

County requests \$175,000 from feds to improve road from Camas to Polebridge

Updated March 31, 2009—Flathead County has requested \$175,000 in federal money to add crushed rock to the North Fork Road between Camas Creek Road and Polebridge, reports the **March 23 Kalispell Daily Inter Lake**.

“The local Resource Advisory Committee, a group of people representing government, recreation, education, the timber industry and other entities, recommends how to divvy up Flathead’s share of the federal money,” reports the Inter Lake.

“In mid-January, the U.S. Forest Service began distributing more than \$477 million to 41 states and Puerto Rico for improvements to public schools and roads and stewardship projects. An additional \$52 million is available this year to be used by local Resource Advisory Committees to fund projects to maintain infrastructure, improve the health of watersheds and ecosystems, protect communities, and strengthen local economies hurt by federal cutbacks in logging,” the story says.

For example, Larry Wilson reported at a March 10 meeting of the North Fork Landowners’ Association Road Committee that in 2008 \$60,000 of RAC funds were used to upgrade the road along Vance Hill, and that additional funds were spent on other North Fork projects. Wilson said that \$360,000 is available to our RAC, half of which must be spent on roads or trails that benefit the use of U.S. Forest Service lands.

Also at the meeting, committee member Steve Weber reported on his discussion about U.S. Forest Service road maintenance and economics with Earl Applecamp, the head forest engineer for the Flathead National Forest and the former U.S. Forest Service road engineer for Montana, Idaho and the Dakotas. Applecamp concluded that reconstruction of the North Fork Road to reduce maintenance problems (for example, incorporating additional grades, curves and narrow stretches to slow traffic) would make the road less safe in winter, increase driving time, and exceed the cost of paving the road.

The Road Committee has scheduled or is in the process of scheduling meetings about North Fork Road issues with Chas Cartwright, superintendent of Glacier National Park; Jimmy DeHerrera, district ranger for the Glacier View Ranger District of the Flathead National Forest; Earl Applecamp of the Flathead National Forest’s engineering and administrative staff office; Ben Conard, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Jim Lynch, director of the Montana Department of Transportation.

For a summary of the March 10 Road Committee meeting, **[click here](#)**.