

TRACK LOG INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions should help you fill out the Track Log.

INTRO

Snow quality: See separate instruction sheet.

GPS #: Write the number written on the outside of the GPS.

Location: Write the general location, as given on the cover page. This will help us keep track of the sheet in case it gets separated.

TRACK

Number of toes: Write in the number of toes that you see.

Claws and proximal pad: Circle yes or no to indicate whether claws are present and whether a proximal pad is present. The proximal pad is an additional heel pad that shows behind the first heel pad on some species, such as on the front feet of mustelids.

Measurements: Measurements should represent an average of at least 3 different tracks. Take all measurements in inches.

Length: Measure parallel to the long axis of the animal's body.

Width: Measure perpendicular to the length measurement.

TRAIL

Trail pattern: If the animal is using one of the trail patterns pictured, circle it. Otherwise draw the trail pattern in the space provided.

Stride: Stride is most often defined as from a point on one foot to the same point on the same foot when it comes down again. It is measured parallel to the direction of travel. For walks and trots, you could also measure half stride instead, defined as the distance from one foot to where the same foot (front or rear) on the opposite side of the body comes down. Circle whether you are measuring a half stride or full stride.

Straddle: Straddle is the trail width. Measure straddle perpendicular to the direction of travel, from the outermost point on the left side of the trail to the outermost point on the right side of the trail.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Tell what characteristics you are using, other than the ones you have already recorded above, to identify the track. Include such things as the shape of the heel pad, shape of toes, relative position and size of toes, etc.

SCAT AND OTHER SIGN

Use this space for all sign other than tracks. Tell why you identified it as you did. Give measurements, size, shape, color, taste, whatever is appropriate.

HABITAT

For each habitat variable, choose the category that fits best. Estimate for an area approximately 200 ft in radius around the track. If the area doesn't easily fit into a category (as happens regularly), just choose the closest one. If it really doesn't fit, explain why on the comments sheet.

Landform

Valley bottom – land is sloping up from you on either side

Ridgetop – land is sloping away from you on either side

Gentle slope – slope you can easily walk up without getting winded

Moderate slope

Steep slope – slope that you have difficulty moving on

Aspect For valley bottoms & ridgetops, leave this blank. Aspect is the direction in which the land is sloping downwards.

Vegetation type Pick the vegetation type that best describes the area:

Forest – includes recent clearcuts

Alpine meadow – few trees growing because it is too high in elevation

Wet meadow – few trees are growing because ground is too wet

Dry forest opening – few trees are growing because ground is too rocky

Scree or talus – ground is covered with loose rock, ranging in size from small rocks to boulders

Stream-influenced area – a streamside or floodplain that looks different from surrounding area; often has alder or cottonwood

Developed area – forest has been removed for development; ex.-ski resort, housing development

Tree size/age Choose the category that fits the best.

Recent clearcut - Trees less than 4 ft tall. You can easily see over them.

Regenerating stand - Trees less than 20 ft tall and lower limbs not yet touching each other. Has lots of cover for large animals to hide in.

Young timber - Lower limbs of trees are shaded and dying, and little is growing beneath them. Trees usually average less than 15" diameter.

Mature timber - Trees average greater than 15" diameter and shrubs often present in understory. Mature trees all roughly the same height.

Old growth - Larger trees average more than 3 ft diameter AND there are many mid-size and smaller trees as well.

Percent canopy cover Canopy cover is the amount of sky NOT visible because the tree canopies are in the way. Assume each tree canopy is solid and completely blocks out the sky above it.

Human use Estimate the amount of human use the area receives, relative to other areas of the forest. For a comparison, very low would be the top of Lolo Pass during the winter and very high would be Timberline Lodge.

Nearby water If there is water within several hundred feet, tell what type of water (small stream, large stream, wetland, etc.) and approximately how close it is.