U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Eastern Federal Lands
Highway Division

21400 Ridgetop Circle
Sterling, Va 21066-5611

In Reply Refer To:
Illinois Forest Highway Program
- Project Selection Process

US Forest Service – Forest Supervisors and District Rangers.
Illinois Dept. of Transportation – District Engineers, County Engineers, Program Managers.
County Roadmasters and Director of Public Works.

Subject: <u>Project Selection Process Document, Nomination Form, and Selection Criteria for the Illinois Forest Highway Program.</u>

The Forest Highway Program provides funding to resurface, restore, rehabilitate, or reconstruct designated public roads that provide access to or are within a National Forest or Grassland. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Federals Lands Highway Office, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service (FS) and 41 State Departments of Transportation, in accordance with tri-agency agreements in each state.

Funding is provided for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, or improvement of designated Forest Highways—including bridges—providing access to or are within a unit of the National Forest System. Funds can also be used to purchase transit vehicles and design, operate, and maintain public transit facilities on public lands. Additionally, funds can be used to pay for any transportation project authorized in Title 23.

The purpose of the Forest Highway Program is to provide safe and adequate transportation access to and through the National Forest System (NFS) lands for visitors, recreationists, resource users, and others, by funding needs not met by other transportation programs. Forest highways assist rural and community economic development and promote tourism and travel. The Illinois Forest Highway program typically receives a total annual allocation of approximately $250,000 with the Forest Highway (F15E) appropriation.

In each state, the Forest Highway Program is jointly administered by the FS, the FHWA, and the respective state transportation agency in that state. A memorandum of agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Forest Highway projects are selected and developed under tri-agency partnerships.

Each year, the FHWA Federal Lands Division Offices and the FS Regional Offices meet with state transportation agencies and county governments. They select projects and update the five-year program of projects for their state. The programs of projects are approved by the Federal Lands Highway Divisions. Copies of the approved programs are distributed to State transportation agencies.

With this document, the Illinois Forest Highway Program is implementing an improved process to soliciting proposed projects for FY 2012, FY 2013, FY 2014, FY 2015 and FY 2016.

FINAL DRAFT