

**ITEM 5-1  
Off Road Vehicles**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Limit off-road vehicle damage.	Annual	When use conflicts with management goals of area.

**Introduction:** The objective of this monitoring item is to analyze the use of Off Road Vehicles (ORV's) on the Lolo NF. The Forest Travel Plan prohibits motorized vehicle travel off open roads or trails. Snowmobile use is generally considered open unless specifically restricted on an area-by-area basis. At this time, only lands designated to wilderness (MA 12) and large blocks of roadless lands (MA 11) restrict motorized use. This restriction applies to snowmobile use.

**Methods:** ORV use is measured by the amount of resource damage and/or the number of new motorized trails that develop off open roads and trails on the forest. These unauthorized trails leave obvious marks on the landscape. No actual field counts have been conducted.

**Results:** District Resource Assistants have observed a general increase in resource damage and trail tracks created by ORV's in the past year. These observations indicate an increase in the number of ORV's using the Lolo National Forest.

**Evaluation:**

Missoula Ranger District:

The largest area of unauthorized ATV/ORV use on the Missoula District occurs west of Missoula, from Wildhorse Point to Telephone Butte. Corporate private lands at lower elevations in this area give access to ORV's to National Forest system lands at higher elevations. These access points through private land are difficult to patrol. Also, the Graves Range Jeep road provides access to many user made trails that connect with Wildhorse Point. Resource problems include eroding user-made trails on steep slopes.

Ninemile Ranger District:

ORV use is concentrated near Frenchtown and Huson in the Mill Creek, Roman Creek, Houle Creek, and Sixmile Creek drainages. Off-road and off-trail riding occur in the low elevation, open ponderosa pine stands adjacent to subdivisions. Use is causing vegetation loss and erosion.

ATV use occurs on trails designed for motorcycles in the Petty Mountain area resulting in vegetation loss and erosion.

Scattered snowmobile use occurs District-wide. The most significant backcountry use occurs in the Great Burn proposed wilderness. Use is limited to the more experienced backcountry, off-trail riders.

Plains/Thompson Falls and Seeley Lake Ranger Districts:

ORV use is generally light across the Plains/Thompson Falls and Seeley Lake Districts. Few areas show evidence of improper or illegal use in the form of resource damage or complaints from other users. Use primarily occurs in relation to hunting during spring and fall hunting seasons.

### Superior Ranger District:

ATV's are continuing to create their own trails to circumvent road closure devices. New, unauthorized trails have been discovered in the Mill Creek, Fourmile Creek, and lower Keystone Creek areas. Off-road use in the St. Regis Basin and Big Creek drainage is continuing to be a problem.

Silver Country continues to promote this area for recreation opportunities. Some increase in ATV, ORV, and snowmobile use appears to be a result of this promotion. Also, the Idaho Panhandle National Forests are developing ORV and ATV trails adjacent to the Superior Ranger District border.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) Continue to monitor ORV use across the Forest on an annual basis and document ORV-caused resource damage and user conflicts on the forest.
- 2) Identify critical issues that must be addressed prior to the next Forest Travel Plan and Forest Plan Revision. New Travel Plan or interim orders may result from addressing these issues.
- 3) The Stateline EA decision is in litigation. The Lolo's decision was to continue to prohibit motorized use of MA 11, forestlands *including* snowmobile use. A final decision and plan for implementation and monitoring of the EA is pending while it remains in litigation.
- 4) The ORV DEIS was made available for review on November 15, 1999. The 90-day public comment period on the draft EIS/plan amendment will end on February 24, 2000. A final EIS/plan amendment is scheduled for December 2000.

**ITEM 5-2  
Recreation Opportunities**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Provide opportunities for a wide spectrum of recreation activities.	Annual	+ or - 25% of target projected in Recreation Opportunity Inventory.

**Introduction:** The objective of this monitoring item is to analyze recreation use on the Lolo National Forest and compare this with Forest Plan projected use.

**Methods:** Developed recreation use information was obtained through campground use numbers and collected fee use dollars. Observations by hosts at these developed recreation sites were also used. Use levels and patterns in dispersed recreation and wilderness areas were obtained through field observations by district field crews who monitored use along roads and trails and made personal contacts with Forest visitors. Wilderness management was monitored by evaluating number of acres managed for wilderness values on the Lolo National Forest.

**Results:** Western Montana continues to be a destination location for tourism and recreation with most increases in use occurring in Dispersed Recreation. See Table 5-2A.

Developed Recreation: Developed recreation use differed between districts this year. Superior and Missoula Districts found that use at developed sites increased about five percent in 1999. However, Seeley Lake reported no noticeable increase in developed recreation use in 1999. Overall, district personnel estimate that developed recreation sites on the Lolo received approximately 444,000 recreation visitor days (RVD's) in 1999.

Dispersed Recreation: Dispersed recreation use was up an average of three percent in 1999 from earlier figures. District personnel calculate general forest areas received 846,000 RVD's in 1999.

Wilderness Use: Wilderness use numbers remain static in the Rattlesnake and Welcome Creek Wildernesses (1700 and 1550 RVD's, respectively) while use is down approximately 2000 RVD's in the Scapegoat Wilderness to 6000. Use is down due to the overwhelming amount of blow down occurring along the main trails in the Scapegoat. The blow down in the drainage resulted from the 1988 Canyon Creek Fire. The total number of RVD's for wilderness use on the Lolo in 1999 was 9,250.

Wilderness Management: The Lolo currently manages 370,000 acres of wilderness-designated lands. No additional acreage was allocated to wilderness in 1999.

Trails Construction and Reconstruction: The Lolo NF manages 2,794 total miles of trails that serve hikers, horse users and off-highway vehicle users. In 1999, the Lolo constructed and/or reconstructed 33.6 miles of that trail base.

**Table 5-2A.** Recreation Use from 1987 to 1999 - *the figures in the table below are rounded to the nearest 1000.*

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Developed Recreation (M RVD*)</b>	<b>Dispersed Recreation (M RVD*)</b>	<b>Wilderness Use (M RVD*)</b>	<b>Wilderness Mgmt. (M Acres**)</b>	<b>Trails Constructed/Reconstructed (Miles)</b>
87	352	1080	12	369	0
88	268	1300	9	369	22
89	384	950	5	369	7
90	331	1037	4	369	21
91	360	1131	5	369	20
92	378	1194	5	369	11
93	315	1228	5	370	16
94	329	1268	12	370	31
95	375	1223	12	370	21
96	376	1212	11	370	25
97	410	781	10	370	22
98	431	821	11	370	16
99	444	846	9	370	34

\* M RVD =Thousand Recreation Visitor Days

\*\* M Acres = Thousand Acres

**Evaluation:** A slight increase in developed and dispersed recreation has been noticed. See Table 5-2B.

Developed Recreation: Developed recreation use is now at 102% of the projected level in the Forest Plan.

Dispersed Recreation: Dispersed recreation is also up from last year and is now at 97% of the projected level in the Forest Plan.

Wilderness Use: Wilderness use is 53% of projected Forest Plan use levels.

Wilderness Management: Wilderness management continues to be at 102% of Forest Plan projected outputs in 1999. This is due to no additional acreage added to the wilderness base.

Trails Constructed and Reconstructed: The Lolo averaged 73% of the trail construction/reconstruction that was projected in the Forest Plan.

**Table 5-2B.** Forest Plan Projected vs. Actual Average Outputs, 1987-1999.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Forest Plan Projected (Ann. Ave.)</b>	<b>Actual Average to Date</b>	<b>Percent of Projected</b>
Developed Recreation	M RVD	353	366	104%
Dispersed Recreation	M RVD	1,137	1,082	95%
Wilderness Use	M RVD	17	8	47%
Wilderness Management	M Acres	363	370	102%
Trail Construction /Reconstruction	Miles	26	19	73%

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Continue to direct appropriated, CIP, and Fee Demonstration funding to: a) perform heavy maintenance and repair of recreation facilities (deferred maintenance); b) correct resource

damage and poor health and safety conditions of facilities; c) improve universal accessibility of our recreation sites; and d) operate and maintain interpretive sites, congressionally designated areas, Scenic Byways, and Wild and Scenic Rivers corridors.

2) Hold new programs and facilities to a minimum.

3) Continue implementation of the Lolo Accessibility Transition Plan for developed recreation sites.

4) Continue to assemble, update, and validate Meaningful Measures data for all recreation uses on the Lolo.

5) Continue to monitor the effects and benefits of the Fee Demonstration project established for Developed Recreation fee sites.

**ITEM 5-3  
Roadless Land Changes**

ACTIVITY, PRACTICE OR EFFECT TO BE MEASURED	REPORTING PERIOD	VARIABILITY (+/-) WHICH WOULD INITIATE FURTHER EVALUATION
Compare changes in acres and distribution of roadless lands with Forest Plan projections.	5 years	Changes different from what was projected.

**Introduction:** This monitoring item is used to track changes to roadless areas that have been designated by the Lolo Forest Plan.

In March 1999, the National Forest Service (NFS) began an 18-month suspension of road reconstruction and construction. On October 19, 1999, the NFS published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register that outlined a two part process that could: 1) limit certain development activities such as road construction in inventoried roadless areas across the country and 2) determine what activities are consistent with protecting the important ecological and social values associated with inventoried roadless areas. A 60-day public comment period started on October 19 and ended on December 20, 1999. Over 500,000 comments were received. The agency is planning to publish a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and proposed rule for public review in the spring of 2000. The DEIS will outline specific alternatives and provide a detailed basis for discussion with the public concerning future management of roadless areas.

**Methods:** District personnel report road development in designated roadless areas.

**Results:** No development took place in roadless areas on the Lolo National Forest in FY 99.

**Evaluation:** The Lolo NF has developed roadless areas at a much slower pace than the Forest Plan projected. We corrected some roadless acres after landscape level analysis found some errors both plus and minus. Thirteen years into the Plan, we've developed 43,445 acres compared to the 142,864 acres projected for development by the end of the first decade. We have developed 29% of the roadless lands anticipated. No road development has taken place in allocated roadless areas in the last several years.

**Table 5-3A. Roadless Land Status on the Lolo National Forest.**

Area Code	Roadless Area Name	1983 Net Acres	Projected Decade 1 Development	Actual 1984-99 Developed	Projected Decade 1 Roadless	Remaining Roadless Oct. 98
L1LAQ	McGregor-Thompson	27,850	27,568	14,350	282	13,500
01141	Maple Peak	6,960	*	0	*	6,690
01142	Stevens Peak	600	*	0	*	600
01152	Wonderful Peak	1,600	*	0	*	1,600
01202	Petty Mountain	16,980	0	0	16,980	16,980
X1204	Rattlesnake	2,700	1,740	0	960	2,700
X1205	Reservation Divide	16,300	2,560	338	13,740	15,962
X1209	Baldy Mountain	6,680	0	90	6,680	6,590
X1220	Ward Eagle	8,570	960	0	7,610	8,570
01301	Hoodoo	98,500	5,800	0	92,700	98,500
01302	Meadow Cr.-Upper North	7,200	1,400	850	5,800	6,350
01424	Silver King	12,840	1,920	1,338	10,920	11,502
01485	Bear-Marshall-Sc-Swan	120,900	*	1,556	*	119,344
01665	Cataract	9,900	0	0	9,900	9,900
01781	Marshall Peak	9,400	0	629	9,400	8,771
01784	Cube Iron-Silcox	37,700	*	0	*	37,700
01785	Sundance Ridge	7,220	3,040	583	4,180	6,637
X1786	Teepee -Spring Cr.	14,890	480	2,761	14,410	12,129
01790	Mount Bushnell	43,070	20,000	1,902***	23,070	41,168
01791	Cherry Peak	39,640	4,160	690**	9	38,950
01792	Gilt Edge-Silver Cr.	11,200	*	2,005	*	9,195
01794	Pat's Knob-North Cutoff	17,200	7,200	50	10,000	17,150
01795	S.Siegel-S. Cutoff	14,800	7,360	818	7,440	13,982
01796	North Siegel	10,000	2,400	0	7,600	10,000
01798	Marble Point	13,170	5,280	2,438	7,930	10,732
01799	Sheep Mtn.-St. Line	40,500	7,200	3,391	33,300	37,109
01800	Stark Mtn.	14,140	6,560	587	7,580	13,553
01803	Burdette	16,360	480	0	15,880	16,360
01805	Lolo Creek	14,660	0	381	14,660	14,279
01806	Welcome Creek	1,100	0	0	1,100	1,100
01807	Quigg Peak	69,820	0	352	69,820	69,468
01808	Stony Mtn.	34,930	0	174	34,930	34,756
01809	Garden Point	6,500	6,500	4,216	0	2,284
01811	Evans Gulch	8,830	0	0	8,830	8,830
X1812	Clear Creek	5,470	5,470	1,681	0	3,789
01814	Deep Creek	7,970	4,101	2,265	3,869	5,705
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>776,190</b>	<b>142,864</b>	<b>43,445</b>	<b>421,696</b>	<b>732,745</b>

\* Roadless areas continue onto adjacent national forests. The acres recorded are only for the Lolo National Forest portion.

\*\* 420 acres result from a boundary change to the roadless area. The discrepancy resulted from timber sales and power line development, which occurred prior to the Forest Plan. Appendix C of the EIS recognized these projects and the need to adjust the boundary after their completion.

\*\*\* Roads were built into this roadless area in 1997, but have been fully re-contoured and are no longer considered roads.