

## **PROGRAM PLAN**

Department of Agriculture - Wildland Fire Management - ARRA Recovery Plan

Updated 05/11/2010

### **Objectives**

#### Program Purpose

The goal of WFM projects under the ARRA is to create jobs that maintain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands and reduce the country's reliance on fossil fuels and foreign energy. The WFM projects are also protecting communities from large, unnaturally severe fires and contribute to the restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems, thereby helping to foster fire-adapted communities well into the future. The WFM program is designed to recognize the importance of integrating fire as a critical natural process in land and resource management plans and activities, managing wildfire across landownership boundaries, and applying the best available science.

### **Public Benefits**

The ARRA assigned the Forest Service a role in facilitating the preservation and creation of jobs to promote economic recovery and assisting those who were most impacted by the recession throughout the nation. America's forests and grasslands are a cornerstone of our nation's natural resource conservation as well as the economic security for America's citizens.

The Forest Service projects implemented under the ARRA are creating jobs and sustaining businesses across the country. In addition to jobs, this work provides multiple benefits for people, such as clean and abundant water, by restoring forest health and reducing risks from insects, disease, and wildfires near communities. This investment in jobs also accelerated our ability to use technology to convert wood to energy and to help lands adapt to a changing climate.

The new private sector jobs that targeted restoration of the land had a positive impact on the quality of the nation's forests and grasslands and on the vibrancy of the economy. Expanded youth education and job training improved the "green" economy, technologies, and industries. The 28 Job Corps centers of the Forest Service have been an integral part of developing a highly skilled workforce.

Restored fire-adapted ecosystems protect lives and property from large wildfires. Private sector jobs that were created from the ARRA enhanced the rate of restoration so that the number and size of large fires will potentially decline and communities are safer, sooner.

Wood bioenergy derived from the fiber obtained by removing hazardous fuels in the forests can be a cost-effective alternative energy source. The application of economic recovery funds for this effort provided significant opportunities to protect communities, restore forest health, and decrease reliance on foreign oil.

## Measures

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

Measure	Projected	2009	2010
	[+]Number of acres treated to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire	392,850	123,144
[+]Acres of forest vegetation established or improved	810	0	143,521
[+]Number of priority acres treated for invasive species or native pests	1,254,452	84,350	7,994
[+]Number of hazardous fuels reduction or mitigation projects conducted on nonfederal lands through Recovery Act funding	80	310	248
[+]Green tons of biomass utilized through Recovery Act grant funding to produce energy	5,197,410	0	55,519

## 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

3/9/2009 WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem Restoration - Research, Hazardous Fuels Reduction –  
State & Private Forestry, Hazardous Fuels Reduction  
\$ 32,588,100

5/5/2009 WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Hazardous Fuels  
\$ 223,694,000

5/14/2009 WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Forest Health - Invasive Species  
\$ 38,057,000

8/18/2009

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Hazardous Fuels Reduction, Hazardous Fuels/Ecosystem  
Restoration on State and Private Forestry Lands, Biomass  
Utilization Grants on Federal Lands, Fuels Research, and  
Hazardous Fuels Mitigation  
\$ 45,607,000

9/9/2009

WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT

Forest Health  
\$ 89,321,700

1/21/2010 Additional Projects  
Wildland Fire Management \$3,038,000

### 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.

Six replacement and expansion projects for WFM were designated for a total of \$3,038,000 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

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

## Projects and Activities

Funds were invested on priority NFS lands and priority adjacent State and private lands and targeted State and private forest lands, in general.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction Federal Land** – This program focuses on restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and reducing undesired effects of large, destructive wildfires by reducing the volume of hazardous fuels on forests, woodlands, shrub lands, and grasslands.

**Forest Health Protection Federal Land** – This program monitors, assesses, and mitigates forest health conditions on National Forest System lands at high risk to wildland fires, including communities in the Wildland Urban interface (WUI) and in previously burned areas. Funds were provided for detection, evaluation, prevention, and suppression of forest insects and diseases on forest and rangelands.

**Rehabilitation Federal Land** – The rehabilitation program restores National Forest System lands impacted by wildfire, addressing post-emergency rehabilitation needs on lands unlikely to recover naturally from wildland fire damage.

**Hazard Mitigation Activities Federal Land** – Hazard mitigation activities protects the public's health and safety by removing dead or dying trees near areas of public access, such as trails and campgrounds. Hazard trees develop when trees are dead or injured, but left standing, after wildland fire or forest insect and disease infestation.

**Hazardous Fuels Reduction Non-Federal Land** – Hazardous fuels reduction activities on non-Federal lands are carried out in cooperation with Tribes, States and territories. The program provides financial assistance through partnership agreements with State Foresters to treat hazardous fuels on lands owned by Tribes, States, local governments, private organizations, and individual land owners.

**Forest Health Non-Federal Land** – Forest health activities on non-Federal lands are carried out in cooperation with Tribes, States, and territories. This cooperation optimizes efficiency in executing the program to restore forestlands and rangelands damaged by insects, disease, and invasive plants on land owned by Tribes, States, local governments, private organizations, and individual land owners. Treatments protect non-Federal lands from damaging insects, diseases and invasive plants; reduce the risks of mortality and from wildland fire; protect highly valued sites; and prevent future outbreaks by increasing the resilience of treated areas.

**Ecosystem Improvement Activities Non-Federal Land** - The objectives of this program are to achieve healthy ecological communities in both rural and urban settings. The benefits include improved wildlife and fish habitat; improved range and forest stand conditions; improved water quality, quantity, and timing of stream flows; cleaner air; and effective long-term carbon sequestration.

**Wood to Energy Grants** - The program objectives are to create markets for small diameter wood

and low value trees removed during forest restoration activities. These grants help communities and entrepreneurs turn residues from forest restoration activities into marketable energy products.

## **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 Opportunity 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 USDA 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 served 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 continues to be posted, on the Forest Service AQM ARRA website, and Program Direction continues to be updated and distributed as needed.

#### **Energy Efficiency Spending Plans**

This program does not directly invest in infrastructure improvements.

#### **Program Plan Award Types**

No Data Available.