

Project Closure

Forest Management Practices Fact Sheet Managing Water Series #11

Introduction

After forest activities have ended, forest roads and trails remain. If these roads aren't maintained, they may erode and contaminate area waters. However, steps can be taken to either temporarily or permanently close roads and limit erosion. Closing roads also reduces maintenance costs.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) can prevent or minimize the impact of forestry activities on rivers, lakes, streams, groundwater, wetlands, and visual quality.

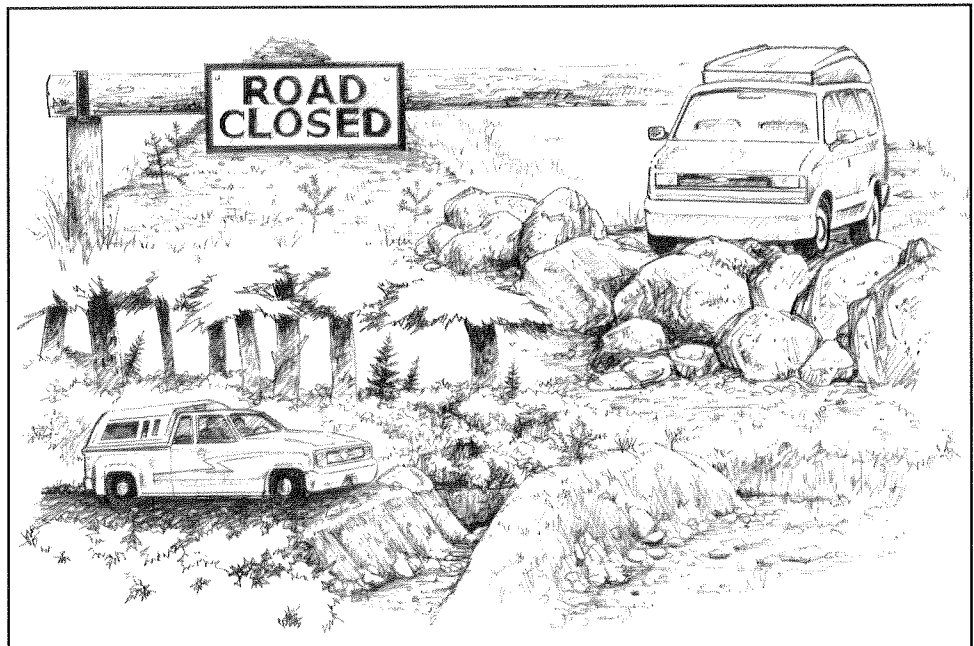
Where Used

Project closure measures should be used for all forest roads, trails, and landings that are to be temporarily or permanently closed. Temporary closure may be needed during breakup or wet periods to protect a traffic surface. Permanent closure should be considered whenever use will cease for more than five years.

Application

When temporarily closing a road:

- ▶ Place barriers and signs indicating "road closed" at the beginning of the forest road.
- ▶ Stabilize the road by seeding and fertilizing disturbed surfaces. Generally, seed mixtures should include fast-growing annual species. They will quickly stabilize the soil and permit perennial native species to reestablish themselves on the site. Any perennials found in seed mixtures should be native species. For more information, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Cooperative Extension Service, or Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices.



- ▶ Keep existing drainage structures in good working order during closure. Clean debris from culverts and ditches. Install additional drainage structures if needed. Place debris away from open water and away from structures.
- ▶ Reduce travel during spring and other muddy times when roads can be damaged by traffic.
- ▶ Inspect the road occasionally to check conditions and schedule repairs.
- ▶ Repair road surfaces by filling in ruts and holes with gravel or compacted fill.

When permanently closing a road:

- ▶ Keep traffic from entering the road by posting signs and placing barriers.
- ▶ Place water bars where necessary.
- ▶ Remove culverts, bridges, and related structures. They will fail without long-term maintenance.
- ▶ Reshape stream crossings to the previous channel shape.
- ▶ Stabilize all exposed surfaces with mulch, hay bales, water bars or other materials. Seed and fertilize as needed (see temporary closure for more information).

Advantages

Properly closing forest projects results in cleaner water and improved habitat. In the long run, proper closure of all roads, trails, and landings, and regular maintenance on temporarily closed roads can save money.

Disadvantages

Proper closure of roads, trails and landings requires additional advance planning and effort.

Related Fact Sheets in This Series

Project Planning: Locating Roads, Landings, Skid Trails, and Crossings (FS-6970); Managing Water on Roads, Skid Trails, and Landings (FS-6971); Earth-Berm Water Bars (FS-6972); Using Logging Debris or Logs to Build Water Bars (FS-6973); Conveyor Belt Water Bars (FS-6974); Broad-Based Dips (FS-6975); Open-Top Culverts (FS-6976); Shaping Roads and Trails (FS-6977); Roadside and Diversion Ditches (FS-6978); Cross-Drainage Culverts (FS-6979); Making and Using Measurement Tools—Basal Area (FS-6981); and Making and Using Measurement Tools—Slope (FS-6982).

Cooperators

University of Minnesota Extension Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Logger Education Program, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan State University Extension, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



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