

**Recreation Outdoor Coalition  
4000 Beacon Drive  
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**Use of Road Maintenance Level Description for the  
Route Designation Process**

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ROC has carefully reviewed the FSM and FSH to understand the direction for use of the maintenance level descriptions in determining which road needs an engineering analysis to allow mixed use. Following are the FSM and FSH sections that influence our position:

**FSM–Forest Service Manual Direction**

**FSM 7702–Objectives**

1. Provide sustainable access in fiscally responsible manner.
4. Coordinate access to NFS lands with others.

**FSM 7712.03–Policy**

4. Consider long- and short-term uses, including possible mechanized, non-mechanized, and off-highway vehicle uses, when analyzing forest transportation facilities.
5. Actively engage the public in transportation analysis.
- 6.a. Document road management objectives.

**FSM 7712.5–Road Management Objectives**

Validate, revise, or establish road management objectives for all classified National Forest System roads to be consistent with forest land and resource management plan direction, project decisions, and the results and findings of roads analysis. Road management objectives establish the design criteria (FSM 7720) and operation and maintenance criteria (FSM 7730.3) for each road. The road management objectives require approval by the Responsible Official (usually the District Ranger) and are included in the forest road atlas (FSM 7711.1).

## FSM 7730—Operation and Maintenance

### 30.2—Objective

Operate and maintain the National Forest System transportation system in a manner that meets the road management objectives to provide for:

1. Safe and efficient travel;
2. Access for the administration, utilization and protection of National Forest System lands; and
3. Protection of the environment, adjacent resources, and public investment.

### 30.3—Policy

1. Establish operation and maintenance criteria for transportation facilities.
2. Document these criteria in accordance with FSM 7712.5. These criteria must describe how to operate and maintain facilities to meet management needs as determined through land and resource management planning. As a minimum, the criteria must:
  - a. Identify vehicles and type of use for which the facility is intended.
  - b. Identify seasonal or yearlong use restrictions necessary for meeting road management objectives.
  - c. Identify measures needed to protect the investment in the facility.
  - d. Document operational status as to whether the road is subject to or excluded from the Highway Safety Act (FSM 7705).
2. Make annual plans for the operation and maintenance of National Forest System roads to meet road management objectives.
3. Coordinate road operation and maintenance plans with cooperators in cooperative construction and use agreement areas (FSM 5467).
4. Operate and maintain transportation facilities consistent within constraints and limitations inherent in the original design.

## **FSH – Forest Service Handbook Guidance**

### FSH 7709.58 Maintenance Handbook

#### 11– Maintenance Criteria

12 – Road Maintenance Management System. Select road maintenance levels consistent with road operation and maintenance condition.

Modify the annual Maintenance Plan as necessary to balance requirements with available resources.

12.1 – Scope – Road maintenance includes expenditures in the repair or upkeep of a road necessary to retain the road’s approved traffic service level.

Some roads may be allowed to disinvest to allow uncompensated deterioration of assets gradually over time. For example, a road may need to be operated and maintained at a higher level during periods of commercial use than is required at other times.

#### 12.3 – Maintenance Levels.

Maintenance levels must be consistent with road management objectives and maintenance criteria.

1. Factors. Consider the following factors when selecting maintenance levels:
  - a. Resource program needs, environmental and resource protection requirements, visual quality objectives, and recreation opportunity spectrum classes.
  - b. Road investment protection requirements.
  - c. Service life and current operational status.
  - d. User safety.
  - e. Volume, type, class, and composition of traffic.
  - f. Surface type.
  - g. Travel speed.
  - h. User comfort and convenience.
  - i. Functional classification.

j. Traffic service level.

The operational maintenance level is the maintenance level currently assigned to a road considering today's needs, road condition, budget constraints and environmental concerns; in other words, it defines the level to which the road is currently being maintained.

The objective maintenance level is the maintenance level to be assigned at a future date considering future road management objectives, traffic needs, budget constraints and environmental concerns.

As a result of ROC's review, the operational maintenance level is to be used when considering mixed use on NFS roads, not objective.

And because there is no direction or guidance given to link the Factors (FSH 7709.58–12.3), the following is reasonable:

<i>Road Maintenance Level</i>	<i>Factor e</i>		<i>Factor f</i>	<i>Factor g</i>	
	<i>ADT Range</i>	<i>Average Design ADT</i>	<i>Surface Composition</i>	<i>Observed Speed Range</i>	<i>Design Speed</i>
2	0-10	10	Native	2-20	15
3	10-30	30	Native or Aggregate	10-35	25
4	30-60	45	Aggregate	25-40	35
5	60+	60+	Paved	35-45+	40