

FORM LETTER 1
(EXAMPLE)

From: <valhalla@smig.net>
To: <brian.mccann@dnr.state.mn.us>
Date: 6/27/2007 8:56 PM
Subject: Limit ATV access in Cloquet Valley State Forest

Dear Mr. McCann:

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CUSTOMIZE THIS MESSAGE. THE DNR WILL NOT SEPARATELY CONSIDER IDENTICAL COMMENTS.

(Please protect the Cloquet Valley State Forest from ATVs by designating it as limited so ATV use is only allowed on trails signed for such use. Let's not reward vandals who remove route closed signs under the managed designation. The exemption to the ban on cross-county riding for hunting and trapping creates an ever growing network of trails in managed but not in limited forests.

(I prefer to hike or paddle to enjoy public forests. I value land in its natural state, unmarred by ruts, erosion, noise, and invasive plants. I value clean water, healthy wetlands, quiet and good fishing. The serious damage left by ATVs, dirt bikes and mudder trucks saddens me.

I feel the majority of forest users who dont use ATVs would have their historical use of these lands taken away if large parts of the forest are zoned for motorized use. There many times more non-motorized wildlife watchers than ATV riders and the wildlife watchers spend more per day and buy things where the dollars are recycled in the local economy, according to similar studies of these tourism segments by Professor Ingrid Schneider of the University of Minnesota . There are no oil wells in the county, so sales of ATV gas dont do much for the local economy.

(I am also concerned about future grant-in-aid ATV trail development and want to see full environmental review and township approval of any trail proposals.

This forest belongs to all Minnesotans. Please protect it. Thank you for considering my views.

David Cole
2003 11th Ave SW
Austin, MN 55912

FORM LETTER 2
(EXAMPLE)

From: <schu0843@yahoo.com>
To: <brian.mccann@dnr.state.mn.us>
Date: 6/29/2007 9:56 AM
Subject: Cloquet Valley State Forest - Trails posted Open Only

Mr. McCann

I request that the DNR Classify the Cloquet Valley State Forest as Limited and that St. Louis County go along with this plan.

The DNR should restrict OHV activity to designated roads or trails in the Cloquet Valley State Forest. Operation of OHVs should be restricted only to trails posted as OPEN. Offroad crossing of wetlands and streams should be prohibited.

There should be larger and more non motorized areas, perhaps the forest should have more than one classification due to the size and the population centers.

Finances should be directed first to enforcement, longterm maintenance and damage payments related to OHV damage. The threat to this forest by invasive species is real. ATVs bring more seeds in that walkers, spread them faster and farther.

Funding and political pressures should not drive forest planning, the best sustainable forestry practices should. Mapping laws passed this year will result in more OHV traffic, the forest access routes are public information and will appear on maps, if not yours then someone else's.

Give more consideration to habitat and sound forestry, There is an area in the eastern part of the forest t54N R12W -with a nice big area of highground without many trails, keep it closed to motor use.

Consider the people who live and work in the CVSF. This plan distorts the kind of use this forest has, make an effort to keep trails that were traditionally walking trails for walking. This plan is turning a lot of trails that were used for walking into legal ATV trails, this is granting amnesty to many illegally formed trails. More of these trails should be left as they were prior to the recent onslaught of ATVs. Please pay more regard to other recreational uses of this forest that have been going on for a very long time. It is clear that no comprehensive plan is being followed in the planning for OHVs that is ongoing. Scant awareness of other activities and uses of the forest than OHVs are acknowledged by the plan. Mother Bear Ski Area ought to have a non motorized buffer around it. Set this right, If you set all these trails up for ATV use that's going to be the result, and you'd better plan on a lot more of them if you set it up that way. Don't contribute to the problem of ATVs by changing every trail an ATV has been on to Forest Access Route open for all ATVs, leave more as walking trails.

Tamara Schuette
3128 301st Ave .
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FORM LETTER 3
(EXAMPLE)

From: <eheebink@yahoo.com>
To: <brian.mccann@dnr.state.mn.us>
Date: 6/27/2007 6:29 PM
Subject: Classify the Cloquet Valley State Forest Limited rather than the Proposed Managed Classification

Mr. McCann

(Please Classify the Cloquet Valley State Forest as Limited.* I value the Northern Forests and want to see them protected more than is possible under a Managed Classification.

(Further, I ask that other types of recreation be protected, Mother Bear Ski Area near Brimson needs to be protected. It is one of the few non motorized recreational trail opportunities not entirely taken over by ATVs. The area must be preserved with a surrounding non motorized area to preserve a high quality recreational experience that is cherished by local residents

(A Non Motorized area to the East of Joker Ace and King Lakes has been removed from the plan. The area has few trails and while it has been logged, it has been done so carefully and the natural regrowth is good. There are many areas of high quality plant communities that should be preserved and protected from invasive species which are spread faster, faster and deeper into the forest by OHV/ATVs than via foot or animal.

(Forest Access Routes between that run near populated areas must be closed.

(Ditch right of ways must be closed in populated areas.

Under a Mapping law passed this Legislative session,** in the future ATVs will be required to stay on trails that are shown on maps published by the DNR. However, a last-minute alteration to the law by northern legislators, who are strong proponents of ATV riding, allows ATVs on undesignated and unmapped "forest access routes" in Managed forests north of Highway 2. There are over 400 miles of these routes and most but not all have been inventoried. The DNR says they will close those that show erosion or other environmental damage, but responsibility and or plans for monitoring these trails remain unclear. It may be left up to the ATV clubs.

Unofficial maps are likely to be produced. Under the new mapping law this forest is particularly unsuitable for the managed classification due in part to the high number of forest access routes. In total for the plan, Over 400 miles of the total trails remaining open (876 miles) will be "forest access routes" These routes will have NO maintenance, per legislation passed in 07. When damaged they may be closed but no maintenance or repair is planned.

(The plan for the Cloquet Valley State Forest was developed prior to the passage of this new law, so assumptions made by the planning team planning stage may not be applicable or valid. The plan needs to be re evaluated in light of this new law and its implications.

Further, some County Commissioners have discussed plans to encourage the development of OHV Tourism in the forest, and to link it to the Northshore Trail and Gilbert. This possibility would change the anticipated number

of OHV/ATV users from the current estimates, and needs to be taken into account by the planning team.

The plan fails to take into account the wishes of the people living in the forest. This forest has a long history of people living within it, for many generations people have been coexisting with the forest, its flora and fauna, yet in the DNRs planning the existence of humans residing in the forest was overlooked. Four of the townships within the forest have passed resolutions opposing the Managed Designation and another opposing any new trails. A Lake Association has also resolved for the Limited Classification. The people of the Clouquet Valley State Forest are trying to live sustainably within the forest and they need support in asserting this.

The DNR needs to consider input from townships and local residents in their forest plans, in particular when the requests are for better stewardship.

*I understand the following Forest classifications.

In state forest land classified as managed:

Motor vehicles may operate only on forest roads and forest trails unless they are posted and designated closed.

EXCEPT: Persons lawfully engaged in hunting big game or constructing hunting stands during October, November and December, retrieving big game during September, or trapping during open seasons, may use ATVs off forest trails in a manner consistent with the general operating restrictions.

This exception does not apply in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest.

In state forest land classified as limited:

OHV use is prohibited on state land and on county administered land within the boundaries of a state forest, except on designated OHV roads and trails.

Counties may adopt a resolution to modify the above restrictions on county-administered land within state forest boundaries.

Motor vehicles may operate only on forest trails or other areas that are posted and designated open.

EXCEPT: Persons lawfully engaged in hunting big game or constructing hunting stands during October, November and December, retrieving big game during September, or trapping during open seasons, may use ATVs off forest trails in a manner consistent with the general operating restrictions.

This exception does not apply in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood Forest.

In state forest land classified as closed:

Motor vehicles and snowmobiles are not allowed except:

- o Vehicles licensed for highway use may use forest roads that are not posted or gated closed.

- o Vehicles may operate on frozen public waters where it is not otherwise prohibited.

- o Snowmobiles may operate on designated trails.

**S.F. No. 1131, Conference Committee Report - 85th Legislative Session (2007-2008)

Subd. 3. Mapped trails. (a) Except as provided in sections 84.926 and 84.928,

after completion of official department off-highway vehicle maps for the

area, a person must not operate an off-highway vehicle on state land that is not mapped for the type of off-highway vehicle. This paragraph does not apply to state forest land north of U.S.

Highway 2 until after June 30, 2009.

b) This subdivision does not apply to a forest access route in a managed forest north of U.S. Highway 2 that the commissioner has not designated as a road or trail. Forest access routes will not be signed or maintained and will not be included on published user maps of the forest. Off-highway vehicle operation on forest access routes is subject to the prohibitions on causing erosion, rutting, damage to trees or crops, and construction of unauthorized trails contained in Minnesota Rules. Damaged routes are subject to closure to off-highway vehicle use.

Elizabeth Heebink
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FORM LETTER 4
(EXAMPLE)

From: "Raymond Barnes" <rgbarnes@outdrs.net>
To: <brian.mccann@dnr.state.mn.us>
Date: 6/29/2007 1:27 PM
Subject: Public Comment on So. St. Louis/Carlton Co. Access Plan

CC: <jim.weseloh@dnr.state.mn.us>, <kathleen.larson@dnr.state.mn.us>, <mark....>
Public Comment on So. St. Louis/Carlton Co. Access Plan

My name is Raymond Barnes. I have owned property on West Branch Road (County Hwy 256) at Pequaywan Lake in the Cloquet Valley State Forest since 1971. I moved up here permanently from Florida in 1973 after graduating from the School of Forestry (Wildlife Division) at the University of Florida. I have traveled the United States extensively as a photographer for an International Stock Photo Agency until I retired several years ago. A couple of years ago, I got married and moved from my house at Pequaywan Lake area to my wife's house. This house is also in the Cloquet Valley State Forest on the Little Cloquet River on Pequaywan Lake Road (County Hwy 44). Our plans are to move permanently to the house on West Branch Road.

I support the Limited Trail Designation for the Cloquet Valley State Forest. My major concerns are for enforcement of the Managed Trail system, the spread of Spotted Knapweed by ATVs, and the impact this would have on the residents in the area. Details of my concerns are:

1. Enforcement
2. Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*)
3. Impact on Residents

Enforcement. My property on West Branch Road is on the opposite side of the road away from Pequaywan Lake. My property borders on the Cloquet Valley State Forest. A few years ago the forest behind my place was logged, and they put in a logging road with several spurs which end near my property boundary. The road has a county gate, but ATVs are allowed to run on the road. I have had at least 5 major incursions since the road was put in. In each case, no trespassing signs posting my property were either ignored or destroyed. Three of the incursions involved ATVs going into a Shore Fen (wetland) and setting up a double oval track (complete with exit signs). This track went across 3 different private properties and county controlled state land. The signs posting the property were destroyed by either running over them or tearing them out and throwing them away. They also destroyed a state listed TES species (Dragon mouth orchid, *Arethusa bulbosa*), which have never recovered. The track and damage was documented by GPS and photos. The Sheriff and DNR were notified. No one was ever apprehended.

The other incursions involved cutting trails (including White Cedar) through the property to be able to access West Branch Road from the logging road. The posted signs were either ignored or destroyed by tearing them down. One of the trails was cut across a wetland (County controlled State land). No one was ever caught.

One of the activities by ATVers on the logging road is target shooting. This mainly occurs on the weekends. There is no adequate backstop for target shooting along the logging road, but they are close enough that we can hear them talking at times. This activity started after the logging road was built and ATVs started using it. This might be a good area for a Hunter Walking trail. During the fire restriction, restricting OHV use (DNR Fire Order No. 2007-2), the restriction was ignored and the activity continued.

A field audit (certification registration # SCS-FM/COC-088N) on MN DNR Administered Forestlands (lead author, Dave Wager) states on page 15 that individuals and groups oppose a managed classification because it is difficult to enforce, leads to more user created trails, contributes to off-trail riding, disturbs hunting opportunities, and for other reasons. My experience verifies this belief.

(Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*). My first contact with this plant was in Glacier National Park, Montana. Since then, I have observed a large amount of Montana, and some other states being taken over by this very invasive, toxic plant. Agricultural and forest lands have been greatly impacted. This plant is difficult and expensive to control or eradicate. Several years ago, this plant showed up on Pequaywan Lake Road (County Hwy 44) and has since spread over ten miles in length. It is also found on West Branch Road (County Hwy 256). The plant covers many of the hillsides along Hwy 44 through North Star Township, unorganized areas, and Pequaywan Township. The plant first showed up in the Lost Lake tower area (North Star Township). It started showing up along ATV tracks paralleling Pequaywan Lake Road, and has since spread to the road shoulders. The DNR Invasive Species Program seems to be undermined by ATV use under the Managed Classification.

(Impact on Residents. The DNR's Forest Classification & Road/Trail Designation Plan for the Cloquet Valley State Forest states that the primary ATV use is by local hunters (page 12). During early Spring through late Fall, the ATV use in the CVSF around the Pequaywan Lake area is fairly heavy. Groups of ATVs (from a couple to almost 2 dozen machines) travel the roads, logging roads, ditches, and trails almost daily. These are not hunters. The noise, exhaust and congestion can be quite disruptive to those that moved here for the peace and quiet. In the DNR plan and the St. Louis County plan, a few leased hunting cabins are mentioned while residents living here are not. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by the residents in this area to improve their homes and many have moved here permanently for the peace and quiet. None of these concerns have been addressed. It has been suggested that this area be developed as a Mecca for ATVs to boost the economy of Duluth. This will completely destroy the nature of this area. This impact needs to be addressed.

Raymond Barnes

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