



# Parks, Recreation, & Open Spaces Plan 2026-2030

Also covering the municipalities within Wood County

**DRAFT – Oct. 13, 2025**



Prepared by: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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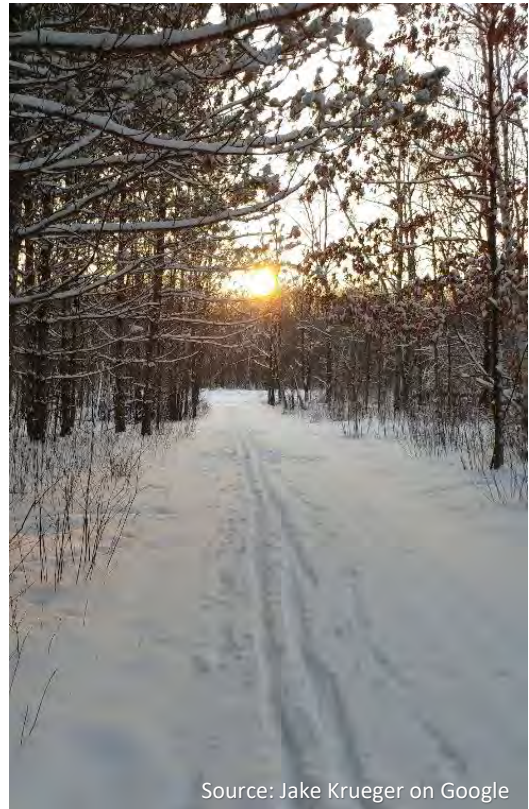
# Acknowledgements

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Source: Jake Krueger on Google

## Staff for this Plan

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Fred Heider, AICP, NCWRPC Planner

Cover photo by \_\_\_\_\_.

DRAFT – October 2025

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This plan was prepared under the direction of the Wood County Highway Infrastructure & Recreation Committee, and the Wood County Parks and Forestry 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 Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities.....               | 12 |
| Map 5 Local Government Outdoor Recreation.....                   | 13 |
| Map 6 Marshfield Area Outdoor Recreation .....                   | 14 |
| Map 7 Wisconsin Rapids Area Outdoor Recreation.....              | 15 |
| Map 8 Nekoosa & Port Edwards Area Outdoor Recreation .....       | 16 |
| 2. BACKGROUND OF WOOD COUNTY .....                               | 17 |
| 2.1 Physical Characteristics .....                               | 17 |
| 2.2 Social Characteristics .....                                 | 23 |
| 3. OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES .....                           | 30 |
| 3.1 Introduction .....                                           | 30 |
| 3.2 County Maintained Recreation Facilities .....                | 30 |
| 3.3 Linear Facilities.....                                       | 30 |
| 3.4 Points of Interest .....                                     | 33 |
| 3.5 Public Access Points to Water Bodies .....                   | 35 |
| 3.6 School District Facilities .....                             | 35 |
| 3.7 Local Government Facilities & Capital Improvement Lists .... | 38 |
| 3.8 State Facilities .....                                       | 52 |
| 3.9 Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned.....              | 57 |
| 4. COUNTY MAINTAINED RECREATION FACILITES .....                  | 58 |
| 4.1 Introduction .....                                           | 58 |
| 4.2 County Parks & Recreation Areas .....                        | 58 |
| 4.3 County Forest .....                                          | 71 |
| 4.4 Special Use Recreational Areas .....                         | 72 |

|                                                           |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 5. OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT .....              | 79  |
| 5.1 Introduction .....                                    | 79  |
| 5.2 Public Participation.....                             | 79  |
| 5.3 Park Standards Analysis .....                         | 100 |
| 5.4 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends.....              | 102 |
| 6. VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES .....                       | 104 |
| 7. RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS .....           | 106 |
| 7.1 Local Government Recommendations .....                | 106 |
| 7.2 County Recommendations .....                          | 106 |
| 7.3 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2026-2030 ..... | 111 |
| 8. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES .....                        | 114 |

## Appendices

- A. Park Design and Location Criteria
- B. Facility Development Standards
- C. Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs
- D. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)—Western Sands Region Analysis
- E. Forest Legacy Areas 2025 Wood County
- F. Wood County ATV-UTV Planning Map
- G. Yellowstone Trail in Wood County Map
- H. Powers Bluff County Park Concept Plan
- I. 2026-2030 Wood County Parks and Forestry CIP

# 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 Wood 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 Wood 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)



**Knowles-Nelson  
Stewardship Program**

**Nature-based recreation**  
50% grants

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



**LAND & WATER  
CONSERVATION  
FUND**

**Active & Nature-based recreation**  
50% grants

- Playgrounds
- Splash pads
- Tennis courts, etc.



**Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

**Trail-based recreation**

80% grants up to \$100,000  
(...up to \$250,000 every 3<sup>rd</sup> year)

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

*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 Highway, Infrastructure, & 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 Highway Infrastructure & 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 Wood County Highway Infrastructure & Recreation Committee, and Wood County Parks and Forestry Department by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

### **Wood County Planning Timeline**

Winter 2024-2025 – Staff park analysis, plans reviewed, & demographic data analysis.

February 6, 2025 – Highway, Infrastructure & Recreation Committee meeting – Overview of planning process, discussed questions for countywide survey and how to distribute the survey.

February 2025 – Survey available for 4-weeks. 584 responses. See survey details in Chapter 5.

Spring 2025 – Goals & Objectives developed.

Spring 2025 – All local governments contacted to update their parks and list any possible capital improvements.

May 1, 2025 – Highway, Infrastructure & Recreation Committee meeting – Reviewed survey results, and discussed initial goals & objectives.

Summer 2025 – Draft Plan ready for review.

Fall 2025 – Highway, Infrastructure & Recreation Committee meeting – Draft Plan presented for initial review.

Fall 2025 – Plan ready for approval by Highway, Infrastructure & Recreation Committee and adoption by County Board.

## 1.4 Reference Plans

Recreational planning has a long-established history in Wood County. The first Wood County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Plan was developed in 1972 as part of a larger county comprehensive development project. Updates of the plan occurred in: 1977, 1984, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2011, 2018, and now 2026. This demonstrates Wood County's commitment to providing quality recreational opportunities for its residents and visitors. Reviewing these documents provides a clearer understanding of the extent of progress made over the years.

This plan builds off of all previous versions of County recreation plans to provide consistency, but also aims to identify ever-changing recreation trends and issues.

Plan summaries that affect outdoor recreation in Wood County are referenced below:

### ***Wood County Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2025***

In 2023-2025, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission developed this bicycling and walking plan. This plan identifies where existing biking and walking facilities exist. Recommendations in this plan are for facility improvements throughout the County; and non-infrastructure recommendations for encouragement, education, enforcement, evaluation, and other policy recommendations.

Proposed paths and on-road routes from this plan are shown on **Maps 4, 6, 7, & 8**.

### ***Wood County Comprehensive Plan, 2025***

**NOTE:** *This plan is under development in 2024-2025.*

This plan will be a compilation of demographics, 20-year projections, maps, and community created goals, objectives, policies, and programs that will guide future planning and community decisions for a 10-year period.

Within some of the chapters may be goals, objectives, and policies that relate to outdoor recreation.

### ***Powers Bluff County Park Long Range Master Plan, 2005***

This plan was developed by Schreiber/Anderson Associates, Inc. at the request of the Wood County Parks and Forestry Department. The purpose of the plan is to guide the management, development and preservation of Powers Bluff over the next 10 to 15 years.

Master Plan is in **Appendix H**.

### ***Powers Bluff County Park Trails Concept Plan, 2018***

This plan was prepared by the International Mountain Bicycling Association for Wood County. The plan provides guidance and recommendations for developing a comprehensive trail network at Powers Bluff County Park. The planned trail network is intended to serve the needs of all recreation users by adding upon the existing Powers Bluff trails with new multi-use trails and the creation of bike optimized trails for all ages and ability levels.

Trails Concept Plan is in **Appendix H**.



### **Wood County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2021–2035**

This plan is a management guide for the Wood 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.

Designated and undesignated recreational uses of the county forest, along with designated recreation trails, are outlined in Chapter 900.

Designated recreational uses = campgrounds, ATV intensive use area, Richfield 360, picnic/day use areas, swimming areas/beaches, boat landings, waysides, and shooting ranges.

Undesignated recreational uses = hunting, fishing, picnicking/day use, some camping, some motorized travel (on roads), and other identified types of dispersed recreation uses.

Designated recreation trails = hiking trails, all types of biking trails, equestrian trails, ski trails, snowmobile trails, ATV trails, motorcycle trails, and other motor vehicle trails.

#### **Wood County Forest Mission:**

*The mission of the Wood County Forest is to manage, conserve and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. These resources, such as those provided by the County Forest, are the base for addressing the ecological and socioeconomic needs of society.*

*County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect and disease outbreaks, and from human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation and excessive development. While managed for environmental needs including watershed protection, protection and maintenance of biotic diversity, these same resources must also be managed and provide for sociological needs, including the production of raw materials for wood-using industries that provide a wide variety of products fulfilling consumer demands, and provisions for recreational opportunities.*

*Management must balance local needs with broader state, national, and global concerns through integration of sound forestry, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and recreational practices. Management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the future with sustainable forest management practices.*

### **North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan, 2018**

The purpose of this 2018 plan is to “recommend policies, programs, and facilities to improve the safety, viability, convenience, and attractiveness of bicycling and walking for transportation.” This plan also serves to bridge the gap between local community planning and State plans, as well as fill in gaps where improvements for bicycling and/or walking end in local community plans, to create a regional network of safe walking and bicycling.

Goals of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

- Mobility – The Trail System must enhance bicyclists’ ability to get around the Region including access to key destinations such as schools, parks, retail areas, and other public facilities.

- **Functionality** – New off-road routes, improved existing street routes, signage and marking, and route promotion must be combined to function as a system that is easy and desirable to use.
- **Safety** – Every bicyclist and pedestrian in the North Central Region deserves a system that is safe for travel.
- **Connectivity** – The Trail System must provide a seamless transportation system on multiple levels including; internally to all areas of a community; externally to outlying neighbors around the Region; and becoming a part of the bigger picture of a statewide trails network.

### ***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 **Appendix E**;
- 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.

### ***State Trails Network Plan***

This 2001 document (revised in 2003) 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.

The following potential trails in Wood County are shown on **Map 3**.

#### Segment 4 – Green Bay to Mississippi River

This segment is an important link in a long-distance east/west corridor across the state. From City Point to Wisconsin Rapids, the option of remaining on the rail corridor or using roadways should be considered.

**NCWRPC Note:** *From Plover to the west, this railroad is still active through all of Wood County. From Plover to the east, this segment is the Tomorrow River State Trail. The plan shows that Segment 4 between Plover and Wisconsin Rapids is within the STH 54 corridor. Since STH 54 has a large stretch of 55 mph, then a more comfortable ride for drivers and bicyclists would be to create an off-road path along one side of the highway.*

#### Segment 18 – Tomahawk to Wisconsin Dells

It is important to note that Segment 18 links with potential corridors in the Northern and South Central regions to create a continuous trail route from Ashland, on Lake Superior, to the Wisconsin/Illinois state line.

From Stevens Point to Wisconsin Dells, a potential trail route using roadways is recommended that generally would follow the Wisconsin River and its flowages and may provide access to Roche-A-Cri and Buckhorn State Parks for trail users. With the support of the counties, this could become a designated bike route. Paved shoulders should be included with any future road improvements. The Ice Age Trail crosses this potential corridor near the intersection of County Highway Z and State Highway 82.

**NCWRPC Note:** *From Stevens Point to Wisconsin Rapids, this route could include the scenic STH 66 corridor and a variety of local roads. Since STH 66 is 55 mph, then a more comfortable ride for drivers and bicyclists would be to create an off-road path along one side of the highway that connects local roads at both ends of the highway between Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids.*

#### Segment 47 – Marshfield to Merrilan

This potential trail corridor is combination of a rail line and roadway that will link these two communities as it passes through many small towns. This segment will connect to West Central Region Segment #4 in Merrilan. Roadways may be necessary for the completion of this section as a portion of the rail corridor is in private ownership.

**NCWRPC Note:** *It appears that only about 0.7 miles of this corridor is in semi-public hands (WI Public Service), so all of this potential corridor in Wood County would be in road right-of-ways.*

#### Segment 52 – Wausau to Marshfield

Marathon County also recognizes this abandoned rail corridor from Wausau to Marshfield as having significant trail potential. After rail line abandonment in the early 1980s the county took part of the rail right-of-way for tax purposes. A section near Wausau serves as a power line corridor by Wisconsin Public Service (WPS), which apparently would not object to sharing the right-of-way with trail users. Sections of the corridor have reverted back to adjacent landowners, but there may be opportunities for easements or the use of lightly traveled local roads.

#### Segment 64 – Ladysmith to Marshfield

This potential trail corridor is a combination of rail line and highway right-of-way that continues into Northern Region as Segment #64 to Ladysmith. This segment passes through numerous wildlife areas and several small communities.

## Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, 2006-2056

This report is a comprehensive inventory of the special places that will be critical to meeting future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next 50 years. Some of the questions asked to guide the 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 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 draft comprehensive plans, or offering different types of technical assistance.

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

### **CG** Central Wisconsin Grasslands

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

### **MW** Middle Wisconsin River

|                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| Size                      | Large    |
| Protection Initiated      | Limited  |
| Protection Remaining      | Moderate |
| Conservation Significance | ☆☆       |
| Recreation Potential      | ☆☆☆☆☆    |

### **SM** Sandhill – Meadow Valley – Wood County State Wildlife Areas

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

### **YW** Yellow River

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

## Other Areas of Interest

### **Cranmoor Wetlands** (Wood County)

This large wetland area is located within former Glacial Lake Wisconsin and is between large Wood County Forest properties. The area contains extensive wet meadows and marshes and an impressive array of wetland plant and wildlife species amidst a series of cranberry operations. Although altered, the wetlands have relatively few invasive plants and the potential to support rare plants is high.

### **Powers Bluff** (Wood County)

This 300' high monadnock (an isolated remnant hill) is round-shaped due to the erosion-resistant durability of the quartzite. This contrasts with other less durable sandstone bluffs in the area that have weathered parallel to their vertical planes giving them very steep slopes. Dominant trees on the bluff are sugar maple, yellow birch, and bitternut hickory with scattered red oak, white ash, and basswood. The forest floor is strewn with boulders and two boulder trains extend southeast and southwest from the bluff, suggesting that glacial ice moved over and around the bluff. The area is known to harbor Native American historical features. Although the bluff is part of the Wood County park system, there is interest in expanding protection efforts to further meet both conservation and recreation needs.

### ***Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023***

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

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

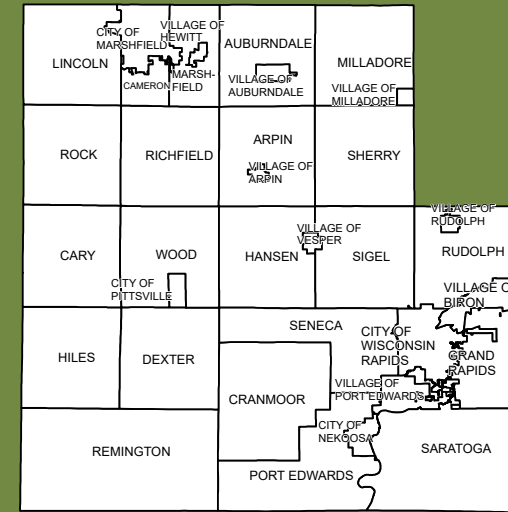
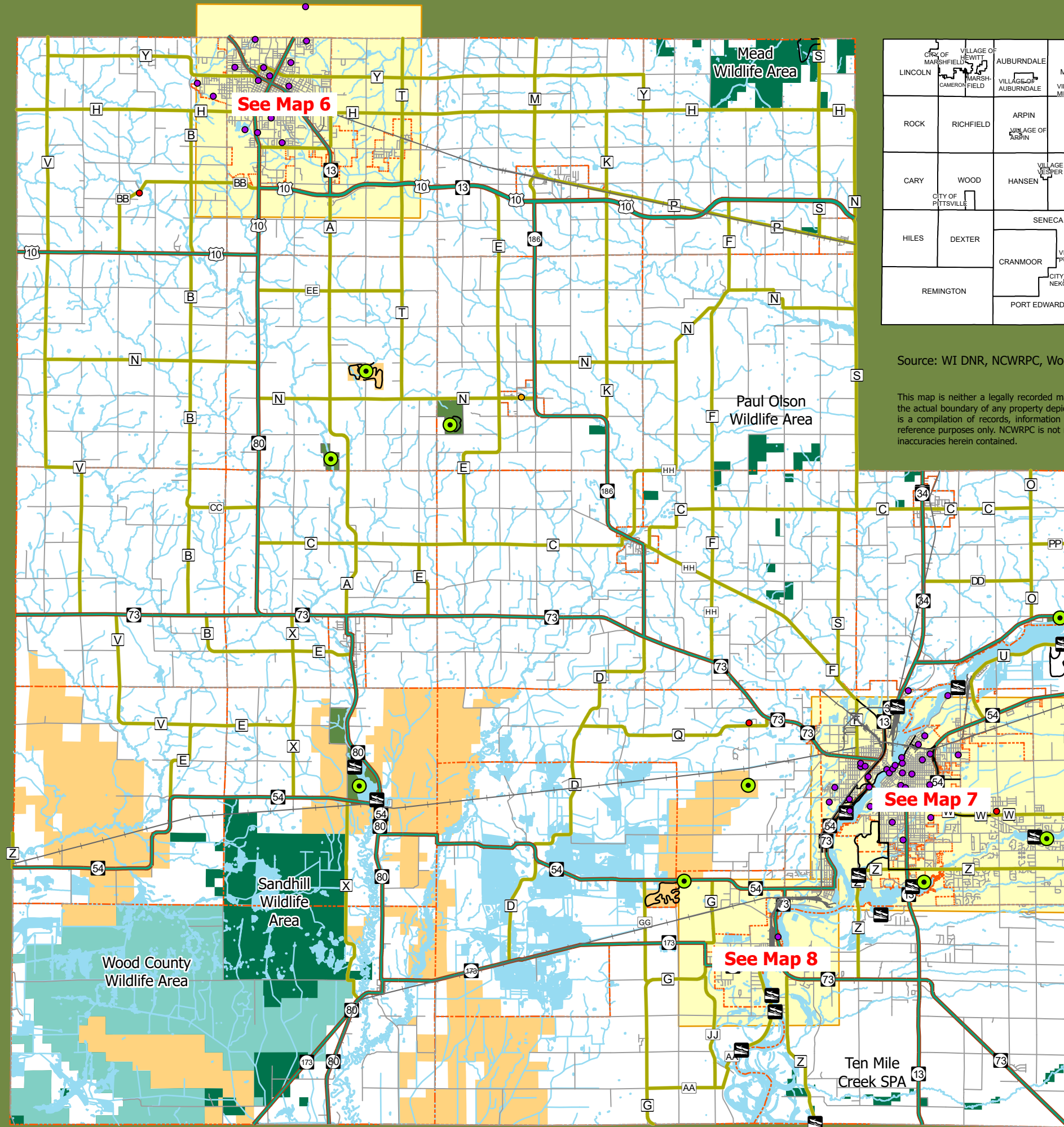
This SCORP lays out five overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

1. Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
  2. Grow partnerships.
  3. Provide high-quality experiences.
  4. Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
  5. Enhance funding and financial stability.
- Park Design and Location Criteria from SCORP are described in **Appendix A**.
  - SCORP identified outdoor recreation needs are in **Appendix D**.



# Outdoor Recreation

Wood County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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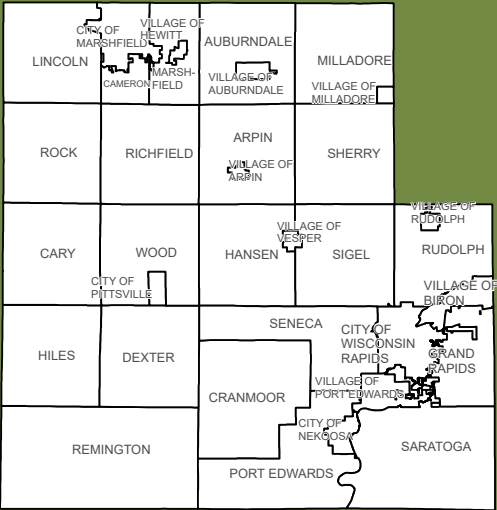
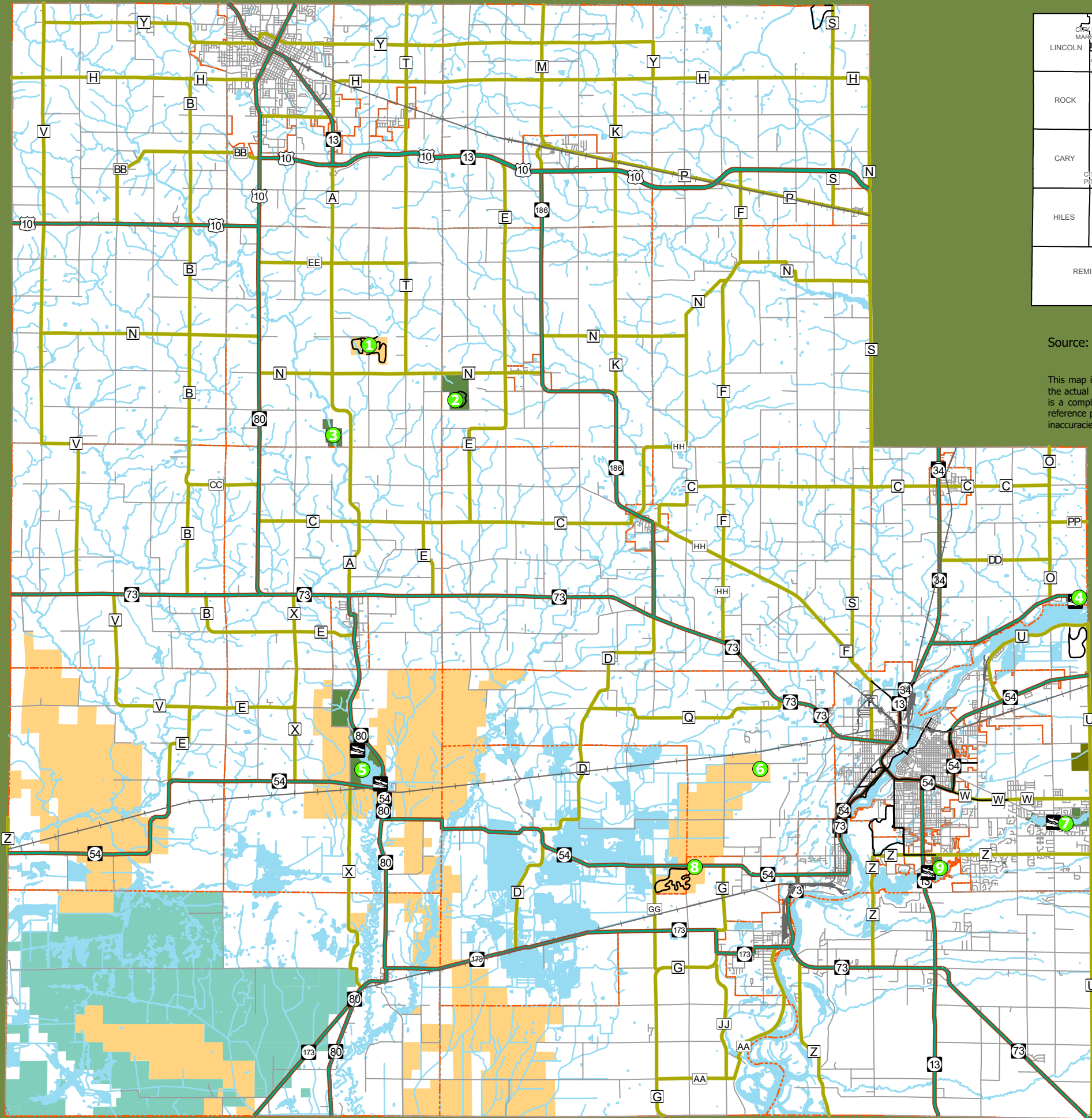
## Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Trails
- Boat Launches
- Parks
  - County
  - City
  - Town
  - Village
  - State Wildlife Area
  - County Park Area
  - Public County Owned
  - County Forest
  - County Wildlife Area

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County Administered  
Outdoor Recreation  
Wood County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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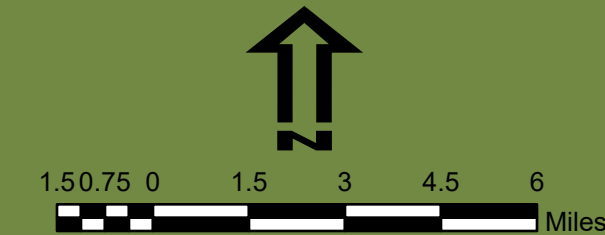
| ID | NAME                        |
|----|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Richfield 360 County Forest |
| 2  | Powers Bluff County Park    |
| 3  | North Wood County Park      |
| 4  | Wood County Cera Park       |
| 5  | Dexter County Park          |
| 6  | Wood County Rifle Range     |
| 7  | South Wood County Park      |
| 8  | ATV Intensive Use Area      |
| 9  | NEPCO Lake County Park      |

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Trails
- County Boat Launches

Parks

- County
- County Forest
- County Park Area
- Public County Owned
- Wood County Wildlife Area



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# Legacy Places and Potential Trails

Wood County, Wisconsin

## Legend

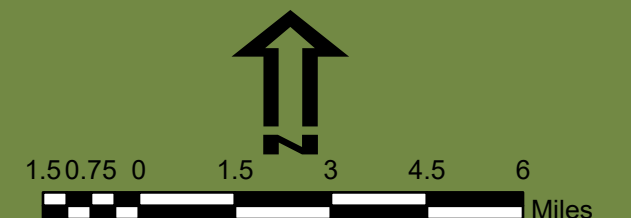
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Trails
- Snowmobile Trails
- DNR Trails Network Plan Cooridors
- Cranberry Highway
- CG** Legacy Places

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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**\*NOTICE**  
Each proposed bike route becomes a bike route when the County:

1. Officially designates by ordinance one of the segments or part of a segment per WI State Statue 349.23; and
2. Installs bike route signs.

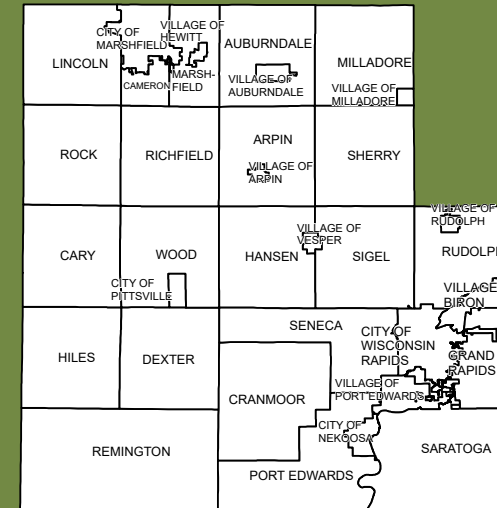
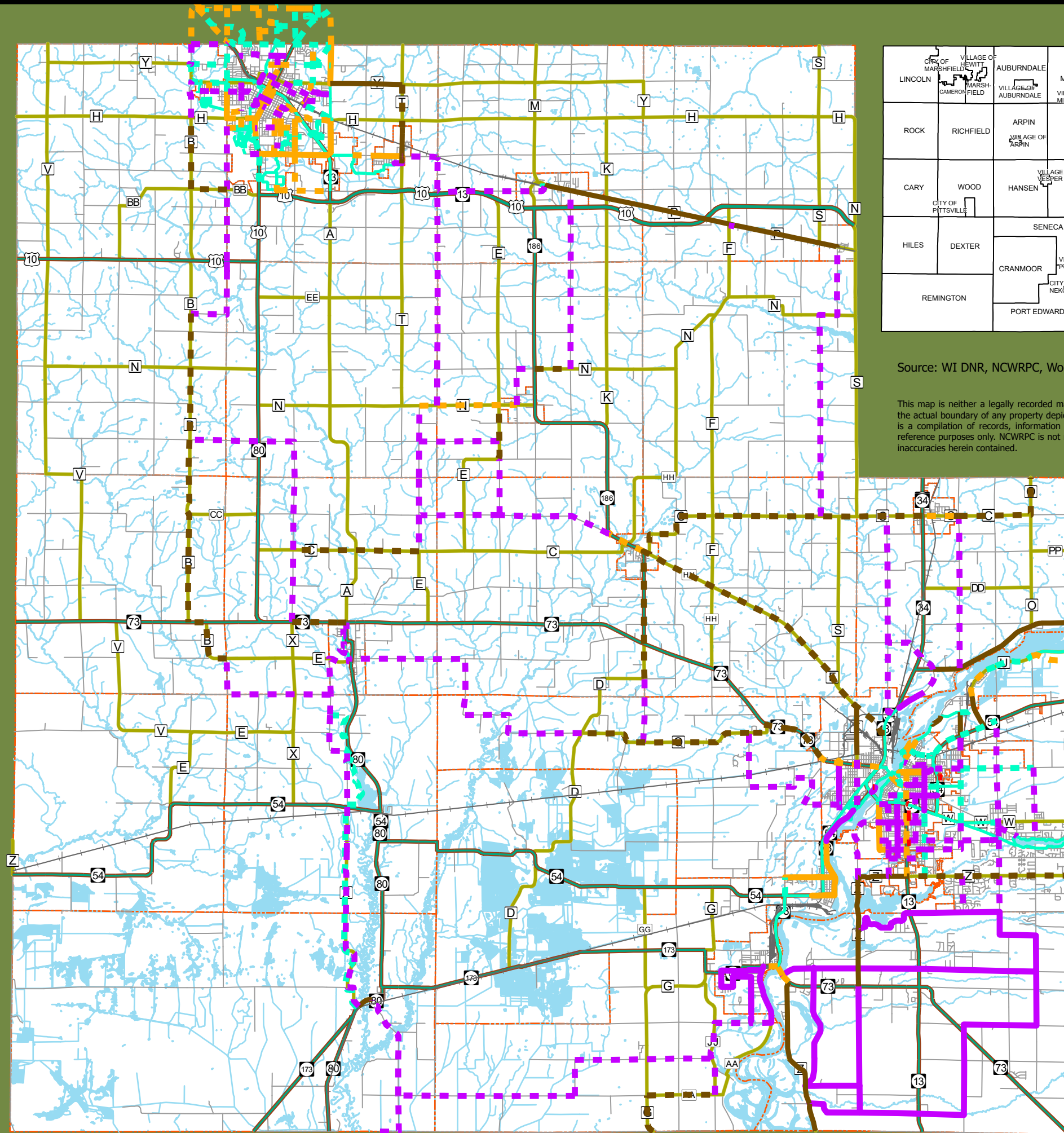


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# Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities

Wood County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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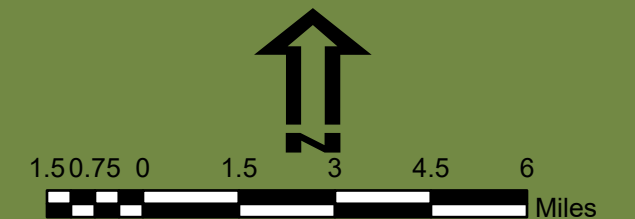
## Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Bicycle Facilities**
  - Existing Off-Road
  - Existing Bike Lane
  - Existing Shared Road
  - Existing Wide Paved Shoulder
  - Proposed Off-Road
  - Proposed Bike Lanes
  - Proposed Shared Road
  - Proposed Sidewalk
  - Proposed Wide Paved Shoulders

## \*NOTICE

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1. Officially designates by ordinance one of the segments or part of a segment per WI State Statue 349.23; and
2. Installs bike route signs.

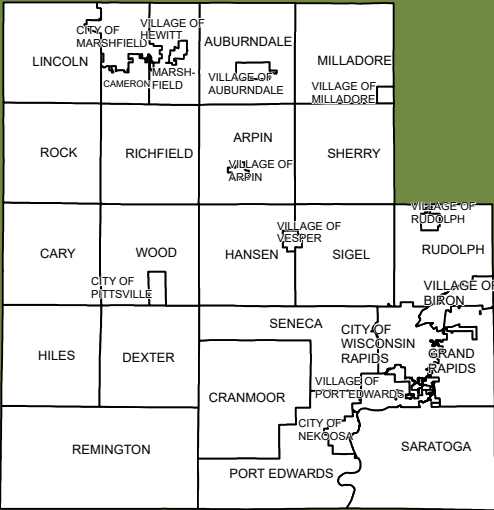
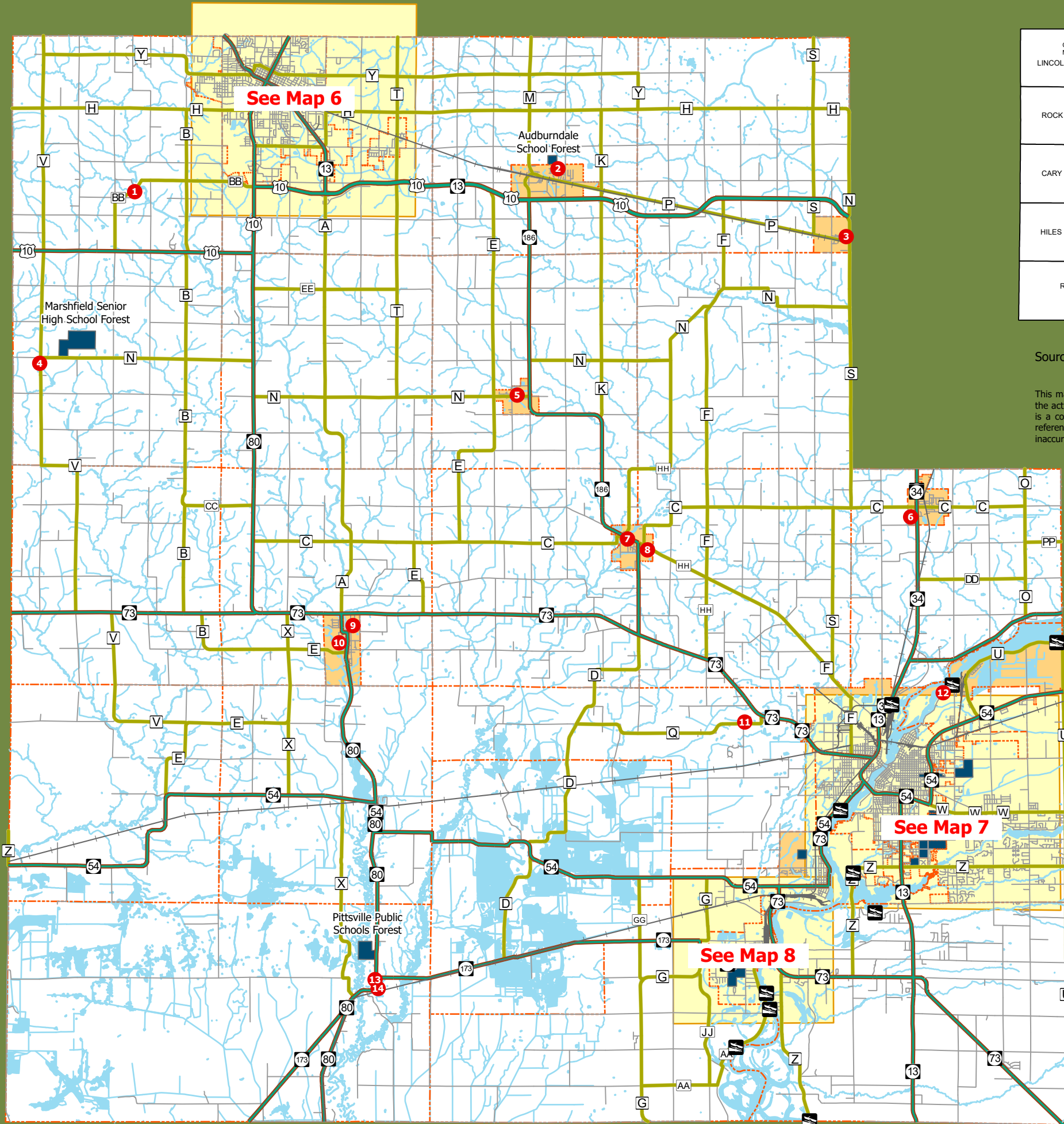


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Local Government  
Outdoor Recreation  
Wood County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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| ID | Name                         |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1  | Ebbe Park                    |
| 2  | Auburndale Park              |
| 3  | Milladore Park               |
| 4  | Lindsey Park                 |
| 5  | Kandy Kane Park              |
| 6  | Rudolph Community Park       |
| 7  | Vesper Community Park        |
| 8  | Vesper Recreation Center     |
| 9  | Lions Club Ball Park         |
| 10 | Riverside Park               |
| 11 | George Nielsen Memorial Park |
| 12 | Biron Park                   |
| 13 | Babcock Baseball Park        |
| 14 | Babcock Community Park       |

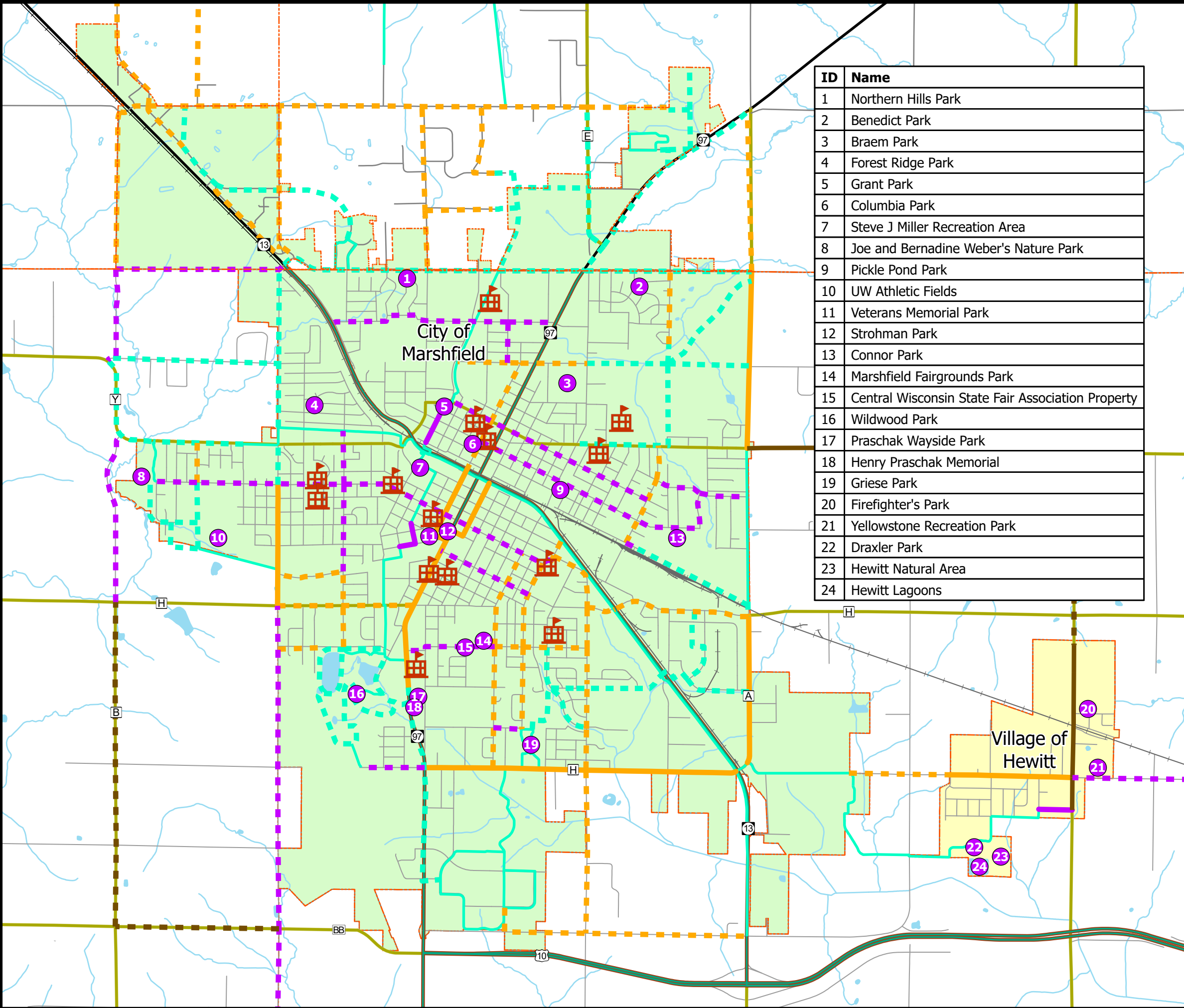
Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- School Forests
- Boat Launches



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Marshfield Area  
Outdoor Recreation  
Wood County, Wisconsin



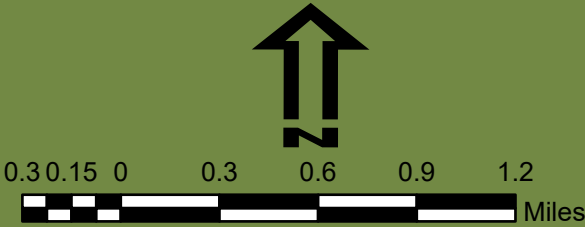
| ID | Name                                              |
|----|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Northern Hills Park                               |
| 2  | Benedict Park                                     |
| 3  | Braem Park                                        |
| 4  | Forest Ridge Park                                 |
| 5  | Grant Park                                        |
| 6  | Columbia Park                                     |
| 7  | Steve J Miller Recreation Area                    |
| 8  | Joe and Bernadine Weber's Nature Park             |
| 9  | Pickle Pond Park                                  |
| 10 | UW Athletic Fields                                |
| 11 | Veterans Memorial Park                            |
| 12 | Strohman Park                                     |
| 13 | Connor Park                                       |
| 14 | Marshfield Fairgrounds Park                       |
| 15 | Central Wisconsin State Fair Association Property |
| 16 | Wildwood Park                                     |
| 17 | Praschak Wayside Park                             |
| 18 | Henry Praschak Memorial                           |
| 19 | Griesse Park                                      |
| 20 | Firefighter's Park                                |
| 21 | Yellowstone Recreation Park                       |
| 22 | Draxler Park                                      |
| 23 | Hewitt Natural Area                               |
| 24 | Hewitt Lagoons                                    |

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Schools
- Existing Off-Road Path
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Shared Road
- Existing Wide Paved Shoulder
- Proposed Off-Road Path
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Shared Road
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Wide Paved Shoulders
- Parks

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

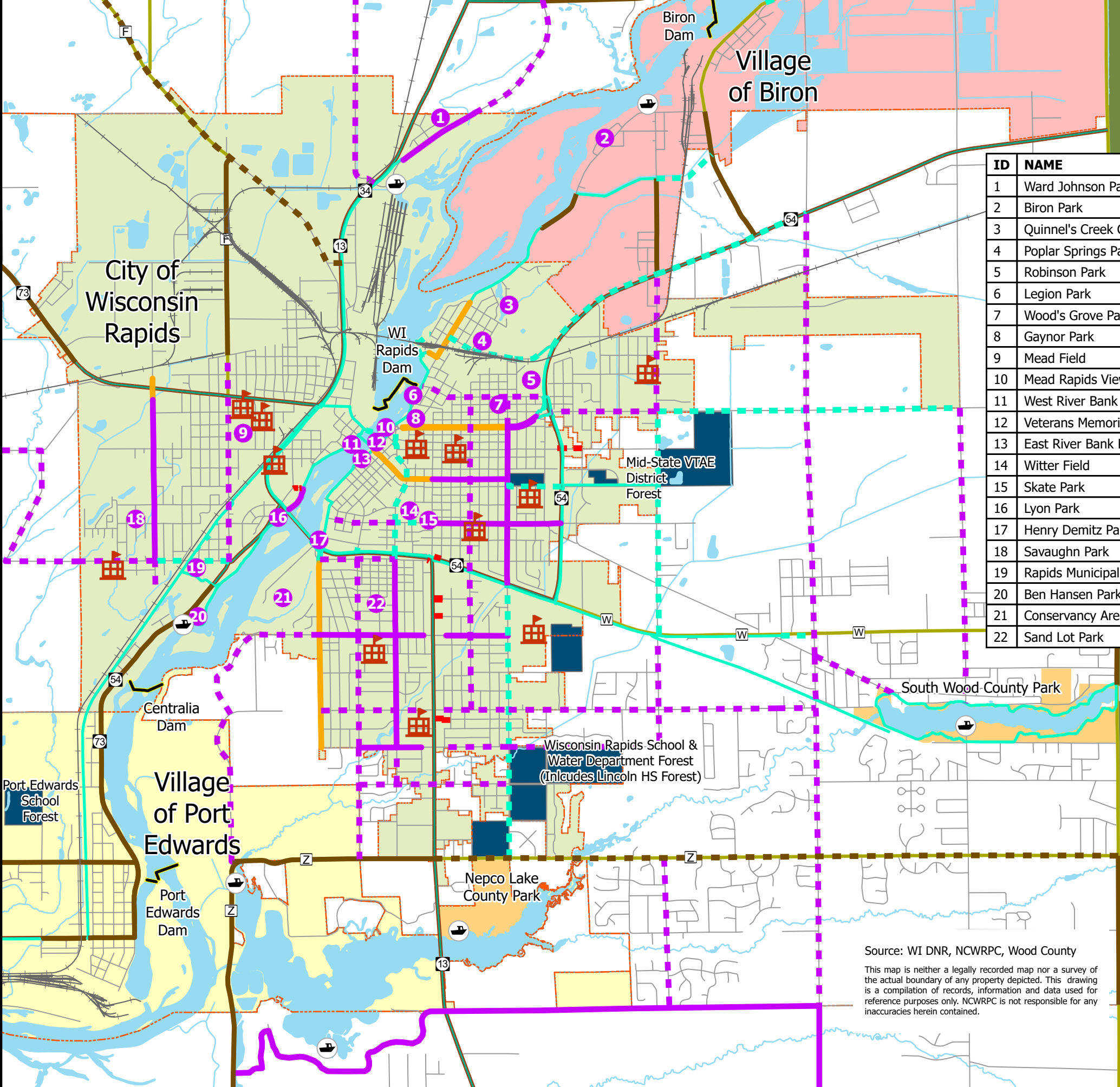
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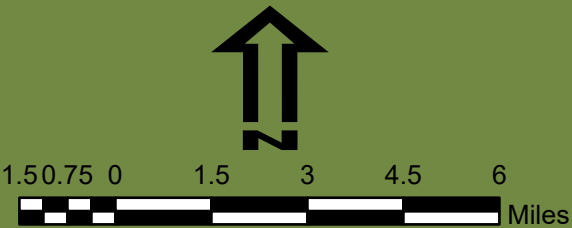
Wisconsin Rapids Area  
Outdoor Recreation  
Wood County, Wisconsin



| ID | NAME                                    |
|----|-----------------------------------------|
| 1  | Ward Johnson Park                       |
| 2  | Biron Park                              |
| 3  | Quinnel's Creek Conservancy             |
| 4  | Poplar Springs Park                     |
| 5  | Robinson Park                           |
| 6  | Legion Park                             |
| 7  | Wood's Grove Park                       |
| 8  | Gaynor Park                             |
| 9  | Mead Field                              |
| 10 | Mead Rapids View Park                   |
| 11 | West River Bank Park / Conservancy Area |
| 12 | Veterans Memorial Park                  |
| 13 | East River Bank Park / Conservancy Area |
| 14 | Witter Field                            |
| 15 | Skate Park                              |
| 16 | Lyon Park                               |
| 17 | Henry Demitz Park                       |
| 18 | Savaughn Park                           |
| 19 | Rapids Municipal Zoo                    |
| 20 | Ben Hansen Park                         |
| 21 | Conservancy Area                        |
| 22 | Sand Lot Park                           |

**Legend**

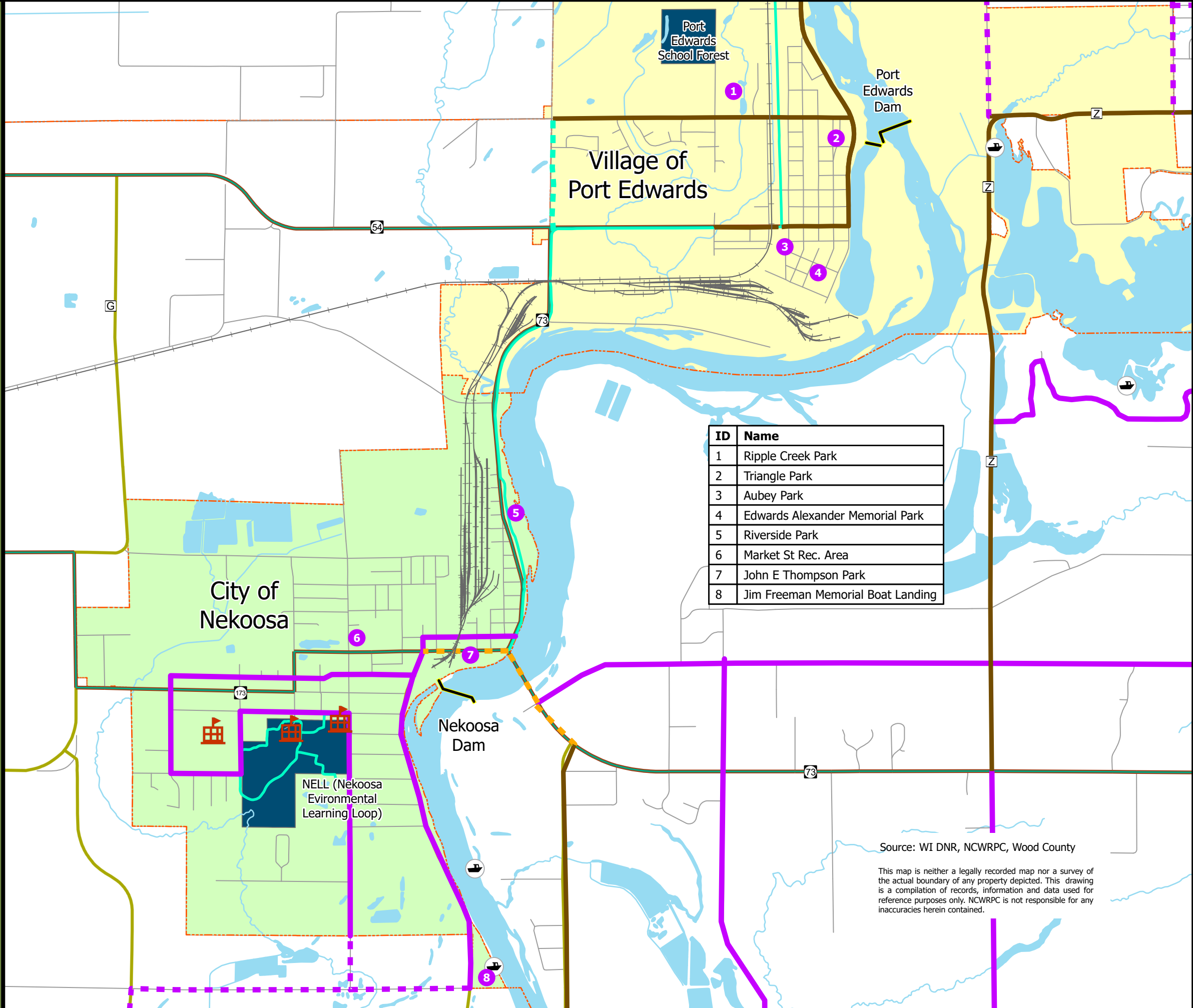
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- Wood County Park
- Schools
- Boat Launches
- Dams
- School Forests
- Existing Off-Road Path
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Shared Road
- Existing Wide Paved Shoulder
- Proposed Off-Road Path
- Proposed Shared Road
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Wide Paved Shoulders



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County  
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Nekoosa & Port Edwards Area  
Outdoor Recreation  
Wood County, Wisconsin



Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Parks
- Schools
- Boat Launches
- Dams
- School Forests
- Existing Off-Road Path
- Existing Bike Lane
- Existing Shared Road
- Existing Wide Paved Shoulder
- Proposed Off-Road Path
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Shared Road
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Proposed Wide Paved Shoulders



1.5 0.75 0 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Wood County

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# Chapter 2:

## BACKGROUND OF WOOD COUNTY

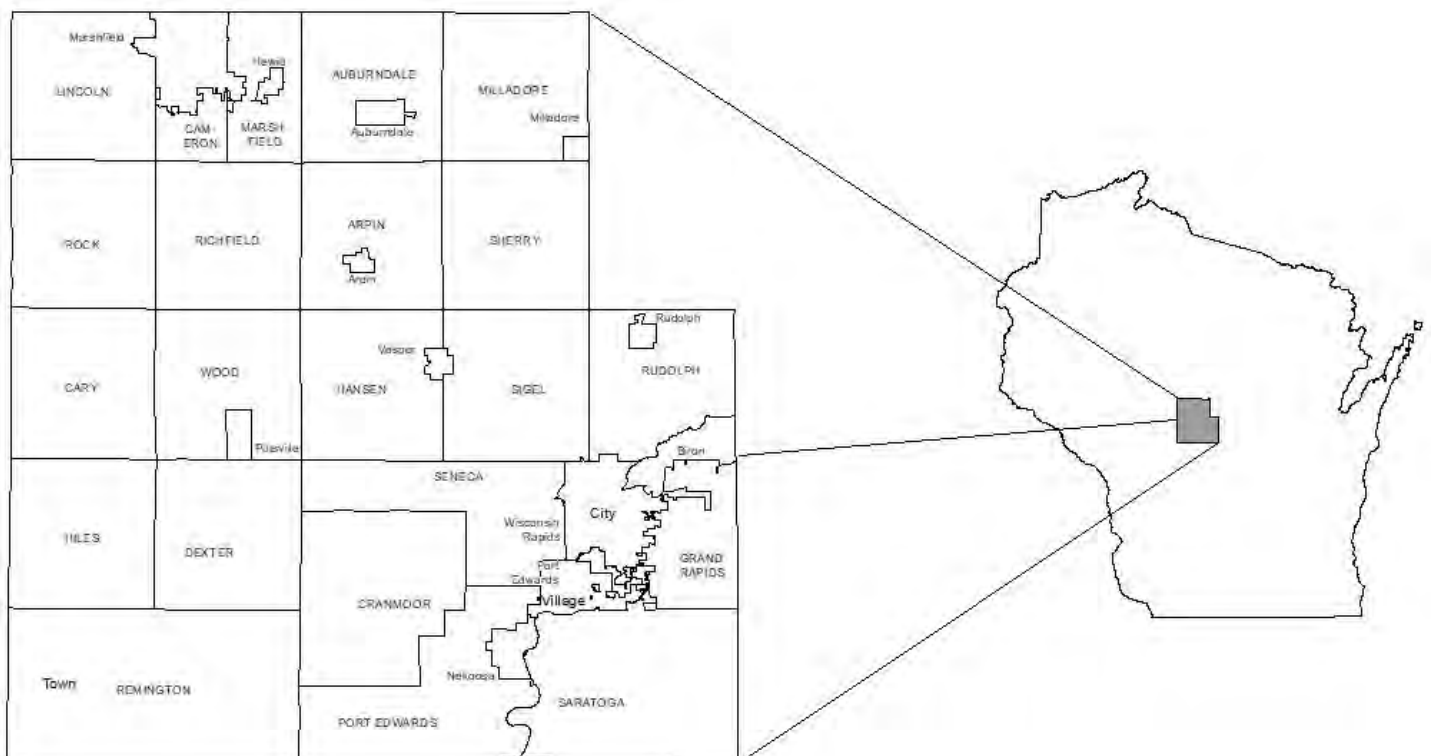
### 2.1 Physical Characteristics

This section describes the physical features that make up Wood County. Recreation planners use this kind of data to determine which resources to develop and which resources to protect or preserve. From the rolling highlands of northern Wood County to the sandy central plain of southern Wood County, the county provides a diverse landscape with a significant amount of recreational resources. Lakes, rivers, forests, wetlands, parks, recreation areas, and open spaces allow residents and visitors opportunities to enjoy a variety of recreational activities.

Wood County is located in the geographic center of Wisconsin (see **Figure 1**). The total area of the county is approximately 517,846 acres, or about 809 square miles. The county boundary measures approximately 30 miles from north to south and 29 miles from east to west. The county is bordered on the north by Marathon County, on the east by Portage County, on the south by Adams and Juneau counties, and on the west by Jackson and Clark counties.

**Figure 1**

**Wood County**



## Ecological Landscapes and Geology

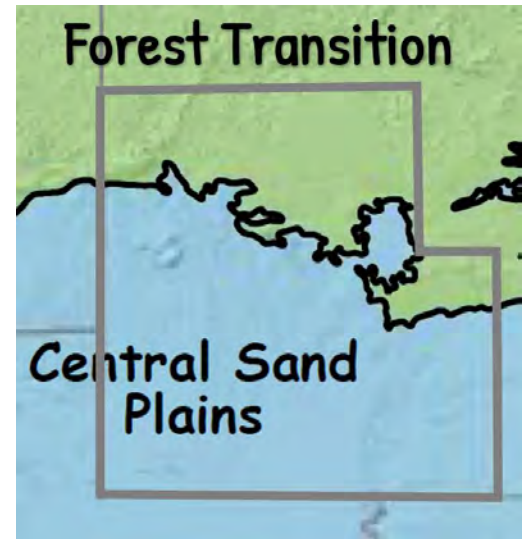
As part of the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, 16 ecological landscapes were identified that make up the whole state. The Wood County Soil Survey provides the general geology within each ecological landscape.

**Forest Transition** – The roughly northern 1/3 of Wood County’s landscape was almost entirely covered with mesic to wet-mesic forests of hemlock and sugar maple, with some yellow birch, red pine, and white pine. There were pockets of conifer swamps, often near the headwaters of streams like the Marshfield area, containing white cedar, black spruce and tamarack. (Land Legacy Report)

There are a number of low depressions in this region of the County that create large wooded wetlands providing recreational hunting lands which are publicly owned. Two examples of such wetlands include the Sherry Flats and the Mead Wildlife Area.

In general, the Forest Transition portion has long, gentle slopes. The underlying bedrock consists of Precambrian igneous and metamorphic rocks. The western half of this area has a mantle of heavy loam glacial till over the bedrock. The rest of this area has a layer which varies in thickness of loamy residuum weathered from the Precambrian rock that is over the bedrock. Stream valleys in the glaciated part of the area are broad and shallow, and those in the residual part tend to be narrow and steep sided. The entire area was covered by a layer about 2-feet thick of wind deposited silt during the Wisconsin Glaciation. The soils formed partly in the silt and partly in the underlying till or residuum. (Soil Survey)

**Central Sand Plains** – The dominant feature in this landscape is the vast, remarkably flat, sandy plain that was once the bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin—the enormous body of water fed primarily by glacial runoff. This lake, ringed by the Driftless Area to the southwest and the glacier to the north and east, was 70 to 150 feet deep and covered over 1,800 square miles. Streams and rivers draining from the glacier into the lake carried enormous loads of sand, silt, and clay that settled onto the lake bottom. The lake is believed to have drained catastrophically, in an estimated 7 to 10 days, when the



Source: Wisconsin Land Legacy Report



Source: John W. Attig, UW-Madison (emerit) and Eric Carson, WGNHS Geologist



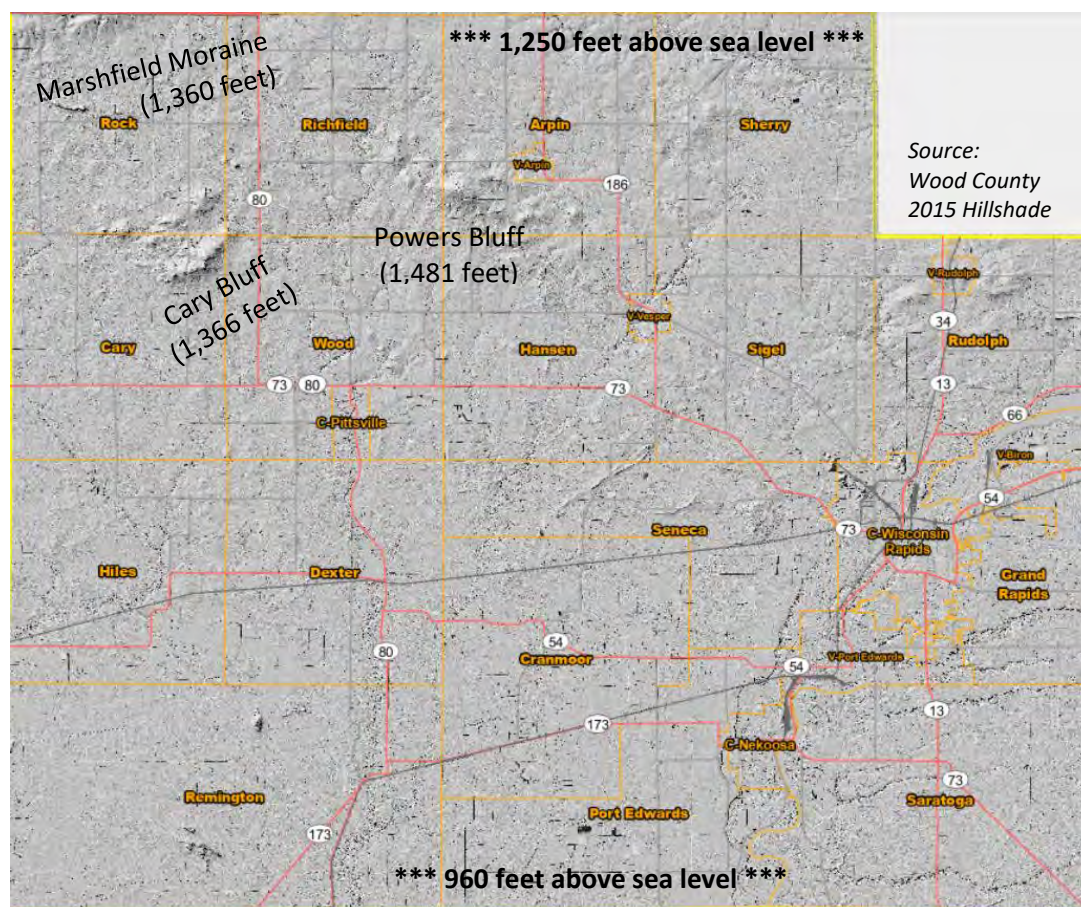
ice dam along its southern end failed. This flush of water out of the lake carved the spectacular narrow, deep-sided gorges at Wisconsin Dells. (Land Legacy Report)

The southern one third of the County is situated on the lake plain of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. This low, sandy region is home to very large wetland areas, conifer forest tracks, and over 5,300 acres of cranberry marshes. While the southeast corner of Wood County is somewhat urbanized, the south central and southwestern regions of the county are sparsely populated and relatively undisturbed.

The Central Sand Plains consists of nearly level to gently sloping uplands associated with occasional low ridges and hills of sandstone, and of broad areas of sandy outwash plains and lake plains. The bedrock in this area consists of Cambrian sandstone interbedded with varying amounts of shale. The shale layers are generally thin or absent in parts of Siegel and Hansen Townships but are thick and very prominent in the western part of the county. Glacial till covers the sandstone and shale in the northwestern part of the county and on a few broad, low ridges south of Powers Bluff, but the rest of this area is residual. One to two feet of loess covers all of the area except the lake plain and outwash parts. (Soil Survey)

Powers Bluff, the highest elevation in the county, is a mass of Precambrian rock capped by extremely resistant quartzite. Cary Bluff and a somewhat smaller hill in the Sandhill Crane Wildlife Area in the Town of Remington, although on the Central Plain and surrounded by Cambrian sandstone, are Precambrian rock that lacks the quartzite cap of Powers Bluff. (Soil Survey)

## Topography



Wood County mainly ranges from 1,250 to 960 feet above sea level.

Surface elevations decrease, from north to south. This slope is interrupted by the Marshfield Moraine (1,360 feet), Powers Bluff (1,481 feet), Cary Bluff (1,366 feet), as well as a few lower hills.

The highest point in the county is Powers Bluff located in the Town of Arpin. It rises 300 to 400 feet above the surrounding area and also happens to be a county park.



## Soils

The soils in the northern two-thirds of Wood County formed in “two-storied” parent material. That is, the upper 20 to 26 inches of the soils formed in silty wind-laid material, and the lower part of the soils formed either in glacial till or in residuum weathered from underlying bedrock. (Wood County LWRMP)

If a line were drawn east and west approximately through Wisconsin Rapids, it would roughly separate the loamy soils north of the line from the sandy soils south of the line. The loamy soils have a cap of wind laid silty material that averages about 24 inches in thickness. (Wood County LWRMP)

In the northwestern part of the county, the soils formed partly in the underlying loamy glacial till. These are soils of the Withee, Marshfield, Santiago, and Mann series. (Wood County LWRMP)

In the northeastern part of the county, the material below the silty cap is loam residuum weathered from the underlying gneissic rock. Milladore, Eaupleine, and Sherry soils formed in this silt and residuum. (Wood County LWRMP)

A broad belt across the middle of the county is soils that formed in the silty cap and underlying layers of residuum from weakly cemented sandstone and acid clay shale. These are soils of the Kert, Vesper, Hiles, and Veedum series. (Wood County LWRMP)

Most of the soils in the southern part of the county formed in sandy material deposited by glacial melt waters along the Wisconsin River or in Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Soils of the Nymore, Plainfield, Friendship, Meehan, and Newson Series formed in these materials. (Wood County LWRMP)

## Surface Water

The Wood County recreation system has utilized the surface water of reservoirs extensively. Many cities and villages have also developed park and recreation areas along water fronts.

The quality of water resources is important to sustaining a healthy wildlife population and creating a safe and desirable place for outdoor recreation. Clean water provides an environment for aquatic species to thrive and reproduce in. When a water body experiences problems with pollution or lack of oxygen, many other plants and animal species that live on, in or near water bodies suffer as a result.

Clean surface water is also important to water recreation activities including swimming, boating and fishing. In Wood County water related recreation activities are very popular and are a contributing factor to the overall quality of life of the area. Clean lakes, rivers and streams also help the economy by drawing tourists to the area to recreate and vacation. Generally, the water quality of the lakes, rivers and streams in the county is good.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wood County has 78 lakes totaling over 6,240 acres. Of the 78 lakes, 13 lakes are named and 65 lakes are unnamed. Additionally, the county has over 100 unnamed lakes that are smaller than 20 acres. Ross Lake is the only named seepage lake in the county. The remaining named lakes are classified as drainage lakes. These lakes have both an inlet and outlet where the

main water source is a stream. The main drainage lakes in the county are created by dams and are considered flowages, impoundments or reservoirs. These man-made lakes and flowages provide most of the recreational water in the county. Natural lakes in the county are generally small and very shallow with recreation potential mainly centered around wildlife, waterfowl and fishing.

The Wisconsin River is the county's most prominent water feature, and it is identified by 5 flowages: Biron Flowage, Wisconsin Rapids Flowage, Centralia Flowage, Port Edwards Flowage, Nekoosa Flowage; and the tail of the Petenwell Lake. Although legally considered a river, the Wisconsin River is included with the lake inventory because of the large surface area that it covers that is more typical of a lake than a river. Although contiguous, the Wisconsin River flowages are somewhat confined water features separated by 4 dams that control the rate of water flow for power generation and regulating seasonal flow.

There are 82 named streams/creeks in Wood County totaling approximately 390 miles in length. The Yellow River is the longest in the county, but the Wisconsin River has the largest surface water acreage.

## **Climate**

The climate of Wood County is typical of the center of the continent in the middle latitudes. Winters are long, cold, and snowy; summers are warm and occasionally humid; and spring and fall are sometimes short and are a mixture of summer and winter. (Wood County Soil Survey, 1977)

Like much of the Midwest, Wood 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**

Wood 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, Wood 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 Wood 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)

## **Groundwater**

Groundwater is an extremely important resource in Wood County as it is the source of the entire county's drinking water supply and serves many agricultural, commercial, and industrial purposes. Because of its importance, a greater understanding of groundwater is needed to gauge existing and potential threats to its quantity and quality.

Contamination of groundwater almost always results directly from land uses associated with modern society. Almost anything which can be spilled or spread on the land has the potential to seep through the ground and enter the groundwater. The impacts of improper land uses or waste management are usually determined by the physical characteristics of that area. By locating, constructing, and operating development and waste management systems appropriately, these negative effects can be minimized.

The Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS) provides the following groundwater information from their 1989 publication titled: Hydrogeology of Wood County, Wisconsin.

Elevated hardness, iron, and manganese concentrations are the most common water-quality problems in the county. Ground water has relatively low alkalinity because of small amounts of carbonate minerals in rocks and unconsolidated deposits in the county.

Precambrian rock, unconsolidated sand and gravel deposits, and Cambrian sandstone provide virtually all ground water used in Wood County. Saturated thicknesses of permeable sand and gravel deposits adequate for water supply occur only in the southeastern part of the county and in an isolated area in the northwestern part of the county. These deposits are capable of yielding 500 gal/min or more in some areas. Residents in more than two-thirds of the county area depend on fractured or weathered Precambrian rock for ground-water supplies. However, limited amounts (generally less than 5 gal/min) of water generally are available from this rock; this causes a water-availability problem in much of the county.



## 2.2 Social Characteristics

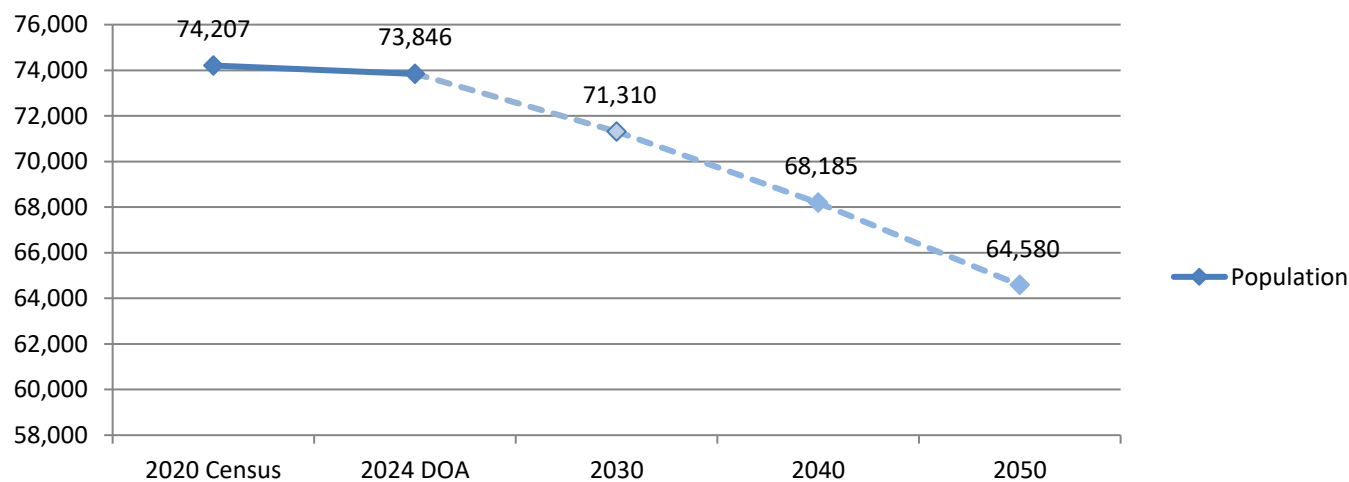
### Introduction

This section describes social and economic demographic information that influences Wood 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 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates total population of Wood County is 74,039. This 100% count shows an increase of approximately 3,758 people since the 2020 Census. Wood County’s population decreased by 0.9 percent while the state grew by 9.8 percent and the nation grew by 7.7 percent between 2010 and 2023. The population of Wood County is expected to decline through 2040 (see **Figure 2**).

**Figure 2: Wood County Population Projections**



Source: U.S. Census 2020, Wisconsin Department of Administration  
2024 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 Wood County’s 2024 population at 73,846. Wood County’s natural increase in 2024 was a decrease of 1.3%; unlike the state’s natural increase of 0.01%. The decreased natural increase may be a reflection of more deaths than births in the county. Net migration for Wood County was 0.8%, which is the sole reason why Wood County’s population increased in 2023. This net migration for the County was considerably higher than the state rate of 0.1%. 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)

| <b>Table 1 Populations &amp; Projections</b> |                    |                      |                         |                        |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Municipality</b>                          | <b>2020 Census</b> | <b>2024 Estimate</b> | <b>2030 Projections</b> | <b>2040 Projection</b> |
| City of Marshfield                           | 18,119             | 17,927               | 17,172                  | 16,182                 |
| City of Nekoosa                              | 2,449              | 2,407                | 2,272                   | 2,092                  |
| City of Pittsville                           | 813                | 821                  | 789                     | 763                    |
| City of Wisconsin Rapids                     | 18,877             | 18,659               | 18,183                  | 17,429                 |
| Village of Arpin                             | 305                | 300                  | 279                     | 253                    |
| Village of Auburndale                        | 702                | 726                  | 695                     | 685                    |
| Village of Biron                             | 839                | 855                  | 845                     | 846                    |
| Village of Hewitt                            | 796                | 798                  | 773                     | 747                    |
| Village of Milladore                         | 268                | 265                  | 253                     | 237                    |
| V. Port Edwards                              | 1,762              | 1,743                | 1,646                   | 1,527                  |
| Village of Rudolph                           | 433                | 428                  | 413                     | 391                    |
| Village of Vesper                            | 513                | 515                  | 485                     | 457                    |
| Town of Arpin                                | 942                | 950                  | 922                     | 899                    |
| Town of Auburndale                           | 790                | 785                  | 729                     | 667                    |
| Town of Cameron                              | 539                | 544                  | 545                     | 548                    |
| Town of Cary                                 | 406                | 404                  | 390                     | 373                    |
| Town of Cranmoor                             | 181                | 178                  | 176                     | 170                    |
| Town of Dexter                               | 350                | 352                  | 335                     | 318                    |
| Town of Grand Rapids                         | 7,576              | 7,609                | 7,420                   | 7,233                  |
| Town of Hansen                               | 747                | 741                  | 748                     | 746                    |
| Town of Hiles                                | 152                | 150                  | 141                     | 129                    |
| Town of Lincoln                              | 1,593              | 1,605                | 1,576                   | 1,552                  |
| Town of Marshfield                           | 763                | 770                  | 759                     | 751                    |
| Town of Milladore                            | 668                | 661                  | 626                     | 582                    |
| Town of Port Edwards                         | 1,356              | 1,351                | 1,278                   | 1,197                  |
| Town of Remington                            | 230                | 226                  | 204                     | 178                    |
| Town of Richfield                            | 1,596              | 1,599                | 1,558                   | 1,514                  |
| Town of Rock                                 | 787                | 797                  | 753                     | 716                    |
| Town of Rudolph                              | 1,027              | 1,016                | 985                     | 940                    |
| Town of Saratoga                             | 5,060              | 5,105                | 4,971                   | 4,861                  |
| Town of Seneca                               | 1,039              | 1,028                | 964                     | 887                    |
| Town of Sherry                               | 755                | 756                  | 722                     | 688                    |
| Town of Sigel                                | 1,017              | 1,016                | 980                     | 939                    |
| Town of Wood                                 | 757                | 759                  | 723                     | 688                    |
| Wood County                                  | <b>74,207</b>      | <b>73,846</b>        | <b>71,310</b>           | <b>68,185</b>          |

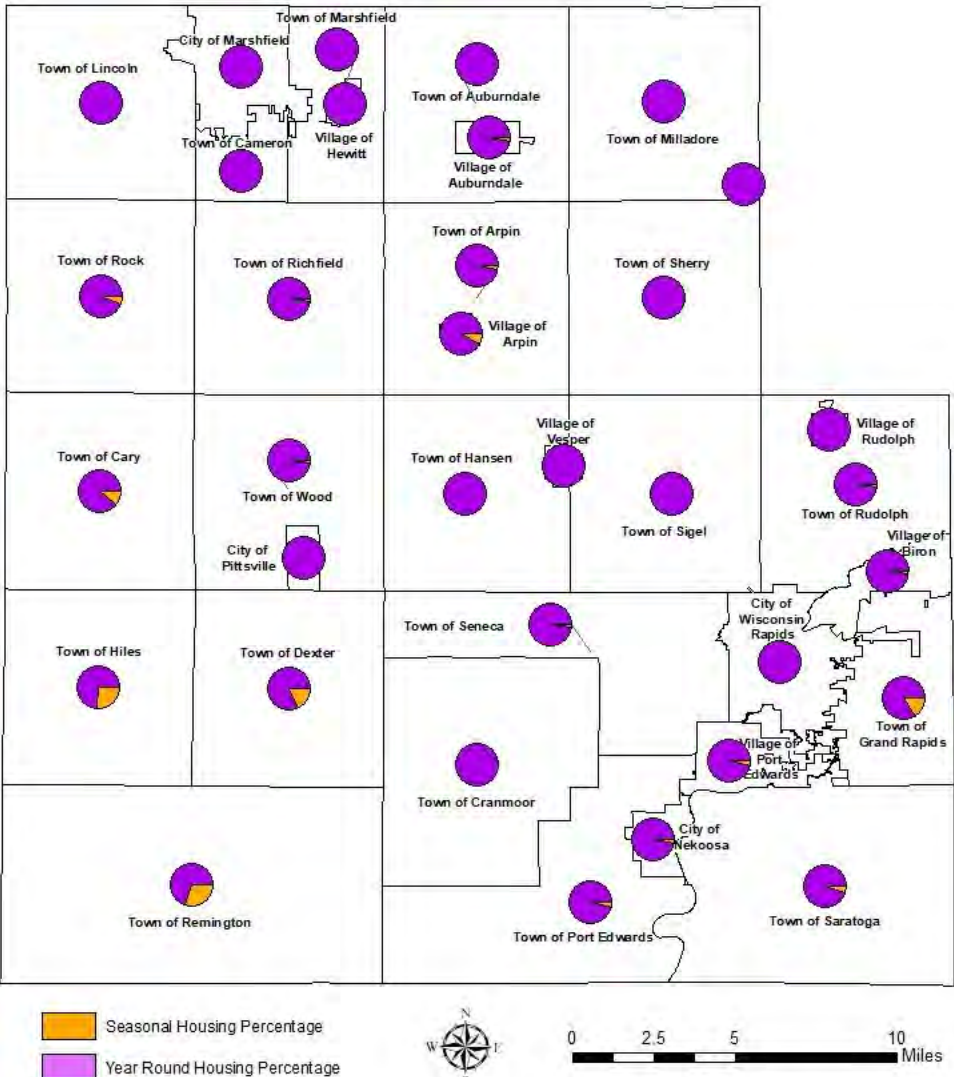
Source: U.S. Census 2020; WDOA Preliminary Jan. 1, 2024, Population Estimates; WDOA 2013 Population Projections

**Table 1** shows three parts of the population for all the local governments within Wood County. The 2020 Census population comes from the 100% count decennial Census. Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) created the 2024 Estimates, which are preliminary Jan. 1, 2024 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 Wood County, similar to national and state trends where household sizes have also decreased. Wood County had 31,979 households as of the 2010 Census, and an average household size of 2.31 people. By 2023, the average household size within Wood County has decreased to 2.29 people. About 24% of households have someone under 18 years old, and about 35% of households have someone 65 or older. About 62% of households are families, and just over 24% have their own children under 18 years old.

Wood County has a smaller proportion of vacant housing than Wisconsin or the United States per the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. Some of these vacant housing is seasonal housing a.k.a. “up north cabins” (see **Figure 3**). In 2023, approximately 2% of the housing in Wood County was seasonally vacant compared to approximately 6.4% in Wisconsin and 3.4% in the United States. There are some concentrations of seasonal housing in Wood County near a couple of small lakes and along the Wisconsin River. 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, 2023**

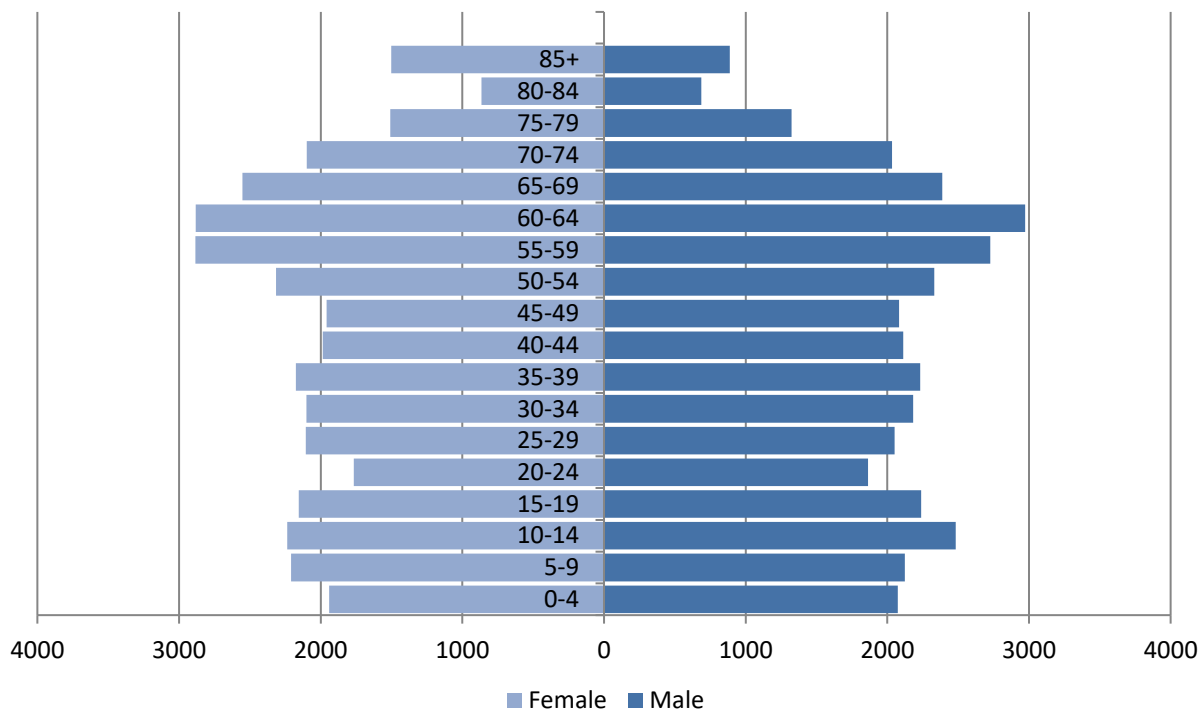


## Age

The median age of Wood County is 43.9 years old, while Wisconsin is 40.1 years old. The median age has increased in both Wood County and Wisconsin between 2010 and 2023, from 42.0 and 38.1 years old, respectively. **Figure 4** shows the distribution of age groups in Wood County. In Wood County, the largest age concentration is the 60-64 year old group. There is also a concentration of people in the middle-aged 50-69 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, Wood County has a healthy balance of age group distribution (see **Figure 4**), with each age group having varied recreational needs.

**Figure 4: Wood County Age Pyramid, 2023**



Source: 2023 American Community Survey

## Ethnic Background

The people of Wood County mostly identify as white, at approximately 92.0% of people. About 0.8% identify as Black or African American and about 1.8% identify as Asian. About 0.3% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.1% as some other race, and 4.1% as two or more races. Approximately 3.5% identify as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

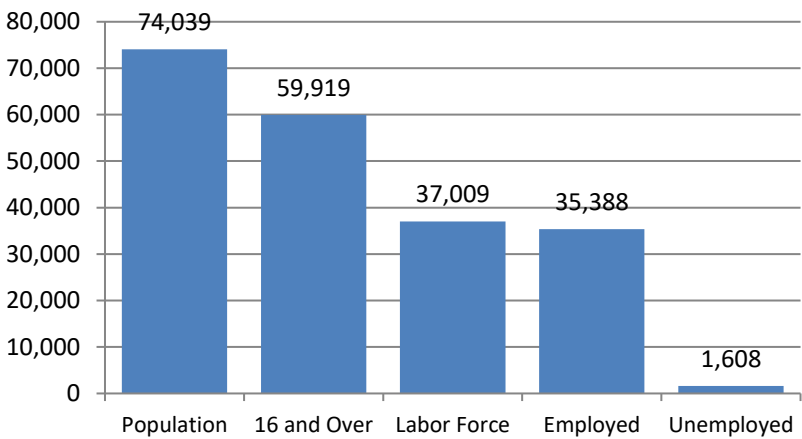


Employment and Economy

Wood County has a diverse economy with major industries including healthcare, manufacturing (particularly paper), and agriculture (especially cranberries and dairy).

Wood County has 59,919 people age 16 and over, 61.8% 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 65.5%; higher than Wood County. According to the 2023 ACS, the unemployment rate in Wood County was 4.3%; higher than the 3.3% in the state and lower than the 5.2% in the United States.

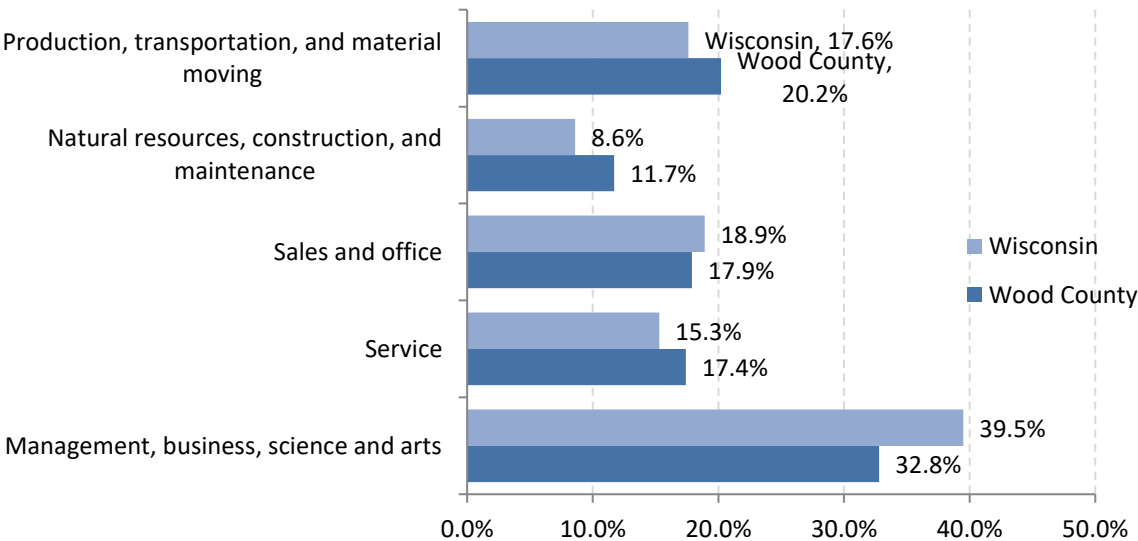
Figure 5 Wood County Employment, 2023



Source: 2023 American Community Survey

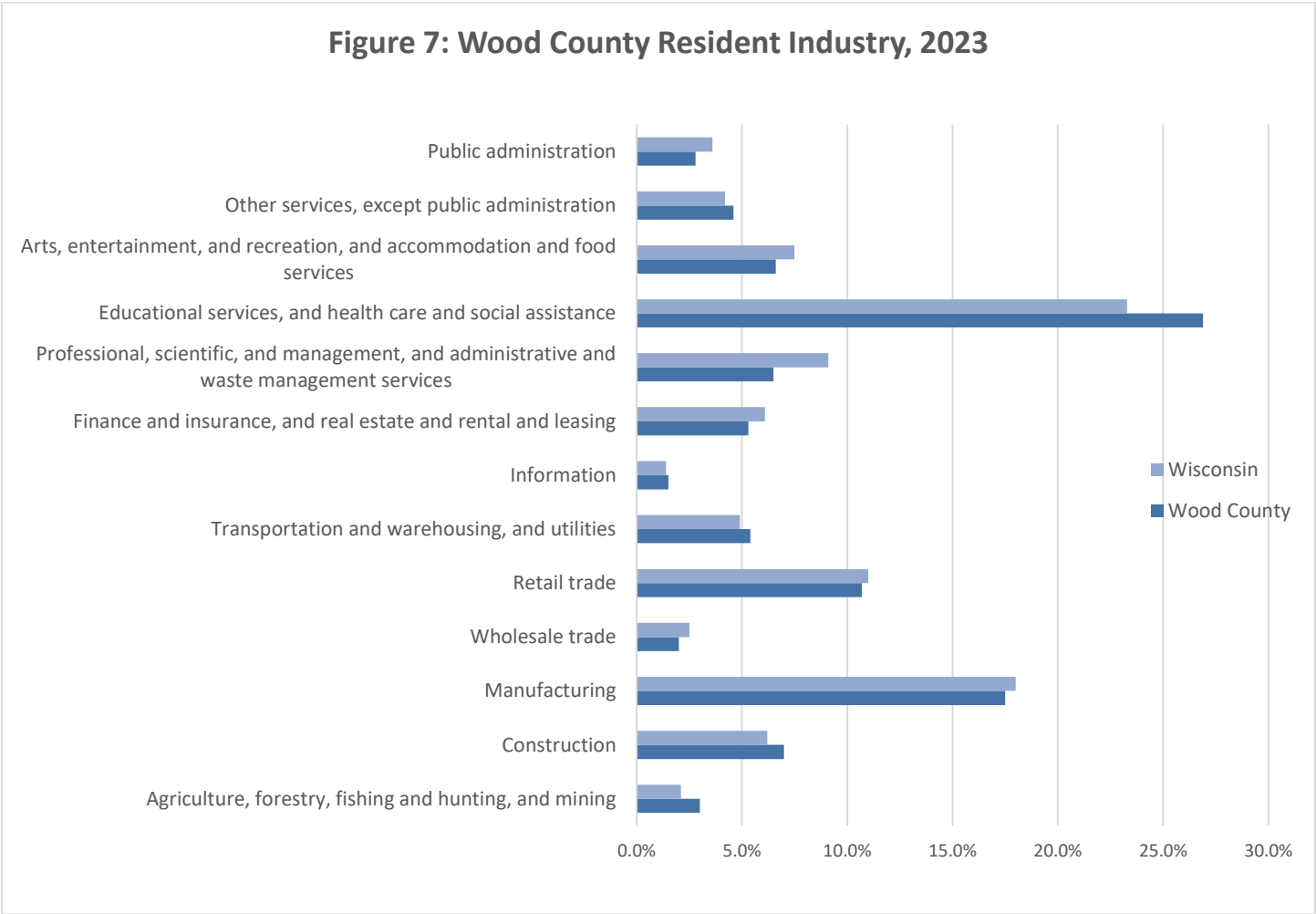
As shown in **Figure 6**, most residents of Wood County are employed in Management, business, science and arts occupation at 32.8%; Sales and office occupation at 17.9%; the Production, transportation, and material moving occupation at 20.2%. Wood County has a higher proportion of residents in the Service occupation as well as the Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupation; but a lower proportion of the Sales and office occupation and Management, business, science and arts occupation.

Figure 6: Wood County Resident Occupation, 2023



Source: 2023 American Community Survey

**Figure 7** shows the most common industry for Wood County residents as Education services, health care and social assistance, which is a higher proportion than the state; followed by the Manufacturing industry. Wood County also has a higher proportion of residents in the Construction; and Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, and mining industries, as well as Transportation and warehousing, and utilities.

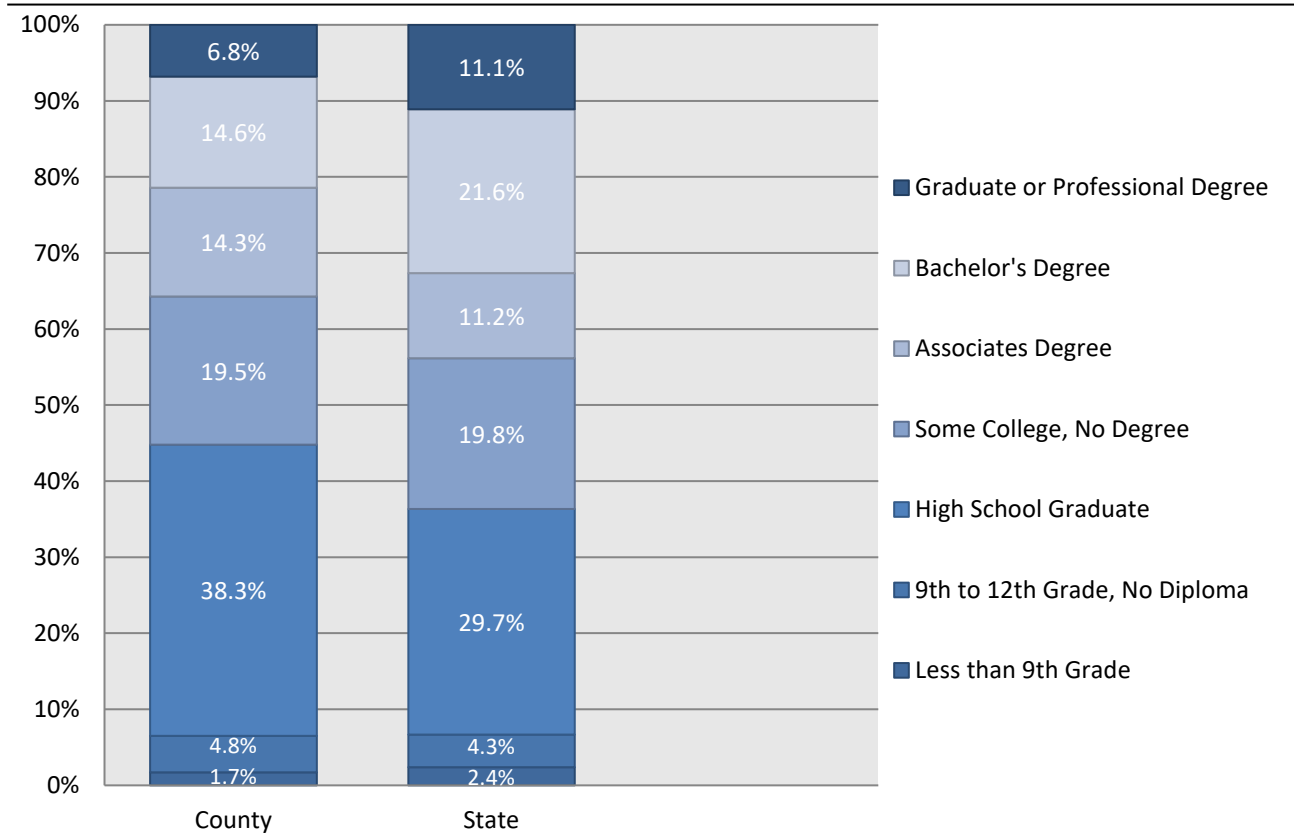


Source: 2023 American Community Survey

As of the 2023 American Community Survey, the median household income in Wood County was \$66,417, and per capita income was \$37,954. This is lower than the state and nation, which can be explained by the lower cost of living in Wood County. The distribution of household incomes in Wood 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 Wood County is generally lower than the State of Wisconsin (see **Figure 8**). About 93.5% of Wood County residents over the age of 25 have graduated high school, slightly higher than Wisconsin, where over 93.4% of residents have graduated high school. About 21.4% of Wood County have a bachelor’s degree or higher, while 32.8% 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 Wood County is lower than the state proportion. The proportion of people with an associate’s degree is slightly higher in Wood County than in the state.

**Figure 8: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older  
2023**



Source: 2023 American Community Survey

# Chapter 3:

## OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational facilities in Wood 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 Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids urbanized areas, on school district properties, and in town centers. There may not be any parks in towns with low population densities.

### 3.2 County Maintained Recreation Facilities

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

### 3.3 Linear Facilities

#### ATV Trails & Routes

ATV trails and routes are described in Chapter 4, and are generally shown on a map in **Appendix F**, which is the Wood County ATV/UTV planning map.

#### Snowmobile Trails

Snowmobile trails are described in Chapter 4, and are shown on **Map 3**.

#### Silent Sport Trails

Under “4.3 County Forest,” see the silent sport trail facilities that are on county forest land:

- cross country ski trails;
- snowshoe trails;
- mountain bike trails; and
- hunter/hiking trails.



## **Bicycle Trails & Routes**

Bicycle trails and routes are described below and are shown on **Map 3**.

Proposed paths and on-road routes from this plan are shown on **Maps 4, 6, 7, & 8**.

### **Wood County Bicycle Routes**

The County's 1996 bicycle plan proposed a series of bicycle routes and trails countywide. The 2025 Plan includes many of the 1996 routes and trails, and includes some different alignments based upon public feedback of the current system.

### **Ahdawagam Multi-Use Trails**

The network is made up of five connected trails from between three to seven miles in length. Over 21 miles of multi-use trails in Wisconsin Rapids make up the Ahdawagam trail network.

### **City of Marshfield Multi-Use Trails**

There are 14 off-road trails in the City and one trail system directly to the north of the city that Marshfield residents often use. There are approximately 22 miles of recognized trails in or near the City of Marshfield.

### **George W. Mead Wildlife Area Trails**

About 70 miles of hiking trails exist. No bike trails exist.

### **McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area Trails**

The Marsh has a seasonally open bicycle loop trail and a connected seasonally open walking trail. The Marsh is fully within Marathon County, but is adjacent to the City of Marshfield (in Marathon County). City residents often use these trails.

## **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 many streams and rivers providing canoeists many miles of routes in Wood County.

The Wisconsin River Centennial Trail is a water trail that was established in 2007 to commemorate Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation's (WVIC) 100th year of coordinating flow on the Wisconsin River. Mile markers are typically located on the right side of the bridges and at portage take out sites.

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.).

### **Yellowstone Trail**

Roads were initially established by the repeated use of horses and wagons. Most roads were packed earth that became soft when it rained and became severely rutted when used while soft. Roads were also slippery due to horse excrement. Before there were numbered highways in the United States there were names attached to roads to help the motorist navigate from community to community.

Bicyclists and the new motorists were vocal and persistent. The decades around 1912 saw the beginning of high volume auto manufacturing and the Good Roads Movement, started by bicyclists, meant the time had come to be serious about roads and long-distance routes. Many auto clubs were established, and several multi-state named road routes were established, some of which crossed the whole country—like the Lincoln Highway, dedicated in 1913. Area men of vision were called together for a Good Roads meeting in Ipswich, South Dakota, on April 23, 1912, to do something about the roads crisis. That meeting started the next 18 years of work developing the Yellowstone Trail.

Although there are many more route choices when traveling today, much of the Yellowstone Trail can still be traveled. More information on the Yellowstone trail can be found at Yellowstone Trail Association, LLC online at <https://yellowstonetrail.org/>

See partial map of Wood County segment in **Appendix G**.



Duke Behnke/USA TODAY NETWORK Wisconsin

### **Cranberry Highway**

The Cranberry Highway and Cranberry biking trail were started in the late 1990s to promote tourism in South Wood County associated with cranberry culture. What first started as a promotional tour has evolved into a cultural experience where participants can take a self-guided auto drive or bicycle ride on a 50-mile route. Although the tour can be taken any time during the year, the cranberry harvest and changing colors make the fall season the optimum time of year to experience it. On the tour there are opportunities to tour cranberry marshes, dine at local establishments, and shop at unique specialty stores that sell items unique to the area.

See **Map 3** for the Cranberry Highway and Cranberry Biking Trail.



Wisconsin Rapids Area  
Convention & Visitors Center

### 3.4 Points of Interest

Wood County contains both historic and contemporary points of interest of cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and scientific importance. A number of private sites are open to the public, while others in private ownership are closed.

Find historical buildings in Wood County by going online to Wisconsin Historical Society and search under: "Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory."

The North Wood County Historical Society, South Wood County Historical Corporation, and the Wisconsin Historical Society assist the public with finding a variety of culturally significant sites on an annual basis.

#### **Historical Markers**

- A state historical marker titled: Cranberry Culture is located on STH 54, 5 miles west of Port Edwards.
- A state historical marker titled: Centralia Pulp and Paper Mill is located in Wisconsin Rapids at the intersection of STHs 54 & 73.
- A state historical marker titled: Point Basse is located in Riverside Park along STHs 54 & 73 in Nekoosa.
- A state historical marker titled: Prisoners of War is located in a wayside at the intersection of STHs 10 & 13.
- A state historical marker titled: Myron "Grim" Natwic is located at the South Wood County Historical Museum 540 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South in Wisconsin Rapids.
- A state historical marker titled: Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Champions is located in South Wood County Park & Campground, west of the Lake Wazeecha Red Sand Beach.

#### **Historical Attractions & Memorials**

The ***Rudolph Grotto Shrine*** is located in the Village of Rudolph. The Grotto was started in 1920 by Father Philip Wagner and consists of over five acres of lush gardens, numerous shrines, museum, and a gift shop. It is constructed using rock and broken glass and is set among meandering paths and crooked bridges, with shady, intimate areas for meditation as well as more formal memorials and open picnic grounds.

***Historic Point Basse*** is one of Wood County's most historically significant areas, which is located on the east side of the Wisconsin River just south of the City of Nekoosa. Point Basse, as the site is called, is the French term for "low point" or "shallows." Prior to development by Robert and Mary Wakely on June 2, 1837, as a trading post, warehouse, inn, and home for themselves, the site marked the crossing point for Native Americans as they made their way on an east and west trail that ran from Lake Poygan to Black River. Many of the original buildings at Point Basse have been moved, burned or razed. The only original building is the Wakely home, and other structures have been donated or reconstructed. Over the years Point Basse has hosted many events that focus on the history of the area and interpretation of the lives of the eleven Wakely family members that resided there. The site also offers nature education through events and a nature walk and prairie garden. More information on Point Basse and scheduled events can be found at [www.historicpointbasse.com](http://www.historicpointbasse.com)

The **Wisconsin River Papermaking Museum** is located at 730 First Ave. South in the City of Wisconsin Rapids. The museum is open to the public and features changing exhibits that focus on paper making over the years. Some exhibits include antique papermaking tools and large wooden papermaking vats from China and Japan.

The **Alexander House** is located at 1131 Wisconsin River Drive in the Village of Port Edwards. It was founded by the Alexander Charitable Foundation of Port Edwards in 1990. It is named for the late John E. Alexander, who was instrumental in establishing the lumbering and paper industry. Since opening in 1991 tens of thousands of people have visited the art and history displays. The art display changes throughout the year and features many local and Midwestern artists. The second floor of the house contains many historic items from the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company.

The **Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial** is located on the southwest side of Wisconsin Rapids, in Ben Hansen Park. The memorial at this scenic location along the Wisconsin River was constructed to pay tribute to the firefighters from the State of Wisconsin who made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to their communities.

The **Wood County Veteran's Memorial** is located near the courthouse entrance at 400 Market Street. The memorial pays tribute to the veterans that paid the ultimate price in defending the principles and freedoms of the United States of America. Veterans listed by name on the monument served in the following wars: Spanish American; Civil War; World War I; World War II; Vietnam War; Korean War; Gulf War; and Iraq War. The memorial was established by a volunteer committee that wanted to make sure that all Wood County service men and women who died as a result of combat-related wounds, injuries or causes are not forgotten. Inspiration for the monument comes from the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Highground in Neillsville, Wisconsin.

### **Archaeological Sites**

According to records at the State Historical Society (Office of the State Archaeologist) there are presently 269 archaeological sites in Wood County. One site—Powers Bluff—is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Eight other sites are eligible to be listed on the National Register. The archaeological sites are typically relating to early tribal villages or burial grounds, such as those at Ross Lake or Powers Bluff, or from the pre-Contact period. The majority of the archaeological sites that have not been considered for application to the National Register of Historic Places, have not been evaluated in enough detail to warrant such application. (State Archaeologist, 2025)

Most of the 269 identified archaeological sites were found while completing archaeological surveys for proposed highway corridors, or for the relicensing of impoundments on the Wisconsin River. The Historical Society has emphasized that "these sites probably represent only a fraction of the sites actually present within Wood County as little systematic archaeological survey work has been undertaken." Wood County should pursue an archaeological investigation to identify important sites. Such an investigation would be educational for area residents and may uncover archaeological areas of statewide or national significance. Without an archaeological investigation, important sites stand the chance of being inadvertently destroyed by unknowing developers. (State Archaeologist, 2025)



## 3.5 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 while the County maintains many of them.

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 Wood County maintained public access points to waterbodies.

See “3.7 Local Government Facilities” for those public access points maintained by local governments.

See “3.8 State Facilities” for those public access points maintained by the State.

## 3.6 School District Facilities

Six public school districts and some private schools have additional local recreation opportunities in Wood 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 **Map 5** 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 Wood County:

#### Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools

The School District maintains:

- 1 school forest about 46 acres is adjacent to the high school in Wisconsin Rapids (see **Map 7**).
- 1 school forest about 8 acres is actually business park land.
- There is a 182 acre school forest that also is the City of Wisconsin Rapid’s wooded well fields (see **Map 7**).
- Located in the Wisconsin Rapids area:
  - 8 elementary schools (early learning center) with outdoor recreation
  - 1 middle school with outdoor recreation
  - 1 high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 9 tennis courts
  - 6 ball fields
- Located in the Rudolph area:
  - An elementary school with outdoor recreation

### **Assumption Catholic Schools – Wisconsin Rapids**

The School District maintains:

- A high school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A middle school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- Two elementary schools with outdoor recreation facilities.

### **School District of Marshfield**

The School District maintains:

- Located in the Marshfield area:
  - 5 elementary schools with outdoor recreation
  - a middle school with outdoor recreation
  - a high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 8 tennis courts
  - 2 soccer fields
  - 1 ball field
- Marshfield Senior High School Forest is about 320 acres in the Town of Rock (see **Map 5**).

### **Columbus Catholic Schools – Marshfield**

The School District maintains:

- A high school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A middle school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- An intermediate school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A primary school with outdoor recreation facilities.

### **School District of Auburndale**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Auburndale:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle/high school with outdoor recreation
  - a varsity football field & track
  - a soccer field
  - 5 ball fields
- Auburndale School Forest, about 40-acres in Auburndale (see **Map 5**).

### **Port Edwards School District**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Port Edwards:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle/high school with outdoor recreation
  - a varsity track
  - a soccer field
  - a ball field
- Port Edwards School Forest, about 40-acres in Port Edwards (see **Map 8**).

### **School District of Nekoosa**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Nekoosa:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle school with outdoor recreation
  - 1 high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 2 soccer fields
  - 5 ball fields
- NELL (Nekoosa Environmental Learning Loop), about 53-acres in Nekoosa (see **Map 8**).

### **School District of Pittsville**

The School District maintains:

- A K-12 school with the following outdoor recreation facilities in Pittsville:
  - a playground
  - a varsity football field & track
  - a soccer field
  - 2 ballfields
- Pittsville Public Schools Forest, about 137-acres in the Town of Remington (see **Map 5**).

## 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.

**Map 5** shows 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 **Appendix 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 facilities, programs, and services. This will provide future direction on how to achieve compliance with ADA requirements.

### **Proposed Projects from 2026-2030**

The projects listed may occur from 2026-2030. 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.

### **City of Wisconsin Rapids**

See the City of Wisconsin Rapids Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The City's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

**Map 7** shows Wisconsin Rapids' area outdoor recreation.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Wisconsin Rapids has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

### **City of Marshfield**

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

**Map 6** shows Marshfield area outdoor recreation.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Marshfield has its own Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.



## **City of Nekoosa (See Map 8)**

**Riverside Park** – This approximately 31-acre park is along the Wisconsin River, east of CTH 73, between about 13<sup>th</sup> St and 5<sup>th</sup> St. Park facilities include about 1 mile of Wisconsin River shoreland, open play space, wooded area, playground, ball field, band shell, 1.2 miles of paved multi-use trail with benches, artwork on park buildings, disc golf baskets (holes), restrooms, picnic areas with grills & tables, the Nekoosa Veterans Memorial, and Point Basse historical marker. Domtar owns the land which is leased by the City of Nekoosa. There is a festival area in the park that includes 3 large open-air picnic shelters, an enclosed shelter with restrooms, parking lot, and open space with electrical hook-up pedestals. This park is home to the Nekoosa GIANT Pumpkin Festival, Nekoosa Area Hometown Christmas, and other community events.

The shelters are ADA accessible, but not the restrooms. A concrete panel boat launch exists with parking for about 5 boat trailers. The transition to the boarding dock is not ADA accessible. There is an accessible fishing platform near the boat launch. Fishing is also allowed along the riverbank.

**William Kautzer Recreational Plaza** – This 12.7-acre park is located at 1002 Market St. Park facilities include open play space, 3 ball fields, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts & ice rink, 2 non-ADA accessible portable toilets, warming house, batting cage and pitching machine, and a small parking lot by the tennis courts.

**John E. Thompson Park** – This 0.3-acre park is located in downtown, across the street from 418 Market St. Park facilities include open space with shade trees, a picnic table, a bench, and a park sign. Domtar owns the land.

**Jim Freeman Memorial Boat Landing** – This 8.5-acre boat launch park shares a driveway with the wastewater treatment plant, located at 1348 Point Basse Ave, along the Wisconsin River. The boat launch has 4 concrete launch lanes, 2 ADA accessible boarding docks, 51 boat trailer parking spots, about 5 vehicle parking spots, ADA accessible restrooms, picnic tables, and a few acres of wooded and open play space.

**Point Basse Avenue Riverfront** – This approximately 4-acre park is along the Wisconsin River, south of the Nekoosa Dam on the east side of Pointe Basse Avenue/CTH AA. This location is passive open space that is available to the public. Domtar owns the land.

**Lynn Creek** – This 63.9-acre park is on the west side of the City, on the north side of Wood Avenue/STH 173. A majority of this City owned site is undeveloped wooded land. The Nekoosa Police Department shooting range is located on the property. The area along Fawn Lane is used as a sledding hill in the winter. Recreational activities may be developed in the future.

**Sacred Heart Playground** – This 3-acre park is on the west side of Vilas Ave at 7th St, that is a combination of parcels owned individually by Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Domtar, and the City of Nekoosa. The park is primarily used as the Sacred Heart School playground that is closed to the public during the school day. After school, on weekends, and in the summer, this park is open to the public. Park facilities include a playground with safety surface, open play space, soccer field, parking, and a small fenced area.

## Proposed Projects for 2026-2030

General Cost: \$\$\$\$ = high cost \$=low cost

Priority: 1=highest priority 5=lowest priority

| Riverside Parks                                                         |              |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                                                 | General Cost | Priority |
| Enhance disc golf course (designated route, signage, launch pads, etc.) | \$           | 1        |
| Restroom facility                                                       | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Plant trees by playground for shade                                     | \$           | 1        |
| Install dog waste receptacles                                           | \$           | 1        |
| Address goose waste issue                                               | \$           | 1        |
| Address water issues/flooding                                           | \$\$         | 1        |
| Expand Christmas display                                                | \$\$         | 1        |
| Install a natural surfaced multi-use trail on north side of park        | \$           | 2        |
| Upgrade lighting                                                        | \$\$         | 2        |
| Install Wi-Fi                                                           | \$\$         | 2        |
| Address shoreline erosion                                               | \$\$         | 3        |
| Improve gravel parking lot                                              | \$\$         | 3        |
| Upgrade crosswalk at 1 <sup>st</sup> St & Wilhorn Rd                    | \$\$         | 3        |
| Construct a canoe/kayak launch                                          | \$\$         | 3        |
| Create picnic shelter                                                   | \$\$         | 3        |
| Upgrade boat landing dock                                               | \$\$         | 3        |
| Make improvements to the band shell                                     | \$\$\$\$     | 4        |
| Re-pave park road                                                       | \$\$\$       | 5        |

| William Kautzer Recreational Plaza                  |              |          |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                             | General Cost | Priority |
| Install splash pad                                  | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Develop multi-use paths                             | \$\$         | 1        |
| Install Wi-Fi                                       | \$\$         | 1        |
| Address park boundary fencing                       | \$           | 2        |
| Update restrooms                                    | \$\$\$       | 2        |
| Create an additional parking lot                    | \$\$\$       | 2        |
| Add pickleball court to tennis court                | \$           | 3        |
| Create a picnic shelter                             | \$\$         | 3        |
| Restripe parking lot                                | \$           | 3        |
| Create a recreation plaza and building              | \$\$\$\$     | 4        |
| Create an educational boardwalk in the wetland area | \$\$\$       | 4        |
| Install plaza entry monuments                       | \$\$         | 5        |

| John F. Thompson Park                     |              |          |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                   | General Cost | Priority |
| Install more picnic tables                | \$           | 1        |
| Consider land acquisition                 | ?            | 1        |
| Develop a small picnic shelter            | \$\$\$       | 2        |
| Install garbage and recycling receptacles | \$           | 2        |
| Upgrade electrical in park                | \$           | 3        |

| Jim Freeman Memorial Boat Landing |              |          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                           | General Cost | Priority |
| Install a picnic shelter          | \$\$         | 1        |
| Develop 2 fishing piers           | \$\$\$       | 2        |
| Install a playground              | \$\$         | 3        |
| Upgrade the restrooms             | \$\$\$       | 4        |
| Create a campground               | \$\$\$       | 5        |
| Install a fish cleaning station   | \$\$         | 5        |

| Point Basse Avenue Riverfront                |              |          |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                      | General Cost | Priority |
| Create a paved off-street multi-use path     | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Install a canoe/kayak launch                 | \$           | 1        |
| Preserve and protect the shoreline           | \$\$\$\$     | 1        |
| Install dog waste garbage receptacles        | \$           | 1        |
| Consider land acquisition                    | ?            | 2        |
| Develop picnic areas                         | \$           | 2        |
| Install picnic shelter and restroom building | \$\$\$\$     | 3        |
| Develop fishing piers                        | \$\$\$       | 5        |

| Lynn Creek Area          |              |          |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                  | General Cost | Priority |
| Prepare park master plan | \$\$         | 1        |

| Charles and JoAnn Lester Library                  |              |          |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                           | General Cost | Priority |
| Install a small playground                        | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Create picnic areas                               | \$           | 2        |
| Install a gazebo or pergola                       | \$\$         | 2        |
| Install garbage and recycling receptacles         | \$           | 3        |
| Install benches                                   | \$           | 4        |
| Create an outdoor reading and recreation addition | \$\$\$\$     | 5        |

| Nekoosa Community Center                   |              |          |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                    | General Cost | Priority |
| Plant more trees and landscaping           | \$\$         | 1        |
| Create an outdoor wedding venue            | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Install a small playground                 | \$\$\$       | 3        |
| Create green space east of the parking lot | \$\$         | 5        |

| Nekoosa School District                                                              |              |          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                                                                              | General Cost | Priority |
| Develop paved trail system                                                           | \$\$         | 1        |
| Connect School trails to City trail system                                           | \$\$\$       | 1        |
| Improve access to Nekoosa Environmental Learning Loop (NELL) from Sunny Ridge Circle | \$\$         | 2        |
| Create a small stage                                                                 | \$\$\$       | 2        |
| Develop a pavilion                                                                   | \$\$         | 3        |
| Develop exercise stations along trail                                                | \$\$         | 3        |
| Control invasive species in the park                                                 | \$           | 4        |
| Develop athletic complex                                                             | \$\$\$\$     | 4        |
| Enhance playground equipment                                                         | \$\$\$       | 4        |
| Dredge pond                                                                          | \$\$\$       | 5        |
| Develop trail maps and interpretive signs                                            | \$           | 5        |

| Sacred Heart Playground     |              |          |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Project                     | General Cost | Priority |
| Update playground equipment | \$\$\$       | 3        |
| Install picnic shelter      | \$\$         | 4        |
| Plant trees                 | \$           | 5        |

## **City of Pittsville**

See the City of Pittsville Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The City's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Pittsville has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

## **Village of Arpin**

**Kandy Kane Park** – This 7.8-acre park is next to the Village Municipal Building. Parking access is available off of Park Lane, and at 3 parking areas off of Main Street. Park facilities include play equipment, lighted softball field, tennis/pickle ball court, volleyball court, basketball court, 8 picnic tables, 3 cooking grills, an open shelter, an enclosed shelter, restrooms, concession stand, a covered walking bridge, a pond, a gazebo, sand box, and rope climber. The shelters and restrooms are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Kandy Kane Park**

- Playground equipment updates and upgrades
- Pond dredging
- Beautification focused on tree replacement
- New signage

## **Village of Auburndale**

**Auburndale Park**– This 7.5-acre park, located at 10654 Park Ave., is surrounded by School District of Auburndale athletic fields. Park facilities include a parking lot; open play space; playground; 2 softball fields (one lighted); 2 youth ball fields tennis/pickleball court; 3 volleyball courts; basketball court; picnic tables; open shelter; enclosed shelter with kitchen, restrooms, and concession stand. There is a walking path around the entire park.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Auburndale Park**

- Expanding the walking path through the school forest and out to North Road
- Build separate pickleball courts
- New PA system for announcements during events
- Residing the shelter house
- Buying land to expand the walking path.
- New youth sports building for storage.
- Install parkwide Wi-Fi
- Plant trees for walking path
- Install new signage parkwide
- Add security cameras
- Add AC unit for shelter house
- Upgrade bleachers



## **Village of Biron**

**Biron Park** – This 2.7-acre park is located at 780 S Biron Dr. Park facilities include open play space, a parking lot, baseball field, playground on sand, lighted tennis court, volleyball court, 2 ½ basketball courts, an open picnic pavilion with about 8 picnic tables, drinking fountain, ice rink. Everything except the playground is ADA accessible.

**Gateway Park** – This 1-acre park is located at 2420 1st St N on the Wisconsin River. Park facilities include a 12-space parking lot, picnic table, viewing deck, kayak launch, fishing pier, and little library.

**Bridgewater Park** – This 16.8-acre wooded area is located at 2923 N Biron Dr. Park facilities include a gravel parking area with connecting trail to the main Bridgewater trail along the Wisconsin River, an open-covered pavilion with 4 picnic tables and power outlets, and restrooms with running water.

**Sunset Point Park** – Along the Wisconsin River on Sunset Point Drive at Bridgeview Drive sits this 0.45-acre park with about 400 feet of shoreline. Park facilities include unobstructed views of the Wisconsin River, wheelchair accessible fishing pier, public parking for 4 vehicles, and a little library. Bridgewater Trail passes through this park.

**Bridgewater Trail** – This is a 10-foot wide asphalt paved walking & biking trail. The trail begins at the east end of the Village at N 80th St and the Wisconsin River (3315 Biron Dr). There is a small parking lot just off 80th Street (5163 N 80th St). From this parking lot, the path goes west along the shores of the Wisconsin River, along Sunset Point Drive, then along N Biron Drive/Cty Rd U and continues west onto S Biron Drive. Once on S Biron Drive the path turns south down Kahoun Road for about a ½-mile, passing the Municipal Center, and then it turns west onto an off-road section through the woods towards Gateway Park at S Biron Rd (1243 S Biron Dr) and then south, connecting to the Wisconsin Rapids Trail system.

### **Boat Landings**

The Village has 2 boat landings operated by Consolidated Water Power Company (CWPCo).

The Biron Boat Landing is a small boat access landing along S Biron Drive, about 240 feet west of Kahoun Rd.

The second boat landing is located on the East end of the Village at the end of Anchor Landing Drive. This boat landing has 90 boat trailer parking spaces and 20 vehicle parking spaces, a boat washing station, and restrooms with flush toilets,

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Bridgewater Park**

- Possibly add cross-country ski trails
- Possible add hiking/biking trails

#### **Sunset Point Park**

- Upgrade landscaping
- Possibly add a second kayak launch

## **Village of Hewitt** (See Map 6)

**Hewitt Village Park** – This 2-acre park is located at 7688 McLean Dr., behind the Village Hall. Park facilities include 2 basketball courts, playground, volleyball court, 2 enclosed shelters, one of which includes a kitchen and restrooms, and parking exists for 40 vehicles. Both shelters are ADA compliant.

**Yellowstone Recreation Park** – This 14-acre park is located at 7658 Yellowstone Dr. Park facilities include 2 ball diamonds, 2 volleyball courts, play equipment, enclosed concession building that includes a kitchen, restrooms, and storage area; open picnic shelter, parking for 200 vehicles, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and trail head for Hewitt-Marsh Trail. All buildings, parking lot, and the trail are ADA compliant.

**Hewitt Marsh Trail** – This is an asphalt and gravel surfaced walking and biking trail that is about 0.7-mile long on a Village access driveway and private property. This trail connects 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets to Marshfield's walking and biking trail.

**Hewitt Lagoons** – This 10-acre parcel is southeast of wastewater treatment facility. The site is maintained in natural state and has some unpaved recreational trails.

**Hewitt Natural Area** – This 19-acre parcel is east of the wastewater treatment facility. The site is maintained in natural state and has some unpaved recreational trails.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Hewitt Village Park

- Resurface parking lot in asphalt.

#### Yellowstone Recreation Park

- Resurface parking lot in asphalt.

#### Hewitt Marsh Trail

- Reseal walking/biking trail.

## **Village of Milladore**

**Village of Milladore Park** – This 12.7-acre park is located at 722 Bradley St, and has a second parking lot off of County Rd N. Park facilities include open play space; lighted softball field; tennis court; 2 volleyball courts; basketball court; band shell; horseshoe pits; 24 picnic tables; 6 cooking grills; 2 open shelters; and an enclosed shelter with kitchen, restrooms, and concession stand. Only the restrooms are ADA compliant.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Village of Milladore Park

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **Village of Port Edwards (See Maps 7 & 8)**

**Edwards Alexander Park** – This 2.5-acre park is located at 210 2nd St. Park facilities include open play space, an open shelter adjacent to an enclosed shelter that has restrooms and a kitchen, 12 picnic tables within the shelters, 2 cooking grills next to the shelters, splash pad, horseshoe pits. Playground equipment includes adult and tot swings, teeter-totter, horizontal ladder, and hobby horse swings. All play equipment playground equipment complies with U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines. Both shelters are ADA accessible. The open and enclosed shelters with kitchen and restroom facilities are ADA compliant. Not all the playground equipment is ADA accessible.

**Ripple Creek Park** – This 22.6-acre park is located at 670 Ver Bunker Ave. Park facilities include open play space, tot lot, 2 parking lots, 3 softball fields, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, volleyball court, walking path, 12 picnic tables, 4 cooking grills, open shelter, restrooms, ice rink, warming house, toboggan/sledding hill, horseshoe pits. Developed play area consists of adult and tot swings, hobby horse swings, and a variety of wood play equipment that are in poor condition. The warming house with restrooms and the open shelter are ADA compliant. All playground equipment is ADA compliant.

**Aubey Park** – This 0.9-acre park is located at \_\_\_\_\_. Park facilities include

**Triangle Park** – This 0.7-acre park is located at 1<sup>st</sup> St and Jefferson Ave. Park facilities include open play space, and a playground.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Edwards Alexander Park

- Replace 20 year old playground equipment
- Resurface splash pad
- Repaint shelter house
- Replace 10 picnic tables

#### Ripple Creek Park

- Replace 20 year old playground equipment with new state of art equipment with rubber matting instead of sand base.
- Resurface tennis courts and add two pickle ball courts.
- Pave a 1 mile walking if trail around park.
- Purchase and install 10 new picnic tables.

#### Aubey Park

- Resurface Basketball courts.
- Add new play ground equipment.

#### Triangle Park

- Build a 15x15 shelter with 2 picnic tables

## **Village of Rudolph**

**Rudolph Community Park** – This 20.8-acre park is located at 1757 Park St. Park facilities include open play space, 2 softball fields, baseball field, 1 lighted ball field, 2 tennis courts, 3 volleyball courts, walking path, 25 picnic tables, open shelter, restrooms, concession stand, and the Dick Trickle Memorial. The open shelter and memorial are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Rudolph Community Park**

- Create a splash pad area.
- Update the park shelter area.

## **Village of Vesper**

**Cameron Park** – This 2-acre park is located 5032 Benson Ave. Park facilities include open play space, 6 picnic tables, 1 cooking grill, enclosed shelter, and restrooms. Building is ADA accessible.

**Vesper Recreation Center** – This 20-acre park is located at 6435 Cameron Ave. Park facilities include open play space, a half mile crushed granite walking path, 2 softball fields (1 lighted), 2 tennis courts, 2 volleyball courts, 1 basketball court, 12 picnic tables, 1 open shelter, 2 restroom facilities, concession stand, gazebo, Gardens, and dog park. The building and walking path are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Cameron Park**

- Full renovation of the Community Center, including bathroom upgrades and installing AC; renovation of the grill/picnic hut; and improve landscaping
- Replace lighting on the outside of the Community Center

#### **Vesper Recreation Center**

- Repairs to scorekeeper buildings
- Repair/replace cabinets in the Recreation Center, install rollup doors
- Reset/repair/replace ballpark, tennis court/basketball court fencing
- Repair tennis court/basketball court surface
- Rebuild/repair gazebo and picnic tables
- Repair/replace playground equipment, basketball hoops
- Install lighting at dog park and basketball/tennis courts
- Repair retaining walls and upgrade landscaping

## **Town of Arpin**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Arpin.

### **Town of Auburndale**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Auburndale.

### **Town of Cameron**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cameron.

### **Town of Cary**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cary.

### **Town of Cranmoor**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cranmoor.

### **Town of Dexter**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Dexter.

### **Town of Grand Rapids**

**Weslan Park** – This 2.5-acre park, located on Grassmere Drive, has a developed play area, picnic tables, softball field, tennis court, volleyball court, basketball court, and horseshoe pit. All facilities are ADA compliant.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

##### Weslan Park

- None.

### **Town of Hansen**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Hansen.



## **Town of Hiles**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Hiles.

## **Town of Lincoln**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Lincoln.

## **Town of Marshfield**

**Old Township Landfill** – This 16-acre natural area is west of Stadt Road and a portion of the Hewitt-Marsh trail crosses the property and connects to the City of Marshfield trail.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

- None.

## **Town of Milladore**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Milladore.

## **Town of Port Edwards**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Port Edwards.

## **Town of Remington**

**Babcock Community Park** – This 0.3-acre park is located next to the Town Hall in Babcock on STH 80. The park has a landscaped picnic area with 2 picnic tables, a playground, and a gazebo. Restrooms are only available when the Town Hall is open.

**Babcock Baseball Park** – This 2.3-acre park is located at the intersection of STH 80 and Taylor Ave. This park includes a baseball diamond with fence dugouts, aluminum bleachers on one side and wooden bleachers on the other side, and a scoreboard.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Babcock Community Park**

- Replace picnic tables.
- Install a restroom, or at least a dark green ADA accessible portable toilet.
- Replace the sand under the playground with 6-inches of soil planted in grass.
- Replace playground with new one.

#### Babcock Baseball Park

- Need to level the ballfield's infield.
- Install a second aluminum bleacher.
- Replace scoreboard.
- Install a restroom, or at least two dark green portable toilets (one of which will be ADA accessible).
- Create covered dugouts.

### **Town of Richfield**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Richfield.

### **Town of Rock**

**Lindsey Community Park** – This 1-acre park is located at 8413 CTH V. Park facilities include an open air picnic shelter with about 8 picnic tables, a grill next to the shelter, parking lot, play equipment, restrooms, and a veterans memorial.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

##### Lindsey Community Park

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Town of Rudolph**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Rudolph.

### **Town of Saratoga**

See the Town of Saratoga Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The Town's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The Town of Saratoga has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

## **Town of Seneca**

**Town of Seneca Park** – This 4-acre park, located on CTH Q, has a baseball field, volleyball court, 6 picnic tables, open shelter, and restrooms. All facilities are ADA compliant.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Town of Seneca Park

- Update pit toilets and shelter house.
- Update volleyball court.
- Add horseshoe pits.
- Add disc golf.
- Add pickleball courts.

## **Town of Sherry**

**Anderson Park** – This 1.6-acre park is located adjacent to the Town Hall (9285 2<sup>nd</sup> St.). The parking lot is shared between the Town Hall, the bar, and the park. Park facilities include an open play field, playground, separate playground equipment at other side of park, open air picnic shelter filled with picnic tables. This park is owned by the Sherry Volunteer Fire Department

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Anderson Park

- Replace playground equipment
- Remove trees in decline and replant with new trees.

## **Town of Sigel**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Sigel.

## **Town of Wood**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Wood.

### 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**

All wildlife areas are managed to sustain the wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses. These include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and nature study. Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for the purpose of personal consumption by the collector. Dog training or trialing (hunting dog competitions) may be allowed by permit. A limited number of properties allow additional outdoor recreation — such as camping, bicycling, horseback riding and snowmobiling — at designated locations.

The following wildlife areas in Wood County (see **Map 1**) may be owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources:

The **George W. Mead Wildlife Area** occupies more than 33,000 acres in Marathon, Portage, and Wood counties. About one tenth of the total area (3,200 acres) is located in the northeastern part of Wood County.

Nestled in the Little Eau Pleine River valley, the George W. Mead Wildlife Area encompasses over 33,000 acres of open marshes, hardwood and aspen forests and grasslands. Mead is one of the largest wildlife areas in Wisconsin, comprising the most extensive contiguous state ownership of wildlife lands. Two conifer bog state natural areas showcase the tamarack and black spruce ecosystems on the property.

Mead's diverse habitats harbor abundant wildlife species such as deer, turkey, bear, grouse, otter, beaver, muskrats, herons, prairie chickens, fox, coyote, eagles, wolves and bobcats. It is an important resting, feeding and nesting site for migrating waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds. Over 267 bird species have been documented on the property. Except for designated refuge areas, the property is open to hunting and trapping during the regular seasons.

The **Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area** occupies about 3,000 acres in Wood and Portage counties, with less than half the acreage located in the east-central part of Wood County. This area has non-native, cool season grassland and shrub-carr wetland habitat, and is managed for the Greater Prairie-chicken and other grassland dependent species.

The **Sandhill Wildlife Area** occupies about 9,150 acres of a series of gently rolling sandy ridges in the southwestern part of the County. This property boasts a unique 9-foot deer-proof fence, which creates an ideal environment for wildlife research. Special permits and restrictions are in place within the fenced area of the property; however, visitors are welcome to enter through the designated entrance gates to explore and recreate. DNR staff manage the Sandhill Wildlife Area, Wood County Wildlife Area and the Meadow Valley

Wildlife Area collectively. Together, these three Wildlife Areas are called the Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit. They make up the largest block of state-managed wildlife lands in Wisconsin. Nearly 150 square miles of public lands lie within the work unit.

The **Wood County Wildlife Area** occupies about 21,000 acres in the southwestern part of the County. This property lies within the bed of historic Glacial Lake Wisconsin, an area characterized by large expanses of wetlands interspersed with forested uplands and islands. The original vegetation consisted primarily of sedge, grasses, tamarack and black spruce in the wetlands and white and red pine forests mixed with oak on the uplands. Advancing forest and shrub growth displaced prairie openings and prairie chicken but created excellent habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. Sharp-tails prospered until the 1960s, when forest growth displaced them in favor of the more traditional wooded species, the ruffed grouse. However, remnant openings on the western portion of the area remained, providing suitable habitat for sharp-tailed grouse through to the present day.

The area lies between the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area on the south and the Sandhill Wildlife Area on the north. Collectively, these three areas are referred to as the Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit, the largest block of state-managed wildlife lands in Wisconsin. Nearly 150 square miles of public lands lie within the work unit.

In 1939, the Wisconsin Conservation Department negotiated a long-term lease with Wood County. The lease transferred management responsibility to the department for which the county received an annual lease payment. This lease dedicates the property to be managed for wildlife production and public recreation. It reflects the commitment of Wood County and the state to a sound, long-term management program.

### **State Fishery Areas**

State fishery areas have been purchased to help preserve and manage headwaters and springs that often form the biological base for stream fisheries. These lands protect and improve spawning grounds for lake fisheries and prevent private blocking of important waterways, game lands, and lakes. Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses on that parcel.

The following fishery area in Wood County (see **Map 1**) is owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources:

- ***Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area in the Town of Saratoga.***

## **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.

Each site was given a statewide identification (**No. #**) by the DNR. The Department of Natural Resources listed the following areas within Wood County:

**Hiles Wetlands SNA (No. 524)** is 561 acres within the Wood County Forest—Hiles Block.

Hiles Wetlands is a large complex of tamarack poor fen and sedge meadow, which have seen relatively little human disturbance as compared with other similar community types in this area. The wet meadow contains an abundance of blue-joint grass, manna grass, and prairie cord grass. Other species include swamp milkweed, boneset, spotted Joe-Pye-weed, northern bugleweed, sensitive fern, wool-grass, and grass-leaved goldenrod. The wilderness aspect of this site adds to its ecological significance. Hiles Wetlands is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2006.



**Hog Island Tamaracks SNA (No. 579)** is 462 acres in the Wood County Wildlife Area.

Situated within the flat, sandy bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin, Hog Island Tamaracks features a northern wet forest of tamarack and black spruce. Low sandy ridges are interspersed within the flat plain. The shrub layer is dominated by huckleberry with winterberry and mountain holly. The herb and low shrub layer is typical of this community type and includes Canada bunchberry, swamp dewberry, cinnamon fern, and tawny cotton grass. This peatland community provides habitat for numerous Species of Greatest Conservation Need found at their southern range limit including Canada warbler, Connecticut warbler, and veery. In addition several bird species with northern affinities such as hermit thrush, white-throated sparrow, yellow-rumped warbler, and Nashville warbler nest within this coniferous forest. Hog Island Tamaracks is owned by Wood County and the U.S. Government. It was established as a State Natural Area in 2008.

**Mead Conifer Bogs SNA (No. 373)** is 932 acres within the George Mead Wildlife Area.

Mead Conifer Bogs are extensive areas containing northern wet forests dominated by black spruce and tamarack. Both species are reproducing well. The center of the tract is dominated by black spruce, which is gradually replaced by larger tamaracks at the perimeter. Ground cover is a firm carpet of sphagnum moss dominated by leather-leaf and cotton grass.

Poison sumac may be locally abundant. Other species include bog birch, bog-rosemary, Labrador-tea, blueberry, bogbean, yellow blue-bead-lily, bogbean, pitcher plant, bunchberry, Canada mayflower and royal, cinnamon and interrupted fern. Alder-dogwood shrub-carr dominates on the eastern edge near the uplands. Animal life includes bog lemming, Sandhill crane, American redstart, common yellowthroat and Nashville warbler. Mead Conifer Bogs is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.

**Owl Creek Fen Savanna SNA (No. 521)** is 814 acres located in the Wood County Forest—Dexter Block.

Owl Creek Fen Savanna is a large peatland complex that supports a diversity of natural features including central poor fen, tamarack swamp, alder thicket, and upland islands of pine and oak. Of note are unique savanna-like stands of open-grown aspen situated in a wet meadow dominated by blue-joint grass. Central Poor Fens are acidic, low-nutrient wetlands dominated by sedges including *Carex oligosperma*, *C. lanuginosa*, and *C. utriculata*.

Found within the Central Sand Plains of Wisconsin, they often intergrade with Tamarack Swamp. Other characteristic species include three-way sedge, fowl manna grass, swamp candles, cotton grass, bog goldenrod, swamp milkweed, bulblet water hemlock, and blue-flag iris. Birds include sandhill cranes, purple finches, and black-and-white warbler. Owl Creek Fen Savanna is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2006.

**Powers Bluff Maple Woods SNA (No. 131)** is 60 acres located in Powers Bluff County Park.

Powers Bluff Maple Woods features a mature southern mesic forest perched on a 300-foot high monadnock, an isolated remnant hill made of erosion-resistant quartzite. The 1.6 billion-year-old bluff is round-shaped due to the durability of the quartzite, which has resisted erosion. This contrasts with other less durable sandstone bluffs in the area that have weathered parallel to their vertical planes giving them very steep slopes. Dominant trees are sugar maple, yellow birch, and bitternut hickory with scattered red oak, white ash, and basswood.

The understory is quite open and there is little herbaceous ground cover due to the low light levels. Some common species include plantain-leaved sedge, blue cohosh, maidenhair fern, and bloodroot. The forest floor is strewn with boulders and two boulder trains extend southeast and southwest from the bluff suggesting that glacial ice moved over and around the bluff from at least two different directions. On the south end are quartzite outcrops with columbine and common polypody fern. Birds found are typical mesic forest species including least flycatcher, eastern wood pewee, red-eyed vireo, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager. Powers Bluff Maple Woods is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 1976.

**Red Oak Bottoms SNA (No. 523)** is 25 acres in the Wood County Forest—Seneca Block.

Situated along Hemlock Creek, Red Oak Bottoms supports an old-growth floodplain forest, which contains an unusual abundance of red oak in the canopy. While large floodplain forests occasionally have a red oak component, it is unique to have red oak co-dominant in these situations. Along with silver maple, this one and three-quarter mile reach of the creek supports basswood and some swamp white oak. The 35-mile Hemlock Creek is a soft-water stream that flows in a southerly direction and joins the Yellow River south of Babcock. Sand, gravel, and rubble are the dominant bottom types, but boulders, bedrock, and silt are also present.

Fish include walleye, northern pike, bluegill, rock bass, bullheads, perch, and pumpkinseed. Migrating ducks use the creek and mallard, teal, and wood ducks nest along the stream. The large maple and red oaks provide important habitat for a state-threatened bird while numerous cavities offer nesting sites for prothonotary warblers and brown creepers. Red Oak Bottoms is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

**Skunk Creek Woods SNA (No. 522)** is 66 acres located in the Wood County Forest—Hiles Block.

Skunk Creek Woods features a northern dry-mesic forest situated within a large expansive peatland. Medium to large red oak and white pine dominate the canopy. Associated trees include white oak, black cherry, mountain ash, and paper birch. Yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple, and eastern hop-hornbeam are also present. Common shrubs are huckleberry, northern bush-honeysuckle, American fly-honeysuckle, maple-leaved viburnum, and sweet fern. The ground layer contains many dry-mesic associated species.

Plants noted include wild columbine, wild sarsaparilla, big-leaf aster, three-leaved goldthread, Canada bunchberry, wild strawberry, American starflower, partridgeberry, naked miterwort, round-leaved shin-leaf, rosy twisted stalk, Canada mayflower, and nodding trillium. Breeding birds include a broad-winged hawk, black-billed cuckoo, pileated woodpecker, great-crested flycatcher, yellow-throated vireo, black-

throated green warbler, pine warbler, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager. Skunk Creek Woods is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

**Yellow River Floodplain Forest SNA (No. 580)** is 86 acres located in the Sandhill Wildlife Area.

Situated along the meandering Yellow River, this mature, intact floodplain forest is dominated by silver maple with river birch, basswood, and red oak. The canopy is composed of large trees with a good mix of sizes and age classes. Protection of intact stands of bottomland forest is a high priority along this river corridor and opportunities are increasingly scarce on this landscape. A rich and diverse ground layer includes spring ephemerals such as trout lily, spring beauty, and bloodroot. Other species are nodding trillium, Virginia waterleaf, green dragon, meadow-rue, woodland phlox, marsh marigold, golden ragwort, swamp rose, false mayflower, Michigan lily, Sprengel's sedge, fox sedge, blue joint grass. This assemblage of understory plants is highly localized and relatively rare within this area. The Yellow River flows through the site and is of extremely low gradient, with many meanders, oxbows, sloughs, and ponds. This stretch of river is an important component of a highly significant riverine corridor that is threatened by intensive timber harvest and, in some areas, cranberry farm development. Birds include pileated woodpeckers, eastern phoebe, wood duck, and a state-threatened species. Yellow River Floodplain Forest is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.

### 3.9 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 2025 there are 80 acres enrolled under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in Wood 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 2025 there are about 53,943 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program in Wood County. Of that MFL acreage, there are about 5,157 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 **Appendix 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

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational facilities that are managed by the Wood County Parks and Forestry Department. Developed recreation areas that the County maintains or owns are listed and described by type:

- 4.2. County Parks & Recreation Areas
- 4.3. County Forest
- 4.4. Special Use Recreational Areas

### 4.2 County Parks & Recreation Areas

The following county parks and recreation areas are shown on **Map 2** and are maintained by the Wood County Parks and Forestry Department. Any recreation areas of the county forest that do not act as county parks are listed in **4.5 Special Use Recreational Areas**.

#### **Classification: County Parks & Recreation Areas**

**County Parks & Recreation Areas that act as county parks:** *At least 100 acres of land that is specifically set aside for active and passive recreation uses, accommodates large gatherings & special events, and provides for the individual recreation needs of county residents. County parks and recreation areas 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. County parks and recreation areas 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. (See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)*

See the following pages for county park & recreation area descriptions. See county parks & recreation areas on **Map 2**.

# Wood County Cera Park

About 54 acres

205 State Highway 66, Rudolph, WI (Town of Rudolph)

Wood County Cera Park is a 54-acre park on the Wisconsin River. On January 1, 2025, Wood County Parks and Forestry Department entered into a lease agreement with Consolidated Water Power Company (CWPCo) to begin managing Cera Park.

## Inventory:

Non-Electric Campsites (6)

Electric Campsites (59)

Waterfront Campsites

Restroom & Shower Facilities

Dump Station & Potable Water

Boat Landing

Boat/Fishing Docks (9)

Picnic Areas

Playgrounds

Mini Golf Course

Enclosed Shelters (2)

Basketball Courts

Sand Volleyball

Softball/Baseball Field

Wi-Fi offered thru Solarus



Pictures from Consolidated Water Power Company staff.







# Dexter County Park

About 930 acres

8220 State Highway 54, Pittsville, WI (Town of Dexter)

Dexter Park is about 930-acres located fully within the approximately 1,000-acre Dexter Block of the Wood County Forest. Located within Dexter Park, Lake Dexter is 298-acres with a maximum depth of 17 feet that was created in 1962 by damming the Yellow River. About 80-acres of the park includes a 109-site campground. Within the campground area is a small concrete boat launch; about 400 feet south is a fishing pier with boat mooring; and about 400 feet further south is another fishing pier with boat mooring. Three group camping sites are located south of the main campground. Ten ATV campsites are located south of the group camping sites. The approximately 136-acre park to the south of the campground features an open shelter, playground, beach with bath house and restrooms, and a sand volleyball court. Hiking trails loop throughout the campground and extend north of the campground.

*Dexter Hiking/Biking Trails* – Loops include 1.75 miles (asphalt / natural surface), 3.75 miles (asphalt / natural surface), and 5.25 miles (asphalt / natural surface). These trails are about 7-feet wide.

On the southeast corner of the lake is a 31-acre peninsula accessible on Town Hall Road, a loop road off of STH 80. Facilities on this peninsula include a concrete boat launch, accessible boat boarding dock, a boat wash station, fish cleaning house, and an enclosed rentable building,

On the northeast shore of Lake Dexter is a 70-acre peninsula accessible on Lake Road, a loop road off of STH 80. Facilities on this peninsula include 3 restrooms and a 1-mile double loop sand trail that is 9-feet wide.

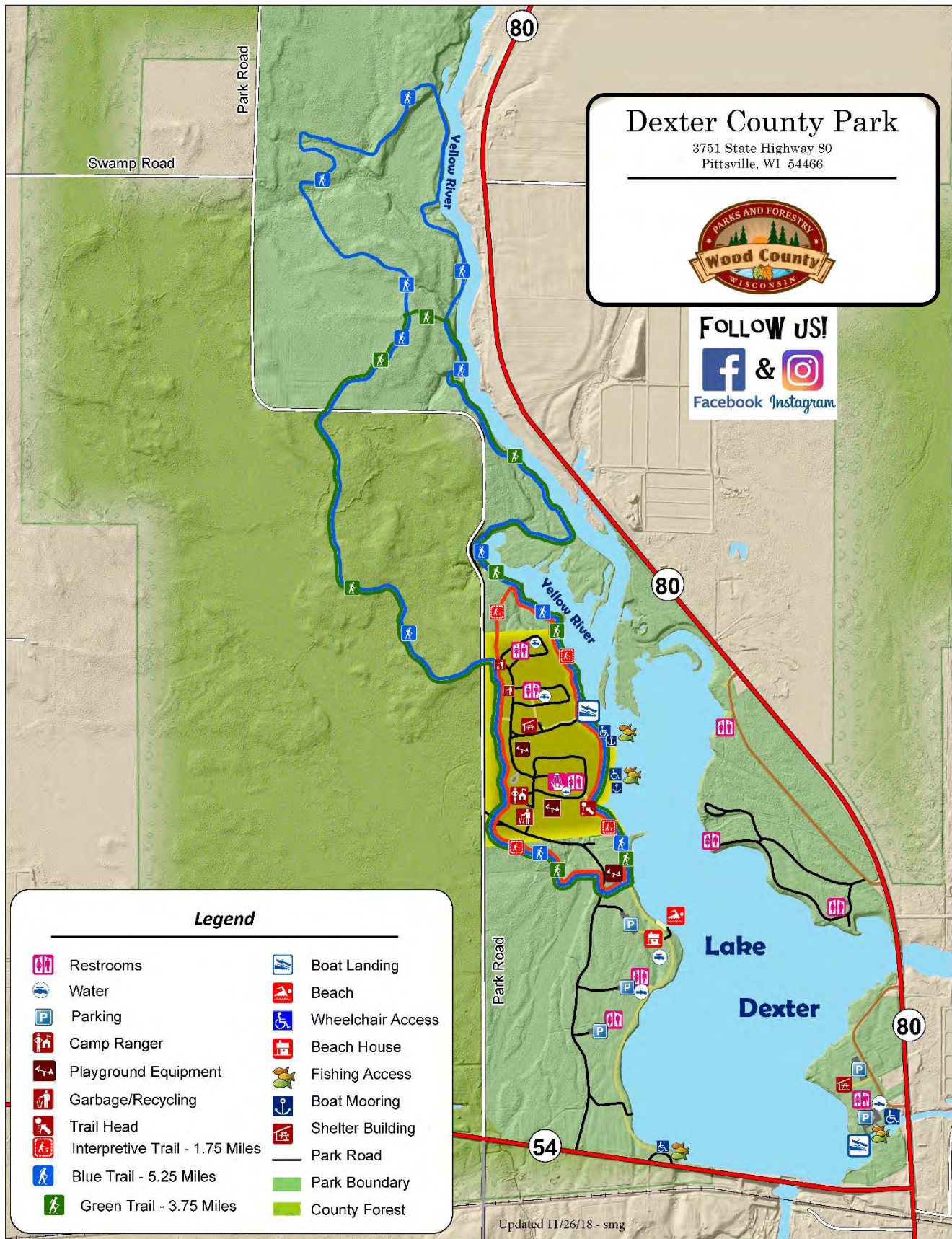
A wayside park, within Dexter Park, has a boulder lined loop gravel driveway off of STH 54 on the southwest corner of Lake Dexter. Facilities include gravel parking, a historic log, a covered picnic table, a bench along Lake Dexter, and an accessible fishing platform.

## Inventory:

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Non-Electric Campsites (3)   | Sand Volleyball Court   |
| Electric Campsites (103)     | Restroom Facilities     |
| Waterfront Campsites (2)     | Drinking Fountains      |
| Full Hookup Campsites (4)    | Picnic Areas            |
| ATV Campsites (10)           | Playgrounds             |
| Group Campsites (3)          | Lake Dexter (298 acres) |
| Accessible Campsites (3)     | Swimming Beach          |
| Accessible Fishing Pier      | Boat Landings (2)       |
| Laundry Facilities           | Fish Cleaning Stations  |
| Restroom & Shower Facilities | Hiking/Biking Trails    |
| Dump Station & Potable Water | Hunting (certain areas) |
| Enclosed Shelter             | Wildlife Observation    |
| Open Shelter                 |                         |









# Nepco Lake County Park

About 125 acres

1410 Griffith Ave., Wisconsin Rapids, WI (Village of Port Edwards)

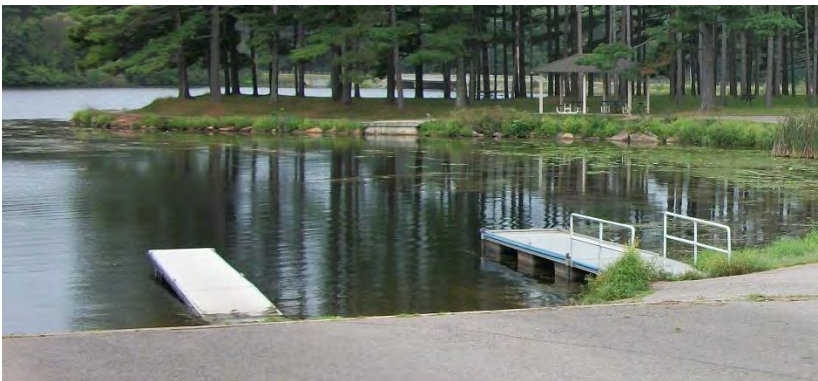
In 1977, this 125-acre park was donated by Nekoosa Papers, Inc. to be used for public outdoor recreation. This park is located on the north side of 496-acre Nepco Lake. The park provides the only public boat landing available on the lake. The park features just over 1-mile of shoreline, which provides ample opportunities to shore fish. Some other highlights include a beach area, playground, accessible fishing pier, and an enclosed shelter with heating and air conditioning that is open to rent all year round. One of the most popular attractions at the park includes all of the available trails. There are several loop trails totaling 4.5 miles that are used by many for hiking and cross-country skiing. Additionally, there are over 5 miles of single-track trails used for bicycling and snowshoeing. Wood County has partnered with Consolidated Musky Club on several occasions to stock musky in Nepco Lake.

## Inventory:

496-acre Nepco Lake  
Swimming Beach  
Boat Landing  
Boat Docks (2)

About 4.5-miles Hiking & X-C skiing trails  
5-miles Single Track Bike/Snowshoe Trails  
Trail Pass Registration Station  
Picnic Areas

Enclosed Shelter Building (reservable)  
Open Shelter  
Playground



Source: Wood County Parks & Forestry







# North Wood County Park

About 167 acres

7500 Park Lane, Arpin, WI (Town of Richfield)

The Yellow River traverses North Wood County Park. Two small dams create Lake Kaunewinne (5 acres) and Lake Manakiki (11 acres), providing scenic beauty throughout the park. One of the main attractions of the park is the 225-foot suspension bridge that spans the river. The Yellow River and both lakes provide ample shore fishing opportunities. There are a total of 99 campsites in North Park. Some of the amenities at the campground include: electrical hookups, shower & laundry facilities, a dump station (fee for non-registered campers), and fresh water are available for registered campers. Other attractions include disc golf, a stone enclosed shelter, beach area, bathhouse, and scenic walking trails along the river.

## Inventory:

Non-Electric Campsites (23)

Electric Campsites (76)

Waterfront Campsites (5)

Accessible Campsites (2)

Group Campsite

Laundry Facilities

Restroom & Shower Facilities

Dump Station & Potable Water

Suspension Bridge

Stone Shelter Building (Reservable)

Open Shelters (2)

Playgrounds (3)

Dams (2)

Sand Volleyball Courts (2)

18-hole Disk Golf Course

Stone Bathhouse & Restroom

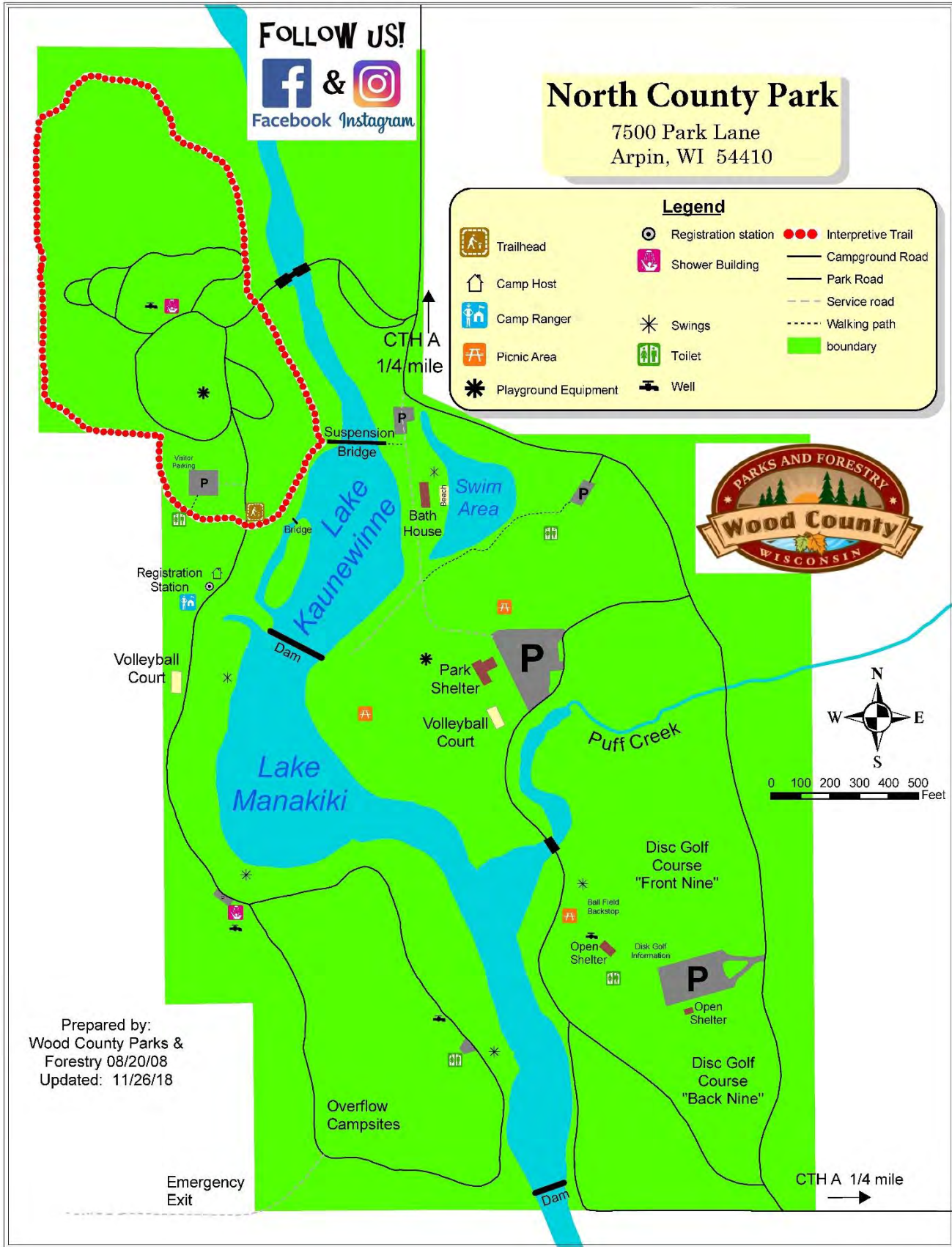
Swimming Beach

Picnic Areas with tables and grills

Hiking Trails



Source: Wood County Parks & Forestry





# Powers Bluff County Park

About 382 acres

6990 Bluff Drive, Arpin, WI (Town of Arpin)

Powers Bluff is a worn down peak of an ancient mountain range which once covered northern Wisconsin. It is comprised almost entirely of solid quartzite, and the highest point of elevation in Wood County.

## Inventory:

Snow Tubing Hill (4 runs)

Downhill Skiing (3 runs)

Tow Lifts (3)

Skiing/X-C Trail (2.5 mi.)

Snowmobile Trail (1.3 mi.)

Nature Trail (1.5 mi.)

3-miles Hiking, Biking, Snowshoeing, & X-C skiing trails

5-miles Single Track Bike/Snowshoe Trails

Stone Shelter Building

➤ Restrooms

➤ Drinking Water

➤ Fireplace (winter only)

➤ Concessions (winter only)

Picnic Areas/Tables/Grills

Play equipment

2 parking lots off of CTH N.

Native American Burial

Grounds & Dance Rings

Historical Markers

Archery hunting allowed

within 223 acres of new property off CTH N.



Winter activities include: downhill skiing, tubing (tubes provided), snowboarding, cross-country skiing, snowmobile access, and wooded areas for snowshoeing.

A two-story stone shelter building includes a fireplace, restrooms, and concessions.

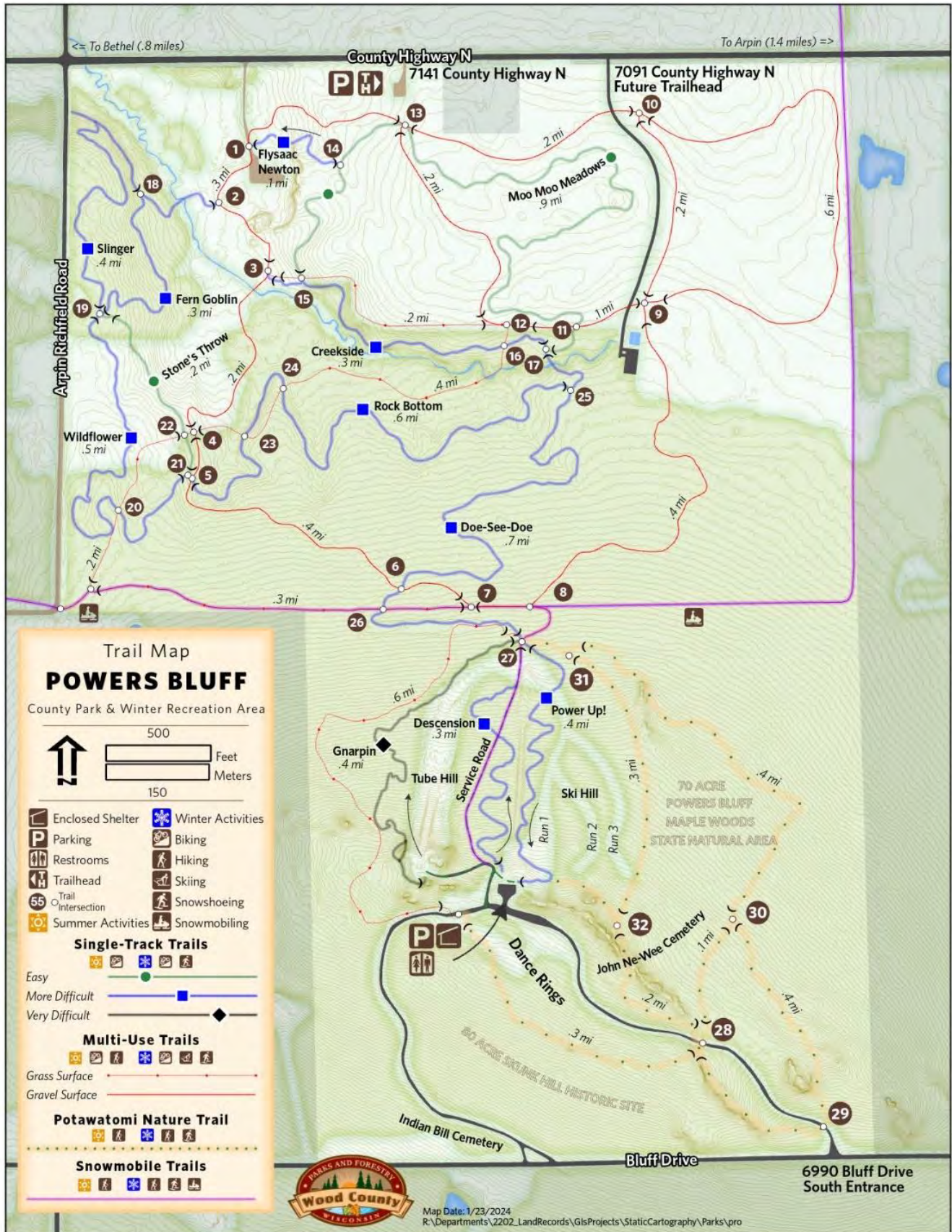


70 acres of the park is a designated State Natural Area (SNA) – **Powers Bluff Maple Woods SNA (No. 131)**. A 1.5 mile nature trail winds through the SNA, which was designated a State Natural Area in 1976.



The south 80 acres of the park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Native American Cultural Sensitivity Area with preserved Native American dance rings, and burial grounds.

In 2012, Wood County acquired 223 acres north of the snow tubing & downhill skiing location. This area will be developed in the future for recreational activities. See [Powers Bluff County Park Concept Plan](#) in **Appendix H**.





# South Wood County Park

About 332 acres    6411 South Park Road, Wisconsin Rapids, WI (Town of Grand Rapids)

Lake Wazeecha is the Native American name that means "Lake of the Land of the Pines."

## Inventory:

|                              |                                     |                                    |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Non-Electric Campsites (8)   | Boat Landing (2 lanes, concrete)    | White Sands Swimming Beach         |
| Electric Campsites (66)      | Boat Wash Station                   | Red Sands Swimming Beach           |
| Waterfront Campsites (8)     | Boat/Fishing Docks                  | Bleachers for State Water Ski Show |
| Accessible Campsite (1)      | Picnic Areas with tables and grills | Ski Show Historical Marker         |
| Accessible Fishing Dock      | Playgrounds                         | Enclosed Shelter                   |
| Restroom & Shower Facilities | 12-hole Disk Golf Course            | Open Shelters (4)                  |
| Dump Station & Potable Water |                                     | Storm Shelter                      |

South Wood County Park is 332-acres located around 148-acre Lake Wazeecha. There is a 4-mile trail encompassing the lake. This multi-use trail is mostly paved, and features community walk/run events annually. Trail users can enjoy scenic views throughout the year. South Wood County Park Campground is located on the south side of the lake. This campground hosts 73 campsites. The campground has shower facilities available to users. Lake Wazeecha is a great place for water skiing, fishing, paddle boarding, canoeing, tubing, and other water sport activities.

There are numerous small sandy beaches that are perfect for parking a boat and having a picnic. There are plentiful fishing opportunities by boat and shoreline. The park hosts the State Water Ski Show Tournament, held each July at Red Sands Beach. South Wood County Park is surrounded by suburban neighborhoods providing outdoor recreations opportunities within walking distance. Some other highlights of the park include: Willow Run Disc Golf Course, two beaches, six reservable shelters, a boat launch, and numerous picnic areas.





## 4.3 County Forest

The Wood County Forest has 37,822 acres of land. This land provides public access for various types of outdoor recreation. There are several miles of county forest roads to enhance access to these facilities.

### 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.

Wood 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 Wood County Parks & Forestry Office. Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days without a permit.

### **Multi-Use Trails**

All open paths and roads in the Wood County Forest are open to walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing.

*Richfield 360 Trails* – These trails total about 8 miles of roughly 7-foot wide mowed clover that are open all year round. In winter, these trails are groomed for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat tire biking. A trail pass is required in winter. Outside of winter, these trails are open for walking, fat tire biking, and horseback riding.

*Dexter Park Walking Trails & Nature Trail* – These trails total about 10.75 miles of roughly 7-foot wide mowed clover that are open all year round for walking, fat tire biking, and horseback riding. These trails are not groomed for cross country skiing, and no trail pass is required.

### **Equestrian Trails**

All portions of the Wood County Forest are open to horseback riding except: 1) within developed areas of Dexter Park, 2) ski trails at Richfield 360 parcel when groomed in winter, and 3) locations marked with signs closing an area.

### Snowmobile Trails

Wood County has approximately 285 miles of established public snowmobile trails: 271 miles are **state-funded** and 13.6 miles are **club-funded**, non-sponsored snowmobile trails. **Map 3** shows the location of all snowmobile trails, but there are also numerous road routes available for snowmobiling throughout the County. The state-funded trails sponsored by Wood County Parks & Forestry are maintained by the member clubs of the Wood County Snowmobile Council. The Council is comprised of 7 snowmobile clubs that meet monthly during the snowmobile season to provide continuous input to the County about the future direction of the County's snowmobile program.



### **ATV/UTV Trails**

Wood County sponsors 10.6 miles of state funded All Terrain Vehicle (ATV)/Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) trails. In addition to the 10.6 miles of state funded off-road trails, there are several miles of road routes. **Map 3** shows the location of all ATV/UTV trails throughout the County. The map in **Appendix F** shows what communities have opened their roads to ATV/UTV traffic.

The state funded ATV/UTV trails in Wood County are as follows:

- **Hazelnut Trail** is 4.1 miles long running from STH 173 to McKeel Road.
- **Kimball Connector Trail** is 1 mile long running from the ATV Intensive Use Area to Kimball Road.
- **Hay Creek-Peterson Road Trail** is 4 miles long and runs from Hay Creek Road to Peterson Road.
- **Range Road Connector** is 1.5 miles long running from STH 54 to Range Road.

See **ATV Intensive Use Area** under **4.5 Special Use Recreational Areas**.

## **4.4 Special Use Recreational Areas**

Special use recreational areas are intensively used spaces in the county forest that do not act as county parks. A fairly high degree of public use is expected in these areas, so there will be developed trails or facilities created for such uses. Any recreational areas of the county forest that act as county parks are listed in **4.3 County Parks & Recreational Areas**.

### **Classification: Special Use Facility**

***Special Use Facilities*** are often created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or unique use not classified elsewhere. Activities allowed and size requirements are only based upon what the use is and how much buffer space is needed from adjoining land uses. **(See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)**

The following properties are shown on **Map 2** and are maintained by the Wood County Parks and Forestry Department:

- ATV Intensive Use Area
- Richfield 360 County Forest
- Rifle Range

*See next page for descriptions.*

# ATV Intensive Use Area

About 400 acres      4415 State Highway 54, Wisconsin Rapids, WI (Town of Cranmoor)

The Wood County ATV Intensive Use Area is located 3 miles west of Port Edwards on State Highway 54. The park provides a central trailhead location to access ATV/UTV trails, snowmobile trails, and routes in Wood County and adjacent counties. The 400-acre area includes 10 miles of ATV trails, restroom facilities, a wash down station, loading/unloading ramp, playground equipment, open shelter, and an enclosed shelter. The park is open year-round with the exception of gun deer hunting season. This area offers several loop trails that have varying terrain and conditions. It is recommended if you visit the ATV Intensive Use Area to have a cell phone on you, to ride with a buddy, and to have a winch on your machine. It is a very “intensive use area.”

## Inventory:

10 miles of ATV trails  
Paved parking lot  
Loading/unloading ramp  
ATV wash station

Enclosed shelter (reservable)  
➤ Restrooms  
➤ Wood stove

Small open shelter with grill  
Picnic area  
Playground

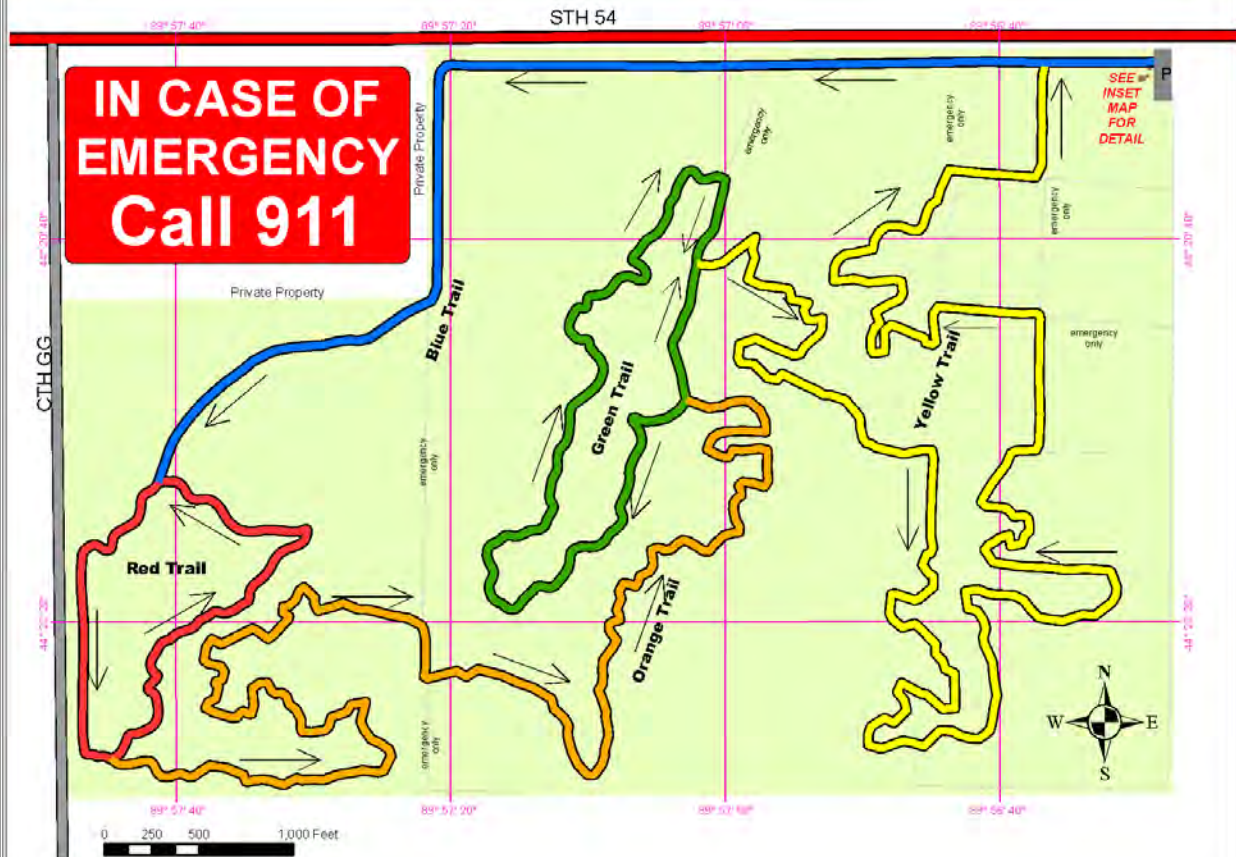


Source: Wood County Parks & Forestry



# Wood County ATV Intensive Use Area

4415 State Highway 54  
Port Edwards, WI 54469



Inset Map



Updated November, 2018

# Richfield 360 County Forest

About 360 acres

8183 Heggelund Lane, Marshfield, WI (Town of Richfield)

Richfield 360 Area is located 7 miles north of State Highway 73 and State Highway 80 on County Highway A. This 360-acre area has wilderness camping with 7 primitive campsites and is open year-round. The park features 8 miles of nature & cross-country ski trails on gently rolling lands along Puff Creek. The ski trails are broken down into 1, 2, and 5 mile loops. These trails are winter groomed for ski, bike, and snowshoe. The Wood County snowmobile trail also crosses through the southern portion of the park. Horseback riding is another activity that can be enjoyed at Richfield 360 when there is no snow. This property is part of the County Forest Program and is often open for hunting.

## Inventory:

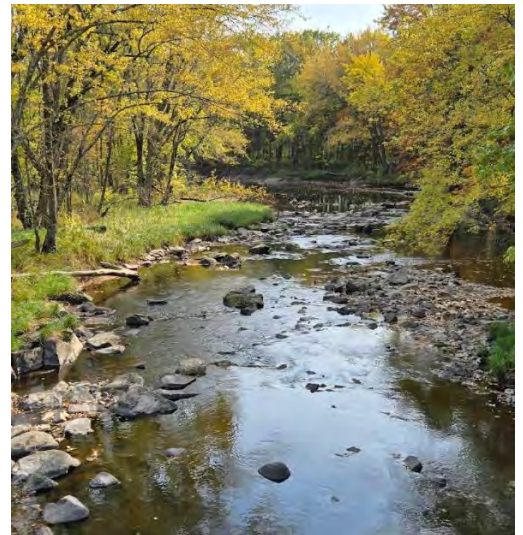
Hiking/Biking/Cross-Country Trails  
Horseback Riding  
Trailhead & Trail Pass Registration Station

Primitive Campsites (7)  
Vault Toilet  
Puff Creek

Hunting  
Wildlife Observation

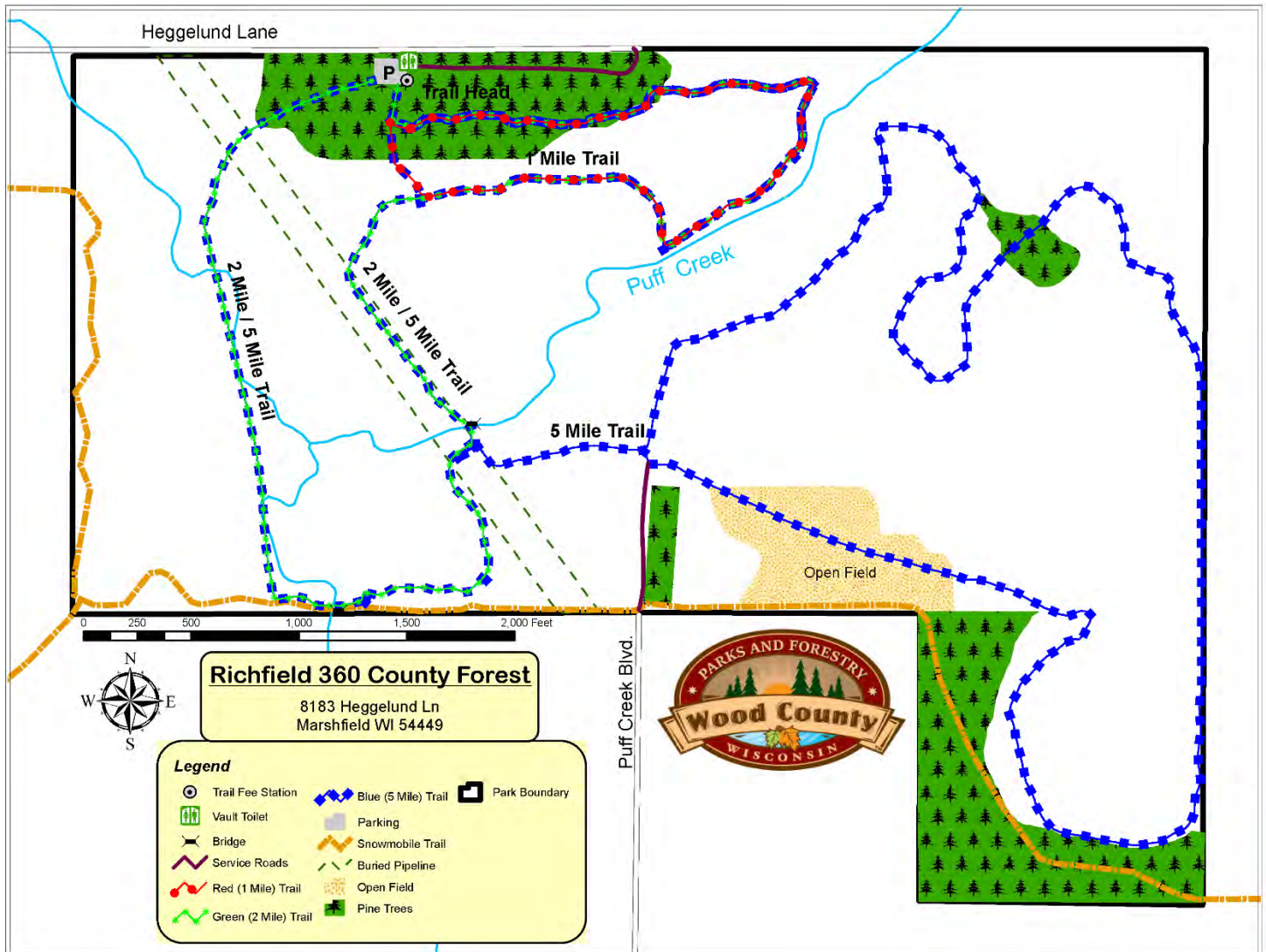


Source: John Drachenberg on Google



Source: Kevin Fuller on Google







# Rifle Range

About 9 acres

3705 Marsh Rd., Wisconsin Rapids, WI (Town of Seneca)

The Wood County Rifle Range is 9-acres and open year-round from sunrise to sunset. The shooting range is free of charge. Eight shooting stations are available ranging from 25 yards out to 100 yards. There are two 100-yard shooting stations, two 50-yard shooting stations, and four 25-yard shooting stations. Each shooting station is equipped with an ambidextrous shooting bench. There is no range master, and users must provide their own targets (cardboard and paper only). The shooting range is in the Seneca Block of the Wood County Forest. Additionally, the range features a large gravel parking lot, gravel path to all shooting stations, and trash receptacles to dispose of targets and shell casings.

## Inventory:

Shooting Benches  
Range Backstop  
No Range Master  
No Range Fees

25-yard Shooting Stations  
50-yard Shooting Stations  
100-yard Shooting Stations

Gravel Parking Lot  
Gravel Paths  
Trash Receptacles



Source: Wood County Parks & Forestry

# Wood County Rifle Range Area

3705 Marsh Road, WI Rapids, WI 54495

3.5 miles West of Wisconsin Rapids



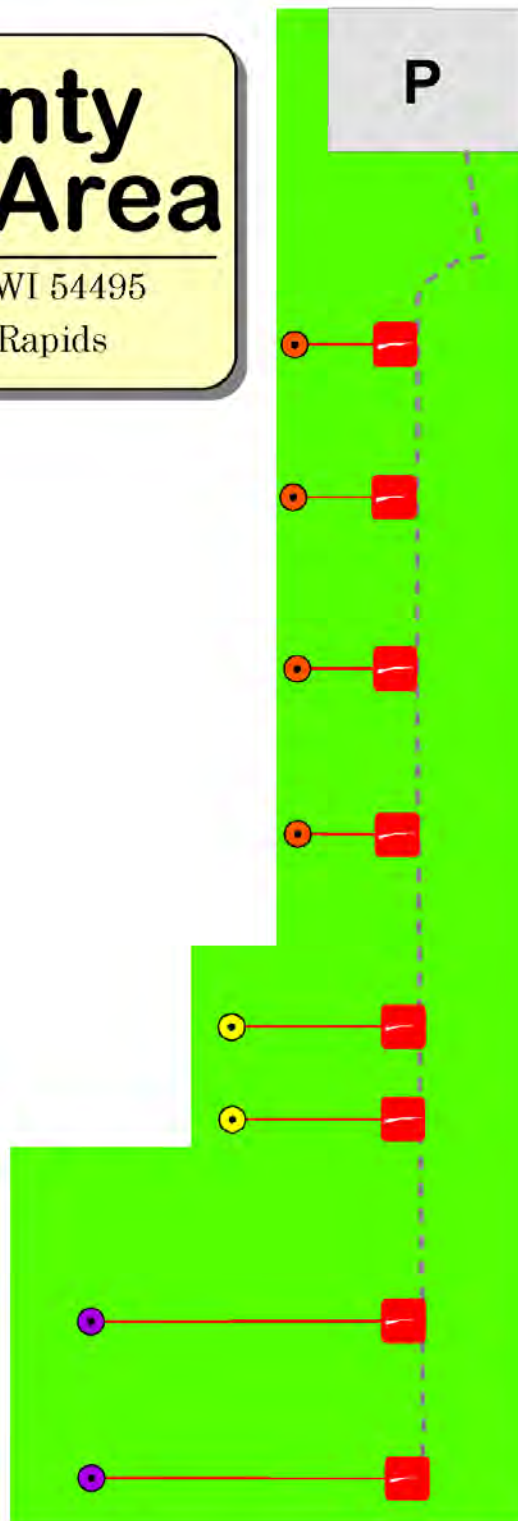
The Rifle Range is open year round from sunrise to sunset. There are eight shooting stations available. No fee is required. There is no range master so you must bring your own targets.

**PLEASE CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF!**

**Cardboard Targets Only. Please observe the posted rules.**



Prepared by: Wood County  
Land Information Office  
2/24/2014  
Updated 3/20/18 by  
Parks & Forestry



0 75 150 225 300 Feet

# Chapter 5:

## OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

Outdoor recreational needs within Wood 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. A park standards analysis identifies how each standard was applied to County facilities. A summary exists of the outdoor recreational needs in Wisconsin's Central Sands region and an overview shows how Wood County accommodates some of the most popular outdoor activities. These assessments provide valuable insights into current recreational offerings and helps identify opportunities for future improvements in Wood County.

### 5.2 Public Participation

#### Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, Wood County Parks and Forestry 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 late winter 2024-2025, this survey was sent out for customer feedback. Wood County Parks and Forestry advertised the survey on Facebook, sent a press release to CVB's, chambers, news outlets – print, radio, TV; schools; volunteer clubs; and adjoining county park and recreation departments. An email was also sent to all Wood County staff and Board members. NCWRPC mailed or emailed survey notices to every local government in Wood County.

All local governments in Wood County were mailed or emailed survey notices by NCWRPC. Marshfield added the survey link to their homepage, Facebook, and in the weekly City newsletter. Wisconsin Rapids also added the survey link to their Facebook page.

The survey was open initially for 3 weeks to get the public's sentiment on what CERA Park should be called. The survey remained open for another week and an additional 13 responses came in that final week.

We received **584 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. 75% of respondents who began the survey also finished the survey. This is a good completion rate.

Answered: 438 Skipped: 146

About 75% of respondents live in Wood County, and 25% do not or did not answer. Most municipalities (31 of 34) were represented with about 26% coming from Wisconsin Rapids, about 14% from Town of Grand Rapids, 10% from Marshfield, and 8% not living in Wood County.



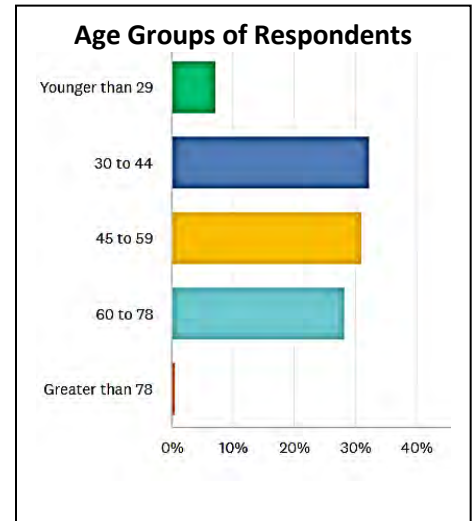
Answered: 437 Skipped: 147

About 37% of respondents were male, and about 60% were female, with 3% preferring not to answer.

Answered: 437 Skipped: 147

Respondents came from all age groups, with a strong showing of at least 25% in the 30 to 44 (Millennials), 45 to 59 (Gen X), and 60 to 78 (Baby Boomers) groups.

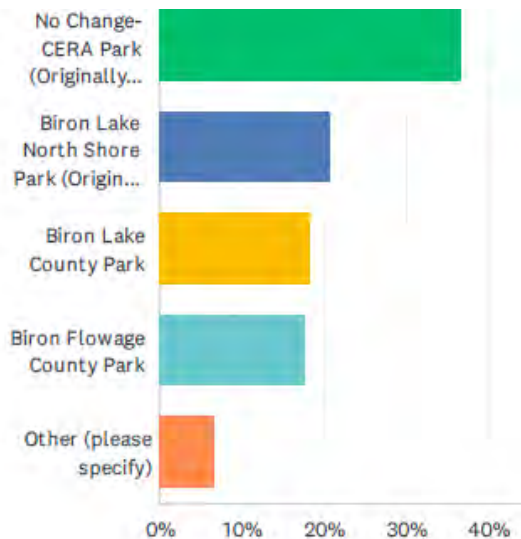
Through an IP address analysis of those who took the survey it appears that 36 IP addresses are duplicated, which could mean that a husband and wife both took the survey. 3 IP addresses had 3 responses, 1 IP had 4 responses, 1 IP had 5 responses, and 1 IP had 6 responses. 1 IP address had 103 responses, which may be people possibly taking the survey from their Wood County computer after they got an email. 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 Parks & Trails Survey**

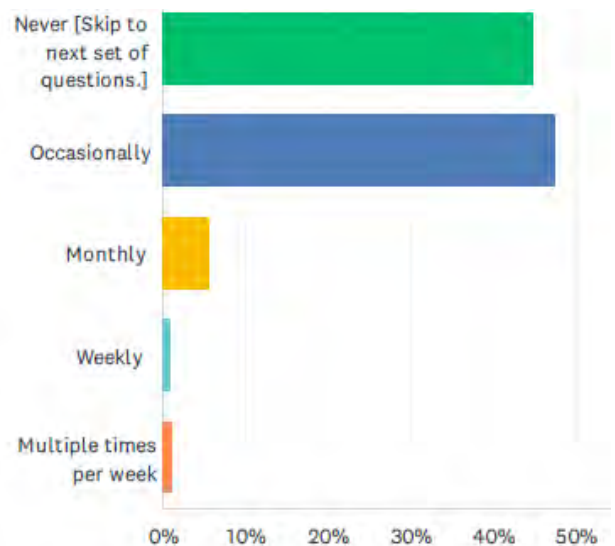
**Q1. Wood County is considering renaming CERA Park. Please select one of the following options:**

Answered: 550 Skipped: 34



**Q2. How often do you use CERA Park or Campground?**

Answered: 584 Skipped: 0

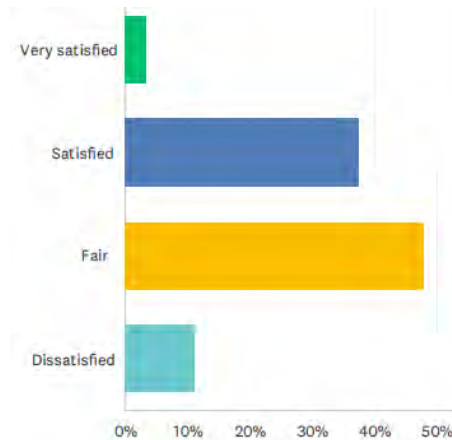




***Campground questions follow these general questions...***

**Q3. Rate your overall satisfaction with CERA Park:**

Answered: 296 Skipped: 288



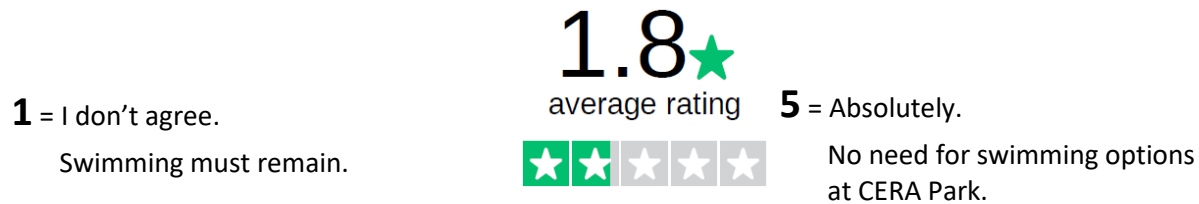
**Q4. Rate how strongly you would like to keep or improve the following amenities at CERA Park: (Not the campground area.):**

Answered: 294 Skipped: 290

|                                       | 1 (LOW PRIORITY) | 2            | 3            | 4            | 5 (HIGH PRIORITY) | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------|
| Boat docks (Boat launch will remain.) | 9.22%<br>27      | 10.24%<br>30 | 19.45%<br>57 | 22.53%<br>66 | 38.57%<br>113     | 293   |
| Shelterhouses (small & large)         | 3.08%<br>9       | 6.16%<br>18  | 26.37%<br>77 | 24.66%<br>72 | 39.73%<br>116     | 292   |
| Mini Golf course                      | 10.62%<br>31     | 7.19%<br>21  | 23.97%<br>70 | 26.71%<br>78 | 31.51%<br>92      | 292   |
| Volleyball courts                     | 18.56%<br>54     | 18.90%<br>55 | 30.24%<br>88 | 21.99%<br>64 | 10.31%<br>30      | 291   |
| Basketball courts                     | 18.97%<br>55     | 16.90%<br>49 | 33.45%<br>97 | 18.97%<br>55 | 11.72%<br>34      | 290   |
| Ball Diamond                          | 19.31%<br>56     | 17.59%<br>51 | 33.10%<br>96 | 17.93%<br>52 | 12.07%<br>35      | 290   |

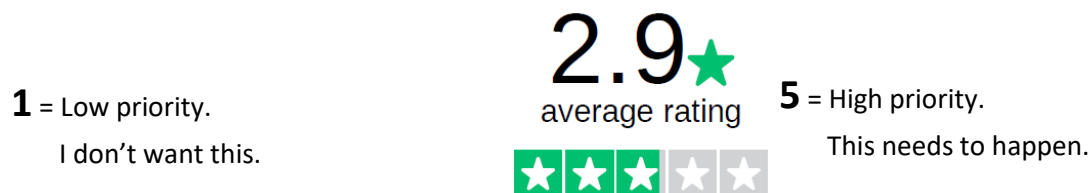
**Q5. No need for swimming option at CERA Park.**

Answered: 290 Skipped: 294



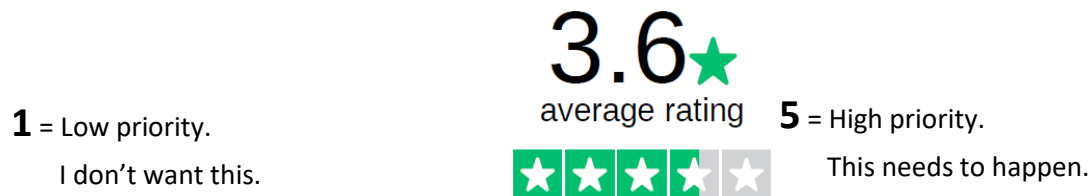
**Q6. Develop a Splash Pad at CERA Park**

Answered: 283 Skipped: 301



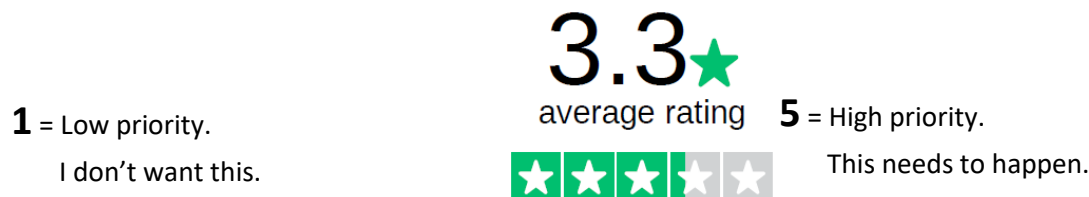
**Q7. Create a beach on Wisconsin River at CERA Park. (Area is not in main river channel.)**

Answered: 290 Skipped: 294



**Q8. Build a swimming pond (not concrete) at CERA Park that looks more natural with a sand beach. (NOT on the Wisconsin River.)**

Answered: 293 Skipped: 291

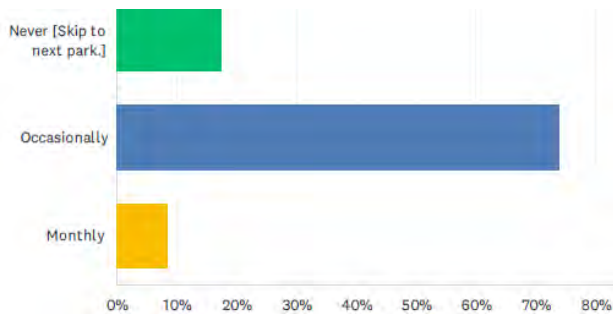


**Q9 (Optional) Any other comments about CERA Park?**

**Note: 66 respondents made comments.**

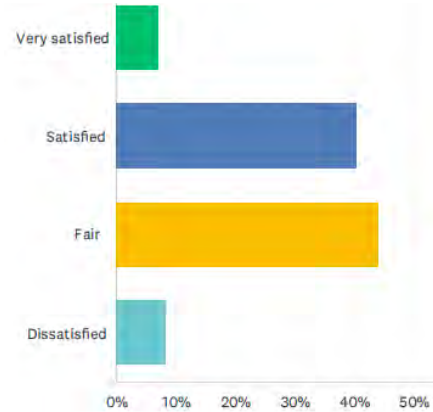
**Q10. How often do you use CERA Park Campground?**

*Answered: 296 Skipped: 288*



**Q11. Rate your overall satisfaction with CERA Park Campground:**

*Answered: 229 Skipped: 355*



**Q12. For your most recent visit to CERA Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?**

*Answered: 213 Skipped: 371*

- 1 night 12 responses
- 2 nights 97 responses
- 3 nights 57 responses
- 4 nights 13 responses
- 5-6 nights 10 responses
- 7 or more nights 14 responses

**Q13. How many times a year do you camp at CERA Park Campground?**

*Answered: 200 Skipped: 371*

- Once (81 responses)
- Twice (49 responses)
- 3 times (40 responses)
- 4 times (11 responses)
- 5 times (8 responses)
- More than 5 times (6 response)

**Q14. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at CERA Park Campground:***Answered: 218 Skipped: 366*

|                                         | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE. | POOR         | FAIR          | GOOD         | VERY GOOD   | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Picnic Tables & Fire Rings at campsites | 2.30%<br>5               | 7.83%<br>17  | 40.09%<br>87  | 42.40%<br>92 | 7.37%<br>16 | 217   |
| Wilderness Camping Area                 | 40.28%<br>87             | 7.41%<br>16  | 25.93%<br>56  | 23.61%<br>51 | 2.78%<br>6  | 216   |
| Restrooms & Showers                     | 5.56%<br>12              | 40.74%<br>88 | 38.89%<br>84  | 14.35%<br>31 | 0.46%<br>1  | 216   |
| Dump Station                            | 20.19%<br>43             | 6.57%<br>14  | 43.66%<br>93  | 27.70%<br>59 | 1.88%<br>4  | 213   |
| Playground                              | 8.80%<br>19              | 16.67%<br>36 | 41.67%<br>90  | 28.70%<br>62 | 4.17%<br>9  | 216   |
| Firewood availability                   | 21.86%<br>47             | 13.02%<br>28 | 39.53%<br>85  | 21.40%<br>46 | 4.19%<br>9  | 215   |
| Reservation Process                     | 9.86%<br>21              | 14.08%<br>30 | 36.62%<br>78  | 34.27%<br>73 | 5.16%<br>11 | 213   |
| Campsite fees                           | 6.51%<br>14              | 18.14%<br>39 | 48.37%<br>104 | 22.79%<br>49 | 4.19%<br>9  | 215   |
| Customer Service                        | 14.69%<br>31             | 22.75%<br>48 | 39.81%<br>84  | 18.96%<br>40 | 3.79%<br>8  | 211   |

**Q15. (Optional) Any other comments about CERA Park Campground?****Note: 52 respondents made comments.****Q16. Which recreational activities did you participate in during 2024?***Answered: 492 Skipped: 92*

1. Walking / Hiking 80% of responses
2. Swimming 54% of responses
3. Events / Festivals / Fairs 54% of responses
4. Fishing 53% of responses
5. Camping (RV) 46% of responses
6. Boating 45% of responses



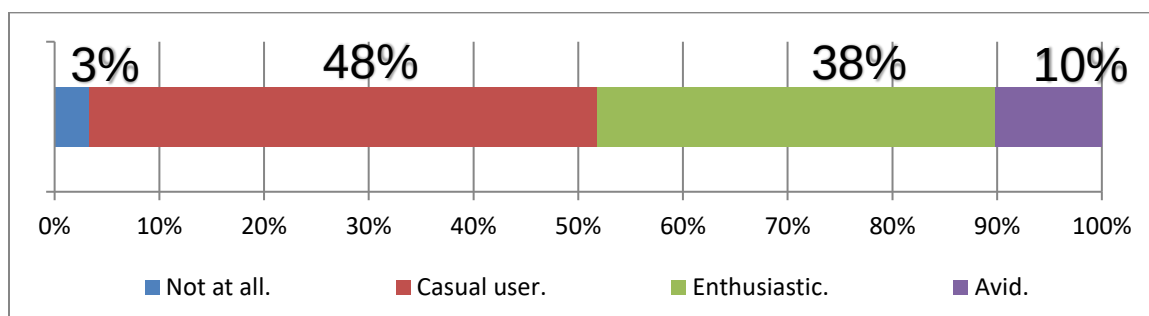
**Q17. What potential outdoor recreational opportunities should be developed in Wood County?**

Answered: 152 Skipped: 432

- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1. Walking / Hiking trails</b> | <b>42 responses</b>       |
| <b>2. Bicycling trails</b>        | <b>26 total responses</b> |
| <b>3. Pickleball</b>              | <b>16 responses</b>       |
| <b>4. ATV/UTV routes/trails</b>   | <b>16 responses</b>       |
| <b>5. Swimming / beach access</b> | <b>16 responses</b>       |

**Q18. What type of water enthusiast are you?**

Answered: 481 Skipped: 103



**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.)

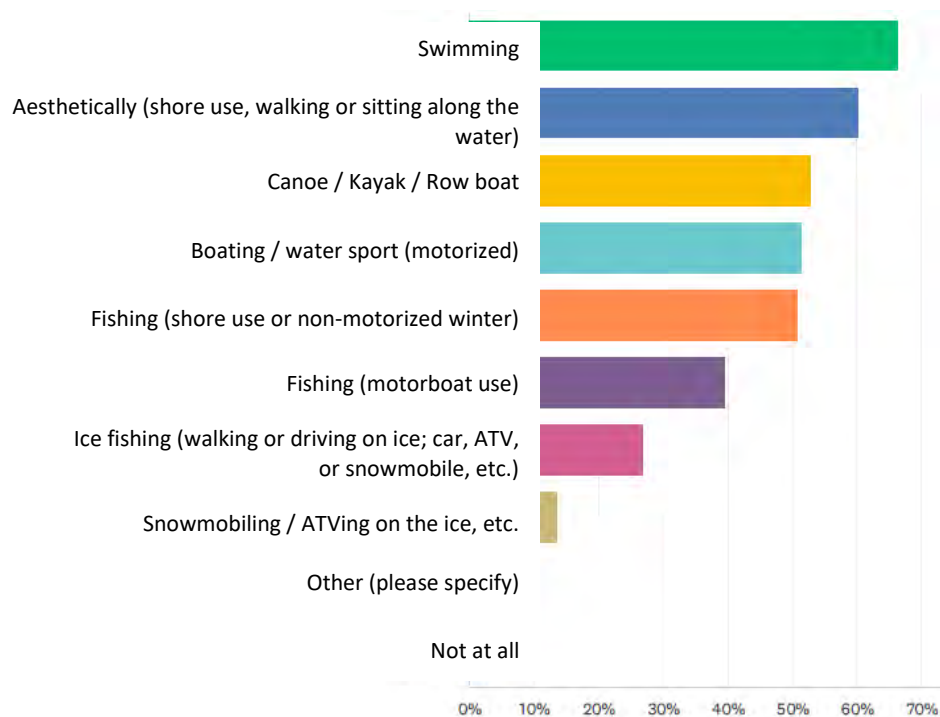
**Avid.** (I am always on the water or ice every chance I get.)

### Q19. How do you use the water?

(Choose all that apply.)

Answered: 479

Skipped: 105



### Q20. What improvements may be needed to public boat landings or water access points in Wood County?

Answered: 80

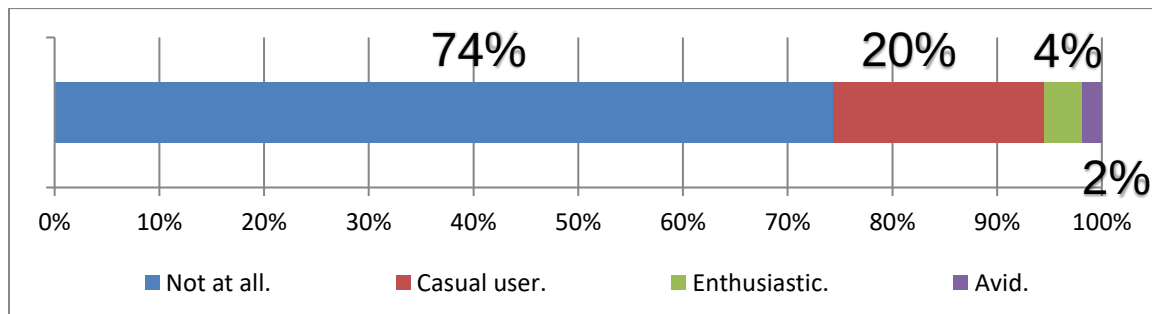
Skipped: 504

**Note: 80 respondents made comments.**



(Word Cloud – The larger the word the more mentions)

**Q21. What type of snowmobile enthusiast are you?** Answered: 475 Skipped: 109



**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.)

**Q22. How often do you use snowmobile trails in Wood County?**

Answered: 451 Skipped: 133

|                               | NEVER         | OCCASIONALLY | MONTHLY    | WEEKLY     | MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Wood County Snowmobile Trails | 80.71%<br>364 | 15.30%<br>69 | 0.67%<br>3 | 1.33%<br>6 | 2.00%<br>9              | 451   |

**Q23. Rate your overall satisfaction with the snowmobile trails in Wood County:**

Answered: 445 Skipped: 139

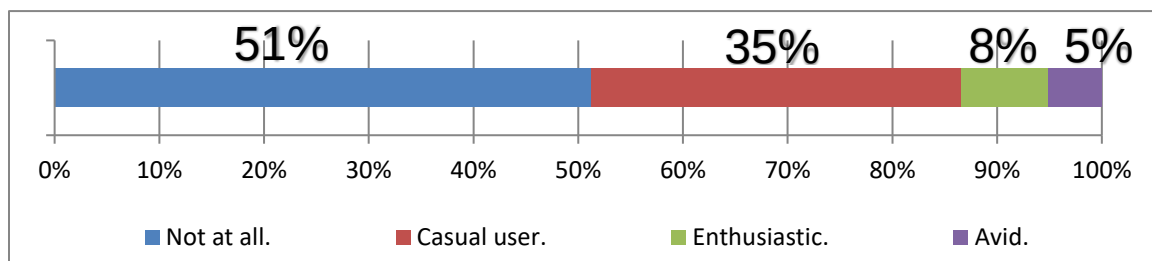
|                               | NOT APPLICABLE (I DO NOT USE THIS.) | VERY SATISFIED | GOOD        | FAIR        | DISSATISFIED | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| Wood County Snowmobile Trails | 81.35%<br>362                       | 4.27%<br>19    | 8.99%<br>40 | 4.49%<br>20 | 0.90%<br>4   | 445   |

**Q24. Any comments about snowmobile trails in Wood County?**

**Note: 36 respondents commented about snowmobile trails.**

**Q25. What type of motorized vehicle (ATV/UTV/Off-Highway Motorcycle) enthusiast are you?**

Answered: 468 Skipped: 116



**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.)

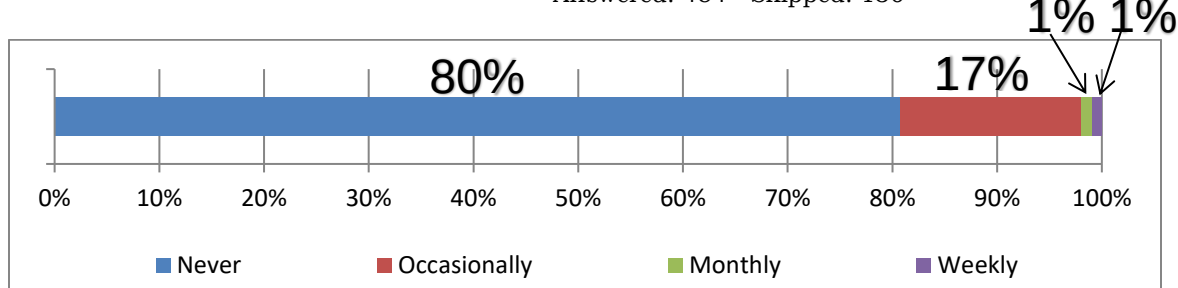
**Avid.** (I am always on a motorized vehicle every chance I get – all year long.)

**Q26. Any comments about motorized sport trails in Wood County?**

**Note: 54 respondents commented about motorized sport trails.**

**Q27. How often do you use the Wood County ATV Intensive Use Area?**

Answered: 454 Skipped: 130



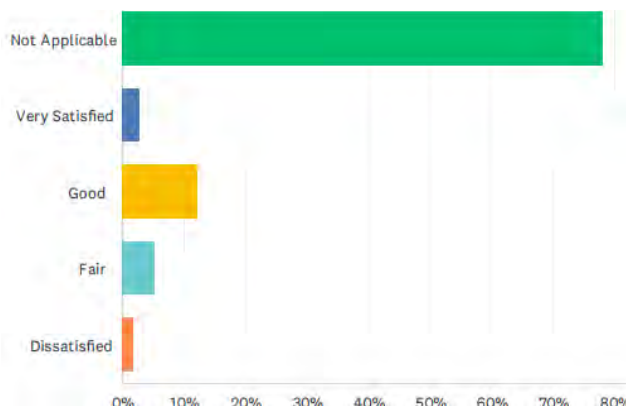
**Q28. Rate your overall satisfaction with Wood County ATV Intensive Use Area:**

Answered: 446 Skipped: 138



**Q29. Any comments about Wood County ATV Intensive Use Area?**

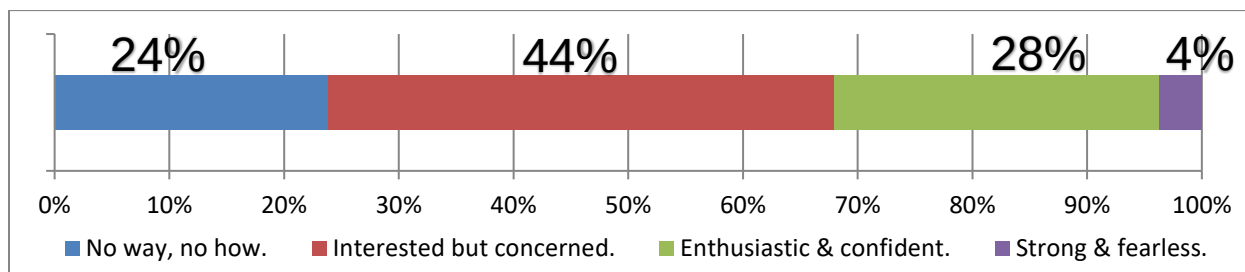
**Note: 26 respondents commented about snowmobile trails.**





### Q30. What type of bicyclist are you?

Answered: 462 Skipped: 122



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

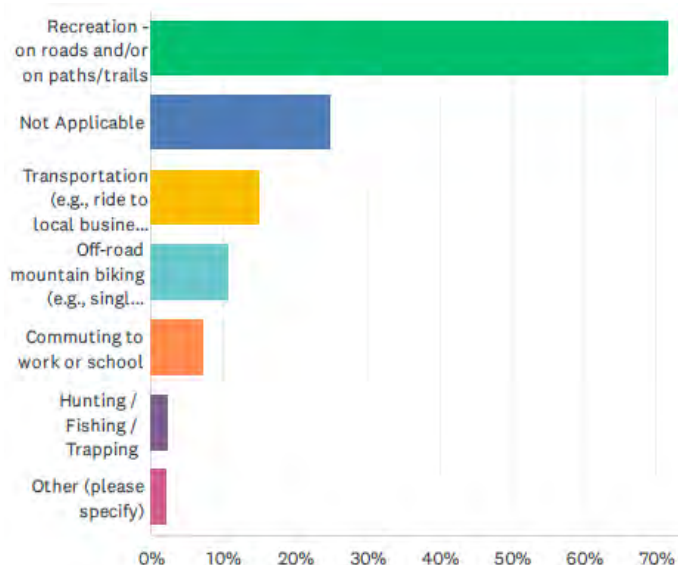
**Interested but concerned.** (I like riding, but don't do it regularly. I'm generally concerned that my route is not safe to ride, so I don't ride often. I definitely do not ride when the weather is bad.)

**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.)

### Q31. What are you using your bicycle for?

Answered: 453 Skipped: 131

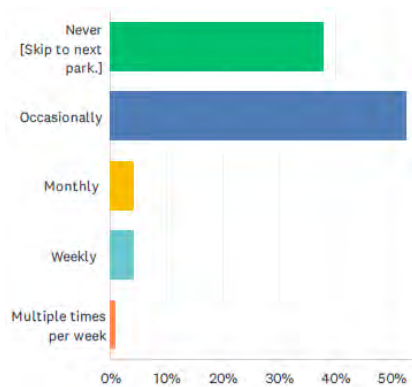


### Q32. Any comments about bicycling in Wood County?

**Note: 92 respondents commented about bicycling in Wood County.**

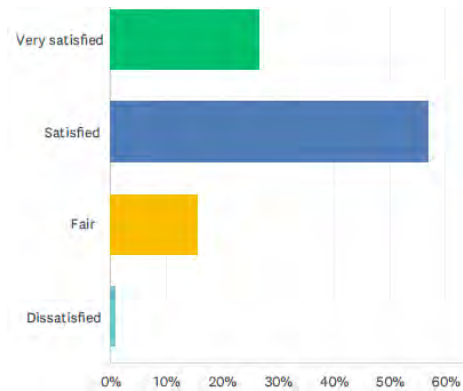
**Q33. How often do you use Powers Bluff Park?**

Answered: 213 Skipped: 371



**Q34. Rate your overall satisfaction with Powers Bluff Park:**

Answered: 128 Skipped: 456



**Q35. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Powers Bluff Park:**

Answered: 123 Skipped: 461

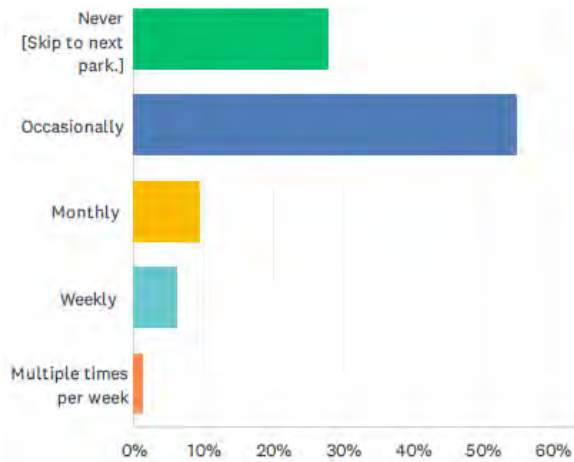
|                            | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR       | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Snow tubing hill           | 38.60%<br>44            | 0.00%<br>0 | 14.04%<br>16 | 30.70%<br>35 | 16.67%<br>19 | 114   |
| Downhill skiing            | 72.32%<br>81            | 4.46%<br>5 | 15.18%<br>17 | 6.25%<br>7   | 1.79%<br>2   | 112   |
| Cross-country skiing trail | 73.21%<br>82            | 2.68%<br>3 | 6.25%<br>7   | 13.39%<br>15 | 4.46%<br>5   | 112   |
| Multi-Use Trail            | 33.33%<br>39            | 1.71%<br>2 | 17.09%<br>20 | 31.62%<br>37 | 16.24%<br>19 | 117   |
| Single Track Bike Trail    | 64.86%<br>72            | 1.80%<br>2 | 11.71%<br>13 | 9.91%<br>11  | 11.71%<br>13 | 111   |
| Shelter Building           | 23.28%<br>27            | 0.00%<br>0 | 27.59%<br>32 | 32.76%<br>38 | 16.38%<br>19 | 116   |

**Q36. Any other comments about Powers Bluff Park?**

**Note: 37 respondents commented about Powers Bluff Park.**

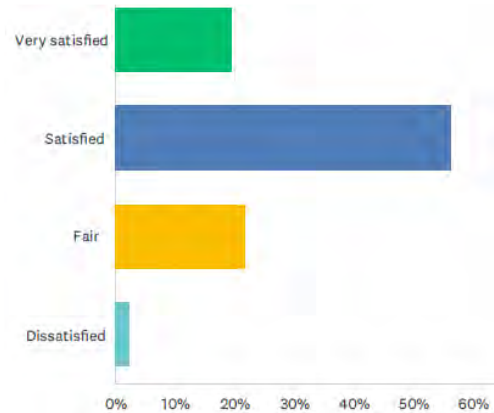
**Q37. How often do you use Nepco Lake Park?**

Answered: 240 Skipped: 344



**Q38. Rate your overall satisfaction with Nepco Lake Park:**

Answered: 174 Skipped: 410



**Q39. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Nepco Lake Park:**

Answered: 170 Skipped: 414

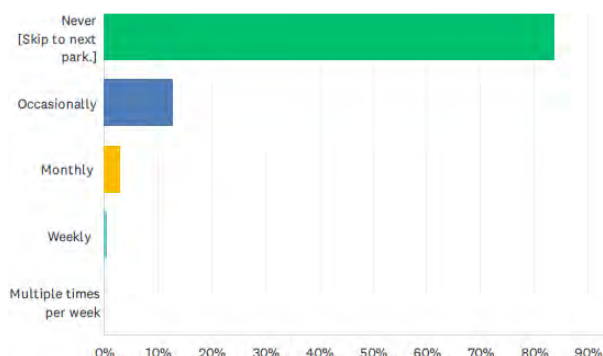
|                                        | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR         | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Boat Launch                            | 38.99%<br>62            | 5.03%<br>8   | 22.01%<br>35 | 26.42%<br>42 | 7.55%<br>12  | 159   |
| Beach, Restroom, & Changing Facilities | 22.01%<br>35            | 10.69%<br>17 | 31.45%<br>50 | 28.30%<br>45 | 7.55%<br>12  | 159   |
| Playground Equipment                   | 30.32%<br>47            | 8.39%<br>13  | 34.19%<br>53 | 21.29%<br>33 | 5.81%<br>9   | 155   |
| Multi-Use Trail                        | 33.97%<br>53            | 5.13%<br>8   | 14.74%<br>23 | 36.54%<br>57 | 9.62%<br>15  | 156   |
| Single Track Trail                     | 47.02%<br>71            | 5.30%<br>8   | 15.23%<br>23 | 28.48%<br>43 | 3.97%<br>6   | 151   |
| Enclosed Shelter                       | 14.72%<br>24            | 1.23%<br>2   | 15.34%<br>25 | 27.61%<br>45 | 41.10%<br>67 | 163   |

**Q40. Any other comments about Nepco Lake Park?**

**Note: 37 respondents commented about Nepco Lake Park.**

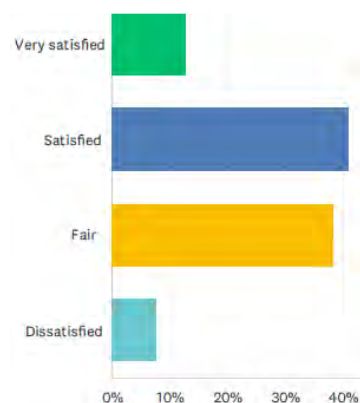
**Q41. How often do you use Richfield 360 County Forest?**

Answered: 241 Skipped: 343



**Q42. Rate your overall satisfaction with Richfield 360 County Forest:**

Answered: 39 Skipped: 545



**Q43. Rate the following amenities at Richfield 360 County Forest:**

Answered: 38 Skipped: 546

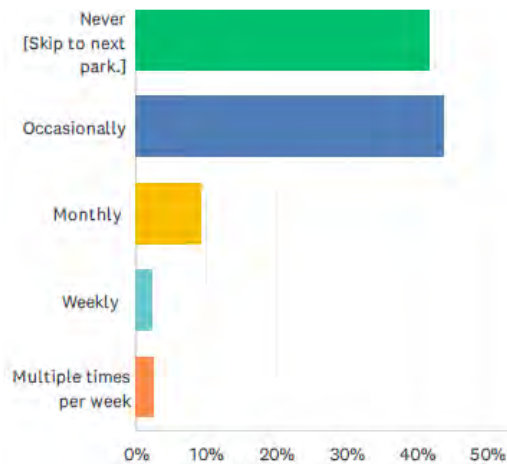
|                                      | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR         | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD   | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| Primitive Camping                    | 45.95%<br>17            | 13.51%<br>5  | 16.22%<br>6  | 16.22%<br>6  | 8.11%<br>3  | 37    |
| Trailhead & Multi-Use Trail          | 11.11%<br>4             | 11.11%<br>4  | 33.33%<br>12 | 33.33%<br>12 | 11.11%<br>4 | 36    |
| Cross-Country Skiing                 | 55.26%<br>21            | 5.26%<br>2   | 7.89%<br>3   | 23.68%<br>9  | 7.89%<br>3  | 38    |
| Grounds maintenance                  | 5.41%<br>2              | 16.22%<br>6  | 35.14%<br>13 | 32.43%<br>12 | 10.81%<br>4 | 37    |
| Signage and maps on/for the property | 5.41%<br>2              | 27.03%<br>10 | 27.03%<br>10 | 29.73%<br>11 | 10.81%<br>4 | 37    |
| County employee customer service     | 47.22%<br>17            | 8.33%<br>3   | 11.11%<br>4  | 13.89%<br>5  | 19.44%<br>7 | 36    |

**Q44. Any other comments about Richfield 360 County Forest?**

**Note: 10 respondents commented about Richfield 360 County Forest.**

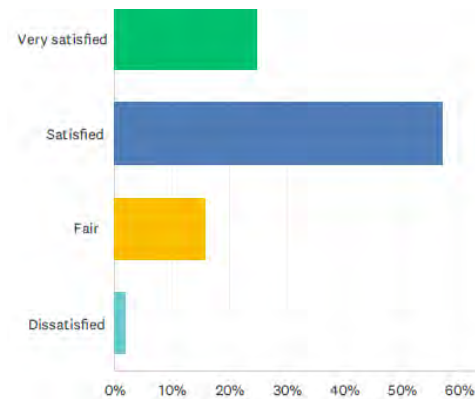
**Q45. How often do you use North Park or Campground?**

Answered: 266 Skipped: 318



**Q46. Rate your overall satisfaction with North Park:**

Answered: 152 Skipped: 432



**Q47. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at North Park:**

Answered: 147 Skipped: 437

|                                      | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR         | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Beach                                | 33.10%<br>48            | 18.62%<br>27 | 26.21%<br>38 | 16.55%<br>24 | 5.52%<br>8   | 145   |
| Enclosed Shelter                     | 32.41%<br>47            | 2.07%<br>3   | 15.86%<br>23 | 35.86%<br>52 | 13.79%<br>20 | 145   |
| Playgrounds and Restrooms            | 8.90%<br>13             | 6.16%<br>9   | 26.03%<br>38 | 39.04%<br>57 | 19.86%<br>29 | 146   |
| Disk Golf Course                     | 53.74%<br>79            | 1.36%<br>2   | 8.16%<br>12  | 24.49%<br>36 | 12.24%<br>18 | 147   |
| Signage and maps on/for the property | 16.44%<br>24            | 2.74%<br>4   | 18.49%<br>27 | 42.47%<br>62 | 19.86%<br>29 | 146   |

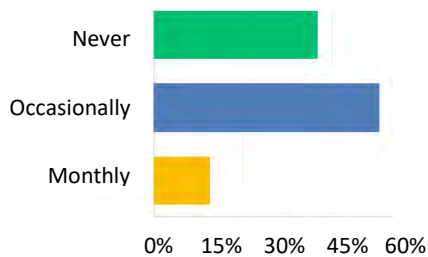
**Q48. Any other comments about North Park?**

**Note: 37 respondents commented about North Park.**



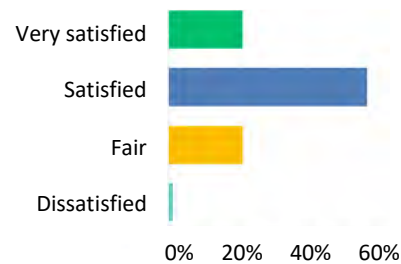
**Q49. How often do you use North Park Campground?**

Answered: 152 Skipped: 432



**Q50. Rate your overall satisfaction with North Park Campground:**

Answered: 95 Skipped: 489



**Q51. For your most recent visit to North Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?**

Answered: 79 Skipped: 505

- 1 night (7 responses)
- 2 nights (35 responses)
- 4 or more nights (17 responses)

**Q52. How many times a year do you camp at North Park Campground?**

Answered: 81 Skipped: 503

- Once (43 responses)
- 2-4 times (26 responses)
- 5 or more times (6 responses)

**Q53. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at North Park Campground:**

Answered: 91 Skipped: 493

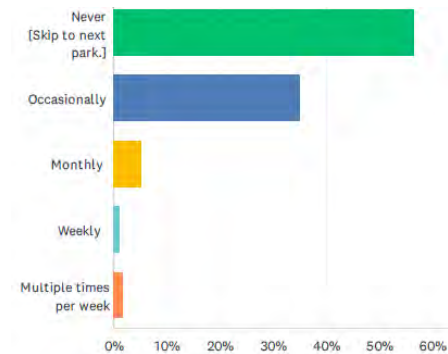
|                                         | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE. | POOR       | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Campsites                               | 5.49%<br>5               | 3.30%<br>3 | 25.27%<br>23 | 45.05%<br>41 | 20.88%<br>19 | 91    |
| Group Campsite                          | 51.65%<br>47             | 1.10%<br>1 | 16.48%<br>15 | 21.98%<br>20 | 8.79%<br>8   | 91    |
| Dump Station                            | 24.44%<br>22             | 2.22%<br>2 | 16.67%<br>15 | 40.00%<br>36 | 16.67%<br>15 | 90    |
| Picnic tables & fire rings at campsites | 4.44%<br>4               | 3.33%<br>3 | 24.44%<br>22 | 50.00%<br>45 | 17.78%<br>16 | 90    |
| Firewood availability                   | 12.22%<br>11             | 3.33%<br>3 | 15.56%<br>14 | 44.44%<br>40 | 24.44%<br>22 | 90    |
| Playground                              | 18.89%<br>17             | 2.22%<br>2 | 18.89%<br>17 | 41.11%<br>37 | 18.89%<br>17 | 90    |
| Reservation process                     | 5.68%<br>5               | 4.55%<br>4 | 27.27%<br>24 | 38.64%<br>34 | 23.86%<br>21 | 88    |
| Campsite fees                           | 4.49%<br>4               | 5.62%<br>5 | 23.60%<br>21 | 51.69%<br>46 | 14.61%<br>13 | 89    |
| Customer Service                        | 7.87%<br>7               | 5.62%<br>5 | 22.47%<br>20 | 41.57%<br>37 | 22.47%<br>20 | 89    |

#### Q54. Any other comments about North Park Campground?

**Note: 19 respondents commented about North Park Campground.**

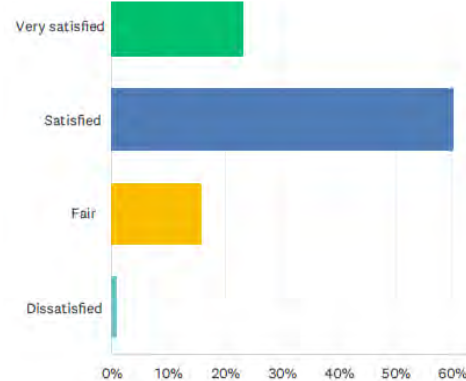
#### Q55. How often do you use Dexter Park or Campground?

Answered: 281 Skipped: 303



#### Q56. Rate your overall satisfaction with Dexter Park:

Answered: 121 Skipped: 463



#### Q57. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Dexter Park:

Answered: 118 Skipped: 466

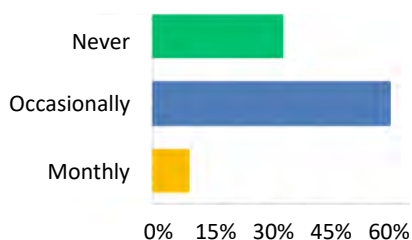
|                                      | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR       | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Beach                                | 22.41%<br>26            | 5.17%<br>6 | 25.86%<br>30 | 39.66%<br>46 | 6.90%<br>8   | 116   |
| Enclosed Shelter                     | 53.85%<br>63            | 1.71%<br>2 | 12.82%<br>15 | 22.22%<br>26 | 9.40%<br>11  | 117   |
| Boat Landings                        | 46.61%<br>55            | 0.85%<br>1 | 15.25%<br>18 | 32.20%<br>38 | 5.08%<br>6   | 118   |
| Playground                           | 36.21%<br>42            | 2.59%<br>3 | 18.97%<br>22 | 29.31%<br>34 | 12.93%<br>15 | 116   |
| Restrooms                            | 13.79%<br>16            | 3.45%<br>4 | 23.28%<br>27 | 40.52%<br>47 | 18.97%<br>22 | 116   |
| Signage and maps on/for the property | 9.65%<br>11             | 3.51%<br>4 | 19.30%<br>22 | 51.75%<br>59 | 15.79%<br>18 | 114   |

#### Q58. Any other comments about Dexter Park?

**Note: 21 respondents commented about Dexter Park.**

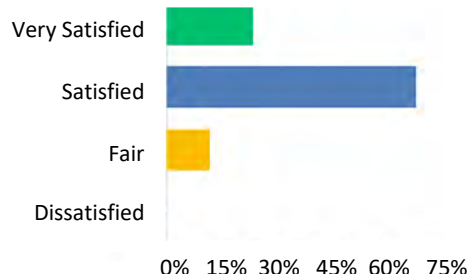
**Q59. How often do you use Dexter Park Campground?**

Answered: 121 Skipped: 463



**Q60. Rate your overall satisfaction with Dexter Park Campground:**

Answered: 79 Skipped: 505



**Q61. For your most recent visit to Dexter Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?**

Answered: 69 Skipped: 515

- 1 night (3 responses)
- 2 nights (26 responses)
- 3 nights (20 responses)
- 4 or more nights (16 responses)

**Q62. How many times a year do you camp at Dexter Park Campground?**

Answered: 68 Skipped: 516

- Once (38 responses)
- Twice (15 responses)
- 3 or more times (12 responses)

**Q63. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at Dexter Park Campground:**

Answered: 75 Skipped: 509

|                                         | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE. | POOR       | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Campsites                               | 2.67%<br>2               | 2.67%<br>2 | 21.33%<br>16 | 46.67%<br>35 | 26.67%<br>20 | 75    |
| Group Campsites                         | 64.86%<br>48             | 1.35%<br>1 | 8.11%<br>6   | 17.57%<br>13 | 8.11%<br>6   | 74    |
| ATV Camping Area                        | 75.68%<br>56             | 1.35%<br>1 | 6.76%<br>5   | 9.46%<br>7   | 6.76%<br>5   | 74    |
| Dump Station                            | 24.66%<br>18             | 0.00%<br>0 | 15.07%<br>11 | 46.58%<br>34 | 13.70%<br>10 | 73    |
| Picnic Tables & Fire Rings at campsites | 2.78%<br>2               | 1.39%<br>1 | 23.61%<br>17 | 50.00%<br>36 | 22.22%<br>16 | 72    |
| Restroom & Shower Facilities            | 1.37%<br>1               | 4.11%<br>3 | 21.92%<br>16 | 43.84%<br>32 | 28.77%<br>21 | 73    |
| Playground                              | 26.03%<br>19             | 1.37%<br>1 | 16.44%<br>12 | 39.73%<br>29 | 16.44%<br>12 | 73    |
| Firewood Availability                   | 6.85%<br>5               | 2.74%<br>2 | 10.96%<br>8  | 54.79%<br>40 | 24.66%<br>18 | 73    |
| Reservation Process                     | 2.74%<br>2               | 5.48%<br>4 | 13.70%<br>10 | 53.42%<br>39 | 24.66%<br>18 | 73    |
| Campsite Fees                           | 2.74%<br>2               | 5.48%<br>4 | 24.66%<br>18 | 47.95%<br>35 | 19.18%<br>14 | 73    |
| Customer Service                        | 18.06%<br>13             | 2.78%<br>2 | 11.11%<br>8  | 44.44%<br>32 | 23.61%<br>17 | 72    |

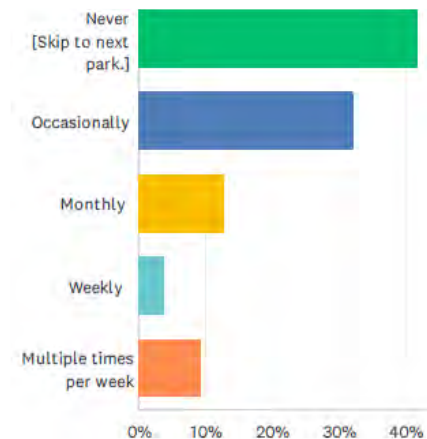
**Q64. Any other comments about Dexter Park Campground?**

**Note: 12 respondents commented about Dexter Park Campground.**

\*\*\*\*\*

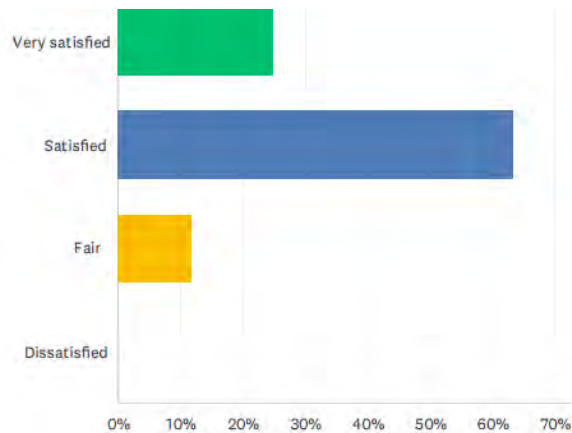
**Q65. How often do you use South Park or Campground?**

Answered: 311 Skipped: 273



**Q66. Rate your overall satisfaction with South Park:**

Answered: 180 Skipped: 404



**Q67. For your most recent visit to South Park, please rate the following amenities:**

Answered: 179 Skipped: 405

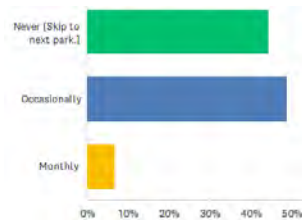
|                                   | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE | POOR        | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Beaches                           | 9.71%<br>17             | 3.43%<br>6  | 21.71%<br>38 | 50.86%<br>89 | 14.29%<br>25 | 175   |
| Boat Launch                       | 34.66%<br>61            | 1.14%<br>2  | 11.93%<br>21 | 39.77%<br>70 | 12.50%<br>22 | 176   |
| Playground                        | 23.98%<br>41            | 6.43%<br>11 | 31.58%<br>54 | 31.58%<br>54 | 6.43%<br>11  | 171   |
| Disk Golf course                  | 59.41%<br>101           | 0.00%<br>0  | 8.24%<br>14  | 24.71%<br>42 | 7.65%<br>13  | 170   |
| Shelters and Restroom maintenance | 8.47%<br>15             | 4.52%<br>8  | 22.60%<br>40 | 42.94%<br>76 | 21.47%<br>38 | 177   |
| Customer Service                  | 48.52%<br>82            | 2.37%<br>4  | 12.43%<br>21 | 26.04%<br>44 | 10.65%<br>18 | 169   |

**Q68. Any other comments about South Park?**

**Note: 50 respondents commented about South Park.**

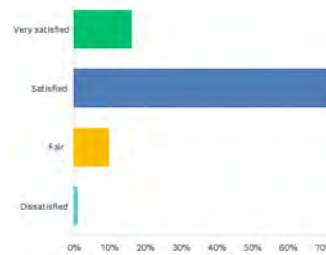
**Q69. How often do you use South Park Campground?**

Answered: 180 Skipped: 404



**Q70. Rate your overall satisfaction with South Park Campground:**

Answered: 99 Skipped: 485



**Q71. For your most recent visit to South Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?**

Answered: 83 Skipped: 501

- 1 night (6 responses)
- 2 nights (29 responses)
- 3 nights (23 responses)
- 4 or more nights (11 responses)

**Q72. How many times a year do you camp at South Park Campground?**

Answered: 83 Skipped: 501

- Once (41 responses)
- Twice (15 responses)
- 3 or more times (11 responses)

**Q73. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at South Park Campground:**

Answered: 92 Skipped: 492

|                                         | NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE. | POOR       | FAIR         | GOOD         | VERY GOOD    | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Picnic Tables & Fire Rings at campsites | 3.26%<br>3               | 3.26%<br>3 | 25.00%<br>23 | 54.35%<br>50 | 14.13%<br>13 | 92    |
| Restrooms & Showers                     | 3.26%<br>3               | 5.43%<br>5 | 32.61%<br>30 | 45.65%<br>42 | 13.04%<br>12 | 92    |
| Playground                              | 20.22%<br>18             | 6.74%<br>6 | 30.34%<br>27 | 38.20%<br>34 | 4.49%<br>4   | 89    |
| Firewood availability                   | 5.56%<br>5               | 5.56%<br>5 | 11.11%<br>10 | 53.33%<br>48 | 24.44%<br>22 | 90    |
| Reservation Process                     | 7.69%<br>7               | 3.30%<br>3 | 16.48%<br>15 | 52.75%<br>48 | 19.78%<br>18 | 91    |
| Campsite fees                           | 5.49%<br>5               | 2.20%<br>2 | 29.67%<br>27 | 48.35%<br>44 | 14.29%<br>13 | 91    |
| Customer Service                        | 15.73%<br>14             | 4.49%<br>4 | 21.35%<br>19 | 42.70%<br>38 | 15.73%<br>14 | 89    |

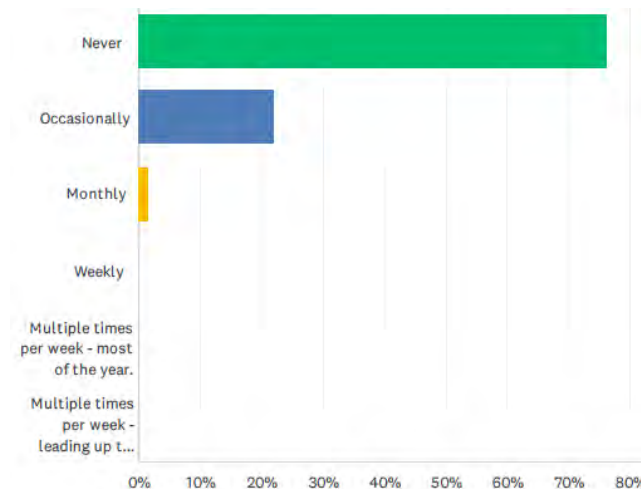
**Q74. Any other comments about South Park Campground?**

**Note: 14 respondents commented about South Park Campground.**



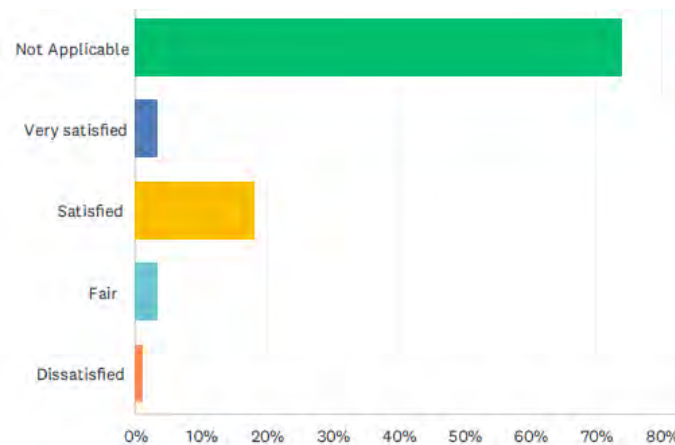
**Q75. How often do you use Wood County Rifle Range?**

*Answered: 315 Skipped: 269*



**Q76. Rate your overall satisfaction with Wood County Rifle Range:**

*Answered: 293 Skipped: 291*



**Q77. Any other comments about Wood County Rifle Range?**

**Note: 12 respondents commented about Wood County Rifle Range.**

**For the full survey results (153 pages) and written comments go online here:**  
[ncwrpc.org/wood-county-parks-recreation-and-open-spaces-plan-2026-2030/](http://ncwrpc.org/wood-county-parks-recreation-and-open-spaces-plan-2026-2030/)

## 5.3 Park Standards Analysis

This section identifies the standards used to analyze the need for park sites and outdoor recreational facilities in Wood 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 **Appendix A**.

Park standards include a) classifying each park, b) geographic distribution of parks in a system, c) park facilities, & d) universal design.

### A. Park Classification

Each county recreation property was categorized by type using a combination of DNR's Park Design and Location Criteria (see **Appendix A**), and County Forest Land Use Plan headings.

All county parks and facilities were designed for different purposes. For example, every county park is not designed as a countywide destination park. Smaller parks were created to serve local pockets of the county's population, and came about through different ownership patterns (e.g., local creation and deeded to the county, direct donation to county, county acquisition due to a local need).

For Wood County, each developed recreation area that the County maintains is listed and described by the following types:

- 4.2 County Parks and Recreation Areas
- 4.4 County Forest
- 4.5 Special Use Areas

### B. Geographic Distribution

- Every county property classified as a county park serves the whole county. See all county managed facilities on **Map 2**.
- Wisconsin Rapids has 2 county parks within 1.5 miles, and the closest county park to Marshfield is about 8 miles away where a group of 3 county parks exists.

## C. 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 **Appendix B – Facility Development Standards**.

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

## D. 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.

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

**Within the Wood County Recreation System**, improvements that target facility compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) have been identified in a thorough, countywide, planning process initiated in 1993. The "Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan, Wood County, Wisconsin" was created to address all facilities owned by Wood County, including the park system. Since 1993 all new park facilities have been constructed to meet ADA requirements, and many existing facilities have been modified to conform to ADA standards.

Overall, the implementation of the plan has been successful throughout the county park system. Here are the county park facilities that do not conform to ADA standards: 

### Non-ADA Compliant County Recreation Facilities:

**Dexter Park** – Loop 2 vault toilet, & Loop 3 vault toilet.  
**Powers Bluff** – Vault toilet.

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.

Wood County routinely identifies If changes to park facilities are necessary to make them ADA compliant, then suggested improvements are listed under each park in Chapter 7.

## 5.4 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends

### 2019 2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Wood County is in the Western Sands SCORP region. See **Appendix D**.

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

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

#### SCORP's overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

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

### Wisconsin residents' TOP 5

*nature-based outdoor activities*

#### Favorite

Walking, hiking  
Fishing  
Hunting  
Bicycling  
Camping

#### Most frequent participation

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

#### Most needed in their home county

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

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

More hiking/walking trails (348 responses)  
More natural surface bicycle trails (226 responses)  
More rustic/quiet campgrounds (218 responses)  
[pit toilets, no electricity or generators allowed]  
More horseback trails (200 responses)  
More paved bicycling trails (184 responses)  
More trails for motorized recreation (150 responses)  
[ATV, UTV, off-highway motorcycles]

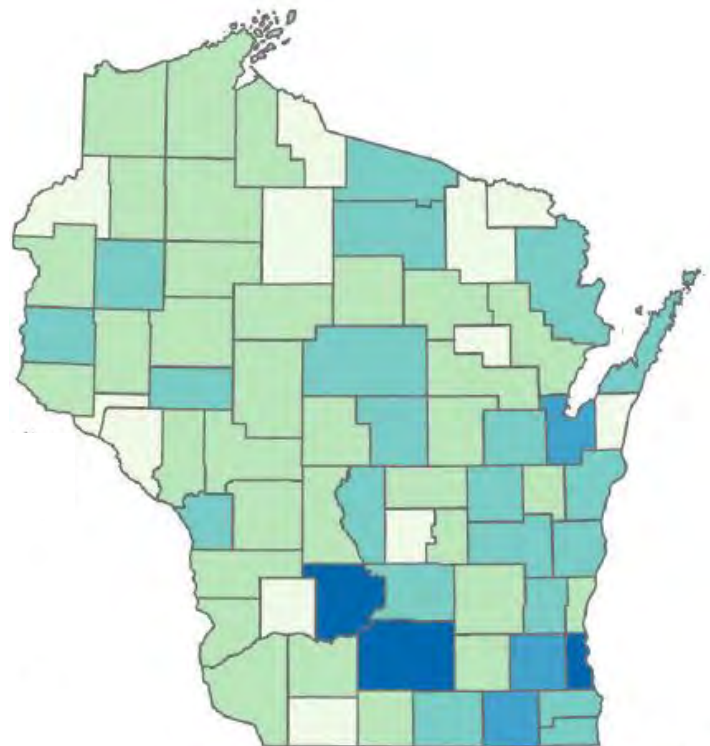
More public shore access to lakes & rivers (123)  
More developed campgrounds (116)  
[electric hook-ups, flush toilets, showers]  
More local parks and playgrounds (83)  
More wildlife watching decks or platforms (78)

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

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

Source: SCORP 2019-2023

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



Data Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism, 2018

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



Source: SCORP 2019-2023



## Chapter 6:

# VISION, 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 Highway, Infrastructure, & Recreation 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 Wood County's residents and visitors to the area.



**Goal 1 – Provide and maintain a high-quality recreation system that is available to ALL Wood County residents and visitors.**

### Objectives

1. Ensure that outdoor recreation facilities serve people of all ages and physical abilities.
2. Encourage municipal cooperation and communication to reduce redundancy and duplication of recreation facilities and services.
3. Upgrade existing facilities and design future improvements so they are accessible to the greatest extent possible per the Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines.
4. Protect the County's open space and recreational resources from visual blight and loss of environmental quality.

**Goal 2 – Protect, restore, and enhance the natural and historical resources in Wood County for outdoor recreation.**

**Objective**

1. Support wildlife management and adequate wildlife habitat through the conservation of wetlands and county forests.
2. Continue implementing the County's 15-year County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
3. Manage County lands for the broadest possible recreation benefit consistent with other essential uses.
4. Follow Best Management Practices for water quality and for invasive species control in development of outdoor recreation facilities. This will maintain forest certification.
5. Identify and preserve sites that have scientific, historic, or archeological significance. Cooperating with DNR to establish state natural areas is one way to preserve such sites.

**Goal 3 – Continue developing Wood County as a trail friendly community and destination.**

**Objective**

1. Support walking and biking trail development countywide.
2. Work on implementing the Wood County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2025.
3. Establish a permanent forum for evaluating bicycling and walking infrastructure across Wood County; either the County's Highway Infrastructure & Recreation Committee or establishing a new committee or ad-hoc committee that answers to the County's Highway Infrastructure & Recreation Committee.
4. Support ATV/UTV trail development countywide.
5. Support snowmobile trail development countywide.
6. Support local government and local group development of trails for hiking, biking, walking, birding, ATV/UTVing, and snowmobiling.

# 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 Walking & Bicycling Countywide**

Question 17 on the spring 2025 Parks & Trails survey asked respondents what outdoor recreation improvements are needed in Wood County. The #1 desire was more walking/hiking trails, and the #2 desire was more bicycling trails.

**Recommendation:** Continue to implement the **Wood County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2025**. This plan is considered to be part of this county recreation plan by reference.

#### **2. Support ATV/UTV Routes**

Roads are open to ATVs and UTVs throughout Wood County.



**Recommendation 1:** Continue keeping roads and county highways open to ATV & UTV use as appropriate.

**Recommendation 2:** Continue working with local governments and clubs to provide ATV & UTV route connections where gaps exist.

**Recommendation 3:** Continue sponsoring state-funded ATV/UTV trails.

**Recommendation 4:** Continue providing ATV/UTV Intensive Use Area.

**Recommendation 5:** Continue providing an ATV/UTV campground in Dexter Park.

### **3. Support Snowmobiling Routes**

Snowmobile routes currently exist throughout Wood County.



**Recommendation 1:** Continue providing snowmobile route access across the County Forest as appropriate.

**Recommendation 2:** Continue sponsoring state-funded snowmobile trails that are maintained by the member clubs of the Wood County Snowmobile Council.

### **4. Pursue State and National Historic Register Designation**

According to records at the State Historical Society (Office of the State Archaeologist) there are 163 identified archaeological sites in Wood County. Seven of these sites have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and all seven sites are located along the Wisconsin River.

**Recommendation 1:** Promote research needed to list the known 7 sites onto the State and National Registers of Historical Places.

Most of the 163 identified archaeological sites were found while completing archaeological surveys for proposed highway corridors, or for the relicensing of impoundments on the Wisconsin River. The Wisconsin Historical Society has emphasized that these sites probably represent only a fraction of the sites actually present within Wood County as little systematic archaeological survey work has been undertaken. Wood County should pursue an archaeological investigation to identify important sites. Such an investigation would be educational for area residents and may uncover archaeological areas of statewide or national significance. Without an archaeological investigation, important sites stand the chance of being inadvertently destroyed by unknowing developers.

**Recommendation 2:** Consider pursuing an archaeological investigation to identify what type of archaeological sites are out there.

## **5. Promote the Yellowstone Trail**

Before there were numbered highways in the United States there were names attached to roads to help the motorist navigate from town to town or from county to county. In 1912 before the vision of the interstate highway was conceived, a small group of men envisioned a road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound and called it the Yellowstone Trail.

See partial map of Wood County segment in **Appendix G**.

**Recommendation 1:** Identify any possible remnants of the Yellowstone Trail (yellow boulders) in Wood County and seek State and National Registers of Historical Places designation. After existing historic boulders are documented, consider installing new boulder markers.

**Recommendation 2:** Encourage all chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus in communities along the Yellowstone Trail to promote the Yellowstone Trail.

**Recommendation 3:** Consider having the Highway Department coordinate the installation of official Yellowstone Trail signs along the whole route in Wood County, with signs possibly donated by various chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus.

**Recommendation 4:** Encourage libraries in communities along the Yellowstone Trail to acquire books about the Yellowstone Trail.

## **6. Promote the Cranberry Highway**

The Cranberry Highway is a 50-mile self-guided drive along century-old cranberry beds in Wood County. The route offers views of vibrant cranberry beds during harvest and stunning fall colors.

See map of Cranberry Highway on **Map 3**.

**Recommendation 1:** All chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus in Wood County to continue promoting the Cranberry Highway.

**Recommendation 2:** Consider having the Highway Department coordinate the installation of Cranberry Highway signs along the whole route.



## 7. Improve County Park Wayfinding

Even with the rise of remote work and phone maps, people still want to disconnect from their technology and travel to areas of natural beauty to recharge themselves. Therefore, there is still a need for local wayfinding using physical signage to find points of interest – like county parks.

### Wayfinding to a site

Getting to a park includes directional signs, entrance signs, and gateway features.

### Wayfinding within a site

Within a site that includes multiple park lodges, shelters, and picnic areas, having each facility physically signed and identified on park maps helps everyone find the correct location.

An additional reason for directional signs on highways is to advertise that a county park exists in the area. This is a very inexpensive advertising campaign, because once installed, a sign lasts for many years. People visiting an area and residents alike will be continually reminded that a county park or boat launch is nearby.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue adding county park directional signs on state and county highways and local roads.
  - No Dexter County Park signs exist on STH 80 for any of the 4 driveways.
2. As necessary, review and update maps of facilities within each park that has a map.
3. When multiple types of the same facility exist in the same park, then consider physically labeling each lodge, shelter, and picnic area with its name on the exterior of the building or on a freestanding sign.



Sample highway directional sign

Source: Google Street View



Sample highway wayside sign

Source: Google Street View



Sample lodge sign (Hemlock).

Source: Breanna Moore at CWES

## **8. Improve Dexter Park Entrance Aesthetics**

First impressions are important to visitors, otherwise they will spend less money or not return. The area around Dexter Lake has dense groves of majestic red pines and deciduous trees. These woodlands so close to STH 54 and throughout the area are highly aesthetically pleasing. This is what makes driving to a park so desirable to city dwellers.

**Recommendation:** Consider planting evergreen bushes and trees per the images below to screen the County yards and pole buildings.



 = possible new evergreen bush and tree plantings to form a screen

 = main entrance to Dexter County Park

## 7.3 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2026-2030

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 Parks & Forestry 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.

Staff from the Wood County Parks & Forestry Department projected what recreational needs face each County facility and the capital improvements needed to improve the facility.

See **Appendix I** for the current outdoor recreation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Wood County's Parks & Forestry Department.

Projects listed below and in **Appendix I** (CIP) are subject to receiving County budgetary approval or private group fundraising. All listed projects may not be completed over the next 5 years.

### **Future County Park & Recreation Area Projects – 2026-2030**

#### **Wood County Cera Park**

- Complete remodeling of large shelter building, to include new roofing, pocket door replacement, and exterior hardscaping around building
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Upgrade park electric service and internal underground electric lines throughout park
- Upgrade campsite electrical pedestals to 50 amp service
- Widen, replace culverts, and resurface existing parking lots and park roads
- Relocate camper water fill/ dump station closer to campground.
- Remove and repurpose swimming pool site
- Construct beach, splash pad, or swimming pond
- Remodel existing pool restroom building for new repurposed area
- Enlarge and improve existing boat landing to accommodate more vehicles/trailers, and add a boat washdown area
- Construct additional docks near boat landing to accommodate additional boat traffic and allow for slip rentals throughout the season
- Construct large firewood storage shed
- Repurpose or remove old marina building at boat landing
- Construct camping cabins
- Construct additional restroom buildings at boat landing and within campground
- Campsite additions/improvements to accommodate larger campers/RV's
- Replace underground water lines throughout the park

### **Nepco Lake County Park**

- Construct vault toilet building at trailhead parking lot
- Construct canoe/kayak launch
- Addition to shelter building to include a covered outdoor patio area
- Resurface parking lot and entrance road
- Replacing rip-rap and walk trail between boat landing and beach area
- Treatment and control of invasive species in the park
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment

### **South Wood County Park**

- Repair/replace failing boat mooring sites within campground
- Maintain/repair dam, as required by WIDNR
- Campground addition, to include full hook up and pull through sites. To include roadways, dump station, shower building, playground, ranger station, and additional restrooms as needed
- Construction of a 2nd shower building in existing campground
- Water faucets added to existing campsites
- Resurface multi-use trail on the north side of Lake Wazeecha
- Replacement of campground vault toilets with flush toilet buildings
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- White Beach accessible walk path down to the beach
- Enclosed shelter improvements for cool weather events- heated bathrooms, furnace for shelter building
- Addition of patio area near shelter buildings with canopy/gazebo for weddings and special events
- Construction of an accessible canoe/kayak launch area
- Create a fenced in “off leash” area for dogs
- Improve fish population by improving fish habitat in lake
- Red Sands Beach terracing to reduce erosion and to enhance area to attract more events

### **North Wood County Park**

- Construction of a new vehicular bridge to access the campground
- Remodel/replace beach house and add additional open air shelter
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Concrete overlay of lower dam
- Construction of a new snowmobile/ATV/pedestrian bridge near lower dam
- Walk trail improvements
- Disc Golf course drainage improvements and walk trails
- Campsite surface improvements
- Basketball court addition to campground

### **Dexter County Park**

- Improve sections of multi-use trail system with black top or recycled blacktop
- Expand ATV camping area with new sites and amenities
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Outside patio area at shelter building
- Paved walk trail, with fishing pier, near shelter building
- Paved walk trail from shelter to restrooms and playground
- Replace beach restroom, to include open shelter
- Improve fish population by improving fish habitat in lake

### **Powers Bluff County Park**

- Continue upgrading multi-use trails from natural surface to gravel surface
- Improve signage for the existing trail system to include interpretive signage for cultural, and natural history of the park
- Dig a recreational/fishing pond, and create a sledding hill and ice skating rink near trail head
- Complete entrance road, parking lot, and shelter building at the trail head
- Continue entrance road and install 3-phase power to the base of the ski/tube hill
- Restore disturbed areas within the sensitive areas on the south slope of the park
- Dig cooling pond and install snow making equipment
- Lengthen the ski run and tow system, and lengthen the tube tow system
- Install lights on the tube and ski hill
- Install playground equipment near trailhead shelter building

### **ATV Intensive Use Area**

- Install drinking fountain
- Remodel shelter building with new siding/windows
- Construct additional trails in adjacent county forest

### **Public Rifle Range**

- Improve accessibility of range
- Parking lot improvements
- Construction of vault toilet
- Create berms between shooting lanes
- Consider archery shooting area

### **Other County Park Areas and County Forest Property**

- Construction of additional ATV/UTV trails, and support facilities
- Construction of horse riding trails, and support facilities
- Create “off leash” areas for dogs



## 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.

**Appendix 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 **Appendix 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 West Central Region  
Eau Claire, WI

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

### 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.

# **Appendix A**

## **Park Design and Location Criteria**

From:

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023



## Park Design and Location Criteria

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

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

### Mini Park

#### 1. Definition Summary:

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

#### 2. Size Objectives:

0.5 to 1.5 acres.

#### 3. Service Area Objectives:

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

#### 4. Location Objectives:

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

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

#### 5. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

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

#### 6. Orientation:

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

#### 7. Function:

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

### Neighborhood Park

#### 1. Definition Summary:

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

#### 2. Size Objectives:

5 to 25 acres.

### **3. Service Area Objectives:**

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

### **4. Location Objectives:**

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

### **5. Program Objectives:**

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

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

### **6. Orientation:**

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

### **7. Function:**

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

### **8. Space, Design and Service Area:**

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

## **Community Park**

### **1. Definition Summary:**

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

### **2. Size Objectives:**

Usually more than 25 acres.

### **3. Service Area Objectives:**

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

### **4. Location Objectives:**

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

## 5. Program Objectives

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

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

*Appropriate program elements include:*

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

## 6. Orientation:

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

## 7. Function:

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

## 8) Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

## Special Use Park

### 1. Definition Summary:

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

### 2. Size Objective:

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

### 3. Service Area Objectives:

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

### 4. Location Objectives:

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

### 5. Program Objectives:

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

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

## **6. Orientation:**

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

## **7. Function:**

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

## **8. Space, Design, and Service Area:**

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

## **School Park**

### **1. Definition Summary:**

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

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

### **2. Size Objective**

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

## **3. Service Area Objectives:**

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

## **4. Location Objectives:**

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

## **5. Program Objectives:**

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

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

## **County Park**

### **1. Definition Summary:**

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

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

## **2. Size Objectives:**

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

## **3. Service Area Objectives:**

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

## **4. Location Objectives:**

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

## **5. Program Objectives:**

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

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

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

## **6. Orientation:**

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

## **7. Function:**

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

## **8. Space, Design, and Service Area:**

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

## **State Forest**

### **1. Definition Summary:**

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



## 2. Size Objectives:

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

## 3. Service Area Objectives:

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

## 4. Location Objectives:

Areas with large blocks of land.

## 5. Program Objectives:

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

### Current Level of Supply:

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

## 6. Orientation:

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

## 7. Function:

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

## 8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

## State Park

### 1. Definition Summary:

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

### 2. Size Objectives:

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

### 3. Service Area Objectives:

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

### 4. Location Objectives:

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

### 5. Program Objectives:

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

**Current Level of Supply:**

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

**5. Orientation:**

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

**6. Function:**

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

**7. Space, Design, and Service Area:**

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

## **Appendix 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                                                                                                              |
| <b>Badminton</b>                                                 | Singles--17' x 44'<br>Doubles-20' x 44'<br>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.                                   |
| <b>Basketball</b><br>1. Youth<br>2. High School<br>3. Collegiate | 46' - 50' x 84'<br>50' x 84'<br>50' x 94' with 5' unobstructed space all sides.                                                                                                                   | 2400-3036 sq. ft.<br>5040-7280 sq. ft.<br>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.            |
| <b>Handball (3-4 wall)</b>                                       | 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.                  |
| <b>Ice Hockey</b>                                                | Rink 85' x 200' (Min. 85' x 185')<br>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.                         |
| <b>Tennis</b>                                                    | 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.                                            |
| <b>Volleyball</b>                                                | 30' x 60'. Minimum of 6' clearance on all sides.                                                                                                                                                  | Minimum 4,000 sq. ft.                                         | Long axis north - south                                                                                                                               | ½ - 1 mile.                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Baseball</b><br>1. Official<br><br>2. Little League           | Baselines - 90'<br>Pitching distance-60.5'<br>Foul lines - min. 320'<br>Center field - 400'+<br><br>Baselines - 60'<br>Pitching distance - 46'<br>Foul lines - 200'<br>Center field - 200' - 250' | 3.0 - 3.85 A min.<br><br>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.                                                            |
| <b>Field Hockey</b>                                              | 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.                   |
| <b>Football</b>                                                  | 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.                                                                                                |
| <b>Soccer</b>                                                    | 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. |
| <b>Golf - Driving Range</b>                                      | 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. Part of golf course complex. As separate unit may be privately operated.                                                |

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

| <b>SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS <i>(continued)</i></b>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                              |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Activity Format</b>                                                                                      | <b>Recommended Size and Dimensions</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>Recommended Space Requirements</b>                        | <b>Recommended Orientation</b>                                                                   | <b>Service Radius and Location Notes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>¼ mile running track</b>                                                                                 | 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.                                                                                                   |
| <b>Softball</b>                                                                                             | Baselines - 60' pitching distance<br>- 45' men. 40' women<br>Fast pitch field radius from plate - 225'<br>Slow pitch - 275' (men)<br>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.                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Multiple use court (basketball, tennis, etc.)</b>                                                        | 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.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Archery range</b>                                                                                        | 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.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Golf</b><br><b>1. Par 3 (18 hole)</b><br><br><b>2. 9-hole standard</b><br><br><b>3. 18-hole standard</b> | Average length varies -600 - 2700 yards.<br><br>Average length 2250 yards<br><br>Average length 6500 yards.                                                               | 50 - 60 A<br><br>Minimum of 50 A<br><br>Minimum 110 yards    | Majority of holes on north/south axis                                                            | ½ - 1 hour travel time<br><br>9-hole course can accommodate 350 people/day<br><br>500 - 550 people/day.<br><br>Course may be located in community, district or regional/metro park.                                              |
| <b>Swimming pools</b>                                                                                       | Teaching - min. 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3-4 ft.<br><br>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. |
| <b>Beach areas</b>                                                                                          | 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)*

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

## **Appendix C**

# **Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs**

Compiled by: NCWRPC

## **Wisconsin DNR Administered Programs**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR) [Stewardship]**

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

### **ATV/UTV Enhancement**

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

### **ATV Patrols**

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

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

### **ATV/UTV Trails**

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

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

### **Boat Enforcement Patrol**

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

### **Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program**

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

Tier 1 - State

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

Tier 2 - National

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

### **Natural Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]**

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

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

### **Habitat Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]**

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

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

### **Stream Bank protection [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]**

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

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

### **State trails [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]**

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

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

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

## **Motorized Stewardship Grants [Stewardship]**

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

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

*Match Requirement:* 20 percent

## **Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Grants**

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

## **Recreational Boating Facilities Grants**

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

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

## **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

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

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

## **Shooting Range Grant Program**

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

### **Snowmobile Patrols**

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

### **Snowmobile Trail Aids**

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

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

### **Sport Fish Restoration (SFR)**

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

### **Surface Water Grants**

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

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

### **Urban Green Space [Stewardship]**

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

### **Urban Rivers [Stewardship]**

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



## **Wisconsin DOT Administered Programs**

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

### **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

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

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

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

### **Safe Routes to School (SRTS)**

#### ***[A Transportation Alternatives Program]***

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

### **Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)**

#### ***[A Transportation Alternatives Program]***

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

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (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.

## **Appendix D**

# **SCORP Identified Outdoor Recreation Needs**

Compiled by:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
in their 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan  
(SCORP)

# Recreation Opportunities Analysis



## WESTERN SANDS REGION



## 6. WESTERN SANDS REGION

### BACKGROUND

#### *LANDSCAPE SETTING*

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

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

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

#### *LOCAL ECONOMY*

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

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

## RECREATION USES AND PARTICIPATION

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

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

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

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

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

- Hunting – big game

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

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

## EXISTING RECREATION SUPPLY IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

### PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

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

#### *a) Federal*

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

#### *b) State*

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



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

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

#### *c) County*

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

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

#### *d) Other*

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

### *PRIVATE LANDS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION*

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

#### *a) Forest Legacy program easements*

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

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

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

#### *c) Land trusts*

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

*d) Voluntary Public Access Program*

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

*e) Snowmobile Trails on Private Lands*

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

*EXISTING PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE*

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

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

*a) Black River State Forest*

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

*b) Buckhorn State Park*

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

*c) Lake Wissota State Park*

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

*d) Rib Mountain State Park*

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

*e) George W. Mead Wildlife Area*

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

*f) Elroy-Sparta Trail*

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

*g) Jackson County Forest*

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

*h) Marathon County Forest, Nine Mile Unit*

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

## PUBLIC INPUT ON RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

*INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE ROA.*

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

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

The department received comments in the following formats:

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

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

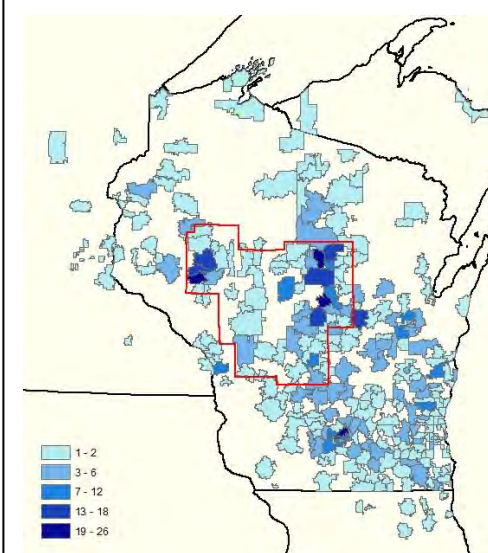
<sup>14</sup> The public input form was available for anyone to complete and over 900 people did so. The department’s experience is that when it provides “open access” opportunities in which anyone can participate, the people that respond tend to be those that find out about the input opportunity and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

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

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

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

Number of input forms submitted, by zip code



## Participation in outdoor recreation

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

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

#### **Bicycling – surfaced trails**

Bicycling – mountain biking, single track

#### **Camping – tent**

Camping – RV/pop-up

#### **Canoeing/kayaking**

Cross-country skiing/ snowshoeing

#### **Fishing – from a boat, canoe or kayak**

#### **Hiking, walking, running on trails**

Horseback riding

#### **Swimming**

#### **Wildlife/bird watching**

## Properties that people visit

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

## Factors important in determining favorite places to visit

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

## Additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed

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

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

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

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

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

## Department-managed roads and motorized access

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

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

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

## *INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE WISCONSIN SCORP*

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

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

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

- equestrian trails
- trails for motorized recreation
- public campsites

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

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

## FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL RECREATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Cooperatively Managed Trails

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

For the Western Sands Region, cooperatively managed trails include:

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

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

## WATER RELATED RECREATION

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

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

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

| Recreation Activity                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Canoeing or kayaking</b>                                | <p>Although not every property with open water has formal boat access sites (or access sites on all waterbodies) many of the lakes, rivers, and larger streams on department-managed lands have some opportunities to carry in a canoe or kayak. The following properties may have the potential to add more walk-in trails to access waterbodies with canoes or kayaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black River State Forest</li> <li>Big Rib River Fishery Area</li> <li>Big Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area</li> <li>Little Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area</li> <li>Mc Millan Wildlife Area</li> <li>Mead Wildlife Area</li> <li>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</li> <li>Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area</li> <li>Upper Neenah Fishery Area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fishing - lake fishing from a boat, canoe, or kayak</b> | <p>The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, there are a limited number of lakes in the region and many of those are small kettle lakes. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are few department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access. The following property may have potential to add more improved boat access sites (ramps for trailered boats):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| <b>Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier</b>         | <p>All department lands with lakes are open to shore fishing and as such there are not significant opportunities to expand this opportunity. There are some fishing docks or piers on department lands and there are some opportunities to add new ones, particularly at those properties near cities and villages and with easy road access. The following properties may be able to provide opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chippewa River State Trail</li> <li>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</li> <li>South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| Recreation Activity                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Fishing - stream or river fishing from shore or wading</b> | <p>All department lands with streams or rivers are open to shore fishing and as such there are not opportunities to expand this opportunity at existing properties. There may be opportunities to expand shore fishing opportunities through the acquisition of key parcels or to create disabled accessible fishing areas on the following properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black River State Forest</li> <li>Big Rib River Fishery Area</li> <li>Big Creek Fishery Area</li> <li>Chippewa River State Trail</li> <li>Emmons Creek Fishery Area</li> <li>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</li> <li>Plover River Fishery Area</li> <li>Richard A Hemp Fishery Area</li> <li>Sand Creek Fishery Area</li> <li>South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area</li> </ul> |
| <b>Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)</b>    | <p>The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, the number of large waterbodies in the region that would be able to accommodate motorboating is limited. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are no department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Swimming in lakes and rivers</b>                           | <p>All department properties adjacent to public waters allow swimming. Many department properties, especially state parks and forests, have beaches, changing rooms and other amenities to accommodate swimming. The following department properties may be able to either add new opportunities for swimming access or expand existing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black River State Forest</li> <li>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## OTHER FORMS OF RECREATION

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

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

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

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

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



## SUMMARY OF THE WESTERN SANDS REGION ROA

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

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

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

### *STATE PARKS, FORESTS AND RECREATION AREAS*

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

### *STATE TRAILS*

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

### *STATE WILDLIFE AND FISHERY AREAS*

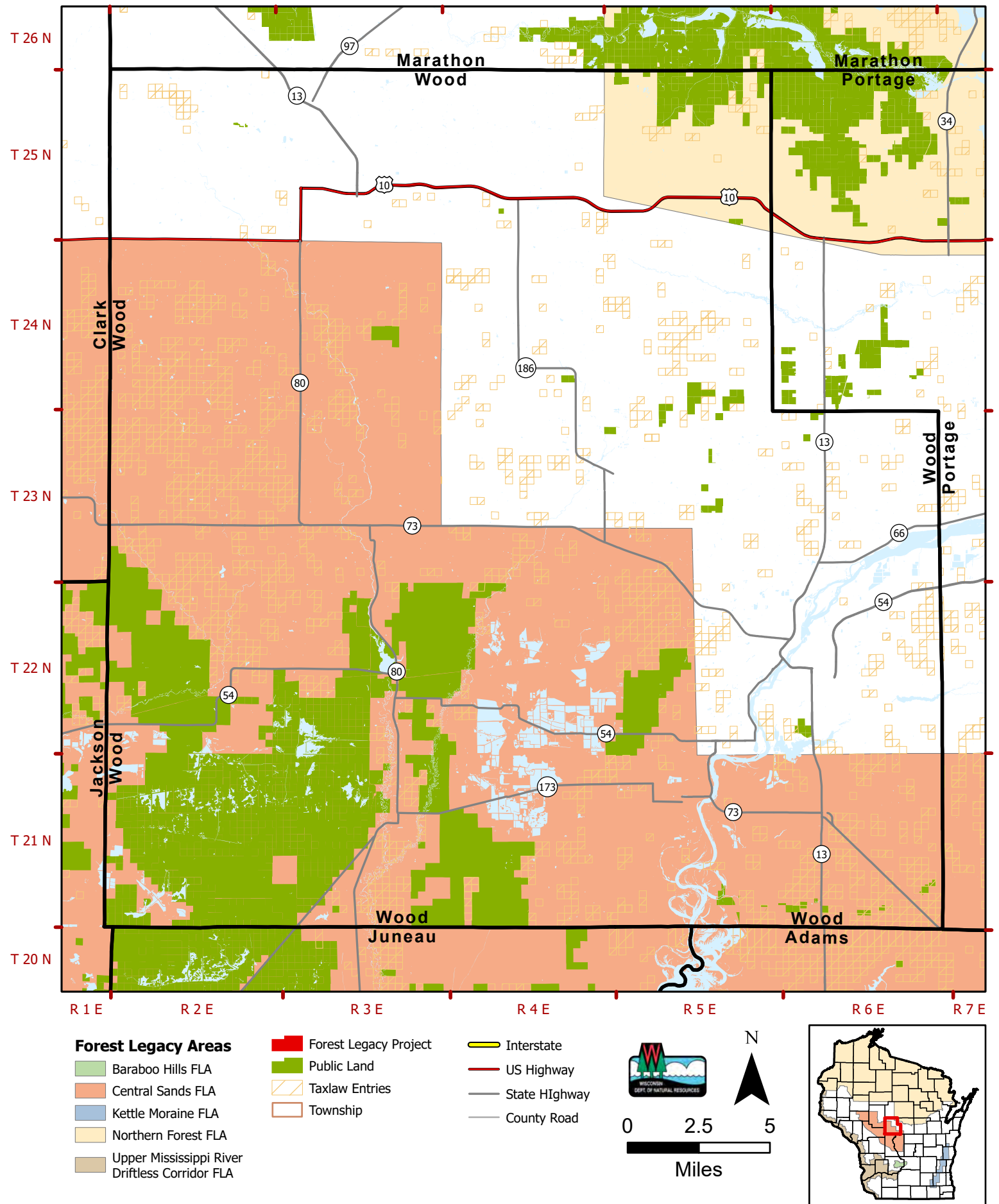
- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- Mountain biking trails that expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Equestrian trails that either connect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

## **Appendix E**

### **Forest Legacy Areas 2025 Wood County**

From:  
WDNR

# Forest Legacy Areas: Wood County



This map is for informational purposes only and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering or surveying purposes. The user is solely responsible for verifying the accuracy of information before using for any purpose. By using this product for any purpose user agrees to be bound by all disclaimers found here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/legal>.

## **Appendix F**

# **Wood County ATV-UTV Planning Map**

From:  
Wood County

# Wood County Wisconsin

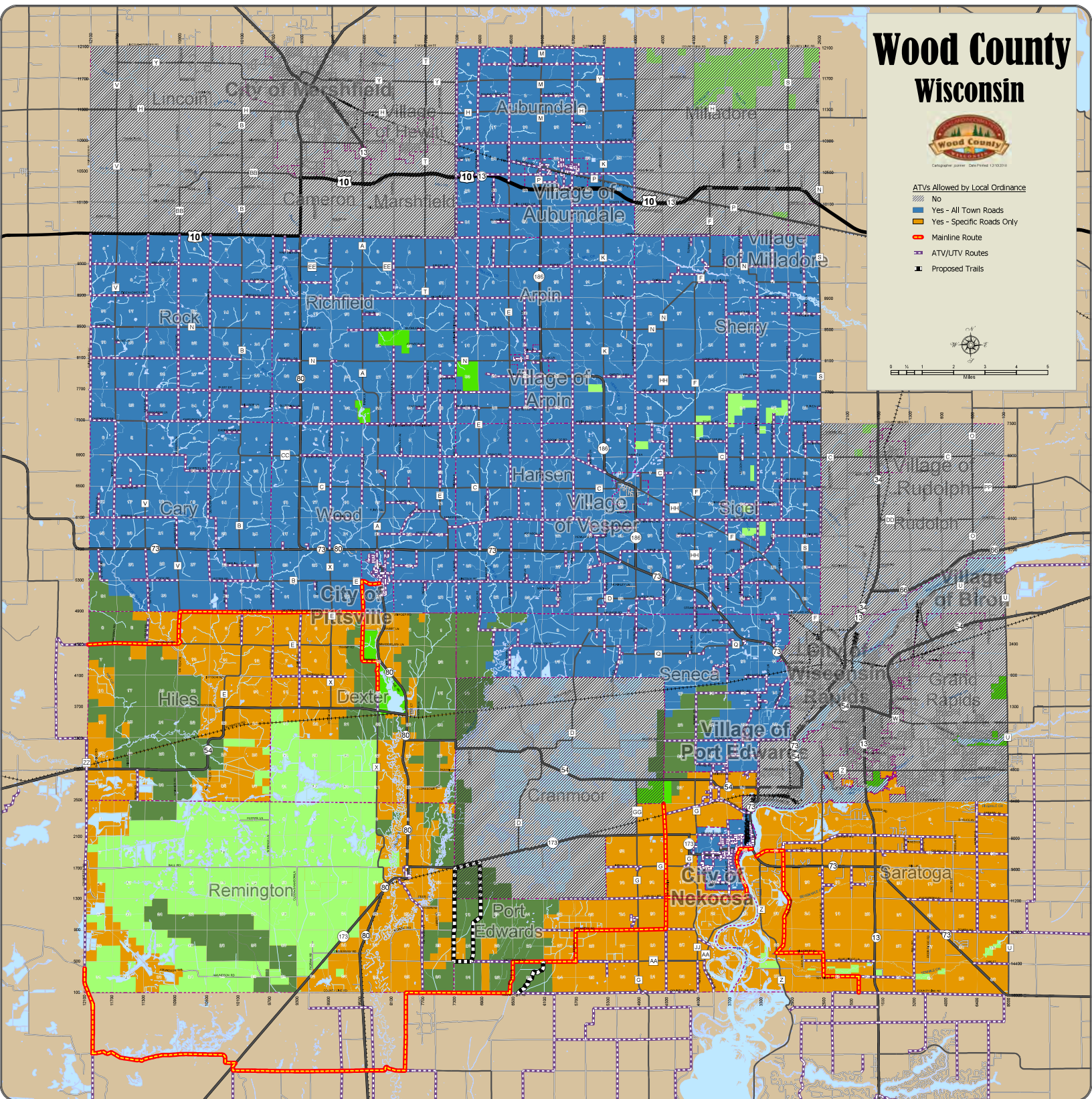


ATVs Allowed by Local Ordinance

- No
- Yes - All Town Roads
- Yes - Specific Roads Only
- Mainline Route
- ATV/UTV Routes
- Proposed Trails



0 1 2 3 4 Miles



## **Appendix G**

# **Yellowstone Trail Map**

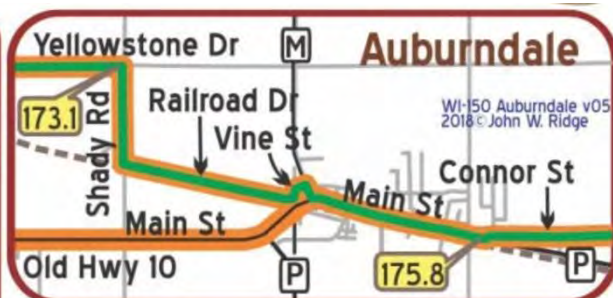
From:

Yellowstone Trail Association, LLC





Source: Yellowstone Trail Association, LLC



|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Yellowstone Trail               | Interstate-94     |
| YT (now not drivable)           | US-12 State-63    |
| Drive to follow the Trail       | Local/County-E    |
| Modern Roads                    | Exits -18         |
| Railroad                        | City names        |
| Miles to state's western border | Street/Road names |
| Scale= 4 miles/in.              | County names      |

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## **Appendix H**

# **Powers Bluff County Park Concept Plan**

From:  
Wood County Parks & Forestry



# POWERS BLUFF COUNTY PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PHASES

2018

## Legend

- Planned Multi-Use Paths : 3.0 Miles
- Planned Mountain Bike Trails : 7.75 Miles
  - Beginner
  - Intermediate
  - Advanced
- Planned Bike Park Zones  
Flow Trails, Skills Features, Pumptrack
- Race Event Support Zone  
Parking, Camping, Staging
- Existing Hiking Trails

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



Note: This map is for planning purposes only.  
Property boundary is approximate.  
Do not use for design development or  
construction estimates.

10 Foot Index Contours



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

## Phase 1

Entrance road and parking lot = \$345,000  
Multi-use shelter trailhead building = \$560,000  
Fishing Pond = \$25,000  
Ice Skating Rink = \$5,000  
Playground, benches, tables & grills = \$70,000

## Phase 3

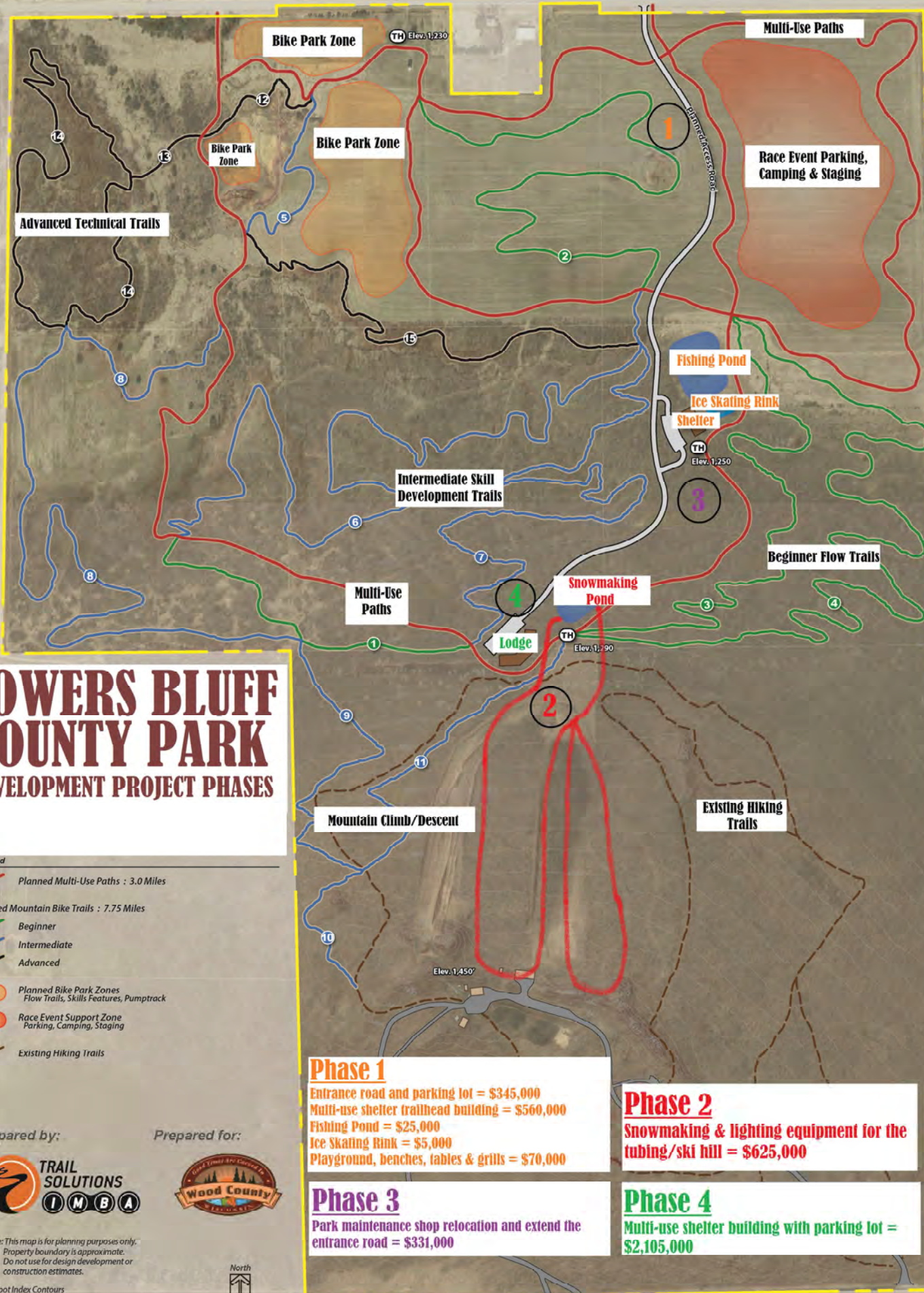
Park maintenance shop relocation and extend the  
entrance road = \$331,000

## Phase 2

Snowmaking & lighting equipment for the  
tubing/ski hill = \$625,000

## Phase 4

Multi-use shelter building with parking lot =  
\$2,105,000



Check us out on Facebook at  
"Wood County Parks and Forestry"

# **Appendix I**

## **Parks & Forestry**

### **Capital Improvement Plan 2026-2030**

From:  
Wood County Parks & Forestry

# Wood County, WI

## Capital Plan

2026 thru 2030

### PROJECTS BY DEPARTMENT

| Department                             | Project # | Priority | 2026           | 2027           | 2028             | 2029             | 2030             | Total            |
|----------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Parks &amp; Forestry</b>            |           |          |                |                |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| Fleet Vehicle Replacement              | 21-26-001 | 3        | 60,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 60,000           |
| Road/Parking Lot Improvements          | 21-26-002 | 3        | 80,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 80,000           |
| UTV Replacement                        | 21-26-003 | 3        | 21,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 21,000           |
| Tractor Backhoe Replacement            | 21-26-004 | 3        | 80,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 80,000           |
| Forestry ATV Replacement               | 21-26-005 | 3        | 9,000          |                |                  |                  |                  | 9,000            |
| Cera Park Wood Storage Shed            | 21-26-006 | 3        | 25,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 25,000           |
| Cera Park Electric Upgrade             | 21-26-007 | 2        | 100,000        |                |                  |                  |                  | 100,000          |
| Dexter Dam Repairs                     | 21-26-008 | 1        | 100,000        |                |                  |                  |                  | 100,000          |
| Boat Dock Replacement                  | 21-26-009 | 3        | 10,000         |                |                  |                  |                  | 10,000           |
| Fleet Vehicle Replacement              | 21-27-001 | 3        |                | 60,000         |                  |                  |                  | 60,000           |
| Road/Parking Lot Improvements          | 21-27-002 | 3        |                | 80,000         |                  |                  |                  | 80,000           |
| Tractor Loader Replacement             | 21-27-003 | 3        |                | 75,000         |                  |                  |                  | 75,000           |
| Utility Cart Replacement               | 21-27-004 | 3        |                | 6,000          |                  |                  |                  | 6,000            |
| Playground Replacement                 | 21-27-005 | 3        |                | 50,000         |                  |                  |                  | 50,000           |
| South Park Dam Repairs                 | 21-27-006 | 1        |                | 100,000        |                  |                  |                  | 100,000          |
| Campground Storage Shed                | 21-27-007 | 3        |                | 25,000         |                  |                  |                  | 25,000           |
| Boat Dock Replacement                  | 21-27-008 | 3        |                | 10,000         |                  |                  |                  | 10,000           |
| Forestry Skidsteer/Mulcher             | 21-27-009 | 3        |                | 130,000        |                  |                  |                  | 130,000          |
| Tandem Dump Truck Replacement          | 21-27-010 | 3        |                | 80,000         |                  |                  |                  | 80,000           |
| Fleet Vehicle Replacement              | 21-28-001 | 3        |                |                | 60,000           |                  |                  | 60,000           |
| Road/Parking Lot Improvements          | 21-28-002 | 3        |                |                | 80,000           |                  |                  | 80,000           |
| Pisten Bully Snow Groomer Replacement  | 21-28-003 | 3        |                |                | 90,000           |                  |                  | 90,000           |
| Bucket Truck Replacement               | 21-28-004 | 3        |                |                | 70,000           |                  |                  | 70,000           |
| Cera Park Utility Tractor              | 21-28-005 | 3        |                |                | 40,000           |                  |                  | 40,000           |
| South Park 2nd Campground Constuction  | 21-28-006 | 4        |                |                | 1,000,000        |                  |                  | 1,000,000        |
| Powers Bluff Towline Replacement       | 21-28-007 | 3        |                |                | 70,000           |                  |                  | 70,000           |
| Dexter ATV Campground Expansion        | 21-28-008 | 4        |                |                | 500,000          |                  |                  | 500,000          |
| Campground Storage Shed                | 21-28-009 | 3        |                |                | 30,000           |                  |                  | 30,000           |
| Fleet Vehicle Replacement              | 21-29-001 | 3        |                |                |                  | 60,000           |                  | 60,000           |
| Road/Parking Lot Improvements          | 21-29-002 | 3        |                |                |                  | 80,000           |                  | 80,000           |
| Tractor Loader Replacement             | 21-29-003 | 3        |                |                |                  | 75,000           |                  | 75,000           |
| Wood Chipper Replacement               | 21-29-004 | 3        |                |                |                  | 70,000           |                  | 70,000           |
| Utility Cart Replacement               | 21-29-005 | 3        |                |                |                  | 7,000            |                  | 7,000            |
| Playground Replacement                 | 21-29-006 | 3        |                |                |                  | 50,000           |                  | 50,000           |
| South Park 2nd Campground Construction | 21-29-007 | 4        |                |                |                  | 1,000,000        |                  | 1,000,000        |
| Dexter ATV Campground Expansion        | 21-29-008 | 4        |                |                |                  | 1,000,000        |                  | 1,000,000        |
| Mower Replacement                      | 21-29-009 | 3        |                |                |                  | 30,000           |                  | 30,000           |
| Fleet Vehicle Replacement              | 21-30-001 | 3        |                |                |                  |                  | 60,000           | 60,000           |
| Road/Parking Lot Improvements          | 21-30-002 | 3        |                |                |                  |                  | 80,000           | 80,000           |
| Dexter ATV Campground Expansion        | 21-30-003 | 4        |                |                |                  |                  | 500,000          | 500,000          |
| North Park Campground Access Bridge    | 21-30-004 | 3        |                |                |                  |                  | 1,500,000        | 1,500,000        |
| Mower Replacement                      | 21-30-005 | 3        |                |                |                  |                  | 30,000           | 30,000           |
| <b>Parks &amp; Forestry Total</b>      |           |          | <b>485,000</b> | <b>616,000</b> | <b>1,940,000</b> | <b>2,372,000</b> | <b>2,170,000</b> | <b>7,583,000</b> |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                     |           |          | <b>485,000</b> | <b>616,000</b> | <b>1,940,000</b> | <b>2,372,000</b> | <b>2,170,000</b> | <b>7,583,000</b> |