

PROGRAM PLAN

Department of Agriculture - Capital Improvement and Maintenance - ARRA Recovery Plan

Updated 05/11/2010

Objectives

Program Purpose

The goals of the Forest Service's Capital Improvement and Maintenance (CIM) program under the ARRA are to provide jobs that improve energy efficiency, increase the number of energy efficient buildings and at the same time improve infrastructure that supports public, administrative, and recreation uses with minimal impact to ecosystem stability and conditions.

Public Benefits

Targeted restoration of the land, facilities, and infrastructure create new private sector jobs that have a positive impact on the quality of the nation's forests and grasslands and on the vibrancy of the economy by:

- Investing in a transportation infrastructure – roads, trails, and bridges – with a minimal footprint in America's national forests protects water quality, enhances visitors' experiences, and promotes safety while building a natural resource workforce.
- Converting existing administrative, recreation, and fire facilities to more efficient technologies demonstrates the leadership of USDA in the emerging "green" economy that conserves energy and water.
- Developing leading-edge "green-collar" workforce helps affect a "green" economy that could be strong enough to create enduring jobs.
- Expanding youth education and job training will promote the "green" economy through specific training opportunities that will provide a new pool of highly skilled workers in "green" technologies, and industries. The Forest Service's 27 Job Corps centers will be an integral part of developing a highly skilled workforce.

Measures

The measures have been revised to display the target and accomplishments of ARRA.

Measure	Projected	2009	2010
[+]Acres of water or soil resources protected, maintained or improved to achieve desired watershed conditions	1,800	13,649	10,109
[+]Miles of road decommissioned	100	0	53
[+]Miles of system trail maintained or improved to standard	2,800	934	924
[+]Number of abandoned mine land sites remediated	30	1	9
[+]Miles of system roads receiving maintenance.	1,400	4,276	3,151
[+]Expected annual energy savings as a result of ARRA facility investments as estimated by the awarded contractor, or as estimated using a reputable energy savings calculator	1,500,000	31,000	32,532
[+]Expected annual operation and maintenance cost savings as a result of ARRA facility investments	1,680,000	0	309,407

Schedule and Milestones

Released approximately 10% of funds for projects approved for ARRA funding.

Projected: March 5, 2009 Actual: March 10, 2009

Establishment of four Economic Recovery Operation Centers (EROCs) to streamline acquisition management processes.

Projected: April 27, 2009 Actual: April 27, 2009

Released approximately 50% - 80% of funds for projects approved for ARRA funding.

Projected: April 2009 Actual: Funds were released in category increments in CY 2009

Project Announcement Dates, Types and Amounts

3/9/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Trails, Roads, Facilities, Abandoned Mine Lands
\$ 62,957,200

6/2/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Roads
\$ 203,468,500

6/2/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Roads Only Related Ecosystem / Watershed Enhancement
\$ 25,012,000

6/15/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Biomass And Wood-To-Energy
\$ 56,929,000

6/23/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Abandoned Mine Lands
\$ 19,884,000

7/21/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Trails, Facilities, Related Ecosystems, Watershed Restoration
\$ 274,051,900

8/18/2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE
Trails, Facilities, Related Ecosystems, Watershed Restoration and
Abandoned Mine Lands
\$ 49,036,400

1/21/2010 Additional Projects
Capital Improvement and Maintenance \$7,657,000

Quarterly Reviews

The Agency completed quarterly reviews to monitor the status of project awards. The reviews included an evaluation of whether any projects were behind schedule to determine appropriate action. The Economic Recovery Team, working with Financial Management, Strategic Planning and Budget, and Acquisition Management used established criteria for determining if funds should be re-allocated or de-obligated to be used on other projects.

Projected: July 10, 2009

Actual: July 17, 2009

Projected: October 13, 2009

Actual: November 10, 2009

After this review the Agency did a further analysis to determine that out of the 695 approved ARRA projects 15 had been identified as "At-Risk" of not being completed before ARRA funding expired. Six of those 15 projects would be completed as soon as possible with regular appropriated funds. Two projects were no longer feasible.

Fourteen replacement and expansion projects for CIM were designated for a total of \$7,657,000 million in funding

Projected: January 11, 2010

Actual: January 21, 2010

Projected: April 12, 2010

Actual: April 27, 2010

Projected: July 12, 2010

Actual:

Milestones

Milestone	Completion Date
Release of approximately 10% of funds for projects approved for ARRA funding.	03/05/2009
Establishment of four Economic Recovery Operation Centers (EROCs) to streamline acquisition management processes.	04/27/2009
Release of approximately 50% - 80% of funds for projects approved for ARRA funding.	05/30/2009 Funds were released in category increments (See above)
All funds released	Sept 30, 2009
90% of funds will be obligated by June 1, 2010	
All proposed contracts will be in for the EROCs for processing by June 1, 2010	
100% of funds will be obligated by September 30, 2010	

Projects and Activities

Funds invested on priority National Forest System (NFS) roads, bridges and structures where the long-term need for the road, bridge, or other structure is documented.

Road Maintenance & Decommissioning – The appropriated funds primarily address public safety needs, resource protection, and access to the most important National Forest System (NFS) sites and features.

Objectives were to reduce the number of roads and to maintain roads to meet safety and environmental standards. Roads are closed or decommissioned as needed to reduce maintenance costs and protect forest resources. Maintenance activities include repair of roads, bridges, and other vehicle access areas. Road maintenance priorities for passenger car roads have to meet Highway Safety Act requirements, allowing emergency access for first responders, and provide escape routes for recreationists and local residents in emergency situations, such as wildfire. Priority high clearance road maintenance minimizes or eliminates environmental effects to resources, including sediment loads in streams and barriers to fish passage. Decommissioning roads eliminates unneeded and unauthorized roads and restores the land to a more natural state.

Bridge Maintenance & Decommissioning – Bridge maintenance and decommissioning projects are incorporated into road or trail maintenance and decommissioning projects. Therefore, the objectives of this activity are a component of either road or trail projects.

Trail Maintenance & Decommissioning – The trails program ensures public safety and backcountry access through the operation, maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvement of the NFS trails system. The appropriated funds are used to provide trail accessibility and promote ecosystem health by protecting soil, vegetation, and water quality. Trail maintenance activities include clearing encroaching vegetation fallen trees and repairing or improving trail signs, treadways, water drainage, and bridges. Trail decommissioning eliminates unneeded and unauthorized trails and restores land occupied by trails to a more natural state.

Related Watershed Restoration/Ecosystem Enhancements – The benefits of restoration projects include improvement to: wildlife and fish habitat; range and forest stand conditions; improved water quality; quantity; and timing of stream flows; cleaner air, and effective long-term carbon sequestration.

Facility Improvement Maintenance and Rehabilitation – Improvement to Facilities eliminates

health and safety risks at agency owned buildings, recreation sites, and reduce deferred maintenance on aging infrastructure, thereby improving the ability of the agency to successfully perform its mission. Facility improvement includes construction, alteration, and expansion of facilities and recreation sites. This work includes design, construction, operations and maintenance practices that implemented energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable high-performance building principles.

Abandoned Mine Remediation – Tasks involve inventory, assessment, and mitigation of abandoned mine safety hazards and the associated environmental damage. Priorities are placed on cleaning up abandoned mines that are publicly accessible and in high priority watersheds. Mitigation of abandoned mine safety hazards help to ensure public health and safety and protected habitats and groundwater. Remediation activities include closing mine openings and vertical shafts; recontouring open pits, trenches and associated roads; and removing or stabilizing abandoned buildings, equipment, and hazardous materials.

Review Process

The Agency's processes for identifying and mitigating challenges and risks are set forth in Sections G, H, I, and J of its narrative Program Plan, separately submitted to OMB. Below is some, but not all, of the ways that the Forest Service is ensuring oversight capacity.

Acquisition Management (AQM): The Director of Acquisition Management has responsibility for implementation of processes to ensure compliance with ARRA, OMB Guidance and FAR on ARRA awards. AQM established a link on its internal website for ARRA standard operating procedures for contracting officers (COs), contracting officers' representatives (CORs), program managers, and other AQM staff. A national strategy for supporting the expenditure of ARRA funds was established with two components: (1) the initial phase of ARRA the Requirements Package Preparation Support was provided by the local AQM staffs; and (2) AQM Recovery Project Support occurred through the AQM staff at four nation-wide Economic Recovery Operation Centers (EROCs). After the EROCs were established, instruments implementing projects funded by the ARRA were processed by these centers. The AQM staff in the Washington Office continues to provide direct oversight, and management.

Office of Chief Financial Officer (OCFO): The CFO is responsible for ensuring that financial reporting required by the ARRA, including information provided by AQM, is accurate, timely and properly reported. The CFO is also responsible for providing oversight on risk mitigation strategies for ARRA funds expended by the Forest Service. Staff from Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), which reports to the CFO, will perform independent reviews to ensure that specific ARRA program goals are met, including verification of financial accuracy,

completeness, and compliance of report products to meet accountability and transparency standards. IQA will also serve as the audit liaison for USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) on Forest Service ARRA-related audits, by providing audit oversight and coordination on all requests. IQA will also coordinate, review, and finalize Agency responses to the OIG audits.

Forest Service Economic Recovery Team: The Economic Recovery Team, led by the Economic Recovery Executive, conducted quarterly reviews of progress on awards, including the number, percent, and dollar amount of contracts, grants, and agreements that are advertised through the competitive process, that are awarded to small businesses, and that are awarded to minority-owned businesses. These reviews will continue until July 2010. Reviews will include an evaluation of whether any projects are behind schedule to determine appropriate action. The Economic Recovery Team, working with Financial Management, established criteria for determining if funds should be re-allocated or de-obligated to be used on other projects.

Performance Accountability System: The Forest Service's Performance Accountability System (PAS) – Managerial Reports are updated daily (USDA updates financial data every other day) to report weekly on timely award of dollars, timely expenditure of dollars, and detection of cost overruns.

Cost and Performance Plan

Information on the Forest Service's development of accountable and transparent processes for implementation of the ARRA are set forth at Sections I and J of the Agency's narrative Program Direction separately submitted to OMB. Detailed information, including anticipated costs, on the projects approved for funding can be obtained at <http://www.fed.us/recovery.gov>.

With regard to the collection, compilation and dissemination of performance information from recipients, the Forest Service's Director of Acquisitions Management (AQM) and appropriate staff are responsible for compliance with recipient reporting requirements as outlined by the OMB Guidance, and for working with the Departmental Management to provide consistency of reporting. OMB's Section 1512(f) guidance of the ARRA required recipient reporting to begin 180 days after enactment, and for reports to be submitted by recipients 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter. Per OMB, this resulted in meeting the initial statutory reporting deadline of October 10, 2009, with quarterly reports due 10 days after the end of each calendar (CY) quarter thereafter.

The Forest Service has initiated the following procedures to appropriately collect required information from both grantees and contractors.

1. A Forest Service AQM representative will serve on an Intergovernmental Working Group for

Recipient Reporting – one of two representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This representative assisted in determining the best methods for government-wide collection and reporting of recipient information for contractors and grantees receiving funds under the ARRA.

2. The Forest Service issued Program Direction to its employees with a Chapter detailing AQM ARRA Guidance and Standard Operating Procedures. This Program Direction outlined workflow and communications, ARRA key acquisition related provisions, AQM standard operating procedures, and systems standard operating procedures. The Program Direction outlined recipient reporting requirements, and provided a link to the Forest Service's AQM website, which provides the appropriate FAR clauses for contracting and appropriate clauses for grants/agreements to be used in contract awards.

3. The staff at the Economic Recovery Operation Centers (EROCs) is responsible for informing recipients of the reporting requirements under the ARRA. A national strategy for supporting the expenditure of ARRA funds initially was established with two components: (1) the Requirements Package Preparation Support was completed by local AQM staffs; and (2) AQM Recovery Project Support occurred through the staffs at the four EROCs. After the establishment of the EROCs all contracts, grants, and agreements implementing projects funded by the ARRA were processed through these centers. AQM's Washington Office continued to provide direct oversight of contracts, grants, and agreements for ARRA funds by auditing awards from local AQM staffs and the EROCs.

4. Additional information on reporting requirements continued to be posted, the Forest Service's AQM ARRA website, and Program Direction continued to be updated and distributed as needed.

Energy Efficiency Spending Plans

The Forest Service has taken significant steps to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and Executive Order 13423. Forest Service Handbook (FSH 7309.11, Chapter 70-Sustainable Buildings, November, 2008) requires all new facilities and major renovation projects, including those funded by the ARRA; include design, construction, and operation and maintenance practices that implement energy efficiency, water conservation and sustainable high-performance building principles. By operating in this manner and following the USDA Sustainable Building Implementation Plan, that promotes and requires sustainable building principles and practices, the requirements outlined in the OMB Recovery Guidance will be met.

Program Plan Award Types

No Data Available.