

On Track

A monthly update on forest road and trail designation in Minnesota state forests

Planning Progress

Chippewa Group

- Commissioner's Orders being drafted

Cloquet Valley (St. Louis)

- Awaiting final approval

Crow Wing/Emily (Crow Wing County)

- Revising forest classification decision

East Central

- Inventory maps available on line
- Public open houses held in August
- Classification and route evaluation underway

Koochiching/Itasca

- Public open houses 4:30 to 7 pm
 - Jan. 23, International Falls
 - Jan. 24 Northome
 - Jan. 29 Big Fork
 - Jan. 30 Grand Rapids

Northern Border

- Compiling comments from December open houses
- Developing forest classification and road/trail designation recommendations

Sturgeon River (St. Louis County)

- Awaiting final approval

Superior Group (North St. Louis County)

- Open houses complete
- Route designation underway

West Central Group

- Planning for the North Unit underway; MHSF draft plan released in November; WESF draft plan release in winter 2008
- MHSF public meeting on Jan. 16
- South Unit completed

Vol. 2, Issue 1

State forest road signs

Roads in state forests classified as *limited* or *managed* are open to all legal motorized vehicles. That means that ATVs, 4x4 pickups, highway-licensed vehicles, logging trucks, logging skidders, dirt bikes, Jeeps, and tracked off-road vehicles can all travel on state forest roads, unless the road is signed as temporarily closed to some or all types of vehicles.

A *limited* forest will have this sign at all entry points to the forest.



A *closed* forest will have the following sign at entrance points:



In a *closed* forest only highway licensed vehicles may travel on a state forest road. No ATVs can travel on forest roads in a *closed* forest.

January 2008

A *managed* forest will have the following sign at entry points.

State Forest Lands

MANAGED

MOTOR VEHICLE USE

- Highway licensed vehicles may operate on existing roads and routes unless posted closed or designated for specific use
- Off-highway vehicles (ATVs, OHMs, ORVs) may be operated on all roads and routes, and on trails marked for their specific use
- ATV travel off of roads, routes, and trails is prohibited except with valid big game license, furbearer trapping license, or commercial minnow license.
- Constructing unauthorized permanent trails is prohibited
- Causing rutting or erosion is prohibited

State forest road signs are of two types:



The brown sign indicates an improved, gravel surface road that is periodically maintained for low-clearance vehicles.

The yellow sign indicates a low standard road that has very little, if any, maintenance. Low clearance sedans should not expect to be able to negotiate the road. The road may be impassable and users are warned to travel at their own risk.

Before entering a state forest, know the motorized vehicle classification and obey the signs.

Planning for West Central forests, South Unit completed

Planning for the West Central forests, South Unit is now complete. Commissioner's Orders for proposed forest classifications and forest road/trail designations were published in the Dec. 24, 2007 *State Register*. The final plan considered about 325 miles of inventory and establishes how motor vehicle access will be addressed on almost 60,000 acres of state lands.

The final plan recommends that Huntersville, Lyons, Smoky Hills, and Two Inlets state forests be classified as limited. This means motor vehicles will be restricted to forest roads and trails that are posted open. Signed routes will include 117 miles of forest roads and almost 111 miles of both motor and non-motor trails. Another 98 miles of routes will remain unsigned, with most of these unavailable for motor vehicle use except for certain big game hunting and trapping activities in the fall.

The final plan also addressed motor vehicle use on scattered DNR Forestry-administered lands in six northwestern Minnesota counties. State forest lands in Douglas, Otter Tail, Todd, and Wadena counties have been classified as limited. DNR ownerships in Pope County are classified closed to motor vehicle use. Both limited and closed parcels will be present in Clay County.

All of the recommendations in the final plan become effective Dec. 31, 2008. DNR field staff will spend the upcoming field season preparing the forests for implementation. The full set of recommendations is available at:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/mgmtplans/ohv/designation/status.html>

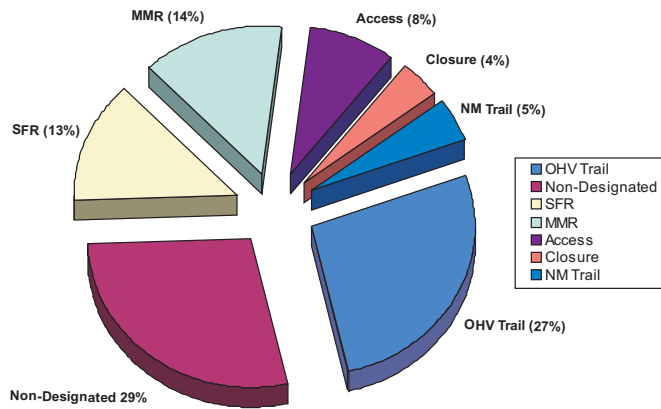
Mississippi Headwaters unit public meeting will be Jan.16

The public meeting for the Mississippi Headwaters Unit will be on Wed., Jan. 16, 2008 at the Beaux Arts Ballroom, Hobson Memorial Union, Bemidji State University, 1500 Birchmont Road, in Bemidji, from 6 to 8:30 pm.

From 6 to 7 pm, people will be able to informally review the plan, maps and other materials. The DNR team and supporting staff will be there to answer questions. During the rest of the meeting, DNR will present its proposal, respond to questions and accept comments.

Land department staff for Beltrami, Clearwater, and Hubbard counties will be on hand to answer questions and receive comments on designations on county-managed tax forfeit lands.

First 25 State Forests: Final Designations
[Total = 4,532 Miles of Routes]



Source: MN DNR, Trails & Waterways, Unpublished Data, Nov. 2007. Some county-administered routes are included in the route inventory and designation totals. Shared ATV / OHM Trail miles roughly double actual miles of OHV trail designations (above).

Forest Road & Trail Designation Mileage Totals for the First 25 Completed State Forests		
Route Designation	State Forest Land (miles)	
System Forest Road	717	
Min. Maintenance Forest Road	771	
Non-designated Routes*		2248
Proactive Closures	224	
In closed forests	136	
In limited forests	1,520	
In managed forests (forest access routes)	456	
ATV Trail	659	
OHM Trail	776	
ORV Trail	23	
Non-motorized Trails	259	

* Non-designated routes in 'limited' forests are closed to OHV traffic, except pursuant to MS 84.926 which provides for seasonal big-game hunting and trapping exceptions for licensed individuals to operate ATVs/HLVs.



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