

ORIGINAL

Masterplan Variance Approval

Property Name: Brule River State Forest

Date Masterplan was approved: December 2002

Variance to the 2002 Brule River State Forest Masterplan: This variance to the May 2003 Brule River State Forest Masterplan permits development of an archery course on the Afterhours Ski Trail. *The specific language on the attached sheet will be added to the master plan.*

Approved: Paul DeLong Date: 9/1/05
Paul DeLong, Administrator, Division of Forestry

Variance Author: Steve Petersen, Superintendent, Brule River State Forest

Supporting Approvals

Steve Petersen Date: June 8, 2005
Property Manager

Shannon Johnson Date: 6/10/05
Area Forester

Michael C. Quedde Date: 6-21-05
Regional Forester

Robert J. Matthe Date: 6-28-05
Bureau Director

Thomas J. Watts Date: 7-20-05
Master Planning Manager, LF

Brule River State Forest Master Plan Variance for Construction of an Archery Course on the Afterhours Ski Trail

The following language will be added to the Recreation Management Prescriptions for Area 6 page 89 of the 2003 master plan:

- Working with partner groups construct and operate an archery course on the entry/return loop (approximately .5 miles in length) of the Afterhours Ski Trail. The course shall be constructed to not conflict with skiing or hiking trail uses and to have minimal visual impact on trail user. Further, course shall be closed to archery use during the ski season and the targets removed.

Supporting Information

Purpose and need for the Variance:

The purpose of this variance is to permit development of an sporting archery course along the Afterhours Ski Trail located on the Brule River State Forest south of Hwy 2 and west of the Bois Brule River. This trail is located within Area 6 with a project boundary size of approximately 2000 acres with 1200 acres in state forest ownership. This activity is not expressly permitted in the May 2003 Master Plan for the state forest. The idea for this course was discussed by property staff at the September 2004 public meeting and received public support. Following that meeting the Brule River Sportsman's Club submitted a request to the forest superintendent for a Master Plan variance to permit this proposed course.

The intended development of the archery trail and addition of a new use to this existing trail would provide low impact to the area's present uses, aesthetics, and natural condition.

- The Afterhours Recreation Management Area would continue to be managed as a Type 3 recreation use area. The recreation management objectives are described on pages 88-89 of the approved Brule River State Forest Master Plan.
- Forest management objectives and planned management activities would not be changed by approval of this variance. The forest management objectives for Area 6 are described on page 40 of the approved Brule River State Forest Master Plan.
- The proposed course would use the entry/return loop of the existing trails, roughly .5 miles of a 16.5 mile system (3% of the total Afterhours Ski Trail mileage).
- The course would be seasonally operated from May 1 to October 30 to eliminate conflict with skiers.
- Shooting station signs and targets would be removed prior to the ski season. The backstops would remain.
- Targets would be chosen that blend with the surrounding and avoid clashing with the natural experience.
- Targets would be oriented to maximize the safety of other shooters and other trails users that may not be aware of the course.
- As many as 30 shooting stations would be developed along the roughly half mile trail.
- Course layout would consider National Field Archery Association guidelines or other sanctioning body's guidelines.
- The cost to develop the course (estimated to be around \$3,000 to \$5,000) is expected to be paid from donations and the work done by volunteers with oversight and assistance from property staff. Several groups and individuals have already expressed an interest in funding this.
- Ongoing costs of operation, for instance to purchase replacement targets, would be supported with donations. There are a number of organizations that provide ongoing operations support for archery trails, particularly if they are used by youths.
- Brush would be cleared where necessary for the trail to the target but otherwise it is not expected that trees would be removed to facilitate the course. Target locations would be chosen with this in mind.
- Hunting is a legal activity within this area during appropriate seasons.
- No use fees would be charged for use of this archery course.
- Adequate parking space exists to accommodate up to 30 vehicles.

A typical shooting station would have:

- A sign identifying it as a station.
- A short trail spur or wide spot in the trail constructed to place the shooting station.
- A short metal stake that the shooter would "toe" to establish the distance to the target. The metal stake would be located away from the main travel tread of the ski trail so hikers would not be obstructed by this marker.
- A trail roughly four feet wide and surfaced with bark chips or a similar product that would travel to the target from the shooting station.
- The backstop would be constructed with wood posts and treated lumber to create a three sided box about 5 feet square and 4 feet high and filled with sand. Alternative backstops may be needed at some stations because of topography.

- Three feet in front of the backstop would be two additional posts used to hold a target or as a reference for freestanding targets.
- The target could be freestanding commercially made 3 dimensional foam animal targets, cardboard animal shaped cutouts, or Olympic style round targets.
- The distance from a shooting station to the target ranges from 7 yards to 80 yards and averages about 25 yards.
- Certain shooting stations may have a rustic bench from which the shooter is expected to shoot.
- No permanent elevated shooting stations would be constructed.

Historically there have been three archery courses on the Brule River State Forest, though none of them are still maintained. At one time an indoor archery range was located in the former dining hall of the CCC camp. Property staff has also been told that archery courses existed on what is now the Stony Hill Nature Trail and near the building that is now the Highland Town Hall.

Anticipated Primary Benefits of the Proposed Variance:

The primary benefit is to respond to a public request for this opportunity. Some of the reasons the public shared for developing this course included:

- This would meet a request to provide another compatible recreation opportunity on the state forest.
- The public desires a more natural venue for shooting archery and this could be done at this location.
- This would restore a historical opportunity on the state forest. In the past there were three ranges or courses on the property.
- It would complement the archery curriculum offered at some of the area schools.

Additional Anticipated Benefits:

- This archery course would provide a positive social opportunity for the community.
- Archery is a popular sport in the community, not only among hunters. The closest similar opportunities are located in the Superior Municipal Forest and the Aurora Ouisconsin Outdoor Club near Hawthorne. This would provide an additional more convenient location for archery practice.
- The course would make year round use of already developed infrastructure at the ski trail
- The existing facilities together with the course would provide an opportunity to facilitate hunter education
- An increase in the number of people using this area will increase the level of security and protect the state's infrastructure investment at the Afterhours Trail.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:

- The trails are frequently used by hikers and dog walkers and while there shouldn't be a direct conflict those people would see more activity on this segment of the trails. Dog walkers will need to leash and control their pets in the area of the targets.
- Trails to the targets will increase foot traffic off the ski trail. This will be mitigated by surfacing the trails to the targets with wood chips or a similar product.
- Some people may object to the idea of targets placed along the trail. During the 2004-2005 ski season a foam 3 dimensional deer was placed about 25 yards off the ski trail near the start line for a ski race. Not a single comment noting the target was received by property staff.

Compatibility with Statutes, Codes, and Department Policies:

- The area is currently open to all methods of hunting and is frequently used by hunters.
- The trails are identified as hunter walking trails.
- This proposal does not conflict with the property's Master Plan.
- Nothing in NR 45 would prohibit this use.
- Elevated stands are prohibited from being left on the on state forest land overnight. This course would not use permanent elevated shooting stations. Instead, topography would be used to simulate shooting from a higher elevation than the target. Elevated stands may be used on a temporary basis.

Federal Aid Limitations (cite if any federal aid monies are involved with either acquisition or management of the property and whether the proposed plan variance is compatible with the aid requirements):

There are no federal funds involved with the management of the area covered by the proposed variance.

How the Master Plan Supports the Proposed Variance (cite how the proposed variance is consistent with the provisions of the masterplan): The Afterhours Trails are within Area 6, Afterhours Recreation Area described on page 88 of the 2002 masterplan. The area is classified a Type 3 Recreational Use Setting. The objective of this setting is to provide readily accessible areas with modest recreational facilities offering opportunities at different times and places for a variety of dispersed recreational uses and experiences. Landscapes within the setting may vary from natural appearing to highly altered. The proposed development of this archery course is not inconsistent with the described recreational use setting.

At the time the Master Plan was developed the idea to develop an archery course was not considered. The seasonal nature of skiing and archery complement each other and if this idea had been discussed during development of the Master Plan it likely would have been supported.

The Public Review Process Used (summary of who was notified about the proposal or otherwise reviewed the proposal and the meetings, mailings, and other techniques used):

The concept was first discussed at the September 2004 public meeting for the Brule River State Forest. The forest superintendent shared the idea with the membership of the Brule River Sportsman's Club at their September meeting. At that meeting the club passed a motion to request a variance to the masterplan to permit the archery course. The variance was presented at the April 16, 2005 public meeting for the Brule River State Forest.

Description of the Support and/or Opposition to the Proposed Variance (including reasons for the various positions taken) and Any Unresolved Issues or Concerns:

Letters supporting this course have also been received from The Ruffed Grouse Society, The Isaak Walton League, The Douglas County Fish and Game League, The Gitchee Gummee Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, The Brule Valley Ski Club, and the ABC Sportsman's Club.

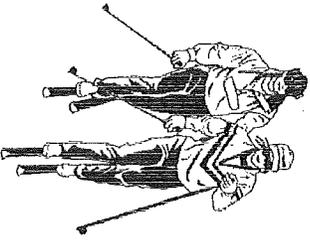
At the spring 2005 annual public meeting on April 16, 2005, the variance was discussed. Roger Anderson shared the history of trails that existed in the past and supported this variance to permit a new trail. Bob Banks said he is not aware of any conflict from the course at the Superior Municipal Forest, near his home. There was much general support for the variance. One written letter of support for the variance was received. Two other letters of comment were received regarding the entire annual report. One person made "no comment" on the proposed variance and the other one remained neutral, deferring to the opinions of the Brule Valley Ski Club. Overall there was no written or verbal opposition made to the variance.

Map attached: Afterhours Ski Trail Brochure (PUB-FR-231_2003)

proposed archery course

Afterhours Ski Trail

TRAIL	LENGTH	LEVEL
Entry	1.5 km	Beginner
Maple	1.4 km	Beginner
Aspen	1.1 km	Beginner
Spruce	1.4 km	Beginner
Oak	4.7 km	Intermediate
River	2.2 km	Intermediate
White Pine	4.4 km	Intermediate
Loop	3.1 km	Intermediate
Little Joe	1.0 km	Advanced

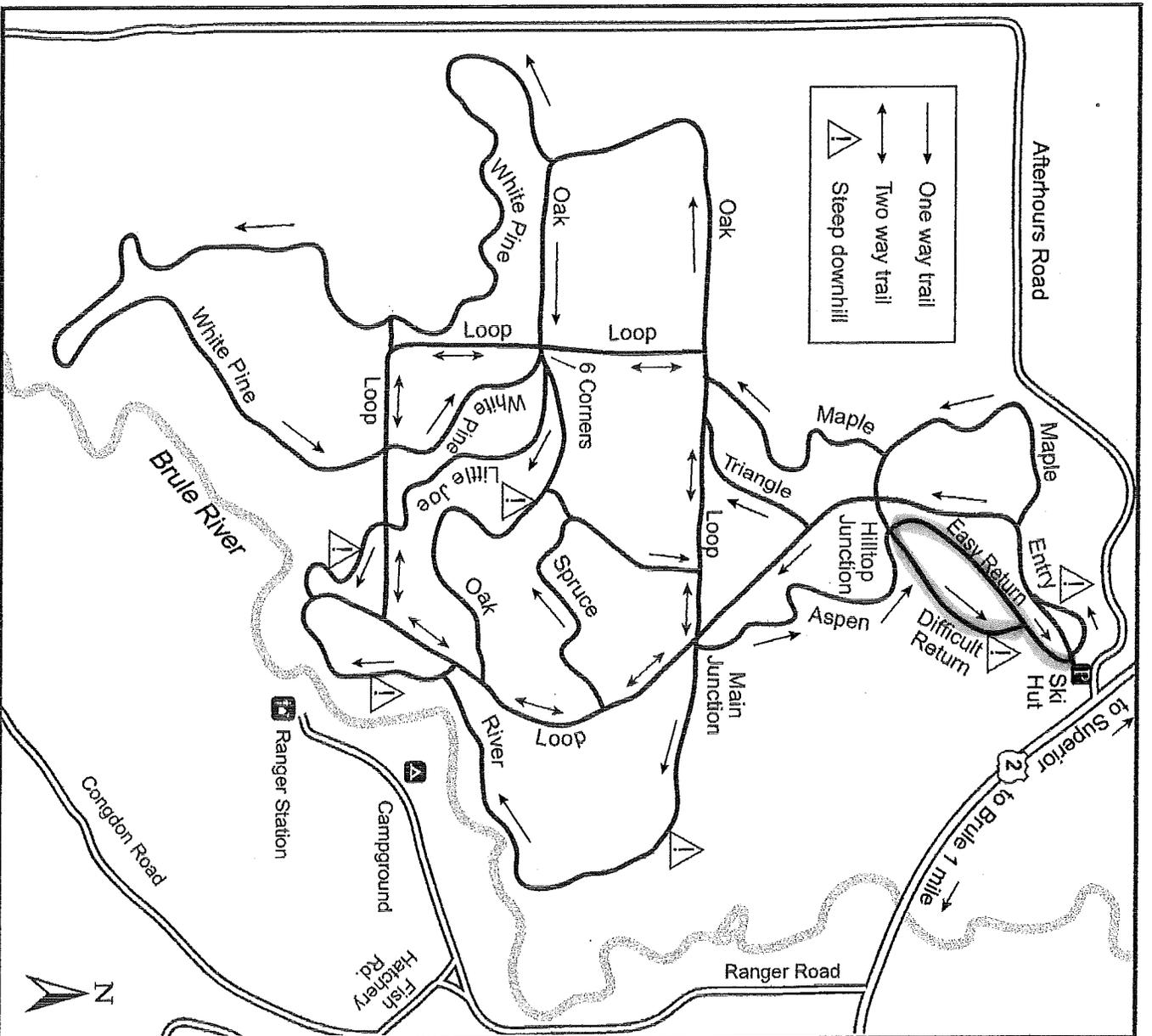


We are continually looking for ways to improve the Afterhours Ski Trail. Please direct any suggestions to the Brule River State Forest.

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CP2/03



Afterhours Ski Trail

The Afterhours Ski Trail system consists of 22.5km of well-maintained trails for both classical and skate skiing.

The Afterhours Ski Trail is located west of Brule on the Afterhours Road, just south of US Hwy. 2.

Parking, a heated shelter and restrooms are available at the trailhead compliments of the Brule River State Forest and the Brule Valley Ski Club.

Ski Etiquette and Rules

- Please purchase a trail pass prior to skiing.
- Snowmobiles, ATVs and dogs are prohibited on the trail.
- If you fall, please fill in your sitzmark.
- Do not walk or snowshoe on the ski trails.
- Skiers should ski within their own abilities. Always leave space between other skiers and alert others when passing. Control speed on downhill and follow the proper direction of the trail.
- Every effort is made to groom trails as quickly as possible. Even the best-groomed trails can be affected by trail usage and weather conditions.

Information

Superintendent, Steve Petersen
Brule River State Forest
6250 South Ranger Road
Brule, WI 54880
715-372-5678

Email: steven.petersen@dnr.state.wi.us

**Please consider joining the
Brule Valley Ski Club.**

Contact: Brule Valley Ski Club, Inc.
Bob Cragin, Treasurer
2106 Central Avenue
Superior, WI 54880
www.brulexski.com

If you would like to make a donation to help support the ski trails, contact the Brule Valley Ski Club.

State Trail Admission Fees

(Required for all skiers
16 yrs or older)

Annual \$10.00
Daily \$3.00

- Self-registration available at the trailhead.
- Trail fees contribute to the cost of maintenance and grooming.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Douglas County Sheriff's Dept.
911

A payphone is available at the
River House Restaurant

Afterhours Ski Trail

Brule River State Forest

