



WORVPI Response to Proposed Amendments

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

The following responses were provided to the Forest County Forestry & Recreation Committee, MRA Park Sub-Committee of December 9, 2014.

FOREST COUNTY
15 YEAR COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
AMENDMENTS 2014

-DEFINITIONS-

Delete all text in **red**.

Add all text in **green**.

Changes will be made to text in **blue**.

“Standard” Changes are regular plan updates.

“MRA Park” changes are new, proposed changes to accommodate a proposed MRA Park.

WORVPI Responses in **Golden Rod**.

Page 100-6 Paragraph 125.3 Standard

Only one town – the The Town of Lincoln – kept its land in **the** County Forest Program **the longest**. From 1935 to the present the area has been very stable. Four times since then, in 1942, 1950, 1959 and 1974, entries have been made; and three times in 1936, 1945 and 1950 small withdrawals have been made for higher use. **The County now has a forest totaling 10848.39 acres.** **The Town of Crandon added 1,031 acres in 2014.** **The Town of Nashville added an additional 1,065.27 acres in 2014.** **The County now has a forest totaling 13,643.04 acres.**

In 1963, several major revisions were made to the County Forest Law. The most notable change to the law was to create a permanent program of forests that would be managed in accordance with a 15 Year Comprehensive Land use Plan developed by the County with the assistance of the Department of Natural Resources.

Page 100-7 Paragraph 130.1.3 Standard

Forest County is the twelfth largest county in Wisconsin with a land area of approximately 642,460 acres, plus another 24,360 acres of water included in lakes and streams. Approximately ninety-seven percent of the land in the county is classified as forest land. The County Forest, which contains approximately 10,840 13,643.04 acres, is the twenty-seventh sixth largest County Forest in the state.

Page 100-8 Paragraph 130.1.5 Standard

Approximately 92% of the Forest County Forest land base is forested. Forested uplands are comprised of primarily mixed hardwood and aspen while fir-spruce and tamarack occupy the forested lowlands. The remainder is classified as non-forested, including types such as open water, wetlands, rights-of-way, grass openings, shrubs and bogs. The different cover types present on the Forest county Forest are detailed under “Forested Communities” in Chapter 800 (820.1).

All of the County forest acreage is located in one three civil townships, the Town of Lincoln, located in the south central part of the county. The Town of Crandon located in western Forest County, and the Town of Nashville in south western Forest County. A map can be found in Chapter 900.

Page 100-10 Paragraph 130.2.0 Standard

Forest-based recreation has expanded rapidly in recent years in Forest County. Recreational opportunities include a county park, beach, campground, boat landing, 398 405.79 miles of state funded snowmobile trails, 32 55.2 miles of state funded all-terrain, utility vehicle trails, hunter/walking trails and cross country ski trails. The county forest also provides tremendous opportunities for informal recreational pursuits not requiring developments. These include

hunting, fishing, berry and mushroom picking, bird watching, hiking, mountain biking and sight-seeing.

Page 100-12 Paragraph 130.2.5 © Standard

Wisconsin's forests are naturally changing due to forest succession. Most of the County Forest acreage statewide is a result of regeneration or planting from the early to mid 1900's. Mid to late successional northern hardwood forests are replacing the early successional aspen-birch, oak and jack pine forest of the 1940's through the 1970's. The aspen cover type is key habitat for many of the state's premier game species including deer, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. A declining harvest and a movement away from even-aged species on Wisconsin's National and State forests may place the responsibility of maintaining aspen, birch and jack pine types on the county forests. The county forest system currently has 15% of the State's public land base and 24% of the aspen resource.

Page 100-13 Paragraph 130.3 Standard

The County Forest is composed of 18 management compartments ranging in size from 350 acres to nearly 1300 acres. A map of these compartments can be found in Chapter 900.

Page 300-7 Paragraph 330 MRA Park

The following ordinances will be considered in all planning. Refer to Chapter 900 – Appendix for full text of these ordinances.

1. Forestry ordinance
2. Park ordinance
3. Zoning ordinance
4. Floodplain-Shoreland Zoning ordinance
5. Snowmobile ordinance
6. Non-metallic Mining ordinance
7. **ATV ordinance**
8. **MRA Park ordinance**

Page 500-18 Paragraph 510.2 MRA Park

1. Permits or use agreements for use of the County Forest may be issued by the Committee for recreational purposes.
2. No permits for sale of malt or intoxicating beverages will be issued on the County Forest.
3. Other types of special use permits are found in Section 515.
4. Permits will not be issued for cabin sites **or permanent structures** on the forest.
5. Organized events or special uses, other than informal recreation (see Sec. 510.4) require specific permission from the Committee **in advance of the event including user fees and insurance coverage for the event.**

Item #4 above is not acceptable. It restricts Park development and potentially greatly reduces projected Park revenues (and anticipated property tax relief). Structures included within the WORVPI proposal include buildings needed for operation, administration, general services as well as the potential for cabin rentals (research has identified this as a large revenue source).

Item #5 above greatly restricts operations and is too vague. This could easily be incorporated within an MOU between WORVPI & Forest County. Business decisions (especially those regarding fees and revenues) a most efficiently made by the corporate entity and not a third party.

Page 500-21 Paragraph 510.6 Standard

Whenever possible, multiple uses of the various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review **of and approval by** the Committee. Whenever possible, user conflicts are avoided. However, recreational users will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the Forest County Forest. The trail systems are identified in the Recreation map appended in Chapter 900 and referenced in Chapter 700.

Page 500-22 Paragraph 510.6.1 MRA Park

The Forest County Forest is a multiple use forest. Motorized travel on trails can be a legitimate use of this forest provided that these trails are designed and maintained in a manner that minimizes damage to the environment and reduces

user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. Trail use must be consistent with Statute 28.11, County policy as well as SFI and FSC Forest Certification. It shall be the policy of The Forestry Committee to will consider opportunities for the following motorized trail use:

1. Snowmobiles
2. All-terrain vehicles (ATV's) (ATV's and UTV's)
3. MRA Park

Refer to Chapter 700 for further discussion on motorized recreation opportunities on the Forest County Forest.

Definition of an MRA Park should be incorporated into document. No need to stipulate and limit trail use to a specific state statute. Reference "compliance with Wisconsin State Statutes and Forest County Ordinances."

Page 500-22 Paragraph 510.6.2 MRA Park

The Forest County Forest is a multiple-use forest. Non-motorized travel on trails is a legitimate use of this forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage to the environment and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It shall be the policy of the Committee to consider opportunities for the following non-motorized trail use:

1. Ski trails
2. Hiking trails
3. Horse trails
4. Biking trails
5. Canoe routes
6. Snowshoe trails
7. Hunter Walking trails
8. Other trails

Refer to Chapter 700 for further discussion on non-motorized recreation opportunities on the Forest County Forest.

Conflicting paragraph. Minimize damage and reduce user conflict? Sustainable? Too vague to be enforced and adhered to. Assuming damage and

conflict without first defining those terms. Sustainable needs to be defined. We prefer that word stricken and stress compatible.

Page 700-4

Paragraph 710

MRA Park

Forest County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by the County/private contractors working under contract / the direction of the county / other public resources agencies / cooperative agreement with non-profit organizations. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. **Additional roads may be developed on newly acquired county forest land for possible use as an MRA Park. These roads must be developed in accordance with the Town Road Gas Tax Program and/or the County Forest Road Aid Program to ensure revenue is available for future road maintenance.**

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 water resources staff to **ensure compliance with water regulation laws, State law and SFI and FSC Certification.**

Conflicts with Park operation. Unable to restrict access or collect fees for using roads funded by Gas Tax Program. This would be a violation of Federal Law.

Page 700-5

Paragraph 710.1

MRA Park

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. **These permanent primary forest roads are town roads funded by State Gas Tax Revenue, maintained by the town and under the town's legal jurisdiction. These roads are located in the Towns of Lincoln, Crandon and Nashville.**

If roads are located in Towns of Crandon, Lincoln and Nashville, how would this affect the MRA Park?

Page 700-5 Paragraph 710.2 MRA Park

These roads often serve a variety of uses including forest management, fire protection, **access** 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 **a lower standards or are not improved at all. Use of these roads are approved for all non-motorized public uses. Motorized use of these roads include forest management, fire protection and state funded snowmobile and ATV trail use only.** Some of these roads are designed for use only when the ground is frozen or firm.

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked, gated or bermed and/or signed as restricted **to prevent environmental damage.**

Restricts Park use of roads. Not available to 4WD's & OHM's. Does not comply with the previous multiple-use guidelines as identified earlier.

Environmental damage is too vague. Needs to be defined. Recommend striking the additional and change to restrict access or travel.

Page 700-6 Paragraph 710.3 MRA Park

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

Temporary roads on existing and past **timber** sales will be considered for closure. Reasons will include protection of perpetually wet soils, human safety, and prevention of illegal dumping. **These roads will be seeded to clover to stabilize soils, prevent erosion and run off as well as provide a food source for wildlife.**

The need for new temporary roads will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis **and associated with active management of forest lands**. 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, sustainability, maintenance and prevention of environmental damage and protect public safety**.

How does this apply to the MRA? Seems to be targeted at timber harvests and not recreation.

Page 700-6

Paragraph 720

MRA Park

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

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

Trail closures should be joint decisions between the Forestry Committee and the operational corporation. Recommend including this in an MOU between WORVPI & Forest County to avoid confusion. Managing entity should have authority to open or close trails on a day-to-day basis if necessary and in compliance with Park Plan.

Page 700-6

Paragraph 720.1

MRA Park

Requests for recreational trails will be reviewed by the Committee. Groups requesting specific trail development or use must present a plan for the long term funding and maintenance of proposed trails. Organized trail users and group-sponsored activities must protect Forest County with a minimum of \$300,000

liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage.

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 storm water 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 Forest County that meets these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-95) to mitigate any adverse impacts. For projects requiring a Stormwater permit, 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. **All permits and plans will be developed by and paid for by the group requesting development.**

Type of liability insurance? Personal injury, property damage...and why a \$300,000 liability limit?

730 Page 9 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; 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.

Has this been documented or merely the inclusion of opinion by the drafter? Research shows that trail use conflicts are actually reduced by properly designed trails. This could very well be a departmental trail management short-coming. Cause and affect should be referenced with research.

730.3 Page 11

Create MRA Park use here including location, size, intended use, park plan, etc.