

GAO

United States General Accounting Office

Briefing Report to the Chairman,
Subcommittee on National Parks and
Public Lands, Committee on Interior and
Insular Affairs, House of Representatives

April 1992

FEDERAL LANDS

Reasons for and Effects of Inadequate Public Access



146394

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**Resources, Community, and
Economic Development Division****B-247341****April 14, 1992****The Honorable Bruce F. Vento
Chairman, Subcommittee on National
Parks and Public Lands
Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
House of Representatives****Dear Mr. Chairman:**

This report responds to your request that we review the adequacy of public access to land managed by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Specifically, you asked us to provide information on the extent and effects of, as well as the reasons for, inadequate public access and on the methods used by the Forest Service and BLM to resolve access problems. On January 7, 1992, we briefed your staff on the results of our work. As requested, this briefing report presents our findings and observations.

Inadequate access, as we have defined it through discussions with Forest Service and BLM officials, means that the federal government has not acquired the permanent, legal right for the public to enter federal land at the point(s) needed to use the federal land as intended by the managing agency. Because neither agency maintains information at a central location on access problems, our findings and observations are based primarily on responses to questionnaires we sent to Forest Service and BLM field offices. (Sec. 1 contains the details of our audit scope and methodology.)

In summary, the questionnaires indicated that access to about 50.4 million acres, or about 14 percent, of Forest Service and BLM land in the contiguous United States is considered inadequate by agency managers.¹ According to questionnaire respondents, private landowners' unwillingness to grant public access across their land has increased over the past decade as the public's use of federal land has increased. Factors contributing to inadequate access were private landowners' concerns about vandalism and potential liability, and landowners' desire for privacy or exclusive personal use.

¹Public access to federal land in Alaska is assured under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. The state of Hawaii does not have any Forest Service or BLM lands.

To resolve public access problems, the Forest Service and BLM can acquire either all rights and interests associated with the land (called fee simple acquisition) or perpetual easements (limited controls over the land that are binding on succeeding owners). Fee simple acquisitions and perpetual easements can be acquired through purchase, donation, exchange, or condemnation. In fiscal years 1989-1991, the Forest Service and BLM acquired permanent, legal public access to about 4.5 million acres of federal land. As of October 1991, the two agencies had about 3,300 actions pending to open another 9.3 million acres of Forest Service and BLM land to the public.

Background

Of the nearly 700 million total acres of federal land, about 465 million are managed by the Forest Service and BLM. This land provides valuable resources—including timber, water, minerals, energy reserves, and livestock forage—and valuable uses—including wildlife habitats, wilderness experiences, and recreational opportunities. Both Forest Service and BLM land is managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. That is, the land is to be managed to achieve in perpetuity an output of renewable resources such that all the diverse resources are used in a combination that best meets the needs of the American people.

Extent Of, Effects Of, and Reasons for Inadequate Access

According to the questionnaire respondents, about 50.4 million acres, or about 14 percent, of the land managed by the Forest Service and BLM in the contiguous 48 states lack adequate public access. As used in this report, inadequate access does not necessarily mean that the public is physically prevented from entering federal land, but only that the federal government has not acquired the permanent, legal right for the public to enter federal land at the point(s) needed to use the land as intended by the managing agency. Under this definition, permission from nonfederal landowners to cross their land is not considered adequate access because such permission can be revoked at any time.

According to the questionnaire results, private landowners have many reasons for not granting the public access to cross their land. In addition to concerns about vandalism and potential liability, and desire for privacy or exclusive personal use, disagreements over the value of the land and concerns about lost profits were identified as additional reasons for not granting access. (See sec. 2 for further details on the extent of and reasons for inadequate access.)

While inadequate access can reduce the public's recreational opportunities, it can also create management problems relating to the land's multiple uses. The questionnaire respondents believed that hunting, off-road vehicle use, hiking, and camping are the recreational opportunities most affected. Management activities most affected include construction, trail and road maintenance, wildlife habitat management, and law enforcement. The severity of the public access problem, according to the questionnaire respondents, is not the same nationwide; rather, it varies by activity and geographic location. (Sec. 3 provides additional details on the effects of inadequate access.)

How the Agencies Resolve Access Problems

The Forest Service and BLM have several ways of acquiring public access. The primary way, according to the questionnaire respondents, is by acquiring perpetual easements. In some cases, nonfederal landowners are willing to donate perpetual easements to the government; in other cases, the government purchases the easements. Also, the Forest Service and BLM can acquire public access by outright fee simple purchases of nonfederal land, by getting nonfederal landowners to donate their land to the agency, or by exchanging federal land for nonfederal land. For both the Forest Service and BLM, the method of last resort is condemnation. Condemnation, however, is infrequently used because of the time, expense, and sensitivity involved.

The Forest Service and BLM issued guidance to their field offices in 1991 and 1987, respectively, to improve access planning efforts. This guidance required that each forest and resource area plan include a transportation plan that would identify the access rights needed to support the resource objectives of the respective forest or resource area plan. Each forest is required by law to prepare a plan and update it every 15 years. BLM policy states that resource area plans should be updated every 20 years. As the plans are updated, access needs are to be highlighted in the transportation plans and used to monitor access problems. (Sec. 4 addresses methods for acquiring public access.)

We conducted our work between April 1991 and January 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We discussed the facts contained in this briefing report with Forest Service and BLM headquarters officials. These officials agreed with the facts as presented. As you requested, we did not obtain written agency comments on a draft of this report.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this briefing report until 2 days from the date of this letter. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and make copies available to others upon request.

Please contact me at (202) 275-7756 if you or your staff have any questions. Major contributors to this briefing report are listed in appendix III.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Duffus III". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

James Duffus III
Director, Natural Resources
Management Issues

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Abbreviations

BLM Bureau of Land Management

Introduction

The total land area of the United States is 2.3 billion acres. Approximately one-third of this total, or about 700 million acres, is owned by the federal government. The Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manage about 465 million acres. This land contains many resources, including minerals, timber, rangeland, fish and wildlife habitats, recreation areas, and cultural and historic sites.

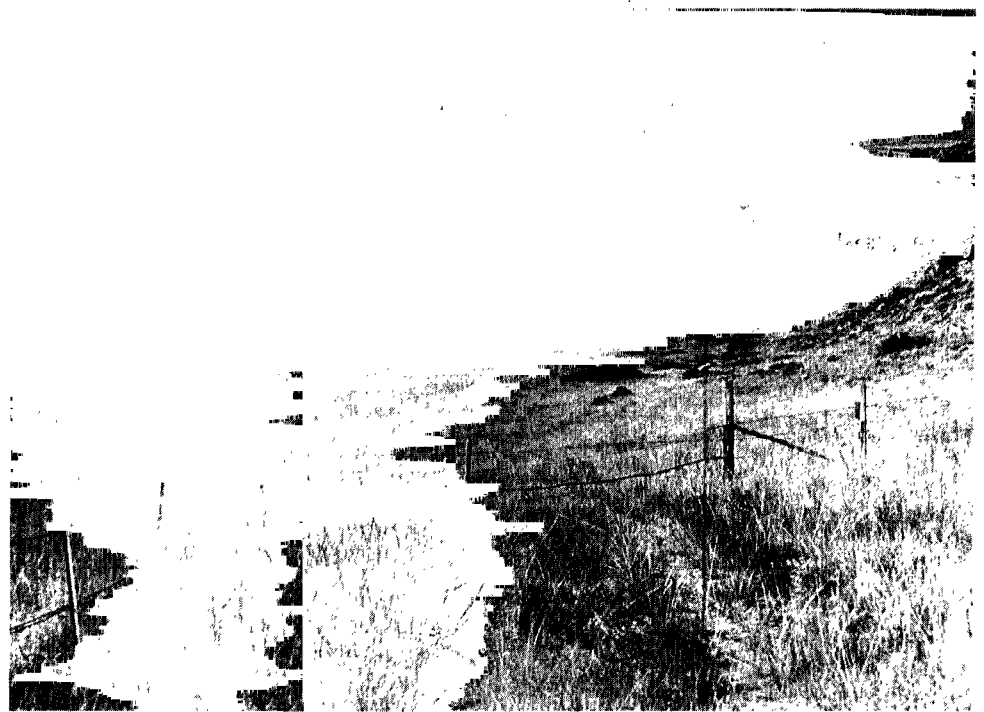
Intermingled with the federal land, however, is state and local government land as well as land owned by corporations, Native American tribes, and private individuals. This checkerboard pattern of ownership, particularly in the western states, can make it difficult for the public to get to federal land without traversing nonfederal land. Unless the federal government obtains permanent, legal public access, nonfederal landowners can control or deny the public's ability to reach federal land.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show private land blocking access to federal land.

Figure 1.1: Private Land Blocking Public Access to Rosebud Lake, Custer National Forest, Montana



**Figure 1.2: Private Land Blocking
Public Access to Custer National
Forest, Montana**



Forest Service and BLM Management Responsibilities

Both the Forest Service and BLM manage federal land and resources in a combination of ways to best serve the needs of the public. That is, the agencies must balance the competing and sometimes conflicting demands of resource development and protection.

The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended, requires the Forest Service to prepare a land and resource management plan for each of its forest units. Similarly, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 requires BLM to prepare land-use plans for its public land areas. In both agencies, these plans set forth management objectives and strategies in various categories such as recreation, wildlife, grazing, and timber.

Evolution of the Access Issue

Only over the past few decades has the issue of public access to federal land arisen. Up until the 1940s, the land management agencies concentrated on building the roads needed to access federal land for commercial purposes, such as timber harvests and mineral development, as well as administrative purposes, such as fire fighting and trail maintenance. Use of these roads for public recreational purposes was

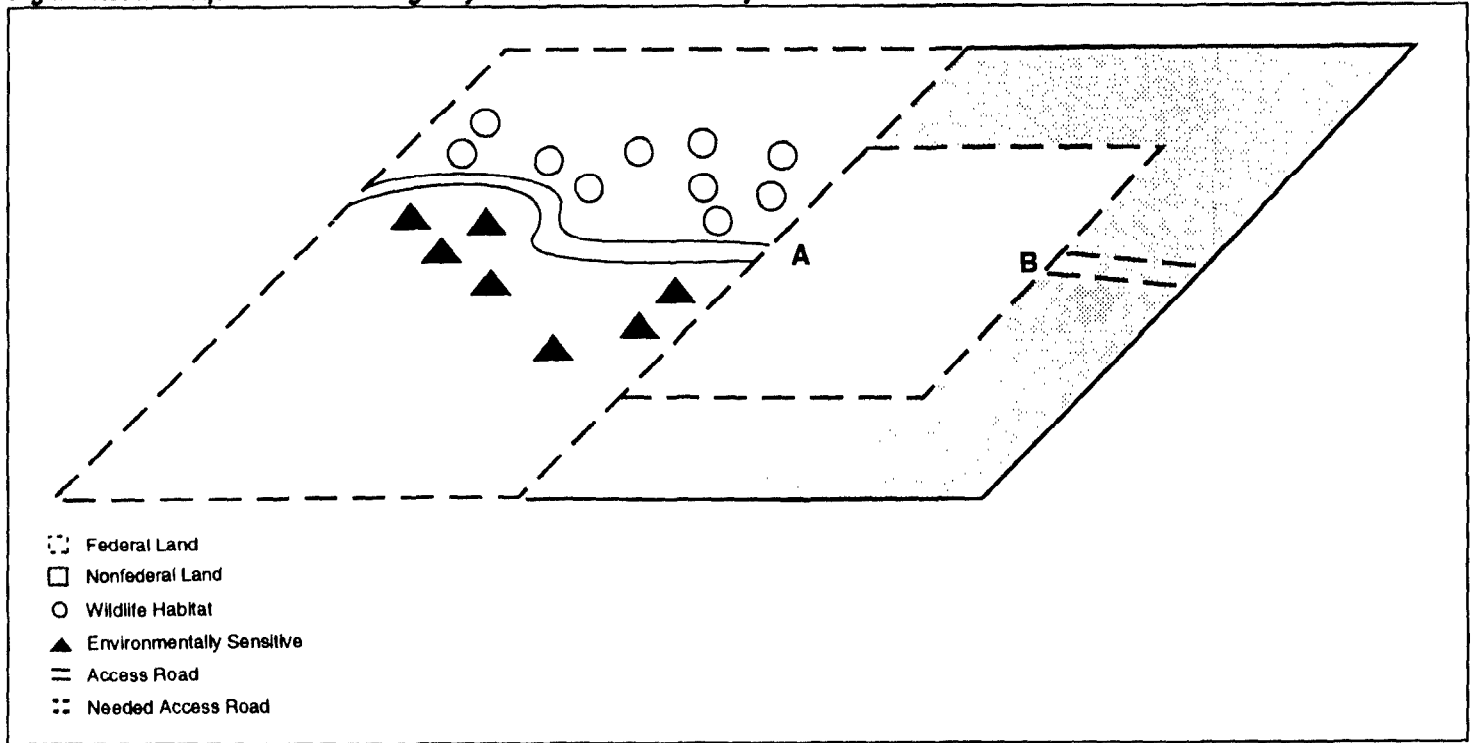
secondary. After the end of World War II, however, the public demand for recreational opportunities on federal land increased, and people began to seek more remote areas in which to hunt and fish. Because public access routes to such areas had not been built, the public had to cross nonfederal land to reach many federally owned areas. But many nonfederal landowners did not want the public crossing their land. Accordingly, some nonfederal landowners blocked passage, while others began charging fees for the privilege of crossing their land.

Definition of Inadequate Access

Inadequate access does not necessarily mean that the public is physically prevented from entering federal land. Inadequate access, as we have defined it through discussions with Forest Service and BLM officials, means that the federal government does not have the permanent, legal right for the public to enter federal land at the point(s) needed to use the land as intended by the managing agency. For example, assume that the public can legally enter a parcel of federal land at point A, but that the managing agency has determined, for land-use purposes, that point B is a more appropriate point of entry. (Such a determination could be based on various factors; point A could be a wildlife habitat or an environmentally sensitive area, for example.) If the managing agency did not have the permanent, legal right for the public to enter that federal parcel at point B, then access to that parcel would be considered inadequate. Figure 1.3 illustrates such a case.

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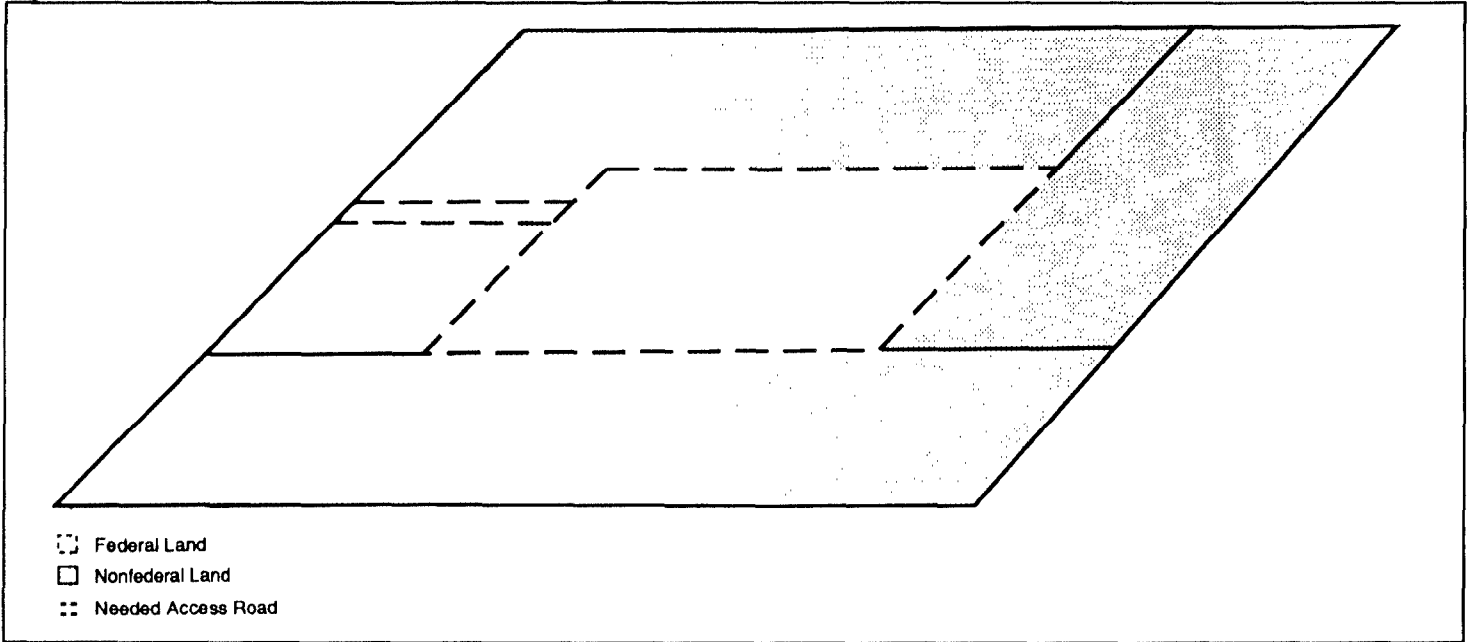
Figure 1.3: Inadequate Access at Agency-Preferred Point of Entry



GAO Presentation Derived From Agency Information

In other cases, access to federal land is blocked at all points. For example, if a parcel of federal land were totally surrounded by nonfederal land, and the government did not have the legal right for the public to cross any portion of the nonfederal land, then access to the federal land would be inadequate, as illustrated in figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Inadequate Access Posed by Surrounding Nonfederal Land



Access Acquisition Methods and Funding

The land management agencies have several ways to obtain public access. For example, the Forest Service and BLM can acquire either all rights and interests associated with the land (called fee simple acquisition) or perpetual access easements (limited rights to enter and use the land for access that are binding on succeeding owners). Fee simple acquisitions and perpetual easements can be acquired through purchase, donation, exchange, or condemnation. Additionally, land acquired for purposes such as wildlife conservation (e.g., through the Land and Water Conservation Fund) sometimes provides access as a secondary benefit.

In fiscal year 1991, direct funding for easement acquisitions amounted to \$6.3 million for the Forest Service and \$1.4 million for BLM, a total of \$7.7 million. Data were not available to determine how much of the money spent under other programs for fee simple land acquisitions resulted in access as a secondary benefit.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Chairman, Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, asked us to determine (1) the extent of and reasons for inadequate access to public land managed by the

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Forest Service and BLM, (2) the effects of inadequate access, and (3) how the agencies resolve access problems.

Because the Forest Service and BLM are decentralized, most data on and knowledge of access problems exist at the individual forests and resource areas. Accordingly, we developed a questionnaire to obtain current information on access issues from forest and resource area officials. The questionnaire requested information on (1) the federal acreage that has inadequate public access, (2) the reasons for inadequate access and the extent to which these reasons have changed over the past decade, (3) the types of public recreational and agency management activities that are restricted by inadequate access and the severity of those restrictions, and (4) how the agencies deal with access problems.

We pretested the questionnaire at 9 national forest supervisor offices in 4 regions and at 10 BLM resource area offices in 5 states. After modifying the questionnaire based on pre-test results, we distributed it to forest supervisors of all 122 national forest administrative units, to managers of all 140 BLM resource area offices, and to the 8 BLM district offices that have no resource area offices under their jurisdiction.

We received responses from 119 (98 percent) of the 122 forest supervisors and 143 (97 percent) of the 148 BLM managers. All statistical data reported are based on the total number of forest supervisors and BLM land managers surveyed. However, responses from the five BLM district offices and four Forest Service administrative units in Alaska are excluded from this report because public access to federal land in that state is assured under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-203). The two agencies manage about 115 million acres in Alaska.

On a number of questions, we asked agency officials to rate, on a scale, the extent to which selected factors contributed to an effect. For example, we asked them to indicate the extent to which certain factors contributed to private landowners' unwillingness to grant permanent, legal public access across their land, using the scale: (1) little or no extent, (2) some extent, (3) moderate extent, (4) great extent, and (5) extreme extent. We also asked agency officials to quantify the amount of reduction in certain recreational opportunities and the amount of interference in agency management activities caused by inadequate access.

In addition to obtaining data from the questionnaire respondents, we interviewed Forest Service and BLM officials at the agencies' headquarters.

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Based on discussions with headquarters and field officials, we selected and visited 16 field locations in the forests and resource areas to obtain information on various access problems. At each field office visited, we interviewed agency officials knowledgeable about access issues, and we reviewed pertinent documents and records. Table 1.1 shows the field offices we visited. Copies of the questionnaires, with response frequencies, are available upon request.

**Table 1.1: Forest Service and BLM
Field Offices Visited**

Office visited	Location
Forest Service	
Northern Region Headquarters	Missoula, Mont.
Flathead National Forest	Kalispell, Mont.
Custer National Forest	Billings, Mont.
Pacific Southwest Region	
Headquarters	San Francisco, Calif.
Angeles National Forest	Arcadia, Calif.
Los Padres National Forest	Goleta, Calif.
Eldorado National Forest	Placerville, Calif.
BLM	
California State Office	Sacramento, Calif.
California Desert District	Riverside, Calif.
Redding Resource Area	Redding, Calif.
Montana State Office	Billings, Mont.
Billings Resource Area	Billings, Mont.
Big Dry Resource Area	Miles City, Mont.
Oregon State Office	Portland, Oreg.
Three Rivers Resource Area	Burns, Oreg.
Vale District	Vale, Oreg.

To obtain varying perspectives on the public access issue, we also met with private landowners, representatives of a hunting and fishing association, representatives of an outfitters and guides association, and representatives of national organizations interested in access. We also reviewed related reports issued by the Congressional Research Service, the Forest Service, BLM, and two national conferences on public access issues. To understand the various ways available to the agencies to resolve access issues, we interviewed agency officials and reviewed pertinent laws and agency policies and regulations.

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We conducted our work between April 1991 and January 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. We discussed the factual information in this report with Forest Service and BLM headquarters officials responsible for resolving access problems. The officials agreed with the facts contained in this report. However, as requested, we did not obtain written agency comments on a draft of the report.

Extent of and Reasons for Inadequate Access

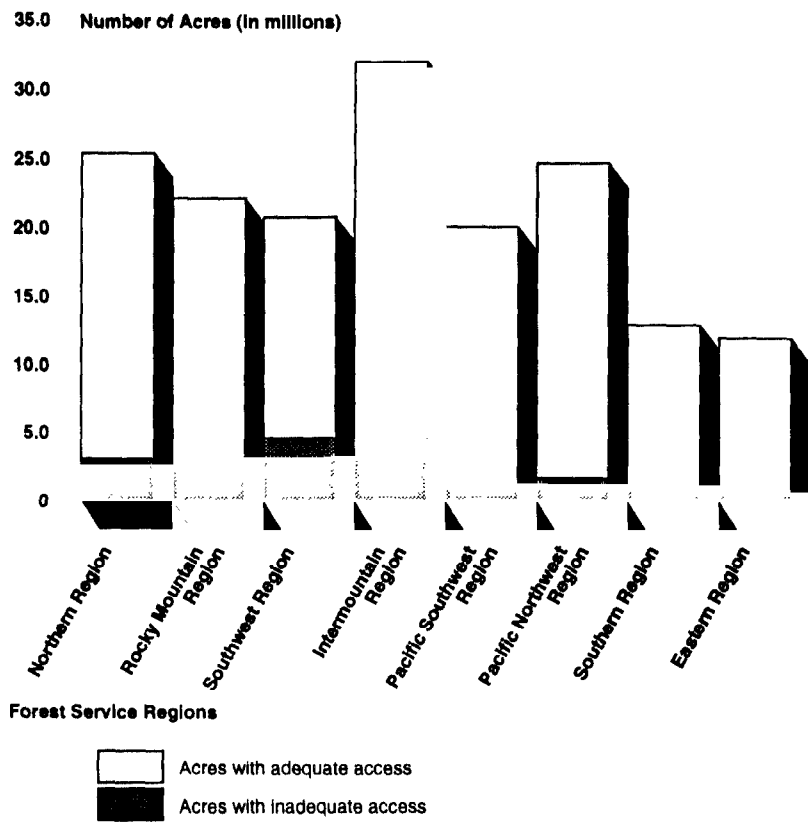
Based on our review, public access to millions of acres of federal land is inadequate. Over the past decade, private landowners' unwillingness to grant public access across their land has increased. Factors contributing to this unwillingness include concerns about vandalism and potential liability, and desire for privacy.

Extent of Inadequate Access

According to questionnaire respondents, access to 50.4 million federal acres, primarily in the western states, is inadequate. Of these acres, 17.3 million are managed by the Forest Service, and 33.1 million by BLM. Figure 2.1 shows, by region, the Forest Service acres with inadequate access; figure 2.2 shows, by state, the BLM acres with inadequate access. In the case of BLM, "eastern states" include all states other than the 10 listed in figure 2.2. Alaska is excluded because public access to federal land in that state is assured under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 and Hawaii is excluded because it does not have any Forest Service or BLM land.

**Section 2
Extent of and Reasons for Inadequate
Access**

**Figure 2.1: Forest Service Acres, by
Region, With Inadequate Public
Access**

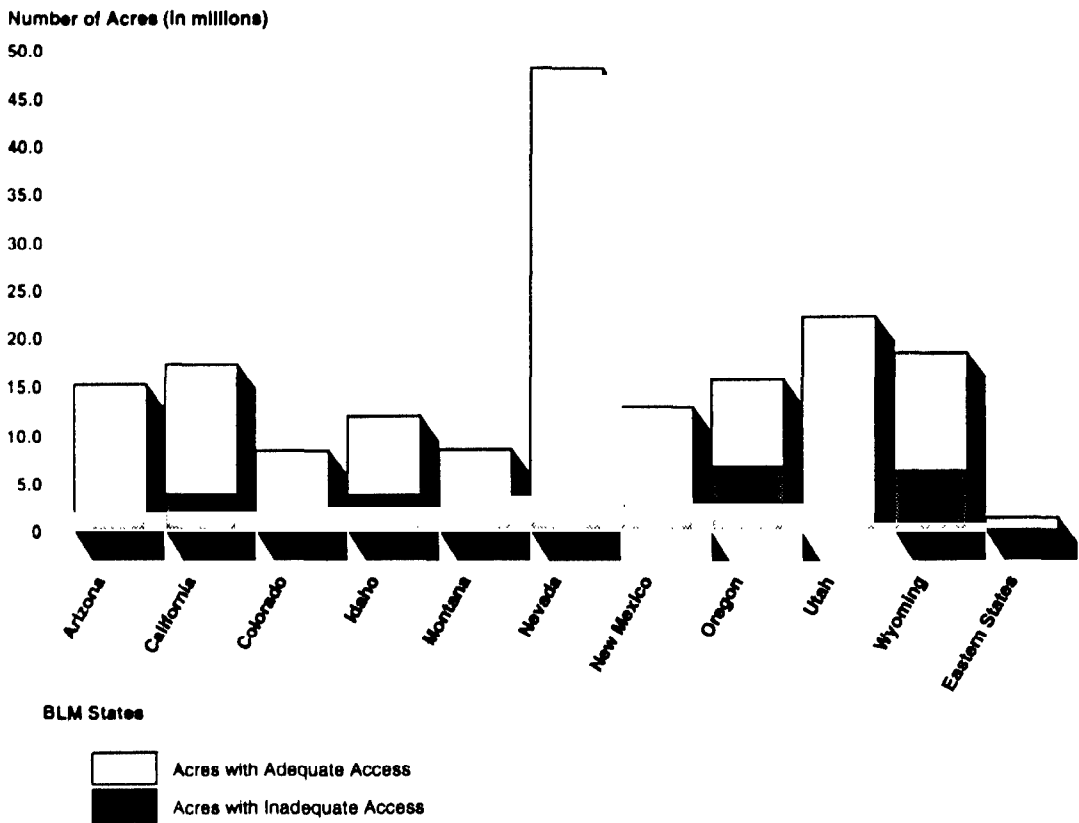


Source: Basic data provided by the Forest Services



**Section 2
Extent of and Reasons for Inadequate
Access**

Figure 2.2: BLM Acres, by State, With Inadequate Public Access



Eastern State Offices reported no inaccessible acres.

Source: Basic data provided by BLM.

**Reasons for
Inadequate Access**

Private landowners' unwillingness to grant public access is based on several factors. These factors, according to questionnaire respondents, are concerns about vandalism and potential liability, and desire for privacy. These concerns, according to the respondents, have increased over the past decade, as has private landowners' unwillingness to let the public cross their land.

Table 2.1 shows the percent of Forest Service supervisors and BLM managers who indicated that certain factors contributed, to a great or

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Access**

extreme extent, to private landowners' unwillingness to let the public cross their land.

Table 2.1: Respondents Indicating Factors Contributing, to a Great or Extreme Extent, to Private Landowners' Unwillingness to Grant Public Access

Factor	Percent of supervisors/land managers	
	Forest Service	BLM
Concern with vandalism	52.5	62.9
Desire for exclusive personal use of their own property	55.1	41.3
Desire for privacy	51.7	37.1
Concern with liability	24.6	35.0
Noneconomic desire for exclusive personal use of agency-managed lands adjacent to or intermingled with private lands	32.2	25.9
Disagreement with the agency over the value of the conveyance	11.0	11.2
Potential loss of profits from renting private fishing and/or hunting rights on lands adjacent to or intermingled with agency-managed lands	8.5	12.6
Potential loss of profits from charging access fees to the public	6.8	13.3
Potential loss of profits from outfitter/guide operations	5.9	14.0
Potential loss of profits from operation of dude ranches on lands adjacent to or intermingled with agency-managed lands	1.7	8.4
Other reasons	3.4	3.5

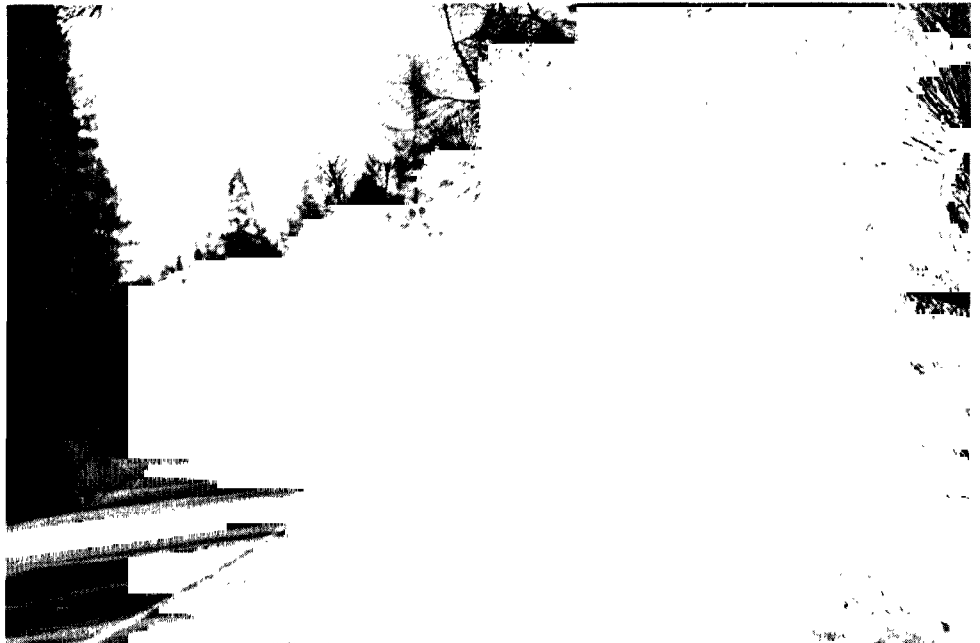
As an example of private landowners' concerns, a Montana landowner we interviewed told us that allowing public access disrupts his cattle-ranching operation, because the public disturbs grazing cattle and the animals move to other areas. The rancher is then forced to spend time collecting the cattle and returning them to the pasture. On this ranch we also observed signs that had been shot, and trespassers cutting down trees for firewood.

Another rancher we interviewed said he did not want hunting parties to cross his land because he feared they would introduce noxious weeds. Seeds of weeds such as leafy spurge and spotted knapweed, which crowd out pasture grasses, could be carried onto the land in tire treads, horses' hooves, or hikers' clothing. As another example, some private landowners in southern California do not want the public to cross their property because they fear the introduction of the root rot fungus to their avocado trees.

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Access

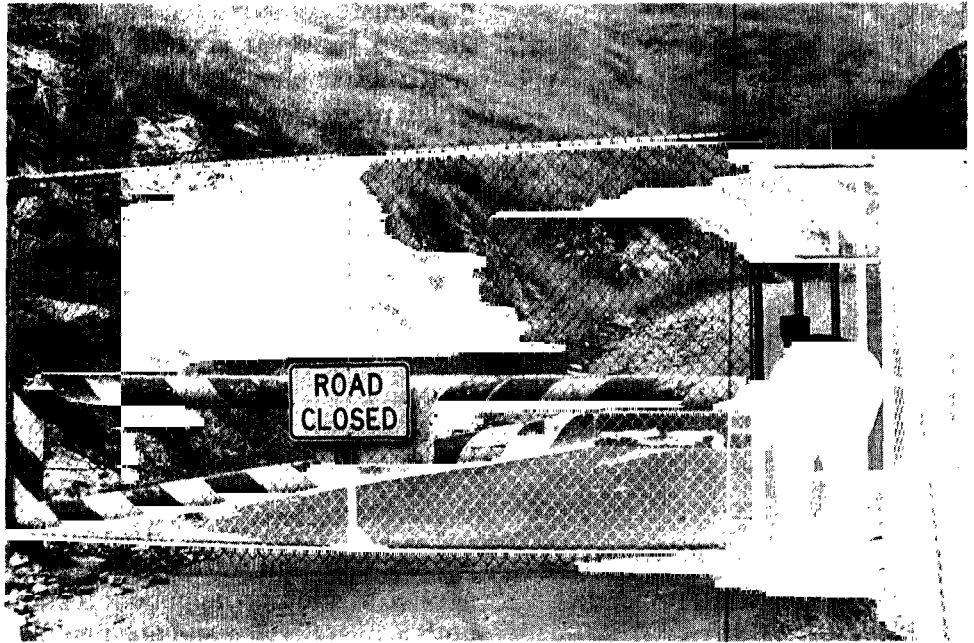
Given such concerns, private landowners use various means of restricting the public's access. According to agency officials we interviewed, some private landowners physically block the access routes; others erect warning signs; and still others threaten trespassers with guns or attack dogs. Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show public access restrictions imposed by private landowners.

Figure 2.3: Warning Sign Erected by Private Landowner to Restrict Public Access in the Eldorado National Forest, California



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Access

Figure 2.4: Gate on Privately Owned Land Blocking Public Access to a Trail in the Angeles National Forest, California



Effects of Inadequate Access

Inadequate access to federal land reduces the public's opportunities to use the land. However, according to the questionnaire respondents, the extent of access problems is not the same nationwide. Rather, the extent to which recreational activities are affected differs by type of activity and by geographic location. In other words, what is a problem in one part of the country is not necessarily a problem in another.

Inadequate access also interferes with the agencies' land management activities. In some cases, this interference is extreme; in other cases, it is merely a nuisance.

Reduced Public Recreational Opportunities

According to the questionnaire respondents, the recreational opportunities most reduced by inadequate access are hunting and off-road vehicle use (e.g., dune buggies and dirt bikes). Table 3.1 shows the types of recreational activities that Forest Service and BLM questionnaire respondents said were either greatly or extremely reduced by inadequate access. In addition, appendix II shows the full range of responses given by both Forest Service and BLM managers for this question.

Table 3.1: Respondents Indicating Great or Extreme Reduction in Public Recreational Opportunities Due to Inadequate Access

Recreational activity	Percent of supervisors/land managers	
	Forest Service	BLM
Hunting	12.7	14.7
Off-road-vehicle use	10.2	8.4
Hiking	7.6	7.0
Camping	4.2	8.4
Viewing scenery and wildlife	5.9	6.3
Driving for pleasure	5.1	4.9
Horseback riding	4.2	4.2
Fishing	3.4	4.9
Wilderness area uses	3.4	4.9
Mountain biking	4.2	3.5
Rafting, canoeing, and other water sports	1.7	4.2
Cross-country skiing and snowmobile use	1.7	2.1
Recreational mining	1.7	2.1
Developed Recreation Site use	0.8	1.4
Commercial uses (e.g. outfitting/guiding, providing access to ski areas, etc.)	0.8	0.7

Such restrictions are a concern to recreationists. According to representatives of various sporting groups we interviewed, private landowners who block access are in effect "privatizing" federal land for their own personal use or gain. The sportsmen fear that they will lose not only their hunting and fishing opportunities, but also other recreational opportunities available to the public. This concern is illustrated by an excerpt from an outfitter/guide brochure to federal land. "Our hunting territory comprises 25,000+ acres of private property and private access National Forest land. Our clientele enjoys exclusive run of this carefully preserved remnant of North America's wilderness and representative wildlife."

Although inadequate access reduces the public's recreational opportunities, the problem is not equally extreme nationwide, but varies by activity and geographic area. For example, hunting was reported by BLM managers as being greatly or extremely reduced in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming, but not in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, or the eastern states. Hunting was reported by Forest Service supervisors as being greatly or extremely reduced everywhere but in the Eastern Region.

The extent of reduction of other recreational opportunities also varied from place to place. For example, according to BLM respondents, camping was reduced in Idaho but not in Oregon, whereas mountain biking was reduced in Oregon but not in Idaho. According to Forest Service respondents, fishing was reduced in the Rocky Mountain Region, but not in the Northern Region, whereas wilderness use was reduced in the Northern Region, but not in the Rocky Mountain Region.

Interference in Agency Management Activities

According to questionnaire respondents, the management activities most interfered with by inadequate access are construction, trail and road maintenance, and wildlife habitat. Table 3.2 shows the type of management activities that inadequate access interfered with to either a great or extreme degree. Additionally, appendix III shows the full range of responses given by Forest Service and BLM managers for this question.

**Section 3
Effects of Inadequate Access**

Table 3.2: Respondents Indicating Great or Extreme Interference to Management Activities Due to Inadequate Access

Management Activity	Percent of supervisors/land managers	
	Forest Service	BLM
Construction, reconstruction, and/or improvements	6.8	4.9
Maintenance of existing trails, roads, etc.	2.5	9.1
Habitat or biological/ vegetative diversity management	4.2	3.5
Law enforcement	3.4	3.5
Inventory work (e.g., tree counting, archaeology, etc.)	1.7	2.8
Fire protection	4.2	0.0
Contract or permit administration	3.4	0.7
Ability of contractors and permittees to reach areas for authorized activities (e.g., grazing permittees, outfitter/guides, service contractors, etc.)	3.4	0.0
Search and rescue	0.8	1.4
Work at administrative or communications sites	1.7	0.0
Toxic waste cleanup	0.8	0.7
Other	0.8	0.7

Extreme interference in agency and permittees' work, for example, was reported at a site in southern California. At this site, the Forest Service does not have access to a mountaintop containing communications equipment—some owned by the Forest Service, and some by other federal agencies or private corporations holding Forest Service permits. Part of the road leading to the mountaintop crosses private land, and the private landowners charge the Forest Service and the permittees an access fee to cross their land for equipment maintenance purposes. The private landowners' refusal to allow access interferes to an extreme extent, according to the questionnaire respondent, with both the Forest Service's and the permittees' work at this site. Because the Forest Service has not been able to obtain the access easements needed to cross the private land, it is considering building a road to reach the site from the other side of the mountain, according to a Forest Service official we interviewed. No cost estimates for construction of this road were available.

In other cases, inadequate access is perceived as more of a nuisance than an interference in agency management activities, and its effect is slight. According to a BLM official we interviewed in Oregon, BLM personnel occasionally encounter locked gates on private land they are crossing to reach a fire on federal land. In such a situation, according to this official,

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Effects of Inadequate Access

BLM personnel simply cut the lock and proceed to the fire. While such an instance of blocked access was a nuisance, its effect on the agency's management ability was slight.

Agency Methods of Acquiring Public Access

The Forest Service and BLM have various tools for acquiring public access. They can acquire all rights and interests associated with the land (called fee simple acquisition) or perpetual easements (limited rights to enter and use the land for access which are binding on succeeding owners). Fee simple acquisitions and perpetual easements can be acquired through purchase, donation, exchange, or condemnation. Condemnation, simply put, is the federal government's right to take private property for public use, without the owner's consent, upon payment of just compensation. Although both the Forest Service and BLM are authorized by law to condemn nonfederal land to obtain access for public recreational purposes,¹ they rarely do so. According to agency officials, the condemnation process is time consuming, expensive, and can be politically sensitive.

During the past 3 fiscal years, according to questionnaire respondents, the Forest Service and BLM have successfully completed about 2,600 access actions,² thereby obtaining public access to 4.5 million acres of land. The methods most frequently used were perpetual easement acquisition and fee simple land acquisition.

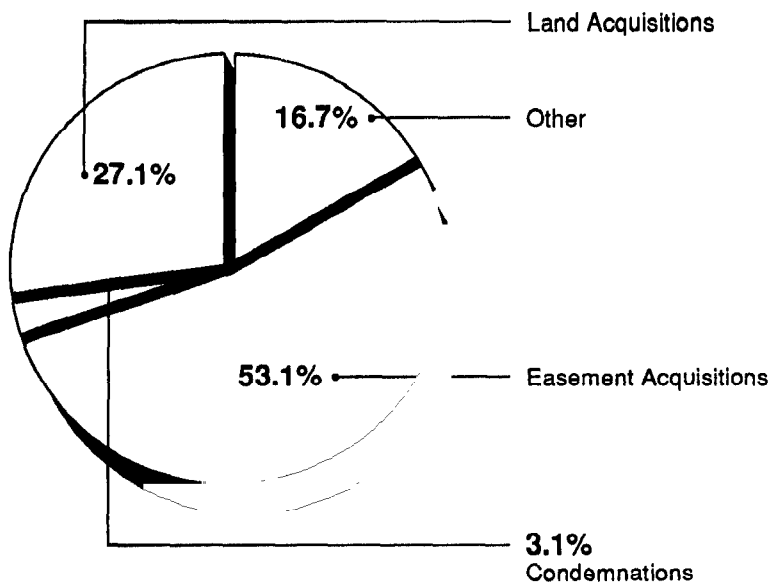
Figure 4.1 shows the methods the Forest Service used in obtaining public access to about 2.6 million acres of federal land.

¹Condemnation is authorized under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

²For purposes of our questionnaire, we asked the respondents to count the number of cases completed over the past 3 fiscal years, counting each separate conveyance of land or easement as an individual case. These access cases are referred to as "access actions" in the text.

Section 4
Agency Methods of Acquiring Public Access

Figure 4.1: Methods Used by the Forest Service, Over the Past 3 Fiscal Years, to Obtain Public Access

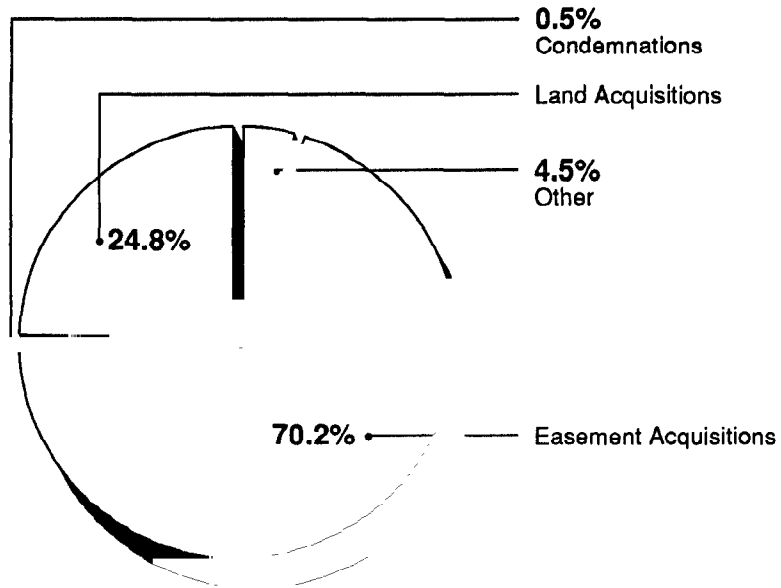


"Other" category includes cooperative agreements with other agencies or private entities, as well as other methods not listed in the questionnaire.

Source: Basic data provided by the Forest Service.

Figure 4.2 shows the methods BLM used in obtaining public access to about 1.9 million acres of federal land.

Figure 4.2: Methods Used by BLM, Over the Past 3 Fiscal Years, to Obtain Public Access



"Other" category includes cooperative agreements with other agencies or private entities, as well as other methods not listed in the questionnaire.

Source: Basic data provided by BLM.

As of October 1991, the Forest Service and BLM had about 3,300 access actions pending—some work had been done, but access had not yet been obtained. If all these actions are successfully completed, another 9.3 million acres will be open to public access—about 18 percent of the 50.4 million acres reported by the agencies as having inadequate access. Of the 3,300 access actions pending, however, the agencies have identified 540, involving 2.3 million acres, which they believe will require condemnation action.

Percent of Forest Service Supervisors and BLM Managers Indicating Reduction in Recreational and Other Opportunities Due to Inadequate Access

Overall, how reduced, if at all, is the public's opportunity to engage in each of the following activities in your forest because of inadequate permanent legal public access to the areas you identified in Q. 14?

	Hardly or Not at All Reduced (1)	Somewhat Reduced (2)	Moderately Reduced (3)	Greatly Reduced (4)	Extremely Reduced (5)	Resource Not Present (6)
Dispersed Recreation						
1. Hunting	31.4	34.8	18.6	10.2	2.5	0
2. Fishing	47.5	33.9	11.9	2.5	0.8	0
3. Driving for pleasure	60.2	20.3	10.2	3.4	1.7	1.7
4. Viewing scenery and wildlife	60.2	22.0	9.3	4.2	1.7	0
5. Hiking	39.8	32.2	17.0	5.1	2.5	0.8
6. Camping	53.4	26.3	11.9	2.5	1.7	0.8
7. Horseback riding	50.9	28.0	13.6	1.7	2.5	0.8
8. Cross-country skiing and snowmobile use	54.2	21.2	6.8	0.8	0.8	12.7
9. Mountain biking	54.2	21.2	11.9	1.7	2.5	4.2
10. Off-road vehicle use	44.9	28.0	11.9	6.8	3.4	2.5
11. Recreational mining	57.6	11.0	7.6	1.7	0	18.6
12. Rafting, canoeing, and other water sports	66.1	17.0	5.9	1.7	0	6.8
Other Uses						
13. Wilderness Area uses	55.1	24.6	8.5	2.5	0.8	5.9
14. Developed Recreation Site uses	87.3	4.2	0.8	0.8	0	3.4
15. Research	83.1	6.8	0	0	0	6.8
16. Commercial uses (e.g., outfitting/guiding, providing access to ski areas, etc.)	72.0	14.4	5.1	0	0.8	5.1
17. Consumption/use of resources such as timber, grasslands, etc.	37.3	36.4	20.3	1.7	1.7	0
18. Other (specify):	0	0	0.8	0.8	0	0

**Appendix I
Percent of Forest Service Supervisors and
BLM Managers Indicating Reduction in
Recreational and Other Opportunities Due
to Inadequate Access**

Overall, how reduced, if at all, is the public's opportunity to engage in each of the following activities in your resource area because of inadequate permanent legal public access to the BLM-managed lands you identified in Q.14?

	Hardly or Not at All Reduced	Somewhat Reduced	Moderately Reduced	Greatly Reduced	Extremely Reduced	Resource Not Present
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dispersed Recreation						
1. Hunting	23.1	29.4	29.4	11.2	3.5	0
2. Fishing	40.6	24.5	15.4	4.2	0.7	11.2
3. Driving for pleasure	46.2	25.9	18.9	4.2	0.7	0.7
4. Viewing scenery and wildlife	43.4	28.7	18.2	4.9	1.4	0
5. Hiking	47.6	25.2	16.8	5.6	1.4	0
6. Camping	39.2	30.8	18.2	7.0	1.4	0
7. Horseback riding	48.3	31.5	11.9	4.2	0	0
8. Cross-country skiing and snowmobile use	46.9	21.7	6.3	2.1	0	19.6
9. Mountain biking	49.7	25.9	13.3	2.8	0.7	4.2
10. Off-road vehicle use	37.1	30.1	19.6	7.7	0.7	0.7
11. Recreational mining	53.9	21.0	6.3	2.1	0	11.9
12. Rafting, canoeing, and other water sports	48.3	18.9	7.7	4.2	0	15.4
Other Uses						
13. Wilderness Area uses	41.3	14.0	11.2	4.2	0.7	23.1
14. Developed Recreation Site uses	76.2	7.7	0	1.4	0	9.8
15. Research	69.9	14.7	4.9	0.7	0.7	2.8
16. Commercial uses (e.g., outfitting/guiding, providing access to ski areas, etc.)	51.8	24.5	9.1	0.7	0	8.4
17. Consumption/use of resources such as timber, grasslands, etc.	46.9	27.3	16.1	4.2	0	1.4
18. Other (specify):	0	2.1	0	2.8	0	0

Percent of Forest Service Supervisors and BLM Managers Indicating Management Activities Having Interference Due to Inadequate Access

How much, if at all, does the lack of adequate permanent legal public access to areas in your forest interfere with each of the following activities?

	(1) Interferes Hardly or Not At All	(2) Interferes Somewhat	(3) Interferes Moderately	(4) Interferes Greatly	(5) Interferes Extremely
1. Fire protection	70.3	19.5	2.5	4.2	0
2. Contract or permit administration	64.4	22.0	7.6	2.5	0.8
3. Habitat or biological/vegetative diversity management	53.4	27.1	11.9	1.7	2.5
4. Maintenance of existing trails, roads, etc.	37.3	41.5	16.1	1.7	0.8
5. Construction, reconstruction, and/or improvements	45.8	31.4	13.6	5.1	1.7
6. Inventory work (e.g., tree counting, archaeology, etc.)	60.2	31.4	4.2	0.8	0.8
7. Law enforcement	61.9	25.4	5.9	1.7	1.7
8. Search and rescue	79.7	15.3	1.7	0.8	0
9. Toxic waste cleanup	90.7	4.2	0	0	0.8
10. Work at administrative or communication sites	83.9	9.3	1.7	0.8	0.8
11. Ability of contractors and permittees to reach areas for authorized activities (e.g., grazing permittees, outfitter/guides, service contractors, etc.)	55.9	31.4	5.1	1.7	1.7
12. Other (specify):	0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0

**Appendix II
Percent of Forest Service Supervisors and
BLM Managers Indicating Management
Activities Having Interference Due to
Inadequate Access**

How much, if at all, does the lack of adequate permanent legal public access to BLM-managed public lands in your resource area interfere with each of the following activities?

	Interferes Hardly or Not At All (1)	Interferes Somewhat (2)	Interferes Moderately (3)	Interferes Greatly (4)	Interferes Extremely (5)
1. Fire protection	67.1	23.8	5.6	0	0
2. Contract or permit administration	53.9	32.2	9.8	0.7	0
3. Habitat or biological/vegetative diversity management	37.1	39.9	14.0	3.5	0
4. Maintenance of existing trails, roads, etc.	48.3	26.6	11.9	7.7	1.4
5. Construction, reconstruction, and/or improvements	48.3	32.2	10.5	3.5	1.4
6. Inventory work (e.g., tree counting, archaeology, etc.)	49.7	30.1	14.0	2.8	0
7. Law enforcement	60.8	23.1	9.1	3.5	0
8. Search and rescue	81.1	8.4	5.6	1.4	0
9. Toxic waste cleanup	81.8	9.8	2.8	0.7	0
10. Work at administrative or communication sites	74.8	15.4	5.6	0	0
11. Ability of contractors and permittees to reach areas for authorized activities (e.g., grazing permittees, outfitter/guides, service contractors, etc.)	49.7	30.8	16.1	0	0
12. Other (specify):	0	0.7	0.7	0.7	0

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