



USDA Forest Service
Bitterroot National Forest

NEWS RELEASE

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Forest Service Announces Grant Opportunities for Rural Montana Communities

Applications accepted through January 15, 2004

Hamilton, MT October 27, 2003 —The USDA Forest Service's Bitterroot National Forest announced today that Montana communities may begin applying for 2004 Rural Community Assistance and National Fire Plan Economic Action Program grants.

The Rural Community Assistance (RCA) program is designed to assist rural communities that depend on natural resources, to strengthen community leadership and long-term social, environmental and economic sustainability. National Fire Plan Economic Action (NFP-EA) grants help communities test new or implement existing economic uses for small diameter wood and biomass resulting from wildland hazardous fuels reduction and other forest health related activities.

Both programs require at least 20% in matching, non-federal contributions. They are open to communities with populations of 10,000 or less, within 100 miles of a National Forest or Grassland. Grants may be awarded for either the planning or implementation phase of projects. Local governments, tribal councils or districts, and nonprofit institutions representing unincorporated communities are eligible to apply.

RCA projects funded in the past include: developing community action plans; establishing or improving community/tourist facilities; developing tourism or other alternative business enterprises;

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and training/placement programs for displaced loggers and miners. RCA grants of up to \$5,000 are available for community planning and up to \$20,000 for implementation of projects in a community plan. Only one project will be accepted per community.

NFP-EA grants target economic projects that use small diameter wood or biomass removed during fuels reduction. Examples include biomass energy, compost, pulp, landscaping mulch, animal bedding, and small roundwood construction demonstrations. Proposals for either the development or implementation of such projects are eligible. Projects designed to expand existing markets or develop new markets are also encouraged. Grants awarded for the NFP-EA program can range up to \$30,000, with amounts up to \$100,000 possible in exceptional circumstances.

Grant information and materials are available on the web at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1-r4/spf/grants/index.html> or by visiting one of the Bitterroot National Forest offices. An official of the community (i.e., mayor, county commissioner, tribal leader, etc.) should submit proposals to the Bitterroot National Forest – Forest Supervisor’s office, marked to the attention of Nan Christianson, no later than close of business on January 15, 2004. Applicants selected for funding will be notified within 60 days of this deadline.

For assistance in applying or further information, contact Nan Christianson at 363-7113 or Pat Gordon at 363-7173.