
MONTANA LOGGING ASSOCIATION

...from the desk of **Keith L. Olson**, *Executive Director*
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April 24, 2010
Ms. Leslie Weldon
Northern Regional Forester

Ms. Weldon:

I am writing on behalf of the Montana Logging Association (MLA) to express our strong support for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative's Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) proposal recently submitted to your office for consideration. The MLA has been briefed on the development of the proposal and we are confident that this proposal is the 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 for funding, the SW Crown CFLRP proposal will ensure that collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration will continue to be a high priority in the Blackfoot, Clearwater and Swan Valleys. The proposal's emphasis on treating 80% of all high risk acres identified in the area's three Community Wildfire Protection Plans ensures that lives, homes and communities will face a significantly reduced risk from uncharacteristic wildfire. The participation by federal, state and local officials as well as a diverse array of non-profit organizations and private landowners, in the development of the proposal will facilitate ongoing collaboration on the fuel reduction and forest restoration efforts envisioned in the proposal.

In addition to its emphasis on fuel reduction and wildfire risk reduction, this proposal would protect and restore clean water, improve fish and wildlife habitat and treat tens of thousands of acres of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

Finally, this proposal would provide much needed jobs in the woods where fuel reduction and forest restoration would put people back to work. This proposal would also provide much needed saw logs and biomass to existing and proposed future facilities in the region.

Thank you giving the SW Crown CFLRP proposal the strongest possible support as it moves forward through the selection process.

Sincerely,



Keith L Olson, executive director
Montana Logging Association

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