

# NEWS ADVISORY

USDA Forest Service  
Washington, D.C.



**FS-0901**  
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Contact: Press Office 202-205-1134

## **USDA FOREST SERVICE CHIEF TOM TIDWELL DISCUSSES STATUS OF AGENCY'S AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) PROJECTS**

*\$274 Million Announced this Week for Forest Trails and Facilities*

**WHAT:** Dial-in news conference to discuss recent release of \$274 Million for ARRA projects relating to forest trails and facilities work, and overview of the status of USDA Forest Service ARRA projects to date.

**WHO:** Tom Tidwell, Chief, USDA Forest Service  
Richard Sowa, Acting Associate Chief, National Forest System  
Tony Tooke, Deputy Director, Forest Service ARRA

**WHEN:** Thursday, July 23, 2009 - 2:30 pm Eastern Time

**DIAL-IN:** Credentialed Reporters may listen to the news and participate in the question and answer session by calling: 877-601-3552.

Password: FOREST SERVICE.

**DETAILS:** For more information on this news conference, call the Press Office at 202-205-1134. For information on Forest Service ARRA Projects, go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us>

## THOMAS L. TIDWELL

Tom Tidwell grew up in Boise, Idaho, and graduated from Washington State University. He has spent 32 years with the Forest Service in a variety of positions. He began his Forest Service career on the Boise National Forest in fire, and has since worked on eight different national forests, in three regions. He has worked at all levels of the agency in a variety of positions, including District Ranger, Forest Supervisor, and Legislative Affairs Specialist in the Washington Office, where he worked on the planning rule, the 2001 roadless rule and the Secure Rural Schools County Payments Act. Tom served as the Deputy Regional Forester for the Pacific Southwest Region (California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands) with primary responsibility for fire and aviation management, recreation, engineering, state and private forestry and tribal relations. Under Tom's leadership, there was a significant increase in the Region's hazardous fuels effectiveness, and improved cooperation with CALFIRE on wildland fire suppression. Tom worked closely with the State of California to address the State's concerns on roadless area management on the National Forests of California.

Prior to this assignment, Tidwell served as the Regional Forester for the Northern Region, with responsibility for the national forests and grasslands in northern Idaho, Montana, North Dakota and portions of South Dakota. Tom was the Agency's lead executive on the collaborative approach that resulted in the Idaho roadless rule. This rule increases protections on over 3.2 million acres of roadless areas, while providing flexibility to address wildfire threat to communities and municipal watersheds in roadless areas. As the Regional Forester, Tom encouraged and supported community-based collaboration to find resolution on how and where to use active management to restore forest health and address wildfire threat to communities, and to provide protection for the values of unroaded landscapes. These collaborative efforts have significantly reduced the number of appeals and lawsuits, as these groups have reached agreement on how and where forest restoration should be accomplished.

Tom's field experience includes working from the rural areas of Nevada and Idaho all the way to the urban Forests in California and the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Utah, where he served as Forest Supervisor during the 2002 Winter Olympics. Tom has extensive fire experience, beginning as a firefighter, and accumulating nineteen years as an agency administrator responsible for fire suppression decisions.

Tom is married to Kim, and they have one daughter, MacKenzie.