

Wisconsin's Rustic Roads: a positive step backward

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Rustic Roads program in 1973 to help citizens and local units of government preserve what remains of Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads.



Unique brown and yellow signs mark the routes of all officially-designated Rustic Roads. These routes provide bikers, hikers, and motorists an opportunity to leisurely travel through some of Wisconsin's scenic countryside. For motorcyclists, Wisconsin offers a special [Rustic Roads award program](#).

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/safety/vehicle/motorcycle/rusticroads.htm>

A small placard beneath the Rustic Roads sign identifies each Rustic Road by its numerical designation within the total statewide system. Each Rustic Road is identified by a 1- to 3-digit number assigned by the Rustic Roads Board. To avoid confusion with the State Trunk Highway numbering, a letter "R" prefix is used such as R50 or R120. The Department of Transportation pays the cost of furnishing and installing Rustic Roads marking signs.

An officially designated Rustic Road shall continue to be under local control. The county, city, village or town shall have the same authority over the Rustic Road as it possesses over other highways under its jurisdiction.

What is a Rustic Road? And what does it take to qualify for the Rustic Road program:

1. Outstanding natural features along its borders such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, native wildlife, or include open areas with agricultural vistas which singly or in combination uniquely set this road apart from other roads.
2. Lightly traveled local access, one which serves the adjacent property owners and those wishing to travel by auto, bicycle, or hiking for purposes of recreational enjoyment of its rustic features.
3. No scheduled nor anticipated for major improvements which would change its rustic characteristics.
4. Minimum length of 2 miles and, where feasible, should provide a completed closure or loop, or connect to major highways at both ends of the route.

A Rustic Road may be dirt, gravel or paved road. It may be one-way or two-way. It may also have bicycle or hiking paths adjacent to or incorporated in the roadway area.



The maximum speed limit on a Rustic Road has been established by law at 45 mph. A speed limit as low as 30 mph may be established by the local governing authority.

Award program for motorcyclists

It seems as if rustic roads were especially designed for motorcycles! Wisconsin has a large system of lightly traveled asphalt or gravel roads highlighting the state's natural beauty.

Presently, Wisconsin has 107 marked Rustic Roads covering over 600 miles in 56 counties. Travel 10 of these roads and you'll be eligible for a Rustic Roads Motorcycle Tour patch. 25 Rustic Roads qualifies you for a special state certificate.

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/scenic/maps.htm>

To verify participation, have your picture taken with your bike in front of the Rustic Road numbered sign. If solo, just your bike needs to be in front of the numbered sign. Once you assemble the minimum number of photos (10 or 25), forward them to the Wisconsin Motorcycle Safety Program for a patch and/or certificate. Paper or electronic photos can be submitted. There is no time limit, and group photos are acceptable. For more information on Rustic Roads, the awards program or to submit proof of ride photos, contact:

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

800) 368-9677

barbara.ofstie@dot.state.wi.us

OR VISIT Wisconsin Site of

BikerInformationGuide.com

Visit our link for Day Rides for quick access to the maps of Wisconsin's Rustic Roads.

