

Dupont pondering tax to fund road maintenance; North Fork dust abatement unlikely in 2009

Posted June 3, 2009—A county vehicle-registration tax of \$4 to \$5 per vehicle under consideration by Flathead County Commissioner Jim Dupont would provide about \$2 million annually to the county Road and Bridge Department, North Fork Landowners' Association Road Committee members Margaret Heaphy and Ed Heger learned at a May 27 meeting with Dupont in Kalispell.

Dupont said only 7 percent of the county roads have a major dust problem. With the extra money he hopes to acquire through the proposed tax, the dust problem on these roads could be addressed more aggressively. Dupont plans to propose the tax to voters next fall.

Since the Road Committee met with Dupont in January, Dupont said he has met with the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Border Patrol and the Montana Department of Transportation to help with county road maintenance.

For a summary of the meeting with Dupont, [click here](#).

On May 11, Heaphy met with Flathead County Public Works Director Dave Prunty and Operations Manager Guy Foy at their office in Kalispell. She was told that while the North Fork Road will see some new gravel south of Polebridge this year, the county does not plan to implement dust abatement on the road in 2009.

Prunty confirmed that \$96,500 in federal Resource Advisory Committee funds will be used to put gravel on about 10 miles of the road from the Camas Creek Road junction north. The county plans to apply the gravel to the road mid-September through mid-October, depending on completion of other valley work, Heaphy was told. Work will include cutting the banks where needed, shaping the ditches, and maintaining culverts.

In other news, Heaphy also was told that the bridge over Teepee Creek will be widened, and that the "dust deputy"—who patrols dusty county roads on a rotating basis, writing speeding tickets—went back on duty May 4. Also, narrowing of the North Fork Road south of the Camas Creek junction is in the early planning stages; community input on the proposal is welcome.

Heaphy also learned that county engineers are developing a plan that will prioritize maintenance of the county's 400 miles of paved and 700 miles of unpaved roads. The matrix system takes into account such factors as number of cars per day, connectivity, bus route, residential density, maintenance cost and safety. Heaphy was told the management plan will be finished this fall.

For a summary of the meeting with Prunty and Foy, [click here](#).

On April 23, committee members met with Flathead National Forest District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera and Earl Applekamp, Flathead National Forest engineering and administrative staff officer, regarding the U.S. Forest Service's limited responsibility for maintenance of the North Fork Road, and how the forest generates funds for county road maintenance. For a summary of the meeting, [click here](#).

The committee plans to make a full report at the June 6 NFLA meeting at 8 p.m. at Sondreson Hall, and would like to hear from North Forkers both at the meeting and before then by e-mail at northforkroad@live.com.