

Letters to the Editor (most recent on top)

December 13, 2007

Support work of diverse group

The three environmental organizations and five wood-products companies that comprise the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership have different and, at times, sharply conflicting interests. But they sat down together and found interests they hold in common: healthier forests, cleaner air and water, more accessible recreational areas but more wilderness as well.

Their process and their product, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Conservation, Restoration and Stewardship Plan, is worthy of our congressional delegation's support.

Bill Carey, Missoula

December 7, 2007

Plan just what our forests need

Recent articles about the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership (Nov. 17) and the Missoulian editorial (Nov. 25) praising their efforts have been great. I hope to hear more in the future about their success. I have been following Montana's timber companies and conservation groups working together offering a historic new plan for managing the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest in southwest Montana. Their work shows that Montanans can work together for the betterment of our national forests.

I like the pillars upon which their plan is founded- good-paying jobs in the woods and mills staying open, healthy forests that reduce the threat of insects, diseases, and large wildfires, and setting aside a few special areas that will keep Montana a wonderful place for all to visit. Also, the views from the valley floors will be more pleasing for everyone.

I'd like to thank Sen. Jon Tester for praising the work of these folks. His praise is exactly the kind of encouragement we all should be sending the Partnership. I want to also thank Sen. Max Baucus and Rep. Denny Rehberg for the support they have voiced, and hope they too will throw their full support to the plan, even if there are some groups who are reticent. Keep up the good work. Nothing this historic comes easy.

Eugene Miller, Bonner

December 5, 2007

Forest Service should embrace proposal

I read the Missoulian editorial (Nov. 25) about the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership praising some of Montana's conservation groups and timber companies coming together as Montanans and putting years of gridlock behind them. This agreement represents a monumental breakthrough between two groups whose past relationships have been adversarial. A new dawn of cooperation and collaboration in the management of public lands to the benefit of all could be upon us. I certainly hope so.

I have difficulty understanding why the U.S. Forest Service has not adopted and fully implemented this strategy. To not support this agreement is to prefer the confrontation, inflexibility, years of delay in addressing real needs and millions of dollars spent on litigation that has marked the management of public lands in the past.

I urge all citizens of Montana to enthusiastically support this proposal and insist that the U.S. Forest Service and our congressional representatives adopt this plan immediately.

Gary Fee, Alberton

December 4, 2007

Opposing sides found compromise

This is to commend the Missoulian for the editorial in praise of the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership (Nov. 25). I recommend it to those who missed it and hope that many more will join the chorus of supporters for this project, as it represents a truly cooperative proposal for the management of our forests.

It's a good day when such conservation groups as the Montana Wilderness Association, Montana Trout Unlimited and the National Wildlife Federation join together with timber companies like RY Timber, Sun Mountain Lumber, Smurfit-Stone Container, Roseburg Forest Products and Pyramid Mountain Lumber to form the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Partnership and to draft a plan that will benefit all Montanans.

Instead of agreeing to disagree, members of this partnership rolled up their sleeves and sat down at the table together nearly two years ago to work out the many differences that existed between lumbermen and conservationists regarding the number of acres available for harvest and the lack of environmental protections in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. The give-and-take plan that resulted from this unlikely coalition is a win-win situation for both groups and for the people to whom these forests belong. While some may be disappointed in specific recommendations, the plan puts folks to work in the woods creating healthy forests, while setting aside special areas for traditional activities such as camping, hiking, hunting and horsepacking.

The next step is up to us: To request that our Montana congressional delegates introduce legislation in support of this pioneering model for federal land management and to usher the Beaverhead-Deerlodge Conservation, Restoration and Stewardship Act successfully through Congress.

Hazel Pflueger, Florence
