

## D. Non-motorized and Motorized Recreation Opportunities

The Forest provides a variety of opportunities, settings, and experiences for motorized or non-motorized recreation.

### Key Points

- The existence of roads within the forest is the primary criteria to assign a recreational opportunity spectrum area as a motorized or non-motorized area. Continuing to not build permanent roads and to decommission permanent roads may influence the Forest ROS inventory over the next five years.
- The demand and the ability of the Forest Service to meet that demand in the context of the Forest Plan and budgets will guide the quantity of motorized and non-motorized trails.
- Additional analysis should be done to map traditional small areas (Bass Lake/Rush Island, Simpson Creek Trail/Area, Fiske Lake) across the CNF that have been informally managed for non-motorized use.

### Monitoring Question

To what extent is the Forest providing a range of motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities that incorporate diverse public interests yet achieve applicable Management Area and LE objectives?

### Results

#### Management Areas

During Forest Plan revision management areas were assigned to encompass specified land areas. Management areas are portions of a landscape with similar management objectives and a common management prescription. Management areas indicate certain types of management activities or uses of the land. Most management areas allow for the use of motorized vehicles, few management areas are non-motorized uses.

**Table 6-2.** Management Area by Motorized or Non-Motorized Criteria

Management Area	Motorized or Non-motorized
Candidate RNAs	Non-motorized
Eligible Scenic Rivers	Motorized
Experimental Forest	Motorized
General Forest	Motorized
General Forest – Longer Rotation	Motorized
Recreation Use in a Scenic Landscape	Motorized
Research Natural Areas	Non-motorized
Riparian Emphasis	Motorized
Semi-primitive Non-motorized Recreation	Non-motorized

Unique Biologic/Aquatic/Geology/History	Motorized
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The following table is a summary of the percentage of non-motorized and motorized National Forest system lands.

**Table 6-3.** Percentage of NFS Land by Motorized and Non-Motorized Acres

<b>Management Area : Motorized or Non-motorized</b>	<b>2004 Percent</b>	<b>2011 Percent</b>
Non-Motorized	4%	4%
Motorized	96%	96%

A Forest Plan amendment was completed June 4, 2009, adding an additional 1,868 acres to the North Winnie Semi-primitive Non-motorized area (North Winnie SPM Boundary Change and Trail Project Decision Notice). However, these additional acres are not enough to change the percentage of motorized and non-motorized lands within the Chippewa NF.

### Trails

Numbers on the miles of trails in 2004 compared to 2011 is as follows:

**Table 6-4.** Miles and percentages of Motorized and Non-motorized Trails

<b>Trails</b>	<b>2004 Miles</b>	<b>2004 %</b>	<b>2011 Miles</b>	<b>2011%</b>
Motorized Trails	378	56%	310	39%
Non-motorized Trails	303	44%	489	61%
Total Miles	681	100%	799	100%

Differences in the percentage of motorized and non-motorized trails and also total miles between 2004 and 2011 are due to:

- Compiling accurate data is on on-going effort.
- An existing water trail was added to the data base.
- New trails developed in the Winnie North Semi-primitive Non-motorized Area were added to the data base.
- Four trails that were indicated as a single use in 2004 were changed to reflect snow and non-snow use. The majority of those miles were non-motorized.

### Roads

The Forest has hundreds of miles of roads. Inventory of the road system has improved through better record keeping and identification of hundreds of unauthorized routes. Over 140 miles of road has been decommissioned, and an additional 265 miles of unauthorized roads have been identified since 2004.

**Table 6-5. National Forest System and Unauthorized Road Miles**

<b>Type of Road</b>	<b>2004 Road Miles</b>	<b>2011 Road Miles</b>
System Roads	2,646	2,458
Unauthorized Roads		265

Of the approximately 2,450 miles of Forest Service system roads, 1,620 road miles are be accessible with motorized vehicles year round. Off-highway vehicle use is not allowed from March 16 to May 1 of each year. Some roads are also closed seasonally for reasons such as wet soils or wildlife nesting habitat. There are many other resource related seasonal closure factors.

Unauthorized roads are those roads not a part of the Forest Service road system. They are closed to motor vehicle traffic, and may be accessed by non-motorized means.

All roads are open to non-motorized use.

The following table indicates the total number of road miles on the Chippewa open year round and closed seasonally to OHVs and other motorized vehicles by year.

**Table 6-6. Road Miles Open to Motorized Use Year Round and Seasonally Closed to Motorized Use**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Open Year Round to :</b>		<b>Seasonal Closures:</b>		<b>Total Miles FS Roads</b>
	Motorized Vehicles excluding OHVs	OHV	All Motorized Vehicles	OHV	
2008	1878	10.5	106	1345	2349
2009	1761	0	111	1351	2479
2010	1709	0.3	111	1345	2468
2011	1623	0	101	1360	2444

## **Implications**

### **Management Areas**

The acres assigned within management areas have not substantially changed and therefore there have been no significant changes in the opportunities for motorized and non-motorized forest access. There has been an increase of approximately 1,870 acres to the designated semi-primitive non-motorized North Winnie area. The additional acres were added to the area through a Forest Plan amendment. These additional acres are a small enough amount that when included within the Chippewa's total acres, it does not change the percentages of motorized and non-motorized acres.

### **Roads**

The Forest Plan indicates that there will be approximately 200 miles of roads decommissioned by the end of Decade 1. These roads will not be available for motorized use; non-motorized use can continue as always within the decommissioned corridor.

### **Trails**

While the mileage indicates change to the motorized and non-motorized designated trails, a significant portion is due to the data base recognizing that trails have dual use based on the

season and so miles are then double counted. An existing water trail was added to the data base and new trail was designated in the semi-primitive non-motorized area. Continuing to improve trail inventory and to provide quality information to visitors is necessary.

## **New Issues**

Since the Forest Plan has been implemented, there are a number of small areas that have been identified across the Forest that have been traditionally managed as non-motorized areas. These areas have not been formally identified as semi-primitive non-motorized areas within the Forest Plan. These areas include:

- Bass Lake/Rush Island: This area was acquired approximately 20 years ago by the Forest Service. Since that time, it has been managed as a semi-primitive non-motorized area. It has been posted and enforced through a Forest Supervisor's Order.
- Simpson Creek Trail/Area: This area has been managed as a semi-primitive non-motorized area.
- Fiske Lake: This area has been managed as a semi-primitive non-motorized area for many years. It is adjacent to MN DNR Wildlife Management area, managed as a non-motorized area.

## **Recommendations**

- Implementation of the goals of the Forest Plan for management of the semi-primitive non-motorized management areas has been delayed for the Suomi Hills area due to budget constraints. Trailheads, signing, parking areas, and trail inventory are site specific amenities and processes that have had to be delayed. Investigating partnerships and/or stewardship contracts, and advocating for additional recreation funding would enable the Forest to further work toward meeting the Forest Plan goals.
- The recreation opportunity spectrum inventory may change slowly over time as roads are decommissioned. ROS should be considered again in the next Plan revision as a factor influencing management area designations.
- Motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities for change should continue to reflect both demand and ability of the Forest Service to respond to the demand within the context of the Forest plan and budget.
- The CNF will continue through project level planning to consider management of some inventoried semi-primitive ROS areas for separate non-motorized or motorized recreation uses. (O-REC-3). These areas (Bass Lake/ Rush Island, Simpson Creek Trail/Area, and Fiske Lake) that have recently been identified as traditionally managed for non-motorized use should be identified and managed as O-REC-3 recommends.

Additional information can be found in the project file and is available upon request.