

On Track

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

Planning Progress

Chippewa Group

- Commissioner's Orders being drafted

Cloquet Valley (South St. Louis/Carlton)

- Public review ended June 29
- Analysis of comments underway
- Final plan expected November 2007

Crow Wing/Emily (Crow Wing)

- Final documents being prepared
- Commissioner's Orders being drafted

East Central

- Inventory maps available on line.
- Public open houses held between August 21 and 29.
- Fall 2007 classification and route evaluation process underway

Koochiching/East Itasca

- First public open houses expected in September

Northern Border

- Public open houses expected in October
- Inventory maps being prepared

Vol. 1, Issue 9

September 2007

Where can I hunt using my ATV?

In general, it is not legal to ride ATVs off-trail on public lands in Minnesota. National Forest policy prohibits cross-country travel on federal lands and further restricts riding to routes that are designated for ATVs. Except for areas like parking lots and access roads, motorized vehicles including ATVs are not permitted on National Wildlife Refuges or Waterfowl Production Areas. ATVs are not permitted on State Wildlife Management Areas (with a few exceptions)*, State Natural Areas, or State Parks.

State law has provided four exceptions—on state and some county forest lands—that allow cross-country travel on ATVs. On state forest lands classified as managed or limited, Class 1 ATVs may be used to:

- Retrieve big game or transport or install hunting stands (September through December)
- Hunt big game (October through December)
- Trap during open seasons for protected furbearers
- Trap for minnows under certain conditions

The operator of the ATV must have the appropriate valid hunting, trapping or commercial license in possession.

State law also allows Class 2 ATVs and other highway licensed vehicles to be used on existing, non-designated routes on state forest lands classified as managed or limited for the activities listed above.

The Richard J. Dorer forest in southeastern Minnesota is not included in this exception.

Bear hunters need to be aware that these exceptions do not allow cross-country travel for baiting activities. Deer hunters need to remember that ATV use during the firearms deer seasons is restricted to before and after legal shooting times and from 11 am to 2 pm in order to reduce disturbance during prime hunting times.

** Although ATVs are not permitted in most WMAs, there are some exceptions: ATV use is allowed in some Northwestern Minnesota WMAs. Please see the **2007 Minnesota Hunting Regulations Handbook** for details (pp. 105-106).*



DNR staff meet with Cass County Board

Minnesota DNR staff met with the Cass County Board in August to outline the trail designation and classification process. The County Land Department is working on a countywide ATV trail system proposal to connect communities. The board hopes to review and approve the plan in October so it can be considered for inclusion in the East Central plan. Board members said they would like to see consistency between county and state land classifications. They plan to continue to use the LIMITED classification for county lands.

East Central open houses complete

Open houses were held in five locations for the East Central Group. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) team and staff and county representatives engaged the public at Pillager, Emily, Mora, Hill City, and McGregor from August 21-29. Attendance was greatest at Mora and least at McGregor. In all about 100 people met with DNR and county representatives at these sessions.

What's the word?

State Forest Land

State Forest Land is public land managed by the State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. The land is managed for a variety of purposes including recreation, forest products, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, aesthetics, solitude, hunting, trapping, berry picking, etc.

There are 3.85 million acres of State Forest Land in Minnesota. About 3.12 million of these acres are within the statutory boundaries of the 58 State Forests that exist in Minnesota. The State Forest statutory boundaries also encompass other public and private lands that are not managed by the Division of Forestry.

The 730,000 acres of State Forest Lands located outside of the boundaries of the 58 named State Forests are managed for the same purposes, but in some cases public access is non-existent due to the land being totally surrounded by private land.

There are thousands of miles of forest roads and motorized and non-motorized recreational trails available for public use on State Forest Lands.

For more information, visit the DNR OHV riding web page at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/index.html>
www.findthetrails.com



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Planning Progress (cont.)

Sturgeon River (St. Louis County)

- Public review ended July 20
- Analysis of comments underway
- Final plan expected October 2007

Superior Group (Cook County)

- Public review ended May 31
- Analysis of comments underway
- Final plan expected October 2007

Superior Group (Lake County)

- Public review ended June 22
- Analysis of comments underway
- Final plan expected October 2007

Superior Group (North St. Louis County)

- Open houses held in June
- Classification/designation exercise underway
- Draft proposal expected November 2007

West Central Group

- Planning for the North Unit underway; draft plan will be released fall 2007
- Analysis of comments underway for South Unit
- South Unit final classification review and designation expected fall 2007