

Northern St. Louis and Lake Counties State Forests

Forest Trails Revision Project

Past Summary

This plan will cover the State lands in Bear Island, Burntside, Insula Lake, Lake Isabella, Lake Jeanette and Sturgeon River State Forests as well as scattered DNR land within northern St. Louis County. The majority of the State Forest lands lie within St. Louis County with outlying areas extending into Lake County. The statutory boundary of the project area encompasses over 392,000 acres, with approximately 99,000 acres of DNR-administered land. Other public land owners include Lake County, St. Louis County and the US Forest Service through the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), which is closed to all motorized use. Areas included within this plan are classified as managed, limited and closed for motor vehicle use. The David Dill Memorial State Trail passes through the Bear Island and Sturgeon River State Forests. Nineteen miles of the Taconite section are within the Bear Island State Forest, while seven miles of the Arrowhead section and twenty-two miles of the Taconite section are within the Sturgeon River State Forest. The trail is a natural surface trail open to hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and snowmobiling. State trails are not part of this planning project, however, a master plan for the Taconite section is currently under review.

Future Planning

Phase II will be a review of the forest trail systems to identify new trail routes and connections, areas for special management, and to close trails that have proven unsustainable. The trail system changes will not include changing forest-wide classification.

The reason for a Phase II review of the current forest road and trail designations is to use adaptive management techniques of recreational use of trails in all of the state forests and to respond to the changes in recreational user needs in the forest lands. DNR is committed to this project and DNR assured stakeholders that trail revisions would continue beyond the legislatively mandated process.

Process Objectives

- Designate a sustainable system of forest roads and trails that provide for diverse motorized and non-motorized public recreation and access.
- Close unsustainable routes to vehicular travel.
- Designated trails and trail systems that provide a ‘quality’ recreational experience, and provide connections to other recreation facilities, support services and other popular destinations.
- Forest roads and trails that provide adequate access for both recreational and utilitarian purposes (e.g., hunting, trapping, angling, firewood collecting, etc.)

Continued on back

- Management options not available or not used during the 2003-2008 process will be implemented:
 - Hunter/walking trails designated;
 - Areas where the hunting and trapping exceptions do not apply (M.S. 84.926); and
 - New trails designated to provide improved state forest access and trail connections.
- The public will be engaged in recommending and reviewing changes to forest trail systems and management.