

USDA Forest Service Update September 2009



Subject: Legacy Roads and Trails Funding

Issue Description: The Legacy Roads and Trails program was established by Congress in FY 2008 to decommission unneeded roads, remove fish passage barriers, fix roads and trails in environmentally sensitive areas, roads and trails damaged by recent storms, and roads which could harm community water systems. Congress continues to be concerned about the condition of Forest Service roads and the potential environmental impacts.

The Forest Service Road System includes 378,000 total miles. The best estimate is that the Forest Service can only maintain about 25% to standard through appropriation dollars. With the cost of fuel increasing, access to national forests and the recreation opportunities they offer, especially adjacent to major urban areas, are growing in significance.

Issue Key Points:

- The FS is unable to meet its maintenance needs, unable to meet evolving best management practices, and unable to address the accelerating deterioration of bridges and road surfacing. Additionally, local rural communities are losing tourist generated revenues.
- There is a continued need to remove barriers to fish passage.
- Decommissioning of unneeded roads, and the repair and maintenance of roads and trails reduces the potential for environmental impacts.
- Program will continue to focus on protecting water quality in water bodies that support threatened or endangered species or community water sources.
- Allocation of funds consider the relative amounts of acreage in “impaired” watersheds, as defined in Section 303d of the Clean Water Act, visitor use, and the relative amounts of critical resource deferred maintenance on roads and trails.

Performance:

Funding & Accomplishment:
(\$ in thousands)

	FY 2008 Enacted	FY 2009 Enacted	FY 2010 Pres. Budget
Legacy Roads and Trails	\$39,766	\$50,000	\$50,000
Miles of roads improved	631	1,300	1,300
Miles roads receiving maintenance	1,533	1,950	1,950
Miles of decommissioning	531	550	550
Stream crossings replaced	180	200	200
Miles of trail improved	22	65	45
Miles of trail maintained to standard	849	1,845	1,845

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