Federal Trail Data Standards (FTDS) Version 1

National Trail Management Classes

10/16/2008

> *Note: The National Trail Management Classes are currently undergoing public notice and comment via the Federal Register under the leadership of the US Forest Service. Once this is complete and the final version published in the Federal Register, the Trail Classes incorporated in the Federal Trail Data Standards will be revised as needed to reflect the final published version of these management concepts. (June, 2010)*

Trail Classes are general categories reflecting trail development scale, arranged along a continuum. The Trail Class identified for a trail prescribes its development scale, representing its intended design and management standards.[1] Local deviations from any Trail Class descriptor may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, or other factors, provided that the deviations do not undermine the general intent of the applicable Trail Class.

Identify the appropriate Trail Class for each trail or trail segment based on the management intent in the applicable land management plan, travel management direction, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Apply the Trail Class that most closely matches the management intent for the trail or trail segment, which may or may not reflect the current condition of the trail.

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Tread & Traffic Flow	• Tread intermittent and often indistinct. • May require route finding. • Single lane, with no allowances constructed for passing. • Predominantly native materials.	• Tread continuous and discernible, but narrow and rough. • Single lane, with minor allowances constructed for passing. • Typically native materials.	• Tread continuous and obvious. • Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volumes in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. • Native or imported materials.	• Tread wide and relatively smooth , with few irregularities. • Single lane, with allowances constructed for passing where required by traffic volumes in places where there is no reasonable opportunity to pass. • Double lane where traffic volumes are high and passing is frequent. • Native or imported materials. • May be hardened.	• Tread wide, firm, stable, and generally uniform • Single lane, with frequent turnouts where traffic volume is low to moderate. • Double lane where traffic volume is moderate to high. • Commonly hardened with asphalt or other imported material.
Obstacles	• Obstacles common, naturally ocurring, often substantial , and intended to provide increased challenge. • Narrow passages; brush, steep grades, rocks and logs present.	• Obstacles may be common, substantial, and intended to provide increased challenge. • Blockages cleared to define route and protect resources. • Vegetation may encroach into trailway.	• Obstacles may be common, but not substantial or intended to provide challenge. • Vegetation cleared outside of trailway.	• Obstacles infrequent and insubstantial . • Vegetation cleared outside of trailway.	• Obstacles not present • Grades typically < 8%

Trail Attributes	Trail Class 1 Minimally Developed	Trail Class 2 Moderately Developed	Trail Class 3 Developed	Trail Class 4 Highly Developed	Trail Class 5 Fully Developed
Constructed Features & Trail Elements	◆ Structures minimal to non-existent. ◆ Drainage typically provided without structures. ◆ Natural fords. ◆ Typically no bridges.	◆ Structures of limited size, scale, and quantity; typically constructed of native materials. ◆ Structures adequate to protect trail infrastructure and resources. ◆ Natural fords . ◆ Bridges as needed for resource protection and appropriate access.	◆ Structures may be common and substantial; constructed of imported or native materials. ◆ Natural or constructed fords. ◆ Bridges as needed for resource protection and appropriate access.	◆ Structures frequent and substantial; typically constructed of imported materials. ◆ Contructed or natural fords. ◆ Bridges as needed for resource protection and user convenience. ◆ Trailside amenities may be present.	◆ Structures frequent or continuous; typically constructed of imported materials. ◆ May include bridges, boardwalks, curbs, handrails, trailside amenities, and similar features.
Signs[2]	◆ Route identification signing limited to junctions. ◆ Route markers present when trail location is not evident. ◆ Regulatory and resource protection signing infrequent. ◆ Destination signing, unless required, generally not present . ◆ Information and interpretive signing generally not present.	◆ Route identification signing limited to junctions. ◆ Route markers present when trail location is not evident. ◆ Regulatory and resource protection signing infrequent . ◆ Destination signing typically infrequent outside of wilderness; generally not present in wilderness areas. ◆ Information and interpretive signing uncommon.	◆ Route identification signing at junctions and as needed for user reassurance. ◆ Route markers as needed for user reassurance . ◆ Regulatory and resource protection signing may be common. ◆ Destination signing likely outside of wilderness; generally not present in wilderness areas . ◆ Information and interpretive signs may be present outside of wilderness .	◆ Route identification signing at junctions and as needed for user reassurance. ◆ Route markers as needed for user reassurance. ◆ Regulatory and resource protection signing common. ◆ Destination signing common outside of wilderness; generally not present in wilderness areas. ◆ Information and interpretive signs may be common outside wilderness areas. ◆ Accessibility information likely displayed at trailhead.	◆ Route identification signing at junctions and for user reassurance. ◆ Route markers as needed for user reassurance. ◆ Regulatory and resource protection signing common. ◆ Destination signing common. ◆ Information and interpretive signs common. ◆ Accessibility information likely displayed at trailhead.
Typical Recreation Environs & Experience[3]	◆ Natural and unmodified. ◆ ROS: Typically Primitive to Roaded Natural. ◆ WROS: Typically Primitive to Semi-Primitive .	◆ Natural and essentially unmodified. ◆ ROS: Typically Primitive to Roaded Natural. ◆ WROS: Typically Primitive to Semi-Primitive.	◆ Natural and primarily unmodified. ◆ ROS: Typically Primitive to Roaded Natural. ◆ WROS: Typically Semi-Primitive to Transition.	◆ May be modified. ◆ ROS: Typically Semi-Primitive to Rural. ◆ WROS: Typically Portal or Transition.	◆ May be highly modified. ◆ Commonly associated with visitor centers or high-use recreation sites. ◆ ROS: Typically Roaded Natural to Urban. ◆ Generally not present in wilderness areas.

[1] For management standards, potential appropriateness of Trail Classes for Managed Uses, technical specifications by Trail Class and Designed Use, and other related guidance, refer to agency-specific guidelines and reference material.

[2] For standards and guidelines for the use of signs and posters along trails, refer to agency-specific guidelines.

[3] The National Trail Management Class matrix shows the combinations of Trail Class and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) or Wilderness Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (WROS) settings that commonly occur, although trails in all Trail Classes may and do occur in all settings. For guidance on the application of the ROS and WROS, refer to agency-specific guidelines.