

Appendix B: Field Visit Rationale

Each resource specialist determined the necessity for field visits based on their individual knowledge of areas of interest across the Forest and through the GIS exercise which looked at each individual route against a backdrop of potential areas of concern. The text below describes field visit rationale. 100% of the routes were assessed during the GIS Interdisciplinary Team exercise, which was the first filter. More refined filters were created by each resource specialist and that criteria determined the need for which roads needed field visits.

Botany

Botany evaluated all unauthorized/proposed routes against existing botanical records, using GIS and paper records. Field visits were performed when it appeared that potential habitat for Federally Listed plant species overlapped with routes proposed for addition. Field visits were not performed on other proposed routes because there was neither enough time nor an urgent need to visit every route: most of these unvisited routes were considered to have a low potential for special status plant habitat, and none were considered to have a high potential. Mitigations were not considered necessary, since botany concerns were addressed early on during the project planning process. There were 83 routes that were field visited which is seven percent of the 1,154 proposed unauthorized routes.

Recreation

During the inventory process and subsequent GIS analysis, all routes receiving any type of vehicle use were identified. The Forest identified routes with low resource impact potential as proposed additions to the National Forest Transportation System. As a result, there was not a need to field visit each proposed route by the Recreation Specialist to determine its recreational value; since most of the road segments were proposed to be added and therefore not a concern for recreation.

Heritage

Of the 1,154 unauthorized routes proposed for addition, 170 routes were field visited. These routes were field checked because they have known sites associated with the area. Another 242 sites have been identified as being within the route-designation corridor. The Forest archaeologist created a monitoring plan that will be spread over the next three years (see appendices C and F).

Aquatics

Unauthorized and proposed routes were overlaid on aquatic species habitat using GIS and Forest records. The Forest hydrologist determined which unauthorized routes within riparian conservation areas were to be field checked (this information can be found in the FEIS, Chapter 3, Soils and Water). Field visits were not performed on other proposed routes as those outside of RCA's were considered to have no or insignificant potential for impacts to aquatic species.

Monitoring of aquatic resources will occur on unauthorized routes added to the Forest Transportation System utilizing the Best Management Practices Evaluation Program. In areas that have the greatest potential for impacts to aquatic species, monitoring of fine-grained sediments would be implemented using Stream Condition Inventory protocols. Sites monitored may vary from year to year.

Wildlife

As part of the design process for the proposed action, an interdisciplinary team and the Forest's line officers met and evaluated each inventoried unauthorized road segment for inclusion in the NFTS. As part of the evaluation, each segment was reviewed for proximity to sensitive wildlife habitats. The familiarity of the team and line officers with on-the-ground conditions made subsequent review of these segments duplicative and unnecessary for the wildlife resource area.

Hydrology and Soils

Of the 1,154 proposed unauthorized routes, 127 routes were field visited. This eleven percent of the routes visited was based on the screening criteria below. To evaluate direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Action to water quality, the Forest hydrologist used the Forest soils database, housed in GIS layers. He used the following screening criteria (rating factors) to make an initial screen-out:

- Maximum erosion hazard rating (MEHR)
- Water runoff potential
- Watershed sensitivity
- Slope-stability hazard

If all the above ratings factors were low to moderate, then the risk was low. If the risk was low, no field-checking was done.

If the rating factors were exceeded (i.e., if they were greater than low to moderate), the proposed route was field-checked to see if it was consistent with LRMP standards and guidelines for soil and water. In the field, the following method used was to determine if the proposed route met the effectiveness measure from the BMPEP T02 form (Best Management Practice Evaluation Protocol—a standardized form approved by the California State Water Resources control Board). These measures are as follows:

1. Erosion on skid trail surface: little or no evidence of rills
2. Rutting: little or no evidence of rutting
3. Water bars
 - a. Diversion of runoff: less than 10 percent of water bars fail to divert flow off skid trail
 - b. Sediment below: sediment deposition absent, or does not extend beyond outlet control
 - c. Erosion below outlet: no evidence of rills or gullies
4. Sediment to channel: no evidence of transport to the streamside management zone (SMZ)

For the last step in the analysis of direct & indirect effects, the Forest hydrologist analyzed the results of the field check to determine whether the LRMP standards and guidelines had been met.