

**BAYFIELD COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**CHAPTER 700**

**ACCESS MANAGEMENT**

**ROADS AND TRAILS**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
700	Access Management/Roads and Trails	3
700.1	History	3
700.2	Current Status	3
700.3	Goals and Objectives	4
700.3.1	Objectives	4
700.3.2	Goals	5
702	Recreational Use Regulations of all County Forest Lands	5
705	Area Classifications	6
705.1	High Motorized Areas	7
705.2	Moderate Motorized Areas	7
705.3	Low Motorized Areas	8
710	Roads and Trails	8
710.1	Road Classifications	8
710.1.1	Primary Roads	9
710.1.2	Secondary Roads	9
710.1.3	Tertiary Roads	9
710.1.4	Unclassified Roads	10
710.1.5	Minimum Road Standard	10
710.2	Road and Trail Planning	10
710.2.1	Road and Trail Analysis and Classification	10
710.2.2	New Roads and Trails	11
710.3	Road and Trail Closure Methods	11

720	Recreational Access	12
	720.1 Trail Construction, Maintenance and Abandonment	12
	720.2 Events	13
	720.2.1 Event Fees	13
725	Non-Motorized Recreation	13
	725.1 Walking Trails	14
	725.2 Mountain Bike Trails	14
	725.3 Cross Country Ski Trails	15
	725.4 Dogsled Trails	15
	725.5 Equestrian Trails	16
730	Motorized Recreation	16
	730.1 Snowmobile Trails	17
	730.2 All Terrain Vehicle Trails	18
735	Aesthetic Zone Classifications	19
740	Management Activities Adjacent To Trails	19
	740.1 Non-Motorized Trails	19
	740.2 Motorized Trails	20
750	Special Use Areas	20
755	Access To Private Lands	20
	755.1 Temporary Access	20
	755.2 Access Permits	20
	755.3 Easements	22
760	Utility Access	22
765	Best Management Practices	22
770	Signs	22
775	Recreation Opportunities For People With Disabilities	22
780	Exemptions	23
785	Interface With Law Enforcement	23
790	Tribal Forest User Groups	23

## **700 ACCESS MANAGEMENT/ROADS AND TRAILS**

### **700.1 HISTORY**

Most of the existing roads on the County Forest were originally developed to facilitate timber harvesting activities or as railroad grades. Many of these roads were constructed prior to the land being owned by the County.

Historically, road maintenance was generally performed in conjunction with timber harvest activities primarily by the holders of County timber sale contracts and, secondarily, by Department staff with Department equipment. Also, historically, very few roads were closed to motorized use. In 1998 it was calculated that less than two percent of all roads located on the County Forest were closed to motorized use.

Due to a lack of policies and guidelines for road use and/or maintenance within the County Forest, a variety of problems developed over time. For instance, roads constructed for winter only harvesting operations, which were not built to accommodate long term motorized pressure, remained open, and, subsequently subjected to recreational use. The increased use had the potential to cause non-point source pollution, erosion, damage to road infrastructure needed for future forest management access, or other natural resource degradation.

At the same time, the region was experiencing a significant increase in motorized use pressures, particularly on public lands, and especially with all-terrain vehicles (ATV's). The increase in demand for recreational opportunities on the County Forest also resulted in a greater potential for conflict between different user groups.

In response to these pressures, in 1998, the County Board amended the County Forest Comprehensive Land Use plan. The amendment completely replaced the existing Chapter 700 and provided a new access management plan for the County Forest.

That plan provided a process for classifying all of the roads on the County Forest into one of three categories: Primary, Secondary, and Temporary (or Tertiary). The Plan further provided for the development and adoption of appropriate use restrictions on all County Forest roads as they were placed into one of these three categories.

Access management was revised slightly in 2005/2006, as part of the process to update the County Forest 15 Year Comprehensive Use Plan. Chapter 700 was modified again in 2013, this time introducing general use areas, expanding the motorized use designations and incorporating non-motorized recreation.

## 700.2 CURRENT STATUS

Resource management, recreational activities, and public uses on the County Forest require several different types of road and trail accessibility. Since the County Forest is large and diverse, covering nearly the entire length of Bayfield County, over time, a broad network of access routes has been developed.

A summary/listing of the most up to date road and trail designations, including all associated maps, can be found in the Appendix. It's important to note that some authorized designated recreational uses occupy the same segment of trail. Similarly, some trails are also located on what is classified as a County Forest road (see below for more information on County Forest roads).

For example, a certain linear feature in the woods could be designated as a singletrack mountain bike trail in the summer and a snowshoe trail in the winter; or a cross country ski trail in the winter may also be a secondary County Forest road. In general, all designated trails are located on either a primary, secondary or temporary road, except for singletrack mountain bike trails, any trail constructed for a specific designated purpose, or any other trail less than 50 inches in width.

There is more than 50,000 acres of private land within the Blocking, which has, over time, led to an increase in requests for access. Access permit requests are addressed by the Committee on a case by case basis. See Chapter 500 for more information on access permits.

In a few rare cases Bayfield County has issued permanent easements across County Forest land. Generally, these have been granted as part of a reciprocal easement (where the County has also secured legal access to the County Forest) or for public utility access. As a result, in some instances, access permits or easements will grant the permitted individual(s) motorized access on a road or trail that is otherwise closed to motorized use. See Chapter 500 for more information on easements and utility access.

### 700.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Recreational use of the County Forest has steadily increased by type and volume, and now includes, but is not limited to, licensed highway vehicles, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs and UTV's), mountain biking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, horseback riding, dog sledding, ski-joring, hunting access, scenic driving, mushroom/berry picking, wildlife viewing, firewood gathering and other similar activities.

Recreational use pressures and related demands placed on public lands are expected to increase indefinitely. Fortunately, with over 51% of Bayfield County in public ownership, there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy recreating in the outdoors. Still, as technologies improve the accessibility to, and affordability of, a diversity of recreational equipment (both motorized and non-motorized); as more private lands are sold and posted closed and/or developed; and as tourism within the region increases, the County Forest can also expect a proportionate growth in recreational use pressures.

Throughout this Chapter, highway vehicles (licensed cars, trucks, motorcycles, etc.) will be referred to as HV and all off-highway vehicles (registered ATV's, UTV's, snowmobiles, etc.) will be referred to as OHV.

#### 700.3.1 Objectives

Roads and trails provide critical access corridors into the County Forest. These corridors are relied upon for a variety of activities, including, but not limited to: forest management purposes, timber harvesting, and all forms of recreation. Recreation comes in all forms, shapes and sizes. Everyone has their own unique way to unwind and enjoy the benefits provided by the County Forest.

The diversity of County Forest uses shall be considered during all phases of access management planning to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide a safe, economical, efficient, and properly engineered and maintained network of roads and trails on the County Forest for resource management activities such as timber sale establishment, harvesting operations, reforestation, regeneration monitoring, inventory and reconnaissance, and other similar forest management and/or administrative activities, as deemed necessary by the Department, as well as protection from insect, disease, and wildfire.
2. Identify, develop and maintain parameters for the consideration and management of public uses on the County Forest, including, but not limited to: motorized recreation; non-motorized recreation; and access to private lands. Variables such as vehicle and/or equipment type and their potential impacts on the landscape, seasonal restrictions or similar constraints, potential conflicts with other approved or designated uses, and other natural resource values, deemed necessary by the Department, will be considered as part of the process.
3. Provide safe, sustainable public access for a variety of recreational activities on County Forest lands and when appropriate, links to adjacent lands, utilizing multiple-use strategies whenever feasible, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
4. Develop and maintain an ecologically, economically, and socially sound and responsible access management plan for the County Forest. This could include closing and/or obliterating existing infrastructure, if identified as a priority. Also, produce periodic updates to the Plan when appropriate, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
5. Incorporate recreational and similar use opportunities already available on other public lands, either located within or immediately adjacent to Bayfield County, as part of the planning process.
6. Other similar objectives as deemed important by the Committee and/or Administrator.

### 700.3.2 Goals

The management guidelines in this Chapter will be used to address the objectives listed above. To ensure that this Plan is implemented properly and the objectives are addressed, Bayfield County will:

1. Develop and maintain a record/inventory of all existing roads and trails on the County Forest, including easements, access permits, reciprocal permits or similar authorization that grant the County and/or private access through other ownerships.
2. Monitor and evaluate existing road and trail infrastructure on a routine and regular basis, with an emphasis on developing and maintaining a transportation system that, within reason, meets the current needs of the public, as determined feasible by the Administrator, while considering future demands.
3. Designate and convey permitted or authorized uses on all inventoried roads and trails. This may be accomplished through individual road and/or trail designations and/or through area classifications.
4. Maintain the transportation system in a manner that is safe, efficient, sustainable and environmentally sound.
5. Develop a routine and regular method of inventory, as well as a mechanism to re-evaluate road and trail use designations and/or an ability to make adjustments or modifications, as deemed necessary by the Administrator.
6. Identify the existing and future County Forest roads eligible for transportation aids under s.86.315(1), Wis. Stats.
7. Routinely collaborate with other public land management agencies.
8. Solicit and consider public input and/or comments for future planning purposes.

### **705 RECREATIONAL USE REGULATIONS ON ALL COUNTY FOREST LANDS**

The following recreational use regulations apply to all roads, trails and area classifications on the County Forest.

1. All roads and trails (inventoried and un-inventoried) are closed to all forms of motorized vehicle use unless posted open by the Department or designated

open as per an area classification (see more on area classifications below).

- a. State funded snowmobile and ATV trails are exceptions to this general rule (see the Appendix for a map and listing of all state funded snowmobile and ATV trails).
2. Permissible/authorized motorized uses will be designated (signed) on all inventoried County Forest roads and trails, unless permitted as per an area designation, given prior authorization from the Administrator and/or Committee, already approved as per an access permit, use agreement, easement or similar conveyance, already part of a state funded motorized trail, or as otherwise specifically addressed in this Plan.
3. Foot travel is permitted on all areas of the County Forest, unless otherwise specifically addressed in this Plan. It is suggested that individuals wear blaze orange during open firearms seasons and take extra care when traveling upon designated motorized trails.
4. Mountain biking, cross-country skiing, dog-sledding, snowshoeing, ski-joring, horseback riding and other similar non-motorized recreational activities are permitted on all roads and trails throughout the County Forest, unless posted (signed) and/or closed to a particular use or otherwise specifically addressed in this Plan.
  - a. For safety reasons, the recreational activities listed in item 4 above are not authorized on any state funded snowmobile trail located on the County Forest.
5. No off-road/trail (cross-country) motorized vehicle use, of any kind, is allowed, anywhere on the County Forest, including for game retrieval, trail connecting purposes or access to private lands, unless specifically authorized by the Administrator.
6. No off-road/trail (cross-country) equestrian or mountain bike travel is permitted on the County Forest.
7. No motorized vehicles are allowed to travel over or around earthen berms, piled logging debris, boulders, gates, signs, etc, where the intent, by the Department, was to restrict motorized use with a closure device, even if signs are missing or closure devices damaged, unless posted, by Bayfield County, with a sign allowing such use.
8. No motorized vehicle use is allowed on any road or trail between spring break



up (roughly April 1<sup>st</sup>) through May 15<sup>th</sup>, or as determined by the Administrator, unless given prior authorization by the Administrator and/or Committee.

9. Unlicensed highway vehicles (trucks, cars, motorcycles, etc) and unregistered off highway vehicles (ATVs, UTVs, snowmobiles, dirtbikes etc) are prohibited on all roads and trails within the County Forest, unless permission has been granted by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The following motorized vehicle and/or equipment use situations are exempt from the regulations listed above: Department staff and/or DNR for County Forest management and/or administration purposes; contractors authorized by the Department; emergency personnel, including fire suppression; groups and/or individuals given prior authorization by the Administrator and/or Committee.

## **710 ROADS AND TRAILS**

All man-made linear features constructed on the County Forest ultimately fall into one of two categories: they are classified as either a road or a trail. In general, most linear features are classified as roads and were originally constructed for timber management purposes. In some instances, roads can also become part of a designated “trail” system. The snowmobile and ATV trail programs are good examples of forest roads also being used as part of a designated trail system. In other scenarios, purpose-built trails are constructed on the County Forest. Singletrack mountain bike trails are good examples of networks that were constructed for a specific recreational purpose.

Moving forward, as a general rule of thumb, all man-made linear features on the County Forest will be categorized as a road. All road segments that have also been officially designated and/or recognized, by the Department, as a trail, will carry a dual designation: road and trail. When a linear feature is categorized as a road and trail, the Department may need to take additional steps when establishing timber sales that will utilize the road as a haul route. These steps could include, but are not limited to: coordinating with the group or club responsible for maintaining the trail system; locating and/or designating alternate haul routes; adopting seasonal timber harvest restrictions that minimize conflict with the recreational activity; temporarily closing the recreational activity; or re-routing the trail.

All trail segments, not otherwise categorized as a road or road and trail, that have been officially designated and/or recognized, by the Department, for a specific non-motorized recreational use, will be classified as a trail.

In summary, each man-made linear feature will either be classified as a road, road and trail, or trail.

## 710.1 ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

All roads on the County Forest have been or will be placed into one of three different classifications: primary, secondary or temporary. Any road segment that has not been placed in one of these three categories will be designated as unclassified (until an appropriate designation is determined). These classifications will provide long term direction for how individual roads on the County Forest will be used, maintained, and/or improved. Also, allowable motorized uses will be determined, by the Department, for each segment of road, per classification. Trail designations, if any, will be assigned as well.

### 710.1.1 Primary Roads

Roads in this category have been, or are intended to be, enrolled in the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads must meet minimum design standards. State law requires a road surface width of at least 16 feet and an overall roadway width of at least 20 feet.

The Department receives an annual aid payment from the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation for the maintenance of all roads classified as primary (also referred to as Gas Tax roads). There are currently approximately 38 miles of primary roads in this program. Maps of all primary roads are located in the Appendix.

Primary roads will be maintained by the Department or their designee and will remain open for public motorized use. However, use by motorized vehicles other than licensed highway vehicles may be restricted, as determined by the Administrator.

Primary roads may also be temporarily closed, by the Administrator, to resolve or address issues or concerns regarding public safety, fire suppression, natural disasters or similar events, natural resource/environmental damage, law enforcement, or other critical incidents requiring immediate action.

See the Appendix for a summary of all primary roads, including associated maps.

#### 710.1.2 Secondary Roads

Secondary roads serve as main corridors for a multitude of County Forest uses, including, but not limited to: timber sale access; various forest management activities; fire protection; emergency response; and recreation.

Like primary roads, secondary roads are managed as part of a permanent network, but are built and maintained to a slightly lower standard. Additionally, secondary roads may be designated, by the County, as either open or closed to motorized vehicles.

Nearly all secondary roads were originally built to access a timber sale. Depending on the location and general restrictions of the timber sale, each secondary road is also fairly unique and was ultimately constructed only to service the original purpose. Over time, as public uses evolved, so did the demands and pressures placed on existing infrastructure, primarily as requests for more motorized recreational access. Motorized vehicles have the potential to create extensive damage to existing infrastructure and, as such, receive more attention through regulation.

Most logging roads were constructed on ground suitable for motorized vehicles and, as a result, are generally better able to withstand long term use pressures. However, many of these logging roads were built to access winter only timber sales, or those where logging activities were restricted to periods of frozen ground only. These roads are generally suitable for winter use, but were not constructed to accommodate motorized access during the rest of the year.

Authorized motorized use designations will be determined, by the Administrator, on all secondary roads. The Road and Trail Analysis and Classification procedure (as outlined in Section 710.3) will be referenced as part of the designation process. When motorized vehicles are permitted, a sign may be posted to designate the authorized use. The Administrator will designate which roads are open to vehicles, as well as the approved forms of motorized use(s). Permitted motorized use may include, but not be limited to, licensed highway vehicles, registered off-highway vehicles (i.e. ATVs, UTVs,

snowmobiles) or similar registered and/or licensed units powered by a motor.

In cases where motorized use is permitted on all secondary roads within a designated area, a few strategically placed signs may be constructed to present the allowable use. Roads or trails that are closed within these areas will be posted with a sign and, if necessary, other restrictive closure devices. See section 710.2 for more information on Area Classifications.

Similarly, in cases where all motorized use is restricted in a designated area, signs may be placed in strategic locations to present the designated use. Closure devices may also be required to further obstruct unauthorized motorized access.

See the Appendix for a summary of all secondary roads, including associated maps.

#### 710.1.3 Temporary Roads

Temporary roads are designed and constructed for short-term use on a specific project, usually for timber harvest access. These roads are typically used only for a short duration and are often closed when the activity is done. Short “stub” roads or those that service a specific general area of the County Forest and provide little, if any, connectivity to other trail networks will commonly be classified as Temporary. Generally, these roads are, or will be, abandoned and naturally or artificially re-vegetated.

Unless designated otherwise, temporary roads will be closed to all motorized use. The Administrator will employ criteria outlined in Section 710.3 to determine the permitted uses on these roads once all timber sale activities have been completed.

See the Appendix for a summary of all temporary roads, including associated maps.

#### 710.1.4 Unclassified Roads

This category includes any existing road on the County Forest that has not yet been placed into one of the other three classifications listed above. In general, this classification will serve as a placeholder for a section of road until more information is obtained, by the Department, to determine an accurate designation. As such, the amount of road designated as unclassified will fluctuate every year. Unless designated otherwise these roads will be closed to all motorized vehicles until an official determination of use is

made.

See the Appendix for a summary of all unclassified roads, including associated maps.

#### 710.1.5 Minimum Road Standard

Man-made linear features that are less than 50 inches wide are not considered to be a road under this Plan. Unless otherwise stated, motorized use will be prohibited on these travelways.

### 710.2 AREA CLASSIFICATIONS

Area classifications (or designations) are used to generalize the type and level of motorized use that is typically authorized or permitted over a larger landscape. The County Forest is divided into three different area classifications:

- 1) High Motorized Areas.
- 2) Moderate Motorized Areas.
- 3) Low Motorized Areas.

The classifications are intended to serve as a general reference or guide for planning purposes associated with forest management, recreational use and/or accessibility to private lands, or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Administrator and/or Committee.

In some instances, opportunities exist to designate most or all of the roads located within an area classification as open or closed to all or specified motorized uses. However, unless specifically addressed in the individual area classification, all inventoried roads on the County Forest are closed to all motorized vehicles, unless signed to designate the permitted use.

Roads, trails and/or areas designated as open to motorized use may be closed at any time, if the authorized/permitted use is causing or has the potential to cause, significant natural resource degradation, is conflicting with other authorized uses, is no longer consistent with the goals or direction of the County Forest, or for any other similar reason, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Similarly, roads, trails or areas designated as closed to one or more forms of motorized use may be opened to one or more forms of motorized use, if it can be demonstrated that

such use will not cause significant natural resource degradation, will not impact existing non-motorized uses or other authorizations, and is consistent with the goals and directions of the County Forest, as outlined throughout this Plan, or for any other similar reasons, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Additional public input will be required if the Administrator and/or Committee is considering opening roads and/or trails to motorized use in areas that are located within heavily used non-motorized portions of the County Forest i.e. the Cable Block and near Mt. Ashwabay.

A summary of the most up to date area designations, including all associated maps, can be found in the Appendix.

#### 710.2.1 High Motorized Areas

These areas contain the greatest potential for motorized use on the County Forest. Roughly one quarter of the County Forest is classified as High Motorized. The areas are generally dominated by deep, sandy, outwash soils, contain very little or no riparian or other sensitive wetland features, and have mostly flat or gently rolling terrain. Roads located in these areas can withstand repeated motorized use and typically require very little maintenance.

In general, all licensed HV and registered OHV are allowed on all inventoried roads located within High Motorized Areas. The area may be signed as open to these motorized uses in strategic, commonly used public access points, as determined by the Administrator.

If a portion of road and/or trail needs to be closed to all or a particular form of motorized use, as determined by the Administrator, it will be obstructed with an earthen berm, logging debris, gate, sign or similar device. If closed, no motorized use will be permitted beyond the point of closure.

Below are the general use designations on inventoried roads located within all High Motorized Areas:

Permitted Uses: licensed HV, registered OHV, and all forms of non-motorized recreational use on all roads and trails not otherwise posted closed or as otherwise addressed in this Plan.

Restricted Uses: Unlicensed HV and unregistered OHV; cross-country motorized, equestrian and mountain bike travel; motorized use of any kind on roads or trails posted closed to motorized use or not currently in the Department's access management database (un-inventoried) or as otherwise addressed in this Plan.

#### 710.2.2 Moderate Motorized Areas

Of the three area classifications, this area is the largest and contains the greatest diversity of permitted uses. A little more than half of the County Forest is classified as Moderate Motorized. The area also provides the greatest combination of motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities on the County Forest.

Unless posted closed, all roads located within Moderate Motorized Areas will be open to registered OHV use. Also, unless posted closed, all roads located within Moderate Motorized Areas will be open to licensed HV use. Other posting and/or signing options or arrangements may be considered, as determined, by the Administrator, to be the most effective and/or efficient.

More specific area classifications may be possible in other portions of the County Forest if a large enough tract of land, with common forms of similar motorized use designations, is identified, as determined by the Administrator.

Below are the general use designations on inventoried roads located within all Moderate Motorized Areas:

Permitted Uses: registered OHV on all roads and trails not posted closed; licensed HV on all roads and trails, unless posted closed; all forms of non-motorized recreational use; or as otherwise addressed in this Plan.

Restricted Uses: unlicensed HV and unregistered OHV; cross-country motorized, equestrian and mountain bike travel; motorized use of any kind on roads, trails or

areas closed to motorized use or not currently in the Department's access management database (un-inventoried); or as otherwise addressed in this Plan.

### 710.2.3 Low Motorized Areas

Low Motorized Areas contain the greatest potential for non-motorized recreation and generally covers a little less than one quarter of the County Forest. Typically, snowmobile use will be the only permissible form of motorized recreation and will only be allowed on state funded snowmobile trails, as well as specific designated roads or areas.

In some instances, a few select, well-constructed roads may be open for a specific motorized use, but only if such use will not negatively impact the natural resources or established non-motorized activities, as determined by the Administrator.

Additional motorized use may be granted by the Administrator and/or Committee on a case by case basis (usually in the form of a private access permit). In essence, motorized vehicles (other than snowmobiles) will be prohibited on most or all of the roads that exist in Low Motorized Areas.

These areas typically contain abundant riparian features, sensitive soils, unique ecological and/or geological attributes, existing abundant non-motorized recreational land uses, or other features that do not readily support motorized traffic.

The areas will be signed as closed to motorized use in strategic, commonly used public access points, as determined by the Administrator. Certain access points may require a closure device to further deter motorized use. If motorized use has been permitted within these areas, the section of road or trail will be signed designating the appropriate use.

Below are the general use designations on inventoried roads located within all Low Motorized Areas:

Permitted Uses: all forms of non-motorized recreation. Registered snowmobiles and grooming equipment on state funded trails or designated roads/areas only.

Other motorized recreation only on roads signed as open for such use. Or as



otherwise addressed in this Plan.

Restricted Uses: motorized vehicles, of any kind, on any road or trail not designated (signed) for such use; cross-country motorized, equestrian and mountain bike travel; motorized use of any kind on roads or trails closed to motorized vehicles or not currently in the Department's access management database (un-inventoried). Or as otherwise addressed in this Plan.

Maps and summary information of all Area Classifications can be found in the Appendix.

### 710.3 ROAD AND TRAIL PLANNING

It is the policy of Bayfield County to plan, develop, and maintain a sustainable, multi-use road and trail system.

#### 710.3.1 Road and Trail Analysis and Classification.

The Administrator will regularly evaluate the County Forest road and/or trail infrastructure, future access needs, and engineering/environmental factors and designate, for long term use, the networks that best meet the County's objectives. For each existing and/or new road or trail, the Administrator will select the classification and the appropriate motorized use designation that best meets current and future needs, while ensuring long term, sustainable access to the County Forest.

All roads and trails will be designated as: 1) open to HV and OHV use; 2) open to OHV use only; or 3) non-motorized. Designations may be assigned on an individual road and/or trails segment or on all roads and/or trails located in an entire area, as determined by the Administrator. Snowmobile use is specifically addressed in Section 730.1 and will be allowed on most inventoried roads. Road classifications and associated motorized use designations will be periodically reviewed and updated accordingly, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate roads and trails (to assist in the classification process):

1. Existing road and/or trail density in the area classification and/or IRMU.
2. Current road and/or trail condition and use (on existing infrastructure).
3. Soil characteristics and the corresponding ability of the road to support vehicles.

4. Water quality and/or natural resource concerns/issues: BMPs and proximity to wetlands, streams, or lakes.
5. Expected/anticipated maintenance requirements.
6. Present and future needs for forest management activities in the area.
7. Potential connectivity to other existing road networks.
8. Current and future recreational uses and anticipated demands.
9. Presence of threatened or endangered species or other wildlife considerations.
10. Suitability and sustainability for year-round motorized use – if considering a motorized use designation, a priority will be given to roads that can be utilized at least three seasons or year-round.
11. Protection of special use areas, features, or other ecological considerations.
12. Presence of known archeological or cultural sites.
13. Existing recreational opportunities or authorized motorized uses on other nearby public lands.
14. Other, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The Administrator will also collaborate with the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa regarding transportation planning within the Reservation boundary. In addition, the Administrator will, as needed, engage and cooperate with other agencies and landowners to address access needs which span different ownerships.

#### 710.3.1 New Roads

The Administrator will evaluate the goals and objectives for additional new roads, as well as for the relocation of all or portions of existing roads. The Administrator will determine the location, classification and motorized use designation for all new and relocated roads; will determine the standards and criteria to which new and relocated roads will be constructed; and, when necessary, will prepare plans and specifications for their construction.

All new roads will be constructed in accordance with Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality, as well as all applicable County, State, and Federal regulations.

In general, the most common scenario for new road development is in conjunction with timber sale activities. Often, these roads are constructed by loggers or other timber

contractors, under the direction of the Department, for access into a timber sale. The Administrator or designee will inspect all road construction and/or relocation projects to ensure that the work is in compliance with Department expectations, plans and specifications

#### 710.4 Road and Trail Closure Methods

In general, all roads and trails located on the County Forest are closed to motorized uses unless posted (signed) as open or designated open as per an area classification. To protect the integrity of the natural resource or to restrict unauthorized motorized use, many roads and trails will need to be physically closed.

Preferably, strategically placed signs will be used to communicate the permitted motorized use of any given road, trail or area. Whenever possible, roads or trails that require more restrictive closure devices will be constructed in conjunction with timber sale activities.

The most common form of closure will be an earthen berm. Logging debris, boulders, downed logs and other similar forms of closure may also be used to deter motorized use. Roads that serve as significant access points for forest management purposes, that provide permitted access routes into private property or are part of major recreational trail networks may be gated.

The Department or their designee may install a closure devices on any segment of road or trail where unauthorized recreational use has caused or has the potential to cause significant resource degradation, or for any other reason where there is a demonstrated need to physically restrict motorized access, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Additionally, closure devices, or modified devices, may be used to inhibit the access of certain motorized vehicles that are restricted on a road or trail, but allow vehicles that are permitted (i.e. a modified gate that allows OHV's to pass, but obstructs trucks). In some instances, OHV's will be allowed to travel over berms in areas where berms were originally constructed to restrict all forms of motorized use. Where allowed, the berms will be signed to communicate the permitted use. Unless signed to authorize the use, no motorized

vehicles are allowed to travel through, around, over or under a road or trail closure device.

In summary, where permitted, a sign will designate which form of motorized vehicle is authorized on any inventoried road or trail on the County Forest, unless authorized via an area designation, or as otherwise determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

## **715 RECREATIONAL ACCESS**

An important role of the County Forest is to provide sustainable recreational opportunities for the public. These opportunities include both cooperatively maintained, designated trail systems (including motorized and non-motorized) and un-designated dispersed recreation.

The Department will continue to explore opportunities to provide rewarding recreational experiences for all users of the County Forest, while attempting to minimize conflicts, whenever feasible, between them. Input from various user groups and from other interested members of the public will assist the Department in achieving this goal.

Forest management activities adjacent to recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and, when possible, attempts will be made to minimize the impact that these activities will potentially have on rec trail users. However, recreational users will encounter forest management activities. The Administrator has the authority to temporarily close and/or relocate trails to assure a safe and enjoyable experience for the users of the trails.

The Department may also modify and/or alter forest management design, entry cycles, goals, and/or objectives when managing adjacent to or near a popular designated rec trail. See Section 750 for more information of aesthetic management.

### **715.1 AUTHORITY**

The Bayfield County Code of Ordinances and s. 28.11 Wis. Stats (County Forest Law), authorize the Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement of this Plan (see 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.

Maps and summary data of the recreational facilities managed by the Department can be found in the Appendix. A summary of specific goals pertaining to recreation can be found in the Workplan.

#### 715.2 RECREATION PLANNING

In addition to this Plan, the Bayfield County Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (LCORP) also guides the recreation program. The LCORP is revised every five years and includes, but is not limited to, recreational opportunities on the County Forest. The LCORP incorporates motorized and non-motorized recreation, campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports. See the Appendix for a link to the Bayfield County LCORP.

The LCORP, 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.

#### 715.3 RECREATIONAL USE/SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to enter into contracts, use agreements or similar arrangements with clubs, groups, organizations, municipalities, Tribes, other units of government, individuals and/or similar entities to provide recreational opportunities for the public on the County Forest.

Use agreements will generally be required for all recreational opportunities that are designated by the Committee, but not maintained by the Department. A recreational use agreement, contract or other similar document, if applicable, will be developed, by the Administrator, for each designated activity. Said document will outline the terms and conditions of the designated recreational use, as well as all requirements of the responsible party. All said agreements will be presented by the Administrator to the Committee for approval. If approved by the Committee, the use agreements will generally be valid for a period of ten years, or as otherwise determined by the Committee.

As part of this Plan, the County has developed and maintained agreements and/or contracts,

for various services with the goal of providing recreational opportunities for the public. Some of which included, but are not limited to:

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance on designated, state funded trails.
2. ATV trail grading and maintenance on designated, state funded trails.
3. Cross-country ski trail grooming, maintenance and development.
4. Mountain bike trail development and maintenance.
5. Hiking trail development and maintenance.
6. Dogsled trail development and maintenance.
7. Shooting and trap range development and maintenance.

#### 715.4 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS

Any event on the County Forest, which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, and/or is formally organized in any way, will require a permit, agreement or similar authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with the management of the County Forest, will not cause resource damage, and/or will not conflict with other County authorized uses of the area, as determined by the Administrator. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance, as determined by the Committee, as well as other conditions, as outlined in the permit, agreement or similar document, if applicable, will be required, as determined by the Committee.

See Section 720 for more information on events. Also see the Workplan and annual accomplishment report for a summary of events on the County Forest.

#### 715.5 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND ABANDONMENT

Requests for recreational trail development and/or re-routing will be reviewed by the Administrator, on a case by case basis. In general, individuals or groups requesting specific new trail development or use must present a plan for the long-term funding and maintenance of the proposed trails. A long-term recreational use agreement will also generally be required on any new trail development project. Additional information may be required, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Minor trail development projects or re-routes (defined as typically ½ mile or less in length), proposed by groups or organizations that have a valid use agreement, or similar prior

arrangement with the Department, may be addressed directly by the Administrator. The Administrator may require additional information on the proposed project, as determined by the Administrator.

On larger trail development projects or those proposed by a new user group (not already under a valid use agreement with the Department), the Administrator will make a recommendation to the Committee on whether the recreational trail plan should be approved. As part of that process, existing user groups that could be impacted by a new trail development project, and that have valid use agreements with the Department, will also be consulted. If the Committee approves the trail plan, in most cases, a ten-year recreational use agreement will be issued that specifies the conditions under which the trail may be developed, maintained and used.

Bayfield County will require all parties or organization(s) named in the use agreement to carry an appropriate level of liability insurance, as determined by the Administrator, naming Bayfield County as additionally insured, and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage, or as otherwise determined by the Committee.

Parties listed on the use agreement will also be responsible for all development, maintenance and/or promotion of designated trails, assume all liability associated with the trail designation, and consent to abide by all other requirements listed in the agreement. When the recreational use agreement expires, the Committee may renew the agreement or inform the user group the reasons for termination.

Construction or maintenance of any recreational trail in which the activity would impact one acre or more of land is subject to state and federal storm water runoff requirements.

Recreational trail development will employ Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality and will comply with all applicable County, State, and Federal regulations.

The Administrator, or designee, will periodically inspect all trail construction and maintenance projects to ensure that work is in compliance with permit specifications. Any minor changes to the original recreational use agreement must be approved, in writing, by the Administrator. Significant changes, as determined by the Administrator, will require Committee approval.

Before any trail or special use area is discontinued or abandoned, the individual(s) or group(s) identified in the agreement must complete all rehabilitation and closure requirements specified in the agreement or as otherwise directed by the Administrator and/or Committee.

## **720 EVENTS**

Requests to host events on the County Forest will be reviewed by the Administrator. The individuals or groups requesting the use of existing trails and/or land to host an event must provide the Administrator information including, but not limited to:

1. A summary of the event, including dates and times when the event will take place.
2. Listing of individuals or groups assuming responsibility for the event, including contact information of each.
3. Map of the trails and/or area requested for use.
4. Summary of set up and clean-up plans and names and contact information of the responsible individuals or parties.
5. Expected participation and associated registration/entry fees, if any.
6. Completed permit application, if available, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
7. Other information deemed relevant to the event request, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
8. A wet/inclement weather alternate plan and/or cancellation policy in the event of wet or otherwise dangerous weather.

The Committee will review all new event requests. The Administrator will make a recommendation to the Committee on whether the event should be approved. If the Committee approves the event, a recreational use permit (if available), or other written documentation, will be issued by the Administrator that specifies the conditions under which the roads, trails and/or land may be used. All recurring events that were previously approved by the Committee may be re-approved by the Administrator, assuming no significant changes have been made to the event.



If a new event is approved by the Committee or recurring event is approved by the Administrator, the individuals and/or groups listed on the permit or similar document will be required to provide the Department proof of event/liability insurance. The policy should carry a level of liability insurance deemed appropriate by the Administrator and/or Committee, naming Bayfield County as additionally insured. The responsible party must also provide the Department a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage. The individuals or groups approved to host the event must consent to all other required parameters listed on the permit or other written correspondence pertaining to the event, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Every year, the Committee approves roughly 20 events that utilize the County Forest (see the annual accomplishment report for the total number of events approved per year).

#### 720.1 EVENT AND USER FEES

Currently, there are no fees associated with events on the County Forest. However, the Committee is empowered and shall have the responsibility for establishing event, entrance, camping and other user fees on county forest lands and/or recreational facilities maintained by the Department. Event, camping, entrance or other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by similar private facilities, other municipalities, adjacent counties, or as otherwise deemed to be appropriate, as determined by the Committee, and are subject to periodic change by the Committee.

The Committee may authorize the development of a payment structure for events that require an entry or participation fee. Fees, if developed and where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance and/or development of recreational infrastructure on the County Forest, as determined by the Committee.

#### 725 DESIGNATED NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION

All inventoried roads and trails located on the County Forest are open to most forms of non-motorized use, unless marked with signs closing a specific road, trail or area to a particular non-motorized use or as otherwise specifically addressed in this Plan. This includes, but is not limited to, the categories of use listed throughout this Chapter.

Recreation on the County Forest is generally classified in two distinct categories:

designated and undesignated (or dispersed). Designated recreation generally refers to all instances where the County actively maintains a road, trail, facility and/or area for a specific public use or has authorized a third party to do the same. The Lost Creek Falls hiking trail (see below) is a good example of a County designated non-motorized trail; while the CAMBA mountain bike trails (see below) are a good example of a third-party managed system that has been authorized by the Committee. Undesignated recreation refers to all other public uses of the County Forest, that are more dispersed or self-guided in nature. Hunting, nature viewing, berry picking, hiking through the woods, etc., are all good examples of undesignated recreational uses of the County Forest.

Roads or trails designated, by the Department, as open to non-motorized use may be closed at any time. Some reasons to permanently or temporarily close a road or trail include, but are not limited to: if the permitted use is causing or has the potential to cause, natural resource degradation; for reasons of public safety; responses to natural disasters or similar events; for emergency situations; or as otherwise determined necessary by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The Committee has the authority to grant non-profit organizations, municipalities, and/or similar user groups/units of government the permission to designate and maintain certain roads or trails for specific non-motorized recreational uses. However, said approvals do not imply, in any way, an exclusive use of the County Forest. These uses include, but are not limited to, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, dogsledding, fat-tire mountain biking, ski-joring, snowshoeing, and horse-back riding. In most cases, the Department will also develop and maintain a long-term recreational use agreement with any group that has been given permission, by the Committee, to designate and maintain trails on the County Forest.

In addition, the Committee may also grant for-profit organizations (i.e. tour/guide companies) the same permissions, but with the general caveat that the roads or trails remain open for public use and that said companies do not have the authority to charge for such use (for those who are not willfully engaging in/paying for their services), unless authorized, by the Committee, in a recreational use agreement. Similar to non-profit organizations, if the Committee authorizes for-profit organizations permission to designate and maintain roads or trails on the County Forest, the terms and conditions of

said use will be addressed in a recreational use agreement.

The Committee may also grant any and all user groups the permission to charge a fee for road or trail use, either voluntary or mandatory, where the user group has demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Committee, that funds are needed to help maintain the infrastructure for a specific activity (i.e. cross-country skiing). If the Committee permits a user group to charge a fee for use, as determined by the Committee, the terms and conditions of said fee will be addressed in the recreational use agreement with the authorized organization.

Department staff, emergency vehicles, authorized user groups (as defined in the use agreement with the Department), logging or other forest management contractors (under contract with the Department), and any other party given prior written authorization from the Administrator, may be permitted motorized use on any road or trail, for maintenance, administrative, management, emergency, or similar purposes, that is otherwise closed to motorized vehicles, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Additional non-motorized recreation restrictions may be placed on designated ATV and/or snowmobile trails. Please refer to Section 12-1-5 (Regulation of County Trail System) of the Bayfield County Code of Ordinances for up to date information.

Below is a non-inclusive listing of designated non-motorized recreational opportunities, including permitted and restricted uses, on the County Forest (maps and/or summary tables of each trail network, as well as links to various websites, can be found in the Appendix):

#### 725.1 WALKING/HIKING TRAILS

In general, the entire County Forest is open to walking/hiking (unless otherwise posted as closed or as otherwise stated in this Plan). Some trails are designated and maintained specifically for hiking. These include, but are not limited to:

1. North Country National Scenic Trail

The North Country Trail (NCT) is unique as one of only eleven dedicated National scenic hiking trails in the Country (at around 4,600 miles total, it is also the longest such trail). See the Appendix for a link to the National Parks Service's webpage on

## National Scenic Trails.

The NCT crosses approximately 8 miles of the County Forest. This trail is maintained by local chapters of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA). The Department maintains a rec use agreement with NCTA.

Whenever possible, closure devices and/or signs will be used to restrict unauthorized motorized use on this trail. However, a few integral motorized access corridors (roads) either cross over or share small portions of the trail. The goal will be to keep these common overlaps at a minimum and reinforce the non-motorized nature of the trail where intersections exist.

Permitted Uses: hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing.

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those required to maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department); equestrian and mountain bike travel.

The NCTA maintains two designated, rustic camping sites along or near the trail. Both campsites are located southwest of Iron River, near Pero Road. One campsite is located next to Erick Lake (east of Pero Rd.), and the other is located near Morris Pond (west of Pero Rd.). The NCTA also maintains a trailhead, located off County Highway A, south of Iron River. See the Appendix for a map of the North Country Trail and/or a link to the NCTA website, as well as the location of each rustic campsite and the trailhead.

## 2. Raspberry River Hiking Trail

This trail is located in the Town of Russell, in the Bayfield Peninsula and is maintained by Friends of the Raspberry River Walking Trail. A trailhead is located off Old Highway K, as well as within the Tulip Lane sand and gravel pit. See the Appendix for a location of the trail and trailheads.

Permitted Uses: hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, equestrian.

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those

required to maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department), mountain bike travel.

### 3. Lost Creek Falls Hiking Trail

A roughly 1.5 mile hiking trail (each way) located in the Town of Bell, just south of Cornucopia. This trail is maintained by the Department and has been improved with a series of boardwalks and graveled sections. The trail provides access to Lost Creek Falls, one of only four waterfalls located in Bayfield County. The trail is also located within the Lost Creek Falls Special Management Area (see Chapter 800 for more information on Special Management Areas). A designated parking area/trailhead, also maintained by the Department, is located off Trail Drive, just west of County Highway C.

Permitted Uses: hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing.

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those required to maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department), equestrian and mountain bike travel.

### 4. Jerry J. Jolly/Pike's Creek Trails

In 2005, Jerry J. Jolly donated roughly 70 acres of undeveloped land to the County. In general, the purpose of the donation was to facilitate the development and maintenance of non-motorized recreational trails, so that the public would be able to enjoy the land.

The donation of land, combined with funding from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant, additional funding received from other grants and donations, and input from the Department, allowed for the development of trails and other infrastructure to accommodate various public recreational uses.

Much of the Jolly/Pike's Creek trail networks are located on the donated property, which is not part of the County Forest system. However, these trails do connect with those that are located on County Forest land. The entire network is maintained by the Department and/or through an agreement with the Ashwabay

Outdoor Education Foundation (AOEF).

Walking/hiking trails in the summer and cross-country ski trails in the winter provide year-round use of this scenic area. Present facilities include a parking area, ADA toilets, informational kiosk, donation station and picnic area.

Permitted Uses: hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, ski-joring.

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those required to groom/maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department), equestrian and mountain bike travel.

The Jolly/Pike's Creek trails have also traditionally been maintained, through agreement with AOEF, for cross-country ski use. If cross-country ski trails are maintained in the future, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee, the Department will enter into a similar recreational use agreement with AOEF or other non-profit organization or group, for all grooming and trail maintenance activities.

Other compatible and sustainable non-motorized recreational uses may be considered and will be treated on a case by case basis, as determined to by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The trails listed above have been designated specifically for hiking and similar non-motorized activities. However, hiking is allowed on many other designated non-motorized trails like the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) singletrack mountain bike trails and most cross-country ski trails (when not being groomed for skiing). See below for more information regarding authorized uses other designated trail systems located on the county forest.

The development of other designated hiking trail networks may be considered on other portions of the County Forest. New trails will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the conditions as detailed throughout this Plan.

## 725.2 MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

In general, mountain bikes are allowed on most County Forest roads and trails (unless posted as closed or as otherwise stated in this Plan). However, in two separate areas of the County Forest, the Department has permitted user groups to establish and maintain an extensive network of designated mountain bike trails.

Most designated mountain bike trails have been constructed specifically for that purpose (singletrack). However, there are some instances where, to maintain connection with other mountain bike networks, the trail will utilize a portion of a County Forest road. The permitted and restricted uses listed below apply to the annual timeframes where the designated/authorized use is actively occurring, and also generally apply to singletrack trails. These uses include, but are not limited to:

### 1. CAMBA Mountain Bike Trails

CAMBA maintains a series of extensive mountain bike trail networks in two different locations on the County Forest: south of Cable and near Mt. Ashwabay (located generally between the cities of Bayfield and Washburn).

These networks are primarily comprised of purpose built singletrack trails, but also occasionally use County Forest roads to provide connections. These trails can also be used for hiking, as well as fat-tired mountain biking, snowshoeing and, in some instances, cross country skiing, during the winter months.

CAMBA also maintains a parking area/trailhead on the County Forest at each location. In Cable, the primary trailhead is located off Randysek Rd (south of Cable), near the North End Cabin (see cross country ski trails for more information on the cabin). At the Mt. Ashwabay location, the trailhead on the County Forest is located off Whiting Rd. There is also a trailhead located on the north end of the trail system, off Ski Hill Rd. However, this trailhead is not located on the county forest. The Department maintains a recreational use agreement with CAMBA.

Permitted Uses: mountain biking, hiking, snowshoeing, cross country

skiing, fat-tired mountain biking. Equestrian use allowed on all County Forest roads, but is not allowed on designated singletrack trails.

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those required to groom/maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department), equestrian use on designated singletrack trails.

E-bikes or electric bicycles have become more popular over the past few years. E-bikes are essentially bicycles with an integrated electric motor which can be used for propulsion. E-bikes continue to evolve in performance and capabilities, but all provide some form of additional assistance to the rider in the form of increased power.

Currently, e-bikes are not permitted on designated mountain bike trails or cross-country ski trails (in the winter) on the County Forest, but are permitted on all County Forest roads that are not designated as a mountain bike or cross country ski trail. The Department will continue to collaborate with various user groups to determine if some form or classifications of e-bikes should be permitted.

The Administrator may authorize a trial or similar arrangement to determine if e-bikes are a viable, sustainable and safe option on designated trails. If the Administrator determines that e-bikes should be considered, it will be presented to the Committee for further action.

The development of other mountain bike trail networks may be considered on other portions of the County Forest. New trails will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the conditions as detailed throughout this Plan.

See the Appendix for maps and summary tables of all CAMBA trails, as well as links to the CAMBA website.

### 725.3 CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAILS

Cross-country skiing is also generally allowed on most County Forest roads and trails



unless posted closed or as otherwise stated in this Plan. Similar to mountain bike trails, the Department has permitted some user groups to designate and maintain cross-country ski trails at various locations on the County Forest.

As previously stated, many designated cross-country ski trails are located on County Forest roads. The permitted and restricted uses listed below generally apply to the annual timeframes when the designated/authorized use is actively occurring (i.e. when trails are being groomed for the intended authorized use). Also, though ski trails are maintained (groomed) for a specific use in the winter, they are often open to hiking and many other forms of non-motorized uses throughout the rest of the year.

1. Tomahawk Lake Trails

These trails are located east of Tomahawk Lake, in the Town of Barnes, and are maintained by the Town of Barnes. The trails interconnect with a similar network of trails on land owned by the Town. The Department maintains a recreational use agreement with the Town of Barnes.

Permitted Uses: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking (when trails are not being groomed for cross-country skiing).

Restricted Uses: all forms of motorized vehicles (except for those required to groom/maintain the trails, or for administrative purposes, as determined by the Department), hiking (on groomed ski trails), equestrian, ski-joring,

2. North End Ski Club Trails

This extensive network of trails is located south of Cable, in the same general area as the CAMBA trails (with some shared sections of road/trail). These trails are maintained by the North End Ski Club, as per a recreational use agreement with the Department.

The North End Ski Club maintains/grooms approximately 32km of cross-country ski trails, most of which occurring on the county forest (with some on privately owned lands). They also maintain approximately 6km of designated snowshoe trails, including the Mammal Trail, which features over two dozen

metal cutouts of local mammals.

The Club also maintains a trailhead/parking area (off Randysek Rd.), a warming log cabin (near the parking area), an outhouse, informational sign/kiosk, donation tube and storage building (located near the warming cabin). The North End Ski Club also maintains snowshoe trails on the County Forest.

- Cross-Country Ski Trails:

Permitted Uses: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking (when trails are not being groomed for cross-country skiing).

Restricted Uses: hiking (when trails are being groomed for cross-country skiing), mountain biking, fat tire mountain biking, equestrian, ski-joring, all forms of motorized vehicles (unless required to maintain/groom the trails or for administrative purposes by Department staff).

- Snowshoe Trails:

Permitted Uses: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fat tire mountain biking, hiking.

Restricted Uses: equestrian, all forms of motorized vehicles (unless required to maintain/groom the trails or for administrative purposes by Department staff).

See the Appendix for a summary of trails maintained by the North End Ski Club, as well as various maps.

### 3. American Birkebeiner Ski Trail

The Birkebeiner ski trail is located south of Cable, in the same general area as the North End ski trails and CAMBA mountain bike trails. It traverses roughly 2.5 miles of the County Forest as part of its approximate 33 mile length (in Bayfield and Sawyer counties).

The trail is used as part of the world-famous American Birkebeiner cross-country ski race and is maintained by the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF), as per a recreational use agreement with the Department. The ABSF also maintains a warming/storage cabin, on the County Forest, located just south of Timber Trail. ABSF also hosts numerous events throughout the year on County Forest land. See the annual accomplishment report for a summary of approved events.

Permitted Uses: cross-country skiing in winter; hiking and mountain biking (when trails are not being groomed for cross-country skiing).

Restricted Uses: hiking (when trails are being groomed for cross-country skiing), snowshoeing, mountain and fat tire mountain biking (in winter), equestrian, ski-joring, all forms of motorized vehicles (unless required to maintain/groom the trails or for administrative purposes by the Department).

#### 4. Mt. Ashwabay Trails

Mt. Ashwabay provides year-round recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of the Chequamegon Bay area. The area encompasses more than 2,500 acres total and is composed of lands owned by Bayfield County, the State of Wisconsin, Mt. Ashwabay, Big Top Chautauqua, and a few private landowners.

Mt. Ashwabay supports a variety of recreational opportunities, including, but not limited to: alpine and nordic (cross-country) skiing, hiking, mountain biking, winter fat-tire biking, ski-joring, and camping. Much of the operations and maintenance are provided by community volunteers and non-profit organizations including the Ashwabay Outdoor Education Foundation (AOEF), Bayfield Nordic Inc. (BNI), and CAMBA. The Department maintains a long-term recreational use agreement with AOEF.

The recreational uses listed below generally only apply to those trails that are located on the County Forest.

- Cross-Country Ski Trails:

Permitted Uses: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ski-joring (on trails designated as open to ski-joring), hiking (when trails are not being groomed for cross-country skiing).

Restricted Uses: hiking (when trails are being groomed for cross-country skiing), mountain biking, fat tire mountain biking, equestrian, ski-joring, all forms of motorized vehicles (unless required to maintain/groom the trails or for administrative purposes by Department staff).

- Snowshoe Trails:

Permitted Uses: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, fat tire mountain biking, hiking, ski-joring.

Restricted Uses: equestrian, all forms of motorized vehicles (unless required to maintain/groom the trails or for administrative purposes by Department staff).

- Fat Tire Mountain Bike Trails:

CAMBA maintains an extensive network of singletrack mountain bike trails in the area. AOEF and BNI maintain a portion of those same trails in the winter for fat tire mountain biking. In addition to mountain biking, snowshoeing is permitted on these trails during the winter months.

5. Jerry J. Jolly/Pike's Creek Trails

See Section 725.1 for more information on the Jolly/Pike's Creek trails.

6. National Fish Hatchery Trails (Iron River)

The Hatchery maintains a roughly 3.5 mile trail network, located partially on the County Forest. In the winter, the trails are maintained for classic cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. In the summer, the trail is mowed for hiking, birding and many other outdoor recreational uses. The Department maintains a long-term recreational use agreement with the Hatchery for the

portion of the trails located on the County Forest.

The trail is broken into three loops and can be accessed from the trailhead at the Hatchery parking lot by the main office or on Weidenaar Road. See the Appendix for trail maps and a link to the Hatchery website.

The development of additional designated cross-country ski trail networks may be considered on other portions of the County Forest. New trails will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the conditions as detailed throughout this Plan.

#### 725.4 DOGSLED TRAILS

In general, dog sledding is allowed on most County Forest roads and many trails, unless posted as closed or as otherwise stated in this Plan. A few designated trails have been approved on the County Forest. These include:

1. Wolfsong Adventure Trails.

These trails are maintained by a for-profit business located within the Bayfield Peninsula, as per a long-term recreational use agreement with the Department. These trails remain open for public use, as outlined within the agreement.

2. Apostle Islands Sled Dog Race Trails.

The annual sled dog race utilizes many of the same trails that are maintained by Wolfsong. The Department also maintains a long-term recreational use agreement with the Bayfield Area Chamber of Commerce regarding the use of these trails for the race.

The development of additional designated dog sled trail networks may be considered on other portions of the County Forest. New trails will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the conditions as detailed throughout this Plan. Additional dog-sledding events may also be approved by the Committee. See the annual accomplishment report for a summary of all approved events.

#### 725.5 EQUESTRIAN TRAILS

There are no designated equestrian trails on the County Forest, though horseback riding is allowed on most inventoried roads and trails, unless specifically addressed in this Plan.

Currently, horseback riding is only prohibited on the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Lost Creek Falls Hiking Trail, the Jolly/Pike's Creek Trails, designated singletrack mountain bike trails, groomed cross country ski trails and designated snowmobile trails.

Trails or areas open to equestrian use may be closed at any time, if the permitted use is causing or has the potential to cause, significant natural resource degradation or a considerable conflict with other existing forms of recreation, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

The development of designated equestrian trail networks may be considered on portions of the County Forest. New trails will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the conditions as detailed throughout this Plan, including approval by the Committee.

#### 725.6 YURTS

The Department also provides designated, rustic camping opportunities on the County Forest. During the summer of 2016, two yurts were constructed on the County Forest. One yurt was constructed in the Cable area and one near Mt. Ashwabay (now named Evergreen). In late summer of 2018, a third yurt was constructed on the County Forest, a little north of the first one located near Mt. Ashwabay (named Terra Cotta). All three yurts are available for rent, by the public, through Airbnb.

All three yurts contain two bunkbeds (full mattresses on the bottom and twins on the top) and can accommodate up to six people. Each also contains a woodstove, table and chairs, bear proof box (for outdoor food storage), outdoor fire ring, pit toilet (privy), lean-to (for firewood storage), picnic tables and a large deck. The two yurts near Mt. Ashwabay also have extensive views of Lake Superior.

There is no power, potable water, or garbage receptacles at any of the yurts. Also, no linens, pillows or blankets are provided. Each renter is required to bring everything that they require as part of their stay. However, firewood is provided by the Department.

All three yurts are located in Low Motorized Areas with direct access to designated non-

motorized rec trails (cross-country skiing in the winter and mountain biking/hiking the remainder of the year). There is no direct motorized access by the renters to each yurt. However, there is a designated service route to each yurt, that is used by the Department and accessed with a motorized vehicle. Each renter is required to hike, ski, bike or snowshoe to the yurts from the designated parking area.

The Department maintains each yurt on a routine and regular basis. The Department also partners with local municipalities to plow the parking areas and with local user groups/organizations to maintain direct access to the various non-motorized rec trails.

The Department will continue to explore additional opportunities for designated camping, including yurts, on the County Forest. See the Accomplishment Report for a summary of occupancy for each yurt, as well as summary of work accomplished by the Department.

Also see the Workplan for more detailed information on short term management goals and objectives for each yurt. See the Appendix for maps of each yurt.

#### 725.7 FUTURE DESIGNATED NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee has the authority to consider and develop additional designated non-motorized recreational opportunities on the County Forest, including, but not limited to, trail and trailhead development, improved public access to surface water features, dispersed rustic campsites and/or yurts, or special use areas. This can include internal development and construction by Department staff, partnering with other agencies or organizations, and/or authorizing recreational development plans and/or opportunities by a non-profit, friends group or similar organization.

All recreation projects, not managed directly by the Department, will require a long-term use agreement with the Department, as determined by the Committee. See Section 715.3 for more information on recreational use agreements.

The development of additional designated non-motorized trail systems will include, but not be limited to: careful consideration of public demand; alignment with the goals and objectives of the County Forest; analysis of potential user conflicts; estimations of cost, including development and maintenance; and potential damage to the natural resources,

or as otherwise determined by the Administrator and/or Committee. Where applicable, future trail system development should also align with LCORP goals or other regional planning documents.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. If the trail is not directly managed by the Department, the Committee may require proof of an organized club's or user group's ability to provide maintenance and support of the trail and associated facilities (short and long term), including proof of financial stability, where applicable.

The Administrator and/or Committee may require additional information from said user groups to protect the interests of the County. Trail passes or other user fees may also be considered or implemented, as indicated in Section 720.

### **730 DESIGNATED MOTORIZED RECREATION**

Primary, secondary, temporary, and unclassified roads are in some cases designated and signed open to registered snowmobiles, ATVs, UTVs or similar registered OHV's and/or licensed highway vehicles. In order to protect these roads, they are closed to all motorized vehicles in the spring during the same period that the state funded ATV trail system is closed.

In addition, there is a network of designated ATV and Snowmobile trails which provide riding opportunities within the County Forest. No cross-country motorized vehicle travel of any kind is permitted on the County Forest. Motorized vehicles other than registered snowmobiles, ATV's, UTV's or similar registered OHV's and licensed highway vehicles are also not allowed on the County Forest.

For the purposes of this Plan, an "All-Terrain Vehicle" (or ATV) is defined as specified in s. 340.01(2g), Wis. Stats.; a "Snowmobile" is defined as specified in s. 340.01(58a), Wis. Stats.; and a "Utility Terrain Vehicle" (or UTV) is defined as specified in s. 23.33(1)(ng), Wis. Stats. A licensed highway vehicle means any wheeled vehicle that meets all legal requirements for use on a state highway. Motorized vehicles, other than licensed highway vehicles, will be classified collectively as off-highway vehicles, unless specifically addressed in this Plan.



Roads, trails or areas designated as open to motorized use may be closed at any time, if the permitted use is causing or has the potential to cause, significant natural resource degradation, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

Similarly, roads, trails or areas designated as closed to one or more forms of motorized use may be opened to one or more forms of motorized use, if it can be demonstrated that such use will not cause significant natural resource degradation or negatively impact existing non-motorized uses, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee. Additional public input will be required if considering opening trails to motorized use that are located within heavily used non-motorized areas i.e. the Cable Block and near Mt. Ashwabay.

Additional restrictions may be placed on the use of highway vehicles or other forms of motorized vehicles on designated state funded ATV or snowmobile trails. Please refer to Section 12-1-5 (Regulation of County Trail System) of the Bayfield County Code of Ordinances for up to date information.

See the Workplan for additional information pertaining to designated motorized trails, including short term goals and objectives, as well as current projects. See the Appendix for summary tables and/or maps of all designated motorized trails that are either located on the County Forest and/or managed by the Department. See the Accomplishment Report for a summary of work performed and/or administered by the Department on designated motorized trails.

#### 730.1 SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

As of October 2020, there are 108 miles of groomed designated state funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest. However, through agreements with various landowners, including the DNR and Forest Service, the Department is responsible for the administration of the entire state funded snowmobile trail program in Bayfield County, which, as of December 2020, consists of approximately 461 miles. When on County Forest lands, most of the snowmobile trails are on improved forest roads. There are two types of groomed snowmobile trails on the County Forest; state-funded trails and local club trails.

1. State Funded Snowmobile Trails: A system of state approved and funded snowmobile trails is authorized on designated County Forest roads. This system is part of the statewide network of snowmobile trails, which links Bayfield County with adjoining Counties as well as the rest of the state. Snowmobile registration, motor fuel tax, and out-of-state user fees are used to support trail development, enforcement, signing, maintenance, grooming and bridge construction.

The Department is responsible for managing the state funded snowmobile trail network on all lands located within Bayfield County, except for those under federal jurisdiction. However, the Department has traditionally maintained a use agreement with the Forest Service, providing the Department the authority to maintain (groom) the snowmobile trails that exist on federal (Forest Service) land. The Department will continue to collaborate with the Forest Service on similar use agreements, when determined to be in the best interest of the County. Similar agreements are also maintained with the DNR, where the trails are located on state owned lands.

As stated above, the Department assumes the primary responsibility of administering all funds received by the state to maintain the snowmobile trail network, while also developing and administering major construction and/or rehabilitation projects. The Department contracts out most of the primary maintenance, grooming, signing and general upkeep of the designated state funded snowmobile trails to the Bayfield County Snowmobile Alliance (BCSA). The Department will accomplish some minor repairs of the snowmobile trail, but will continue to rely heavily on the BCSA (or similar contractors) to perform most of the activities required to maintain the system.

2. Local Snowmobile Trails: A smaller network of local club-sponsored snowmobile trails may also be permitted on the County Forest, as determined by the Committee. Maintenance of these trails is supported by club membership fees and fund raising activities.

The Department is not responsible for maintaining local snowmobile trails. The

responsibility of maintenance, grooming, signing, etc. of all local snowmobile trails lies with the local clubs and/or funding organizations. Any local trail that is authorized by the Committee will also require a recreational use agreement with the Department.

For safety reasons, cross-country skiing, dog sledding, mountain biking (including fat biking), pedestrian traffic, ski-joring, and other non-motorized activities are not allowed on designated snowmobile trails from December 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> or whenever the trails are actively being groomed, without written approval from the Administrator, or unless otherwise approved by the landowner.

All groomed snowmobile trails are also closed to all unregistered motorized vehicles, licensed highway vehicles and registered ATV's, UTV's and other similar off highway motorized vehicles from December 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup> or whenever the trails are actively being groomed, unless part of a winter designated ATV trail network or as otherwise authorized by the Administrator and/or Committee.

#### 730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE TRAILS (ATV)

As of October 2020, there are 42 miles of designated state funded ATV trails on the County Forest. Most of these are on improved forest roads. There are two types of designated ATV trails that may be authorized on the County Forest; state-funded trails and local club trails.

1. State Funded ATV Trails: A system of state approved and funded ATV trails is authorized on designated County Forest roads. This system is part of the statewide network of ATV trails, which links Bayfield County with adjoining Counties as well as the rest of the state. ATV registration, motor fuel tax funds, and out-of-state user fees are used to support trail development, enforcement, signing, maintenance, grooming and bridge construction.

The Department is responsible for managing the state funded ATV trail network on all lands located within Bayfield County, except for those under federal jurisdiction. The Forest Service assumes the primary responsibility of maintaining the trails when they occur on federal lands. The Department will

continue to collaborate with the Forest Service with regards to coordinating and maintaining trail connections between ownerships and may also consider the development of a use agreement similar to that created for the snowmobile trail program, when and/or if determined to be in the best interest of the County.

The Department maintains the primary responsibility of administering all funds received by the state to maintain the ATV trail network, while also developing and administering major construction and/or rehabilitation projects. The Department also receives additional funding from the state to accommodate the use of UTV's on these same trails.

The Department contracts out most of the primary maintenance, grooming, signing and general upkeep of the designated state funded ATV trails to local ATV clubs. The Department will accomplish some minor repairs of the snowmobile trail, but will continue to rely heavily on the clubs (or similar contractors) to perform most of the activities required to maintain the system.

The Department also maintains designated state funded winter ATV trails throughout the County. These trails exist on designated state funded snowmobile trails that are also designated as state funded ATV trails during the rest of the year. The Department receives additional funding from the state to maintain this dual winter use.

2. Local ATV Trails: A smaller network of local club-sponsored ATV trails may also be permitted on designated trails and roads, as determined by the Committee. Maintenance of these trails is supported by club membership fees and fund-raising activities.

The Department is not responsible for maintaining local ATV trails. The maintenance, grooming, signing, etc. of all local ATV trails lies with the local clubs and/or funding organizations. Any local trail that is authorized by the Committee will also require a recreational use agreement with the Department.

At the present time all of the designated ATV trails on the County Forest are state funded,

however local trails may be developed in the future, as authorized by the Committee.

Off-highway vehicles, including ATV's and UTVs, are permitted on roads throughout the County Forest that are signed as open to such use or when classified as open in an area designation, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.

On all roads, trails or areas where off highway vehicle use is allowed, all permitted motorized recreation will be prohibited from Spring Break-up (typically around April 1<sup>st</sup>), through May 15<sup>th</sup> or as determined by the Administrator.

See the Appendix for maps and/or summary tables of all designated state funded trail systems managed by the Department.

### 730.3 FUTURE DESIGNATED MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The use and popularity of snowmobiles and OHV's has increased dramatically over the past few decades. The surge in motorized use has significantly increased the impacts on existing road and trail infrastructure, resulting in the potential for higher risks of natural resource damage and/or unauthorized use of the County Forest.

With the increase in motorize use comes the demand for additional riding opportunities. The Committee has the authority to consider and develop additional designated motorized recreational opportunities on the County Forest, including, but not limited to, ATV/UTV trail development and snowmobile trail development. This can include internal development and construction by Department staff, partnering with other agencies or organizations, and/or authorizing recreational development plans/opportunities by a non-profit, club, friends group or similar organization.

All recreation projects, not managed directly by the Department, will require a long-term use agreement, maintenance contract or similar authorization with the Department, as determined by the Committee.

#### 730.3.1 Future Snowmobile Trails

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over any snowmobile trail development proposals on County Forest lands. It is recommended that future trails be considered only after

careful consideration of costs, benefits and potential impacts, as part of a larger planning effort.

New trails should only be considered if they would compliment the existing state funded system, would be eligible for inclusion into the state funded program, would bring additional value/benefits to the local community and would provide an enhanced riding experience and/or opportunity to the user, or as otherwise determined beneficial by the Committee. New snowmobile trails would also need to be sponsored by the BCSA, local snowmobile club and/or organization that is contracted by the Department to maintain said trails.

Proposals to relocate trails or make adjustments to the existing trail system will also be encouraged where there are concerns of public safety or potential for environmental damage. Unfunded and club trails should be regularly evaluated for entry into the designated state funded system.

#### 730.3.2 Future OHV Trails

As with snowmobile trails, the Committee shall have jurisdiction over all OHV trail development proposals on County Forest lands. Adding OHV trails should be done as part of a 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.

When considering options to develop new OHV trail systems, some general criteria and/or parameters will be measured by the Administrator and/or Committee, including, but not limited to:

- Trails should be designed and planned to connect communities and/or provide connections to previously established, designated state funded systems.
- All new OHV trails will generally only be considered if they are eligible for enrollment in the state funded program, unless otherwise deemed important by the Committee and/or Administrator.
- New OHV trails will generally not be permitted in Low Motorized areas, Special Management Areas for Recreation, or in any other area where

motorized recreation may conflict with previously established and authorized non-motorized recreation, as determined by the Committee and/or Administrator.

- Loop trails will generally be discouraged unless part of a larger trail system that connects communities or as otherwise deemed important, as determined by the Committee and/or Administrator.
- Dead end trails will generally not be sanctioned as part of the County ATV trail system.
- Intensive motorized use areas will generally not be permitted (and are not recommended), unless, deemed appropriate by the Committee. Additional levels of public input may be necessary if considering the development of intensive motorized use areas.
- OHV trails will only be considered on suitable soils and in appropriate locations, as part of the road and trail classification process (see Section 710.3), as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
- New OHV trails would also need to be sponsored by a local ATV club and/or organization that is contracted by the Department to maintain said trails.

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in a sustainable manner and in such a way as to prevent erosion and potential damage to natural resources. To this end, the construction and development of new OHV trails should comply with the WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards. See the Appendix to view the Standard.

### **735 UNDESIGNATED RECREATIONAL USE**

Undesignated recreation includes, but is not limited to, those informal activities for which the County generally does not provide a marked trail, facility or service or that is otherwise being maintained for a specific use(s). These recreational uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, biking, hiking and similar pursuits. These uses generally do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with Ordinances or other formalized regulations, if applicable. The Administrator and/or Committee shall periodically review such undesignated activities and enact Ordinances as necessary to protect the County Forest from potential resource damage or conflict with other authorized uses.

### 735.1 HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The entire County Forest is open for regulated hunting and trapping, with the exception of areas developed for high public use, if restricted, as determined by the Committee.

The Bayfield County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to the Appendix for a full text of the Ordinance.

### 735.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the County Forest are available for fishing unless otherwise listed in state regulations.

### 735.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other similar day uses, outside of otherwise established facilities, is allowed throughout the County Forest. In general, leave no trace ethics apply to all day uses (as well as all other uses) of the County Forest. Users must remove all litter, trash, debris, etc., that was generated as part of their use. The Bayfield County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. See the Appendix for a summary of the Ordinances.

### 735.4 CAMPING

In most scenarios, a permit is not required for dispersed camping on the County Forest.

When camping on the County Forest, the following regulations apply:

1. No camping overnight in locations designated as no camping areas, or camp in a manner inconsistent with designated camping rules.
2. No blocking or obstructing any primary, secondary or temporary County Forest road or designated recreational trail with a vehicle, camper, tent, lean-to, screen or other similar object or otherwise create a hazard to road and/or trail users; or camp in a manner that will diminish, inhibit or otherwise negatively impact the designated recreational uses of an area, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee.
3. No littering or disposing of trash or rubbish in any manner other than depositing such in a provided container, if available. All trash and debris must be removed upon leaving the area.
4. Natural vegetation and/or terrain may not be damaged or altered in any way, except for the construction of an adequate fire ring (i.e. rocks, bare soil, etc).



- The fire ring must be dismantled and returned to a “natural” state when finished. Fasteners such as nails, screws or bolts may not be attached to trees.
5. It is not permitted to ignite an open fire unless such fire is in a fireplace, grill, fire ring (as described above) or other suitable container provided for or constructed to contain a fire, or unless the ground is one hundred percent (100%) snow covered.
  6. An open fire can't be left unattended unless it has no smoke and the entire coal or ash bed is cool enough to touch with a hand.
  7. Open fires are not permitted during a DNR red flag fire ban period or when the site is posted for no open fires.
  8. No damage to a natural feature, resource, trail, gate, berm, barrier or facility is allowed.
  9. There is a fourteen (14) day camping limit on the County Forest. It is not permitted to occupy the same site on the County Forest for a period exceeding 14 days. After the 14 day period, another site on the County Forest can be selected, but that site must be at least one mile away from previous campsite, or as otherwise directed by the Administrator.
  10. Must leave an area when directed to by the Administrator, Sheriff, their designee, or anyone authorized to enforce this Section.

A permit will be required for camping on the County Forest when the total number of a group, party, gathering or similar association, exceeds 20 people. All events, gatherings, festivities or similar occasions may also be subject to a separate events permit, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee, and will be required to comply with all terms and conditions of said permit, including obtaining liability insurance and/or providing performance bonds/securities, as determined and directed by the Committee.

All permits will be subject to the terms and conditions as outlined in this Section, as well as the Bayfield County Code of Ordinances, and may be subject to additional regulations relating to the disposing of waste, manipulation of site, noise, or similar concerns, as determined by the Committee.

All requests for a camping permit will be reviewed and addressed by the Committee. The Committee is not obligated to approve said camping permit if they feel it is not consistent

with the goals and objectives of the County Forest, conflicts with other designated uses of the County Forest, has the potential to cause significant damage to the natural resources, or for any other reason deemed relevant by the Committee.

If the camping request is approved by the Committee, the authorized group will be required to comply with all terms and conditions of the camping permit, agreement or similar document, as developed by the Administrator and sanctioned by the Committee. If a permit is approved by the Committee, no more than one permit will be issued per section (640 acres) of County Forest land at any one time. A maximum total of people allowed on an approved campsite/area may also be established by the Committee. Each camping permit must be separated by a distance of at least one mile, or as otherwise directed by the Committee and/or Administrator. Each permit may also be subject to other local use and/or zoning regulations. The permit holder will be responsible for obtaining all required authorizations.

## 735.5 UNDESIGNATED MOTORIZED TRAVEL

### 735.5.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Use

Snowmobile use on the County Forest is permitted on all inventoried roads located within High and Moderate Motorized Areas when the ground is snow covered or on roads and/or trails specifically designated for such use. As a reminder, most of the designated state funded snowmobile trails that are on County Forest land are located on County Forest roads. Snowmobile use within Low Motorized Areas is only allowed on designated state funded snowmobile trails or roads specifically posted as open, by the Department, or where entire areas have been posted as open by the Department.

Snowmobile use is not permitted on roads or trails that are being groomed for another designated purpose i.e. cross-country ski trails, except where the vehicles are used to aid in the grooming activities. No cross-country snowmobile use is allowed on the County Forest. Snowmobile use on the County Forest when the ground is not snow covered is prohibited.

### 735.5.2 Undesignated OHV Use

All ATV's and UTV's must be registered or licensed in order to be used on the County Forest.

ATV's, UTV's or similar registered or licensed off highway motorized vehicles are permitted on all inventoried County Forest roads that are signed, by the Department, indicating the allowable use, as determined by the Administrator. In some instances, use by registered or licensed off highway vehicles is permitted in designated areas, as determined by the Administrator. These areas will be signed, by the Department, in numerous strategic locations to convey the permitted uses. Use by off highway vehicles is not permitted on roads, trails or areas not signed indicating the allowable use. No cross-country OHV use is allowed on the County Forest.

Most County Forest roads (other than primary roads) are not built or maintained to the same standards as state funded designated trails, nor does the County receive funds from the state to maintain them. Undesignated roads, where OHV use is authorized by the Department, are capable of handling light regular motorized use and are intended to provide recreational opportunities for local residents. If motorized use is causing or has the potential to cause, significant natural resource degradation, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee, all or sections of the road or trail will be permanently closed or closed temporarily until the damage is repaired.

On all County Forest roads, trails or areas where OHV use is allowed, all permitted motorized recreation will be prohibited from Spring Break-up (typically around April 1<sup>st</sup>), through May 15<sup>th</sup> or as otherwise determined by the Administrator.

#### 735.5.3 Other Motorized Vehicle Use

Licensed highway vehicles are allowed on the County Forest, but only on roads that have been designated (signed), by the Department, for such use, or as otherwise authorized by the Administrator and/or Committee. In some instances, use by licensed highway vehicles is permitted in designated areas, as determined by the Administrator. These areas will be signed, by the Department, in numerous strategic locations to convey the permitted uses. Highway vehicles are not allowed on roads, trails or areas that are not signed indicating the permitted use. No cross-country vehicle use is allowed on the County Forest.

### **740 OTHER DESIGNATED RECREATION AREAS/USES**

Other designated recreation on the County Forest generally includes those uses that

haven't already been addressed above and for which the County provides a trail or facility that is managed and maintained for a specific activity, or where the County has authorized a third party to provide such services.

As stated throughout this Chapter, the Committee has the authority to consider and develop additional designated recreational opportunities on the County Forest. If a recreation area is designated on the County Forest by the Committee, other forms of recreational use may be prohibited within said areas, especially those that have been deemed incompatible or otherwise conflict with previously designated activities, as determined by the Committee.

The County may also attempt to establish additional facilities and/or areas and, if so, will develop a maintenance plan, with goals, objectives and estimated budgets, for each. If established, goals and objectives will be addressed in the Workplan.

#### 740.1 CAMPGROUNDS

There are no designated campgrounds on the County Forest. However, the Department does maintain yurts for designated rustic camping opportunities. See Section 725.6 for more information about the yurts.

The Department is responsible for the management of three campgrounds on County owned, non-County Forest land. These include Twin Bear campground, Delta Lake campground and Big Rock campground. See the Workplan for more information on the management of those facilities.

#### 740.2 PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS

There are no designated picnic or day use areas on the County Forest. However, the Department is responsible for the management of numerous County owned properties (non-County Forest) that provide day use and/or picnicking opportunities. These include, but are not limited to: Atkins Lake park, Siskiwit Falls, Fire Hill, and Jolly/Pike's Creek. See the Workplan for more information on the management of those facilities.

The development of new designated day use areas may be considered on portions of the County Forest. New areas will be treated on a case by case basis and subject to the

conditions as detailed throughout this Plan. All plans for new day use area developments, including improvements to existing areas, if applicable, will be presented to the Committee for review and action. Also see the Workplan regarding goals and objectives for the development of picnic or other day use areas.

#### 740.3 SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES

There are no designated beaches or swimming areas on the County Forest. However, numerous lakes have at least a portion of their shorelines on County Forest land and could provide opportunities for swimming.

#### 740.4 BOAT LANDINGS

There are no designated, developed and/or maintained boat landings on the County Forest. However, due to 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 County Forest access management plan or future dedicated recreation plan. Managed landings or other forms of water access may also serve as supply points for fire suppression activities.

If new boat landings or similar water access features are a potential in the future, as determined by the Administrator and/or Committee, the following should be considered prior to development (not an all-inclusive list):

- Current public access, if any, to the water feature in question. Higher priorities will be given to water features with no public access points.
- Cost of construction and maintenance. Whenever possible grants or similar funding sources should be pursued when constructing new boat landings or similar access to a water feature. Short and long-term budgets should also be developed to determine if the maintenance of the facility is feasible.
- The type of access that would be accommodated from the landing i.e. small boat/trailer, canoe, kayak, direct access to the shoreline, carry in only, etc.
- Degree to which the landing and associated access route/parking areas will be maintained by the Department. Those that would require minimal maintenance, and expense, would be given a higher priority.

Not all watercraft will be able to use developed access points. Some access points may

consist of a rustic, carry-in path or improved trail. All landings would be constructed and designated for public use and not for private boat mooring sites. In general, mooring or storing boats for longer than 24 hours would be prohibited, unless other arrangements are made, in writing, by the Administrator, or if other policies are developed by the Committee to administer such use. Also refer to the Workplan for a summary of planned boat landings or other developments aimed at improving public accessibility to surface waters located on the county forest.

#### 740.4.1 Undeveloped Water Access

Other undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats may exist on the County Forest. These are generally used, incidentally, by locals to hand launch canoes, kayaks or small boats, and are not designated or maintained, in any way, by the Department. If these sites are discovered, by the Department, and determined to be causing or have the potential to cause, damage to the natural resources, the water access point may be closed to further public use. All new sites for developed and/or designated water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

#### 740.5 RIFLE RANGE

The Committee has authorized one designated rifle range on the County Forest. The range is open to the public, is located in the Town of Bell and is maintained, via long term use agreement, by the ABC Sportsmen Club (ABC).

As per the agreement, ABC maintains various shooting lanes, a trap range, vault toilet, fencing, a parking area and various signs on the property. See the Appendix for a map of the rifle range.

The Committee may also consider the development of other similar ranges on the County Forest.

#### **745 SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS FOR RECREATION**

In general, Special Management Areas (SMA's) contain unique natural resources and/or features including, but not limited to, rivers, lakes, bogs, wetlands, rare forest types/communities and rare geological features, as well as historical, and archeological sites. These areas are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 800. SMA's can also apply

to other resources deemed important by the County, such as those that contain extensive amounts of designated recreation.

For the purpose of this Plan, the County recognizes two distinct areas that provide unique and diverse recreational opportunities for the public, in relatively small, concentrated portions of the County Forest: the Low Motorized area in the Cable block; and the Low Motorized area near Mt. Ashwabay. A summary of each SMA for Recreation can be found below, while maps of each SMA can be found in the Appendix:

1. Cable SMA for Recreation: this area is located within the Low Motorized area of the Cable block of the County Forest. It contains a variety of designated non-motorized rec trails, including, but not limited to: cross-country ski, snowshoe, mountain bike, and fat tire mountain bike, and also contains one of the County yurts. The Department maintains use agreements with CAMBA, North End Ski Club, and American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation to maintain trails and associated infrastructure located within this SMA.
2. Mt. Ashwabay SMA for Recreation: this area is located in the Low Motorized area of the County Forest near Mt. Ashwabay in the Bayfield Peninsula. It also contains a variety of designated non-motorized rec trails, including, but not limited to: cross-country ski, snowshoe, mountain bike, and fat tire mountain bike, and also contains two of the County yurts. The Department maintains use agreements with CAMBA and AOEF to maintain trails and associated infrastructure located within this SMA.

## **750 AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONES**

Aesthetic Management Zones are established to recognize areas of the County Forest that are more likely to receive elevated amounts of public use, primarily as a result of designated recreational opportunities, or a higher degree of public exposure. When managing the County Forest in these areas, the Department may consider adjustments to or modifications of traditional forest management practices to address and/or accommodate other established public uses.

This section establishes the Aesthetic Management Zone classification that designated recreational trails and/or Special Management Areas for Recreation will be assigned. The Aesthetic Management Zones for the remainder of the County Forest, including a more

detailed description of each Zone, are addressed in Chapter 800 of this Plan.

1. All Special Management Areas for Recreation, as detailed in Section 745 of this Chapter, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone A.
2. All designated motorized trails, where the Department maintains a valid long-term recreational use agreement and/or maintenance contract with a user group, non-profit organization, municipality, other governmental entity or similar third-party, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone B.
3. All designated non-motorized trails, where the Department maintains a valid long-term recreational use agreement and/or maintenance contract with a user group, non-profit organization, municipality, other governmental entity or similar third-party, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone B.
4. All designated motorized and/or non-motorized trails that are maintained by the Department, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone B.
5. The following highways and roads, where they interface the County Forest, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone B:
  - a. All State Highways (including the Lake Superior Scenic Byway).
  - b. All County Trunk Highways.
  - c. All Federal Highways.
  - d. Star Route Rd.
6. Areas of the County Forest that contain prominent elevations, specifically those that can be seen at a distance from areas that are routinely and regularly frequented by the public, as determined by the Committee and/or Administrator, will be classified as Aesthetic Zone B.

## **755 FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WITHIN AESTHETIC MANAGEMENT ZONES**

Bayfield County will consider mitigating the potential impact that forest management activities may have on the users of recreational trails. When planning forest management activities within Aesthetic Management Zones (as per Section 750), the Department will consider the following guidelines and actions, whenever deemed practical and feasible, as determined by the Administrator:

For all recreation classified as Aesthetic Zone B, the following actions will be considered:



1. All groups, organizations or similar entities, that have long-term recreational use agreements with the Department, or similar agreements, will be notified of any future forest management planning efforts that may impact the designated trails, roads, and/or SMA's that they have been authorized, by the Committee, to maintain. The group will have an opportunity to comment on the timber sale prior to bid letting. The groups will also be notified when an existing timber sale is about to commence.
2. Irregular sale design/layout, strategic placement of leave/reserve trees or areas, long-term landscape level management planning, or other similar forms of modification will be considered when establishing timber sales near designated trails and/or roads, within SMA's for Recreation or in areas of prominent elevations.
3. Where practical, and while still achieving core silvicultural objectives, forest management prescriptions may target the maintenance of longer lived tree species adjacent to designated trails and/or roads. A residual stocking (basal area) of 20 to 40 sq. ft. (of desirable tree species) within 50 feet of the maintained edge of designated trails and/or roads may be considered. Silvicultural requirements for some forest types and/or tree species (i.e. aspen) or catastrophic events such as fire, insect, or disease outbreaks, or wind damage may require heavier harvests.
4. When more significant forms of even-aged forest management are prescribed, sale layout, strategic placement of visual barriers, slope direction, sun rotation, and similar forms of timber sale design will be considered to reduce the visual impact of the timber sale.
5. Whenever possible, a slash free zone and/or slash height restrictions, from a distance of at least 25' within the maintained edge of both sides of the designated trail and/or road, will be applied to all timber sales.
6. Designated trail and/or road crossings will be minimized whenever possible.
7. Landing and decking wood on or adjacent to designated trails and/or roads will be avoided whenever possible.
8. Whenever practical, seasonal restrictions will be applied to timber sales in an attempt to minimize potential conflicts with the designated recreational use.
9. To avoid unnecessary increases in road density, existing trails may be used as haul roads (many trails utilize roads that were originally built for logging). If

used as a haul road, signs will be posted to notify designated trail and/or County Forest road users of the logging activity. In some cases, the recreational activity may need to be temporarily closed in order to minimize potential conflicts with rec users.

10. At the completion of forest management activities, designated trails and/or County Forest roads will be left free of any slash or other logging debris and, if necessary, will be graded flat or returned to a condition equal to or better than before, as determined by the Administrator.
11. When establishing plantations along designated trails and/or roads, where possible, the rows of trees will be planted in a manner that will minimize the visual impact.
12. Where practical, the Department may place educational signs and/or kiosks along trails providing information on current or future forest management activities.

For all areas classified as Aesthetic Zone A, in addition to the potential actions listed above, the following additional considerations will be applied:

1. In Special Management Areas for Recreation, the primary contact for each organization, with which the Department maintains a valid recreational use agreement, will be notified of all timber sale planning activities that are expected to occur within the area during any given year. Prior to the commencement of timber sale establishment activities, the Department will engage with each said organization and solicit input on timber sale design, development and harvest strategies. Engagement could involve formal meetings, email messages or phone conversations, with the overall goal of conveying forest management objectives and addressing potential concerns, prior to the commencement of field work. An emphasis will also be made to develop long-term forest management plans that recognize the importance of recreation in the SMA, and incorporate measures to minimize the visual impact and/or maintain the integrity of the authorized recreational use. The Department may agree to incorporate additional modifications to a timber sale, provided that the adjustments will not result in a significant impact on long-term goals and objective for the stand, as determined by the Administrator.
2. Whenever feasible, as determined by the Administrator, supplemental strategic

planning efforts will be established in an attempt to spread out the number and intensity of timber sale activity over a longer time period within an SMA for Recreation. The goal would be to consider minimizing the number and breadth of timber sale activity that might occur at any one time.

Additional adjustments or modifications to forest management activities, including planning strategies and alternate harvest schedules may also be outlined within the recreational use agreement the Department maintains with each user group, organization or entity.

## **760 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND TRAIL PERMITS**

The layout and construction of any new road or trail on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality*. See the Appendix for a reference to the BMP's.

### **760.1 RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS**

#### **760.1.1 Storm Water Discharge**

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre of 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 one 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.

#### **760.1.2 Navigable Waters (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.

### 760.1.3 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.

## 765 SIGNS

Signs may be used to appropriately inform or convey information to the public of various activities occurring on the County Forest. Private signs promoting personal, commercial or political objectives will not be permitted. Signs installed by the Department for forest management purposes or by non-profit recreational groups that have been authorized by the Department can include, but not be limited to:

1. Informational Type Signs
  - A. Interpretive Signs: to educate the general public about the management of the County Forest.
  - B. Public Land Signs: to identify the land as the Bayfield County Forest.
  - C. Trail Markers: to identify permitted uses, provide direction, and promote safety for trail users on individual trails.
  - D. Area Markers: to identify permitted uses, provide direction and promote safety for users over large contiguous tracts of land.
  - E. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers: to identify points of interest.
  - F. Recreational Facility Markers: to identify parking areas, etc.
2. Regulatory Type Signs: to regulate and/or convey the appropriate use of the County Forest in specific areas.

## 770 RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The County will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regulations.

The Administrator may issue a special access permit to hunters who have received a WDNR disabled hunting permit, to non-hunters who meet the physical requirements for a State disabled hunting permit, or to anyone who claims to have a disability. The following conditions will apply to these permits.

1. Permits may be issued allowing motorized access from point to point on a specific route, if the route is capable of accommodating motorized vehicles, as determined by the Administrator.
2. The permit, if issued, will include conditions to protect the resource. For instance, the permit may only authorize OHV use if the road in question will not support a heavier vehicle.
3. The Administrator will decide whether or not to issue a permit. Environmental concerns, potential conflicts with other user groups, or other issues may result in a permit not being issued.
4. The Permit will allow one assistant to aid the individual with a disability. The assistant must be named on the permit form.
5. The Permit will be issued for a fixed time period. The Administrator will select an expiration date that best addresses the authorized use, as determined by the Administrator.

## **775 EXEMPTIONS**

Motorized and non-motorized access by Department staff, the DNR, and contractors of the Department, for administrative and forest management purposes are exempted from the provisions of this plan. Administrative traffic will be limited to periods of time when resource damage will not occur. Other limited exemptions from the provisions of this Plan may be authorized, in writing, by the Administrator and/or Committee.

## **780 INTERFACE WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The Administrator and the Forestry Department staff will cooperate with federal, state, and local law enforcement officers as well as the agents of the various resource management agencies to assure that all applicable ordinances are followed and resource management goals are accomplished. The Administrator will also work to develop consistent standards and regulations with agencies managing adjacent forest lands to

reduce confusion over permitted uses.

## **785 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS**

### **785.1 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING**

#### **785.1.1 Non-Motorized Trail Systems**

At this time, there is very limited access to grant funds or similar forms of financial aid that would assist with non-motorized recreational trail development and/or maintenance. For designated recreation that is maintained by the Department, the County relies heavily on general fund revenue i.e. timber sales, to support the development and maintenance of non-motorized trails on the County Forest. The Department will continue to explore options that would help support the development and maintenance of designated recreational opportunities on the County Forest.

#### **785.1.2 Motorized Trail Systems**

There are numerous grant programs available to offset the costs associated with the designated, state funded motorized trail systems. These included, but are not limited to:

1. Snowmobile Trail Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. Summer ATV Trail Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. Winter ATV Trail Maintenance - \$100/mile
4. UTV Trail Maintenance - \$100/mile
5. Snowmobile and/or ATV Trail Rehabilitation - 100% grants
6. Snowmobile and/or ATV Trail Development - 100% grants
7. Other grants and aids as made available to County Forest programs.

See the Workplan, annual accomplishment report and annual budget narrative for more information on grants and/or aids received to help offset costs associated with the various non-motorized and/or motorized trail networks.

## **790 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS/PLAN MODIFICATIONS**

The Administrator and/or Committee may temporarily suspend policies specified in this Plan to resolve an emergency such as public safety, fire suppression, environmental damage, law enforcement, or other critical event requiring immediate action. Suspension may be in writing or, if time does not permit, it may be verbal. If given verbally, a

written follow up will be prepared documenting the reason(s) and specifications for the verbal suspension. When appropriate, signs explaining the special designation will be placed at prominent locations on the County Forest that are impacted by the closure. As soon as the emergency event is over, the Administrator will rescind the temporary suspension of policies in writing.