



Fremont-Winema National Forest

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Fremont-Winema National Forests Roads Analysis Report

Winema Portion of the Fremont-Winema National Forests
December 2006

Executive Summary

Roads analysis is an integrated ecological, social, and economic approach to transportation planning designed to provide Forest Service officials with critical information needed to develop and maintain road systems that meet the National Roads Policy. The Final Road Management Policy issued on January 12, 2001, emphasizes science-based analysis of forest road systems with the goal of optimum road systems that support land management objectives.

The Forest Supervisor of the Fremont-Winema National Forests formed an Interdisciplinary Team to develop a Forest-level roads analysis in 2000 for the Winema and 2002 for the Fremont. The Fremont and Winema National Forests were administratively combined in 2002. The Forest Roads Analysis Team produced a forest roads analysis report and transportation atlas documenting the six-step interdisciplinary process and recommendations resulting from the process for Maintenance Level 3, 4 and 5 roads. Level 3, 4, and 5 roads are maintained for low clearance vehicle access with the highest level of travel comfort at Level 5. These roads form the main or “backbone” road system for the Fremont-Winema National Forests. Recommendations are made for future actions on this system that will reduce risks of unacceptable environmental disturbance and increase the benefits provided by these roads where appropriate.

The Interdisciplinary Team included a team leader, forest planner, road systems manager, hydrologist, wildlife biologist, forester, fire planner, geographic information system specialist, cultural resource specialist and others. The public and The Klamath Tribes were invited to provide input into the Forest-level roads analysis. Target audiences included local governments, road users and persons interested in management of the Forest, cooperating road management agencies, private company road managers, private landowners who own land within the boundary or adjacent to the Forest, and Forest employees.

Total Forest Road System

Maintenance Level	Fremont	Winema	Total
1 – Closed to Public Use	1,952	3,205	5,157
2 – Maintained for High Clearance Vehicles	3,882	2,400	6,282
3, 4 and 5 – Maintained for Low Clearance Vehicle Access (Passenger Car)	954	484	1,438
Totals	6,788	6,089	12,877

Watershed and project level roads analyses will tier to the Forest-level roads analysis and address all roads within the watershed or project boundary, including local or Maintenance Level 1 and 2 roads and unclassified roads. Project-level roads analyses will be prepared as a part of the environmental planning and analysis for proposed resource activities across the Forest . The Forest-level roads analysis is focused on the routes maintained for low clearance vehicle access. This analysis does not address Maintenance Level 1 (closed) or 2 (high clearance vehicle access) roads, or non-system roads.

Forest-Scale Roads Analysis

Roads analysis is a six-step process. The steps are designed to be sequential with the understanding the process may require feedback and iteration among steps over time as an analysis matures. The amount of time and effort spent on each step differs by project based on specific situations and available information. The process provides a set of possible issues and analysis questions for which the answers can inform choices about road system management. Decision makers and analysts determine the relevance of each question, incorporating public participation as deemed necessary.

The six steps that guided the process are:

- Step 1: Setting up the analysis
- Step 2: Describing the situation
- Step 3: Identifying the issues
- Step 4: Assessing benefits, problems and risks
- Step 5: Describing opportunities and setting priorities
- Step 6: Reporting

Key Fremont-Winema Roads Analysis Issues

The Fremont-Winema roads analysis focuses on five key issues:

- Management of the main forest road system – Does the existing main road system meet resource objectives and is it affordable?
- The Public Forest Service Road System – What portion of the Forest main road system should be considered part of the Public Forest Road System? The miles identified for this system are proposed for funding under the Federal Lands Highway Program.
- Management of road surfaces – What should the forest strategy be for its bituminous and crushed rock surfaced roads?
- Fish passage and road crossings – Where should the forest invest to improve fish passage at road stream crossings?
- Priority road improvement projects – Where should the forest invest its capital investment funds to improve the main road system?

Key Analysis Findings and Recommendations

The following are findings and recommendations from the analysis for each of the five key issues. Details of these findings are covered in the Roads Analysis Report. In some cases additional analysis is recommended in the future. These recommendations will be used to advise Forest Line Officers when making future project-level decisions. Details of these recommendations are displayed in tables included in the Forest-Level Roads Analysis Report. The content of the Forest-level roads analysis will be used as a

framework for future road related decisions and as the basis of information that will be assembled for watershed-level roads analysis.

Management of the main road system

Evaluation of the main road system identified the recommendations that follow.

- No changes are recommended for the functional classification of the road system (arterial, collector, local). Functional classification of a road generally corresponds to the size of land area served, with arterials serving the largest land areas.
- Change is recommended for the maintenance level assigned to some main roads in order to meet resource management objectives. For example, a road may require a higher level of maintenance in order to mitigate resource damage.
- Changes are recommended to frequency and timing of road maintenance activities
- No roads currently on the main road system are recommended for decommissioning
- No recommendations are made for maintenance level 1 and 2 roads. These roads will need to be considered in project level and watershed level analysis. Emphasis should be placed on decommissioning roads whenever possible.
- Additional analysis is recommended to lower the maintenance levels and resulting level of service on a significant portion of the main road system. The objective of this is to reduce road maintenance requirements to bring road maintenance funding needs more in line with expected road management budgets. Concentrate limited maintenance funding on the main forest road system.
- Actively pursue alternate sources of funding for road management.

Public Forest Service Road System

This analysis identified the Public Forest Road System in response to national direction. Forest Service roads identified in this analysis as Public Forest Roads are listed in the Roads Analysis Report. The Public Forest Road System is a subset of the main forest road system (Maintenance Level 3, 4 and 5 roads). These roads may be eligible for funding in the future through the Federal Lands Highway Program. The following table summarizes the identified system.

Maintenance Level	Fremont	Winema	Total
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Public Forest Road System Miles	711	404	1,115
Maintenance Level 3, 4 and 5 Road Miles (Maintained for Low Clearance Vehicle Access)	954	484	1,438

Management of road surfaces

The Fremont-Winema National Forests have a total of 3,041 miles of pumice, aggregate, and bituminous surfaced roads with 2,107 miles on the Fremont , and 934 miles on the Winema. These roads represent a large financial investment. Current resources are inadequate to maintain all these miles to standard in the future. The Roads Analysis evaluated the need for each road, categorizing roads into high, medium and low priority for surface maintenance or restoration.

Summary recommendations for road surface maintenance priorities are listed in the table below. Details of the recommendations, including the list of roads by priority, are described in the Roads Analysis Report.

Spending priorities will be established using this priority scheme. At current funding levels, the Forest will be able to maintain road surface miles in the high category, approximately 30% of surfaced miles. Remaining surfaced miles will likely continue to decline in quality resulting in lower levels of travel service, longer travel times, and more weather related closures.

Maintenance Priority for Aggregate and Bituminous Surfaced Road Miles	Fremont	Winema	Total
High (First consideration for investment)	589	237	826

Medium	338	286	624
Low	1,180	411	1,591
Total	2,107	934	3,041

Fish passage and road crossings

It is a Forest Service requirement to evaluate fish passage at road crossings on all fish bearing streams. An interdisciplinary team conducted field surveys and evaluated culvert crossings for fish passage. Specific findings are summarized in the Roads Analysis Report.

Fish passage blockage at road crossings is a major concern on the Fremont-Winema National Forests. Of 39 culverts evaluated on the Winema National Forest, 28 were found to not meet the criteria to allow fish passage, and 11 were found to need more analysis to determine if they allow fish passage. Of 399 culverts evaluated on the Fremont National Forest, 357 were found to not meet the criteria for fish passage, and 32 were found to need more analysis to determine if they allow fish passage.

Investment needs for improving fish passage were prioritized and are listed in Roads Analysis Report Appendix.

Priority road improvement project

During the analysis of the four issues described above, road concerns and project recommendations were identified for the main road system. These project recommendations were made to meet Forest mission objectives, restore the road investment, correct design and road maintenance problems, mitigate road safety hazards, and correct resource concerns. Project recommendations are listed in the Roads Analysis.

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