

in Idaho. They include constructing roads to provide access to new recreation areas on reservoir projects constructed by the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, private and public power developments, State water agencies, and others. I know you are familiar with the existing roads to some of our existing recreation areas. Many of these roads have outlived their design life and need to be rebuilt to an adequate standard to accommodate the ever-increasing number of visitors that use the national forest system.

I want also to point out that new access roads continue to be needed to provide ground support for fighting forest and range fires. We do not believe that new technology will eliminate the need for adequate road access to fight fires. I want to emphasize that putting out fires requires on-the-ground work by men and machines. We need roads to get these forces to the fires fast.

In fiscal years 1968 and 1969 under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1966, we expect to construct 12,382 miles of forest development roads. Of this amount, we expect to build 2,414 miles out of appropriated funds. The remaining 9,968 miles will be built by timber sale purchasers. Government funds will be used for the required surveys, the plans and construction supervision of these operator-built roads.

Although these roads may be constructed by timber operators as a part of the sale contract, they are in effect an investment of Federal funds. We have to insure that these roads will be designed and constructed insofar as possible in a manner that will best meet the present and future public needs.

We also expect to construct 726 miles of trails. We now have 101,500 miles of trails in the national forest system. This is 78 percent of all the forest and recreation trails in the Nation. Yet the demand and the need of trails continues to grow. The system must be improved, expanded, and reconstructed. Consideration must be given to geographical uses. Most of our trails originally served simply as a way through the country. Many now need to be relocated to take advantage of scenic vistas, to provide access to special points of interest, to follow more attractive routes, and to provide better distribution of hunters and people seeking this type of recreation experience. I am sure you know that even the national wilderness system would have little use without a trail system.

The Department of Agriculture also supports the forest highway system and the public lands highway programs which are administered by the Department of Transportation through the Bureau of Public Roads. Because of its relationship to the national forests, the forest highway system represents the main traffic arteries through or adjacent to the forests. Forest highways provide primary access to, and outlet from, our forest development road and trail system. Section 5(3) of these bills would authorize appropriation of \$33 million for forest highways in each of fiscal years 1970 and 1971.

Rural life continues to be one of the major concerns of our Department. We must intensify our efforts to assure rural families their rightful share in the increased economic and cultural opportunities of our Nation. Their pattern of living must be comparable to that of the rest of our citizens. The forest development road and trail program together with the program for forest highways are vital to the economic stability of many small rural communities near and adjacent