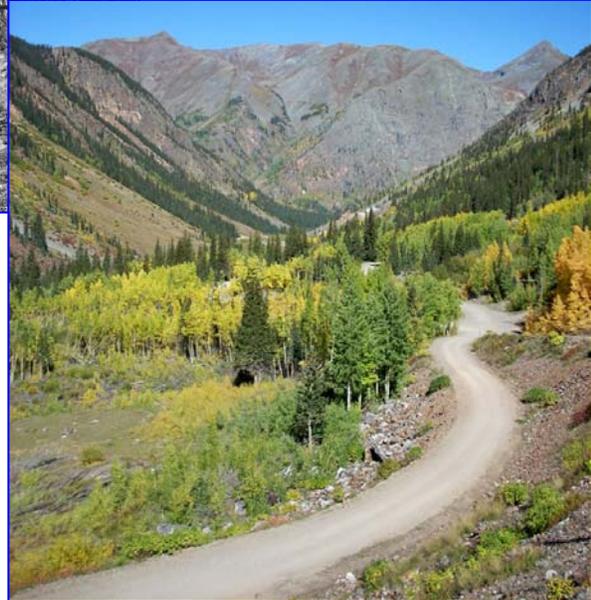


## 1 – SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST ROADS - WHAT TO EXPECT:



Many San Juan National Forest roads were built early in the last century to allow loggers, miners and ranchers access to remote locations to extract natural resources.

Today, these roads are important to offer the public recreational access to backcountry locations and the agency access for continued resource management. National Forest roads are maintained with federal taxpayer dollars and are managed carefully to retain the public investment in their infrastructure.



The San Juan National Forest receives about \$1 million from Congress annually for road maintenance, and maintains its roads 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 San Juan currently has a backlog of several millions of dollars of deferred road maintenance projects. Heavily used National Forest Roads accessing popular destinations receive higher standards of maintenance; more primitive roads leading to remote locations are maintained to lower standards.

National Forest roads may be different than the roads you are accustomed to driving. While a few are paved, most have gravel or native surfaces. Because you will be driving in remote locations on sometimes rough roads, it is important to carry a San Juan National Forest Recreation Map and be prepared with emergency supplies. Be prepared to share narrow roads without shoulders with diverse forms of traffic – from jeeps to logging trucks. You should be able to negotiate tight corners, often with limited sight distance.



**SAFETY:** Driving conditions can include ice, mud, dust, washboards, loose gravel, or 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, while 40 miles per hour is considered acceptable on straight roads. USFS law-enforcement officers patrol National Forest roads and write violations for careless and reckless driving, including speeding.



**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 San Juan maintains 20 miles of its road system to this highest standard – including the roads to McPhee Reservoir and the Dolores-Norwood Road (shown here), which accesses utility corridors, 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 over stream crossings. The San Juan maintains about 760 miles of gravel roads, such as the Fourmile Road (shown here) north of Pagosa Springs, accessing the Fourmile Trailhead.



**HIGH-CLEARANCE ROADS:** The majority of roads on the San Juan access remote areas and are recommended for high-clearance vehicles, such as jeeps, trucks, four-wheel-drive, etc. These roads require skill and caution. Road surfaces are rock or dirt, they can be steep and rocky, and narrow with no turnouts. No culverts are installed, so you may have to drive through water. When wet, they are often muddy and/or impassable. The San Juan has about 1,000 miles of high-clearance roads. Shown here is a typical high-country road.