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# Custer & Gallatin National Forests News Release

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## **Custer and Gallatin Forests Receive ARRA Funding for Six Projects**

Billings and Bozeman, MT... U.S. Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell announced today the Agency's plan to use the \$1.15 billion allocated to the agency as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Approximately ten percent of the Forest Service projects submitted under the ARRA were revealed. These initial projects will create 1500 jobs across the country, giving the Agency the early opportunity to help put people to work. The remaining 90 percent of projects, totaling \$1.052 billion, will be announced shortly and will create an additional 23,500 jobs.

The Gallatin and Custer National Forests received ARRA funding for six projects. On the Beartooth District of the Custer Forest, two projects within the West Fork of Rock Creek were funded. West Fork Rock Creek (FS Road #2071) is located southwest of Red Lodge, Montana. The first project, from Basin Campground to the trailhead at the end of the road (5.5 miles total) will improve turnouts for accessibility and visibility and the road surface will be improved. From the Silver Run Trailhead to Basin Campground (about 2.9 miles) the existing paved section will be reconstructed. This work will also address safety and evacuation concerns by improving the ingress and egress for wildland and structural fire protection engines and improving vehicle pullout sites for those leaving and entering the canyon.

On the Gallatin National Forest, four projects were funded; the Taylor Fork Road Surfacing and Drainage project, Smith Creek Culverts project; Shields River Road and Bridge Reconstruction project, and the Hyalite Guardrail – Municipal Watershed Protection project.

The Taylor Fork project, located south of Big Sky, Montana in the Gallatin Canyon will complete the surfacing and road drainage improvements of the Upper Taylor Fork and Cache Creek roads (about 7.8 miles) to address sedimentation concerns. This area has been the

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focus of multiple land acquisition, watershed rehabilitation, and road and trail improvement projects during the last 15 years. The road segments being improved are very erosive, easily rutted, and have substantial use and safety issues when wet.

The Smith Creek Culverts project will replace four existing culverts in the Smith Creek Road (FS Road #991) located in the Shields River watershed. The current culverts are not adequate to meet fish passage standards during high flow events and do not meet the needs of other aquatic species. The Smith Creek drainage provides habitat for Yellowstone Cutthroat trout and this project will eliminate trout spawning movement barriers.

The Shields River Road and Bridge reconstruction project is located in the Shields River drainage north of Livingston, Montana and will address erosion and safe use issues. This project will reconstruct and upgrade 5.6 miles of the Shields River Road (FS Road #844) from the end of the Park County Road #45 to the Deep Creek Bridge. It will extend the asphalt double-lane paved road for the first 1.5 miles to the Smith Creek Road junction. It will also reconstruct and resurface the remaining portion of the road to double-lane, widen existing bridges, and replace existing culverts. Finally, a parking area on national forest system land will be constructed near the Sunlight Road.

The Hyalite Guardrail – Municipal Watershed Protection project is located just south of Bozeman, Montana. The Hyalite drainage is one of the most heavily used recreation areas in Montana and is the municipal watershed for the city of Bozeman. This project will install guardrail on portions of about 4 miles of the Hyalite Road between the city of Bozeman's municipal water intake structure to the Moser Road to address safety and municipal water supply issues. The project will also reduce the risk of hazardous spills into Hyalite Creek from vehicles leaving the road.

“We are excited at the opportunity to help put people to work while accomplishing these resource priorities,” said Mary Erickson, Gallatin and Custer National Forest Supervisor. “The Forests look forward to quickly implementing these projects and doing our part to create jobs in our nation’s rural areas.”

Additional information on the overall U.S. Forest Service role in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can be found at: <http://fs.usda.gov/recovery>. You can also call the Gallatin National Forest at (406) 587-6701 or the Custer National Forest at (406) 657-6205 for information. Information on the total federal effort can be found at <http://www.recovery.gov>.

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