

DOUGLAS COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND-USE PLAN 2006-2020

CHAPTER 700 Access Management Plan

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CHAPTER 700

ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN

700 OBJECTIVES

The Access Management Plan provides direction for access management in the Douglas County Forest. Objectives include:

- (1) Ensuring public safety for all users.
- (2) Ensuring sustainability of natural resources.
- (3) Minimizing conflicts between users.
- (4) Providing a range of opportunities for users.

705 INTRODUCTION

705.1 Background

The Douglas County Forestry Department (DCFD) manages 272,795 acres (426.2 square miles) of public forest land and associated resources on the Douglas County Forest. Motorized recreational use on the Forest has increased substantially in recent years and continues to do so annually. A corresponding increase in demand for utilization and access opportunities presents challenges for the DCFD in providing motorized users with access on public land while minimizing user conflicts, protecting resources, and safeguarding visitor safety. The DCFD has determined that a comprehensive approach to access management on the County's vast acreage is needed to ensure a wide array of recreational opportunities, including those for both motorized and non-motorized recreationists.

705.2 Regional Setting

The Douglas County Forest, the largest County Forest in Wisconsin, is located in the extreme northwestern corner of the State. The County is bordered to the west by Minnesota, to the south by Burnett and Washburn Counties, to the east by Bayfield County, and to the north by Lake Superior. Most of the County is within a half hour's drive from Superior, Wisconsin, and an hour's drive from Duluth, Minnesota. Minneapolis – St. Paul is within a 3 hour drive to the southwest and Chicago is within 6 hours to the southeast.

Comprising 16 townships and 5 villages, Douglas County provides a range of commercial, industrial, and recreational opportunities within an area of 1,365 square miles. The County Forest is accessible via U.S. Routes 2 and 53, State Routes 13, 23, 27, 35, and 105, many County Highways and an extensive network of graveled township roads.

Prior to the establishment of the Douglas County Forest, recreational access across most of the County resulted largely from industrial activity dating back to the mid to late 1800's when millions

of board feet of pine logs were floated down rivers to sawmills. Timber exploration and subsequent lumbering activity in conjunction with railroad development began to open these lands up for access. In 1931, the County took title on unwanted cutover, burned, and tax-delinquent land and the Douglas County Forest was officially established that year under the County Forest Law of 1927. For the past 60 years, motorized recreational access has been a traditional use in the County Forest due primarily to a substantial increase in demand for fiber and pulpwood during the mid-1900's and the subsequent development of associated industrial roads. The Forest also is a popular destination for snowmobilers during the winter months and for off-road enthusiasts year round.

705.3 Working Group

The Access Management Plan was developed on a consultative and cooperative basis by a 6 member working group comprised of the following 4 staff positions with the DCFD: Director of Forestry and Natural Resources, Parks and Recreations Supervisor, Forester and Conservation Tech III; and the following 2 positions with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR): Forestry Team Leader and Liaison Forester. The representatives were elected by their peers and/or appointed as participants. This group was assisted, for technical information, by a support team comprised of additional County and WDNR staff.

705.4 Mission Statement

The mission of the working group was to develop and complete an Access Management Plan for the Douglas County Forest that focuses on motorized and non-motorized recreational access. Specific goals of the working group were to:

- (1) Provide a balanced solution to the issues related to motorized vs. non-motorized recreational access on the Forest by integrating the different interests of users.
- (2) Establish a system that ensures continued sustainable access to users engaging in legitimate recreational access activities.
- (3) In providing recreational access, address concerns related to the protection of wildlife populations and habitat, fisheries, land and watershed management, wildland and seasonal limitations associated with motorized recreational access.
- (4) Promote responsible motorized recreational access while respecting and protecting the rights of those who live, gain their livelihood or recreate in the area.
- (5) Afford opportunities for public input to the DCFD regarding recreational access.

The Access Management Plan will be developed as part of the Douglas County Forest Comprehensive Land-Use Plan 2006-2020 and in response to increasing recreational activity on the Forest and conflicts (real or perceived) among user groups that were identified as significant during periods of public comment.

The Plan will be developed on a cooperative and integrated basis. Participating in the development process will be members of the DCFD and WDNR and citizens representing various public interests.

The working group recognizes that individuals have the freedom to access the County Forest by motorized and non-motorized means according to existing resource management policies.

The group also recognizes that motorized recreational access to any portion of the Forest must be compatible with non-motorized uses, and that such access must be sustainable but not infringe on the rights of other users.

705.5 Purpose of the Access Management Plan

The purpose of the Access Management Plan is to address and provide field-level direction for recreational use of highway vehicles (HV) and off-highway vehicles (OHV) in the Douglas County Forest. The Plan provides a mapped system of the block-classification structure and description of the routes and trails for a specific use. Considered are the different types of vehicles and their uses, seasonal use and timing constraints, other land uses and resource values, and public comment on the management policies and objectives established by the DCFD. Also addressed are general environmental concerns and those associated with fisheries resources and wildlife habitat.

The Access Management Plan provides the general public and those who use the County Forest with a field guide to motorized recreation. By noting where motorized recreation may or may not occur, the Plan also will integrate this activity with those of non-motorized recreationists.

705.6 Relationship to the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan

The Access Management Plan was initiated in connection with the County Forest Comprehensive Land-Use Plan that covers the same geographical area. The Plan focuses on the resource and recreational values attributed to the County Forest and provides a policy framework from which land and resource management can proceed on an integrated basis.

Motorized recreational access was a primary consideration by the public and the DCFD as requiring close attention. The Comprehensive Land-Use Plan provides broad direction with respect to motorized access through the use of management intent statements, objectives, and guidelines but increasing demand for a wide variety of recreational opportunities requires a new plan to provide those opportunities.

705.7 Principles of Access Management Planning

Several principles established by the working group provide a framework within which the Access Management Plan was developed. The Plan would:

- (1) Address both motorized and non-motorized recreational access on the County Forest.

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- (2) Address industrial/commercial access on the Forest as it affects motorized recreational use and with the understanding that industrial/commercial access is regulated by Douglas County policies and the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan.
- (3) Comply with State statutes and regulations and the standards of the fully independent third party Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Forest Certification program with respect to resource management and environmental conservation, administrative authorities, and Departmental management priorities established for the Forest.
- (4) Act as an extension of the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan in implementing projects identified in that plan and meeting resource management objectives and guidelines prescribed for the Forest.
- (5) Use a cooperative approach including the DCFD, WDNR, and the public during development and delivery of the Access Management Plan.
- (6) Address vehicle types, timing (seasonal use), existing or alternate routes and trails, and limits to motorized recreational access on the County Forest while planning for the protection of natural resources.
- (7) Promote a balanced approach in addressing both motor vehicle and non-motorized recreational use.
- (8) Integrate existing plans and policies for established special areas of the County Forest (e.g., State Natural Areas, Wildlife Management Area, Ruffed Grouse Management Areas, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, and North Country National Scenic Trail) with those included in the Access Management Plan.
- (9) Promote forest-management practices that embrace wildlife habitat and protect wildlife populations.
- (10) Integrate existing recreational motor vehicle trails that currently are managed and maintained for public use with those that are not formally managed.
- (11) Eliminate the duplication of both existing and future routes and trails to minimize access density and to promote a more efficient network for public use;
- (12) Minimize routes and trails that cross drainages or stream crossings in recognition of fisheries and watershed management objectives.
- (13) Where appropriate, recommend changes in ordinance and/or policy to ensure orderly implementation of the Access Management Plan;
- (14) Emphasize that those who use the County Forest are responsible for obtaining current information on road and trail conditions and the proper use of roads and trails in all weather conditions.

705.8 Term Definition

Definitions and/or descriptions to clarify terminology used in the Access Management Plan can be found in Ordinance 7.2 attached as Appendix C-I. The Official County Ordinance book should be referred to for the most current version.

710 ACCESS MANGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to develop the Access Management Plan encompassed four major components: data and information base, decision making process, public involvement, and the approval process.

710.1 Data and Information Base

The Comprehensive Land-Use Plan was used to obtain information with respect to resource management policy and land-use patterns on the County Forest. County Land Recreation Ordinance 7.2 was the standard for what has been permitted concerning motorized recreational access on the Douglas County Forest since 1991. The Sustainable Forestry Initiative certification standards for motorized recreational access relative to other current land uses were used as fundamental compliance measures. Components of similar access management policies of the Minnesota DNR, Michigan DNR, WDNR, Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forests, and other county forests in Wisconsin were sources of information for members of the working group.

Field work was undertaken by staff from the DCFD and WDNR to gain additional information with respect to a road and trail inventory on the Forest, and additional field visitations were made by individual group members. The field work produced a revised and more detailed database and a map of forest roads and trails. This information was digitized and stored via Geographic Information System (GIS) technology where the line features of individual road and trail segments were linked with associated tabular attributes.

Finally, staff with the DCFD and WDNR who were not members of the working group constituted a separate knowledge base by local conditions.

During the planning process, the working group met with the Forest Administrator for the Washburn County Forest, which has an access management plan. Members of the group gained an overview and insights with respect to the planning, development, and implementation of Washburn County's access management plan.

710.2 Public Involvement

The planning process that evolved for the Access Management Plan allowed for a high degree of public involvement. Individuals representing the DCFD, WDNR, Douglas County Board of Supervisors, public interest organizations, and the general public were given an opportunity to participate in the Plan's development. The Douglas County Sheriff's Department and local

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recreational user clubs also had an opportunity to contribute to the planning process. Ongoing informal notifications and consultations allowed those participants to remain aware of the progress made by the working group.

Upon completion and approval of the initial draft of the Access Management Plan by the Douglas County Forest, Parks, and Recreation Committee (FPRC) in May 2005, two general public meetings were scheduled to allow for broader involvement and further refinement of the plan. These meetings afforded an opportunity for input by those who were not directly involved in the process or affiliated with an organization that participated in the Plan's development. Advertisements and legal notices were placed in the local and regional newspapers (Northwoods Shopper and Daily Telegram) approximately three weeks in advance of the public meetings. The ads announced the dates and times of the public meetings and welcomed inquiries about them.

The public meetings were held at noon on Wednesday, September 7, 2005 at the Superior Public Library (1530 Tower Avenue, Superior, WI 54880) and 6 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28 at the Solon Springs Community Center (11523 South Business 53, Solon Springs, WI 54873). There were 17 people at the Superior meeting and 23 at the Solon Springs meeting. The public was encouraged to comment about both motorized and non-motorized recreational access on the County Forest, users groups, facilities, environmental damage or other issues pertaining to access. Both meetings featured a series of information exchange sessions and more formal panel sessions. Numerous topics were discussed at these sessions, though motorized recreational access was the dominant issue.

Members of the working group were available to discuss the details of the Access Management Plan and provide attendees with a copy of the draft of the Plan for review. The draft Plan also was available for public review at the DCFD office, Douglas County Clerk's office, Superior Public Library, and the County website (<http://www.douglascountywi.org>). The public also was encouraged to comment on the draft Plan through standard mail or email or by telephone.

Subsequent to the public meetings, an information package containing the input received from the public meetings and public comments was distributed to working group members to assist them in further evaluating the draft Plan. The group continued meeting thereafter to address concerns raised by the public and a revised version of the Access Management Plan was produced on the basis of that input.

A second series of public input meetings, held at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at the Solon Springs Community Center (11523 South Business 53, Solon Springs, WI 54873) and 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 13, 2007 at the Superior Public Library (1530 Tower Avenue, Superior, WI 54880), focused on the Comprehensive Land-Use Plan, of which the Access Management Plan is a component. Opportunities to discuss the draft Comprehensive Land-Use Plan were provided to gain additional public input on the Access Management Plan. This input was summarized by the working group and subsequent meetings were held to reevaluate the Access Management Plan on that basis. A final version of the Plan was ratified by the working group during January 2008, presented to the FPRC for approval on February 25, 2008, and presented to

the County Board of Supervisors for final approval on March 20, 2008.

710.3 Decision Making Process

Decisions by the working group were made on a consensual basis. By this process, each member of the group stated his or her opinion with all proposals adopted by consensus. Dissenting opinions were recorded for further consideration by the working group or were forwarded to the Douglas County Director of Forestry & Natural Resources for resolution. The positions advocated and opinions offered by a working group member could be challenged by another member. The ensuing discussion was a key feature of the working group's meeting format.

Decisions by the working group concerning the application of classification systems, a three-area classification system, and the development of the recommendations package (discussed elsewhere), were influenced and enhanced by the checks and balances inherent in the planning process.

During implementation of the Access Management Plan, decisions on road and trail use designations will be based on recommendations by DCFD staff according to the objectives set forth in the Plan. Again, different opinions will be recorded for further consideration by the working group or will be forwarded to the County Director of Forestry & Natural Resources for resolution.

710.4 Forest Road and Trail Inventory

The initial forest road and trail inventory was completed in the early 1990's. The first digital stand delineation of the County Forest was completed at this time. Through the use of traditional orthophotography and GIS technologies, forest roads and trails were depicted visually on prints and manually digitized into digital format. This initial inventory focused on timber, wildlife, and forest-management applications. Current and potential access management were not identified or evaluated.

In 2002, as part of the planning process for the Access Management Plan, the DCFD completed a second inventory of forest roads and trails that was more detailed and incorporated a use-designation process for all roads and trails on the Forest. Open and closed roads and trails for motorized use were identified according to established criteria, providing DCFD staff with a framework for determining use designations based on road/resource conditions, user conflicts, and illegal activities. A primary component of this inventory focused on the development and implementation of a process for continual updating inventory data over time. This process allows for the continuous updating of road and trail locations and use-designations through data additions, edits, and deletions.

Currently, approximately 1,125 miles of forest roads and trails have been inventoried within the County Forest. They occur on a land base of 2.64 miles of roads and trails for every square mile of land in the Forest. Also, 203 miles of winter snowmobile and summer ATV trails that are managed by the DCFD but not within the Forest have been inventoried, as have 343 miles of Federal, State, County, and township roads that are within or adjacent to the Forest. Although the DCFD is not

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responsible for managing these roadways, the working group determined that they are a legitimate means of Forest access.

Table 710.1 is a summary of roads and trails proposed for use according to DCFD policy and regulations as defined by County Land Recreation Ordinance 7.2.

Table 710.1
Summary of 2006 Road and Trail Classification
for the Douglas County Forest ^(a)

Road and trail classification	Winter system		Summer system	
	No. of miles	Percent	No. of miles	Percent
HV and OHV use permitted ^(b)	368.2	32.7	404.6	35.9
OHV use permitted	157.1 ^(c)	13.9	18.4 ^(d)	1.6
HV and OHV use not permitted	549.2	48.7	654.5	58.1
Unknown	52.1	4.6	49.1	4.4
Total	1,126.6	100	1,126.6	100

(a) Includes roads and trails within the County Forest that are managed but not necessarily maintained by the Department.

(b) Includes all county forest roads except those within the Douglas County Wildlife Management Area.

(c) Snowmobile and winter ATV trail system within the County Forest.

(d) Summer ATV trail system within the County Forest.

Currently, the only roads and trails on the Forest that are closed to HV use and open to OHV use are those that make up the winter snowmobile/winter ATV trail system and the summer ATV trail system with the exception of County Forest Road segments. The winter trail system offers eight times the availability of OHV use than the summer trail system, indicating that OHV's cause much less damage when the ground is frozen and/or snow covered. Also, the permitting and regulatory processes for winter trail development and use are less complex than those for year-round trails.

Table 710.2 is a summary of the funded snowmobile and winter ATV trail system within Douglas County that is managed by the DCFD. The figures are representative of the trails within the Forest and those on other non-County ownerships.

Table 710.2
Summary of 2006 Funded Snowmobile and
Winter ATV Trail System in Douglas County

Trail designation	Trail length	
	No. of miles	Percent
Cross Town Route (Trail 2)	5.78	1.9
Gandy Dancer (Trail 43)	14.27	4.6
O'Saugie Trail (Trail 2)	3.66	1.2
Saunders Grade (Trail 2)	17.45	5.6
Trail 24	3.18	1.0
Trail 27	4.18	1.3

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Trail 27B	1.00	0.3
Trail 28	3.62	1.2
Trail 3	9.71	3.1
Trail 4	43.23	13.9
Trail 4 & 41	12.39	4.0
Trail 41	37.86	12.1
Trail 5	32.67	10.5
Trail 541	2.94	0.9
Trail 7	18.32	5.9
Trail 9	32.48	10.4
Trail 925	3.68	1.2
Trail 930	5.20	1.7
Trail 935	5.68	1.8
Trail O	6.11	2.0
Wild Rivers Trail (Trail 35)	40.93	13.1
Wrenshall Grade (Trail 66)	7.28	2.3
Total	311.6	100

Table 710.3 is a summary of the nonfunded snowmobile and winter ATV trail system within Douglas County that is managed through club partnerships. The figures are representative of trails within the Forest and those on other non-County ownerships.

Table 710.3
Summary of 2006 Nonfunded Snowmobile and
Winter ATV Trails in Douglas County

Trail designation	Trail length	
	No. of miles	Percent
Trail 1	12.15	50.4
Trail 17	7.31	30.3
Trail 3 Spur	1.22	5.1
Wanek Trail Connector	3.41	14.2
Total	24.09	100

Table 710.4 is a summary of the funded summer ATV trail system within Douglas County that is managed by the DCFD. The figures are representative of trails located within the Forest and those on other non-County ownerships.

**Table 710.4
Summary of Funded Summer ATV Trail System in Douglas County**

Trail designation	Trail length	
	No. of miles	Percent
Gandy Dancer (Trail 43)	12.01	15.1
Saunders Grade (Trail 2)	10.14	12.8
Trail 3	4.20	5.3
Trail 41	12.28	15.5
Wild Rivers Trail (Trail 35)	40.81	51.4
Total	79.4	100

Table 710.5 is a summary of public roadways within or adjacent to the Forest that are not managed by the DCFD. The use of these roadways is governed by the statutes and regulations administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Douglas County Highway Department, or local township authorities.

**Table 710.5
Summary of Public Roadways within or adjacent to
the Douglas County Forest**

Public roadway	Road length	
	No. of miles	Percent
Federal	4.2	1.2
State	6.0	1.7
County	40.8	11.9
Town	292.5	85.2
Total	343.4	100

The primary goal in developing the DCFD’s ongoing road and trail inventory program was to accurately depict the established routes and use designations that are available to access the County Forest. This information was the foundation for analysis of area access by the working group. The inventory data was used to determine the amount of forest area that can be accessed by roads and trails.

Tables 710.6 and 710.7 summarize the amount of County forest land accessed by motorized winter and motorized summer roads and trails as classified in Tables 1 and 5. The figures represent the total amount of forest area within 0.25 mile, 0.50 mile, and 1 mile for specific motorized road and trail classifications. The area percentages are based on the total forest land base of 272,795 acres. The 0.25, 0.50, and 1 mile datasets are independent of each other. The data represents the total

amount of forest area available for foot access from the road or trail in a particular motorized classification. The data does not take into account landscape features such as potential obstructions or features that might impede foot access. However, the working group acknowledged the extensive number of such features in developing the Access Management Plan.

Table 710.6
Summary of 2006 Forest Area Accessed by
Motorized Winter Road and Trail System

Road and trail classification	Area within 0.25 mile		Area within 0.50 mile		Area within 1 mile	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
HV use permitted ^(a)	76,277	28.0	135,008	49.5	211,074	77.4
HV and OHV use permitted ^(b)	45,213	16.6	43,757	16.0	24,624	9.0
OHV use permitted ^(c)	26,069	9.6	26,082	9.6	13,529	5.0
Total	147,559	54.1	204,847	75.1	249,227	91.4

- (a) Road data from Table 710.5.
- (b) Road and trail data from Table 710.1.
- (c) Road and trail data from Table 710.1.

Table 710.7
Summary of 2006 Forest Area Accessed by
Motorized Summer Road and Trail System

Road and trail classification	Area within 0.25 mile		Area within 0.50 mile		Area within 1 mile	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
HV use permitted ^(a)	76,277	28.0	135,008	49.5	211,074	77.4
HV and OHV use permitted ^(b)	55,110	20.2	54,915	20.1	31,838	11.7
OHV use permitted ^(c)	1,514	0.6	594	0.2	3	0.0
Total	132,900	48.7	190,517	69.8	242,915	89.0

- (a) Road data from Table 710.5.
- (b) Road and trail data from Table 710.1.
- (c) Road and trail data from Table 710.1.

Tables 710.8 and 710.9 summarize the amount of County forest land accessed by winter and summer non-motorized or restricted roads and trails as classified in Table 710.1. The figures represent the total amount of forest area within 0.25 mile, 0.50 mile, and 1 mile for specific road and trail classifications, as well as the total amount of forest area remaining after subtracting areas that overlap with an accessed area from a motorized road or trail (Tables 710.6 and 710.7). The 0.25 mile, 0.50 mile, and 1 mile datasets are independent of each other. The data represents the total amount of forest area available for foot access from a non-motorized road or trail while incorporating areas accessed by motorized means. The data does not take into account landscape features such as potential obstructions or features that might impede foot access. However, the working group acknowledged the extensive number of such features in developing the Access Management Plan.

Table 710.8
Summary of 2006 Forest Area Accessed by
Winter Restricted Road and Trail System
(based on the total forest land base of 272,795 acres)

Road and trail area accessed ^(a)	Remaining area after:					
	0.25 mile motorized access overlap ^(b)		0.50 mile motorized access overlap ^(c)		1 mile motorized access overlap ^(d)	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Within 0.25 mile	80,165	28.8	47,783	17.2	17,472	6.3
Within 0.50 mile	115,314	41.5	66,776	24.0	23,714	8.5
Within 1 mile	137,765	49.5	80,185	28.8	27,763	10.0

- (a) Data on HV and OHV use not permitted (549.2 miles) from Table 710.1.
- (b) Road and trail data from Table 710.6.
- (c) Road and trail data from Table 710.6.
- (d) Road and trail data from Table 710.6.

Table 710.9
Summary of 2006 Forest Area Accessed by
Summer Restricted Road and Trail System
(based on the total forest land base of 272,795 acres)

Road and trail area accessed ^(a)	Remaining area after:					
	0.25 mile motorized access overlap ^(b)		0.50 mile motorized access overlap ^(c)		1 mile motorized access overlap ^(d)	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Within 0.25 mile	86,875	31.8%	51,193	18.8%	18,073	6.6%
Within 0.50 mile	119,810	43.9%	69,453	25.5%	24,512	9.0%
Within 1 mile	137,327	50.3%	80,074	29.4%	28,244	10.4%

- (a) Data on HV and OHV use not permitted (654.5 miles) from Table 710.1.
- (b) Road and trail data from Table 710.7.
- (c) Road and trail data from Table 710.7.
- (d) Road and trail data from Table 710.7.

The inventory process itself does not include judgments about the future status or use of a given road or trail. Most of the historical routes that showed evidence of human use where future motorized access for any purpose is highly unlikely were removed from the inventory. However, the working group recognized these historical routes as a feature of the Forest. Recommendations on future road designation and uses as outlined in the Access Management Plan will be made by DCFD staff according to objectives set forth in the Plan.

710.5 Plan Approval

The Access Management Plan was developed under the auspices of the seven-member FPRC. Participants were appointed from the 28-member Douglas County Board of Supervisors. The FPRC was involved throughout the development of the Plan in both an advisory and approval capacity. Authorization to proceed with the development of the Access Management Plan was sought by the

working group and was granted by the FPRC in the fall of 2004. FPRC members periodically met with members of the working group and provided advice throughout Plan development.

The Comprehensive Land-Use Plan 2006-2020 of which the Access Management Plan is a component, will be subject to review and preliminary approval by the FPRC and the full County Board of Supervisors. The Plan will then be presented to the WDNR for final approval.

715 ACCESS HISTORY ON THE DOUGLAS COUNTY FOREST

715.1 Timber Harvests

The first entry of Douglas County forest lands (9,002 acres) occurred in 1931 under the County Forest Crop Law. Later, large acreages were entered and the forest grew substantially in size. Today, the Douglas County Forest comprises 272,795 acres, or about 32 percent of the County's land surface.

From the mid to late 1800's to the early 1900's, much of the timber in the County was harvested, providing raw materials for a thriving timber industry and a growing nation. In the process of harvesting and transporting these forest products to the mills during this period, timber producers built many miles of forest roads across County forest land. Rarely did staff from the County Forest or the WDNR design, locate, or set standards for these roads.

During the past several decades, demand for and harvest of timber in this region has increased substantially, as has the need to ensure the long-term health of the County Forest, enhance wildlife habitat and protect water quality. In response, the DCFD has reduced the average size of harvest areas and spread them across the landscape to improve age-class diversity and the management of different timber types. These changes have resulted in more complex location and construction standards and increased the need for roads to access the timber resource. Today, the DCFD highly regulates the design, location, and construction of all new timber-sale access roads through contractual agreements. When establishing timber sales, DCFD foresters must consider the recreational access of the area before and after harvest, and balance these considerations with factors such as environmental and wildlife habitat protection, and aesthetics.

It is understood that motorized vehicles and equipment that are used in managing the County Forest by staff, timber-sale contractors, or other users with written permission are exempt from regulations as specified in contractual agreements with the County.

715.2 Other Motorized Off-Highway Vehicles

During the past decade there has been a significant increase in the use of motorized OHV's, including snowmobiles and ATV's, on the Douglas County Forest. ATV riding currently is among the fastest growing outdoor sports in Wisconsin. The Forest also has seen an increase in the use of LUV's (light utility vehicles), e.g., Argos, Mules, Rangers, buggies, golf carts, and go karts. Both

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legitimate and illegitimate motorized access have been noted on all areas of the Forest. Most of this use has been through the use of ATV's, from casual riders on secondary roads to off-road uses in remote areas of the Forest.

Since the late 1960's, people have been using snowmobiles on the County Forest as a way to travel across snow covered terrain. Early models consisted of a rough chassis with an engine that drove a rubber track which pushed the machine across the snow on skis. As technology progressed, advanced machines were produced and the popularity of this sport increased dramatically. Today's machines are larger, much faster, handle better, have larger motors, and are more diverse for a variety of riding conditions and user preferences. The most popular snowmobile use in Douglas County is for recreational trail riding on the maintained trail system. Other uses include ice fishing, hunting, trapping, and exploring.

The current winter recreational trail system on the Forest includes about 310 miles of snowmobile trails. Over the last decade, maintenance of these trails has shifted from the County to the Northwest Trails Association by contractual agreement.

Two principal types of off-road motorcycle that have been used on the Forest since 1950 evolved from street motorcycles following World War II. The moto-cross or dirt bike is designed for use entirely off paved roads and generally lacks the appropriate equipment to be licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation as "street legal." The dual sport or enduro bike has appropriate equipment to be licensed as street legal. Off-road motorcycle use has been minimal on the Forest but these cycles have become more popular in recent years.

Licensed motorcycle use on the Forest currently is limited to roads that are open for motorized use. Exceptions are snowmobile, and winter and summer ATV trails. Moto-cross or dirt bike use currently is prohibited on the road/trail network and throughout the Forest.

The ATV emerged on the County Forest during the late 1970's and now represents the most common OHV use. These machines have balloon-style tires and initially had a tread width of slightly less than 48 inches. Originally, ATV models had three wheels. These models have since been replaced by four-wheeled vehicles due to safety concerns. Today's models are much larger and more powerful, have high ground clearance, and can carry significant loads. They travel at fast speeds and many have 4-wheel drive. There are utility varieties and those more suited to trail riding, including youth-size models. The utility varieties can include numerous after-market attachments available, can carry everything a variety of equipment and supplies, and can tow a trailer or other device. They are used in connection with activities such as hunting, trapping, ice fishing, exploring, and trail riding.

Currently, OHV use is permitted on any nonrestricted/open road or trail in the Forest that can accommodate a licensed, 4-wheeled HV, all County Forest Roads except for those within the Douglas County Wildlife Area, and the winter and summer recreational ATV trail systems. The current winter and summer ATV systems include about 295 and 80 miles of trails, respectively. These trail systems also are maintained by the Northwest Trails Association.

More recently, larger vehicles that have been marketed as having crossover applications in agriculture, land management, and construction are becoming more prevalent. Some are as large as small automobiles, have six or more tires, side-by-side seating, and are said to be effective on land, water, or ice.

Currently, Wisconsin does not license most LUV's and moto-cross or dirt bikes and unlicensed OHV use is prohibited on the road/trail network and throughout the County Forest.

Other OHV's include full-size, 4-wheel-drive trucks, sport utility vehicles, and large specialty vehicles. Initially, enthusiasts converted military Jeeps and other large vehicles for off-road use on lightly maintained backwoods roads. Today, full size, 4-wheel-drive vehicles are a major part of the U.S. automobile/truck market and are popular in Douglas County. Typically, these vehicles are used only occasionally in off-road situations, primarily for day-to-day transportation. As with ATV's, they have high ground clearance, and can carry multiple passengers and large loads.

Currently, HV use is permitted on all non-restricted/open road's in the County Forest.

715.3 Non-Motorized Use

Non-motorized use of the existing road network also have increased dramatically during the last decade. Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, horseback riding, hunting, winter camping, mountain biking, and hiking show the most noteworthy increases. Many non-motorized or silent-sport recreationists are opposed to motorized recreation, particularly that which conflicts with their activities. Steadily increasing motorized recreation, particularly ATV use, has sparked user conflicts and also has become a safety issue. The DCFD currently maintains 10.3 miles of cross-country ski trails (see Appendix Z-III for a map) and the premier footpath of The North County National Scenic Trail intersects the Forest (see Appendix B-IV for a map). For additional information and maps, contact the North County Trail Association, 229 East Main Street, Lowell, MI 49331 or the National Park Service, 700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100, Madison, WI 53711.

715.4 Horseback Riding

During the past several decades, horseback riding was an occasional use on most of the Douglas County Forest. However, in recent years there has been a marked increase in the popularity of this activity as well as in the use of trails for this purpose. Currently, the Douglas County Wildlife Area contains about 14 miles of designated horseback riding trails (see Appendix Q-III for a map) and stable facilities. All forest roads and trails that are open for motorized use also are open for horseback riding.

715.5 Fishing and Access to Water

Fishing has been a traditional use on the Douglas County Forest. Boat launches have been developed to accommodate anglers and other recreational water users within the Forest and on other

county-owned lands. These sites include; the Mooney Dam launch accessing Lower Eau Clair Lake, Gordon Dam Launch accessing the Gordon Flowage, North Flowage Launch accessing the Gordon Flowage, Minnesuing Launch accessing Lake Minnesuing, Anna-Gene Launch accessing Lyman Lake, and County Highway “L” Launch accessing the Amnicon River. There also are many undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats on the Forest. These points are used to launch boats or canoes by hand versus launching water craft from vehicle trailers. These sites, including the roads and trails accessing them, are not maintained routinely by the DCFD.

Many of the small lakes and waterways in the Forest contain fragile aquatic ecosystems. Overuse of these areas, all of which are accessible by foot, a primary concern of the DCFD. As a result, the construction of access roads or trails on these sites is regulated carefully.

715.6 Hunting Access

Hunters represent another major category of forest users. Each fall, the Douglas County Forest offers abundant, quality opportunities for local hunters and those from across the State and beyond. Hunting is particularly popular during the black bear, ruffed grouse, and gun deer seasons. Hunters of small game and waterfowl and deer bowhunters also frequent the County Forest each year. With the exiting network of forest roads and trails, hunter access is readily available on much of the Forest.

Wild turkey have been introduced on County forest land, so the number of turkey hunters is expected to increase over the next several years. A primary objective of the DCFD is extensive habitat management for all of these game species through timber-sale design and road density and design.

There is little data on the relative level of hunting pressure or number of hunters using the County Forest. However, general observations suggest that hunting pressure per acre on the Forest is greater than on many other County lands due to the Forest’s high visibility, familiarity, and good reputations, acreage, abundant quality habitat.

The primary issues affecting hunters are motorized/non-motorized user conflicts, crowding, and opportunities for solitude. While OHV’s have made access to remote areas of the Forest and retrieval of big game much easier for many hunters, increased use has also created these problems, particularly among motorized and non-motorized users who are participating in the same activity.

Hunter Conflict - Conflict between motorized and non-motorized hunters occur where motorized use has increased in areas that were lightly used in the past. A common belief among hunters, particularly those who seek big game, is that avoiding other hunters and their activities will result in a more enjoyable outdoor experience. This requires traveling into more remote areas of the Forest where few hunters are willing to travel without the aid of a motorized vehicle.

Noise - The repeated sound of a vehicle can alter game patterns and/or chase game from hunting areas. This creates hard feelings among the hunters who have invested considerable time and

energy in learning game patterns and/or by those who use stealth and stalking skills only to see their efforts spoiled by a vehicle. An important component of hunting for many hunters is the wild or wilderness recreation aspect that emphasizes a quiet, solitary experience.

Ethics - With the more extensive network of roads and trails on the Forest, an increasing number of hunters are using vehicles rather than traveling on foot. This behavior raises ethical concerns that can reflect poorly on the sport of hunting and hunters as a group. Studies have shown that areas with high road densities can have significantly higher harvest rates, directly affecting game population dynamics.

Off-Trail Use - Cross-country travel on motorized vehicles to access hunting areas or retrieve game can create a network of new travelways that cause soil erosion, destroy natural vegetation, damage fish and wildlife habitats, and adversely affect forest aesthetics. Recent studies also suggest that off-trail OHV use has resulted in an increase in some nonnative weed species as well as a loss of native species.

Closed Areas - Operating a motorized vehicle in areas where they are prohibited irritates hunters who have carefully selected their hunting area to avoid these vehicles and their effects. This leads to conflicts between motorized hunters and those who walk into closed areas.

715.7 Trapping Access

Although the number of hunters far exceeds the number of trappers on the County Forest, trapping remains a popular activity and has played a significant role in the founding of many of the rural communities in the region. The Forest provides excellent opportunities to trap fisher, beaver, otter, fox, coyote, bobcat, and other fur bearers.

Trapping for beaver has been the most common trapping activity on the Forest. Ponds and drainages that support beaver populations are scattered across the Forest. They are found relatively close to open roads but also in remote areas. Most of the trapping for beaver occurs during the winter months when ice covers ponds and the ground is frozen and snow covered. ATV's are used by some trappers but snowmobiles seem to be the OHV of choice for this activity.

Conflicts between trappers and other users have been minimal due to the small number of trappers and because trapping occurs primarily in remote areas during months when other users are not in the field. Likewise, soil damage and damage to upland and riparian vegetation due to trapping is minimal because this activity usually occurs in the winter months. Trapping of specific beaver populations has the added benefit of reducing road maintenance costs by removing beavers that are responsible for flooding roads and/or plugging culverts. Access on restricted roads and trails for the purpose of trapping requires a permit. Requests for permits are considered on a case-by-case basis and only specific areas where beaver activity has threatened the infrastructure of the Forest will be considered.

715.8 Adjacent Landowner Easements and Access Permits

Access to land under other ownerships in which County forest land or other owned land managed by the DCFD is used requires an access permit (see Appendix R-I for template). Requests for an access permit are considered on a case-by-case basis. Douglas County is not required to provide access to other parcels through its lands. When an application is approved and an access permit is issued, only permission to cross county land is granted. The DCFD does not issue legal easements.

Currently, there is no general fee associated with an access permit. However, as set forth in the Access Management Plan, the DCFD plans to establish a general \$150 access permit fee for up to five years. It has been proposed that this fee be increased to \$250 for up to five years effective on January 1, 2010.

Associated damages also will be assessed and charged to the permittee as follows:

- (1) If no new construction is needed to use the access, – damages will not be charged.
- (2) If construction is required to develop or improve the proposed access temporarily (less than 24 months) as determined by the DCFD, an acreage estimate of the disturbed area will be calculated and the permittee will be charged for a single commercial timber rotation at DCFD's current per-acre timber value (as determined by the average per-acre equivalent value of the DCFD's three most recent timber auctions at the time of application).
- (3) If construction is required to develop or improve the proposed access in a more sustained fashion (more than 24 months) as determined by the DCFD, an acreage estimate of the disturbed area will be calculated and the permittee will be charged for a double commercial timber rotation at the DCFD's current per-acre timber value (as determined by the average per-acre-equivalent value of the DCFD's three most recent timber auctions at the time of application).

As of 2006, 15 access permits (2 for forest-product removal and 13 for recreational use) have been issued by the DCFD.

715.9 Need for an Ordinance

As additional roads were constructed on the County Forest and recreation use continued to increase, conflicts increased among recreationists, particularly motorized and non-motorized users. At the same time, there was heightened concern about sedimentation and damage to riparian vegetation, alteration of fish and wildlife habitat, adverse hydrological impacts, road density and long-term scarring of the land.

Gates, earth berms, and professionally manufactured signs restricting ATV use were erected on trails and roads that are highly susceptible to road damage. Certain routes suffering from annual damage by rutting and/or erosion were rehabilitated and reclaimed, and some roads that had been open to motorized use for long periods were closed to prevent environmental degradation. These

new regulations and changes in historical use allowances created considerable controversy judging from comments by the Forest users and general public.

With increased regulations and fees at local transfer stations over the last decade came an unfortunate use of forest roads: the dumping of household, business, and yard refuse in secluded areas of the Forest. Many more persons guilty of dumping and littering go unpunished than are apprehended and fined. Illegal dumping probably will continue so long as it is cheaper to do so than to pay for refuse removal from one's home or business.

In 1973, a "County Forest Ordinance" was adopted that helped regulate the use of County Forest Roads and recreational trails. In 1991, a "Land Recreation Ordinance" was established to regulate use of County forest land, including the road and trail network. The ordinance includes regulations for the use of OHV's and penalties in the form of forfeiture for misuse of forest roads or recreational trails that are regulated by the DCFD or FPRC (see the Forest Ordinance 7.0 – Appendix B-I and the Land Recreation Ordinance 7.2 – Appendix C-I).

In January 2000, the Douglas County Sheriff's Department implemented a program that created a new Recreation Officer position to be occupied by a fully credentialed law enforcement professional. This position is funded through the snowmobile, ATV, Boating and Narcotic Prevention programs, and from County general purpose revenues.

The County Recreation Officer has a variety of duties, including routine patrol activities such as speed enforcement, traffic accident investigation, courthouse security, and warrants. The core of the job is working on recreational trails, parks, and forest lands managed and/or owned by the County. Activities include investigating timber thefts, illegal dumping, marijuana growing, methamphetamine labs, illegal ATV operations, illegal use of tree stands, and park patrol.

The duties of the Recreation Officer require that he or she develop a solid working relationship with other law enforcement professionals: wardens (both WDNR and Minnesota DNR), recreation officers from other counties, state narcotics and patrol officers, Superior WI police officers, and deputies with the Douglas County Sheriff's Department. The County Recreation Officer also works closely with DCFD staff on issues related to resource protection.

Despite the addition of the Recreation Officer, it has been difficult to enforce access regulations for protecting the County Forest and its users because DCFD staff cannot be assigned to enforcement duties on a full-time basis. Adding to this difficulty is the overall size of the Forest and amount of remote acreage. Certain users continue to disregard the ordinances because they disagree with the regulations and/or do not respect enforcement efforts. Other users have willingly accepted the risk of being apprehended because the benefits derived by ignoring regulations outweigh the cost of fines that may be imposed.

715.10 County Forest Road Development

In the 1970's, Wisconsin funded a County Forest Road system at \$100/mile annually (per statutory

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authority 86.315 (4)(a)) through the Department of Transportation to help defray costs incurred in improving and maintaining public roads within county forest land. The State later withdrew this source of funding and the County Forest Road system suffered accordingly. Efforts by the Wisconsin County Forest Association succeeded in restoring funding for the system in 1988 at the rate of \$200/mile per year. In 1999, funding was increased to the current level of \$336 per mile/per year. To qualify, roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and a 20-foot roadway width, be located within county forests, be open and used for travel, and not be a town roads or a county or state trunk highway. County Forest Roads are not eligible to receive general transportation aid from the State.

Today, there are 45 major County Forest Roads within the Douglas County Forest (see Appendix T-III for a map). Total mileage was 95.5 miles in 2006. Some of these roads double as winter snowmobile trails and/or summer ATV trail segments.

**Table 715.1
County Forest Roads within the Douglas County Forest, 2006**

Name	Miles	Name	Miles
Amnicon River Trail	0.5	Pine Knob Road	3.4
Aspen Moraine Trail	1.9	Pine Ridge Trail	4.1
Bounty Road	8.3	Pine Savannah Loop	2.8
Buckley Break	1.4	Prairie Trail	0.5
Darwin's Loop	1.4	Raspberry Trail	1.8
Dewey Road	1.2	Red Pine Road	0.5
Erickson Creek Cut-A-Cross Road	2.1	Red Squirrel Loop	2.2
Erickson Creek Road	2.5	Reichuster Lake Road	1.4
Fred Bear Ridge	3.9	Resinosa Road	3.6
Gray Ghost Trail	2.5	Road 41	4.8
Gullion Trail	0.2	Shed Horn Trail	1.0
Holmes Camp Road	2.5	Spike Loop	1.4
Hungry Bear Trail	3.4	Spruce River Trail	1.9
Hunters Trail	3.9	Staupe Road	0.7
Jackson Box Grouse Road	2.5	Strutters Lane	1.0
Leopold Lane	0.9	Thorn Trail	0.4
Loop Trail	2.5	Twilight Trail	1.0
Nanuuq Trail	2.7	Twin Bridges Trail	3.2
Ole Larson Road	1.0	Two Drop Trail	0.5
Ox Creek Trail	0.6	Wanek Trail	3.0
Pack Trail	0.7	Webb Lake Road	0.4
Pikes Peak Road	3.2	West Crotte Brook Road	4.8
Pikes Peak West Road	2.4		

Additional routes and segments of existing roads have been added in recent years and there are proposed plans in place for future development of the overall system (see Appendix U-III for a map).

715.11 County and Township Access

County - All new timber sales with access onto Douglas County Highways will require coordination with the County Highway Department. This includes sales being accessed through existing roads and new roads planned for construction.

Townships - In recent years, several townships in Douglas County have developed additional policies to protect their investments in and limit damage to their road networks. Many towns have cooperated fully in resolving road-hauling issues and the DCFD is committed to continuing and strengthening these relationships to provide good roads for all public uses. Every year, the WDNR Division of Forestry pays townships \$0.30 per acre of forest land enrolled in the County Forest Program. This payment is distributed to each Douglas County township based on the individual acreage of County Forest in that township. Douglas County also distributes to 13 townships and 1 village 10 percent of the gross timber sale receipts from the County Forest. These funds are intended to be used to help maintain town and village road networks. The amount that each township receives is based on the percentage of total County forest land within its boundaries (see Appendix P-II for a map showing townships that contain County forest land). In 2006, 10 percent of the gross timber-sale receipts totaled \$336,477.42, which was distributed as follows:

**Table 715.2
Payments to Townships from Gross Timber-Sale Receipts
on the Douglas County Forest, 2006**

Township	Dollars	Percent
Bennett	\$8,177.22	2.43%
Brule	8,210.87	2.44
Dairyland	65,956.18	19.60
Gordon	64,307.27	19.11
Hawthorne	7,268.64	2.16
Highland	3,600.66	1.07
Village of Lake Nebagamon	1,043.18	0.31
Lakeside	33.65	0.01
Maple	4,307.34	1.28
Oakland	15,681.41	4.66
Solon Springs	18,070.64	5.37
Summit	80,426.16	23.90
Superior	8,143.56	2.43
Wascott	51,250.64	15.23

715.12 Summary

Access on the Douglas County Forest has encompassed numerous stages from severely limited access to increased access by logging roads, to the overuse and destruction of logging roads and sensitive areas by recreationists.

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Access to the Forest has become increasingly necessary to reach timber sales and remove timber. Today, the transportation system and the use of these roads for other motorized and non-motorized uses has grown considerably. Large blocks of County Forest that with no access opportunities in recent decades other than cross-country travel by foot now contain timber-sale access roads.

Soil variability is great within the County. Soil type, steepness, slope length and shape, and drainage patterns must all be considered when designing access routes and trails. The amount of use, and amount and type of traffic also must be taken into account.

Construction and design requirements for access routes and trails in all soil types have become more advanced in the last decade as a result of the increased need for erosion and environmental protection. This advancement has been coupled with an increasing need for extended access on traditionally marginal sites. The DCFD has successfully designed and located all-season roads and trails on fragile soils with high erosion potential by implementing many of these advanced construction and mitigation requirements.

The resulting problems related to increased access was evident in the early 1990's and led to the Land Recreation Ordinance. Since its implementation in 1991, this ordinance has been amended eight times most recently on July 20, 2006. Yet, issues related to access on the Forest continue to grow in both scope and complexity despite the ordinances. The Access Management Plan is the next step in attempting to deal with these issues and provide direction for managing access throughout the County Forest.

Forest-management activities, snowmobile, OHV, and non-motorized recreation, trapping, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, hunting, and fishing, are all legitimate uses of public land affected by roads and access. Also, whether existing or planned, primary County Forest Roads, fire lanes, cross-country ski, ATV, and snowmobile trails, and timber-sale access roads are legitimate types of road and trail on the Douglas County Forest.

One of the most difficult issues facing the DCFD during a time of increasing recreational use and conflict is how to provide access opportunities for all users while ensuring that no single activity dominates, displaces, or disrupts the recreation experiences of others. Over the next decade, the most dominant access issue likely will revolve around the conflict between motorized and non-motorized users. The preparation of the Access Management Plan is hoped to change access management from the current user-conflict management to an integrated use management, which also is environmentally friendly.

Increasingly, Douglas County must work closely with its many cooperators to meet ever increasing recreational access demands on the Forest. Cooperators such as snowmobile, sportsman, and ATV clubs, professional wildlife organizations, forest-management contractors, and other groups have worked with the DCFD in the past to achieve a multiple-use balance on County forest land. The number of cooperators is expected to increase as the Forest continues to expand in area and services.

The benefactors of effective access management will be the environment and those who use the Forest. Educating users and enforcing existing laws and ordinances will be required to ensure that recreational access and opportunities are well balanced and the future forest resource is protected.

720 ROUTE AND TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Access Management Plan includes a route and trail classification system for motorized recreational access on the Douglas County Forest. The four-type system is for management purposes only and does not replace any classification with respect to vehicle types or roadway classifications prescribed by State statute or local planning agencies.

The classification system was developed by the working group and will be used by the DCFD to identify roads and trails and determine specific uses, if any, during the implementation of the Access Management Plan. This system will be closely tied to objectives in Sections 730 and 735 and facilitate the signage process for road and trail identification in the field (Section 725).

Summer and winter recreational trail systems currently managed by the DCFD on both County-owned property and other ownerships will be integrated with the classification system. Summer and winter trail systems that are managed by cooperating agencies also will be integrated with the classification system.

Federal, State, and County highways, town roads, and other roadways that are not under the authority of the DCFD will be classified separately and are addressed to a limited degree in the Access Management Plan. OHV access on those roads and maintenance responsibilities are governed by statutes and regulations administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Douglas County Highway Department, regional township authorities, utility corporations, or other local planning authorities.

720.1 Highway Vehicle Access (Permitted)

This classification generally applies to highways and roads that are managed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Douglas County Highway Department, or local township authorities. These are public roadways that are adjacent to or directly intersect County forest land and that are open to HV traffic as governed by statutes and regulations. Motorized recreational use of roads and routes under this classification is subject to prevailing legislation and regulations of the appropriate governing body.

720.2 Highway and Off Highway Vehicle Access (Permitted)

This classification applies to roads and trails located on the Douglas County Forest where both HV and OHV access may be permitted. Managed by the DCFD, these routes generally are located on well-established stable soils, have been built to higher construction specifications, and support frequent use. These routes may be County Forest Roads, former logging roads, abandoned

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recreational trail routes, or other historic travel routes. They generally receive limited to moderate use and are subject to limitations as the result of DCFD resource management policy and direction prescribed by the Access Management Plan. Constraints regarding motorized recreational access considered as part of this classification include:

- (1) Seasonal limitations related to time of year where the open and closed seasons will be assigned specific calendar dates in a given year.
- (2) Timing constraints for specific recreational motor-vehicle activities with respect to other uses occurring on or near roads and trails, e.g., snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding, and commercial recreation ventures.
- (3) Limitations related to forest-management operations or other purposes where the road would be closed temporarily to establish and/or repair itself once operations have been completed.
- (4) Existing motor vehicle trails that are funded by the State and maintained for public use for specific vehicle types (e.g., winter snowmobile trail system and summer ATV system) during certain times of the year.
- (5) User-interpreted limitations related to environmental impacts and land capabilities to sustain various motor-vehicle activities, e.g., site sensitivity, erosion potential, and snowpack.

Other limitations are inherent in the conditions of the particular road or trail, type of vehicle being used and its equipment options, and experience of the operator. Roads and trails under this classification may or may not be maintained and their use is solely at the risk and discretion of the individual.

720.3 Off Highway Vehicle Access (Permitted)

This classification applies to roads and trails located on the County Forest where motorized recreational access is limited to OHV use. Two general categories of the routes included in this classification are the winter and summer recreational trails and certain woods roads and trails scattered throughout the Forest.

State-funded and nonfunded club partnership recreational trail routes are designed to attract the majority of OHV use as opportunities for destination travel and may take the form of regional corridor trails or local loop systems. They have designated primary uses, are well signed, monitored and maintained, and are listed in OHV recreation publications. User maps in the form of summer ATV trails and snowmobile and winter ATV trails typically are available for these routes. Both State-funded routes and partnership club trails are incorporated into this classification.

The woods roads and trails included in this classification generally are located on sites that are more at risk to damage by heavy vehicles, have been built to lower construction specifications, and cannot support repeated HV use. However, they can support OHV use. These routes can be former logging roads, skid trails, abandoned recreational trail routes, or other historic travel routes. They

often dead-end, generally receive limited use, and are subject to limitations as the result of DCFD's resource management policy and direction as prescribed in the Access Management Plan.

Constraints on motorized recreational access as part of this classification include:

- (1) Seasonal limitations related to time of year where the open and closed seasons will be assigned specific calendar dates in a given year.
- (2) Timing constraints for specific recreational motor vehicle activities with respect to other uses occurring on or near roads and trails, e.g., hiking, horseback riding, and commercial recreation ventures.
- (3) Limitations related to forest-management operations or other purposes where the road would be closed temporarily to establish and/or repair itself once operations have been completed.
- (4) User-interpreted limitations related to environmental impacts and land capabilities to sustain various recreational motor-vehicle activities, e.g., site sensitivity, erosion potential, and snowpack.

Other limitations are inherent in the conditions of the particular road or trail, type of vehicle being used and its equipment options, and experience of the operator. Routes under this classification are not maintained and their use is solely at the risk and discretion of the individual.

720.4 Motorized Recreational Access (Not Permitted)

This classification applies to roads and trails that are not available for HV or OHV use as the result of DCFD resource management policy and direction as contained in the Access Management Plan. Watershed or wildlife management considerations are subject to DCFD policy provisions concerning areas in which motor-vehicle access is not allowed.

Motorized access on all roads and trails under this classification will be prohibited with the exception for persons conducting official DCFD business and/or ongoing authorized forest-management activities, disabled persons with a valid permit, or when motorized access is required for emergency purposes. Roads and trails that are not identified with any use designation also are included in this classification. These routes may be considered for reclamation programs or other site treatments to prevent motor-vehicle access on a temporary or permanent basis.

725 SIGNAGE

This section includes guidelines on establishing a uniform policy with respect to signing on roads and trails within the Douglas County Forest. Also included are examples of the different sign symbols and images used within the Forest. These guidelines pertain to all roads and trails under the direct authority of the DCFD except for all funded and nonfunded winter snowmobile and summer ATV trails. Signing on these trails shall be completed as prescribed by State statute requirements. The WDNR handbook on signing and existing user-group agreements with Douglas

County also shall be consulted. For a copy of the guidelines, contact the regional WDNR Community Services Specialist and/or the Douglas County Parks and Recreation Supervisor.

725.1 Sign Information and Symbol Meanings

The Access Management Plan defines six symbols that will be incorporated into signs (Figs. 725.1 and 725.2).

**Figure 725.1
Designated Authorized-Use Sign Symbols**



**Figure 725.2
Designated Unauthorized-Use Sign Symbols**



Information on use-designation signs will include one or more of the following: (1) the type of trail or route, (2) symbols of permitted and/or restricted motorized uses, (3) seasonal dates associated with permitted and/or restricted motorized uses, (4) trail hotline phone number, (5) purpose for use designation, (6) ethical land-use statement, (7) reference to Douglas County Ordinance 7.2, (8) contract information for reporting violations, (9) contact information for the DCFD. Additional informational signs such as Damage Warning, Illegal Trail, and Use-Designation Change will be

used where appropriate and in conjunction with use-designation signs.

725.2 Signage Guidelines

- (1) Except for informational and guide signs, all road or trail use-designation signs should be fully reflectorized when possible.
- (2) No road or trail use-designation sign should be placed more than 6 feet from the edge of a road or trail.
- (3) Signs and posts should be placed carefully with regard to brush line and line of sight to maximize visibility.
- (4) Road and trail signs should be placed to the right of the trail when possible to conform with user's familiarity with the placement of highway signs. Restrictive signs should be placed in the center of the road or trail.
- (5) For seasonal trails or special events, signs should be erected as closely as possible to the trail opening date or day of the event and be removed promptly at the end of the event or season. This reduces vandalism, theft, trespassing, and reduces sign wear by minimizing exposure to the elements.
- (6) Trail signing will be completed by DCFD staff or authorized designees.
- (7) All signs shall be affixed to a metal or wooden post when possible. Steel posts (6 to 6 1/2 feet) will be driven 18 to 24 inches into the ground.
- (8) Sign hardware will consist of standard treaded bolts with self-locking nuts and washers. Grade 2 bolts (5/16 inch) will be used.
- (9) Posts may be upgraded to heavier metal, wood, or concrete posts and hardware may be upgraded at sites that experience vandalism.
- (10) Extra sign posts and signs should be carried by County staff while in the field so that missing or vandalized signs can be replaced quickly.
- (11) Professional, positive signing techniques shall be used.
- (12) Signs related to road and trail etiquette shall be used as appropriate following approval of the DCFD.
- (13) Information signs for varying purposes may be placed on a road or trail only following approval by the DCFD and must conform to DCFD standards for installation, color, and shape.
- (14) On all County Forest Roads, wood posts will be of sufficient size to ensure stability and deter vandalism. They will be used with wooden signs that have the name of the particular road etched into the face. The standard color scheme will be a brown sign with yellow lettering.

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(15) Only trail signs that meet standards for shape, color, size, and reflectorization will be allowed on roads and trails.

(16) Global positioning technology will be used to locate signs for maintenance purposes and inventory records.

725.3 Information Signs

Incorporating larger information and area signs has been identified as a potential project by the working group as part of the Access Management Plan. These signs would be located in key areas throughout the Forest that serve as primary access routes. Messages should be brief and clear and highly visible.

725.4 Road and Trail Blockage Devices

Roads and trails on the County Forest that are restricted or closed with respect to designated motorized uses and/or seasonal periods may have certain structures installed to further prevent unauthorized use. These structures would include gates, berms, and any other devices to obstruct access. Most of these structures will be berms placed at that point on the road or trail where use becomes restricted. Berms covering the entire width of the road or trail are intended to obstruct all motorized access and close the road. Gates will be located and installed on primary access roads that are used frequently by DCFD staff where berms would be impractical and also on certain trails where access is restricted on a seasonal basis. As with berms, all gates on the Forest are used to obstruct all motorized access and close the road. Sign identification is the primary method for providing clear guidance with regard to permitted-use designations.

730 THREE AREA CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Access Management Plan designates a mapped and classification system for managing motorized recreational access on the Douglas County Forest. The Forest was divided into three areas for management and planning purposes based on motorized-access objectives (see Appendix S-III for a map). Forest resource management units, local descriptions, soil types, and landscape attributes were used to delineate the three areas. Some of the criteria used to identify these areas included past access management and type of use (motorized vs. non-motorized), intensity of use, soil types, associated riparian habitats, topography, long-term forest-management and transportation plans, sense of wilderness, and ecosystem characteristics. Management of all three areas is under the authority of Douglas County and all applicable County policies and ordinances apply. During the area identification process, the working group also acknowledged and incorporated access objectives and/or regulations of existing cooperative plans and projects.

730.1 High Motorized Area

This area consists of 65,971 acres of County forest land and special-use land. For purposes of the Access Management Plan, it area is categorized as a High Motorized Area and was identified by the

working group as the block that can best provide and sustain the greatest opportunity for motorized uses on roads and trails. This classification does not authorize the use of motorized vehicles over the entire block. Rather, it is defined as the area on the Forest where motorized-vehicle access is most readily available. Permitted motorized uses are designated on a road-by-road basis; one permitted use for a road is exclusive of that road alone and not necessarily permitted on any other individual road. The distribution of this block across the southern, southeastern, central, and northeastern region of the Forest was identified by the working group as providing the greatest opportunity for users who seek this type of recreational area. Of the three classifications, this area offers the greatest opportunity for motorized recreational use on the Forest.

Stands of aspen (25 percent); jack pine (18 percent), and red pine (18 percent) are the most dominant in this block, followed by swamp hardwood types (6 percent), scrub oak (6 percent), swamp conifer types (5 percent), muskeg bogs (4 percent), tag alder (3 percent), and northern red oak (3 percent). The remaining 12 percent of this tract is composed primarily of fir-spruce, white birch, upland brush, lowland marsh, grass, northern hardwood, white pine, red maple, and open water types. Timber harvesting is a significant commercial activity and occurs throughout the year. This block offers the most potential of any on the Forest for harvesting when the ground is not frozen. The primary management objective is to maintain stands of the aspen, jack pine, and red pine for timber production and enhance wildlife habitat through natural and forced maintenance. Stands of aspen and jack pine are managed naturally for age-class and structural diversity through regeneration harvests. Past management of jack pine has focused primarily on forced maintenance in the form of artificial plantings, while future management will focus more on natural regeneration. Traditional management of jack pine included much more forced conversions to red pine but today focuses more on natural maintenance. Artificial plantations and natural stands of red pine are managed aggressively for both fiber and sawlog production through selective harvests based on site occupancy levels. A secondary objective for this block is to maintain and perpetuate the scrub oak component in both pure and mixed stands to improve species diversity and enhance wildlife habitat. Other considerations when managing timber on this block are protecting water quality in the many ponds and lakes, preventing erosion on sand slopes, and promoting forest aesthetics.

This block contains 4 of the County's 10 State Natural Areas. The Blueberry Swamp State Natural Area (370 acres) located in the northeastern portion of the block, occupies a drainage divide. The eastern part flows to the Bois Brule River (water going to the Atlantic Ocean) and the western part flows to the Namekagon River (water going to the Gulf of Mexico). The core of the swamp holds mineral-rich waters and harbors a high conservation forest of black ash and Atlantic white-cedar. The swamp provides habitat for numerous rare plant and animal species, including a diverse array of orchids. The relative undisturbed core is an ideal ecological reference area, in large part because of its position as source water for the Namekagon River and Blueberry Creek, both of which provide exceptional water to the Bois Brule River. This site has been rated as one of the top hardwood swamps in northern Wisconsin.

The Flat Lake State Natural Area (105 acres) located in the central portion of the block, is a shallow, soft-water, seepage lake with fluctuating water levels and shoreline features. The bottom consists of muck and sand and sedges and rushes dominate the emergent vegetation. The

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submerged vegetation is lush and diverse. This lake is an excellent site for the study of diverse aquatic insect and plant populations.

The Goose Lake State Natural Area (80 acres), located in the southeastern portion of the block, is a soft-water, seepage lake with fluctuating water levels and shoreline features. Sedge and rushes are the most common plants and 20 acres of sedge meadow adjoin the lake. These lakes and wetlands are found in sandy outwash areas that were dominated by pine barrens in the pre-European period. There were regular fires along the shorelines and occasionally throughout the wetlands. Several species of concern are found in these shoreline communities. This lake is an excellent location for studying the ecological effects of fluctuating water levels.

The Buckley Creek Barrens State Natural Area (899 acres), located in the southwestern portion of the block, contains a slow, cold, soft-water creek that flows 4.5 miles to the St. Croix River from a spring pond. Most of this stream flows through swamp conifers, black spruce, tamarack, balsam fir, Atlantic white-cedar, and tag alder. The uplands to the east are high-conservation-value pine barrens that burned in a forest fire in 1977; the barrens have recovered since the fire. Dominant tree species are slow-growing jack pine and Hills oak. Species composition in the pine barrens indicates a diverse plant and animal community. The barrens have few invasive exotic plants.

The topography in this block ranges from virtually flat to sloping hills; primary landform patterns range from nearly level to rolling outwash plains. The secondary pattern is undulating outwash plains and moraines. Due to its location and regional distribution, this block intersects many soil associations. The primary associations of Grayling-Rubicon, Loxley-Seelyeville, and Grayling-Menahga-Rubicon consist of excessively drained sand over sand outwash. These types contain mostly soils in outwash areas that comprise knolls, swells, hills, and ridges. The terrain also includes basins and drainages, many of which contain ponds, lakes, creeks, rivers, bogs, or swamps. A minor secondary soil association found throughout the extreme northeastern portion of this block is the Vilas-Keweenaw-Sultz types, which consists of excessively drained loamy sand over sand outwash or acidic loamy sand. Depressional areas such as drainageways and basins are common throughout the outwash plain. Other soil associations found in the northeastern portion and along the extreme southeastern boundary of the block include Loxley-Dawson, Mahtomedi-Menahga-Graycalm-Seelyeville-Loxley, and Sarwet-Keweenaw-Moodig-Lupton-Annalake-Pence-Vilas. All of these consist of well-drained to excessively well-drained sandy loam or loamy sand over loamy sand till, gravelly sand, or sand outwash along with very poorly drained, mucky organic soils.

The primary concern in managing access on this block is the potential for erosion on slopes and damage to native vegetation on unimproved roads and trails. Sandy soils are particularly prone to these risks. Most of the existing logging roads and trails in the block have been constructed in sandy soils and are in nearly flat areas, and can support sustained motorized use throughout the year. Roads and trails that are associated with slopes greater than 2 percent, though minimal, are highly susceptible to erosion. Roads that intersect streams, drainages and low areas present significant potential for sedimentation, soil and vegetation damage, and scarring of the landscape. Most of the secondary public road system that provides access to the area requires considerably less maintenance than roadways in other blocks. However, occasional maintenance is required during

most months.

This block includes the Ounce, St. Croix, and Totogatic Rivers and the following Creeks: Arnold, Blueberry, Buckley, Casey, Lord, Lower Ox, Nebagamon, Smith, Snake, and Spring.

Seventy-six sections of this block have a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in July 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

This unit encounters considerable recreational use on a year-round basis. Primary uses include hunting large and small game, viewing wildlife, nature photography, cross-country skiing, hiking, gathering firewood, fishing, trapping, horseback riding, camping, and picking berries. The central portion of the block contains the North Country National Scenic Trail footpath and 10.3 miles of DCFD-maintained cross-country ski trails. The following funded snowmobile trails intersect portions of the block: 24, 3, 4, 41, 5, 541, 7, and 35 (Wild Rivers Trail). Segments of Trails 3, 41 and 35 also are funded summer ATV trails. The Lucius Woods, Gordon Dam, and Mooney Dam County Parks are within or near this unit. These parks offer designated camping areas and a variety of recreational opportunities, including numerous maintained facilities. Bass Lake, Long Lake, and Minnesuing County Parks and Park Creek Pond also are within or near this unit. These designated day-use sites have a limited number of maintained facilities but offer many opportunities for outdoor recreation. Canoeing and other water-related recreational uses are common on the scenic Totogatic River that intersects the extreme southeastern portion of the block.

730.1.1 Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a High Motorized Area for both HV and OHV use.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) All routes open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.
- (4) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.1.2 Objectives

- (1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.
- (2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.
- (3) Develop the highest open-road density on the Forest for motorized HV and/or OHV use.
- (4) Ensure that most of the open roads that provide access remain open to HV and/or OHV motorized use.

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- (5) Where applicable, use advanced standards and engineering specifications when constructing new HV and OHV open roads or improving existing routes.
- (6) Protect temporary roads for which motorized recreational access will be prohibited with an appropriately signed blockage device. Such roads may be rehabilitated and “put to bed” using various reclamation techniques, e.g., ripping, disking, barring, furrowing, and/or planting vegetation.
- (7) Examine existing dead-end and/or isolated road and trail networks for possible development and/or improvement of strategically located connectors open to motorized use, thus providing a greater opportunity for destination travel.
- (8) Distribute designated HV and/or OHV open roads as best possible across the block to disperse use patterns.
- (9) Continue cooperating with the North County Trail Association and National Park Service in developing and establishing of the North County National Scenic Trail.
- (10) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.
- (11) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.
- (12) Avoid all unnecessary route construction through the Blueberry Swamp State Natural Area. If necessary, branch access off an existing restricted access route and use minimal construction techniques.
- (13) Avoid all new road construction and development within the Flat Lake and Goose Lake State Natural Areas except for emergency purposes.
- (14) Protect the natural integrity and exceptional resources of the Buckley Creek Barrens State Natural Area by carefully analyzing planned management activities before developing additional access points.

730.1.3 Potential Projects

- (1) Develop parking areas along public roadways at main points of restricted access into this block.
- (2) Construct camping areas that can accommodate larger recreational vehicles and pull-behind, trailer-type vehicles where suitable along the public roadways and primary roads that access this block.
- (3) Examine all State-funded summer ATV and winter ATV and snowmobile trail systems for possible expansion.
- (4) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.

730.2 Moderate Motorized Area

The largest of the three classifications, this area includes 154,406 acres of County forest land and special-use land. For purposes of the Access Management Plan, it is categorized as a Moderate Motorized Area and was identified by the working group as the area that can best provide a combination of designated motorized and non-motorized uses. This classification does not exclude or permit the use of motorized vehicles over the entire block. Rather, on this area of the Forest, motorized-vehicle access is moderately regulated to allow for a blend of designated recreational opportunities. Permitted motorized uses are designated on a road-by-road basis; one permitted use for a road is exclusive of that road alone and not necessarily permitted on another road. Identified by the working group and through the public participation process, this integrated access approach of both open and closed roads with varying uses was the most popular management system. The large size and locational coverage of this block were determined by the working group as providing the greatest opportunity for integrated access. By offering this large block on a significant portion of the Forest, users should have ample access to areas that fall under the Moderate Motorized Area classification.

Stands of aspen (34 percent) are the most dominant in this block, followed by tag alder (13 percent), northern hardwood (12 percent), swamp hardwood types (10 percent), swamp conifer types (9 percent), white birch (7 percent), and lowland marsh (4 percent). The remaining 11 percent of this tract is composed primarily of muskeg bogs, fir-spruce, northern red oak, grass, red maple, and upland brush types. Timber harvesting is a significant commercial activity and occurs throughout the year. The primary management objective is to maintain the current mix of species and enhance age diversity for timber production and wildlife habitat. The management objective for most stands of this block is natural maintenance. Past management has focused primarily on aspen while future management will focus more on northern hardwood, white birch, northern red oak, red maple, and fir-spruce types. Stands of aspen are managed for age-class and structural diversity through timber harvests of varying frequency, distribution, and size. The aspen type is extended when possible in areas containing poorer quality hardwood and red maple stands, for cover-type diversity, and wildlife-habitat enhancement. Stands of northern hardwoods, white birch, and northern red oak are developed and managed for quality timber production through regeneration and improvement harvests. Other considerations when managing timber on this block are to perpetuate the white birch and northern red oak types as these species are diminishing across the landscape, preserve low, wet swamp hardwood swales, protect water quality, increase thermal cover for wildlife, and promote forest aesthetics.

This block contains 4 of the County's 10 State Natural Areas. The Empire Swamp State Natural Area (1,410 acres) located in the central portion of the block, is a large peatland with high-forest conservation value as the headwaters of the Tamarack River. This peatland is a combination of several natural communities, including northern sedge meadow, northern wet forest, tamarack swamp, black ash swamp, alder thicket, open bog, and muskeg. The swamp harbors 11 rare bird species and there are 19 species of warbler in the block, including the highest known population of golden-winged warblers in the State. Five rare butterfly species and nine rare plant species have

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been recorded in this area.

The Erickson Creek Forest and Wetlands State Natural Area (2,089 acres), located in the north-central portion of the block, is an exceptional resource that includes a diverse assemblage of community types in close proximity. The remoteness of these communities and the near absence of recent disturbance makes this area unique in all of Wisconsin. Communities represented are open bog, northern wet forest, northern wet-mesic forest, northern hardwood swamp, northern sedge meadow, northern dry-mesic forest, boreal forest, and northern mesic forest. This block includes populations of several rare species and the bog and sedge meadow harbors 15 species of special concern.

The Nemadji River Floodplain Forest State Natural Area (341 acres), located on an isolated parcel of county ownership in the extreme northern portion of the block, is a mesic floodplain with high conservation value. This area along the banks of the Nemadji River contains diverse flora, including many canopy tree species. Large-diameter silver maple, swamp white oak, basswood, Atlantic white-cedar, white spruce, and ash (three species) are found in this block. Spring flora is rich and mesic and includes high populations of numerous species that usually are found in southern Wisconsin. The wood turtle, which is threatened in the State, also is found at this site.

The Pokegama Red Clay Flats State Natural Area (640 acres), also located in the extreme northern portion of the block is a forested area with high conservation value. This excessively poorly drained area in the headwaters of the Pokegama and Little Pokegama Rivers supports a wetland mosaic of shrub swamp, sedge meadow, emergent marsh, small ponds, and tiny upland islets of white spruce, white pine, balsam fir, and trembling aspen. Of special significance are the many populations of rare plants found in the site's wetlands. These plants are not widespread in the Lake Superior region but are concentrated near Superior with highest concentrations in this block.

This block contains one of the County's three special grouse management areas that are enrolled in the Ruffed Grouse Society's Special Management Area Program. The Empire Grade Grouse Management Area (8,200 acres) located in the center of the block and partially overlaps with the eastern half of the Empire Swamp State Natural Area. Under a cooperative agreement with the Ruffed Grouse Society, this area is managed intensively for ruffed grouse habitat through patch timber harvests in scattered stands of aspen. Under the current agreement proposal, limited permanent and seasonal access open to public motorized travel on designated roads and trails has been proposed.

The topography in this block ranges from nearly level to steep. Primary landform patterns are undulating moraines with swamps and rolling collapsed moraines. The secondary pattern is undulating modified lacustrine moraines with deep V-shape ravines. This unit comprises many soil associations. The primary association, Newood-Freeon-Pomroy-Lupton-Metonga, consists of moderately well-drained sandy loam over loamy sand till or igneous/metamorphic bedrock along with very poorly drained mucky organic soils. Scattered drainageways and basins are common among the elongated and oval moraines. Streams, ponds, swamps, bogs, and marshes make up these lower features. Upland ridges have broad crests and gentle slopes and terrain features

generally are linear and orientated from northeast to southwest, especially in the southwest region of the block.

A predominant secondary type found throughout the north-central portion of this block is the Sarwet-Keweenaw-Moodig-Lupton-Annalake-Pence-Vilas soil association. It consists primarily of moderately well-drained, well-drained, somewhat poorly drained soils with a sandy loam surface over sand till or loamy sand, very poorly drained mucky organic soils, and well-drained and excessively well-drained sandy outwash. This type is characterized by low recessional moraines intermingled with swamps and bogs.

Another soil association found in the extreme northern region of the block is the Cuttre-Miskoaki-Aminicon-Anton-Borea type which consists of somewhat poorly drained clay over calcareous clay till or loamy lacustrine. Slopes are short and complex. Soil associations found along the extreme southeastern boundary of the block are the Dairyland-Clemens-Gander-Lupton-Menahga-Pomroy and Grayling-Rubicon, Loxley-Seelyeville types, both of which consist of predominantly excessively well-drained sand over loam till or gravel outwash.

The primary concerns in managing access on this block are rutting on fragile soils, damage to riparian resources on unimproved roads and balancing motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Many of the logging roads can easily be rutted and damaged by both HV and OHV due to a lack of soil strength and wetness, especially during periods of wet weather. Erosion also is a concern in areas where the slope is greater than 2 percent. Roads that intersect streams, drainages, and low areas present significant potential for sedimentation, soil and vegetation damage, and scarring of the landscape. Certain segments of frozen winter roads in riparian environments cannot support motorized vehicle use. Most of the secondary public-road system that provides access to the area requires significant graveling and maintenance to make these routes accessible to HV traffic during most months.

This block includes the following Rivers: Amnicon, Black, Little Amnicon, Little Pokegama, Middle, Moose, Nemadgi, Pokegama, Spruce, St. Croix, St. Louis, and Tamarack, and the following Creeks: Arnold, Balsam, Bear, Beaver, Buckety, Cattle, Chases (Brook), Copper, Cranberry, Dingle, Hay, Ericson, Garison, Little Balsam, Lord, Miller, Rock, Rocky (Run), Sheosh, Spring, Stony Brook, Thompson, and Toad.

Sixty-three sections of this block have a threatened, rare or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in July 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

The major recreational use in this area is hunting large and small game particularly ruffed grouse, white-tail deer, and black bear. Most recreational use in this unit occurs in late summer and fall. Other uses include viewing wildlife, nature photography, cross-country skiing, hiking, gathering firewood, fishing, trapping, horseback riding, picking berries, and camping. The following funded snowmobile trails intersect portions of the block: 43 (Gandy Dancer), 2 (Saunders Grade), 35 (Wild Rivers), 4, 4/41, 41, 5, 66 (Wrenshall Grade), 9, 930, and 935. Trails 43, 2, and 35 also are

funded summer ATV trails.

This area has hosted the annual Nickerson/Holyoke Enduro motorcycle race event since 1968. The race course is largely in Minnesota's Nemadji State Forest with a small portion on Douglas County forest land in Summit, Wisconsin. Each year the race committee requests permission from the FPRC to hold the race and lists Douglas County as coinsured on a \$1 Million liability insurance policy.

730.2.1 Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Moderate Motorized Area for both HV and OHV use.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) All routes open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.
- (4) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.2.2 Objectives

- (1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.
- (2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.
- (3) Open a moderate level of roads to motorized uses.
- (4) Distribute designated HV and/or OHV open roads as best possible across the block to disperse use patterns and provide a variety of uses.
- (5) Examine regions of the block that currently do not have motorized access for possible development and/or improvement of strategically located primary and/or secondary access routes (dead-ends or loop-connecters) open to motorized use with select non-motorized spur components thus creating foot access in "quiet areas".
- (6) Where applicable, use advanced standards and engineering specifications when constructing new HV and OHV open roads or improving existing routes.
- (7) Protect temporary roads for which motorized recreational access will be prohibited with an appropriately signed blockage device. Such roads may be rehabilitated and "put to bed" using various reclamation techniques, e.g., ripping, disking, barring, furrowing, and/or planting vegetation.

- (8) Examine existing dead-end and/or isolated road and trail networks for possible development and/or improvement of strategically located connectors open to motorized use, thus providing a greater opportunity for destination travel.
- (9) Where applicable, keep primary routes open to HV and/or OHV motorized use and promote walk-in access on secondary spur routes and small scattered dead-end routes.
- (10) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.
- (11) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.
- (12) Continue cooperating with the North County Trail Association and National Park Service in developing and establishing the North County National Scenic Trail.
- (13) Continue coordinating with the Ruffed Grouse Society's Special Management Area Program and designate/maintain hunter walking trails in the Empire Grade Grouse Management Area.
- (14) Where feasible and appropriate, maintain the old Empire Grade to promote the historical significance of this historic railroad bed.
- (15) Continue maintaining the Douglas County Stockpile Sites 1 and 5 located east off Highway 35.
- (16) Avoid all unnecessary route construction through the Empire Swamp State Natural Area. If necessary, branch access off an existing restricted access route and use minimal construction techniques.
- (17) Avoid all unnecessary route construction through the northern portion of the Erickson Creek Forest and Wetlands State Natural Area. If necessary, branch access off an existing restricted access route and use minimal construction techniques. Carefully analyze planned road/trail development activities in the southern portion of the area to ensure that its natural integrity and beauty are protected.
- (18) Protect the natural integrity and composition of the Nemadji River Floodplain Forest and Pokegama Red Clay Flats State Natural Areas by carefully analyzing planned management activities before developing additional access points.

730.2.3 Potential Projects

- (1) Develop parking areas along public roadways at main points of restricted access into this block.
- (2) Construct camping areas that can accommodate larger recreational vehicles and pull-behind, trailer-type vehicles where suitable along the public roadways and primary roads that access this block.
- (3) Examine all State-funded summer ATV and winter ATV and snowmobile trail systems for possible expansion.

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- (4) Coordinate with the Ruffed Grouse Society and update and develop a more extensive Empire Grade Grouse Management Area Plan.
- (5) Expand the development and maintenance of designated hunter walking trails in the Empire Grade Grouse Management Area.
- (6) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.

730.3 Low Motorized Area

This area consists of 52,418 acres of County forest land and special-use land that was further divided into five sub-blocks; Spruce River, Poplar River, Douglas County Wildlife Management Area Block, Coppermine, and St. Croix River. For purposes of the Access Management Plan, each sub-block is categorized as a Low Motorized Area. Each area was designated by the working group based on its own unique characteristics. The Low Motorized Area classification does not exclude the use of motorized vehicles in any sub-blocks, so a user may or may not encounter a quiet experience. Rather, on these regions of the Forest, motorized vehicle access is the most highly limited and regulated. Permitted motorized uses are designated on a block-by-block basis one permitted use in one sub-block is not necessarily permitted in another. Other than routes designated as part of the funded snowmobile or winter or summer ATV trail systems, there will be no OHV motorized-use-only route designations in any sub-blocks. The scattered distribution of these five blocks across the Forest was identified by the working group as providing the greatest opportunity for users who seek this type of recreational experience. These areas offer the greatest opportunity for a wild or wilderness recreation experience.

730.3.1 Spruce River Block

This block consists of 32,658 acres of County forest land. Stands of aspen (41 percent) are the most dominant in this block, followed by tag alder (17 percent), muskeg bogs (12 percent), swamp conifer types (8 percent), swamp hardwood types (5 percent), and lowland marsh (5 percent). The remaining 11 percent of this tract is composed primarily of northern hardwood, white birch, grass, and fir-spruce types. Timber harvesting is a significant commercial activity and occurs primarily during the winter months. A large fire in 1936, that burned most of this tract resulted in the establishment of large stands of even-age aspen. The primary management objective for this area is to maintain these large blocks of aspen for timber production and wildlife-habitat enhancement. Age-class and structural diversity is promoted through timber harvests of varying frequency, distribution, and size. A secondary objective is to develop an intermingling of quality northern hardwood and white birch stands throughout this tract for timber production and cover-type diversity. Other considerations when managing timber in this block are to increase coniferous thermal cover for wildlife, and sustain the many wetlands in this area.

This block contains 2 of the county's 10 State Natural Areas. The Black Lake Bog State Natural Area (2,200 acres), located in the northwestern portion of the block has high conservation value because of its complex of natural communities: soft bog, lake, northern wet forest, northern sedge

meadow, open bog, and shrub-carr. This area also is noted for stunted black spruce. Species of concern at Black Lake Bog include LeConte's sparrow, northern harrier, timber wolf, lake darter, and green-striped darter. A portion of this site is within Minnesota and has been designated as a Minnesota Natural Area. The Belden Swamp State Natural Area (1,862 acres) is located in the northeastern portion of the block and has been identified as an exceptional and unique wetland resource. The large size and muskeg-like vegetation of this bog is not duplicated elsewhere in northwestern Wisconsin. Some portions are thinly vegetated with stunted black spruce and tamarack over ericaceous shrubs. Other areas are open with wire-leaved sedges and bog birch dominating. This bog supports populations of jutta arctic butterfly, LeConte's sparrow, yellow-bellied flycatcher, and northern harrier.

Most of this block also contains one of the County's three special grouse management areas that are enrolled in the Ruffed Grouse Society's Special Management Area Program. The Spruce River Grouse Management Area (18,200 acres), located throughout the central portion of the block is the largest of the special grouse management areas. Under a cooperative agreement with the Ruffed Grouse Society, the area is managed for age-class diversity of aspen while maintaining other species that benefit wildlife. This area is managed intensively for ruffed grouse habitat through patch timber harvests in scattered stands. Under the current agreement designated forest roads and trails are intended to serve as hunter walking trails and are restricted to public motorized travel.

The landscape in this unit has little local relief and terrain features generally are linear and oriented from northeast to southwest. There is little difference in elevation between uplands and lowlands. The undulating morainic mounds that protrude slightly higher than the level of the plain are separated by long, depressional valleys. These drainageways and basins are common throughout the block. Streams, ponds, swamps, bogs, and marshes make up these lower features. The upland ridges have broad crests and gentle slopes. The primary soil association in this unit is the Newood-Freeon-Pomroy-Lupton-Metonga type, which consists of moderately well-drained sandy loam over loamy sand till or igneous/metamorphic bedrock along with very poorly drained mucky organic soils. Slopes are mostly long and smooth except for the short slopes adjacent to depressional areas. The Sarwet-Keweenaw-Moodig-Lupton-Annalake-Pence-Vilas soil association, a minor type in this block, consists of moderately well-drained, well-drained, and somewhat poorly drained soils with a sandy loam surface over sand till or loamy sand, very poorly drained mucky organic soils, and well-drained and excessively well-drained sandy outwash. It is characterized primarily by low recessional moraines intermingled with swamps and bogs.

Primary concerns in managing access on this block are rutting on fragile soils and damage to riparian resources on unimproved roads. Many of the logging access roads can easily be rutted and damaged by both HV's and OHV's due to a lack of soil strength and wetness. Long, unfrozen segments of winter roads in riparian areas cannot support motorized vehicles use. Most of the upland roads intersect multiple streams and drainages, presenting significant potential for sedimentation and soil and vegetation damage. The limited public-road system that provides access to the area requires significant graveling and maintenance to make these routes accessible to HV traffic during most months. This block includes the Black and Spruce Rivers and Balsam, Dingle, Hay, and Toad Creeks.

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Seventeen sections of this block have a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

The major recreational use in this area is hunting large and small game, particularly ruffed grouse, white-tail deer, and black bear. Most recreational use in this unit occurs in late summer and fall. Funded snowmobile Trail 935 runs along on the southwestern boundary of the block into Minnesota and Trail 9 intersects a portion of the extreme southeastern corner. Two uses that were noted during public meetings were trapping throughout the block and winter camping within the Black Lake Bog State Natural Area.

730.3.1(a) Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Low Motorized Area so motorized use will be limited.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) Foot travel is encouraged.
- (4) No OHV-only use designations will be permitted on general forest access roads. This does not apply to the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks.
- (5) All roads and trails open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.
- (6) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.3.1(b) Objectives

- (1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.
- (2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.
- (3) Although limited motorized use will be allowed, manage this block as a “quiet area” to accommodate future growth in non-motorized recreational activities.
- (4) Strategically locate select few designated HV and OHV open roads as best possible within the block to promote limited main points of motorized access with select non-motorized spur components.
- (5) Where applicable, use advanced standards and engineering specifications when constructing new HV and OHV open roads or improving existing routes.

- (6) Protect temporary roads for which motorized recreational access will be prohibited with an appropriately signed blockage device. Such roads may be rehabilitated and “put to bed” using various reclamation techniques, e.g., ripping, disking, barring, furrowing, and/or planting vegetation.
- (7) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.
- (8) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.
- (9) Continue coordinating with the Ruffed Grouse Society’s Special Management Area Program and designate/maintain hunter walking trails in the Spruce River Grouse Management Area.
- (10) Protect the natural integrity and beauty of the Black Lake Bog State Natural Area including Black Lake by carefully analyzing planned management activities before developing additional access points.
- (11) Avoid all unnecessary route construction through the Belden Swamp State Natural Area. If necessary, branch access off an existing restricted access route and use minimal construction techniques.
- (12) Continue maintaining the Belden Swamp Overlook and Douglas County Stockpile Sites 2, 3, and 4 located west off Highway 35.

730.3.1(c) Potential Projects

- (1) Develop parking areas along public roadways at main points of restricted access into this block.
- (2) Construct camping areas that can accommodate larger recreational vehicles and pull-behind, trailer-type vehicles where suitable along the public roadways and primary roads that access this block.
- (3) Coordinate with the Ruffed Grouse Society and update and develop a more extensive Spruce River Grouse Management Area Plan.
- (4) Expand the development and maintenance of designated hunter walking trails in the Spruce River Grouse Management Area.
- (5) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.
- (6) Develop remote, primitive walk-in camping locations.

730.3.2 Poplar River Block

This block consists of 4,564 acres of County forest land. Stands of aspen stands (31 percent) and

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swamp hardwood types (23 percent) are the most dominant in this block, followed by tag alder (12 percent), northern hardwood (9 percent), swamp conifer types (8 percent), and grass (4 percent). The remaining 12 percent of this tract is composed primarily of lowland marsh, northern red oak, white birch, fir-spruce, and upland brush types. Timber harvesting is a significant commercial activity and occurs throughout the year. The primary management objective is to maintain the current of species mix and enhance age diversity for timber production and wildlife habitat. The management objective for most stands of this block is natural maintenance. Past management has maintained aspen but future management focus on regenerating northern hardwoods, birch, and northern red oak in areas with little or no aspen component. A major concern in this block is the threat of increased activity of the two-lined chestnut borer, which attacks northern red oak. A secondary objective is using salvage and sanitation harvests to minimize the loss of quality northern red oak stands in conjunction with their regeneration.

This block contains one of the County's three special grouse management areas that are enrolled in the Ruffed Grouse Society's Special Management Area Program. The Poplar River Grouse Management Area (1,700 acres), located on the eastern third of the block, is the smallest of the special grouse management areas. Under a cooperative agreement with the Ruffed Grouse Society, the area is managed for age-class diversity of aspen while maintaining other species that benefit wildlife. This area is managed intensively for ruffed grouse through patch timber harvests in scattered stands. Under the current agreement, designated forest roads and trails are open to public motorized travel.

The topography in this block ranges from nearly level to steeply rolling hills. The primary soil association in this unit is the Sarwet-Keweenaw-Moodig-Lupton-Annalake-Pence-Vilas type, which consists of moderately well-drained, well-drained, and somewhat poorly drained soils with a sandy loam surface over sand till or loamy sand, very poorly drained mucky organic soils, and well-drained and excessively well-drained sandy outwash. In most areas, swells, hills, and ridges are interspersed with many small depressions and drainage valleys. Many of these depressions and drainage valleys contain ponds, bogs, or swamps. A secondary soil association that runs through the center of this block is the Vilas-Keweenaw-Sultz type, which consists mostly of excessively drained and well-drained sandy soils with a loamy sand surface over sand outwash or loamy sand till. It is characterized primarily by low outwash plains and moraines found within the Poplar River watershed.

The primary concern in managing access on this block is providing low motorized access in the northeastern region of the Forest for those who frequent this area during non-winter months. Throughout the winter season, numerous funded winter ATV and snowmobile trails intersect this block. Although many of the existing roads and trails can support motorized use other than during winter months, this area has been designated as one of low motorized access for purposes of the Access Management Plan.

The Poplar River flows through the center of this block.

One section of this block has a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or

natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in July 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

Partly because of its proximity to the Brule River State Forest, this area has received heavy pressure from hunters of large and small game hunting and those who use winter trails. Most recreational use occurs in late summer and fall, particularly by hunters seeking ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer, and black bear. Funded snowmobile Trail 4 runs through the center of the block from east to west direction. Trail 4 intersects Trail 24 toward the north boundary of the block where Trail 24 continues northward.

730.3.2(a) Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Low Motorized Area so motorized use will be limited.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) Foot travel is encouraged.
- (4) No OHV-only use designations will be permitted on general forest access roads. This does not apply to the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks.
- (5) All roads and trails open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.
- (6) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.3.2(b) Objectives

- (1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.
- (2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.
- (3) Although limited motorized use will be allowed, manage this block as a “quiet area” to accommodate future growth in non-motorized recreational activities.
- (4) Strategically locate select few designated HV and OHV open roads as best possible within the block to promote limited main points of motorized access with select non-motorized spur components.
- (5) Where applicable, use advanced standards and engineering specifications when constructing new HV and OHV open roads or improving existing routes.
- (6) Protect temporary roads for which motorized recreational access will be prohibited with an appropriately signed blockage device. Such roads may be rehabilitated and “put to bed” using

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various reclamation techniques, e.g., ripping, disking, barring, furrowing, and/or planting vegetation.

(7) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.

(8) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.

(9) Continue coordinating with the Ruffed Grouse Society's Special Management Area Program and designate/maintain hunter walking trails in the Poplar River Grouse Management Area.

730.3.2(c) Potential Projects

(1) Develop parking areas along public roadways at main points of restricted access into this block.

(2) Construct camping areas that can accommodate larger recreational vehicles and pull-behind, trailer-type vehicles where suitable along the public roadways and primary roads that access this block.

(3) Coordinate with the Ruffed Grouse Society and update and develop a more extensive Poplar River Grouse Management Area Plan.

(4) Expand the development and maintenance of designated hunter walking trails in the Poplar River Grouse Management Area.

(5) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.

(6) Develop remote, primitive walk-in camping locations.

730.3.3 Coppermine Block

This block consists of 8,708 acres of County forest land. Stands of aspen (32 percent) and northern hardwood (29 percent) are the most dominant in this block, followed by swamp hardwood types (7 percent), jack pine (6 percent), red maple (5 percent), grass (5 percent), northern red oak (4 percent), and red pine (4 percent). The remaining 8 percent of this tract is composed primarily of muskeg bogs, tag alder, upland brush, lowland marsh, swamp conifer, and hemlock-hardwood types. Timber harvesting is a significant commercial activity and occurs throughout the year. The primary management objective for this area is maintaining blocks of aspen and northern hardwoods for timber production and wildlife habitat. The northern hardwood type is all-age managed for high quality on the better sites in the Forest. A secondary objective is to develop an intermingling of jack pine and red pine stands throughout this tract for timber production and cover-type diversity and perpetuating the hemlock component, which comprises nearly 60 acres, and sustain the many wetland ecosystems present in this block.

The topography on this block is gently sloping, and characteristic landform pattern is hilly bedrock-

controlled moraines. The primary soil association in this unit is the Sarona-Sarwet-Matonga-Lupton type, which consists of well-drained and moderately well-drained sandy loam over acid loamy sand till or igneous/metamorphic bedrock along with very poorly drained mucky organic soils. In most areas, swells, hills, and ridges are interspersed with many small kettles, bogs, swamps, or narrow drainage valleys. Slopes are mostly short and complex. Minor soil associations along the northwestern boundary of this block are the Grayling-Menahga-Rubicon and Mahtomedi-Menahga-Graycalm-Seelyville-Loxley types which consist primarily of excessively drained sandy and loamy sand soils over sand outwash. The topography in outwash areas that include of knolls, swells, hills, and ridges is undulating to rolling. Depressional areas such as basins and drainages are common and many of these contain ponds, streams, rivers, bogs, or swamps. The terrain is generally linear and orientated from northeast to southwest.

Primary concerns for managing access on this block are rutting on fragile soils, damage to riparian resources on unimproved roads and providing low motorized access in the southeastern region of the Forest for those who frequent this area during nonwinter months. Many of the logging roads, especially those in the central, eastern and southern portions of the block can be easily rutted and damaged by HV's and OHV's because of wetness. Most of these roads intersect multiple streams and drainages, presenting significant potential for sedimentation and both soil and vegetation damage. Although many of the existing roads and trails along the northwestern boundary and northern section of this block can support motorized use, this area has been identified as one of low motorized access for purposes of the Access Management Plan.

Cole, Haymaker, and O'Hara Creeks, and the Ounce, and Totagatic Rivers are present on this block.

One geographic section of this block a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in July 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

The major recreational use in this area is hunting of large and small game particularly ruffed grouse, white-tailed deer, and black bear. Most recreational use in this unit occurs in late summer and fall.

730.3.3(a) Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Low Motorized Area so motorized use will be limited.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) Foot travel is encouraged.
- (4) No OHV-only use designations will be permitted on general forest access roads. This does not apply to the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks.
- (5) All roads and trails open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.

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(6) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.3.3(b) Objectives

(1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.

(2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.

(3) Although limited motorized use will be allowed, manage this block as a “quiet area” to accommodate future growth in non-motorized recreational activities.

(4) Strategically locate select few designated HV and OHV open roads as best possible within the block to promote limited main points of motorized access with select non-motorized spur components.

(5) Where applicable, use advanced standards and engineering specifications when constructing new HV and OHV open roads or improving existing routes.

(6) Protect temporary roads for which motorized recreational access will be prohibited with an appropriately signed blockage device. Such roads may be rehabilitated and “put to bed” using various reclamation techniques, e.g., ripping, disking, barring, furrowing, and/or planting vegetation.

(7) Increase communication and cooperation with Bayfield, Sawyer, and Washburn Counties when regulating motorized access on routes that originate and intersect lands in those Counties.

(8) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.

(9) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.

730.3.3(c) Potential Projects

(1) Develop parking areas along public roadways at main points of restricted access into this block.

(2) Construct camping areas that can accommodate larger recreational vehicles and pull-behind, trailer-type vehicles where suitable along the public roadways and primary roads that access this block.

(3) Cooperate with the Ruffed Grouse Society and discuss designating and developing this area or a portion of into a Ruffed Grouse Society Special Management Area.

(4) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.

(5) Develop remote, primitive walk-in camping locations.

730.3.4 Douglas County Wildlife Management Area Block

Although this 5,583 acre block is commonly referred to as the Bird Sanctuary, its official designation is the Douglas County Wildlife Management Area, 3006 acres of County-owned forest land and 994 acres of State-owned fee title land. This County forest land currently is leased to the WDNR under an agreement that gives management authority to the latter. The only areas not covered under the agreement are immediate areas that are directly adjacent to a clubhouse and horse corrals, dog kennels, and barns. Although most of this block is managed by the WDNR, the working group, with support from the WDNR property manager, agreed that this area should be included in the Access Management Plan for informational purposes. Any direction provided by the Plan with respect to types of use and route classifications does not supersede that prescribed by the WDNR. For additional information on the policies and regulations of the Douglas County Wildlife Management Area including permitted uses and route designations, contact the WDNR Douglas County Wildlife Management Area Property Manager, 1401 Tower Avenue, Superior, WI 54880.

At the time of Plan development, detailed data on vegetative cover types area data were not available for this block. An estimated 75 percent of the area currently is maintained with the grass/brush savannah, which is representative of the historical pine barren type. The remaining 25 percent is maintained with small stands of young aspen and jack pine. Small areas of lowland marsh and scattered ponds also are present. Vegetation management in the form of prescribe burning is the primary technique for developing and maintaining of the pine barren type, followed by commercial and non-commercial timber harvesting. The primary management objective for this area is to maintain early, open stages of pine barrens habitat with stands of young aspen and jack pine. A secondary objective is enhancing recreational opportunities and protecting aesthetic values.

This 240 acre block contains the Solon Springs Sharptail Barrens State Natural Area. Owned by Douglas County and managed by the WDNR, it is located in the northeastern corner of the block. With a large pine barrens with widely scattered clumps of jack pine, Hill's oak, bur oak grubs, and occasional red pine, the area's vegetation is characteristic of presettlement vegetation that covered much of northwestern Wisconsin. Maintained by fire, this area includes some of the best habitat for the rare sharp-tailed grouse in the State. Shrubs species include sweet fern, blueberry, dewberry, New Jersey tea, hazelnut, willow, wild rose, chokecherry, and bearberry. Groundlayer species include big and little blue-stem, prairie alumroot, puccoon, Canada mayflower, wormwood, asters, and goldenrods. Bird life is dominated by species that require extensive open landscapes. In addition to the sharp-tailed grouse, these include the upland sandpiper, grasshopper sparrow, Connecticut warbler, and Tennessee warbler. Other bird species that inhabit this area include the mourning dove, eastern towhee, Brewer's blackbird, vesper sparrow, field sparrow, and recently introduced wild turkey.

The topography on this block is nearly level to gently sloping. The characteristic landform pattern is nearly level outwash plains to sloping outwash valleys with stream traces and floodplains. The primary soil association in this unit is the Grayling-Rubicon, Loxley-Seelyeville type, which

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consists of excessively well-drained sand over sand outwash. This pitted outwash plain contains numerous glacial sags and depressions that are interspersed with small kettles, lakes, bogs, swamps, and marshes. This association was formed from sands and gravel carried by water from melting glaciers; because these deposits were water washed, there is a noted absence of large stones in the area. A minor soil association within the center of this block is the Rubicon-Sayner-Croswell-Lupton-Gander-Dechamps type, which consists primarily of excessively well-drained and moderately well-drained sandy soils with a sand or loamy sand surface over sand outwash, and very poorly drained mucky organic soils. Slopes are mostly short and smooth.

Primary concerns in managing access on this block are protecting the pine barrens ecosystem and providing a low motorized access in the central region of the Forest. This sandy soil area has shallow soil depth and areas of rolling terrain, making this region prone to erosion and vegetation damage by both motorized and non-motorized users.

Leo Creek is present in the northern region of this block.

All eight sections of this block have a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

This unit encounters year-round recreational use, providing outstanding opportunities for hunting large and small game, wildlife viewing; nature photography, cross-country skiing and running, hiking, horseback riding, and camping. Funded snowmobile Trails 5 and 35 (Wild Rivers Trail) run along the extreme eastern boundary and intersect the northeastern corner of the block. Trail 35 also is a funded summer ATV trail. The North Country National Scenic Trail footpath intersects the entire block from north to south. Each year, this block hosts numerous birddog field trials and is nationally recognized for these events. The county also maintains a clubhouse, dog kennels, horse stables and barns in the north-central portion of this block. These facilities are used for a wide range of activities in the spring and fall. This block of particular interest to the Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, which was founded to help protect and preserve the Douglas County Wildlife Management Area.

The following conditions, objectives, and potential projects in the Access Management Plan were provided by the WDNR. For additional information on any of the following items, contact the WDNR.

730.3.4(a) Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Low Motorized Area so motorized use will be limited.
- (2) The signage system described in the Access Management Plan does not apply to this block. This State Wildlife Area is signed according to State standards.
- (3) HV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.

- (4) OHV use is prohibited on this block other than on the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks.
- (5) Horse use is allowed on designated trails and elsewhere as authorized by dog trial permits.
- (6) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.3.4(b) Objectives

- (1) Continue coordinating with and following WDNR direction in the management of the area.
- (2) Maintain this block for low HV and very limited OHV use.
- (3) Maintain the dog trial and horse trail for HV and horse use, and for foot travel.
- (4) Continue to encourage foot travel, especially on the North County Trail.

730.3.4(c) Potential Projects

- (1) Develop an information kiosk and parking area along Bird Road.
- (2) Establish a trail head for the North County Trail.
- (3) Develop and maintain a walking nature trail/bird house trail and develop educational signs and brochures.

730.3.5 St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway Block

This block consists of 904 acres of County forest land. Swamp hardwood (41 percent), open water (22 percent), and tag alder (17 percent) types are dominant in this block, followed by swamp conifer (9 percent), fir-spruce (6 percent), and aspen (3 percent). The remaining 2 percent of this tract is composed primarily of upland brush and muskeg bog types. All management within this block must meet requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and follow the objectives as outlined in the National Park Service's master plan for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The DCFD has agreed to define the boundary of the Scenic Riverway Zone as no point less than 412 feet from the river's edge. Timber harvesting will be prohibited within the initial 100 feet from the river's edge and all management activities within the remaining 312 feet will follow the WDNR's Class A Aesthetic Management Zone guidelines. All new road and trail construction within the Scenic Riverway Zone is limited to all but necessary routes and must meet standards and conditions prescribed in the master plan.

The topography on this block is generally level to steep. The characteristic landform pattern is nearly level outwash plains to sloping outwash valleys with stream traces and floodplains. This unit comprises of the Grayling-Rubicon, Loxley-Seelyeville soil association, which consists of excessively well-drained sand over sand outwash. During the last glacial period about 10,000 years

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ago, the St. Croix River Valley was a major drainage channel for glacial meltwater from the Lake Superior Basin. The river valley eroded the glacial outwash plains and exposed the basalt and sandstone bedrock. This pitted outwash floodplain contains numerous depressions such as drainages and basins. Slopes are short and abrupt, particularly those immediately adjacent to the river channel.

Primary concerns in managing access on this block are protecting its aesthetic, recreational, geologic, historic, and cultural values, improving and maintaining the area in a largely primitive state, and developing and maintaining the block's scenic beauty.

The Beaver, Cattle, and Sheosh Creeks flow into the St. Croix River on this block.

Five sections of this block are a threatened, rare, or endangered aquatic and/or terrestrial species or natural community as identified in the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory that was conducted in July 1999 by the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

This unit receives significant year-round recreational use, providing outstanding opportunities for camping, wildlife viewing, canoeing, nature photography, cross-country skiing, hiking, fishing, trapping, berry picking, and hunting large and small game. Some unimproved campsites and fishing areas along the river on County forest land receive moderate use. Four landing areas (County Road T, Louis Park, Schoen Park, and Dry) that are maintained by the National Park Service provide users with basic facilities such as canoe access, restrooms, and primitive shoreline campsites (for additional information, and maps, contact the National Park Service, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Namekagon River Visitor Center, Highway 63, Trego, WI 54888 or www.nps.gov/sacn). This block is of particular interest to the Upper St. Croix Watershed Alliance an alliance of organizations and individuals that was founded to help maintain and improve water quality in the Upper St. Croix watershed.

730.3.5(a) Conditions

- (1) This block is designated as a Low Motorized Area so motorized use will be limited.
- (2) Both HV and OHV use is allowed on this block except where restricted.
- (3) Foot travel is encouraged.
- (4) No OHV-only use designations will be permitted on general forest access roads. This does not apply to the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks.
- (5) All roads and trails open to both HV and/or OHV use are open to motorized use as designated in type of use and time period.
- (6) All motorized uses are prohibited on closed roads and trails throughout the year or seasonally closed period.

730.3.5(b) Objectives

- (1) Identify open and closed routes and designate restricted motorized uses on closed routes.
- (2) Identify and close currently open roads not intended to be open by installing a sign, gate, berm, or other blockage device.
- (3) Although limited motorized use will be allowed, manage this block as a “quiet area” to accommodate future growth in non-motorized recreational activities.
- (4) Rely on Town, County, and/or State public roadways to provide access into this block.
- (5) Avoid all new road construction and development within this block except for emergency purposes.
- (6) Apply road and trail policies and management guidelines that meet the requirements of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- (7) Comply with Scenic River road and trail objectives outlined in the National Park Service’s master plan for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.
- (8) Reduce individual or group preference by minimizing permitted motorized travel from private land into this block.
- (9) Identify and eliminate locations of unauthorized motorized travel from private land into this block and enforce continued violations.

730.3.5(c) Potential Projects

- (1) Maintain existing parking and primitive camping areas along public roadways within this block.
- (2) Coordinate with the National Park Service in cooperative projects designed to enhance the aesthetic and recreational values of this area.
- (3) Design and strategically locate large information signs along public roadways and main points of access that identify the block and consider incorporating maps and other pertinent information.

735 CONDITIONS, OBJECTIVES, AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS PERTAINING TO ALL AREAS OF THE DOUGLAS COUNTY FOREST

735.1 Conditions for All Areas

- (1) All recreation on the Douglas County Forest, including forest access, is regulated by County Land Recreation Ordinance 7.2.

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- (2) Foot travel is permitted on all areas of the Forest. It is suggested that individuals wear blaze orange during open firearms hunting seasons.
- (3) No cross-country motorized travel is allowed at any time on the Forest, including for game retrieval or trail connecting purposes.
- (4) It is prohibited to construct, alter, re-route, or otherwise change existing roads or trails on the Forest without the permission of the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or his or her designee. The use of illegally constructed trails by all persons is prohibited at all times.
- (5) No person shall operate any unapproved motorized vehicle on a snowmobile, ATV, or cross-country ski trail once grooming activities on these trails have commenced.
- (6) All vehicles not officially licensed or registered by the State of Wisconsin as a highway or recreational vehicle (including dirt bikes, larger utility vehicles, etc.) are prohibited on the Forest unless written permission has been obtained from the DCFD. Permission will be granted only for special events, vehicles whose primary purpose is utility line work, and authorized persons performing work on the County Forest.
- (7) Equestrian, mountain bike, dogsled, cross-country ski, ski-joring, and snowshoe travel are permitted on all roads and trails throughout the Forest unless posted and/or closed to a particular use. It is suggested that individuals wear blaze orange during open firearms hunting seasons.
- (8) No cross-country equestrian or mountain bike travel is allowed at any time on the Forest.
- (9) It is prohibited to damage, manipulate, or otherwise circumvent a sign, gate, rock, berm, or other device placed by Douglas County or its agent for the purpose of signing a road and/or blocking a closed road.
- (10) All official signs and road blockage devices will be installed by DCFD personnel or their agents.
- (11) An access permit is required to use County forest property to gain access to other land ownership, utility access, or remove timber from non-County owned land. Fees may be assessed in connection with access requests.
- (12) Authorized persons performing official work may receive permission from the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or designee to use a HV and/or OHV on closed roads and areas.
- (13) Persons with disabilities can apply for a disability access permit with the DCFD for HV and/or OHV access to specific closed roads or trails.
- (14) It is prohibited to block in any manner a forest access road or trail which obstructs access by others.
- (15) HV, OHV, equestrian, or mountain bike traffic on open roads or trails into or through any unfrozen lake, stream, or wetland is prohibited unless WDNR-authorized crossing structures are in

place. Any activity that results in the destruction of natural growth, erosion, rutting, or damage to a lakebed, or that has the potential to cause other environmental degradation or damage is prohibited.

(16) No organized events shall be permitted (races, hiking, derbies, etc.) on the Forest without approval of the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or the Forest, Parks, and Recreation Committee.

(17) Sponsors of an authorized event will accept liability for all trail, road and related damage that might occur as a result of the event. Trails and roads may be inspected by the DCFD before and after sponsored events and an inspection fee may be assessed.

(18) No person shall operate a motorized vehicle with studded tires on the County forest property unless authorized by the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or the Forest, Parks, and Recreation Committee.

(19) Where access is limited, ingress or egress to or from private land on County forest property is prohibited unless an access permit is granted by the DCFD.

(20) Apart from other provisions of the Access Management Plan or County Ordinance 7.2, the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or designee may permit motorized use on any open or closed road or trail so that authorized persons can conduct official duties.

(21) Notwithstanding other provisions of the Access Management Plan or County Ordinance 7.2, the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources or designee may close any road or area within the Forest to protect it from damage caused by any activity.

735.1.1 County Forest Road System

(1) All Douglas County Forest Roads not designated as part of the snowmobile and winter ATV trail network may be closed temporarily during the spring break-up season. Roads will be inspected on a case-by-case basis and closed/reopened by sign notification as conditions warrant.

(2) All Douglas County Forest Roads designated as part of the snowmobile and winter ATV trail network are closed to HV use annually from December 15 to May 15 and closed annually to OHV use from the official winter trail closing date to May 15.

(3) All Douglas County Forest Roads designated as part of the winter cross-country ski trail network are closed to both HV and OHV use annually from December 15 to May 15.

(4) All Douglas County Forest Roads receiving road maintenance will be evaluated for permitted motorized use on a case-by-case basis. Most of these roads will be closed to both HV and OHV use.

735.1.2 Recreational Trail System

(1) All County trails designated as part of the snowmobile and winter ATV trail network are closed to HV use year round and open to OHV use only when the winter trail network is officially open or as signed.

(2) All County trails designated as part of both the snowmobile and winter ATV trail and summer ATV trail networks are closed from the official winter trail closing date to the official summer trail opening date.

735.1.3 Cross-Country Ski Trail System

All County trails designated as part of the winter cross-country ski trail network are closed to HV use annually from December 15 to May 15 and closed to all OHV use year round.

735.1.4 General Forest Access Road System

(1) Roads with no sign, berm, gate, or other blockage device are open to both HV and OHV motorized use. All travel must be confined to those portions of the road that can accommodate a licensed, 4-wheeled HV during the intended period of use.

(2) Each year, all general forest access roads open to HV and/or OHV use are closed to all motorized uses from March 1 to April 30.

(3) All general forest access roads that are closed to HV and OHV use year round will be signed and blocked by a gate, berm, rocks, stumps or wood debris, or similar devices.

(4) All general forest access roads that are closed to HV use year round and annually open to OHV use from August 1 to March 1 will be signed accordingly and may have a road blockage device installed.

(5) All general forest access roads that lack a sign but have a gate, berm, rocks, stumps or wood debris or any other blockage device are closed to HV and OHV use year round.

(6) All general forest access roads being used for forest operations will be evaluated for motorized use allowances on a case-by-case basis. Most of these roads will be closed to both HV and OHV use.

(7) All general forest access roads open to HV and/or OHV use that are being used for unethical or illegal activity are subject to an immediate redesignation of their permitted use and/or a sign warning users of the consequences of continued illegal activities.

735.2 Objectives for All Areas

(1) Locate signs on designated roads and trails using the signage objectives presented in the Access Management Plan.

- (2) At strategic locations throughout the Forest, locate 15 to 25 large informational signs that inform users of access and use restrictions.
- (3) Evaluate the possibility of erecting large billboard type informational signs related to forest access along major State highways entering Douglas County.
- (4) Designate all Douglas County Forest Roads by name with a wooden sign following the traditional standard of routing letters into the wood. The letters will be yellow against a brown background.
- (5) The Douglas County Forest road system is open for all forest-management activities.
- (6) Low, moderate, and high motorized recreational opportunity areas are offered and managed throughout the Forest.
- (7) All efforts shall be made to take into consideration the needs of the diverse groups that use the Forest.
- (8) Coordinate with different user groups to reduce or resolve conflicts between the groups.
- (9) Continue coordinating with recreational user groups, clubs, and cooperators to maintain and/or enhance the summer and winter trails networks.
- (10) Promote and encourage annual voluntary clean-up efforts by individuals and different user groups.
- (11) Provide appropriate parking areas and turnarounds on roads on which motorized access is permitted.
- (12) Where appropriate and necessary, improve primary and secondary forest access roads to better sustain motorized use, and develop parking areas and turnarounds to disperse recreation pressure.
- (13) Rehabilitate unimproved lake and stream accesses to minimize littering, pollution, silting and shoreline damage. If damage continues or escalates consider closing these areas to public use.
- (14) The use of any road or trail on the County Forest must not result in pollution of surface water (lake and stream) as determined by the DCFD.
- (15) The use of any road or trail on the County Forest must not result in damage to riparian and/or wetland communities or cause shoreline erosion as determined by the DCFD.
- (16) Close all roads and trails that cannot sustain motorized use.
- (17) Redevelop County Land Recreation Ordinance 7.2 after reviewing input from law enforcement officials and impose additional penalties and increase fines for violations.
- (18) Improve and increase Ordinance 7.2 enforcement efforts by coordinating more efficiently and effectively with the Douglas County Sheriff's Department, Douglas County District Attorney's office, and partnering agencies.

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- (19) Identify locations where illegal access and/or use activities are occurring and notify the County Sheriff's Department.
- (20) Coordinate with the County Sheriff's Department and Recreation Officer in scheduling Deputy Enforcement Days. The DCFD would pay an additional deputy's wages for time spent enforcing the ordinance on days when motorized recreational use is heaviest.
- (21) Schedule public awareness days throughout the year when DCFD staff would be responsible for contacting the general public concerning education and enforcement issues and thereby maintain a high level of authoritative presence throughout the Forest.
- (22) Encourage users who observe or are aware of violations to promptly report them to the County Sheriff's Department.
- (23) Purchase additional surveillance equipment for use in areas with repeat violations.
- (24) Reconfigure the DCFD's telephone recreation hotline so that users can easily obtain current trail or park information.
- (25) Provide regular trail and access updates on the DCFD website.
- (26) Evaluate enhancements in and reductions to the Douglas County Forest Road network and catch up on overdue maintenance to the current network.
- (27) When feasible, budget for and obtain the services of independent contractors for road and trail construction and maintenance activities.

735.3 Potential Projects for All Areas

- (1) Dedicate more time and effort toward public education through the use of media technology and direct user interaction with DCFD staff. Involve the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses in promoting awareness of local recreational opportunities.
- (2) Considering hiring a second Recreational Officer.
- (3) Encourage annual public education days in conjunction with additional enforcement efforts by DCFD staff.
- (4) Expand the trail systems for both the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail networks where feasible and appropriate.
- (5) Develop a long-term plan for the Douglas County Forest Road network that includes identifying strategic locations and routes for road expansion through large contiguous blocks of the Forest. Future forest-management may be directed toward using these routes where applicable and practical to reduce heavy vehicle traffic on township roadways (see Appendix U-III for a map of proposed routes).
- (6) Designate and maintain hunter walking trails within the ruffed grouse management areas.

(7) Attempt to secure permanent easements or purchase lands as necessary to ensure access to County Forest lands and/or trail use.

(8) The Forest, Land, and Parks Committee will consider additional recreational activities that do not compromise the protection of various resources on the County Forest or conflict with other uses.

740 FOREST-MANAGEMENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This section provides direction on developing uniform administrative policy with respect to planning, analyzing, and developing the forest-management transportation system, and discusses the decision making process in connection with the construction, reconstruction, or decommission of various infrastructure components. A uniform policy is necessary to ensure that the Douglas County Forest transportation system provides for safe access and travel, minimizes adverse ecological impacts, and meets current and future land and resource management needs.

The direction provided in this section pertains to all infrastructure components of the transportation system under the direct management authority of the DCFD.

740.1 Past to Present

Most of the exiting forest roads and trails on the Douglas County Forest were developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. Historically, the forest-management program has focused more on road development than any other activity. Over the last two decades, the need to access timber for harvesting purposes has substantially increased to meet increasing demand for forest products. As a result, further development in the forest transportation system also is needed.

Forest roads, skid trails, and landings constitute the important infrastructure components of the forest-management transportation system today and together connect the Forest with existing public roadways and provide for vehicle and equipment access along with timber extraction. They also provide access for activities such as fish and wildlife habitat improvement, wildfire protection, and recreation.

Forest roads that are poorly located, constructed, or maintained can be a significant source of nonpoint source pollution, adversely affecting hydrological processes in the soil and degrading fish and wildlife habitat. Roads over steep slopes, stream crossings, or erodible or fragile soils have the greatest potential to degrade water quality.

Today, the DCFD staff plans and administers the construction and maintenance of all infrastructure components of the forest-management transportation system within the Forest. Most of these construction and maintenance activities are carried out by the DCFD and private contractors working under Douglas County contracts. The specifications for road, skid trail, and landing construction and maintenance vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each

component in the overall transportation system. The four major types of road routes on the Forest are permanent primary, permanent secondary, temporary, and lowland roads.

740.2 Permanent Primary Forest Roads

These are the primary roads in the forest-management transportation system accessing the Forest. They typically originate directly off public roadways, access large blocks of the Forest, are designed for all-season use, and are used frequently. These roads are strategically located and routed to serve as essential access corridors for the transportation system. Many are constructed according to complex design and engineering standards that require considerable time, effort, and cost expense. Others are graveled and routinely maintained. Access may be restricted periodically to minimize damage to the road. Some roads in this category qualify for funding under the County Forest Road Aids program.

740.3 Permanent Secondary Forest Roads

These roads typically are the connecting routes or the feeder roads from landings and yarding areas to primary roads or to public roadways in small blocks of the Forest. They generally are used infrequently on a temporary basis so maintenance is minimal. These roads may or may not be constructed to the standards of a primary forest road but most are narrower and built to lower engineering standards. Some of these roads are designed for use only when the ground is firm or frozen. Access may be restricted periodically to minimize damage to the road.

740.4 Temporary Roads

These roads are designed and constructed for short-term use for a specific project; often as a single timber-harvest access route. When the activity is completed, the road is left to reclaim itself naturally. Most of these roads are narrow, constructed to minimal standards, not maintained, and are used only when the ground is firm or frozen. Forest-management access is typically seasonally restricted to minimize damage to the road in heavier soils.

740.4.1 Lowland Roads

These roads are a type of temporary road and used only when the ground is frozen. Locating roads in lowland areas is avoided as much as possible, so the need for these routes is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and their length and width are limited to the minimum required to meet forest-management objectives. Lowland roads are constructed carefully to avoid restricting or altering the natural hydrological flow of surface and subsurface water. Special “freeze down” construction techniques such as snow, grass, and brush compaction are used to promote frost penetration.

During the planning stage of a forest-management project, it is essential that road construction costs, long-term maintenance needs, service life, and potential to cause nonpoint source pollution be determined. DCFD staff are responsible for planning, locating, and designing all access roads according to objectives for the transportation system. Design and construction requirements are incorporated into forest-management contracts administered by staff to ensure that all requirements

in the contractual agreement are met.

740.5 Road Planning, Location, and Design Objectives

- (1) In addition to meeting project objectives, consider possible future commercial and recreational uses of the road system during the planning and development stages. Locate and design roads according to objectives related to future use.
- (2) Develop a transportation system that limits the number of roads on the Forest so that the total area of disturbance is minimized.
- (3) Develop a transportation system such that primary roads constitute the main corridor foundation with branching secondary and temporary roads stemming from these routes.
- (4) Minimize the number of forest road access points that meet public roadways and, where possible, avoid access points that meet private roadways.
- (5) Where possible, locate access routes and sites where forest road access points meet public roadways on County-owned land to minimize private ownership use.
- (6) Use existing roads when they provide the best long-term access. Consider relocating existing roads if doing so would improve access and reduce environmental impacts.
- (7) Reconstruct existing roads as necessary to meet current “Best Management Practices” standards and provide for adequate drainage and human safety.
- (8) Where possible, coordinate route development with recreation trail-program cooperators and increase communication and coordination between forest-management and recreation program managers to meet common objectives.
- (9) Where possible, locate road systems off existing recreational trails. Only use existing recreational trails in an effort to enhance the trail program after coordination and approval from recreation program managers.
- (10) Construct all primary access roads to an advanced engineering level, including any combination of the following; permanent crossing installations, ditching, crowning, backsloping, graveling, and grading.
- (11) Construct and maintain all secondary access roads to an acceptable level for all recreational use designations, including any combination of the following; permanent crossing installations, ditching, crowning, backsloping, graveling, and grading.
- (12) Where possible, locate road systems on well-drained upland soils and minimize road construction in riparian areas.
- (13) Locate roads, ensuring that drainage is directed from the road surface and road ditches.

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- (14) Minimize the number of stream and drainage crossings and make crossings at right angles to stream channels and drainage directions.
- (15) Identify the best stream and drainage crossing locations before locating a road.
- (16) Approach stream and drainage crossings at the lowest slope possible.
- (17) Locate roads outside streamside management zones except at stream crossings.
- (18) Optimal road grades should be less than 5 percent and acceptable grades shall not exceed 10 percent. If steep grades are unavoidable, they should be broken into short segments and separated by segments of adverse grade.
- (19) When locating roads, follow natural contours and minimize cut and fills. Minimize the need for fill or to remove excess material.
- (20) If necessary, stabilize road ditches, backslopes, and crossing structures after construction by evenly covering them with natural debris, installing drainage-diversion structures, and/or planting cover vegetation.

740.6 Landing Planning, Location, and Design Objectives

- (1) Minimize the number and size of landings to reduce environmental impacts and the loss of productive forest area.
- (2) Avoid all landing construction in riparian and wetland areas.
- (3) Locate and design landings to prevent sediments from entering watercourses.
- (4) Where appropriate, locate landings outside of areas excluded from harvesting and at sufficient distances from buffer zones.
- (5) If possible, locate landings in relatively flat, elevated areas where free drainage occurs at all times and with a low slope to reduce the amount of side cutting.
- (6) Locate landings in dry areas on ridges or benches to promote uphill skidding/forwarding to disperse runoff into stable surrounding vegetation.
- (7) Locate landings at sites that can accommodate the necessary skidding/forwarding patterns and directions.
- (8) Balance environmental impacts and site disturbance with skidding/forwarding distances.
- (9) Where appropriate, use authorized roadsides under the authority of the DCFD to minimize environmental impacts and soil disturbance.
- (10) Rehabilitate and stabilize landings after use by covering them with natural debris, ripping the surface, and/or planting cover vegetation.

- (11) Where appropriate, locate landings outside of areas established as wildlife openings.

740.7 Skid Trail Planning, Location, and Design Objectives

- (1) Minimize the number and area covered by skid trails to reduce environmental impacts.
- (2) Locate landings before locating skid trails.
- (3) Locate main skid trails along elevated areas with drainage away from waterways and unstable areas to minimize potential damage to soil caused by skidding machinery.
- (4) Where possible, avoid locating skid trails in areas excluded from harvesting and promote skidding uphill or on flat ground in areas of good soil drainage.
- (5) Optimal skid trail grades should be less than 20 percent and acceptable grades shall not exceed 40 percent considering soil type and machine traction.
- (6) Minimize the number of watercourse crossing points. If necessary, cross watercourses at right angles and use elevated crossing structures where possible.
- (7) In locating skid trails, avoid damage to residual trees and vegetation. Where possible, use “sacrificial” trees that are to be removed.
- (8) If necessary, maintain corduroy on some or all portions of the trail surface to minimize soil damage.
- (9) If necessary, stabilize skid trails after use by covering them with natural debris, installing drainage-diversion structures, and/or planting cover vegetation.

745 ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Consistent with applicable State and Federal laws, the DCFD recognizes the desire of persons with permanent or long-term disabilities to operate a HV and/or OHV on the County Forest.

In response to a citizen request during a regular meeting of the FPRC on June 26, 2006 an application and permit were developed that allow persons with disabilities to use a motorized vehicle in closed areas of the Forest. On August 28, 2006 an Application for Disability Permit to Use a Motor Vehicle in a Closed Area (see Appendix Q-I for a template) was approved by the FPRC.

Currently, persons holding a valid Class A, B (issued for more than one season), or C disability permit issued by the State can request and apply for a County permit, which allows the permittee to operate a motorized vehicle on a specified segment of closed road in the Forest. Applicants and valid permit holders must meet all permit requirements and applications are approved and permits issued on a case-by-case basis. No permit will be issued for use in a Low Motorized Area or on any road that is highly susceptible to environmental damage. Access is restricted to established routes

and cross-country travel is prohibited for any purpose, including game retrieval.

Use of a HV or OHV also is subject to all State licensing and County requirements and restrictions, and must be operated in such a way that does not degrade the environment. This privilege may extend to one companion or assistant of the disabled person. The assistant may operate the disabled person's vehicle but cannot participate in the intended recreational activity, unless approved by the Director of Forestry and Natural Resources. He or she also must aid the permittee in meeting permit requirements.

750 EDUCATION

The primary purpose of the Access Management Plan is to increase public awareness of the land and natural resources in the Douglas County Forest and to reinforce the ethic of responsible use of the land and natural resources within the Forest by abiding by the rules and regulations presented in the Plan. This section discusses educational opportunities offered by the DCFD and cooperating recreational groups and public interest organizations.

750.1 Objectives

The following objectives were developed to assist and direct the administrative and field educational implementation of the Access Management Plan:

- (1) Development and production of recreational trail maps in the form of brochures depicting the snowmobile and winter ATV and summer ATV trail systems, County Forest roads, and general forest access roads and trails. The brochures should provide information on: (a) ethical considerations surrounding social interactions between motorized and non-motorized users; (b) responsible use, (c) personal safety, and (d) natural resources management.
- (2) Brochures on the snowmobile and winter and summer ATV trail system will be made available to the public and distributed as widely as possible (County and WDNR offices, local businesses, County Visitors Center, and County website).
- (3) Signs that indicate particular motorized recreational access restrictions on roads or trails will be strategically located throughout the County Forest. The signs will list restrictions on motorized recreational use on each road or trail by type of use and time period.
- (4) Signs indicating that the County Forest is being managed in accordance with the Access Management Plan will be strategically located at primary entry points throughout the Forest.
- (5) Recreational/public interest groups such as the Northwest Trails Association, Douglas County Fish & Game League, Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association, Northwoods Harness Club and Wisconsin ATV Association may be asked to aid in imparting to the area users information about the Access Management Plan and on ethical considerations related to land/natural resource management.

(6) Field/district staff from the DCFD, WDNR, and the County Sheriff's Department will continue to communicate with area users through personal contact.

(7) Staff from the DCFD and WDNR will continue to communicate to the County Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's Office the importance of their respective roles in implementing and ensuring the long-term success of the Access Management Plan.

750.2 Plan Availability

Copies of the finalized Access Management Plan will be available at the DCFD, County Clerk's Office, WDNR Gordon Ranger Station, Superior Public Library, and Joan Salmen Memorial Branch of the Library, and posted on the County website. Updated trail maps and brochures also will be available at DCFD, WDNR offices, local businesses, and County Visitors Center, and on the County website.

750.3 Douglas County Recreation Officer Role

The role of the Douglas County Recreation Officer is to assist in informing the general public about the Access Management Plan. Through patrols and individual contact, with users, the Recreation Officer will play a vital role in educating the public. DCFD staff will regularly coordinate with the Recreation Officer to maintain consistency in serving the public. The Recreation Officer also will play a primary role in the following areas:

- (1) Contact citizens and users while on patrol; discuss the Access Management Plan, distribute trail maps, explain rules, and regulations, etc.
- (2) Conduct ATV/snowmobile training classes; incorporate the Access Management Plan into the classes and emphasize the significance and importance of the Plan.
- (3) Assist with educational workshops sponsored by the DCFD by providing information on access throughout the Forest.
- (4) Provide assistance and public outreach to citizen and service groups such as sportsman's, snowmobile, ATV, and wildlife clubs.
- (5) Assist the DCFD in developing a recreational access ordinance and is preparing public service announcements, brochures, press releases, and other advertisements related to the Plan.
- (6) Coordinate interagency patrol activities throughout the Forest as warranted.
- (7) Educate and train other County law enforcement personnel on the elements of the Access Management Plan, applicable ordinances, and pertinent State laws.

750.4 Douglas County Forestry Department Staff Role

The role of the DCFD staff is to assist in educating the general public on the provisions in the

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Access Management Plan. In many cases, the DCFD will be the first contact with users of regarding the plan. All staff members will be educated on the Plan and instructed to provide the public with consistent and timely information.

Along with the published Access Management Plan, the DCFD staff and members of service clubs will use professional signing techniques to inform individuals of trail uses and potential hazards. Public service announcements and the County trails hotline and website may be used to inform the public of trail openings and closings.

The DCFD working with local WDNR personnel will investigate the possibility of setting up educational workshops, during which information pertaining to access issues, forest-management and timber harvesting would be provided to users and the general public.

750.5 Local WDNR Staff Role

The role of local WDNR personnel, including WDNR Conservation Wardens, will be to assist the DCFD with all aspects of the Access Management Plan. WDNR staff will help identify needs and help provide technical and materials support in the delivery of information about the Plan, and assist in conducting educational workshops/presentations, and in preparing signage, displays, and advertisements. The WDNR will also play an important role with respect to citizen and user contacts throughout the County Forest.

750.6 Organized User Groups Role

The DCFD along with organizations such as sportsman's, snowmobile, ATV, cross-country ski, equestrian, and hiking clubs, e.g., Brule-St. Croix Chapter of the North Country Trail Association, recognize that it is necessary to educate both the general public and their own members concerning the value and importance of the Douglas County Forest. It is also important that these organizations help promote various education efforts, e.g., courses on ATV, boating, snowmobiling, and hunting safety. Such courses also educate the public and Forest users land ethics and the responsible use of natural resources.

Public notification of events on County forest land will be the responsibility of the club hosting the event. The DCFD staff, which must be made aware of all events, will provide contact information regarding the event to interested parties.

755 ENFORCEMENT

Implementation of the Access Management Plan will require the enactment of appropriate regulatory mechanisms to help ensure the long-term viability of the Plan and the realization of recreational and resource management objectives within the Douglas County Forest.

755.1 Objectives

The enforcement objectives of the Access Management Plan are to:

- (1) Protect the public, employees, natural resources, and property under the jurisdiction of the DCFD.
- (2) Investigate and enforce applicable laws and regulations that affect the County Forest.
- (3) Prevent criminal violations by informing and educating visitors and the general public of applicable laws and regulations.

755.2 Citizen Involvement

Douglas County encourages citizen involvement with the Access Management Plan. Citizens who observe a violation should report it directly to the County Sheriff's Department at (715) 394-4432. Reports of violations to the Sheriff's Department also can be directed to the DCFD at (715) 378-2219. Reports should include a detailed description of the violation, including the specific location of occurrence and any observation linking the violation to an individual.

755.3 Role of the Douglas County Recreation Officer and the Sheriff's Department

The primary responsibility of the Douglas County Recreation Officer is to enforce ATV, snowmobile, and boating rules and regulations and County Ordinances. The Recreation Officer travels in an assigned squad or DCFD ATV, snowmobile, or boat, patrolling trails, roads, and lakes. He or she also enforces State laws and County and City of Superior ordinances on County, State, and private property. This includes enforcing ordinances related to County-owned parks.

The Recreation Officer also may be called upon to respond to emergencies, accidents, and violent or abusive criminal acts, and will enforce traffic laws and make warrant arrests.

Douglas County forest land is a popular location for planting marijuana. As a result, the Recreation Officer also is responsible for identifying and arresting persons who commit narcotic offenses.

The Recreation Officer also works with City of Superior police officers, Minnesota Conservation Wardens, WDNR Conservation Wardens, Wisconsin State patrol officers, and local constables in the course of his or her duties.

County Sheriff's Deputies also enforce County ordinances and State laws. They may be called to both County forest land and County parks to respond to complaints and violations reported by DCFD staff or private citizens. Deputies also patrol routinely throughout the Forest and County parks.

755.4 WDNR Conservation Warden's Role

WDNR Conservation Wardens are primarily responsible for enforcing State regulations. They do not have jurisdiction to enforce County ordinances. Often they work closely with the County Sheriff's Department, reporting ordinance violations while enforcing State statutes.

Conservation Wardens have statutory authority to enforce State laws related to hunting, fishing, snowmobile and, ATV use, boating, and environmental protection on all State properties. Regarding recreational vehicles, Wardens can enforce laws and regulations related to helmet use, registration, age restrictions, equipment violations, intoxicated use, reckless operation, and trespass on private land. Wardens cannot enforce local ordinances related to speeding or trespassing on County land. Nor does enforcement authority apply to the use of go-karts or dirt bikes as these vehicles are not regulated by the WDNR.

Wardens also may act on specific requests from local law enforcement agencies if a crime or violation is observed in their presence. The County Sheriff's Department may request that a Warden take action when a violation of a county ordinance has been observed. They are authorized to take immediate action should a violation of State laws occur, e.g., damage to property.

Wardens may be asked to participate in recreation-related patrols organized by the County Sheriff's Department.

755.5 Role of the Douglas County District Attorney

The Douglas County District Attorney's Office is responsible for prosecuting violations of State and County statutes and regulations, and County ordinances. It acts on reports of violations forwarded by the County Sheriff's Department, WDNR officials, and local law enforcement agencies.

The District Attorney's Office prosecutes violations related to hunting, fishing, snowmobile and, ATV use, boating, and environmental protection on all County properties. Convictions for violations can result in forfeitures and/or fines, revocation of hunting or fishing privileges, and possibly incarceration.

755.6 Role of the Douglas County Forestry Department Staff

The role of the DCFD staff is to assist and support all aspects of enforcement on the County Forest. In many cases, staff members may be in the position to identify enforcement issues and take necessary steps to correct problems. If a violation of a County ordinance is observed, staff is instructed to record pertinent information and report the occurrence to the proper authorities. If a citizen observes and reports a violation, staff will instruct the person on the proper procedure for filing a complaint with a law enforcement officer. Staff will follow through with tips provided by citizens that may result in the issuance of a citation for violations of County ordinances.

755.7 Role of Local WDNR Staff

The role of local WDNR personnel is to cooperate with DCFD staff, the County District Attorneys Office, and the County Sheriffs Department in enforcing rules and regulations as they pertain to access on the County Forest.

As requested, WDNR staff will assist the DCFD in enforcing County ordinances that are outside of the WDNR's jurisdiction. WDNR staff will take appropriate actions based on what is considered safe and reasonable in identifying, reporting, and documenting violations of a County ordinance, as well as reporting the person(s) responsible.

755.8 Surveillance Cameras

New electronic surveillance technology has an important role in the enforcement of rules and regulations outlined in the Access Management Plan. This technology is secondary to the traditional law enforcement approaches toward enforcing regulations described in the Plan but is no less important. Surveillance cameras have been used on the County Forest since 2000 and have been instrumental in reducing timber theft and vandalism. Recent advancements in surveillance technology are particularly effective in helping identify individuals who violate County ordinances. Cameras can be setup quickly in problem areas and then checked periodically for evidence of violations.

Although surveillance cameras are passive, information about their presence can act as a deterrent. Because of the sheer size of the County Forest, often the DCFD reacts to access violations with time-consuming and failed attempts to identify the perpetrator(s). Electronic surveillance cameras provide additional enforcement eyes, aiding greatly in the identification of individuals caught on camera. The cameras provide 24-hour surveillance, including weekends and holidays, even in remote and isolated areas of the Forest.

The DCFD hopes that the increased use of electronic surveillance will result in more responsible behavior as users become aware of the cameras deployed throughout the Forest and their ability to identify perpetrators and store video/photo records as evidence.

760 FUNDING

The major sources of potential funding available to Douglas County to implement of the Access Management Plan are State and Federal aids and grants, revenue from the sale of timber stumpage, conservation organization grants, tax levies, user fees, and donations from clubs and users. It may also be possible to use funds from other sources to implement, maintain, and enforce the Plan.

The following are the primary potential funding sources:

COMPREHENSIVE LAND-USE PLAN 2006-2020

760.1 County Forest Road Aids *(per statutory authority 86.315 (4)(a))*

County Forest Road Aid is available through the State to help defray costs for the improvement and maintenance of public roads within the County Forest. The County is to receive \$336 per mile of qualifying forest road to be paid each year on March 10th. The aid is prorated if the amount appropriated in the State budget is insufficient to support the \$336 per mile payment. To qualify, the road must be:

- (1) Within the County Forest.
- (2) At least 20 feet wide with a surface width of at least 16 feet.
- (3) Open and used for travel.
- (4) Part of a Comprehensive County Forest Land-Use Plan approved by the County Board or Supervisors the WDNR (see section 715.10)

County Forest Roads are not eligible for General Transportation Aid.

760.2 All-Terrain Vehicle Trails *(per statutory authority 23.33 and Wis. Admin. Code NR 64)*

State funding is available to the County to acquire, insure, develop, and maintain ATV trails, areas, and routes. Levels of reimbursement vary according to the project and trail type. The following are eligible levels of reimbursement:

- (1) ATV trails available for spring, summer, and fall riding may be reimbursed up to 100 percent of eligible maintenance costs (up to \$450 per mile).
- (2) ATV trails available for winter riding may be reimbursed up to 100 percent of eligible maintenance costs (up to \$100 per mile).
- (3) Development of ATV trails and areas may be reimbursed up to 100 percent of eligible costs.
- (4) Major rehabilitation of bridge structures or trails may be reimbursed up to 100 percent of eligible costs.
- (5) Maintenance of ATV intensive use areas may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of eligible costs.

The WDNR allocates funds in accordance with the following ranked priorities:

- (1) Maintenance of existing, approved trails, areas, and routes.
- (2) Liability insurance acquisition.
- (3) Easement acquisition.
- (4) Major rehabilitation of bridge structures or trails.

(5) Land acquisition and development of new ATV trails and areas.

760.3 Snowmobile Trail Aids *(per statutory authority 23.09 and chap. 350 and Wis. Admin. Code NR 6)*

State funding is available to the County for well-signed and well-groomed snowmobile trails for public use and enjoyment. Eligible projects include:

- (1) Maintenance of trails (includes signing, brushing and grooming of snowmobile trails, purchase of liability insurance, and purchase of short-term easements).
- (2) Development of trails (includes general trail construction, bridges, gates, and signs).
- (3) Major rehabilitation of existing snowmobile bridges.
- (4) Rehabilitation of existing trail segments.

The County is eligible to receive reimbursement for up to 100 percent of:

- (1) Approved maintenance costs (up to \$250 per mile).
- (2) Development costs.
- (3) Major bridge rehabilitation costs.
- (4) Trail rehabilitation costs.

760.4 General Purpose Revenues of Douglas County

Funding also is available through the general purpose revenues of Douglas County. Needs are incorporated into budget requests as part of the annual budgeting process. The County adopts an annual budget in accordance with Chapter 65 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The DCFD is responsible for developing its budget, which then is submitted for approval by the FPRC, Administration Committee, and the County Board of Supervisors.

760.5 Conservation Organizations

National conservation organizations provide grant funds for the management and protection of natural resources. The Ruffed Grouse Society is an example of an organization that has provided project funding to Douglas County. Grant objectives typically are to conserve, restore, or enhance wildlife habitats. Funding also can be used to manage invasive, nonnative species, support comprehensive information on wildlife management and mapping, and assess impacts of land management actions on wildlife habitats.

765 REVIEW PROCESS

The following objectives will also ensure that the Access Management Plan continues to address the needs of the recreating public for which it was established.

765.1 Objectives

(1) The Access Management Plan will be reviewed three years after initial implementation and then at intervals as deemed necessary by the working group. Road and trail classifications may be reviewed and altered in response to changing needs and circumstances within the context of the Douglas County Forest Comprehensive Land-Use Plan.

(2) Any amendments to the Plan will include an opportunity for review by the general public at regularly scheduled meetings of the FPRC. In the event that an access-related amendment is made within other plans and/or regulations referenced in the Access Management Plan, the Plan will be amended accordingly.

(3) Future evaluation will incorporate the principles, objectives, and performance measures developed as standard requirements for forest certification. Plan amendments and changes will be made accordingly to maintain program compliance.

(4) Updates of the Access Management Plan will be made available to the general public.

(5) The DCFD and local staff from the WDNR will monitor motorized recreational use levels to determine the effectiveness of the Access Management Plan.

(6) The County Recreation Officer will monitor the effects of, interact with and educate the public concerning enforcement activities and enforce laws and regulations in accordance with the Access Management Plan.

(7) Funding be allocated as needed to implement and administer the Access Management Plan and future amendments.

765.2 Approval of the Douglas County Forest Access Management Plan

The Douglas County Forest Access Management Plan was approved by the Douglas County Board of Supervisors on March 20, 2008 per Resolution #18-08.

765.3 Ongoing Public Involvement

The working group, DCFD, and the WDNR will cooperate in promoting awareness of the Access Management Plan.

A variety of techniques may be used to encourage the public to participate in future evaluations of the Access Management Plan. These may include the use of mailed questionnaires, press releases, public surveys, feedback from the County website, and open meetings.

765.4 Ongoing Environmental Analysis

The effectiveness of the Access Management Plan in protecting and minimizing adverse biological and other environmental effects on the Douglas County Forest will be monitored continually. Use of the Forest will be consistent with the WDNR's field manual for loggers, landowners, and land managers entitled Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices (BMP's) for Water Quality. The working group has incorporated BMP's into the planning and development of the Plan, including the access policies contained in it. The DCFD and the WDNR will cooperate in providing ongoing environmental analysis of environmental effects on the County Forest.

765.5 Forest Certification

As forest certification continues to grow in both scope and complexity, the Access Management Plan will be required to adapt to new program standards and expectations. The various uses of the Forest will need to be consistent with the principles, objectives and performance measures required by certification. The DCFD is committed to following certification program standards on behalf of the citizens of Douglas County.

765.6 Regulatory Advancements

The development of new rules and regulations will be essential if the objectives of the Access Management Plan are to be achieved. Amendments to Ordinance 7.2 will allow the ordinance to adapt to changing needs and policies while consistently maintaining a high level of quality. Penalties should be further developed with the overall goal of discouraging first-time and subsequent violations.