

Senator ^(fmr) Patrick O. Connell

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Hamilton, MT 59840
Cell: 406.370.8682

18 September 2023

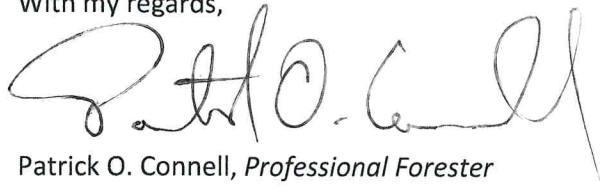
Emmet Pruss
[Fuel Breaks Projects]
Bitterroot National Forest
1801 N. 1st Street
Hamilton, MT 59840

Mr Pruss:

I am writing to generally extend my support for the announced fuel breaks projects. When well positioned, fuel breaks can be very effective for the purposes mentioned the the public announcement of the projects.

I would strongly add that your environmental documents' purpose and need statements should specifically include the primary mandate that the Forest Service was directed in its formative authorization, the 1897 Organic Act, which would be "... for the purpose of securing favorable conditions of water flows" The proposed fire break projects will undoubtedly facilitate protection of many smaller drainages of the forest that directly contribute to the general Bitterroot Watershed.

With my regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick O. Connell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Patrick O. Connell, *Professional Forester*