

## **Dual Sport Access to State Trails in Forest County**

In March of 2011, I made a presentation to a committee of the Forest County Board on behalf of the Wisconsin Dual Sport Riders (WDSR).

The WDSR hosts two popular events in Forest County every year. They wanted to include some segments of a nearby State Recreation Trail as part of their event. At that time, the State trails in Forest County were open to ATV use but excluded motorcycles.

During the presentation to the committee I was able to address a significant list of concerns that people had about introducing motorcycles to the trail. In the end, the county agreed to a trial period of two years during which they would allow licensed dual sport motorcycles onto the Forest County segments of the Nicolet and the Wolf River State Trails.

What is significant about this action is that it required a policy change from the DNR. The new policy allows the local entities that manage DNR owned State trails to alter their master plans to allow motorcycle use on the trails as they see fit.

This is important to us as motorcyclists because it opens the door to gaining motorcycle access on some other State trails managed by local government entities. Of the 41 State trails of interest to use, 25 are cooperatively managed by counties which could grant us motorcycle access to the trails (if we don't already have it).

One important lesson that was reinforced by the meeting in Forest County is that when user groups and decision makers can sit down and talk through the issues, it become much easier to work out solutions that satisfy and benefit everyone involved.

The end state is that the Forest County segments of the Nicolet and Wolf River State Trails are now open (April 2012) for use and that use includes licensed dual sport motorcycles. No trail pass is required.

Issues for the future that are related to this include motorcycle access to the Langlade and Florence County segments of the Nicolet State Trail and motorized access to the Langlade County portion of the Wolf River State Trail.

The DNR intends to replace a bridge between the UP and Wisconsin that will continue ATV access into Michigan. At present, we are not allowed to operate motorcycles on the Langlade or Florence County segments of the Nicolet State Trail. We need to engage the DNR and these two counties in an initiative to allow motorcycles on their portions of the trail to allow us trail access to the UP.

The segment of the Wolf River Trail in Langlade County is currently not open to summer motorized recreation. This is contrary to the intent of Forest County taking on their portion of the Wolf River Trail and developing it thinking that it would continue through Langlade County. The issue of motorized access is currently for Langlade County to decide. Some believe that it is about a 50/50 split for and against. There may be some action that reroutes some of the trail along the Wolf River to an alternate route for motorized vehicles.

I am in contact with the Wisconsin ATV Association and the DNR regarding the Wolf River Trail issue and will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that we become involved as opportunities present themselves.

If you have a situation where a State trail in your area that is managed by a local jurisdiction does not allow motorcycle access, I would be happy to discuss with you the prospects of getting that changed.

If you have questions or concerns about any of these issues, feel free to contact me at [bryan.much@charter.net](mailto:bryan.much@charter.net). If you e-mail a phone number I will be happy to call you to discuss these matters.