

RESTORING NATURE'S DESIGN THROUGH ROAD REMOVAL¹

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Abstract. The expansion of Redwood National Park in 1978 included 15,000 hectares of recently logged land, with over 500 kilometers of haul roads. The park was directed to implement a watershed restoration program with the goals of reducing management-related erosion, encouraging natural patterns of vegetation, and restoring natural ecosystems to conditions similar to what would have existed without man's disturbance.

Pilot projects were initiated to test a variety of erosion control and ecosystem restoration techniques. Methods have evolved from employing hand labor to large heavy equipment. Nature's design guides the restoration work. Original stream channels are uncovered and restored, pre-road hillslope morphology is recreated, and in the process, buried topsoil is often uncovered. These treatments speed natural succession of vegetation and, ultimately, ecosystem recovery. These techniques are now widely used throughout Northwest California and beyond.

Additional Key Words: watershed, restoration, erosion, road removal

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