

**WOOD COUNTY, WI
FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
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CHAPTER 700
ROADS AND ACCESS**

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700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

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

Many of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. County personnel did not routinely establish the locations and standards for these earlier roads, nor were they maintained on a regular basis.

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

There are many potential problems to address, and reasons for an access management plan:

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

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

Erosion: soils eroding due to use, or over-use by vehicles without routine maintenance.

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

Litter/dumping depositing garbage, tires, construction debris, and other waste on the Forest.

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

Crowding: E.g., complaints from hunters about intensified competition for traditional hunting areas because 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 should be closed for improper location, intended use/length of service, and evaluated for replacement.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

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

710 ROADS

Wood County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by the County, private contractors working under contract, other public resource agencies, and non-profit organizations under cooperative agreement, etc.

The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads, permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads. New road establishment should consider information identifying areas with sensitive soils or severe slopes that have the potential for adverse water quality impacts from land management practices. County staff can work with local DNR forest hydrologists to develop site-specific measures where appropriate and to follow all required permitting processes when applicable.

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

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS (County Forest Roads)

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

Some forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads in this program must meet minimum design standards set by WI Statute Section 86.315 (4) (a) and 86.315 (3) and administered by WI DOT. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. The following table lists the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats. Also included are roads proposed for addition once improvements meet statute requirements.

WOOD COUNTY FOREST CURRENT WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Hiles	15,16,21, 22	2.39	Peterson Road Extension
Hiles	5	.19	Nieman Road
Remington	18,19,23, 24,25,26	4.30	South Bluff Road
Port Edwards	33, 34	1.53	Red Pine Trail
Port Edwards	19	1.02	Hazelnut Trail
Cranmoor	18	.98	Hazelnut Trail
	TOTAL =	10.41	

WOOD COUNTY FOREST PROSPECTIVE FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Port Edwards	32	1.0	Kimball Connector

These permanent primary roads will be maintained and remain open to public use. Permanent primary roads are mowed, brushed, and graded periodically as needed, but generally are not plowed in the winter. Culverts, drainage, gravel and other improvements are accomplished as yearly budgets allow. Portions of these roads also serve as snowmobile and ATV trails.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

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

Many 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. Some roads in this category are gated and may be open to vehicular traffic under frozen conditions. Some of these roads are also used as snowmobile trails in the winter.

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

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

Many of the roads on the Forest fall into this classification. These roads are designed and constructed for short-term use for a specific project; often for timber harvest access. These roads are used only for a short duration and when the activity is done, the temporary road is closed by

either the logging contractor or the County. These roads are naturally or artificially revegetated and closed by use of earthen berms/bunkers, boulders, or other physical barriers. In some cases, roads are completely closed with slash and debris to prevent future use and to encourage natural regeneration of trees.

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

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

Decisions relating to post harvest status of temporary roads such as: suitability for potential upgrade and future vehicular use, type of road closure, method of rehabilitation and/or revegetation, etc. fall under the Wood County Forest Administrator's responsibility.

710.4 STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS

710.4.1 State Highways

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

710.4.2 County Highways

Access points to Wood County Highways are subject to Wood County Ordinance #401, Highway Access Control Ordinance. This ordinance establishes rules and a permit system for access (See appendix for Ordinance #401). Any new access or improvements to existing access to County highways from the Wood County Forest shall follow procedures established in Ordinance #401.

710.4.3 Town Roads

Requirements for access to Town roads may vary depending on Township. Any new access, or significant changes to existing access, shall be accomplished through prior consultation with a representative of the particular Township in which the proposed access is located.

710.5 UTILITIES

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered under Chapter 500-20.5, Special Uses.

710.6 CULVERTS

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

In all instances, culverts should be placed according to required DNR permitting procedures and should follow BMP's for culverts that can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of the WI BMP's for Water Quality PUB FR-093 2010. Routine maintenance of these structures should also be completed to make sure structures are adequately working. The county may want to consider documenting the location of culverts on the forest and provide a list of the culverts that should be routinely checked.

715 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest may also provide and designate areas where motorized equipment is not permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. In general, motorized use is not permitted off road, as well as on any closed roads, within the Wood County Forest (refer to Forestry Ordinance contained in the appendix).

720 WILD LAKES

The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those restricted use areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, watercraft, or snowmobiles except when snow covered. There are no lakes under this designation contained within the Wood County Forest at this time.

725 ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. The BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in highly erodible soil areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-2010. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

730 SIGNS

Signs on the County Forest will be used discreetly to perform and function with minimal disruption to the multiple uses of the Forest. Private signs promoting personal, commercial or political objectives will not be permitted. 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 public about forest management practices.
 - B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Wood 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.

730.1 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 sign posts.
2. Routed wood signs may be used wherever practical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when used, will be of neat appearance.
3. Signs placed on snowmobile/ATV trails must conform to state standards and be

approved by the 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.

735 ROAD AND ACCESS PLAN

In general all motorized vehicular traffic, (including: ATV's, UTV's, snowmobiles, motorcycles, dirt bikes, etc.) is allowed on any forest road (Primary, Secondary, Temporary) open to public use. Primary Roads include all Wood County Forest Roads enrolled in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Certified County Forest Road Program (a.k.a. Gas Tax Roads), as well as other forest roads not enrolled but maintained by the Wood County Forest.

However, off-road motorized vehicular use, and also operation on roads closed through the use of: gates, berms, boulders, signs, etc. is not allowed. See Wood County Forestry Ordinance contained in the Appendix. Additionally, motorized use on roads normally open, may be temporarily signed closed for various reasons such as: road maintenance/repairs, forest management activities, storm damage, flooding, etc.

For additional information see various Wood County Forest Primary and Secondary Road Maps by forest block contained in the appendix.