



POLK COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Putting Your Federal Tax Dollars to Work: Federal Lands Access Funds Secured for Major Roadway Improvement Project

Polk County, Oregon — Polk County is proud to announce a major infrastructure improvement project made possible through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). This project, which focuses on the Mitchell Street and Black Rock Road corridor outside Falls City, is a critical investment in the safety and accessibility of a key transportation route. Thanks to the FLAP grant funding of \$9,826,275.77 and Polk County's matching share of \$1,124,661.23, and easement donations from the City of Falls City, this project demonstrates the impactful use of federal tax dollars to improve local infrastructure.

Project Scope

Mitchell Street and Black Rock Road form a vital transportation link for the city of Falls City, Oregon, and the surrounding areas, serving both local residents and significant logging and recreation traffic. Currently, the road is a narrow, two-lane gravel route with varying width. It crosses the Little Luckiamute River via a structurally deficient, single-lane bridge, creating safety concerns and ongoing maintenance challenges, especially as traffic volume increases in the coming years.

The project spans approximately 0.95 miles, beginning at the intersection of Mitchell Street and Park Street, and extends west past an unnamed logging road near Lower Berry Quarry. Planned improvements will transform this gravel road into a durable, all-weather two-lane roadway, ensuring safer, more reliable access for both local, visiting, and commercial vehicles. The upgrade will include the replacement of the Little Luckiamute River bridge to meet current safety standards, as well as essential culvert replacements at Dutch Creek to protect water and habitat.



Partnership and Community Impact

This project is a collaboration between Polk County, Falls City and Federal Highway Administration, all of which are responsible for maintaining the roadway. Approximately half of the road lies within Falls City's limits, where it is known as Mitchell Street, while the remaining portion is under Polk County jurisdiction as Black Rock Road. By partnering on this effort, the County and City are ensuring the long-term viability of the route for all users and protection of wetlands and streams.

"We're excited to see these federal funds at work, enhancing a vital transportation corridor in our community," said Board of Commissioners Chair, Craig Pope. "With logging traffic increasing, it's crucial that we upgrade this road to improve safety, reduce ongoing maintenance needs, and ensure access during all weather conditions."

Environmental and Property Considerations

The project will require the acquisition of approximately 2.95 acres of right-of-way, affecting up to 20 properties with 12 different owners. Additionally, utility relocations and environmental mitigation measures, including addressing wetlands, fish passage, and stream encroachments, will be necessary to complete the improvements in compliance with state and federal regulations.

Polk County is committed to working closely with property owners and environmental agencies to ensure the project moves forward smoothly and responsibly, with a focus on minimizing disruption and protecting natural resources.

About the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

The Federal Lands Access Program provides funding to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within federal lands. FLAP grants are awarded to projects that enhance access to federal lands, supporting rural and urban economies alike.

