



D. Monitoring Item Results

Wild and Scenic Rivers ¹ 😊

Introduction: On the Gifford Pinchot National Forest there are no Congressionally designated Wild, Scenic or Recreational Rivers; however, the Forest Plan recommends the Lewis River, Cispus River, and the Muddy Fork and Clear Fork of the Cowlitz River be designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers. As a result of the 1997 Final Legislative EIS, the Upper White Salmon River is also recommended for Wild and Scenic River designation. Twelve other rivers are recommended for further study.

On the Gifford Pinchot there are no congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The values for which these corridors were either recommended or deemed eligible for recommendation are being protected until Congress takes action on the Forest’s recommendation or further studies are completed. The Forest monitors activities in each of these corridors to ensure that the outstandingly remarkable river values are being protected consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Results: There were no projects implemented in Wild and Scenic River corridors in 2003.

Evaluation: No projects have occurred and therefore there were no adverse effects to the outstandingly remarkable values, the free-flowing nature, or classification of any eligible or study river.

No projects were implemented in Wild and Scenic River corridors in 2003.

Recommended Action to be Taken: No corrective action required -- monitoring will continue.

Semi-Primitive Recreation ² 😊

Introduction: The Forest Plan provides a framework for managing different classes of outdoor recreation settings, activities and opportunities. This framework is a continuum comprised of seven classes:

Primitive	Roaded Natural
Semi-primitive Non-motorized	Rural
Semi-primitive Motorized	Urban
Roaded Modified	

This monitoring item focuses on maintaining the character of the two semi-primitive classes. The emphasis in these areas is to maintain a predominantly natural or naturally appearing environment. Motorized recreation use is not permitted in the semi-primitive non-motorized category.

The projects implemented in the semi-primitive ROS class complies with standards and guidelines.

Results: In addition to ongoing routine trail maintenance, there are two projects planned in areas identified as a semi-primitive recreation area in the Forest Plan. The Lakes Trail slide reconstruction and the Boundary Trail Devil’s Elbo segment



reopening, both in the Mt. Margaret Backcountry of the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

Evaluation: Both projects were consistent with the ROS class and in compliance with the Forest Plan standards and guidelines. The semi-primitive character of the area will be maintained.

Recommended Action to be Taken: No corrective action required -- monitoring to continue.

Scenic Quality 3 

Introduction: The Forest Plan delineated 37 viewshed corridors across the Forest. Lands within view of 21 of these viewshed corridors have management objectives requiring maintaining or improving scenic values. In these viewsheds, management activities are designed to be compatible with scenic quality objectives.

Results: There were no projects within scenic viewshed corridors in 2003.

The following Landscape-scale viewshed condition monitoring was conducted in 2003.

Viewsheds conditions either stayed the same or improved from prior surveys.

Table 1. – Viewshed Condition

Viewshed Name and Road No.	Prior Year Monitoring and Rating	2003 Rating
Carson Guler, 60	1997- Slightly Altered	Slightly Altered
Lewis River, 90	2001- Slightly Altered	Natural Appearing
MSHNVM, Highways 504, 99	1984- Natural Appearing	Natural Appearing
White Salmon, 23	1994- Moderately Altered	Slightly Altered

In all viewsheds, conditions either stayed the same or improved from prior surveys.

Recommended Action to be Taken: No corrective action required -- monitoring to continue.



Wilderness Use and Condition

Introduction: The Forest currently has about 180,000 acres in seven wilderness areas. Each wilderness is zoned according to the nature of recreation opportunities. The range of these opportunities is called the Wilderness Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. Each category has a set of standards describing the desired recreation experience. Periodic monitoring determines if standards for the experience in each category have been met. Monitoring measures wilderness use and impacts of recreation use on wilderness character.

The Forest currently includes about 180,000 acres in seven wildernesses.

Limits of acceptable change is a measure of impacts associated with wilderness recreation use such as trampled area, vegetation loss at campsites, and mineral soil exposed. It is usually done on a three to five years frequency, the amount of time necessary to see measurable change occur. Previous year's monitoring provides a baseline for determining if management measures are working to reduce impacts. Resource conditions that are degrading rather than improving are a clear indication of the needs for additional corrective actions.

In 1999, the Forest, with the input by wilderness users and other interested parties, developed a Wilderness Resource Protection Plan that includes measures such as, designated sites in overused areas, use limits, and increased education and enforcement. The primary purpose of these measures is to reduce impacts from human use, primarily overnight use.

Results:

Wilderness Use – Figure 1 and Table 2 compare overall wilderness use in recent years. Heavier than normal snowfall, contributed to lower wilderness use in 2002. In 2003, annual visitor use increased slightly by 3% percent across all seven wildernesses. The largest increases from 2002 to 2003 were in the Goat Rocks Wilderness (+35%) and Tatoosh Wilderness (+80%). The South Climb portion of the Mt. Adams Wilderness, historically popular with climbers had record high use equivalent to 100% of the Forest Plan level and exceeding that for the entire remainder of the Mt. Adams Wilderness.

Wilderness visitor use increased slightly in 2003.

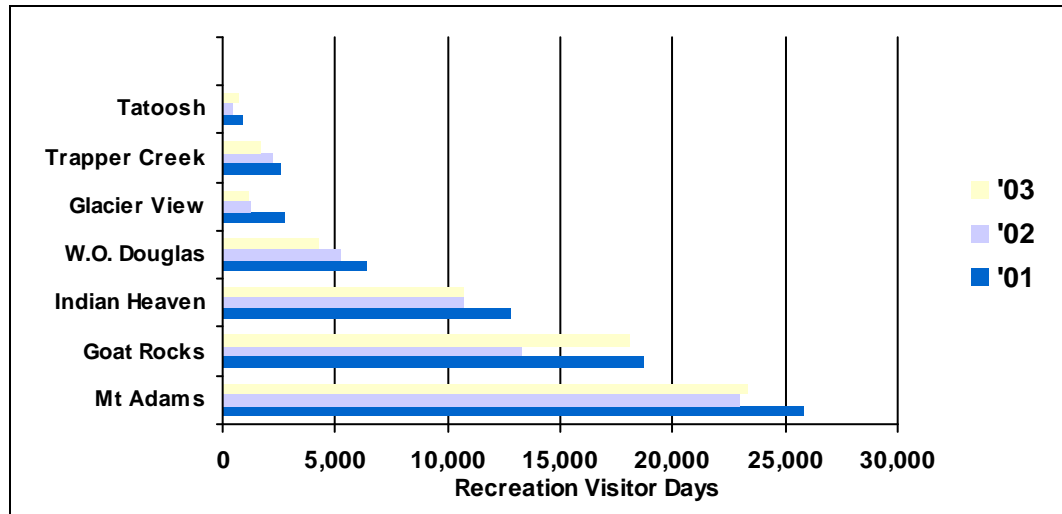


Figure 1. - Wilderness Use 2001 - 2003

Table 2. - Wilderness Use

Wilderness	Recreation Visitor Days						
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2002-2003 % Change
Mt. Adams	22,400	19,620	27,200	25,810	23,030	23,300	1%
Goat Rocks *	21,250	12,730	17,500	18,760	13,340	18,080	36%
Indian Heaven	12,000	8,968	11,200	12,770	10,760	10,700	-1%
William O. Douglas*	8,920	6,370	7,000	6,420	5,270	4,240	-20%
Glacier View	4,300	2,100	3,200	2,730	1,240	1,160	-6%
Trapper Creek	2,200	2,190	2,500	2,600	2,220	1,720	-23%
Tatoosh	1,100	910	1,000	860	410	740	80%
TOTAL	72,180	52,888	69,600	69,950	56,270	59,940	7%

* Gifford Pinchot National Forest portion only.

Standards for LAC are not being met in Packwood Lake and Alpine Camp.

Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). In Goat Rocks Wilderness, site specific monitoring of 42 sites (13% of the known sites in the Goat Rocks Wilderness) in 3 areas was conducted. Results were compared with monitoring results from 1990. Standards were not being met in two of the three areas: Packwood Lake and Alpine Camp. New sites had been created, and the average campsite condition had deteriorated. Measures to reduce impacts taken previously in Snowgrass Flats, such as closing the area to camping, resulted in all campsites monitored showing improved conditions.

Popular wilderness destinations continue to receive heavy peak - weekend use.

Evaluation: Overall wilderness use increased slightly over last year. In addition, sharp spikes in use recorded for Goat Rocks and Tatoosh Wildernesses were atypical. In 2002 the delayed access because of near-record snowfall may have contributed to the 2002 decline in wilderness use. In 2003 popular camping



destinations in Mt. Adams, Indian Heaven and Goat Rocks Wildernesses continued to receive heavy peak-weekend use, particularly in August.

Measures, such as rehabilitation, education, attempts to confine damages to previously impacted areas and designating campsites, have worked to some degree to reduce soil and vegetation impacts.

Snowmobile incursions into the Mt. Adams Wilderness were less frequent than in previous years. Corrective actions implemented in 2002 and 2003 included increased winter recreation education and enforcement, changes in Sno*Park uses, and posting the boundaries.

Recommended Actions to be Taken:

LAC monitoring should continue. The need to implement additional measures to reduce resource impacts should be evaluated annually.

Trail Inventory and Condition 

Introduction: On the Forest there are 1,490 miles of trails, including 305 miles within wilderness. These trails are managed to maintain a diverse array of travel opportunities. Difficulty, mode of travel, and distance are factors affecting the mix of travel opportunities. Each Forest trail is assigned a trail management level, with associated standards and guidelines for management of adjacent lands. These management levels offer a range of protection from roading and timber harvest impacts. We also monitor the amount of trail construction, maintenance, use, and management.

On the Forest there are 1,475 miles of trails, including 305 miles within Wilderness.

Results:

Trail Construction and Maintenance -- Table 3 compares the amount of trails constructed or reconstructed in 2003 with the amount projected in the Forest Plan. Construction or reconstruction work was accomplished on the following trails: Fossil Trail #242, Lakes Trail #211, Boundary Trail #1, East Crater Trail #48, PCT #2000, Wicky Shelter Trail #39A, Buck Creek Trail Extension #54, Wicky Creek Trail #38.

Table 3. - Trail Construction and Maintenance

Trail Activity	Forest Plan Projection	2003 - Miles Accomplished	Percent of Plan Level
Construction or Reconstruction	34	5.6	16
Maintenance	1,490	831	56



Approximately 831 miles (56 percent) of the 1,490 miles of the existing summer and winter use trails in the Forest Trail System were maintained to full Meaningful Measures Standards (see Glossary). Most trails, where maintenance was deferred, were low priority, low use, or didn't require maintenance.

831 miles were maintained to standard.

Table 4. - Trail Setting

Trail Reviewed Name and No.	Planned Mgt. Level	Meets Management Level in Plan
Juniper Ridge #261	I	Y
Kraus Ridge Tr 275	I	Y

Trail Setting - The following table shows trails that were reviewed either in the planning phase (through the review of planning documents) or on the ground.

All trails reviewed meet management level standards which refer to the management of the setting. Note: the trail tread on Juniper trail does not meet trail maintenance standards due to poor trail location, wet conditions and motorized use.

Trail Use – The Forest responded to public comments concerning use conflicts on several trails across the Forest. Motorized/Non-motorized use conflicts were reported on the Ptarmigan Trail #216 between climbers and snowmobilers. Meetings were held with the climbing groups, snowmobile groups and hiking groups to discuss the issue. Resulting management actions include road and trail speed limits, and increased user education leading to voluntary support to resolve issues. Middle Service Trail mentioned in FY '00 Monitoring report as having ORV resource impacts is scheduled for reconstruction during summer '04.

Monitoring of use will continue.

Evaluation: There is currently no planned target for trail construction/reconstruction in the Forest Plan. The budget for this work is considerably less than is needed to reconstruct a deteriorating trail system and create new opportunities. Trail mileage maintained decreased slightly from last year (Table 3). User conflicts were reported on fewer than 10 percent of the system trails and thus do not trigger planning action.

Only 16% of the planned trail construction was accomplished due to budget limitations.



Recommended Action to be taken: In 2004, revenues from NW Forest Pass user-fees will continue to provide funding to maintain trailheads and the trails they serve. The expected result is an improved ability to meet trail operation and maintenance standards for fee site related trails. Leveraged funding, and volunteer trail maintenance will continue to contribute to the Forest trail system maintenance.

OHV planning to address user conflicts and resource impacts will be is scheduled to begin in 2005, based on new national OHV policy. Motorized/non-motorized trail designations will be addressed in the Forest Plan revision scheduled for 2009.

Continue to perform tread maintenance on critical trail sections, though many sections will require relocation to remedy.

Developed and Dispersed Recreation Use and Facility Condition 7 ☹️

Introduction: The Forest has about 120 developed recreation sites, not including visitor centers, with a combined capacity of 16,650 persons-at-one-time (PAOT). We have experienced increasing demand for recreation opportunities from the fast growing populations of the Portland metropolitan area, and the international notoriety of Mount St. Helens and the Columbia River Gorge. Accompanying the growth in demand has been relatively stable recreation budgets. The Forest has pursued some innovative measures to close the gap between demand for services and the recreation budget through partnerships, volunteers, user fees and use of campground concessionaires. In 2000 the Northwest Forest Pass was introduced and provided a means to collect additional revenue from trail, interpretive site and rustic campground users at selected sites. The revenue from this user fee has helped to meet operation and maintenance standards for these sites.

The Forest has about 120 developed recreation sites.

All but two of the fee campgrounds are operated by concessionaires. Concessionaires also operated some day-use sites in 2003. These sites are managed to standard since sites are operated and maintained according to the concessionaires' operating plans approved by the Forest Service. In 2003, two non-concessionaire operated fee campgrounds and some rustic campgrounds generated camping fees that went toward operation and maintenance of these sites.

Many developed sites are still in need of repair or upgrading to meet new standards

Camping outside of campgrounds (dispersed camping) continues to be popular and is increasing. There are currently few restrictions on where visitors may camp. Since the preference for camping is to be near water, this is where the majority of use of this type occurs.

Results: The Forest is continuing to pursue upgrading of developed recreation facilities. In 2002, 25 new vault toilets were constructed to replace 33 older toilets that did not meet standards. In 2003 some deferred maintenance was accomplished at Lava Cyn, Morrison Cr. CG, Peterson Info Shelter, Mt. Adams Horse Camp, Snow King SnoPark. However, in spite of these projects, many developed sites are still in need of repair or upgrading to meet new standards.



Visitor centers at Mount St. Helens are accruing deferred maintenance due to their age and heavy use. A survey of maintenance needs was conducted, priorities set, and funding options identified. For the long-term, the Forest is exploring options for their operation and maintenance.

The Forest is exploring options for the operation and maintenance of Mount St. Helens visitor Centers.

Monitoring of recreation use outside of campgrounds indicates numerous dispersed camping sites, accessible by vehicle, are continuing to show evidence of overuse. Concerns include inadequate sanitation, resource damage, littering, illegal tree removal, trash dumping, user conflicts, and user-created sites located too close to streams, lakes, and scenic highways.

Ongoing actions include: blocking vehicle access to sensitive riparian areas, restoring impacted sites, designating campsites, increasing enforcement. The annual “Pick-up the Pinchot” is an example of successful volunteer effort to assist in cleaning trash from dispersed sites around the Forest.

Evaluation: While strides were made in upgrading toilet facilities, many recreation facilities continue to show the need for reconstruction or heavy maintenance. Deferring routine maintenance of these facilities has resulted in a devaluation of the capital investment and increased maintenance costs. Condition surveys of developed recreation sites indicate that many still do not meet accessibility or sanitation standards. Monitoring of dispersed recreation camping sites indicates that many of these sites do not meet standards and are impacting riparian areas.

Condition surveys of developed recreation sites indicate that the majority do not meet accessibility or sanitation standards.

Recommended Actions to be taken: The Forest will continue to evaluate the ability to meet existing and future developed recreation needs, while providing facilities that meet operation, maintenance, and accessibility standards. Some revenues from the Northwest Forest Pass program will be focused on capital improvements. Other funding sources will be pursued.

To address dispersed impacts, placing barriers and camping closure of areas adjacent to some roads should be considered. Dispersed recreation management should be addressed in conjunction with other planning efforts, such as transportation planning, and watershed and habitat restoration.