EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rural Road RAM is a tool for anyone with 1 day of training to evaluate the relative rural road condition, determine the urgency of roadway improvements to reduce the road-derived sediment loads reaching local streams, and track the effectiveness of improvements over time. The primary product of Rural Road RAM is a customized web based data management system (www.ruralroadram.com) where users inventory road sites, enter standardized and consistent field observations, and simply review mapped and tabular results of the relative condition of rural roads. Rural road condition is defined as the relative threat and magnitude of road-derived sediment reaching the local stream in the near future. Rural road condition is expressed as a meaningful and continuous 0-5 score that directly correlates to the relative magnitude of chronic and episodic erosion generation estimated at the site. The focused field observations and associated scoring rubrics were highly influenced by the existing PWA and CDFG road assessment protocols (CDFG 2010; Chapter 10) and the results of these assessments in Santa Cruz County. The development team effectively translated these well-developed protocols used by road experts, into a series of meaningful, objective and rapid field proxies that can be applied by users with a small amount of training. The data management system automates site condition tracking and program effectiveness reporting at a range of spatial scales (i.e., road network, subwatershed, watershed, region, etc.). Rural Road RAM is another valuable decision support tool developed by 2NDNATURE for use by resource managers to simply and consistently evaluate, track and report the effectiveness of improvement actions in a format easily communicated to regulators, funders and the public.