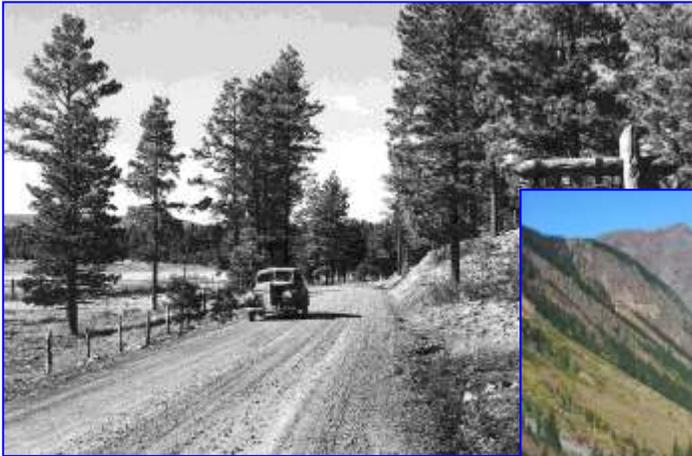


1 – GMUG NATIONAL FOREST ROADS - WHAT TO EXPECT:



Many roads on the national forests were built early in the last century to allow loggers, miners and ranchers access to remote locations.



Today, these roads provide important public recreational opportunities and access to backcountry locations and provide the agency access for continued resource management. National Forest roads are maintained with federal taxpayer dollars as well as grant funding and are managed carefully to provide for safe travel and retain the public investment in their infrastructure.

The GMUG National Forest receives on average about \$ 500,000 from Congress annually for road maintenance. Some counties also help maintain some National Forest roads under cooperative agreements. Roads are maintained to levels deemed appropriate for their locations, the travel experiences they offer, and the amount of use they receive. Funds must be allocated wisely, because the GMUG currently has a backlog of several millions of dollars of deferred road maintenance projects. Generally, the more heavily used national forest roads, often accessing popular destinations, receive higher standards of maintenance; more primitive roads, leading to remote locations rarely receive maintenance.

National Forest roads may be different than the roads you are accustomed to driving. Few are paved; most have gravel or native soil surfaces. There are generally few signs or markers along routes in remote locations, so it is a good idea to carry a visitor use map, and motor vehicle use map (MVUM) for the area you will be traveling. Be prepared with emergency supplies, and be prepared to share narrow roads without shoulders with a variety of vehicles from OHVs to logging trucks. Be prepared to negotiate tight corners, often with limited sight distance.



SAFETY: Driving conditions can include ice, mud, dust, washboards, loose gravel, and drop offs. Speed limits are typically not posted, but Colorado law identifies 20 miles per hour as the proper speed on a winding backcountry road. Forty miles per hour may be considered acceptable on straight roads but narrow and more mountainous roads may require slower speeds. USFS law-enforcement officers patrol National Forest roads and write violations for careless or reckless driving, and excessive speed. State mountain road speed limits are 25 mph.



PAVED ROADS: Major arterial roads are paved or chip-sealed and are double-laned for use by passenger cars at moderate speeds. These roads typically connect to major intersections leading to highways, towns, or popular recreation areas. The GMUG National Forest maintains 16 miles of road system to this highest standard including the roads which access utility sites, recreation sites, and populated areas.



GRAVEL ROADS: Minor arterial roads are gravel surfaced and bladed. Many are double-lane, but some are single-lane with turnouts for passing oncoming traffic. They are designed for passenger car use at lower speeds. These roads are engineered with culverts or bridges over stream crossings. The GMUG maintains about 640 miles of gravel roads.

Passenger vehicle roads are generally paved or graveled, but some are native surfaced.



HIGH-CLEARANCE ROADS:

The majority of roads on the GMUG NF access remote areas and are recommended for high-clearance vehicles. Road surfaces are gravel or native surface. Roads can be steep, rocky, and narrow without turnouts. Many roads are without culverts, so you may have to drive through water. When wet, roads are muddy, slippery and often impassable. The GMUG has over 5,500 miles of high-clearance roads. Shown here is a typical native surface, high-clearance road.