

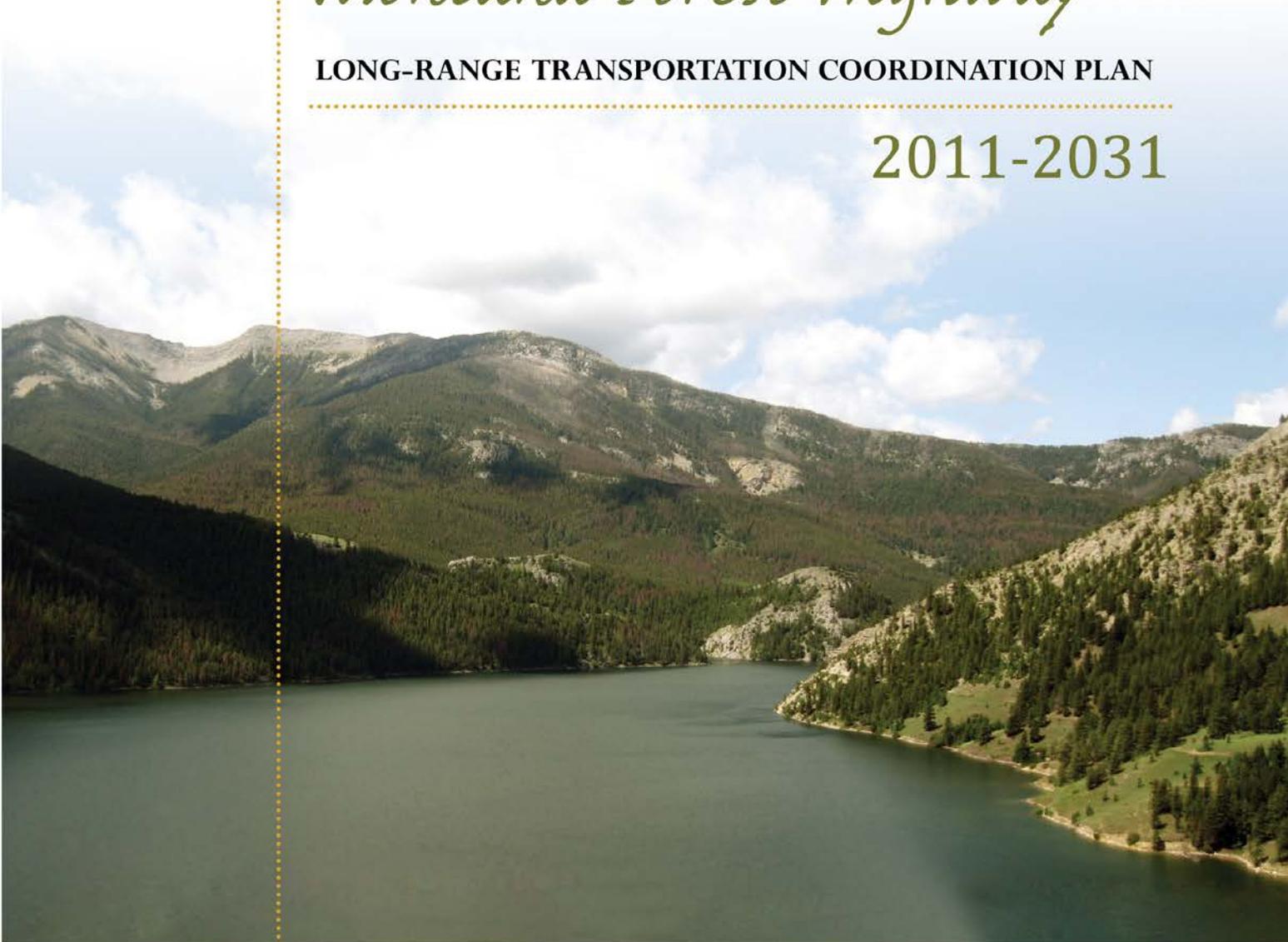
Draft: August 17, 2011

A transportation policy plan to coordinate the
Montana Forest Highway program into the future.

Montana Forest Highway

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PLAN

2011-2031



Prepared by the Western Federal Lands
Highway Division in partnership with U.S.
Forest Service & Montana Department of
Transportation and in Cooperation with
the Montana Association Of Counties.



Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADT	average daily traffic
CAPS	Crucial Areas Planning System
CCAC	Montana Governor's Climate Change Advisory Committee
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CHSP	Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan
Coordination Plan	Montana Forest Highway Transportation Coordination Plan
EA	environmental assessment
EIS	environmental impact statement
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FR	Federal Register
FWP	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
GAO	US Government Accountability Office
LCIC	Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center
MACo	Montana Association of Counties
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MMBF	million board feet
MPO	metropolitan planning organization
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFS	National Forest System
PIR	Project Identification Report
PMS	Pavement Management System
RSA	road safety audit
RTP	regional transportation plan
SAFETEA-LU	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SMS	Safety Management System
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TIP	transportation improvement program
USC	United States Code
USDI	US Department of the Interior
USFS	US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
WFLHD	FHWA, Western Federal Lands Highway Division
Y2Y	Yellowstone to Yukon

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1 Introduction

This 20-year transportation coordination plan describes the Montana Forest Highway Program and identifies the long-range goals for the program. This plan describes the process for coordinated planning and decision-making among the agencies responsible for the Montana Forest Highway Program. Those agencies are:

- Montana Department of Transportation (MDT);
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, Region 1 (USFS); and
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Western Federal Lands (WFLHD).

The Montana Forest Highway Program is administered by WFLHD in partnership with the USFS and MDT, together called the Tri-Agency. The Montana Association of Counties (MACo) attends Tri-Agency meetings and is involved in the Montana Forest Highway Program discussions, but does not have decision-making authority. Roles of the Tri-Agency members are defined in Appendix C, Roles of the Partner Agencies.

This Montana Forest Highway Long-Range Transportation Coordination Plan (Coordination Plan) is intended to help the Tri-Agency make investment decisions for planning, multi-modal alternatives, transportation enhancements, safety management, preservation, and construction on Forest Highways in Montana. Because funds are limited, it is essential to assess needs, set priorities, and efficiently manage and leverage funds from a variety of sources to meet transportation needs. This Coordination Plan provides a 20-year vision and mission for the Montana Forest Highway Program, as well as goals, a funding and investment strategy, criteria, and guidance—all of which are to be used to select projects that will receive Montana Forest Highway Program funding.

Another purpose of this document is to help transportation planners, transportation professionals, forest professionals, community representatives, and citizens who have an interest in improving Forest Highways understand the Forest Highway Program, thereby helping them to understand the types of projects eligible for program funding as well as how to participate in the planning and decision-making processes.

The Tri-Agency drafted this Coordination Plan. The plan was then made available for review and comment by other agencies and the public. Based upon input received during the comment period, this Coordination Plan was revised and finalized. However, this plan is intended to be a “living” document and, as such, will be reviewed and updated periodically (such as when new legislation is enacted) to remain current and relevant to the Montana Forest Highway Program.

1.1 What Are Forest Highways?

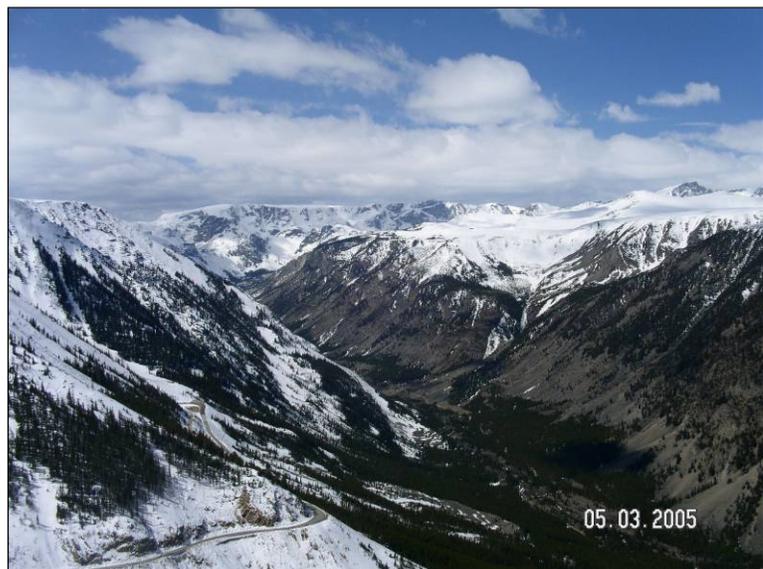
A “Forest Highway” is a forest road under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel. A total of approximately 31,200 miles of roadway are designated as Forest Highways in the United States. In general, Forest Highways must:

- be within or adjacent to National Forest System (NFS) lands;
- be necessary for access to protect, administer, utilize, and develop National Forest resources;
- be open to public travel; and
- provide a connection to other transportation systems (such as public roads, shipping points, etc.).

Forest Highways are a subset of Montana’s overall road system. They comprise approximately 1,527 miles of roadway in Montana, ranging from single-lane rural roads to main arterial state highways. Figure 1, Montana Forest Highways, shows the designated Forest Highways in Montana, as of 2009. A list of Montana’s Forest Highways is contained in Appendix A. The list of designated Forest Highways is not fixed. Routes can be added or removed at any time. Routes are designated by the WFLHD Division Engineer with concurrence from the USFS and state department of transportation. Further information regarding Forest Highway designation is provided in Appendix B – Forest Highway Background.

A Forest Highway is managed by a public authority other than FHWA. In Montana, Forest Highways are managed by MDT, the USFS, or a local (county) government. A Forest Highway may comprise several segments, each managed by a different authority, and a Forest Highway project may receive funding from several sources. Figure 1 indicates which public authorities have jurisdiction over the Forest Highways in Montana.

Examples of Forest Highways in Montana include roads that cross the Rocky Mountains (like the portion of US Highway 93 from Whitefish to Eureka) and others that provide links to remote communities (like portions of Forest Highway 61 to Polebridge). Forest Highways also provide access to popular recreation areas, such as the Big Sky ski area and Yellowstone National Park, which are accessed via the Beartooth Highway (US Highway 212).



Beartooth Highway in the Gallatin National Forest

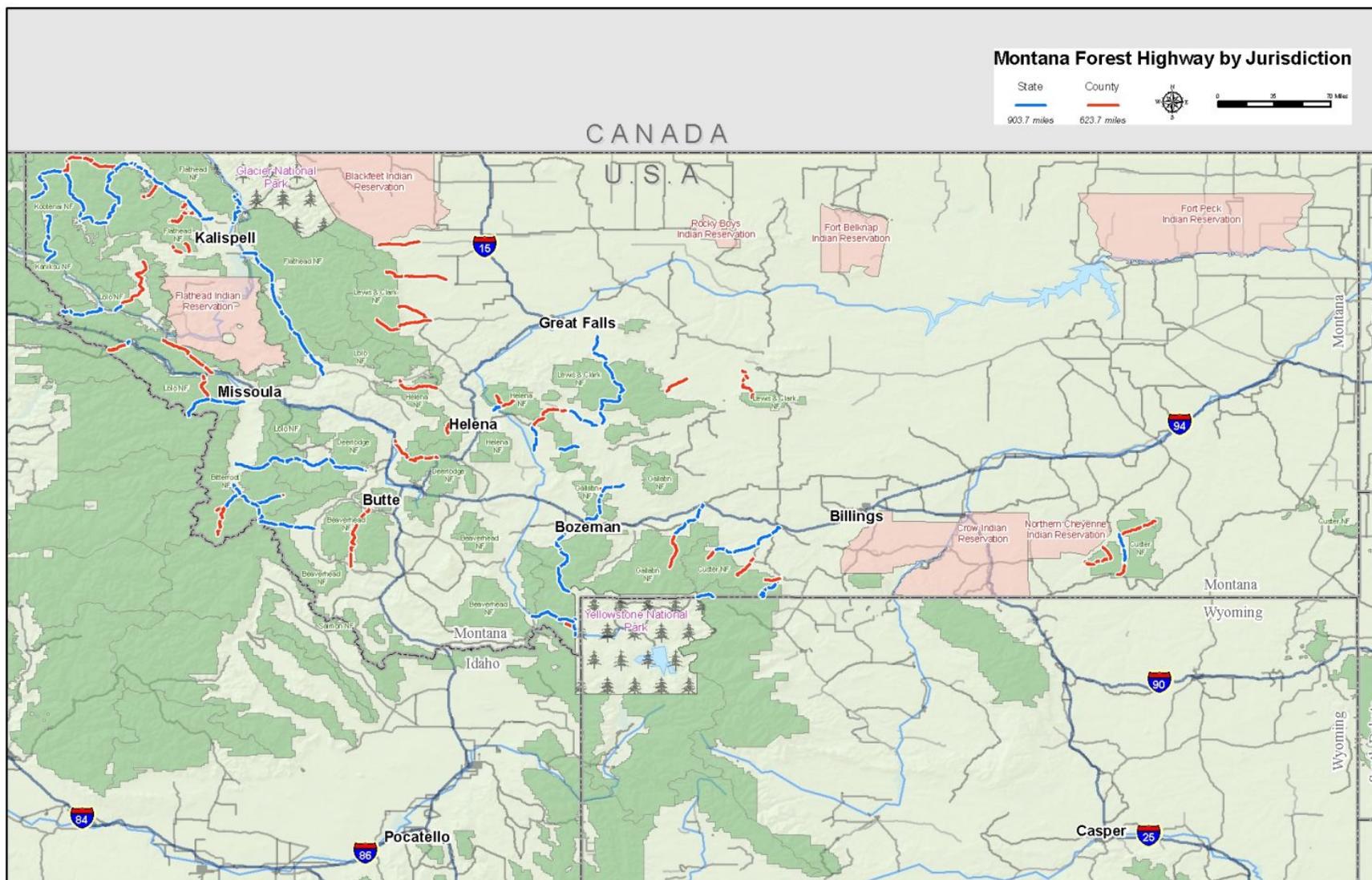


Figure 1. Montana Forest Highways by Jurisdiction

1.2 Why Are Forest Highways Important?

Forest Highways derive their importance from the National Forest System (NFS) lands to which they provide access. Forest Reserves, the precursors to today's National Forests, were established in 1891 through the National Forest Reserve Act. Through that act, forested lands could be kept in public ownership and managed for the good of all people, including future generations. With the establishment of the USFS in 1905, it was the first Chief Forester, Gifford Pinchot, who stated that the purpose of the National Forests is to provide the "greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." Pinchot's conservation philosophy is echoed in today's USFS mission, to "sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."



Beartooth Mountains, Gallatin National Forest

Providing access to NFS lands is integral to fulfilling the USFS mission. Accessing those lands is part of our heritage, our culture, and our economy. We access NFS lands for recreation, resource extraction, scientific research, education, and numerous other activities. People appreciate and have concern for their NFS lands when they can reach them, spend time in them, and enjoy them.

In addition, population growth and continuing human development are increasing the demand for access to NFS lands. More people are living closer to NFS and other federal lands as urban and suburban development expands. In Montana, Forest Highways are particularly important where approximately 18.2 percent of all the land is NFS lands. Approximately 17 million acres of NFS lands are within Montana's boundaries (USFS 2009).

1.3 What Is the Montana Forest Highway Program?

The Montana Forest Highway Program addresses the needs for safe and adequate transportation access to and through NFS lands for visitors, recreationists, resource users, and others that are not specifically addressed by other transportation programs. It provides funding and technical assistance to resurface, restore, rehabilitate, or reconstruct designated public roads that provide access to or are within NFS lands. Nationally, 41 states have Forest Highway Programs. Montana has approximately 1,527 miles of designated Forest Highways.

A reliable source of funding has not always been available to Forest Highways. Although Forest Highways were first defined in the Federal Highway Act of 1921, funding needed to develop and maintain the roads was small and inconsistent because selection for funding was based on the extent to which the roads were “of primary importance to the States, Counties, or communities... and on the Federal-Aid System.” Because Forest Highways tended to be low-volume roads, they rarely ranked high using that criterion. Passage of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act in 1978 and its amendment in 1982 established the current Forest Highway Program, providing a specific funding source for Forest Highways so they no longer had to compete against state routes for funds. The legislation resulted in a consistent and reliable source of funding for the development and improvement of Forest Highways.

Typically, Forest Highway funding is provided for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, or improvement of designated Forest Highways, including bridges. Additionally, funds can be used to pay for any transportation project authorized in Title 23 of the United States Code (USC) such as transit facilities. See Appendix D.

Through the federal tax on gasoline, the Montana Forest Highway Program provides approximately \$11 million of federal transportation funding to Montana each year. The Forest Highway funding is in addition to the approximately \$333 million of annual federal funding provided to MDT for transportation projects in the state.



MT Forest Highway 77, Benchmark Road

Projects funded by the Montana Forest Highway Program occur on Forest Highways under various jurisdictions. Figure 2 shows Montana Forest Highway projects that were completed between 1983 and 2009. By comparing Figures 1 and 2, one can see that some projects were done entirely on MDT highways, others on county or USFS roads, and others on roads under the jurisdiction of more than one agency.

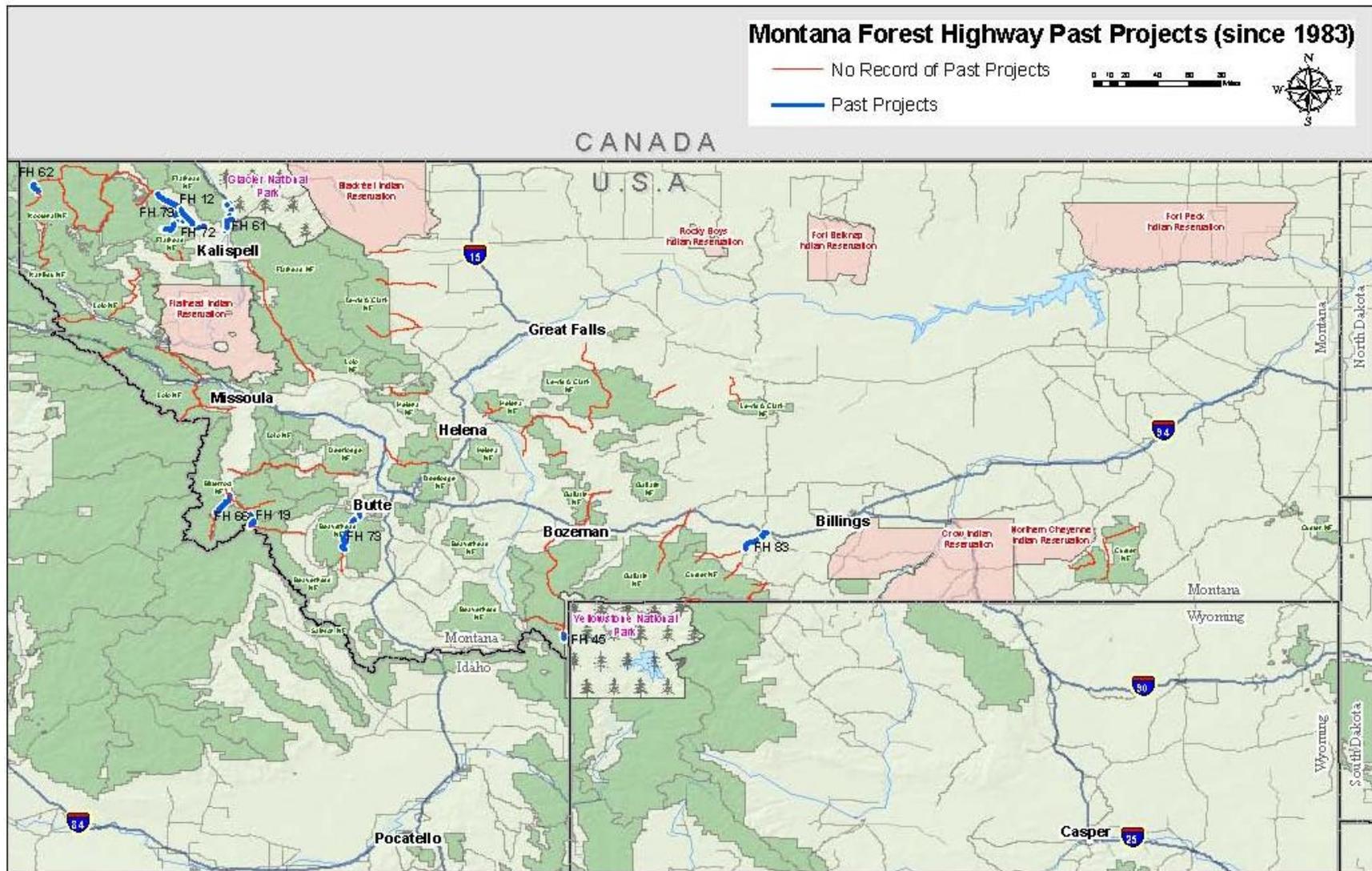


Figure 2. Montana Forest Highways Past Projects (1983-2009)

1.4 Why Do We Need Coordinated Transportation Planning?

The Forest Highway Program requires transportation planning that is consistent with state and local transportation planning processes, and that clearly defines and offers opportunities for public input. The main objectives of such a planning process are:

- to develop and maintain a coordinated, “seamless” transportation system for public use, even though various segments of the system are under different jurisdictions;
- to help ensure that the most-needed projects receive funding and are implemented, so that the infrastructure remains in place to access Montana’s NFS resources and communities; and
- to lay the foundation for streamlined environmental review.

Residents and visitors in Montana want to get to their destinations safely and experience a quality natural environment when they arrive. To provide appropriate access to NFS lands, planners and decision-makers must consider a complex balance among transportation effectiveness, human safety, and environmental care. The Tri-Agency partners need to work together to effectively manage and implement the Montana Forest Highway Program and to wisely invest Forest Highway Program funds.

As noted in Section 1.1, roads designated as Forest Highways may be under the jurisdiction of one or more agencies, and they serve multiple purposes and a variety of users. Therefore, Forest Highway projects need to address multiple objectives. Limited funding and increased use of the Forest Highway transportation system contribute additional challenges to Forest Highway Program planning. The potential environmental effects of Forest Highway projects also need to be considered. Coordination among the Tri-Agency partners, as well as environmental resource and permitting agencies and the public, is required to implement projects efficiently and effectively, while addressing the vision, mission, and goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program.

Some general requirements for coordinated Forest Highway planning are set forth in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 660, Subpart A – Forest Highways, which is provided in Appendix D of this document. Additional requirements are listed in Title 23 of the United States Code (23 USC), which is the federal surface transportation act. ¹ Text of the statewide transportation planning requirements of Subsections 135 and 204 of 23 USC are provided in Appendix E of this document.

¹ As of this writing, the current federal surface transportation act is the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was signed into law on August 10, 2005. SAFETEA-LU authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period 2005-2009. SAFETEA-LU is codified in 23 USC. At the writing of this draft, Congress extended SAFETEA-LU to September 30, 2011.

In 23 USC 135 (statewide planning for highways), the language related to the transportation planning requires each State to consider the concerns of Indian tribal governments and federal land management agencies that have jurisdiction over land within the boundaries of the State. In accordance with 23 USC 204, Forest Highway planning should follow a process consistent with the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) processes to ensure coordination for all public roads in a State. Also, Forest Highway planning requires consultation with Federal land management agencies, as described in Section 3.3.1.

1.5 What Is Included in this Plan?

The Coordination Plan is written for planners and decision-makers in the partner agencies. It is also written for others: planners, transportation professionals, forest professionals, community representatives, and citizens who have an interest in improving Forest Highways.

This Coordination Plan is presented in several chapters. The major substance of the plan is contained in Chapters 2 through 6.

Chapter 2 presents the 20-year vision, mission, and goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program, along with background information and guidance to help the Tri-Agency achieve those goals.

Chapter 3, Agency and Planning Coordination, describes the long-range plans that are particularly related to Montana's Forest Highways, including USFS National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans ("Forest Plans"), USFS motor vehicle use maps, MDT's long-range transportation plan, and county transportation system plans. Chapter 3 also describes other factors and regulations that influence Forest Highway planning, including the federal laws that require planning coordination among the Tri-Agency partners.

Chapter 4 summarizes the process for selecting projects that will receive Forest Highway Program funds and describes the funding and investment strategy.

Chapter 5, Condition of the Network, presents data about Montana's Forest Highways that were gathered from existing management systems. All roads funded under the Forest Highway Program are required to have management systems in place to make investment decisions. Management systems are focused on the existing conditions and predicted future conditions of pavement, bridges, safety, and congestion.

Chapter 6, Future Planning Activities, outlines future actions that the Tri-Agency will undertake to implement and update this Coordination Plan.

Chapters 7 and 8 contain information to help readers better utilize this Coordination Plan and to learn more about the planning process and Tri-Agency. Chapter 7 contains definitions of terms used in this Coordination Plan. Chapter 8 includes a list of the references used to prepare this plan.

2 Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program

The Tri-Agency Vision for the Montana Forest Highway Program defines the desired or intended future state of the Program in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction set within the legislation establishing the program. The Vision is a long-term view, describing how the Tri-Agency would like the world in which it operates to be.

The Mission of the Montana Forest Highway Program defines the fundamental purpose of the Program, succinctly describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision. The Mission can last for many years or for the life of the Program, or it may change as new legislation is passed.

Goals translate the Mission and Vision into an action plan. The Goals are specific and realistic statements of intended future results.

2.1 20-Year Vision and Mission

The Tri-Agency developed a 20-year vision and mission for the program, as well as a set of specific goals, that are intended to guide long-range planning and funding priorities for Forest Highway projects in Montana.

Montana Forest Highway Program 20-Year Vision:

Montana will have a safe and efficient public road transportation system to and within Montana's National Forest System lands that balances USFS management objectives with the transportation needs of visitors, recreationists, and resource users.

Montana Forest Highway Program 20-Year Mission:

The Montana Forest Highway Program will strive to meet USFS, community, and private goals to improve transportation access to Montana's National Forest System lands by providing funding, planning, design, and construction services while coordinating with federal, state, and local agencies and communities.

2.2 Goals

The goals are intended to guide the process for ranking and selecting projects for the Montana Forest Highway Program. (See Chapter 4 for a description of the project selection process.) The goals are based upon the project selection criteria established in 23 CFR 660.109 (which are listed in Section 4.2.2 of this Coordination Plan) but expand upon and refine those criteria to better address the particular needs of the Montana Forest Highway Program.

The Montana Forest Highway has five goals, which are discussed in more detail in the following sections. In evaluating and selecting projects, the Tri-Agency will consider all of the goals and try to balance the intent of each with the intent of the others.

The goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program are:

Safety: *Improve the safety of Forest Highways by identifying needs on a systematic basis and working with Forest Highway Program and other funding sources to address those needs.*

Preservation: *Preserve the Forest Highway infrastructure by working with other transportation partners to jointly and systematically identify needs and address them.*

Economic Development: *Enhance the economic health of local communities and the public value of the Forest Highway transportation system.*

Mobility: *Maintain or improve the ability to access National Forest System lands while considering travel time and multiple modes of transportation.*

Environmental Quality and Health: *Protect and/or enhance the natural environment when designing and constructing transportation facilities.*

These individual goal areas are not necessarily independent, but instead they can be interdependent. Addressing one goal can result in a secondary effect that addresses other goal areas. In addition, each goal will be accompanied by performance measures and quantifiable targets. The Tri-Agency will use those measures and targets to evaluate how well the Montana Forest Highway Program is achieving the goals. The targets are not presented in this Coordination Plan; they will be developed and presented in short-term strategic plans, which the Tri-Agency will produce every 3 to 5 years. While this Coordination Plan provides framework for Forest Highway Program coordination over 20 years, the short-term strategic plans can be more adaptable to changes in funding, needs, and policy.

The Tri-Agency has options available to help achieve each of the above goals. In addition to the general call for projects, the Tri-Agency may issue separate calls specific to certain types of

projects (such as safety projects) to encourage project sponsors to submit proposals for those types of projects. The Tri-Agency may also set aside a certain amount or percentage of Forest Highway Program funds for certain types of projects. Such set-asides may or may not be used in conjunction with separate calls for projects.

2.2.1 Safety

Providing travelers with a safe transportation system is a high priority of the Montana Forest Highway Program. Several processes and information sources, such as Safety Management Systems (SMS), crash data, and road safety audits (RSAs) will be used to identify safety needs and to evaluate and select safety projects. The Tri-Agency will also refer to MDT's Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) for additional guidance and information. This approach will provide the Tri-Agency with objective, quantifiable means to evaluate the safety needs on a project proposed for Forest Highway funding. More information on the CHSP is presented in Section 3.1.4. The CHSP may also help project proponents develop proposals for safety projects.

Safety Goal:

Improve the safety of Forest Highways by identifying safety needs on a systematic basis and working with Forest Highway Program and other funding sources to address those needs.

Safety Management Systems

SAFETEA-LU requires that SMS be developed and funded for all Federal Lands Highway Programs, including the Forest Highway Program. Implementing rules for the Forest Highway Program SMS are contained in 23 CFR 971.212. The full text of 23 CFR 971 is included in Appendix F of this Coordination Plan.

The federal lands SMS is a systematic process that will be used by the federal land management agencies and other project partners with the goal of reducing the number and severity of traffic accidents. The SMS is used so that all opportunities to improve roadway safety are identified, considered, implemented, and evaluated during all phases of transportation system planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation by providing information for selecting and implementing effective transportation safety strategies and projects. The language in 23 USC 204 states that the Tri-Agency shall utilize SMS to ensure that safety is considered and implemented, as appropriate, throughout the transportation planning and development process and in making project selection decisions under 23 USC 204.

This Coordination Plan proposes a Forest Highway SMS designed specifically for the unique nature of the Forest Highways. The proposed Forest Highway SMS will provide the Tri-Agency

with objective, quantifiable means to evaluate the safety needs on a project proposed for Forest Highway funding. This SMS will include the compilation and submission of crash data with project proposals and road safety audits.

Compilation and Submission of Crash Data with Project Proposals

Forest Highway project proposals will be accompanied by all available crash data. A summary for at least the past 5 years should be provided, although 7 to 10 years of crash data is preferred for low-volume roads. The crash data will be considered when project selections are made. Including documented crash histories in project proposals will ensure that the safety benefits of a proposed project are given appropriate consideration.

When ranking projects, the Tri-Agency will recognize, however, that complete and well-documented minor accident data may be lacking on some rural, low-volume routes. Such lack of data is largely because reporting of minor accidents is not required. The Montana Code Annotated 2007 requires immediate notice of more serious accidents: "The driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to or death of any person or property damage to an apparent extent of \$500 or more shall immediately by the quickest means of communication give notice of the accident to the local police department if the accident occurs within a municipality, otherwise to the office of the county sheriff or the nearest office of the highway patrol."

Road Safety Audits

A road safety audit (RSA) is a formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multi-disciplinary, audit team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users (FHWA 2008). An RSA is intended to answer two questions:

- What elements of the road may present a safety concern: to what extent, to which road users, and under what circumstances?
- What opportunities exist to eliminate or mitigate identified safety concerns?

An RSA should be completed for each proposed project except, perhaps, for pavement preservation projects. Typically, the RSA would be done concurrent with the Project Identification Report (see Section 4.2.3), but it may be done during another phase of project development. The level of detail of the RSA will be determined according to the size and complexity of the proposed project.

RSAs also may be completed on high-use Forest Highway routes with known traffic use conflicts or safety issues to identify and document safety needs on those routes and facilitate their ongoing management. Documented safety needs could be used in future Forest Highway project proposals for those routes or be used in applications for other funding sources.

2.2.2 Preservation

Preservation is defined as extending the life of the transportation system and its assets. Preservation activities can include pavement overlays, pavement chip seals, repairing and rehabilitating drainage features, and gravel resurfacing. Preservation involves making decisions about rehabilitation in a timely and effective manner so the transportation facility does not degrade beyond repair or to the point of needing major repair.

Preservation is a priority in the Montana TranPlan21 and a specific investment guideline in 23 USC 135 for Statewide Planning. It is further emphasized by the requirement, under 23 USC 204, to utilize management system data (pavement, bridge, safety) in making transportation investment decisions.

Preservation Goal:

Preserve the Forest Highway infrastructure by working with other transportation partners to jointly and systematically identify needs and address them.

Pavement Management System

SAFETEA-LU requires that Pavement Management Systems (PMS) be developed and funded for all Federal Lands Highway Programs, including the Forest Highway Program. Implementing rules for the Forest Highway Program PMS are contained in 23 CFR 971.212. The full text of 23 CFR 971 is included in Appendix F of this Coordination Plan.

Pavement Management System information for the existing and future conditions of Forest Highways must be included with the project proposals where available. The Tri-Agency will consider how each proposed project will generally move the condition of the transportation facility to the desired condition.

Consideration of Alternative Funding Sources

Prior to submitting a project proposal, the proposing agencies should consider their own financial capacity to fund a preservation project. Some agencies may have funds, other than Forest Highway Program funds, available for preservation projects. Other agencies, particularly rural counties, may have very limited funds for preservation on low-volume Forest Highways. In selecting projects for programming, the Tri-Agency will endeavor to approve Forest Highway funding where the proposing agencies have demonstrated the greatest need from a condition standpoint and the least capacity from a potential funding standpoint.

Proposing agencies, as well as the Tri-Agency, should also look for opportunities to leverage funds or other resources to address needs. Funds from one source could be supplemented by

Forest Highway funds to implement a more comprehensive improvement project. Another example of leveraging, a county may be proposing a utility line replacement within a Forest Highway right-of-way, and that Forest Highway may also be in need of an overlay. By coordinating the projects, they would be accomplished more efficiently. The projects could be combined and phased so the utility line is replaced prior to the overlay, minimizing impacts on travelers and the local environment while reducing costs for the individual projects (as compared to doing the two projects separately). Investment strategies are further discussed in Chapter 4.

Maintenance

Forest Highway Program funds are available for maintenance as allowed in SAFETEA-LU. Maintenance activities are newly eligible for funding under the Forest Highway Program. Under SAFETEA-LU, there are program funding limits for maintenance; for Montana, the amount available is approximately \$1.5 million per year.



Winter maintenance on Beartooth Highway

Maintenance projects will be treated like any other Forest Highway project: they must be put into the multi-year Forest Highway Program.

Maintenance is defined in 23 USC 101(a)(14): The term “maintenance” means the preservation of the entire highway, including surface, shoulders, roadsides, structures, and such traffic-control devices as are necessary for safe and efficient use of the highway. The funding amounts are not set-asides. Any program funds spent on maintenance will come directly from Montana’s annual allocation of Forest Highway funds.

Work selected for program funding would be limited to crack sealing and application of chip seals. Also, the eligible projects would be those in which the Forest Highway Program had previously invested funds.

2.2.3 Economic Development

The Montana Forest Highway Program seeks opportunities to enhance the economy of local communities and strives to provide the public with the best value for their tax dollars. The Tri-Agency needs to consider where to make key investments with limited Montana Forest Highway Program funds. It also needs to consider where economic development opportunities exist. The Tri-Agency partners need to work together to provide safe, adequate access to NFS lands for recreation, tourism, resource extraction, and other economic development

opportunities. The Funding and Investment Strategy and Guidelines, in Section 4.1 of this Coordination Plan, are intended to help the Tri-Agency achieve that.

Economic Development Goal:

Enhance the economic health of local communities and the public value of the Forest Highway transportation system.

Access to and Use of NFS Lands and Resources

By definition, Forest Highways must provide public access to and/or within NFS lands. Such access is critical to the use of NFS lands and their resources, such as timber, other forest products, minerals, and recreation opportunities – all of which contribute to local and regional (and even national) economies.

The Tri-Agency will consider how proposed projects would enhance access to and use of NFS lands and the potential related economic contributions. For example, a paving project may open travel to heavy trucks and provide a new route for hauling timber or mining products. Road improvements may create a shorter or safer travel route for industrial or recreation users, encouraging additional travel in an area and benefitting local businesses.

Tourism

Tourism may or may not be directly related to NFS lands. Some of Montana’s Forest Highways may be part of designated scenic byways, which are tourist destinations themselves. Economic benefits of tourism are generally related to travelers purchasing goods and services along the route.

Travelers may be encouraged to visit particular locations by providing attractions or services, or by otherwise enhancing a site. One way in which the Tri-Agency supports tourism is by funding enhancement work in conjunction with forest highway projects. Enhancements are road-related improvements such as, but not limited to, interpretative signs, kiosks, restrooms, viewpoints, and trailheads. Enhancement work also includes improvements to scenic byway corridors. Forest Highway enhancement improvements are designed to benefit the Forest Highway users.

2.2.4 Mobility

Mobility is both the ability to get to a certain location (i.e., access) and the travel time required to make the journey. Mobility is also having a choice of the mode (car, truck, bicycle, feet, bus, etc.) for the journey that is accessible to all potential users, including the transportation disadvantaged. Many factors can affect mobility. Conditions such as narrow travel lanes, sharp

curves, uneven pavement, landslide areas, lack of shoulders, and congestion can all affect travel time – or even the ability to reach a destination.

The focus for mobility in this Coordination Plan is to preserve and improve existing opportunities for access to NFS lands. Access is important, not only for recreation and resource management, it is also important for emergency preparedness and response. Forest Highways are used to respond to fire emergencies and are often the only evacuation routes available to people working or recreating in the forest. The Tri-Agency will look for opportunities to improve mobility – for example, by improving reliability, travel times, or access to alternative modes of transportation. However, with limited funds from the various transportation funding sources, preserving the existing Forest Highway system is especially important.

Mobility Goal:

Maintain or improve the ability to access National Forest System lands while considering travel time and multiple modes of transportation.

Reliability and Travel Times

As noted above, many factors can affect travel time and reliability of roadways. Sometimes, they limit or close access to an area, such as when a road is too narrow or winding for trucks to pass, or when a landslide blocks travel. Examples of improvements that can be made to improve reliability and decrease travel time include:

- Pave roads with gravel surface or overlay/improve paved surface on rough roads,
- Modify alignment to reduce sharp curves,
- Widen roadway and/or clear zone to increase sight distance,
- Manage access to roadway (e.g. combine driveways or construct frontage road) to limit conflicts from vehicles entering and leaving roadway, and
- Stabilize slide areas and other areas of instability to improve driving surface and reduce potential for road closure.

It may not always be appropriate to decrease travel times. Travel time and speed need to be considered in light of the other goals of the Forest Highway Program, particularly safety and environmental quality and health. Quality of the travel experience may also be a consideration. The Tri-Agency will evaluate project proposals against each of the goals and relevant criteria.

Alternative Transportation Modes

High levels of use at some national recreation sites have led to concerns that congestion is compromising the visitor experience and degrading natural, cultural, and historic resources. In

many cases, congestion impacts are related more to the number of automobiles accommodated at the site than to the number of people visiting it. To respond to this issue, Section 3039 of TEA-21² required the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior, to undertake a comprehensive study of alternative transportation needs in national parks and related federal lands. (See Section 3.4.3 of this Coordination Plan for more discussion.) The study was to identify opportunities for the application of alternative transportation systems to:

- Preserve sensitive natural, cultural, and historic resources;
- Reduce pollution;
- Relieve traffic congestion and parking shortages;
- Enhance visitor mobility and accessibility;
- Provide improved interpretation, education, and visitor information services; and
- Improve economic development opportunities for surrounding communities.

Generally, the concept of alternative modes of transportation is an urban consideration. In areas where the automobile dominates the mode of travel and the volumes of traffic cause congestion, other modes are being considered for moving people and goods. Forest Highways in Montana are generally in rural areas and typically carry relatively low volumes of traffic, especially when compared to urban roadways. The movement of goods and people relies primarily on cars and trucks, but consideration of other transportation modes is beginning to occur.

Providing access to an alternative transportation mode may be as simple as paving roadway shoulders for bicycles and pedestrians. Providing safe, accessible crossings or paths can also encourage bicycle and pedestrian use. Congestion can be managed, for example, by installing signs to route traffic for more efficient use of the roadway system.

As discussed in Section 3.4.3, a report was issued in 2004 that includes an assessment of needs for alternative transportation systems in lands managed by the USFS (Cambridge Systematics, Inc. 2004). Although only one site in Montana is addressed in the report (the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center), additional sites may also benefit from the use of alternative transportation systems.

2.2.5 Environmental Quality and Health

Many of the Forest Highways in Montana are older roads, built at a time when attention to environmental matters was not acknowledged or before environmental protection laws were enacted. While the past is the past, portions of these older roads remain today. Some Forest Highways have culverts that block fish passage; some dissect habitat for fish or wildlife species; and some cross migration corridors, leading to collisions between wildlife and vehicles. Some Forest Highways are on steep slopes with continuous slides; some have undersized culverts and

² TEA-21, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, is described in Section 3.3.1 of this Coordination Plan.

contribute sediment to nearby streams and wetlands; and some Forest Highways provide ready opportunities for noxious weed invasions.

Environmental Quality and Health Goal:

Protect and/or enhance the natural environment when designing and constructing transportation facilities.

The Montana Forest Highway Program has been a leader in environmental quality and health, and it will continue to emphasize projects that are designed to be environmentally friendly. This includes improving passage for fish and/or wildlife, developing interpretive signage or other environmental education opportunities, implementing best management practices to reduce or eliminate sedimentation of streams and wetlands, implementing measures to minimize the potential for spreading invasive or noxious weeds, and using native plants for revegetation efforts on disturbed roadsides.

Making informed decisions is essential for achieving environmental quality and health. When making decisions for allocating funds for each project, the Tri-Agency sometimes programs (i.e., identifies) the amount of funding that will be made available for all of project development, that is, from preliminary design through construction. However, phased programming allows the Tri-Agency to make better-informed decisions on complex projects about whether and how much to fund a project. It also ensures that construction funding decisions are not “pre-decisional” (i.e. made before the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] process is complete) and, therefore, do not preclude analysis and selection of certain alternatives.

In phased programming, the Tri-Agency will first program funds for preliminary design and the NEPA process, during which project alternatives will be developed and evaluated. After the environmental decision document (i.e., NEPA document) is issued, the Tri-Agency will program funds for project final design and construction.

Agency Coordination

To address the requirements of Section 6001 of SAFETEA-LU (see Section 3.3.1) WFLHD will facilitate consultation among MDT, USFS, and other land and natural resource management agencies early in the planning process. To ensure environmental considerations are incorporated into the selection of Montana Forest Highway projects, WFLHD environmental staff will work with the USFS staff at the National Forests that are proposing projects to assess project issues and to find environmental enhancement opportunities aligned with the forest plans that optimize future ecosystem health. Such considerations will be assessed in the review of project proposals.

Context Sensitive Solutions

FHWA has stated an objective to “improve the environmental quality of transportation decision making by incorporating context sensitive solutions principles in all aspects of planning and the project development process” (FHWA 2009a). To be “context sensitive,” project planning, design, and construction must all consider the total context within which a transportation facility will exist. The facility should be appropriate for its physical setting (i.e. should “fit in”) and should preserve scenic, aesthetic, historic, cultural, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility. The project also should use available funds efficiently through practical design that provides a “best fit” solution for its context. Context Sensitive Solutions is a collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders, throughout the project development process, to develop a context sensitive transportation facility.

Montana Forest Highway projects will continue to incorporate Context Sensitive Solutions throughout all phases of Forest Highway project development, that is, planning, design, and construction.

Sustainable Design and Construction

In recent years, there has been a trend toward more sustainable design and construction practices that are intended to reduce human impact on the environment while sustaining economic prosperity. Numerous programs have been developed to certify practices and developments as “green” or “sustainable.” They typically include metrics for various criteria, such as reduced energy use and waste production, to measure sustainability performance (or, how “green” a project is).

At least one program has been developed to assess sustainability performance of road projects—Greenroads. Greenroads™ is a sustainability performance metric™ for roadway design and construction. It can be applied to new or reconstructed/rehabilitated roadways. The program awards credits for approved sustainable choices and practices. Credits are awarded for avoiding or reducing project impacts on the environment, improving human and wildlife health, and innovative design (Greenroads 2009). The program can be used to assess project sustainability.

In implementing proposed project, sustainability will be evaluated in all phases of Forest Highway project development. Greenroads or a similar program can serve as a guide for recommending and assessing sustainable practices and performance.

Aquatic Organism and Wildlife Passage

The Tri-Agency recognizes a need to reduce the negative effects of roadways on aquatic organisms and wildlife. As Forest Highway projects are developed, the partner agencies will work together to identify needs and opportunities to preserve or restore aquatic organism passage and wildlife corridors, and to develop appropriate crossings. Preservation and enhancement of corridors and important habitat will be considered in all phases of Forest Highway project development. Separate funding has been set aside in SAFETEA-LU for aquatic organism passage, as described in Section 4.3.

A number of other planning efforts provide guidance in this area. They include the PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies (USFS), the Western Governors' Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative (Western Governors' Association 2008), and the Crucial Areas Planning System (CAPS) (Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks [FWP], undated). Section 3.1.1 provides more information about PACFISH and INFISH. Section 3.4.6 provides additional information about CAPS and planning for aquatic organism and wildlife passage, and describes some examples in Montana.



Completed fish passage project

Where roads interfere with aquatic organisms and/or wildlife movement, opportunities for safe crossings should be evaluated, especially for heavily traveled routes. Bridges or culverts allowing aquatic organism passage should be used where roads cross streams. For wildlife (mammals, reptiles, and amphibians) constructed crossings may be necessary to allow them to cross safely over or under busy roadways—particularly where there is no natural alternative and the road interferes with wildlife's desired travel routes for food, shelter, social, migratory, or other needs.



Deer using culvert crossing under US 93
Photo by K. Foresman
(Transportation Research Board, no date)

Climate Change

Climate change and the related effects are complex. The Tri-Agency understands that addressing the issues and effects of climate change requires:

- Incorporating climate change into program and project planning.
- Coordinating with other agencies and their climate change efforts.
- Adapting to current and anticipated effects of climate change and to new response strategies as they are developed.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Addressing climate change, along with potential mitigation and adaptation for its effects, in transportation planning is important. Considering climate change early in the planning process will aid decision-making and improve efficiency at the program level, and will inform the analysis and decisions for project design and mitigation. Climate change can be considered as part of many planning factors, such as supporting economic vitality and global efficiency, increasing safety and mobility, enhancing the environment, promoting energy conservation, and improving the quality of life (FHWA 2009c).

Coordinated planning among the Tri-Agency partners, as well as other agencies, with regard to climate change is also important. In Montana, the state Department of Environment of Environmental Quality, under a directive from the governor, established a Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC). The CCAC worked with a scientific advisory group and other experts to develop a report that includes an inventory and forecast of greenhouse gas emissions and that makes recommendations to reduce such emissions in the near future (CCAC 2007). Montana also joined the Western Climate Initiative. Another group addressing climate change in the state is the Montana Climate Action Project, which is a collaborative effort by non-governmental project partners to provide information to the public and to encourage action toward finding solutions to climate change. The studies and results of those efforts and others can inform the Tri-Agency's planning and decision-making processes.

The Montana Forest Highway Program needs to be adaptable so that it: 1) can address the current and anticipated effects of climate change and 2) can incorporate new strategies or methods for addressing climate change as they are developed. Rather than designing Forest Highway projects based on historical trends, the Tri-Agency needs to look forward and predict future trends. For example, climate change is affecting the frequency and intensity of storms. One effect of that is a greater quantity of stormwater runoff and more potential for roads to be flooded. By using current hydraulic and hydrologic models to estimate and predict water flows for roadways susceptible to flooding, engineers can design alternatives that are appropriate for the predicted conditions.

Numerous executive orders require federal agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Because most vehicles burn fossil fuels, they release greenhouse gases; burning less fossil fuel reduces greenhouse gas emissions. There are several ways that the Montana Forest Highway

Program can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Providing more opportunities for and encouraging the use of alternative transportation modes (such as walking, bicycling, and transit) can reduce the overall number of vehicle miles traveled (and thereby, the amount of fuel used and gas emissions). Reducing energy use by using sustainable construction methods and materials, such as recycled asphalt, can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions. See the “Sustainable Design and Construction” section above.

Draft

3 Agency and Planning Coordination

This Coordination Plan links the Tri-Agency partners' long-range planning efforts related to Forest Highways. Each partner agency prepares its own long-range plans for managing the resources under its jurisdiction. The long-range plans that are particularly related to Montana's Forest Highways include: USFS Forest Plans and motor vehicle use maps, MDT's long-range policy plan (TranPlan21), and county transportation system plans. Those plans are described in this chapter. Projects proposed for funding under the Montana Forest Highway Program should be consistent with each of those plans. Additional information about the roles and responsibilities of each partner agency is provided in Appendix C, Roles of the Partner Agencies. This chapter also describes other factors and regulations that influence Forest Highway planning, including the regulations that require planning coordination.

When a partner's long-range plan is being updated, WFLHD will assist the partner agency to help define the purpose and uses of important access routes in, to and through the National Forest, specifically those designated as Forest Highways. The purposes of such coordination are: to help identify projects that meet partner agency access objectives for those routes, and to ensure consistency of those projects with the partner agency long-range plan.

3.1 Long-Range Plans

3.1.1 USFS Land and Resource Management Plans

The management of National Forests is guided by existing laws, regulations, agency policy, and National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans. Forest Plans may be amended to reflect new science or changed circumstances. For example, emphasis on the protection of aquatic resources in late-successional forests was increased across the region when plans were amended by the PACFISH and INFISH decisions in 1995.

Forest Plans

The USFS has prepared a Land and Resource Management Plan (commonly referred to as a "Forest Plan") for every National Forest in the country. The Forest Plans are updated periodically. In general, each Forest Plan evaluates the existing conditions of the National Forest, defines desired future conditions, evaluates and sets standards for visual quality (for example, along scenic byways, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness areas), and provides direction for managing the forest resources.

Forest Plans provide the framework in which project decisions can be made on case-by-case and site-specific bases. In relation to transportation planning, Forest Plans identify the types of travel that are suitable to particular parcels of land, based on desired future conditions and other plan designations. Transportation decisions are directly related to the stated management objective for specific areas. If the management objective for a certain area changes, site-specific plans for road and trail management must be made separately from the Forest Plan to bring

travel into compliance with the forest plan. Decisions about specific roads and trails are made through project-level analysis and decision documents in accordance with NEPA. Appendix G contains a summary of the functions and limitations of a Forest Plan.

PACFISH and INFISH

USFS Regions 1, 4, and 6 and Bureau of Land Management's Montana, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington offices have made commitments to improve aquatic resources through the PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies. The PACFISH and INFISH Management Strategies are ecologically-based strategies that provide direction for improving aquatic resources in the Upper Columbia River Basin and the Upper Missouri River Basin in Montana. The PACFISH strategy, adopted in 1995, was designed to arrest the degradation and begin the restoration of aquatic habitat and riparian areas in watersheds that provide habitat for anadromous fish outside the range of the northern spotted owl.³ Similarly, INFISH, also adopted in 1995, provided interim direction to protect the habitat and populations of native fish outside the range of anadromous fish and east of the range of the northern spotted owl. The PACFISH and INFISH strategies are considered to be an interim approach until USFS Forest Plans are revised. The strategies include standards and guidelines for transportation management within riparian areas and guidance for key watersheds.

3.1.2 Travel Management Rule

The NFS transportation system is regulated under the Travel Management Rule (36 CFR part 212, subpart B), adopted in 2005. One impetus for the regulations was the large growth of off-road vehicle (OHV) use and capabilities and the resulting impacts on soil, water, wildlife habitat, and other recreational visitors. The Travel Management Rule provides for a system of NFS roads, trails, and areas that are designated for motor vehicle use, including the class of vehicle and time of year. In designating NFS roads, trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use, the responsible official shall consider effects on NFS natural and cultural resources, public safety, provision of recreational opportunities, access needs, conflicts among uses of NFS lands, the need for maintenance and administration of roads, trails, and areas that would arise if the uses under consideration are designated; and the availability of resources for that maintenance and administration. Designation of NFS roads on NFS lands is coordinated with appropriate federal, state, county, and other local governmental entities and tribal governments.

Roads, trails, and areas designated as open to motor vehicles will be identified on a motor vehicle use map, which replaces the Access and Travel Management map previously in use. The motor vehicle use maps specify the classes of vehicles and, if appropriate, the times of year for which use is designated. A complete inventory of NFS system roads is included in a unit's transportation atlas. After the roads, trails, and areas are designated, motor vehicle use, including the class of vehicle and time of year, not in accordance with these designations is prohibited.

³ Within the range of the northern spotted owl, the Northwest Forest Plan provides direction for management of federal forest lands.

3.1.3 MDT's Long-Range Transportation Policy Plan

Montana's long-range transportation policy plan, TranPlan21, represents part of an ongoing process that regularly identifies transportation issues, evaluates public and stakeholder needs and priorities, and establishes and implements policy goals and actions. That planning process guides MDT in the development and management of a multimodal transportation system for the State of Montana.

MDT developed the original TranPlan 21 in 1994 and 1995, and updated the plan in 2002. Updates to the plan are made approximately every 5 years. The purpose of the 2002 update was to ensure that MDT continues to address customer priorities, and that transportation funds are effectively spent on the programs and projects that reflect those priorities. Another focus of the 2002 update was determining how MDT could best support economic development through transportation policy and programs. The most recent update, released in February 2007, includes several new planning requirements that required a limited amendment to TranPlan 21, which was completed in 2008.

TranPlan 21 establishes policy goals in seven key areas within a 20-year planning horizon: roadway system performance, economic development, traveler safety access management, land use planning, bicycle and pedestrian transportation, and public transportation. Projects proposed for funding under the Montana Forest Highway Program should be consistent with the goals, listed below.

Roadway System Performance

Policy Goal A - Establish explicit priorities for roadway improvements; First Priority = preservation of Montana's existing highway system; Second Priority = capacity expansion and mobility improvements; Third Priority = other improvements.

Policy Goal B - Preserve mobility for people and industry in Montana within available resources.

Policy Goal C - Improve the productivity of the roadway system.

Economic Development

Policy Goal A - Preserve the efficient functioning of the transportation system used by Montana's export oriented ("basic") industries to access regional, national, and international markets.

Policy Goal B - Monitor and address capacity needs arising from Montana's economic growth trends.

Policy Goal C - Support state and local economic development initiatives to maximize new economic opportunities.

Policy Goal D - Support the tourism industry through promoting access to recreational, historical, cultural, and scenic destinations.

Policy Goal E - Develop MDT's organizational capacity to support economic development.

Traveler Safety

Policy Goal A - Reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes on Montana's roadways.

Policy Goal B - Provide leadership and coordinate with other Montana agencies to improve traveler safety.

Access Management

Policy Goal A - Improve corridor level access management to preserve the highway system.

Land Use Planning

Policy Goal A - Provide technical support and leadership to encourage local jurisdictions to support transportation corridor preservation and management through their land use planning and development permitting authority.

Policy Goal B - Consistently apply MDT's System Impact Action Process to ensure developers equitably mitigate their impacts to the highway system.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation

Policy Goal A - Institutionalize bicycle and pedestrian modes.

Policy Goal B - Target bicycle and pedestrian improvements to account for differences in current and future use.

Public Transportation

Policy Goal A - Promote and support increased use of public transportation systems.

Policy Goal B - Preserve existing intercity public transportation service and encourage/facilitate the development of new services.

Policy Goal C - Work to improve service to social service passengers and the transportation disadvantaged – the elderly, children at risk, low income, and persons with disabilities-through facilitating interagency funding consolidation.

Policy Goal D - Identify and implement transportation demand management actions that will work in Montana.

3.1.4 Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

To address highway safety needs, MDT led the development of the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP) in collaboration with other state and local agencies and various stakeholders throughout the state. Subsequent to the initiation of the CHSP, SAFETEA-LU, the federal transportation program reauthorization act for 2005, required each state to develop a long-range Strategic Highway Safety Plan that identifies highway safety problems and opportunities and includes a program of projects. States must evaluate the plan on a regular basis. In response, MDT developed its CHSP to meet SAFETEA-LU requirements for Strategic Highway Safety Plans.

The CHSP (Cambridge Systematics 2006) includes goals and emphasis areas, objectives, and strategies to accomplish the goals. The goals are to:

- Reduce the Montana statewide fatality rate from 2.05 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2004 to 1.79 per 100 million VMT by 2008;
- Reduce the statewide mortality rate to 1.0 per 100 million VMT by 2015; and
- By reducing the mortality rate to 1.0 per 100 million VMT by 2015, Montana’s incapacitating injuries will also fall from 1,700 in 2005 to 950 in 2015.

The CHSP is managed through an ongoing process including data gathering and analysis. Data are gathered and reported annually, and new emphasis areas will be developed if the data show they are warranted. Each year, MDT issues an “Annual Element” of the CHSP. The annual elements of the CHSP include descriptions of specific strategies and programs being implemented for each emphasis area, as well as information about new strategies to be undertaken in the future. Specific strategies will be refined or added based on direction from the CHSP Committee and analysis of data and other resources.

The CHSP is not only an MDT plan; it is intended to incorporate the programs of multiple agencies, jurisdictions, and tribes with safety responsibilities throughout the state. The CHSP describes the roles of MDT and those other entities.

3.1.5 MDT Corridor Planning

The MDT corridor planning process is an effort to better coordinate MDT’s planning processes with the NEPA process. The corridor planning process allows for early planning-level coordination with the public, federal and state resource and other agencies, and local governments.

The MDT corridor planning process develops specific products that can be used in the future project development and environmental review process. Those products include: goals, objectives, development and analysis of alternatives, elimination of alternatives, public involvement, identification of potential environmental impacts, and potential mitigation opportunities. Important considerations in the process are the costs of proposed improvements and the availability of funding—and how they affect the nature of the improvements and their phasing. The corridor planning process typically recommends both short- and long-term improvement options.

3.1.6 Regional Transportation Plans

Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) are the long-range (20-year) transportation plans prepared by the state’s three designated MPOs—urban areas with populations of 50,000 or more. Montana’s MPOs are Missoula, Billings/Yellowstone, and Great Falls. All three are near a National Forest: the Lolo National Forest surrounds Missoula (see Figure 3); the Custer National

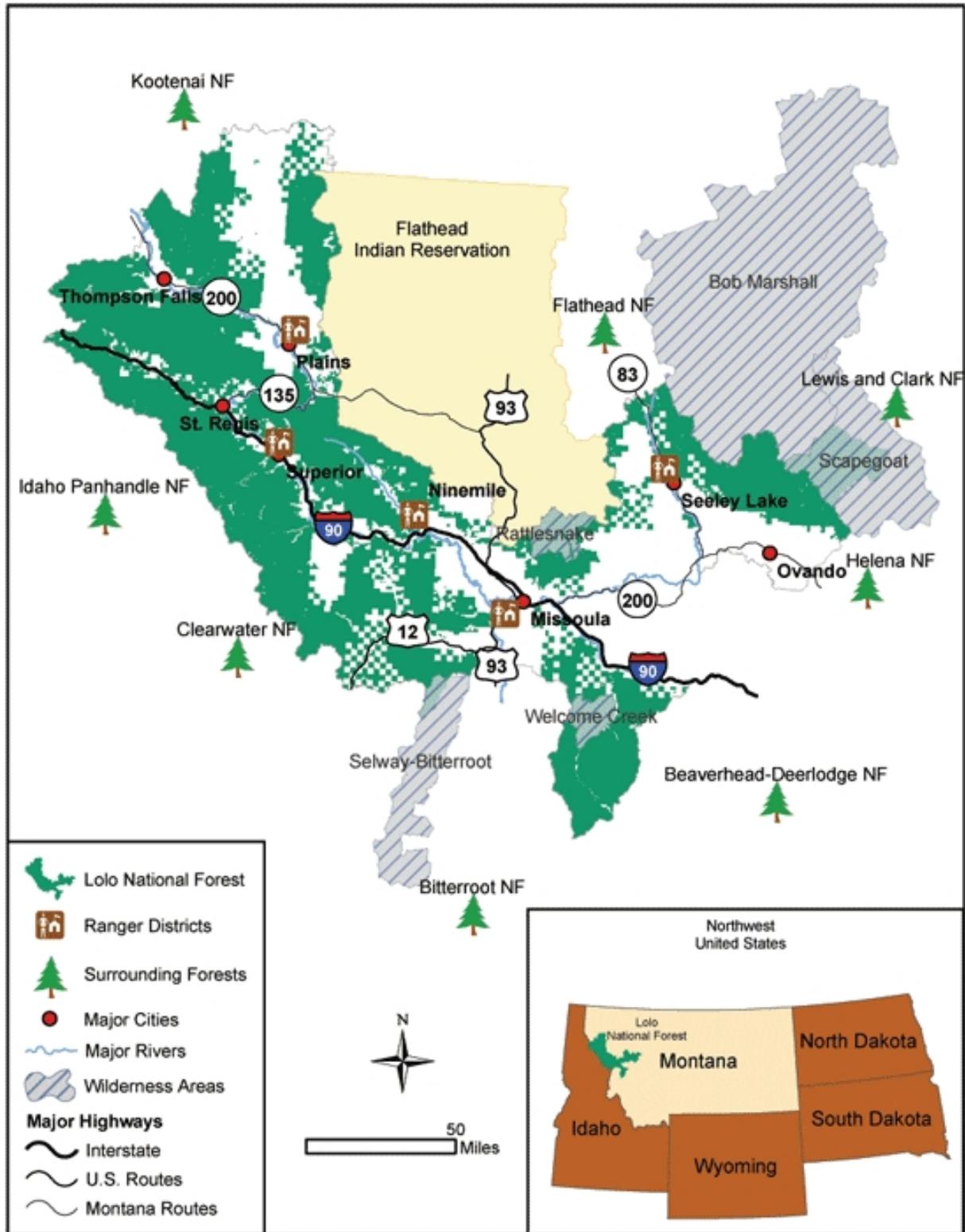


Figure 3. Lolo National Forest proximity to Missoula, Montana

Forest borders Yellowstone; and the Lewis and Clark National Forest borders Great Falls. Kalispell and Bozeman also maintain regional transportation plans.

The federal government requires MPOs to develop and maintain RTPs in exchange for access to federal funding for transportation improvements. Each RTP is developed in coordination with existing planning processes, agencies, and transportation providers in the region. RTPs are updated every four years, and public involvement occurs at various points throughout the development and update of each RTP.

3.1.7 County Transportation System Plans

County transportation system plans may provide near-term (6-year), mid-term (12-year) and long-range (20-year) plans for transportation improvements to accommodate local and regional transportation needs. In metropolitan areas, the transportation plans may be supported by travel demand modeling and fairly accurate forecasts of population and employment growth in those areas. In rural areas, such modeling tools may not be available, and growth may be extrapolated based on historical data and best estimates of development. Typically, communities have a role in choosing the projects included in the transportation system plans; therefore, the plans represent the needs and desires of the local communities. Often, as projects are being defined, some level of impact assessment occurs, as well as planning-level estimates of cost and economic benefit of the projects.

A wide range of project types may be included in county transportation system plans. Some examples are: environmental analysis of corridor alternatives, bridge structural survey or rehabilitation, pavement overlay, roadway widening for capacity or safety, drainage improvements and pedestrian or bicycle enhancements. In many cases, county transportation system plan projects are included in the state transportation system plan.

When developing project lists for the Montana Forest Highway Program, the Tri-Agency will seek projects from local jurisdictions. Forest Highway projects should be consistent with the county transportation system plans.

3.2 Transportation Improvement Programs

3.2.1 Forest Service Transportation Improvement Programs

The USFS coordinates several transportation improvement programs at the regional scale through its regional offices. They are typically in the form of a capital investment program and several natural resource investment programs directed towards transportation. The programs are funded through agency appropriations in 23 USC 205, not through the highway trust fund. They are not required by law, regulation, or policy but are either best practices or are required

by program direction contained within the USFS budget process. They can affect the Forest Highway program by either directly funding projects (partially or fully) that are Forest Highways under USFS jurisdiction or on NFS roads that directly link to Forest Highways.

The Northern Region of the USFS maintains a three-year capital investment program for road and bridge projects on NFS roads. While agency appropriations are for only one year, the region has decided that they will allocate approximately 10 percent of road appropriations for road and bridge purposes. Projects are evaluated against a set of criteria that include safety/volume of use, preservation, importance of access, mobility, potential leveraging of funds, and meeting restoration goals.

The Northern Region also creates a three-year program of projects that are directed towards environmental restoration on NFS roads and trails, specifically those projects that can improve watershed health. The projects are a result of a change in agency appropriations bills that began in 2008, called Legacy Roads and Trails. Projects are evaluated against a set of criteria in four major categories of work (improvements, aquatic organism passage, decommissioning/storage, and planning). An additional allocation is made for maintenance related work, primarily road drainage. Funds are directly allocated to the regions by the USFS office in Washington DC.

3.2.2 State and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs

Montana's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, known as the STIP, is a five-year plan developed by MDT. The STIP includes a prioritized list of transportation projects and programs, and identifies the funding and scheduling for those projects and programs. The STIP includes projects on the federal, state, city, and county transportation systems; multi-modal projects; and projects in the National Parks, National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, and Indian tribal lands.

Regional transportation improvement programs (TIPs) are similar to the STIP, but they are prepared by the MPOs for each region. TIPs are the short-term investment plans for implementing projects envisioned in the RTPs.

3.2.3 Federal Lands Highway Transportation Improvement Program

The Federal Lands Highway Transportation Improvement Program is similar to the STIP and MPO TIPs. It is a five-year plan and includes a prioritized list of transportation projects, along with funding and scheduling information. The TIP also identifies "regionally significant" projects. Projects defined as "regionally significant" must follow the statewide or MPO planning process. For other projects, the transportation planning process need only be consistent with statewide or MPO planning processes.

Each division of FHWA's Office of Federal Lands Highways⁴ develops a TIP in cooperation with the federal land management agencies. The Office of Federal Lands Highways has responsibility for approval of the TIP, which is subsequently incorporated into the STIP. The projects included in the TIP are consistent with the STIP, RTPs, and long-range transportation plans of the federal land management agencies, such as the USFS. More information about how Forest Highway projects are included on the STIP and TIP is available in Section 4.2.

3.3 Federal Requirements for Coordinated Transportation Planning

3.3.1 Federal Surface Transportation Act

Congress has recognized the need for coordinated transportation planning for many years. The current and previous federal surface transportation acts required federal transportation agencies to coordinate their planning efforts with other transportation plans. Such a requirement is likely to be included in future federal surface transportation acts. This Coordination Plan was prepared, in part, to comply with such regulations.

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) was enacted in 1998. In TEA-21 the Federal Lands Highway Program was required to develop regulations for transportation planning that were more consistent with the planning regulations for state departments of transportation. The Forest Highway Program has responded to that requirement mainly through the defined Tri-Agency partnership of the Federal Lands Highway divisions, USFS, and state departments of transportation.

SAFETEA-LU, enacted in 2005, was TEA-21's successor. Section 6001 of SAFETEA-LU establishes the long-range planning requirements for transportation projects. It includes provisions intended to enhance the consideration of environmental issues and impacts within long-range transportation planning processes, as well as in the NEPA process. Section 6001 of SAFETEA-LU also directs the FHWA and state departments of transportation to consult with land and natural resource management agencies, to compare maps of interest with those agencies, and to discuss issues early in planning process.

To meet the federal requirements for coordinated transportation planning, the Tri-Agency partners must coordinate with one another, as well as with interested natural resource agencies (e.g., US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks). Working together, the agencies need to identify environmental issues and to determine environmental review and permitting requirements and schedules. The Tri-Agency considers that information when determining schedules (and, potentially, phases) for project delivery.

⁴ The Federal Lands Highway field organization consists of three divisions: Eastern Federal Lands, Central Federal Lands, and Western Federal Lands. WFLHD serves Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Alaska.

3.3.2 Federal Lands Highway Program

The Forest Highway Program is part of the Federal Lands Highway Program and, as such, must comply with statutes related to the Federal Lands Highway Program. Title 23 of the USC, as amended, is the federal statute related to highways. Title 23, subsection 204 includes the following language related to the Federal Lands Highway Program.

- (1) *In general.* — Recognizing the need for all Federal roads that are public roads to be treated under uniform policies similar to the policies that apply to Federal-aid highways, there is established a coordinated Federal lands highways program that shall apply to public lands highways, park roads and parkways, refuge roads, and Indian reservation roads and bridges.
- (2) *Transportation planning procedures.* — In consultation with the Secretary of each appropriate Federal land management agency, the Secretary shall develop, by rule, transportation planning procedures that are consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning processes required under sections 134 and 135.
- (3) *Approval of transportation improvement program.* — The transportation improvement program developed as a part of the transportation planning process under this section shall be approved by the Secretary.
- (4) *Inclusion in other plans.* — All regionally significant Federal lands highways program projects —
 - a. shall be developed in cooperation with States and metropolitan planning organizations; and
 - b. shall be included in appropriate Federal lands highways program, State, and metropolitan plans and transportation improvement programs.
- (5) *Inclusion in state programs.* — The approved Federal Lands Highway transportation improvement program shall be included in appropriate State and metropolitan planning organization plans and programs without further action on the transportation improvement program.
- (6) *Development of systems.* — The Secretary and the Secretary of each appropriate Federal land management agency shall, to the extent appropriate, develop by rule safety, bridge, pavement, and congestion management systems for roads funded under the Federal lands highways program.

In 23 USC 135 (statewide planning for highways), the language related to the transportation planning requires each State to consider the concerns of Indian tribal governments and federal land management agencies that have jurisdiction over land within the boundaries of the State. Also, each State must develop a long-range statewide transportation plan, with a minimum 20-year forecast period for all areas of the State, which provides for the development and implementation of the intermodal transportation system of the State. Relevant language from 23 USC 135 is contained in Appendix E.

Generally, Forest Highway planning should follow a process consistent with the statewide and MPO processes to ensure coordination for all public roads in a State. Also, Forest Highway planning requires consultation with federal land management agencies, as described in Section 3.3.1.

3.4 Other Factors that Influence Forest Highway Planning

Several factors have been influencing the federal Forest Highway Program over recent years. They are described in this section. Some of those factors are changing areas of emphasis for the program, and other factors are reinforcing previous activities.

3.4.1 Construction Costs

Across the country, road and highway construction costs have shown volatility in recent years, but, overall, costs have continued to rise. The cost of rehabilitating some roadways has been increasing at a rate greater than US core inflation.

In addition, the amount of road rehabilitation that is deferred each year has been growing as a result of funding limitations and deteriorating infrastructure conditions. This has resulted in an increased pool of potential projects with a higher level of deterioration due to deferred maintenance.

Construction cost is a factor that should be considered when deciding how Montana Forest Highway funds will be invested. Specifically, planners and decision-makers should consider the best use of available funds to provide more miles of improved road or more road deficiencies/conditions improved. Potential for combining or matching funds from various sources should also be evaluated.

3.4.2 Safety

Safety is always a high priority in transportation, is one of the five goal areas and a selection criteria for Forest Highway project selection. SAFETEA-LU requires each state department of transportation to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan to address the state's highway safety needs (see Section 3.1.4). The Montana Forest Highway Program needs to consider how it can complement other safety planning efforts within the state. For example, if a route is designated as a critical access route or disaster evacuation route, that designation should be considered in making decisions about proposed funding and roadway improvements.

3.4.3 Multi-Modal Considerations

States, MPOs, and federal land management agencies are now considering alternative transportation solutions in their transportation plans. Alternative transportation modes can be solutions for managing demand, providing access, and enhancing environmental quality,

among other issues. Alternative transportation solutions may also provide additional funding opportunities. Likewise, the Montana Forest Highway Program should consider alternative transportation modes when evaluating and developing proposed projects.

Section 3039 of the TEA-21 required the Secretary of Transportation, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior, to “undertake a comprehensive study of alternative transportation needs in national parks and related public lands managed by federal land management agencies in order to . . . encourage and promote the development of transportation systems for the betterment of the national parks and other units of the National Park System, national wildlife refuges, recreational areas, and other public lands in order to conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources and prevent adverse impact, relieve congestion, minimize transportation fuel consumption, reduce pollution (including noise and visual pollution), and enhance visitor mobility and accessibility and the visitor experience.” (FHWA 2001)

In response to the directive in TEA-21, FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration, in cooperation with the federal land management agencies, produced a “3039 Study” that assessed transit needs at in National Parks and other federal lands. Volume III of that study focused on NFS lands and, in particular, on 30 high-use sites in National Forests. The “Federal Lands Alternative Transportation System Study, Summary of Forest Service ATS Needs” (Cambridge Systematics, Inc. 2004) included one site in Montana, on the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The study identified a need for new and expanded bus service to serve the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center (see Figure 4).

Following the studies done under Section 3039, Congress established the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program (formerly the Alternative Transportation in Parks and Public Lands Program) to enhance the protection of national parks and federal lands and increase the enjoyment of those visiting them. Administered by the Federal Transit Administration in partnership with the Department of the Interior and the USFS, the program provides grants to fund capital and planning expenses for alternative transportation systems such as shuttle buses and bicycle trails in national parks and public lands. Projects carried out under this program

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center (LCIC) is part of the Lewis and Clark National Forest and resides in the Giant Springs State Park in Great Falls, Montana. The interpretive center is located on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River, along the trail used by Lewis and Clark, and provides 25,000 square feet of space for exhibitions, a theater, a retail store, and other hands-on activities. The center's emphasis is to provide information related to all aspects of the expedition completed by Lewis and Clark from 1804 to 1806.

Access to the LCIC is primarily provided by the local roadway system, and a recent \$1 million expansion of the parking lot allows for adequate capacity during most times. The LCIC is roughly five minutes from downtown Great Falls and approximately 20 minutes from the Great Falls Airport. Access is limited for those without personal vehicles as the existing Great Falls Transit system does not provide routes that link to the LCIC.



Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Montana – River's Edge Trail

Given the lack of transit service to the LCIC, there are three proposed bus and shuttle service options to address the needs of the center. The first is implementation of supplemental bus routes to handle increased visitation expected for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Similar to when the LCIC opened in 1998, there are expectations that the bicentennial will generate a significant increase in visitation for the years 2004 to 2006, primarily during the months of May through September. Beyond the temporary needs related to the bicentennial, there also is discussion regarding how to improve connections of the LCIC with the River's Edge Trail and other Great Falls attractions such as the C.M. Russell Museum. One proposal is a partnership with Great Falls Transit to provide seasonal local shuttle service (May through September) to connect major recreational destinations in the Great Falls area. A major benefit would be additional access to key destinations for local residents, recreation seekers, and visitors. The final option involves provision of funding for distant schools to visit the LCIC. Montana is a very large state (fourth in terms of square miles) with a relatively small and dispersed population. Consequently, there are a number of school districts that are both distant and lack their own funds to visit the LCIC. While more than 6,000 students visit each year, this number could be increased with greater funding for long-distance school visits.

Source: Cambridge Systematics, Inc. 2004

Figure 4. Example of Proposed Alternative Transportation System Project in Montana: Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center

must be consistent with other transportation policies of the Department of the Interior and other federal land management agencies.

The Transit in the Parks Program is not part of the Forest Highway Program. However, the Forest Highway Program has contributed funding for some projects that received grants under the Transit in the Parks program – another example of combining funds from different sources to implement projects.

One example of a multi-modal transportation corridor in Montana is US 191 through Gallatin Canyon. A bus service was established in that corridor to help relieve congestion and reduce the number of motor vehicles traveling from the city of Bozeman to the Big Sky resort.

3.4.4 Fluctuations in Revenue

As many Montanans know, there has been a shift in economic activities associated with National Forests in the state. While National Forests in Montana continue to play a role in the state's economy, that role has shifted from timber production to recreation, and it has affected the Forest Highway Program.

During the 1950s and 1960s timber harvest on National Forests in Montana grew substantially, reaching its high point in 1969, when 779 million board feet (MMBF) – about 61 percent of the state's timber harvest – was harvested from National Forests (Keegan et al. 2001). Changes in forest management and increasing emphasis on non-timber resources led to a decline of timber harvest from the National Forests over the next 40 years. In 2008, the harvest was about 100 MMBF – about 22 percent of the state's timber harvest. The 2008 harvest was the second-lowest harvest level on National Forests since 1946; the lowest level was in 2007 (Morgan and Keegan 2009).

Reduced timber harvest on National Forests has reduced federal payments to counties, so the counties have less money available to provide services, such as road maintenance and construction. Without available funding, counties must defer maintenance and improvements to county roads, including Forest Highways. Counties are looking for other funding sources to meet their needs, such as the Federal Highway Program.

3.4.5 Economic Development Opportunities

The economic impacts of tourism and recreation on federal lands nationwide have been studied in various contexts relating to impacts at the regional level; impacts to industry and recreational activities; and studies of individual parks, forests, tribal lands, and wildlife refuges. Some of the major findings and highlights are (FHWA 2009d):

- Federal lands welcome more than 550 million visitors annually.
- Visitors to federal lands spent \$39 billion in 2006, accounting for almost 7% of all tourism spending in the United States.

- Recreation activities at the local level support 373,000 jobs in the retail, dining, and hospitality sectors.
- Each year, approximately 790 miles of the nearly 300,000-mile federal public road system is improved. Road rehabilitation and maintenance activities create new income and spending for local communities surrounding federal lands.
- From 2004-2009, it is estimated that funding for federal lands through the SAFETEA-LU transportation authorization will create over 20,000 jobs annually.

Compared to many other states, Montana contains a large number of National Forests. National Forest System lands comprise about 18.2 percent of Montana's land area. In Montana, there are:

- 9 National Forests (6 percent of the 155 National Forests in the United States)
- Almost 17 million acres of National Forest lands (nearly 9 percent of all the National Forest lands within the United States) (USFS 2009)
- 8.8 million National Forest Visits (9.5 million Site Visits) annually (about 4.4 percent of all National Forest Visits nationally) (USFS 2010)
- Approximately 1,527 miles of Forest Highways (4.9 percent of the 31,200 miles of Forest Highway in the United States).

Forests contribute to Montana's economy. Resource industries (agriculture, mining, lumbering) have traditionally dominated Montana's economy, although they have declined over the past two decades. Employment in the services industries surpassed that in manufacturing and mining during the 1990s as diversification into business, engineering, health, and tourism services helped stimulate the economy. Although the state economy was little affected by the national economic slowdown in 2001, it has not avoided impacts of the most recent national economic decline. Lumber consumption in the US was at its lowest level since 1950, and lumber prices dropped almost 50 percent between 2005 and 2009 (Morgan and Keegan 2009). Consequently, timber harvest and wood-products employment in Montana are down considerably from even a few years ago.

Nature-related tourism and recreation are growing in Montana, although they have been affected somewhat by the current economy. Compared to most states, a higher percentage of Montana residents participate in nature-related recreation, particularly hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing (FWP 2004). In addition, the top attractions for visitors from out of state are mountains and forests, open spaces, and rivers and lakes—and the associated wildlife and fish. Annually, approximately 10 million people visit Montana, which represents about 10 times the resident population. Expenditures for travel/tourism in the State are greatest around Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, but they also contribute to other areas. Tourism had an annual economic impact of \$2.75 billion in 2003 (FWP 2004).

Considering the above information, it is apparent that Montana's NFS lands can, and do, make an appreciable contribution to the state's economy. Projects that improve access to or through NFS lands can, therefore, encourage economic development. Forest Highways provide access to

National Forests, but also serve rural communities, and other public- and privately-owned forest lands. The Tri-Agency needs to consider the potential economic effects of the Forest Highway system and how Forest Highways can benefit economies in the areas they serve.

3.4.6 Aquatic Organism and Wildlife Conservation

Each year, millions of animals are killed by vehicle collisions on roadways in the US. Such collisions also cause human injury and property damage. Roads can also act as barriers to movement of both aquatic and wildlife species, affecting their ability to find food, breed, and thrive.

The most important way to protect wildlife and aquatic organisms from the effects of roadways is to establish and preserve habitat corridors where wildlife can move freely and safely. Wildlife corridors are roadless areas set aside primarily for wildlife habitat. An example is the grizzly corridor under development called “Yellowstone to Yukon” (Y2Y), which passes through Montana and includes portions of several National Forests. For Y2Y, agencies and citizens are working together to provide the habitat, haven, and connections that grizzlies and other species need in order to survive.

Recognizing the importance of considering wildlife and aquatic organism movement in the Forest Highway Program, the Tri-Agency supports the following action items from the Western Governors’ Association Wildlife Corridors Initiative (Western Governors’ Association 2008):

- Make the preservation of Wildlife Corridors and Crucial Habitat priorities for transportation planning, design, and construction;
- Integrate conservation and transportation coordination, planning, and implementation across jurisdictions.



*Bighorn sheep “jam” on Rock Creek Road
Photo by Marcel Huijser
(Western Transportation Institute 2007)*

In addition, the Tri-Agency will review tools such as the CAPS as part of the Forest Highway project selection process. The Crucial Areas Planning System (FWP, undated) is a mapping service based on a Crucial Areas Assessment begun by FWP in 2008. The assessment evaluated fish, wildlife, and recreational resources and identified crucial areas for fish and wildlife corridors. The CAPS provides digital, GIS-layer maps showing important species and habitat information. It also provides management guidelines and examples for development, including

transportation projects. The CAPS is intended to help project planners consider fish, wildlife, and recreation resources early in the planning process; and to help planners know about potential conflicts between the proposed project and important species and habitat so impacts can be avoided and mitigation can be planned.

Montana is a leader in implementing wildlife crossings. US 93 between Evaro and Polson is considered by many wildlife advocates and transportation officials to be a model of wildlife-sensitive highway development – it has more than 50 passages for wildlife and/or aquatic organisms in use today. MDT designed the US 93 project with input from local tribes and FWP. MDT has also issued a report to help transportation planners reduce animal-vehicle collisions and to provide habitat connectivity for wildlife across highways (Western Transportation Institute 2007). In addition, between 2007 and 2010, the USFS built 395 aquatic organism passage structures in Montana.

To be successful, wildlife and aquatic organism passages need to be designed, located, and built appropriately. As Forest Highway projects are developed, the partner agencies will work together and with other agencies, such as FWP, to identify needs and opportunities to enhance wildlife corridors and to develop appropriate aquatic and wildlife crossings.

3.4.7 Public Input

Forest Highway planning is also influenced by information and opinions expressed by tribes, agencies, local residents, businesses, special interest groups, and others members of the public. Public involvement occurs throughout the transportation planning processes used by the counties, USFS, MDT, and WFLHD. Although the Forest Highway public involvement and planning processes are distinct from those specific to the counties, USFS, and MDT, they build upon and are integrated with them.

Both long-term and short-term transportation planning efforts of the partner agencies provide opportunities for public involvement. Public involvement occurs during the various stages of transportation planning, and it affects:

- transportation policy (at the “policy level” of planning),
- transportation plans (at the “plan level” of planning), and
- transportation projects (at the “project level” of planning).

“Policy level” plans are the long-range transportation planning efforts that set transportation policy in Montana such as TranPlan21, the RTPs or metropolitan transportation plans prepared by the MPOs in the state’s three largest urban areas, county comprehensive land use plans, USFS Forest Plans, and this Coordination Plan. Various techniques are used to gain public input to assure that policy-makers consider of a broad range of issues, allowing the public to help shape transportation policy.

Public involvement activities that occur at the “plan level” include those related to the development of county transportation system plans, MPO TIPs, the STIP, and the Federal Lands Highway TIP. Because those plans include lists of projects proposed for implementation, public input is used to inform the process of project selection. Therefore, there is some project-specific input at the plan level of public involvement.

Additional public involvement occurs after projects are included on the STIP, MPO TIPs, county transportation system plans, and Federal Lands Highway TIP. The “project level” planning and public involvement occurs when developing specific transportation projects, such building a new bridge, widening a roadway to add bicycle lanes, or constructing a rest area. Public input is sought to identify community interests and concerns, and to help communities anticipate and prepare for project construction impacts.

Public involvement specific to Forest Highway projects is typically related to the NEPA process, which is the process used to evaluate and assess the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects. All projects that include federal funding, such as Forest Highway projects, must comply with NEPA process. The NEPA process requires public outreach at several stages.

4 Funding, Investment Strategy, and Project Selection Process

This chapter summarizes the process for selecting projects that will receive Forest Highway Program funds and describes the funding and investment strategy. In brief, when developing or reviewing a project proposal, the partner agencies will consider:

- The Montana Forest Highway Program funding and investment strategy and guidelines'
- how the project meets the established criteria of 23 CFR 660, Subpart A – Forest Highways,
- the purpose of and need for the project,
- how the project addresses the goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program (see Chapter 2), and
- how the project aligns with transportation plans and other relevant planning documents.

4.1 Funding and Investment Strategy and Guidelines

Funding for the Montana Forest Highway Program may remain at current levels or may experience minor increases in the next 20 years. In either case, the combined cost of the projects submitted in a call for projects will likely continue to exceed the amount of program funds available each year. The Tri-Agency must carefully consider the costs and benefits of each project; therefore, a funding and investment strategy is critical to the program's success over the next 20 years.

The investment strategy of the Montana Forest Highway Program is to be able to select the “best” of the proposed projects – those that offer the best combination of safety, preservation, economic development, mobility, and environmental quality – with the limited funds available. Project proposals that demonstrate how the project will address several of the investment guidelines will generally rank higher than other proposals.

The following investment guidelines will be used to revise the project selection criteria of 23 CFR 660 for use by the Montana Tri-Agency. The “best” projects, that is, the projects that will be selected for funding through the Montana Forest Highway Program, are defined as the ones that:

- address a documented condition requiring relief (i.e., meet the stated purpose and need);
- are consistent with transportation planning for that corridor (e.g., forest plan, TranPlan 21, county transportation system plan) ;
- truly balance the objectives of transportation and land management;

- provide an opportunity for Forest Highway Program funds to be used where either other funding is less available or other funding has not yet addressed the condition; and
- leverage funds from other sources to increase project benefits. The intent here is to look into other planning efforts and, where appropriate, combine money from other sources with Forest Highway Program funds, making it possible to develop a project that provides greater benefit. Examples include:
 - combining Forest Highway funds with funds designated for recreation to provide additional pedestrian or bicycle improvements
 - combining Forest Highway funds with funds designated for fish and wildlife to enhance habitat in addition to project mitigation, and
 - combining Forest Highway funds with funds designated for an adjacent transportation project to develop a larger project with a consistent, coordinated design and with fewer construction impacts.

When developing or reviewing project proposals, the Tri-Agency should consider how each project meets the established criteria of 23 CFR 660, the Montana Forest Highway investment strategy and guidelines, and the goals of the Montana Forest Highway Program. The program goals are presented in Chapter 2 of this Coordination Plan.

The Tri-Agency is able to direct, or set aside, a certain percentage of program funds to a specific type of project. The Tri-Agency may create such set-asides to meet certain goals and, if desired, issue separate project calls specific to those set-asides.

Some Forest Highway Program funds are also set aside specifically for aquatic organism (e.g., fish) passage. However, that money was set aside by Congress in SAFETEA-LU, and the USFS directs how the funds are spent. See Section 4.3 for more information.

4.2 How Forest Highway Projects Are Selected

4.2.1 Proposal and Selection Process Overview

The process for identifying and selecting projects that will receive Forest Highway Program funding is truly a partnership between WFLHD, USFS, and MDT with MACo. Basically, the process consists of:

1. WFLHD issues a call for projects.
2. Project proposals are prepared and submitted by the USFS and state or local agency. Project proposals are submitted on specific forms.
3. The Tri-Agency ranks project proposals using established criteria; low-ranking projects may be dropped at this point, depending on available funding.

4. If needed, a Project Identification Report (PIR) and RSA are prepared to scope the project and its potential impacts, issues, and cost. Projects that have limited impacts or very basic scopes of work may not need a PIR or RSA. The PIR is also used to help define the purpose of and need for the project.
5. Based on the scoping reports, the Tri-Agency prioritizes projects on the Forest Highway Program.
6. WFLHD puts the Tri-Agency-approved projects on the STIP and the Federal Lands Highway TIP.

The Forest Highway Program project development and selection process is diagrammed below on Figure 5.

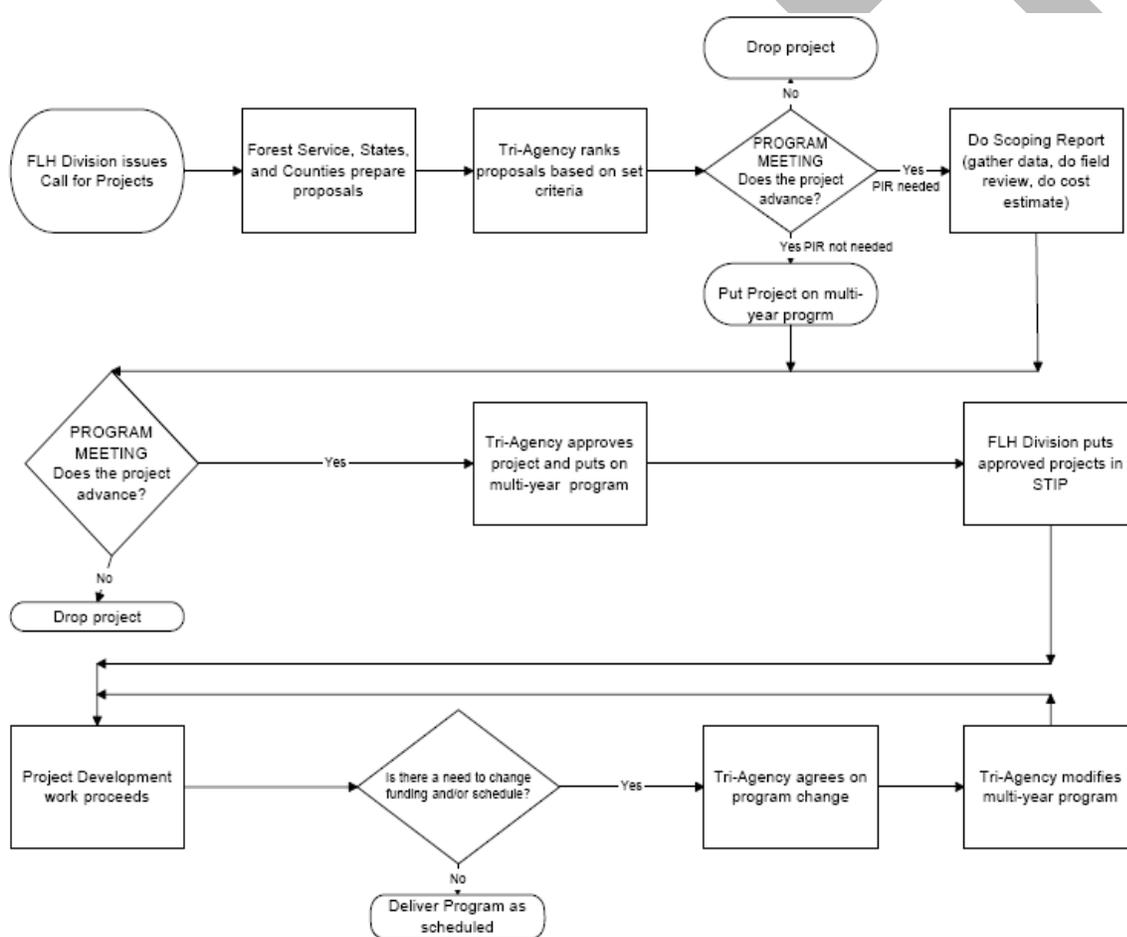


Figure 5. Typical Forest Highway Project Selection and Development Process

4.2.2 Selection Criteria

23 CFR 660, Subpart A – Forest Highways has established a list of seven criteria for FHWA to use with the USFS and state departments of transportation to jointly select the projects that will

be included in the Forest Highway Programs for the current fiscal year and at least the next 4 years. The criteria to be considered are:

- The development, utilization, protection, and administration of the NFS and its resources;
- The enhancement of economic development at the local, regional, and national level, including tourism and recreational travel;
- The continuity of the transportation network serving the NFS and its dependent communities;
- The mobility of the users of the transportation network and the goods and services provided;
- The improvement of the transportation network for economy of operation and maintenance and the safety of its users;
- The protection and enhancement of the rural environment associated with the NFS and its resources; and
- The inventory results for Forest Highways from the pavement, bridge, and safety management systems.

While the criteria are presented in CFR 660, the Montana Tri-Agency has latitude to emphasize one or more criteria, and to develop additional guidance for the types of projects that will rank higher. Chapter 2 of this Coordination Plan presents a set of goals that expand and refine the 23 CFR 660 criteria to meet the needs of the Montana Forest Highway Program for the next 20 years, 2011 to 2031.

Inventory results of the pavement and bridge management systems, which provide information about the existing conditions on Montana Forest Highways and represent one of the selection criteria, are presented in Chapter 5 of this Coordination Plan.

4.2.3 Scoping – Project Identification Report

Preparing and issuing the PIR is a key step in the process of selecting and programming projects for the Montana Forest Highway Program. The PIR is prepared for proposed projects that meet the goals and selection criteria and that are within the funding amount proposed for Forest Highway programming. PIRs are not prepared for proposed projects that have limited impacts or very basic scopes of work (e.g., paving or chip seal projects). For major rehabilitation, reconstruction, or new construction, the PIR is a key part of the project programming process.

The PIR is not an environmental or NEPA decision document. It is a planning-level or scoping document to gather data, perform field reviews, and prepare cost estimates for preliminary alternatives. The PIR is prepared early in the planning process. Stakeholder involvement at such an early stage helps identify potential issues, concerns, and avoidance opportunities.

Comprehensive information about the project area and environment helps streamline the environmental review process and meet coordination and Context Sensitive Solutions objectives.

The most important element of the PIR is the joint development of an initial, but quality, statement of the purpose of and need for the proposed project. Although the project purpose and need is stated on completed project proposal forms, the quality and accuracy of that purpose and need statement varies. The PIR provides a multi-discipline team with the opportunity to review and develop a more robust purpose and need statement for the project.

4.2.4 Purpose and Need

A well-defined purpose and need statement explains to the public and government officials why limited tax dollars should be spent on a specific project. The purpose and need statement essentially tries to answer two key questions:

- What is the condition requiring relief (or, what is the problem that needs to be solved)?
- Why does the condition need to be corrected (or the problem need to be solved)?

The purpose and need statement should drive the development of project alternatives. Preliminary alternatives that are determined to not meet the purpose and need should be eliminated from further consideration.

A purpose and need statement is required for federally funded actions under 40 CFR 1502.13, and is required by other federal laws and regulations when the proposed project may affect wetlands, air quality, federal lands, and historic sites. Purpose and need statements must be included in NEPA documents.

4.3 Aquatic Organism Passage Funds

Section 1119, part (m) of SAFETEA-LU modified the Forest Highway Program so that up to \$10 million per year is to be used by the USFS for Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) projects on Forest Highways and specific Forest Service roads. Though funded through the Forest Highway Program, the Tri-Agency does not oversee allocation of the AOP funds.

In accordance with federal regulations, the USFS creates a prioritized list of AOP projects each year. The Secretary of Agriculture has sole discretion over the AOP funds; the Tri-Agency does not decide how they are obligated (FHWA 2009b).

5 Condition of Montana Forest Highway System

The designated Forest Highways are not intended to be a system of roads; they are part of the overall system of roads in Montana. All roads receiving Forest Highway Program funding are required to have management systems in place to guide investment decisions. Management systems are focused on pavement, bridges, safety, and congestion. Generally, a management system documents the existing condition of the asset (road or bridge) and predicts a future condition.

5.1.1 Pavement Condition

Based on current data, 1,070 miles of the 1,527 total miles of Forest Highways in Montana are paved. Of the paved miles, 51 percent were in good condition, 90 percent were in good or fair condition, and 10 percent were in poor condition based on a 2004 condition inventory. The table below shows the condition of Montana’s paved Forest Highways, based on the 2004 data. Figure 6 shows Montana’s Forest Highways by Surface Type. Figure 7 shows Montana’s Forest Highways by Road Condition.

Existing Conditions of Montana's Forest Highways

Facility	Condition			
	Good	Good or Fair	Poor	Deficient
Forest Highways (paved)	51%	90%	10%	
Bridges on Forest Highways				5%

Source: Federal Lands Highway Roadway Inventory, 2004

5.1.2 Bridge Condition

In 2004, there were 141 bridges on Forest Highways in Montana. Of those, seven (or fewer than 5 percent) were identified as in deficient condition, which is shown in the table above. Recent events have focused public attention on bridge conditions. Each bridge on a Montana Forest Highway is inspected at regular intervals and included in the National Bridge Inventory System.

5.1.3 Safety

Safety is always a high priority in transportation. FHWA, state departments of transportation, and the USFS have been emphasizing safety at national, regional, and local levels. SAFETEA-LU requires MDT to develop a Strategic Safety Plan to address the state’s highway safety needs.

Most Montana Forest Highways are in rural areas. Although crash data specific to Montana Forest Highways are not available, national and MDT crash data indicate that, although fewer traffic accidents (crashes) occur on rural roads, those that occur are often more serious than crashes in urban areas. According to the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), about 60

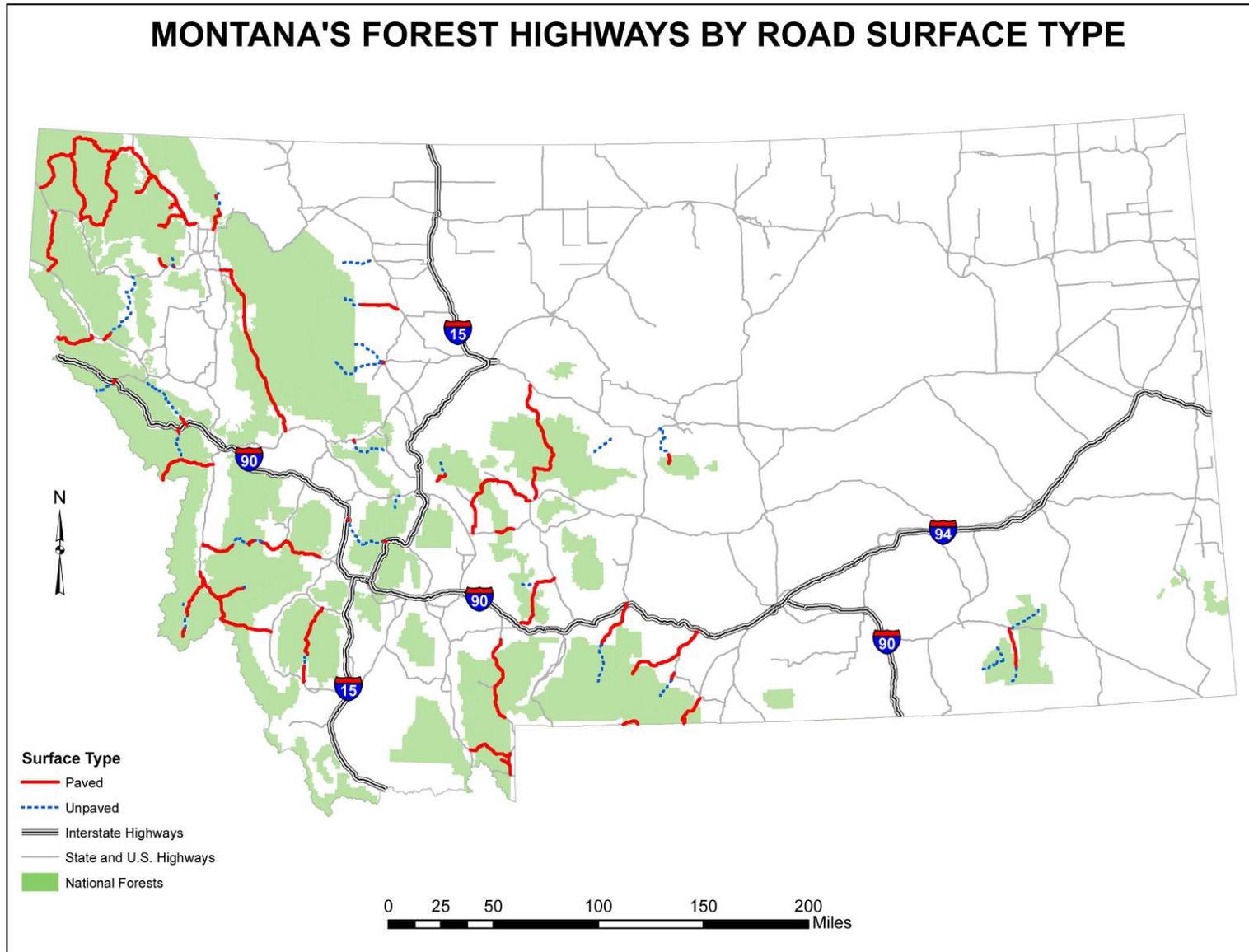
percent of national traffic fatalities in 1999 occurred on rural roads, even though only about 40 percent of vehicle miles traveled were on rural roads (GAO 2001). When adjusted for miles traveled, the fatality rate from crashes on rural roads was nearly 2.5 times greater than the rate on urban roads (GAO 2001). In particular, all rural roads other than interstates had a relatively high number of accident fatalities when adjusted for miles traveled.

In Montana, about 85 percent of traffic accident fatalities in 2009 occurred on rural roads (MDT 2010). The Montana fatality rate from crashes on rural highways was six times higher than the fatality rate on urban highways (MDT 2010).

5.1.4 Congestion

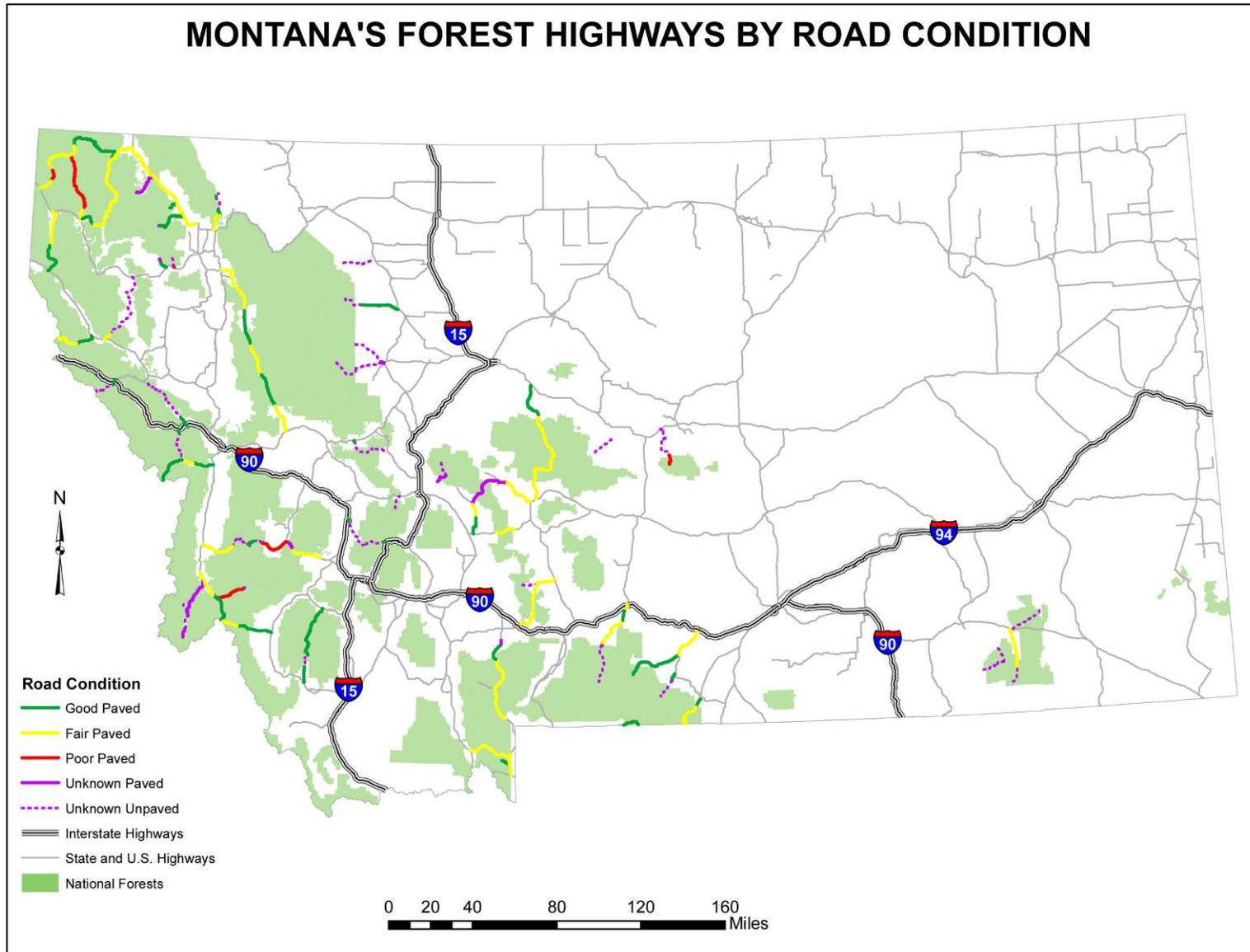
Congestion is usually not an issue on Forest Highways in Montana. The average daily traffic volumes (ADT) of Forest Highways are shown on Figure 8.

As shown on Figure 8, traffic volumes exceed 5,000 ADT on a few parts of Montana's Forest Highway system. With such heavy traffic volumes, some parts of Montana's Forest Highways experience traffic congestion. For highways around Glacier and Yellowstone national parks, regional transportation planning efforts are underway to study congestion and the possible remedies, including alternative modes.



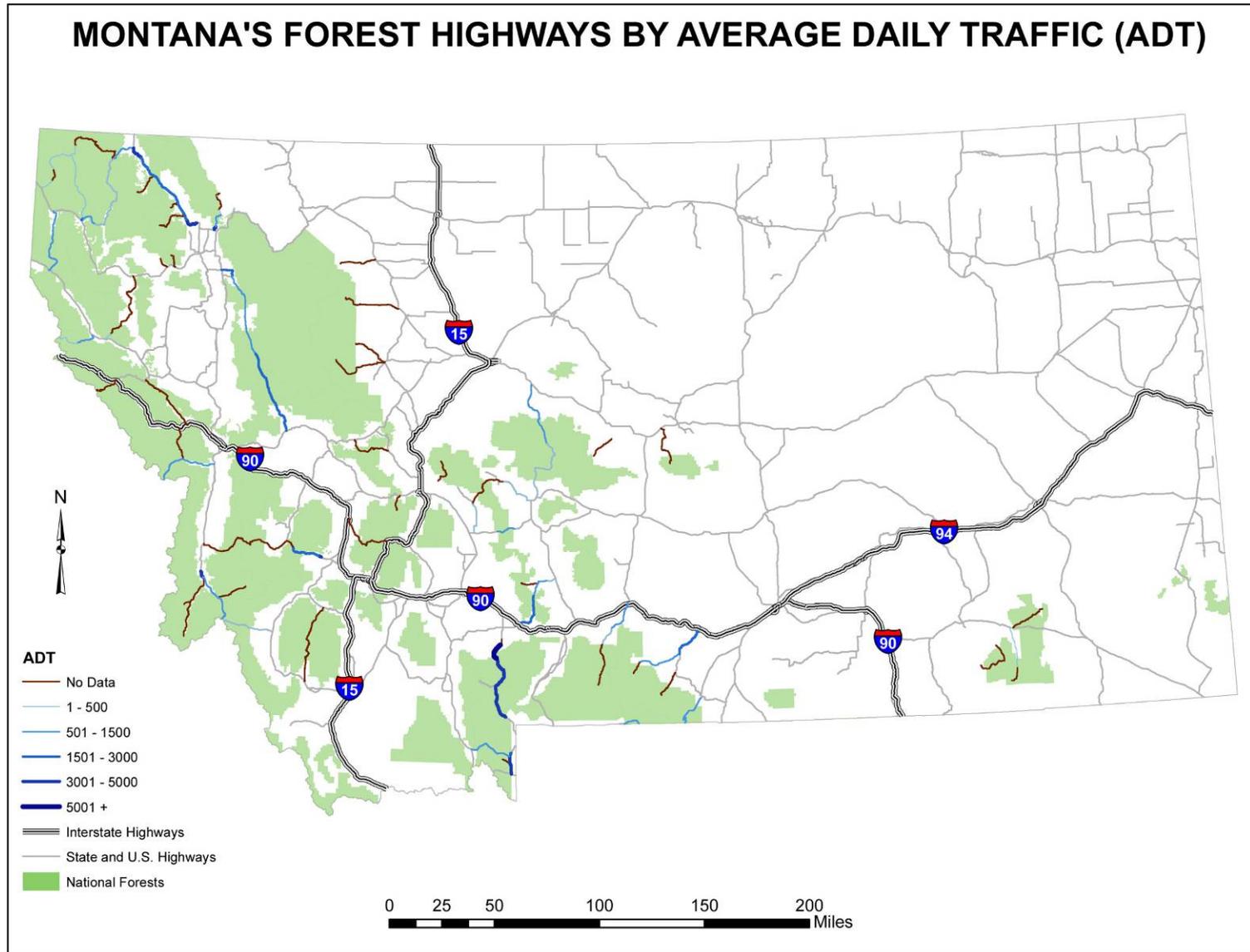
Source: Federal Lands Highway Roadway Inventory, 2004

Figure 6. Montana Forest Highways by Road Surface Type, 2004



Source: Federal Lands Highway Roadway Inventory, 2004

Figure 7. Road Condition of Montana Forest Highways, 2004



Source: Federal Lands Highway Roadway Inventory, 2004

Figure 8. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Montana Forest Highways, 2004

6 Future Planning Activities

This Coordination Plan formalizes the Montana Forest Highway Program project selection process, which begins with issuing a call for projects, and then uses agreed-upon goals and criteria to evaluate, rank, and select projects that will receive Forest Highway Program funding and be advanced for development. To help the Tri-Agency meet the goals and objectives of the Montana Forest Highway Program, this Coordination Plan also outlines planning activities occurring within the 20-year timeframe for the plan, which are described below.

Action: Develop and Update Short-Term Strategic Plans

The Tri-Agency will develop strategic plans and update them every 3 to 5 years. The strategic plans will contain quantifiable targets related to the goals and performance measures in this Coordination Plan. The Tri-Agency will use the performance measures and targets for ranking and selecting projects, and to evaluate how well the Montana Forest Highway Program is achieving its goals and mission. In setting targets, the Tri-Agency will consider the condition of the Forest Highway network; economic, social, and environmental changes and trends; and other information that may signify needs relevant to project ranking and selection.

Action: Periodically Review and Update the Forest Highway Network

The Tri-Agency will periodically review the Montana Forest Highway network to determine whether routes continue to meet the criteria for being designated as Forest Highways. Routes may be added or dropped from the network, as the Tri-Agency deems appropriate.

Action: Periodically Review and Update this Coordination Plan

This Coordination Plan is intended to be a “living” document and, therefore, will need to be reviewed at least every time new legislation is enacted and updated as needed. Updates will be done to reflect changes in policy, rules or regulations, needs, objectives, or other things that may affect the project review and selection process. The Tri-Agency will review this Coordination Plan whenever new federal surface transportation legislation is enacted and will update this plan, as needed, to provide consistency with the act and implementing rules.

Action: Seek Public Input During Coordination Plan Update Process

The Tri-Agency will make the updated plan available for review and comment by the public and other agencies. Comments will be sought through a public review period and agency coordination. Public input will be considered prior to adopting the updated Coordination Plan.

7 Definitions

Federal land management agencies – United States government agencies responsible for management of public lands, including: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS); US Department of the Interior (USDI), Bureau of Land Management; USDI, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); and USDI National Park Service.

Forest Highway – a forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority and open to public travel.

Forest road – a road wholly or partly within, or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest System and which is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources.

Jurisdiction – the legal right or authority to control, operate, regulate use of, maintain, or cause to be maintained, a transportation facility, through ownership or delegated authority. The authority to construct or maintain such a facility may be derived from fee title, easement, written authorization, or permit from a federal agency, or some similar method.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) – an organization designated as the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making pursuant to the provisions of 23 CFR 450.

National Forest System (NFS) – lands and facilities administered by the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), as set forth in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act of 1974, as amended (16 USC 1601 note, 1600–1614). NFS lands include National Forests and National Grasslands; they do not include lands and facilities administered by other federal land management agencies, such as the Bureau of Land Management.

Public Roads or Roads Open to public travel – except during scheduled periods, extreme weather conditions, or emergencies, open to the general public for use with a standard passenger auto, without restrictive gates or prohibitive signs or regulations, other than for general traffic control or restrictions based on size, weight, or class of registration.

Public authority – a federal, state, county, town, or township, Indian tribe, municipal, or other local government or instrumentality with authority to finance, build, operate, or maintain toll or toll-free facilities.

Road safety audit (RSA) – a formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multi-disciplinary, audit team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements in safety for all road users.

Definitions

Statewide transportation plan – the official transportation plan that is: (1) Intermodal in scope, including bicycle and pedestrian features, (2) addresses at least a 20-year planning horizon, and (3) covers the entire State pursuant to the provisions of 23 CFR 450.

Tri-Agency – the group of agencies that administer the Montana Forest Highway Program. This group includes the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration, the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service, and the Montana Department of Transportation.

Draft

8 References

Note: The web links identified below may have changed since the time they were accessed.

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Draft

Appendix A: Montana Forest Highway Inventory

Draft

Appendix A: Montana Forest Highway Program Inventory

The following table lists the designated Forest Highways in Montana as of April 28, 2010.

FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
5	Troy-Noxon	From the intersection with State Hwy 200 at approx. RP 10, approx. 4 miles northwest of Noxon, northerly 34.7 miles on State Hwy 56 to the intersection with US Hwy 2 approx. 3 miles southeast of Troy.	Kootenai	Lincoln Sanders	18.2 16.5	State	34.7	34.7
7	Thompson Pass-Prospect Creek	From the intersection with State Hwy 200 near Thompson Falls, westerly 22.1 miles on State Hwy 471 to the Montana - Idaho state line at Thompson Pass.	Lolo	Sanders	22.1	State	22.1	22.1
11	Lewis and Clark	From the Montana - Idaho state line at Lolo Pass, easterly 32.6 miles on US Hwy 12 to the intersection with US Hwy 93 at Lolo.	Lolo	Missoula	32.6	State	32.6	32.6
12	Eureka-Whitefish	From the intersection with Lion Mountain Rd and Nelson Lane, approximately 1 mile west of the western city limits of Whitefish, northwesterly 53.1 miles on US Hwy 93 to the intersection with State Hwy 37 approximately 2 miles north of Eureka.	Kootenai	Lincoln Flathead	26.0 25.6	State	51.6	51.6
15	Seeley-Swan	From the intersection with State Hwy 200 in Clearwater Junction, northerly 91.1 miles on State Hwy 83 to the intersection with State Hwy 35, approx. 2 miles north of Bigfork.	Flathead	Flathead Lake Missoula	9.0 33.8 48.3	State	91.1	91.1
17	Georgetown Lake	From the intersection with Hemlock Street at the west city limit of Anaconda, westerly 21.3 miles on State Hwy 1 to the intersection with State Hwy 38 near Porters Corner.	Bitterroot	Deer Lodge Granite	17.2 4.1	State	21.3	21.3
19	Darby-Lost Trail	From the Montana - Idaho state line at Lost Trail Pass, northerly 30.0 miles on US Hwy 93 to the intersection with Gary Allen Lane and Warren Rd at the southern city limits of Darby.	Bitterroot	Ravalli	30.0	State	30.0	30.0

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
20	Bitterroot-Big Hole	From the intersection with US Hwy 93 and State Hwy 43 at the Montana - Idaho state line near Chief Joseph Pass, easterly 26.2 miles, excluding the 1.2 miles in Idaho, on State Hwy 43 to the intersection with State Hwy 278 in Wisdom.	Beaverhead-Deer Lodge	Beaverhead	26.2	State	26.2	26.2
29	Lakeside-Nelson	From Lakeside Resort, 8.6 miles northeast of Helena, northeasterly 6.4 miles on State Hwy 280 to York, then northwesterly 8.0 along Nelson Road (L-25-103) to Nelson.	Helena	Lewis & Clark	14.4	State County	3.4 11.0	14.4
32	Kings Hill	From the intersection with US Hwy 12 approx. 3 miles northeast of White Sulphur Springs, northerly 71.3 miles on US Hwy 89 to the intersection with US Hwy 87 near Armington.	Lewis & Clark	Meagher Cascade	28.5 42.8	State	71.3	71.3
42	West Gallatin	From the intersection with US Hwy 287, northerly 53.8 miles on US Hwy 191 to the intersection with Gooch Hill Rd in Gallatin Gateway excluding the segment in Yellowstone National Park (approx 14.5 miles).	Gallatin	Gallatin	53.8	State	53.8	53.8
45	Madison River	From the intersection with US Hwy 20 in West Yellowstone, northerly and then westerly 30.8 miles along US Hwy 191/287 to the intersection with State Hwy 87.	Gallatin	Gallatin Madison	24.6 6.2	State	8.4 22.4	30.8
51	Otter Creek	From the intersection with US Hwy 212 approx. 3 miles east of Ashland, southerly 27.8 miles on State Hwy 484 to the intersection with Bear Creek Road (Local Road 123) near Otter.	Custer	Powder River	27.8	State County	20.0 7.8	27.8
56	Thompson River	From the intersection with State Hwy 200, approx. 5 miles east of Thompson Falls, northeasterly 44.2 miles on State Hwy 556 to the intersection with US Hwy 2.	Lolo	Flathead Sanders	6.0 38.2	State County	4.1 40.1	44.2
57	Libby-Eureka	From the intersection with US Hwy 2 in Libby, easterly then northerly 67.0 miles on State Hwy 37 to the intersection with US Hwy 93 approx. 2 miles north of Eureka.	Kootenai	Lincoln	67.0	State	67.0	67.0

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
59	Beartooth Highway	From the east boundary of Yellowstone National Park, easterly 32.0 miles on US Hwy 212 to the intersection with State Hwy 308 in Red Lodge, excluding the segment in Wyoming (approx. 34.7 miles).	Custer	Carbon Park	23.5 8.5	State Nat'l Park Service	23.3 8.7	32.0
61	North Fork Flathead	From the intersection with US Hwy 2 in Columbia Falls, northerly 22.6 miles on State Hwy 486 to the intersection with Camas Road in Glacier National Park (T33N R20W S14).	Flathead	Flathead	22.6	State	22.6	22.6
62	Yaak River	From the intersection with US Hwy 2, approx. 14 miles northwest of Troy, northeasterly 29.3 miles on State Hwy 508 to Yaak then northeasterly 42.7 miles along NFSR 92 (L-27-1) to the intersection with State Hwy 37 approx. 8 miles southwest of Rexford.	Kootenai	Lincoln	72.0	State County	29.6 42.4	72.0
63	Stemple Pass	From the intersection with State Hwy 200 in Lincoln, southerly and then easterly 23.1 miles on Stemple Pass Road (L-25-500) to the intersection with State Hwy 279 in Wilborn.	Helena	Lewis & Clark	23.1	County	23.1	23.1
64	Boulder River	From the intersection with US Hwy 191 in Big Timber, southwesterly 25.7 miles on State Hwy 298 , and then southerly 22.4 miles along NFSR 6639 to the termini at the campground at the East Fork Boulder River.	Custer	Sweet Grass Park	42.3 5.8	State County	25.8 22.3	48.1
65	Townsend-Confederate Gulch-Smith River	From the intersection with US Hwy 89 in White Sulphur Springs, northwesterly 18.2 miles on State Hwy 360 to the intersection with Benton Gulch Road (L-30-2), then westerly 12.5 miles along Benton Gulch Road (L-30-2) to the intersection with Confederate Gulch Road (L-4-11), then southerly 11.6 miles along Confederate Gulch Road (L-4-11) to intersection with State Hwy 284, and then southerly 15.6 miles on State Hwy 284 to the intersection with US 12 in Townsend.	Helena	Broadwater Meagher	27.0 30.9	State County County State	18.4 12.3 11.6 15.6	57.9
66	West Fork Bitterroot	From the intersection with US Hwy 93 south of Darby, southerly 14.4 miles on State Hwy 473 through the town of Conner, and then southerly 19.7 miles on W. Fork Road (L-41-701) to Woods Creek Road (NFSR 5669, L-41-764).	Bitterroot	Ravalli	34.1	State County	14.4 19.7	34.1

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
67	Pipe Creek	From the intersection of State Hwy 37, approx. 1 mile north of Libby, northerly 35.9 miles on State Hwy 567 to the intersection with State Hwy 508 at Yaak.	Kootenai	Lincoln	35.9	State	35.9	35.9
68	Fortine Creek	From the intersection with US Hwy 93, approx. 2 miles southeast of Fortine, southeasterly 12.9 miles along NFSR 36/Fortine Creek Road to intersection with NFSR 3550 (Former Local Road 338).	Kootenai	Lincoln	12.9	County	12.9	12.9
69	Ninemile	From the intersection with I-90 (6 miles east of Alberton) at the Ninemile interchange (RP 82.6), northwesterly 15.3 miles on Ninemile Road (L-32-3) to an intersection with Flothill Rd (NFSR 412), then northwesterly 10.6 miles on Flothill Rd. (NFSR 412, L-32-7) through Seigel Pass to Missoula - Sanders county boundary, and then southwesterly 8.6 miles on Seigel Creek Rd. (L-45-306) to the intersection with State Hwy 135.	Lolo	Missoula Sanders	25.9 8.6	County County	15.3 10.6 8.6	34.5
70	Bernice-Deer Lodge	From the intersection with I-15, 5 miles west of Basin (Exit 151), westerly 15.3 miles along Boulder River Road to the Jefferson - Deer Lodge county boundary, and then northwesterly 15.7 miles along Boulder Road to the intersection with I-90 in Deer Lodge.	Beaverhead-Deer Lodge	Jefferson Deer Lodge Powell	15.3 3.0 12.7	County	31.0	31.0
71	Petty Creek	From the intersection with I-90 (Exit 77), approx. 1 mile east of Alberton, southerly 17.6 miles along Petty Creek Road (L-32-100) to the intersection with US Hwy 12.	Lolo	Missoula	17.6	County	17.6	17.6
72	Star Meadows	From the intersection with US Hwy 93, southwesterly 1.7 miles on Farm to Market Road (L-15-801) to the intersection with Tally Lake Road (L-15-883), then westerly 3.3 miles on Tally Lake Road (L-15-883) to the intersection with Local Road 884, then westerly 2.6 miles on Local Road 884 to the intersection with Local Road 882, then southerly 3.0 miles on Local Road 882 to the intersection with Star Meadows Rd (L-15-802), and then southwesterly 7.8 miles on Star Meadows Road (L-15-802) to the intersection with Griffin Creek Road (NFSR 538).	Flathead	Flathead	18.4	County	1.7 3.3 2.6 3.0 7.8	18.4

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
73	Pioneer Mountain Scenic Byway	From the intersection with State Hwy 43 at Wise River, southerly 44.8 miles along Wise River Polaris Rd (L-1-2) to the intersection with State Hwy 278 east of Polaris.	Beaverhead -Deer Lodge	Beaverhead	44.8	County	44.8	44.8
74	North Fork Teton	From the intersection with US 89, approx. 5 miles northwest of Choteau, westerly 30.2 miles along Teton Pass Road (L-50-202) to the Teton Pass Ski Area.	Lewis & Clark	Teton	30.2	County	30.2	30.2
75	Sun River	From the intersection of State Hwy 435 and State Hwy 287 in Augusta, northwesterly 18.6 miles on Sun Canyon Road (L-25-401) to the east boundary of the Lewis and Clark National Forest.	Lewis & Clark	Lewis & Clark	18.6	County	18.6	18.6
76	CMR Memorial Way	From the intersection with State Hwy 239 in Utica, southwesterly 12.6 miles along Pig Eye Road (L-23-1) to the intersection with NFSR 821 near the east boundary of the Lewis and Clark National Forest and the Judith Ranger Station.	Lewis & Clark	Judith Basin	12.6	County	12.6	12.6
77	Benchmark Road	From the intersection with State Hwy 435 and State Hwy 287 in Augusta, westerly 14.5 miles along Benchmark Rd (L-25-401) to the intersection with Local Road 402 at T20N R8W S30, and then northwesterly 16.0 miles on Benchmark Rd (L-25-402) to termini at the work center.	Lewis & Clark	Lewis & Clark	30.5	County	14.5 16.0	30.5
78	East Fork Bitterroot	From the intersection with US Hwy 93 in Sula, northeasterly 15.8 miles along East Fork Road (L-41-601) to the USFS East Fork Work Center in T2N R17W S16.	Bitterroot	Ravalli	15.8	State County	14.1 1.7	15.8
79	Good Creek Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 93, approx. 1 mile south of Olney, westerly and then southerly 6.0 miles on Good Creek Road (NFSR 60) to the intersection with Local Rd 882 at T32N R24W S27.	Flathead	Flathead	6.0	County	6.0	6.0

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
80	Rainbow Point Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 287, approx. 5 miles north of West Yellowstone, northwesterly 4.6 miles along Rainbow Point Road (NFSR 610) to the intersection with local Rd. 626 in T12S R4E S25	Gallatin	Gallatin	4.6	County	4.6	4.6
81	Ashley Lake Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 2, approx. 4.5 miles east of Marion, northerly 7.6 miles on Ashley Lake Road (NFSR 679) to the intersection with a Local Rd 854 at the south shore of Ashley Lake.	Flathead	Flathead	7.6	County	7.6	7.6
82	Pleasant Valley	From the intersection with US Hwy 2 in Marion, approx. 18 miles west of Kalispell, northwesterly 5.8 miles along Pleasant Valley Road (NFSR 543) to the intersection with Local Rd. 867 approx. 1 mile north of Little Bitterroot Lake.	Flathead	Flathead	5.8	County	5.8	5.8
83	Stillwater River Road	From the intersection with State Hwy 421 south of Columbus, southwesterly 16.0 miles on State Hwy 78 to the intersection with State Hwy 419 approx. 3 miles south of Absarokee, then westerly 20.4 miles on State Hwy 419 to the intersection with Nye Road (L-48-207) west of Nye, and then southwesterly 8.3 miles on Nye Road (L-48-207) to Woodbine Campground.	Custer	Stillwater	44.7	State County	16.0 20.4 8.3	44.7
84	Little Joe Road	From the intersection with Mullan Gulch Road just west of Saint Regis in T18N R28W S24, southwesterly 16.2 miles on Little Joe Road (L-31-5) to the Montana - Idaho state line.	Lolo	Mineral	16.2	State County	0.9 15.3	16.2
86	Roscoe-East Rosebud Lake	From the intersection with State Hwy 78 in Roscoe, southwesterly 14.4 miles along East Rosebud Road (L-5-7) to the East Rosebud Trailhead near Rosebud Lake.	Custer	Carbon	14.4	County	14.4	14.4

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FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
87	Crystal Lake Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 87/191, approx. 9 miles west of Lewiston, southeasterly 1.9 miles on McMillan Road (L-14-307) to an intersection with Beaver Creek Road (L-14-301), then southerly 9.9 miles on Beaver Creek Road (L-14-301) to an intersection with Crystal Lake Road (L-14-309), and then southerly 12.5 miles on Crystal Lake Road (L-14-309) to Crystal Lake.	Lewis & Clark	Fergus	24.3	County	1.9 9.9 12.5	24.3
90	East Fork Otter Creek Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 212, approx. 4.5 miles east of Ashland, northeasterly 18.3 miles along East Fork Otter - Stacy Road (L-38-5) to the intersection with Little Pumpkin Creek Road (L-38-14) in T2S R27E S1.	Custer	Powder River	18.3	County	18.3	18.3
91	Skalkaho Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 93, approx. 3 miles south of Hamilton, easterly 53.9 miles on State Hwy 38 to the intersection with State Hwy 1 just south of Porters Corner.	Bitterroot, Beaverhead -Deer Lodge	Ravalli Granite	16.6 37.3	State	53.9	53.9
92	Bozeman-Wilsall	From Bozeman Urban Limits, northeasterly 34.5 miles on State Hwy 86 to the intersection with US Hwy 89 near Wilsall.	Gallatin	Gallatin Park	27.8 6.7	State	34.5	34.5
93	Swift Dam Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 89, approx. 0.25 miles north of Dupuyer, westerly 18.1 miles along Swift Dam Road (L-37-313) to Swift Dam.	Lewis & Clark	Pondera	18.1	County	18.1	18.1

FH No.	Name	Description	Forest	County(ies)	Segment Length (miles)	Jurisdiction	Segment Length (miles)	Total Length (miles)
94	Odell Creek, East Fork Hanging Woman Creek Road	From the intersection with State Hwy 566, approx. 12 miles south of Ashland in T4S R44E S30, southeasterly 11.1 miles along O'Dell Creek Road (L-44-520) to an intersection with Haystacker Road, then southwesterly 2.0 miles along O'Dell Creek Rd (L-44-522) to an intersection with Timber Creek Road (L-44-521) in T6S R44E S3, then westerly and southerly 5.7 miles on Timber Creek Rd. (L-44-521) to an intersection with East Fork Hanging River Road (L-44-501) in T6S R44E S16, and then westerly 5.4 miles on E. Fork Hanging River Road (L-44-501) to an intersection State Hwy 556 at Birney.	Custer	Rosebud	24.2	County	11.1 2.0 5.7 5.4	24.2
96	Flathead Pass Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 86, westerly 9.0 miles along Flathead Creek Road (L-16-124) to the intersection with Local Road 126 in T3N R5E S34.	Gallatin	Gallatin	9.0	County	9.0	9.0
97	Deep Creek Canyon Road	From RP 13.5 on US Hwy 12, east of Townsend, easterly 9.6 miles on US Hwy 12 to the Broadwater County line at RP 23.5	Helena	Broadwater	9.6	State	9.6	9.6
98	Rimini Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 12, approx. 8 miles west of Helena, southerly 7.2 miles along Rimini Road to the town of Rimini.	Helena	Lewis & Clark	7.2	County	7.2	7.2
99	Nez Perce Road	From the intersection with State Hwy 473, southwesterly 3.8 miles along Nez Perce Road (L-41-702) to an intersection with Soda Springs Road just east of Little West Fork Bridge.	Bitterroot	Ravalli	3.8	County	3.8	3.8
100	Trout Creek Road	From the intersection with State Hwy 280 in York, northeasterly 6.5 miles on York Road (L-25-102) to the termini at the Vigilante Creek Campground.	Helena	Lewis & Clark	6.5	County	6.5	6.5
101	West Fork Rock Creek Road	From the intersection with US Hwy 212 in Red Lodge, westerly 7.2 miles on W. Fork Rock Road (NFSR 2071) to the Basin Creek Campground intersection.	Custer	Carbon	7.2	County	7.2	7.2
Total Miles							1,527.4	

Appendix B: Montana Forest Highway Program Background

Forest Highway Program History

In 1891, Congress authorized the creation of *Forest Reserves*, now called *National Forests*. Forests were to be conserved to assure a permanent national timber supply; to preserve scenic and wilderness areas for recreational use by the public; and to safeguard the steady flow of streams that supplied water for domestic, farm, and industrial use.

Federal participation in forest road construction began when Congress passed the Federal-Aid Road Act in 1916. This act appropriated \$10 million (\$1 million per year for 10 years) for the "...survey, construction, and maintenance of roads and trails within or only partly within the National Forests when necessary for the use and development of resources upon which communities within and adjacent to the National Forests are dependent..."

It was not until the passage of the Federal Highway Act of 1921 that two types of forest roads were defined:

- Forest Development Roads - those forest roads that are needed primarily for management of the National Forests
- Forest Highways (FH) - those forest roads which must serve the National Forests and also serve the communities within and adjacent to the National Forests

During the first 50+ years of the program, most of the funds were expended on routes which were of primary importance to the states, counties, or communities within or adjacent to the National Forests. Most of those routes were of statewide importance and were then, or later became, State Primary Highways.

The 1978 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) changed the direction of the Forest Highway Program by redefining Forest Roads, Forest Development Roads, and Forest Highways:

The term "forest road or trail" means a road or trail wholly or partly within, or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest system and which is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest system and the use and development of its resources.

The term "forest development road and trail" means a forest road or trail under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service."

The term "Forest Highway" means a forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority, and open to public travel.

A primary effect of these new definitions was increased Forest Highway Program emphasis on local roads with less emphasis on state highways. This was possible because requirements that

such routes be "...of primary importance to the States, Counties, or communities... and on the Federal-Aid System" had been eliminated.

Although many miles of roads have met the requirements for Forest Highway designation, funding for their improvement has remained in short supply. Congress had authorized an amount of \$33 million for each year from 1955 to 1982. Those funds were made available to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for expenditure in the various States according to an apportionment formula based on the area and value of the National Forests in each State.

The 1982 STAA increased the annual funding for FH from \$33 million to \$50 million. The act also directed FHWA and the USFS to jointly develop new regulations for the administration of the Forest Highway Program. The regulations, which were issued on March 11, 1982, contained specific requirements for the designation of Forest Highway routes and for the selection of projects for Forest Highway Program funding. In addition, the 1982 STAA changed the method of distributing the funds, specifying that:

On October 1 of each fiscal year, the Secretary shall allocate the sums authorized to be appropriated for such fiscal year for forest highways according to the relative needs of the various elements of the National Forest system as determined by the Secretary, taking into consideration the need for access as identified by the Secretary of Agriculture through renewable resource and land use planning, and the impact of such planning on existing transportation facilities.

This temporarily changed the distribution of Forest Highway funds from an apportionment formula to an allocation based on needs. To assist in implementing this change, FHWA undertook an inventory and needs study in 1983 to determine the costs to improve the newly designated Forest Highways in each state.

In addition, various task groups made up of USFS and FHWA personnel identified other factors that could be used to determine Forest Highway Program fund allocation. Those factors were: value of forest resources, recreational visitor days (RVDs), volume of timber harvested, and acres of National Forest. Using those factors along with costs from the inventory, FHWA and USFS developed a new formula to be used in allocating funds. The formula was used to allocate Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 1984 Forest Highway Program funds.

Before the new formula was formally adopted, a provision was added to the 1982 STAA that required the Forest Highway funds to be allocated using the area/value formula for 66 percent of the annual authorization and the new FHWA/USFS formula for the remaining 34 percent. That provision was used to allocate Forest Highway Program funds in FY 1985 and FY 1986.

The 1987 Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act (STURAA) increased the annual Forest Highway Program authorization from \$50 million to \$55 million for FY 1987 through FY 1991. The funds were allocated the same as in FY 1985 and FY 1986, using the area/value formula for 66 percent of the annual authorization and the FHWA/USFS formula for the remaining 34 percent.

The 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) combined the Forest Highway Program and Public Lands under the Public Lands Highway Program. Sixty-six (66) percent of the Public Lands Highway Program funds was allocated for use on Forest Highways using the same formula applied in FY 1987 through FY 1991. The formula used the area/value formula for 66 percent of the funding and the FHWA/USFS formula for the remaining 34 percent.

The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) did not alter any of the allocation formulas for 66 percent of the Public Lands Highway Program funds, but it did increase the amount of funding for Forest Highways. The Forest Highway Program funds available were as shown in the table below.

Year	TEA-21 Forest Highway Funds
1998	\$ 129.4 Million
1999	\$ 162.4 Million
2000	\$ 162.4 Million
2001	\$ 162.4 Million
2002	\$ 162.4 Million
2003	\$ 162.4 Million

The remaining 34 percent of the Public Lands Highway funds are designated as discretionary Public Lands Highway funds. There is no legislatively prescribed formula for the distribution of those discretionary funds.

The discretionary Public Lands Highway funds available were as shown in the table below.

Year	TEA-21 Public Lands Highway Funds
1998	\$ 66.6 Million
1999	\$ 83.6 Million
2000	\$ 83.6 Million
2001	\$ 83.6 Million
2002	\$ 83.6 Million
2003	\$ 83.6 Million

Public Lands Highway Program discretionary funds are sometimes used to supplement Forest Highway Program funding of Forest Highway projects. There are legislative requirements for Public Lands Highways. To be eligible for discretionary Public Lands Highway Program funds, a proposed project must be:

1. A forest road under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel.
2. A highway through inappropriate or unreserved public lands, non-taxable Indian lands, or other Federal reservations under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel.

Approval to use discretionary Public Lands Highway funds is at the discretion of the Secretary of Transportation and has been delegated to the FHWA. The discretionary Public Lands Highway Program is administered by the state highway agency. The projects are proposed by the state and sent through the FHWA Federal-Aid Division Office. The project list is then forwarded to FHWA Headquarters in Washington, DC, where FHWA staff prioritizes the projects. Recommendations are made to the Federal Highway Administrator, who makes the final selection and approves projects for funding.

Discretionary Public Lands Highway Program funds do not require local matching funds, but supplemental funding of projects is encouraged. The discretionary funds are available for preliminary engineering and construction, but not for right-of-way acquisition. TEA-21 stated that, if a state received these funds, there would be no reduction in Federal-Aid highway funding to that state. Funds must be obligated in the fiscal year approved or they are withdrawn and redistributed.

TEA-21 also legislated the following program changes:

1. Allowed Public Lands funds to be used for the state/local share for Federal-Aid Highway funded projects.
2. Reduced the administrative takedown to 1.5%.
3. Placed an annual limit on Public Lands Highway funds.
4. Provided full obligation limitation for future fiscal year carryover funds.
5. Authorized funds, which exceed the obligation limitation for FY 1998 to 2003, to be distributed to the states as Surface Transportation Program funds. Those funds lose their funding designation and are not available for obligation by federal land management agencies.

In 2004 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was passed. It continued the Forest Highway Program allocation procedure established in ISTEA and currently found in 23 USC 202(b)(2), as amended by section 1119(d) of SAFETEA-LU. SAFETEA-LU also added three new eligible activities for Forest Highway Program funds: Maintenance, Hunting and Fishing Access Signs, and Aquatic Organism Passage projects.

The Forest Highway funds available in SAFETEA-LU were as shown in the following table.

Year	SAFETEA-LU Forest Highway Funds
2004	\$162.4 Million
2005	\$171.6 Million
2006	\$184.8 Million
2007	\$184.8 Million
2008	\$191.4 Million
2009	\$198.0 Million

Allocations for the Montana Forest Highway Program, from 2002 to 2009, were as follows:

Year	Montana Forest Highway Allocations
2002	\$10,500,000
2003	\$10,500,000
2004	\$10,500,000
2005	\$10,465,000
2006	\$10,729,000
2007	\$11,701,000
2008	\$11,561,000
2009	\$11,561,000
2010	\$11,561,000
Annual Average, 2002-2010	\$11,009,000

Because of the legislative and regulatory changes over the past decade, there is now more county involvement in the program. Providing access to National Forests often places transportation needs on the local roads connecting National Forests to the main state highways. Therefore, the objective of the Forest Highway Program has been clarified, i.e., to construct or improve roads serving the National Forest and its resources, and which connect the National Forest to the main state transportation network.

Forest Highway Designation

Forest Highways are designated as such if they meet certain criteria. The list of designated Forest Highways is not fixed. Routes can be added or removed at any time. Forest Highway route designation may be requested by the state department of transportation, by the USFS, or by a county through the state. Routes are designated by the FHWA, Western Federal Lands Highway Division Engineer with concurrence of the USFS and state department of transportation. Routes do not have to be designated before a project can be proposed, but a route must be designated before Forest Highway funds are expended on it.

Route designation proposals must contain information on the criteria listed below and must be coordinated with the local USFS representatives who can provide information on USFS use of the proposed route. USFS support for the proposed designation is very important.

The Forest Service Manual Chapter 7700

7741.1 - Route Designation: Forest highways are a special classification of forest roads. They are specifically designated State or local government roads that meet the criteria listed in 23 CFR 660.105. The designation of forest highways is not intended to form a "system" of roads. Instead, the purpose of the designation is to identify State and local government roads that qualify for construction and reconstruction funding under the forest highway program.

The challenge is that the Forest Highway routes in Montana are not by themselves a "system" of roads, but are part of the state's road system. Also, Montana Forest Highways are ideally part of a seamless system of travel from, for example, an urban area, interstate highway, or state highway to the heart of a National Forest. Many roads in Montana will meet the definition of a Forest Highway; the key is what roads need all or part of the Forest Highway Program to truly meet the needs of accessing the National Forests.

To be designated as a Forest Highway, a route must:

1. Be wholly or partially within, or adjacent to, and serving the National Forest System (NFS) (23 USC 101).
2. Be necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS (23 USC 101).
3. Be necessary for the use and development of NFS resources (23 USC 101).
4. Be under the jurisdiction of a cooperator and open to public travel (23 CFR 660. 105).
5. Provide a connection between NFS resources and one of the following (23 CFR 660. 105):
 - a. A safe and adequate public road
 - b. Communities
 - c. Shipping points
 - d. Markets dependent on these resources
6. Serve one of the following (23 CFR S660.105):
 - a. Local needs such as schools, mail delivery, commercial supply
 - b. Access to private property within the NFS
 - c. A preponderance of NFS generated traffic
 - d. NFS generated traffic that has a significant impact on road design or construction.

The Tri-Agency periodically conducts a network analysis for the all the designated Forest Highway routes within the state. This analysis evaluates each route to assure it continues to

meet the designation criteria above. The following additional guidance has been developed as part of this analysis:

- Preponderance of traffic as a designation criterion is important when the other criteria do not apply. Preponderance is not rigidly defined as a percentage of total traffic. It is intended to address situations where National Forest System traffic constitutes a significant portion of the road use, such as in a major resort or ski area.
- Forest Highway designation is appropriate when the National Forest System traffic volumes and types have a substantial impact on the road design and construction.
- Forest Highway designations should be designed so that the Forest Highway related traffic gets all the way to the primary highway. Forest Highway termini should begin (or end) at the next highest functional level classification when applicable.
- A Forest Highway designation may include segments inside of the urbanized area boundary (urban functional classification), however, urban sections are generally not eligible for Forest Highway funding unless the use from National Forest generated traffic is causing the need for the project. Project proponents would need to clearly convey what the Forest Highway funds would be used for in the urban sections by stating how the Forest Highway traffic generated from the forest use or resource extraction brings about the need for the proposed project. For example, log or chip truck traffic may require modifications to an intersection or the addition of a left turn lane. Enhancement type projects serving National Forest visitors (gateways, restroom, kiosks , etc.) would also be an example of an eligible project for Forest Highway funding within an urbanized area.
- Generally Forest Highway Routes do not allow designation or funding for interstate construction.
- Generally the Forest Highway Routes prefer the through routes to be designated versus designating a segment at each end. The goal is to designate logical routes that are seamless to the Forest related traffic.
- Forest Highway routes that connect to a Public Forest Service Road or major USFS arterial are preferred to validate the transportation system need.
- Generally the goal is to avoid duplication of access to similar areas of the forest. Consider the following in designation:
 - a. Does your route proposed a duplicate access?
 - b. Is there a currently designated route that could be dropped, after the new route is designated?
 - c. What other public roads serve the same or area designation?
 - d. Are both routes providing valuable access to the Forest?

A clear understanding of the kind of forest related traffic using the route (mining, recreation, forest, grazing) is essential.

Appendix C: Roles of the Partner Agencies

Role of the Montana Department of Transportation

1. Proposes routes for Forest Highway designation.
2. Reviews routes proposed by the USFS for Forest Highway designation.
3. Identifies needs and provides information on State Forest Highway routes and projects.
4. Represents the counties' interests in proposing Forest Highway routes and projects.
5. Proposes projects for inclusion in the Forest Highway Program.
6. Jointly selects, with FHWA and the USFS, projects for the Forest Highway Program.
7. Incorporates the Federal Lands Highway Program into the annual STIP.
8. Appoints a member to the Interagency Project Team to study location alternatives and to obtain environmental clearance for a project.
9. Obtains necessary right-of-way (for State Forest Highway projects) at State expense and maintains completed construction.
10. If applicable, enters into a project agreement with FHWA.
11. Concurs in Forest Highway project Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&Es) on state routes.
12. Inspects and approves final construction on State routes.
13. May contribute cooperative funds to assist the construction or improvement of a Forest Highway Project.

Role of the USDA Forest Service

1. Identifies needs and provides forest resource information as required for route and project support.
2. Proposes routes for Forest Highway designation.
3. Reviews routes proposed by the State for designation.
4. Coordinates with the State and counties on proposed Forest Highway routes and projects.
5. Proposes projects for inclusion in the Forest Highway Program.
6. Jointly selects projects for inclusion in the Forest Highway Program with FHWA and MDT.
7. Appoints a member to the Interagency Project Team to study location alternatives and to obtain environmental clearance for a project.
8. If applicable, enters into a project agreement with FHWA.
9. Concurs in project PS&Es.

10. Inspects and approves final construction.
11. May contribute cooperative funds to assist in the construction or improvement of a Forest Highway Project.

Role of Western Federal Lands Highway Division

1. Administers program funds.
2. Reviews and designates proposed Forest Highway routes.
3. Develops PIR.
4. Jointly selects projects for the Forest Highway Program with the State and USFS.
5. Approves the program of projects.
6. Drafts project agreement.
7. Appoints a member to the Interagency Project Team to study location alternatives and to obtain environmental clearance for a project.
8. Designs the project and approves the PS&Es.
9. Advertises, awards, and administers the construction contract.
10. Makes final acceptance of Forest Highway construction projects.
11. Coordinates with the FHWA Montana Division office to assure consistency with other FHWA transportation planning processes and projects in the state.

Role of the County

While counties do not have a direct role in the decision-making process of the Forest Highway Program, they are involved in the program because many of the present Forest Highway needs are on roads under the jurisdiction of and maintained by counties. The county:

1. Works with the local forest engineer and State Highway representatives in identifying candidate Forest Highway routes and projects and coordinates with the local forest engineer and State to ensure that they support the proposed route or project. The State Highway agency will propose the county project or route to the Tri-Agency group.
2. May contribute cooperative funds to assist in construction or improvement of a Forest Highway project.
3. Role will expand to include the following when a project on a county road is selected for Forest Highway funding:
 - a. Enters into a project agreement with FHWA.
 - b. Cooperates with FHWA and USFS in the development of the project.
 - c. Appoints a member to the Interagency Project Team to study location alternatives and to obtain environmental clearance for a project.

- d. Concurs in the project PS&Es.
 - e. Inspects and approves final construction.
4. Accepts jurisdiction of and maintains the project when construction is completed.

Draft

Appendix D: 23 CFR 660, Subpart A – Forest Highways

Authority:

16 USC 1608–1610; 23 USC 101, 202, 204, and 315; 49 CFR 1.48.

Source:

59 FR 30300, June 13, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

§660.101 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to implement the Forest Highway (FH) Program which enhances local, regional, and national benefits of FHs funded under the public lands highway category of the coordinated Federal Lands Highway Program. As provided in 23 U.S.C. 202, 203, and 204, the program, developed in cooperation with State and local agencies, provides safe and adequate transportation access to and through National Forest System (NFS) lands for visitors, recreationists, resource users, and others which is not met by other transportation programs. Forest highways assist rural and community economic development and promote tourism and travel.

§660.103 Definitions.

In addition to the definitions in 23 U.S.C. 101(a), the following apply to this subpart:

Cooperator means a non-Federal public authority which has jurisdiction and maintenance responsibility for a FH.

Forest highway means a forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority and open to public travel.

Forest road means a road wholly or partly within, or adjacent to, and serving the NFS and which is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and the use and development of its resources.

Jurisdiction means the legal right or authority to control, operate, regulate use of, maintain, or cause to be maintained, a transportation facility, through ownership or delegated authority. The authority to construct or maintain such a facility may be derived from fee title, easement, written authorization, or permit from a Federal agency, or some similar method.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) means that organization designated as the forum for cooperative transportation decision making pursuant to the provisions of part 450 of this title.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan means the official intermodal transportation plan that is developed and adopted through the metropolitan transportation planning process for the metropolitan planning area.

National Forest System means lands and facilities administered by the Forest Service (FS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, as set forth in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act of 1974, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1601 note, 1600–1614).

Open to public travel means except during scheduled periods, extreme weather conditions, or emergencies, open to the general public for use with a standard passenger auto, without restrictive gates or prohibitive signs or regulations, other than for general traffic control or restrictions based on size, weight, or class of registration.

Public authority means a Federal, State, county, town, or township, Indian tribe, municipal or other local government or instrumentality with authority to finance, build, operate, or maintain toll or toll-free facilities.

Public lands highway means: (1) A forest road under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel or (2) any highway through unappropriated or unreserved public lands, nontaxable Indian lands, or other Federal reservations under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel.

Public road means any road or street under the jurisdiction of and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel.

Renewable resources means those elements within the scope of responsibilities and authorities of the FS as defined in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resource Planning Act of August 17, 1974 (88 Stat. 476) as amended by the National Forest Management Act of October 22, 1976 (90 Stat. 2949; 16 U.S.C. 1600–1614) such as recreation, wilderness, wildlife and fish, range, timber, land, water, and human and community development.

Resources means those renewable resources defined above, plus other nonrenewable resources such as minerals, oil, and gas which are included in the FS's planning and land management processes.

Statewide transportation plan means the official transportation plan that is: (1) Intermodal in scope, including bicycle and pedestrian features, (2) addresses at least a 20-year planning horizon, and (3) covers the entire State pursuant to the provisions of part 450 of this title.

§660.105 Planning and route designation.

(a) The FS will provide resource planning and related transportation information to the appropriate MPO and/or State Highway Agency (SHA) for use in developing metropolitan and statewide transportation plans pursuant to the provisions of part 450 of this title. Cooperators shall provide various planning (23 U.S.C. 134 and 135) information to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for coordination with the FS.

(b) The management systems required under 23 U.S.C. 303 shall fulfill the requirement in 23 U.S.C. 204(a) regarding the establishment and implementation of pavement, bridge, and safety management systems for FHs. The results of bridge management systems and safety

management systems on all FHs and results of pavement management systems for FHs on Federal-aid highways are to be provided by the SHAs for consideration in the development of programs under §660.109 of this part. The FHWA will provide appropriate pavement management results for FHs which are not Federal-aid highways.

(c) The FHWA, in consultation with the FS, the SHA, and other cooperators where appropriate, will designate FHs.

(1) The SHA and the FS will nominate forest roads for FH designation.

(2) The SHA will represent the interests of all cooperators. All other agencies shall send their proposals for FHs to the SHA.

(d) A FH will meet the following criteria:

(1) Generally, it is under the jurisdiction of a public authority and open to public travel, or a cooperator has agreed, in writing, to assume jurisdiction of the facility and to keep the road open to public travel once improvements are made.

(2) It provides a connection between adequate and safe public roads and the resources of the NFS which are essential to the local, regional, or national economy, and/or the communities, shipping points, or markets which depend upon those resources.

(3) It serves:

(i) Traffic of which a preponderance is generated by use of the NFS and its resources; or

(ii) NFS-generated traffic volumes that have a substantial impact on roadway design and construction; or

(iii) Other local needs such as schools, mail delivery, commercial supply, and access to private property within the NFS.

§660.107 Allocations.

On October 1 of each fiscal year, the FHWA will allocate 66 percent of Public Lands Highway funds, by FS Region, for FHs using values based on relative transportation needs of the NFS, after deducting such sums as deemed necessary for the administrative requirements of the FHWA and the FS; the necessary costs of FH planning studies; and the FH share of costs for approved Federal Lands Coordinated Technology Implementation Program studies.

§660.109 Program development.

(a) The FHWA will arrange and conduct a conference with the FS and the SHA to jointly select the projects which will be included in the programs for the current fiscal year and at least the next 4 years. Projects included in each year's program will be selected considering the following criteria:

- (1) The development, utilization, protection, and administration of the NFS and its resources;
 - (2) The enhancement of economic development at the local, regional, and national level, including tourism and recreational travel;
 - (3) The continuity of the transportation network serving the NFS and its dependent communities;
 - (4) The mobility of the users of the transportation network and the goods and services provided;
 - (5) The improvement of the transportation network for economy of operation and maintenance and the safety of its users;
 - (6) The protection and enhancement of the rural environment associated with the NFS and its resources; and
 - (7) The results for FHs from the pavement, bridge, and safety management systems.
- (b) The recommended program will be prepared and approved by the FHWA with concurrence by the FS and the SHA. Following approval, the SHA shall advise any other cooperators in the State of the projects included in the final program and shall include the approved program in the State's process for development of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. For projects located in metropolitan areas, the FHWA and the SHA will work with the MPO to incorporate the approved program into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program.

§660.111 Agreements.

- (a) A statewide FH agreement shall be executed among the FHWA, the FS, and each SHA. This agreement shall set forth the responsibilities of each party, including that of adherence to the applicable provisions of Federal and State statutes and regulations.
- (b) The design and construction of FH projects will be administered by the FHWA unless otherwise provided for in an agreement approved under this subpart.
- (c) A project agreement shall be entered into between the FHWA and the cooperator involved under one or more of the following conditions:
- (1) A cooperator's funds are to be made available for the project or any portion of the project;
 - (2) Federal funds are to be made available to a cooperator for any work;
 - (3) Special circumstances exist which make a project agreement necessary for payment purposes or to clarify any aspect of the project; or

(4) It is necessary to document jurisdiction and maintenance responsibility.

§660.112 Project development.

(a) Projects to be administered by the FHWA or the FS will be developed in accordance with FHWA procedures for the Federal Lands Highway Program. Projects to be administered by a cooperator shall be developed in accordance with Federal-aid procedures and procedures documented in the statewide agreement.

(b) The FH projects shall be designed in accordance with part 625 of this chapter or those criteria specifically approved by the FHWA for a particular project.

§660.113 Construction.

(a) No construction shall be undertaken on any FH project until plans, specifications, and estimates have been concurred in by the cooperator(s) and the FS, and approved in accordance with procedures contained in the statewide FH agreement.

(b) The construction of FHs will be performed by the contract method, unless construction by the FHWA, the FS, or a cooperator on its own account is warranted under 23 U.S.C. 204(e).

(c) Prior to final construction acceptance by the contracting authority, the project shall be inspected by the cooperator, the FS, and the FHWA to identify and resolve any mutual concerns.

§660.115 Maintenance.

The cooperator having jurisdiction over a FH shall, upon acceptance of the project in accordance with §660.113(c), assume operation responsibilities and maintain, or cause to be maintained, any project constructed under this subpart.

§660.117 Funding, records and accounting.

(a) The Federal share of funding for eligible FH projects may be any amount up to and including 100 percent. A cooperator may participate in the cost of project development and construction, but participation shall not be required.

(b) Funds for FHs may be used for:

- (1) Planning;
- (2) Federal Lands Highway research;
- (3) Preliminary and construction engineering; and
- (4) Construction.

(c) Funds for FHs may be made available for the following transportation-related improvement purposes which are generally part of a transportation construction project:

- (1) Transportation planning for tourism and recreational travel;
 - (2) Adjacent vehicular parking areas;
 - (3) Interpretive signage;
 - (4) Acquisition of necessary scenic easements and scenic or historic sites;
 - (5) Provisions for pedestrians and bicycles;
 - (6) Construction and reconstruction of roadside rest areas including sanitary and water facilities; and
 - (7) Other appropriate public road facilities as approved by the FHWA.
- (d) Use of FH funds for right-of-way acquisition shall be subject to specific approval by the FHWA.
- (e) Cooperators which administer construction of FH projects shall maintain their FH records according to 49 CFR part 18.
- (f) Funds provided to the FHWA by a cooperator should be received in advance of construction procurement unless otherwise specified in a project agreement.

Appendix E: 23 USC 135 (Statewide Transportation Planning) and 23 USC 204 (Federal Lands Highways Program)

The text below is excerpted from Title 23, Chapter 1, subsection 135 and Chapter 2, subsection 204. The entire text of Title 23 is available online at:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/legis.htm>

Sec 135. Statewide transportation planning

(a) General Requirements. —

(1) Development of plans and programs. — To accomplish the objectives stated in section 134 (a), each State shall develop a statewide transportation plan and a statewide transportation improvement program for all areas of the State, subject to section 134.

(2) Contents. — The statewide transportation plan and the transportation improvement program developed for each State shall provide for the development and integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) that will function as an intermodal transportation system for the State and an integral part of an intermodal transportation system for the United States.

(3) Process of development. — The process for developing the statewide plan and the transportation improvement program shall provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and the policies stated in section 134 (a), and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems to be addressed.

(b) Coordination With Metropolitan Planning; State Implementation Plan. — A State shall—

(1) coordinate planning carried out under this section with the transportation planning activities carried out under section 134 for metropolitan areas of the State and with statewide trade and economic development planning activities and related multi-state planning efforts; and

(2) develop the transportation portion of the State implementation plan as required by the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.).

(c) Interstate Agreements. —

(1) In general. — The consent of Congress is granted to two or more States entering into agreements or compacts, not in conflict with any law of the United States, for cooperative efforts and mutual assistance in support of activities authorized under this section related to interstate areas and localities in the States and establishing authorities the States consider desirable for making the agreements and compacts effective.

(2) Reservation of rights. — The right to alter, amend, or repeal interstate compacts entered into under this subsection is expressly reserved.

(d) Scope of Planning Process. —

(1) In general. — Each State shall carry out a statewide transportation planning process that provides for consideration and implementation of projects, strategies, and services that will —

(A) support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, non-metropolitan areas, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;

(B) increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;

(C) increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;

(D) increase the accessibility and mobility of people and freight;

(E) protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;

(F) enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the State, for people and freight;

(G) promote efficient system management and operation; and

(H) emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

(2) Failure to consider factors. — The failure to consider any factor specified in paragraph (1) shall not be reviewable by any court under this title or chapter 53 of title 49, subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, or chapter 7 of title 5 in any matter affecting a statewide transportation plan, the transportation improvement program, a project or strategy, or the certification of a planning process.

(e) Additional Requirements. — In carrying out planning under this section, each State shall consider, at a minimum —

(1) with respect to non-metropolitan areas, the concerns of affected local officials with responsibility for transportation;

(2) the concerns of Indian tribal governments and Federal land management agencies that have jurisdiction over land within the boundaries of the State; and

(3) coordination of transportation plans, the transportation improvement program, and planning activities with related planning activities being carried out outside of metropolitan planning areas and between States.

(f) Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan. —

(1) Development. — Each State shall develop a long-range statewide transportation plan, with a minimum 20-year forecast period for all areas of the State, that provides for the development and implementation of the intermodal transportation system of the State.

(2) Consultation with governments.—

(A) Metropolitan areas.— The statewide transportation plan shall be developed for each metropolitan area in the State in cooperation with the metropolitan planning organization designated for the metropolitan area under section 134.

(B) Non-metropolitan areas.— With respect to non-metropolitan areas, the statewide transportation plan shall be developed in consultation with affected non-metropolitan officials with responsibility for transportation. The Secretary shall not review or approve the consultation process in each State.

(C) Indian tribal areas.— With respect to each area of the State under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribal government, the statewide transportation plan shall be developed in consultation with the tribal government and the Secretary of the Interior.

(D) Consultation, comparison, and consideration.—

(i) In general.— The long-range transportation plan shall be developed, as appropriate, in consultation with State, tribal, and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation.

(ii) Comparison and consideration.— Consultation under clause (i) shall involve comparison of transportation plans to State and tribal conservation plans or maps, if available, and comparison of transportation plans to inventories of natural or historic resources, if available.

(3) Participation by interested parties. -

(A) In general. - In developing the statewide transportation plan, the State shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, providers of freight transportation services, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed plan.

(B) Methods. - In carrying out subparagraph (A), the State shall, to the maximum extent practicable-

(i) hold any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;

(ii) employ visualization techniques to describe plans; and

(iii) make public information available in electronically accessible format and means, such as the World Wide Web, as appropriate to afford reasonable opportunity for consideration of public information under subparagraph (A).

Sec. 204. Federal Lands Highways Program

(a) Establishment.--

- (1) In general.--Recognizing the need for all Federal roads that are public roads to be treated under uniform policies similar to the policies that apply to Federal-aid highways, there is established a coordinated Federal lands highways program that shall apply to public lands highways, park roads and parkways, refuge roads, and Indian reservation roads and bridges.
- (2) Transportation planning procedures.--In consultation with the Secretary of each appropriate Federal land management agency, the Secretary shall develop, by rule, transportation planning procedures that are consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning processes required under sections 134 and 135.
- (3) Approval of transportation improvement program.--The transportation improvement program developed as a part of the transportation planning process under this section shall be approved by the Secretary.
- (4) Inclusion in other plans.--All regionally significant Federal lands highways program projects--
 - (A) shall be developed in cooperation with States and metropolitan planning organizations; and
 - (B) shall be included in appropriate Federal lands highways program, State, and metropolitan plans and transportation improvement programs.
- (5) Inclusion in state programs.--The approved Federal lands highways program transportation improvement program shall be included in appropriate State and metropolitan planning organization plans and programs without further action on the transportation improvement program.
- (6) Development of systems.--The Secretary and the Secretary of each appropriate Federal land management agency shall, to the extent appropriate, develop by rule safety, bridge, pavement, and congestion management systems for roads funded under the Federal Lands Highway Program.

Appendix F: 23 CFR 971 (Forest Highway Program Management Systems)

Subpart A—Definitions

§ 971.100 Purpose.

§ 971.102 Applicability.

§ 971.104 Definitions.

Subpart B—Forest Highway Program Management Systems

§ 971.200 Purpose.

§ 971.202 Applicability.

§ 971.204 Management systems requirements.

§ 971.206 Funds for establishment, development, and implementation of the systems.

§ 971.208 Federal lands pavement management system (PMS).

§ 971.210 Federal lands bridge management system (BMS).

§ 971.212 Federal lands safety management system (SMS).

§ 971.214 Federal lands congestion management system (CMS).

Source: 69 FR 9480, Feb. 27, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Definitions

§ 971.100 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to provide definitions for terms used in this part.

§ 971.102 Applicability.

The definitions in this subpart are applicable to this part, except as otherwise provided.

§ 971.104 Definitions.

Alternative transportation systems means modes of transportation other than private vehicles, including methods to improve system performance such as transportation demand management, congestion management, and intelligent transportation systems. These mechanisms help reduce the use of private vehicles and thus, improve overall efficiency of transportation systems and facilities.

Elements mean the components of a bridge that are important from a structural, user, or cost standpoint. Examples are decks, joints, bearings, girders, abutments, and piers.

Federal lands bridge management system (BMS) means a systematic process used by the Forest Service (FS), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Park Service (NPS) for

collecting and analyzing bridge data to make forecasts and recommendations, and that provides the means by which bridge maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement programs and policies may be efficiently and effectively considered.

Federal lands congestion management system (CMS) means a systematic process used by the FS, FWS, and NPS for managing congestion that provides information on transportation system performance, and alternative strategies for alleviating congestion and enhancing the mobility of persons and goods to levels that meet Federal, State, and local needs.

Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) means a federally funded program established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to address transportation needs of Federal and Indian lands.

Federal lands pavement management system (PMS) means a systematic process used by the FS, FWS, and NPS that provides information for use in implementing cost-effective pavement reconstruction, rehabilitation, and preventive maintenance programs and policies, and that results in pavement designed to accommodate current and forecasted traffic in a safe, durable, and cost-effective manner.

Federal lands safety management system (SMS) means a systematic process used by the FS, FWS, and NPS with the goal of reducing the number and severity of traffic accidents by ensuring that all opportunities to improve roadway safety are identified, considered, implemented, and evaluated as appropriate, during all phases of highway planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance, by providing information for selecting and implementing effective highway safety strategies and projects.

Forest highway (FH) means a forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority and open to public travel.

Forest Highway Program means the public lands highway funds allocated each fiscal year, as is provided in 23 U.S.C. 202, for projects that provide access to and within the National Forest system, as described in 23 U.S.C. 202(b) and 23 U.S.C. 204.

Forest Highway Program transportation improvement program (FHTIP) means a staged, multiyear, multimodal program of transportation projects in a State area consistent with the FH transportation plan and developed through the tri-party FH planning processes pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 204, and 23 CFR 660 subpart A.

Forest Service transportation plan means the official FH multimodal, transportation plan that is developed through the tri-party FH transportation planning process pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 204.

Highway safety means the reduction of traffic accidents on public roads, including reductions in deaths, injuries, and property damage.

Intelligent transportation system (ITS) means electronics, communications, or information processing, used singly or in combination, to improve the efficiency and safety of a surface transportation system.

Life-cycle cost analysis means an evaluation of costs incurred over the life of a project allowing a comparative analysis between or among various alternatives. Life-cycle cost analysis promotes consideration of total cost, including maintenance and operation expenditures. Comprehensive life-cycle cost analysis includes all economic variables essential to the evaluation including user costs such as delay, safety costs associated with maintenance and rehabilitation projects, agency capital costs, and life-cycle maintenance costs.

Metropolitan planning area means the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process, required by 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303–5306, must be carried out.

Metropolitan planning organization (MPO) means the forum for cooperative transportation decision-making for the metropolitan planning area pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 5303.

National Forest System means all the lands and waters reported by the FS as being part of the National Forest System, including those generally known as National Forests and National Grasslands.

Operations means those activities associated with managing, controlling, and regulating highway traffic.

Secretary means the Secretary of Transportation.

Serviceability means the degree to which a bridge provides satisfactory service from the point of view of its users.

State means any one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico.

Transportation facilities mean roads, streets, bridges, parking areas, transit vehicles, and other related transportation infrastructure.

Transportation Management Area (TMA) means an urbanized area with a population over 200,000 (as determined by the latest decennial census) or other area when TMA designation is requested by the Governor and the MPO (or affected local officials). It also must be officially designated by the Administrators of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The TMA designation applies to the entire metropolitan planning area(s).

Tri-party means the joint, cooperative, shared partnership among the Federal Lands Highway Division (FLHD), State Department of Transportation (State DOT), and the FS to carry out the FH program.

Subpart B—Forest Highway Program Management Systems

§ 971.200 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to implement 23 U.S.C. 204, which requires the Secretary and the Secretary of each appropriate Federal land management agency, to the extent appropriate, to develop by rule safety, bridge, pavement, and congestion management systems for roads funded under the FLHP.

§ 971.202 Applicability.

The provisions in this subpart are applicable to the FS, the Federal Highway Administration, and the State DOTs that are responsible for satisfying these requirements for management systems pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 204.

§ 971.204 Management systems requirements.

(a) The tri-party partnership shall develop, establish, and implement the management systems as described in this subpart. If the State has established a management system for FH that fulfills the requirements in 23 U.S.C. 303, that management system, to the extent applicable, can be used to meet the requirements of this subpart consistent with 23 CFR 660.105(b). The management systems may be tailored to meet the FH program goals, policies, and needs using professional engineering and planning judgment to determine the nature and extent of systems coverage consistent with the intent and requirements of this rule.

(b) The tri-party partnership shall develop and implement procedures for the acceptance of the existing, or the development, establishment, implementation, and operation of new management systems. The procedures shall include:

- (1) A process for ensuring the output of the management systems is considered in the development of the FH program transportation plans and transportation improvement programs, and in making project selection decisions under 23 U.S.C. 204;
- (2) A process for the analyses and coordination of all management systems outputs to systematically operate, maintain, and upgrade existing transportation assets cost-effectively;
- (3) A description of each management system;
- (4) A process to operate and maintain the management systems and their associated databases; and
- (5) A process for data collection, processing, analysis, and updating for each management system.

- (c) All management systems will use databases with a common or coordinated reference system, that can be used to geolocate all database information, to ensure that data across management systems are comparable.
- (d) Existing data sources may be used by the tri-party partnership to meet the management system requirements.
- (e) The tri-party partnership shall develop an appropriate means to evaluate the effectiveness of the management systems in enhancing transportation investment decision-making and improving the overall efficiency of the affected transportation systems and facilities. This evaluation is to be conducted periodically, preferably as part of the FS planning process.
- (f) The management systems shall be operated so investment decisions based on management system outputs can be accomplished at the State level.

§ 971.206 Funds for establishment, development, and implementation of the systems.

The FH program funds may be used for development, establishment, and implementation of the management systems. These funds are to be administered in accordance with the procedures and requirements applicable to the funds.

§ 971.208 Federal lands pavement management system (PMS).

In addition to the requirements provided in §971.204, the PMS must meet the following requirements:

- (a) The tri-party partnership shall have PMS coverage of all FHs and other associated facilities, as appropriate, funded under the FLHP.
- (b) The PMS may be based on the concepts described in the AASHTO's "Pavement Management Guide."¹

¹ "Pavement Management Guide," AASHTO, 2001, is available for inspection as prescribed at 49 CFR part 7. It is also available from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Publication Order Dept., P.O. Box 96716, Washington, DC 20090-6716 or online at <http://www.transportation.org/publications/bookstore.nsf>.

- (c) The PMS may be utilized at various levels of technical complexity depending on the nature of the transportation network. These different levels may depend on mileage, functional classes, volumes, loading, usage, surface type, or other criteria the tri-party partnership deems appropriate.
- (d) The PMS shall be designed to fit the FH program goals, policies, criteria, and needs using the following components, at a minimum, as a basic framework for a PMS:

(1) A database and an ongoing program for the collection and maintenance of the inventory, inspection, cost, and supplemental data needed to support the PMS. The minimum PMS database shall include:

- (i) An inventory of the physical pavement features including the number of lanes, length, width, surface type, functional classification, and shoulder information;
- (ii) A history of project dates and types of construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and preventive maintenance. If some of the inventory or historic data is difficult to establish, it may be collected when preservation or reconstruction work is performed;
- (iii) A condition survey that includes ride, distress, rutting, and surface friction (as appropriate);
- (iv) Traffic information including volumes and vehicle classification (as appropriate); and
- (v) Data for estimating the costs of actions.

(2) A system for applying network level analytical procedures that are capable of analyzing data for all FHs and other appropriate associated facilities in the inventory or any subset. The minimum analyses shall include:

- (i) A pavement condition analysis that includes ride, distress, rutting, and surface friction (as appropriate);
- (ii) A pavement performance analysis that includes present and predicted performance and an estimate of the remaining service life. Performance and remaining service life may be developed with time; and
- (iii) An investment analysis that:
 - (A) Identifies alternative strategies to improve pavement conditions;
 - (B) Estimates costs of any pavement improvement strategy;
 - (C) Determines maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation strategies for pavements using life cycle cost analysis or a comparable procedure;
 - (D) Provides for short and long term budget forecasting; and
 - (E) Recommends optimal allocation of limited funds by developing a prioritized list of candidate projects over a predefined planning horizon (both short and long term).

(e) For any FHs and other appropriate associated facilities in the inventory or subset thereof, PMS reporting requirements shall include, but are not limited to, percentage of roads in good, fair, and poor condition.

§ 971.210 Federal lands bridge management system (BMS).

In addition to the requirements provided in §971.204, the BMS must meet the following requirements:

(a) The tri-party partnership shall have a BMS for the FH bridges funded under the FLHP and required to be inventoried and inspected under 23 CFR 650, subpart C, National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).

(b) The BMS may be based on the concepts described in the AASHTO's "Guidelines for Bridge Management Systems."²

² "Guidelines for Bridge Management Systems," AASHTO, 1993, is available for inspection as prescribed at 49 CFR part 7. It is also available from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), Publication Order Dept., P.O. Box 96716, Washington, DC 20090-6716 or online at <http://www.transportation.org/publications/bookstore.nsf>.

(c) The BMS shall be designed to fit the FH program goals, policies, criteria, and needs using the following components, as a minimum, as a basic framework for a BMS:

(1) A database and an ongoing program for the collection and maintenance of the inventory, inspection, cost, and supplemental data needed to support the BMS. The minimum BMS database shall include:

- (i) The inventory data required by the NBIS (23 CFR 650, subpart C);
- (ii) Data characterizing the severity and extent of deterioration of bridge elements;
- (iii) Data for estimating the cost of improvement actions;
- (iv) Traffic information including volumes and vehicle classification (as appropriate);
and
- (v) A history of conditions and actions taken on each bridge, excluding minor or incidental maintenance.

(2) A system for applying network level analytical procedures at the State or local area level, as appropriate, and capable of analyzing data for all bridges in the inventory or any subset. The minimum analyses shall include:

- (i) A prediction of performance and estimate of the remaining service life of structural and other key elements of each bridge, both with and without intervening actions; and

(ii) A recommendation for optimal allocation of limited funds through development of a prioritized list of candidate projects over predefined short and long-term planning horizons.

(d) The BMS may include the capability to perform an investment analysis, as appropriate, considering size of structure, traffic volume, and structural condition. The investment analysis may:

- (1) Identify alternative strategies to improve bridge condition, safety, and serviceability;
- (2) Estimate the costs of any strategies ranging from maintenance of individual elements to full bridge replacement;
- (3) Determine maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation strategies for bridge elements using life cycle cost analysis or a comparable procedure; and
- (4) Provide short and long-term budget forecasting.

(e) For any bridge in the inventory or subset thereof, BMS reporting requirements shall include, but are not limited to, percentage of non-deficient bridges.

§ 971.212 Federal lands safety management system (SMS).

In addition to the requirements provided in §971.204, the SMS must meet the following requirements:

- (a) The tri-party partnership shall have an SMS for transportation systems providing access to and within National Forests and Grasslands, and funded under the FLHP.
- (b) The SMS may be based on the guidance in "Safety Management Systems: Good Practices for Development and Implementation."³

³ "Safety Management Systems: Good Practices for Development and Implementation," FHWA and NHTSA, May 1996, may be obtained at the FHWA, Office of Safety, Room 3407, 400 Seventh St., SW., Washington, DC 20590, or electronically at <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/media/documents.htm>. It is available for inspection and copying as prescribed at 49 CFR part 7.

(c) The tri-party partnership shall utilize SMS to ensure that safety is considered and implemented, as appropriate, in all phases of transportation system planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations.

(d) The SMS may be utilized at various levels of complexity depending on the nature of the facility and/or network involved.

(e) The SMS shall be designed to fit the FH program goals, policies, criteria, and needs and shall contain the following components:

- (1) An ongoing program for the collection, maintenance, and reporting of a database that includes:
 - (i) Accident records with detail for analysis such as accident type using standard reporting descriptions (e.g., right-angle, rear-end, head-on, pedestrian-related, etc.), location, description of event, severity, weather, and cause;
 - (ii) An inventory of safety appurtenances such as signs, delineators, and guardrails (including terminals);
 - (iii) Traffic information including volume and vehicle classification (as appropriate); and
 - (iv) Accident rates by customary criteria such as location, roadway classification, and vehicle miles of travel.
- (2) Development, establishment, and implementation of procedures for:
 - (i) Where appropriate, routine maintenance and upgrading of safety appurtenances including highway rail crossing safety devices, signs, highway elements, and operational features,
 - (ii) Identifying, investigating, and analyzing hazardous or potentially hazardous transportation system safety problems, roadway locations, and features;
 - (iii) Establishing countermeasures and setting priorities to correct the identified hazards and potential hazards.
- (3) Identification of focal points for all contacts at State, regional, tribal, and local levels to coordinate, develop, establish, and implement the SMS among the agencies.

(f) While the SMS applies to appropriate transportation systems providing access to and within National Forests and Grasslands funded under the FLHP, the extent of system requirements (e.g., data collection, analyses, and standards) for low volume roads may be tailored to be consistent with the functional classification of the roads. However, adequate requirements should be included for each roadway to provide for effective inclusion of safety decisions in the administration of the FH program.

§ 971.214 Federal lands congestion management system (CMS).

(a) For purposes of this section, congestion means the level at which transportation system performance is no longer acceptable due to traffic interference. For portions of the FH network outside the boundaries of TMAs, the tri-party partnership shall:

- (1) Develop criteria to determine when a CMS is to be implemented for a specific FH; and
- (2) Have CMS coverage for the transportation systems providing access to and within National Forests, as appropriate, that meet minimum CMS criteria.

(b) The tri-party partnership shall consider the results of the CMS when selecting the implementation of strategies that provide the most efficient and effective use of existing and future transportation facilities.

(c) In addition to the requirements provided in §971.204, the CMS must meet the following requirements:

(1) For those FH transportation systems that require a CMS, in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, consideration shall be given to strategies that reduce private automobile travel and improve existing transportation efficiency. Approaches may include the use of alternative mode studies and implementation plans as components of the CMS.

(2) A CMS will:

- (i) Identify and document measures for congestion (e.g., level of service);
- (ii) Identify the causes of congestion;
- (iii) Include processes for evaluating the cost and effectiveness of alternative strategies to manage congestion;
- (iv) Identify the anticipated benefits of appropriate alternative traditional and nontraditional congestion management strategies;
- (v) Determine methods to monitor and evaluate the performance of the multi-modal transportation system; and
- (vi) Appropriately consider the following example categories of strategies, or combinations of strategies for each area:
 - (A) Transportation demand management measures;
 - (B) Traffic operational improvements;
 - (C) Public transportation improvements;
 - (D) ITS technologies; and
 - (E) Additional system capacity.

Appendix G: Forest Plan Functions

The table below summarizes the functions and limitations of National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) related to a variety of topics.

What a Forest Plan Does and Does Not Do

Topic	The Forest Plan does...	The Forest Plan does not...
Laws, regulations, and policies	Use guidance provided by the Forest Service Handbook, Forest Service Manual, and other federal regulations and policies to create an over-arching management plan for the National Forest.	Make law, regulations, or policy. The Revised Forest Plan is not a policy-making document; it reflects agency policy and goals.
Budget for local Forest Service operations	Consider the financial feasibility of implementing Plan goals and objectives.	Determine funding levels for the National Forest (budget allocations are determined in other ways).
Travel management	Identify what kinds of travel are suitable to particular parcels of land, based on desired future conditions (DFCs) and other designations. This can vary by season.	Make the decision to open, close, or otherwise restrict use of a specific road or trail to certain modes of travel (such as ATVs or mountain bikes). If the management objective for certain parcels changes, site-specific plans for road and trail management will have to be made separately from the Forest Plan to bring travel into compliance. Decisions about specific roads and trails are made through project-level NEPA analysis and decision documents.
Timber harvests	Identify sustainable annual yields. Identify which lands are suitable for timber harvests for various objectives, including timber production.	Identify individual areas that will be offered for sale.
Timber sales	Provide direction and standards to determine where and how sales can take place, based on goals and objectives.	Approve any site-specific timber sale.
Grazing allotments	Analyze and disclose which lands are suitable for grazing. Describe the parameters or standards grazing practice shall attain.	Make decisions about what to do with vacant allotments or allotment management plans and permit renewals.
Land exchanges	Identify values and	Identify or prioritize specific

Appendix G: Forest Plan Functions

Topic	The Forest Plan does...	The Forest Plan does not...
	considerations to be evaluated in potential exchange of land parcels. Identify landscapes where opportunities to consolidate landownership patterns should or should not be pursued to meet DFCs and objectives.	parcels for exchanges. Guidance for required analyses for land exchanges is in Forest Service manuals and handbooks.
Ski areas	Identify which lands have DFCs, objectives, standards, and suitability that emphasize ski-based resorts.	Approve creation of any additional infrastructure such as lifts, runs, or snowmaking facilities.
Endangered species	Provide DFCs, objectives, and standards to ensure sustainable habitat conditions for species that have been listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.	Decide which species will be protected under the Endangered Species Act. These decisions are made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
Hunting and wildlife management	Describe desired conditions, objectives, and standards for managing the habitat for many game and non-game species.	Set hunting seasons, designate areas as open or closed to hunting, or set harvest levels or hunting fees. Seasons and limits are set by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (except for migratory birds, which are set by USFWS.)
Wilderness	Recommend to Congress those areas that are capable and suitable for designation as wilderness. Allocate land to area designations that are managed for wilderness values.	Create or designate lands as Wilderness.
Wild, scenic and recreational rivers	Identify river segments eligible for further study as wild, scenic, or recreational under the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Allocate land to river corridors that must be managed to maintain the values that provide eligibility for wild, scenic, and/or recreational rivers.	Designate those rivers as wild, scenic, or recreational. A finding of eligibility does not automatically launch further study.
Law enforcement	Emphasize cooperative partnerships and collaborative activities with stakeholder groups, local communities, and governments.	Include directives about law enforcement, specify enforcement staffing, or budget for those operations.

Source: http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/gmug/policy/plan_rev/lwg/mtg_notes/unc_notes/10102002_plans_do_dont.shtml