

Minnesota Administrative Rules

Authenticate

6100.1950 MOTOR VEHICLES AND SNOWMOBILES; FOREST LANDS.

Subpart 1. **Classified forest lands.** The operation of motor vehicles and snowmobiles on forest lands classified by the commissioner for purposes of motor vehicle use according to subpart 2 and Minnesota Statutes, section 89.002, is regulated according to items A to C.

A. On forest lands classified as managed, a person may operate a motor vehicle only on forest roads and forest trails that are not posted and designated closed and in areas that are posted and designated to allow motor vehicle use, subject to the limitations and exceptions in this part.

B. On forest lands classified as limited, a person may operate a motor vehicle only on forest roads that are not posted and designated closed and on forest trails or areas that are posted and designated to allow motor vehicle use, subject to the limitations and exceptions in this part.

C. No person shall operate a motor vehicle or snowmobile on forest lands classified as closed, unless on frozen public waters where operation is not otherwise prohibited. Motor vehicles that are licensed for use on public highways may be operated on forest roads that are not posted or gated closed. Snowmobiles may operate on designated trails.

Subp. 2. **Criteria for classification.** The following criteria shall be considered when classifying forest lands for motor vehicle use:

- A. resource sensitivity and management objectives;
- B. resource impact by motorized and nonmotorized use, including erosion, rutting, and impacts on vegetation, wildlife, air, water, or natural habitats;
- C. motorized and nonmotorized recreational opportunity in area;
- D. user needs, such as trails, parking, signs, and access;
- E. the degree and trend of motor vehicle use in the area;
- F. the degree and trend of nonmotor vehicle use in the area;
- G. competing interests among different user groups; and
- H. public safety and law enforcement concerns.

Subp. 3. **Notice and public meeting.** Before changing the classification of forest lands for motor vehicle use, the commissioner shall provide notice and a public meeting according to items A to C.

A. A public meeting shall be held in the county where the largest portion of the forest lands are located to provide information to and receive comment from the public regarding the proposed classification change.

B. Sixty days before the public meeting, notice of the proposed classification change shall be published in legal newspapers that serve the counties in which the lands are located and in a statewide Department of Natural Resources news release and in the State Register. The notice shall include a summary of the proposed action, a request for public comment, and notice of the public meeting.

C. Twenty-one days before the public meeting, notice of the meeting shall be announced in a statewide Department of Natural Resources news release.

Subp. 4. **Commissioner's decision.** The commissioner shall make a decision about the proposed classification change after considering the criteria listed in subpart 2 and any public comment received and explaining how the nature and magnitude of the criteria and comments relate to the classification.

Subp. 5. **Nonmotorized trails.** No person shall operate a motor vehicle or snowmobile on forest lands on a designated nonmotorized trail, including ski, foot, horse, bike, or accessible trail, unless the trail is also posted open for a motorized use.

Subp. 6. **Lakes, rivers, and streams.** No person shall operate a motor vehicle on forest lands on or over the beds of lakes, rivers, or streams when ice is not covering the water body, except on a bridge, culvert, or similar structure or designated low water crossing.

Subp. 7. **Other prohibitions and exceptions.**

A. No person shall operate a motor vehicle or snowmobile on forest lands in a manner that causes erosion or rutting or injures, damages, or destroys trees or growing crops. The rutting prohibition does not apply on trails that are designated and maintained for motorized use.

B. No person shall operate motor vehicles or snowmobiles on forest lands within the boundaries of an area that is posted and designated as closed to the operation of motor vehicles or snowmobiles.

C. No person shall operate a motor vehicle or snowmobile in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest, except on forest roads that are not posted and designated as closed, and on forest trails or areas that are posted and designated to allow the use of motor vehicles or snowmobiles. The exception under item D does not apply.

D. Except as provided in item C, on forest lands classified as managed or limited, a person may use an ATV off forest trails in a manner consistent with this subpart when lawfully:

- (1) engaged in hunting big game or constructing hunting stands during October, November, and December;
- (2) retrieving big game during September; or
- (3) trapping during open seasons.

E. No person shall construct an unauthorized permanent trail on forest lands.

F. Subpart 1 does not apply to motor vehicles used to carry out silvicultural activities, including timber cruising, and the harvest and transport of forest products for commercial purposes.

G. The commissioner may grant a variance from the requirements of subpart 1 to private landowners and leaseholders when the only reasonable access to their land is across state forest lands.

Subp. 8. **Forest roads.**

A. A motor vehicle on a forest road shall travel at a speed that is reasonable and prudent. It is a violation of this part to exceed a posted speed limit.

B. All posted parking and traffic regulations, including signs designating speed limits, stop signs, one-way traffic, and do not enter, shall be obeyed on a forest road.

C. No person, passenger, or operator of a motor vehicle shall travel on or along a forest road that is designated as closed with signs, barricaded, or blocked with a gate.

D. Removing snow from a forest road is prohibited when the road is posted for no snow removal.

E. No person shall operate, nor shall an owner permit the operation of a motor vehicle, on a forest road or trail in a manner that causes damage to the road, land, or other natural resources.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 14.045; 14.388; 84.03; 85.052; 85.053; 85.20; 86A.05; 86A.06; 89.031; 89.19 to 89.21; 89.71*

History: *24 SR 208; 25 SR 782; 27 SR 27*

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Trail Fundamentals

Trail Type Trail Class Managed Use Designed Use Design Parameters

Trail Fundamentals are five concepts that are the cornerstones of Forest Service trail management:

- Trail Type
- Trail Class *
- Managed Use *
- Designed Use *
- Design Parameters

Identify the five Trail Fundamentals for each National Forest System (NFS) trail or trail segment based on applicable land management plan direction, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction (FSM 2353.13).

Trail Fundamentals provide an integrated means to consistently record and communicate the intended design and management guidelines for trail design, construction, maintenance and use. Before completing documentation for Trail Management Objectives (TMO), TRACS, or applying Trail Fundamentals in trail management, it is essential that their intent is clearly understood.

Trail Type (FSH 2309.18, sec. 14.1)

A category that reflects the predominant trail surface and general mode of travel accommodated by a trail

There are three Trails Types:

Standard/Terra Trail: *A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of the ground and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.*

Snow Trail: *A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of snow or ice and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.*

Water Trail: *A trail that has a surface consisting predominantly of water (but may include land-based portages) and that is designed and managed to accommodate use on that surface.*

This management concept allows managers to identify trail-specific Design Parameters, management needs, and the cost of managing the trail for particular uses and/or seasons by trail or trail segment.

1. Inventory trails and identify the appropriate Design Parameters, management needs, and management costs for NFS trails using the Trail Types.
2. Identify only one Trail Type per trail.

3. Identify the Trail Type for each NFS trail based on applicable land management plan direction, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction.
4. Inventory both trails and Trail Types in the Infra Trails Module when two National Forest System trails overlap, for example, when a Snow Trail overlaps a Standard Terra Trail.

Trail Class (FSH 2309.18, sec.14.2)

The prescribed scale of development for a trail, representing its intended design and management standards.

Trail Classes are general categories reflecting trail development scale, arranged along a continuum.

There are five Trail Classes, ranging from the least developed (Trail Class 1) to the most developed (Trail Class 5):

Trail Class 1: Minimally Developed

Trail Class 2: Moderately Developed

Trail Class 3: Developed

Trail Class 4: Highly Developed

Trail Class 5: Fully Developed

Use Trail Classes to inventory NFS trails and to identify the applicable Design Parameters and costs for meeting the National Quality Standards for Trails.

1. Identify only one Trail Class per trail or trail segment.
2. Trail Class descriptors reflect typical attributes of trails in each class. Local deviations from any Trail Class descriptor may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, or other factors, provided that the deviations are consistent with the general intent of the applicable Trail Class.
3. There is a direct relationship between Trail Class and Managed Uses (FHS 2309.18, sec. 14.3): generally, one cannot be determined without consideration of the other.
4. Identify the appropriate Trail Class for each NFS trail or trail segment based on the management intent in the applicable land management plan, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction. Apply the Trail Class that most closely reflects the management intent for the trail or trail segment, which may or may not reflect the current condition of the trail.

For specifics on each Trail Class, refer to the Trail Class Matrix (FSH 2309.18, sec. 14.2, ex. 01).

Managed Use (FSH 2309.18, sec. 14.3)

A mode of travel that is actively managed and appropriate on a trail, based on its design and management.

1. Managed Use indicates management intent to accommodate a specific use.
2. There can be more than one Managed Use per trail or trail segment.
3. The Managed Uses for a trail are usually a small subset of all the allowed uses on the trail, that is, uses that are allowed unless specifically prohibited. For example, on a trail that is closed to all motorized use but open to all non-motorized use, the Managed Uses could be Hiker/Pedestrian and Pack and Saddle. The allowed uses, however, would also include bicycles and all other non-motorized uses.
4. Identify the Managed Uses for each NFS trail or trail segment based on applicable land management plan direction, travel management decisions, trail-specific decisions, and other related direction.
5. There is a direct relationship between Managed Use and Trail Class: generally, one cannot be determined without consideration of the other. Not all Trail Classes are appropriate for all Managed Uses. For guidance on the potential appropriateness of each Trail Class to each Managed Use, see FSH 2309.18, section 14.3, exhibit 01.

Designed Use (FSH 2309.18, sec 14.4)

The Managed Use of a trail that requires the most demanding design, construction, and maintenance parameters and that, in conjunction with the applicable Trail Class, determines which Design Parameters will apply to a trail.

1. There is only one Designed Use per trail or trail segment. Although a trail or trail segment may have more than one Managed Use and numerous uses may be allowed, only one Managed Use is identified as the design driver or Designed Use.
2. Determine the Designed Use for a trail or trail segment from the Managed Uses identified for that trail. When making this determination, consider all Managed Uses that occur during all seasons of use of the trail or trail segment. Assess any essential or limiting geometry for the Managed Uses of the trail or trail segment to determine whether any trail-specific adjustments are necessary to the applicable Design Parameters.
 - a. In some situations, when there is more than one Managed Use identified for a trail, the Designed Use may be readily apparent. For example, on a trail with Managed Uses of all-terrain vehicle and Motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle use would be the Designed Use because this use requires wider tread widths and has lower tolerances for surface obstacles and maximum trail grades.
 - b. In other situations involving more than one Managed Use, the Designed Use may not be readily apparent, as is often the case when there are fewer differences between the applicable sets of Design Parameters than in the example above. For example, on a trail that is actively managed for hiker and pedestrian, pack and saddle, and bicycle use, pack and saddle use would likely be the Designed Use because of the three Managed Uses, pack and saddle use generally has the most limiting design requirements. While the Bicycle Design Parameters are very similar to the Pack and Saddle Design Parameters, the Design Parameters for this trail may need to be adjusted to accommodate bicycles.

Designed Use / Managed Use Types

Hiker / Pedestrian	Cross-Country Ski
Pack and Saddle	Snowshoe
Bicycle	Snowmobile
Motorcycle	Motorized Watercraft
All Terrain Vehicle	Non-Motorized Watercraft
Four-Wheel Drive Vehicle > 50" in Width	

Design Parameters (FSH 2309.18, séc. 14.5)

Technical guidelines for the survey, design, construction, maintenance, and assessment of a trail, based on its Designed Use and Trail Class.

1. Design Parameters reflect the design objectives for NFS trails and determine the dominant physical criteria that most define their geometric shape. These criteria include:
 - a. Design Tread Width. Design Tread Width is expressed in terms of single lane, double lane, and the minimum tread width on trail structures.
 - b. Design Surface. Design Surface is expressed in terms of surface type, protrusions, and obstacles.
 - c. Design Grade. Design Grade is expressed in terms of Target Grade, Short Pitch Maximum Grade, and Maximum Pitch Density.
 - d. Design Cross Slope. Design Cross Slope is expressed in terms of Target Cross Slope and Maximum Cross Slope.
 - e. Design Clearing. Design Clearing is expressed in terms of width, height, and shoulder clearance.
 - f. Design Turns. Design Turns are expressed in terms of the turning radius.
2. Local deviations from any Design Parameter may be established based on trail-specific conditions, topography, and other factors (for example, mitigation of site-specific safety concerns and adjustments to accommodate other Managed Uses), provided that the deviations are consistent with the general intent of the applicable Trail Class.
3. Identify the Design Parameters for a NFS trail or trail segment based on its Trail Class and Designed Use. For a Design Parameter such as Design Tread Width, Design Clearing Width, and Design Turns that is expressed as a range of values, identify a specific value for each trail or trail segment.

For the complete set of Design Parameters, refer to FSH 2309.18, section 23.11, exhibit 01, through section 23.33, exhibit 01.

* This management concept / attribute is included in the Federal Trail Data Standards developed by the US Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and US Fish and Wildlife Service.



Official Trail Definitions

USFS Definitions: (36 CFR 212.1)

Trail: *A route 50 inches or less in width or a route over 50 inches wide that is identified and managed as a trail.*

Forest trail: *A trail wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the National Forest System and the use and development of its resources.*

National Forest System trail: *A forest trail other than a trail which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county, or other local public road authority.*

USFS / NPS / BLM / FWS Interagency Definition:

Defined by the Interagency Trail Data Standards Team in July 2002, the interagency definition is based on and encompasses individual agency definitions of a trail, and includes "standard" trails, National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails:

Trail: *A linear route managed for human-powered, stock, or OHV forms of transportation or for historic or heritage values.*

Clarifier: "Trails provide public access for opportunities of outdoor recreation as well as access to many significant prehistoric and historic sites.

Some portions of historic trails are accessible today, and provide recreational and other benefits, while others, more 'virtual' in nature, provide a cultural and/or historic experience, but are not physically capable of being traversed or accessed. Historic trails can consist of a path, a route, a corridor, a road, a river/stream, etc."

Member Hartwell Comments on Trails

LSCHC Definitions of Roads and trails

- 1) Roads – used for vehicles to move freely from one area to another
- 2) Maintenance Roads and trails – used to access property for habitat enhancement, restoration, sustainable harvest and maintenance. Closed for general transportation.
- 3) All Purpose Trails – used for free movement of smaller vehicles such as ATVs
- 4) Snowmobile Trails – use in the winter for snowmobiles
- 5) Hard Surface Trails – trails for public use but not vehicles
- 6) Unimproved Trails – hiking but no vehicle use

Inherent in all the descriptions is the assumption that ATV's would be able to use roads and hiking would be allowed on any of the described roads and trails.

LSOHC Staff DRAFT Trail Language

On Outdoor Heritage Fund acquired lands, new trails may be constructed or existing trails may continue current use or be expanded if: the proposed trails are consistent with the appropriation and the approved accomplishment plan, are for the purposes of habitat management, and primarily benefit wildlife dependent recreation activities. Any existing or proposed trail not meeting all of the criteria must receive prior review and approval of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council or its successor.