

# Travel Management Project

## Recreation Report

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
ATV Use & Motorized Recreation: A National and State Issue.....	3
Cross-County Travel.....	4
Significant Issue: Not Enough Motorized Access.....	4
Methodology for Analysis.....	4
Existing Condition.....	5
General Forest Conditions.....	5
Existing Condition for Resource Indicators.....	6
Desired Condition.....	7
Overview of the Forest Proposal.....	7
Mitigation.....	7
Monitoring.....	8
Environmental Consequences.....	8
Alternative 1 - No Action.....	8
Alternative 2 - Forest Proposal.....	9
Alternative 3.....	10
Cumulative Effects for All Alternatives.....	12
Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction.....	13
References.....	15

## Table of Tables

Table 1. Alternative 1 (No Action) Summary.....	8
Table 2. Alternative 2 (Forest Proposal) Summary.....	9
Table 3. Alternative 3 Summary.....	10
Table 4. Roads Analysis Process Ranking Criteria.....	13

## Introduction

This report will address (1) a general overview of motorized recreation in Wisconsin; (2) the specific issue of “not enough motorized recreation access” identified during public scoping of the Travel Management Project; and (3) the consistency or compliance of expected environmental consequences with the Travel Management Rule and the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan. The Recreation Resource Report is tiered to the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF), Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Recreational motor vehicles are analyzed in the FEIS and this analysis is included by reference. This analysis focuses only on the effects relevant to this project.

## *ATV Use & Motorized Recreation: A National and State Issue*

### The Travel Management Rule

In 2004, the Chief of the Forest Service identified unmanaged motorized recreation as one of the four greatest threats to the National Forest System. Concerns included the amount of unplanned roads and trails, erosion, lack of quality motorized riding opportunities, water degradation, and habitat destruction from motorized recreation. To respond to this growing concern, the Forest Service instituted the 2005 Travel Management Rule to designate where all-terrain (ATVs), and other motorized vehicles, may operate on National Forest System lands.

The Travel Management Rule requires designation of the roads, trails, and areas open to motor vehicle use. Designations on each Forest Service unit are made by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year. The designation of system roads occurs through the development and publishing of the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). The MVUM and 36 CFR Part 212 Sec. 50 places the responsibility on the individual to know where they can legally ride, rather than posting prohibitions.

### ATV and Motorized Use in Wisconsin: Controversy over Supply & Demand

Several recent and on-going projects conducted by the State of Wisconsin point to public controversy over the supply and demand for motorized recreation opportunities in the state. One project is the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) finalized in 2004. Another, on-going, project is a proposed State Motorized Recreation Area (DNR Board Meeting, 2006; STC, 2007). The State is also conducting a feasibility study for development of an ATV Trail on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron counties near the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest, in part due to the controversial nature of motorized use (NHAL, 2008).

“Increasing ATV usage and associated impacts” is considered a recreation issue in all but the Mississippi River Corridor (defined by the State SCORP) region of the State of Wisconsin and is the recreation issue identified most frequently in all regions (SCORP: 5-10). “More ATV usage opportunities” is identified only as a recreation need in the Southern Gateways region of the State and a supply shortage for ATV trails was identified only in the Great Northwest region (SCORP 5-21). The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters believe the supply of ATV trails, “appears adequate for the current and future demand” (Waalén, 2006); the April 2007 Governor’s State Trails Council Meeting, however, reports the Natural Resources Board supports approval for the DNR to look into the planning process for a motorized recreation area and other ATV trails (STC April, 2007).

A survey conducted by the Woodruff Area Chamber of Commerce found 56% of residents from Minocqua, Arbor Vitae, and Woodruff “completely” or “somewhat” disagree with the statement, “I would like to see ATV trails made available in the area” and 29% agree either “completely” or “somewhat” with the statement

(NHAL, 2008). In addition, the State DNR concludes that a majority of the people providing comments oppose development of ATV trails on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest (NHAL, 2008).

A feasibility study conducted by the State of Wisconsin for an ATV trail on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest in Iron, Vilas, and Oneida counties near the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest provides information regarding social considerations. Residents in the Village of Lake Tomahawk oppose development of an ATV trail due to concerns for dust and noise. The Town of Plum Lake recently passed an ordinance to prohibit ATV use on Town roads and “significantly” oppose ATV use in their community. The community of Star Lake also opposes the trail as well as 63% of Vilas county residents. Conversely, residents of Iron County generally support ATV use and Hurley and Mercer promote two large rallies each year with hundreds of ATV riders. Some trails in Iron County are linked to trails in Michigan (NHAL, 2008).

### **ATV and Motorized Use in Wisconsin: Controversy over Economic Benefits**

Another public controversy relates to the economic benefit of motorized recreation. A 2003 State of Wisconsin tourism study indicates ATV-related recreation brings \$295 million in visitor spending to the State. ATV riders spend an average of \$523.33 per person per trip, with a trip averaging 3.2 nights (WI Dept. of Tourism, 2003). However, some people believe this figure is misleading because it does not reflect the opportunity cost of displaced people (typically non-motorized recreation that could occur on the same trail) or law enforcement costs; a Vilas County Sheriff reports increased accidents, trespass, damage to property, speed, noise, littering, right-of-way violations, underage operators, unregistered vehicles, and intoxicated operator complaints related to ATV use (Waalén, 2006).

The feasibility study for a proposed ATV trail on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest reports that business owners in St. Germain, Sayner, and Star Lake recognize some economic potential from new ATV users while others believed that their existing customer based could be displaced by increased ATV use. However, several businesses in Mercer, Wisconsin, such as ATV dealerships, gas stations, bars, and restaurants, cater to ATV riders using the existing trail system (NHAL, 2008).

### ***Cross-Country Travel***

The 2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Plan prohibits ATV use off system roads and trails, which is defined as cross-country travel. While the 2005 Travel Management Rule requires all National Forests to designate roads, trails, and areas open for ATV use, the Regional Forester for the Eastern Region, through the Record of Decision for the FEIS, decided that only system roads and trails could be designated open for ATV use on the CNNF.

### **Significant Issue: Not Enough Motorized Access**

The Forest Service identified “not enough motorized access” as the significant issue raised by the public on the roads analysis process (RAP) recommendation (which became the proposed action for the Travel Management Project). The public voiced several ways to increase motorized access on the forest and these possibilities were included, when feasible, into two alternatives to address the issue (see Alternatives 3 and 5).

### **Methodology for Analysis**

The 2004 CNNF Forest Plan, 2005 Travel Management Rule, and Code of Federal Regulations are the fundamental plans and laws that guide the recreation resource analysis. The CNNF 2004 Forest Plan requires consistency of motorized recreation with general management area direction, standards, and guidelines. Consistency with general management area direction is addressed through criteria used in the forest roads analysis process. In other words, one of the criteria in the roads analysis process is consistency with management area direction and roads or trails that occur in management areas that discourage, or prohibit,

motorized use, are not included in the forest proposal, or other alternatives, as available for public motorized use.

The Forest Plan categories “Off-Road Vehicle Use” and “Construction, Reconstruction, and Use of Motorized Trails” give specific requirements related to the Travel Management Project (CNNF Forest Plan 2-27 & 2-28). Some of the standards and guidelines apply to law enforcement and are met through forest closure orders and other standards and guidelines are outside the scope of this project. Resource-related guidelines are incorporated into the forest roads analysis process (RAP) similar to the consistency with management area direction.

Due to the extensive consideration given to forest plan standards and guidelines for resource requirements in the forest roads analysis process, the following recreation resource analysis focuses on consistency with the 2004 CNNF Forest Plan through disclosing miles of roads and trails designated open for motorized use within each of the categories established in the ATV Suitability Map (see CNNF Forest Plan 2-28 and map packet to the FEIS). [http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/final\\_forest\\_plan/maps/ATV\\_Suitability\\_sm.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/final_forest_plan/maps/ATV_Suitability_sm.pdf)

Consistency with the 2005 Travel Management Rule is provided through disclosing roads and trails designated available for public motorized use, by type of vehicle, and when appropriate, by time of year. Information is also listed for each recreation resource indicator established for the public scoping issue, “not enough motorized access.” The Forest Service corporate GIS data layers and professional judgment are used to conduct the analysis.

## Existing Condition

### *General Forest Conditions*

#### **Social & Economic Conditions related to the Travel Management Project**

Middle income Wisconsinites most often participate in developed recreation activities such as camping, snowmobiling, and ATV riding (SCORP 1-6). The National Forest Service Visitor use Monitoring report (NVUM) indicates no significant regional differences in spending by people engaged in motorized recreation. For Non-Local Day trips, people spend \$49-76 dollars per trip; Non-Local Overnight \$72-126 dollars per trip; and roughly \$43 dollars per Day trip. Local Day trips account for 48% of motorized use in Wisconsin Forests followed by Non-Local overnight trips at 23% (NVUM, 2006). However, a 2003 State of Wisconsin tourism study indicates ATV riders spend an average of \$523.33 per person per trip, with a trip averaging 3.2 nights. The State of Wisconsin study also states that ATV-related recreation brings \$295 million in visitor spending to Wisconsin (WI Dept. of Tourism, 2003).

Only 7% of the State population lives in the Northwoods and Great Northwest Regions and over 30% of home ownership is seasonal (SCORP 5-6). American Indians make up 3.7% of the Great Northwest and 2.2% of the Northwoods Regions of the State (SCORP 1-7). According to a 1999 Wisconsin DNR socioeconomic assessment, 66% of households in the six counties surrounding the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest engaged in primarily passive recreation while 12% engaged in motorized activities (NHAL, 2008).

#### **Recreation Opportunities related to the Travel Management Rule Project**

There are approximately 244,000 registered ATV's in Wisconsin, which is four times the number registered since 1993 (NHAL 2008). Approximately 23% of the population (959,400 people) use ATV's and 18% of the population participates in operating a vehicle off-road (SCORP, 2004). ATV's are permitted at the Richard I Bong Recreation Area, two state forests and seven state trails (DNR Board meeting, 2006). A Wisconsin DNR report in 2004 estimates 5,555 miles of roads or trails available for ATV riding (SCORP) in Wisconsin. In

addition, 29 of 72 counties in Wisconsin provide ATV trails on county owned or managed lands (DNR Board meeting, 2006).

The *Anything Wisconsin* website provides comprehensive information on the State of Wisconsin. According to the information posted, all but one of the eleven counties comprising the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest advertise ATV riding opportunities on private, state, county, federal, and other lands. Over 700 miles of ATV riding opportunities are listed within the 10 counties. <http://www.anythingwisconsin.com/atvtrails.htm>

The West side of the forest experiences more recreation demand from the Twin Cities, while people from Milwaukee, Madison, and Chicago are more likely to visit the East side. Off-road driving with an ATV is most popular within the Upper Mississippi Region of Wisconsin followed by the Great Northwest at 34% and the Northwoods at 30% (SCORP 5-6).

### *Existing Condition for Resource Indicators*

#### The miles of roads and trails open to ATV use across the entire Forest

There are 2 miles of roads open to ATV use only and 486 miles of roads open to both HLVs and ATVs. There are also 318 miles of trails open to ATV use on the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest. Forest roads are closed to ATV use unless posted open with a sign. The open roads are identified on ATV maps available at CNNF Ranger District Offices. The MVUM will replace these maps.

The following information on ATV riding opportunities in counties surrounding the CNNF appears on the *Anything Wisconsin* website (March, 2008) <http://www.anythingwisconsin.com/atvtrails.htm> Over 700 miles of ATV riding opportunities are listed.

- Ashland County – Tri-Co Recreational Corridor. Approximately 62 miles through Ashland, Bayfield, and Douglas Counties.
- Bayfield County – 56 miles of trail from Port Wing to the Tri-Co Recreational Corridor.
- Florence County – over 150 miles of trails/routes connecting to Marinette and Iron Counties in Michigan.
- Forest County – 8 miles of looped trail.
- Langlade County – 16 miles of Augustyn Trail and 38 miles of Parrish Highlands Trail.
- Marinette County – 160 miles that connect to Pembine, Dunbar, Goodman, and Florence Counties.
- Oconto County – The Dusty Trails ATV Club maintains approximately 110 miles of trails/routes.
- Oneida County – 20 miles of Little Rice ATV Trail.
- Price Country – 60 miles Flambeau Trail System
- Sawyer County – 46 miles (random); 38 miles in the Flambeau River State Forest; and 51 miles with the Tuscobia-Park Falls Trail.
- Taylor – 12 Camp 8 Trail miles

## Miles of Road Available for ATV Use by ATV Suitability Area

There are 90 miles of road available for ATV use in areas classified as least suitable and 238 miles in the intermediate area. 157 miles of road are available for ATV use in the most suitable area.

## Miles of roads opened seasonally

There are currently no miles of roads or trails managed on the Forest specifically to provide seasonal motorized recreation opportunities; current seasonal restrictions relate to the protection of forest resources.

## Miles of roads open to ATV use on the eastside of the Forest

There are currently 0.83 miles of roads open to ATV use on the eastside of the Forest (Himley Lake Connector).

The information listed on *Anything Wisconsin* website indicates that there are about 500 miles of ATV trails/routes available in the Counties comprising the East side of the CNNF Forest.

## Desired Condition

The following objectives are listed for motorized recreation in the CNNF Forest Plan:

Objective 2.1e – The forest may designate up to 100 miles of additional ATV trail on the Chequamegon side of the forest.

Objective 2.1g – On the Chequamegon, designate and sign all classified roads as ATV routes except: (1) on roads where the forest does not have the authority to designate as ATV routes; and (2) in instances where the local Ranger District identifies and closes specific routes for management issues such as safety, resource degradation, local government concerns, or recreation use conflict.

## Overview of the Forest Proposal

The CNNF Forest Proposal (Alternative 2) presents the interdisciplinary, public involvement-based, outcome of the 1,052 roads put through the CNNF roads analysis process (RAP). The RAP included ranking criteria for resource risks (water quality, soils, heritage resources, resource protection-based management areas, Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species habitats, other wildlife needs, the potential to spread of non-native invasive species, and a road value to the public (access for hunting, bough and firewood gathering, recreation, access to private in holdings, and administrative access).

## Mitigation

There are no formal mitigation measures required for the Forest proposal to be consistent with the CNNF forest plan and the Travel Management Rule.

The following suggestions would improve public understanding of recent changes in motorized use law, regulation, and policy, and to reduce the risk of non-conformance, such as riding motorized vehicles off designated routes.

1. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest staff should increase efforts to promote public education of the MVUM through issuing news releases, updating the forest website, meetings with ATV clubs and special interest groups, and the developing ATV education material.

2. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest staff should work with other agencies (DNR, Tribal, county and township governments) to increase awareness of ATV designations and help reduce barriers for ATV riders using roads that cross multiple ownerships.

## Monitoring

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest conducts monitoring every year on the effects of off-road vehicles. There are no additional monitoring requirements specific to this project. Please see page 24 on the following link for additional information:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/reports/monitoring\\_2006/FY06\\_CNNF\\_Monitoring\\_Report.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/reports/monitoring_2006/FY06_CNNF_Monitoring_Report.pdf)

## Environmental Consequences

The environmental consequences section will disclose direct, indirect, and cumulative effects for the recreation resource related to the CNNF Travel Management Project. Direct and indirect effects will be disclosed for each alternative. Cumulative effects are discussed as a separate section and include all the alternatives.

### Alternative 1 - No Action

For the CNNF Travel Management Project, the baseline condition (No Action Alternative) is motorized use that is currently occurring on the Forest and is outlined as follows:

- HLVs currently use any road that is not physically closed;
- Cross-country travel by any vehicle is prohibited,
- General ATV seasonal use restrictions remain in place (March 15<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>) as described in the current Forest Order R913-08-02.

Forest roads are closed to ATV use unless posted open with a sign. The open roads are identified on ATV maps available at CNNF Ranger District Offices.

### Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the No Action Alternative there would be no change over the existing condition in motorized recreation use opportunities on the CNNF related to the Travel Management Rule implementation. Street legal vehicles would continue to be allowed on any route that is not physically closed and ATVs would only be allowed on roads posted open with a sign allowing ATV use. Cross county travel would be prohibited. The miles available for each type (and both) vehicles are listed in the following table:

**Table 1. Alternative 1 (No Action) Summary**

ML Roads	Miles of Roads Open for Highway Legal Vehicles	Miles of Roads Open for ATVs	Miles of Roads Open to Both Vehicle Types
1	0	2	0
2	4,086	0	464
3	22	0	20
4	48	0	2
5	13	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,169</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>486</b>

Total Miles of Trails Open for ATVs: 318



ATV Suitability Map

There would be no change in the existing condition in terms of consistency with the routes available for public motorized use and the Forest Plan ATV Suitability Map. There are currently 157 miles of road available for ATV use in the most suitable area, 238 miles in the intermediate area, and 90 miles in the least suitable area.

Seasonal Restrictions (Miles of Road Opened Seasonally)

The CNNF would continue to issue seasonal travel restrictions where appropriate for resource protection, such as elk calving areas and wet soil conditions in the spring. There would be no change in motorized recreation use opportunities on a seasonal basis.

Type of Vehicles allowed (Roads Open to ATV use on the East side of Forest)

There would continue to be 0.83 miles designated roads open to ATV use on the East side of the forest.

**Alternative 2 - Forest Proposal**

**Direct and Indirect Effects.**

Implementation of Alternative 2 (the Forest Proposal) would result in 1,621 miles of road available for street legal vehicles, 9 miles of road available for ATV only use, and 450 miles available for both types of vehicles. Motorized use recreation opportunities would be reduced by 2,548 miles of road over the No Action Alternative for street legal vehicles. Implementing this Alternative would result in a 61% reduction in the recreation motorized use opportunities available on the forest. Roads available for both ATV and highway legal vehicle use would be reduced by 36 miles. Seven new miles of road would be available for ATV only use. Roads available for ATV use would not change on the East side of the Forest. The miles available for each type (and both types) of vehicle are listed in the following table:

**Table 2. Alternative 2 (Forest Proposal) Summary**

ML Roads	Miles of Roads Open for Highway Legal Vehicles	Miles of Roads Open for ATVs	Miles of Roads Open to Both Vehicle Types
1	0	2	0
2	1,543	7	428
3	20	0	20
4	46	0	2
5	12	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>450</b>

Total Miles of Trails Open for ATVs: 318

ATV Suitability Map

In this alternative, 149 miles of road would be available for ATV use in the most suitable category, 229 miles in the intermediate category and 90 miles in the least suitable category. The number of miles of road available in the least suitable category is the same as in Alternative 1. There are 9 less miles in the intermediate category and 8 less miles than the most suitable category. Therefore, this alternative brings forest conditions to a higher level of consistency with forest plan direction for the miles of routes (roads and trails) open to ATV use in the most and intermediate suitability categories and is the same level of consistency as the existing condition for the least suitable category.

### Seasonal Restrictions (Miles of Road Opened Seasonally)

There are no specific changes in seasonal restrictions included in the forest proposal, and subsequently no changes in use for those roads with seasonal restrictions. Therefore the recreation motorized use opportunities available seasonally would be the same as for the No Action Alternative.

### Type of Vehicles allowed (Roads Open to ATV use on the East side of Forest)

Roads available for ATV use would not change on the East side of the Forest.

## **Alternative 3**

### **Direct and Indirect Effects**

Alternative 3 addresses the significant issue of “not enough motorized access” associated with the forest proposal (Alternative 2). Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in 1,664 miles of road available for street legal vehicles and 20 miles of road available for ATV use. Motorized use opportunities for street legal vehicles would be reduced by 2,505 miles of road from the No Action Alternative; however Alternative 3 provides 43 more miles for highway legal vehicles than the Forest Proposal.

474 miles of road would be available in Alternative 3 for both highway legal vehicles and ATVs. This is 12 miles less than the No Action Alternative and 24 more miles than Alternative 2.

Roads available for ATV use only would be increased by 18 miles over the existing condition (No Action Alternative) and 11 miles more than Alternative 2.

The miles available for each type (and both) of vehicle are listed in the following table:

**Table 3. Alternative 3 Summary**

<b>ML Roads</b>	<b>Miles of Roads Open for Highway Legal Vehicles</b>	<b>Miles of Roads Open for ATVs</b>	<b>Miles of Roads Open to Both Vehicle Types</b>
1	0	2	0
2	1,587	18	451
3	20	0	20
4	45	0	3
5	12	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,664</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>474</b>

Total Miles of Trails Open for ATVs: 318

### ATV Suitability Map

Approximately 86 miles of road would be designated for motorized use within the least suitability areas; 4 less miles in this area than Alternatives 1 or 2 (90 miles each). 248 miles of road are designated in Alternative 3 within the intermediate suitability area which is 19 more than Alternative 2 and 10 more miles than Alternative 1. 157 miles of road are designated in the most suitable area which is the same number as the existing condition (No Action Alternative) and 8 more miles than in Alternative 2. Therefore, this alternative has the same level of consistency with forest plan direction for the miles of routes (roads and trails) open to ATV use in the most suitable category. Alternative 3 brings forest conditions into a greater level of consistency with the existing condition for the least suitable category; however there are more miles available for motorized use in the intermediate category.

### Seasonal Restrictions (Miles of Road Opened Seasonally)

Hunters and people that collect boughs and firewood expressed a need for access to the forest during the fall. A timeframe of September 15 to December 31 was established to include hunting and gathering seasons and included in Alternative 3. Implementation of Alternative 3 addresses the “not enough motorized access” issue by allowing 42 more miles of road open for highway legal vehicles and 11 additional miles for ATV only use during the fall compared to Alternative 2 (the forest proposal).

### Type of Vehicles allowed (Roads Open to ATV use on the Eastside of Forest)

Alternative 3 would add 22 new miles of routes for ATV use on the East side of Forest. There are currently 0.83 miles designated for ATV on the East side of Forest and therefore Alternative 3 presents a substantial increase in motorized use opportunities for ATVs in this area.

### *Current Travel Management-Related projects on the CNNF<sup>1</sup>*

The following projects appear on the April-June 2008 SOPA and are considered in the recreation resource analysis as appropriate. Some of the projects started prior to TMR, and some are simply maintenance for ATV and other trails. Other projects require construction of new routes, or segments of routes, or other actions outside the scope of TMR.

Challenge 4X4 Trail Restoration ANRI/El Paso Pipeline - Lakewood Laona District: This project includes restoration and repair of the ANRI/El Paso Pipeline trail that have been degraded by past use. This project is on hold.

Fish Trap Lake Area Snowmobile & ATV Trail - Categorical Exclusion: This project includes a trail re-route and rehabilitation. Decision memo October 2007.

Dead Horse ATV & Snowmobile Trail – Great Divide: Environmental Assessment. Trail Reroute out of Wild & Scenic River corridor East Fort of the Chippewa River. Decision scheduled in June 2008

Perkinstown ATV Trail maintenance & Improvement - Medford-Park Falls: This project is on hold and may include trail relocation and maintenance. This project is on hold.

Iron River Trail Categorical Exclusion – Washburn: This project includes trail relocation and widening. This project is on hold.

Sailor to Solberg ATV Trail Connection – Medford Park Falls: This project consists primarily of designating existing travel corridors for ATV use with some new construction. Decision expected July of 2008.

Townsend to Forest/Oconto County Line Multiple Use Trail Connector – Lakewood-Laona: EA expected September of 2008. The project includes improvements and designation of 1.7 miles of the Nicolet State multi-purpose trail.

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<sup>1</sup> The following projects appear on the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest April-June 2008 SOPA:  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/nepaqr/sopa/2008\\_3\\_sopa.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/nepaqr/sopa/2008_3_sopa.pdf)

## *Cumulative Effects for All Alternatives*

There are direct effects from implementing the alternatives for the CNNF Travel Management Project to recreation motorized use opportunities and this section discusses the overall, or cumulative, effects. The spatial boundary for cumulative effects includes the eleven Wisconsin counties comprising the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest; the rationale for this boundary is based on a reasonable distance of motorized recreation opportunities available to someone living in the area or traveling to the forest.

The temporal boundary includes the projects related to travel management since implementation of the 2004 Forest Plan and the April-June 2008 Forest SOPA. The rationale is that motorized recreation opportunities are discussed in depth in the 2004 Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement and that the current Forest SOPA provides a reasonable list of expected forest projects related to motorized vehicle use.

The CNNF corporate GIS database includes information regarding motorized recreation use on roads and trails from past and reasonable future projects listed on the forest SOPA; this information is listed on the existing condition (Alternative 1).

Therefore, the cumulative, overall impact to motorized recreation use opportunities in the “Northwoods” of Wisconsin relates primarily to those motorized recreation use opportunities available on non-federal lands in the eleven counties surrounding the CNNF. Many counties and towns update the availability of roads and trails for public motorized use frequently, if not annually. The CNNF cooperates with local governments and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and considers the comprehensive recreation opportunities available to the public. However, the Forest Service does not maintain records of the current motorized use availability of roads and trails outside Federal jurisdiction.

The *Anything Wisconsin* website lists approximately 700 miles of routes available for ATV use in counties surrounding the Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest, with about 500 of those miles close to the East side of the forest.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources conducted a feasibility study to create trails for ATV use at the Northern Highland-American Legion (NHAL) State Forest in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties. The feasibility study looked at two alternatives for designated ATV trails, including approximately 49 miles of trail in Vilas-Oneida Counties and 18 or 11.6 miles in Iron County that connected to existing designated routes. The State of Wisconsin has decided not to proceed with either of the alternatives since the initiation of the CNNF Travel Management Project and therefore the Northern Highland-American Legion (NHAL) State Forest recreation opportunities discussed will not be included in the cumulative effects.

In conclusion, the cumulative effects of implementing the CNNF Travel Management Project, in addition to the direct effects already discussed, are difficult, if not impossible, to calculate exactly for recreation motorized use opportunities for highway legal vehicles, given the lack of information (and frequently changing information) on the availability of motorized use on roads managed under non-federal jurisdiction. Implementing Alternative 2 or 3 would reduce the motorized recreation opportunities on the CNNF by approximately 2,500 miles. It is highly unlikely that the State of Wisconsin, counties, townships, or other governmental or private land owners would have the land base or financial resources to create new motorized recreation opportunities that could accommodate the demand for any displaced users when the 2,500 miles of motorized opportunities would be no longer available under Alternatives 2 and 3.

Accurate monitoring data is not available to determine likely changes in recreation use if the 2,500 miles on the CNNF were no longer available under Alternatives 2 and 3; outcomes may include increased motorized use on the roads and trails that remain available, illegal use on closed roads and trails, and displacement of users to Michigan, Minnesota or other locations.

For ATV riding opportunities, the addition of 22 miles of routes included on the East side of Forest (84 miles total new miles across the Forest) in Alternative 3 would represent a comparatively small increase in recreation opportunities to the over 700 miles available in the 11 Wisconsin counties listed on the *Anything Wisconsin* website while Alternative 2 would add 58 miles.

## Compliance with the Forest Plan and Other Regulatory Direction

All action alternatives comply with the 2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and the 2005 Travel Management Rule. The following paragraphs explain the compliance finding and provide interpretation of the environmental and social effects for consideration by the Deciding Official in regards to the “not enough motorized access” significant issue.

### Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest Plan Roads Analysis Process (RAP)

The CNNF 2004 Forest Plan requires consistency of motorized recreation with general management area direction, standards, and guidelines. The CNNF roads analysis process (RAP) includes the following analysis criteria that ensure compliance with Forest Plan requirements.

**Table 4. Roads Analysis Process Ranking Criteria**

Resource Criteria	Access Value Criteria
Water quality	Hunting
Soils	Bough & firewood gathering
Heritage resources	Recreation
Resource protection-based management areas	Access to private in-holdings
Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive species habitats	Administrative access
Other wildlife needs	
Potential to spread invasive species	

### CNNF ATV Suitability Map

The CNNF Forest Plan also provides a guideline for new miles roads and trails designated open for motorized use within the least suitable category established in the ATV Suitability Map (see CNNF Forest Plan 2-28 and map packet to the FEIS). [http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/final\\_forest\\_plan/maps/ATV\\_Suitability\\_sm.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/final_forest_plan/maps/ATV_Suitability_sm.pdf). The Forest Plan does not provide a threshold for a minimum or maximum number of miles in any of the three suitability areas, and therefore the interpretation of the environmental effects focuses on a relative comparison of Alternatives with the ATV Suitability Map areas.

There is not a substantial difference between the three alternatives in terms of miles designated within each ATV suitability area. Alternatives 1 and 2 show 90 miles designated in the least suitability area and Alternative 3 includes 86. Assuming the least suitability area is the most critical in terms of resource protection; Alternative 3 would be the most consistent with Forest Plan goals for resource protection in the designation of routes for motorized use by designating four less miles in the least suitability area. Alternatives 1 and 2 show 157 miles in the most suitable area indicating that the two alternatives are equally consistent with CNNF Forest Plan direction for providing motorized recreation use opportunities.

### Travel Management Rule: Type of Vehicles allowed

The Travel Management Rule requires that the routes available for motorized use be designated by type of vehicle. The CNNF Travel Management Project complies with this requirement because under all the Alternatives, roads and trails would be open to highway legal vehicles, ATVs, or both types of vehicles. Each alternative clearly defines the routes available by vehicle type.

The No Action Alternative clearly provides the most motorized recreation use opportunities for highway legal vehicles. There is approximately 61% more miles of road available for highway legal vehicles in Alternative 1 than either Alternative 2 or 3. The No Action Alternative also provides the most motorized use opportunities for ATVs with 486 miles of road and 318 miles of trails.

### Seasonal Restrictions

The Travel Management Rule requires that the routes available for motorized use be designated, if appropriate, by time of year. All the Alternatives for the CNNF Travel Management Project include motorized access restrictions to protect natural resources appropriately during spring break-up and wildlife breeding seasons.

In terms of overall miles of road available for motorized use opportunities September 15 to December 31 (for hunting and gathering seasons) the No Action Alternative provides the most motorized opportunities.

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