

April 28, 2010

Leslie Weldon, Regional Forester
USDA – Forest Service, Northern Region
P. O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807-7669



Dear Leslie:

Please accept the strong support of the Montana Wood Products Association for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative proposed project. The MWPA has participated in the Montana Forest Restoration Committee (MFRC) and it is through this participation that we know the proposal is the direct result of a model collaborative effort based in sound science deserving consideration.

The current condition of the Southwestern Crown encompasses working forests on public and private land, working ranches, pristine lakes and streams, along with abundant wildlife presenting an ideal opportunity to implement the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) through the proposed project.

The MFRC has collaboratively developed three restoration projects in the Southwestern Crown with one having passed through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) without appeals or litigation and the other two moving forward through NEPA. The proposed project builds on this and other collaborative work that has already been completed or initiated with goals to restore forest and aquatic ecosystem function, improve landscape-level biodiversity, resiliency and adaptability, and enhance recreational experiences.

If selected, the proposal will carry forward the goals previously stated as well as significantly reducing risk from catastrophic wildfires by providing treatments for fuels reduction largely tied to the areas identified and prioritized in the Community Wildfire Protection Plans of communities and counties within the Southwestern Crown. This would improve conditions for those folks living in the wildland urban interface with the added valuable public benefit of rural jobs and economies on this same landscape.

The members of the MWPA encourage your strong support for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative proposed project as it continues to move through the selection process. If we can provide any further information or assistance, please contact us. Thank you for your consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Roady". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "C" and "R".

Chuck Roady, President
MWPA Board of Directors

cc: Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture
Tom Tidwell, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service