

Rum River State Forest Trail Revisions Project

Why is the DNR revising the trails?

In 2007, the DNR completed a forest classification and road/trail designation for all Minnesota State Forests. During this planning effort, the DNR classified Rum River State Forest as “limited” for recreational motor vehicle use, meaning off-highway vehicles may use all forest roads and trails signed as open for their use. However, no trails were designated during this process. The DNR is now reviewing the forest for trail connections and designations. This process will *not* change the limited classification.

What lands are included in this project?

This review will include the Rum River State Forest and surrounding scattered Forestry lands. Rum River State Forest contains over 40,000 acres of land owned by the DNR, county/local governments and private land owners. The DNR owns approximately 21,000 acres that comprise the project area.

What is/is not included in this project?

This project will review trail designations in the area, both motorized and non-motorized. This includes ATV, OHM, ORV, horse and hunter-walking. Also, the DNR may designate areas where the hunter-trapper exemptions do not apply. Changing the forest classification from limited is also not included in this project.

What trails are currently designated within the project area?

Currently, there are no designated trails within Rum River State Forest. However, non-motorized uses (hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, etc.) may use access routes throughout the forest lands. All uses may also use all designated forest roads.

What are the benefits of designating trail?

Designation ensures the trail will receive funding for maintenance, signage and mapping. In a limited forest, such as Rum River, a motorized designation allows the trail to be open for motorized use.

Where will the money for these changes come from?

Designated OHV trails are funded through the dedicated OHV accounts. Money in these accounts comes OHC registration fees. The DNR may also work with local clubs who may be interested to add the new trails to the Grant in Aid System. Non-motorized trails may have dedicated funding accounts or be funded through general appropriation money.

How long will this process take?

We anticipate the planning process will take 6-9 months. After a signed designation, trails should be open for use within 2 seasons.

How will the public be involved?

The DNR values public input throughout this process. During an initial 30-day scoping period, we encourage members of the public to submit your comments, ideas and suggestions to the DNR. Once a draft plan is completed, there will be a 60-day public review period followed by a public meeting where you may submit comments on the proposed changes. All public input will be read and considered.

What about the environment?

Trails will be developed based on standards found in the DNR's Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines manual as well as the National Off-Highway Conservation Counsel's Great Trails manual. Use of these manuals helps guide trail designers to develop trails that are environmentally sustainable. Trails will be routed to avoid sensitive environmental areas whenever possible. If a trail must cross a sensitive environmental area, appropriate measures will be taking to reduce the impact to the area.

Before designation, all proposed trails will be subject to a rigorous DNR interdisciplinary review. This will include checking trails against the National Heritage Information System (NHIS) data for potential conflicts with state listed threatened and endangered species, field checks where necessary and, if necessary, formal environmental review.

Additional questions/comments?

For additional information, please contact Joe Unger, OHV Planner, Parks and Trails Division, MN Department of Natural Resources at 651-259-5279 or joe.unger@state.mn.us or Tim Edgeton, Acquisition and Development Specialist, Parks and Trails Division, MN Department of Natural Resources at 320-223-7861 or tim.edgeton@state.mn.us.

Comments may be submitted to: Joe Unger, Parks and Trails Division, 500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155. Or email to foresttrailplanning.dnr@state.mn.us.