



Winter is here and with it comes the end of hunting season and the beginning of winter recreation. ATV riding, snowmobiling, cross country skiing, camping and snowshoeing are all popular forms of recreation at the state forest.

ATV and snowmobile trails open on December 15<sup>th</sup> pending adequate snowfall and frozen ground conditions. The state forest offers 28.5 miles of shared ATV and snowmobile trails and an additional 19.6 miles of snowmobile only trails. The state forest trails link up with Jackson and Clark County's trail systems.

One change new to this year is that the Oak Ridge trail, which travels south of Castle Mound to Millston, will be closed to ATVs whenever the trails are groomed for snowmobiles. This change was to remain consistent with the County who designated the middle portion of the trail snowmobile only at the request of local snowmobilers. ATV riders will still be able to access Millston by riding east of Castle Mound.

The state forest's 24 miles of ski trails are considered some of the finest in the state. They offer a variety of conditions from beginner to experienced with portions groomed for traditional skiing and others where skate skiing and traditional are allowed. After hitting the trails skiers can warm up by the fire at the log cabin warming building. This was constructed in 2006 by the Black River Forest Trail Foundation, a non profit group working to improve and maintain the ski, hike, and bike trails.

It would probably surprise many people that we still get campers all through out the winter. The first loop of Pigeon Creek Campground is plowed for winter campers and backpack camping is allowed year round at the property. All backpack campers must get a permit from the state forest before setting up camp. While not many partake in winter camping those that do are most enthusiastic about this.

Snowshoeing is one activity that seems to grow in popularity each year. While the state forest has no designated snowshoe trails they are allowed anyplace on the property other than groomed trails. Two trails we recommend to users are the Castle Mound nature trail and the five mile Pigeon Creek hiking trail.

Winter use conditions are updated regularly at our website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/forestry/StateForests/SF-BlackRiver/> For any other questions please call us at (715) 284-4103.