

PREPARED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ATTACHMENT A

Matthew Lourey State Trail – ATV and OHM use in Nemadji/St. Croix State Forests Project

Public Comments on EAW

6/22/2011

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2 Thomas Stronczer (05-03-2011)
3 Jason P. (05-03-2011)
4 Jason P. (05-03-2011)
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13 Keith Knuth on behalf of Minnesota Adventure Riders (05-04-2011)
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16 Tamara E. Cameron on behalf of the St. Paul District, Corps of Engineers (05-04-2011)
17 Allon Mor (05-05-2011)
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19 David Andrews Jr. on behalf of Rapids Riders ATV Club (05-05-2011)
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Anglers (05-16-2011)
26 Terry Peterson on behalf of the Northern Pine Riders Snowmobile Club (05-28-2011)
27 Brent Ostwald (05-29-2011)
28 Karen Kromar on behalf of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (05-31-2011)

Comment #1 From: Bob Linn [boblinn41@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2011 2:00 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

This is to advise you that I am against opening this trail to winter use by ATV enthusiasts. The opening of this area will set a precedent for other areas to be opened for this type of use. The ATV people already have designated areas to use their machines. If they want additional ATV use trails then let them raise their own money and purchase land intended for that use.

Bob Linn
48947 North Shore Road
Waterville, MN 56096

Comment #2 From: Thomas Stronczer [mailto:tstroncz@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 10:59 AM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Dear Ronald Wieland,

I am writing you in regards to the Matthew Lourey State trail.
I want to show my support for creating new ATV and OHM trails in the Nemadji/St. Croix state forests project in Pine and Carlton counties. I feel that the efforts the State of MN takes to continue to improve and give residences the opportunity to enjoy their recreational activities is one reason that makes Minnesota a great place to live.

I ride both OHM and horses and currently volunteer time to help keep trails open and promote the use of trail systems in the state. With proper management and education I feel that the addition of ATV and OHM trails in the Nemadji/St. Croix state forests will benefit everyone using the trail system. By opening up new trail miles for ATV and OHM use, forest management will be improved by reducing concentrated use in areas of the Nemadji/St. Croix state forests that are currently open.

I also feel by opening up more miles for ATV and OHM use it will help bring in new business to the local businesses near the proposed new trail.

Thank you for your time working on this project, Sincerely, Thomas Stronczer

Comment #3 From: j [mailto:jjpa36@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 12:37 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: thanks for the current dirtbike trails in nemadji!!!!

instead of just yapping, my dirtbike group would like to help ,,when we ride up there,,, twice a month, please let us know if there is a 2 hour project 4/6 guys could complete or help you out with

i'm glad my tax dollars go to your, our trails; what can we do to help?

Comment #4 From: j [mailto:jjpa36@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 12:40 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: "matthew Lourey state trail" jason p., msp, mn

please allocate more funds towards these beautiful trails

my group of 6 dirtbikers may be small, but we would like to help and keep these going strong

may we help with something???

jason

Comment #5 From: Dale Jacobson [mailto:djacobson@rahr.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 12:47 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

To Whom it May Concern,

I congratulate and back those involved in creating this new trail addition. It's a great way to connect these trail systems together and give riders more of a destination type quality ride. I believe this will help spread-out riders and keep the trails safer. Thanks for all the hard work, Dale Jacobson

Dale Jacobson
Malt Production Supervisor
Rahr Malting
800 West First Avenue
Shakopee, MN 55379
djacobson@rahr.com

Comment #6 From: Carlson, Michael D. [mailto:Michael.Carlson@Donaldson.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 3:51 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Attn: Ronald Wieland

I would like to comment on the plans for the Matthew Lourey State Trail.

ATV's and Snowmobiles don't mix, just like ATV's and OHM's don't mix and should not be forced to ride on combined trails. Allowing ATV's on snowmobile trails in the winter is counter to all the efforts done by the volunteers who maintain the 21,000 miles of GIA

snowmobile trails. Doing so could send the message that it will be allowed other places too as well as setting a precedence for that to be argued. Snowmobile trails are not sustainable under the tires of ATV's and will become rutted rough and increasingly dangerous.

The OHM trails in Nemadji SF have been irreparably ruined by ATV traffic with the same results. They are deeply rutted on the sides making them very dangerous for OHM's to operate. The wheels of OHM's get pulled into the ruts forcing a rider to the outside and into the trees. NOT GOOD!

Please try to lessen or eliminate altogether any combined use with ATV's on either snowmobile or OHM trails.

Michael D. Carlson
1585 Serenity Lane
Waconia, MN 55387

Comment #7 From: Joshua Ostrowski [mailto:joshuaostrowski@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 03, 2011 1:35 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

I support the proposed ATV/OHM use on the Matthew Lourney State Trail. With rising fuel prices expanding and adding recreational use trails in MN is important as many will be staying closer to home. It is also an important revenue stream to local supporting businesses.

Thanks,

Joshua Ostrowski
709 Sunwood Park Dr
Waite Park, MN 56387

Comment #8 From: pdstreeter@mmm.com [mailto:pdstreeter@mmm.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 8:11 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

I just wanted to comment that I am very much in support of this trail. This will make it possible for me to ride my dirt bike all the way from Chengwatana through St. Croix and all the way to Nemadji. This will be great!

Thank you very much,

Paul Streeter
3230 Park Overlook Drive
Shoreview, Minnesota 55126

Comment #9 From: notify@yahoogroups.com [mailto:notify@yahoogroups.com] On Behalf Of kusstj
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 12:48 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: as a local landowner - I fully support the expansion of recreational trails

Sleds, atvs, dual sport motorcycles etc. Ought to be allowed to be used on all trails (snowmobile trails) in Minnesota. I see no reason why not. It would be good for the tourist economy, who currently goes to wisconsin to ride atv and off highway motorcycles.

opening up more use would only make my happier as a landowner who would love to frequent local trails which are currently not open to my dual sport motorcycle.

sounds like a good idea, and any environmental assessment which comes up with a way to block a good common sense idea like this is probably environmentalist wacko's who have perpetuated the lie of global warming Such a decision would wreak of the cronyism and

corruption which is the current liberal government.

let's ride!!! todd kuss, chaska mn

Comment #10 From: Kuss, Todd [mailto:Todd.Kuss@ATK.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 1:03 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: "Matthew Lourey State Trail"

Please do move ahead with this common sense project, and don't let any environmentalist educated idiots get in the way.

Currently, people ride in Wisconsin. We need a reason to ride in the state of Minnesota. The fact that virtually none of the snowmobile trails are available for ATV or OHM is just plain silly. Thanks

Todd J. Kuss
Mission Assurance Lead, Master Black Belt
ATK Advanced Weapons
Plymouth Minnesota

Comment #11 From: Ernest Swihart [mailto:ernie.swihart@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 1:20 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Dear Mr. Wieland

I strongly support the creation of this trail for ohm use. There are not enough trails to ride and this trail is a perfect addition to the trails in the area.

Ernie Swihart MD
Minnetonka MN

'84 R80RT
'89 R100GS
01 Kawasaki KLR 650
ABC #7013
BMWMOA #116472

Comment #12 From: Michael Haug [mailto:michael@michaelhaug.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 12:56 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail"

I Totally support this idea of having the Matthew Lourey state trail opened to OHM and Atv's. I ride OHM and licensed dual sport motorcycles and would love to see more of this kind of thing happen.

I would also like to see thousands of miles of ATV trails opened to OHM or licensed dual sport motorcycles. There are so many trails for ATV riders and very few for OHM riders.

I appreciate what you guys are doing for us!! Thank you! Michael

Michael Haug Photography
535 15th Ave South
Hopkins, Mn 55343
www.michaelhaug.com

Comment #13 From: KK [mailto:keithknuth@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 1:04 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

All, I just wanted to take a minute to email in my support of the proposed Matthew Lourey State Trail found on http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/matthew_lourey/index.html.

I head the Minnesota Adventure Riders group and associated Trans-Minnesota Adventure Trail found on <http://MinneADV.info>

The Trans-Minnesota Adventure Trail already makes use of the Gandy Dancer, Nemadji, and St. Croix forest trails. The Matthew Lourey trail would add even better riding and easier access to this part of the state. Our riders would be very enthusiastic about this addition!

If our riders can be of any help is developing this trail please let me know.

Thank you,
Keith Knuth
Minnesota Adventure Riders
16601 Imperial Way
Lakeville, MN 55044

Comment #14 From: Bob Bemmels [mailto:minnesotasnowman@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 7:55 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

I have seen the damage that ATV's do to snowmobile trails in the winter months in Wisconsin. They leave ruts in the snow that makes snowmobiling dangerous. The groomers have a difficult time leveling the trails after ATV's have driven on them.

I am definitely opposed to allowing ATV's on snowmobile trails from Dec. 1 through March 31.

Sincerely,
Bob Bemmels
16680 Rose St NW
Andover, MN 55304

Comment #15 From: Todd Lofstrom [mailto:toadl@q.com]

Sent: Wednesday, May 04, 2011 4:42 PM

To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)

Subject: I love OHM trails

I'm thirty-eight years old and my whole family loves to ride our motorcycles In the Hinkley area. In fact we have a trip planned Memorial weekend. I strongly support any trail in our State Forest. They provide a legal and safe place for us to spend time doing what we love.

Thanks

Todd Lofstrom



REPLY TO
ATTENTION

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ST. PAUL DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
180 FIFTH STREET EAST, SUITE 700
ST. PAUL MINNESOTA 55101-1678

MAY 04 2011



Operations
Regulatory (2011-01305-BGO)

Ronald Wieland, EAW Project Manager
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Ecological and Water Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025

Dear Mr. Wieland:

We have received the document entitled *Matthew Lourey State Trail – ATV and OHM Use in Nemadji/St. Croix State Forests Project* dated April 29, 2011. Due to limited staff and resources, it is unlikely that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory staff will review or comment on this document until we receive a jurisdictional determination request and/or a permit application. In lieu of a specific response, please consider the following general information concerning our regulatory program that may apply to the proposed project.

If the proposal involves activity in navigable waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (Section 10). Section 10 prohibits the construction, excavation, or deposition of materials in, over, or under navigable waters of the United States, or any work that would affect the course, location, condition, or capacity of those waters, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit.

If the proposal involves discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA Section 404). Waters of the United States include navigable waters, their tributaries, and adjacent wetlands (33 CFR § 328.3). CWA Section 301(a) prohibits discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit under Section 404. Information about the Corps permitting process can be obtained online at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory>.

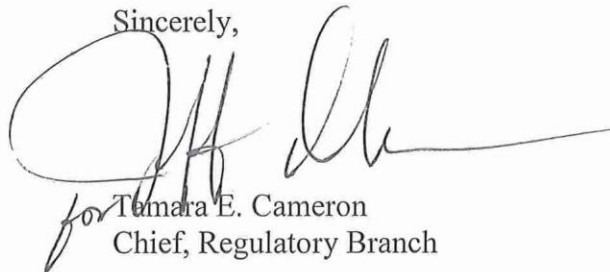
The Corps' evaluation of a Section 10 and/or a Section 404 permit application involves multiple analyses, including (1) evaluating the proposal's impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (33 CFR part 325), (2) determining whether the proposal is contrary to the public interest (33 CFR § 320.4), and (3) in the case of a Section 404 permit, determining whether the proposal complies with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) (40 CFR part 230).

If the proposal requires a Section 404 permit application, the Guidelines specifically require that “no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences” (40 CFR § 230.10(a)). Time and money spent on the proposal prior to applying for a Section 404 permit cannot be factored into the Corps’ decision whether there is a less damaging practicable alternative to the proposal.

If an application for a Corps permit has not yet been submitted, the project proposer may request a pre-application consultation meeting with the Corps to obtain information regarding the data, studies or other information that will be necessary for the permit evaluation process. A pre-application consultation meeting is strongly recommended if the proposal has substantial impacts to waters of the United States, or if it is a large or controversial project.

For further information or to request a pre-application consultation meeting, please contact Benjamin Orne at (651) 290-5280, the Corps’ project manager for the County in which this proposal is located.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "for Tamara E. Cameron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tamara E. Cameron
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Comment #17 From: Allon Mor [mailto:allonm55344@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 7:38 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Supporting the proposed trail.
Allon Mor
Plymouth Minnesota

Comment #18 From: MICHAEL RANDALL [mailto:mtbiker3@msn.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 7:46 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Attn: Ronald Wieland - Matthew Lourey State Trail

Greetings, and thank you for your efforts to open more trail to OHM/ATVs and connect more riding areas.

I began off road riding in 1983 at the age of 21. I lived in Los Angeles at the time, and with a dual-sport motorcycle, I was able to ride for days without touching pavement through the mountains of Southern California.

I moved to Minnesota in 1989, and was shocked at the limited areas for OHM riding. ATV's certainly have a plethora of riding opportunities, but areas where you can ride an OHM are quite limited in comparison.

As a resident of Stillwater, MN, my closest riding area is Chengwatana State Forest. As you may know, the riding at Chengwatana is quite limited, ~12 miles, and most of the year, most of the trails are impassable due to the high amount of water in the area. As a result of this, we usually go to Nemadji to camp and ride, though we visit most of the other OHM areas as well, including St. Croix State Forest, General C.C. Andrews, Spider Lake, and the Richard Dorer areas.

I am grateful for the possibility that more trails will become open to OHM's, and the fact that they will link different areas together is even more exciting. I am all for, and support your proposed additions, but I have another agenda for writing to you.

Nemadji is one of the few areas where you can actually ride the trails from your campground. At St. Croix State Forest, you must trailer your OHV the 2 miles from the Rock Lake Campground and at Chengwatana, it is a 20 mile one-way trip to go back to Pine City, cross the Snake River, and drive back into the forest to ride on a trail that is less than 2 miles from the campground.

OHV users pay fees to the DNR. Mountain Bikers, Hikers, and Equestrians do NOT pay DNR fees, yet they can ride or hike on the OHV trails, and at all areas, have the luxury of accessing the trails from their campsite.

I am a backpacker and mountain biker, have been active in the National Mountain Bike Patrol for over 15 years, and was the MN state patrol director from 1996 - 2002, so I have no problem with those activities, I just have a problem with intolerance. There is plenty of land out there for us all to enjoy. I had to laugh at the people camping at Chengwatana, who kept giving the OHM riders dirty looks each time they rode by their primitive campsite, 20 feet from the OHM trail. There are literally thousands of places they

could have gone to camp if they did not want to hear motorcycles, but there are only a dozen places that OHM riders can ride. This is the same kind of mentality that is grabbing up national land at an astounding rate to save it for 'future' generations, failing to recognize that it will only be available to those with the time, money, and physical fitness to take a 2 week hike into a remote area.

I have provided EMS support for adventure races in both Chengwatana SF and St. Croix SP, so I have traveled the non-motorized portion of the trail from Chengwatana, north to the Kettle River. I sincerely hope this will be included as a possible section to open to OHMs/ATVs in the future, as well as a section through the St. Croix state park to allow a link to the state forest trails. I would also like to see the southern section of Chengwatana, to the campground opened as well, and I would like to see a trail from the Rock Lake campground to the rest of the OHV trails, or at least open the road to these vehicles. It really is silly to have to load your bikes for a 2 mile trip, down a dirt road, to the trailhead parking.

Once again, thank you for all of your efforts. For an off road enthusiast, whose wife and grandchildren ride with him, your proposed trail openings are like presents waiting to be opened.

Sincerely,

Michael Randall
10633 Norwood Ave N
Stillwater, MN 55082-9294

Comment #19 From: David Andrews Jr. [mailto:dajr62@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 6:46 AM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: DNR seeks comments on EAW for Matthew Lourey State Trail

I think we need as many trails as possible for this great sport. A great shot in the arm for monies it brings to our communities.

David Andrews Jr
Rapids Riders ATV Club
Trail Ambassador
dajr62@yahoo.com

Comment #20 From: Jan Dose [mailto:mjdose@brainerd.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 9:29 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Good Morning

All I can say is no and I mean No atv use of any existing trails or new trails. The reason is, we have been trying to stop them on our trails"Up north". I have a question for you, have you ever looked at the damage they do? That includes right of ways,private driveways,trails etc. The cost to just try to repair, would be to much. They do not repair there own destruction.

Thank You
R.D.

Comment #21 From: Kyle Sorensen [mailto:ksorensen@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 05, 2011 10:39 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

Hello,

I have been snowmobiling for over 14 years in MN, primarily in the Twin Cities area. Please strongly consider approving the proposals for extending the Matthew Lourey State Trail for ATV use during the summer/spring/fall time ONLY. I hope you can keep the ATV's off of this trail however, in the winter time as this is an issue for creating ruts in the snow and makes it difficult to sled. If not, could it be possible to keep ATV's to one side of the trail and snowmobiles to another (similar to how other trails in the area keep studded snowmobiles to one side and non-studded to another)? I just bought a class II ATV last year (not used in the winter) and have been disappointed by the distance I have to trailer my machine in order to get to a trail of any decent length. Driving up to the Matthew Lourey State Trail would be better than me having to trailer my ATV over to Wisconsin to ride. I would much rather give my business to MN local businesses. As long as people ride responsibly and respect property and the environment, I don't see any issues of allowing this proposal to pass.

Thank you for the consideration.

Kyle Sorensen
1217 Patterson Dr.
Shakopee, MN 55379

Member, Minnesota River Valley Trail Blazers Club

Comment #22 From: GREG.SAUNDERS@spps.org [mailto:GREG.SAUNDERS@spps.org]
Sent: Saturday, May 07, 2011 6:18 AM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept my vote for the above referenced project.

I have been riding motorcycles since 1963 and love to take my street legal dirt bike down any trail I any trail I can find. So I encourage the DNR to open up any off-road trail to street legal motorcycles. It is a wonderful way to spend time in Nature. And that heals my spirit.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Greg Saunders
3944 Blackhawk Circle
Eagan, MN 55122

Comment #23 From: Chris Thorne [mailto:cthorne@cthorne.com]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2011 7:35 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Matthew Lourey State Trail Project

Hello,

I just wanted to write in to let you know that I support this project to make more trails available to ATVs and OHMs. We've made frequent trips to Gilbert for this reason, but that gets to be way to far. I have been jealous of WI, as they already have so many trails available for these purposes, and I'm hoping that MN can add more.

In addition to enjoying both of these powersports, I also belong to a snowmobile club in Shakopee. Our club is very passionate about our trails, and are often assisting the DNR with the maintenance of the trails (especially with the continuous flooding). Point being, there are some really great (and respectful) groups out there that care about their sports, and more importantly, about their image.

Thank you very much & good luck with the project!
Chris Thorne

Comment #24 From: Barton [mailto:bartonadams@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2011 12:04 PM
To: Wieland, Ronald (DNR)
Subject: OHM trails

Dear Ronald Wieland,

I would like to voice my support of designating parts of the Matthew Lourey State Trail for ATV and OHM use.

As an off road rider, I'm well aware of the lack of available trails. I'm also aware of the challenges of opening new trails or keeping existing trails open.

I support the idea to create this opportunity for off road riders and have encouraged my friends and family to do the same. Best of luck in your work and thank you.

Sincerely,

Barton Adams,
1942 Silver St
Waconia, MN 55387
952 442 1935



BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS



David A. Lien
MN Chapter Co-Chairman
1026 Cheyenne Villas Pt.
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

dlien2@yahoo.com

719-650-6526

May 16, 2011

Minn. Dept. of Natural Resources
"Matthew Lourey State Trail" Comments
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155
ronald.wieland@state.mn.us

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) that was prepared for the Matthew Lourey State Trail, an ATV/OHM trail project in the Nemadji/St. Croix state forests.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) is a sportsmen's conservation group that seeks to ensure America's outdoor hunting and angling heritage through education and work on behalf of clean water and wilderness. Being a native of Minnesota who grew up hunting and fishing in the woodlands and waterways of northern Minnesota around Grand Rapids and points further north, I am currently the co-chairman of the Minnesota Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (MN BHA).¹

MN BHA comprises a growing and diverse organization of both urban and rural members from all over the state. A crucial common denominator in the philosophies of all BHA members is a goal to conserve the forests, mountains, prairies, and waters that support our chosen way of life. As BHA's founder, Mike Beagle, says: "We believe in keeping public lands healthy and accessible. We believe in managing wildlife as a public trust and all native wildlife as a priceless resource. We believe in protecting the big, natural areas and natural functions that support our hunting and fishing heritage."

That said, as you surely know, many sportsmen and women are becoming increasingly concerned about growing threats to the future of hunting and angling opportunities on our public lands resulting from habitat loss and degradation due to excessive road building and off-highway vehicle (OHV) over-use and abuse. With this in mind, we are asking the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to refrain from building any new trails or opening existing non-motorized

¹http://www.backcountryhunters.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=56&Itemid=70

trials to OHVs. In particular, the DNR should not designate portions of the existing Matthew Lourey State Trail for ATV/OHV use. Additional support for our request is included in the information that follows:

- Former Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth called off-road vehicle (ORV) abuse one of the “four threats” to the health of public lands.
- Today in America there are 7 million miles of roads; in our National Forest System alone, over 460,000 miles—enough to circle the earth 18 times.² Just to put that figure into perspective, the Interstate Highway System is only 43,717 miles long.
- Some 270,000 miles of roads and routes are legally available to off-road vehicles nationwide, over six times the length of the interstate highway system. Meanwhile, at least 60,000 miles of unauthorized (“unclassified”) routes zigzag through public forests.³
- In Minnesota’s Chippewa National Forest, for example, there are 5,831 road miles on all land ownerships. These roads provide unbroken access to within about 0.5 mile of all lands.⁴
- Regarding invasive species, a study by the Montana State University Extension Service found that, “People and their motorized vehicles are a major cause of knapweed spread. Vehicles driven several feet through a knapweed site can acquire up to 2000 seeds, 200 of which may still be attached after 10 miles of driving.”
- Poorly managed OHV use damages hunter, angler, and other quiet-user experiences, adversely affects wildlife habitat and behavior (including big game and fisheries), and impacts water quality.
- OHV-caused soil compaction triggers a cascade of negative effects ranging from impacts on water quality to a shift in plant and animal communities. After vehicle tires compact loose soil, rain or snowmelt can no longer percolate fully, and the subsequent surface runoff generates hillside erosion.⁵ This is of particular concern in the MHSF.
- Steep hills and sandy soils make the MHSF area vulnerable to off-road driving damage and significant erosion already has occurred from illegal driving near and through the river.⁶
- According to the Minnesota DNR, “It has been well established in Minnesota that ATVs are traversing wetlands on public lands, and that sediment from eroding slopes damaged by ATV traffic is entering wetlands and streams.”⁷
- Closing OHV trails on state forestland is reasonable because hundreds of miles of OHV trails are already available on nearby county lands and in other state forests.⁸
- According to a 2000 Minnesota DNR “Awareness and Satisfaction Survey,” the statement that survey respondents *disagreed* with most was: “The DNR should establish more sites on public land for motorized off-road vehicle recreation.”⁹

² Conservation Northwest. “Roads shrink wild areas.” *Conservation Northwest*: Fall 2005, p.9

³ Matthew Daly. “New Illegal Trail Rule Criticized.” *Associated Press*: 11/7/05

⁴ Al Williamson and Stan Kot. “Off-Highway Vehicle Road Travel Access Project Wildlife Report.” *Chippewa National Forest*: April 2007

⁵ David G. Havlick. *No Place Distant*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002, p.91

⁶ Tom Meersman. “ATVs could get foothold in hallowed headwaters.” [Minneapolis-St. Paul] *Star-Tribune*: 12/4/07

⁷ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Ecological Services Division. “Assessing the ecological impacts of ATV trail construction and use on public lands: factors to consider and a review of literature.” *Internal Peer Review*: 10/3/02

⁸ Tom Meersman. “ATVs could get foothold in hallowed headwaters.” [Minneapolis-St. Paul] *Star-Tribune*: 12/4/07

⁹ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “Awareness and Satisfaction Survey Results.” *Bureau of Information, Education and Licensing*: June 2000, p.4

- According to a 2002 “Minnesota Deer Hunters’ Opinions and Attitudes Toward Deer Management” survey, the typical Minnesota firearms hunter hunted with a group, used a tree stand at least some of the time, and *did not use an ATV*. Most hunted for the sport and to be with friends and family.¹⁰
- Multiple studies and surveys have shown that OHVs scare away big game and do not improve hunters’ success.¹¹
- The approach of sharing public land sounds reasonable, but in practice it has often failed. What usually happens is that those who prefer quiet recreation are driven from areas where off-road driving becomes popular.¹² So where’s the multiple use?
- Data shows that the people of Minnesota who do not use OHVs vastly outnumber those who do (even among deer hunters in the north central and northeast part of the state). Those who recreate in non-motorized ways on public lands outnumber those who ride OHVs in terms of both the number of people and number of recreational days, and Minnesotans react negatively to suggestions that the DNR should supply more OHV trails in public satisfaction surveys when questioned about how DNR should cater to recreation tastes.
- When hunting skill and effort is reduced to twisting a throttle, hunting and habitat disappear. Motorized hunters have to continually reach further. And thus it spreads. Like cancer cells, if the use of ATVs continues to grow unabated they’ll eventually kill the host. In this case, the host is hunting.¹³

Top-of-the-line OHV models can also outpace sticker prices for many standard passenger cars. Hunting boots are cheap. Most hunters rely on “sweat equity,” not OHVs. That’s tradition. That’s how it should be, how it should remain. According to BHA member (and NRA life member) Chas S. Clifton, “Although I am 55 years old, I am not so feeble as to require motorized access everywhere I go hunting...[there are] plenty of heavily roaded public lands for those who do.”

Former Trout Unlimited Public Lands Initiative (TU-PLI) coordinator David Petersen says that “a single ATV or dirt bike ripping round-and-round can silence gobblers...and chase wary deer plumb out of the country, and there are millions of these screaming nightmares out there, with more every year. At the same time, these multiple-abuse machines are destroying the precious gifts of solitude and adventure the rest of us work so hard to find.”¹⁴

Kevin Biegler, a member of the executive board and past president of the Twin Cities chapter of Trout Unlimited, says: “We’re sick and tired of listening to ATVers cry about the need for more trails.” They have 11,000 miles of DNR inventoried trails. “The state only has 1,900 miles of trout streams and one-third of them are not viable waters for sustaining recreational fishing.”¹⁵

Other Minnesota groups, like Minnesotans for Responsible Recreation and the Izaak Walton League, have spoken out against expanded ATV use in our state forests. “They call it managed,

¹⁰ Responsive Management. “Minnesota Deer Hunters’ Opinions and Attitudes Toward Deer Management.” Presented to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources: 1/4/02

¹¹ David G. Havlick. *No Place Distant*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2002, p.98

¹² Tom Meersman. “Trouble on the trails.” [Minneapolis-St. Paul] *Star-Tribune*: 12/9/06

¹³ Scott Stouder. “Standing up for Idaho’s Rapid River.” *Backcountry Journal*: Fall 2007

¹⁴ David Petersen. “Our Very Survival.” *Backcountry Journal*: Winter 2006-2007, p.1

¹⁵ Lu Ann Hurd-Lof. “County attorney discovers loophole in ATV rules.” *Park Rapids Enterprise*: 5/15/07

but it's really not managed at all. It's unmanageable," said Rick Fry, longtime Pequaywan resident and Town Board supervisor. "We're trying to convey to [the DNR and county] that we don't want this [network of trails up here]. But no one seems to be listening to us."¹⁶

The noise and smell of an ATV can alert game animals from a long way off, so your chance of seeing game from an ATV is very small. That same noise and smell that is chasing deer away from you is also chasing them away from any other hunters in the area -- this can create very hard feelings among hunters who used stealth and stalking skills to get into good habitat only to have the deer scared off by ATVs!¹⁷

An increasing number of hunting and other conservation groups are questioning the use of ATVs in hunting, says Montana Wildlife Federation president David Stalling. "Unregulated, irresponsible and out-of-control use of ATVs threatens our hunting heritage," said Stalling. "Simply put: unmanaged ATV use is reducing habitat security, increasing big-game vulnerability and, in the long term, greatly reducing hunting opportunities."¹⁸

The late Midwest outdoorsman Tony Dean said, "I tend to agree with Stalling. For a few years, my wife and I...hunted the Cave Hills area in Harding County on an annual basis. We'd arrive early for pre-hunt scouting, but come opening morning, ATV riders carrying rifles would be out in full force. As a result, the deer would almost immediately abandon daily patterns...hunting from such a vehicle stretches the boundaries of fair chase, and interferes with other hunters."¹⁹

"Traditional hunters want a quality experience, but they are faced with ever-increasing negative impacts brought about by unmanaged ATV use on our public lands," says Stand Rauch, a lifelong hunter. "As ATV use grows unchecked, many hunters are being displaced from their most pristine and productive hunting areas on their national forests and critical wildlife habitat is being sliced into smaller and smaller pieces."²⁰

David Petersen says that in these times of general overcrowding and shrinking quiet-use opportunities on our increasingly stressed public lands, it's hard to comprehend why hunters and hunters' organizations who are quick to sound alarms about real and perceived Second Amendment and anti-hunter threats don't raise a peep of protest while the best of what's left of America's unspoiled public backcountry is chopped into ever-smaller bits by new roads and motorized trails.²¹

In "Trouble on the trails," Tom Meersman describes the damage being caused by OHVs in the MHSF: "As snow swirled at Stumphges Rapids campground in Mississippi Headwaters State Forest, flurries began coating a "No Motorized Vehicles" sign yanked from the ground and lying on its side. Boulders had been set across a trail to block all-terrain vehicles, but two of the rocks had been pulled away. Meanwhile, across the Mississippi River, a deep gouge in the side of a

¹⁶ John Myers. "Debate runs deep over ATV use in state forest." *Duluth News Tribune*: 6/17/07

¹⁷ Bureau of Land Management-Colorado (BLM-Co). "Hunting With ATVs-Responsibility or Regulation?" BLM-Co website (accessed 3/4/07): <http://www.co.blm.gov/gra/gra-atvethic.htm>

¹⁸ Tony Dean. "Hunting, ATVs a bad combo." *Argus Leader*: 1/3/07

¹⁹ Tony Dean. "Hunting, ATVs a bad combo." *Argus Leader*: 1/3/07

²⁰ Jason Kiely and Scott Kovarovich. "Now or Never: Getting a Grip on Off-Road Vehicles." *New Mexico WILD!*: Spring 2004, p.17

²¹ David Petersen. "Studies confirm that ATVs and elk don't mix." *The Durango Herald*: 3/16/07

sandy bluff showed where ATVs had climbed the slope repeatedly to reach the top. Winter is setting in, but the scars of last summer remain.”²²

As award-winning DWM Cary Carron so accurately puts it, if something isn’t done soon to reverse the take-over of public lands by OHVs, “It will be the end of hunting as we know it.” We hope you will do everything in your power to help preserve our state forest and other public lands in their natural and wild state for future generations of hunters and anglers and other outdoors enthusiasts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) that was prepared for the Matthew Lourey State Trail. MN BHA recognizes that travel management planning for DNR employees is not an easy task and we appreciate your efforts.

Sincerely,

//S//

David A. Lien
Co-Chairman, Minnesota
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
www.backcountryhunters.org

²² Tom Meersman. “Trouble on the trails.” [Minneapolis-St. Paul] *Star-Tribune*: 12/9/06

Comment #26 From: Terry Peterson [tatbrd@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 28, 2011 2:47 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Cc: Alberio, Joe (DNR); Kurt Schneider
Subject: Mathew Lourey State Trail
Attachments: No. Pine Riders Map.doc

Dear Mr. Wieland:

We, the Northern Pine Riders Snowmobile Club of Willow River, MN, oppose the proposal to open the Mathew Lourey Trail to ATV & OHM wintertime use.

It is our concern that such users will leave the Forest on our GIA snowmobile trails to access desired services in Nickerson, Duquette, Kerrick, Duxbury, and possibly Bruno and Askov. Or, such users will use these towns as start-off locations to access the Forest. Either way, use of our connecting trails entails the crossing of private lands whose owners have given us permits for snowmobile use but not for ATV/OHM. Unauthorized use of our trails on private lands creates a very serious risk of cancellation of our permit(s) resulting in loss of the trail(s).

We have previously needed to address unauthorized OHV use during the off-season with private landowners in the area. We have installed gates on our trails on private property to help control off-season use. However, these gates are opened for snowmobile use in the winter thus provide no help to control unauthorized use during that season.

We see no part of the EAW that addresses this very real problem. Your response to Question 25 (reprinted below) is lacking. While GIA snowmobile trails are noted as a nearby resource, the project-related impact mentioned above is not mentioned nor, of course, are any measures to minimize or avoid the adverse impact.

25. Nearby resources. Are any of the following resources on or in proximity to the site?

Archaeological, historical, or architectural resources? Yes ☒ No

Prime or unique farmlands or land within an agricultural preserve? Yes ☒ No

Designated parks, recreation areas, or trails? ☒ Yes No

Scenic views and vistas? Yes ☒ No

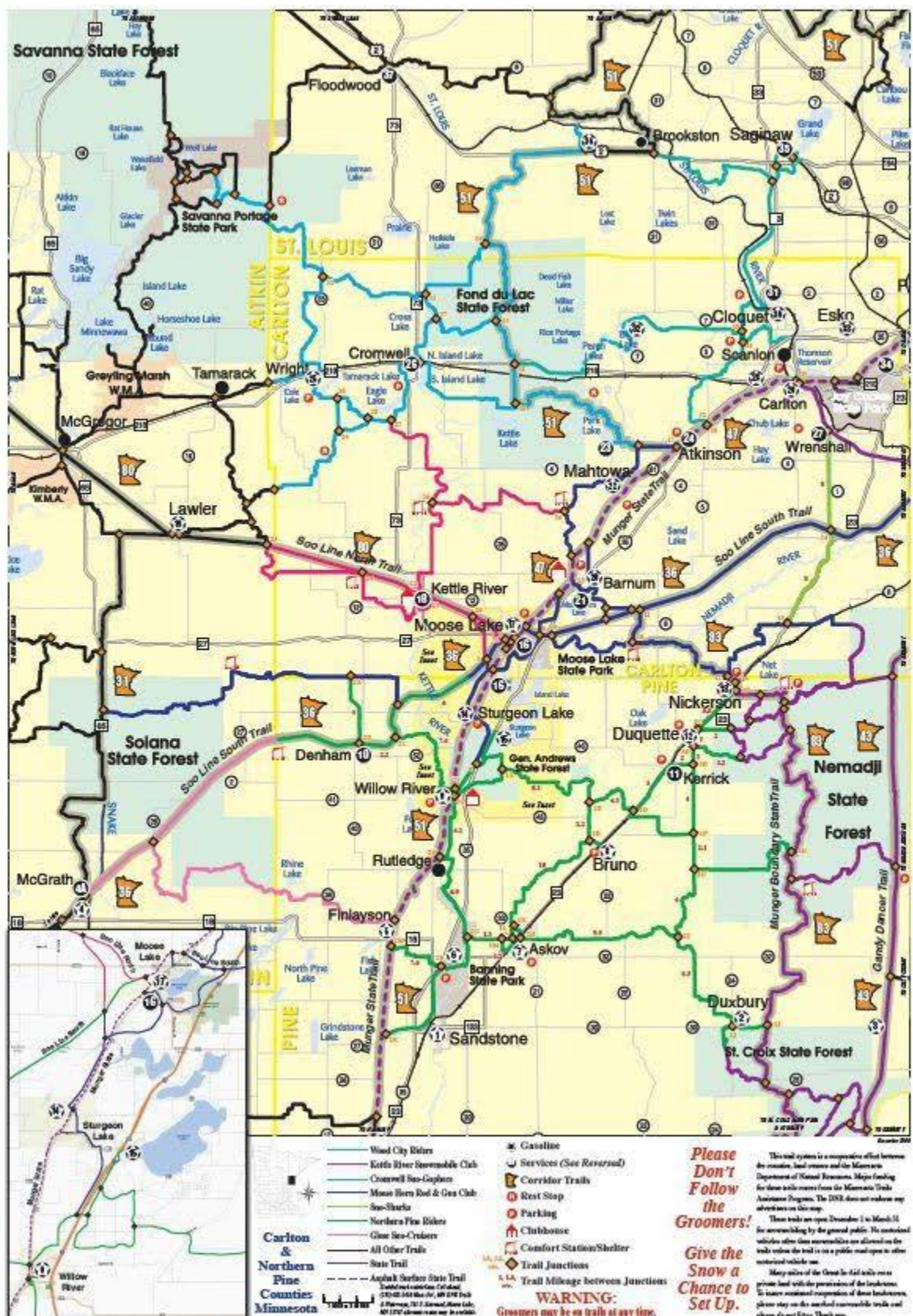
Other unique resources? ☒ Yes No

If yes, describe the resource and identify any project-related impacts on the resource. Describe any measures to minimize or avoid adverse impacts.

We strongly urge this serious potential problem be fully addressed before any decision is made to open the Lourey Trail to winter ATV/OHM use.

Attached is a copy of our trail map which shows our four connector trails to the Forest and in two cases directly to the Lourey Trail.

Sincerely,
Terry Peterson, Trail Coordinator
Northern Pine Riders Snowmobile Club
P.O. Box 28
Willow River, MN 55795



Comment #27 From: Brent Ostwald [bostwald@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 29, 2011 4:26 PM
To: Review, Environmental (DNR)
Subject: Mathew Lourey State Trail

Ms.Joyal's legitimate concerns pertaining to the Bald Eagle nesting areas in her Heritage systems comments brought to mind a nesting area just south of the Duxbury café where visitors can look across the field year after year to view the continuing return of Bald Eagles perched high above the surrounding landscape. They don't seem to mind the comings and goings of visitors or the maintenance machinery that is used for road maintenance and must certainly be louder in nature than most atvs. Brent Ostwald
Maple Grove Mn bostwald@hotmail.com



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

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May 31, 2011

Mr. Ronald Wieland
Environmental Review Planner
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

Re: Matthew Lourey State Trail – ATV and OHM Use Environmental Assessment Worksheet

Dear Mr. Wieland:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the Matthew Lourey State Trail – ATV and OHM Use project (Project) located in Carlton and Pine Counties, Minnesota. The Project proposes to construct treadway improvements on 23.3 miles of the trail to allow for all-terrain vehicle and off-highway motorcycle use. Regarding matters for which the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has regulatory responsibility and other interests, MPCA staff has the following comments for your consideration.

Physical Impacts on Water Resources (Item 12)

Please note that while Lake St. Croix is impaired for phosphorus and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is being drafted, it is also important to understand that any increase in sediment above natural processes can cover and fill in nest habitat for the biological community and mussel community. While there are currently no impaired waters in the area, the MPCA plans to assess the Upper St. Croix Watershed in 2015 or 2016 for biology and chemical parameters. It would be in the Department of Natural Resources' best interest to limit or stop any potential impacts at this time before any future impairments are found.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this project. Please provide your specific responses to our comments and notice of decision on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement. Please be aware that this letter does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the Project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions. If you have any questions concerning our review of this EAW, please contact me at 651-757-2508.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Karen Kromar', is located below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Karen Kromar
Planner Principal
Environmental Review and Feedlot Section
Regional Division

KK:mbo

cc: Craig Affeldt, MPCA, St. Paul
Christopher Klucas, MPCA, St. Paul
Suzanne Hanson, MPCA, Duluth
Reed Larson, MPCA, Brainerd