

On Track

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

Planning Progress

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March 2007

Beltrami Island

- Σ Drafts of proposals and maps are available on the DNR website <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/index.html>
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Team will respond to comments on March 7; then send the plan to the commissioner for approval.

Chippewa Group

- 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: Finalize plan and map; respond to comments; prepare Commissioner's Orders.

Cloquet Valley (St. Louis)

- Σ Public review to begin April 2007.
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Complete 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 in mid-March; public meeting in May.

West Central Group to release proposal in April

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) team for recommending forest classification and road/trail designations for the West Central group of state forests is expected to release recommendations in April. Planning started last summer and should be complete this fall.

The West Central Group includes Huntersville, Lyons, Mississippi Headwaters, Smoky Hills, Two Inlets, and White Earth state forests, and scattered forest lands in Becker, Beltrami, Clearwater, Douglas, Mahanomen, Norman, Otter Tail, Todd, and Wadena counties. These lands are located west of Brainerd to Bemidji.

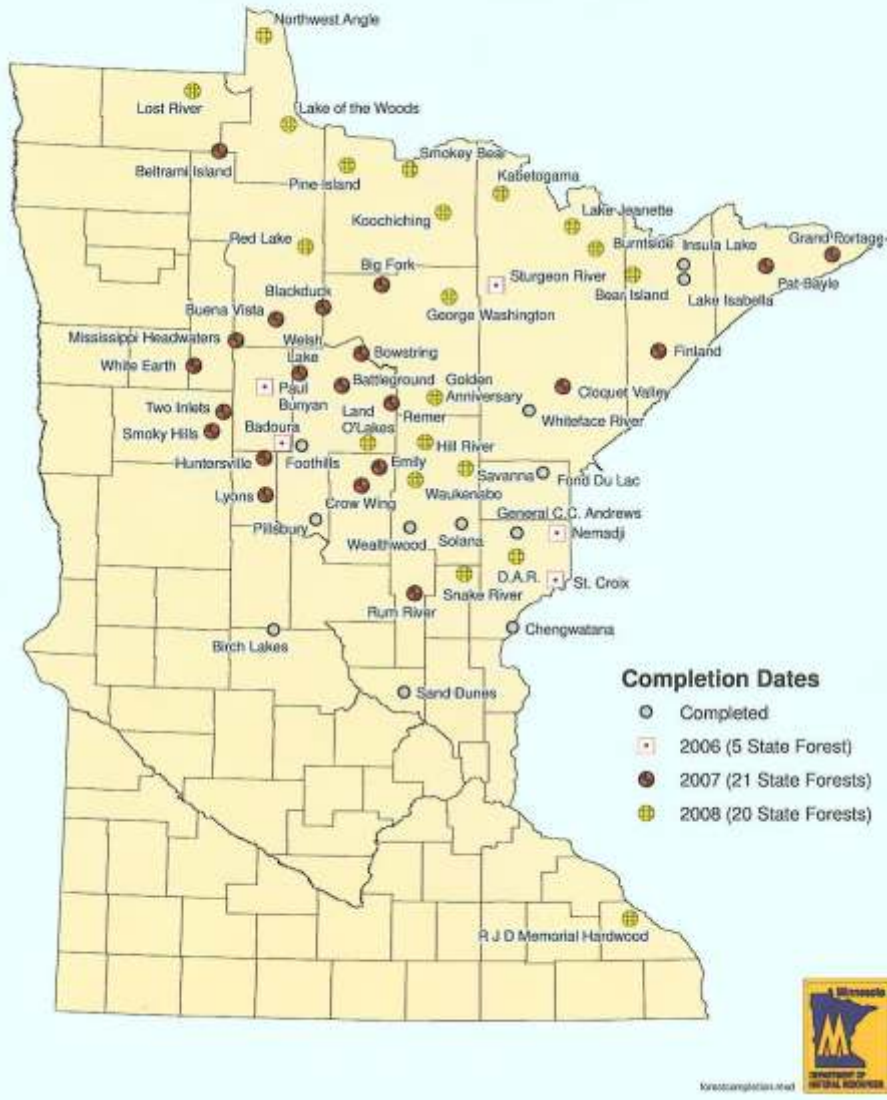
Public ownership varies across the area. DNR is the main land manager in Huntersville, Lyons, Smoky Hills, and Two Inlets state forests. The team worked with Becker and Clearwater counties and the White Earth Band in developing the proposal for White Earth State Forest; and with Beltrami, Clearwater, and Hubbard counties for the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest.



Draft plans recommend: forest classifications (managed, limited or closed); designated uses for roads and trails including minimum maintenance roads, and motorized and non-motorized trails; identification of possible areas where the big game hunting and trapping exemptions do not apply; and closing of specific trails if deemed necessary.

Minnesota State Forests

Forest Classification and Road/Trail Designation Schedule



Planning Progress (cont.)

Paul Bunyan/Hubbard County

- Σ Team has reviewed all public comments for response document.
- Σ Final plan and maps have been forwarded for final Commissioner's review; and will be posted on the web shortly.

Sturgeon River (St. Louis)

- Σ Public review to begin April 2007.
- Σ Proposed classification: Managed.
- Σ Next steps: Complete county review, issue notice of public review period and set meeting dates.

Superior Group (Cook County)

- Σ Public review to begin mid-March 2007.
- 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 Public review to begin mid-March 2007.
- Σ Proposed classifications for Finland State Forest and scattered lands coincide with other owners – USFS (Limited); Lake County (Managed).
- Σ Next steps: Complete county review; issue notice of public review period and meeting dates.

West Central Group

- Σ Planning team finalizing recommendations.
- Σ Proposed classifications: Limited for Huntersville, Lyons, Smoky Hill, Two Inlets, White Earth. Mississippi Headwaters under consideration.
- 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 planning efforts to begin spring 2007; Koochiching, George Washington and Golden Anniversary to begin summer 2007.

What's the word?

Minimum Maintenance Road

State forest roads are generally one- or two-lane roads with native soil or gravel surfaces. They are not considered public roads, and DNR is not a public road authority.

A minimum maintenance state forest road is a state forest road that is maintained for forest management access on an intermittent, as needed, basis. The public may use them, but the roads are not promoted or maintained for recreation.

The roads are open to both highway licensed vehicles and OHVs (ATV, OHM, ORM). It is important to note that they are not maintained to the level where low-clearance highway vehicles can travel routinely on them. The minimum maintenance road sign says "Road may be impassible. Travel at your own risk." The sign also includes a road number that is the road's inventory number.



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