



NEWS RELEASE

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U.S. Forest Service Highlights Expansion of Restoration of National Forests and Funding For Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Projects

Increasing the Pace of Restoration and Job Creation On Our National Forests' Charts Course For Federal Agency; U.S. Forest Service Seeks To Reduce Major Threats Through Restoration

WASHINGTON – Feb. 2, 2012 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced a new report, [Increasing the Pace of Restoration and Job Creation on our National Forests](#) that outlines a strategy and series of actions for management on 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. As part of the accelerated restoration strategy, \$40 million for 20 forest and watershed restoration projects have been announced for the upcoming year. The funding includes ten new projects under the [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration \(CFLR\) program](#), continued funding for the original 10 projects selected under the CFLR program in 2010, and an additional \$4.6 million to support other high priority restoration projects.

"Through our partnerships with states, communities, tribes and others, we are committed to restoring our forests and bringing jobs to rural America," said Vilsack. "Whether the threat comes from wildfire, bark beetles or a changing climate, it is vital that we step up our efforts to safeguard our country's natural resources."

Within the context of the overall restoration program, the strategy and actions announced today are designed to expand the number of forest acres treated by 20 percent over the next three years and increase the pace of active forest management, including fuels reduction, reforestation, stream restoration, road decommissioning, replacing and improving culverts, forest thinning and harvesting, prescribed fire and a range of other techniques.

As a result of these efforts, the Forest Service will be able to accomplish critical restoration objectives, including for water, wildlife, forest health and resilience, and community safety. This effort will support jobs and stimulate a more vibrant forest industry that will provide the workers and the know-how to undertake other restoration projects. Altogether, the Forest Service estimates this will increase the amount of forest products sold in 2014 to 3 billion board feet, up from 2.4 billion board feet in 2011.

The restoration of National Forest System lands is critically needed to address a number of threats to the health of forest ecosystems, watersheds, wildlife habitats and forest dependent communities. Major threats include wildland fire, climate change, beetle epidemics and invasive species.

The national forests and grasslands are the backdrop and neighbor to many rural and urban communities, providing a range of values and benefits, including clean drinking water for millions of people across the U.S., vital wildlife habitat, a variety of recreation opportunities, and other multiple uses that support jobs and economic growth in rural communities. The Forest Service's restoration program of work is designed to sustain the ability of these lands to continue to deliver a full range of ecosystem services for generations to come.

These restoration efforts will further stimulate local economies by retaining and increasing other forest related jobs, such as the 1,550 jobs expected to be maintained or generated through

implementation of the CFLR projects, and by supporting recreation activities and attracting more tourists to rural areas. Currently, recreation activities on National Forest System lands contribute \$14.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in local communities.

“Accelerated restoration efforts demonstrate a shared vision where environmentalists, forest industry and local communities are working together to build healthier forests and contribute to local economies,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “The increased restoration work will benefit the environment and people, with more resilient ecosystems, improved watersheds and wildlife habitat, hazardous fuel reduction, and outputs of forest products. We hope accelerated restoration activities will bring all of our partners together, working as allies for forest conservation.”

The Forest Service will increase restoration activities with a series of [actions](#), some of which are already underway. The list includes: expanding collaborative landscape partnerships; finalizing and implementing a new forest [Planning Rule](#); implementing the Watershed Condition Framework; improving efficiencies of the planning process for restoration projects under the National Environmental Policy Act; implementing Integrated Resource Restoration budgeting; implementing the agency bark beetle strategy; improving the implementation and efficiencies of timber and stewardship contracts; and expanding markets for forest products.

The Forest Service received 26 proposals for Collaborative Forest Restoration Grants which were evaluated by a federal advisory committee. The committee recommended 13 projects to the USDA for funding consideration, of which 10 were selected under the program. Because the remaining three are high priority restoration projects and exemplify the intent of the program, the Forest Service is setting aside another \$4.6 million to fund those projects as well.

Project proposals included ecological restoration treatments to reduce wildfire risk, enhance fish and wildlife habitats, maintain and improve water quality, use woody biomass and harvest timber. All of the landscape proposals include matching contributions from partners, either funds or in-kind services.

The following 10 new projects are approved for funding in 2012:

- [**Burney-Hat Creek Basins Project, California**](#) - \$605,000
- [**Pine-Oak Woodlands Restoration Project, Missouri**](#) - \$617,000
- [**Shortleaf-Bluestem Community Project, Arkansas and Oklahoma**](#) - \$342,00
- [**Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters Project, Idaho**](#) - \$2,450,000
- [**Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, Idaho**](#) - \$324,000
- [**Southern Blues Restoration Coalition, Oregon**](#) - \$2,500,000
- [**Lakeview Stewardship Project, Oregon**](#) - \$3,500,000
- [**Zuni Mountain Project, New Mexico**](#) - \$400,000
- [**Grandfather Restoration Project, North Carolina**](#) - \$605,000
- [**Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Cornerstone Project, California**](#) - \$730,000

The following three projects are considered high priority restoration and are approved for funding in 2012 outside of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Act:

- [**Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020, Washington**](#) - \$968,000
- [**Ozark Highlands Ecosystem Restoration, Arkansas**](#) - \$959,000
- [**Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction, De Soto National Forest, National Forests in Mississippi**](#) - \$2,710,000

The following 10 Collaborative Forest Landscape projects were approved for funding in 2010 and will continue to receive funding in 2012:

Selway-Middle Fork Clearwater Project, Idaho
Southwestern Crown of the Continent, Montana
Colorado Front Range, Colorado
Uncompahgre Plateau, Colorado
4 Forest Restoration Initiative, Arizona
Southwest Jemez Mountains, New Mexico
Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project, California
Deschutes Skyline, Oregon
Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative, Washington
Accelerating Longleaf Pine Restoration, Florida

Since taking office, President Obama's Administration has taken historic steps to improve the lives of rural Americans, put people back to work and build thriving economies in rural communities. From proposing the American Jobs Act to establishing the first-ever White House Rural Council – chaired by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack – the President wants the federal government to be the best possible partner for rural businesses and entrepreneurs and for people who want to live, work and raise their families in rural communities.

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