



Date: April 27, 2010

Dear Ms. Weldon:

I am writing on behalf of scientists at the Missoula Fire Sciences Lab, within the Fire, Fuels, and Smoke Science Program, Rocky Mountain Research Station to express my support for the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) proposal recently submitted to you for consideration. I have had independent discussions with two members of the proposal development team who have varied missions, Forest Service and The Wilderness Society, and am impressed that this proposal has resulted from collaborative interactions based on sound science, comparable objectives, and reasonable tradeoffs. The area of focus is somewhat unique in its quantity and quality of natural resource values as well as its current unsustainable ecosystem conditions.

My organization is The Fire, Fuel and Smoke Science Program that has a national charter to conduct fundamental and applied research on wildland fire processes, terrestrial and atmospheric effects of fire, and ecological adaptations to fire, with an extended goal of compiling technical knowledge into functional guides to support planning and implementation of all phases of fire management activities. The scope of work addresses four stages of the wildland fire environment, including: the pre-fire status; combustion and fire behavior processes; immediate (first-order) fire effects; and longer-term (second-order) fire effects. The Program's research, development, and applications address several national wildland fire programs, including the National Fire Plan, the National Forest Management Act, the Cohesive Strategy (Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems), and the national Strategic Program Areas (Fire). Therefore, it's clear that several issues of research focus at the Fire Lab, especially related to national programs, are addressed in application by this SW Crown CFLRP proposal.

Because of the broad background and representation of collaborators, it appears highly likely that this proposal, if selected, will move forward with a consensus of desired future conditions and a strong science-based restoration plan. I assume that much of the science already used in planning and that will be use during implementation was developed at the Fire Lab. Therefore, consultations and field trips with our scientists for guidance on specific projects are welcomed. This may be especially valuable in light of the treatments proposed for high wildfire risk areas identified in the three Community Wildfire Protection Plans as well as fire use in fire-adapted



ecosystems. The design of effective fuel treatments and the implementation and monitoring of ecological consequences of ecosystem restoration treatments would be of particular interest to our research fire behavior specialists and research fire ecologists.

As proposed, this project has a large-scale perspective to address interconnected landscape elements such as aquatics, soils, invasive species, wildlife habitat, water quality, and others rather than the more typical stand level assessment. The adaptive management approach with important funding for critical monitoring will reveal key multi-disciplinary consequences of the proposed ecosystem-based treatments.

Finally, it's well worth noting that the economic status of several struggling communities should be improved through forest employment, but more importantly, this is not work for work's sake but the employment and resulting forest products would be byproducts of very important ecosystem restoration activities. Few should object to this strategy.

As a proponent of this proposal, which follows the design of much of my own restoration research, I support the philosophy, the design, the activities, and the scale of this project and am happy that you are giving it focused consideration.

Sincerely,

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cc:

Secretary Tom Vilsack  
Chief Tom Tidwell  
Deputy Director Bill Timko