

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Seeking public comment on master plan variance to expand equestrian trail opportunities at Newport State Park

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**STURGEON BAY, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public comment on a [master plan variance](#) to allow the expansion of equestrian trails in Newport State Park in Door County. The public comment period is open through Sept. 16, 2023.

A master plan variance is a change in the use or management of an area that is consistent with the area's land management classification and objectives.

The 2018 [Northern Lake Michigan Coastal \(NLMC\) Regional Master Plan](#) authorized four to six miles of equestrian trails in a defined portion of two of the park's management areas. After additional analysis at the request of local equestrians, the department has concluded that the area initially envisioned for equestrian trails would not provide high quality experiences, in either location or distance.

The proposed master plan variance would allow equestrian trails to be located throughout Management Areas 1 and 2 and increase the authorized miles of equestrian trails to up to 10 miles. The park currently has 26 miles of hiking and hiking/biking trails; this variance would allow placing equestrian use on a small portion (less than 0.5 mile) of these trails in Management Areas 1 and 2 where it will improve efficiency of the trail network and will not substantively detract from existing uses. This variance also proposes to construct a new parking area in a former gravel pit about 0.7 miles to the south of the initially proposed parking area. This location would have minimal impact to the resources of the park or its current

users.

[Located at the northern end of Door County, Newport State Park](#) offers over 2,300 acres of forest on 11 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, and backpack camping as a quiet alternative to bustling Door County. At the far end of the Door Peninsula, Newport is also designated as a Dark Sky Park.

Please submit questions or comments on the draft variance by Sept. 16, 2023 to:

Wisconsin DNR; Attn: John Pohlman  
LF/6; P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921  
[John.Pohlman@wisconsin.gov](mailto:John.Pohlman@wisconsin.gov) or 608-264-6263