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State will close dirt road near Whitesbog

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PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP — Drivers who use North Whitesbog Road as a shortcut may want to start looking for a new way to get to Lakehurst Road or Route 70.

Sometime this fall, the state Department of Environmental Protection plans to close the road from the village of Whitesbog to a point south of where the sand road intersects White Street.

That part of the road is located in the Brendan Byrne State Forest, which the state owns and

maintains. DEP spokeswoman Dana Loschiavo said the road would be closed by gates, for which state emergency vehicles would have a key.

Loschiavo said closing the road would alleviate some safety hazards for people who live in or visit the village. "People zoom right through there and don't stop at stop signs," Loschiavo said.

Loschiavo also pointed out several other benefits of closing the road. She said the state often has to fill holes, smooth out bumps and remove trash people dump along the sides of the road.

About 20 homes are located on North Whitesbog Road, near

where the road is scheduled to be closed.

"It wouldn't really affect us," said George Allen, who is one of those residents. "It would probably be a good thing. Some people here just use it as a shortcut."

Several Township Council members, however, said they don't approve of the road being closed. They said it could cut off a route for township emergency vehicles and direct more traffic toward the intersection of Ridge and Lakehurst roads.

"Let's not bless it," said Councilwoman Jean Dwane at a council meeting last week. "That's a dangerous situation."