MEMORANDUM

TO: County Commission Chairs and County Managers
   Public Education Department, School Budget Section

FROM: Robert M. Apodaca, Director
       Local Government Division, DFA

DATE: October 21, 2008

SUBJECT: Federal Forest Reserve Payments to States

As you may be aware, the federal law relating to the Federal Forest Reserve payments (Public Law 106-393, October 30, 2000, known as the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000) has been amended and reauthorized for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 by Public Law 110-343 (the “SRS Act”).

This memorandum, along with the attachments, explains important deadlines that must be met so that counties can make decisions that affect their federal forest reserve funding.

Description of Attachments:
Attachment A – October 17, 2008 letter to states from the Forest Service, Albuquerque Service Center.
Attachment B – October 17, 2008 letter to regional foresters from the Forest Service, Washington Office. This letter provides a summary of the major changes under P.L. 110-343 and should be read by counties prior to filling out the election form.
Attachment C – FY2008 Payments to States Election Form to be submitted by counties to the Local Government Division (LGD).
Attachment D - Spreadsheet showing projected county payments based on the two options that counties must choose from (1) 25% Rolling Average and (2) Full Funding Amount.

Deadlines:
By November 7, 2008, counties submit Attachment C to LGD:

By Mail:  Brenda L. Suazo-Giles
           NM Department of Finance and Administration
           Local Government Division
           Bataan Memorial Building, Suite 201
           Santa Fe, NM  87501

By Fax:   (505) 827-4340

By E-mail: BrendaL.Suazo-Giles@state.nm.us

By November 14, 2008, LGD compiles and forwards county election information to Forest Service.
October 21, 2008
Forest Reserve Memorandum to Counties

Please keep in mind that November 14th is a deadline that will not be extended. By federal law, failure to submit county elections by this deadline will result in the county returning 15 percent of its share of the State payment to the U.S. Treasury in lieu of making a 15 to 20 percent allocation for Title II and/or Title III projects.

Based on the projected full payment amounts, there are increases for all New Mexico counties as compared to 2007 actual payments (see Attachment D). Because some of the projected increases are significant, counties should pay close attention to the allocation requirements for Title II and Title III projects as summarized on Attachment B (pages 2 and 3).

For information on developing Resource Advisory Committees for Title II projects, work with the Forest Supervisor(s) in your area:
- Carson National Forest – Kendall Clark
- Cibola National Forest – Nancy Rose
- Gila National Forest – Richard Markley
- Lincoln National Forest – Jacque Buchanan
- Santa Fe National Forest – Daniel Jiron

Additional information on the SRS Act, including any revisions to county payment projections, can be found on the Forest Service website at: http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/.

If you have any questions, please contact Brenda L. Suazo-Giles at (505) 827-4127.

RMA/blsg

Enclosures