



# Roads Analysis

Mendocino National Forest

Forest-scale RAP Newsletter #1

April 12, 2002

## Forest Supervisor's Message

In January 2001, the Forest Service adopted a new road management policy for all national forests which directs the agency to maintain a safe, environmentally sound road network that is responsive to public needs and affordable to manage. The policy includes a science-based roads analysis process designed to help managers make better decisions on roads.

As we conduct the analysis, we'll be asking questions about what sort of road system we need on the Forest to provide for administrative uses (such as for fire suppression), allow public access (such as for recreation), and ensure resource protection (such as clean water). As we do this analysis for the road system of the Mendocino National Forest, it's important for us to hear what you think. I hope you'll take the time to let us know.

*Jim Fenwood*

## What is Roads Analysis??

If you are unfamiliar with the new Forest Service roads analysis process (RAP), please visit our web page, or contact our roads analysis coordinator for information (see end of newsletter).

## Mendocino NF Roads Analysis Schedule

We are conducting the bulk of our forest-scale analysis work between January and June of 2002. Public input is most useful if received during this time, preferably before the end of April. Between June and September, we will assemble the analysis results into a draft report. The draft report will be available for review and comment by the public in September. The final report is due in January 2003.

## Public Meeting Results

Public meetings were held in late January and early February in Ukiah, Chico, and Willows. Although only a few folks showed up at the Chico meeting, both the Ukiah and Willows meetings were well attended.

The meetings were held to provide information about the roads analysis process currently underway on the Mendocino NF, and to let people know how they can participate. Information that was handed out at the meetings is available on our web page, or interested people can contact the roads analysis coordinator (see the end of the newsletter).

The meetings were primarily informational, but we were able to capture many comments about forest road management. Some of the things we heard at the meetings and from other sources include:

- Concern (and anger) regarding losing recreation opportunities by closing of roads.
- Keep the public informed and involved in road management decisions, especially those decisions that would reduce access.
- Inform the public better about seasonal closures, especially about when and why roads are going to be closed.
- Concern that sediment from road-related erosion harms salmon and steelhead habitat.
- Key routes need better maintenance than side roads.
- Could some of the funding shortfall be made up with volunteer assistance?
- Involve local fire departments in decisions that affect access.

- Road decommissioning could result in creating more unroaded areas, which could be subject to permanent loss to vehicle-based recreation (such as through Wilderness designation or administrative withdrawal).
- Concern about resource and safety impacts due to inadequate maintenance.
- Vehicle access is needed in order for people who have physical limitations to use and enjoy the Forest.
- Key route criteria should include access to communities within Mendocino NF.
- Lake Pillsbury is becoming a more popular recreation destination, so there needs to be better access.
- Concerns that roads to private land or special use cabins are not being adequately maintained.

We will be using these comments and others we receive during the analysis process to identify the important road management issues on the Mendocino NF, and to develop guidelines for dealing with those issues. If we missed anything, please let us know.

**Did You Know...?**

- Driving on unpaved roads when they are wet causes up to 5 times the amount of resource damage and work needed to maintain the road.
- Seasonal closures reduce access by cutting off wet season use. But they allow road managers to stretch their budgets to maintain a larger road system for use during the dry season when most use occurs.
- The Mendocino NF has about 1,500 miles of roads that are open for public use.
- Our annual road maintenance budget for the recent past has averaged about 25% to 30% of what is needed to fully maintain the existing road system.

**For More Information**

The Washington Office of the Forest Service also maintains a road management web page with roads analysis and related information.

The address is  
*[http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road\\_mgt](http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road_mgt)*.

We are using a document titled Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions About Managing the National Forest Transportation System to guide the roads analysis process.

You can find it on the web at  
*[http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road\\_mgt/DOCSroad-analysis.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road_mgt/DOCSroad-analysis.shtml)*, or hard-copies may be ordered by sending your mailing information in label form to: Publications distribution, Rocky Mountain Research Station, 3825 E. Mulberry Street, Fort Collins, CO 80524-8597.

A handy reference that pulls together a wide range of information about forest roads is Forest Roads: A Synthesis of Scientific Information (General Technical Report PNW-GTR-509, May 2001), published by USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Portland, Oregon. It is available on the web at

*[http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road\\_mgt/science.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/road_mgt/science.pdf)*

**Let Us Hear From You**

Do you -

- Have an issue or information that is important to consider regarding road management?
- Have a comment on something in this newsletter?
- Want to check out a rumor that you have heard?

If so, please contact the Roads Analysis Coordinator, Mike Van Dame:

- Telephone - (530)934-1141
- Email – [mvandame@fs.fed.us](mailto:mvandame@fs.fed.us)
- Address – 825 N. Humboldt Ave., Willows, CA 95988

**Mendocino NF Roads Web Page**

*<http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/mendocino/roads.htm>*