COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 700

ROADS AND ACCESS

Section	Subject	Page
700	**ACCESS CONTROL & HISTORY**	2
705	**CHAPTER OBJECTIVES**	3
710	**ROADS**	4
	710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS	4
	710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY FOREST ROADS	6
	710.2.1 Permanent Secondary Forest Road Additions	6
	710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS	7
	710.4 STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS	7
	710.4.1 State Highways	7
	710.4.2 County Highways	7
	710.4.3 Town Roads	7
	710.5 UTILITIES	8
	710.6 CULVERTS	8
715	**RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS**	8
720	**WILD LAKES**	9
725	**ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY**	9
730	**SIGNS**	9
	730.1 SIGNING STANDARDS	9

700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management, protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Marathon County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is large and diverse, a broad network of access opportunities have 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 Forest.

During the 1970's, Marathon County created a policy to gate or berm most roads and trails intersecting with Town, County or State roads. The policy was to prohibit vehicular traffic except on designated trails and to prevent resource damage. About the same time, the County designated snowmobile trails using existing logging roads and opened gates in the winter for this recreational pursuit. In the late 1980's, the County also designated 14 miles of ATV trails in the Burma Forest Unit. Some of the trails were closed to ATV's because they were located in lowland areas to prevent resource damage. Currently, about 11 miles of trails are designated for ATV use. During the last three planning processes, 1986-1995, 1996-2005, and 2006-2020 there was overwhelming support by County residents to continue this gating and designated trail policy.

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 use of Forest roads and trails on the Forest has increased in response to an expanding number of recreational activities 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 have reached the point where an integrated access management plan is needed.

LIST OF PROBLEM AREAS AND REASONS FOR ACCESS PLANNING

User conflict between groups: Example, hunting on foot versus use of ATV's for disabled hunting.

Safety: Example, 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.

Litter: Depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.

Over-utilization of a resource: Example, reduced availability of trophy-sized deer, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, etc.

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

Fires: Example, increased exposure of the resource to forest fire occurrence.

Endangered species management: Example, high road densities conflict with eagle and osprey nest disturbance.

Invasive species: Example, introduction of invasive exotic species along travel routes.

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

Road placement: Example, some roads should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

Clear and concise policy for the public.

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

Marathon County Parks and 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 or private contractors working under contract. 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 information identifying 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 forest hydrologists to develop site-specific measures where appropriate and to follow all required permitting processes when applicable.

The forest should have enough roads to provide sufficient access, without degrading water resources, while still maintaining recreational experiences. Program evaluation of road infrastructure will continuously occur.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS (County 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 as essential access corridors for multiple use management. 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, safety reasons, to accommodate a groomed snowmobile trail or recreational events. Closing of these roads will be for the shortest possible time due to the law requiring that they be open to the public.

Forest roads in this category qualify for the County Forest Road Aids program. Qualifying roads in this program must meet minimum design standards set by WI Statute Section 86.315 (4) (a) and 86.315 (3) and administered by WI DOT. 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.

MARATHON COUNTY CURRENT AND FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Guenther	Sec. 11, T26N-R8E	.77	County Forest 505 Road
Guenther	Sec. 12, 13, T26N-R8E	.18	County Forest 510 Road
Harrison	Sec. 4, T30N-R10E	.81	County Forest 112 Road
Harrison	Sec. 7, T30N-R10E	.13	County Forest 105 Road
Harrison	Sec. 31, T30N-R10E	.30	County Forest 202 Road
Hewitt	Sec. 1, 2, T30N-R10E	.50	County Forest 101 Road
Hewitt	Sec. 12, T30N-R9E	.13	County Forest 105 Road
Hewitt	Sec. 36, T30N-R9E	.30	County Forest 202 Road
Marathon	Sec. 36, T28N-R6E	.51	County Forest 702 Road
Reid	Sec. 6, T27N-R9E	.13	County Forest 303 Road
Rib Mountain	Sec. 29, 30, 32, 33, T28N-R7E	2.60	County Forest 707 Road
Ringle	Sec. 31, T28N-R9E	.12	County Forest 303 Road
TOTALS		6.48	

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

Maintenance on primary forest roads receiving County Forest road aid payments will include a monitoring program, which will ensure that Best Management Practices for Water Quality (BMPs) are providing adequate environmental protection, and drainage structures are in proper working condition. Such monitoring will be ongoing, at regular intervals as needed. Road segments with more intensive use will be identified and examined more frequently to verify that water quality protection structures have not been degraded. Monitoring results will be documented and will be used to assist with locating portions of road that have more recurrent repair needs. Restoration of failing structures will be done in a timely manner to assure that BMP standards are being upheld.

The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) will continue to pursue additional funding for maintenance on primary forest roads receiving road aid payments. County forest management is met with the current primary forest road system. No additional permanent primary roads are needed at this time.

During certain times, primarily spring break up, the Parks and Forestry Department may post roads as Class B to limit damage. County Forest 707 Road in the Town of Rib Mountain will be the only permanent primary road snowplowed. All other permanent primary roads lead in to forest parking areas and will not be snowplowed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. The map of the permanent primary forest roads is located in the appendix.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY FOREST ROADS

Secondary roads are maintained for three season access (summer, fall, winter) to accomplish forest management, wildlife management, fire protection, and provide 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. The roads will be blocked, gated, and/or signed. All secondary roads are closed to public motorized use except by permit or as otherwise designated by the Committee. The map of the permanent secondary roads is in the appendix.

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.

710.2.1 Permanent Secondary Forest Road Additions

New access roads will be evaluated by the Forest Administrator before being classified as a permanent secondary road. Consideration will be given to distribution by geographic unit, road density, and need as it relates to potential use, and available funding for long-term road maintenance. In the interest of resource protection, all access roads which are not needed may be bermed or blocked to restrict all but non-motorized traffic.

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. In some cases, roads are completely closed with slash and debris to prevent future use and to encourage natural regeneration of trees.

Temporary roads on existing and past sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will include protection of perpetually wet soils, 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.

710.4 STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS

710.4.1 State Highways

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) requires permits for permanent and temporary driveways on State highways. The County will track and retain permit records and work with local DOT officials for access.

710.4.2 County Highways

Driveway permits are issued by officials of the Marathon County Highway Department and are required for all access onto a County highway. New roads that intersect County highways must have the intersections approved by the Highway Department prior to construction and cleared of all unsightly debris at the time of construction. The contractor is responsible to apply, pay all fees and obtain all approvals. The contractor also agrees to fully comply with all terms and conditions of intersection approvals.

710.4.3 Town Roads

Driveway permits are issued by officials of the Towns and may be required for access onto a Town road. New roads that intersect Town roads must have the intersections approved by the Town prior to construction and cleared of all unsightly debris at the time of construction. The contractor is responsible to apply, pay all fees and obtain all approvals. The Contractor also agrees to fully comply with all terms and conditions of intersection approvals.

710.5 UTILITIES

In 2004 Marathon County and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation entered into a utility construction and maintenance agreement for the Arrowhead to Weston Transmission Line Project. As part of this agreement a perpetual easement and Right-Of-Way for the erection, maintenance and operation of a high voltage powerline was also modified to allow electric utility operations across Nine Mile County Forest. Additionally, there are numerous other transmission line easements that allow for high voltage transmission lines to cross County Forest lands. An easement in Nine Mile Forest for an underground pipeline that allows the transportation of liquids, gasses and/or solids was signed with Williams Pipe Line Company in 1967. See Chapter 500, Section 520.5 for policy on public utilities.

710.6 CULVERTS

In many cases culverts are needed in all three classifications of roads that are on the County Forest when dealing with drainages, wetlands and stream crossings. Some of these are temporarily placed culverts that are used during a specific project then removed, while others are permanent structures.

In all instances, culverts should be placed according to required DNR permitting procedures and will follow BMP's for culverts that can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of the WI BMP's for Water Quality PUB FR-093 2010.

Routine maintenance of these structures should also be completed to make sure structures are adequately working. The County may want to consider documenting the location of culverts on the forest and provide a list of the culverts that should be routinely checked.

715 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. There are currently no restricted access areas on the Marathon County Forest.

720 WILD LAKES

There are no wild lakes on the Marathon County Forest.

725 ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY

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 2010). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. The BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in highly erodible soil areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093 2010. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas. Best Management Practices will be followed on all projects or activities that occur on County Forest lands.

730 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 Marathon 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 Marathon 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.

730.1 SIGNING 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, carbide posts, or steel backed wooden posts. NO signs will be nailed or fixed in any other way to living trees.
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/ATV/UTV 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 Parks and 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.