



RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING



KEITH CREAGH
DIRECTOR

SUBMITTED: May 11, 2015
RESUBMITTED: June 15, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO THE DIRECTOR

Information: Natural Resources Commission

Subject: Order to Regulate Off-Road Vehicles (ORV) Use at Bewabic State Park, Iron
County
Land Use Order of the Director Amendment No. 3 of 2015

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, authorizes the Director to issue orders to implement land use rules.

Discussion and Background:

The Department recommends allowing use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) in Bewabic State Park (Iron County) limited to loading, unloading, and riding ORVs from a designated parking area or campsite by the most direct route to the public county highway or nearest trail.

Bewabic State Park is located near access points to hundreds of miles of established ORV routes in the Western Upper Peninsula, and various organizations and numerous ORV users have requested ORV access into Bewabic State Park for several years. In addition, the unit supervisor has solicited input from park users, and they are in favor of the change. Providing access to Bewabic State Park for limited ORV use would further the Parks and Recreation Division's goals to expand recreation experiences available to ORV users. It would also increase camping and lodging nights, as well overall attendance at state parks, resulting in additional revenue from camping fees, lodge rentals and Recreation Passport sales.

The recommended amendment would provide ORV connectivity (via Kaski Road) between the park and the state-designated Stateline ORV Route, but would limit ORV use in Bewabic State Park to only those activities that are necessary for park visitors to access the nearby trail networks via the park's roads. This ensures minimal impact to non-ORV users in the park. Bewabic State Park would also serve as a trailhead for ORV users hauling trailers who want a place to park and ride.

If the recommended order is executed, the Division will construct an ORV access trail just west of the park entrance, directly across from Kaski Road. This access trail would separate vehicle and ORV use at the entrance in order to provide ORV users with a safe crossing and a better vantage point/visibility of the traffic on US-2. The access trail would be approximately 200 feet long and would connect directly to the main park road.

Consistent with the other four state parks (Baraga, Clear Lake, Muskallonge Lake, and Twin Lakes) that currently allow ORV entry, the ORV access and management at Bewabic State Park will include proper signage, routing, and necessary auxiliary parking for excess equipment and trailers.

This amendment is supported by Crystal Falls Township, Iron County Board of Commissioners, Iron County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Transportation, Law Enforcement Division, and various ORV trail clubs.

Recommendation:

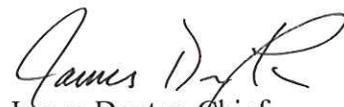
This order was submitted for information at the June 11, 2015 Natural Resources Commission meeting. This item appeared on the Department's June, 2015 calendar and may be eligible for approval on July 9, 2015.


Ronald A. Olson, Chief
Parks and Recreation Division


Gary Hagler, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

for 
William O'Neill, Chief
Forest Resources Division


Russ Mason, Ph.D., Chief
Wildlife Division


James Dexter, Chief
Fisheries Division


William E. Moritz, Ph.D
Natural Resources Deputy

LAND USE ORDERS OF THE DIRECTOR

Amendment No. 3 of 2015

By authority conferred on the Director of the Department of Natural Resources by Section 504 of the Natural Resources Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.504, and in accordance with R 299.921 to R 299.933 , the Director of the Department of Natural Resources orders the following:

5.17 Off road vehicles in state parks; conditions for use, permit, prohibited conduct.

Order 5.17. A person shall not operate an off road vehicle in the following state parks except for:

(1) Entrance to and departure from a designated area in:

- (a) Baraga SP, Baraga county.
- (b) Bewabic SP, Iron county.
- (c) Clear lake SP, Montmorency county.
- (d) Muskallonge lake SP, Luce county.
- (e) Twin lakes SP, Houghton county.

This amended order shall be posted on or after the 10th day of July, 2015.

Issued on this 9th day of July, 2015.

Keith Creagh
Director



Crystal Falls Township

908.876.3082
fax 908.876.3333

1384 West U.S. 2 • P.O. Box 328
Crystal Falls, Michigan 49920

February 16, 2015

Kasey Ann Mahony
Unit Supervisor
Bewabic State Park
Menominee River State Recreation Area
720 Idlewild Rd
Crystal Falls, MI 49920.

To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of the Crystal Falls Township Board in support of a land use order to allow ORVs into Bewabic State Park.

At our regular monthly meeting held February 10, 2015 the Board strongly supported a Director's Order to change the Land Use rules for Bewabic State Park to open up the Park for ORV access.

Sincerely,

Nancy Niemelä
Nancy Niemelä/Clerk

COPY

mead 2.18.

Iron County Board of Commissioners
2 South Sixth Street - Suite 7
Crystal Falls, MI 49920-1413
Ph: (906)875-3301 Fax (906) 875-0635
TDD: 800-649-3777

Chair
Tim Aho
Vice Chair
Jim Brennan
Finance Chair
Patti Peretto
Commissioners
Ray Coates
Sharon Leonoff

Board of Commissioners Office

County Administrator
Sue K. Clisch

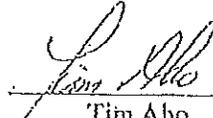
Administrative Assistant
Mary S. Dalpra

February 5, 2015

Ms. Kasey Mahony
Unit Supervisory
Bewabic State Park
Menominee River State Recreation Area
720 Idlewild Rd.
Crystal Falls, MI 49920

The County of Iron allows snowmobiles and ORV's to use the county roads with very few limitations. Additionally the County has a recreational trail and cooperates with the DNR to operate this trail and the Saunders Wye Connector with the Wisconsin ORV trail system. It should be noted that the County recreational trail is next to the park and is readily available for users staying at or using the services of the park. There has not been any real problems with these long term usages and the County wants to enhance ORV uses along with tourism that goes with these activities to economically help our County.

The Iron County Board of Commissioners have been made aware of the potential for ORV access in Bewabic State Park, with a connector route to the Stateline ORV trail, along Kaski Road, crossing US 2, and in full support of this potential route.



Tim Aho
Board Chair

From: Mahony, Kasey (DNR)
To: Katona, Robert (DNR)
Subject: FW: Letter of Support
Date: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 3:16:43 PM

FYI below – letter of support from Iron County Road Commission

Kasey Ann Mahony
Unit Supervisor
Bewabic State Park
Menominee River State Recreation Area
720 Idlewild Rd.
Crystal Falls, MI 49920
Office: (906) 875-3324
Cell: (906) 284-3632
Fax: (906) 875-6195

From: Doug Tomasoski [mailto:doug@ironcountyroads.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 2:36 PM
To: Mahony, Kasey (DNR)
Subject: RE: Letter of Support

Good afternoon Kasey,

I am writing as a follow up to our earlier discussion about using Kaski Road as a connector route from the Stateline Trail to Bewabic Park. As per the County of Iron ORV ordinance, ORVs are allowed on most all county roads, Kaski being one of them. At this point I see no reason why the ICRC would object.

Should this project move forward, any route signage should be permitted through the Iron County Road Commission (ICRC). A simple application/permit (CRA 100) from the ICRC would be all that is necessary from our perspective. As it would be for another governmental agency, there would be no fee.

Let me know if you have any additional questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Doug

Douglas C. Tomasoski, P.E.
Superintendent/Manager
Iron County Road Commission

From: Mahony, Kasey (DNR) [mailto:MahonyK@michigan.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2015 7:26 AM
To: 'Doug Tomasoski' (doug@ironcountyroads.com)
Subject: Letter of Support

Hello Doug,

I am following up on our discussions regarding the ATV connector route from the Stateline Trail to the park via Kaski Rd. I was wondering if I could get a letter of support for this project from the road commission. I have spoken to Crystal Falls Township, MDOT, Iron County, and local law enforcement and have not received any negative comments. I just need something (it could even be a reply to this email) stating that this topic has been discussed and has not met any pushback.

Thank you very much for your assistance!

Kasey Ann Mahony
Unit Supervisor
Bewabic State Park
Menominee River State Recreation Area
720 Idlewild Rd.
Crystal Falls, MI 49920
Office: (906) 875-3324
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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
CRYSTAL FALLS TRANSPORTATION SERVICE CENTER

RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

KIRK T. STEUDLE
DIRECTOR

March 2, 2015

Kasey Ann Mahony, Unit Supervisor
Bewabic State Park, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
720 Idewild Road
Crystal Falls, MI 49920

Dear Ms. Mahony:

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Crystal Falls Transportation Service Center (TSC), supports your efforts to establish accommodations for ORV users at Bewabic State Park. Per Act 451 of 1994, Section 324.81122, the operator of an ORV may cross a street, county road, or highway, other than a limited access highway, at right angles, for the purpose of getting from 1 area to another, if the operation can be done in safety. Therefore, a permit for crossing the highway is not required, however, a permit would be required for any construction modifications within MDOT Right-of-Way.

During a field visit on February 2nd, 2015, several alternative access locations along US-2 adjacent to the park perimeter were reviewed. The most appropriate location in terms of direct access, limited exposure and adequate sight distance was near Kaski Road, a county road open to ORV's. Concerns were discussed with the truck climbing lane transition, conflict separation, conflict use, erosion, sun glare and travelling appropriate along Kaski Road. It was also noted that tree trimming and brushing along the South side of US-2 may enhance visibility and existing sight distance. Although MDOT has not been involved in any stakeholder engagement related to this project, we have not received any negative feedback to date.

It should be noted, that US-2 is designated as a Pure Michigan Byway and is locally referred to as the Iron County Heritage Trail. The heritage trail group has been working toward an implementation strategy to provide non-motorized accommodations along this Byway in an effort to interconnect the park with other existing facilities throughout the County. I would recommend that the Iron County Heritage Trail Committee be kept informed of this project's status.

MDOT would charge no fee for the required permit(s) and supports efforts to continue relationships that develop or enhance the health and safety of an integrated, multi-modal transportation environment. We will gladly discuss or review any project details and share MDOT requirements for areas within our Right-of-Way. Thank you for this opportunity of input.

Sincerely,
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Michael J. Premo, Manager
Crystal Falls Transportation Service Center

MJP:BMF:naw

cc: B. Feldhausen, Crystal Falls TSC Traffic and Safety Engineer
B. Santilli, Crystal Falls TSC Permits
D. Pericolosi, Crystal Falls TSC Utility Engineer

From: Joe Chavis
To: Mahony, Kasey (DNR)
Subject: Support Letter
Date: Sunday, February 01, 2015 12:33:55 PM

As the President of The Chippewa Sno-Kats Trail Club, Inc. of Crystal Falls, Michigan, we feel that Bewabic State Park becoming ORV accessible would be a great asset for Iron County and our whole area.

There is easy access to the trail system directly across from the park entrance. In our opinion, access to the park by ORV trail will bring more visitors to the park and their much needed

tourism dollars to the businesses throughout Iron and Dickenson County's.

Along with the camping experience at Bewabic, the well established trail system for ORV's and the many lakes for boating, fishing and hiking trails, will keep visitors coming back year after year.

This would really make it part of the Pure Michigan experience for many people to truly enjoy!

If there is anything we can do to make this happen, please advise us and feel free to contact us on this matter.

Joe Chavis

President

The Chippewa Sno-Kats Trail Club, Inc.

P.O. Box 124

Crystal Falls, MI. 49920

Ph #: 906-265-7185

Cell: 906-284-1762

e-mail: upchavis@hotmail.com

From: Painter, Dave (DNR)
To: Mahony, Kasey (DNR)
Subject: RE: Proposed ORV access
Date: Saturday, February 14, 2015 3:31:09 PM

We have no real opinion one way or another. The main entrance does have a better field of sight than the Idlewild rd. area.

From: Mahony, Kasey (DNR)
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2015 3:43 PM
To: Painter, Dave (DNR)
Subject: Proposed ORV access

Hello Dave,

I hope all is well with you and your family.

I wanted to reach out to you concerning a proposed spur trail into Bewabic State Park. I am in the process of applying to get the land use order for the park changed to allow ORVs in Bewabic State Park on the park roads. This would allow campers with ORVs to have direct access to Stateline Trail via Kaski Rd. This could also bring some ORV from the trail into the park to explore everything we have to offer, as well as serve as a trailhead for folks hauling trailers who want a place to park and ride.

We are planning on constructing an ORV access trail just west of the park entrance, directly across from Kaski Rd., to get ORV-ers off US-2 as quickly as possible, separate vehicle use and ORV use right at the entrance, and also give riders a better vantage point/visibility of the traffic on US-2. The access trail would only be about 200 feet long, and would connect with our main park road.

I am gathering letters of support from multiple organizations, including Crystal Falls Township, Iron County Board of Commissioners, Iron County Road Commission, MDOT as well as the Chippewa Snow-Kats Club. I was wondering if you would be able to reply for the COs in Iron County, either in favor or against, this proposal -- or please pass this along to someone who can.

I appreciate your assistance Dave. Thank you!

Kasey Ann Mahony
Unit Supervisor
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