
20. THE VOLK FIELD REGION'S RECREATION AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES



Recreation and leisure opportunities are abundant in the Volk Field Region. The Volk Field Region has numerous recreational and leisure opportunities for all walks of life and interests. Whether an individuals interests are passive or active activities, the area provides ample opportunities. It is this diverse recreational and scenic environment that attracts people to west central Wisconsin and creates a quality of life that is unsurpassed. Such an area will assist Volk Field in recruiting military personnel, maintaining morale and increase military employee retention.

In the Volk Field Region golf courses can be found in both Mauston and Union Center. These courses combined with courses in the Fort McCoy Region and surrounding counties provide golfing opportunities for everyone.

There are numerous hunting and fishing opportunities in the Volk Field Region. Public fishing access may be found in the adjacent community of Camp Douglas at Nelson Park as well as in New Lisbon and Mauston (each only a few minutes away). There are seven other fishing piers in the county as well as a public fishing access in each of three county parks. Lake Petenwell and Lake Castle Rock provide opportunities for fishing. Hunting is allowed at the nearby Meadow Valley Wildlife Area and the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, as well as the extensive county managed forestlands.



Lake Petenwell is Wisconsin's second largest inland lake

Lake Petenwell and Lake Castle Rock are the second and fifth largest inland lakes in the State of Wisconsin and offer numerous boating opportunities. Both lakes are within 15 miles of Volk Field and offer numerous boat accesses for recreational boating activities on the lakes. Other nearby boat launches are found southeast of Volk Field including New Lisbon Lake located just over six miles away and Decorah Lake at a distance of 12 miles. Only 4 miles east of Volk Field is a public boat launch for the Lemonweir River and 9 miles north is another launch for the Eagle Nest Flowage. Canoe and kayak enthusiasts need only travel three miles north of Volk Field to find a public canoe and kayak landing on the Lemonweir River.

Regional and community festivals are a tradition in the Volk Field Region. Camp Douglas has an atmosphere of mutual caring and concern, which shows in their providing a recreation center for all age groups, parties for the village youth, and a two-day Armed Forces Day celebration and carnival. The village boasts several tourist attractions, excellent restaurants, and hunting and fishing areas. The Fall Foliage Festival takes place at Mill Bluff State Park near Volk Field. It features woodcarving demonstrations, chain saw woodcarvers, a country-western band, and the Cotton Candy Clowns. The Juneau County Fair takes place every year during August at the Juneau County Fairgrounds. Only five minutes east of Volk Field is the Bow-Hunters Bow Shoot (annually in September) where bow-hunters participate in contests, games, and demonstrations pertaining to archery and hunting. Northeast of Volk Field is the Village of Necedah and the annual Whooping Crane Festival in September. The festival celebrates the annual Fall Flight of the Necedah Whooping Cranes. Pancake breakfast and bus tours of the Necedah Wildlife Refuge are offered hourly from 7-10am. Other activities include music, art and crafts, youth art contest, ultra-light display, and demonstrations of training techniques. Every year at the end of June the Elroy Fair fills its Schultz City Park with exhibits, activities, and music.

For residents that enjoy the fine arts the Volk Field Region has numerous museums and theaters.

The Wisconsin National Guard Museum is located at historic Volk Field - Camp Williams, near the Village of Camp Douglas. The museum is housed in an 1896 log lodge that has been restored to its original appearance. The modern interior contains 3,000 square feet of exhibits. A historical account of how Camp Williams evolved from a swampy rifle range to a modern Air Combat Readiness Training Center is offered as well as a profile of 50 years of the Wisconsin Air National Guard. The Memorial Library at Volk Field contains books, diaries, personal histories, scrapbooks, photographs, slides, videos and maps. Materials can only be used in the reading room. Copying services are available on weekdays. Research assistance is provided.

Visitors follow the famed 32nd Division from the Mexican Border through five major offensives against German trenches. Called Les Terribles by the French, they adopt the RED ARROW as their distinctive emblem. Hundreds of Wisconsin Guardsmen fought with the 1st and 42nd Divisions in 1918. In World War II, the 32nd scores the first offensive victory against the Japanese, and then logged a record 654 days of combat. Two battalions of artillery fight through Italy, and the 135th Medical Regiment supported troops from Australia to Japan. Visitors may learn about the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Civil War Volunteers and Wisconsin soldiers as they fought in Puerto Rico in 1898. The duties of the 32nd Separate Infantry Brigade is highlighted in their NIKE air defense role, service in Vietnam, deployments to Germany, and service in Desert Storm.

The Boorman House is a Victorian mansion built in 1874 that is now the Juneau County Historical Society Museum. Located at 211 North Union Street in Mauston, it is open to the public Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. The museum also opens around Thanksgiving and holds a Christmas open house with tours and entertainment. In addition to the museums, there are numerous movie theatres in many of the local communities.

Bicycling is a major recreational activity in the Volk Field Region. Starting in Camp Douglas, the Juneau County Omaha Bike Trail can take bicyclists directly from Volk Field to join up with two major state bike trails. The seal coated Omaha Bike Trail is maintained by Juneau

County and measures 12.5 miles long on its way to the City of Elroy. The Elroy-Sparta State Bike Trail was the first official "Rails to Trails" conversion in the United States in 1965. The surface of the trail is smooth, hard-packed limestone. The 32 miles of abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Railroad has no more than a 3 percent grade and passes through 3 tunnels that were dug by hand in the 1870's. The bicycle trail is located only ten miles from Volk Field. The City of Elroy also links up with the most scenic trail in the Wisconsin State Trail System: the "400" State Trail. It was named for the Chicago & Northwestern passenger train that traveled the 400 miles from Chicago to Minneapolis in 400 minutes. The 22 miles of smooth, hard-packed limestone parallels or crosses the Baraboo River for the entire length of the trail between Elroy and Reedsburg. Access to the "400" Trail is located 12 miles south of Volk Field. The conversion of a former railroad right-of-way into the 400 State Trail provides a significant opportunity for bicycling enthusiasts as well as hikers.

Winter activities are popular and abundant in the Volk Field Region.

Juneau County offers 66 miles of skiing trails and 186 miles of snowmobiling trails. Although there is no alpine skiing in the immediate Volk Field Region, downhill skiing can be found within less than an hour's drive in Adams-Friendship and La Crosse.



Castle Rock Lake is Wisconsin's Fifth Largest Inland Lake

Juneau County contains numerous public and private campgrounds with over 1,000 campsites. Castle Rock County Park offers 300 campsites and is located approximately 14 miles east of Volk Field on the banks of Castle Rock Lake. Wilderness County Park is located along Petenwell Lake approximately 18 miles

from Volk Field and offers over 100 campsites. The campsites of both locations are suitable for tents or trailers and maintain electricity, showers, flush toilets, playgrounds, swimming, water skiing, grills, shelters, picnic tables, and trails. Although there are hundreds more campsites at many other locations in Juneau County, there are numerous sites offered within five minutes of Volk Field including: Kennedy County Park with 30 campsites and Mill Bluff State Park with 21 campsites.



Unique Rock Outcropping near Volk Field

The Volk Field Region has affordable regional lodging accommodations. Most hotels and motels in the Volk Field Region are approximately ten minutes away in nearby Mauston. These hotels include: The Country Inn, the Mauston Park Oasis-Best Western, and the Super 8. Table 10.1 has a list of some of the lodging facilities in the four county Fort McCoy and Volk Field region.

The Sunnyfield Farm Bed and Breakfast is only five minutes from Volk Field and offers scenic bluffs and quiet countryside. The Village of Necedah has the Best Retreat Bed and Breakfast. Necedah is located approximately fifteen minutes away to the northeast of Volk Field. In all, there are about 200 rooms available in the county.

The area is also near one of the largest tourist attractions in the Midwest, Wisconsin Dells. This area is only an hours drive and has numerous year round activities for everyone, from waterparks (both indoor and outdoor) to go-carts to roller coasters. The area has hundreds of hotel rooms and a diversity of shopping and related services.