



CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

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April 28, 2010

Leslie Weldon
Regional Forester
USFS Northern Region - R1
200 East Broadway
PO Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807-7669

Subject: Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative CFLRP Proposal

Ms. Weldon:

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) would like to formally support the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative CFLRP Proposal, being submitted to you under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). As you know, TPL has been working with communities, landowners and resource management agencies in the Crown of the Continent for over twelve years and we are well-aware of the need for landscape-scale programs and projects that meet the multiple objectives of conservation, restoration, recreation, public safety, and economic sustainability related to the forest land base. We have more recently worked in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) on the large Montana Legacy Project that will consolidate ownerships resulting in more comprehensive and sustainable land management. We believe that the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative Proposal provides an excellent approach to achieving the multiple objectives of the CFLR program and the communities within the affected watersheds.

It should be noted that the proposal is rooted in science-based analyses, based upon all available information. This integrated approach to modeling and identification of priority treatment areas provided for detailed discussion of the interdisciplinary aspects of proposed actions. As described in the proposal, targeted restoration treatments will promote a sustainable landscape that provides for a variety of ecosystem services and associated economic and social benefits. Ecological diversity will be maintained to support the integrity and complexity of this region while incorporating predicted effects of future climate change. Fish and wildlife habitats will support the full complement of species and also provide for linkages that connect to other important areas within and beyond the Crown. Recreational opportunities and experiences will be enhanced by improved forest, watershed, and habitat conditions. Forest restoration and fuel management activities will facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs while reestablishing natural fire regimes. Wood products and by-products that help sustain a sound forest products industry and sustainable local economies will be supplied.

As outlined in the proposal, the location of this project area is significant. Being a portion of the Crown of the Continent landscape, these southwestern watersheds play a critical role in the restoration and/or maintenance of the region's ecological integrity and its ability to respond to climate change.

It is important to acknowledge the collaborative effort of the participants supporting this proposal; clearly, there is broad representation of affected interests. Though many of these parties have a history of dialogue and working together to achieve positive outcomes, the CFLRP provides an opportunity to further address the needs of the three watersheds, the communities that exist, and the people that live, work, and recreate in the area.

TPL encourages your active support of this proposal. We look forward to participating with the USFS and the other partners to effectively implement the Southwestern Crown of the Continent Collaborative Proposal and the CFLRP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Love".

Deb Love
Northern Rockies 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
Jad Daley, TPL Climate Program Director
Bob Ekey, The Wilderness Society