

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 700

ROADS AND ACCESS

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700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management, 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 opportunities has developed over the years. 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 used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. The locations and standards for these earlier roads were not routinely established by county personnel, nor were they maintained on a regular basis.

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 provide access for our timber harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. But the diverse demands for, and uses of, the County Forest have reached the point where integrated access management planning is needed.

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 without routine maintenance.

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

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

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

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

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Provide direction to the committee and resource managers in order to maintain a network of roads and trails on the 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 a variety of contractors as well as the Florence County Highway Department. The highway department provides equipment and labor for the routine maintenance as well as any major projects on the Florence County Forest.

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 forest hydrologists to develop site-specific measures where appropriate and to follow all required permitting

processes when applicable

The forest should have enough roads to provide sufficient access, without degrading water resources, while still maintaining recreational experience. Program evaluation of road infrastructure will continuously occur.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS (County 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 as 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 for safety reasons.

Forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads in this program must meet minimum design standards set by s. 86.315(4)(a) and 86.315(3) Wis. Stats., and administered by WI DOT. 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 WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	LENGTH (MI) CURRENT	LENGTH (MI) FUTURE	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Commonwealth	1.46	1.46	Flowage Road
	2.33	2.33	LaSalle Falls Road
	1.00	1.00	Keyes Overlook Road

	.89	.89	Fire Lane South
	.50	.50	Pine Creek Road
Aurora	1.00	1.00	Mallard Drive
Fern	1.10	1.10	LaSalle Falls Road
	1.65	1.65	Jennings Falls Road
	2.66	2.66	Washburn Falls Road
	1.65	1.65	Jutra Lake Road
	.84	.84	Fire Lane Road
Homestead	1.00	1.00	3 Mile Road
	1.37	1.37	Buckskin Lake Road
	1.25	1.25	Patties Motel Road
	1.55	1.55	Devils Connection road
	1.5	1.5	Devils Run
	.5	.5	Patties Motel South
	.5	.5	N Grouse Area Road
	2.10	2.10	Halls Creek Dam Road
	2.01	2.01	Marm Lake Road
	2.22	2.22	Nichols Lane
	1.25	1.25	Rural Carpets Road

	3.45	3.45	Spur Lake Road
	2.61	2.61	Washburn Falls Road
Fence	0	4.60*	Buckskin Lake Road Extension
	36.39	40.99	

*() Indicates the mileage of existing roads that will be improved and certified during the next ten years.

These permanent primary roads will be maintained and remain open to public use. The roads are not plowed during the winter months unless needed for timber sale purposes or recreational trail head access. These roads are graded twice per year on average and gravel is added as needed. The goal for each year is to upgrade approximately 1-2 miles of road with pit run gravel and topped with crushed gravel as needed.

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. 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. The policy on the Florence County Forest is to allow any licensed or registered vehicle to travel on any road that is not gated, bermed, or signed as closed. ATV's are allowed off trails on other roadways, however they are not allowed to travel through the woods off of roads.

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities, fire protection, and in cases where motorized handicapped access has been approved. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

Many of the roads on the Forest fall into this classification. 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. In some cases, roads are completely closed with slash and debris to prevent future use and to encourage natural regeneration of trees.

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will include protection of perpetually wet soils, human safety, 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.

710.4 STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS

710.4.1 State Highways

Wisconsin DOT generally requires permits for permanent and temporary driveways on state highways. The County should track and retain permit records and work with local DOT officials for access.

710.4.2 County Highways

The Florence County Highway Department has a permit process in place for new driveways. If a new driveway is needed to access the Florence County Forest, the two

departments will work together for proper placement and construction methods.

710.4.3 Town Roads

Most town roads in Florence County do not have a permit procedure for driveways. The Florence County Forestry and Parks Department corresponds with towns on matters concerning town roads and access for timber harvest as well a recreational use.

710.5 UTILITIES

There is an underground natural gas pipeline that runs through Florence County as well as the Florence County Forest lands in several locations. Crossing this pipeline can pose some difficulties so careful planning needs to be done prior to harvests around the pipeline. In most cases timber sales will be designed to avoid crossing the pipeline if possible. If a crossing is needed the pipeline company will be contacted and the appropriate permits will be filed.

710.6 CULVERTS

In many cases culverts are needed in all three classifications of roads that are on the County Forest when dealing with drainages, wetlands and stream crossings. Some of these are temporarily placed culverts that are used during a specific project then removed, while others are permanent structures.

In all instances, culverts should be placed according to required DNR permitting procedures and should follow BMP's for culverts that can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of the *WI BMP's for Water Quality*, PUB FR-093 2010.

Routine maintenance of these structures should also be completed to make sure structures are adequately working. The county will be documenting the location of culverts on the forest and use that list of the culverts for routine maintenance. This will be great addition to the GIS system for the Florence County Forest.

715 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the County Forest also provides designated 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 to public motor vehicular access on the Florence County Forest:

- Hall's Creek Hunter Walking/Horse Trail Network
- Bush Lake Flats Hunter Walking/Horse Trail Network
- Tower Grouse Hunter Walking Trail network
- Lake Emily Hunter walking/ Cross Country Ski Trail
- Grandma's Beaver Pond Hunter Walking Trail Network
- Duck Lake Hunter Walking Trail Network

These areas are restricted to access during different times of the year. Most of these areas are closed to motor vehicles during the summer months for horseback riding, and during the fall for ruffed grouse and whitetail deer hunter walking trails, as well as winter months for the cross-country ski trails.

The Forestry and Parks Department does its best to restrict access to motorized vehicles during those times. This can be difficult because of illegal ATV use, disabled hunter permits and other access requests. Most illegal use of these areas occurs during the Wisconsin firearm deer season. This is particularly troublesome as the law-abiding citizens are restricted to access while others are able to access the area illegally. To help with this scenario some of these areas may be opened to public vehicular travel to aid in access to more remote locations during the firearm deer season. Every effort will be made to provide equitable access to users of the Florence County Forest.

Florence County has developed a permit to authorize use to handicapped or mobility disability persons. The permit will grant access to gated areas. Each request will be handled individually and the permit will have specific requirements for each person needing access. Please see the following website for a sample access permit.

[https://www.florencecountywi.com/i/f/files/Disabled%20Hunter%20Access%20permit%20sample\(3\).pdf](https://www.florencecountywi.com/i/f/files/Disabled%20Hunter%20Access%20permit%20sample(3).pdf)

720 ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY

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. The BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in highly erodible soil 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.

725 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 on Florence County Forest Lands. 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.

725.1 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/ATV trails must conform to state standards and be approved by the Forestry and Parks Department.
- 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.