

Road Analysis of designated county road accesses for OHV use, as approved on Nov 5, 2007.

The Loon Lake to Chewelah Area.

Beginning in the Loon Lake area, the routing to the Chewelah area is as follows, with comments. Map page references are those found on the Stevens County web site and in the Stevens County Road Atlas by Map Metrics.

Garden Spot Road (Map page 67, 81). This two lane paved county road is proposed for opening due to direct connection to services. Loon Lake, a small unincorporated community has long been an informal ATV access point. Evidence of OHV trails alongside Hwy 395 are clear and often times riders are seen moving up and down these trails. Garden Spot Road is characterized with a higher duty load than other paved roads proposed for opening. Less than 60 vehicles per hour reflects the average daily travel, and anecdotal evidence shows weekends are less impactful than during the work week, due to commuter and truck traffic using this road. OHV users have stated they do not consider it a primary access route, but rather travel a user defined trail alongside Garden Spot when weather permits. This should be considered for future enhancement. A favorite user site is Deer Lake Mountain, which is accessed from the Garden Spot Road. Commonly, on weekends, several vehicles and trailers will be parked nearby Garden Spot Road creating a certain amount of congestion as the users ingress and egress the area underneath the powerlines that course across the area. Most recently, Deer Lake Mountain has been designated as an OHV Use Area, with the permission of the private land owner. As this OHV area lies within private property, agreements should be fostered between the users and the owners for appropriate use, signage and improvements to access to that area. Garden Spot leads into Loon Lake, and services on the east side of Hwy 395 for food and fuel are readily available. Intersection traffic at Garden Spot and Hwy 395 is heavy. A user-defined crossing several hundred feet north of there is in use. Hotel, fuel, restaurant, and other services are available on the west side of Hwy 395. This road is frequently traveled, and OHV users must be cautious when crossing the surface of this road. Garden Spot Road is allowed for OHV use from the Loon Lake services to the intersection with Whittier Road.

East Deer Lake Road (Map page 67, 81). This road intersects with Garden Spot Road on the south end, is paved up to the eastern side of Deer Lake, then becomes gravel. It gradually narrows from a standard two lane road, to a narrower gravel road. Caution is required. In the lake area, many hikers, bike riders, horseback riding and other types of travel are noted. Cars, campers, boats on trailers, all present hazards to the OHV users. Speed limits are enforced. Less than 30 vehicles per hour can be expected. Anecdotal information confirms this road provides excellent access to the Deer Lake Mountain area previously mentioned, as well as routing to the western side of Deer Lake, then northerly to the Chewelah area. Many vacationing residents in the Deer Lake region will benefit from the designation, and would actually reduce vehicle traffic as they access the local resort stores for groceries, etc.

Southwood Shores Road (Map page for Deer Lake, or 67A). This road is also a paved and gravel road. The middle segment is gravel, with both ends paved. It covers almost 4 miles with an average of less than 5 vehicles per hour expected. This is a residential zone for the Deer Lake region, with the usual walkers, bikers, and other traffic congestion expected. It has a lot of corners, reducing sight distance. Caution is advised.

North Deer Lake Road (Map page for Deer Lake or 67A, 67). This is a more traveled Deer Lake residential area road. It is paved for the most part, with the last mile beyond the cattle guard as gravel. This road would primarily serve as services access and routing directly to the Chewelah area, via North Deer Lake Road and north on Grouse Creek. Areas beyond the cattle guard are largely private land. If these lands are accessible by agreement with the large private land holder, then a designation as an OHV use area would be appropriate. Taking this road to the west towards Hwy 395, a four intersection with Grouse Creek Road going north, and Agar Road to the south appears. Vehicle traffic at this area is just less than 40 vehicles per hour, decreasing slightly going into Deer Lake.

Before reaching that intersection, **Powers Road (Map page 67)**, a short, primitive designated, 1 ½ mile gravel road goes to the south. This road has less than 7 vehicles per hour expected, and helps access the commonly used Deer Lake Mountain area. This also helps OHV users from the Deer Lake area access the use area, as well as serve as a direct connector to Loon Lake services to the south.

Agar Road, which is approximately another ½ mile to the west of Powers Road is a paved road, almost two miles long, which intersects with Hwy 395. This intersection crosses to Maple St from Loon Lake. However, many OHV riders exit the road surface at Agar Rd and travel the user defined trail along the east side of Hwy 395. This is opportunity to codify a use, and to study the possibility of designating this area as an OHV access route to services, which avoids the highway use itself. Safety and accessibility would be fostered. A short segment is only required for access from the intersection from Hwy 395, up Agar to the intersection with Powers Road. Less than 30 vehicles per hour frequent this short segment.

Grouse Creek Road (Map page 67, 68, and 69). This is a 10.2 mile road, with approximately the first two miles paved from North Deer Lake Road to the Stevens County Solid Waste Transfer Station. In that area, expect around 12 vehicles per hour, then a marked reduction in vehicular traffic north of there to the intersection with Horseshoe Lake Rd. The remaining 8 miles of gravel road is two lane road, with some narrowing in spots. 4 vehicles per hour and less is expected in this route. Little public land is accessible from this section of Grouse Creek Road. It serves as a direct connecting route to accesses in Loon Lake and to Chewelah. It also provides access to private lands that may be designated OHV use areas in the future. At the intersection of Grouse Creek Road and Cottonwood Creek Road, it changes designation to that of a primitive road. It continues northeasterly for another 1 ½ miles where it intersects with Horseshoe Lake Road and further on transitions to USFS maintained road in the Colville National Forest.

Bussard Lake Rd (Map page 68). This short route provides access to DNR lands in Section 22 of this area and is designated a primitive road. Less than 2 vehicles per hour are frequenting this road. It should be designated for OHV use as it is primitive and connects to DNR accessible lands. It leaves Grouse Creek road, eventually returning after approximately three miles back to Grouse Creek.

Cottonwood Creek Road (Map page 68, 69). This is another major connecting route to services in the Chewelah area. As we go further north, routing from Chewelah to the various national forest areas becomes critical. Several routes ensure dispersion of recreation, reducing congestion and impacts to the environment. This road is approximately 10 ½ miles in length, with both paved and gravel portions. In the southern region where the road is located, it accesses some DNR tracts of land for potential OHV access. Less than 4 vehicles per hour frequent this region. More importantly are the hunting accesses that lead to designating this road for OHV access. Private lands and public lands are in a checkerboard pattern in this area. Users must be cautious to avoid illegal trespass. Opportunities to designate OHV use areas abound here, and should be explored for future designation. Cottonwood Road lies on an east-west access and leads downhill to the west to the paved portion of that road which eventually tucks into the east side of the Colville Valley, leading past farms and residences lining the road to Chewelah. This is a direct connector route, with expected vehicular travel at less than 7 vehicles per hour, until reaching Chewelah. Near the city limits, expect around 14 vehicles per hour at the intersection with Flowery Trail Road.

Horseshoe Lake Road. This gravel road is a designated primitive road. This 10.2 mile length is contained mostly within the public lands of the DNR and the USFS. At Horseshoe Lake, private land exists, and OHV users must remain on the road. This is a scenic route, with many unexploited features that bear exploring. Old mine sites also exist, which, in the future, could serve as historical or heritage sites. Development of these possibilities should also be entertained. Horseshoe Lake Road intersects with Mud Lake Road which then continues northerly. Staying on Horseshoe Lake Road eventually lead to intersecting with Cottonwood Road (paved) for direct connection to Chewelah services. Less than 4 vehicles per hour frequent this road.

Mud Lake Road (Map page 69). This road is 3.25 miles of primitive designated road. Less than 2 vehicles per hour can be expected. It connects from Horseshoe Lake Road to Flowery Trail Road, transiting through private lands. It is the potential access road for Mud Lake and the Quartzite Mountain area for the future, however, the rest of the northern portions of the road are in private lands. For Quartzite Mountain, no access route for OHV's currently exists, limiting the disabled adventurers from spectacular views of the Colville Valley from the top of Quartzite. Perhaps a collaborative effort could be fostered to create such a route for multiple-use access to allow all citizens the opportunity for such an adventure. As it intersects with Flowery Trail, the decision to turn left or right leads into the next region of travel. Flowery Trail is a major division road for recreational activities that is discussed in the next section.

Summary

The direct connections to the service areas meet the requirements of connectivity by state law. The connections enhance and benefit the communities they serve, as well as enhancing the potential recreational activities in the region. The public lands managed by the DNR and USFS are thus connected with a properly designated route, increasing the capacity of the agencies to serve the public by providing recreational opportunities for all the citizens, not just the able-bodied without disability. Recreation associations should be enlisted to help educate and foster outreach to all recreational users on these roads to exercise caution and safety.

USFS and DNR lands predominate north of Garden Spot, and it would be a beneficial project to study the impacts of the openings of county roads in this area, as it is already an active OHV use area. A large block of privately owned land in the Deer Lake Mountain area is designated as an OHV use area.

Future OHV facility and use areas for designation are incumbent upon successful administration of this first designation. An analysis should be ongoing as it relates to frequency of use, impacts to the economy and environment, and how it relates to private property owners along the roads proposed for use.