

OHV Strategic Master Plans – Public Comment Summary

This document captures the major themes identified through a comprehensive review of public comments submitted in response to Minnesota’s draft Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Strategic Master Plans. It provides a structured summary of recurring themes, concerns and recommendations to support transparent evaluation, meaningful revisions and future planning efforts. The framework is intended to guide strategic alignment with stakeholder and user input and ensure a balanced representation of diverse perspectives across the OHV planning landscape.

All comments were reviewed and considered, and those offering specific, actionable feedback or raising planning-relevant issues were especially helpful to inform revisions to the final plans. Comments that expressed general opinions, repeated commonly stated views or addressed themes outside the scope of the strategic planning process were taken into account, but may not have all resulted in specific plan modifications. Each comment has informed the planning process and contributed to a balanced and forward-looking approach to OHV recreation in Minnesota.

Themes and Response Table

Themes	Areas of Focus	DNR Response
Public Engagement	Requests for future public involvement and long-term stakeholder collaboration	The DNR remains committed to inclusive and transparent planning processes. We recognize the importance of long-term stakeholder collaboration and the contributions of OHV user groups, including their economic, volunteer and social roles. Based on public input, the plans were reinforced with additional language highlighting opportunities for continued collaboration with partners, including local governments, property owners and community organizations. While formal engagement structures will vary by project, we continue to evaluate ways to strengthen outreach and feedback loops. Input from property owners and local communities remains a valued part of our process, and the final plans emphasize balancing diverse perspectives while maintaining clarity in how planning and designation decisions are made.
	Desire to acknowledge motorized user group contributions (volunteerism, economic, social)	
	Calls for stronger property owner involvement	
	Questions about transparency in planning and trail designation	

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Environmental and Resource Impact Concerns	General environmental degradation (erosion, dust, wildlife disruption, trail overuse)	Environmental stewardship remains foundational to our trail planning and management efforts. The DNR follows established regulatory frameworks, including MEPA compliance and internal environmental review processes, to assess and mitigate potential impacts such as erosion, habitat fragmentation and the spread of invasive species. Based on public input, the plans were reinforced with updated language clarifying how environmental considerations are applied, including explicit references to MEPA, invasive species prevention and enforcement tools that promote both safety and compliance. The final plans also highlight alignment with broader state policy such as the Climate Action Framework, and with DNR policy such as Operational Order 113 (Invasive Species Prevention and Management). Through these updates, we aim to communicate more clearly how safeguards and safety considerations are integrated into planning while continuing to support responsible recreation that considers sound, emissions and sensitive natural areas.
	Specific environmental issues, including sound and noise pollution, air pollution and emissions (climate concerns and GHGs), spread of invasive species (with multiple requests for stronger policies), and MEPA compliance concerns (Minnesota Environmental Policy Act)	
	Concerns about trail proximity to sensitive lands (e.g., BWCA, SNAs, wetlands)	
	Wildlife protection and habitat fragmentation	
	Dust and sedimentation concerns	
	Climate change alignment and planning	
Comparative Observations	Minnesota trails vs. Wisconsin (trail quality, access, economic impact)	We appreciate public feedback that draws comparisons with other states and recreational user groups. While Wisconsin provides a nearby reference point, broader benchmarking opportunities will continue to be considered. Based on public input, the plans were reviewed to ensure language remains clear, neutral and inclusive of varying recreation perspectives. The DNR recognizes that managing shared use of public lands and facilities requires careful balance. The final plans emphasize equitable access, sustainable trail development and safe recreation for all user groups. Public perception of plan inclusiveness is taken seriously and will continue to inform how content is communicated.
	Concerns about motorized impacts on quiet recreation and non-motorized impacts on motorized access and funding	
	Property owners: mix of support and opposition to proximate trails	
	Perceptions of plan tone, including views that the plan is biased against motorized users, or that motorized recreation is over-prioritized	

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Trail Design, Maintenance and Accessibility	Support or concern for expansion of OHV trails	<p>Public input has reinforced the importance of maintaining access and emphasizing connectivity while ensuring trails are sustainable, safe and responsive to user needs. Comments regarding single-track OHM opportunities, technical and family-friendly trail design and access to amenities are reflected in the broader goals of strategic trail development. The DNR acknowledges the desire for both trail separation and shared use, and continues to invest in maintenance, signage and enforcement to support safe and positive trail experiences. Safety is a guiding principle in trail planning and management, and project-specific planning and partnerships with local sponsors will remain key to addressing site-specific challenges and opportunities. While the Strategic Master Plans did not identify or evaluate individual trail alignments or connection projects, expressions of support for specific systems were documented and shared with OHV program staff for consideration in future planning efforts.</p>
	Call for more single-track OHM trails, especially near metro areas	
	Desire for more technical and family-friendly trail options	
	Requests for improved trail access to amenities (fuel, food, lodging)	
	Trail sharing vs. separation (e.g., snowmobiles, non-motorized, multi-use)	
	Desire for maintenance and signage improvements	
	Questions about trail restrictions (seasonal use, enforcement)	
	Concern about quality and quantity of existing trail infrastructure	
	Trail systems specifically mentioned, including strong support for connecting the Alex Laveau Trail/Wrenshall Grade to Wisconsin, as well as references to the CJ Ramstad/North Shore Trail and the Sawmill, General Andrews and Rum River OHM areas	
Information Access	Requests for public access to consultant maps, complete trail inventory and ArcGIS data	<p>We recognize that transparency and clarity are essential to building and maintaining public trust. Some planning data (such as consultant maps and GIS layers) were extrapolated from broader datasets limiting how they can be shared and interpreted without specialized software. Even so, we strive to make key information accessible through public-facing documents such as FAQs, maps and summary materials. The plans were updated in several areas to provide clearer explanations of environmental review requirements, invasive species prevention and sound standards. At the same time, the DNR is continuing to explore opportunities to improve public clarity around trail access rules, GIA processes and regulatory responsibilities across jurisdictions. While the Strategic Master Plans are not intended to be live-updating documents, we remain committed to their periodic review,</p>
	Confusion around trail access, regulation visibility or GIA process	
	Requests to update Strategic Master Plans on a rolling or annual basis	

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		<p>generally on a multi-year cycle such as every several years, as need and resources dictate, to ensure relevance over time. Clear and accessible information also supports safe and consistent use of the trail system by all recreation groups.</p>
Enforcement and Compliance	Perceived lack of enforcement for OHV rules and trail restrictions	<p>Enforcement is a shared responsibility between the DNR and local partners. We acknowledge the importance of education, signage evaluations and user accountability to support compliance and rider safety. Public suggestions around enforcement topics were noted, and the plans were updated to reinforce the role of conservation officers and Trail Ambassadors in promoting safe and responsible trail use. The DNR also recognizes the important role riders play in modeling trail ethics and responsible behavior, which aligns with existing DNR and partner education materials. The DNR will continue to explore a range of tools to support compliance and strengthen safety across the system.</p>
	Support for increased fines, signage and education	
	Suggestions for improving user responsibility (volunteer monitors, peer pressure)	
Specific Suggested Edits	Plan tone and language improvements (reduce perceived bias, use neutral framing)	<p>We appreciate the thoughtful feedback on plan language, formatting and content. Based on public input, the plans were refined to strengthen neutral tone, clarify tables and figures and ensure references to existing law and interagency coordination are clear. Acknowledgment of club contributions, distinctions between public and private access and alignment with state policy goals are also reflected in the final edits. These refinements are intended to improve clarity and transparency while reinforcing the DNR’s emphasis on safe, sustainable and inclusive trail management.</p>
	Support for stronger interagency collaboration and tribal consultation	
	Suggestion to remove or revise specific tables, graphics or unclear data	
	Concerns about the accuracy of economic impact data (especially WI comparisons)	
	Requests for improved clarity on implementation timelines, strategies and metrics	
	Suggestions to differentiate between private (e.g., motocross tracks) and public access	
	Requests for recognition of clubs’ work on trail development and maintenance	

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	Call for greater planning alignment with state environmental policy (MEPA), the Climate Action Framework (CAF) and Operational Order 113 (Invasive Species)	
General Opinion	<p>Strong support for more trails and access (especially near metro areas)</p> <p>General appreciation for planning effort and club partnerships</p> <p>Frustration with perceived anti-motorized bias in tone, content or stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Desire for equity between user groups (motorized and non-motorized)</p> <p>Frustration over funding allocation or plan development delays (especially OHM)</p> <p>Opposition to trail expansion, particularly near sensitive natural areas</p> <p>Support for OHV use with environmental safeguards</p> <p>Requests for more accurate representation of youth, older adult and disabled riders</p> <p>Concerns about overrepresentation of organized clubs vs. individual residents</p>	<p>Public comments reflected a wide range of perspectives, from strong support for OHV access to concerns about environmental safeguards and conflicts with other users of public lands. The DNR values all viewpoints and has worked to reflect the diversity of input in meaningful ways. The plans were updated to reinforce environmental review, invasive species prevention, sound standards and safety education, ensuring that public feedback is meaningfully represented. We recognize frustration expressed around delays and representation and remain committed to improving transparency and responsiveness. Each comment has informed the planning process and contributed to a balanced and forward-looking approach to OHV management in Minnesota.</p>