



For Immediate Release

July 22, 2013

Collaborative Effort Nets Millions for Flathead County Road Projects

KALISPELL, MONT - Partnering efforts between Flathead County, the Montana Department of Transportation and several Federal Agencies has resulted in federal funding for four road improvement projects in Flathead County. The federal, state and local collaboration in each of these efforts was a significant factor in the successful evaluation of the proposals.

Flathead County Commissioner Pam Holmquist said, "Flathead County is excited to receive this funding to improve our road system providing public access to the recreational lands around the County. We have appreciated the collaborative efforts with our State and Federal partners and look forward to the completion of construction."

Each of the teams developed and coordinated support for several different road improvement projects in Flathead County as part of several different national programs in the current Highway bill. As a result four projects were recently announced in either the Federal Lands Access or Federal Lands Transportation Programs for improvements on Flathead County roads.

- 1) The Hungry Horse West Project was awarded 3.3 million dollars. This project will replace the Highway 2 Bridge over the South Fork of the Flathead River as part of a larger \$15 million project. The project includes a shared-use path and address safety and other issues along the bridge approaches.
- 2) The Blacktail Road Project was awarded 1.1 million dollars for 1.75 miles of surface improvements starting from the current end of pavement.
- 3) The Blacktail Road Project was also awarded 300,000 dollars for planning and design to address safety and resource impacts on the remainder of Blacktail road through the end of the road at Blacktail ski area. This road also serves numerous other functions including access to private lands, communications sites, winter and summer use trails, timber haul and if necessary fire-fighting.
- 4) The Pleasant Valley Road Relocation Project was awarded 2.9 million dollars for relocating out of a wetland area about four miles of the Pleasant Valley road that bisects the Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge. Other funding for this project will also address long standing stream restoration and fish passage improvements for Pleasant Valley Creek.

The legislation Congress passed providing these funds currently authorizes the program for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. Funding beyond 2014 is dependent on reauthorization of the programs by the US Congress.

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There are also matching funds requirements being addressed on each project. The next step in the process is for the Western Federal Lands Highway Division to develop funding agreements with state and local agency partners. Just as with the proposal process, it is anticipated that each of these projects will involve a unique partnering between the organizations during the implementation phases. The projects are slated for construction between 2014 and 2017.

Federal agencies involved include Flathead National Forest, Glacier National Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Western Federal Lands Transportation Division of the Federal Highway Administration. State and local agencies include Montana Department of Transportation and Flathead County. This collaboration leverages the strengths of each organization to efficiently and economically address improvements to the public's transportation needs.

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