



TOWN OF RIB MOUNTAIN

Marathon County, Wisconsin

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

2015-2019



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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This plan was prepared under the direction of the Town of Rib Mountain Public Works Department by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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- E. Wausau MPO Bike & Pedestrian Facility Implementation Table (2009 list)
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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

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

Submission of this adopted CORP to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources establishes eligibility for the local unit of government to apply for a variety of Federal and State Aids for outdoor recreation (Chapter NR 50.06(4), Wisconsin administrative code).

A. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this outdoor recreation plan is to provide continued direction toward meeting the current and future recreation needs of the Town of Rib Mountain.

Adoption of this plan by the Town of Rib Mountain Board and subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) will continue the Town's eligibility for Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF), and State Knowles–Nelson Stewardship Program funds under: *Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space Program (UGS), and Urban Rivers Grant Program (URGP).*

Non-profit conservation organizations (NCOs) are eligible to participate in the Knowles–Nelson Stewardship Program under the Urban Green Space and Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks programs. NCOs may adopt or carry out recommendations from a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan of the local unit of government in which the NCO project is located or use their land management plans that are required for participation in the stewardship programs.

This plan is organized by:

1. Reviewing other plans and laws that affect outdoor recreation (Chapter 1);
2. Describing the Town demographics (Chapter 2);
3. Inventorying what park facilities exist within the Town (Chapter 3);
4. Asking the public about their needs for outdoor recreation (Chapters 4 & 5); &
5. Recommendations are made to satisfy identified needs (Chapter 6).

B. PROVISIONS FOR PLAN UPDATES

Plan amendments are common and should be considered part of the planning process. They frequently represent good implementation or plan usage and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision makers. Amendments must follow the same process as the original plan and generally prolong the effectiveness of the plan.

C. REFERENCE PLANS & LAWS

This plan was written to continue the parks and recreation program established in the Town of Rib Mountain Outdoor Recreation Plans since 1977. Each plan and law listed below affects outdoor recreation in the Town of Rib Mountain.

Complete Streets Law

Wisconsin's Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations law addressing Complete Streets was codified in 2009. It was incorporated as State statute §84.01(35) and later into administrative rule as Transportation 75.

Complete Streets are roadways designed and operated to enable safe, convenient, and comfortable access and travel for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities are able to safely and comfortably move along and across a complete street.

All roads receiving state or federal funding through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) must also accommodate bicycles and pedestrians per this law. Local governments may pass their own Complete Streets ordinances to cover their own road networks. Specific guidelines related to traffic counts, and if the road is urban or rural, are used in these ordinances to determine whether a sidewalk, path, or lane is needed to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.

State Trails Network Plan

This 2001 document [revised in 2003] 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. Two segments affect the Town of Rib Mountain.

Segment 18 – Tomahawk to Wisconsin Dells

A power line corridor along County Trunk Highway X from Wausau to Stevens Point should be considered a component of the statewide "backbone" trail system. This potential trail not only connects the communities of Wausau and Stevens Point, but also could link with the Green Circle State Trail and several other proposed trail corridors. ***NCWRPC Note: This power line corridor is on the west side of the Wisconsin River in the Town of Rib Mountain.***

Segment 52 – Wausau to Marshfield

Marathon County also recognizes this abandoned rail corridor from Wausau to Marshfield as having significant trail potential. After rail line abandonment in the early 1980s the county took part of the rail right-of-way for tax purposes. A section near Wausau serves as a power line corridor. Sections of corridor have also reverted to adjacent landowners, but there may be opportunities for easements.

WIS 29 (Sunrise Dr.-Business 51 Interchange) Rib Mountain and Rothschild, Marathon County

WisDOT began road construction in May 2014 and is expecting completion in spring 2017.

Proposed improvements to the WIS 29 project:

- Wisconsin River bridge deck and pavement replacement.
- Sunrise Drive overpass bridge deck needs preventative maintenance, and does not meet vertical clearance.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2011-2016

Every five years, the WDNR 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 non-partisan objective shared by all Americans. The AGO encourages state and local communities to develop local conservation and recreation initiatives.

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

A summary of this SCORP is in Attachment D.

Marathon County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2007-2012

Marathon County has recognized the importance of providing quality recreational opportunities to its residents by developing and updating a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CGRP). The Marathon County Parks Department prepared this 5-year plan. The Town of Rib Mountain is well served by county parks that exist within a 30-minute driving distance.

The county plan shows that a need exists throughout the county for more non-motorized trails, two additional county parks, and for additional fishing access to the water.

Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, 2006-2056

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

Each Legacy Area in Rib Mountain is summarized below with 5 stars representing the highest level for that category:

MW	<u>Middle Wisconsin River</u>
Size	Large
Protection Initiated	Limited
Protection Remaining	Substantial
Conservation Significance	☆☆☆
Recreation Potential	☆☆☆☆

As the Wisconsin River meanders across this ecological landscape, it flows through a number of communities, including Merrill, Wausau, Rothschild, and Mosinee. Surrounding land use is a mix of agricultural and forested land. Numerous hydroelectric facilities are found throughout this reach of the river. The middle portion of the Wisconsin River is an important biological and recreation corridor linking northern and southern Wisconsin.

Due to the proximity of several large population centers, this portion of the river receives substantial public use with recreational boating, fishing, and waterfowl hunting being particularly popular activities. Large numbers of anglers take advantage of the river's robust warmwater fishery, which includes muskies in the upper stretches, and walleye, smallmouth bass, and several other species elsewhere. The black redhorse is found below the dam in Wausau, the only place in the state that it is known to occur.

Upland forests in the area typically contain a mix of oaks, aspen, and conifers, while the floodplain forests dominated by silver maple, green ash, and hackberry. In concert with associated marshes, these forests provide important habitat for a variety of resident and migratory wildlife. In addition to its aesthetic value, maintaining natural shoreline along the river is important for maintaining and improving water quality. A protected corridor could possibly allow for the establishment of a network of recreation trails.

Wausau MPO Bicycle And Pedestrian Plan, 2009

The Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) prepared the 20-year Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Implementation Guide in 2008. The plan developed strategies for improving bicycle and pedestrian transportation throughout the Wausau area. Potential trails and routes are identified and an improvement schedule was created for each project in 5-year time frames.

The plan is beginning a revision in 2014, so this table will be updated in 2015. See “Wausau MPO Bike & Pedestrian Implementation Table” in Attachment E. Rib Mountain’s routes are shown on Map 2.

A look into the future, CWOCC Master Plan, 2013

The Central Wisconsin Offroad Cycling Coalition (CWOCC) created the master plan to make the Wausau area an official IMBA Ride Center.

IMBA Ride Center evaluation criteria were also reviewed to determine other community aspects of what Rib Mountain could do to help make the whole area more bicycle friendly, and recommendations were added to Chapter 6.

Five parts are planned within the Town of Rib Mountain:

Nine Mile County Forest

Existing trail system with 12 miles of single track and 20+ miles of double track. Single track is hand built technical riding.

Mosinee Hill

XC mountain bike & flow trail. Multiuse or additional hiking trail. Bike park on northwest side.

Rib Mountain State Park

XC mountain bike & flow trail (quarry area) around perimeter of State Park. Connected to lift served trails on ski hill and connector to Nine Mile County Forest trails.

Granite Peak ski lease land

Beginner to Expert gravity based flow trail. Lift or Shuttle served possible. Potential for free ride park.

Urban bike park

Hwy 29/I-39 interchange. Pump track, dirt jump, other technical features. Connects to Liberty Park (Town of Rib Mountain park).

Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan, 2005-2025

The Town of Rib Mountain cooperated with the County Planning Department that hired URS Inc. and MSA to assist with creating this plan. This comprehensive plan will guide zoning and land division decisions in the Town for many years to come.

Insert MAP 1 – Recreation Facilities in Rib Mountain

Insert MAP 2 – Bike Routes

Chapter 2 BACKGROUND OF RIB MOUNTAIN

A. INTRODUCTION

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

The area now constituting the Town of Rib Mountain was part of the Town of Weston until 1905. The Town was formed in 1905, and was a rural farm area called “Fleith” until 1930 when the name changed to Rib Mountain. Although the Town was initially settled as a rural agricultural area, it has evolved into a dynamic, growing suburban area to the City of Wausau.

Rib Mountain has a 2010 Census population of 6,825 people and is part of the Wausau urbanized area in Marathon County. Single family and multi-family housing is still being constructed, and commercial properties continue to turn over into new businesses due to their preferred easily accessible locations.

The natural features (e.g. wetlands, forest, wildlife, and steep slopes) are described and mapped in the Town of Rib Mountain Comprehensive Plan of 2005 (not part of this plan). The Wisconsin River segment that runs through Rib Mountain and all of Marathon County is an impaired water, because of atmospheric deposition of mercury mainly from fossil fuel fired power plants and PCB contamination. Waters in Rib Mountain are not listed as Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest, nor are they designated by DNR as outstanding resource waters or exceptional resource waters. The water resources, park locations, and road layout exist on Map 1.

B. LAND USE

The Town is located on 24.6 square miles of land along the western shore of the Wisconsin River. Rib Mountain State Park is surrounded by the Town. Most of the big box retailers in the Wausau area are along Rib Mountain Drive. Large lot subdivisions continue to grow throughout the Town. Hundreds of agricultural acres are still farmed in Town too.

C. DEMOGRAPHICS

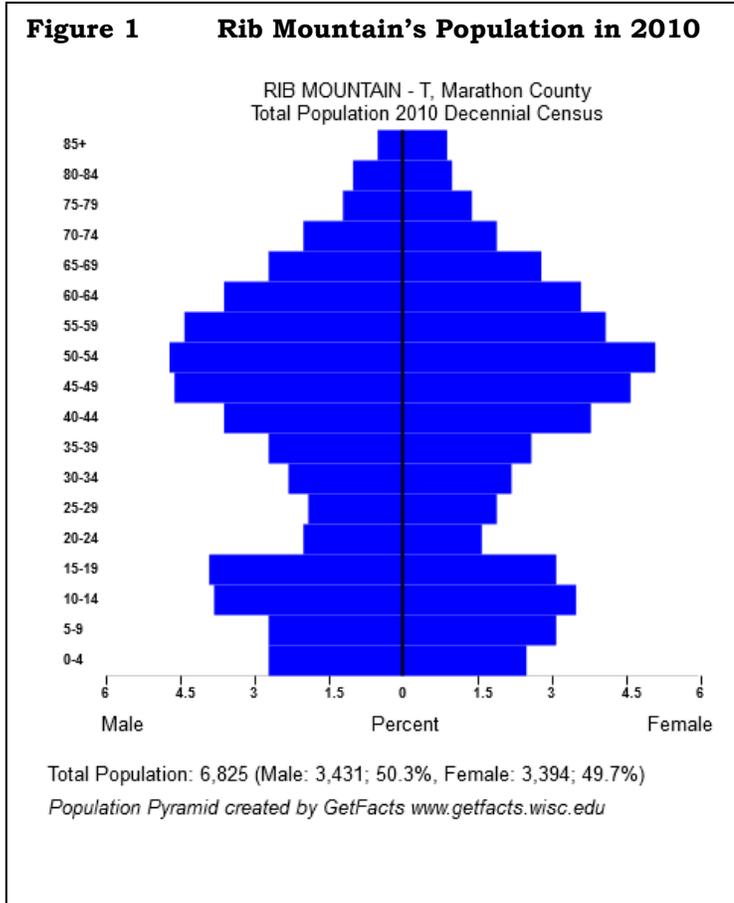
In 2010, Rib Mountain’s Census population was 6,825. By 2015, the Wisconsin Demographic Services Center projects that Rib Mountain’s population will increase by 70 people (1%), and is projected to increase by 230 people (3.4%) by 2020.

Table 1: Rib Mountain Population Projections

2010 Census	2015 Projections	2020 Projections	2025 Projections
6,825	6,895	7,055	7,145

Source: U.S. Census, & WI DOA

Figure 1 is The Town of Rib Mountain's population pyramid that was created with 2010 U.S. Census data. The Town of Rib Mountain's population shows an almost equal amount of men to women in each age group. The bulges in Figure 1 show that families with children make up many of the residents. Children older than 19 are leaving Town, and are not coming back until they raise families of their own.



Demographic Trends

Table 3 shows a comparison between the last two U.S. Census counts for Rib Mountain. Families with young children under 5 years old continue to become residents in Rib Mountain. Latino and Hmong populations have both increased in the Town by ½ a percentage point and 2.6 percentage points respectively. Educational attainment over the last decade of Town residents has risen, with almost 1½ percentage point gain of those having a high school diploma, and a slight (0.5%) gain in residents with bachelor's degrees.

Table 3: Rib Mountain's Quick Demographics

	2000	2010
Population	7,556	6,825
Persons under 5 years	6.6%	5.2%
Persons under 18 years	30.2%	25.4%
Persons 65 years and over	9.8%	15.4%
Female persons	49.6%	49.7%
White persons (not Hispanic)	96.5%	93.3%
Black persons	0.1%	0.2%
American Indian persons	0.2%	0.2%
Asian persons	2.7%	5.3%
Hispanic or Latino persons	0.5%	1.0%
High school graduates or higher**	91.7%	93.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher**	33.3%	33.8%
Housing units	2,769	2,761
Persons Per Household	2.78	2.57
Median household income	\$66,337	\$113,940

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 (SF1 & SF3), 2010 (SF1 & ACS)

**Percent of the population that is 25 years old and over.

The Office of Economic Advisors (OEA) within the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development creates countywide workforce profiles that include some demographic data. In 2009, OEA provided the following population perspective:

Population changes are made up of two components; natural and migration. Natural change computes births minus deaths, and migration looks at how many people moved into and out of an area. Marathon [County] has a balanced mix of both. Marathon [County's] natural growth was 3.8 percent, 0.3 percentage points higher than the state but 0.9 percentage points lower than the nation. Net migration, at 3.7 percent, was higher for the county than either the state or nation. Natural increases accounted for 4,730 new residents while migration added 4,626, a difference of about 100. The combination of natural and migration increases gives a nice mix of older and younger residents.

D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Rib Mountain is part of the greater Wausau area, which is the main economic region within Marathon County. The Wausau Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes all of Marathon County.

Table 4 shows employment by industry in Rib Mountain and the Wausau MSA (Marathon County).

Table 4: Employment by Industry

	Rib Mountain	Marathon County
Ag, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	38	2,289
Construction	199	3,650
Manufacturing	605	15,399
Wholesale trade	82	2,265
Retail trade	596	8,374
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	135	3,161
Information	22	924
Finance & insurance, real estate	476	5,494
Professional, scientific, mgnt., admin., and waste mgnt. services.	214	3,876
Educational, health care, social assistance.	738	15,147
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food service.	134	4,880
Public administration	141	2,418
Other services	173	1,371

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 2008-2012

Table 5 shows the labor force of Town residents over the last two Census counts. Even through the 2008 Recession, unemployment has remained low among Town residents.

Table 5: Rib Mountain’s Labor Force Indicators

	2000	2010
Labor Force	4,353	3,803
Employed	4,183	3,646
Unemployed	170	157
Unemployment Rate	3.91%	4.13%
Participation Rate	76.2%	69.5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, 2010, & NCWRPC

Chapter 3 EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

A. PARKS and CONSERVANCY CLASSIFICATIONS

The following descriptions of each park type are from SCORP 2011-2016.

Linear Parks are trails that may have various lengths.

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

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

Community Parks: Usually more than 25 acres in size, these parks serve entire communities, and are located adjacent to a collector street to provide community-wide vehicular access. The purposes of this park are to meet the recreational needs of several neighborhoods, as well as to preserve unique landscapes and open spaces. These parks allow for group activities not feasible at the neighborhood level. All of the facilities of a neighborhood park may exist, along with nature trails and scenic areas.

Special Use Areas: These areas are for single purpose recreational activities that often are designed as revenue generating enterprises such as for baseball, golf, nature centers, arboreta, formal gardens, gun ranges, festivals, ski areas, or areas that preserve and maintain cultural or archeological sites.

County Parks: County parks consist of 100 acres or more that are specifically set aside for active and passive recreation uses to accommodate large gatherings, special events, and individual users. These parks have scenic natural features that preserve the character of the region and provide a wide variety of compatible outdoor recreation activities; and may also provide areas for camping, historic preservation, protection of natural areas, and special use areas.

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

State Parks: State parks aim to preserve, protect, interpret, and enhance the scenic and cultural resources of the state. They are typically larger than county parks, as they serve larger numbers of people. State parks generally serve an area up to 150 miles in radius due to their destination features and amenities. They act as multi-purpose regional centers for active and passive recreation as dictated by the uses and facilities present in the park.

B. PARK FACILITIES IN RIB MOUNTAIN

The Town of Rib Mountain park system consists of parks maintained by the Town, along with two public school grounds, a county park, a county forest, and a state park. The Town only maintains Town parks, but provides input to the school district on how to improve both public school play areas.

Map 1 shows outdoor recreational opportunities within the Town.

Linear Parks

Water Trails – A water trail is a network of access points, resting places, and attractions for users of water craft on lakes and rivers. All navigable water is available to canoe on.

No marked water trails exist within or near the Town of Rib Mountain.

The Wisconsin River has a portage established on the west bank around the Rothschild Dam. There are 2 boat landings within the Town and 6 non-improved public access points, as shown on Map 1.

Gulliver's Landing Boat Launch: This is a boat launch across the street from Gulliver's Landing Restaurant. The park is a 20-foot paved shoulder to Mallard Lane, which provides about 18 car parking spots. On-street parallel parking is available for vehicles with trailers. A pier is available for 2 boats to dock to.

Rookery View Park: This 2 acre park is a peninsula surrounded by Lake Wausau. Facilities include an improved boat launch with gravel parking area for about 10 cars. About an acre of mowed lawn is available for picnics and viewing the rookery on Lake Wausau.

Domtar Company Boat Launch: This 8 acre boat launch is along the west bank of the Wisconsin River and owned & operated by the Domtar Company. Access to this boat launch is off Sunrise Lane in the Town of Rib Mountain and open to the public, however, please be aware of Rothschild Ordinance No. 12.13 relating to boating below the Rothschild Dam in the Wisconsin River.

Public Water Access Points: Every time a land subdivision occurs next to a public waterbody, then an access point must be established for the public to access that water body [236.16(3) Wisconsin Statutes]. There are 6 unimproved public access points to the Wisconsin River and Lake Wausau within Rib Mountain.

Snowmobile Trails – Marathon County has 884 miles of snowmobile trails that are maintained by multiple snowmobile clubs. These trails pass around the west side of Rib Mountain in the non-urban portions of the Town.

Bike Trails: A variety of bicycle improvements within Rib Mountain are described in Attachment J. Attachment E has a list from the Wausau MPO Bike Plan that describes when and how each bike enhancement may be completed.

Wausau Area Bike Routes: Ten color-coded and numbered bike routes cover the Wausau area, of which three are in Rib Mountain. See Map 2 for the routes.

Routes 5, 7, & 12 pass through Rib Mountain. Additional information about these routes is available online at: <http://www.bicyclewausau.org/index.html>

Attachment J shows when all the Rib Mountain bicycle improvements may be scheduled to occur.

Mini Parks

See "mini park" definition on page 12.

Flax Lane Tot Lot: This 0.609 acre park has a half sized basketball court in it.

Chellis Park: This 3 acre park includes both woodlands and wetlands as well as a recreation area that contains a picnic shelter, basketball court, playground, a walking trail, and a grassy play area.

Neighborhood Parks

See "neighborhood park" definition on page 12.

Liberty Park: This 14 acre park is owned by the Rib Mountain Sanitary District and leased to the Town of Rib Mountain for park use. Facilities include a playground, picnic shelter, two parking lots, a ball diamond, basketball court, two tennis courts, woodlands and open fields for unstructured play.

Rib Mountain Elementary School: This school district facility includes 5 acres of outdoor recreation amenities: a playground, volleyball court, 2 tennis courts, a basketball court, and an area that can either be used as 2 baseball diamonds or a playfield and soccer field. The Town Park Commission worked with the Wausau School District to develop the school's play area to meet school and town needs.

South Mountain School: This school district facility includes 25 acres of outdoor recreation amenities: playground, ice skating area, tennis courts, baseball diamond, soccer fields, and basketball courts. The Town Park Commission worked with the Wausau School District to develop the school's play area to meet school and town needs.

River Park: *The Wisconsin River pedestrian bridge connects Rib Mountain residents to this park in Rothschild.* This 5 acre Village of Rothschild park overlooks the Wisconsin River and is located at the corner of River and Williams Streets in Rothschild. Facilities in this park include a Little League size ball diamond, a soccer field, playground, and an open air shelter building with a concession kitchen, restrooms, and drinking fountain. A pedestrian trail with benches at various locations winds throughout the park and along the banks of the Wisconsin River. The pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Wisconsin River connects the trails of the Village of Rothschild and Town of Rib Mountain. Pets are not allowed in the park.

Community Park

See "community park" definition on page 12.

Doepke Recreation Area: This 37.35 acre park has a parking lot for about 100 cars, a fitness trail, a little league baseball diamond, a softball diamond, an ice hockey rink and skating area, a soccer field, and vast wooded land.

Bluegill Bay County Park: This 68 acre county owned and operated park is considered a community park in addition to its county park status. County ownership is why it is a county park, but this park also contains a scenic natural feature (i.e. natural shoreline on Lake Wausau) which is made accessible to the public through the trail system in the park.

Special Use Area

See "special use area" definition on page 12.

Rookery View Park: This 2 acre peninsula provides an open field to bird watch from and a boat launch that is only open for winter vehicular access to Lake Wausau.

County Parks and Forests

See "county park" definition on page 12.

Bluegill Bay County Park: This 68 acre county owned and operated park has north and south sections that are only connected by a walking and biking path.

Facilities in the **north section** (enter from Oriole Lane) include double boat launch ramps with courtesy piers to access Lake Wausau year-round, benches to view Lake Wausau, picnic area, open shelter, flush toilets, drinking fountain, sand volleyball court, and wooded walking trails to access the south section of the park.

Facilities in the **south section** (enter from Cloverland Lane) include a 75 person capacity open shelter without electricity that is reservable. Vault toilets, well water hand pump, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, grills and a second smaller open shelter, playground, two handicapped accessible fishing piers, parking lot, and extensive trails through the woodlands.

Nine Mile County Forest: This is the crown jewel of the Marathon County forest system at just over 4,900 acres. Nine Mile is intensively managed for multiple uses including sustainable timber harvest, wildlife habitat, and a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities like hunting, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing.

There is a large formal parking area and Chalet building at the north portion of this unit, on Red Bud Road. The main trailhead starts here for a variety of uses.

The Chalet is a 175 person capacity reservable indoor pavilion. This cement block building has high, wood beamed ceilings, cement floor, seating for 95-100, a changing room, wood burner with firewood, ceiling fans, crank out windows with screens, indoor restrooms, 4 basin sink with hot & cold water, refrigerator, and a large counter area. An outdoor vault restroom located in the chalet parking lot on the west side is available when the chalet is not open. An outdoor drinking fountain, donated by the Wausau Wheelers, is available on the front of the Chalet.

Within the boundaries of Nine Mile is the Duane L. Corbin Shooting Range Park, located off of Rifle Road, in the southern portion of this unit. This shooting range has target and trap shooting, and an archery range with elevated shooting stations.

Two streams, Black Creek and Four-Mile Creek, thread part of their way through Nine-Mile Swamp, winding through open marsh and clumps of spruce. Nearby, mixed hardwoods, oak, and pine thrive on the uplands, alternating with large stands of aspen, the principal timber crop and a major source of food and cover for ruffed grouse and deer. These game species, as well as cottontails, snowshoe hare, waterfowl, and squirrels are actively pursued by hunters. The maintenance of waterfowl reservoirs, seeding of trails, planting of food and cover shrubs, and selective cutting of trees, all help to promote vigorous game and non-game wildlife populations.

A well maintained system of trails totaling over 30 miles (45 Km) allows easy access for recreation. All trails are closed to motorized vehicles, except in winter, for designated snowmobile/ATV trails. Cross-country skiers have more than 30 Km of one-way trails over a variety of terrain with loops suitable for the novice to expert skier. In the summer, the ski trails become an excellent mountain biking trail system. Horses are allowed on the snowmobile trail during the summer only. Blackberries, blueberries, and choke cherries are eagerly sought by berry pickers in the late summer and fall.

Nine Mile Forest Unit has 10 miles of single track mountain bike trails and 20 miles on the cross country trails, all riders 12 years and older require a daily or annual pass.

Cross country ski trails are double tracked with a skating lane and are generally one-way. Almost 4 miles (6.3 km) of trails are lighted nightly until 9 pm during the ski season. There are 30 km of beginner to expert, signed and mapped trails. Rental equipment is available, annual passes are offered, and pre-season and school/group discounts are available.

Skijoring (pulled on skis by dogs) is prohibited on ski trails.

Snowshoeing is allowed on the cross country trails, a snowshoeing pass is required. A 4 mile snowshoe trail is also available.

Dogs are allowed, except on groomed trails.

Camping is allowed with a permit issued in advance by the Forest Administrator.

All trails are closed to motorized vehicles, except for designated snowmobile/ATV trails.

Nine Mile Forest Unit has 10 miles of signed horseback riding trails.

Hunting is permitted and all state hunting regulations apply. Trapping is allowed no permit required.

State Park

See "state park" definition on page 13.

Rib Mountain State Park: This quartzite hill is one of the oldest geological formations on earth. Rib Mountain State Park is a premier day-use facility with picnicking, hiking trails and a reservable amphitheater. The top of the 60-foot observation tower offers spectacular views of the Wausau area and Wisconsin River.

Granite Peak Ski Area is on the north face of the mountain and offers downhill skiing and snowboarding during winter.

Hiking – There are more than 13 miles of hiking trails at Rib Mountain, with over eight miles accessible to people with disabilities. Pets are permitted in the park on the trails when on an 8-foot leash.

Picnicking is very popular at Rib Mountain. There are several picnic tables, two playgrounds and a reservable amphitheater at the park. Pets are not permitted in the picnic areas.

Open and closed hunting and trapping areas exist throughout the park. See the park's hunting regulations for further details.

Winter Activities – There are no groomed cross-country ski trails at the park. Winter hiking and snowshoeing are allowed in most areas of the park. About 1.5 miles of club-operated snowmobile trails travel through the park, however there is no access to the trails from the park.

Chapter 4

OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Recreational needs within the town were identified by collecting public input, reviewing past plans and ordinances, and creating a park Level Of Service assessment.

B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, Rib Mountain's staff, and Park Commission members have received public input about the parks. That input and staff's professional experience will also shape what changes are implemented.

Town Outdoor Recreation Survey Results

The Town outdoor recreation survey was available to residents for about a month (April 2014), and a good response rate was received.

- 47 people ripped out the yellow paper survey from the Town Bean and either mailed it or dropped it off at the Town Hall.
- 9 people completed a survey at the polling booth.
- 56 people completed the survey online.

All the paper surveys were imputed online so all the surveys could be tabulated together. The survey summary with additional comments is attached to this letter.

Here are the Top 3 Issues in Rib Mountain:

- 40 responses – Biking facilities comments.
- 34 responses – Walking facilities comments.
- 13 responses – Doepke Park comments
- 13 responses – Lake Wausau comments.
- 12 responses – No swimming pool or beach in Rib Mountain.
- 9 response – Hunting or gun range concerns.
- 6 response – No camping comments.
- 5 response – Dog waste problem.
- 4 response – Dog park needed.

See Attachment K for a summary of the survey results.

C. 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 nationwide is no longer recognized as universal for a park. A standard land measure is still used to determine how much land is needed for a specific use like a baseball diamond. Facility standards are used for this purpose. The number of baseball diamonds and other facilities are not the same among similar sized communities nationally; therefore a Level of Service needs to be created locally.

Besides creating a Level of Service for each park classification, other measures such as geographic distribution and universal accessibility, are also used to determine the adequacy of a community's parks.

Universal accessibility is making facilities (e.g. tables, drinking fountains, and restrooms) accessible to people with limited mobility. Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards are followed when purchasing or modifying facilities for universal accessibility. Each park description starting on page 12 lists specific park facilities. If changes to park facilities are necessary to make them ADA compliant, then they will be listed as recommended improvements in Chapter 6 under "Capital Improvements."

1. Park Design Criteria

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

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

Each park classification contains the following:

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

2. Park Service Areas

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

Park and Recreation Designs

Attachment A

The various attributes (e.g. acreage, location, and amenities) of each park classification are described in this attachment. Use these designs as one part of determining if community-wide needs are being met in the parks.

Map 3 illustrates how well Town residents are served by the various parks within and outside of the Town that serve Town residents. The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides the following guidelines for park placement:

- Mini park service area: ½-mile radius, or a population of 2,000-3,000;
- Neighborhood park service area: 1 mile radius, or a population of 2,000-5,000 (every neighborhood park serves both as a mini and a neighborhood park);
- Elementary school grounds service area: same as *neighborhood parks*, because in Rib Mountain both elementary school grounds have the same level of playgrounds and play areas similar to *neighborhood parks*, so their service areas are the same;
- Community park service area: 2-5 mile radius (shown on Map 3 with a neighborhood service area and a mini park service area, because they serve as neighborhood parks and as whole community parks);
- County and State park service areas are larger than the community they are located within.

3. Level of Service

A Level Of Service (LOS) approach is used to identify if enough park land exists for a community's needs. This revised approach is defined by the community's needs rather than an arbitrary acreage-per-1000-people standard. The LOS is generated locally for each park classification (e.g. mini, neighborhood, or community). Public input is collected, and the needs for a particular park, or whole park classification, are determined. If the public is content with the existing parks within a park classification, then the LOS is applied to the whole population. If the public determines that individual parks need more facilities in them, then a particular park needing additional land may become reclassified into the next larger classification. When the community grows in population the LOS is used to calculate how many additional parks are needed.

Park Acreage

The size of a park is determined by two criteria:

1. Physical geography. Does the site have steep hills, woodlands, or wetlands? Such natural features are useful for exploration, conservation, aesthetic buffers, and unprogrammed buffers between uses.
2. Park facilities. What activities are allowed or will be allowed? How much land is needed for each use? This is determined by applying the park Level of Service (LOS) to lands where the village is growing. If a community is not growing in population, then the LOS does not change, but different uses may become desired over time, so facilities will need replacement.

Park acreage in TABLE 7 shows how Rib Mountain's park system (including schools, county parks, and neighboring community parks) compares with state standards for the size of each park as grouped by classification. The average park sizes for Rib Mountain are in line with State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recommendations for each classification.

Classification	SCORP Recommendation	Rib Mountain average park size
Mini	0.5 – 5* acres	1.80 acres
Neighborhood	5 – 25 acres	12.25 acres
Community	25+ acres	52.7 acres

Source: WDNR, & NCWRPC

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

Parks are listed by classification starting on page 13 of this plan.

Rookery Park (2 acres) was added between 2000 and 2010, and 278 more houses were added. The Town of Rib Mountain’s 2000 Census population was 7,556, and decreased to 6,825 in 2010.

This is the formula used in TABLE 8 to create the acres per 1,000 people, which is the Level of Service (LOS):

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

Park Classification	2000		2010	
	Total Acres	Acres per 1,000 people	Total Acres	Acres per 1,000 people
Mini	3.6	0.47	3.6	0.53
Neighborhood	49	6.48	49	7.18
Community	105.4	13.95	105.4	15.44
Total	160	20.9	160	23.15

Source: NCWRPC

Rib Mountain had a 21.18 town-wide Level Of Service (LOS) in 2000, which increased to 23.44 by 2010 because the Town’s population declined. An LOS of at least 20 is what most communities aim for, but this is only one of three parts of the picture for determining if adequate parkland exists; the other two parts are space within a park (1. Park design), and location (2. Park Service Area).

Summary of Needs Driven Park Planning

This is a summary of the above three parts (*park design criteria, park service areas, and level of service*) of *Needs Driven Park Planning* as it applies in Rib Mountain.

- A. Park Design Criteria (space within each park) – All of Rib Mountain’s parks appear to meet these criteria for space and facilities within each park, and that is why they fall into specific park categories. Within existing parks, there was no analysis done regarding if enough activity space (e.g. number of tennis courts, number of ball fields) was available within each park, although no deficiencies were identified in the Town’s outdoor recreation survey results in Attachment K. There is a shortage of parks, which is identified in the Park Service Area below.

- B. Park Service Area (park location) – Map 3 shows the park service areas. Every residential neighborhood needs to be covered with a mini park and a neighborhood park. The far southern area of Town and area west of Rib Mountain will not be served with neighborhood parks, and it will also take some time to provide mini parks in those areas (numbered VII and VIII).

Several residential areas are significantly farther away from their nearest park than what SCORP standards suggest as adequate.

The Town is populated by two subdivision types – suburban residential (less than ½ acre lots) and rural residential (1+ acres). Residents are spread out in the rural residential area noted in areas VI & VII below. All areas will be served with parks per the area descriptions below:

(Match the Roman numerals below to those on Map 3.)

- “**I**” – This area encompasses all the residential subdivisions off of CTH NN that are west of Rib Mountain Elementary. These neighborhoods are outside the ½ mile radius from Rib Mountain Elementary. **Recommendation:** Town to add a mini park on the Town Hall grounds, and pursue constructing an 8-foot wide asphalt path in or alongside of the CTH NN right-of-way from the Town Hall, west to at least Rib Mountain Way. **Long term recommendation:** Add a mini park, west of Grouse Lane to serve the remaining area, along with continuing the potential multi use path from Town Hall, parallel to CTH NN. The Town’s Comprehensive Plan predicts that additional housing will be constructed west of Grouse Lane, so as additional housing is created, also create the mini park.

- “**II**” – This neighborhood is along both sides of Rib Mountain Drive between the ½ mile services areas of Rib Mountain Elementary and Bluegill Bay County Park. Residents in this area can still access either park, with no trips longer than 1 mile. **Recommendation:** No improvements necessary.

- “**III**” – This neighborhood is sandwiched between Lake Wausau and I-39. The longest trip to either Bluegill Bay County Park or Liberty Park is 1.25 miles. The area is underserved by *mini* parks that local kids can enjoy. For the foreseeable future, residents in this area will walk longer distances to either of the closest parks. **Recommendation:** Add a path between houses to connect Tulip Lane with Phlox Lane to make that walking distance shorter. **Long term recommendation:** Add a mini park in this area. *(See possible locations in Recommendation chapter.)*

“IV” – This neighborhood is bound by I-39 on the east, and Rib Mountain State Park on the west. All of these residential pockets west of the commercial uses along CTH R, lead out to the multiuse path on CTH R, so safe off street access to *neighborhood* parks is good. But this same area is not served by a mini park, where walking distances top 1.5 miles from homes in this area to the nearest park, which are too long. **Recommendation:** Add a mini park in this area.

“V” – This neighborhood is home to the Town Fire Department, has high voltage power lines cutting through it, and is sandwiched in between I-39, CTH N, and Trillium Lane. The area is served by a mini park that is next to I-39, which is very noisy. The Town owns two buildable parcels near the fire station. **Recommendation:** Add a mini park on Town land at the corner of Rib Mountain Drive and South Mountain Road (1 block southeast of the fire station). This new park will also serve residents in the next area (“VI” described below).

“VI” – This neighborhood is almost all the residential areas bound by CTH N to the north and Foxglove Road to the south. Many 2 mile one-way trips to the nearest park exist. **Recommendation: Town to add 1 mini park and 1 neighborhood park to cover existing and future homes in this area. The mini park should be west of CTH KK, and the neighborhood park should be east of CTH KK.** The neighborhood park will act as both a *mini* park (per page 11) and a *neighborhood* park (per page 11) for *service area* (Map 3) requirements. Based upon other *neighborhood* parks serving Rib Mountain, this neighborhood park should have at least 5 acres of buildable land in it.

“VII” – This area includes all the subdivisions south of Foxglove Road. No parks are within walking distance of any of these residents. **Long term recommendation: Add a mini park in this area.**

“VIII” – This subdivision is off of Thornapple Rd. No parks are within walking distance of any of these residents. **Long term recommendation: Add a mini park in this area.**

C. Level Of Service (amount of parks for the population) – When you take into account the school grounds and the county park, then Rib Mountain has a high amount of park acreage per resident.

- Park acreages within each park are appropriate in size per Table 7 and serve their respective neighborhoods well.
- Among the developed parks in Rib Mountain, features within each park (identified in Chapter 3) have enough space to function properly, are well maintained, and have unprogrammed buffer space between uses.
- Parks are located in areas that have scenic beauty and do not have physical barriers for neighbors to access them. For example: River Park in Rothschild now connects to Rib Mountain over the recently built Wisconsin River pedestrian bridge, and therefore now counts as providing park coverage to some residents in Rib Mountain.

Insert Map 3 – Park Service Areas

Chapter 5

OUTDOOR RECREATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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

Goal 1 – Provide facilities for bicycle and pedestrian use.

Objectives

1. Cooperate with WisDOT to choose the best bicycling and walking accommodations for WisDOT road projects. State and federal highway projects now must comply with the Complete Streets law that requires site specific bicycling and walking accommodations within certain levels of reconstruction.
2. Cooperate with County Highway Department to improve bicycle accommodations on all county highways.
3. Install sidewalk connections along and across Rib Mountain Drive.
4. Consider making all roads classified as collectors or arterials pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Many main roads in the Town do not have a safe place to walk or bike outside of the travel lane.
5. Consider requiring bicycle parking at each employer in the Town.

Goal 2 – Improve water access throughout the Town.

Objectives

1. Mark public water access points within the Town (e.g. 6 points along the Wisconsin River).
2. Develop kayak launch within an existing park in the Town. This launch could be at Gulliver’s Landing, or Bluegill Bay County Park.
3. Protect shore fishing areas on Wisconsin River by restricting boat traffic near pier. Placing “boats keep out” buoys near shore and dock fishing sites would reinforce the regulation.

Goal 3 – Maintain the existing quality park level of service as the community grows.

Objectives

1. Continue improving and expanding Doepke Park to maintain it as the Town’s premier community park.
2. Continue utilizing and exploring additional opportunities to work with other public and private entities for services. This includes working with the county and state parks within the Town, and with other organizations that may want to host events or build recreation facilities that may fit within existing parks.
3. Continue to add parks to serve new residential developments.

Chapter 6

RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations and Capital Improvements are strategies for satisfying issues identified. 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.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a variety of strategies available for implementing this plan. Chapter 7 provides a wide variety of implementation techniques to use. By using the following recommendations, and implementation techniques in Chapter 7, Rib Mountain can improve and preserve outdoor recreation for current residents and future generations.

The following recommendations are listed in priority order:

Bone and Joint Trail

On the eastern base of Rib Mountain is the Bone and Joint Trail that connects some street parking with the Rib Mountain trail that goes to the top of Rib Mountain. Parking at the mountain's base has been expanded, and is still not enough for the high volume of users – both during the day and on weekends.

Short Term (2015-2016):

Extend the CTH R asphalt path along the driveway to access Immanuel Baptist Church's (IBC) parking lot, which is available for public parking when there are no church services. See potential path design in Attachment L.

Long Term (2016-2019):

Seek additional public/private partnerships to establish trailhead parking sites around the Town.

Doepke Park

Doepke Park receives extensive use by Town residents and many people also consider it a regional park due to its draw of users from a variety of other municipalities.

Recreational Pressure:

- Parking can be an issue on weekends and during special events. Expanded parking is necessary.

Where is this demand coming from? Part of the parking issue is due to bikers, hikers, and children in strollers. With the large volume of families living out off of Hwy KK, Foxglove, and Goldenrod, there is no safe pedestrian opportunities out there for any of those neighborhoods. Many residents are also using Doepke's parking lot as a trail head so they can use the wide paths that start here and continue north along CTH R.

Recommendation: Develop additional parking within the park, and seek private property partnerships where a trailhead may be created for public parking to use bike trails.

- Regarding playground equipment usage, there are many times when the playground is beyond capacity. The small child swings are always busy. Kids are waiting in line to use the swings, and seating for parents is non-existent (due to kids using them while they wait).

Recommendations:

1. Advertise other parks (especially South Mountain Elementary) on a kiosk near the playground.
 2. Instead of adding another playground in Doepke Park, consider creating the additional parks that are recommended later in this chapter, so that playgrounds are closer to where people live, and therefore will not need to drive to Doepke Park.
 3. Add benches inside playground fence.
- Lack of shelter, shade, and picnic accommodations.

Doepke Park is currently designed only for sporting events and active recreation. There is no covered outdoor seating within Doepke Park. Liberty Park has a nice shelter.

Recommendation: Consider adding a covered picnic pavilion to either or both sides of the main food concession and restroom building.

The congested use at Doepke Park partially corresponds with a lack of mini parks serving residents in the Town, as shown on Map 3.

County Highway KK – Bicycle Path Alternative

CTH KK has 5-foot asphalt paved shoulders on both sides, and is well used by bicyclists. After two bicyclist deaths along this road, the community wants a safer way to ride their bikes generally in the CTH KK area.

A short term recommendation to make CTH KK safer is to add *bicycle friendly rumble strip (approved by WisDOT & WI Bike Fed.)* to both white lines and the centerline. Work with the Marathon County Highway Department and the Wausau MPO Bike & Ped. Committee to recommend installing this rumble strip that is half the width of the usual rumble strip, and the white line rumble strip is also only used like a “dashed line” to provide non-rumble strip pavement for bikes to ride into the travel lane to avoid hazards like roadkill on the shoulder.

Attachment F has a map showing a potential off-road bike path to parallel CTH KK. This alternative would be in addition to continuing to allow riding on CTH KK. Families with children and less adventurous bicyclists would prefer to use the alternative trail vs. CTH KK.

Rib Mountain Bike & Pedestrian Improvements

Continue to implement and amend the bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the Rib Mountain Bike & Pedestrian Improvements Map. See Attachment J.

Extend multi-use path to connect Doepke Park with South Mountain Elementary. See Attachment M.

Pave Wide Shoulders For Bicycle & Pedestrian Use

People live in Rib Mountain because they want to have urban amenities but still feel like they live in nature, so not many curbs or sidewalks exist in residential areas.

Traffic volumes are low on most residential streets in Rib Mountain, so no sidewalks or paths are recommended (see #5 in table below) along residential streets.

Traffic volumes on all the minor arterial roads (e.g. NN), and collector roads (e.g. CTH N, Lilac Ave, and Sunrise Dr) are almost all too high to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians without paved shoulders.

The recommendation is to add at least 5-foot (6-foot or off-street path is better) asphalt paved shoulders to all arterial and collector roads within the Town of Rib Mountain.

ROAD or HIGHWAY SUITABILITY FOR BICYCLES, 2014*						
Town of Rib Mountain						
Road	Segment ID	Length (miles)	Pavement Width (feet)	ADT +/- CL = AADT**	% Truck Traffic	Suitability Rating
CTH NN, west of Partridge Ave	1	2.5	34	6200 + 0 = 6200	Up to 9%	Fair
N Mtn. Rd	2	0.25	43	8100 + 800 = 8900	15%	Poor
Lilac Ave	3	0.25	24	3900 + 800 = 4700	Up to 9%	Poor
Lilac Ave	4	0.5	30	3900 + 800 = 4700	Up to 9%	Poor
Sunrise Dr	5	1	28	710 + 800 = 1510	Up to 5%	Good
CTH N	6	2	24	4000 + 100 = 4100	Up to 10%	Poor
CTH KK	7	3	34	3600 + 100 = 3700	Up to 12%	Good

* Rating calculated by NCWRPC from tables in WisDOT's Wisconsin Rural Bicycle Planning Guide.
 ** ADT = Average Daily Travel; CL = additional factor for solid Center Line (no passing); AADT = Adjusted Annual Daily Traffic.

Rib Mountain Drive Sidewalks

Walking is by far the most popular outdoor activity in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan lists walking for pleasure as having 87.7% of the population enjoying it.

Recommendation:

1. Continue to install sidewalks on both sides of Rib Mountain drive where there is right-of-way to do so.

2. Cooperate with retail properties along Rib Mountain Drive to connect private sidewalks to adjacent properties and to connect with the Town's sidewalks.
See sample of sidewalk fixes in Attachment G.

Add New Parks

Needs driven park planning, pages 19-23, identified where deficiencies in the system exist. See the summary on page 22.

New Neighborhood or Community Park

In addition to the **recommendations** and **long term recommendations** below, the Town envisions adding another neighborhood or community level park somewhere in the Town. This potential park may be on land that the Town already owns or on land that becomes available for such a use. The site may be a joint use for the Public Works Department to store material, or for the Fire Department to practice, and the potential park uses may include disc golf, a dog park, mountain biking park, ball diamonds, soccer fields, or any number of additional uses.

Recommendation / long term recommendation: If the park is designed to have uses consistent with what a neighborhood park would have (see page 12), then make sure at least 5 buildable acres are available. If the park will have uses consistent with a community park (see page 12), then make sure at least 25 total acres are part of the park.

Here are the **recommendations** (next 5-years) and **long term recommendations** (beyond 5-years, unless the opportunity arises sooner to satisfy this need):

Official Map – Consider placing future park locations on the official map (Sec. 62.23(6) Wis. Stats) for the Town of Rib Mountain. An official map may be amended to move a park so that a housing development can fit an area, but then the Town can require just compensation (an equivalent amount of buildable land) to move the park.

“I” – Recommendation: Town to add a mini park on the Town Hall grounds, and pursue constructing an 8-foot wide asphalt path in or alongside of the CTH NN right-of-way from the Town Hall, west to at least Rib Mountain Way. **Long term recommendation:** Add a mini park, west of Grouse Lane to serve the remaining area, along with continuing the potential multi use path from Town Hall, parallel to CTH NN. The Town's Comprehensive Plan predicts that additional housing will be constructed west of Grouse Lane, so as additional housing is created, also create the mini park.

“II” – Recommendation: No improvements necessary.

“III” – Recommendation: Add a path between houses to connect Tulip Lane with Phlox Lane to make that walking distance shorter. **Long term recommendation:** Add a mini park in this area. *(See possible locations in Recommendation chapter.)*

- A. Vacant residential parcel – flat buildable parcel with trees is highly desirable. If landowner wishes to sell parcel, then a playground could be installed in the southern half of parcel, and a small open play field on the north half of the property could exist.

- B. Open commercial parcel – less desirable due to expense of purchasing commercial property, and no landscaping exists, which would also add expense.
- C. Strip of land that is privately owned by adjacent land owners – could be an easy location to add an 8 foot wide asphalt path. This would provide a shorter distance (and more scenic than Lilac Ave) for residents south of Phlox Lane to walk or bike to Bluegill Bay County Park.



Source: NCWRPC, and Photo from Google.

“IV” – Recommendation: Add a mini park in this area. Based upon other mini parks serving Rib Mountain, this mini park should have at least 1/2 acre of buildable land in it.

“V” – Recommendation: The Flax Lane Tot Lot exists next to the expressway, which is very noisy. Since the Town owns two other parcels in this area, then this recommendation is to keep the tot lot until the facilities need replacement, and build a new larger mini park on Town land at the corner of Rib Mountain Drive and South Mountain Road (1 block southeast of the fire station). This new park will also serve residents in area “VI.”

The Town also owns another parcel at the east end of Ivy Lane under the power lines. Sell this parcel to help finance the new park.

“VI” – Recommendation: Town to add 1 mini park and 1 neighborhood park to cover existing and future homes in this area. The mini park should be west of CTH KK, and the neighborhood park should be east of CTH KK. The neighborhood park will act as both a *mini* park (per page 11) and a *neighborhood* park (per page 11) for *service area* (Map 3) requirements. Based upon other *neighborhood* parks serving Rib Mountain, this neighborhood park should have at least 5 acres of buildable land in it.

“VII” – Long term recommendation: Add a mini park in this area. Based upon other mini parks serving Rib Mountain, this mini park should have at least 1/2 acre of buildable land in it.

“VIII” – Long term recommendation: Add a mini park in this area. Based upon other mini parks serving Rib Mountain, this mini park should have at least 1/2 acre of buildable land in it.

Marking Public Water Access Sites

Public access points to state waters are required with land subdivisions along rivers and lakes (per §236.16(3) WI Stats.). There are a few types of public access points to waterbodies such as boat launches, canoe access, and unimproved spots. All of these access points are free and open to the public, so they should be identified for everyone to find.

See potential marker designs in Attachment H titled: *“Potential Public Water Access Marker Designs.”* This recommendation is to install a physical marker at each access point that is visible from the water, and another marker that is visible from the nearest road, so the public knows where public access is granted. Also, an official 911 emergency identifier (e.g. like an address number) should be posted along the road and along the water for each access point.

County Park Signs

Bluegill Bay Park does not have any signs on Rib Mountain Drive. There are two unconnected entrances to Bluegill Bay Park, with only one entrance leading to the boat launch.

This recommendation is to request that the county install one set of brown colored highway grade signs on Rib Mountain Drive for both county park entrances. A boat launch symbol should be added to the set of new park signs leading to the **north section** of the park, and a “no boat launch access” or a boat launch symbol with a line through it should be added to the signs leading to the **south section** to show that there is no access to the boat launch from the south.

IMBA Ride Center

Rib Mountain is at the center of a variety of potential mountain biking facilities that would make the Wausau area an IMBA Ride Center. The CWOCC chapter of IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) created their long range plan for mountain biking in the Wausau area, and presented it to a variety of groups in the summer of 2013. Generally, the recommendations below are parts of this long range plan, or were recently discussed, that could be implemented in the Town of Rib Mountain.

Mountain biking by the numbers (per CWOCC):

- More than 1 in 5 Americans 16 and over mountain bike.
- By number of outings, biking is the favorite outdoor activity of American kids aged 6-17.
- There are 1 ½ times more mountain bikers than golfers in America.

IMBA Member Profile

- Male (86%).
- 37 years old (median).
- 71% college or post-graduate degree.
- \$62,000 median household income.
- 33% have \$75,000 median household income.

The following infrastructure is recommended to support a local bicycling public, along with creating an official IMBA Ride Center, which would be a large tourism draw:

Bicycle Parking

Installing bike racks in each park would provide secure parking for residents and visitors. A set of bicycle parking recommendations from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) is included in Attachment I. The amount of space needed for a bike rack, and how to determine good bike rack designs are included in those guidelines.

Bike-friendly Lodging

Specific easy to provide bike facilities at each bike friendly hotel is important when enticing people to visit the local trails. Ride Center Evaluation Criteria has this statement for lodging:

“Hotels, motels, or campgrounds must have bike washes, secure bike storage, and/or allow bikes in rooms. At least 25% of available rooms/sites are to be bicycle friendly within the region near the Ride Center.”

NCWRPC Note: A bicycle wash should just use standard municipal water pressure when designating an area to wash bikes. High pressured wash stations could cause damage by forcing abrasives into bike bearings.

Granite Peak Ski Area

The ski area operates under a lease agreement with the Wisconsin DNR. Unlike the state park, which prohibits mountain bike use, the ski hill lease has wording specific to the possibility of mountain bike trails within the leased area. Given the expansion of the facilities over the last decade it is reasonable to imagine that Granite peak would consider summertime activities.

Benefits: Ski hill leased area is approximately 400 acres, which would provide for a significant amount of trails. Given the elevation, access to chairlifts, and updated base facilities, Granite Peak could offer gravity based flow trails unlike anywhere in Wisconsin. A freeride park may be possible also.

Drawbacks: The terrain is rugged and rocky with very little topsoil. Trail construction could be very costly. The trails on the ski leased property will remain isolated unless a change to the State Park Master Plan can be implemented to facilitate additional trails outside of the ski hill property and connectivity to Nine Mile.

Trail Type: Gravity based flow trail for all ability levels and advanced downhill trails. Lift served and base trail (ride up) access. Freeride Park.

Rib Mountain State Park

At 1500 acres the park is a significant large tract of land that flanks the west side of the Wausau metropolitan area. Already home to an amphitheater, picnic areas, and 13 miles of hiking trail where scenic overlooks are abundant. Limited access for hunting and trapping is also allowed.

Benefits: Very large tract of land already available for public use could provide for significant mileage of trail. Incredible elevation gain found nowhere else in Wisconsin. Close proximity to the metro area would allow residents and visitors to ride to the park. There is potential for connectivity to existing mountain bicycling facilities at Nine Mile County Forest to the south.

Drawbacks: The current Master Plan for the park specifically writes out the possibility for mountain bike trails. A change to the master plan would require a full amendment process, which will be lengthy. While the topography is excellent there is a lack of topsoil as the majority of Rib Mountain is made up of quartzite making trail construction expensive. A State Natural Area virtually cuts the park in half. Getting access to build trails in designated Natural Areas will be difficult. Other user groups have voiced opposition to mountain bike trails at the mere rumor of mountain bicycle access.

Trail Types: Flow trail and XC trail.

Rib Mountain to Nine Mile Recreation Area

A link between Rib Mountain State Park & Granite Peak Ski Area to Nine Mile Recreation area is possible through trail along the southern border of Rib Mountain State Park and easements on private property and access through Town of Wausau property just north of Nine Mile. This link will also serve as an off road corridor from the southwest edge of the residential portion of the Town of Rib Mountain.

Benefits: Connector trail will allow for expanded riding opportunities by allowing mountain bikers to access multiple trail clusters all by bicycle. The

connector trail will also allow for residents to ride to mountain bike facilities at Rib Mountain and Nine Mile without having to drive to the trail head.

Drawbacks: Mountain bike access will have to be granted for Rib Mountain State Park and numerous easements granted for crossing private lands. A wetland area on the north side of Nine Mile will have to be crossed to make the connection possible.

Trail Type: XC trail for all ability levels and/or multi-use trail for hiking/biking

Mosinee Hill

Mosinee hill lies just to the south of Rib Mountain along the west side of Interstate 39 in the Town of Rib Mountain. Rising approximately 375 feet above the surrounding area this is the second most significant elevation in the Wausau area. The hill is primarily wooded with some residential areas on the northwest side and along Foxglove Road, which crosses just south of the peak. All of the property of interest is privately owned.

Benefits: Excellent wooded property with significant elevation change. Close proximity to the metro area and existing paved bicycle/pedestrian paths would allow for many mountain bicyclists to ride from home to the trailhead. Some of this land could be utilized for mountain bike connectors to link the metro area to Nine Mile Recreation Area. Potential for multiuse trails as the views from the hill would be attractive for other user groups.

Drawbacks: All of the land on Mosinee Hill is privately owned making easements or acquisition of the properties very expensive and time consuming. The primary land of interest (approximately 600 acres) is divided among 12 different property owners adding to the complexity of access or acquisition. Many residential homes are located on portions of the hill.

Trail Type: Flow trail and XC trail for all ability levels. Potential for multiuse or hiking only trail to take advantage of the views from the top.

Wausau School Forest

The Wausau School District owns and operates the School Forest located adjacent to Nine Mile County Forest to the southwest. The forest is over 400 acres of pine and hardwoods bordering the west bank of the Wisconsin River. The School Forest is also home to cabins, wildlife museum, obstacle course and rappelling tower.

Benefits: Large tract of mature forest that is publicly owned. Close proximity to existing mountain bike facilities and provide for a portion of a connector trail from Rib Mountain/Rothschild to Nine Mile. There already are existing nature trails on a portion of the property but the west side is relatively undeveloped with some little utilized double track trail. A snowmobile trail also runs through the west end of the property (south to north). Teaming with the school district could help spur a school based mountain bike program.

Drawbacks: Area available for trails would not likely be the entire forest and much of the property is flat. The east side of the property has a lot of low lying flood plain along the Wisconsin River that could make trail building difficult.

Trail Type: Gateway trail in much of the west side pine forested area and north of highway KK. Connector trail to link Rib Mountain/Rothschild to Nine Mile Recreation Area.

NCWRPCE Note: This Liberty Park facility idea is not in the CWOCC plan, but was brought up for discussion after that plan was created:

Liberty Park

Summer recreation here includes tennis, nature trails, sand volleyball, baseball and has open field play too, and is next to a regional bicycle trail.

Benefits: Good sized park at 14 acres. Nearly level land to build upon.

Drawbacks: Park may not be large enough for bike park facilities without clearing some trees. Undeveloped park area may not be large enough for a traditional pump track. Constant expressway noise exists next to park.

Trail Type: Freeride Park

Bicycle Parking

For bikes to be used more often for transportation, everyday destinations like work, school, stores, offices, and restaurants must be within a convenient biking distance. Many Town destinations are clustered along Rib Mountain Drive, and they are close enough to residential areas so that many types and abilities of riders can bike to them.

The Town may want to consider creating a bicycle parking ordinance. Bicycle trails now run throughout several parts of the Town, but few places provide bicycle parking. Therefore, now is the time to provide guidance and a timeline to establishing 1) where, 2) how much, and 3) what type of bicycle parking each employer would provide in the Town (both public and private). Bicycle rack design guidelines in **Attachment I** are a good start for anyone wanting to provide bicycle parking now that would probably comply with potential future regulations.

Recreation Safety (911)

Accidents are a part of life. From a physical injury to recreational equipment breaking down, people will need help, and they expect the authorities to find them.

Work with the Marathon County Emergency Management Department to verify that official Town trails, parks, and water access points are geo-located in the 911 system. For example: if a person calls from a water access point along the Wisconsin River between houses, then a map of the area’s access points would show up on the 911 screen.

B. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 2014-2019

Capital improvements to parks are the addition of labor and materials that improve the overall value and usefulness of that park. This list of capital improvement projects was created by the Park Commission.

General Town Projects:

- Add park benches along paved pedestrian trails:
 - Between I-39 & big box retailers;
 - Doepke Park trail;
 - Wisconsin River Pedestrian Bridge path; and
 - At Wisconsin River dam boat launch.
- Add bike racks at all parks.
- Create a bike park in an area along Bike Route #7, between Liberty Park and River Park (Rothschild).
- Update Town website to add links to state and county parks within Town, and to link to County Park activities. Providing links to Wausau's pools and both area aquatic centers would provide new residents with additional swimming options. Many people are expecting the Town to provide recreational services that are provided by other governmental bodies.

Kayak Launches

- Add a kayak launch at Gulliver's Landing boat launch, or possibly at Rookery View Park. Adequate launch area and vehicle parking will need to be identified before a final site is chosen.
- Work with County to add kayak launch at Bluegill Bay County Park, and D.C. Everest County Park.
- Work with Rothschild to add kayak launch at Pavilion Park.

Doepke Park improvements:

- Create shelters with and without grills.
- Install pedestrian benches along trail.
- Install benches inside the playground fence.
- Install informational kiosk along path leading to playgrounds, which identifies other parks to use when Doepke Park is busy.
- Expand trail into adjacent Rib Mountain Park parcel.
- Add more shade trees.
- Add disc golf holes for practice.

Liberty Park improvements:

- Replace park boundary markers, used to keep cars off the grass, with boulders.

- Move wooden park sign toward Lakeshore Drive to provide better visibility of the sign, or drastically prune bushes on both sides of the sign. The bushes are blocking the sign from view until you are perpendicular to the sign on the road.
- Install new or remove the “caution park area” sign on Lakeshore Drive, which is west of the main driveway facing eastbound traffic.
- Install two pet waste cleaning stations. One pet station at the end of Moonlite Lane on the park side of Liberty Street, and the other pet station near the parking lot on the tennis court side off of Lakeshore Drive.
- Fence in the seldom used soccer field to create a dog park. Add two entrances – one off of Moonlite Ave, with the other closest to the sand volleyball court. Provide pet waste stations at each entrance, and benches on both the west and east ends.
- Remove poison ivy.
- Add a second picnic shelter north of the parking area by the tennis courts. Maintain a portable restroom somewhere on the tennis court side of the park.
- Add a permanent restroom building, with drinking fountain, between playground and sand volleyball court.

South Mountain Schoolyard improvements:

- Work with School District to improve tennis court fence, so that tennis balls no longer roll under the fence.

Chapter 7 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

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. Marathon County administers the zoning within Rib Mountain.

Public Access to Waterways

Rib Mountain is part of Marathon County's Subdivision Ordinance, and the County administers the ordinance. State regulations for subdivisions require dedication of public access when the land along waterways is platted.

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

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

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

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

Park Dedication

Subdivision regulations can be used to require residential land subdividers to dedicate a portion of subdivided land for permanent park and open space use. Neighborhood parks may be acquired in this manner in newly developing residential areas. Local landowners 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 some communities.

Official Map

Section 62.23(6) of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that a city (or village or Town exercising village powers) may establish an *official map* to designate the precise right-of-way lines and site boundaries of streets, highways, parkways, parks, and playgrounds. The map may also include the locations of railroad rights of way, public transit facilities, and waterways that have been included in a comprehensive surface water drainage plan. Airports, areas affected by airports, and historic districts may also be mapped.

Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions are characterized by common open space and clustered compact lots. A variety of housing types or the same type of housing may be allowed. The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to protect farmland or natural resource open spaces while allowing for the maximum number of residences under current community zoning and subdivision regulations. In some cases a greater density (density bonus) may be offered in the local ordinance to encourage this approach. Generally, this tool is used for parcels 40 acres and larger, or where the community maps natural resource corridors or natural features that they want to preserve. A conservation subdivision maintains the same level of overall density as a conventional subdivision, but individual lot sizes are smaller, and the community receives open space.

Use of Easements

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

Leases

Leases may be used as measures to use or protect land until more permanent measures may be found. By leasing parcels of land, the land remains on the village'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 local government. The local government then leases the land to a private party or organization with use restrictions placed on the land. Under this method, the local government receives some monetary return on its investment and retains control over the use of the land.

Program Costs

A community should carefully watch operations and maintenance costs when setting up a parks program. A too ambitious acquisition and/or development program can easily lead to annual costs larger than the community can afford to meet. Recreation

facilities like golf courses and swimming pools, for example, require large annual maintenance investments to continue.

Capital Improvements

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

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

Monetary Aid Programs

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

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

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

Community Services Specialist
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
1300 West Clairemont Avenue
P.O. Box 4001
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4001

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

Lifetime Activities

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

Winter Activities

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

Specialized Facilities

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

Municipal and School District Cooperation

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

Senior Citizen Involvement

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

Service Group Involvement

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

Community Beautification

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

Adopt-A-Park Program

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

ATTACHMENT A

Park Design and Location Criteria

From:

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2011-2016

ATTACHMENT B

Facility Design Standards

From: National Recreation and Park Association

ATTACHMENT C

Federal & State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs

ATTACHMENT D

2011-2016 Wisconsin SCORP Summary

ATTACHMENT E

Bike and Pedestrian Implementation Table

From: Wausau MPO's 2009 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

ATTACHMENT F

County Highway KK – Bicycle Path Alternative

ATTACHMENT G

Sidewalk Fixes on Rib Mountain Drive

ATTACHMENT H

Marking Public Water Access Sites

ATTACHMENT I

Bicycle Parking Guidelines

From: Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)
One page summary sheet.

ATTACHMENT J

Rib Mountain's Bike & Pedestrian Improvements Map

ATTACHMENT K

Rib Mountain's Survey Results Summary

ATTACHMENT L

Potential Base of Rib Mountain Parking Lot Layout

ATTACHMENT M

Potential Doepke To South Mountain Elementary Path Layout