

Swan View Coalition *Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path*



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March 26, 2012

Marsha Moore
Flathead National Forest
650 Wolfpack Way
Kalispell, MT 59901

Re: Larch Cone Collection via PDF to memoore@fs.fed.us

Dear Ms. Moore;

We object in the strongest of terms to collecting western larch cones by killing up to 270 large trees of America's best genetic stock. You know the cones can be collected efficiently and cleanly by removing just the cones or by removing a limited number of limbs per standing tree, then removing the cones from the limbs on the ground. Your press release misleads the public, suggesting dropping limbs causes too great a loss of cones, while implying that felling the entire tree to the ground does not.

We urge you to spread tarps under the selected trees and then remove a few limbs per tree. This will capture clean cones with minimal damage to the trees, which will be left alive to spread their genes for generations. Limbs can be removed by tree climbing, shooting beanbag lines over limbs, by lift truck, or by a weighted line suspended from a helicopter. Or, you can simply spread tarps under trees where squirrels are actively dropping the mature cones from the canopy.

Seed collection guides find helicopter collection using a rake basket to be cost-effective when done correctly, with the added advantage of aerial selection of the best trees. We urge you to review the ["Seed Handling Guidebook" by Kolotelo et al. \(2001\)](#).

"Efficiency" is a poor excuse for unnecessarily killing the best of America's 2-foot diameter larch trees. It's better described as gluttony! There are plenty of efficient non-lethal means to collect cones. Maybe you need to look at this from the tree's perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith".

Keith J. Hammer
Chair