



Chapter 1
Purpose and Need



1. PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Forest-wide Travel Management Project is to determine which roads and trails on the Superior National Forest are to be available for public motorized use, including highway vehicles (licensed cars and trucks), all terrain vehicles (ATVs), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs), and unlicensed off road-vehicles (class 2 ATVs and non-highway legal 4 wheel drive vehicles)..

It may be helpful to review the existing condition as well as the decisions, policies and regulations on motorized travel management over the past several years. Several changes in management policies and rules have prompted the need to make changes in how motorized use is managed on all national forests including the Superior National Forest. For example, unmanaged off-highway vehicle use, termed “unmanaged recreation” was initially identified nationally as a key threat by the Forest Service Chief and in the Forest Service’s national strategic plan. On a local level, several off-road vehicle policies were changed by the revised Forest Plan for the Superior National Forest. Cross-country travel by off-highway vehicles was prohibited and ATV use was allowed to continue on unclassified roads until such time that a decision was made on whether the unclassified road would either be decommissioned or made a part of the official road or trail system. Since the revised Forest Plan was approved in 2004, a national rule on travel management directed that motorized use only be allowed on national forest system roads and trails (and could not occur on unclassified or unauthorized routes). This rule required national forests to make decisions on where and when those motorized uses could occur. More details about these policies and the resulting changes follow:

2003 - Unmanaged Recreation – One of the Chief’s Four Threats

In 2003, the Chief of the Forest Service identified “unmanaged recreation”, especially the undesired impact from unmanaged off-road vehicle use, as a key threat facing national forests. Concerns included the amount of unplanned roads and trails, erosion, lack of quality ORV riding opportunities, water degradation, spread of invasive weeds, and habitat destruction from ORV activity. The phenomenal increase in the use of the national forests for recreational activities raises the need to manage most forms of recreation, particularly the use of off-road vehicles such as ATVs,, sport utility vehicles (SUVs), off-highway motorcycles, and similar means of transportation.

2003 – National Association of Counties Resolution

In July 2003, the National Association of Counties passed a resolution regarding off-highway vehicle management on public lands. They proposed that the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management expedite the development of new travel policies and plans, as well as interim site specific plans, in conjunction with local government and community-based partnerships that require off-highway vehicles (OHVs) to stay on designated roads, trails, or in limited off-road areas. Their resolution stated in part: “The range and ability of OHV to access remote public lands have placed demands on local search and rescue teams, helped to spread noxious and invasive weeds, have resulted in conflicts with other recreation users, ranchers, hunters, wildlife, and have caused environmental damage.”

2004 - Revised Superior National Forest Plan

Prior to 2004, the Forest Plan allowed ATVs to travel not only on low standard forest roads, but to also to travel cross-country or throughout the national forest, even where there were no roads. Approximately 1.3 million acres of national forest (most areas outside of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness) were available for ATV riding.

With the newly revised Forest Plan, the current situation for use of ATVs, off-highway motorcycles, and non-street legal four wheel drives can be described as more restrictive than the previous policy. In 2004, the revised Forest Plan made several decisions on the use of off-road vehicles and laid the groundwork for more decisions to be made in the future. The decisions in the revised Forest Plan were made because ATVs, off-highway motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles are a legitimate use of national forests, and there is a need to provide opportunities for this very popular and growing recreational pursuit. However, there is also a need to protect natural and ecological resources, provide opportunities for non-motorized recreational uses, and to reduce conflict among users. (Forest Plan Record of Decision, p. 15).

The revised Forest Plan made the following decisions:

- Cross-country travel by ATVs, off highway motorcycles, and four-wheel drives was prohibited, including no cross-country travel for big game retrieval or trapping of furbearers.
- Roads where use by ATVs, off-highway motorcycles, and four-wheel drives is inappropriate or would cause unacceptable resource damage were closed to such use. (Example: summer use of a winter-use only road)
- ATVs and off-highway motorcycles are allowed on many low standard roads that are managed for use by high-clearance vehicles such as pick-up trucks.
- ATVs, off-highway motorcycles, and four-wheel drive vehicles could continue to use many existing unclassified roads (roads that are not part of the national forest road system) *until such time that a decision was made on the disposition of the unclassified road.*
- On September 10, 2004, the Forest Supervisor issued an order listing which roads were open and which roads were closed to ATVs. A map showing these roads was distributed and has been revised on an annual basis. This resulted in approximately 1522 miles of roads being open to ATV use and approximately 1311 miles of roads being closed to ATV use. Of these approximately 244 miles of unclassified roads were open for ATV use.

2005 – Travel Management Rule Published

In late 2005, the Forest Service published the Final Rule for Travel Management. This rule revised the regulations on travel management on national forest system lands, including the use of off-highway vehicles. The rule intends to restrict motor vehicles to designated roads and trails and requires national forests to designate those roads, trails, and areas that are open to motor vehicle use. Designations are made by class of vehicle and, if appropriate, by time of year.

The decisions already made in the Forest Plan were consistent with the travel management rule, and the Forest Plan's conditional use of unclassified roads for off-highway vehicle riding was now given a process and a deadline for making that decision by the travel management rule. The rule required that any road or trail where motorized use was to be allowed would now have to be part of a national forest system road or trail, and unclassified roads would have to either be designated as system roads or trails or be decommissioned.

2005 – 2008 Collaborative Efforts of Federal, Tribal, State, and County Governments

Because of the mixed ownership of publicly managed forest lands in northeast Minnesota, and because much of this area lies within the 1854 ceded territories, the State of Minnesota, the Forest Service, county governments and the tribes within the 1854 ceded territories decided to work collaboratively in planning for each entity's respective areas. An additional objective was to strive toward a "seamless" system of motorized travel routes across publicly owned lands and where possible to have consistent rules and regulations. Beginning in 2005 and continuing through the present, these governments have worked together to inventory and map existing roads and trails and to coordinate proposals for future use. The modified proposed action being analyzed in this analysis resulted in large part from this interagency/intergovernmental collaboration.

2007 – Forest Service Strategic Plan for the years 2007 through 2012

This plan provides strategic direction to guide the Forest Service in delivering its mission. It addresses the core principles which guide our work; major issues important to natural resources management and goals upon which the agency will focus from 2007 through 2012.

One goal of the Strategic Plan is to sustain and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities with the outcome of making a variety of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities available to the public. A key objective is to improve the management of off-highway vehicle use. The Forest Service is challenged with sustaining adequate high-quality outdoor recreational experiences to meet the nation's needs while maintaining the ecological integrity of national forests. If public lands are to provide additional recreational benefits without unacceptable resource impacts, we must emphasize effective management solutions and consider the condition of the land, recreation facilities, and transportation infrastructure, including off-highway-vehicle access.

2007 – Minnesota DNR Decisions on State Forest Lands

Ten State Forests exist within the boundaries of the Superior National Forest; Grand Portage, Pat Bayle, Finland, Insula Lake, Lake Isabella, Bear Island, Burntside, Lake Jeanette, Kabetogema, and Sturgeon River State Forests. Insula Lake and Lake Isabella are within the BWCAW and therefore closed to all motorized use. In 2007, the Minnesota DNR issued motor vehicle use classification decisions for the Grand Portage (Managed), Pat Bayle (Limited) and Finland State Forests (Limited on portions within the Superior National Forest, Managed on portions outside Superior NF). In addition, decisions have been made on the scattered state lands outside the State Forest boundaries within Cook and St. Louis Counties. Decisions on the remaining State Forests and scattered state lands within St. Louis County are expected within the year.

1.2 ORGANIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This environmental assessment is organized into four chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Purpose and Need** – Provides introductory material that explains the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, provides background information about the Project Area, and describes the issues used for alternative analysis.
- **Chapter 2: Alternatives** – Describes the no-action alternative and the three action alternatives, which are analyzed in detail in Chapter 3. Chapter 2 provides a summary comparison of the

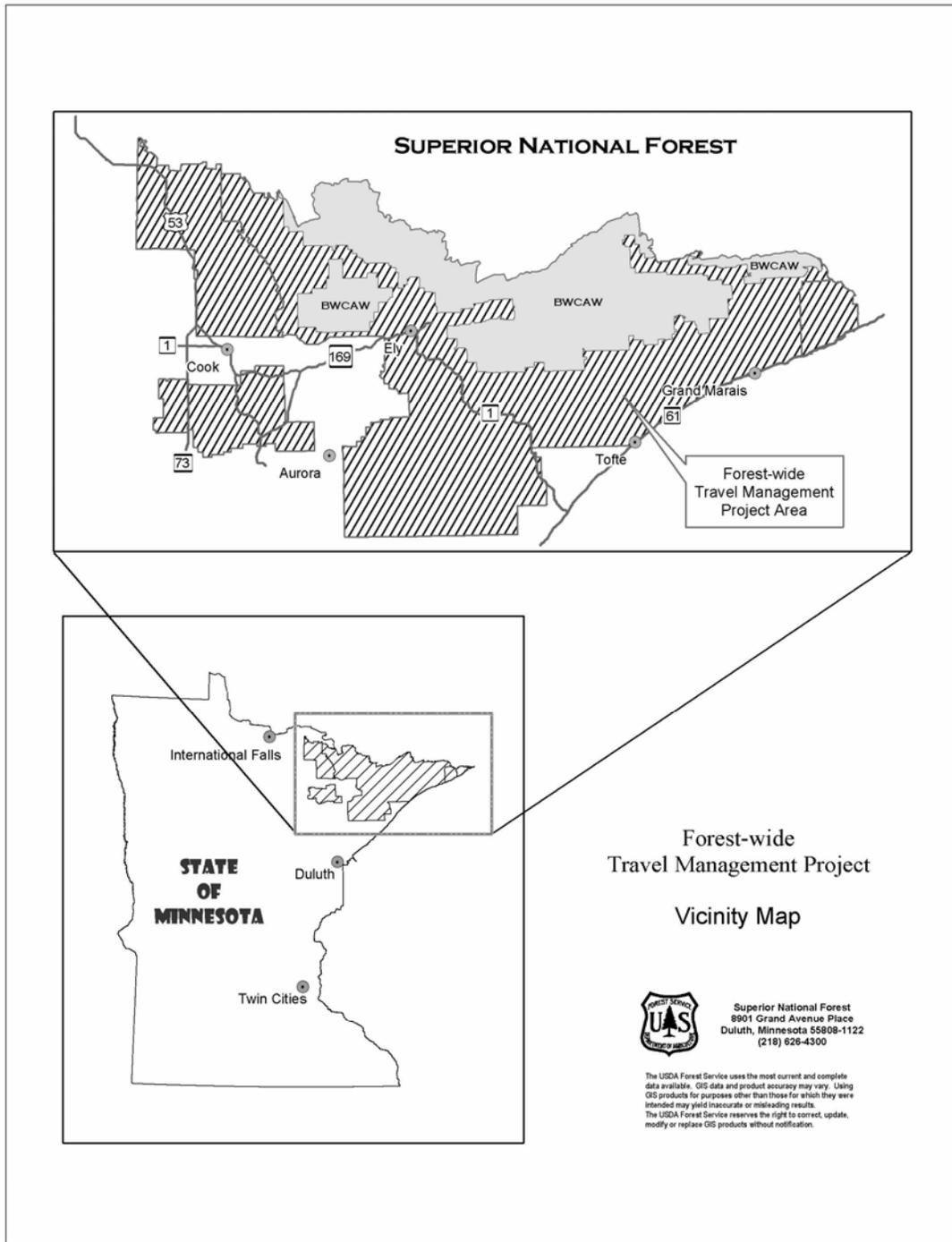
environmental effects that would result from implementation of the alternatives. This chapter also describes alternatives considered and eliminated from further study.

- **Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Effects** – Describes the affected environment and the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the alternatives.
- **Chapter 4: Lists** – Provides the following information:
 - **Preparers and Contributors** – Lists the people who contributed to the development and preparation of this EA
 - **Glossary** – Defines the technical terms used in this EA

1.3 PROJECT AREA

The Forest-wide Travel Management Project includes all national forest system lands within the proclamation boundaries of the Superior National Forest and also includes the Kabetogema and Pigeon River Purchase units. Not included in this project is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness where motorized use is restricted by legislation. Although no decisions will be made for lands within the BWCAW, the potential effects to wilderness will be considered as part of this analysis. The project area is located in Cook, Lake and St. Louis Counties, and encompasses approximately 2,768,000 acres of which approximately 1,363,900 are national forest system lands. (See Figure 1-2.) Other landowners who manage land within the Project Area boundaries include the State of Minnesota, Cook County, Lake County, St. Louis County, and private landowners. All management actions proposed as part of the Forest-wide Travel Management Project would occur on National Forest System land, although they may be closely linked with decisions made by others on their lands.

Figure 1-1. Project Vicinity Map



1.4 MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

This environmental assessment for the Forest-wide Travel Management Project presents a range of reasonable alternatives and displays site-specific descriptions and impacts of the proposed activities. The environmental assessment is tiered to the 2004 Superior National Forest Plan and its associated Forest Plan environmental impact statement as supported by the National Environmental Policy Act and 40 CFR 1502.20. Relevant discussions from these documents have been incorporated by reference rather than repeated (40 CFR 1502.21).

Management Areas

The Forest Plan “zones” the Superior National Forest into 14 management areas. Six management areas allow motorized recreation use, and have a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum objective of roaded-natural or semi-primitive motorized: General Forest, General Forest-Longer Rotation, Recreation Use in a Scenic Landscape, Riparian Emphasis, Semi-primitive Motorized Recreation and Eligible Scenic and Recreational Rivers (the Wild portion of these rivers do not allow motorized recreation use since they are within the BWCAW). These management areas comprise approximately 1.63 million acres (61 percent) of National Forest System lands on the Superior.

The eight remaining management areas either discourage motorized recreation use or prohibit it completely. Within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, all four management areas prohibit passenger vehicles, ATVs, off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) and four-wheel drives. These include Pristine Wilderness, Primitive Wilderness, Semi-primitive Non-motorized Wilderness, and the Semi-primitive Motorized Wilderness (which only allows limited horsepower boats and canoes on certain lakes specified by law). These management areas comprise approximately 810,609 (37 percent) of National Forest System lands on the Superior.

Outside the Wilderness, four management areas discourage or prohibit motorized recreation use. The Semi-primitive non-motorized Recreation and the Candidate Research Natural Area management areas have a Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Objective of Semi-primitive non-motorized, and therefore ATVs, Off-highway motorcycles, and four-wheel drives are not allowed. The Unique Biological and Research Natural Management Areas have a semi-primitive motorized Recreation Opportunity Spectrum objective, but have guidelines (G-UB-9 and G-RNA-4) that state that use by ATVs, off-highway motorcycles and four-wheel drives is generally prohibited on lower standard (OML 1 and OML 2) roads. These management areas comprise approximately 29,770 acres (1.3 percent) of National Forest System lands on the Superior.

Other Forest Service Direction, Laws, and Regulations

In addition to the *Forest Service Manual* and *Forest Service Handbook* direction, the interdisciplinary team of natural resource specialists complied with federal and State laws and regulations in conducting the environmental analysis and developing the environmental assessment for this project.

Definitions

See Chapter 4, Section 4.2 for a glossary of definitions explaining the types of roads and trails managed on the Superior National Forest as well as decommissioning techniques.

1.5 PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is two fold:

1. **Designate or decommission unclassified roads.** The Travel Management Rule restricts motor vehicles to designated roads and trails but not all roads on the Superior NF are designated. There is a need to designate needed roads as system roads, trails, or special use authorization routes, and to decommission unclassified roads not needed for long-term resource management. Roads designated for decommissioning will generally be subject to the following: Road will be rendered unusable by motorized vehicles; stream crossing structures will be removed; road fills will be removed from flood prone and wetland areas to restore stream and wetland crossings to original contours; and exposed soil will be revegetated (Forest Plan p. 2-50).

2. **Create loops and connections.** Many of the roads that the TMR requires the FS to make decisions on are short spur roads that do not provide quality motorized experiences, while the Forest needs to provide a range of quality motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities to satisfy diverse public interests while maintaining sustainable ecosystems (D-REC-1). Mixed ownership of publicly managed land also requires collaborative planning to create a seamless system of routes (D-TS-4). There is a need to create recreation opportunities for off-highway vehicles by identifying loop routes and connections on existing roads and trails that provide for enjoyable and consistently managed riding experiences. Limited new construction may be necessary to create the loops.

These two purposes would be achieved in concert with the goals and objectives outlined in the Forest Plan and would comply with the Travel Management Rule requiring a designated route system for motor vehicle use by vehicle class and if appropriate, by time of year.

Management actions are needed to comply with the Travel Management Rule and to move the existing condition towards the goals, desired conditions, objectives and standards and guidelines of the Forest Plan, in particular:

Goals (Forest Plan p. 2-5)

Promote ecosystem health and conservation using a collaborative approach to sustain the nation's forests and watersheds.

Provide a variety of uses, values, products and services for present and future generations by managing within the capability of sustainable ecosystems.

Provide management direction that enhances social and economic benefits for individuals and communities:

Maintain a road and trail system that provides opportunities for people to access the national forest.

Contribute to efforts to sustain the American Indian way of life, cultural integrity, social cohesion, and economic well-being.

Desired Conditions

D-CM-1: The Forest works cooperatively with other landowners, and land managers to protect, enhance, and restore physical and biological resources as well as social and economic values. Cooperative management includes tribal, State, county and local governments as well as other federal agencies. (Forest Plan, p. 2-6)

D-TR-3: Superior National Forest facilitates the exercise of the right to hunt, fish and gather as retained by the Ojibwe whose homelands were subject to treaty in 1854 and 1866. Ongoing

opportunities for such use and constraints necessary for resource protection are determined in consultation with the following Ojibwe Bands: Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, and Bois Forte. (Forest Plan, p. 2-37)

D-REC-1: The Forest provides a range of quality motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities to satisfy diverse public interests while maintaining sustainable ecosystems. (Forest Plan, p. 2-40)

D-RMV-1: The Forest provides recreation motor vehicle road and trail riding opportunities with experiences in a variety of forest environments, while protecting natural resources. (Forest Plan, p. 2-43)

D-RMV 2: Allowed, restricted and prohibited recreation motor vehicle uses are clearly defined to the public. Where practical, recreation motor vehicle policies are consistent with adjacent public land management agencies. (Forest Plan, p. 2-43)

D-TS-2: The National Forest road system is the minimum needed to provide adequate access to both national forest system and non-system land. (Forest Plan, p. 2-47)

D-TS-3: The transportation system design considers environmental, social and health concerns. (Forest Plan, p. 2-47)

D-TS-4: The national forest road system provides a “seamless” interface with the neighboring public road agencies based on coordinated use, function and agency goals. (Forest Plan, p. 2-47)

D-TS-5: Private and non-national forest system landowners have reasonable access to their lands. (Forest Plan, p. 2-47)

Objectives

O-TS-6: Decisions will be made on forest unclassified roads to designate them as a national forest system road or trail or to decommission them. (Forest Plan, p. 2-49)

O-TS-7: Unneeded roads will be decommissioned and closed to motorized vehicles. Roads that are not necessary for long-term resource management are considered “unneeded.” (Forest Plan, p. 2-49)

O-SU-2 Attempt to meet demand for special use activities when consistent with the Forest Plan direction and when the proposed use cannot be accommodated on non-NFS land. (Forest Plan, p. 2-52)

Standards

S-TR-3: Forest management activities will be conducted in a manner to minimize impact to the ability of Tribal members to hunt, fish, and gather plants and animals on Forest Service administered lands. (Forest Plan, p. 2-38)

S-TS-4: Decommission unclassified roads that are not needed in the national forest road and trail system and special use permitted roads that are no longer needed. Decommissioning will make the road unusable by motorized vehicles and stabilize the roadbed. (Forest Plan, p. 2-50)

Guidelines

G-RMV-1: OHV use is generally prohibited on OML 3, 4, and 5 roads. OHV use may be allowed on specific segments of OML 3, 4 and roads to provide connections to other roads and trails open to OHVs, if safety, resource and other requirements can be addressed. (Forest Plan, P. 2-44)

G-RMV-4: RMV use will generally be allowed on existing unclassified, OML 1 and OML 2 roads. (Except ORVs will generally be prohibited on OML 1 roads). (Forest Plan, p. 2-44)

G-TS-12: On existing OML1 roads, an effective barrier will generally be installed as needed to prevent use by highway-licensed vehicles and ORVs. ATV and OHM use may continue to be allowed on some existing OML 1 roads. (Forest Plan, p. 2-50)

1.6 MODIFIED PROPOSED ACTION

The public was informed of, and invited to submit comments on the Travel Management Project through two scoping letters issued on March 23, 2007 and June 11, 2007. At that time, the eastern portion and western portion of the Superior National Forest were expected to be analyzed separately. A decision was later made to combine the projects into a single, forest-wide analysis, with Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders as the Responsible Official. The Scoping Letters each included a “Proposed Action” which outlined the management activities the interdisciplinary team had determined would move the Project Area towards the desired future conditions set forth in the Forest Plan.

To develop the proposed action, the Interdisciplinary Team identified existing National Forest System roads and system trails that are currently closed to use by OHVs but could be opened to create recreational OHV loops. This proposal was developed based on comments received from the public during the five public meetings held in conjunction with the MNDNR meetings in Cook, Lake and St. Louis Counties. The proposal looked at ways to make more logical travel routes including loops and connections to destinations such as towns, lakes, campgrounds, service stations and restaurants. This was done trying to utilize existing roads and trails first, and only recommending minimal new trail construction as a last possible resort. This proposal does recommend utilizing portions of existing higher maintenance level roads (OML 3-5) that are generally closed OHVs unless needed to provide a connection to a lower standard road.

In other instances, where short, lower standard roads now open to OHVs branch off an existing higher maintenance road that is currently closed and not being considered for opening, these roads were considered for closing to reduce the potential for illegal use on the higher level road. To offset this, these short roads generally remained open to standard vehicles such as cars and trucks.

The Interdisciplinary Team reviewed all inventoried unclassified roads for their potential immediate or long term need and made a proposal regarding their disposition. Some of the criteria used to develop the proposed action included:

- Vegetation Management – would there be a need for repeated entries for thinning or would there be a need for treatment in the next 20 years?
- Access to Tribal hunting/gathering – does the road access a particular vegetation type or area that has been identified by the tribes for in the pursuit of tribal rights including hunting or gathering needs?
- Other Uses – is the road needed for lake, gravel pit, or dispersed recreation campsite access?
- Other Ownerships – should the road be opened or closed to coincide with adjacent land owner or land management agency’s jurisdiction?

- ATV loop or destination – is the road needed to complete a possible loop route or access a destination for ATV/OHVs.
- The proposed action as presented in this document has been slightly modified. Additional coordination with the State of Minnesota, County governments and American Indian tribes has resulted in minor changes to better coordinate the respective proposals.

The intent of the Proposed Action remained intact when it was modified each time. This EA analyzes the Modified Proposed Action (Alternative 2). Listed below are the specific actions proposed in the Modified Proposed Action. These would be changes from the currently existing condition. See Chapter 2 for a more complete description of total opportunities available under this proposal.

Proposed Changes to National Forest System Roads/Trails

NFS Roads - Open to OHVs or ATV/OHM (Currently Closed)	260 miles
NFS Roads - Close to OHVs (Currently Open)	71 miles
NFS Trails Open to ATV/OHM (Currently closed)	43 miles
Construct New ATV/OHM Trail	2.5 miles

Proposed Changes to Unclassified Roads on National Forest System Lands

Decommission of Unclassified Roads	157 miles
Convert to National Forest System Road	125 miles
Convert to ATV Trail	14 miles
Potential Special Use Access Route	3.3 miles

Proposed OHV Designation of Unclassified Roads converted to National Forest System Road

Convert to NF System Road – Open to only ATV/OHMs	39 miles
Convert to NF System Road – Open to all OHVs	50 miles
Convert to NF System Road – Close to all OHVs*	39 miles

As a result of the modified proposed action, there would be:

- Approximately 157 miles of unclassified roads decommissioned. The modified proposed action identifies the location of roads to be decommissioned. The site-specific methods may vary site by site. Past monitoring has revealed that road decommissioning practices and procedures have been effective at revegetation and prevention of unwanted motorized use. (2006 Monitoring and Evaluation Report).
- Approximately 1603 miles available for ATV/OHM riding on the Superior National Forest (currently 1573 miles are available, including riding on unclassified roads).

1.7 DECISION TO BE MADE

The scope of the Project is limited to decisions concerning travel management across the Forest-wide Travel Management that meet the purpose and need of the Project and desired conditions of the Forest Plan. The environmental assessment will provide the Responsible Official (Forest Supervisor Jim Sanders) with the information needed to make the following decision:

Which roads and trails to designate as open to motor vehicles (See maps entitled “Off Highway Vehicle Use” for each alternative).

Which unclassified roads to decommission (See maps entitled “Disposition of Unclassified Roads for each alternative).

Where to create loops and connections (See maps entitled “Off Highway Vehicle Use” for each alternative)

1.8 IMPLEMENTATION

If an action alternative is selected, the Forest-wide Travel Management Project would be initiated after publication of the decision. A Motor Vehicle Use Map would be published and would become the legal document for determining the location, type of vehicle use authorized, and season of use. Public use of motor vehicles would only be allowed on those national forest system roads or trails shown on the map. Unclassified roads would then become Unauthorized Roads, and public use of these roads would be prohibited. Decommissioning of the Unauthorized Roads would occur over a period of time, as funding is available.

Special use authorizations for access across federal land would be granted for long-term access. User holders would be authorized to re-construct or use an existing unclassified road, within the limitations described in the authorization. The special use authorization(s) would meet the requirements of the laws and regulations that apply to national forest management. Special use access routes would be monitored to ensure authorized users are in compliance with the terms and conditions of the associated special use authorization.

If the no-action alternative is selected, none of the proposed management activities would occur.

1.9 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Scoping Proposed Action

The interdisciplinary team conducted public scoping and involvement activities to determine issues associated with the Project Area.

Early on in the process the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service held joint public meetings to present information about existing roads and trails to the public and to explain the collaborative planning process. Public meetings were held in Grand Marais and Schroeder, MN during January of 2006, in Finland, Two Harbors and at Fall Lake town hall in July of 2006, and in Tower, Virginia and Orr in June of 2007. Throughout 2006 and into 2007, the Forest Service continued to meet and collaborate with other governments (MN DNR, Counties, and Tribal representatives) on the State Forest Classifications and to evaluate cross-jurisdictional routes.

The interdisciplinary teams developed two Scoping Letters (one for the Eastern Zone and one for the Western Zone of the national forest) that included information on the Project Area, a preliminary Purpose and Need, a Proposed Action, instructions for submitting comments, and maps displaying the proposed action for OHV travel and for unclassified roads. The Eastern Zone mailed the scoping letter on March 23, 2007 and the Western Zone mailed their scoping letter on June 11, 2007. Approximately 85 letters totaling over 950 comments on the Scoping Letters were received from the public.

1.12 ISSUES

Issues are a point of debate, dispute, or disagreement regarding anticipated effects of the Proposed Action. Issues were identified from comments gathered through the scoping process. Many of the public comments were addressed through project design, mitigation, or application of Forest Plan direction.

All comments received were read and considered. Some comments do not enter into the analysis because they are:

- Outside the project scope (do not meet the purpose and need for the proposal)
- Already decided by law, regulations, Forest Plan, or policy
- Irrelevant to the decision being made
- Conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence.

Through the analysis of public scoping comments, the interdisciplinary team identified issues that drove the development of alternatives (management options).

The interdisciplinary team also developed indicators for each issue to compare the environmental impacts of each alternative. Those indicators are identified and described in Chapter 3 of this environmental assessment.

1. The proposed level of OHV use will adversely affect motorized recreation opportunities for forest visitors and adjacent landowners. This includes the following elements:

- Impacts to OHV recreation experience for forest visitors & adjacent landowners.
- Impacts to forest access for hunting and fulfillment of 1854 Treaty rights

Disagreement exists on the level of effects the Modified Proposed Action could have on OHV recreation users, forest visitors and adjacent landowners. Some commenters expressed concern that the prohibitions and decommissioning proposed would limit their ability to experience and enjoy access to the forest for recreation, hunting, gathering and access to treaty rights. Other commenters, especially those who live in close proximity to the forest expressed concern that proposals for restrictions on specific roads would impact normal travel routines, such as travel to local businesses. .

Table 1.1 – Where Issue 1 is addressed in the analysis.

Potential Effects To Issue 1 Elements from Proposed Prohibitions and Decommissionings	EA Section(s)
Motorized recreation	3.7
Forest Access – treaty rights and hunting and gathering	3.6

2. The proposed level of OHV use will adversely affect non-motorized recreation opportunities for forest visitors and adjacent landowners. The proposed level of use could also affect forest resources. This includes the following elements:

- Impacts to non-motorized recreation experience on NFS lands
- Impacts to wilderness character in the BWCAW
- Impacts to soil and water resources
- Impacts from the spread of NNIS

- Impacts to threatened and endangered species, Regional Forester sensitive species and habitat

Disagreement exists on the level of effects the Modified Proposed Action could have on non-motorized recreation users, forest visitors and adjacent landowners and forest resources. Some commenters expressed concern that the number, location and types of routes where the modified proposed action would allow OHV use would negatively impact non-motorized recreation experiences. Other commenters expressed concern about effects to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from ATV use, especially in close proximity to the wilderness boundary. Some commenters identified forest resource related concerns, including soil, water, non-native invasive species (especially with ATV use on lower standard roads) and wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Table 1.2 – Where Issue 2 is addressed in the analysis.

Potential Effects To Issue 2 Elements	EA Section(s)
Non-motorized recreation	3.7
Soil and water resources	3.10
Spread of NNIS	3.12
TES, RFSS, wildlife, and wildlife habitat	3.11
Wilderness characteristics in the BWCAW	3.9-3.12

1.13 RESOURCES ANALYZED

The scientific and analytic comparison of alternatives is disclosed in Chapter 3 of this environmental assessment. The analysis focuses primarily on effects related to the issues. Analysis in Chapter 3 includes the following resources and topics.

- Environmental impacts of the alternatives
- Adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented
- Relationship between short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity
- Irreversible or ir retrievable commitment of resources which would be involved in the proposal should it be implemented
- Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects and their context and intensity. The resources include:
 - Recreation
 - Access
 - Wilderness Character in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
 - Soils and Water
 - Non-native Invasive Species (NNIS)
 - Threatened/Endangered and Sensitive Species
 - Heritage Resources

– Economics

1.14 AVAILABILITY OF THE PLANNING RECORD

The Planning Record will be available at the Supervisor's Office of the Superior National Forest, Duluth, Minnesota, upon publication of the decision.