

SESSION NAME: *Coalition of Forested Counties Overview*

DAY & TIME: October 19th, *Opening*

SPEAKER #1 NAME: Senator Jon Tester

MAJOR POINTS:

- We have to “get folks back to work in the woods.”
- Success must begin with on-the-ground collaboration. Talk to the people who have had success – let’s try to replicate it.
- We agree that it’s time to free up the resources we spend on wildfire in order to better manage natural resources.
- Need predictability in the Forest Service’s budget.
- PILT and SRS – When production declines, commissioners are forced to make tough decisions. They need more predictability. Tester is pushing the legislature to fully fund both PILT and SRS. Right now the legislation has bipartisan support.
- It’s important to find solutions – we have to keep working together and listening to one another.
- **Q:** Is litigation a problem? Are there solutions on the horizon? **A:** Yes. Fixing fire funding will help with the issue of litigation. We need more man power and people to do on-the-ground work so that we can have “iron clad” decisions (that’s not always possible, but we can get closer). Also need to make adjustments so that people can’t come to the table late and throw a monkey wrench in everything.

SPEAKER #2 NAME: Bob Harrington

MAJOR POINTS:

- This hasn’t happened before – the Summit is the first time we’ve gathered county commissioners and Forest Service staff to dialogue.
- We want to make this worthwhile. Encourage people to dialogue throughout the Summit.

- Proud to have Matt and Mo working for DNRC and working so hard to move the needle forward. They are reinforcing DNRC's important role in the forest issues.
- Story: DNRC and state representatives got together and talked about how to move the dial forward for county and local governments and forest engagement. Governor Bullock saw real potential in Matt's role and the program and signed the bill.
- Through a focus on collaboration we've been able to move through barriers and start having productive dialogue. Yet, there's a need (and some frustration) to see results.
- If collaboration is going to live up to its promise we have to see results. We don't see a return on our investments often enough – we're still not quite getting to the results that we thought we'd see.
- State of Montana is focusing on the tools, energy, and funding that we have right now to get more work done on the ground. DNRC is working with a sense of urgency. DNRC would like to see the same sense of urgency from the FS that DNRC has.