

# Burntside, Bear Island, Kabetogama and Lake Jeanette State Forests North St. Louis County

## Final Recommendations (Refer to Planning Unit Map)

### Forest Land Classification – *No Change*

***‘Managed’*** - The Planning Team recommends that state lands located outside of the Superior National Forest, or about 64% of state lands in the planning area, retain their current classification as *‘managed’* per motor vehicle use.

***‘Limited’*** – The Team recommends that state lands that lie within the proclamation boundaries of the Superior National Forest be reclassified as *‘limited’* to approximate USFS’ travel management policy. They further recommend that one 2,504 acre section of the Kabetogama State Forest be reclassified as *‘limited’*. About 24% of state lands in the planning area are proposed to be classified as *‘limited’*.

***‘Closed’*** – The Planning Team recommends that seven sites totaling 5,834 acres (state land only) be reclassified as *‘closed’* to motor vehicle use due to a history of non-motor recreational use and various environmental factors (e.g., wetlands, saturated organic or clay soils). About 12% of the planning area, including state lands located within the federal BWCAW, will be classified as *‘closed’*.

### Areas with Proposed Motor Vehicle Use Restrictions: No. St. Louis County

Source: Forest Access Route Unpublished Data, Jan. 2008. DNR DRS. Generated using ArcView extension.

Proposed Forest Land Classification	Total Size (Acres)	DNR Acres (Acres)	Inventoried Routes (Miles)
<b><u>Kabetogama State Forest</u></b>			
Site 1, Ash River East / ‘Closed’	69	69	1.0
Site 2, Ash River West / ‘Limited’	3,944	2,504	8.4
Site 3, Black Bay Trails / ‘Closed’	1,054	370	0.0
Site 4, Echo Lake / ‘Closed’	1,798	979	4.0
Site 5, Elephant Lake / ‘Closed’	3,587	2,385	3.1
Site 6, Gheen Hill / ‘Closed’	630	630	6.7
Site 7, Willow Valley / ‘Closed’	1,460	1,401	9.2
<b><u>Outside State Forest Boundaries</u></b>			
Site 8, McNiven / ‘Closed’	3,741	954	4.4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>16,283</b>	<b>8,338</b>	<b>36.8</b>

## Public Review Issues

- **Classification of the ‘Kabetogama Triangle’** – The Kabetogama State Forest is proposed to retain its current ‘managed’ classification, including that portion which lies within the proclamation boundaries of the Superior National Forest (118,500 gross ac.). This decision is intended to retain motorized hunter access on the minority of these lands (about 10%) which are in state ownership. A number of plan reviewers have asked that this section be reclassified as either ‘limited’ or ‘closed’ to match the surrounding National Forest System (closed unless posted open) travel management policy.
- **Access Routes With High REAC Scores** - The Team’s plan to close only those ‘forest access routes’ with visible damage didn’t elicit much comment. Still, these routes, which receive little traffic but fulfill critical access needs, will require frequent, systematic monitoring and timely follow-up. Trail Ambassadors may be useful here. Some routes may require up-front improvements in order to minimize future resource damage potential. Despite this special focus, some of the routes may still fall into disrepair and eventually require permanent closure.
- **Unimproved Stream Crossings** –Under this proposal, problem segments will be closed. In many cases, these routes access private lands or county hunting cabin leases. Affected landowners seemed to understand and accept, that they would need to obtain the necessary permits to improve inadequate or unpermitted stream crossings before these routes could again be officially be re-opened and legally used. The DNR and St. Louis County will provide technical assistance to affected landowners.
- **Gated Access Routes / Walking Grouse Hunters** – The Team’s proposal to seasonally gate certain *‘forest access routes’* in areas frequented by walking hunters was generally well-received. The intent is to limit motor use during wet periods and the Sept./Oct. Grouse season, but to allow for OHV use later during firearms deer season. Past compliance with existing gates has been good. Some bear baiters and beaver trappers, however, did object to the proposed early fall gate closures. They suggested that they be given legal access to use ATVs in these areas during legal trapping seasons.
- **Proposed Designation of 36 miles of State Trail (4 segments)**

No comments were received regarding the team’s proposal to designate four State Trail segments for vehicular use. One comment, however, suggesting a GIA Trail near Tower, prompted the team to recommend that an additional segment of State Trail be designated for OHV use. Portions of these state snowmobile trails are already being used legally, other portions illegally, by OHV operators. USFS intends to designate federal land segments for OHV travel. The team, likewise suggests that State (9 miles) and County (2 miles) segments be designated through this process. Public use of private/corporate segments, will need to be addressed separately, leaving potential interim gaps in these proposed vehicle routes. A State Trail Master Plan Amendment may also be required in order to effect planned changes.

  - **Arrowhead Trail near Orr (ATV/OHM)**
    - Located entirely on public land; no gaps in continuity.
    - 10 mi. of State Trail creates 47 mi. interconnected road/trail system.
  - **Arrowhead Trail near Ash Lake (ATV/OHM)**
    - Partially located on Forest Capital Partners’ land.
    - 5 mi. of State Trail creates 13+ mi. interconnected road/trail system.

- **Taconite Trail between Side Lake and Big Aspen ATV Trails (MMR/OHV)**
  - Dual designation as both MMR and OHV Trail.
  - Mostly Federal land, with some DNR and Potlatch land ownership.
  - 20 mi. of State Trail creates 65+ mi. interconnected road/trail system.
  
- **Taconite Trail near Tower / Soudan (MMR/OHV)**
  - Dual designation as both MMR and OHV Trail.
  - 1.3 miles of DNR-owned RR Grade well-suited to OHV travel.
  
- **No ORV Trails are Proposed** – No ORV-specific trails were identified on state or county lands despite a concerted effort to provide for this activity. Public land ownership patterns and complex surface and subsurface mineral interests frustrated this search. Although ORV access will be maintained on the majority of inventoried *forest access routes*, and will be allowed on an additional 20 miles of the Taconite State Trail (may require State Trail Master Plan amendment), off-road truck trail supporters were frustrated and disappointed with the DNR team’s draft proposal.

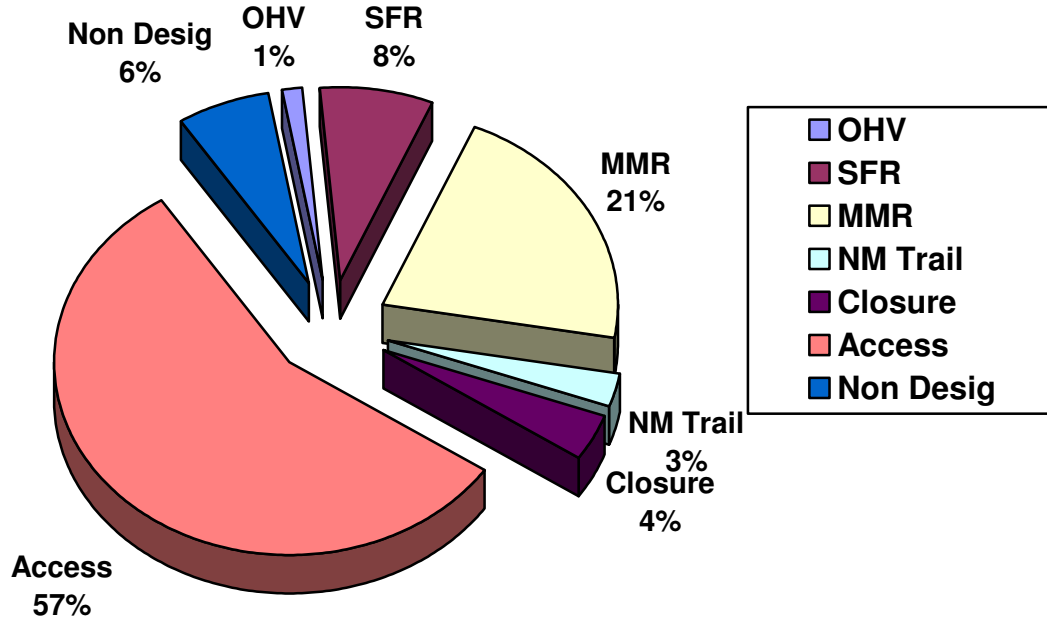
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*13 Oct. 2008*

**Final Plan**

## Proposed North St. Louis County Designations State & County Forest Lands

[Total = 1,367 Miles of Routes]



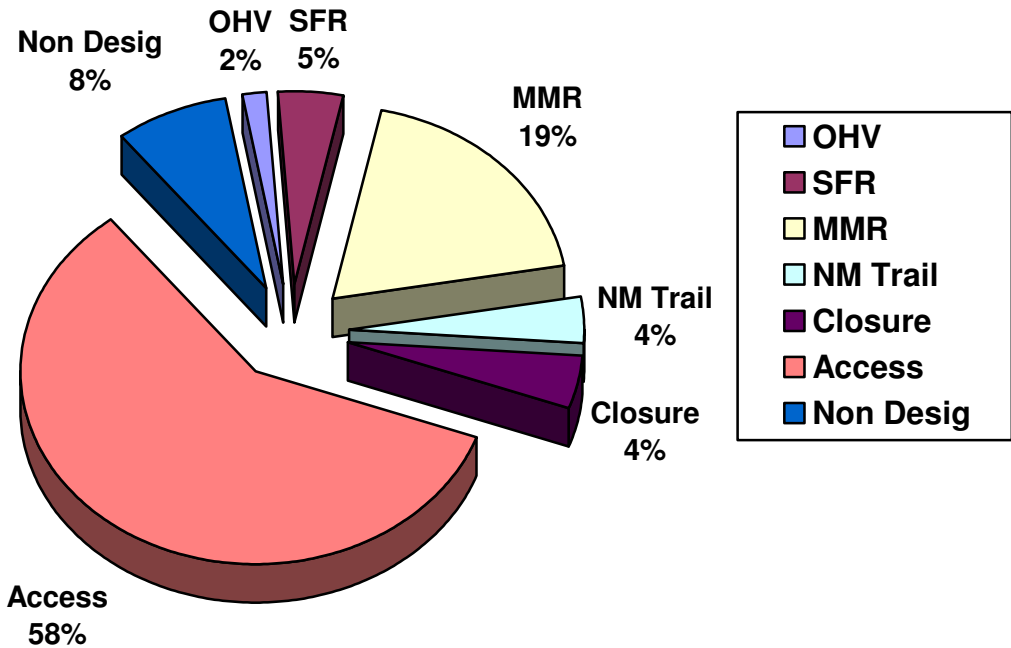
Proposed Route Designations ( No. St. Louis County )	State Land Designations (miles)		St. Louis County Designations (miles)	
Total Inventoried Routes	828.0	<b>829.2</b>	537.5	<b>537.8</b>
System Forest Road	37.0		69.2	
Min. Maintenance Forest Road	146.6		135.1	
Non-designated Routes	572.6		320.3	
Proactive closures	34.8	<b>570.9</b>	15.5	<b>17.3</b>
In <i>closed</i> forests	0.0		0.3	
In <i>limited</i> forests	71.8	<b>63.4</b>	32.8	<b>20.5</b>
In <i>managed</i> forests ( <i>access routes</i> )	466.0	<b>472.7</b>	271.7	<b>281.5</b>
ATV & OHM Trail	4.1		2.1	
ORV Trails	0.0		0.0	
Dual-Designated MMR/OHV	4.4		0.0	
Gated / Seasonally Closed	30.5		3.0	
Non-Motor Trails	35.8		7.8	
	<b>31.6</b>		<b>6.7</b>	

**RED** indicates change resulting from public review and comment.

**Final Plan**

## Proposed North St. Louis County Designations State Forest Lands Only

[Total = 829 Miles of Routes]



Proposed Route Designations ( State Lands Only )	Lands Inside State Forest (miles)		Lands Outside State Forest (miles)	
Total Inventoried Routes	549.8	<b>546.0</b>	286.2	<b>283.2</b>
System Forest Road	35.1		1.9	
Min. Maintenance Forest Road	108.5		42.7 <b>41.5</b>	
Non-designated Routes	357.4		215.2	
Proactive closures	23.3		11.5	<b>213.5</b>
In <i>closed</i> forests	0.0		0.0	
In <i>limited</i> forests	12.7		52.4	<b>50.7</b>
In <i>managed</i> forests ( <i>access routes</i> )	321.4		151.3	
ATV & OHM Trail	3.6		3.9 <b>5.6</b>	
ORV Trails	0.0		0.0	
Dual-Designated MMR/OHV	0.0		4.4 <b>3.5</b>	
Gated / Seasonally Closed	20.5		11.4 <b>10.0</b>	
Non-Motor Trails	24.7 <b>20.9</b>		11.1 <b>10.7</b>	

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