

# WINTER RIDING OPPORTUNITIES IN MINNESOTA



**WHERE CAN I RIDE MY ATV?  
ATV MINNESOTA HAS THE ANSWER.**



## **ATV Minnesota Works For You Year-Round**

The ATV Association of Minnesota, also known as ATV Minnesota, is a non-profit, state association representing 70 member ATV clubs across the state. Established in 1983, it serves the interests of ATV owners by advocating for ATV recreation, advancing the safe use

of ATVs, helping clubs build trails economically and environmentally sustainable, and participating in legislative and regulatory activities related to the use of all-terrain vehicles.

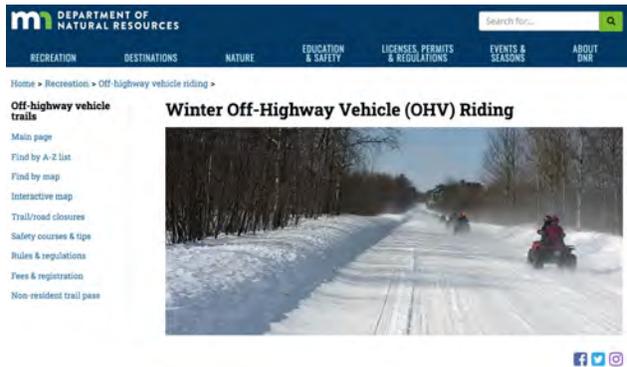


## **It's Winter...Let's Ride**

Winter ATV riding is growing in popularity across Minnesota. ATV clubs have "polar bear rides." Many riders meet up for weekend

rides posted on the Facebook pages of ATV clubs and user groups such as "Minnesota ATV Riders." There are plenty of places to ride legally and safely. Before you go, know what's open, and what's not. Always follow proper trail etiquette for winter riding, especially on dual-use trails open to snowmobiles and ATVs.

Learn more at this link: [www.mndnr.gov/winterohv](http://www.mndnr.gov/winterohv)



*This page of the Minnesota DNR website is titled "Winter OHV Riding in Minnesota." It lists some of the more popular trails open to ATVs in winter, with some cold-weather riding tips.*

## Start Here: 20 State ATV Trails Open Year-Round

While most ATV trail systems close in October or mid-November, 20 trails are open year-round (see list below). They may include areas off limits to ATVs, including: 1) Grant-in-Aid snowmobile trails in the area, and 2) temporary trail closures due to big-game season, logging, and extreme weather that may cause washouts or blowdowns. You can see the complete list of State ATV Trails that are open during winter months, with their total miles and a link to their maps at: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/az.html> .





Remember that groomed, signed snowmobile trails are closed to OHVs and highway licensed vehicles (HLVs) beginning December 1st, unless they are designated as a dual-use trail. Please respect private property and obey all signs.



### Most Importantly, Know Before You Go

This link takes you to the DNR website page that shows the current open/closed status of State ATV Trails and State Forest Roads.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/ohv/closures.html>



## Venture Out: On Minnesota's Two National Forests

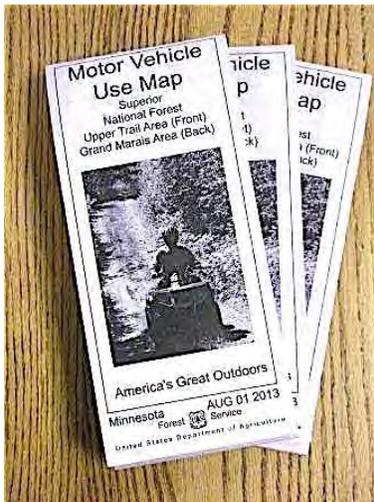
There are ATV winter riding opportunities in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests. Their Forest Roads fall into two main categories: "Open To Highway Legal Vehicles" and "Open To All Vehicles" (including OHVs). There are also routes designated as "Trails" on the National Forests.



### Season dates include winter months

Forest Roads in both National Forests are generally open May 1st and stay open through the fall and winter months to March 15th. However, some roads may vary in their

seasonal dates, and all roads are closed March 15 to May 1 during spring thaw, and may be temporarily closed at any time for logging, flooding and other conditions. Check with the National Forest offices for updates.



### Maps printed and online

Like all National Forests, the Chippewa and Superior have a Motorized Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), with regulations relating to OHV use. MVUMs serve as the main source of information for enforcement and are the final authority on use. MVUMs are not always reliable for navigation, however, as they may not show roads and trails that continue across state or county public lands. Printed MVUMs are available at the Forest

Supervisor's office and Ranger District offices, and online on the Forest websites. Maps are also available on the map stores of the Avenza Map app, and are geo-referenced to show a rider's GPS location on smartphones or tablets while riding.

Grant-in-Aid snowmobile trails on Forest Roads are off limits to ATVs unless marked as open on the MVUM. No cross-country travel is permitted. This includes big game retrieval, trapping or bear baiting.

**Caution:** Many Forest Roads were constructed by and paid for by the forest/logging industries. These routes are active in the winter so always use extreme caution in the vicinity of these operations. Heavy equipment and logging trucks have limited visibility. It is your responsibility to “Share The Road” and give them complete right-of-way.

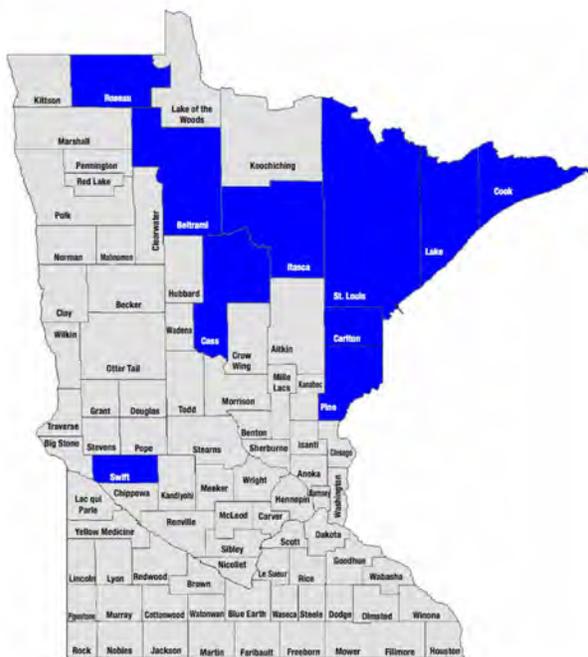
*Learn more at these links:*

Chippewa National Forest page on OHV Recreation:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/chippewa/recreation/ohv/?recid=26620&actid=93>

Superior National Forest page on OHV Recreation:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/superior/recreation/ohv>



## Want To Stay Local?

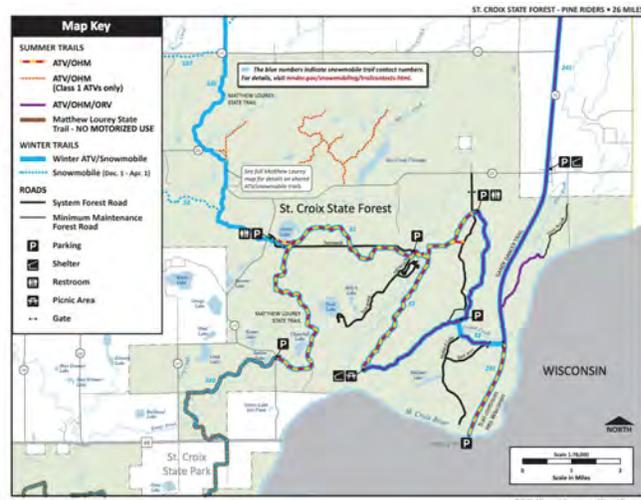
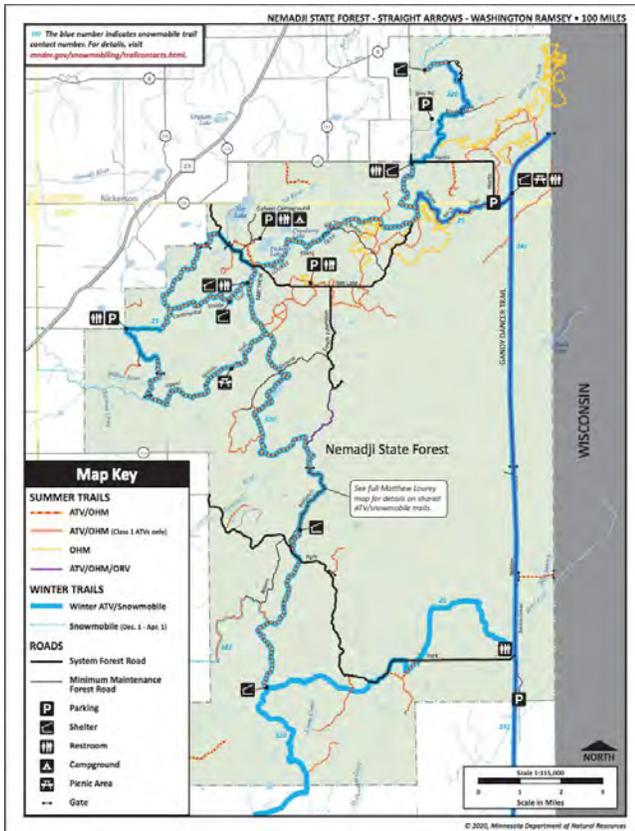
In many parts of Minnesota, winter riding opportunities on public lands are close by. This map shows counties (in blue) with one or more State ATV Trails and counties within National Forests that have some Federal Forest roads open during winter months. As always, there may be exceptions so be sure to know before you go, and follow the rules regarding OHV use in State and Federal Forests based on their classification.



## A Unique Riding Opportunity: Groomed Dual-Use Trails

Some trails groomed during winter months in the Nemadji and St. Croix State Forests are open to both snowmobiles and

ATVs (Class 1 and 2), but only when the air temperature is 30° F or lower to preserve a good trail condition. Grooming, done by the DNR, is funded by both the ATV and snowmobile dedicated funds. Watch for signs regarding air temperature. And pay close attention to signs to make sure you're not on snowmobile-only trails. Maps in the 2020 DNR OHV Trail Atlas show trails open during winter months. They are also available on the DNR website and on the Avenza app map store.



### Other Trails Open To Both Snowmobiles and ATVs

-The Chisholm Trail is groomed, 25 miles long and maintained by the Northern Traxx ATV Club.

-On the Soo Line North Trail and Soo Line South Trail, the segments in Carlton County are open to ATVs year-round.

-Parts of the Gandy Dancer Trail are shared with snowmobiles.

-ATVs are permitted on the Matthew Lourey Trail from Harlis Road in the Nemadji State Forest to County Road 173 in the St. Croix State Forest.



### **Proper trail etiquette when riding on a groomed trail open to ATVs:**

- In air temperatures above 30° F, especially if it is sunny, wheels rut up the groomed trail. For the safety of everyone, including trail groomers, don't drive on a groomed trail if the outside temperature is above 30° F.
- If the forecast is for temperatures to go above 30° F, plan ahead. Make sure you are off the groomed trails during that time.
- Stay on your side of the trail at all times. Be especially cautious when approaching narrow or winding sections of the trail.
- Stay to the right when meeting other ATVs or snowmobiles.
- ATVs are slower than snowmobiles on groomed trails, so if snowmobiles come up behind you, pull over and let them go past.
- If you are sliding down the trail sideways or come around a corner sideways, that is considered Careless Driving; you will be fined.
- Run in 4-wheel drive to reduce wheel spin. Wheel spin causes more impact to the groomed snow surface, so minimize that impact.
- Side-by-Side ATVs are much wider than a snowmobile, so make sure you remain on your half of the trail. If you can't fit on one half of the trail, then you are too wide for that trail, don't go there.

### **Please Note: Parking Can Be Tough**

Most access roads and parking areas are not plowed during the winter. A few parking areas in the Nemadji State Forest may be plowed when conditions allow. According to Mary Straka, DNR Area Supervisor in Moose Lake, ATV clubs can include a line item for winter plowing in the grant application for the ATV trail systems they maintain in the GIA program.



### **Go Deep: A Place For Tracked Vehicles To Ride**

State and Federal Forest roads that are open to OHVs and are not part of a groomed snowmobile trail give riders with tracked ATVs a unique riding opportunity during the winter.

**Please note: When tracks are attached to a Class 1 or Class 2 ATV, the vehicle no longer falls under the DNR's definition of an ATV and must be registered as an ORV. In addition, tracked ATVs do not meet the definition of a snowmobile and are not allowed on any groomed snowmobile trail or dual-use trail.**



### **Land Of 10,000 (Frozen) Lakes**

Riding on lakes when the ice is considered thick enough is a great way to enjoy winter. Know the rules. According to DNR regulations: "A person may not drive or operate an ATV at a speed exceeding 10 mph on the frozen surface of public waters

within 100 feet of a person not on an all-terrain vehicle or within 100 feet of a fishing shelter." All other ATV regulations apply during winter months.



### **The Cold Hard (And Fun) Facts**

- There are many ATV winter riding opportunities in Minnesota.
- Always follow proper trail etiquette, especially on dual-use trails.



- Dress for winter, bring extra clothes and never ride alone.
- Follow the same DNR regulations you do the rest of the year.
- Tell someone where you will be riding before you head out.

-Ride Sober: As of August 1, 2018, people convicted of DWI will be prohibited from operating any motor vehicle, including ATVs, motorboats and snowmobiles.

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### Heading to Wisconsin?

The Wisconsin ATV Association (WATVA) has a brochure on winter riding opportunities, regulations and safety, at:

<http://magazine.watva.org/books/pzva/#p=1>

### This e-brochure is provided by ATV Minnesota:

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651-243-4417 800-442-8826 [www.atvam.org](http://www.atvam.org) November 2020

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