

BROADWATER COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners

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COMMISSIONERS:
Steven R. McCullough - Chairman
James V. Hohn
Elaine M. Mann

July 10, 2006

Gail Kimbell, Regional Forester
Northern Region - USFS
200 E. Broadway
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, Montana 59807

Dear Ms. Kimbell:

We write to support the efforts being made by a coalition of timber companies and conservation groups (the Partnership) to break the gridlock relative to the forest planning efforts on Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The proposal is historic - that groups with such diverse interests in the Forest have been able to hammer out a compromise that they feel achieves their respective goals is something we've not seen on the Forest.

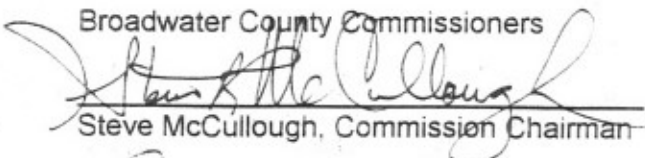
The proposal identifies over 700,000 acres of suitable timber that mills, loggers and lumber companies need for local economies. The proposal calls for most of the forest to be open to motorized use and still preserves acreage necessary to maintain wildlife habitat and outdoor non-motorized recreation.

It appears that the Forest Service Multiple Use question, which has been in gridlock for 20 years, may not be solved unless we begin to deal with the Wilderness issue. Therefore we support the designation of 573,000 acres of wilderness in the Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest as proposed by The Partnership, emphasizing that this support in no way gives carte blanche support for other wilderness proposals in the state.

This proposal represents a balanced approach to land-use management while being fair to the varied and diverse users of the forest. We urge your support for this proposal and we thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Broadwater County Commissioners


Steve McCullough, Commission Chairman


Jim Hohn, Commissioner


Elaine Mann, Commissioner