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**Travel Management Project**  
**2011 Supplement to**  
**Recreation Resource Report Supplement**

Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest



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## **Overview**

This analysis is a supplement to the Travel Management Project Recreation Report, dated June 2008. The purpose of this supplement is to provide recreation analysis for the 2011 Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) Update and will compare the effects on motorized recreational opportunities in regards to the proposal for 2011, the decision implemented in 2010, and motorized use prior to the 2009 decision.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) proposal presents the interdisciplinary, public involvement-based, outcome of the additional 183 roads and trails put through the CNNF roads analysis process (RAP). The RAP included ranking criteria for resource risks (water quality, soils, heritage resources, resource protection-based management areas; Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species habitats, other wildlife needs, the potential to spread of non native invasive species) and a road value to the public (access for hunting, bough and firewood gathering, recreation, access to private in holdings, and administrative access). Recreation in terms of road value can be described as use to access dispersed camping, hiking, fishing, and various other recreation activities. It can also be used to describe motorized recreational use such as all terrain vehicle (ATV) use. Roads were also analyzed by district personnel in terms of socioeconomic effect and a landscape scale as well as the above criteria. Proximity to non-motorized recreation opportunities were also taken into consideration.

## **Effects of 2011 MVUM Update**

Implementation of the proposed 2011 MVUM Update would result in a total of 1,921 miles of roads available to public motor vehicle use. Of the 1,921 miles, 1,361.6 miles would be available to highway legal vehicles (HLV), 4.7 miles of road would be available to ATV, and 547.9 miles would be available for both types of vehicles. Additionally, 6.3 miles of roads would be open to HLV, ATV, and utility terrain vehicles (UTV). Compared to what was available prior to 2009, motorized recreation opportunities would be reduced by 2,735.5 miles resulting in a 59% reduction in recreation motorized use opportunities.

Roads and trails brought forward through the 2011 analysis would result in 12.9 miles of road added and 10.5 miles of road removed. Seasonal designation addition would occur on 0.3 miles of trail. UTVs would be allowed on 168.1 miles of trail and 6.3 miles of road that provide connections to ATV routes and trails off-Forest. Additionally, the 13.0 mile Pipeline trail on the Lakewood Laona Ranger District would have a seasonal restriction reduced for highway legal vehicles.

Project decisions made through vegetative management environmental impact statements resulted in changes to the 2011 MVUM. Roads added were 68.5 miles, and roads removed were 17.3. Trails added were 1.4 miles. 10.5 miles of roads had changes in vehicle designations, including

3.7 miles where ATV seasonal use was added, and 5.8 miles where ATV seasonal use was removed.

Due to map or data corrections, 0.02 miles of road were opened to HLV, 30.2 miles of roads were removed, and 1.3 miles of road changed designation for the 2011 map. These corrections consisted of location/mileage errors, non-existence, and closures by previous decisions that were not updated in the database.

By comparing the roads data collected from the 2010 MVUM against the proposed 2011 MVUM we would be adding 81.4 miles of roads, removing 58 miles of roads, and changing the motorized designation of 23.2 miles of roads for a net increase of 23.4 miles of roads available to public motorized use. This includes a loss of 2.7 miles to ATV, and gains of 9.3 miles for HLV, 10.4 miles for HLV and ATV, and 6.3 miles of gains for HLV, ATV, and UTV.

The 2011 MVUM when compared to the data available from the 2010 MVUM increases recreational opportunities by increasing the number of miles available for public use thus increasing motorized recreational use opportunities. By analyzing these available miles using the Chequamegon-Nicolet Roads Analysis Process (RAP) we are in compliance with the Forest Plan and are within the parameters established in the 2008 environmental assessment.

Social and economic values are considered in the process. The RAP includes analysis based not only on resource risks, but also on access values related to public use. Additionally, when designating public motor vehicle use for each road in our analysis, the District Rangers consider the impact to the known local social and economic climate. However, the socioeconomic value attached to public motor vehicle use is difficult to determine due to the large amount of complex variables including season of use, road size, differences in public values regarding motorized versus non-motorized recreation, differences in management actions at the local and state level regarding motorized recreation, and location of each individually effected road.

### **Proposed UTV Rule**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources pilot UTV (Utility Terrain Vehicle) rule would have a positive impact on recreation forest wide. During the summer and throughout the fall seasons, a great deal of motorized use occurs on the Forest ATV trails. This rule would allow UTVs to use many ATV trails on the Forest on a trial basis. Similar to the State of Wisconsin program, counties can opt in or out of the pilot program. Trails where the Forest has proposed to allow UTVs are in counties that have opted in to the program. The Forest will use the definition of a UTV that mirrors the of the State of Wisconsin, which includes side-by-side vehicles up to 65 inches in width and no more than 1,999 pounds. (Wisconsin Statute 23.33 (11p) (6))

By and large, UTVs have not been legal to operate on public lands prior to the inception of the pilot program in 2009. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how much impact this will have

when added to Forest ATV trails. It is expected that numbers of UTVs on Forest trails would start out very low until more users purchase UTVs. UTVs will allow a certain segment access to ATV trails, those that can now accompany other users because of the ability to comfortably handle two passengers, and those that may not be comfortable astraddle an ATV.

At this time, UTVs are not being considered on Forest roads unless they provide connections to ATV trails off-Forest. There are 6.3 miles of roads proposed in this scenario. For trails, there are 168.1 miles of existing ATV trail that would be open to UTVs. These are all seasonal, the same as ATVs, open from May 1 through March 14 each year (closed March 15 – April 30).