



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration  
Office of Federal Lands Highway

# The Federal Lands Highway Program

Making a Positive Difference  
with America's Tax Dollars  
under SAFETEA-LU

## The Federal Lands Highway Program —

On August 10, 2005, the President signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). That authorizing legislation, which recently expired on September 30, 2009, provided over \$4.4 billion to the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLH Program) to enhance transportation access to and through our national parks, forests, and refuges and our nation's tribal communities.


On behalf of the FLH Program, I am pleased to report that the expenditure of Americans' tax dollars resulted in significant improvements on Federal lands to over 4,650 miles of roadway and 335 bridges that were in disrepair and required attention. Generally, the condition of our roads and bridges, across the four FLH programs, remained about the same when we compare 2005 condition data to 2009. When we consider the increasing volume of visitors to our public lands coupled with the long-term trend of increasing construction costs, we believe there is a good news story to be told.

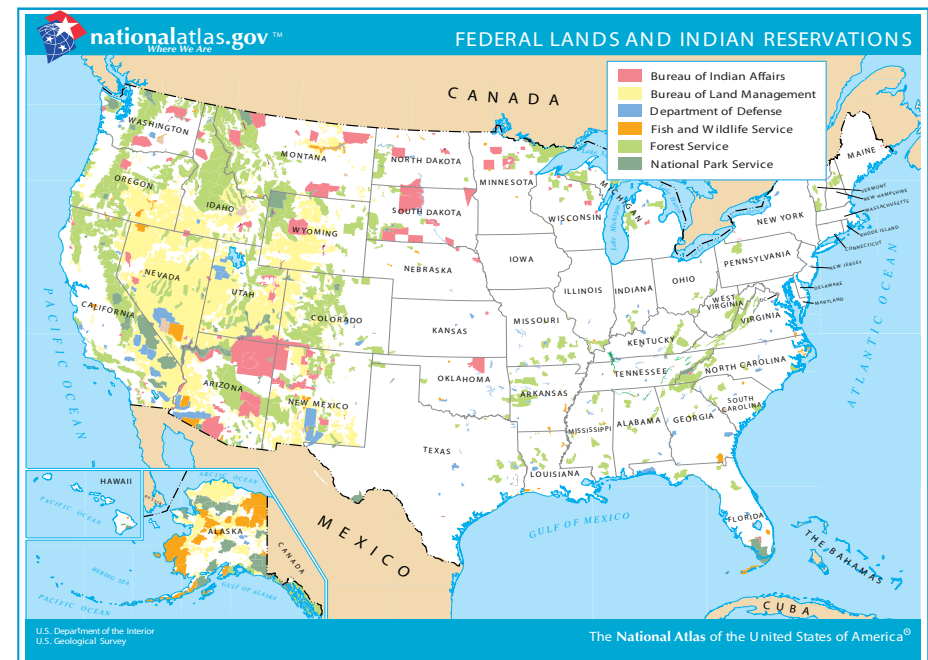
When Congress created the FLH Program in 1983, our elected officials made it clear that they expect public roads on Federal lands to be "... treated under uniform policies similar to the policies that apply to the Federal-aid highways..." In this regard, the program has made significant gains during SAFETEA-LU toward establishing a jointly administered program. As it has long been doing, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) continues to work closely with our core partners, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, to promote and implement long-term transportation plans as a part of those resource agencies' planning and asset management endeavors. We have made significant progress in acquiring safety data and pavement and bridge condition data from our core partners and other Federal partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and Department of Defense. The Federal Government has ownership responsibilities for more than 30 percent of the Nation's land. (see map) Collecting, analyzing, and acting on the safety and condition data directs Americans' tax dollars to those projects that provide the greatest return.

SAFETEA-LU provided a significant change in the administration of the Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) program. Tribal governments, that satisfactorily demonstrate financial stability and financial management, could now contract directly with the Department of Transportation. In 2005, the Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Assiniboine and Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Ramah Navajo Chapter, and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe were the first tribes to sign agreements with the FHWA.

At the conclusion of SAFETEA-LU, the FHWA had agreements with approximately 50 tribal partners and the number continues to grow. We are very excited about the new, direct relationships we have forged with our tribal partners. It is noteworthy to mention, as the FLH Office prepared for this new direct tribal requirement, the BIA was, and continues to be, extremely helpful and provided us invaluable assistance. We recognize the future success of the IRR Program continues to hinge in very large part on our partnership with the BIA and we appreciate their support very much.

We take our stewardship role very seriously. In that light, we have developed this publication to provide a brief snapshot of how Americans' hard-earned tax dollars were spent for the good of the nation. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities afforded to the program in future authorizations.

  
Associate Administrator  
Office of Federal Lands Highway  
Federal Highway Administration



## About the Program



Whether you are speeding down a freshly groomed ski slope, bicycling past fall foliage along a scenic highway, fishing in a pristine mountain lake or stream, or helping your children spot wildlife from the car, you have probably spent time on our public lands. **Context sensitive solutions** have helped FLH and its partners maintain

the environmental, cultural, and historic integrity of the national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and Indian reservation lands they manage.



The roads supported by the FLH Program not only sustain **recreational travel**, they also maintain resource extraction, protect and enhance natural resources, uphold sustained economic development in rural areas, and provide transportation access for Native Americans. Recreational spending is a

significant portion of the \$730 billion in travel and tourism dollars that are contributed to the US economy every year. It is one of the fastest growing sectors of our economy — and more than 20 percent of Americans' recreational activities take place on Federal lands. These activities create thousands of jobs for local communities surrounding Federal lands.



Congress established the FLH Program in 1983 to **promote effective, efficient, and reliable transportation access to our national treasures**. We stand by our vision "to create the best transportation system in balance with the values of Federal and Tribal lands," and have succeeded throughout

SAFETEA-LU fulfilling our organizational mission of providing quality technical services to the highway community.

## Delivery of the Program



Since 1914, the Federal Lands Highway Office and its predecessor agencies have assisted the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and other Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMA) on the development, design, and construction of roads through this nation's treasured Federal and Tribal lands. The Federal

Lands Highway Office of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), is recognized for delivering projects that meet the varied needs of our many partners. FLH is relied upon to solve and manage unique challenges in environmentally sensitive locations through engineering solutions that are sensitive to the context of the land. **Whether it is building highly visible and politically sensitive projects, constructing roads that become national landmarks, or providing critical access using low-cost transportation facilities, the FLH Office is at the forefront, consistently delivering distinct, context-sensitive, and sound engineering projects.**



FLH builds roads and supports alternative transportation systems in partnership with FLMA's across the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Pacific Island Territories. FLH is responsible for program development; project management; transportation planning; environmental compliance; preparation of

plans, specifications and estimates; contract administration; construction supervision and inspection. **FLH technical expertise and services include: highway and bridge design; survey; mapping; hydraulics; geotechnical engineering; traffic; safety; intelligent transportation systems; design visualization; road and bridge inventory and inspection; asset management; consultant and construction acquisition; materials, and contract administration. FLH design and construction projects range from simple rural resurfacing to construction of highly complex, high volume, urban arterial highways.**

## Accomplishments under SAFETEA-LU (fiscal year 2005-2009)

### Indian Reservation Roads

- Funding Authorization: \$1,860.0 million
- Total mileage of road system: 126,000 \*
- Road miles improved: 1600 \*
- Bridges improved: 125 \*

### Park Roads and Parkways

- Funding Authorization: \$1,050.0 million
- Total mileage of road system: 10,000 \*
- Road miles improved: 750 \*
- Bridges improved: 85 \*

### Forest Highways

- Funding Authorization: \$ 930.6 million
- Total mileage of road system: 30,000 \*
- Road miles improved: 900 \*
- Bridges improved: 25 \*

### Refuge Roads

- Funding Authorization: \$ 145.0 million
- Total mileage of road system: 5,000 \*
- Road miles improved: 200 \*
- Bridges improved: 20 \*

### Public Lands Highways Discretionary

- Funding Authorization: \$ 479.4 million
- Road miles improved: 1200 \*
- Bridges improved: 80 \*

### Totals

- Funding Authorization: \$4,465.0 million
- Total mileage of road system: 171,000 \*
- Road miles improved: 4,650 \*
- Bridges improved: 335 \*

\* Numbers are approximate

## Leveraging the FLH Program to Deliver More for America

In addition to the \$4.4 billion that SAFETEA-LU provided for Federal and Tribal roads, the FLH Office and our partners have successfully leveraged these funds with other Federal, State, County, non-profit, foundation and private funds to establish and expand broad partnerships which extend the effectiveness of the highway trust fund by an additional several hundred million dollars. This is even more impressive when one realizes that Federal Lands Highway Program funding is statutorily 100% federal share and requires no state or local matching. This leveraging significantly stretches the available highway trust funding to deliver considerably more work than the FLH Program would be able to accomplish on its own.



Hoover Dam Bypass, Nevada and Arizona — The Hoover Dam Bypass project serves as an excellent example of leveraging multiple funding sources. The bypass is being constructed to divert U.S. 93 away from the present narrow two-lane road that crosses the top of the dam. U.S. 93 is a major commercial corridor between Arizona,

Nevada, and Utah, and is a North American Free Trade Agreement route between Mexico and Canada. The traffic volumes, combined with the sharp curves on U.S. 93 in the vicinity of Hoover Dam, create a potentially dangerous situation. When complete, the Hoover Dam Bypass project will create a safe, secure and efficient alternate crossing of the river near the Hoover Dam, and through-vehicle and truck traffic would be removed from the top of the dam. Construction on the nearly 2,000 foot long bridge, 900-feet above the Colorado River, began in late January 2005 and the completion of the entire Hoover Dam Bypass Project is expected in 2010. *The total project cost is \$240 million, including project engineering and construction. This includes more than \$66 million from the Public Lands Highways Discretionary program, \$20 million each from the States of Arizona and Nevada, and used \$100 million advanced from bond funds by the States of Arizona and Nevada.*

## Program Successes



Guanella Pass, Pike and Arapaho National Forests, Colorado — This route provides the only access to a popular and heavily used recreation area along the Front Range of Colorado. Roadway improvements provided a safer facility and incorporated measures to protect water quality and native alpine tundra. The project also highlights fulfillment

of the combined missions of access and resource protection. The first phase has been constructed and another phase was initiated under SAFETEA-LU. The total construction obligations have been approximately \$58.9 million, which included \$4.6 million of Recovery Act funding.



Visitor Center Facilities, Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, Sherwood, Oregon — The refuge is located just outside the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area and provides recreational and educational opportunities unique to an urban location. The Visitor Center was constructed using several funding sources, including Refuge Roads funds for the parking facilities,

Public Lands Highway Discretionary funds for access roads, and Fish and Wildlife Service funds for trails and buildings. Completed in 2007, the project incorporates green elements for the buildings and the parking facilities, including porous pavement. Taking advantage of an existing metropolitan bus route, the project included construction of a bus stop to provide alternate means of access to the Refuge.

## Program Successes



The Federal Highway Administration's Federal Lands Highway Office embraced the new SAFETEA-LU provision that allows tribal governments to contract directly with the Department of Transportation. Implementing this new legal provision required a great deal of planning and the development of technical assistance resources to assist tribes in defining the roles and responsibilities associated with the use of funds. This picture reflects the signing ceremony of the initial Tribes who entered into IRR Program Agreements directly with the FHWA. Seated from left to right, are tribal leaders from the Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, the Ramah Navajo Chapter, and Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Chickaloon Native Village in Alaska was included in the agreement but was not present.



Going to the Sun Road, Glacier National Park, Montana — The Going to the Sun Road is a 50-mile, two-lane highway that winds through the heart of Glacier National Park. Built into the sides of near-vertical cliffs, it has been described as "the most beautiful piece of mountain road in the world." Using a network of stone masonry walls, bridges,

tunnels, and arches, it is considered an engineering marvel. A shuttle system was implemented successfully to help mitigate the congestion impacts during construction. The rehabilitation project to save this national treasure has been underway since 2004 and six of the 13 phases have been constructed. To date, \$35 million of SAFETEA-LU funding has been spent on construction contracts and engineering. An additional four phases are currently being designed, however the completion date is dependent on future funding levels.

## Program Successes



Cass-Oark Road, Ozark National Forest, Arkansas — Forest Highway 65 is the only east-west road through a wide section of the Ozark National Forest, and provides access to the scenic and recreational resources of the area. The project expanded the road's capacity to meet current and future traffic volumes, and eliminated roadway dust which had been causing sedimentation of the adjacent Little Mulberry River. Retaining walls were constructed along the embankment using stone from a local quarry. The natural stone

facing eliminated the need for concrete thus providing for natural water drainage. The context-sensitive design thus provided significant improvements in safety on the roadway, while preserving the view from the river for kayakers and canoeists who frequent the area.



Giant Forest Shuttle, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, California — The shuttle is part of the Giant Forest Restoration, an effort to restore the ecosystem in the Giant Forest area of the parks while still providing an enjoyable visitor experience. The shuttle to the Giant Forest Area is part of a regional transit system in

partnership with the City of Visalia and the gateway community of Three Rivers. The Park Roads and Parkways Program helped to develop the operational planning leading up to service implementation in 2007. This project also received a grant under the Federal Transit Administration's Paul S. Sarbanes Transit and Parks Program. Operation of the shuttle system is currently funded through a combination of user fees and Park entrance fees.

## Program Successes



Veteran's Highway, Ramah Navajo Chapter, New Mexico — Veteran's Highway (BIA Route 125) is the primary north-south route through the 168,000-acre Ramah Navajo Chapter reservation. It serves all 3,500 registered community members by intersecting with the

Chapter's headquarters in Mountain View and acting as the primary school bus route for two school districts. It is also designated as an emergency route. This project included 9 miles of pavement rehabilitation and road improvements from Mountain View to Pine Hill by correcting major safety issues including sudden undulations or dips in the road, and improved drainage, pavement striping, signs, guardrails and hazard markers.



Mount Vernon Circle, George Washington Memorial Parkway, Virginia — Mount Vernon, the historic residence and gardens of George Washington, receives an average of one million visitors annually. In order to better accommodate the needs of these visitors, the project constructed additional parking

and reconfigured Mount Vernon Circle to improve bus, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation. The Mount Vernon Trail was also extended to connect with the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Through the use of infiltration and underground storage of storm water, additional impacts on the impervious surface were reduced.

## Program Successes



Sundog Ranch Road Bridge, Yavapai Prescott Indian Reservation, Prescott, Arizona — The improvement of Sun Dog Ranch Road, and its extension to State Route 69, is part of a regional access management strategy to mitigate traffic congestion on State Route 69 and State Route 89 resulting from current and planned economic and residential

development in the area. The bridge is located at the west end of Sun Dog Ranch Road (BIA Route 11), a proposed connector road between SR69 and SR89, which is currently being constructed by the Yavapai-Prescott Tribe. This bridge was constructed as a replacement bridge for an existing functionally obsolete bridge over Granite Creek that is located approximately 1000 feet downstream from the new bridge.



Plum Island Drive, Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Massachusetts — A Visitor Center was constructed by the Fish and Wildlife Service to better serve the visiting public and to provide a facility to better manage the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. This

project also included the construction of a bridge over degraded wetlands to provide access to the new facility. This bridge was constructed entirely of innovative prefabricated elements in order to lessen the construction time frame and the impact to the wetlands. Mitigation of the degraded wetlands adjacent to the bridge site was accomplished in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, Inc. The wetland mitigation provides exceptional interpretive and environmental value and also provides valuable fresh water marsh habitat.

## Messages from our Partners

*"I look forward to working with you in my new capacity and spreading the great partnership across the country. Thanks for all the great ARRA work as well! More to come!"*

*Jon Jarvis*  
Director, National Park Service

*"America's National Forests are home to the most outstanding recreation areas in the world. And thanks to the Forest Service's longstanding partnership with the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Lands Highway Program, we are ensuring more and more Americans have access to their treasured landscapes. Together we provide exceptional opportunities for the motoring public to explore the beauty, history and natural heritage of our National Forests and Grasslands. We look forward to continuing the work of maintaining the 30,000 mile Forest Highway system and our successful partnership."*

*Tom Tidwell*  
Chief of the Forest Service

*The NPS appreciates the USDOT, FLH Program for your on-going support both in Headquarters and in the Divisions. The work accomplished by FLH reflects highly upon this nation's effort to create jobs, rebuild our infrastructure and to prepare for the NPS 100th anniversary. We look forward to continuing this successful partnership. FLH can be proud of your dedication, hard work, and extraordinary contributions to strengthening the economy, sustaining jobs in the construction industry and rebuilding the transportation assets of the National Parks.*

*Stephen E. Whitesell*  
Associate Director,  
Park, Planning, Facilities, and Lands  
National Park Service

*"2010 is Glacier National Park's 100-year anniversary, and one of the primary accomplishments we are celebrating is the major progress being made in rehabilitating the Going to the Sun Road. Thanks to the outstanding leadership shown by the Federal Lands Highway Office, there is finally light at the end of the tunnel in getting this defining feature of the park back in good condition. We value our relationship with the Federal Highway Administration, and look forward to continuing this partnership into Glacier's next 100 years."*

*Chas Cartwright*  
Superintendent, Glacier National Park

*"Seventy-five years ago, on September 11, 1935, the first ground was broken at Cumberland Knob and in 1987 the Blue Ridge Parkway was completed when the Linn Cove Viaduct opened. Nearly 800 million visitors have enjoyed the beauty of the Parkway since it first opened. The FHWA Federal Lands Highway Office played a significant role in the management and preservation of this exceptional resource and has enhanced the overall quality of visitor experience during the entirety of these 75 years."*

*Philip A. Francis, Jr.*  
Superintendent, Blue Ridge Parkway

## Messages from our Partners

*“The FLHP program is vital to providing access to and through our nation’s public lands. Without the FLHP program and the close collaboration with State DOT’s, national treasures and engineering marvels such as the Hoover Dam Bypass and others would not be achievable. The FLH organization is a strong and essential delivery arm of the FHWA and the State’s depend on their services.”*

*Susan Martinovich, P.E.*  
Director, Nevada Department of Transportation

*“While asset managers may focus on how many assets (roads, bridges, parking lots) have been repaired and improved, and how much still needs to be done, the real question is did the passage of SAFETEA-LU make a significant difference to Federal lands and their neighboring communities. And the answer to that question is not always just measurable statistics.*

*We can state that the passage of SAFETEA-LU has increased the level of communication between the Federal Highway Administration; Federal Lands Highway Program, State Division Offices, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Land Management Agencies, State Departments of Transportation, and neighboring communities. We can state that the emphasis on long-range transportation planning has gotten underway, that communications and interagency planning coordination has improved, that we have our first ever interagency and intragovernmental planning process underway.*

*We can tell you that safety issues have moved forward — we have done more road safety audits and made more safety improvements. While it is often difficult to document the safety improvements that keep us from having crashes, the occasional email message from an agency staff member telling us that they believe the recent safety improvements may have saved their life, let us know that we are making some good decisions for improvements.*

*The SAFETEA-LU funding provisions and opportunities to provide non-federal match have made a difference to Federal Land Management Agencies not only in addressing the backlog of asset management needs but in making a difference with State Departments of Transportation and local communities through local project improvements, encouraging better communications and facilitating the development of coordinated transportation planning.”*

*Sean Furniss*  
Refuge Road Coordinator (Retired)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*“The Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex has had great success partnering with Federal Lands Highway on a number of projects on the Oregon coast in recent years. The partnership has allowed each agency to bring its strengths and expertise to the table in a cost-efficient manner providing the public with safe and efficient roads, trails, and interpretive features while protecting and restoring wildlife habitat on National Wildlife Refuges.*

*Roy W. Lowe*  
Project Leader, Oregon Coast  
National Wildlife Refuge Complex

## Looking Ahead

The infusion of additional FLHP funds (\$550M) stemming from the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** provided the Federal Lands Office and our partners with a great opportunity to **deliver a significantly larger program**. In addition, it provided the FLH Office with an opportunity to design and construct projects using non-Title 23 ARRA funds on behalf of other Federal agency land owners, e.g., Bureau of Land Management. Together, we succeeded in delivering both the core program and ARRA resources thereby spurring job creation while improving transportation access to Federal and tribal lands. This opportunity has raised-the-bar for the FLH program and we look forward to strengthening our existing core **partnerships**, and possibly expanding relationships with other non-core partners, following the next reauthorization.

The SAFETEA-LU Act created two independent commissions to explore the future of the Federal-aid program and to identify financing options to address the shortfall of the Highway Trust Fund. One common theme from these endeavors was the transportation community has an opportunity to move toward a more **performance-based program** to ensure American’s tax dollars are being directed toward “the right projects” that support national goals and measures. The Federal Lands Highway Program will place greater attention on performance management principles, assess program outcomes that benefit Americans, and continue to work closely with our partners to build upon our strategic planning endeavors.

A growing focus area for multiple Departments is promoting the importance of **livable communities**, and providing greater choices for transportation users through the integration of transportation, housing and commercial development decisions. Livability is an evolving effort. It encompasses both metropolitan and rural components. We anticipate working with our partners to better understand how livability goals, including multi-modal options that provide access between homes, services and/or jobs, will benefit tribal communities and gateway townships that support nearby public lands.

The FHWA will continue to focus on the goal of significantly reducing project delivery time. The Administration is examining all phases of project delivery and seeking innovative approaches to achieving this goal. We look forward to extending this conversation and effort with our partners. Finally, if the past 4-5 years are any indication under the **IRR Program**, we envision an increase in the number of tribal governments who elect to negotiate directly with FHWA. As we move forward, we will continue to manage both the resource and stewardship and oversight implications that accompany this burgeoning program area.

The FHWA will continue to work to make the next transportation legislation a model of effectiveness and efficiency for America. For more information on the Federal Lands Highway Program, please visit [www.flh.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.flh.fhwa.dot.gov)