



USDA Forest Service

2007 ATM Update Hood Canal South Area

South Fork Skokomish Watershed

Olympic National Forest

Summary of the 2003 ATM Process

In 2003, the Olympic National Forest completed its Access and Travel Management (ATM) Plan. The purpose of the process was to develop a framework for managing the Forest's existing 2,250 mile road system in a safe and environmentally sound manner within the context of substantially reduced road maintenance funding. Tribal and public involvement was a critical component of the ATM Plan update process – a forum that supported input of road management related recommendations for consideration.

The purpose of the Plan is to inform future road management decisions rather than serve as a decision itself. The completed ATM Plan represents the first step in moving toward a safe, environmentally sound road network that serves the needs of the Forest and its users at an affordable cost. It was recognized that road management decisions would use the ATM Plan as a starting point but that future reviews of the road system, along with tribal and public involvement, could result in modifications to the 2003 ATM Plan recommendations. As with any ATM Plan recommendations, there would be a site-specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis and publication of a Decision Notice or Decision Memo prior to implementation.

Need for Revisiting 2003 ATM Recommendations for South Fork Skokomish Roads

Since development of the 2003 ATM Update changes in watershed conditions; new information obtained from various studies, assessments, and strategic plans; and funding shifts generated the need to review the existing objective maintenance levels for specific roads within the South Fork Skokomish watershed. In particular development of two documents that focus on watershed recovery emphasizing road treatments on National Forest System lands within the South Fork Skokomish watershed provided incentive for bringing forward preliminary recommendations for the 2007 ATM Update. One document developed by the Olympic National Forest with endorsement by the Skokomish Watershed Action Team, is the *2007 Aquatic Restoration Plan for National Forest System Lands within the South Fork Skokomish*. The second document, prepared by the Skokomish Watershed Action Team, is the *“Restoring the Skokomish River: A Three-Year Action Plan”*.

In response to this need, the District Ranger for the Hood Canal Ranger District convened an interdisciplinary team of Olympic National Forest resource specialists representing silviculture, wildlife, engineering, fire, recreation, and aquatics to assess roughly 27 roads within the South Fork Skokomish watershed. The primary purpose of the assessment was to determine whether specific roads identified as either Objective Maintenance Level 1 or 2 according to the 2003 ATM Update should be considered for decommissioning (Level 1 roads are those closed to vehicle access and receive only custodial maintenance, while Level 2 roads are those maintained for high clearance vehicles).

Considerations for 2007 ATM Update

Several factors were considered in development of the 2007 ATM Update recommendations:

Tribal and public input submitted as part of the 2003 Update process were brought forward to the 2007 review and were taken into consideration as each road was assessed.

Changed conditions within two South Fork Skokomish drainages (Church Creek and Brown Creek) which include: 1) Water flows at the mouth of Church Creek have gone subsurface in some years, precluding juvenile bull trout from migrating upstream, and 2) a woody debris jam within Brown Creek that once blocked access to two miles of stream to steelhead broke loose and is no longer a barrier.

Studies, assessments and strategies that provided new information for making informed decisions, including: the *2004 South Fork Watershed Restoration Summary*; the *2004 Olympic National Forest*

Strategic Plan, Draft Bull Trout Recovery Plan, and field reconnaissance conducted to determine current road conditions.

Funding shifts, including decreased Forest Service road budgets since 2003 have resulted in less than 10% of the Olympic National Forest road maintenance funds used to treat Level 2 roads, and currently no funds are expended to maintain Level 1 roads. In addition, it appears Federal Highways no longer allows Level 2 roads to be eligible for repair using Emergency Repair for Federally Owned Roads (ERFO) funds. In the past ERFO funds were available to repair, or decommission in lieu of repair, Level 2 roads damaged during major storm events.

Recommendations for 2007 ATM Update

The recommendations for updating the ATM Plan brought forward by the District Ranger for roads within the South Fork Skokomish Watershed, are summarized below, and detailed in Table 1. Additionally, information about roads currently under NEPA scoping or planned for assessment at a later date is listed below and in Table 1. The objective of high intensity Level 1 treatments is similar to decommissioning, but these roads are retained on the system to accommodate future access needs.

- 0.8 miles changed from Level 1 to Decommissioning
- 9.1 miles changed from Level 2 to Decommissioning
- 15.0 miles changed from Level 2 to Level 1 (High intensity treatment)
- 2.4 miles retain as Level 2 – no change
- 0.5 mile changed from Level 2 to 1 per NEPA Decision Memo in Summer 2007
- 13.3 miles to be assessed at a later date

The Hood Canal South Area map and spreadsheet posted on the Forest's ATM Plan website have been updated to reflect these modifications.

Table 1. Summary of Preliminary Recommendations for 2007 ATM Update for Roads within the South Fork Skokomish Watershed

Road Number	Beginning Milepost	Ending Milepost	2003 ATM Recommendation	2007 ATM Recommendation	Miles
<i>Roads Assessed in January 2007 for ATM Update</i>					
2361000	0.0	2.4	2	2	2.4
Sub-total					2.4
2354000	1.7	6.5	2	1	4.8
2355000	5.4	6.7	2	1	1.3
2363000	0.0	2.6	2	1	2.6
2363170	0.0	1.3	2	1	1.3
2361600	2.4	4.6	2	1	2.2
2355400	0.0	1.2	2	1	1.2
2354500	0.0	1.6	2	1	1.6
Sub-total					15.0
2363000	2.6	3.6	2	D	1.0
2363190	0.0	0.8	1	D	0.8
2363170	1.3	1.7	2	D	0.4
2361600	4.6	5.5	2	D	0.9
2361670	0.0	1.4	2	D	1.4
2355400	1.2	3.9	2	D	2.7
2340400	3.6	6.3	2	D	2.7
Sub-total					9.9
Total					27.3
<i>Road Segment Under NEPA Decision Memo in Summer 2007</i>					
2354300	0	0.5	2	1	0.5
Total					0.5
<i>Roads to be Assessed at a Later Date</i>					
2300000	14	18	4,3		4
2353000	6	13	2		7
2361000	4.5	5.3	3		0.8
2353140	0	1.5	D/C		1.5
Total					13.3

Note: Roads recommended for Objective Maintenance Level 1 under the 2007 ATM Update infer high intensity treatments – similar to decommissioning, but the road will be retained on the transportation system to accommodate future access needs.