

Master Plan Variance UTV Pilot Program

Property Name: Flambeau River State Forest

Date Master Plan was Approved: 12-17-80

Variance to the Master Plan 5-15-10

The following temporary provision is added to the ATV trail section of the master plan:
This variance is in response to Act 175, 2009, which establishes a pilot program for testing the feasibility of allowing utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) on ATV trails. Following the UTV Pilot program being approved by the sponsoring counties, Sawyer and/or Price County, the Flambeau River State Forest (FRSF) property plans to participate in the utility terrain vehicle (UTV) pilot program given it is part of the regional trail network with direct access to the existing UTV trail pilots.

The existing ATV trail has sufficient width to allow two UTVs to safely pass without leaving the trail tread, except for short width-restricted areas (such as bridges) where sight-lines are sufficient to allow riders to stop and wait for traffic to clear.

The level of ATV use and speed of ATV traffic is low enough that UTVs are not projected to cause significant safety concerns.

The trail surface is judged to be firm enough to support the weight of UTVs.

The UTV pilot on the FRSF will be monitored on a periodic basis for impacts and safety compliance.

Efforts shall be made to inform users where legal and safe public UTV riding opportunities exist. This will be accomplished through providing information to participating counties of UTV participation.

Therefore, as signed by the Department, UTV use is allowed on 40 miles of the summer ATV trail until June 30, 2012.

Approved: _____ **Date:** _____
Administrator, Division of Forestry

Approved
5/27/2010

Variance Initiator/Author: Jim Halvorson, Property Manager FRSF

_____ Date: _____
Property Manager

Supporting Approvals (as needed):

_____ Date: _____
Regional Forestry Leader

_____ Date: _____
Program Bureau Director

_____ Date: _____
Department Master Planning Manager, LF

Approved
5/27/2010

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Variance:

Act 175, 2009 establishes a pilot program for testing the feasibility of allowing utility terrain vehicles (UTVs) on ATV trails. The statute directs the Department, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, to conduct a two-year pilot program to investigate the effects of using UTVs on ATV trails and routes.

Under the pilot program the Department (and federal agencies, counties and municipalities participating in the program) may designate an ATV trail or a portion of a trail where UTVs may be used during the pilot program. (Counties and municipalities may also designate ATV routes that may be used by UTVs.) The UTV pilot program shall conclude on June 30, 2012. At the end of the pilot program the Department shall report the results of its evaluation to the legislature.

As UTVs are not a specifically authorized use under the master plan a plan variance is required to allow UTVs to be used on the ATV trail as part of this pilot program.

Anticipated Primary Benefits of the Proposed Variance:

The variance permits the Department's participation in the evaluation of the suitability of permanently incorporating UTV use on Department managed ATV trails

Additional Anticipated Benefits:

- Provide expanded, short-term opportunities for UTV owners to experience using their vehicles on a longer trail.
- Provide some additional economic benefit, although likely small, to local economies in the vicinity of the trail.

Unavoidable Adverse Impacts:

Unknown. A primary purpose of the pilot program is to test for these adverse impacts. There may be conflicts with ATV riders and a possible increase in safety risk due to the UTVs being larger and slower than ATV. Also, some additional physical impacts to the trail surface may occur as the UTVs are substantially heavier than ATVs.

Compatibility with Statutes, Codes and Department Policies:

The UTV Pilot Program was established by statute. UTV use on this trail is compliant with criteria established by the Department for participation in the pilot program.

Federal Aid Limitations:

None.

How the Master Plan Supports the Proposed Variance:

The master plan designated motorized use and specifically ATV trails on the property. This pilot is to test whether UTVs are an appropriate shared use on ATV trails.

The Public Review Process Used:

Notification was given to entities on the FRSF stakeholder email list, including but not limited to: Price County, Rusk County, Sawyer County, and Wisconsin County Forest Association. The information was also posted on the Flambeau River State Forest webpage: <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/stateforests/SF-Flambeau/>.

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

Two comments were received which both fully supported the variance.