

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 700

ROADS, TRAILS AND ACCESS

Section	Subject	Page
700	ACCESS CONTROL	3
705	OBJECTIVES	4
710	ROADS	5
	710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY ROADS	5
	710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS.....	6
	710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS.....	7
720	RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS	8
	720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE	8
725	NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS	9
	725.1 HIKING TRIALS.....	9
	725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails	9
	725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails.....	9
	725.2 BICYCLE TRAILS.....	9
	725.2.1 ... Undesignated Bicycle Trails.	9
	725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails	9
	725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING TRAILS	9
	725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails	9
	725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails	9
	725.4 CROSS-COUNTY SKI TRAILS	10
	725.4.1 Undesignated cross-country ski trails	10
	725.4.2 Designated cross-country ski trails	10
	725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL USE	10
730	MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS	10

730.1	SNOWMOBILE TRAILS	10
730.1.1	Undesignated Snowmobile Trails	10
730.1.2	Designated Snowmobile Trails	10
730.2	ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) TRAILS.....	12
730.2.1	Undesignated ATV Trails.....	12
730.2.2	Designated ATV Trails	12
730.3	OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS.....	12
730.3.1	Undesignated Motorized Trails.....	12
730.3.2	Designated Motorized Trails	12
735	RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS	12
740	WATER ACCESS	13
740.1	COUNTY FOREST BOAT ACCESS	13
740.2	TOWNSHIP BOAT ACCESS	14
740.3	DNR BOAT ACCESS	14
740.4	UNDEVELOPED ACCESS POINTS ON COUNTY FOREST	14
745	WILD LAKES	14
750	WETLANDS	14
755	ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS	14
760	PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS	15
765	BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	15
770	SIGNS	16
770.1	STANDARDS	16

700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management and protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Wood County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is large and diverse, a broad network of access routes has been developed. A combination of geography, soils, vegetation, surface waters, seasons of the year, presence/absence of roads or trails, ownership of adjoining lands, and public regulations interact to control access to any part of the Forest.

Many of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. The locations and standards for these earlier roads were not routinely established by county personnel.

Over the years, the road density and frequency of vehicle use on the Forest has increased in response to an expanding number of motorized recreational vehicles and to an active timber harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. But the diverse demands for, uses of, and abuses of the County Forest have reached the point where an integrated access management plan is needed.

There are many potential problems to address, and reasons for an access management plan:

User conflict between groups: e.g., snowmobiling versus other winter recreation, hunting on foot versus use of vehicles for access to game populations, etc.

Safety: e.g., pleasure riding of horses on the same trail with vehicle traffic or hiking.

Erosion: soils eroding due to use, or over-use by vehicles.

Damage to access: rutted or impassable roads requiring costly repair by the county or other specific user groups (e.g., snowmobile club, logging contractors, etc.).

Litter/dumping: depositing garbage, tires, construction debris, and other waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of a resource; e.g. reduced availability of trophy-sized deer or excessive

harvest of ruffed grouse along trails are examples.

Fires: e.g. increased exposure of the resource to forest fire occurrence, Access for firefighters and firefighting equipment.

Endangered species management: e.g. high road densities conflict with timber wolf recovery, eagle and osprey nest disturbance.

Invasive species: e.g. introduction of invasive exotic species along travel routes.

Developmental trends: e.g. preservation of the County Forest solitude by limiting access versus development of high intensity use by additional roads and unlimited access.

Road placement: e.g. some roads should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

Clear and concise policy for the public.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide direction to the committee and resource managers in order to maintain a network of roads and trails on the County Forest. This will meet the needs for resource management and protection activities, as well as provide public access for recreation opportunities.
2. Identify the distribution, density, and types of roads and uses of roads and trails needed to establish a safe and efficient transportation and recreation system that complements the economic, environmental, and social interest in the County Forest.
3. Identify the existing and future County Forest roads eligible for transportation aids under s.86.315(1), Wis. Stats.
4. Identify areas on the County Forest where the access is limited or restricted.
5. Identify the provisions and criteria that will be policy when addressing access management issues on the County Forest.

710 ROADS

Wood County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by: the County, private

contractors working under contract, other public resource agencies, non-profit organizations under cooperative agreement, etc. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads, permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads.

New road establishment should consider information identifying areas with sensitive soils or severe slopes that have the potential for adverse water quality impacts from land management practices. County staff can work with local DNR water resources staff to develop site-specific measures where appropriate.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS

These roads are the primary roads accessing the County Forest. They are designed, constructed, and maintained for year-round use. These roads serve essential access corridors for multiple use management. Some of these roads are graveled and routinely graded. Vehicle use may be restricted at various times of the year to minimize physical damage to the road.

Some forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and a 20-foot roadway width. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. The following table lists the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats. Also included are roads proposed for addition once improvements meet statute requirements.

WOOD COUNTY CURRENT AND FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Hiles	15,16,21, 22	2.39	Peterson Road extension
Remington	18,19,23, 24, 25,26	4.30	South Bluff Road
Port Edwards	33,34	1.53	Red Pine Trail
Port Edwards	32	1.0	Proposed – road linking ATV parking lot to Kimball Ave.
Port Edwards and Cranmoor	19 18	2.0	Proposed – Hazelnut Trail
TOTALS		8.22 MI *(3.0)MI	

*() Indicates the mileage of existing roads that may be improved and certified during the next fifteen years.

These permanent primary roads will be maintained and remain open to public use.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

These roads often serve a variety of uses including forest management, fire protection, and recreation. These roads are maintained as part of a permanent road system but are often narrower than permanent primary roads and are built and maintained to lower standards. Some of these roads are designed for use only when the ground is frozen or firm.

Because of wet soil conditions over much of Wood County Forest, many roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is causing damage to the

roads. Many of these roads are also being used as routes for dumping garbage in the forest off of town roads. Where these conditions exist, it is Wood County's intent to block the roads from motorized vehicular access. A map of permanent primary and secondary roads can be found in chapter 900.7. Roads that are currently proposed for closing are noted on each map. Other roads may be identified for closure in the future as conditions warrant.

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities or fire protection. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

Many of the roads on the Forest fall into this classification. These roads are designed and constructed for short-term use for a specific project; often for timber harvest access. These roads are used only for a short duration and when the activity is done, the temporary road is usually closed either by the logging contractor or the county. These roads are naturally or artificially revegetated and closed by use of earthen berms/bunkers or other physical barriers.

New roads into timber sale areas are generally closed by the logging contractor prior to final close-out of the sale.

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons may include but are not limited to: protection of perpetually wet soils, human safety, and prevention of illegal dumping.

The need for new temporary roads will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Road locations will be included in designing timber harvests. Consideration will be given to the objectives within each County Forest unit, existing road density, potential use, and soil type.

720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities on the Forest. An important role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause

long-term natural resource damage, and that are compatible with other uses. Management activities adjacent to recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations will be made to accommodate the recreational use. The committee has the authority to open, close or relocate trails.

All of the recreational uses of the Forest have corresponding maps in Chapter 900 (section 925).

720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Committee. Groups requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long term funding and maintenance of proposed trails. Organized trail uses and group-sponsored activities must protect Wood County with a minimum \$250,000.00 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage.

Construction or maintenance of any recreational trail in which the activity would increase the erosion potential of one acre or more of land is subject to state and federal storm water runoff requirements (NR216, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 283.33, Wis. Stats). Construction or development for silvicultural purposes is presently exempt from these requirements. Recreational trail development in Wood County that meets these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-95) to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, an erosion control plan will be prepared for each project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed.

725 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

725.1 HIKING

725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs

closing an area.

725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

There is currently one designated hiking trail maintained on the Wood County Forest. This trail, located primarily within Dexter Park, is approximately six miles long.

725.2 BICYCLING

725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use may be restricted in specific areas if use causes erosion or other environmental damages.

725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

The Wood County Forest does not currently contain any designated bicycle trails.

725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING

725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

All portions of the Wood County Forest are open to horseback riding unless marked with signs closing an area. Any organized event, whether for profit or not, requires a special use permit.

725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

The Wood County Forest does not currently contain any designated horseback riding trails at this time.

725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing on groomed snowmobile trails is not permitted due to serious safety concerns.

725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

The Wood County Forest does not currently contain any designated cross-country ski trails.

725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED USE

Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including, but not limited to snowshoeing, dog sledding, and hunting are permitted on all trails except where otherwise posted as closed.

730 MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

The use of motorized vehicles on the Forest continues to increase. The design, maneuverability, and power of the vehicles have improved. This has led to greater use; increased trail use conflicts, unnecessary environmental damage, and increased expenses for trail maintenance. Additional regulation on these types of recreational vehicles is needed to protect the Forest and limit adverse impacts on non-motorized uses.

730.1 SNOWMOBILING

730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

No cross-country use is permitted. Snowmobile use is permitted on all unblocked logging roads and fire lanes except on active timber sales and areas posted as closed.

730.1.2 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Two types of groomed snowmobile trails are authorized on the Forest: state-funded trails and local club trails. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance, and insurance obligations between Wood County and local snowmobile clubs.

State trails: A system of state approved and funded snowmobile trails is authorized on designated trails, logging roads, and fire lanes. This system is part of the statewide network of snowmobile trails which links Wood County with adjoining counties as well as the rest of the state. Snowmobile registration and out-of-state user fees are used to support trail development, signing, maintenance, grooming and

bridge construction.

Local trails: A smaller network of local club-sponsored snowmobile trails is also permitted on designated trails, logging roads, and fire lanes. Maintenance of these trails is supported by club membership fees and fund raising activities.

All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to all cars, trucks, atv's, and other motorized vehicles from seasonal opening (approximately December 1st) through closing (approximately March 31st) unless vehicle use is authorized by the County. Snowmobile trails may be used for access to timber sales on the County Forest. When vehicle use is authorized, the following use conditions apply:

- Contractors will be required to maintain the trail in a safe and snow covered condition.
- The trail must be kept free of debris and left in good condition. Slash along the trail must be pulled back at least 10 feet behind the snow bank or groomed trail area.
- Decking of forest products or loading of trucks is generally not permitted on snowmobile trails.

DNR's Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the county. Only trail signs that provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private and business signs are not authorized on the Forest. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden or metal posts.

730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

No cross-country use is permitted. ATV's may only be operated on designated trails unless a Disabled Access Permit has been granted. Disabled Access Permits may be issued only to those persons eligible to receive a Wisconsin disabled hunter permit.

730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

There are currently no State funded ATV trails on the Wood County Forest. However, the “Wood County ATV Area” is available for ATV use. This intensive use area, located in the Towns of Cranmoor and Port Edwards, contains approximately ten miles of trails, parking area, bathrooms, shelter, and a small park. It is maintained with the help of the Central Wisconsin ATV Riders Club.

730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

730.3.1 Undesignated

Other cross-country, motorized, recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited. Motorized recreational use is only allowed on Permanent Primary and Secondary Roads that are not posted closed. Any motorized recreational use in a manner resulting in damage to these roads is prohibited.

730.3.2 Designated

There are currently no other designated motorized recreational trails or intensive use areas on the Wood County Forest.

735 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest may also provide and designate areas where motorized equipment is not permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. There are currently no designated “Restricted Access Areas” on the Wood County Forest although there are areas of the forest that are not accessible by motorized vehicles.

740 WATER ACCESS

As a result of the wide distribution of lakes, streams, rivers, and other surface waters on the

County Forest, water access may be planned, developed, or restricted as a component of the overall Forest access management plan. Boat landings, and adjacent roads currently provide water access on the Forest primarily for recreational activities. In addition, these water access points also provide water supply points for fire apparatus working to suppress forest fires or nearby structural fires.

The existing water access points will be maintained to provide a place to launch a small fishing boat or canoe. Not all watercraft will be able to use these access points. These landings are built for public use and not for private boat mooring sites. Mooring or storing boats for longer than 24 hours is prohibited.

740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY WOOD COUNTY FOREST

The following public boat access sites have been developed on the Wood County Forest and are open to public use:

Dexter Park : Two boat landings exist on Lake Dexter in Dexter Park. The larger and newly renovated landing is located on the east side of the lake, and is available for all public users. A second landing is located on the west side of the lake, near loop #2 of Dexter Park Campground, and is available for use by registered campers only.

740.2 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY TOWNS.

None

740.3 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY DNR.

None

740.4 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS

Other undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats currently exist on the Forest. These are used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but have not been developed for

boat trailer launching. These sites are not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

745 WILD LAKES

There are currently no “Wild Lakes” designated within, or adjacent to, the Wood County Forest.

750 WETLANDS

All wetlands on the Forest are closed to motorized recreational vehicles to prevent soil rutting, compaction and damage to vegetation. The wetlands are not listed individually here but include all areas where soils, groundwater or surface waters support the growth of vegetation commonly associated with wetland plant communities.

755 ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS

Applications by private parties to build or improve access roads through County Forest land will be handled according to the Land Transaction Policy (see section 905.2.5) and be considered by the Committee on a case-by-case basis. The following stipulations will generally be adhered to as they apply to each situation before an "Access Permit" is granted. Additional stipulations may also be included depending on each specific situation.

1. Access across County Forest lands must be demonstrated by the applicant as the route of last resort. Proposed uses must be documented by the applicant.
2. No legal easement will be granted, just permission to cross county lands.
3. The permit is non-transferable. New landowners must apply to continue the land use agreement.
4. Road improvements and upgrading must be approved and will be supervised by the Forestry Department staff. Prior notification of three (3) days is required before work starts.
5. All wood cut is the property of Wood County.
6. Roadway must be opened to the public through county land. No gate may be

erected on county land unless authorized by the Forest Administrator.

7. The County continues full ownership of the improved roadway; however, it shall not be liable for maintenance or upkeep of the road.
8. Permittee waives any rights to any declaration of ownership or interest in the road on county land for administrative costs as a result of this "Access Permit". The access permit is granted upon the signature and any fees being received by the Wood County Park and Forestry Department.

760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered under Chapter 500-15.5, Special Uses.

765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. Chapter 6 of the BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in areas prone to erosion may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-95. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

770 SIGNS

Signs on the County Forest will be used discreetly to perform and function with minimal disruption to the multiple uses of the Forest. Private signs promoting personal, commercial or political objectives will not be permitted without authorization from Wood County. Signs erected by the County for management purposes or by non-profit recreational trail groups will be as follows:

1. Informational Type Signs
 - A. Interpretive Signs - to educate the general public about forest

management practices.

- B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Wood County Forest property.
 - C. Trail Markers - to provide direction and safety to trail users.
 - D. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers - to identify points of interest.
 - E. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.
 - F. Directional Markers.
2. Regulatory Type Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

770.1 SIGNING STANDARDS

To assure that signs will serve a purpose without damaging aesthetics, the following standards will be maintained:

- 1. All signs will be mounted on treated wood posts or steel backed wooden posts.
- 2. Routed wood signs will be used wherever practical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when used, will be of neat appearance.
- 3. Signs placed on snowmobile trails must conform to state standards and be approved by the committee.
- 4. All authorized signs shall be protected by ordinance from being damaged, defaced, obstructed, removed, or possessed by unauthorized persons.
- 5. All unauthorized signs will be removed by the Forestry staff. No compensation will be afforded for loss or damage to signs during removal. Individuals erecting unauthorized signs may be prosecuted under s. 943.13(3), Wis. Stats.