

# PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING

---

Chippewa County Land Conservation and Forest Management Department

February 15, 2018



## Objective of Meeting

1. Review Preliminary Results of Technical Analysis Conducted by Staff with Considerations For Draft Plan Amendment.
2. Receive public comment to be considered in finalizing the technical analysis of the proposal and the development of a Draft Plan Amendment.

- Motorized access to the Tealey Creek Game Loop is currently prohibited under the 2006-2020 County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, (except for limited-term ATV use by disabled hunters).
- Approval of the requested use would be a change in current policy & require a Plan amendment.
- Plan amendments require:
  - Public input
  - Approval of the County Board and DNR.

# Public Input Process

2/1/18- Public Info. Hearing #1

-Present info. on the request

-Receive public comments

2/15/18 - Public Info. Hearing #2

-Present: Public Comments;  
Staff analysis/ Draft technical report

-Receive comments on:  
Staff analysis/Draft technical report

2/21/18 - LCFM Committee Meeting

-Present:

1. Public Comments
2. Draft technical report
3. Draft plan amendment

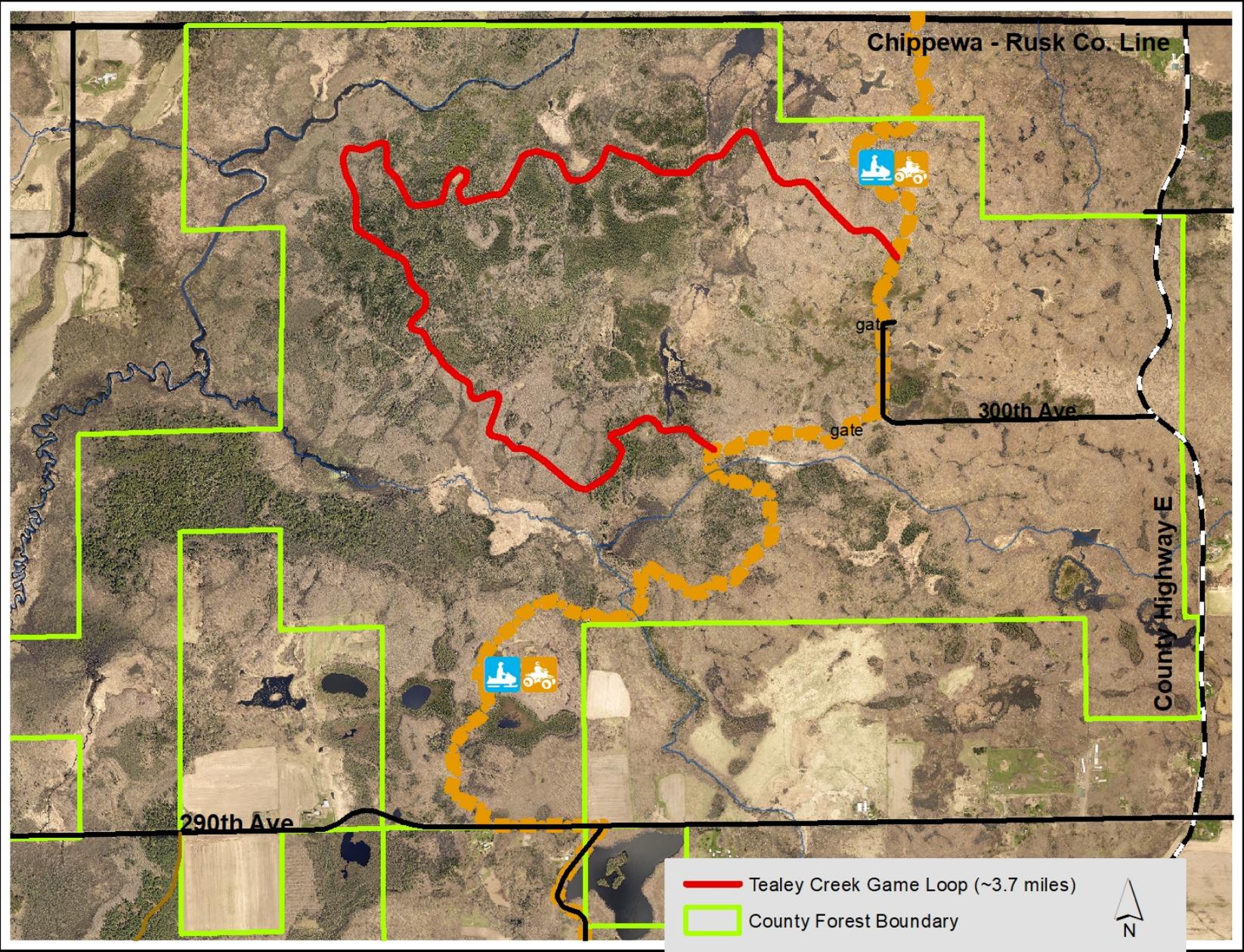
3/21/18 - LCFM Committee Meeting & Public Hearing

-Receive public comment on draft plan amendment

3/29/18 - LCFM Committee Special Meeting

-Committee action to adopt, reject, or further refine draft plan amendment

Overview of County Forest Area Surrounding The Tealey Creek Game Loop



**Overview of  
Preliminary LCFM Staff Report: Technical and Operational  
Considerations Relating to Proposed Frozen-Ground Motorized Access  
To The Tealey Creek Game Loop**

Chippewa County Forest: Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, T32N R7W, Town of  
Birch Creek

2/15/18

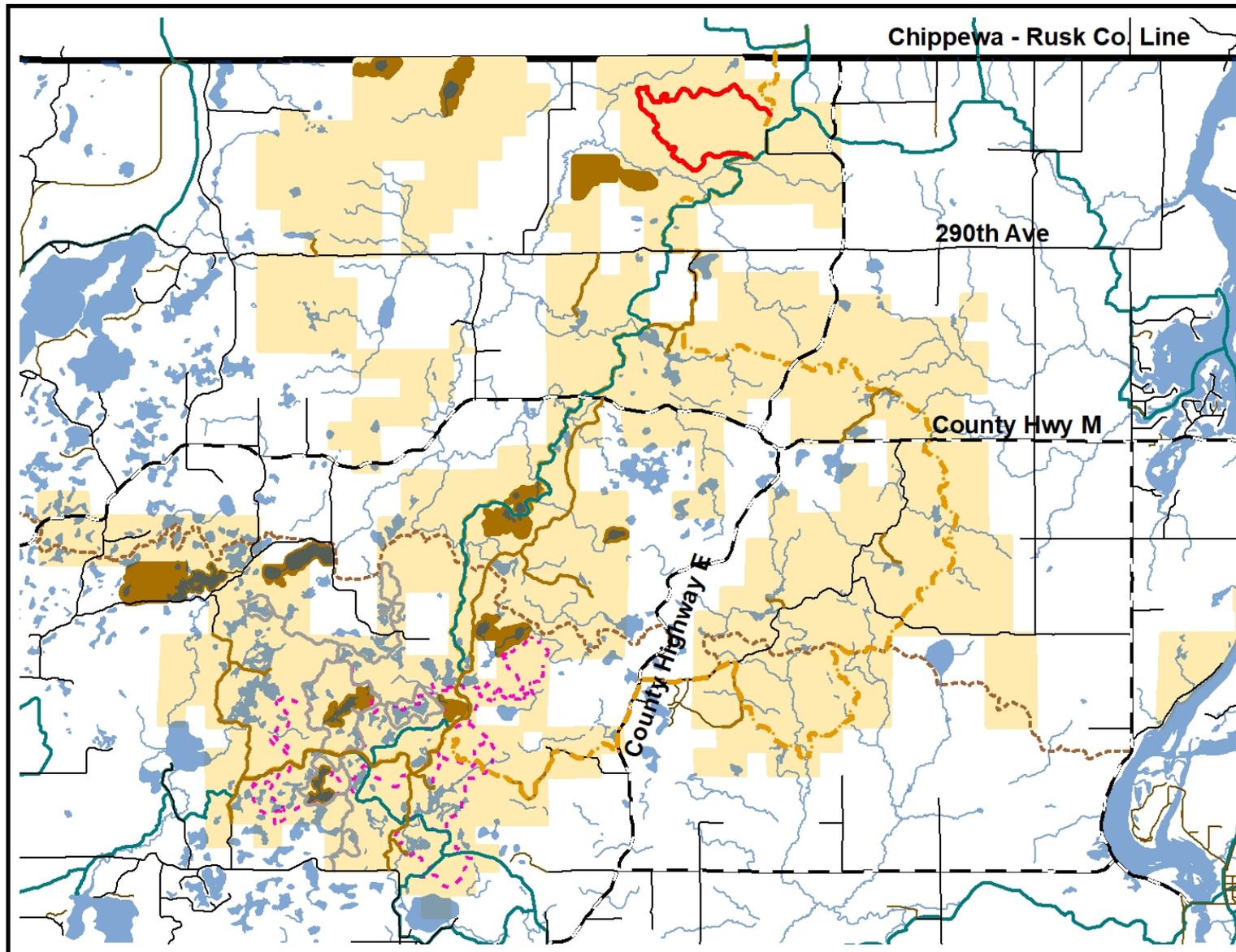
## Objective of Staff Analysis

To analyze the citizen request using established policy criteria for the purpose of reporting resulting technical and operational considerations to interested citizens and the Land Conservation and Forest Management Committee.

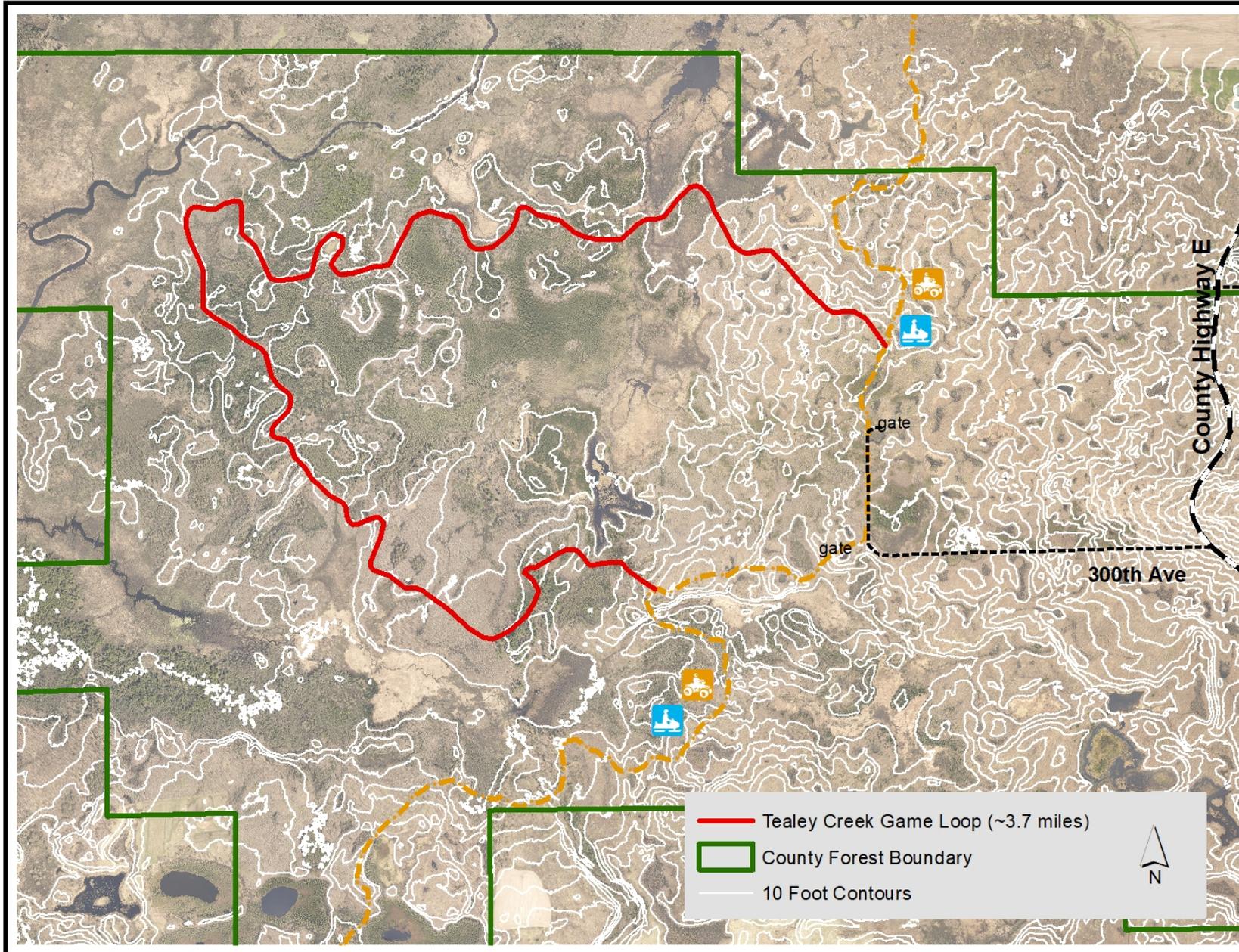
## Primary Methods

- Utilize site specific experience, the county geographic information system, and historic aerial photos to examine environmental characteristics of the Tealey Creek Game Loop.
- Interview previous county staff to gain historical perspective relating to the Tealey Creek Game Loop.
- Utilize the management provisions and criteria established under Section 700 of the County Forest Plan as a basis for staff analysis of the requested access to the Tealey Creek Game Loop.
- Identify best management practices to limit or mitigate detrimental effects of motorized access.

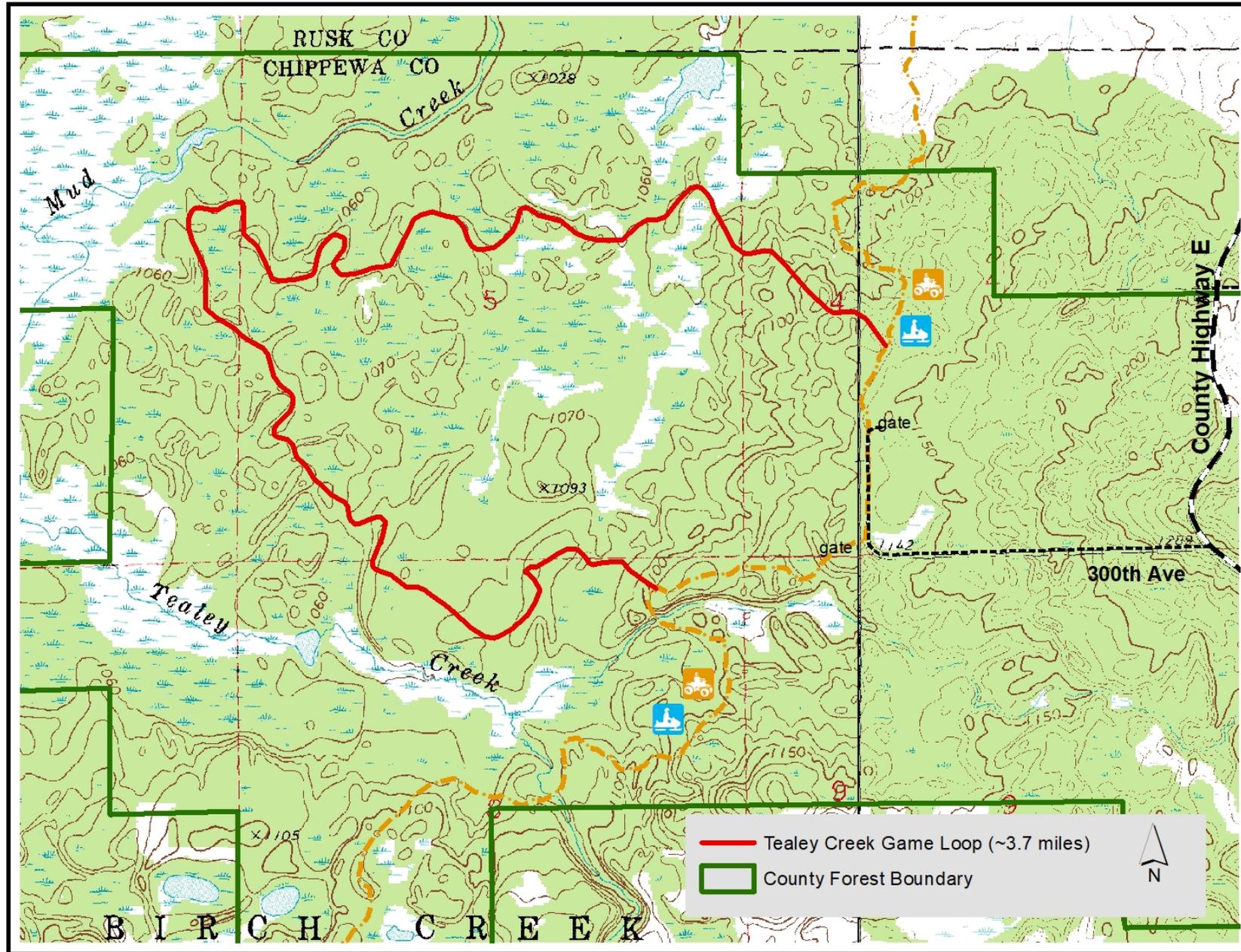
Overview of County Forest West of Chippewa River - Showing Tealey Creek Game Loop



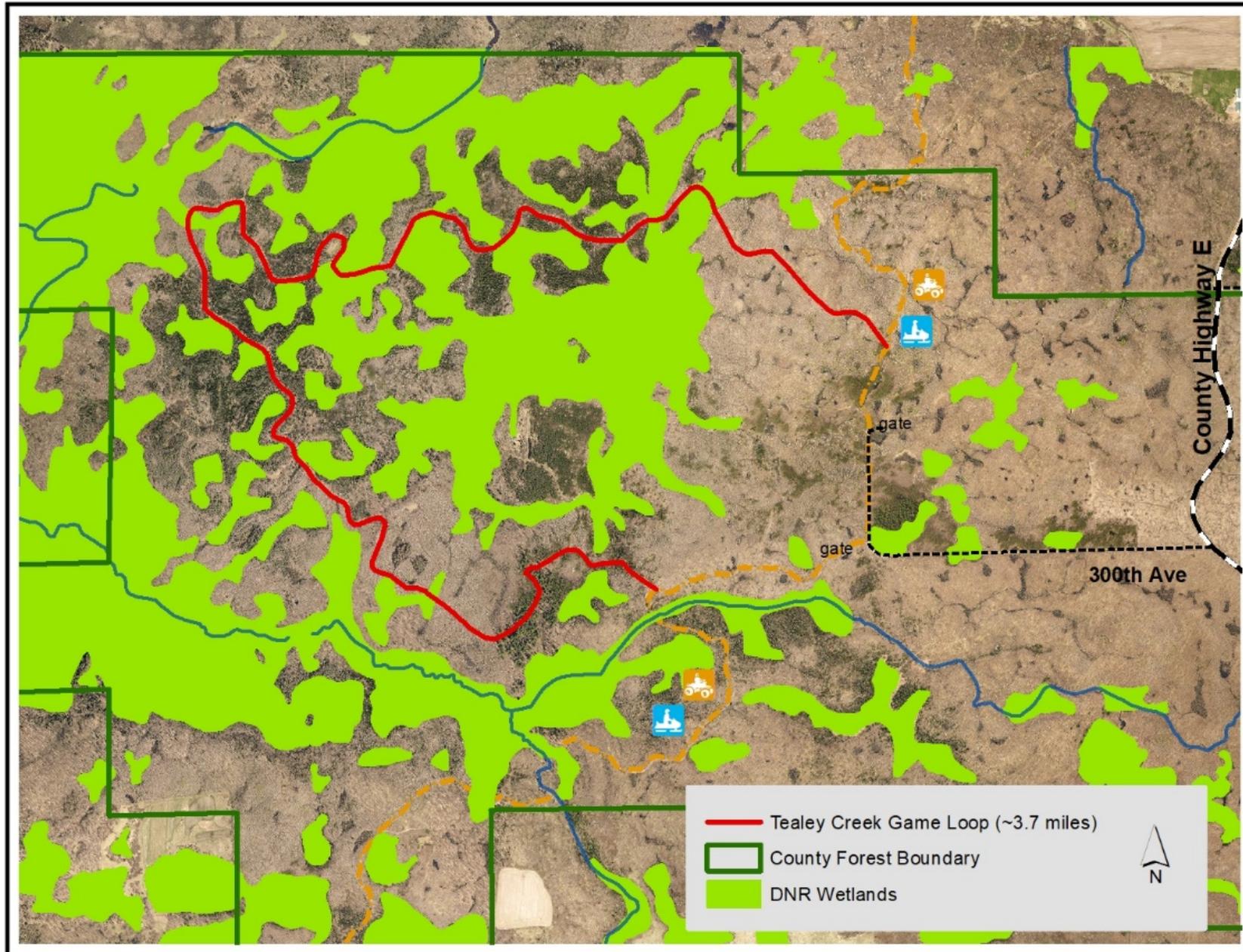
Map A. Tealey Creek Game Loop Topography - 10' Contour Interval



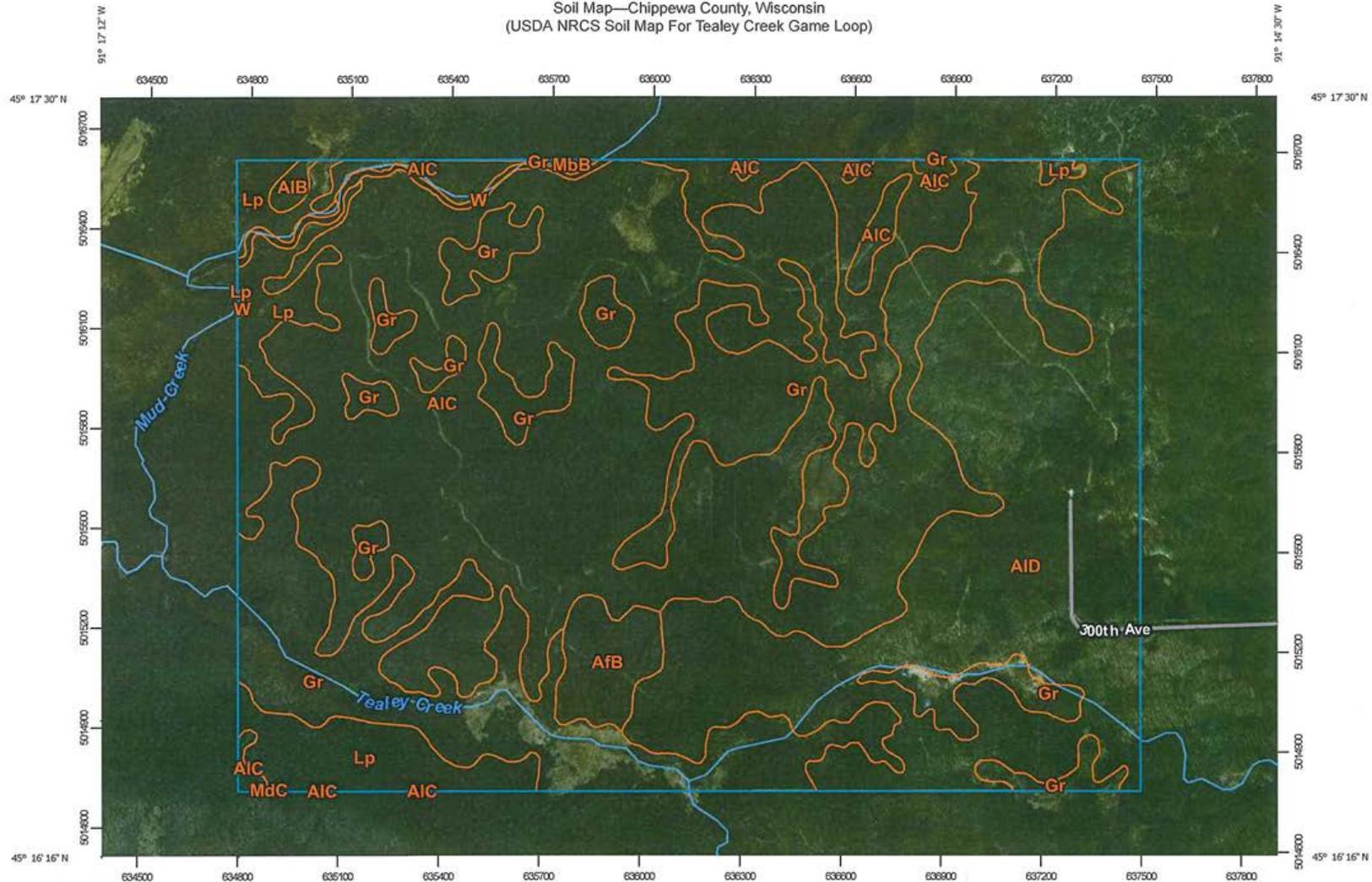
Map B. Tealey Creek Game Loop on 7.5' USGS Quadrangles



Map C. DNR Mapped Wetlands Adjacent The Tealey Creek Game Loop



Map D  
 Soil Map—Chippewa County, Wisconsin  
 (USDA NRCS Soil Map For Tealey Creek Game Loop)



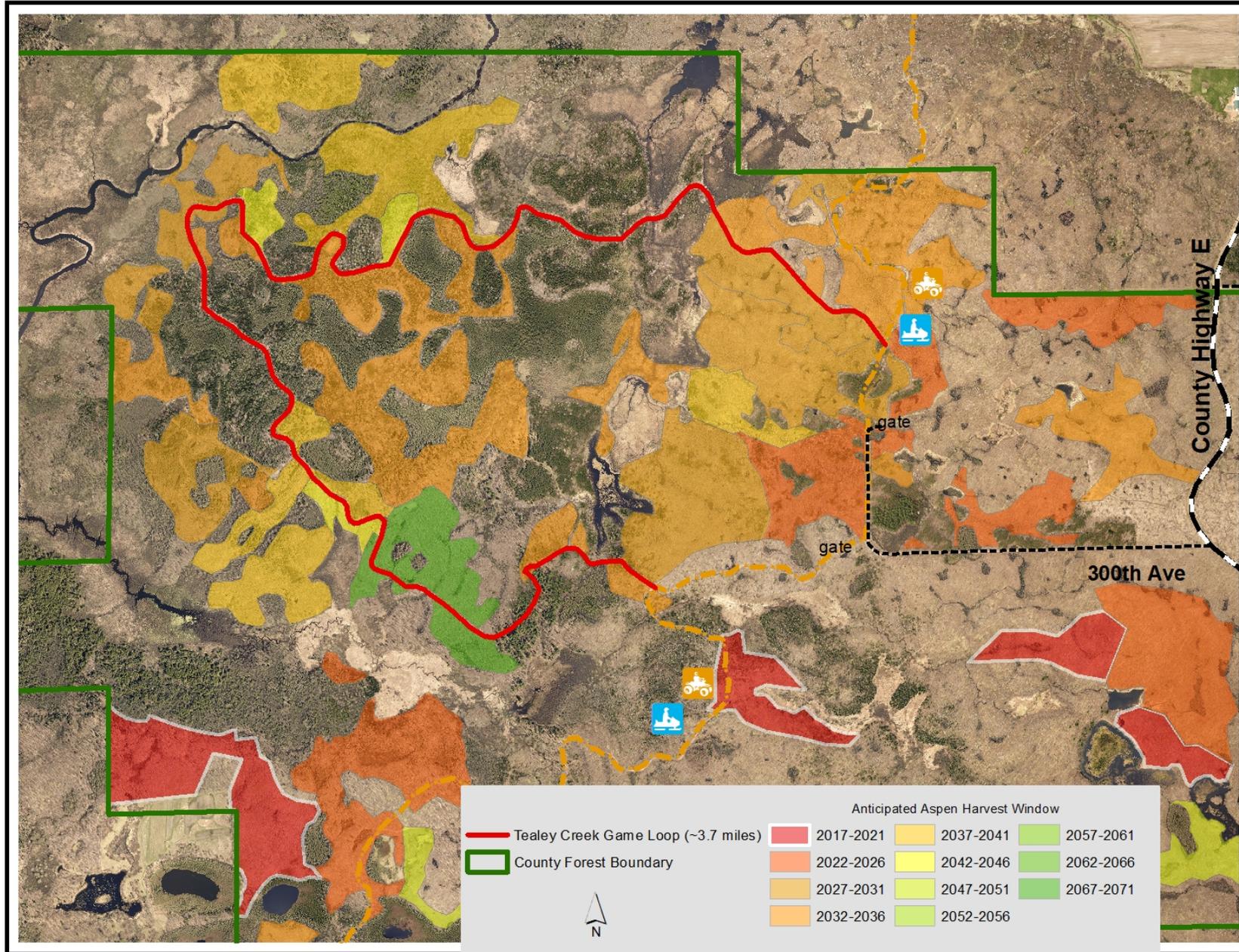
Map Scale: 1:16,100 if printed on A landscape (11" x 8.5") sheet.

0 200 400 800 1200 Meters

0 500 1000 2000 3000 Feet

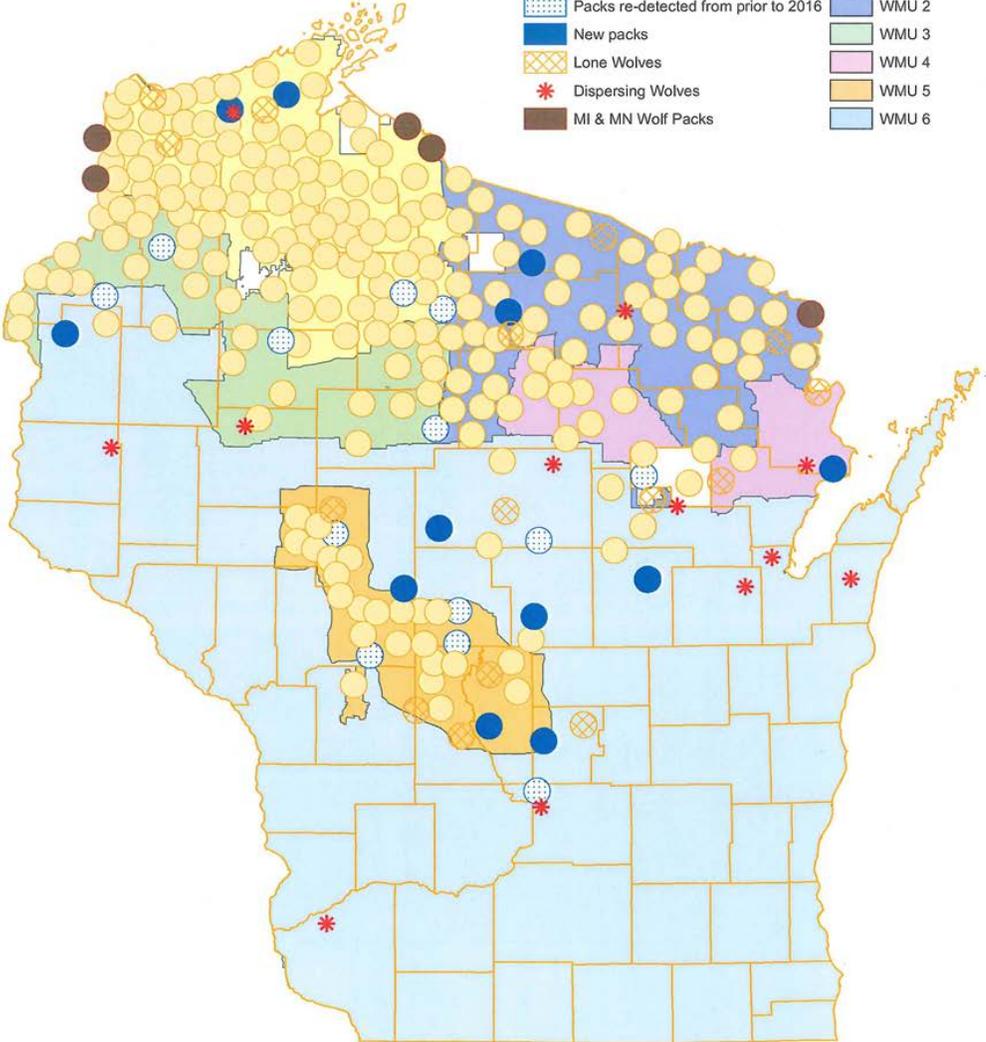
Map projection: Web Mercator Corner coordinates: WGS84 Edge ticks: UTM Zone 15N WGS84

Map E. Tealey Creek Game Loop Aspen Management Schedule



**Wolves Detected in Wisconsin in winter 2016-2017**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Packs detected last 2 winters        |  WMU 1 |
|  Packs re-detected from prior to 2016 |  WMU 2 |
|  New packs                            |  WMU 3 |
|  Lone Wolves                          |  WMU 4 |
|  Dispersing Wolves                    |  WMU 5 |
|  MI & MN Wolf Packs                   |  WMU 6 |



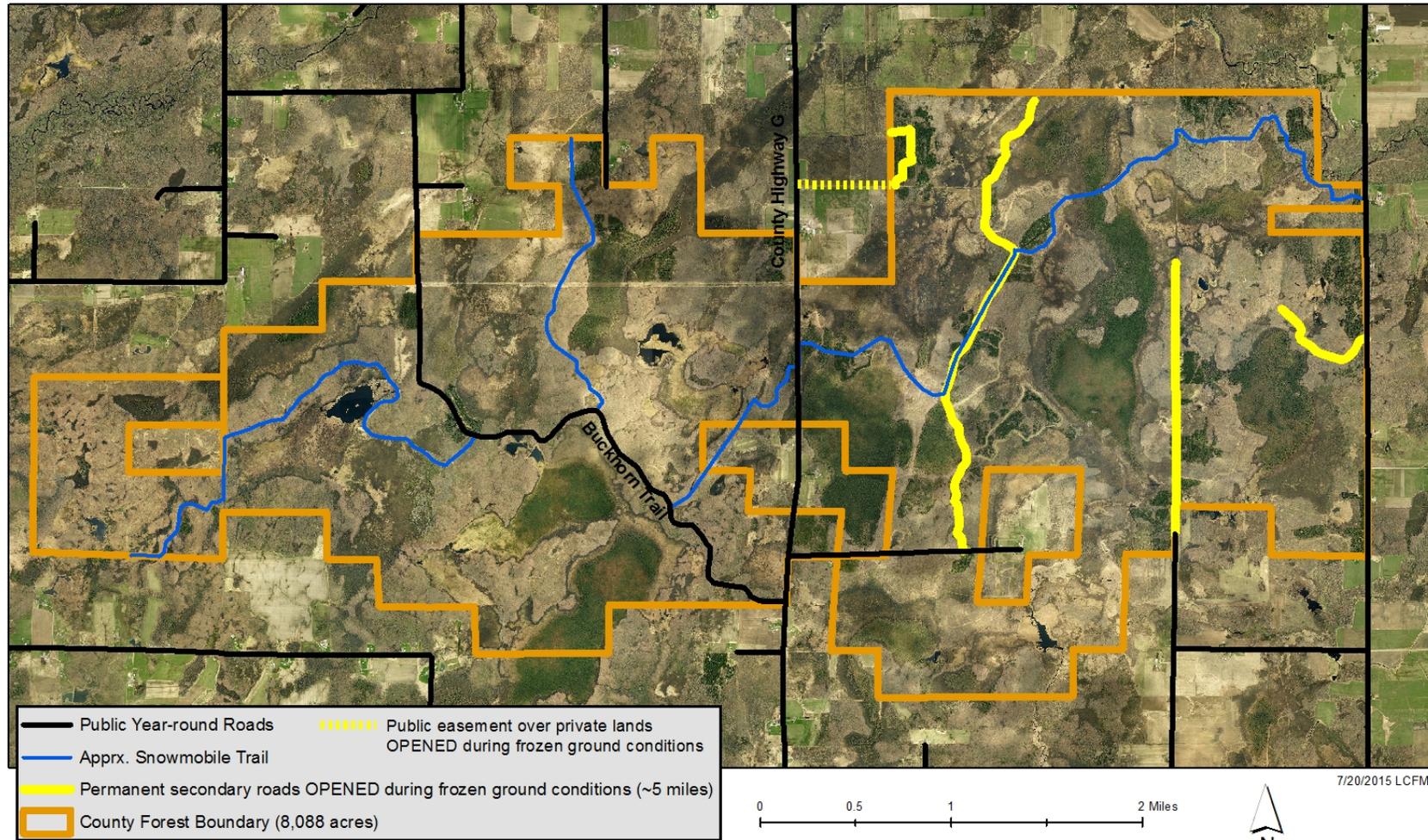
# Chippewa County Forest Road System Policy

Chapter 700 of the 2006-2020 County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan establishes access control policy, including identification of provisions and criteria to be considered when addressing management issues on the County Forest.

# Transferrable policy relating to frozen-ground access to permanent secondary roads in the Town of Ruby

- Frozen ground motor vehicle access is limited to select permanent secondary roads on county forest land in the Town of Ruby
- Maintenance required to facilitate access and/or minimize environmental damage is the responsibility of the Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management Department Staff
- Chippewa County Department of Land Conservation and Forest Management Department Staff is responsible for monitoring the permanent secondary road surface, corridor, and adjacent lands

**925.13 Permanent Secondary Roads In Town of Ruby County Forest Open To Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Condition After The Traditional Gun Deer Season**



# Preliminary Findings

Note: Analysis focused on trail corridor and surface. Impacts to resources that off the trail were not considered.

## User Conflicts

- Adjacent landowners may be affected by an increase in noise and trespass (intentional or accidental).
- Operation of motorized vehicles on the snowmobile trail for approximately 0.6 miles. The eligibility of this section of snowmobile trail for maintenance funding may become questionable.
- The experience of current users (i.e. snowshoe, walk-in small game, deer, and varmint) may become compromised.
- Individuals traveling to the TCGL through other areas of the county forest may accidentally mistake other gates that are temporarily open for maintenance operations (i.e. snowmobile or ski trail grooming), resulting in unauthorized operation on snowmobile or ski trails placing other recreationalists at risk and causing damage to the trail.

## Public Safety

- Truck usage may result in dangerous conditions on snowmobile trail.
  - Uneven conditions or rutting on the snowmobile trail.
  - Topography and curves result in relatively limited site distance.
  - Snowmobiles are likely to be traveling at a faster rate of speed than trucks, causing potentially dangerous situations when snowmobiles approach trucks from behind, particularly in narrow, hilly, and/or curvilinear sections of the snowmobile trail.
- Licensed vehicles that are not well suited for the conditions (i.e. cars, minivans, etc.) may venture onto open roads.
- Several locations on the TCGT are not wide enough for two-way traffic or to allow a moving vehicle to pass by a parked vehicle.
- Remote trails present greater challenges for emergency response operations than maintained roads.

# Environmental

## **Soils**

- Maintenance activities may cause rutting
- Certain areas may not freeze, especially when insulated by snow cover.
- If under frozen ground conditions, not expected to have an appreciable impact on soils.

## **Vegetation**

- Frost damage to desired grasses, forbes, and legumes may increase. (from plowing)
- Increased wetness and decreased soil temperatures in spring. (from compaction)
- Increased risk of importing invasive plant species.

# Environmental

## **Water resources**

- Not expected to impact groundwater elevation, quality, or quantity unless there are spills or leaks.
- Not expected to have a direct impact surface water quality.
- Maintenance activities required to facilitate the proposed use may impact surface water quality (i.e. sedimentation).

## **Wildlife**

- The T&E species listed on the NHI Database are not active during the winter months and are not expected to be impacted by the requested use. Certain species are likely to be impacted by summer and fall maintenance activities.
- Wildlife movement patterns may change impacting predator/prey dynamics.
- There is potential for violent confrontations between gray wolves and hunting dogs, which commonly result in serious injury or death to the hunting dogs.

## Law Enforcement

- Little to no dumping or littering, to-date. Remote roads tend to be at higher risk. Use will increase this risk.
- Remote areas are often subject to infrequent law enforcement patrol and are known to be used for various unlawful activities such as drug-related activity, underage alcohol consumption, poaching, etc. Use will increase access for individuals or groups with unlawful intent.
- Unlawful operation of trucks on the snowmobile trail, either intentionally or by accident.
- Several trails (i.e. historic skid trails, recent haul roads) lead directly to adjacent private lands. Increase risk of trespass on adjacent private lands, either intentionally or by accident.

## Maintenance

- Improvements (i.e. culvert installation and replacement, grading, limited fill) will be required to facilitate requested use and maintenance.
- Areas may not freeze without snow removal.
- Improvements may require permits from the State of Wisconsin (i.e. stormwater, wetlands, and waterways).
- Maintenance practices will require special precautions to protect threatened and endangered species.
- The frequency and nature of inspection and will need to increase, resulting in an increase in the County's operational expenses and demand on staffing resources.

# **Management options to limit or offset effects of motorized access**

## User Conflicts

- Install signage at off-site locations (i.e. ski and snowmobile trail road crossings) to inform public of motorized use prohibitions.
- Develop a snowplowing standard that removes enough snow to provide safe travel for motor vehicles and retains adequate snow for snowmobile use.
- Delay the opening of roads until after the close of the deer archery season to avoid impacts to deer hunters and reduce the duration of snowmobile trail disruption during early snow years.
- Install paint lines, signage, and earthen traffic barriers to reduce the likelihood of private trespass.
- Require all motor vehicles meet standards established under WI Admin Code Trans 305 (noise, etc)
- Require that Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Regulations apply (ATV/UTV noise and safety).

## Public Safety

- Consider one-way traffic designation, install turnouts, or widen trail to alleviate limitations or safety risks related to narrow trail widths.
- Remove underbrush in select areas to improve visibility in corners on the snowmobile trail to reduce risk of collisions between snowmobiles and motor vehicles.
- Require snowmobiles to obey a speed limit to reduce speed differential and reduce the risk of collisions between snowmobiles and motor vehicles.
- Install signage at numerous locations to alert snowmobiles to potential motor vehicles and vice versa.
- Install signage to protect the groomed snowmobile trail from motor vehicles near points where the TCGL and snowmobile trail meet.

## Environment

- Employ best management practices for water quality (i.e. road drainage structures, soil stabilization, silt fence, seeding & mulching, etc.) to minimize sedimentation risks associated with certain soil disturbing maintenance and improvement projects.
- Obtain DNR waterway, wetland, and stormwater permits where necessary for improvement projects.
- Mow after nesting season.
- Follow Threatened and Endangered Species Guidance (timing, exclusion, etc.) and obtain incidental take permits where necessary, when implementing maintenance and improvement projects.
- Conduct annual invasive species inspections and complete required treatments. Clean all maintenance.

## Maintenance

- Re-establish or install ditching in multiple areas to decrease surface wetness to: reduce the risk of rutting from summer/fall maintenance, increase the probability/duration of frozen ground, and accommodate plowing if needed.
- Add or replace culverts to decrease surface wetness to: reduce the risk of rutting from summer/fall maintenance, increase the probability/duration of frozen ground, and accommodate plowing if needed. Select locations may require the addition of fill to increase the separation distance between saturated soils (i.e. ground water) and the trail surface.
- Remove snow from the surface of the TCGL to achieve and maintain frozen-ground conditions in situations where snow cover prevents freezing. Rutting may be an unavoidable outcome of initial snow removal activities. In these situations rutting would need to be repaired on an annual basis to maintain compliance with sustainable forestry certification standards.

# Law Enforcement

- Require that all motor vehicles and Off-Highway vehicles must be registered and licensed to provide license plates to assist law enforcement activities.
- Provide emergency service agencies with maps and electronic location data for the TCGL to decrease response times.
- Increase patrol by law enforcement and encourage citizen monitoring/reporting to minimize illegal activities.
- Install surveillance cameras to record and identify vehicles operating on the TCGL to assist law enforcement efforts.
- Prosecute unlawful activities to the greatest extent possible.

Questions Relating To Proposal, Site, or Report ???

## Public Testimony

- The subject matter and testimony at this public informational hearing shall be limited to the pending request to open gates that currently restrict motorized access to a 3.7 mile-long secondary road in the county forest commonly referred to as the Tealey Creek Game Loop. To meet this requirement, public testimony that relates to matters not under consideration at this time, will be curtailed.
- Oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes per person. The hearing record will remain open to receive written comments received or postmarked no later than February 20, 2018.