

Chapter 700

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 700

ROADS, TRAILS AND ACCESS

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700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

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

Many of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. An example of this is Parkway Road extending from U.S. Highway 8 in the Town of Goodman to the county line in the Town of Stephenson. This former town road has recently been turned over to Marinette County and has been designated as County Highway I. Plans are underway to improve the north 20 miles to withstand the constant tourism and logging traffic. Unlike Parkway Road, however, county personnel did not routinely establish the locations and standards for many of the earlier roads.

Over the years, the road density and frequency of vehicle use on the Forest has increased in response to an expanding number of motorized recreational vehicles and to an active timber harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. But the diverse demands for, and uses of, the County Forest have reached the point where an integrated access management plan is needed.

User conflict between groups e.g., snowmobiling or ATV's versus cross-country skiing (an example of this is the new ATV trail in the Town of Stephenson and the Marinette County Cross-Country Ski Assn Trail on Bushman Road); hunting on foot versus use of vehicles for access to game populations (Thus the need for the Peshtigo River, Lake Mary and Long-Slide Hunter Walking Trail Systems).

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

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

Damage to access: rutted or impassable roads requiring costly repair by the county or other specific user groups (e.g., snowmobile club). This problem developed on the snowmobile trail from Lake Mary north to County Forest Road 902 in the Town of Middle Inlet, finally resulting in a two-mile stretch being gated-off.

Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of a resource; e.g. reduced availability of trophy-sized deer, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, over-harvest of bobcat.

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

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

Endangered species management: e.g. high road densities conflict with timber wolf recovery, eagle and osprey nest disturbance.

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

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

Road placement: e.g. some roads/trails should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement. It is the policy of the Forestry Department to annually review the trail system on the Forest and to close those trails deemed unnecessary or duplicate. This process has been greatly aided buy the completion of a trail inventory by the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS).

Clear and concise policy for the public. A well-designed and written access management

plan should be available to the public identifying Department goals and objectives.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES:

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

710 ROADS

Marinette County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads will be constructed and maintained by the Marinette County Forestry Crew stationed at Amberg, WI. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads, permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads.

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

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS (COUNTY FOREST ROADS)

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

Some forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and a 20-foot roadway width. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. A table listing the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats. And an associated map are available in chapter 925.3. Also included are roads proposed for addition once improvements meet statute requirements. These permanent primary roads will remain open to public use. County Forest Roads are maintained during the summer months. The County does not snowplow these roads during the winter.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS (YEAR-ROUND TRAILS)

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

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked and/or signed as restricted from certain use. Refer to the County Forestry Ordinance in the Chapter 905.2.1 appendix for permitted use of these trails. A general map showing the location of these roads is included in chapter 925.3.

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for

planned management activities or fire protection. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

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

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

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

Marinette County does not snow plow forest roads. Snow plowing of roads for access to logging jobs is the responsibility of the logging contractor. Persons that need to snowplow roads in the county forest to gain access to their land are required to obtain a Snow Plowing Permit from the Forestry Department. Snow plowing for other reasons will be by permit at the discretion of the committee.

720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities on the Forest. An important role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause long-term natural resource damage, and that are compatible with other uses. Management activities adjacent to recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Where

deemed necessary, alterations will be made to accommodate the recreational use. The committee has the authority to open, close or relocate trails.

All of the recreational uses of the Forest have corresponding maps in Chapter 900-Appendix.

720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

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

Construction or maintenance of any recreational trail in which the activity would increase the erosion potential of one acre or more of land is subject to state and federal storm water runoff requirements (NR216, Wis. Adm. Code and s. 283.33, Wis. Stats). Construction or development for silvicultural purposes is presently exempt from these requirements. Recreational trail development in Marinette County that meets these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-95) to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, an erosion control plan will be prepared for each project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed.

Note: The best management practices for water quality, as they relate to trail construction and maintenance, are currently being refined and revised along with technical standards for trail construction. Once complete, a reference will need to be added to indicate where the standards and practices can be found.

725 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

725.1 HIKING

725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs closing an area.

725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

A designated hiking trail originates and terminates at Morgan Park in the Town of Pembine

725.2 BICYCLING

725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails

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

725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

There are no Designated Bicycle Trails on the Marinette County Forest at this time.

725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING

725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

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

725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

There are no designated Horseback Riding Trails in the Marinette County Forest at this time.

725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

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

725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

It is the policy of the committee to provide cross-country skiing opportunities on the County Forest. However, forest management activities may dictate a specific trail facility be temporarily closed or relocated. In some cases, forest management activities may be altered adjacent to ski trails. The Marinette County Cross-Country Ski Association maintains a trail system west of Crivitz near the Peshtigo River which traverses both Marinette County Forest lands and the Peshtigo River State Forest. A trail system is also maintained by volunteers on the east side of Lake Noquebay along Right-of-Way Road. A map of this trail system can be found in Chapter 925.2.

725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED USE

Trails developed by either County or State funds designated primarily as hunter walking trails can be constructed using existing logging roads whenever possible. Gates and/or barriers may be constructed and strategically located to allow maintenance while restricting vehicular travel. Trail maintenance will be conducted in cooperation with DNR-Wildlife. Maps of the current hunter walking trails in the towns of Silver Cliff, Niagara and Middle Inlet are included in Chapter 925.2. Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including, but not limited to, snowshoeing and dog sledding are permitted on all trails unless posted to the contrary.

730 **MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS**

The use of motorized vehicles on the Forest continues to increase. The design, maneuverability, and power of the vehicles have improved. This has led to greater use; increased trail use conflicts, unnecessary environmental damage, and increased expenses for trail maintenance. Additional regulation on these types of recreational vehicles is needed to protect the Forest and limit adverse impacts on non-motorized uses.

730.1 SNOWMOBILING

730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

No cross-country use is permitted; however, snowmobile use is permitted on all logging

roads and fire lanes when the ground is snow covered. Use on the Forest during other times of the year is not allowed.

730.1.2 Designated Snowmobile Trails

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

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

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

All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to all cars and trucks from December 15th through April 30th unless vehicle use is authorized by Marinette County. When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free from debris and equipment, and with a minimum of 4 inches of snow pack. Trail width shall not exceed 16 feet.

DNR's Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the county. Permitted use of signs is explained in section 770.

730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

ATVs may only be operated on designated trails. No cross-country use is permitted. ATVs may not be operated in any wetland area, behind any gated, bermed, blocked or signed trail or on any designated non-motorized trail.

730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

A map showing the designated ATV Trails on the Marinette County Forest is included in Chapter 900 –Appendix.

Two types of designated ATV trails exist; state-funded and club trails. State funded trails run both in the summer and winter months. Summer trails are generally open from May 1st through October 31st and winter trails from December 15th through March 31st. Actual dates are set by the Department annually based on conditions. Trail use may be temporarily closed during extremely wet weather to prevent erosion or during dry periods for protection against forest fires. The county has contracts with local clubs and organizations for the grooming, brushing, signing and maintenance of these trails.

730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

730.3.1 Undesignated

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

730.3.2 Disabled Person ATV Permit

Disabled Persons ATV Permits will be issued in accordance with the Federal Disabilities Act and at the discretion of the committee.

730.3.3 Designated Trails

There are currently no winter or summer use off-road vehicle (ORV) or motorcycle (MC) trail systems on the Forest. State funds may be available for trail development and maintenance. The Forestry Committee may enter into agreements with clubs or organizations for the responsibility of signing and maintenance of these trails. This trail system may involve a combination of both public and private lands.

735 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

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

1. Beech Natural Area (T34N R17E Sec 11, NENE)
2. Lake Mary Hunter Walking Trail (T33N R21E, Sec. 13)
3. Peshtigo River Hunter Walking Trail (T35N R17E Sec. 15,16,17)
4. Long Slide Hunter Walking Trail (T37N R20E, Sec. 13,24)

740 WATER ACCESS

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

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

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

740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY MARINETTE COUNTY FOREST

1. FRYING PAN LAKE (T32N R18E, SEC. 6)
2. HARPERS LAKE (T35N R17E, SEC. 29)
3. BENSON LAKE (T35N R18E, SEC. 7)
4. PHILLIPS LAKE (T35N R19E, SEC. 5)
5. MIRROR LAKE (T36N R18E, SEC. 31)
6. SPUR LAKE (T37N R18E, SEC. 3)

740.2 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY TOWNS.

There are no sites on the Forest maintained by the Towns at this time.

740.3 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY DNR.

There are no sites on the Forest maintained by the DNR at this time.

740.4 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS ON COUNTY FOREST

Other undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats currently exist on the Forest. These are used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but have not been developed for boat trailer launching. These sites are not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion

damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

745 WILD LAKES

The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those areas that the County may designate as not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, watercraft, or snowmobiles except when snow covered. They may have road access available to or near the water’s edge but no other structural developments visible from the water and where man’s influence upon the landscape is minimal. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes are owned by Marinette County. Counties may request that townships, under authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., establish regulations restricting motorized use on these surface waters. Canoes, kayaks, and boats propelled by wind, oars, or electric motors are permitted. The intent of these restrictions is to protect the aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow human access. On the Marinette county forest the following lakes are designated as “Wild Lakes”:

LAKE	LOCATION	ACRES	FRONTAGE (miles)
Brandywine	34-17-12,13	7	0.5
Kidd	36-18-10	21	1.0
Hobachee	37-17-15	20	1.0
Spur	37-18-3	11	0.7
Johnson and beach	37-19-3	12	0.6
Barlow	38-20-29	5	0.4

750 WETLANDS

In addition to surface waters, all wetlands on the Forest are closed to motorized recreational vehicle use when soils are not frozen. Vehicle use during non-frozen seasons causes soil rutting, compaction and damage to vegetation. The wetlands are not listed individually here

but include all areas where soils, groundwater or surface waters support the growth of vegetation commonly associated with wetland plant communities.

755 ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS

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

1. Access across County Forest lands must be demonstrated by the applicant as the route of last resort. The applicant must document proposed uses.
2. No legal easement will be granted, just permission to cross county lands.
3. The permit is non-transferable. New landowners must apply to continue the land use agreement.
4. Road improvements and upgrading must be approved and will be supervised by the Forestry Department staff. Prior notification of three (3) days to Marinette County Forest Administrator is required before work starts.
5. All wood cut is the property of Marinette County.
6. Roadway must be opened to the public through county land. No gate may be erected on county land.
7. The County continues full ownership of the improved roadway; however, it shall not be liable for maintenance or upkeep of the road.
8. Permittee waives any rights to any declaration of ownership or interest in the road on county land for administrative costs as a result of this "Access Permit". The access permit is granted upon the signature and any fees being received by the Marinette County Forestry Department.
9. The fee schedule for a one-time payment is set at \$100.00 (\$50.00 for logging purposes only). The Committee reserves the right to waive this fee, and may consider fee increases in the future.
10. The standard Land Use Agreement Access permit is included as an exhibit in Chapter 900-32-Appendix.

Note: A separate permit is required for plowing snow for the purpose of accessing private

lands. The standard Snow Plowing Permit is included as an exhibit in Chapter 915.7.

760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered under Chapter 515.5, Special Uses.

765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. Chapter 6 of the BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in these areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-95. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas. See Soil Disturbance Policy in Chapter 925.8.

770 SIGNS

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

1. Informational Type Signs
 - A. Interpretive Signs - to educate the general public.
 - B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Marinette County Forest property.
 - C. Trail Markers - to provide direction and safety to trail users.
 - D. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers - to identify points of interest.

- E. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.
 - F. Directional Markers.
2. Regulatory Type Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

770.1 SIGNING STANDARDS

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

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