COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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Revised 5/21/19

CHAPTER 700

ROADS AND ACCESS

700   ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management, protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Iron County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is large and diverse, a broad network of access opportunities have developed over the years. 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, nor were they maintained on a regular basis.

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 provide access for our harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. But the diverse demands for, and uses of, the County Forest have reached the point where integrated access management planning is needed.

(Choose appropriate listings of problem areas and reasons for access planning, providing a clear and concise policy for the public.)

User conflict between groups: e.g., snowmobiling versus cross-country skiing; hunting on foot versus use of vehicles for access to game populations.

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

Erosion: soils eroding due to use, or over-use by vehicles without routine maintenance.

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

Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

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

Commented [PTT1]: Add any history relating to the road/trail network on your forest and / or development of the access management plan. Refer to appendix for access management plan, if applicable.

Commented [PTT2]: Edit as appropriate to describe any history leading to road and access planning.

Commented [PTT3]: Itemize problems leading to access planning efforts if you have any.

harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, overharvest of bobcat.

Crowding: e.g. complaints from hunters about intensified competition for traditional hunting areas as a result of better access.

Fires: e.g. increased exposure of the resource to forest fire occurrence.

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.

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 management issues on the County Forest.

710   ROADS

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

> **Commented [PTT4]:** This template section creates a sample road classification program. Delete, edit, add to reflect your local program

> **Commented [PTT5]:** Describe who maintains road sytems - County, private contractors, cooperative agreement, other, etc. and under whose direction.

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 forest hydrologists to develop site-specific measures where appropriate and to follow all required permitting processes when applicable

The forest should have enough roads to provide sufficient access, without degrading water resources, while still maintaining recreational experience. Program evaluation of road infrastructure will continuously occur.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS (County 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 as 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 or for safety reasons.

Forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads in this program must meet minimum design standards set by WI Statute Section 86.315 (4) (a) and 86.315 (3) and administered by WI DOT. 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.

Commented [PTT6]: Itemize County Forest Roads and proposed future County Forest Roads either table, tabular or create reference to appendix

_____COUNTY CURRENT WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS

<center>_____COUNTY PROSPECTIVE FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED</center>

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS

*( ) Indicates the mileage of existing roads that will be improved and certified during the next ten 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.

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked and/or signed as restricted

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities, fire protection, and in cases where motorized handicapped access has been approved. 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 closed. These roads are naturally or artificially revegetated and closed by use of earthen berms/bunkers or other physical barriers. In some cases, roads are completely closed with slash and debris to prevent future use and to encourage natural regeneration of trees.

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will include 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.

Road abandonment considerations:

710.4   STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS

710.4.1   State Highways

Wisconsin DOT generally requires permits for permanent and temporary driveways on state

highways. The County should track and retain permit records and work with local DOT officials for access.

710.4.2 County Highways

Insert your local regulations for county highways.

710.4.3 Town Roads

Insert your local regulations for town roads.

710.5 UTILITIES

710.6 CULVERTS

In many cases culverts are needed in all three classifications of roads that are on the County Forest when dealing with drainages, wetlands and stream crossings. Some of these are temporarily placed culverts that are used during a specific project then removed, while others are permanent structures.

In all instances, culverts should be placed according to required DNR permitting procedures and should follow BMP's for culverts that can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of the WI BMP's for Water Quality PUB FR-093 2010.

Routine maintenance of these structures should also be completed to make sure structures are adequately working. The county may want to consider documenting the location of culverts on the forest and provide a list of the culverts that should be routinely checked.

715 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. The following areas have been designated as restricted access areas on the Iron County Forest:

720   WILD LAKES

(Use this section if applicable, or delete.) The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those restricted use areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, water craft, or snowmobiles except when snow covered. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes and streams are owned by Iron County. Counties may request that townships, under authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., establish regulations restricting motorized use on these surface waters. Canoes, kayaks, and boats propelled by wind, oars, or electric motors are permitted. Gasoline or diesel powered equipment is not permitted. The intent of these restrictions is to protect the aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow human access. On the Iron County Forest the following lakes are designated as "Wild Lakes":

725   ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY

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. The BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in highly erodible soil areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-2010. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

730   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 Iron 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 Iron 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.

730.1   SIGNING STANDARDS

To assure that signs will serve a purpose without damaging aesthetics, the following standards will be maintained: (*insert your county policy below*):

> **Commented [PTT17]:** Itemize signage policies as appropriate. Sample language listed.

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/ATV 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.*

740 ROAD AND ACCESS PLAN

> **Commented [PTT18]:** If you County has a comprehensive road and access plan, insert language sections here as well as either maps or references to maps in the appendix.