

Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest and its surrounding communities will benefit from the next wave of economic recovery act funds coming to the state. Vermont's Congressional Delegation - Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Congressman Peter Welch (D-Vt.) said the U.S. Forest Service will invest \$5.295 million in economic stimulus funds on projects that range from road upgrades to waterway improvements that will help conserve endangered species such as the Atlantic Salmon.

Five projects on and around the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) will create jobs while contributing improvements to public health and safety and access to the Forest. Two road rehabilitation projects will improve water quality by reducing sediments in Vermont streams and help restore aquatic habitat for fish in areas affected by road erosion. Other projects will improve fish passage by replacing stream crossings, bridges and culverts, while opening two miles of fish spawning and rearing habitat. These projects will especially benefit populations of the Atlantic Salmon and the native Eastern Brook Trout. The fish recovery projects are a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the White River Partnership, Trout Unlimited, and local communities.

Leahy said, "These investments are a two-fer for our state and our forest, letting us tackle the backlog of deferred roadway and waterway improvements, while creating good private sector jobs. The benefits to Vermont, and especially to these communities, will last long beyond the recovery."

Sanders said, "These economic stimulus funds are a significant step forward in addressing long-overdue infrastructure needs of our state while creating good-paying jobs during this economic crisis."

Welch said, "These funds will improve Vermont's ecological and recreational resources while addressing long-delayed transportation and infrastructure projects in and around the Green

Mountain National Forest. These projects are another example of how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is meeting community needs, creating local jobs and investing in Vermont."

The Delegation released this summary of Vermont's U.S. Forest Service projects:

\$1,200,000 in Rutland County for capital improvements and maintenance work to improve Vermont fish passage. By providing for unobstructed passage of fish this project will create jobs in Vermont for work that includes design of bridges and culverts and for reconstruction. The results will allow for full passage of fish such as the native Eastern Brook Trout and other aquatic life, while improving public access and traffic safety.

\$1,000,000 in Windsor County for capital improvements and maintenance work to improve Vermont fish passage. This 18-month project will include stream-crossing reconstruction to improve traffic safety for local residents, improve public access for visitors, and allow for full fish passage through bridge reconstruction. The project will have long-term benefits for the endangered Atlantic Salmon, a federally endangered species, and the Eastern Brook Trout, as well as for other species. The project will also enhance recreation and travel opportunities for Forest visitors.

\$500,000 in Windsor County for capital improvements and maintenance work to improve Vermont fish passage in the Green Mountain Forest. This project will improve fish habitat and

create safer road systems for Forest visitors. The work includes replacing stream crossings and opening two miles of critical fish spawning and rearing habitat over the next year and a half. The project is a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, White River Partnership, and Trout Unlimited. The work will have long-term benefits for the Atlantic Salmon and will enhance recreation and travel opportunities for visitors to the Forest.

\$2,475,000 in Rutland County for deferred maintenance work in partnership with the towns of Goshen, Ripton, Chittenden, Wallingford, Peru, Sunderland, and Winhall. This work will maintain several forest roads while creating private sector jobs, involving the removal of encroaching brush; adding gravel surfaces; cleaning ditches; replacing rusted-out culverts, and grading roadways, which will reduce runoff sediment and improve water quality. Although many of the GMNF roads that offer access to the Forest begin as township roads, they frequently become Forest Service roads often used by local residents for traveling to work, transporting children to school, providing emergency services, and for commercial deliveries.

\$120,000 in Bennington, Essex, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor Counties for capital improvements and maintenance in partnership with the towns of Hancock, Granville, and Rochester. This project will create private sector positions in several towns in work that will improve safety for the many users of Forest Service roads that intertwine with township roads. The work includes removing encroaching brush; adding gravel surfaces; cleaning ditches; replacing rusted-out culverts, and grading roadways. These backlogged maintenance projects will also improve water quality by reducing soil erosion.

Vermont counties also will share in these additional Forest Service project funds: An overall pool of \$5,880,000 that will be shared among a dozen states for deferred road maintenance and drainage work, for which Addison, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor counties are eligible; and a second overall pool of \$3,500,000 for deferred maintenance work and for signage, for which Addison, Bennington, Rutland, Windham and Windsor counties are eligible.