

Briefing Paper

Summary of the process

Step 1 Setting up the process

The format for our report will use the ecological, social, and economic areas of consideration from the FS report FS-643 as an outline to display the existing situation, concerns, and opportunities associated with the management of Forest Service Roads. These areas are... Ecosystem Function and Processes (EF), Aquatic Riparian Zone and Water Quality (AQ), Terrestrial Wildlife (TW), Economics (EC), Commodity Production, Water Production, General Public Transportation, Administrative Use (AU), Protection (PT), Recreation, Passive Use (PV), Social Issues (SI), Civil Rights (CR). A Core Team member was assigned one or more of these areas, and has at their disposal an extended team for support.

In order to evaluate the existing situation the Roads Analysis Team identified **indicators** for analysis. These indicators allow an objective, transparent and professional evaluation of resource conditions and road needs. The development of these indicators will take place with public involvement to validate their scientific, social and economic veracity.

The value of using indicators for analysis is that they are available for everyone to review and to provide comment. What we use, as the basis for our assessments is the most important part of Roads Analysis and is the point where we can most effectively apply our professional judgment and utilize public input.

Step 2 Existing Situation

Road Management on the Lassen National Forest is driven and continues to evolve, through a myriad of land management activities, natural environmental events and the need for public use. There are a variety of circumstances that have led to the road conditions we are now trying to evaluate. Some of the benefits and concerns that we have recognized through project level analysis or that have been brought to our attention by the public are listed below and will be considered during the forest's roads analysis process.

Benefits...

Economics (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roads offer the great flexibility for many resource management activities
Commodity (CM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roads provide efficient access for vegetation management
Protection (PT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire protection strategies, tactics, and equipment have been designed around road access• Roads provide convenient fuel breaks and defensible locations for fire suppression
Recreation (RC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Road related recreation is growing• Nearly all recreation facilities on the forest are access via the road system

Concerns...

Ecosystem Function (EF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road locations can intrude upon sensitive areas and degrade habitat
Aquatic Riparian (AU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate road design can lead to chronic sedimentation
Terrestrial Wildlife (TW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High road densities may compromise habitat quality for certain species
Economics (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads rockered without economic analysis or validation of need at the forest scale. • Timber sale related road maintenance has declined from historic levels
Commodity (CM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term priorities in planning for timber sales have led to poor locations being adopted into the system. • Temporary roads have not been closed or have been re-opened.
Protection (PT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead end and mid slope roads often present hazards for firefighters • Increased use by the public has increased risk of fire ignition
Recreation (RC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User developed roads has increased maintenance and risks from erosion • Increased recreational use has brought motorized vs. non-motorized uses into conflict

Step 3 Identification of Concerns

Our process begins with the identification of concerns or problems which may drive future changes in the way we manage some roads. Recommended changes will be used to develop a proposed action for later environmental analysis and public involvement. This process helps Line Officers to focus on a variety of road management solutions or opportunities and opens the door for the public and our partners to solve concerns or undesirable situations with us. This chapter in our report will contain a matrix that displays how ratings applied in chapter four are compared and contrasted to identify concerns.

This is where we are in the process now. The steps below will take place after public feedback.

Step 4 Assessing Benefits Problems and Risks

At this step in the process, the Team will take their individual indicators or (guidelines) and apply a resource rating by road. This will result in a completed spreadsheet that displays all of the ratings in a row. Each resource specialist can do this independently, but collaboration at this step is recommended. The objective of this step is to compare and contrast the benefits with the risks of a given road. The greater the contrast, that is high benefit and high risk the more significant the concern. Higher degrees of concern are given a higher priority for resolution. The ideal situation is where resource benefits are

high and risks are low, indicating that future changes to managing a specific road are less likely or less urgent. This assessment road by road for maintenance level 3-5 roads will take place at a later date, after public feedback.

Step 5 Describing Opportunities and Setting Priorities

The next step, identifying opportunities and setting priorities, is where internal collaboration, public involvement and consensus are critical. The following table outlines just a few of the types of opportunities that could be used to drive changes in the way we manage Forest Service Roads. These types of opportunities serve as a starting point in developing guidelines for a **minimum** road system on the Lassen National Forest.

Opportunities exist to improve...

Ecosystem Function (EF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce incidence of spread of exotic plants through administrative controls
Aquatic Riparian (AU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outsloping roads, diversion prevention dips, decommissioning
Terrestrial Wildlife (TW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce road densities (decommission) • Reduce traffic (closures, level 1)
Economics (EC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change maintenance levels downward (i.e. level 3 to level 2, etc.) • Reduce road standards (i.e. replace culverts with low water crossings)
Commodity (CM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve arterial and collector road service levels
Protection (PT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce risk of human caused fire in high hazard terrain/fuels • Improve road service levels to strategic locations (i.e. widen, improve surface, provide turnarounds and safety zones)
Recreation (RC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore areas in near stream zones, to non-motorized recreation activities, (i.e. hiking, picnicking, fishing, etc.) • Increase non-motorized...convert roads to trails • Increase motorized...designate and design to meet OHV soil conservation standards

Step 6 Reporting

Reporting out consists of...

- The completion of step 4 spreadsheets that identify varying degrees of concern for each road.
- The completion of step 5 spreadsheets, that test the effectiveness of identified opportunities
- The documentation of concerns and opportunities for each road in a Road Management Objectives (RMO) spreadsheet.

These products of Roads analysis will be completed for all Forest Service roads as a set at the forest scale or included in watershed or project level roads analysis in the future.

When individual road assessments are completed regardless of scale, Line Officers review and select opportunities, and initiate the appropriate environmental process.

The **Communication Strategy** is the mechanism/process and timetable we will use to solicit feedback for a Forest Roads Analysis. You can find this document on our WEB site, available February 2003. Hardcopies can be mailed to you upon request.

Public participation is welcomed at anytime and in any form, as this is an iterative process. When the draft is completed the most effective way to provide feedback is to...

1. Contribute to our list of benefits and effects that we collect in Step #1.
2. Comment on the indicators we choose to use for evaluation, also Step #1.
3. Advise us of current road conditions or situations (benefits or concerns) that interest you, Step #2.
4. Submit your recommendations as to what road management opportunities are appropriate for a given problem or concern, Step #5