

Objectives of the Analysis

?? Establish the level and type of decision-making the analysis will inform

- The roads analysis project will be used to support the revision of the Clearwater National Forest Plan and subsequent subforest scale (the term “*subforest*” refers to analysis area scales usually at the 5th and 6th code watershed, 10 to 200 thousand acres, or site-specific project level scale). It is intended to identify prioritized opportunities, which address watershed health or road management. It will assist in developing Forest wide standards and guidelines and geographic area direction for the Forest plan revision effort.

?? Identify Scale/Analysis Area

- The analysis area will be the Clearwater National Forest (1.8 million acres) in Idaho in Region 1 of the National Forest System.
- Concentrate on classified arterial (primary), collector (secondary) and important local roads. The Forest-scale project will not analyze unclassified roads (temporary roads or travel-ways resulting from off-road vehicle use).
- Focus will be Forest-wide with examples in five hydrologic 4th code watershed divisions as appropriate: Clearwater (main stem), Lochsa/Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Lower North Fork of the Clearwater, Palouse/Hangman, and the Upper North Fork of the Clearwater, as appropriate.
- Use only existing information.

?? Interdisciplinary Team Members (IDT) and Participants

Cliff Mitchell, Team Leader, Clearwater National Forest Planner
Duanne Annis – Recreation Trails, North Fork Ranger District
Anne Connor – Forest Watershed Engineer
Dan Davis – Forest Wildlife Biologist
Dick Jones – Forest Hydrologist
Rick Kusicko – Forest Management, Lochsa Ranger District
Jim Mital – Forest Ecologist/Soil Scientist
Pat Murphy – Forest Fish Biologist
Norm Schuessler- Forest Transportation Planner
Susan White – GIS Support, Supervisor’s Office

Analysis Plan

The detailed analysis process, following the direction of the Forest Leadership team, considered 1,349 miles of arterial, collector and important local classified roads in the Forest roads database. This was a two-step, integrated approach that considered issues, data, and information and systematically addressed this information. Figure 1 is a map showing the arterial, collector, and important local roads analyzed in detail. Also, the remaining 2,730 miles of local roads are shown in Figure 1. The 2,730 miles of local roads are not analyzed in detail. However, they are included in the analysis of watershed condition and erosion hazards created by the Forest road system.

Step 1 considered the following:

- ?? Issues
- ?? Annual maintenance cost value
- ?? Recreation use value
- ?? Access value
- ?? Resource management value
- ?? Mass Wasting Risk
- ?? Surface Erosion Risk
- ?? Aquatic Risk
- ?? Wildlife Risk

The interdisciplinary team (IDT) assigned a low, medium, or high value rating to each value and risk factor. All value and risk factors were considered equal. For example, a Low aquatic risk value of one equals a Low wildlife risk of one, and so on. IDT members conducted resource-specific analyses to derive the data that appears in the Road Matrix (e.g., aquatic risk, recreation use value) and the information used to answer the questions in Chapter 4 – Assessing Benefits, Problems, and Risks. A complete listing for each value and risk criteria for the 1,349 miles of road is provided in the Road Matrix, Appendix C.

In Step 2, the numerical ratings for each risk or value factor for each road segment were summed to create a set of descriptive coordinates that indicated their value and risk. The

descriptive coordinates for all road segments were plotted on a graph with four quadrants representing the following categories:

- ?? Category 1 – High Value, Low Risk
- ?? Category 2 – High Value, High Risk
- ?? Category 3 – Low Value, High Risk
- ?? Category 4 – Low Value, Low Risk

The results of this exercise are shown in Figure 2 located in Chapter 5. Once the roads were assigned into one of the four management categories, recommendations for future actions could be described. Past experience in project analysis, use of existing data, queries to the roads and GIS database and recent decisions to prioritize watersheds for analysis were used by the IDT to describe opportunities and set priorities. The remaining 2,730 miles of local roads will be analyzed during watershed analysis. A specific schedule of which watersheds will be analyzed is shown in Table 11.

The IDT discussed the use of threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) wildlife species to determine road risks to wildlife. The listed TES terrestrial species for the Clearwater NF (wolf, lynx, grizzly bear, bald eagle,) are not at any meaningful risk from roads and the risk value was one for all road segments. In order to have a criteria that provided a relative difference between road segments, the IDT agreed to use elk. Research and past analysis have shown roads have impacts to elk on the Clearwater NF.

A complete discussion of the criteria used by each IDT specialist to define the H, M, and L for each risk and value criteria is located in Appendix A.

Information Needs

The IDT identified the following information sources to use for the analysis:

- ?? INFRA data base of road travel routes.
- ?? Potential Public Forest Service Road (PFSR) project submittals.
- ?? Management Area prescriptions and Suitable Timber Base for the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan.
- ?? February 29, 2000 Roadless area inventory for the Clearwater National Forest plan revision.
- ?? Streams and riparian areas.
- ?? Occurrence of threatened and endangered species.

The IDT also identified the following GIS base map needs:

- ?? Classified Roads.
- ?? 6th -level watersheds.
- ?? Land-type maps from 1987 Forest Plan.
- ?? Land status.

Public Involvement

?? Communications Plan

A communication plan was developed to inform and involve the public and key stakeholders. The tone of this communication effort was low-key, informative, aimed at stakeholders with a direct and meaningful interest in National Forest road system management. This was appropriate for three main reasons. First, this is not a NEPA analysis requiring a legally mandated level of public scoping. Second, this effort was intended to be completed in a few months, necessitating an adequate, but not over-done, public involvement effort. Finally, numerous public scoping efforts related to road and travel management have preceded this analysis. A local base of knowledge about public issues exists on the Forest.

The Communications Plan for this assessment identified the County Commissioners, the Nez Perce Tribe and Coeur d'Alene tribe as the key contacts for public involvement. The ID team felt that the commissioners and tribes had road management knowledge and information that could be useful in identifying mutual opportunities and issues. Idaho and Clearwater were the key counties identified for making these contacts. Additional notification to the general public will be published in local newspapers and the Forest quarterly report of projects.

?? Public Contacts

A letter was mailed in July of 2002 to fourteen key contact groups and over 100 individuals and organizations on the NEPA project mailing list to notify them of the Forest roads analysis project. The Forest requested that recipients request a draft road report or contact the Forest for further information.

A briefing to explain the analysis was presented to the Clearwater County Commissioners on August 26, 2002 and to the Clearwater County Roads and Trails Advisory Committee on October 4, 2002. Representatives from the Nez Perce Tribe Fisheries Department were briefed on September 17, 2002. Idaho County Commissioners received a briefing on October 21, 2002.

The County Commissioners were very interested in the process to categorize roads into value and risk categories. They felt all roads were of high value either for existing uses or potential future Forest management. The Nez Perce Tribe representatives requested that the report include a discussion about tribal access for cultural uses, religious uses, and hunting and fishing rights. They also presented the idea that there may be other wildlife species besides elk that roads may impact. They are very interested in reviewing and commenting on the draft report.

Copies of the preliminary report were sent to the following organizations in December 2002 for comment:

- ?? Idaho County Commissioners
- ?? Clearwater County Commissioners
- ?? Nez Perce Tribe
- ?? Coeur d'Alene Tribe
- ?? Lee Zukoski, Pacific Rivers Council
- ?? Jeff Cook, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
- ?? John Robison, Idaho Conservation League
- ?? Alison Hanks, Wildland Center for the Prevention of Roads

Also, all organizations and individuals on the NEPA Quarterly mailing list (approximately 130 addresses) received notice of the availability of the preliminary report via the December 19, 2002 mailing of the second quarter NEPA Quarterly Report.