

STATEMENT OF SCOPE

Department of Natural Resources

Rule No.: PR-03-20

Relating to: Wisconsin DNR property management regulations in chs. NR 5, 10, 11, 15, 17, 20, 26, 27, 45 and 51

Rule Type: Permanent

1. Finding/nature of emergency (Emergency Rule only):

This will be a permanent rule.

2. Detailed description of the objective of the proposed rule:

Chapter NR 45, Wis. Admin. Code governs the conduct of visitors to the lands and facilities owned, eased, or leased by the department. The department reviews this chapter every 3-4 years. For this rule, the department's focus will remain on ch. NR 45, but the department may also consider revisions to department lands rules in other related chapters of administrative code to improve consistency and organizational structure between chapters, and other changes of a minor nature. This rule would update fee structures, vehicle and boat use regulations, camping rules and hours of operation, technology regulations, rules relating to the possession of animals, general property use rules and property-specific rules. This rule will also streamline language, minimize redundancy and clarify provisions in ch. NR 45 and related administrative codes.

3. Description of the existing policies relevant to the rule, new policies proposed to be included in the rule, and an analysis of policy alternatives:

This rule will include changes in the following categories.

Fee structures

This rule will consider fee structures on various properties that charge fees for camping, parking, boat docking, rentals or other purposes. Fee modifications may include updating fees to keep pace with factors such as public use and facility management expenses, eliminating certain fees, establishing fee areas described in property master plans or for meeting facilities, and modifying fee structures.

Vehicle and boat use

The department will consider adding or modifying areas in which vehicles may be used, and may clarify rules on whether ATVs/UTVs, snowmobiles, bicycles and segways can be used on roads and trails within properties. This rule may also modify motorboat regulations for waters on state properties, including prohibiting motorboat use in some waters, allowing their use in other waters, and determining a policy for motorboat use in flowages, ditches and wetlands. This rule may also address vehicle rules that are already covered elsewhere in administrative code or statutes.

Camping and operating hours

The department will revise camping policies to bring them up to date with the new camping reservation system, and may allow or prohibit camping on certain types of department properties, such as wildlife areas, and change camping admission and facility rules and fees. This rule may also exempt hunters or trappers engaged in a legal, open season to enter wildlife areas outside regular operating hours. This rule will also review quiet hours and hours that visitors may use the property, and make changes if needed.

Technology

This rule will establish policies and restrictions for drone use on or over department lands. This rule may also propose regulations for the use of newer types of weapons, such as airsoft guns.

Animals

This rule will evaluate and potentially revise areas of properties, including facilities, where pets are allowed on and off-leash. The rule may modify restrictions on equine animals to include other non-equine, large hooved animals, and may also revise policies on the use of equine and hooved animals on roads open to motor vehicles. This rule will also codify rules prohibiting feeding wildlife.

General property use

This rule will address allowable uses of department-managed properties to limit detrimental uses and encourage recreational use in line with the management strategies of each property. The rule may modify regulations for gathering edible and non-edible natural materials for personal use, apply consistent regulations to firearm and non-firearm weapon use and hunting on department lands and near or within designated use areas, add counties to the list of counties where shooting is not allowed outside of the hunting seasons, clarify policies for recreational activities such as rock climbing to protect safety and property, and review policies on multi-use trails and property accessibility. The department may also review and update solicitation restrictions, review noise level rules, and update rules for certain structures placed on state lands, such as trail cameras and artificial hives or swarm traps. This rule will review closures on properties or parts of properties during part of or the entire year, and may consolidate closures into one section for simplification. This rule will also make minor changes and clarifications to language to reduce confusion and facilitate law enforcement efforts.

Property-specific regulations

The department will address regulations to meet a variety of public health, safety and welfare and land and resource management goals on state-owned and -managed properties. The department may update rules specific to individual properties, or may consolidate rules that currently apply to individual properties into a different section or structure. Proposals for specific department properties include but are not limited to:

- Reviewing boating regulations.
- Prohibiting access for safety, conservation or landscape preservation needs on certain state natural areas.
- Revising beverage regulations on certain properties to allow drinking water.
- Increasing fees for certain events and rentals at specific state parks and forests.
- Revising falconry and trapping regulations.
- Evaluating legal fishing methods on department lands containing a lake.
- Allowing additional activities under an event permit on certain properties.
- Allowing additional hunting opportunities on specific state recreation areas.

- Revising camping reservation policy for units of Kettle Moraine state forest and potentially other properties with backpacking trails to limit the number of backpackers that camp at the same place on the trail for consecutive nights.
- Requiring a vehicle admission sticker on one or more properties where this is not currently required.
- Prohibiting grilling on docks on certain properties.
- Revising hours of entry or operational hours for vehicles for various state properties.
- Reviewing gun range regulations.

In addition to the categories listed above, the department also may pursue additional rule modifications that reasonably relate to use or management of department lands.

No action to update these rules could result in uses of department properties that are detrimental to public safety and welfare or incompatible with property management goals, fee structures that do not keep pace with demand and funding needs, reduced recreational opportunities, and regulatory uncertainty for the purposes of law enforcement.

4. Detailed explanation of statutory authority for the rule (including the statutory citation and language):

The department has the authority under s. 23.09 (2) to promulgate rules and establish plans and projects for conservation, including establishing game and fish refuges, acquiring lands, and maintaining lands for conservation, habitat, research, scenic, historical and recreational purposes.

Section 23.091, Stats. authorizes the department to acquire, develop, operate and maintain state recreation areas and establish use zones and associated rules within state recreation areas.

Section 23.11, Stats. grants the department jurisdiction over department lands.

In s. 23.115, Stats., the department is directed to designate trails, campgrounds, picnic areas and other special use areas, and roads on department properties.

Section 23.117, Stats. allows the department to post trails as open to use by bicycles, electric scooters or electric personal assistive mobility devices, and requires the department to regularly patrol trails in state parks and the Kettle Moraine state forest.

Section 23.28, Stats. authorizes the department to designate and regulate state natural areas, and restricts the department from allowing uses of state natural areas that are incompatible with the natural value of those areas.

The department is authorized under s. 23.305, Stats. to lease state park or state forest land to towns, villages or counties for outdoor spectator sports purposes.

Section 23.33, Stats. authorizes the department to regulate all-terrain vehicles and utility terrain vehicles in a manner consistent with the rules established in this section of statutes.

The state park system is established in s. 27.01, Stats., and this section grants the department acquisition, development and administration authority for the state park system. This includes authority in s. 27.01 (2) (j), Stats. to promulgate rules regulating the use of state parks. Furthermore, s. 27.01 (10) (b), Stats. allows the department to establish and operate campgrounds on department lands, and s. 27.01 (11), Stats. authorizes the department to establish a campground reservation system and promulgate rules associated with it.

Section 29.014, Stats. grants the authority for the department to establish open and closed seasons, bag limits, size limits, rest days and other conditions for taking fish and game to conserve fish and game and ensure continued opportunities for good fishing, hunting and trapping.

According to s. 29.335, Stats., the department shall promulgate rules regulating feeding of wildlife.

In s. 29.617, Stats., authority is granted to the department to acquire, lease, develop and maintain public hunting and fishing grounds.

In addition, general authority is granted by s. 227.11 (2) (a), Stats. to implement and interpret its statutory authority.

5. Estimate of amount of time that state employees will spend developing the rule and of other resources necessary to develop the rule :

The department estimates that development of the rule, including meetings to discuss code revisions and holding public hearings, will require 400 hours of staff time.

6. List with description of all entities that may be affected by the proposed rule :

Nearly all users of Department of Natural Resource's managed properties can be affected. A wide variety of groups and individuals will be interested in this proposed rule. Some groups include: Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners, Friends of Wisconsin State Parks, The Wisconsin ATV-UTV Association, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, National Rifle Association, Non-motorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation.

7. Summary and preliminary comparison with any existing or proposed federal regulation that is intended to address the activities to be regulated by the proposed rule :

Federal regulations do not directly apply to the management of Department of Natural Resources lands.

8. Anticipated economic impact of implementing the rule (note if the rule is likely to have an economic impact on small businesses):

The department anticipates an annual economic impact of over \$50,000 (moderate impact) due to potential fee increases. An economic impact analysis will be conducted as part of rule development.

9. Anticipated number, month and locations of public hearings:

The department anticipates holding five public hearings in the month of January 2021. The department anticipates holding one hearing in Madison with a simultaneous broadcast to DNR regional offices to obtain statewide comments.

The department will hold these hearings in these locations to provide an opportunity for department property users in different parts of the state to attend a hearing and provide input.

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