



# Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative

◀ This 13-foot diameter culvert became plugged with debris during a rain-on-snow storm event in the Olympic National Forest in the winter of 2012. The stream was forced to flow over the road fill, washing it away and depositing sediment downstream as far as Hood Canal. Two years later, the culvert is still in the stream. More high intensity storms lead to more damage in the National Forest road system.

*WildEarth Guardians photo*

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Department of Ecology at 360-407-6600. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability can call 877-833-6341.

## Support the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program Keep Washington Working!

### THE PROBLEM

**Rapidly deteriorating U.S. Forest Service roads** – often poorly located and built – are causing environmental damage. The network is too big for current budgets and management needs. Declining federal funds, increasing storm intensity and lack of attention, means roads will close themselves – reducing access and harming streams in the process. Roads are needed for forest management, recreation and multiple-use, but they must not cause unacceptable environmental damage. The current network of failing USFS roads causes:

- **Closed recreation roads and trails** – reduces access for hikers, anglers, boaters, birders, hunters, and other recreationists.
- **Increased sediment in streams** – smothers fish eggs, reduces drinking water quality, and changes stream flow dynamics.
- **Habitat fragmentation** – reduces important wildlife and fisheries habitat connectivity.

### OUR SUCCESSES SO FAR

In the **past six years**, the investment of nearly \$22 million in Washington State has resulted in:

- 1,780 miles of roads storm-proofed and/or maintained.
- 204 miles of obsolete roads decommissioned.
- 104 miles of trails storm-proofed and/or maintained.
- 44 stream crossings and bridges fixed – increasing fish passage.
- Approximately 352 – 528 jobs created or maintained.

### SOLUTIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015

- **Re-invest in the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program with \$45 million** to allow the Forest Service to make progress in addressing the problems, without jeopardizing our past investments.
- **Complete the comprehensive travel analysis process** for each forest - evaluating access needs, environmental risks, and costs of maintaining each forest's road system. This will help set priorities and ensure the system is "rightsized" to today's budgets and recreation and management needs.

Healthy coastal cutthroat trout in a forest stream.

*David Saiget photo*



## THE NEED IS STILL GREAT

- 78% of Forest Service watersheds in Washington State are harmed by roads and trails that are not up to today's standards.<sup>1</sup>
- \$48 million is the annual cost for basic Forest Service road maintenance in Washington State.
  - **Only 12% of the roads could be maintained with FY13 funding** (approximately \$6 million).<sup>2</sup>
- \$440 million is the estimated deferred maintenance need for Forest Service roads in Washington State.
  - Less than 1% of these deferred projects could be funded from FY13 LRT allocations (approximately \$2 million).<sup>3</sup>

## INVESTING IN ROAD REMEDIATION – WHAT WILL WE GET?

### JOBS

- Just \$1 million invested in restoration, creates or maintains an estimated 16-24 family-wage jobs.<sup>4</sup>
- \$43 is the average amount spent on gas, food, supplies, etc., per national forest visitor per day – often supporting local economies.<sup>5</sup>

### EQUITY

- Investments in roads by state and private forest landowners far surpass federal forests:
  - Approximately \$173 million<sup>6</sup> spent to improve over 20,025 miles of roads, abandon 5,002 miles of roads, fix 4,846 fish passage barriers.<sup>7</sup>
- Federal lands in Washington State are lagging far behind:
  - \$440 million is the Forest Service estimate to bring roads up to standard, replace fish blocking culverts, and remove roads that can't be supported.<sup>8</sup>

### TANGIBLE RESULTS

- Long-term reduction in maintenance and mitigation costs.
- Watersheds restored to a healthier condition.
- Public access ensured to key recreation areas and management units.
- Critical headwater streams improved supplying cool, clean water for uses downstream.
- Healthier fish habitat and clean water compliance.

One road removal and watershed restoration project generated almost 350 hours of work for three contractors working for LKE Corporation, making an hourly wage of between \$27-\$45 dollars.

“All restoration jobs are good jobs, I just wish they would do more.”

– Kim Erion;  
LKE Corporation

Gifford Pinchot  
Task Force photo



## WHO ARE WE?

Since 2007, our coalition – Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative (WWRI) – of conservation, recreation and fish-focused non-governmental organizations, state agencies, and tribes is dedicated to re-establishing and maintaining healthy aquatic and forest ecosystems in Washington's national forests. Our focus is on roads. We advocate for: the maintenance and repair of needed roads; the decommissioning of unneeded roads; and fish passage improvements.

We are working to ensure that the Forest Service has the funds it needs through the **Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program** to address problems caused by aging and deteriorating roads.

**The WWRI coalition asks for your continued support of the Legacy Road and Trails program with a national investment of \$45 million in FY 2015, focusing funding in the regions with the most need.**

## Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative Members

- > Alpine Lakes Protection Society
- > American Rivers
- > American Whitewater
- > Bark
- > Conservation Northwest
- > Gifford Pinchot Task Force
- > North Cascades Conservation Council
- > Olympic Forest Coalition
- > Pacific Rivers Council
- > Pilchuck Audubon Society
- > The Mountaineers
- > The Wilderness Society
- > Trout Unlimited
- > Upper Columbia United Tribes
- > Washington State Chapter, Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- > Washington State Chapter, Sierra Club
- > Washington State Department of Ecology
- > Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- > Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- > Washington Trails Association
- > Washington Wild
- > WildEarth Guardians

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Contact:** Marlies Wierenga, WWRI Coordinator – WildEarth Guardians, 503-278-0669, [mwierenga@wildearthguardians.org](mailto:mwierenga@wildearthguardians.org)

Stephen Bernath, Senior Policy Analyst – Washington State Department of Ecology, 360-407-6459, [sber461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:sber461@ecy.wa.gov)

**Legacy Roads and Trails Program background:**

<http://bitly.com/1c1H10h>

**WWRI website:** [www.washingtonwatersheds.org/](http://www.washingtonwatersheds.org/)

**Washington State Department of Ecology:**

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/wtrshedInit.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/wtrshedInit.html)

<sup>1</sup> USDA Forest Service. Watershed Condition Framework.

<sup>2</sup> USDA Forest Service Region 6 estimate, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> USDA Forest Service Region 6 estimate 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Nielsen-Pincus, Max and Cassandra Moseley. Economic and Employment Impacts of Forest and Watershed Restoration in Oregon. Ecosystem Workforce Program. Working Paper Number 24, Spring 2010.

<sup>5</sup> USDA Forest Service. National Visitor Use Monitoring Program. May 2012.

<sup>6</sup> WA Forest Protection Association estimate, 2014 (approximately \$13.3 million a year).

<sup>7</sup> WA Dept. of Natural Resources. Forest Practices HCP Annual Report 2013.

<sup>8</sup> USDA Forest Service Region 6 estimate 2014.