

Recreation Site and Trail Use Effects on Land Item 29

OBJECTIVE: Identify areas that are proceeding toward irreversible ecosystem damage.

DATA SOURCE: Site and trail inspection and interdisciplinary team review.

FREQUENCY: Annually (25 percent of high use areas and trails)

REPORTING PERIOD: 1998

VARIABILITY: Irreversible ecosystem damage.

EVALUATION:

No irreversible ecosystem damage attributable to recreation site and trail use was identified in 1998.

MONITORING RESULTS:

Areas of concern noted last year included dispersed camping sites along Lost Horse Creek and some areas in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, although use of these sites is not causing irreversible damage. Lost Horse Road was reconstructed in 1998. Dispersed camping sites along the road were mitigated with gravel hardening or with placement of large boulders to restrict vehicle access to the creek.

The roadway and trail to Bass Lake were monitored in August. Rehabilitation work on the roadway and trail were accomplished following the reconstruction of Bass Dam. The rehabilitation involved improving drainage and narrowing the tread on the trail, as well as minimizing the effects of heavy equipment traveling through the area on the way to the dam. Monitoring indicated that some drainage dips needed to be armored with rock. Another need was to increase the visual screening where the road intersects with the trail. Because of the ground disturbance, an increase in noxious weeds occurred. These infestations will be included in the Forest's schedule for weed treatment.

Annual trail reconstruction or rerouting projects are done to rectify situations where trail use is causing resource damage.

