



Community. Conservation. Education.
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Leslie Weldon, Regional Forester
Northern Region
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807-7669

May 7, 2010

Dear Ms. Weldon:

I am writing on behalf of Northwest Connections (NwC) 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 participated in the development of the proposal and I 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.

Northwest Connections engages in community based projects which assist land managers and private land owners in better understanding, conserving, and restoring critical habitats and habitat connections in the Swan Valley and surrounding areas. We continue to explore new ways to integrate local knowledge and conventional scientific processes in the conservation of Montana's rural forest lands. Northwest Connections has been working with our Federal, State, and NGO partners for 10 years to implement and monitor restoration projects. These efforts include forest inventory, watershed, weed and wildlife assessments and monitoring. We are encouraged by the collaborative CFLRP proposal submitted and are confident that it has the potential to add great value to our region by ramping up needed restoration efforts, especially given the recent acquisition of thousands of acres of former Plum Creek timberlands. The projects proposed within the Southern Crown would not only add to the ecological resilience of our region and improve watershed health, but would provide critical jobs for local contractors and local businesses. In addition the spirit of this proposal will only strengthen and expand current collaborative efforts in our region - helping us to meet the triple-bottom line, leading to better outcomes for our land and our communities.

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. Thank you very much for giving the Southwestern Crown CFLRP proposal the strongest possible support as it moves forward through the selection process!

Sincerely,

Melanie Parker, Executive Director

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