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BUDGET BOONDOGGLE AWARD

FIGHTING FIRE WITH ... FESTIVALS?

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With the unemployment rate swelling to 9.7 percent last month, Americans can be forgiven if they are unsure what job creation has come from the \$787-billion deficit-financed “stimulus” bill. Likewise about their confusion over what the money is being spent for. Washington DC was the recent recipient of \$2.8 million in stimulus funds from the United States Forest Service, ostensibly for “wildland fire mitigation.” The District, however, contains no national forests and has not had a wildland-scale fire since 1814, when British forces burned down U.S. government buildings, including the White House and the U.S. Capitol. So what exactly is the fire-fighting money for?

As it turns out, most of it – \$2.7 million – will go to *Washington Parks and People*, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing and restoring public parks. Among its accomplishments, *Washington Parks and People* has:

- Sponsored the Marvin Gaye Festival, which includes live musical performances.
- Sponsored the Season in Seven Celebration and Tree Lighting
- Chaired the International Urban Parks Alliance Forum, the premier forum for parks advocates.

Interestingly, it appears the good people at *Washington Parks and People* were as surprised as anyone to be getting the grant. “[W]e do not know anything beyond the information we saw on the Web site,” they reported.

With an explosion of spending and debt in Washington DC, and wildfires still smoldering on the West coast, it may not have been the best use of taxpayer dollars, but it is a perfect candidate for the latest Budget Boondoggle Award.

For more information, please visit:

<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov/Blog/?postid=144409>

