

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2602

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April 30, 2010

Ms. Leslie Weldon  
Regional Forester  
US Forest Service Region 1  
PO Box 7669  
Missoula, Montana 59807-7669

Dear Leslie:

The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) as proposed by the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative represents a new and innovative partnership for which I am pleased to offer my strong support. The program has been developed with the best interests of Montanans in mind and is poised to make a meaningful impact for the community. I am confident that Southwestern Crown's proposal is the result of a model of collaboration effort rooted in sound science and stemming from a long, productive history of cooperation that will yield positive results for Montana's Blackfoot, Clearwater, and Swan Valleys.

As the senior senator from Montana, I have the privilege of representing a state renowned both for its connections to the land and its traditions of communities working together. For over 35 years, I have strived to help implement effective resource management, including supporting projects and legislation that reduce the risks of wildfire and protect wildlife and habitat. Our natural resources, including forests, wildlife, and scenery represent an economic impact of over \$1 billion dollars for the state. Ecosystem restoration activities such as this are an important way for Montana to continue collaborating to manage resources and provide an example for other states and communities to emulate.

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. Further, the projects envisioned in the proposal will move terrestrial ecosystems toward a more resilient state, thus allowing natural processes to play a greater role.

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 "Max Baucus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

MSB/BKR

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