



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Sawtooth National Forest
Supervisor's Office

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Date: February 14, 2014

Steve Botti and Gary O'Malley
Representative Members
Sawtooth Valley Collaborative
c/o City of Stanley
P. O. Box 53
Stanley, ID 83278

Dear Sawtooth Valley Collaborative,

The Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis National Forests have reviewed your "Strategic Recommendations for Wildfire Hazard Mitigation" Paper. Your coordination and partnership on such an important issue is critical and the Forest Service genuinely thanks you for the efforts of pulling such a diverse group of people together.

The Forest Service agrees that high intensity fires, with the potential to impact values at risk, are a concern within the Sawtooth Valley and adjacent lands. The recommendations the Collaborative has provided are a great framework to begin with. Over time, the Forest Service hopes to accomplish many of the fuel modifications suggested by the Collaborative, as well as, have cooperative dialogue about implementation of such treatments. This will likely include conversations about time of year, funding, and tradeoffs (i.e. smoke in the air in order to conduct a prescribed burn).

The Forest Service is grateful to have had initial conversations about the uncertainty of where and when a wildfire ignition will occur, as well as, the efficacy of various treatments within certain fuel types under certain conditions. These uncertainties in a dynamic system are always challenges, but we believe the framework the Collaborative has drafted and on-going conversations with experience and science as the basis, will lead us towards success.

What does success look like? The development and implementation of a strategic fuels plan will be a critical need to guide our cooperative efforts. We plan to develop a strategic fuels plan in coordination with the Collaborative and ultimately include a tentative 5 year action plan for implementation. The strategic plan will include the zones identified by the Collaborative and will be interactively developed with multiple partners. Projects will be drafted based on this plan and can be at the landscape or smaller scale depending on the objectives. These projects will incorporate a variety of fuel treatment opportunities and a lasting, cooperative partnership with the Collaborative where funding, education and other opportunities can be more readily realized.

The Sawtooth National Forest is proceeding with two projects identified by the Collaborative. The 210 Road Project is in a high priority zone (Zone B Collaborative Map), and has a standing pre-existing history of patch cuts and wildfire (Road 210 Fire). We plan to use this project as a small scale, "pilot project" to not only explore treatment possibilities but also to keep the partnership and funding requirements realistic and successful. The Highway 21 Conifer Encroachment Project is also in a high priority zone (Zone D Collaborative Map), where



extensive regeneration of lodgepole pine along the roadway is currently limiting the effectiveness of firefighters. When complete, this project will provide opportunities to fire managers attempting to contain wildfires to one side of the road. Concurrently, we hope to work on other issues described in your paper related to Special Use Permits, Leases, Private Land (both encumbered and unencumbered by easements) and the FIREWISE concepts.

The Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis National Forests will also consider alternative fire management strategies with natural ignitions within the protection zones that are adjacent to and/or that we share between forests. We will continue to see fire in these areas and proactive strategizing on how we would manage natural ignitions could help establish fuel modification areas where we have identified the greatest needs based on values at risk. Our fire management staffs will be meeting this winter to game out such fire management options.

Again, thank you for your commitment to and coordination of the Sawtooth Valley Collaborative. We feel the relationship is off to an amazing start and look forward to successful fuels reduction and fire education efforts in the future.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sharon LaBrecque (for):

REBECCA S. NOURSE

Forest Supervisor, Sawtooth National Forest

/s/ Charles A. Mark

CHARLES A. MARK

Forest Supervisor, Salmon-Challis National Forest

cc: Joby Timm
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