

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 700

ROADS, TRAILS AND ACCESS

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700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management and protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Juneau County Forest require several different types of access. Since the County Forest was created a great number of access points have been established. A combination of geography, soils, vegetation, surface waters, seasons of the year, presence/absence of roads or trails, ownership of adjoining lands, and public regulations interact to control access to any part of the Forest.

Many of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, forest fire protection lanes, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. The locations and standards for these earlier roads were not routinely established by county personnel.

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

Listed below are problem areas that need to be addressed and also some of the reasons that an access plan needs to be developed.

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

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

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

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

Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of a resource; e.g. reduced availability of trophy-sized deer, excessive

harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, over harvest of bobcat.

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

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

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

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

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

Road placement: e.g. some roads should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

As can be seen above there is a need for a clear and concise policy for a public access plan for the County Forest.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES:

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

710 ROADS

Juneau County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by the County Forestry Department personnel and equipment, private contractors working under contract or the direction of the county, or other public resource agencies with cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads; permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads.

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

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS

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

Some forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and a 20-foot roadway width. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. The following table lists the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats. Also included are roads proposed for addition once improvements meet statute requirements.

JUNEAU COUNTY CURRENT WDOT CERTIFIED FOREST ROADS

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Armenia	22, 27 & 34- 20N-4E; 3-19N-4E	3.25	
Cutler	25 & 26-18N- 2E	1.39	Highline Road
Necedah	30-18N-3E	0.95	Highline Road
TOTALS		5.59 miles	

(*) Indicates the mileage of existing roads that will be improved and certified during the next 15 years.

These permanent primary roads will be maintained and remain open to public use.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

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

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked and/or signed as restricted from motorized vehicle use.

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities or fire protection. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

Many of the roads on the Forest fall into this classification. These roads are designed and

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

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure after the completion of the timber sale. Reasons will include protection of perpetually wet soils, protection of endangered, archeological or cultural resources, human safety, and prevention of illegal dumping.

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

720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities on the Forest. An important role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause long-term natural resource damage, and that are compatible with other uses. Management activities adjacent to recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations will be made to accommodate the recreational use. The committee has the authority to open, close or relocate trails.

Juneau County maintains the old railroad grade from Camp Douglas to Elroy as the “Omaha Trail”. This trail is a fee use trail with several locations in Camp Douglas, Hustler and Elroy selling daily and seasonal passes. This trail was purchased from the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad using funds from the Snowmobile Fund. Since the trail was purchased, the 19 bridges on the trail have been renovated to snowmobile trail standards and the trail has been surfaced with tar and pea gravel twice. The trail features not only a wonderful view of the Juneau County countryside along the bluffs of Central Juneau County, but also an 890-foot tunnel about at the midway point of the trail. A rest area has been constructed at the north entrance to the tunnel. The trail is used by bicyclists and hikers in

the summer, and snowmobiles in the winter months.

Another feature of this trail is that it joins the Elroy-Sparta State Trail and the “400” State Trail at Elroy. It also is just a few miles east of Mill Bluff State Park at the Camp Douglas end of the trail.

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

720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Committee. 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 Juneau County with \$5,000,000.00 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage.

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 Juneau County that meets these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-95) to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, an erosion control plan will be prepared for each project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what erosion control measures will be employed.

725 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

725.1 HIKING TRAILS

725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

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

725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

While the Omaha Trail was not specifically purchased for hiking, it is used by the public for hiking. It is a fee use trail. It is maintained in the summer months.

725.2 BICYCLE TRAILS

725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails

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

725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

The Omaha Trail is also used for bicycling. It is located on an abandoned railroad grade. It is a fee use trail. It has been seal-coated twice to improve the surface for riding.

725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING TRAILS

725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

There are no undesignated horseback riding trails.

725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

Horseback riding is allowed on all trails unless the trail is marked against horseback riding.

725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING TRAILS

725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. No trail grooming or tracking is done on these trails.

725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

The Oak Ridge area in the Cutler Unit of the County Forest has been designated for cross-country skiing. At times the trail may be groomed and tracked for public use. There is a parking area for the trail just off of County Highway M about 9 miles north of New Lisbon. There is no fee for using the trail. Motorized vehicle use is not permitted on this trail system without authorization.

725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED USE

Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including, but not limited to, snowshoeing, dog sledding and, hunting on foot are permitted on all trails except where otherwise posted as closed.

730 MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS

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

730.1 SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

No cross-country or off-road snowmobile use is permitted. Snowmobile use is permitted on all logging roads and fire lanes when the ground is snow-covered.

730.1.2 Designated Snowmobile Trails

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

State trails: A system of state approved and funded snowmobile trails is authorized on designated trails, logging roads, and fire lanes. This system is part of the statewide network

of snowmobile trails which links Juneau County with adjoining counties as well as the rest of the state. Snowmobile registration and out-of-state user fees are used to support trail development, signing, maintenance, grooming and bridge construction.

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

730.1.3 Juneau County Policy on Snowmobile Trail Use.

Juneau County has a Snowmobile Trail Ordinance that was adopted in 1980.

All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to all cars and trucks from December 1st through March 31st unless vehicle use is authorized by Juneau County. When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free from debris and equipment. Trail width shall not exceed 16 feet.

If a timber sale is located by a snowmobile trail, the contractor may not use the trail for access when there is snow on the ground. The contractor may cross the trail at a 90 degree angle to provide access from one side of the trail to the other and to limit any dangerous situations.

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 approved by the county and be mounted on wooden or metal posts.

730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

As ATV trails are created and the need to use County-owned land is necessary to complete trails, such trails will be developed and maintained for public use.

730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

There are no undesignated ATV Trails on County Forest or County Owned lands.

730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

There are no designated ATV Trails on County Forest or County Owned lands. ATV use is not allowed on any county lands.

730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

730.3.1 Undesignated Motorized Trails

Other motorized recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited on those trails designated for other recreational uses or where trails are rocked, bermed, gated or otherwise blocked.

730.3.2 Designated Motorized Trails

Other motorized recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited on those trails designated for other recreational uses or where trails are rocked, bermed, gated or otherwise blocked.

735 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest may also provide and designate areas where motorized equipment is not permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. The following areas have been designated as restricted access areas on the Juneau County Forest: certain portions of the Blueberry Trail area, Kennedy Park, Bass Hollow and Riverview Recreational Areas.

740 WATER ACCESS

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

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

740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY JUNEAU COUNTY FOREST

1. CASTLE ROCK COUNTY PARK
2. WILDERNESS COUNTY PARK
3. KENNEDY PARK
4. LEMONWEIR MILLS PUBLIC ACCESS
5. TWO RIVERS PUBLIC ACCESS

740.2 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY TOWNSHIPS: NONE

740.3 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY DNR: NONE

740.4 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS

Some undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats currently exist on the Forest. These are used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but have not been developed for boat trailer launching. These sites are not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

745 WILD LAKES

There are no wild lakes on the Juneau County Forest.

750 WETLANDS

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

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

755 ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS

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

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

760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered under Chapter 515.5, 515.6 and 515.7 Special Uses.

765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access management chapter addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. Chapter 6 of the BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Areas with highly erodable soil types, close proximity to streams or lakes, or steep slopes are identified on the erosion susceptibility map included in Chapter 900. Soil disturbance activities in these areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-95. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

770 SIGNS

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

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

interest.

E. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.

F. Directional Markers.

2. Regulatory Type Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

770.1 SIGN STANDARDS

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

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