

Department Road Inventory and Planning Guidance Summary of Comments

Thank you to all of the individuals and groups that provided feedback on the Department of Natural Resources (department) proposed new guidance titled, "Department Road Inventory and Planning Guidance." Included in this document is a summary of comments received.

The intent of the public review was to seek feedback on the guidance the department will use to inventory and evaluate motorized use on department roads to implement State Statute 23.116(2).

Wis. Stat. s. 23.116 directed the Department as follows: Wis. Stat. s. 23.116(2) "The department shall inventory and map all roads that are located on each department property. Each map shall designate which roads are open to the public for the use of motorized vehicles and shall state when each road is open or closed for such use." The new law further provided under Wis. Stat. s. 23.116(3) that: "For each department property, the department shall work with members of the public, governmental units, and other interested parties to prepare a plan for allowing the public to use motorized vehicles on the department property. Ecological, economic, and social criteria shall be considered in preparing each plan. Each plan shall include methods for implementing the plan, and each plan shall contain criteria to be used in determining when the use of motorized vehicles may be restricted or temporarily prohibited by the department due to logging or other activities."

There were over 300 comments submitted. The vast majority of respondents, approximately 90 percent, shared views and perspectives favoring or opposing motorized use and access on department lands. Of those, the vast majority focused on ATV's, both in favor and opposed, and furthermore the majority of these comments were specific to Vilas County.

For the remainder of the comments, the majority of respondents indicated the guidance represented a reasonable and balanced approach to inventory department roads and the evaluation considerations for future road use generally represented a well-balanced range of considerations.

Specific to the inventory guidance, there were suggestions to include old historical abandoned roads in the inventory.

Specific to the evaluation considerations, there were suggestions for additional emphasis on motorized and non-motorized use conflicts, clarification on Ice Age Trail segments currently used as roads, clarification on how the economic considerations would be used, suggesting using a net economic impact perspective, additional conditions for involvement of local units of governments, and lastly questions on how the monitoring use and impacts would be implemented.

A number of comments suggested the desire to include and identify motorized and non-motorized use areas in the guidance. Questions were asked which properties would be inventoried and planned, in what priority order, and the decision making process on individual properties.

The department incorporated comments that were specific to the proposed inventory and evaluation guidance. Comments specific to favoring or opposing motorized access were not addressed as these comments will be more appropriate at the time of individual property assessments and evaluations.

The final guidance will be issued to the Departments Property Managers Guidance v1.1

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