

Appendix 16: Principles of Road Construction and Decommissioning

Main points in the forest resource road strategy are;

1. Any road, temporary or permanent, that would be built would be to approved environmental standards (e.g., as stated in the Environmental Protection Plan of 1994).
2. Any main road would be built by the department to a standard capable of regular truck traffic. In areas where there was no objection to road construction and where desirable from a sustainable forest management point of view (eg. no illegal occupation or other damaging activities) roads could be maintained.
3. Where there are sensitive or particular values to be protected, access by a main road would be restricted while forest operations in the areas were on going; and after forest operations in the area were completed for a period. Various levels of decommissioning may be decided on a case by case basis.
4. Three standards of decommissioning will be attempted. Firstly, old skid trails may be rehabilitated to a state whereby natural succession may occur again on the right of way as shown possible by a trial conducted by a private operator in 1999. Secondly, existing forest access roads that are built to a C standard and would be too costly to put back in a completely natural state may be blocked off to stop highway vehicular traffic. Thirdly, operator built access roads (generally D class or lower) or roads built by the Department with the option of decommissioning may be rehabilitated to a state whereby natural succession may again occur on the right of way. Information on decommissioning will be included in Environmental Assessment and ILUC procedures.
5. No main forest resource road would run on a continuous course parallel to the main channel of a river, if the topography slopes consistently towards the river. All roads shall be constructed in accordance with existing guidelines (ie. Fish Habitat Protection and other guidelines).
6. Temporary extraction routes less than 2 km in length would be constructed by commercial operators (sawmillers) to a standard that would be environmentally acceptable, and such road would be decommissioned immediately after satisfactory inspection of the harvesting areas for cutting and silviculture

requirements. It must be noted though, that if part of an area is scheduled for harvest now and another part of the area for several years later, decommissioning may not be complete for a number of years. In such cases, the road will be blocked in a way sufficient to exclude motor (highway) vehicles.

7. As a Planning guideline, for every kilometer of road constructed, a kilometer of existing road will be decommissioned. The operational plan will invoke a program to identify roads that are unnecessary and these will be reclaimed/decommissioned. Such decommissioning will not be contingent upon new road construction.
8. Although the intent of this section is to address resource roads, it was felt a statement should be made on extraction on cutting areas. It is recognized that no matter what type of extraction equipment is used, repeated passes over the same extraction trail will wear away the soil sometimes to bare rock. Repeated passes on one trail is preferable to the use of numerous trails, but reclamation of the trail has to be undertaken by the operator and approved by the responsible authorities.
9. When road building, precautions and modifications have to be taken to ensure all values are safeguarded. Examples would be from standard engineering practices (Beattie, Thompson and Levinel, 1983 ; McCubbin, Case and Rowe, 1985 ; Scruton et al, 1997 ; FEIS, 2001) such as using filter fabric and rock check, to landscape design techniques in layout of roads avoiding tops of ridges, keeping construction off more productive sites, or native seeding around ends of culverts or decommissioning roads. Biological surveys should be incorporated into the design/location process for any new road.
10. Road construction should be conducted during the summer months or generally dry periods. Road use and construction should be restricted during periods of road weakness, fire hazard or wildlife vulnerability.
11. As with access roads, all terrain vehicle trails for timber extraction would have to be located in specified environmentally acceptable locations and be subject to decommissioning (removal of any constructions).
12. Roads in sensitive areas should be constructed by the Department of Natural Resources.

13. Roads to be decommissioned should be built to the lowest possible accepted standard taking into account reasonable environmental protection. In effect they should be created so they can self reforest with a minimal amount of roll up required.
14. Decommissioning to a completely impassable standard will not be considered on the sole access route to an approved cabin or on traditional access routes which pre-date 1970. The type of road would depend on the agreement to access the areas as well as the type of traffic and duration of the operation in the area. A blanket policy again cannot be applied throughout the District, but the type of road must suit the area, the purpose and the concern.