

# **The Forest Service and the Economic Stimulus Plan**

## **January 9, 2009 Update**

As many of you are aware the Forest Service may have the opportunity to be part of the 2-3 year Economic Stimulus Plan proposed by President-Elect Obama. The Forest Service has responded to requests from legislators that describe opportunities to create jobs through natural resource and infrastructure work on the national forests and grasslands.

Details and decisions will likely emerge over the next several weeks which will identify specific funding, activities and expectations for Forest Service to deliver. Forest Service responses regarding capacity for job creation include:

- hazardous fuels reduction (on both federal and nonfederal land);
- facilities reconstruction (recreation, administrative sites, bridges, roads, dams, fish passages, etc), and;
- wood-to-energy grants that will focus on assisting the development of alternative energy through increased use of biomass resulting from restoration activities.

The quantity and mix of projects and activities will be determined as the Economic Stimulus Plan is debated and finalized. When this happens the Forest Service will monitor, track and account for all stimulus funds dedicated to this program.

Once these decisions are made, the National Leadership Council will provide guidance to units on the coordination and work to follow. It is important that our efforts nation-wide be carefully coordinated to achieve our goals, and to manage expectations. These job opportunities are vitally important to our partners and to the economies of the communities we serve in urban and rural areas alike.

In whatever size, implementing Economic Stimulus is a significant opportunity to reinvigorate the nation's economy and will have some impact to the Forest Service. We will be addressing needs to increase our contracting and agreements administration capacity, prioritizing work, and applying our workforce effectively in order to meet the work ahead of us.

The Forest Service has a rich history of helping during tough economic times. We provide training, education and good, environmentally sensitive jobs. From the Civilian Conservation Corps to the current workforce, the Forest Service has been engaged in job skills training (Job Corps) and provides broad opportunities in professional and technical skill development (fire fighting, restoration, contract administration, etc) for permanent, temporary, student, and contracted jobs. Our partnerships with research institutes and universities train the natural resource scientists of the future.

Based on this tradition, we look forward to generating additional employment opportunities and building job skills as we care for the Nation's forests and grasslands and support the communities where we work and live.

