

## REFERENCE

### VEHICLES

- ATV** – All-terrain vehicle  
**HLV** – Highway-licensed vehicle (cars, trucks)  
**OHM** – Off-highway motorcycle  
**OHV** – Off-highway vehicle  
**ORV** – Off-road vehicle (jeeps, trucks)

### CLASSIFICATIONS

#### Managed

Motor vehicle use is permitted on all forest roads and trails unless posted (signed) closed.

#### Limited

Motor vehicle use is permitted on forest roads and those trails specifically designated for certain types of motorized uses, for example trails can be designated for ATV use, off-road motorcycle use. Roads and trails are posted (signed) open for specific use.

#### Closed

Forest roads are open to highway-licensed vehicles. OHVs are not permitted, except on frozen waters.

### EXCEPTIONS

#### Big game exception\*

Travel off roads and trails (cross-country travel) is prohibited on all state lands with four exceptions. Class 1 ATVs may be used cross-county in managed or limited state forests to:

- retrieve big game (Sept. to Dec.)
- hunt for big game and construct stands (Oct. to Dec.)
- trap during the open season for protected furbearers
- trap for minnows under certain conditions.

The ATV rider must have a valid hunting, trapping, or commercial license in possession. Hunting and trapping exceptions also apply to Class 2 ATVs, ORVs and HLVs used on a **trail** not specifically for other uses. Motor vehicle use causing erosion, rutting, or damage to trees is prohibited.

#### Areas with limitations

The big game hunter/trapper exceptions do not apply in areas signed and mapped as “vehicle restricted.”

\* Does not apply in the RJ Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest.

# On Track

FINAL FOREST PLANNING REVIEW

March 2009  
including updates 4/15/09

## *DNR completes state forest classification and route designation*

After five years of intense work, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and its partners have completed forest planning to classify state forest land for motor vehicle use and designate which forest roads and trails will be open and closed to motorized use. Implementation has begun and will be complete by December 31, 2009.

In 2003, the Minnesota Legislature required DNR to review all 58 state forests to evaluate motor vehicle access needs. The primary goal was to provide more consistent, understandable, and enforceable motor vehicle use management on state forest lands.

The first step was to inventory forest routes. DNR inventoried over 12,132 miles of routes on 5.7 million acres of land, including DNR-administered land (within and outside of state forest boundaries) and intermingled county and national forest lands.

Twenty field-level teams from DNR's resource disciplines worked with counties, American Indian bands, and US Forest Service to develop forest classification and route designations for each forest or group of forests in Minnesota.

Many people were interested in the process and input was essential. Public meetings were held at the start of the process to review inventoried routes and to provide initial recommendations to the teams. Meetings were also held to review draft plans before the DNR Commissioner's final approval.

All state forest lands have now been classified as **managed, limited, or closed**. (See definitions, left.)

Route designations include:

- 2,379 miles of forest roads
- 831 miles of ATV/OHM trails
- 143 miles of single-track OHM trails
- 27 miles of ORV trails
- 827 miles of non-motorized trails for various recreational uses
- over 3,382 miles of routes (about 1/3 of all state land routes) permanently closed to all or most vehicular traffic.

The next steps include posting signs and preparing state forest route maps. DNR will continue to review motor-use designations and adjust them if conditions change or problems occur.

For more information,  
visit the DNR OHV riding web page at  
[www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov)

click on outdoor activities, then OHV riding,  
or  
[www.findthetrails.com](http://www.findthetrails.com)

# State forest classification and route designation facts

## Inventory

The forest planning process began with a comprehensive forest access route inventory of 5,714,400 acres of public land, including 3,075,600 acres of DNR-administered land *within* state forests; 980,300 acres of county lands; 843,500 acres of federal lands within state forests; and 815,000 acres of 'scattered lands' administered by DNR *outside* of state forest boundaries.

## Time and cost

DNR field staff spent more than 55,000 hours on route inventory at a cost of more than \$1.6 million. Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) staff also contributed 10,288 hours at a value of approximately \$205,760.

## Data base

Forest route inventory data was loaded into a special database developed specifically for this project. This spatial database enables the DNR to update and manage forest route data.

## Challenges

Challenges included ambiguities in the data caused by interspersed land ownerships, variable boundaries, inaccurate land records, outdated data, seasonal or dual-use trail treadways, and inconsistencies in the collection and reporting of field data.

## Objectives

- Designate a sustainable system of forest roads and trails
- Provide adequate motor access for recreation and utilitarian purposes
- Close all unsustainable routes
- Create designated non-motorized areas
- Engage interested stakeholders
- Involve cooperators
- Communicate planning status, next steps, decision points, appeal options

## Desired outcomes

- Substantial, enduring agreement on motor access to public forest lands
- Consistent, understandable and enforceable regulatory framework
- Clearly signed and mapped motor/non-motor roads, trails and (legal) forest access routes
- Updated visitor maps that reflect route designations, route closures and non-motor area designations

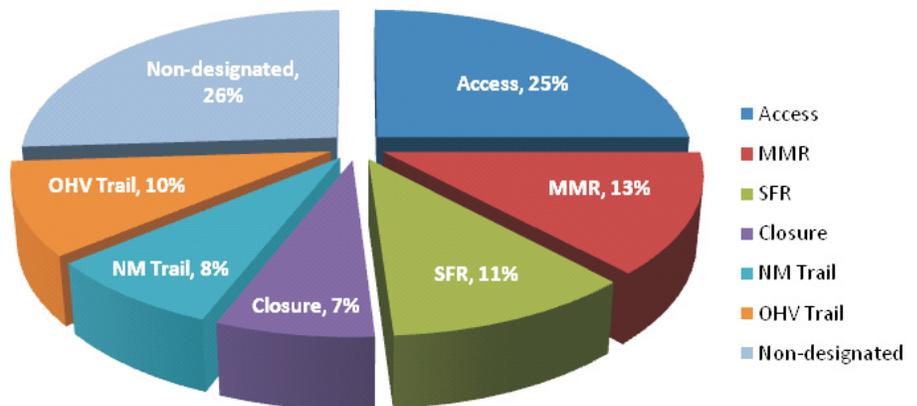
## Future development

This forest planning project dealt only with pre-existing routes and did not suggest or recommend new trail alignments or construction.

The process, however, has put DNR in a better position to respond to trail development requests. The DNR will continue to work with partners to improve and expand trails.

## Final Route Designation

58 State Forests  
12,132 Miles of Routes



Some county-administered routes are included in the route inventory and designation totals. Shared trail alignments also result in double-counting of some reported mileage totals. Data may not total due to rounding.

Forest Road & Trail Designation Mileage Totals for All 58 State Forests & Scattered State Forest Lands		
Route Designation	State Forest Land (miles)	
Total Inventoried Routes	12,132	
System Forest Road	1,086	
Min. Maintenance Forest Road	1,293	
Non-designated Routes	5,993	
Proactive Closures	491	
In closed forests	177	
In limited forests	2,714	
In managed forests (forest access routes)	2,611	
ATV / OHM Trail	776	
ATV-Only Trail	55	
OHM-Only (Single-Track Trail)	143	
ORV-Only Trail	0	
OHV Trail (ATV+OHM+ORV)	27	
Non-motorized Trails	827	

# State Forest Land Classification and Areas with Motor Vehicle Use Limitations

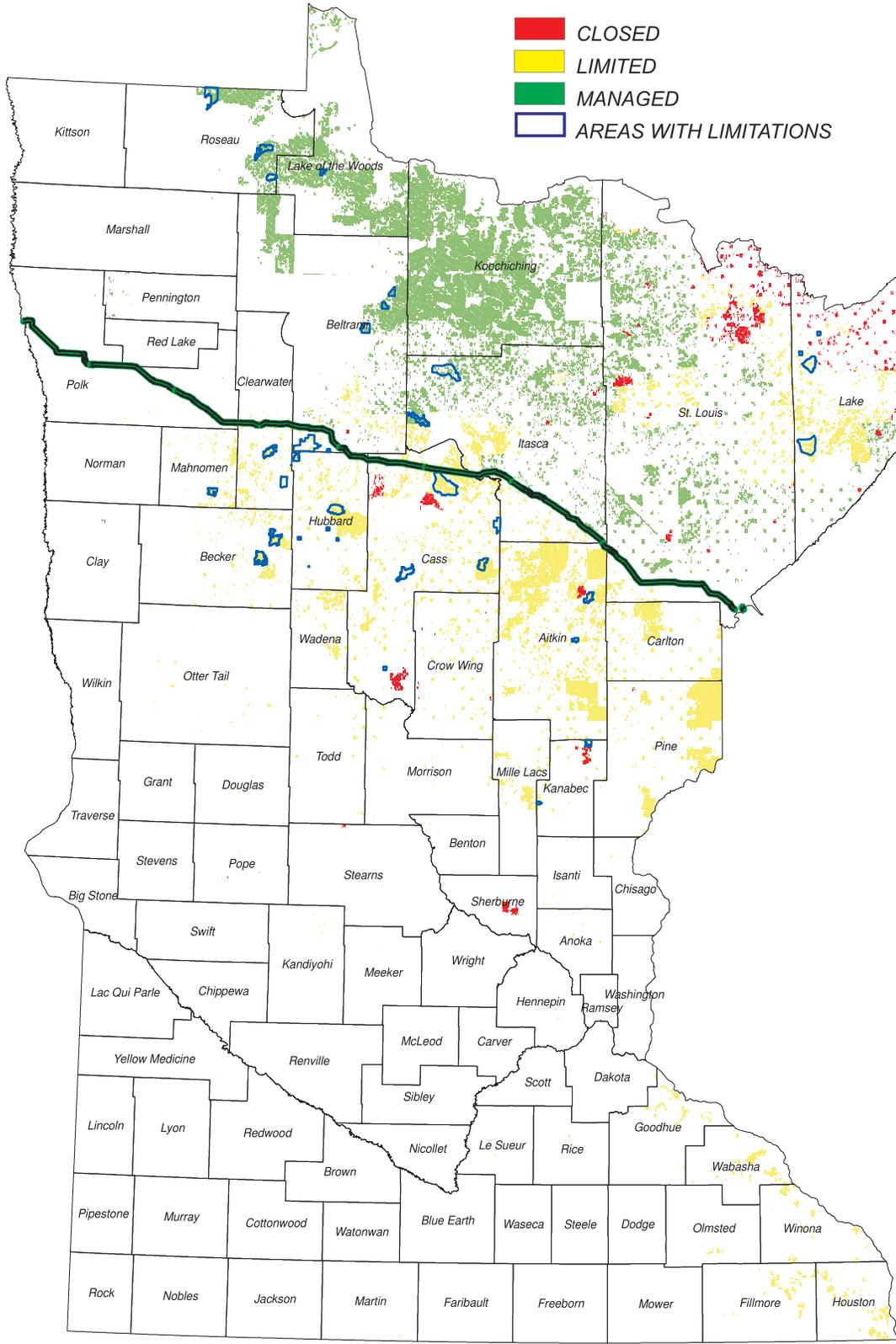
February 2009  
(Subject to change)

## LEGEND

- CLOSED
- LIMITED
- MANAGED
- AREAS WITH LIMITATIONS

## Areas With Limitations

- Aitkin**
  - McGregor Marsh
  - Sugarbush/Two Rivers
- Becker**
  - Indian Creek
  - Shell River
- Beltrami**
  - Fern Lake
  - Larson Lake
  - Saum
  - Shotley
- Beltrami/Hubbard**
  - Headwaters
- Cass**
  - Blind Lake
  - Boy River/Child Lake
  - Deep Portage
  - Drumbeater Lake
  - Land 'O Lakes
  - Pillsbury Meadowbrook
  - Trelipe
  - Washburn/Margaret Lake
  - Willow River
- Clearwater**
  - Coffee Pot
  - Itasca
  - Upper Rice Lake
- Hubbard**
  - Crocus Hill
  - Crooked Lakes
  - Gulch Lakes
  - Mantrap Lakes
  - Soaring Eagles
- Itasca**
  - Dishpan-Fiske Lake
- Itasca/Beltrami**
  - Morph Meadows NE
- Kanabec**
  - Chelsey Brook
  - Esker/Tunnel Valley
  - Rum River Esker Addition
- Lake**
  - Greenstone Lakes
  - Kawishiwe
  - Spruce Road
  - Trumpeter Rainy Swimmer
- Lake of the Woods**
  - Manweiler Dam
- Mahnomen**
  - Snider Lake
- Roseau**
  - Bemis East
  - Bemis West
  - Hansen Creek
  - Sprague Creek



## Summary of Motor Route Designations on State Forest Lands

State Forest (SF) or Planning Group (PLG) <i>(Planning group list follows state forest list.)</i>	Forest Classification S=South of Hwy 2 N=North of Hwy 2 B=N & S of Hwy 2	DNR-Administered Forest Land (acres)	All Inventoried Routes (miles)	Forest Roads (miles) SR=System road MMR=Minimum maintenance road		OHV Trails (recreational trail miles only)			Closed to Motor Use (miles)
				SR	MMR	ATV	OHM	ORV	
<b>STATE FORESTS</b>									
<b>Badoura</b> <i>(see Paul Bunyan SF)</i>	Limited-S								
<b>Battleground</b> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Closed-S								
<b>Bear Island</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited-N <sup>1</sup>	18,605	96.6	5.6	55.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	3.2
<b>Beltrami Island</b> <sup>6</sup>	Managed-N	289,700 DNR 160 Beltrami 160 LOTW	1,133.6	355.5	118.7	238.9	238.9	0.0	204.4
<b>Big Fork</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Managed-N								
<b>Birch Lakes</b>	Closed-S	527	6.6	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6
<b>Blackduck</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Managed-N								
<b>Bowstring</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Limited-B								
<b>Buena Vista</b> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Mixed-N								
<b>Burntside</b>	Closed/Limited-N <sup>1, 3</sup>	26,220	7.3	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1
<b>Chengwatana</b>	Limited-S	17,720	87.0	5.0	10.0	16.0	16.0	0.0	60.0
<b>Cloquet Valley</b>	Mixed-N <sup>2</sup>	144,404	307.8	21.8	50.0	7.2	7.2	0.0	82.3
<b>Crow Wing SF</b> <i>(includes Emily SF, scattered)</i>	Limited-S	23,847 w/scattered	104.6	0.0	24.1	17.3	17.3	0.0	63.1
<b>D.A.R.</b>	Limited-S <sup>1</sup>	356	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Emily</b> <i>(see Crow Wing SF)</i>	Limited-S								
<b>Finland</b> <sup>6</sup>	Mixed-N <sup>4</sup>	161,093 acres w/scattered	218.3 w/scattered	57.5	84.7	5.6	1.0	0.0	49.2
<b>Fond du Lac</b>	Limited-S	44,424 DNR 4,083 Carlton	169.7	9.6	24.8	40.0	40.0	0.0	95.3
<b>Foot Hills</b>	Limited-S	22,000 DNR 54,000 Cass	311.5	26.2	37.4	40.9	40.9	11.0	203.4
<b>General CC Andrews</b>	Limited-S	5,188	62.0	0.0	14.0	37.0	37.0	0.0	15.0
<b>George Washington</b> <i>(see Koochiching/Itasca PLG)</i>	Mixed-N <sup>2</sup> (most Managed)								
<b>Golden Anniversary</b> <i>(see Koochiching/Itasca PLG)</i>	Limited-S <sup>2</sup>								
<b>Grand Portage</b>	Managed-N	44,984	122.0	43.4	11.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	31.5
<b>Hill River</b>	Limited-S <sup>1</sup>	80,115	178.8	12.5	17.7	7.0	7.0	0.0	4.3
<b>Huntersville</b>	Limited-S	16,714	147.8	5.5	39.9	3.6	57.9	0.0	48.1
<b>Insula Lake</b>	Closed-N	485	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Kabetogama</b>	Managed-N	159,845	445.2	29.5	49.1	3.5	3.5	0.0	53.2
<b>Koochiching</b> <i>(see Koochiching/Itasca PLG)</i>	Managed-N <sup>2</sup>								
<b>Lake Isabella</b>	Closed-N	66	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Lake Jeanette</b>	Closed/Limited-N <sup>1, 3</sup>	1,384	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
<b>Lake of the Woods</b> <i>(see Northern Border PLG)</i>	Managed-N <sup>2</sup>								
<b>Land O'Lakes</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited-S <sup>1</sup>	28,348	141.8	12.1	16.7	26.9	26.9	0.0	13.5
<b>Lost River</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Northern Border PLG)</i>	Managed-N <sup>2</sup>								
<b>Lyons</b>	Limited-S	6,650	23.9	0.0	15.3	2.3	2.3	0.0	6.3
<b>Mississippi Headwaters</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited-S	8,790	38.4	4.0	11.8	1.3	0.0	0.0	17.5
<b>Nemadji</b>	Limited-S								

Note: Columns may not total due to dual designations, shared use or double-counted treadways, the inclusion of some county and/or federal inventoried routes, and rounding of numbers.

State Forest (SF) or Planning Group (PLG) <i>(Planning group list follows state forest list.)</i>	Forest Classification S=South of Hwy 2 N=North of Hwy 2 B=N & S of Hwy 2	DNR-Administered Forest Land (acres)	All Inventoried Routes (miles)	Forest Roads (miles) SR=System road MMR=Minimum maintenance road		OHV Trails (recreational trail miles only)			Closed to Motor Use (miles)
				SR	MMR	ATV	OHM	ORV	
<b>Northwest Angle</b> <i>(see Northern Border PLG)</i>	Managed-N								
<b>Pat Bayle</b>	Limited-N	59,880 w/scattered	92.1 w/scattered	4.3	33.8	7.6	7.6	0.0	46.4
<b>Paul Bunyan</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited-S	79000 DNR 138,000 Hubbard	1,107	88.0	295.0	37.0	87.0	0.0	618.0
<b>Pillsbury</b>	Closed-S	10,080	99.5	8.1	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	85.2
<b>Pine Island</b> <i>(see Koochiching/Itasca PLG)</i>	Managed-N <sup>2</sup>								
<b>RJ Dorer Memorial Hardwood</b> <i>(includes scattered lands So MN)</i>	Limited-S <sup>2,5</sup>	52,680 w/scattered	321.6	14.1	2.3	21.5			188.3
<b>Red Lake</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Northern Border PLG)</i>	Managed-N								
<b>Remer</b> <sup>6</sup> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Limited-S								
<b>Rum River</b>	Limited-S	20,726	79.2	16.2	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.6
<b>Sand Dunes</b>	Closed-S	5,814	55.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.0
<b>Savanna</b> <sup>1</sup>	Limited-S	127,191	377.4	27.7	30.1	16.1	16.1	0.0	6.8
<b>Smokey Bear</b> <i>(see Koochiching/Itasca PLG)</i>	Managed-N								
<b>Smoky Hills</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited-S	15,074	67.1	13.6	15.0	8.5	8.5	0.0	30.0
<b>Snake River</b> <sup>6</sup>	Limited/Closed-S <sup>1,2</sup>	7,885	62.8	2.5	0.0	5.9	5.9	0.0	24.2
<b>Solana</b>	Limited-S	58,000 DNR 45 Aitkin	158.0	17.4	9.8	48.4	43.2	1.1	82.4
<b>St. Croix</b>	Limited-S	27,105	148.4	14.4	7.2	45.3	45.3	0.0	81.5
<b>Sturgeon River</b>	Mixed-N <sup>2</sup>	60,770	132.4	13.3	14.9	12.7	12.7	12.7	66.7
<b>Two Inlets</b>	Limited-S	13,968	71.7	12.2	15.1	6.1	6.1	0.0	38.3
<b>Waukenabo</b>	Limited-S <sup>1</sup>	15,461	16.4	0.4	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Wealthwood</b>	Limited-S	5,100 DNR 80 Aitkin	15.3	0.5	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.3
<b>Welsh Lake</b> <i>(see Chippewa PLG)</i>	Closed-S								
<b>White Earth</b>	Limited-S <sup>2</sup>	66,936	141.1	10.9	27.8	1.7	1.7	0.0	15.5
<b>Whiteface River</b>	Closed-N	2,480 DNR 2,000 St. Louis	5.1	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9
<b>PLANNING GROUPS</b>									
<b>Chippewa Area</b> <sup>6</sup> Battleground, Big Fork, Blackduck, Bowstring, Buena Vista, Remer, Welsh Lake	See individual forests for classifications	322,422 w/scattered	741.0	12.4	72.6	8.8	8.8	0.0	266.1
<b>Koochiching/Itasca</b> George Washington, Golden Anniversary, Koochiching, Pine Island, Smokey Bear	See individual forests for classifications	1,165,508 w/scattered	3,448.9	158.5	77.5	16.9	2.7	0.0	108.7
<b>Northern Border Forests</b> <sup>6</sup> Northwest Angle, Lake of the Woods, Lost River, Red Lake	Managed-N except Polk County-S	300,946	531.9	36.0	8.4	1.8	11.8	0.0	63.9
<b>TOTALS (rounded)</b>		<b>3,880,663 DNR 198,528 County</b>	<b>12,132</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2,485</b>

See state forest map on p. 6 for forest locations

- 1 Effective September 1, 2009
- 2 Effective December 31, 2009
- 3 Closed inside BWCAW, limited outside BWCAW

- 4 Limited within Superior National Forest, managed outside Superior Nat. Forest
- 5 Big game hunter/trapper motor vehicle exception does not apply
- 6 Includes Area/s With Limitations

For more information, see forest plans at [www.findthetrails.com](http://www.findthetrails.com) or contact Brian McCann, DNR planner, 651-259-5627



# State Forest Classification and Road / Trail Designation: Motor Vehicle Access to Minnesota's Public Lands

**Background.** In 2003, Minnesota's State Legislature called for a *'forest-by-forest'* review of all 58 State Forests to evaluate motor vehicle access needs. This assessment, which wrapped-up December 31, 2008, is based upon newly collected forest access inventory, which provides a comprehensive accounting of existing roads, trails and other *'undesignated'* routes on state and county forest lands all across the state. Plan implementation is now underway all across the state.

**Scope.** This legislatively mandated review covered some 5,714,400 acres, including 3,075,600 acres of forestry-administered land within state forests and 815,000 acres of so-called *'scattered state lands'* which are located outside of state forest boundaries. In addition, some 980,300 acres of county lands and 843,500 acres of federal lands located within state forests were also evaluated. The scope of this effort was unprecedented.

**Process Details.** This process involves segment-by-segment route evaluations to determine which should remain open to vehicular use; which ought to be closed, and which might be better suited to non-motorized traffic only. More than an off-highway vehicle planning exercise, the teams also evaluated highway-licensed vehicle travel in the forest. Interdisciplinary DNR Teams conducted this analysis in concert with county, federal and tribal land managers, then submitted their draft findings and recommendations for a rigorous 60-day public review. Face-to-face public meetings were an important part of this sometimes acrimonious process. Public interest was understandably very high, and political intervention wasn't uncommon.

**Issues and Challenges.** To kick things off, a comprehensive forest access route inventory was conducted in 2003-04'. In all, 5,714,400 acres were inventoried; including 3,075,600 acres of forestry-administered land within state forests; 980,300 acres of county lands, some 843,500 acres of federal lands within state forests; and another 815,000 acres of so-called *'scattered lands'* administered by DNR Forestry outside of state forest boundaries. In excess of 55,000 hours were spent on the route inventory by DNR field staff at a cost of more than \$1.6 million. Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) staff also contributed 10,288 hours to the effort. The MCC time was valued at approx. \$205,760. Forest route inventory data was then loaded into a special database called 'WHEELS', which was developed by DNR (at considerable cost) specifically to store this data. This spatial database enables the department to update and manipulate forest route data for a variety of purposes and management applications.

Among the many challenges faced by DNR Planners and Field Teams, were ambiguities in the data caused by interspersed land ownerships, variable project boundaries, inaccurate land records, outdated State Forest Boundary data, seasonal or dual-use trail treadways, and inconsistencies in the collection and reporting of field data attributes by various field inventory teams. Routes too narrow or too wet to inventory, for example, were typically noted by data points which are often difficult to quantify or connect. And, despite the use of historical records, administrative maps, aerial photos and updated timber inventory data to fill-in the gaps, it is still often difficult to locate and map narrow single-track trails across checkerboard land ownerships through the forest.

## Planning Process Objectives

- Designate a sustainable system of forest roads and trails that provide for public vehicular access.
- Close all unsustainable routes to vehicular travel.
- Reclassify State Forest Lands as appropriate, per motor vehicle use.
- Motorized use should not supplant or displace non-motor uses or users.

- Create designated and/or de facto non-motorized areas (or buffers) via route or areal closures.
- Designated trails and trail systems should provide a ‘quality’ recreational experience, and provide connections to other recreation facilities, support services and other popular destinations.
- Forest access routes should provide adequate access for both recreational and utilitarian purposes (*e.g., hunting, trapping, angling, fuelwood and bough collecting, berry and mushroom picking, etc.*)

### Public Process Objectives

- Meaningfully engage interested and affected stakeholders throughout this process.
- Synchronize public involvement steps w/cooperators, to the extent possible, via shared public meetings and simultaneous public review periods to minimize confusion.
- Clearly communicate planning status, next steps, decision points and appeal options.
- Maintain a complete planning record in the event of administrative or legal appeals.

### Desired Outcomes

- Substantial, enduring agreement regarding motor access to public forest lands.
- Stakeholders respect the process, feel valued and listened to – despite disagreements.
- Consistent, understandable and enforceable regulatory framework across public forest lands.
- Clearly signed and mapped motor/non-motor roads, trails and (legal) forest access routes that provide for both recreational and utilitarian forest use.
- Updated visitor maps that reflect new route designations, route closures and non-motor area designations.

### Caveats. The DNR planning exercise :

- Isn’t a comprehensive or full-blown outdoor recreation planning or land-use zoning exercise. It’s really just a long-overdue administrative route disposition exercise.
- Deals only with existing routes through the forests – no new trail development is contemplated.
- Makes only incremental changes to already designated roads or trails.
- Addresses both motor/non-motor routes through the forest, but isn’t intended to partition state forests into motor/no-motor use zones.
- Puts the Interdisciplinary Field Team in the driver’s seat, and provides broad discretion and potent tools for their use. Public and agency review serve as ‘*checks*’ to ensure fairness and balance in the final direction.
- Isn’t the last opportunity to propose new trails or trail connections in Minnesota’s State Forests – it’s really just the beginning!

**Current Status.** This process wrapped-up on December 31, 2008. All 58 State Forests containing 12,132 miles of inventoried routes have been completed.

Route designations resulting from this process include over 2,300 miles of roads, 831 miles of ATV/OHM Trail, 143 miles of single-track OHM Trail, 27 miles of ORV Trail (*i.e., jeep or truck*), and 827 miles of non-motorized trails. Over 3,382 miles of routes, or about one-third of all state land routes have been permanently closed to all or most vehicular traffic.

**To Learn More.** Planning has just wrapped-up. To learn more, you can log on to [www.findthetrails.com](http://www.findthetrails.com) and click on ‘Plans and Proposals’. You’ll find a wealth of information about this process and implementation progress to-date.. Or, contact Brian McCann @ 651/259-5627 or Toll Free 1-888-MINNDNR (646-6367) with questions or FFI.