

Transportation Analysis Report

Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement Project Transportation Analysis Report

USDA Forest Service

Dixie National Forest

Escalante Ranger District



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Introduction

Prior to implementing road management decisions, the USDA Forest Service completes a transportation analysis of the affected roads in the project area. The objective of a transportation analysis is to provide decision makers with critical information to develop and maintain road systems that are safe and responsive to public needs and desires, are affordable and efficiently managed, have minimal negative ecological effects on the land, and are in balance with available funding for needed management actions. Transportation analysis is typically completed on several scales including forest-wide, watershed, and project.

This report documents a project level transportation analysis done for the Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement Project Area. This report is not a decision-making document; however, it is intended to provide information to support decisions to be made. Any changes in Forest Service road management in the Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement Project Area resulting from this process will be disclosed in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental document.

The proposed 8,306-acre Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement and Salvage Project is situated in the Dixie National Forest approximately 15 miles northwest of Escalante, Utah, along National Forest System road 140. Elevations range from 9,000 feet to 10,750 feet. Terrain is slightly rolling to level. The forest type is primarily Engelmann spruce/subalpine fir, with scattered aspen clones. The project area is within the headwaters of three watersheds: Coyote Hollow-Antimony Creek, North Creek, and Upper North Creek, and covers portions of Township 33 South, Range 1 West, and Township 33 South, Range 1 East of the Salt Lake Base Meridian, Garfield County, Utah.

The existing transportation system in the analysis area includes a network of system and non-system roads (See Appendix, Project Area Transportation Map). There are currently 35.75 miles of system routes in the analysis area and consist primarily of maintenance level two routes. Forest Road (FR) 140 is the only maintenance level 3 road in the project area. Designated by the State of Utah as a Scenic Backway, FR 140 is to be maintained so that it is suitable for passenger car travel. The open road density of the Iron Springs project area is approximately 1.801 miles of road per square mile. The National Forest System roads serve a number of purposes including timber management, recreation, range management, and access for fire suppression.

Methods

The Forest Service Manual directs decision makers to conduct transportation analysis at appropriate scales in order to provide and maintain a safe, affordable, and efficient road system that has “minimal adverse effects” on ecosystem health, diversity, and productivity (FSM 7712.1). The Escalante Ranger District assembled an interdisciplinary team of scientists and resource specialists to identify road system needs and opportunities in the Iron Springs Project Area. The team consisted of the following members:

Name	Resource Area
Terry DeLay	District Ranger
Robert Miller	Project Engineer
Brooke Shakespeare	Hydrologist
Rich Jaros	Soils
Lisa Young	Wildlife
Cindy Calbaum	Recreation
Kevin Zeman	Timber
Andrew Orlemann	Silviculture
Chance Stewart	Fire/Fuels
Ron Mortensen	Range
Marian Jacklin	Heritage

First, as directed by the Forest Service Handbook 7709.55- Travel Planning Handbook, the team used a flow chart (21.6 Exhibit 01) to evaluate each road segment for its role in meeting resource management needs (See Appendix, Travel Analysis Steps). Second, following recommendations found in Forest Service Report FS-643, Roads Analysis: Informing Decisions About Managing the National Forest Transportation System, the team answered questions designed to force thinking about the road system’s relationship to, among other things, social values, hydrology, and economics (See Appendix, Roads Analysis Questions).

Results & Recommendations

The Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement interdisciplinary team identified opportunities to improve the Project Area’s road network. Opportunities include maintenance, construction and obliteration of existing system and non-system roads.

The table below (Table 1:) shows all system roads in the analysis area along with their current maintenance level.

Table (1):

SYSTEM ROADS IN THE ANALYSIS AREA			MTP Designation	After Project Goal
Road Number	Road Length (Miles)	Operational Maintenance Level		
30140	10.45	3- SUITABLE FOR PASSENGER CAR	Open to All	Maintain Status
30408	0.44	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
30463	0.56	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
30469	0.71	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31369	2.58	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31370	1.14	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31372	1.16	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Seasonal	Maintain Status
31373	1.17	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31374	1.02	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31377	1.69	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31906	0.48	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31910	1.41	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
31963	0.25	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
33809	0.08	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
33810	0.13	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
33877	0.11	2 - HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLES	Open to All	Maintain Status
30028	0.80	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
30304	0.53	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
30783	0.55	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
30984	0.67	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31374	0.24	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31375	0.24	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31376	0.59	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31377	0.99	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31440	0.98	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31908	0.69	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31909	1.82	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
31963	1.58	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
32139	0.59	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
32148	0.22	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
32151	1.36	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
33811	0.07	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
33812	0.19	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
33816	0.26	1 – BASIC CUSTODIAL CARE	Admin	Maintain Status
Total	35.75			

One of the key work items identified is on FS Route 31369. Road 31369 has a section of road approximately 200 feet long that needs to be relocated. Relocating this section approximately 60

feet uphill will help the road to drain, this section of road is in a low spot and continues to rut and hold water. Existing section of road will be obliterated.

The Forest Service Manual, Chapter 7705 and the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 26, Chapter II, Part 212.1 states that new road construction is an activity that results in the addition of forest system or temporary road miles. The resulting open road network will provide 35.75 miles of maintenance level 1, 2 and 3 roads. Forest Service Road Maintenance Levels are described below.

- **Maintenance Level 1.** Assigned to intermittent service roads during the time they are closed to vehicular traffic. The closure period must exceed 1 year. Basic custodial maintenance is performed to keep damage to adjacent resources to an acceptable level and to perpetuate the road to facilitate future management activities. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Planned road deterioration may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are "prohibit" and "eliminate". Roads receiving level 1 maintenance may be of any type, class, or construction standard, and may be managed at any other maintenance level during the time they are open for traffic. However, while being maintained at level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic, but may be open and suitable for non-motorized uses.
- **Maintenance Level 2.** Assigned to roads open for use by high clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic is not a consideration. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to (1) discourage or prohibit passenger cars or (2) accept or discourage high clearance vehicles.
- **Maintenance Level 3.** Maintenance level three is assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed, single lane with turnouts and spot surfacing. Some roads may be fully surfaced with either native or processed material. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either "encourage" or "accept". "Discourage" or "prohibit" strategies may be employed for certain classes of vehicles or users.

An analysis of the Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement project found that to fully access all the treatments units would require 9.61 miles of temporary road. The table below (Table 2:) shows all temporary roads in the analysis area and lists road lengths in miles.

Table (2):

TEMPORARY ROADS IN THE ANALYSIS AREA			
Road Number	Road Length (Miles)	Note	After Project Goal
T1	0.26	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
T2	0.26	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
T3	0.22	New Construction	Decommission
T4	0.22	New Construction	Decommission
T5	0.41	New Construction	Decommission
T6	0.43	New Construction	Decommission
T7	0.75	New Construction	Decommission
T8	0.58	New Construction	Decommission
T9	0.31	New Construction	Decommission
T10	0.61	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
T11	0.19	New Construction	Decommission
T12	0.41	New Construction	Decommission
T13	0.73	New Construction	Decommission
T14	0.30	New Construction	Decommission
T15	0.38	New Construction	Decommission
T16	0.18	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
T18	0.17	New construction	Decommission
T19	0.30	New Construction	Decommission
T20	0.59	New Construction	Decommission
T21	0.88	New Construction	Decommission
T22	0.22	New Construction	Decommission
T23	0.17	New Construction	Decommission
T24	0.65	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
T25	0.39	Construction on Existing Roadbed	Decommission
Total	9.61		

Conclusion

Upon review of the transportation system, the team determined that the proposed transportation system is acceptable and meets Forest Planning guidance.

In addition to the existing system roads, The Iron Springs TAP analysis found that 9.61 miles of temporary routes will be required to allow timber to be hauled out of the project area.

Temporary routes were determined to have short term impacts on the area. All temporary routes are connected to either administrative or open routes. As noted in the table above, all temporary routes will be properly prepared for drainage, seeded and closed at the end of the project.

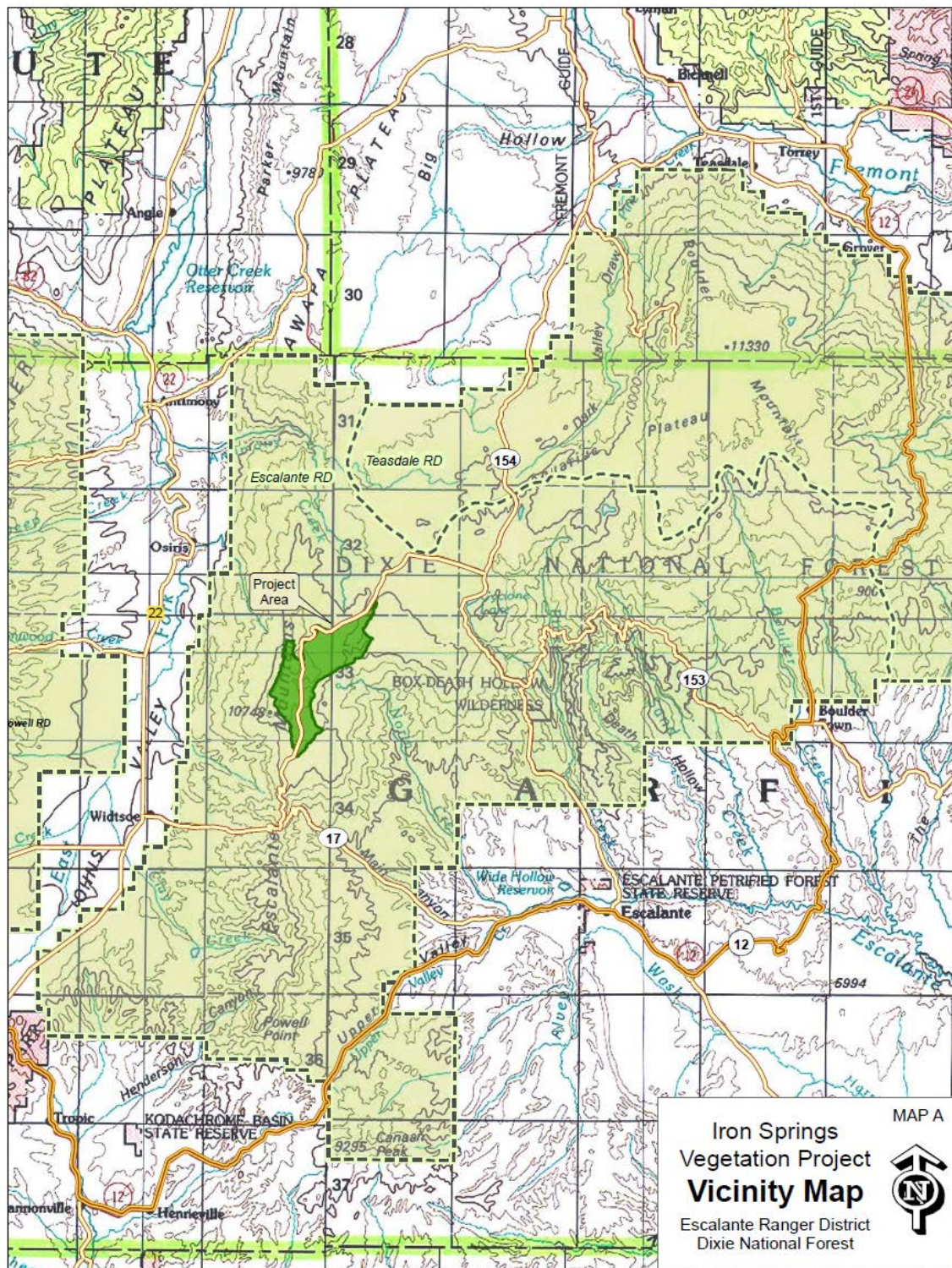
Temporary roads will be located as shown on the project map and closed as specified in Table 2.

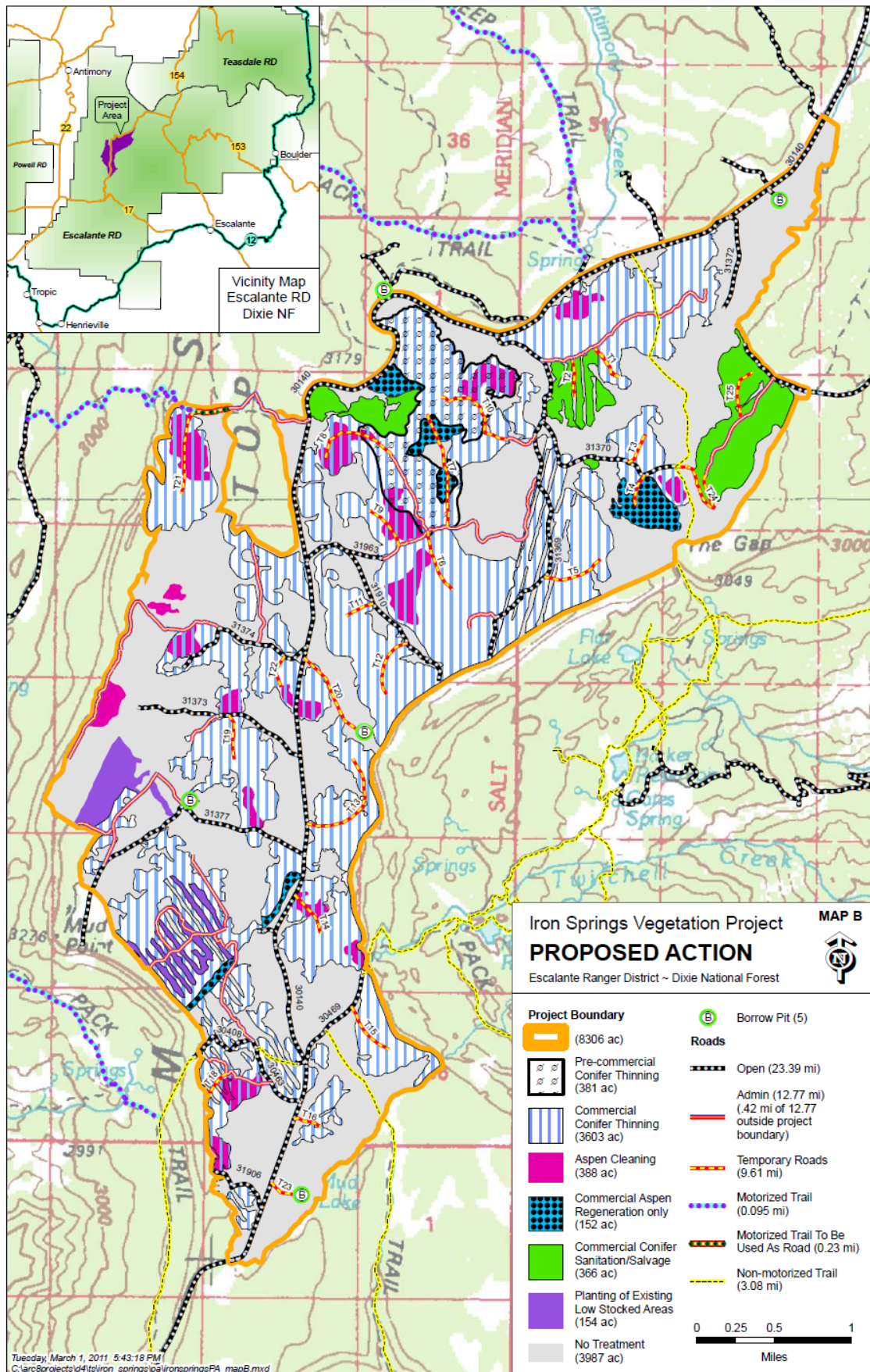
The Iron Springs project will primarily utilize existing system routes and will not change the classification on any of the routes. The primary route system in the area will be benefited greatly with the planned route maintenance. The relocation of route 31369 will change the character of the existing road from a muddy, boggy section that is difficult to travel without creating more damage, to a well-constructed sustainable route that is more easily traveled. This reroute will not increase the length 31369. The road density in the area after the project will remain below the Forest Plan guidance. The Iron Springs TAP is consistent with the 2009 Dixie MTP decision.

Appendices

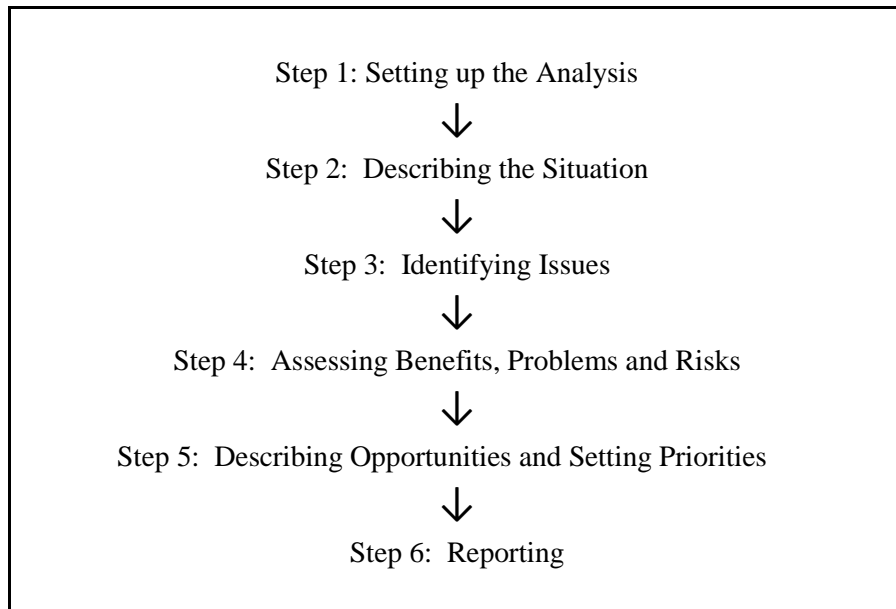
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Project Area Transportation Map





Travel Analysis Steps



Roads Analysis Questions

Transportation Analysis Questions

Ecosystem Functions and Processes (EF)

EF (2): To what degree do the presence, type, and location of roads increase the introduction and spread of exotic plant and animal species, insects, diseases, and parasites? What are the potential effects of such introductions to plant and animal species and ecosystem function in the area?

Because motor vehicles are known to transport and disperse weed seed along travel corridors, restricting motor vehicle access serves to limit the potential spread of noxious weeds. Creating and reopening roads disturbs the soil and creates a favorable seed bed increases potential for noxious weed establishment. Heavy equipment can harbor and transport noxious weed seeds from previous job sites. As a result, the risk of noxious weed establishment from road creation and reestablishment is expected to be moderately high.

Aquatic, Riparian Zone, and Water Quality (AQ)

AQ (1): How and where does the road system modify the surface and subsurface hydrology of the area?

Road 31369 has a section of road approximately 200 feet long that needs to be relocated. Relocating this section approximately 60 feet uphill will help the road to drain, this section of road is in a low spot and continues to rut and hold water. Existing section of road will be obliterated.

The new location will reduce sediment and chemical impact to areas with perennial or intermittent concentrated flow. Impacts from the new road location will be located in an area less critical to water resources. There may be some interference and concentration of overland flow crossing the road prism during storms and snowmelt runoff.

Soils in the new road location may become compacted and reduce infiltration along the road prism. If water is concentrated along the road prism there may be an increase in runoff rates and quantity. However, the slope in this area is low, reducing the potential for significant impacts to subsurface hydrology.

AQ (8): How and where does the road system affect wetlands?

Road 31369 has a section of road approximately 200 feet long that needs to be relocated. Relocating this section approximately 60 feet uphill will help the road to drain, this section of road is in a low spot and continues to rut and hold water. Existing section of road will be obliterated.

Terrestrial Wildlife (TW)

TW (1): What are the direct affects of the road system on terrestrial species habitat?

The presence of roads directly affects habitat for many species. Habitat loss, fragmentation, creation of corridors, and creation of edges are direct effects of roads on terrestrial species habitat. The degree of these effects depends on road density, the intensity of road use, road location, types of habitats traversed by roads, and the status of the populations in the area.

In addition to disturbance caused by traffic, roads remove about five acres of productive habitat per mile if the surface is such that vegetation is prohibited from growing (Leege 1984). Currently there are approximately 35.75 miles of open roads within the project area and 9.61 miles of temporary routes that will be closed and rehabbed following activities. Habitat loss on National Forest system lands within the project area using two acres per mile (roads averaging 18 feet wide) would be approximately 72 acres.

Roads may function as travel corridors to predators into forest interiors, thereby increasing predation rates on nests of forest birds (Small and Hunter 1988, Schonewald-Cox and Buechner 1992, Askins 1994). For small mammals, habitats adjacent to roads may serve as dispersal corridors for certain species (e.g. meadow vole and pocket gopher), while presenting a barrier to movement for others (Frederick 1991). The width of the road appears to be the most important factor inhibiting small mammals. Roads greater than 30m wide (98 feet) are known to create movement barriers for white-footed mice (*Peromyscus leucopus*) and eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*; Oxley et al. 1974). Mortality from traffic along roads increases with increasing road width, traffic volume and speed. Roadways may also prevent gene flow between populations (Oxley et al. 1974).

Most of the road mileage existing in the project area is within aspen and mixed conifer habitats. Road densities in the project area are well under the Forest Plan guidance of 2.0 miles of road per square mile of habitat and are currently 1.8 miles per square mile of habitat based upon Motorized Travel Planning ROD. Habitat in this area is effective for big game and will increase even more once all roads have been closed from MTP implementation.

Habitats for deer and elk are impacted by roads. The Iron Springs Vegetation Improvement project area is considered substantial elk calving and summer habitat and mule deer summer range.

TW (4): How does the road system directly affect unique communities or special features in the area?

Special features or unique habitats that can be directly affected by road systems include wet meadows and riparian areas. Riparian areas are probably the most likely habitat to be impacted, and results in the most adverse effects. Roads that cross within or on the edge of riparian habitats reduce the size of the riparian habitat, fragment the habitat, and reduce the effectiveness of the habitat. Habitat effectiveness can be reduced due to the traffic on the road that, when driven upon, disrupts wildlife. This disruption can be by noise (see the above section on the effects of noise on wildlife), and the physical presence of the vehicle. In addition, disturbance occurs when the vehicle stops and people get out and walk around, shoot guns, throw rocks, build campfires, or any other number of activities.

The presence of a road in an area invites more use off the road. For example, meadows are particularly vulnerable to use off road because they are so inviting for camping and are easily accessible. They are open, usually scenic, and often have trees along the edges that are pleasing places to camp. In general, camping takes up more habitat than a road. The period in which disturbances can occur from camping is extended to days, nights, and sometimes weeks. If this occurs during a critical time period for a particular species using that area, it can lead to loss of young, forcing an animal to forage in another area which may not provide comparable nutrition or amount of forage, or abandoning young (Call 1979). Soil compaction from repeated camping can reduce vegetation, create conditions where non-native vegetation will grow more easily, and result in a reduced biodiversity and vegetative cover. In addition, meadows are also areas where un-authorized ATV and vehicle use occurs often from hunters. This increases animal vulnerability during the hunting season and decreases wildlife use of meadows during other times of the year. These areas can become less suitable to wildlife, even during periods when visitors are not present. Therefore, the period of disturbance can extend beyond when people are present.

Disturbance to nesting birds can lead to interrupted incubation, possible nest abandonment, missed feedings of young with subsequent mortality of young (Call 1979 in Frederick 1991). For bald eagles and other raptors, vulnerability to human disturbance is greatest during egg-laying, incubation, and when the eaglets are newly hatched (Mathisen 1968, Reynolds 1992). Prairie falcons may abandon nests when motorcycles and automobiles create noise within 100-800 m (109-875 yd) of an active eyrie (Berry 1980).

Economics (EC)

EC (1): How does the road system affect the agency's direct costs and revenues? What, if any, changes in the road system will increase net revenue to the agency by reducing cost, increasing revenue, or both?

Currently the roads in the area are Maintenance Level (ML) I, ML II, and ML III. Other than the one road classified as a ML III (Forest Road 140), the majority of existing routes currently do not

require a great deal of maintenance. The roads have no significant impact on the agencies direct costs as maintenance schedules in the area are minimal. Decreasing the total mileage in the area and re-routing portions of some roads outside of riparian areas will reduce deferred maintenance. Maintenance on the roads in the area primarily consists of drainage control and light blading.

Forest Road (FR) 140 is the only maintenance level 3 road in the project area. Designated by the State of Utah as a Scenic Backway, FR 140 is to be maintained so that it is suitable for passenger car travel. This road receives maintenance in the form of blading and drainage control on average every 2 years.

Minerals Management (MM)

MM (1): How does the road system affect access to locatable, leasable, and salable minerals?

No substantial impact.

Range Management (RM)

RM (1): How does the road system affect access to range allotments?

No Change. Range Permittees are allowed cross country and/or motorized access to do official business within their allotments in the project area under the provisions of their permit.

Water Production (WP)

WP (1): How does the road system affect access, constructing, maintaining, monitoring, and operating water diversions, impoundments, and distribution canals or pipes?

Other than range stock ponds, the current road system does not serve as the primary access to any water diversions, impoundments, or distribution canals or pipes. There is one non-functioning diversion canal locally known as the Erie Canal off of FR 31369. Designed to divert water from the Sevier River Basin to the Escalante Basin, due to a water rights court case it is not used.

WP (2): How does road development and use affect water quality in municipal watersheds?

The eastern portion of the Iron Springs project area is located in the headwaters of the North Creek drainage. North Creek serves as one of the primary sources of water for the Wide Hollow Reservoir and subsequently irrigation water for the town of Escalante. Escalante's culinary water comes from another drainage not located in the project area.

WP (3) how does the road system affect access to hydroelectric power generation?

There is no hydroelectric power generation in this area. It will have no effect.

Special Forest Products (SP)

SP (1): How does the road system affect access for collecting special forest products?

The proposed project actions pose no substantial change to affect special forest products.

General Public Transportation (GT)

GT (1): How does the road system connect to public roads and provide primary access to communities?

The main road through the area, FR 140 is the only maintenance level 3 road in the project area. Designated as a Utah Scenic Backway, this road system connects Forest Highway 17 with FR 154. While the routes in the area provide indirect access to communities, the routes do not provide primary access to any communities or private properties.

GT (2): How does the road system connect large blocks of land in other ownership to public roads (ad hoc communities, subdivisions, in holdings and so on)?

The road system does not connect any land ownership with public roads. All forest service roads in the project area are local routes.

GT (3): How does the road system affect managing roads with shared ownership or with limited jurisdiction? (RS 2477, cost-share, prescriptive rights, FLPMA easements, FRTA easements, DOT easements)

No effect.

GT (4): How does the road system address the safety of road users?

The roads in the area are open for mixed use. While the likelihood of an accident is rare, the accident may prove to be fatal. Adequate signing is posted and there appears to be no sight distance issues with the travelable speeds in the area. Much of the traffic is from recreation use, including camping hiking, biking, hunting and ATV's.

Administrative Use (AU)

AU (1): How does the road system affect access needed for research, inventory, and monitoring?

The proposed temporary roads will be decommissioned and obliterated following the project, and so will have no long-term effect. The rerouted permanent road proposed will maintain motorized access to National Forest System lands, and may be used, as needed, for research, inventory, and monitoring activities.

AU (2): How does the road system affect investigative or enforcement activities?

The proposed temporary roads will be decommissioned and obliterated following the project, and so will have no long-term effect. The proposed permanent road reroute will maintain motorized access to National Forest System lands, and may be used, as needed, for investigative or enforcement activities.

Protection (PT)

PT (1): How does the road system affect fuels management?

Fuel treatment areas can be more easily accessed if there are roads near. Without roads access becomes difficult and may preclude the implementation of certain fuels projects. Biomass can not be removed without roads in close proximity. We tend to treat areas with at least some road access. In addition roads help break up the continuity of the fuels, act as a fuel break, anchor point and/or control line. As the density of roads decrease the costs of fuel treatments increase.

PT (2): How does the road system affect the capacity of the Forest Service and cooperators to suppress wildfires?

The existing road system allows us to access certain areas of the forest. This access allows us to have quicker responses and allows us to bring engines with water close to the fires. Fire engines (application of water) have faster line building rates (production capability) as compared to hand crews without water. This quick response and the ability to bring water close to a fire helps us to keep wildland fires small and keep suppression costs down.

Over the last 50 years or so about half of the fires on this district were caused by humans and the other half caused by lightening. The great majority of human starts have occurred near or adjacent to roads. With many fewer roads on our district, we would probably have fewer human caused wildland fires.

PT (3): How does the road system affect risk to firefighters and to public safety?

There is some element of risk in everything we do and driving is no exception. Driving, when viewed from the number of fatalities, is the most dangerous activity that firefighters take part in. Firefighters and the public are going to drive a certain amount each year. Having more or less

miles of roads will not increase or decrease the risk from driving. Another aspect would include roads built to a certain specified standard provide ingress/egress to the public and firefighters. This allows suppression resources to arrive and take actions on the fire reducing the probability of the fire becoming larger, more expensive and more potentially dangerous. In the event of the public and/or firefighting resources needing to escape/evacuate and adequately built road would help facilitate this in a safer and more efficient manner.

PT (4): How does the road system contribute to airborne dust emissions resulting in reduced visibility and human health concerns?

The road system is the number one source of airborne dust generated on the Escalante Ranger District. For the most part this airborne dust is a nuisance and, in the quantities that humans take in, are not a known health hazard. Fugitive dust is one of many contributors to air borne emissions that impact visual quality. This dust comes from various sources, roads, trails, road maintenance, gravel crushing and other non vegetated areas that are exposed to the wind.

Unroaded Recreation (UR)

UR (1): Is there now or will there be in the future excess supply or excess demand for unroaded recreation opportunities?

The proposed temporary roads will be decommissioned and obliterated following the project, and so will have no long-term effect. The proposal for rerouting a permanent route will maintain existing access in a more sustainable manner a “Semi-Primitive Motorized” ROS-designated setting. Within the project area, there is no excess supply or demand for unroaded recreation opportunities. This proposal will not affect existing unroaded recreation opportunities on the Escalante Ranger District.

UR (2): Is developing new roads into unroaded areas, decommissioning of existing roads, or changing the maintenance of existing roads causing substantial changes in the quantity, quality, or type of unroaded recreation opportunities?

The proposed temporary roads will be decommissioned and obliterated following the project, and so will have no long-term effect. The proposal for rerouting a permanent route will maintain existing access in a more sustainable manner in a “Semi-Primitive Motorized” ROS-designated setting.

UR (3): What are the adverse effects of noise and other disturbances caused by developing, using, and maintaining roads, on the quantity, quality, and type of unroaded recreation opportunities?

Lands within the Iron Springs project area have historically been managed for “semi-primitive” motorized recreation opportunities. The area is popular with OHV users. The inclusion of the proposed re-route to the system does not result in any additional intrusion of noise into new areas that will affect the quantity, quality, or type of unroaded recreation opportunities.

Road-Related Recreation (RR)

RR (1): Is there nor or will there be in the future excess supply or excess demand for roaded recreation opportunities?

All parts of the project area meet current demands for roaded recreation. The demand for roaded recreation opportunities is rising as motorized recreation continues to increase in popularity. There may be a perceived decrease in the supply of roaded recreation opportunities as the DNF Motorized Travel Plan is implemented, with the closure of redundant routes. The analysis completed for the MTP shows that roaded recreation opportunities are adequately provided for.

RR (2): Is developing new roads into unroaded areas, decommissioning of existing roads, or changing maintenance of existing roads causing substantial changes in the quantity, quality, or type of roaded recreation opportunities?

No.

RR (3): What are the adverse effects of noise and other disturbances caused by constructing, using, and maintaining roads on the quantity, quality, or type of roaded recreation opportunities?

Lands within the Iron Springs project area have historically been managed for “semi-primitive” motorized recreation opportunities. The area is popular with OHV users. The inclusion of the proposed re-route to the system does not result in any additional intrusion of noise into new areas that will affect the quantity, quality, or type of roaded recreation opportunities. Recreation resources, including those accessed by the proposed permanent re-route, are typically accessed by motor vehicles. The proposed temporary roads will intrude into an area managed for “semi-primitive” recreation opportunities. The noise associated with these routes would have a temporary, short-term adverse effect on non-motorized users, but the project area is not typically used by non-motorized recreationists.

RR (4): Who participates in roaded recreation in the areas affected by road constructing, changes in road maintenance, or road decommissioning?

Motorists making use of roads for dispersed recreation of all types, primarily via OHVs, including access to dispersed camping areas.

RR (5): What are these participants’ attachments to the area, how strong are their feelings, and are alternative opportunities and locations available?

General access to areas on the Forest for the purpose of recreation is extremely important to almost all users of the project area. There are plentiful opportunities for roaded recreation in the project area and across most of the Escalante Ranger District.

RR (6): How does the road system affect the Scenic Integrity Objective, SIO(s)?

In the foreground of Road 140 (Griffin Top Road) and within the 9A management area, SIO would remain high. The Griffin Point trail would not be affected as there would not be any **management activity adjacent to this trail**. In the foreground of the Grass Lakes ATV trail the SIO is high. Timber harvest will only be visible for a short distance along this trail. Additionally whole tree harvesting will prevent negative impacts from slash accumulation along this visual corridor. The Scenic Integrity level will remain high. Within the 2B, 6A, and 9A management areas the SIO is moderate. The resulting SIO would be moderate or higher. Within the 7A management areas the SIO is low. The resulting scenic integrity level would be low or higher.

Social Issues (SI)

SI (1): What are people's perceived needs and values for roads? How does road management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for roads?

The majority of Forest users have come to rely on the presence of maintained roads to access those areas of the forest necessary for recreation and/or commercial enterprise. Segments of recreation users want access to popular trailheads, but then want no roads in certain areas to participate in unroaded recreation activities. Most also recognize the necessary balance between providing roads to provide access to areas needed for recreation, sightseeing, or commercial use, and the need for maintaining opportunities for solitude and scenic beauty, where appropriate.

SI (2): What are people's perceived needs and values for access? How does road management affect people's dependence on, need for, and desire for access?

Access is an extremely important factor that is common to a vast majority of Forest users. However, not all users see a need for universal motorized access.

SI (3): How does the road system affect access to paleontological, archaeological, and historical sites?

No affects.

SI (4): How is community social and economic health affected by road management (for example, lifestyles, businesses, tourism industry, infrastructure maintenance)?

The social and economic health of communities relies on the presence of maintained roads to access those areas of the forest necessary for recreation and/or commercial enterprise. However, certain segments of recreation users want limited motorized access to popular trailheads, but then want no roads in certain areas to participate in unroaded recreation activities in order to realize the benefits of healthful outdoor activity, while others depend on road access to most areas of the Forest for the economic benefit of tourism, and the business benefits of natural resource-based industry. Most also recognize the necessary balance between providing roads to provide access

to areas needed for recreation, sightseeing, or commercial use, and the need for maintaining opportunities for solitude and scenic beauty, where appropriate.

SI (5): What is the perceived social and economic dependency of a community on an unroaded area versus the value of that unroaded area for its intrinsic existence and symbolic values?

No permanent routes are being proposed in unroaded areas. The social and economic health of communities relies on the presence of maintained roads to access those areas of the forest necessary for recreation and/or commercial enterprise, including a high reliance on access to trailheads for non-motorized recreation activities. Recreation users want limited motorized access to popular trailheads, but then want no roads in certain areas to participate in unroaded recreation activities in order to realize the benefits of healthful outdoor activity. However, even proponents of unroaded areas depend on road access to those areas of the Forest where they can realize the economic benefit of tourism associated with non-motorized use of unroaded areas. Most users recognize the necessary balance between providing roads to provide access to areas needed for recreation, sightseeing, or commercial use, and the need for maintaining opportunities for solitude and scenic beauty, where appropriate.

SI (6): How does road management affect wilderness attributes, including natural integrity, natural appearance, opportunities for solitude, and opportunities for primitive recreation?

The proposal for the permanent re-route has no effect on wilderness attributes, since that part of the project area is not unroaded and does not have a wilderness character. Certain segments of recreation users want limited motorized access to popular trailheads, but then want no roads in certain areas to participate in unroaded recreation activities in order to realize the benefits of healthful outdoor activity. The proposed temporary routes into an area managed for “semi-primitive” motorized recreation will have a temporary, short term adverse affect on the natural appearance and opportunities for solitude. However, this area is not managed for a “primitive” recreation experience. Most users recognize the necessary balance between providing roads to provide access to areas needed for recreation, sightseeing, or commercial use, and the need for maintaining opportunities for solitude and scenic beauty, where appropriate.

SI (7): What are traditional uses of animal and plant species in the area of analysis?

The area is used for personal use firewood cutting. Deer and Elk Hunting take place in the fall of each year by a variety of people using either bows and arrows or rifles.

SI (8): How does road management affect people’s “sense of place”?

With regard to the social concept of a “sense of place,” people purposefully choose settings for recreational and other activities with the expectation that their intended and “hoped-for” experience will be achieved. The management of roads allows for the provision of a diverse spectrum of activity and setting opportunities, ranging from highly developed to primitive, from which people may choose. National Forest lands within the Dixie are managed to provide the

full range of these settings and opportunities, including primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized and roaded recreation. Permanent road management in the project area, which is managed for “semi-primitive motorized” recreation opportunities, will maintain one’s ability to access their own preferred setting that provides them with a “sense of place,” which is something that varies from one individual to the next. Temporary roads will have a temporary, short term adverse impact on the ability of a recreation user who seeks a “primitive” recreation experience and/or an opportunity for solitude to establish his/her sense of place, but the project area is in a “semi-primitive recreation opportunity” management area, and is not managed for a “primitive” experience.

Civil Rights and Environmental Justice (CR)

CR (1): How does the road system, or its management, affect certain groups of people (minority, ethnic, cultural, racial, disabled, and low-income groups)?

The current road system, along with proposed permanent re-route, allows access by the public. No group is denied access on motorized routes of travel that are classified as “Open to All”. The proposed re-route improves accessibility for those with disabilities, and provides a more sustainable route that is less damaging to valuable wetlands, is easier to maintain, and is easier for all to travel.