

## REMOVING ROADS TO RESTORE WATERSHEDS ON THE CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST A NEZ PERCE TRIBE—CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST PARTNERSHIP<sup>AFS</sup>

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Over the last eight years, the Nez Perce Tribe and the Clearwater National Forest have worked in partnership to protect and restore watersheds. Restoration projects follow aquatic resource priorities. The Lochsa River Drainage, an important fishery, has been a focal point for restoration projects, especially road removal. The Lochsa River and its tributaries provide critical habitat to populations of spring chinook salmon, ESA listed Snake River steelhead, ESA listed bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout. In addition to providing critical fisheries habitat, the Lochsa has been an important part of the Clearwater National Forest's timber production program. Among the legacies of intensive timber harvest are roads. Over the last 50 yrs, management priorities and harvest systems changed, leaving many of the roads in the Lochsa redundant to management needs. These abandoned roads on the steep, failure prone slopes of the Lochsa have proved deleterious to aquatic resources. The Nez Perce Tribe and Clearwater National Forest have successfully removed over 400 mi of failing roads. Over the years we have learned many lessons about how to effectively implement road removal projects (road removal is referred to as road decommissioning and/or road obliteration) to restore watershed function and protect aquatic resources. Successful road removal projects involve multiple steps including planning, public outreach, mapping, earthwork, erosion control, and monitoring.