Transportation Report

Middle Illinois Watershed Analysis

Road Access and Construction History:

The transportation system for this watershed can be accessed by roads that exit off U.S. Highway #199 (Redwood Hwy.). These roads are Forest Service road #2500 (Briggs Valley), County road #5070 (Deer Creek), and County road #5240 (Eight Dollar). There is limited access into this watershed off County road #5300 (Westside) but no easement is permitted to the general public, this is private land.

Early signs of transportation specifically into the Josephine Subwatershed were established directly to accommodate the "Gold Rush" around 1851. The area known as Sebastapol held a good size community of early prospectors. The population during the early to mid 1850's for this area were in upwards of 800 people and at times reaching as many as 2,500. Mining travel into this area was accessed by native surface, low-standard roads, trails, and wheel tracks.

In 1960, road #4105 was constructed to access timber for harvest. This road system also provides an alternative rout to the Oak Flat area as it ties into road #4103. Recreational opportunities are also prevalent throughout this road In 1969, Forest road #4201 (Onion Camp) was constructed. This road was built to access timber harvesting units. This road also provides recreational access to the Illinois River, Josephine Creek, Onion Camp picnic site, Hungry Hill picnic site, The trail head leading to Babyfoot Lake, and the Kalmiopsis Wilderness area. There are many "local" or "spur" roads off the 4201 that provide access to mining and recreational sites.

Historically, trails followed parallel along major drainages. With this practice early signs of transportation systems were built along the Illinois River. Miners constructed a trail into the Sixmile and Oakflat subwatersheds to access mining claims. Around the turn of this Century native surface wagon track trails were identified. In 1918 the CCC Boys helped to improve and construct a more elaborate trail/road system. And finally in 1960 this road was reconstructed and partially paved. Collector road #4103 is currently the highest recreational used road system within this Watershed during high recreation seasons.

Transportation to recreational opportunities such as camping, trailhiking, botanical sight-seeing, rafting, fishing, mining, hunting are among the many uses for forest visitors. These roads provide public access, allow for the sustainable removal of commodities and enable resource protection activities such as fighting fires. They are integral to the rural transportation system. Driving forest roads for pleasure has been identified by the region as the number one outdoor recreational activity through the year 2040.

Transportation Management:

Available maintenance funding drives the maintenance frequency for all forest roads. Maintenance level 2, 3, and 4 roads within this watershed receive scheduled maintenance. A maintenance rotation is used as funding permits. Roads with sediment delivering potential are monitored and maintained by the Forest Service. A list of roads that are suspected to be susceptible to flood damage are contained in the "FERM" (Flood Emergency Road Maintenance) Plan. The FERM Plan is available for review at the Eastside Engineering Zone I Office at (541) 471-6500. All road related failures are also encouraged to be reported to the Zone I Office.

There are currently road improvement projects located within this watershed that are scheduled for work in FY 1999. These improvements are designed to specifically help transportation and drainage concerns.

Currently there are approximately 273 miles of road within the Middle Illinois Watershed, of which 116 miles are system roads. This is 38% of the total forest system and 18% of the Transportation Management System (TMS) for the Illinois Valley Ranger District. There are also approximately 6 miles of Galice Ranger District roads located in this watershed. Table 1 gives a complete list of Transportation Management System roads for this watershed and Table 2 gives a list of roads that have been decommissioned within this watershed. There are approximately 135 miles of roads outside the USFS jurisdiction.

A brief description of maintenance levels located within this watershed are as follows:

Maintenance Level 4 - Provide a moderate degree of user comfort at moderate travel speeds, meets the Highway Safety Act (HSA). Most roads are double lane aggregate surfaced. Aggregate is to be (POC) approved. Some roads are single lane. Some roads may be paved and/or dust abated. These roads "encourage" safe travel to forest users with passenger cars.

Maintenance Level 3 - Maintained for travel by "prudent" drivers in a passenger car. Typically these roads are low speed, single lane with turnouts, and they meet (HSA). Some roads are fully surfaced with either native or approved aggregate. The appropriate traffic management strategies are either "encourage" or "accept". User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities.

Maintenance Level 2 - Assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not a consideration. Traffic is normally minor. Traffic strategies are either to (1)-discourage or prohibit passenger cars or (2)-accept or discourage high clearance vehicles. Usually these roads are native surfaced.

Maintenance Level 1 - Assigned to intermittent service roads during the time they are closed to vehicular traffic. Traffic management strategies are "prohibit" and "eliminate". Basic custodial maintenance is performed to help resources and to perpetuate the road to facilitate future management activities. These roads require very little maintenance.

Excessive roading and stream crossings are forest issues Tables 3 & 4 show the density relationship between miles of roads and stream crossing. In 1994, a Transportation Network Analysis was completed forest wide to determine the future of the transportation system. Historically, timber management was an important emphasis on the forest and the primary reason an extensive road system was developed. Today, the forest envisions a less extensive road system and higher importance on recreational opportunities such as driving for pleasure, sight-seeing. A list of those roads that were identified as candidates for closure, decommissioning, or conversion to another use are listed in Table 1.

A. Traffic Counts

A Traffic Count Report was accomplished in 1993 and is available for review at the Eastside Engineering Zone Office. Due to vandalism there is presently only one traffic control device working within this watershed area. Tables 5, 6, and 7 show all current information as it pertains to traffic counts within the Middle Illinois Watershed area.

B. Gates

There are several gates located within this watershed. An extensive gate condition and road closure inventory report is currently being done. This information will be completed by September 1999

and located for review within the Infrastructure database. The road number and milepost for each gate currently identified within this watershed are as follows:

1. Road # 4103087- (mp. 1.10) Seasonally closed, POC administration.
2. Road # 4105061- (mp. 0.10) Seasonally closed, Wildlife administration.
3. Road # 4201023- (mp. 0.47) Yearly closed, miners gate.
4. Road # 4300011- (mp. 0.10) Intermittently closed, private property.
5. Road # 4200000- (mp. 0.90) Need report.
6. Road # 4201140- (mp. 0.30) Seasonally closed, POC administration.
7. Road # 4201141- (mp. 0.10) Seasonally closed, POC administration.
8. Road # 4201142- (mp. 0.10) Seasonally closed, POC administration.
9. Road # 4201090- (mp. 0.15) Currently open, miners gate, damaged.