

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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REV: 05/21/19

CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

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900 RECREATION

Recreation is an integral part of the management of the Iron County Forest and recreation uses are referenced in most of the previous chapters. Due to the tremendous growth in recreational demands over the duration of the last planning period, this Plan recognizes the importance of more intensive recreational planning and emphasizes its importance with a separate chapter.

Commented [PTT1]: There are 2 distinct thoughts on this chapter coming from template team members. The template draft is written to allow incorporation of all recreation programs handled by your specific county. The 2nd thought process is to only include those recreational uses that occur on the County Forest Land specifically. Both are valid approaches and you should choose which is the best fit for your program.

905 PLANNING

In addition to this Plan, the Iron County Outdoor Recreation Plan also guides the recreation program. This plan is revised every five years and is made part of this Plan. The Iron County Outdoor recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It incorporates snowmobile and ATV plans, campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan, Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), public input, and other local or regional planning documents will be used as resources in recreational planning and development efforts. The responsibility for recreational planning, development and maintenance on the County Forest will rest with the Committee.

910 AUTHORITY

The *Iron County Code of Ordinances* and s.28.11 Wis. Stats, authorize the *Iron County Forestry, Parks and Recreation Committee* to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the County Forest Plan (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. This mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes environmental damage.

Commented [PTT2]: Edit to reflect the proper title of the ordinance(s) that regulate your program as well as the correct committee title

Maps of the recreational facilities managed through the Iron County Forest program are appended or referenced in Chapter 1000.

915 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES

The Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for establishing entrance, camping and other user fees on recreational facilities maintained by the County Forest. Camping, entrance or

Commented [PTT3]: Edit to reflect authority for fees in your program as well as pertinent policies for setting them.

other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by (*similar private facilities, other adjacent counties*) and are subject to periodic change by the Committee. Fees, where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities.

920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of the Plan, the County contracts for the following services

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance
2. ATV trail grading and maintenance
3. *Others as appropriate*

Commented [PTT4]: Itemize any other agreements for recreation.

925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance is required.

Commented [PTT5]: The organized event language is likely standard, but edit as appropriate to reflect your specific policies.

930 UNDESIGNATED RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

Undesignated recreation includes those informal activities for which the County Generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, biking, hiking and others. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with ordinance. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

930.1 HUNTING

The entire County Forest is open for regulated hunting, with the exception of areas developed for high public use.

The Iron County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance *or insert hyperlink to ordinance source*. In general the following activities are regulated:

Commented [PTT6]: Describe any areas on the forest with hunting and/or firearm restrictions

Commented [PTT7]: Consider inserting an itemized list of ordinances relating to hunting activities (stands, blinds, motorized use).

930.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for fishing unless otherwise listed in state regulations. The County Forest also provides for xxxx

Commented [PTT8]: describe any specifically managed fisheries including trout ponds, fishing piers, etc.

930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities is allowed. The Iron County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. In general, the following activities are regulated:

Commented [PTT9]: List general restrictions on day use areas. Sample language included.

1. All litter, trash or rubbish must be removed
2. Cutting or harvesting vegetation is not permitted
3. Fires may not be left unattended unless the ground is 100% snow covered
4. Others

930.4 CAMPING

A permit is required to camp outside of developed campgrounds on the County Forest. Permits are available from the County Forestry Office (or online, or other offices?) Described regulations/process for dispersed camping. In general the following activities are regulated:
List general ordinance items relating to dispersed camping.

Commented [PTT10]: Insert language describing dispersed camping on your forest. Sample language included.

930.5 MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The Iron County Code of Ordinances (and road and access plan if applicable) regulates motorized uses on the County Forest. The full text of these regulations is included in Chapter 700. In general the following regulations apply to motorized travel outside of a developed recreational trail system.

Commented [PTT11]: Describe ordinance language pertinent to motorized travel (if available) sample language included.

1. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle on a trail designated closed with a gate, earthen berm, sign, or other closure
2. Two-wheeled motorized travel (motorcycles, mini bikes, dirt bikes) is not permitted unless the machine is street legal and operating on a County Forest Road (gas tax)
3. Other regulated items

930.6 INCLUDE OTHER DISPERSED RECREATION USES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

Commented [PTT12]: There may be other dispersed recreational uses that need to be addressed.

930.7 OTHER USES

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed with the County Code of Ordinances. Mountain Biking, Horseback riding, and other non-motorized

Commented [PTT13]: Sample language. Include other uses as appropriate

uses are currently not regulated. The County Board may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the forest should damage begin to occur.

935 DESIGNATED RECREATION AREAS/USES

Designated recreation includes those uses for which the County provides a trail or facility. The Iron County Forest has developed sites and areas to accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Committee and Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for recreation facilities. Iron County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities.

935.1 **CAMPGROUNDS**

935.1.1 _____ Park

_____ Insert appropriate info here: _____ Park is located at _____.

The park facilities include 75 campsites, electricity, hand pumps, shower house, 3 pit toilets, beach, fishing pier, boat landing, dump station, firewood sales, and a nature trail. The facility is fee based for camping and day use.

Commented [PTT14]: Itemize a brief description of any/each campground facility. Sample language included

935.2 **YOUTH CAMP**

Commented [PTT15]: If applicable

935.3 **PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS**

Commented [PTT16]: Describe as text or create sub-sections

935.4 **SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES**

Commented [PTT17]: Describe as text or create sub-sections

935.5 **BOAT LANDINGS**

As a result of the wide distribution of lakes, streams, rivers, and other surface waters on the Forest, water access may be planned, developed, or restricted as a component of the overall Forest access management plan. Several boat landings, canoe 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.

Commented [PTT18]: Add narrative on boat landings as well as locations. Sample language included.

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.

The following public boat access sites have been developed on the Iron County Forest and are open to public use: List as appropriate for your county.

935.5.1 *Public Boat Access Sites Maintained by Iron County Forest*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

935.5.2 *Public Boat Access Sites Maintained by Towns*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

935.5.3 *Public Boat Access Sites Maintained by the DNR*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

935.5.4 **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.

Commented [PTT19]: Edit, add, delete as appropriate

935.6 **SKI/TUBING HILLS**

Commented [PTT20]: If applicable

935.7 RIFLE RANGE

Commented [PTT21]: If applicable

935.8 OTHER

Commented [PTT22]: Add descriptors of other designated recreation areas as appropriate.

940 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trail systems that accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

940.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Iron County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape.

It is the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

940.1.1 Hiking Trails

Commented [PTT23]: Describe multiple use trails where hiking use is either permitted or restricted. For example, "all developed trails are open to use by hikers". Itemize designated hiking trails below with a brief description, including how maintenance is conducted and by whom.

940.1.1.1 *Ice Age National Scenic Trail / North County Trail (if applicable)*
Description of trail segment(s) and any special management criteria.

940.1.2 Mountain Bike/Fat Tire/Bicycle Trails

Commented [PTT24]: Describe multiple use trails where bicycle use is either permitted or restriction. For example, bicycle use is permitted on all developed trails except for equestrian trails. Itemize designated bicycle trails below with a brief description, including how maintenance is conducted and by whom.

940.1.3 Equestrian Trails

Commented [PTT25]: Describe multiple use trails where horseback use is either permitted or restricted. Itemize designated equestrian trails below with a brief description, including how maintenance is conducted and by whom.

940.1.4 **Ski Trails**

Commented [PTT26]: Itemize designated ski trails below with brief description, including how maintenance is conducted and by whom.

940.1.5 **Other**

Commented [PTT27]: Describe other non-motorized trails (fat tire bike, canoe trails, etc.)

940.1.6 **Future non-motorized trail systems**

The development of additional non-motorized trail systems will include careful consideration of public demand, analysis of user conflicts and potential damage to the natural resource. Trail system development should comply with the Outdoor Recreation Plan goals and be referenced in SCORP or other regional planning documents.

Commented [PTT28]: If you have policy on future non-motorized trails, include it here. Sample language included.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. The County may require proof of an organized club, or user group, with the ability to assist with maintenance and support of the trail and associated facilities. Appropriate trail passes, or other user fees, may be implemented as indicated in Section 905.

940.2 **MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS**

940.2.1 **Designated Snowmobile Trails**

Designated snowmobile trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Forestry, Parks and Recreation Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Iron County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

Commented [PTT29]: If you manage snowmobile trails include defining language. Sample language included.

The Iron County Code and the Road and Access Plan regulate snowmobile trails. A summary of rules and regulations relating to snowmobile trails is as follows:

- a. Snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks from December 1 through April 1*
- b. The Forest Administrator will make determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow and maintenance conditions*
- c. Snowmobile trails used for logging access during snowmobile season will be posted with signs warning uses of activity.*
- d. Insert rules/regulations as appropriate.*

Commented [PTT30]: Describe ordinance language pertinent to snowmobile trails. Sample language included.

Iron County recognizes the following categories of snowmobile trail:

940.2.1.1 **Trail Types**

The County recognizes several different classifications of snowmobile trail:

State Funded Trails – these are state approved and funded trail miles on designated trails that are part of a statewide network of trail systems. Snowmobile registration fees and gas tax allotments fund grants that support maintenance, rehabilitation and development of these trails. There are approximately ____ miles of funded trails in Iron County, with approximately ____ miles on County Forest Lands.

Unfunded Trails – these are segments of trail that meet the eligibility requirements for a funded trail system but have not been included in the grant system due to restrictions on available funding. There are approximately ____ miles of unfunded trails in Iron County, with approximately ____ miles on County Forest lands. It is recommended that the county continues to apply for grants to include these in the funded system.

Local/Club Trails – these are trails that are not funded by State maintenance grants and may or may not be groomed by local clubs. These trails may not meet eligibility requirements of a funded trail and may dead end at local businesses. There are approximately ____ miles of club trails in Iron County, with approximately ____ miles on County Forest lands. *Include or delete as appropriate.*

940.2.1.2 **Trail Maintenance**

Iron County contracts with insert club information of snowmobile trail grooming is contracted. For Example... “Adams County contracts with the Yellow River Snowmobile Club and the Lakes and Pines Drifters to groom the funded snowmobile trail system. The County periodically assists with mowing, grading or other trail maintenance projects as needed”.

The County shall inspect and monitor bridges and other infrastructure on the trail system and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace or rehabilitate as needed.

Commented [PTT31]: Edit, add, delete as necessary.

Commented [PTT32]: Describe how trails are maintained. Sample language included.

940.2.1.3 **Future Snowmobile Trails**

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over any trail development proposals. It is recommended that future trails be considered only after careful consideration of costs, benefits and impacts and as part of a larger planning effort.

Insert general statements regarding need for additional snowmobile trails. For example, "Iron County deems that the existing number of snowmobile trail miles is sufficient to satisfy public demand." Or "A recognized need exists to establish a designated snowmobile trail connecting xxx to xxx".

Proposals to relocate trails or to make adjustments to the existing trail system will be encouraged where there are concerns of public safety or environmental damage. Unfunded and club trails should be evaluated for maintenance funding application.

Commented [PTT33]: If you have policy on future snowmobile trails insert here. Sample language included. Delete if not appropriate to your program

940.2.2 **Designated ATV Trails**

Designated ATV Trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. These may lie on County, private, or other agency lands. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

There are numerous types of designated ATV trail managed by Iron County. These trails are further identified in the appendix.

Commented [PTT34]: If you manage ATV trails include defining language. Sample language included.

940.2.2.1 **Trail Types**

The County recognizes several different classifications of ATV trail. Maps are appended for reference.

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – A majority of state funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. There are approximately xxx miles of winter funded ATV trail managed by Iron County, with xxx miles on County Forest lands.

Commented [PTT35]: Edit, add, delete as necessary.

2. Funded Summer ATV Trails – these are trail systems funded for only summer winter use. These trails are open from _____ – _____. There are approximately ____ miles of summer use ATV trails managed by the County with ____ miles on the County Forest.

3. Funded Year Round Trails - these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are approximately ____ miles of year round funded ATV trails managed by Iron County with ____ miles on the County Forest.

4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV’s, or side by sides, can be allowed on ATV trail systems. Iron County allows for UTV’s on ____ miles of the trail system within the County.

5. Funded Trout/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after August 1, 2012 allow for partial funding under the following categories:

5a. County Forest Gas Tax Roads – these are gas tax roads used as a connector to trails or services and are funded at a rate determined by the full per mile funding rate, less gas tax funding rate, not to exceed 50% of the full maintenance funding rate. Iron County maintains ____ miles of County Forest Road Troutes.

5b. Hybrid Trails – these are trails designated as ATV trails, opened after August 1, 2012, that also permit highway vehicle traffic. These are funded at 50% of the annual maintenance funding rate. Iron County maintains ____ miles of Hybrid/Troute trails.

5c. Club Trails – These re trails not funded under the state ATV program. In some cases these are trails that are maintained and may be added as a funded trail at a future date. Iron County recognizes ____ miles of club trails.

5d. State Trails – *insert any necessary descriptions, special management, etc. for state motorized trails managed under agreement or easement and how they fit into various funding categories.*

940.2.2.2 **ATV Trail Maintenance**

For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion.

Insert County maintenance plans here, list items such as club contract, grading schedule, county involvement, equipment used, etc.

The County shall inspect and monitor trails, bridges and other infrastructure and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace improvements or rehabilitate trail surfaces or bridges as needed.

940.2.2.3 **Future ATV Trails**

The use and popularity of ATV's and UTV's increased dramatically over the period of the 2006-2020 County Forest Plan. Increased usage of trail systems proved a tremendous need for much higher levels of trail maintenance in order to manage environmental damages.

Adding ATV trails should be done as part of larger planning effort that incorporates considerations for impact on other users and user groups; how future trail systems will be maintained; and impact on the natural resources. New ATV trail systems will only be considered with the following framework:

Insert County specific plans/goals such as: (or insert ATV Master Plan language if available)

- *“Trails should be designed and planned to connect communities”*
- *“Loop trails will be discouraged unless part of a larger trail system that connects communities”*
- *“Dead end trails will not be sanctioned as part of the County ATV trail system”*
- *“Intensive use areas will not be permitted, (or are recommended)”*
- *“New trails will only be allowed if they fit within an ATV plan established by the Committee”*

Commented [PTT36]: Describe how trails are maintained. Sample language included.

Commented [PTT37]: If you have policy on future ATV trails insert here. Sample language included. Delete if not appropriate to your program.

- *“Trails will only be considered on suitable soils and in appropriate locations*

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in such a way as to prevent erosion and soil loss. Trails must be developed to sustainably. For the purpose of this plan, sustainability is defined as follows:

Sustainability – For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails should be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal. To this end, the construction and development of new ATV trails are to comply with the **WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards**, which is appended to this Plan.

Commented [PTT38]: This section should remain consistent if you county manages ATV trails. Template team encourages reference and adherence to WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards.

940.2.3 **Designated Motorcycle Trails**

Commented [PTT39]: Describe any trail systems, maintenance, funding, etc. or county policy on moratoriums or future plans.

940.2.4 **Other Designated Motor Vehicle Trails**

Commented [PTT40]: Describe any trail systems, maintenance, funding, etc. or county policy on moratoriums or future plans.

940.3 **RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS**

Commented [PTT41]: 940.3 is intended to provide clarity on the implementation/management of trail permits. Delete if you feel it is not necessary to include.

940.3.1 **Storm Water Discharge**

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre or more of land will require a Storm Water Discharge Permit. There have been instances of inconsistent application of permit requirements statewide. In order to further define the County’s understanding and implementation of permit requirements, the following current acceptable process will be used for determining when a permit is needed.

- The 1 acre threshold will be determined by measuring/estimated new disturbance or disturbance of previously grassed surfaces.
- Periodic grading of impervious or non-grassed trail surfaces is not considered disturbance.
- Restoration of water filtration/diversion devices, such as sediment traps or catch basins is considered maintenance and not disturbance

- Reconstruction of previously grassed ditch lines as part of trail rehabilitation is considered disturbance.

940.3.2 Chapter 30

Permits are required for bridges or culvert crossings of navigable waterways. These permits will either be classified as general or individual depending on specific site conditions. These permits are not required for culvert or bridge crossings of non-navigable or intermittent streams, nor are they required to install a clear span bridge over wetlands.

940.3.3 Wetland Fill

Permits are required at any time that fill is placed in a wetland. Permits are available to fill small wetlands for recreation trail purposes. Wetland fill must be less than 10,000 square feet and the permit does not require wetland mitigation. Clear span bridge and boardwalks placed on pilings generally do not require a wetland fill permit. Puncheon style bridges do require a permit.

945 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS

945.1 RECREATION AREA FUNDING

Funding for recreation areas is generally fee based *insert other funding mechanisms*. Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of completion for these funds.

Commented [PTT42]: Edit as appropriate.

945.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

945.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At this time, there is very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance. *The [County] relies on trail passes, timber revenue, RTP, insert specific county funding mechanisms.*

Commented [PTT43]: Describe how your county funds non-motorized trail systems

945.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs. Iron County utilizes the following funding sources:

1. Snowmobile Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile

4. UTV Maintenance - \$100/mile
5. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
6. ATV Development - 100% grants
7. *List other grants - Troute, Motorcycle, etc.*

950 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECREATION PROGRAM

The following are recommended changes that this Plan recognizes as improvements or enhancements to the recreation program. *Insert any as appropriate:*

- 950.1 *ENFORCEMENT NEEDS*
- 950.2 *STAFF NEEDS*
- 950.3 *CAMPGROUNDS*
- 950.4 *PARKS*
- 950.5 *TRAILS*

Commented [PTT44]: There may be an opportunity to itemize future recommendations for your programs. It may assist in future development efforts or help secure funding. Sample ideas included as subsections. Delete is you wish to .