



**Pacific Northwest Region
Regional Office**

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News Release

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Forest Service Publishes Region's Travel Analysis Reports

Analyses will guide national forests toward sustainable road system

Portland, Ore -- The U.S. Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region released 17 travel analysis reports this week that outline existing road systems and identify opportunities to achieve a more sustainable system of roads for each national forest in the Pacific Northwest. These travel analysis reports are part of nationwide requirement involving national forests across the country.

These reports are not decision documents—instead, they provide an analysis of where the existing road system is today. All future proposed actions and decisions will involve further opportunities for public input and engagement at the project-level under national environmental policy act processes, according to guidance issued by Regional Forester Jim Peña to all national forests.

“The release of these travel analysis reports is a critical step to ensure our future road system investments promote the greatest good for the great number in the long run,” said Peña. “Given the long-term funding expectations, these reports will help the Forest Service strike the right balance between meeting a diversity of access needs while ensuring the health of your forests and streams.”

The reports will inform future decisions on where and how to invest limited resources on building new roads, managing current roads, or decommissioning old roads. Travel analysis reports identify roads “likely needed” and “likely not needed” in the future, as well as opportunities to change road operation and maintenance strategies, decommission, convert to other use, or add to the system.

As part of a national travel management process, the Forest Service is working to achieve a financially and ecologically sustainable road system that meets access needs, minimizes adverse environmental impacts, and reflects long-term funding expectations.

Through a variety of processes, national forests have worked closely with the public and stakeholder groups to collect information and feedback about social, economic, and ecological concerns and impacts around forest road systems. For many national forests, this is the first time they have looked at their entire road system in a comprehensive way.

The Forest Service manages approximately 90,000 miles of roads in Oregon and Washington that must be maintained to provide safe public and administrative access for a variety of uses, including recreation, fire suppression, commercial activities, forest restoration,



for the greatest good

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and other management purposes. It is a challenge to maintain all roads to proper safety and environmental standards due to increased use, aging infrastructure, and decreasing budgets. Many roads, built between 1950 and 1990, have exceeded their designed lifespan and require costly repairs. Unmaintained roads and infrastructure can impact water quality and wildlife habitat, especially fish-bearing streams. Backlog maintenance projects top \$1.2 billion, and funds available for road maintenance each year are only about 15% of what is needed to fully maintain the current road system.

Of the 90,000 miles of Forest Service roads in Oregon and Washington, about 2/3 of those are currently open and maintained for both public and administrative purposes. The other 1/3 of the current road system is managed for specific project uses. These roads are opened during project activities, and closed and put in storage between uses. The travel analysis reports indicate that about 12% of the overall road system is “likely not needed” for resource management purposes in the future. However, the majority of roads in this category are part of the closed and stored road system. Only about 20% (approximately 2,000 miles) of the roads shown as “likely not needed” in the travel analysis reports come from the group of roads that are currently open to the public.

Travel analysis reports for individual national forests in Oregon and Washington can be found [here](#).

The Pacific Northwest Region consists of 16 National Forests, 59 District Offices, a National Scenic Area, and a National Grassland comprising 24.7 million acres in Oregon and Washington and employing approximately 3,550 people. To learn more about the U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest, please visit www.fs.usda.gov/r6

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