



Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2029

Also covering the municipalities within Portage County



Prepared by: North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Acknowledgements

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Cover & back of cover photos by Portage County Parks Department.

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This plan was prepared under the direction of the Portage County Park Commission by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

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

Adoption of this plan by the Portage County Board and subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), will continue eligibility of the County and its local units of government for the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF), Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space Program (UGS) and Urban Rivers Grant Program (URGP).

All municipalities that wish to apply for DNR grants need to adopt this Plan by resolution as their own.

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.

1.2 Provisions for Updating Plan

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

Annual review of the plan recommendations and capital improvement list by the Park Commission will keep this plan current. This review may also occur after a large turn over in elected officials after an election.

Annual Review Process:

1. The Park Commission reviews plan and takes a vote on what changes to make.
2. County Board adopts changes by resolution.

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).

3. Those changes are now part of the original plan. Make sure those changes, the original plan and the approval resolution are available to submit to DNR’s Community Financial Assistance staff when applying for any financial assistance.

Establishing a **full plan update every five years** will assure that the plan reflects changes in the recreational needs of the County and will extend the county’s eligibility for grant programs for another 5 years.

1.3 Planning Process

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Portage County Park Commission by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Portage County ORP Planning Timeline

Winter/Spring 2024 – Staff park analysis, plans reviewed, & demographic data analysis.

April 11, 2024 – Park Commission meeting – Overview of planning process, discussed questions for countywide survey and how to distribute the survey, and discussed local government questionnaires to update their existing facilities and get their lists of outdoor recreation recommendations for their facilities.

Spring 2024 – Survey available for 6-weeks. 182 responses. See survey details in Chapter 5.

Summer 2024 – Goals & Objectives developed.

August 8, 2024 – Park Commission meeting – Reviewed survey results, and discussed initial goals & objectives.

Summer/Fall 2024 – Draft Plan ready for review.

December 12, 2024 – Park Commission meeting – Draft Plan presented for initial review.

Winter 2024/2025 – Plan ready for approval by Park Commission and adoption by County Board.

1.4 Portage County Park Commission

The Portage County Board of Supervisors established the Park Commission in 1935, under Chapter 27.02 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. The seven-member Commission consists of four County Board Supervisors whose terms are subject to re-election every two years; and three citizen members that serve seven-year terms. The Commission discharges those responsibilities granted under Chapter 27.05.

Portage County Park Commission’s Mission:

To enhance and maintain the quality of life for Portage County citizens by providing a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities such as biking, birding, fishing, skiing, viewing, swimming, etc., in natural settings throughout County Park facilities and programs.

1.5 Reference Plans & Programs

Portage County developed its first outdoor recreation policy manual in 1966. That manual and a subsequent 1969 update were written for the purpose of meeting the County recreation demands and qualifying for State and Federal recreation aids. The policy manual was expanded and reworked to create the first Portage County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP), which was adopted in 1971. Since the adoption of the 1971 CORP, the Portage County Park Commission has adopted plan updates in 1977, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2001, 2007, and 2012. This plan has been written to follow the previous Portage County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2020-2025.

Plan and program summaries that affect outdoor recreation in Portage County are referenced below:

Portage County Land Preservation Fund Committee

The Portage County Land Preservation Fund (PCLPF) Committee was created in 2004 to identify and protect open spaces and outstanding natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County. Land can be preserved through donations, conservation easements, or land purchase. The PCLPF Committee reviews applications for funding on a regular basis and sends recommendations to the Portage County Parks Commission for final approval.

Land Legacy Fund of Portage County

The Land Legacy Fund was established in the fall of 2004 as a private fund within the Community Foundation of Portage County. The primary purpose of the fund is to supplement and complement the activities of Portage County's Land Preservation Fund. The secondary purpose is to work with other organizations in or near Portage County to purchase land and conservation easements that protect natural, cultural, historic, and/or agricultural areas in and near Portage County.

Portage County Open Space Plan 2000

The County adopted the Portage County Open Space Plan 2000 for identifying, preserving, and in some cases purchasing environmentally significant lands. Of particular concern are those lands which are still undeveloped and afford the opportunity to maintain significant natural or open spaces. Lands that are associated with stream corridors or other natural features, lands with special scenic value, and lands that connect such areas are given high priority for protection. Purchase, land trade, conservation easements, or other compensatory forms of acquisition or development restrictions should be considered as supplements to the use of conservancy type zoning. Acquisition of desirable lands would eliminate the pressure for private rezoning, allow for public access, and allow the private landowner some form of compensation not presently afforded under official Conservation zoning. Scenic easements should be considered where public ownership is not desirable or feasible.

The County has two zoning districts to match the existing Natural Areas Land Use categories in the 2000 plan. These zoning districts are the Conservancy District and the Rural Limited District to buffer the Conservancy District..

Portage County Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

In 2013-2014, Portage County Planning and Zoning Department developed this bicycling and walking plan with assistance from Toole Design and Schriber Anderson and Associates. This plan identifies where existing biking and walking facilities exist. Recommendations in this plan are for facility improvements throughout the County; and non-infrastructure recommendations for encouragement, education, enforcement, evaluation, and other policy recommendations.

Proposed paths and on-road routes from this plan are shown on maps in **Attachment G**.

Portage County Comprehensive Plan, 2024-2044

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

Within some of the chapters are the following goals, objectives, and policies that relate to outdoor recreation:

Chapter 3: Transportation

Goal: Develop an area-wide transportation planning and funding approach that maximizes efficiency and minimizes conflicts between modes as well as jurisdictions.

Objective 2: Utilize and update existing transportation related plans.

Objective 4: Encourage and accommodate human-powered transportation options.

Policy 1: Develop an area-wide transportation planning approach for all ages, abilities, and incomes.

Policy 3: Plan for and improve ATV, bicycle, pedestrian, UTV, snowmobile, and other kinds of trails to provide transportation and recreational opportunities while minimizing conflicts with other users.

Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities

Goal 1: Create and protect public green space and water resources Countywide.

Policy 7: Support the implementation of the 2020-2024 Portage County Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Chapter 5: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

NR Goal 1: Manage the natural resources that support and sustain us.

NR Objective 2: Natural resources that provide recreational opportunities on public land are managed to ensure their lasting presence.

NR Policy 4: Develop partnership efforts that result in the preservation and restoration of natural resources.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan, 2018

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

Goals of the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

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

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

Forest Legacy Program

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

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

Landowner participation is entirely voluntary. A project can be:

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

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

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

Land must be:

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

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

State Trails Network Plan

This 2001 document (revised in 2003) clarifies a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources’ (WDNR) role and strategy in the provision of all types of trails. The plan identifies a series of potential trail corridors that would link existing trails, public lands, natural features, and communities. This statewide network of interconnected trails would be owned and maintained by municipalities, private entities, and partnerships of the two. Preserving transportation corridors, such as old rail lines, is specifically discussed as a very important strategy in the creation of recreational and alternative transportation corridors.

The following potential trails are shown on **Map 3**.

Segment 4—Green Bay to Mississippi River

This segment is a 65-mile link from Green Bay to the Waupaca-Portage county line. It would connect with the Wiouwash Trail in New London (Outagamie County) and the Tomorrow River State Trail. It is also an important link in a long-distance east/ west corridor across the state. At present, the Waupaca County line to Scandinavia portion is DNR-owned with Waupaca County as the operating partner. Within Portage County, Segment 4 is the Tomorrow River State Trail coming into Plover. **NCWRPC Note:** *The plan shows that Segment 4 between Plover and Wisconsin Rapids is within the STH 54 corridor.*

Segment 18—Tomahawk to Wisconsin Dells

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

Continuing southward into Portage County, 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.

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

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

Segment 58—Appleton to Plover

This 60-mile-long segment will connect Appleton to the Green Circle State Trail in Plover. From Appleton, this route would follow a rail corridor northwest through New London, south of Manawa, then to Odgensburg, Amherst Junction, then to Plover where it connects with the Green Circle Trail.

NCWRPC Note: *Odgensburg to Amherst Junction are both already on the Tomorrow River State Trail, so there is no need for a second trail alignment to Appleton. Creating an off-road path in the Amherst Junction area will finish the Tomorrow River State Trail. East of Portage County, connecting Manawa to New London to Hortonville would finish the trail to Appleton.*

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023

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

This SCORP lays out five overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

1. Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
2. Grow partnerships.
3. Provide high-quality experiences.

4. Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
5. Enhance funding and financial stability.

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

Wisconsin Land Legacy Report 2006-2056

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

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

CG Central Wisconsin Grasslands

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

DW Dewey Marsh and Woods

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

HE Hartman & Emmons Creeks

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

LV Little Plover River

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

PV Plover River

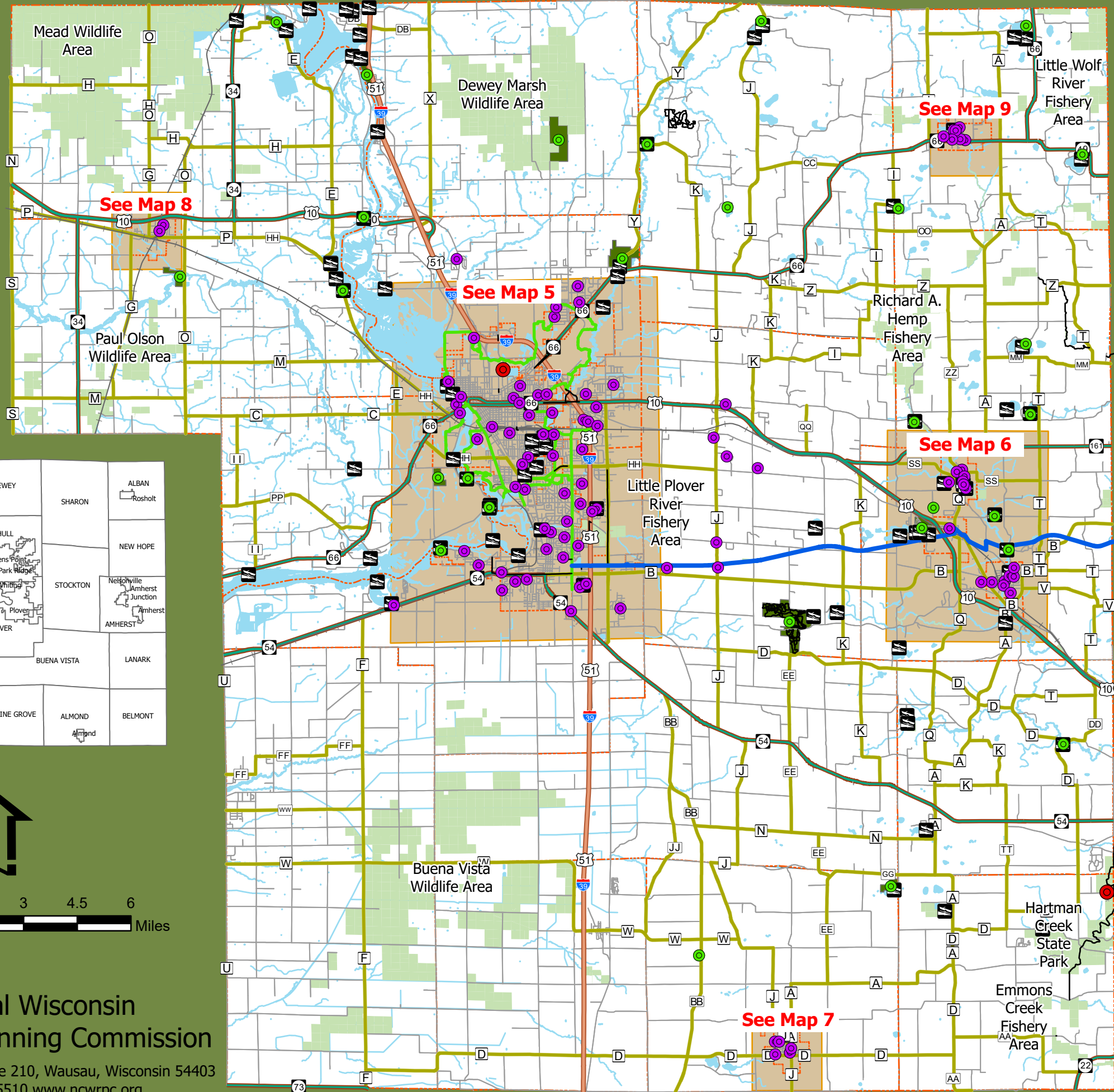
Size	Medium
Protection Initiated	Limited
Protection Remaining	Substantial
Conservation Significance	☆☆☆
Recreation Potential	☆☆☆

Outdoor Recreation

Portage County, Wisconsin

Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
 - Interstate Highways
 - US & State Highways
 - County Highway
 - Local Roads
 - Railroad
 - Water
 - State Recreational Lands
 - Portage County Lands
 - Trails
 - Green Circle State Trail
 - Tomorrow River State Trail
 - Boat Launches
- PARKS**
- County
 - Municipal
 - State



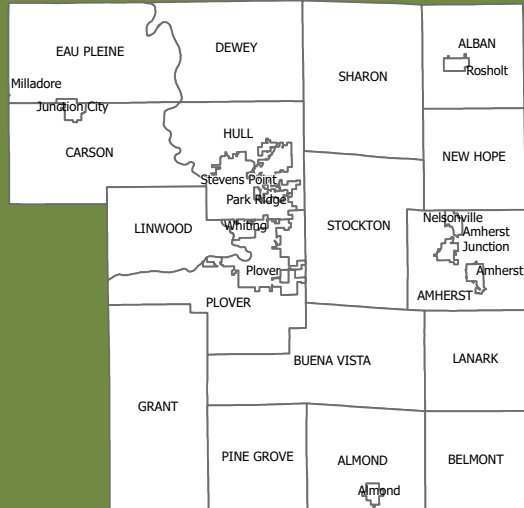
See Map 8

See Map 5

See Map 9

See Map 6

See Map 7



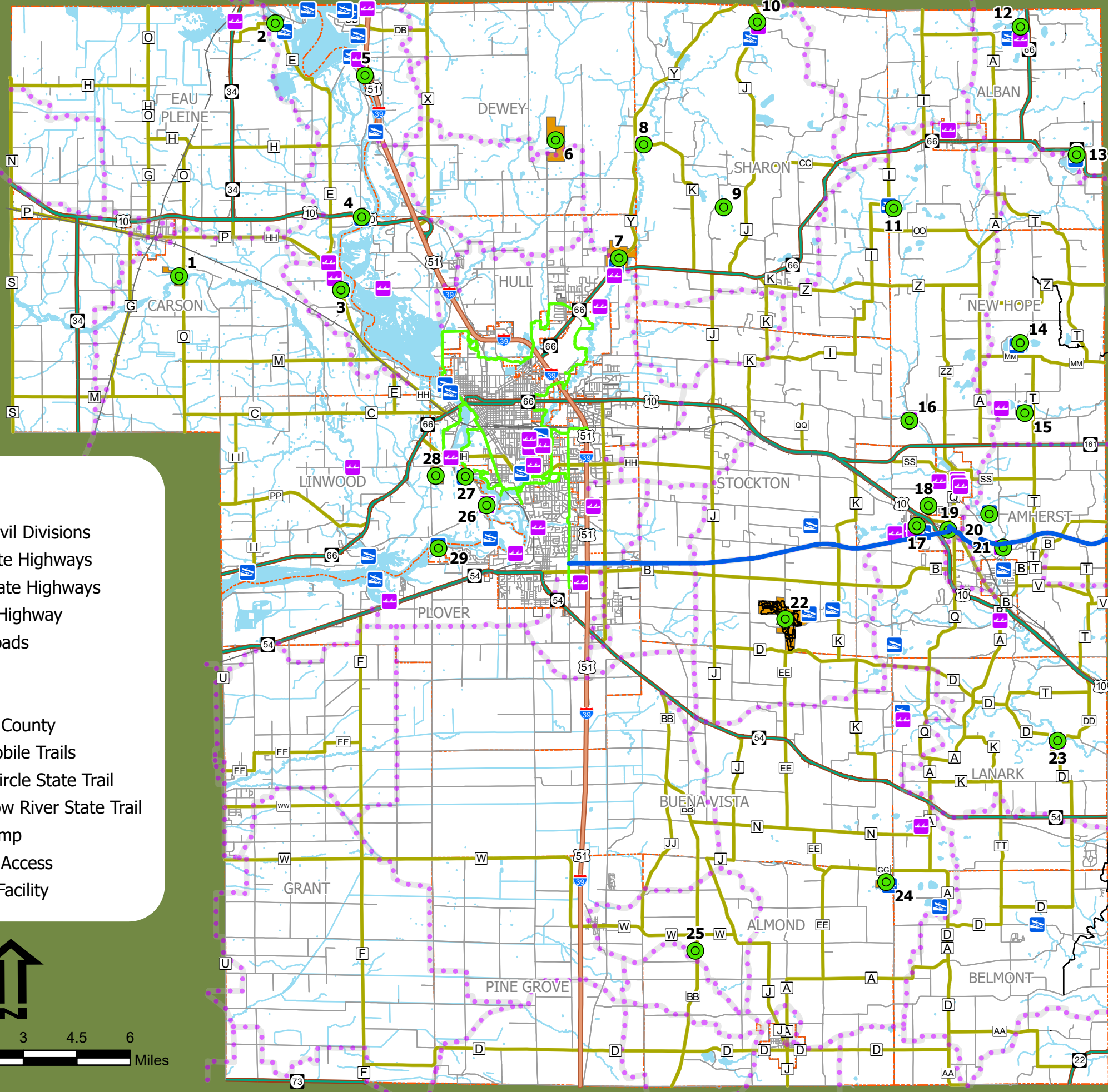
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Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Portage County

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County Administered Outdoor Recreation

Portage County, Wisconsin



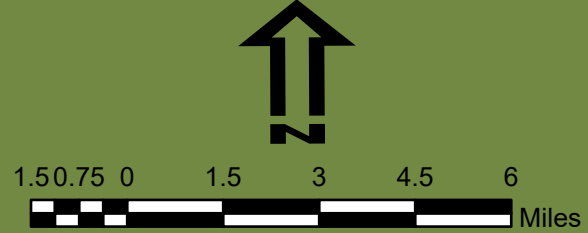
Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- + Railroad
- Water
- Portage County
- ⋯ Snowmobile Trails
- ~ Green Circle State Trail
- ~ Tomorrow River State Trail
- Boat Ramp
- Walk-In Access
- County Facility

ID	NAME
1	Mill Creek Preserve
2	DuBay Park
3	HH Boat Launch
4	River Road Boat Launch
5	Wis. River Recreation Area
6	Dewey Marsh Rec. Area & Shooting Range
7	Jordan Park
8	Plover River Wayside
9	Becker Lake Recreation Area
10	Lake Jacqueline Preserve
11	Collins Park
12	Peterson Park
13	Lake Helen Park
14	Sunset Lake Park
15	Rinehart Lake Boat Landing
16	Tomorrow River Wayside
17	Lake Emily Park
18	County Cemetery
19	Tomorrow River State Trailhead
20	Lake Meyers Boat Landing
21	Cate Park
22	Standing Rocks Park
23	Stedman Wayside
24	Wolf Lake Park
25	Carrie Frost Park
26	Al Tech Park
27	Consolidated Park
28	Rocky Run Preserve
29	Galecke Park

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Portage County
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Legacy Places and Potential Trails

Portage County, Wisconsin

Legend

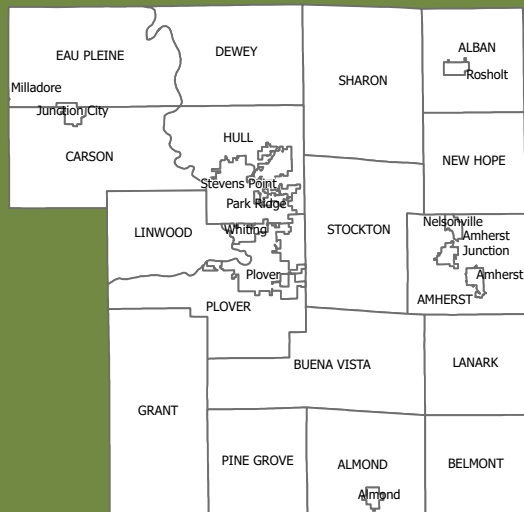
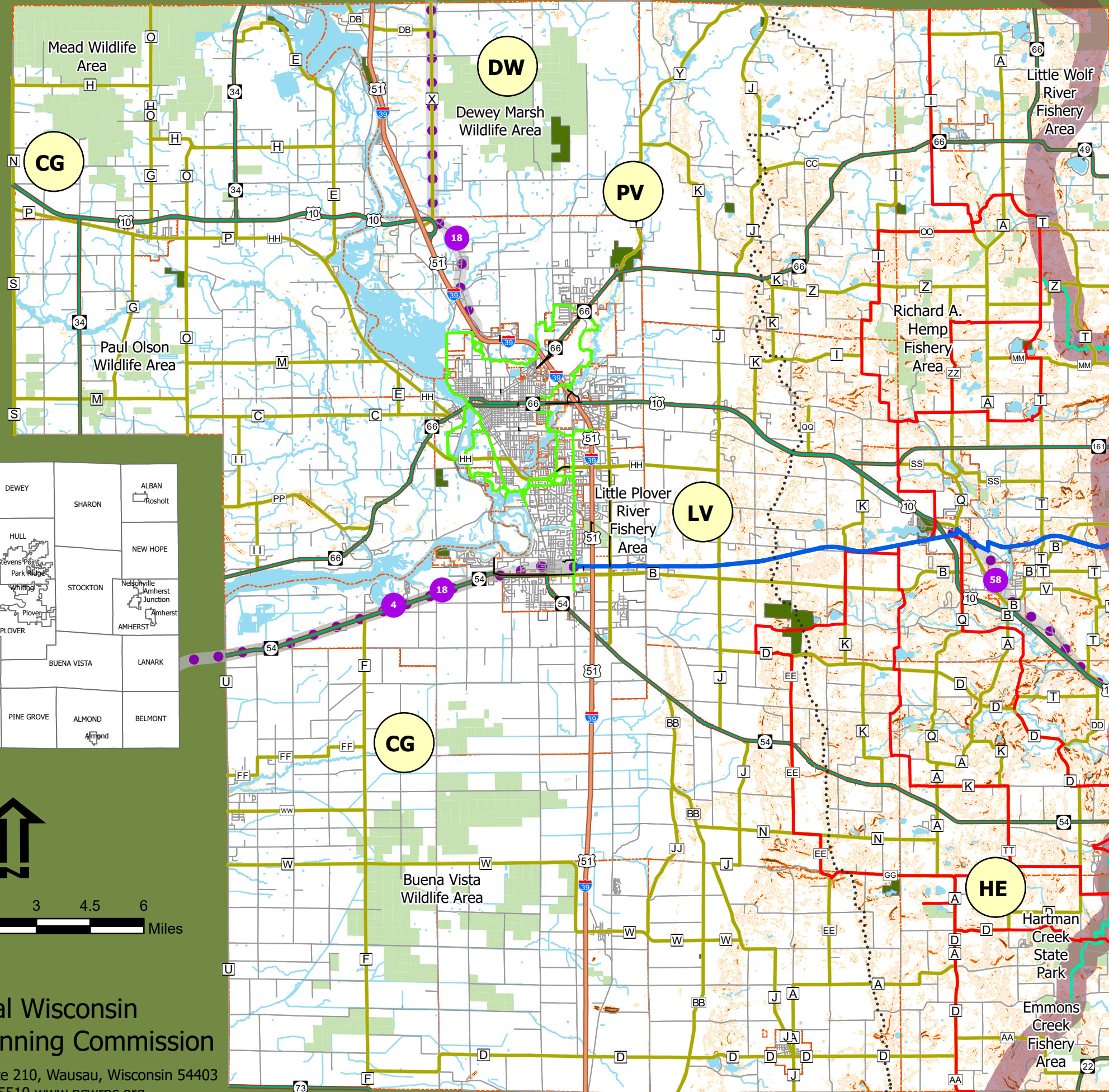
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Water
- Ice Age Bicycle Route*
- Green Circle State Trail
- Tomorrow River State Trail
- Ice Age Trail
- Ice Age Trail Corridor
- Level to Gentle Slopes (0-6%)
- Slopes (6-12%)
- Moderate Slopes (12-20%)
- Steep Slopes (>20%)
- Subcontinental Divide
- Portage County Lands
- State Recreational Lands
- DNR Trails Network Plan Corridors
- HE Legacy Places

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

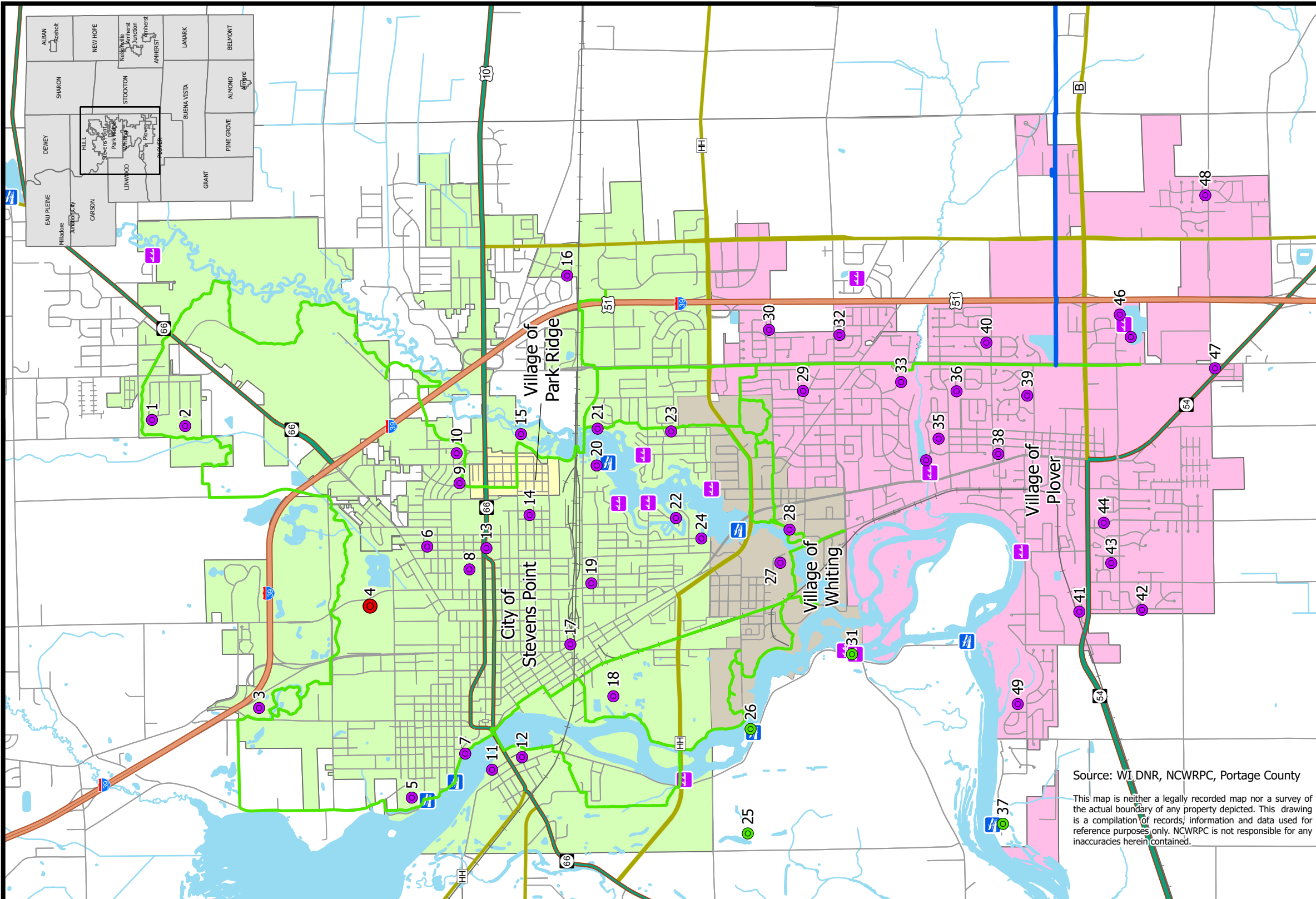
1. Officially designates by ordinance one of the segments or part of a segment per WI State Statue 349.23; and
2. Installs bike route signs.

Source: WI DNR, NCRWPC, Portage County

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Legend

- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Green Circle State Trail
- Tomorrow River State Trail
- PARKS**
- County
- Municipal
- State
- City of Stevens Point
- Village of Park Ridge
- Village of Plover
- Village of Whiting
- Boat Landings Legend**
- Boat Ramp
- Walk-In Access

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Portage County

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ID	NAME
1	Whitetail Park
2	Yulga Park
3	Zenoff Park
4	Schmeckle Reserve
5	Bukolt Park
6	Atwell Park
7	Pfiffner Pioneer Park
8	Goerke Park
9	Hein Park
10	Plover Hills Park
11	Mead Park
12	Slomann Park
13	McLachlin Park
14	Texas Park
15	Iverson Park
16	Conifer Park
17	Veteran's Memorial Park
18	Stevens Point Dog Park
19	Morton Park
20	McDill Disc Golf
21	Plover River Park
22	Riverwoods Park
23	Parkwood Park
24	Kozickowski Park
25	Rocky Run Preserve
26	Consolidated Park
27	Lower Whiting Park
28	Upper Whiting Park
29	Kubacki Park
30	Oakwood Forest
31	AI Tech Park
32	Pleasant Acres Park
33	Little Plover River Park
34	Springville Park
35	Iber Park
36	Hoover Heights
37	Galecke Park
38	Memorial Park
39	Easlan-Weslan
40	Forest Pines Park
41	Plover Pines Park
42	Okray Park
43	Jack's Park
44	Oak Park
45	Lake Pacawa
46	Worzella Pines Park
47	Wayside
48	Arbor Haven Park
49	OK Bluff Park



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Town Parks and School Forests

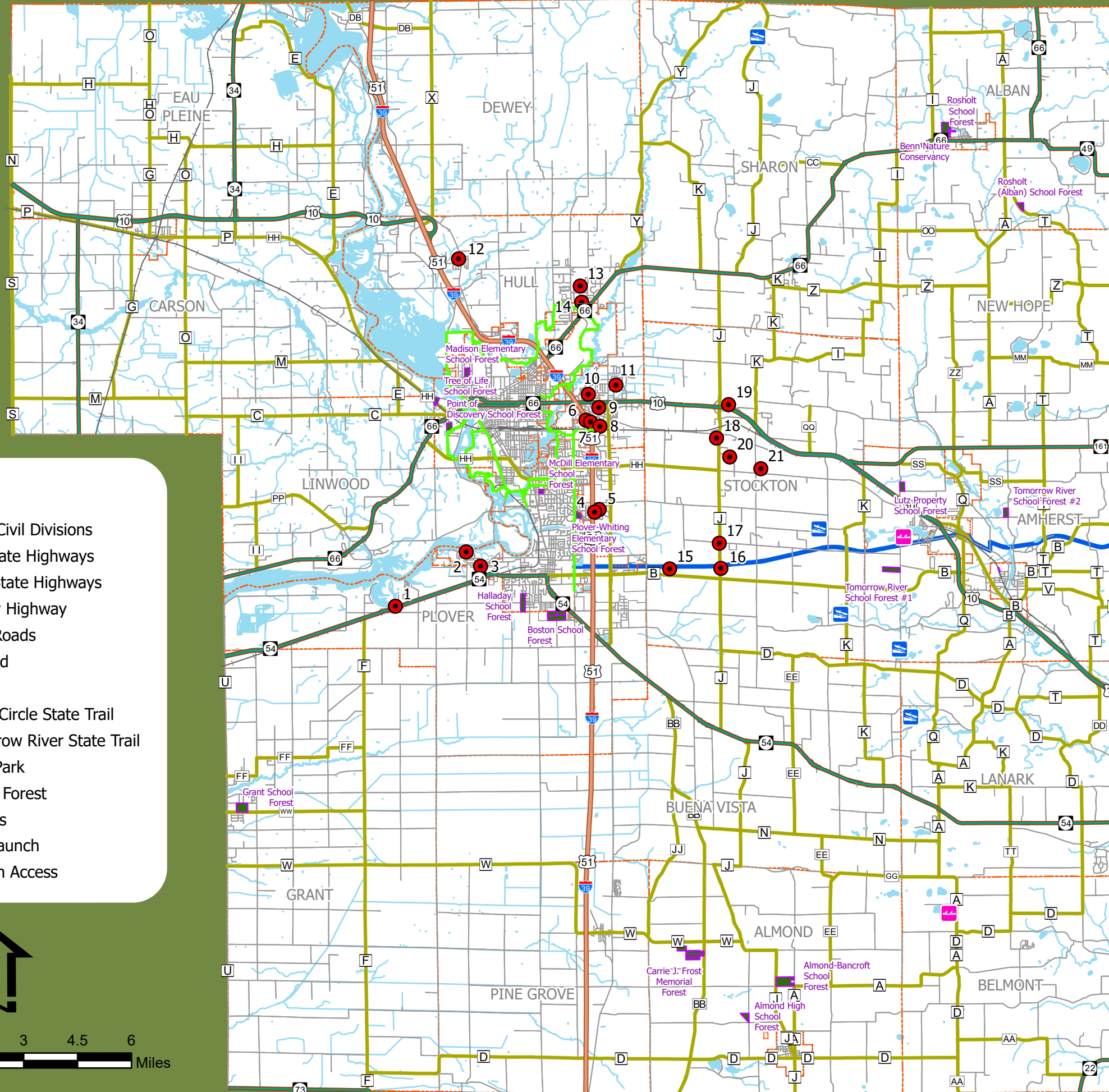
Portage County, Wisconsin

ID	NAME
1	Forest Lake
2	River Heights Park
3	River Ridge Lea
4	Bluebird Park
5	Bluebird Lake
6	Pleasant View Park
7	Pleasant View East Park
8	Conifer Park
9	Sorenson Park
10	Treder's Woodland Park West
11	Eastwood Park
12	Meadow Manor Park
13	Jordan Acres
14	Somerset Park
15	Buckhorn Park
16	Arnott Centennial Park
17	Arnott Lions Park
18	Lone Pine Park
19	Custer Square Park
20	Country Beautiful Park
21	Town of Stockton Park

Source: WI DNR, NCRWPC, Portage County

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Legend

- - - Minor Civil Divisions
- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- + Railroad
- Water
- ~ Green Circle State Trail
- ~ Tomorrow River State Trail
- Town Park
- School Forest
- Water Access**
- Boat Launch
- Walk-In Access



Nelsonville, Amherst Junction & Amherst Outdoor Recreation

Portage County, Wisconsin

Legend

- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- Type**
- Tomorrow River State Trail
- Tomorrow River State Trail Road Route
- Library
- School
- PARKS AND RECREATION**
- County
- Municipal
- Water Access**
- Boat Ramp
- Walk-In Access
- Village of Amherst
- Village of Amherst Junction
- Village of Nelsonville

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Portage County

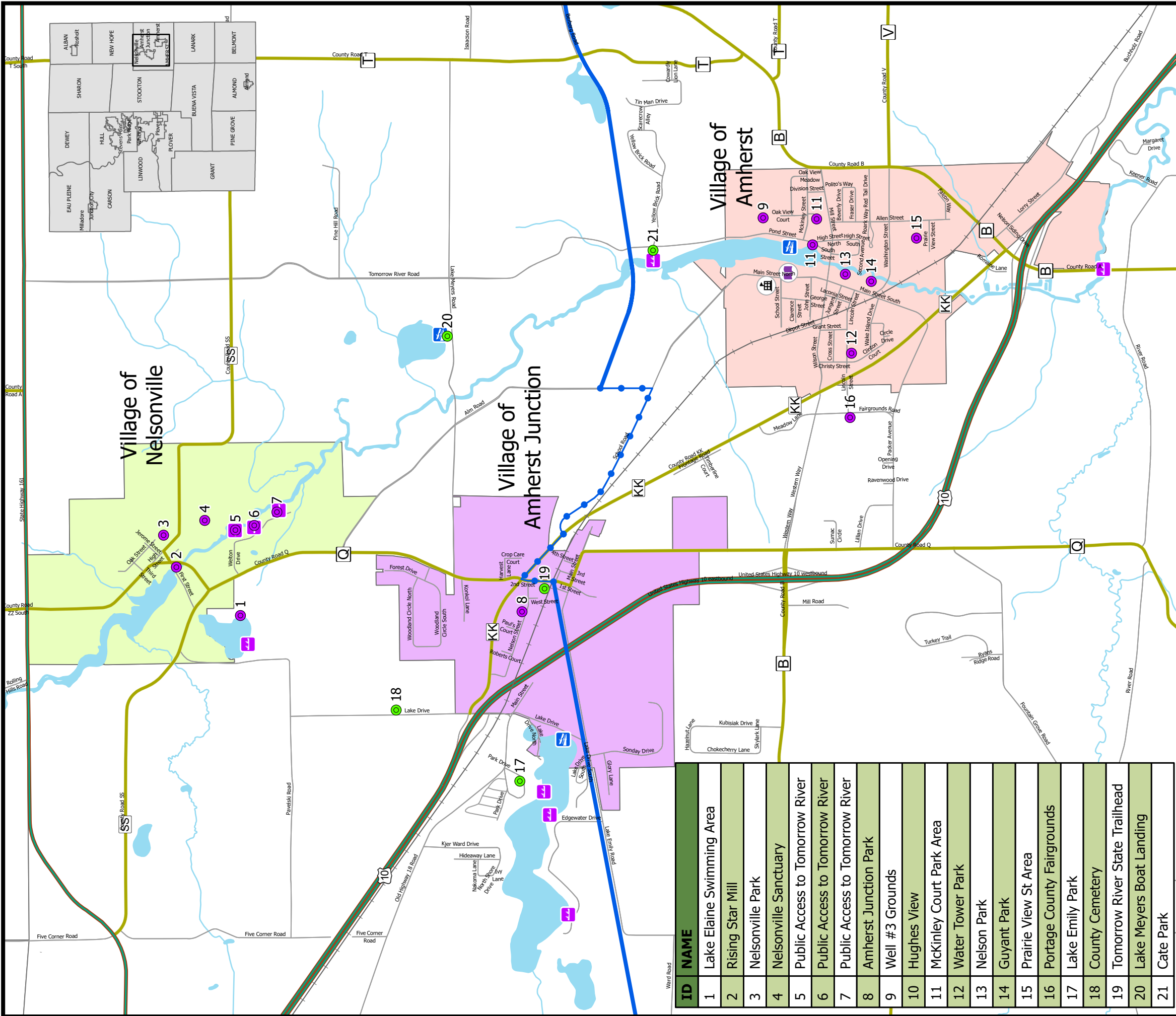
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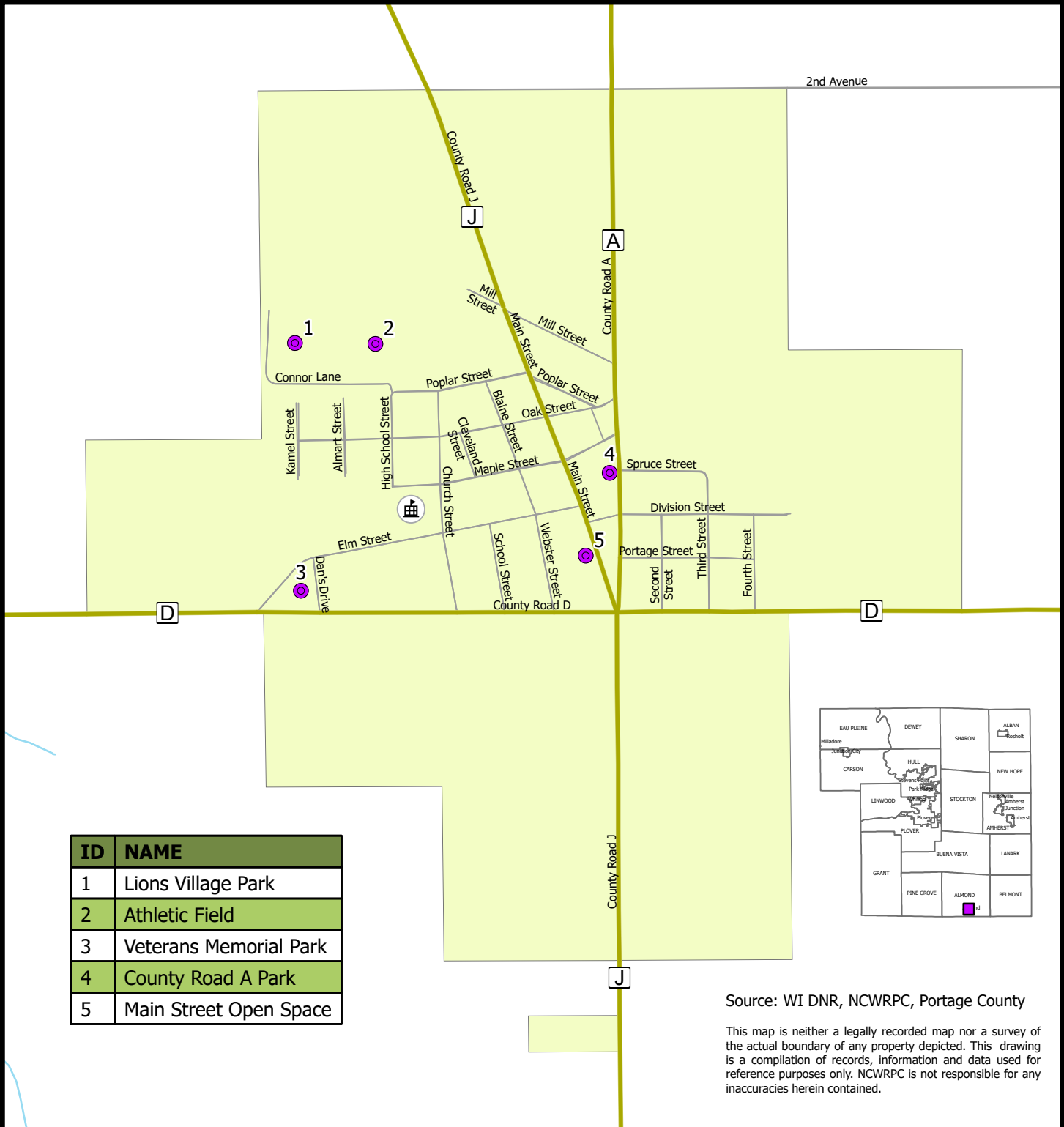


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 Regional Planning Commission**
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ID	NAME
1	Lake Elaine Swimming Area
2	Rising Star Mill
3	Nelsonville Park
4	Nelsonville Sanctuary
5	Public Access to Tomorrow River
6	Public Access to Tomorrow River
7	Public Access to Tomorrow River
8	Amherst Junction Park
9	Well #3 Grounds
10	Hughes View
11	McKinley Court Park Area
12	Water Tower Park
13	Nelson Park
14	Guyant Park
15	Prairie View St Area
16	Portage County Fairgrounds
17	Lake Emily Park
18	County Cemetery
19	Tomorrow River State Trailhead
20	Lake Meyers Boat Landing
21	Cate Park





ID	NAME
1	Lions Village Park
2	Athletic Field
3	Veterans Memorial Park
4	County Road A Park
5	Main Street Open Space

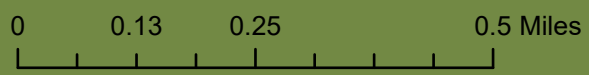


Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Portage County

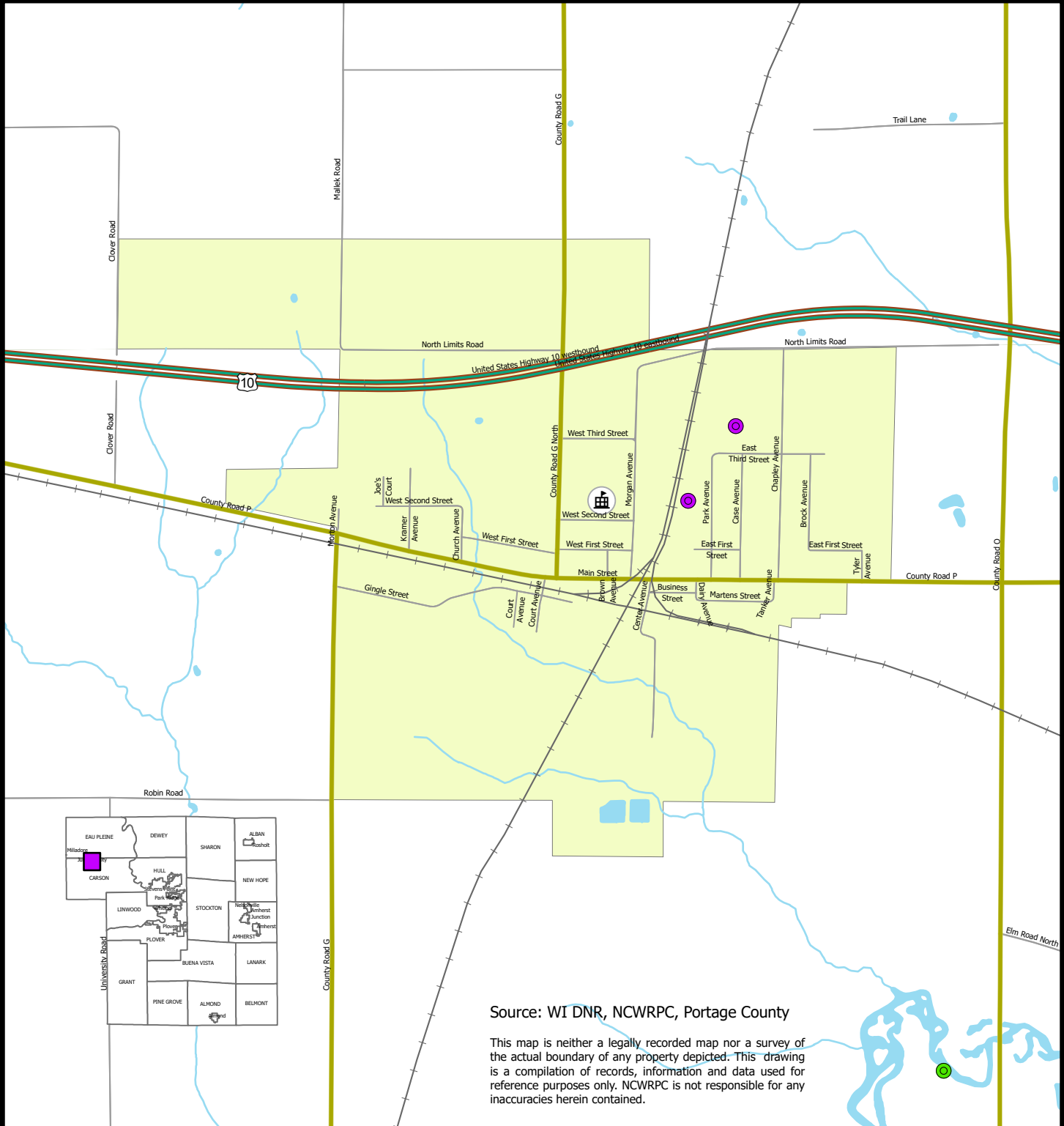
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Legend

- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- School
- PARKS & RECREATION**
- Municipal



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Legend

- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water

- School
- PARKS & RECREATION**
- County
- Municipal
- State

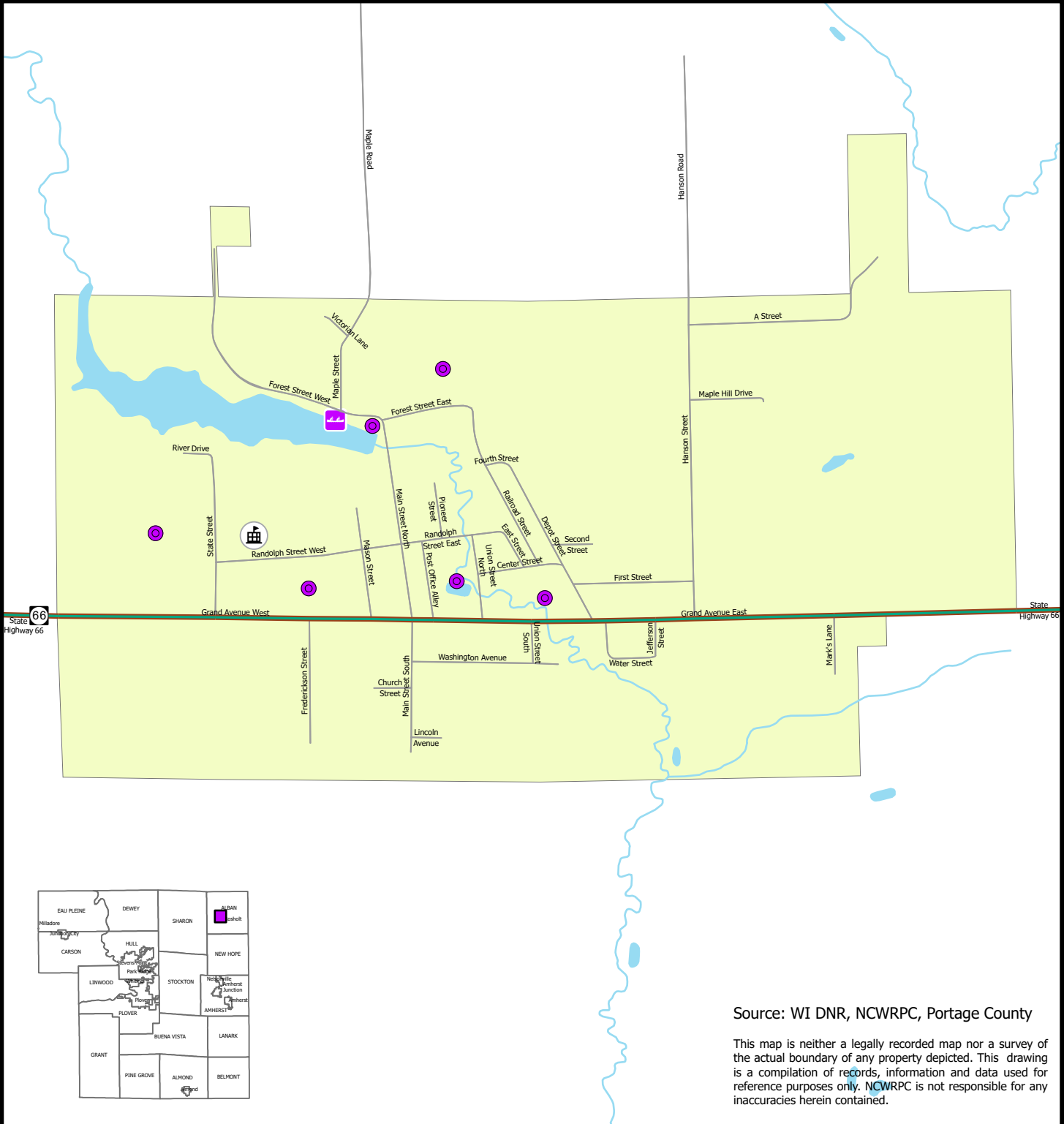


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Legend

- Interstate Highways
- US & State Highways
- County Highway
- Local Roads
- Railroad
- Water
- School

PARKS & RECREATION

- County
- Municipal
- State

Water Access

- Walk-In Access



0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

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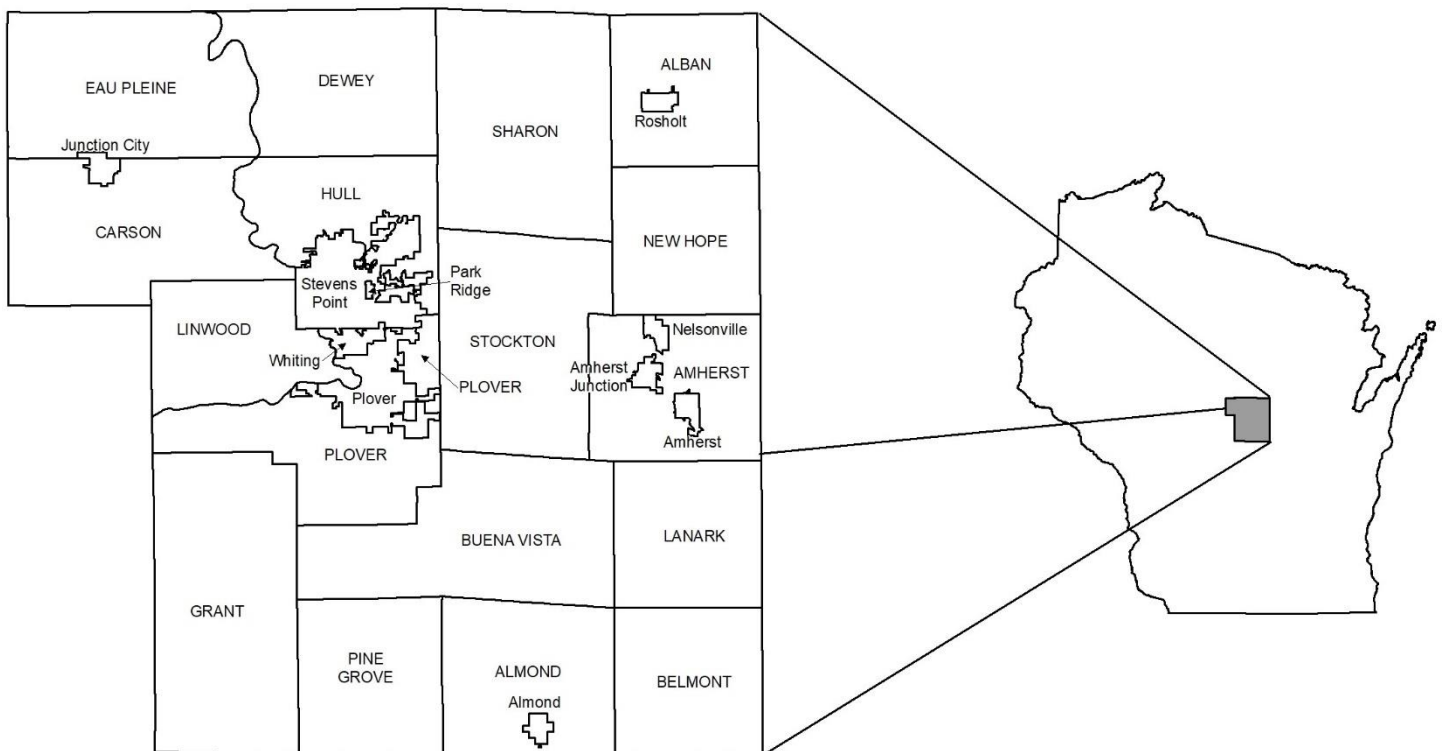
Chapter 2: BACKGROUND OF PORTAGE COUNTY

2.1 Physical Characteristics

This section describes the physical features that make up Portage County. Recreation planners use this kind of data to determine which resources to develop and which resources to protect or preserve.

Portage County is located in Central Wisconsin along the Wisconsin River. The County borders Wood County to the west, Marathon County to the north, Waupaca County to the east, and Waushara and Adams Counties to the south (see **Figure 1**). This area was once part of a vast forest region covering much of the Great Lakes area. The physical resources of forests and the Wisconsin River are a key factor in the economic structure of the area evidenced by the number of paper and wood industry factories in the County. The County is easily accessible by both highway and airport.

Figure 1 Portage County



Soils

The soils in Portage County range from sandy to loamy, from shallow to deep, and from excessively drained to very poorly drained. Glaciation is chiefly responsible for the properties of many of the soils that formed in the eastern part of the County. These soils are sandy to loamy. The soils of the southwestern part of the County are nearly level sandy soils that formed in the basin of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The loamy soils in the northwestern part of the County formed in material weathered from the underlying igneous rocks. Hard igneous and metamorphic bedrock underlies this part of the County within a depth of 20-feet. (Soil Survey)

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 Portage County Soil Survey Report was made available in 1978. Soil suitability tables for outdoor recreation and other uses are available on the Internet.

Surface Water

The western half of Portage County drains to the Wisconsin River, and generally the eastern half of the County drains to the Wolf River (Tomorrow and Little Wolf Rivers). This surface water divide is a North American subcontinental divide, as the Wisconsin River flows to the Mississippi River and the Wolf River flows to Lake Michigan (see **Map 3**).

No single boundary, such as a topographic divide, identifies that area of basin which contributes to the Wisconsin, Waupaca or Little Wolf Rivers. Instead, the topographic divide limits the areas contributing surface runoff to the streams, whereas the groundwater divides limits the areas contributing subsurface groundwater. The groundwater divide between the Wisconsin and Waupaca Rivers' basin follows the general trend of the outer moraine, whereas the topographic divide approximates the trend of the second moraine, lying further east.

Most of the rivers and lakes in the County receive a significant amount of water from groundwater; especially winter base flow when soils are frozen. Therefore, contaminated groundwater can impact the surface water quality and biota. Additionally, significant groundwater water withdrawal from pumping can impact the amount of water in lakes and rivers. Parts of the Little Plover River dried out during the summers 2005 through 2009. Historically this has never been observed and is due to low groundwater levels, Pickerel and Wolf Lakes have experienced fish kills and beach closures for similar reasons. The number of high capacity wells in Portage County has increased from 60 in 1960 to approximately 1,000 today. Based on an inventory of water resources by the Wisconsin Department of Natural resources (DNR), there are 85 lakes and 64 streams in the County, totaling approximately 6,600 acres. The length of the largest watercourse (Wisconsin River) is 19 miles, much of which is impounded within the County. The Wisconsin River Flowage No. 3 near Stevens Point is the largest single body of water in the County covering 2,093 acres.

a. Streams

There are about 430 miles of streams that convey over 3,000 cubic feet of water per second through the County. The largest flow of surface water which passes through Portage County is the Wisconsin River. Streams contain 25.5% of all surface water in the county. There are 40 named streams and 24 unnamed streams. The bulk of water that feeds these streams comes from groundwater seepage along the stream channels, with the remainder of water flow coming from surface runoff during and after storms.

- The Wisconsin River is a major waterway for Portage County and throughout the State of Wisconsin. In total, the Wisconsin River is 430 miles long with a 12,000 square mile drainage area and a vertical drop of 1,050 feet. The river runs either through or along the borders of the Portage County Towns of Carson, Dewey, Eau Pleine, Hull, Plover, Linwood, Village of Plover, and the City of Stevens Point, covering 25.5 miles in Portage County.
- The Plover River runs through or along the border of the Portage County Towns of Sharon, Dewey, Hull, the Village of Whiting, and City of Stevens Point. In total, it is 16.98 miles long and averages 53 feet in width.
- The Tomorrow River runs through or along the border of the Portage County Towns of Sharon, Stockton, New Hope, Amherst, Lanark, and the Villages of Nelsonville and Amherst. In total, it is 30.89 miles long and averages 33 feet in width.
- Mill Creek runs through the Portage County Towns of Carson and Linwood, and flows into the Wisconsin River between the Towns of Linwood and Plover, In total, the creek is 21.92 miles long and averages 68 feet in width.

b. Lakes

Most of the naturally occurring lakes in Portage County are small and located in the pitted outwash and glacial drift of eastern Portage County. Many lakes are small, without a surface inlet or outlet. Since these lake surfaces coincide with the water table, they may have widely fluctuating stages. Portage County has kettle lakes (pothole lakes), oxbows, bayous, marsh potholes, excavations, and impoundments. Forty-one of the 85 lakes listed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are less than 30 acres. Lake Emily is the largest of the natural lakes (105 acres). Fifteen of the 85 lakes are impoundments of rivers, and there are a number of farm ponds that have been developed over the years.

The majority of the lakes in the County are shallow, with about half less than 10 feet deep. The deepest lakes in the County are Adams Lake at 51 feet, Budsberg Lake at 58 feet, Collins Lake at 56 feet, and Sunset Lake at 55 feet.

c. Wisconsin River Flowages

The Wisconsin River, within the County, has four closely controlled flowages. One of these, Lake DuBay, is strictly for hydroelectric use and not associated with a paper mill. This flowage is formed by a Consolidated Paper Company dam, which is about one mile south of the Marathon County line. Most of this flowage is outside of the County, but its flood control potential benefits the County. However, this flowage is not considered large enough to completely control or accommodate a 100-year regional flood.

Wisconsin River Flowage No. 3, an impoundment on the Wisconsin River from Stevens Point north, is the largest single body of water in the County. Covering 2,093 acres, it represents 43% of the total lake surface area. Lakes 50 acres and less account for 90.3% of the total number of lakes, but only 33.4% of the surface area.

d. Mill Ponds

There are a number of mill ponds throughout the County. The largest and one of the most scenic is McDill Pond (262 acres) on the lower Plover River in the City of Stevens Point. Mill ponds were originally created as a source of water power for local grain and timber mills, but no longer function in that capacity. These ponds are generally shallow and suffer from eutrophication. The dam at Jordan Pond is a hydro-electric power generating facility.

Climate

Portage County's climate is classified as continental. Winters are cold and snowy. Summers are generally warm and have periods that are hot and humid. Spring and fall are sometimes short and are often a mixture of summer and winter climatic conditions. (Portage County Soil Survey, 1978)

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

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

Projected Future Climate Trends

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

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

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

Groundwater

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

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

Groundwater conditions are far from uniform throughout the County and can be distinguished in terms of three distinct regions.

1. River and Marsh Landscape – Border drift from early glaciers covers much of the bedrock in the northwestern portion of the county, to an average depth of four feet. This shallow drift layer contains the water supply for this part of the County.
2. Moraine and Lake Landscape – Glacial drift in the form of moraines or ridges cover the eastern one-half of the County. Private wells in this area are commonly 25 to 100 feet deep and typically yield 10 to 50 gpm. High capacity wells of 100-200 feet are not uncommon, in the moraine area, and they commonly yield 500 gpm or more.
3. Sandplain Landscape – The most important sources of groundwater in the County are thick and extensive deposits of well-sorted sand and gravel, which form gently sloping outwash plains and terraces. High capacity wells in this area commonly yield 1,000 gpm and are usually drilled down to the bedrock at depths of 50 to 200 feet. Saturated thickness of the aquifer materials is 50 to 150 feet, sunk to an average depth of 60 feet. The chemical quality of the water is generally satisfactory, although the iron content may be objectionable locally, and corrosivity caused by low ph can be a problem. Elevated nitrate levels are a problem in some areas.

2.2 Social Characteristics

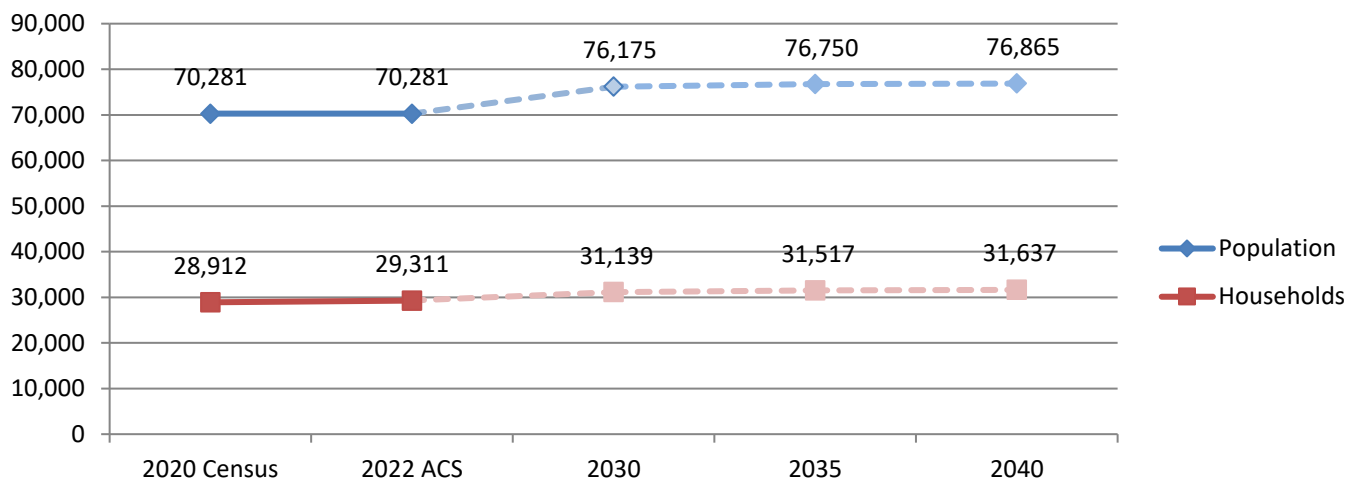
Introduction

This section describes social and economic demographic information that influences Portage County. Overall recreation demand within Wisconsin is described in SCORP, under Past Plans in Chapter 1. The social characteristics and growth projections from this section 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 2020 Census population of Portage County is 70,281. This 100% count shows an increase of approximately 844 people since the 2010 Census. Portage County’s increase in population compares to growth rates of 4.3 percent in the state and 8.9 percent in the nation between 2010 and 2022. The population of Portage County is expected to continue to grow through 2040 (see **Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Portage County Population and Household Change



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 produce a natural increase, and more people moving into an area than moving out produces a migration increase. The combination of these two factors makes up increases or decreases in population. The Wisconsin’s Demographic Services Center estimates Portage County’s 2023 population at 71,590. Portage County’s natural increase in 2023 was a decrease of 0.2%; unlike the state’s natural increase of 0.1%. The decreased natural increase may be a reflection of more deaths than births in the county. Net migration for Portage County increased the population by 1.3%,

which is the sole reason why Portage County’s population increased in 2023. This net migration for the County was considerably higher than the state rate of 0.1%. Net migration has an immediate impact on a county’s labor force potential, while natural increase provides some insight into a county’s long-term workforce pipeline. Natural increase is largely a function of age and is expected to decline in the coming decades because the state’s fertility rate has been below replacement level since 1975. (WDOA, DSC)

Table 1 Populations & Projections

Municipality	2020 Census	2024 Estimate	2025 Projections	2030 Projection
C. Stevens Point	25,666	26,619	29,110	29,640
V. Plover	13,519	14,270	13,770	14,200
V. Whiting	1,601	1,614	1,620	1,575
V. Park Ridge	530	540	505	505
V. Almond	424	417	450	450
V. Amherst	1,117	1,130	1,130	1,155
V. Amherst Junction	383	378	415	430
V. Junction City	420	415	425	415
V. Nelsonville	158	155	140	135
V. Rosholt	478	473	495	490
T. Alban	863	869	875	865
T. Almond	625	622	685	685
T. Amherst	1,402	1,417	1,320	1,305
T. Belmont	623	613	635	635
T. Buena Vista	1,145	1,150	1,220	1,220
T. Carson	1,374	1,389	1,340	1,335
T. Dewey	962	969	950	950
T. Eau Pleine	1,063	1,072	975	985
T. Grant	1,842	1,838	1,970	1,970
T. Hull	5,287	5,250	5,465	5,450
T. Lanark	1,535	1,549	1,675	1,715
T. Linwood	1,070	1,087	1,150	1,150
T. New Hope	711	720	710	705
T. Pine Grove	873	876	950	945
T. Plover	1,565	1,565	1,880	1,920
T. Sharon	2,123	2,121	2,135	2,165
T. Stockton	3,018	3,021	3,135	3,180
Portage County	70,377	72,139	75,130	76,175

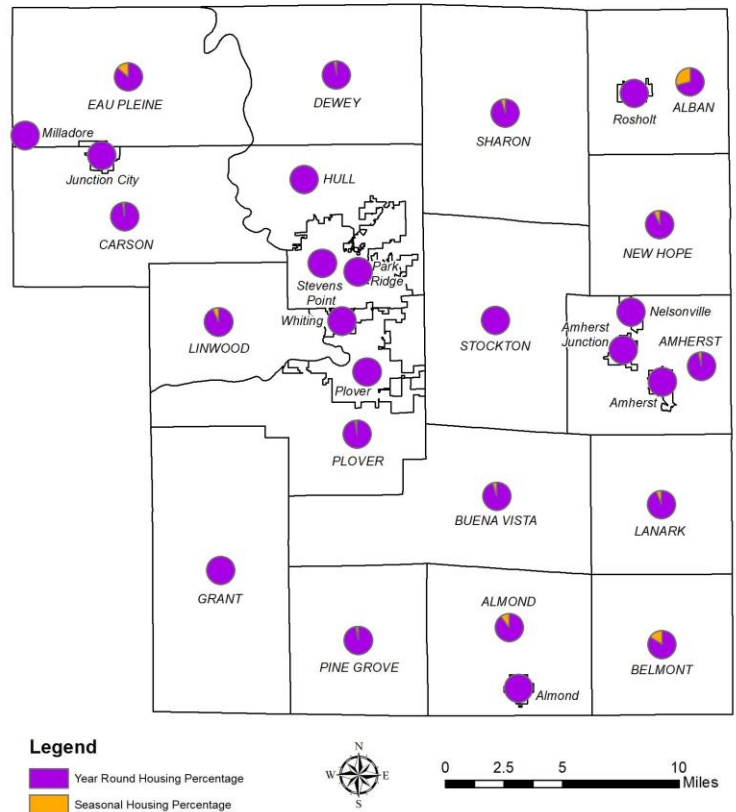
Source: U.S. Census 2020; WDOA Preliminary Jan. 1, 2024, Population Estimates; WDOA 2013 Population Projections

Table 1 shows three parts of population for all the local governments within Portage County. The 2020 Census population comes from the 100% count decennial Census. Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) created the 2024 Estimates, which are preliminary Jan. 1, 2024 numbers. Projections come from the now dated numbers that WDOA created in 2013 from the 2010 Census. New projections are very late.

Household sizes have slightly decreased over time in Portage County, similar to national and state trends where household sizes have also decreased. Portage County had 29,601 households as of the 2010 Census, and an average household size of 2.39 people. By 2020, the average household size within Portage County has decreased to 2.30 people. Household sizes are expected to decline to around 2.32 persons per household by 2030. Household growth is expected to continue through 2040. About 24% of households have someone under 18 years old, and about 29% of households have someone 65 or older. About 60% of households are families, and just over 24% have their own children under 18 years old.

Portage County has a smaller proportion of vacant housing than Wisconsin or the United States. Some of these vacant housing is seasonal housing a.k.a. “up north cabins” (see **Figure 3**). In 2020, approximately 2% of the housing in Portage County was seasonally vacant compared to approximately 6.5% in Wisconsin and 3.5% in the United States. There are some concentrations of seasonal housing in Portage County near a couple of small lakes and along the Wisconsin River. The towns with high proportions of seasonal housing (Alban, Almond, Belmont, and Eau Pleine) will have greater fluctuations in population throughout the year, and these seasonal residents must be included when determining the demand for recreation facilities.

Figure 3: Year-Round and Seasonal Housing, 2022



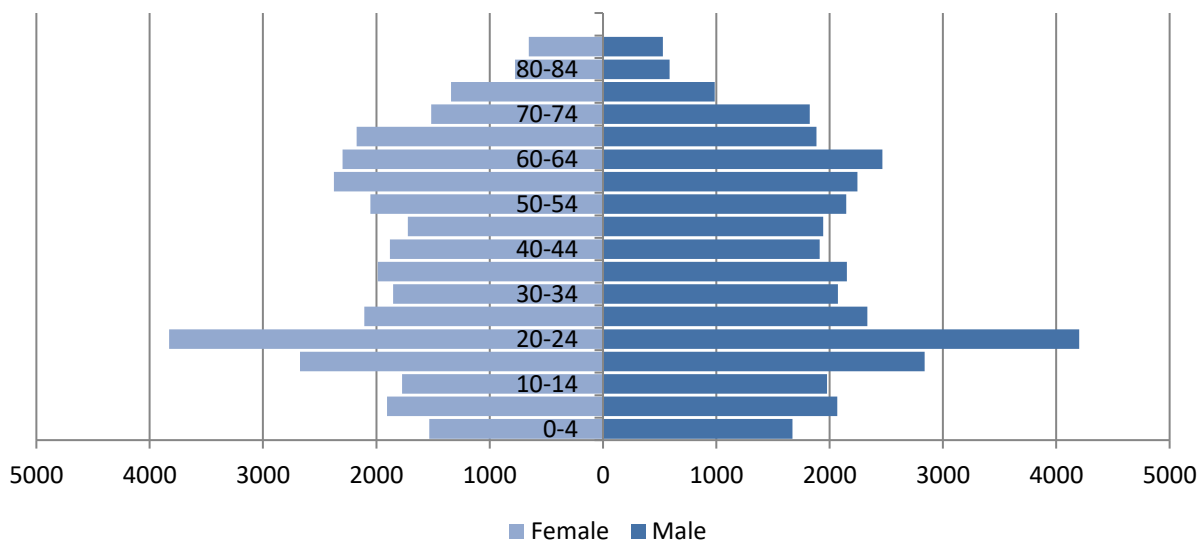
Age

The median age of Portage County is 37.8 years old, while Wisconsin is 39.9. The median age has increased in both Portage County and Wisconsin between 2010 and 2022, from 35.6 and 38.1 years old, respectively. It is evident that the median age in Portage County is lower but has grown faster than the state. Figure 3 shows the distribution of age groups in Portage County. In Portage County, the largest age concentration is the 20-24 year old group, due to the presence of UW-Stevens Point. There is also a concentration of people in the middle-aged 50-74 year old age groups. Usually, the most heavily concentrated age groups are very near to the typical

retirement age, which will likely have a great effect on the parks and recreation needs of the County. Females outnumber males in the age groups above 60.

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

Figure 4: Portage County 2022 Age Pyramid



Source: American Community Survey, 2018-2022

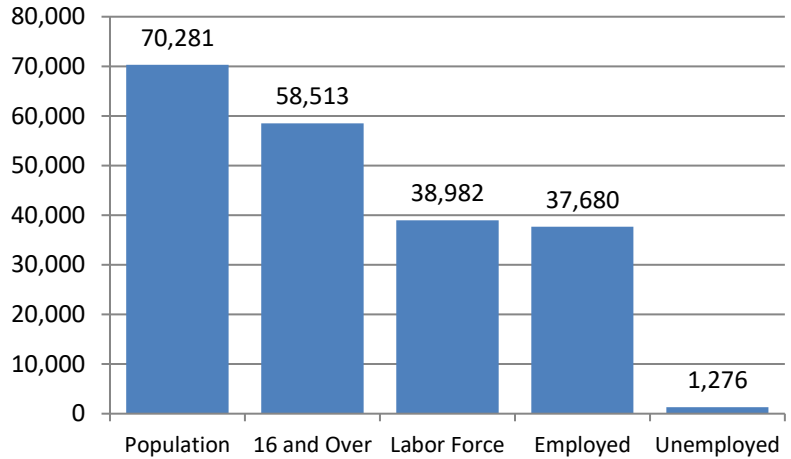
Ethnic Background

The people of Portage County mostly identify as white, at approximately 91.4% of people. About 0.9% identify as Black or African American and about 2.9% identify as Asian. About, 0.2% as American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.6% as some other race, and 3.0% as two or more races. Approximately 3.6% identify as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

Employment and Economy

Portage County has 58,513 people age 16 and over, 66.6% of which are in the labor force, i.e., actively working or seeking work. See **Figure 5**. The labor force participation rate for Wisconsin as a whole is 65.7%; significantly higher than Portage County. According to the 2018-2022 ACS, the unemployment rate in Portage County was 3.3%; lower than the 3.4% in the state and lower than the 5.3% in the United States.

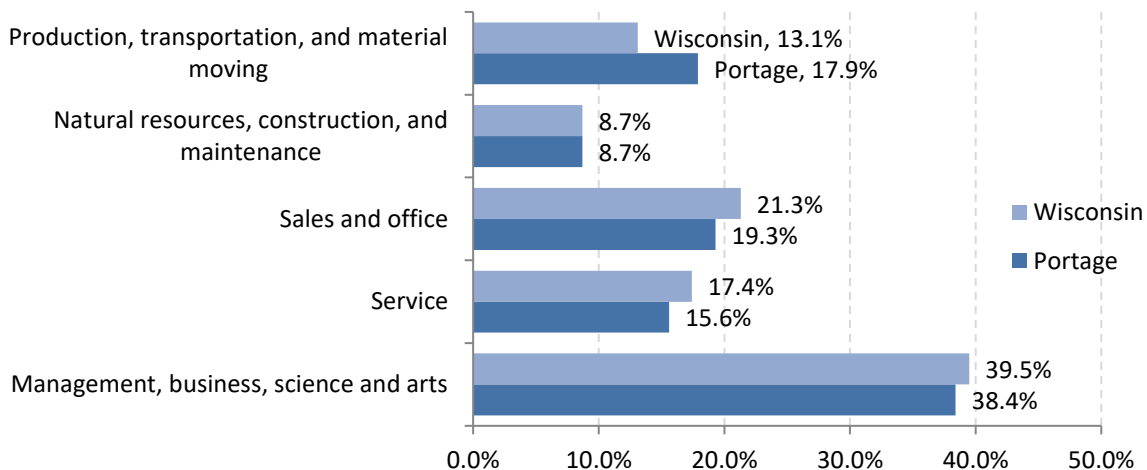
Figure 5 Portage County Employment



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

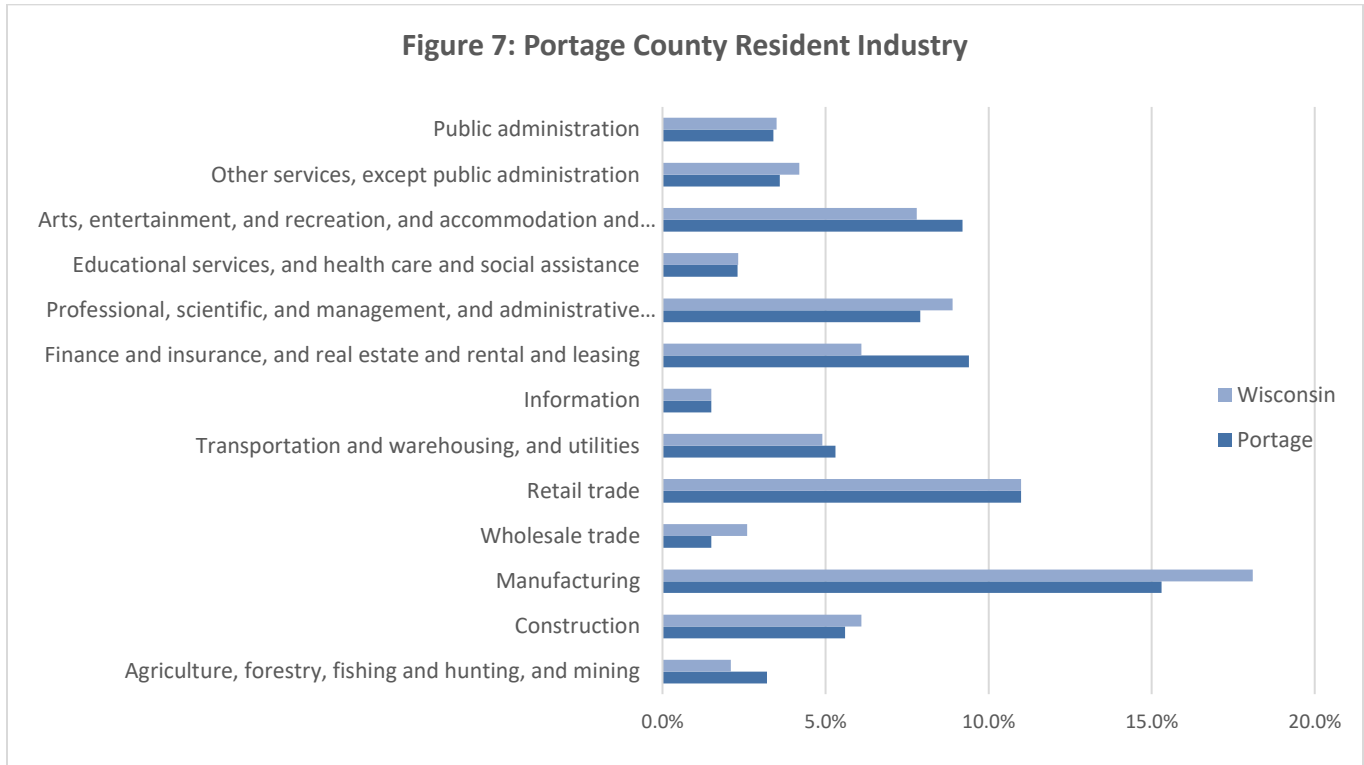
As shown in **Figure 6**, most residents of Portage County are employed in Management, business, science and arts occupations at 37.4%; Sales and Office occupations at 19.2%; or Service occupations at 16.5%. The most common industry for Portage County residents is Education services, health care and social assistance at 23.0%, followed by the Manufacturing industry at 15.3%. Portage County has a higher proportion of residents in the Service occupation as well as Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations; but a lower proportion of the Production, transportation, and material moving occupations, Sales and office occupations, and Management, business, science, and arts occupations than the state.

Figure 6: Portage County Resident Occupation



Source: US Census, ACS 2018-2022

Figure 7 shows the most common industry for Portage County residents as *Education services, health care and social assistance*, which is basically identical to the state; followed by the *manufacturing industry*. Portage County has a higher proportion of residents in the finance and insurance industry and a lower proportion of the Manufacturing industries than the state.



Source: US Census, ACS 2018-2022

Table 2 shows industry employment in Portage County. The highest levels of employment are in the trade, transportation, utilities, and education & health industries. The one-year change shows the largest declines in the trade, transportation, utilities, and the *natural* resources industries.

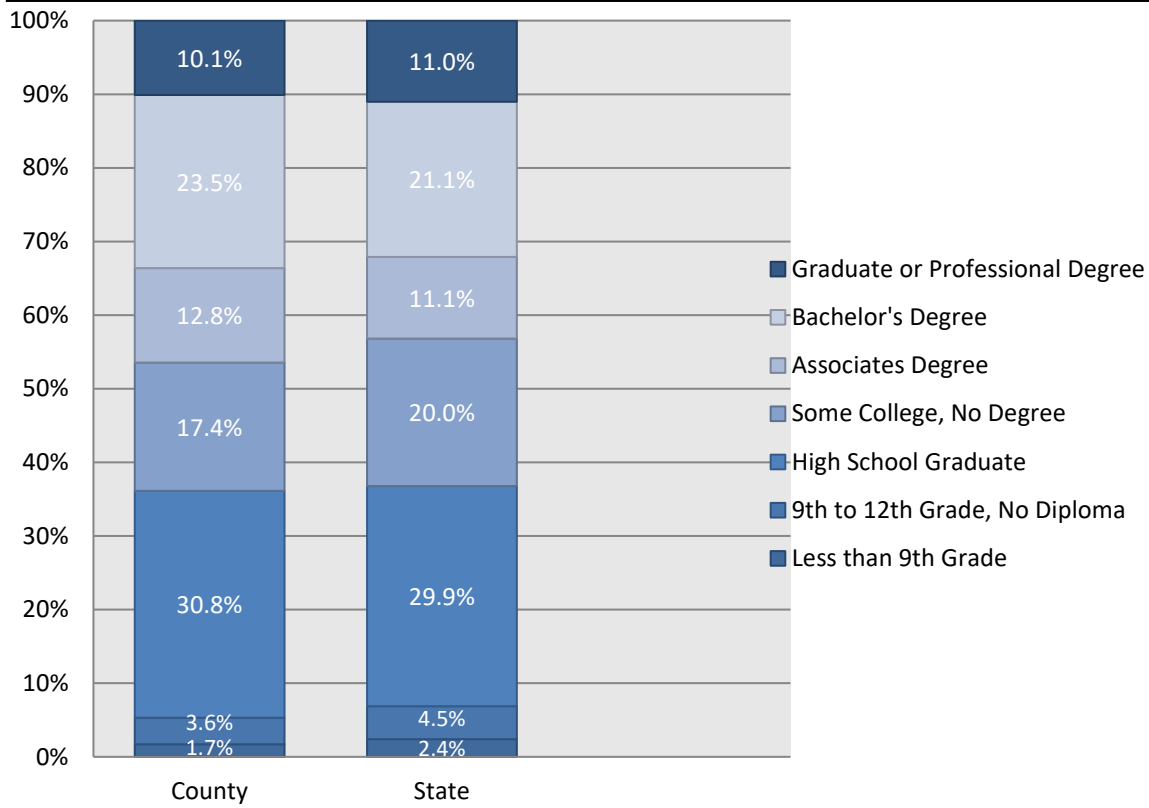
Industry	Employment	
	Annual Avg.	1-Year Change
Natural Resources	714	-32
Construction	1,159	74
Manufacturing	4,969	276
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	7,654	-152
Information	194	19
Financial Activities	4,251	59
Professional & Business Services	2,522	105
Education & Health	5,708	-14
Leisure & Hospitality	3,249	159
Other services	1,230	-5
Public Administration	1,222	-2
Total	32,872	487

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Training, QCEW, 2021-2022

As of the 2016-2020 American Community Survey, the median household income in Portage County was \$71,301, and per capita income was \$37,990. This is lower than the state and nation, which can be explained by the lower cost of living in Portage County. The distribution of household incomes in Portage County are fairly similar to the state, but with fewer households making \$100,000 or more, and more households making less than \$35,000 annually.

Educational Attainment in Portage County is generally higher than the State of Wisconsin (see **Figure 8**). About 94.7% of Portage County residents over the age of 25 have graduated high school, slightly higher than Wisconsin, where over 93.1% of residents have graduated high school. About 33.6% of Portage County have a bachelor’s degree or higher, while 32.0% of Wisconsin residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Both the proportion of high school graduates and college graduates in Portage County is very close to the state proportion. The proportion of people with some college, but no degree is lower in the county but those with an associate’s degree are slightly higher in Portage County than the state.

Figure 8: Educational Attainment, Age 25 and Older, 2018-2022



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey

Chapter 3: OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

3.1 Introduction

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

Intensively used outdoor recreation facilities are generally located near population concentrations like the City of Stevens Point to the Village of Plover, the school district properties, and town centers. In towns with low population densities, there may not be any park-like facilities.

3.2 County Maintained Recreation Facilities

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

3.3 Linear Facilities

Various entities maintain the following public facilities:

Rustic Roads

Portage County has the following rustic road:

- **Rustic Road 17** is a 2.7-mile combination of Otto Road from USH 10 west to Morgan Road, then south on Morgan Road to CTH T.

This scenic route south of Amherst passes through hilly, rugged terrain, forests and fields, offering glimpses of native wildlife. This road also crosses a boulder-strewn section of the Tomorrow River.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail was authorized as a National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1980 and as a State Scenic Trail in 1987. The route generally follows the nationally significant glacial features of Wisconsin and is intended to provide opportunities for low impact, non-motorized recreational use. In Portage County, the completed portions of this trail wind in and out of the County along the eastern border with Waupaca County.

The Ice Age Bicycle Route mainly exists in Portage County as about 49-miles of on-road bike routes (see **Map 3**).

Water Trails

A water trail is a network of access points, resting places, and attractions for users of watercraft on lakes and rivers. There are many streams and rivers providing canoeists many miles of routes in Portage County.

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

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

Green Circle State Trail

Encircling the City of Stevens Point, this trail meanders along the Wisconsin and Plover rivers, connecting secluded natural and wildlife areas, the Schmeckle Reserve, and many City parks. The trail, including all spurs, is 31 miles long and features river scenery, forests, wetlands, prairies, boardwalks and quiet neighborhoods. A 4-mile spur on Hoover Road connects to the Tomorrow River State Trail in Plover.

Tomorrow River State Trail

This 29-mile rail trail travels through scenic glacial terrain and farm country from Plover in Portage County to just outside the Village of Manawa in Waupaca County, while passing through the communities of Amherst Junction, Scandinavia and Ogdensburg. The western end of the trail connects to the Green Circle State Trail at Hoover Road in Plover.

3.4 Points of Interest

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

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

The Portage County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society assist the public with finding a variety of culturally significant sites on an annual basis.

Historical Markers

- A state historical marker titled: Du Bay Trading Post is located in DuBay County Park, 3 miles south of Knowlton.
- A state historical marker titled: The Historic Southside Railroad Complex of Stevens Point is located at 1700 Monroe St in Stevens Point.
- Buena Vista historical kiosk in the Town of Grant has 2 state historical markers, DNR informational kiosk, and u-shaped driveway so vehicles can pull off the road and park to see the kiosk. This area is located in Buena Vista Marsh Wildlife Area, on the south side of CTH W, just east of CTH F
 - state historical marker titled: Wisconsin's Greater Prairie Chicken.
 - state historical marker titled: Dr. John E. Toepfer, 1948-2018.

3.5 Public Access Points to Water Bodies

Public access points to water bodies vary from primitive (e.g., canoe launches) to well developed (e.g., boat launches). Multiple jurisdictions own the access points while the County maintains many of them.

All public access points are shown on **Map 1**. You may review an interactive map online of public access points by searching for "WDNR boat and shore fishing access map."

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

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

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

3.6 School District Facilities

Five public school districts and some private schools have additional local recreation opportunities in Portage County that **may** be open to the public. School yards often have playgrounds with play equipment, ball diamonds, and basketball hoops. These school yards range in size from 1 to 15 acres. See **Map 5** for locations.

School properties NOT always publicly available:

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

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

Stevens Point Area Public School District

The School District maintains:

- 2 school forests less than 5 acres each adjacent to elementary schools in Stevens Point.
- 1 school forest about 15 acres adjacent to a middle/high school in Stevens Point.
- 1 school forest less than 5 acres adjacent to an elementary school in Whiting.
- 1 school forest less than 5 acres adjacent to an elementary school in Plover.
- Halladay School Forest, about 40-acres in Plover.
- Boston School Forest, about 80-acres adjacent to Plover that is jointly owned by Stevens Point Public Schools, Pacelli Catholic Schools, & UWSP (see **Map 5**).
- Located in the Stevens Point area:
 - 9 elementary schools with outdoor recreation
 - 2 middle schools with outdoor recreation
 - 1 high school Facility
 - A City varsity football field & track shared among UWSP, Pacelli Catholic High, & SPASH
 - 8 tennis courts
 - 4 ball fields

Pacelli Catholic Schools

The School District maintains:

- A high school with outdoor recreation facilities in Stevens Point.
- A middle school with outdoor recreation facilities in Stevens Point.
- An elementary school with outdoor recreation facilities in Stevens Point.
- An elementary school with outdoor recreation facilities in Plover.
- A City varsity football field & track shared among UWSP, Pacelli Catholic High, & SPASH
- Boston School Forest, about 80-acres adjacent to Plover that is jointly owned by Stevens Point Public Schools, Pacelli Catholic Schools, & UWSP (see **Map 5**).

Stevens Point Christian Academy

The School District maintains:

- A 12-acre school forest adjacent to a K-12 school with playgrounds in Stevens Point (see **Map 5**).

St Paul Lutheran School

The School District maintains:

- A K-8 school with playground in Stevens Point

Rosholt School District

The School District maintains:

- A K-12 school with the following outdoor recreation facilities in Rosholt:
 - Varsity football field & track
 - 2 ballfields
 - 1 soccer field
- Benn Nature Conservancy, about 33-acres in and adjacent to Rosholt (see **Map 5**).
- Rosholt (Alban) School Forest, about 13-acres in the Town of Alban (see **Map 5**).

Tomorrow River School District

The School District maintains:

- A K-12 school with the following outdoor recreation facilities in Amherst:
 - A playground
 - 2 varsity football fields
 - 1 varsity track
 - 2 ballfields
- Lutz Property School Forest, about 20-acres about 1-mile west of Nelsonville (see **Map 5**).
- Tomorrow River School Forest #1, about 40-acres about 1-mile east of Amherst Junction (see **Map 5**).
- Tomorrow River School Forest #2, about 20-acres about 2-miles west of Amherst (see **Map 5**).

Almond-Bancroft School District

The School District maintains:

- A K-12 school with the following outdoor recreation facilities in Almond:
 - playground
 - 2 ballfields
 - soccer field
- Carrie J. Frost Memorial Forest, about 170-acres about 3-miles northwest of Almond (see **Map 5**).
- Almond High School Forest, about 19-acres about 1-mile northwest of Almond (see **Map 5**).
- Almond-Bancroft School Forest (Phillips), about 75-acres about 1.3-miles north of Almond (see **Map 5**).

Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools

The School District maintains:

- Grant Elementary in the Town of Grant, which has a large playground.
- Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports maintains 6 ball diamonds on school property.
- 23-acre school forest is next to Grant Elementary (see **Map 5**).

3.7 Local Government Facilities

See capital improvement recommendations for each municipality in Chapter 7.

City of Stevens Point

See the City of Stevens Point Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks and recommendations for future improvements to outdoor recreation in Stevens Point.

See **Map 4** for a listing of Stevens Point parks.

Village of Plover

See the Village of Plover Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks and recommendations for future improvements to outdoor recreation in Plover.

See **Map 4** for a listing of Plover parks.

Village of Park Ridge

No Village parks exist. See **Map 4** for a listing of urban area parks.

Village of Whiting

See **Map 4** for a listing of Whiting parks.

Village of Almond

See **Map 7** for a listing of Almond parks.

County Road A Park – This 0.7-acre park, located at CTH A and Division Street contains 2 basketball hoops and an ice skating rink in winter.

Lions Village Park – This is a 4-acre park located directly adjacent to the school district fields. The Almond Lion’s shelter house concession stand exists next to the football field.

Veterans Memorial Park – This 0.9-acre park, located at the corner of CTH D and Elm St, is an open field with a mounted military helicopter and armament.

Village of Amherst

See **Map 6** for a listing of Amherst area parks.

Guyant Park – This 3.6-acre park is located along the Tomorrow River on Washington Street. Main activities here include passive recreation in the large grassy fields, scouting activities, VFW and American Legion events. The Tomorrow River Military Memorial is located here. Scout Hall in this park is used primarily by Scouting America, VFW, and American Legion.

Amherst Administrative Building and Mill Street Public Access – This approximately 0.5-acre park is located along the south end of Amherst Mill Pond with a walking path connecting Main Street, over the dam, to Tomorrow River Road and the Amherst Administrative Building. Facilities include the walking path over the dam, picnic tables next to the falls provided by the dam, an open air picnic pavilion at the dam, parking at village hall, and a pier on the mill pond with benches.

Nelson Park – This 3.2-acre park is located along the west back of the Tomorrow River, behind the businesses along Mill Street and Main Street. Access to the park exists off of both Mill and Main Streets to small parking areas. Facilities include a lighted ball diamond, park benches, playground, open picnic shelter, and open grass field.

Prairie View Street Land – There are about 14 acres of land adjacent to the Village’s wastewater treatment facility that have been identified by the Village as possible future park land.

Hughes View – This approximately 0.12-acre overgrown parcel along the east side of the mill pond at Pond & High Streets.

Water Tower Park – This is a 1.3-acre wooded parcel at the corner of Lincoln Street and Clinton Court with a Village water tower on it.

Village of Amherst Junction

See **Map 6** for a listing of Amherst Junction area parks.

Nelson Park – This 3.4-acre park is located on Nelson Street. Facilities include a ball diamond, sand volleyball court, playground, and grass parking area.

Village of Junction City

See **Map 8** for a listing of Junction City parks.

Village Park – This 45-acre park is located on the north side of the Village, along the east side of the railroad tracks. Park Avenue and East First Street are roughly the southern boundary, with Chapley Ave north of East Third St being the eastern boundary.

Facilities include an open air pavilion by two ball diamonds, surrounded by about 5,120 feet of gravel walking and biking paths; another area of the park includes an all season lodge within a wooded area, near the lighted ball field complete with bleachers, scoreboards, concession stand; two lighted tennis courts, open fields and wooded land.

Village of Milladore

No Village maintained outdoor recreation facilities exist. See **Map 5** for a listing of village parks.

Village of Nelsonville

See **Map 6** for a listing of Nelsonville area parks.

Nelsonville Park – Located in the center of the Village, on High St at 1st St, is a 1.8-acre park. Facilities include some vintage playground equipment, a tennis court with a basketball hoop, open space for recreation or picnicking, and a hill for snow sledding.

Nelsonville Community Sanctuary – Located between CTH Q and SS, along the Tomorrow River, southeast of the Village's center is this 35.5-acre wooded land. A path winds through the property for nature viewing. This property supports a variety of wetlands, prairies, and forested uplands. Historically, this was the Loberg Farm and homestead. The land was previously home to Wisconsin's second artificially lit baseball diamond and a nine-hole golf course.

Stoltenburg Lake Swimming Area – The Village of Nelsonville leases a beach on the southern end of Stoltenburg Lake from YMCA Camp Glacier Hollow. Stoltenburg Lake is a 17-acre clear, hard water marl lake.

Rising Star Mill – Located on the banks of the Tomorrow River at the intersection of 1st Street and CTH Q, this historical property is owned by the DNR for the Portage County Historical Society. There is an open space area with picnic tables located along the Tomorrow River.

Public Access to Tomorrow River – There are 3 access properties to the Tomorrow River along Welton Drive. All three are owned by the DNR for public use. None of the three sites are identified in the field.

Village of Rosholt

See **Map 9** for a listing of Rosholt parks.

Fairgrounds (Hill Park) – Located on the northern edge of the Village is this 26-acre wooded property. These grounds are owned by the Village and leased by the Rosholt Community Fair Association. Facilities include Community Building, bathrooms, parking, concession stands, bleachers, baseball diamond, horseshoe pits, camper/boat storage, lighted sled hill, Saw Mill and Pioneer Buildings including a school house.

Depot Park – This 1.6-acre park is on the west side of the American Legion Hall, with access off of Main Street and walk-in access off of Center Street. A train depot previously existed on this site. Facilities include a basketball court, playground equipment, lighted volleyball courts, and lighted ice-skating rink with warming house.

Foot Bridge Park – This 2.2-acre park is along Flume Creek, between Post Office Alley and Union Street North. Facilities include a pedestrian bridge over Flume Creek, picnic tables, a merry-go-round, and open space for recreation

Birthplace of Rosholt Historic Marker – This 0.6-acre park is on the east end of the Rosholt Millpond, accessible off of North Main Street. A historical marker identifies that the old grist mill formerly on this site is the birthplace of Rosholt.

Lions Park – This 1.2-acre park is on the northeast side of Rosholt Millpond, adjacent to the Birthplace of Rosholt Historical Marker. Facilities include a picnic shelter, grills, playground, fishing dock, and Rosholt Millpond dam.

Town of Alban

No Town maintained outdoor recreation facilities. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Almond

No Town maintained outdoor recreation facilities. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Amherst

The Town maintains a gravel boat landing on the north side of Lime Lake. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Belmont

No Town maintained outdoor recreation facilities. All outdoor recreation areas in the Town are taken care of by DNR. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Buena Vista

The Town maintains a gravel boat landing on the north side of Lime Lake. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Carson

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Dedicated parkland:

The Town of Carson owns and maintains open space for public use at:

- ___-acres on Green Tree Road;
- ___-acres on Sarafin Court; and
- ___-acres on Second Lake Drive.

Boat launches on the Wisconsin River are maintained by the Town at:

- Martin Island Drive
- Sleepy Hollow Road; and
- Riverview Drive.

Town of Dewey

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

South Bay Beach Park is a 39.8 acre park that is jointly maintained by Consolidated Water Power Company and the Town of Dewey. There is a boat launch with a picnic and swimming area.

Town of Eau Pleine

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Marietta Estates – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. Two lots totaling 3.4-acres have not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Town of Grant

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Larry's Court Leisure Living Estates – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. A 2.4-acre lot has not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Class I Trout Streams – These various streams in Town have limited access along Town or County roads; typically a wide spot in the road or a turnaround is the access point for these trout streams.

Wisconsin Rapids Youth Sports Association (WRYSA) ballfields – There are 6 ball fields, just north of Grant Elementary, that are maintained by the WRYSA for their use.

Grant Elementary School – A playground exists at the school that is open to the public outside of school hours.

9011 County Road WW – This 5-acre site is located across the road from the Town Hall. No facilities exist.

Town of Hull

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Developed Parks

Meadow Manor Park, 2.48 acres located at ___(address)_____ has a playground, ____

Somerset Park, 3.0 acres located at __ (address)_____ has a playground, ____

Jordan Acres (Sunny Crest) Park, 0.82 acres located at _____ has a playground, ____

Sorenson Park, 1.5 acres located at __ (address)_____ has a playground, ____

Pleasant View Park, 1.49 acres located at ___(address)_____ has a playground, ____

Undeveloped Town lands available for outdoor recreation

Treder's West, 1 acre located at ___(address)_____.

Conifer Acres, 1.5 acres located at ___(address)_____.

Oakwood Heights Subdivision, 5.6 acres located at ___(address)_____.

Plover Heights Subdivision, 0.78 acres located at _____(address)_____.

Town of Lanark

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Park View Acres on Badger Drive – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. This 1.66 parcel has not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Town of Linwood

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Linwood Springs Subdivision – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. This 2-acre parcel has not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Wisconsin River boat launch off of Blue Heron Lane – Consolidated Water & Power Company maintains a boat launch and a small parking lot adjacent to the launch.

Town of New Hope

No Town maintained outdoor recreation facilities. See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Town of Pine Grove

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Bancroft Lions Park – This 2.75-acre park, owned by the Lions Club, has an enclosed picnic shelter, playground, and picnic area with picnic tables.

Bancroft Ball Park (Town Park) – This 4.3-acre Town park has a softball diamond, restrooms, playground, and American Legion owned shelter-house with concession stand that is adjacent to the softball diamond.

Town of Plover

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Bluebird Park – This 5-acre Town park is located in the Bluebird Subdivision between I-39, Cardinal Drive, and Bluebird Drive. Facilities at this park include a combined play field, picnic tables, swing set, 5 disc golf holes, and a softball field with backstop.

Bluebird Lake – A 3.5-acre neighborhood lake owned by Portage County with an unimproved public access off Bluebird Drive.

Forest Lake Park – This undeveloped Town park is located between Forest Lake Drive and STH 54 which is a natural area and serves as a buffer to the highway.

River Heights Subdivision and Michael Court – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. This 1.57-acre parcel has not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Town of Sharon

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Polonia Park – This 3.31-acre park on CTH K at Church St has a ballfield with dugouts, some open play space, and playground.

Boulder Heights Addition on High Ridge Road – Lands dedicated to the public for use as recreational areas through the development process. This 2.1-acre parcel has not been developed for recreational use at this time.

Town of Stockton

See **Map 5** for a listing of all parks maintained by towns in Portage County.

Arnott Centennial – This 0.6-acre park, located at 4487 CTH J, is a small play lot.

Buckhorn Park – This 1.22-acre park, located at 6270 Leroy Lane, is a play lot.

Country Beautiful – This 5.2-acre park, located at 7129 Country Beautiful Lane, is a passive natural environment.

Hoffman's Custer Square – This 1.75-acre park, located at 1034 Custer Square, provides a small play lot and open space.

Lone Pine Park – This 0.6-acre park, located at 6775 Oak Tree Road, is a small play lot.

Town of Stockton Park – This 25-acre park, located at 3333 Custer Road, has a picnic shelter, a 1-mile walking path, playground, a 9-hole disc golf course, pickleball court, volleyball practice court, youth soccer fields, and sledding hills.

Arnott Lions Park – This 11.5-acre park, located at 6867 4th Street, is privately owned and maintained by the Arnott Lions Club. Facilities include two shelters, a 100'x200' multipurpose building, softball diamond, restrooms, horseshoe pits, playground, and picnic area. The park is divided into two areas that can be rented out.

3.8 State Facilities

The State of Wisconsin, primarily through the Department of Natural Resources, holds several tracts of land within Portage County as shown on **Map 1**. Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses that are open to the public on that parcel.

Hartman Creek State Park

Hartman Creek State Park occupies about 1,100 acres, mostly in Waupaca County. 428 acres are within the southeast corner of Portage County. The park offers camping, boating, swimming, horseback riding and mountain biking opportunities, the historic Hellestad House log cabin, and four picnic areas including Whispering Pines along crystal-clear Marl Lake.

Mead Wildlife Area

The **George W. Mead Wildlife Area** occupies more than 33,000 acres in Portage, Marathon, and Wood counties. About one quarter of the total area (11,021 acres) is located in the northwestern part of Portage County.

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

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

Buena Vista Wildlife Area

The **Buena Vista Wildlife Area** occupies about 12,700 acres of grassland in the southwestern part of the County. The DNR currently owns about 8,140 acres and manages an additional 4,560 acres, portions of which are owned separately by the Dane County Conservation League and the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology. These grasslands support the State's largest population of state-threatened Greater Prairie-chicken and Short-eared Owl, as well as healthy populations of the state-threatened Henslow's Sparrow and several other grassland bird species of management concern. The regal fritillary (state endangered butterfly) and Franklin's ground squirrel (state: special concern) also occur here.

Dewey Marsh Wildlife Area

The **Dewey Marsh Wildlife Area** occupies about 6,005 acres in north central Portage County. This area is predominantly a mix of forested and open wetlands. Grasslands here support populations of rare species, including Sedge Wren, Wilson's Phalarope, Bobolink, Upland Sandpiper, Brewer's Blackbird, Eastern and Western Meadowlark, Northern Harrier, and several rare sparrows.

Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area

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

State Fishery Areas

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

The following fishery areas are located along lakes and streams, primarily in the eastern moraine area of Portage County (see **Map 1**), and are owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources:

- **Little Wolf River Fishery Area, 1,608 acres**
- **Emmons Creek Fishery Area, 1,473 acres**
- **Richard A. Hemp Fishery Area, 1,372 acres**
- **Little Plover River Fishery Area, about 250 acres**

State Highway Water Access Sites

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation operates two boat launches in Portage County; both of which are on the west side of the Wisconsin River:

County Road HH access is located in Stevens Point, on the southeast corner of CTH HH and West River Drive. This 2-acre site has a bit of a steep shoreline with rip-rap and mature trees on the Wisconsin River, along with a gravel parking lot and some picnic tables. No canoe or boat launch exists here.

River Road boat launch is under the USH 10 Bridge, 2000 River Road, 7 miles northwest of Stevens Point. To access this boat launch from downtown Stevens Point, head west over the Clark Street bridge over the Wisconsin River, straight onto CTH HH at the traffic light, now on CTH HH west about 5.5 miles to CTH E, then take CTH E to East River Road, then 1-mile to the boat launch. This 2.3-acre site has a boat launch, paved parking, and some picnic tables.

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

1. **Bradley Creek Swamp Conifers SNA (No. 585)** is 21 acres within the Little Wolf River Fishery Area.
2. **Dewey Marsh SNA (No. 182)** is 801 acres located within the Dewey Marsh Wildlife Area.
3. **Emmons Creek Barrens SNA (No. 365)** is 201-acres within the Emmons Creek Fishery Area and Hartman Creek State Park.
4. **Flume Creek Cedars SNA (No. 586)** is 138 acres located within the Little Wolf River Fishery Area.
5. **Little Bear Hemlocks SNA (No. 620)** is 59 acres located in the Town of Eau Pleine.
6. **New Hope Pines SNA (No. 181)** is 171 acres located in the Town of New Hope.
7. **Mead Conifer Bogs SNA (No. 373)** is 932 acres located within George Mead Wildlife Area.
8. **Pickereel Lake SNA (No. 227)** is 143 acres located in the Town of Belmont.
9. **Upper Little Wolf SNA (No. 584)** is 33 acres located within the Little Wolf River Fishery Area.

3.9 Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned

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

As of 2024 there are about 40 acres enrolled under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in Portage County, which are open to the public to hunt and fish.

As of 2024 there are about 54,856 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program in Portage County. Of that MFL acreage, there are about 1,103 acres designated “open” to the public for hunting (not trapping), fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross-country skiing only (s. 77.83(2)(a), Wis. Stats.).

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

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

MFL “open” property NOT always publicly available:

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

Chapter 4: COUNTY MAINTAINED RECREATION FACILITIES

4.1 Introduction

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

- 4.2. Trails
- 4.3. County Parks
- 4.4. County Recreation Areas & Preserves
- 4.5. County Public Access Points to Water Bodies
- 4.6. County Special Use Facilities

Resource management in all types of recreation areas is key to successful use and sustainability. The Portage County Parks Department has adopted forestry management plans for Wolf Lake, Standing Rocks, and the Dewey Recreation Area. Invasive species control efforts, mainly for garlic mustard, also began in 2006 at Standing Rocks and Lake Emily, which will continue annually.

4.2 Trails

Snowmobile Trails (See **Map 2**)

Portage County has approximately 337.1-miles of established public snowmobile trails: 304.2-miles are **state-funded** (of which 13-miles are county sponsored) and 29-miles are **club-funded**, non-sponsored snowmobile trails. Map 1 shows the location of the state-funded and club-funded trails, but there are also numerous road routes available for snowmobiling throughout the County. The state-funded trails sponsored by Portage County Parks Department are maintained by the Portage County Snowmobile Clubs. The Alliance is comprised of eleven snowmobile clubs that meet monthly during the snowmobile season to provide continuous input to the Department about the future direction of the County's snowmobile program.

Tomorrow River State Trail (See **Map 2**)

The Tomorrow River State Trail segment in Portage County is a 14-mile crushed limestone trail developed on an abandoned railroad grade, starting in the Village of Plover and ending at the Portage/Waupaca County line. It is open to bicyclists and hikers in spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, this trail is open to snowmobiles, skiers, and dog sleds. A separate parallel off-grade trail exists for horseback riders in the spring, summer, and fall. Parking lots serving the trail exist at Custer Road in the Town of Stockton, in Amherst Junction on West St and 2nd St, and at Cate County Park.

Green Circle State Trail (See Map 2)

Encircling the city of Stevens Point, this trail meanders along the scenic Wisconsin and Plover rivers, recalling the history of the lumber-making and pioneer settlements of the area, while connecting secluded natural and wildlife areas, the Schmeckle Reserve and many city parks. The trail, including all spurs, is 31 miles long and features river scenery, forests, wetlands, prairies, boardwalks and quiet neighborhoods. A 4-mile spur on Hoover Road connects to the Tomorrow River State Trail in Plover. (WDNR)

Portage County Parks Department performs all of the routine maintenance, storm damage cleanup, and enforcement on the Trail, with the exception of those segments within City of Stevens Point parks. About 126,500 people use the Green Circle Trail each year.

Cross Country Ski Trails

Portage County Parks Department grooms about 10 miles of ski trails at Standing Rocks Park. The Department continues to manage, maintain, and groom the Plover River Ski Trail at the City of Stevens Point well fields, adjacent to the airport.

4.3 County Parks

The following parks and recreation areas are maintained by the Portage County Parks Department.

Map 2 shows the locations of these parks:

Classification: Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks: Centrally located spaces of 5 to 25 acres that serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. County parks in this classification generally provide passive recreational activities that may include water access (e.g., swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, hunting, and aesthetic enjoyment), trails, picnicking. Facilities may also include a playground, restroom/pit toilet, drinking water well, ball field, multi-activity field, and picnic shelter. Trees, open fields, and undeveloped natural areas are also desirable components of neighborhood parks. The service area for this park is generally a 1-mile radius or a population of 2,000-5,000 people. **(See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)**

Al Tech Park is mainly a boat launch, see: 4.5 County Public Access Points to Water Bodies.

Carrie Frost Park

This 7-acre park is located on County Road BB in the Town of Almond. The park currently features a roadside rest area, snowmobile shelter, picnic grounds, and provides parking access for the adjacent 170-acre Carrie J. Frost Memorial [school] Forest.

- This park serves as snowmobile trailhead, school forest parking, and park for the Almond/Bancroft area.

Cate Park

This 8.7-acre park is located on County Road A in the Town of Amherst, ½ mile north of the Village of Amherst. This site, adjacent to the Amherst Mill Pond, has as a picnic area and is a trailhead for the Tomorrow River State Trail.

- This park serves trail users, and the Nelsonville/Amherst Junction/Amherst area.

Lake Helen Park

This 10.6-acre park is located on Lake Helen in the Town of Alban. Lake Helen is the largest lake in northeastern Portage County. Facilities include a boat launch/fishing area, beach, pit toilet, drinking well, playground, sand volleyball court, horseshoe pit picnic shelter and picnic area.

- This park serves northeastern Portage County.

Peterson Park

This 3.5-acre park is located on Tree Lake in the Town of Alban. Facilities include a beach, pit toilet, drinking well, playground, picnic shelter, and picnic area. The County maintains a boat launch/fishing area on the opposite side of the lake from Peterson Park.

- This park serves northeastern Portage County.

Galecke Park

This 33.2-acre park is located on the east bank of the Wisconsin River in the Town of Plover, on Park Drive, about ½-mile west of the Village of Plover. Facilities include a boat launch/fishing area, dock, open shelter, pit toilet, and picnic area.

- This park serves the Town of Plover, the Village of Plover, and anyone who wishes to access the Wisconsin River.

Classification: Community Parks

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, provide large group organized sports areas, 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 cultural and community centers, park maintenance and equipment storage buildings, multiple sports fields, nature trails, and scenic areas. The service area for this park is generally a 2 to 5 mile radius. **(See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)**

Sunset Lake Park

This 36.2-acre park is located on Sunset Lake in the Town of New Hope, and is adjacent to UWSP's Central Wisconsin Environmental Station. After 40 years of being leased, this property was acquired in 2005. Facilities include a beach with changing stalls, open air shelter, 2 sets of pit toilets, drinking well, boat launch/fishing area, playground, and picnic area.

- This park serves the Town of New Hope.

Classification: County Parks

County Parks: *High recreational potential sites with a minimum of 100-acres that are able to withstand intensive and extensive recreational activities. The potential for future land acquisition should be taken into account. Development and planning should consider the physical condition and characteristics of the land and recognize potential environmental or structural limitations that might require intensive maintenance. Active and passive recreational facilities may include camping, picnicking, recreational trails of all types, play areas, water access (e.g., swimming, boating, canoeing, fishing, hunting, and aesthetic enjoyment), shelters, restrooms, sports fields of all types, pet exercise areas, and undeveloped natural areas. The service area for this park classification is the whole county. Special facilities like camping and trails are also used by tourists. (See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)*

DuBay Park

This 84.06-acre park is located on 6,700-acre Lake DuBay, a flowage of the Wisconsin River. Lake DuBay is the largest body of water in the Central Wisconsin area. Most of the flowage lies within Marathon County. More than half of the park is undeveloped natural area. Park facilities include a 36-site campground, 2 shower buildings, 4 sets of pit toilets, RV dump station, boat launch/fishing area, accessible fishing pier, lodge, well, playground, seasonal manager's residence, storage building, ball field, beach, and picnic area.

Collins Park

This 53.08-acre park is located on Collins Lake in the Town of Alban. The park has a 28-site campground, boat launch/fishing area, beach, lodge, shower building, flush toilets and pit toilets, 2 drinking wells, 2 playgrounds, seasonal manager's residence, picnic area, storage garage, and RV dump station.

Jordan Park

This 404.64-acre park is located on Jordan Pond, a flowage of the Plover River, at the intersection of STH 66 and County Road Y in the Town of Hull. The park lies on the edge of the Stevens Point urban area. Fifty acres of the park are maintained as natural area. Park facilities include a 25-site campground, shower building, 3 sets of pit toilets, 4 drinking wells, 3 playgrounds, picnic areas, boat launch/fishing area, canoe access, beach, 2 lodges, 2 open shelters, picnic area, nature center, nature trails, historic site, administrative office, maintenance facility, 5 storage buildings, a steel foot bridge, snowmobile bridge, RV dump station, and hydroelectric dam.

Lake Emily Park

This 177.7-acre park is located on Lake Emily in the Town of Amherst. Lake Emily is the location of historical Native American burial mounds. Facilities include a campground with 71 electrical hook-up campsites and 3 walk-in tent sites, 3 shower buildings, 4 pit toilets, 5 drinking wells, 2 playgrounds, boat launch/fishing area, beach with changing stalls, 2 lodges, picnic areas, hiking trails, baseball field, accessible fishing pier, office, storage garage with workshop, and two RV dump sites.

Standing Rocks Park

This 551.1-acre park is located on Bear Lake in the southeastern part of the Town of Stockton. Portions of the park are maintained in a natural state, like a county forest recreational area. Facilities include two lodges with ski equipment rental shop, 5 downhill ski runs with 2 cable tows, snow-making on 800 meter cross-country ski area with a 3k lit trail, 13 mile total cross-country ski, single-track mountain bike trails, hiking trails,

boating/fishing area, public hunting area, 33-hole disc golf course, cross country running course, and dog exercise area.

Wolf Lake Park

This 112.77-acre park is located on Wolf Lake in the Town of Almond, 4 miles northeast of the Village of Almond. Facilities include a beach, boat launch/fishing area, pit toilet, drinking well, public hunting grounds, hiking trails, and picnic area.

Steinhaugen Recreational Area

The Steinhaugen property is located on Bentley Rd in the Town of Sharon, seven miles northeast of Stevens Point. This 280-acre property is a diverse, high quality natural area with the Plover River, North Star Creek, wetlands, upland hardwood forest, pine plantations, prairie and open fields. This property is managed as a conservancy, public hunting area, and silent sports area. Facilities include a parking lot and trails for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

4.4 County Recreation Areas & Preserves

The following recreation areas and preserves are maintained by the Portage County Parks Department.

Map 2 shows the locations of these recreation areas and preserves:

Classification: Recreation Areas & Preserves

Recreation Areas & Preserves are managed for the flora & fauna resources that exist at a site. Activities like hiking, wildlife watching, hunting, trapping, and fishing may be allowed on these lands that may have labels like recreational area, preserve, conservancy, forests, or wildlife refuges. Each area has specific rules of use for public enjoyment. Recreational facility development, when present, may provide a modest level of user conveniences and comfort as well as furnish environmental protection. (See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)

Becker Lake Recreation Area

This 40-acre recreation area is located on Becker Lake in the Town of Sharon. This park is currently managed as public hunting grounds with a parking lot to access the site.

Dewey Marsh Recreational Area

This 319.5-acre wildlife preserve is a portion of the larger Dewey Marsh Wildlife area (4,900 acres) that is owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. This wildlife area is a forested wetland area and represents a major public conservancy in the County. Game species include whitetail deer, grouse, rabbit and others.

See section 4.3 County Special Use Facilities for the **Dewey Shooting Range** description.

Lake Jacqueline Preserve

This 23.19-acre preserve is located on Lake Jacqueline in the Town of Sharon. It is managed as a conservancy area to protect the flora and water quality of the lake area.

Mill Creek Preserve

This 122.25-acre preserve is located adjacent to Mill Creek in the Town of Carson. It is managed as a public hunting area and conservancy for the protection of the Mill Creek watershed. A parking lot exists to access the site.

Rocky Run Preserve

This 83.66-acre preserve is located on Rocky Run and Little Chicago Roads in the Town of Linwood, ¼ mile west of Stevens Point. This property is managed as a conservancy and public hunting area. No facilities exist.

4.5 County Public Access Points to Water Bodies

Public access points to water bodies vary from primitive (e.g., canoe launch) to well developed (e.g., boat launches). Multiple jurisdictions own the access points.

County maintained public access points are shown on **Map 2** and described below:

Classification: Public Access Points to Water Bodies

***Public Access Points to Water Bodies** are managed as boat launches, canoe access, and/or fishing access spots. The state Constitution and the Public Trust Doctrine declare that all navigable waters are "common highways and forever free." Activities may include boating, fishing, hunting, ice skating, snowmobiling, swimming, and enjoying the natural scenic beauty of navigable water. Each area has specific rules of use for public enjoyment. Recreational facility development, when present, may provide a modest level of user conveniences and comfort as well as furnish environmental protection. (See: 5.3 Park Standards Analysis.)*

Al Tech Park

This 2.9-acre park is located along the west bank of the Wisconsin River on West River Drive, one mile south of Stevens Point in the Town of Linwood. It is currently managed as a canoe access/fishing area, with picnic area and stairs down to a low head dam observation area.

Consolidated Park

This 23-acre park is along the west bank of the Wisconsin River on West River Drive, just south of County Route HH. Facilities include a collection of 4 spots to park and access the Wisconsin River, the spot adjacent to County Route HH has a picnic bench and is the only spot maintained by WisDOT, another spot has a boat ramp/fishing area, pit toilet, and picnic area, and the remaining 3 spots have space to park at least 2 vehicles.

Lake Meyers Boat Launch

This 0.52-acre boat launch is located on Lake Meyers Road in the Town of Amherst, one mile east of the Village of Amherst Junction. Facilities include a primitive boat ramp. Parking is on Lake Meyers Road.

Plover River Wayside

This 0.3-acre canoe access site is located on County Highway K, 7 miles northeast of Stevens Point.

Rinehart Lake Boat Landing

This 1.5-acre site is located on South Lake Road in the Town of New Hope, 3 miles north of the Village of Nelsonville. Facilities include a primitive boat ramp. Parking is on South Lake Road.

Stedman Wayside

This 2.85-acre site is located on County Road D in the Town of Amherst, 6 miles south of the Village of Amherst. This site is managed as a fishing access and picnic area along the Tomorrow River. A parking lot is provided.

Tomorrow River Wayside

This 3.07-acre site is located on Rolling Hills Road in the Town of New Hope, 1 ½ miles northwest of the Village of Nelsonville. This site provides access to the Tomorrow River. Parking is on Rolling Hills Road.

4.6 County Special Use Facilities

The following properties are maintained by the Portage County Parks Department.

Map 2 shows the locations of these special use facilities:

Classification: Special Use Facility

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

Dewey Shooting Range

The County's Dewey Shooting Range is located in the Dewey Recreational Area on Willow Springs Drive in the Town of Dewey, five miles north of Stevens Point. The Dewey Shooting Range has a range office, pistol range, 50/100/200 yard ranges, archery range, pit toilet, and lighting for night shooting.

Tomorrow River State Trail Trailhead

This 1-acre trailhead is located on County Road Q/2nd Street in the Village of Amherst Junction. This site is a trailhead for the Tomorrow River State Trail. Facilities include a gravel parking lot, Trail informational kiosk, self-pay station, picnic table, bench, and direct access to the Trail.

Portage County Cemetery

This 1-acre cemetery is located on Lake Road in the Town of Amherst, 1-mile north of the Village of Amherst Junction. Residents of the former Portage County farm are interred here.

Chapter 5:

OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

Recreational needs within Portage County are identified in the Recommendations & Capital Improvement chapter. Those needs were identified by gathering public input via a survey, the results of which are in this chapter; and Parks Department staff analysis of how current facilities are operating.

5.2 Public Participation

Informal Public Input

In the regular course of business, Portage County Parks Department staff have received public input about its parks, campgrounds, trails, and forest. That input and staff's professional experience will also shape what changes are implemented.

Summary of Survey Responses

In the spring of 2024, this survey was sent out for customer feedback. Portage County Parks installed survey advertisement posters in all Portage County parks and some high use boat launches. Portage County Parks also advertised the survey on the Portage County Parks' Facebook page and the County homepage. All towns and rural villages countywide were mailed 3 posters by NCWRPC to place wherever they saw fit. Local government officials were emailed and encouraged to take the survey themselves too. Stevens Point and Plover both prominently placed the survey link on their websites or social media. NCWRPC also emailed a list of outdoor recreation contacts provided by Portage County Parks.

Posters were in County Parks by Memorial Day weekend, and removed July 1st – available for 5 weeks. All of the survey links remained open for a total of 8 weeks, and 20 additional responses were received after the listed deadline of June 30th.

We received **182 responses** to the survey. Although not statistically significant of the whole population, this survey does provide a much deeper understanding of the wants and needs for outdoor recreation than a public hearing, so the results are very valuable. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, so several questions had smaller response groups. 65% of respondents who began the survey also finished the survey. This is a low completion rate that appears to be the result of 2 questions not skipping respondents ahead a bunch of questions that didn't apply to them, thus irritating people.

Answered: 118 Skipped: 64

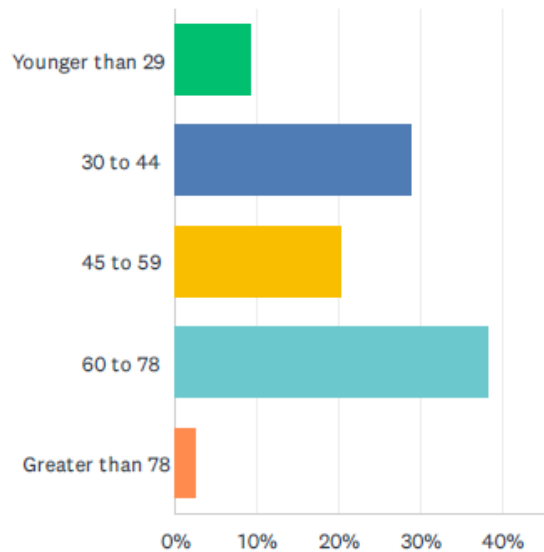
About 86% of respondents live or own a seasonal dwelling in Portage County, and 14% do not. Most municipalities (19 of 28) were represented with about 32% coming from Stevens Point, about 13% from Plover, and 4% from Park Ridge.

Answered: 117 Skipped: 65

About 38% of respondents were male, and about 59% were female, with 2.5% preferring not to answer.

Answered: 117 Skipped: 65

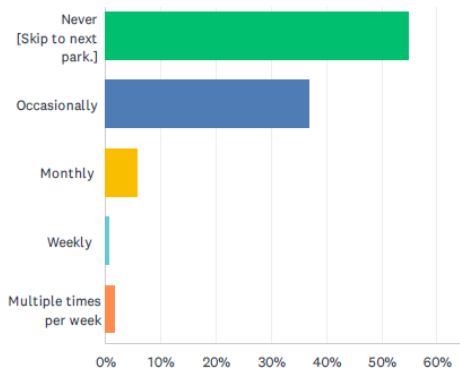
Respondents came from all age groups, with a strong showing of at least 20% in the 30 to 44 (Millennials), 45 to 59 (Gen X), and 60 to 78 (Baby Boomers) groups.



Through an IP address analysis of who took the survey it appears that 8 IP addresses are duplicated, which could mean that a husband and wife both took the survey. 4 of these duplicate IP addresses did not complete over half the survey, which appears to be people giving up some way through the survey and then taking it again and finishing the survey. All of those duplicate IP addresses did not have the same answers, so it appears that nobody “stuffed the ballot box.”

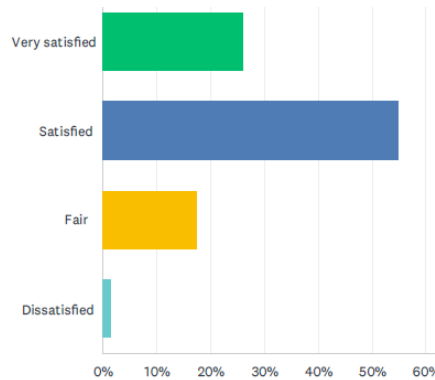
Q3. How often do you use Lake Emily Park or Campground?

Answered: 176 Skipped: 6



Q4. Rate your overall satisfaction with Lake Emily Park:

Answered: 69 Skipped: 113



Q5. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Lake Emily Park:

Answered: 62 Skipped: 120

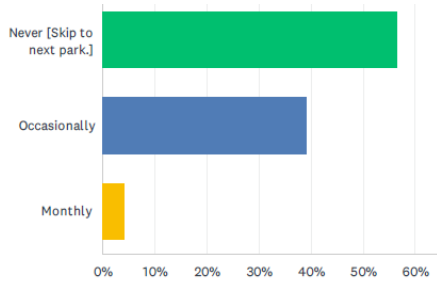
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	21.31% 13	1.64% 1	36.07% 22	40.98% 25	61
Facility maintenance	16.13% 10	1.61% 1	41.94% 26	40.32% 25	62
Signage and maps on/for the property	21.67% 13	3.33% 2	41.67% 25	33.33% 20	60
County employee customer service	54.10% 33	3.28% 2	9.84% 6	32.79% 20	61
West Lodge (near ball diamond)	63.79% 37	0.00% 0	6.90% 4	29.31% 17	58
East Lodge (near boat landing)	70.69% 41	0.00% 0	8.62% 5	20.69% 12	58
Lodge Reservation Process	60.34% 35	1.72% 1	13.79% 8	24.14% 14	58

Q6. Any other comments about Lake Emily Park?

Note: 19 respondents also commented about Lake Emily Park.

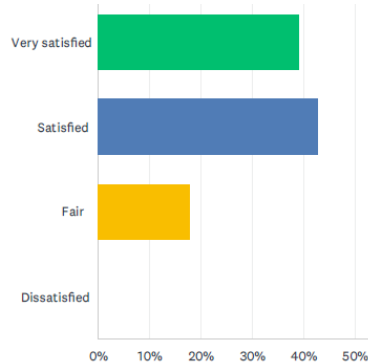
Q7. How often do you use Lake Emily Park Campground?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 113



Q8. Rate your overall satisfaction with Lake Emily Park Campground:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 154



Q9. For your most recent visit to Lake Emily Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 156

- 1 to 3 nights (20 responses)
- 4 to 7 nights (1 response)
- 8 or more nights (2 responses)

Q10. How many times a year do you camp at Lake Emily Park Campground?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 156

- Once (13 responses)
- Twice (5 responses)
- 3 times (4 responses)
- More than 3 times (1 response)

Q11. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at Lake Emily Park Campground:

Answered: 28 Skipped: 154

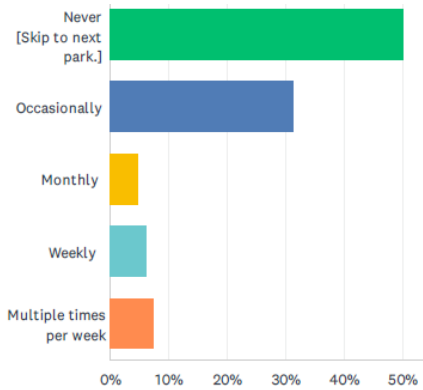
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE.	POOR	OK	GREAT	TOTAL
Picnic tables & fire rings at campsites	17.86% 5	3.57% 1	35.71% 10	42.86% 12	28
Trailer Sanitary Dump Station	37.04% 10	3.70% 1	44.44% 12	14.81% 4	27
Firewood availability	21.43% 6	0.00% 0	53.57% 15	25.00% 7	28
Registration process	19.23% 5	7.69% 2	34.62% 9	38.46% 10	26
Campsite fees	18.52% 5	3.70% 1	48.15% 13	29.63% 8	27

Q12. Any other comments about Lake Emily Park Campground?

Note: 6 respondents also commented about Lake Emily Park Campground.

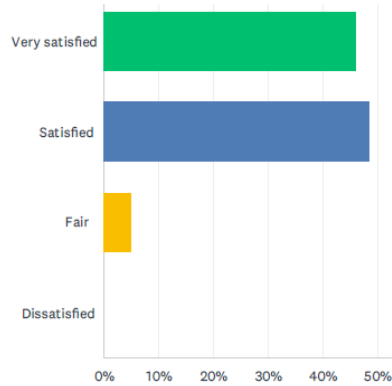
Q13. How often do you use Standing Rocks Park?

Answered: 163 Skipped: 19



Q14. Rate your overall satisfaction with Standing Rocks Park:

Answered: 78 Skipped: 104



Q15. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Standing Rocks Park:

Answered: 73 Skipped: 109

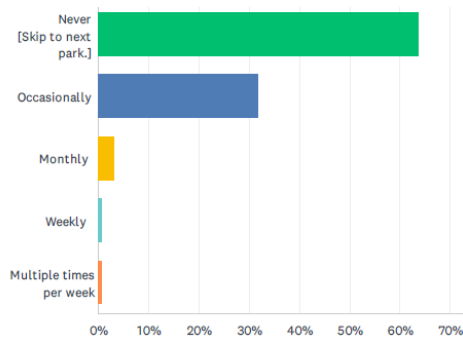
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	8.33% 6	0.00% 0	20.83% 15	70.83% 51	72
Facility maintenance	18.31% 13	0.00% 0	16.90% 12	64.79% 46	71
Signage and maps on/for the property	13.70% 10	4.11% 3	42.47% 31	39.73% 29	73
County employee customer service	52.78% 38	2.78% 2	9.72% 7	34.72% 25	72
Standing Rocks Lodge	35.62% 26	2.74% 2	19.18% 14	42.47% 31	73
Dog Exercise Area	59.15% 42	1.41% 1	8.45% 6	30.99% 22	71
Mountain Biking Trails	60.87% 42	0.00% 0	7.25% 5	31.88% 22	69
Disk Golf	71.43% 50	0.00% 0	4.29% 3	24.29% 17	70
Archery Range	97.14% 68	0.00% 0	2.86% 2	0.00% 0	70
Boat Launch	94.29% 66	0.00% 0	5.71% 4	0.00% 0	70
Snowshoe Trails	77.94% 53	0.00% 0	10.29% 7	11.76% 8	68
Downhill Skiing	79.71% 55	0.00% 0	15.94% 11	4.35% 3	69
Cross-Country Ski Trails	63.77% 44	0.00% 0	13.04% 9	23.19% 16	69

Q16. Any other comments about Standing Rocks Park?

Note: 26 respondents also commented about Standing Rocks Park.

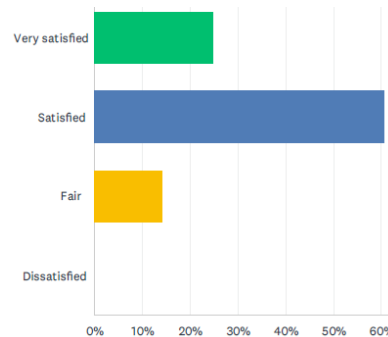
Q17. How often do you use Jordan Park or Campground?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 25



Q18. Rate your overall satisfaction with Jordan Park:

Answered: 56 Skipped: 126



Q19. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Jordan Park:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 130

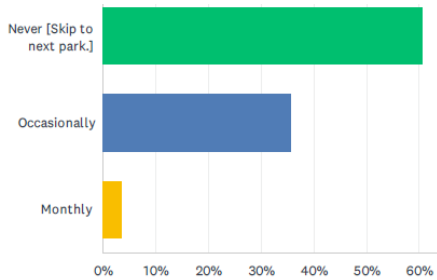
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	17.31% 9	1.92% 1	42.31% 22	38.46% 20	52
Facility maintenance	16.33% 8	2.04% 1	34.69% 17	46.94% 23	49
Signage and maps on/for the property	32.65% 16	6.12% 3	34.69% 17	26.53% 13	49
County employee customer service	55.10% 27	2.04% 1	6.12% 3	36.73% 18	49
West Lodge	59.57% 28	0.00% 0	6.38% 3	34.04% 16	47
East Lodge	68.09% 32	0.00% 0	6.38% 3	25.53% 12	47
Lodge Reservation Process	61.70% 29	6.38% 3	10.64% 5	21.28% 10	47
Nature Center	56.25% 27	2.08% 1	20.83% 10	20.83% 10	48

Q20. Any other comments about Jordan Park?

Note: 17 respondents also commented about Jordan Park.

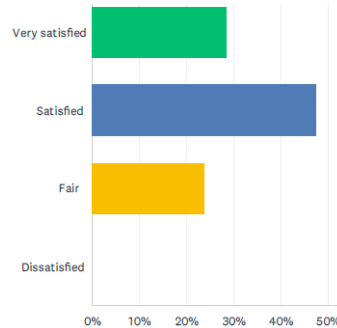
Q21. How often do you use Jordan Park Campground?

Answered: 56 Skipped: 126



Q22. Rate your overall satisfaction with Jordan Park Campground:

Answered: 21 Skipped: 161



Q23. For your most recent visit to Jordan Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 169

- 1 to 3 nights (10 responses)

Q24. How many times a year do you camp at Jordan Park Campground?

Answered: 14 Skipped: 168

- Once (7 responses)
- Twice (2 responses)
- More than 3 times (1 response)

Q25. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at Jordan Park Campground:

Answered: 14 Skipped: 168

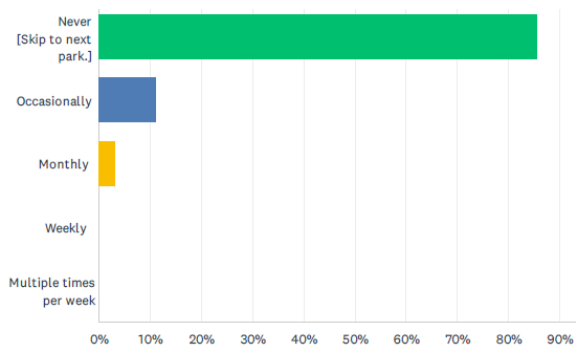
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE.	POOR	OK	GREAT	TOTAL
Canoe Campsites	28.57% 4	0.00% 0	21.43% 3	50.00% 7	14
Off-Water Campsites	28.57% 4	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	28.57% 4	14
Picnic tables & fire rings at campsites	14.29% 2	0.00% 0	57.14% 8	28.57% 4	14
Firewood availability	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	50.00% 7	28.57% 4	14
Registration process	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	38.46% 5	46.15% 6	13
Campsite fees	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	61.54% 8	23.08% 3	13

Q26. Any other comments about Jordan Park Campground?

Note: 4 respondents also commented about Jordan Park Campground.

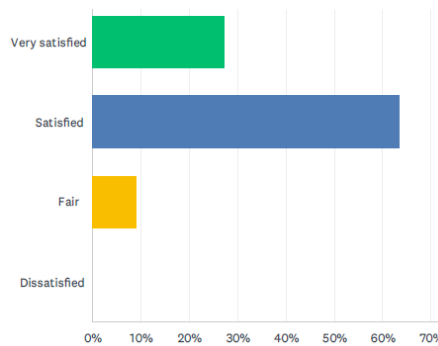
Q27. How often do you use DuBay Park or Campground?

Answered: 154 Skipped: 28



Q28. Rate your overall satisfaction with DuBay Park:

Answered: 22 Skipped: 160



Q29. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at DuBay Park:

Answered: 21 Skipped: 161

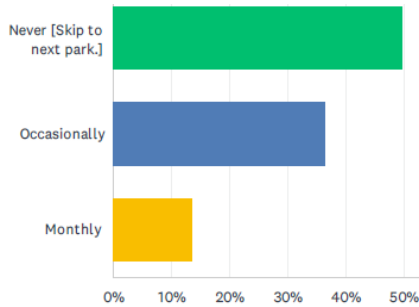
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	23.81% 5	0.00% 0	38.10% 8	38.10% 8	21
Facility maintenance	23.81% 5	0.00% 0	42.86% 9	33.33% 7	21
Signage and maps on/for the property	23.81% 5	0.00% 0	42.86% 9	33.33% 7	21
County employee customer service	57.14% 12	0.00% 0	9.52% 2	33.33% 7	21

Q30. Any other comments about DuBay Park?

Note: 9 respondents also commented about DuBay Park.

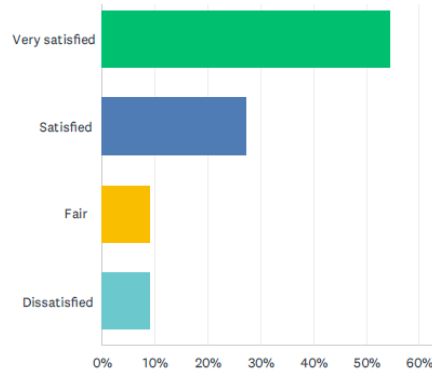
Q31. How often do you use DuBay Park Campground?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 160



Q32. Rate your overall satisfaction with DuBay Park Campground:

Answered: 11 Skipped: 171



Q33. For your most recent visit to DuBay Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 171

- 1 to 3 nights (2 responses)
- 4 to 7 nights (4 responses)
- 8 or more nights (2 responses)

Q34. How many times a year do you camp at DuBay Park Campground?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 172

- Once (5 responses)
- 5 or 6 times (3 responses)

Q35. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at DuBay Park Campground:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 173

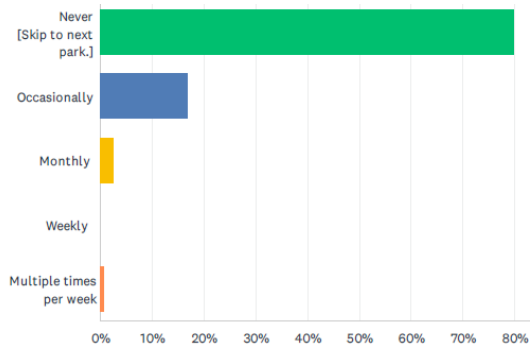
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE.	POOR	OK	GREAT	TOTAL
Picnic tables & fire rings at campsites	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	44.44% 4	33.33% 3	9
Firewood availability	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	22.22% 2	66.67% 6	9
Registration process	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	55.56% 5	9
Campsite fees	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	62.50% 5	8

Q36. Any other comments about DuBay Park Campground?

Note: 5 respondents also commented about Jordan Park Campground.

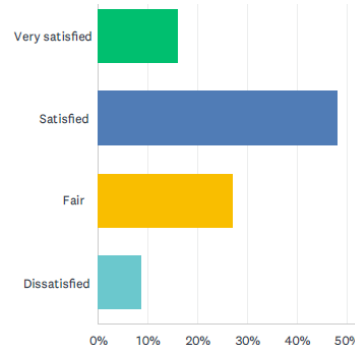
Q37. How often do you use Collins Park or Campground?

Answered: 154 Skipped: 28



Q38. Rate your overall satisfaction with Collins Park:

Answered: 137 Skipped: 45



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

Answered: 109 Skipped: 73

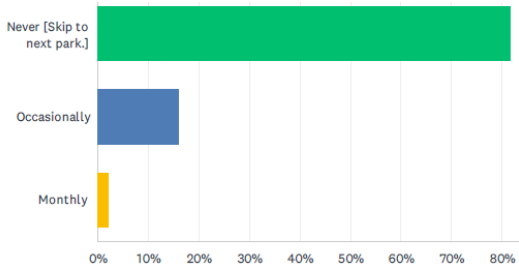
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	56.88% 62	0.92% 1	21.10% 23	21.10% 23	109
Facility maintenance	60.19% 65	2.78% 3	14.81% 16	22.22% 24	108
Signage and maps on/for the property	60.19% 65	0.00% 0	18.52% 20	21.30% 23	108
County employee customer service	67.31% 70	0.00% 0	9.62% 10	23.08% 24	104

Q40. Any other comments about Collins Park?

Note: 32 respondents also commented about Collins Park.

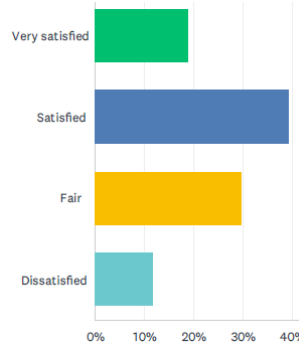
Q41. How often do you use Collins Park Campground?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 45



Q42. Rate your overall satisfaction with Collins Park Campground:

Answered: 127 Skipped: 55



Q43. For your most recent visit to Collins Park Campground, how many nights did you camp?

Answered: 60 Skipped: 122

- 1 to 3 nights (10 responses)
- 4 to 7 nights (8 responses)
- 8 or more nights (5 responses)

Q44. How many times a year do you camp at Collins Park Campground?

Answered: 63 Skipped: 119

- Once (16 responses)
- Twice (5 responses)
- 3 times (3 responses)

Q45. Rate your satisfaction with the following amenities at Collins Park Campground:

Answered: 87 Skipped: 95

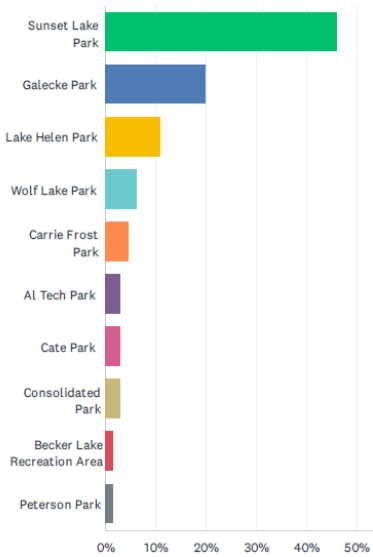
	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE.	POOR	OK	GREAT	TOTAL
Picnic tables & fire rings at campsites	62.07% 54	0.00% 0	20.69% 18	17.24% 15	87
Firewood availability	66.67% 58	0.00% 0	18.39% 16	14.94% 13	87
Registration process	66.28% 57	0.00% 0	13.95% 12	19.77% 17	86
Campsite fees	66.28% 57	0.00% 0	15.12% 13	18.60% 16	86

Q46. Any other comments about Collins Park Campground?

Note: 27 respondents also commented about Collins Park Campground.

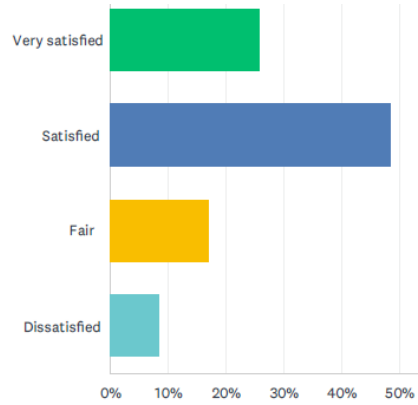
Q47. County park you want to rate (pick one)

Answered: 65 Skipped: 117



Q48. Overall, how satisfied were you with your visit?

Answered: 70 Skipped: 112



Q49. For your most recent visit to that park, please rate the following amenities:

Answered: 69 Skipped: 113

	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Grounds and trail maintenance	24.64% 17	8.70% 6	37.68% 26	28.99% 20	69
Facility maintenance	25.37% 17	13.43% 9	35.82% 24	25.37% 17	67
Signage and maps on/for the property	30.88% 21	11.76% 8	33.82% 23	23.53% 16	68
County employee customer service	70.59% 48	2.94% 2	10.29% 7	16.18% 11	68

Q50. How often do you use the following locations:

Answered: 108 Skipped: 74

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK	TOTAL
Lake Jacqueline Preserve	93.33% 98	5.71% 6	0.95% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	105
Mill Creek Preserve	90.48% 95	6.67% 7	2.86% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	105
Rocky Run Preserve	92.38% 97	5.71% 6	1.90% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	105
Steinhaguen Recreation Area	82.08% 87	12.26% 13	3.77% 4	1.89% 2	0.00% 0	106
Wisconsin River Recreation Area	66.36% 71	20.56% 22	4.67% 5	3.74% 4	4.67% 5	107

Q51. Rate your satisfaction with the following locations:

Answered: 108 Skipped: 74

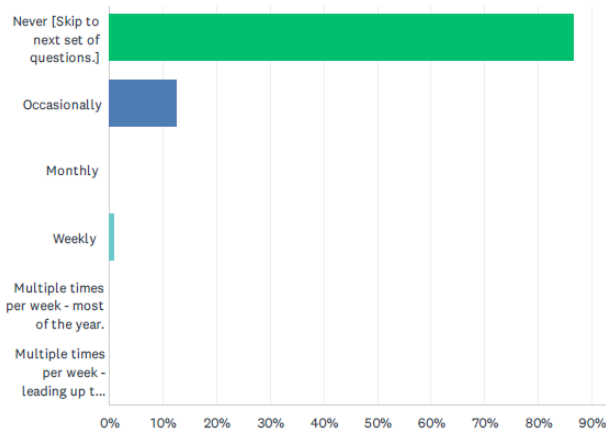
	I DO NOT USE THIS FACILITY.	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
Lake Jacqueline Preserve	92.38% 97	0.95% 1	2.86% 3	3.81% 4	105
Mill Creek Preserve	92.23% 95	0.00% 0	3.88% 4	3.88% 4	103
Rocky Run Preserve	93.27% 97	0.96% 1	3.85% 4	1.92% 2	104
Steinhaguen Recreation Area	83.81% 88	0.95% 1	5.71% 6	9.52% 10	105
Wisconsin River Recreation Area	69.52% 73	3.81% 4	11.43% 12	15.24% 16	105

Q52. Any other comments about any of the above locations?

Note: 16 respondents also commented about the above locations.

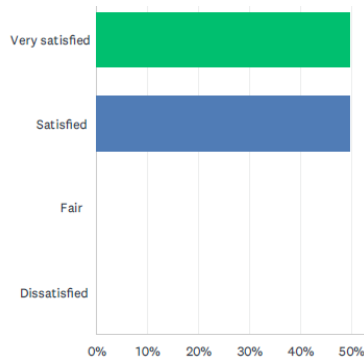
Q53. How often do you use Dewey Shooting Range?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 63



Q54. Rate your overall satisfaction with Dewey Shooting Range:

Answered: 16 Skipped: 166



Q55. For your most recent visit, please rate the following amenities at Dewey Shooting Range:

Answered: 14 Skipped: 168

	NOT APPLICABLE / UNSURE	POOR	FAIR	GREAT	TOTAL
General grounds & path maintenance	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	35.71% 5	64.29% 9	14
Facility maintenance	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	71.43% 10	14
Variety of items for sale	28.57% 4	7.14% 1	21.43% 3	42.86% 6	14
County employee customer service	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	28.57% 4	64.29% 9	14
Range Pass Fees	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	42.86% 6	50.00% 7	14

Q56. Any other comments about Dewey Shooting Range?

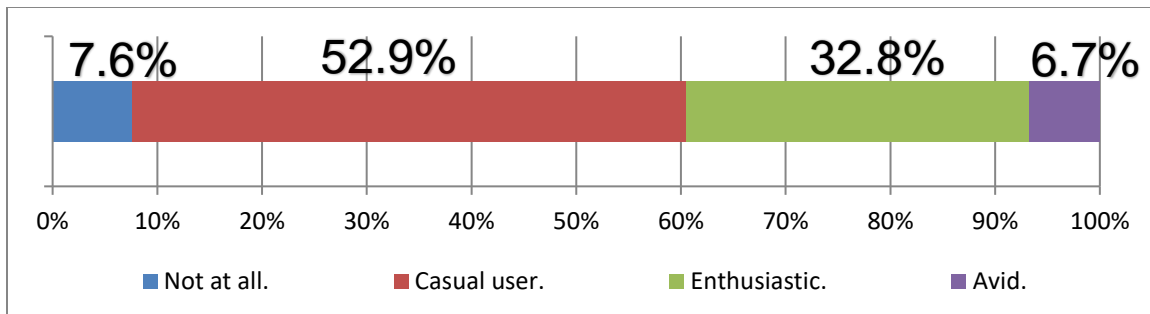
- Would be helpful to be open more hours
- Would like shoot clay birds

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

- More/improved facilities for gun sports--especially trap shooting

Q57. What type of water enthusiast are you?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 63



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

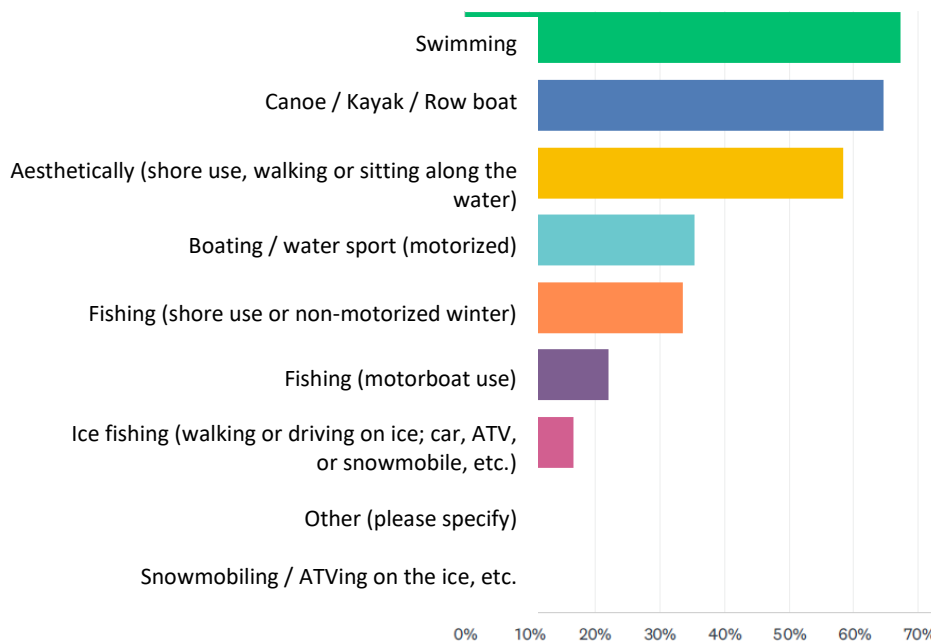
Casual user. (I like to use the water, but only do so occasionally.)

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

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

Q58. How do you use the water?

(Choose all that apply.) Answered: 113 Skipped: 69



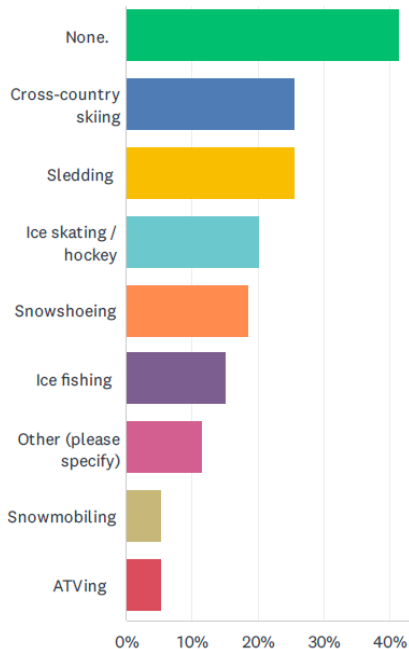
Q59. What improvements may be needed to public boat landings or water access points in Portage County? Answered: 32 Skipped: 150



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

Q60. In Portage County, what winter recreation activities do you participate in?

Answered: 113 Skipped: 69



Q61. How often do you use the following winter silent sports?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 71

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK	TOTAL
Plover River Ski Trail	80.00% 88	10.91% 12	6.36% 7	0.91% 1	1.82% 2	110
Downhill skiing at Standing Rocks	87.16% 95	8.26% 9	4.59% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	109
X-C skiing at Standing Rocks	80.91% 89	10.00% 11	4.55% 5	3.64% 4	0.91% 1	110
Snowshoe trail at Standing Rocks	80.56% 87	12.04% 13	4.63% 5	2.78% 3	0.00% 0	108

Q62. Rate your overall satisfaction with the following winter silent sports locations:

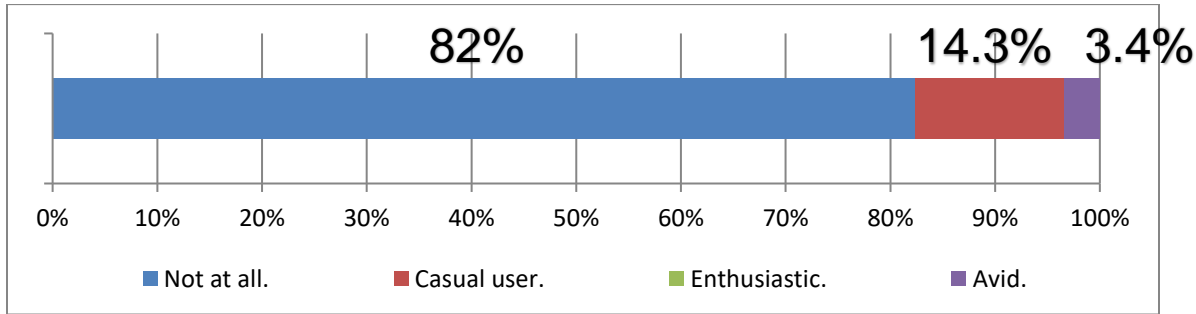
Answered: 109 Skipped: 73

	NOT APPLICABLE (I DO NOT USE THIS.)	VERY SATISFIED	GOOD	FAIR	DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
Plover River Ski Trail	79.82% 87	5.50% 6	9.17% 10	4.59% 5	0.92% 1	109
Downhill skiing at Standing Rocks	82.86% 87	3.81% 4	6.67% 7	6.67% 7	0.00% 0	105
X-C skiing at Standing Rocks	80.00% 84	7.62% 8	9.52% 10	2.86% 3	0.00% 0	105
Snowshoe trail at Standing Rocks	77.88% 81	9.62% 10	10.58% 11	1.92% 2	0.00% 0	104

Q63. What improvements to winter silent sports would you like to see?

Note: 30 respondents also commented about winter silent sport improvements.

Q64. What type of snowmobile enthusiast are you? Answered: 119 Skipped: 63



- Not at all.** (I'm not interested in snowmobiling at all, not even with friends.)
- Casual user.** (I like snowmobiling for fun, but **only** do so occasionally, **OR only** on my own land.)
- Enthusiastic.** (I access or go on snowmobile routes and trails regularly.)
- Avid.** (I am always on a snowmobile every chance I get – all season long.)

Q65. How often do you use snowmobile trails in Portage County?

Answered: 107 Skipped: 75

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK	TOTAL
Portage County Snowmobile Trails	86.92% 93	9.35% 10	0.93% 1	1.87% 2	0.93% 1	107

Q66. Rate your overall satisfaction with the snowmobile trails in Portage County:

Answered: 102 Skipped: 80

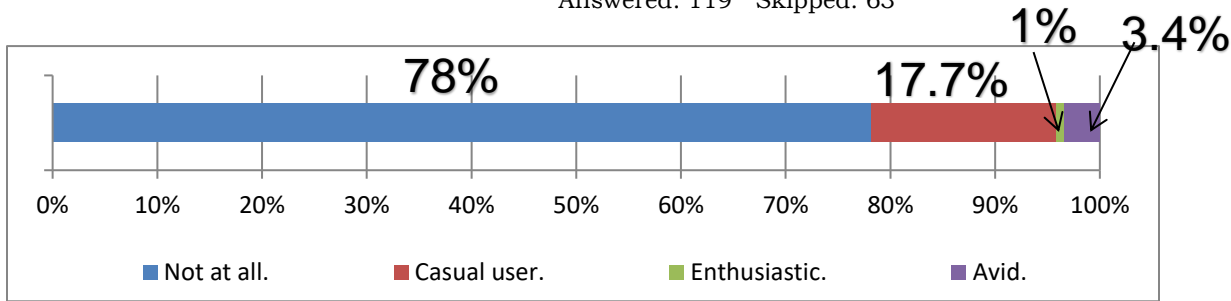
	NOT APPLICABLE (I DO NOT USE THIS.)	VERY SATISFIED	GOOD	FAIR	DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
Portage County Snowmobile Trails	86.27% 88	5.88% 6	5.88% 6	1.96% 2	0.00% 0	102

Q67. Any comments about snowmobile trails in Portage County?

Note: 16 respondents also commented about snowmobile trails.

Q68. What type of motorized vehicle (ATV/UTV/Off-Highway Motorcycle) enthusiast are you?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 63



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

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

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

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

Q69. How often do you use the following motorized sport trails?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 79

	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	MONTHLY	WEEKLY	MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK	TOTAL
Portage County ATV / UTV trails	90.29% 93	5.83% 6	0.97% 1	0.97% 1	1.94% 2	103
	87.00% 87	9.00% 9	2.00% 2	2.00% 2	0.00% 0	100
Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) trails outside of Portage County	92.71% 89	5.21% 5	2.08% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	96

Q70. Rate your overall satisfaction with the following motorized sports trails:

Answered: 101 Skipped: 81

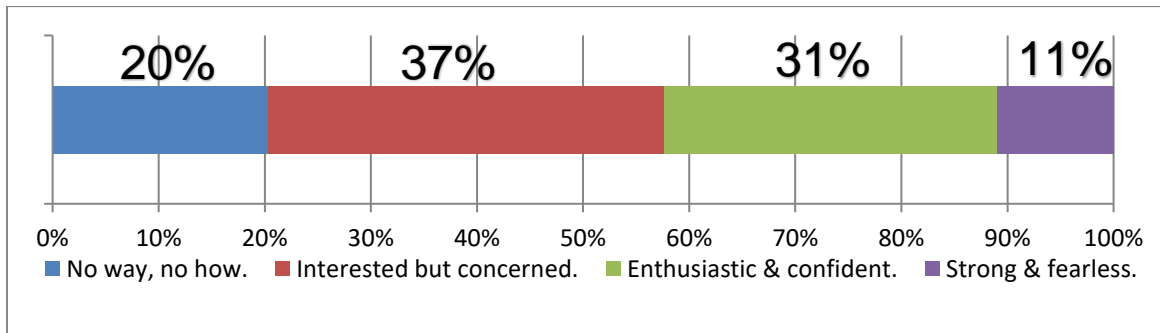
	NOT APPLICABLE (I DO NOT USE THIS.)	VERY SATISFIED	GOOD	FAIR	DISSATISFIED	TOTAL
Portage County ATV / UTV trails	87.13% 88	1.98% 2	4.95% 5	1.98% 2	3.96% 4	101
ATV / UTV trails outside of Portage County	86.87% 86	3.03% 3	9.09% 9	0.00% 0	1.01% 1	99
Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) trails outside of Portage County	93.81% 91	0.00% 0	5.15% 5	0.00% 0	1.03% 1	97

Q71. Any comments about motorized sport trails in Portage County?

Note: 18 respondents also commented about motorized sport trails.

Q72. What type of bicyclist are you?

Answered: 118 Skipped: 64



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

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

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

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

Portage County has a countywide bicycle and pedestrian plan that covers all urban and rural areas. In 2024 & 2025 the County will update that plan.

Q73. Any comments about bicycling in Portage County?

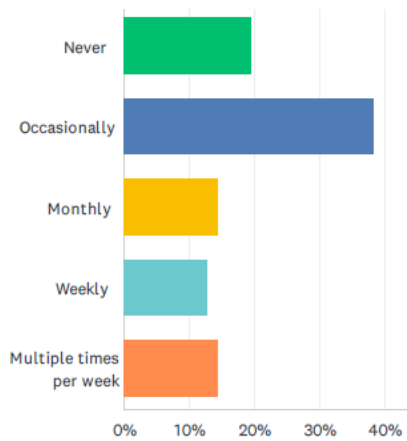
Answered: 42 Skipped: 140



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

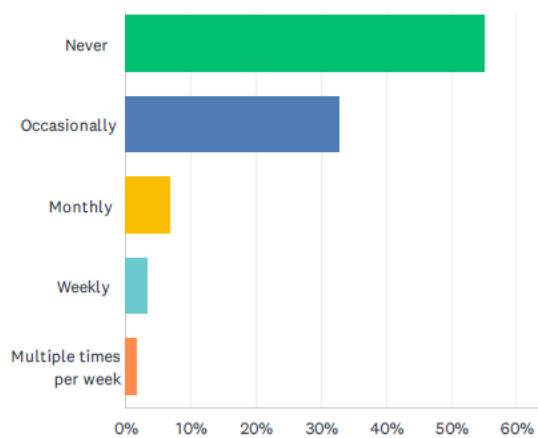
Q74. How often do you use the Green Circle State Trail? (On UWSP campus or other areas. Any time of year.)

Answered: 117 Skipped: 65



Q75. How often do you use the Tomorrow River State Trail? (Any time of year.)

Answered: 116 Skipped: 66



Q76. Do you have any other concerns or comments?

Note: 29 respondents had additional comments.

For the full survey results (127 pages) and written comments go online here:
<https://www.ncwrpc.org/portage-county-outdoor-recreation-plan-2025-2029/>

5.3 Park Standards Analysis

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

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

Park analysis is determined by 1) classifying each park, 2) geographic distribution, and 3) universal design.

A. Park Classification

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

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

4.2. Trails

4.3. County Parks

- Within the County Parks heading are additional classifications to identify the purpose of each park: *neighborhood park, community park, county park*. See **Attachment A**.

4.4. County Recreation Areas & Preserves

4.5. County Public Access Points to Water Bodies

- In Portage County, this heading includes one county park that is mainly a boat launch, all county maintained boat launches that exist outside of parks, and all waysides because they are only boat or canoe access points without any day-use facilities.

4.6. County Special Use Facilities

B. Geographic Distribution

Every county property classified as a county park serves the whole county. See all county managed facilities on **Map 2**. In Portage County, all other properties in section 4.3 County Parks have their service area identified in their descriptions.

C. Universal Design

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

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

5.4 Statewide Outdoor Recreation Trends

2019 2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Portage County is in the Western Sands SCORP region. See **Attachment D**.

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

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

SCORP's overarching goals for outdoor recreation:

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

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

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

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

Wisconsin residents' TOP 5

nature-based outdoor activities

Favorite

Walking, hiking
Fishing
Hunting
Bicycling
Camping

Most frequent participation

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

Most needed in their home county

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

Chapter 6:

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The development of an efficient outdoor recreation plan depends upon establishing specific recreation and open-space goals and objectives from public participation and Park Commission revision and refinement. These goals and objectives are meant to guide County and local officials as they work towards providing a recreation system to meet the needs of Portage County's residents and visitors to the area.

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

Objectives

1. Follow Best Management Practices for erosion control while developing trails and recreation facilities.
2. Cooperate with the County Land and Water Conservation Department to improve swimming areas on lakes and rivers.

Goal 2 – Continue developing Portage County as a bicycle friendly community and destination.

Objectives

1. Support walking and biking trail development countywide.
2. Continue existing partnerships that support the Green Circle State Trail.
3. Support creation of a Friends Group for the Tomorrow River State Trail.
4. Consider how to provide hike or bike campsites for people who either walk in or pedal into a campsite.
5. Provide bike parking wherever motor vehicle parking is provided.
6. Support establishing a permanent advisory committee for evaluating how to implement the Portage County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

Goal 3 – Continue improving outdoor recreation facilities throughout Portage County.

Objective

1. Maintain and improve existing recreational facilities as outlined in the Chapter 6 Capital Improvement lists.
2. Continue incorporating ADA accessibility into all capital improvements as appropriate.

Chapter 7:

RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations and capital improvements are based on the goals and objectives (Chapter 6), the public comment documented in Chapter 5-Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment, and the needs that the Parks Department has 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 arises.

7.1 Countywide Recommendations

Bicycling Improvements Countywide

Question 73 on the spring 2024 Outdoor Recreation survey asked respondents what bicycling improvements are needed in Portage County. There were 42 people that commented with specific improvement ideas. See comments in the full survey results document online.

Recommendation:

1. Continue to implement the **Portage County Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan**.
2. Review Q73 comments in online 2024 Outdoor Recreation survey document for specific bicycling improvement suggestions.
3. Physically sign the Ice Age Trail Bicycle Route.
4. Consider connecting the library in Amherst with a walking & biking path to Amherst Junction and to Nelsonville.
5. Consider signing a bicycle route from Amherst and Nelsonville to Amherst Junction and then to Lake Emily County Park.
6. Verify that existing Tomorrow River State Trail wayfinding signage to Lake Emily County Park, Trailhead park in Amherst Junction, and Cate County Park is in good condition.
7. Consider establishing a non-reservable hiking/bicycling camping area within Lake Emily Park and Cate Park that are available only to those traveling solely by hiking or bicycling. See **Attachment H** for best practices for bicycle camping, and see **Attachment I** for sample signs for the Tomorrow River State Trail and within both county parks.

Park Crosswalks on County Highways

Some County parks have a county highway running through them and have active uses on both sides. Jordan Park, DuBay Park, and Boston School Forest are all split by a county highway.

See recommendation in Attachment K.

Ice Age Trail Development

The Ice Age Trail in Portage & Waupaca Counties has a final trail area identified to finish the trail. The local chapter and the Ice Age Trail Alliance remain willing and committed to working with the county and private landowners to complete the trail.

Recommendations:

1. Continue working with the local chapter of the Ice Age Trail, DNR, National Park Service to finish the trail in Portage & Waupaca County.
2. Continue prioritizing County acquisition of lands for the Ice Age Trail, particularly where they overlap with other project boundaries and where partnership support is available.

Ice Age Trail (IAT) Community

The spring 2024 Outdoor Recreation survey shows that respondent's most frequent outdoor recreational activities include **walking/hiking** (75%), and **bicycling** (51%). The 2024 survey also showed that the #2 opportunity that should be developed in Portage County is **more bicycling improvements**.

The Ice Age Trail Alliance's Trail Communities program is designed as a symbiotic relationship between the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) and communities near the Trail which enhances awareness of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail (IANST) and improves the quality of life in communities throughout Wisconsin. The Portage/Waupaca Chapter is the local IATA chapter that serves Portage County.

Recommendation 1 (Short-term): Nelsonville, Amherst Junction, and Amherst to consider pursuing official Ice Age Trail Community designation. Other communities may also wish to pursue this designation.

Recommendation 2 (Short-term): Ice Age Trail Communities to cooperate with Portage/Waupaca Chapter of IATA to host volunteer-based events annually (e.g., Mobile Skills Crew events, local chapter hikes, and trail-wide events).

By hosting IAT events, residents will be exposed to what the organization is all about, and encourage more residents to volunteer with the Portage/Waupaca Chapter of the Ice Age Trail to help complete the IAT and enjoy what currently exists.

Recommendation 3 (Short-term): Ice Age Trail Communities to encourage businesses and the whole community to promote the Ice Age Trail.

Maybe local restaurants would have a special breakfast, lunch, or dinner that has an Ice Age Trail theme. **Maybe** a local beer, coffee, or dessert is named for an ice age feature. **Maybe** Ice Age Trail maps and brochures are part of tourism literature racks and chamber websites. **Maybe** local schools create outings or build information related to the Wisconsin Glaciation into their lesson plans.

Statewide County Campground Reservation System

Portage County has a successful online campground reservation system. One way to possibly increase the occupancy rate of existing county campsites is to partner with other counties to create an online website for all county campsites statewide. DNR has moved to a single website for state campsite reservation years ago.

Key benefits of a statewide reservation system include:

- Easily find available campsites near a chosen campground that is full during the user's specified reservation times.
- Conveniently find available campsites by type (e.g., RV, tent, and water access) in a chosen area. Primitive camping could be identified online, with a user needing to contact a county to verify that a particular area is open.

Recommendation: Consider working with other counties to establish a singular online portal for reserving county administered campsites statewide.

County Park Wayfinding

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

Wayfinding to a site

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

Wayfinding within a site

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

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

Recommendations:

1. Continue adding county park directional signs on state and county highways and local roads.
2. Consider adding county boat launch signs, when not inside a park, on state and county highways and local roads.
3. Consider standardizing county park entrance signs.
4. As necessary, review and update maps of facilities within each park that has a map.
5. When multiple types of the same facility exist in the same park, then consider physically labeling each lodge, shelter, and picnic area with its name on the exterior of the building or on a freestanding sign.



Source: Google Street View

Sample highway directional sign



Source: Google Street View

Sample highway sign at driveway



Source: Breanna Moore at CWES

Sample lodge sign (Hemlock).

Land Conservation Program

Portage County created an Open Space Plan in 2000 to identify, preserve, and in some cases purchase environmentally significant lands if desired. In 2005, the DNR created the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report, 2006-2056 to inventory the special places that will be critical to meet future conservation and outdoor recreation needs for the next fifty years. Both of these plans are summarized on pages 2-6.

In 2004, the Portage County Land Preservation Fund Committee to identify and protect open spaces and outstanding natural, cultural, historic and/or agricultural areas in Portage County. Also in 2004, the Land Legacy Fund was established within the Community Foundation of Portage County.

Recommendations:

1. Consider having an educational meeting once every 5-years regarding the Portage County Open Space Plan 2000 and the related programs that could implement it (e.g., Portage County Land Preservation Fund Committee, Land Legacy Fund of Portage County, and DNR's Forest Legacy Program).
2. Consider how the Land Conservation Fund and DNR's Forest Legacy Program could assist the County with possible acquisition of lands or acquisition of development rights to expand existing facilities or to conserve those spaces identified: 1) by staff for existing facilities, 2) in the Portage County Open Space Plan, or 3) in the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report.

7.2 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2025-2029

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

Staff from the Portage County Parks Department projected what recreational needs face each County facility and the capital improvements needed to improve the facility. Due to budget constraints, the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities has priority over new development.

5-Year Capital Improvement Tables below provide a general list of items, their cost, and approximate time frame for completion at each County maintained outdoor recreation facility.		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Item to build or remodel in a park or forest area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High (1-3 years) ○ Medium (3-5 years) ○ Low (5+ years) 	An estimate made with 2023 prices.

OUTLINE of Capital Improvement Tables on the following pages:

County Parks

- All county parks are listed alphabetically.

Recreation Areas & Special Use Areas

- All county recreation areas are listed here.
- Dewey Marsh Recreation Area & Shooting Range is listed here.
- Portage County Fairgrounds is listed here.

Boat Launches

- All county boat launches are listed alphabetically.
- All waysides are listed here.

Trails

- All county maintained trails are listed.

Preserves

- All county preserves are listed alphabetically.

County Parks

Al Tech Park

This 2.9-acre park is located along the west bank of the Wisconsin River on West River Drive, one mile south of Stevens Point in the Town of Linwood. The major usage for this park are canoe access, fishing and picnicking.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This small wayside by the Wisconsin River is used primarily for fishing and a canoe/kayak portage. The area could benefit from chip sealing of the parking area and pruning of brush to make fishing and kayaking more enjoyable.

Al Tech Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Chip seal parking area	Low	10,000

Carrie Frost Park

This 7-acre park is located on County Road BB in the Town of Almond, and serves the Almond/Bancroft area. A school forest is located adjacent. The major usage for this park are picnicking and snowmobile shelter. No Improvements at this time.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Primarily used as wayside and stop over for snowmobilers, Carrie Frost has a small parking area and shelter for snowmobilers. The park gets mowed regularly and we repair the parking area when needed.

Carrie Frost Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
None		

Cate Park

This 8.7-acre park is located on County Road A in the Town of Amherst, ½ mile north of the Village of Amherst. This site is adjacent to the Amherst Mill Pond. Managed as a picnic area, canoe/kayak launch and trailhead for the Tomorrow River State Trail. Installation of a vault toilet and well would service the trail and park users.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Cate Park is a parking area/trailhead for the Tomorrow River State Trail. The trail could benefit from a vault toilet and possibly a well for drinking water. An improved kayak launch is something that has been talked about but would need further investigation and information for location.

Cate Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Install vault toilet	Low	\$20,000
Install new well	Low	\$20,000
Total estimated cost		\$40,000

Collins Park

This 53.08-acre park is located on Collins Lake in the Town of Alban. This park offers swimming, picnicking, fishing and camping. 28 Campground pads, boat ramp, beach, lodge, and playgrounds.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Collins Park is a quiet campground that could benefit from an upgraded beach swimming area including new playground equipment. The boat landing has seen some wear and could use some work to make it more accessible for fishermen and boaters.

Collins Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Improve boat landing	Low	\$2,000
Improve beach swimming area	Medium	\$5,000
New playground equipment	High	\$40,000
Total estimated cost		\$47,000

Consolidated Park

This 23-acre park is located along the west bank of the Wisconsin River on West River Drive, 2 miles south of Stevens Point in the Town of Linwood. The park has boat ramp, picnic area and fishing areas

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Consolidated Park has a boat ramp and several fishing and picnic areas on the Wisconsin River.

Consolidated Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
None		

DuBay Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 84.06-acre park is located on 6,700-acre Lake DuBay, a flowage of the Wisconsin River. Lake DuBay is the largest body of water in the Central Wisconsin area. Most of the flowage lies within Marathon County. More than half of the park is undeveloped, natural area. Lake Dubay needs more parking for the boat traffic so that it doesn't take away from the day use at the beach. New Playground is needed as the current stuff is outdated and getting worn.

DuBay Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Expand parking lot	Low	\$50,000
Improve crosswalk visibility on CTH E (See Attachment K)	Medium	\$2,000
New playground equipment	High	\$40,000
Total estimated cost		\$92,000

Galecke Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 33.2-acre park is located on the east bank of the Wisconsin River in the Town of Plover, on River Road 1 ½ miles west of the Village of Plover. Managed mostly as a boating/fishing and picnic area. The Vault toilet needs some new paint, roof and doors that would help keep the area clean. We have resurfaced the parking lot over the years and it again could use some more granite and grading.

Galecke Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Vault toilet restoration	Medium	\$5,000
Parking lot resurfacing	Low	\$10,000
Total estimated cost		\$15,000

Jordan Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 404.64-acre park is located on Jordan Pond, a flowage of the Plover River, at the intersection of STH 66 and County Road Y in the Town of Hull. The park lies on the edge of the Stevens Point urban area and is experiencing heavy use. Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach, picnic area, nature center, nature trails, historic site, administrative office, workshop, and hydroelectric plant. Capitalize upon the Plover River corridor connecting Jordan and Iverson Parks and recognize the potential for linear park uses such as bicycling, cross-country skiing, canoeing, and hiking/nature study. A campground expansion has been talked about on the west side of the park and would serve the greater Stevens Point area. A new vault toilet was installed at South Jordan with another vault toilet needing to go in by the canoe sites in the future.

Jordan Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Expand campground	Low	\$750,000
Improve crosswalk visibility on CTH Y (See Attachment K)	Medium	\$1,000
Replace vault toilet by canoe sites	Medium	\$28,000
Granite resurfacing of roads and parking areas	Medium	\$15,000
Total estimated cost		\$794,000

Lake Emily Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 177.7-acre park is located on Lake Emily in the Town of Amherst. Lake Emily is the location of historical Native American Burial Mounds. Managed as a campground, boat launching/fishing area, beach, picnic grounds, hiking area, and historical site. The fluctuating lake levels have made access to the beach difficult. An improved road or path would be needed if the water recedes. The Retaining wall for the beach has been underwater for some time and will need some repair as well. The boat launch has seen some maintenance recently, but with high water a new access could be investigated. Campground expansion to the west has been talked about, but a need would have to be there.

Lake Emily Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Improve boat launch	Low	\$20,000
Improve access to beach	Low	\$10,000
Campground expansion	Low	\$750,000
Total estimated cost		\$780,000

Lake Helen Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 10.6-acre park is located on Lake Helen in the Town of Alban. Lake Helen is the largest lake in northeastern Portage County. Managed as boating/fishing and picnic/beach area. A new playground was added recently along with new siding of the lodge. The parking area could use some granite and rolling.

Lake Helen Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Parking lot resurface	Low	\$2,000

Peterson Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 9-acre park is located on Tree Lake in the Town of Alban. Managed as a boating/fishing area, beach picnic area, playground and open shelter. Upgrading playground equipment and improve the boat launch would improve the parks aesthetics and accessibility.

Peterson Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Repair and improve boat launch	Medium	\$3,000
Replace playground equipment	Low	\$20,000
Total estimated cost		\$23,000

Standing Rocks Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 551.1 acre park is located in the town of Stockton. Portions of the park are maintained in a natural state while others have been developed into an all-season recreation area. A new multi purpose lodge, lighted ski trails, event parking, single track mountain bike trails and paved parking lots have enhanced the park and increased the users of the park. Invasive Species and ski trail repairs are the main items that need to be addressed in the future.

Standing Rocks Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Invasive species control	Medium	\$10,000
Ski trail repairs	Medium	\$5,000
Total estimated cost		\$15,000

Sunset Lake Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Sunset Lake Park is a 36.2 acre park and beach. Sunset Lake is heavily used by beach goers, fisherman and kayak and canoeist. The park could use new Vault Toilets and upgrades to the boat launch area.

Sunset Lake Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Boat launch repairs	Medium	\$5,000
Vault toilet replacement	Medium	\$100,000
Total estimated cost		\$105,000

Wolf Lake Park

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 112.77 acre property is used for public hunting, fishing and has a great beach for day use. With fluctuating water levels we moved the boat launch to make launching a boat more accessible and we continue to work on the beach to make it more user friendly. With more users the parking area could use some material.

Wolf Lake Park 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Parking lot repairs	Low	\$5,000
Total estimated cost		\$5,000

Recreation Areas & Special Use Areas

Becker Lake Recreation Area

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 40-acre recreation area in the town of Sharon is managed as a natural area and public hunting grounds.

Becker Lake Recreation Area 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
None		

Dewey Marsh Recreation Area & Shooting Range

This 319.5-acre wildlife preserve is a portion of the larger Dewey Marsh Wildlife area (4,900 acres) owned and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. This wildlife area is a forest/wetland area and represents a major public open space area of the County. Game species include whitetail deer, grouse, rabbit and others. Included within this area is the County's "Dewey Shooting Range", located on Willow Springs Drive in the Town of Dewey, five miles north of Stevens Point. This shooting range and recreation area serves Central Wisconsin.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Dewey Marsh Recreation area has seen several improvements in the past few years including lights and a new pistol/handgun range. Lead reclamation has been talked about a future goal and project as well as lengthening the 200-yard range. With the land all around the range's wetland any expansion of the Dewey Marsh range would be difficult to do. Road and Parking Maintenance is a need and something that could be done to improve access.

Table 10 Dewey Marsh Recreation Area & Shooting Range 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Lead reclamation	Medium	\$40,000
Parking and road improvement	Low	\$5,000
Trap range	Low	\$30,000
Total estimated cost		\$75,000

Wisconsin River Recreation Area

Portage County Staff Assessment:

The Wisconsin River Recreation area is an 89.2 acre area typically used by fishermen and outdoor/nature enthusiast. The biggest need for the area is better fishing access and parking lot repairs.

Wisconsin River Recreation Area 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Parking lot repairs	Low	\$2,000

Steinhaugen Recreational Area

Steinhaugen is a 280-acre property of diverse high quality natural area within the Plover River and North Star Creek watershed. The area is maintained for green space, silent sports and as a public hunting area. The major activities are hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on ungroomed trails.

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Steinhaugen Recreation Area is our newest acquisition, and we recently completed the removal of the outbuildings, future plans including new trailhead parking, signage, trail repair, open shelter and vault toilet installations.

Steinhaugen Recreational Area 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Trailhead parking area	Medium	\$50,000
Vault toilet construction	Medium	\$60,000
Open shelter	Low	\$40,000
Total estimated cost		\$150,000

Boat Launches

Lake Meyers Boat Launch (Town of Sharon)

Portage County Staff Assessment:

The Meyers Lake Boat launch is located on Meyers Lake Rd. This boat launch consists of a gravel/grass access drive and launch with minimal parking. Mostly used by kayakers and canoers for fishing, hunting and nature observations.

Lake Meyers Boat Launch 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Mow and maintain access	Low	\$500

Plover River Wayside

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 0.3 acre park wayside is located on County Highway K and is managed for canoe and kayak access.

Table 9 Plover River Wayside 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
None		

Rinehart Lake Boat Launch (Town of New Hope)

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 1.5 acres park is located in the Town of New Hope and is managed for boating and fishing access. Additional Gravel and parking could possibly be expanded on.

Rinehart Lake Boat Launch 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Grade/gravel parking area	Low	\$500

Stedman Wayside

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 2.85 acre park and wayside in the Town of Amherst is managed for fishing access and a picnicking area. The area could benefit by improved fishing access and parking.

Table 9 Stedman Wayside 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Improve parking area	Low	\$2,000
Improve fishing access and picnic area	Low	\$2,000
Total estimated cost		\$4,000

Tomorrow River Wayside

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 3.07 acre park is located in the Town of New Hope and is managed as a fishing access area. Transfer of ownership is a goal for this park and the WIDNR seems interested in making that happen.

Table 9		
Tomorrow River Wayside 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Transfer ownership to the WDNR	Medium	

Trails

Green Circle State Trail

Portage County Staff Assessment:

The Green Circle Trail is a nationally recognized recreational corridor that encircles the Stevens Point Urban area. The trail is mostly granite with a few blacktop areas which help keep it a natural and beautiful trail. Repairing and replacing The Moses Creek and River Pines board walks needs to be explored in the near future. The Granite trail surface continues to degrade and sections should be resurfaced on a yearly rotation.

Green Circle State Trail 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Resurface rough and degraded sections of the bike trail	Medium	\$100,000
Repair and replace board walks	Medium	\$200,000
Total estimated cost		\$300,000

Tomorrow River State Trail

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This is a 14 mile long limestone walking & biking trail that connects Plover to Scandinavia in Waupaca County. Snowmobiles are able to use the trail in winter. There is a separate off-grade horse trail that parallels the Tomorrow River State Trail segment from Plover to the Portage/Waupaca County Line. Portions of the trail should be resurfaced along with moving the horse trail from off grade to the side of the limestone trail.

Tomorrow River State Trail 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Resurface rough or overgrown areas	Medium	\$100,000
Move the horse trail to the side of the limestone trail	Medium	\$2,000
Improve parking areas	Medium	\$15,000
Total estimated cost		\$117,000

Portage County Snowmobile Trail System

Portage County Staff Assessment:

The snowmobile trail system administered by the Portage County Parks Department consists of approximately 333.2 miles of trail throughout the county. The trails are maintained through agreements with nine snowmobile clubs. Funding for the trails is provided by WDNR grants and club contributions.

Portage County Snowmobile Trail System 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Bridge repair and replacement	Medium	\$100,000*
Trail reroute	Medium	\$100,000*
Total estimated cost		\$ 200,000

*Mainly grant funded

Preserves

Lake Jacqueline Preserve

Portage County Staff Assessment:

Lake Jacqueline Preserve is 23.19 acres in the Town of Sharon and is managed as green space to help protect the flora and water quality of the lake

Table 10 Lake Jacqueline Preserve 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
None		

Mill Creek Preserve

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 122.25 acre preserve is located on the Mill Creek in the Town of Carson. It is managed as a public hunting area and preserve/protection of the Mill Creek watershed. Several trees were planted in the past and are growing nicely. The parking area could use resurfacing and rolling.

Table 10 Mill Creek Preserve 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Parking lot improvements	Low	\$5,000

Rocky Run Preserve

Portage County Staff Assessment:

This 83.66 acre preserve is located on Rocky Run road and is managed as a green space and public hunting area. There is no parking except on the road and finding a location to put in a parking area could take work.

Table 10 Rocky Run Preserve 5-Year Capital Improvements		
Improvement	Priority	Estimated Cost
Parking improvement	Low	\$10,000

7.3 Local Government Capital Improvements, 2025-2029

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

Improvements that are projected to occur from 2025-2029

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

City of Stevens Point

Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

The City of Stevens Point has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits. Refer to **Map 4** in the County ORP for a listing of recreational facilities in Stevens Point.

Village of Plover

Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

The Village of Plover has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the village limits. Refer to **Map 4** in the County ORP for a listing of recreational facilities in Plover.

Village of Whiting

Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 4** for a listing of recreational facilities in Whiting.

McDill Pond Access

- Traction improvements to the concrete boat landing to increase safety and ease of access for visitors wishing to launch at the site.

Lower Whiting Park

- Improvements to the playground equipment, bathroom facilities and trash cans to assist with keeping the site tidy for visitors.

Upper Whiting Park

- Improvements to walking trails and wooden walking bridge located in the lower portion of the park on the north side.

Village of Park Ridge Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 4** for a listing of recreational facilities in Park Ridge.

Village of Almond Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 7** for a listing of recreational facilities in Almond.

Main Street Open Space – Develop 3 downtown lots into a small park with a playground, path, park benches, and lighting.

Village of Amherst Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 6** for a listing of recreational facilities in Amherst.

Village of Amherst Junction Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 6** for a listing of recreational facilities in Amherst Junction.

Nelson Park – Improvements to the playground equipment, bathroom facilities, and trails.

Village of Junction City Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 8** for a listing of recreational facilities in Junction City.

Village of Nelsonville Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 6** for a listing of recreational facilities in Nelsonville.

Village of Rosholt Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 9** for a listing of recreational facilities in Rosholt.

Town of Alban
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Alban.

Town of Almond
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Almond.

Town of Amherst
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Amherst.

Improve public access to Lake Emily off of Edgewater Driver.

Town of Belmont
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Belmont.

Town of Buena Vista
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Buena Vista.

Town of Carson
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Carson.

Town of Dewey
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Dewey.

Town of Eau Pleine Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Eau Pleine.

Town of Grant Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Grant.

1. Widening of roads next to trout streams to accommodate a single off-road parking spot.
2. At WRYSA ball fields, build a pavilion (low priority as there are other structures present).
3. Grant Elementary School - Erect educational signage explaining the native prairie in the storm water infiltration basin. Thin some of the pioneer plant species around the burr oaks, to restore a “micro” oak savanna.
4. 5-acre parcel at 9011 County Road WW that the Town owns – construct a roofed picnic pavilion with restrooms. Plant a native prairie or butterfly garden.
5. 40-acre parcel at 8840 Griffith Ave. Five-acre parcel is in use for the town transfer station. Inquiries have been made about creating a horse or mountain bike trail on the remaining acreage [Note: surface cannot be excavated due to former use]; however, this may introduce conflict. Perhaps a better idea is to have students from Grant Elementary School create a walking nature trail.
At a minimum, buckthorn, an invasive shrub should be controlled. The site is commonly used for hunting outside of the transfer station’s hours of operation. The forested sections could be managed for old growth. It is noteworthy that a rare butternut tree survives on this parcel and reproduction could be possible if the invasives are removed.
5. Buena Vista Wildlife Area - Improve “low maintenance” roads by installing cul-du-sacs for parking on 130th (south of CTH W), and Quarry Road (east of CTH F) that lie within the Buena Vista Wildlife Area. Collaborate with WDNR. Consider use of Town Park Fund to supplement county or state funding.

Town of Hull Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Hull.

Town of Lanark
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Lanark.

Town of Linwood
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Linwood.

Town of New Hope
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of New Hope.

Town of Pine Grove
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Pine Grove.

Bancroft Ball Park (Town Park) – create a sand volleyball court, build an open air picnic shelter, install new playground equipment, build a combined tennis/basketball court, build horseshoe pits, build shuffleboard, construct walking trail around park, and erect a railroad historical marker

Town of Plover
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Plover.

Town of Sharon
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Sharon.

Town of Stockton
Proposed Projects for 2025-2029

Refer to **Map 5** for a listing of recreational facilities in the Town of Stockton.

Town of Stockton Park – Upgrade the volleyball court to include sand and outline a full court, possible creation of a basketball court, construct a bigger parking lot, and improve landscaping.

Chapter 8:

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

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

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

Adopt-A-Park Program

A program which encourages local groups 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.

Capital Improvements

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

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

Community Beautification

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

Historic Sites

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

Leases

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

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

Lifetime Activities

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

Monetary Aid Programs

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

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program is a federal program administered by WDNR to encourage the creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Since passage of the Great American Outdoors Act of 2020, LWCF is permanently and fully funded at \$900 million annually, nationwide. What this means in Wisconsin is that more park projects that include splash pads, playgrounds, and skateparks are now more easily fundable up to 50%.

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

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

For the remaining program requirements, or additional information contact:

Community Service Specialist
DNR's West Central Region
Eau Claire, WI

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

Municipal & School District Cooperation

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

Park Dedication

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

landowners should also be encouraged to dedicate land to their communities for recreational uses. Numerous small town memorial parks have been acquired through the generosity of local citizens. If citizens are made aware of community needs, this form of private action may continue to enrich the public resources of small communities.

Program Costs

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

Senior Citizen Involvement

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

Service Group Involvement

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

Shoreland Zoning

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

Specialized Facilities

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

Public Access via Subdivision Regulations (Platting Lands)

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

Use of Easements

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

Winter Activities

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

Appendix A

Park Design and Location Criteria

From:

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023

Park Design and Location Criteria

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

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

Mini Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objectives:

0.5 to 1.5 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

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

5. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

Neighborhood Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objectives:

5 to 25 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives:

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

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

8. Space, Design and Service Area:

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

Community Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objectives:

Usually more than 25 acres.

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives

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

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

Appropriate program elements include:

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

8) Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

Special Use Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objective:

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

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives:

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

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

School Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

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

2. Size Objective

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

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives:

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

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

County Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

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

2. Size Objectives:

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

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives:

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

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

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

State Forest

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objectives:

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

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

Areas with large blocks of land.

5. Program Objectives:

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

Current Level of Supply:

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

6. Orientation:

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

7. Function:

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

8. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

State Park

1. Definition Summary:

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

2. Size Objectives:

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

3. Service Area Objectives:

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

4. Location Objectives:

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

5. Program Objectives:

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

Current Level of Supply:

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

5. Orientation:

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

6. Function:

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

7. Space, Design, and Service Area:

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

Appendix B

Facility Development Standards

From: National Recreation and Park Association

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

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

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS *(continued)*

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

Source: National Recreation and Park Association

Appendix C

Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Funding Programs

Compiled by: NCWRPC

Wisconsin DNR Administered Programs

Community Services Specialist
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
2984 Shawano Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54313

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

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

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

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

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

Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR) [Stewardship]

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

ATV/UTV Enhancement

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

ATV Patrols

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

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

ATV/UTV Trails

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

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

Boat Enforcement Patrol

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

Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program

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

Tier 1 - State

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

Tier 2 - National

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

Natural Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

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

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

Habitat Areas [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

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

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

Stream Bank protection [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

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

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

State trails [Stewardship – Only available to nonprofits]

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

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

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

Motorized Stewardship Grants [Stewardship]

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

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

Match Requirement: 20 percent

Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) Grants

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

Recreational Boating Facilities Grants

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

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

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

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

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

Shooting Range Grant Program

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

Snowmobile Patrols

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

Snowmobile Trail Aids

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

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

Sport Fish Restoration (SFR)

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

Surface Water Grants

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

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

Urban Green Space [Stewardship]

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

Urban Rivers [Stewardship]

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

Wisconsin DOT Administered Programs

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

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

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

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

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

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

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

Local Transportation Enhancements (TE)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

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

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program (BFPF)

[A Transportation Alternatives Program]

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

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

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

Federal Assistance Programs

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

Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) – National Park Service

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix D

SCORP Identified Outdoor Recreation Needs

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

Recreation Opportunities Analysis



WESTERN SANDS REGION



6. WESTERN SANDS REGION

BACKGROUND

LANDSCAPE SETTING

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

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

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

LOCAL ECONOMY

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

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

RECREATION USES AND PARTICIPATION

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

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

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

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

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

- Hunting – big game

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

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

EXISTING RECREATION SUPPLY IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

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

a) Federal

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

b) State

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

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

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

c) County

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

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

d) Other

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

PRIVATE LANDS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

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

a) Forest Legacy program easements

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

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

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

c) Land trusts

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

d) Voluntary Public Access Program

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

e) Snowmobile Trails on Private Lands

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

EXISTING PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

a) Black River State Forest

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

b) Buckhorn State Park

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

c) Lake Wissota State Park

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

d) Rib Mountain State Park

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

e) George W. Mead Wildlife Area

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

f) Elroy-Sparta Trail

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

g) Jackson County Forest

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

h) Marathon County Forest, Nine Mile Unit

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

PUBLIC INPUT ON RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE ROA.

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

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

The department received comments in the following formats:

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

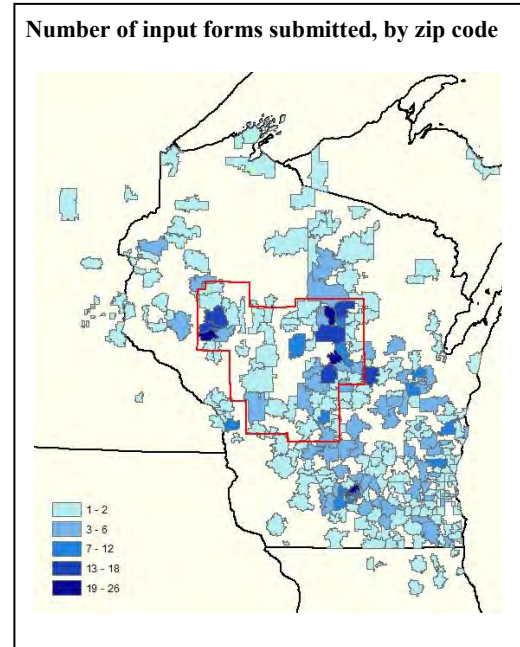
It is important for readers to keep in mind that the public input received through the ROA process is simply information gathered at one point in time, using an open-access technique. It is not a representation of what the “average” resident believes or the range of perspectives that exist.

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

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

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

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



Participation in outdoor recreation

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

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

Bicycling – surfaced trails

Bicycling – mountain biking, single track

Camping – tent

Camping – RV/pop-up

Canoeing/kayaking

Cross-country skiing/ snowshoeing

Fishing – from a boat, canoe or kayak

Hiking, walking, running on trails

Horseback riding

Swimming

Wildlife/bird watching

Properties that people visit

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

Factors important in determining favorite places to visit

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

Additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed

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

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

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

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

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

Department-managed roads and motorized access

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

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

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

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE WISCONSIN SCORP

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

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

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

- equestrian trails
- trails for motorized recreation
- public campsites

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

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

FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE WESTERN SANDS REGION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL RECREATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cooperatively Managed Trails

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

For the Western Sands Region, cooperatively managed trails include:

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

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

WATER RELATED RECREATION

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

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

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

Recreation Activity	
Canoeing or kayaking	<p>Although not every property with open water has formal boat access sites (or access sites on all waterbodies) many of the lakes, rivers, and larger streams on department-managed lands have some opportunities to carry in a canoe or kayak. The following properties may have the potential to add more walk-in trails to access waterbodies with canoes or kayaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black River State Forest Big Rib River Fishery Area Big Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area Little Roche-A-Cri Fishery Area Mc Millan Wildlife Area Mead Wildlife Area North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area Upper Neenah Fishery Area
Fishing - lake fishing from a boat, canoe, or kayak	<p>The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, there are a limited number of lakes in the region and many of those are small kettle lakes. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are few department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access. The following property may have potential to add more improved boat access sites (ramps for trailered boats):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area
Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier	<p>All department lands with lakes are open to shore fishing and as such there are not significant opportunities to expand this opportunity. There are some fishing docks or piers on department lands and there are some opportunities to add new ones, particularly at those properties near cities and villages and with easy road access. The following properties may be able to provide opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chippewa River State Trail North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area

Recreation Activity	
Fishing - stream or river fishing from shore or wading	<p>All department lands with streams or rivers are open to shore fishing and as such there are not opportunities to expand this opportunity at existing properties. There may be opportunities to expand shore fishing opportunities through the acquisition of key parcels or to create disabled accessible fishing areas on the following properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black River State Forest Big Rib River Fishery Area Big Creek Fishery Area Chippewa River State Trail Emmons Creek Fishery Area North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area Plover River Fishery Area Richard A Hemp Fishery Area Sand Creek Fishery Area South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area
Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)	<p>The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. However, the number of large waterbodies in the region that would be able to accommodate motorboating is limited. Department properties connecting to these waterbodies either already have boat accesses or have no feasible way to create more. As such, there are no department properties that would be able to address this recreation activity. Other public land managers may be able to provide additional access.</p>
Swimming in lakes and rivers	<p>All department properties adjacent to public waters allow swimming. Many department properties, especially state parks and forests, have beaches, changing rooms and other amenities to accommodate swimming. The following department properties may be able to either add new opportunities for swimming access or expand existing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black River State Forest North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area

OTHER FORMS OF RECREATION

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

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

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

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

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

SUMMARY OF THE WESTERN SANDS REGION ROA

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

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

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

STATE PARKS, FORESTS AND RECREATION AREAS

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

STATE TRAILS

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

STATE WILDLIFE AND FISHERY AREAS

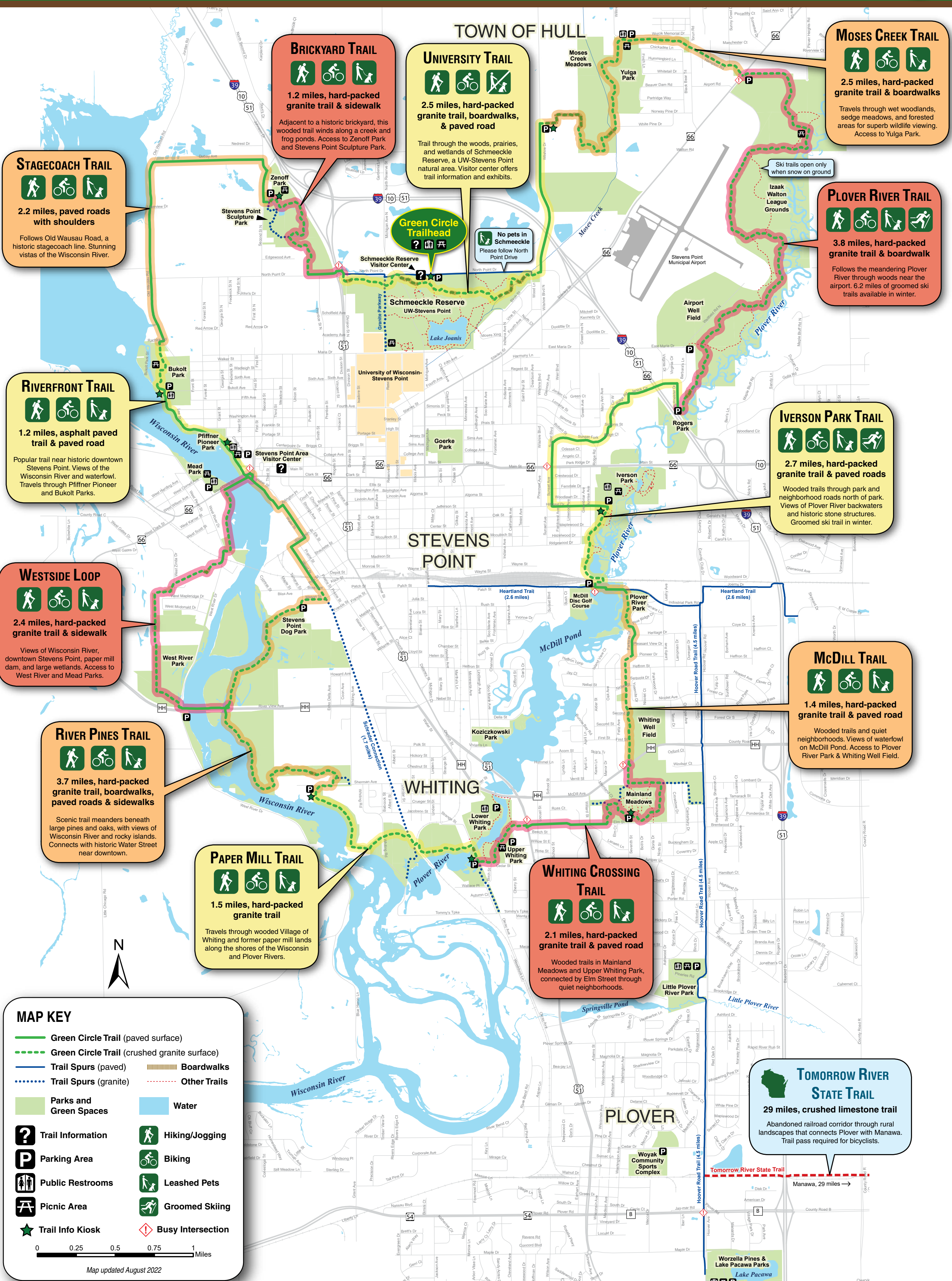
- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- Mountain biking trails that expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Equestrian trails that either connect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

Appendix E

Green Circle State Trail Map

Compiled by:
Green Circle Trail, Inc.

GREEN CIRCLE TRAIL MAP



BRICKYARD TRAIL
 1.2 miles, hard-packed granite trail & sidewalk
 Adjacent to a historic brickyard, this wooded trail winds along a creek and frog ponds. Access to Zenoff Park and Stevens Point Sculpture Park.

UNIVERSITY TRAIL
 2.5 miles, hard-packed granite trail, boardwalks, & paved road
 Trail through the woods, prairies, and wetlands of Schmeckle Reserve, a UW-Stevens Point natural area. Visitor center offers trail information and exhibits.

MOSES CREEK TRAIL
 2.5 miles, hard-packed granite trail & boardwalks
 Travels through wet woodlands, sedge meadows, and forested areas for superb wildlife viewing. Access to Yulga Park.

STAGECOACH TRAIL
 2.2 miles, paved roads with shoulders
 Follows Old Wausau Road, a historic stagecoach line. Stunning vistas of the Wisconsin River.

PLOVER RIVER TRAIL
 3.8 miles, hard-packed granite trail & boardwalk
 Follows the meandering Plover River through woods near the airport. 6.2 miles of groomed ski trails available in winter.

IVERSON PARK TRAIL
 2.7 miles, hard-packed granite trail & paved roads
 Wooded trails through park and neighborhood roads north of park. Views of Plover River backwaters and historic stone structures. Groomed ski trail in winter.

RIVERFRONT TRAIL
 1.2 miles, asphalt paved trail & paved road
 Popular trail near historic downtown Stevens Point. Views of the Wisconsin River and waterfowl. Travels through Pfiffner Pioneer and Bukolt Parks.

MCDILL TRAIL
 1.4 miles, hard-packed granite trail & paved road
 Wooded trails and quiet neighborhoods. Views of waterfowl on McMill Pond. Access to Plover River Park & Whiting Well Field.

WESTSIDE LOOP
 2.4 miles, hard-packed granite trail & sidewalk
 Views of Wisconsin River, downtown Stevens Point, paper mill dam, and large wetlands. Access to West River and Mead Parks.

RIVER PINES TRAIL
 3.7 miles, hard-packed granite trail, boardwalks, paved roads & sidewalks
 Scenic trail meanders beneath large pines and oaks, with views of Wisconsin River and rocky islands. Connects with historic Water Street near downtown.

PAPER MILL TRAIL
 1.5 miles, hard-packed granite trail
 Travels through wooded Village of Whiting and former paper mill lands along the shores of the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers.

WHITING CROSSING TRAIL
 2.1 miles, hard-packed granite trail & paved road
 Wooded trails in Mainland Meadows and Upper Whiting Park, connected by Elm Street through quiet neighborhoods.

TOMORROW RIVER STATE TRAIL
 29 miles, crushed limestone trail
 Abandoned railroad corridor through rural landscapes that connects Plover with Manawa. Trail pass required for bicyclists.

MAP KEY

- Green Circle Trail (paved surface)
- Green Circle Trail (crushed granite surface)
- Trail Spurs (paved)
- Trail Spurs (granite)
- Parks and Green Spaces
- Water
- Trail Information
- Parking Area
- Public Restrooms
- Picnic Area
- Trail Info Kiosk
- Boardwalks
- Other Trails
- Hiking/Jogging
- Biking
- Leashed Pets
- Groomed Skiing
- Busy Intersection

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles
 Map updated August 2022

Appendix F

Tomorrow River State Trail Map

Compiled by:
Portage County Parks Department

Tomorrow River State Trail

Plover to Manawa: Detail 1



Contacts

Portage County Parks
715-346-1433
parks@co.portage.wi.us

Waupaca County Parks
715-258-258-6243
parks@co.waupaca.wi.us

Amenities	Parking	Interstate	County Boundary
Gas	Parking/Trailhead	US	Incorporated Area
Park	Trail: Finished	State Road	Unincorporated Area
Park With Facilities	Trail: Unfinished	County Road	Local Road
	Trail: Alternate Route		
	Trail: Green Circle		
		Distance: Miles	

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles
- Plover, Through Amherst Junction To Start of Unfinished Section: 11.05 Miles
- Alternate Route Around Unfinished Section: 1.15 Miles
- End of Unfinished Section To Scandinavia: 7.63 Miles
- Scandinavia To Ogdensburg: 5.72 Miles
- Ogdensburg To End of Trail: 5.05 Miles

Trail Usage

The trail is available for hiking, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. Biking and horseback riding require a trail pass for users 16 and older. No unauthorized motorized use is allowed. Contact Parks Departments for trail pass information.



Appendix G

Existing & Proposed Bicycle Facilities Maps



















From:

Portage County Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2014

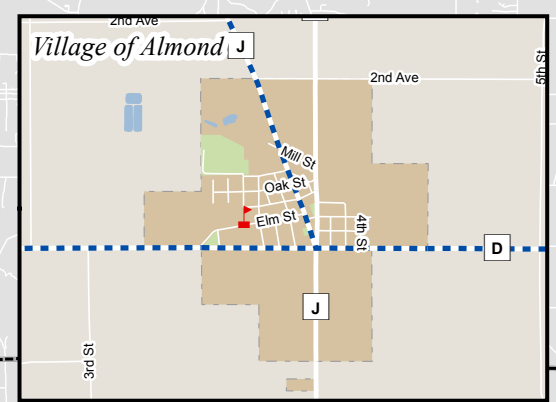
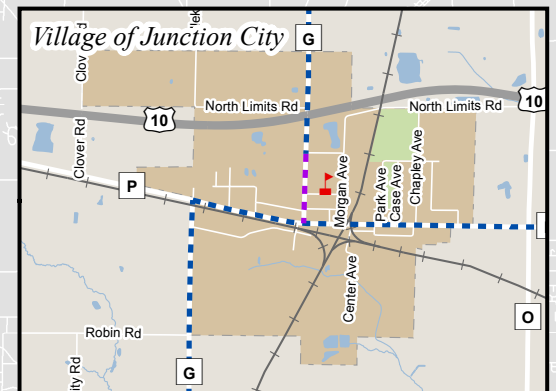
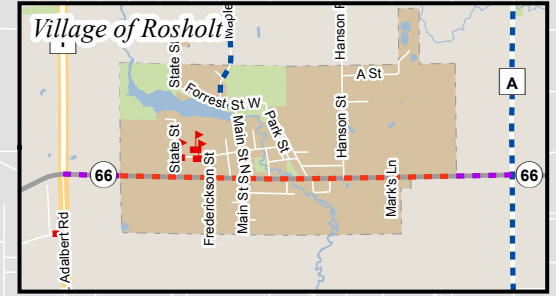
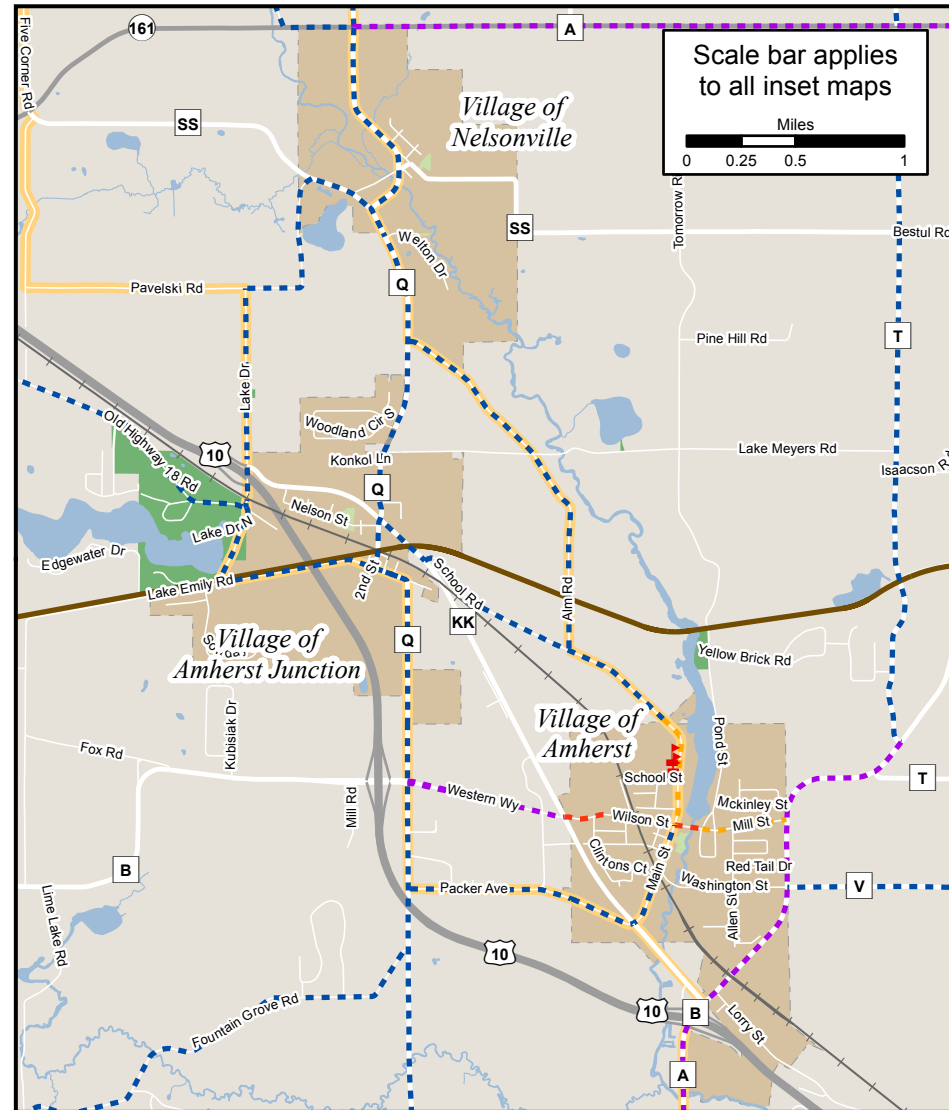
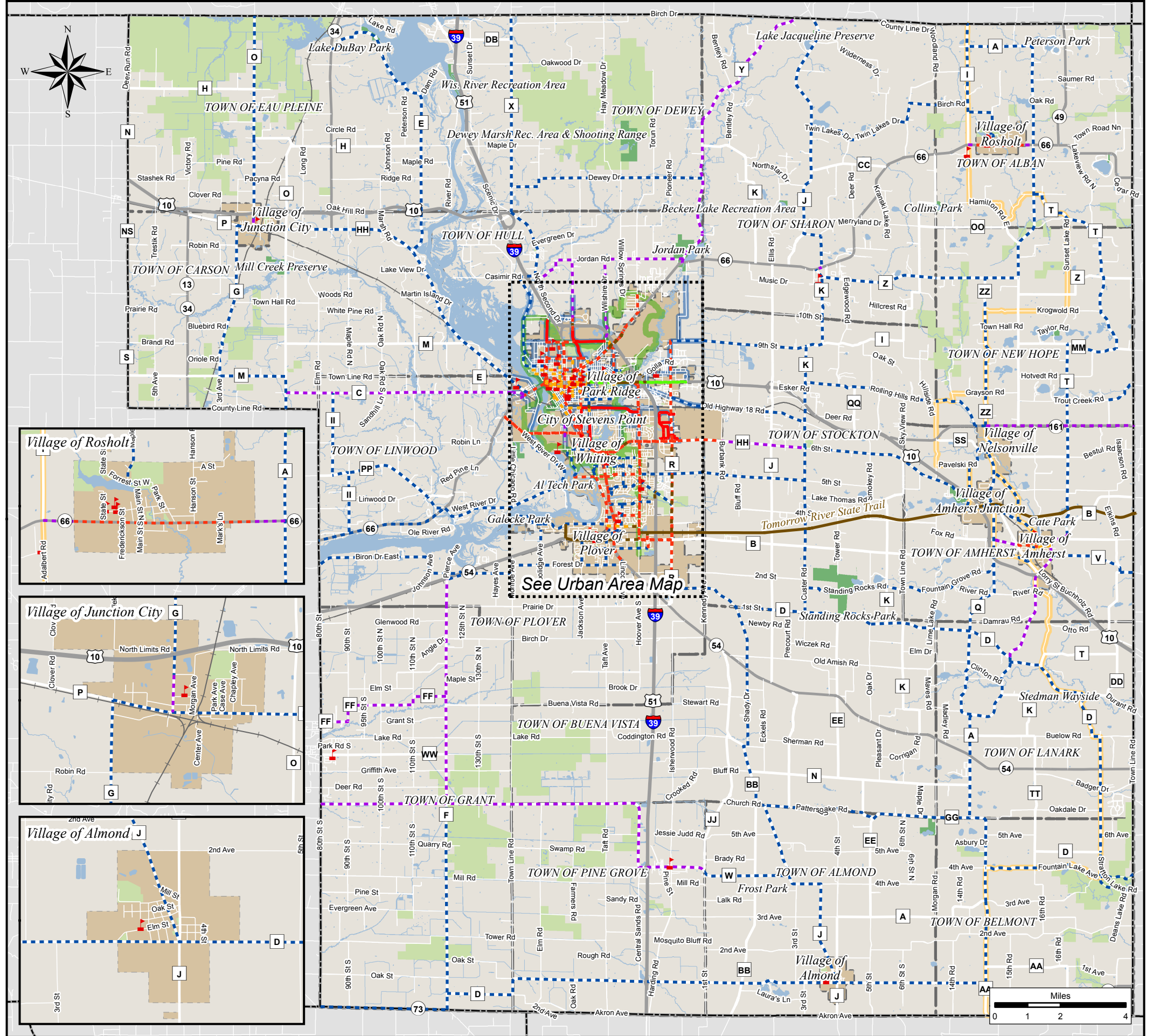
Portage County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Map 13: Countywide Existing & Proposed Bicycle Facilities

Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Municipal Border |  Water |
|  County Park |  School |
|  State or Municipal Park |  Railroad |
| Existing Bicycle Facilities | |
|  Shared-Use Path |  Shared-Use Path |
|  Bike Lane |  Bike Lane |
|  Shared Lane Marking |  Shared Lane Marking |
|  Signed Bike Route |  Bike Route |
|  Green Circle Trail |  Paved Shoulder |
|  Ice Age Bicycle Route |  Future Bike Accommodation |

Map data provided by Portage County and the U.S. Census Bureau. | Plot date: 03/26/2014

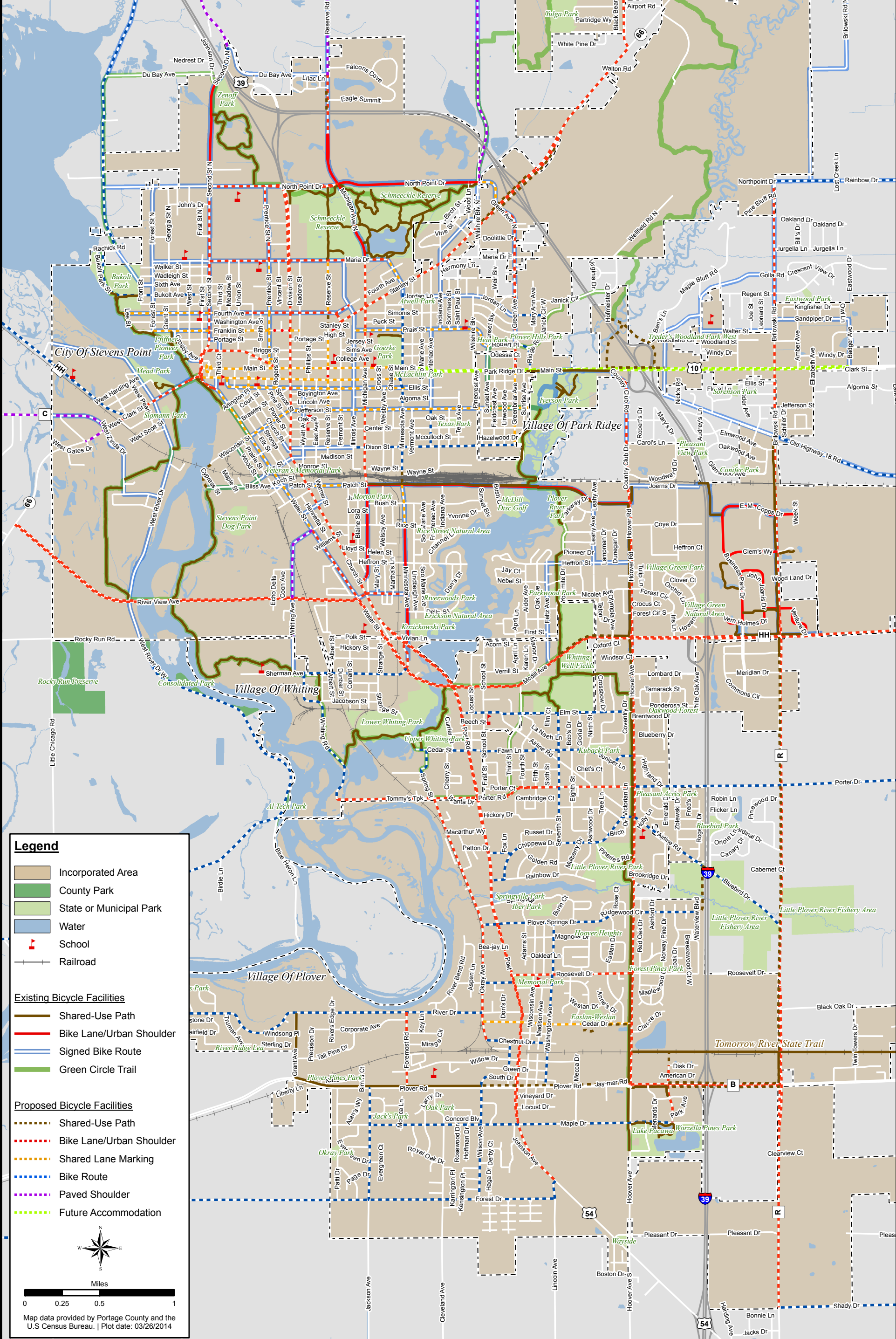


See Urban Area Map

Miles
0 1 2 4

Portage County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Map 14: Urban Area Existing & Planned Bicycle Facilities



Legend

- Incorporated Area
- County Park
- State or Municipal Park
- Water
- School
- Railroad

Existing Bicycle Facilities

- Shared-Use Path
- Bike Lane/Urban Shoulder
- Signed Bike Route
- Green Circle Trail

Proposed Bicycle Facilities

- Shared-Use Path
- Bike Lane/Urban Shoulder
- Shared Lane Marking
- Bike Route
- Paved Shoulder
- Future Accommodation

Map data provided by Portage County and the U.S. Census Bureau. | Plot date: 03/26/2014

Appendix H

Bicycle Friendly Campground Guide

From:
Adventure Cycling Association



Introduction

Campgrounds are well equipped to handle motorized visitors and RVs but may be unfamiliar with the idea of providing specific services and accommodations for people who arrive by bicycle. Adventure Cycling Association's *Guide to Bicycle Camping*² will help campground and park managers identify how bicycle camping can best fit with their existing services and accommodations to effectively serve cycling visitors.

Why Bicycle Camping?

Busy campgrounds are used to turning away motorized visitors who have the flexibility to drive elsewhere, but bicycle travelers don't have that luxury. After a full day of riding, they need to refuel and rest to prepare for the next day of riding, and often only need accommodations for one night.

Providing bicycle camping shows that your campground is committed to:

- **Welcoming cycling visitors** by providing amenities, policies, and services that are specific to their needs.
- **Ensuring that they won't be turned away** and left stranded after a long day of riding, even if the campground is full.
- **Providing a quality experience** for all visitors, no matter what mode they choose to travel by.



A cyclist pays \$5 for an Oregon State Parks hiker/biker site.

Bicycle Camping Basics

How are cycling visitors different?

People who choose to travel by bicycle or on foot are self-powered, which makes getting to their destination part of the fun and the challenge. They are more vulnerable to unplanned factors such as weather, terrain, flat tires, illness, or injury. This can affect when and if they arrive at a campground as planned. The unpredictable nature of bike touring makes it less practical to make reservations in advance.

With no motorized support, visitors arriving by bicycle have limited alternatives if a campground is full, especially if other accommodations are more than a few miles away or there is limited daylight.

Welcoming visitors arriving by bicycle

Campgrounds can welcome bicycle travelers and avoid having to turn them away by taking two simple steps:

- **Providing bicycle campsites.** A bicycle campsite (also called hiker/biker or bike-in site) is a campsite specifically outfitted for people arriving by bicycle and, if applicable, other nonmotorized visitors like hikers and kayakers.
- **Implementing a no-turn-away policy or directive.** A no-turn-away policy or directive² guarantees an emergency camping space for bicycle travelers traveling solo or with a small, noncommercial group who arrive at a full campground without motorized support. A no-turn-away policy guarantees space for bike travelers only when a campground is full, and they otherwise have to occupy regular campsites, which typically aren't outfitted specifically for bicyclists.

Bicycle Campsites: A Small Footprint

| What makes a bicycle campsite?

- **Nonreservable** — These sites should be nonreservable and set aside for bicyclists and other nonmotorized visitors only. Regular first-come, first-served campsites are not a substitute because motorized visitors have an advantage in being able to arrive early.
- **Shared site** — The space should be able to accommodate the peak number of touring cyclists typical for your area so that no cyclist would need to be turned away.
- **Minimal space and resources** — Bicyclists travel lightly and have a small footprint. Bicycle campsites don't require RV-sized parking spaces, hookups for generators, or giant tent spots, which saves on costs and reduces maintenance. A site that could fit one RV camper could fit multiple bicycle campers, particularly because bicycle campers often prefer shared sites.
- **Separate fee** — The fee charged should be a per-person fee based on the level of services provided (typically \$5–10), which is usually less than other RV or tent sites.
- **Bicycle-specific amenities** — The amenities listed below require relatively small investment but improve bicycle travelers' camping experiences immensely. See page 7 for more information about these amenities.

"Hiker/bikers pay per person, making the site revenue on par with other sites when considered on a per-person basis, yet hiker/biker sites are often much less expensive and use far less land than other camping options."

— Oregon State Parks, 2014 Survey Report



A hiker/biker site at Oregon State Parks.



N. LEWIS, SHEPANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

No-Turn-Away Policies: No Visitor Left Stranded

A no-turn-away policy typically allows for:

- **One-night accommodation for cyclists touring without motorized support**
- **Is not guaranteed for large or commercial tour groups if space is limited**
- **A fee consistent with the level of service provided**
- **At minimum a tent space and a place to park a bike**
- **Other amenities can be provided if possible**

A no-turn-away policy is recommended for all campgrounds, but is particularly necessary for campgrounds without bicycle campsites. A bicycle campsite is preferred because it is a shared site that should provide a no-turn-away function by accommodating the peak number of cycling visitors.

All no-turn-away bike camping policies are available to download at adventurecycling.org/noturnaway. For examples of no-turn-away policies, see page 29.

Make it official

Many park campgrounds “unofficially” don’t turn away visitors arriving by bicycle, and it’s common to think that a no-turn-away policy isn’t necessary. However, we have heard from bicycle travelers who have been turned away from both campgrounds with policies and without them, so making an official written policy is critical to ensuring that it is followed consistently.

Why officially adopt a no-turn-away policy?

- It communicates the existence of the policy to the public as well as campground staff and hosts.
- It allows for consistent training and implementation of the policy.
- It can be referenced by bicycle travelers if it is not being implemented consistently.

Nuts and Bolts of Bicycle Camping

There are many practical and logistical considerations for implementing bicycle camping, including what kinds of amenities to provide and how to determine demand and location. These factors can vary, but this information will help you evaluate what will work best for your campground.

Amenities

Bicycle travelers are generally self-sufficient and prepared and need at minimum a place to set up their tent and park their bicycle. However, a few simple amenities can vastly improve their camping experience.

| Bike Parking



Bike racks should provide two points of contact with the bike frame, not the wheel, to support the weight of a loaded bike.

| Bike Repair Stations



Bike repair can include any or all of the elements shown, including the bike stand or clamp, tools, and floor pump.

| Lockers



Lockers are most useful when they provide secure storage for food and valuables.

| Group Picnic Area



At minimum, a covered group picnic area should be provided. If resources allow, some campgrounds provide an enclosed space with a fully equipped kitchen.

| Electrical Outlets



Electrical outlets can be solar-powered and are best located either in a secure place (inside of lockers) or at another central place like the group picnic area.

| Showers



Showers are always welcome at the end of a long day of cycling. They're not essential but are a popular amenity.

Appendix I

Bicycle Campground Signage

From:
NCWRPC

Figure 1 Bike Repair Sign



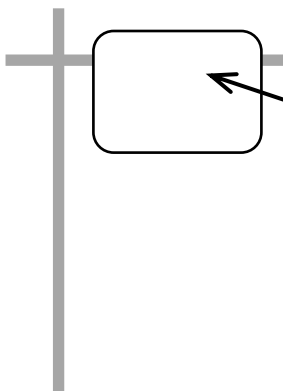
Sign source: Jami Stinson on Pinterest

Figure 2 Sign for State Trail



Camping sign source: MUTCD

Figure 3 Non-Reservable Hiking/Bicycling Sign Example



Non-reservable hike-in or bicycle-in camping on surrounding grass area or in trees between this sign and waterfront.

May lock bike to cyclone fence.

Please spend \$5 per person at a local business.

One night stay only.

Contact Portage County Parks staff for longer reservations.

All campground regulations apply.

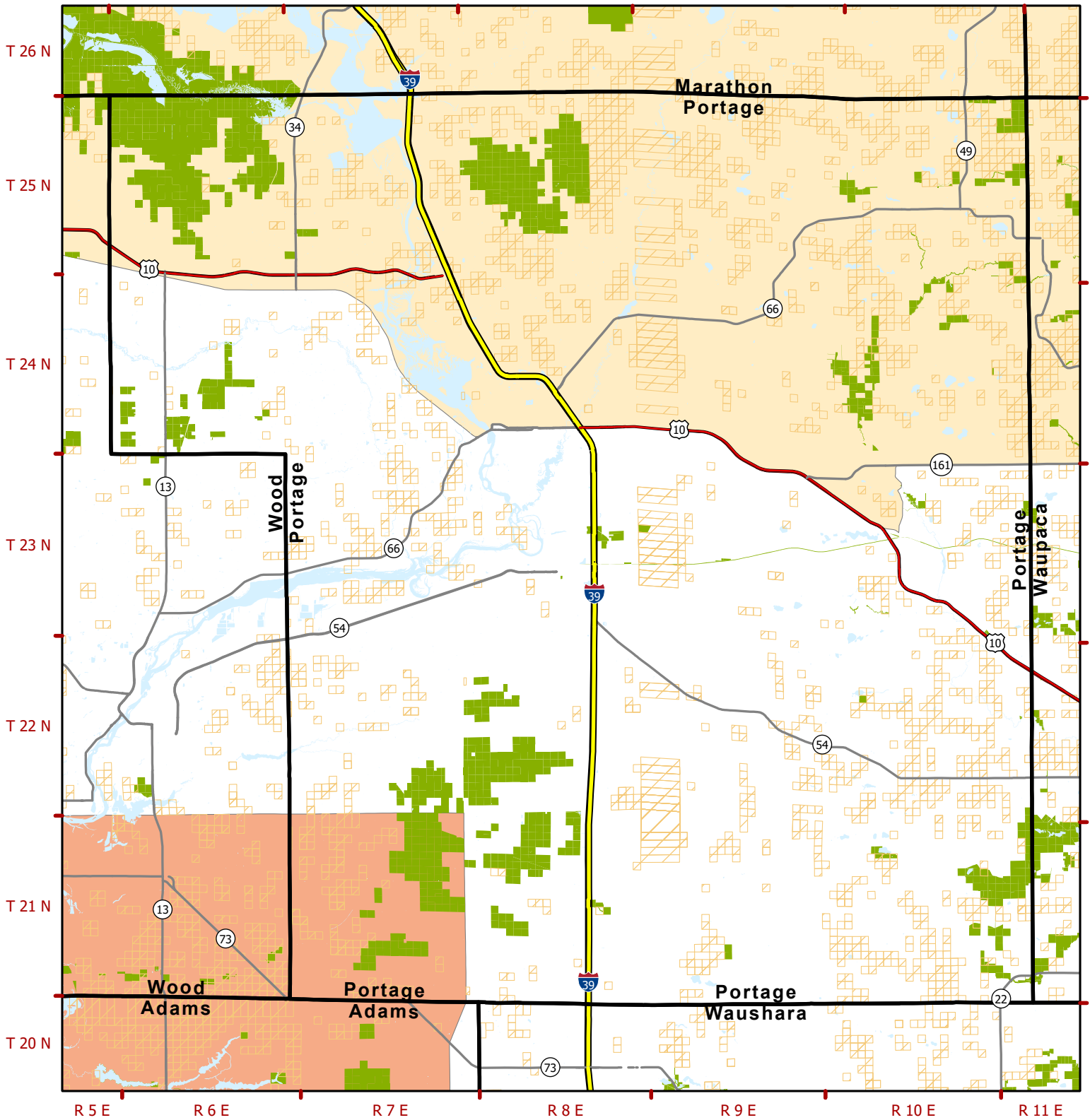
Note: Adjust the sign text to match the park.

Appendix J

Forest Legacy Areas 2024 Portage County

From:
WDNR

Forest Legacy Areas: Portage County



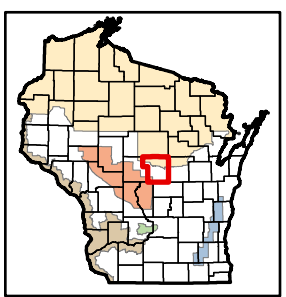
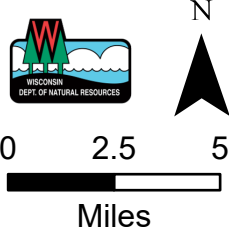
Forest Legacy Areas

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

Forest Legacy Project

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

- Interstate
- US Highway
- State Highway
- County Road



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Appendix K

Potential Highway Pedestrian Crosswalks



From:
NCWRPC

Potential Highway Crosswalks at Parks

Some County parks and school forests have a county highway running through them and have active uses on both sides. Jordan Park, DuBay Park, and Boston School Forest are all split by a county highway.


All public road markings and signs must follow the standards within the federal Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The following recommendations are from the current MUTCD (December 2023).


Recommendation: Provide additional markings and signs at pedestrian crosswalks on county highways per graphic below.

1. Consider posting the summer speed limit in park vicinity as 35 MPH, and then switch it back to the original speed for winter at the same time that the crosswalk bollards are removed from crosswalks. In this park vicinity speed limit area, consider re-painting the white edge line to make 11-foot wide travel lanes.
2. Continue using Pedestrian Ahead () and Pedestrian Crosswalk () signs.



Source: Portage County Parcel Viewer

 = Paint high visibility crosswalk.

 = In-Street Pedestrian Crosswalk sign, at least 10-feet in advance of crosswalk. If not near an intersection, then place sign at least 40-feet in advance of crosswalk.

 = Paint “shark teeth” Yield line, and place **delineator with base** () at same distance in advance of crosswalk as In-Street Pedestrian Crosswalk sign is placed.

Potential Highway Crosswalks at Parks

Graphic showing potential street view

