



February 19, 2009

Peggy Hernandez, Forest Supervisor
Los Padres National Forest
6755 Hollister Ave. Ste 150
Goleta, CA 93117

RE: URGENT: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Data Request

Dear Ms. Hernandez:

As you know, on February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 ("ARRA") to revive the economy and create millions of jobs. Under this bill, the U.S. Forest Service will receive \$650 million for Capital Improvement and Maintenance. These funds are to be used for road maintenance and decommissioning, deferred maintenance work, abandoned mine cleanup, and other related critical habitat, forest improvement, and watershed enhancement projects.

We are writing today to request that the Los Padres National Forest prioritize road decommissioning, fish passage, and wildlife connectivity projects with the expenditures from the capitol improvement and maintenance account. We also request that the LPNF prioritize vegetation treatments adjacent to communities at risk, rather than those in remote areas of the forest. To that end, we have identified several projects that we hope to see prioritized for these stimulus dollars:

- Removal and/or modification of road crossings in the Sisquoc River watershed to enhance steelhead passage.
- Decommissioning of legacy roads, particularly those in roadless and wilderness areas (i.e. roads recently identified in the northeast corner of the Ventana Wilderness).
- Tamarisk surveys in the Santa Ynez River watershed.
- Implementation of the Machesna Mountain Wilderness Trail Reconstruction Project on the Santa Lucia Ranger District (Decision Memo signed August 6, 2007).
- Placement of additional barriers on West Camino Cielo and West Cuesta Ridge to deter unauthorized off-road vehicle trespass, as well as other areas in the Santa Lucia and Mt. Pinos Ranger Districts.
- Cleanup and development of a long-term solution to unauthorized shooting at Cherry Creek, a tributary of Sespe Creek in the Ojai Ranger District.
- Addressing the maintenance backlog for hiking, bicycling, and equestrian trails.
- Abandoned mine closures.

In addition, we strongly request that the Los Padres National Forest provide the public with a preliminary list of roads to be decommissioned to establish a fiscally and ecologically sustainable road system. We also believe that any stimulus expenditures be prioritized on activities that further the elimination of unneeded roads and aid in rightsizing the road system. Finally, no hazardous fuels reduction projects should be used for commodity production, be in roadless areas, or remove mature or old-growth forests.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. I would like to schedule a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss which projects the Los Padres National Forest has identified for stimulus funding. In the meantime, please provide me with the list of stimulus projects you forwarded to the Regional Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JK', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Kuyper
Executive Director

Cc: Rep. Lois Capps, U.S. Congress, 23rd District