

Klamath National Forest granted stimulus funds for local projects



Courtesy Klamath National Forest

Crews from the Northwest Youth Corps

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[Siskiyou Daily News](#)

Posted Oct 18, 2010 @ 09:41 AM

Yreka, Calif. —

On Feb. 13, 2009, the U.S. Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), also known as federal stimulus funds.

The Klamath National Forest (KNF) applied for and was granted some of these funds to improve forest facilities and to increase recreation opportunities for the public, a KNF news release announced this week.

The forest received approximately \$6 million from the ARRA in late 2009 for roads, facilities and recreation projects. Another \$1.5 million was received in 2010 for additional roads and facilities work. As a result, local youth crews and contractors have been working on projects across the Klamath National Forest. These projects include reconstructing several miles of dirt roads to reduce future maintenance needs and potential sediment run-off, upgrading two road stream crossings to remove fish passage barriers and handle higher water flows, rehabilitating older road pavement, replacing substandard fire aviation facilities, and reconstructing and maintaining recreation sites and trails.

Road-related ARRA projects awarded this summer include 34 miles of reconstruction/deferred maintenance and two miles of decommissioning on forest roads in the North Fork Salmon River area near Sawyers Bar and the Indian Creek area near Happy Camp. Additionally, the forest repaired and chipsealed five miles of Forest Road 15 near the Four Corners Snowmobile Park and replaced fish blocking culverts on China Creek and Fish Gulch near Seiad, the release stated. At the Scott Valley Airport, 30-40 year old modular trailers that do not meet current mission needs are being replaced with new buildings that will provide for the proper support of helicopter crews. “We have an on-going program to identify roads that can be reconstructed or decommissioned to reduce future maintenance requirements, while meeting the access needs for the forest and the public,” Forest Engineer Ken Stagg said. “In the administrative facility area, we also have on-going plans to replace structures for improved operational efficiency and reduced maintenance costs. This ARRA funding was put to good use meeting these objectives, while producing jobs to help our local economy.”

In the recreation area this year, about 25 miles of trails in the Marble Mountain, Russian and Siskiyou wilderness areas were rehabilitated using ARRA funds and another 13 miles will be maintained in 2011. This work eliminated some of the forest’s deferred maintenance backlog by improving trails that had not been maintained in many years, the release continued.

All trail work was completed by youth crews, providing young adults paid work opportunities and job skills training. A Student Conservation Association Trail Crew made up of eight students recruited from local high schools spent 30 days camping and working on the Paynes Lake Trail in the Russian Wilderness. A Backcountry California Conservation Corps crew made up of about 15 young adults worked in all three wilderness areas for a total of 18 weeks. Northwest Youth Corps Crews of 10 youths worked for three weeks on the Bear Lake Trail in the Siskiyou Wilderness.

Crews were supported by contract packers and pack stock.

“By engaging youth in these projects, we are creating a new legacy of stewardship for our national forests, providing job opportunities and completing long-overdue trail maintenance,” Forest Recreation officer Togan Capozza said. “These trails will be enjoyed by forest visitors for many years to come.”

Other recreation projects that are currently being completed by contractors are the reconstruction of Orr Lake Campground and repaving the accessible trail around Juanita Lake. Both projects will be completed this fall.

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