

State Forest Road Inventory Review: 2023 Summary

Michigan Department of Natural Resources



Annual forest road inventory

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources annually updates its forest road inventory to meet Public Act 288 legislative requirements and provide an opportunity to account for current road conditions. The DNR encourages public involvement in the management of state forest roads in addition to staff input.

In 2018, the DNR launched an online map to provide an easy way for the public to interactively view forest roads and submit comments on the management of those roads. This interactive web map has continued to be a useful tool throughout the 2023 road inventory cycle. As of August 31, 2023, the public submitted 95 comments over the previous year. These comments were reviewed by DNR staff and considered as potential proposals for changes to the road inventory. All remaining changes were proposed by DNR staff as they worked to complete inventory on the ground and refine the existing road data and/or respond to the impact of off-road vehicle use on state forest roads.

Mileage details

Changes in mileage are determined by adding or deleting online road information after field confirmation. This can include either extending or shortening a road segment or data cleanup such as deleting duplicate segments from the map. A statewide summary of the proposed mileage changes includes the following:

- Total mileage of roads to be removed from the state forest road maps due to closure to conventional vehicles and ORVs: **38.7 miles**
 - Reasons for roads to be closed to conventional vehicles include: environmental or resource protection.
- Total mileage of roads to delete due to data cleanup: **36.0 miles**
 - Examples of data cleanup include: roads that do not exist on the ground; duplicate roads; data reconciliation.
- Total mileage of roads to add: **254.9 miles**
 - Added roads must be classified as either open to ORVs, closed to ORVs, or seasonally closed to ORVs. The mileage summary for each of these categories follows:

- Added roads open to ORVs: **252.0 miles**
- Added roads closed to ORVs: **2.9 miles**
 - Reason for roads closed to ORVs include: resource protection; and existing Land Use Orders of the Director.
- Added roads seasonally closed to ORVs: **3.6 miles**
 - Reason for roads closed to ORVs seasonally: Road leads to a Boating Access Site or Public Water Access Site, which is open to ORVs in the winter only to provide access to the ice in the Lower Peninsula.

In addition to actual road mileage being added or deleted, changes in road mileage open or closed to ORVs can also occur as a result of the ORV status on the existing road changing. Those changes are summarized as follows:

- Total mileage of roads to be changed from opened to closed to ORVs: **18.6 miles**
- Total mileage of roads to be changed from closed to ORVs to open: **1.0 miles**
- Total mileage of roads to be changed from closed to ORVs to seasonally closed to ORVs (Includes allowing use in a portion of Camp Grayling Military roads except seasonally during operations): **189.7 miles**

Summary

DNR staff refinements, proposals initiated by DNR staff and comments submitted from members of the public resulted in the following proposed mileage for state forest roads:

- **Upper Peninsula:**
 - Total miles of state forest roads: **5,767.4 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **5,686.6 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **80.8 miles**
 - Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **98.6%**
- **Northern Lower Peninsula:**
 - Total miles of state forest roads: **7,251.2 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **6,068.6 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **1,182.6 miles**
 - Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **83.7%**
- **Southern Lower Peninsula:**
 - Total miles of state forest roads: **358.0 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads open to ORVs: **10.1 miles**
 - Total miles of state forest roads closed or seasonally closed to ORVs: **347.9 miles**
 - Total percentage of roads open to ORV use: **2.8%**