

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Missoula, March 6 2009— 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 announced. 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 Forest Service has a proud history of creating private sector jobs in rural areas of our nation," said Northern Regional Forester Tom Tidwell. "Each of our economic recovery projects will employ people in work that is directly linked to improving the health of forests and grasslands within our community."

In the Northern Region, three project categories in Montana were selected totaling 9.5 million dollars:

- Watershed Enhancement project in Carbon, Park, Gallatin and Ravalli Counties. This 1.9 million dollar project benefits areas on the Bitterroot, Gallatin and Custer National Forests in Montana. The work includes culvert and bridge replacement and road surface improvement on the Bitterroot, Gallatin and Custer National Forests.
- Montana Road Improvements projects totaling 3.6 million dollars will contribute to watershed restoration by improving drainages, culverts and road surfacing. These activities will occur in Gallatin, Lincoln and Carbon County with oversight primarily by the Gallatin, Custer and Kootenai National Forests.
- Shields River Road and Bridges Construction is funded for 4 million dollars. Shield River Road in Park County is a major arterial used by the public in the Gallatin National Forest. Public safety and resource protection will be enhanced through the reconstruction and maintenance work in this area.

The categories include several individual projects to be implemented by contracts designed to create about 114 private sector jobs. The number of jobs is determined by economists using a project-to-dollar figure formula. These projects were a priority choice because the contracting work is near ready to release publicly for bids. Project contract descriptions and contracting instructions will be guided by the information located at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>.

More construction, improvement and maintenance projects in the region are expected to be funded and announced over the next three months along with fuels reduction projects authorized under ARRA. Winter weather may delay the start of some ground disturbing projects.

For further information on individual projects:

- On the Gallatin National Forest, contact Marna Daley at 406-587-6703,
- On the Bitterroot National Forest call Nan Christiansen 406-363-7113,
- On the Custer National Forest call Babete Anderson at 406-657-6205 ext.239,
- On the Kootenai National Forest call Cami Winslow at 406-283-7664.

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>. Information on the total federal effort can be found at <http://www.recovery.gov>.

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