



Forestry: Economic Stimulus in the Western U.S. *~Creating Green Jobs~*

A Briefing Paper from the Council of Western State Foresters

The Need for *Green Jobs*: With the nation's recent economic downturn, Americans are in dire need for job creation through public investment in infrastructure. The investment needed is not limited to traditional infrastructure, such as roads and public facilities, but also landscape level, cross-boundary investment¹ in our forested "green" infrastructure which will increase the value of the nation's natural assets, essentially compounding the social and ecological return on the investment. The Council of Western State Foresters (CWSF) estimates that **\$2.3 billion** is needed to stimulate and insulate rural and urban communities, and the forests they depend upon, from economic hardship throughout the western United States. A western *Green Jobs* package is needed!

What are *Green Jobs*? There is a synergistic opportunity to create "green" jobs by reinvesting in America. Through economic stimulus we can sustain green infrastructure and respond to climate change as we manage our vast forests and tree resources. *Green Jobs* include those that plant trees to restore fire and insect damaged forests, thin overstocked forests to protect communities and watersheds, plant new trees on landscapes for energy and environmental services, and businesses that remove and process woody biomass into energy and high value products. *Green Jobs* also describe work on upgrading or decommissioning roads, improving trails and upgrading public facilities to reduce their environmental footprint. *Green Jobs* also involve people trained as wildland fire fighters skilled not only in protecting communities and resources, but also who help use fire to accomplish ecological restoration and create landscapes and communities more resilient to wildfire and climate change.

State and federal land management agencies are uniquely positioned to facilitate and implement major investments in these *Green Jobs*. Through vast networks of trained field professionals, job training centers, partnerships with universities and community colleges, expanded funding of existing programs and authorities can be easily expanded across the country to immediately create jobs and support investment that will have lasting and significant benefits.

Green Jobs – A Western² Economic Stimulus Package

1. **Sustainable woody biomass production/supply (TOP PRIORITY):**
 - Community Wood Energy (2008 Farm Bill) - technical assistance, demonstration projects. Also, assistance with creating working capital funds to help cover initial costs, and reinvest to fund new projects using funds generated by energy savings. (New Authority needed for this aspect) (\$20 million)
 - Biomass Transportation Assistance (2005 Energy Policy Act) - provides funds to help offset the high cost of transporting woody biomass to biomass energy facilities. (\$100 million)
 - Stewardship contracting - Create a Trust Fund to cover the government's liability for the length of each contract. This will allow long-term stewardship contracts to be completed without each National Forest being required to set-aside funds for the length of the contract from their limited NF budget. This way the total funding can be used more efficiently. (Revised Authority)
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¹ Good Neighbor Authority, Steven's authority, Wyden amendment, Tribal Forest Protection Act, Stewardship Contracting.

² This *Green Jobs* Package is western focused; funding levels need to be increased to over \$5 billion to represent the national funding needs for this type of a package.

- No-interest revolving loan program for institutional conversion to woody biomass to meet capital cost requirements. (\$100 million)
- Biomass targets (100 million tons/year) for forested public lands. An on-going forest restoration project of 1,000 acres estimates the creation of 35 jobs every year. This estimate only includes direct and indirect employment from the actual treatment, not the jobs created by the use of the materials such as merchantable wood and slash.
- Direct cash investment in woody biomass co-generation power plants, maximum cap based on nameplate capacity to ensure smaller, family owned mills benefit. \$10M 0-15 MW, \$20M 16-25 MW, etc. (\$500 million)
- Expand research and development to improve environmental and economic performance of woody bioenergy and wood products conversion technology, and tools to more efficiently process, harvest, and transport biomass. (\$200 million)
- Modify the definition of renewable biomass in the Renewable Fuels Standard (2007 Energy Bill) so sustainable woody biomass can be derived from public and private forests to create biofuels that replace fossil fuels. (2008 Farm Bill definition preferred)

2. Industry Support

- No-interest revolving loan program for hard-hit timber industries in targeted areas to keep and stabilize jobs. (\$100 million)
- 3-year price support structure for wood products. (\$100 million)

3. Forest Management and Restoration

- Post-wildfire forest restoration needs (\$100 million)
- Fund hazardous fuels treatments identified in Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and associated capacity within public agencies to conduct necessary environmental assessments, monitoring and contracting. (\$500 million)
- Expand funding for roads (maintenance/upgrade and decommissioning), trails, recreation facilities, and stream restoration. (\$500 million)

4 Ecosystem Services

- Expanded Job Corps and partnerships with community college for training in *Green Jobs*.
- Promote standards development of ecosystem markets. Strengthen research, development and demonstration of forest management and reforestation practices in order to provide a strong scientific basis to access to emerging ecosystem services markets, including carbon, water and biodiversity.
- Expanding the (electricity) Production Tax Credit to include thermal energy from combined heat and power, and direct thermal energy from renewable sources, and extended the authority for at least five-years to stimulate reinvestment at existing forest products facilities, and provide incentives to adapt to changing markets.
- Investment in urban and community forests to reduce energy consumption and reduce drainage system costs. (\$75 million)

5. Suppression Funding Fix – adjust wildfire budgeting methodology to minimize wildfire transfers and borrowing to cover growing wildfire suppression expenditures. (New Authority)