
**Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest
Amendment for Management of Recent Land Purchases**



**Willow Flowage Scenic Area
Motorized Access Amendment**



**Public Involvement Plan
2013**

Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recognizes the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Amendment for Management of Recent Land Purchases and the Willow Flowage Scenic Area Motorized Access Amendment must reflect the people it serves, and encourages citizen input throughout the planning process. This document outlines the strategy for soliciting public review and input into the development of management objectives for the new acquisitions in the NHAL and a motorized access plan for the Willow Flowage.

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

The amendment process is guided by the following state regulations:

- A. The Amendments for the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and the Willow Flowage Scenic Area will be developed within the parameters of Administrative Code NR 44, which governs Master Planning for DNR properties;
- B. The Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest will be managed and developed as a "State Forest" as outlined in state statutes 28.04 Wis. Stats; and
- C. The Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and the Willow Flowage Scenic Area will be managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code NR1 (Natural Resources Board Policies).

Planning Process

The planning process for each amendment is divided into three primary phases:

Phase 1-Inventory and Analysis

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

Phase 2-Proposed Management and Options to Consider

Phase two is amendment development and begins with a formal announcement that the master plan will be amended. This is followed with a process to: identify important issues to be addressed in the planning process to establish options. This culminates with the development of the *Draft Amendment*. Additional opportunities for public involvement will be scheduled.

Phase 3-Final Draft Amendment and Approval

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

Opportunities for Public Participation

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

Public review and comment will be formally sought at two milestones during the amendment's development. Formal public input opportunities are listed below:

Phase 1

- Property assessment and issues and opportunities

Phase 2

- Engage public input for issue-based alternatives if the need arises
- Develop a draft Master Plan Amendment
- Public review and comment on the draft Master Plan Amendment

Phase 3

- In addition, the Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to comment at the meeting before approving

How Your Voice is Heard

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

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

How the Department will Provide Information

Information and major planning documents will be available at the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Headquarters and in Madison (GEF 2, 4th Floor).

Press Releases

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

Direct Mailings (regular and e-mail)

A mailing list of key stakeholders and interested parties will be developed and used to keep interested parties informed about upcoming events and discussions. Electronic news media will also be kept informed. Mailings will be done at key points in the planning process to provide valuable information about the property and planning issues. Contacts will be added to the initial mailing list as additional people or groups participate in the planning effort. You may sign up for the mailing list by contacting the Department at the address or phone number listed at the end of this document.

State Forest Web Page

The Department will provide a Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and a Willow Flowage Scenic Area planning web page where information about the properties, the planning process, planning documents, notices, and other important planning information will be posted.

Consultation with Other Governmental Units

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

How Decisions Will be Made

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

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

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

Contact Information

To join the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Amendment for Management of Recent Land Purchases mailing list or to send comments or suggestions on the amendment, please contact:

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To join the Willow Flowage Scenic Area Motorized Access Amendment mailing list or to send comments or suggestions on the amendment, please contact:

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