

LEWIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Since 1845



Lewis County, Washington

LEWIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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Second District

DENNIS HADALLER
Third District

January 3, 2007

Sheila Unger
Board Administrator

Ken Berg
USFWS
510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102
Lacey, WA 98503

Bonnie Bunning
Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 47014
Olympia, WA 98504-7014

RE: Support for the Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan

Family forests are an integral part of Lewis County's economy and environment. These forestlands play an important role in maintaining healthy watersheds, provide critical habitat for both upland and aquatic species, and contribute to our local economy. Family forestland managers face many challenges, in particular regulatory uncertainty. The Family Forest Habitat Conservation Plan (FFHCP) will provide much needed regulatory reform and certainty to the family forest landowners, which in turn will facilitate their ability to continue to contribute to Lewis County's economy and environmental health.

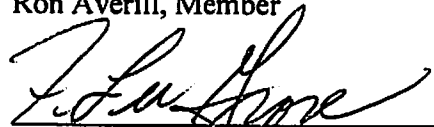
The Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) recognizes the need for, and fully supports the FFHCP. Lewis County has been working closely with the Family Forest Foundation (FFF) on developing a process, through the FFHCP, that will work for the family forest landowners of Lewis County and allow Lewis County to hold the Incidental Take Permits for the FFHCP. As such, the BOCC is supportive of the Family Forest Foundation's 2006 Section 6 grant application to complete the development of the FFHCP.

The Lewis County BOCC and FFF share a common vision on the importance of the sustainability of family forestry and its economic and ecological contributions to Lewis County. With the completion of the FFHCP, more than 2200 Lewis County family forest landowners, who manage in excess of 130,000 acres of forest, will have a more efficient way to ensure the long-term viability of the family forests while providing habitat for fish and wildlife under the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,


Richard Graham, Chairman


Ron Averill, Member


F. Lee Grose, Member