



409 Missouri Avenue
Deer Lodge, MT 59722
406-846-3680

April 29, 2014

Environmental Quality Council
ATTN: Joe Kolman, County Projects
Room 171B, Capitol Building
PO Box 201704
Helena, MT 59620-1704

Joe Kolman:

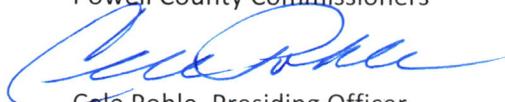
The Board of Commissioners for Powell County would ask the Environmental Quality Council to consider the Eastside Forest Stewardship Project. This project lies on the east side of the Deer Lodge Valley on the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest. The project started approximately seven years ago when the Watershed Restoration Coalition approached the Board of Commissioners with a request for help addressing the Pine Bark Beetle kill in the forest and the threat of health and safety of our citizens. The Board approved \$80,000 for a pre NEPA study and later Senator Tester earmarked \$1,000,000 for a full NEPA study by a private contractor. The Deer Lodge-Beaverhead did not feel the quality of the study was adequate and repeated this study themselves. During this time, the new Forest Plan came about and reduced the approximately 30,000 acres of harvestable timber to approximately 2,000 acres.

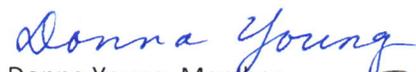
At the present time, the only thing that has been done is the removal of dead trees that would fall across the roads.

A fire in this area could conceivably extend all the way to the Ten Mile project and the city of Helena. We still feel this should be a number one priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Powell County Commissioners


Cele Pohle, Presiding Officer


Donna Young, Member


Ralph E. Mannix, Jr., Member