

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Superior National Forest and Minnesota Conservation Corps

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American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds Superior National Forest Trail Maintenance in Partnership with Minnesota Conservation Corps

Through the recently-passed “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” \$557,000 of funding will be used to improve conditions on the Superior National Forest’s extensive trail system, including hiking, portage, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ATV, and interpretive trails. Work will be performed through a partnership with Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC).

Trail work will involve brushing, tread work, installation of water control structures, boardwalk reconstruction, and trail sign maintenance in various areas of the Superior National Forest. A few specific sites include the Kekekabic Trail, Whiteface Campground Hiking Trail, Franklin Lake ATV Trail, and Cascade River Ski Trail.

“This project exemplifies the objectives of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by providing jobs that will maintain and improve existing trails on the Superior National Forest for years. Additionally, young adults employed through MCC to work on this project will gain valuable skills and an appreciation for natural resource management,” said Jim Sanders, Forest Supervisor for the Superior National Forest.

Funds will be awarded to the MCC within seven days, but actual work will not begin until around June 1 and will run throughout the year.

MCC’s AmeriCorps program provides hands-on environmental stewardship and service-learning opportunities to young adults, ages 18 to 25, while accomplishing conservation, natural resource management and emergency response work. In addition to job-skills gained, MCC crew members receive professional certifications such as wildfire suppression, chain-saw safety and first aid. The service they provide restores and improves access to natural resources while changing the lives of young people.

“We’ll be increasing the number of young adults we employ in conservation work by almost 50 percent,” says Tim Johnson-Grass, MCC Operations Manager. “Our corps members are committed to service and proud of their work — that is why they’re in this program. The trails that they maintain and improve in the Superior National Forest will be enjoyed for generations.” For more information about Minnesota Conservation Corps and seasonal trail crews, visit www.conservationcorps.org.

This project was one of several Forest Service projects submitted for funding under the Act. The intent is to help put people back to work, while also providing long-term benefits in terms of developing new skills, enhancing local resources, or adding value to communities, counties, and partners.

Nationally, almost \$63 million worth of Forest Service projects creating hundreds of private-sector jobs have already been funded. The remaining projects to be funded, valued at \$1.052 billion, will be announced in the coming weeks and are expected to create approximately 23,500 more jobs nationwide.

Additional information about how the Forest Service is involved in implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is available at: www.fs.fed.us

PHOTOS available upon request