

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 900

RECREATION

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## **900 RECREATION**

Recreation is an integral part of the management of the Marathon County Forest and recreation uses are referenced in most of the previous chapters. Due to the tremendous growth in recreational demands over the duration of the last several planning periods, this Plan recognizes the importance of more intensive recreational planning and emphasizes its importance with a separate chapter.

## **905 PLANNING**

In addition to this Plan, the Marathon County Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) also guides the recreation program. This plan is revised every five years and is made part of this Plan. The Marathon County Outdoor Recreation Plan includes, but is not limited to, activities on the County Forest. It incorporates campgrounds, parks and boat landings, recreational maintenance and development plans and other recreation surveys and reports. The Outdoor Recreation Plan, Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), public input, and other local or regional planning documents will be used as resources in recreational planning and development efforts. The responsibility for recreational planning, development and maintenance on the County Forest will rest with the Committee.

## **910 AUTHORITY**

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances and s. 28.11 Wis. Stats, authorize the Committee to provide recreational opportunities for the public. This authority is further recognized in the mission statement for the County Forest Plan (Chapter 100), which specifically identifies outdoor recreational opportunities. This mission statement also charges the Committee to conduct activities in a manner that prevents or minimizes environmental damage and degradation of natural resources.

Maps of the recreational facilities managed through the Marathon County Forest program are appended or referenced in Chapter 1000.

## **915 ENTRANCE AND USER FEES**

The Committee is empowered and shall have responsibility for establishing entrance, camping and other user fees on recreational facilities maintained by the County Forest. Camping, entrance or other fees shall be comparable to fees charged by (similar private facilities, other adjacent counties) and are subject to periodic change by the Committee or Commission. Fees, where appropriate, will be utilized to assist in the maintenance of recreational facilities.

## **920 RECREATIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS**

It is permissible for the Committee to contract with clubs or individuals to provide for recreational maintenance or services to the public. As part of the Plan, the County contracts or have agreements in place for the following services:

1. Snowmobile trail grooming and maintenance.
2. ATV/UTV trail grading and maintenance.
3. Mountain bike trail grooming and maintenance.
4. Nordic ski trail grooming and maintenance.

## **925 RECREATIONAL USE PERMITS FOR ORGANIZED EVENTS**

Any event on the Forest which is advertised to the public, for which a fee is charged, or is otherwise organized as an event, requires a permit or authorization by the Committee. Permits may be issued by the Committee provided the use is consistent with management activities and will not cause resource damage. Appropriate levels of event liability insurance is required.

## **930 EXTENSIVE RECREATIONAL USE OF THE FOREST**

Extensive recreation includes those informal activities for which the County generally does not provide a facility or service. These uses include activities such as hunting, fishing, picnicking, horseback riding, photography, nature study, hiking and others. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted in compliance with ordinance. The Forest Administrator and the Committee shall periodically review such uses and enact ordinances as necessary to protect from resource damage.

### **930.1 HUNTING AND TRAPPING**

The entire County Forest is open to hunting and trapping with the exception of areas which are developed for high public use, such as Shooting Range Park, within 300 feet of the Nine Mile trailhead, chalet and maintenance garage or other areas designated by the Committee. In addition, Bitzke Birdwalk Nature Trail Area is closed to hunting from September 1 through November 15. From November 16 through August 31 the area is open to all hunting and trapping seasons designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with the exception of waterfowl hunting which is closed year round.

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances regulates activities relating to hunting. Refer to Chapter 1000 for a full text of the Ordinance or it may be found here: <http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/departments/countyclerk/codeofordinances>. In general the following activities are regulated:

1. Tree Stands
2. Ground Blinds
3. Elevated Platforms (Freestanding)
4. Access Trail Identification
5. Shooting Lanes
6. Target Shooting
7. Trail Cameras
8. Waterfowl Blinds
9. Watercraft
10. Motorized Use

#### 930.2 FISHING

All lakes and streams within the forest are available for fishing unless otherwise listed in state regulations.

#### 930.3 PICNICKING / DAY USE

Picnicking and other day uses, outside of established facilities is allowed. The Marathon County Code of Ordinances also regulates day use. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. All litter, trash or rubbish must be removed.
2. Cutting or harvesting vegetation is not permitted.
3. Fires may not be left unattended unless the ground is 100% snow covered.

#### 930.4 CAMPING

A permit is required to camp on the County Forest. Permits are available from the County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Office and on the County website. In general, the following activities are regulated:

1. Littering or site destruction is not allowed.
2. The Committee will set the permit fee.
3. The maximum permitted time period is 14 days for any location.

#### 930.5 **MOTORIZED TRAVEL**

The Marathon County Code of Ordinances regulates motorized uses on the County Forest. In general the following regulations apply to motorized travel outside of a developed recreational trail system.

1. It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle on a trail designated closed with a gate, earthen berm, sign, or other closure.
2. Two-wheeled motorized travel (motorcycles, mini bikes, dirt bikes) is not permitted anywhere on the County Forest unless the machine is street legal and operating on a County Forest Road (gas tax).

#### 930.6 **OTHER USES**

Other uses of the County Forest are permitted provided they are not specifically addressed with the County Code of Ordinances. The County Board may, at any time, enact ordinances to protect the forest should damage begin to occur.

### **935 INTENSIVE RECREATION AREAS/USES**

Intensive recreation includes those uses for which the County provides a trail or facility. The Marathon County Forest has developed sites and areas to accommodate a fairly high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other recreation activities that are not compatible with the intent of the developed facilities.

The Committee and the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department has noted a marked increase in demand for recreation facilities. Marathon County may attempt to develop additional facilities and will maintain its currently developed facilities.

#### 935.1 **CAMPGROUNDS**

There are no designated camping areas on County Forest.

#### 935.2 **YOUTH CAMP**

There are no youth camps on County Forest.

#### 935.3 **PICNIC / DAY USE AREAS**

There are no designated picnic or day use areas on County Forest.

935.4 SWIMMING AREAS / BEACHES

There are no designated formal swimming areas on County Forest.

935.5 BOAT LANDINGS

There are no boat landings on County Forest.

935.5.1 Undeveloped Water Access Points

One undeveloped water access point for canoes and boats currently exists at the Wisconsin River Forest Unit. This is used routinely to hand launch boats or canoes but has not been developed for boat trailer launching. This site is not routinely maintained and may be closed if erosion damage becomes severe. All new sites for developed water access must be reviewed and approved by the Committee.

935.6 SKI/TUBING HILLS

There are no ski or tubing hills on County Forest.

935.7 SHOOTING RANGE PARK

The archery and gun range was developed and is maintained and administered by the Marathon County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department on the south end of the Nine Mile Forest Unit. The Committee will cooperate with the Commission to assist to the extent possible in the maintenance of the land and facilities within the park boundaries.

**940 RECREATION TRAIL ACCESS**

This trail network provides access for many recreational opportunities in 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. The Committee has the authority to open, close, or relocate trails. Non-motorized use of groomed snowmobile trails is not recommended due to serious safety concerns. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

**945 DEMAND DEVELOPMENT/EXCLUSION**

If a deficiency exists in trail mileage for a given user group, the Committee will receive recommendations and evaluate new trail proposals, with full consideration for resource protection, safety and potential for user conflicts due to County Forests being multiple use areas. An existing trail may be reclassified to satisfy demand consistent with the Fifteen-Year Plan or Comprehensive



Outdoor Recreation Plan. Trails may be closed or their use designation changed if they fail to satisfy the intended purpose or are found to be contributors to resource degradation.

**950 TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE**

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.

Beginning in 2002 the Committee adopted a policy to restrict new trail expansion for all user groups at Nine Mile County Forest Recreation Area due to the density and trail mileages that currently exist. Improvements and reconstruction of trails within the same footprint will be considered by the Committee. Relocation of some trails for resource protection and safety will also be considered. In these cases the rerouted sections will be permanently closed and allowed to revegetate naturally. Total trail mileage will remain the same or similar following the rerouted sections. Trail connections to Rib Mountain State Park will be considered to allow new trail development for connection to the State Park.

Construction or maintenance 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 stormwater 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 Marathon County meeting these parameters will employ best management practices for water quality (PUB-FR-093-2010) to mitigate any adverse impacts. In addition, 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.

**955 ORGANIZED TRAIL USE/SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department reserves the right to impose a bond for damage to the forest. Organized trail uses and group-sponsored activities must protect Marathon County with \$1,000,000 liability insurance coverage and provide a certificate of insurance as proof of coverage. Organizers may apply to hold special events by completing a Facility Use Agreement form. Special events will be considered by the Committee based upon the Nine Mile County Forest Event and Use Policy. Both the Facility Use Agreement Form and Event and Use Policy can be found in Chapter 1000.

## 960 DESIGNATED RECREATION TRAILS

Designated recreation trails are those for which the County provides a designated trail and/or facility. The County currently provides trail systems that accommodate a high degree of public use. The Committee may prohibit other activities on these trails that are not compatible with the intent of the development.

Whenever possible, multiple uses of various trail systems are encouraged and are subject to policy review of the Committee. The Committee will consider the primary purpose for which trails were developed and regulate use for the safety and enjoyment of the public and maintenance and protection of the Forest, including temporary or permanent trail closures. Wherever possible, attempts will be made to avoid user conflicts. Recreational users, however, will frequently encounter forest management activities instrumental to the existence and future of the County Forest. Management activities adjacent to designated recreation trails will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Where deemed necessary, alterations may be made to accommodate the recreational use. Trail systems are identified in Chapter 1000.

### 960.1 NON-MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

The Marathon County Forest is a multiple use forest. Non-motorized recreation trails are a legitimate use of the forest. Design and maintenance of these trails may highlight natural features present on the Forest, should minimize damage, and reduce user conflict. Trail use and development must be compatible and sustainable with the characteristics of the landscape. It is the policy of the Committee to manage non-motorized recreation trails on the County Forest.

#### 960.1.1 Hiking Trails

##### 960.1.1.1 Undesignated Hiking Trails

All portions of the County Forest are open to hiking or foot travel unless marked with signs closing an area.

##### 960.1.1.2 Designated Hiking Trails

###### Bitzke Bird Walk

This 1.9-mile walking trail in the Harrison-Hewitt Forest Unit meanders through a series of wetlands and flowages created for wetland animals. The area has a history which includes logging, fire, draining, and agriculture. As farming failed, nature began to reclaim the wetland.

Aspen trees grew up on surrounding uplands which provided food for beaver. This trail is open year round, and we ask the public to abide by the posted regulations. Maintenance of the walking trail is shared between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the County.

#### Boy Scout Hiking Trail

This 10.2-mile trail, of which 7.5 miles are designated, in the Nine Mile Forest Unit primarily follows an existing snowmobile and cross-country ski trails. The nature trail was built by the Boy Scouts to fulfill a need for a sanctioned metered course in the North Central Wisconsin area. Merit badge requirements make it compulsory that a scout travel a pretabulated course in compiling part of the mileage necessary for the award. A map of the Boy Scout hiking trail can be found in Chapter 1000.

### 960.1.2 Mountain Bike Trails

#### 960.1.2.1 Undesignated Mountain Bike Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational bicycle use. Off-trail mountain bike use is prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion or other environmental damages.

#### 960.1.2.2 Designated Mountain Bike Trails

##### Summer Nine Mile Forest Bike Trail

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated mountain biking opportunities at Nine Mile County Forest. There are approximately 33.45 miles of designated trails, including over 13.45 miles of single track and 20 miles of cross-country ski trails designated open for bicycling. The trails open May 1 – May 15 to October 15 each year depending on trail conditions. During May, trails open at Noon to allow safe and quality spring turkey hunting opportunities. Biking at Nine Mile requires the user to purchase a trail pass. A map of the designated bike trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Maintenance of the single track trails is primarily completed by volunteers of the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Additionally, other opportunities for mountain biking in Marathon County include trails at Big Eau Pleine Park, Sylvan Hill Park and at the Marathon County Ringle landfill.

### Winter Nine Mile Forest Fat Tire Bike Trails

There are about 7.6 miles of designated winter fat tire bike trails open for biking. The trails open when there is enough snow as determined by the Department but no earlier than the ski trails open which is typically mid-December depending on trail conditions. Winter biking at Nine Mile requires the user to purchase a trail pass. A map of the designated trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Maintenance and grooming of the winter bike trails is primarily completed by volunteers of the Central Wisconsin Off Road Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Additionally, other opportunities for winter fat tire biking include trails at Big Eau Pleine Park, and at the Marathon County Ringle Landfill.

### 960.1.3 Equestrian Trails

#### 960.1.3.1 Undesignated Equestrian Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for recreational horseback trail riding except in the Harrison-Hewitt, Bern Forest along with the Nine Mile cross-country and bike trails where horseback riding is prohibited. Off-trail horseback riding is also prohibited to minimize the potential for erosion, introduction of exotic species, and other environmental damage.

#### 960.1.3.2 Designated Equestrian Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated horseback riding trails at Nine Mile, Kronenwetter, and Leather Camp Forest Units. The snowmobile trail, approximately 10 miles at Nine Mile Forest, is signed and designated as a horseback riding trail. Additionally, both the Kronenwetter and Leather Camp Forest Units have approximately 18 miles designated for horseback riding although these trails are not signed. Maintenance of the equestrian trails is completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated equestrian trails can be found in Chapter 1000. Additionally, equestrian trails are developed for use at Big Eau Pleine Park.

### 960.1.4 Ski Trails

#### 960.1.4.1 Undesignated Cross Country Ski Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for cross-country skiing. Undesignated cross-country ski trails are not signed or maintained. Off trail cross-country skiing is permitted on the County Forest.

#### 960.1.4.2 Designated Cross Country Ski Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide designated cross-country skiing opportunities in the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers 19.5 miles of regularly groomed ski trails that offer both skate skiing and diagonal skiing and facilities which provide a variety of terrain and scenery. Cross-country skiing on Nine Mile designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Donations are accepted at Sylvan Hill. Dog use on groomed cross-country ski trails is prohibited when such trails are open for skiing except while hunting in accordance with Department of Natural Resources regulations.

Maintenance of the cross country ski trails is primarily completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. Volunteers from the Wausau Nordic Ski Club also provide assistance preparing the trails for the cross country ski season with approval by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated cross country ski trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

#### 960.1.5 Snowshoe Trails

##### 960.1.5.1 Undesignated Snowshoe Trails

All trails, roads, and fire lanes are open for snowshoeing except on the Nine Mile cross-country ski trails. Undesignated snowshoe trails are not signed or maintained. Off-trail snowshoeing is also permitted on the County Forest.

##### 960.1.5.2 Designated Snowshoe Trails

It is the policy of the Committee to provide public designated snowshoeing opportunities on the County Forest. Nine Mile Forest offers approximately 6.7 miles of signed snowshoe trails which include a variety of terrain and scenery. Snowshoeing on designated trails requires the user to purchase a trail pass. Generally, no maintenance is required on snowshoe trails. If required, it would be completed by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. A map of the designated snowshoe trails can be found in Chapter 1000.

#### 960.1.6 Other Non-Motorized Use

All County Forest trails are designated for non-motorized use except by permit, posted as closed, or as otherwise designated by the Committee. Gates and/or barriers will be constructed and strategically located to allow optimum maintenance while restricting motorized vehicular travel. Trail maintenance may be conducted in cooperation with the DNR Wildlife Manager.

#### 960.1.7 Future Non-Motorized Trail Systems

The development of additional non-motorized trail systems will include careful consideration of public demand, analysis of user conflicts and potential damage to the natural resource. New trail proposals will be evaluated as indicated in Section 945.

Non-motorized trail systems generally are not supported by statewide grant programs. The County will require proof of an organized club, or user group, with the ability to assist with maintenance and support of the trail and associated facilities. Appropriate trail passes, or other user fees, may be implemented as indicated in Section 915.

### 960.2 MOTORIZED RECREATION TRAILS

Motorized travel on trails can be legitimate use of the forest if these trails are designed and maintained in a manner to 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 motorized trail use:

1. Snowmobiles.
2. All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's).
3. Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV's)

#### 960.2.1 Designated Snowmobile Trails

Designated snowmobile trails are those recognized by the Committee as the official trails within the County. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department manages the snowmobile trail system in Marathon County. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

1. A & H Sno-Mobilers
2. Athens Sno-Pak
3. Eau Pleine Riders Inc.
4. Elderon Sno-Angels
5. Emmet Sno-Drifters
6. Frankfort Freedom Riders
7. Glandon Snow Barons
8. Green Valley Stump Jumpers

9. Hamburg Rainbow Riders
10. Hatley Snowmobile Club
11. KK Riders
12. Kelly Snowshoes
13. Krecji City Cruisers
14. Little Rose Riders
15. Midnight Riders
16. Nutterville Sno-Nuts
17. Peplin Unlimited
18. Pike Lake Wilderness Unlimited
19. Poniatowski Dare Devils
20. Rib Knights
21. Rib Riders
22. Rothschild Urbanaires
23. Rozellville Wilderness Riders
24. Shantytown Snowmobile Club
25. Spencer Swamp Stompers
26. Stratford Sno-Runners
27. Trailmates Snowmobile Club
28. WI Valley Sno-Jets

The Marathon County Code 7.09 regulates snowmobile trails. A summary of rules and regulations relating to snowmobile trails is as follows:

1. All groomed snowmobile trails are closed to cars and trucks unless vehicle use is approved by Marathon County.
2. The Recreation Coordinator will make determinations to officially open and close snowmobile trails based on snow, trail maintenance conditions, and information provided by the clubs.
3. Snowmobile trails used for logging access during snowmobile season will be posted with signs warning users of activity and every attempt will be made to leave at least 3 inches of snow pack on the trail. However, they may be plowed down to the trail base in certain circumstances.
4. Trail width shall not exceed 16 feet.

Marathon County recognizes the following categories of snowmobile trail:

#### 960.2.1.1 Trail Types

The County recognizes several different classifications of snowmobile trail:

State Funded Trails – these are State approved and funded trail miles on designated trails that are part of a Statewide network of trail systems. Snowmobile registration fees, trail pass sticker fees and gas tax allotments fund grants that support maintenance, rehabilitation and development of these trails. There are approximately 791 miles of funded trails in Marathon County, with approximately 42.28 miles on County Forest Lands.

Unfunded Club Trails – these are segments of trail that are maintained to the same standards as a funded trail but do not meet the State’s eligibility requirements for a funded trail system. There are approximately 67 miles of unfunded trails in Marathon County, with approximately .11 miles on County Forest lands in the Leathercamp Forest Unit. It is recommended that the County continues to apply for grants to include these in the funded system.

#### 960.2.1.2 Trail Maintenance

Marathon County contracts with Marathon County snowmobile clubs to groom the funded snowmobile trails. The County will maintain State trails in cooperation with the Marathon County Snowmobile Council and snowmobile clubs with funds provided by the DNR. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department will coordinate and administer the County-wide snowmobile trail program under s. 23.09(11) and (26) and 350.12(4), Wis. Stat., Natural Resources Code NR 50.09, and County General Code 7.09.

The County shall inspect and monitor bridges and other infrastructure on the trail system and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace or rehabilitate as needed.

DNR’s Trail Signing Handbook will be used as the guide for posting standardized signs and will assist in promoting uniformity for trail signing throughout the County. Only trail signs that provide information for safety, regulations, or trail directions will be permitted. Private and business signs are not authorized on the Forest. All trail signs must be mounted on wooden or metal posts.



#### 960.2.1.3 Future Snowmobile Trails

The Committee shall have jurisdiction over any trail development proposals. It is recommended that future trails be considered only after careful consideration of costs, benefits and impacts and as part of a larger planning effort.

Marathon County deems that the existing number of snowmobile trail miles is sufficient to satisfy public demand.

Proposals to relocate trails or to make adjustments to the existing trail system will be encouraged where there are concerns of public safety or environmental damage. Unfunded and club trails may be evaluated for maintenance funding application.

#### 960.2.2 Undesignated Snowmobile Trails

There are no undesignated snowmobile trails on County Forest. Snowmobile use is permitted on designated trails only.

#### 960.2.3 Designated ATV Trails

Designated ATV Trails are those recognized by the Committee as official trails within the County. These may lie on County, private, or other agency lands. Annual agreements outline the operation, maintenance and insurance obligations between the County and local clubs. The County contracts with the following snowmobile/ATV clubs for trail maintenance:

1. Mid-Wisconsin Trail Blazers Club

There are numerous types of designated ATV trails managed by Marathon County.

##### 960.2.3.1 Trail Types

The County recognizes several different classifications of ATV trail. Maps are appended in Chapter 1000 for reference.

1. Funded Winter ATV Trails – State funded snowmobile trails on the County Forest are also designated and funded as winter use ATV trails. There are approximately 699.5 miles of winter funded ATV trail managed by Marathon County, with 42.28 miles on County Forest lands.

Designated snowmobile trails are open for winter ATV use during the snowmobile season if the air temperature is 28°F or colder. ATV's are permitted on designated snowmobile trails on County Forest 10 days following the opening of the trails. The trails remain open until the snowmobile trails are closed or if the trail base can no longer support ATV use.

2. Funded Summer ATV Trails – these are trail systems funded for only summer use. These trails are open from May 1 – September 30. There are approximately 20.75 miles of summer use ATV trails managed by the County with 11 miles on the County Forest.
3. Funded Year Round ATV Trails - these are trail systems funded for both winter and summer use. There are approximately 11 miles of year round funded ATV trails managed by Marathon County on the County Forest.
  - a. The Burma Road Forest Unit trails are designated for year-round use. Summer trails are open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. May 1 through September 30 and winter trails are open from December 1 through March 15. Burma Forest ATV/UTV trails are open Dec. 1 – March 15 regardless of air temperature.
4. Funded UTV Trails – UTV's, or side by sides, are not allowed on snowmobile/winter ATV trail systems. Marathon County allows for UTV's on 20.75 miles of the trail system within the County with 11 miles on the County Forest. (Burma County Forest Unit and Edgar to Fenwood Trail.)
5. Funded Troute/Hybrid Trails – The ATV/UTV program does not allow for full maintenance funding on ATV/UTV trails that are open to highway traffic (cars, trucks, etc.) ATV trails with this dual use that were maintained and funded prior to August 1, 2012 are still funded at 100% of the annual per mile maintenance rate. Trails funded after August 1, 2012 allow for partial funding under the following categories:
  - a. County Forest Gas Tax Roads – these are gas tax roads used as a connector to trails or services and are funded at a rate determined by the full per mile funding rate, less gas tax funding rate, not to exceed 50% of the full maintenance funding rate. Marathon County maintains 0 miles of County Forest Road Troutes.

- b. Hybrid Trails – these are trails designated as ATV trails, opened after August 1, 2012, that also permit highway vehicle traffic. These are funded at 50% of the annual maintenance funding rate. Marathon County maintains 0 miles of Hybrid/Troute trails.
- c. Club Trails – These trails are not funded under the State ATV program. In some cases these are trails that are maintained and may be added as a funded trail at a future date. Marathon County recognizes 0 miles of club trails.
- d. State Trails – There are no State trails either funded or unfunded in Marathon County.

6. Undesignated ATV/UTV Trails

There are no undesignated ATV or UTV trails on County Forest. ATV and UTV use is permitted on designated trails only.

960.2.3.2 ATV Trail Maintenance

For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion.

The County has contracts with local clubs and organizations for the grooming, brushing, signing, and maintenance of these trails. Funding for maintenance is provided by the State ATV program.

The County shall inspect and monitor trails, bridges and other infrastructure and attempt to secure funding from grants, or other sources, to periodically replace improvements or rehabilitate trail surfaces or bridges as needed.

960.2.3.3 Future ATV Trails

The use and popularity of ATV's and UTV's increased dramatically over the period of the 2006-2020 County Forest Plan. Increased usage of trail systems proved a tremendous need for much higher levels of trail maintenance in order to manage environmental damages.

The Marathon County Forest has ten different Forest Units with Burma Forest being the only one with summer ATV/UTV trails. During the last planning process 2006 – 2020 it was determined that no new summer ATV trails would be considered due to the reasons below:

1. Unsuitable soil types
2. User conflicts
3. Small forest units without capability to connect trail systems to other counties/trail systems.
4. Only looped trail opportunities
5. Maintenance issues
6. Impacts on natural resources
7. Impacts on other users/user groups

It shall be the policy of the Committee to continue to allow summer ATV/UTV use at Burma Road. No other summer ATV/UTV use shall be approved.

It is critical that trail layout and design is done in such a way as to prevent erosion and soil loss. Trails must be developed sustainably. For the purpose of this plan, sustainability is defined as follows:

**Sustainability** – For the purpose of ATV trails, the term sustainability is intended to mean the development of a trail surface that is maintainable. It appears evident there are no circumstances where an ATV trail can be considered sustainable without intensive maintenance. Of primary importance, trail surfaces need to be conducive to periodic grading or restoration that promotes water runoff from the trail surface and eliminates the opportunity for water flow to gain velocity, causing erosion. Trails will be built with a slight crown and appropriate ditching to allow for adequate and proper water dispersal. To this end, the construction/development and maintenance of ATV trails are to comply with the **WCFA ATV/ORV Trail Standards**, which is appended in Chapter 1000 to this Plan.

#### 960.2.4 Designated Motorcycle Trails

There are no designated motorcycle trails on County Forest.

#### 960.2.5 Other Motorized Recreational Vehicle Trails

1. Designated

There are no designated other motorized recreational vehicle trails on County Forest. Other motorized recreational use on the County Forest is prohibited.

2. Undesignated

There are no other undesignated motorized recreational vehicle trails on County Forest. Other motorized recreational use on the County Forest is prohibited.

960.2.6 Recreational Access with Persons with Disabilities

The Committee supports recreational access for persons with permanent disabilities. Federal and State disabled access guidelines will be met when required.

Requests for access in non-motorized areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis and be limited to ATV's/UTV's or snowmobiles. No other motorized access will be allowed. Permits may be granted if:

1. The Permittee provides proof as disabled under DOT or DNR guidelines. Requires Class A, B or C disabled hunter permit or disabled DOT license plate.
2. The requested use will not damage soil or vegetation in the area of use.
3. The requested use will not endanger other users.
4. The requested use will not significantly impact other users of the Forest.

Additionally, if a permit is granted, the ATV/UTV or snowmobile must be clearly marked with a sign provided by the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department that reads "Disabled" or "Disabled Hunter". The permit shall be limited to a specific entry point and area. The permit shall not exceed two weeks.

Permits are granted by the Committee under County General Code 16.08(9)(c). A copy of the permit can be found in Chapter 1000.

960.3 RECREATION TRAIL PERMITS

960.3.1 Storm Water Discharge

In general, any trail construction or rehabilitation activities that disturb one acre or more of land will require a Storm Water Discharge Permit. There have been instances of inconsistent application of permit requirements Statewide. In order to further define the County's understanding and

implementation of permit requirements, the following current acceptable process will be used for determining when a permit is needed.

1. The 1 acre threshold will be determined by measuring/estimated new disturbance or disturbance of previously grassed surfaces.
2. Periodic grading of impervious or non-grassed trail surfaces is not considered disturbance.
3. Restoration of water filtration/diversion devices, such as sediment traps or catch basins is considered maintenance and not disturbance.
4. Reconstruction of previously grassed ditch lines as part of trail rehabilitation is considered disturbance.

#### 960.3.2 Chapter 30

Permits are required for new bridges or culvert crossings of navigable waterways. These permits will either be classified as general or individual depending on specific site conditions. These permits are not required for culvert or bridge crossings of non-navigable or intermittent streams, nor or they required to install a clear span bridge over wetlands.

#### 960.3.3 Wetland Fill

Permits are required at any time that fill is placed in a wetland. Permits are available to fill small wetlands for recreation trail purposes. Wetland fill must be less than 10,000 square feet and the permit does not require wetland mitigation. Clear span bridge and boardwalks placed on pilings generally do not require a wetland fill permit. Puncheon style bridges do require a permit.

### **965 RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING AND GRANTS**

#### 965.1 RECREATION AREA FUNDING

Funding for recreation areas is generally fee based. Aid for Development of Local Parks (ADLP) funding is available for facility development or enhancement but there is normally a very high level of competition for these funds.

#### 965.2 RECREATION TRAIL FUNDING

##### 965.2.1 Non-motorized trail systems

At this time, there is very limited access to any grant funds that will assist with non-motorized recreational trail maintenance. The County relies on user fees and/or funds maintenance out of the Parks, Recreation and Forestry operating budgets.

#### 965.2.2 Motorized trail systems

There are numerous grant programs available to offset motorized trail system costs. Marathon County utilizes the following funding sources. As of December 2023 the rates are:

1. Snowmobile Maintenance - \$300/mile
2. ATV Summer Maintenance - \$600/mile
3. ATV Winter Maintenance - \$100/mile
4. UTV Maintenance - \$400/mile
5. ATV Rehabilitation - 100% grants
6. ATV Development - 100% grants