



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service



**Environmental Assessment**

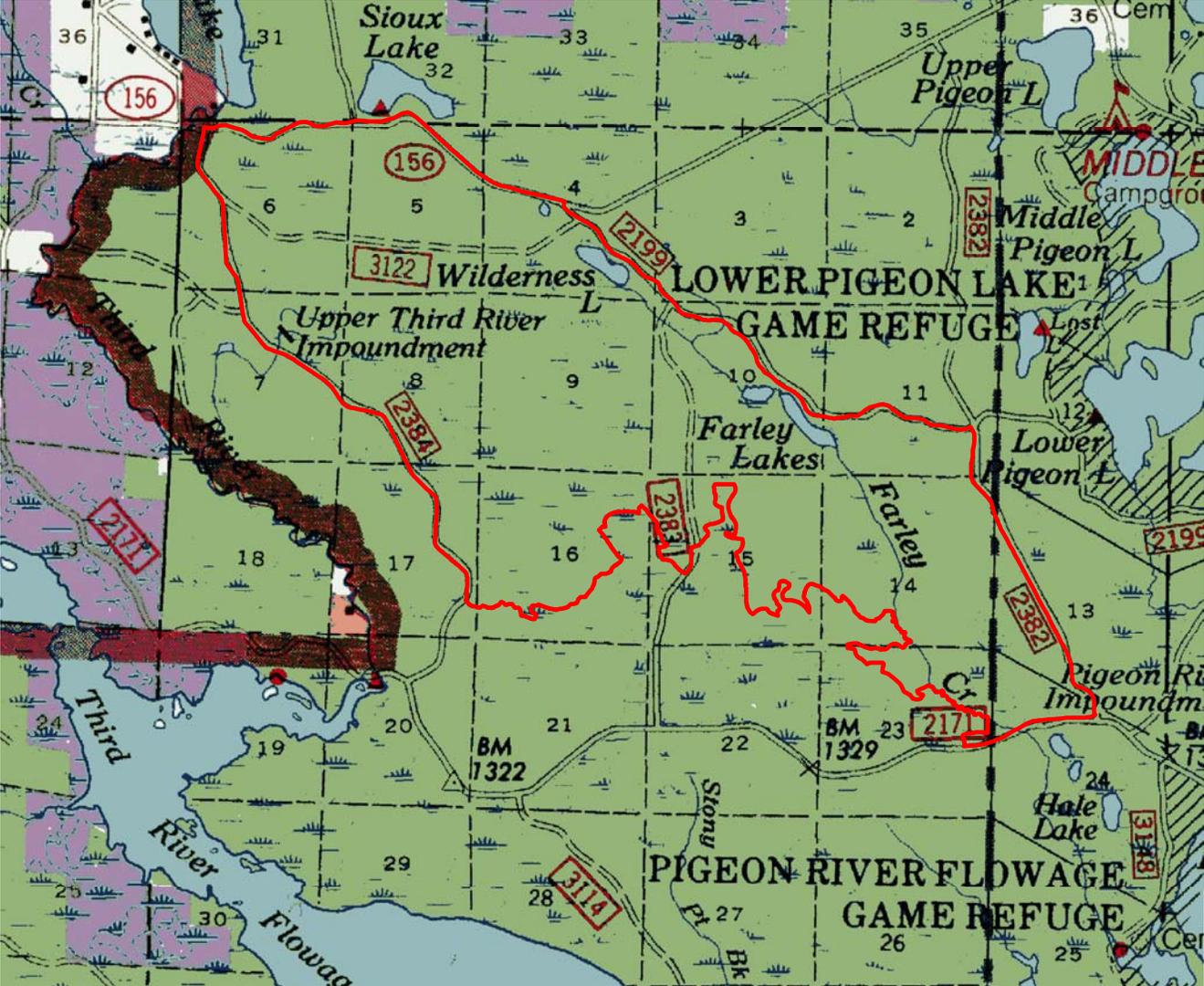
**North Winnie Semi-Primitive Non-  
Motorized Area Boundary Change  
and Trail Project**  
Chippewa National Forest  
Itasca County, Minnesota



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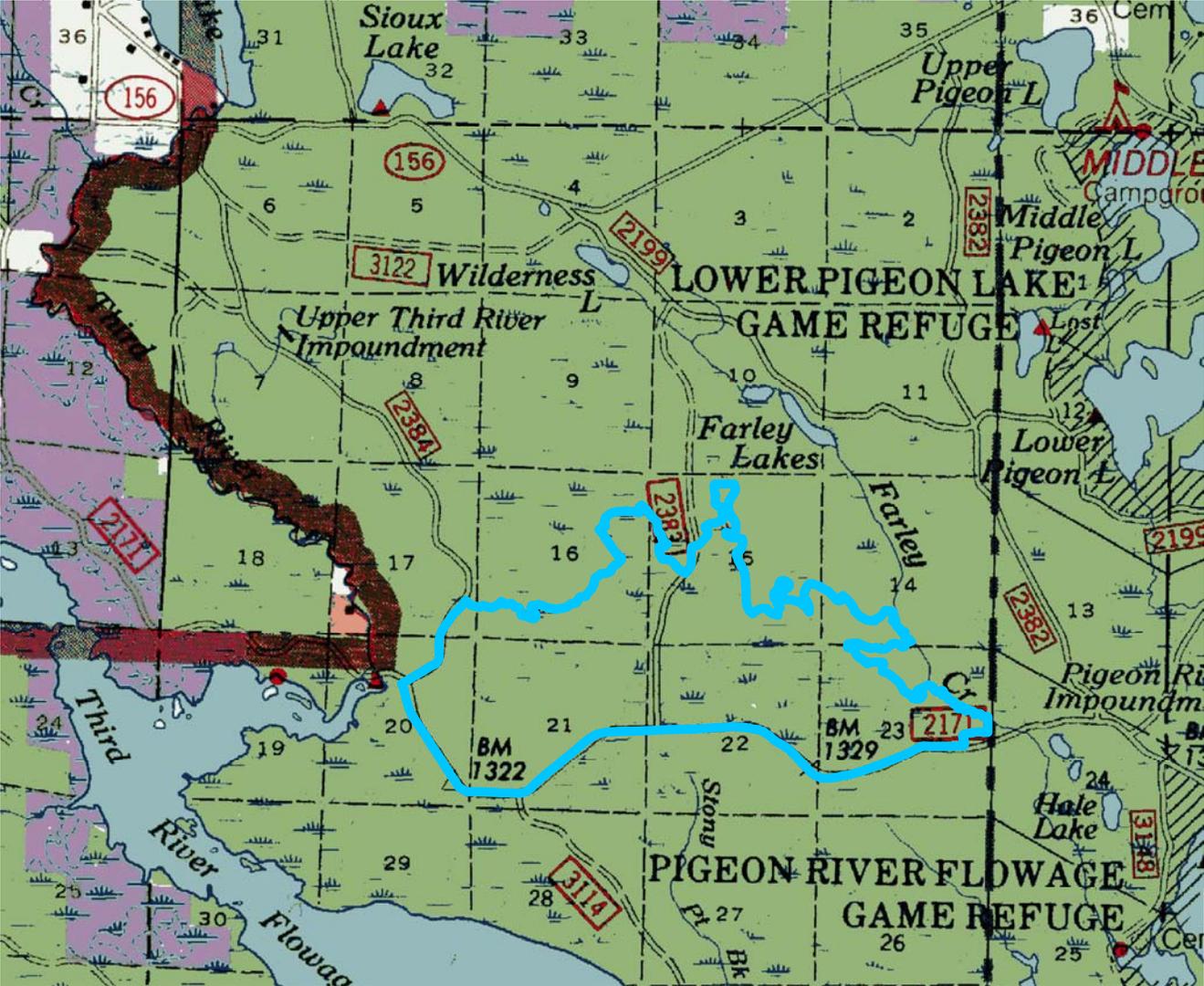
# VICINITY AREA MAPS

Map of the Existing SPNM Management Area from the Forest Plan  
(Boundary is shown in red.)



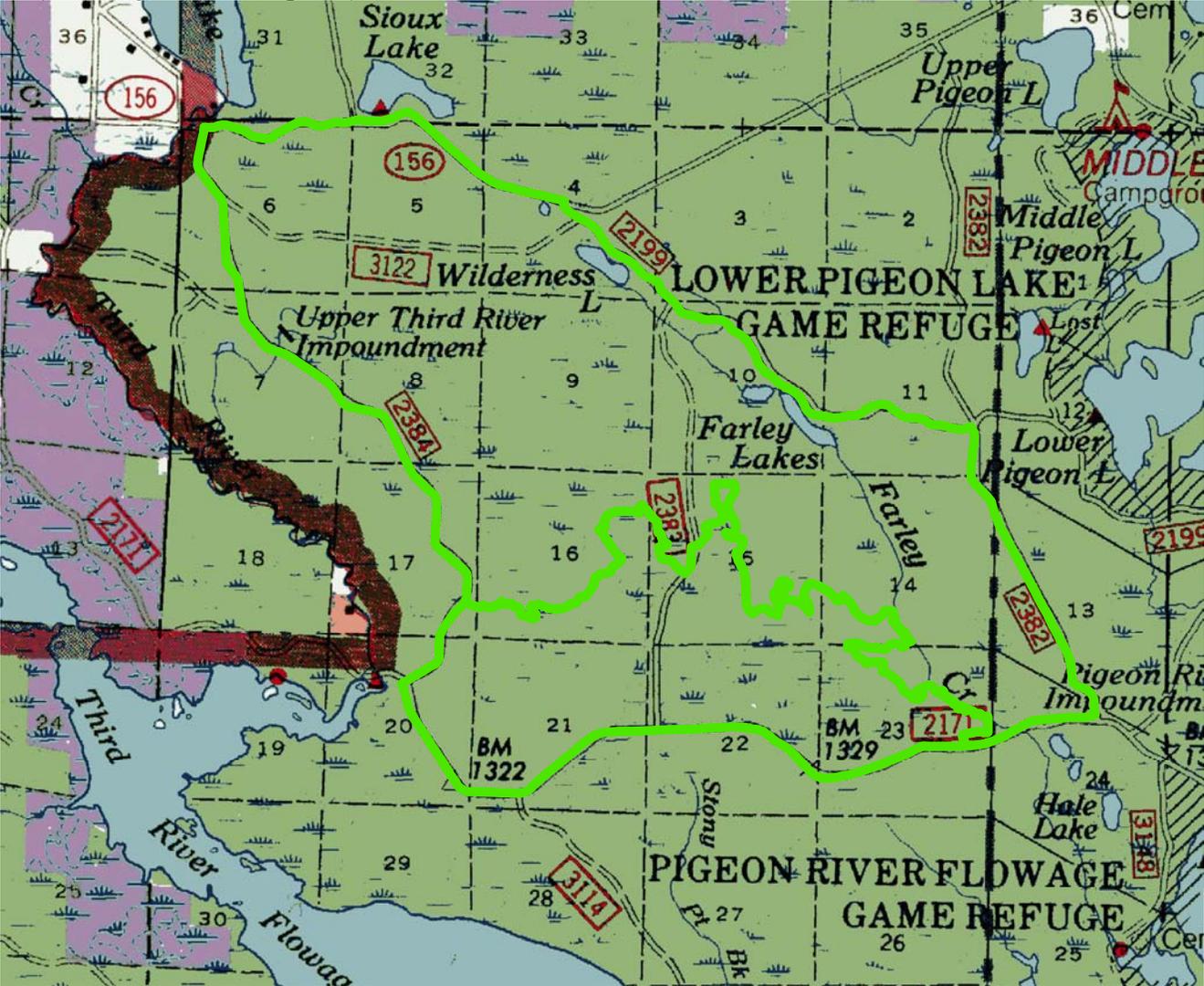
Map of the Proposed Addition to the existing SPMN Management Area

(Boundary is shown in blue.)

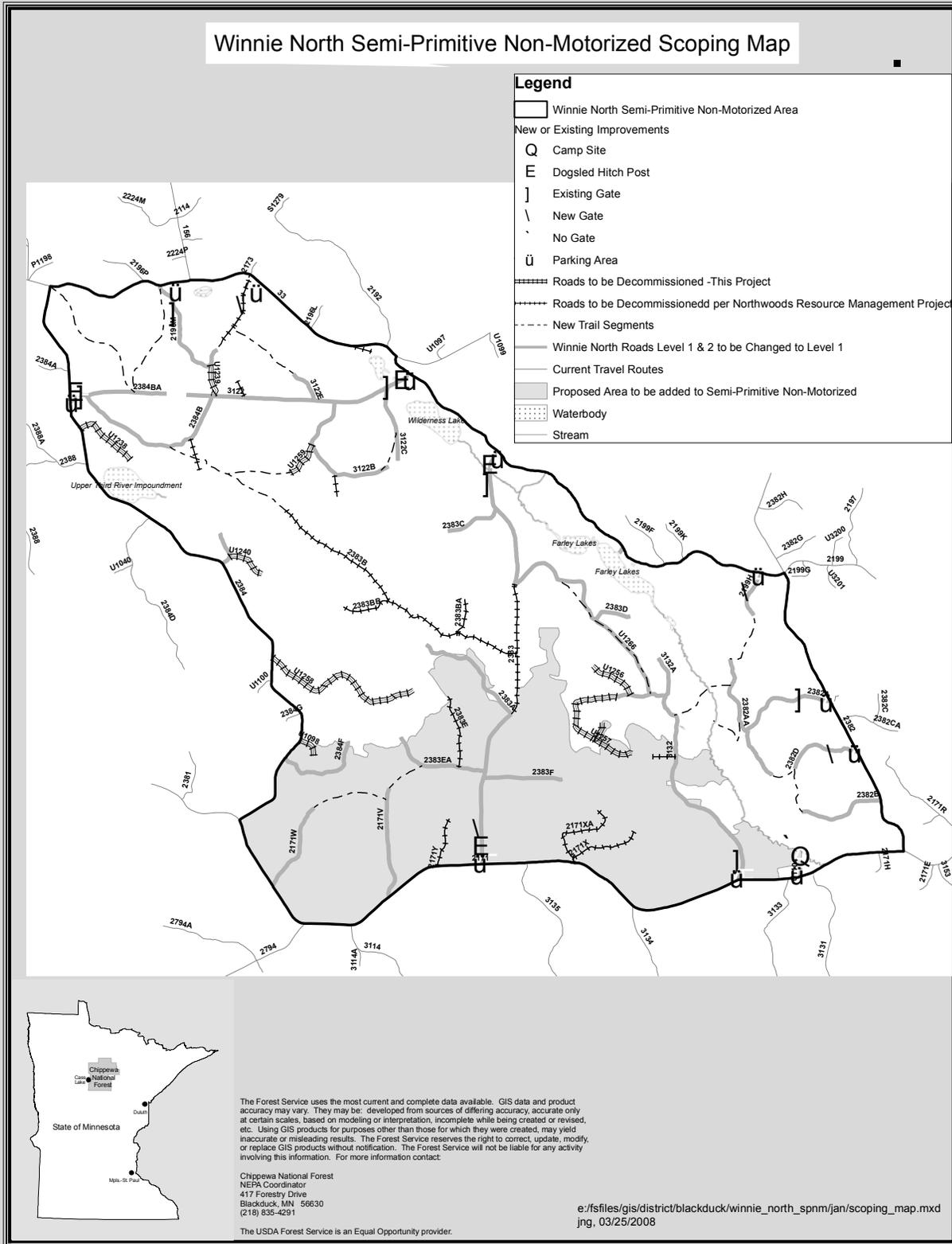


**Map of the Newly Proposed SPMN Management Area**

(Boundary is shown in green.)



# Original Scoping Map



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## **SUMMARY**

The Forest Supervisor of the Chippewa National Forest proposes to move the boundary of the North Winnie semi-primitive non-motorized area south to FR 2171 (to allow for more streamlined management of the area) and to construct some new trails, parking areas at trailheads, hitching posts for dog-sled teams, and dispersed campsites. The project will also decommission unauthorized roads and roads that are no longer necessary for management purposes. The boundary change proposal is a non-significant amendment to the Chippewa National Forest 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). The trail, campsite and trail head parking and dog-sled hitching post projects are consistent with the direction in the Forest Plan.

## **CHAPTER 1 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal and state laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the Blackduck Ranger District Office in Blackduck, MN.

### **1.1 - INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The CNF 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) allocated three areas as Semi-primitive Non-motorized Recreation Management Areas. North Winnie was established as a new semi-primitive area encompassing 4,995 acres.

This analysis is tiered to the Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for the 2004 Forest Plan. All activities will be consistent with the intent of the Forest Plan although the modification of the boundary will result in a non-significant Forest Plan Amendment.

The project is located in the Semi-primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) Management Area of the 2004 Forest Plan and a proposed addition to the south of it.

The title of the project is The North Winnie Semi-primitive Non-Motorized Boundary Change and Trail Project (NWSPNMA).

The existing NWSPNMA is located north of Lake Winnibigoshish and is nearly 4,995 acres in size. It is bounded on the north, east, and west by County Roads 33 and 156 and Forest Roads 2171, 2384, 2199, and 2382. The southern boundary is not defined on the ground. This creates a problem for enforcement officers and the public because it is unclear where the boundary begins. There are about 16.1 miles of system roads and 4.75 miles of unclassified road inside the area that are mapped and approximately 3-5 more miles that are not mapped.

Many of the roads and trails within the area will be suitable for hiking and walking as well other silent sports. The area has a variety of resources including wetlands, pine ridges, white cedar stands and a mix of age classes especially where aspen dominates the landscape. There are two lakes within North Winnie SPNM area, Farley

and Wilderness. Farley Creek is on the eastern side of the area. There is also one impoundment, Upper Third River, in the SPNM area near the western boundary. The legal description is Township 147 North, Range 28 West.

There is strong local support for the Semi-Primitive Area from a local Lake Association, local businesses including a resort, and dog sled businesses who would use the area for training and for commercial use. There is a desire by some of these entities to partner to maintain and provide additional opportunities for non-motorized use. North Winnie is also the location where a stewardship contract will be used to decommission roads in the area and improve watershed health within the area. There is strong local support from a State Conservation Officer for the boundary change. Enforcing the non-motorized status of the area with the current boundaries is cumbersome and inefficient. The public is unsure of the boundary of the area as well.

The project is entirely on National Forest System lands.

## 1.2 - PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The purpose of this project is to:

- Adjust the boundary of the Semi-primitive non-motorized area.
- Make desirable associated developments.
- Identify necessary mitigation measures and design features.
- Eliminate unnecessary roads or unauthorized trails not needed for management of the area.

**Table 1.2.a Purpose and Need Descriptions**

<b>Existing Condition Alternative A</b>	<b>Proposed Action Alternative B</b>
South boundary of the current SPNM area does not follow an easily recognizable line, so management for ATVs, roads, trails, and signage is difficult. The public cannot easily tell where the boundary is located. The 2004 Forest Plan used geo-morphological boundary for the southern boundary of the area.	South boundary of the SPNM area follows an easily recognizable line, so management for ATVs, roads, trails, and signage is easy. The public readily recognizes the boundary. This amendment to the 2004 Forest Plan would change the boundary to and geo-political boundary, Forest Road 2171.
There are no designated trails in the SPNM area (hiking, hunting, skiing, or dog sledding). There are numerous OML 1 roads but they do not join in a usable loop trail network.	There is a designated trail network in the SPNM area (hiking, skiing, and dog sledding). Trails are newly constructed or join existing segments of OML 1 roads to make a loop trail network.
There are few good parking locations or other trail amenities.	Trail signage and amenities are adequate, e.g. parking areas, boundary signs, trailhead signs, trail signs, and dogsled hitching posts.
Dispersed camping is allowed, but there are no designated sites.	Dispersed camping is allowed, and there are designated sites at appropriate locations along the trails, as well as being allowed elsewhere in line with Forest Plan direction.
The SPNM area has a Semi-primitive motorized ROS character, with some use by pickups and ATVs on unauthorized roads and system roads.	The SPNM has a Semi-primitive non-motorized ROS character.

### **1.3 - PROPOSED ACTION**

The Forest Supervisor of the Chippewa National Forest proposes to change the existing boundary of the North Winnie Semi Primitive Non-Motorized Area in order to make management of the area more efficient. This will result in amending the 2004 Forest Plan. In addition we will also construct associated amenities, e.g. new trails, parking areas, dogsled hitching posts and dispersed campsites within the non-motorized area. Future maintenance of the amenities are included in the proposed action. These are site specific activities that were addressed in the 2004 Forest Plan.

Specifically, the Forest Service will move the southern boundary of the area to Forest Road 2171, thereby adding 1,860 acres to the Semi-primitive non-motorized area, construct 4.32 miles of non-motorized trail, convert 1.67 miles of old roads to trails, convert 18.1 miles of level 1 and 2 roads to level 1 roads and use as trails, construct 7 parking areas for one or two vehicles, construct 4 dogsled hitching posts, construct 7 trailhead signs, install 5 new gates and designate 2 dispersed camping areas. A Total of 24.0 miles trail in the area consisting of interior system roads as well as some sections of previously constructed roads that are no longer on the system, user developed trails and newly constructed sections of trail linking these old roads will be used and maintained as trails. 3.4 miles of road including unauthorized roads and trails will be decommissioned in this project.

Developing the trail network will include: 1) clearing and grubbing new trail sections to a 12 foot width and building boardwalks or foot bridges in wet areas, 2) clearing downed trees and pruning encroaching shrubs from the existing roads and trail corridors. Maintenance of the designated trails will be mowed 1-2 times per year to keep the shrubs, grass, and forbs from obscuring the trails. Initially trails will be available for backcountry cross country skiing. Over time grooming for cross country skiing may occur on some of the trails. The most likely the network to be groomed would lie north of FR 2384BA and 3122.

Trails could be used for hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, horseback riding and dogsledding as well as other non-motorized use.

### **1.4 - DECISION FRAMEWORK**

Given the purpose and need, the Responsible Official will decide:

Whether or not to move the boundary of the area by amending the 2004 Forest Plan.

Whether or not to make additional associated amenities, e.g. trails, trail signage, parking areas, campsites, and dogsled hitching posts; and, if so, in what locations and what amounts.

If an action alternative is selected, what mitigation and monitoring of environmental effects may be necessary.

### **1.5 - SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public involvement was conducted by mail, through the news media, and by meetings with the Third River community. A scoping letter and Section 106 Consultation letter was sent to 169 interested individuals and agencies on April 28, 2008. Comments were received from 4 agencies and two individuals (see Appendix B for

comments and responses). On April 24, 2008, a Public Notice was published in the Cass Lake Times and on April 28, 2008 one was published in the Blackduck American.

The North Winnie Semi-Primitive Non-motorized Boundary Change and Trail project has been listed in the quarterly listing of NEPA projects since January 2008.

## **1.6 - ISSUES**

There were no key issues that drove the creation of new alternatives. The following are secondary issues or concerns are associated with the proposed action these secondary issues will guide much of the analysis.

### **Secondary Issue 1. Management Efficiency:**

**The existing management area boundary makes administration of the area difficult because it is not on a major road or natural feature that clearly defines its location.**

Indicators:

Miles of boundary that are difficult to define/locate.

### **Secondary Issue 2. Solitude:**

**The ability to enjoy silent sports in an area without intrusion by motorized vehicles or noise and odors from motorized vehicles requires being at least ½ mile from actively used roads.**

Indicators

Acres of non-motorized area.

Acres more than 1/2 mile of an actively used road.

### **Secondary Issue 3. Dogsledding/Skiing/Camping**

**Some recreation uses of the SPMN area require new amenities to proceed smoothly.**

Indicators

Number of designated dispersed campsites.

Number of parking areas.

Number of dog-sledding hitching posts installed.

### **Secondary Issue 4. Wetlands:**

**Wetlands may impacted by fill or boardwalk or bridge. This loss will need to be mitigated.**

Indicators

Square feet of wetlands crossed by trail system

### **Secondary Issue 5. Threatened and Endangered or Sensitive Wildlife and Plants and Their Habitat:**

**Trail and amenity construction and activities proposed for the area may pose a problem for species and their habitat**

Indicators

The degree to which the proposal has a detrimental or positive effect (varies by species and habitat needs)

## **CHAPTER 2 - ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION**

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the North Winnie Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Boundary Change and Trail project. It includes a description of two alternatives considered (including the proposed action).

### **2.1 - ALTERNATIVES DROPPED FROM DETAILED STUDY**

In response to public comments, we considered one alternative, but dropped it from detailed study for the following reasons.

#### **2.1.1 - Alternative C with fewer amenities**

Early public involvement indicated that there should be less impact on the ground, forest, and setting by developing fewer amenities.

This alternative was dropped from detailed consideration for several reasons:

No definite amenities, locations, or amounts were specified at that time or in later public involvement, so it was not possible to design a reasonable alternative.

The proposed action incorporates all currently desirable amenities. The degree to which to implement them is a part of the scope of the proposed action.

A field review of the area identified existing areas that were not suitable for trail development and the existence of areas that can be used without construction for some of the amenities including trails, parking areas and campsites.

### **2.2 - ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED IN DETAIL**

#### **2.2.1 - ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

The current situation would exist. The southern boundary of the semi primitive area would remain as it is and no additional trail, parking, campsites, or dog sled hitching posts will be constructed.

#### **2.2.2 - ALTERNATIVE B (PROPOSED ACTION)**

The proposed action is for the Forest Service to move the southern boundary of the area to Forest Road 2171, thereby adding 1,860 acres to the Semi-primitive non-motorized area, construct 4.32 miles of non-motorized trail, convert 1.67 miles of old roads to trails, convert 18.1 miles of level 1 and 2 roads to level 1 roads and use as trails, construct 7 parking areas for one or two vehicles, construct 4 dogsled hitching posts, construct 7 trailhead signs, install 5 new gates and designate 2 dispersed camping areas. A Total of 24.0 miles trail in the area consisting of interior system roads as well as some sections of previously constructed roads that are no longer on the system, user developed trails and newly constructed sections of trail linking these old roads will be used and maintained as trails. 3.4 miles of road including unauthorized roads and trails will be decommissioned in this project.

Developing the 24 mile trail network will include: 1) clearing and grubbing new trail sections to a 12 foot width and building boardwalks or foot bridges in wet areas that will be 6 feet in width 2) clearing downed trees and pruning encroaching shrubs from the existing roads and trail corridors. Maintenance of the designated trails will be mowed 1-2 times per year to keep the shrubs, grass, and forbs from obscuring the trails. Initially trails will be

available for backcountry cross country skiing. Over time grooming for cross country skiing may occur on some of the trails. The most likely the network to be groomed would lie north of FR 2384BA and 3122.

Trails could be used for hiking, hunting, wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, mountain biking, horseback riding and dogsledding as well as other non-motorized use.

# Winnie North Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Proposed Trail and Amendment Map

## Legend

### New or Existing Improvements

- Q Camp Site
- | Dogsled Hitch Post
- ] Existing Gate
- \ New Gate
- ü Parking Area

### Winnie North Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Area

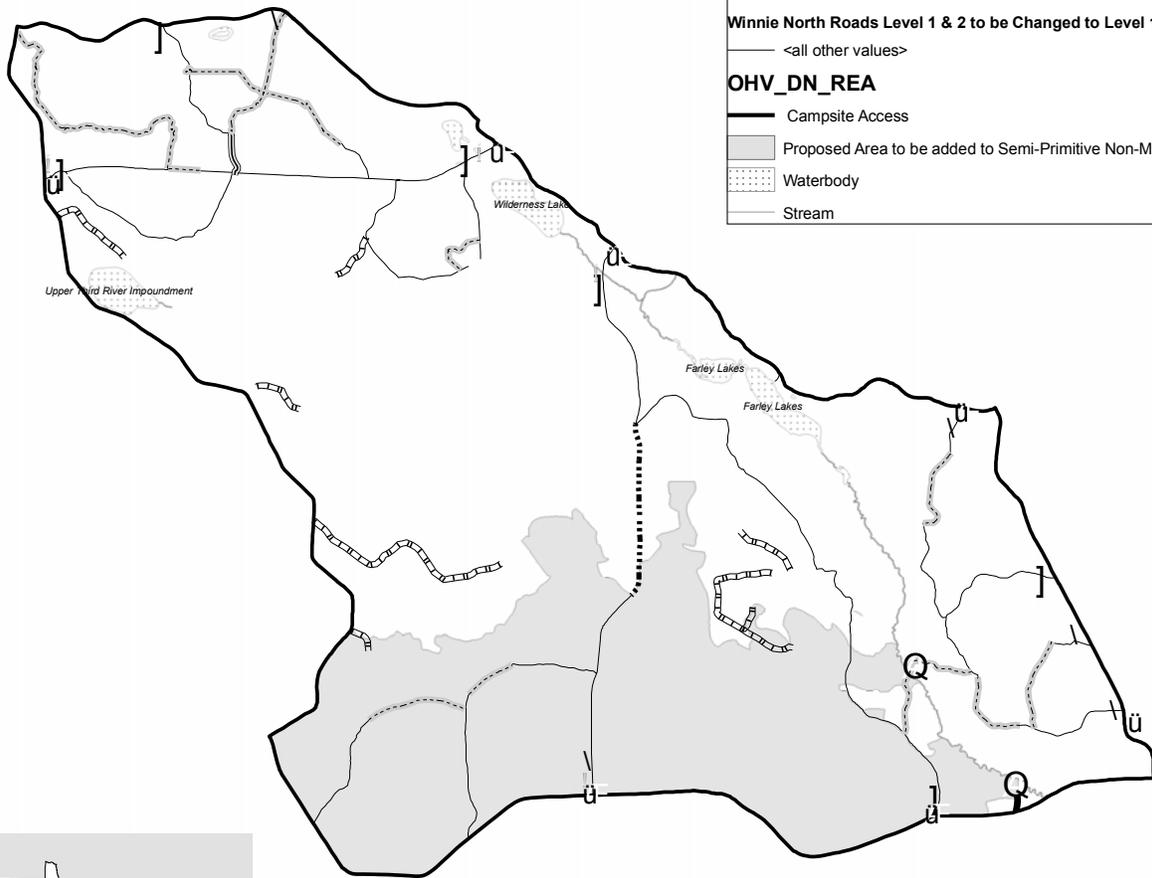
- New Trail Segments (All)
- Roads to be Decommissioned -This Project
- Decommission This Project Use For Trail
- Decommissioned in Northwoods EA Use for Trail

### Winnie North Roads Level 1 & 2 to be Changed to Level 1

- <all other values>

### OHV\_DN\_REA

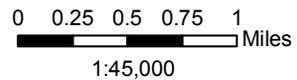
- Campsite Access
- Proposed Area to be added to Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized
- Waterbody
- Stream



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## **2.3 - MITIGATING MEASURES AND DESIGN FEATURES**

### **2.3.1 - STANDARDS, GUIDELINES, GOALS, DESIRED CONDITIONS FROM THE 2004 FOREST PLAN:**

The 2004 Forest Plan has much guidance for the design of treatments and projects. Anything incorporated into the actual design of the treatment is not considered a mitigating measure. We have been calling these "design features". All of this guidance is incorporated by reference into this EA.

### **2.3.2 – DESIGN FEATURES:**

Again, anything incorporated into the actual design of the treatment is not considered a mitigating measure. These items would be part of the prescriptions and called "design features." They include guidance from the Forest Plan, but also guidance and ideas from District personnel, the Interdisciplinary Team, and other authoritative sources. This includes best management practices (BMPs), which are "normal" design factors that are known from past practices to reduce the negative impacts of a treatment on a particular resource. The publication (*Sustaining Minnesota Forest Resources: Voluntary Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines for Landowners, Loggers, and Resource Managers (2005)*) was developed by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council and contains many best management practices that would protect the resources of the area. The document is voluntary but the Chippewa National Forest has agreed to follow its practices. In most cases the Forest Plan incorporates the provisions of this document and is often more specific or restrictive.

In summary, some of the major design features and special treatments in the prescriptions include:

- Season of use for construction.
- Distance treatments from TES and heritage sites.
- Use of the voluntary guidelines to control sedimentation into water during construction.
- Avoid wetland areas for trail locations and minimize the impact if no alternative exists.

### **2.3.3 - MITIGATING MEASURES TO BE IN THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION:**

Mitigating measures are factors in the design of individual stand treatments that are different from "normal" guidance and that are relatively uncommon. Mitigation measures to be included in the project plans and contracts include:

- ACGE 1     There will be no ground disturbing activities (trail construction and maintenance, etc.) within the nesting and post-fledging areas during the breeding season, which lasts from March 1 - August 31. See Forest Plan G-WL-24. If trail maintenance is needed during the breeding season, the district wildlife biologist will be consulted with prior to any work.
- ACGE 2     If a new active goshawk nest is discovered in the project area during project implementation, then work within 2,640' (post-fledging zone) of the nest will be delayed until Sept. 1.

## 2.4 DEFINITIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

N/A

## 2.5 - COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

**TABLE 2.5.a Comparison of Alternatives with the Purpose and Need**

<b>Purpose and Need Item:</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>
South boundary is not easy to locate for management or enforcement.	Remains difficult to locate.	Moved to FR 2171 adding 1860 acres to the Semi-Primitive Area
There are no designated trails in the SPNM area.	No designated trails.	4.32 miles of new trails and use 19.7 miles of existing level 1 roads decommissioned in Northwoods EA, and old road that were used to harvest the area decades ago.
There are few good parking locations or other trail amenities.	No new amenities.	7 parking areas, 4 dogsled hitching posts, 7 trailhead signs and 5 gates
Dispersed camping is allowed, but there are no designated sites.	Allowed but no designated sites.	2 designated dispersed camping areas .
The SPNM area has a Semi-primitive motorized ROS character, with some use by pickups and ATVs.	SPNM ROS character due to closures in line with Forest Plan on existing area.	SPNM ROS character due to closures in line with Forest Plan on expanded area.
Unauthorized roads and system roads not needed for future management are in the SPNM	Roads not needed remain	3.37 miles of road that are not needed are decommissioned

**TABLE 2.5.b Impacts of Alternatives on Selected Indicators for the Issues**

<b>Secondary Issues:</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>
1. Management Efficiency	South boundary still difficult to locate.	No boundary difficult to locate.
2. Solitude	4,995 acres of SPNM area and 1,842 acres farther than ½ mile from actively used roads.	6,855 acres of SPNM area and 2,456 acres farther than ½ mile from actively used roads.
3. Dogsledding/Skiing/Camping	No amenities.	7 parking areas, 2 campsites, 4 hitching posts and 5 new gates
4. Wetlands	No new trail in wetlands  No removal of fill in wetlands from unneeded roads	7 wetland crossings totaling 7500 square feet. Board walks or bridges would be utilized  7740 square feet of wetland would be restored through road decommissioning

<b>Secondary Issues:</b>	<b>Alt. A</b>	<b>Alt. B</b>
5. T&E and sensitive species and habitats	Positive and negative effects depending on species	May affect but not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx, grey wolf and grey wolf critical habitat

## **CHAPTER 3 - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **3.1 - RECREATION AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

#### **3.1.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

#### **3.1.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The CNF 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) allocated three areas as Semi-primitive Non-motorized Recreation Management Areas. Within the Forest Plan, the two areas existing prior to 2004 continued to be included, while additional acres were added to Suomi. A new SPNM area – North Winnie – was established. The theme of the SPNM management area described in the Forest Plan emphasizes land and resource conditions that provide recreational opportunities in nearly primitive surroundings where motorized use is not permitted. Most of the non-motorized recreation use occurs on lakes, trails, portages, and low standard roads. Interaction among recreation users is low. Forest management enhances recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors.

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas:

- Ecosystems are managed to provide a predominantly natural-appearing landscape, emphasizing large trees and older forest with a continuous forest canopy. Vegetation management generally maintains or enhances the older vegetation growth stages. (D-SPNM-1)
- Management activities in these areas enhance recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors. Such management activities may include developing primitive campsites, harvesting timber, using management-ignited fires, and planting trees. (D-SPNM-2)
- Vegetation management such as timber harvesting and fire may be used to achieve vegetation objectives. These activities are designed to maintain the natural appearance of the landscape. (D-SPNM-3)

The project area currently has two Management Areas in it. The majority of the project area is Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Recreation (SPNM) Management Area totaling 4995 acres, and the remainder is in the General Forest (GF) Management Area totaling 1842 acres.

Both of these management areas provide for commercial timber harvest to achieve ecosystem composition outcomes and a variety of recreation and wildlife opportunities and values. The primary difference between the two management areas is that one provides for motorized access and recreation opportunities and the other provides and area for hiking, snowshoeing, dog-sledding, and other non-motorized sports.

The character of timber harvests within a SPNM versus a GF management area is also somewhat different. There is a higher degree of consideration in an SPNM management area to maintain scenic integrity especially near improvements such as trails or campsites. There area also longer spans of time between vegetation management entries.

The following are additional desired conditions and guidelines for Semi-Primitive Areas

- Recreational activities occur in natural-appearing environments that may be slightly modified by forest management activities. Evidence of management activities is relatively low, consisting of occasional stands that have been harvested, low standard roads that are used for timber access, and trails that are used for non-motorized recreation. (D-SPNM-4)
- Developed recreation sites such as water access sites and trailheads may be provided for public use. There is generally little site modification with rustic improvements designed primarily for protection of environment rather than the comfort of users. Use of natural materials for improvements is emphasized. (D-SPNM-5)
- Dispersed recreation opportunities such as campsites and trails (day use, backpacking, portaging, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and hunter walking) may be provided for public use. Other human-made structures are rare. Other dispersed recreation opportunities that may not be associated with facilities, such as orienteering, hunting, fishing, berry picking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and trapping, would also occur. (D-SPNM-6)
- Low-standard roads, with native soil or gravel surfaces, are permitted to accomplish forest management. However, most roads would be closed to public motor use. (D-SPNM-8)
- If small, low development level, parking areas are provided, they are generally located at the perimeter of the management area. (G-SPNM-1)
- Special uses are generally not permitted, except those uses that do not detract from the semi-primitive environment or uses needed to access or supply utilities to private land, recreational facilities, or administrative sites. (G-SPNM-3)

### **3.1.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

Three secondary issues from Section 1.6 are discussed in relation to the recreation and visual resources of the area.

#### **Secondary Issue 1. Management Efficiency:**

**The existing management area boundary makes administration of the area difficult because it is not on a major road or natural feature that clearly defines its location.**

Indicators:

Miles of boundary that are difficult to define/locate.

#### **Secondary Issue 2. Solitude:**

**The ability to enjoy silent sports in an area without intrusion by motorized vehicles or noise and odors from motorized vehicles requires being at least ½ mile from actively used roads.**

Indicators

Acres of non-motorized area.

Acres more than 1/2 mile of an actively used road.

#### **Secondary Issue 3. Dogsledding/Skiing/Camping**

**Some recreation uses of the SPNM area require new amenities to proceed smoothly.**

Indicators

Number of designated dispersed campsites.

Number of parking areas.

The boundary for the SPNM area in the Forest Plan is defined by roads on the east, west, and north sides, but by a geo-morphological boundary on the south. There are no distinct features that define this southern boundary of

about 7.5 miles on the ground, making it very difficult to enforce the non-motorized closure or for the public to know where this line is located.

The existing SPNM area is about 4,995 acres with about 1,842 of these acres more than ½ mile from an actively used road. This assumes that the SPNM closure is in effect and interior roads are not being used. Prior to the SPNM area designation there were only about 786 acres more than ½ mile from a road that could be driven, because there were several interior roads drivable by highway vehicles or OHVs (this is in the existing plus added SPNM area).

Currently there is some ATV use and some back country cross-country skiing on the interior roads and a minor amount of dispersed camping and dog-sledding. However safe areas to park vehicles with trailers or to camp without removing brush are very limited.

While the roads on the north (Co. 156) and south (FR 2171) edges of the SPNM area are scenic integrity objective (SIO) HIGH, most of the SPNM area is only MEDIUM.

### **3.1.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.1.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.1.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

Under Alternative A, the boundary for the SPNM area in the Forest Plan is defined as it currently is, with about 7.5 miles of the south boundary very difficult to locate or enforce.

The SPNM area remains at about 4,995 acres with about 1,842 of these acres more than ½ mile from an actively used road.

With no added amenities, the public is limited in their ability to use the area. Parking spots remain limited and not very protected from other vehicle traffic. Dispersed camping is difficult to do without cutting brush. Dog-sledding is difficult without hitching posts.

Lack of maintenance or use of the roads allows them to grow up in grass, forbs, and shrubs making them difficult or unpleasant to hike, ski, or dog-sled on.

ATV use is dropped from 2.0 miles of gated road, plus a variety of other roads that are being used even though they are too soft/wet and shouldn't be used.

With no changes in boundary, trails, or amenities, the SIOs are unchanged and met.

##### **3.1.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B**

Under Alternative B, the boundary for the SPNM area in the Forest Plan is defined by roads on all sides, making 0 miles difficult to locate. This makes it easy to enforce the non-motorized closure and for the public to know where this line is located.

The expanded SPNM area adds about 1,860 acres of SPNM acreage, making a total of about 6,855 acres with about 2,456 of these acres more than ½ mile from an actively used road (added 614 acres to Alternative A).

With the added amenities, the public is able to do as much hiking, back country cross-country skiing on designated trails, dispersed camping, hunting, dog-sledding and horseback riding as there has been indicated a need for. There will be a total of 24.0 miles of trail. The 7 parking areas should be able to accommodate the cars and trailers safely. The designated dispersed camp sites should be enough for the few people that camp this

way. The signage on the trailheads (7) and trails should make use of the trails easy and safe. The 4 hitching posts for dogs should make it possible for dog-sledders to make their runs easily.

Maintenance or use of the designated trails keeps them from growing up in grass, forbs, and shrubs making them easy to hike, ski, horse back ride or dog-sled on; although they are not meticulously maintained. ATV use is dropped the same as in Alternative A, plus on 1,860 more acres to the south, which are even wetter/softer.

The changes in amenities should make very minor changes to the scenic integrity, with only small parking areas visible from the HIGH SIO roads. So the desired SIOs should be met.

### **3.1.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS-**

#### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

#### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

#### **Past Impacts:**

This area is entirely NFS lands so all effects are from or to NFS lands. The primary activities in this area have been timber harvest and hiking hunting and OHV use. Harvests activity and OHV use have kept many roads in the area free of brush and downed trees making the conversion of these roads to non-motorized trails a relatively easy task. There area a combination of both young and old forests in the area that contribute to habitat for a variety of game species. The OHV Road Travel Access EA 2007, Closed 18.9 miles of road to OHV travel and left 2.72 miles open to OHV travel in the GF management area. This action decreased OHV travel into the area. In addition gates and signs were installed leading to existing SPNMA in the fall of 2006 which helped the public identify the area.

#### **Present Impacts:**

The Northwoods EA has proposed activities in the area that will be in effect for the next 2-5 years, primarily timber harvesting and road decommissioning. Proposed harvesting in Northwoods EA includes 641 acres of cutting: 339 acres of regeneration harvesting (26 acres in the existing area and 313 in the added area) and 302 acres of intermediate harvesting (273 acres in the existing area and 29 in the added area). There is 5.25 miles of road decommissioning proposed. These activities involve motorized use for short periods of time to extract the wood and to perform decommissioning activities. Much of the timber harvest will be a winter activity and road decommissioning will occur in the summer. There will be additional noise from equipment during these activities but it will be short lived therefore it is not likely that it will impact recreation users negatively.

#### **Future Impacts:**

There area no firm plans for this area in the next 4 years however the next time that planning for vegetative treatments will be initiated is in 2012.

## **3.2 - WILDLIFE**

### **3.2.1 - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive Non-motorized (NWSPNM) area and the proposed addition to the south. For lynx, the analysis area extends beyond the project boundary and includes the Lynx Analysis Units (LAU) that overlap the project area.

### **3.2.2 - MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Management direction is guidance for managing resources and uses on National Forest System land. The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) established direction for natural resource management on the Chippewa National Forest (CNF). The goal or purpose of the Forest Plan is to protect natural resources, sustain vegetation management, and enhance social and economic benefits. Desired conditions describe what the forest should look like in the future, and indicate what the Forest Service will strive to achieve in the long-term. Objectives are measurable steps taken within a specified timeframe to move towards a desired condition, and are achieved by implementing a site-level project. Standards are required limits for resource management, which ensures compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. Guidelines are preferred limits to management actions, which may be followed in order to achieve desired conditions. All alternatives comply with the Forest Plan objectives, standards, and guidelines relative to threatened and endangered species, regional forester sensitive species, management indicator species (MIS), management indicator habitats (MIH), non-native invasive species (NNIS), other species of interest, and aquatic communities on National Forest land. Desired conditions are found on page 2-24 of the Forest Plan.

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) administratively lists regional forester sensitive species (RFSS), whose viability is of concern within the eastern region of the Forest Service. The Forest Plan identifies sensitive species, whose viability is of concern on the CNF due to their rarity, limited range, or susceptibility to management activities. For Threatened and Endangered Species, consultation was completed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and they concurred with the CNF's determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed threatened and endangered species.

### **3.2.3 - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

There were no issues based on public comments and internal discussion (See Section 1.6) relating to threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife and plants and their habitat, but the USFS is still required to disclose effects to these species.

#### **Issue 3 Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species (TES):**

##### **Trail construction and use could impact TES species or their habitat.**

Indicators

Effects to TES Species and Habitat

There are a total of 52 TES and MIS on the CNF. Determinations of effects for each species are summarized in this EA. The direct and indirect effects of each project alternative on TES species are more fully described in the biological assessment (BA) and biological evaluation (BE), which can be found in the project record.

#### **3.2.3.1 THREATENED and ENDANGERED SPECIES**

The project area contains habitat for two threatened and endangered species; Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and the gray wolf (*Canus lupus*).

##### **3.2.3.1.1 Canada Lynx**

The historic range of Canada lynx extended from Alaska across much of Canada, with southern extensions into parts of the western United States, the Great Lakes states, and New England (Ruediger et al. 2000). The FWS listed the Canada lynx in March 2000 as threatened in the contiguous United States (USFWS 2000). The distribution of lynx is strongly associated with the boreal forest and stable populations of the snowshoe hare (Ruggiero et al. 1999).

Snowshoe hares are the primary prey of lynx; thus, lynx foraging habitat coincides with the dense understory shrub and sapling habitats used by snowshoe hare (Ruggiero et al. 1999). Lynx denning habitat is found in mature forests with high horizontal cover provided by coarse woody debris (Ruggiero et al. 1999; Ruediger et al. 2000). Suitable travel corridors consist of a closed canopy of coniferous or deciduous vegetation taller than 6 feet. Lynx avoid large openings where they cannot find snowshoe hare, stalk other prey, or stay hidden from larger predators (Ruggiero et al. 1999). On a landscape scale, Canada lynx habitat includes a mosaic of early seral stands that support snowshoe hare populations and late seral stands of dense old-growth forest that provide denning and security habitat.

Of the 366 reports of lynx or bobcat that have been received by the MDNR since March of 2000, 191 have been verified as Canada lynx. Thirty provided evidence of reproduction. Lynx scat that was identified through DNA analysis was recently collected just a few miles outside of the northeast corner of CNF. There have been 4 verified lynx sightings on the CNF, 1 of which was on the Blackduck District.

Threats to Canada lynx consist of habitat loss or modification; trapping, inadequate regulatory mechanisms to protect lynx and their habitat, and other factors such as increased human access into suitable habitat and human-induced changes in habitat allowing other species (bobcats and coyotes) to move into lynx habitat and compete with them. Snow conditions on the CNF do not commonly give lynx a competitive advantage during the winter when survival is most difficult. The CNF usually has about 12 inches of snow on the ground for 45 days/year. Snow that does fall on the CNF often sublimates and frosts over, forming a crust that can easily support small to medium-sized mammals.

LAUs have been delineated across the CNF and provide the fundamental scale at which to evaluate and monitor effects of management actions on lynx habitat. The project area is within LAU 11.

#### **3.2.3.1.2 Gray Wolf**

The gray wolf population in Minnesota far exceeds the population goal of 1,400 wolves in the state. The winter survey of 1997-1998 showed a 50% increase in the statewide population estimate compared to surveys conducted a decade ago, with about 2,450 wolves ranging over 33,970 square miles in the state. Minnesota currently supports the highest population density of gray wolves worldwide. The 2007-2008 wolf survey results showed an estimated 2,921 wolves in the State, well above the population goal and the population in 1997-1998. "Comparison of results for total wolf range, occupied range, and population size over the last 3 surveys (10 years) suggests that the wolf population has been, on average, geographically and numerically stable" (Erb, 2008). The white-tailed deer population is also at an all time high, due in part to aspen clearcutting that creates quality forage. Although a severe winter would thin the herd and reduce wolf numbers, the deer herd has quickly rebounded in the past. Wolves are known to utilize the project area.

#### **3.2.4 – EFFECTS**

Alternative A would have no impact on Threatened and Endangered species. The project area would continue to be used as it has been in the past. The potential for human disturbance in lynx and wolf habitat would remain the same.

##### **3.2.4.1 – DIRECT, INDIRECT and CUMULATIVE EFFECTS – Canada Lynx**

Since only a negligible amount of lynx habitat would be impacted by this project, the only effects consist of the potential for lynx competitors that utilize the project area during the winter to increase. This is due to snow compaction on trails that are used for cross-country skiing and dog sledding.

##### **3.2.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE B - Lynx**

No direct effects to lynx are expected from implementing Alternative B. Lynx are very rare on the CNF and the likelihood of human use in the project area directly disturbing/displacing lynx is very low.

Indirectly, there is a slight potential for lynx competitors to increase in the project area in the winter. This is due to snow compaction on trails that are used for cross-country skiing and dog sledding. About 19.8 miles of road would be converted to non-motorized trail and 4.3 miles of new trail would be constructed. The trails in the project area are not designated over-the-snow trails, but are “multiple-use” trails available for all seasons of use. Road/trail densities in LAU 11 would increase by about 1.0 mile due to new trail construction, but road/trail densities would remain the same at about 2.7 miles/mile<sup>2</sup>.

The entire project area boundary consists of drivable roads, but vehicle access is limited in the winter. Roads on the very northern boundary of the project area are plowed during the winter while the remaining boundary roads are not plowed. The north end of the project area is where most winter use currently occurs and would continue to occur after project implementation. This would consolidate use in an area that is already being used in the winter. Due to lack of vehicle access in the winter, the proposed trail system in the southern two-thirds of the project area would likely receive little use in the winter. All interior roads/trails in the project area will be closed to motorized use. Thus, any increase in lynx competitors use in the project area would likely be in areas that are already being utilized by these species.

Conversely, habitat would improve in some areas within the project area due to decommissioning roads and increasing the size of the non-motorized area. Table 3.2.4.1a displays the miles of roads proposed for decommissioning and roads converted to trail in LAU 11 as part of this project.

**Table 3.2.4.1a Total miles of roads (# segments) to be decommissioned, new temporary roads to be closed, and roads converted to non-motorized trail.**

LAU	Alternative B			
	Decomm.	Temp	Convert to Trail	Total
11	3.4	0	19.8	23.2
# of Segments	11	0	33	44
<i>Data source: ArcMap 2008</i>				

Within LAU 11 lynx habitat would cumulatively improve do to road decommissioning that is currently occurring as part of the Northwoods project. An additional 7 miles of roads within LAU 11 will be decommissioned as part of that project.

**3.2.4.2 – DIRECT, INDIRECT and CUMULATIVE EFFECTS – Gray wolf**

Since only a negligible amount of wolf foraging habitat (deer habitat) would be impacted by this project, the only effects consist of the potential for temporary displacement of wolves in close proximity of these trails when people are present.

**3.2.4.2.1 – ALTERNATIVE B – Gray wolf**

If wolves are present when these trails are being used by people, there is a very slight potential for displacement of wolves from the area. This displacement would be temporary and very short term. Wolves would be expected to use the area once people have left. The increase in the size of the non-motorized area may benefit wolves by increasing the area of secure habitat for wolves and their prey.

Since only a negligible amount of deer habitat would be affected by this project, no indirect or cumulative effects are expected.

**3.2.5 REGIONAL FORESTER SENSITIVE SPECIES**

Sensitive species are plant and animal species identified by a Regional Forester for which population viability is a concern as evidenced by (FSM 2670.5):

- Significant current or predicted downward trends in population numbers or density.
- Significant current or predicted downward trends in habitat capability that would reduce a species' existing distribution.

The NWSPNM project BE was developed in consideration of relevant Forest Plan standards, guidelines, and management objectives, including conservation objectives for Sensitive Species.

The BE evaluates all proposed project alternatives for effects on Regional forester's Sensitive Species. Forest Service Manual (FSM 2672.42) objectives for completing a BE are to:

- Ensure that Forest Service actions do not contribute to loss of viability of any native or desired non-native plant or animal species,
- Ensure that Forest Service activities do not cause any species to move toward federal listing, and
- Incorporate concerns for sensitive species throughout the planning process, reducing negative impacts to species and enhancing opportunities for mitigation.

There are 49 species listed as Regional Forester's Sensitive Species on the CNF. All 49 were initially considered. Based on past surveys conducted in the project area and the forest types where new trail construction is planned, the risk for most sensitive wildlife and plants occurring within these trail corridors is low. Based on lack of suitable habitat in the project area and/or low project risk, the list was reduced to 1 species that is evaluated in detail. The remaining 48 species that were not evaluated in detail received a finding of "no impact" from implementation of Alternative B. These 48 species are not discussed in detail.

### 3.2.5.1 - ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)

Alternative A would have no impact on sensitive species from management activities because no ground disturbing activities would take place.

#### 3.2.5.1.1 – DIRECT, INDIRECT and CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

##### 3.2.5.1.2 -ALTERNATIVE B – Sensitive Species Effects Summary

Alternative B only impacts a negligible amount of sensitive species habitat. Refer to the individual species section for more detailed information. Alternative B would not result in a trend to federal listing or loss of viability to a Regional Forester Sensitive Species' populations or species. A finding of "may impact" is associated with 1 species (Table 3.2.5.1.2a).

**Table 3.2.5.1.2.a -- Summary of effects to Sensitive Species from implementation of Alternative B.**

Species	Effects Determination <sup>1</sup>	Summary of Effects
Northern goshawk ( <i>Accipiter gentiles</i> )	MINH	Potential for temporary disturbance/displacement during the breeding season where trails are within known territories.

<sup>1</sup> MINH: May impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend toward federal listing or cause a loss of viability to the population or species

#### Northern Goshawk

Goshawk habitat consists of large tracts of mature, closed canopy, deciduous, coniferous and mixed forests with an open understory in fairly contiguous blocks, intermixed with younger forest and openings for production of prey species. This species appears to be uncommon in Minnesota, and there are concerns about its population status throughout the Lake States (USFS 2004, p. 32). Currently proposed as a Species of Special Concern by the MDNR, an average of only 25 – 30 active nests are found per year in Minnesota (MDNR 2007, p. 22). Over the past 10 years, the number of active goshawk territories known on the Chippewa has ranged from 7 to 17 (USFS 2006, p. 35). Nesting success varies by year: in 2008, 12 known territories fledged young on the CNF.

Goshawks are considered habitat generalists at range-wide scales. However, there is general commonality in nest site selection, foraging habitat, and prey selection. Goshawks prefer mature deciduous or mixed deciduous/conifer forest in fairly contiguous blocks intermixed with younger forest and openings. Goshawks eat mainly rabbits, hares, squirrels, ducks, gallinaceous and other birds; local diet partly depends on availability. Snags, downed logs, openings, large trees, shrubby understory, and interspersed vegetation structural stages (grasses to old forests) are critical habitat for prey species used by the goshawk. Nest sites are usually in stands with large trees and well-developed canopies. Several alternate nests may be associated with a single pair of birds.

Risk factors for goshawks include forest fragmentation and isolation of primary habitats, cutting and regeneration in nesting areas that result in vegetative simplification (Crocker-Bedford 1990), predation by other raptors such as great-horned owls and red-tailed hawks, and mammals such as fisher. Human disturbance at the nest site may result in nest failure and abandonment.

**Environmental Baseline:** Goshawk habitat occurs within the NWSPNM project area. There are 2 known goshawk territories; Dixon Lake and Farley Creek. The Dixon Lake territory has not been active since 2003. The Farley Creek territory is a new territory located in 2008.

Since the project area is in known territories no goshawk surveys were conducted.

**Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis of Known Goshawk Territories:**

Negligible direct effects are expected from this project. Any project implementation activities within nesting and post fledging zones will have timing restrictions to reduce any disturbance to nesting birds.

There is a very slight potential for disturbance/displacement effects when trails are being used by people within these territories during the breeding season. These effects would be temporary and very short term.

Since only a negligible amount of habitat may be affected by this project, no indirect or cumulative effects are anticipated.

***Determination of effects:***

Alternative B *may impact goshawks or their habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species.* This is due to the slight potential for disturbance/displacement when people are using the trails within these territories during the breeding season.

**Mitigations Measures:**

ACGE 1     There will be no ground disturbing activities (trail construction and maintenance, etc.) within the nesting and post-fledging areas during the breeding season, which lasts from March 1 - August 31.

See Forest Plan G-WL-24. If trail maintenance is needed during the breeding season, the district wildlife biologist will be consulted with prior to any work.

ACGE 2 If a new active goshawk nest is discovered in the project area during project implementation, then work within 2,640' (post-fledging zone) of the nest will be delayed until Sept. 1.

### 3.2.6 – MANAGEMENT INDICATOR SPECIES

#### 3.2.6.1 - ALTERNATIVE B

Management indicator species are those species that are monitored over time to assess the effects of management activities on their populations. MIS monitoring also indicates the effects on populations of other species with similar habitat needs, which represent major biological communities. National Forest Management Act regulations [CFR 36, part 219.19, paragraph a-6] state that “Population trends of management indicator species would be monitored and relationships to habitat changes determined.” This direction applies specifically to the forest planning process, but also has implications for project planning. Detailed analysis of effects to gray wolf and northern goshawk are located in the Threatened and Endangered and Sensitive Species Sections. Effects to bald eagles are located in the BE. Since there will only be a negligible change in habitat for MIS, effects are very limited.

The CNF, MDNR, and the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) regularly conduct monitoring of management indicator species. Summaries of recent surveys are displayed in Table 3.2.6.1a.

**Table 3.2.6.1. a – Population trends of management indicator species on the CNF**

Common Name	Reason for Selection	Unit of Measure	CNF survey		Population Trend	
			Average	Latest	CNF	Region/State
Gray Wolf	federally threatened	wolves/aerial survey	80-90	100+	stable	stable
Bald Eagle	federally threatened	breeding pairs	151	113	stable	increasing
		successful pairs	96	55		
		young/nest	1.02	0.58		
Northern Goshawk	regional forester sensitive species	breeding pairs	8	16	stable	stable
		successful pairs	4	12		
		young/nest	0.9	1.3		
White Pine	desirable historic species	acres forestwide	4,600	4,600	increasing	increasing

#### Gray Wolf

Refer to the wolf section for population status in Minnesota.

#### Bald Eagle

Eagle numbers appear to have reached a leveling off point on the CNF. There is some evidence that in recent years, competition among breeding pairs due to high nesting densities has resulted in some declines in breeding success. It appears that the growth rate of eagles on the CNF is dropping, and the habitat in this region has reached its capacity (USFS 2004, p. 14-20).

Activity and productivity flights were conducted for bald eagle surveys in 2007. A total of 259 nests were surveyed. Of these, 113 nests were active with 55 of them fledging young. A total of 66 eagle chicks were

observed during the productivity flights; 0.58 young fledged per active nest. This productivity is up slightly from 2005, the last year bald eagles were monitored on the CNF, when the average was 0.41 young fledged per active nest. For the period from 1987 thru 2004, CNF bald eagle monitoring shows an average of: 151 (range, 88-189) active breeding pairs; 96 successful breeding pairs (range, 66-108); and 1.02 young fledged per active nest (range, 0.76-1.39) (USFS 2008).

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. Federally listed threatened and endangered species Biological Assessment for the Revised Forest Plans: Chippewa and Superior National Forests. 224 pp.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2008. Monitoring and evaluation report. Chippewa National Forest.

### **Northern Goshawk**

Over the past 10 years, the number of known goshawk breeding territories has risen steadily on the CNF, from 9 known in 1996 to 49 known in 2008. The number of known active breeding territories and the number of successful breeding pairs has more than doubled, from 7 active breeding territories in 1996 to 16 active territories in 2008. In 2008, twelve of these territories successfully fledged young. The great variability of young per active nest and signs of predation at failed nests indicates intense predation pressure. Predators such as the red tailed hawk, great horned owl, raccoon, and fisher are more abundant in open areas and edge habitat. Refer to the northern goshawk section in the Sensitive Species Section for detailed effects analysis of known nest territories in the NWSPNM project area.

### **White Pine**

There will be no change in the acreage and distribution of white pine on the CNF as a result of this project.

### **3.2.7 – MANAGEMENT INDICATOR HABITATS**

Management indicator habitats (MIHs) are groupings of forest types. The 9 management indicator habitats include upland forest, upland deciduous, northern hardwoods, aspen-birch, upland conifer, uplands spruce-fir, red and white pine, jack pine, and lowland black spruce-tamarack. MIH's are described in more detail in the Forest Plan (USFS 2004a, C-1, C-2) and Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines relating to the MIH's are also described in the Forest Plan (USFS 2004a, 2-32, 2-33).

Three landscape ecosystems (LE) comprise the NWSPNM project area: Boreal Hardwood Conifer (BHC), Tamarack Swamp (TS) and Dry Mesic Pine-Oak (DMPO). The composition of land within the project area is about 45% (3,094 acres) BHC, 16% (1,092 acres) TS, and 39% (2,664 acres) DMPO.

Since only a negligible amount of MIHs would be affected by this project, there will be no change in the acreage or distribution of MIHs in the project area.

### **3.2.8 – NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS**

Neotropical migratory birds breed in the U.S. and Canada, and winter in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Many populations are in decline, due in part to conversion of grasslands and wetlands to agriculture, fragmentation of habitat, loss of wintering and migratory habitat, and brood parasitism.

Northern Minnesota and the CNF are located within the Boreal Hardwood Transition Zone that occurs between the mixed hardwood forest to the south and the boreal forests to the north. Twenty five neotropical migratory bird species on the Forest are associated with this zone.

#### **3.2.8.1 – ALTERNATIVE B**

Since only a negligible amount of habitat would be affected by this project, no measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to migratory birds are expected.

### 3.2.8 – SELECTED GAME SPECIES

#### 3.2.8.1 - ALTERNATIVE B

The CNF, MDNR, and the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) regularly conduct monitoring of selected species. Table 3.2.8.1a summarizes recent surveys on selected popular game species. Since only a negligible amount of habitat would be affected by this project, no measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to ruffed grouse, whitetail deer, or woodcock are expected.

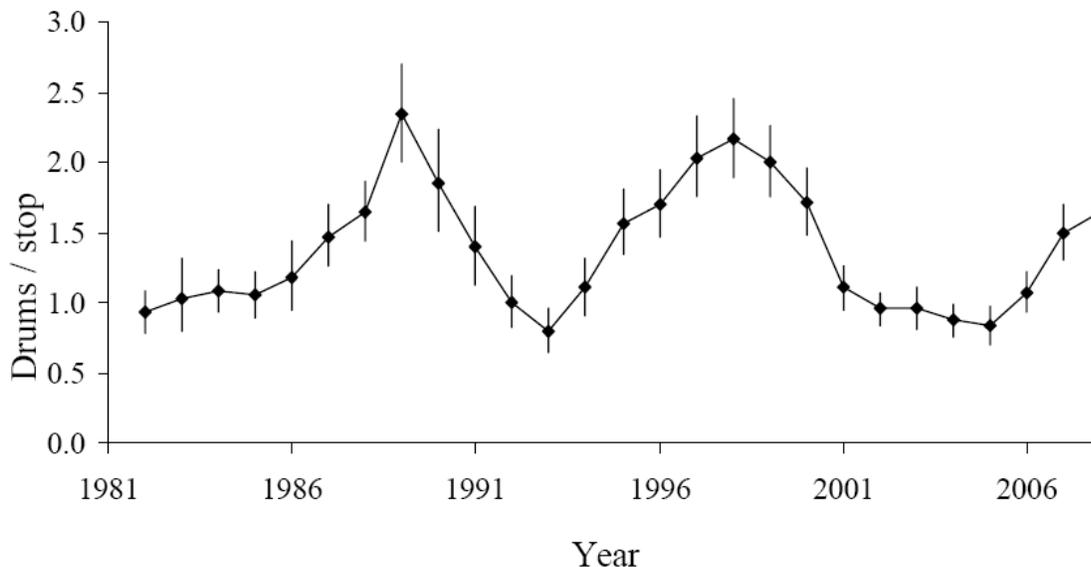
**Table 3.2.8.1.a - Selected Game Species on the CNF 2003 surveys.**

Species	Habitat	Unit of Measure	CNF Survey		Population Trend	
			Average	Latest	CNF	Region/State
White-tailed Deer ( <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i> )	Shrub/sapling habitat	Deer/mile <sup>2</sup>	14.7	11.9	Stable	Increasing
Ruffed Grouse ( <i>Bonana umbellus</i> )	Deciduous upland habitat	Drum/stop	1.3	1.3	Within 10 year cycle	Within 10 year cycle
American Woodcock ( <i>Scolopax minor</i> )	Permanent opening communities	Singing males/route	4.1	3.9	Stable	Decreasing

#### Ruffed Grouse

Ruffed grouse on the CNF appear to reflect similar trends to those across northern Minnesota, with a 10-year cycle being characteristic of their population dynamics. Figure 3.2.8.1b displays recent ruffed grouse counts in the northeast survey area including the CNF (MDNR 2008).

#### 3.2.8.1b Ruffed grouse drums per stop in northeast zone of northern Minnesota



### **White-tailed Deer**

The white-tailed deer is at or near an all-time high on the CNF. Habitat is excellent with the abundant clearcutting that has been done over the last 3 decades, especially the recent aspen regeneration.

### **American woodcock**

American woodcock on the CNF have been declining along with the national long-term population trend. The 2003 woodcock survey on the CNF resulted in 3.0 singing males per route, as compared to a historical average of 4.1 singing males per route. The statewide and national population trends have been declining, possible due to the succession of old farm fields to forest.

## **3.3 - SOIL, WATER, WETLANDS AND FISHERIES**

### **3.3.1 – SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is within 100 feet of any ground disturbing activities in the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

### **3.3.2 – MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

From the Chippewa National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (2004):

Objective WS-10: In all management actions involving soil disturbance:

Maintain adequate ground cover and soil organic layers, both during and after treatment, to minimize erosion (including rill and gully formation) and allow water to infiltrate the soil.

Restore and re-vegetate disturbed areas.

G-WS-12: Wetland impacts will be avoided whenever possible. Where impacts are unavoidable, minimize and compensate for loss when undertaking projects

S-WS-4 Water quality Best Management Practices (BMP) which are represented by some of the MN Forest Resource Council (MFRC 1999) Voluntary Site Level Forest Management Guidelines, will be implemented as standards on NFS land.

G-WS-6 Within the near-bank zone, minimize soil disturbance and avoid activities that may destabilize soils or add sediment to the water.

A variety of sources provide direction for management related to water quality, riparian areas, and fish and aquatic habitat on the Forest. Some of the more relevant of these include Executive Orders 11988, the Clean Water Act, and the Forest Plan (riparian management zones (RMZ)).

### **3.3.3 – EXISTING CONDITION / AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

One issue from Section 1.6 is affected by soil and water resources.

#### **Secondary Issue 5. Wetlands:**

**Wetlands will be impacted by fill and this loss will need to be mitigated.**

Indicators

Square feet of wetlands crossed by trails .

Square feet of wetlands restored.

There are 2540 acres of wetlands in the project area and the "heavy" soil is relatively damp and soft elsewhere. Only about 4.2 miles of the interior system road are solid/dry enough to drive year-round in the existing SPNM area, plus 0.7 miles in the added SPNM area. Many of the roads cross wetlands or the damper, "heavy" soils and are relatively unimproved, so are too soft to drive in most seasons. The use of these roads by a few vehicles has resulted in some deep (and shallow) ruts. Occasional vehicle use of the "harder" roads keeps the shrubs,

forbs, and grass beaten down and the soil/roadbed compacted, thus the roads are in an open condition. The wetter roads are slowly growing up in shrubs as they are not driven over and the soil/roadbed is softer.

### **3.3.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.3.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.3.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

Alternative A will close the roads in the existing SPNM area to vehicular use, so they will receive no vehicular use and will slowly fill with shrubs unless annual maintenance is done. There will be no further rutting on the 16.1 miles of interior road (13.8 after Northwoods EA decommissioning). The roads south of the existing SPNM area will remain as they are.

##### **3.3.4.1.2 - ALTERNATIVE B – (Proposed Action)**

Alternative B will close the roads in the existing and expanded SPNM areas to vehicular use, so they will receive no vehicular use and will slowly fill with shrubs unless annual maintenance is done. There will be no further rutting on the 22.2 miles of interior road including unauthorized roads (18.1 miles after Northwoods EA decommissioning). In addition another 3.37 miles of road and trail, both authorized and unauthorized will be decommissioned in this project. About 7500 square feet of wetland will need to be crossed by the proposed trail system. Boardwalks or bridges will be built to cross these areas. About 7,740 square feet of wetland will be restored in this alternative. The increased use of the area by hiking, skiing, and dog-sledding will have little effect on soils and wetlands, except for the maintenance that will need to be done. Maintenance will restrict the growth of the shrubs and may cause some rutting, depending the type of equipment that is used. Thus this treats more roads than in Alternative A with either decommissioning, restoring wetlands or converting roads to trails.

#### **3.3.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is within 100 feet of any ground disturbing activities in the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

##### **Past Impacts:**

This area is entirely NFS lands so all effects are from or to NFS lands. Timber harvesting has been one reason that motorized vehicles have been in the non-motorized area and the add on area to the south. Most rutting in the area has been caused by OHV use prior to the 2004 Forest Plan.

##### **Present Impacts:**

The Northwoods EA has proposed activities in the area that will be in effect for the next 2-5 years, primarily timber harvesting and road decommissioning. There is 5.25 miles of road decommissioning proposed. These activities involve motorized use for short periods but will be conducted utilizing management practices that protect wetland and water quality. Measures include winter harvest and conducting activities during dry conditions.

**Future Impacts:**

There are no firm plans for this area in the next 4 years however the next time that planning for vegetative treatments will be initiated is in 2012.

### **3.4 - VEGETATION AND NON-NATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES**

#### **3.4.1 – SCOPE OF ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

#### **3.4.2 – MANAGEMENT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

A Semi-primitive report about SPNM areas was done by the Supervisor's Office. It is included in Appendix E. Only pertinent quotes from the Forest Plan are included here:

Management activities in these areas enhance recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors. Such management activities may include developing primitive campsites, harvesting timber, using management-ignited fires, and planting trees. (D-SPNM-2)

Recreational activities occur in natural-appearing environments that may be slightly modified by forest management activities. Evidence of management activities is relatively low, consisting of occasional stands that have been harvested, low standard roads that are used for timber access, and trails that are used for non-motorized recreation. (D-SPNM-4)

#### **3.4.3 – EXISTING CONDITION**

This SPNM area has a diversity of forest types and ages, much like the surrounding area, with aspen, spruce/fir, lowland hardwoods, and wetlands prevailing. Non-native invasive species (NNIS) are probably present along some of the roads, but are not a major problem in the area. The interior roads are covered with grass, forbs, and shrubs to the extent that use and driving has not controlled the vegetation. A few roads are brushed in to the extent that they cannot be driven.

The SPNM area contains about 5,082 acres of hardwoods (3,323 in the existing area and 1,759 in the added area), 2,601 acres of conifers (2,111 in the existing area and 490 in the added area), and 966 acres of openings (794 in the existing area and 172 in the added area). The existing area is drier with the only red pine, white pine, and white spruce in the area. There is a higher percentage of black ash in the added area but it is common in the whole area. Lowland species are more common in this area than in most other areas of the district with about 1,727 acres of lowland conifers and about 750 acres of black ash.

Forest Types in Existing SPM Area

Decade		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18
Years			1999-2008	1989-1998	1979-1988	1969-1978	1959-1968	1949-1958	1939-1948	1929-1938	1919-1928	1909-1918	1899-1908	1889-1898	1879-1888	1869-1878	1859-1868	1849-1858	1829-1838
AGE CLASS existing	acres forest type	None Listed	0-9	10to19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100-109	110-119	120-129	130-139	140-149	150-159	170-179
red pine	573	0	0	55	200	86	65	0	0	35	12	0	16	34	39	31	0	0	0
white pine	43	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	16
fir/spruce	74	0	0	34	28	0	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
black spruce	433	0	0	14	23	78	0	0	28	53	21	162	18	26	10	0	0	0	0
Cedar	50	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	15	0	0	0
Tamarack	346	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	40	0	111	0	117	46	19	0	0	0	0
White Spruce	149	0	0	28	63	41	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Swp Conifer	423	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	32	29	44	80	117	105	0	0
Black ash	359	0	0	5	13	0	0	4	0	45	104	0	66	23	90	0	0	9	0
Sugar Maple	215	0	0	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	22	0	96	20	22	18	0	0	0
Aspen	1544	0	110	619	253	142	0	0	96	288	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aspen_fir_spruce	521	0	0	112	95	72	0	13	93	134	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paper Birch	684	0	34	73	41	0	7	0	45	86	15	123	228	32	0	0	0	0	0
lowland opening	118	118																	
upland opening	3	3																	
opening	673	673																	
total age	6228	794	149	957	758	432	88	17	307	648	338	319	590	243	260	198	105	9	16
percent age		13	2	15	12	7	1	0	5	10	5	5	9	4	4	3	2	0	0

Forest Types in Added SPNM area

Decade		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	16
Years			1999 - 2008	1989 - 1998	1979 - 1988	1969 - 1978	1959 - 1968	1949 - 1958	1939 - 1948	1929 - 1938	1919 - 1928	1909- 1918	1899- 1908	1889- 1898	1879- 1888	1869- 1878	1849 - 1858
AGE CLASS in added	acres for. type	None Listed	0-9	10to 19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100-109	110-119	120-129	130-139	150-159
red pine	0	0															
white pine	0	0															
fir/spruce	0	0															
black spruce	345	0	0	0	0	74	0	0	27	13	0	222	0	0	0	9	0
Cedar	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4
Tamarack	80	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	22	0	0	0
White Spruce	35	0	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Swp Conifer	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	14	0	0
Black ash	391	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	56	4	106	9	161	16	0
Sugar Maple	264	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	170	22	0	72	0	0	0	0
Aspen	758	0	0	187	176	7	0	15	3	291	20	59	0	0	0	0	0
Aspen_fir_spruce	318	0	0	117	49	51	0	0	0	101	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paper Birch	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
lowland opening	11	11															
upland opening	0	0															
opening	161	161															
	0	0															
	0	0															
total age	2421	172	0	304	260	145	0	15	75	642	98	285	178	38	180	25	4
percent age		7	0	13	11	6	0	1	3	27	4	12	7	2	7	1	0
2422																	

### **3.4.4. – EFFECTS**

#### **3.4.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.4.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

Alternative A will not result in any changes to vegetation or NNIS due to treatments. Natural changes will be slow and not noticeable during the next 10 years. Vegetation grows even more dense as vehicles no longer drive on the 16.1 miles of interior road and there is no maintenance of it for trails.

##### **3.4.4.1.2 - ALTERNATIVE B – (Proposed Action)**

Alternative B will have the construction of 4.32 miles of new trails connecting existing system roads and old roads from past harvest activities, 7 parking lots, 7 trailhead signs, and 2 dispersed campsites. Overall this will be about a maximum of 5.0 acres of disturbed trees, which is almost unnoticeable in this area of over 6,000 acres. The increased number of trails and increased number of people using the area could have the potential to spread the NNIS, but this is relatively unlikely to happen with hiking, skiing, and dog-sledding; as opposed to use of wheeled vehicles. The maintenance and use of the trails keeps the vegetation low and controlled on the designated trails. Roads that are not maintained will reforest as in Alternative A.

#### **3.4.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

##### **Past Impacts:**

The effects are the same as in direct and indirect, since the current conditions are the results of the past actions on this area that is entirely NFS lands.

##### **Present Impacts:**

The changes due to this EA will be added to the impacts from the sales and road decommissioning in Northwoods EA, that is ongoing and will continue for the next 3 to 5 years.

Proposed harvesting in Northwoods EA includes 641 acres of cutting: 339 acres of regeneration harvesting (26 acres in the existing area and 313 in the added area) and 302 acres of intermediate harvesting (273 acres in the existing area and 29 in the added area).

##### **Future Impacts:**

The changes due to this EA will be added to the impacts from the sales and road decommissioning in Northwoods EA, that is ongoing and will continue for the next 3 to 5 years.

## **3.5 - GATHERING AND TRADITIONAL USES**

### **3.5.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

### **3.5.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Forest Plan contains several items that deal with indirectly or directly with gathering and traditional uses, including:

Goal: Provide forest settings and natural resources that enhance social and economic benefits at local, regional, and national levels. (FP Page 2-5)

Goal: Provide management direction that enhances social and economic benefits for individuals and communities. (FP Page 2-5)

D-SE-2 The Forest provides non-commodity opportunities in an environmentally sustainable and socially acceptable manner to contribute to social sustainability and vitality of local resident's way of life, cultural integrity, and social cohesion.

S-TR-6 Environmental documents will disclose potential effects on cultural resources, traditional use areas and areas of special interest that include tribal cultural values, properties, and uses, and species of special concern. (FP Page 2-36)

### **3.5.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

None of the issues from Section 1.6 are affected by traditional gathering.

Traditional resources are gathered to some extent in the SPNM area. There is open roaded access to most of the area, however the majority of these roads cannot be driven except under extremely dry conditions. There are no known unique gathering opportunities in the area.

Under the Forest Plan, the existing SPNM area will have all interior roads closed to mechanized vehicular traffic on about 4,995 acres. This EA would add about 1,860 acres to this.

### **3.5.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.5.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.5.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

Under Alternative A all roaded access in the existing SPNM area will be changed to travel without mechanized vehicles on 4,995 acres. This could have a very minor impact on gathering opportunities along the roads that can presently be driven year-round.

##### **3.5.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B**

Under Alternative B the impacts will be similar to Alternative A except on 5,855 acres (1,860 more acres). However there will also be 4.34 miles of additional walking trails that access the interior of the area for gathering and other uses.

#### **3.5.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

**Past Impacts:**

Past management on this NFS land has left the area as it is, with about 16.1 (and 6.1) miles of interior roads; most of which are not drivable year-round.

**Present Impacts:**

The Northwoods EA has proposed activities in the area that will be in effect for the next 2-5 years, primarily timber harvesting and road decommissioning. This road decommissioning is primarily of interior roads that will not be available for vehicular traffic anyway in the SPNM area.

**Future Impacts:**

There are no firm plans for this area in the next 4 years however the next time that planning for vegetative treatments will be initiated is in 2012.

### **3.6 - ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

#### **3.6.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The environmental justice analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

#### **3.6.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

Under Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations) and Chippewa National Forest policy, when populations of low-income persons (below poverty level) or minorities of the county are greater than twice the state percentage for low-income or minority populations, an environmental justice assessment must be conducted. This analysis is to determine that there are no "disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of USDA programs and activities on minority and low-income populations" and that they have the opportunity "to participate in planning, analysis, and decision-making that affects their health or environment." This section is that analysis.

The Forest Plan contains few items that deal indirectly or directly with environmental justice:

Goal: Provide management direction that enhances social and economic benefits for individuals and communities. (FP Page 2-5)

#### **3.6.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

**Topic of Concern:**

None of the issues deal directly with environmental justice, but it is a resource that needs to be discussed under NEPA.

Aspects of the project related to environmental justice include the opportunity to comment on the EA and analysis and have input to it and access for gathering traditional products in the SPNM area. Traditional uses and gathering would be dealt with in Section 3.5.

The SPNM area is entirely in Itasca County. Itasca County has a 5.5% minority population compared to 10.6% in Minnesota. Itasca County also has a poverty level that is less than twice the state average (10.6% vs. 7.9% for individuals and 7.7% vs. 5.1% for families)

Therefore an analysis under EO # 12898 is not required for Itasca County under Chippewa NF policy because its percentages are less than twice the State averages, but a short discussion will follow.

### **3.6.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.6.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

The proposed activities under Alternatives A, and B treat all groups and people fairly and equally under the provisions of the Forest Plan. LLBO members and the general public both use the SPNM area for gathering and dispersed recreation. There are no disparate risks or effects for any given group of people. The NEPA process is open to all people and groups.

#### **3.6.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

There are no known similar projects on public or private lands that are on-going or planned that would have disproportionately high negative effects on minorities or low-income groups of people in the SPNM area. There have been none in the known past and there are none planned for the reasonably foreseeable future.

## **3.7 - TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

### **3.7.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

### **3.7.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

A lengthy write-up about the SPNM area was done by the Supervisor's Office. It is included in Appendix E. Only pertinent quotes from the Forest Plan are included here:

Recreational activities occur in natural-appearing environments that may be slightly modified by forest management activities. Evidence of management activities is relatively low, consisting of occasional stands that have been harvested, low standard roads that are used for timber access, and trails that are used for non-motorized recreation. (D-SPNM-4)

Developed recreation sites such as water access sites and trailheads may be provided for public use. There is generally little site modification with rustic improvements designed primarily for protection of environment rather than the comfort of users. Use of natural materials for improvements is emphasized. (D-SPNM-5)

Dispersed recreation opportunities such as campsites and trails (day use, backpacking, portaging, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and hunter walking) may be provided for public use. Other human-made structures are rare. Other dispersed recreation opportunities that may not be associated with facilities, such as orienteering, hunting, fishing, berry picking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and trapping, would also occur. (D-SPNM-6)

Low-standard roads, with native soil or gravel surfaces, are permitted to accomplish forest management. However, most roads would be closed to public motor use. (D-SPNM-8)

If small, low development level, parking areas are provided, they are generally located at the perimeter of the management area. (G-SPNM-1)

### 3.7.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

One secondary issue from Section 1.6 is discussed in relation to the transportation system.

#### Secondary Issue 2. Solitude:

**The ability to enjoy silent sports in an area without intrusion by motorized vehicles or noise and odors from motorized vehicles requires being at least ½ mile from actively used roads.**

Indicators

Acres of non-motorized area.

Acres within 1/2 mile of an actively used road. (Dealt with in the Recreation Section.)

There are about 16.1 miles of roads inside the existing SPNM area, plus 11.6 miles of boundary roads. All of the boundary roads are in good condition and are drivable year round if plowed. Only County Road 33 and Forest Road 2384 are regularly plowed each winter. Of the interior roads only about 4.2 miles have road surfaces that have a graveled surface, with the remainder being too soft or wet. Of these 4.2 miles of road, about 0.4 miles are bermed or brushed in and cannot be driven, leaving about 3.8 miles of interior road with good surfacing. Under Northwoods EA, 4.2 miles of the interior roads will be decommissioned so no vehicular traffic is possible, although it should be noted that only 0.1 miles of these decommissioned roads were drivable year-round anyway. Thus driving inside the SPNM area, never has been a major activity. Or rather it should be said that driving inside the area tended to cause rutting and compaction when it was attempted.

For the proposed addition to the SPNM area, there are 6.1 miles of interior road and 4.6 miles of boundary road. All of the boundary roads are drivable year-round. Of the interior roads only about 0.7 miles are drivable year-round, with the remainder being too soft or wet. All of these 0.7 miles of year-round road are bermed or brushed in and cannot be driven, leaving no drivable interior roads. Under Northwoods EA, 1.8 miles of the interior roads will be decommissioned so no vehicular traffic is possible, although none of these were year-round roads anyway. Thus driving inside the addition to the SPNM area, has never been a major activity. Or rather it should be said that driving inside the area tended to cause rutting and compaction when it was attempted.

**Table 3.7.3.a -- Summary of Road/Trail Recommendations**

Type	Mileage	Decommission in NWRM	Decommission in SPNM	Decom convert to trail (NWRM Decom,SPNM)
Border Road	11.6	0	0	0
Inside Road	16.1	2.3		1.0
Border Road Added	4.6	0	0	0
Inside Road Added	6.1	1.8	0	0
Inside New Trails	3.61	0	0	0
Inside Added New Trails	0.71	0	0	0
User Developed Roads	4.95	1.15	2.93	0.67
User Developed Added	0.44		.44	0
TOTAL	48.11	5.25	3.37	1.67

(See Appendix F for a detailed listing of all roads and details about them.)

### 3.7.4 – EFFECTS

#### 3.7.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS

#### **3.7.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

Under Alternative A the road closures from the Forest Plan due to the SPNM area designation will remain in effect on the 16.1 miles of interior roads on about 4,995 acres of existing SPNM area. This will allow foot travel but no mechanized vehicles in the SPNM area.

About .8 miles of the roads decommissioned under Northwoods EA will be converted to hiking trails.

The proposed addition to the SPNM area will remain unchanged.

#### **3.7.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B (PROPOSED ACTION)**

Under Alternative B the road closures from the Forest Plan will remain in effect on 16.1 miles of open interior roads on about 4,995 acres of existing SPNM area the same as in Alternative A; plus about 6.1 more miles in the added 1,860 acres of added SPNM area (note that about 1.8 more miles of road in the added area are being decommissioned under Northwoods EA). This will allow foot travel but no mechanized vehicles in the SPNM area. This is a reduction of 3.8 miles of drivable road .

About 5.25 miles of the roads decommissioned under Northwoods EA will be converted to hiking trails. Under this EA about 3.37 more miles of interior road will be decommissioned with 0.8 miles of road will be converted to hiking trails.

In addition to this, about 4.32miles of new trail construction will be done to connect existing road segments and make loop trails.

#### **3.7.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

##### **Past Impacts:**

Past timber sales, other management activities, and management direction have resulted in the present road system and closures. Some of the soft interior roads have been rutted due to use by ATVs and larger vehicles.

##### **Present Impacts:**

Road decommissioning in Alternative A from the Northwoods EA will reduce the amount of interior roads in the existing SPNM area to about 13.8 miles before the SPNM area closure. This will also happen under Alternative B but adds the decommissioning of about an additional 1.8 miles of interior roads in the added 1,860 acres leaving 4.3 miles of roads in it.

##### **Future Impacts:**

There are no further plans for changes to the road system in the existing or added SPNM areas.

## **3.8 - ECONOMICS**

### **3.8.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is for the activities associated with designation of an addition to the SPNM area and construction additional amenities for it in the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

### **3.8.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

NEPA regulations 40 CFR 1508.8(b) require that all analyses consider economic social factors.

The law does not require a quantitative, monetary analysis of non-commodity resources.

The Forest Plan contains several items that deal indirectly or directly with economics:

Goal: Provide forest settings and natural resources that enhance social and economic benefits at local, regional, and national levels. (FP Page 2-5)

### **3.8.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

None of the issues from Section 1.6 are affected by economics, but a short discussion is needed.

The only current cost is for the signage needed to implement the Forest Plan designation of the SPNM area.

### **3.8.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.8.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.8.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

The only costs associated with Alternative A are those needed to maintain the signage for the existing SPNM area. This signage is estimated to cost \$700/year

##### **3.8.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B**

Costs under Alternative B include the maintenance costs listed in Alternative A plus the added costs of signage and maintenance for the additional 1,860 acres. Some costs will actually be reduced because signs will be at road junctions rather than miles in at locations that are difficult to locate and travel to. This additional signage is estimated to cost \$900

In addition there will be the costs of constructing and maintaining the amenities being added under Alternative B. These are estimated and listed below.

Construction of 3.61 miles of hiking trail will cost about \$350/mile. Maintenance will be about \$150/mile/year

Construction of 7 parking lots is estimated to cost about \$5,000, with maintenance of about \$700/year

Construction of 7 trailhead signs is estimated to cost about \$4,500, with maintenance of about \$350/year

Construction of 4 dog-sledding hitching posts is estimated to cost about \$800, with maintenance of about \$100/year

Installation of 5 gates \$700 each with \$50 maintenance cost per year/gate. There will be a total of 11 gates.

Construction of dispersed camping sites will cost about \$300/ campsite, with maintenance of about \$200/year

#### **3.8.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

Cumulative effects of economics are better addressed at the Forest level. The costs by alternative listed in Direct/Indirect Effects will be added to the costs of all similar projects on the Forest. These are each very small pieces of the Forestwide resources, so will have very minor impacts cumulatively. They do not add to any costs on non-Forest System lands or activities.

### **3.9 - CULTURAL RESOURCES**

#### **3.9.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is the sites directly affected by construction and about 50 feet around them, since direct impacts are the cause of damage to cultural resources; in the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

#### **3.9.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

None of the issues from Section 1.6 are affected by cultural resources.

Investigations of cultural resources for this project follow the implementing regulations of Section 106 (36 CFR 800) of the National Historic Preservation Act (PL 89-665; 16 USC 470) as amended 1992, to fulfill National Environmental Policy Act requirements. Information concerning the location and nature of cultural resource sites is protected from public disclosure by the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archeological Resources Protection Act (PL 96-95), and is exempt from information requests under the Freedom of Information Act. Contacts with the Leech Lake Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) have been made and consultation under Section 106 is ongoing.

American Indian and Alaska native religious or cultural sites - Federal government has trust responsibilities to Tribes under a government-to-government relationship to insure that the Tribes reserved rights are protected. Consultation with tribes helps insure that these trust responsibilities are met. This project lies entirely within the Leech Lake Reservation boundary. The Leech Lake Band was notified of this proposal and was asked to comment. No comments were received.

Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effect of a project on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. The Forest Service has accomplished this through consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and the national Park Service Historic landmarks program. The Archeological Resources Protection Act covers the discovery and protection of historic properties (prehistoric and historic) that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It affords lawful protection of archaeological resources and sites that are on public and Indian lands. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act covers the discovery and protection of Native American human remains and objects that are excavated or discovered in federal lands. It encourages avoidance of archaeological sites that contain burials or portions of sites that contain graves through “in situ” preservation, but may encompass other actions to preserve these remains and items. This decision complies with the cited Acts. Sites will be protected.

### **3.9.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

Cultural resource surveys were conducted in November and December 2008 on all new trail segments. There will be no effect on cultural resources although a shovel test is warranted before a dispersed campsite is constructed on a bluff overlooking Farley Creek and at the stream edges where the bridge will be constructed. These surveys plus past information shows that there are no concerns with the proposed action except for the areas noted above.

This project lies entirely within the Leech Lake Reservation boundary. The Leech Lake Band was notified of this proposal and was asked to comment. No comments were received.

The Forest Service will consult with the State Historic Preservation Office. The Forest Service will conduct shovel tests in the areas recommended and will not pursue construction of the campsite or bridge until concurrence has been received by the State Historic Preservation Office.

### **3.9.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.9.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.9.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

There will be no damage to cultural resource sites, since no treatments will be done.

##### **3.9.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B**

This project complies with the cited Acts. By the use of avoidance, surveys, and protection, activities under this proposal will not impact Religious, Cultural, Archeological, or Historic properties in the area.

#### **3.9.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is the sites directly affected by construction and about 50 feet around them, since direct impacts are the cause of damage to cultural resources; in the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

##### **Past Impacts:**

There have been timber sales and associated road construction in the past 10 years, but no known impacts to cultural resource sites.

##### **Present Impacts:**

The Northwoods EA has proposed activities in the area that will be in effect for the next 2-5 years, primarily timber harvesting and road decommissioning. Cultural resources were protected under that analysis, so there would be no known impacts to cultural resource sites from it and no cumulative effects from the new proposals.

##### **Future Impacts:**

There are no firm plans for this area in the next 4 years however the next time that planning for vegetative treatments will be initiated is in 2012.

## **3.10 - AIR**

### **3.10.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The analysis area is within 300 feet of a treated location within the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located. The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

### **3.10.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Forest Plan contains several items that deal with air quality. The main desired conditions being to keep good air quality and to be consistent with the Clean Air Act.

### **3.10.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

None of the issues from Section 1.6 are affected by the air resource.

### **3.10.4 – EFFECTS**

#### **3.10.4.1 – DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS**

##### **3.10.4.1.1 – ALTERNATIVE A (NO ACTION)**

There will be no construction activities due to the implementation of the closures for the SPNM area; so no dust, or impacts from it.

##### **3.10.4.1.2 – ALTERNATIVE B (PROPOSED ACTION)**

Construction activities in the SPNM area that could generate dust include construction of 4.32 of new trail, 7 new parking spots, and 4 hitching posts. There could be a minor amount of dust from these construction activities which will only last a few minutes longer than the activities themselves. The bare mineral soil that could generate further dust will be seeded as soon as activities cease. This is a minor amount of dust which spreads only very locally.

#### **3.10.4.2 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

##### **Spatial framework:**

The analysis area is within 300 feet of a treated location within the North Winnie Semi-primitive non-motorized area and the proposed addition to the south of it, because this is where the effects will be located.

##### **Timeframe:**

The timeframe will be the next 10 years, when it is likely that the next revision of the Forest Plan is completed.

##### **Past Impacts:**

There has been minor dust made from maintenance of the county roads annually. It has been years since there was road construction in the SPNM areas.

##### **Present Impacts:**

The only known dust in the SPNM areas will come from the maintenance of the county roads.

##### **Future Impacts:**

The only known dust in the SPNM areas will come from the maintenance of the county roads.

## **3.11 - OTHER ITEMS FOR THE FONSI**

### **3.11.1. - SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS**

The FONSI that is the end result of an EA requires that several items be declared non-significant. Most of these are parts of the discussions of the previous resources. Following are statements and analyses that cover the remainder of the items that do not logically fit previously.

### **3.11.2. - MGMT DIRECTION AND FOREST PLAN CONSISTENCY**

N/A

### **3.11.3. - EXISTING CONDITION/AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

N/A

### **3.16.4 – EFFECTS**

Ten areas considered for significance:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect would be beneficial. (All effects to selected resources are covered in previous analysis. There are no other known effects that need to be discussed.)
2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety. The project trails and amenities are designed to be safe for the intended uses, therefore no effect.
3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. Cultural resources and wetlands have been analyzed previously. There are no parklands, prime farm lands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in the existing or added SPNM areas.
4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. (Covered in previous analysis.)
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. (Covered in previous analysis.)
6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. None of the actions cause us to do similar actions in the future.
7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts. (Covered in previous analysis in the cumulative effects sections as well as elsewhere.)
8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. (Covered in previous analysis.)

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. (Covered in previous analysis.)
10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. No such violations are known. (Most was covered in previous analysis.)

## **CHAPTER 4 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **4.1 - ID TEAM MEMBERS:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Expertise or Position</b>	<b>Sections of Analysis Completed</b>
Leo Johnson	Blackduck Ranger District	NEPA Coordinator	Air, Economics, Environmental Justice, Gathering, FONSI, Heritage Resources
Nancy Salminen	Blackduck Ranger District	Assistant Ranger - Recreation	Recreation, Social Uses
Tracy Beck	Blackduck Ranger District	District Ranger	Advice, Coordination
Cory Mlodik	Blackduck Ranger District	Biologist	Wildlife and TES Resources
Jan Geerdes	Blackduck Ranger District	GIS Specialist	Data Management
Jeremy Cable	Deer River Ranger District	MIST Team Leader	Advice on TES Resources

### **4.2 - CONTACTS:**

#### **4.2.1 - FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES:**

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers  
 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
 Mississippi Headwaters Board

#### **4.2.2 - TRIBES:**

Division of Resource Management (DRM)  
 Tribal Historic Preservation Officer  
 Local Indian Council Officials and Community Representatives

#### **4.2.3 – LAKE ASSOCIATIONS:**

Dixon Lake Association

## APPENDIX A - MAIL LIST FOR SCOPING

Prefix	Title	Last Name	First Name	Organization	Address 1	Address 2	City	State or Province	Postal Code
Mr.	Chairman	Armstrong	Richard	Deer River Local Indian Council	PO Box 374		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms.	Vice Chairperson	Barrett	Elizabeth	Cass River Local Indian Council	28890 Connection Dr SE		Pennington	MN	56663-
Ms.	Community Representative	Beaudreau	Donna	Cass River Local Indian Council	28906 Connection Dr SE		Pennington	MN	56663-
Ms.	Chairperson	Beaulieu	Debra	Bena Local Indian Council	PO Box 175		Bena	MN	56626-
Mr.	Chairman	Charwood	Gary	S. Lake Local Indian Council	P.O. Box 413		S. Lake	MN	56681-
Mr.	Chair	Chase	Harry	Cass River Local Indian Council	PO Box 1336		Pennington	MN	56663-
Ms.	Chair	Cloud	Janice	Oak Point Local Indian Council	PO Box 1414		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	District 2 Representative	Dahl	Lloyd	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 101		Bena	MN	56626-
Ms.	Chair	Ducheneaux	Norma	Sugar Bush Local Indian Council	214 Blackberry Lane SE		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
	District 3 Representative	Finn	Donald	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Finn	Pat	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 1370		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Greene	Guy	Nat Res Advisory Committee	10087 Sugar Point Drive NW		Federal Dam	MN	56641-
Mr.	District III Representative	Howard III	Ernest	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 245		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
	District 1 Representative	Howe	Robbie	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	Chair	Jackson	Faron	Twin Cities Local Indian Council	4043 Aldrich Ave N		Minneapolis	MN	55412-

	District III Representative	Johnson	Floyd	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 551		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Jones	Jim	MN Indian Affairs Council	3801 Bemidji Ave., Suite 5		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Ms.		Jordan	Margaret		8967 Old Agency Trail NW		Walker	MN	56484-
	Reservation Forester	Karnes	Keith	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Honorable	Mayor	LaDuke	Wayne	City of Cass Lake	PO Box 877		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Ms.	THPO	Lemon	Gina	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mrs.	Chairperson	Mitchelle	Marlene	Kego Lk/Smokey Pt Local Indian Council	6190 Kego Lake Trail NE		Longville	MN	56655-
Ms.	Chair	Morgan	Tana	Ball Club Local Indian Council	51508 Highway 2		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	District 3 Representative	Morgan JR	Dave	Nat Res Advisory Committee	6889 162nd ST NW		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	Biologist	Mortensen	Steve	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe-DRM	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Ms.	Chair	Northbird	Sharon	Cass Lake Local Indian Council	PO Box 759		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	District 1 Representative	Ogema	Arnie	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 463		Spring Lake	MN	56680-
Mr.		Ott	Steve		PO Box 110		Bowstring	MN	56631-
Mr.	Fisheries Biologist	Ringle	John	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	Chair	Robinson	Bernard	Inger Local Indian Council	53864 East Bowstring River Road		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	Director, DRM	Johnson	Bruce	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	District 2 Representative	Robinson	Terrance	Nat Res Advisory Committee	11550 24th Ave NE, #91		Federal Fam	MN	56641-
Mr.	Chairman	Robinson	Terrance	Sugar Point Local Indian Council	11550 24th Ave NE		Federal Dam	MN	56641-

	Chair	Smith	Oras	Mission Local Indian Council	PO Box 679		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Thompson	Victor	Nat Res Advisory Committee	5029 Pine Point Lane NW		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	Chair	Thompson	Victor	Onigum Local Indian Council	5029 Pine Point Lane NW		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	District 3 Representative	White	Gary	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 237		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	Community Representative	White, Jr.	Howard	Twin Cities Local Indian Council	5445 25th Ave S		Minneapolis	MN	55417-
Mr.	District 1 Representative	Wilson	James	Nat Res Advisory Committee	31168 CO RD 39		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	Chair	Jackson	Faron	Twin Cities Local Indian Council	4043 Aldrich Ave N		Minneapolis	MN	55412-
Ms	Chair	Egan	Kimberly	Winnie Dam Local Indian Council	56325 County Road 9		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms		Jordan	Margaret		8967 Old Agency Trail NW		Walker	MN	56484

Prefix	Title	Last Name	First Name	Organization	Address 1	Address 2	City	State or Province	Postal Code
	Executive Director			Audubon Minnesota	2357 Ventura DR, Suite 106		St Paul	MN	55125-
				Back Yonder Resort	8391 Back Yonder Ln NE		Deer River	MN	56636-
				Bright Star Resort, Attn: Tim	62559 CO RD 149		Squaw Lake	MN	56681-
				Driftwood Resort	56029 CO RD 157		Max	MN	56659-
				Gus' Place Resort	32228 CO RD 39		Deer River	MN	56636-
				Itasca CO Soil & Water Conserv	1889 E HWY 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
				Jessie View Resort	45756 Cty RD 35		Deer River	MN	56636-
	VP Of Manufacturing			Larex	PO Box 336		Cohasset	MN	55721-

				Little Bowstring Resort	42388 CO RD 48		Deer River	MN	56636-
				MN DNR Forestry	607 First ST W		Park Rapids	MN	56370-
				Northern Acres Resort	47292 Bowstring Access RD		Deer River	MN	56636-
	Park Supervisor			Scenic State Park	Scenic HWY 7		Big Fork	MN	56628-
				Stony Point Resort	PO Box 518		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
	Regional Director			US Fish & Wildlife Service	1 Federal DR ,RM 6301		Fort Snelling	MN	55111-
				USDA Forest Service	Blackduck Ranger District	417 Forestry DR	Blackduck	MN	56630-
Ms.		Adams	Cheryl	UPM-Blandin Paper Co	115 SW First Street		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Chairman	Arbour	Steve	Itasca Forestry Affairs Committee	1 NW 3rd Street		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Chairman	Armstrong	Richard	Deer River Local Indian Council	PO Box 374		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms.		Arnold	Lisa		33201 Highway 38 N		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Aube	Pete	Potlatch Corporation	29647 US HWY 2		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Ms.	Vice Chairperson	Barrett	Elizabeth	Cass River Local Indian Council	28890 Connection Dr SE		Pennington	MN	56663-
Ms.	Community Representative	Beaudreau	Donna	Cass River Local Indian Council	28906 Connection Dr SE		Pennington	MN	56663-
Ms.	Chairperson	Beaulieu	Debra	Bena Local Indian Council	PO Box 175		Bena	MN	56626-
Mr.		Behr	Bob	Blandin Paper Co	PO Box 407		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Benton	Charles & John		725 Center ST		Cedar Falls	IA	50613-
Ms.		Berg	Lorraine & Ivan		1546 Covington Lane		Eagan	MN	55122-
Mr.		Bliss	Fred	Tri-Co Leech Lake Watershed	6395 Macemon TR NE		Remer	MN	56672-
Mr.	President	Brace	Harold	Leech Lake Riders Snowmobile C	8047 Onigum RD N W		Walker	MN	56484-

Mr.		Brandt	Wayne	MN Forest Ind/MN Timber Produc	324 W. Superior St., #903		Duluth	MN	55802-
Mr.		Brewer	James		6642 Boot Lake RD SW		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Mr.		Carlson	Bruce	MN DNR-Div. of Ecol. Research	4805 Rice Lake Rd		Duluth	MN	55803-
Mr.	President	Carpenter	Jerry	Longville Lakes Snowmobile Clu	PO Box 76		Longville	MN	56655-
Mr.	Chairman	Charwood	Gary	S. Lake Local Indian Council	P.O. Box 413		S. Lake	MN	56681-
Mr.	Chair	Chase	Harry	Cass River Local Indian Council	PO Box 1336		Pennington	MN	56663-
		Christenson	Roger & Pat	Dixon Lake Resort	49442 Dixon Lake Resort RD		Squaw Lake	MN	56681-
Ms.	Chair	Cloud	Janice	Oak Point Local Indian Council	PO Box 1414		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	Environ. Review Unit Sup.	Colven	Steve	MN DNR	500 Lafayette Rd		St Paul	MN	55155-4025
Mr.		Cox	Clark		1668 Apache DR NE		Solon	IA	52333-
Mr.		Crouch	Jim R.	Jim Crouch & Associates	2901 Camelot Drive		Russellville	AR	72801-
Mr.	District 2 Represent	Dahl	Lloyd	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 101		Bena	MN	56626-
Mr.		Davis	Matt	NCTA Regional Trail Coord	PO Box 1805		Detroit Lakes	MN	56502-1805
Mr.		Dean	Jim		10985 Brown Eagle Tr NW		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Dethloff	Jim	38'ers Snowmobile Club	33843 County Rd 177		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Di Brito	Steve		17435 Fairway Circle		Cold Spring	MN	56320-
Mr.	District 3 Commission	Dimich	John	Itasca County Courthouse	123 NE 4th Street		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-

Ms.	Chair	Ducheneaux	Norma	Sugar Bush Local Indian Council	214 Blackberry Lane SE	Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	MidWest WoodLands Manager	Earley	Steven	Boise White Paper, LLC	400 Third Ave E	International Falls	MN	56649-
Ms.		Eclov	Theresa	Mississippi Headwaters Board	Cass CO Courthouse, PO Box 300	Walker	MN	56484-
Ms.	Chairperson	Egan	Kimberly	Winnie Dam Local Indian Council	56325 County Road 9	Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	Dist 4 Commissioner	Eichorn	Rusty	Itasca County	31708 LaPlant Road	Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Engel	Tom	MN DNR, Grand Rapids-Wildlife	1201 E HWY 2	Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Reg Director	Engwall	Craig	MN DNR	1201 E HWY 2	Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Regional Manager	Erickson	Gary M.	SAPPI	PO Box 511	Cloquet	MN	55720-
Mr.		Fierstine	Harlan		7316 State HWY 371 NW	Walker	MN	56484-
	District 3 Represent	Finn	Donald	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E	Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Finn	Pat	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 1370	Cass Lake	MN	56633-
		Fleischman	Forrest	FSEEE	PO Box 11615	Eugene	OR	97440-
Mr.	President	Ford	Norm	Suomi Area Lakes Ass'n	42307 Cty Rd 48	Deer River	MN	56636-
		Forest Watch Chair		Sierra Club	2327 E Franklin Ave, Suite 1	Minneapolis	MN	55406-
	Clerk	Gillis	Elna	Lake Jessie Township	PO Box 53	Talmoon	MN	56637-
Mr.	Fed Compliance Officer	Gimmestad	Dennis	State Historic Preservation Of	345 Kellogg Blvd W	St Paul	MN	55102-
Mr.	President	Goetzman	Harold	Jessie Lake Watershed Ass'n	2004 Oak ST	Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Chariman	Goltz	Gary	Third River Township	68395 Third River 1 RD	Squaw Lake	MN	56681-
Mr.		Gorham	Rochelle	DNR-Bemidji Wildlife	2114 Bemidji Ave	Bemidji	MN	56601-

Ms.		Gragg-Johnson	Kelly	SHPO/MN Historical Society	345 Kellogg Blvd W		St Paul	MN	55102-
Mr.		Greene	Guy	Nat Res Advisory Committee	10087 Sugar Point Drive NW		Federal Dam	MN	56641-
Mr.		Gritman	Jim		Route 3 Box 898		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Mr.		Haffner	Jim	Norboard Minnesota	4409 Northwood RD NW		Solway	MN	56678-
Mr.	Clerk	Hagen	Dennis	Deer River Township	PO Box 122		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.		Hammer	Franklin		4698 Big Rice Lake RD NE		Remer	MN	56672-
Mr.		Hample	Richard		25631 105th ST		Spirit Lake	IA	51360-
Mr.		Hanson	William J.		PO Box 387		Longville	MN	56655-
Mr.		Harris	Bryan	Eagle Nest Lodge	58671 Eagle Nest RD		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms.		Harrison	Pamela		4987 Danens TR NE		Remer	MN	56672-
Ms.	Nongame Specialist,	Hawes	Katie	MN DNR	2115 Birchmont Beach RD NE		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Mr.		Herfindahl	Jeff	Deer River Bushwackers	48828 US HWY 2		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.		Herrgard	Gordan		36063 Thompson RD		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms.	Clerk	Hoeschen	Mike	Max Township	57684 Co Rd 4		Max	MN	56659-
Mr.		Horton	Rick	MN DNR	1201 Hwy 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	District III Representative	Howard III	Ernest	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 245		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
	District 1 Representative	Howe	Robbie	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Howell	Ken	National Park Service, NCTA	700 Rayovac DR, Suite 100		Madison	WI	53711-
Mr.		Hughes	Mike	Minnesota United Snowmobilers	35599 W Mcavity Lake Road		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Chair	Jackson	Faron	Twin Cities Local Indian Council	4043 Aldrich Ave N		Minneapolis	MN	55412-

Mr.		Jacobsen Jr	Wayne	MN Ruffed Grouse Soc	2301 HWY 169 S		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Johnson	Leo		PO Box 132		Blackduck	MN	56630-
Mr.		Johnson	Merle		216 SW Logan St		Ankeny	IA	50023-
Mr.	Executive Director	Johnson	Mark	MN Deer Hunters Ass'n	460 Peterson RD		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	District III Representative	Johnson	Floyd	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 551		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Jones	Jim	MN Indian Affairs Council	3801 Bemidji Ave., Suite 5		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Ms.		Jordan	Margaret		8967 Old Agency Trail NW		Walker	MN	56484-
	Reservation Forester	Karnes	Keith	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
		Kavanaugh	Chris	MN DNR	1201 E HWY 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Kersting	Joel		37515 Orange Lake Rd		Deer River	MN	56636-
Ms.		Kichler	Pam	Mississippi Headwaters Board	Cass CO Courthouse	PO Box 3000	Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	Commissioner	Klegstad	Russell	Itasca CO Courthouse	123 NE 4th Street		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Park Manager	Kleinert	Jeff	US Army Corps of Engineers	34385 HWY 2 W		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr. & Mrs.		Kocon	Frank		804 E Forth ST		Superior	WI	54880-
		Kotla	Anthony & Sharon		10991 Brown Eagle Tr NW		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Honorable	Mayor	LaDuke	Wayne	City of Cass Lake	PO Box 877		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Latzka	Jeffrey	Forest Action Network	1476 29th St SE		St Cloud	MN	56304-
Mr.		Leino	Bruce	Squaw Lakers	PO Box 458		Squaw Lake	MN	56681-
Ms.	THPO	Lemon	Gina	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr. & Mrs.		Leonhardt	Rick & Kim	Highbanks Resort	17645 N High Banks RD NE		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.		Lundgren	Paul	MN DNR	PO Box 6		Backus	MN	56435-

Mr.	Dist 5 Commissioner	Mandich	Mark	Itasca County	36820 Baypoint Road		Bovey	MN	55709-
Mr.		Maroney	Rob	US Army Corps of Engineers	10867 E Gull Lake DR NW		Brainerd	MN	56401-
Mr.	Forestry Dept,	Marshall	Jim	UPM, Blandin Paper Co	115 SW First Street	PO Box 407	Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	Supervisor	Martinson	Larry	Ailkinson Township/MN Trappers	6588 S Steamboat Lake DR NW		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
		McDermott	Peter	Itasca Development Corp	12 NW Third ST		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Mehlan	Ward		11405 Pine Bough Ed		Pine City	MN	55063-
Mr. & Mrs.		Menth	Joseph		147 Chesney Way NE		Fridley	MN	55432-
Mr.		Mills	Jerry	Tri-Co Leech Lake Watershed Pr	5323 Ten Mile Lane NW		Hackensack	MN	56452-
Mr.		Milne	Robert	Beltrami Co. Natural Resources	505 Bemidji Ave N, Suite 3		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Mrs.	Chairperson	Mitchelle	Marlene	Kego Lk/Smokey Pt Local Indian Council	6190 Kego Lake Trail NE		Longville	MN	56655-
Mr.		Mitton	W E (Al)		4432 Buxton RD NW		Hackensack	MN	56452-
Mr.	Land Commissioner	Moody	Norm	Cass CO Land Dept	Pine Mountain Prof Bldg	PO Box 25	Backus	MN	56435-
Mr.		Moore	Bob	MN DNR Trails & Waterways	1201 E HWY 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Ms.	Chair	Morgan	Tana	Ball Club Local Indian Council	51508 Highway 2		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	District 3 Represent	Morgan JR	Dave	Nat Res Advisory Committee	6889 162nd ST NW		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Morrin SR	Edward		5154 Deerpath		Oak Forest	IL	60452-
Mr.	Biologist	Mortensen	Steve	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe-DRM	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-

Mr.	Resource Manager	Murn	Tom	Potlatch Forest Products Corp	PO Box 504		Cloquet	MN	55720-
Mr.		Naplin	Rob	MN DNR- Area Wildlife Office	603 First ST W		Park Rapids	MN	556470-
Mr.		Neilson	Dennis		1800 Meadowoods Trail		Long Lake	MN	555356-
Mr.		Nitchals	Jim		10526 Chippewa Beach Rd NW		Cass Lake	MN	556633-
Ms.		Norrgard	Lois	American Lands Alliance	10368 Columbus Circle		Bloomington	MN	55420-
Ms.	Chair	Northbird	Sharon	Cass Lake Local Indian Council	PO Box 759		Cass Lake	MN	556633-
Mr.		Norton	Matt	MN Center For Environ Advocacy	26 E Exchange ST, Suite 206		St Paul	MN	55101-
Mr.	Manager	O'Leary	John	Headwaters Lakes Project Offic	34385 HWY 2 W		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Oberstar	David		700 Lonsdale Bldg	302 W Superior ST	Duluth	MN	55802-
Ms.		Oetker	Susan	US Fish & Wildlife Service	4101 E 80th ST		Bloomington	MN	55425-
Mr.	District 1 Represent	Ogema	Arnie	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 463		Spring Lake	MN	556680-
Mr.	Director Of Forest P	O'Hara	Tim	MFI & MTPA	903 Medical Arts Bldg	324 W Superior ST	Duluth	MN	55802-
Mr. & Mrs.	Owner	O'Reilly	Mike	Northland Lodge	17207 Winnie Dam RD NE		Deer River	MN	556636-
Mr.		Ott	Steve		PO Box 110		Bowstring	MN	556631-
Mr.	Land Commissioner	Ous	Garrett	Itasca County Courthouse	1177 LaPrairie Ave		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
		Parthun	Christopher E.	Beltrami County SWCD	3217 Bemidji Ave N, #3		Bemidji	MN	556601-
Honorable	Congressman	Peterson	Collin	Congressional Dist-7	MN Wheat Growers Bldg	2603 Wheat DR	Red Lake Falls	MN	556750-
Mr.	Area Supervisor	Piilola	Don	MN DNR	1201 E HWY 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-

Mr.		Pipp	Jerry		49357 Holaseik RD		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.		Quincer	Tim	MN Chapter of Wildlife Soc	11586 RiverVista Dr		Baxter	MN	56452-
Mr.		Rabe	Ron	MN DNR - Forestry	417b Forestry DR		Blackduck	MN	56630-
Mr.		Rajala	Jack	Rajala Timber Company	PO Box 578		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	Fisheries Biologist	Ringle	John	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	Chair	Robinson	Bernard	Inger Local Indian Council	53864 East Bowstring River Road		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.	Director, DRM	Robinson	Rich	Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe	115 6th St. NW, Suite E		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.	District 2 Representative	Robinson	Terrance	Nat Res Advisory Committee	11550 24th Ave NE, #91		Federal Fam	MN	56641-
Mr.	Chairman	Robinson	Terrance	Sugar Point Local Indian Council	11550 24th Ave NE		Federal Dam	MN	56641-
Ms.		Ryan	Carol C		PO Box 1127		Langley	WA	98260-
Mr.		Schinke	Pete	Ainsworth Engineered (USA) LLC	502 Co Rd 63		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
	Chair	Smith	Oras	Mission Local Indian Council	PO Box 679		Cass Lake	MN	56633-
Mr.		Spoden	Mark	MN DNR	1201 E HWY 2		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.	President	Stone	Bud	Grand Rapids C of C	1 NW Third ST		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		Thompson	Victor	Nat Res Advisory Committee	5029 Pine Point Lane NW		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	Chair	Thompson	Victor	Onigum Local Indian Council	5029 Pine Point Lane NW		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.		Tjader	Harvey	MN DNR	2220 Bemidji Ave.		Bemidji	MN	56601-
Mr.		Trout	Doug	Trout Enterprises, Inc.	PO Box 236		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr.		Tufte	Don		599 Markgrafs Lk Bay		Woodbury	MN	55129-
Mr.		Uhrinak	James		908 N 34th St		Milwaukee	WI	53208-

Ms.		Urbanek	Kelly	US Army Corps of Engineers	10867 E. Gull Lake DR NW		Brainerd	MN	56401-
Mr.	District 3 Represent	White	Gary	Nat Res Advisory Committee	PO Box 237		Walker	MN	56484-
Mr.	Community Representative	White, Jr.	Howard	Twin Cities Local Indian Council	5445 25th Ave S		Minneapolis	MN	55417-
Mr.		Wille	Don	Wille Logging	24370 Pleasant Valley RD NW		Puposky	MN	56667-
Mr.	District 1 Representative	Wilson	James	Nat Res Advisory Committee	31168 CO RD 39		Deer River	MN	56636-
Mr. & Mrs.		Wolcott	William & Jeannie		2517 SE Welsh St		Port St Lucie	FL	34984-
Mr.		Zasada	Zigmond		1015 NW Third Ave		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-
Mr.		ZumBahlen	Bruce	MN Forestry Ass'n	PO Box 96		Grand Rapids	MN	55744-

## APPENDIX B. RESPONSE TO SCOPING (SPNM)

(Referenced in the EA as "Public Comment X.X")

For comments that cannot be fully answered here there is a reference in the Forest Service Reply to the portion of the EA where the comment is answered or discussed ("See Section X.X.X of this EA for further discussion of this comment.")

+++++

### 1. Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Forestry Affairs Committee -- Bud Stone

E-Mail Dated May 30, 2008, Chamber of Commerce

#### 1.1 North Winnie SPNM in General and timber harvest

"The Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce Forestry Affairs Committee would like to go on record as an interested party in the afore mentioned project. The consensus of the committee members who are chamber members in good standing find that the project has merit and will add value to the experience that National Forest users look for when they visit the Chippewa National Forest."

**Concerns of the committee are that non-motorized, semi-primitive areas offer only limited access to the public and usually offer no opportunity in the future to contribute to the timber supply that is needed to support our wood and wood fiber businesses and industries.**

*(Forest Service Response: Thank you for your comment. It is true that motorized access by the general public would be limited however there will be a good trail network and the area will provide opportunities for the public that likes to hike, hunt, ski, or use other non-motorized equipment. This area would remain in the suitable timber base, in fact there are currently timber sales in the area. The intensity of harvest compared to the general forest is less. Rotation ages will be extended for some species and in some areas longer lived conifer species will be promoted. Habitat management for game species especially along the trail system will be undertaken. )*

### 2. MN DR (Craig Engwall) - Letter - 5/27/2008

#### 2.1 North Winnie SPNM in General

..."The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the scoping for the NWSPNMA project and is in support of the proposed action.

**Division of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Section: Contact: Rick Horton**

The Wildlife Section supports expanding the non-motorized area to easily enforceable road boundaries and is in favor of the project. However we would like more information on hunting opportunities and the potential designation of trails as Hunter Walking Trails. D-SPNM-6 suggests that hunting and hunter walking are expected used of semi-primitive non-motorized areas. We realize the plan call for little active management and very little clear-cutting in these areas. However, some forms of uneven-aged timber management can produce suitable habitat for deer ruffed grouse and woodcock. We ask that the District consider expanding the recreational scope for the areas to include hunting and trapping. We hope to provide input on future timber management to provide a balance of wildlife habitat in a natural appearing landscape.

*(Forest Service Response: Thank you for your comments. This area is open to a wide array of non-motorized use that could include trapping and hunting. Along the trail systems habitat management would be beneficial for providing a quality hunting experience. Our current hunter walking trail*

system is imbedded in the general forest area. Since this area is a Semi-primitive non-motorized area the need to designate the trails as hunter walking will not have a bearing on the quality of the hunter's experience.)

### 3. Jeffrey Latcka

Letter Dated May 30, 2008 , general public

#### 3.1 Trail Density, Parking Areas and Larger Areas not impacted by trails: Jeffery Latcka

The size of the acreage of the semi-primitive area and linear scale of miles or kilometers are necessary for adequate evaluation of the project and were not given on the map or information letter provided.

Trail and road density appear high inundating the project area. It is hard to determine how big areas undisturbed by trails or roads are.

The NW segment of the project area seems more intensely subdivided by trail connections with roads.

A area comprising a block area of 30-40% of the semi-primitive area should be road and trail free. Parking areas seem too close together and 4-6 would be adequate depending on distances between and more cars 4-8 per lot parking areas.

*(Forest Service Reply: We will consider this in our decision Thank you for your concern.)*

### 4. Tim Kilboy

May 28, 2008, resort owner, uses the area

#### 4.1 North Winnie SPNM in General:

Mr Kilboy stated:"I am interested in further information about the NWSPNMA project. I hunt in this area quite extensively, and have for more than 30 years. I think these are good ideas to prevent more damage to new and old logging roads by 4 wheeler crowds who ruin the roads for all because they don't possess the want to enjoy a walk in the woods."

*(Forest Service Reply: We will consider this in our decision Thank you for your concern.)*

### 5. US Army Corps on Engineers

Letter dated May 13, 2008, regulatory agency

#### 5.1 Wetland and Permits:

Looks like there are a lot of wetlands in the area but we will not likely have any comments unless a permit request is filed

*(Forest Service Reply: We will consider this in our decision and work to avoid or minimize trail construction in wetlands.)*

## 6. Mississippi Headwaters Board – Dean Newland, 08 Chair

May 19, 2008 Non-Profit, Joint Powers Board

### 6.1 Effects on River Corridor:

After review and discussion on this topic at the Mississippi headwater Board meeting on May 16th we would like to advise that the plans appear to be aligned with the standards to protect our land and waters in and around the Mississippi Headwaters lake corridor. It is stewardship collaboration like this between local organizations and government which help to lessen the opportunity for resource degradation and ultimately make for a pleasurable experience with nature for all.

During discussion, it was made apparent that at this time the project is an effort to identify and possibly adjust the area boundary, create and improve on trail network utilizing existing OML 1 roads and identify dispersed camping/parking areas. It also appears that the actions are in effort to manage existing trail areas for non-motorized usage only. This board would like to ask that through the identifying and designation/design process in those areas, the utmost care is taken with regard to their effect on the environment due to a multitude of uses (recreation/ sportsman/ hiking etc) and that consideration be extended with respect to buffers and trail construction standards for non-motorized trail within the River and Headwater lakes corridor.

Again, we would like to thank you for your champion efforts in helping to protect our most valuable natural resource by identifying and developing a trail system that provides an environmental win-win for the entities involved.

*(Forest Service Response: Thank you for your response. We intend to construct trail segments that will not impact sensitive resources. We intend to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands and lake and streams and improve existing stream and wetland crossings. We will consider your comments.)*

**APPENDIX C -- Maps of Alternatives**  
**Alternative A Map**



# Winnie North Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Proposed Trail and Amendment Map

## Legend

New or Existing Improvements

Q Camp Site

| Dogsled Hitch Post

] Existing Gate

\ New Gate

U Parking Area

Winnie North Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Area

----- New Trail Segments (All)

----- Roads to be Decommissioned -This Project

----- Decommission This Project Use For Trail

----- Decommissioned in Northwoods EA Use for Trail

**Winnie North Roads Level 1 & 2 to be Changed to Level 1**

<all other values>

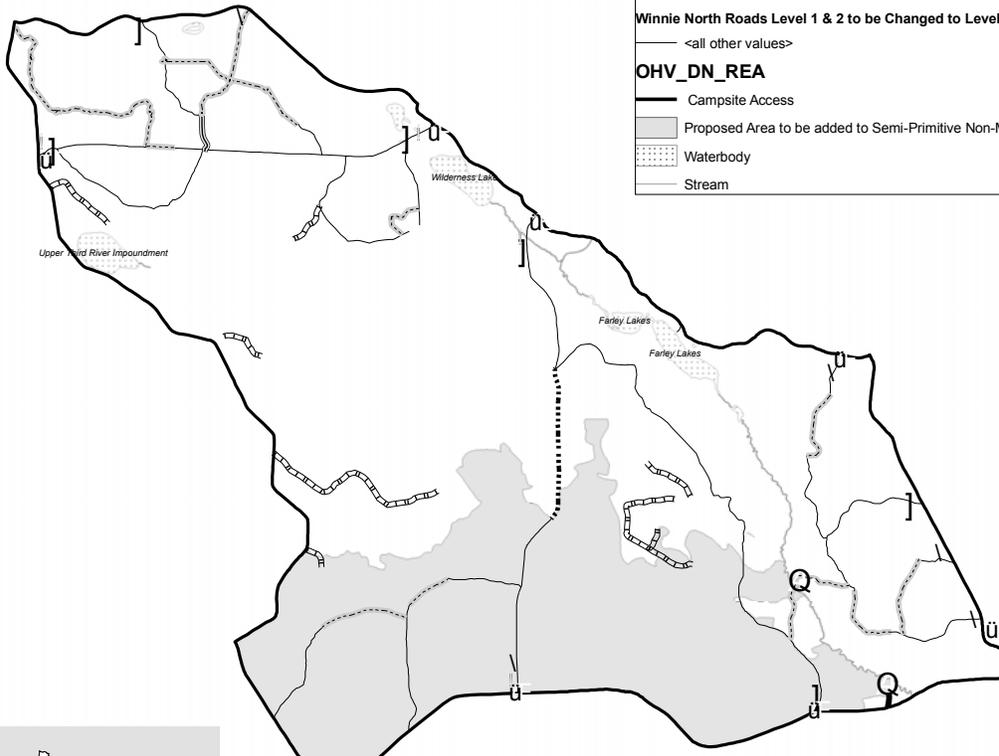
## OHV\_DN\_REA

— Campsite Access

Proposed Area to be added to Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized

Waterbody

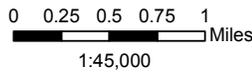
Stream



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Chippewa National Forest  
NEPA Coordinator  
417 Forestry Drive  
Blackduck, MN 56630  
(218) 835-4291

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e:/sfiles/gis/district/blackduck/winnie\_north\_spmn/jan/proposed\_trail\_amendment.mxd  
jng, 11/17/2008, 01/06/09

## APPENDIX D - PROJECT RECORD INDEX

### North Winnie Semi-primitive Non-motorized Area

Docu #	Date	From	To	Subject	Type	Catgry
1	1948.6.30	Congress	Laws	Clean Water Act (as amended)	docu.	Refer
2	2007.8.17	Executive	Order	Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation	docu	Refer
3	2008.5.13	Agency	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	ltr	Comnt
4	2008.5.19	Org	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	ltr	Comnt
5	2008.5.30	Org	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	e-mail	Comnt
6	2008.5.30	Individual	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	ltr	Comnt
7	2008.5.27	Agency	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	ltr	Comnt
8	2008.6.2	Org	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	e-mail	Comnt
9	2008.5.28	Individual	Forest Service	Comment on the proposed action	ltr	Comnt
10	2008.4.26	Individual	Forest Service	Personal Visit on the proposed action and dogsledding	percom	Comnt
11	2008.12.12	Agency	Forest Service	Clarification of process	e-mail	Comnt
12	2008.4.24	FS		News ad and scoping letter	ltr	
13	2007.12.22	FS		Background paper on Semi-Primitive Boundary Change	memo	
14	2009.1.15	FS		BA/BE	doc	
15	2007.8.30	Fs		Stewardship proposal	doc	
16	various	FS		Misc maps	doc	
17		FS		Heritage ltr	doc	
18	2006.1.6	FS	Forest Service	Capital Investment Proposal for Semi-Primitive Implementation	doc	
19	varios	FS		Misc field data sheets on trails, road closures etc	doc	
20	2009.1.29	FS	public	30 Day review letter and news release	doc	

## **APPENDIX E: SPNM Management Area Report-by Ann Long Volkner Recreation Planner**

This report was prepared to assist District Recreation Staff to consistently manage semi-primitive areas across the Chippewa National Forest and to describe the non-motorized areas and their resources.

The CNF 2004 Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) allocated three areas as Semi-primitive Non-motorized Recreation Management Areas. Within the Forest Plan, the two areas existing prior to 2004 continued to be included, while additional acres were added to Soumi. A new SPNM area – North Winnie – was established. The theme of the SPNM management area described in the Forest Plan emphasizes land and resource conditions that provide recreational opportunities in nearly primitive surroundings where motorized use is not permitted. Most of the non-motorized recreation use occurs on lakes, trails, portages, and low standard roads. Interaction among recreation users is low. Forest management enhances recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors.

The Forest Plan guides the social and natural resource management and includes desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines applicable to the Semi-primitive Non-motorized management areas. Forest Plan Chapters 2 and 3 contain specific information related to the management of the SPNM areas.

### **Social and Natural Resource Management:**

#### **1. Vegetation Management:**

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas:

- Ecosystems are managed to provide a predominantly natural-appearing landscape, emphasizing large trees and older forest with a continuous forest canopy. Vegetation management generally maintains or enhances the older vegetation growth stages. (D-SPNM-1)
- Management activities in these areas enhance recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors. Such management activities may include developing primitive campsites, harvesting timber, using management-ignited fires, and planting trees. (D-SPNM-2)
- Vegetation management such as timber harvesting and fire may be used to achieve vegetation objectives. These activities are designed to maintain the natural appearance of the landscape. (D-SPNM-3)

Commercial harvesting of timber has occurred within the Suomi Hills and Trout Lake areas when they were designated semi-primitive areas. There is a current timber sale in the North Winnie area. Some of this harvesting occurred as a response to a wind event that blew down many trees of merchantable size in the Suomi Hills area. Other harvests have occurred to meet the objectives of the Forest Plan, including ecosystem composition outcomes and providing timber volume.

The character of timber harvests within a SPNM area has been scrutinized in the past. Issues such as the method, type, location, size of harvests have all been discussed and analyzed. Managers recognize that while timber harvesting is considered an integral part of SPNM areas there are different outcomes expected in a SPNM area as described within the Forest Plan.

*Intentions:*

The following are general considerations and possible mitigations for harvesting within the SPNM areas:

- Use non-mechanical methods of harvesting – horse logging for example.
- Locate harvest units out of sight and sound of established recreational areas such as trails, campsites, facilities.
- Seasonal restrictions on harvesting activities are appropriate.
- If adjacent to recreation areas, utilize the scenic integrity objective of high to determine mitigation measures relating to scenic quality.
- Even-aged regeneration harvests are inherently more visible than uneven-aged management. Where silviculturally possible, utilize an un-even aged method of harvest.
- Expect longer rotation ages as the objective of older growth stages is desired.

## **2. Trails Management:**

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Developed recreation sites such as water access sites and trailheads may be provided for public use. There is generally little site modification with rustic improvements designed primarily for protection of environment rather than the comfort of users. Use of natural materials for improvements is emphasized. (D-SPNM-5)
- Dispersed recreation opportunities such as campsites and trails (day use, backpacking, portaging, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and hunter walking) may be provided for public use. Other human-made structures are rare. Other dispersed recreation opportunities that may not be associated with facilities, such as orienteering, hunting, fishing, berry picking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and trapping, would also occur. (D-SPNM-6)

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines include:

- National Forest System land, roads and trails are closed to public motorized use with the exception of Forest Roads 2153, 2376, 3464, West Suomi Snowmobile Trails during the Grant-in-Aid season, and motorized grooming of cross country ski trails. (S-SPNM-1)
- If small, low development level, parking areas are provided, they are generally located at the perimeter of the management area. (G-SPNM-1)
- Developing new motorized recreation trails is prohibited. (S-SPNM-2)
- The road or trail access to and facilities at water access sites will generally meet development levels described for natural Environment Lakes and Remote River segments. (G-SPNM-2)

Soumi and Trout Lake SPNM areas:

There are existing snowmobile, hiking and cross-country trails within the Suomi and Trout Lake SPNM areas. Many hiking trails are used as cross-country ski trails in the winter.

Volunteer agreements exist for motorized cross-country ski trail grooming in Soumi and Trout Lake. The volunteers are associated with the Grand Rapids cross-country ski club. A memorandum between Itasca County and the CNF outlines the management of the grant-in-aid snowmobile trails. These snowmobile trails are groomed by the local snowmobile clubs as part of that MOU. During the hiking season, the Forest Service has been providing trail maintenance.

North Winnie:

**North Winnie SPNM area is currently being planned and developed to meet the desired conditions and objectives for SPNM areas as described in the Forest Plan. Local neighbors also have proposed hiking and cross-country ski trail initiatives. The proposed projects are currently being analyzed within an**

**environmental assessment. The following table indicates trail miles by trail type as proposed within the North Winnie Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Area Boundary Change and Trail Project**

<b>Type of Trail (proposed)</b>	<b>Miles</b>
Hiking	23.0
Cross-Country Ski	24.0 total/ 8.5 groomed

No snowmobile trails exist with in North Winnie, nor are none proposed.

The type of trail and how to maintain trails within SPNM areas has been of management interest on the CNF. The snowmobile trails in Suomi were accommodated for in the 1986 CNF Plan and continue to be available for motorized travel within the SPNM area of Suomi. Maintenance and grooming of the trails also continues to be done mechanically and continues to be accommodated for in the 2006 CNF Plan and within the 2006 Snowmobile MOU with Itasca County.

There are many cross country ski trails within the SPNM areas. The cross country ski trials grooming and maintenance with mechanized equipment has been continued through implementation of the Forest Plan.

There are many hiking trails within the SPNM areas. Many of these are also cross-country trails in the winter. Maintenance of the trails continues to be done by hand tools, or mechanically.

*Intentions:*

The following are general considerations and possible mitigations for trail management within the SPNM areas:

- Continue the snowmobile trails in the Suomi SPNM area.
- Mechanical trail grooming on designated Grant-in-aid snowmobile trails.
- Continue to allow mechanized cross country trail grooming on designated cross country trails.
- Continue mechanized maintenance of hiking trials.
- Hiking trail maintenance is minimized and generally occurs once per year or as necessary in response to changed conditions.
- The North Winnie SPNM area will be developed as defined by the Decision Notice related to the North Winnie SPNM Area Boundary Change and Trail Project Environmental Assessment and as budgets allow.

**3. Fire Management:**

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Management activities such as timber harvest and management-ignited fires may be used to achieve vegetation objectives. These activities are designed to maintain the natural appearance of the landscape. Scenic integrity and recreation objectives also guide the design and implementation of these activities. (D-DPNM-3)

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines include:

- Special uses are generally not permitted, except those uses that do not detract from the semi-primitive environment or uses needed to access or supply utilities to private land, recreational facilities, or administrative sites. (G-SPNM-3)

The Forest Order, 36 CFR Sec. 261.50 e(4) exempts any Federal , State or local officer or member of and organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty from any of the prohibitions

contained in the order. There have been a few wildfires within SPNM areas over the past years. Traditional fire fighting equipment has been used to contain fires. To honor the non-motorized management of the SPNM area, mop-up on the most recent fire in the Suomi/Trout Lake area has been restricted to one ATV accessing the area per day and firefighters using only handtools.

*Intentions:*

The following are general considerations and possible mitigations for fire management within the SPNM areas:

- The intention of the Forest is to continue to manage fire in the context of the semi-primitive area.
- There will be an emphasis on limiting motorized use and its resulting environmental legacy while responding to the individual fire and its management conditions.
- Other considerations are the Forest Plan Disturbance Processes desired conditions, objectives, standards and guidelines, (D-ID-4-6, O-ID-2- 6 and G-ID-1 – 4), and also including specific prescribed and unwanted wildland fire suppression plans.

#### **4. Administrative Access:**

Administrative access is defined by the authorized right of entry into an area. The area may or may not be open to the general public using the same method of access that employees may have. The method of administrative access is different based on the management area's Forest Plan defined characteristics. Access in a restricted motorized area such as the SPNM areas is generally done by foot.

*Intentions:*

The following are general considerations and possible mitigations for administrative use within the SPNM areas:

- Motorized equipment may be authorized in response to search and rescue needs, fire suppression, law enforcement or when a situation involves inescapable urgency and temporary need for speed beyond that available by non-motorized means.
- Many people perceive this access as a privilege and so we must take care to use exceptions only when necessary, does not encourage illegal use and is approved by the managing line officer.

#### **5. Special Use Permits:**

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Low-standard roads, with native soil or gravel surfaces, are permitted to accomplish forest management. However, most roads would be closed to public motor use. (D-SPNM-8)

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines include:

- National Forest System land, roads, and trails are closed to public motorized use with the exception of forest roads 2153, 2376, 3464, 3494, West Suomi Snowmobile Trails during the Grant-In-Aid season, and motorized grooming of cross country ski trails. (S-SPNM-1)
- Special uses are generally not permitted, except those uses that do not detract from the semi-primitive environment or uses needed to access or supply utilities to private land, recreational facilities, or administrative sites. (G-SPNM-3)

*Intention:*

- If a request for an activity, including private land access, is received that deviates from the Forest Plan of the SPNM Forest Order a special use permit may be considered. Forest Service rules, regulations, and Forest Plan direction must be considered.

## 6. Trailheads/Parking

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Management activities in these areas enhance recreation and scenic objectives and may occasionally be noticeable to visitors. Such management activities may include developing primitive campsites, harvesting timber, using management-ignited fires, and planting trees. (D-SPNM-2)
- Recreational activities occur in natural-appearing environments that may be slightly modified by forest management activities. Evidence of management activities is relatively low, consisting of occasional stands that have been harvested, low standard roads that are used for timber access, and trails that are used for non-motorized recreation. (D-SPNM-4)
- Developed recreation sites such as water access sites and trailheads may be provided for public use. There is generally little site modification with rustic improvements designed primarily for protection of environment rather than the comfort of users. Use of natural materials for improvements is emphasized. (D-SPNM-5)
- Dispersed recreation opportunities such as campsites and trails (day use, backpacking, portaging, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and hunter walking) may be provided for public use. Other human-made structures are rare. Other dispersed recreation opportunities that may not be associated with facilities, such as orienteering, hunting, fishing, berry picking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and trapping, would also occur. (D-SPNM-6)

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines include:

- If small, low development level, parking areas are provided, they are generally located at the perimeter of the management area. (G-SPNM-1)

There are trailheads and parking facilities that exist in the Suomi/Trout Lake areas and seven are proposed to adjacent to the North Winnie SPNM area. These areas are small, accommodating one to three vehicles.

*Intentions:*

- Generally trailhead/parking facilities will be located outside the boundary of the SPNM area.
- Trailheads/parking areas will continue to be small, accommodating one to four cars.
- The parking areas will be designed to blend with the landscape and surfaced with native materials.

## 7. Signs/Kiosks:

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Developed recreation sites such as water access sites and trailheads may be provided for public use. There is generally little site modification with rustic improvements designed primarily for protection of environment rather than the comfort of users. Use of natural materials for improvements is emphasized. (D-SPNM-5)
- Dispersed recreation opportunities such as campsites and trails (day use, backpacking, portaging, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and hunter walking) may be provided for public use. Other human-made structures are rare. Other dispersed recreation opportunities that may not be associated with facilities, such as orienteering, hunting, fishing, berry picking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and trapping, would also occur. (D-SPNM-6)

Signage is important in managing the recreational opportunities of the SPNM areas. Signs include regulatory and recreation information signs. There are currently boundary signs indicating a non-motorized area and the allowed means of access; and trail location signs. Kiosks at trail heads contain information along with free standing signs at significant trail intersections. Regulatory signs are installed at appropriate places such as gates, sites of illegal use, and access areas.

*Intentions:*

- Kiosks designed for the natural appearing environment are an appropriate structure at trailheads.
- Signage will be positive and kept to a minimum to inform and educate visitors while meeting expectations of the FS Sign Handbook.

## **8. Road Closures:**

The Forest Plan outlines desired conditions within the SPNM areas, included desired conditions are:

- Recreational activities occur in natural-appearing environments that may be slightly modified by forest management activities. Evidence of management activities is relatively low, consisting of occasional stands that have been harvested, low standard roads that are used for timber access, and trails that are used for non-motorized recreation. (D-SPNM-4)
- Low-standard roads, with native soil or gravel surfaces, are permitted to accomplish forest management. However, most roads would be closed to public motor use. (D-SPNM-8)

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines include:

- National Forest System land, roads, and trails are closed to public motorized use with the exception of forest roads 2153, 2376, 3464, 3494, West Suomi Snowmobile Trails during the Grant-In-Aid season, and motorized grooming of cross country ski trails. (S-SPNM-1)

Road closures are important to maintain the non-motorized integrity of the SPNM areas. Many roads have been identified to not decommission for long-term forest management purposes. These roads are currently closed with gates and appropriate signage. Other roads have been decommissioned over the years when they are not necessary to provide for long term forest management.

*Intentions:*

- If roads are not necessary for long term forest management, decommission the road.
- Minimize roads into the SPNM that are necessary for long term forest management.
- Provide road closures that are effective. Gates without barriers along side are not effective in keeping ATVs out.

## APPENDIX F: SPNM Transportation System

Yellow Highlighting: These are roads that will be converted to trails

Road No.	Road Location	NWRM EA recommendation	SPNM EA recommendation	Mileage	Type	Seasonal Closure?
2171	border			0.80	road	none
2171	border_add			3.91	road	none
2171V	inside_add			0.69	road	wet
2171W	inside_add			0.57	road	berm_none
2171X	inside_add	decom	decom	0.46	road	wet
2171XA	inside_add	decom	decom	0.55	road	wet
2171Y	inside_add	decom	decom	0.30	road	wet
2196M	inside			0.77	road	none
2199	border			3.00	road	none
2199H	inside			0.30	road	none
2382	border			1.93	road	none
2382A	inside			0.95	road	wet
2382AA	inside			0.50	road	wet
2382B	inside			0.54	road	wet
2382D	inside			0.48	road	wet
2383	inside	decom	decom to trail	0.80	road	wet
2383	inside			0.51	road	wet
2383	inside			0.37	road	wet
2383	inside_add			0.97	road	wet
2383A	inside			0.37	road	wet
2383A	inside_add			0.38	road	wet
2383B	inside	decom	decom	1.76	road	wet
2383BA	inside	decom	decom	0.23	road	wet
2383BB	inside	decom	decom	0.31	road	wet
2383C	inside			0.36	road	wet
2383D	inside			1.02	road	wet
2383E	inside_add	decom	decom	0.46	road	wet
2383E	inside_add			0.17	road	wet
2383EA	inside			0.05	road	wet
2383EA	inside_add			0.40	road	wet
2383F	inside_add			0.49	road	wet
2384	border			3.49	road	none
2384	border_add			0.66	road	none
2384B	inside			1.17	road	soft
2384BA	inside			0.49	road	soft
2384E	inside			0.22	road	soft
2384F	inside			0.08	road	none berm

Road No.	Road Location	NWRM EA recommendation	SPNM EA recommendation	Mileage	Type	Seasonal Closure?
2384F	inside_add			0.50	road	soft_berm
3122	inside			0.63	road	none
3122	inside			0.78	road	wet
3122B	inside			0.90	road	wet
3122C	inside			0.47	road	none
3122E	inside			0.22	road	none_brush
3132	inside			0.99	road	wet_gate
3132	inside_add			0.70	road	wet_gate
3132A	inside			0.26	road	wet_gate
33/2196	border			2.36	road	none
off156	inside	decom	decom	0.13	road	none?
temp1	inside	decom_temp	decom	0.44	road	soft
temp2	inside	decom_temp	decom	0.11	road	soft
temp3	inside	decom_temp	decom	0.13	road	soft
temp4	inside	decom_temp	decom	0.20	road	soft
temp5	inside	decom_temp	decom	0.14	road	soft
U1039	inside		decom	0.04	road	none
U1098	inside		dec u rd	0.07	road	none_brush
U1098	inside_add		dec u rd	0.07	road	none_brush
U1104	inside			0.08	road	Access to campsite
U1238	inside		dec u rd	0.41	road	none?
U1239	inside		dec u rd	0.20	road	wet
U1240	inside		dec u rd	0.25	road	soft
U1256	inside		dec u rd	0.30	road	wet
U1257	inside		dec u rd	0.55	road	wet
U1257	inside_add		dec u rd	0.26	road	wet
U1257A	inside		dec u rd	0.01	road	wet
U1257A	inside_add		dec u rd	0.11	road	wet
U1258	inside		dec u rd	1.06	road	none?
U1259	inside		dec u rd	0.24	road	wet
U1266	inside		dec u rd to trail	0.59	road	wet
				43.51		

