Forest County
Outdoor Recreation Plan

Also covering the municipalities within Forest County

DRAFT – November 2026

2027-2031

Effective January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2031

Prepared by: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Acknowledgements

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Source: NCWRPC

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DRAFT – November 2026

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Forest County Forestry & Recreation Committee, and the Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 1
   - 1.1 Purpose 1
   - 1.2 Provisions for Updating Plan 2
   - 1.3 Planning Process 2
   - 1.4 Reference Plans 3

Map 1 Outdoor Recreation 9

Map 2 County Administered Outdoor Recreation 10

Map 3 Legacy Places and Potential Trails 11

Map 4 City of Crandon Outdoor Recreation 12

Map 5 Town of Laona Outdoor Recreation 13

Map 6 Town of Wabeno Outdoor Recreation 14

2. BACKGROUND OF FOREST COUNTY 16
   - 2.1 Physical Characteristics 16
   - 2.2 Social Characteristics 20

3. OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES 27
   - 3.1 County Maintained Recreation Facilities 27
   - 3.2 Linear Facilities 27
   - 3.3 Points of Interest 32
   - 3.4 Public Access Points to Water Bodies 33
   - 3.5 Public Campgrounds 34
   - 3.6 School District Facilities 35
   - 3.7 Local Government Facilities & Capital Improvement Lists 36
   - 3.8 State Facilities 44
   - 3.9 Federal Facilities 46
   - 3.10 Forested Lands − Not State or County Owned 47

4. COUNTY MAINTAINED RECREATION FACILITES 48
   - 4.1 County Parks & Recreation Areas 48
   - 4.2 County Forest 48

5. OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT 50
   - 5.1 Public Participation 50
   - 5.2 Park Standards Analysis 57
   - 5.3 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends 58

6. GOALS & OBJECTIVES 60

7. RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 61
7.1 Local Government Recommendations 61
7.2 County Recommendations 61
7.3 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2026-2030 62

8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES 63

Attachments

A. Park Design and Location Criteria

B. Facility Development Standards

C. Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs

D. Forest County Outdoor Recreation Online Survey Results

E. Forest Legacy Areas, 2026, Forest County

F. Bog Brook Wildlife Area

G. Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway Route

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

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 Forest County. 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 Forest County Board will continue eligibility of the County and local governments for the following grant programs:

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



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.

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).

1.2 Provisions for Updating Plan

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 Forestry & Recreation 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 Forestry & Recreation Committee reviews plan and takes a vote to approve what changes to make.
2. County 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 County and maintain the County's eligibility for grant programs for an additional five years.

1.3 Planning Process

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Forest County Forestry & Recreation Committee, and Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Forest County Planning Timeline

Winter 2025-2026 – Staff park analysis, plans reviewed, & demographic data analysis.

February 9, 2026 – Forestry & Recreation Committee meeting – Overview of planning process, discussed questions for countywide survey and how to distribute the survey.

February-March 2026 – Survey available for 4-weeks. 269 responses. See survey details in Chapter 5.

Spring 2026 – Goals & Objectives developed.

Spring 2026 – All local governments contacted to update their parks and list any possible capital improvements.

June 8, 2026 – Forestry & Recreation Committee meeting – Reviewed survey results, and discussed initial goals & objectives.

Summer 2026 – Draft Plan ready for review.

November 2026 – Forestry & Recreation Committee meeting – Draft Plan presented for initial review.

Fall-Winter 2026 – Plan ready for approval by Forestry & Recreation Committee and adoption by County Board.

1.4 Reference Plans

This outdoor recreation plan was written to continue the parks and recreation program established in the Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plans of 1977-1982, 1989-1993, 1997-2001, and from 2002 to the present.

Plan summaries that affect outdoor recreation in Forest County are referenced below, and **Map 3** shows any referenced routes.

Forest County Comprehensive Plan, 2024

This plan is a combination of nine chapters. Within the following Plan chapters are the following goals, objectives, and policies that relate to outdoor recreation:

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter:

Goals:

1. Protect the County's natural features, including lakes, open space, wetlands, wildlife habitat, woodlands, and unique physical areas.
2. Protect large tract woodlands and enhance County Forests.
3. Reduce contamination of surface and groundwater resources in the County.
4. Encourage and support the preservation of natural areas that minimize flooding, such as grasslands, wetlands and woodlands.
5. Allow for needed non-metallic mining while balancing the interests of adjacent landowners and the County.
6. Forest County should be a member of the U.S. Forest Service Land Management Planning Team and the County should coordinate planning activities on any land within Forest County's boundaries.

Objectives:

1. New development should not negatively impact natural resources.
2. Protect surface water, groundwater, and shoreline quality.
3. Identify the critical natural resources, such as lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands.
4. Promote opportunities that support both natural resource protection and economic development.
5. Encourage the development of a natural area network connecting open areas, wetlands, and woodlands.
6. Integrate and implement the County Forest Comprehensive Plan.
7. Balance access to natural areas with resource protection efforts.
8. Promote groundwater protection efforts to maintain and lower nitrate, pesticide, and volatile organic compound pollution.

9. Promote development that minimizes surface and groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.
10. Promote proper reclamation techniques in the County for non-metallic mineral mining sites.
11. Minimize impacts to the County's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.

Policies:

1. Work cooperatively with the WDNR and other forestry agencies and organizations in sponsoring workshops and educational materials regarding sound forest management practices and programs.
2. Implement the policies as identified in the County's Comprehensive Forest Plan.
3. Work with federal, state, and local governments to manage natural resources throughout the county.

Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter:

Policiy:

18. Support the expansion of east-west bicycle facilities along the USH 8 corridor when feasible.

Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter:

Goal:

2. Maintain and enhance year-round recreational opportunities and facilities within the county while minimizing user conflicts.

Objectives:

4. Support implementation of the Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan and its list of capital improvements.
8. Support tourism infrastructure by maintaining and developing boat ramps, bicycle trails, ATV trails, public parks, school forests, shooting ranges, pickleball courts, and other infrastructure to enhance Outdoor Recreation.

Policies:

7. Encourage land acquisition and development strategies for parks, as outlined in the County Outdoor Recreation Plan.
12. Identify and pursue funding opportunities for boat ramps, bicycle trails, ATV trails, pickleball courts, public parks, shooting ranges, school forests and other tourism-based infrastructure when possible.

Economic Development Chapter:

Objectives:

8. Explore expansion of recreational opportunities in the county in context of the natural resource assets of the county.

Forest County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2021–2035

This plan is a management guide for the Forest County Forest and is updated every fifteen years. The mission of the plan is to manage and protect natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for the ecological, economic, educational, recreational, and research needs of present and future residents throughout the county. The report includes a number of recommendations for timber management, wildlife habitat and game management, land acquisition and forest boundary management, biodiversity management, watershed management and tourism.

A framework for how various trail systems will be maintained and expanded is in Chapter 900.

Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway's Corridor Management Plan (CMP)

The Byway's CMP is a written document authored by the local government sponsor that serves as the coordinating plan by which the scenic, historical, recreational, cultural, archeological and natural qualities on a designated byway are maintained and promoted.

The Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway runs through the Town of Wabeno. See the Byway map in **Attachment G**.

Forest County Potawatomi Community Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2021

The Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC) is currently in the process of developing this plan (2020-2021). The plan is intended to help the FCPC improve walking and bicycling within and between the FCPC developments at Stone Lake (Crandon area), Blackwell, and Carter.

The FCPC Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan includes the following:

1. An inventory of bicycling conditions and sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian crashes with vehicles, and bicycle and pedestrian use areas. Researching where crashes occurred will show where some problem areas exist. Other problem locations will be found through analysis of the bicycling conditions on each major road.
2. Locations of potential bicycle routes and recommendations for roadway improvements. Maps will show where people are riding and where they plan to ride when it is safer to do so. Recommendations may include bicycle lanes in high traffic areas, and possibly no change along roads used more by bicyclists than vehicles (e.g. low volume roads).
3. Recommend solutions. The plan will include a combination of ***education, encouragement, engineering***, and ***enforcement*** strategies to increase walking and biking.

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.

This NCW Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan has connectivity and recommendation maps for each county. The Nicolet State Trail, and the Wolf River State Trail are the primary off-road multi-use paths in the county. Blackwell's primary off-road bike and pedestrian path is the Rat River Trail. The Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway is an on-road multi-countywide set of loops as shown in **Attachment G**.

Additional routes are shown on a map in Appendix 1 (not in Forest County ORP) titled: Existing & Recommended Network for Forest County.
Note: *Local review of recommended routes should occur before installing signs.*

State Trails Network Plan

This 2003 document clarifies a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) role and strategy in the provision of all types of trails. The plan identifies a series of potential trail corridors that would link existing trails, public lands, natural features, and communities. This statewide network of interconnected trails would be owned and maintained by municipalities, private entities, and partnerships of the two. Preserving transportation corridors, such as old rail lines, is specifically discussed as a very important strategy in the creation of recreational and alternative transportation corridors. These trails are shown on Map 1.

<u>Segment 2—Forest Co. to Michigan, Nicolet State Trail (Northern Region)</u>

The DNR partially acquired the Nicolet State Trail corridor from Gillett to Wabeno. The rest of the rail corridor in Forest Co., from Cavour to Wabeno, remains largely DOT-owned, with portions used for private rail by term agreement. The tracks from Wabeno to Laona have been removed as well as the tracks north of Cavour to the Michigan border, and this grade may be available for trail acquisition in the near future. (Note: See page 19 for the description of this completed trail.) This trail was developed in 2010 as a part of the state trails network plan.

<u>Segment 13—Dresser to Michigan</u>

This 250-mile-long east-west corridor consists of rail line, the Cattail Trail, which is owned by the DNR and operated by Polk and Barron counties, and an optional highway right-of-way. It would link with the proposed Hiles to Crandon snowmobile trail in Forest County. The use of roadways in Oneida and Forest counties are an alternative to the rail line.

<u>Segment 56—Argonne to Shawano</u>

NCWRPC Note: The part of this segment from Crandon to at least White Lake was completed in 2011 as the Wolf River State Trail.

This is an active rail corridor with abandonment expected in fall of 2000 on the segment from Crandon to White Lake. Argonne is on the Dresser to Michigan corridor in the north, and Shawano links to the Mountain Bay Trail in the south of the corridor. The Crandon to Tomahawk corridor and the White Lake to Antigo

corridor link to the Langlade County to Michigan corridor to form a loop. An old abandoned corridor east of White Lake in the future could link this corridor to the Nicolet State Trail or connect it to road routes. This corridor runs along the east shore of Lake Metonga at Crandon, then runs south through forested lake areas of the Nicolet National Forest. In Langlade County it follows the Wolf River for about seven miles and continues south through the Northwest portion of the Menominee Indian Reservation, terminating at Shawano and its connection to the Mountain Bay Trail.

Segment 69—Tomahawk to Crandon

This abandoned corridor would link these two communities via an off-road connector. This corridor intersects the Langlade County to Michigan corridor at Pelican Lake and links the Argonne to Shawano corridor in the east with the Tomahawk to Wausau corridor in the west. This short linking corridor provides opportunity to access the very popular Hiawatha-Bearskin Trail from other corridors to the east.

Forest Legacy Program

The purpose of the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program is to identify and protect environmentally important private forestlands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses, such as subdivision for residential or commercial development. The Wisconsin DNR administers this federal program in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's Forest Legacy Program aims to keep forests as forests by protecting large unfragmented blocks of forest lands that provide the highest conservation value and public benefit, and minimize conversion of forests to non-forest uses through the purchase of conservation easements. Conservation easements convey a "purchased" set of negotiated property rights, while allowing landowners to continue to own and manage their land, including the right to sell.

Landowner participation is entirely voluntary. A project can be:

- a fee transaction (the landowner sells the land to the state); or
- a conservation easement that restricts development and uses that impact the conservation values present on the property while ensuring sustainable forest management.

With a conservation easement, the land remains in private ownership and keeps forests as forests.

Project applications go through a competitive process at both the state and national level. It is important to note that projects may take several years to complete.

Land must be:

- located within one of Wisconsin's five Forest Legacy Areas (see map in **Attachment _**);
- 75% forested or have additional trees planted to meet the forest cover requirement; and
- owned by someone who is willing to sell or donate the interest in perpetuity.

Landowners must also practice sustainable forestry according to a management plan prepared by a natural resource professional.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2025-2030

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 three overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

1. Ensure that all Wisconsinites have opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation.
2. Maintain and expand sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities.
3. Grow the collaborative approach across non-profit organizations, businesses, and federal, state, regional and local agencies.

- Park Design and Location Criteria from SCORP 2019-2024 are described in **Attachment A.**
- SCORP summary is at the end of Chapter 5 on pages 58 and 59.

2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan

The Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forests were combined into one forest in 1998. This 2004 document revised inconsistent policies between the two forests and provides direction for resource management over the next 10 to 15 years.

In 2004, the Forest revised its forest management plan. The revised plan contains a consistent ATV policy for both sides of the Forest

- No off-road or off trail use allowed (implemented on June 14, 2004).
- New trail construction allowed for up to 100 miles of trail on the Chequamegon side, and up to 85 total miles on the Nicolet side.
- All roads and trails closed to ATV use unless identified on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM).
- In general, most Forest Service trails and routes are closed to ATVs yearly from October 31 through April 30. The MVUM is updated yearly and list the operating season for all Forest Service trails and routes. Township designated roads are still open.
- No Intensive Use ("play areas") allowed on the Forest (Open 26 play area closed on June 14, 2004).
- Emergency closures can be issued locally where resources are being damaged or abused, or there are safety concerns.

All Forest Service roads open to ATV use are posted with signs, but the MVUM is the official source of trail and route information. Also, maps containing information on areas open to ATV use can also be obtained at Ranger District Offices.

Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056

This report is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next fifty years. Some of the questions asked to guide creation of this report were: Which lands and waters remain unprotected that will be critical for conserving our plants and animals and their habitats? What gaps exist now (and will likely emerge in the future) in providing abundant and satisfying outdoor recreation? How can we most effectively build upon the state's existing investment in protected lands to fill conservation and recreation gaps? What special places will our children and grandchildren wish we had protected? The study focused on identifying what of our state or regionally significant green infrastructure remains to be protected.

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 Forest County Legacy Area is summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

CN Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

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

PE Peshtigo River

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

LH Laona Hemlock Hardwoods

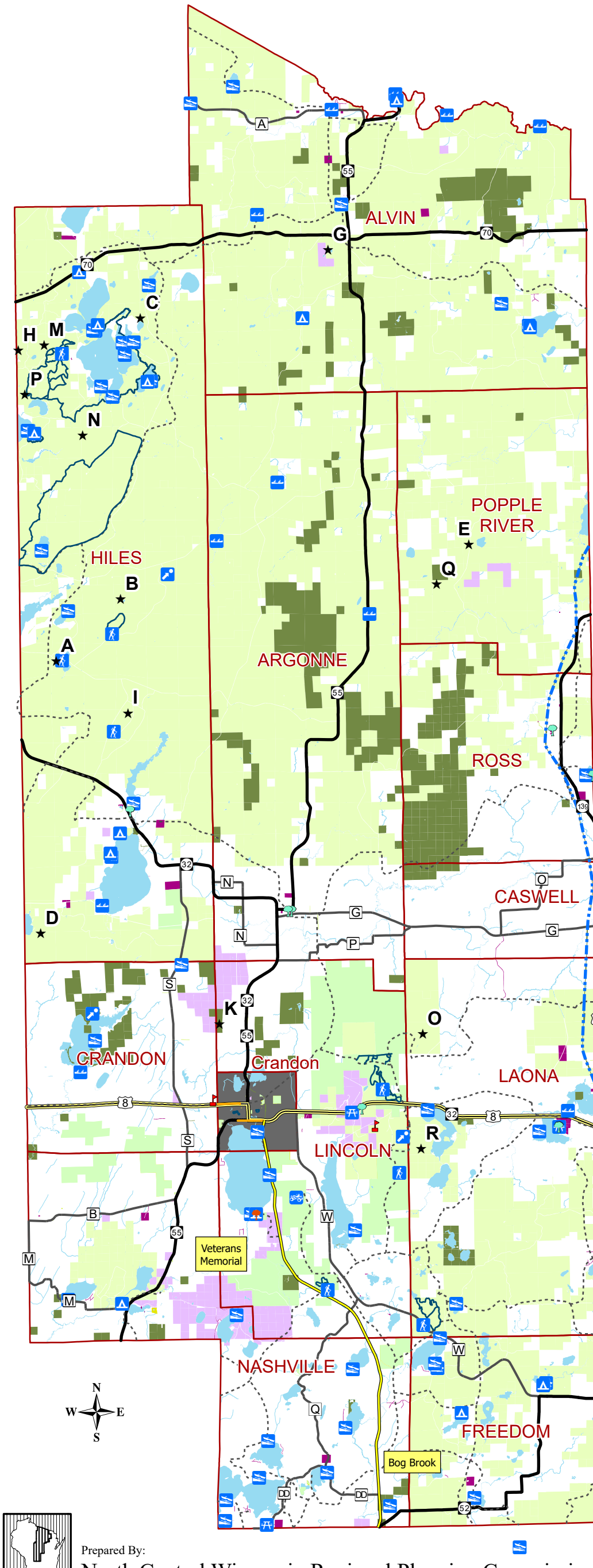
Size	Small
Protection Initiated	Limited
Protection Remaining	Substantial
Conservation Significance	☆☆☆☆
Recreation Potential	☆☆

UP Upper Wolf River

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

Other Areas of Interest includes:

- North Otter Creek
- Elvoy and Brule Creeks



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Water

Facilities

- Schools
- State Natural Areas
- County Park
- Town Parks
- Points of Interests
- Picnic Areas
- Campgrounds
- Boat Access
- Canoe Access
- Non-Motorized Trails
- ATV Trails
- Various Trails
- Snowmobile Trails
- Bike / Ped Path
- Nicolet State Trail
- Wolf River State Trail

Land Ownership

- Federal Land
- State Land
- County Land
- Town Land
- Tribal Land

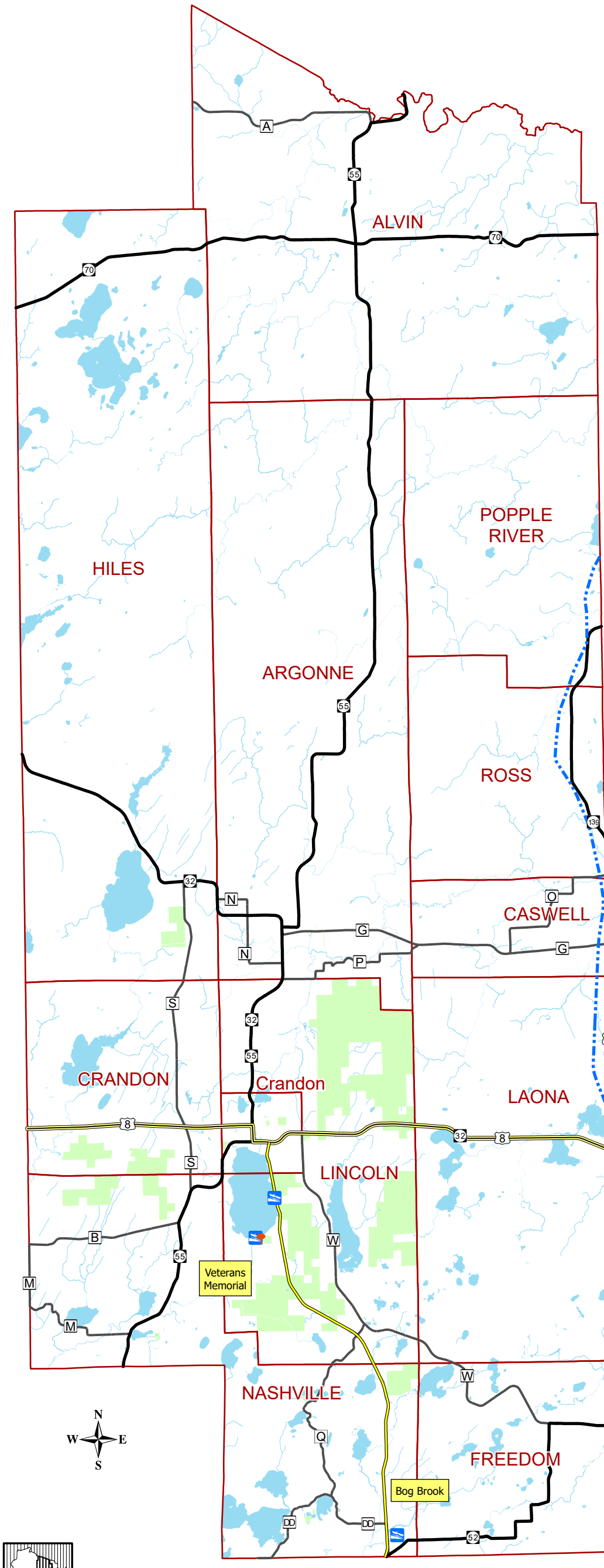
0 2.5 5 10 Miles

Source: Wis DNR, Forest County, NCWRPC

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Forest County, WI DRAFT County Administered Outdoor Recreation Map 2



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Water
- County Park
- Boat Access
- Nicolet State Trail
- Wolf River State Trail

Land Ownership

- County Land

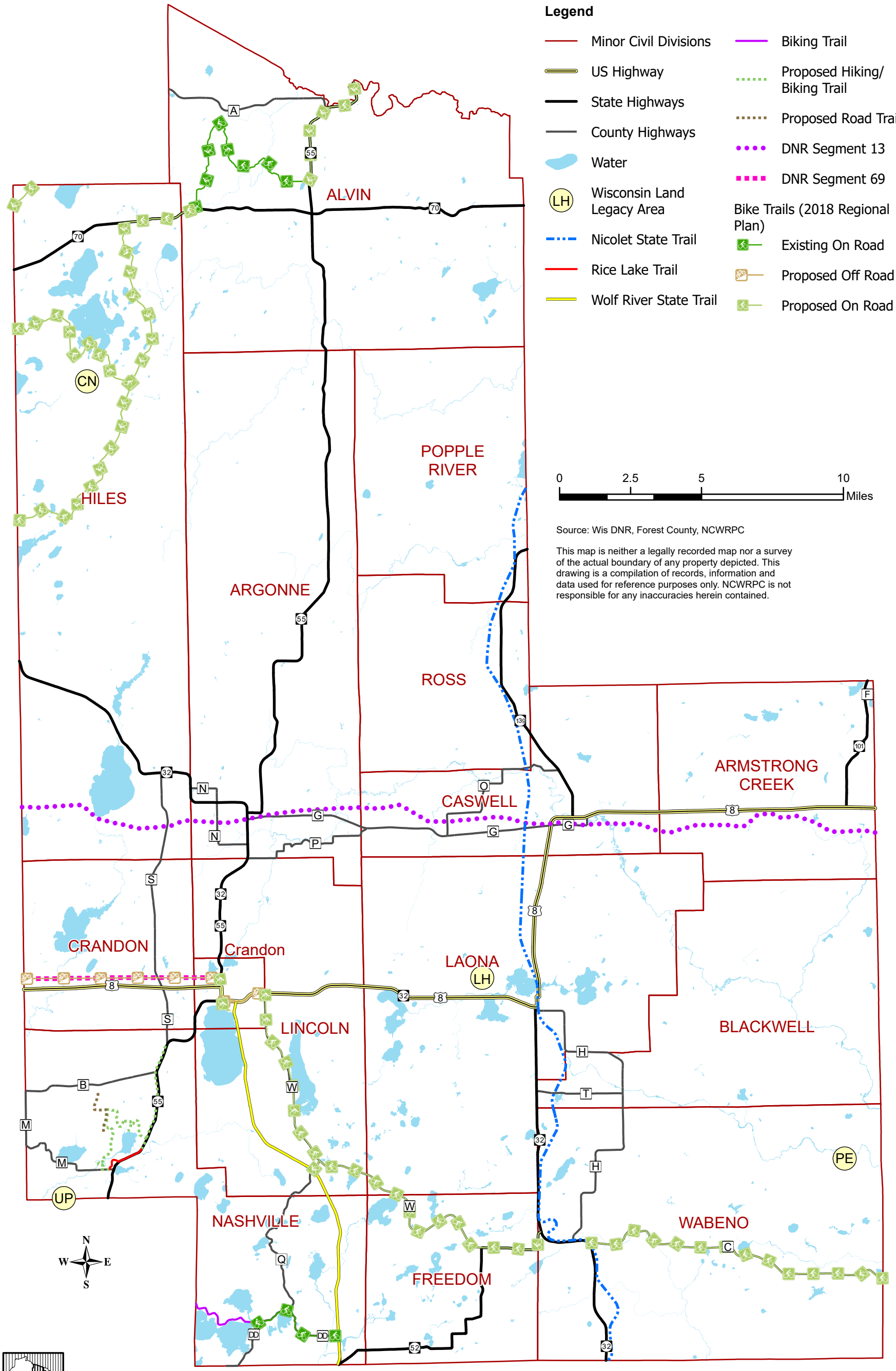
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Forest County, WI DRAFT Legacy Places and Potential Trails Map 3

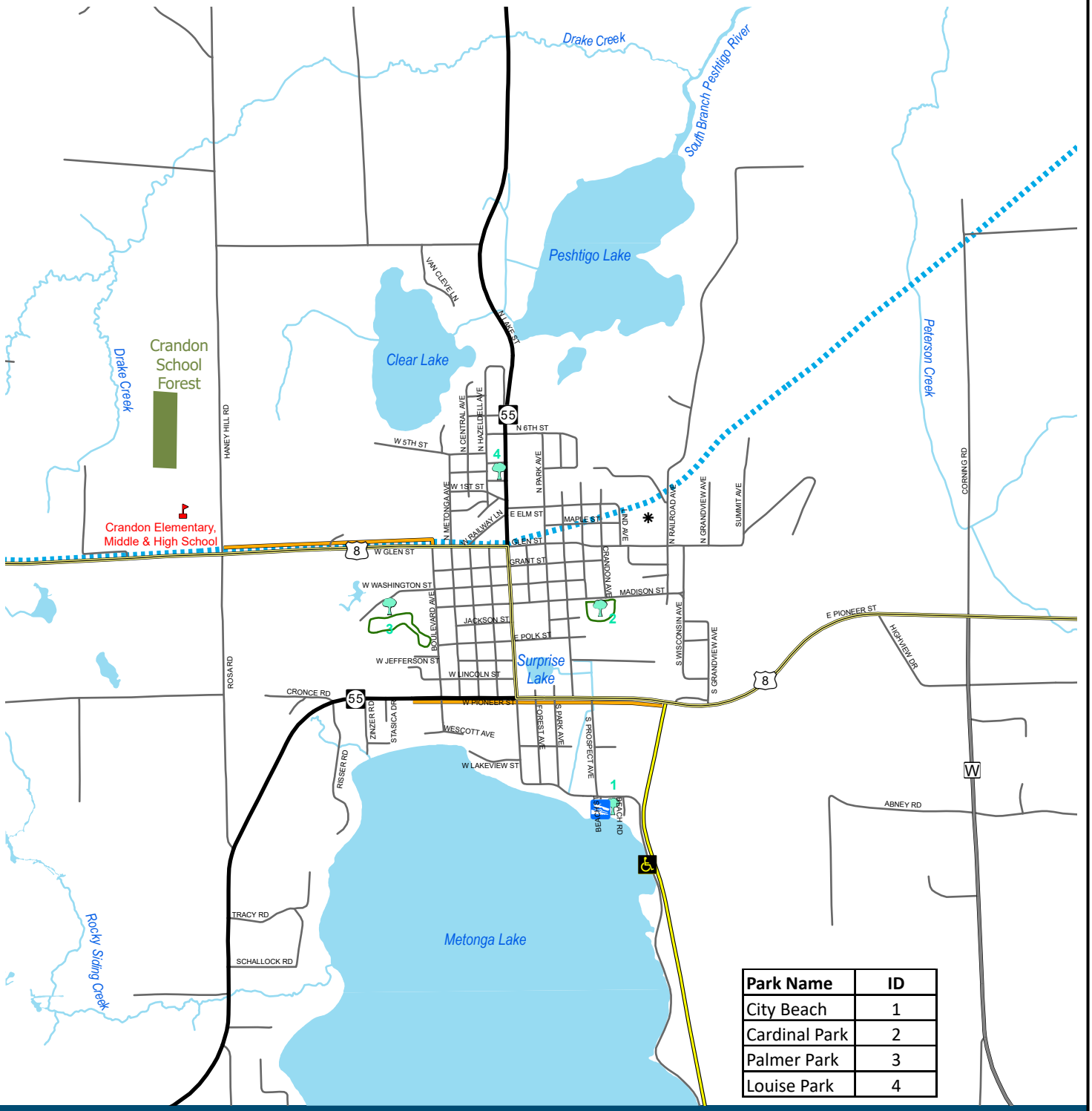


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Forest County, WI DRAFT City of Crandon - Outdoor Recreation Map 4



Park Name	ID
City Beach	1
Cardinal Park	2
Palmer Park	3
Louise Park	4

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- Boat Access
- City Parks
- County Fairgrounds
- Schools
- Handicap Accessible Fishing Pier
- School Forest Land
- Wolf River State Trail
- Bike / Ped Path
- Snowmobile Trails
- Park Walking Trail

N W E S

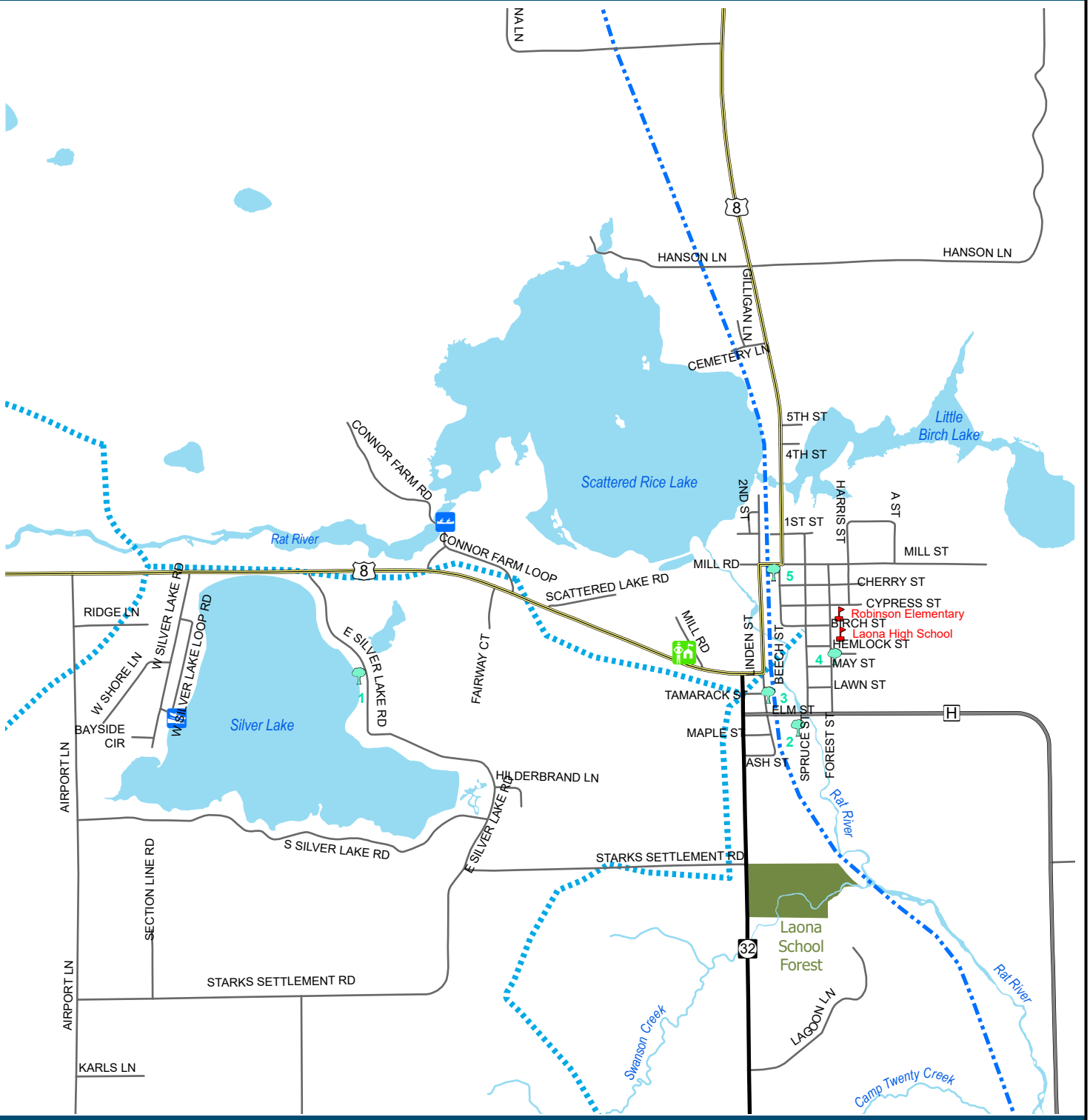
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Forest County, WI DRAFT Town of Laona - Outdoor Recreation Map 5



Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- Boat Access
- Canoe Access
- Town Parks
- Schools
- Ranger Station
- School Forest Land
- Nicolet State Trail
- Snowmobile Trails

Park Name	ID
Silver Lake Park	1
Laona Baseball Field	2
Town Park	3
Football Field	4
Laona Town Park	5

N W E S

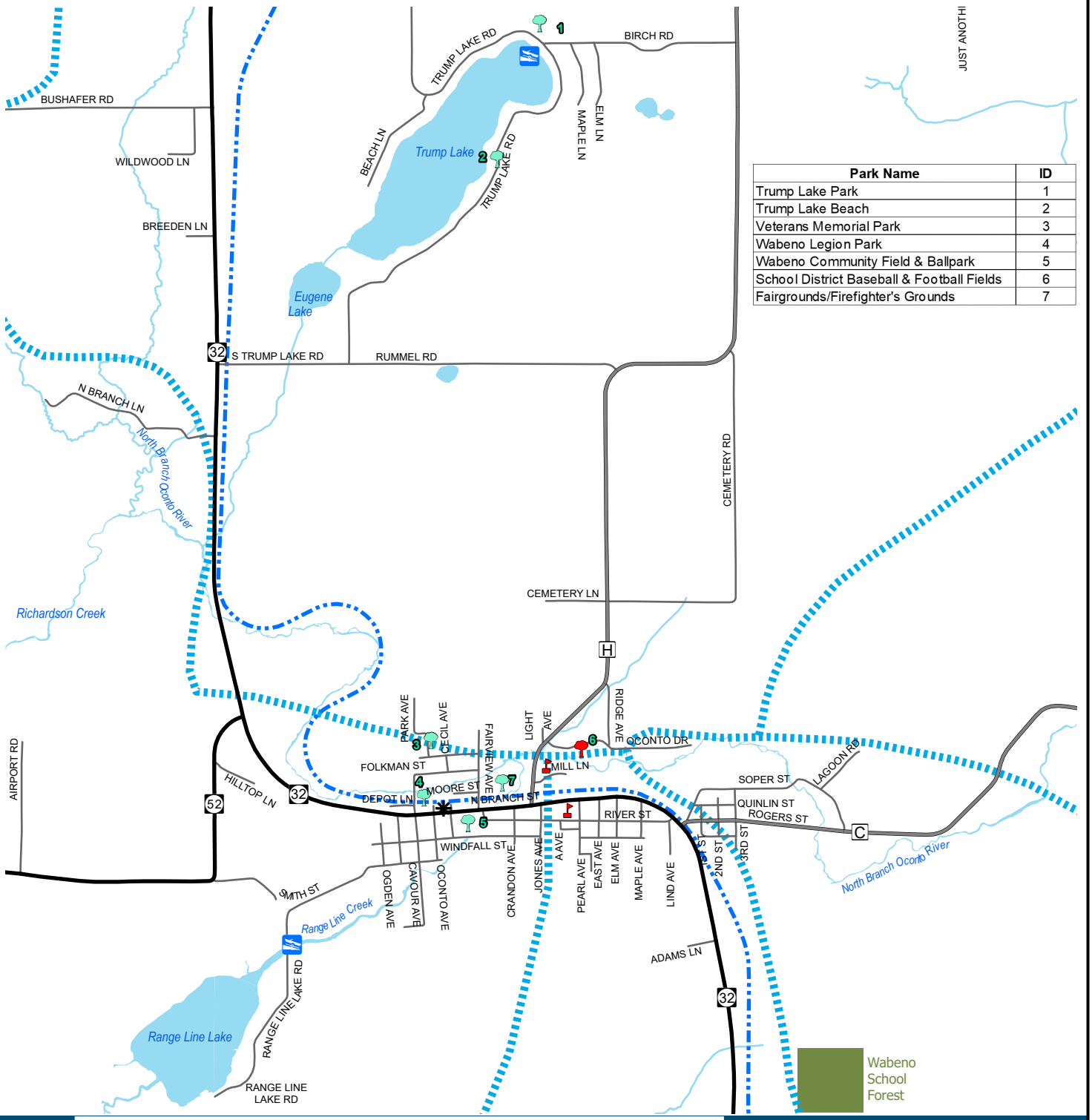
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Forest County, WI DRAFT Town of Wabeno - Outdoor Recreation Map 6



Park Name	ID
Trump Lake Park	1
Trump Lake Beach	2
Veterans Memorial Park	3
Wabeno Legion Park	4
Wabeno Community Field & Ballpark	5
School District Baseball & Football Fields	6
Fairgrounds/Firefighter's Grounds	7

Legend

- US Highway
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Water
- Boat Access
- Town Parks
- School Recreation Area
- Schools
- Nicolet State Trail Parking Area
- School Forest Land
- Nicolet State Trail
- Snowmobile Trails

N W E S

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

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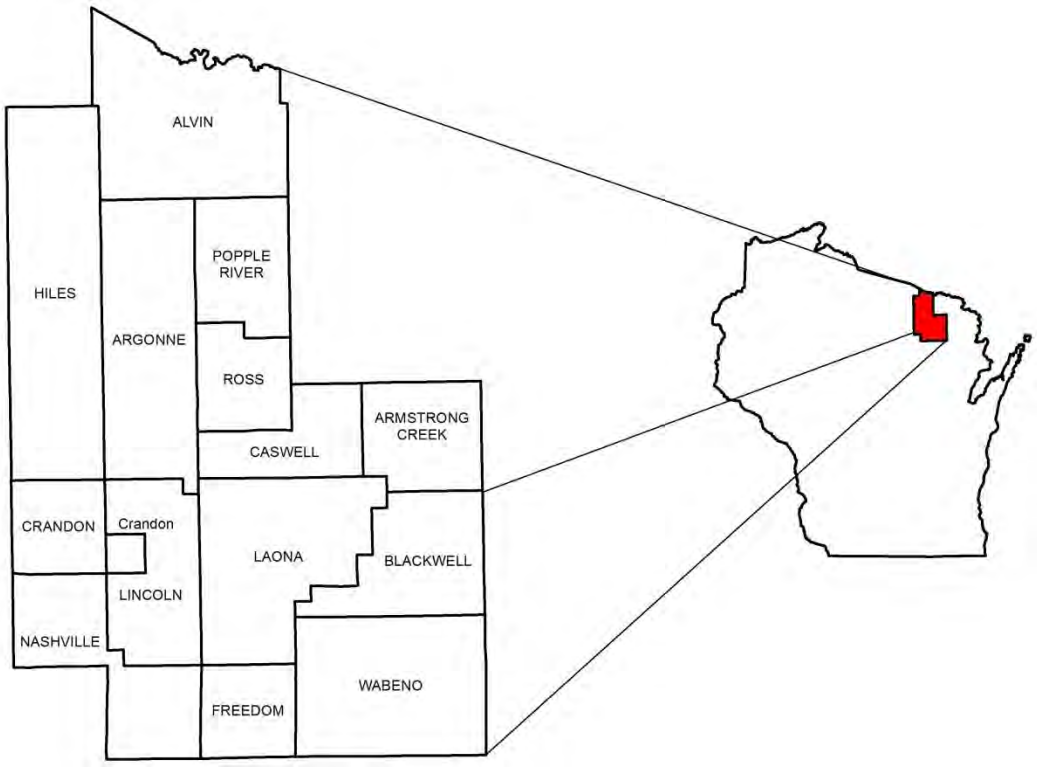
Chapter 2:
BACKGROUND OF FOREST COUNTY

2.1 Physical Characteristics

This section describes the physical features that make up Forest County. This information is essential in determining the potential as well as the limitations of an area for recreation development. Recreation planners use this kind of data to determine which resources to develop and which resources to protect or preserve.

Forest County (Figure 1) in northeastern Wisconsin has a total of 669,231 acres; of which 92.0% is forested, 1.8% is used for agriculture, 3.4% is water, 0.6% for open space, 0.8% is for transportation (which includes airports and roads), 1.0% for residential, and 0.1% is for commercial and industrial uses. Forest County is bound on the north by the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the Brule River, which forms the Wisconsin-Michigan boundary; on the east by Florence and Marinette Counties; on the south by Oconto and Langlade Counties; and on the west by Oneida and Vilas Counties.

Figure 1 **Forest County**



Topography and Geology

Forest County is located entirely in the Northern Highlands physiographic region, which was glaciated during the Pleistocene Age by the Langlade Lobe. The elevation in the county generally ranges from about 1,800 feet above sea level in the west and northwest to about 1,300 feet in the southeast. The third highest point in the state, Sugar Bush Hill, is a drumlin east of Crandon. It rises about 1,938 feet above sea level. The west end of McCaslin Mountain is about 1,610 feet above sea level.

Forest County is underlain by igneous & metamorphic bedrock that makes up the southern extension of the Canadian Shield. The bedrock surface is irregular throughout the county and slopes generally to the east and southeast. The extreme northwest part of the county near the Michigan border is underlain by metavolcanic and metasedimentary rock and an iron formation. A significant sulfide deposit of zinc and copper is also in the southwestern part of the county, north of Little Sand Lake. Underlying the southeast corner is the Hager porphyry rock and a quartzite and conglomerate rock upland, which includes the prominent relief feature of McCaslin Mountain protruding through the glacial deposits. Bedrock exposed in other areas is typically located in topographic lows surrounded by glaciofluvial deposits, such as the gneiss outcrop on the south shore of Pine Lake.

Forestry

As of 2026, there were about 53,954 acres of privately-owned forestland enrolled in either the Forest Crop Law (FCL) or Managed Forest Law (MFL) program, both administered by WDNR. In exchange for following an approved forest management plan, the landowner pays reduced property taxes. An even greater tax reduction is provided to those who open their enrolled lands to the public for the recreational purposes of hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, and sightseeing. More details about FCL and MFL are located in section: 3.10 Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned.

Surface Water

Forest County has many streams, lakes, and rivers that furnish a good supply of surface water. The county has 24,094 acres of surface water. There are 824 lakes in the county. These lakes make up 22,324 acres of water. Streams in the county have a surface area of 1,770 acres and a total length of 710 miles. The majority of these streams are classified as trout waters. Surface water is used mainly for recreation, stock watering, and wildlife.

The Eastern Continental Divide directs the flow of surface water in Forest County into two major bodies of water – Green Bay and the Mississippi River. The vast majority of the surface water in Forest County flows to the east and southeast and eventually into Green Bay. Three major rivers – the Brule, the Pine, and the Popple – flow in that direction and are part of the Menominee River watershed. Both the Pine and Popple Rivers are designated as "wild" under the Wisconsin Wild River Act (Ch. 30.26 WI Stats.).

The Peshtigo River and its feeder streams encompass the largest watershed in the county. This river flows to the southeast and enters Green Bay in southeastern Marinette County. The Wolf River, whose headwaters originate at Pine Lake, flows southward into Lake Poygan in Winnebago County. Several small streams on the far western edge of the county flow to the west and are part of the Wisconsin River watershed.

The secondary drainage system in Forest County consists mainly of surface runoff and hillside seepage into basins and depressions caused by the last glacial period. Some of these areas have drainage outlets, but most of this system tends to be poorly developed.

This extensive water resource provides a great deal of recreational opportunity like boating, sailing, skiing, fishing, swimming, canoeing and ice fishing.

Groundwater

Glacial drift aquifers are the major source of ground water in most of the county. Large yields of ground water are available where the thickness of the saturated drift is at least 50 feet. The thickness of the glacial drift over most of the county ranges up to about 300 feet. The glacial drift produces well yields ranging from 5 to 1,000 gallons per minute. Yields of at least 500 gallons per minute are common. Most high-capacity wells range from 30 to 300 feet in depth.

Precambrian crystalline rock underlying the county is not considered a significant source of water. The availability of water from the bedrock is difficult to predict and is probably less than 5 gallons per minute. The glacial drift aquifer above the bedrock is the best source of ground water.

The quality of ground water in Forest County is generally good. The ground water is suitable for most domestic, municipal, and industrial uses, but treatment may be required for special purposes. The water in the aquifers is principally a calcium magnesium bicarbonate type. It is moderately hard or hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard. Local differences in the quality of ground water are a result of the composition, solubility, and surface area of soil and rock particles through which the water moves and the length of time the water is in contact with these materials. The least mineralized water is from the glacial drift aquifer.

Soils

Most of the soils in Forest County formed under forest vegetation, which results in a light-colored soil that has a relatively low content of organic matter.

The parent soil materials in Forest County are mainly glacial till or glacial mudflow sediment, glacial outwash, and lacustrine deposits, which in places are covered by a thin layer of silty or loamy windblown material. Some of the soils formed in more recent deposits of organic material or alluvium.

Soil properties are important considerations when planning and developing recreation facilities. To help evaluate soils, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service publishes a Soil Survey Report. The Forest County Soil Survey Report was made available in 2003. Soil suitability tables for outdoor recreation and other uses are available on the Internet.

Climate

Winters in Forest County are very cold, and the short summers are fairly warm. The short frost-free period during the summer limits cropping mainly to forage crops, small grain, and adapted vegetables. Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year but reaches a peak in summer. Snow covers the ground much of the time from late fall through early spring. (Forest County Soil Survey, 2003)

Like much of the Midwest, Forest County has experienced increasing temperatures and precipitation in recent decades. Warming has been concentrated in the winter and spring, while summers have warmed less. Warmer spring temperatures present the additional threat of frost-freeze damage to early-budding fruit trees. The lack of summer warming is reflected in a below average occurrence of very hot days and no overall trend in warm nights. The number of very cold days has been near or below average since 2000, reflecting a winter warming trend. The increase in winter temperatures has also reduced lake ice cover. Precipitation varies widely from year to year, and most of the state's precipitation falls during the warmer half of the year. (Excerpt from NOAA State Climate Summaries - Wisconsin 2022)

Total winter precipitation and total summer precipitation have been mostly above average over the last 26 years. The frequency of 2-inch extreme precipitation events has increased, with the highest number occurring during the 2015–2020 period. Annual snowfall totals have increased over the rest of Wisconsin since 1930. (Excerpt from NOAA State Climate Summaries - Wisconsin 2022)

Projected Future Climate Trends

Forest County, like the rest of Wisconsin, is projected to continue warming in the future, with winters warming more rapidly than other seasons (Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts 2021 Assessment Report). With warming winters, Forest County can expect to see fewer nights per year with below-freezing temperatures and with a warming climate comes a shift in lakes predictably freezing over from annually to intermittently. Lake Mendota (Dane County) will likely have intermittent ice by 2040. Trout Lake (Vilas County) will likely start having intermittent ice by 2100. (John J. Magnuson et al, Center for Limnology, UW-Madison, 2019)

Precipitation is projected to continue increasing in Forest County and the rest of Wisconsin. Most of the precipitation increase is projected to occur during the winter and spring, but snowfall is projected to decline due to warmer temperatures. Additionally, extreme precipitation is projected to increase, potentially increasing the frequency and intensity of floods and causing increased runoff and erosion. Above normal precipitation enhances the risk of springtime flooding, which could pose a threat to Wisconsin's agricultural industry by delaying planting and causing yield losses. (Excerpt from NOAA State Climate Summaries - Wisconsin 2022)

The intensity of future droughts is projected to increase. Even if precipitation increases in the future, rising temperatures will increase the rate of soil moisture loss during dry periods. Thus, future summer droughts, a natural part of Wisconsin's climate, are likely to be more intense. (Excerpt from NOAA State Climate Summaries - Wisconsin 2022)

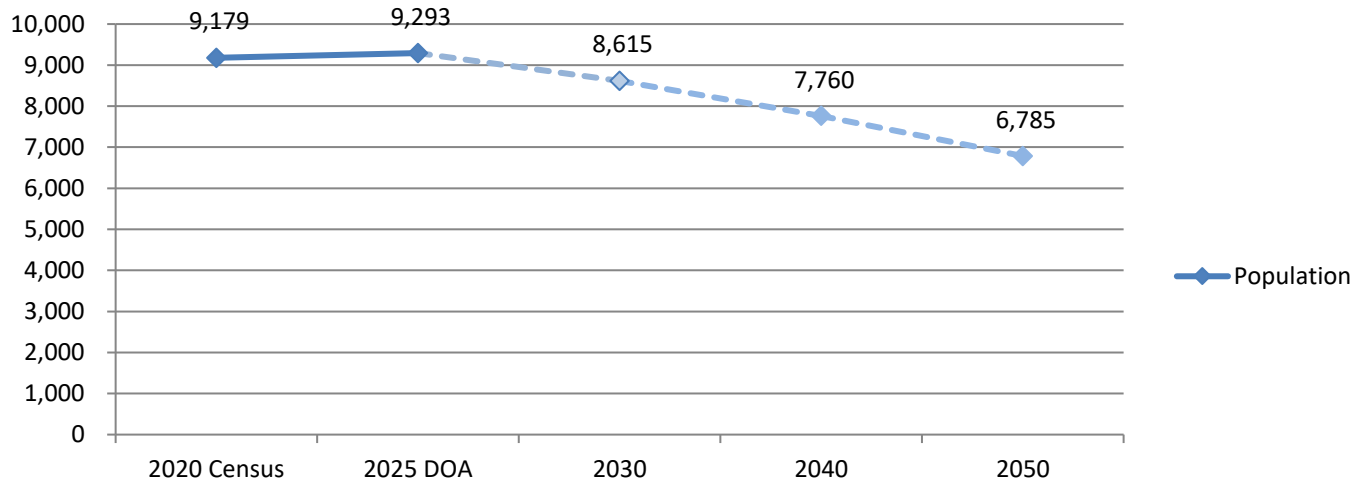
2.2 Social Characteristics

This section describes social and economic demographic information that influences Forest County. Overall recreation demand within Wisconsin is described in SCORP, under Reference Plans in Chapter 1. The social characteristics and growth information from this section combined with recreation demands as shown in Western Sands SCORP region can help determine the appropriate recreation investments in the County.

Population

The 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates total population of Forest County is 9,369. This 100% count shows an increase of approximately 190 people since the 2020 Census. Forest County's population increased by 0.7 percent while the state grew by 4.0 percent, and the nation grew by 8.5 percent between 2010 and 2024. The population of Forest County is expected to decline through 2050 (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Forest County Population Projections



Source: U.S. Census 2020, Wisconsin Department of Administration
2025 Estimate, Wisconsin DOA 2024 projections

Changes in population are made up of two components. More births than deaths produce a natural increase, and more people moving into an area than moving out produces a migration increase. The combination of these two factors makes up increases or decreases in population. Wisconsin's Demographic Services Center estimates Forest County's 2025 population at 9,293. Forest County's natural increase in 2025 was a decrease of 1.6%, unlike the state's natural increase of 0.05%. The decreased natural increase may be a reflection of more deaths than births in the county. Net migration for Forest County was 2.9%, which is the sole reason why Forest County's population increased in 2025. This net migration for the County was similar to the state rate of 2.3%. Net migration has an immediate impact on a county's labor force potential, while natural increase provides some insight into a county's long-term workforce pipeline. Natural increase is largely a function of age and is expected to decline in the coming decades because the state's fertility rate has been below replacement level since 1975. (WDOA, DSC)

Table 1

Populations & Projections

Municipality	2020 Census	2025 Estimate	2030 Projections	2040 Projection	2050 Projection
C Crandon	1,713	1,688	1,454	1,169	898
T Alvin	173	172	167	155	139
T Argonne	546	549	527	489	439
T Armstrong Creek	422	416	390	346	298
T Blackwell	152	221	234	294	331
T Caswell	72	70	57	41	27
T Crandon	606	607	549	476	401
T Freedom	324	323	289	247	205
T Hiles	359	361	354	335	307
T Laona	1,215	1,201	1,122	994	854
T Lincoln	1,133	1,136	1,124	1,067	982
T Nashville	1,215	1,319	1,235	1,199	1,123
T Popple River	43	42	40	36	31
T Ross	132	130	119	102	86
T Wabeno	1,074	1,058	954	810	664
Forest County	**9,179**	**9,293**	**8,615**	**7,760**	**6,785**

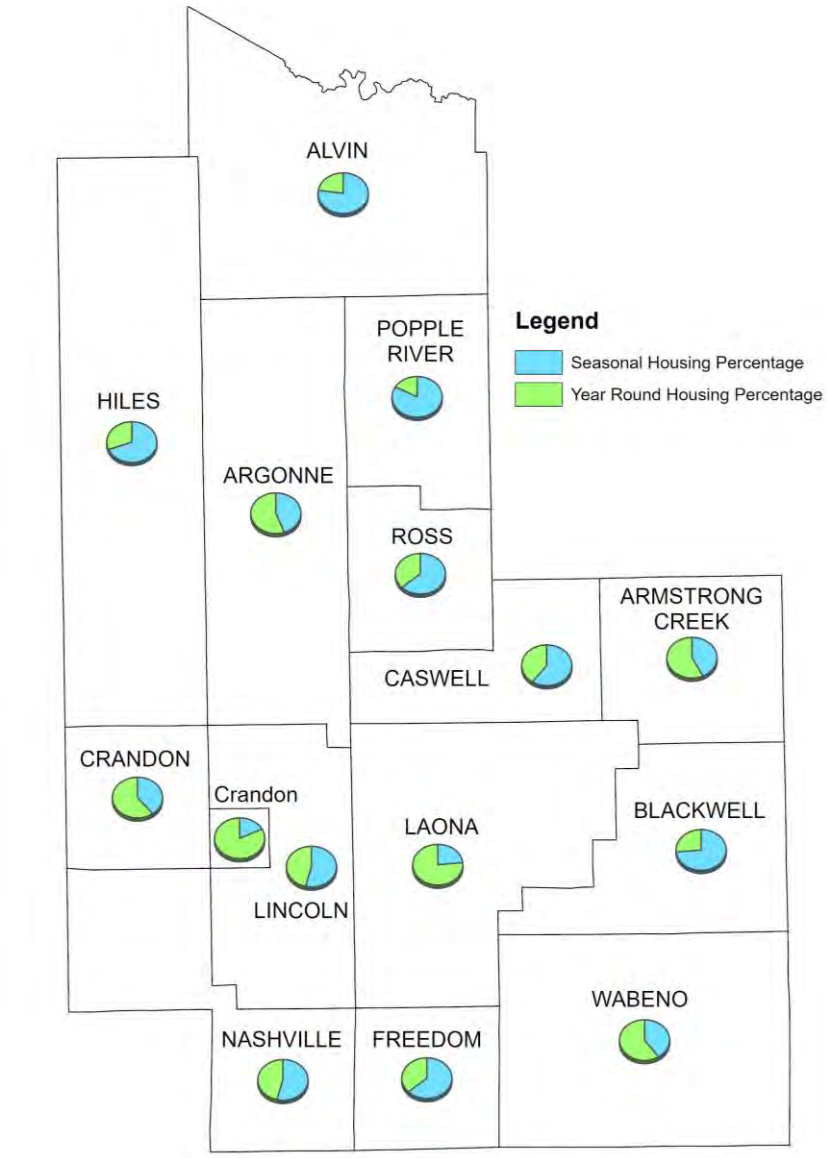
Source: U.S. Census 2020; WDOA Preliminary Jan. 1, 2025, Population Estimates; WDOA 2024 Population Projections

Table 1 shows three parts of the population for all the local governments within Forest County. The 2020 Census population comes from the 100% count decennial Census. Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) created the 2025 Estimates, which are preliminary Jan. 1, 2025 numbers. Projections come from the now dated numbers that WDOA created in 2024 from the 2020 Census. New projections are very late.

Household sizes have slightly decreased over time in Forest County, similar to national and state trends where household sizes have also decreased. Forest County had 4,006 households as of the 2010 Census, and an average household size of 2.39 people. By 2024, the average household size within Forest County has decreased to 2.29 people. About 23% of households have someone under 18 years old, and about 40% of households have someone 65 or older. About 67% of households are families, and just over 20% have their own children under 18 years old.

Forest County has a much larger proportion of vacant housing than Wisconsin or the United States per the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Some of these vacant housing units are seasonal housing a.k.a. "up north cabins" (see **Figure 3**). In 2024, approximately 49.5% of the housing in Forest County was seasonally vacant compared to approximately 6.2% in Wisconsin and 3.3% in the United States. There are concentrations of seasonal housing in Forest County, mainly near the many lakes dispersed throughout the county. These areas will have greater fluctuations in population throughout the year, and these seasonal residents must be included when determining the demand for recreation facilities.

Figure 3: Year-Round and Seasonal Housing, 2024

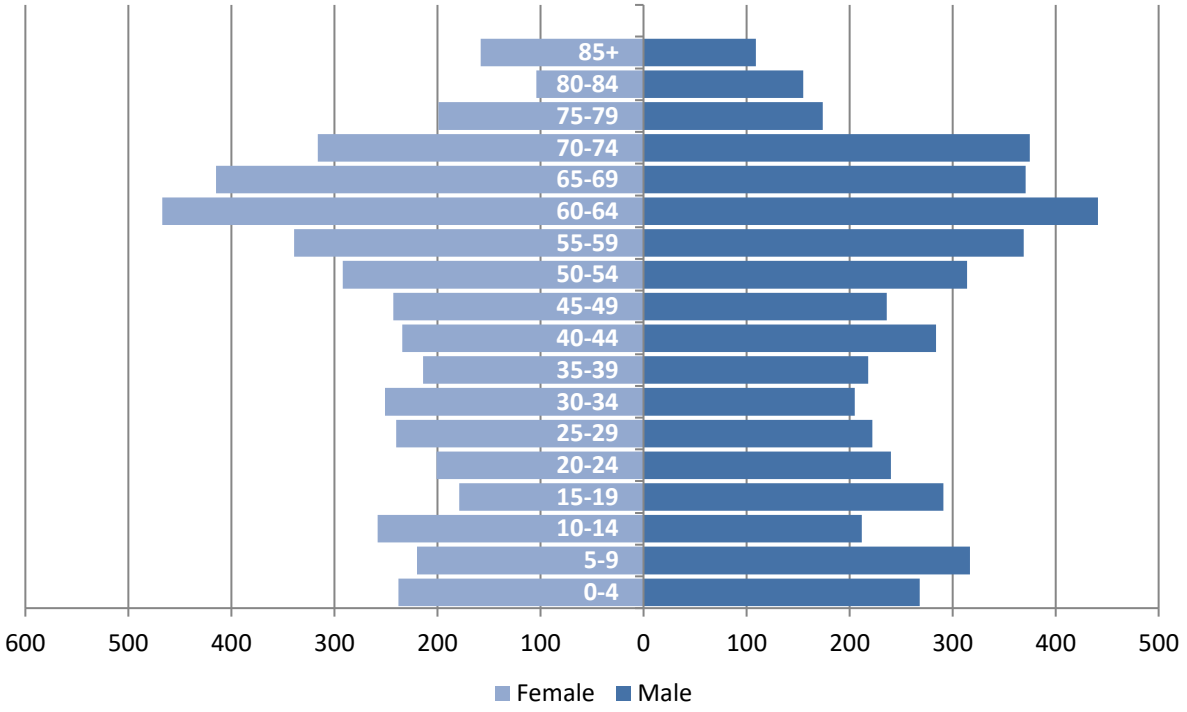


Age

The median age of Forest County is 49.3 years old, while Wisconsin is 40.2 years old. The median age has increased in both Forest County and Wisconsin between 2010 and 2024 from 43.4 and 38.1 years old, respectively. **Figure 4** shows the distribution of age groups in Forest County. In Forest County, the largest age concentration is the 60-64 year old group. There is also a concentration of people in the middle-aged 55-74 year old age groups. Usually, the most heavily concentrated age groups are very near to the typical retirement age, which will likely have a great effect on the parks and recreation needs of the County. Females outnumber males in the age groups above 60.

Understanding the needs of younger adults is important in ensuring there are adequate recreational amenities. Younger people tend to be very active and prioritize physical activities like hiking, biking, and gym activities. Similarly, research has demonstrated that recently retired people tend to be very active and are attracted to places with recreational amenities. As retirees age, they tend to become less active, with many eventually moving to more urban areas where services such as health care are in closer proximity and more accessible. Overall, Forest County has a healthy balance of age group distribution (see **Figure 4**), with each age group having varied recreational needs.

Figure 4: Forest County Age Pyramid, 2024



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Ethnic Background

The people of Forest County mostly identify as white, at approximately 78.0% of people. About 0.4% identify as Black or African American and about 0.08% identify as Asian. About 11.3% as American Indian or Alaska Native,

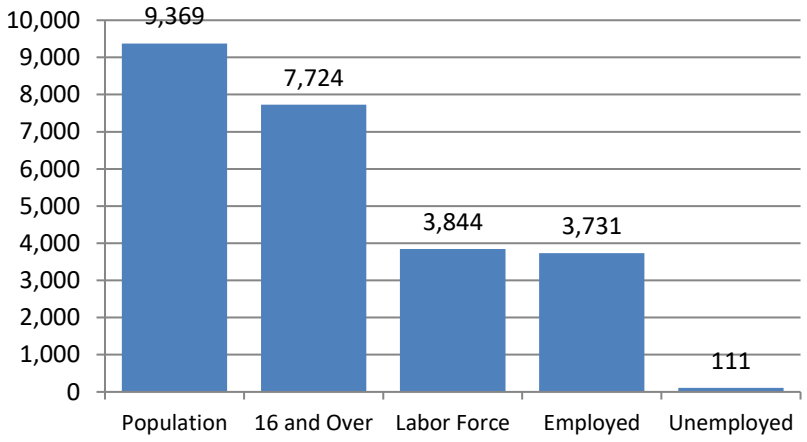
1.9% as some other race, and 8.0% as two or more races. Approximately 2.2% identify as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

Employment and Economy

Forest County has a diverse economy with major industries including healthcare, manufacturing, and natural resources.

Forest County has 9,369 people age 16 and over, 49.8% of which are in the labor force, i.e., actively working or seeking work. See **Figure 5**. The labor force participation rate for Wisconsin as a whole is 65.3%; higher than Forest County. According to the 2024 ACS, the unemployment rate in Forest County was 2.9%; lower than the 3.2% in the state and lower than the 5.2% in the United States.

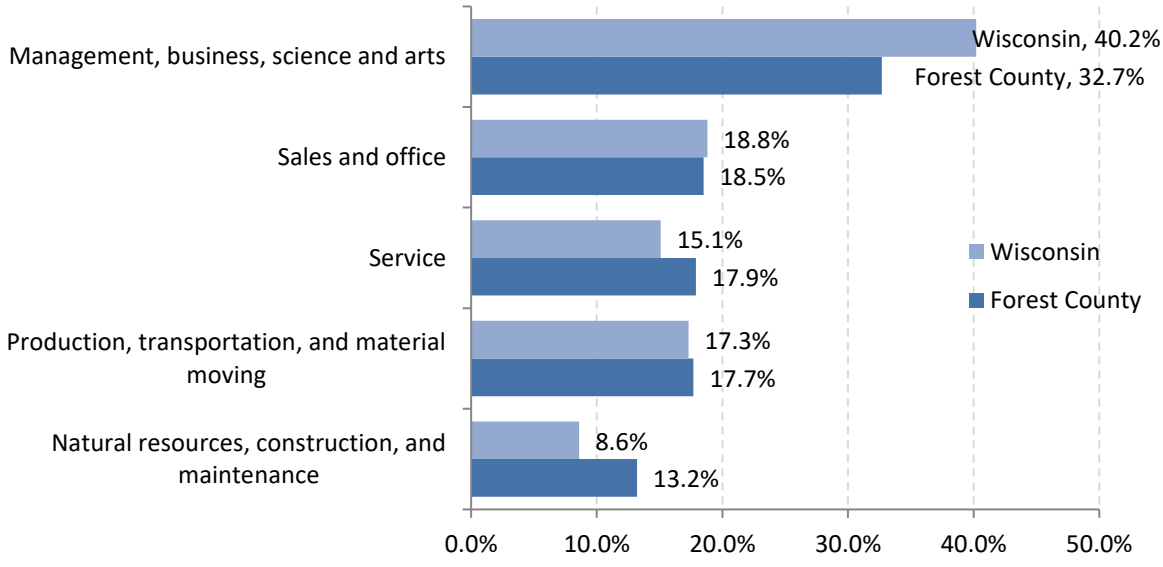
Figure 5 Forest County Employment, 2024



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

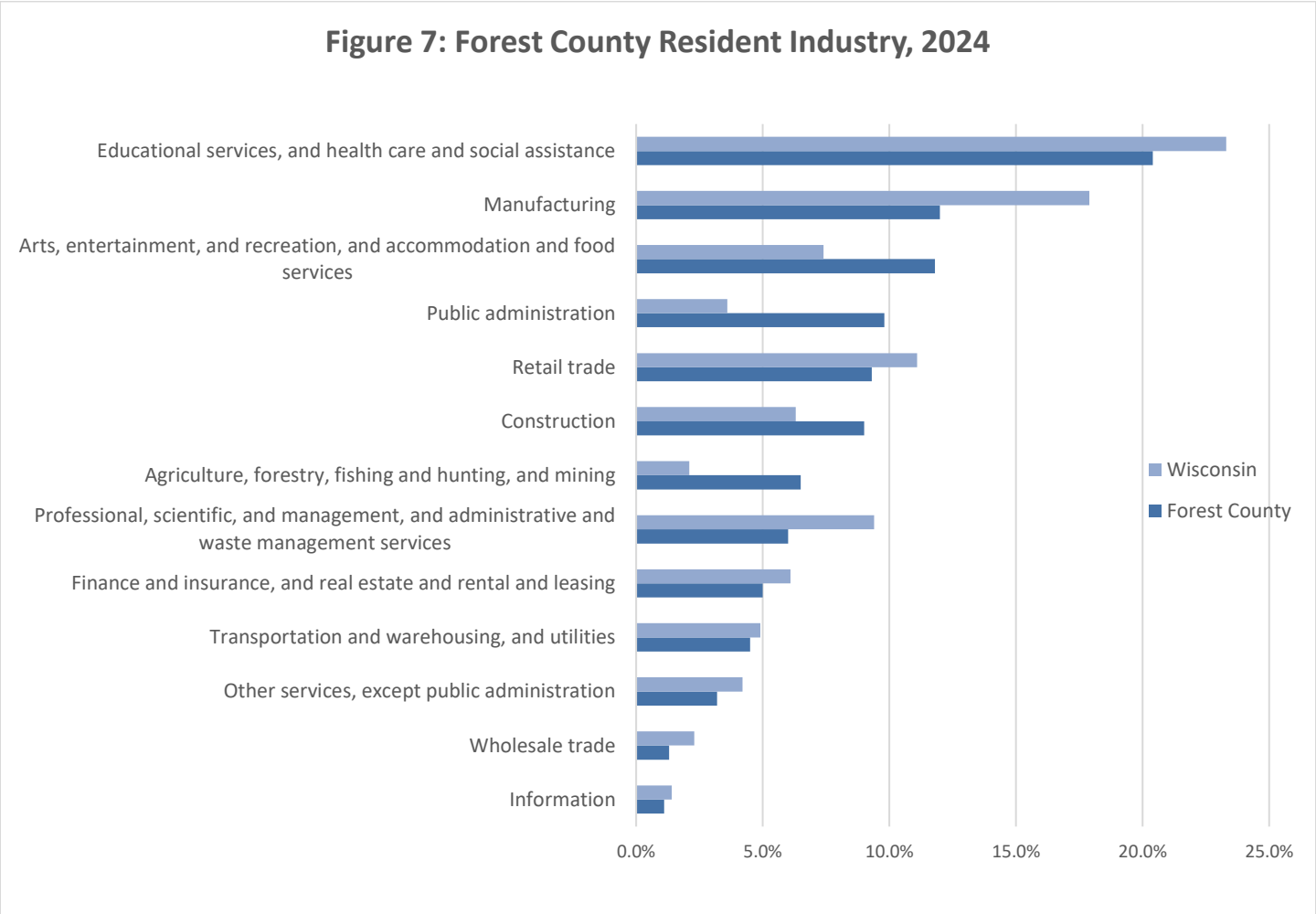
As shown in **Figure 6**, most residents of Forest County are employed in *Management, business, science and arts* occupation at 32.7%; *Sales and office* occupation at 18.5; the *Production, transportation, and material moving* occupation at 17.7%. Forest County has a higher proportion of residents in the *Service* occupation as well as the *Natural resources, construction, and maintenance* occupation, and *Production, transportation, and material moving*; but a lower proportion of the *Sales and office* occupation and *Management, business, science and arts* occupation.

Figure 6: Forest County Resident Occupation, 2024



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Figure 7 shows the most common industry for Forest County residents as *Education services, health care and social assistance*, which is a lower proportion than the state; followed by the *Manufacturing* industry. Forest County also has a higher proportion of residents in the *Construction;* and *Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, and mining* industries, as well as Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services, and Public Administration.

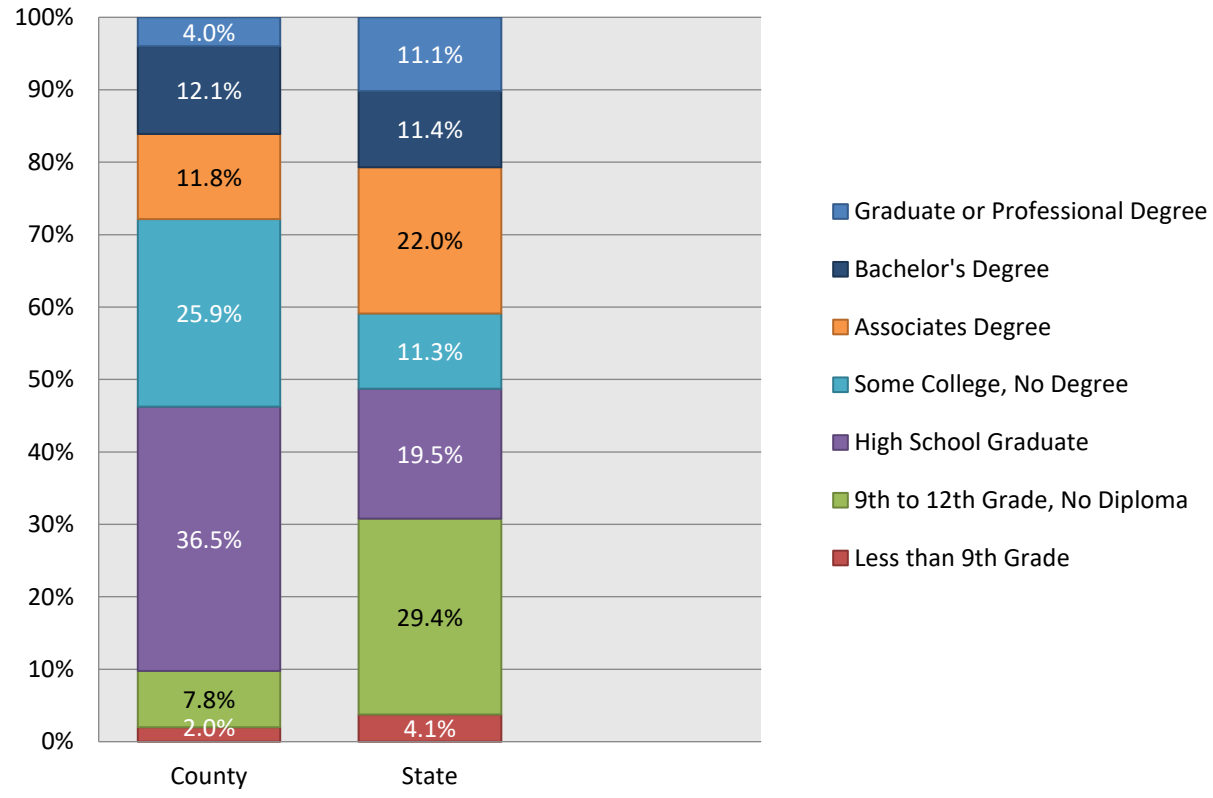


Source: 2024 American Community Survey

As of the 2024 American Community Survey, the median household income in Forest County was $61,071 and per capita income was $33,817 This is lower than the state and nation, which can be explained by the lower cost of living in Forest County. The distribution of household incomes in Forest County are fairly similar to the state, but with fewer households making $100,000 or more, and more households making less than $35,000 annually.

Educational Attainment in Forest County is generally lower than the State of Wisconsin (see **Figure 8**). About 90.3% of Forest County residents over the age of 25 have graduated high school, slightly lower than Wisconsin, where over 93.6% of residents have graduated high school. About 16.1% of Forest County residents have a bachelor's degree or higher, while 33.4% of Wisconsin residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. Both the proportion of residents with a bachelor's or graduate or professional degree in Forest County is lower than the state proportion. Additionally, the proportion of people with an associate's degree is also lower in Forest County than in the state.

Figure 8: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2024



Source: 2024 American Community Survey

Chapter 3:
OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

This chapter is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational facilities in Forest County, which will focus primarily upon public facilities. Some private facilities may be listed for reference purposes. The private sector provides many recreational opportunities, but this plan's purpose is to identify public facility improvements that may qualify for state and federal money.

Intensively used outdoor recreation facilities are generally located near population concentrations like the City of Crandon, the school district properties, and town centers. In towns with low population densities and relatively low real estate valuation, there typically are no local outdoor recreation facilities. Since there are abundant outdoor recreation facilities located within Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest, then there is less demand for local governments to provide those similar types of facilities.

3.1 County Maintained Recreation Facilities

See Chapter 4 for Forest County owned and maintained outdoor recreation facilities.

3.2 Linear Facilities

Various entities maintain the following public facilities:

Rustic Roads:

Forest County has two rustic roads.

- **Rustic Road 34** is an 8.8-mile combination of Fishel Rd, Cary Dam Rd, and Lakeview Dr near the intersection of STHs 70 and 55.
- **Rustic Road 118** is 26.3-miles long, from STH 32 and County C, Indian Market, Kuffner, Camp 1 and Bay Shore roads forming a loop back to County C.

Scenic Byway:

The **Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway** is located in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and home to the headwaters of the Wolf River. This 145-mile route that winds through the counties of Forest, Langlade, Oneida and Vilas. See the map in **Attachment G**.

Water Trails:

A water trail is a network of access points, resting places, and attractions for users of watercraft on lakes and rivers.

There are over 317 streams and rivers providing canoeists 710 miles of routes.

All navigable water is available to canoe on according to the Public Trust Doctrine (Art. 1, §1, WI Constitution). Wisconsin law recognizes that owners of lands bordering lakes and rivers - "riparian" owners - hold rights in the water next to their property. These riparian rights include the use of the shoreline, reasonable use of the water, and a right to access the water. Members of the public may use any exposed shore area of a stream without the permission of the riparian (i.e., landowner) only if it is necessary to exit the body of water to bypass an obstruction. In addition, a member of the public may not enter the exposed shore area except from the water, from a point of public access on the stream, or with the permission of the riparian landowner. Obstructions could consist of trees or rocks, shallow water for boaters or deep water for wading trout anglers. The bypass can involve areas up to the ordinary high water mark and should be by the shortest possible route. Under this law, using the exposed shoreline for purposes such as picnicking and sunbathing is not allowed (Ch. 30.134, WI Stats.).

- *Armstrong Creek* – one route with a length of __-miles (FR 2131 landing – Old 101 landing).
- *Brule River* – one route with a length of 18 miles (Brule Dam – STH 139 bridge).
- *Peshtigo River* – four routes with different lengths: 7.5 miles (Big Joe Canoe Landing – CCC Bridge), 9.5 miles (CCC Bridge – Burnt Bridge), 5.75 miles (Burnt Bridge - Burton Wells), and 6.25 miles (Burton Wells – Goodman Park).
- *Pine River* – Two routes: 20 miles (FS Road 2182 near Haystack Corners – FS Road 2168) and 18 miles (FS Road – Chipmunk Rapids)
- *Popple River* – One route (Hwy 55 ten miles north of Argonne – Town of Popple River).
- *Wolf River* – Three routes: 10 miles (Pine Lake – Little Rice Lake Dam), and 15 miles (Little Rice Dam – Hwy B Bridge).

Non-Motorized Trails:

Forest County Forestry & Recreation Department (see Table 2):

- *Hemlock Lake Trail* – located one mile east and four miles south of Crandon off Hwy W on Hemlock Lake Road. Two miles of gentle and intermediate hiking and cross-country trails and parking is available.
- *Otter Springs Recreation Area* – located four miles east of Crandon on Otter Spring Road/Forest Road 2378. Trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and horseback riding including nine different trail segments varying in length and difficulty. All trails are well groomed and marked. There is also a ski shelter, benches, fire pit and outdoor toilet. Pursuant to the agreement with Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department, the Forest County Area Single Track Association has developed and maintains approximately 6 miles of single-track trails for bicycles within the Otter Springs Recreation Area.
- *Hunter Walking Trails* – Located throughout the County Forestlands. Trails are mowed and maps are available in the Forestry and Recreation office.

City of Crandon (see Map 4):

- The City of Crandon has 2 Bike / Ped trails in the City. One path is on the north side of USH 8 from Haney Hill Road to Boulevard Avenue. The other path is on the south side of STH 55 and USH 8 from Glen Park Court to the Wolf River State Trail.

Town of Blackwell (see Map 1):

- *Rat River Recreational Trail* – this non-motorized trail has a limestone base, an ADA accessible privy, and connects the Nicolet State Trail, east along the Rat River to Bear Lake Campground.

Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest (see Table 2):

In addition to designated trails, all logging roads and undesignated/unmarked trails within the Nicolet side of the National Forest are open to non-motorized public use unless otherwise posted.

- *Ed's Lake Trail* – located on County Highway W between Wabeno and Crandon. Cross county ski trails include a 2.3 mile loop for beginners, and a 2.7 mile loop or 3.5 mile loop for intermediate skiers. All trails are groomed. There are also 6 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails in upland hardwoods.
- *Nicolet North Trail* – located 10.5 miles east of Eagle River on Forest Road 2460 to the trailhead. Cross-country ski trails include 13 miles of groomed trails with several loop options. In the summer months, these trails can be used for hiking and mountain biking. The Nicolet North Trail connects with the Anvil Trail.
- *Franklin Nature Lake Trail* – located 9 miles east of Eagle River on Forest Road 2181 to the campground and trailhead. This is a one mile interpretive loop trail that takes you through a tamarack swamp, hemlock cathedral, and 300-year old white pines.
- *Hidden Lakes Trail* – this is a thirteen mile trail which begins at Franklin Nature Lake Trail and eventually joins the Luna-White Deer Trail.
- *Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail* – located 9.5 miles east of Wabeno on Forest Road 3132. This is a one-third mile access interpretive trail which follows the north shore of North Creek impoundment. This is also a state designated Wildlife viewing area.
- *Halley Creek Bird Trail* – located five miles east of Blackwell on Forest Road 2103. It is a one mile loop trail with bird viewing opportunities in four different habitat types.
- *Michigan Rapids Trail* – located 3 miles north of Laona on Forest Road 2134. This is a two mile hike along the Peshtigo River to the rapids.
- *Argonne Forest Trail* –located 1.5 miles east of Hiles on Forest Road 2184. A self-guided loop trail gives a hiker a chance to learn more about the northern hardwoods and forest management. The trail features 17 stops along a ¾ mile path.
- *Scott Lake Trail and Shelp Lake Trail* – located on Forest Road 2183. The one-third mile Scott Lake Trail is located on the south side of 2183. The boardwalk to Shelp Lake is located on the north side of 2183. This walk will take you out over a floating bog.

- *Luna-White Deer Trail* – located off Divide Road to the Luna-White Deer Lake campground and trailhead. Hikers can park either at the White Pine swimming area or the boat ramp on Luna Lake.
- *Sevenmile Trail* – located seven and a half miles north of Hiles off Forest Road 2435 to Seven-Mile Lake Campground and trailhead.
- *Giant Pine Trail* – located two miles north of Hiles on off Forest Road 2414 to the trailhead. This is a 1.5 mile loop in the Headwaters Wilderness where white pines overtop the hardwood forest.
- *Bailey Lake Equestrian Trail* – trailhead is located off of Forest Road 3861. This trail is approximately 12 miles used as a designated horse trail. In the winter, parts of the trail are used for snowmobiling.
- *Quartz Hill Trail* – located in the southeast corner of Forest County. From Carter, take State Highway 32 south 1 mile. The parking area is on the west side of the highway. This trail has two sections; one on the east and a ¼ mile trail on the west side of State Highway 32. The east section leads across a boardwalk to the top of Quartz Hill.

Table 2 **Trail Uses**

County Trails	Miles	Hiking	Mtn. Bike	X-C Ski	Horse	Interpretive	Difficulty
Hemlock Lake Trail	2	X	X	X			Easy
Otter Springs Trail	5	X	X	X	X		Easy - Moderate
Hunter - Walking Trails	Unmeasured	X		X			Easy - Hard
Nicolet Nat'l Trails	**Miles**	**Hiking**	**Mtn. Bike**	**X-C Ski**	**Horse**	**Interpretive**	**Difficulty**
Ed's Lake Trail	6	X	X	X			Easy - Difficult
Nicolet North Trail	15	X	X	X	X		Medium
Franklin Nature Lake	1	X				X	Easy
Hidden Lakes Trail	13	X					Medium
Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail	2/3	X				X	Easy
Halley Creek Bird Trail	1	X				X	Easy
Michigan Rapids Trail	2	X					Medium
Argonne Experimental Forest Trail	3/4	X				X	Medium
Scott Lake Trail and Shelp Lake Trail	1/2	X					Easy
Luna-White Deer Trail	4	X					Easy
Sevenmile Trail	2	X					Medium
Giant Pine Trail							
Bailey Lake Equestrian Trail	15	X			X		Easy
Quartz Hill Trail	1 1/4	X				X	Medium-Difficult

Source: Forest County, & USDA – Forest Service

Motorized Trails:

Forest County Forest ATV Trail

A two-way, looping, 8-mile trail is located on old logging roads on the Forest County Forest. This trail system is open to ATVS, dual sport motorcycles, snowmobiles, hikers, bikers, skiers, hunters and many other uses. The trail head is a paved parking area at the entrance to the trail system. Please be aware that many towns in Forest County have opened their town roads for ATV use as well. Please be sure that town roads are signed with the green and white "ATV Route" signs before riding your ATV on them.

Spring Lake Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Trail

There are 15.4 miles of signed trails with different skill levels, located on Spring Lake Rd in the Town of Nashville. This area is for OHM only and is maintained by the Wisconsin Dual Sport Riders. OHM park includes a pit toilet and parking area.

Nicolet State Trail

The Nicolet State Trail is 32 miles of State funded snowmobile and ATV trail on abandoned railroad grade. The Nicolet State Trail is also open to hiking, biking, cross country skiing, dual sport motorcycles and horseback riding. The Nicolet State Trail connects to Florence County to the North and Oconto County to the South.

Wolf River State Trail

The Wolf River State Trail is open in Forest County and runs for about 20 miles from the Forest/Langlade county line to Argonne.

Only use roads that are legally marked as ATV routes to leave the corridor.

Valley Trail

The Valley Trail is an ATV, snowmobile, dual sport motorcycle, and hiking trail. The trail is 8-miles long following USH 8 west out of Crandon. The trail will run from Crandon to the Oneida County line.

Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest (Forest)

In 2004, the Forest revised its forest management plan. The revised plan contains a consistent ATV policy for both sides of the Forest

- No off-road or off trail use allowed (implemented on June 14, 2004).
- New trail construction allowed for up to 100 miles of trail on the Chequamegon side, and up to 85 total miles on the Nicolet side.
- All roads and trails closed to ATV use unless identified on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM).
- In general, most Forest Service trails and routes are closed to ATVs yearly from October 31 through April 30. The MVUM is updated yearly and list the operating season for all Forest Service trails and routes. Township designated roads are still open.
- No Intensive Use ("play areas") allowed on the Forest (Open 26 play area closed on June 14, 2004).
- Emergency closures can be issued locally where resources are being damaged or abused, or there are safety concerns.

All Forest Service roads open to ATV use are posted with signs, but the MVUM is the official source of trail and route information. Also, maps containing information on areas open to ATV use can also be obtained at Ranger District Offices.

Snowmobile Trails:

Forest County has about 406 miles of groomed, state funded trails winding throughout the county. All trails link to both casinos and many hospitality businesses in Forest County. All trail maintenance is contracted to snowmobile clubs. The trail segments that exist within the County include:

- *100 Mile Snow Safari Trails* – 143.02 miles
- *Black Bear Sportsmen's Club* – 49.39 miles
- *Lumberjack Memorial Trails* – 101.20 miles
- *Three Lakes Trails* – 90 miles
- *Tombstone-Pickerel Trails* – 25.95 miles

3.3 Points of Interest

Forest County contains both historic and contemporary points of interest of cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and scientific importance.

A) Historic Buildings and Sites

Nine sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places in Forest County:

1. Minertown-Oneva, Town of Wabeno
2. Butternut-Franklin Lakes Archaeological District, Town of Hiles
3. Franklin Lake Campground, Town of Alvin
4. Camp Five Farmstead, Town of Laona
5. Chicago and North-Western Land Office, Town of Wabeno
6. Dinesen-Motzfeldt-Hettinger Log House, Town of Crandon
7. Armstrong Creek Bridge, Town of Armstrong Creek
8. John and Anna Wywialowski Farmstead, Town of Armstrong Creek
9. Otter Spring House, Town of Lincoln
10. Butternut Lake Site, Forest County
11. Connor Lumber and Land Company Store, Town of Laona

Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) lists 86 properties on it within Forest County.

- City of Crandon – 22 sites
- Town of Hiles – 17 sites
- Town of Armstrong Creek – 10 sites
- Town of Alvin – 5 sites
- Town of Blackwell – 5 sites

- Town of Laona – 5 sites
- Town of Lincoln – 4 sites
- Town of Wabeno – 15 sites
- Town of Argonne – 2 sites
- Town of Nashville – 1 site.

The Forest County Historical and Genealogical Society maintains extensive county historical records that are available to the general public.

B) Historical Markers

- A state historical marker titled: **Northern Highland** is located on USH 8, 1.8 miles east of Crandon.
- A state historical marker titled: **Battle of Mole Lake** is located on STH 55, in the center of Mole Lake.
- A state historical marker titled: **Laona School Forest** is located on STH 32, 1 mile south of Laona.

C) Geologic Sites

Forest County's topography, and geology are described in Chapter 2 – Description of Forest County.

Sugar Bush Hill – Located three miles east of Crandon, this is one of the highest points in the State at 1,938 feet above sea level. This site is tribally owned.

3.4 Public Access Points to Water Bodies

Public access points to water bodies vary from primitive (i.e., canoe launches) to well developed (i.e., boat launches). Multiple jurisdictions own the access points. All public access points are shown on **Map 1**. You may review an interactive map online of public access points by searching for "WDNR boat and shore fishing access map."

See Chapter 4 for Forest County maintained public access points to waterbodies.

See "3.6 Local Government Facilities" for those public access points maintained by local governments.

See "3.7 State Facilities" for those public access points maintained by the State.

3.5 Public Campgrounds

Forest County

- *Forest County Veteran's Memorial Park* – 7 tent and 58 trailer RV spaces, electric and water hookups, dump station for RV's, potable water, sanitary facilities, restroom/shower facility, picnic facilities, two picnic shelters, grills, playground, volleyball courts, basketball court, swimming beach, boating, boat landing, fishing, fishing pier, and a manager building. Firewood and ice are also available on site.

Tribally Owned

- *Sokaogon Chippewa Community Park* – 20 tent and trailer spaces, drinking water, picnic facilities, boating, boat landing, and fishing.

Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest

- *Big Joe* – 3 primitive sites – fire rings, and vault toilet. (Note: This site is proposed for reduction. Future management will have only the three dispersed sites, the toilet is currently closed, and will be removed when funding allows.)
- *Bear Lake* – 27 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, picnic facilities, grills, hiking, swimming, boating, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Brule River* – 11 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, grills, fishing, and grocery store.
- *Franklin Lake* – 77 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, flush toilets, picnic facilities, shelter, grills, hiking, swimming, boating, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Laura Lake* – 41 tent and trailer space – drinking water, picnic facilities, grills, hiking, swimming, non-motorized boat restrictions, a five mile bike trail, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Ludington Lake* – 4 tent and trailer spaces – fire rings, vault toilet, swimming, boating, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Luna-White Deer Lake* – 37 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, picnic facilities, grills, hiking, non-motorized boat restrictions, swimming, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Pine Lake* – 12 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, picnic facilities, grills, swimming, boating, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Richardson Lake* – 26 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, picnic facilities, grills, swimming, boat landing, boating, and fishing.
- *Seven Mile Lake* – 27 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, grills, hiking, swimming, boating, boat landing, and fishing.
- *Stevens Lake* – 6 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, grills, boat landing, boating, and fishing.
- *Windsor Dam* – 8 tent and trailer spaces – drinking water, grills, hiking, canoeing, and fishing.

3.6 School District Facilities

Three public school districts have additional local recreation opportunities in Forest County that ***may*** be open to the public. School yards often have playgrounds with play equipment, ball diamonds, and basketball hoops. These school yards range in size from 1 to 15 acres. See **Maps 4, 5, & 6** for locations.

School properties NOT always publicly available:

- Each school's playground is NOT open to the public during school hours.
- Parochial school grounds are on private property and may not be open to the public at all.
- School forests may not be available – contact school forest owner for rules.

Each school district maintains the following outdoor facilities in Forest County:

School District of Crandon

The District maintains:

- Crandon School Forest, 10 acres, E1/2 NE1/4, S25 T36N R12E.
- Hovind Family School Forest, 40 acres, SE1/4 SE1/4, S28 T36N R12E.
- Located just outside of Crandon sits the combined elementary, middle, and high school building and the following outdoor recreation facilities:
    - Elementary and middle school playgrounds
    - A baseball field
    - A softball field
    - a varsity football & soccer field

Laona School District

The District maintains:

- Laona School Forest, 63 acres, N1/2 NW1/4, S6 T35N R15E.
- Located within the downtown area of Laona sits the combined elementary, middle, and high school building and the following outdoor recreation facilities:
    - Elementary and middle school playgrounds
    - Two ballfields

School District of Wabeno Area

The District maintains:

- Wabeno School Forest, 40 acres, SE1/4 SW1/4, S16 T34N R15E.
- Along Mill Ln where the elementary school is located are elementary school playgrounds
- Along Oconto Dr are a baseball/softball field, football field, restrooms, shelter, ice skating area, and sledding hill.

3.7 Local Government Facilities & Capital Improvement Lists

This section is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreation facilities that are managed by each local government. Parks, special use facilities, trails, local forests, and boat launches are all included here. Since there are abundant outdoor recreation facilities located within Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest, then there is less demand for local governments to provide those similar types of facilities

Maps 1, 4, 5, & 6 show local government managed outdoor recreation.

A local government can find out how much land is needed for a tennis court, for example, or many other park features in **Attachment B** – Facility Development Standards.

ADA 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 its existing facilitates, programs, and services. This will provide future direction on how to achieve compliance with ADA requirements.

Proposed Projects from 2027-2031
The projects listed may occur from 2027-2031. Projects are not listed in priority order and are subject to change. Each local government created the following capital improvement lists. All upgrades and new construction will take into consideration meeting ADA standards. As funds become available, the following projects may be completed.

Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC)

See the Forest County Potawatomi Community Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The FCPC's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

The FCPC has their own Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the FCPC.

Sokaogon Chippewa Community (SCC)

See the Sokaogon Chippewa Community Tourism Strategic Plan 2025 for a listing of their parks. The Tribal plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

The SCC has their own Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, titled: Sokaogon Chippewa Community Tourism Strategic Plan 2025. See that plan for recommendations within the SCC.

City of Crandon (See Map 4)

City Beach – This 4.4-acre park is located at 5207 E Lakeview St. The beach is located on Lake Metonga's north shore, on the city's south side. Facilities include a beach house, two boat launches with a pier in the middle, picnic area, playground, restrooms, shelter, swimming, and volleyball courts.

Palmer Park – This 23.8-acre park is located at 601 W Washington St. This park is located next to City Hall on the west side of city. Facilities include a little league and softball field, basketball court, play equipment with safety surfacing, restroom, and a 0.6-mile bike path.

Peshtigo Lake Access – This public boat ramp is on the southeast corner of Peshtigo Lake, and Is provided through cemetery land.

Cardinal Park – This 6.2-acre park is located south of Madison St at Prospect Ave. Park facilities include two little league fields, a basketball court, six pickleball courts, playground, restrooms, and two shelters.

Louise Park – This 1.6-acre park is located west of STH 55 between 2nd and 4th Streets. This undeveloped park is located on the north side of the city.

Forest County Fairgrounds – This 7.4-acre park is located at 615 Glen St. Facilities include three buildings for displays, animal barn, horse arena, and restrooms. The Forest County Agricultural Society owns this property.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Cardinal Park
1. Update current bathrooms with no-touch sinks, toilets, etc.
2. Repave walking path and remove boardwalk.
3. Resurface pickle ball court.

Crandon Public Beach
1. Upgrade and repair pavilion.
2. Add playground equipment.
3. Upgrade boat launch.

Palmer Park
1. Update current bathrooms with no-touch sinks, toilets, etc.
2. Repave walking path.
3. Update playground equipment.

Peshtigo Lake Access
1. Add a "public boat launch" sign on driveway at Railroad Ave.
2. Upgrade boat launch.



Town of Alvin

Buchanan Recreation Area – This ___-acre park is located at _____(address)_____. Facilities include shelter/storage, horseshoe pit, volleyball court, basketball, playground equipment, and nature trail.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

- None.

Town of Argonne

Argonne Town Park – This 3.3-acre park is located at 8734 Railroad Ave. Facilities include two ball fields, a covered pavilion that meets ADA standards, playground, restrooms, and a basketball court.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Argonne Town Park

- Upgrade restroom facilities.

Town of Armstong Creek

Armstrong Creek Town Park – This 2-acre park is located behind the Community Center at 7874 Old 101 Road. Facilities include two basketball hoops, a covered pavilion that meets ADA standards, restrooms in the Community Center, and a playground.

Town Ballfield – This 3.7-acre park is accessible by driveways off of both STH 101 and USH 8. This is a ballfield at the northeast corner of USH 8 and STH 101.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Armstrong Creek Town Park

1. Install new water bubbler.
2. Purchase portable hand washing stations

Town Ballfield

1. Install new aluminum bleachers.
2. Purchase and install a portable fence and movable bases so that regular-season boys baseball games or men's softballs tournaments can be held there in addition to little league and girls softball games.
3. Develop a concession stand with electricity

Old Red Bridge

1. Develop a picnic area.
2. Replace interpretive signage.
3. Repaint the bridge

Town of Blackwell

Town of Blackwell Park – This 2.3-acre park is located on Rat River Lane across from the Town Recycling Center. Facilities include a picnic area, Flowering Crab Memorial Park, an ATV trailhead with parking, and ADA compliant privies. A foot bridge connects this park across the Rat River to Nu Roc Lane.

Since Blackwell does not have a cemetery, the Town fenced an area for families to plant a flowering crab tree in memory of their loved ones. There are currently 12 trees in Flowering Crab Memorial Park.

Monte's Playground – This 0.15-acre park is located next to the Town Hall. Facilities include a playground, shelter, and 2 picnic tables. This land is approximately one acre and is adjacent to the Town Hall. These facilities do not meet ADA standards.

Rat River Recreational Trail – This non-motorized trail has a limestone base, an ADA accessible privy, and connects the Nicolet State Trail, east along the Rat River to Bear Lake Campground.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

- Develop access road to another pier on Rat River Trail connection with small area for parking.

Rat River Recreational Trail

- Construct a second fishing pier on the Rat River Recreational Trail.
- Place some picnic tables and benches by the parking area.

Town of Caswell

Town of Caswell Park – This 1.0-acre park is located next to the Town Hall. Facilities include an ADA accessible pit toilet and an open picnic pavilion that is ADA accessible from the parking lot. Snowmobile & ATV/UTV trail accessible parking.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Town of Casswell Park

1. Install pit system restroom for playground and outdoor pavilion. Estimated cost: $7,500.
2. Add electricity to pavilion for lighting and outlets. Estimated cost: $4,500.

Town of Crandon

Refer to **Maps 1 & 4** for recreational facilities near the Town of Crandon.

Town of Freedom

Refer to **Maps 1 & 6** for recreational facilities near the Town of Freedom.

Town of Hiles

Refer to **Map 1** for recreational facilities near the Town of Hiles.

Town of Laona (See Map 5)

Silver Lake Park – This 1.3-acre park is located at 5201 E Silver Lake Rd. Facilities include a swimming beach with restrooms and changing rooms, playground, picnic tables, grills, benches, basketball court, and two shelters with picnic tables.

Laona Centennial Park and Playground – This 0.9-acre park is adjacent to the Town Hall at 5146 Linden St. Facilities include a picnic area and ice-skating area.

Laona Heritage Baseball Park & Veterans Memorial Park – This 6.2-acre park is located at 4855 Elm St. Facilities include a ball diamond, gravel parking lot, and a veterans memorial that includes a U.S. flag.

Soup Kettle Park – This 1.2-acre park is located southeast of the Linden St and Mill Rd intersection. Facilities include a picnic area with tables and grills, gravel parking area, and the world's largest soup kettle. This park is owned by the Wisconsin Timber Association and open for public use.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

- None.

Town of Lincoln

Refer to **Maps 1 & 4** for recreational facilities near the Town of Lincoln.

Town of Nashville

Nashville Town Park – This 1.5-acre park is located at 4265 State Hwy 55. Facilities include a large open area, playground equipment, shelter and picnic table.

St John Park – This 0.5-acre park is located at the intersection of Co. Hwy Q and St John Lane. Facilities include playground equipment, picnic table, and wigwam.

*Town boat launch – **Mole Lake Access** – gravel ramp on North Mole Lake Road.*

*Town boat launch – **Crane Lake Access** – gravel ramp on Doemel Lane.*

*Town boat launch – **Pickerel Lake Access** – concrete ramp on Pickerel Lake Road.*

*Town boat launch – **Pickerel Lake - South Shore Drive Access** – paved ramp on South Shore Drive.*

*Town boat launch – **Crystal Lake Access** – sand launch on Crystal Lake Road.*

*Town boat launch – **Little Sand Lake Access** – gravel ramp on Sand Lake Road.*

*Town boat launch – **Jungle Lake Access** – gravel ramp on Wilderness Lane.*

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Mole Lake Access – on Mole Lake Rd.

- Remove dead tree hazards approximately 20 trees.

- Remove approximately 6 trees for snow plow access. Currently we can not plow with plow truck, we need to use pickup truck with plow.
- Add concrete boat ramp pads.
- Remove stumps, and add gravel to make small parking area.

Crane Lake Access – on Doemel Lane
- Add gravel to parking area.

Pickerel Lake Access – on Pickerel Lake Rd.
- Add gravel to parking area.

Pickerel Lake Access – on South Shore Dr.
- OK as is, no improvements needed at this time.

Crystal Lake Access – on Crystal lake Rd.
- Remove dead tree hazards.
- Add gravel to parking area.

Sand Lake – on Sand Lake Rd.
- Replace broken concrete boat ramp pads, and add additional pads to lengthen ramp.
- Regrade parking area and add gravel.
- Remove dead hazard trees.

Jungle Lake – on Jungle Lake Rd.
- Regrade ramp and truck trailer runaround area to prevent erosion towards the lake.
- Regrade to reduce slope of hill of in and out approach to turn around area.
- Add gravel to turnaround area.

Bishop Lake – on County M
- Add gravel to boat ramp.
- Add boat ramp concrete pads to lengthen ramp.
- Remove trees to improve entering and exiting boat landing.
- Parking lot, regrade and add gravel.

Town of Nashville Playground – 4265 State Hwy 55, Crandon
- Add ground cover material: sand or rubber under playground.
- Add additional playground equipment.
- Repair/straighten slide.
- Add border to playground area (decorative fencing).
- Add grill to picnic area.

St Johns Park – Corner of Saint John's Lane and CTH Q
- Ground cover material, sand or rubber.

- Add additional playground equipment
- Add grill and picnic table to picnic area
- Remove partial driveway to create only one entrance.

Town of Popple River

Refer to **Map 1** for recreational facilities near the Town of Popple River.

Town of Ross

Town of Ross Park – This 1.4-acre park is located adjacent to the Town Hall at 10170 Cypress St. Facilities include a large open field, two playgrounds worth of equipment, and a shelter with picnic tables.

Lake Van Zile Community Park – This 12.7-acre park is located at 1002 Market St. Facilities include a boat access, picnic area, sanitary facility, and swimming beach.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

- None.

Town of Wabeno (See Map 6)

All Town roads are open to ATV/UTV use. Downtown Wabeno has a Nicolet State Trail trailhead for parking and loading/unloading ATV/UTVs.

Wabeno Legion Park – This 4-acre park is located in downtown Wabeno. Facilities include a tennis courts, 2 pavilions (ADA accessible), an island, playground, ADA restrooms, basketball court, and a barrier free boardwalk and nature trail along the North Branch of the Oconto River with fishing piers.

Wabeno Community Field & Ballpark – This 2.4-acre park is located in downtown Wabeno next to the Town Hall. In 2025, this property's ownership was transferred from the Wabeno School District to the Town of Wabeno. Facilities include a baseball/softball field with bleachers and a batting cage.

Firefighter's Grounds – This 6-acre park is located at 1796 Fairview Ave. There are a variety of expo buildings, restrooms, informal camping area, and accessible nature trail.

Trump Lake Park – This 0.4-acre park is located at 3033 Trump Lake Rd. There is a boat launch, picnic area, and restrooms.

Trump Lake Beach – This 0.3-acre park is separate from Trump Lake Park, located at 2791 Trump Lake Rd. There is a swimming beach, restrooms, and picnic area.

Veterans Memorial Park – This 10-acre park is located at 1944 Park Ave. A parking lot leads to war memorials, and an accessible loop nature trail.

Nicolet State Trail Parking Area – This 0.4-acre gravel parking lot behind the Wabeno Logging Museum, bandshell, and American Legion Post, serves as a parking lot to these entities and as trailhead parking for those walking, biking or ATVing on the Nicolet State Trail.

Proposed Projects for 2027-2031

Firefighter's Grounds
1. Replace/ repair outdoor bar & pie shack
2. Replace cooler
3. New bleachers
4. Replace overhead lighting

Trump Lake Park
1. Resurfacing at Trump Lake boat landing
2. Create male/female restrooms at Trump Lake pavilion
3. Install large charcoal grill
4. Replace boat landing

Wabeno Legion Park
1. Update playground equipment
2. Update bathrooms
3. Replace/ resurface basketball court
4. Buy land to expand park
5. Replace Cavour Ave bridge over Oconto River
6. Install large charcoal grill
7. Replace tennis court/ pickleball court

Wabeno Community Field & Ballpark
1. Add snack shack
2. Add outdoor bathrooms

Nicolet State Trail Parking Area
- Add building

Downtown Wabeno - STH 32 / N. Branch Street
1. Add decorative light poles
2. Update and replace Christmas lighting and decorations

Wabeno Public Library (4556 N Branch St)
- Expand library building

Wabeno Logging Museum (4494 N Branch St)
- Update building and show room

Community Caring Projects
1. Art Sculptures / Thomas Dambo Inspired Trolls
2. Design Community Involvement Projects/ Workshops

3.8 State Facilities

Wisconsin can take pride in its vast treasure of natural resources, particularly its wildlife. Since 1876, Wisconsin has been acquiring land to meet conservation and recreation needs. Public lands managed by the DNR provide many opportunities and public spaces for you and your family to hunt, fish, trap, hike, canoe or watch and photograph wildlife.

Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses that are open to the public on that parcel.

State Wildlife Areas

State wildlife areas were acquired by the state to protect and manage important habitat for wildlife and to preserve unique wild land features for hikers, wildlife watchers, hunters, trappers, and all people interested in the out-of-doors. Wildlife areas have only minor facility development like a very small gravel parking lot.

The following wildlife areas are owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. There is one federal wildlife area in Forest County:

Little Rice Wildlife Area located 6 miles northwest of Crandon, is a public hunting area that consists of 1,757 acres. Waterfowl, furbearers, deer, loons, bald eagles, and osprey inhabit the area.

State Natural Areas (SNA)

State natural areas were designated to protect the state's natural diversity, provide sites for research and environmental education, and serve as benchmarks for assessing and guiding use of other lands in the state. Natural areas are defined as tracts of land or water, which have native biotic communities, unique natural features, or significant geological or archeological sites. These sites do not have much facility development, though there may be a designated trail on the site.

The restrictions and guidelines that follow are applicable to most SNAs, though sites owned by agencies and organizations other than the DNR may have additional rules.

- Most SNAs are open to the public year around unless otherwise noted in the SNA site descriptions or posted at the site. SNAs within State Parks are generally open between 6:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M.
- Please recognize and respect the property of private landowners adjacent to SNAs by not trespassing. Seek the landowner's permission before crossing private lands.
- Do not collect plants (including fruits, nuts, or edible plant parts), animals, fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead. Collecting for scientific research requires a permit issued by the DNR.
- Vehicles, including bicycles, ATVs, aircraft, and snowmobiles, are prohibited except on trails and roadways designated for their use. Access is only by foot, skis, snowshoes, and watercraft. Some trails are wheelchair accessible.

- Pets are allowed on most DNR-owned SNAs, but must be kept on a leash no longer than 8', unless they are dogs being used for hunting purposes. Pets are prohibited on sites owned by The Nature Conservancy and most other private conservation organizations. Horseback riding is not allowed.
- Camping and fires are generally prohibited.
- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited, except on SNAs #98 and #164.
- Fishing, trapping, and hunting are allowed on most DNR-owned properties in accordance with state regulations.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) listed the following State Natural Areas in Forest County. Each site was given a statewide identification ***(No. #)*** by the DNR, and a Map 1 location letter **[_]**:

Scott Lake and Shelp Lake SNA (No. 117) [A] is 1,674 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T38N R12E).

Giant White Pine Grove SNA (No. 118) [B] is 43 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T38N R12E)

Franklin and Butternut Lakes SNA (No. 119) [C] is 1,548 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T40N R 12E).

Atkins Lake and Hiles Swamp SNA (No. 238) [D] is 2,708 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T37N R11E & R12E).

Bastile Lake SNA (No. 302) [E] is 156 acres located in the Town of Popple River.

McCaslin Mountain SNA (No. 307) [F] is 408 acres located in the Town of Wabeno (T34N R16E).

Alvin Creek Headwaters SNA (No. 443) [G] is 1,048 acres located in the Town of Alvin (T40N R13E).

Anvil Lake Trail SNA (No. 449) [H] is 980 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T40N R11E & R12E).

Argonne Experimental Forest SNA (No. 441) [I] is 1,125 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T38N R12E).

Camp 3 Lake SNA (No. 450) [J] is 1,214 acres located in the Town of Laona (T36N R15E).

Crandon Ribbed Fen SNA (No. 590) [K] is 96 acres located in the Town of Lincoln (T36N R13E).

Deer Mountain SNA (No. 455) [L] is 2,089 acres located in the Town of Wabeno (T35N R16E).

Echo Lake SNA (No. 445) [M] is 657 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T40N R11E & R12E).

Haymeadow Flowage SNA (No. 482) [N] is 1,935 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T39N R12E).

North Otter Creek SNA (No. 448) [O] is 724 acres located in the Town of Laona (T36N R14E).

Pat Shay Lake SNA (No. 446) [P] is 736 acres located in the Town of Hiles (T39N R12E).

Rat Lake Swamp and Popple River Headwaters SNA (No. 444) [Q] is 2,517 acres located in the Town of Popple River (T38N-R14E, & T39N-R14E).

Wabikon Lake SNA (No. 447) [R] is 1,105 acres located in the Town of Laona (T35N & T36N R14E).

3.9 Federal Facilities

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest covers over half the land within Forest County. Extensive recreational opportunities within the Forest are described throughout the Existing Recreation Facilities chapter of this Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan.



A sign designating the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin. Rob Mentzer/WPR

Wilderness Areas are the federal version of the state natural areas program.

Headwaters Wilderness Area – Officially designated as a wilderness in 1984, this 18,000 plus acre wilderness is located 16 miles southeast of Eagle River, Wis. in Forest County. Portions of this area contain some of the largest and oldest trees in the forest. Kimball Creek, Shelp Lake and the Headwaters of the Pine River are major features within this Wilderness. The terrain is generally flat. Popular recreation uses in this Wilderness are hiking, bird-watching, hunting, fishing and studying nature.

3.10 Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned

Forested lands that may be open to the public but are not part of the county forest are privately held lands by individuals and corporations that are enrolled in either the Forest Crop Law or the Managed Forest Law. Currently, lands can only be newly enrolled in Managed Forest Law.

As of 2026 there are 2,472 acres enrolled under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in Forest County, which are open to the public to hunt and fish.

MFL "open" property NOT always publicly available:

- It is the responsibility of the user to know where they are, and which land is open to the public.
- MFL "open" lands may be closed within 300 feet of any building.
- MFL "open" lands may be closed within 300 feet of a harvesting operation.

As of 2026 there are about 51,482 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program in Forest County. Of that MFL acreage, there are about 29,005 acres designated "open" to the public for hunting (not trapping), fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross-country skiing only (s. 77.83(2)(a), Wis. Stats.).

See Forest Legacy Areas map in **Attachment E** to see generally where FCL & MFL lands ("Taxlaw Entries" as shown on map) are located, which includes both open and closed to the public lands.

Other than the following exception, MFL lands enrolled as open shall not be posted to restrict access. All MFL program participants can restrict access without penalty to the landowner to areas that are within 300 feet of any building or harvesting operation. Access by motor vehicles or snowmobiles may be prohibited by the landowner on open lands. Open MFL lands can be found on the DNR's website. It is the responsibility of the user to know where they are and which land is open to the public.

Chapter 4:
COUNTY MAINTAINED RECREATION FACILITIES

This chapter is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational facilities that are managed by the Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department.

4.1 County Parks & Recreation Areas

The following county parks and recreation areas are shown on **Map 2** and are maintained by the Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department.

Veteran's Memorial County Park and Campground is about a 35-acre facility located 4 miles South of Crandon on County Park Road off of East Shore Drive on the south shore of Lake Metonga. The campground and day use park includes a boat launch with boat wash station, potable water, large beach with sandy lake bed, picnic pavilions, volleyball court, basketball court, playground, and campsites for RV campers (58 sites) electric hook up or 7 tent camping sites and a variety of modern conveniences like firewood, ice, and Wi-Fi hotspot. Handicapped accessible facilities exist throughout the park and campground.

Bog Brook Flowage and Wildlife Area
This area was created by Forest County by constructing an earthen dam across Bog Brook Creek in 1962. The impoundment is about 490 acres and up to 6 feet deep, for the purpose of improving aquatic and terrestrial wildlife conditions.

See **Attachment F** for additional information.

4.2 County Forest

The Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department manages 15,284.84 acres of county forest. This land is managed for multiple uses and is third-party certified as sustainably managed and harvested. Some of the county forest is closed to motorized vehicles. Examples of permitted recreational activities are hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, camping, bough cutting (permit required), firewood collection (permit required), and wildlife observation. Refer to **Map 2** for Forest County Forest Land.

Recreational Use of the County Forest
Hunting, trapping, fishing, picnicking, snowshoeing, horseback riding, biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, photography and nature study are currently permitted throughout the County Forest. These uses do not require a permit but must be conducted according to the provisions of County Ordinances.

Primitive Camping within the County Forest.

Forest County allows primitive camping within the County Forest. Natural vegetation and terrain may not be damaged or altered in any way, except for the construction of an adequate fire ring. Fasteners such as nails, screws or bolts may not be attached to trees. No littering. Camping is not permitted in areas adjacent to existing County Park camping facilities, developed recreation areas, and in areas posted "no camping allowed." Firewood cutting requires a permit that is available at the Forest County Forestry and Recreation Office. Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days without a permit.

Non-Motorized Trails

See: "3.2 Linear Trails" for Forest County maintained trails.

Motorized Trails

See: "3.2 Linear Trails" for Forest County maintained trails.

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Chapter 5:
OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Outdoor recreational needs within Forest County were analyzed in several ways. Public input was gathered through a survey and daily staff interactions to determine how well their outdoor recreational needs are being met.

5.1 Public Participation

Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department staff have received public input about its parks, campgrounds, trails, and forest. That input and staff's professional experience will also shape what recommendations are made.

Summary of Survey Responses

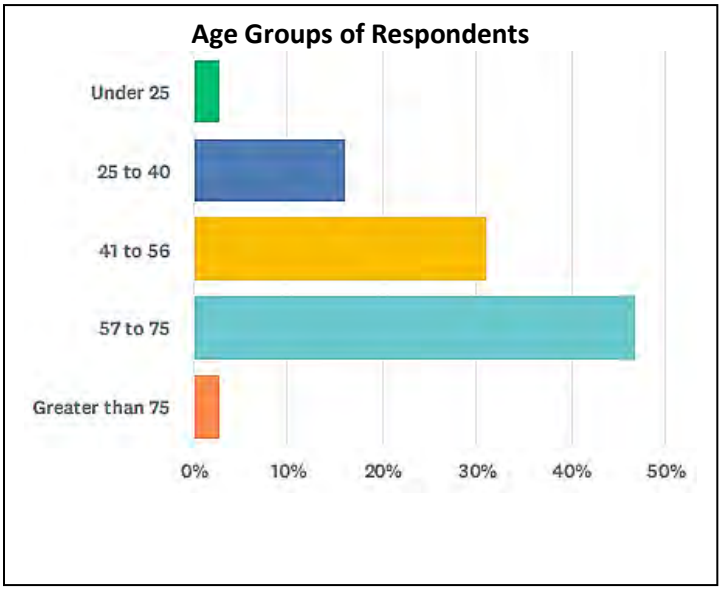
In February and March 2026, this survey was sent out for customer feedback. The Forestry & Recreation Department emailed the survey to all county staff and all outdoor rec. clubs. NCWRPC mailed or emailed survey posters and social media post examples to every town, the City of Crandon, both Tribal Communities, and a list of outdoor recreation groups provided by the County. The Forest County Potawatomi Community and Visit Forest County both posted the survey on their Facebook pages.

The survey was open for 4 weeks.

We received **269 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. 89% of respondents who began the survey also finished the survey, which is a very good completion rate.

Answered: 241 Skipped: 28

About 81% of respondents live in Forest County, and 19% do not or did not answer.



Answered: 241 Skipped: 28

About 52% of respondents were male, and about 47% were female, with 1% preferring not to answer.

Answered: 241 Skipped: 28

Respondents came from all age groups, with a strong showing of at least 30% in the 41 to 56 (Gen X), and 57 to 75 (Baby Boomers) age groups.

Through an IP address analysis of those who took the survey it appears that one IP address collected 33 responses; none of which looked like the same responses. 8 IP addresses are duplicated, which could mean that a husband and wife both took the survey. 3 IP addresses had either 3, 4, or 5 responses.

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. In 2025, which outdoor recreational activities did you participate in?

Answered: 269 Skipped: 0

1.	Walking / Hiking	69% of responses
2.	Fishing	64% of responses
3.	ATV/UTV Riding	64% of responses
4.	Boating	62% of responses
5.	Events / Festivals / Fairs	54% of responses
6.	Swimming	50% of responses
7.	Hunting / Trapping	50% of responses
8.	Driving for pleasure	41% of responses
9.	Snowmobiling	39% of responses
10.	Canoeing / Kayaking	39% of responses

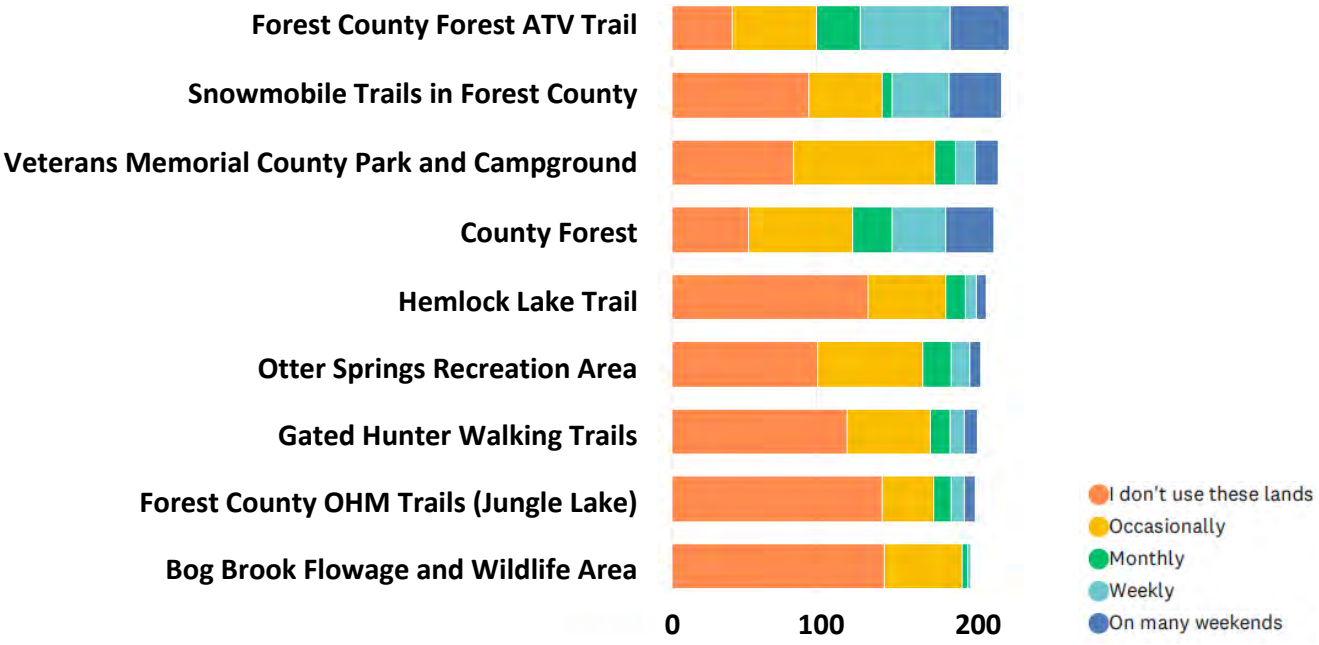
Q2. What potential outdoor recreational opportunities should be developed in Forest County?

Answered: 129 Skipped: 140

1.	**ATV/UTV trails**	**29 responses**
2.	**Hiking trails**	**18 responses**
3.	**Mountain bike single track, bike trails**	**15 responses**
4.	**Dog park**	**13 responses**
5.	**Off-hwy. motorcycle, dirt bike trails**	**10 responses**

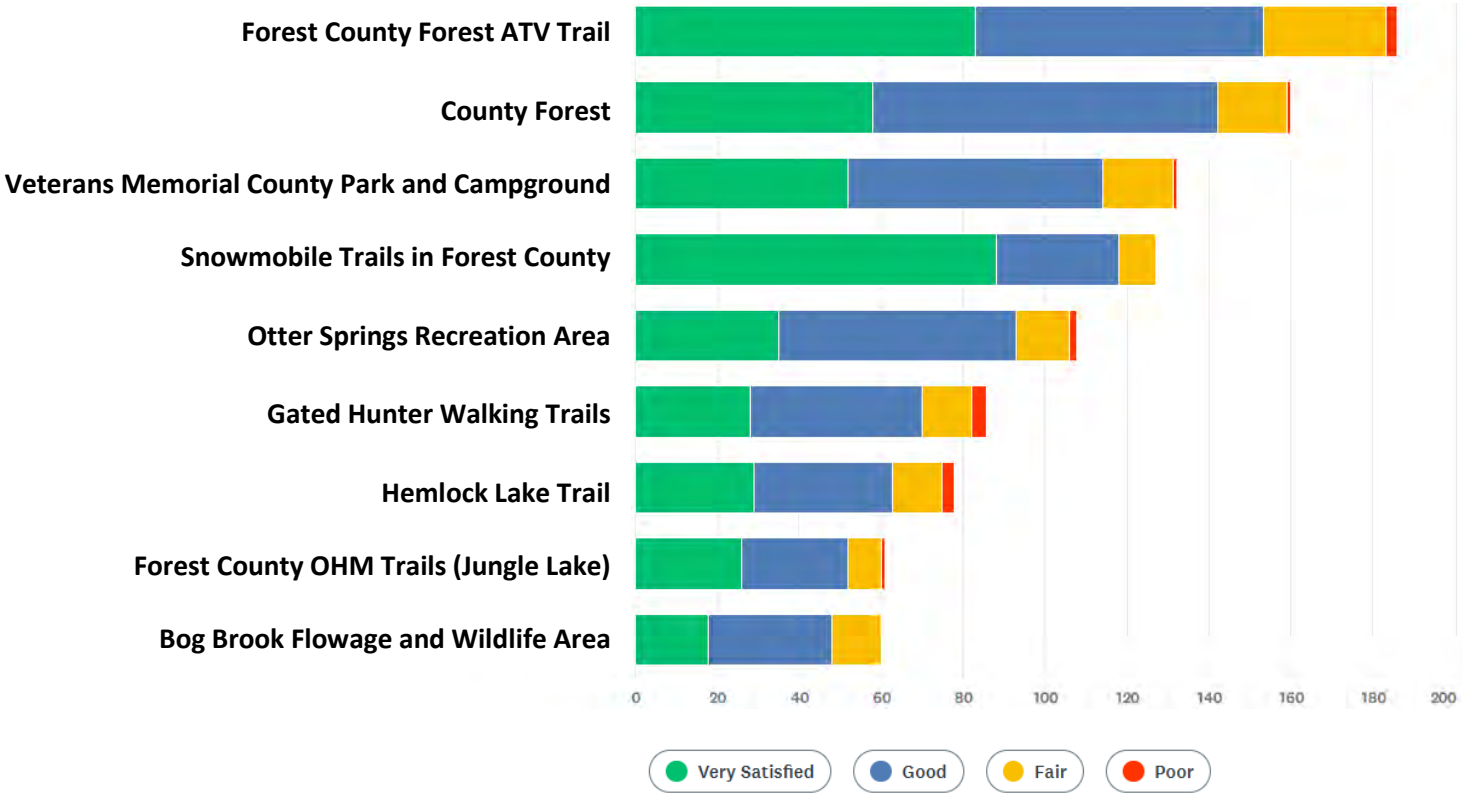
Q3. In 2025, how often did you use Forest County managed parks or trails?

Answered: 247 Skipped: 22



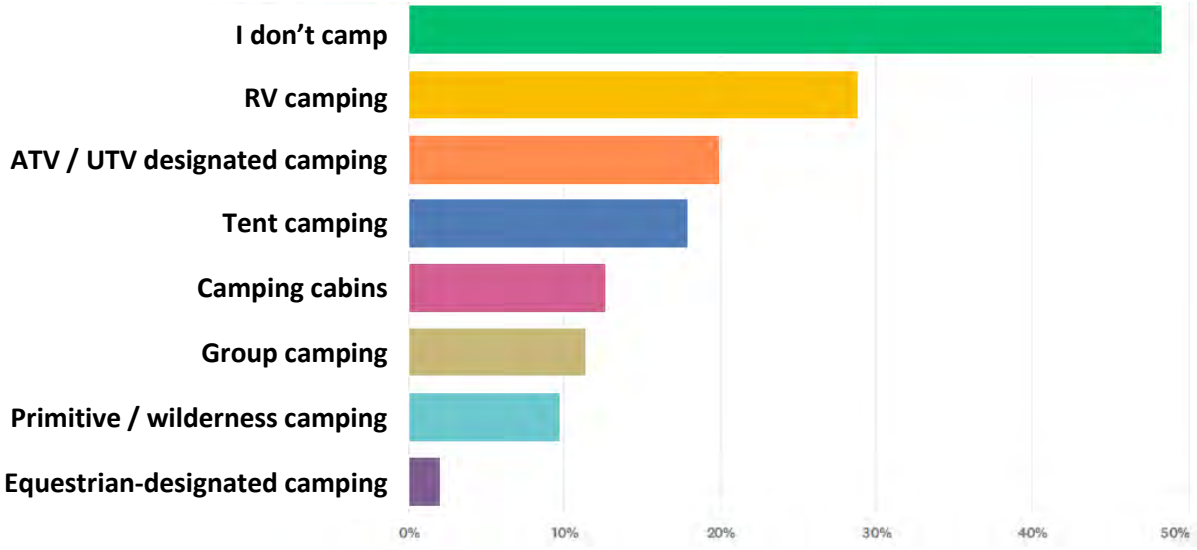
Q4. Please rate your satisfaction with the Forest County managed parks or trails:

Answered: 236 Skipped: 33



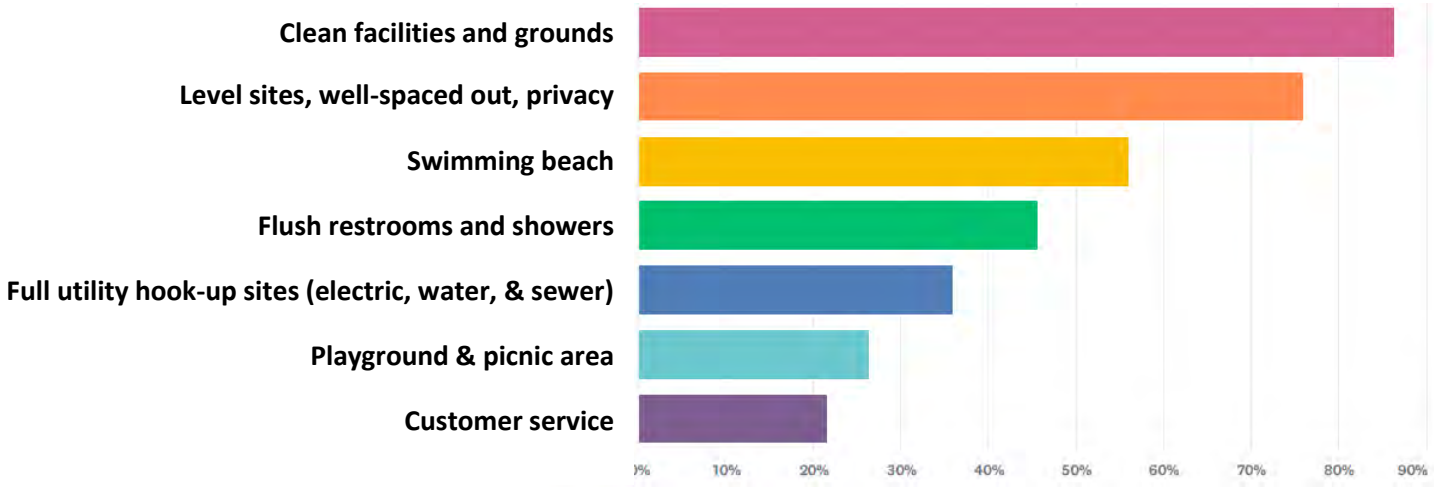
Q5. What type of camping opportunities do you use, or want to use in Forest County?

Answered: 246 Skipped: 23



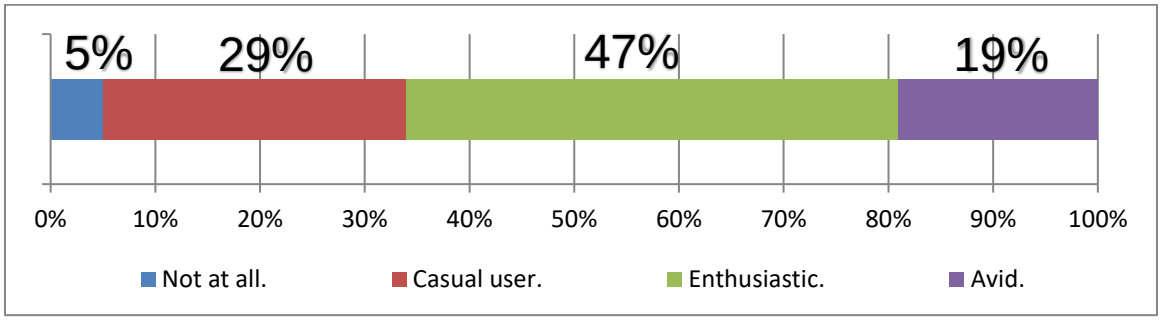
Q6. When choosing a campground, which amenities are most important to you?

Answered: 125 Skipped: 144



Q7. What type of water enthusiast are you?

Answered: 243 Skipped: 26



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

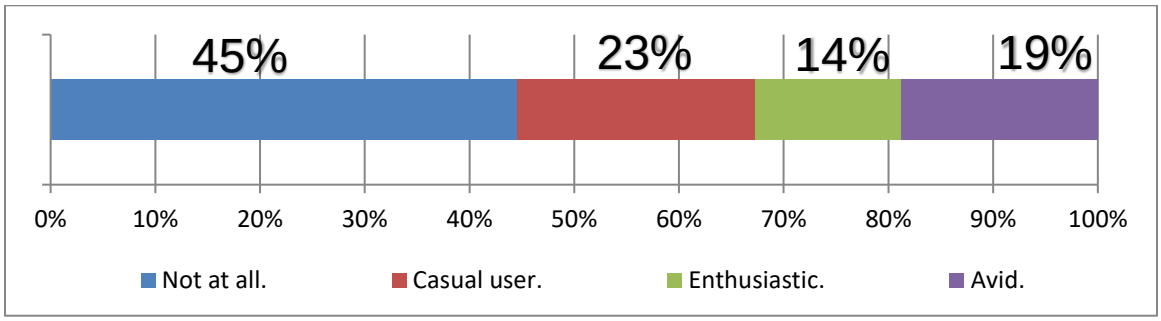
Casual user. (I like to use the water, but only do so occasionally.)

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. What type of snowmobile enthusiast are you?

Answered: 243 Skipped: 26



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

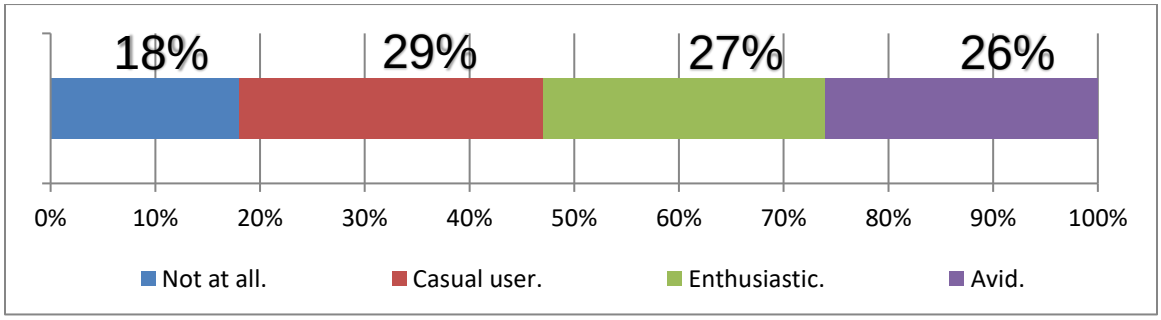
Casual user. (I like snowmobiling for fun, but **only** do so occasionally, **OR only** on my own land.)

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.)

Q9. What type of motorized vehicle (ATV / UTV / OHM) enthusiast are you?

Answered: 243 Skipped: 26



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

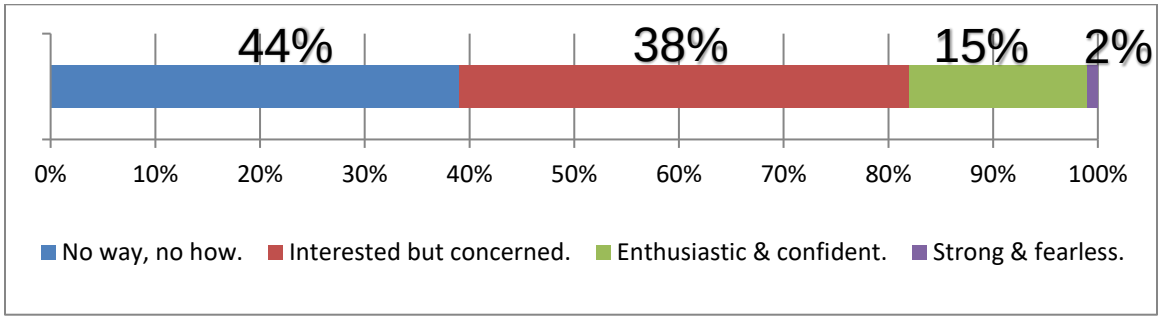
Casual user. (I like using motorized vehicles for fun, but **only** do so occasionally, **OR only** on my own land.)

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.)

Q10. What type of bicyclist are you?

Answered: 243 Skipped: 26



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.)

Q11. Do you have any other concerns or comments?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 235

34 additional comments were received.
See individual comments in Attachment D.

The full survey results (26 pages) with comments are available in Attachment D.

5.2 Park Standards Analysis

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

Local governments may compare their own parks to the Park Design and Location Criteria in **Attachment A**.

A. Individual Park Facilities

Park facilities encompass the buildings, structures, equipment, and amenities within a park designed for public recreation, leisure, and enjoyment, including playgrounds, sports fields, restrooms, and pathways.

The amount of land needed for many intensive use facilities, like a tennis court, are available in **Attachment B – Facility Development Standards.**

Forest County routinely identifies if changes to park facilities are necessary, then suggested improvements are listed under each park in Chapter 7.

B. Accessibility 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.

Forest County routinely identifies If changes to park facilities are necessary to make them ADA compliant, and designs new facilities to meet ADA standards. Any improvements to make a county facility ADA compliant are listed under each facility (e.g., park, trail, boat launch) in Chapter 7.

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 facilitates, programs, and services. This evaluation will provide direction on how to achieve compliance with ADA requirements.

All existing outdoor recreation facilities that are repaired, modified or reconstructed should meet the requirements of ADA. Furthermore, any new outdoor recreation development should meet ADA requirements. A few examples of accessible designs include: wide doorways, specialized playground equipment, ramps, wider parking spaces, etc. Trails shall be accessible to people with disabilities wherever possible. Trail surface, grade and width should meet or exceed ADA guidelines. Grades in excess of 5% may be unavoidable on some natural surfaced trails, but then a level area would be constructed every so often if walking and wheelchairs are possible.

5.3 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends

2025 2030 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

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.

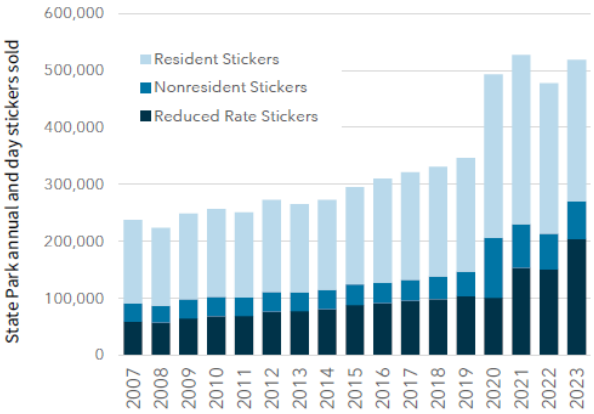
To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding their outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as their opinions about future needs.



SCORP's goals for outdoor recreation:

1. **Ensure that all Wisconsinites have opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation.**
2. **Maintain and expand sustainable outdoor recreational opportunities.**
3. **Grow the collaborative approach across non-profit organizations, businesses, and federal, state, regional and local agencies.**

Like other destinations for outdoor recreation, visitation at Wisconsin State Parks jumped dramatically after the pandemic



TOP 5 Motivations to Participate in Outdoor Recreation

1. Physical health / exercise (79% of Wisconsinites)
2. Mental health / happiness (73%)
3. Connection with nature (72%)
4. Socialization / being with friends and family (67%)
5. Adventure / challenge (52%)

TOP 5 Barriers to Participation in Outdoor Recreation

1. Have other priorities / lack of time (54% of Wisconsinites)
2. Costs are too high / lack of money (20%)
3. Don't know places to go / unaware of options (19%)
4. Places to go are too far away (19%)
5. Nobody to go with (19%)

Estimated participation rates in outdoor recreation activities by Wisconsinites.

Participation Rate	Outdoor Recreation Activity
68%	Walking/Hiking/Running (on paved or unpaved trails)
46%	Swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers
45%	Wildlife watching/Nature photography
44%	Picnicking
40%	Fishing
40%	Motorboating (including pontoons)
40%	Visiting a nature center
36%	Canoeing, kayaking, row boating, stand up paddleboarding
34%	Bicycling – all types
31%	Gardening
30%	Using splash pads or outdoor pools
28%	Camping (tent & RV/pop-up/van)
24%	Riding a motorized vehicle (ATV, UTV, 4WD, OHM)
22%	Visiting a dog park
22%	Dog walking on trails
21%	Playing court sports (e.g., basketball, pickleball, tennis)
19%	Hunting
17%	Recreational firearm range shooting (target, clays, trap)
17%	Playing field sports (e.g., soccer, football, baseball)
15%	Foraging or gathering (e.g., wild edibles, medicinal plants)
12%	Managing land (e.g., restoring habitats, building trails)
10%	Playing disc golf
10%	Water skiing, wakeboarding
9%	Snowmobiling
8%	Downhill skiing/Snowboarding
8%	Snowshoeing
6%	Cross-country skiing
5%	Inline skating/Roller blading
5%	Horseback riding
4%	Geocaching
3%	Rock climbing outdoors with climbing gear
3%	Trapping
2%	Bouldering outdoors (with crash pads)

Source: SCORP 2025-2030

Chapter 6:
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The development of an efficient outdoor recreation plan depends upon establishing specific recreation and open-space goals and objectives from public participation and forestry committee revision and refinement. These goals and objectives are meant to guide county and local officials as they work towards providing a recreation system to meet the needs of Forest County's residents and visitors to the area. The National Forest Service has specific goals and objectives for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

Goal 1 – Protect, restore, and enhance Forest County's natural resources for outdoor recreation.

Objectives

1. Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve water quality and control invasive species when developing trails and recreation facilities.
2. Cooperate with those who are implementing the Good Neighbor Authority to improve forest health on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.
3. Provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities while minimizing conflicts among user groups through thoughtful planning, education, and the separation of incompatible uses where appropriate.

Goal 2 – Continue developing all types of recreational trails.

Objectives

1. Work with partner agencies to coordinate creation of a singular map of roads and trails by the following entities: CNNF, county forest, DNR, and local governments as a basis to designating more trails from existing resources.
2. Work with user groups to meet specific needs and desires for additional trails and trail connections.

Goal 3 – Continue to improve Forest County's outdoor recreation facilities.

Objectives

1. Ensure that outdoor recreation facilities serve people of all ages and physical abilities.
2. Continue improving county owned recreational facilities per the 5-year capital improvement lists.
3. Work with user groups to meet specific needs and desires for recreation on the Forest County Forest and other Forest County land.
4. Work with both tribes and all municipalities in Forest County as the need arises to cooperate on developing outdoor recreation facilities.

Chapter 7:
RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations and capital improvements are ways of satisfying issues identified during the planning process, which included citizen input, staff ideas, and analysis. 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.

7.1 Local Government Recommendations

See capital improvement lists for each municipality under 3.7 in Chapter 3.

7.2 County Recommendations

1. Improve Boat Launches Countywide

Forest County has a vast wealth of lakes to enjoy. The 2021 ORP survey shows that over 67% of respondents use the water in the following top two ways: **1)** *Boating / water sport (motorized)*, and **2)** *Swimming*. 90 people commented about specific boat landing or water access improvements that are needed. Some comments suggested things like a parking lot that needs resurfacing, the possible addition of an ADA accessible pier, or a boat launch that does not accommodate pontoons. Many people just responded with a lake name indicating that a problem may exist there, but didn't identify anything specific to repair. This recommendation is to update the DNR's current inventory, and to provide recommendations to be added to this Forest County ORP when they become available.

Recommendation: Cooperate with DNR and USFS to inventory conditions of boat launches countywide and recommend specific improvements. Include these recommendations in the Forest County ORP.

2. Biking/Hiking Trail Development and Enhancement

Recommendation: Consider making all or a portion of the trails more multi-use year-round facilities. Improve trail access, trail designation with signs, and trail maintenance of hiking, biking, horseback riding and x-ski trails.

Recommendation: Cooperate with the FCPC and various local governments on implementing the Forest County Potawatomi Bike & Pedestrian Plan.

3. ATV / UTV / Dual Sport Motorcycle / Snowmobile Trail Development and Enhancement

The County has a long history with off road vehicles. For over 40 years the Crandon International Off-Road Raceway has hosted the Brush Run Races and World Championship Races. The Crandon International Off-Road Raceway annually attracts thousands of motorized recreational enthusiasts to Forest County.

ATV & UTV trail use and the need for additional places for users to ride continues to increase. Regional development of routes and trails can connect communities to each other and provide a potential economic boost to the area.

Recommendation: Cooperate with various governments developing better ATV/UTV connectivity to other communities in Forest County through trail creation.

Recommendation: If local snowmobile or ATV clubs develop new trail adjacent to county forest land, full consideration will be given to develop links or connecting trails across county forest land provided these trails are part of the state funded snowmobile or ATV programs.

7.3 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2027-2031

Capital improvements to parks are the addition of labor and materials that improve the overall value and usefulness of that park facility. Routine maintenance is considered the normal cycle of repair and upkeep for existing facilities and is traditionally funded through the Forestry and Recreation Department's operations budget. Upgrading an outdoor restroom facility for universal access would qualify as a capital improvement, while repainting an outdoor restroom would be considered routine maintenance.

Projects listed below are subject to receiving County budgetary approval or private group fundraising. All listed projects may not be completed over the next 5 years.

County Park & Recreation Area Projects – 2027-2031

Motorized and Non-Motorized Trailhead Improvements – Update motorized and non-motorized locations to have pavilions and or bathrooms. Creating a location where people will stop and spend more time at for lunches.

Motorized Trails – Continue to update infrastructure, expand the Wolf River State Trail from Crandon to Argonne.

Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) – Add a pavilion at Spring Lake OHM Trails.

Veterans Memorial County Park – Add more playground equipment, new half basketball court, maintain park at a higher standard (like a state park) to continue attracting visitors new and returning.

Chapter 8:
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

There are a number of different strategies available for the implementation of this plan. This includes securing funds to carry out the five-year planning program and adopting techniques to carry out the general recommendations and to move towards attainment of the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.

Attachment C provides a list of commonly used state and federal government financial assistance programs.

Adopt-A-Park Program

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

Friends of a Park/Trail Program

A Friends Group is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose members have an interest in Wisconsin's natural resources and volunteer their time, services and support to enhance a local government's parks, forests, trails and recreation areas. They provide direct support to individual properties.

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.

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.

Historic Sites

Historical sites can be rewarding additions to any community's recreation program. This is especially true in areas oriented to serving a significant tourist trade. Nearly all communities in North Central Wisconsin are in this category and they should all identify their historic sites. A study of potential areas is encouraged. Assistance and guidance for the study can be obtained from the Wisconsin Council for local History, an organization affiliated with the State Historical Society and the local county historical society.

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 county's and 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 county. The county then leases the land to a private party or organization with use restrictions placed on the land. Under this method, the county receives some monetary return on its investment and retains control over the use of the land.

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.

Monetary Aid Programs

Take advantage of state and federal financial and technical aid programs, which are designed, to assist communities in meeting recreational, needs, and maintain community eligibility for such programs. A list of these programs exists in **Attachment C**.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program is a federal program administered by WDNR to encourage the creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. 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%.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is a comprehensive aid program for the promotion of resource conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. It consists of a variety of programs such as Local Park Aids, and the Urban Rivers Program, along with many others.

Requirements for application to the Stewardship Fund include the requirement that the applicant submits an approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. This plan is designed to meet that requirement.

For the remaining program requirements, or additional information contact:

Regional Project Manager
DNR's Northern Region
Rhinelander, WI

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

Municipal & 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.

Park Dedication

Subdivision regulations can be used by counties to require residential subdividers to dedicate a portion of subdivided land for permanent park and open space use in areas which are experiencing significant residential growth. Neighborhood parks may be acquired in this manner in newly developing residential areas. Local landowners should 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 small communities.

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.

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 garden 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 needed park and recreation development, including development of competitive sports area 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 activity of this type should be encouraged. In addition, service groups could help to meet the need for neighborhood facilities by supplementing municipal financial resources and providing organization and volunteer labor.

Shoreland Zoning

Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program established statewide standards for shoreland development. Counties are required to adopt and administer shoreland zoning ordinances that meet these requirements. The statewide standards for county shoreland zoning ordinances are found in Chapter NR 115, Wis. Admin. Code.

Specialized Facilities

Encourage development of specialized facilities by the private sector. Specialized facilities such as golf courses, 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.

Public Access via Subdivision Regulations (Platting Lands)

Lake and stream shore plats can provide public access to the adjacent water bodies. The Wisconsin Statutes §236.16(3) require that all subdivisions abutting a navigable lake or stream provide at least a sixty-foot-wide access to the low watermark from existing public roads at not more than one-half mile intervals (excluding shore areas where public parks or open-space streets are provided).

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.

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.

Attachment A

Park Design and Location Criteria

From:
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2011-2016

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, through 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.

Source: 2011-2016 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

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 *(continued)*				
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 *Source: USA Pickleball*	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** *Source: Tony Hawk Foundation*	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 Northern Region
107 Sutliff Ave.
Rhinelander, WI 54501

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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]

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance Program is closed to new applications on May 1, 2026.

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 (BPFP)
[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

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

NOTE: The BPFP 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

Forest County Outdoor Recreation Survey 2026 Results with comments

Compiled by: NCWRPC

2026 Forest County Outdoor Recreation

Survey Summary with Comments

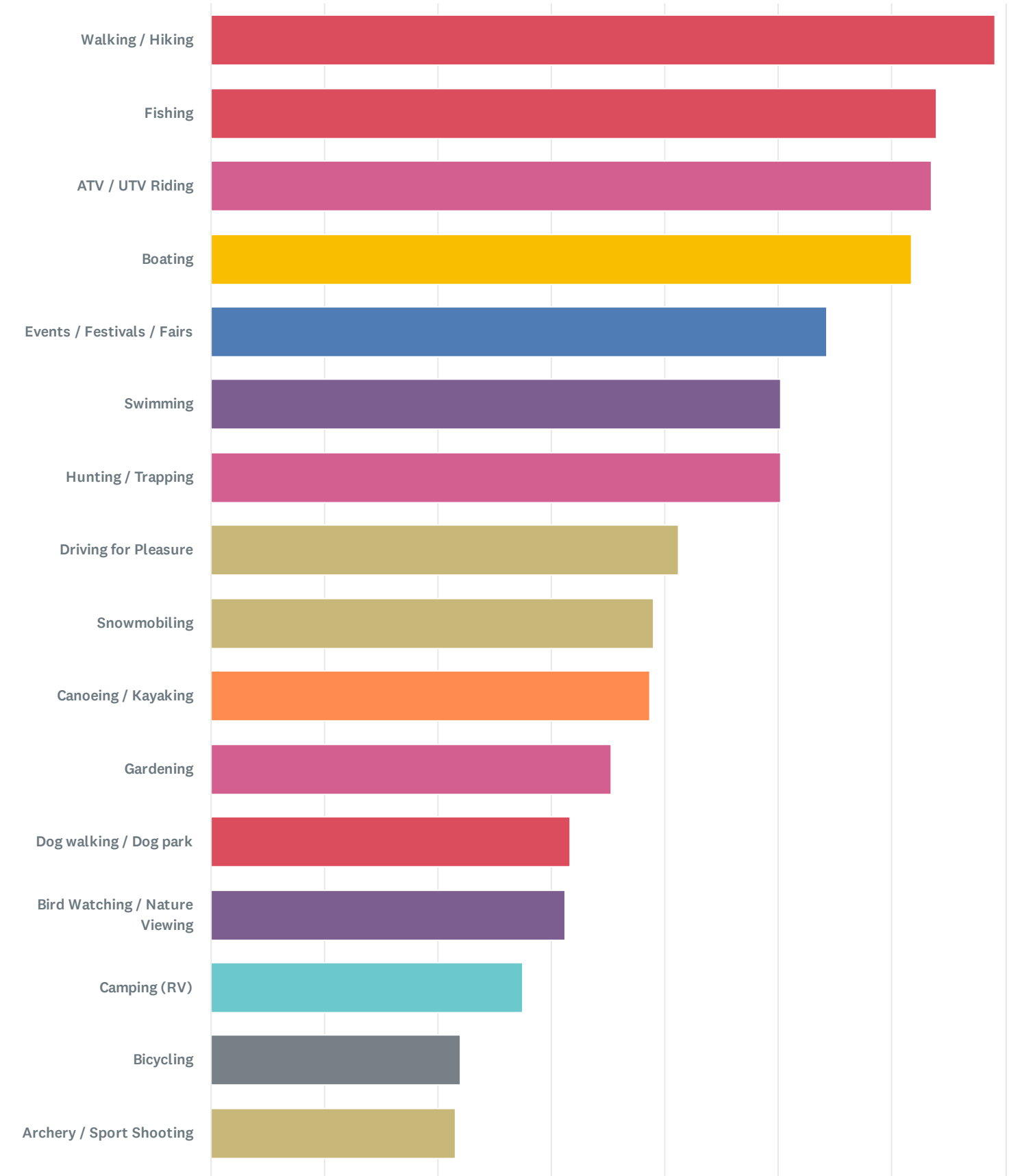
Insights

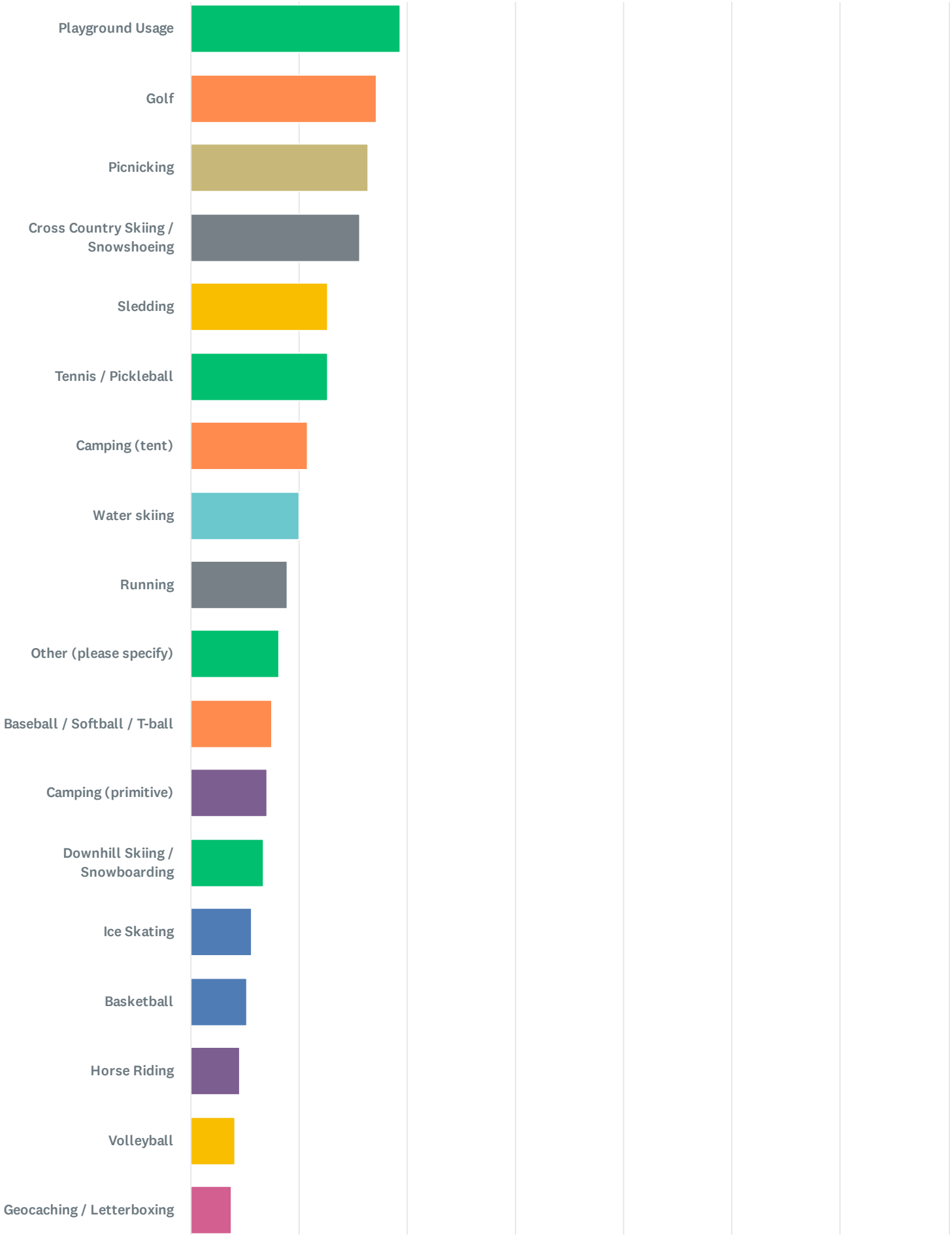
Total Responses	Completion Rate	Typical Time Spent
269	90%	5.5 minutes

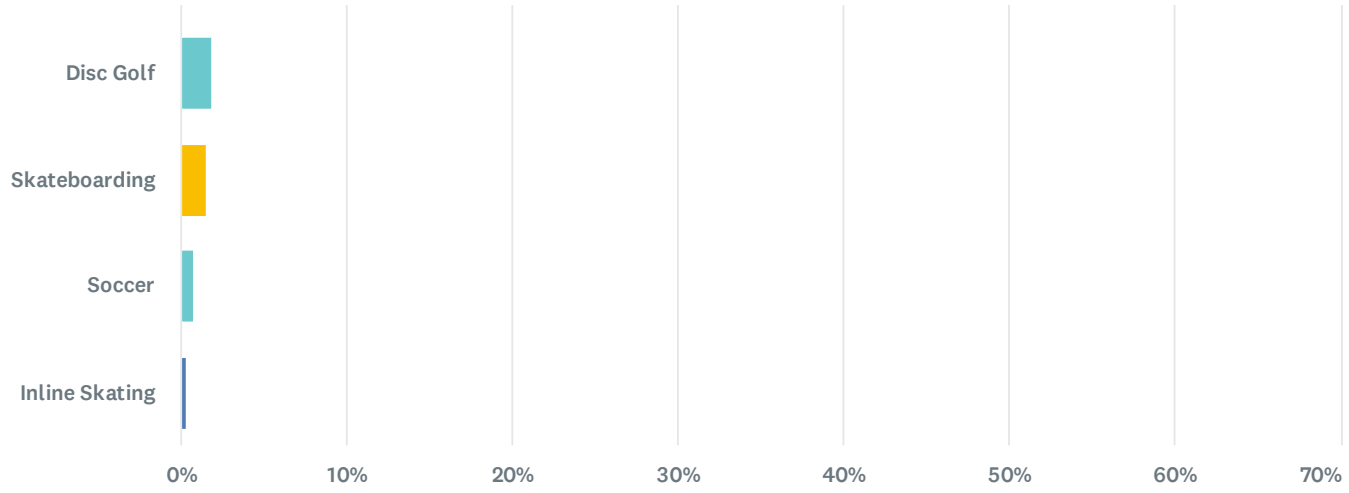
Q1

269 responses

In 2025, which outdoor recreational activities did you participate in? (Choose all that apply.)




Playground Usage
Golf
Picnicking
Cross Country Skiing / Snowshoeing
Sledding
Tennis / Pickleball
Camping (tent)
Water skiing
Running
Other (please specify)
Baseball / Softball / T-ball
Camping (primitive)
Downhill Skiing / Snowboarding
Ice Skating
Basketball
Horse Riding
Volleyball
Geocaching / Letterboxing



RESPONSES (0) WORD CLOUD TAGS (0)

Search Responses

Filter: by tag by sentiment

No responses yet

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Tubing	3/7/2026 7:54 AM
2	Off road motorcycle riding	3/5/2026 6:11 PM
3	Like how the popular ones are on the bottom?!?!	3/5/2026 1:37 PM
4	Motorcycle	3/4/2026 3:24 PM
5	dirtbike	3/4/2026 1:48 PM
6	Pickle Ball	3/4/2026 10:20 AM
7	Paid overpriced property taxes	2/27/2026 9:13 AM
8	Off road motorcycling	2/18/2026 11:58 AM
9	Dirtbike/Dualsport motorcycle & jeeping	2/17/2026 8:56 PM
10	off road motorcycling	2/13/2026 12:02 PM
11	Dual Sport Motorcycles	2/13/2026 7:59 AM
12	Motorcycling, dual sport and off road	2/12/2026 10:03 PM
13	Motorcycle dual sport	2/12/2026 1:08 PM
14	Off road motorcycle at Spring Lake riding area	2/12/2026 11:46 AM
15	Off road motorcycle riding (dual sport bike)	2/12/2026 11:12 AM
16	Personal water crafting	2/12/2026 10:06 AM
17	Off road motorcyling	2/12/2026 9:03 AM
18	Riding motorcycle	2/12/2026 4:14 AM
19	Volunteered	2/11/2026 3:53 PM

20	Trail brushing	2/11/2026 1:18 PM
21	Grooming and brushing snowmobile trails	2/11/2026 1:17 PM
22	driving my horse and cart	2/11/2026 11:40 AM

Q2 What potential outdoor recreational opportunities should be developed in Forest County?

Answered: 129 Skipped: 140

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Idc	3/15/2026 2:44 PM
2	Everything our family does is already available	3/13/2026 7:16 AM
3	ATV trail to connect to three lakes	3/9/2026 7:12 PM
4	Gardening	3/8/2026 10:26 AM
5	Dog park would be great!	3/7/2026 7:41 PM
6	Opportunities are there	3/7/2026 3:54 PM
7	atv and utv friendly towns and more trails	3/7/2026 3:02 PM
8	More UTV trails	3/7/2026 1:30 PM
9	Pickle ball courts	3/7/2026 12:48 PM
10	More dedicated long hiking trails, similar to Jones Spring	3/7/2026 11:59 AM
11	ski trails	3/7/2026 10:42 AM
12	Expanding utv trails. Crandon to W. Crandon to Argonne	3/7/2026 9:27 AM
13	Better parks more festivals or family activities more learning experiences more winter activities more community based events	3/7/2026 7:54 AM
14	Beach on Pine. Lake	3/7/2026 6:55 AM
15	Cross Country Skiing	3/6/2026 7:16 PM
16	Dirt bike single tracks	3/6/2026 6:13 PM
17	Not Pickleball, more ATV trails.	3/6/2026 9:05 AM
18	XC skiing	3/6/2026 8:13 AM
19	More fun ATV trails	3/6/2026 7:39 AM
20	Large playground for children	3/6/2026 7:31 AM
21	Off road motorcycling	3/5/2026 6:11 PM
22	Rec officers who actually patrol the utv trails....where homeowners who live on the trail..and are terrorized by certain utvs	3/5/2026 3:15 PM
23	Expand ATV/UTV trail connectivity between communities to support tourism and local travel, and prioritize maintenance and upgrades to existing public lake access sites and fishing piers that are currently in poor condition.	3/5/2026 2:48 PM
24	Dog Park	3/5/2026 2:13 PM
25	Atv utv trails	3/5/2026 1:40 PM
26	Expand UTV trails to connect Crandon to Laona.	3/5/2026 1:07 PM
27	Dog park, ice skating rink, more walking paths/sidewalks, splash pad & pool	3/5/2026 12:52 PM
28	More bike trails	3/5/2026 12:03 PM
29	X	3/5/2026 10:03 AM

30	Public docks for fishing	3/5/2026 9:28 AM
31	Disc golf and mountain bike trails	3/5/2026 2:42 AM
32	Mountain biking	3/4/2026 9:29 PM
33	ATV trails	3/4/2026 9:09 PM
34	Trails in Forest	3/4/2026 9:08 PM
35	More ATV trails	3/4/2026 9:06 PM
36	Dog park, ice skating rink,	3/4/2026 7:41 PM
37	Paved bike paths	3/4/2026 7:26 PM
38	Promoting nature tours in our forested lands year round.	3/4/2026 5:42 PM
39	Bike trails	3/4/2026 5:12 PM
40	Better advertising of trails and getting dog park	3/4/2026 3:22 PM
41	Hiking trails	3/4/2026 3:01 PM
42	Youth sporting events such as baseball tournaments, maybe a 3 on 3 basketball event that lasts two days. This will bring entrants and their families into all of our small businesses.	3/4/2026 2:58 PM
43	More hiking trails and dog park	3/4/2026 2:46 PM
44	Dog Park	3/4/2026 2:42 PM
45	unknown	3/4/2026 2:39 PM
46	Pickleball Courts!	3/4/2026 1:39 PM
47	Snowmobiling trails open for UTVs	3/4/2026 12:52 PM
48	Volleyball courts, basketball courts,	3/4/2026 12:22 PM
49	Dog Park , walking trails through the forests (maintained)	3/4/2026 12:05 PM
50	Ice skating rinks in winter	3/4/2026 11:51 AM
51	More ATV/UTV terrain parks	3/4/2026 11:42 AM
52	Fish stocking, handicap accessible trout streams	3/4/2026 11:33 AM
53	Hiking/biking trails	3/4/2026 11:19 AM
54	more ATV/UTV trails	3/4/2026 11:10 AM
55	Clean up the public beach at Lake Metonga	3/4/2026 10:48 AM
56	All towns in Forest County should have dog parks, dog runs. There is ZERO,Why?	3/4/2026 10:48 AM
57	More Atv trails and not on black top rds.	3/4/2026 10:45 AM
58	Bike trails	3/4/2026 10:44 AM
59	ATV?UTV	3/4/2026 10:44 AM
60	Hiking trails, cross country trails, more campgrounds	3/4/2026 10:36 AM
61	more roads open to ATV use	3/4/2026 10:29 AM
62	We have a lot of options, but feel we should make the public more aware of what Forest County already has to offer.	3/4/2026 10:20 AM
63	land fishing for people with children that don't have boats; and a "shorter" UTV trail connecting Argonne, County P to Airport Rd in Laona	3/4/2026 10:13 AM
64	walking trails/Hiking trails/biking trails	3/4/2026 10:10 AM
65	Firepit at Otter creek recreation center, for cooking purposes	3/4/2026 10:07 AM
66	hiking trails	3/4/2026 9:53 AM

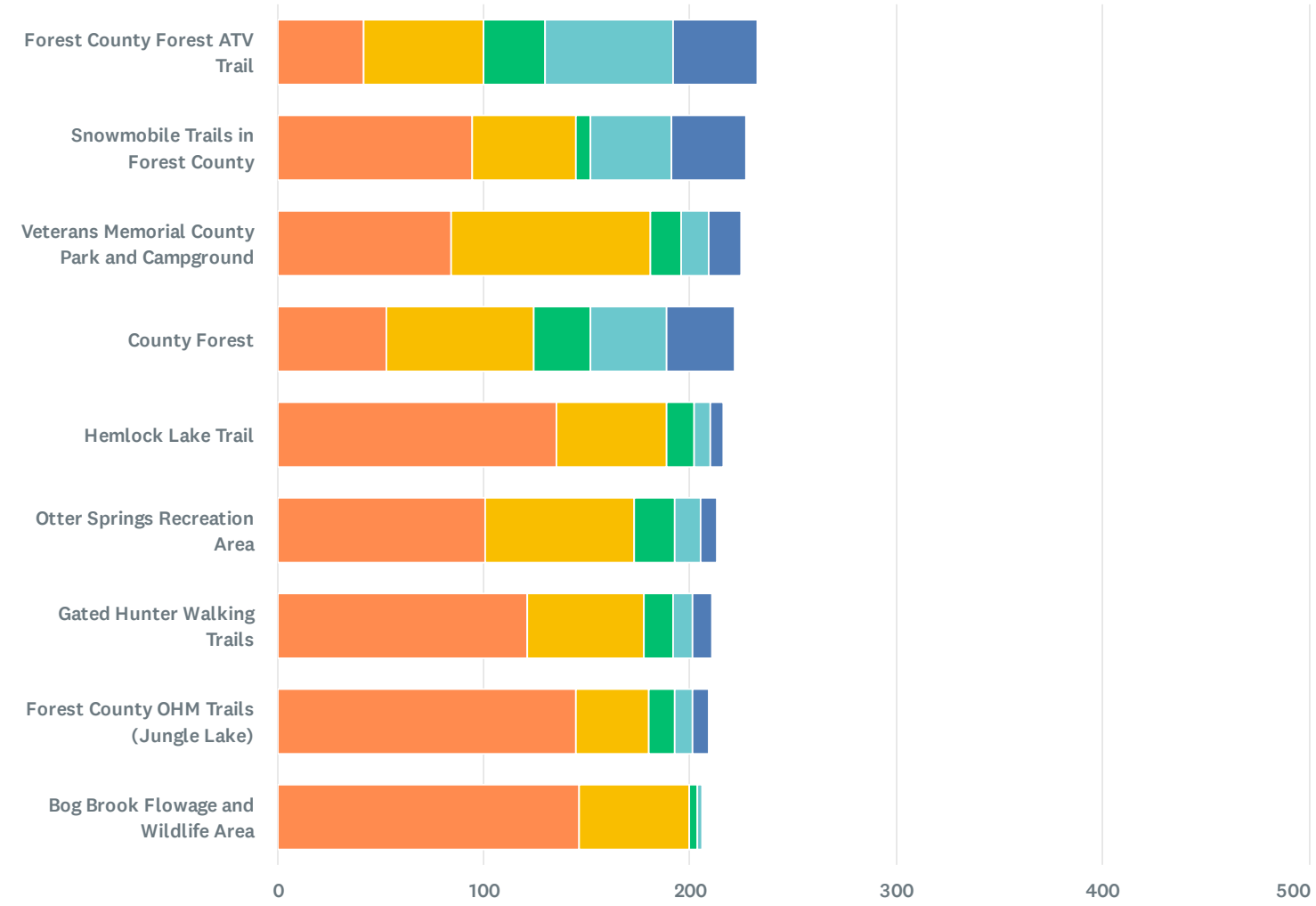
67	Indoor walking areas during cold months.	3/4/2026 9:50 AM
68	More events and festivals	3/4/2026 9:49 AM
69	Single track to dirt bikes.	3/4/2026 9:48 AM
70	dog park,	3/3/2026 6:16 AM
71	Need to have better amenities at Otter Springs.shelter is in bad shape, no Pavillion or area to picnic.need separate snowshoe trails.	3/2/2026 6:28 PM
72	Better bike trails	3/2/2026 4:57 PM
73	Hiking Trails	3/2/2026 8:57 AM
74	I feel that Forest county has a good variety of sports	2/27/2026 9:51 PM
75	Dog park.	2/27/2026 1:28 PM
76	Public whipping of public officials who don't know how to budget	2/27/2026 9:13 AM
77	All good	2/27/2026 8:59 AM
78	More Pickleball	2/26/2026 9:36 PM
79	Better basketball and tennis courts	2/26/2026 9:27 PM
80	Dog park. Could do better at publicizing what is available.here	2/26/2026 7:18 PM
81	Outdoor concert series	2/26/2026 6:22 PM
82	Better utv trails, that actually connect and do not dead end.	2/24/2026 5:29 PM
83	More outdoor pickleball communities	2/22/2026 11:37 AM
84	More off road motorcycling	2/18/2026 11:58 AM
85	Family activities	2/18/2026 9:28 AM
86	Single track dirtbike tracks and jeep offroad trails	2/17/2026 8:56 PM
87	Ice skating rink	2/17/2026 7:26 PM
88	Sculpture gardens in Parks, winter non motorized bicycle competitions, hockey rinks	2/17/2026 2:44 PM
89	Bicycling	2/13/2026 11:57 AM
90	It would be cool to have ice skating trails on lakes. Probably very expensive.	2/13/2026 8:45 AM
91	More single track mountain bike and Dual Sport motorcycle trails	2/13/2026 7:59 AM
92	Bike trails, linking UTV trails such as Strong Rd to Cty Rd S and Cty Rd S to Pine Lake Road	2/13/2026 6:12 AM
93	Public off highway motorcycle	2/12/2026 10:03 PM
94	More snowmobile trails off of roads	2/12/2026 9:39 PM
95	Atv/utv	2/12/2026 7:30 PM
96	Extra trails for walking, ATV, UTV, snowshoes, also camping and RV parks with swimming,	2/12/2026 6:43 PM
97	Off road Motorcycle riding	2/12/2026 1:08 PM
98	Equestrian trails	2/12/2026 11:45 AM
99	Maintained year round hiking trails	2/12/2026 11:15 AM
100	Id love an atv park, and a way to get from crandon to stone lake without running a long distance on asphalt	2/12/2026 11:14 AM
101	More riding trails	2/12/2026 11:12 AM
102	competitive winter bike races threw out the county	2/12/2026 10:10 AM
103	Trash cans!!	2/12/2026 10:08 AM

104	Utv	2/12/2026 10:06 AM
105	More non-motorized trails.	2/12/2026 10:05 AM
106	Horseback riding	2/12/2026 9:51 AM
107	Hiking. Would love a dog park!	2/12/2026 9:48 AM
108	Designated mountain biking trails, backpacking sites	2/12/2026 9:26 AM
109	more off-road utv trail options	2/12/2026 9:18 AM
110	Off road motorcyling	2/12/2026 9:03 AM
111	ATV/UTV with Campground - Park Pull w/ through sites!	2/12/2026 8:35 AM
112	ATV UTV Challenge/Play area	2/11/2026 8:54 PM
113	Atv trails	2/11/2026 5:58 PM
114	More ATV trails in the woods	2/11/2026 4:45 PM
115	New ATV trails off road	2/11/2026 4:45 PM
116	Mini Cabins for rent at Veterans Park	2/11/2026 4:17 PM
117	More technical Atv trails	2/11/2026 3:53 PM
118	Horseback Riding	2/11/2026 3:08 PM
119	more trail connections for utv	2/11/2026 12:49 PM
120	N/A	2/11/2026 12:41 PM
121	things for youth	2/11/2026 11:40 AM
122	Off Highway Motorcycle, Mountain Biking	2/11/2026 11:35 AM
123	more ATV/UTV trails and camping sites.	2/11/2026 11:10 AM
124	Better playgrounds, Better hiking/walking trails,	2/11/2026 10:57 AM
125	More Walking/Hiking Trails	2/11/2026 10:43 AM
126	Wolf River State Trail north and a connecting trail from Crandon to Laona.	2/11/2026 10:26 AM
127	Walking and biking trails	2/11/2026 10:20 AM
128	Walking Trails	2/11/2026 10:14 AM
129	Singletrack Mountain Biking	2/11/2026 9:30 AM

Q3

247 responses

In 2025, how often did you use Forest County managed parks or trails?



	I don't use these lands or trails.	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	On many weekends	Total
Forest County Forest ATV Trail	18.03% 42	24.89% 58	12.88% 30	26.61% 62	17.60% 41	233
Snowmobile Trails in Forest County	41.41% 94	22.47% 51	3.08% 7	17.18% 39	15.86% 36	227
						1963

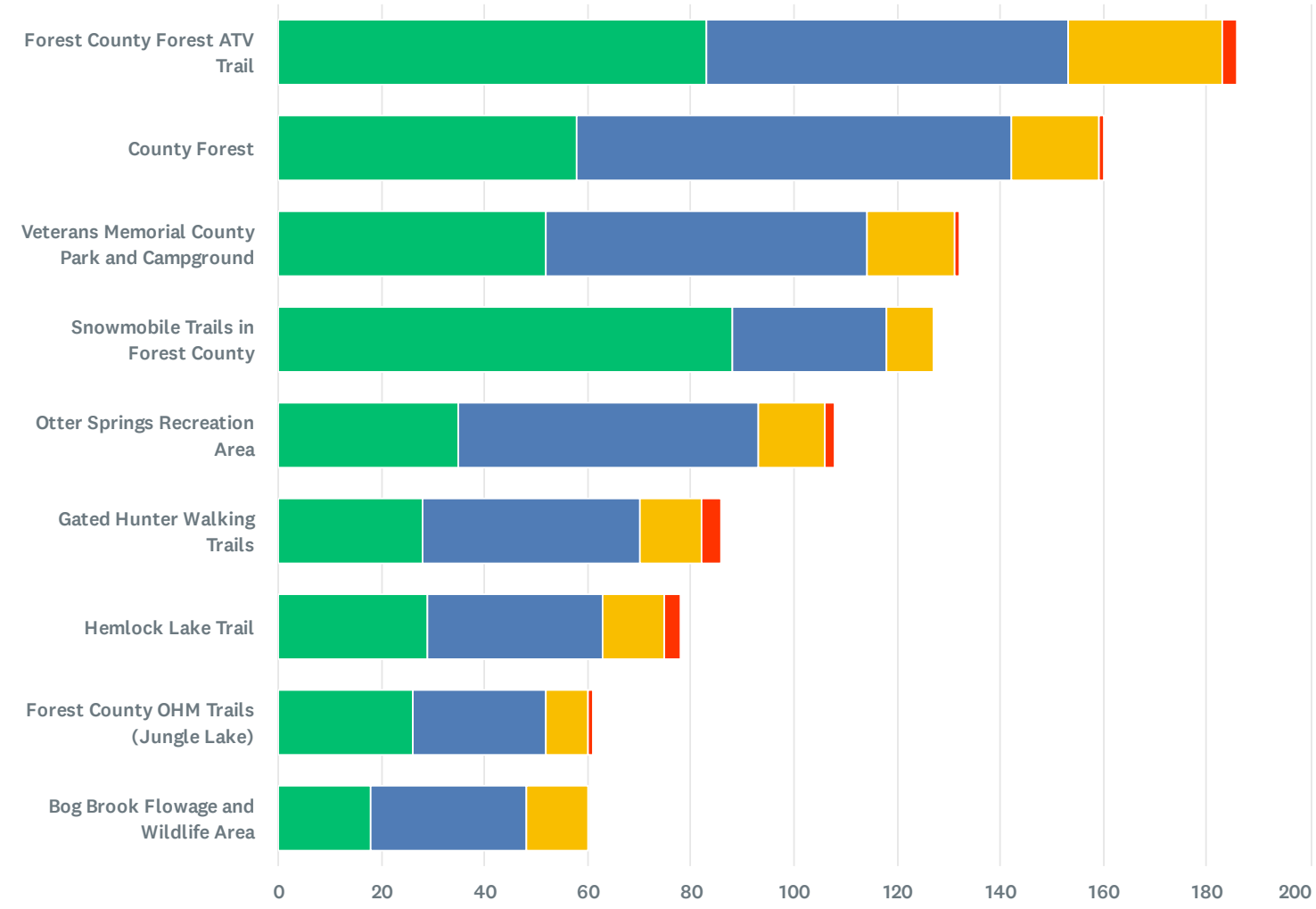
	I don't use these lands or trails.	Occasionally	Monthly	Weekly	On many weekends	Total
Veterans Memorial County Park and Campground	37.33% 84	43.11% 97	6.67% 15	5.78% 13	7.11% 16	225
County Forest	23.87% 53	31.98% 71	12.61% 28	16.67% 37	14.86% 33	222
Hemlock Lake Trail	62.50% 135	25.00% 54	6.02% 13	3.70% 8	2.78% 6	216
Otter Springs Recreation Area	47.42% 101	33.80% 72	9.39% 20	5.63% 12	3.76% 8	213
Gated Hunter Walking Trails	57.35% 121	27.01% 57	6.64% 14	4.27% 9	4.74% 10	211
Forest County OHM Trails (Jungle Lake)	69.38% 145	16.75% 35	6.22% 13	3.83% 8	3.83% 8	209
Bog Brook Flowage and Wildlife Area	70.53% 146	26.09% 54	1.93% 4	0.97% 2	0.48% 1	207
						1963

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Rat river recreational trail I use very often.	3/8/2026 10:43 AM
2	Ed’s lake	3/4/2026 9:30 PM
3	County lakes	3/4/2026 1:57 PM
4	Rat River Recreational Trail, Blackwell	3/4/2026 12:07 PM
5	Havn't this year, because of bad hip.	3/4/2026 10:49 AM
6	I just visit people at the Veterans Memorial County Park but its a favorite to many family members.	3/4/2026 10:14 AM
7	I was not even aware of bog flowage wildlife area.	2/26/2026 7:21 PM
8	We own land on the LMT #6 trail and often hike on our own land	2/18/2026 9:31 AM
9	National forest lands	2/12/2026 10:05 PM
10	We love otter springs, very much appreciate the walking trails and parking area there.	2/12/2026 9:51 AM
11	Spring Lake OHM Trail	2/12/2026 9:06 AM
12	Use county land for recreation.	2/11/2026 10:27 AM

Q4

236 responses

Please rate your satisfaction with the Forest County managed parks or trails:



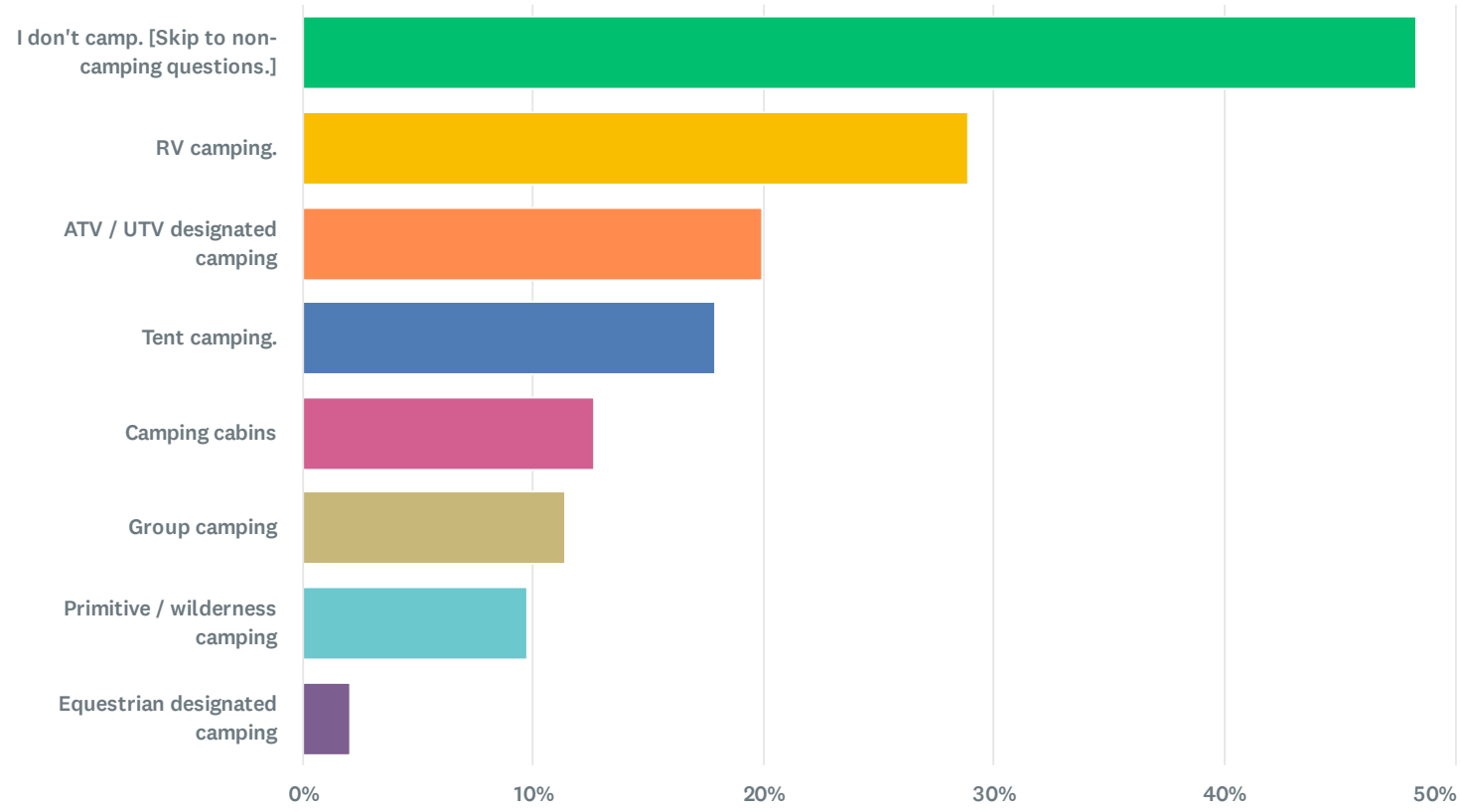
	Very Satisfied	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Forest County Forest ATV Trail	44.62% 83	37.63% 70	16.13% 30	1.61% 3	186
County Forest	36.25% 58	52.50% 84	10.63% 17	0.63% 1	160
Veterans Memorial County Park and Campground	39.39% 52	46.97% 62	12.88% 17	0.76% 1	132
					998

	Very Satisfied	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Snowmobile Trails in Forest County	69.29% 88	23.62% 30	7.09% 9	0% 0	127
Otter Springs Recreation Area	32.41% 35	53.70% 58	12.04% 13	1.85% 2	108
Gated Hunter Walking Trails	32.56% 28	48.84% 42	13.95% 12	4.65% 4	86
Hemlock Lake Trail	37.18% 29	43.59% 34	15.38% 12	3.85% 3	78
Forest County OHM Trails (Jungle Lake)	42.62% 26	42.62% 26	13.11% 8	1.64% 1	61
Bog Brook Flowage and Wildlife Area	30.00% 18	50.00% 30	20.00% 12	0% 0	60
					998

Q5

246 responses

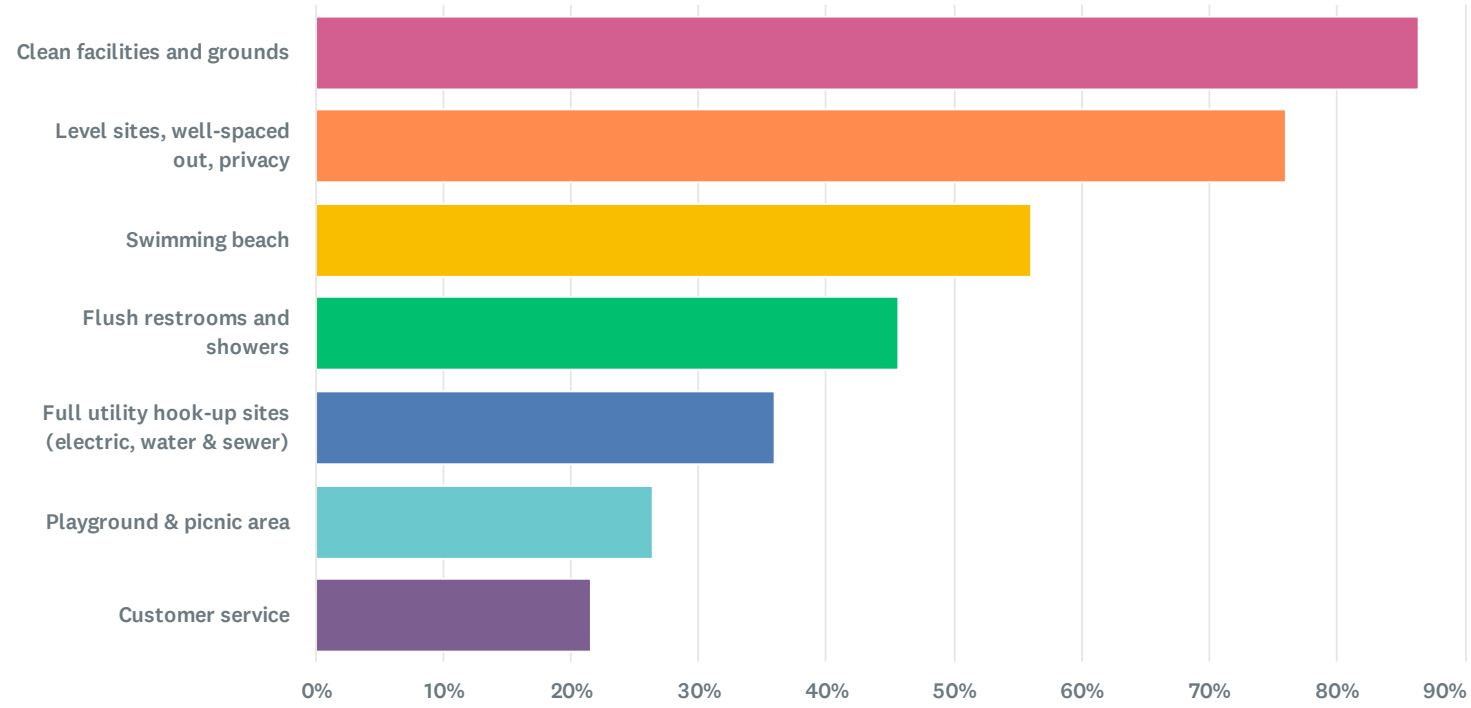
What type of camping opportunities do you use, or want to use in Forest County? (Choose all that apply.)



Q6

125 responses

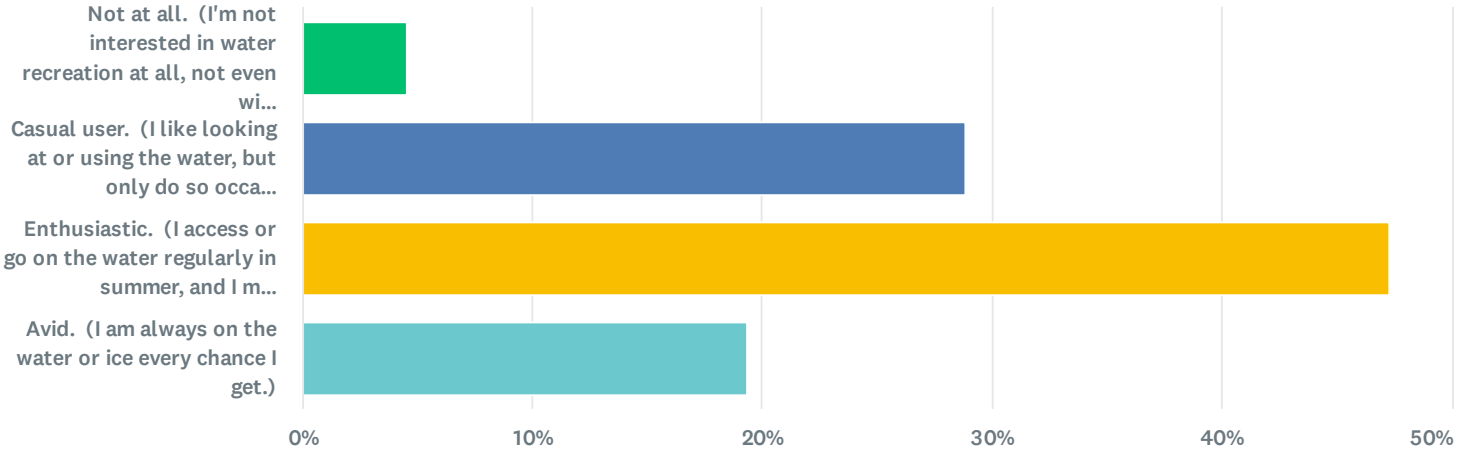
When choosing a campground, which amenities are most important to you?(Choose all that apply.)



Q7

243 responses

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

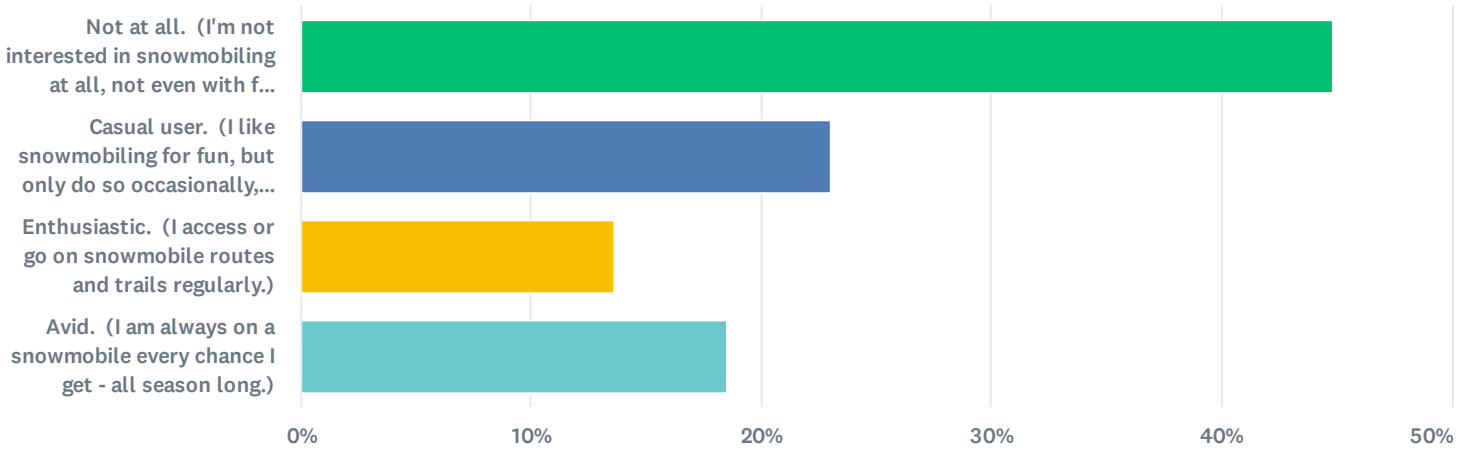


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Not at all. (I'm not interested in water recreation at all, not even with friends.)	4.53%	11
Casual user. (I like looking at or using the water, but only do so occasionally.)	28.81%	70
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on the water regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)	47.33%	115
Avid. (I am always on the water or ice every chance I get.)	19.34%	47
Total		243

Q8

243 responses

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

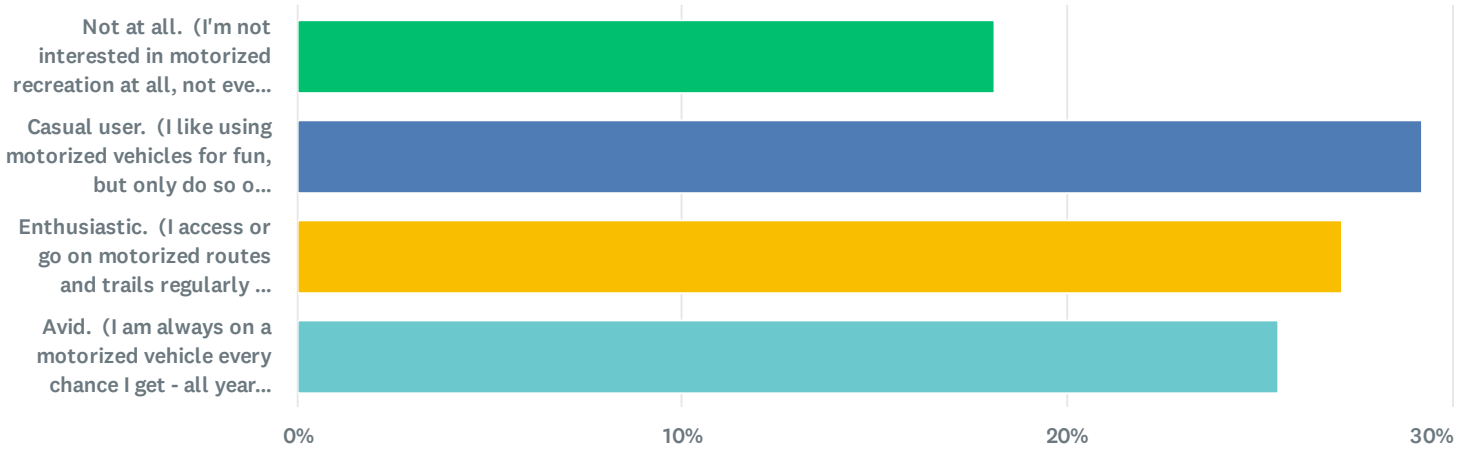


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Not at all. (I'm not interested in snowmobiling at all, not even with friends.)	44.86%	109
Casual user. (I like snowmobiling for fun, but only do so occasionally, OR only on my own land.)	23.05%	56
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on snowmobile routes and trails regularly.)	13.58%	33
Avid. (I am always on a snowmobile every chance I get - all season long.)	18.52%	45
Total		243

Q9

243 responses

What type of motorized vehicle (ATV / UTV / OHM) enthusiast are you? (Choose one.)

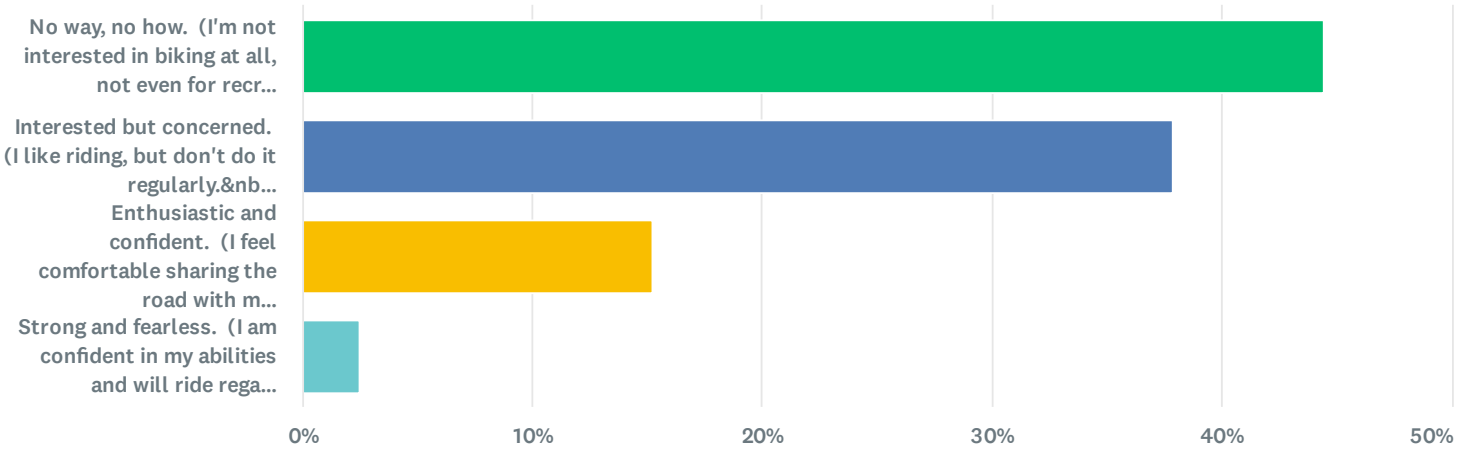


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Not at all. (I'm not interested in motorized recreation at all, not even for recreation.)	18.11%	44
Casual user. (I like using motorized vehicles for fun, but only do so occasionally, OR only on my own land.)	29.22%	71
Enthusiastic. (I access or go on motorized routes and trails regularly in summer, and I might occasionally access the ice in winter.)	27.16%	66
Avid. (I am always on a motorized vehicle every chance I get - all year long.)	25.51%	62
Total		243

Q10

243 responses

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



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
No way, no how. (I'm not interested in biking at all, not even for recreation.)	44.44%	108
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.)	37.86%	92
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.)	15.23%	37
Strong and fearless. (I am confident in my abilities and will ride regardless of roadway conditions, amount of traffic, or inclement weather.)	2.47%	6
Total		243

Q11 (Optional) . Do you have any other concerns or comments?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 235

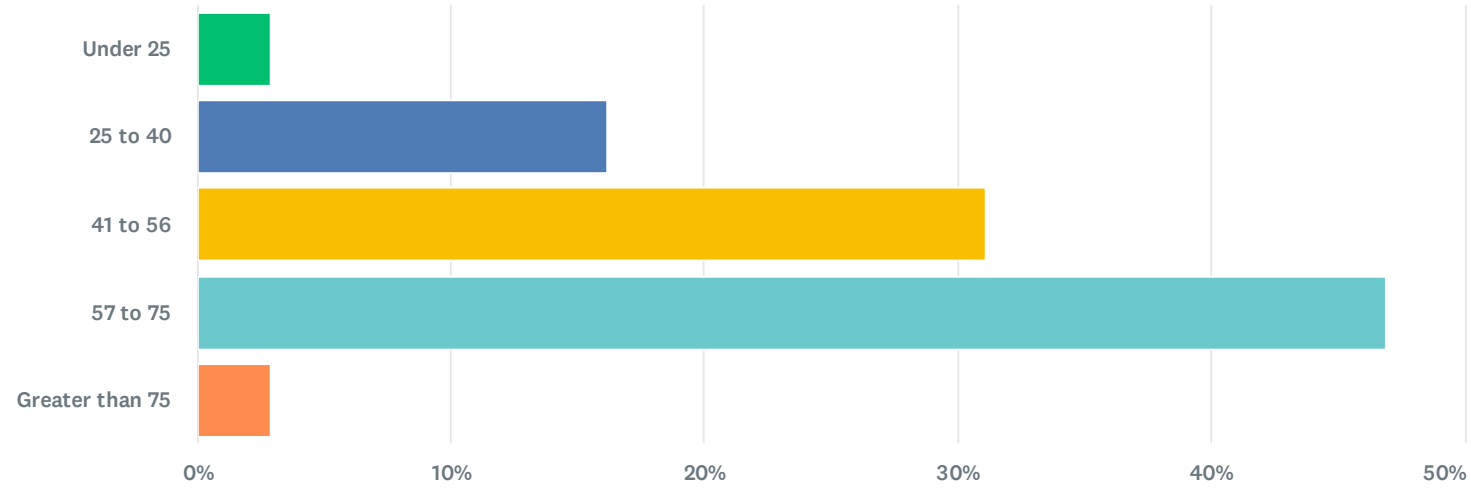
#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The tribes are better at making events for their communities than crandon is for their community	3/7/2026 8:01 AM
2	We need someone who cares...about the homeowners that live on the utv trails..that are terrorized by utvs...threatened by utv operators..driving by home owners homes..every weekend and dusting out good peoples...homes every weekend....and nobody cares...or patrol the homeowners homes..even after 5 years of calling and asking for something to be done.....NOBODY CARES ABOUT THE GOOD PEOPLE WHO OWN LAND..AND LIVE ON THESE TRAILS...VERY SAD!!!!	3/5/2026 3:22 PM
3	New off-road atv utv trails	3/5/2026 1:43 PM
4	We need paved biking trails	3/4/2026 7:28 PM
5	During hound training season the forests are very active & the hound handlers are not always respectful of others' rights to use the same land.	3/4/2026 5:47 PM
6	Would like better marketing of available trails for hiking and snowshoeing	3/4/2026 3:25 PM
7	Open the atv trail to Argonne from Crandon	3/4/2026 3:00 PM
8	County should financially support managing lakes.	3/4/2026 1:59 PM
9	The ATV/UTV association responsible for keeping the UTV trails clear of brush, fallen trees (especially after ice storm) needs to be held accountable. They did a horrible job last year after the storm. Maybe let the snowmobile clubs help out too since they do a better job at cleanup.	3/4/2026 12:59 PM
10	Would love to have more accessible information on local trails for hiking. I tried to take my teen son for the first time and was nervous to go far as hiking trails were not marked clearly and hard to even find where to go to begin	3/4/2026 12:51 PM
11	Yes, Bay View Lane in Hiles Wisconsin is a concern for me. This is a private road. Snow machines have been using this private road for there convenience for many years. I have reached out by email to local officals in Hiles and Forest county and not One person contacted me back about my concerns.The Town of Hiles or Forest County needs to take responsibility for providing an access point to Pine Lake safely not my property. I almost had a head on collision with snowmachines next to my house on new years day. I was threatened by locals on Facebook that if that " if dont let the locals use this road, they will make sure our business is not supported". I would love to have someone contact me at 312.208.4524.	3/4/2026 12:19 PM
12	No	3/4/2026 12:07 PM
13	There is a private road in Hiles Wisconsin. called Bay View lane. This road is an easement road that has become a safety issue for the owners of Hiles- Pine lake campground. Snow machine owners tresspassed many times over the past five years of owning this property.winter have been trespassing into our campsite property property, almost crashing into.me driving my tractor with pallet forks on front.	3/4/2026 11:45 AM
14	A biking opportunity that would not include the threat of being knocked off the bike due to proximity to speeding semis and logging trucks would be amazing.	3/4/2026 10:25 AM
15	I don't trust motor vehicles while taking my grandchildren for bike rides or walks so I stick to the county roads during slow traffic times. One of my grandchildren use training wheels. It's too hard to pack up all the bikes to head into Crandon to use the trails there.	3/4/2026 10:23 AM
16	The Veterans campsites are to costly for many people especially those who only tent camp.	3/4/2026 10:10 AM
17	would like to see a walking/biking trail on airport road. It is a very high traffic area due to the close proximity to Lake Metonga	3/3/2026 6:19 AM

18	Grooming could be better at Otter and Hemlock	3/2/2026 6:31 PM
19	We need off road bike trails.	3/2/2026 5:00 PM
20	Bike trails alongside roads so there is no risk of being hit by a car.	2/27/2026 1:30 PM
21	How about having someone create a poll that wasn't designed by a Crandon Middle School Student ('No way, no how.')? I'm tired to being used as an ATM for all of this stuff that the businesses that benefit from this sort of 'activity' and the people who buy those 'toys' expect me to fund it. They're using it...they can afford to buy the garbage...then PAY for it!!!!!!!!!! I have snowmobilers going on my property and causing damage...and I can't get the Sheriff's Department to do anything about it because those people are 'more important' than me. Wonder how it would go if these people did that on Reservation Land? Probably...not well... Let me give you boys a little advice...having someone who can think of ways to gum up the works for Forest County *isn't* a great plan...	2/27/2026 9:24 AM
22	We use the atv trails for walking	2/26/2026 7:23 PM
23	More biking trails	2/26/2026 6:25 PM
24	Nicolet National Forest is adjacent to our property and we enjoy using trails to get from place to place.	2/18/2026 9:35 AM
25	I would like to see FC communities have nonmotorized bicycle competitions; in particular winter biking due to the lack of snow for snowmobiling	2/17/2026 2:45 PM
26	Forest county ATV trail needs better signage. We've gotten lost out there, especially since it was logged (which was a crying shame).	2/13/2026 12:02 PM
27	I'm hoping to feel safe next summer riding my bike on County Rd W. Last summer was too dangerous with the rerouted traffic.	2/13/2026 8:53 AM
28	More mountain bike trails and more regular maintenance of trails would be great!	2/12/2026 10:40 AM
29	I think we should focus on more nonmotorized sports for residents and tourists because climate change has profoundly affected our area-- no snow (except this winter) and motorized vehicles increase carbon emissions which add to warming the earth and increasing pollutants and frequency of storms (ice storms)	2/12/2026 10:18 AM
30	Would love to have a dog park. Looking forward to using paved trail from Crandon to Otter Creek this spring. Would like to see better advertising and maps of hiking areas and hunter walking trails.	2/12/2026 9:57 AM
31	My bicycle activity is 90% single track mountain biking during non-winter months.	2/12/2026 9:11 AM
32	More "Offroad" trails in County Forests, similar to Marinette County. The trails between Metonga and Lucerne are fantastic and I would love more of those and less gravel highways	2/11/2026 9:01 PM
33	I am concerned about the future of snowmobiling. Forest County offers hundreds of miles of trails. In the past few years multiple miles have been lost in the National forest for unknown reasons. Those woods should be open to everyone and if a trail is deemed unsafe for travel it needs to be addressed or replaced so we do not lose what we already have.	2/11/2026 2:51 PM
34	Forest County should consider adding more bike trails. something like vilas county has.	2/11/2026 1:41 PM

Q12

241 responses

What is your age?

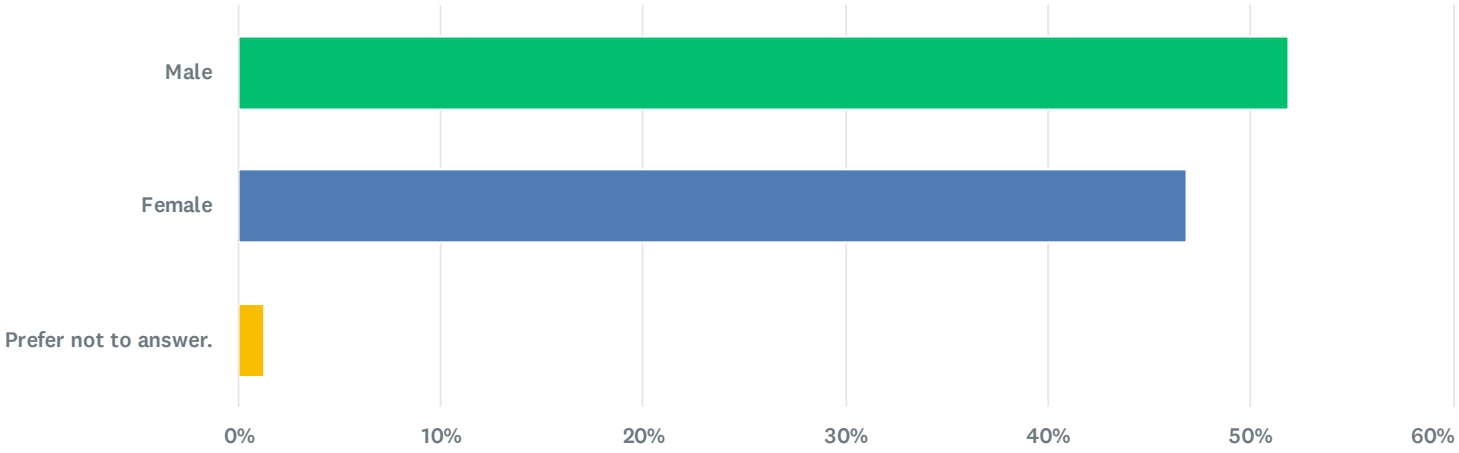


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Under 25	2.90%	7
25 to 40	16.18%	39
41 to 56	31.12%	75
57 to 75	46.89%	113
Greater than 75	2.90%	7
Total		241

Q13

241 responses

What is your gender?

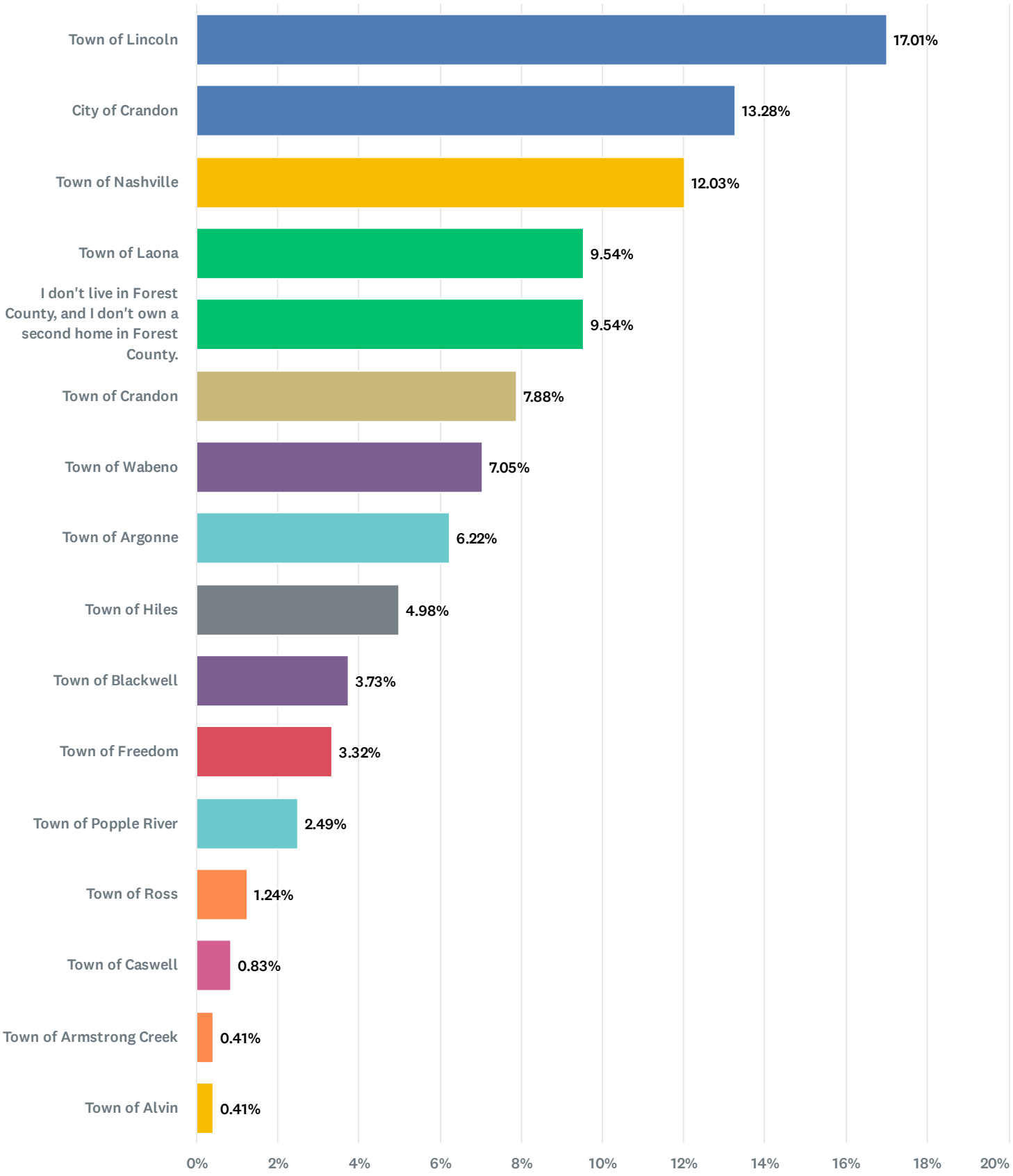


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Male	51.87%	125
Female	46.89%	113
Prefer not to answer.	1.24%	3
Total		241

Q14

241 responses

What municipality is your Forest County home or second home located?



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Total		241

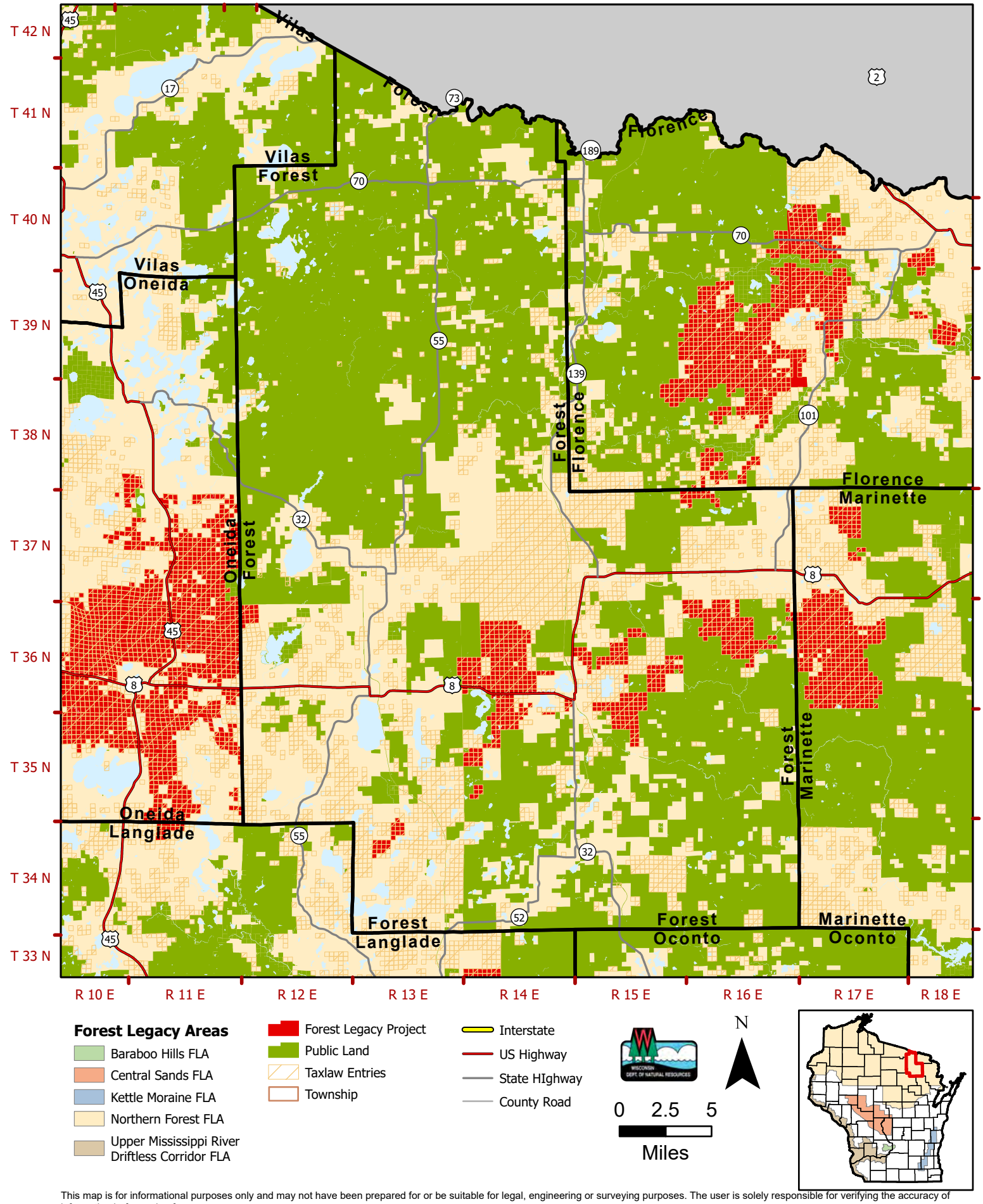
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Town of Lincoln	17.01%	41
City of Crandon	13.28%	32
Town of Nashville	12.03%	29
Town of Laona	9.54%	23
I don't live in Forest County, and I don't own a second home in Forest County.	9.54%	23
Town of Crandon	7.88%	19
Town of Wabeno	7.05%	17
Town of Argonne	6.22%	15
Town of Hiles	4.98%	12
Town of Blackwell	3.73%	9
Town of Freedom	3.32%	8
Town of Popple River	2.49%	6
Town of Ross	1.24%	3
Town of Caswell	0.83%	2
Town of Armstrong Creek	0.41%	1
Town of Alvin	0.41%	1
Total		241

Attachment E

Forest Legacy Areas 2026, Forest County

From:
WDNR

Forest Legacy Areas: Forest County



Forest Legacy Areas

- Baraboo Hills FLA
- Central Sands FLA
- Kettle Moraine FLA
- Northern Forest FLA
- Upper Mississippi River Driftless Corridor FLA

- Forest Legacy Project
- Public Land
- Taxlaw Entries
- Township

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State HIghway
- County Road

N

0 2.5 5

Miles

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Attachment F

Bog Brook Wildlife Area History

From:
Forestry & Recreation Department

Bog Brook Wildlife Area

The Bog Brook Wildlife Area was created by the construction of an earthen dam across Bog Brook Creek in 1962. Its permitted purpose was to provide a flowage which can be regulated to obtain the most favorable conditions for wildlife, both terrestrial and aquatic.

The impoundment has a surface area of approximately 490 acres and a maximum depth of 6 feet. Inlet streams from Mud Lake and Bog Brook Lake are present, with the outflow to the Lily River. Originally the entire shore was upland hardwoods. Emergent wetland now occupies large portions of the flowage.

The dam was breached in 1983. The dam was reconstructed to the original design in 1993 by the Forest County Highway Department and a WCC crew under the direction of the Forest County Forestry Department with assistance from a USDA Forest Service engineer.

Because there is one house downstream that may be in the hydraulic shadow of a potential dam failure and neither a floodplain zoning ordinance nor restrictive covenants, easements or legal arrangement restricting further housing development downstream, the Bog Brook Dam is considered a high hazard dam.

In 2015 the Forest County Land Conservation Committee held a hearing to gauge the public's interest in retaining the flowage area and maintaining the dam. More than 25 people attended the hearing with all in favor of not only maintaining the dam at this location, but also improving the surrounding area. Sustainable Resource Industries (SRI), a consulting firm administering Stewardship Contracts for the USFS, granted matching funds to install a dam gate. The gate was installed in 2016 and lessens man and equipment hours required to operate the dam within its working parameters. The height of the dam can now be controlled by turning a wheel instead of using a loader truck to manually lift the steel gate.

Also In 2015, Flambeau engineering was hired to build a dam failure analysis to apply a flood shadow downstream of the dam in an effort to lower the dam hazard rating. Forest County had adopted Floodplain Zoning and was now in a position to restrict downstream development.

It was noted and reported that the pier over the inlet of the dam was available to the public but not handicapped accessible as required. Further improvements would be necessary to make the area ADA accessible by providing a walkway over the spillway and a wheelchair accessible fishing pier. A beaver excluder will be installed under the fishing pier to eliminate a long standing beaver problem.

The Bog Brook Wildlife Area has the potential to be of greater recreational use to area residents and visitors in addition to being a wildlife area. Recreation at the site has great potential in that it has a good site to recreate with canoes and kayaks, hold gatherings and other recreational activities associated with this area and landscape.

Attachment G

Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway Route

From:
NCWRPC

NICOLET-WOLF RIVER SCENIC BYWAY ROUTE

Map 1

