



## Progress on Tribal Relations

Significant improvements in our government to government relationship between the Chippewa National Forest and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe are demonstrated in three focus areas:

### *Outreach and recruitment to Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal members:*

- **Rabideau Conservation Corps and the Worker Investment Act:** Eight disadvantaged youth from area reservations, including Leech Lake, participated in work/learn programs conducted at the Camp Rabideau National Historic Landmark in 2009. The Rabideau Conservation Corps was further expanded from a 6 week summer program to a 10 month program to assist with national forest projects including stabilization of historic buildings, forest management, developing and operating a People's Garden with produce sales, while earning high school equivalency degrees and reporting their own successes to the media. *[photo right]*



- **Youth Conservation Corps:** The Chippewa National Forest annually hosts up to 12 Youth Conservation Corp enrollees. In 2009, youth ages 15 to 19 worked alongside Forest Service professionals and technicians performing trail and campground maintenance, timber stand improvement, and roadside brushing. Of the 12 youth participating, 4 were from local Reservations, including Leech Lake. *[photo left]*



- **Student and Temporary Appointments:** In 2009, the Chippewa National Forest hired 2 Leech Lake Band members in seasonal positions and a Leech Lake Band member already in a student position was converted to a permanent position.
- **Cass Lake High School STAR Program:** In 2010, students from Cass Lake High/Bena School will shadow Chippewa National Forest natural resource professionals as part of the school's Successful Transition to Academic Rigor (STAR) program that promotes graduation and career development. The CLB-HS student body is predominately tribal members.
- **Senior Employment Programs:** Under agreement with the Department of Labor and Elder Circle, the National Forest hired 2 additional local tribal Elders who are provided job training skills with the goal of re-entering the workforce.



▪ **Leech Lake Temporary Employment Program:** Since the establishment of the Agreement in 2007, the Chippewa NF has provided training and all season work opportunities throughout the national forest. The TEP assists those needing a hand-up instead of a hand-out by providing a positive means to employment when there is a lack of jobs. [photos left and below]

▪ **Minnesota Family Investment Program:** Through agreement with the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the Chippewa National Forest employed both a White Earth and a Leech Lake tribal member for 12 weeks during the summer in campgrounds and at the National Forest headquarters. This program provides MFIP recipients with practical work experience and practices to enable recipients to re-enter the workforce.



▪ **Leech Lake Tribal College:** The Chippewa National Forest hosted three Leech Lake Tribal College interns for 10 to 12 weeks. Interns provided frontline customer services at the Blackduck Ranger District, presented Chippewa National Forest and cultural programs at the Norway Beach Visitor Center, and assisted recreation management at the Walker Ranger District.

### ***Partnerships:***

- In 2009, 16 agreements were established with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, representing over \$500,000 of work. Seven of those agreements focused on implementing work for the Leech Lake Temporary Employment Program. Six other agreements arranged for the LLBO to conduct national forest road decommissioning, roads maintenance, trail development, chainsaw operation training and Heritage survey work.
- Three economic recovery project Agreements are underway with the Leech Lake Band, including a \$111,000 project to train firefighters, \$340,000 to perform road maintenance within the Experimental Forest areas, and \$4,339 to implement 19 miles of trail maintenance with the Leech Lake Temporary Employment Program. These projects total \$455,000 – nearly half a million- of Chippewa National Forest’s 5.5 Million ARRA funds.



- In 2009, the Forest obligated \$741,743.31 in agreements. Of this amount, 72% (\$533,911.41) was directed to Native American-owned cooperators, including the Leech Lake Band.
- In partnership with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, the Chippewa National Forest directed \$338,875 in grant funding to Band members to implement 500-800 acres of hazardous fuels work near the tribal community of Ball Club. Work began during the Fall of 2009 and employed two local machine operators.
- Approximately 65% of the national forest timber from the Enbridge Energy Company Pipeline right-of-way timber sale was donated for firewood use by Leech Lake Band members while 35% will be sold to local mills.
- In July 2009, a challenge cost share agreement allowed the Chippewa National Forest and LLBO to work together over the next five years on needed maintenance and operations of approximately 45 water impoundments within the Chippewa National Forest.
- Three tribal members, two from Leech Lake, have been nominated to a new 15-member Resource Advisory Committee to begin implementing Title II of the Secure Rural Schools Act (P.L. 110-343). Members will work cooperatively to recommend projects on national forest lands.
- The Chippewa National Forest worked with LLBO and the BIA to identify Forest roads for inclusion in the Indian Reservation Roads inventory (IRR). A new participating agreement was formalized in March 2009 to grow this effort from maintenance towards bridge work and road improvement work.
- The former Cass Lake Ranger Station is in process for sale to the Leech Lake Band. The LLBO is currently leasing the site as their Tribal Law Enforcement Center. A decision is expected in June 2010.

***Cultural and Institutional Awareness:***

- **Leech Lake Career Fairs:** The Chippewa National Forest participates annually at recruitment events at the Northern Lights Casino, and at the Leech Lake Tribal College.

- **Forest Service R9 Honor Award for Protecting Ecosystems:** Three individuals (one from Leech Lake Solid Waste Dept, and a former Division of Resource Management employee along with a national forest employee) were recognized by Regional Forester Kent Connaughton for implementing a cooperative dumpsite clean-up process with local communities at over 48 sites since 2007. The Cooperative Dumpsite CleanUp program is continuing through 2010. *[Photo left: Award winners with Regional Forester Kent Connaughton]*



▪ A jointly produced Programmatic Agreement to implement national forest heritage evaluations with the Leech Lake Band is currently ready for review by both governments' legal counsel.

