

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 700

ROADS, TRAILS AND ACCESS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Page</u>
700	ACCESS CONTROL	3
705	OBJECTIVES	4
710	ROADS	4
	710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY ROADS	5
	710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS	7
	710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS	7
720	RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS	8
	720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE	8
725	NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS	9
	725.1 HIKING TRIALS	9
	725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails	9
	725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails	9
	725.2 BICYCLE TRAILS.....	10
	725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails.	10
	725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails	10
	725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING TRAILS	10
	725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails	10
	725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails	10
	725.4 CROSS-COUNTY SKI TRAILS.....	11
	725.4.1 Undesignated cross-country ski trails	11
	725.4.2 Designated cross-country ski trails	11
	725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL USE	11

730	MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS	11
730.1	SNOWMOBILE TRAILS	11
730.1.1	Undesignated Snowmobile Trails.....	11
730.1.2	Designated Snowmobile Trails.....	12
730.2	ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE (ATV) TRAILS.....	13
730.2.1	Undesignated ATV Trails.....	13
730.2.2	Designated ATV Trails	13
730.3	OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS	13
730.3.1	Undesignated Motorized Trails.....	13
730.3.2	Designated Motorized Trails	13
735	RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS	13
740	WATER ACCESS	14
740.1	COUNTY FOREST BOAT ACCESS	14
740.2	TOWNSHIP BOAT ACCESS	15
740.3	DNR BOAT ACCESS	15
740.4	UNDEVELOPED ACCESS POINTS ON COUNTY FOREST	15
745	WILD LAKES	15
750	WETLANDS	16
755	ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS	16
760	PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS	17
765	BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	17
770	SIGNS	17
770.1	STANDARDS	18

700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management and protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Florence County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is large and diverse, a broad network of access routes have developed. A combination of geography, soils, vegetation, surface waters, seasons of the year, presence/absence of roads or trails, ownership of adjoining lands, and public regulations interact to control access to any part of the Forest.

Many of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails and are used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. The locations and standards for these earlier roads were not routinely established by county personnel.

Over the years, the road density and frequency of vehicle use on the Forest has increased in response to an expanding number of motorized recreational vehicles and to an active timber harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. The policy of the Florence County Forest is to work on each issue on a case-by-case basis.

User conflict between groups: e.g., snowmobiling versus cross-country skiing; hunting on foot versus use of vehicles for access to game populations.

Safety: e.g., pleasure riding of horses on the same trail with ATV vehicle traffic, or hiking.

Erosion: soils eroding due to use, or over-use by vehicles.

Damage to access: rutted or impassable roads requiring costly repair by the county or other specific user groups (e.g., snowmobile club).

Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of a resource; examples could be reduced availability of trophy-sized

deer, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, over harvest of bobcat.

Crowding: e.g. complaints from hunters about intensified competition for traditional hunting areas as a result of better access.

Fires: e.g. increased exposure of the resource to forest fire occurrence.

Endangered species management: e.g. disturbance of timber wolf den areas, eagle and osprey nest disturbance.

Invasive species: e.g. introduction of invasive exotic species along travel routes.

Developmental trends: e.g. preservation of the County Forest solitude by limiting access versus development of high intensity use by additional roads and unlimited access.

Road placement: e.g. some roads should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

Clear and concise policy for the public.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide direction to the committee and resource managers in order to maintain a network of roads and trails on the Florence County Forest. This will meet the needs for resource management and protection activities, as well as provide public access for recreation opportunities.
2. Identify the distribution, density, and types of roads and uses of roads and trails needed to establish a safe and efficient transportation and recreation system that complements the economic, environmental, and social interest in the County Forest.
3. Identify the existing and future County Forest roads eligible for transportation aids under s.86.315(1), Wis. Stats.
4. Identify areas on the County Forest where the access is limited or restricted.
5. Identify the provisions and criteria that will be policy when addressing management issues on the County Forest.

710 ROADS

Florence County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by the County, private contractors, under the direction of the county, or other public resource agencies. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads; permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads.

New road establishment should consider information identifying areas with sensitive soils or severe slopes that have the potential for adverse water quality impacts from land management practices. County staff can work with local DNR water resources staff to develop site-specific measures where appropriate.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS

These roads are the primary roads accessing the County Forest. They are designed, constructed, and maintained for year-round use. These roads serve essential access corridors for multiple use management. Some of these roads are graveled and routinely graded. Vehicle use may be restricted at various times of the year to minimize physical damage to the road or to accommodate a groomed snowmobile trail.

Some forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and a 20-foot roadway width. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. The following table lists the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats. Also included are roads proposed for addition once improvements meet statute requirements.

FLORENCE COUNTY CURRENT AND FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	LENGTH (MI) Current	LENGTH (MI) Future	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Commonwealth	5.29	3.20*	Keyes Peak, La Salle Falls, Pine Flowage Rd, Pine Creek Rd, N. Sand Lake*
Aurora	1.0		Mallard Road
Florence	0	2.5*	Montangue*
Fence	0	1.55*	Lund's Kopka Rd.*
Fern	7.9		Jennings Falls Rd., Jutra Lake Rd., Bass Lake Fire Lane, Washburn Falls, Bradles Blvd.
Homestead	19.76	2.00*	Spur Lake, Devils Run, Marm Lake, Nichols Lane, Patties Motel South, Buckskin Lake, Rural Carpets, Hall's Creek Flowage Rd, 3 Mile Rd, Washburn Falls Rd, Lamon Tangue Grouse Area North rd. Patties motel N Rd., Marm Lake Burma Connection*
Total	33.95	9.25	

*() Indicates the mileage of existing roads that will be improved and certified during the next fifteen years. There is a map of these roads on page 900-38.

These permanent primary roads will be maintained and remain open to public use.

These roads may be plowed during the winter months for access to private lands, timber sales, etc. Plowing will be the responsibility of the landowner or timber sale contract holder.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

These roads often serve a variety of uses including forest management, fire protection, and recreation. These roads are maintained as part of a permanent road system but are often narrower than permanent primary roads and are built and maintained to lower standards. These roads are designed and built to accommodate timber hauling. Some of these roads are designed for use only when the ground is frozen or firm.

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked and/or signed as restricted from motor vehicle use. ATV travel is acceptable on all roads under the jurisdiction of the Forestry and Parks Department open to vehicle traffic unless signed otherwise, gated or bermed.

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities or fire protection. These roads will be gated, bermed, or blocked with rocks, stumps etc. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

These roads are designed and constructed for short-term use for a specific project; often for timber harvest access. These roads are used only for a short duration and when the activity is done, the temporary road is closed. These roads are naturally or artificially revegetated and closed by use of earthen berms/bunkers or other physical barriers.

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will include protection of perpetually wet soils, human safety, protection of sensitive or endangered species, and prevention of illegal dumping.

The need for new temporary roads will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Road locations will be included in designing timber harvests. Consideration will be given to the objectives within each County Forest unit, existing road density, potential use, and soil type.

720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities on the Forest. An important role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause long-term natural resource damage, and that are compatible with other uses. Management activities adjacent to recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations will be made to accommodate the recreational use. The administrator has the authority to open, close or relocate trails. Whenever possible recreation trails will be located on a road that is available on the County Forest.

720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Committee. Groups requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long term funding and maintenance of proposed trails. Organized trail uses and group-sponsored activities must protect Florence County with \$ 1,000,000.00 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage.

Any recreational trail development in Florence County will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-2010) to mitigate any adverse impacts. For projects requiring a storm water permit an erosion control plan will be prepared for each

project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed. NR216, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 283.33, Wis. Stats requirements will be implemented.

725 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

725.1 HIKING

725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

The non-motorized trail systems on the County Forest were developed in the process on harvesting and transporting timber. These walking trails are normally mowed annually and reseeded at approximately 5 year intervals. The trails and log landings(developed into grassy openings) provide an opportunity for the walking hunter, wildlife watching, cross-country skiing, and a general hiking trail. The trail system is either bermed and /or gated with signage at the various trail heads. The existing trails are:

- (1) Hall's Creek Flowage Walking Trail
- (2) Bush Lake Flats Trails
- (3) LamonTangue Creek Ruffed Grouse Walking Trials
- (4) Lake Emily Walking Trails
- (5) Aurora Winchester Trails

Funding for construction and maintenance of these trails and any future trails may be through state grants, private donations such as the Ruffed grouse Society, Whitetails Unlimited and County funds. Florence County Ordinance #92-2 (Found in Chapter 900) prohibits vehicular travel on gated or bermed roads.

725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

Management practices on, and adjacent to, these designated trails will be designed to maintain the character of the landscape and minimize disruption to the trail and its users. The trail corridors are considered Zone B aesthetic management zones and referenced in Chapter 500. Temporarily rerouting the trail to avoid conflict and safety concerns may be necessary. Trees and signing identifying the trail will be maintained and protected by

inclusion into timber sale contracts. Trails bisecting timber sales will be cleared of trees and logging debris at all times.

LaSalle Falls Hiking Trail

This is a 1-mile hiking trail to LaSalle Falls. This trail is located north of County Highway C on the LaSalle Falls road. The trail starts on the County Forest and runs north continuing through the Pine-Popple Wild Rivers land to the falls.

Washburn Falls Hiking Trail

This is ¼ mile walking trail to Washburn Falls. The trail is located north of County Highway C on the Washburn Falls Road. County Forestry & Parks and DNR Staff maintain the trail.

725.2 BICYCLING

725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use may be restricted in specific areas if use causes erosion or other environmental damages.

725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

Keyes Peak Bicycle trails. This trail system starts at the Keyes Peak Ski Lodge and runs up the hill on existing woods roads and County Forest roads.

725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING

725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for horseback trail riding. Off-trail riding within 50 feet of rivers, streams, or lakes is not permitted except when watering horses.

725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

Florence County forest has two designated horse trails. The Hall's creek trails, with the trail head located near the Hall's Lake Boat Landing. The other is the Bush Lake Flats trail with the trail head located off of Tower Road.

725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Cross-country skiing on groomed snowmobile and ATV trails is not advised due to serious safety concerns.

725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

Two regularly groomed ski trails are available for public use on the Forest and are maintained for public skiing. The Lake Emily Ski Trail and the Hall's Creek Ski Trail are maintained by the Forestry and Parks Department. Motorized vehicle use is not permitted on these two trail systems without authorization.

725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED USE

Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including, but not limited to, snowshoeing, dog sledding and, hunting on foot are permitted on all trails except where otherwise posted as closed.

730 MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

The use of motorized vehicles on the Forest continues to increase. The design, maneuverability, and power of the vehicles have improved. This has led to greater use; increased trail use conflicts and increased expenses for trail maintenance.

730.1 SNOWMOBILING

730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

No cross-country use is permitted; however, snowmobile use is permitted on all open (none

bermed or gated) logging roads, and fire lanes when the ground is snow-covered. Gated areas of the county forest are open for snowmobile use when the gates are open. Use on the Forest during other times of the year is not allowed.

730.1.2 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Two types of groomed snowmobile trails are authorized on the Forest: state-funded trails and local club trails. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance, and insurance obligations between Florence County and local snowmobile clubs.

State trails: A system of state approved and funded snowmobile trails is authorized on designated trails, logging roads, and fire lanes. This system is part of the statewide network of snowmobile trails which links Florence County with adjoining counties as well as the rest of the state, and with the State of Michigan Trails. Snowmobile registration and out-of-state user fees are used to support trail development, signing, maintenance, grooming and bridge construction.

Local trails: A smaller network of local club-sponsored snowmobile trails is also permitted on designated trails, logging roads, and fire lanes. Maintenance of these trails is supported by club membership fees and fund raising activities.

All groomed snowmobile trails on the county forest are closed to all cars and trucks, unless vehicle use is authorized by Florence County (see ordinances chapter 900). When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free from debris and equipment, and with a minimum of 3 inches of snowpack.. Trail width shall not exceed 16 feet.

DNR's Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the county. Only trail signs that provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private

and business signs must match sign standards in sign handbook. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden or metal posts. Any signs placed on trees must be done so with aluminum nails.

730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

No cross-country use is permitted; however, existing snowmobile trails, logging roads on County Forest lands and County Forest roads are open to ATV use from June 1st through March 31st. ATVs may not be operated in any wetland area, behind any gated, bermed, blocked or signed trail, or on any designated non-motorized trail. Trail use may be temporarily closed for protection against forest fires during dry periods.

730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

Two types of designated ATV trails exist; state funded and club trails. State funded trails run both in the summer and winter months. Summer trails are open from May 1st through November 31st and winter trails are open from December 1st through March 31st when snow depth is 4 inches or greater, and the temperature is below 32 degrees. The county may have contracts with local clubs and organizations for the grooming, brushing, signing and maintenance of these trails.

730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

730.3.1 Undesignated

Other unregistered or unlicensed motorized recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited on those trails designated for other recreational uses or where trails are rocked, bermed, gated or otherwise blocked. Cross-country motorized use is also prohibited on the county forest.

730.3.2 Designated

None

735 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest may also provide and designate areas where motorized equipment is not permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. The following areas have been designated as restricted access areas on the Florence County Forest:

The Florence County Forest is in the process of assessing all lands for PDMD use. This is to comply with a recent Department of Justice ruling. **740 WATER ACCESS**

As a result of the wide distribution of lakes, streams, rivers, and other surface waters on the Forest, water access may be planned, developed, or restricted as a component of the overall Forest access management plan. Several boat landings, canoe landings, and adjacent roads currently provide water access on the Forest primarily for recreational activities. In addition, these water access points also provide water supply points for fire apparatus working to suppress forest fires or nearby structural fires.

The existing water access points will be maintained to provide a place to launch a small fishing boat or canoe. Not all watercraft will be able to use these access points. These landings are built for public use and not for private boat mooring sites. Mooring or storing boats for longer than 24 hours is prohibited.

The following public boat access sites have been developed on the Florence County Forest and are open to public use:

740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY FLORENCE COUNTY FORESTRY AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

1. KEYES LAKE
2. LAKE EMILY

3. WEST BASS LAKE
4. HALL'S CREEK FLOWAGE
5. SEA LION LAKE

740.2 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY TOWNS.
NONE ON THE COUNTY FOREST

740.3 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY DNR.
NONE ON THE COUNTY FOREST

740.4 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS

Other undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats currently exist on the Forest. These are used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but have not been developed for boat trailer launching. These sites are not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee. It has been the committee's long time goal to have public access to all waters in the county.

745 WILD LAKES

The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those restricted use areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, watercraft, or snowmobiles except when snow covered. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes and streams are owned by Florence County. Counties may request that townships, under authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., establish regulations restricting motorized use on these surface waters. Canoes, kayaks, and boats propelled by wind, oars, or electric motors are permitted. Gasoline or diesel powered equipment is not permitted. The intent of these restrictions is to protect the aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow human access. On the Florence County Forest the following lakes are designated as "Wild Lakes":

None

750 WETLANDS

In addition to surface waters, all wetlands on the Forest are closed to motorized recreational vehicle use when soils are not frozen. Vehicle use during non-frozen seasons causes soil rutting, compaction and damage to vegetation. The wetlands are not listed individually here but include all areas where soils, groundwater or surface waters support the growth of vegetation commonly associated with wetland plant communities.

755 ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS

Applications by private parties to build or improve access roads through County Forest land will be considered by the Committee on a case-by-case basis. The following stipulations will be adhered to before an access is granted.

1. Access across County Forest lands must be demonstrated by the applicant as the route of last resort. Proposed uses must be documented by the applicant.
2. No legal easement will be granted, just permission to cross county lands.
3. Road improvements and upgrading must be approved and will be supervised by the Forestry Department staff. Prior notification of three (3) days is required before work starts.
5. All wood cut is the property of Florence County.
6. Roadway must be opened to the public through county land. No gate may be erected on county land.
7. The County continues full ownership of the improved roadway; however, it shall not be liable for maintenance or upkeep of the road.
8. Permittee waives any rights to any declaration of ownership or interest in the road on county land. The access is granted upon by written approval received from the Florence County Forestry Department.
9. There is no fee for an access permit on the Florence County Forest.

760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered under Chapter 500-25, Special Uses.

765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-2010). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. Chapter 6 of the BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in these areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-2010. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

770 SIGNS

Signs on the County Forest will be used discreetly to perform and function with minimal disruption to the multiple uses of the Forest. Private signs promoting personal, commercial or political objectives will not be permitted without authorization from Florence County. Signs erected by the county for management purposes or by non-profit recreational trail groups will be as follows:

1. Informational Type Signs
 - A. Interpretive Signs - to educate the general public about forest management practices.
 - B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Florence County Forest property.
 - C. Trail Markers - to provide direction and safety to trail users.

- D. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers - to identify points of interest.
 - E. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.
 - F. Directional Markers.
2. Regulatory Type Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

770.1 SIGNING STANDARDS

To assure that signs will serve a purpose without damaging aesthetics, the following standards will be maintained:

- 1. All signs will be mounted on treated wood posts or steel posts.
- 2. Routed wood signs will be used wherever practical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when used, will be of neat appearance.
- 3. Signs placed on snowmobile trails must conform to state standards and be approved by the committee.
- 4. All authorized signs shall be protected by ordinance from being damaged, defaced, obstructed, removed, or possessed by unauthorized persons.
- 5. All unauthorized signs will be removed by the Forestry staff. No compensation will be afforded for loss or damage to signs during removal. Individuals erecting unauthorized signs may be prosecuted under s. 943.13(3), Wis. Stats.