

## America's Roadmap to Cost Savings, Jobs & Clean Water

### *The Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative*

*"Given the reality of a very large and under-maintained system leading to sediment-laden streams and impacted communities, we are heartened that Secretary Vilsack identified road decommissioning and watershed protection as a major priority."*

- US Conference of Mayors, December 2009

*"The forest road system is convoluted and unmanageable; fails to meet the needs of our nation; and places a tremendous burden on taxpayers, with backlogged maintenance over \$10 billion dollars and growing."*

-Taxpayers for Common Sense, September 2009

#### Forest Service Road System

- 375,000 miles – enough to circle Earth 15 times
- Primary source of pollution into streams
- A legacy from last century
- Not meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century recreation and other management needs

#### Expensive

- Multi-billion dollar road maintenance backlog and growing<sup>1</sup>
- 5 times larger than available maintenance resources<sup>2</sup>

#### Polluting Water

- 66 million people and 3,400 communities rely on national forests for their drinking water<sup>3</sup>



Road washout in the Stanislaus National Forest in California. Unmaintained culverts can lead to road blowouts which results in recreational users losing access to popular destinations. Additionally, many of the agency's roads are unused and unneeded old dirt logging roads. These roads are rarely maintained leading to massive erosion which washes sediment downstream suffocating fish and clogging community water treatment plants. Photo: Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

<sup>1</sup> Over the past few years, the USFS has released several conflicting estimates of their road maintenance backlog including, \$5.2 billion in 2000, \$8.1 billion in 2000, and \$4.1 billion in 2007. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Response to Six Questions Contained in June 29, 2007 Letter From Senator Cantwell, Senator Murray, Representative Dicks, Representative Baird, Representative Larsen, and Representative Inslee To The Honorable Mike Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture. October 4, 2007. Available online at <http://www.wildlandscpr.org/files/NFSroadsresponse.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Wildlands CPR. (2009). Managing the Miles: A Review of Forest Service Policy and Practices. WCPR found that the Forest Service maintains roughly 20% of its road system annually and only 20-30% of the roads meet their assigned maintenance levels. To calculate annual road maintenance capabilities, WCPR used data from USDA Forest Service Roads Accomplishment Reports, which are available on Wildlands CPR's website at <http://www.wildlandscpr.org/2006-and-2007-road-accomplishment-reports-rars>.

- Recreational fishing industry depends on clean water and healthy streams
- The costs of the decaying road system falls disproportionately on these communities, which are mostly rural

**The Solution – Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative**

- Created in 2007 to reclaim unneeded, fiscally draining, and environmentally problematic roads and trails
- \$269 million has been appropriated to the program since FY08, resulting in an average of about \$54 million per year. **This has helped create or retain 700 to 915 jobs each year.**<sup>4</sup>
- As a result of the first \$180 million the agency received (FY08-FY10), the Forest Service improved 659,600 acres of habitat and restored 3,147 miles of stream nationally<sup>5</sup>
- Lowers long-term cost of maintaining the road system
- Improves access to important recreation destinations
- Reduces pollution in America’s rivers and drinking water



Restoration crew improving water quality and fish habitat on the Olympic National Forest in Washington by removing unneeded Forest Service roads. Road restoration creates high wage jobs for rural Americans. Photo: Steve Zugschwerdt.

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**Legacy Roads and Trail Remediation Fund Achievements Nation-Wide, 2008-2012**

Fiscal Year	Funds Appropriated (millions)	Miles of System and Unauthorized Roads Decommissioned	Road and Trail Miles Maintained or Improved	Number of Sites where Fish Passage was Restored (culverts fixed or replaced)	Number of Bridges Constructed, Replaced or Repaired	Average Number of Jobs Created or Retained Annually
FY 2008	\$39.40	531	3,035	180	15	<b>700 to 915</b>
FY 2009	\$50	929	2,783	145	23	
FY 2010	\$90	1,509	4,109	261	75	
FY 2011	\$45	581	2,309	143	57	
FY 2012	\$45	Not Reported Yet	Not Reported Yet	Not Reported Yet	Not Reported Yet	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$269.4</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>12,236</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>170</b>	

<sup>3</sup> Sedell, J.; Sharpe, M.; Dravieks-Apple, D.; Copenhagen, M.; Furniss, M. 2000. Water and the Forest Service. FS-600. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.

<sup>4</sup> Moseley, Cassandra and Max Nielsen-Pincus, Economic Impact and Job Creation from Forest and Watershed Restoration: A Preliminary Assessment. Briefing Paper #14. Ecosystem Workforce Program. Institute for a Sustainable Environment. University of Oregon. Winter 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The Wilderness Society used U.S. Forest Service’s LRTI national reporting summaries for actual and projected accomplishment for FY08-FY10 to arrive at these figures.