



Flambeau River State Forest Master Plan

Public Involvement Plan

July 2008



Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recognizes the Flambeau River State Forest Master Plan must reflect the people it serves, and encourages citizen input throughout the planning process. This document outlines the strategy for soliciting public review and input into the development, evaluation, and adoption of the revised Flambeau River State Forest Master Plan.

The revised Master Plan will be guided and influenced by: existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, capacity of the forest resources, surveys, judgment of forest management experts, and public opinion. Local and regional recreational supply, economy, and needs also will be considered. Management alternatives are also influenced by these factors and the approved master plan represents a balance of key benefits.

The master plan process is guided by the following state regulations:

- A. The Master Plan for the Flambeau River State Forest will be developed within the parameters of Administrative Code NR 44, which governs Master Planning for DNR properties and requirements of WEPA (Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act).
- B. The Flambeau River State Forest will be managed and developed as a "State Forest" as outlined in state statutes 28.04 Wis. Stats.
- C. The Flambeau River State Forest will be managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code NR 1 (Natural Resources Board Policies).
- D. Public use activities on DNR properties are governed by Administrative Code NR 45 (Use of Department Properties)

Planning Process

The Master Planning process is divided into three primary phases:

Phase 1-Inventory and Analysis

Up-to-date information and data on the property's resources and public uses as well as an understanding of regional demands and opportunities are the foundation of the planning process. Using the best available data for a thorough and in-depth analysis of the property and region ensures that public needs and benefits are fully considered while determining the current and potential role of the state forest in the region.

Phase 2-Preferred Alternative and Draft Plan

Phase two is plan development and begins with a formal announcement that the state forest's master plan will be revised. This is followed with a process to: identify important issues to be addressed in the planning process, establish draft property vision and goals that focus the planning effort, and options for land

management, land use, and recreation. This culminates with a *Preferred Alternative* document which, when revised with public input, forms the basis of the *Draft Plan and Environmental Analysis*. The public is a valued partner with the Department in each step of the plan's development.

Phase 3-Final Draft Plan and Approval

Presentation of the draft, revised Master Plan to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

Opportunities for Public Participation

The Department's goal for public involvement in master planning is to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of their favorite properties, and to provide a means for staying informed about the property and planning progress.

Public review and comment will be formally sought at key milestones during the plan's development. However, it should be noted that public comments are welcome at any time. Formal public input opportunities are listed below:

Phase 2

- The identification of important planning issues
- Establishing the property's vision and goals
- Review and comment on plan alternatives
- Review and comment on the draft plan and the environmental impact analysis

Phase 3

- The Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to comment at the meeting before approving

How Your Voice is Heard

There are many ways to ensure that your voice and concerns are heard throughout the planning process.

- Public Meetings-the WDNR will hold informal public meetings at key points throughout the master-planning process (described above) to present and discuss information on the property and plan proposals, and to listen to your comments and suggestions. These meetings will be held in the vicinity of the property and in other locations as appropriate.
- Comments can also be sent to the planning team via e-mail, post, or phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

How the Department will Provide Information

Information and major planning documents will be available at the Flambeau River State Forest Headquarters and in Madison (GEF 2, 4th Floor).

Press Releases

Press releases will be issued at key stages to announce public meetings, provide information updates, and to solicit public comments.

Direct Mailings (regular and e-mail)

A mailing list of key stakeholders and interested parties will be developed and used to keep interested parties informed about upcoming events and discussions. Local and state newspapers and electronic news media will also be kept informed. Mailings will be done at key points in the planning process, to provide valuable information about the property and planning issues; and to announce meetings, decisions, and other planning developments. You may sign up for the mailing list by contacting the Department at the address or phone number listed at the end of this document.

State Forest Web Page

The Department will provide a state forest master planning web page where information about the property, the planning process, planning documents, notices, and other important planning information will be posted.

Informational Updates

After each formal public input, the Department will provide informational updates. If needed, a progress report may be prepared to keep you informed on the status of the plan's development. These would be sent to everyone on the planning mailing list and posted on the master planning website.

Consultation with Other Governmental Units

The master planning team will also consult with local governments, state and federal agencies, and affected Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis on mutual planning issues throughout the planning process.

How Decisions Will be Made

To develop an effective Master Plan, the Department listens to many voices. Recreation users, commercial interests, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials, other government agencies and tribal representatives, and other interested persons or groups are all encouraged to participate. Input received at each major step in the planning process will be considered as the plan is developed.

Public comments and ideas incorporated into the Plan will be made based on several factors, including but not limited to: type of property, its capabilities, and the best role of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Additionally, the plan must comply with applicable Federal Laws, State Statutes, Administrative and Department Codes, and facility design standards.

While a broad range of interests will be listened to and considered in the *Draft Master Plan*, the final decision-making authority rests with the DNR's citizen policy-making Natural Resources Board.

Contact Information

To join the Flambeau River State Forest Master Plan mailing list or to send comments or suggestions on the master plan, please contact:

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