

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

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900 RECREATION

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

905 PLANNING

For the purposes of this plan, only uses that occur on the Polk County Forest are addressed in this plan. In addition to this plan, the Polk County Outdoor Recreation Plan also guides the recreation program. The Polk County Outdoor Recreation Plan is revised every five years and is can be found at: <https://www.co.polk.wi.us/fpt>. The Polk County Outdoor recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It incorporates snowmobile and ATV plans, campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports. The Outdoor Recreation Plan, [Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) (SCORP), public input, and other local or regional planning documents will be used as resources in recreational planning and development efforts. The responsibility for recreational planning, development and maintenance on the County Forest will rest with the Environmental Services Committee.

910 AUTHORITY

The Polk County Code of Ordinances and [s.28.11](#) Wis. Stats, authorize the Environmental Services Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the County Forest Plan (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. This mission statement also charges the Environmental Services Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes environmental damage.

Maps of the recreational facilities managed through the Polk County Forest program are appended or referenced in Chapter 1000. These amenities can also be found on the Polk County Recreational Viewer <https://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfointeractivemaps>

915 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES

The Environmental Services Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for establishing entrance, camping and other user fees on recreational facilities on the County Forest. Camping, entrance or other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by other adjacent counties and or similar private facilities and are subject to periodic change by the Environmental Services Committee. Fees, where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities.

920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS

It is permissible for the Environmental Services Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of this plan, the County contracts for the following services

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance
2. ATV trail grading and maintenance
3. *Agreement with Governor Knowles State Forest to maintain the Sterling horse trails.*
4. *Agreement with the Town of Sterling for the County to maintain the Sterling ATV loop.*

925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Environmental Services Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance is required.

930 UNDESIGNATED RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST

The majority of the recreational use on the Polk County Forest is undesignated and undeveloped use. Undesignated 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. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance within the County ordinances and State Law. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

930.1 HUNTING

The entire County Forest is open for regulated hunting, with the exception of areas developed for high public use. Apple River Park is not open to hunting. All state hunting regulations apply. See Chapter 1000 for County ordinances and special rules concerning ground blinds and tree stands.

930.2 FISHING

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

930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities is allowed. The Polk County Forestry and Parks Ordinances also regulates day use. 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*

930.4 CAMPING

Prior to camping on the Polk County Forest permission must be granted by notifying the Forestry Department by telephone call or email. Camping cannot exceed 14 days.

Camping with a mobile camper is not permitted within 200 feet of a state or county town road. No roads, fire breaks, or trails may be blocked

Camping

1. Camping is allowed from April 1 to December 1.
2. Overnight Camping is not allowed at County boat landings, parks, or recreational trailheads.
3. No littering or site destruction will be tolerated.
4. Campers may utilize firewood that is both dead and down.
5. Campers are subject to rules and penalties provided by ordinances and state law regarding all aspects of conduct including fire control, cutting and defacing timber, following game and fish laws. In addition to the penalties of applicable ordinances and statues violators may be subject to ejection from the county forest.
6. Natural vegetation and terrain 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.
7. Manufactured materials (lumber, concrete, plastics etc.,) may not be left on the site when it is vacated. No trees or other vegetation, either native or exotic may be planted on site.

930.5 MOTORIZED TRAVEL

The following regulations apply to motorized travel outside of a developed recreational trail system within the Polk County Forest.

1. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle on a trail designated closed with a gate, earthen berm, sign, or other closure.
2. Two-wheeled motorized travel (motorcycles, mini bikes, dirt bikes) are not permitted unless the machine is street legal and operating on a County Forest Road (gas tax).
3. The Forest Administrator can close a road if resource damage is occurring.

930.6 OTHER USES

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed within the Polk County Parks and Forestry Ordinances. Mountain Biking, Horseback riding, and other non-motorized uses are currently not regulated. The County Board may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the Polk County Forest should damage begin to occur.

935 DESIGNATED RECREATION AREAS/USES

Designated recreation includes those uses for which the County provides a trail or facility. The Polk County Forest has few developed sites and areas to accommodate public use. The Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Environmental Services Committee and Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for recreation facilities. Polk County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities depending on funding. Areas can be developed for recreation use as well as signing memorandum of Understandings to User groups.

935.1 CAMPGROUNDS

935.1.1 Apple River Park

Apple River is a 20 acre park located along the Apple River North of Amery in Apple River Township. The park facilities includes: 15 campsites, electricity, hand pumps, toilets, and a nature trail. The facility is fee based for camping and open free of charge to day use. The Parks Department currently maintains Apple River Park.

935.2 PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS

Polk County Forest allows picnics and day use anywhere in the forest. Sommers Lake, Apple River and the Sterling ATV Loop have picnic tables and a restroom facility.

935.3 BOAT LANDINGS

Mackie Lake is the only developed water access point and is maintained to provide a place to launch a small fishing boat or canoe. Not all watercraft can use this access points. These landings are built for public use and not for private boat mooring sites. Storing boats for longer than 24 hours is prohibited.

935.3.1 Undeveloped Water Access Points

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 Environmental Services Committee.

940 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County Forest currently provides trail systems that accommodate some 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 various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Environmental Services Committee. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

940.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Polk 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, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It is the policy of the Environmental Services Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

940.1.1 Hiking Trails

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

940.1.1.1 [Ice Age National Scenic Trail](#)

The Ice Age NST is supported by a triad of the National Park Service, the Wisconsin DNR and the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA). The IATA Indianhead Chapter is based in Polk County.

The Ice Age Trail crosses the Forest in sections 19,20,21,24, 25 and 27 and transect approximately 6.5 miles of the Polk County Forest in the Town of Lorain. The trail is both a national and state scenic trail and follows the end moraines of the most recent glaciation of Wisconsin. It is intended to provide a high quality rustic walking experience across Wisconsin.

Management practices on, and adjacent to, these designated trails will be designed to maintain the character of the landscape and minimize disruption to the trail and its users. Temporarily rerouting the trail to avoid conflict and safety concerns may be necessary. Trees and signing the trail will be maintained and protected by inclusion into timber sale contracts. In order to avoid confusion with trail users, an effort will be made to avoid the use of yellow paint on projects immediately adjacent to the Ice Age Trail. Yellow is the standard colors designating the trail. Trails bisecting timber sales will be cleared of trees and logging debris daily.

940.1.2 Mountain Bike/Fat Tire/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 damage.

940.1.3 Equestrian Trails

Horseback riding is allowed on all trails, roads and fire lanes except the ice age trail, ATV trails (when open) and snowmobile trails (when open). Off trail riding is allowed except for within 50 feet of rivers, streams, or lakes. The 50 foot rule does not apply when watering horses.

Designated horseback riding trails are maintained by Governor Knowles State Forest. Polk County Forest has approximately eight miles of designated horse trails through the County Forest that are part of the Governor Knowles equestrian trail network. The Environmental Services committee will continue to support the use of the County Forest for designated Equestrian use in the Town of Sterling.

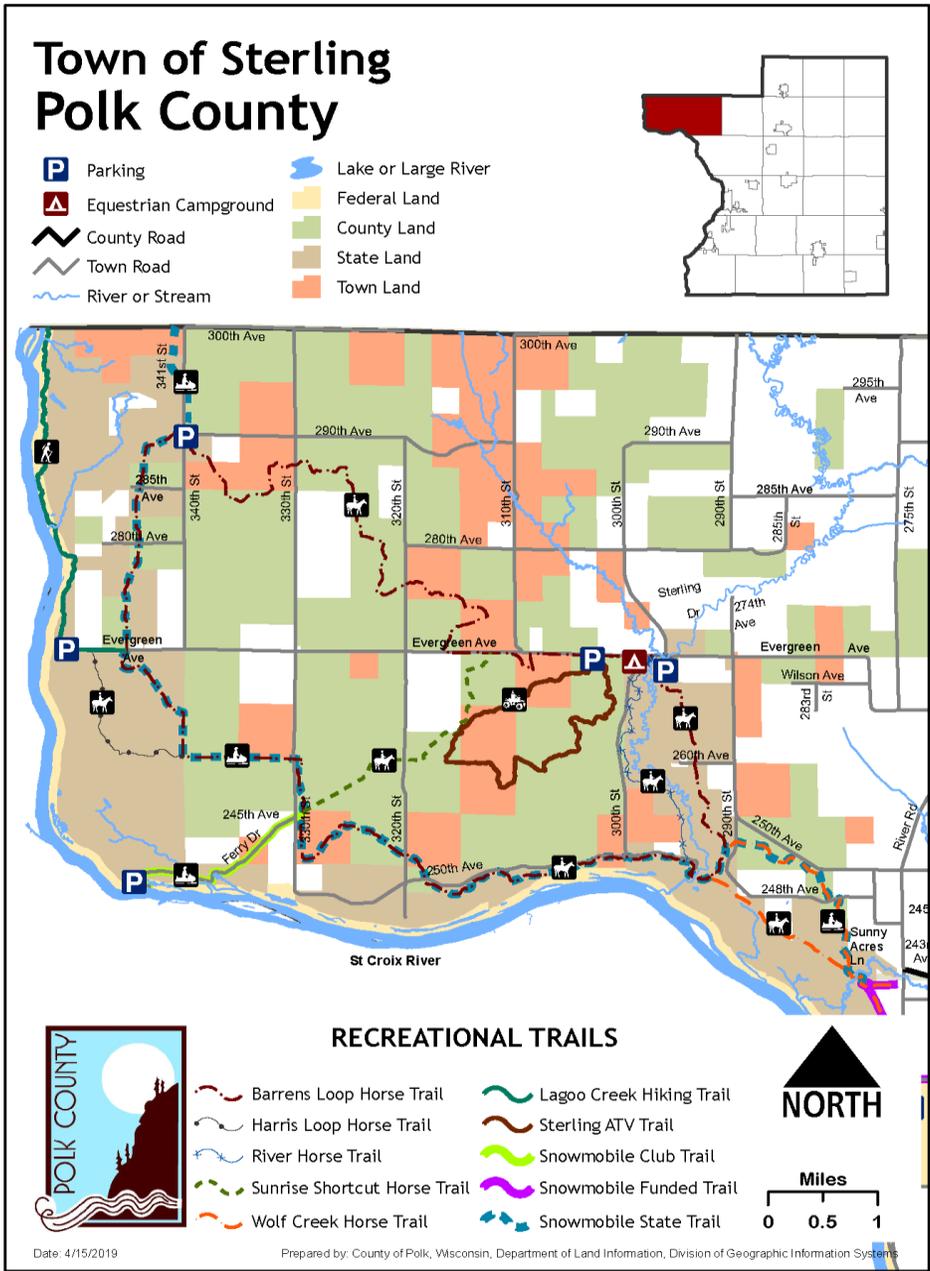


Figure 900-1. Equestrian trails and ATV loop Town of Sterling.

940.1.4 Cross Country Ski Trails

Non- groomed cross country skiing is allowed anywhere within the forest.

940.1.4.1 Undesignated Cross Country Ski Trails

Non-groomed skiing is allowed anywhere on the County Forest. Sommers Lake trail is located in the Northern part of the County in Clam Falls Township along the West shore of Sommers Lake and East of County Road I. The property also contains a parking area, picnic area, a restroom and developed recreational trail. Currently, non- groomed cross country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and hunting are allowed on the property.

940.1.5 Future non-motorized trail systems

The development of additional non-motorized trail systems will include careful consideration of public demand, analysis of user conflicts and potential damage to the natural resource. Trail system development should comply with the Outdoor Recreation Plan goals and be referenced in [SCORP](#) or other regional planning documents.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. The County may require proof of an organized club, or user group, with the ability to assist with maintenance and support of the trail and associated facilities. Appropriate trail passes, or other user fees, may be implemented as indicated in Section 905.

940.2 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

940.2.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Designated snowmobile only trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Parks Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Polk County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the [Polk County Snowmobile and ATV Council](#) for maintenance.

Rules and regulations relating to snowmobile trails is as follows:

- a. Snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks from December 1 through April 1 (with the exception of gas tax roads)

- b. The Parks Department will make determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow and maintenance conditions.
- c. Snowmobile trails used for logging access during snowmobile season will be posted with signs warning users of activity.
- d. Snowmobiles are only allowed on funded trails within the Polk County Forest.
- e. [Wisconsin Snowmobile Laws](#) must be followed.

940.2.1.1 Snowmobile Trail Types

The County recognizes the following categories snowmobile trails:

State Funded Trails – these are state approved and funded trail miles on designated trails that are part of a statewide network. Snowmobile registration fees and gas tax allotments fund grants that support maintenance, rehabilitation and development of these trails. There are approximately 346 miles of funded trails in County, with approximately 16 miles on County Forest Lands. These trails are currently funded at \$300/ mile.

Unfunded Trails – these are segments of trail that meet the eligibility requirements for a funded trail system but have not been included in the grant system due to restrictions on available funding. All Snowmobile Trails on the Polk County Forest are funded.

Local/Club Trails – these are trails that are not funded by State maintenance grants and may or may not be groomed by local clubs. These trails may not meet eligibility requirements of a funded trail and may dead end at local businesses. There are no local club trails on the County Forest.

940.2.1.2 Trail Maintenance

The County shall inspect and monitor bridges and other infrastructure on the trail system and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace or rehabilitate as needed. 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. Only trail signs that provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private and business signs are not authorized on the Forest. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden or metal posts.

940.2.1.3 Future Snowmobile Trails

The Environmental Services Committee shall have jurisdiction over any trail development proposals. It is recommended that future trails be considered only after careful consideration of costs, benefits and impacts and as part of a larger planning effort.

-Polk County Forestry will consider future trails within the forest.

-Proposals to relocate trails or to make adjustments to the existing trail system will be encouraged where there are concerns of public safety, environmental damage or loss of private easements.

940.2.2 Designated ATV/UTV Trails

Designated ATV Trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. The Parks Department manages the ATV system within Polk County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the Polk County Snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance.

Operation of ATV'S within the County Forest is only allowed on designated trails only. The only trail open on the County Forest is a five mile closed loop trail in the Town of Sterling this trail is open June 1st to November 15th. In addition ATV/UTV are limited to a maximum width of 50 inches. See the state definition of an [ATV/UTV](#).

940.2.2.1 ATV /UTV Trail Types

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – The Polk County forest does not have any funded winter ATV Trails. There are approximately 53 miles of winter funded ATV trails located in the County.
2. Funded Summer ATV Trail – The Sterling loop is funded for only summer use. The trail is open from June 1- to November 15th. There are approximately 5 miles of summer use ATV trails within the Polk County Forest.
3. Funded Year Round Trails - these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are no funded year round trails on the County Forest.
4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV's, or side by sides, can be allowed on ATV trail system.
5. Funded Troute/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after August 1, 2012 allow for partial funding under the following categories: The road is not closed to vehicle traffic and the total funding does not exceed \$600 per mile (gas tax road funds plus ATV funding dollars) and the ATV trails are open in the summer.
 - 5a. County Forest Gas Tax Roads – these are gas tax roads used as a connector to trails or services and are funded at a rate determined by the full per mile funding rate, less gas tax funding rate, not to exceed 50% of the full maintenance funding rate.
 - 5b. Hybrid Trails – these are trails designated as ATV trails, opened after August 1, 2012, that also permit highway vehicle traffic. These are funded at 50% of the annual maintenance funding rate. Polk County Forest does not have any Hybrid/Troute trails

5c. Club Trails – These are trails not funded under the state ATV program. In some cases these are trails that are maintained and may be added as a funded trail at a future date.

940.2.2.2 ATV Trail Maintenance

For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails should be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal. To this end, the construction and development of new ATV trails are to comply with the WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards.

WCFA ATV/UTV Sustainable Trail Guidance

This document is meant to be used as guidance in the development or rehabilitation of state funded, “summer” use, county sponsored ATV/UTV trails

In an attempt to simplify and standardize ATV/UTV grant applications from WCFA member counties, the following guidelines have been developed for new trail construction or trail rehabilitation projects. The guidance is not meant to apply to existing trails but should be followed when developing new trails and when trail managers determine rehabilitation is necessary due to environmental or safety issues.

It is understood these trail guidelines cover normal situations on many of the trails, but in some cases there is good reason for building trails above and beyond the guidelines. In those cases, make sure you clearly explain and justify your reasoning for requesting more than standard amounts. In a case where trail development or rehabilitation projects do not require the trail manager to achieve recommendations provided in this guidance and there are no environmental concerns, the application should explain and justify project circumstances. The goal of a trail manager should be to develop and rehabilitate trails so they are sustainable and manageable for years to come when routine maintenance is applied.

Some trail development or trail rehabilitation projects may only entail crowning and ditching of existing natural materials, most notably on trails that do not receive extensive use on a regular basis. When developing and rehabilitating heavily used trails, managers should consider adding a base layer of material to allow for routine trail grooming and maintenance.

“The trail design should minimize the ecological impact of the trail and should retain the trail’s basic stability and shape through time without abrupt changes, recognizing there are both the human and natural forces at work on the trail surface. The concept of sustainability also recognizes that appropriate maintenance and management are also necessary”¹

Trails will be developed and maintained in a sustainable manner to meet *Wisconsin Forestry BMPs for Water Quality* guidelines and all WDNR permit requirements, including new stormwater discharge permit requirements, in an effort to prevent water runoff, soil rutting and erosion that may result in environmental degradation.

¹ “So You Want to Build an ATV Trail” WDNR PUB-CF-018 2005

Sustainability – For the purpose of ATV/UTV trails, the term “sustainability” is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV/UTV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails should be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal.

Width – Trail widths should be adequate for intended uses, one-way trails can be built to a 9 foot width. It is recommended two-way trails have a 12 foot wide maintained trail running surface with 2 feet cleared on each side. Trails should be wider where turns/corners are required. Adequate width may also be dependent on slope, aspect, and visibility on curves. Please note that in most cases, total trail width must accommodate periodic maintenance equipment such as graders and dump trucks.

General Design - All trails should be developed with a crowned or sloped surface (2 – 4% slope) to direct cross flow of water off the trail surface and into adjacent vegetation. Trail design, rehabilitation and maintenance should be done in a manner preventing water from traveling parallel to trail direction. All slopes should contain drainage structures at intervals as follows:

)

Table 4-2. Recommended Maximum Distances Between Drainage Structures on Forest Roads and Skid Trails

Road Grade (%)	Maximum distance between water bars (feet)		Maximum distance between all other drainage structures (feet)	
	High Erosion Risk (most sandy soils and silt soils)	Low Erosion Risk (most rocky soils and clay soils)	High Erosion Risk (most sandy soils and silt soils)	Low Erosion Risk (most rocky soils and clay soils)
0–3	175	250	250	350
4–6	125	200	175	250
7–9	100	175	125	175
10–12	75	150	75	125
13–15	60	100	60	100
16–20	50	75	50	75
21–30	40	65	40	65
30+	30	50	30	50

Note: Broad-based dips generally become ineffective on slopes greater than 10%.

(Table 4-2 taken from “Wisconsin’s Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality” – WDNR PUB FR-093 2010)

Cross drainage structures should be primarily in the form of diversion ditches but may also utilize cross drain culverts, broad based dips, or water bars.

Slopes Greater than 10% - Steeper slopes should be avoided when possible. In areas where there is no other alternative, slopes should be armored with material other than gravel or native soils. 2” or larger fractured rock spread at a minimum of 4” deep is preferable. Maximum erosion control is obtained when this material is compacted and incorporated into native soil. Mat materials or concrete blocks stacked upright are also feasible alternatives on extreme slopes. Depending on soil type, other alternatives such as 1 ½” rock to a desired depth, incorporated with appropriate amounts of gravel or other suitable material, are acceptable.

Surface Material – Trail surfaces may be crushed gravel or native soils, depending on conditions, but should provide for the ability to grade/reshape/restore the trail surface and

cross drainage patterns periodically. Consider grading trail surfaces a minimum of twice during a riding season depending on traffic load and surface materials. All trail surfaces should be adequately maintained to ensure longevity of base material and address environmental and safety concerns.

Culverts – Evaluate the entire trail project to identify areas with periodic cross-trail water flow and install appropriately sized culverts at these locations. Note that any stream crossing with a defined bed and bank will require a Chapter 30 permit for either a culvert or bridge.

Trail Rehabilitation – Trail Rehabilitation projects should be considered a major reconstruction of the trail surface and should occur at no less than 8 year intervals, with exceptions for unusual circumstances. The need for trail rehabilitation is somewhat dependent on terrain, soil type, and amount of use on a given trail. A project should be considered as rehabilitation only if a minimum of 50% of the trail segment requires significant reconstruction. Projects with less than 50% reconstruction should be considered part of annual maintenance.

Bridge Rehabilitation – Bridge rehabilitation on ATV/UTV trail systems will follow snowmobile bridge rehabilitation guidelines contained in Wisconsin’s Snowmobile Trail Aids Program.

Construction/Rehabilitation Standards by Soil Type

It is highly recommended trail sponsors research and understand soil types in project areas. Consult county soil survey data or NRSC web soil data for reference in determining soil suitability for motorized use. When relying on information contained in soil survey data, keep in mind mapped soil types in an individual county or specific area may not always accurately depict actual on the ground conditions. Recreational trail projects require on-site visits and knowledgeable managers. Most ATV/UTV trail systems require soil surfaces that can accommodate vehicular traffic for adequate maintenance, this often means accommodating loaded dump trucks and graders.

When applying surface material consider the following options:

Sandy Soils – Establishment of ATV trails on native sand soils tends to result in “blown out” trails once the minimal organic layer on the surface of these soils is disturbed. Underlying soils are extremely loose and often deep, resulting in difficult and dangerous riding conditions. Gravel surfaces are necessary on most of these soil types in order to create safe riding conditions and to minimize erosion and water quality issues.

- Trail surfaces require 6” loose / 4” compacted gravel on a majority of trail systems occurring in this soil type.
- Deep sand pockets and corners may require an underlying road fabric or geo-textile. Any fabric materials must be covered with a minimum of 10” of rock, gravel or a combination of materials.

Loamy Sand/Sandy Loam Soils – These soil categories provide a better opportunity to utilize native soils for the trail surface. These soils do, however, present a greater risk of erosion. Trail design must incorporate cross drainage and drainage structures that shed water from the trail surface before it can gain enough velocity to erode trail surfaces.

- Trail projects on these types normally allow for at least a portion of the trail to lie on native soils.
- Pockets of heavier soils, especially on the wetter end of sandy loams, will require gravel, or other suitable material, surfaces.
- Particular attention must be paid to slopes on these types
- Soil types with larger rock components may require more gravel, or other suitable material, to permit trail maintenance and grading activities.

Silt Loam/Loam/Clay Soils – These heavier soil types present special challenges. While they may support periodic motorized traffic without causing damage, sustained use on native soils may cause rutting and soil compaction. These ruts typically become water logged and continual motorized use degrades the trail surface rapidly to the point where they become impassable. An additional concern on these soils is once water pockets begin to form, many riders bypass the rough areas and extremely wide areas of damage rapidly develop.

- Projects on these soil types typically require a minimum of 6" loose/4" compacted finish material. Some projects may require a maximum 4" – 6" crushed stone over a 6" base course of graded rock. A maximum of 12" loose / 6" compacted is accepted for these types
- It may be more feasible on certain sites , especially those with long distance slopes (it is common to find slopes of ¼ mile or more on terminal end moraines with these soil types), to add a larger diameter crushed rock as a base layer and a lighter gravel, or other suitable material, cap over the top. Rock armoring on these slopes is intended for spot applications only and not the entire trail surface.

Hydric Soils – Hydric soils are typically considered as wetland and trail development should be considered only as a last resort. Trails on these soil types normally require wetland fill permits, either in the form of puncheon bridges or solid fill. The permit process will likely dictate the majority of trail design on these soils.

- Evaluate any alternatives to trails on hydric soils
- If crossing hydric soils is the only alternative, consult with WDNR Water Regulations Staff to determine options
- For existing trails with wetland impacts already occurring, and less than 1 acre in size, consider a wetland fill permit with geo-textile and larger crushed rock.
- For short crossing distances (generally less than 40 feet) consider a clear span bridge.
- For longer crossing distances, evaluate the use of puncheon/floating bridges.

Trail Types

Rail Road Corridors - Use existing ballast as base layer. If grading only 1-2 times per year no other material is needed. If grooming on a weekly/bi-weekly basis, consider adding 6" of gravel compacted to 4" and maintain with grooming equipment.

Multi-Use Trails - Apply a manageable base layer and follow suggested guidance contained in this document

Troute/Hybrid Trails - Apply a manageable base layer and follow suggested guidance contained in this document.

The County shall inspect and monitor trails, bridges and other infrastructure and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace improvements or rehabilitate trail surfaces or bridges as needed.

940.2.2.3 Future ATV Trails

The use and popularity of ATV's and UTV's increased dramatically over the period of the 2006-2020 County Forest Plan. . Increased usage of trail systems proved a tremendous need for much higher levels of trail maintenance in order to manage environmental damages. In addition, adding additional off road miles to the existing ATV trails can be considered.

Adding ATV trails should be done as part of larger planning effort that incorporates considerations for preferred trail type and length of the ATV user group, impact on other users and user groups; how future trail systems will be maintained, and impact on the natural resources. Any new ATV trail systems should consider:

- A separate ATV Master Plan with considerations to cost, trail location and priorities needs to be developed for Polk County.
- Trails should be designed and planned to connect communities.
- Loop trails will be discouraged but considered.
- Dead end trails will not be sanctioned as part of the County ATV trail system unless it dead ends at a destination.
- Intensive use areas may be considered.
- New trails will only be allowed if they fit within an ATV plan established by the Committee.
- Trails will only be considered on suitable soils or on trails where a sustainable surface can be created and maintained.

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in such a way as to prevent erosion and soil loss. Trails within the Polk County Forest must be developed for long term sustainably, approved by the committee and Forest Administrator. Trails that are developed within the Polk County Forest will remain open to vehicle traffic and logging contractors.

940.3 RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS

940.3.1 Storm Water Discharge

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre or more of land will require a Storm Water Discharge Permit. In order to further define the County's understanding and implementation of permit requirements, the following current acceptable process will be used for determining when a permit is needed.

- The 1 acre threshold will be determined by measuring/estimated new disturbance or disturbance of previously grassed surfaces.
- Periodic grading of impervious or non-grassed trail surfaces is not considered disturbance.
- Restoration of water filtration/diversion devices, such as sediment traps or catch basins is considered maintenance and not disturbance
- Reconstruction of previously grassed ditch lines as part of trail rehabilitation is considered disturbance.

940.3.2 [Chapter 30](#)

Permits are required for bridges or culvert crossings of navigable waterways. These permits will either be classified as general or individual depending on specific site conditions. These permits are not required for culvert or bridge crossings of non-navigable or intermittent streams, nor do they required to install a clear span bridge over wetlands.

940.3.3 Wetland Fill

Permits are required at any time that fill is placed in a wetland. Permits are available to fill small wetlands for recreation trail purposes. Wetland fill must be less than 10,000 square feet and the permit does not require wetland mitigation. Clear span bridge and boardwalks placed on pilings generally do not require a wetland fill permit. Puncheon style bridges do require a permit.

945 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS

945.1 RECREATION AREA FUNDING

Funding for recreation areas is generally fee based or by obtaining grants such as Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of completion for these funds

945.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

945.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At the time this plan was written very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance exists. The County relies on, timber revenue, timber sale logging access, volunteers, and Recreational Trail Program Grants.

945.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs.

1. Snowmobile Maintenance paid annually- \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance paid annually-\$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance paid annually- \$100/mile
4. UTV Maintenance paid annually - \$100/mile
5. Troute Maintenance- up to 50% of the summer ATV per mile rate.
6. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
7. ATV Development - 100% grants
8. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants- up to 50% of projects cost

950 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RECREATION PROGRAM

The following are recommended changes that this Plan recognizes as improvements or enhancements to the recreation program.

950.1 ENFORCEMENT NEEDS

Continue to work with the Sheriff's office enforcing recreational ordinances as well as State Laws.

950.2 STAFFING NEEDS

Continue to evaluate the recreational program within Polk County and add resources as need. Continue to support volunteerism, user groups, friends groups and investment from private sources.