

National Forest Watershed Restoration Initiative Principles

Repairing the damage from ecologically destructive roads in our national forests

Introduction: The National Forest Watershed Restoration Initiative is dedicated to reestablishing and maintaining healthy aquatic and forest ecosystems in our national forests through maintenance, repair, and reclamation of forest roads and culverts.

Background: The Fiscal Year 2008 Interior Appropriations bill created a \$39 million Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program to fund watershed restoration through road reclamation on national forest lands – an historic appropriation. This appropriation was the result of effort on the part of numerous environmental and recreation groups, state agencies and tribes in Washington State and elsewhere. The funding required to complete this work is enormous: at least \$10 billion is needed to address the national backlog of road maintenance.

Building a National Forest Watershed Restoration Initiative: This effort needs to expand to create a nationwide network of organizations, state, county and municipal agencies, political and policy leaders, tribes and individual citizens dedicated to restoring ecosystem processes and water quality in our national forests. Together our voices from many states can unite to secure the funding needed to repair the damage derived from the impact of logging roads and returning our forests and rivers to their natural ecological functions resulting in improved water quality, stabilized soil, enhanced habitat and the creation of restoration jobs for local communities.

To this end, the National Forest Watershed Restoration Initiative encourages groups that support these principles to come together at the state-level to make an annual and consistent request of the legislators and to work regionally with the U.S. Forest Service to:

1. Help increase federal investment annually to maintain and eliminate deteriorating and poorly designed national forest roads by requesting the Congressional delegation for your state to support the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program and other appropriations to address the road maintenance backlog.
2. Help identify priority watersheds within each national forest in your state to reduce road-related water quality and wildlife habitat impacts. Priorities should be given to regions with significant populations of threatened, endangered or sensitive species and high habitat value for conservation and recovery.
3. Help make decisions on which roads go and which ones stay by working with the regional office of the Forest Service and individual national forests to guarantee they are using more field-based information to inventory, assess and develop projects as well as develop a comprehensive evaluation of road and watershed restoration needs through the full use of NEPA and other analytical tools (RAP; Travel Analysis).

4. Support the use of partnerships between the Forest Service and other landowners and organizations to cooperatively fund and implement restoration projects when appropriate.
5. Support agency efforts to conduct ecologically and economically effective environmental monitoring and reporting of baseline conditions and restoration project effectiveness.

If you support the principles above, and want to become a formal supporter of the National Forest Watershed Restoration Initiative send an email with your organization's contact information and the name of a key contact person to Sue Gunn at sue@wildlandscpr.org. Thank you for your support.