

**Draft Nez Perce–Clearwater National Forests
Forest Plan Assessment**

11.0 Infrastructure

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11. Infrastructure

11.1 EXISTING INFORMATION

Existing relevant information regarding management of infrastructure can be described under three main areas transportation (roads and trails); facilities (buildings and support systems); recreation facilities, and special uses authorizations. The following documents provide information and management direction regarding infrastructure:

- National Roads policy (36 CFR 212)
- Forest Service Manual 7700 and 7710
- Inventory (Natural Resource Management System, INFRA)
- Area transportation plans
- Newsome Creek ecosystem assessment at the watershed scale (Forest Service 2002)
- Slate Creek ecosystem analysis at the watershed scale (Forest Service 2000)
- Subbasin planning unit assessments (Selway)
- Steelhead Biological Assessment
- Forest Scale Roads analysis (Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests)
- Forest facilities master plan (Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests)
- Strategic facilities master plan (Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests)
- Forest Service Northern Region Historic Structure assessment and historic preservation plan January 2009
- Facilities Energy and Water Conservation and Utilities Management (DR-5500-001)
- Energy Policy Act 2005
- Regional Strategic Facility Management Plan 2005
- Recreation Sites Inventory (INFRA)
- Dispersed Site Inventory
- Recreation Facilities Analysis
- National Visitor Use Monitoring

11.2 TRANSPORTATION

11.2.1 *Current Condition*

Approximately 7,800 miles of National Forest System roads exist on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (Forests) (unpublished data) (Table 1). Efforts to maintain these roads are in accord with established road management objectives and are described by Maintenance Levels 1–5. Maintenance Level 1 is custodial maintenance and corresponds to roadways not generally maintained for vehicle travel; Maintenance Level 2 is maintained for passage by high clearance vehicles; while Maintenance Levels 3 through 5 are maintained for passenger vehicles at increasing levels of comfort and speeds. Maintenance Level 5 roads are typically paved.

Table 1. Miles of road by assigned maintenance level

| Maintenance Level | Nez Perce | Clearwater | Total |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 1 | 2,026 | 1,244 | 3,270 |
| 2 | 863 | 1710 | 2,573 |
| 3 | 788 | 848 | 1,636 |
| 4 | 0 | 159 | 159 |
| 5 | 33 | 123 | 156 |

Approximately 1,000 miles of National Forest System roads have been decommissioned (600 miles on the Clearwater National Forest and 400 miles on the Nez Perce National Forest) since the 1990s; these miles do not include a quantified amount of unauthorized roads and linear events such as skid trails and firelines.

Several easements needed for the road system to clarify access rights to National Forest System lands remain. Notable among these includes NFSR 241 near Riggins that provides primary access to lands between Kessler Creek and Cow Creek drainages as well as the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

Several existing forest plan standards related to roads that are dated, ambiguous, or otherwise in need of deletion, update, or revision exist. The new planning regulations emphasize improving the transportation system with clearly articulated Desired Condition statements and fewer Forest Plan standards.

11.2.2 Trends and Drivers

Since the mid-1990s construction of new National Forest System roads has been very minimal. Virtually all of road decommissioning has occurred during this same time period. These changes have been in response to decisions implementing efforts to address watershed concerns related to road system effects.

It is becoming increasingly common for current management projects to have limited access to lands that previously received road decommissioning. This trend will limit all management activities not generating enough revenue to reestablish road access.

11.2.3 Resource-Specific Information

11.2.3.1 Relevant External Transportation

The National Forest road system is tributary to the State and County road networks. State primary road systems include Highways 95 and 12 while State secondary road systems include Highways 3, 6, 8, and 14. In addition, numerous county roads provide access to National Forest System lands. Where these routes cross proclaimed National Forest System lands, they are managed in accord with established easements.

11.2.3.2 Minimum Road System

The National Travel Management Rule (issued 2005) identifies the need for a minimum road system. This requirement is codified in the Code of Federal Regulations at 36 CFR 212.5. It states, “The minimum road system is the road system determined to be needed to meet resource and other management objectives adopted in the relevant land and resource management plan

(36 CFR part 219), to meet applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, to reflect long term funding expectations, to ensure that the identified system minimizes adverse environmental impacts associated with road construction, reconstruction, decommissioning, and maintenance.”

Much of the analysis required to identify the minimum road system has been accomplished through a series of plans, assessments, and analyses as summarized.

Forest-scale roads analysis was completed by the Nez Perce National Forest in 2005 and by the Clearwater National Forest in 2002. The following were principal results of these analyses:

- Road maintenance funding is not adequate to maintain and sign roads to standard.
- Road access may not be adequate for future management needs.
- Management of the Forest Service road system can affect cultural and traditional uses (e.g., plant gathering and access to traditional and cultural sites) and American Indian treaty rights.
- Some roads are causing adverse impacts.
- Existing roads may be needed for future management activities not currently planned.

Subbasin planning assessments were conducted in the mid-1990s in response to Endangered Species Act listings of anadromous fisheries stocks. These assessments accomplished the following:

- Provided initial draft of roads that may be considered excess to the long-term transportation needs
- Identified some roads as being of importance to providing “back country access”

Area transportation plans development began in the 1980s and continued through the 1990s. These plans provide a conceptual depiction of the road network necessary to access the identified land base for timber harvest. In general, these plans demonstrate that road densities ranging from 3 to 5 miles of road per section are necessary to access 50%–70% of the land base. This density reflects utilizing the full range of available harvest systems, including aerial systems.

Watershed analysis has also been conducted on 5th code HUC watershed scale on various watersheds, including Newsome Creek and Slate Creek. Some of these assessments developed road management themes. One of the themes includes the concept of an “ephemeral road system”. In this scenario, access would be developed to treat vegetation in accordance with disturbance regimes, and then some of the access would be removed following treatment. Resultant road densities of 1 to 3 miles per section, representing the main access routes, would be retained. Tertiary local roads would be removed through road decommissioning.

11.2.3.3 Transportation Sustainability

Forest-scale roads analysis documented that funding for road maintenance is a concern. An annual need of approximately \$6,100,000 was identified as being necessary to maintain the Maintenance Level 3 through 5 roads along with major Maintenance Level 2 routes.

Appropriated funding for road maintenance was approximately 20% or less at the time of this analysis. This level did not address maintenance needs for the remainder of the Maintenance Level 2 and Maintenance Level 1 roads. Appropriated road funds have since declined by 50% over the last 3 years, which will profoundly affect the road access to National Forest System lands.

To date, no clear resolution has been reached to respond to the gap in funding road maintenance.

11.2.4 Information Needs

None identified.

11.3 FACILITIES—NON RECREATION

11.3.1 Informing the Assessment

11.3.1.1 Current Condition

The Forests manage more than 506 buildings—an infrastructure sized to serve a mid-1980s work force of approximately 600 employees. While downsizing and restructuring have resulted in a proposed work force of approximately 260 forest employees and 40 virtual employees (a 50% percent reduction in workforce), a comparable reduction in buildings or administrative sites has not occurred.

11.3.1.2 Trends and Drivers

Declining budgets and work force are leading to needed administrative infrastructure reductions; however, the building boom in the Forest Service of the 1960s means more buildings are potential Heritage Structures, making disposal more difficult. Along with the trend to reduce workforce, the need for remote site housing facilities is increasing as fewer people try to cover larger areas.

The Forest Service is also trying to reduce its carbon footprint by making buildings more efficient and sustainable. According to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the federal government is to reduce utility and operations costs 2% annually, from 2006 to 2015. Any new buildings are to be designed to 30% below ASHRAE Standard or International Energy Code if life-cycle cost-effective and/or LEED Silver Standards.

11.3.2 Resource-Specific Information

11.3.2.1 Relevant External Infrastructure

Forest Service buildings and utilities are governed by the International Building Codes, the Architectural Barriers Act (Accessibility), State Water Protection Regulations, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and various Energy Regulations. In addition, State and local codes may be applicable to the operation of the Forest Service buildings.

11.3.3 Information Needs

Information concerning historic acceptability of existing condition for Forest Service buildings is needed, especially those building that became or will become 50 years old between 2009 and 2020. Both Facility Master plans need to be updated to desired future conditions and to determining maintenance objectives according to regional guidelines. INFRA needs to be updated and fire maps need to match fire management plans. Finally, the Forests need to develop carbon footprint data for their facilities.

11.4 FACILITIES—RECREATION

11.4.1 Informing the Assessment

11.4.1.1 Current Condition

The Nez Perce–Clearwater National Forests have approximately 212 recreation facilities (Table 2). Approximately 90% of the developed recreation facilities on the Clearwater National Forest and 80% on the Nez Perce National Forest meet national standards. To meet standards the Facility Condition Index (FCI) of a facility must be greater than 90%. FCI is the current value of the resource divided by the current deferred maintenance. Sites with improvements designed for user convenience are listed as development level 3–5.

Many minor recreation sites are identified as dispersed sites. These dispersed sites are generally improved for resource protection rather than user convenience. Many of these sites have been improved, but much of the maintenance identified has been deferred, and these sites have a development level of 0–2.

Table 2. Number of recreation facilities by site type

| TYPE | Clearwater National Forest | | Nez Perce National Forest | | Nez Perce-Clearwater Total Reservation System | Total |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| | Number of Facilities | Facilities with fees | Number of Facilities | Facilities with fees | | |
| Campground | 24 | 18 | 31 | 11 | 6 | 55 |
| Camping Area (Level 2 Facility) | 33 | – | 20 | – | – | 53 |
| Group Campground | 1 | – | 2 | – | 1 | 3 |
| Visitor Centers | 2 | – | 1 | – | – | 3 |
| Picnic Day Use Site | 6 | – | 6 | – | 1 | 12 |
| Pavilion | 2 | – | 1 | – | 2 | 3 |
| Cabin/Lookout | 12 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 12 | 16 |
| Boat Launch | – | – | 3 | – | – | 3 |
| River Access/Boating Site | 3 | – | 2 | 3 ^a | – | 5 |
| Trailheads | 20 | – | 20 | – | – | 40 |
| Interpretive Sites | 6 | – | 6 | – | – | 12 |
| Fishing Sites | 1 | – | 2 | – | – | 3 |
| Snow Park/ Snow Play | – | – | 4 | – | – | 4 |
| Total | 110 | 26 | 102 | 17 | 22 | 212 |

^aFee at boating site is for floating permit on Main Salmon River.

11.4.1.2 Trends and Drivers

The Forests receive annual funding to maintain recreation facilities. This funding has fluctuated over the years, but funding appears to be declining. In addition to a yearly allocation for facilities maintenance, the Forests compete for capital improvement funding to improve and/or develop recreation facilities.

11.4.1.3 Social and Economic Sustainability

Most visitors to the Forests utilize some type of recreation facility. The majority of visitors come

to camp, picnic, use a trailhead, or visit an interpretive facility. All of these activities involve the use of recreation infrastructure. Visitors who participate in these activities generally visit adjacent communities and, therefor, contribute to the economy in various ways.

11.5 INFORMATION NEEDS

- Final Recreation Facilities Analysis (final)
- Final National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) data.
- Spatial data for developed and dispersed sites.

Literature Cited

(Under Development)

Forest Service. 2000. Slate Creek ecosystem analysis at the watershed scale. Grangeville, ID: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Nez Perce National Forest.

Forest Service. 2002. Newsome Creek ecosystem assessment at the watershed scale. Grangeville, ID: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest service, Nez Perce National Forest.