



March 19, 2009

The Honorable Brian Blake
Washington State House of Representatives
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: Checklist Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan Legislative Report

Dear Representative Blake:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Ecology, is required by RCW 76.09.420(4) and WAC 222-24-050 to monitor the extent, effectiveness, and progress of the checklist Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) implementation and report to the Legislature and the Forest Practices Board by December 31, 2008 and December 31, 2013. The distribution of this report was delayed in order to give the new leadership at the Department of Natural Resources time to transition and assess.

The 1999 Salmon Recovery Act required all forest roads be brought up to new forest road standards by 2016 as outlined in the 1999 Forests and Fish Report, and established in the forest practices rules (Title 222 WAC). The new road standards were designed to improve and protect riparian habitat on non-federal lands in Washington. Forest landowners submitted Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plans (RMAPs) to the Department of Natural Resources detailing the work that needs to be done to bring the roads to standard, along with a schedule for accomplishing the work by 2016.

In 2003, the legislature recognized that the RMAP requirement could cause unintended disproportionate financial hardship for small forest landowners. As a result, in an effort to minimize the adverse impacts, RCW 76.09.420 created a simplified RMAP checklist process for small forest landowners. While the RMAP strategies differ between large and small landowners, the goal remains constant – to bring forest roads up to forest practices standards by 2016. To assist small forest landowners, RCW 76.13.150 created a cost-share program in 2003 known as the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFPP) to provide financial assistance for the removal, repair and/or replacement of fish passage barriers such as undersized culverts.

While the RMAP checklist process minimized the financial impacts to small forest landowners, it has limited DNR's ability to report on the extent, effectiveness, and progress of the RMAP checklist approach. The RMAP checklist process lacks a mechanism to determine the scope of



small forest landowner roads, the condition of the roads or status of required up-grades. Small forest landowners submit a RMAP checklist when they are planning to harvest or salvage timber. The RMAP checklist is a brief assessment of certain road characteristics and is limited to the area of application, and the checklist may not cover the entire ownership. Many small forest landowners may only conduct a harvest once or twice during their lifetimes, and information about the condition of their forest roads may be limited or unknown.

Highlights of the enclosed report include:

- Recommendations to improve future reporting and assist in meeting the 2016 road up-grade goal:
 - Obtain additional funding to complete the statewide field inventory of fish passage barriers on small forest landowner forestland.
 - Obtain funding and legislative direction to conduct a statewide sample survey of small forest landowner roads and report findings to the Legislature in 2011. The survey would determine if the roads are on track to meet the goals of road improvement by 2016.
 - Revise the forest practices application form and RMAP checklist form to provide additional data. DNR is researching the feasibility of this option.
 - Propose legislative changes to the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) to provide additional incentives to small forest landowners enrolled in FFFPP who choose to complete road abandonment projects.
 - Expand the concept of improving road conditions and maintenance in existing cost share programs like the Federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- A study completed by the Rural Technology Initiative at the University of Washington and DNR annual reporting show:
 - 215,000 small forest landowners in Washington State,
 - 3.2 million acres of small forest landowner forestland in Washington,
 - 8,121 RMAP checklists submitted to DNR between October 2003 and December 2007.
- Existing tools, methods and appropriation rates limit DNR's ability to evaluate and report on the extent, effectiveness and progress of the RMAP checklist:
 - The RMAP checklist approach does not offer an inventory method for determining baseline extent and condition of all small forest landowner roads.
 - The RMAP checklist approach provides accountability in the form of road up-grades during forest practices use but does not offer accountability tools such as planning and scheduling for bringing all roads, including those roads not being used during a forest practice, up to standard by the 2016 goal set by the legislature.
- The FFFPP is a key component to bringing small forest landowner roads up to forest practices standards:
 - 552 fish barriers have been entered in the FFFPP program since 2003.

- The FFFPP is a key component to bringing small forest landowner roads up to forest practices standards:
 - 552 fish barriers have been entered in the FFFPP program since 2003.
 - 137 fish barriers have been repaired since 2003. In addition to fish barrier repairs under current cost-share agreements, others have been located across the state, and identified as “shovel ready” projects for consideration as part of Washington’s funding request for federal stimulus dollars.
 - Funding is needed to obtain a complete field inventory of fish blockages in order to facilitate repair. Until the inventory is completed, the scope of fish passage barriers remains unknown.

Please direct any questions about the report or the specific recommendations to Marc Engel, Acting Assistant Division Manager for Policy and Services, Forest Practices Division, at marc.engel@dnr.wa.gov or 360-902-1390.

Sincerely,



Gary Graves
Acting, Forest Practices Division Manager

c: Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands
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LEGISLATIVE REPORT 2008

SUBMITTED BY:

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FOREST PRACTICES DIVISION

A Report to the Legislature: Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan Checklist Report

December 2008

Department of Natural Resources
Forest Practices Division

Acknowledgments

Executive Sponsorship

Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands
Lenny Young, Department Supervisor
Chuck Turley, Acting Deputy Supervisor of Regulatory Programs

Participating Organizations

Family Forestry Foundation
Washington Farm Forestry Association
University of Washington - Rural Technology Initiative
Washington Department of Ecology
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
U.S. Forest Service

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources
Peter Goldmark - Commissioner of Public Lands

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Introduction

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required by law to submit a report to the Legislature and the Forest Practices Board (FPB) regarding the forest practices checklist Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) implementation.

RCW 76.09.420(4):

DNR must monitor the extent of the checklist road maintenance and abandonment plan approach and report its findings to the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2008, and December 31, 2013.

WAC 222-24-050

DNR, in consultation with the departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife, will monitor the extent, effectiveness, and progress of checklist road maintenance and abandonment plan implementation and report to the legislature and the board by December 31, 2008, and December 31, 2013.

This report provides information regarding the effectiveness, extent and progress of the RMAP checklist implementation. Recommendations which could lead to better data and reporting and assist in meeting road improvement goals are made at the end of the report.

Background

The 1999 Salmon Recovery Act required all forest roads to be brought up to new forest roads standards by 2016, as outlined in the Forests and Fish Report (FFR). The report represented the recommendations of the authors for the development and implementation of rules, statutes, and programs designed to improve and protect riparian habitat on non-federal forest lands in Washington. The mechanism established by the legislature for ensuring that the road standards were met by 2016 was the RMAP process. The RMAP rule stated that all forest landowners must submit RMAPs for their complete ownership to DNR by July 1, 2006. The RMAPs must contain ownership maps and a schedule to complete necessary road work by 2016. Annually, on each anniversary date of a RMAPs submission, the owner must file with the DNR a report of the work that was accomplished the previous year and the work that is scheduled for the upcoming year.

In 2003 the legislature found that in the time since the Forest and Fish law's 1999 enactment, it had become clear that the RMAP requirement could be causing unforeseen and unintended disproportionate financial hardship on small forest landowners. The legislature passed a law in 2003 (RCW 76.09.420) to help minimize the hardships caused by the RMAP requirements to small forest landowners. The new law established an abbreviated RMAP process and contained the following components:

- The law altered the RMAP requirements for small forest landowners by allowing them to use a simplified checklist RMAP form.
- Small forest landowners no longer had to submit a plan for their entire ownership. The checklist only applies to forest roads affected by a forest practices application.
- Small forest landowners who meet the 20-acre exemption requirements do not have to file a checklist RMAP or a standard RMAP.

- The law exempted small forest landowners from the annual RMAP reporting requirement.
- The law contained a cost-share program to provide financial assistance to small forest landowners for the removal of fish blockages.
- The law exempted checklist road maintenance and abandonment plans from the RMAPs continuing obligation requirements (upon sale of the property).

The cost-share program established by the 2003 legislation is the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP) (RCW 76.13.150) which shifted most of the financial burden from the family forest landowner to the State of Washington. It provides financial assistance to small forest landowners for the removal of fish blockages, and required the following:

- The state to create a cost-share program that would provide 75-100 percent of the cost of correcting small forest landowners' fish barriers.
- Small forest landowners enrolling in the program would be required to fix their barriers only if financial assistance is available from the state.
- Barriers be prioritized and repaired on a "worst-first" basis.

The RMAP checklist and FFFPP program are linked and together created the legislative framework to help bring small forest landowner forest roads up to the new rules standard. There are several challenges with this method, which limits the ability of DNR to report on extent, effectiveness and progress of the RMAP checklist approach. There is no mechanism currently in place to determine the scope of small forest landowner roads, or their condition and status of required upgrades. Statewide information about small forest landowner roads is limited, as is information about their overall effect on public resources.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness can be determined when the objective of effort, the scope of the issue, and progress in reaching the objective are known. This section discusses the effectiveness of the RMAP checklist and the FFFPP in relation to the RMAP checklist.

RMAP Checklist

WAC 222-24-050 Road Maintenance and Abandonment states:

The goals for road maintenance outlined in this chapter are expected to be achieved by July 1, 2016. The strategies for achieving the goals are different for large forest landowners and small forest landowners.

Effectiveness of the RMAP checklist is difficult to determine because the scope and the progress toward reaching the objective are unknown. The scope of the issue is unknown because the RMAP checklist approach does not offer an inventory method for determining the extent and condition of all small forest landowner roads. DNR does not know the relative progress of bringing forest roads qualifying for the RMAP checklist approach up to standard because the overall picture of existing roads is unknown. For these reasons, it is unclear if the new strategy is successful.

The full RMAP process, required for large forest landowners, provided a method to determine the scope of forest road issues and progress toward resolving those issues. The RMAP checklist process lacks these key features. The RMAP checklist process, created by the legislature, was

intended to minimize the disproportionate financial impacts felt by small forest landowners resulting from the full RMAP process. The RMAP checklist process has been successful in this endeavor and has benefited small forest landowners who no longer have to follow the full RMAP process. It is useful, however, to compare the two processes; the full RMAP process with the abbreviated RMAP checklist process for the purposes of illustrating the difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of the RMAP checklist process. A few important differences are explained below:

1) Timing

- The full RMAP process required the submittal of an RMAP covering the landowner's entire forest ownership by July 1, 2006. This involved a complete road inventory, a statement of condition of the roads and a plan to bring all the roads to standard by 2016.
- The abbreviated RMAP checklist process requires a RMAP checklist to be submitted when a landowner submits a forest practices application. There is no common deadline by which RMAP checklists covering all small forest landowner roads have to be submitted.

The condition of roads that fall under the RMAPS process became known as of July 1, 2006. The condition of roads that fall under the RMAP checklist process may not be known for as many as 50–100 years. Under the RMAP checklist process road conditions primarily become known at time of harvest or salvage. The frequency of harvest for small forest landowners can be very low. Some small forest landowners may only harvest once in a lifetime. The RMAP checklist process does not provide a method of discovering road conditions until a forest practices application is submitted and reviewed by the forest practices forester or when a forest practices forester is responding to a complaint or inadvertently becomes aware of adverse road conditions.

2) Coverage

- The full RMAP process requires reporting on all forest roads owned by the forest landowner so that all existing issues can be discovered and fixed.
- The RMAP checklist process only requires reporting on roads that are being used during the life of a forest practices permit. The RMAP checklist does not cover all forest roads owned by the landowner. The condition and impact on public resources of those roads that are not required to be reported in the checklist is unknown.

3) Accountability

- The full RMAP process requires a complete accounting of all forest roads in the landowners' ownership including the location of the roads, their condition, what road issues need to be fixed and a detailed plan showing when each road issue will be addressed prior to the 2016 goal. The RMAP process requires the landowner to report

annually to ensure that all road improvements are going as planned, that roads are maintained to standard and that the roads will meet the 2016 goal.

- The RMAP checklist approach requires that roads used for implementation of a forest practice be brought up to standard during the life of the Forest Practices Application (FPA) (generally two years). There is an exception for fish passage blockages that have been enrolled in the FFFPP but have not yet been funded. These fish passage blockages are corrected when funding becomes available. The RMAP checklist process does not require all forest roads to be inventoried and reported in a plan nor does it require annual reporting on road improvement progress.
- Accountability for roads standards in the RMAP checklist process occurs during the compliance of the forest practices permit. During this time the landowner is required to bring forest roads used in the forest practice activity up to forest practices standards.

The lack of a comprehensive accounting of roads, an overall plan for improvement, and annual reporting on progress presents significant accountability challenges under the RMAP checklist process. A plan facilitates understanding of the overall picture which then allows for scheduling of all work that needs to be accomplished. Annual reporting ensures work is completed. The lack of accountability tools makes it difficult to determine if the 2016 goal will be met.

4) Data Reliability

- The full RMAP process requires detailed information on all forest roads and existing road issues that need to be fixed.
- The RMAP checklist process uses a simple form (found at the end of the report) which asks a landowner to check listed road characteristics that apply to the roads being used during the forest practice. The characteristics on the form are indications of possible road issues. Landowners may or may not understand if any of the road characteristics apply to their roads. Follow-up site visits to forest practices application areas are necessary to verify if road problems do or do not exist.

The comparison between the full RMAP process and RMAP checklist process illustrates key components that influence the ability to determine and report on effectiveness, extent and relative progress of road upgrades. The RMAP checklist in and of itself is not an effective tool for determining the scope, tracking progress or ensuring forest road upgrade goals are met. An additional tool provided to DNR to help in this endeavor is the FFFPP. The FFFPP enhances the RMAP checklist process by providing information about fish blockages and their repair.

FFFPP

When the legislature established the RMAP checklist approach the legislating body provided an additional tool that enhances the effectiveness of the RMAP checklist approach, the Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP). The program has helped many small landowners replace their fish blockages (see Extent section below). The program, however, faces several challenges.

The FFFPP is a voluntary program that allows small landowners to sign up to correct fish passage barriers on their road crossings with assistance from the program. A challenge is that many landowners do not know about the program until they submit a FPA or learn about it through program outreach efforts. The lack of awareness could delay for several years the correction of a fish blockage. The FFFPP program has successfully intensified its outreach efforts over the last year to increase small forest landowner awareness (see Extent section below).

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has a database to maintain inventory of fish passage barriers. However, the database is not yet comprehensive. Information on fish passage barriers is obtained from site visits and entered into this database. There is a critical need to build an inventory of all small forest landowner fish passage barriers so that the extent of the problem is known and worst problems are fixed first. There are several reasons the database is still only a partial inventory.

- The program relies on a variety of groups to report the barriers when they are found including the Department of Transportation, local government inventories, barriers identified in FFFPP stream checks, and local inventories funded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. These entities use different protocols, and none of these entities have the direction or funds to engage in a total barrier inventory.
- Most completed inventories have been road-based. These inventories have provided valuable data, however, road based inventories are not the ideal survey method because existing barriers can be missed. Stream-based inventories – walking the stream from end to end - are needed to ensure identification of all road crossings, including old overgrown logging roads, private dams, etc.
- Some landowners are reluctant to allow access to their land. While a few counties have completed private road inventories, even those are not 100% due to lack of access.
- Additional funding is needed. Increasing the completeness of the barrier inventory depends upon funding for state or contract staff to walk streams, staff training and monitoring, and interfacing and managing data. WDFW estimates it has identified and evaluated less than fifty percent of the stream crossings in the state. Additionally, fish passage barriers are not static. New barriers form and some are eliminated in major rain and flood events. For example, a culvert that was not a barrier last year may be a barrier this year. A culvert that was a barrier may have blown out in a major precipitation event and is no longer a barrier. Maintaining fish passage barrier inventories is an on-going process.

The FFFPP and RMAP checklist work in tandem to help bring small forest landowner roads up to standard. The FFFPP is successful and effective in assisting individual landowners with fish blockage replacement. However, the two tools lack key components for determining the effectiveness of bringing all roads up to standard by 2016. The tools do not provide a method to determine the extent or condition of forest roads that qualify for the RMAP checklist approach

nor do they have a component for overall progress accountability. Overall effectiveness cannot be ascertained without additional data regarding small forest landowner's forest roads. Possible additional solutions to obtaining information on scope and progress of road up-grades are provided in the Recommendation section below.

Extent

The statewide extent and location of small forest landowner roads on small forest landowner parcels is unknown. Additionally, the extent of small forest landowner road problems, including fish blockages, on small forest landowner parcels is unknown.

A recent study completed by the Rural Technology Initiative (RTI) (for report go to: www.ruraltech.org/files/download.aspx?file=b4794cb3-555d-4f0c-99a5-5155fbd36326) provided the number of small forest landowners statewide and the total parcel ownership in acres as of 2007. RTI compiled landowner parcel data from Washington state counties. The data was available in most counties in both tabular and spatial forms. WAC 222-16-010 defines small forest landowner in terms of volume of timber harvest for the purposes of conducting forest practices. As a proxy for the harvest based WAC definition of a Small Forest Landowner, an acreage definition was developed to quantify Small Forest Landowner geography and demographics. The definition includes the following characteristics:

- Upper end of acreage size of ownership defining small forest landowner is determined by potential harvest of under 2 MMBF; 2500 acres in western Washington and 9990 acres in eastern Washington,
- Lower boundary for acreage owned is 2 acres or having a forest assessment land use code of 87, 88, 92, or 95,
- Contains at least 1 full acre of forestland,
- No tribal land is included, however, fee land owned by individuals within the tribal land boundaries is included,
- No government owned lands are included (including city or county),
- Lands owned by conservation organizations are included.

The study found there are 215,043 small forest landowners in Washington who own parcels with forestland that total 3,235,372 acres of forestland. A visual representation of small forest landowner forestland parcels can be seen in the map on the following page.

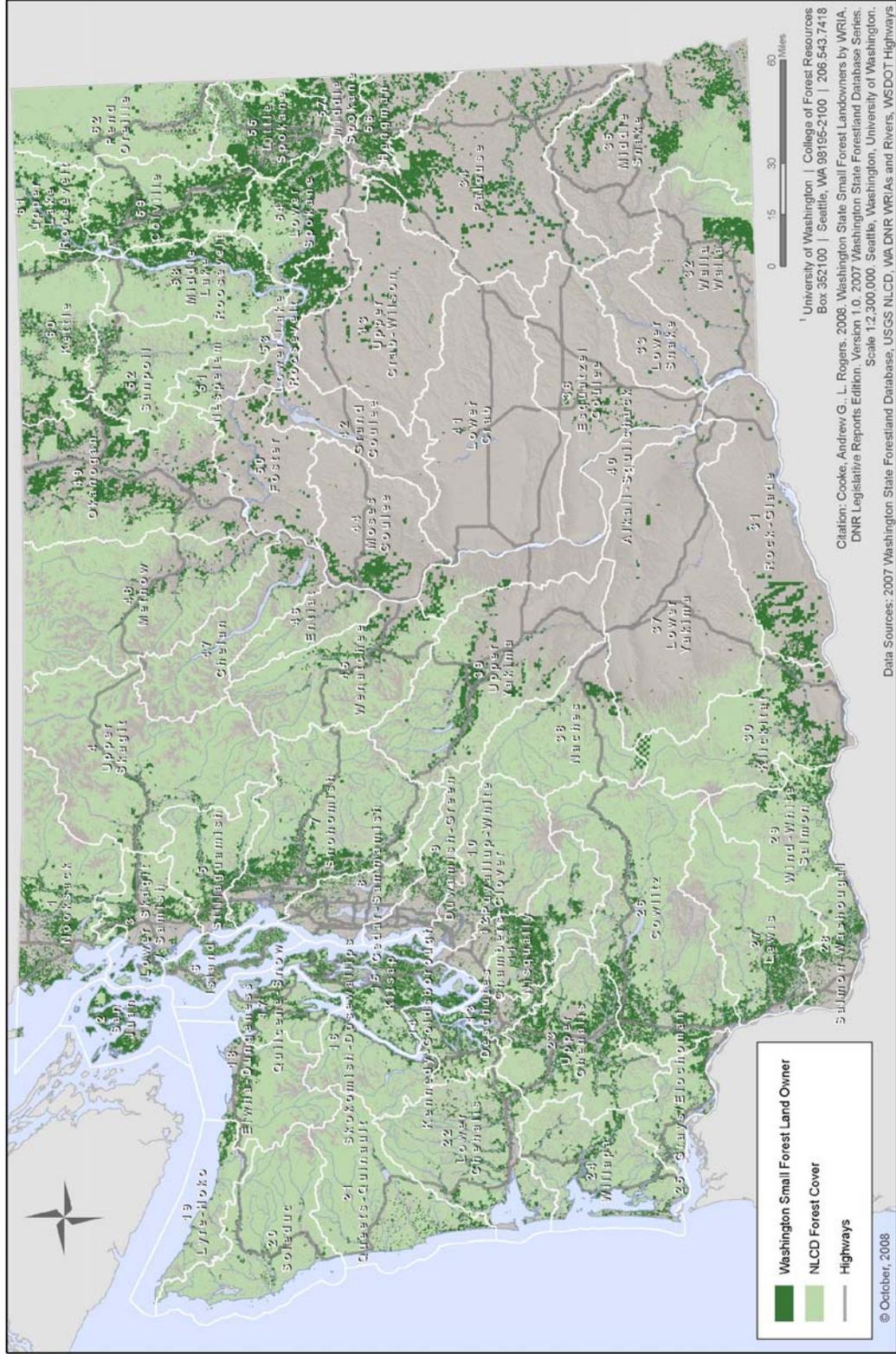
The RTI study also provided data on the number of fish-bearing stream miles in Washington State, and the number of those miles found on small forest landowner parcels. There are approximately 57,900 miles of fish-bearing stream, with 10,545 miles (18.2%) running through lands owned by small forest landowners. Its unknown how many miles of small forest landowner roads cross or are near streams.



Washington State Small Forest Landowners by WRIA

DNR Legislative Reports Edition | Version 1.0 | 2007 Washington State Forestland Database Series

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RMAP Checklist

The RMAP checklist became effective on October 13, 2003. Prior to the effective date for the RMAP checklist many small forest landowners submitted full RMAPs that were initially required by all forest landowners. Approximately 4,500 RMAPs were submitted by small forest landowners, mostly within DNR's NE and NW regions. Once the new RMAP checklist requirement became effective in 2003, the vast majority of small forest landowners who initially provided a RMAP chose to no longer follow the RMAP process but instead follow the RMAP checklist process. About ten small forest landowners continue to use their original RMAP and report progress annually.

RMAP checklists are attached to forest practices applications for harvest or salvage operations. An annual report generated by the DNR shows that a total of 8,121 RMAP checklists have been submitted through December 2007. This equates to approximately 2,030 RMAP checklists submitted annually to the DNR as attachments to forest practices applications.

If it is assumed that the past rate of FPA submittal reflects the future rate of submittal, approximately 17,255 additional RMAP checklists will be submitted to the DNR before July 1, 2016. The 17,255 is an absolute number that becomes meaningful when a road mileage estimate can be attached to it and compared to the total statewide mileage of small forest landowner roads. However, this comparison has not been made as the department does not have reliable data indicating the total forest road mileage of forest roads that qualifies for the RMAP checklist approach.

The condition of roads and progress of road improvement are fundamental components in understanding the extent of the problem or lack of a problem to be fixed. Forest roads are improved as they are used for forest practices but the overall condition of small forest landowner roads is unknown. The RMAP checklist process does not provide a method to obtain the data needed to determine the proportion of road mileage under the RMAP checklist or the condition of existing roads outside of forest practices applications. This lack of knowledge impedes DNR's ability to report on the extent of the RMAPS checklist or to ensure small forest landowner roads will meet the 2016 road improvement goal.

FFFPP

Since its 2003 inception, there have been 552 barriers entered in the FFFPP program and put on the list for repair. One hundred and thirty-seven fish passage barriers have been repaired on the roads of over 100 small forest landowners. This has opened 350 miles of fish-bearing stream at an approximate cost of 12 million dollars. To date, 400 fish passage barriers remain enrolled in the program for future funding.

The FFFPP is a voluntary program known to some but not all small forest landowners. Recently a large outreach effort was successfully launched to reach landowners who qualify for the FFFPP. The effort resulted in increasing the number of accepted applicants from 44 in 2007 to 64 in 2008.

The FFFPP generates information about fish blockage removal, however, the overall picture is yet unknown. Neither the FFFPP nor the RMAP checklist process provides information necessary to determine the extent of small forest landowner roads or existing problems.

Progress

While challenges are clear in determining the location and condition of small forest landowner roads statewide as identified in the Extent and Effectiveness sections above, progress on small forest landowner road improvement is being made through a variety of statewide, local, and individual efforts.

- Family Forest Fish Passage Program (FFFPP)

Steady progress has been made since 2003 in the number of fish passage barriers repaired or replaced through the FFFPP, and the number that are awaiting funding; along with the miles of stream that have been opened up to fish passage (see section above for accomplishments). The RMAP checklist serves as an important tool to inform small forest landowners about the FFFPP, and the cost-share opportunities that are available. DNR in conjunction with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Recreation and Conservation Office/Salmon Recovery Funding Board has continued to request legislative funding for repair of fish passage barriers and to complete a stream inventory to identify barriers. Additional funding for educational outreach and specific barrier corrections has been secured by partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Washington Department of Ecology.

- Education and Outreach

Family Forest Field Days, co-sponsored by DNR and Washington State University (WSU) Extension Office offer opportunities, in part, to share information about forest road maintenance and improvement. Since 1996 there have been 21 field days, with approximately 6,000 family forest landowners attending. While not all have included a forest roads component, more recent field days such as the one held in November 2008 in Naselle, Washington have discussed forest road maintenance and improvement. At Naselle, the Oregon State University Extension Service presented a segment on forest road management and distributed "*Managing Woodland Roads, A Field Handbook*" to those attending. The comprehensive field handbook discusses the major aspects of woodland roads management as it relates to design, inspection, maintenance and repair. DNR and the WSU Extension Office are committed to offering future educational opportunities to small forest landowners through the Family Forest Field Days.

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a federal incentives and cost-sharing program managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and directed at conservation practices that help to improve water quality and maintain the health of natural resources. While not every NRCS office allocates funding for forestry-related projects (the majority of the funding is directed towards agricultural projects), the local NRCS office in southwest Washington (Lewis, Pacific, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Clark, Wahkiakum and Skamania counties) have focused their efforts on providing cost-sharing opportunities to small forest landowners addressing road maintenance issues. Road maintenance activities such as road grading

and rocking, improving roadside ditches, installing waterbars and cross-drains, and seeding critical areas have been funded to successfully reduce sediment to fish-bearing streams. In Washington state, a total of \$2.7 million was allocated to forestry projects from 2004-2008. Funded and completed projects during that time period cover 10,375 acres and cost \$761,000. The funding allocated to forestry projects doubled from 2007 to 2008. NRCS is initiating a specific advertising campaign aimed at recruiting forest landowners; particularly emphasizing that EQIP can help those who have DNR approved Forest Stewardship Plans to actively implement their plans.

- Road Assessment through the Long-term Forest Practices Application

Some small forest landowners choose to use the Long-term Forest Practices Application (LTA) when proposing to harvest timber, build forest roads, or conduct other forest practices activities. Since the forest practices application process can be complex and time-consuming, the LTA was developed as an incentive for small forest landowners to keep their land in forestry use. The LTA can be valid for up to 15 years, as opposed to the standard 2-year forest practices application. It allows landowners to react more quickly to changing market conditions and unforeseen events such as forest health problems or weather related disturbances.

Part of the LTA requires that the landowner conduct an in-depth assessment of road conditions within the application area and to identify work needed to keep soil from entering streams or wetlands. DNR foresters review the information on the LTA with the help from other agency and tribal staff, and approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove the application. There have been 12 LTAs submitted and 8 approved since October 27, 2007 - the effective date of the rule.

- December 2007 Storm

In December 2007 an extreme rain and wind storm occurred in southwest Washington. The record setting rainfall and winds caused many floods and created mud and debris flows in several drainages, destroying numerous stream crossings. The Family Forest Fish Passage Program has established standards for new structures replacing fish passage barriers. The new structure not only needs to allow for fish passage, but also must stand up to high flow events and allow logs and other debris to pass downstream. Thirty-eight fish passage barrier projects have been completed in Lewis, Thurston, Grays Harbor, and Pacific counties (those counties hit hardest by the storm), and only one project sustained minimal damage. The remaining thirty-seven were unharmed.

- On-going Maintenance

All forest landowners have a legal obligation to maintain all their forest roads on all their forest land to the extent necessary to prevent damage to public resources, per WAC 222-24-052. Many small forest landowners routinely and regularly inspect and maintain their forest roads as committed stewards of the natural resources entrusted to them.

Recommendations

Progress toward bringing roads up to standard is being made. Challenges are clear in determining the extent, effectiveness and relative progress of the RMAP checklist process. Additional data is needed to provide meaningful information on extent, effectiveness and progress of the RMAP checklist approach. DNR suggests additional efforts to enhance data availability for reporting and to increase overall progress and the likelihood of meeting the road improvement goal of 2016. These suggestions fall into two categories; those efforts currently being pursued and other suggestions for possible pursuit.

Efforts Currently Being Pursued

1) Continue to pursue increased legislative funding to complete the statewide field inventory of fish passage barriers on small forest landowner forestland, and to support the cost-share program through the Family Forest Fish Passage Program.

DNR, in partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Recreation and Conservation Office originally requested approximately \$19,700,000 (FY 09-11) for the Family Forest Fish Passage Program – to effectively locate and identify fish passage barriers through a continuation of the WDFW-led statewide field inventory and to provide cost-share funds to repair or remove the barriers. (Note: With the challenges of the current economic climate, the Governor’s budget for FY 09-11 requests \$6.0 million in cost-share funds to repair or remove barriers, and does not include a funding request for the statewide field inventory of fish passage barriers. At this time, the Governor’s budget is not finalized).

Funding for FFFPP has gradually increased over the past three biennia, from \$2.0 million for 03-05, followed by \$4.15 million for 05-07, to \$6.0 million for 07-09. This is an encouraging trend, which has resulted in a growing ability to assist small landowners in repairing or removing fish passage barriers. (Note: In addition to the current request of \$6.0 million in the yet-to-be-finalized Governor’s FY 09-11 budget, fish passage barriers have been located across the state, and identified as “shovel ready” projects for consideration as part of Washington’s funding request for federal stimulus dollars, at an estimated cost of \$2.9 million).

The size of the total fish passage barrier workload is unknown because comprehensive inventories of barriers have not been completed for most Watershed Administrative Units (WAUs). It is estimated that inventories conducted to date have identified up to 50% of the fish passage barriers in the state but most of these are road-based inventories where existing roads are driven and stream crossings checked for barriers. As a result, the most complete barrier inventories are on state highways and county roads, and some proportion of forestland roads still in active use. Roads that are inactive and many cases overgrown are more difficult to identify, and identifying fish passage barriers at stream crossing is especially difficult.

A complete inventory will provide the information needed to determine the scope of the fish blockage problem and track the upgrade progress. The inventory will also enable the program to contact the small forest landowners with fish barriers in an effort to encourage them to apply to the program. When landowners sign up under FFFPP, their barriers are evaluated and streams are walked upstream and downstream, and previously unidentified barriers are often found. For example, a recent eight mile walk in creek drainage helped the FFFPP to locate twelve fish barriers that were previously missing from the statewide database.

Most estimates of the total workload suggest that the current pace of repairs is far too slow and the program will not meet its 2016 goal unless funding is significantly increased. Despite its accomplishments the program has been able to fund only about 132 of the 552 (24%) repair projects proposed by landowners. Further, without a complete barrier inventory it is impossible to identify small forest landowners who have barriers on their properties but have not yet applied for cost-share funding.

2) Forest Practice Application (FPA) and RMAP Checklist Revisions

Add additional questions to the FPA and RMAP checklist to provide additional needed information about acreage and miles of road covered. The feasibility of this option is currently being explored. If feasible, either additional funding or a reprioritization of funding would be required.

Other suggested efforts

1. Statewide small forest landowner road survey

Conduct a sample survey in the next two years to determine if small forest landowners' roads are on track to meet current roads standards, specifically determining what percent of ownership has water and roads, and what percentage of those are on track to meet the 2016 goal. Report the findings of the survey to the legislature for the 2011 legislative session with any recommendations, if needed, on how to alter checklist RMAPS strategy for small forest landowners.

The survey would cover all small forest landowner forest roads including those that are not specifically linked to a forest practice application. The landowner sample could be selected from RTI's small forest landowner parcel data base. The surveys would be performed by a qualified person who would evaluate the road system. This effort would require funding support and direction from the legislature. New legislative direction may be required to establish authority to access small forest landowner parcels for the survey.

2. Additional incentives to small forest landowners.

Proactive landowner incentives could be made fuller with a few minor changes. The changes would help small forest landowners bring their roads up to standard and can be put into place with little increased funding.

One incentive change could occur within the FFFPP. The FFFPP currently provides cost sharing for replacement or abandonment of fish barriers on small forest landowner's forest roads. Under the current program, there is no incentive to abandon a road when a landowner can receive a new crossing for the same cost share obligation. Abandonment projects should be considered with other eligible projects in funding priority. The change to FFFPP would waive the cost-share obligation for a small landowner who has enrolled in FFFPP and has chosen to abandon a water crossing. This change to FFFPP would require a legislative action. If FFFPP funding remains the same, this change could result in the repair of a few less fish barriers, however, the quantity

of fish barrier removal reductions would be insignificant and the abandonment option may provide more rapid improvement in some habitat areas.

A second incentive could be to expand the concept of improving road conditions and maintenance in existing cost share programs. For example, the targeted funding for improving road conditions on forest land within the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost share program would be encouraged for state wide expansion. The expansion would be focused in two areas: funds for technical assistance and funds for implementing the revised road redesign. Technical assistance might come from a forester or road expert and help landowners plan or redesign a road that is a high risk for resource damage when not maintained frequently. Currently, there are no cost share programs or funding targeted for these efforts. The change to extend the eligibility to provide cost sharing for road relocation/construction in EQIP would have to take place at a statewide Natural Resources Conservation Service policy level. Small forest landowners would need to support and request the changes at the appropriate Local Working Groups.



FOR DNR USE ONLY
Checklist #

SMALL FOREST LANDOWNER CHECKLIST RMAP

WHEN TO SUBMIT A CHECKLIST RMAP

Submit this checklist with your Forest Practices Application/Notification (FPA/N) for harvest or salvage. If you have already submitted a Checklist for these roads, please contact the DNR region office. The Checklist is for existing roads on your forest land that have been used by anyone for a forest practice since 1974. Do not include haul roads on your neighbor's property. Do not include skid trails.

THIS CHECKLIST APPLIES TO *(Check one)*

- The forest roads on my forest land that I will use for this FPA/N. *Minimum Required*
- All the forest roads on my forest land. *Assessing all your forest roads is optional. If you choose this, you will not be required to submit additional checklists with future FPA/N's. If you check this box, include a DNR Activity Map(s) that shows all your forest roads. Maps are available at DNR region offices and at <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices>. You need to know the legal description (section, township, and range) of your roads in order to request a map.*

OPTIONAL: The approximate total number of miles of forest road assessed in this Checklist is: _____
This information will be used for statewide statistics. Your help gathering this information is appreciated.

FOREST ROAD ASSESSMENT

Please complete this section after you have assessed your forest roads.

- I need help with this section. *(If you check this box, you may leave the rest of the boxes in this section blank. DNR will contact you)*

The following boxes describe common sediment issues. Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water from the road or ditch runs directly into typed water. | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt from the uphill side of the road keeps falling into the ditch-line before regularly scheduled maintenance. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water flows under, over, or around the culvert. | <input type="checkbox"/> Dirt from the cut-slope keeps falling downhill into or near a stream, pond, or wetland. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The culvert keeps filling with dirt. | <input type="checkbox"/> The road crosses typed water <i>(a culvert, bridge or ford exists)</i> . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The road has large cracks. | <input type="checkbox"/> My forest roads do not have any of these issues. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The road has sinkholes. <i>(Not a pothole – but a hole that you can't drive over)</i> | |

FAMILY FOREST FISH PASSAGE PROGRAM

This is a cost-share program to fix fish passage barriers, such as culverts. Not all culverts are fish passage barriers. If yours is, you may qualify. Please contact the DNR's Small Forest Landowner Office in Olympia at (360) 902-1404 or see <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/sflo>

ORPHANED ROADS

State law requires DNR to keep an inventory of orphaned roads that pose a risk to public safety or to public resources. Your help with this inventory is requested.

Orphaned roads include:

- Roads on your forest land that someone hauled timber on before 1974.

Orphaned roads do not include:

- Skid trails,
- Roads on your forest land that someone will drive a pick-up truck on for forestry use,
- Roads on your forest land that someone will use for log or rock trucks.

Check one of these boxes

- I do not have orphaned roads that I think pose a risk to public resources or public safety – such as houses, highways, county roads, streams, ponds, or wetlands.
- I have orphaned roads that I think may pose a risk to public resources or public safety – such as houses, highways, county roads, streams, ponds or wetlands. *(Please show the locations of all these orphaned roads on a separate DNR Activity Map. This is not the same map that shows your harvest)*
- I need help identifying orphaned roads.

ROAD MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS

All forest landowners have a legal obligation to maintain all their forest roads on all their forest land to the extent necessary to prevent damage to public resources. This includes forest roads not shown on this Checklist. Maintenance rules are in WAC 222-24-052. Best Management Practices (BMP's) for road maintenance are in the Forest Practices Board Manual Section 3. Both are in the forest practices rule book or at <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices>.

Road maintenance includes:

- Inspecting forest roads and fixing damage before, during, and after hauling timber and/or rock
- Keeping drainage structures (*relief culverts, ditches, water bars, dips, etc.*) and water crossings functional
- Making sure water from roads and ditches do not flow directly into streams, ponds, or wetlands

LANDOWNER INFORMATION

I certify that at the time I submit this FPA/N I am a small forest landowner because:

- I have an average annual timber harvest level of two million board feet or less from my own forest land in Washington State; and
- I have not exceeded this average annual harvest level in the last three years; and
- I will not exceed this average annual harvest level for the next ten years.

Printed Name of Landowner: _____

Landowner Signature(s): _____

Complete this section only if you are not submitting an FPA/N

Mailing Address _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-Mail Address (optional): _____ Phone Numbers: _____

Printed Name of Contact Person (If different from landowner): _____

E-Mail Address (optional): _____ Phone Number: _____