



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Intermountain Region  
12795 West Alameda Parkway  
Lakewood, CO 80228



IN REPLY REFER TO:

N1627

July 16, 2010

Advisory Committee  
Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRA)  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Members of the CFLRA Advisory Committee:

We write you today to express our agency's continued support and enthusiasm for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRA) for the Southwest (SW) Jemez Mountains Restoration Project. Though not yet funded, the SW Jemez Mountains Restoration proposal has been advancing steadily within the competitive review process established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Representatives from adjacent NPS Bandelier National Monument have been key partners with the Santa Fe National Forest, Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) and others in collaboratively developing the strategy for forest restoration. The project is directed toward establishing forest ecological health, including return of natural fire regimen within treatment areas. The project area is currently vulnerable to destructive stand-replacing wildland fires that require extensive post-fire treatment to reestablish ecosystem health and stability.

Legislation was introduced in May 2010 by Senators Bingaman and Udall to designate the Valles Caldera National Preserve as a unit of the National Park Service. The VCNP constitutes approximately 45% of the total acreage of the proposed SW Jemez Mountains Restoration project area, and would be a key component of a successful forest restoration effort. Because wildland fire recognizes no boundaries, restoration of forest ecosystem health and reduction of the potential for destructive wildland fire will be an important management goal at the VCNP. NPS is a strong supporter of the CFLRA proposal and would be amenable to carrying out the proposed project as currently proposed. However, should USDA Forest Service be unable to fund work at the VCNP if there should be a land transfer between agencies, then NPS would seek alternative project funding to accomplish the needed forest restoration work.

Depending on funding, NPS would accomplish forest restoration through established agency project funding methods. The National Park Service manages approximately eighty (80) project fund

sources, each targeting specific projects of importance to the agency, ranging from regular cyclic maintenance of existing structures, to conducting archeological inventories, to mechanical thinning and prescribed fire treatments. To illustrate how the project funding method works, Bandelier National Monument received \$1.742M in project funding (exclusive of one-time-only ARRA project funds) from forty (40) different fund accounts in FY10. Project funds, in combination with annual operational funds, provide a key financial resource for national park sites in carrying out resource management and other undertakings.

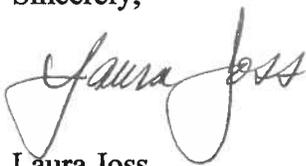
Bandelier has current experience with landscape-scale ecological restoration treatments within its boundaries. Monument resource management staff initiated scientific and archeological investigations of erosion and unnatural fire conditions on its mesa top pinyon juniper woodland landscapes from 2002-2006 (project funding \$327,000), completed implementation from 2007-2010 (project funding \$2,644,000), and is initiating post-treatment monitoring for 2010-2012 (project funding \$388,000). In the case of the 4,700 acre Bandelier Ecological Restoration project, additional in-kind support was received through numerous institutions and federal agencies that supported scientific research for aspects of the project.

Similar to CFLRA funds, NPS project funds are distributed through a competitive process that rewards well-formulated project proposals. Timing for carrying out forest restoration at the VCNP under NPS would not be known until a land transfer was completed and initiation of project fund requests within the NPS system was undertaken.

As before, we strongly encourage the Advisory Committee support of this project. We support the SW Jemez Mountains Restoration proposal for the improved fire management conditions it will create, for its potential to benefit ecosystem health, and for the interagency cooperation that will be a signature of the project.

If you have any questions please contact my office at (303) 969-2503.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Joss". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Laura Joss  
Acting Regional Director

Cc:

Jason Lott, Superintendent, BAND  
Dan Jiron, Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest  
Gary Bratcher, Executive Director, Valles Caldera Trust