

**APPENDIX G**  
**ROAD GUIDELINES**

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## **Appendix G Road Guidelines**

### **Decommissioning Guidelines**

Road decommissioning results in the removal of a road from the road system. The impacts of the road on the environment are eliminated or generally reduced to an acceptable level. To accomplish this, a number of techniques can be used, such as posting the road closed and installing waterbars, posting and installing barriers, ripping and seeding, converting the road to a trail, and full reclamation by generally restoring the original topography. There is a different cost associated with each of these techniques; their effectiveness for deterring unauthorized motorized vehicle use varies as well. When choosing a technique for road decommissioning, the objective is to eliminate the need for future road maintenance.

ML 3, 4 and 5 roads are generally fairly wide, have culverts installed at designed intervals to cross drain the roads, are ditched, have better sight distances designed on horizontal and vertical curve, have larger cuts and fills, and are designed through the topography rather than with the topography. It is generally much more expensive to decommission these roads than decommissioning lower level roads..

Guidelines for decommissioning roads include the following:

- Balance cost with resource risk and effectiveness of the treatment when selecting methods for decommissioning roads.
- Convert roads to trails as a decommissioning method when analysis of recreation demand indicates a need to expand, connect or improve the existing trail system in the area. Provide adequate trailhead parking as part of this treatment method (See URI and RRI discussion in Chapter 4).
- Decommission by restoring the road to original contours when mitigating visual impacts is required by the Forest Plan (USDA-Forest Service 1997) or when necessary to assure the elimination of vehicular traffic.

### **Capital Improvement Guidelines**

Funding limitations require prioritization of reconstruction work. The Road Risk/Value Category Matrix in combination with the Road Risk and Value spreadsheet printouts provide a starting point for developing priorities. The following guidelines should be used in conjunction with the category matrix when selecting, prioritizing, and implementing road reconstruction and construction projects.

Guidelines for capital improvement include the following:

- Conduct road location reviews prior to all new construction and road relocations. Assure the location meets public and agency needs while mitigating environmental impacts

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identified in the analysis. Responsible line officers and resource and engineering specialists should participate in the review.

- Establish a traffic counting program to identify high use roads and traffic patterns.
- Use motor vehicle accident safety investigations and reports to help identify road safety hazards.
- Use the following categories to prioritize road investments planned to reduce deferred maintenance backlog on roads: 1, Critical Health and Safety; 2, Critical Resource Protection; 3, Critical Forest Mission. Data for these work items is in the Forest Service Infrastructure database.
- Coordinate reconstruction and construction work with other agencies whenever possible. Utilize interagency agreements to develop investment and maintenance partnerships.
- Use funding sources in timber and K-V programs to address areas that impact safety and efficiency of commodity production

## **Road Management Guidelines**

Road management guidelines include the following:

- If a road's maintenance condition has decreased, consider the need for the road and the historic use, as well as alternative roads in the area before changing the maintenance level.
- Reduce the maintenance level on identified low value ML 3, 4 and 5 roads being analyzed in local-level analyses. This can be a cost effective alternative. Reduced maintenance of these roads should not result in any increased watershed risks from these roads as the most basic road maintenance will focus on maintaining road drainage. The reduced maintenance should only result in reduced user comfort, and hence, decreased use over time will further lessen the potential for road related watershed risks.
- It is important for travelers to have the sort of information necessary to make a decision about the road on which they are about to travel. When appropriate, utilize entrance treatments, warning signs, route markers, and information bulletin boards to advise travelers of conditions ahead.
- Do not post speed limit and other regulatory signs on roads under Forest Service jurisdiction without a Forest Supervisor's order and a law enforcement plan.
- Consider prohibiting all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use on Forest system roads when one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - The road is maintained at a ML 3, 4 or 5 and connects to a state, county, or other public agency road that is similarly regulated.
  - Traffic volumes exceed 100 vehicles per day (ADT) on single-lane roads.
  - Average traffic speed on the road exceeds 25 miles per hour.

## **General Guidelines**

The following are general road-related guidelines.

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- Require authorized, permitted operations utilizing NFSR roads to pay their fair share of the road maintenance costs.
  - Consider road decommissioning when planning projects that involve the construction and use of short-term, single resource roads (e.g., roads planned for mineral projects that undergo exploration, development, and abandonment phases, and temporary timber access roads).
  - Concentrate maintenance resources on high value roads.
  - Update the road system databases and keep them current.
  - At appropriate intervals, update the data contained in the Road Risk and Value spreadsheets. Analyze the changes to determine new opportunities that may have developed as new information is collected.
  - Periodically update, road management objectives for all system roads to take into account changes in risks, values and maintenance resource budgets.

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