

# Commission Background Paper 8A-01

## Implications of Aging Infrastructure on Federal Lands Highways

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### Introduction

This paper is part of a series of special gap analyses to be prepared for the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission authorized in Section 1909 of SAFETEA-LU. These analyses are intended to address issues that are relevant to the Commission's charge outlined in Section 1909 that were not fully explored in an initial set of briefing papers that were prepared for the Commission. These papers will serve as background material in developing the analyses to be presented in the final report of the Commission. This particular paper correlates to Paper 4I-03, "Implications of Aging Infrastructure on Long Term Preservation and Reconstruction Needs".

The intent of this paper is to inform the Commission on the existence and purpose of the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP); briefly describe the unique requirements of Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) partners; provide information on the condition and needs associated with public roads and bridges that provide access to/within Federal lands; describe the benefits of the FLHP; and provide suggestions for the Commission's future consideration. Also see Briefing Paper 8A-02 for information on the financing of the FLHP.

### Background and Key Findings

The following key findings are provided for the Commission's consideration:

- The total area of America's 50 States is 2.3 billion acres. The Federal Government has title to about 650 million acres, or about 30 percent of the total area of the United States.
- Urban growth is moving closer to many Federal land areas thereby placing new pressures on the natural landscapes including but not limited to increased demand for recreational activities and energy/alternative energy sources. The growth of domestic and international tourism contributes significantly to increasing visitation rates on Federal lands. These increasing demands place greater emphasis on the need for adequate public transportation access, cross-jurisdictional collaboration and integrated planning.
- Unlike many of the topics before the Commission, the FLHP provides a focus on supporting **rural America** as well. The FLHP provides public access that supports opportunities for recreational travel and tourism, promotes and sustains economic development of edge communities located on the outskirts of Federal lands, and benefits communities within Indian reservations by providing the critical access between Indian housing and education, emergency centers, and places of employment – to name a few.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TEA-21 Reauthorization Resource Paper, Bureau of Indian Affairs, May 2003.

- Before the 1980s, all Federal road improvements were dependent upon various annual Federal Agency appropriations and had to compete with non-transportation needs. This haphazard and unpredictable approach caused many road systems on Federal lands to fall into a state of disrepair.
- In 1982-3, the 97th Congress and the President recognized there existed a Federal responsibility to provide effective and reliable transportation access to Federally-owned lands across America and that a coordinated program and reliable funding mechanism was needed to accomplish this goal; thus, the creation of the Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP). Subsequent Congresses and Administrations have continued to endorse and grow the FLHP to address this set of Federal transportation requirements.
- A Federal role and responsibility continue to exist to provide effective transportation access to and within Federal lands. Federal funding will continue to be needed and serve a critical source of funds to support this program.

### **Federal Lands Highway Program: What is it and why did Congress create it?**

The FLHP was created by the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) and signed by the President on January 6, 1983. The program is subdivided into five core areas, namely, the Forest Highway (FH) Program, Park Roads and Parkways (PRP) Program, Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) Program, Indian Reservations Roads (IRR) Program, and the Refuge Roads (RR) Program. The primary purpose of the FLHP is to provide financial resources and technical assistance to support a coordinated program of public roads that service the transportation needs of Federal and Indian lands. It brought together for the first time a consolidated and coordinated long-range program funded under the Highway Trust Fund. Before the 1980s, all road improvements were dependent upon the unpredictability of the various annual Federal Agency appropriations competing with non-transportation needs. This caused many road systems on/near Federal lands to fall into a state of dilapidation.

Multi-year FLHP authorizations provided an opportunity to develop a realistic, long-range priority program of projects based on adequate lead time for transportation planning resulting in the development of sound road improvements. The opening paragraph in United States Code 23, Section 204 (a) Establishment, effectively summarizes Congress's rationale for the program. It reads - *"Recognizing the need for all Federal roads that are public roads to be treated under uniform policies similar to the policies that apply to Federal-aid highways, there is established a coordinated Federal lands highway program that shall apply to public lands highways, park roads and parkways, and Indian reservation roads and bridges."*<sup>2</sup> Later, in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) refuge roads were added to the FLH program and these groups of roads serve as the core program today. FLHP funds may be used for purposes including but not limited to the planning, design, construction and rehabilitation of public roads and bridges in addition to serving as the Federal Share Payable or "match" on other projects governed by Title 23 and Title 49 (Chapter 53).

### **Types of Federal Lands**

The total area of America's 50 States is 2.3 billion acres. The Federal Government has title to about 650 million acres, or about 30 percent of the total area of the United States. Federal and Indian lands are managed by various FLMAs within the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture,

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<sup>2</sup> United States Code, Title 23, Sec. 204 (a), pg. 148.

and Defense. A FLMA is defined as any Federal agency or organization that manages or maintains a portion of the lands that are under the direct jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

Each FLMA and each individual site managed by the FLMA has a unique mission for preserving and protecting its resources while providing access to those resources for the enjoyment of the public. Federal and Indian lands have many uses including but not limited to recreation, range and grazing, timber, minerals, watersheds, fish and wildlife, and wilderness. These lands are also managed to protect natural, scenic, scientific, and cultural values. In recent years, resource extraction and cutting of timber have been significantly reduced. At the same time, recreation use has significantly increased.

Over three quarters of Americans participate in active outdoor recreation each year ranging from bird watching to biking and hiking to hunting which contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy.<sup>3</sup> For example, the United States Forest Service (USFS) oversees 175 national forests and grasslands that welcome 205 million visits.<sup>4</sup> The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) oversees 3,500 recreation sites that attract 56 million visitors a year. The National Park Service's (NPS) 390 units attract 274 million visitors annually. The FWS' 545 national wildlife refuges welcome 72.6 million visitors a year, and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) hosts 90 million visitors at its 308 recreation sites a year.<sup>5</sup> In total, there are over 700 million visits per year to Federal lands facilities.

### **Increased Urbanization**

Urban areas are spreading toward Federal lands including but not limited to national parks, wildlife refuges, Indian reservations, forests, and other wilderness areas. As the U.S. population continues to grow and move toward new areas, fresh considerations on the natural landscape emerge in response to changing demographics. For instance, citizens are looking for more recreational opportunities and the demands for energy and alternative energy sources are increasing, thereby creating greater demands for transportation access to our Federal lands. In summary, larger numbers of people living in proximity to Federally-managed lands result in:

- ❑ Increased recreation;
- ❑ Increased resource demands;
- ❑ Increased interaction between citizens and land managers;
- ❑ Cross jurisdictional issues; and
- ❑ Public access issues.<sup>6</sup>

### **Difference Between Federal Lands Highway and Federal-aid Program(s)**

Before we proceed further, it is important to clarify some terms. The FHWA administers both the "Federal Lands Highway" and "Federal-aid" Program(s). What is the difference?

The Federal Lands Highway Program provides funding (about \$1 billion per year) for constructing, preserving, and improving public roads and highways that access and cross through

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<sup>3</sup> Outdoor Industry Foundation "The Active Outdoor Recreation Economy" Fall 2006.

<sup>4</sup> USFS Website 2004 National Visitor Use Report.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Department of the Interior News Release September 8, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Interior's Strategic Human Capital Management Plan, pg. 13.

federally owned and tribal lands. These roads are not a State or local government responsibility, but a Federal responsibility. Conversely, the Federal-aid Highway Program provides Federal financial resources (about \$40 billion/year) and technical assistance to State and local governments for constructing, preserving, and improving the roads that make up the National Highway System and the Interstate System.

### **Program Delivery Through Federal Partnerships**

The FLHP is administered through partnerships and interagency agreements between FHWA's Office of Federal Lands Highway and FLMAs and Tribal customers. The four core FLH partners include the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), USFS, NPS, and FWS.

The FLH Program also supports other important FLMA partners by providing funding (about \$6 million per year total) for integrated transportation planning, bridge inspections and other technical assistance activities to the BLM, Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (MSDDC), U.S. Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), U.S. Navy, Tennessee Valley Authority, and the BOR. FLH also works closely with many State and Territorial partners.

Prior to the 1982 Act, FHWA's role focused primarily on serving as a transportation service provider to FLMAs. The FLMAs leveraged their own funding for transportation projects and sought the expertise of DOT/FHWA to plan, design, and construct their roads and bridges. FHWA's initial partnership began with the USFS in 1914 and expanded to the NPS in the mid-1920s. To date, FHWA has fostered partnerships with over fifteen Federal and tribal organizations.

**One of the primary factors that has contributed to the success of these long-term partnerships is that FHWA and FLMAs have learned to respect and leverage each other's mission, i.e., they work together to build roads that meet the transportation community's standards while balancing, respecting and protecting the resources in which they are located.**

After the passage of STAA in 1982, FHWA's role changed to include stewardship and oversight responsibility of the Highway Trust Fund dollars that fund the FLHP, while still retaining the transportation service provider role that initially defined their early relationships. Although stewardship is a shared responsibility between FHWA and FLMAs, generally, FHWA is responsible for overall program oversight and technical delivery, while the FLMA is responsible for project selection and prioritization and safeguarding the FLMA's values.

### **What Roads Are Supported by the FLHP?**

The Federal Lands Highway Program provides funding for transportation facilities that are owned by Federal, State and/or Local Governments – depending upon the program. For the Park Roads and Parkways and Refuge Roads Programs, FLHP funds are used predominantly for Federally-owned, public roads within the boundaries (typically) of the park or refuge. Conversely, the roads that are outside the boundaries of parks and refuges are State and/or locally owned roads. Federal-aid programs (e.g., National Highway System Program, Surface Transportation Program) support these transportation facilities that are outside the boundaries of parks and refuges but provide the vital linkages to and from them.

In regard to the Forest Highway Program (a component of the Public Lands Highway Program) and the Indian Reservation Roads Program, there exist multiple owners of public roads that are all eligible for FLHP funds. Many of the roads that provide public access to, through, or from National forests and/or Indian reservations are owned by State and/or local Governments. This point begs the question – If these roads are State and local roads, why use Federal-aid program funds to maintain them? In 1982, Congress recognized that many of these State and local roads were falling in serious disrepair because they were not a high priority compared to other state and local projects. In the STAA of 1982, Congress maintained that a Federal responsibility existed to support these State and local roads because the preponderance of travel on these roads was generated based upon the existence of Federally-owned lands in the immediate vicinity. Put simply, most of the traffic on these State and local roads that surround and access National Forests and Indian reservations is attributable to visitors and/or tribal residents, respectively. In addition to State and locally-owned roads, the USFS and BIA also own transportation facilities that provide public access to/through National Forests and Indian reservations. These roads and bridges are also eligible for FLHP funds.

## **Core FLH Programs and Partners: Snapshot of Aging Infrastructure and Needs**

### **Indian Reservation Roads Program**

The IRR system provides access to and within Indian reservations, Indian lands, Indian communities, and Alaska Native villages. There are two categories of IRR. The first category consists of approximately 27,000 miles of public roads that are owned and maintained by the BIA and Tribal governments. These are referred to as BIA system roads. The second category consists of about 59,000 miles of State and local public roads, and other Federal roads. These roads provide access to or through Indian reservations. Over 65 percent of the IRR system is unimproved, earth, and gravel. These conditions make it difficult for residents of Indian country to travel to hospitals, schools, stores, and employment centers. Approximately 31,000 miles of the IRR roads are paved. The condition of IRR roads is 5 percent Good, 10 percent Fair and 85 percent Poor.<sup>7</sup> About 25 percent of BIA owned, unpaved roads are constructed to a recognizable standard. There are approximately 7,652 bridges within the entire IRR system of which 928 are BIA or tribally owned. Approximately 29 percent of all IRR bridges are either functionally obsolete and/or structurally deficient.<sup>8</sup> The annual fatal accidents on IRR exceed 4 times the national average. A significant number of these accidents are due to poor road conditions. In excess of \$26 billion in public and/or private resources would be required to address the backlog of improvement needs to restore roads and bridges to good/fair condition(s).<sup>9</sup>

### **Park Roads and Parkways Program**

The NPS includes National parks, parkways, monuments, historic sites, military parks, battlefields, memorials, recreational areas, and scenic waterways. There are about 8,000 miles of park roads and parkways (PR&P) of which approximately 5,317 miles are paved. The condition of paved roads is 13 percent Good, 40 percent Fair, and 47 percent Poor.<sup>10</sup> There are approximately 1,415 bridges and 63 tunnels. Approximately 1.8 percent of the bridges are

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<sup>7</sup> BIA Road Inventory, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> National Bridge Inventory System, Federal Highway Administration, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> BIA Road Inventory, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Federal Lands Highway, Park Roads and Parkways, Roadway Inventory Program, Cycle C, 2006.

structurally deficient and 22.5 percent are functionally obsolete.<sup>11</sup> Please note many bridges identified as functionally obsolete are safe and usable but they are single lane bridges constructed of timber, thus their designation as functionally obsolete. About 40 fatal accidents occur annually in the national park system. The majority of vehicle fatalities occur in 12 national park units. In 2002, the NPS stated that \$470 million per year over six years was needed to restore the existing infrastructure to a satisfactory level. In total, in excess of \$2.8 billion in public and/or private resources would be required to address the backlog of improvement needs to restore road and bridge conditions to good/fair condition(s).<sup>12</sup>

### **Public Lands Highway Program**

The Public Lands Highway (PLH) program consists of two components, namely, the Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) program and the Forest Highways (FH) program. The PLHD and Forest Highways Programs receive 34 percent and 66 percent of PLH funds, respectively. The PLHD program provides funds for public roads serving Federal and Indian lands that are on the Federal-aid primary and secondary systems, i.e., State and/or locally owned public roads providing access to, within, or adjacent to national forests and grasslands. Typically, these State and local roads are not deemed high priority compared to other Federal-aid projects yet a Federal responsibility exists to maintain them. During the past 3-4 years, the PLHD program has been 100 percent earmarked by Congress.

The second component of the PLH program is the FH Program and it is administered in partnership with the USFS. The USFS has jurisdiction over the national forest system that includes a total of 155 national forests and 20 grasslands covering approximately 191 million acres in 40 states plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Of the 29,000 miles of Forest Highways, approximately 22,000 miles are paved. The condition of paved roads is 20 percent Good, 61 percent Fair and 19 percent Poor.<sup>13</sup> There are over 3,094 bridges of which approximately 10 percent are deficient and 13 percent are functionally obsolete.<sup>14</sup> In 2002, the USFS recommended that an annual budget of about \$340 million over six years would restore their FH infrastructure to satisfactory levels. In excess of \$2 billion in public and/or private resources would be required to address the backlog of improvement needs to restore road and bridge conditions to good/fair condition(s).<sup>15</sup> For clarification purposes, there exists another important set of Federally-owned public roads inside the boundaries of national forests, namely Public Forest Service Roads (PFSR), which are addressed below under Non-Core Programs.

### **Refuge Roads Program**

The FWS manages the National Wildlife Refuge System. This system consists of 553 wildlife refuges and wetland management districts encompassing 93 million acres of land. It receives about 34 million recreation visits per year and has a variety of existing or potential roads, trails, boat ramps, access points, bicycle trails, and viewing areas. The FWS maintains about 5,074 miles of public roads commonly referred to as refuge roads (RR), almost 5000 parking lots, and over 337 bridges. Approximately 400 miles are paved. The condition of the paved roads is 24

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<sup>11</sup> National Bridge Inventory System, Federal Highway Administration, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Highway Trust Fund Reauthorization Resource Paper (Draft), National Park Service, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Federal Lands Highway, Forest Highways Program, Roadway Inventory Program, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> National Bridge Inventory System, Federal Highway Administration, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Transportation Strategy for Roads Serving the National Forests, U.S. Forest Service, July 5, 2002.

percent Good, 51 percent Fair and 25 percent Poor.<sup>16</sup> In excess of \$1.9 billion in public and/or private resources would be required to address the backlog of improvement needs.<sup>17</sup>

## **Non-Core FLH Programs and Partners: Snapshot of Aging Infrastructure and Needs**

To ensure the Commission has a complete picture of the aging transportation infrastructure requirements on Federal lands, this paper includes both the infrastructure needs identified by FLH core partners in addition to other applicable needs identified by the FLMAs. Federal agencies including but not limited to the BLM, BOR, USACOE, and the MSDDC all own public roads that support not only their mission but also users within their communities.

**Today, a dedicated program does not exist to support these non-FLHP Federal partners' transportation infrastructure needs. Capital improvements for their transportation needs are funded through their own organizations' budgets.**

Typically, local transportation infrastructure needs rank low in priority against other competing non-transportation priorities. Yet, the traveling public has an expectation of a seamless transportation system. In the absence of a dedicated transportation funding source, these FLMAs lack the valuable resources to develop long range transportation plans, maintain their roads satisfactorily, collect and act upon safety data – to name a few ramifications. The FLMAs who do not possess a dedicated funding program under the FLHP have, and continue to, make appeals to the Department of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget for consideration and inclusion in the FLH Program. These FLMAs have provided White Papers to the Department that articulate their issues regarding aging transportation infrastructure and its effect on their respective missions, safety, local congestion, and the economic vitality of surrounding communities. The FLMAs' White Papers are available to the Commission upon request.

### **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**

The BLM manages and protects 264 million acres in 12 western States and is responsible for approximately 81,000 miles of BLM roads within the boundaries of their lands. The condition of these roads is 10 percent Good, 43 percent Fair, and 47 percent Poor. Of the 81,000 miles, BLM identified approximately 8,000 miles of public roads, classified as arterial roads, which generate the most traffic for multiple purpose including recreation and tourism. This subset of roads connects to State and local roads adjacent to BLM lands. The BLM also owns and manages over 960 bridges. The BLM estimates that 69 percent of bridges are in good condition and 15 percent are in poor condition. In excess of \$163 million in public and or private resources would be needed to address the backlog of improvement needs.<sup>18</sup>

Similar to the USFS, there are State and local roads adjacent to BLM lands that typically would not otherwise be eligible for Federal highway funding even though they provide important access to Federal lands. During the development of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the Senate recommended the creation of a BLM-State designated system that would include adjoining State and local roads that provide access to BLM sites. The concept continued

<sup>16</sup> Federal Lands Highway, Refuge Roads Program, Roadway Inventory Program, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Roads, Parking Lots, Bridges and Trails: Conditions and Future Needs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, July 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Roads, Bridges and Trails: Conditions and Future Needs, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, August 2002.

to evolve and in 1995/1996, BLM and FHWA were actively pursuing the establishment of a Land Management Highway (LMH) System. A key purpose of the LMH system was to provide improved public access to recreational facilities and BLM Back Country Byways. In 2002, BLM identified over 7,200 miles and 100 bridges for LMH designation. The condition of LMH roads is 29 percent Good, 45 percent Fair, and 26 percent Poor while 93 percent of LMH bridges were in Good to Fair condition. In excess of \$180 million in public and/or private resources would be required to address the backlog of improvement needs for LMH roads.<sup>19</sup>

### **Bureau of Reclamation**

The BOR administers 348 dams/reservoirs in 17 Western States and manages in partnership 308 recreation sites. One of the most notable reservoirs is that created by the Hoover Dam. Based on a preliminary inventory in 2002, the BOR owns approximately 1,176 miles of public roads and 400 bridges that are open and intended for use by the general public. Funding for their roads and bridges are provided through BOR appropriations. The condition of paved roads and bridges is estimated to be 65 percent Good, 25 percent Fair, and 10 percent Poor. Approximately \$1 million per year in public and/or private resources would be required to address the BOR's backlog of needs.<sup>20</sup>

### **United State Army Corps of Engineers**

The USACOE is the largest provider of water-based recreation. Corps projects having recreation facilities are located in 43 of 50 States. There are approximately 7800 miles of roads owned and maintained by the Corps. The condition of the roads is estimated to be 20 percent Good, 40 percent Fair, and 40 percent Poor. The Corps also own 250 bridges of which 6 percent are structurally deficient and 17 percent are functionally obsolete. The estimated cost in public and/or private resources to bring all roads and bridges to good condition is \$508 million.<sup>21</sup>

### **Department of Defense/Military Surface Deployment & Distribution Command (MSDDC)**

There are approximately 500 major military installations in the United States, encompassing about 24 million acres of land within these military installations. Most installations roads are open to use by dependents, visitors, and other members of the public, although some may require a security clearance and/or clearance at the entrance gate. Roads on military installations serve housing, offices, commissaries, recreational facilities, hospitals, and local traffic crossing the installation. The DOD regulations allow public access to unimproved recreational facilities such as lakes, beaches, and wooded areas for bases within the continental United States. About 24,000 miles of military installation roads (MIR) are open to the public. The condition of base roads is 17 percent Good, 12 percent Fair, and 71 percent Poor. Approximately 37,000 traffic accidents occur annually. The annual cost of these accidents is estimated to be \$530 million. Annually, there are 55 fatalities, 4,200 injuries, and more than 3.0 million lost person-hours attributable to crashes. The MSDDC estimates that an annual allocation of \$35 million per year over six years would restore DOD's roads to acceptable conditions and reduce their fatality and

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Transportation Resource Paper, Bureau of Reclamation, November 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Reauthorization Resource Paper, US Army Corps of Engineers, December 2002.

accident numbers significantly, equating to a backlog in excess of \$210 million needed from public and/or private resources.<sup>22</sup>

### U.S. Forest Service

In addition the Forest Highways, the USFS maintains a separate set of Federally-owned, public roads inside the boundaries of national forests, namely, the Public Forest Service Roads (PFSR). Many of these PFSR roads originally served the timber industries but are now used by the public. There are approximately 60,000 miles of PFSRs that provide access to national forest sites, recreational areas, and wildernesses. The FLHP does not provide funding for capital improvements for these roads yet the public expects a seamless transportation system. In that light, the USFS has made repeated appeals to DOT and OMB to support PFSRs under the FLHP. In 2002, the USFS reported that 13 percent of these roads were in Good condition, 37 percent Fair, and 50 percent in poor condition and pose immediate threats to public safety. About 1,000 miles of Forest Roads are closed annually to passenger car traffic because of unsafe road conditions. These closures preclude Americans and international visitors from accessing national forests and adversely affect local economies because of restrained recreational opportunities. The estimated cost in public and/or private resources to bring PFSRs to a good/fair condition is \$4.3 billion.<sup>23</sup>

### Value of the Federal Lands Highways Program to America

Together, travel, tourism and recreation comprise one of the largest industries in the United States and represent over \$730 billion contribution to the US economy. Recreation is one of the fastest growing sectors of United States economy and represents a significant portion of the travel and tourism industry. **Over 20 percent of all recreation activities are conducted on Federal lands.** In 2007, the U.S. is projected to host more than 54 million international visitors, generating \$113 billion in travel exports. The forecast for 2006-2010 predicts that by 2010 international arrivals will reach 63 million, an increase of 28 percent between 2005 and 2010, and generate over \$135 billion in travel exports that year.<sup>24</sup>

Not only is travel and tourism a significant part of our nation's economy, it is also an integral part of many local, rural economies in communities adjacent to Federal and Indian lands. The Corps of Engineers estimated that \$6 billion was spent on trip expenses in rural communities around Corps' lakes. This \$6 billion sum translated into supporting over 123,000 local jobs and generating \$2 billion in income to the local communities.<sup>25</sup> Conversely, the FWS estimates that visitation will double between 2001 and 2009, i.e., increasing from about 38 million visits to over 61 million. By 2009, the value of regional sales, most in rural America, will increase to an estimated value of \$1.054 billion and employment income will increase to over \$428 million.<sup>26</sup> Federal lands also provide substantial economic benefit from resource outputs including grazing, timber harvesting, oil extraction, mining, electrical generation, and related activities.

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<sup>22</sup> Reauthorization Resource Paper, Military Traffic Management Command Transportation Engineering Agency, July 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Public Forest Service Roads, U.S. Forest Service, August 15, 2002.

<sup>24</sup> American Recreation Coalition's Website, January 5, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Reauthorization Resource Paper, US Army Corps of Engineers, December 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Roads, Parking Lots, Bridges and Trails: Conditions and Future Needs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, July 2002.

Recreation, travel and tourism, and resource outputs are absolutely dependent on a quality transportation infrastructure. The FLHP is a critical component to realizing the economic and health benefits that Federal lands have to offer. What has the FLHP done for America? During the past four fiscal years, the Office of Federal Lands Highway, in collaboration with the NPS, FWS, and USFS, successfully completed over 207 construction projects with a value of more than \$580 million, improved over 2900 miles of roads, and improved approximately 135 bridges.<sup>27</sup> During the same period, the IRR Program provided funding for over 1000 road construction projects with a value of over \$880M and improved over 850 miles of road.<sup>28</sup>

One technical service FHWA provides to NPS, USFS, and FWS is inventorying the condition of Federal Lands Highway roads and bridges. The inventory of roads includes three descriptions, namely, Good, Fair, and Poor condition(s). Based on the past 3 years of data, the pavement condition for:

- ❑ Forest Highways (FH) has increased under Good from 41 percent to 50 percent;
- ❑ Refuge Roads (RR) has increased under Good from 24 percent to 41 percent; and
- ❑ Park Roads and Parkways (PRP) has remained static at about 35 percent Good condition.

In light of rapidly growing visitation rates, increasing inventories of public roads; and escalating construction costs, the FLHP has delivered projects that either maintained or, in many areas, improved the condition of partners' transportation system(s).

### **Looking Forward: Areas for Consideration**

- Urban growth is migrating closer to Federal Lands' areas; therefore integrated transportation planning between multiple parties is critical.<sup>29</sup> There is an opportunity to plan transportation projects and solutions in a more integrated, cross-jurisdictional, systematic manner. Today, there are many instances where multiple FLMA properties are adjacent to one another or are in close proximity. This situation provides an opportunity to pool Federal agencies' resources and/or plan, design, and construct projects more efficiently.
- Improving operations of the transportation network is a viable and effective strategy to improve traffic flow and meet growing transportation access demands on the more popular and congested Federal lands.
- Greater exploration into the use of Public-Private Partnerships for providing and managing infrastructure is recommended.
- There continues to be a need for a Federal, sustainable funding source that supports effective transportation access to Federal lands.

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<sup>27</sup> Federal Lands Highway Program: FY 2004 Annual Report, Federal Highway Administration Annual Reports.

<sup>28</sup> IRR Program Data, January 2007.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Forest Service Presentation, Great Outdoors Week, Public Lands Access Forum Organizing Meeting, June 15, 2006.