

# 2015 Waupaca County 5-Year Outdoor Recreation Plan



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**1.a Acknowledgments**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The preparation of the Waupaca County Outdoor Recreation Plan was accomplished with the assistance of the Waupaca County Board, the Waupaca County Parks and Recreation Committee, and the Waupaca County Parks and Recreation Division.

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Andrea Moore, Program Assistant

RESOLUTION NO. 22 (2014-2015)

WAUPACA COUNTY PARK & RECREATION 5 YEAR PLAN

WHEREAS, For more than 40 years the Waupaca County Outdoor Recreation Plan in its various editions since 1971 have provided direction to the County in acquiring, developing, and maintaining the park system we now enjoy; and

WHEREAS, The Waupaca County Parks and Recreation Committee has completed an update of this plan to cover the period from 2015 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, The plan must be updated every five years in order to be eligible to apply for a variety of grants including land acquisition and park development funding through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant program; and

WHEREAS, The planning process included a public hearing held November 12, 2014; and

WHEREAS, The plan was posted on waupacacountyparks.com and Facebook for comment; and

WHEREAS, Public input has been incorporated where feasible and written comments are included in an appendix to the plan; and

WHEREAS, This plan has been reviewed by "several agencies" to ensure completeness; and

WHEREAS, This plan is not a land use plan or created for the purpose of guiding future zoning decisions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Waupaca County Board of Supervisors approves and adopts the 2015-20 Waupaca County Outdoor Recreation Plan.

RECOMMENDED FOR INTRODUCTION BY:

WAUPACA COUNTY  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Passed this 20<sup>th</sup> day of  
January, 2015  
23 Ayes 0 Nays

*Joe Mc Clore*  
*Donald Peterson*  
*Lee Mueh*  
*Gene Sprensen*  
*Ilona Gahert*

ATTEST:

*Mary A Robbins*  
Mary A. Robbins  
Waupaca County Clerk

LEGISLATIVE & JUDICIAL, ETHICS,  
SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

*Dennis Kussmann*  
*Mary Kay Perkowski*  
*Dora Gahert*

## **1.c About Environmental Resource Management Department**

### **Waupaca County Department of Environmental Resource Management**

In 2012 a reorganization of several departments created the Department of Environmental Resource Management by merging Waupaca County Parks, Solid Waste and Recycling, and the Land and Water Conservation Departments. The Department consists of three divisions:

#### **Land and Water Conservation Division**

The Land and Water Conservation Division provides conservation implementation services to private landowners and land users in order to protect and enhance Waupaca County soil and water resources. The Division coordinates several Federal, State, and County natural resource programs with the goal of reducing sources of non-point pollution.

#### **Solid Waste and Recycling Division**

The Solid Waste and Recycling Division is responsible for planning and implementing a County-wide management system for both solid and hazardous wastes generated within the County in an economically and environmentally sound manner. The Division oversees a solid waste transfer facility and a recyclables processing facility and is a partner in the collection systems for recyclables countywide. The Division also operates a household hazardous waste collection center May through October.

#### **Parks and Recreation Division**

The Parks Division operates and maintains 40 sites ranging from small water accesses to large multi-use parks to the County Fairgrounds with many buildings and other infrastructure. Several of these sites are multi-use trails including the Tomorrow River State Trail. There are 7 boat launches that fees are charged on and enforced. The Division manages the Snowmobile and Winter ATV trail programs for the County working with the Waupaca County Snowmobile Association to provide over 400 miles of safe and enjoyable trails when the conditions are right.

## 2. Introduction and Plan Purpose

Since the last adopted Outdoor Recreation plan, many changes have taken place. These were mostly upgrades to existing recreational opportunities, but there have been acquisitions and new services provided as well. Some of the changes that have happened include:

- Keller Park land acquisition – In 2007 the county purchased property to the NE and SW of the lake to expand the park to approximately 80 acres.
- Park Maintenance Shop Built in 2003
- Keller Restroom replaced in 2013
- Keller Playground equipment installed in 2008
- Gills Landing restroom replaced in 2006
- Shaw’s Landing launch replaced in 2006 with a new floating dock
- Oakwood Playground equipment installed in 2008
- Little Wolf Boat Launch replaced in 2011-2012 with a new floating dock
- Royalton play equipment replaced in 2008
- Lowney-Rohan viewing mound and trail developed in 2007
- Pigeon River restroom 2006
- County Forest restroom 2006
- Fairgrounds improvements:
  - Education building built in 2000
  - Addition to Hog/Sheep Barn 2004
  - New Dairy Barn in 2007
  - New Commercial Restroom in 2006
  - New Demo Pit on track area in 2008
- TRST Development
  - Portage County Line to Scandinavia completed in 2003
  - Scandinavia to Manawa completed in 2009
- Camp Vic-To-Rae:
  - Acquired 1999
  - Added men’s shower building 2006
  - New Vault style toilet 2013
- Wau-King Trail completed in 2006

Like its predecessors, this version of the Waupaca County Outdoor recreation Plan seeks to help preserve the county's natural environment and at the same time allow residents and visitors alike to play, learn, enjoy and live in harmony with it. Recreation and resource planning in Waupaca County dates back at least to 1971 when the Outdoor Recreation Plan for Waupaca County was prepared. This early document was succeeded by the Waupaca County Outdoor Recreation Plans in 1978 and 1987. These plans inventoried existing natural and cultural resources and park and recreation facilities, identified county-wide park and recreation needs, and presented recommendations for meeting these needs.

**Purpose:**

The purposes of this plan are to identify changing recreational needs, assess potential opportunities, and evaluate the status of the county's natural and cultural resources and to present appropriate recommendations that will ensure that Waupaca County residents and visitors alike will continue to enjoy a wide variety of recreational opportunities in a quality environment.

The 2015-2020 Waupaca County Parks Outdoor Recreation Plan, after county and state approval, will allow the County to gain eligibility for matching fund programs. This plan must be updated and adopted every five years to maintain eligibility for the various State and Federal funding programs.

### 3. Vision Statement and Goals

#### Waupaca County's Mission Statement:

**“Waupaca County government exists to provide services that empower and protect residents and guests”**

#### Waupaca Count Parks Vision Statement:

**“Connect people to the land and water resources of Waupaca County”**

Goals in this plan are intended to be broad statements that are not time-specific and serve to guide the policies and direction of Waupaca County Parks. The Waupaca Count Parks Outdoor Recreation Plan has these primary goals:

1. Provide sufficient park and recreation facilities to meet the demand of Waupaca County residents and guests without adversely affecting existing natural resources.
2. Preserve for posterity the characteristics and diversity of the natural resources of Waupaca County.
3. Provide access to the diverse water resources of the County by various means.
4. Promote healthy lifestyles by providing well maintained recreational facilities and trails.
5. Provide a planned system of parks and recreation areas that contain a diversity of recreational activities.
6. To link major county and community recreation areas by utilizing trails, natural watercourses and transportation or utility rights-of-way.



#### 4. Population Trends

The purpose of this section is to look at the population trends in Waupaca County and statewide to determine what size and type of population we will be serving into the future. While predictions into the future are subject to many unknowns, there are general trends that can guide our planning to better serve the changing demographics.

#### Waupaca County Population Trends

Years	Population Starting	Population Ending	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase	Net Migration	Total Change	Total Pct. Change
2000-2010	51,825	52,410	5,734	6,750	-1,016	1,601	585	1.1
2010-2020	52,410	54,475	5,329	7,095	-1,766	3,831	2,065	3.9
2020-2030	54,475	57,460	5,235	8,251	-3,016	6,001	2,985	5.5
2030-2040	57,460	55,670	5,083	10,253	-5,170	3,380	-1,790	-3.1

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration and U.S. Census

As the above figure shows, the Waupaca County population is expected to continue to grow at a moderate rate until sometime after 2030. This trend is similar statewide with more northern and rural county's populations dropping off around 2030. The more populous areas like Milwaukee and Dane Counties are expected to continue to grow keeping the growth rate of the State as a whole a positive number. The importance of this information for our plan is that we will have a population of similar size if not larger for quite some time to provide for.

The composition of that population is of possibly more interest for our future planning as illustrated in the "State Population Trends" chart on page 11. This table is for the state as a whole but shows how the age structure of our population is changing. The first four age groups all grow slightly over the next 30 years, and then there is a slight decline in the 45-64 age group. The big change is in the 65-84 and 85 & over groups; they are close to doubling in numbers. This means we are going to have a much larger elderly population requesting appropriate services. These groups account for about 12% of the current population and will grow to about 25% of the population. By exploring what activities they are interested in and ramping up the availability of them, the County should be in a good position.

Wisconsin Minor Civil Division (MCD) Projections, 2010-2040													
DOA Code	Census CoCode	Census Code	MCD Type and Name	Split	County Name	2010 Census	1/1/2013 Estimate	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection	2040 Projection
69002	135	05625	T Bear Creek		Waupaca	823	818	830	835	850	855	840	810
69004	135	12000	T Caledonia		Waupaca	1,627	1,642	1,695	1,785	1,895	1,985	2,025	2,025
69006	135	19025	T Dayton		Waupaca	2,748	2,751	2,820	2,910	3,040	3,140	3,165	3,110
69008	135	21200	T Dupont		Waupaca	738	732	745	755	775	785	775	755
69010	135	25400	T Farmington		Waupaca	3,974	3,985	4,055	4,115	4,220	4,295	4,250	4,115
69012	135	27850	T Fremont		Waupaca	597	590	595	595	600	600	580	555
69014	135	32925	T Harrison		Waupaca	468	467	470	475	480	485	470	450
69016	135	33850	T Helvetia		Waupaca	636	627	635	635	645	645	630	605
69018	135	37050	T Iola		Waupaca	971	977	1,010	1,065	1,135	1,195	1,220	1,220
69020	135	42650	T Larrabee		Waupaca	1,381	1,373	1,400	1,425	1,465	1,495	1,480	1,440
69022	135	43075	T Lebanon		Waupaca	1,665	1,672	1,715	1,770	1,845	1,910	1,915	1,890
69024	135	44575	T Lind		Waupaca	1,579	1,589	1,645	1,730	1,835	1,930	1,970	1,970
69026	135	45300	T Little Wolf		Waupaca	1,424	1,420	1,445	1,460	1,500	1,520	1,500	1,455
69028	135	49975	T Matteson		Waupaca	936	928	940	945	960	965	945	905
69030	135	55025	T Mukwa		Waupaca	2,930	2,951	3,035	3,155	3,315	3,445	3,490	3,450
69032	135	69900	T Royalton		Waupaca	1,434	1,439	1,465	1,480	1,520	1,540	1,520	1,475
69034	135	70900	T St. Lawrence		Waupaca	710	708	715	720	730	735	720	690
69036	135	72000	T Scandinavia		Waupaca	1,066	1,064	1,085	1,105	1,140	1,165	1,160	1,130
69038	135	81700	T Union		Waupaca	806	812	830	850	880	900	900	880
69040	135	84400	T Waupaca		Waupaca	1,173	1,188	1,215	1,250	1,300	1,340	1,340	1,315
69042	135	86425	T Weyauwega		Waupaca	583	574	575	560	555	545	515	480
69044	135	89375	T Wyoming		Waupaca	329	333	345	360	380	400	405	405
69106	135	07250	V Big Falls		Waupaca	61	60	60	60	55	55	50	45
69121	135	23850	V Embarrass		Waupaca	404	402	400	390	380	370	350	320
69126	135	27800	V Fremont		Waupaca	679	676	685	695	715	730	720	700
69141	135	37025	V Iola		Waupaca	1,301	1,292	1,315	1,335	1,370	1,395	1,380	1,340
69165	135	59475	V Ogdensburg		Waupaca	185	180	180	175	170	165	155	145
69181	135	71975	V Scandinavia		Waupaca	363	363	370	380	395	410	410	405
69211	135	15725	C Clintonville		Waupaca	4,559	4,537	4,595	4,610	4,685	4,710	4,610	4,415
69251	135	48350	C Manawa		Waupaca	1,371	1,340	1,360	1,365	1,395	1,405	1,380	1,325
69252	135	49400	C Marion	*	Waupaca	1,235	1,232	1,245	1,250	1,265	1,270	1,240	1,185
69261	135	56925	C New London	*	Waupaca	5,685	5,692	5,800	5,905	6,080	6,200	6,145	5,975
69291	135	84375	C Waupaca		Waupaca	6,069	6,023	6,165	6,320	6,560	6,735	6,730	6,595
69292	135	86400	C Weyauwega		Waupaca	1,900	1,917	1,960	2,010	2,085	2,140	2,135	2,090

State Final Population Projections, by Broad Age Group, 2010-2040											
<i>with numeric and percent change, cumulative for 30 years, and shares of population</i>											
	C2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Num Change 2010-2040	Pct Change 2010-2040	Share of Population	
										2010	2040
0-4	358,443	348,765	367,375	374,170	378,340	377,720	373,940	15,497	4.3%	6.3%	5.8%
5-17	981,049	962,660	970,995	991,840	1,007,395	1,012,335	1,007,370	26,321	2.7%	17.3%	15.5%
18-24	549,256	538,960	543,630	555,295	564,005	566,770	563,995	14,739	2.7%	9.7%	8.7%
25-44	1,447,360	1,431,945	1,492,505	1,526,090	1,537,485	1,528,290	1,493,595	46,235	3.2%	25.5%	23.0%
45-64	1,573,564	1,605,765	1,566,645	1,498,940	1,464,365	1,482,520	1,517,370	- 56,194	- 3.6%	27.7%	23.4%
65-84	658,809	766,095	929,800	1,111,770	1,251,210	1,284,390	1,251,765	592,956	90.0%	11.6%	19.3%
85 & over	118,505	128,825	134,130	145,745	173,110	224,245	283,600	165,095	139.3%	2.1%	4.4%
TOTAL	5,686,986	5,783,015	6,005,080	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270	6,491,635	804,649	14.1%		
0-17	1,339,492	1,311,425	1,338,370	1,366,010	1,385,735	1,390,055	1,381,310	41,818	3.1%	23.6%	21.3%
18-64	3,570,180	3,576,670	3,602,780	3,580,325	3,565,855	3,577,580	3,574,960	4,780	0.1%	62.8%	55.1%
65 & over	777,314	894,920	1,063,930	1,257,515	1,424,320	1,508,635	1,535,365	758,051	97.5%	13.7%	23.7%

## 5. Outdoor Recreation Participation Trends

Waupaca County provides a variety of different outdoor recreational opportunities with its many parks and trail systems. (See the existing parks and facilities section for details.) In order to make the best use of the limited resources available, it would be wise to know what the public is doing with their limited time and resources and try to accommodate for those activities. There are a number of groups that put out listings of participation in outdoor activities, and they all vary somewhat based on how the surveys were conducted.

We have included chapter 2 of the 2011-2016 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in the appendix of this plan. It breaks down participation into various categories and explains trends in activities. Of special interest is table 2-1: the “Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Participants by Activity” chart on page 2-3. This breaks participation into many different activities and allows you to start seeing some trends that are happening.

There appears to be a large percentage of people participating in more passive type activities. This includes nature viewing, photography, and sightseeing, among others. Having larger areas open to the public will help in these pursuits. Our relatively small acreage for a County Park system should point towards expanding whenever possible to provide for the largest percentage of users.

Our focus on water accesses throughout the park system appears justified in that about half of all people surveyed have participated in some sort of boating. If you add all the people that use the accesses for fishing in its various seasons, there is a large portion of the population served by these sites.

Bicycling is another activity that about 50% of those surveyed participated in. We do have a few bike trails in our system currently, but we could tap into demand for different types of trails in several of our parks.

Near the end of this plan there is a section of activities that we have identified as possibilities for expansion in the future. The list is not all-inclusive, but is a good snapshot of what should be pursued at this time. These should be reviewed and changed with each version of this plan to ensure they keep up with public opinion.

## 6. Existing County Parks and Facilities

The following section lists all of the parks that we operate, gives a brief description of each, and provides some recommendations for the future of each of them. This is what the park system has to work with and what we are hoping to do in the future. The recommendations should serve as a guide to future projects and funding priorities.

The chart on the next page lists all the parks and some of the activities they provide. The activities listed are not all-inclusive; they just show some of the main features at each site. More detail can be found in the write-up for each site.

**Waupaca County Parks and Recreation**

<b>Parks and Boat Landings</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Restrooms</b>	<b>Camping sites</b>	<b>Group Camping</b>	<b>Open Shelters</b>	<b>Reservable Buildings</b>	<b>Picnic Areas</b>	<b>Playground Equipment</b>	<b>Boat and Trailer Launch</b>	<b>Small Boat/Canoe Launch</b>	<b>Hiking Trails (miles)</b>	<b>Horse Trails</b>	<b>Biking Trails</b>	<b>Pet exercise area</b>	<b>Hunting Allowed</b>	<b>Drinking Water</b>
Big Falls Pond Access	0.25						X		X	X						
Chief Waupaca Historical Site	0.26						X									
Columbia Lake Landing	0.17	X							X	X						
Dake Lake Landing	0.12								X	X						
Fisherman's Park	1.1	X					X			X						
Gills Landing	11.5	X			X		X		X	X						
Graham Lake Access	1.7								X	X						
Grass Lake Access	0.25									X						
Indian Crossing Park	0.2						X			X						
Keller Park	80	X			X	X	X	X		X						X
Kinney Lake Access	0.5	X					X		X	X						
Lembke-Long Lake Access	0.25	X					X		X	X						
Little Wolf Canoe Access	0.25									X						
Little Wolf River Park	2				X		X			X						
Lowney-Rohan Wetlands	110.4						X									
Manawa Park	4.8	X			X	X	X	X	X	X						
Marion Park	5						X			X						
Miner Lake Landing	0.12								X	X						
Nelson Park	0.5	X					X			X						
North Lake Access	5								X	X						
Northland Park	1						X			X						
Oakwood Park	26.6	X					X	X			X					X
Pigeon River Park	40	X			X		X			X	X					
Rollofson Lake Access	0.25									X						
Royalton Park	2				X		X	X		X						
Shaw's Landing	1.5	X							X	X						
Symco Park	2.1						X			X						
Taylor Lake Landing	0.2	X							X	X						
Waupaca County Dog Park	1.25				X		X							X		
White Lake Access	0.5								X	X						
<b>Special Use Sites</b>																
Camp Vic-To-Rae	40.1	X	X	X	X	X	X			X						X
Pauers Environmental Education Center	106	X				X										
Poor Farm Cemetary	1.2															
Waupaca County Fairgrounds	39	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								X
Waupaca County Forest	200	X			X		X				X	X	X		X	
<b>Trail Systems</b>																
Tomorrow River State Trail (14.7 miles)	178.2										X		X			
Wau-King Trail (3.9 Miles)	9.5						X				X		X			
Wolf River Sturgeon Trail (.56 miles)	10						X				X		X			
Hwy. 54 By-Pass Trail (1.35 miles)	1.63										X		X			

<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>885.4</b>
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## 6.a County Parks and Boat Landings

### Waupaca County Parks and Boat Landings

#### Big Falls Pond Access

Located in the northern part of the county in the Village of Big Falls, this site provides access to Big Falls Pond, an impoundment of the North Branch of the Little Wolf River. The Village operates the park area; the County is responsible for the boat launch. The improved boat ramp is used as a take-out point for canoes on the river. The predominately wooded shoreline and granite rock outcroppings on the opposite shore are particularly attractive from the launch area. Site features include:

- A picnic area with a grill
- A boat and canoe launch
- A small designated parking area

There is currently a local effort to develop a kiosk and small shelter at this park to educate visitors about the history of Big Falls. There are plans to have pictures of and directions to significant landmarks around the town. It would be good to support and encourage this development as it would provide another level of use for this small park.



#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Repair/replace the existing launch
- Install better signage
- Repair/replace the pavement in the parking area
- Accessible walks to the picnic area and future kiosk/shelter
- A restroom, likely a portable one, should be provided in the future if use increases
- Invasive species should be addressed on the site, there has been purple loosestrife found and there may be other species.

## Chief Waupaca Historical Site

This 1/4 acre parcel is located south of Marion on HWY 110. This historical site marks the grave site of a Potawatomi Chief who lived in the area, Chief Wapuka. Chief Wapuka, better known as Sam Wapuka, was friendly to early settlers, although his tribesmen were very opposed to the white man's invasion of this area. Once on a trip with several warriors, he stopped where the present City of Waupaca is. His men were eager to massacre the whole settlement, but Wapuka argued long and well against it. He won, but when he began to ride away, he suddenly fell dead from his horse. His companions hurriedly buried him almost where he fell. Later, relatives purchased several acres of land south of Marion, along present-day Hwy. 110, and took the body there. In 1957, a historical marker was erected to mark the spot. The park serves as a place for travelers to learn about the unique history of the area. It is also a nice place to picnic.

Site features include:

- A picnic area with a grill
- A small parking area
- A historical marker sign



### Recommendations for the Future:

- Maintain the trees and bushes on the site
- Install a better park sign to be observed from the road
- The fence on the northern property line should be upgraded soon as it is falling over in places.



## Columbia Lake Landing

This landing is located just south of County Road Q on Cleghorn Road in the Town of Farmington. This is a very popular public landing to get onto the Chain of Lakes. Site features include:

- Concrete boat launch
- Accessible dock
- Self-registration box
- Parking area
- Portable Restroom

Expansion of this launch is unlikely as it is surrounded by private homes, but some improvements may be made around the parking lot.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- One possible project would be to install a permanent restroom at this site
- Due to its location next to several popular businesses, trail development into Oakwood park from this site should be considered

### Dake Lake Landing

This landing is located on Cleghorn Road in the Town of Dayton. This landing consists solely of a boat ramp and a paved path to the water. There is no parking provided but this landing is still busy on weekends. Site features include:

- Concrete boat launch
- Paved access road
- Self-registration box



#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- A parking area should be purchased, if the opportunity should arrive. Work with the Town of Dayton to identify and sign appropriate areas to park along roadways.
- Upgrade the launch to replace the current concrete log style one.

## **Fisherman's Park**

This park is located under the new Highway 10 in Fremont off of County Road H. The park provides shoreline fishing and an area to picnic while doing it. This stretch of the Wolf River is very popular during the seasonal runs of different species of fish. Site features include:

- Paved shore fishing areas
- Large parking lot
- Portable Restrooms
- Open grass picnic/play area

Public areas to fish from shore are getting hard to find. During the White Bass run fishermen are literally shoulder to shoulder on this stretch of shoreline.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- More work will have to be done with the riprap that is protecting the paved walkway along the shore. Foot traffic has caused much of the rock to migrate into the river. Larger rocks should be placed to protect the walkway and still allow fishermen to get to the edge of the water.
- More picnic tables should be provided, as well as permanently mounted benches with pole holders along the shoreline for fishermen.
- A large project that really should be done is installing a permanent restroom at this park. Currently there are a couple portables installed, but they are overwhelmed during the peak fishing times.
- Security lights might be a good idea also, especially if there is a permanent restroom at the site.

## Gills Landing

Located four miles east of Weyauwega on CTH F near the confluence of the Waupaca and Wolf rivers, Gills Landing is an 11.5 acre parcel developed as a multiple use park. The two recently improved launches both have accessible docks. There is also a paved path along the seawall that provides many opportunities for shoreline fishing. The landing gets very busy during the peak fishing and duck seasons and also receives heavy use from recreational boaters. Site features include:

- Picnic tables
- Small open shelters
- Leopold benches
- Permanent Restrooms
- Large Parking lot
- Shore fishing areas
- Self-Registration station
- 2 concrete launches
- 2 accessible docks
- Boardwalk trail and wetland observation deck

This launch receives heavy use and as such, maintenance of the concrete launches will require regular additions of rock to protect the toe and constant monitoring for other problems as they arise.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Areas in the center of the parking lot that are grass should be reduced in size and more pavement added as the heavy parking traffic for much of the year destroys the grass and it turns into a mud puddle.
- The sea-wall is near the end of its useful lifespan and should be replaced soon.
- The small shelters that are currently there are used frequently but are beginning to show the need for major repairs. These should be replaced after the sea wall is replaced with slightly larger 2 table shelters to better protect visitors in the rain and allow families more room for picnicking while they fish from the shore.

### **Graham Lake Access**

Graham Lake is located in the Town of Iola in the northwestern portion of the county. The site along Graham Lake Road skirts the lake's eastern shore. Site features include:

- Launch area
- Small parking area



There are no current plans to expand or offer more services at this park. Additional parking should be added if needed in the future. Recent repairs have been made to prevent the landing from washing into the lake; this should be monitored to ensure the problem is solved.

### **Grass Lake Access**

Grass Lake Access is a ¼ acre site located on CTH J in the Town of Iola in the northwestern portion of the county. Site features include:

- Launch area
- Small parking area

There is not much room or demand to expand this access.

## Indian Crossing Park

This park is located along Lime Kiln Lake on the east sides of the CTH Q Bridge and is accessible by water or foot. This is a popular spot to stop and picnic for boaters and pedestrians as there is an ice cream shop across the road. Site features include:

- Several picnic areas with tables
- A bench swing
- Benches



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Provide better access for handicapped users.
- Possibly build a small picnic shelter on the northernmost side.
- Plantings for shoreline improvement should be protected and more low maintenance plantings installed on the steep slopes to prevent erosion. The retaining wall should be looked at to see if we could make it safer to mow the top of it or eliminate the need to mow up there at all.
- This park would serve the area well as a location for a public restroom on the Chain of Lakes. There is a sewer lateral on the parking lot side and a dock could be installed to provide easy access from the water. This would benefit the boaters, as well as water quality and perhaps prevent some trespass issues on private property.

## Keller Park

Keller Park is located on CTH G in the north central portion of the county between Marion and Big Falls. The site is heavily wooded with a mixture of hardwood and coniferous species. Keller Lake, a 21-acre impoundment of the south Branch of the Pigeon River which flows through the park, adds greatly to the park's scenic beauty and provides swimming, boating and fishing opportunities. The dam and spillway are located in the park.

In 2006, approximately 40 acres were added to the park, bringing the total acreage to around 80. This was a great addition in that it makes almost the entire road system of the park, actually on park property. Site features include:

- Restrooms
- Large open picnic shelter
- Many picnic tables
- Grills
- Paved basketball court
- Playground equipment
- Paved parking areas
- Many picnic areas with tables



The playground equipment was replaced in 2008 with new safer equipment with recycled rubber chips for surfacing. The shelter concrete was also replaced in 2008. The restrooms were replaced in the fall of 2013.

### **Recommendations for the future:**

- A kiosk with information about other park locations and opportunities, as well as explaining the history of the park, would be a great addition.
- This park could be developed into a park that offers many more services, and with the natural beauty of the location, could become a destination park.
- Camping could be accommodated at this site with the development of some of the newly acquired land into camping sites and the establishment of more restrooms and water sources.
- An enclosed shelter facility could be developed where the existing open shelter is that would be available to parties to rent.
- A multi-use trail system should be developed soon to use the newly acquired land and showcase some of the parks' most interesting features.
- A beach area could be developed to offer a safer swimming experience for families.
- Purchasing more adjoining land should be a priority as there is still undeveloped land around this park.
- A friends group for the park should be pursued to help with development direction and funding.

### Kinney Lake Access

This one-half acre parcel of land is located on the southwest side of Kinney Lake in the Town of Dupont. The site is about a mile east of Keller Park on CTH G. Site features include:

- Paved boat access
- Parking area.
- A picnic area
- A porta-potty is on site

There is little room to expand this site so future improvements will likely be limited to repairing or replacing the boat launch at some point.

### Lembke-Long Lake Access

Located in the northern portion of the county in the Town of Dupont, this 1/4 acre site on the south shore of Lembke Lake off Long Lake Road provides direct access to Lembke Lake and indirect access via a navigable channel to Long Lake. This is a nice site with a picnic area in the middle. Site features include:

- Picnic tables
- A boat launch
- Small grass parking area
- Hitching rail for horses
- A porta-potty is on site

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Develop a means for accessible shore fishing.
- Upgrade the boat ramp.
- Install a permanent restroom if use increases at the park.



### Little Wolf Canoe Access

The county owns a 1/4 acre walk-in canoe access site on the North Branch of the Little Wolf River in the Town of Harrison. The site is located about seven miles upstream from Big Falls Pond. This stretch of river offers excellent canoeing opportunities.

There is little that could be done with this site, maintenance of the path and an area to park should be about all there is to do here. If adjoining land were acquired there would be more possibilities for development.



## Little Wolf River Park

This park is located about ½ mile east of Manawa on County Highway N. The site is a popular boat access to the Little Wolf River and has a nice picnic area that can be used for gatherings. Site features include:

- Boat launch (new in fall of 2011)
- Floating Dock (new in 2012)
- Paved parking area, drive
- Open shelter
- Picnic tables
- Grills
- Permanent Restrooms
- Bench swing
- Small playground equipment



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- New playground equipment and surfacing should be pursued if the demand is there as the old equipment is getting to the end of its life-cycle.
- Upgrades to the restroom should be done. A new vault style restroom would do the job, but it should be explored to see how far from City water and sewer the park is as that would be a better option.
- Provide accessible shore fishing opportunities.

## Lowney-Rohan Wetlands

This 110 acre site is located south of Hwy 161 one mile west of Hwy 45 in the Town of Bear Creek. The land was purchased using a Stewardship Grant to provide wetland areas for habitat and nature viewing. There are several different habitat types on the site from marshland to mature hardwoods. This provides an excellent opportunity to see many types of wildlife in one area. Site features include:

- An elevated earth mound with benches near the eastern border
- A parking area
- Limestone trail from parking lot to the observation mound.
- Wetland ponds/scrapes that attract a variety of birds and other creatures.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Interpretive signs could be placed to explain various features.
- An invasive species management plan should be developed to address various issues including Willows and Phragmites (reed grass).
- Develop another observation mound by opening another scrape in the northeast corner of the property near the parking lot.
- Develop a trail system to give users better access to the property.
- Write a management plan for the upland area on the property.

## Manawa Park

This one-acre site is located south of Manawa on HWY 110. This is a popular lunch site for people from Manawa. It is also used by canoeists and fishermen to access the Little Wolf River. Site features include:

- Limited boater access
- Picnic tables
- Small picnic shelter
- Grills
- Parking area



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Upgrade the boat launch site.
- Provide an accessible shore fishing area.
- A kiosk with information on canoe routes, time, takeouts, and information about other parks and opportunities in the area would also be a good addition.
- A restroom would be popular with the many visitors to the park.

## Marion Park

This five-acre site is located south-east of Marion on the north side of Hwy 45. This was a former DOT wayside and provides canoe access to the Pigeon River. Site features include:

- Picnic tables & grills
- Restrooms (currently closed)
- Paved parking area

### **Recommendations for the future:**

- The red pine stand by the highway was thinned in 2008; this will have to happen again in 10 years or so to manage the undergrowth of mainly white pines.
- The restroom will need to be removed or replaced.
- A small picnic shelter would be a welcome addition for visitors.
- An informational kiosk about the river and canoe routes would help promote the river for canoeists. The river will need serious clearing work done before it could be considered an enjoyable experience to paddle. A connection via the river from this park to Pigeon River Park and beyond should be pursued if local groups are interested in helping this process.

### Miner Lake Landing

This landing is located south of CTY Q on West Miner Lake Road in the Town of Dayton. This is one of the few public landings on the Chain O' Lakes. Site features include:

- Paved boat launch
- Self-Registration box
- Small parking area

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- There is no room to expand the actual landing as there are houses on both sides of this site, however, more parking or other facilities could be added across the road in what is part of Oakwood Park.
- The launch should be improved/replaced soon as the concrete logs have deteriorated far enough to become a problem.

### Nelson Park

Nelson Park is located on CTH K three miles south of the City of Waupaca. This half acre site provides access to the Crystal River. The park is heavily used by both picnickers and fishermen and is sometimes used as a take-out point for canoe/kayakers. Site features include:

- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Grill
- A footbridge to a small island
- A restroom



#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Upgrades to the restroom should be done as it becomes necessary.
- Replace the Aldo benches with permanent anchored down ones.
- The dam should be removed as it is in very poor condition.
- An informational kiosk would inform visitors of the history of the site as well as other recreational opportunities in the area.
- Drinking water and connection to the city sewer system should be pursued if it becomes available in the area.
- The rock/concrete walls along the stream bank will need to be addressed soon as they are starting to crumble and fall into the river.
- Develop a path to the Red Mill along Cty Hwy K.

### North Lake Access

This public access is located on the east side of North Lake. This is a popular fishing site and at times there will be vehicles and trailers parked a considerable distance along the side of CTH J. Site features include:

- A boat launch
- A dock
- Roadside parking

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Development of a parking area should be pursued, however; wetland issues have prevented development on the attached County land in the past. The parking is a critical safety issue as the landing is located on a corner where parked cars could be a safety hazard.
- Develop a walking trail and picnic area.



### Northland Park

Located eight miles north of Iola on STH 49 in the Town of Harrison this one-acre park provides a way for fisherman to get to Flume Creek, which is managed for trout and bisects the park. A foot-bridge crossing the old Northland Dam and spillway connects the 2 sides of the park. Site features include:

- A hard-packed trail to a bench swing
- Small parking area
- Picnic tables
- A bench swing

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- There are plans for an accessible fishing area.
- Adjoining land purchases should be pursued if the opportunity arises as this park could be further developed with more room.



## Oakwood Park

This 26.6-acre park is located on CTH Q in the popular Chain O' Lakes area southwest of Waupaca. A master plan for this site was prepared by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in 1984. Much of the park development work was done by the Wisconsin Conservation Corps. A walkway through a low area in the park provides access to a small pond. The interior of the site provides un-groomed cross-country skiing opportunities as well as walking trails. Site features include:

- Picnic tables
- Grills
- Playground equipment (New in 2008)
- Restroom building
- Drinking water
- Small picnic shelter
- Walking trails.
- 2 small parking areas



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Expansion of the trail network with boardwalks and better layout with signage.
- As with all sites in the Chain O' Lakes, opportunities to expand should be pursued, but cost will likely limit the ability to do so.
- An invasive species control plan should be developed; there are large amounts of Buckthorn near the small pond and likely other undesirable species.
- A forest management plan should be developed for the larger part of the park to help guide the tree composition to what may be desired. Currently there is a large population of over-mature aspen on much of the site.

## Pigeon River Park

This 40 acre site is located south of Marion on Knitt Road in the Town of Larrabee. The North and South branch of the Pigeon River converge on this site. This site is in the early stages of development. There are several different habitat types within this park making it ideal for nature viewing and walking. Site features include:

- A parking area
- A trail system with multiple boardwalks
- A footbridge across the Pigeon River
- Two small picnic shelters
- Picnic tables
- A restroom



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- A forest management plan should be developed to address the Park's timber needs.
- There is more trail work to be done on this site. The trails between the boardwalk sections need to be improved and signed. Trails for snowshoeing and cross country skiing could be developed and maintained in the future.
- There is the opportunity for interpretive signs at this site for the many natural features found here.
- An open picnic area should be maintained near the parking lot to provide for activities that require some open space.
- Should adjoining land become available it should be pursued as a way of maintaining the unique undeveloped nature of this parcel.
- Rustic camping has been proposed for this site in the past and should be planned for as it becomes needed.
- A master plan should be developed to incorporate the school property, town property, and possibly other properties into a joint recreational system.
- A canoe / kayak access point should be developed.

### Rollofson Lake Access

This 1/4 acre parcel is located 6 miles northwest of Scandinavia on Rollofson Lake Road. This site provides canoe and fishing access to Rollofson Lake. Site features include:

- Small parking area
- A trail to Rollofson Lake
- A small floating dock



#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Should adjoining land become available it should be considered at the time to determine if it would be worth the cost to purchase. As the site is surrounded by private residences the cost of expansion in the future will likely be prohibitive.
- The boardwalk and dock will need to be replaced fairly soon as they are starting to show their age.
- The access trail to the dock should be re-graded to provide an appropriate slope and make it accessible.



## Royalton Park

This two-acre park located immediately west of the Little Wolf River Bridge on the south side of STH 54 features a small flower planter that the Royalton Garden Club helps maintain. The site is used frequently to access the river for canoeing and fishing. Site features include:

- A small picnic shelter
- A picnic table
- A swing set (New in 2008)
- A small parking area



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- The shelter could be replaced with a larger one in the future; it has a good 5+ years left in it yet.
- A restroom on site would be nice however; this would likely change the park into a wayside that would require very frequent maintenance.
- A kiosk with information on canoe routes and other park opportunities in the area would help users explore the area.
- The trail to the river should be upgraded someday. The slope is too steep to accommodate an accessible path, but an improved foot path would be welcome.

## Shaw's Landing

Shaw's Landing is located south west of New London at the end of Dey Road. Shaw's Landing provides boater access to the Wolf River. There is one large concrete slab style launch on the site that is divided into two launching lanes by the floating dock. The launches are located where the road right of way runs to the river. Across the road from the launch is a 1.28 acre graveled parking area. Site features include:

- 2 boat launch lanes and a floating dock
- Fee Deposit box and related signs
- A Porta-Potty
- A dumpster
- Parking area



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- A permanent restroom in the parking lot would be a great addition to this site.
- The parking lot would be far nicer if it were paved, every year in the spring when the traffic is the highest; the gravel parking lot is at its softest, making for lots of mud puddles and complaints.
- The dock end pilings should be outfitted with reflective markings to make it more visible at night.
- If property near the launch becomes available it should be pursued for purchase.

## Symco Park

This 1.69-acre site is located between the Little Wolf River and Symco Road, immediately south of State Highway 22 in the unincorporated community of Symco. The property was formerly owned by Symco Milling Company. There was a mill building adjacent to the river. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources purchased this property in March of 1999 after bridge reconstruction on Highway 22. The DNR then conveyed a non-exclusive easement to Waupaca County "for the purpose of constructing, maintaining, repairing, removing and replacing a limited development canoe access site."

Site features include:

- Picnic tables
- A parking area



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Plans are underway to develop an accessible canoe/kayak launch and path to the river, an archeological survey was completed in 2013 as a step in the permit process. This path will likely lead to the small channel between the island and the main park and will be most useful during higher water times of the year.
- When a canoe launch is developed a better picnic area should be installed.
- Large rocks should be placed around the parking area and along the road to help keep the area bar patrons from doing burnouts in the grassy area.
- A restroom would be nice for the park users, however it is not recommended at this time as it would likely become a high-maintenance wayside type situation and create a vandalism target for the destructive drinkers that frequent the park when the bars close.

## Taylor Lake Landing

This site is located at the end of Pine Ridge Lane on Taylor Lake in the Town of Farmington. The launches are used quite heavily throughout the fishing and recreational boating seasons. This is the busiest of the public launches on the Chain O' Lakes. Site features include:

- Two concrete boat launches
- One dock
- Limited parking
- Portable restroom



Parking is probably the main issue with this landing. When it is busy, there are cars and trailers parked along the road for a great distance. The boat launches were both replaced in 2010 with poured in place concrete ramps.

### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Additional land to provide parking would be a great addition but it is unlikely due to the property values in the area.
- A small area near the launch would be a great place to install a permanent restroom as the portable one is usually in the way and gets damaged quite often.

## Waupaca County Dog Park

This site is located off CTY K just north of HWY 10 in the City of Waupaca. The fenced in area provides a place for people to run their dogs off-leash. The park is run in cooperation with the Waupaca County Canine Park Committee, Waupaca County Parks, and the City of Waupaca. Some of the upkeep is done by volunteers; most is done by Waupaca County Parks. Most of the amenities of the park were purchased through fund raising efforts and donations. Site features include:

- Fenced in exercise area
- Parking lot
- A water faucet
- Small picnic shelter
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Some pet agility training equipment



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Expand the fenced in area to encompass the area north of the existing park.
- Currently the Canine Committee is not a functioning entity, with the County Parks picking up the slack with maintenance. As volunteers have been harder to come by, there may be a need to start charging a fee to cover the maintenance costs.
- An updated management plan should be developed soon to address these and other issues into the future.

## White Lake Access

This access is located on the Southwest side of White Lake off of HWY 110 in the Town of Royalton. This is a popular lake with fisherman and hunters alike. During season openers there are trucks and trailers parked up and down the road to this landing. Site features include:

- Boat launch
- Small parking area
- An accessible dock



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- This site could benefit from more land, but like many parks, there is little to be had that adjoins the property. Parking is an issue that could be addressed with more land.
- A portable restroom would likely be a welcome addition at this site.
- There are currently too many signs at this landing and they should be consolidated into one or two in the future.
- The existing concrete-log style boat ramp should be replaced soon as it is in poor condition, a new one of similar design should do a fine job at this site.
- Additional property should be purchased for development of a permanent restroom and picnic area.

## 6.b Special Use Sites

### Camp Vic-To-Rae

Camp Vic-To-Rae is a unique piece of property composed of approximately 40 acres located 3-4 miles west of New London on County X, then west on Ostrander Rd approximately 1 mile. The property was purchased from the Fox Valley Area Girl Scout Council, Inc. and title was transferred in the spring of 1999. For the summer of 1999, the property was left closed to the public and access was granted to a number of Girl Scout groups wishing to use the property for their overnight and day camps as it was used in the past.

Currently the camp is open for use to groups for day and overnight camps for a small fee. The camp has become quite popular and is being sought after by more groups each year. The fee structure and management objectives are currently under review to determine the proper use of the camp in the future. In 2008 land was purchased to allow a two-way access to the site, making travel in and out of the camp safer. Site features include:

- Access to the Little Wolf River
- 5 cabins/shelters with picnic tables
- 2 wells
- 2 restrooms with showers
- 1 vault style restroom
- Multiple fire rings with seating
- Some nature trails linking shelters and providing access to the river



#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- A management plan for this site needs to be developed and approved to provide the direction and priorities for development.
- Camping is a very likely and suitable use for this site, a plan for development will be started soon to address what would be provided and how it would be laid out. Policies and maintenance schedules will have to be ironed out in order to properly care for the site once the use changes.
- There has been efforts made to open the camp for day use visitors and this will have to be addressed in the management plan.
- An accessible canoe/kayak launch should be developed, especially if the park is opened for day use.
- Additional property should be purchased if it becomes available.

## Pauer's Environmental Education Center

This 106 acre site was donated in 1992 to be used for environmental education by organized youth groups. The site offers very diverse vegetation and wildlife habitat ideal for exposing youth to nature based education. The cabins provide classroom area where educational excursions can branch off from. This site is not available for use by the general public. Facilities include:

- 3 log cabins
- A restroom



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Proposed developments include restrooms, a well at the cabins, and educational programming.
- This site could be developed into a multi-use trail area for summer and winter activities including walking, biking, skiing and snowshoeing.
- If one of the cabins were heated, it could serve as a warming house for winter activities.
- Currently all 3 cabins need work to preserve them for future possible uses. The third cabin is partially complete should be finished in the near future to prevent damage to what is already complete.
- The Pauer's house could be used for various purposes once it is available, but it will require significant upgrades such as a new septic system, restrooms, HVAC systems and more before it would be able to handle use by the general public.
- Partnerships with educational groups such as the scouts and local school districts should be sought out to increase the use of this site and justify further development.
- In the future the cabins could be available for reservation by the general public when not used by an educational group. This could be a year-round activity if there were wood heat provided in the cabins.
- The management plan for this property should be updated to guide future development.



## Poor Farm Cemetery

This closed 1.2 acre cemetery is located south of Manawa off Bear Lake Road.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Proposed improvements include access to the site to enable visitors easier access and make maintenance quicker.
- The fence around this site should be replaced within the next few years.

## Waupaca County Fairgrounds

Located in the City of Weyauwega, this 39-acre site includes:

- A ½ mile dirt race track
- Covered grandstand (56 x 209') with restrooms
- Commercial Building (66 x 150') with restrooms
- Youth Building (70 x 120') with restrooms
- Maintenance Building (36 x 60')
- Milk House (26 x 15')
- Dairy Barn (90 x 132')
- Beef Barn (60 x 120')
- Multipurpose Building (50 x 60') with attached show ring (100 x 100') with restrooms
- Hog and Sheep Barn (50 x 174') with attached show ring
- Rabbit and Poultry Barn (40 x 80' and 40 x 80')
- Education Building (60 x 144') with restrooms
- Grandstands Pavilion (40 x 80' and 40 x 60')
- Goat Barn (36 x 96')
- Grey Horse Barn (36 x 114')
- Red Horse Barn (50 x 98')
- An outdoor horse arena (120 x 240')
- Lots of picnic tables
- Some playground equipment.



The fairgrounds are used throughout the spring, summer, and fall months for a wide variety of events taking place almost every weekend. The biggest event is the Waupaca County fair in August. There are also a few events in the winter such as snowmobile races, swap meets and fisheries. The grounds are maintained as a park and are used as such by many people throughout the year. Many of the buildings are also used for storage in the winter.

## Fairgrounds Continued...



### Recommendations for the future:

- There are many maintenance issues that will have to be addressed as they come up. Several buildings with metal roofing need to be sealed or replaced at some point.
- There is some call for a large open shelter that could be used for parties as well as the fair and other events, a study should be completed to determine demand for this structure.
- The Grandstands Pavilion should be looked at for possible renovation at some point as it is beginning to look run down and does not meet the needs of several of the groups that use it on a regular basis.
- The food stands and seating area under the Grandstands will have to be looked at to determine the best approach to updating them or exploring other options.
- The horse groups have expressed interest in some sort of small shelter building by the horse arena for shade during their many events.
- Additional property surrounding the Fairgrounds should be pursued should it become available as there are few remaining undeveloped parcels left.
- A 5-10 year master plan should be developed for the grounds.

## Waupaca County Forest

This 200-acre site is located in the south central portion of the county on Desert Road in the Town of Fremont. The Waupaca County Forest is composed mostly of a variety of conifers in all stages of growth resulting from planned reforestation and selective thinning. The site has the potential to be used as an educational tool to showcase forestry management practices and land restoration techniques. A central area has been converted to more of a park setting with the installation of shelters and a vault type restroom. The County Forest has been receiving increased use for hunting, hiking, and horseback riding in recent years. Site features include:

- Picnic shelters
- Picnic tables
- Restrooms
- Parking lot
- Walking/horse trails/service roads
- Artesian well
- Sand point well (no pump on site)



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Drinking water could be provided on site by the artesian well if a proper fountain was developed and maintained. This could also provide water for horses.
- A more defined and marked trail system would help people who are new to the site enjoy more of it.
- Cross country skiing would be a good use of the land. Being able to groom the trails would help this effort. These trails could be used for hiking, biking, and snow shoeing as well.
- Interpretive signs explaining the various stages of forest management on the site would help the educational component of this site.
- Continue to follow and update the forest management plan with DNR assistance.

## Tomorrow River State Trail

The Tomorrow River State Trail consists of a 14 mile trail segment in Portage County and another 14 miles in Waupaca County. The trail starts in the village of Plover and ends by Manawa. It is developed along an abandoned railroad grade. The trail is open to bicyclists, hikers, joggers and horseback riders in the spring, summer and fall. Snowmobiles, skiers and dog sleds may use the trail during the winter. No ATV's are allowed on the trail, and dogs must be leashed at all times.

The bicycle/hiking trail is on the main railroad grade and is surfaced with crushed limestone. Horseback riders have a well developed trail on the Portage County side of the trail while the section in Waupaca County is still under development. There are several area establishments along the trail in Arnott, Smokey Spur, Scandinavia, and Ogdensburg. Hungry and thirsty trail users are welcome to stop in for a sandwich or pizza and a beverage.

Bicyclists and horseback riders 16 years of age and older are required to have either a state or county trail pass in order to use the trail. Trail passes are available along the trail at self registration stations or by stopping in to the Waupaca County Parks Department Office in the courthouse.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- There is a bridge on the eastern most end of the trail into Manawa that needs to be crossed yet but there are issues with the railroad that need to be resolved before the re-decking project can be started.
- Parking areas need to be developed in Ogdensburg and Manawa to allow users to park and ride, complete with self-registration stations.
- The Horse trail on the Waupaca County side needs to be developed to a point where it is easy to maintain. Partnerships with horse riding groups will have to be developed to complete some of the work and come up with funding mechanisms for maintenance.
- There are many great things that can be done with this trail and with time and increased user pressure these projects will be funded and completed.
- Kiosks with information on the trail, trail projects, user groups, as well as information on our other parks and trails would help promote our park system as well as possibly provide more opportunities for visitors.
- If the railroad abandons the track between Manawa and New London, the County should pursue adding that section to the TRST. This would bring us one big step closer to connecting to the Newton Blackmour State Trail.
- The master plan for the Waupaca County section of the TRST should be revised in the near future.

## The Wau-King Trail

This 3.5 mile trail runs from Waupaca to King. It is a paved trail that allows foot and bicycle traffic along with roller blade and other non-motorized transportation. The trail is well used as it provides a safe path to travel from Waupaca to the high school and the Wisconsin Veterans Home as well as many other Chain of Lakes destinations. There are benches and garbage cans located along the trail as well as gates to ensure there is no vehicular traffic



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- There may be opportunities to extend the trail in the future, like partnering with the school to develop side trails, and they should be pursued as a top priority.
- Landscaping along the trail should also be looked at where it would help shield views into private yards or prevent trespass.
- The trail could be groomed for cross country skiing and other winter uses to provide more opportunities in the winter months. This would require the purchase and operation of grooming equipment by Waupaca County Parks.
- A trail system along King Road should be encouraged for safer travel in and out of the King area.
- A trail system including widened road shoulders that connects to Hartman Creek State Park would be a great benefit to park users and local commuters as well.

## Wolf River Sturgeon Trail

This Trail runs along the Wolf River next to County Highway X in the town of Mukwa. It is a paved trail with a parking area at both ends. There are several accessible fishing platforms along the trail as well. Many people come to watch the Sturgeon run along this portion of the river in the spring. A volunteer group has raised much of the money and completed several projects along the trail including a boardwalk into a marshy area, a picnic shelter, and several interpretive signs. There are several garbage cans and benches along the trail also.



### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Expansion of the trail to the east into New London's Hatten Park would greatly increase the value of this rather isolated trail section.
- Interpretive signs along the boardwalk would help visitors understand the benefits of wetlands.
- Ongoing maintenance of the trail surface and the riprap that protects it will have to be a priority to keep this trail safe and functional.
- Expanding the turn-around area and having some additional parking would help during the busy season.

### **Highway 54 Bypass Trail**

This trail follows the new Hwy 54 bypass on the East side of Waupaca from the business park to Hwy 10. It is a paved path and has seen increasing use since its installation. The main feature is where it crosses the Waupaca River on a separate wing of the highway bridge.

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- This trail should be tied into the local trail systems (River Ridge Trail). This will have to be done in cooperation with the City of Waupaca's Parks Department as well as the various user groups that have shown interest in becoming involved.
- Where the trail crosses the river has the possibility of being developed into a river access point that could be part of a larger "water-trail" system throughout the County.
- Expand the trail to include a path along Apple Tree Lane.

### **Wiouwash Trail by Marion on Rail Grade**

The Wiouwash State Trail is named for Winnebago, Outagamie, Waupaca and Shawano counties. This trail, built on a former rail corridor, is maintained and operated by the four counties the trail traverses. Two sections of the trail are now complete and are separated by a gap of about 30 miles.

In Shawano County, the northern segment of the trail travels 19 miles between Birnamwood and Split Rock. This segment of the trail connects with the Mountain-Bay State Trail in Eland. The southern segment of the trail is open for 22 miles from Hortonville to the city of Oshkosh. The southern segment skirts along the edge of Lake Butte des Morts and continues into the countryside through native tall grass prairies, farmlands and wildlife areas. This segment connects to the Friendship Trail at State Highway 10. The Friendship Trail travels between the Wiouwash State Trail and the city of Menasha.

Several gaps remain along the rail corridor before the two segments are connected by a continuous trail. Ongoing efforts are being made to acquire right-of-way or obtain the necessary easements to complete the trail. Once completed, the trail may eventually run from the town of Aniwa in Shawano County to downtown Oshkosh.

#### **Recommendations for the future:**

- The next step for the Waupaca County section is to develop the 3+ miles of trail from Marion to the Shawano County Line that we already have easements to. There is a parcel just south of Marion that was donated by Marion Body Works in 2008 that will serve as a parking area for this section of trail.
- Beyond that, the county should pursue with the DNR purchasing property and easements to connect the northern and southern sections of the trail.



## Waupaca County Snowmobile and Winter ATV Trail Systems

Waupaca County is host to over 400 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. 371.3 miles of that trail system is funded through the snowmobile trail grant program. This impressive collection of trails turns the area into a real destination for snowmobiling when the conditions are right. The trails are maintained by over 17 different snowmobile clubs throughout the county that operate on volunteer labor. The miles of trail not funded by the maintenance grant are entirely maintained by snowmobile club fundraising efforts. The vast majority of these trails are located on private property.

A recent addition to the winter activities in the county is winter ATV trails. Currently (2014) there are over 100 miles of this type of trail mostly located in the northern part of the county. This has proven to be a good use of the trails with minimal conflict.

Maps and condition information on the trails can be found at:

[www.waupacacountyparks.com](http://www.waupacacountyparks.com)

### **Recommendations for the future:**

- Continue to work with the snowmobile clubs to ensure the trail system is maintained to a high level.
- Inventory all bridges and conduct inspections to be sure they are safe and provide a rough idea of when bridges will have to be repaired or replaced.
- Pursue new trails when opportunities arrive and continue to apply for funding for the trails that are eligible.

## 7. Outdoor Recreation Possibilities for Waupaca County Parks

### **ATV Park:**

ATVs have been growing in popularity for many years and as of yet there are very few places in the area to ride them. The lack of large continuous tracts of public lands makes the development of ATV trails very difficult at best. The high percentage of agricultural land makes the likelihood of patching together enough easements through private land for a trail system nearly impossible at this time. A designated area consisting of 500+ acres would provide riding opportunities for many in the area and perhaps draw users from farther away. These types of facilities generally operate on fees generated by the users, so once established should have a relatively low impact on the Parks budget. Grants are available through the DNR ATV program to help establish these types of parks. As large parcels become available, the County should watch for an area that would have suitable soils and interesting terrain for this type of intensive use area.

### **Mountain Bike Trails:**

This is an underserved activity that could be developed in several existing park locations. Single track riding is quite popular and requires a less developed trail than the limestone and paved trails found throughout the State. Hartman Creek State Park has a nice trail system, but as demand increases, there will need to be more trails located in other portions of the County. Keller Park has the potential to host some unique and challenging bike trails with its hilly and rocky terrain. The Pauer's Property could one day serve as a site for trails as well. Development of these trails should be in coordination with interested bike groups to both provide input for what they are looking for in trails and possibly volunteer labor for establishment and maintenance. There has been a push lately for groomed winter bike trails that accommodate the "fat-tire" bikes, this should be pursued as well when interested groups come forward.

### **Ski and Snow Shoeing Trails:**

Cross country skiing and snow shoeing are very low impact sports for the park system. The trails can generally be used for other purposes during other seasons. There are groomed trails provided at Hartman Creek State Park and the Iola Winter Sports Area but the opportunity exists to have more trails at various parks including Keller, Pigeon River, Pauer's, Wau-King Trail, Camp Vic-To-Rae and others. To groom these trails the Parks Department would need a grooming drag and a suitable piece of equipment to pull it with.

**Disc Golf:**

Disc golf, also has been called Frisbee Golf, is a flying disc game that requires precision and accuracy, in which individual players throw a flying disc at a target. According to the Professional Disc Golf Association, "The object of the game is to traverse a course from beginning to end in the fewest number of throws of the disc. Many County Parks have incorporated disc golf courses into their parks as demand has grown steadily for many years now. Some places charge a fee to users, others rely on donations to purchase and maintain the baskets (goals). There are several parks that could provide for this activity if there was interest shown.

**Swimming:**

Waupaca County does not offer any developed swimming areas in its park system. Keller Park has an area that was in the past maintained as a beach but has since been allowed to return to a more natural condition. With the proper permits and enough use a nice swim area could be maintained there. There has been a great demand for a public swimming area on the Chain of Lakes, in fact it was one of the primary recommendations from the previous Outdoor Recreation Plan. Finding a suitable spot on the Chain of Lakes to develop this park has been and will continue to be a challenge both financially and socially. Those opposed to the beach have sited possible crowding and water quality issues as reasons to not build this type of park. The swimming areas at Hartman Creek State Park and Waupaca City Parks get heavy use during the swimming season.

**Sledding:**

Sledding is a popular family oriented winter activity that many park systems provide. Waupaca County parks does not provide any designated sledding areas at this time but if an opportunity were to arise to purchase and develop an area to do so, it would likely be well used. The City of New London has a sled hill near Hatten Park that is quite popular with locals. The City of Waupaca developed a sled hill in Swan Park which opened in 2014.

### **Horse Trails:**

Portage County Parks has a horse trail developed alongside the Tomorrow River State trail from Plover to the Waupaca County Line. There has been several attempts to get the development going on the Waupaca County Side, only to have the interested groups back out. If horses are to have continued access to this trail, the parallel trail will have to be developed as horses riding the limestone surface of the trail causes tread damage that is costly and time-consuming to repair. Some sections of this trail will be easy to develop, requiring only the moving of some brush, rocks, and trees. There are many sections of the trail that run through wetlands that will prove more difficult to link together and will require more sharing of the old railroad grade surface.

The County Forest provides for horse riding on the many access roads/trails throughout the property. To improve this for horse riding would involve signing the trails and organizing them into loops with maps to help people get around. There will have to be special attention given to pruning trees to ensure that there is enough clearance for a rider on a horse.

### **Hunting:**

The County Forest is currently the only park that we allow hunting on. The demand for this area during hunting seasons far exceeds what is available. Should larger tracts of land become available for purchase by the County, having these parcels open to hunting should be carefully considered.

### **Ice Skating:**

This is an activity that could be provided for if the County were to get into providing a winter recreation area for skiing, snow shoeing and biking. Having a skating pond near a warming house would increase the diversity of use. Providing for skating in an area other than that is likely best left to a local City park system where it would be close to a larger population base.

### **Target Shooting (Gun and Archery):**

A public gun range would be a positive addition to the area as currently residents would have to go to a members-only gun club range or travel to a different county to shoot at an established range. To provide this service the County would need a large parcel of land in a fairly unpopulated area. There are a few different approaches to running a shooting range that vary from a staffed facility with additional services offered, to a basic open area with established benches, lanes and backstops that would be unsupervised. Having a longer range area (400+ yards) in addition to the standard 25, 50, 100 yard ranges would provide a more unique experience that may draw people from surrounding areas.

An archery range could be developed near a gun range to utilize the same facilities (parking lot, restrooms, shelter, etc...). Many archery ranges provide some standard shooting lanes as well as a few different stations to shoot from including elevated stands and unique obstacles to shoot around.

### **Camping:**

Camping is a very popular family activity that is underprovided for at the County level. There is currently event camping allowed at the Waupaca County Fairgrounds, as well as group camping at Camp Vic-To-Rae. Waupaca County lacks the established public campgrounds many of its neighboring counties operate. There are several existing parks that could be developed into camping areas. The County is in the process of developing a camping plan to address priorities and the proper approach to starting up some camping areas. Camp Vic-To-Rae appears to be the lowest hanging fruit in this pursuit as there are already proper restrooms and some infrastructure in place. There is additional area to develop standard camping sites as well. This could become a good revenue source for the County but will require some investment up front to get to that stage. Additional sites to consider for camping include Keller Park, Pigeon River Park, and more established sites at the County Fairgrounds in Weyauwega.

### **Water Trail System:**

A system of water access points should be developed to allow access to and from sections of river within the County. This could be promoted and used to draw visitors to the area. The Waupaca Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with other agencies, is spearheading an effort to describe and publish what is available at this time. This effort should point us toward which streams to focus the most initial effort on. A water trail system will require buy-in from paddling groups to help maintain and promote the various rivers.

### **Community to Community Trails:**

Whenever the opportunity arises to connect two communities together with a trail system, the idea should be explored. These types of trails promote healthy lifestyles and bond communities together. Examples of this type of trail are the Wau-King Trail and the Friendship Trail. A bonus is when one community's local trails (i.e. River Ridge Trail) can be linked with another community's trails as it benefits both.

### **Additional Park Land:**

Whenever the opportunity to acquire more parkland comes up, it should be considered carefully. There are areas of the County that have very little park land such as the northwest part of the County. Any new additions to the County Park System should be carefully evaluated to see how they would fit, if they are filling a void, and what all the implications would be of owning it. Public participation and opinion should be considered prior to any major purchases or commitments.

### **Dog Exercise Area:**

While Waupaca County offers a dog park in the City of Waupaca, it is too small and does not provide much of interest for visitors, canine or human. A larger, 30+ acres, site should be considered that would provide varied terrain, trees, and walking paths. These type of parks are very popular in other areas with the closest being Standing Rocks Park in Portage County. The larger areas allow users to explore and trails promote physical activity in the user as well as the dog.

## **8. Public Response to Plan**

A 5-year plan public hearing was held on 12 November 2014 at the Waupaca County Courthouse. There were 3 in attendance from the general public. Only a few concerns were brought up, mostly pertaining to the Fairgrounds. There was talk about the planned Grandstands Pavilion building as well as concerns about providing storm shelters for the fairgrounds.



## Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Uses and Trends

*As the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative looks to reconnect Americans to the outdoors, Wisconsin must examine its outdoor recreation uses and trends to better understand how Wisconsinites currently connect to the state's outdoor recreation resources. The second theme of the AGO Report, "Enhance Recreational Access and Opportunities," was developed out of the public's desire to remove barriers to recreation and to make recreation a higher priority for land and water management agencies. The survey analyses in this chapter can be used to determine what improvements are needed in regard to access and opportunities in outdoor recreation.*

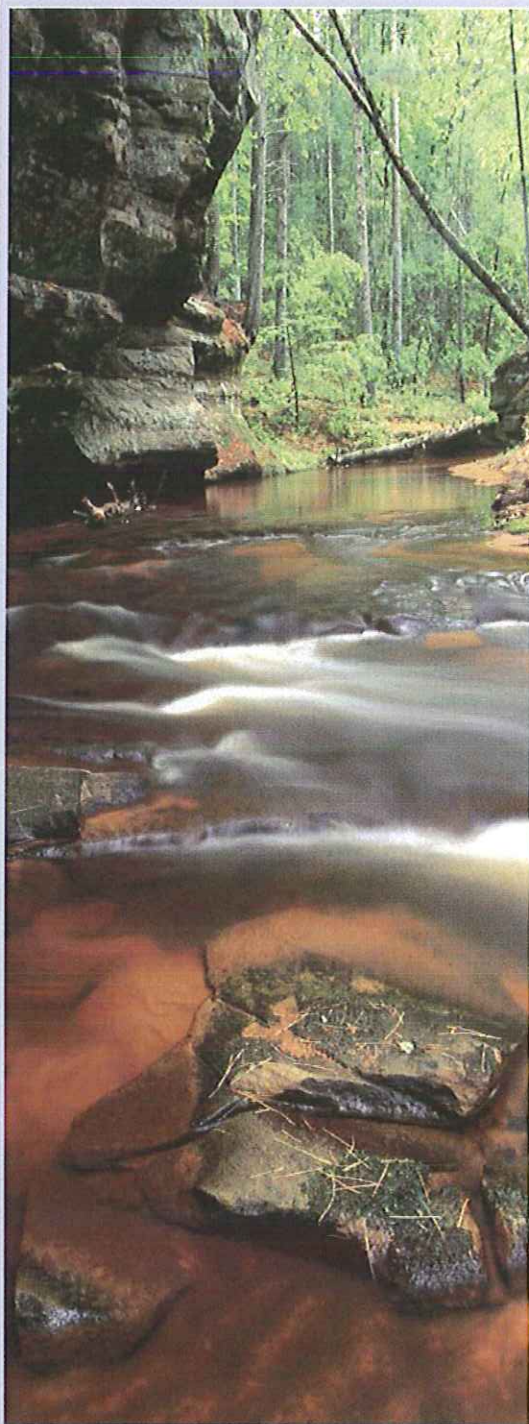
*By identifying outdoor recreation demand by demographics and by projecting outdoor recreation activity trends relevant to the immediate future, Chapter 2 of the SCORP gives Wisconsin communities direction in outdoor recreation planning. Under AGO, community-based efforts to increase outdoor recreation access will receive federal government support (AGO Recommendation 2.2). Such support will include technical assistance for local, state, and tribal efforts to enhance recreation (AGO Action Item 2.2a), and backing of community programs that improve safety of open spaces and access routes (AGO Action Item 2.2c).*





# 2

## Chapter 2: Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Uses and Trends



The challenge for recreation providers is to understand the ever-changing needs of the outdoor recreation public.

### Overview

Over 87% of Wisconsinites enjoy some form of outdoor recreation. This staggeringly high number reflects a state that is passionate about outdoor recreation and the traditions that go with it. Outdoor recreation happens over a variety of landscapes—whether in a duck blind along the Mississippi River or bicycling on a paved trail in Milwaukee, Wisconsin provides high quality outdoor recreation experiences for a diverse population. The challenge for recreation providers is to understand the ever-changing needs of the outdoor recreation public.

This chapter explores several of the factors that influence a person's recreation preferences—recreation settings, recreation experiences, and geographic locations—and classifies recreational activities and users according to these groupings. By dividing recreational activities into standard categories, this chapter seeks to explain recreation preferences within Wisconsin.

Recreation demand survey results for this SCORP are primarily based on the 2005–2009 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). The NSRE's Wisconsin data is based on 718 survey responses across five versions.

## Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Wisconsinites are active participants in most forms of outdoor recreation, and recreation participation rates within Wisconsin are higher than most other regions of the country. This high level of participation may be attributed to the combination of Wisconsin's abundant recreation resources as well as the state's four season climate, which provides unique

recreational opportunities year-round. Table 2-1 lists the 72 outdoor recreation activities surveyed for this SCORP. DNR identified these activities by following state and nationally recognized outdoor recreation demand survey methodology as detailed in Appendix B.

Table 2-1: Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Participants by Participation Rate (Age 16+), 5-year view

Activity	2005–2009 Participation	
	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Walk for pleasure	87.7	3,947
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.4	2,944
View/photograph natural scenery	65.3	2,939
Attend outdoor sports events	65.0	2,926
Family gathering	63.5	2,858
Visit nature centers, etc.	63.5	2,858
View/photograph other wildlife	57.9	2,606
Driving for pleasure	52.8	2,377
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	52.4	2,359
Sightseeing	50.6	2,278
Bicycling	48.7	2,192
Boating (any type)	47.3	2,129
Picnicking	47.0	2,115
Visit historic sites	46.7	2,102
Snow/ice activities (any type)	45.9	2,066
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	44.7	2,012
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	42.8	1,926
Visit a beach	42.3	1,904
Golf	41.8	1,881
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	41.7	1,877
View/photograph birds	41.7	1,877
Freshwater fishing	37.4	1,683
Day hiking	36.7	1,652
Motorboating	36.0	1,620
Visit a farm or agricultural setting	35.3	1,589
Swimming in an outdoor pool	34.5	1,553
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	33.7	1,517
Warmwater fishing	33.2	1,494
Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	32.8	1,476
Soccer outdoors	32.3	1,460
Running or jogging	32.1	1,445
Mountain biking	30.7	1,382
Sledding	28.2	1,269
View/photograph fish	26.7	1,202
Developed camping	25.4	1,143
Handball or racquetball outdoors	23.5	1,058
Visit other waterside (besides beach)	22.6	1,017
Hunting (any type)	22.2	999

Activity	2005–2009 Participation	
	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Off-highway vehicle driving	19.8	891
Trail running	18.6	773
Snowmobiling	18.3	824
Big game hunting	18.0	810
Canoeing	17.9	806
Visit prehistoric/archeological sites	15.5	698
Boat tours or excursions	13.9	626
Ice skating outdoors	13.5	608
Ice fishing	13.1	590
Waterskiing	13.0	585
Coldwater fishing	12.8	576
Primitive camping	11.4	513
Small game hunting	11.3	509
Rafting	9.2	414
Cross country skiing	8.8	396
Horseback riding (any type)	8.7	392
Tennis outdoors	8.5	383
Backpacking	7.4	333
Kayaking	7.3	329
Rowing	7.2	324
Downhill skiing	7.0	315
Horseback riding on trails	6.6	297
Use personal watercraft	6.5	293
Snorkeling	6.2	279
Snowshoeing	6.1	275
Migratory bird hunting	4.1	185
Sailing	3.9	176
Rock climbing	3.8	171
Snowboarding	3.7	167
Mountain climbing	2.7	122
Caving	2.6	117
Inline skating	2.5	113
Orienteering	1.6	72
Scuba diving	1.1	50
Windsurfing	1.1	50
Surfing	1.0	45

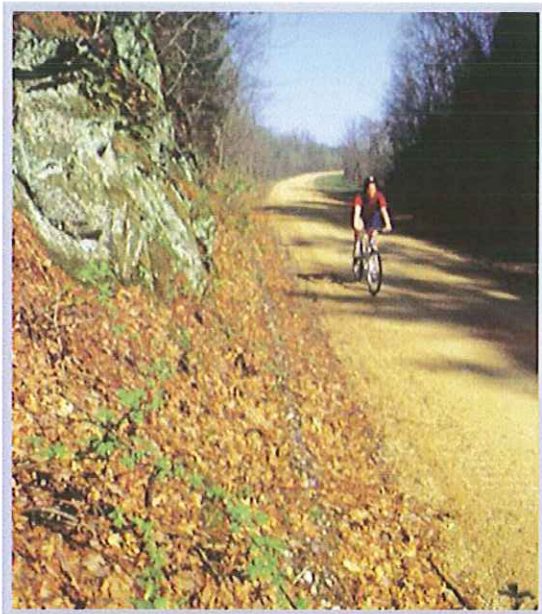
See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

## Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Setting Segmentation

While the above rankings are useful in determining which outdoor recreation activities are popular among Wisconsinites, it is also useful to understand what causes an activity to be popular. One method of examining outdoor recreation participation is by recreation setting, or the environment in which people recreate. For the purpose of this plan, the NSRE activities were divided into five groupings describing different activity and setting trends. These groupings, listed below, suggest that people in different recreation setting segments seek different kinds of experiences from outdoor recreation. By understanding recreation use in terms of these segments, we may begin to see how individual recreation activities fit within a broader spectrum of recreation settings.

**Segmentation of Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Activities:**

1. DEVELOPED LAND
2. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT
3. WATER
4. WINTER
5. VIEWING AND INTERPRETIVE



**Bicycling is a very popular activity in Wisconsin.**

## Developed Land Activities

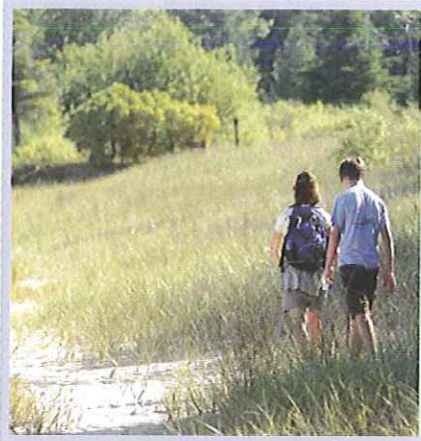
Outdoor recreation in developed settings includes a wide mix of recreational activities, all of which use some form of manmade development (such as roads or sidewalks) or involve a high level of social interaction. Developed land setting outdoor recreation is by far the most popular form of recreation in Wisconsin; more Wisconsin residents participate in two developed land recreation activities—walking for pleasure (87.7% participating) and gardening/landscaping for pleasure (65.4% participating)—than any other activities. Family gathering and bicycling are other popular activities in this category. Table 2-2 lists the percentage of Wisconsin residents participating in several popular developed land activities.

**Table 2-2: Percent Wisconsin Residents Participating in Developed Land Activities (Age 16+)**

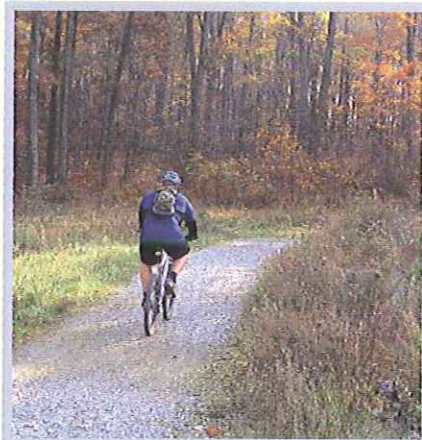
Activity	Percent Participating	Estimated Number of Participants (1,000s)
Walk for pleasure	87.7	3,947
Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	65.4	2,944
Attend outdoor sports events	65.0	2,926
Family gathering	63.5	2,858
Driving for pleasure	52.8	2,377
Bicycling	48.7	2,192
Picnicking	47.0	2,115
Yard games, e.g., horseshoes	44.7	2,012
Golf	41.8	1,881
Soccer outdoors	32.3	1,460
Running or jogging	32.1	1,445
Developed camping	25.4	1,143
Handball or racquetball outdoors	23.5	1,058
Horseback riding (any type)	8.7	392
Tennis outdoors	8.5	383
Horseback riding on trails	6.6	297
Inline skating	2.5	113

See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

**Parks, Trails, and Pedestrians in Wisconsin**

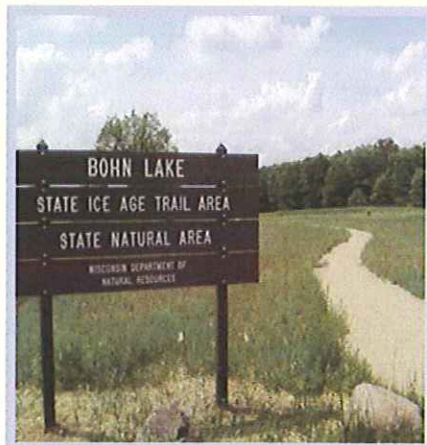


Public parks and trails are essential components of Wisconsin’s outdoor recreation infrastructure. Aside from other benefits, parks and trails serve as the setting for many of the state’s most popular outdoor activities. Walking is by far the most popular outdoor activity in Wisconsin. While much of recreational walking takes place on neighborhood sidewalks, the presence of parks and trails plays a significant role in activities like walking. Research has linked the presence of parks, trails, enjoyable scenery, and other people exercising to increased physical activity.



Activity	2005-2009 Participation	
	Percent Participating	Number of Participants (1,000s)
Walk for pleasure	87.7	3,947
Bicycling	48.7	2,192

While the presence of public parks and trails are essential to outdoor activities, the connectivity of surrounding communities to these recreational opportunities is also important. For example, a park connected to a local bike trail or located just a short walk down the street may see higher usage frequency from nearby neighborhoods as compared to one far and remote. Public parks and trails with coherent pedestrian connectivity, such as through popular activities of walking or biking, to adjacent communities can increase residents’ accessibility to outdoor recreation.



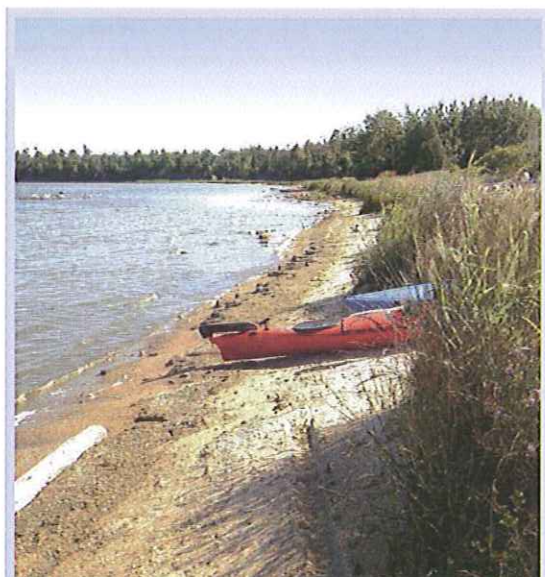
In 2011, a study assessed the pedestrian accessibility of Wisconsin’s parks and trails. This network analysis considered where people live, where parks and trails are located, and how parks and trails are connected by public sidewalks. This led to a county-by-county estimation of how many residents live within a ½-mile walk of a park or trail. The results indicate that over 70% of Wisconsin residents do not live within a ½-mile walk of a public park or trail. The assessment also revealed wide variation in park walkability across the state. For example, more than 50% of all residents in Dane, Milwaukee, and Rock counties live within a ½-mile of a park or trail. Meanwhile, in 31 other counties, less than 5% of residents have that level of pedestrian access.

### Limited Development Activities

Wisconsin offers many outdoor recreation activities in undeveloped, or primitive, sites. Generally, these activities involve hiking, camping, or some form of hunting. Over 1/3 of Wisconsinites participate in day hiking. One in five participate in some form of hunting. While limited development facilities may be used in conjunction with these activities, the typical nature-based land activity participant wants to experience natural surroundings.

### Water Activities

Water-based outdoor activities are among the most popular recreation activities in Wisconsin. Abundant water resources across the state offer a wide variety of recreation options from high speed motorboating to lazy lounging at the beach. Just under half of Wisconsin residents participate in boating, visiting a beach, or swimming in a lake or stream. The lakes and rivers of northwestern Wisconsin provide ample opportunities for water-based recreation. The Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River regions, both of which provide many miles of shoreline for water-based participants, are also popular areas for water recreation.



Abundant water resources across the state offer a wide variety of recreation options.

Table 2-3: Percent Wisconsin Residents Participating in Limited Development Activities (Age 16+)

Activity	Percent Participating	Estimated Number of Participants (1,000s)
Day hiking	36.7	1,652
Visit a wilderness or primitive area	33.7	1,517
Mountain biking	30.7	1,382
Hunting (any type)	22.2	999
Big game hunting	18.0	810
Small game hunting	11.3	509
Primitive camping	11.4	513
Migratory bird hunting	4.1	185
Backpacking	7.4	333
Rock climbing	3.8	171
Mountain climbing	2.7	122
Caving	2.6	117
Orienteering	1.6	72

See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

Table 2-4: Percent Wisconsin Residents Participating in Water Activities (Age 16+)

Activity	Percent Participating	Estimated Number of Participants (1,000s)
Boating (any type)	47.3	2,129
Visit a beach	42.3	1,904
Swimming in lakes, streams, etc.	41.7	1,877
Freshwater fishing	37.4	1,683
Motorboating	36.0	1,620
Swimming in an outdoor pool	34.5	1,553
Warmwater fishing	33.2	1,494
Visit other waterside (besides beach)	22.6	1,017
Canoeing	17.9	806
Waterskiing	13.0	585
Coldwater fishing	12.8	576
Rafting	9.2	414
Kayaking	7.3	329
Rowing	7.2	324
Use personal watercraft	6.5	293
Snorkeling	6.2	279
Sailing	3.9	176
Scuba diving	1.1	50
Windsurfing	1.1	50
Surfing	1.0	45

See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

**Winter Activities**

Snow- and ice-based activities are those that involve some form of frozen water. These activities are very popular among Wisconsinites with just over 45% of residents participating in some form of snow or ice activity. Sledding is the most popular of these activities, with just over a quarter (28.2%) of the state participating. Ice-related activities are also very popular in the state, with 608,000 Wisconsinites participating in ice skating and 590,000 participating in ice fishing.

**Viewing and Interpretive Activities**

Statewide, the most popular viewing and interpretive activity is viewing or photographing natural scenery, an activity in which over 65% of Wisconsinites participate. The second most popular viewing and interpretive activity is attending outdoor sporting events, with 65% of residents participating. Over half of all state residents have gone sightseeing within the last year, while just under half have visited historic sites. Physical activity is not generally a primary component of these activities, although it is often a complementary component. In general, rates of participation in viewing and interpretive activities are higher in Wisconsin than they are in other states. This may be a reflection of Wisconsin's strong educational system and history of environmental awareness.

**Wisconsin Recreational Trends and Observations**

As society grows and changes, so too does the recreational landscape. Changes in demographics, the economy, user preferences, and availability of recreation venues all influence the demand for different recreational activities. As part of the NSRE survey work, Wisconsin recreational activities have been tracked over the last 15 years. By far the biggest change in Wisconsin has been the migration of rural populations to urban centers, which is reflected in increased demand for urban-based recreational activities.

**Demographics**

Demographics play an important role in the popularity of outdoor recreation activities. From the years 2000 to 2010, the 2010 Census showed that Wisconsin's population grew 6%, which is well below the national average of 9.7%. The state fared better than four of the other six states in the Midwest region, trailing only Minnesota and Indiana in population growth. However, 2010 census data shows that rural counties in northern Wisconsin continued to lose population to urban areas in the past decade, while counties adjacent to major metro areas grew in population.

Table 2-5: Percent Wisconsin Residents Participating in Snow- and Ice-Based Activities (Age 16+)

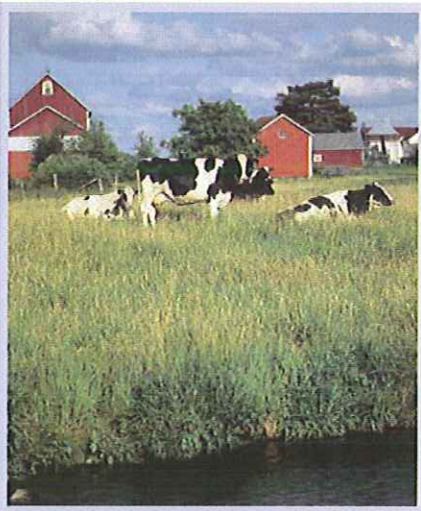
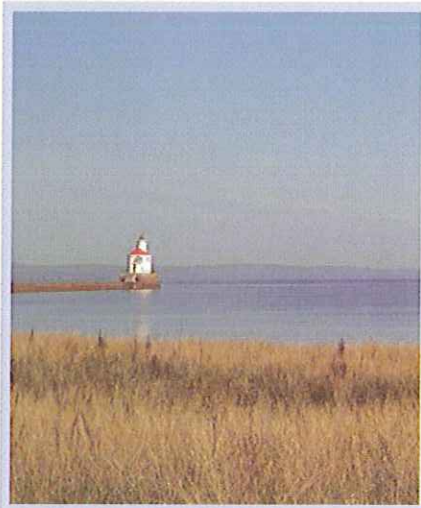
Activity	Percent Participating	Estimated Number of Participants (1,000s)
Snow/ice activities (any type)	45.9	2,066
Sledding	28.2	1,269
Snowmobiling	18.3	824
Ice skating outdoors	13.5	608
Ice fishing	13.1	590
Cross-country skiing	8.8	396
Downhill skiing	7.0	315
Snowshoeing	6.1	275
Snowboarding	3.7	167

See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

Table 2-6: Percent Wisconsin Residents Participating in Viewing and Interpretive Activities (Age 16+)

Activity	Percent Participating	Estimated Number of Participants (1,000s)
View/photograph natural scenery	65.3	2,939
Attend outdoor sports events	65.0	2,926
Visit nature centers, etc.	63.5	2,858
View/photograph other wildlife	57.9	2,606
View/photograph wildflowers, trees, etc.	52.4	2,359
Sightseeing	50.6	2,278
Visit historic sites	46.7	2,102
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	42.8	1,926
View/photograph birds	41.7	1,877
Visit a farm or agricultural setting	35.3	1,589
Attend outdoor concerts, plays, etc.	32.8	1,476
View/photograph fish	26.7	1,202
Visit prehistoric/archeological sites	15.5	698
Boat tours or excursions	13.9	626

See the 2005–2010 Wisconsin SCORP for additional detail on residents' participation in outdoor recreation.



### Rustic Roads, Byways, and Circle Tours

One relaxed way to enjoy the beauty of Wisconsin is to travel its rustic roads and byways. Wisconsin is the only state with a rustic road program, which was established in 1973. By 2011, 111 rustic roads totaling 639 miles now cut across 58 counties. These selectively preserved areas allow travelers to journey back in time through miles of charming and quaint paths that uniquely set them apart from other roads in the area. Rustic roads offer access to scenic resting points and connect scenes from Wisconsin's past, from lighthouses to Amish farms. As the only nationally designated scenic byway in the State, the Great River Road runs through 33 river towns while showcasing some of the oldest communities in Wisconsin. Other Wisconsin byways allow visitors to witness the beauty of our state through vantage points along lakes, rivers, bluffs, valleys, and swamps, all with various animal and plant life. With spans of 15 to 250 miles, byways offer historic and seasonal scenery through lakes, rivers, and national forests, all in flexible driving tours of 2 to 10 hours.

Wisconsin motorists can also enjoy highway expeditions around both Lake Michigan and Lake Superior via their respective circle tours. The Wisconsin portion of the Lake Michigan Circle Tour (LMCT) is 325 miles in length, and it extends along the entire eastern shore of Wisconsin. The Lake Superior Circle Tour (LSCT) on the northernmost shore of Wisconsin is 144 miles long, complete with optional passage through Big Bay State Park and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Both circle tours provide views of scenic waterfalls and miles of shoreline beaches, as well as numerous boating, camping, and fishing opportunities.

Table 2-7: Top Growth Wisconsin Recreation Activities 1994–2009 (Age 16+)

Recreation Use	Survey of 1994* (1,000s)	Survey of 2009* (1,000s)	Difference (1,000s)
Soccer outdoors	179.1	1,460.0	+ 1,280.9
View/photograph other wildlife	1,582.9	2,605.8	+ 1,022.9
Golf	888.8	1,882.3	+ 993.5
Handball or racquetball outdoors	96.8	1,058.3	+ 961.5
Walk for pleasure	2,988.0	3,946.9	+ 950.9
Attend outdoor sports events	1,995.2	2,923.5	+ 928.3
Bicycling	1,486.8	2,190.8	+ 704.0
Day hiking	949.0	1,652.8	+ 703.8
Running or jogging	803.8	1,446.8	+ 643.0
View/photograph birds	1,261.4	1,877.5	+ 616.1

\*Each survey represents a rolling average of five previous years.

Table 2-8: Top Growth Wisconsin Recreation Activities by Percent 1994–2009 (Age 16+)

Recreation Use	Survey of 1994* (1,000s)	Survey of 2009* (1,000s)	Percent Difference
Handball or racquetball outdoors	96.8	1,058.3	+ 993.3%
Soccer outdoors	179.1	1,460.0	+ 715.2%
Kayaking	46.6	328.4	+ 604.7%
Surfing	10.3	44.5	+ 332%
Football	282.5	852.4	+ 201.7%
Horseback riding	139.3	389.9	+ 179.9%
Mountain/rock climbing	53.3	122.9	+ 130.6%
Use personal watercraft	131.9	293.7	+ 122.7%
Golf	888.8	1,882.3	+ 111.8%
Snowboarding	77.7	164.4	+ 111.6%

\*Each survey represents a rolling average of five previous years.

From the years 2000 to 2010, nineteen Wisconsin rural counties lost population during this decade—experiencing more deaths than births that are part of a larger pattern of rural population loss across the Midwest. The 2010 census shows a shift from the 1990s, when only Milwaukee County experienced population loss. The population decline was mostly in the northern parts of the state, with Iron (down 14%), Florence (down 13%), and Price (down 11%) in the top three. The reasons for migration of younger people moving out of more rural areas are multifaceted that include job and educational opportunities, and a desire for diversity and cultural amenities (Applied Population Laboratory 2011). In stark contrast, just two Wisconsin counties lost population in the 1990s. A factor in this increased rural population loss is the recession that started in 2008, which pulled people away from rural areas and toward metro areas.

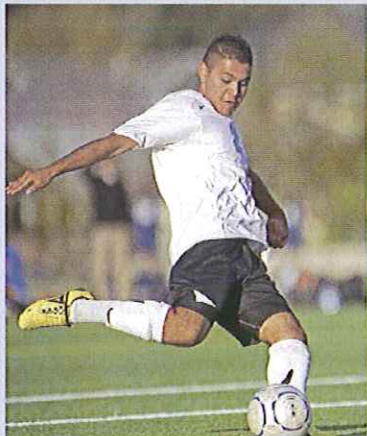
Wisconsin counties across the state line from the Chicago and Minneapolis metropolitan areas saw rapid population growth since the year 2000. St. Croix County, which lies within commuting range of Minneapolis and St. Paul, was the fastest-growing county in the state, increasing in population by more than 33% since 2000. Kenosha County, across the border from Chicago, grew 11.3% during the same period.

The state's Hispanic population has grown 74.2% since the year 2000. Hispanics now account for 5.9% of the state's population. Blacks remain the largest state minority group at 6.3%.

**Fifteen Year Recreation Trends**

A number of recreation activities have seen exponential growth over the last 15 years. In terms of sheer numbers, soccer has outpaced every other outdoor recreation activity. This growth can be attributed to the number of youth soccer leagues that have been formed over the last decade. Table 2-7 shows the top 10 recreational activities by total numbers.

Another way to show growth is by percentage change. This method shows a different set of recreation activities that have grown in popularity. Interestingly, most participants in these activities are urban residents. Table 2-8 reflects the top 10 recreational activities by total percentage change.



A number of recreation activities have seen exponential growth over the last 15 years. In terms of sheer numbers, soccer has outpaced every other outdoor recreation activity.






# 2

## Chapter 2: Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Uses and Trends

Table 2-9 considers the percentage changes in recreation participation rates, as well as industry forecasts and opinions from recreation professionals, to suggest which activities will be popular in the future. These observa-

tions are made for a five year period, and therefore reflect the most pressing demands on recreation in the immediate future.

Table 2-9: Projected Trends in Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Activities

<b>Increasing Demand</b> 	Adventure racing	Popular as both an individual and a group activity.
	Driving for pleasure	An easy activity for the aging baby boomer generation.
	Developed/RV camping	Baby boomers are a continued driving force for this growth.
	Kayaking	Cheaper entry points have attracted more participants.
	Visit a dog park	Urban residents continue to demand more of these areas.
	Soccer outdoors	Youth growth is still strong in urban areas.
	BMX biking	X Games popularity may be driving this growth.
	Climbing	Indoor climbing walls have led to an outdoor resurgence.
	Stand up paddling/paddleboarding	A fast growing water sport sweeping the country.
	Triathlon (on- and off-road)	Varying distance events have allowed for growth.
	Off-highway vehicle driving	Post recession growth continues.
	Gardening or landscaping for pleasure	The "grow local" concept is taking hold at many levels.
<b>Stable Demand</b> 	Walk for pleasure	Market saturation does not allow for large growth.
	Running or jogging	Gen Y is replacing the baby boomers for this activity.
	Water parks	Recession may have caused this growth to slow.
	Motorboating	Still easy access in a water-based state.
	Day hiking	Popular with many generations.
	Golf	Time constraints do not allow for growth.
	Tent camping	Continues to be stable, but growth is illusive.
	Snowboarding	May have peaked after 20 years of growth.
	Trail running	A stable niche activity with Gen Y.
	View/photograph wildlife	An easy activity that spans generations.
	Bicycling (road and non-paved)	Popular with many generations – access is still key.
	Snowshoeing	After large growth, this has stabilized.
<b>Decreasing Demand</b> 	Hunting	Continues to struggle with generational loss and private access.
	Inline skating	A large decrease in the last six years, the bottom may be near.
	Skateboarding/skate parks	Gen M is free-skating with longboards.
	Horseback riding on trails	Recession impacts have caused this to decrease with no rebound.
	Softball	Baby boomers continue to leave this sport.
	Downhill skiing	Gen Y does not have the numbers to replace aging baby boomers.



### Summary

As society continues to change and evolve, so too does outdoor recreation participation. Recreation participation reflects many elements: recreation preferences, the diversity of the Wisconsin population, the variety of recreation landscapes available throughout the state, and the increasing barriers placed upon the average recreationalist. Taken as a whole, these factors contribute to a diverse range of recreational activity preferences and demands throughout the state. As recreation providers attempt to accommodate these various needs, proactive planning will become increasingly important to ensure that recreation in Wisconsin remains accessible and adaptable to the needs of the state's population.