



FORESTRY, PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT  
LANGLADE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
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PHONE: 715-627-6300  
[www.co.langlade.wi.us](http://www.co.langlade.wi.us)

October 31, 2022

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Secretary Preston Cole  
101 S. Webster Street  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Dear Secretary Cole,

I have been directed by Langlade County to follow up on a County resolution pertaining to the Wolf River State Trail.

Please see attached a Resolution approved by the Langlade County Board of Supervisors on October 24, 2022. This resolution requests information from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on what actions Langlade County would need to undertake to allow year-round use of motorized recreational vehicles, including All Terrain Vehicles and Utility Terrain Vehicles on all of the Wolf River State Trail. Currently the Wolf River State Trails restricts ATV/UTV use from the intersection of the trail and State Highway 64 north to the intersection of the trail with State Highway 55 near the Town of Lily.

The Wolf River State Trail is managed by the County under a Master Plan approved by the Wisconsin DNR in 2006. At that time the use of ATV/UTV vehicles on the entire Wolf River State Trail had great support by the public and Langlade County, but that use was never approved. That support still exists and the demand is growing. Langlade County would like to modify the 2005 Master plan to allow year-round motorized recreational vehicle use on the entire trail and needs assistance from the Wisconsin DNR to identify items that may hinder that goal.

In the past Langlade County was told by DNR staff that ATV/UTV use could not be authorized due to the nearby fisheries area, the impacts that dust would have on the Wolf River and endangered turtle habitat in the area. The County was also told that if ATV/UTV use was authorized on the trail, replacement lands would need to be purchased because of the Sport Fisheries Grant money utilized to acquire the trail and the fisheries area.

Our research shows that the Wolf River State Trail and the Wolf Rivers Fisheries area were acquired separate from each other. Can your Department identify if the Wolf River State Trail property was acquired utilizing the National Fisheries Grant money and if the Wolf River State Trail has limitations from Federal Sport Fisheries Grants? If so, what would the replacement of

lands require in the number of acres and land type? The County may consider locating and purchasing replacement lands if need be.

In regards to dust, could the DNR and County work together to allow year-round motorized recreational vehicle use by establishing dust treatment protocols or establish surface types that would eliminate the potential dust issue in appropriate locations.

Our research shows that in other areas that endangered turtle habitat exist in proximity to motorized trails, fencing is placed to limit turtle use of the trail surface. Could the DNR and County work together in strategic placement of turtle fencing on the Wolf River State Trail that then would allow year-round recreational motorized use?

In the past Langlade County was told by DNR staff that summer, spring and fall motorized recreational trail use could not be authorized due to past grant dollars used for establishment of non-motorized uses. Could staff identify the grant limitations. What policies or practices would need to be changes to eliminate the grant limitation.

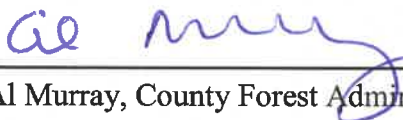
Langlade County also understands that DNR Master Planning is currently underway for the Wolf River Fisheries Area and the North Central Forest Area which includes the Wolf River State Trail. We would like the Langlade County Resolution to be part of the record for both master plans when completed.

It should be noted that our department issues ADA keys to locked gates on the restricted segments of the Wolf River State Trail after approval of DNR staff. Annually we issue between 30 and 50 keys allowing use. There is an effort by ADA users to get the gates removed due to limitations by those individuals opening the gates. Also, there is currently substantial unauthorized ATV/UTV use of those trail segments as can be evidenced by packed trails passing around established gates.

If possible, please have your staff provide me the above requested information as soon as possible. Once I can obtain the information, I will be able amendment to the Langlade County Wolf River State Trail Master Plan to include year-round motorized recreational vehicle use as requested the Langlade County Board. I also understand that trail rehabilitation and improvements may be required following master plan amendment to allow additional motorized use and that process will be completed when approved and required.

If you or your staff should have any questions about this request, please contact me.

Sincerely,



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Al Murray, County Forest Administrator

CC (defined by Resolution): Governor Tony Evers, Congressman Tom Tiffany, Congressman Mike Gallagher, State Senator Mary Felzkowski, Representative Calvin Callahan, State Representative Jeffery Mursau, Langlade County Board of Supervisors

# LANGLADE COUNTY



VOTE  
18 AYES  
0 NAYS  
2 ABSENT  
1 VACANCY

RESOLUTION #39-2022

INTRODUCED BY: FORESTRY & RECREATION COMMITTEE

INTENT: REQUEST MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS TO ALLOW SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL MOTORIZED RECREATIONAL VEHICLE USAGE ON RESTRICTED AREAS OF THE WOLF RIVER STATE TRAIL

**WHEREAS**, Langlade County manages the segments of the Wolf River State Trail that are located within Langlade County under an approved Master Plan created in 2005 and approved by the Wisconsin DNR in August 2006; and

**WHEREAS**, the Master Plan, as approved, restricts the spring, summer and fall usage of Motorized Recreational Vehicles on the segment of the Wolf River State Trail from Highway 64 north to Lily; and

**WHEREAS**, the original Master Plan, as approved, had major influence from the State of Wisconsin related to adjoining Fisheries Areas acquired and managed by the Wisconsin DNR; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wolf River State Trail, originally a railroad grade, was acquired through the Rails to Trails program, independent of the Wolf River Fisheries Area; and

**WHEREAS**, other State Trails, that were originally railroad grades and acquired through the Rails to Trails program, allow multiple uses including combinations of motorized recreational use, hiking, biking, and equestrian use year-round without complications or restrictions; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past 16 years, trail usage by ATV and UTV vehicles in Langlade County and across Wisconsin has increased more than tenfold; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past 16 years, demands for ATV/UTV trail connectivity for the Communities of Wolf River, Hollister, Lily and White Lake north to Forest County have resulted in reduced economic development in those areas; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past 16 years; hiking, biking, and equestrian use of the restricted segments of the Wolf River State Trail have had limited economic impact related to trails for the Communities of Wolf River, Hollister, Lily and White Lake; and

**WHEREAS**, Langlade County provides hiking, biking, and equestrian trails in many areas of the County Forest and such trails do not require long distance connectivity to other State Trail Systems; and

**WHEREAS**, Langlade County has provided limited summer maintenance of the restricted use area due to lack of funding for maintenance of non-motorized trail systems and no permanence of a trail club to complete the work;

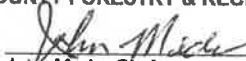
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, to improve the connectivity of the Langlade County Trail systems to Statewide trails systems and improve the economic opportunities in the Eastern parts of Langlade County, the Board of Supervisors of Langlade County respectfully request the State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to provide mandatory requirements to Convert Restricted Areas of the Wolf River State Trail to include the Addition of Motorized Recreational Vehicle Usage in the Spring, Summer and Fall.

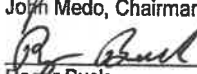
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Requirements shall be directed to the Langlade County Forestry, Parks and Recreation Department to be utilized for updating of the Langlade County Wolf River Master Plan to be completed in the Fall of 2022.


**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the County Clerk is hereby directed to provide completed copies of this resolution to the Governor, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Congressional Representative Tiffany, Congressional Representative Gallagher, State Senator Mary Felzkowski, State Representative Calvin Callahan, and

State Representative Jeffrey Mursau for assistance that may be required for Policy or Practice changes to accomplish the goals of this Resolution.

**LANGLADE COUNTY FORESTRY & RECREATION COMMITTEE:**

  
John Medo, Chairman

  
Roger Buck

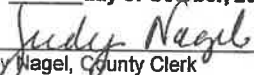
  
Reinhardt Bajerzak

  
Ben Pierce

  
Todd May

**FISCAL NOTE:** Opening such trails will result in hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent over time in Langlade County and will greatly impact local businesses.

Adopted by the County Board of Langlade County,  
this 24<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2022.

  
Judy Nagel, County Clerk

