

State Forests Trail Revisions Project

Commonly used Terms



All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) Class 1 and 2: A motorized vehicle with three to six low-pressure or non-pneumatic tires, a total dry weight of 2,000 pounds or less and a total width (measured from outside of tire rim to outside of tire rim) that is 65 inches or less. ATVs do not include golf carts, mini-trucks, dune buggies, or go-carts or a vehicle designed and used specifically for lawn maintenance, agriculture, logging or mining purposes.

Areas with Limitations: Designated special management areas on state forest lands where the big game hunting and trapping-related motor vehicle use exceptions do not apply. These areas are primarily for the purposes of 1) protecting unique natural resource values and 2) providing a balance of diverse recreational and hunting opportunities.

County-administered Forest Lands: County-managed forest lands are available for diverse recreational uses under policies adopted by each county board.

Forest Trail: A trail that is constructed, maintained, or located on forest lands administered by the commissioner for recreational activities on forest lands. Access trails, or trails not listed on maps, are open unless posted closed.

Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Program: A cost-share program to aid development and maintenance of trails by clubs with the support and participation of local government sponsors for cross-country ski, off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and snowmobile use.

Hunter Walking Trail: Provide comparatively easy access to areas where small game such as grouse and woodcock may thrive. Improvements on the trails vary. Some feature clover planted along the trail, others have forest openings that attract wildlife, and some are mowed annually. These trails wind their way through the landscape, sometimes connecting with state forests, wildlife management areas and other public hunting lands.

Motorized Trail: Corridors or treadways that allow people to travel the landscape using a motor vehicle such as an ATV, OHM or ORV. These routes may be managed for specific uses and signed accordingly. All motorized trails in a state forest are open to non-motorized uses.

Motor Vehicle: Any self-propelled vehicle including, but not limited to, automobiles, trucks, dune buggies, minibikes, motorcycles, trail bikes, and ATVs, but not including snowmobiles.

Non-Motorized Trail: A corridor or treadway that allows people to cross the forest. These routes may be managed for specific uses and signed accordingly. Uses are many but include backpacking, all forms of bicycling, bird watching and nature study, hiking, horse riding and hunting.

Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM): A motorized, off-highway vehicle traveling on two wheels and having a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control, including vehicles registered for highway use if also registered for off-highway operation on trails or unimproved ground.

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV): Any self-propelled vehicle including, but not limited to: automobiles, trucks, dune buggies, minibikes, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) and off-road vehicles (ORVs), but not snowmobiles.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV): A motor-driven recreational vehicle capable of cross-country travel on natural-surface road or trail.

Scientific & Natural Area (SNA): Lands managed to preserve and perpetuate the ecological diversity of Minnesota's natural heritage, including landforms, fossil remains, plant and animal communities, rare and endangered species or other natural features, and geological formations, for scientific study and public education as part of a healthy environment.

State Forest: State lands managed according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. Those natural assets include: timber and other forest crops, biological diversity, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness, rare and distinctive flora and fauna, air, water, soil, and educational, aesthetic, and historic values. State forest management principles are to utilize the land to best meet the needs of the people of the state; including management of the forest resources, without destructing of the productivity of the land and with consideration of the values of the resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses resulting in the greatest economic return or unit output.

State Forest Motor Vehicle Use Classification: The allowed motor vehicle use for roads and trails designated by the Commissioner of DNR on state forest lands or scattered state forest lands in a county. Off-road or trail travel by motor vehicle is prohibited except when hunter/trapper exception applies in a limited or managed state forest. The three classifications defined by Law are:

Closed: Off-highway vehicles (ATVs/ORVs/OHMs) are prohibited except by special event permits. State forest roads are open only to highway-licensed vehicles. The Commissioner of DNR may open forest roads to ATV use for big game hunting.

Limited: State forest roads are open to highway-licensed vehicles and off-highway vehicles (ATVs/ORVs/OHMs). Forest trails are closed to motor vehicle use, except where designated and signed to permit specific motorized uses.

Managed: State forest roads and non-designated routes that are not posted closed are open to motor vehicle use. Signing and enforcement restrict motor vehicle use in sensitive resource areas and on non-motorized trails. Forest trails may be designated, managed and signed for specific motorized uses.

State Forest Road: Roads maintained by the DNR within a state forest open to motor vehicle uses according to the Classification for Motor Vehicle use of the State Forest.

Minimum Maintenance Road: Maintained on an intermittent, as-needed basis typically for timber harvest access. They may not be suitable for routine low-clearance highway licensed vehicle travel. The minimum maintenance road sign says "Road may be impassable. Travel at your own risk."

System Road: Usually gravel-surfaced with two lanes maintained on a regular basis. Most of these roads are connected to state, county, or township public highways.

State Park: Lands managed to conserve the scenery, natural and historic objects and wildlife and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in a manner that will leave them in a natural state for the enjoyment of future generations. A state park will offer a diversity of quality outdoor recreation experiences.

Sustainable Trail: A trail that provides a high-quality recreational experience by flowing with the environment to reduce erosion, using natural drainage and minimizing user conflicts.

Trail Difficulty Ratings:



Easiest: Intended for novice riders.



More Difficult: Intended for well-developed skills.



Black Diamond: Suitable for expert riders.

Wildlife Management Area (WMA): Lands managed to protect those lands and waters which have a high potential for wildlife production and to develop and manage these lands and waters for the production of wildlife, for public hunting, fishing, and trapping, and for other compatible outdoor recreational uses.