



A new approach to restoring Montana's forests

Montana Forest Restoration Committee
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April 26, 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:

We are writing on behalf of the Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC) steering committee 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). Members of the MFRC helped craft the proposal; subsequently, we understand the end product is the direct result of a model collaborative effort rooted in sound science and built upon a long, productive history of effective collaboration throughout Montana's Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Swan Valleys.

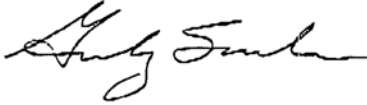
If selected, the Southwestern Crown proposal will ensure that collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration will continue to be a high priority. The proposal's emphasis on treating 80% of all high risk acres, as identified in the area's three Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), is a significant aid in reducing the threat of risk to lives and communities in the event of an uncharacteristic wildfire. The participation of multi-stakeholder and multi-jurisdictional interests served to facilitate ongoing collaboration pertaining to fuel reduction and forest restoration efforts envisioned in the proposed project.

The proposal proposes to protect and restore clean water, improve aquatic and wildlife habitat and treat a large landscape prone to terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. The restoration work encourages a more natural process to play a greater role in ecosystem diversity and sustainability, while providing and retaining forest-related jobs.

As co-chairs of the MFRC steering committee, we believe this project embodies the restoration committee's guiding principles to restore ecosystem biodiversity and enhancing forest resiliency on federal forestlands, while providing economic opportunity to rural Montana communities and retaining our essential forest products partners.

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

With best wishes,



Gordy Sanders
Pyramid Mountain Lumber &
Co-Chair, Montana Forest Restoration
Committee



Dale Harris
The Great Burn Study Group &
Co-Chair, Montana Forest Restoration
Committee

Cc: Mr. Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Mr. Tom Tidwell, Chief, USDA – Forest Service