



Proposal For An ATV Route Through The Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Area



PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH ATV ROUTE THROUGH WOODBORO LAKES WILDLIFE AREA

Background:

The Woodboro Lakes Wildlife Area (WLWA) is in the Town of Woodboro and consists of 2,632 acres of mostly forested land. WLWA Master Plan states “Recreationally, this region is notable for its high proportion of public recreation land, abundant water resources, high seasonal homeownership, and influx of retirees influencing recreation demand. The area has long been known as a vacation destination. Large federal, state, and county land holdings provide a wide array of outdoor recreational opportunities, including both motorized and non-motorized trails.”

The effort to create an ATV trail within WLWA was headed by the Nokomis ATV Club, starting in 2014. The trail is a connector between Oneida County Forest and Oscar Jenny Rd.

The trail in WLWA is 1.7 miles long on state property with a majority following an existing snowmobile trail. Oneida County agreed to open 3.8 miles of Cruiser Rd and a snowmobile trail from Cr-N to the border with WLWA for use by ATV/UTVs. The Town of Woodboro agreed to designate Oscar Jenny Road as an ATV route and to sponsor the development of the new trail through state land. The combination of ATV/UTV use on county and state land connecting Cr-N with Oscar Jenny Rd eliminates 5.1 miles of paved routes.

Several town hall meetings were held to inform the public of the proposal and to give the public an opportunity to comment either supporting or opposing the trail. There was overwhelming support. The trail was approved by the Natural Resources Board in the new Master Plan in October 2015. The ATV trail is referred to as Cruiser ATV Trail.

At the same time Cruiser ATV Trail was envisioned, Nokomis ATV Club and its supporters planned a second phase to extend the use of the ATV trail in WLWA north of Oscar Jenny Rd. Using existing public access roads, phase 2 would link Oscar Jenny Rd with Cr-K and Old K. The proposal for phase 2 was not considered in the new Master Plan because Cr-K was not approved for ATV/UTV use at that time and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) did not want a route that did not connect to an approved trail or route at each end.

Cr-K is now approved as an ATV route from Hwy-51 to Hwy-47.

Proposal:

Request the WLWA Master Plan be amended to expand current recreational opportunities by establishing an ATV route between Oscar Jenny Rd, Cr-K and Old K.

There is strong local demand for extending the miles of routes which remove ATV/UTVs from more heavily trafficked paved roads and residential neighborhoods. Separating ATV/UTVs and street-licensed vehicles promotes safety and a more pleasurable ride for both ATV/UTV users and drivers of other vehicles. Riding on unpaved routes through dense scenic forests provides an off-road experience which ATV/UTV riders desire.

Allowing public access to natural resources is included in DNR's mission statement. There is also an unwritten goal of making them multipurpose, which should include establishing routes and trails for use by ATV/UTVs.

There has been a tremendous growth in the popularity of ATV/UTV riding in the region, on both trails and routes. According to DNR, riding ATVs and UTVs is one of the fastest growing segments of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin. The DNR reported a record-high 512,792 ATV and UTV registrations in 2024, up 3% year-over-year and 16% since 2020. Routes have been approved on all local town roads in Woodboro, Cassian, Nokomis, Little Rice, Crescent, and others. Even non-resident ATV/UTV users are drawn to the area because of riding opportunities as well as ATV/UTV events like Bubba's Bog Bash, Rondele Ranch venues, and numerous fundraisers by ATV clubs, snowmobile clubs and local businesses. These boost the local economy. WATVA conducted an economic impact summary in 2023. It documented that ATV/UTV riders contributed \$5.43 billion to the Wisconsin economy and created 25,845 jobs.

In addition to public access roads in WLWA, about 16 miles of hunter walking paths have been developed in cooperation with the Ruffed Grouse Society. The public access roads, whether to drive to the walking trails or to just drive through WLWA, are open to all street-licensed vehicles to include cars, trucks, and motorcycles. Not to ATV/UTVs. The proposed ATV route will utilize 3.3 miles of these public access roads which existed before Ruffed Grouse Society interest in the area. The walking trails are blocked off from all vehicle traffic with gates. ATV/UTVs would not be able to ride on them disturbing the hunters or their dogs. If there still are concerns by Ruffed Grouse Society, then ATV/UTVs can be prohibited from using the proposed route after the hunting season starts around September 13 each year. NOTE: Hunters with their vehicles are allowed on Cruiser ATV trail after the ATV season ends.

The proposed route consists of using a public access road 1.5 miles long from Oscar Jenny Rd to the north. The route splits at that point. Leg 1 goes northwest 1.4 miles connecting with Cr-K; leg 2 goes east .3 miles connecting with Old K.

Route connecting Oscar Jenny Rd with Cr-K is 2.9 total miles, eliminating 3.8 miles of paved routes on local and county roads and bypassing numerous houses. The route provides access of Cruiser Trail to Little Rice Trails (west via Cr-K and Swamp Lake Rd) and to Cr-L via a new trail being developed linking it with Swamp Lake Rd.

Route connecting Oscar Jenny Rd with Old K is 1.8 total miles, eliminating 2.3 miles of paved routes on local roads and bypassing numerous houses. The route provides access of Cruiser ATV Trail with Harshaw Rd for continuing north to Little Rice Trails (west via Rocky Run Rd) and trails at St. Germain and beyond Lake Tomahawk (Northern Highland State Forest east via Cr-D). To the south, It will provide access to scenic routes through Oneida County Forest, for example Nose Lake Rd and Trout Creek Rd.

Together, the Cruiser ATV Trail along with the proposed ATV route through WLWA provides a scenic off-road experience between Cr-N and Cr-K and Old K and eliminates 9 miles of paved roads shared with other vehicles.

There are minimal or no environmental impact and development cost (except for signing) since the route with its two legs uses existing roads which already allow street-licensed vehicles. Signing includes identifying the ATV route, closed areas, and speed limit established by DNR. Any costs incurred in establishing the route as well making any needed repairs will be covered by the Nokomis ATV Club. Nokomis ATV Club has a proven record of being a good steward of nature in years of maintaining ATV trails and promoting rules, regulations, safety and responsible riding on its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NokomisATVClub/> and website at <https://nokomisatvclub.org/>.

Only ATVs and UTVs that are registered or have a non-resident pass, meet all legal specifications, and follow all rules established by DNR will be allowed to ride on the route.

Endorsements:

The following state their support for the addition of the ATV route through WLWA.

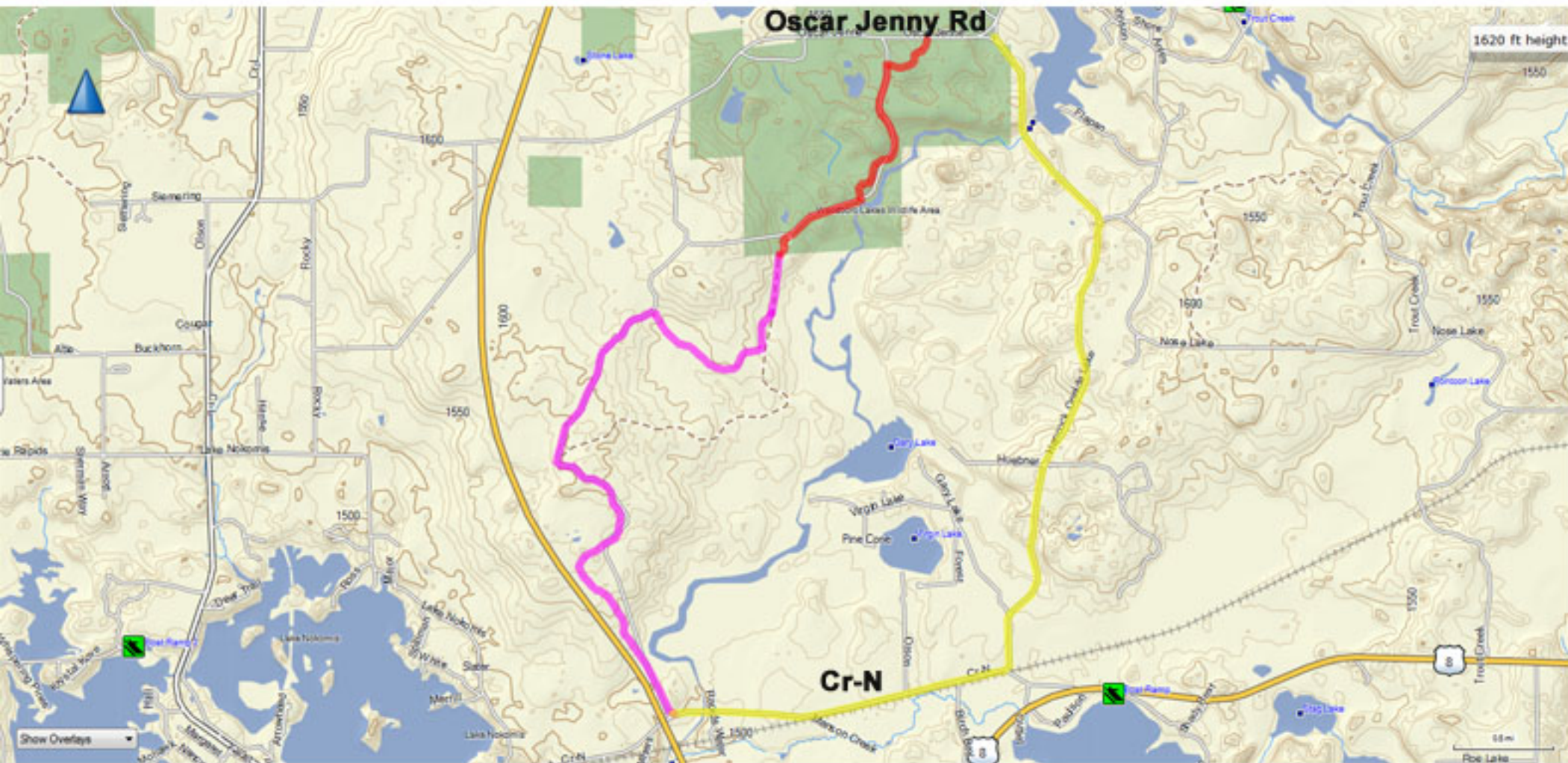
- State Senator Mary Felzkowski
- Oneida County Forestry
- Wisconsin ATV UTV Association (WATVA)
- Oneida County ATV/UTV Council
- Town of Woodboro
- Tomahawk Chamber of Commerce
- My Ten Point, Alpine Resort, Northwoods Store, The Grill, Birch Lake Bar & Resort (businesses local to proposed route)
- Tomahawk Sports Center, Erv's Sales & Service, Tomahawk Yamaha, Powersports Repair & More, Hob's Service Center (ATV sales and service businesses)
- Nokomis ATV Club (membership consisting of 238 families/individuals and 81 business sponsors including 44 bar and grills).
- Hancock Lake Association (covers region adjacent to WLWA)
- Rondele Ranch (hosts public events and rents UTVs)

Summary:

This proposal requests the WLWA Master Plan be amended to designate a public access road between Oscar Jenny Rd, Cr-K and Old K to become a route for use by ATV/UTVs.

- It is a logical extension of Cruiser ATV Trail that will provide additional off-paved road experience which ATV/UTV riders desire
- The public access road already allows other vehicles
- The proposed route links two existing routes
- ATV/UTVs will not disturb hunters and their dogs on the gated walking trails
- The proposed route removes ATVs and UTVs from paved roads and away from numerous houses
- There is overwhelming support for this proposal by residents and businesses
- Repairs will be responsibility of Nokomis ATV Club using its own funds

Thanks in advance for your consideration,
Nokomis TV Club
nokomisatv@nokomisatvclub.org



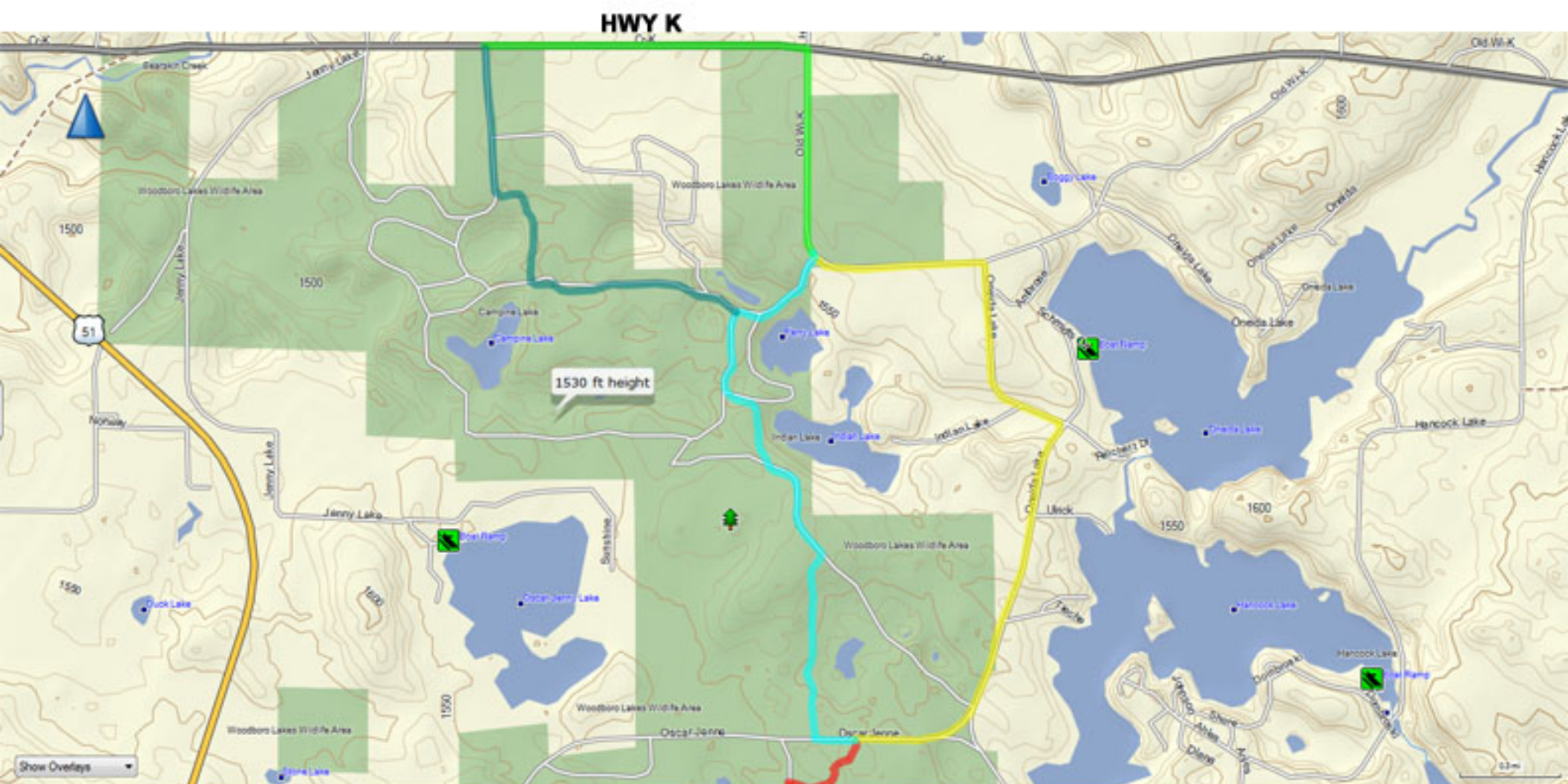
Cruiser ATV Trail

Cruiser ATV Trail WLWA (1.7 miles)

Cruiser ATV Route & Trail County Land (3.8 miles)

Paved Route Eliminated (5.1 miles)

All Woodboro town roads are open to ATV



Cruiser ATV Trail

Proposed ATV Route In WLWA

Cruiser ATV Trail (1.7 miles)

Route Between Oscar Jenny Rd and Cr-K (2.9 miles)

Paved Route Eliminated (3.8 miles)

Route Between Oscar Jenny Rd and Old K (1.8 miles)

Paved Route Eliminated (2.3 miles)

Proposed ATV route uses existing public access road approved for street-licensed vehicles

Cr-K, Old K, Oscar Jenny Rd are open to ATV

All Woodboro town roads are open to ATV