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Forest  
Service

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# Travel Analysis Report

## PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLAND

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests & Pawnee National  
Grassland

**Responsible Official: Curtis Youngman, Pawnee National Grassland  
District Ranger**

### **Abstract:**

This Travel Analysis Report documents a route-by-route analysis of all National Forest System roads on the Pawnee National Grassland and provides recommendations that will aid in identifying the minimum road system needed for public access and forest management.

### **Location:**

Pawnee National Grassland, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee  
National Grassland

Larimer County, Colorado

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document is the Travel Analysis (TA) Report for the Pawnee National Grassland, Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP). This Travel Analysis Report documents a route-by-route analysis of all National Forest System roads on the Pawnee National Grassland and provides recommendations that will aid in identifying the minimum road system needed for public access and forest management.

The outcome of the TA is a set of science-based recommendations for route-by-route changes to the forest transportation system to meet current and future management objectives. These recommendations are based on an analysis of the physical, biological, social, and economic risks and benefits of every system road.

Travel Analysis is intended to inform subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes, allowing individual projects to be more site-specific and focused, while still addressing cumulative impacts. The Travel Analysis Process (TAP) neither produces decisions nor allocates National Forest System lands for specific purposes. It merely provides the analytical framework from which to make recommendations that may then be examined in the NEPA process. It describes current conditions, risks, benefits, opportunities (needs for change), and priorities for action. Future NEPA analyses that include public involvement may carry forward, reject or change the recommendations in this report, and provide the basis for making specific transportation system-related decisions. Public involvement was not incorporated into this initial analysis.

### **Summary of Issues**

Issues were identified using internal Forest Service input at the ARP Forest level, and are summarized below. Issues are discussed in more detail in Step 3.

- Insufficient resources for maintenance of the existing system of roads.
- Environmental impacts, including impacts to water resources and fish, soil and geologic hazards, fragmentation and wildlife security, impacts to vegetation including weeds and rare plants, and impacts to cultural resources.
- Access Needs, including motorized recreation use, access and connectivity to a variety of recreational opportunities, access to scenic viewpoints, access for forest management, access to Forest Service Administrative sites, and emergency access.
- Access to range, mineral, and other permit holders.

### **Analysis Performed**

Utilizing a GIS and INFRA (database) query that modelled Resource Criteria developed by the respective ARP Forest Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) Resource Area experts, a route-by-route risk-benefit assessment was used to rank system roads and selected unauthorized routes on the Pawnee National Grassland. Each road was further evaluated at the District to refine modelled results. Numerical ranking results were combined and averaged in order to provide a recommendation on whether a road was likely needed as part of the District's transportation network.

### Key Results and Findings

The IDT ranked routes based on their *risks* to natural ecosystem and cultural resources and their *benefits* to forest management and multiple access needs.

Opportunities for changes to roads were also identified as summarized below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Summary of Recommendations to Roads within the Pawnee National Grassland**

Recommendations	Number of Miles*	Number of Roads	
Decommission	150	232	Likely NOT Needed for Future Use
Close or Decommission	58	71	
Convert, Close, or Decommission	10	16	Likely Needed for Future Use
Convert, Close, or Decom, or Maintain & Mitigate	41	18	
Maintain	94	134	
Maintain & Mitigate	458	288	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>759</b>	

\* Mileages presented are *total road lengths* (irrespective of jurisdiction or System) with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction in INFRA at the time of this analysis. Table excludes Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of “Undetermined” or “Not Needed” unless requested to be analyzed by the district. Table includes existing (Status) ML 1-5 roads and selected unauthorized routes.

It is recommended that all way routes and other unauthorized routes on Forest Service lands not included in the analysis be automatically considered for decommissioning. It is estimated for the Pawnee National Grassland there are approximately 84 miles, or 147 inventoried unauthorized roads (including those selected for analysis).

Recommendations are for the Forest Service portion of the road only.

Step 5 of this analysis, Describing Opportunities and Setting Priorities, and the maps in Appendix C display the TA recommendations. A complete list of the individual rankings for each road can be found on the Analysis Results Tables located in Appendix A.

### How the Report will be Used

The Travel Analysis Report for the Pawnee National Grassland will assist in identifying and addressing issues related to the road system in subsequent project level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. The recommendations presented herein are limited by the route-by-route analysis and not at a project level scale. Future analyses should consider the Scope and Need of the project and utilize as much as possible the generalized recommendations presented in this Travel Analysis Report.

Travel analysis is an ongoing process and it is anticipated that the recommendations in this document could be updated.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Travel Analysis Process, as described in the Forest Service Handbook FSH 7709.55, chapter 20, consists of six steps which are as follows:

- Step 1: Setting Up the Analysis
- Step 2: Describing the Situation
- Step 3: Identifying Issues
- Step 4: Assessing Benefits, Problems, and Risks
- Step 5: Describing Opportunities and Setting Priorities
- Step 6: Reporting

Travel Analysis is an iterative, not a one-time, process. When conditions change, additional analysis may point to the need for revisions to the recommendations.

This TA does not address nonmotorized or motorized trail opportunities, it is focused only on National Forest System Roads (NFSR). It is assumed that “National Forest System Roads” is used interchangeably with “National Grassland Roads”.

Travel analysis neither produces decisions nor allocates NFS lands for specific purposes. Rather, responsible officials, with public involvement, make travel management decisions that are informed by travel analysis. Public involvement was not incorporated into this initial analysis.

## **STEP 1: SETTING UP THE ANALYSIS**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this step is to:

- State objectives
- Identify the roles of technical specialists
- Identify the analysis area
- Develop an analysis plan
- Scope of analysis
- Identify information needs

### **Objectives**

In 2005, the U.S. Forest Service adopted the Travel Management Rule. The travel management regulations (36 CFR 212.5(b)) requires as part of “Subpart A – Administration of the Forest Transportation System” that the Forest Service “responsible official must identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands” and “identify the roads on lands under Forest Service jurisdiction that are no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives and that, therefore, should be decommissioned or considered for other uses, such as for trails.”

Following recommendations in the FSH 7709.55 Chapter 20, the objective of this Travel Analysis is to create a science/resource-based examination of each road on a road-by-road basis that is consistent across the entire Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (referred to herein also as the ARP). The analysis was designed to be reproducible and objective. This was done by creating criteria at the Forest Resource level that could be converted into GIS models. Utilizing INFRA data, the modeling output global results that ranked roads as a high, medium, or low risk and as a high, medium, or low benefit based on a distribution of scores (explained in Step 4). A set of generalized recommendations based on the overall risk and overall benefit scores were then developed to be applied to each road (explained in Step 5).

These scores and recommendations were then given to the District Resources to truth and modify as needed based on limited subjective criteria and/or field knowledge.

All existing system roads within the analysis area are included in this Travel Analysis Report. Unauthorized routes were not analyzed in this Travel Analysis unless specifically requested by the district. This TA does not address nonmotorized or motorized trail opportunities, it is focused only on National Forest System Roads.

The Travel Analysis Report for the Pawnee National Grassland will assist in identifying and addressing issues related to the road system in subsequent project level National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. The recommendations presented herein are limited by the route-by-route analysis and not at a project level scale. Future analyses should consider the Scope and Need of the project and utilize as much as possible the generalized recommendations presented in this Travel Analysis Report.

**Specialist Roles**

The Forest Resources developed criteria on which each road was to be analyzed. GIS was used to model the criteria. GIS output in the form of a ratings table along with recommendations (described further in Steps 4 and 5) were provided to the District. The District Resources applied field knowledge to the tabular results and provided modifications with clarification. The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) members and their primary resource discipline(s) are listed below

Michele White – Team Lead

*Forest Resources*

	Weeds	----	Steve Popovich
	Botany	----	Steve Popovich, Tom Bates
	Wildlife	----	Lynne Deibel
Watershed Condition, Water Resources		----	Carl Chambers
	Soils	----	Eric Schroder
	Fisheries	----	Matthew Fairchild
	Cultural Resources	----	Sue Struthers
	Engineering	----	Michele White, Chris Ida, Crystal Landis
	Lands and Minerals	----	Elizabeth (Liz) Moncrief
	Scenery	----	Erich Roeber
	Recreation	----	Paul Cruz
Forest and Vegetation Management		----	Mark Martin
	Emergency Access	----	Geoff Bell
	Range	----	Mary Ann Chambers
	GIS	----	Mary Hattis

*District Resources*

	Wildlife	----	Kristen Philbrook
Watershed Condition, Water Resources		----	Carl Chambers
	Soils	----	Lizandra Nieves-Rivera
	Fisheries	----	Chris Carroll, Matt Fairchild
	Cultural Resources	----	Abe Thompson
	Engineering	----	Kipp Klein
	Lands and Minerals	----	Vern Koehler
	Recreation	----	Lenora Arevalos
Forest and Vegetation Management		----	Dick Edwards
	Emergency Access	----	Dick Edwards, Dave Hamrick
	Range	----	Randy Reichert
	Environmental Planner	----	Mary Ann Chambers
	District Ranger	----	Curtis Youngman



## **Analysis Area**

The analysis area is the Pawnee Ranger District which is approximately 768, 000 acres in size. Approximately 193,000 acres of the analysis area are on National Forest and Grassland System lands. The remaining 575,000 acres are private or other government lands within the boundaries of the National Forest and Grassland.

An inventory of roads is located in Appendix A. A map of the road system is located in Appendix C. The maps and inventory include all existing Maintenance Level 1-5 roads within the NFSR System in the Pawnee National Grassland.

## **Analysis Plan**

Roads were analyzed on route-by-route basis, unbiased by any established project purpose and need. The IDT followed these steps while conducting the analysis:

- Determined that only existing Maintenance Level 1-5 National Forest System Roads should be analyzed unless a District specifically requests a specific unauthorized route to be included.
- Created resource criteria that could be universally applied across the entire ARP road system.
- Remained objective in the rating criteria by:
  - Utilizing existing data, specifically INFRA and GIS, and other resource-specific databases.
  - Creating models utilizing GIS that automatically output ratings for the roads.
- Utilized direction presented in the Forest Plan.
- Reviewed and critiqued each other's Rating Criteria to keep criteria non-redundant amongst resources and to verify validity of each resources concerns.
- Determined ranking cutoff's for high-medium-low risks and benefits to roads.
- Encouraged the District(s) to review modeling output and modify results as needed (with comment) based on field knowledge and subjective criteria developed by the Forest Resources.
- Provided generalized recommendations to the road systems based on the findings of this Travel Analysis in order to improve the management of forest resources relying on the transportation system.

## **Scope of Analysis**

The range of potential actions that could be taken forward into the NEPA from this Travel Analysis can include:

- Changing Jurisdiction
- Closing to Motorized Use
- Converting to Another Use
- Decommissioning
- Removing from System
- Adding to System
- Mitigating

Descriptions of potential actions are described further in Step 5.

### **Information Needs**

Information needs were identified and the IDT worked to gather as much information as available about the following:

- A complete inventory of System Roads
- Maps of Systems Roads
- Resource Specific information needed to run Resource models as described further in Steps 3 and 4
- Past NEPA decisions

Extensive field investigations were not encouraged as this analysis was based on existing catalogued, recorded, or filed information.

### **Public Involvement**

The existing transportation system was used as a basis for this analysis and included past public involvement during the Forest Plan (including subsequent amendments and revisions), public comments on past travel management planning projects, collaboration with other public agencies related to Subpart B Motor Vehicle Use Maps, and yearly engagement with constituency groups.

Future travel management planning NEPA will provide more project level opportunities for public involvement at the local level.

## **STEP 2: DESCRIBING THE SITUATION**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this step is to:

- Describe the existing Road Management Direction
- Describe Forest Plan Direction
- Describe the existing road system data bases
- Describe existing road system

### **Road Management Direction**

The transportation system on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARP) serves a variety of resource management and access needs. Many roads on the ARP were originally constructed for commercial access purposes which included grazing, timber, and mineral extraction. Other roads resulted from construction of gas pipelines, power transmission corridors, and other activities. Over the past 100 years, an extensive road network was developed that continues to serve commercial, recreation, and administrative purposes and provide access to private lands located within the Forest and Grassland.

The following is a brief summary of relevant management direction.

### **Travel Management Rule, Travel Analysis, Subpart A**

In 2005, the U.S. Forest Service adopted the Travel Management Rule. The travel management regulations (36 CFR 212.5(b)) requires as part of “Subpart A – Administration of the Forest Transportation System” that the Forest Service “responsible official must identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands” and “identify the roads on lands under Forest Service jurisdiction that are no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives and that, therefore, should be decommissioned or considered for other uses, such as for trails.” In determining the minimum road system, the responsible official must incorporate a science-based roads analysis at the appropriate scale and, to the degree practicable, involve a broad spectrum of interested and affected citizens, other state and federal agencies, and tribal governments.

Forest Service Manual FSM 7712 states “to use travel analysis (FSH 7709.55, ch. 20) to inform decisions related to identification of the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of NFS lands per 36 CFR 212.5(b)(1) and to inform decisions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for motor vehicle use per 36 CFR 212.51, provided that travel analysis is not required to inform decisions related to the designation of roads, trails, and areas for those administrative units and ranger districts that have issued a proposed action as of January 8, 2009.” A roads analysis conducted at the scale of an administrative unit that was completed in accordance with Publication FS-643, “Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions About Managing the

National Forest Transportation System,” satisfies the requirement to use travel analysis relative to roads. More information on Publication FS-643 is described further below.

FSM 7712.3 states that “travel analysis is not a decision-making process. Travel management decisions are site-specific decisions.” FSM 7715 states that “travel management decisions include adding a route to or removing a route from the forest transportation system, constructing an NFS road or NFS trail, acquiring an NFS route through a land purchase or exchange, decommissioning a route, approving an area for motor vehicle use, or changing allowed motor vehicle classes or time of year for motor vehicle use.” FSM 7712.3 states that “travel analysis is not required to advise decisions to decommission unauthorized routes, including those discovered through monitoring.”

On November 10, 2010 Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop issued a letter:

“directing the use of the travel analysis process (TAP) described in Forest Service Manual 7712 and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 7709.55, Chapter 20, to complete the applicable sections of Subpart A. The TAP is a science-based process that will ensure future travel-management decisions are based on the consideration of environmental, social, and economic impacts. All NFS roads, maintenance levels 1-5, must be included in the analysis.

For units that have previously conducted travel analysis or roads analyses (RAPs), the appropriate line officer should review the prior report to: 1) assess the adequacy of the analysis and the relevance of any recommendations to the process for complying with Subpart A; 2) help determine the appropriate scope and scale for any new analysis; and 3) build on previous work. A RAP completed in accordance with publication FS-643, “Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions about Managing the National Forest Transportation System,” will also satisfy the roads analysis requirement of Subpart A.”

On March 29, 2012 Deputy Chief Leslie A.C. Weldon issued a letter to:

“reaffirm agency commitment to completing a travel analysis report for Subpart A of the travel management rule by 2015 and update and clarify Agency guidance.”

The letter further states:

“Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 212.5(b)(1) require the Forest Service to identify the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System (NFS) lands. In determining the minimum road system, the responsible official must incorporate a science-based roads analysis at the appropriate scale. Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 212.5(b)(2) require the Forest Service to identify NFS roads that are no longer needed to meet forest resource management objectives.”

“Units should seek to integrate the steps contained in the Watershed Condition Framework (WCF) with the six TAP steps contained in FSH 7709.55, Chapter 20, to eliminate redundancy and ensure an iterative and adaptive approach for both processes.”

“The next step in identification of the MRS is to use the travel analysis report to develop proposed actions to identify the MRS. These proposed actions generally should be

developed at the scale of a 6<sup>th</sup> code subwatershed or larger. Proposed actions and alternatives are subject to environmental analysis under NEPA. Travel analysis should be used to inform the environmental analysis.”

This Travel Analysis Report is being prepared for the Pawnee National Grassland to satisfy the travel analysis requirements of Subpart A.

### **Travel Management Rule, Subpart B**

The travel management regulations (36 CFR 212.51(a) and 212.56) requires as part of “Subpart B – Designation of Roads, Trails, and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use”, that “Motor vehicle use on National Forest System roads, on National Forest System trails, and in areas on National Forest System lands shall be designated by vehicle class and, if appropriate, by time of year by the responsible official on administrative units or Ranger Districts of the National Forest System” and that “Designated roads, trails, and areas shall be identified on a motor vehicle use map”.

Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM) have been published for all Districts on the ARP. The MVUM was published for the Pawnee National Grassland with 2011 MVUM being the most current version at the time of this report. This map contains the existing direction for motor vehicle use open to the public on the district. Motor vehicle use (excluding snowmobiles operating on snow) is allowed on designated roads and trails shown on the MVUM. The MVUM’s for the ARP, including Pawnee National Grassland are available on the web (under “Maps and Publications”) at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/arp/home> States, counties, other Federal agencies, and private entities may control roads that cross Forest land by obtaining easements from the Forest Service. A road is on the MVUM if it meets the following criteria: System is Forest Service, Status is Existing, and Maintenance Level is equal or greater than 2.

### **Report FS-643 – Roads Analysis**

In August 1999, the Washington Office of the USDA Forest Service published Miscellaneous Report FS-643 titled “Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions about Managing the National Forest Transportation System.” The objective of roads analysis is to provide decision makers with critical information to develop road systems that are safe and responsive to public needs and desires, are affordable and efficiently managed, have minimal negative ecological effects on the land, and are in balance with available funding for needed management actions.

Roads analysis is an integrated ecological, social, and economic approach to transportation planning, addressing both existing and future roads. Roads analysis is intended to be based on science. Analysts should locate, correctly interpret, and use relevant existing scientific literature in the analysis, disclose any assumptions made during the analysis, and reveal the limitations of the information on which the analysis is based.

Roads analysis neither makes decisions nor allocates lands for specific purposes. Line officers, with public participation, make decisions. Technical analysts inform the decision maker about effects, consequences, options, and priorities. Roads analysis provides information for decision making by examining important ecological, social, and economic issues. Roads analysis helps implement forest plans by identifying management opportunities

that can lead to site-specific projects. It can also identify needed changes in forest plans to be addressed in amendments or revisions.

A Roads Analysis Report, as described in publication FS-643, *Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions about Managing the Transportation System*, analyzing maintenance level 3, 4, and 5 roads across the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland was produced in October 2003. This Travel Analysis Report revises and updates the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland 2003 Report, including adding maintenance level 1 and 2 roads managed by the Pawnee National Grassland. Maintenance levels are described further below.

### **Road Management Objectives**

National Forest System Roads (NFSR) are managed in accordance with the Road Management Objectives (RMO) established for each road. RMOs stipulate the uses for which the road was designed and currently managed, maintenance levels, target maintenance frequencies and tasks, and other information, as well as future needs for the road.

According to FSM 7714, road management objectives (RMOs) and trail management objectives (TMOs) document the intended purpose, design criteria (FSM 2353.26 and 7720), and operation and maintenance criteria (FSM 2353.25 and 7730.3) for each NFS road and NFS trail. RMOs and TMOs require written approval by the responsible official and are included in the applicable forest transportation atlas (FSM 7711.2, para. 2a).

### **Road Maintenance Level**

National Forest System Roads are assigned a specific maintenance level which defines the level of service provided by, and maintenance required for, each specific road. Roads may be currently maintained at one level (operational maintenance level) and planned to be maintained at a different level (objective maintenance level) at some future date. The objective maintenance level may be the same as, or higher or lower than, the operational maintenance level. For the Pawnee National Grassland, the operational and objective maintenance levels are typically the same. Maintenance level (ML) definitions, as described further in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 7709.59, Section 62.32, are summarized below:

- **ML 1 Basic Custodial Care (closed to all travel but not decommissioned)** - These are roads that have been placed in storage between intermittent uses. The period of storage must exceed 1 year. Basic custodial maintenance is performed to prevent damage to adjacent resources and to perpetuate the road for future resource management needs. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Planned road deterioration may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are "prohibit" and "eliminate" all traffic. These roads are not shown on motor vehicle use maps.

Roads receiving level 1 maintenance may be of any type, class, or construction standard, and may be managed at any other maintenance level during the time they are open for traffic. However, while being maintained at level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic but may be available and suitable for nonmotorized uses.

- **ML 2 High Clearance Vehicles** - Assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic, user comfort, and user convenience are not

considerations. Warning signs and traffic control devices are not provided with the exception that some signing, such as W-18-1 "No Traffic Signs," may be posted at intersections. Motorists should have no expectations of being alerted to potential hazards while driving these roads. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to:

- a. Discourage or prohibit passenger cars, or
  - b. Accept or discourage high clearance vehicles.
- **ML 3 Suitable for Passenger Cars** - Assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is applicable. Warning signs and traffic control devices are provided to alert motorists of situations that may violate expectations.

Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed with single lanes and turnouts. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either "encourage" or "accept." "Discourage" or "prohibit" strategies may be employed for certain classes of vehicles or users.

- **ML 4 Moderate Degree of User Comfort** - Assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds. Most roads are double lane and aggregate surfaced. However, some roads may be single lane. Some roads may be paved and/or dust abated. Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is applicable. The most appropriate traffic management strategy is "encourage." However, the "prohibit" strategy may apply to specific classes of vehicles or users at certain times.
- **ML 5 High Degree of User Support** - Assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience. These roads are normally double lane, paved facilities. Some may be aggregate surfaced and dust abated. Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices is applicable. The appropriate traffic management strategy is "encourage."

### **Administrative Road**

An Administrative National Forest System road is any National Forest System road that is not a public road. (FSH 7709.56 Chapter 40).

### **Forest Roads**

Forest Road or Trail. A road or trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the NFS that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and the use and development of its resources (36 CFR 212.1).

National Forest System Road. A forest road other than a road which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a state, county, or local public road authority (36 CFR 212.1).

## **Unauthorized Road**

An Unauthorized Road is a road or trail that is not a forest road, or a temporary road and is not included in a forest transportation atlas. (36 CFR 212.1, FSM 2353.05, FSM 7705). Unauthorized roads are categorized into two types. “Undetermined” roads are those where long term purpose and need has yet to be determined, and “Not Needed” roads are those not needed for long-term management of national forest resources as determined through an appropriate planning document. Typically, most user created routes are not part of the forest road system and are considered to be unauthorized.

## **Adding roads to the system**

FSM 7703.12 requires that the addition of new roads to the system should occur only where resource management objectives and benefits are clearly demonstrated and where long-term funding obligations have been carefully considered. FSM 7703.12, 7703.26 requires that addition of new roads to the forest transportation system must be informed by a travel analysis conducted at an appropriate scale, as well as appropriate site-specific environmental analysis and public involvement. FSM 7703.26 requires that long-term road funding opportunities and obligations must be considered in the decision to add roads to the system.

## **Decommissioning of temporary and other roads**

FSM 7703.24 states that temporary roads are maintained as provided in the contract, permit, lease, or other written authorization for those roads and must be decommissioned at the conclusion of the authorized activity. FSM 7703.25 states that unauthorized roads, temporary roads, and any NFS roads no longer needed for the use and management of NFS lands should be decommissioned. FSM 7734.01 states that vegetative cover be reestablished on the road within 10 years after it is determined that a road is no longer needed.

## **Highway Safety Act**

Roads open to travel for passenger cars (low clearance vehicles) are subject to the Highway Safety Act. These are objective maintenance Level 3-5 roads. Signs on roads subject to the Highway Safety Act must comply with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). For the safety of the public, contractors, and Forest Service employees and to reduce Forest Service liability, the latest MUTCD guidelines for permanent and temporary signing and the use of certified flaggers on all roads in the project would be followed. According to Forest Service policy, all signs shall comply with the latest version of EM-7100-15.

## **Forest Plan Direction**

The 1997 Revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland establishes programmatic direction for the management of National Forest System lands.

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland are broken into discrete Management Areas which are guided by the Forest Plan. Management Areas provide management direction by emphasizing a particular resource and identifying associated guidelines (prescriptions) for management activities. The Forest Plan also provides guidance by



Geographic Area (GA) which informs how travel management should be accomplished in these areas.

As part of the Forest Plan process, the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland participated in the Region 2 R2TF (Region 2 Transportation Features) data management inventory system. This system was an inventory of every transportation feature on the ground at the time of the Forest Planning process. The inventory was a tabular and spatial data gathering effort. The spatial data was generated from the Cartographic Feature Files then edited with local knowledge. The tabular data was information about each feature entered into an Oracle database. The Oracle information started as a R2TF regional database that was migrated into the national database INFRA. Each feature was coded with information including but not limited to: maintenance level, system, jurisdiction, status, source, surface type, CFF code, etc. Spatial representation of each road was evaluated during the data gathering effort for the ARP Forest Plan revision at the district level on a quad-by-quad review and added anything that looked like a road or trail from aerial photographs to the database.

The Forest Plan provides guidance to minimize the impacts of roads and trails on natural resources such as soil, water, and wildlife. The following are some of the guidance found in the Forest Plan (and which chapter it is located) related to roads:

- Based on site-specific environmental decisions, all “ways” will either be reclassified as FDRs or FDTs (Forest Development Roads and Forest Development Trails) or will be scheduled for obliteration (*Introduction – Travel Management*).
- Provide an integrated travel system that considers various modes of motorized and nonmotorized use consistent with the resource capacity of the area (*Chapter 1 – Human Uses*).
- Limit roads and other disturbed sites to the minimum feasible number, width, and total length consistent with the purpose of specific operations, local topography, and climate (*Chapter 1 – Erosion and Sediment*).
- Construct roads and other disturbed sites to minimize sediment discharge into streams, lakes, and wetlands (*Chapter 1 – Erosion and Sediment*).
- Stabilize and maintain roads, trails, and disturbed sites during and after construction to control erosion (*Chapter 1 – Erosion and Sediment*).
- Reclaim roads and other disturbed sites when use ends, as needed, to prevent resource damage (*Chapter 1 – Erosion and Sediment*).
- System travelways determined to be no longer needed to achieve proposed management activities or located where resource damage cannot be mitigated shall be obliterated, revegetated, and sloped to drain (*Chapter 1 – Infrastructure*).
- Maintain all roads at the minimum maintenance level to meet the management objectives for the area (*Chapter 1 – Infrastructure*).
- Manage road use by season restriction if it use causes unacceptable damage to soil and water resources due to weather or seasonal conditions (*Chapter 1 – Infrastructure*).
- Decisions about which roads and trails to keep open or to close will be implemented under formalized travel management plans (*Chapter 2 – Travel Management Strategy*).

## Existing Road System Databases

The two major tools used to catalog information about roads are geographic information system (GIS) and the corporate database known as INFRA. Each of these computer-based tools contains slightly different information.

### INFRA Data Base

The INFRA database lists all the system roads on the Forest and includes a variety of survey-based information about each route, such as route number, length, beginning and ending locations, ownership, ranger district, surface type, and other similar data. The INFRA database also stores Access and Travel Management (ATM) data that contains the information on if and when a road is open to the public.

### Geographic Data Base

The geographic information system, or GIS, spatially displays the roads and trails and other information across the landscape. Using GIS, transportation routes may be overlaid with streams, wildlife areas, land ownership, and a host of other information. GIS integrates the information from INFRA (such as in the production of the Motor Vehicle Use Map) and other resource databases. Models can be created in GIS to query different attributes about roads, such as how many stream crossings it has, what management areas it crosses, etc.

#### History of GIS data

The Forest Service began using GIS on a nationwide level in approximately 1988. Data layers were generated for each forest by digitizing the Primary Base Series maps also known as 7.5-minute quadrangles. The resulting data are known as the Cartographic Feature Files or CFF. Features were either a line or point, identified with a numeric code identifying the feature code and the cartographic symbol; for example a four-wheel drive road would be a line with a code of 082, paved landing strip would be 059, a primary highway class 1 100. This data was collected by digitizing aerial photography with a data error ratio of 40 feet at 1:24,000 scale. Each Forest took the CFF files and split them into individual data layers based on coding within the point or line files.

In Region 2, Forests used the CFF data to build the initial GIS data sets and added Oracle data to contain information about the features. There were two databases the region relied on for management and planning, RIS and R2TF. RIS was the Resource Information System and R2TF was Region 2 Transportation Features. All CFF features that were roads or trails were put into the R2TF. RIS contained a polygon system based on vegetation breaks. On every poly information was filled in for vegetation type, management area, geographic area, recreational opportunity spectrum, visual quality objective, owner, etc.

In 1998 Region 2 migrated the R2TF data into a Service-wide Oracle based database called INFRA. INFRA is a tabular oracle based database containing all information about Forest Service infrastructure. There are corresponding spatial layers to support the location on the ground of the specific item. The spatial data and tabular data are updated on an ongoing basis using aerial photography, GPS data or resource specialist ground knowledge.

In 2000 the GIS data for roads and trails was individual arcs for each feature containing the R2TF information. These separate pieces or arcs were selected for an entire road and routed giving it a measure where the INFRA information could be used as dynamic segmentation.

### GIS Data Form

Currently the GIS data on the ARP contains hundreds of spatial layers grouped into feature datasets and housed in a Spatial Data Engine (SDE) for resource managers to use for analysis and general mapping. The transportation data is in one feature data set. The data set contains routed roads and routed trails containing measures, routed trails containing measures and arcs which represent other travel ways found within our Forest boundary but not on our lands. Every attempt has been made to route Forest Service roads and trails and accurately depict the alignment using GPS data or the best aerial photography available. This allows for any one road to have a geospatial location and dynamic segmented information.

### How Criteria was Modeled

Resource Specialists on the IDT developed criteria for their discipline that determined a risk or benefit rating for each road. Resource Specialists tried to develop criteria in such a way that the rating could be calculated with a GIS analysis versus a subjective rating as described further in Step 4. The road routes for the ARP stored in the Forest SDE database were used for this analysis.

Each criterion was different and utilized a different set of resource data which was compared against the road routes using a multitude of GIS analysis tools and techniques. The data used in the analysis was a combination of data generated from the Forest Plan analysis, national databases, or data generated on the ARP. No new data was collected or created for this analysis. Each road was scored for each item specified in the criteria then given a final average or weighted average depending on the directions in the resource criteria. After all routes in the database were scored, all ML 1-5 roads with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction (except Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of "Undetermined" or "Not Needed") were labeled as needed for District Review. All other roads were considered not NFSR's or unauthorized. These scores for each resource were then aggregated so that each road had a risk or benefit score for each resource. These individual resource scores were reviewed by District Resource specialists and adjusted based on location specific issues or ground knowledge.

With this type of analysis, the results across all the five districts in the ARP are consistent.

The INFRA database and GIS are working tools to help manage the transportation system. Over the years the database and GIS have been refined. As problems or mistakes are discovered, corrections are made. INFRA and GIS-derived information within this report was based on the information contained in these two systems at the time of the analysis. Although the best information at the time of this study, it is approximate and may change.

### Existing Road System

Table 2 below lists the number of miles of system (NFSR) roads by operational maintenance level on the Pawnee National Grassland per data recorded in INFRA. The mileages in Table 2 include lengths of existing roads with *both* NFSR System and Forest Service jurisdiction (i.e. a road must have all three of these attributes to have mileage represented). Therefore, these numbers are typically lower than the numbers in the Analysis Results Table in Appendix A. Mileages presented in the Analysis Results Table are *total road lengths* (irrespective of jurisdiction or System) with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction (except for Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of “Undetermined” or “Not Needed”) in INFRA at the time of this analysis.

Appendix C displays a map of the Pawnee National Grassland road system.

**Table 2: Roads within the Pawnee National Grassland, by Maintenance Level** (these numbers are current as of May 2015)

System	Maintenance Level	On MVUM	Admin Access Only	Total Miles	
National Forest System (NFSR)	5	0	0	0	609.5
	4	3.1	0.1	3.2	
	3	52.9	15.4	68.3	
	2	118.9	410.1	529.0	
	1			9.0	

\* The mileages in Table 2 include lengths of existing (Route Status = EX) roads with *both* NFSR System and Forest Service jurisdiction (i.e. a road must have all three of these attributes to have mileage represented). Therefore, these numbers are typically lower than the numbers in the Analysis Results Table in Appendix A.

### Assessment of Available Resources

The desired annual road maintenance funding for the Forest have outpaced the available funding and have resulted in an estimated Forest deferred maintenance backlog of over 6 million dollars as of 2007. If adjusted for inflation at a rate of 4 percent per year results in a more accurate estimate of 8.8 million in today’s dollars. This trend will continue into the future as the Forests current road maintenance budget has been trending down by 3-5% per year not including the annual rate of inflation.

The available Forest road maintenance funding is prioritized to those roads needing critical health and safety maintenance with an emphasis on passenger car routes and those routes that support the critical resource management activities such as the Front Range Long Term Stewardship contract and vegetation management projects for Bark Beetle.

Additional resources for road maintenance are achieved through Forest Road Agreements with most Counties on the Forest and collaboration with road associations and home owner groups.

Funding for road decommissioning has been occurring yearly to the extent that travel management planning decisions can be completed, a task made much complex due to the urban interface and mixed use land patterns inherent to the Forest.

## STEP 3: IDENTIFYING ISSUES

### Purpose

The purpose of this step is to:

- Identify key issues related to management of the existing road system
- Determine Data needed to analyze key issues
- Existing Travel Management

### Key Issues

The key issues were identified using input from Forest Service personnel. These issues are listed in random order and do not represent a hierarchy of importance.

#### 1. **Insufficient resources for maintenance of the existing system roads and motorized trails**

Inadequate maintenance reduces access for National Forest users and management, accelerates soil erosion by concentrating surface water flow, and affects water quality and aquatic habitat by increasing sediment into water courses and intermittent drainages. Funding for road maintenance is not adequate to maintain the existing system.

#### 2. **Access needs**

Motorized vehicle access of various types is needed in order to provide recreational opportunities, efficiently manage the Forest, provide access for emergency response, and provide access for permittee holders as described further below:

- a. **Administrative Access:** Roads provide access to Forest Service administrative sites including offices, housing, and fire caches.
- b. **Motorized Recreation Use / Recreation Access:** Roads are used for various types of motorized recreation including driving for pleasure, scenic viewing, 4-wheel driving, ATV and motorcycle riding, and winter motorized recreation. Roads provide motor vehicle access to recreational activities occurring off roads, such as hiking, camping, hunting, firewood gathering, rock collecting, etc.
- c. **Forest Management:** Roads provide access for forest management activities such as fuels reduction, timber harvest, grazing, mining, noxious weed treatment, etc.
- d. **Emergency:** Roads provide access to facilitate responding to emergencies such as fire suppression and search and rescue.
- e. **Permittee:** Roads access lands with special use permits, grazing permits, road use permits, etc.
- f. **Cultural:** Roads that access high public value cultural resource sites

### 3. Environmental impacts

There are concerns about damage from motor vehicle use, including:

- a. **Fisheries:** When road networks bisect stream networks, fragmentation of the linear habitat network occurs and often habitat conditions become degraded.
- b. **Impacts to water and soil resources:** Erosion and sediment transport off roads and motorized trails in areas with perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream channels or wetlands impair the ecological and hydrologic function of drainage channels.
- c. **Fragmentation and wildlife security:** Motorized routes may fragment wildlife habitat, create barriers to movement, reduce wildlife habitat capability to sustain populations, and increase areas of disturbance.
- d. **Impacts to vegetation:** Motor vehicle use may cause the spread of noxious weeds by dispersing seed sources or, alternatively, negatively impact native and rare plant species.
- e. **Impacts to cultural resources:** Motorized routes and use of these routes may impact cultural resources by allowing users to access these sensitive sites more easily.

#### Data Needed

All data needed is already included in the GIS/INFRA databases. Due to the size of the analysis, only existing information was used and no fieldtrips occurred to create the Analysis Results Table (Appendix A).

The roads included in the analysis included those roads with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction in INFRA at the time of this analysis (except Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of “Undetermined” or “Not Needed”). Road lengths reported on the Analysis Results Table include total road length, irrespective of System and jurisdiction.

#### Existing Travel Management

The district was encouraged to provide past NEPA decisions that included travel management recommendations in the Analysis Results Table. When the results of this TA is included in future NEPA projects, the Deciding Official should compare previous decisions with current recommendations.

Refer to Step 2 above and the Analysis Results table in Appendix A regarding other Travel Management Decisions for the Pawnee National Grassland. Also refer to the current revision of the MVUM.

## STEP 4: ASSESSING BENEFITS, PROBLEMS, AND RISKS

### Purpose

The purpose of this step is to:

- Describe the analysis process
- Describe the criteria and rankings used in the risk and benefit analysis
- Summarize the results of the risk and benefit analysis

### The Analysis Process

The risk and benefit criteria categories listed in Table 3 were developed by the IDT and issues from Step 3 were considered. Each road within the Pawnee National Grassland was then evaluated against the identified risks and benefits.

### Criteria and Rankings Used in the Risk and Benefit Analysis

Roads on the Pawnee National Grassland provide access for many uses and users. They also provide the infrastructure to facilitate motorized recreation and Forest management. However, their presence has possible negative effects on the natural and cultural resources of the Forest. Further, maintenance and repair costs for these roads are in excess of budgetary allocations. The Forest IDT identified the following risks and benefits of roads as the most important resource issues for managing the transportation system on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland.

**Table 3: Road Risks and Benefits Summary**

Roads are considered a <b>Risk</b> to the following Resources	Roads are considered a <b>Benefit</b> to the following Resources
Botany	Engineering
Weeds	Lands and Minerals
Watershed Condition	Scenery
Water Resources	Recreation
Soils	Forest/Veg Management
Fisheries	Emergency Access
Wildlife	Range
Cultural Resources	

The IDT evaluated each road for each of these risks and benefits and assigned a numerical value for each category. This was based on data contained in existing (at the time of this report) GIS layers and within the INFRA database first followed with professional knowledge of the routes, their resource impacts and benefits for various uses. High risks and benefits were assigned a numerical value of three (3), medium risks and benefits were assigned a numerical value of two (2), and low risks and benefits were assigned a numerical value of one (1). The following criteria affect all NFSR's including those on the MVUM and Admin Roads. However, it was



recommended that all way routes and other unauthorized routes be automatically considered for decommissioning unless the District wished to include specific routes in the analysis.

Utilizing the criteria, a table was automatically created via GIS/INFRA with ratings for each road included. Therefore, this portion of the exercise was mechanical and consistent. Because actual field conditions can differ from those in the databases, the tables were then provided to the District resources to apply professional knowledge to the analysis and update the ratings as needed. Justification was provided in these situations and included in the Analysis Results Table in Appendix A.

There are several reasons for “NULL” ratings. “NULL” does not affect the rating of a road, it simply is not averaged in with the other scores. The resources that utilized “NULL” are:

- Cultural Resources – NULL values apply to those areas of unknown effect.
- Engineering – Engineering criteria applied to very few roads. “NULL” category was used to not artificially lower the benefit of the other roads.
- Lands - All Lands and Minerals results are automatically given a “NULL” rating as the information is not currently recorded in GIS and/or INFRA. District Lands resources are responsible for providing rating information.
- Range – Applies to roads with no allotment status.
- Fish –A road received a “NULL” rating if it did not meet one of the high criteria.
- Forest /Vegetation Management - Vegetation Management is not applicable to the Pawnee National Grassland and all scores were set to “NULL.”

Assignment of a High (3), Medium (2), or Low (1), or NULL rating for each risk and benefit category generally followed the guidelines presented below. As a note, “Medium” is used interchangeably with “Moderate.”

	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
<b>Botany</b>	High (3)	Road segment known or estimated to have potentially negative effects, or threats of future negative effects, to rare plants or communities. Road is rated High if any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the road has a rating of “3” in either criteria (1) or (4) below.</li> <li>• If the segment had a “sum of scores” in the four criteria below of 8 or higher</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	Road segment estimated to have some potentially negative effects, or threats of some future negative effects, to rare plants or communities. Road is rated Medium if any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the segment had a “sum of scores” in the four criteria between 6 and 8</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	Road segment estimated to have little or no potentially negative effect, now or in the future, to rare plants or communities. Includes all roads not considered “High” or “Medium”
	<p>Roads ranked “low” includes roads in areas that have not been surveyed for botanical resources. In such cases, roads should not be considered “low concern,” but “unknown concern,” since data for rare plants are lacking.</p> <p>Criteria:</p> <p>(1) <b>TES</b>                      High (3) - segment &lt; 80 feet from TES species points or polygons                      Med (2) - segment &gt; 80 feet and &lt; 1/4 mile from TES species points or polygons                      Low (1) - segment &gt; 1/4 mile from TES species points or polygons</p> <p>(2) <b>Rare Plants and Communities</b>                      High (3) - segment &lt; 80 feet from rare species points or polygons                      Med (2) - segment &gt; 80 feet and &lt; 1/4 mile from rare species points or polygons                      Low (1) - segment &gt; 1/4 mile from rare species points or polygons</p> <p>(3) <b>Road Level</b>                      High (3) - segment is a Level 3, 4, or 5 road; inferred higher use level                      Med (2) - segment is a Level 2 road; inferred lesser use level                      Low (1) - segment is a Level 1 road; inferred lowest use level</p> <p>(4) <b>Known adverse impacts</b>                      High (3) - TES plants or fens known to be receiving adverse impacts in area associated with segment                      Med (2) - plants of local concern or sensitive plant communities other than fens known to be receiving adverse impacts in area associated with segment                      Low (1) - plants or communities not known to be receiving adverse impacts in area associated with segment</p>	

**Rationale for Criteria – Botany**

Methods are lifted and modified from the 2003 *Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland Forest Level Roads Analysis, Appendix B*. Four criteria, listed below, were used to analyze road segments using GIS and botany staff knowledge when data were not entered into GIS. It is believed that these criteria are most useful for assessing rare plant species and communities known to occur on the ARP, whether or not the plants and communities were identified in the 1997 revised *Forest Plan* (Forest Plan lists are outdated).

- 1) **Presence of Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Plant Species (TES)** – initially used Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) data for locations of federally endangered, threatened or proposed and FS sensitive species occurrences. Additionally, used NRIS TESP database as well as personal knowledge and botany crew field record books for plants known to occur in the analysis area that are not in the CNHP database. Eighty feet was determined to be the tallest height of the dominant trees, including riparian species that occur along the road corridors in the analysis area. Eighty feet each side left and right of roadway edge is the corridor width in which roadside hazard tree or other vegetation management or road

maintenance activities are most likely to occur. The following activities are also most likely to occur within 80 feet of roadway edge: incidental trampling, picking, digging, or whole plant mortality/removal by roadside visitors, illegal harvesting, and mud-bogging. Therefore, this corridor width carries the greatest probability of impacting rare plants. Beyond 80 feet adverse impacts would be less likely to occur, and would mostly be attributable to timber sales, vegetation management activities, and off-road vehicle use. Beyond 1/4 mile of the road, impacts to rare plants are greatly reduced and would most likely be from USFS activities such as timber or fuels management, and such activities are not necessarily tied to road proximity.

- 2) **Presence of Rare Plants and Communities**, including fens and species of local concern (SOLC) – used the above process for the remainder of rare plant occurrences after TES were considered (above).
- 3) **Road Level** – The road system facilitates human activities that affect rare plants. More use (assumed maintenance level infers use) promotes a greater probability of adverse impacts to plants.
- 4) **Uses causing Known Adverse Impacts** – used locations accessed by the roadway segment where the USFS is aware of known authorized or unauthorized activities that have been documented to be causing adverse impacts to rare plants or communities, such as from heavy localized plant collecting or wildflower picking at a campground or day-use area, heavily trampled visitor use areas, illegal plant harvesting, or unauthorized mud-bogging in riparian areas containing sensitive plants or ecosystems. The area known to be adversely impacted was tied to the corresponding access road segment. If the road were not present, access to the area would become more difficult, and the adverse impacts would be anticipated to be reduced or could cease.

Databases used were comprised of the following: 1) NRIS TESP, 2) CNHP (including PCA's or communities of concern), 3) TEAMS botany crews, ARP SO botany crews, and botany contractor data resulting from roadside hazard tree project rare plant surveys in 2010 and 2011, 4) proactive fen survey data from around 2005, and 5) knowledge of rare plant or community data not entered into any of the aforementioned data bases. Roughly 1/5 to 1/4 of the road segments assessed in this analysis have been surveyed for rare plants to varying degrees, mostly associated with roadside hazard tree removal planning efforts conducted in 2010 and 2011 or with special use permits that involved road easements. Most surveyed roads are Levels 3-5.

It is unlikely that there exist any TE plants along any Forest road segment because there is very little suitable habitat in the road corridor, and most suitable corridor habitat has been adequately surveyed. Similarly, there is a low likelihood of any Sensitive plants occurring within 1/4 mile of assessed road segments, except for the following: *Potentilla rupincola*, which has a moderate probability of occurrence, *Cypripedium parviflorum*, which is known to occur within 1/4 mile of a road, *Botrychium lineare* and *Botrychium ascendens*, both of which are known to occur along roadsides in the Guanella Pass area, and *Rubus arcticus* ssp. *acualis*, which occurs in wetlands along roadsides in two locations on the Forest.

There are numerous roadside occurrences of other rare plants, such as various ferns, *Calypso bulbosa*, *Cypripedium fasciculatum*, *Lycopodium annotinum*, *Corallorhiza trifida*, and *Listera* spp. There is high confidence that there exist additional undetected populations of rare plants. There are several occurrences of PCA's or noteworthy plant communities as identified by CNHP that overlap with roads.

	Risk Rating	Criteria Guidelines
<b>Weeds</b>	High (3)	Road segment known or estimated to have potentially negative effects, or threats of future negative effects, to NFS lands by spread and/or persistence of invasive weeds. Road is rated High if one or more of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation Type is montane/mixed conifer forests, shrublands, or is located on the PNG (FSVeg) AND road segment contains at least one known weed presence within 80 feet left or right of road edge (NRIS and/or knowledge by District Weed Coordinator)</li> <li>• Rating is deemed appropriate by District Weed Coordinator to accommodate high District weed management priorities</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	Road segment estimated to have some potentially negative effects, or threats of some future negative effects, to NFS lands by spread and/or persistence of invasive weeds. Road is rated Medium if one or more of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation Type is lodgepole or spruce-fir forests AND road segment contains at least one known weed presence within 80 feet left or right of road edge (NRIS and/or knowledge by District Weed Coordinator)</li> <li>• Rating is deemed appropriate by District Weed Coordinator to accommodate medium District weed management priorities</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	Road segment estimated to have little or no potentially negative effect, now or in the future, to NFS lands by spread and/or persistence of invasive weeds. Road is rated Low if one or more of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetation Type is Alpine vegetation AND road segment contains at least one known weed presence within 80 feet left or right of road edge (NRIS and/or knowledge by District Weed Coordinator)</li> <li>• Roads with no known weed infestations. In such cases, it is more accurate to think of risk as “unknown” rather than “low” when the roads have not been adequately inventoried for weeds</li> <li>• Rating is deemed appropriate by District Weed Coordinator to accommodate low District weed management priorities</li> <li>• Road does not fit into the definition of “High” or “Medium”</li> </ul>

**Rationale for Criteria – Weeds**

Motor vehicle use has the potential to spread invasive plant species by dispersing the seed source or less likely by dispersing propagative plant parts (e.g., rhizomes). The three risk ratings identified for invasive plant species are low, moderate, or high, with a single risk rating to be provided for each road segment analyzed (unless District Weed Coordinators break segments into proportions and provide rationale). Risk ratings are tied to whether or not existing noxious weed populations are known within a segment as derived from the NRIS invasives database and/or knowledge by District weed staff of populations not in the database, combined with the life zone in which the weeds occur. Different life zones have different probabilities of weeds spreading and differing priorities for control. Generally across the forest, the lower in elevation and dryer the life zone, the more a weed effectively invades and increases. Invasive species considered for this analysis are the plant species listed on the most current Colorado Noxious Weed List (including Watch List) as well as any others that occur in the NRIS invasives species database or Weed Action Plan. Aquatic non-plant invasive species such as zebra mussels were not considered because mere presence of roads that access bodies of water does not infer that spread of aquatic species to other bodies of water will occur.

**Rationale for Criteria – Weeds (continued)**

Ratings are not further modified on a species-by-species basis at a Forest level because there is substantial variation within a species between Districts and/or Counties in terms of management priority. It is intended that the product of the Forest-level rating exercise be adjusted as appropriate by District staff during the district-level exercise to accommodate district priorities based upon 1) species, 2) impending disturbance activities that would be anticipated to release weeds, 3) geographic locations or special management areas, or 4) any other reason that prioritizes weed management for a certain road segment. At that time, each district can adjust road segments of concern upward or downward based on such considerations. If adjustments occur, rationale for weighting by consideration should be provided by each District.

Roads fit into three life zones – grasslands and montane, subalpine, and alpine – that are accurately reflected by vegetation type using FS Veg data:

- Montane/mixed conifer forests, shrublands, and PNG: Risk level 3 (high) is assigned to the lowest elevation (montane) forests, all shrublands, and PNG grasslands for roads with known weed populations. Such forests are dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, or a mixture of ponderosa pine with Douglas-fir, lodgepole and/or aspen. Shrublands are dominated by bitterbrush, mountain mahogany, sagebrush, or mixed mountain shrubs.
- Lodgepole or spruce-fir forests: Risk level 2 (moderate) is assigned to roads with mid-elevation (subalpine) forests containing known weed populations.
- Alpine vegetation: Risk level 1 (low) is assigned to roads with high-elevation alpine settings with known weed populations. Alpine vegetation is any vegetation above upper treeline.

*Rating (vegetation type reflecting life zone)*

Montane/mixed conifer forests, shrublands, and PNG = High Risk (3)

Lodgepole or spruce-fir forests = Moderate Risk (2)

Alpine vegetation = Low Risk (1)

Known Population = any population occurring within 80 feet left and right of edges of roadway. Eighty feet is the average height of hazard trees that may be removed or corridor width of general roadside vegetation management, as well as the approximate width of most off-road corridor use, which can result in plants or seed being transported to roadways and spread.

Ratings are to be completed for each road segment by assigning a Risk level of 3, 2, or 1 for Vegetation Type if a road segment contains at least one known weed presence within 80 feet left or right of road edge. For segments with no known weed infestations, a default value of 1 (Low Risk) is to be assigned. In such cases, it is more accurate to think of risk as “unknown” rather than “low” when the roads have not been adequately inventoried for weeds. Also, any segment rated as “low” could be invaded by weeds in the future, necessitating a reassignment to a higher risk rating. Each road segment has only one rating, and the highest rating prevails (unless broken into proportions by District weed staff). The only elevational break used in the GIS vegetation typing is as follows: the “meadows” veg type above 11,000 feet is assigned as alpine. The vegetation map produced by GIS of Vegetation Types is manually revised slightly by the Botanist to reflect improved accuracy for some small areas of the Forest. Each district can adjust road segments of concern upward or downward or into proportions by segment.

**Rationale for Criteria – Weeds (continued)**

The listing of Colorado noxious and watch list weeds as of January 15, 2013, is as follows:

Colorado List A Species

African rue (*Peganum harmala*) A  
 Bohemian knotweed (*Polygonum x bohemicum*) A  
 Camelthorn (*Alhagi pseudalhagi*) A  
 Common crupina (*Crupina vulgaris*) A  
 Cypress spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*) A  
 Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) A  
 Elongated mustard (*Brassica elongata*) A  
 Giant knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*) A  
 Giant reed (*Arundo donax*) A  
 Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) A  
 Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) A  
 Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) A  
 Meadow knapweed (*Centaurea pratensis*) A  
 Mediterranean sage (*Salvia aethiopis*) A  
 Medusahead (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*) A  
 Myrtle spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) A  
 Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) A  
 Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) A  
 Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*) A  
 Squarrose knapweed (*Centaurea virgata*) A  
 Tansy ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) A  
 Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) A

Colorado List B Species

Absinth wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) B  
 Black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*) B  
 Bouncingbet (*Saponaria officinalis*) B  
 Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) B  
 Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) B  
 Chinese clematis (*Clematis orientalis*) B  
 Common tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) B  
 Common teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) B  
 Corn chamomile (*Anthemis arvensis*) B  
 Cutleaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*) B  
 Dalmatian toadflax, broad-leaved (*Linaria dalmatica*) B  
 Dalmatian toadflax, narrow-leaved (*Linaria genistifolia*) B  
 Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) B  
 Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) B  
 Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) B  
 Hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*) B  
 Houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) B  
 Jointed goatgrass (*Aegilops cylindrica*) B  
 Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) B  
 Mayweed chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*) B  
 Moth mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*) B  
 Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*) B  
 Oxeye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) B  
 Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) B  
 Plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*) B  
 Quackgrass (*Elytrigia repens*) B  
 Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*) B  
 Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) B

Colorado List B Species (continued)

Salt cedar (*Tamarix chinensis*, *T. parviflora*, and *T. ramosissima*) B  
 Scentless chamomile (*Matricaria perforata*) B  
 Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*, *O. tauricum*) B  
 Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) B  
 Spurred anoda (*Anoda cristata*) B  
 Sulfur cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*) B  
 Venice mallow (*Hibiscus trionum*) B  
 Wild caraway (*Carum carvi*) B  
 Yellow nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*) B  
 Yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*) B

Colorado List C Species

Bulbous bluegrass (*Poa bulbosa*) C  
 Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) C  
 Common burdock (*Arctium minus*) C  
 Common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) C  
 Common St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*) C  
 Downy brome (*Bromus tectorum*) C  
 Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) C  
 Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) C  
 Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*) C  
 Perennial sowthistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) C  
 Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) C  
 Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) C  
 Redstem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*) C  
 Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*) C  
 Wild proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) C

Colorado Watch List

Asian mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*) W  
 Baby's breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) W  
 Bathurst burr, Spiny cocklebur (*Xanthium spinosum*) W  
 Common bugloss (*Anchusa officinalis*) W  
 Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) W  
 Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) W  
 Hairy willow-herb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) W  
 Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) W  
 Japanese bloodgrass/cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) W  
 Meadow hawkweed (*Hieracium caespitosum*) W  
 Onionweed (*Asphodelus fistulosus*) W  
 Pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) W  
 Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) W  
 Sericea lespedeza (*Lespedeza cuneata*) W  
 Swainsonpea (*Sphaerophysa salsula*) W  
 Syrian beancaper (*Zygophyllum fabago*) W  
 Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) W  
 Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) W  
 White bryony (*Bryonia alba*) W  
 Woolly distaff thistle (*Carthamus lanatus*) W  
 Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) W

Watershed Condition (Criteria 1)	Risk Rating	Criteria Guidelines
	High (3)	Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is greater than 2.33
	Med. (2)	Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is greater than 1.66 and less than or equal to 2.33
	Low (1)	Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is less than or equal to 1.66
<p>Each road should be rated based on the weighted average of the Roads Indicator score for the watersheds that the road passes through, based on the proportion of road length within each watershed.</p>		

Refer to Rationale for Criteria next page.

Water Resources (Criteria 2)	Risk Rating	Criteria Guidelines
	High (3)	Average of Sub-Criteria A and Sub-Criteria B is greater than 2.33. Example: Both Sub-Criteria rate High (3 and 3) or one Sub-Criteria rates High and one rates Medium (3 and 2)
	Med. (2)	Average of Sub-Criteria A and Sub-Criteria B is greater than 1.66 and less than or equal to 2.33. Example: Both Sub-Criteria rate Med (2 and 2) or one Sub-Criteria rates High and one rates Low (3 and 1)
	Low (1)	Average of Sub-Criteria A and Sub-Criteria B is less than or equal to 1.66. Example: Both Sub-Criteria rate Low (1 and 1) or one Sub-Criteria rates Med and one rates Low (2 and 1)
<p>Each road should be rated based on the average of scores for the following sub-criteria:</p> <p><b>Sub-Criteria A: Proximity to Water</b>                      High (3) – &gt;35 % of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course                      Mod (2) – 20-35% of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course                      Low (1) – &lt;20% of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course</p> <p><b>Sub-Criteria B: Stream Crossings</b>                      High (3) – &gt;5 stream crossing (perennial and intermittent)                      Mod (2) – 1-5 stream crossing (perennial and intermittent)                      Low (1) – No stream crossings (perennial and intermittent)</p>		

Refer to Rationale for Criteria next page.

## **Rationale for Criteria – Watershed Condition, Watershed Resources, and Soils**

Criteria used to estimate risk to soil and water resources for the minimum roads analysis included:

- Watershed Condition Class Road Indicator
- Road Proximity to Stream Channels
- Stream Crossings
- Road Adjacent Terrain Slope
- Road Gradient

The RO provided direction to include results of the Watershed Condition Classification (WCC) in the analysis. The Roads Indicator is one of the indicators in the WCC, and ties watershed condition directly to road impacts. Road proximity and stream crossings are good predictors of the direct impacts of roads on streams and riparian areas, and estimate risk that road drainage and sediment will be deposited directly into streams. Road adjacent terrain slope and road gradient are predictors of the risks that roads pose to soil erosion. While other factors certainly influence roads-watershed interactions (e.g. road condition, road drainage, and surfacing, site specific soils), the selected criteria lend themselves to GIS analysis, which is appropriate for large scale assessments.

Erosion and sediment transport off roads and motorized trails in areas with perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral stream channels or wetlands impair the ecological and hydrologic function of drainage channels. Proximity to stream channels and number of stream crossings will be the primary data utilized in the ratings. Soil erosion/runoff/geologic hazards (mass wasting) will also be considered. Class breaks are guidelines, ratings will be adjusted based on knowledge of specific roads. In addition, we will be considering information collected by the field crews to assist with our ratings.

**Criteria 1: Watershed Condition Classification (WCC) Roads Indicator** - Each road should be rated based on the weighted average of the Roads Indicator score for the watersheds that the road passes through, based on the proportion of road length within each watershed.

High (3) – Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is greater than 2.33

Mod (2) – Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is greater than 1.66 and less than or equal to 2.33

Low (1) – Weighted average of Roads Indicator score is less than or equal to 1.66

**Criteria 2: Water** - Each road should be rated based on the average of scores for the following sub-criteria. Ratings should be reviewed by District water and soils professionals and adjusted upward or downward based on professional judgment or local knowledge regarding road condition or other mitigating or exacerbating factors.

### **Sub-Criteria A: Proximity to Water**

High (3) – >35 % of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course

Mod (2) – 20-35% of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course

Low (1) – <20% of road within 100 feet of a perennial or intermittent stream course

### **Sub-Criteria B: Stream Crossings**

High (3) – >5 stream crossing (perennial and intermittent)

Mod (2) – 1-5 stream crossing (perennial and intermittent)

Low (1) – No stream crossings (perennial and intermittent)



	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
<b>Soils (Criteria 3)</b>	High (3)	Road is rated High if one of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average of Sub-Criteria C and Sub-Criteria D is greater than 2.33 [both Sub-Criteria rate High (3 and 3) or one Sub-Criteria rates High (3) and one rates Medium (2)] <b>and</b> the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows or does not show.</li> <li>• Average of Sub-Criteria C and Sub-Criteria D is medium (2) <b>and</b> the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows – change the score from 2 to 3</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	Road is rated Medium if one of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average of Sub-Criteria C and Sub-Criteria D is greater than 1.66 and less than or equal to 2.33 [both Sub-Criteria rate Med (2 and 2) or one Sub-Criteria rates High (3) and one rates Low (1)] <b>and</b> if the interception (Kw+ C or D) does not show in the area keep as a 2.</li> <li>• Average of Sub-Criteria C and Sub-Criteria D is low (1) <b>and</b> the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows – change the score from 1 to 2.</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	Road is rated Low if one of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average of Sub-Criteria C and Sub-Criteria D is less than or equal to 1.66 [both Sub-Criteria rate Low (1 and 1) or one Sub-Criteria rates Med (2) and one rates Low (1)] <b>and</b> the interception (Kw+ C or D) does not show.</li> </ul>
Each road should be rated based on the average of scores for the following sub-criteria: <p><b>Sub-Criteria C: Road-adjacent Terrain Slope</b>                      High (3) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes greater than 40%.                      Mod (2) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes from 20 to 40%.                      Low (1) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes lower than 20 %.</p> <p><b>Sub-Criteria D: Road Gradient</b>                      High (3) – Greater than 25% of road length has slope greater than 6%                      Mod (2) – 10-25% of road length has slope greater than 6%                      Low (1) – Less than 10% of road length has slope greater than 6%</p> <p>For the PNG, the following also applies:                      (Kw+ C or D) – Roads that overlaps those areas with all soil units with Kw factors equal or higher than 0.28 and all soil map units with hydrologic groups C and D.</p>		

**Rationale for Criteria – Watershed Condition, Watershed Resources, and Soils**

Refer to above for Rationale for Criteria – Watershed Condition, Watershed Resources, and Soils.

Refer to Rationale for Criteria next page.

**Criteria 3: Soil** - Each road should be rated based on the average of scores for the following sub-criteria. Ratings should be reviewed by District water and soils professionals and adjusted upward or downward based on professional judgment or local knowledge regarding road condition or other mitigating or exacerbating factors.

#### **Sub-Criteria C: Road-adjacent Terrain Slope**

For GIS exercise, hill slopes directly adjacent to road should be analyzed. Buffer roads layer to 300 feet (on both sides) to account for hill-slope run-on (up-slope from road) and run-off (downslope from road). Derive a slope polygon layer using the slope breaks described below (0-20%-low risk, 20-40%-moderate risk, and 40% high risk). Intersect the buffered road layer with the slope layer to calculate miles and percentages of each road by risk.

High (3) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes greater than 40%.

Mod (2) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes from 20 to 40%.

Low (1) – Greatest proportion of road on slopes lower than 20 %.

#### **Sub-Criteria D: Road Gradient**

Road Gradient should be calculated for 100 meter segments.

High (3) – Greater than 25% of road length has slope greater than 6%

Mod (2) – 10-25% of road length has slope greater than 6%

Low (1) – Less than 10% of road length has slope greater than 6%

The interception of the following soil factors in addition to other current sub-criteria will result in a final score within Pawnee National Grassland:

1. **All soil units with Kw factors equal or higher than 0.28.** These values represent the soils units that are more susceptible to soil particles detachment by water within the Pawnee Grassland.
2. **All soil map units with hydrologic groups C and D:** Soils in the C group have moderately high runoff potential when thoroughly wet. Soils in the D group have high runoff potential when thoroughly wet.

The addition of these criteria will result in a Final score for the Pawnee National Grassland:

#### High (3)

- If road adjacent Terrain Slope (Sub-Criteria C) + Road Gradient (Sub-Criteria D) is high (3) **and** the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows or does not show – the final score will be 3
- If road adjacent Terrain Slope (Sub-Criteria C) + Road Gradient (Sub-Criteria D) is medium (2) **and** the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows – change the score from 2 to 3. If the interception does not show in the area keep as a 2.

#### Medium (2)

- If road adjacent Terrain Slope (Sub-Criteria C) + Road Gradient (Sub-Criteria D) is medium (2) **and** If the interception (Kw+ C or D) does not show in the area keep as a 2.
- If road adjacent Terrain Slope (Sub-Criteria C) + Road Gradient (Sub-Criteria D) is low (1) **and** the interception (Kw+ C or D) shows – change the score from 1 to 2.

#### Low (1)

- If road adjacent Terrain Slope (Sub-Criteria C) + Road Gradient (Sub-Criteria D) is low (1) **and** the interception (Kw+ C or D) does not show in the area keep as a 1.

<b>Fisheries</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	High (3)	Road is rated High if one or more of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road segment contains crosses/fragments the identified aquatic habitat corridors</li> <li>• The road occurs within 200 m of suitable aquatic habitat.</li> </ul>
	Null	Road is not rated or receives a NULL rating if it does not meet one of the high criteria.

**Rationale for Criteria – Fisheries**

Fish and other aquatic species live within linear habitat networks, akin to road networks. When road networks bisect stream networks, fragmentation of the linear habitat network occurs and often habitat conditions become degraded. Stream habitat fragmentation ranks among the leading causes of habitat degradation for mobile aquatic species occurring in intermittent stream networks. Road-stream and road-riparian interactions also have a strong influence on the quality of fish habitat in a stream due as a result of introducing road-derived sediments and reducing pool depths. The degree to which roads intersect and interact with fish habitat will be based on GIS calculations of numbers of stream intersections on and proximity to perennial, fish-bearing streams. Class breaks are guidelines, ratings will be adjusted based on knowledge of specific roads. In addition, biologists will consider information available in files and data collected by field crews.

The above criteria in the table above were based on:

- (1) Does the Road Segment fragment aquatic habitat?
- (2) Does the road occur within proximity to elevate sedimentation risks to suitable aquatic habitat?

	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
<b>Wildlife</b>	High (3)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographical Area or Management Area polygon road density &gt; 2 mi/mi sq.</li> <li>• Road segment within ¼ mile of known Raptor Nest</li> <li>• Road segment occurs through active or inactive prairie dog towns ( based on 2011 prairie dog town data-year with largest number of towns)</li> <li>• Road segment in Woodlands management area (3.61) Pawnee Buttes raptor closure area (mapped in WIT) RNA (2.2) or SIA (3.1)</li> <li>• Road segment occurs through active or inactive prairie dog towns ( based on 2011 prairie dog town data-year with largest number of towns)</li> <li>• Road segment within 200 meters of known Northern Leopard frog site</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic Area or any Management area polygon has a road density between 1.1 and 1.9 mi/mi sq</li> <li>• Road segment &gt; 1/4 to 1/2 mile of known raptor nest site</li> <li>• Road segment is within 200 meters of an active or inactive prairie dog town</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	All other roads, including if any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic area or Management area polygon has road density is &lt;1 mile per square mile.</li> <li>• Road not in management area 3.61, Pawnee Buttes raptor closure area, RNA (2.2) or SIA (3.1)</li> <li>• Road segment &gt; 1/2 mile of known raptor nest</li> <li>• Road greater than 200 meters from active or inactive prairie dog town</li> <li>• Road greater than 200 meters from Northern Leopard frog site</li> </ul>
If only a portion of the road bisects one of the above, it will be assumed the whole road bisects one of the above for the purpose of this exercise. At the time of project level NEPA, the road should be further broken out if a recommendation could potentially affect its existing status.		

**Rationale for Criteria – Wildlife (Forest/Grassland - wide Information)**

Wildlife Risk Criteria were developed considering current literature, peer reviewed recommendations and accepted practices, species life history requirements, and Forest Plan direction. Below is a summary of sources consulted; expanded documentation is available.

- **General:** *Applicable terrestrial wildlife direction not listed elsewhere in this document*
- **Road Density Literature**
- **Threatened & Endangered Species**
  - Refer to Southern Rockies Lynx Amendment (2008)
  - Refer to DRAFT Preble’s Meadow Jumping Mouse Recovery Plan
  - Refer to Recovery Plan for Mexican Spotted Owl (1995)
- **Forest Plan Direction:** Goals 44, 45, 94; ST 97
- **Management Area 3.5: (Forested Flora & Fauna Habitats)** ST 2-5
- **Management Area 3.55 (Connecting Corridors):** ST 1-4
- **Management Area 1.41 Core Habitats – Existing:** ST 1-2, GL 3-4
- **Management Area 1.42 Core Habitats – Restoration:** ST 1-4, GL 5-6
- **Known Raptor Nests:** ST 101. Also, Colorado Parks & Wildlife Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors

- **Interior Forest:** GO 39, GL 40-41
- **Habitat Effectiveness:** GO 95, 116; GL 107- 109, 120
- **Production Areas and Migration:** ST 50-51, 96, 101-102: GL 103, 106

Ratings should be reviewed by District wildlife professionals and adjusted upward or downward based on professional judgment or local knowledge regarding road condition or other mitigating or exacerbating factors.

### **Additional Wildlife Rationale for criteria specific to the PNG**

The PNG in the GIS data layer includes 2 geographic areas- the west side (Crow Valley) and the East side (Pawnee). Because forested districts have multiple geographic areas, and the data is arranged in 2 geographic areas for the PNG, using geographic areas was one of two methods used to determine road density.

Management areas are smaller areas of the PNG than Geographic Areas. Management area polygons were used to determine road densities are for each management area polygon. The road density for each polygon is determined in GIS with a rating of 1, 2, or 3 assigned to each of the many management area polygons based on the road density of miles per square mile. See road density criteria.

Regardless of road density, all roads in management areas woodland management area (3.61) or RNA (2.2) or SIA (3.1) or in the Pawnee Buttes Raptor closure order (mapped in WIT), are given a ranking of a 3. These management areas are small, but important areas for wildlife and are limiting on the PNG.

Active and inactive prairie dog towns were used as criteria. 2011 was chosen as this was the year, based on acres, that best represents where prairie dog towns may occur. In the future, project analysis may need to refine these towns based on movement of prairie dog towns. Prairie dogs are a keystone species and provide nesting, foraging and birthing habitat for many sensitive species on the PNG. This includes species such as the burrowing owl, mountain plover, foraging for the ferruginous hawk, and swift fox. A 200 meter buffer from prairie dog towns was selected based on disturbance impacts to prairie dogs at this distance (Environment Canada 2009).

Known Northern leopard frog sites with roads within 200 meters were given a road rating of 3. This is because there are less than 10 known sites, and the Conservation Assessment for the Northern Leopard Frog recommends a buffer of 200 meters around known northern leopard frog habitat. Roads can cause mortality of frogs, increase sedimentation to the site and add to habitat loss.

Pronghorn fawning areas were not used as criteria for the wildlife portion of the roads subpart A. The entire PNG is fawning calving habitat based on information from the CPW. Pronghorn are not an MIS species or a sensitive species. Other species' rankings (i.e. raptors and prairie dogs) supersede the pronghorn for road criteria ratings.

<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<b>Risk Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	High (3)	Roads that intersect or contain an NRHP eligible unevaluated cultural resource that may be adversely affected by travel (including erosion). This Includes roads that are 50 years old or older that have engineered features such as bridges, stone culverts or stone retaining walls and have not been recorded or evaluated.
	Med. (2)	Roads where there is a presence of any National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible or “needs data” cultural resources that may be affected by looting/ vandalism/ erosion located within ¼ mile of the road. Areas with high cultural resource potential located within ¼ mile of the road.
	Low (1)	Roads with no potentially NRHP eligible cultural resources located within ¼ mile of the road.
	NULL	Roads with unknown potentially NRHP eligible cultural resources located within ¼ mile of the road.

**Rationale for Criteria – Cultural Resources**

The Forest Service has a responsibility to protect significant cultural resources. Cultural resources may be prehistoric or historic archeological sites (Indian campsites, mining or homestead sites, etc.), historic architectural sites (cabins, bridges or roads, etc.) or sacred or traditional use sites ( a sacred peak or area where plant resources are collected, etc.). Roads allow the public to access these resources. Public access is a benefit because it allows people to enjoy and experience diversity in history and in cultures. Public access may be a problem if it allows or encourages access to sensitive sites or allows easy access to vandals or theft of artifacts. Roads may also present a risk to archaeological resources if the road is causing erosion to sites that bisect or are near the road bed. Road maintenance may also pose a risk to archeological sites, and if the road itself is a significant site maintenance or replacement of historic elements may cause damage to a cultural resource.

Refer also to Rationale for Criteria – Recreation.

<b>Engineering</b>	<b>Benefit Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	High (3)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On a County Schedule A</li> <li>• Roads that access Forest Service Facilities that are ranked high on the Facilities Master Plan</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	
	Low (1)	
	NULL	All roads that don't fit into the definition of "High Benefit"

**Rationale for Criteria – Engineering**

Roads do not provide a benefit to engineering, instead roads are typically a benefit to other resources such as recreation, fire management, vegetation management, access to other interests such as range, minerals, communication sites, etc. Most criteria that would be considered a benefit, such as arterial/collector designation, access to high recreational use sites, higher maintenance levels, etc. are included in other resource criteria and are not repeated here. However, there are two considerations not included elsewhere that makes roads a high benefit:

- Roads on a Schedule A agreement with the counties
- Roads that access Forest Service Facilities that are ranked high on the ARP Facilities Master Plan.

Because roads will either be on a re-occurring Schedule A agreement or not, and because the Facilities Master Plan has only facilities ranked as "high" or "low", all other roads will be given a "not applicable" designation and not included in the average benefit score.

Due to limited funding at the time of this study for annual road maintenance, an annual road maintenance plan and costs were not available to determine those roads that constitute a lower or higher maintained cost per mile. Therefore, maintenance costs were not included in the above criteria.

Lands and Minerals	Benefit Rating	Criteria Guidelines
	High (3)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road use is authorized under a special use permit (SUP).</li> <li>• The road use is authorized under a FLPMA or FRTA easement.</li> <li>• The road use is authorized under an APD.</li> <li>• Road use has been negotiated for a private mineral operation on NFS lands.</li> <li>• The ARP has a SUP application on file that hasn't been processed.</li> <li>• The road use provides reasonable access to an in-holding and should be authorized.</li> <li>• The ARP has a current Plans of Operations (POO) for the road.</li> <li>• A road is being used by a hardrock minerals claimant without a POO or without any approval.</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of the road would affect or be affected by a Land Adjustment project.</li> <li>• Road use likely to be applied for given the nature of the claim.</li> <li>• Road use likely to be applied for to access leasable mineral operation on NFS or adjacent non-Federal land.</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road was illegally constructed</li> </ul>
	NULL	All roads that don't fit into the definitions of High, Medium, or Low Benefit.
Districts to review ratings for final determination.		
All Lands and Minerals results are automatically given a "NULL" rating as the information is not currently recorded in GIS and/or INFRA. District Lands and Mineral staff are responsible for providing rating information.		

Note: At this level of analysis, Lands and Mineral staff did not consider alternative existing roads or new access roads, only ones currently used or likely to be applied for.

**Rationale for Criteria – Lands and Minerals**

**Basic Questions** to ask during the screening process for eliminating, abandoning or otherwise closing roads and trails.

Because both the Lands and Minerals Programs are 'reactive' to the needs of the public, the program doesn't have an inherent interest in seeing roads either left open or closed. Our clients dictate to the agency whether a road is needed or if access is required to be provided by a law or statute. The program cannot make a determination on any given road per se – we can only react to a road with regards to a client's needs.

**LANDS and SPECIAL USES**

- **Inholdings:** the agency is required to allow access under ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) to all 'inholdings' (lands within Forest Service boundaries), if the land owner requests it and all other options are exhausted. The agency determines 'reasonable' access. Therefore, we do have some control over the extent of the use or the adequacy of the access. The agency cannot force an adjacent 'inholding' landowner to offer access across their private property in lieu of NFS lands.
- **FLPMA (Individual) and FRTA (County) Roads Easement** are property rights and cannot be taken back without the permission of the holder. Permits can be taken back but only if the agency finds a 'higher need'. The agency can choose not to renew a permit at the end of its term.



- Rights granted prior to FLPMA (Federal Land Policy and Management Act) and National Forest or Grassland Designation: The Forests and Grassland have a large number of users who were granted rights of use and occupation prior to the designation of the National Forests or Grassland: Department of Interior (DOI) easements for reservoirs, diversions, other impoundments, power lines, pipelines, as well as the designations made under U-11 authority. It is assumed that these rights were granted allowing for access to the facilities. There is very little in writing and the access is almost never accounted for in the paperwork.

#### **LOCATABLE (HARDROCK) MINERALS**

- The 1872 Mining Laws allow for prospecting, exploration and extraction/production of minerals on all NFS lands not withdrawn from entry. The BLM has administration over mining claims and does not inform the USFS when a claim has been filed; therefore the USFS may never know that a claimant is utilizing a road until we try to shut it down. In addition, the ‘pre-claimant’ has a right to explore-for minerals prior to filing a claim. Before shutting a road down, a records search with the BLM needs to be done to screen for claimants and to determine if access would be denied.
- If claimants wish to use mechanized equipment on their claims, they should be submitting Plans of Operations (POO) to the USFS to review and determine whether we need to do NEPA or not – However it is up to the claimant to determine whether they need a POO or not. If the claimant decides that they don’t – the USFS may never know about the claim or the disturbance.

#### **OIL & GAS and OTHER LEASABLE MINERALS**

- Some areas of the Forests and Grassland have leasable mineral (*e.g.*, oil & gas) rights associated with them. Some of these rights are Federally-owned and managed by the BLM under a lease. Others are privately owned. These mineral rights mean that the surface owner (Forest Service) will have to grant entry via some type of road to these lands for the purposes of extracting the minerals. This may preclude some very restrictive surface development management direction such as designated roadless areas or Wilderness. This means the Forest Service may have to, by law, allow roads to be built and used in these areas.
- A Federal lease allows the lease holder (lessee) or a designated operator access to the surface above the lease to develop the minerals, except in places where a No Surface Occupancy (NSO) lease stipulation has been attached to that particular area. The NSO doesn’t allow for any surface occupancy for the purposes of developing the lease. The lease is sold with that stipulation attached. In some areas where horizontal drilling for oil & gas is economically viable given the geology and oil & gas reservoir characteristics, the lessee can access and drill from well pads on either an adjacent NFS parcel (that does not have the NSO lease stipulation) or from nearby non-Federal land. This could allow the lessee to develop the oil & gas below NFS lands from up to 2 miles away without a need for any activities on the surface. For oil & gas development, most newly constructed roads will either be authorized by the BLM under the APD (Application for Permit to Drill) or under a Special Use Permit – depending on the land ownership, lease ownership or other factors. Conditions of approval (for an APD) or terms and conditions (for a special use permit) attached to the authorization would require full rehabilitation of the road after it’s no longer needed for the mineral operation. For mineral operations associated with private mineral rights below NFS lands, there would be no permit. In those cases, the Forest Service negotiates with the mineral owner’s representative as to what form the surface disturbance, including roads, would take.

#### **SALEABLE MINERALS, a.k.a., MINERAL MATERIALS such as sand & gravel**

- The ARP does not have any saleable minerals operations permitted at this time.

<b>Scenery</b>	<b>Benefit Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	High (3)	<p>If any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads with special designations (e.g. Scenic Byways, the Bird Tour, etc.)</li> <li>• Primary roads/M.L. 3, 4, or 5 that travel through Management Areas whose management is directly associated with scenery (e.g. M.A. 4.2 and 4.4)</li> <li>• Primary roads/ M.L. 3, 4, or 5 roads that pass through or pass within 0.5 miles of an area with a designated SIO of Very High or High</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	<p>If any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary roads/M.L. 2 that travel through Management Areas whose management is directly associated with scenery (e.g. M.A. 4.2 and 4.4)</li> <li>• Secondary roads/M.L. 2 that pass through or pass within 0.5 miles of an area with a designated SIO of Very High or High".</li> <li>• Primary roads/M.L. 3, 4, or 5 roads that pass through or pass within 0.5 miles of an area with a designated SIO of Moderate</li> </ul>
	Low (1)	<p>All other roads, including if any of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary roads/M.L. 2 that are completely within areas with a designated SIO of Very Low or Low</li> </ul>
<p>A road that travels through more than one SIO (Scenic Integrity Objective) will be given the rating of the highest SIO</p> <p>Benefit Ratings should be reviewed and confirmed by District personnel familiar with the land base to confirm the GIS-derived ratings. Benefit Ratings can be adjusted up or down based on local knowledge.</p> <p>This review process may be particularly pertinent to ML2 roads that are assigned a GIS-derived Benefit Rating of 1 or 2. These may be roads that provide a scenic experience for the people in the cars, but do not detract from the scenery of the surrounding landscape as viewed from elsewhere in the area (e.g. trails, recreation sites, etc.)</p>		

**Rationale for Criteria – Scenery**

For the purposes of this analysis, roads were considered to be a potential benefit to the forest visitors’ experience of the Scenery resource. Forest system roads that are most heavily travelled which pass through areas of the forest which are specifically managed to give preferentiality to the scenery resource receive the highest Benefit Rating. Conversely, roads that are travelled by lower numbers of visitors and that pass through areas whose management direction does not necessarily promote the scenery resource receive the lowest Benefit Ratings.

Recreation	Benefit Rating	Criteria Guidelines
	High (3)	If any of the following apply:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All ML 3-5 roads</li> <li>• ML 2 roads that satisfy the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides direct access to a developed recreation site or is part of a Christmas tree cutting area.</li> <li>- Designated on the MVUM as a road open to all motor vehicles AND is part of an established Named OHV road/trail riding system.</li> <li>- Listed as an authorized travel route in a recreation special use permit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A road that is considered a cultural resource that is potentially eligible or eligible for the NRHP. Roads that are potentially used by Native American Tribes to access sites or resources of traditional cultural value. Roads that are potentially used by the public to access high public value cultural resource sites</li> </ul>
Med. (2)	ML 2 roads when any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides direct access to designated dispersed campsites.</li> <li>• Designated on the MVUM as open to highway legal vehicles only but does not access any developed recreation site.</li> </ul>	
Low (1)	All other roads including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated on the MVUM as a road open to all motor vehicles but is not part of an established Named OHV road/trail riding system.</li> <li>• Provides access to dispersed day-use and camping sites only or not at all.</li> <li>• ML 1 roads</li> </ul>	

**Rationale for Criteria – Recreation**

A road was given a High (3) benefit rating if it exhibited one or more of the following attributes:

- All ML 3-5 roads are High Priority. Any local deviations from this assumption should be documented as to why a particular ML3-5 road is not a high priority from a recreational access/use perspective.
- A road that is considered a cultural resource that is potentially eligible or eligible for the NRHP. Roads that are potentially used by Native American Tribes to access sites or resources of traditional cultural value. Roads that are potentially used by the public to access high public value cultural resource sites. The criteria was the only Cultural Resources benefit and was moved to a Recreation Benefit for simplification.
- ML 2 roads should be High Priority if any of the following conditions apply:
  - It provides direct access to a developed recreation site (campground, trailhead, picnic area, interpretive site, boat launch, lookout/cabin rental, recreation residence, etc.) or is part of a Christmas tree cutting area. A 100 foot buffer search via GIS will flag these roads and connection roads will be subjective
  - It is designated on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) as a road open to all motor vehicles and is part of an established OHV road/trail riding system (as designated by a map separate from the MVUM and with the road/trail riding system having a unique name).
  - It is listed as an authorized travel route in a recreation special use permit. Spur roads that serve rec residences should consider a driveway permit. There may be some unauthorized or undetermined routes that access rec residences and should be considered to be added to the system as an NFSR with admin access or put under permit.

ML 2 roads not considered a High Priority should be considered a Moderate Priority (2) or a Low Priority (1) based on the criteria in the table above. Assume all ML 1 roads are Low Priority. Any local deviations from this assumption should be documented as to why a particular ML 1 road is not a low priority from a recreational access/use perspective.

<b>Forest / Veg Management</b>	<b>Benefit Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	NULL	

**Rationale for Criteria – Forest / Vegetation Management**

Vegetation Management criteria was utilized in the Travel Analysis process for the other four forested districts on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland. However, Vegetation Management was not applicable to the Pawnee National Grassland and all scores were set to “NULL.”

	<b>Benefit Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
<b>Emergency Access</b>	High (3)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any road greater than 3 miles</li> <li>• Arterials and collectors</li> <li>• Roads greater than 1 mile that run on ridgelines or drainages (50% of road or more)</li> <li>• Roads greater than 1 mile that are adjacent to private property (within ¼ mile)</li> <li>• As determined by District Fire Management:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides primary access to large areas.</li> <li>- Topographic situation favorable for fire control operations.</li> <li>- Provides means for substantive logistical support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	If any of the following apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads between 1 and 3 miles that do not meet “high”</li> <li>• As determined by District Fire Management:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extends access from primary routes but to smaller areas</li> <li>- May have favorable topographic situation</li> <li>- Suitable for logistical support or primary travel route</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Low (1)	All other roads including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any road less than 1 mile</li> <li>• Provides only limited access to small areas</li> <li>• Not suitable for substantive logistical support</li> <li>• Provides little benefit as a fire control</li> </ul>

**Rationale for Criteria – Emergency Access**

A road was given a High (3) benefit rating if it exhibited one or more of the following attributes:

- Primary Forest roads in good condition, longer than 3 miles, passable by common emergency (fire) vehicles.
- Includes arterials. An arterial is a NFS road that provides service to large land areas and usually connects with other arterial roads or public highways.
- Includes collectors. A collector is a NFS road that serves smaller areas than an arterial road and that usually connects arterial roads to local roads or terminal facilities. Provides service to smaller land areas than an arterial road. It usually connects forest arterial roads to local forest roads or terminal facilities.
- Roads close or adjacent to private property – defined as all ML roads greater than 1 mile long within ¼ mile of private land
- Include roads that provide primary access to large areas, are located in areas with topographic situation favorable for fire control operations, and provide means for substantive logistical support (support rating with explanation).

A road was given a Medium (2) benefit rating if it exhibited one or more of the following attributes:

- Secondary Forest roads in good condition, between 1 and 3 miles, passable by common emergency (fire) vehicles.
- Include roads that extend access from primary routes but to smaller areas, are located in areas with favorable topographic situation , and are suitable for logistical support or primary travel route (support rating with explanation).

A road was given a Low (1) benefit rating if it exhibited one or more of the following attributes:

- Short, dead-end spur roads (less than one mile) and roads that typically exist as "4WD only" or not drivable by typical emergency vehicles. A local NFS road is one that connects a terminal facility with collector roads, arterial roads, or public highways and that usually serves a single purpose involving intermittent use.
- Provides only limited access to small areas, not suitable for substantive logistical support, or provides little benefit as a fire control feature (midslope or poor topographic situation)

<b>Range</b>	<b>Benefit Rating</b>	<b>Criteria Guidelines</b>
	High (3)	Active Allotments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifically for the Pawnee National Grassland, if a road accesses a range improvement such as a tank, windmill, etc., it was automatically recommended to be maintained.</li> </ul>
	Med. (2)	Vacant Allotments
	Low (1)	Closed Allotments
	NULL	All roads that do not have an Allotment status

**Rationale for Criteria – Range**

Livestock grazing permit holders are required to maintain range improvements (e.g. fences and water developments), use proper salting practices to help distribute livestock, and ride/check cattle on at least a weekly basis per the terms and conditions of their term grazing permit. Access by roads helps facilitate this work, and in some cases is the only or best way to get supplies into areas otherwise inaccessible to permittees.

Specifically for the Pawnee National Grassland, if a road accesses a range improvement such as a tank, windmill, etc., it was automatically recommended to be maintained.

**Rangeland Management Unit (RMU)\_ (Allotments)** - Depicts the gross grazing management area (allotment) boundaries, range general resource area boundaries.

**RMU\_SubUnit (Pastures)** - Depicts grazing implementation monitoring area boundaries within each Pasture.

Cross reference this data with INFRA Billings to determine Active, Vacant, and Closed allotments and prioritize road closures or other actions associated with transportation. Active allotments would be the highest priority, vacant allotments would be a medium priority and closed allotments would be a lower priority.

**Criteria and Rankings Used in the Risk and Benefit Analysis (continued)**

The same risk and benefit categories were used for all roads, regardless of maintenance level. This was done for simplicity and consistency.

All resources were weighted equally (scores averaged) except for Botany ,Weeds, and Cultural Resources in the Risk Category, and Veg Management and Emergency Access in the Benefit Category as explained further below. Table 4 summarizes the risk and benefit weightings. As mentioned above, a “NULL” score was not averaged.

**Table 4: Road Risk and Benefit Weighting**

Weight	Risk	Weight	Benefit
Averaged. Total weight = 16-2/3 %	Botany	Averaged	Engineering
	Weeds		Lands
Averaged. Total weight = 83-1/3 %	Watershed Condition		Scenery
	Water Resources		Recreation
	Soils		Range
	Fisheries		0%
	Wildlife	0%	ER Access
0%	Cultural Resources	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		

Rare Plants and Weeds (Risk)

Overall, in the absence of additional surveys, the botany resources are of low risk. It was recommended that for the purposes of risk assessment, that botany resources receive a lesser weighting (half) relative to other resource concerns. This is with the caveat that individual areas containing rare plants or fens, if found, could be addressed for conservation if desired on a case by case or project basis. In addition, the presence of rare plants would likely not affect or change a recommendation of a road, just mitigated to avoid the impacts.

Likewise, the presence of weeds would likely not affect or change a recommendation of a road, just mitigated to avoid the impacts. Therefore, the weighting of weeds is also half relative to the other resource concerns.

Cultural Resources (Risk)

Heritage information was captured for this process. Because Heritage would not recommend the closing of specific roads, the weighting factor was set to zero.

Vegetation Management (Benefit)

Vegetation Management scores were automatically set to “NULL” as this criteria does not apply to the Pawnee National Grassland landscape.

Emergency Access (Benefit)

Emergency Access information was captured for this process. Because cross-country travel can generally easily occur across the Pawnee National Grassland landscape, the weighting factor was set to zero.

This risk and benefit analysis used for this TAP was based on GIS layers and INFRA data available at the time this analysis was conducted. A matrix was created displaying each road and each risk and benefit category and is presented in the Analysis Results Table in Appendix A. Once a numerical value was assigned to each matrix category, a weighted average was calculated for each road that is represented by the overall “Risk Rating” and overall “Benefit Rating”. The following is a breakdown of the overall rating.

High - Those rankings with a value of 2.33+ or greater

Medium - Those rankings between 1.670 and 2.330

Low – Those rankings with a value of 1.67- or less

These categories were calculated mathematically and did not consider the severity of the impact beyond the guidelines listed above.

After the initial matrix was produced, it was given to the District for input. If a score was changed for a resource, it was recorded in the “Comments” column to note additional information about the road.

**Results of the Risk and Benefit Analysis**

Appendix A contains the Risk/Benefit Analysis matrices (the Analysis Results Table), which lists the risks and benefit ratings associated with each NFSR on the Pawnee National Grassland.

Refer to Step 5 below for the summarized results of the Risk and Benefit Analysis.



## **STEP 5: DESCRIBING OPPORTUNITIES AND SETTING PRIORITIES**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this step is to:

- Describe opportunities for roads
- List recommendations for roads
- Describe future actions

### **Opportunities for Roads**

#### **Change Jurisdiction**

Opportunities may exist to convert some roads under Forest Service jurisdiction to another jurisdiction, such as a County or other government agency, thus shifting the maintenance responsibility to them. This could, however, require an initial investment to bring the road up to a designated standard prior to transfer of jurisdiction.

#### **Close to Motorized Use**

Opportunities may exist to convert some roads currently open to public motorized use, but for no obvious benefit, to ML1 roads, if they are deemed needed for forest management or emergency access. This could effectively reduce the cost of maintaining the roads. There may be initial costs to ensure that these roads are made to be self-maintaining hydraulically before converting them to ML1 roads.

#### **Convert to Another Use**

Opportunities may exist to convert some roads, if the road is not needed, to another use, such as a motorized or non-motorized trail, thus eliminating the need to use resources to maintain it as a road. This option, however, would shift the cost of maintaining the converted road to another program area, such as trails.

#### **Decommission**

Opportunities may exist to decommission some roads, if the road is not needed. This would eliminate the need to plan for expenditure of resources to maintain the road in the future. There may be one-time costs to decommission roads.

#### **Remove from System**

Opportunities may exist to remove some roads from the system. Some system roads exist on private property to which the Forest Service has no legal access. This is not the same as decommissioning because the roads may continue to be used by the private landowner.

**Add to System**

Opportunities may exist to add some roads to the system. In some situations it may be beneficial to add an unauthorized route that may have minimal potential risks but significant benefits in conjunction with removing other high risks/low or medium benefit roads.

**Mitigation**

Opportunities may exist to prioritize the high and medium benefit roads that require mitigation owing to their high potential risks. Mitigation may include moving roadways out of stream beds, installing drainage features including aquatic organism passages, or installing erosion control measures. The benefits of expending maintenance funds to do this should be compared with the potential economic and social costs of keeping the road open or temporarily closing it until funding is available to mitigate the risks.

**Recommendations for Roads**

General recommended actions for roads that fall within each of the risk/benefit categories are described below. These are general considerations and are not necessarily applicable to all roads that fall within each category.

		Benefit*		
		High	Medium	Low
Risk	High	Maintain & Mitigate	Convert, Close, or Decommission, or Maintain & Mitigate	Close or Decommission
	Medium			
	Low	Maintain		Convert, Close or Decommission

\*Exceptions:

- If all benefit resources ranked a road low (all scores were a “1”), the road was automatically recommended for decommissioning.
- If Lands ranked a road as high (3), it was automatically recommended for “maintain” for risks rated as low and “maintain and mitigate” for risks rated as medium or high.
- If Range ranked a road as high (3) and it accessed a range improvement, it was automatically recommended for “maintain” for risks rated as low and “maintain and mitigate” for risks rated as medium or high.

**High Risk/High Benefit – Mitigate/Maintain**

High Risk/High Benefit roads should receive the highest priority for maintenance and mitigation. These roads have high benefits and should therefore be retained, while mitigation of resource impacts and frequent maintenance should occur as soon as possible to reduce the risk level.

**High Risk/Medium Benefit – Convert/Close/ Decommission or Maintain/Mitigate**

High Risk/Medium Benefit roads should be considered for closure to motorized use, decommissioned, or converted to another use due to their high risk. If they are to be maintained due to their moderate benefit, they should be given a high priority for mitigation of resource impacts.

**High Risk/Low Benefit – Close/ Decommission**

High Risk/Low Benefit roads should be closed to motorized use (change maintenance level to 1) or decommissioned due to their high level of risk and low level of benefit.

**Medium Risk/High Benefit – Mitigate/Maintain**

Medium Risk/High Benefit roads should be given a high priority for maintenance and mitigation. These roads have high benefits and should be retained, while mitigation of resource impacts and regular maintenance should occur to reduce the risk level.

**Medium Risk/Medium Benefit – Mitigate/Maintain or Convert/Close/ Decommission**

Medium Risk/Medium Benefit roads could be considered for maintenance and mitigation or be considered for conversion, closure, or decommissioning and will depend on the level of benefit versus risk in the overall project area.

**Medium Risk/Low Benefit – Close/ Decommission**

Medium Risk/Low Benefit roads should be considered for closure to motorized use (change maintenance level to 1) or decommissioning.

**Low Risk/High Benefit – Maintain**

Low Risk/High Benefit roads have high benefits and should be retained. Since the risks are low, they are not a priority for maintenance or mitigation, but should be maintained adequately to avoid deterioration.

**Low Risk/Medium Benefit – Maintain**

Low Risk/Medium Benefit roads should be retained in light of their importance to the public and/or forest management and their relatively low resource risk. Because the risks are low, they are not a priority for maintenance, but should be maintained adequately to avoid deterioration.

**Low Risk/Low Benefit – Convert/Close/ Decommission**

Low Risk/Low Benefit roads should be evaluated for converting to other uses, closing to motorized use (change maintenance level to 1), or decommissioning. Since the risks are low, they are not a priority for these activities.

The above nine categories do not address Changing Jurisdiction, Removing from System, or Adding to System as recommendations for the following reasons:

- **Adding to System** would apply to unauthorized routes that the District wishes to add to the System and would be selected as a recommendation for these types of individual situations.
- **Changing Jurisdiction** and **Removing from System** would require a more in depth analysis of ownership and maintenance of the road. If the District recognized opportunities to change the road jurisdiction or system, it was individually added as a recommendation.

Since every road was given a numerical value for both risk and benefit, priorities for action should consider the value these scores.

Recommendations for Roads are summarized in Table 5 (and Table 1 in the Executive Summary).

As required per letter dated December 17, 2013 from Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System roads were labeled as “likely NOT needed for future use” and roads “likely needed for future use.” Only roads recommended for “Decommission” or “Close or Decommission” were mapped as “likely NOT needed for future use.” The remaining roads were mapped as “likely needed for future use.”

**Table 5: Summary of Recommendations to Roads within the Pawnee National Grassland**

Recommendations	Number of Miles*	Number of Roads	
Decommission	150	232	Likely NOT Needed for Future Use
Close or Decommission	58	71	
Convert, Close, or Decommission	10	16	Likely Needed for Future Use
Convert, Close, or Decom, or Maintain & Mitigate	41	18	
Maintain	94	134	
Maintain & Mitigate	458	288	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>759</b>	

\* Mileages presented are *total road lengths* (irrespective of jurisdiction or System) with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction in INFRA at the time of this analysis. Table excludes Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of “Undetermined” or “Not Needed” unless requested to be analyzed by the district. Table includes existing (Status) ML 1-5 roads and selected unauthorized routes.

It is recommended that all way routes and other unauthorized routes on Forest Service lands not included in the analysis be automatically considered for decommissioning. It is estimated for the Pawnee National Grassland there are approximately 84 miles, or 147 inventoried unauthorized roads (including those selected for analysis).

Recommendations are for the Forest Service portion of the road only.

### Mapping and Tables

The Analysis Results Table in Appendix A lists the roads by Road Number. The Analysis Results table in Appendix B lists the roads by Recommendation.

Two maps are included in Appendix C. The first map includes the breakdown of roads by Recommendation as summarized in Table 5. The second map satisfies the map template required per letter dated December 17, 2013 from Leslie Weldon, Deputy Chief, National Forest System that displays roads “likely NOT needed for future use” and roads “likely needed for future use.” Only roads recommended for “Decommission” or “Close or Decommission” were mapped as “likely NOT needed for future use.” The remaining roads were mapped as “likely needed for future use.”

The following should be noted regarding these maps and tables:

- The modeling results for this table were produced in February 2015. Although the best information at the time of this study, it is approximate and may have changed. Refer to “Existing Road System Databases” in Step 2 above regarding limitations of data.
- Mileages presented in the Analysis Results Table are *total road lengths* irrespective of jurisdiction or System with at least some of its length recorded as NFSR System and/or Forest Service jurisdiction (except for Forest Service jurisdiction roads with system of “Undetermined” or “Not Needed”) in INFRA at the time of this analysis. Although the entire road is mapped as having one recommendation, recommendations are for the Forest Service portion of the road only.
- This analysis assumed a single recommendation for an entire road. A project level analysis may segment a road into differing recommendations (i.e. a section of road may be recommended for decommissioning while another section will be maintained). Notes were captured as much as possible on segmentation of recommendations.
- Only ML1-5 and selected unauthorized routes were mapped. All other unauthorized roads were not analyzed and are not included on the maps. Unauthorized roads are recommended for decommissioning.
- Maintenance Levels in the Tables represent the majority Maintenance Level of the road.
- The tables in Appendix A have more detailed information than the map displays.
- If a road had a previous decision and it had multiple recommendations, if any portion of the road had a recommendation to maintain, or “needed for future use”, the entire road was shown as “likely needed for future use.” A separate effort will be made to segment roads by recommendation as time and funding permits. Again, the information provided in the table in Appendix A has more detailed information regarding road risks, benefits, and decisions (if applicable). Note: The Pawnee National Grassland did not have any previous decisions to record in this analysis.
- This Travel Analysis Report is being prepared for the Pawnee National Grassland to satisfy the travel analysis requirements of Subpart A. The maps in Appendix C do not define the “minimum road system.” Instead this travel analysis will be used to inform future site specific NEPA analyses that include public involvement and additional evaluation by the Forest or District Resources. The recommendations contained may be carried forward for implementation, be rejected, or changed.

## Future Actions

The recommendations for roads, as presented in the Pawnee National Grassland Analysis Results Table by Road Number and the Pawnee National Grassland Analysis Results Table by Recommendation in Appendices A and B, respectively, are recommendations only. As stated previously, future site specific NEPA analyses that include public involvement and additional evaluation by the Forest or District Resources may carry forward for implementation, reject, or change the recommendations in this report, and provide the basis for making specific road related decisions. These NEPA analyses, in combination with strategic prioritization of anticipated allocated funding, will determine how this report is implemented or modified. As additional information is gathered in the future, this information may result in future modifications to the recommendations in this Travel Analysis.

## Travel Analysis Report

### Pawnee National Grassland

The recommendations for roads, as presented in this report, tables, and maps are preliminary recommendations only. Future site specific NEPA analyses that include public involvement and additional evaluation by the Forest or District Resources may carry forward for implementation, reject, or change the recommendations in this report, and provide the basis for making specific road related decisions. These NEPA analyses, in combination with strategic prioritization of anticipated allocated funding, will determine how this report is implemented or modified. As additional information is gathered in the future, this information may result in future modifications to the recommendations in this Travel Analysis.

Prepared by:	Michele White, Transportation Engineer	Date
Reviewed by:	Curtis Youngman, Pawnee National Grassland District Ranger	Date
Reviewed by:	Tom Ford, Recreation, Planning, and Design Group Leader	Date

## **APPENDIX A: PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLAND ANALYSIS RESULTS TABLE BY ROAD NUMBER**

### **Overall Risk and Benefit Assessment Ratings**

High - Those rankings with a value of 2.33+ or greater

Medium - Those rankings between 1.670 and 2.330

Low – Those rankings with a value of 1.67- or less

**APPENDIX B: PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLAND ANALYSIS  
RESULTS TABLE BY RECOMMENDATIONS**

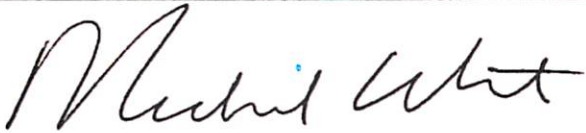
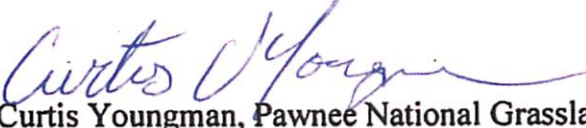
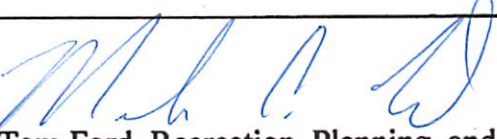


## **APPENDIX C: PAWNEE NATIONAL GRASSLAND ROAD SYSTEM MAPS**

### Travel Analysis Report

#### Pawnee National Grassland

The recommendations for roads, as presented in this report, tables, and maps are preliminary recommendations only. Future site specific NEPA analyses that include public involvement and additional evaluation by the Forest or District Resources may carry forward for implementation, reject, or change the recommendations in this report, and provide the basis for making specific road related decisions. These NEPA analyses, in combination with strategic prioritization of anticipated allocated funding, will determine how this report is implemented or modified. As additional information is gathered in the future, this information may result in future modifications to the recommendations in this Travel Analysis.

Prepared by:	 Michele White, Transportation Engineer	9/23/15 Date
Reviewed by:	 Curtis Youngman, Pawnee National Grassland District Ranger	9/25/15 Date
Reviewed by:	 Tom Ford, Recreation, Planning, and Design Group Leader	10/8/2015 Date