



George Washington & Jefferson National Forests
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**USDA SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES \$3.2 MILLION FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY
PROJECTS FOR FACILITIES AND TRAILS ON THE GEORGE WASHINGTON &
JEFFERSON NATIONAL FORESTS**

Roanoke, Va. – The George Washington & Jefferson National Forests received \$3.2 million for multiple trails projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The money is part of the \$274 million announced by Secretary Tom Vilsack on July 21, 2009 that is funding 191 US Forest Service projects in 32 states.

“The Recovery Act projects we’re announcing today are central to creating jobs and building a better, stronger economy in the future,” said Secretary Vilsack. “These projects exemplify President Obama’s commitment to sustainability, reducing our environmental footprint, and increasing energy efficiency, which will benefit the 178 million people who visit the National Forests each year, while generating additional tourism and stimulating local economies.”

The funding will provide \$1.89 million for trail and trail bridge maintenance in 36 counties across the forests, \$1.1 million for repair and maintenance of the Virginia Creeper Trail in Grayson and Washington Counties and \$275,000 for trail bridge replacement in Bath, Bland, Lee and Smyth counties.

"Visitors from across the country come to our region seeking Virginia's best outdoor experience. The work that will be completed with this funding will ensure visitors a safe experience on our region's trails for years to come," said Congressman Rick Boucher.

The Forest Service Trails System provides access to a wide diversity of users including hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, cross-country skiers and all-terrain vehicle enthusiasts. In many ways, the benefits of maintaining the trails system are similar to those of roads. Trail maintenance includes protecting soils and reducing erosion, along with clearing vegetation, controlling invasive species, and removing downed trees. Repairs and upgrades to trail head and parking areas will improve access and safety for trail users. All of this is labor-intensive work requiring skilled workers to be hired under ARRA.

Information on other Forest Service ARRA projects and related economic recovery can be found at: [http://fs.usda.gov/economic recovery](http://fs.usda.gov/economic%20recovery).

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The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.