

On Track

A Monthly Update on Forest Road & Trail Designation in Minnesota State Forests

Planning Progress

Vol. 1, Issue 2

February 2007

Beltrami Island

- Σ Drafts of revised proposals and maps will be available on the DNR website after the Feb. 13 team meeting.
- Σ Opportunity for final public review.
- Σ Team reviewing maps to close or reroute routes that are not on state lands.
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Team will evaluate public comments, make revisions and forward for Commissioner's approval.

Chippewa Group

- Σ Commissioner reviewed plan. Commissioner's Orders being drafted.
- Σ Proposed classifications:
 - o Managed: Big Fork & Blackduck state forests; scattered lands in Beltrami and Itasca counties
 - o Limited: Bowstring, Buena Vista & Remer state forests; scattered lands in Cass County
 - o Closed: Battleground & Welsh Lake state forests
- Σ Next steps: Meet with Forest Service to develop responses to site-specific comments.

Cloquet Valley (St. Louis)

- Σ Team is finalizing its proposal for public review. Review beginning in March 2007.
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Complete DNR and county review, issue notice of public review period; schedule meeting dates.

Crow Wing/Emily (Crow Wing)

- Σ Commissioner reviewed in January; team is updating plan and map.
- Σ Proposed classifications:
 - o Crow Wing State Forest: Limited
 - o Emily State Forest: Limited
 - o Scattered lands in Crow Wing County: Limited, with several isolated parcels closed
- Next steps: Plan will be released for public review.

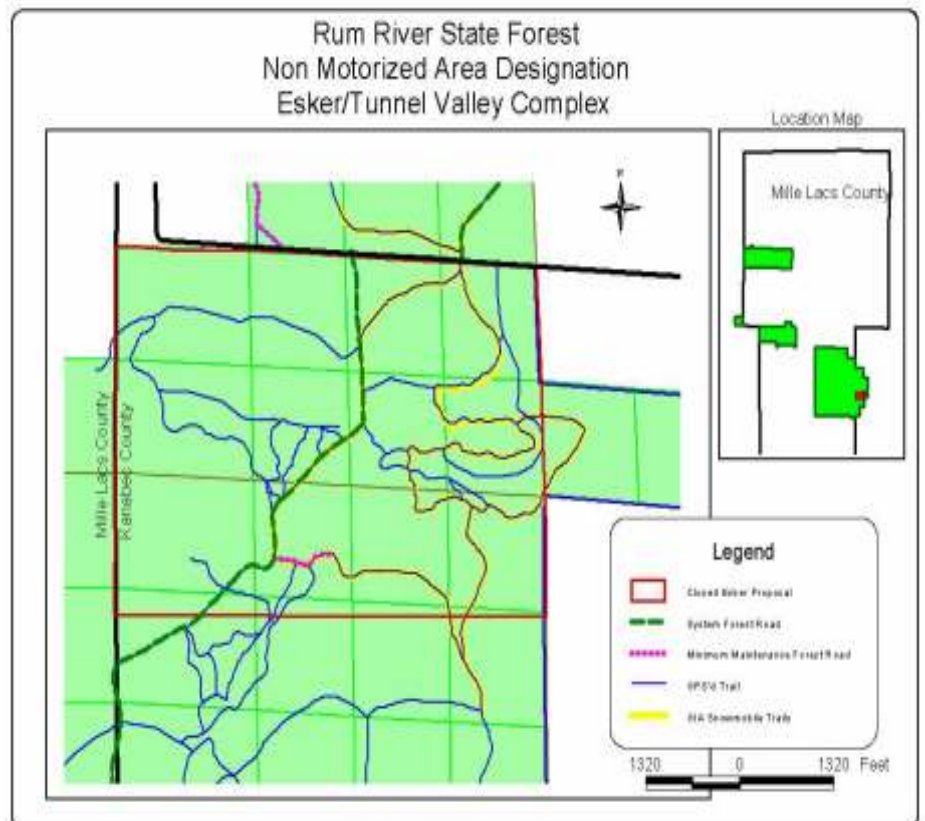
DNR completes road and trail designation for Rum River State Forest

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed its evaluation and will retain the "limited" classification for the 20,000-acre Rum River State Forest. The forest is located in east-central Mille Lacs, and western Kanabec, and eastern Morrison counties. The classification will also apply to state forest lands outside the forest boundaries in Mille Lacs County. No new recreational trail designations are proposed for the forest.

A "limited" classification means that motor vehicle use is allowed only on roads and trails that are signed "open" to motor vehicle use. Under the plan, 61.6 miles of unsigned, non-designated routes will be closed to most vehicle use, except for seasonal hunting and trapping activities.

The plan calls for the creation of a 570-acre non-motorized area in West-Central Kanabec County. In this area (see map), motorized use of non-designated trails is prohibited year-round to protect this geologically rare and ecologically sensitive area.

There are 18.1 miles of state forest roads that will be open for all-terrain vehicles (ATV), off-highway motorcycles (ORHM), off-road vehicles (ORMV) which include 4x4 trucks, and highway licensed vehicles (HLV).



DNR, Aitkin County agree to ATV, OHM trail

Aitkin County commissioners approved a grant agreement on Jan. 30 that will create a continuous trail, at least 70 miles long, for all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-highway motorcycles (OHMs). The DNR selected the Aitkin-Itasca proposal because it best matches the established criteria – land availability, level of readiness and public involvement.

Legislation passed in 2003 required the DNR to identify, design and develop a continuous trail at least 70 miles long. When complete, the Aitkin-Itasca proposal would create approximately 85 miles of recreational trail, and complement the existing trail system in the area.

DNR to launch five planning efforts in 2007

The DNR will launch five planning efforts for forest access in 2007.

- February: East Central – Hill River, Savanna, Waukenabo, Land o' Lakes, Snake River and DAR state forests and scattered Forestry parcels in Pine, Carlton, Aitkin, Kanabec and southern Cass counties. Bill Johnson, planner.
- February: Northern Border group – Red Lake, Lake of the Woods, NW Angle and Lost River state forests and scattered state lands in Lake of the Woods, Roseau and northern Beltrami counties. Jack Olson, planner.
- February: Superior National Forest – St. Louis County (Lake Jeanette, Kabetogama, Burntside, Bear Island & scattered lands in North St. Louis County). Brian McCann, planner.
- March: Koochiching group – Smokey Bear, Koochiching and Pine Island state forests and scattered lands in Koochiching County.
- Summer: George Washington group – George Washington and Golden Anniversary state forests and scattered lands in eastern Itasca County.

What's the word?

Managed, limited, closed classifications

The Minnesota Legislature has directed the DNR to regulate motor vehicle use on state forest lands under one of three classes.

Managed: Motor vehicle use is permitted on all forest roads and trails unless posted (signed) closed.

Limited: Motor vehicle use is permitted on forest roads and those trails specifically designated for certain types of motorized uses, for example trails can be designated for ATV use, off-road motorcycle use. Roads and trails are posted (signed) open for specific use.

Closed: Forest roads are open to highway-licensed vehicles. OHVs (off-highway vehicles) are not permitted, except on frozen waters.

Planning Progress (cont.)

Paul Bunyan/Hubbard County

- Σ Team has drafted a non-motorized access proposal.
- Σ Public meetings were Jan. 17.
- Σ Next steps: Team reviewing public comments; drafting Commissioner's Orders.

Rum River (Mille Lacs)

- Σ Commissioner's Orders signed and published in the State Register.
- Σ Final documents available on web.
- Σ Implementation to begin this spring; completed by September.

Sturgeon River (St. Louis)

- Σ Team finalizing proposal for public review which begins in March.
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Complete county review, issue notice of public review period and meeting dates.

Superior Group (Cook County)

- Σ Team finalizing proposal for public review which begins in March.
- Σ Proposed classification: Pat Bayle State Forest – Limited; Grand Portage State Forest – Managed.
- Σ Next Steps: Complete county review, issue notice of public review period and meeting dates.

Superior Group (Lake County)

- Σ Team finalizing proposal for public review which begins in March.
- Σ Proposed classifications for Finland State Forest and scattered lands coincide with other owners – USFS (Limited); Lake County (Managed).
- Σ Next steps: Complete DNR, USFS, county review; issue notice of public review period and meeting dates.

West Central Group

- Σ Planning team is coordinating with government partners.
- Σ Proposed classifications: None yet.
- Σ Next steps: Create written proposals and maps for internal DNR review. Public review anticipated in April.

The East Central, Northern Border, Superior-St. Louis, and Koochiching planning efforts are scheduled to start in February and March 2007; George Washington and Golden Anniversary in the summer of 2007.

For more information, visit the DNR OHV riding web page at

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/index.html>



Copyrighted 2007 State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources. Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is available to all individuals regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, age, sexual orientation, membership or activity in a local commission, or disability. Discrimination inquiries should be sent to MN-DNR, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4031; or the Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240. Alternative format available upon request by contacting the DNR Information Center at 1-888-MINNDNR. *On Track* is published monthly online by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at www.dnr.state.mn.us.