

DRAFT – Oct. 2025

**Village of Spencer
Outdoor Recreation Plan
2026-2030**



Acknowledgements

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DRAFT – October 2025

2026-2030
Effective January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2030

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Village of Spencer by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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- A. Park Design and Location Criteria
- B. Facility Development Standards
- C. Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs
- D. SCORP Identified Outdoor Recreation Needs
- E. Spencer's 2025 Outdoor Recreation Survey Results with Comments
- F. Bicycle Parking Guidelines

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

This Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) was prepared pursuant to Wisconsin Statute §23.30 Outdoor Recreation Program. This section serves "to promote, encourage, coordinate, and implement a comprehensive long-range plan to acquire, maintain, and develop for public use, those areas of the state best adapted to the development of a comprehensive system of state and local outdoor recreation facilities and services..."

Submission of this adopted CORP to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at the time of grant application is necessary to be eligible for a variety of Federal and State Aids for outdoor recreation (Chapter NR 50.06(4), Wisconsin administrative code).

1.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of this outdoor recreation plan is to provide continued direction toward meeting the current and future recreation needs of the Village of Spencer. This is accomplished through an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities, asking the public what they are looking for, and the establishment of recommendations to meet identified needs.

Adoption of this plan by the Village Board of Spencer will continue the Village's eligibility for the following grant programs:

- Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (Stewardship)
- Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP)



**Knowles-Nelson
Stewardship Program**

*Nature-based recreation
50% grants*

- Park shelters
- Canoe/kayak launches
- Land, etc.



**LAND & WATER
CONSERVATION
FUND**

*Active & Nature-based
recreation
50% grants*

- Playgrounds
- Splash pads
- Tennis courts, etc.



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration**

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Trail-based recreation

*80% grants up to \$100,000
(...up to \$250,000 every 3rd year)*

Non-profit conservation organizations (NCOs) are eligible to participate in some Knowles–Nelson Stewardship programs. NCOs may adopt a local government’s comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (CORP) in which the NCO project is located or use the NCO’s land management plans that are required for participation in the Stewardship programs.

1.2 Provisions for Plan Updates

Plan amendments are common and should be considered part of the planning process. They frequently represent good implementation or plan usage and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision makers.

Annual review of the plan recommendations and capital improvement list by the Parks & Buildings Committee will keep this plan current. This review may also occur after a large turnover in elected officials after an election.

Annual Review Process:

1. The Parks & Buildings Committee reviews plan and takes a vote to approve what changes to make.
2. Village Board adopts plan with changes by resolution.
3. Those changes are now part of the original plan. Make sure those changes, the original plan, and the approval resolution are available to submit to DNR’s Community Financial Assistance staff when applying for any state or federal financial assistance.

Full plan update every 5-years

Updating the plan every five years will ensure it aligns with the evolving recreational needs of the Village and maintain the Village's eligibility for grant programs for an additional five years.

1.3 Planning Process

This plan was prepared under the direction of Spencer’s Parks & Buildings Committee, and Spencer’s Administrative Department by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Spencer Planning Timeline

Summer 2025 – Staff park analysis, plans reviewed, & demographic data analysis.

July 15, 2025 – Parks & Buildings Committee meeting – Overview of planning process, discussed questions for Village survey and how to distribute the survey.

July-August 2025 – Survey available for 4-weeks. 111 responses. See survey details in Chapter 4.

September 8, 2025 – Village Board and Parks & Buildings Committee meeting – Reviewed survey results, and discussed initial goals & objectives.

Fall 2025 – Draft Plan ready for review.

October 2025 – Parks & Buildings Committee meeting – Draft Plan presented for initial review.

Fall 2025 – Plan ready for approval by Parks & Buildings Committee and adoption by Village Board.

1.4 Related Plans

This plan was written to continue the parks and recreation program established in the Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Plans since 2017. Each plan listed below affects outdoor recreation in the Village of Spencer.

Village of Spencer Comprehensive Plan 2017

The Spencer Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2017. This document covers all types of development that may occur throughout Spencer, and encourages the Village to continue updating the Village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to maintain park facilities that residents want.

Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2020-2024

NOTE: This plan is out of date. Not sure when it will be updated.

Marathon County has recognized the importance of providing quality recreational opportunities to its residents by developing and updating a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). The Marathon County Parks Department prepared this 5-year plan.

Proposed new county park:

Park Acquisition/Development

"B. Land should be acquired and developed along the Edgar-Fenwood Trail to provide enhanced park and recreation opportunities in the southwestern edge of the County. There is a woodland with potential for acquisition at the southern end of the trail (north of the Village of Stratford and along the Big Eau Pleine). Park additions in this area would not only increase the use of the trail, but would add park access to prospective users currently underserved by the 20-minute drive time access standards. Parcels #071827040040000000 and #071827040020000000 should be considered for acquisition."

"C. Areas between Stratford and Marshfield should be prioritized for parkland acquisition to increase access for prospective users in southwestern Marathon County, as well as to draw users from population centers in neighboring counties. There are several woodland areas near McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Area under private ownership that provide potential for access to the Little Eau Pleine, and increase access to State natural and recreation lands."

Off-Road Multi-Use Connections:

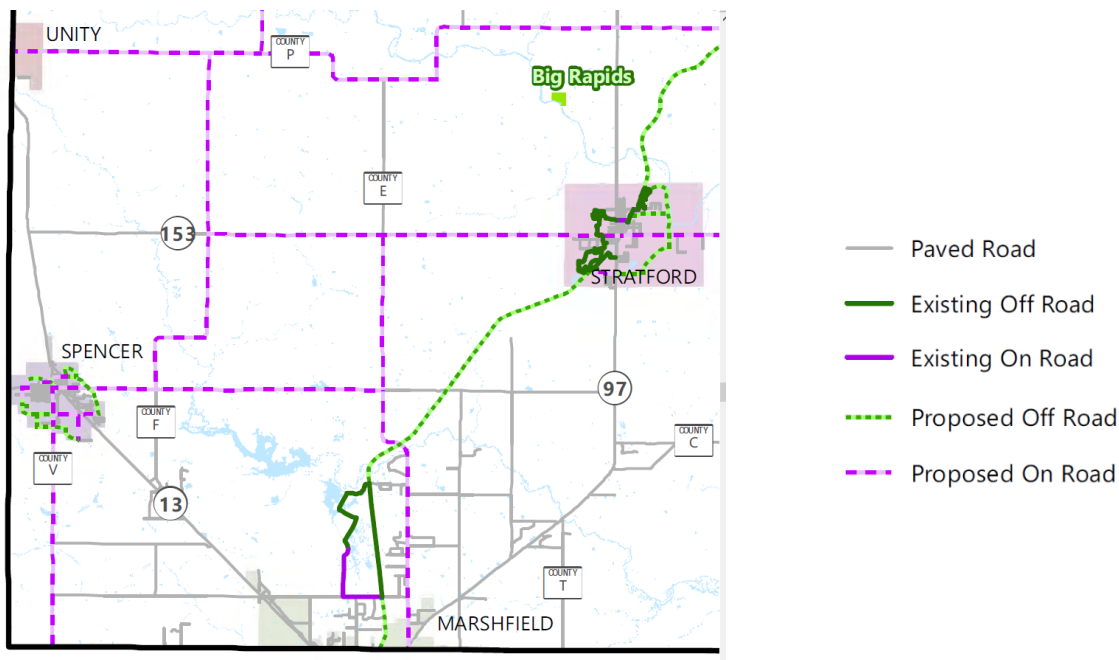
- "There are large sections of railway no longer in use that connect Wausau, Marathon City, Edgar, Fenwood, Stratford, and Marshfield (including the Edgar-Fenwood Trail.) As part of improvements to the park system, Marathon County should highly consider purchase and conversion of large stretches of abandoned railway to multi-use paths connecting major communities along this route. Additional regional opportunity exists in connecting/ converting a trail north from Maine to Merrill."*

North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan, 2018

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission created this document to guide the development of an interconnected bikeway system for the North Central Wisconsin Region at the 10-county level. Potential trail corridors are identified and improvement descriptions were created for each trail that exists to facilitate implementation.

Spencer Area Recommendations:

- Graphic from Marathon County CORP 2020-2024 shows proposed on-road and off-road trails.
- Policy suggestions for improving biking and walking are also listed in the plan.



Source: Marathon County CORP 2020-2024

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023

NOTE: This plan is undergoing revision in 2024-2025.

Every five years, the Wisconsin DNR publishes a SCORP as required by the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965. At its core, this SCORP is used to help allocate federal funds equitably among local communities, but the document also transcends many levels of outdoor recreation discussion and policy.

This SCORP lays out five overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

1. Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
2. Grow partnerships.
3. Provide high-quality experiences.
4. Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
5. Enhance funding and financial stability.

- Park Design and Location Criteria from SCORP are described in **Attachment A**.
- SCORP identified outdoor recreation needs are in **Attachment D**.

Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, 2006-2056

This WDNR report is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs in Wisconsin for the next fifty years. The Land Legacy report recommends protection of these lands by using federal, state, and local funding opportunities; along with: possibly creating new kinds of incentives for landowners, working to craft comprehensive plans, or offering different types of technical assistance.

Each Legacy Area near Spencer is summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

BW Big Eau Pleine River and Woods

Size	Medium
Protection Initiated	Limited
Protection Remaining	Substantial
Conservation Significance	☆☆☆
Recreation Potential	☆☆☆

CG Central Wisconsin Grasslands

Size	Large
Protection Initiated	Moderate
Protection Remaining	Moderate
Conservation Significance	☆☆☆☆☆
Recreation Potential	☆☆☆☆

NCWRPC Note: Neither of these Legacy Areas are within the 1.5-mile extraterritorial boundary of the Village.

Chapter 2:

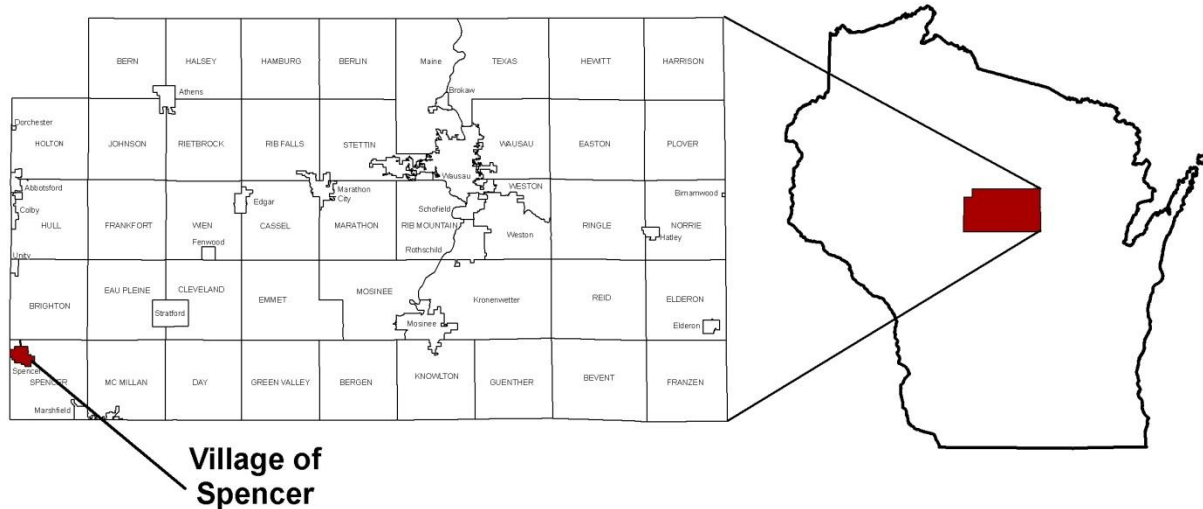
VILLAGE OF SPENCER’S BACKGROUND

Potential opportunities and limitations start with understanding an area. This section provides a basic feel for what the Village of Spencer looks like physically, demographically, and economically.

2.1 Natural Environment

The Village of Spencer is located on the western edge of Marathon County where the topography is relatively flat. A massive wetland, the size of the Village, exists directly northwest of the Village, which is the headwaters of the South Fork Popple River. To the southeast about 2 miles begins the McMillan Marsh State Wildlife Area. Un-named creeks exist in the Village leading to these two wetland complexes. Active farms and woodlots surround the Village.

Figure 1 Location of Spencer



2.2 Demographics

Village of Spencer:

37.5
median age

14.9%
Bachelors degree or higher

\$74,245
Median household income

Marathon County:

41.1
median age

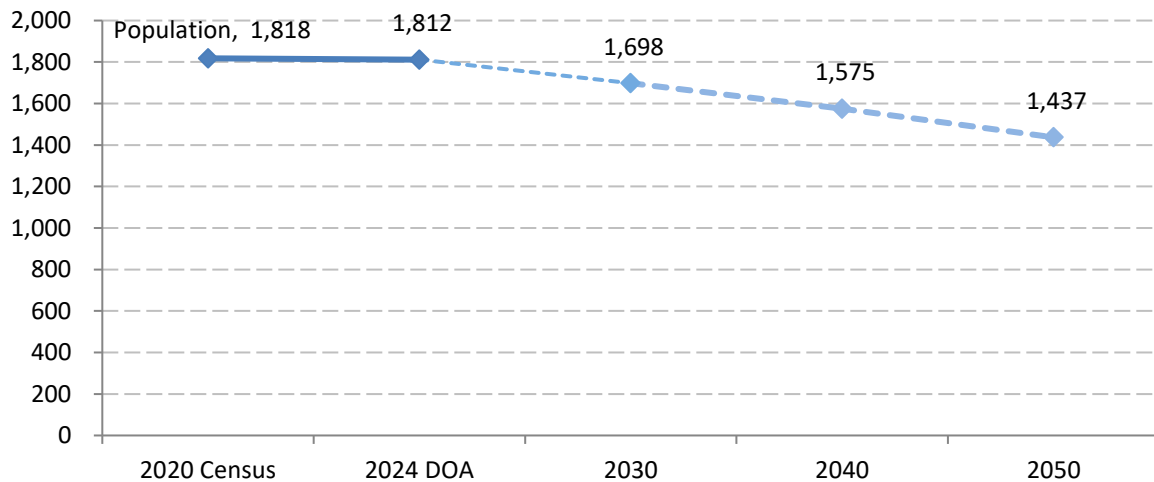
27.9%
Bachelors degree or higher

\$74,141
Median household income

Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

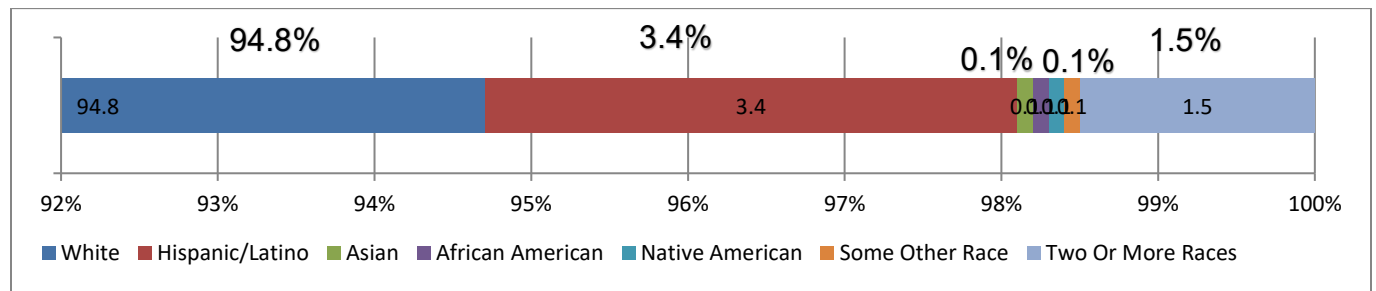
Population

Village of Spencer Population Trends



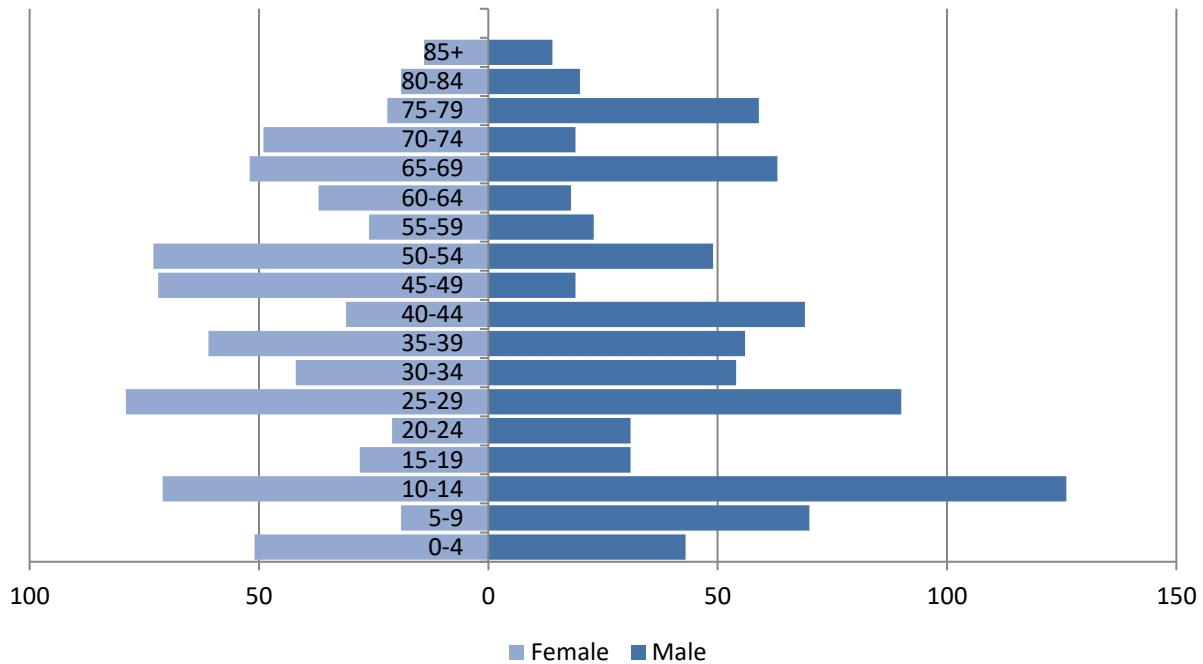
Source: U.S. Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration 2020 Estimate, Wisconsin DOA 2025 projections

Ethnicity



Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population by Age and Sex, 2023

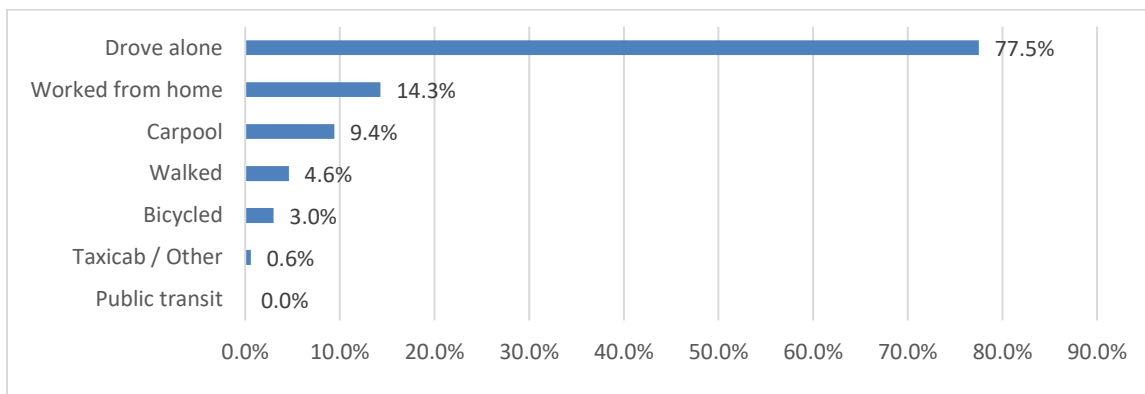


Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Created by the U.S. Census.

2.3 Economic Development

Commuting

18.9 minutes average travel time to work



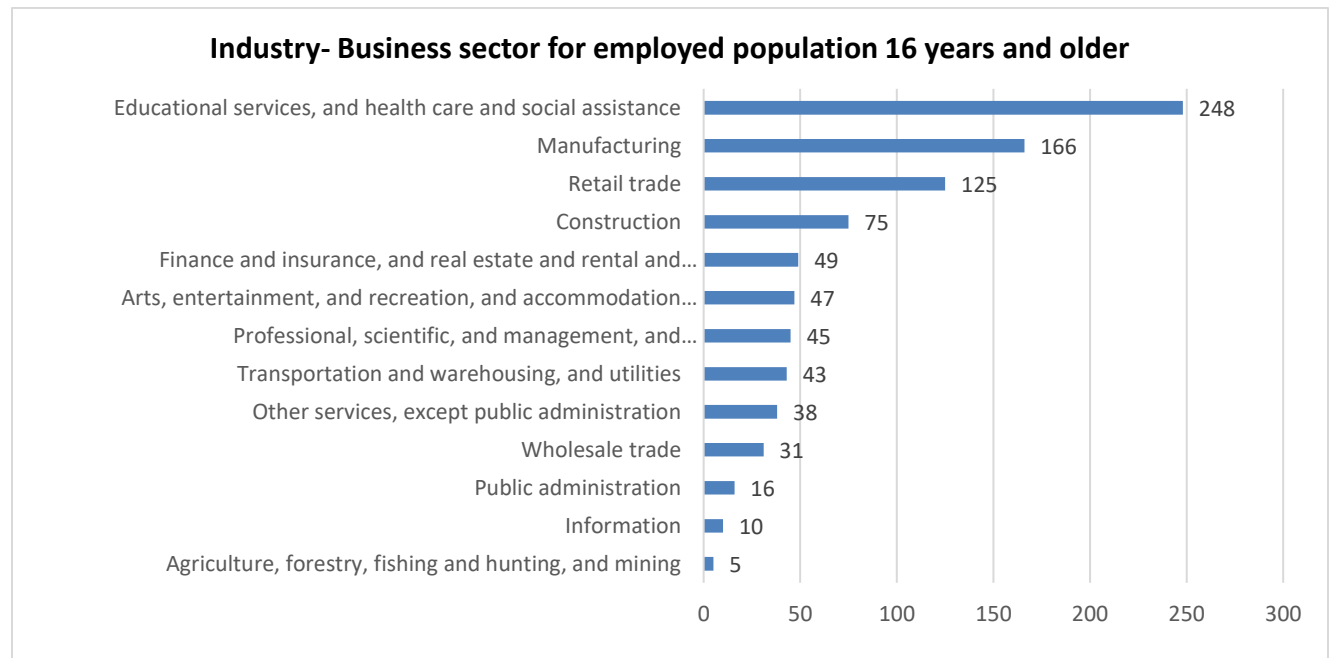
Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Labor Force Indicators

	2020	2023
In Labor Force	1,015	898
Employed	1,004	898
Unemployed	11	0
Unemployment Rate	1.1%	0.0%
Participation Rate	76.2%	73.8%

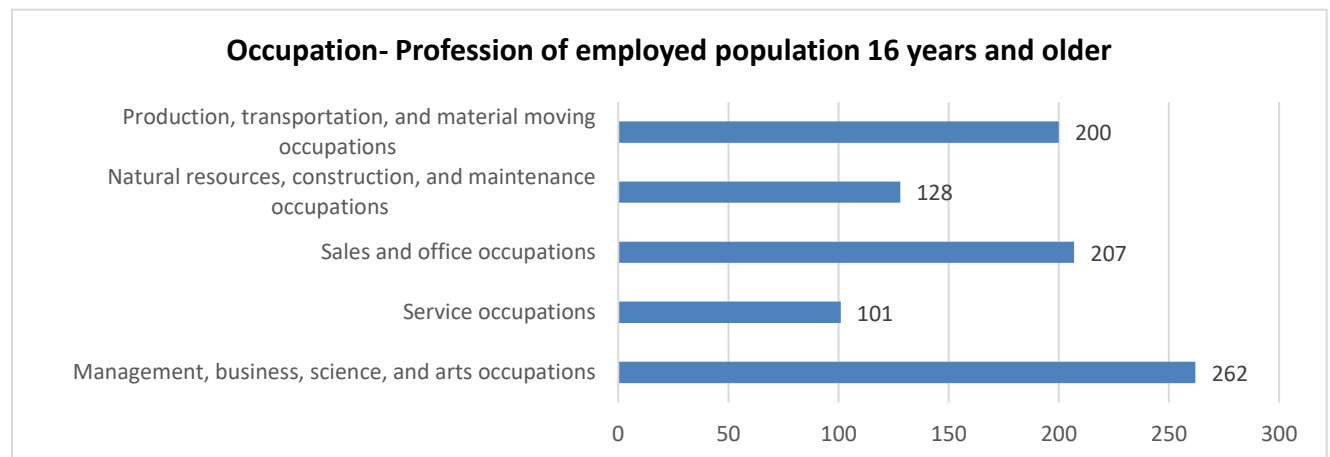
Source: 2020 U.S. Census, 2023 ACS, & NCWRPC

Industry Business sector for employed population 16 years and older



Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Occupation Profession of employed population 16 years and older



Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Chapter 3: EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

The Village of Spencer maintains a park system that consists of about 39.8 acres. This acreage does not include trails or open space areas that do not have any signage noting their public availability. Public schools also have playgrounds that are generally open to the public after school hours, so they are shown below too.

Map 1 shows outdoor recreational opportunities within the Village.

*Each park classification description (in each text box) is from the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2011-2016, and is in **Attachment A**.*

Linear Parks

Linear Parks are trails that may have various lengths. (See Attachment A.)

Snowmobile Trails – Marathon County has 790 miles of snowmobile trails that are maintained by multiple snowmobile clubs. These trails pass through Spencer on non-permanent easements.

ATV Trails – There are two ATV/UTV areas in Marathon County. The Burma Forest Trails (11 miles of trails) and the Edgar-Fenwood Trail (9.75 miles long).

Walking Trails – There are three segments of gravel walking trails that connect dead end streets to each other. These include 850 ft between W Willow Drive and W Cedar Street, 350 ft between E Apple and E Aspen Street, and 4000 ft between E Peach Street and S Adams Street in the Peach Pond Wildlife Area.

Mini Parks

Mini Parks: Generally less than 5 acres, these parks are special areas that serve a concentrated or limited population or specific group such as tots or senior citizens. One prominent feature or recreation facility like a playground may be present as the purpose of this park. The **service area** for this park **if a playground exists** generally is a ½-mile radius, and a population of 2,000-3,000 people. (See Attachment A.)

Haslow Park – This 0.8-acre park is located at the corner of Depot Street and Haslow Street. Park facilities include a basketball hoop, shelter, and play equipment.

Madison Street Park – This 0.3-acre park is located on the corner of Madison and Buse Streets. Park facilities include a basketball hoop, shelter, and play equipment.

Veterans Park – This 0.4-acre park is located on the corner of Hwy 13 and Hwy 98/C. Park Facilities include a memorial to veterans and a gazebo.

Poderosa Park – This 0.8-acre park is located at 502 W Main Street. Park Facilities include 0.5 acres of green space, a gazebo, and sitting benches around a small pond.

The following **public school** has outdoor recreation facilities that are available to the public outside of school hours:

Spencer Elementary School – The school has 1.3 acres of open space with playground equipment, basketball hoops, and green space for kickball and soccer.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks: Centrally located spaces of 5 to 25 acres that serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood are good neighborhood parks. Active and passive recreational activities in this park classification include field, court, and ball games; skating; crafts; and picnicking. Facilities may also include a playground, wading pool, ball field, multi-activity field, ball diamond, tennis courts, skatepark, and shelter. Trees, open fields, and undeveloped natural areas are also desirable components of neighborhood parks. The service area for this park generally is a 1-mile radius, and a population of 2,000-5,000 people. (See Attachment A.)

Lions Park – This 3.1-acre park is located at 109 Park Street, next to Village Hall. Park facilities include gazebo, octagonal picnic shelter, a 3,000 sq. ft. indoor shelter with kitchen and bathrooms, covered stage with electrical, historical railway flagman's building, and several pieces of play equipment.

ARC Park – This 6.2-acre park is located at 501 North LaSalle Street. Park facilities include a lighted softball diamond with bleachers, concession stand and bathrooms, 2 volleyball courts, SPARC pickleball court, and play equipment.

The following **public school** has outdoor recreation facilities that are available to the public outside of school hours:

Spencer High School – The school has 2 ball diamonds, parking lot, and a football/soccer stadium with concession stand and bathrooms, on about 17.6 acres of developed land.

Special Use Areas

Special Use Areas: *A special use park is often designed as a revenue-generating enterprise created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or special event. A special use park may also be a sports park combined with enterprise activities and administered as a community recreation resource. Various functions include special events, fairs, festivals, expositions, symposiums, sport, community gatherings, and numerous other recreational programs and activities. (See Attachment A.)*

Nitty Park – This 2.5-acre park is located at 210 E Willow Drive. This is a dog park with a double entry gated fenced area for off-leash dogs.

Conservancy Areas

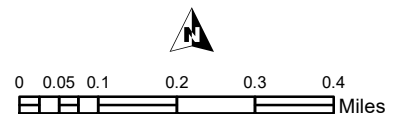
Conservancy Areas: *Conservancy areas are managed for the flora & fauna resources that exist at a site. Activities like hiking, wildlife watching, hunting, and fishing may be allowed on these lands that may have labels like state natural areas, forests, or wildlife refuges. Each conservancy area has specific rules of use for public enjoyment. (See Attachment A.)*

Peach Pond Wildlife Area – This 6.8-acre wildlife area is located at 711 E Peach Street. It includes about 2 acres of green space and 4 acres of wooded area with a gravel walking path connecting Peach St, around the south side of the pond, across a creek, to S Adams St.



Number	Name
1	Ponderosa Park
2	Arc Park
3	Veterans Park
4	Spencer Elementary
5	Spencer Schools
6	Lions Park
7	Madison Street Park
8	Haslow Park
9	Peach Pond Wildlife Area
10	Nitty Park

- Minor Civil Divisions
- == US Highway
- == State Highways
- == County Highways
- == Local Roads
- Railroad
- Parcels
- 2 Parks
- Mini Park
- ▲ Neighborhood Park
- ~ Paths
- ~ Water



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Chapter 4:

OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Recreational needs within the Village were identified by 1) collecting public input, 2) needs driven park planning, and 3) creating a park Level of Service assessment.

4.1 Public Input

A. Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, the Village of Spencer's staff, and Parks & Buildings Committee members have received public input about the parks. That input and staff's professional experience will also shape what recommendations are made.

B. Input from Related Plans

A variety of plan's goals & objectives and recommended projects that affect the Village of Spencer are summarized in Chapter 1 under: "Related Plans."

C. Spencer's Outdoor Recreation Survey Results

In August 2025, this survey was sent out for customer feedback. Spencer posted the survey on their website, Facebook, as well in the Spencerama Pages. Posters were hung at the office and paper copies of the survey were on the counter.

The survey was open for 4 weeks.

We received **111 responses** to the survey. Although not statistically significant of the whole population, this survey does provide a much deeper understanding of the wants and needs for outdoor recreation than a public hearing, so the results are very valuable. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, so several questions had smaller amounts of responses. 86% of respondents who began the survey also finished the survey, which is a very good completion rate.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 16

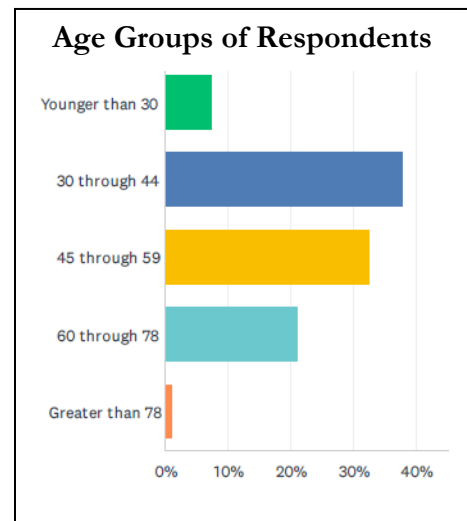
About 80% of respondents live in Spencer, and 20% do not.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 16

About 29% of respondents were male, and about 71% were female.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 16

Respondents came from all age groups, with a strong showing of at least 20% in the 30 to 44 (Millennials), 45 to 59 (Gen X), and 60 to 78 (Baby Boomers) age groups.



Through an IP address analysis of those who took the survey it appears that 7 IP addresses are duplicated, which could mean that a husband and wife both took the survey. All of those duplicate IP addresses did not have the same answers, so it appears that nobody “stuffed the ballot box.”

Key Findings of the Outdoor Recreation Survey

Q1. Which recreational activities did you participate in during 2024?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 0

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Walking / Hiking | 72% of responses |
| 2. Events / Festivals / Fairs | 70% of responses |
| 3. Swimming | 51% of responses |
| 4. Fishing | 47% of responses |
| 5. Boating | 39% of responses |
| 6. Gardening | 37% of responses |
| 7. Driving for Pleasure | 37% of responses |
| 8. Playground Usage | 36% of responses |
| 9. ATV / UTV / OHM Riding | 36% of responses |
| 10. Bicycling | 36% of responses |

Q2. What outdoor recreational opportunities would you like considered in the Village of Spencer?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 63

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Walking & Biking (multi-use) trails | 30 responses |
| 2. Splash Pad or Pool | 6 responses |
| 3. Basketball court | 3 responses |

Q3. How often do you use the following parks?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 11

	I DON'T USE THIS PARK.	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	TOTAL
Lions Park	17.00% 17	61.00% 61	19.00% 19	3.00% 3	100
ARC Park	37.76% 37	36.73% 36	12.24% 12	13.27% 13	98
Haslow Park	69.39% 68	22.45% 22	4.08% 4	4.08% 4	98
Madison Street Park	71.43% 70	20.41% 20	5.10% 5	3.06% 3	98
Veterans Park	71.43% 70	24.49% 24	4.08% 4	0.00% 0	98
Nitty Park	86.17% 81	8.51% 8	4.26% 4	1.06% 1	94

Q4. Please rate your satisfaction with the following parks?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 11

	I DON'T USE THIS PARK.	VERY SATISFIED	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	TOTAL
Lions Park	17.00% 17	25.00% 25	46.00% 46	12.00% 12	0.00% 0	100
ARC Park	37.00% 37	26.00% 26	30.00% 30	7.00% 7	0.00% 0	100
Haslow Park	61.22% 60	9.18% 9	14.29% 14	11.22% 11	4.08% 4	98
Madison Street Park	62.63% 62	3.03% 3	11.11% 11	14.14% 14	9.09% 9	99
Veterans Park	65.98% 64	11.34% 11	17.53% 17	4.12% 4	1.03% 1	97
Nitty Park	80.41% 78	1.03% 1	8.25% 8	6.19% 6	4.12% 4	97

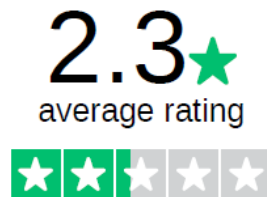
Q5. How much do you like to ice skate?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 13



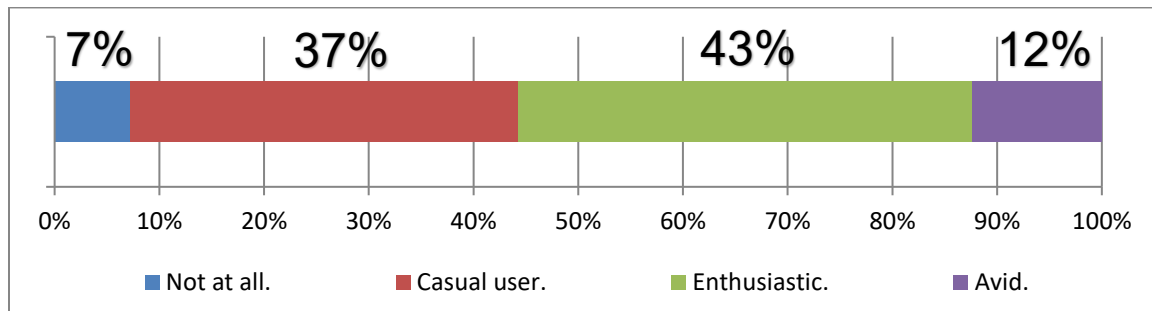
Q6. How much do you like to play pickleball?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 15



Q7. What type of water enthusiast are you?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



Not at all. (I'm not interested in water recreation at all, not even with friends.)

Casual user. (I like to use the water, but only do so occasionally.)

Enthusiastic. (I access or go on the water regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)

Avid. (I am always on the water or ice every chance I get.)

Q8. Any water access improvements needed near Spencer?

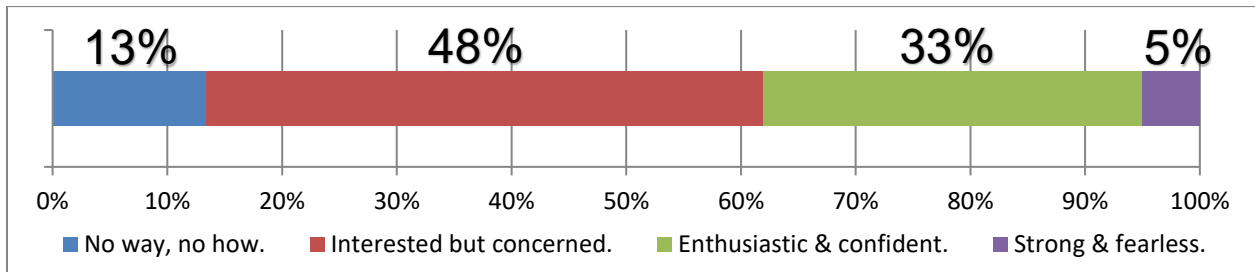
Answered: 22

Skipped: 89

Note: 22 respondents made comments.

Q9. What type of bicyclist are you?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



No way, no how. (I'm not interested in biking at all, not even for recreation.)

Interested but concerned. (I like riding, but don't do it regularly. I'm generally concerned that my route is not safe to ride, so I don't ride often. I definitely do not ride when the weather is bad.)

Enthusiastic and confident. (I feel comfortable sharing the road with motor vehicles, but I prefer to ride on separate facilities like bike lanes. I may or may not ride in inclement weather.)

Strong and fearless. (I am confident in my abilities and will ride regardless of roadway conditions, amount of traffic, or inclement weather.)

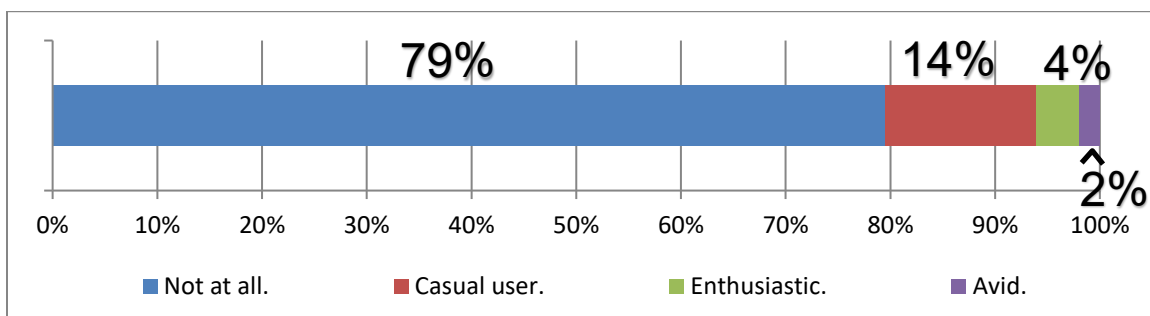
Q10. Any bicycling improvements needed in Spencer?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 83

Note: 28 respondents commented about bicycling in Spencer.

Q11. What type of snowmobile enthusiast are you?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



Not at all. (I'm not interested in snowmobiling at all, not even with friends.)

Casual user. (I like snowmobiling for fun, but **only** do so occasionally, **OR only** on my own land.)

Enthusiastic. (I access or go on snowmobile routes and trails regularly.)

Avid. (I am always on a snowmobile every chance I get – all season long.)

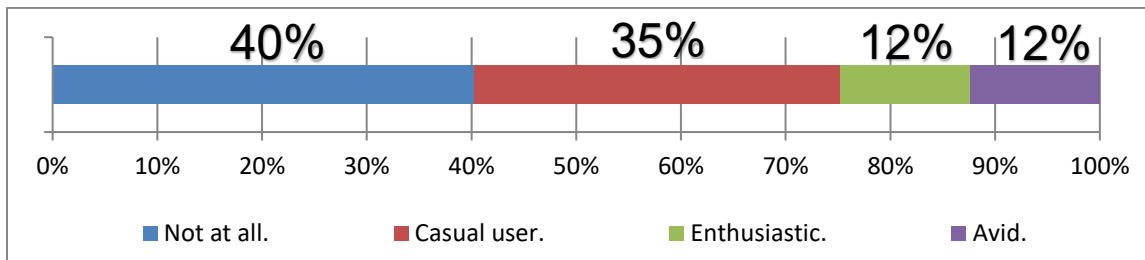
Q12. Any improvements needed for snowmobiling in Spencer? Answered: 2

Skipped: 109

Note: 2 respondents commented about snowmobile trails.

Q13. What type of motorized vehicle (ATV/UTV/Off-Highway Motorcycle) enthusiast are you?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



Not at all. (I'm not interested in motorized recreation at all, not even for recreation.)

Casual user. (I like using motorized vehicles for fun, but **only** do so occasionally, **OR only** on my own land.)

Enthusiastic. (I access or go on motorized routes and trails regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)

Avid. (I am always on a motorized vehicle every chance I get – all year long.)

Q14. Any improvements needed for motorized vehicle usage in Spencer?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 100

Note: 11 respondents commented about motorized sport trails.

See Attachment E for the full survey results (25 pages) with written comments.

4.2 Park Standards Analysis

This section identifies the standards used to analyze the need for park sites and outdoor recreational facilities in the Village of Spencer. The standards corresponding with each analysis provide the basis for evaluating how well each standard is met as it is applied to Village facilities.

Park standards include a) classifying each park, b) geographic distribution of parks in a system (park service areas), c) acreage level of service, & d) accessible design.

A. Park Classification

Parks of any size are useful, but when land is set aside in subdivision plats for future parks, then the appropriate size and reason for the park needs to be established. Park design criteria become useful when deciding on a communities' *official map* (§62.23(6) *WI. Stats.*) where future parks should be.

Park design criteria is described in **Attachment A** for the full variety of park classifications.

Each park classification contains the following:

- Definition,
- Size Objectives;
- Service Area Objectives;
- Location Objectives;
- Space and Design;
- Orientation; and
- Function.

Park Acreage

The size of a park is determined by two criteria:

1. Physical geography. Does the site have steep hills, woodlands, or wetlands? Such natural features are useful for exploration, conservation, aesthetic buffers, and unprogrammed buffers between uses.
2. Park facilities. *What activities are allowed or will be allowed?* This is determined by physical inventory and by asking for public input.

How much land is needed for each use? This is determined by Facility Development Standards in **Attachment B** for a large variety of activity types.

Park acreage in **Table 4** shows how the Village of Spencer's park system (including schools) compares with state standards for the size of each park as grouped by classification. Parks are listed by classification in Chapter 3.

Table 4 Park Acreage, 2025		
Classification	SCORP Recommendation	Spencer's average park size
Mini	0.5 – 5* acres	0.7 acres
Neighborhood	5 – 25 acres	9 acres

Source: WDNR, & NCWRPC

*SCORP states that a mini park is 0.5-1.5 acres, but a gap from 1.5-5 acres exists, so that gap was added to the mini park size.

Park Design Criteria Conclusions (space within each park)

- The average park sizes for the Village of Spencer are the bare minimums suggested in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommendations for each classification per **Table 4**.
- Facility Development Standards are mainly consistent with **Attachment B**.

B. Park Service Areas

Parks must be close to where residents live for people to consider a park useful. Just like schools, park types (e.g., mini, neighborhood, and community) are provided for each life cycle, and therefore each park type must cover every resident.

Map 2 illustrates how well Village residents are served by the various parks.

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides the following guidelines for park placement:

- Mini park service area: ½-mile radius, or a population of 2,000-3,000.
 - Any park or school with a playground fits this category.
- Neighborhood park service area
Every neighborhood park serves **both** as a mini and a neighborhood park:
½ mile radius, or a population of 2,000-3,000, **and**
1 mile radius, or a population of 2,000-5,000.
- Elementary school grounds service area: same as *neighborhood* parks.

Park Service Area Conclusions – **Map 2** shows the park service areas and the existing and projected future housing density per the Village's 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Area A on Map 2 – About 60 homes are beyond the mini park service area of Lions Park if these residents walk north along CTH V on the sidewalk. Walking on Park St between the Land 'O Lakes plan is not encouraged for kids walking to school, therefore it will not be encouraged during the workday either. If Park Street was used to walk to Lions Park, then 40 houses would be outside the mini park service area.

Recommendation A – Short-term: Many parents would not allow their children to cross CTH V from Area A to any potential park along West Willow Drive, therefore installing a playground at Nitty Park would serve all residents east of CTH V, and south of Land 'O Lakes' plant.

Area B on Map 2 – About 40 homes are beyond the mini park service area of Haslow Park.

Recommendation B.1 – Short-term: As of now, over half of these residents are over 0.3 miles more away from Haslow Park. No major road is blocking the additional walking needed to access Haslow Park, but a new mini park is needed.

Recommendation B.2 – Long-term: As development proposals are reviewed for new housing in this area, seek a set-aside of at least 5 acres (at least 3 buildable acres) of land for a neighborhood park to serve the existing residential and all future residential in this area.

C. Acreage Level of Service

An acreage Level of Service (LOS) approach is used to identify if enough park land exists for a community's needs. There is no standard acreage LOS in the United States, and LOS can vary widely due to a community's history, culture, demographics, density, development patterns, and other factors. The acreage LOS is generated locally for each park classification (i.e., mini, neighborhood, or community).

Public input is collected, and the needs for a particular park, or whole park classification, are determined. If the public is content with the existing parks within a park classification, then the LOS is applied to the whole population. If the public determines that individual parks need more facilities in them, then a particular park needing additional land may become reclassified into the next larger classification. When the community grows in population, then the LOS is used to calculate how many additional parks are needed.

In **Table 5**, school facilities listed in Chapter 3 were also used as part of Spencer's Level of Service.

Spencer's Census populations were 1,932 in 2015, and 1,812 in 2024. The Wisconsin Department of Administration is projecting that Spencer's population will decrease to 1,698 by 2030.

$$\text{LOS by classification} = \frac{\text{Park acres per classification}}{(\text{Municipal population} \div 1,000 \text{ population served})}$$

Table 5 Acreage Level of Service				
Park Classification	2015		2024	
	Total Acres	Acres per 1,000 people	Total Acres	Acres per 1,000 people
Mini	2.8	1.4	3.6	2.0
Neighborhood	29	15	26.9	14.8
Total		16.4		16.8

Source: NCWRPC

The Village of Spencer had a villagewide Level of Service (LOS) in 2015 of **16.4**, which increased very slightly to **16.8** by 2024. Between 2015 and 2024, the Village's population went down, the school district reduced their ball field acreage because they expanded their building into the ball fields space, and the Village added Ponderosa Park.

Acreage Level of Service Conclusion *(amount of parks for the population)*

An LOS of about 15 to 20 is what most communities aim for, but a LOS is only one of three parts of the picture for determining if adequate parkland exists; the other two parts are space within a park (1. Park design), and location (2. Park Service Area).

- The Village of Spencer's Level of Service is **16.8** in 2024.
- Village maintained parks have acreages are the bare minimums suggested in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommendations for each classification. Future parks

D. Accessible Design

Accessibility is making facilities (e.g., pedestrian trails/paths, parking, tables, drinking fountains, restrooms, etc.) accessible to people with limited mobility or limited vision. Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards are followed when purchasing or modifying facilities for universal accessibility.



All local municipalities must ensure that park and recreation programs and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. If not done already, local municipalities shall complete an evaluation of the accessibility of their existing facilities, programs, and services. This evaluation will provide direction on how to achieve compliance with ADA requirements.

The Village of Spencer routinely identifies if changes to various facilities are necessary to make them ADA compliant. Improvements are then placed in their capital improvements list in Chapter 6.

4.3 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends

2019 2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
*Marathon County is in the Western Sands SCORP region. See **Attachment D**.*

Every five years the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) produces the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The plan provides recommendations to guide 1) public outdoor recreation policy and planning decisions, 2) the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund money that comes to Wisconsin, and 3) other Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administered grant programs. Although this SCORP provides some basic information on a wide variety of outdoor activities, the focus is on those activities that are related to natural resources and where experiences are enhanced with higher quality natural habitats. In this document, these are referred to as **nature-based** recreational activities.

To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding their outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as their opinions about future needs. In addition, the DNR undertook an assessment of recreation opportunities and needs in each region of the state. See **Attachment D**.

Wisconsin residents' TOP 5

nature-based outdoor activities

Favorite

Walking, hiking
 Fishing
 Hunting
 Bicycling
 Camping

Most frequent participation

Bird/wildlife watching at home
 Hiking/walking/running on trails
 Picnicking/tailgating/cookout
 Visit a beach/beach walking
 Swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers

Most needed in their home county

Hiking, walking, or running trails
 Bicycling trails
 Public shore access to lakes, rivers and streams
 Public campsites
 Public shooting ranges

SCORP's overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

1. **Boost participation in outdoor recreation**
2. **Grow partnerships**
3. **Provide high-quality experiences**
4. **Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits**
5. **Enhance funding and financial stability**

Highly desired regional recreation needs in **Western Sands Region**, (Regional survey responses)

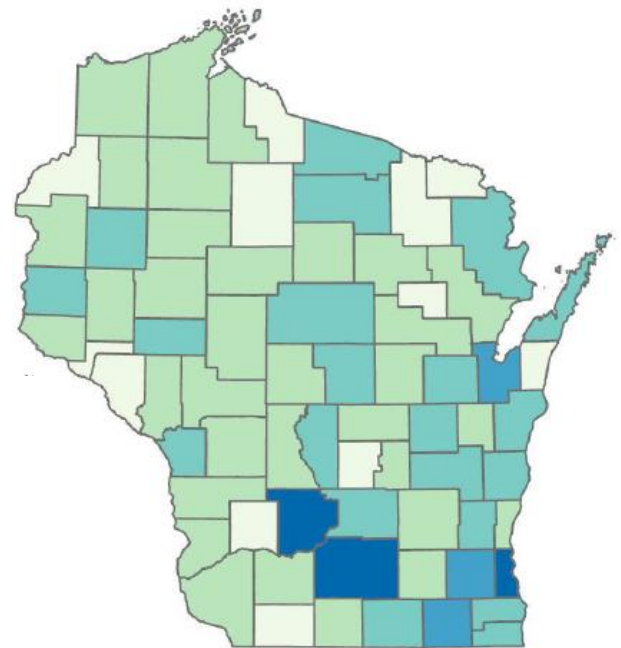
More hiking/walking trails (348 responses)	More public shore access to lakes & rivers (123)
More natural surface bicycle trails (226 responses)	More trails for motorized recreation (150 responses)
More rustic/quiet campgrounds (218 responses)	[ATV, UTV, off-highway motorcycles]
[pit toilets, no electricity or generators allowed]	More developed campgrounds (116)
More horseback trails (200 responses)	[electric hook-ups, flush toilets, showers]
More paved bicycling trails (184 responses)	More local parks and playgrounds (83)
	More wildlife watching decks or platforms (78)

Table 2: Wisconsin resident participation rates of the 25 most popular nature-based recreation activities

Participation Rate	Activity
74%	Picnicking/tailgating/cookout
68%	Hiking/walking/running on trails
65%	Visiting a beach/beach walking
55%	Bird/wildlife watching at home
54%	Swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers
52%	Visiting a nature center
45%	Motor boating
40%	Lake fishing from shore or a pier
39%	Bird/wildlife watching away from home
37%	Lake fishing from a boat/canoe/kayak
37%	Nature photography
34%	Bicycling on rail-trails/developed trails
34%	Canoeing/kayaking
32%	Tent camping
32%	Dog walking on trails
31%	Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.
29%	Target firearm shooting
23%	Ice fishing
23%	Visiting a dog park
21%	Hunting big game on private land
21%	RV/pop-up camping
21%	Stream/river fishing from shore/wading
21%	Water skiing/tubing/wakeboarding
20%	River fishing from a boat/canoe/kayak
19%	Target archery outdoors

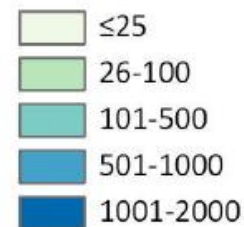
Source: SCORP 2019-2023

**Figure 9:
Map of direct visitor spending in 2017,
by county**



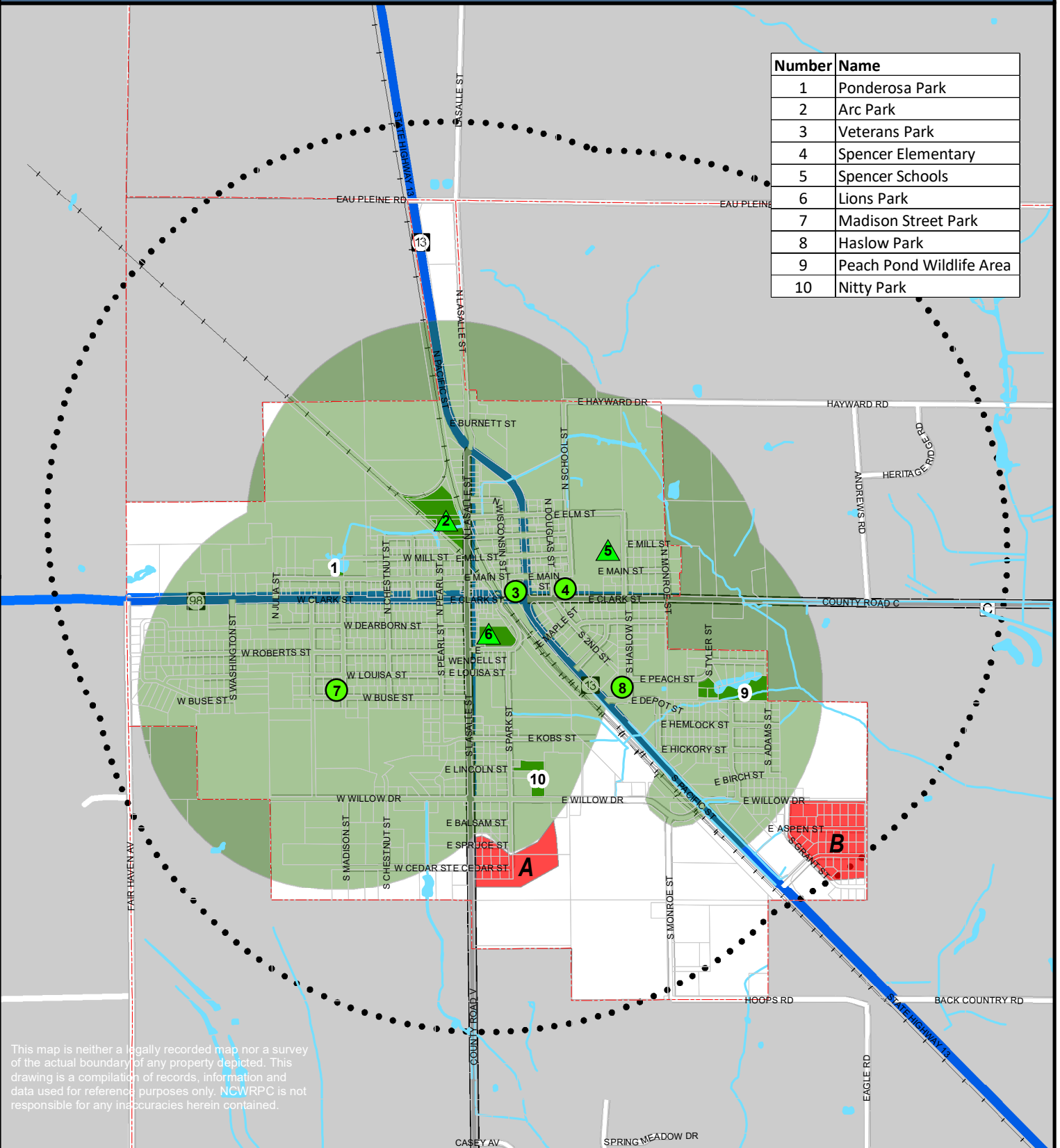
Data Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism, 2018

**2017 Visitor Spending
(in millions of dollars)**



Source: SCORP 2019-2023

Number	Name
1	Ponderosa Park
2	Arc Park
3	Veterans Park
4	Spencer Elementary
5	Spencer Schools
6	Lions Park
7	Madison Street Park
8	Haslow Park
9	Peach Pond Wildlife Area
10	Nitty Park



- Minor Civil Divisions
- == US Highway
- == State Highways
- == County Highways
- == Local Roads
- Railroad
- 2 Parks
- Water
- Schools & Mini Parks With Playgrounds (0.5 Mile)
- Neighborhood Parks (1 Mile)
- Residential Underserved



0 0.075 0.15 0.3 0.45 0.6
Miles



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Chapter 5: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following goals and objectives will guide Village officials and staff as they work towards providing a recreation system to meet the needs of Village residents and visitors to the area over the next 5 years.

Goal 1 – Provide new facilities and ongoing maintenance.

Objectives

1. Continue improving facilities at the Band Stage in _____.
2. Continue developing Peach Pond Wildlife/Nature Area.
3. Develop Graupner Subdivision Park.
4. Continue upgrading facilities to reasonably accommodate the elderly and disabled.
5. Upgrade existing features in each park per the lists under Capital Improvements, and Village Recommendations in Chapter 6.

Goal 2 – Become a more bicycling and walking friendly community.

Objectives

1. Create a Spencer bike and pedestrian path loop using existing roads and off-road paths through and surrounding the Village.
2. Continue adding paths to connect neighborhoods.
3. Consider providing bicycle parking at all parks and Village Hall / Library.
4. Cooperate with neighboring municipalities to connect Spencer to Marshfield with an off-road walking and biking path.

Chapter 6:

RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations & Capital Improvements are ways for satisfying issues identified during the planning process, which included citizen input, Parks & Buildings Committee member comments, and staff analysis throughout all the preceding chapters. Although it is unlikely that all recommendations presented in this plan will be undertaken in the next five years, they should be recognized as examples for action as the opportunity or need arises.

There are a variety of strategies listed below to help implement this plan. By using the following recommendations, and implementation techniques in Chapter 7, the Community can improve and preserve outdoor recreation for residents and visitors.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

6.1 Village Recommendations

6.2 Individual Park Capital Improvements

6.1 Village Recommendations

Each recommendation has a suggested timeframe:

- **Short-term (less than 2 years)** – Projects that can be implemented without the need for specific grant funds.
- **Medium-term (2-5 years)** – Projects that may require some planning to include in more than one of the Village’s annual budgets, or upcoming grant cycles.
- **Long-term (possibly longer than 5 years)** – Projects that require greater coordination, extended design time, or are prolonged due to a lengthy grant cycle.

Build Walking & Biking Paths

The 2025 Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey notes that about 72% of respondents walk/hiked in 2024. About 81% of respondents are bicyclists, with about 36% having bicycled in 2024.

The 2017 Spencer Comprehensive Plan has the following goal: “Goal 8: Provide adequate park and trail space and amenities for current and future village residents,” and the following objective: “Develop multi-use trails throughout the village.” The Transportation map has a proposed trail corridor identified on it.

In 2023, the Village and the School District participated in creating the Spencer Safe Routes to School Plan. There are recommendations in that plan identifying where some sidewalks are needed.

(Short-term)

Recommendation 1: Develop a multi-use trail & sidewalk plan that divides the proposed trail corridor on **Map 4** into segments that identify what type of path is desired for each trail segment.

(Short-term)

Recommendation 2: Add to the proposed multi-use trail & sidewalk plan all sidewalks recommended in the Spencer Safe Routes to School Plan.

(Long-term)

Recommendation 3: Build segments of the proposed trail corridor on **Map 4**.

Connect Spencer to Marshfield via Bike Route

The 2025 Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey shows that about 48% of respondents are concerned that their bike route is not safe to ride, so they don't bike often. In an open ended question asking what recreational improvements are needed in Spencer, 63% of respondents want walking & biking multi-use trails.

Residents have asked the Village for a trail to connect to Marshfield – possibly one that is scenic. Riding on the shoulder of STH 13 is not enjoyable due to 55 mph traffic driving so close.

(Short-term)

Recommendation A: Work with the Town of Spencer and the City of Marshfield to sign local roads that are safe to bike, as a bike route between Spencer and Marshfield.

(Long-term)

Recommendation B: Work with various property owners to construct trail within the highway easement between Spencer and McMillian Marsh. See **Map 3** – Potential McMillian Marsh Bike Loop

Install Bicycle Parking

Many Village destinations are within biking distance of most residents, but very few destinations have bike racks.

Bicycle rack design guidelines in **Attachment F** are a good start for anyone wanting to provide bicycle parking that accommodates a variety of bicycle types.

(Short-term)

Recommendation A: The Village could lead by example by installing bicycle racks per **Attachment F** guidelines at the Village Hall & Library building, and at every park, especially near spectator sports areas.

(Short to Long-term)

Recommendation B: Provide the bike rack design guidelines in **Attachment F** to employers who want to provide visitor bike parking. **Note:** Seek additional guidance from NCWRPC for secure employee bicycle parking options.

Establish Park & Trail Dedication Requirements

The Village of Spencer's 2017 Comprehensive Plan notes that parkland dedication requirements do not formally exist.

(Short-term)

Recommendation 1: Adopt an ordinance requiring installation of bike and pedestrian improvements as part of any development project located along a planned bike or pedestrian route on a specified map.

(Short-term)

Recommendation 2: Add future park locations to Spencer's Future Land Use Map in the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

(Short-term)

Recommendation 3: Adopt an ordinance requiring dedication of parkland to the Village as part of any development project located near a proposed park on Spencer's Future Land Use Map in the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

Establish New Parks

Parks must be close to where residents live for people to consider a park useful. **Map 2** illustrates how well the Village of Spencer's parks serve the various urban residential areas in the Village. See page 20 Park Service Area Conclusions for more analysis.

The following residential areas in Spencer are not served by at least a mini park:

For Area "A" on Map 2:

Recommendation A – Short-term: Installation of a playground at Nitty Park would serve all residents east of CTH V, and south of Land 'O Lakes' plant.

For Area "B" on Map 2:

Recommendation B.1 – Short-term: As of now, over half of these residents in Area B on Map 2 are over 0.3 miles more away from Haslow Park (0.8 miles away total). No major road is blocking the additional walking needed to access Haslow Park, but a new park is needed to serve this area.

Recommendation B.2 – Long-term: As development proposals are reviewed for new housing near Area B on Map 2, seek a set-aside of at least 5 acres (at least 3 buildable acres) of land for a neighborhood park to serve the existing residential and all future residential in this area.

Establish Nature Park

Spencer residents have wanted a nature-based park within their community for many years.

(Short-term)

Recommendation: Add this potential park to the Future Land Use map in the Village's Comprehensive Plan.

(Long-term)

Recommendation 2: Create a natural park in the southwest corner of Spencer. Possible amenities include walking paths, wetland boardwalk, benches, picnic shelter, and restrooms.

6.2 Capital Improvements, 2026-2030

Staff from the Village of Spencer provided a facility assessment of what needs face each park and the capital improvements needed to improve the facility. Improvements include upgrading facilities to make them ADA compliant. Due to budget constraints, the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities have priority over new development.

5-Year Capital Improvement Tables below provide a general list of items, their general cost, and approximate time frame for completion (priority) at each Village maintained outdoor recreation facility.

Lions Park

- At Spencer Community Stage, add bathrooms and a covered shelter area.
 - 2027. \$250,000.
- Update playground equipment
- Make shelter & bathrooms handicap accessible

Peach Pond Wildlife/Nature Area, 2026, \$25,000

- Clear brush and fallen trees
- Improve walking trails
- Add a fishing pier/dock
- Add a shelter/gazebo

Walking & Biking Trails, 2026 – 2030, \$40,000

Trails will be 7-foot wide with woodchips or gravel, and boardwalks that are ADA compliant. UW-Stevens Point's Schmeeckle Reserve has design guidance for boardwalks.

- Add about 3000 ft:
 - between S Washington Street and S Oak Street; and
 - between S Oak Street and W Willow Drive.

Graupner Subdivision Park,

- Install playground equipment and/or shelter. 2027 or later. \$20,000
- Add 2,500 ft walking trail around Graupner Ponds. 2027. \$20,000

Nitty Park

- Install playground equipment and/or shelter. 2026-2027. \$20,000

ARC Park

- Update playground equipment

Haslow Park

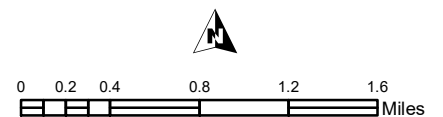
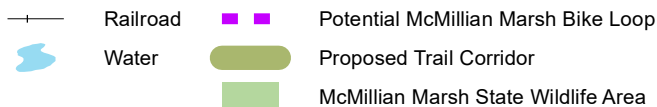
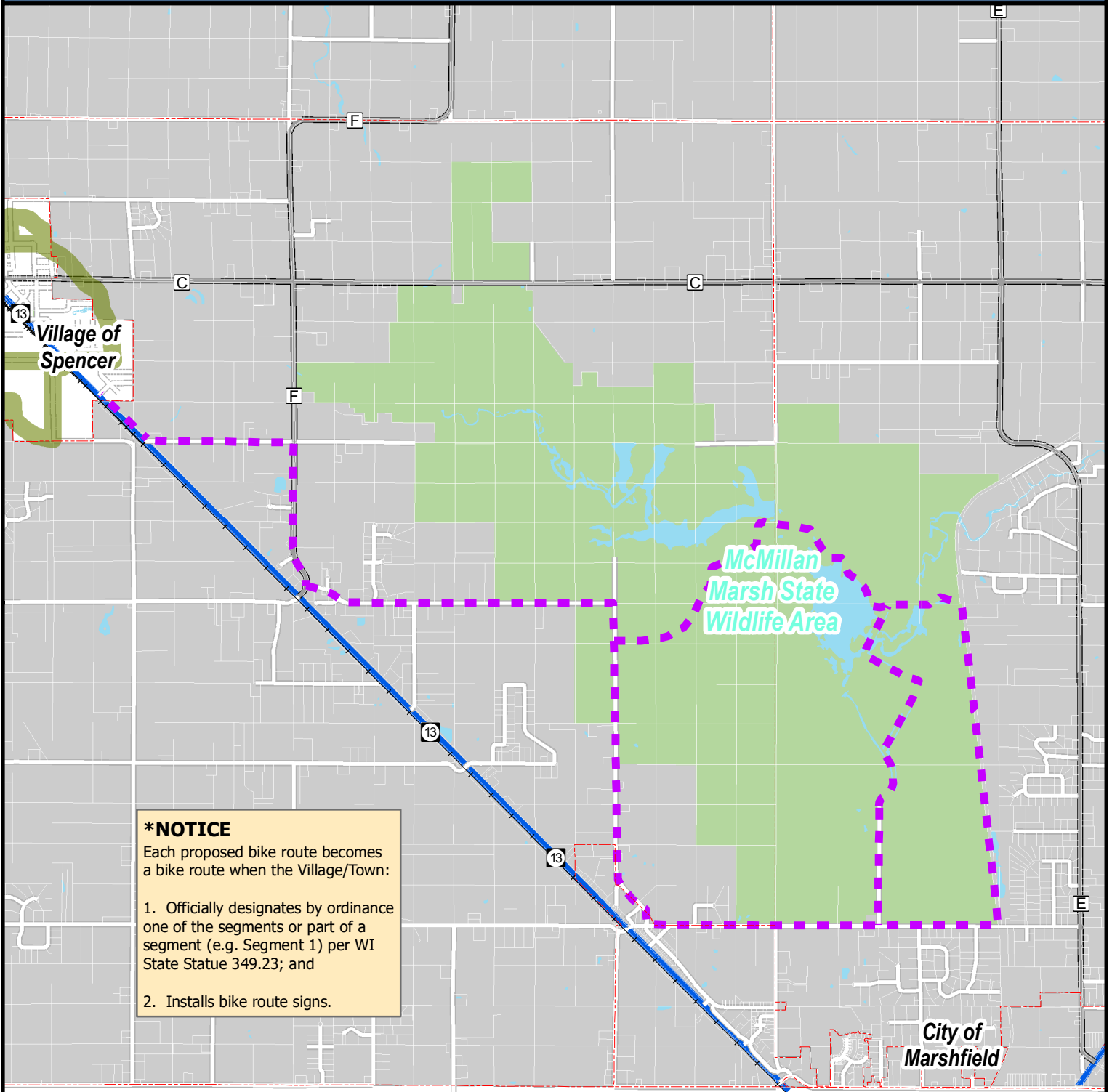
- Update playground equipment

Madison Street Park

- Replace 20 year old playground equipment

Veterans Park

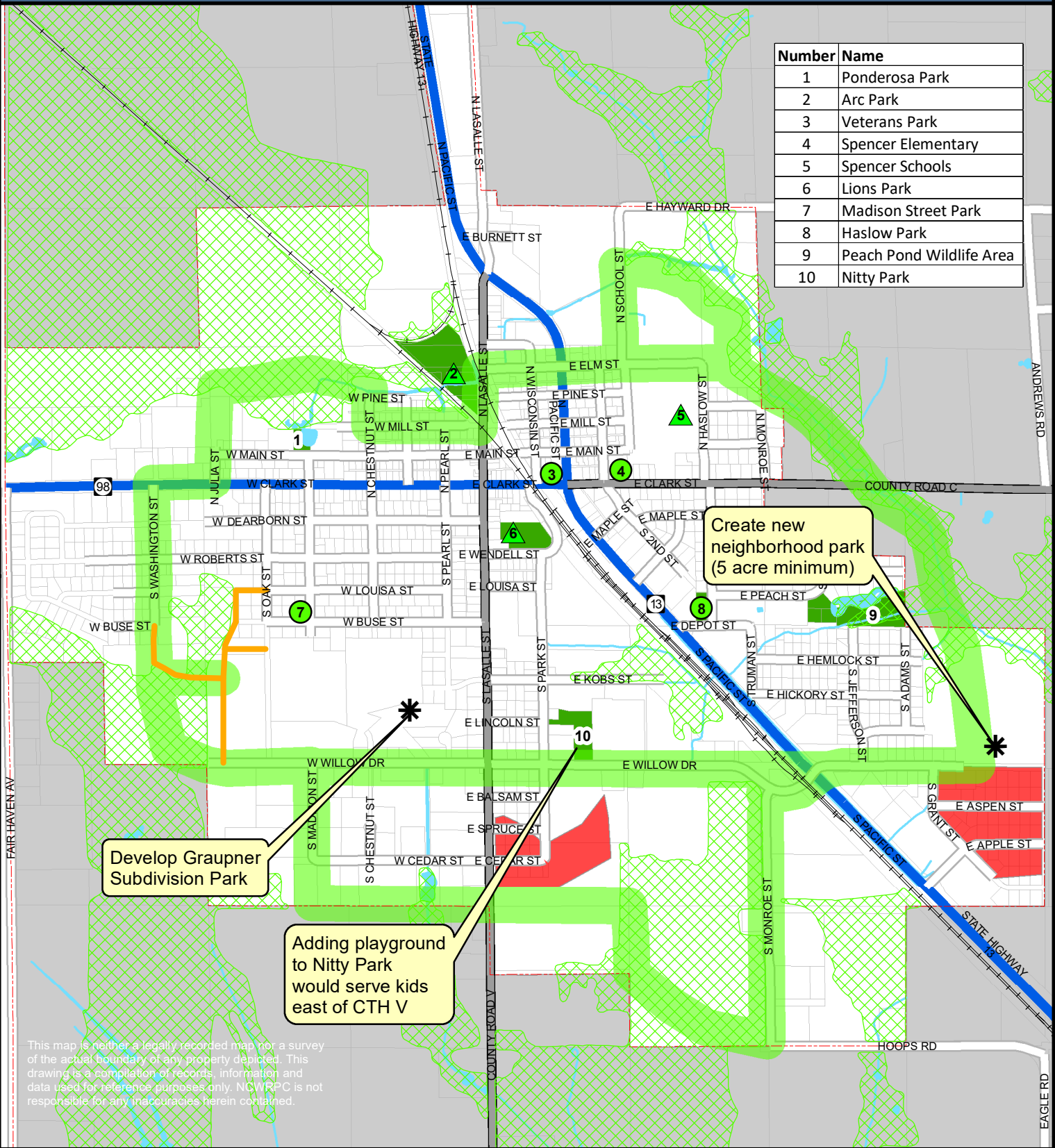
- None.



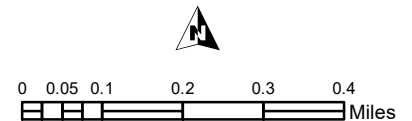
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- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Parcels
- 3 Parks
- Mini
- Neighborhood
- Proposed Trail Corridor
- Proposed Trails
- Underserved Residential
- Wetlands
- Water



Chapter 7:

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are a variety of strategies available for implementing this plan. These strategies include using land use tools and government programs to realize attainment of this plan's goals and objectives.

Public Access to Waterways

State regulations for subdivisions require dedication of public access when the land along waterways is platted.

LAKE AND STREAM SHORE PLATS [236.16(3) WISCONSIN STATUTES]

- (a) All subdivisions abutting on a navigable lake or stream shall provide public access at least 60 feet wide providing access to the low watermark so that there will be public access, which is connected to existing public roads, at not more than one-half mile intervals as measured along the lake or stream shore except where greater intervals and wider access is agreed upon by the department of natural resources and the department, and excluding shore areas where public parks or open-space streets or roads on either side of a stream are provided.

NR 1.93 Access in platted subdivisions. Under s.236.16 (3), Wis. Stats., the DNR has authority to recommend wider access at less frequent intervals than are prescribed in the statutes. The DNR shall consider waiver of the 60-foot access requirement only where the DNR determines:

- (1) It will be advantageous to public interests in navigable water;
- (2) Adequate space for access users and adequate buffering for private property is assured by access wider than 60 feet where possible; and
- (3) The access that would result provides an equal or greater opportunity for public access than would be provided by dedication at statutorily prescribed intervals and the 60-foot width.

Park Dedication

Subdivision regulations can be used to require residential land subdividers to dedicate a portion of subdivided land for permanent park and open space use. Neighborhood parks may be acquired in this manner in newly developing residential areas. Local landowners could also be encouraged to dedicate land to their communities for recreational uses. Numerous small town memorial parks have been acquired through the generosity of local citizens. If citizens are made aware of community needs, this form of private action may continue to enrich the public resources of some communities.

Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions are characterized by common open space and clustered compact lots. A variety of housing types or the same type of housing may be allowed. The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to protect farmland or natural resource open spaces while allowing for the maximum number of residences under current

community zoning and subdivision regulations. In some cases a greater density (density bonus) may be offered in the local ordinance to encourage this approach. Generally, this tool is used for parcels 40 acres and larger, or where the community maps natural resource corridors or natural features that they want to preserve. A conservation subdivision maintains the same level of overall density as a conventional subdivision, but individual lot sizes are smaller, and the community receives open space.

Use of Easements

Open space and public recreation use of private land may be acquired by easement. With an easement, certain rights are granted to the public for a specific period of time and the private owner is compensated for that public use. In purchasing an easement, the public body acquires a right either to use the land in a specific manner or to restrict the use to which an owner may put their land. For example, the rights to establish public hiking or fishing access to a waterway may be purchased through an easement.

Leases

Leases may be used as measures to use or protect land until more permanent measures may be found. By leasing parcels of land, the land remains on the community's tax rolls and can be renegotiated or non-renewed by the property owner if the monetary prospects for another use proves overpowering.

Another leasing method involves outright purchase of land by the community. The community then leases the land to a private party or organization with use restrictions placed on the land. Under this method, the community receives some monetary return on its investment and retains control over the use of the land.

Program Costs

A community should carefully watch operations and maintenance costs when setting up a parks program. A too ambitious acquisition and/or development program can easily lead to annual costs larger than the community can afford to meet. Recreation facilities like golf courses and swimming pools, for example, require large annual maintenance investments to continue.

Capital Improvements

Community officials should develop five year capital improvements programs for recreation that reflect implementation of proposals made in their plans and the priorities they place on them. To be functional, the program must be flexible and be subjected to annual review.

In developing a recreation program, care should be taken that the annual cost of maintenance does not exceed an amount the community can afford to pay. Too often, an ambitious program can lose community support as a result of prohibitive maintenance costs.

Monetary Aid Programs

State and federal financial and technical aid programs are designed to assist communities with meeting recreational needs. A list of these programs exists in **Attachment C**.

The Stewardship Fund is a state provided comprehensive aid program for the promotion of resource conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. It consists of several state and federal aid programs such as Local Park Aids and LAWCON, combined with new programs, such as the Urban Rivers Program. **Attachment C** gives an explanation of the Stewardship Program. For additional information go online to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

A requirement for application to the Stewardship Fund is for the local community to have a DNR approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. The Outdoor Recreation Plan is designed to meet that requirement. For additional information contact:

Regional Project Manager
DNR's West Central Region
Eau Claire, WI

Besides state and federal aid programs, there are other sources of funding such as private foundations, trust funds, and civic and recreation organizations.

Lifetime Activities

Community and school officials responsible for recreation should place greater emphasis on land areas and facilities that can support "lifetime" recreational activities. Falling into this category are activities like golf, tennis, all target sports, horseshoes, cross country skiing, skating, running, volleyball, handball, badminton, back packing, and canoeing. Many schools have programs aimed at teaching recreational activities that people can participate in for a lifetime.

Winter Activities

All communities should provide winter outdoor recreation facilities. Skating and sliding sports (sledding, tobogganing, and skiing) can generally be provided without large investments. Skating, for example, can be as involved as providing rinks for ice hockey or as simple as flooding a small area of a school playground. Likewise, merely blocking off a lightly traveled street with a suitable slope can frequently provide a sliding area.

Specialized Facilities

Encourage development of specialized facilities by the private sector. Specialized facilities such as golf clubs, intensive use ATV areas, and ski resorts can be an important adjunct to public recreational facilities. Quality and availability for public use should be emphasized.

Municipal and School District Cooperation

Promote cooperation between municipalities and school districts in meeting recreational needs. With good planning, cooperation may take the form of joint land acquisition and/or facilities development cost sharing. Increased municipal use of existing school facilities during non-school hours should also be encouraged.

Senior Citizen Involvement

Involve senior citizens in community park development and beautification, and provide recreational facilities for their use. Although senior citizens often compose a significant proportion of the total community's population, they are often neglected in recreational planning. Benches placed near neighborhood parks and play areas and non-intensive sports facilities such as horseshoe pits located in community parks help to provide a place for the senior citizens. Small, passive use parks and gardens located near nursing and retirement homes should also be encouraged. In addition, senior citizens can provide invaluable assistance in beautifying parks and open spaces and can thereby become more involved in community group life.

Service Group Involvement

Involve organized service groups in park and recreation development, including development of competitive sports areas and neighborhood parks. Traditionally, service groups and recreation organizations, such as Lions Club, V.F.W., softball leagues, and snowmobile clubs have played an active role in the development of such facilities. Continued volunteerism of this type should be encouraged. In addition, service groups could help to meet the need for neighborhood facilities by supplementing municipal financial resources by providing organization and volunteer labor.

Community Beautification

All communities should recognize that community appearance is an important component of a recreation program. Maintained streets and sidewalks, attractive trees and shrubs, well cared for homes and commercial buildings, and neatly landscaped home lawns, public open space, and parks are principal contributors to community beautification. Such a program is most rewarding to persons engaged in passive recreation.

Adopt-A-Park Program

A program which encourages local groups to adopt-a-park or segment of trail or stream could be organized similar to the very successful *Adopt a Highway* program. The groups could volunteer their time to maintain and beautify the county's recreational system, allowing more county funds to provide major improvements.

Attachment A

Park Design and Location Criteria

From:

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023

Park Design and Location Criteria

This section is presented in the interest of assisting park and recreation agencies in the development of a system of parks and recreation areas. A recreation system is composed of many different components, the combination of which provide facilities and landscapes for outdoor recreation. Many entities are involved in the development and management of recreational areas and facilities for a community or region. Facilities provided by these entities should be complementary and serve a particular geographic area or recreational need. For this plan, parks and recreation areas have been classified on the basis of their service areas. They are described as the following:

▪ Mini Park	▪ School Park
▪ Neighborhood Park	▪ County Park
▪ Community Park	▪ State Park
▪ Special Use Park	▪ State Forest

Mini Park

1. Definition Summary:

A play lot or playground provides space for parental supervised recreation of toddlers and young children within a neighborhood, or as part of a larger neighborhood or community park and urban center, including retail shopping areas.

2. Size Objectives:

0.5 to 1.5 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Generally within a neighborhood of a half mile radius or population of 2,000-3,000. Mini parks may be included in parks that serve a larger population or service area.

4. Location Objectives:

Located in protected areas with separation from street traffic and high visibility; serving local neighborhoods and adjoining schools, libraries, or police and fire facilities.

- Population Ratio to Acreage: 0.25 to 0.5 acre per 1,000 population to achieve a park unit size that serves 2,000 to 3,000 people.

5. Space, Design, and Service Area:

The size of a play lot or playground may range from as small as 2,500 sq. ft. to 1.5 acres.* Amenities offered by these facilities generally include sand play areas, play apparatus, play equipment, and other special child-oriented features. The service radius for these parks in

terms of distance from population served is limited to less than a quarter mile, or within a super block space, unless the playground is incorporated into a larger park. (*Stand-alone play lots require more land area than play lots incorporated into larger parks.)

6. Orientation:

Small geographic areas, sub-neighborhoods, or neighborhoods, when combined with a larger park unit, serves youth ranging in age from toddler to 12 years, with adult supervision. Playgrounds also serve important needs in city business districts and inner city areas where a mix of commercial and recreation activity is desired.

7. Function:

Provides outdoor play experiences for youth under parental supervision. Generates neighborhood communication and provides diversion from work and domestic chores. Promotes neighborhood solidarity.

Neighborhood Park

1. Definition Summary:

A neighborhood park, by size, program, and location, provides space and recreation activities for the immediate neighborhood in which it is located. It is considered an extension of neighborhood residents' "out-of-yard" and outdoor use area.

2. Size Objectives:

5 to 25 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Generally a one mile radius, but actually defined by collector street patterns which form the limits of a neighborhood or recreation service area. Population served may range from 2,000 up to 5,000.

4. Location Objectives:

Centrally located for equitable pedestrian access within a definable neighborhood service area. Adjoining or adjacent to an elementary school, middle school, high school, fire station, or library, if possible.

5. Program Objectives:

Compatible with the neighborhood setting and park site constraints. Generally includes the following facilities, which are determined with public input as to use and activities:

- a. Parking for 10 to 20 vehicles.
 - 1) On-street parking is acceptable if negative impact to residential units can be mitigated. On-site parking is preferable as a planning objective.
 - 2) Bike racks with Class II trail connections where possible.
- b. Restrooms
 - 1) Men's restroom with 2 water closets, 2 urinals, 2 lavatories.
 - 2) Women's restroom with 3 water closets and 2 lavatories.
 - 3) Utility and minimum park janitorial storage space.
- c. Tot lot/children's play area
- d. Family event/group picnic facility
- e. Informal family picnic area with benches and tables
- f. Unstructured turf grass play area/play or practice field for children, young adults, and families.
- g. Sport facilities—compatible with neighborhood setting and park site constraints.
 - 1) Basketball—half court, full court, or tri-court configuration
 - 2) Volleyball area
 - 3) Softball field/soccer practice or game overlay
 - 4) Other features as needs or site conditions allow

6. Orientation:

Serves all age groups, with an emphasis on youth and families in neighborhood settings.

7. Function:

To provide a combination of active recreation and passive activities, both outdoor and indoor facilities and special features as required or needed.

8. Space, Design and Service Area:

A minimum size of 5 to 25 acres with amenities including sports facilities, picnic areas, swim facilities, cultural activities, arts, crafts, and individual passive activities. The park should primarily serve a defined neighborhood area population of 2,000-5,000. Distance from this neighborhood will vary depending on urban development pattern, zoning, and densities in the respective neighborhoods being served. Efforts should be made to allow easy pedestrian access to the park.

Community Park

1. Definition Summary:

A community park, by size, program, and location, provides space and recreation activities for a defined service area, the entire city, or significant geographic segment of the city's population.

2. Size Objectives:

Usually more than 25 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Generally a 2 to 5 mile radius within the city and adjacent neighborhoods outside of city limits.

4. Location Objectives:

Centrally located if planned to serve a particular geographic segment of the city. Located adjoining or immediately adjacent to a collector street providing community-wide vehicular access, thereby reducing neighborhood traffic impacts. Connected with Class II on-street and/or off-street community trail and bike lane system. Adjoining or adjacent to an elementary, middle, or high school if possible.

5. Program Objectives

Elements that fulfill the service area, park facilities and recreation program demands. The following facilities may be compatible with community setting and park site constraints:

- a. Off-street parking calculated to satisfy demand of park and recreation activities provided. Includes bike racks and a public transit station at the site as well as both on-site and street parking.
- b. Restrooms designed to accommodate the level of park and recreation activities provided and the number of people served. Restrooms should be located within a reasonable walking distance from children's play equipment and other high-use areas.
- c. Community recreation center
- d. Park maintenance and equipment storage building
- e. Tot lot/children's play area
- f. Group picnic shelters
- g. Family picnic facilities
- h. Sport/recreation facility fulfilling the overall city demand

Appropriate program elements include:

- 1) Community pool/water feature
- 2) Soccer fields
- 3) Softball, little league baseball, junior pony league baseball
- 4) Football
- 5) Roller hockey/skateboard area
- 6) Tennis courts
- 7) Basketball courts
- 8) Amphitheater/performing arts center
- 9) Volleyball (indoor and outdoor)
- 10) Jogging trails
- 11) Other facilities as desired and as permitted under park site plan
- 12) Concessions (food and beverage)

6. Orientation:

Multi-purpose service area or community-wide recreation resource serving most or all of the population.

7. Function:

Provides opportunities for a diverse mix of indoor and outdoor recreation, including walking and bicycling, outdoor performances, various programmed and non-programmed field sports, swimming, and special events.

8) Space, Design, and Service Area:

The minimum space for a community park is 15 acres. Facilities typically provide for some sports activities, though emphasis is on passive cultural and community centers with recreational programming and organized activities. The community park may serve populations within a 2 to 5 mile radius, a scope that would allow residents of other communities to use the park as well.

Special Use Park

1. Definition Summary:

A special use park is often designed as a revenue-generating enterprise created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or special event. A special use park may also be a sports park combined with enterprise activities and administered as a community recreation resource.

2. Size Objective:

The actual size of a special use park is determined by land availability and facility/market demand for special uses or recreation programs.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Community or area-wide and determined by the type of recreation program, special events or use activities.

4. Location Objectives:

Determined by the property opportunity, service area and size objectives.

5. Program Objectives:

Special use parks require facility programming that is user- or market-driven and based on community needs or economic and service principles for public and private partnerships. The magnitude and type of special use facilities may include:

- a. Water play park
- b. Amphitheater
- c. Festival/swap meet/farmers market
- d. League/individual sports complex
- e. Fitness/entertainment center
- f. Skateboard/in-line hockey park
- g. Recreation programs and classes

6. Orientation:

Provides recreation programming, sports and special event attractions and activities for all age groups.

7. Function:

Special events, fairs, festivals, expositions, symposiums, sports, community gatherings, ethnic/cultural celebrations, plays and numerous other recreational programs and activities.

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

The minimum size for special parks varies depending on intended use and programming.

School Park

1. Definition Summary:

By combining the resources of two public agencies, the school park classification allows for expanding the recreational, social, and educational opportunities available to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Depending on the circumstances, school park sites often complement other community recreation or open lands. As an example, an elementary/middle school site could also serve as a neighborhood park. Likewise, middle or high school sports facilities could do double duty as a community park or as youth athletic fields. Depending on its size, one school park site may serve in a number of capacities, such as a neighborhood park, youth athletic fields, and a location for recreation classes. Given the inherent variability of type, size and location, determining how a school park site is integrated into a larger park system will depend on case-by-case circumstances. The important outcome in the joint-use relationship is that both the school district and park system benefit from shared use of facilities and land area.

2. Size Objective

The optimum size of a school park site depends on its intended use. The size criteria established for neighborhood park and community park classifications may apply.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Neighborhood park and community park classifications criteria should be used to determine school park functions and area served. For planning purposes, the degree to which school lands, including building or facilities, meet community needs depends on the specific inter-local agreements formed.

4. Location Objectives:

The location of a school park site will be determined by the school district based on district policy. Coordinated city and school district planning allows for siting, acquisition, and facility development to be responsive to community needs. Service areas for school park sites will depend on the type of use and facilities provided.

5. Program Objectives:

The criteria established for neighborhood parks and community parks should be used to determine how a school park site is developed and programmed. If athletic fields are developed at a school park site, they should, where feasible, be oriented toward youth rather than adult programs. Establishing a clearly defined joint-use agreement between involved agencies is critical to making school park relationships workable. This is particularly important with respect to acquisition, development, maintenance, liability, use, and programming of facility issues.

The orientation of school park projects is typically for neighborhood and community recreation services. The functions may include sports, recreation classes, passive recreation activities, and other recreation programs suitable to an elementary or secondary education school.

County Park

1. Definition Summary:

A county park provides sufficient park and recreation area to meet the needs of county residents. County parks consist of land that is specifically set aside for active and passive recreation uses, and that accommodates large gatherings, special events, and individual users. County parks offer a wide variety of compatible outdoor recreation activities, and

may provide areas that do not primarily serve a recreational purpose such as protected natural areas, historic areas, and special use areas.

2. Size Objectives:

The size of recreation parks varies greatly from park to park, but with the exception of those parks that serve a special use or are trail corridors, a recreation park should consist of a minimum of 100 acres of land. Each park should be of sufficient size to accommodate the estimated use and to allow for the operation and maintenance of planned recreational facilities.

3. Service Area Objectives:

County parks provide for a regional user group and serve primarily county residents. Special facilities like camping and trails are also used by tourists and visitors to the county.

4. Location Objectives:

The land should have high recreational potential and be able to withstand intensive and extensive recreational activities. Land should have potential to accommodate large groups of people. Land for corridors should be located so as to connect to communities, parks, and open spaces. The potential for future land acquisition should be taken into account.

5. Program Objectives:

Development should be appropriate for intended use and should accommodate moderate to high use. Development and planning should consider the physical condition and characteristics of the land and recognize potential environmental or structural limitations that might require intensive maintenance. County parks may include the following facilities:

- a. Camping/group camping
- b. Picnic areas
- c. Recreational trails (hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, equestrian, cross-country ski, snowmobile, etc.)
- d. Play areas
- e. Swimming beaches
- f. Water access
- g. Fishing access
- h. Shelters
- i. Restrooms

- j. Shower facilities
- k. Sport fields (basketball, volleyball, softball, etc.)
- l. Pet exercise area

6. Orientation:

Multi-purpose service area and regional recreation resource serving a significant portion of a county or multi-county population.

7. Function:

To provide sufficient parks and recreation areas to meet the needs of the people of the county.

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

The size of a county park should be a minimum of 100 acres. Facilities vary by park. Some parks offer active recreation (camping, recreational trails, etc.), while others provide passive recreation (scenic lookouts, picnic areas, beaches, etc.). Most parks provide both active and passive recreation. County parks provide for a regional user group and serve primarily county residents, through special facilities also serve tourists and visitors to the county.

State Forest

1. Definition Summary:

A state forest consists of well blocked areas of state owned lands that are managed to benefit present and future generations of residents, recognizing that forests contribute to local and statewide economics and to a healthy natural environment. State forests practice sustainable forestry. The management of state forests is consistent with the ecological capability of state forest land and with the long-term goal of maintaining sustainable forest communities and ecosystems. Benefits of maintaining these ecosystems include soil protection, public hunting, protection of water quality, production of recurring forest products, outdoor recreation, native biological diversity, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, and aesthetic value. The range of benefits provided in each state forest reflect its unique character and position in the regional landscape.

2. Size Objectives:

Typically between 1,000 and 250,000 acres, but can be larger or smaller.

3. Service Area Objectives:

Generally a 100 mile radius. State forests typically provide close-to-home recreational area. Day users typically travel approximately 50 miles one-way to reach state forests, while overnight users tend to travel further, approximately 100-150 miles one-way. Travel to state forests can, however, exceed 160 miles for longer vacation stays and travel to "destination areas."

4. Location Objectives:

Areas with large blocks of land.

5. Program Objectives:

State forests must meet ecological, economic, social, and cultural needs. Elements are compatible with the natural resource setting and park site constraints. Facilities may include the following:

Current Level of Supply:

Hiking trails	1,256 acres per linear mile of trail
Cross-country ski trails	2,551 acres per linear mile of trail
Snowmobile trails	639 acres per linear mile of trail
Equestrian trails	559 acres per linear mile of trail
ATV trails	1,795 acres per linear mile of trail
Camping sites	1 campsite per 265 acres

6. Orientation:

Multi-purpose service area and regional recreation resource serving a significant portion of a state or regional population.

7. Function:

To provide for nature conservation, provide income to forest owners, supply raw materials to the wood processing industry, and provide public recreation.

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

The size of a state forest is determined by the extent of the area's natural resources and recreation capabilities. There is no minimum or maximum size for a state forest. Facilities are not universal and vary by forest. The geographic location of the forest and the natural resources present dictate recreation available at the site. State forests serve large geographic areas of a state or region.

State Park

1. Definition Summary:

A state park, by size, program, and location, provides space for outdoor recreation and education about nature and conservation. These parks serve a significant geographic segment of a state or regional population. State parks aim to preserve, protect, interpret and enhance the scenic and cultural resources of the state.

2. Size Objectives:

Parks must be large enough to accommodate a reasonable mix of outdoor recreational activities. Typically, parks are between 500 and 3000 acres, but can be smaller (<20 acres) or larger (>10,000 acres).

3. Service Area Objectives:

Generally a 100-mile radius. State parks typically provide close-to-home recreational areas. Day users generally travel approximately 50 miles one-way to reach state parks, while overnight users tend to travel further, approximately 100-150 miles one-way. Travel distances to state parks can often exceed 160 miles for longer vacation stays and trips to "destination areas."

4. Location Objectives:

Siting of Wisconsin State Parks is typically based on five criteria developed by John Nolen. These criteria are: 1) large size to serve a large number of citizens, 2) accessibility to major population areas, 3) a healthful, natural setting, 4) reasonable cost for land acquisition, 5) land possessing "decidedly uncommon charm and beauty." All, or a combination of these criteria are used to determine where to site a state park.

5. Program Objectives:

Elements that fulfill the service area, park facilities and recreation program demands. Elements are compatible with the natural resource setting and park site constraints. Developments may include the following facilities:

Current Level of Supply:

Hiking trails	196 acres per linear mile of trail
Surfaced bicycle trails	860 acres per linear mile of trail
Mountain bike trails	549 acres per linear mile of trail
Nature trails	1,871 acres per liner mile of trail
Cross-country ski trails	430 acres per linear mile of trail
Snowmobile trails	426 acres per linear mile of trail
Equestrian trails	400 acres per linear mile of trail
Picnic sites	0.05 acres per picnic table
Camping sites	1 campsite per 29 acres
Parking stalls	Year-Round = 1 stall for every three visitors
Swimming beaches	17 linear feet per 1,000 users

5. Orientation:

Multi-purpose service area and regional recreation resource serving a significant portion of a state or regional population.

6. Function:

To provide for public recreation and education of conservation and nature study. To preserve, protect, interpret and enhance the scenic and cultural resources of the state.

7. Space, Design, and Service Area:

The size of a state park is determined by the extent of the area's natural resources and recreation capabilities. There is no minimum or maximum size for a state park. Facilities are not universal and vary by park. Some parks offer active recreation (camping, boating, mountain biking trails, hunting etc.), while others offer passive recreation (scenic lookouts, picnic areas, beaches, etc.). Most provide both active and passive recreation. The geographic area and the natural resources present dictate recreation uses and facilities present in the park. State parks serve large geographic areas of a state or region.

Attachment B

Facility Development Standards

From:
National Recreation and Park Association

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS				
Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes
Badminton	Singles--17' x 44' Doubles-20' x 44' with 5' unobstructed area on both sides	1622 sq. ft.	Long axis north - south	¼ - ½ mile. Usually in school recreation center or church facility. Safe walking or biking or biking access.
Basketball 1. Youth 2. High School 3. Collegiate	46' - 50' x 84' 50' x 84' 50' x 94' with 5' unobstructed space all sides.	2400-3036 sq. ft. 5040-7280 sq. ft. 5600-7980 sq. ft.	Long axis north - south	¼ - ½ mile. Same as badminton. Outdoor courts in neighborhood/community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Handball (3-4 wall)	20' x 40' with a minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance.	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall, 1000 sq. ft. for 3-wall.	Long axis is north - south. Front wall at north end.	15 - 30 min. travel time, 4-wall usually indoor as part of multi-purpose building. 3-2 all usually in park or school setting.
Ice Hockey	Rink 85' x 200' (Min. 85' x 185') Additional 5000 22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	Long axis is north - south if outdoors.	½ - 1 hour travel time. Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multipurpose facility.
Tennis	36' x 78'. 12 ft. clearance on both ends.	Min. of 7,200 sq. ft. single court area (2 acres per complex)	Long axis north - south	¼ - ½ mile. Best in batteries of 2 - 4. Located in neighborhood/community park or near school site.
Volleyball	30' x 60'. Minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft.	Long axis north - south	½ - 1 mile.
Baseball 1. Official 2. Little League	Baselines - 90' Pitching distance-60.5' Foul lines - min. 320' Center field - 400'+ Baselines - 60' Pitching distance - 46' Foul lines - 200' Center field - 200' - 250'	3.0 - 3.85 A min. 1.2 A min.	Locate home plate so pitcher is not throwing across sun, and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound to run east-northeast.	¼ - ½ mile. Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.
Field Hockey	180' x 300' with a minimum of 10' clearance on all sides.	Minimum 1.5 A	Fall season - Long axis northwest or southeast. For longer periods, north/south	15 - 30 minute travel time. Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Football	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.	Minimum 1.5 A	Same as field hockey.	15 - 30 min. travel time. Same as field hockey.
Soccer	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with 10' minimum clearance on all sides.	1.7 - 2.1 A	Same as field hockey.	1 - 2 miles. Number of units depends on popularity. Youth popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to fields or neighborhood parks.
Golf - Driving Range	900' x 690' wide. Add 12' width each additional tee.	13.5 A for min. of 25 tees.	Long axis is southwest - northeast with golfer driving northeast.	30 minute travel time. Park of golf course complex. As separate unit may be privately operated.

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS <i>(continued)</i>				
Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes
¼ mile running track	Over-all width - 276' length - 600'. Track width for 8 - 4 lanes is 32'.	4.3 A	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest - southeast, with finish line at north end.	15 - 30 minute travel time. Usually part of a high school or community park complex in combination with football, soccer, etc.
Softball	Baselines - 60' pitching distance - 45' men. 40' women Fast pitch field radius from plate - 225' Slow pitch - 275' (men) 250' (women)	1.5 - 2.0 A	Same as baseball. indimensions for 16".	¼ - ½ mile. Slight difference. May also be used for youth baseball.
Multiple use court (basketball, tennis, etc.)	120' x 80'	9,840 sq. ft.	Long axis of court with primary use north and south.	1 - 2 miles, in neighborhood or community parks.
Archery range	300' length x minimum 10' between targets. Roped, clear area on side of range minimum 30', clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.	Minimum 0.65 A	Archer facing north + or - 45 degrees.	30 minutes travel time. Part of a regional/metro complex.
Golf 1. Par 3 (18 hole) 2. 9-hole standard 3. 18-hole standard	Average length varies -600 - 2700 yards. Average length 2250 yards Average length 6500 yards.	50 - 60 A Minimum of 50 A Minimum 110 yards	Majority of holes on north/south axis	½ - 1 hour travel time 9-hole course can accommodate 350 people/day 500 - 550 people/day. Course may be located in community, district or regional/metro park.
Swimming pools	Teaching - min. 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3-4 ft. Competitive - min. 25 m x 16 m. Min. of 25 sq. ft. water surface per swimmer. Ration of 2 to 1 deck to water.	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually 1 - 2 A sites.	None, but care must be taken in siting life stations in relation to afternoon sun.	15 to 30 minutes travel time. Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching competitive and recreational purposes with enough to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.
Beach areas	Beach area should have 50 sq. ft. of land and 50 sa. ft. of water per user. Turnover rate is 3. There should be a 3-4 A supporting area per A of beach.	N/A	N/A	½ to 1 hour travel time. Should have a sand bottom with a maximum slope of 5%. Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas. In regional/metro parks.

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS *(continued)*

Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes
Pickleball <i>Source: USA Pickleball</i>	20' wide x 44' long. Total court space needed is 30 feet by 60 feet. 34 feet by 64 feet is recommended.	Min. of 1,800 sq. ft. for single court area.	Long axis north - south	None provided.
Skate Spot Neighborhood Skate Park Community-wide Skate Park <i>Source: Tony Hawk Foundation</i>	Contains one structure. Average length 2250 yards Average length 6500 yards.	3,000 sq. ft. 8,000-12,000 sq. ft. 20,000 sq. ft. or larger.	No orientation specifications.	About 5 skaters can use a skate spot simultaneously. About 70 skaters can use a neighborhood skatepark at the same time. Most can easily accommodate large numbers of skaters and onlookers, and are suitable for contests and events.

Attachment C

Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs

Compiled by: NCWRPC

Wisconsin DNR Administered Programs

Regional Project Manager
DNR's West Central Region
Eau Claire, WI

Go online to find specific DNR staff contact information along with their areas of expertise.

Note: Various program application periods may exist. Check online for each program's requirements and deadlines.

Note: Contact your local DNR Regional Project Manager if you are thinking of applying for a 50% Stewardship or 50% LWCF grant, so they can assist you with the application for the best chance of success.

Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP) Grants [Stewardship]

ADLP grants (up to a 50% cost share) are awarded to improve community recreation areas and acquire land for public outdoor recreation. Priority is given to land acquisition where a need for additional recreational land is supported by an approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR) [Stewardship]

The purpose of the acquisition of development rights (ADR) subprogram is to protect natural, agricultural or forest lands that enhance and/or provide nature-based outdoor recreation. ADR grants can only fund conservation easement purchases up to a 50% cost share.

ATV/UTV Enhancement

This funding is issued bi-annually to non-profit organizations that promote the safe and wise use of all terrain vehicles (ATVs)/utility-terrain vehicles (UTVs), ATV/UTV riding and ATV/UTV education.

ATV Patrols

This grant is issued to Wisconsin sheriff departments that participate in ATV enforcement efforts. The DNR can provide up to 100% of county net costs for the enforcement of ATV regulations. Actual funding received is based on total allotted funds split between participating agencies.

Patrol requirements are contained in NR 50.125, Wis. Adm. Code.

ATV/UTV Trails

Counties, towns, cities, villages and tribes can apply for funds to acquire, insure, develop and maintain ATV/UTV trails, areas and routes.

Specific changes to NR 64 created Hybrid Trails ("Troutes") or all-terrain vehicle trail and route combinations.

Boat Enforcement Patrol

Eligibility & Purpose: This grant is issued to Wisconsin counties or municipalities that participate in boating enforcement efforts. Eligible agencies may receive law enforcement aids for up to 75% of their net costs.

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program

The purpose of BIG is to construct, renovate, and maintain boating infrastructure facilities for transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long.

Tier 1 - State

Provides up to \$200,000 per year to each state. Projects are competitively ranked within the state.

Tier 2 - National

Provides up to \$1,500,000 per project. Projects are competitively ranked at the national level.

Natural Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

Stewardship natural area grants complement the State Natural Areas (SNA) Program, dedicated to the preservation of Wisconsin's native natural communities and habitat for rare plant and animal species.

Land purchased with natural area grants must be open to the public for low-impact nature-based recreation and scientific study. Natural areas are not intended for intensive recreational use such as mountain biking, motorized vehicle use, horseback riding or camping.

Habitat Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

Habitat area grants are awarded to conserve wildlife habitat in Wisconsin in order to expand opportunities for wildlife-based recreation such as hunting, trapping, hiking, bird watching, fishing, nature appreciation and wildlife viewing.

Land purchased with habitat area grants must be open to the public for low-impact nature-based recreation. Habitat areas are not intended for intensive recreational use such as mountain biking, motorized vehicle use, horseback riding or camping.

Stream Bank protection [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

Streambank protection grants are awarded to protect water quality and fish habitat.

Priority is given to land or easement purchases along designated Outstanding or Exceptional Resource Waters, projects that connect sections of protected stream corridor, and projects that will mitigate the impact of agricultural runoff.

State trails [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

State trail grants are awarded to purchase lands or easements identified as part of the State Trail system including designated State Water Trails. Priority is given to lands along nationally designated Ice Age and North Country trail corridors and to lands that connect established trail systems.

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – State Side Program

This is a federal program administered in all states that encourages the creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received by the DNR for this program are split between DNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Since passage of the Great American Outdoors Act of 2020, LWCF is permanently and fully funded at \$900 million annually, nationwide. What this means in Wisconsin is that more park projects that include splash pads, playgrounds, and skateparks are now more easily fundable up to 50%.

Motorized Stewardship Grants [Stewardship]

ATV/UTV grants are available to counties, towns, cities, villages and tribes to apply for funds to acquire, insure, develop and maintain ATV/UTV trails, areas and routes.

Snowmobile trail grants are available to counties and tribes to apply for funding to provide a statewide system of well-signed and well-groomed snowmobile trails for public use and enjoyment.

Match Requirement: 20 percent

Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Grants

OHM grants are available to counties, towns, cities, villages and tribes to apply for funds for development, rehabilitation, and maintenance of OHM trails.

Recreational Boating Facilities Grants

These grants may be used by counties, towns, cities, villages, tribes, sanitary districts, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts and qualified lake associations for recreational boating facility projects.

Past projects have included ramps and service docks to gain access to the water, purchase of aquatic weed harvesting equipment, navigation aids and dredging waterway channels.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

This is a federal program administered in all states. Municipal governments and incorporated organizations are eligible to receive reimbursement for the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses.

Eligible sponsors may be reimbursed for up to 80% of eligible project costs. Funds from this program may be used in conjunction with funds from the state snowmobile or ATV grant programs and Knowles-Nelson Stewardship development projects.

Shooting Range Grant Program

Counties, cities, villages, townships, other governmental agencies or units, clubs or organizations, businesses or corporations and educational institutions can apply for assistance in outdoor shooting range construction, including backstops and berms, target holders, shooting benches, baffles, protective fencing, signs, trenches, gun racks, platforms, restrooms and other items considered essential for the project by the department. Indoor ranges may be eligible as well, including classroom, storage and restroom facilities.

Snowmobile Patrols

This grant is issued to Wisconsin sheriff departments that participate in snowmobile enforcement efforts. The DNR can provide up to 100% of county net cost for the enforcement of snowmobile regulations. Actual funding received is based on total allotted funds split between participating agencies.

Snowmobile Trail Aids

These grants are used to reimburse the over 600 snowmobile clubs in Wisconsin for some of their expenses.

Snowmobile trail aids are entirely funded by snowmobilers. The money awarded in grants to Wisconsin counties comes from snowmobile registrations, trail pass revenue and gas tax from some of the gas used in snowmobiles.

Sport Fish Restoration (SFR)

These grants may be used to construct fishing piers and motorboat access projects. Eligible components include boat ramp construction and renovation, along with related amenities such as parking lots, accessible paths, lighting, and restroom facilities. Funding for this program comes from federal excise taxes on fishing equipment and a portion of the federal gas tax.

Surface Water Grants

[Formerly: Lake Management Planning and Lake Classification and Lake Protection Grants.]

The surface water grant program provides cost-sharing grants for surface water protection and restoration. Funding is available for education, ecological assessments, planning, implementation, and aquatic invasive species prevention and control. With many different projects eligible for grant funding, you can support surface water management at any stage: from organization capacity development to project implementation.

Urban Green Space [Stewardship]

The intent of the Urban Green Space Program (UGS) is to provide open natural space within or in proximity to urban areas; to protect from development areas within or in proximity to urban areas that have scenic, ecological or other natural value; and to provide land for non-commercial gardening for the residents of an urbanized area.

Urban Rivers [Stewardship]

The urban rivers subprogram program aims to restore or preserve the character of urban riverways through the acquisition or development of land adjacent to rivers. Purposes of the program include supporting economic revitalization through the restoration or preservation of urban riverfronts and improving outdoor recreational opportunities by increasing access to urban rivers.

Wisconsin DOT Administered Programs

District Bike & Ped Coordinator
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
1681 Second Avenue South
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Purpose: The Transportation Alternatives Program allocates federal funds to transportation improvement projects that “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.”

TAP is a legislative program authorized by Congress through the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act signed into law in 2015. With certain exceptions, projects that met eligibility criteria for the Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancements, and/or the Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Program are eligible TAP projects.

As of 2022, construction projects eligible for TAP must have a total projected expense of \$150,000 or more, while non-construction projects must have a total projected expense of at least \$20,000. These TAP application minimums may change in any given application year. There is a 20% local match required. *See current TAP guidance for updated information that may have higher project expense minimums.*

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

Purpose: Safe Routes to School programs encourage children in grades K-8 to walk and bike to school by creating safer walking and biking routes. Projects must be within 2 miles of a school and listed in a SRTS plan.

Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

Purpose: Funds projects to increase multi-modal transportation alternatives and enhance communities and the environment. Projects include bicycle or pedestrian facilities, landscaping or streetscaping, and the preservation of historic transportation structures.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (BFPF)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

Purpose: Funds projects that construct or plan for bicycle or bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

NOTE: The BFPF has not been funded in over a decade, but the program is still on the books.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

While HSIP does not pertain to bicycle and pedestrian transportation, this WisDOT program can help improve safety measures on problematic stretches of highway where crashes have occurred in the past, thereby creating a safer and more hospitable transportation network. HSIP improvements generally require a ten percent match of state or local funds. The program generally funds low-cost options that can be implemented quickly.

Federal Assistance Programs

All other federal programs are listed under Wisconsin DNR Administered Programs.

Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) – National Park Service

Purpose: The Challenge Cost Share Program supports local projects that promote conservation and recreation, environmental stewardship, education and engaging diverse youth participants. Local project partners work with National Park Service parks and programs to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. NPS administered parks and programs are eligible such as National Trails, Heritage Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.,

One-third of the CCSP pot is earmarked for National Trails System Projects. Thus supporting work under the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241-51), such as: National Scenic and Historic trails, National Scenic and Historic Trails in parks, National Recreation Trails, and rail-trail projects.

For additional information about this program and the application process, please contact the CCSP Program Coordinators for Wisconsin:

National Park Service
700 Rayovac Dr., Suite 100
Madison, WI 53711
608-441-5610

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program – National Park Service

Purpose: The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. The national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities.

Attachment D

SCORP Identified Outdoor Recreation Needs

Compiled by:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

In their 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
(SCORP)

Recreation Opportunities Analysis



WESTERN SANDS REGION



6. WESTERN SANDS REGION

BACKGROUND

LANDSCAPE SETTING

The Western Sands Region is in the west-central part of the state and encompasses Adams, Chippewa, Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Marathon, Monroe, Portage and Wood counties. Outside of northern Wisconsin's abundant wilderness and water resources, the Western Sands Region has the third largest amount of public lands and water in the state. These areas include the Black River State Forest, several County Forests, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, and the Wisconsin, Chippewa and Black Rivers. Although the region remains largely rural, it is influenced by outside tourism demands from the Chicago and Twin Cities metropolitan areas. Easy highway access and relatively cheap land prices within the region have made it a popular location for seasonal home development. The region's Non-Metro Recreation Counties, Adams and Juneau, have experienced especially high housing growth, particularly along river flowages.

In the middle of this region is the vast, remarkably flat, sandy plain that was once the bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. This lake, ringed by the Driftless Area to the southwest and the glacier to the north and east, was 70 to 150 feet deep and covered over 1,800 square miles. Streams and rivers draining from the glacier into the lake carried enormous loads of sand, silt, and clay that settled onto the lake bottom. The lake is believed to have drained catastrophically when the ice dam along its southern end failed. This flush of water out of the lake carved the spectacular narrow, deep-sided gorges at Wisconsin Dells. Additional striking features across the region include castellated mounds scattered across the south-central portion of this landscape. These irregular bluffs are remnants of a sandstone escarpment and the result of the steady erosional forces of wind and water slowly wearing away the softer sandstone surrounding them. There are no large, naturally occurring lakes here, although there are a number of hydroelectric dams on the Wisconsin River that create large impoundments. The sandy plain is also characterized by sandy soils, dry forests, pine and oak barrens, large wetland complexes and significant tracts of public land. The center of the region has large concentrations of county forest, as well as state and federal lands. Combined with low population density, few roads, and a high percentage of forested cover, this provides for a different set of recreational opportunities.

The north tier of this region, the productive soils and moderate climate makes this the northern extent of predominantly agricultural land use. Remaining forests here tend to occur as fragments and are often quite small. Small kettle lakes are common on the moraines. These lakes are readily accessible to population centers in the Chippewa Valley and are experiencing increasingly intensive development pressure. In Clark and western Marathon counties, very few lakes exist, and the land takes on a more rolling nature. Many small creeks and rivers flow across this area, creating a dendritic drainage system. Soils are diverse and range from sandy loam to loam and shallow silt loam. In contrast, the southwest area is highly eroded and unglaciated.

LOCAL ECONOMY

The major land use in the Western Sands Region is forest, followed by agriculture. Much of the existing forest in the central and southern portions of the region is comprised of oak, aspen and pine. Timber management is focused on pulp production, giving rise to an abundance of pine plantations. Agricultural activities in the central sands are dominated by extensive commercial cranberry and crop production through the use of center-pivot irrigation on drained soils. Due to the abundance of bogs, the region is also a hotspot for the commercial harvest of sphagnum moss. Along with the extensive dairy operations in the northern part of the region, there is ginseng production centered around Wausau. Towards the western side of the Western Sands Region, agricultural activities, namely dairy and beef production, are available on valley floors and ridge tops.

Top employment sectors of the regional economy include trade, transportation and utilities, manufacturing, education and health services, government, professional and business services and leisure and hospitality.

RECREATION USES AND PARTICIPATION

The Western Sands Region receives substantial public use for a variety of recreation activities, due largely to the amount of public land in the central forested area. The region boasts over 430,000 acres of county forest. Public forests offer opportunities for hiking and bird watching, which comprise a large portion of the recreational demand from local and out-of-town visitors. The eastern portion of the region is less densely populated than its surrounding areas and thus used heavily for hunting and fishing.

The northern part of the region has historically provided only limited public recreation opportunities. But, with the growth of the Fox Valley and several western and central Wisconsin cities, this area is under increasing pressure to meet growing recreation demands. Given the gentle topography and silt-loam soils, this landscape has great potential to provide off road biking, cross-country skiing, nature study, horseback riding, fishing, hunting and other outdoor activities. Access to the major rivers for boating and canoeing is in high demand. In the center of the region, an ample supply of trails helps foster other popular activities such as the use of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles. Clark and Jackson counties are especially well known for their motorized recreation opportunities.

Many shallow-water areas within large public properties offer fishing, canoeing, kayaking, waterfowl observation, and hunting opportunities. The Black River is a popular canoeing destination. Coldwater streams found throughout the region also support high quality trout fisheries and receive substantial use by anglers.

Recreation participation rates for Wisconsin residents as a whole were presented on page 14 of the Introduction. The majority of participation rates of Western Sands Region residents are consistent with the state average or within five percentage points in variation. Notable differences to the state average are shown in the box to the right.

Activities that residents of the Western Sands Region participate in at higher rates than the state average:

- Hunting – big game

Activities that residents of the Western Sands Region participate in at lower rates than the state average:

- Sailing/stand-up paddle boarding
- Downhill skiing/snowboarding
- Visiting a dog park
- Personal water craft – jet ski

EXISTING RECREATION SUPPLY IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The Western Sands Region has approximately 750,000 acres of public land available for outdoor recreation. The central forested areas and large river systems accommodate a variety of recreational activities. This section briefly describes the public conservation and recreation lands in the Western Sands Region. A description of all public lands in Wisconsin is provided in Appendix 3.

a) Federal

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages just nearly 97,000 acres in the Western Sands Region. The properties are largely used for waterfowl production, forest production, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, water quality and fisheries habitat.

b) State

The Department of Natural Resources owns just over 221,000 acres and holds public access easements on approximately 13,000 acres in the Western Sands Region. State properties in the region span the range of intended recreational settings and development levels (Map B3). At one end of the spectrum, properties such as Hartman Creek and Buckhorn State Parks provide well-developed recreation settings with developed campgrounds, miles of trails, picnic areas, swim areas and boat launches. In addition, properties like the Black River State Forest also contribute to the extensive trail network for hiking, biking, ATV/UTV riding and other activities.

At the other end of the spectrum are properties like Quincy Bluff and Wetlands State Natural Area, which boast a unique mosaic landscape of wet-mesic forest, sedge meadow, pine barrens, shrub-carr and sand prairie. These types of properties can provide some limited recreation opportunities for low-impact activities such as hunting, bird watching and nature study, but their primary purpose is not necessarily to provide recreation opportunities requiring development or infrastructure.

The State Board of Commissioners of Public Land (BCPL) owns over 400 acres in the region. These lands are scattered throughout the region in tracts typically several hundred acres or smaller in size. The BCPL manages its lands primarily for forest products. Many of the BCPL lands are isolated or contain wetlands and generally have limited recreation potential.

c) County

The Western Sands Region is home to over 430,000 acres of county forest located across the region, including those in Chippewa, Clark, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Marathon, and Wood counties. These large blocks of forest land provide a variety of benefits including forest products, fisheries and wildlife habitat, many types of outdoor recreation and water quality protection.

Most of the counties in the region manage parks that provide campgrounds, boat launches, and other types of infrastructure to support recreation.

d) Other

Many cities, villages and townships in the Western Sands Region own and manage parks, boat access sites, and other properties that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Stevens Point area and City of Eau Claire each have extensive trail networks that continue to grow in urban areas. Other larger municipalities in the region are actively developing trails due to the demand in their communities. In addition, several school forests in the region are open to some forms of recreation, generally when they are not in use by school and community groups.

PRIVATE LANDS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

This section summarizes the privately-owned lands in the region that are open to the public for some types of recreation. A detailed description of private lands in Wisconsin open to the public is provided in Appendix 3.

a) Forest Legacy program easements

Approximately 12,280 acres in Adams County and another 1,300 acres in Marathon County are part of the Forest Legacy program, which is designed to identify and protect environmentally important private forestlands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses (such as subdivision for residential or commercial development). To help maintain the integrity and traditional uses of private forestlands, the Forest Legacy Program promotes the use of conservation easements.

b) Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law enrolled lands

The amount of land enrolled in these forestry programs is found across the region, with the majority concentrated in Adams and Marathon Counties. Approximately 103,000 acres in the region are currently enrolled in these programs. Because these programs use 25 or 50-year contracts, the total amount enrolled changes from year to year as landowners enroll lands into the program (only the MFL program is open to enrollment) and contracts covering other lands expire.

c) Land trusts

These land trusts operate in the Western Sands Region: Ice Age Trail Alliance, North Central Conservancy Trust, The Conservation Fund, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Chippewa County Land Conservancy, West Wisconsin Land Trust, and Mississippi Valley Conservancy. These non-profit conservation organizations have protected over 1,600 acres in the region. Most of these lands are open to the public for some forms of recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife watching, snowshoeing and other similar activities.

d) Voluntary Public Access Program

The DNR Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program provides financial incentives to private landowners who open their property to public hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife observation. Funding was authorized in the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills. 2014 funds are administered and provided by U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS. To date, there are over 4,000 acres available in the Western Sands Region.

e) Snowmobile Trails on Private Lands

The state snowmobile trail network has been developed through the work of local clubs partnering with private landowners. Agreements with willing landowners allow trails to be located for the winter season, which enables snowmobilers to travel throughout the network. There are 3,816 miles of snowmobile trail in the Western Sands region, of which 93% (3,531 miles) on are private lands.

EXISTING PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The department contacted representatives from county governments and regional organizations to gather information about the recreation opportunities available to the public across the Western Sands Region. In addition, department staff searched websites for additional data and descriptions of the recreation opportunities provided. Maps C and D show existing recreation infrastructure in the ten counties of the region.

The Western Sands Region contains a large amount of public land, largely forested. These properties provide a wide range of high-quality recreation opportunities. What follows are examples of infrastructure in the Western Sands Region that support a variety of recreation activities.

a) Black River State Forest

- 3 family campgrounds, 97 family campsites, 2 group campgrounds
- Designated swimming and picnic areas
- 34 miles of ATV, UTV and motorcycle trails
- 29 miles of biking trails
- 24 miles of groomed ski trails
- 48 miles of snowmobile trails
- Hunting and fishing opportunities

b) Buckhorn State Park

- 4 miles of trails
- 68 family campsites
- Picnic/day use areas, 300-foot swim area and boat launches
- Fishing, hunting, and trapping opportunities
- Skiing and ice fishing opportunities

c) Lake Wissota State Park

- Hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails
- 116 wooded, secluded family campsites
- Four picnic shelters, swimming beach and a boat launch
- Hunting, trapping, fishing and nature study opportunities

d) Rib Mountain State Park

- Picnic areas, amphitheater and observation tower
- Hunting and trapping opportunities
- Hiking and snowshoeing opportunities

e) George W. Mead Wildlife Area

- Trapping and migratory bird, small game and big game hunting opportunities
- Dog training and trialing areas
- Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities
- Bird and wildlife viewing, gathering/harvesting edibles and nature study opportunities

f) Elroy-Sparta Trail

- The first rail-to-trail in the United States – featuring three rock tunnels and five small towns
- Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities
- Snowmobiling trails
- Two non-reservable campgrounds

g) Jackson County Forest

- 5 campgrounds with almost 300 campsites
- Hiking, ATV, motorcycle, **snowmobile** and horse riding trails
- Scuba diving at the state’s deepest lake, Wazee Lake

h) Marathon County Forest, Nine Mile Unit

- Hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing opportunities
- Horseback riding trails
- **Range for trap, target shooting and archery**
- **Snowmobiling opportunities**

PUBLIC INPUT ON RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE ROA.

The department hosted four public open house meetings, in Eau Claire, Stevens Point, Onalaska, and Appleton between October 23 and November 1, 2017. These open houses were designed to both present information about the ROA and to gather public input on the types of recreation activities they pursued, what places they liked to visit (including what attributes drew them to these properties), and what additional opportunities they wished were available in the Western Sands Region.

In addition to these open houses, the department posted an online public input form to its web page. A downloadable version was also available for people who preferred to print, fill out, and send in the form. The public input period ran from October 6 to November 17, 2017. The department sent out information and press releases about the ROA project and encouraged people to share their perspectives through the online or hardcopy public input forms. Recreation groups, non-profit organizations, and others distributed links to the input form to their members.¹⁴

The department received comments in the following formats:

- 856 online public input forms
- 98 paper copies of the public input form
- 4 letters and emails

It is important for readers to keep in mind that the public input received through the ROA process is simply information gathered at one point in time, using an open-access technique. It is not a representation of what the “average” resident believes or the range of perspectives that exist.

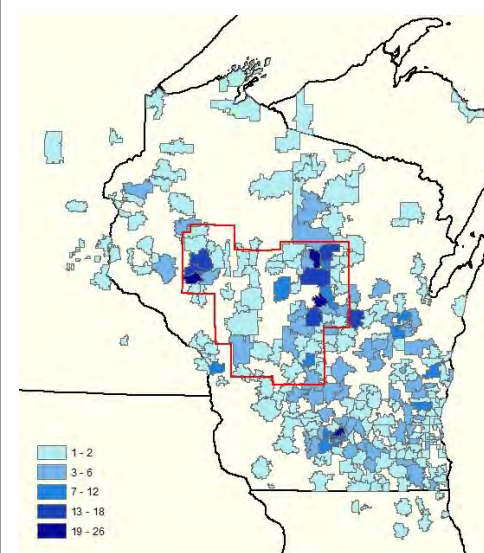
¹⁴ The public input form was available for anyone to complete and over 900 people did so. The department’s experience is that when it provides “open access” opportunities in which anyone can participate, the people that respond tend to be those that find out about the input opportunity and to have a particular or active, interest in a specific issue; that is, they care enough about an issue to take the time to find and fill out the form or write an email or letter. The responses received are valuable in providing the department with an understanding of people’s perspectives, reasoning and breadth of viewpoints. However, because there is no “defined population” from which these responses originate, from a statistical perspective there is no way to know how the respondents compare to a larger population (for example, how the 954 respondents compare to the population of the ten-county region or the state as a whole) and therefore no way that the results can be generalized with an associated error margin to a larger population.

Respondents were asked to list the zip code of their primary residence. Of those who provided this information, the map at right shows their distribution and frequency. For the most part, the primary residence of many people who provided input is within the ten-county Western Sands Region. The map to the right depicts that comments came from the more urbanized areas surrounding Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls, Stevens Point and Wausau. There was also a fair distribution of respondents from outside the region from southern and eastern Wisconsin.

Almost 19% of respondents identified themselves as living in Dane County. About 8% of respondents were from Marathon County and all remaining counties represented 6% or less of the whole. Of all the regions in this analysis, the Western Sands Region had the fewest total number of respondents to the questionnaire.

The department sought and received the following feedback about recreation in the Western Sands region. From central forests to the rugged southwest areas of the region, visitors will find much to explore. Proximity to urban centers combined with the large amount of public land is slowly shaping the Western Sands Region into a recreation destination.

Number of input forms submitted, by zip code



Participation in outdoor recreation

Respondents to the public input form participate in many outdoor recreation activities. Popular activities that were selected by respondents are seen in the table at right. We can compare these results to the participation results from the recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) survey. The **bolded** activities in the table at right were the more popular activities that the SCORP survey indicated residents in the Western Sands Region participate. Respondents who engage in activities that are not bolded participated in this public input opportunity at a higher rate than what is reflected by the regional average. As can be seen, the activities that respondents to the ROA input form participate in resemble the results of the random sample of Western Sands Region residents generated by the SCORP survey.

Popular recreation activities in which respondents to the ROA input form participate

Bicycling – surfaced trails

Bicycling – mountain biking, single track

Camping – tent

Camping – RV/pop-up

Canoeing/kayaking

Cross-country skiing/ snowshoeing

Fishing – from a boat, canoe or kayak

Hiking, walking, running on trails

Horseback riding

Swimming

Wildlife/bird watching

Properties that people visit

There are almost 750,000 acres in public ownership in the Western Sands Region between state, federal and county lands, third highest of all the ROA regions. Of the people that submitted information through the public input opportunity, over half had walked the Ice Age Trail and 40% had visited the Black River State Forest and Rib Mountain State Park in the last three years. About one third of respondents visited Hartman Creek State Park and the Elroy Sparta State Trail. Other popular properties included Marathon and Portage County Parks, the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, and Roche-a-Cri and Buckhorn State Parks.

Factors important in determining favorite places to visit

Of the people providing input, the majority (71%) selected (1) the quality of trails as one of the top four most important factors in determining their favorite property to visit. This is expected, given that many respondents noted their participation in a variety of trail activities. In decreasing order, the next three most important factors are: (2) the desire to be in a quiet place, (3) good maps, signs or information about the property, and (4) the quality of the habitat.

Additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed

Almost 80% of respondents believe that more recreational opportunities are needed in the Western Sands Region. Of the additional opportunities desired by respondents, five of the top six choices selected were trail-related. Again, this speaks to the respondents' participation in a variety of trail activities. The opportunity that was most frequently selected as needed in the Western Sands Region was more trails for hiking, walking or running, which was selected by 36% of respondents.

The recent SCORP survey of statewide residents found a correlation between the activities that people pursue and their perspectives on what additional opportunities are needed in their home county. For many activities, participants generally believed there was a need for more opportunities. The public input received as part of the ROA showed a similar pattern in the Western Sands Region. For example, a strong majority (80+%) of people who either ride single-track mountain bikes or horses believe there is a need for more single-track mountain bike or equestrian trails, respectively, in the Western Sands Region. Additionally, many horse trail supporters also noted a need for "horse campgrounds".

A growing voice within the Western Sands Region is that of rock climbers. Rock climbing fell just short of the top ten most frequently identified recreation opportunities needed in the Western Sands region. Once again, most of those who identified themselves as climbers noted a need for legal access to climbing opportunities.

Top 10 most frequently identified recreation opportunities needed in the Western Sands Region, based on public input gathered during the ROA process

Activity	# of responses
More hiking/walking/running trails	348
More natural surface (dirt) bicycling trails	226
More rustic/quiet campgrounds (pit toilets, no electricity or generators)	218
More horseback trails	200
More paved bicycling trails	184
More trails for motorized recreation (ATVs, UTVs, off-road motorcycles, etc.)	150
More public shore access to lakes & streams	123
More developed campgrounds (electric hook-ups, flush toilets, showers)	116
More local parks and playgrounds	83
More wildlife watching decks or platforms	78

Department-managed roads and motorized access

Over 600 miles of roads exist on department properties in the Western Sands Region, most of which are either maintenance access drives. Generally, these roads are used primarily for management purposes, including primitive seasonal logging roads, natural resource management or other property service activities. About one-third (215 miles) of these roads are open to the public to drive "street-legal vehicles"—this includes cars, pick-up trucks, SUVs, motorcycles and other licensed vehicles. By state law, these roads are also open to horses, horse-drawn vehicles and bicycles. Many local units of government in the Western Sands Region have authorized some types of motorized recreational vehicles on designated local roads and trails, amounting to over 2,600 miles of access.

The department sought public feedback on potentially opening none, some, or all department roads that are currently open to "street-legal" vehicles in the Western Sands Region to motorized recreation vehicles.¹⁵ About 42% of people that provided responses believed that all DNR roads should remain closed to motorized recreational vehicles. Of the 51% that supported allowing at least some motorized recreational vehicles on DNR roads, almost half thought that this access should be on a subset of roads that connect larger regional motorized recreation networks. In addition, 27% of these respondents supporting opening roads thought opening should occur to provide access during the fall hunting season (Sept 1 to Dec 31).

¹⁵ For purposes of the ROA, "recreational vehicles" includes off highway vehicles, ATVs, UTVs and off highway motorcycles.

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE WISCONSIN SCORP

In 2016 as part of the development of the SCORP, the department asked a random sample of Wisconsin residents to identify additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed in their home county. The most frequently identified needs statewide were:

- hiking/walking/running trails
- bicycling trails
- public shore access to lakes, rivers and streams
- public shooting ranges
- local parks and playgrounds

Respondents living in the ten counties in the Western Sands Region identified the following needs, among others, at a higher rate than the state average:

- equestrian trails
- trails for motorized recreation
- public campsites

Western Sands residents identified the following needs, among others, less frequently than the state average:

- hiking/walking/running trails
- bicycling trails
- public shooting ranges
- outdoor courts for tennis, handball, basketball

FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

The Western Sands Region has a variety of existing opportunities for most types of outdoor recreation. The diversity of the country-side between agriculture, forest cover, wetland complexes and various water resources allows for this variety of opportunities. There are a few clusters of urban areas with a population searching for nearby places to recreate. The amount of public land available for outdoor recreation is less than regions to the north, but still sufficient to offer opportunities to recreate outdoors. The main large block of public land is in the central forested area composed of county forests, the Black River State Forest and the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. Future recreation needs seem to be those that are more trail related, and in many cases, these needs appear to be for “loop trail” experiences on smaller public properties (1000 acres or less). There also seems to be a theme of developing access to unique natural resource areas. Being able to experience the outdoors in a variety of ways, whether it is by land or water. The growing popularity of smaller watercraft suggests that more and more people are finding ways to enjoy the water.

The department used the following sources to identify which recreation opportunities are most needed in the region:

- Public input on recreation needs submitted during the comment period (October 6 to November 17, 2017).
- Data on recreation participation and needs gathered in a 2016 survey as part of the development of the 2017-2022 SCORP.
- Data gathered in previous SCORP planning efforts.

From this information, department staff grouped the relative needs for recreation activities as high, medium or low. The groupings are as follows:

Future recreation needs in the Western Sands Region – High	Future recreation needs in the Western Sands Region - Medium	Future recreation needs in the Western Sands Region - Low
Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding Bicycling - mountain biking/off-road biking Bird or wildlife watching Camping - developed Camping - primitive Canoeing or kayaking Cross country skiing Dog walking Fishing - lake fishing from a boat, canoe or kayak Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier Fishing - river fishing from a boat, canoe or kayak Fishing - stream or river fishing from shore or wading Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking Horseback riding Hunting - big game Picnicking Snowshoeing Swimming in lakes and rivers	ATV/UTV riding Dog training Dog trialing Fishing - ice fishing Four-wheel vehicle driving Gather mushrooms, berries, etc. Hunting - migratory birds Hunting - small game Hunting - turkey Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft) Nature photography Off-highway motorcycle riding Participating in nature-based education programs Rock climbing Target shooting - firearms	Bicycling - fat tire/snow biking Dog sledding/skijoring Geocaching Horse cart driving Sailing, windsurfing, rowing, stand-up paddling Scuba diving/snorkeling Snowmobiling Target shooting - archery Trapping Visiting a beach, beach walking Whitewater rafting

OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION ON DEPARTMENT-MANAGED LANDS

On behalf of Wisconsin residents, the department owns and manages properties in the Western Sands Region to meet a variety of ecological and recreation goals. Since the region has fewer large blocks of public land, many of these experiences tend to be less remote than in the regions to the north. The central forested region, however, plays an important role in meeting the demand for activities that require large land areas. Proximity to population centers makes many of the small and moderately sized department properties popular with local residents. These properties are quick and easy to get to and have good points of access.

Applying the regional needs listed above, the department evaluated the properties it manages in the Western Sands Region to identify places where it could potentially incorporate some activities or enhance existing opportunities to meet these needs. The identification of department-managed lands that appear to be “good fits” to provide different activities will be used to help focus the department’s work developing and updating property master plans. A description of opportunities to meet recreation needs in the Western Sands Region (on department-managed lands) follows.

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL RECREATION

Non-motorized trail recreation has been and continues to be a primary outdoor activity throughout the year in the Western Sands Region. From hiking and biking in the summer to cross-country skiing in the winter, the region's residents and visitors take advantage of the numerous opportunities that currently exist.

Participation in mountain biking has grown recently in the region and demand exists for trails suitable for a variety of skill levels. As opposed to recreational bicycle touring, where there are benefits to creating multiple connecting linkages, meeting the growing need for mountain biking and off-road biking opportunities can be created or expanded at multiple, stand-alone sites throughout the region. Mountain biking trails are constructed, narrow trails less than two feet wide.

Hiking, walking, and running on trails in the region remain very popular activities. Many opportunities currently exist on department properties throughout the region. Urban centers in the region are actively adding trails to meet the local demand in their communities. The Ice Age Trail runs through parts of the region and planning is underway to link to communities to supply services needed by through-hikers.

Horseback riding is in demand in the region and opportunities potentially exist to develop trails on department properties especially where camping is available and allowed with horses.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for non-motorized trail activities

Recreation Activity	Activity currently exists at the property; there are opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently exists at the property; there are only limited opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are opportunities to add this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are only limited opportunities to add this use
Bicycling - mountain biking/off-road biking	Black River State Forest Buffalo River State Trail	Brunet Island and Lake Wissota State Parks Chippewa River, Elroy-Sparta and La Crosse River State Trails Buckhorn, Mc Millan, Mead, Meadow Valley, Sandhill and Wood County Wildlife Areas	Rib Mountain and Mill Bluff State Parks Big Rib River Fishery Area Dewey Marsh, North Bend Bottoms, South Beaver Creek and West Taylor Wildlife Areas	Buckhorn and Rocky Arbor State Parks Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Big Creek, Plover River and Emmons Creek Fishery Areas Augusta, Buena Vista, Colburn, Dell Creek, Leola Marsh, Paul Olson and Yellow River Wildlife Areas Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation River Area

Cooperatively Managed Trails

It should be noted that the department owns several state trails in the region. However, some of these trails are cooperatively managed by local governments, usually counties. In these partnerships, the department typically holds the land ownership while the partners develop, maintain and operate the trail. Also, the managing partner conducts planning processes to determine which recreational uses will be allowed on the property. Since use decisions are planned by the trail partners, cooperatively managed trails will not be listed below as potential "good fits" in this analysis. However, the information collected will be provided to the partners for their use in future planning efforts.

For the Western Sands Region, cooperatively managed trails include:

- Hillsboro State Trail
- Mountain-Bay State Trail
- Old Abe State Trail
- Tomorrow River State Trail

Recreation Activity	Activity currently exists at the property; there are opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently exists at the property; there are only limited opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are opportunities to add this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are only limited opportunities to add this use
Bicycling - bicycle touring/ road riding	Black River State Forest	Brunet Island, Buckhorn, Lake Wissota, Mill Bluff, Rib Mountain and Roche-A-Cri State Parks The 400, Buffalo River, Chippewa River, Elroy-Sparta and La Crosse River State Trails Mc Millan, Mead, Meadow Valley, Sandhill and Wood County Wildlife Areas	Dewey Marsh Wildlife Area	Rocky Arbor State Park Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Big Rib River and Big Creek Fishery Areas Augusta, Buckhorn, Buena Vista, Colburn, Dell Creek, Leola Marsh, Paul Olson, Tom Lawin and Yellow River Wildlife Areas Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area
Cross-country skiing	Black River State Forest Mill Bluff, Buckhorn and Roche-A-Cri State Parks Chippewa River State Trail	Lake Wissota State Park Augusta, Dell Creek, Buckhorn, Meadow Valley, Sandhill, Tom Lawin and Wood County Wildlife Areas Quincy Bluff & Wetlands State Natural Area Dells of The Wisconsin River State Natural Area	Rib Mountain State Park Big Rib River, Big Roche-a-Cri, Duncan Creek, Elk Creek, Hay Creek, Lowes Creek, Mccann Creek, Sand Creek and Upper Neenah Fishery Areas Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area Buena Vista, Dewey Marsh, Mc Millan, Mead and Paul Olson Wildlife Areas Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area	Rocky Arbor State Park Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Buffalo River State Trail Colburn, Leola Marsh and Yellow River Wildlife Areas
Horseback riding	Buckhorn, Colburn, Leola Marsh and Yellow River Wildlife Areas	Lake Wissota State Park The 400 State Trail Buena Vista Wildlife Area	Black River State Forest Rib Mountain State Park Big Rib River, Elk Creek, Mccann Creek and Sand Creek Fishery Areas Augusta, Lake Hallie, North Bend Bottoms, South Beaver Creek, Tom Lawin and West Taylor Wildlife Area	Brunet Island, Buckhorn, Mill Bluff, Roche-A-Cri and Rocky Arbor State Parks Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Big Creek, Emmons Creek and Plover River Fishery Areas Dewey Marsh and Paul Olson Wildlife Areas Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area
Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking	All department properties are open to hiking, although most fishery, wildlife and natural areas do not have designated trails. Designated trails are found on state park, trail, forest, and flowage properties. Nearly all department properties have opportunities to add at least some designated hiking/ running/backpacking trails.			
Dog walking	Dog walking has similar characteristic as hiking. Dogs must be leashed on department properties except where the hunting season allows for using dogs. Nearly all department properties have opportunities to add trails designated for hiking. Properties closer to urban areas may provide better access to more people searching for dog walking opportunities.			
Snowshoeing	All department properties are open to snowshoeing, regardless if department properties have designated trails or not. Snowshoe use on groomed cross-country ski trails is usually not allowed.			

WATER RELATED RECREATION

There is fair demand for water related recreation in the Western Sands Region, including swimming, fishing and a variety of types of boating.

This region contains large rivers and several flowages created by hydroelectric dams that are popular for boating. There is also an abundance of tributary streams in the region to fish or to simply enjoy a day on the water. Although there are many existing boat launches that accommodate trailers with motorboats as well as carry-in access for canoes and kayaks, there are several opportunities for additional access sites on underserved waterways on department properties to meet regional demand.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for water related recreation.

Recreation Activity	
Canoeing or kayaking	Although not every property with open water has formal boat access sites (or access sites on all waterbodies) many of the lakes, rivers, and larger streams on department-managed lands have some opportunities to carry in a canoe or kayak. The following properties may have the potential to add more walk-in trails to access waterbodies with canoes or kayaks: - Black River State Forest - Big Rib River Fishery Area - Big Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area - Little Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area - Mc Millan Wildlife Area - Mead Wildlife Area - North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area - Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area - Upper Neenah Fishery Area
Fishing - lake fishing from a boat, canoe, or kayak	The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, there are a limited number of lakes in the region and many of those are small kettle lakes. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are few department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access. The following property may have potential to add more improved boat access sites (ramps for trailered boats): North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area
Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier	All department lands with lakes are open to shore fishing and as such there are not significant opportunities to expand this opportunity. There are some fishing docks or piers on department lands and there are some opportunities to add new ones, particularly at those properties near cities and villages and with easy road access. The following properties may be able to provide opportunities: - Chippewa River State Trail - North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area - South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area

Recreation Activity	
Fishing - stream or river fishing from shore or wading	All department lands with streams or rivers are open to shore fishing and as such there are not opportunities to expand this opportunity at existing properties. There may be opportunities to expand shore fishing opportunities through the acquisition of key parcels or to create disabled accessible fishing areas on the following properties: - Black River State Forest - Big Rib River Fishery Area - Big Creek Fishery Area - Chippewa River State Trail - Emmons Creek Fishery Area - North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area - Plover River Fishery Area - Richard A Hemp Fishery Area - Sand Creek Fishery Area - South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area
Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)	The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, the number of large waterbodies in the region that would be able to accommodate motorboating is limited. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are no department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access.
Swimming in lakes and rivers	All department properties adjacent to public waters allow swimming. Many department properties, especially state parks and forests, have beaches, changing rooms and other amenities to accommodate swimming. The following department properties may be able to either add new opportunities for swimming access or expand existing: - Black River State Forest - North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area

OTHER FORMS OF RECREATION

There appears to be demand for many other types of outdoor recreation in the Western Sands Region, including camping, picnicking, and big game hunting.

Camping in general is becoming more popular in this region. Being closer to urban centers, this region provides access to outdoor recreation with less time required to reach their destination. Primitive camping areas for those hiking the Ice Age Trail are in demand. Places to go for the day and picnic, or simply going for a walk to experience wildlife are also appearing to increase in popularity in the region. Local public land managers may be able to also meet the need for camping and picnicking areas.

Department properties here see a fair amount of use for hunting. There are occasions where higher hunter numbers lessen the quality of the experience, especially during the deer gun season. The blocks of county and state forest tend to see less competition.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for other forms of recreation.

Recreation Activity	Activity currently exists at the property; there are opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently exists at the property; there are only limited opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are opportunities to add this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are only limited opportunities to add this use
Camping – developed	Black River State Forest	Buckhorn, Brunet Island, Lake Wissota, Mill Bluff, Roche-A-Cri and Rocky Arbor State Parks Elroy-Sparta State Trail	Chippewa River State Trail	Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Big Rib River Fishery Area Augusta, Buena Vista, Colburn, Dewey Marsh, McMillan, Mead, Paul Olson and Tom Lawin Wildlife Areas
Camping – primitive	Black River State Forest Brunet Island State Park Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area	Buckhorn State Park Roche-A-Cri State Park Meadow Valley Wildlife Area Wood County Wildlife Area	Chippewa River State Trail State Ice Age Trail Area properties Big Rib River, Duncan Creek, Elk Creek and Mccann Creek Fishery Areas Augusta, Dell Creek, Dewey Marsh, Lawrence Creek, McMillan, Mead, North Bend Bottoms, South Beaver Creek, Tom Lawin and West Taylor Wildlife Areas	Buena Vista Colburn, Leola Marsh, Paul Olson and Yellow River Wildlife Areas Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area
Picnicking	Black River State Forest Rib Mountain State Park Big Rib River Fishery Area Elroy-Sparta and La Crosse River State Trails Meadow Valley Sandhill and Wood County Wildlife Areas	Chippewa Moraine State Recreation Area Chippewa River State Trail Brunet Island, Buckhorn, Lake Wissota, Mill Bluff Rocky Arbor and Roche-A-Cri State Parks Dells of The Wisconsin River and Ohmart Wetlands State Natural Areas	Dewey Marsh, McMillan and Mead Wildlife Areas	Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area Augusta, Buena Vista, Colburn, Leola Marsh, Paul Olson, Tom Lawin and Yellow River Wildlife Area
Big game hunting	Nearly all department properties are open to big game hunting, at least some part of the season. State parks and trails have special regulations pertaining to when and where hunting is allowed in designated areas on the property. Hunter walking trails are sometimes desired to reach different parts of the property, so adding trails could provide better opportunity for some hunters. In some cases, properties may be able to add parking to improve access for hunters.			
Bird and wildlife watching	All department properties are open to bird and wildlife watching. Trails are sometimes desired but not necessary. In some cases, properties may be able to add viewing platforms that would provide better vantage points from which to view wildlife. Nearly all department properties have opportunities to add at least some designated hiking trails or viewing platforms that would aide this activity.			

SUMMARY OF THE WESTERN SANDS REGION ROA

With a diversity of public conservation lands within the diverse landscape, the Western Sands Region provides outdoor recreation for those looking for a mix of developed recreation facilities. Much of what recreationists look for can all be found here—regional trail networks for various forms of trail use, large properties for migratory bird and big game hunting, state and county park properties with camping, picnic areas and hiking trails, as well as waterways for boating and canoe/kayak use.

Although the region is rich in current opportunities, many needs were expressed by residents. Topping the list of needs are: hiking, walking, and running trails, developed and rustic campgrounds, picnic and wildlife viewing areas, as well as horseback riding, bicycle touring and mountain biking trails.

The department believes there are opportunities to meet many of the desired recreational experiences on some of the properties it manages in the Western Sands Region. In general, the department believes the following property groups are well-suited to provide the identified needs in the region:

STATE PARKS, FORESTS AND RECREATION AREAS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths. Properties in proximity to cities and villages likely would be most popular.
- Mountain biking trails that expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Cross-country ski trails could be established and/or expanded on existing trails.
- Equestrian trails that either connect a network and/or are loop trails contained wholly in the property.
- Developed camping, including adding electrified sites to significant portions of campgrounds.
- Primitive camping to serve long-distance trail users and/or isolated sites in larger properties for wilderness-type camping for hunting, hiking and canoeing/kayaking.
- Picnic areas and wildlife viewing areas could be developed to meet the demand of day-users.
- Walk-in access to waterways for canoe/kayak users could be developed.

STATE TRAILS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- Cross-country ski trails could be established and/or expanded on existing trails.
- Primitive camping to enable trail users to take multi-day trips.
- Picnic areas could be developed or expanded at trailhead areas.

STATE WILDLIFE AND FISHERY AREAS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- Mountain biking trails that expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Equestrian trails that either connect a network and/or are loop trails contained wholly in the property.
- Cross-country ski trails could be established and/or expanded on existing trails.
- Primitive camping to serve long-distance trail users and/or isolated sites in larger properties for wilderness-type camping for hunting, hiking and canoeing/kayaking.
- Picnic areas and wildlife viewing areas could be developed to meet the demand of day-users.
- Walk-in access to waterways for canoe/kayak users could be developed.

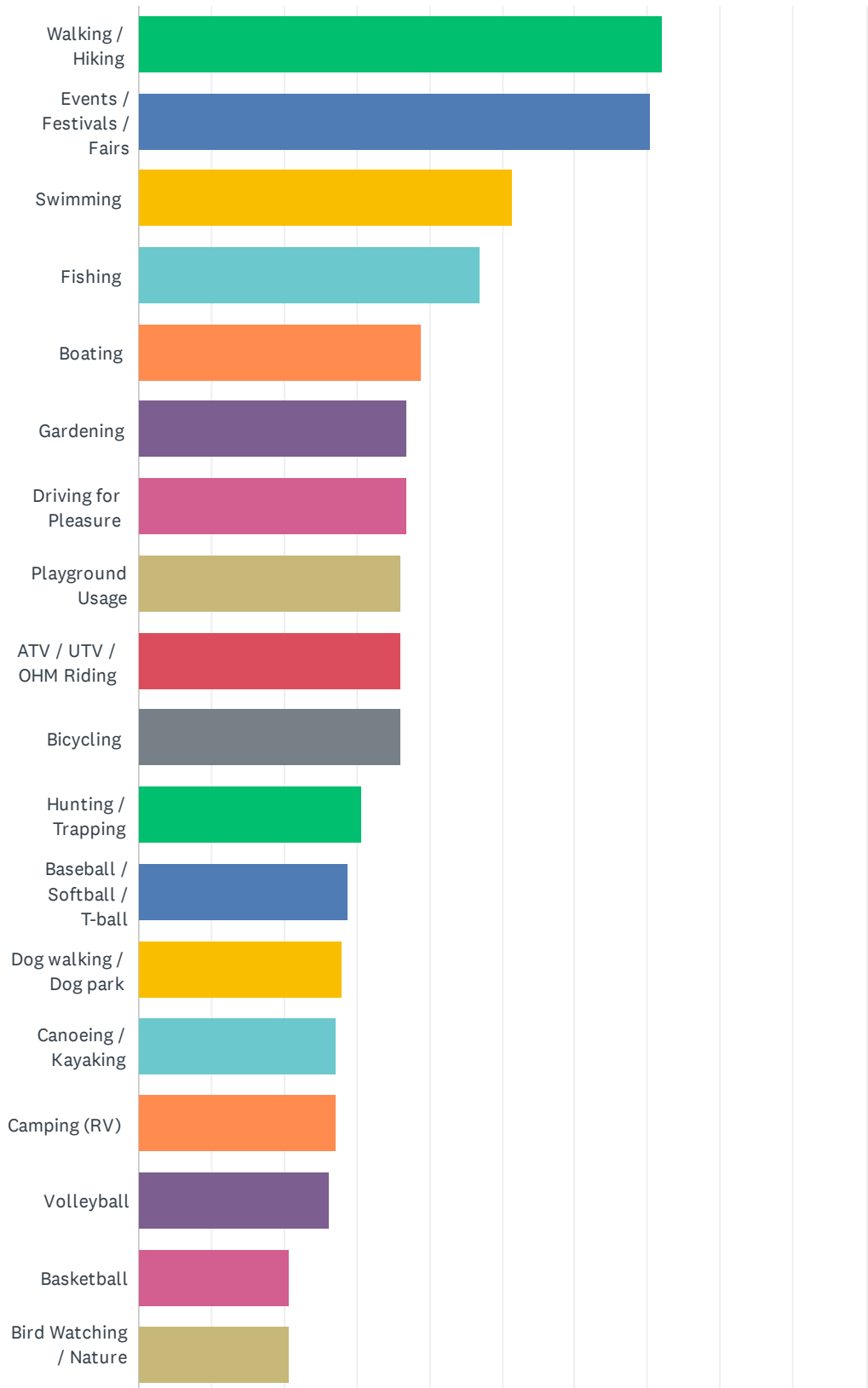
Attachment E

Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025 – Results with comments

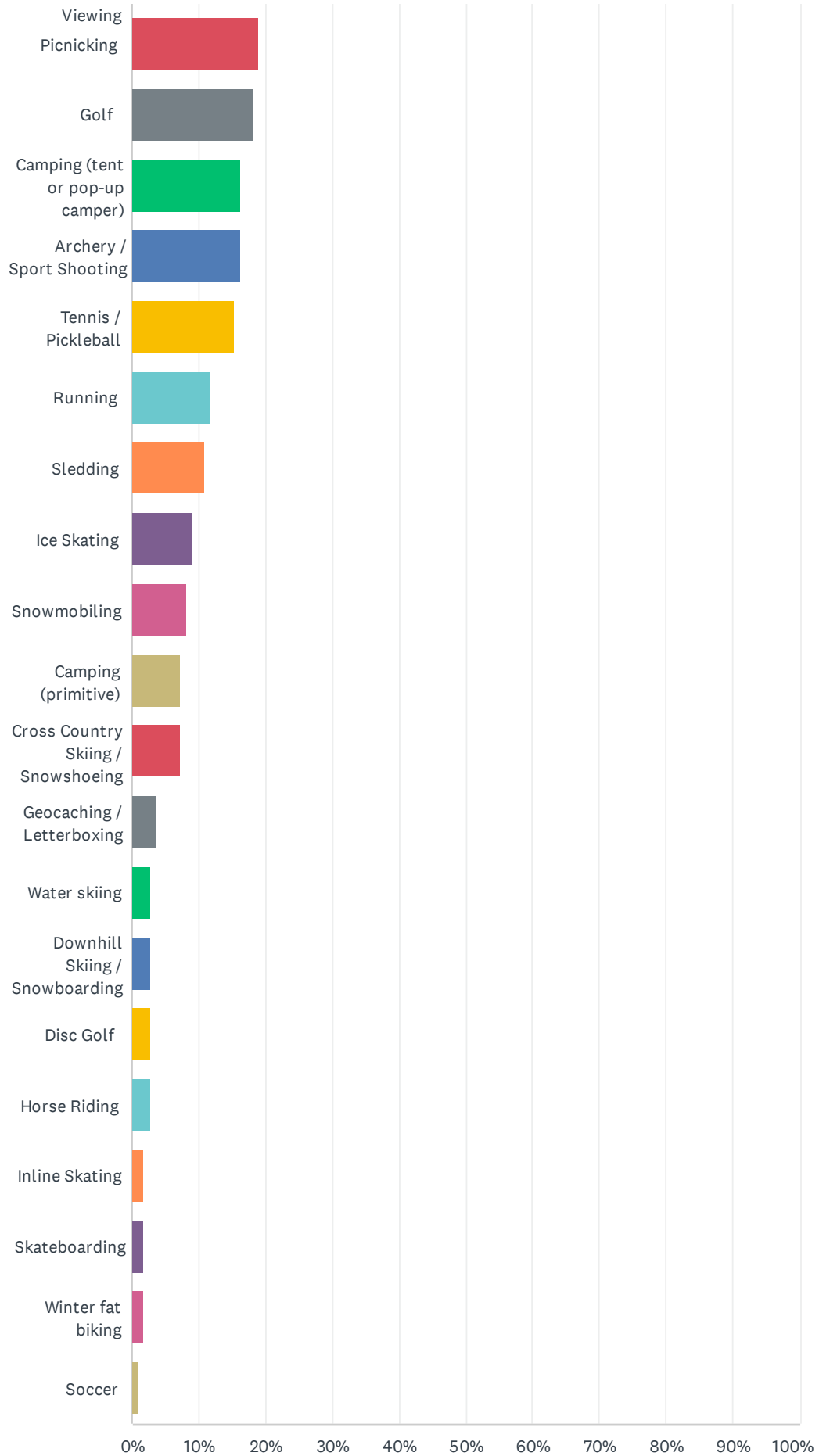
Compiled by: NCWRPC

Q1 Which recreational activities did you participate in during 2024?
(Choose all that apply.)

Answered: 111 Skipped: 0



Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025



Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Walking / Hiking	72.07%	80
Events / Festivals / Fairs	70.27%	78
Swimming	51.35%	57
Fishing	46.85%	52
Boating	38.74%	43
Gardening	36.94%	41
Driving for Pleasure	36.94%	41
Playground Usage	36.04%	40
ATV / UTV / OHM Riding	36.04%	40
Bicycling	36.04%	40
Hunting / Trapping	30.63%	34
Baseball / Softball / T-ball	28.83%	32
Dog walking / Dog park	27.93%	31
Canoeing / Kayaking	27.03%	30
Camping (RV)	27.03%	30
Volleyball	26.13%	29
Basketball	20.72%	23
Bird Watching / Nature Viewing	20.72%	23
Picnicking	18.92%	21
Golf	18.02%	20
Camping (tent or pop-up camper)	16.22%	18
Archery / Sport Shooting	16.22%	18
Tennis / Pickleball	15.32%	17
Running	11.71%	13
Sledding	10.81%	12
Ice Skating	9.01%	10
Snowmobiling	8.11%	9
Camping (primitive)	7.21%	8
Cross Country Skiing / Snowshoeing	7.21%	8
Geocaching / Letterboxing	3.60%	4
Water skiing	2.70%	3
Downhill Skiing / Snowboarding	2.70%	3

Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025

Disc Golf	2.70%	3
Horse Riding	2.70%	3
Inline Skating	1.80%	2
Skateboarding	1.80%	2
Winter fat biking	1.80%	2
Soccer	0.90%	1
Total Respondents: 111		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Drive in movie. Cornhole.	8/6/2025 8:16 PM

Q2 (Optional) - What outdoor recreational opportunities would you like considered in the Village of Spencer?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 63

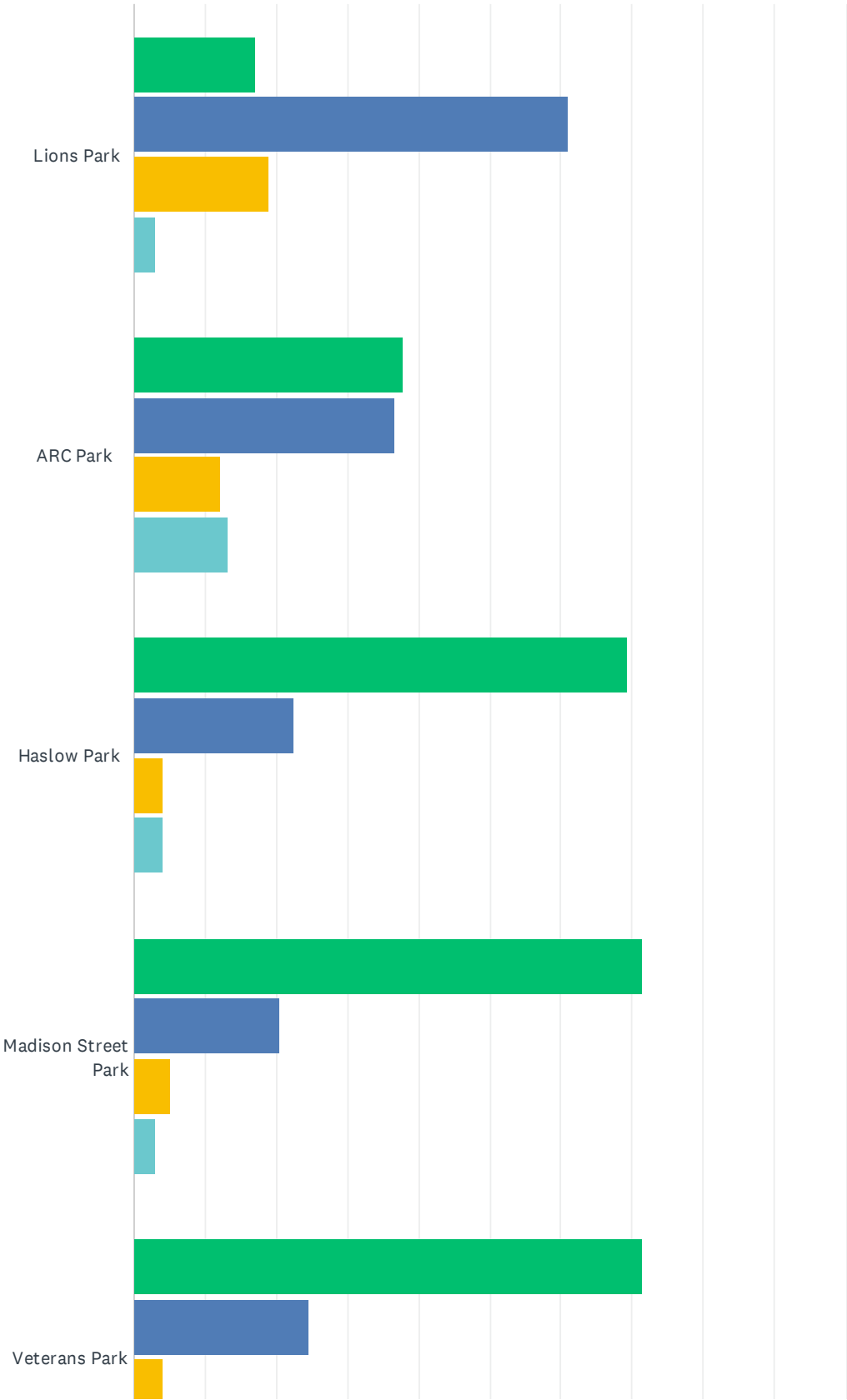
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Walking / bike trails	8/26/2025 11:16 AM
2	Walking/biking trail.	8/12/2025 4:41 PM
3	biking/walking trail around perimeter of village	8/11/2025 2:45 PM
4	Bow/crossbow targe range	8/7/2025 7:19 AM
5	Swim!	8/7/2025 12:20 AM
6	Volleyball	8/6/2025 8:16 PM
7	Splash pad, lion shelter insulated for use during the winter, better blacktop or dryer grounds for Spencerama, outdoor bathrooms for lions shelter that are open to the public, a new park with some woods,	8/6/2025 7:15 PM
8	Walking biking trails that connect to Marshfield.	8/6/2025 10:02 AM
9	A walking trail.	8/6/2025 8:00 AM
10	Bike path because the obe path that there is, is only like 115 feet.	8/5/2025 9:04 PM
11	Full court basketball court and nice sand volleyball court	8/5/2025 9:02 PM
12	Walk/bike path	8/5/2025 8:56 PM
13	Tennis court	8/5/2025 7:11 PM
14	It would be really nice to have more walking / biking / nature trails. If there was a way to connect the trail behind water treatment plant, that would be awesome. Even if it was something simple like what was done between aspen and apple st.	8/5/2025 5:17 PM
15	Walking / biking / nature trails. If there was a way to connect the trail behind water treatment plant to other routes, it would be really nice, even if it was something simple like trail connecting aspen to apple st.	8/5/2025 5:11 PM
16	Bike trail	8/5/2025 5:08 PM
17	Running/walking/bike trails	8/5/2025 3:38 PM
18	Indoor pickleball, swing and ballroom dance lessons for couples	8/5/2025 3:27 PM
19	A network of walking trails trying to be in a cohesive manner so you're able to go on shorter or longer walks if u have to. Spencer has many areas it could ulilize that are not being used. Or are but potions could be used between lots of.	8/5/2025 3:25 PM
20	Walking trail!	8/5/2025 3:19 PM
21	Walking trails	8/5/2025 3:13 PM
22	Fishing pond for kids	8/5/2025 2:35 PM
23	Larger ice rink	8/5/2025 2:27 PM
24	Full Basketball court	8/5/2025 2:16 PM
25	Multiple outdoor basketball courts. Walking trail around the village (No UTV/ATV allowed, they already make village roads dangerous to walk on).	8/5/2025 1:58 PM
26	Walking/Bike trails	8/5/2025 1:38 PM

Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025

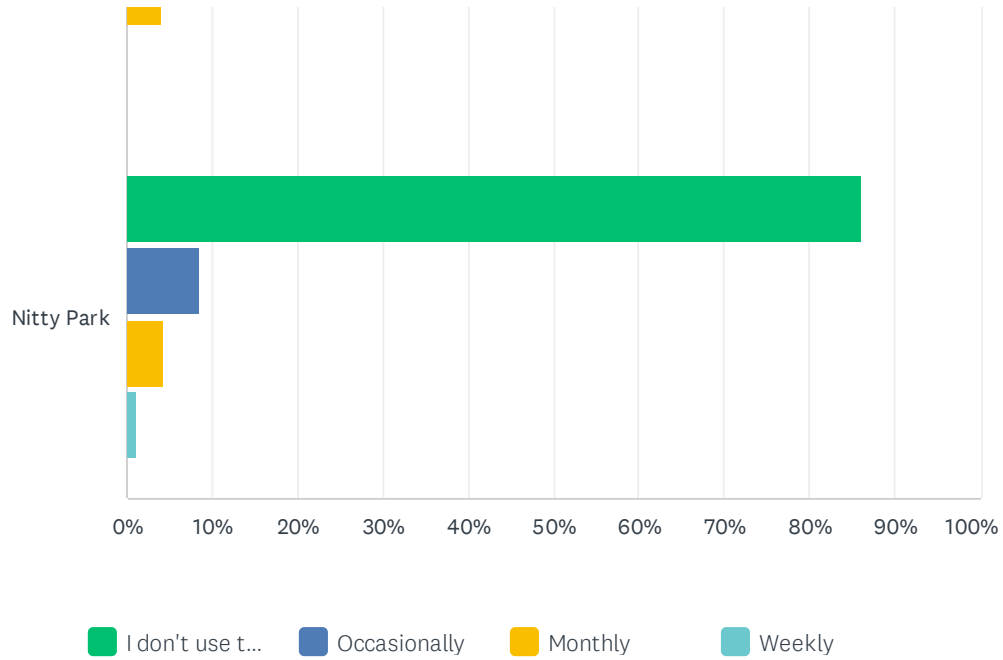
27	Swimming pool &/or splash pad	8/5/2025 1:36 PM
28	a walking/bike riding path	8/5/2025 1:33 PM
29	Walking/bike paths	8/5/2025 1:24 PM
30	Walking path that's shaded	8/5/2025 1:19 PM
31	Splash pad	8/5/2025 1:16 PM
32	Walking trails, park music	8/5/2025 12:53 PM
33	Walking trails/walking loop	8/5/2025 12:51 PM
34	Full walking trail around the whole village of Spencer.	8/5/2025 12:49 PM
35	Walking trails	8/5/2025 12:43 PM
36	Walking trails.	8/5/2025 12:39 PM
37	Walking path	8/5/2025 12:38 PM
38	Bike trail	8/5/2025 12:34 PM
39	Walking/biking trails	8/5/2025 12:34 PM
40	Walking/biking path around the village so people are safer from inattentive drivers	8/5/2025 12:32 PM
41	Curling,helping set up gardens for area buisnesses	8/5/2025 12:28 PM
42	Pool	8/5/2025 12:27 PM
43	Outdoor Basketball hoops, indoor batting cage, fishing pond with stocked fish, bike/walking trails, school swimming pool,	8/5/2025 12:25 PM
44	Trails for walking	8/5/2025 12:19 PM
45	Village swimming pool and walking path	8/5/2025 12:15 PM
46	Swimming	8/5/2025 12:13 PM
47	Better dog park, Haslow playground equipment updated	8/5/2025 12:12 PM
48	Disc golf course	8/5/2025 12:12 PM

Q3 How often do you use the following parks?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 11



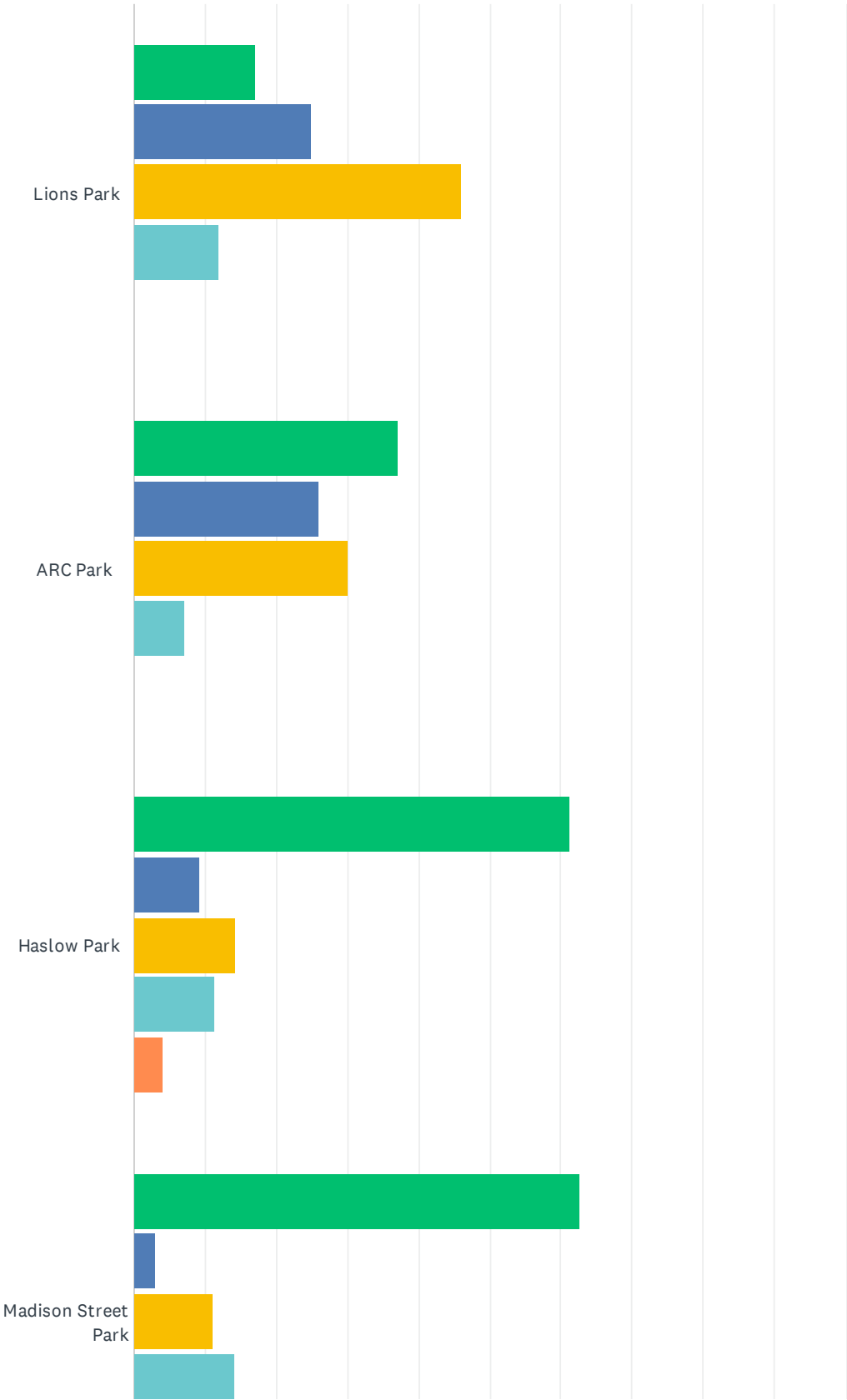
Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025



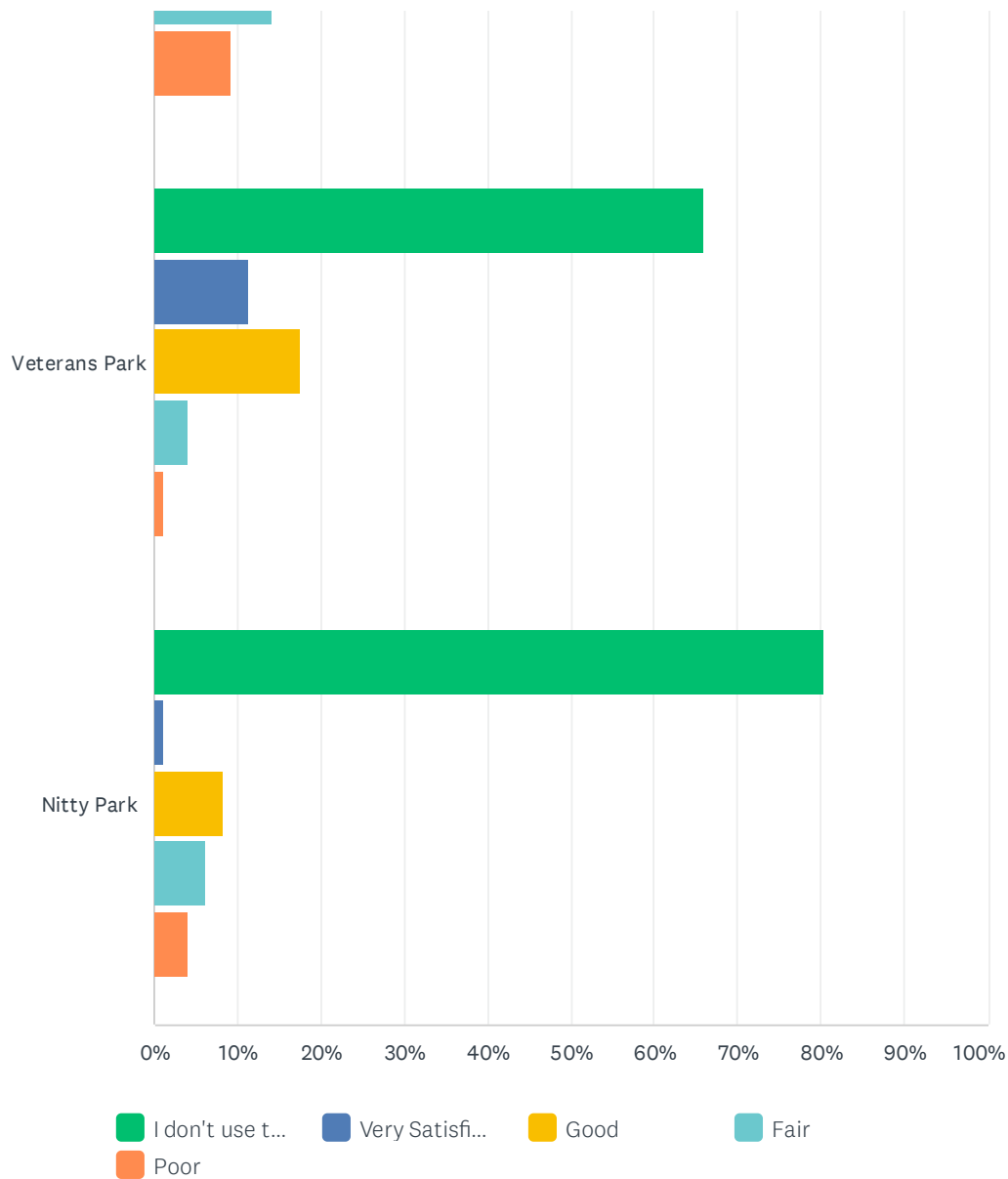
	I DON'T USE THIS PARK.	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	TOTAL
Lions Park	17.00% 17	61.00% 61	19.00% 19	3.00% 3	100
ARC Park	37.76% 37	36.73% 36	12.24% 12	13.27% 13	98
Haslow Park	69.39% 68	22.45% 22	4.08% 4	4.08% 4	98
Madison Street Park	71.43% 70	20.41% 20	5.10% 5	3.06% 3	98
Veterans Park	71.43% 70	24.49% 24	4.08% 4	0.00% 0	98
Nitty Park	86.17% 81	8.51% 8	4.26% 4	1.06% 1	94

Q4 Please rate your satisfaction with the following parks:

Answered: 100 Skipped: 11



Village of Spencer Outdoor Recreation Survey 2025



	I DON'T USE THIS PARK.	VERY SATISFIED	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	TOTAL
Lions Park	17.00% 17	25.00% 25	46.00% 46	12.00% 12	0.00% 0	100
ARC Park	37.00% 37	26.00% 26	30.00% 30	7.00% 7	0.00% 0	100
Haslow Park	61.22% 60	9.18% 9	14.29% 14	11.22% 11	4.08% 4	98
Madison Street Park	62.63% 62	3.03% 3	11.11% 11	14.14% 14	9.09% 9	99
Veterans Park	65.98% 64	11.34% 11	17.53% 17	4.12% 4	1.03% 1	97
Nitty Park	80.41% 78	1.03% 1	8.25% 8	6.19% 6	4.12% 4	97

Q5 How much do you like to ice skate?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 13

2.0★
average rating



	NOT AT ALL.	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	VERY MUCH!	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	57.14% 56	12.24% 12	16.33% 16	7.14% 7	7.14% 7	98	1.95

Q6 How much do you like to play pickleball?

Answered: 96 Skipped: 15

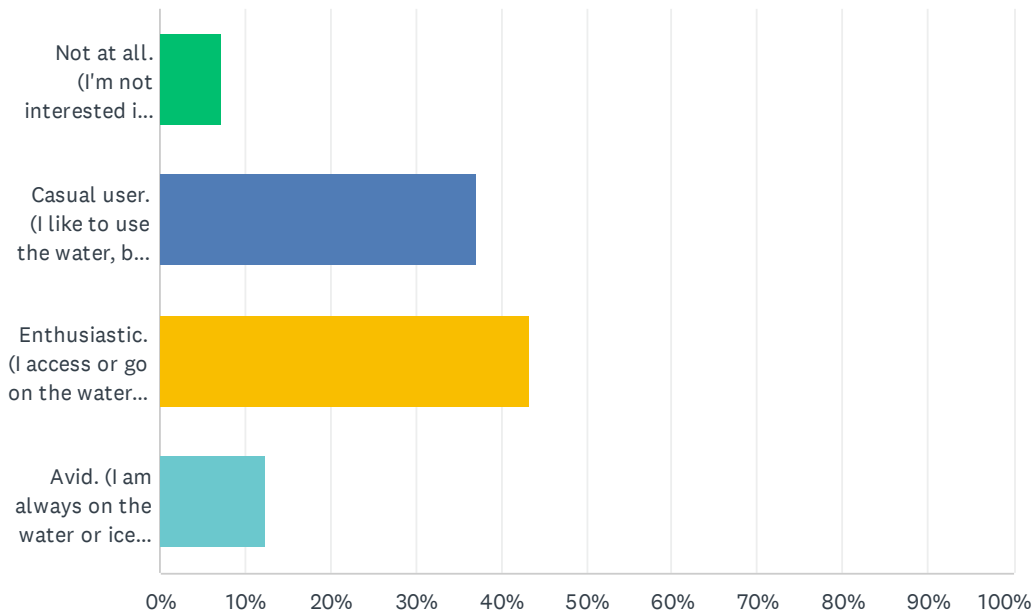
2.3★
average rating



	NOT AT ALL.	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	(NO LABEL)	VERY MUCH!	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
☆	38.54% 37	25.00% 24	17.71% 17	8.33% 8	10.42% 10	96	2.27

Q7 What type of water enthusiast are you?(Choose one.)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Not at all. (I'm not interested in water recreation at all, not even with friends.)		7.22%	7
Casual user. (I like to use the water, but only do so occasionally.)		37.11%	36
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on the water regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)		43.30%	42
Avid. (I am always on the water or ice every chance I get.)		12.37%	12
TOTAL			97

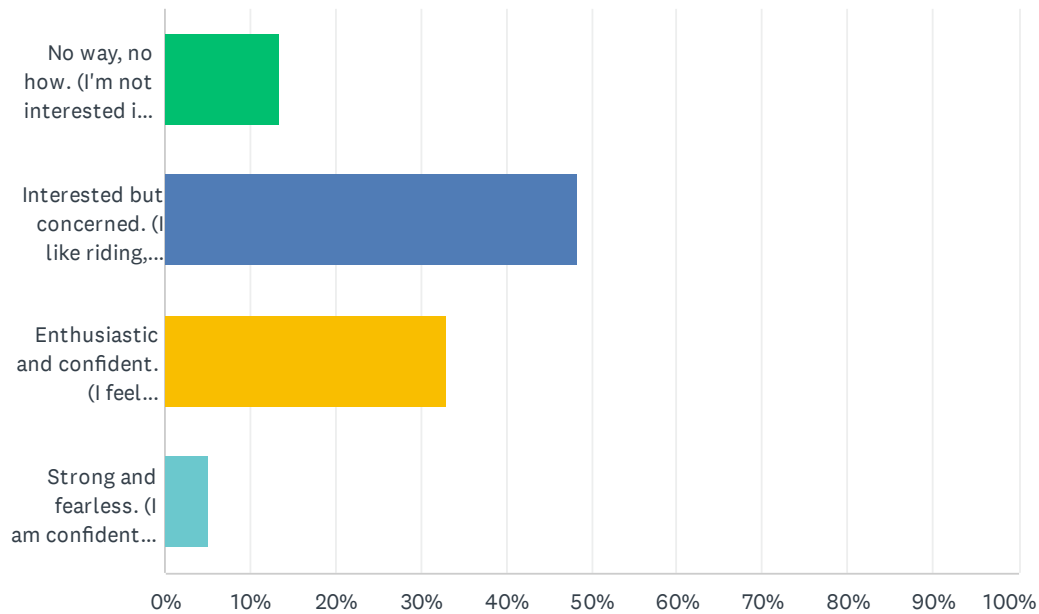
Q8 (Optional) Any water access improvements needed near Spencer?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 89

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Yes - A splash pad park would be great. Better yet with a lap pool.	8/26/2025 11:23 AM
2	we could do a zoo	8/9/2025 4:11 PM
3	Kiddie pool or splash pad - clean out weeds at pond by ponderosa	8/7/2025 12:24 AM
4	Swimming	8/6/2025 8:21 PM
5	A fountain and splash pad.	8/6/2025 8:06 AM
6	Splash pad for kids	8/5/2025 9:35 PM
7	A pool would be nice to be honest.	8/5/2025 9:09 PM
8	Kayak entry and exit public launches	8/5/2025 8:41 PM
9	Water park for the kids would be nice	8/5/2025 8:05 PM
10	What water?	8/5/2025 5:11 PM
11	If there is any water access near Spencer that would be great. It would be nice if there was a decent access point near town to the the marsh area.	8/5/2025 3:30 PM
12	Splash pad	8/5/2025 2:25 PM
13	What water access?	8/5/2025 2:01 PM
14	Small splash pad	8/5/2025 1:41 PM
15	It would be nice to work with the City of Marshfield on getting the resident rates for their aquatic outdoor center.	8/5/2025 1:34 PM
16	Don't have any.	8/5/2025 12:51 PM
17	Need an indoor pool	8/5/2025 12:30 PM
18	Yes, absolutely	8/5/2025 12:28 PM
19	There are no nearby lakes/rivers for boating and fishing. Obviously not something you can just build, but also something to think about considering most summer outdoor activities involve going to a body of water - including a LOT of Spencer families owning cabins up north because there are no real bodies of water close by	8/5/2025 12:27 PM
20	Yes. Get a pool	8/5/2025 12:19 PM
21	There isnt alot of water access in Spencer. Go out of town	8/5/2025 12:18 PM
22	Splash pad	8/5/2025 12:13 PM

Q9 What type of bicyclist are you? (Choose one.)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No way, no how. (I'm not interested in biking at all, not even for recreation.)	13.40%	13
Interested but concerned. (I like riding, but don't do it regularly. I'm generally concerned that my route is not safe to ride, so I don't ride often. I definitely do not ride when the weather is bad.)	48.45%	47
Enthusiastic and confident. (I feel comfortable sharing the road with motor vehicles, but I prefer to ride on separate facilities like bike lanes. I may or may not ride in inclement weather.)	32.99%	32
Strong and fearless. (I am confident in my abilities and will ride regardless of roadway conditions, amount of traffic, or inclement weather.)	5.15%	5
TOTAL		97

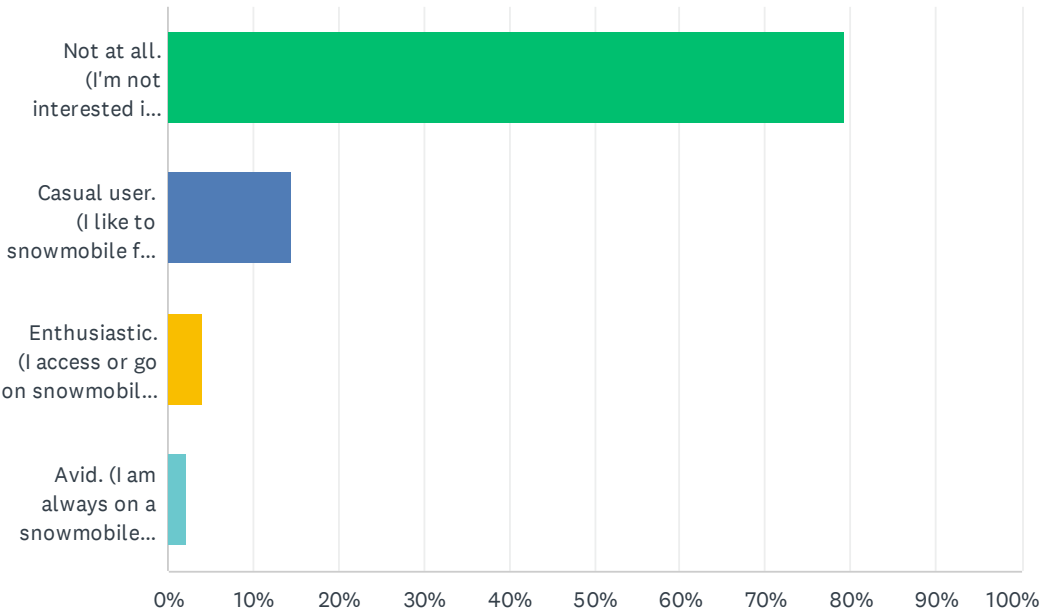
Q10 (Optional) Any bicycling improvements needed in Spencer?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 83

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Bike lanes or a dedicated route trail also a safer route for kids wanting to bike to school. With all the dead ends cutting off the safest places to cross Hwy 13 from the west side of town -- its a hazardous mess!!!	8/26/2025 11:23 AM
2	bike trail around village or to a neighboring village	8/11/2025 2:47 PM
3	no	8/9/2025 4:11 PM
4	bike lane on 98/c & 13	8/7/2025 7:22 AM
5	Sidewalks or bike path along willow	8/6/2025 8:21 PM
6	A bike trail...	8/6/2025 8:06 AM
7	Adding a bike path would be incredible, because there aren't many places to bike in Spencer.	8/5/2025 9:09 PM
8	Would be nice to have a bike trail somewhere in town	8/5/2025 9:05 PM
9	Bike lane	8/5/2025 8:59 PM
10	Same walking / biking trail comment as noted previously	8/5/2025 5:20 PM
11	Trail would be nice	8/5/2025 5:11 PM
12	Bike trails and lanes	8/5/2025 3:40 PM
13	Would love bike paths in our community	8/5/2025 3:30 PM
14	As with walking trails. More interconnect wakings. Something by the railroad tracks so u don't have to cross the highway would be nice. New areas being build would be nice that the roads go all the way through so u can have longer routes without crossing highway.	8/5/2025 3:30 PM
15	Slow down signs in neighborhoods with kids. Or children at play signs to slow down vehicles	8/5/2025 3:25 PM
16	a long easy to use trail around the village	8/5/2025 3:15 PM
17	A trail around the village would be great in future	8/5/2025 2:31 PM
18	This can be apart of the walking trail.	8/5/2025 2:01 PM
19	Bike trails	8/5/2025 1:41 PM
20	A safe trail to ride on.	8/5/2025 1:34 PM
21	Regulation of ebikes	8/5/2025 12:56 PM
22	Need bike trail that goes around whole village.	8/5/2025 12:51 PM
23	A walking/bike trail around the village so people don't have to deal with inattentive drivers	8/5/2025 12:35 PM
24	Yes	8/5/2025 12:28 PM
25	Wish there was bike trails	8/5/2025 12:21 PM
26	Cross walk at light by A&W going across 13 on Willow. Willow road is so rough!	8/5/2025 12:19 PM
27	Need biking trails	8/5/2025 12:18 PM
28	Biking lanes	8/5/2025 12:14 PM

Q11 What type of snowmobile enthusiast are you? (Choose one.)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all. (I'm not interested in snowmobiling at all, not even with friends.)	79.38%	77
Casual user. (I like to snowmobile for fun, but only do so occasionally, OR only on my own land.)	14.43%	14
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on snowmobile routes regularly.)	4.12%	4
Avid. (I am always on a snowmobile every chance I get - all winter long.)	2.06%	2
TOTAL		97

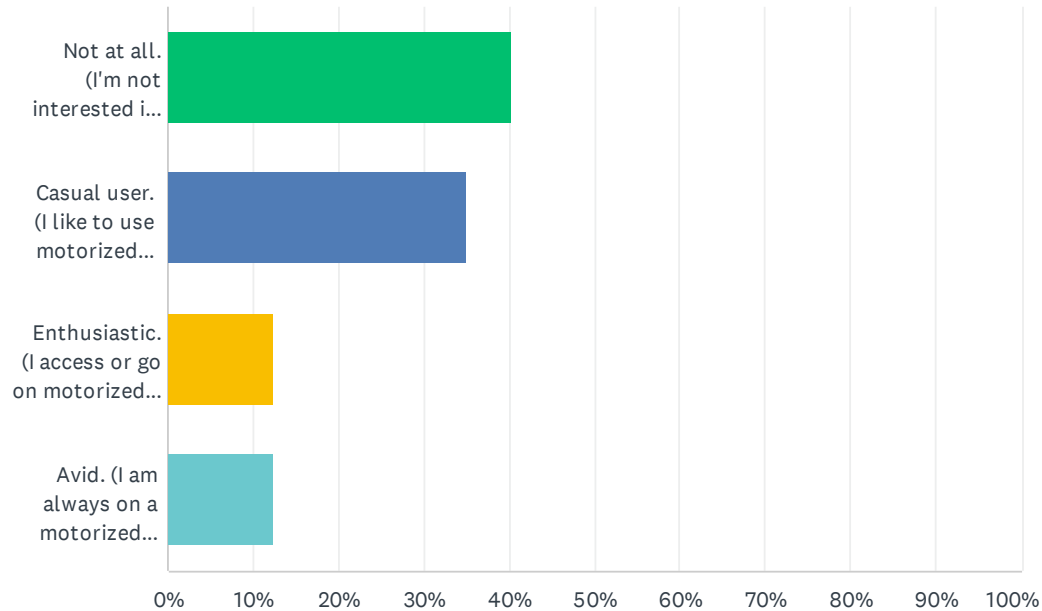
Q12 (Optional) Any improvements needed for snowmobiling in Spencer?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 109

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	no	8/9/2025 4:11 PM
2	Satisfied	8/6/2025 8:06 AM

Q13 What type of motorized vehicle (ATV / UTV / Off-Highway Motorcycle) enthusiast are you? (Choose one.)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 14



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all. (I'm not interested in motorized recreation at all, not even with friends.)	40.21%	39
Casual user. (I like to use motorized vehicles for fun, but only do so occasionally, OR only on my own land.)	35.05%	34
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on motorized routes and trails regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)	12.37%	12
Avid. (I am always on a motorized vehicle every chance I get - all year long.)	12.37%	12
TOTAL		97

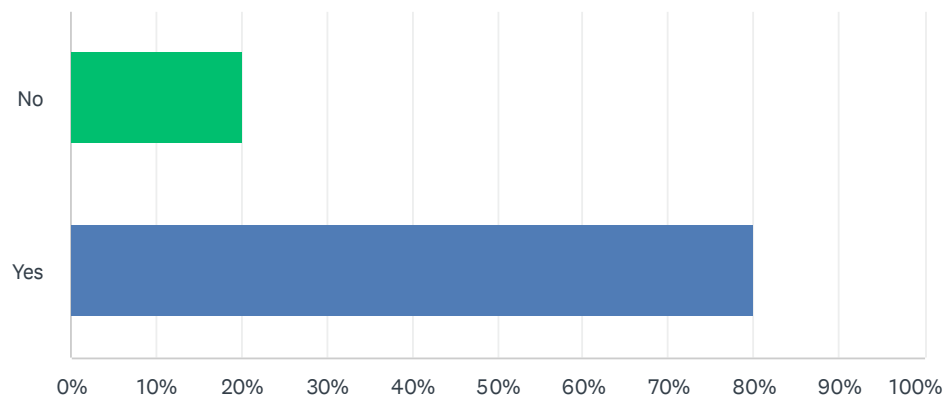
Q14 (Optional) Any improvements needed for motorized vehicle usage in Spencer?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 100

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The speed limit signs were a good idea. Also driver age / helmet use should be highlighted somehow. We've witnessed young drivers with passengers numerous occasions with no helmets or adult supervision.	8/26/2025 11:23 AM
2	no	8/9/2025 4:11 PM
3	Not really anything to improve upon in my opinion.	8/6/2025 8:21 PM
4	Not at the moment.	8/6/2025 8:06 AM
5	Enforce speed limit	8/5/2025 2:31 PM
6	Get them off our roads. They speed and don't follow road rules.	8/5/2025 2:01 PM
7	The in town speed for ATVs should be the same as the vehicles. There's been multiple times when I am going the slower, speed and many of the vehicles are going around me to pass and almost get into accidents because we are going slower than the actual vehicles.	8/5/2025 1:41 PM
8	Make posted speed limit the same as cars	8/5/2025 1:13 PM
9	Allow UTV's to travel speed limits in village.	8/5/2025 12:51 PM
10	Speed limit for utv be same as posted for cars.	8/5/2025 12:36 PM
11	We love that we can access most village and township roads, but it would be nice to have actual trails to ride. Clark Co trails are the closest trail system, which while they ARE close, are still about an hour away.	8/5/2025 12:27 PM

Q15 Do you live in the Village of Spencer?

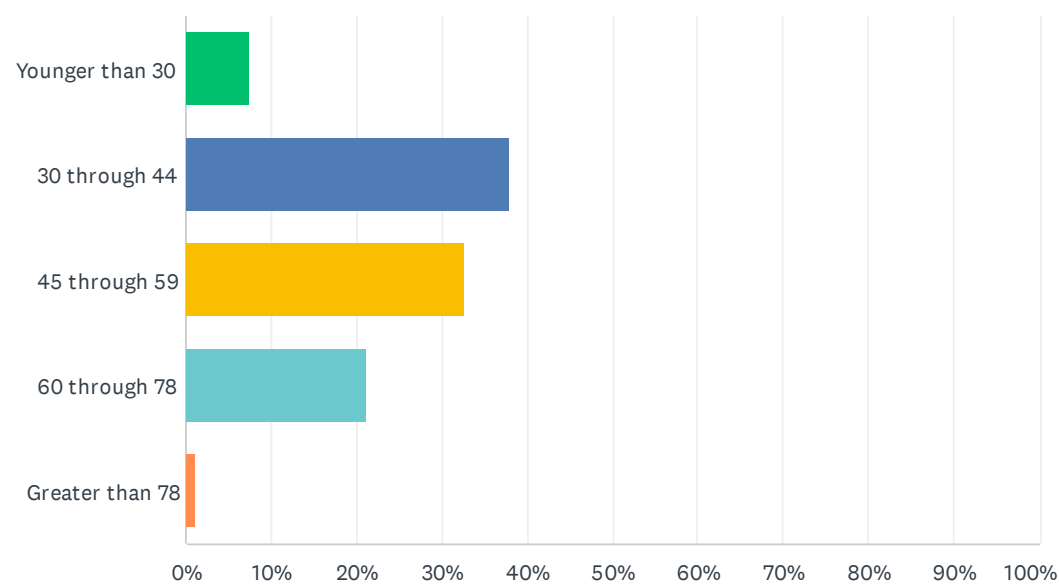
Answered: 95 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	20.00%	19
Yes	80.00%	76
TOTAL		95

Q16 What is your age?

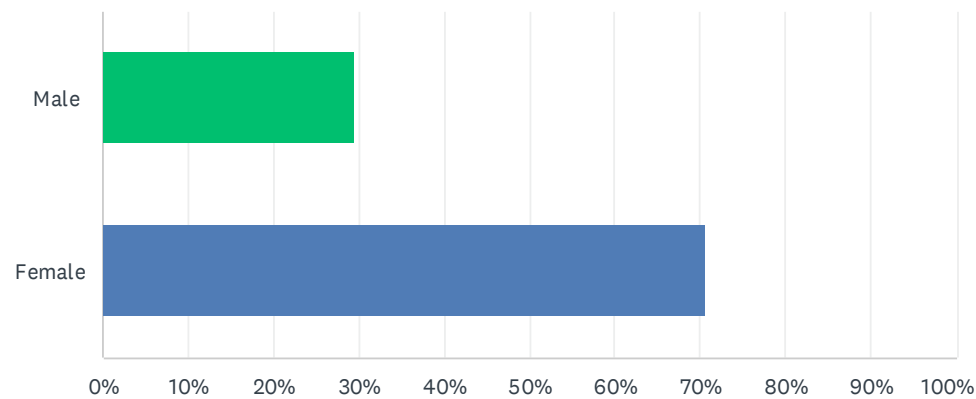
Answered: 95 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Younger than 30	7.37%	7
30 through 44	37.89%	36
45 through 59	32.63%	31
60 through 78	21.05%	20
Greater than 78	1.05%	1
TOTAL		95

Q17 What is your gender?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	29.47%	28
Female	70.53%	67
TOTAL		95

Attachment F

Bicycle Parking Guidelines

From:

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)

One page summary sheet.

And from City of Baltimore

Bicycle Parking Guidelines

A summary of recommendations from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals

Bicycle Parking Design

- Required spaces shall be at least 2 feet by 6 feet.
- An access aisle of at least 5 feet shall be provided in each facility.
- Racks shall be situated to allow a minimum of 2 feet between adjacent bike parking stalls.
- Spaces shall have a vertical clearance of at least 80 inches.

Bicycle Rack Design

Structures that require a user-supplied locking device:

- must accommodate U-shaped locking devices;
- support the bike frame at two points;
- be securely anchored to the ground or the building structure; and
- be designed and maintained to be mud and dust free.

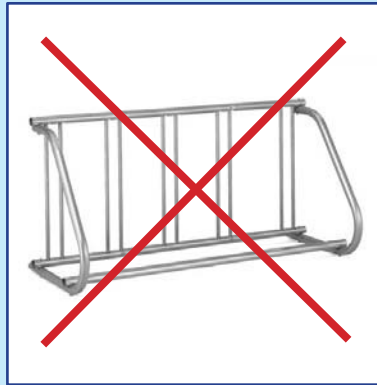
Bicycle Rack Location

- Racks should be located in a clearly designated safe and convenient location.
- Racks should be designed and located to be harmonious with the surrounding environment.
- Racks should be at least as convenient as the majority of auto parking spaces provided.

To learn more about bicycle parking guidelines, visit the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals at: www.apbp.org.

These bicycle racks do NOT meet the design guidelines:

Grid or Fence Style Racks



Wave or Ribbon Style Racks



These bicycle racks DO meet the design guidelines:

Inverted-U Style Racks



Angled Wave Style Racks



Freestanding Style Racks



The above images are examples only. NCWRPC does not endorse any particular bicycle rack manufacturers.

If you have questions about whether a particular bicycle parking rack you are considering using meets these requirements, please contact NCWRPC planner **Fred Heider**, AICP at fheider@ncwrpc.org.

PLACEMENT OF BICYCLE PARKING RACKS

RACK PLACEMENT RULES:

5' from:

Fire hydrant
Crosswalk

4' from:

Loading zone
Bus stop
Bus shelter
Bus bench

Min. 2', Rec. 3' from:

Curb

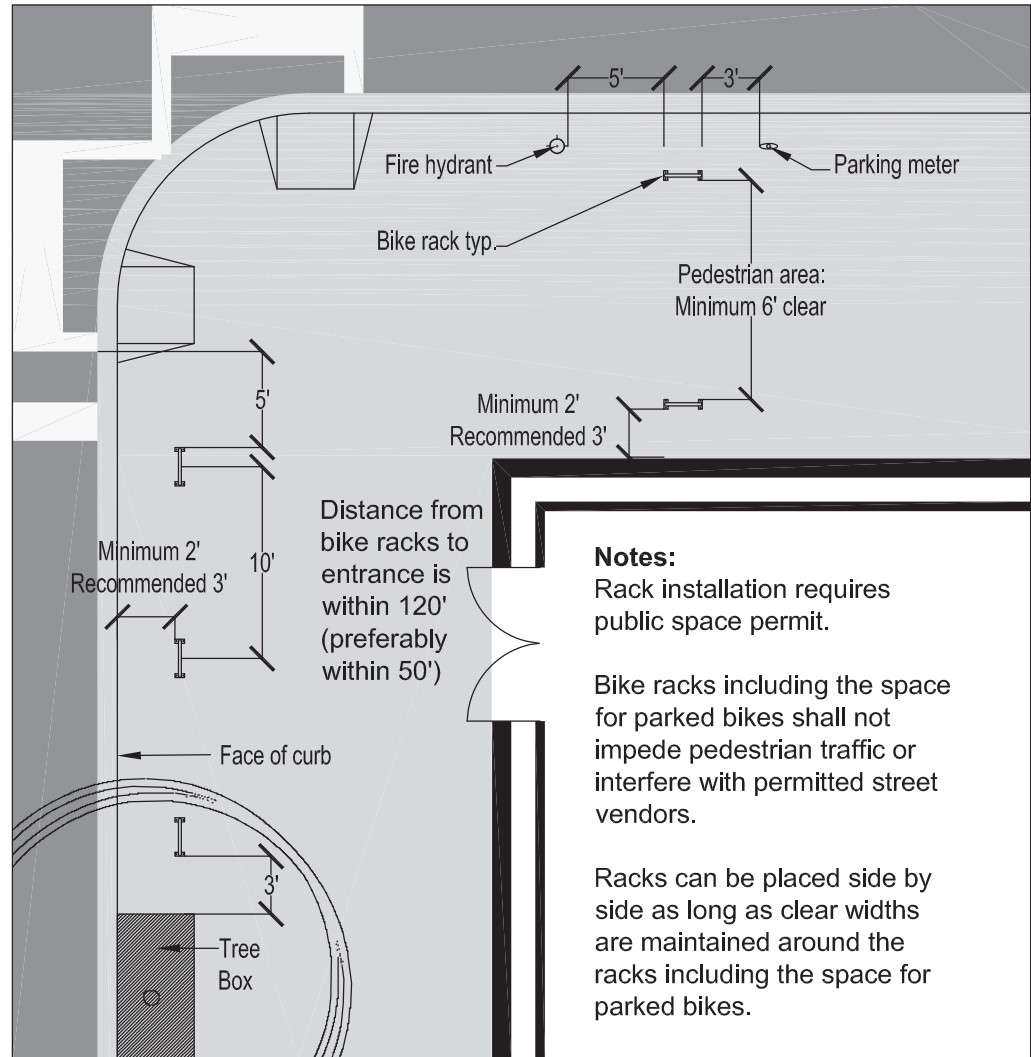
3' from:

Parking meter
Newspaper rack
US mailbox
Light pole
Sign pole
Driveway
Tree space
Trash can
Other street furniture
Other sidewalk obstructions

WALL SETBACKS

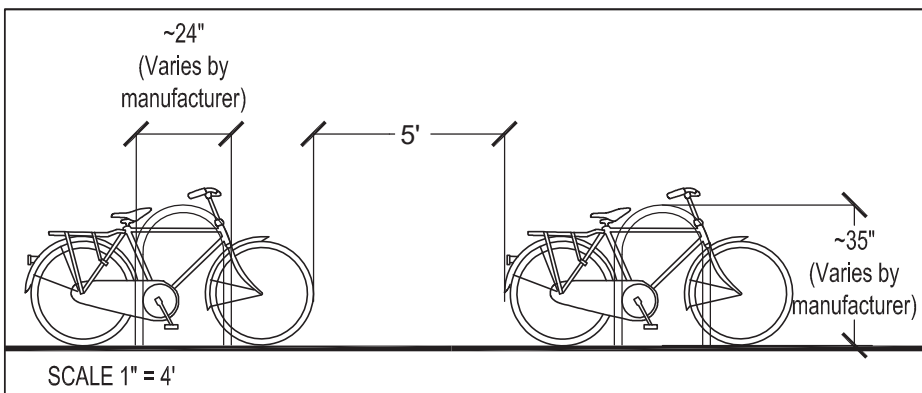
For racks set parallel to a wall:
Min. 24", Rec. 36"

For racks set perpendicular to a wall:
Min. 28", Rec. 36"

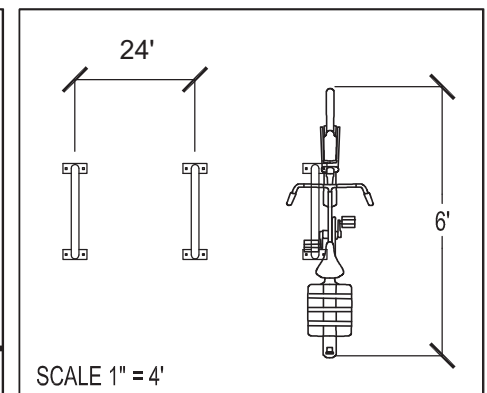


SCALE 1" = 10'

SIDE VIEW



SIDE BY SIDE RACKS:



City of Baltimore
Department of Transportation
Bicycle Facility Design Guide

REVISED:
Aug. 2005
SCALE:
AS NOTED