

White Mountain National Forest

Appendix D Transportation System

Contents

Introduction	3
Road Definitions	4
Reference Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7700	4
Road Functional Classification	9
Objectives for Road Maintenance	9
Additional Road Definitions	10
Temporary Roads	10
Current Roads Policy	10
1986 Forest Plan	10
National Transportation Policy and Rule (36 CFR 212)	10
Roads Analysis Process	11
Public Forest Service Roads Program	12
Special Use Roads	12
Forest Highway Program	13
Road Decommissioning	14
Decommissioning Definitions	14
Timber Sale Temporary Roads	14
Forest System Roads and Unclassified Roads	14
Special Use Temporary Roads	15
Road Decommissioning Techniques	15
Road Decommissioning in the “Seen Area”	15
Current Condition	16
Forest Roads Atlas	16
Current Forest Road System	17
Current Maintenance Situation	17
Road System Needs by Alternative	18
Road Decommissioning During this Planning Period	18

Introduction

Access and roads within and adjacent to the White Mountain National Forest have a long history, dating back to Native American tribes and early explorers and settlers. Early access to the White Mountains, before the establishment of the National Forest, was typically by Native Americans and explorers on foot and by canoe. The tradition of hiking and backpacking continues to be a prominent activity across the Forest today. From those earliest users, the transportation system on and around the Forest has evolved to the federal, state, and local highways of today, including the National Forest System roads. As settlers moved into the mountains in the 1700s and early 1800s, the primary mode of transportation changed from water to horse and wagon. Footpaths were reconstructed into “turnpikes” for use by farmers, tradesmen, and drovers who required access to the markets to the south. Roads and trails throughout the region were upgraded to haul white pine logs for use as masts, and by the late 1700s, turnpikes had been constructed through the notches. By the middle 1800s, more than 65 turnpikes had been developed throughout the State, and railroads soon followed to accommodate the growing population and for the industrial extraction of wood.

By the late 1800s, the dense forest which once covered the state had all but disappeared. The wholesale removal of the forest at this time spurred the development of a Forest Commission, and the idea of public land ownership was born. As the deforestation continued, this concept grew in popularity. A Forest Society came into being which lobbied Congress for the creation of public lands in the East. With the discovery of the valuable timber assets of the Forest, as well as its scenic beauty, rail and road access were established to accommodate logging and the movement of large numbers of vacationers from Boston and other eastern seaboard metropolitan areas to the newly-developed Great Inns of the White Mountains and northern New Hampshire.

In 1911, the Weeks Act was passed and the White Mountain National Forest was born. Early Forest Service land management efforts focused on road construction for the purposes of controlling fire, timber theft, and the growing tourist industry. Stage roads linked railroad stations and tourist destinations. With the Great Depression came the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). From 1933 to 1942, the CCC built roads, trails, recreation facilities, and buildings to accommodate the growing vacation and tourist industry. These were perhaps the first engineered facilities on the Forest, and they responded to growing demand and enhanced recreation opportunities.

As the railroads went into decline, automobiles brought a renewed interest in better roads. Following World War II, the population had dispersed to numerous towns surrounding the National Forest, and the need for improved roads continued to increase. The Forest Service was confronted with the great blow down of 1938, which accompanied an increase demand for timber during this same time period. The call for increased access and

recreation opportunities, supplemented by the increased demand for wood, caused the Forest Service to significantly increase the Forest Road network.

The Forest Service developed road design standards and construction practices in the early 1950s, with an emphasis on direct alignments with specific road grades and curves. Although economic considerations were, and continue to be, a major driving force in road construction, the impacts of such early road designs were recognized in the 1970s when road alignments and grades were designed to follow topographic contours in order to minimize ground disturbance and other impacts. The Forest Service established road standards in the early 1980s to minimize resource impacts of roads and to provide guidance over route location and construction, operation, and maintenance. At that time, Forest Roads were being constructed at the approximate rate of 10 miles per year, and nearly as many existing roads were undergoing restoration or significant reconstruction.

Timber production on the WMNF decreased following implementation of the 1986 Forest Plan, mostly as a result of the increased environmental awareness of the public. However, by this time the road system that was needed to access the Forests timber base was, for the most part, in place. Today, the Forest continues to incorporate more advanced techniques for water and erosion control to preserve water quality and watershed health.

Although the WMNF is currently not harvesting as much timber as in the past, driving for pleasure and sightseeing, especially during the fall foliage season, have become a major use of the transportation system. In addition to the small number of new roads needed annually for vegetative management, the current emphasis is on maintenance and reconstruction of the existing transportation system.

Road Definitions

Reference Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7700

- **Road:** A motor vehicle travelway over 50 inches wide, unless designated or managed as a trail. A road may be classified, unclassified, or temporary.
- **Classified Road:** Roads wholly or partially within or adjacent to National Forest System lands that are determined to be necessary for long-term motor vehicle access, including Forest System roads, state roads, county and town roads, private roads, and other roads authorized by the Forest Service. (“Other roads” would include special use roads to access non-federal lands.)
- **National Forest System Roads:** Classified Forest roads under Forest Service jurisdiction being wholly or partly, or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest System and necessary for the protection, administration, and use of the National Forest and the use and development of its resources. (Jurisdiction is the legal right to control or regulate use of the road or transportation facility, with the right being authorized by fee title ownership, an easement, an agreement, or some similar legal method.)

- **Unclassified Roads:** Roads on National Forest System lands that are not managed as part of the Forest Transportation System, such as unplanned roads, abandoned travelways, roads that pre-existed establishment of the Forest or subsequent acquisition, and unauthorized off-road vehicle tracks that are not managed or have been designated as a trail. Unclassified roads also include those that were once under permit or other authorization and were not decommissioned upon the termination of the authorization.

Unclassified roads on the Forest either predate the establishment of the White Mountain National Forest and subsequent acquisitions or have evolved over the decades and mainly consist of old town roads, Forest Service temporary roads that were never properly decommissioned, or “legacy” roads that were built in the past for timber access and abandoned by the original owners. Roads analysis and environmental analysis must be performed at the project level to determine if an unclassified road should be added to the road system, converted to a trail, or decommissioned. All roads currently identified as existing unclassified are intended to be analyzed within the next planning period for determination of their permanent status.

- **Road Decommissioning:** Activities that result in the stabilization and restoration of unneeded roads to a more natural state.
- **Temporary Roads:** Roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the permanent Forest Transportation System and not necessary for long-term management.
- **Infrastructure (INFRA) Travel Routes:** INFRA Travel Routes is an agency-wide road inventory database used by every national forest. It is designed to document all national forest classified roads on the transportation system, and those non-system unclassified roads still being driven and needing a determination of status (either included in the transportation system and maintained as such, converted to a system trail, or decommissioned and closed to motorized travel).

*Figure D-01. Typical White Mountain National Forest Unclassified Road
(WMNF photo by Tom Giles)*



*Figure D-02. Typical White Mountain National Forest OML 1 Road With
Vegetation (WMNF photo by Robert W. Goetz)*



*Figure D-03. Typical White Mountain National Forest OML 2 Road
(WMNF photo by Robert W. Goetz)*



*Figure D-04. Typical White Mountain National Forest OML 3 Road
(WMNF photo by J. Sylvester)*



Figure D-05. Typical White Mountain National Forest OML 4 Road in Need of Resurfacing (WMNF photo by C. Jon Jakubos)



Figure D-06. Typical White Mountain National Forest OML 5 Road (WMNF photo by J. Sylvester)



Road Functional Classification

Forest System roads are distinguished on the National Forests by three functional classifications to describe their function within the transportation system.

- **Arterial:** Provides service to large land areas and connects with other arterial routes or public highways. These are the major Forest Transportation System travelways which are gravel or asphalt surfaced and maintained annually. These routes normally remain open to public motorized travel and are often but not always through-routes.
- **Collector:** Serves smaller land areas than arterials and connects arterials to local roads or terminal (parking) facilities. These travelways also typically remain open to public motorized travel and are either gravel or native material surfaced.
- **Local:** Serves small local land areas and are normally single purpose roads. Occasionally used to connect terminal (parking) facilities with collectors or arterials otherwise are normally closed to public motorized travel.

Objectives for Road Maintenance

Each Forest System road is to be maintained to a level commensurate with the planned function and use of the road. The intended level of maintenance to be received by each road is termed the Objective Maintenance Level (OML). OMLs are divided into five levels of maintenance intensity, with the levels numbered 1 through 5. OML 1 designating the lowest level of maintenance and OML 5 designating the highest level of maintenance.

The Objective Maintenance Levels are defined in [Table D-01](#).

Table D-01. Objective Maintenance Level Definitions for Forest System Roads

OML 1	Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Assigned to intermittent service roads when they are closed to vehicular traffic.
OML 2	High Clearance Vehicles	Assigned to roads managed for use by high clearance vehicles. OML 2 roads receive occasional vehicle traffic, typically 1-10 vehicles per day during the use season.
OML 3	Suitable for Passenger Cars	Assigned to roads managed and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. OML 3 roads receive moderate vehicular traffic, typically 10-30 vehicles per day during the use season.
OML 4	Moderate Degree of User Comfort	Assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate speeds. OML 4 roads receive considerable traffic, typically 30-60 vehicles per day during the use season.
OML 5	High Degree of User Comfort	Assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience. OML 5 roads receive heavy traffic, typically 60-150 vehicles per day during the use season.

Additional Road Definitions

National Forest System roads (NFSR) are classified roads under Forest Service jurisdiction that the White Mountain National Forest plans to maintain for long-term use (permanent). These roads are given road management objectives and receive road maintenance commensurate with their intended use and function. They may be closed either seasonally or for longer periods of time when no land management activities are in progress.

Temporary Roads

The WMNF also uses temporary roads for land access and management. These are routes needed for short-term vehicular access to allow the accomplishment of individual land management objectives. They are “single purpose” roads, and are not included in the Forest System road inventory (INFRA Travel Routes). Most importantly, temporary roads are located to lie lightly on the land, require minimal cuts and fills, have a minimum number of drainage crossings, and are decommissioned after their single-use is completed.

Most temporary roads are built for timber sale access, and are generally used for a one to five year period. These roads typically provide access from the landings to Forest System roads or other public roads, with skid roads providing access from the cutting units to the landings.

Current Roads Policy

1986 Forest Plan

In the 1986 forest plan, the Forest emphasized the use of lower standard roads and, in many cases, temporary roads. The Forest also employed a system of classifying roads into types, based on season of use. This system was inconsistent with national direction and resulted in confusion with respect to maintenance levels and the overall road inventory.

Since 1986, roads and transportation management have become significant national issues, polarizing groups that desire more access to the forests and those that would prefer less. It is important that the White Mountain National Forest has a sound policy on the planning, management, and decommissioning of its transportation system to meet both national direction and to maintain the road system necessary to support land management activities. There is a great deal of direction to follow for road management on the Forest, including the Transportation Rule and Policy published in the Federal Register (36 CFR 212) in January of 2001. In addition, the Forest has the traditional sources of agency direction, including the Forest Plan, Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks, and timber sale contract clauses.

National Transportation Policy and Rule (36 CFR 212)

The current transportation policy and rules for National Forest road system management requires each Forest to:

- Maintain the minimum road transportation system necessary to provide access to the Forest for its management and for recreation and rural access and to use a science-based roads analysis process to determine the minimum system. Permanent roads on the road transportation system are classified Forest System roads.
- Decommission unneeded unclassified roads.
- Secure a sustainable funding source to improve or restore the main roads to establish a “seamless” interface with other neighboring road agencies (Public Forest Service Roads Program – PFSR).
- Maintain a sustainable flow of goods and services while not compromising the health of the land and water (especially integrating the roads analysis process with watershed and project analysis).

The policy and rules place an emphasis on maintaining and reconstructing existing passenger vehicle roads (ML 3-5) rather than building new roads, and making the existing Forest road system safe, responsive to the public needs, environmentally sound, affordable, and efficient to manage.

Roads Analysis Process

Published in August, 1999, the Roads Analysis Process (RAP) is an interdisciplinary, science-based analysis to determine the road system needs. Each National Forest is required to perform a forest-wide RAP, analyzing and evaluating the existing Forest classified and unclassified roads and

building a Forest Transportation Atlas, which includes a spatial representation of the INFRA database. The RAP process is designed to:

- Identify transportation issues on each Forest.
- Identify higher level heavily used roads needing more intensive maintenance or upgrading.
- Identify roads that are no longer needed or are environmentally damaging, and begin the process of decommissioning them.
- Include public contact: scoping to obtain public comment and input will be sought to help complete the roads analysis.
- Recommend transportation needs that can be used for, and incorporated into, environmental analysis. Roads analysis does not make decisions; rather it is used to inform the NEPA decision.
- Provide guidance in transportation system decisions to line officers.

A roads analysis is required for any land management decision in which the Forest intends to construct new roads, reconstruct existing roads, add unclassified roads to the Forest road system, or remove roads from the system through decommissioning. A roads analysis is not required when temporary roads are the only planned access, although it may be performed to confirm that adequate access can be achieved with temporary roads, without the need for additional system roads or improvement of existing system roads.

During this planning period, the Forest intends to use project level roads analysis in conjunction with environmental analysis to determine the final disposition of the remaining miles of unclassified roads on the Forest. Decisions will be made through project NEPA whether to add these roads to the Forest classified road system, decommission them, or convert them to trails.

Public Forest Service Roads Program

With the 2001 Transportation Policy and Roads Rule, the Forest Service became a Public Road Agency and developed the Public Forest Service Roads Program (PFSR). This program is intended to allow the National Forests to garner federal trust fund (gas tax) monies for the purpose of reconstructing certain roads officially designated as public roads. The program is intended to provide funds in addition to Congressionally-appropriated funds in order to make improvements to existing, higher maintenance level roads. These roads would be reconstructed and maintained at a standard suitable for public travel, and could not be closed to the public by Forest Supervisor closure orders except seasonally. Forests will not be required to plow these roadways in the winter, so they will likely be seasonally impassable due to snow cover. Also, forests will not be able to collect usage fees from commercial haulers on these roads. This program will be dependent on Congressional approval and funding.

The roads considered for this program are the higher standard (OML 3-5) roads that carry the bulk of commercial, commuter, recreation, and through traffic on the Forest. Based on preliminary guidelines, the White Mountain

has designated 134 miles of its OML 3-5 roads as potential public roads under this program. Listed below are the PFSR roads which have been identified for rehabilitation and reconstruction during the first rounds of funding:

State of New Hampshire:

- Tripoli Road — FSR 30
- York Pond Road — FSR 13
- North-South Road — FSR 19
- Russell Pond Road — FSR 90

In 2002, the South Pond Road and parking facility, FSR 765, was totally reconstructed under this program.

State of Maine:

- Deer Hill Road — FSR 9
- Patte Mill Brook Road — FSR 7

Special Use Roads

In addition to Forest System roads, special use roads are allowed on the Forest to provide access to other land ownerships where no other reasonable access is possible on non-federal lands. The permittee is allowed to have sole use of the road to access their lands if applicable, while the Forest maintains the right to use the road for administrative purposes.

Special use roads also require transportation planning and environmental analysis to ensure that minimum road standards are implemented, that the road will benefit multiple landowners, if appropriate, and that the road will have minimal environmental impacts. Prior to granting such use, the Forest will first determine if alternate routes off Forest System lands are available.

When access to other lands ownership is needed permanently, and the road will also provide access to federal lands, it would be appropriate to include such a road as a Forest System road and track it in the inventory and atlas. The appropriate NEPA documentation must be done, depending on whether it is an existing road or new construction (including reconstruction).

Forest Highway Program

The Forest Highway Program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in cooperation with the Forest Service and state highway agencies. It has the following objectives:

- Enhance the value of National Forest System resources.
- Protect, develop, and use the National Forest System and its renewable resources.
- Enhance economic development at the local, regional, and national levels.
- Serve local needs and communities dependent on National Forest System activities.

- Provide for economy of operation and maintenance and the safety of the users.
- Provide safe and adequate rural highways connecting the National Forest System with major highway systems.

Through this program, federal highway funds are made available for the construction and improvement of designated Forest Highways. A Forest Highway is defined as a designated forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public road authority that is subject to the Highway Safety Act. In most cases this authority is the state, with a few designated Forest Highways falling under town authority. Forests work closely with states and towns to plan and develop road improvement projects that receive funding through this program.

On the White Mountain National Forest, there are, currently, 204 miles of designated Forest Highways in New Hampshire, and 22 miles in Maine. These designated miles are expected to remain the same through this planning period. Some examples of these roads are Highway 112 (the Kancamagus Highway), Bear Notch Road, and Jefferson Notch Road in New Hampshire, and Route 113 (Evans Notch Road) in both New Hampshire and Maine.

Over the past several years, the State of New Hampshire, as part of its 10 year Transportation Improvement Plan, has been reconstructing a number of designated Forest Highways, as well as other major roadways through the Forest, in an effort to improve the traveling surface, improve drainage, and add bicycle shoulders for safety. The Forest is working closely with New Hampshire DOT in this effort, which is expected to continue well into this planning period.

Road Decommissioning

Decommissioning Definitions

Road decommissioning is defined as activities that result in the stabilization and restoration of unneeded roads to a more natural state.

All roads that are not needed for long-term use shall be considered for decommissioning when the opportunity arises. These include existing and future temporary roads, some existing unclassified roads, and any current Forest System road. Decommissioning temporary roads (both past and present) is a high priority for the Forest, to allow consistency with the Forest Plan revision and Forest Service Roads policies. A temporary road is not intended to be a Forest System road, and will not be left open to motorized traffic after its intended use is completed.

Timber Sale Temporary Roads

Federal timber sale temporary roads will be decommissioned after their use is completed, either through the timber sale funds, through Knutson-Vanderburg (KV) funding, or other appropriate funding sources. Timber sale contracts require the purchaser to perform temporary road closure

activities, ensuring the road is closed to motorized travel when it is not needed between harvest activities. The standard provisions of timber sale contracts state the minimum decommissioning requirements to be implemented for temporary roads after their use is completed. Special contract provisions offer additional methods of blocking and decommissioning temporary roads. If timber stand improvement (TSI) or reforestation efforts need to use these temporary roads after the roads are no longer needed for harvest activities, then KV funding should be set up in the sale to handle future permanent road decommissioning.

The Forest's intent is to not allow general public use to become established on temporary roads. When the road is not being used, proper informational signs and temporary road blockages will be employed to discourage public use. Planning when to decommission, or when to install only a temporary block on a temporary road, is very important. The time schedule must be planned in advance for each temporary road, indicating when it will be used and for what purposes (harvest, TSI, reforestation, prescribed fire, etc.). During the time periods between use, these roads will be temporarily blocked. After final use of the road is complete, the temporary road will be fully decommissioned.

Forest System Roads and Unclassified Roads

Forest System roads and unclassified roads can also be decommissioned, following appropriate NEPA and roads analysis, at any time if they are not needed for land management activities. Decommissioning includes notifying and receiving feedback from affected local governments, changing their status in the Forest road inventory and atlas (in the case of Forest System roads), blocking the road, and rendering the road unusable to motorized vehicles.

Special Use Temporary Roads

Special use temporary roads developed on federal lands by other entities (states, counties, towns, etc.) must also be closed and decommissioned by those entities following use. This requirement must be included in the agreement or special use permit with such entities.

Road Decommissioning Techniques

Road decommissioning includes both the road closure (blocking) methods used to eliminate motorized access to the road and the methods of restoring the road to meet environmental considerations for the future, such as removing culverts and restoring cross-drainages and wetlands, scarifying compacted road surfaces, seeding and mulching, restoring cut and fill slopes where appropriate and necessary, outsloping, etc. With the rapid regrowth of vegetation that occurs on the WMNF, decommissioning may also consist of simply allowing the road to return to its natural state.

Road closure techniques and methods will consider visual quality, especially in the "seen area," the distance "seen" along the road being decommissioned from the main road. They will be designed to look natural and blend into the landscape over time.

Road Decommissioning in the “Seen Area”

Road decommissioning will be performed with the intent of making the road disappear to a casual viewer, and to render it not-drivable from the beginning of the road to the furthest point that can be seen from the connected Forest System road or other public road. Any combination of the decommissioning techniques discussed below can be used, or the decision could be made to allow the road to decommission naturally. Each site will be different, and creativity will be used to determine how to decommission and block a road in this “seen area.”

The following road decommissioning techniques are basic, standard timber sale contract requirements for the closure/decommissioning of temporary roads, and will be used as minimum actions required for all temporary roads being decommissioned on the Forest. They are also baseline techniques that will be used for decommissioning any roads on the Forest.

- Remove drainage structures and temporary bridges, leaving drainages in their natural state. Seed and mulch approaches, as well as use temporary erosion control techniques, until vegetation is reestablished and banks are stabilized. It is important to reestablish the same character and slope of the original streambed and banks to maintain the same flow characteristics and hydrology of the natural stream.
- Construct cross ditches and waterbars as needed to allow for natural cross drainage of the road prism. It is often best to cut into the roadbed 6-12 inches and to build up a berm to intercept water and safely move water off the roadway. It is important that waterbars and cross drains are properly located and placed across the road at appropriate intervals and angles, depending upon slope and length of grades. Outlets of cross drains must also be considered, and properly located and designed to allow for filtering of water into buffers before entering stream courses.
- Outslope roadways where feasible and appropriate to promote cross drainage and sheet drainage.
- Eliminate ditches that may interfere with cross drainage to promote flow and prevent further erosion over time.
- Remove ruts and roadside berms that will concentrate flow, promote erosion, and prohibit proper drainage over time.
- Effectively block the road by placing boulders, berms, logs, or other natural debris in the roadbed. Slash or a combination of slash and unmerchantable logs and soil are particularly effective in road blockage, especially when placed across the width of the road for the first 200-300 feet. Some allowance may be made for minimal parking at decommissioned road entrances to allow for foot traffic in the area.

Additional, more extensive, techniques that may be used in specific situations, where warranted, include:

- Scarification of the roadbed when needed to loosen compacted soil and encourage more rapid revegetation.

- Flattening cut slopes and pulling fill slopes to reduce slopes that encourage erosion. This technique would only be considered for extreme situations where erosion or potential erosion already exists. It will also require extensive erosion control techniques to be used until repaired slopes are stabilized.
- Mechanical revegetation of the roadway. This may include seeding and mulching, as well as the planting of seedlings or larger saplings, to promote recovery and stabilization of the roadbed. This may be particularly important to consider at the beginning of roads or the “seen area,” and on steep slopes.

Current Condition

Forest Roads Atlas

Between 1999 and 2001, in preparation of the forthcoming Roads Rule and Forest Plan revision, the White Mountain National Forest conducted an extensive inventory of all potential travelways associated with, and adjacent to, the Forest, using existing road system inventories, aerial photos, maps, employee knowledge and experience, and other available data. This inventory resulted in a tremendous amount of information on the Forest’s transportation network, and ultimately identified the miles of classified and unclassified roads. Subsequent analysis and refinement of the data, along with field verification in 2002 and 2003 and completion of the forest wide Roads Analysis, has resulted in the current Forest Roads Atlas.

The Road Atlas is composed of a tabular database of the classified and unclassified road system and the spatial inventory of the road system as follows:

- Infrastructure (INFRA) Travel Routes is the electronic tabular database for the Forest. INFRA Travel Routes is a computer software program established by the agency to document and track the forest road system. It contains the pertinent data for each road on the system. Data include such linear features as functional use, intended maintenance levels, jurisdiction, length, travel lanes, surface type, etc. They also include point features, such as gates, signs, bridges, culverts, etc. In addition, they contain the maintenance needs for each road, as determined by periodic, regularly scheduled condition surveys and deferred maintenance inventories.
- The GIS Roads Layer is the electronic spatial inventory or map showing the location of all classified roads across the Forest. For tracking and analysis, the roads layer also contains the miles of unclassified road currently on the Forest.
- The GIS Roads Layer and INFRA Travel Routes are linked together so pertinent data can be attached to each road on the road layer. These data include specific information about each road and are extremely useful in performing analysis of land areas when different road data queries are required, such as road density, stream crossings, miles of road by OML, etc.

Current Forest Road System

As a result of the road inventories and verifications, there are currently 578 miles of classified Forest System roads and 241 miles of unclassified roads under Forest Service jurisdiction on the Forest. [Table D-02](#) shows the current Forest Road System classified miles.

Table D-02. Forest Road System Classified Miles.

	1986 Total	2004 Totals
Objective Maintenance Level 5		243
Objective Maintenance Level 4		52
Objective Maintenance Level 3		98
Objective Maintenance Level 2		130
Objective Maintenance Level 1		256
No maintenance level assigned yet		19
Total Miles	346*	578

*From the 1986 Forest Plan, which did not contain any reference to maintenance levels. Instead, the Forest used a local system of categorizing roads which is incomparable with OML definitions.

Current Maintenance Situation

Road maintenance funds over the past decade have been inadequate to perform the necessary miles of road maintenance needed to preserve the Forest System roads at existing Operational Maintenance Levels. The Forest currently uses its own road maintenance crew and equipment to perform road maintenance and roadside brushing. Brushing is required on the WMNF due to the rapid growth of roadside vegetation. It helps ensure safe driving conditions and site distances for the traveling public.

Current funding allows for maintenance to be performed annually on approximately 10-15% of the OML 2 roads on the Forest, and 20-25% of the OML 3-5 roads, thus contributing to an ever-increasing backlog of deferred maintenance needs. It is projected that the Public Forest Service Road (PFSR) program will begin to address the reconstruction backlog; however, the program is also dependent on Congressional action.

Road System Needs by Alternative

The primary projected need for new roads and road reconstruction during this planning period and beyond will be directly related to vegetative management activities. The exception to this would be for the reconstruction that may occur as a result of the PFSR (Public Forest Service Road) program outlined previously.

The WMNF will continue to enforce the existing policy that any new roads constructed on the Forest will be either closed to public motorized travel or decommissioned following use, depending on whether they are constructed for management as Forest System roads or temporary roads. These decisions will be made as part of the environmental analysis for each project.

Table D-03 shows the projected need for new and reopened/reconstructed roads by alternative across the Forest. The mileage of new construction shown would all be OML 1 roads. The projected needs are based upon the past several years of historic vegetative management operations, and the miles of road construction and reconstruction associated with acreages treated is based upon silvicultural techniques used.

Table D-03. Projected Need for Roads by Alternative.

	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4
Roads Constructed*	1 mi/yr	1 mi/yr	1 mi/yr	1 mi/yr
Roads Reconstructed	10 mi/yr	7 mi/yr	7 mi/yr	11 mi/yr

* Actual new construction will be minimal. The majority of this activity will be major reconstruction of existing travelways.

Road Decommissioning During this Planning Period

As project level roads analyses are completed and NEPA decisions are made, the Forest expects to perform a significant amount of road decommissioning during this planning period and the decades to follow, no matter which alternative is selected as preferred. Another goal is to either decommission or convert to trails the remaining miles of unclassified road on the Forest. This will, of course, depend on available funding in any given fiscal year. Without site-specific NEPA analysis, it is impossible to predict the amount of decommissioning that will take place, or how many of the currently unclassified roads will be converted to Forest System roads or trails.

