



# *Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet*



## **2012-2013 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET Maintenance of Minimum-Maintenance Forest Roads Expenditures: \$200,000 FY 2012 / \$200,000 FY 2013 (Natural Resources Fund – ATV Account)**

### **It is needed because**

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers 1,293 miles of designated state forest minimum-maintenance roads in the state. Minimum-maintenance forest roads serve as trail connections for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), providing an important resource for motorized recreation, which generates more than \$150 million annually in total trail spending in Minnesota.

DNR currently receives \$1.8 million annually from unrefunded gas tax dollars in the ATV account, which is shared with counties. Priority for forest road maintenance has been to maintain the high-traffic, higher-standard system roads, so funding for maintaining minimum-maintenance roads has often not been available. This initiative would allow for the use of funds from the ATV account in the natural resources fund to assist in the maintenance of those forest roads in high-demand by ATV riders. Many of these minimum-maintenance roads provide ATV riders rustic conditions and remote locations for recreation. As with gas tax dollars, counties with roads that are part of a designated trail system within state forest boundaries would share in the appropriation of these dollars.

The 2007 Legislature modified M.S. 84.927, subd. 2 to authorize funds from the dedicated ATV account to be used for “maintenance of minimum-maintenance forest roads designated under M.S. 89.71, subd. 5, and county forest roads that are part of a designated trail system within state forest boundaries as established under M.S. 89.021.” To date, the legislature has not directly appropriated any money from the ATV account to maintain minimum-maintenance roads.

### **Major program elements**

Investments are required to maintain minimum-maintenance forest roads and keep them from deteriorating. Recreational ATV riding opportunities will improve and road damages will be mitigated with the recommended appropriation. A number of state forest minimum-maintenance roads provide key connections between portions of the state’s ATV trail systems.

### **Priority-setting**

Priorities will be based on:

- Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use: Roads with higher use will be given higher priority for spending dollars.
- Safety standards and existing road conditions: Roads will be given high priority in areas where road damage is more intense due to the fragile nature of the roadbed and safety is an issue.
- State forest classification: Priority will be given to forests classified as “managed” over forests classified as “limited” since OHV travel is more easily controlled in “limited” forests. Therefore, damage to minimum-maintenance roads can be better managed.

### **Project locations**

Project locations are statewide.

### **Key measures and outcomes**

This appropriation will be focused on miles of road that are most beneficial to ATVs, but the roads will continue to be maintained as narrow, primitive woods roads. Culvert replacement, washout repairs, and drainage repairs needed where water covers the road are examples of the types of work that this funding will accomplish.

Forested counties have similar miles of minimum-maintenance forest roads that will qualify for spending under this initiative.

**Financial Implications (if appropriate)**

The \$200,000 requested for each fiscal year would be split with forested counties: \$100,000 to the DNR and \$100,000 as a pass-through appropriation to forested counties each fiscal year.

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