

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN  
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**CHAPTER 700**

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## 700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management and protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Chippewa County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is large and diverse, a broad network of access routes has developed. 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 County Forest. Most of Chippewa County Forest roads and trails were developed in part for the harvesting and transporting of forest products.

Many of the older, 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 County 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 warrants an integrated access management plan.

### LIST OF PROBLEM AREAS AND REASONS FOR ACCESS PLANNING

User conflict between groups: e.g., snowmobiling and ATV use 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.

Damage to access: rutted or impassable roads requiring costly repair by the County or other specific user groups.

Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of resources: e.g. reduced availability of trophy-sized deer, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, etc.

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. roads can be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

Clear and concise policy for the public.

## 705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Identify the existing and future County Forest roads eligible for transportation aids under s.86.315 (1), Wis. Stats.
- D. Identify areas on the County Forest where the access is limited or restricted.
- E. Identify the provisions and criteria that will be policy when addressing management issues on the County Forest.

54 **710 ROADS**

55 Chippewa County **Forest and Parks Department of Land Conservation and Forest Management** staff  
 56 will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads  
 57 may be constructed and maintained by the County, or a private contractor working under the direction  
 58 of the County. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency,  
 59 duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent  
 60 primary roads; permanent secondary roads, and temporary roads.  
 61

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

66 **710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS**

67 Permanent primary roads provide primary access to the County Forest and are designed,  
 68 constructed, and maintained for year-round use. These roads serve as essential access  
 69 corridors for multiple use management. All of these roads have received at least some gravel  
 70 surface improvement and are periodically graded. Vehicle use may be restricted at various  
 71 times of the year to minimize physical damage to the road.  
 72

73 Forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying  
 74 roads must meet minimum design standards of a 16-foot surface width and 20-foot roadway  
 75 width. A yearly aid payment is used to maintain and improve these certified public roads. The  
 76 following table lists the roads currently certified under s. 86.31(1), Wis. Stats.  
 77  
 78

CHIPPEWA COUNTY CURRENT WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Birch Creek	Sec. 22, T32N-R7W	0.93	Birch Creek Flowage Trail
Birch Creek	Sec. 19 & 30, T32N-R7W Sec. 36, T32N-R8W	3.00	Deer Fly Trail
Birch Creek	Sec. 31, T32N-R7W Sec. 36, T32N-R8W	1.16	High Ridge Trail
Birch Creek	Sec. 27 & 34, T32N-R7W	0.41	Horseshoe Flowage Trail
Birch Creek	Sec. 33, T32N-R7W	0.24	Spring Creek Flowage Trail
Birch Creek	Sec. 18, T32N-R7W	0.67	Willow Cr. Flowage Trail #1
Birch Creek	Sec. 17, T32N-R7W	1.10	Willow Cr. Flowage Trail #2 & #3
Cleveland	Sec. 1 & 11, T31N-R8W	2.44	Deer Fly Trail
Cleveland	Sec. 11 & 14, T31N-R8W	1.22	Hay Meadow Flowage Trail
Cleveland	Sec. 9, 10 & 11, T31N-R8W	2.31	Hickory Ridge Trail
Cleveland	Sec. 5, T31N-R7W	0.70	Norway Trail

Cleveland	Sec. 7, T31N-R7W Sec. 12, T32N-R8W	0.96	Old Farm Road
Cleveland	Sec. 4 & 9, T31N-R7W	2.63	O'Neil Creek Flowage Trail
Ruby	Sec. 31, T32N-R5W	0.35	Mallard Flowage Trail
TOTAL		<b>18.12 miles</b>	

79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84

The County periodically reviews roads which may have potential to be developed as a WDOT certified forest road. Decision to improve to certified status is based on cost of improving, work planning needs, and benefit to public.

A map of these roads can be found in Chapter 900.

85 710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

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

91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98

Most roads in this category are located in areas on the County Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted, due to concerns about perpetually wet soils, user conflicts, resource protection, potential for erosion, maintenance expense, illegal dumping, and human safety. For the most part, the roads will be blocked with either a gate or dirt berm and/or signed as restricted from un-authorized motor vehicle traffic. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

99 Except as provided under Section 710.2.1, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned  
100 management activities, law enforcement, or fire protection.

101

102 710.2.1 PUBLIC ACCESS TO SELECT PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS IN THE TOWN  
103 OF RUBY AND TOWN OF BIRCH CREEK UNDER FROZEN GROUND CONDITIONS.  
104 (added on \_\_\_\_\_, 2015)

105

106 Motor vehicle use is allowable on approximately 5.0 miles of permanent secondary roads as  
107 shown on the Map 925.13 titled "Permanent Secondary Roads In The Town of Ruby County  
108 Forest Open To Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Conditions (July 2015)" and Map  
109 925.14 "Permanent Secondary Road within the County Forest in the Town of Birch Creek Open  
110 To Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Conditions (February 2018)" included in  
111 Chapter 900, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

112

- 113 1. Access shall not be limited to specific user groups. On-road ATV Registered and  
114 Licensed Off-Highway Vehicle use is allowed. Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle  
115 Regulations apply.
- 116 2. Access shall be authorized under frozen ground conditions only, as determined  
117 by, the County Forest Administrator or their designee, during the time period from  
118 approximately December 11 – March 30. Sufficiently frozen ground conditions  
119 are such that a ¾ ton pickup can drive on all of the subject roads at all times  
120 during the day, without breaking through the ground surface.

121 Frozen ground motor vehicle access to select permanent secondary roads is limited to county  
122 forest land in the Town of Ruby and the Town of Birch Creek due to the following reasons:

123

- 124 1. The Select County Forest lands in the Town of Ruby and Town of Birch Creek is  
125 are a relatively flat landscape that is are primarily internally drained or contains

126

127

128 saturated soils/groundwater contact; whereas, other areas of County Forest  
129 (including Special Units) have irregular topography consisting of steep slopes,  
130 closed depressions, and a relatively dense surface drainage network (i.e.  
131 streams). Therefore, The select County Forest lands in the Town of Ruby and  
132 Town of Birch Creek is are significantly less susceptible to erosion and sediment  
133 loading to wetlands and surface water resources.  
134  
135

- 136 2. The County Forest land in the Town of Ruby has historically been less accessible  
137 by motor vehicles than other County Forest land because of a low density of  
138 permanent primary county forest and Town roads.  
139
- 140 3. Other areas of County Forest (including Special Units) have a higher density of  
141 developed recreational trails. These trails increase accessibility and, as a result,  
142 there is more intensive recreational use.

143 Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management Department Staff shall notify the  
144 Town of Ruby and Town of Birch Creek Clerks of gate opening and closing and post  
145 notification of gate opening and closing on the County Website. When practicable, notification  
146 of anticipated gate opening and closure shall also be communicated to the Town of Ruby and  
147 Town of Birch Creek Clerks and posted on the county website. The website shall include a  
148 map showing which roads are open to motor vehicle use.  
149

150 Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management Department Staff shall be  
151 responsible for maintenance required to facilitate access and/or minimize environmental  
152 damage, including, but not limited to:

- 153 1. Brushing and removal of wind throws and deadfalls.
- 154 2. Installation and maintenance of road infrastructure such as signage, culverts, at-  
155 grade crossings, ditches, and road surface.
- 156 3. Snow removal (i.e. plowing) may be required to achieve and maintain frozen  
157 ground. In situations where maintained snowmobile trails use open permanent  
158 secondary roads, snow removal shall maintain adequate snow coverage on the road.
- 159 4. Repair of rutting, erosion, and damage to vegetation.  
160  
161  
162

163 Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management Department Staff shall be  
164 responsible for monitoring the permanent secondary road surface, corridor, and adjacent  
165 lands, including coordination with law enforcement, to identify:

- 166 1. Environmental damage to soil, vegetation, water resources.
- 167 2. Unauthorized dumping/litter.
- 168 3. Increase in unlawful activities.
- 169 4. Public safety concerns.  
170

171 Access to some or all of the permanent secondary roads shown on Map 925.13 titled "Permanent  
172 Secondary Roads In The Town of Ruby County Forest Open To Motorized Vehicle Use During  
173 Frozen Ground Conditions (July 2015)" and Map 925.14 "Permanent Secondary Road within the  
174 County Forest in the Town of Birch Creek Open To Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground  
175 Conditions (February 2018)" included in Chapter 900 may be temporarily suspended, without  
176 advanced public notice, at the sole discretion of the County Forest Administrator, under the  
177 following circumstances:

- 178 1. Environmental damage to soil, vegetation, water resources or unauthorized  
179 dumping/ littering cannot be prevented with reasonable accommodations.
- 180 2. At the request of law enforcement personnel in response to immediate public safety  
181 concerns.  
182

183 At their discretion, The Chippewa County Land Conservation & Forest Management Committee  
184 may take action to revoke access to some or all of the permanent secondary roads shown on  
185 Map 925.13 titled "Permanent Secondary Roads In The Town of Ruby County Forest Open To  
186 Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Conditions (July 2015)" and Map 925.14  
187 "Permanent Secondary Road within the County Forest in the Town of Birch Creek Open To

188 **Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Conditions (February 2018)** included in Chapter  
189 900 in the event of intolerable or unsustainable levels of:

- 190 1. Environmental damage to soil, vegetation, water resources.
- 191 2. Unauthorized dumping/litter.
- 192 3. Increase in unlawful activities.
- 193 4. Public safety concerns.

194  
195 The costs associated with the motorized use authorized under this Subsection shall be the  
196 responsibility of the County. As part of the annual budget process, the County Forest  
197 Administrator will estimate and request required operational funding.  
198

### 199 710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

200  
201 Many of the roads on the County Forest fall into this classification. These roads are designed  
202 and constructed for short-term use for a specific project, often for timber harvest access.  
203 These roads are used only for a short duration and when the activity is done, the temporary  
204 road is closed. Many of these roads are accessed via permanent secondary roads. These  
205 roads are naturally or artificially revegetated and often closed by use of earthen  
206 berms/bunkers or other physical barriers.  
207

208 Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will  
209 include protection of perpetually wet soils, potential for erosion, potential for rutting, human  
210 safety, and prevention of illegal dumping.  
211

212 The need for new temporary roads will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Road locations  
213 will be included in designing timber harvests. Consideration will be given to the objectives  
214 within each County Forest unit, existing road density, potential use, and soil type.  
215

## 216 **720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS**

217 This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities on the Forest. An important  
218 role of the Forest is to provide sustainable recreational trails that do not cause long-term natural  
219 resource damage, and that are compatible with other uses. Management activities adjacent to  
220 recreational trails will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. If deemed necessary, alterations will be  
221 made to accommodate the recreational use. The Forest and Parks Committee has the authority to  
222 open, close or relocate trails.  
223

224 Maps for recreational trail uses of the Forest are in Chapter 900-Appendix.

### 225 720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

226 Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Forest and Parks Committee. Groups  
227 requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long term funding and  
228 maintenance of proposed trails.  
229

230 Construction of a recreational trail which would increase the erosion potential of one acre or  
231 more of land is subject to state and federal stormwater runoff requirements (NR216, Wis.  
232 Adm. Code and s. 283.33, Wis. Stats). Construction or development for silvicultural purposes  
233 is presently exempt from these requirements. Recreational trail development in Chippewa  
234 County meeting these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality  
235 (PUB-FR-093-95) to mitigate any adverse impacts. An erosion control plan will be prepared  
236 for each project depicting the location of the project and surrounding wetlands and what  
237 erosion control measures will be employed.  
238

239 Note: Best management practices for water quality, as they relate to trail construction and  
240 maintenance, are currently being refined and revised along with technical standards for trail  
241 construction. Once completed, a copy of the standards will be kept in the Forest and Parks  
242 Administrator's office.  
243

244 **725 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS**

245 725.1 HIKING

246 725.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

247 All of the County Forest is open to hiking or foot travel, unless marked with signs closing an  
248 area.

249 725.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

250 Ice Age Trail

251 A portion of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail has been developed across Chippewa County  
252 Forest land. This portion of the trail has been developed and is operated and maintained  
253 under a land use agreement with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation Inc. and its Chippewa  
254 Moraine Chapter. See Chapter 900 for a copy of this agreement.

255  
256 This trail is part of a continuous trail system across Wisconsin, linking the units of the Ice Age  
257 National Scientific Reserve. The trail is primarily used for hiking, snowshoeing and cross  
258 country skiing.

259  
260 The long-term goal for the Ice Age Trail is that the trail be developed, managed and  
261 recognized as a premier hiking trail of national significance for its scenic and recreational  
262 qualities, and that it becomes part of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. All of the Ice Age Trail  
263 within the Chippewa County Forest has obtained certification from the National Park Service  
264 (NPS). Under this certification and the previously referenced land use agreement, the County  
265 and the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation agrees that the trail should be designed and  
266 maintained to follow the guidelines of the *Ice Age National Scenic Trail: A Handbook for  
267 Trail Design, Construction and Maintenance*. This handbook lays out the trail standards, as  
268 put forth by the NPS.

269  
270 The Ice Age Trail crosses the County Forest in Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 in the Town of  
271 Cleveland, Sections 31, 32, 33 & 36 in the Town of Birch Creek and Sections 26 & 35 in the  
272 Town of Sampson. The trail is both a National and State Scenic Trail and follows the end  
273 moraines of the most recent glacial period in Wisconsin. It is intended to provide a high  
274 quality, rustic walking experience across Wisconsin.

275  
276 Management practices in, and adjacent to, this designated trail will be designed to maintain  
277 the character of the landscape and minimize disruption to the trail and its users. The trail  
278 corridors are designated as a Zone B aesthetic management zone which is referenced in  
279 Chapter 500.

280  
281 Portions of the trail have been routed on old logging roads. This was done in the past  
282 because the trails already existed and minimized construction. They were also used in some  
283 cases because they may have gone past scenic or important glacial features. In addition,  
284 these roads are typically used only on a periodic basis and might not be used for a period of  
285 years, and were re-vegetated and easy to maintain. The county forest timber sale program  
286 occasionally impacts trail sections using these logging roads when the roads are again used  
287 for timber access. Use of the trail for logging must comply with any restrictions designated  
288 under the land use agreement. If the trail is located on a logging road which is actively used,  
289 appropriate signing will be installed by the County informing trail users of truck traffic and  
290 timber sale activities. To avoid user conflict and safety concerns it may be necessary to  
291 temporarily re-route the trail. Re-routing the trail requires substantial work by volunteers  
292 associated with the trail and tends to be confusing to the public and is, therefore, used as a  
293 last resort.

294  
295 Trees and signing identifying the trail will be maintained and protected by inclusions into  
296 timber sale contracts. In order to avoid confusion with trail users, an effort will be made to  
297 avoid the use of medium blue and yellow paint on projects immediately adjacent to the Ice  
298 Age Trail. Yellow (Ice Age Trail) is the standard color for designating this trail. Trails bisecting  
299 timber sales will be cleared of trees and logging debris daily.

300 725.2 BICYCLING

301 725.2.1 Undesignated Bicycle Trails

302 If not gated or posted to prohibit travel, all trails, roads and fire lanes are open for recreational  
303 bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use may be restricted in a specific area if use causes  
304 erosion or other environmental damages.

305

306 725.2.2 Designated Bicycle Trails

307 Old Abe State Trail

308

309 The Old Abe State Trail is a cooperative effort between the State of Wisconsin and  
310 Chippewa County. This paved 19.5 mile trail connects Lake Wissota State Park in  
311 Chippewa Falls and Brunet Island State Park in Cornell. The trail is an abandoned railroad  
312 grade and has been developed into a trail for bicyclists, snowmobiles, hikers, horse back  
313 riders and in-line skaters. The trail winds through agricultural and forest land while following  
314 the undeveloped shoreline of the Chippewa River. The trail is operated under a  
315 memorandum of use agreement between the County and the Department of Natural  
316 Resources, and is located outside the boundaries of the county forest.

317

318 Hickory Ridge Bike Trail

319

320 A short mountain bike trail system has been developed as a trial basis trail system, in the  
321 area near the Hickory Ridge Cross Country Ski Trail. Local bicycle enthusiasts developed  
322 the trail. The trail is being evaluated for potential erosion problems and user demand. The  
323 trail may be expanded if erosion is not a significant problem and there aren't any user  
324 conflicts with the nearby ski and horse trails.

325

326

327 725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING

328 725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

329 There are no undesignated trails for horseback riding in the County Forest. All horseback  
330 riding is restricted to designated trails only.

331

332

333 725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

334 In the County Forest, the Hay Meadow Horse Trail provides 22 miles of designated horseback  
335 riding trail with several loop trails. The Chippewa Valley Trail Riders, a local horseback riding  
336 organization, has been a key force in locating, developing and maintaining portions of the trail.  
337 A map of the horse trail can be found in Chapter 900.

338

339 Outside the County Forest, the Old Abe Horse Trail, which parallels the Old Abe State Trail  
340 from 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Jim Falls, provides approximately 5.5 miles of trail. There are parking  
341 areas at both ends of the trail.

342 725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

343 725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

344 All trails on county forestland, except snowmobile trails, are open for cross-country skiing.  
345 Cross-country skiing on groomed snowmobile trails is not permitted due to safety concerns.

346

347 725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

348 There are two trails maintained and groomed for cross country skiing in the Chippewa County  
349 Forest. The Friends of Hickory Ridge Trail have agreed to maintain and groom the 8.8 mile  
350 Hickory Ridge Ski Trail system. These duties include: trail surfacing, track setting, bathroom  
351 cleaning, litter removal from parking lots and sign placement as required to maintain a safe  
352 skiing experience. The Friends of Hickory Ridge Trail were granted permission to collect trail  
353 donations to be used for maintenance purposes.

354  
355 The River Road Cross Country Ski Trail is located 2.5 miles north of Cornell and adjacent to  
356 the Chippewa River. The trail is groomed and maintained for public use by Chippewa County,  
357 and is approximately 4 miles long.  
358

359 It is the goal of the Forest and Parks Committee to offer both ski-skating and traditional Nordic  
360 skiing opportunities. Where feasible, attempts will be made to have local ski enthusiasts or  
361 organizations do winter grooming and maintenance of ski trails. A map of the ski trails can be  
362 found in Chapter 900.

363 **725.5 OTHER NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL USE**

364 Other non-motorized recreational trail uses including but not limited to, snowshoeing, dog  
365 sledding (except on groomed cross country ski trails), hiking, and hunting on foot are  
366 permitted on all trails except where otherwise posted as closed.

367 **730 MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL TRAILS**

368 The use of motorized vehicles on the County Forest continues to increase. The design,  
369 maneuverability, and power of the vehicles have improved. ATV use in particular, has grown in  
370 popularity. The growing number of users has increased the need and expense for trail maintenance.  
371 It's important that with the increasing numbers, that users stay on designated trails that are designed  
372 and maintained to minimize user conflicts and avoid unnecessary environmental damage.  
373

374 **730.1 SNOWMOBILING**

375 **730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails**

376 No cross-country use of snowmobiles is permitted. Snowmobile use is permitted when the  
377 ground is snow-covered, on all primary, secondary and temporary roads, except where posted  
378 as closed. The Hickory Ridge and River Road Cross Country Ski Trails are closed to  
379 snowmobiles. Snowmobiling is not allowed on any county authorized snowmobile trails when  
380 trails are closed for use or contrary to posted notice. Use on the Forest during other times of  
381 the year is not allowed.  
382

383 **730.1.2 Designated Snowmobile Trails**

384 It is the policy of the Forest and Parks Committee to provide some opportunity for  
385 snowmobiling on the Chippewa County Forest. The Forest and Parks Department will  
386 coordinate the county-wide snowmobile trail program under s 23.09(11) and (26) of the  
387 Wisconsin Statutes, Natural Resources Code NR 50.09 and the Chippewa County Park and  
388 Recreation Ordinance. A maintenance program, now in place, utilizes cost-sharing funds from  
389 the Department of Natural Resources.  
390

391 Chippewa County applies annually for state funding for the operation and maintenance of a  
392 countywide snowmobile trail system. There are approximately 13 miles of the state funded  
393 snowmobile trail located within the County Forest, which represents only a small portion of the  
394 overall countywide trail system. The County has a maintenance agreement with the  
395 Chippewa Valley Snowmobile Organization, outlining the operation, maintenance, and  
396 insurance obligations between the County and the Snowmobile Organization. The  
397 Snowmobile Organization is a non-profit organization that represents the various snowmobile  
398 clubs within the County. Within the County Forest, the Snowmobile Organization does the  
399 winter trail grooming and signing and the County does the summer maintenance. Refer to  
400 Chapter 900 for a copy of the trail maintenance agreement.  
401

402  
403 The County trail system is a part of the statewide network of snowmobile trails which link  
404 Chippewa County with adjoining counties as well as the rest of the state. Snowmobile  
405 registrations, gas tax, and out of state user fees are used to support trail development,  
406 signing, maintenance, grooming, and bridge construction.  
407

408 All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks during the snowmobile season,  
409 except segments of snowmobile trails affected by the frozen-ground motorized vehicle access  
410 authorized under Section 710.2.1 and unless vehicle use is authorized by Chippewa County.

411 The trails may be used for logging access when necessary and are subject to restrictions on  
412 use and restoration as designated by the County Forest and Parks Administrator or designee.  
413 When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free  
414 from debris and equipment, and with a minimum of 3 inches of snow-pack. Trail width shall  
415 not exceed 16 feet.

416  
417 DNR's Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and  
418 will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the county. Only trail signs that  
419 provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private and  
420 business signs are not authorized on the Forest. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden,  
421 metal, or flexible plastic posts.

422  
423 The snowmobile trails will be closed and gated during the off-season to minimize summer  
424 maintenance, unless the trail is used for some other authorized purpose. A portion of the  
425 snowmobile trail is used for an ATV trail during the summer and any maintenance expense  
426 incurred from ATV use is paid for from ATV maintenance funds received from the State DNR.

427  
428 There are currently no club sponsored trails on county forest land. Club sponsored trails  
429 would be considered by the Committee, on a case-by-case basis, if requested. If a club trail is  
430 approved, an agreement would be required, outlining the operation, maintenance and  
431 insurance obligations between Chippewa County and the local snowmobile club.

## 432 730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

### 433 730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

434 There are no undesignated ATV trails on the County Forest. ATV use is permitted only on  
435 designated trails and operation by holders of a special use permit for such purposes as  
436 disabled access.

### 437 438 439 440 730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

441  
442 It is the policy of the Forest and Parks Committee to provide some opportunity for ATV  
443 recreation on the Chippewa County Forest. More than 19 miles of ATV trails wind and loop  
444 through portions of the County Forest. There are 2 convenient parking areas located on each  
445 end of the trail system. ATV's may only operate on designated ATV trails and routes. The  
446 trails may be used for logging access when necessary and are subject to restrictions on use  
447 and restoration as designated by the County Forest Administrator or his designee.

448  
449 These trails are open to ATV riding from May 1<sup>st</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, except in the  
450 case of emergencies, when the County may close and gate the trails. The ATV trail is also  
451 open after hunting hours during the gun deer season for retrieving a deer carcass. It is the  
452 intent of the County to consider changes to the County Code of Ordinances that may expand  
453 the opportunity for game retrieval using an ATV.

454  
455 ATV registration, out-of-state user fees and the gas tax formula are used to support trail  
456 development, signing, maintenance and bridge construction.

457  
458 Public ATV trail systems that utilize private lands have not materialized in the way that  
459 snowmobile trails have. It is widely recognized that the vast majority of public ATV trails have  
460 evolved on public lands and that the majority of future trail development will be limited to public  
461 land.

462  
463 Organized user groups, county residents, and tourists have expressed their desires that the  
464 existing ATV trail be expanded to provide a "loop" that would allow riders to begin and end at a  
465 parking area/trailhead with limited "backtracking". It has been suggested that increasing the  
466 extent of ATV trail by creating a 'loop' from the County Highway M parking area/trailhead will  
467 benefit tourism in the County, especially the Lake Holcombe Service Area.

468

469 Chippewa County will pursue expansion of the County Forest ATV Trail to connect the County  
470 Highway M parking area/trailhead with the Deer Fly Trail utilizing County Forest lands that are  
471 south of County Highway M, subject to the following conditions:

- 472 1. The Chippewa Valley ATV Council, or a similar organization, must formally commit  
473 through written agreement with the County to provide ongoing, long-term  
474 maintenance as required for the County to maintain Sustainable Forestry Certification  
475 and meet all applicable regulations and grant requirements.
- 476 2. The County must receive confirmation of funding adequate for initial trail development  
477 and long-term maintenance.
- 478 3. The Towns of Birch Creek and Cleveland must be consulted and reasonable efforts  
479 to mitigate their concerns shall be made.
- 480 4. Any trail expansion will result in a "loop" and not additional "out-and-back" trail.
- 481 5. Conditions for "Conversion of Existing Trails To An Alternative Trail Use" as defined in  
482 Section 510.8 shall be met.

483 For the specific location of this trail, please see the "Chippewa County ATV Trail" map in  
484 Chapter 900.

### 485 730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

#### 486 730.3.1 Undesignated

487 Other motorized recreational use of the County Forest is prohibited on trails that are blocked  
488 with rock, bermed, gated or signed as closed. Due to concerns of erosion and per county  
489 code, motorcycles are not allowed on county forestland except registered motor vehicles on  
490 designated gas tax roads.

## 491 735 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

492 In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest and Parks Committee may also  
493 provide and designate areas where motorized equipment is not permitted unless authorized. The  
494 principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect  
495 historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety  
496 and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. Cross country use of the forest for motorized use is  
497 prohibited. The Committee may consider and designate restricted access areas on the Chippewa  
498 County Forest.

## 499 740 WATER ACCESS

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

506 Existing water access points will be maintained to provide for launch of small fishing boat or canoe.  
507 Not all watercraft will be able to use these access points. These landings are built for public use and  
508 not for private boat mooring sites. Mooring or storing boats for longer than 24 hours is prohibited.  
509

### 510 740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY CHIPPEWA COUNTY ON THE FOREST

511 These public boat access sites developed on the Chippewa County Forest are open to public  
512 use:

- 513 1. Bass Lake # 2 (T31N-R8W, Sections 1 & 2)
- 514 2. Bass Lake # 3 (T31N-R8W, Section 3)
- 515 3. Hay Meadow Flowage # 1
- 516 4. Horseshoe Lake (T32N-R8W, Section 33)
- 517 5. Knickerbocker Lake

- 518 6. Otter Lake (Otter Lake Park) – two landing, one at Otter Lake Park and one on the east side
- 519 of the Lake
- 520 7. Town Line Lake
- 521 8. Round Lake

522 **740.2 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS**

523 Other undeveloped water access points for canoes and boats currently exist on the County  
 524 Forest. These are used routinely to hand launch car-top boats or canoes but have not been  
 525 developed for boat trailer launching. These sites are not routinely maintained and may be  
 526 closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be  
 527 reviewed and approved by the Forest and Parks Committee.  
 528

529 **745 WILD LAKES**

530 The surface waters encompassed under the “wild lakes designation” include those restricted use  
 531 areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, watercraft or snowmobiles except when  
 532 snow covered. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes and streams are owned by  
 533 Chippewa County. Under the authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., Chippewa County may request  
 534 that Townships establish regulations restricting motorized use on waters that are designated Wild  
 535 Lakes. The intent of these restrictions is to protect aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow  
 536 human access. Currently, no lakes in the County Forest are designated “wild lakes”.

537 **750 WETLANDS**

538 In addition to surface waters, all wetlands on the Forest are closed to motorized recreational vehicle  
 539 use when soils are not frozen. Vehicle use during non-frozen seasons causes soil rutting,  
 540 compaction, and damage to vegetation. The wetlands are not listed individually here but include all  
 541 areas where soils, groundwater or surface waters support the growth of vegetation commonly  
 542 associated with wetland plant communities.

543 **755 ACCESS TO PRIVATE LANDS**

544 Applications by private parties to build or improve access roads through County Forest land will be  
 545 considered by the Forest and Parks Committee on a case-by-case basis. As a general policy, the  
 546 Committee will not provide permission to develop a new road across County lands for private access  
 547 unless it is mutually beneficial to the County. In general, the granting of access permits across  
 548 County Forest land will be discouraged, particularly if other feasible access to private lands exist. The  
 549 following stipulations will be adhered to before an "Access Permit" is granted.  
 550

- 551 A. Access across County Forest lands must be demonstrated by the applicant as the route of
- 552 last resort. Proposed uses must be documented by the applicant.
- 553 B. No legal easement will be granted, just permission to cross County Lands.
- 554 C. Permit is non-transferable. New landowners must apply to continue the land use agreement.
- 555 D. Access improvements and upgrading must be approved and will be supervised by the Forest
- 556 and Parks staff. Prior notification of three (3) days is required before work starts.
- 557 E. All wood cut from County Forestland is the property of Chippewa County.
- 558 F. Access must be open to the public and no gate may be erected on County Land.
- 559 G. The County continues full ownership of the improved access; however, it shall not be liable
- 560 for maintenance or upkeep of the access.
- 561 H. Permittee waives any rights to any declaration of ownership or interest in the access on
- 562 County Land as a result of this "Access Permit". The access permit is granted upon the
- 563 signature and any fees being charged by Chippewa County Forest and Parks Department.
- 564 I. A fee may be charged for an access permit.
- 565 J. The access permit may be canceled at anytime by giving reasonable written notice by the
- 566 County to the Permittee.
- 567 K. The County retains the right to use the access way at any time for any use and is under no
- 568 obligation to repair or maintain the access way.

- 569 L. The permittee agrees to reimburse the County for any unauthorized property damage.
- 570 M. Standard Land Use Agreement Access permit is included as an exhibit in Chapter 900.

571 **760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS**

572 Access of the County Forest for utilities is covered under Chapter 500 Public Utilities.

573 **765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY**

574 The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to  
575 *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access  
576 management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County  
577 Forest. Chapter 6 of the BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance  
578 activities in these areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the  
579 Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-95 and in Chapter 500.3.8 (Soil Disturbance).  
580 Wider buffers, sediment control structures, and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate  
581 in these sensitive areas.

582 **770 SIGNS**

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

587 A. INFORMATIONAL TYPE SIGNS

- 588 1. Interpretive Signs - to educate the public about forest management practices.
- 589 2. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Chippewa County Forest Property.
- 590 3. Trail Markers - to provide direction and safety to trail users.
- 591 4. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers - to identify points of interest.
- 592 5. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.
- 593 6. Directional Markers.

594 B. REGULATORY TYPE SIGNS - REGULATE THE USE OF THE FOREST IN SPECIFIC AREAS.

595 770.1 SIGNING STANDARDS

596 To ensure signs will serve a purpose without damaging aesthetics, the following standards will  
597 be maintained:

- 598 1. All signs will be mounted on treated wood posts, Carsonite type posts, or steel posts. NO  
599 signs will be nailed to living trees.
- 600 2. Routed wood signs will be used wherever practical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when  
601 used, will be of neat appearance.
- 602 3. Signs placed on snowmobile and ATV trails must conform to state standards.
- 603 4. All authorized signs shall be protected by ordinance from being damaged, defaced,  
604 obstructed, removed, or possessed by unauthorized persons.
- 605 5. Forest and Parks staff shall remove all unauthorized signs erected by private parties on the  
606 Forest. No compensation will be afforded for loss or damage to signs during removal.  
607 Individuals erecting unauthorized signs may be prosecuted under s. 943.13(3), Wis. Stats.

**Map 925.14 Permanent Secondary Road within the County Forest in the Town of Birch Creek  
Open To Motorized Vehicle Use During Frozen Ground Conditions (February 2018)**

