

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONSERVATION

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COPY



BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074  
TELEFAX: (406) 444-2684

April 27, 2010

Dear Ms. Weldon:

I am writing on behalf of the Montana Multi-Agency Restoration Strategy Group (MA-IRS) to express my strong support for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative's Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) proposal recently submitted to your office for consideration. I have participated in the development of the proposal on behalf of MA-IRS and am 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.

MA-IRS is a multi agency working group consisting of representatives from the Montana DNRC Trust Lands and Forestry Divisions, USFS Region 1, Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The intent of this group is to examine the potential for agency collaboration and complimentary project planning and implementation across landscapes within common priority areas. One of the Group's pilot project areas is within the SW Crown CFLRP proposal area.

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 land owners, in the development of the proposal will facilitate ongoing collaboration on the fuel reduction and forest restoration efforts envisioned in the proposal.

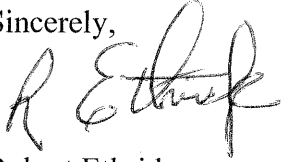
In addition to its emphasis on fuel reduction and wildfire risk reduction, this proposal would protect and restore clean water, improve fish and wildlife habitat and treat tens of thousands of acres of terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.



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 very much for giving the SW Crown CFLRP proposal the strongest possible support as it moves forward through the selection process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Ethridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "R" being particularly large and stylized.

Robert Ethridge  
Chief, Forestry Assistance Bureau  
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

*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*