# A Long-Term Survival Guide - How To Make Roadblocks:

Most survivalists plan to live through long-term survival scenarios, by secluding themselves at isolated retreats, in remote locations. This is the most realistic way to avoid the dangers that will arise, during any extended disruption of our society. These dangers include such things as shortages of food and water, outbreaks of disease, massive social unrest, waves of crime and violence, martial law, confiscations of supplies, government violations of civil rights, and a mass population die-off.
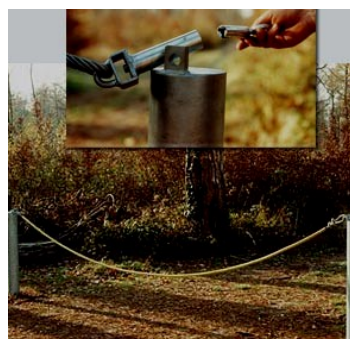
Several companies sell wire rope cable gates, which will stop most vehicles.

It is an unpleasant fact that any major, long-term disaster is guaranteed to result in a large population die-off. Your job is to avoid getting killed, during the ongoing chaos. Like it or not, the best survival strategy will be to "hide" from the collapsing society, until natural selection alleviates the problem.

Wire rope cables, supported by posts or trees, make effective vehicle barriers.

Since most of us can only afford to store a bare minimum of equipment and supplies for our group (and inflation will make this even harder as time goes by), the only realistic choice most self-reliant people will have, is whether to hide out until nature has run its course, or whether to get dragged down by the stampede of refugees trying to avoid their doom.

So let us say that you were wise enough to establish a survival refuge, and that your group has been living there since a major crisis occurred. But then refugees start showing up in your area, more and more of them, until you realize that they outnumber your small group, and they start demanding that you help them. What are you going to do?

If you think about it, there are four basic options available to your group; you can take proactive steps to keep refugees out of your retreat area before a crisis ever occurs, or you can incorporate them into your group (by force, if necessary), or you can send them away, or you can kill them.

Fallen trees are substantial obstacles, when felled in locations where they can't be bypassed.

Killing refugees is the worst option, and can be very traumatic on your group. Your team may not be able to survive the unpleasant group dynamics that will follow the killing of innocent, desperate people caught in a bad situation.

Sending them away is nearly as bad, as you may be sending them off to die somewhere else, and what's worse is that it means there will then be a number of resentful individuals out among the rest of the population. This is guaranteed to send more refugees your way, as they tell people about your group, and continued efforts to turn them away will eventually require the use of force, perhaps even deadly force.
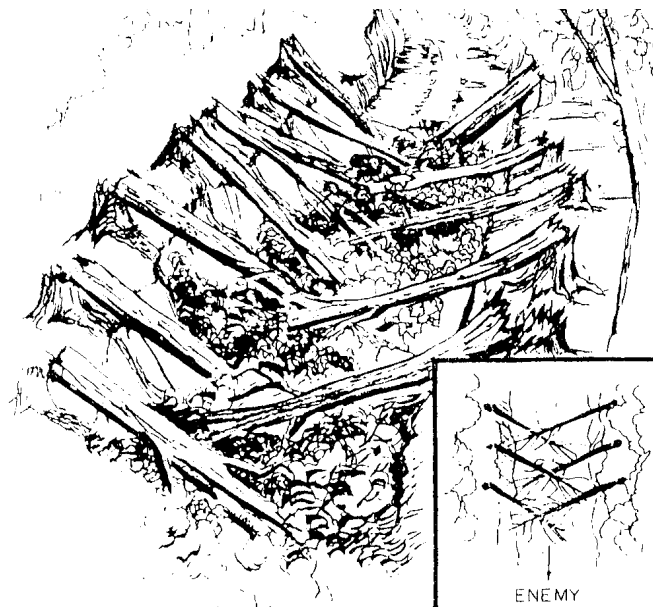
Felled trees can be cleared, but not without a lot of time and effort.

Once refugees show up at your door, the most moral solution is to incorporate them into your group, but this isn't as simple as it sounds, and may not work at all. You probably will not have enough equipment and supplies for your group as it is, and it will take very few extra people to reduce your standard of living to an unacceptable level. Your survival group consists of hand-picked folks with a similar purpose, and a compatible set of beliefs and ideas. The refugees who show up at your door will not share your point of view, in most cases, or they wouldn't be refugees.
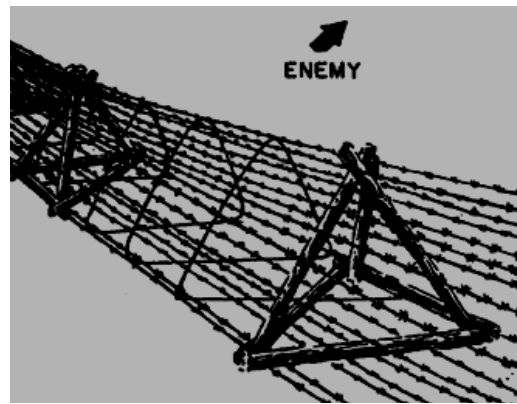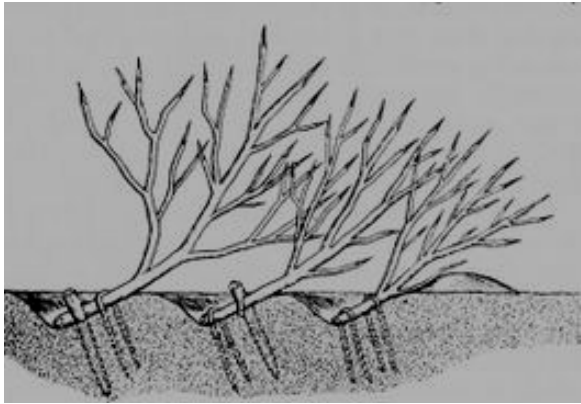
Abatis made from small trees, and barbed wire fence made with log pyramid supports.

Most of them will just expect you to provide them with all of life's needs. These people are going to be problems, in more ways than one. An excess of useful individuals would cause you enough problems, but odds are that most refugees arriving at your site will be badly educated, have no work ethic, and have the welfare mentality.

Decades of government handouts and welfare programs have created generations of individuals that expect to be taken care of. They don't know how to work, and they don't want to know how. Many of these people will show up at your doorstep, demand to be taken in, and then balk and want to leave the moment you put them to work.


This is razor ribbon barbed wire, and it makes a very effective barrier against people on foot.

But you can't let them leave, because they may very well find more of their kind, and return in large numbers, and then try to take your supplies by force. If they succeed, they'll take it all, use it up, and then blame you for not having more. And chances are, they'll kill you as they try to get it. In their desperate attempt to avoid the fate that has overtaken them, your property rights, your life, and your friends and family will mean nothing to them.

This is the best argument for using the first option; proactively keeping refugees away from your retreat area.

Avoiding the refugee problem is a tactic that should be an integral part of your survival planning. You can save yourself a lot of future trouble, by locating your retreat site in the most defensible, difficult to reach area, that still has the natural resources needed for survival (water, wild game, firewood, and room for gardening and small livestock).
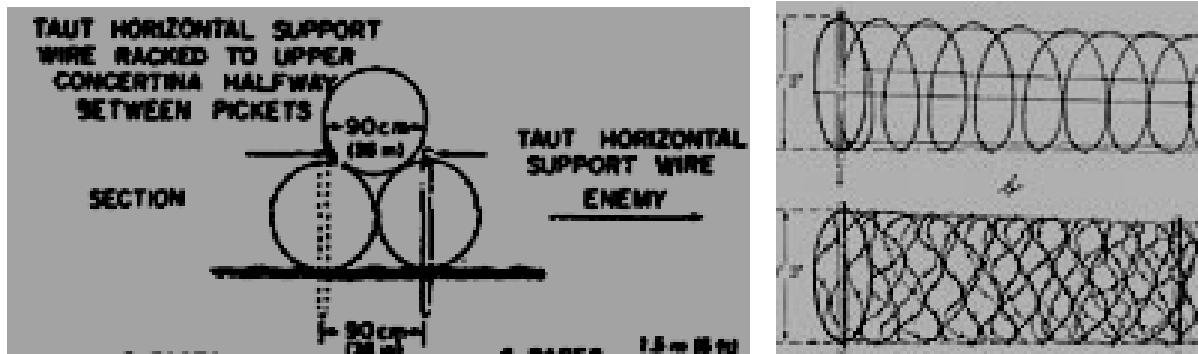
Barbed wire obstacles are often made as three stacked coils, tied to support stakes.

Those people who advocate living in a small town as the best survival strategy probably have not thought about the possibility of their fellow townsfolk turning into an ugly mob, or simply out-voting them on critical life and death decisions. Having seen what used to be called "lynch mobs" in action, I prefer to set up in an isolated area with the few people I trust. Will you really go along with whatever choices are made by a group of strangers who do not have your survival experience and knowledge base? Not me.

Remember that everyone will be stressed out, or even panicked, and in such dire situations even the few normally reasonable folks will tend to act out and make bad decisions. You don't want other people causing your group extra problems, or reducing your chances to make it through. If your site is difficult to find and reach, you'll have fewer refugees to deal with.
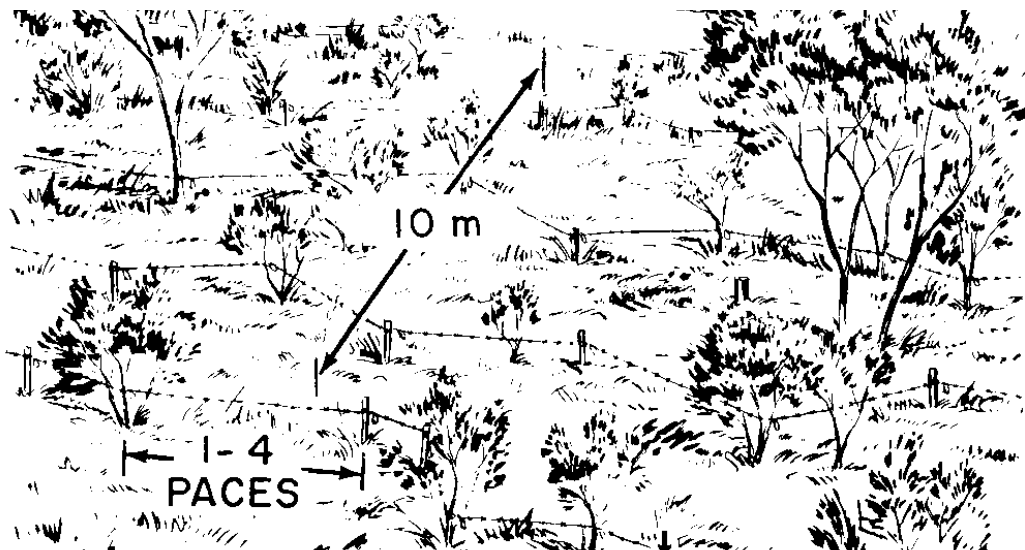
This wire obstacle is called tanglefoot, and is used to slow an enemy advance.

None of us has the resources to save the world, especially when the majority of the world isn't prepared, or even interested, in working at saving itself. Would you really choose to give your supplies to strangers, knowing that you can't get any more, and that you are dooming your own friends and family in the process? If you care about the uninformed masses, you should try to help them now, before it is too late. I constantly try to give away survival information NOW, to people who are not interested in even thinking about the subject, but I will not be volunteering to trade places with them when their lack of interest in preparing to stay alive catches up with them.

Mountain roads are "self-closing", without a lot of expensive maintenance.

Think about it this way: Short-term disasters are much like finding a small boat sinking, while you are out fishing. You could help the other boaters, throw them life preservers, call for the Coast Guard, or ferry them all to safety. There is no reason not to help them out, and many good reasons for doing so.

But a long-term disaster is more like coming upon the Titanic as it is sinking. You might like to help all of those doomed people, but going anywhere near the drowning masses is almost guaranteed to get your little fishing boat swamped, and will only result in your dying along with them.

The best you can do is to rescue a few people from the fringes, without taking on enough that they can overwhelm you, commandeer you boat and throw you out, or take it right into the danger zone (as they try to save the people they care about). An unpleasant truth, but failing to think about it ahead of time can get you killed, as well as anyone else who depends on you.

Landslides should be used in locations where they are already likely to happen.

Remember that you cannot afford to turn refugees away once they know where you are, and expect that to be the end of it. And if you don't have the stomach to turn someone away, then they must be taught (or forced) to contribute their share to your group. Since you cannot afford to turn them away, and you can't let them go, the best strategy is to reduce the probability of refugees finding your site. No other strategy will increase your chances of survival, as much as keeping unprepared people away from your retreat will.

Mountain tunnels are ideal locations for creating roadblocks.

At the risk of being repetitive, the first step in reducing large numbers of refugees is taken in the planning stage of your survival decisions. Careful consideration must be made in the selection of the location of your survival refuge. As mentioned earlier, the site should be remote and difficult to reach, preferably in an area which is easily defended. The problem with this is that you must also be able to ensure that you and your fellow members are able to reach the site, and that once there, sufficient resources are available at or near the site to facilitate your survival. Choosing a good location first will save you from many potential problems later, when you will already have enough to deal with. My vote is for forested mountain terrain, as it has many tactical advantages over any other possible refuge location.

This landslide is an effective roadblock, but was it natural, or deliberate?

An isolated survival refuge in a forested mountain area is the one place you can realistically defend, and where you could still produce wealth during a long-term disaster, by growing crops, raising small livestock, and harvesting local resources, such as fish, game, edible wild plants, and firewood for fuel. It is unrealistic to expect to be able to do any of these things, if you are surrounded by starving neighbors, in cities, suburbs, or small towns. Any population center will be non-stop chaos, as people who don't have food will be trying to take it from those who do.

Any viable survival strategy must include plans for retreat defense. Retreats will be natural targets for criminals, looters, gangs, confiscators, evil authority figures, and waves of starving refugees. Every idiot on the planet will believe that they should be able to take the results of your planning, saving, and effort for themselves, and call you names while they are trying to rob you and kill you.

An induced avalanche can drop tons of snow and debris onto a roadway.

Most survival groups have some type of retreat defense plan worked out for use in a long-term survival scenario, in case they are attacked by people who want to steal their supplies, or take over their retreat. A viable plan will include selecting a remote retreat site, building fighting positions, clearing fields of fire, creating barriers to channel attackers into your kill zones, removing features that attackers can use for cover, making up range cards for each fighting position, manning a continuous observation post to watch for intruders, practicing how to respond to the different types of attack which a retreat group is most likely to face, and blocking road access to your retreat site.

It is that last item on the list, blocking road access to your retreat site, that we will focus on here.

Let's say it again; your goal in a long-term disaster should be reducing the number of other people that you have to deal with to the minimum, so that you can spend more of your time on productive activities. One of the best ways to do this is by using roadblocks, because if looters and refugees can't drive to your area, most of them will go elsewhere, and cause problems for someone else.

Collapsed bridges are effective obstacles, if they cross a substantial ravine.

Bridge out, plus deep river, equals good roadblock.

Choosing an isolated survival refuge, and using roadblocks, are two types of a survival strategy called avoidance. Avoidance is an excellent strategy, because every problem you can avoid is one less drain on your limited resources.

But let's not get off topic. The most effective roadblock strategy uses three stages of roadblocks:

First you will want to block roads that lead into your general area, at spots that are as far away from your retreat as practical. This will keep the bulk of refugees away from your group. You should pick sites for roadblocks where there is no easy way to go around, such as thick woods, rocky areas, bridges over waterways, and narrow mountain passes. Remember that the average refugee will not be interested in traveling for miles and miles on foot, so it should not take much effort to deter the vast majority of potential visitors.

Natural-looking roadblocks, such as rockslides and fallen trees, are the best way to encourage the average refugee to choose a route which does not lead to your group. Most refugees will try to avoid having to abandon their vehicles, and clearing roadblocks is more work than most will attempt. It is best if refugees can continue on in a different direction, rather than having to choose between going back and going onward (towards your retreat) on foot. This means that you should block the road on your side of a turnoff, not before it. Most people will then choose to take the route left open.

Wooden bridges are the easiest type to destroy; all you need is fire.

Second, you should block roads again, at strategic points between the first roadblock, and the retreat area. But don't make too many roadblocks, too close together, or you may create a "trail" of obstacles, which lead the way right to your retreat. Roadblocks should be positioned where there is no easy way to bypass them. Good locations would be in front of a bridge or tunnel, in a rocky area, in a narrow pass, or in a dense forest. Use locally available materials, to save effort. In other words, if you are in a rocky area, use piles of rocks.
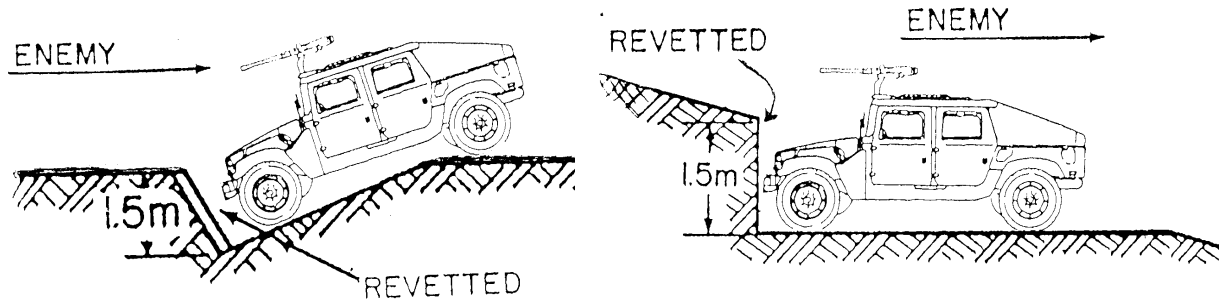
L-shaped ditch, on a flat road.   L-shaped ditch, on a road with an uphill slant.

Third, you should position the roadblocks that are closest to your retreat, so that they are in the field of fire from your fighting positions. This way, you can fire on any enemy troops who try to dismantle your obstacles, while staying safely in your defensive positions. Your closest obstacles should have anti-personnel barriers added to them, to make them hard for foot soldiers to move past. Barbed wire entanglements, sharpened stakes, and boards with large nails in them are some of the items you can add to your roadblocks, to stop troops on foot. These will also keep the enemy from using your barriers as covered places to shoot back at you from, so always add them in any place that would be a good position for the bad guys.
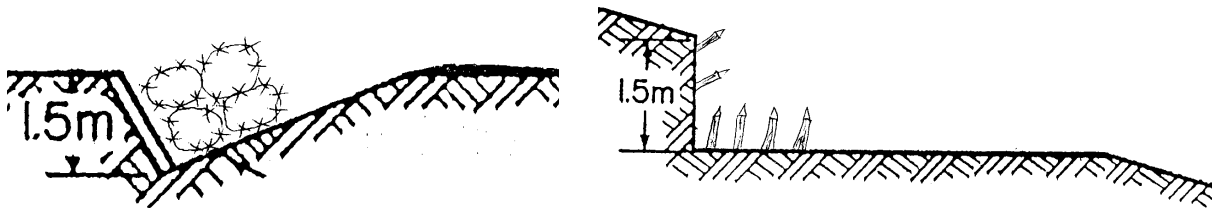
Add barbed wire or spikes to L-shaped ditches, to keep them from being used as enemy fighting positions.

Timing: One problem with constructing roadblocks is deciding when to get started. You can build barriers on retreat property that you own, any time you like, but it is best to stick with moveable barriers on your road, until things get serious. Otherwise you may just cause yourself problems. If you have group members that plan to arrive at the last minute, you will need to get their vehicles stored, before constructing permanent roadblocks.

While you can't block public roads while the law enforcement system is still functional, you can map out the best locations to block off, after things fall apart. You also wouldn't want to block your fellow group members from getting to your retreat, if you have folks who will bug-out to your area. But a little advanced planning, on where to place your roadblocks, can save you valuable time later.

There are several points to keep in mind, when blocking roads which lead into your retreat area. The most important point is that roadblocks can be used to slow down an enemy advance, but are not guaranteed to stop it. Most roadblocks will deter the casual refugee, but any roadblock can be overcome or bypassed, by determined people with enough time. You should think of your roadblocks as a way to delay the enemy, so that you can inflict damage on them while they are stopped at the barrier.

Please note that roadblocks are designed to stop cars and trucks, and will not work against tanks, which can just ram through them, or blast them with the main gun. Troops with explosives can also blast through any of these barriers very quickly. Most wooden barriers can eventually be destroyed by fire, but not without giving you plenty of warning.

Wire Rope Barriers: Wire rope cable can be used to make good vehicle barriers, and there are several companies which sell gates made from wire rope. This is one good way to block vehicle access to your property, until you decide the time is right to construct permanent obstacles.

Concertina Wire Obstacles: Barbed wire, or razor ribbon security wire, can be used to make coiled wire obstacles, which can be erected at strategic choke-points. These wire barriers are very effective against people on foot, and can also be added to any existing fence, to make it a better obstacle.

Landslides: Mountain roads all have tight spots, where there is a cliff on one side, and a drop-off on the other. These natural choke points are the best locations to block with a rockfall. A narrow pass between two steep cliffs is another good choice, and mountain tunnels are perfect blocking locations.

Avalanches: Under the right circumstances, an avalanche can be used to close a road, at least until the weather warms up. Avalanches can involve hundreds of tons of snow, and chunks of ice as big as houses, and they can drag trees and boulders along with them, so they aren't just piles of fluffy snow sliding down hill.

Trees: If your retreat is located in a heavily wooded area, the easiest way to block roads into your location is to drop several trees across the road, at a point where it is not possible to drive around them. Such a barrier can be defeated with a lot of hard work, but most refugees won't bother.

L-Shaped Ditch: In areas where trees are not available, you can block roads by digging an L-shaped ditch. This design is effective, but takes lots of time and effort to make, unless you have a backhoe or dozer available. The short leg of the L has to be five feet high, and should be reinforced, or revetted. The long leg of the L has to be nine feet long. Narrow roads are the easiest roads to block with ditches of this type.

This obstacle works for both flat roads, and roads on an uphill slant. After constructing the roadblock, be sure to add barbed wire or spikes, to keep the enemy from using it as a covered position against you.

Other Obstacles: You can block off areas to foot troops using an Abatis, which is sharpened trees set into the ground. If you have barbed wire available, you can make a wire fence design with wooden pyramids made from logs. The pyramids are self-supporting, and will work on concrete, frozen ground, or swampy ground. In snowy areas, they can be lifted out of the snow if they get partially buried, and will then sit on top of the snow.

There is a wire obstacle, called tanglefoot, that can be made from barbed wire, or any other type of wire,, and will slow down an enemy. The wire is strung in a zig-zag pattern, varying from six to twelve inches above the ground. Several strands of wire are run parallel, and roughly six feet apart. Wire should be nailed to stakes, and to any available bushes or trees. This obstacle works best when grass or other vegetation hides the wire.

Large planters, made from landscape timbers or logs, can be positioned as anti-vehicle barriers.

There are two basic ways to improve the tanglefoot obstacle. One is to add three or four empty tin cans, tied at the center of each stretch, so that they will rattle together if disturbed, and act as an alert. The other is to add sharpened stakes two or three feet on the defending side of the wire, in areas where the enemy is likely to try to pass. Stakes should be hidden by vegetation, and enemy troops who trip over the tanglefoot may impale themselves on these.
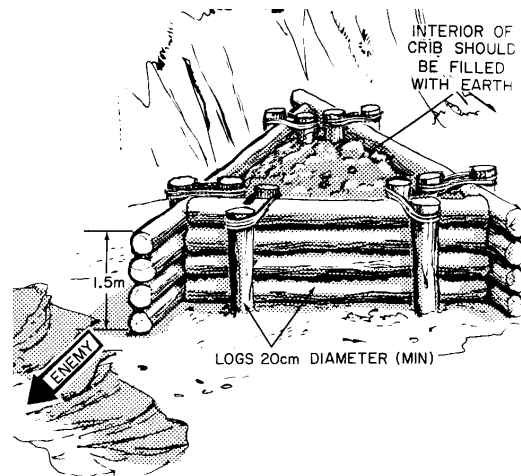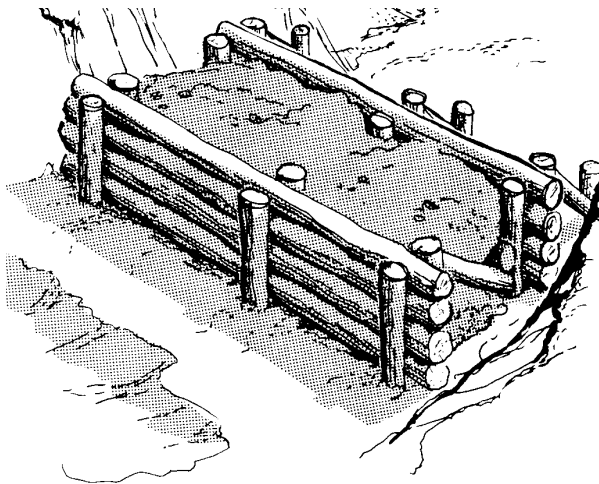
Log cribs are effective roadblocks, but they are obvious constructions, unlike fallen trees or rockslides.

Log Cribs: Log cribs filled with dirt and rocks make good roadblocks, in areas where they can't be driven around. But they also take a lot of time and effort to construct, and they are obviously man-made barriers. Probably the best use for cribs is to make large "planters" of logs or landscape timbers. These planters can be positioned around a house or other building, to thwart ramming attacks by vehicles.

So as you can see, roadblocks are a viable way to divert refugees away from your retreat area, and can also add to your retreat's defenses.