

## Calculating the correction factor of skidding distance based on forest road network

M. LOTFALIAN<sup>1</sup>, E. H. ZADEH<sup>1</sup>, S. A. HOSSEINI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Forestry, Faculty of Natural Resources, Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources University, Sari, Iran*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Natural Resources, Mazandaran University, Sari, Iran*

**ABSTRACT:** Average skidding distance for forest stands is an important parameter for the determination of the optimum road density and spacing. In this research the real mean skidding distance and theoretical mean skidding distance were measured to calculate the correction factor of skidding distance for Chafrood forest in Hyrcanian zone. The length and azimuth of skid trails from road and depot junction to forest interior were measured. Moreover, the position of skid trail was recorded by GPS. These skid trails with a buffer of 140 m were designed on a topographical map using Arc GIS software. Results indicated that the road spacing of 500 m in the study area resulted in a theoretical mean skidding distance of 125 m. For a real mean skidding distance of 525.9 m and for the mean slope of 40%, the correction factor was estimated to be 4.2.

**Keywords:** real skidding distance; theoretical skidding distance; correction factor; Chafrood forest

In the Hyrcanian forest located in the north of Iran, extraction with ground-skidding equipment is the most common system (JOUR GHOLAMI, MAJNOUNIAN 2008). Three types of roads are built for selective logging in these areas: (a) major access roads to be used by trucks carrying logs to a sawmill; (b) temporary local roads into individual logging areas; (c) skid trails made by bulldozers dragging logs to truck loading areas. The first two types usually have a gravel surface protection, while the latter are simply a loose soil. Skid trails are defined as tertiary roads that are used by skidders that move logs from the point of felling and bucking to log landings (DEMIR et al. 2008).

In Iran it was estimated that the skidder productivity rate in uphill skidding was  $16.31 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  and greater than its productivity in downhill skidding ( $12.32 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ ). Changing of the logging system from shortwood system ( $8.88 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ ) to combined system (tree-length, longwood and shortwood systems depending on different situations) with  $14.31 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  productivity rate gives rise to an increase in productivity rate. The TIMBERJACK 450C production cost which was working under

contract was  $11 \text{ €} \cdot \text{m}^{-3}$  (PIR BAVAGHAR et al. 2007). The mean of skid trail density in northern forests of Iran is estimated to be  $30 \text{ m} \cdot \text{ha}^{-1}$ . GHAFFARIAN and SOBHANI (2008) demonstrated that the minimization of total skidding and road construction costs is useful for determining optimum road spacing and logging planning in Kheiroudkenar forest of Nowshahr in the north of Iran. NAJAFI et al. (2008) showed that the forest road networks can be evaluated by GIS and a dense grid of field observations as well as the skidding cost is reduced using linear programming.

Wheeled skidders appeared in the early 1970's and are now the most widely tractors used in Hyrcanian forests (BAGHERI, NAGHDI 2009). The major problem with wheeled skidders in selective logging methods is their requirement for a dense network of roads and skid trails (NAGHDI, BAGHERI 2009). One crucial decision in road network planning in this area is to determine under what terrain conditions ground-based extraction systems should be applied. Slope and topography which affect the forest road network were considered as correction factors (terrain factors) by SEGEBADEN (1964).

Mean skidding distance is the main factor that should be considered when we calculate the formula of a reasonable forest road network (ZHIXIAN, ZHILI 1997). KANZAKI et al. (1990) described a high-density path network in a steep mountain area which supports intensive, high-quality forest in Osaka, Japan. In this network, the road density was  $222.94 \text{ m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ , correction factor of the real skidding distance was 1.215 and the development percentage was 77.9%. Data showed that the correction factors approach 1.0 as the road density increases. HEINIMANN (1998) reported that the road spacing on slopes depends on the underlying off-road transportation technology.

In mountainous forests of Guilan province in Iran, the correction factor of skidding distance for the mean slope of 50% has been determined 2.72 (MOHAMMADALIZADEH 2001). LOTFALIAN (2001) used the coefficient of 3.1 to correct the theoretical skidding distance in Sangdeh forest of Iran. SEGBADEN (1964) in Sweden proposed the correction factor of 2.5 for the low lying area to 4.5 for the mountainous area. According to ABEGG (1978) in Switzerland the correction factor of skidding distance for the flat area, hilly area and mountainous area is suggested to be 2, 2.5 and 3.5, respectively, and according to FAO (1974) the correction factor was defined in the range from 1.6 to 2 for the flat area to more than 3.6 for the steep slopes.

The aims of this paper were to measure the real mean skidding distance and theoretical mean skidding distance and to calculate the correction factor of mean skidding distance for Chafrood forest of Hyrcanian zone.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Description of the site

The study was conducted in compartments 109, 110, 111 and 112 in Chafrood forest (1,775 ha). The area extends from  $37^{\circ}23'00''$  to  $37^{\circ}31'05''\text{N}$  in latitude and from  $48^{\circ}46'40''$ ,  $49^{\circ}06'00''\text{E}$  in longitude (Fig. 1). The general aspect of Chafrood forest is northern. The mean slope is about 40% (min. 5% and max. 80%). The climate is moist and cold with average annual temperatures  $7.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The altitude ranges from 150 m a.s.l. to 1,050 m a.s.l. The structure of growing stock was 6.4% of beech, 47.6% of hornbeam, 3.5% of oak, 6.1% of alder and 36.4% of other hard broadleaves. Total length of roads in Chafrood forest was 41.15 km and their density was  $23.18 \text{ m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ . The road length in the study compartments was 3,275 m with a density of  $19.97 \text{ m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ . The terrain consists of limestone and conglomerated stone.

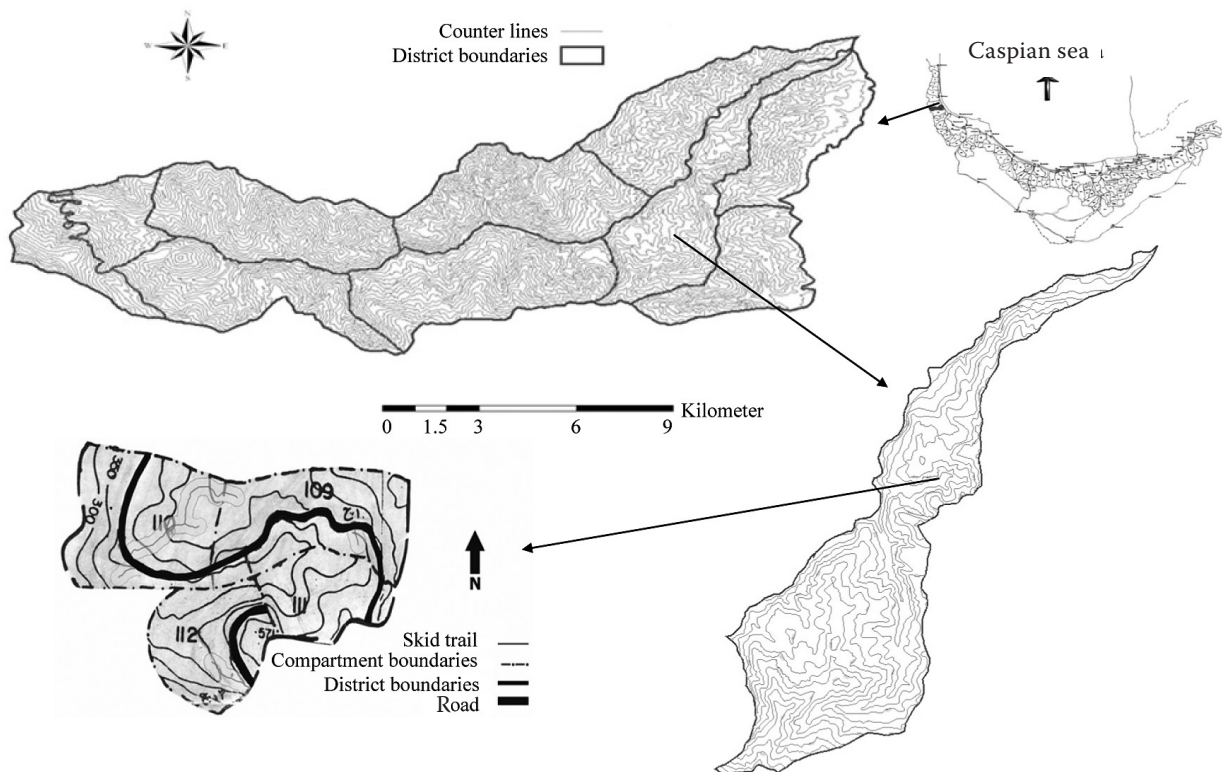


Fig. 1. The geographical location of the study area

## Measurements

The azimuth of skid trail direction from road and depot junction to forest interior was measured by a compass on each node. Real (on slope) and horizontal distance between two stakes was taken after every 20 m by a meter. Moreover, the position of the skid trail junction on road and depot was recorded by GPS. These skid trails were designed on a topographical map using Arc GIS software. The maximum distance of winching for skidders is 70 m. So, for each skid trail a buffer of 140 m was considered on the map based on the scale. The optimum shape and density of forest roads are influenced first of all by the terrain configuration and by the used skidding machines (BENEŠ 1991).

## Calculations

A special criterion is introduced for evaluating the effectiveness of access to the forest, expressed by the ratio of the theoretical and geometrical skidding distances (BENEŠ 1989). The road density, road spacing and theoretical mean skidding distance in our study area were calculated using the formula:

$$RD = \frac{L}{S} \quad (1)$$

$$RS = \frac{10,000}{RD} \quad (2)$$

$$SD = \frac{2,500}{RD} \quad (3)$$

where:

$RD$  – road density ( $\text{m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$ ),

$L$  – total length of forest road (m),

$S$  – area of study forest (ha),

$RS$  – road spacing (m),

$SD$  – theoretical mean skidding distance (m).

The real mean skidding distance in our study area was calculated using the formula:

$$ASD_r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i \left( \frac{Md_i + md_i}{2} \right)}{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i} \quad (4)$$

or

$$ASD_r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n L_i \times D_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n D_i} \quad (5)$$

where:

$ASD_r$  – real mean skidding distance (m),

$Md_i$  – farthest distance of skidding to depot (m),

$md_i$  – nearest distance of skidding to depot (m),

$L_i$  – mean skidding distance in each depot (m),

$D_i$  – total length of skid trails diverged from each depot (m).

The correction factor of mean skidding distance ( $\mu$ ) was calculated from the division of real mean skidding distance by theoretical mean skidding distance (Equation 6):

$$\mu = \frac{ASD_r}{SD} \quad (6)$$

The real mean skidding distance in our study area was compared to values obtained from different coefficients of  $a$  in Segebaden's equation:

$$S = \frac{a}{RD} \quad (7)$$

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The costs can be reduced by constructing roads and skid trails of suitable density (BAGHERI, NAGHDI 2009). Results indicated that the road density and road spacing in our study area were  $20 \text{ m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$  and 500 m, respectively. Optimal road spacing is an important factor in logging planning to help minimize the total cost of harvesting and roading (GHAFFARIAN et al. 2009). The value of road density and road spacing was obtained as follows:

$$RD = \frac{L}{S} = \frac{3,275}{164} = 20 \text{ m}\cdot\text{ha}^{-1}$$

$$RS = \frac{10,000}{RD} = \frac{10,000}{20} = 500 \text{ m}$$

Optimal road spacing can be influenced by logging method, price of products, taxation policies, landing costs, overhead costs, equipment opportunity costs, road width and size of landing, skidding pattern, profit of logging contractor, slope and topography and soil disturbance (SEGEBADEN 1964; SMITH 2003; GHAFFARIAN, SOBHANI 2007). These parameters were not considered in the present study because it is difficult and time-consuming to measure them correctly.

Planning of individual roads within proposed logging blocks is more focused on technical considerations such as detailed terrain conditions and on achieving optimum skidding distances (KLAS-

SEN 2006). In this study the theoretical mean skidding distance and real mean skidding distance were 125 m and 525.9 m, respectively.

$$SD = \frac{2.500}{RD} = \frac{2,500}{20} = 125 \text{ m}$$

$$ASD_r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i \left( \frac{Md_i + md_i}{2} \right)}{\sum_{i=1}^n d_i} = \frac{1,199,259.69}{2,280.4} = 525.9 \text{ m}$$

or

$$ASD_r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n L_i \times D_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n D_i} = \frac{1,199,261.93}{2,280.4} = 525.9 \text{ m}$$

In this research the real mean skidding distance and theoretical mean skidding distance were measured to calculate the correction factor of skidding distance. According to the results of the study, this factor for Chafrood forest in Hyrcanian zone was 4.2. This result is in agreement with SEGEBADEN (1964) and FAO (1974) reports. They proposed the correction factor of more than 3.6 for steep slopes in the mountainous area. LOTFALIAN (2001) used the coefficient of 3.1 to correct the theoretical skidding distance in Sangdeh forest of Iran.

$$\mu = \frac{ASD_r}{SD} = \frac{525.90}{125} = 4.2$$

PENTEK et al. (2005) believed that the correction factor of the theoretical mean skidding distance en-

Table 1. Mean skidding distance in depots

| Depot number | Total length of skid trail (m) ( $D_i$ ) | Real mean skidding distance (m) ( $L_i$ ) |
|--------------|--|---|
| 1            | 141                                      | 70.5                                      |
| 2            | 189                                      | 94.5                                      |
| 3            | 1,547.4                                  | 704.6                                     |
| 4            | 403                                      | 201.5                                     |

ables to use the theoretical model which includes the parallel and equal distribution of forest roads in hilly and mountainous areas where such a distribution is not possible. Some researchers emphasized that the maximum real skidding distance should be used in steep and difficult terrains. Results of the mean skidding distance recorded for the depots are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The real mean skidding distance obtained from different coefficients of  $a$  in Segebaden's equation is shown in Table 3.

The skidding distance models including *Down*, *Up*, *Strdown*, *Strup* programmed in the Turbo Basic language to work with a raster Digital Terrain Model are tools to help the road planners to judge the efficiency of existing or planned road networks while considering the real skidding distance and the proposed technology of skidding (TUCEK, PACOLA 1999). BENEŠ (1989) indicated that it is harmful for the environment to build skidding trails in the mountains, because such a skidding network must be dense, its use is not frequent, and its contribution to potential soil erosion is high. It is recommended to skid the logs the shortest way from the stump to the road, preferably down the slope.

Table 2. Real mean skidding distance in depots

| Skid trail number | Real length of skid trail (m) | Distance of skidding (m) |          | Real mean skidding distance (m) |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
|                   |                               | nearest                  | farthest |                                 |
| 1                 | 141                           | 0                        | 141      | 70.5                            |
| 2                 | 189                           | 0                        | 189      | 94.5                            |
| 3                 | 1,407.4                       | 0                        | 1,407.4  | 703.7                           |
| 3.1               | 140                           | 644                      | 784      | 714.0                           |
| 4                 | 403                           | 0                        | 403      | 201.5                           |

Table 3. Real mean skidding distance based on Segebaden's equation

| Coefficients of $a$                                     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Real mean skidding distance in Segebaden's equation (m) | 200.3 | 250.4 | 300.4 | 350.5 | 400.6 | 450.7 |



## CONCLUSION

Average skidding distance for forest stands is an important parameter for the determination of the optimum road density and spacing. Overall, the road spacing of 500 m in Chafrood forest resulted in a theoretical mean skidding distance of 125 m.

For the real mean skidding distance of 525.9 m and for the mean slope of 40% in our study area, the correction factor was estimated to be 4.2.

## References

- ABEGG B. (1978): Estimation of the optimal forest road density in skidder terrain. *Mitteilungen*, **54**: 101–213. (in German)
- BAGHERI I., NAGHDI R. (2009): Efficiency evaluation of ground skidding system and determining the optimum forest road density in Caspian Forest (Northern Iran). *International Journal of Natural and Engineering Sciences*, **3**: 74–80.
- BENEŠ J. (1989): Access to mountain forests. *Lesnictví*, **35**: 153–172. (in Czech)
- BENEŠ J. (1991): Accessibility of forests in the hilly country. *Forestry*, **37**: 245–266.
- DEMIR M., MAKINECI A., GUNGOR B. (2008): Plant species recovery on a compacted skid road. *Sensors*, **8**: 3123–3133.
- FAO (1974): Logging and log transport in tropical high forest. FAO Forestry Development Paper No. 18, Rome.
- GHAFFARIAN M.R., SOBHANI H. (2007): Optimization of an existing forest road network using network 2000. *Croatian Journal of Forest Engineering*, **28**: 185–193.
- GHAFFARIAN M.R., SOBHANI H. (2008): Optimum road spacing of ground based skidding operations in Nowshahr, Iran. *Caspian Journal of Environmental Science*, **6**: 105–112.
- GHAFFARIAN M.R., STAMPFER K., SESSIONS J. (2009): Comparison of three methods to determine optimal road spacing for forwarder-type logging operations. *Journal of Forest Science*, **55**: 423–431.
- HEINIMANN H.R. (1998): A computer model to differentiate skidder and cable-yarder based road network concepts on steep slopes. *Journal of Forest Research*, **3**: 1–9.
- JOUR GHOLAMI M., MAJNOUNIAN B. (2008): Productivity and cost of wheeled skidder in Hyrcanian Forest. *International Journal of Natural and Engineering Sciences*, **2**: 99–103.
- KLASSEN A. (2006): Planning, location, survey, construction and maintenance for low-impact forest roads. Fourth Technical Procedures Manual: 63–74.
- KANZAKI K., OHASI K., DEKI T., MIYAKE T. (1990): On capillary path systems in steep mountain areas. *International Journal of Forest Engineering*, **2**: 17–21.
- LOTFALIAN M. (2001): Investigation Effective Factors in Determining of Optimum Density of Forest Road Network. [PhD Thesis.] Faculty of Natural resource, University of Tehran: 124. (in Persian)
- MOHAMMADALIZADEH K.H. (2001): Investigation and planning of skid trail network and calculating distance and correction coefficients in Guilan forest. [MSc Thesis.] Faculty of Natural Resource, University of Guilan: 109. (in Persian)
- NAGHDI R., BAGHERI I. (2007): Evaluation of tree length and assortment logging methods with respect to timber production in Caspian Forest in the Northern Iran. *Asian Journal of Plant Science*, **6**: 46–50.
- NAJAFI A., SOBHANI H., SAEED A., MAKHDOON M., MARVI MOHADJER M. (2008): Planning and assessment of alternative forest road and skidding networks. *Croatian Journal of Forest Engineering*, **29**: 63–73.
- PENTEK T., PICMAN D., POTOČNIK I., DVORČAK P., NEVEČEREL H. (2005): Analysis of an existing forest road network. *Croatian Journal of Forest Engineering*, **26**: 39–50.
- PIR BAVAGHAR M., SOBHANI H., FEGHHI J., DARVISHSEDFAT A., MARVI MOHADJER M. (2007): Investigation on production rate and cost of TIMBERJACK 450C in two skidding direction in combined harvesting system. *Iranian Journal of Forest and Poplar Research*, **15**: 374–385. (in Persian)
- SEGEBADEN G.V. (1964): Studies of cross country transportation distances and net extension, *Studia Forestalia Suecica*, No. 18.
- SMITH C.W. (2003): Does soil compaction on harvesting extraction roads affect long-term productivity of Eucalyptus plantations in Zululand. *Southern African Forestry Journal*, **199**: 41–54.
- TUCEK J., PACOLA E. (1999): Algorithms for skidding distance modelling on a raster digital. *Terrain Model. International Journal of Forest Engineering*, **10**: 67–79.
- ZHIXIAN Z., ZHILI F. (1997): The method of calculating average skidding distance. *Journal of Forestry Research*, **8**: 47–49.

Received for publication January 8, 2011

Accepted after corrections August 24, 2011

---

### Corresponding author:

Associate Prof. MAJID LOTFALIAN, Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources University, Faculty of Natural Resources, Department of Forestry, P. O. Box 737, Badeleh, Sari, Mazandaran Province, Iran  
e-mail: mlotfalian@sanru.ac.ir

---