



Forest Roads

Carlton County Tax
Forfeited Land
Management Plan

8.1

Assessment

Carlton County currently has 32 named forest roads which provide access to most portions of the tax-forfeited land base. The roads are divided by class as follows:

- Class A: year-round road (general equivalent of MnDNR road classes 1-3).
- Class B: woods road, seasonal use only (general equivalent of MnDNR road classes 4-6).
- Class C: winter access woods road (general equivalent of MnDNR road class 6).

Class A roads consist entirely of two segments of the Soo Line Trail — a 14.5 mile length from the Aitkin County Line to Moose Lake, and, the 29.5 mile segment to the east to the state line.

There are 22 Class B roads (total length of 32.1 miles) and 8 Class C roads (total of 13.7 miles).

Forest roads serve a variety of interests. All provide access for timber management activities. All also serve some form of recreational use as well —access for hunters, berry gatherers, wildlife observers, and the like. Some are used as recreational trails.

A limited number of new roads are being planned.

Road maintenance is performed by the Carlton County Transportation Department on an “As Needed” basis. Limited funding from State sources precludes regular, routine maintenance. The County cannot levy for forest road maintenance dollars as this is prohibited under Minnesota Statute 282.

8.2

Policies

Objective: Carlton County intends to provide access to County managed lands appropriately to protect, manage, and utilize forest resources for all programs and multiple uses.

The following are the policies of Carlton County regarding forest roads:

Map 6: forest roads and trails

1. Establish three classes of forest roads as follows: Class A — all weather, any type of surface; Class B — one lane, all weather except breakup and wet periods; Class C — woods road, winter use only. All forest roads will be assigned to one of these classes.
2. Forest roads are to be built primarily for specified silvicultural purposes and, if appropriate, secondarily for recreational purposes. The following guidelines apply to existing and new forest roads:
 - a. Determine classification, management purpose(s), use restrictions including seasonality, construction standards including any special features and all applicable BMPs, responsibility for construction and maintenance including any cost-sharing provisions, and life span.
 - b. Construction is to avoid wetlands (e.g., through alignment, use of temporary frozen ground routes) and where disturbance is unavoidable the amount of permanent disturbance is to be minimized and such measures as temporary crossings are to be considered.
3. Restrict vehicular access through gates or other means to any forest road if one or more of the following situations exist in order to:
 - a. Prevent rutting or damage to roads.
 - b. Provide non-motorized hunter or general recreation access on roads or trails developed as part of wildlife habitat improvement projects.
 - c. Protect certain sensitive or special resources or reduce need for road maintenance.
 - d. Protect grass or clover ground cover planted on roads or trails without gravel surfaces.
 - e. Reduce fire hazards.
 - f. Reduce safety concerns from conflicting uses of the road or trail.
 - g. Prevent unauthorized access where County forest road utilizes an easement across private land.
4. Seek assistance and services from other Federal and State agencies in road location and design.
5. Coordinate new road location, construction and maintenance with other public and private forest land managers.
6. Primary for use of forest roads lies with forest management activities. However, good faith efforts will be made to adjust schedules and procedures so as to avoid or minimize conflicts with occasional recreational uses.
7. Where appropriate to sustain County management objectives including access to landlocked parcels, assume the responsibility for the maintenance and liability of former Town roads where the affected Township agrees not to vacate the roadway.

8.3

Strategic Actions

Carlton County will undertake the following actions relative to forest roads to implement this strategic plan:

1. Maintain and improve current roads as needed.