

APPENDIX 4.8.3.3-1

Chapter 900 Washburn County Forest Land Use Plan

WASHBURN COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

CHAPTER 900 – RECREATION

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WASHBURN COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

900 RECREATION

Recreation is an integral part of the management of the County Forest and recreational uses are a part of most of the previous chapters. Due to the tremendous growth in recreational demands over the last ten years, this Plan recognizes the importance of more intensive recreational planning and emphasizes its importance with a separate chapter.

905 PLANNING

The Washburn County Forest Outdoor Recreation Plan also guides the Washburn County Forest recreation program. This plan is revised every five years and is made part of this Plan. The Washburn County Outdoor Recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It includes snowmobile and ATV plans, campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan, ATV Master Plan, and other recreation surveys, plans and reports will be used as available in planning efforts. Additional assistance will be sought from the DNR park planners. The responsibility for all recreation planning on the County Forest will rest with the Committee.

910 AUTHORITY

The Washburn County Code of Ordinances and s.28.11 Wis. Stats. authorize the Washburn County Forestry Parks and Recreation Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the Washburn County Forest (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. The mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes the degradation of natural resources.

1. The Committee may establish and maintain recreation areas and facilities within, or outside the County Forest. The Committee has been empowered to establish and enforce rules and regulations for the use of such developments and to establish fees for their use.

2. The Washburn County Outdoor Recreation Plan, updated every 5 years, will reflect the public use and interest in the County's recreational facilities and how the County plans to accommodate those uses and interests.
3. The Washburn County Code of Ordinances shall govern the lands and facilities designated by the County for park or recreational purposes

Maps of the County's recreation facilities and the Code of Ordinances are appended in Chapter 1000.

915 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide recreational services for the public. Under this Plan, Washburn County contracts the following services:

1. Snowmobile trail maintenance on County Forest, private lands, and the Wild River Trail
2. ATV trail maintenance on County Forest, private lands, and the Wild River Trail.
3. Informal agreements with local clubs and private individuals to maintain ski trails and the Minong Rifle Range.

920 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS

The Committee may issue permits or use agreements for use of the County Forest for recreational purposes.

1. No permits for sale of malt or intoxicating beverages will be issued on the County Forest
2. Other types of special use permits are found in Section 515.

Organized events or special uses, other than informal recreation (See Sec. 510.4) require specific permission from the Committee.

925 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES

The Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for the establishment of entrance, camping, and other user fees on recreational facilities maintained by the County Forest.

1. Fees for camping shall be comparable with fees charged by similar private facilities so as not to provide undue competition. Fees shall be subject to change periodically at the discretion of the Committee.

2. Other user generated fees shall be utilized, where appropriate, to assist in the maintenance of the facility where it was collected.

930 EXTENSIVE (UNDESIGNATED) RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

Extensive recreation includes those informal activities for which the County generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, biking, hiking, and others. Such uses do not normally require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with the Washburn County Code of Ordinances. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances if necessary to protect the County Forest from damage.

930.1 HUNTING

The entire County Forest is open for regulated hunting, with the exception of designated areas that are developed for high public use, such as Leisure Lake Youth Camp, Totogatic Park, and Sawmill Campground. These boundaries of these areas are signed indicating closure. Hunting is also prohibited within 1700 feet of the Northwood School grounds located in NW1/4 Section 1, T41N-R12W (s.29.22 Wis. Stats).

The Washburn County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. Tree stands are permitted providing they do not damage the tree and are removed at the end of hunting hours each day. The use of nails, lag screws, screw steps, or other damaging devices is not permitted
2. Commercially made, or hand made blinds must be removed at the end of hunting hours each day. Blinds made of natural; on site vegetation may be left.
3. ATV use is regulated. Please refer to Chapter 700 for undesignated use and Section 940.3 for ATV trails.
4. Cutting or harvesting of vegetation is prohibited.

This plan recommends developing an ordinance change to allow portable tree stands to be left overnight on the forest within the following criteria:

- *Stand may not damage the tree in any manner (screws, nails, etc.)*
- *Stand must be labeled with owners name and address*

- *Only 1 stand per individual allowed to be left*
- *A time limit to be developed*
- *Any stands left after season or after allot time frame are to be seized and/or citations issued.*
- *Other limitations or restrictions determined appropriate by Committee*

930.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for regulated fishing, unless otherwise listed in State regulations.

930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities, is allowed. The Washburn County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. All litter, trash, or rubbish must be removed.
2. Cutting or harvesting vegetation is not permitted.
3. Fires may not be left unattended unless the ground is 100% snow covered.
4. Fires may not be ignited unless the ground is 100% snow covered in Casey, Chicog, Minong, or Springbrook Townships; or within the Namekagon Wild Riverway Zone.

930.4 CAMPING

A permit is required to camp outside of developed campgrounds on the County Forest. Permits are available from the Washburn County Forestry Office. Permits may be denied for specific areas at the discretion of the Forest Administrator. The Washburn County Code of Ordinances regulates camping. In general the following activities are regulated:

1. Camping is permitted with a tent or lesser facility.
2. Camping use may not exceed 9 consecutive days on the forest.
3. A permit must be acquired from the Forestry Office and the Forest Administrator may limit or restrict certain areas from camping use.
4. Camping in Casey, Chicog, Springbrook, or Minong political townships is not permitted during the months of April or May. Camping within the Wild Riverway zone is not permitted unless it is within a designated campsite.
5. Campers may not leave an open fire, unless it has no smoke and the entire coal or

- ash bed is cool enough to touch with a hand.
6. Campers may not ignite a fire, unless the ground is 100 percent snow covered, in Casey, Chicog, Minong, or Springbrook political townships, except for gas-fueled stoves.
 7. Camping during the first nine days of the state's firearm deer season, in mobile camping units attached to or part of a motor vehicle, and only while off the road and its right-of-way and still within 200 feet of a town road or county forest road with a minimum 16-foot road bed is allowed with a permit.
 8. Littering or site damage will not be tolerated
 9. Natural vegetation may not be damaged or altered in any way, except for the construction of an adequate fire ring. Fasteners such as nails, screws, or bolts may not be attached to trees. Rope may not be left tied to trees on the site.
 10. Manufactured materials (lumber, concrete, plastics, etc.) may not be left on the site when it is vacated.

930.5 MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The Washburn County Code of Ordinances and the Washburn County Road and Access Plan regulate motorized uses on the County Forest. The full text of these regulations is included in Chapter 700 (Roads, Trails, and Access). In general, the following regulations apply to motorized travel (cars, trucks, snowmobiles, ATV's, etc.) outside of a developed recreational trail system.

1. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle on a trail designated closed with a gate, earthen berms, sign, or other closure.
2. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle off of a trail that is designated open to motor vehicles by the Committee (off trail or cross country travel is prohibited).
3. Two-wheeled motorized travel (motorcycles, mini bikes, dirt bikes) is not permitted unless the machine is a street legal machine operating on a County Forest Road (gas tax).
4. ATV's are not allowed anywhere on the County Forest from April 1 through the first Friday before Memorial Weekend.

930.6 OTHER USES

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed within the County Code of Ordinances. Mountain Biking, Horseback riding,

and other non-motorized uses are not currently regulated. The Committee may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the County Forest should damage begin to occur. A description of extensive uses relating to forest trails is included in Chapter 700.

935 INTENSIVE RECREATION AREAS

Intensive recreation areas are those for which the County provides a facility. The Washburn County Forest has developed sites and areas to accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Forestry Parks and Recreation Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Committee and the Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for an increase in developed recreation facilities and the public input sessions reflected this demand. Washburn County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities (maps of these facilities are appended in Chapter 1000):

935.1 CAMPGROUNDS

935.1.1 Ordinances

The Washburn County Code of Ordinances regulates use of designated campgrounds on the County Forest. In accordance with this ordinance, no person within a campground area shall:

1. Camp at anywhere other than an established campsite.
2. Dispose of trash other than in provided containers.
3. Discharge or possess an uncased firearm or weapon.
4. Ignite a fire unless in a designated fire ring.
5. Keep a pet unleashed
6. Use the area between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. unless a registered camper.
7. Keep horses, livestock, or other domesticated animals not considered a household pet.
8. Leave any animal excrement within a developed area.

935.1.2 Totogatic Park

Totogatic Park is located on the Minong Flowage, northwest of Minong. The park

facilities include 75 campsites, electricity, electric water sources, shower house, 3 pit toilets, beach, fishing pier, boat landing, dump station, fish cleaning station, firewood, pavilion, nature trail, and caretaker's residence.

935.1.3 Sawmill Campground

Sawmill Campground is located on Sawmill Lake, northwest of Birchwood. The park facilities include 25 campsites, hand pumps, 2 pit toilets, fishing pier, nature trail, and pavilion.

935.1.4 Davis Flowage

Davis Flowage has two developed campsites on the western shore. These are boat in sites with fire rings and picnic tables. A County Forest Camping Permit is required.

935.2 LEISURE LAKE YOUTH CAMP

Washburn County operates and maintains a Youth Camp at Leisure Lake in Casey Township. This facility includes a main lodge, craft building, six cabins, bathroom, beach, ball field, picnic area, and nature trail. The facility rented on a donation basis with first reservation opportunities given to local youth groups.

935.3 HALLSTROM WOODS

The Hallstrom Woods property was purchased, utilizing State and Federal grant funds, from the Izaak Walton League in 1999. This 600-acre parcel is managed as a non-motorized recreation unit. Facilities included 4-mile non-motorized trail (skiing, mountain biking, etc), parking, bathrooms, pavilion, boat launch, and aerator. The trailhead is built adjacent to the Chicog Township Hall on Highway 77, which offers a shared picnic area facility.

935.4 PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS

Picnic and day use areas maintained by the County and open to the public include (these may be part of other park facilities previously listed):

- a. Slim Creek Flowage Picnic Area
- b. Leisure Lake Picnic Area
- c. Hallstrom Woods Picnic Area
- d. Harmon Lake Picnic Area

- e. Totogatic Park Picnic Area
- f. Sawmill Park Picnic Area

935.5 SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES

Washburn County maintains swimming areas and beaches at the following facilities. Official swimming areas are marked with swim ropes and buoys. Lifeguards are not provided.

- a. Totogatic Park Beach
- b. Leisure Lake Beach

935.6 BOAT LANDINGS

At several locations, both on and off the County Forest, areas have been developed for water access. These generally include a parking lot and an approach to the water. These are provided for public access to waters for recreational purposes and are shown on the recreation maps in Chapter 1000. Water access is also discussed in Chapter 700. These landings are not to be considered boat-mooring sites and camping is not permitted

- a. Leisure Lake
- b. Harmon Lake
- c. Loyhead Lake
- d. Wolf Lake
- e. Sawmill Lake
- f. Spider Lake
- g. Elbow Lake
- h. Slim Creek Flowage
- i. Big McKenzie Lake

935.7 MINONG RIFLE RANGE

Ranges allowing for public use of rifle, bow, pistol, etc. are permitted on County Forest lands. The Minong Rifle range is maintained by a sportsmen's club and is open to the public. The range includes shooting benches, shelter, and backstops. In general, the range is open for target shooting of typical sporting firearms and weapons. Bombs, large caliber military type weapons, or other assault weapons are not permitted.

A "certificate of insurance" for any events held by organizations will be required along

with a permit by the committee before the event. The committee with consultation of corporate counsel will set insurance minimums.

935.8 CABIN PERMITS

Washburn County still retains a cabin permit system on the Forest. At the time of the drafting of this plan, there are 36 remaining permits. The cabin permit system has a sunset clause of December 31, 2010. Detailed information is contained within Chapter 500, section 510.

935.8.1 Cabin Permit Sites After December 31, 2010

The Committee may consider, as a part of this plan, the option of establishing the reclaimed cabin permit sites as camping areas under the following considerations:

1. Designate those sites with easy access from public roads
2. Consider a reservation or drawing for popular sites, especially for the gun deer season
3. Proposal should include provisions for satisfying conditions for a sanitary permit and other zoning requirements
4. A fee structure should be implemented commensurate with the workload of administration, site inspections and other duties resulting from the operation of the program.

940 INTENSIVE RECREATION TRAILS

Intensive recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trails systems that accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of the various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. Wherever possible, attempts should be made to avoid user conflicts. However, recreational users will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the Washburn County Forest. Trail systems are identified on maps in Chapter 1000. Extensive recreational use of trails is discussed in Chapter 700

The Committee and the Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for an increase in developed recreation facilities and the public input sessions reflected this demand. Washburn County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities:

940.1 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 Washburn County with \$1,000,000.00 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage.

Any new trail proposal must comply with County policy, plans and standards. Refer to Section 940.2.6 for non-motorized and Section 940.4 for motorized.

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 stormwater 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 Washburn 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 plan will be prepared for each project depicting the location of the project, surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed.

940.2 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Washburn County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage to the environment, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape.

It shall be the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

940.2.1 Designated Hiking Trails

Any designated recreation trail maintained by the County is open to use by hikers. The County Forest does, however, maintain the following official hiking/nature trails

- a. Sawmill Campground Nature Trail
- b. Totogatic Park Nature Trail
- c. Leisure Lake Nature Trail
- d. Hallstrom Woods Non-Motorized Trail

940.2.1(a) Ice Age National Scenic Trail

On October 13, 1964, Congress passed legislation which authorized the establishment of the "Ice Age National Scientific Reserve in Wisconsin" to assure protection, preservation, and interpretation of nationally significant values of Wisconsin's continental glaciation.

Approximately seven miles of existing roads in the Welsh Lake Unit of the County Forest is authorized by this 10-Year Plan to be included as a route in part of the Ice Age Trail system. A map of this trail is appended in chapter 1000.

The present route will be authorized by Committee authorization and adoption of this Plan. Conditions will include the following:

1. The Ice Age Trail will not conflict with any legal hunting activity, authorized snowmobile trails, or other objectives identified in Section 850.5.28 (Welsh Lake Integrated Resource Management Unit) of this plan.
2. The Ice Age Trail Foundation will provide volunteers to develop and maintain the trail. The County is an unlikely sponsor to construct or maintain the trail, although additional support may be given should outside funding sources become available.
3. Liability for volunteers and hikers is to be covered by the National Park Service. The Forestry Committee upon proof of insurance may authorize other labor sources.
4. No additional aesthetic management category is anticipated, although foresters will be sensitive to trail needs. As of the adoption of this Plan, the Forestry Department has not noted a tremendous amount of use of this section of trail,

although usage should be expected to increase. Management activities such as timber harvest should be considered educational to trail users, and should complement the multiple use objectives of the Welsh Lake Unit.

5. Signs for the trail will be placed on treated wooden, steel, or Carsonite posts (not trees) and will be approved by Forestry staff prior to installation. Yellow painted trees are authorized for use as trail markers.
6. Any trail reroute proposals must be submitted to the Forest Administrator. The Committee will consider these proposals. It is understood that the trail route will occasionally be used for logging (multiple use). The existing route is not anticipated to change within this planning period.
7. The authorized trail itself is considered a route only for observation and interpretation and not part of a reserve or right-of-way area for the purpose of preserving or protecting glacial features.
8. Private land easements are the responsibility of the Ice Age Trail Foundation.

The Ice Age Trail is a welcomed asset on the Forest and the Committee shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the trail and trail users. This plan does not recognize the need for, nor recommend any additional protection measures that are in the form of easement or other designation of property rights to other groups or agencies.

Recommendations:

- *It may be advisable to form a working group between County Forest staff and Ice Age Trail officials that would give an opportunity for notification and input into timber sale activities adjacent to the trail.*
- *Consider forestry activities adjacent to the trail as an educational opportunity for trail users and possibly develop interpretive signs explaining forestry practices that are utilized.*
- *Consider developing alternative routes through the Welsh Lake unit should forest management cause significant negative aesthetic impacts. Trail could be relocated back to the original location once they have regenerated.*
- *The Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation has requested restrictions on motorized uses and on non-motorized uses other than hiking. At present, little motorized or other non-motorized uses are noted on the trail. Motorized use, with the*

exception of winter use on the State funded snowmobile trail, is currently prohibited. Consider amending the Washburn County Code to restrict other non-motorized uses should damage or conflict begin to occur.

- *The current trail is primarily on logging roads. Work cooperatively with the IAPTF to relocate the current trail off of existing roads and skid trails. Relocation efforts shall be conducted by the IAPTF with guidance and cooperation from the Forestry Department. This recommendation is provided in response to the IAPTF statement that:*

“It is recognized that presently the trail is primarily on logging roads that for the most part make it impractical to create a “premier” hiking trail.

During the life of this 10-Year Plan the IAPTF hopes to reroute portions of the trail off logging roads and skid ways.”

- *Any proposed reroutes should target areas of northern hardwood, red oak, or other forest types that are managed under a thinning process rather than stands prescribed for clear-cut. This will minimize aesthetic impacts. Also consider Aesthetic Zone classification for those sections of trail that is permanently rerouted off of existing logging trails.*
- *Carefully review requests for restrictions on use along the trail for consistency with State Statutes and with other recreational trail guidelines. Requests to restrict any legal hunting activity may conflict with s.28.11 Wis. Stats.*

940.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

Any designated recreation trail maintained by the County is open to bicycle use. At the time of the drafting of this plan, there are no trails designated solely for bicycle use. There are numerous trails that offer shared use. A plan proposal is in place to construct a mountain bike trail in Birchwood Township. The trail route would run from the north parking lot of the Nordic Ski Trail to Sawmill Campground. This trail is an approved project within the Washburn County Forest Outdoor Recreation Plan. The construction of this trail is considered approved as part of this Plan. The project is contingent on maintenance and construction support of a local mountain bike or other club and securing funding.

940.2.3 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

Washburn County began construction on the Dugan Run Horse Trail in 2002. The trail

system proposal includes 30 miles of trails in the townships of Stone Lake, Crystal, Birchwood, and Madge. Trailheads were proposed for Dugan Fire Lane, south of Mackey Creek, and at the Harmon Lake Boat Landing Area. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the north segments of this trail are complete. South segments are scheduled for construction during 2005.

Facilities include campsites, toilet, hand pump, pavilion, and horse tethers. Additional facilities may be developed as use warrants.

940.2.4 Designated Ski Trails

Three regularly groomed ski trails are available for public use. User groups or other agencies maintain all ski trails.

- a. Nordic Ski Trail is an 8.1-mile trail located in Birchwood Township. A north parking lot lies on highway 70, 4 miles west of Stone Lake. Most of the loops are maintained for classical skiing and a southern loop is maintained for both classical and freestyle skiing. The Glide and Stride Ski Club maintain the trail.
- b. Totogatic Ski Trail is a 7.8-mile trail located in Minong Township. Parking is located on the west side of 53, 2 miles north of Minong. The trail is maintained for classical skiing. Private individuals maintain this trail
- c. Leisure Lake Ski Trail is a 2.7-mile trail located in Casey Township. Parking is located at the Leisure Lake Youth Camp. The trail is maintained for classical skiing. The National Park Service maintains this trail.
- d. Hallstrom Woods Non-Motorized Trail is a trail proposal on the 600-acre parcel acquired from the Izaak Walton League. The trail system is proposed for construction in late 2004 and early 2005. This trail system will link to and be maintained by the Schwan Center. Maintenance of the trail will likely be a cooperative effort that also includes the County and local ski clubs

940.2.5 Canoe Portage Trails

The County Forest currently maintains two canoe portage routes in the Birchwood area. Both of these routes are located in high-density lake areas and include short portage trails that connect lakes.

Sawmill Lake Canoe Portage

This canoe trail starts on Sawmill Lake, either at the Campground or the boat landing. The route includes nine short portage trails that connect Sawmill, Fawn, Beartrap, Tadpole, Telstar, Mallard, Otter, and Deep Lakes. The longest portage is 1000 feet while most are 300 feet or less. Portage trails are marked and periodically cleared.

Loyhead Lake Canoe Portage

This canoe trail starts at the boat landing off of the Birchwood Firelane at Loyhead Lake. The route includes seven short portage trails that connect Loyhead, Bear, Lost, Bluebill, Pine Point, and Deep Lakes. The longest portage is 500 feet, while most are 300 feet or less. Portage trails are marked and periodically cleared.

940.2.6 Future Non-Motorized Trails

940.2.6(a) Criteria

Proposals to construct new trail facilities will only be considered under the following criteria:

1. Trail must be identified within this Plan or within the Washburn County Forest Outdoor Recreation Plan and must be presented to the Committee for approval.
2. A need must be demonstrated that a demand for the trail system exists and that sufficient use will occur to justify construction.
3. A club or other user group must make a commitment to maintain or assist with maintenance of the trail. This criteria can also be met, upon approval of the Committee, by showing that a club or group will form as a result of trail construction.
4. Trails must be designed to show that undue environmental damage will not occur.
5. All trails should consider trail fees, user fees, or other funding sources would cover the costs of trail maintenance, unless the maintenance fees are part of an approved County budget.
6. Justification should be shown that the trail proposal would create an economic benefit to the County either directly through revenues or through benefit to local businesses due to tourism.
7. Trail design is subject to approval of the Forest Administrator prior to submission to the Committee for approval.
8. Trail proposal must include language indicating any potential user conflicts

and strategies for alleviating conflicts.

9. Trail proposal, construction and design must comply with any and all town, county, state or federal rules, regulations, laws, or ordinances. All necessary permits will be applied for either by the County or the user group.

940.2.6(b) Committee Approved Future Non-Motorized Trail Projects

The following is a list of projects currently approved for construction by the Committee and recognized by the Outdoor Recreation Plan:

1. Dugan Run Horse Trail – South loops
2. Hallstrom Woods Non-Motorized Trail
3. Birchwood Mountain Bike Trail

940.3 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

940.3.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Two types of groomed snowmobile trails are authorized on the Forest. They are either state funded trails or local, unfunded club trails. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance, and insurance obligations between Washburn County and local snowmobile clubs. At the time of the drafting of this plan, Washburn County contracts with the Rolling Hills Snowmobile Club, Minong Wascott ATV and Snowmobile Club, and the Birchwood Bobcats Snowmobile Club for maintenance of snowmobile trails.

- a. State funded 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 Washburn 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. There are 240 miles of funded trails within Washburn County with approximately 120 of those miles on County Forest lands.
- b. Local trails – A smaller network of 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. There are approximately 50 miles of club trails and they are primarily on private lands. Most of these club trails connect to local business, cross lakes, and connect road

routes.

The Washburn County Code of Ordinances and the Washburn County Road and Access Plan regulate county snowmobile trails. A summary of ordinance sections, road and access plan sections and county polices that relate to designated Snowmobiles is as follows:

- a. All snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks December 1 through April 1, including County Forest Roads designated as snowmobile trails.
- b. The Forest Administrator will make the determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow and maintenance conditions.
- c. The official closure of the snowmobile trail system does not prohibit the use of motor vehicles, under 900 pounds, on those segments of designated snowmobile trails on County Forest Lands. By ordinance, snowmobile trails on County Forest are open to vehicles under 900 pounds from December 1 to April 1. Users will travel at their own risk during those periods that the system is closed. Designated snowmobile trails on private lands are closed to public use unless the Forest Administrator officially opens the trail system.
- d. Snowmobile trails are not to be used for timber sale access unless permitted in the prospectus or timber sale contract. Where permitted, the trails must be maintained with snow cover and be kept free of all logging debris.
- e. Snowmobile trails used for access during snow season will be posted with signs warning of “logging ahead”.

940.3.2 Designated ATV Trails

Designated ATV trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. These may lie on County, private, and other agency lands. At the time of the drafting of this plan, Washburn County contracts with the Minong Wascott ATV & Snowmobile Club and the Birchwood Bobcats ATV club for maintenance of ATV trails and expects to contract with the newly organized Yellow River ATV Club. There are four types of designated ATV trail.

- a. Funded Winter ATV Trails – A majority of the state funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. Not all of the trails are funded, however all snowmobile trails on County Forest lands allow ATV travel from December 1 to April 1.

- b. Funded Year Round ATV Trails – Year round ATV trails lie on both County and private lands. These trails are open to ATV travel except April 1 through the first Friday before Memorial Weekend. Currently, only the Spider Lake Trail is designated as a year round funded trail on County Forest Lands.
- c. Wild Rivers Trail – The Wild Rivers Trail is a state owned rail corridor running from Rice Lake to Superior. Washburn County operates and maintains this trail under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DNR. Washburn County manages 40 miles of this corridor for multiple uses. The primary use of the trail is ATV as development funding originated from the ATV program. Washburn County provides heavy equipment maintenance on this trail and contracts lighter work with the local ATV clubs.
- d. Club Trails – Club trails are those that are not funded under the state ATV program. Club trails are not permitted on County Forest lands unless they are part of the ATV Master Plan and are authorized by the Committee. In most cases these are trails maintained or developed and may be added as a funded trail at a later date.

940.3.3 Other Designated Motor Vehicle Trails

No trails for other types of motor vehicles have been developed. This Plan does not recognize a need for designated motorcycle, off road truck, or other motorized trails. It is also recognized that the development of other motorized trails may cause environmental damage, user conflict, and maintenance issues. These types of trails may pose too much of a risk to justify any potential tourism benefit to the County. Consistent with the policy to minimize damage to the environment, the following are to be considered uses are considered to incompatible with multiple use and sound management:

- a. Motorcycles, dirt bike, mini bike trails
- b. Intensive ATV parks (play areas)
- c. Off road vehicle courses or trails (4 x 4)

940.4 FUTURE MOTORIZED TRAIL PROJECTS

The Washburn County Forest is a multiple use forest. Motorized travel on trails can be a legitimate use of the forest provided that these trails are designed and maintained in a manner that minimizes damage to the environment and reduces user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the

landscape. It shall be the policy of the Committee to consider opportunities for motorized recreation trails.

940.4.1 Future Snowmobile Trails

This Plan considers the existing miles of designated snowmobile trails to be sufficient. Proposals for additional trail segments will generally be discouraged. Proposals to relocate trails or to make minor adjustments to the existing trail system will be encouraged in those cases where issues of public safety or environmental damage occur. Recognized club trails that are a part of the overall trail system may be considered for funding and designation as official trails.

940.4.2 Future ATV Trails

The use and popularity of ATV's has increased dramatically over the period of the 1996-2005 Plan. The lack of a more extensive ATV trail system in the County has led to extensive, unorganized, and often illegal use of ATV's on the County Forest. County Forestry staff has noted extensive damage in some areas of the forest that are open to ATV travel, as well as problem areas resulting from illegal travel.

The Forestry Office has received numerous requests for a trail system and the public input meetings for this Plan echoed this sentiment. Requests for an ATV trail system were one of the most common issues presented at our initial public input meetings. ATV related comments were fairly consistent in asking for environmentally sound, sustainable, ATV trail networks that connect communities.

It has become the policy of the Committee to design, and construct ATV trails in order to provide opportunities for ATV users. It is hoped that a comprehensive, viable trail system will alleviate the pressures and impacts of unorganized ATV use as well as minimize ATV travel in closed areas and on closed trails.

This Plan also authorizes the Committee to implement harsher penalties for illegal ATV use once a viable trail system is in place. It is also recommended to consider additional closure of trails in those units currently open to ATV travel, especially in areas where damage is occurring. This recommendation is a result of public input asking for less motorized travel on the forest. (See Road and Access Plan Section 760.5)

940.4.2(a) Washburn County ATV Master Plan

In response to the tremendous demand for ATV trails and in preparation for the adoption of this Plan, Washburn County formed an ATV advisory group with the goal of creating a direction and plan for developing ATV trails within Washburn County. This advisory group had the following representation:

Mike Peterson – County Forest Administrator

Bob Busch – Recreation Coordinator / Park Ranger

Robert Lester – Forestry Committee & Stone Lake Township Chair

Lee Minnick – Birchwood Bobcats ATV Club

Tony Baier – Forestry Committee & Yellow River ATV Club

Dan Carlson – Minong Wascott ATV Club

Diane Conklin – WDNR Community Service Specialist

Dave Zebro – WDNR Conservation Warden

Ed Slaminski – WDNR Water Regulations

Ken Jonas – WDNR Wildlife Biologist

This group provided input into generating a map of a future desired ATV trail system that implements County Forest lands, private lands, and road routes. This map included existing ATV trails, existing forest trails that could be developed into ATV trails, and a designation for general corridors needing access across private lands to connect trails. These corridors provide a focus area for ATV clubs to attempt to secure easements. This plan focuses efforts in the County for trail development rather than creating an unorganized scattering of trail segments. This map is appended in Chapter 1000.

940.4.2(b) ATV Master Plan Requirements

Trail development must comply with the following requirements:

1. Loop trails will be discouraged unless part of a larger system connecting communities.
2. Dead end trails will not be sanctioned as part of a County ATV trail system and will not be permitted on or leading from County Forest Lands (e.g. trails that spur from a main trail to dead end at a residence or business)

3. Intensive use, or play areas, will not be permitted on County Forest lands.
4. ATV clubs will be responsible for securing easements across private lands. Washburn County will assist when dealing with industrial forestlands or other large landowners.
5. Private easement acquisition, by the clubs, will connect to trail systems proposed on County lands and will focus on the corridors identified.
6. All trails will be on suitable soils in appropriate locations for the volume of users.
7. Not all trail proposals presented to the County will be approved. The Forestry Department and the Committee will review each proposal. Final decisions will be based on this review.
8. Trail proposals lying outside of the areas identified on the ATV Master Plan Map will not be considered. Local clubs may develop club trails on other lands that do not comply with the plan, but they will not be sanctioned by the County nor funded.
9. DNR representatives, as well as other pertinent officials (town boards, other agencies, etc.) will review all trail funding proposals prior to submission to the Committee.

Also recognized as part of the development of the ATV Master Plan, is the potential need to further restrict motor vehicle travel on the County Forest, more specifically those units open to motor vehicles on all established roads and trails. It is recommended to evaluate these units for a reduction in the density of roads open to motor vehicles. Trails should be evaluated based on existing and potential future damage. A basic, core road system on stable soils should remain open.

945 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECREATION PROGRAM

The following are recommended changes that this Plan recognizes that would improve or enhance the recreation program on the Washburn County Forest:

945.1 RECREATION OFFICER

The enforcement of ordinances relative to recreation is recognized as lacking in Washburn County. Conservation Wardens, in general, cannot enforce regulations included within the County Code of Ordinances. The Washburn County Sheriff's

Department is authorized to enforce these ordinances but general does not due to time constraints.

This Plan recommends continuing to pursue the creation of a Recreation Officer position within the Sheriff's Department. There are law enforcement grant programs available through the Department of Natural Resources that could help defray the costs of such a position. Snowmobile, ATV, and Boat Patrol Enforcement Aids are all valid programs that could be utilized by the County. It is recommended that a position requiring 33% of time on County Forest issues would greatly reduce enforcement problems.

945.2 ADDITIONAL RECREATION STAFF

With the growing recreation program on the Forest, insufficient manpower is available to manage all recreation resources adequately. This plan recognizes the immediate need for an additional full time recreation position. The long-term goal should be to develop a recreation staff within the Forestry Department.

The recommended organizational structure for such a staff would be to create the position of Assistant Parks and Recreation Administrator to oversee recreational operations. This position would report to the County Forest Administrator.

945.3 OTHER PROJECT PROPOSALS

The following have been identified as potential projects that could be approved and developed on the County Forest. Most have been recognized in the Washburn County Forest Outdoor Recreation Plan. Approval of the Outdoor Plan allows the Forestry Department and Committee to apply for outdoor recreation aids. Projects will require Committee and possibly Board approval and amendment to this Plan prior to development. See the Washburn County Forest Outdoor Recreation Plan for additional information.

Totogatic Park

- Expand Totogatic Park to the west and/or south of the lagoon.
- Construct a second shower house facility
- Add new playground equipment
- Consider a park annex on the northeast side of the flowage
- Consider summer seasonal sites

- Consider a limited reservation system
- Expand nature trail

Sawmill Park

- Improved directional signage
- Widen campground access roads
- Expand nature trail
- Improve swimming beach
- Fish cleaning station
- Develop a host program

Dugan Run Horse Trail

- Develop addition loops and points of interest as use warrants
- Consider camping facilities at Harmon Lake

Leisure Lake Youth Camp

- Construct shower facilities
- Expand nature trail
- Playground equipment
- Insulation/heat for year round usage
- Youth education programs

Ernie Swift Nature Camp

- Explore exercising reversionary clause on original deed from Washburn County

Nordic and Totogatic Ski Trails

- Redesign to accommodate “freestyle” skiing
- Reconstruct trail surface and seed to native grasses
- Construct facilities (bathroom, etc)

Wild River Trail

- Develop camping facilities at Trego
- Connect Wild River Trail to Tuscobia Trail

Hay Lake

Consider access from east side and develop a primitive boat landing

Red, Loon, Bass Lakes

Continue efforts to develop a campground with, or without involvement of DNR as a State Park.

Canoe Portage Trails

Improve landings and trails

Consider primitive camping areas