



NEWS RELEASE



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

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U.S. FOREST SERVICE TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Atlanta, GA, March 05 2009—U.S. Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell announced today the first projects in the Agency's plan to support the nation's economic recovery program. Among the first projects are three aimed at addressing recent ice storm damage in Kentucky, part of the Southern Region of the Forest Service headquartered in Atlanta.

These initial projects will create 1,500 jobs nationwide (including an estimated 34 in Kentucky), giving the Forest Service an early opportunity to put people to back to work. The first projects total about \$98 million, including construction materials and supplies, and represent only the first 10 percent of the Forest Service projects created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Forest Service has received \$1.15 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The remaining 90 percent of projects, totaling \$1.052 billion, will be announced shortly and will create an additional 23,500 jobs nationwide.

Locally, the Southern Region worked to identify projects on national forests and state and private lands that would 1) address backlogged capital improvement and hazardous fuel reduction needs and 2) add jobs to the local area. The Regional Forester's office in Atlanta, GA reviewed the proposed projects based on the criteria in the ARRA and regional priorities and submitted lists of potential projects from the Southern Region for consideration at a national level.

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“This process was very competitive across the entire agency, with an abundance of worthy project proposals,” stated Regional Forester Liz Agpaoa. “Forests, Research Stations and State Foresters are eager to implement projects that will help our rural areas get back to work.”

“We were fortunate to have three projects selected in Kentucky among the first projects in the Forest Service,” Agpaoa continued. “This area was hit hard by the January ice storm, which closed a lot of roads and damaged facilities. These projects will clear roads, allowing tourists back into the area which will keep local economies going and simultaneously create or maintain local jobs.”

The three projects include two on Land Between The Lakes (LBL) National Recreation Area and one on the Daniel Boone National Forest.

- LBL Roads
 - \$475,000 Stewardship with National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf)
 - \$25,000 for Contract Inspectors hired through the Friends of LBL
- LBL Facilities
 - \$2 million for contracts with skilled laborers usually employed in construction industry
- Daniel Boone National Forest Roads and Trails
 - \$558,200 for contracted laborers

Land Between The Lakes proposes to put people back to work by hiring plumbers, electricians, carpenters, laborers, sawyers and equipment with operators through a local contractor. Further, a standing stewardship agreement with National Wild Turkey Federation will be used to clear roads and access into agriculture fields.

Similarly, the heavily visited and tourism-dependant area of the Red River Gorge on the Daniel Boone National Forest was impacted by the ice storm, with damage to roads and trails. The area has already experienced the shut down of an automotive part supplier plant and a lumber mill.

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Under the language of the ARRA, the Forest Service will create as many jobs as possible, mostly through contracts, to support communities and to get money flowing through the economy again. All funds will be spent on specific targeted projects that are, or soon will be, ready to go.

“The Forest Service anticipates playing a key role in our nation’s economic recovery,” said Forest Service Chief Kimbell. “We are grateful for the confidence Congress has shown us and look forward to demonstrating how the Forest Service can create good jobs during difficult times,” she said.

Many of the most affected communities of the economic downturn are located near national forests. Rural jobs will be created in areas needing restoration work with shovel ready projects related to fire prevention, roads, bridges, buildings and recreation facilities.

More detailed information regarding the process of signing up a business as a potential contractor with the Forest Service can be found at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/aqm/index.php>.

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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