



*"Better Communities Through Cooperation"*

April 27, 2010

Ms. Leslie Weldon  
Regional Forester  
USDA – Forest Service  
Northern Region One  
PO Box 7669  
Missoula, MT 59807-7669

RE: Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative Proposed Project

Dear Leslie,

I am writing on behalf of the Blackfoot Challenge to express our strong support for the above referenced proposed project recently submitted to your office for consideration under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). We helped craft the proposal, and support the inclusive, collaborative process followed to involve all stakeholders to propose restoration and fire management treatments through private and public cooperation.

If selected, the Southwestern Crown proposal will ensure that collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration will continue to be a high priority. The proposal's emphasis on treating 80% of all high risk acres, as identified in the area's three Community Wildfire Protection Plans, is a significant aid to increase the safety of communities from wildfire. We greatly appreciate the participation of both public and private stakeholders to facilitate ongoing collaboration to reduce fuel loads and restore forests across all ownerships.

The proposed treatments will restore clean water, improve aquatic and wildlife habitat, and treat a large landscape prone to terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. And an added benefit to local communities, the restoration work will provide and retain forest-related jobs.

Thank-you for giving the Southwestern Crown proposal the strongest possible support as it moves forward through the selection process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Stone", is written over a printed name.

Jim Stone, Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture  
The Honorable Tom Tidwell, Chief of the Forest Service  
Mr. William Timko, Deputy Director of Forest Management Staff