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**700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY**

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

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 have reached the point where an integrated access management plan is needed.

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.

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 game, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, overharvest 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.

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 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. Develop the provisions and criteria that will be policy when addressing management issues on the County Forest.

## **710 ROADS**

Jackson County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest (except roads owned and maintained by other units of government). 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 will 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.

No additional construction of Permanent Primary Roads is expected on the County Forest.

## JACKSON COUNTY CURRENT AND FUTURE WDOT CERTIFIED

TOWNSHIP	SECTION	LENGTH (MI)	ROAD NAME/COMMENTS
Brockway	27,34,35, 36	4.2	Bell Mound Road
City Point (T22N-R1E)	2,3,4,5	3.9	North Knutes Road

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 road 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 during periods of weather and/or temperature where roads are subject to damage from vehicular travel.

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.

Jackson County will attempt to improve the condition of permanent secondary roads where feasible.

New permanent secondary roads shall be evaluated by the administrator before being classified as a road for general public vehicular use or other recreational use. In the interest of resource protection, all timber access trails which are not needed for continuous access

shall be bunkered or blocked to restrict all but foot traffic.

### 710.3 TEMPORARY ROADS

Many of the roads on the Forest fall into this classification. Temporary 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. 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. Existing roads and trails will be used whenever practical for management activities to minimize disturbance.

### 720 RECREATIONAL TRAIL ACCESS

This trail network provides public access for 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 and where practical, buffer strips a minimum of 1 chain (66') will be left to maintain safe visibility for trail users, preserve the aesthetic value, and maintain snow cover during winter months. Exceptions to buffer strips will be made on a case by case basis, and the final decision will be made by the Forest Administrator and County Trail Coordinator. Trail alterations can be made to accommodate the recreational use. The

Committee has the authority to open, close or relocate trails. Recreational maps for the trails

listed below are in Chapter 900

ATV Trail Map

Snowmobile Trail Map

## 720.1 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Requests for expansion, improvement or development of recreational trails will receive individual Committee review. Groups or individuals requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long term funding and maintenance of proposed trails. All new or modified trails shall be subject to inspection by the Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department and will be subject to modification or closure at the sole discretion of the Forestry and Parks Committee. Organized trail uses and group-sponsored activities must protect Jackson County with \$1,000,000.00 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage if any work is done by the clubs/groups on County owned lands. Volunteer forms will be filled out by each club/group member if a formal agreement is not executed between Jackson County and the organized club/group.

Construction 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 Jackson 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

#### 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

Jackson County manages approximately 5 miles of marked hiking and mountain bike trails at the Wazee Lake Recreation Area. These trails were constructed in 1991 through a cooperative effort with the Wisconsin Conservation Corps. The trails are maintained by County Forestry and Parks staff.

### 725.2 BICYCLING

#### 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 Wazee Lake Recreation Area has approximately 3 miles of marked and seal coated bicycle trails. Trails are maintained by Jackson County Forestry and Parks Staff.

### 725.3 HORSEBACK RIDING

#### 725.3.1 Undesignated Horseback Riding Trails

All roads, fire lanes, logging roads and recreational trails located on the County Forest (excluding private inholdings) are open for horseback riding unless otherwise posted closed.

#### 725.3.2 Designated Horseback Riding Trails

Jackson County currently has no designated horseback riding trails. The Black River State Forest currently manages a system of horse trails and associated camping areas that adequately addresses the demand for horseback opportunities in the area.

## 725.4 CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

### 725.4.1 Undesignated Cross-Country Ski Trails

All roads and trails are open to cross-country skiing unless otherwise posted as closed for such use.

### 725.4.2 Designated Cross-Country Ski Trails

Jackson County does not currently have any designated cross-country ski trails. This would not preclude the development and maintenance of cross-country ski trails if the demand for such activity and the economics of constructing and maintaining a trail system would be in the best interest of Jackson County.

## 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 use of motorized vehicles on the Forest continues to increase. The design, maneuverability, and power of the vehicles have improved. This has led to greater use including 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 SNOWMOBILING

#### 730.1.1 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

No cross-country use is permitted; however, snowmobile use is permitted on all logging roads, and fire lanes when the ground is snow-covered unless otherwise posted closed. Use on the Forest during other times of the year is not allowed.

#### 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 Jackson County and local snowmobile clubs. All clubs are required to maintain \$1,000,000.00 liability coverage on their respective sections of trail.

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 Jackson 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 may be supported by club membership fees and fund raising activities.

All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to all cars and trucks unless vehicle use is authorized by Jackson County. When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free from debris and equipment, and with a minimum of 3 inches of snowpack. Appropriate signage will be installed by Jackson County staff to warn trail users of vehicles using the trail.

Jackson County snowmobile trails are open from December 15 through March 15 annually depending upon snow cover. Jackson County will consider extensions of these dates depending upon trail conditions. Trails are subject to discretionary closure at any time to protect the integrity of the trail and to ensure public safety.

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 mounted on wooden, metal, fiberglass or composite posts.

## 730.2 ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES (ATV)

### 730.2.1 Undesignated ATV Trails

ATV's and off-road motorcycles are allowed only on designated trails during the period when trails are posted open to such use.

### 730.2.2 Designated ATV Trails

State trails: A system of state approved and funded ATV trails is authorized on designated trails. ATV registration, out-of-state user fees, County Motorcycle use stickers and other County fees as approved by the Jackson County Forestry and Parks Committee may be used to support trail development, signing, maintenance, grooming, bridge construction and repair of areas damaged by illegal off-trail activity.

Jackson County currently has 65.5 miles of ATV/off-road motorcycle trails that connect with Black River State Forest trails. Maintenance of the ATV/motorcycle trails is conducted primarily by Jackson County staff. Jackson County may enter into contracts with local clubs and organizations for the grooming, brushing, signing and maintenance of these trails.

All groomed ATV/off-road motorcycle trails are closed to all cars and trucks unless vehicle use is authorized by Jackson County. When vehicle use is authorized, contractors must maintain the trail in a safe condition, free from debris and equipment, and with a minimum of 3 inches of snowpack during the period when snow is present. Appropriate signage will be installed by Jackson County staff to warn trail users of vehicles using the trail.

ATV/off-road motorcycle trails are open from May 15 through October 15 and from December 15 through March 15 annually. Closure of the trails during certain periods of the year allows for major repair and rehabilitation, provides for grading prior to winter freeze

down, protects the trail during spring “break-up” and reduces conflicts with other uses of the forest (i.e. hunting). These closures are critical to the safety of trail users and persons involved with the regular maintenance of the trail. Trails are subject to discretionary closure at any time to protect the integrity of the trail and to ensure public safety.

### 730.3 OTHER MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE TRAILS

#### 730.3.1 Undesignated

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, signed or otherwise blocked. Cross-country use of the forest for motorized use is also prohibited. All vehicles using the County Forest must be registered for use on public roadways.

#### 730.3.2 Designated

The Forest will be closed to motorcycle use except on designated trails. State funds may be available to support trail maintenance. The Forestry Committee may enter into agreements with clubs or organizations for the responsibility of signing and maintenance of these trails. This trail network may involve a combination of both public and private lands

### 730.4 DISABLED ACCESS

Jackson County provides a permit system designed to help people who need physical or mechanical assistance for mobility. The permit system allows for the use of an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV), or other motorized vehicle, in specific areas by those persons with either a Class A or Class C Disability Permit. The standard Jackson County Disabled Access Permit is included as an exhibit in Chapter 915.7. Permit conditions include:

1. Permits will be issued only to Class A or Class C permit holders
2. Class B permits will be considered on a case-by-case basis

3. Permits are valid for one year from date of issuance
4. Permits are non-transferable
5. Only roads and trails which are open to the public will be considered for access under the permit. Areas which are normally closed to vehicular travel (i.e closed recreational trails, gated, bermed or posted areas may NOT be used by permit holders).
6. No Cross-Country use of a motor vehicle is permitted
7. Permits are valid for properties owned by Jackson County
8. All other State and Federal Laws apply to permit holders
9. Jackson County reserves the right to re-assign permit areas if excessive damage is occurring to areas from use by permittee

#### **740 WATER ACCESS**

As a result of the wide distribution of lakes, 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, canoe landings, and adjacent roads currently provide water access on the Forest 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, unless separate facilities are provided for such use.

The following public boat access sites have been developed on the Jackson County Forest and are open to public use:

##### **740.1 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY JACKSON COUNTY FOREST**

1. East Arbutus County Park

2. Wazee Lake Recreation Area
3. West Arbutus County Park
4. Merlin Lambert County Park

#### 740.2 PUBLIC BOAT ACCESS SITES MAINTAINED BY TOWNS

There are currently no boat launches located in the boundaries of the County Forest that are maintained by local Townships.

#### 740.3 UNDEVELOPED WATER ACCESS POINTS

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

The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those restricted use areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, water craft, or snowmobiles except when snow covered. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes and streams are owned by Jackson County. Counties may request that townships, under authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., establish regulations restricting motorized use on these surface waters. Canoes, kayaks, and boats propelled by wind, oars, or electric motors are permitted. Gasoline or diesel powered equipment is not permitted. The intent of these restrictions is to protect the aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow access. On Jackson County Forest Wazee Lake is designated as a “Wild Lake”:

#### 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 PRIVATE LAND ACCESS**

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 standard Land Use Agreement Access permit is included as an exhibit in Chapter 900-17.

**760 PUBLIC UTILITY ACCESS**

Access of the County Forest for utility reasons is covered in Chapter 515.5, Special Uses.

**765 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP)**

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 plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. Road construction guidelines are found in the BMP Manual. Areas with highly erodible soil types, close proximity to streams or lakes, or steep slopes 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 Jackson County. Signs erected by the county for management purposes or by non-profit

recreational trail groups will be as follows:

1. Informational Signs
  - A. Interpretive Signs - to educate the general public about forest management practices.
  - B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Jackson 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.
  - G. Emergency Trail Markers
2. Regulatory Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

#### 770.1 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, steel backed wooden posts, fiberglass, composite or steel posts as determined by the department.
2. Routed wood signs will be used wherever practical and economical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when used, will be of neat appearance.
3. Signs placed on snowmobile trails must conform to state standards and “special” signs placed on County lands must 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.

