

Item 54: Miles of Open Road of National Forest System Roads

Purpose: This monitoring item was established to examine open road density on forest land, and to compare it with projected open road density requirements.

Methods: Forest Plan Amendment 19 altered the methods used in examination of open road density in grizzly bear habitat by utilizing a "moving window" analysis to determine which lands have various densities of roads, both open and total. It also set standards to achieve in each Bear Management Unit which are now targets for compliance.

Results: Database totals indicate that the miles of open roads and seasonally open roads have been trending downward each year during the period from 1992 thru 2000. This trend has continued from 2001 through 2008, though at a declining rate as Amendment 19 standards in the forest plan are achieved in some of the bear management units. Total road miles also have been trending down through the periods as a result of continued decommissioning. Tables 53-1 and 53-2, in Item 53, show this as well.

The forest has also annually compiled information reflecting effectiveness of gates and other closure devices. Desired goals were to inspect each controlling device every two years. Although inspections occurred both officially and unofficially, documentation often lacked. Efforts intensified in 2005 for both inspections and documentaion and as a result, monitoring has exceeded our targeted goals since then. That information is summarized in Table 54-1.

Evaluation: Reductions in open road mileages will probably continue as the forest strives for balance in the management of resources and seeks management of a road system within budget constraints.

Table 54-1. Summary of Closure Device Monitoring, Flathead National Forest from 2000-2008.

Description	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
# of Gates	nodata	nodata	531	532	537	536	512	535	523
# Requiring Inspection						425	406	418	398
# Inspected	386	nodata	294	152	166	425	366	298	398
# Not Inspected		nodata	237	380	371	0	40	120	0
# Ineffective	16	nodata	28	9	8	81	86	50	45
# of Barriers	nodata	nodata	915	927	997	886	864	938	904
# Requiring Inspection						585	576	637	544
# Inspected	449	nodata	156	43	36	571	469	431	544
# Not Inspected		nodata	759	884	961	14	107	206	0
# Ineffective	14	nodata	14	5	6	53	25	20	30
# of Signs	nodata	nodata	17	19	31	29	24	29	22
# Inspected	8	nodata	1	1	0	17	6	6	22
# Not Inspected		nodata	16	18	31	12	18	23	0
# Ineffective	8	nodata	17	19	31	29	24	5	22
Total # of Devices ¹	nodata	nodata	1446	1459	1534	1422	1376	1473	1427
Total # Req. Inspect. ¹						1010	982	1055	942
Total # Inspected ¹	835	nodata	450	195	202	996	835	729	942
% Inspected ^{1&2}	nodata	nodata	31%	13%	13%	99%	85%	69%	100%
Total # Not Inspected ^{1&2}	nodata	nodata	996	1264	1332	426	541	326	0
# Ineffective ¹	30	nodata	42	14	14	134	111	70	75
Of Inspected, % Ineffective ¹	4%	nodata	9%	7%	7%	13%	13%	10%	8%

¹ – Totals and overall calculations do not include sign closures. Under Amendment 19, the very nature of a sign makes it an ineffective closure device as it is not a physical barrier.

² – From 2005 on, percentage is calculated using total number of devices requiring inspection.