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# Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan

2017-2021

Effective January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021

Also covering the municipalities and towns within Forest County



Prepared by: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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**September 2016**

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

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## ABSTRACT

- TITLE:** FOREST COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN  
2017-2021 Effective January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021
- SUBJECT:** This report 1) Assesses the existing recreation system in Forest County; 2) Identifies recreation needs based upon public input, past plans, and recreation standards; and 3) Establishes recommendations for improving the recreation system over the next five years.
- Submission of this report to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) establishes eligibility for the County and local units of government for a variety of Federal and State Aids to purchase land and to add facilities to existing outdoor recreation lands. The Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan is required to apply for Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Wisconsin Stewardship Grant funding.
- Non-profit groups, foundations, and the general public may also use this document to coordinate their own private efforts for developing outdoor recreation facilities.
- DATE:** **September 2016**
- AGENCY:** Forest County Forestry Department  
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- DISCLAIMER:** This plan was prepared by the staff of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission under agreement with the above contact.

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- A. DRAFT Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway Route
- B. Outdoor Recreation Online Survey Results
- C. Park Design and Location Criteria
- D. State and Federal Financial Assistance Programs
- E. Bog Brook Wildlife Area

# Chapter 1

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PURPOSE**

The main purpose of completing the Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plan is to provide direction toward meeting the current and future recreation needs of Forest County. This is accomplished through an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities, and the establishment of recommendations to meet identified needs.

Adoption of this plan by the Forest County Board and subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR), will continue eligibility of the county and its local units of government for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON), and Stewardship Funds. Adoption by all municipalities is not necessary if they wish to cooperate with Forest County to use this plan for grant applications. Local government grant applications have a better chance of approval if Forest County applies on their behalf.

Non-profit groups, foundations, and the general public may also use this document to coordinate their own private efforts for developing outdoor recreation facilities.

### **STATUTORY BASE**

This Outdoor Recreation Plan 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...”

### **PLAN COMPONENTS**

This plan addresses the outdoor recreation needs for the entire county, and each local government within Forest County.

Background information on Forest County was compiled to develop an understanding of the environmental and social characteristics of the county and their meaning for outdoor recreation. An inventory of existing recreational facilities exists in Chapter 3 – Existing Recreation Facilities – of this plan.

The existing recreation system was analyzed to determine current and potential future deficiencies. A combination of public survey compilation, standards analysis, and the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) were utilized to define recreational and open space needs.

The recommendations are general strategies and five-year action programs for recreation facility development. A series of possible tools to aid implementation of these recommendations are set forth in Chapter 8 – Provisions For Updating. The plan concludes with a note on updating to insure that it remains relevant to the needs of the county over the entire five-year span.

## **PAST PLANS**

This outdoor recreation plan was written to continue the parks and recreation program established in the Forest County Outdoor Recreation Plans of 1977-1982, 1989-1993, 1997-2001, 2002-2006, 2007-2011, & 2012-2016.

Summaries of plans and laws that affect outdoor recreation:

### ***Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2011-2016***

**NOTE: This plan is being updated in 2016/2017.**

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. At the national level, this SCORP recognizes the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative, which is based on the idea that the protection of the country's natural heritage is a nonpartisan objective shared by all Americans. The AGO encourages state and local communities to develop local conservation and recreation initiatives.

This document shows a clear vision of how preserving and improving recreation opportunities in Wisconsin fits within a broader national initiative of conservation and recreation.

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

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

#### Segment 2—Forest Co. to Michigan, Nicolet State Trail (Northern Region)

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

#### Segment 13—Dresser to Michigan

This 250-mile-long east-west corridor consists of rail line, the Cattail Trail, which is owned by the DNR and operated by Polk and Barron counties, and an optional highway right-of-way. It

would link with the proposed Hiles to Crandon snowmobile trail in Forest County. The use of roadways in Oneida and Forest counties are an alternative to the rail line.

#### Segment 56—Argonne to Shawano

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

This is an active rail corridor with abandonment expected in fall of 2000 on the segment from Crandon to White Lake. Argonne is on the Dresser to Michigan corridor in the north, and Shawano links to the Mountain Bay Trail in the south of the corridor. The Crandon to Tomahawk corridor and the White Lake to Antigo corridor link to the Langlade County to Michigan corridor to form a loop. An old abandoned corridor east of White Lake in the future could link this corridor to the Nicolet State Trail or connect it to road routes. This corridor runs along the east shore of Lake Metonga at Crandon, then runs south through forested lake areas of the Nicolet National Forest. In Langlade County it follows the Wolf River for about seven miles and continues south through the Northwest portion of the Menominee Indian Reservation, terminating at Shawano and its connection to the Mountain Bay Trail.

#### Segment 69—Tomahawk to Crandon

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

### ***2004 Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan***

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

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

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

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

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

**NOTE: This plan is being updated in 2016.**

This 2004 document is intended to guide the development of an interconnected bikeway system for the North Central Wisconsin Region. Potential trails are identified, and an improvement description was created for each county, which identifies how to create the specific trail segments in each county. New regional and county bike plans are scheduled to begin in 2012.

Two abandoned rail corridors in Forest County have great potential. The rail line from Crandon to White Lake in Langlade County was recently abandoned, while the DNR and DOT have owned much of the rail corridor from Carter to Popple River for some time. These trails are shown on Map 1. (Note: The rail line from Carter to Popple River is complete and approved for hiking, biking, ATVing, and snowmobiling – Nicolet State Trail.)

### ***Forest County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan***

This 2006–2021 document was used to inventory existing recreation facilities shown on Map 3.

### ***Forest County Comprehensive Plan, 2011-2031***

This plan is a combination of nine chapters. Within the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter are the following goals that relate to outdoor recreation:

1. Protect the County's natural features, including lakes, open space, wetlands, wildlife habitat, woodlands, and unique physical areas.
2. Protect large tract woodlands and enhance County Forests.
3. Reduce contamination of surface and groundwater resources in the County.
4. Encourage and support the preservation of natural areas that minimize flooding, such as grasslands, wetlands and woodlands.
5. Allow for needed non-metallic mining while balancing the interests of adjacent landowners and the County.
6. Enhance and promote sustainable multiple use forest management to benefit the forest industry and improve opportunities for tourism based industry. Work to exclude non-sustainable forest management strategies including no management zones, improper harvesting techniques, or extended rotation harvesting which result in loss of forest health and productivity. These practices put the forest of the neighboring landowners at risk from forest insects, disease and wildfire as well as reducing the raw material supply for the timber industry.
7. Preserve, protect and enhance surface water quality within the County by protecting shorelands and wetlands which provide the natural filters for surface water and protecting from invasive aquatic species introductions. Provide for proper and adequate accesses to lakes and streams for their tourism value. Preservation of water quality will preserve the tourism value of the water resources and maintain future potential of this industry.

8. Support land management practices on the Nicolet National Forest, Industrial Forests, and other lands in the county which provide habitat improvements for white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, black bear and waterfowl.

Objectives:

1. New development should not negatively impact natural resources.
2. Protect surface water, groundwater, and shoreline quality.
3. Identify the critical natural resources, such as lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands.
4. Promote opportunities that support both natural resource protection and economic development.
5. Encourage the development of a natural area network connecting open areas, wetlands, and woodlands.
6. Integrate and implement the County Forest Comprehensive Plan.
7. Balance access to natural areas with resource protection efforts.
8. Promote groundwater protection efforts to maintain and lower nitrate, pesticide, and volatile organic compound pollution.
9. Promote environmentally sound development.
10. Promote proper reclamation techniques in the County for non-metallic mineral mining sites.
11. Minimize impacts to the County's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.
12. Encourage proper forest management on National Forest Lands, Wisconsin Managed Forest Law Lands and Industrial Forest Lands within the County. Maintain raw material supply by promotion of sustainable cutting levels to the calculated annual allowable cut on the National Forest Lands.
13. Encourage multiple use forest management on all forest land including uses such as standard multiple uses including hunting, fishing, hiking, and biking as well as wildlife management for game species and motorized recreation including snowmobiles and ATV's to create opportunities to diversify our economy into the tourism based industries.

14. Provide adequate, natural resource friendly water access points to all lakes and streams and landings to maintain public use of water resources and maintain the tourism industry value.
15. Discourage introduction of aquatic invasive species by providing education and support to lake associations in their efforts to limit this disturbance to the surface waters.

Policies:

1. Work cooperatively with the WDNR and other forestry agencies and organizations in sponsoring workshops and educational materials regarding sound forest management practices and programs.
2. Implement the policies as identified in the County's Comprehensive Forest Plan.
3. Explore the development of a destination Motorized Recreational Area compatible with surrounding natural resources.
4. Work with federal, state, and local governments to manage natural resources throughout the county.
5. Reduce and actively seek to reduce eutropication of our wetlands, lakes and streams.
6. Officially request the National Forest to maintain harvest levels on Forest County lands at their highest calculated annual allowable cut for sustainable forestry to provide sustained raw material flow for industry in the County.
7. Discourage forest management set-asides which limit raw material supply and limit recreational value of lands. Examples of these include non-motorized areas and wilderness areas.
8. Establish formal meetings with US Forest Service and the County Forestry Committee to have input into the determination of the annual allowable cut and other issues related to the National Forest lands within the County.

Insert Map 1 – Potential Trails and Legacy Areas

**Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056**

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

The Land Legacy report recommends protection of these lands by using federal, state, and local funding opportunities; along with: possibly creating new kinds of incentives for landowners, working to craft comprehensive plans, or offering different types of technical assistance.

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

**CN Chequamegon-Nicolet**

**National Forest**

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

**PE Peshtigo River**

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

**LH Laona Hemlock Hardwoods**

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

**UP Upper Wolf River**

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

Other Areas of Interest includes:

- North Otter Creek
- Elvoy and Brule Creeks

# Chapter 2

## DESCRIPTION OF FOREST COUNTY

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

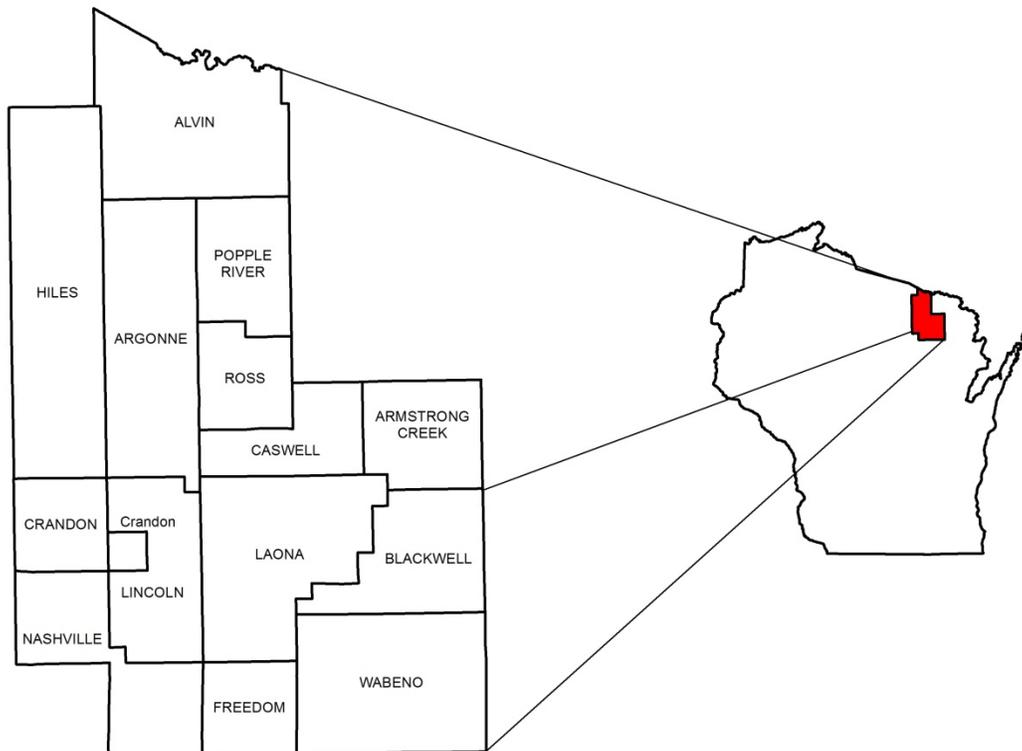
#### Introduction

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

#### Geography

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

**Figure 1 Location**



## **Climate**

Winters in Forest County are very cold, and the short summers are fairly warm. The short frost-free period during the summer limits cropping mainly to forage crops, small grain, and adapted vegetables. Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year but reaches a peak in summer. Snow covers the ground much of the time from late fall through early spring. The total annual precipitation is about 30 inches. Of this total, more than 21 inches, or about 70 percent, usually falls in April through September. The growing season for most crops falls within this period. In 2 years out of 10, the rainfall in April through September is less than 18 inches. The sun shines 65 percent of the time possible in summer and 45 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is from the northwest. Average wind speed is highest, 12 miles per hour, in spring.

## **Topography & Geology**

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

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

## **Surface Water**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Groundwater**

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

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

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

### **Soils**

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

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

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

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

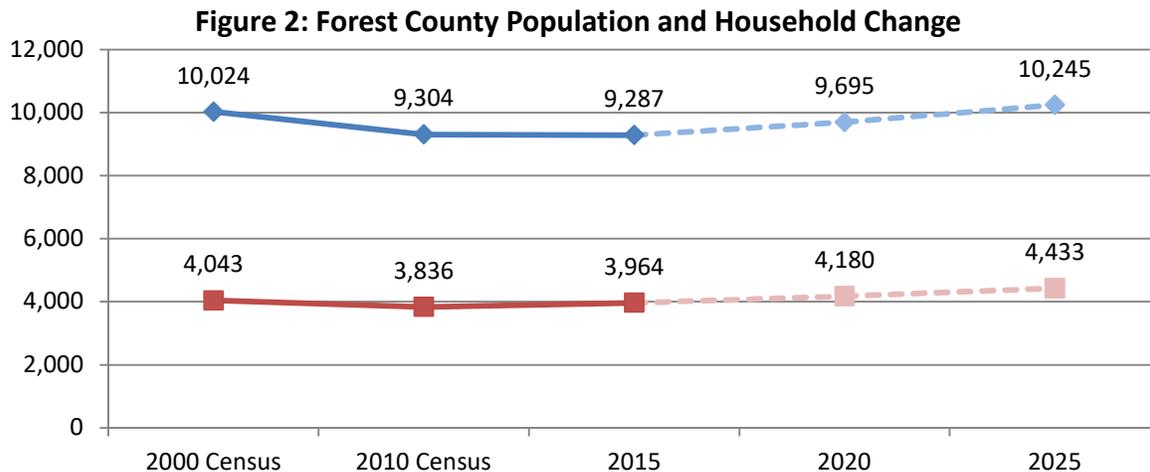
### Introduction

This section describes social and economic demographics of Forest County. Overall recreation demand within Wisconsin is described in the 2011-2016 SCORP. The social characteristics from this section in the Forest County CORP combined with recreation demands as shown in SCORP's Chapter 2 can help determine the appropriate recreation investments in the county.

### Population and Households

The relationship between population demographics, and supply & demand of recreational facilities is only a bare minimum guide for developing outdoor recreational facilities in Forest County. Understanding how each park is used, and if specific activities are in demand are better factors to use when determining future recreational facility needs. Combining population demographics from this section with public participation feedback (results are shown in the Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment chapter) will provide a complete understanding of outdoor recreational facility needs. Both permanent and seasonal residents must be counted when considering outdoor recreation facilities. Seasonal residents pay the same amount of property taxes as residents, but the only services they pay for and do not use are the school districts.

The 2015 population estimate for Forest County is 9,287 people, a slight decline from the 2010 census population of 9,304, continuing the decline that has occurred since the 2000 Census when the population was 10,024. See Figure 2. This 7.2 percent decline from 2000 to 2010 is compared to 5.8 percent growth in Wisconsin and 8.0 percent growth the United States during the same time period.



Source: U.S. Census, Wisconsin Department of Administration 2015 Estimate, Wisconsin DOA 2013 projections

Changes in population are made up of two components. More births than deaths produces a natural increase, and more people moving into an area than moving out produces a migration increase. Most of the decline in population in Forest County was due to outmigration. Forest County's natural decrease was -0.3 percent, while outmigration was a much higher -6.9 percent. Forest County is one of eight Wisconsin counties that had a negative net migration between 2000 and 2010.

Forest County is expected to begin growing population between 2015 and 2020, and continues that population growth through 2035, when the population begins declining again. The population growth is expected to come entirely from in-migration. This pattern of growth and decline is in large part due to the aging of the baby boomer generation. Population growth will occur as many boomers retire in Forest County, becoming permanent occupants of existing seasonal housing, then begin to decline again as many will move to more urban counties where services are in close proximity and their needs can be more easily met.

Household sizes in Forest County have been shrinking over time, much like in the State and Nation. In 2010, there were 3,836 households and the average household size was 2.33 people. In 2000 there were 4,043 households and the average household size was 2.39, a 2.5 percent decrease. This trend is expected to continue into the future, leading to faster household growth than population growth. Similar to population, household growth in Forest is expected to continue through 2035, when it begins declining.

Almost 66 percent of households are family households, and about 25 percent are families with their own children under 18 years old. Over 27 percent of households have someone under 18 years old, and 34 percent have someone 65 or older.

Forest County has a very large proportion of seasonally occupied housing compared to the rest of the state. See Figure 3. Over 57 percent of the housing units in Forest are considered vacant, and 52.7 percent are vacant for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Four of the 14 towns in Forest County have over 70 percent of their housing seasonally occupied, while ten towns have over 50 percent of their housing seasonally occupied. These towns will have much greater fluctuations in population throughout the year that needs to be considered and accommodated when planning for outdoor recreation.

**Figure 3:  
Year Round and Seasonal Housing, 2014**

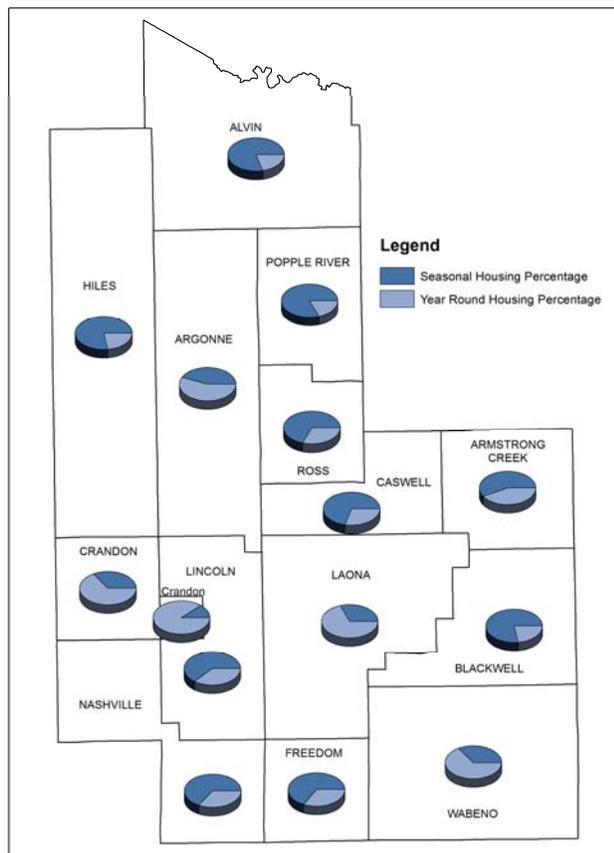


Table 1 shows historical permanent and estimated seasonal populations for Forest County municipalities. Seasonal populations were calculated from U.S. Census data. The number of seasonal housing units was multiplied by the average household size of the permanently occupied housing units in that municipality.

Table 1	Permanent and Seasonal Population by Forest County Municipality							
	Community	2000 Population			2010 Population			Total Pop. Change
Seasonal Pop.		Permanent Pop.	Total Pop.	Seasonal Pop.	Permanent Pop.	Total Pop.		
Alvin	572	186	758	714	157	871	113	14.9%
Argonne	274	532	806	458	512	970	164	20.3%
Armstrong Creek	412	463	875	624	409	1,033	158	18.1%
Blackwell	152	347	499	315	332	647	148	29.7%
Caswell	261	102	363	231	91	322	-41	-11.3%
Crandon (Town)	454	614	1,068	394	650	1,044	-24	-2.2%
Freedom	633	376	1,009	718	345	1,063	54	5.4%
Hiles	1,041	404	1,445	1,196	311	1,507	62	4.3%
Laona	545	1,367	1,912	626	1,212	1,838	-74	-3.9%
Lincoln	1,429	1,005	2,434	1,630	955	2,585	151	6.2%
Nashville	1,738	1,157	2,895	2,156	1,064	3,220	325	11.2%
Popple River	193	79	272	227	44	271	-1	-0.4%
Ross	314	167	481	336	136	472	-9	-1.9%
Wabeno	752	1,264	2,016	721	1,166	1,887	-129	-6.4%
Crandon (City)	229	1,961	2,190	238	1,920	2,158	-32	-1.5%
Forest County	8,999	10,024	19,023	10,346	9,304	19,650	627	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC

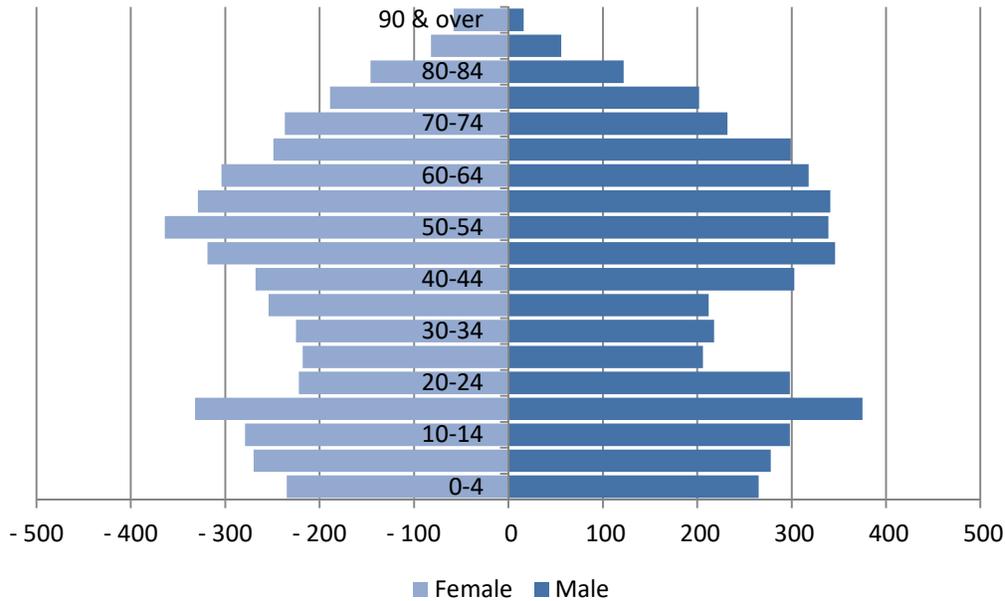
There is a clear pattern county-wide between the seasonal and permanent population changes in Table 1. Between 2000 and 2010 Table 1 shows that each community except of the Town of Crandon experienced a loss in Permanent population. Table 1 also shows that each community except the Towns of Caswell, Crandon and Wabeno experienced growth in seasonal population. The growth of the seasonal population outpaced the decline of the permanent population which results in a population increase of 3.3%.

## Age

The 2010 United States Census also indicates that Forest County has an older population. The county median age of 44.1 years is older than Wisconsin's median age of 38.5. The median age has increased in both Forest County and Wisconsin between 2000 and 2010, from 39.9 and 36 years old, respectively. Like many northern Wisconsin counties, it is evident that the median age in Forest has grown faster than the state. Forest County also has 20.3% of its population 65 years or older, which is a higher percentage than Wisconsin who has 13.7% of its residents 65 years or older. Figure 3 shows the distribution of age groups in Forest County. The age distribution in Forest County is concentrated in the middle-aged 45-65 year old groups and the 5-20 year old groups. The most

heavily concentrated age groups are very near to the common 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 80 years old. The fact that Forest County has an older population needs to be considered with all public investments, including recreational facilities.

**Figure 3: Forest County 2010 Age Pyramid**



Source: Wisconsin DOA

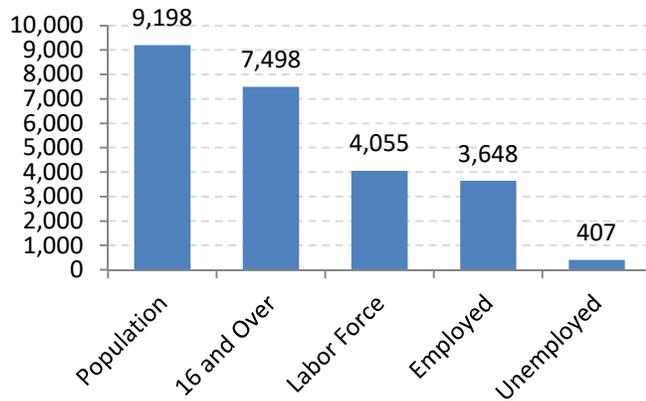
### Ethnic Background

The people of Forest County mostly identify as white, at approximately 84.9 percent of the population. The next largest group is Native American and Alaska Native, at 15.5 percent. Following that are Black or African American at 1.1 percent, Asian at 0.3 percent, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander at 0.2 percent, and Some Other Race at 0.5 percent. 1.5 percent of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

### Employment and Economy

Forest County has 7,498 people age 16 and over, 54.1 percent of which are in the labor force, i.e. actively working or seeking work. According to the 2010-2014 ACS, the unemployment rate in Forest County was 10 percent, compared to 7.2 percent in the state and 9.2 percent in the United States. Forest County has a much lower proportion of people in the labor force and a higher proportion unemployed than the state as a whole. The Wisconsin labor force

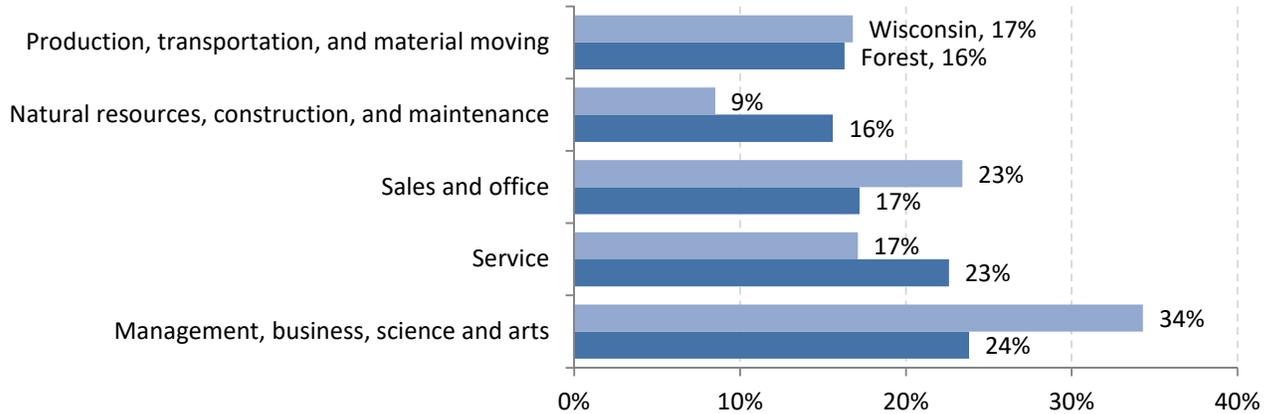
**Figure 4: Forest County Employment**



Source: 2010-2014 ACS

participation rate is 67.4 percent. Forest County experiences very high fluctuations in unemployment due to the number of jobs in leisure and hospitality and construction.

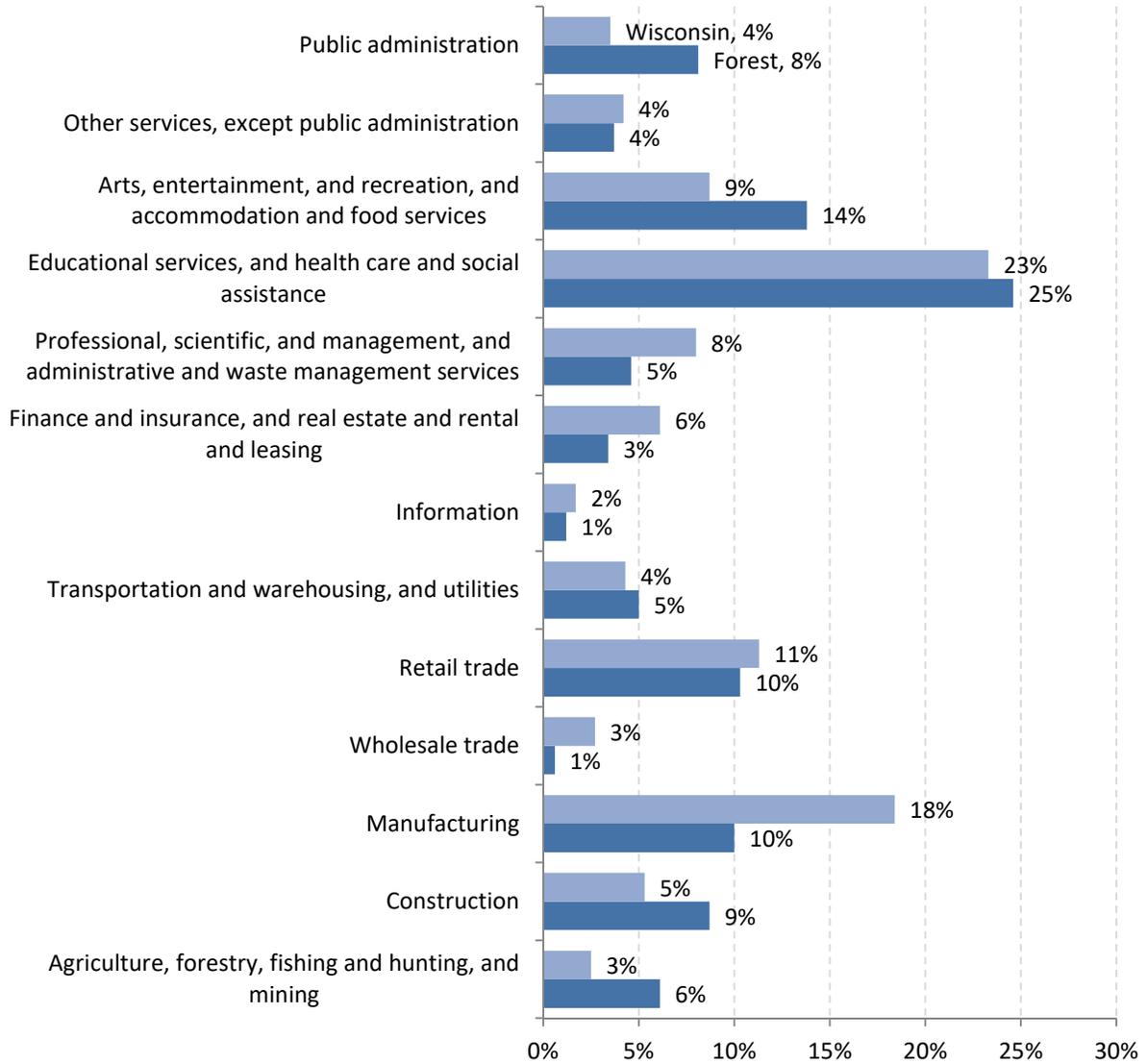
**Figure 5: Forest County Resident Occupation**



Source: 2010-2014 ACS

Figure 5 shows that most residents of Forest County are employed in management, business, science and arts occupations at 28.3 percent or service occupations at 22.6 percent. Figure 6 shows that the most common industry for Forest County residents is education services, health care and social assistance at 24.6 percent. Forest County has a higher proportion than the State in construction, natural resources, and leisure and hospitality industries, all of which are highly seasonal. This may partially explain Forest County’s higher unemployment rate. The state has a much higher proportion of employment in manufacturing and professional, scientific, and management industries.

**Figure 6: Forest County Resident Industry**



Source: 2010-2014 ACS

Table 2 shows industry employment in Forest County. The highest levels of employment are in the manufacturing and trade, transportation and utilities industries. The one year change shows declines in natural resources, information and other services. Location quotient is a method of measuring the relative concentration of that industry in Lincoln County compared to the nation, with a value of 1 meaning the concentration is identical. Lincoln County has a higher concentration of manufacturing, crop and animal production, finance and insurance, transportation and warehousing, and retail trade.

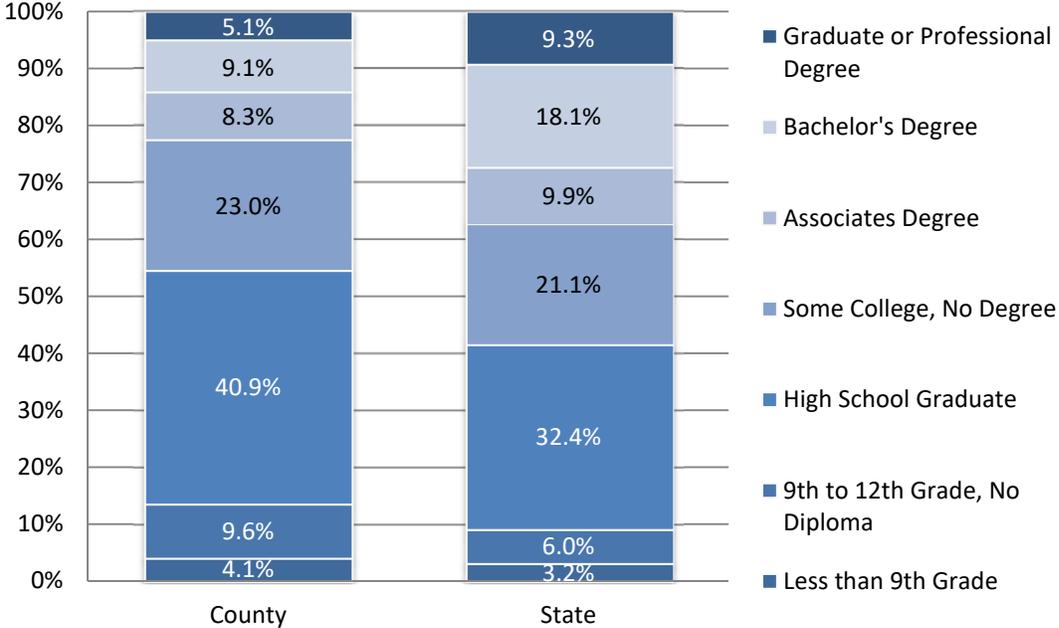
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Employment</b>	
	<b>Annual Avg.</b>	<b>1-Year Change</b>
Natural Resources	28	-3
Construction	59	-8
Manufacturing	280	27
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	426	-4
Information	S	N/A
Financial Activities	86	-1
Professional & Business Services	67	-20
Education & Health	543	11
Leisure & Hospitality	556	-18
Other services	S	N/A
Public Administration	1,001	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,107</b>	<b>24</b>

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Training, QCEW, June 2015

As of the 2010-2014 American Community Survey, median household income in Forest County was \$40,331, and per capita income was \$20,890. This is significantly lower than the state and nation, which can be explained by the lower proportion of people working in Forest County. The distribution of household incomes in Forest are fairly similar to the state, but with far fewer households making \$100,000 or more, and more households making between \$10,000 and \$99,999 annually.

Educational Attainment in Forest County (Figure 7) is generally lower than the State of Wisconsin. 86.3 percent of Forest County residents have graduated high school, while 90.8 percent of Wisconsin residents have graduated high school. 14.2 percent of Forest County have a bachelor's degree or higher, while 27.4 percent of Wisconsin residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. The proportion of people with some college, but no degree is higher in Forest County than the state, and the proportion with an associate's degree is close to the State. The lower educational attainment of the County can also help explain the lower per capita and median incomes discussed earlier.

**Figure 7: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2010-2014**



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Insert Map 2 – Outdoor Recreation

Insert Map 3 – City of Crandon Outdoor Recreation

Insert Map 4 – Town of Laona Outdoor Recreation

Insert Map 5 – Town of Wabeno Outdoor Recreation

## Chapter 3

# EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

### INTRODUCTION

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

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

Existing recreation facilities are grouped under the following headings: Linear Facilities; Public Access Points to Water Bodies; Public Campgrounds, Points Of Interest; County Forest; City and Town Facilities; School District Facilities; State Facilities; Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned; Federal Facilities that are not already listed; and Private Outdoor Recreation Facilities.

### TRAIL FACILITIES

#### Non-Motorized Trails

##### ***Forest County Forestry Department***

- *Hemlock Lake Trail* – located one mile east and four miles south of Crandon off Hwy W on Hemlock Lake Road. Two miles of gentle and intermediate cross-country trails and parking are available.
- *Otter Springs Recreation Area* – located four miles east of Crandon on Otter Spring Road/Forest Road 2378. Trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, mountain biking and horseback riding including a 1 1/4 mile loop, 3/4 mile loop for beginners, and an intermediate 3 mile loop. All trails are well groomed and marked. There is also a ski shelter, benches, fire pit and outdoor toilet.
- *Bradley Lake Trail* – There are three different trail sections to this system. One is located one mile south of Potawatomi Trail Road. Another is west of Lake Lucerne off Duff Road. This section includes the ATV trails (see ATV Trails of this section). The other is located west of County W on the west and east sides of Bradley Lake Road. These 12 miles of trails are used primarily for hunting and hiking.

### ***Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest***

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

- *Ed's Lake Trail* – located on County Highway W between Wabeno and Crandon. Cross county ski trails include a 2.3 mile loop for beginners, and a 2.7 mile loop or 3.5 mile loop for intermediate skiers. All trails are groomed. There are also 6 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails in upland hardwoods.
- *Nicolet North Trail* – located 10.5 miles east of Eagle River on Forest Road 2460 to the trailhead. Cross-country ski trails include 13 miles of groomed trails with several loop options. In the summer months, these trails can be used for hiking and mountain biking. The Nicolet North Trail connects with the Anvil Trail.
- *Franklin Nature Lake Trail* – located 9 miles east of Eagle River on Forest Road 2181 to the campground and trailhead. This is a one mile interpretive loop trail that takes you through a tamarack swamp, hemlock cathedral, and 300-year old white pines.
- *Hidden Lakes Trail* – this is a thirteen mile trail which begins at Franklin Nature Lake Trail and eventually joins the Luna-White Deer Trail.
- *Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail* – located 9.5 miles east of Wabeno on Forest Road 3132. This is a one-third mile access interpretive trail which follows the north shore of North Creek impoundment. This is also a state designated Wildlife viewing area.
- *Halley Creek Bird Trail* – located five miles east of Blackwell on Forest Road 2103. It is a one mile loop trail with bird viewing opportunities in four different habitat types.
- *Michigan Rapids Trail* – located 3 miles north of Laona on Forest Road 2134. This is a two mile hike along the Peshtigo River to the rapids.
- *Argonne Forest Trail* – located 1.5 miles east of Hiles on Forest Road 2184. A self-guided loop trail gives a hiker a chance to learn more about the northern hardwoods and forest management. The trail features 17 stops along a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile path.
- *Scott Lake Trail and Shelp Lake Trail* – located on Forest Road 2183. The one-third mile Scott Lake Trail is located on the south side of 2183. The boardwalk to Shelp Lake is located on the north side of 2183. This walk will take you out over a floating bog.
- *Luna-White Deer Trail* – located off Divide Road to the Luna-White Deer Lake campground and trailhead. Hikers can park either at the White Pine swimming area or the boat ramp on Luna Lake.
- *Sevenmile Trail* – located seven and a half miles north of Hiles off Forest Road 2435 to Seven-Mile Lake Campground and trailhead.
- *Giant Pine Trail* – located two miles north of Hiles on off Forest Road 2414 to the trailhead. This is a 1.5 mile loop in the Headwaters Wilderness where white pines overtop the hardwood forest.
- *Bailey Lake Equestrian Trail* – trailhead is located off of Forest Road 3861. This trail is approximately 12 miles used as a designated horse trail. In the winter, parts of the trail are used for snowmobiling.
- *Quartz Hill Trail* – located in the southeast corner of Forest County. From Carter, take State Highway 32 south 1 mile. The parking area is on the west side of the highway. This trail has two sections; one on the east and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile trail on the west side of State Highway 32. The east section leads across a boardwalk to the top of Quartz Hill.

<b>Table 3</b>		<b>Trail Uses</b>					
<b>County Trails</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Hiking</b>	<b>Mtn. Bike</b>	<b>X-C Ski</b>	<b>Horse</b>	<b>Interpretive</b>	<b>Difficulty</b>
Hemlock Lake Trail	2	X	X	X			Easy
Otter Springs Trail	5	X	X	X	X		Easy - Moderate
Bradley Lake Trail	12	X	X	X	X		Easy
<b>Nicolet Nat'l Trails</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Hiking</b>	<b>Mtn. Bike</b>	<b>X-C Ski</b>	<b>Horse</b>	<b>Interpretive</b>	<b>Difficulty</b>
Ed's Lake Trail	6	X	X	X			Easy - Difficult
Nicolet North Trail	15	X	X	X	X		Medium
Franklin Nature Lake	1	X				X	Easy
Hidden Lakes Trail	13	X					Medium
Knowles Creek Interpretive Trail	2/3	X				X	Easy
Halley Creek Bird Trail	1	X				X	Easy
Michigan Rapids Trail	2	X					Medium
Argonne Experimental Forest Trail	3/4	X				X	Medium
Scott Lake Trail and Shelp Lake Trail	1/2	X					Easy
Luna-White Deer Trail	4	X					Easy
Sevenmile Trail	2	X					Medium
Giant Pine Trail							
Bailey Lake Equestrian Trail	15	X			X		Easy
Quartz Hill Trail	1 1/4	X				X	Medium- Difficult

Source: USDA – Forest Service

### ATV Trails

#### ***Forest County Forest ATV Trail***

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

#### ***Nicolet State Trail***

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

### ***Wolf River State Trail***

The Wolf River State Trail is open in Forest County and runs for 14.4 miles from the Forest/Langlade county line to Crandon.

Only use roads that are legally marked as ATV routes to leave the corridor. The Nicolet State and Wolf River State Trails are the only trails in Forest County that are currently open to both snowmobile and ATV. No other snowmobile trail in Forest County is open to ATV use at this time.

### ***Chequamegon – Nicolet National Forest (Forest)***

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

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

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

### Snowmobile Trails

Forest County has about 405.8 miles of groomed, state funded trails winding throughout the county. All trails link to both casinos and many hospitality businesses in Forest County. All trail maintenance is contracted to snowmobile clubs. The trail segments that exist within the County include:

- *100 Mile Snow Safari Trails* – 148.7 miles
- *Lumberjack Memorial Trails* – 94.1 miles
- *Three Lakes Trails* – 90 miles
- *Tombstone-Pickereel Trails* – 23.6 miles
- *Black Bear Sportsmen's Club* – 49.4 miles

### Water Trails

A water trail is a network of access points, resting places, and attractions for users of water craft on lakes and rivers. There are over 317 streams and rivers providing canoeists 710 miles of routes.

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

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

### Rustic Road

Forest County has one rustic road. Rustic Road 34 is a combination of Fishel Rd, Cary Dam Rd, and Lakeview Dr near the intersection of STHs 70 and 55.

### Auto Tours

Two driving tours exist within the Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest. The Eagle River Self-Guided Natural History Auto Tour is an 80 mile auto tour that starts in Eagle River, travels through Oneida, Forest, and Vilas counties, and ends in Three Lakes. The Lakewood Auto Tour is a 65 mile auto tour in the south part of Forest County.

## **PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS TO WATER BODIES**

Public Access sites on Forest County's lakes and streams are catalogued in the *Forest County Visitors Guide* under lakes and streams. Public access to waterbodies is ensured when land subdivision occurs by state statute. See the Implementation Strategies chapter for more details. Forest County and the City of Crandon each have one access point on Lake Metonga. All other access points in Forest County are maintained by the towns or USDA Forest Service.

## PUBLIC CAMPGROUNDS

### Forest County

- *Forest County Veteran's Memorial Park* – 10 tent and 55 trailer spaces, electric hookups, dump station for RV's, one disabled accessible campsite, drinking water, sanitary facilities meeting ADA standards, beachhouse/restroom/shower facility, picnic facilities, two picnic shelters, grills, playground, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, basketball court, swimming beach, boating, boat landing, fishing, fishing pier, and a manager present. Firewood and ice are also available on site.

### Tribally Owned

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

### Chequamegon–Nicolet National Forest

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

## POINTS OF INTEREST

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

### Historic Buildings and Sites

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

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

Wisconsin's Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) lists 73 properties on it within Forest County.

- City of Crandon – 22 sites
- Town of Hiles – 17 sites
- Town of Armstrong Creek – 10 sites
- Town of Alvin – 5 sites
- Town of Blackwell – 5 sites
- Town of Laona – 4 sites
- Town of Lincoln – 4 sites
- Town of Wabeno – 3 sites
- Town of Argonne – 2 sites
- Town of Nashville – 1 site.

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

### Historical Markers

A state historical marker titled: **Northern Highland** is located on USH 8, 1.8 miles east of Crandon.

A state historical marker titled: **Battle of Mole Lake** is located on STH 55, in the center of Mole Lake.

A state historical marker titled: **Laona School Forest** is located on STH 32, 1 mile south of Laona.

## Geologic Site

Forest County's topography, and geology are described on page 8 in Chapter 2 – Description of Forest County.

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

## **COUNTY FOREST**

The Forest County Forestry and Recreation Department manages 14,096 acres of county forest. This land is managed for multiple uses, and is independently certified as sustainably managed and harvested. Some of the county forest is closed to motorized vehicles. Examples of permitted recreational activities are hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, camping, bough cutting (permit required), firewood collection (permit required), and wildlife observation. Refer to Map 2 for Forest County Forest Land.

## **COUNTY WILDLIFE AREA**

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

See Attachment E for additional information.

## **CITY and TOWN FACILITIES**

### City of Crandon

Recreational opportunities that exist in the City of Crandon include:

- *City Beach* – The beach is located on Lake Metonga's north shore, on the city's south side. Facilities include a beach house, two boat launches with a pier at each, picnic area, playground, restrooms, shelter, swimming, and volleyball courts.
- *Palmer Park* – This park is located next to City Hall on the west side of city. Facilities include a small ice skating rink, a little league and softball field, basketball court, play equipment with safety surfacing, restroom, and a 0.6-mile bike path.
- *Peshigo Lake* – A boat landing is the only recreation facility at this location at this time
- *Cardinal Park* – This park has two little league fields, a basketball court, a volleyball court, two tennis courts, an ice rink with a warming house, playground, restrooms, two shelters, and hiking/nature/fitness trail.

- *Park Louise* – This undeveloped park is located on the north side of the city.
- *Forest County Fairgrounds (City of Crandon)* – Facilities include three buildings for displays, animal barn, horse arena, and restrooms.

### Town Facilities

Various towns throughout Forest County maintain the following recreational facilities:

- *Argonne Town Park* – facilities include two ball fields, a covered pavilion that meets ADA standards, sanitary facilities, and a basketball court
- *Armstrong Creek Town Park* – facilities include a pavilion (meets ADA standards) with picnic tables, playground equipment, basketball court, and sanitary facilities.
- *Buchanan Recreation Area (Town of Alvin)* – facilities include shelter/storage, horseshoe pit, volleyball court, basketball, playground equipment, and nature trail
- *Town of Blackwell Park* – facilities at the Rat River location include a picnic area, an ATV trailhead with parking and ADA compliant privies.
- *Monte's Playground (Town of Blackwell)* – facilities include a playground, shelter, and 2 picnic tables. This land is approximately one acre and is adjacent to the Town Hall. These facilities do not meet ADA standards.
- *Rat River Recreational Trail (Town of Blackwell)* – this non-motorized trail has a limestone base and an ADA accessible privy.
- *Silver Lake Park (Town of Laona)* – facilities include a swimming beach, basketball court, two shelters with picnic tables, volleyball court, sanitary facility, benches, and grills.
- *Laona Town Park* – facilities include a picnic area and ice-skating area.
- *Town of Ross Park* – facilities include a baseball/softball field and a playground area.
- *Lake Van Zile Community Park (Town of Ross)* – facilities include a boat access, picnic area, sanitary facility, and swimming beach.
- *American Legion Park (Town of Wabeno)* – facilities include ADA restrooms, a barrier-free boardwalk and trail along the North Branch of the Oconto River with fishing piers, picnic area, playground, two shelters that meet ADA standards, playground equipment, basketball court, and tennis courts.
- *Trump Lake Park (Town of Wabeno)* – facilities include a boat access, picnic area, sanitary facility, shelter, and swimming beach.

- *Wabeno Fairgrounds* (Town of Wabeno) – facilities include a shelter.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT FACILITIES

Recreational opportunities in Forest County that are maintained by public schools.

*Crandon School District* – Facilities include a baseball/softball field, football field, playground, shelter, ice skating rink, and hiking/nature/fitness trail.

- Crandon School Forest, 10 acres, E1/2 NE1/4, S25 T36N R12E;
- Hovind Family School Forest, 40 acres, SE1/4 SE1/4, S28 T36N R12E;

*Laona School District* – Facilities include a baseball field, football field, and two tennis courts on the east side. The west side of the school provides playground equipment and basketball courts.

- Laona School Forest, 63 acres, N1/2 NW1/4, S6 T35N R15E;

*Wabeno School District* – Facilities include a baseball/softball field, football field, restrooms, shelter, ice skating area, and sledding.

- Wabeno School Forest, 40 acres, SE1/4 SW1/4, S16 T34N R15E.

## STATE FACILITIES

### State Wildlife Areas

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

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

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

### State Natural Areas (SNA)

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

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

- Most SNAs are open to the public year around unless otherwise noted in the SNA site descriptions or posted at the site. SNAs within State Parks are generally open between 6:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M.
- Please recognize and respect the property of private landowners adjacent to SNAs by not trespassing. Seek the landowner's permission before crossing private lands.
- Do not collect plants (including fruits, nuts, or edible plant parts), animals, fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead. Collecting for scientific research requires a permit issued by the DNR.
- Vehicles, including bicycles, ATVs, aircraft, and snowmobiles, are prohibited except on trails and roadways designated for their use. Access is only by foot, skis, snowshoes, and watercraft. Some trails are wheelchair accessible.
- Pets are allowed on most DNR-owned SNAs, but must be kept on a leash no longer than 8', unless they are dogs being used for hunting purposes. Pets are prohibited on sites owned by The Nature Conservancy and most other private conservation organizations. Horseback riding is not allowed.
- Camping and fires are generally prohibited.
- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited, except on SNAs #98 and #164.
- Fishing, trapping, and hunting are allowed on most DNR-owned properties in accordance with state regulations.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) listed the following State Natural Areas in Forest County. Each site was given a statewide identification (**No. #**) by the DNR:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **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.

Under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) 4,019 acres are open to the public to hunt and fish, as of 2015.

There are 119,657 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program as of 2015. Of that 119,657 acres there are 85,985 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.).

Other than the following exception, MFL lands enrolled as open must not be posted as 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. Landowners may prohibit any activity associated with public use of open MFL land which may cause property damage (e.g. cutting trees, brush, building permanent blinds or tree stands, putting nails in trees). Temporary tree stands

and bait stations (where hunting regulations allow) are an accepted and allowable method of hunting conditional upon no damage to the property, including the tree. Access by motor vehicles or snowmobiles may be prohibited by the landowner on open as well as closed lands. Open MFL lands can be found on the DNR website at <http://dnrmaps.wi.gov/opfl/>. It is the responsibility of the user to know where they are and which land is open to the public.

## **FEDERAL FACILITIES**

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

## **PRIVATE OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES**

Crandon International Off-Road Raceway – This 1.7-mile course is located on Highway 8 just one mile west of Crandon. Every Labor Day weekend, the raceway is used for the World Championship Off-Road Races, along with the Brush Run 101 held every year on the third weekend in June. Crowds can swell to over 60,000 people in one day of these events.

There is one private golf course in Forest County that is open to the public for a fee.

There are approximately 10 private campgrounds totaling 291 campsites in Forest County. All of these campgrounds are available for a fee to the public.

## Chapter 4

# OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Recreational needs within the county were identified by collecting public input, creating a county facility assessment, and reviewing past plans.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTS COMPLETED FROM 2012-2016

#### Forest County

##### **Veterans Memorial Park**

1. Trees – Continue the tree-planting program
2. Pavilion Construction
3. Fire Rings – Continue to purchase fire rings for campsites for cooking and campfires.
4. Park Expansion – Consider development of 25 additional campsites within the existing campground and/or expand into the wooded area adjacent to the existing campground.
5. Pit Toilets – Replace four existing pit toilets with modern, ADA accessible facilities. (Completed)
6. Parking Areas – Increase size of parking areas. Stripe and organize existing parking areas to serve more vehicles. (Completed)
7. Borders/Fences – Replace existing fences and borders with boulders (maintenance free and aesthetically pleasing). (Completed)
8. Electric Service Pedestals – Upgrade existing power pedestals to each campsite for camper safety. Add additional power pedestals for expansion and high use occupancy. (Completed)
9. Playground Equipment – Add ADA accessible playground equipment and upgrade existing playground structures. (Completed)
10. Boat Parking – Designate an area adjacent to the tent camping area for parking and mooring boats and canoes. (Completed)

#### Town of Blackwell

- Two ADA compliant privies were added to Town parks.
- Seven miles of non-motorized trail were created, along with installing picnic tables, information kiosks, and benches.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

### Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, Forestry/Parks Department staff have received public input about its parks, and forests.

### Summary of Survey Responses

An overview of the outdoor recreation survey that was created for this CORP exists below. See **Attachment B** for a more detailed survey response summary.

NCWRPC mailed survey notices to each town, the City of Crandon; each library; and emailed or mailed survey notices to a whole list of outdoor recreation groups provided by Forestry/Parks Department.

We received 291 responses to the Survey. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, so several questions had slightly smaller response groups. Also, if a question did not apply to a respondent, then the survey skipped them ahead to the next relevant question, which also provided smaller responses to some questions.

About 40% of respondents live or have a summer home in Forest County; most of the rest of the respondents probably are members of one of the recreation groups that receive the survey link.

Through an IP address analysis of who took the survey, and by reviewing survey responses, it appears that only a few people took the survey twice, 3 times, 4 times, or 5 times (could be husband and wife, and children/adult children). Responses appeared to be slightly different from these duplicate responses, so nobody appears to have “stuffed the ballot box.”

Almost 84% of the respondents were male (16% female), and they were heavily from the 45 to 54 age group (34%). Also from 35-44 age [21%], 55-64 age [19%], more than 64 [11%], and under 34 [15%].

### **Key Findings of the CORP Survey:**

- The top recreational activities, in order, from respondents are:
  1. Boating, Canoeing, Kayaking 58%
  2. Snowmobiling 58%
  3. Walking/hiking 52%
  4. Fishing 52%
  5. ATV / UTV Riding 50%

- [Q4] About 54% of respondents don't camp, but of the remainder who do 20% say campgrounds are in good condition, 15% say improvements are needed, & 11% say more campground facilities are needed.

They also want to see (# of comments):

1. More rustic/northwoods camping sites (4);
  2. Better/more bathrooms/bath house [better restroom building upkeep] (10);
  3. Better campground upkeep (7);
  4. Electric hook ups (5); and
  5. Bear Lake shoreline erosion problem fixed (4).
- **Three big themes** to the comments were:
    1. Increase ATV / UTV trails (Q2 – 57 comments) and (Question 18 – 92 comments).
    2. Allow dual sport motorcycles on ATV trails (Q2 – 72 comments).
    3. Increase bicycle trails (Q2 – 67 comments) and (Question 24 – 58 comments).

## Summary of Public Meeting Input

Local newspapers advertised the public meeting. Outdoor recreation groups were notified about the meeting by mailing them surveys to complete. Area residents were able to view a draft of the proposed plan on the Internet.

Comments from public meeting held at 3:45 p.m. on September 26, 2016:

- Pam LaBine, Land Conservation Department, suggested adding some capital improvements to the Bog Brook Wildlife Area.
- Sheryl Pethers provided the following email on Sept. 13, 2016:  
 Congratulations to the town of Blackwell, and especially Jenny Henkel, for establishing 7 miles of non-motorized (hiking and biking) trails.

The plan mentions the Halley Bird Trail, which appears to have had not one wit of attention paid to it in many, many years. It is hardly a trail anymore, what with huge downed trees everywhere. I have hiked this trail for years, with each year getting more difficult. It is now impassable. Please do something about this. Or, take down the signs and stop advertising it and acting as if it exists. It does not. It is an embarrassment the way it is now.

Swimming and boating opportunities at Bear Lake are limited by an overgrown weedy "beach." It seems not to have had any maintenance this year.

Given the survey results showing ATV use at lower levels than other outdoor activities in the county, why is development of even more ATV trails at the top of the "to do" list? Sounds like inherent bias.

Thanks for all the work you do for Forest County. Really.

Sheryl Pethers 9/12/16

## OTHER PLAN REFERENCES

Map 1 summarizes the location of DNR Land Legacy areas, potential DNR State Trails, and potential trails from the NCWRPC Regional Bike Plan that are all summarized under Past Plans in Chapter 1 of this CORP.

## NEEDS DRIVEN PARK PLANNING

Since the 1960's, an accepted practice has been to adopt a uniform national land standard, such as 10 acres per 1000 population, for park planning. A standard amount of land for parks and recreation cannot be universal for a park. A standard land measure is only useful for specific facilities like determining how much land is needed for a specific use like a baseball diamond. The number of baseball diamonds and other facilities are not the same among similar sized communities nationally.

The basis of this revised approach to park and recreation standards is to create a level of service as defined by the customers' needs rather than an arbitrary standard. The level of service is generated locally for each type of park, trail, or public access to a water body. Public input is collected in multiple ways and the needs for a particular park, trail, or public access to a water body are determined. When specific facilities are needed, then facility standards are used to design the facility and budget for the necessary land, materials, and labor to satisfy that need.

A needs driven and facilities based park planning approach presents the current demand for park and recreation opportunities. The size of a park site is determined by the number of facilities needed to satisfy the active recreation demand within the service area of each park, and the unprogrammed recreation land that buffers different uses within a park and which buffers the park from other non-park uses such as residential housing. Determining the space needs for unprogrammed land is subjective and objective based on first hand knowledge of the area and how community residents and tourists use the parks. Determining how much unprogrammed land to use for buffering parks is subjective based upon how aesthetically pleasing an area should be, and what the surrounding land uses are.

The size of a park is determined by three criteria:

1. Physical geography. Does the site have steep hills, woodlands, or wetlands? Such natural features are useful for exploration, conservation, aesthetic buffers, and unprogrammed lands.
2. Park facilities. What activities are allowed or will be allowed? How much land is needed for each use?
3. Unprogrammed buffers. How much land within the park is needed to separate different uses? How much land is needed for future expansion? Maybe a park will not expand within 2-years, but within 10-20 years expansion may be imminent. When the opportunity to buy land exists, then reaction must be swift to seize the opportunity. A park growth boundary should be created for this reason.

## Chapter 5

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The development of an efficient outdoor recreation plan depends upon establishing recreation and open-space goals and objectives from public participation.

These goals and objectives are meant to guide county and local officials as they work towards providing a recreation system to meet the needs of Forest County's residents and visitors to the area.

The National Forest Service has specific goals and objectives for CNNF.

### **Goal 1**

**Protect, restore, and enhance Forest County's natural resources for outdoor recreation.**

#### Objectives

1. Follow Best Management Practices for water quality and for invasive species control in development of trails and recreation facilities. This will maintain forest certification.
2. Cooperate with those who are implementing the Good Neighbor Authority to improve forest health on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.
3. Provide for a balance of legitimate recreational opportunities to a wide variety of diverse groups and reduce user conflict by keeping incompatible uses separate from one another while still protecting the natural resources of the county in a sustainable manner.

### **Goal 2**

**Continue to improve and develop Forest County's outdoor recreation facilities.**

#### Objectives

1. Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as outlined in 5-year capital improvement tables and as opportunities and funding sources become available.
2. Work with user groups to meet specific needs and desires for recreation on the Forest County Forest, or to connect to Forest County maintained facilities.
3. Continue planning and developing recreational facilities to accommodate the elderly and handicapped.

## Chapter 6

# RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations and capital improvements are based on the goals and objectives, and the public comment documented in Chapter 4-Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment. Although it is unlikely that all recommendations presented in this plan will be undertaken in the next five years, they should be recognized as causes for action if the opportunity or need arises.

### COUNTYWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

#### ATV / UTV / Dual Sport Motorcycle Trail Development and Enhancement

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

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

This recommendation is to cooperate with various governments to review how to meet the needs of expanding ATV / UTV / Dual Sport Motorcycle trail use by possibly developing additional riding opportunities within Forest County, and to provide full consideration to connecting privately developed recreation sites or trails to the public trail system.

#### Scenic Byways

Established in 1999, the Scenic Byways Program represents a cooperative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and local community groups to conserve, promote and enhance some of our most scenic and historic state highway corridors.

To qualify as a scenic byway, a roadway must be part of a federal, state, or county highway that is not an interstate highway; and must be at least 30-miles long that offers travelers outstanding scenic views or historic resources combined with unique recreational, cultural or other educational opportunities. Some of the benefits include promotion as a state or national Scenic Byway, and associated prestige for obtaining the designation.

This recommendation is to finish establishing a Scenic Byway in Forest County and then to create a tourism campaign that highlights each of the communities along the Scenic Byway. As of this CORP's update, the scenic byway under consideration consisted of a figure 8 of highways (See Attachment A).

### Wolf River State Trail Trailhead

Develop a trailhead for the Wolf River State Trail in the City of Crandon. The trail head would include a paved parking area, picnic area with tables and a shower/restroom facility.

### Biking/Hiking Trail Development

Develop a hiking-biking trail near the City of Crandon in three separate phases. Phase one connects the Crandon School District to the City of Crandon by developing a surfaced trail adjacent to U.S. Hwy 8. Phase two proceeds through the City of Crandon connecting to the Forest County Potawatomi Community Health and Wellness Center by developing a surfaced trail adjacent to U.S. Hwy 8. Phase three connects the City of Crandon to Mole Lake and the Mole Lake Casino Lodge and Conference Center by developing a surfaced trail adjacent to County Hwy S and U.S. Hwy 55.

## COUNTY FOREST LANDS RECOMMENDATIONS

### Non-Motorized Use

While there are trails available, consideration needs to be given to making all or a portion of the trails more multi-use year-round facilities. Better trail designation with signs, and trail maintenance of hiking, biking, horseback riding and x-ski trails, will allow more users to enjoy the trails.

### Motorized Use

The Forest County Forestry Committee has determined that there is sufficient use of the county forest by designated snowmobile and ATV trails. If local snowmobile or ATV clubs develop new trail adjacent to county forest land, full consideration will be given to develop links or connecting trails across county forest land provided these trails are part of the state funded snowmobile or ATV programs.

### Otter Springs

The headwaters of the Otter Creek is a natural springs where two pipes are exposed from the ground and covered by an 8'X8' log spring house. This spring house was placed on the Federal and State Registry of Historic Places list, but is deteriorating due to weathering. The County should consider cooperatively working with the Potawatomi Community in pursuing grant money to restore this shelter.

### County Fairgrounds

The County should consider relocation of the fairgrounds. The current site does not provide growth/expansion and is not very visible to the public.

## TOWN RECOMMENDATIONS

Each town created the following lists of recommendations for their communities:

### TOWN OF BLACKWELL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop pavilion at trailhead.
- Create and post trail wayfinding signs within the Town to find the trailhead.
- Install fishing piers and river walk on new land purchased (17 acres) along the Rat River.

## TOWN OF WABENO RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build new bathroom with shower at the Wabeno Fairgrounds.
- Replace the North Branch of the Oconto River bridge on Cavour Street (trout stream improvement project).

## COUNTY FACILITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 2017–2021

Capital improvements to parks are the addition of labor and materials that improve the overall value and usefulness of that park. Capital improvements are designed and funded individually through segregated municipal funds. Routine maintenance is considered the normal cycle of repair and upkeep for existing facilities. Routine maintenance does not increase the value or usefulness of the park, and is traditionally funded through the Forestry/Parks Department's operations budget. Non-routine maintenance of park facilities, however, is usually considered a capital improvement item. For example, upgrading an outdoor restroom facility for universal access would qualify as a capital improvement, while repainting an outdoor restroom would be considered routine maintenance.

### **What is projected to occur from 2017-2021?**

The following tables are Capital Improvement Plans proposed for the Forestry/Parks Department managed recreational system. The projects are not listed in a priority and are subject to change. The Forestry/Parks Department or Land Conservation Department created each capital improvement item. All upgrades and new construction will take into consideration meeting ADA standards. As funds become available, the following projects will be completed.

#### **Veterans Memorial Park**

1. Trees – Continue the tree-planting program using either bare rootstock or containerized trees to provide shade as well as sight and sound barriers. This project could be an annual project of 50-100 trees per year.
2. Fire Rings – Continue to purchase fire rings for campsites for cooking and campfires. This could be an annual project of 10-15 rings per year.
3. Playground Equipment – Add ADA accessible playground equipment and continually upgrade existing playground structures.
4. Beach Expansion and Restoration
5. Park expansion – consider development of 25 additional campsites by expanding into the wooded area adjacent to the existing campground.
6. Construct additional pavilions.

#### **Bog Brook Wildlife Area**

1. Upgrade pier over dam inlet to become handicapped accessible, and have a beaver screen added.
2. Create an ADA walkway over the spillway.

#### **Mountain Bike Trails**

- Develop mountain bike trails in: Otter Springs Recreation Area, and the Forest County Forest ATV Trail (between lakes Metonga and Lucerne).

## Chapter 7

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

### INTRODUCTION

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

Attachment D provides a list of state and federal government financial assistance programs.

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

#### Shoreland Zoning

Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program established statewide minimum standards for shoreland development. Counties are required to adopt and administer shoreland zoning ordinances that meet or exceed these minimum requirements. The statewide minimum standards for county shoreland zoning ordinances are found in Chapter NR 115, Wis. Admin. Code. Be sure to check with Forest County to find out about their development standards.

#### 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. Forest County will focus efforts to provide connectivity between developments/subdivisions and recreation areas through trail development. The County will support development of other recreation areas within developments/subdivisions where feasible.

#### Use of Easements

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

### Leases

Leases may be used as measures to use or protect land until more permanent measures may be found. By leasing parcels of land, the land remains on the 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.

### 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.

### Program Costs

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

### Capital Improvements

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

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

### Monetary Aid Programs

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.

The Stewardship Fund is a comprehensive aid program for the promotion of resource conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities. It consists of several older aid programs such as LAWCON and Local Park Aids, combined with new programs, such as the Urban Rivers Program.

Requirements for application to the Stewardship Fund include the requirement that the applicant submits an approved comprehensive recreation plan. This plan is designed to meet that requirement. For the remaining program requirements, or additional information contact:

Community Services Specialist  
Rhineland Service Center  
107 Sutliff Ave  
Rhineland, WI 54501

Attachment D provides a list of state and federal government financial assistance programs.

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

#### Future Planning

At a minimum, all communities should reassess their recreational needs near the end of the five year period covered by this plan. More frequent appraisal of needs may be called for under certain conditions such as extreme variations in funding capability, rapid population changes, actions of other units of government and private enterprise, and the recognition of new legislation, laws, and public programs.

#### Lifetime Activities

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

#### Winter Activities

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

#### Snowmobile/ATV Routes

Since snowmobiles and ATVs can be considered a noise nuisance and a hazard for non-users, municipalities may wish to designate specific routes through the municipality for snowmobile/ATV use instead of designating all roads open to snowmobiles and ATVs.

#### Specialized Facilities

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

#### Municipal and School District Cooperation

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

### Senior Citizen Involvement

Involve senior citizens in community park development and beautification and provide recreational facilities for their use. Although senior citizens often compose a significant proportion of the total community's population, they are often neglected in recreational planning. Benches placed near neighborhood parks and play areas and non-intensive sports facilities such as horseshoe pits located in community parks help to provide a place for the senior citizens. Small, passive use parks and 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.

### Community Beautification

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

### Adopt-A-Park Program

This could be established by a local government to encourage local groups to adopt-a-park or trail segment for routine maintenance like cutting grass or grading a trail. The group could provide volunteers to maintain the recreational facility, which would allow the local government to focus on providing major capital improvements.

## Chapter 8

# PROVISIONS FOR UPDATING

Essential characteristics of any planning process includes an inventory of what exists, determining what has occurred since the last plan was created, and what is desired locally for the future. Periodic updating of the plan is necessary for continued refinement and course correction to keep the plan current.

Some of the planning recommendations will not be accomplished within this five year plan period, and additional recommendations may be added as new recreational activities are requested or the status of existing facilities changes.

**Annual review** of the plan recommendations and capital improvement tables by the Forest County Forestry and Parks Committee will keep this plan current. This review may also occur after a large turn over in elected officials after a County Board election.

Process:

1. Forest County Forestry and Parks Committee reviews plan and takes a vote on what changes to make.
2. Those changes and a copy of the meeting minutes are forwarded to the DNR's Community Financial Assistance staff in Rhinelander. Submission of the minutes and changes automatically constitutes DNR grant eligibility for those changes.

Establishing a **full plan update every five years** will assure that the plan reflects changes in the recreational needs of the county, and will maintain the county's eligibility for grant programs.

The review process includes surveying the local units of government, outdoor recreation groups, and the general public about what their needs are regarding outdoor recreation such as:

1. What improvements are needed to existing facilities?
2. What new facilities are necessary to satisfy demand?
3. Which potential projects fulfill this demand?

The Forest County Forestry and Parks Committee will review information collected from surveys, and evaluate the need for proposed projects based on standards and Goals & Objectives as outlined in this plan.

Submission of 1) the revised plan, and 2) the County Board resolution approving the plan, to the DNR is the final step to extending the CORP for another 5 years. DNR approval of the CORP will come if the correct process was followed.

# ATTACHMENT A

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## **DRAFT Nicolet-Wolf River Scenic Byway Route**

From: NCWRPC

# ATTACHMENT B

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## Outdoor Recreation Online Survey Results

Compiled by: NCWRPC

# ATTACHMENT C

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## **Park Design and Location Criteria**

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

## **ATTACHMENT D**

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

Compiled by: NCWRPC

# ATTACHMENT E

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## **Bog Brook Wildlife Area**

Compiled by: Forest County Land and Water Conservation Department