



BUTTE-SILVER BOW
OFFICE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE
COURTHOUSE
BUTTE, MONTANA 59701

June 27, 2006

COPY

Ms. Gail Kimbell, Regional Forester
USFS Northern Region
Federal Building
200 East Broadway
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

Dear Ms. Kimbell:

The consolidated government of Butte-Silver Bow (BSB) would like to submit this letter to the Northern Region Office for the purpose of lending our support to the Partnership Strategy which has been offered by various conservation and timber industry leaders with regard to the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (BHDL).

Recently we were given a presentation by the Partnership; and, after due consideration of its various elements, the BSB Council of Commissioners voted unanimously to support the strategy of the Partnership as a way of reducing conflict and litigation between forest users and at the same time resulting in predictable and timely forest management projects.

The Basin Creek Watershed south of Butte, which supplies up to 40 percent of our municipal water needs, has been the subject of intense examination by BSB and the USFS for the better part of the last decade. The resulting management and fuel reduction plan barely got off the ground before it was legally challenged and has been tied up in court ever since. The cost to the taxpayer has been enormous and the fire risk to our watershed remains. It is possible that the collaborative approach of the Partnership could prevent this type of totally unproductive, unresponsive, and wasteful example of forest management for future BHDL forest projects.

We found numerous other features of the Partnership Strategy to be attractive as well including the use of stewardship contracts coupled with timber production, fish and wildlife enhancement projects, larger timber harvest units followed by road obliteration, specific wilderness recommendations, trail maintenance, and, again, a predictable, dependable, and sustainable timber base designation.

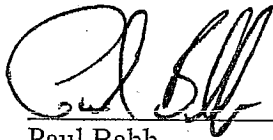
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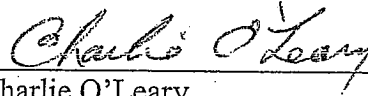
Page 2

In summary, we encourage the USFS to include the Partnership Strategy to the greatest extent possible in its final formulation of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest Plan. Thank you for considering this letter of support.

Sincerely,



Paul Babb
Chief Executive
Butte-Silver Bow



Charlie O'Leary
Chairman, Council of Commissioners
Butte-Silver Bow