

# JACKSON COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



2022 - 2026



PREPARED BY:  
*Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission*





---

# Jackson County

## Outdoor Recreation Plan 2022-2026

Prepared by:  
Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission  
1707 Main Street, Suite 435  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608.785.9396  
plan@mrrpc.com

in collaboration with:

Jackson County Forestry and Parks Department

A special thanks to members of the public who took the time to fill out the survey, offer online feedback on the goals and objectives, and/or attended a public meeting. Thank you to the stakeholder groups who took the time to speak with Town staff members and share their interests, concern, and ideas for the Plan.

Adopted by the Jackson County Board on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

---



---

---

# Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	i
Goals and Objectives .....	i
Authority .....	i
Community Participation and Cooperation .....	ii
Citizen Groups and Service Clubs.....	ii
1. GEOPOLITICAL PROFILE.....	1
Jackson County .....	1
The Landscape .....	1
Table 1-1 Jackson County Land Use.....	1
Local Governments .....	3
Ecological Landscape .....	3
Driftless Area .....	3
2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE .....	1
Population.....	1
Table 2-1 Jackson County Population Estimates .....	1
Population Age.....	2
Gender Characteristics.....	2
Table 2-2 Gender Characteristics - 2019 ACS .....	2
Urban/Rural .....	3
Farming .....	3
Housing Trends .....	3
Table 2-3 Jackson County Housing Trends.....	3
Employment.....	4
Table 2-4 Jackson County Occupations by Industry .....	4
Employers .....	5
Table 2-5 Jackson County Employers.....	5
Per Capita Personal Income.....	5
Tourism Expenditures .....	5
Table 2-6 Tourism Impact .....	5
3. STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP) 2019-2023.....	1
Introduction .....	1
Recreational Demand .....	1
Favorite Places to Visit Based on Public Input .....	2
Future Recreation Needs .....	3
Definitions.....	3
Recreation Standards.....	3

---

---

---

---

4. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Developed Land Activities.....	1
Table 4-1 Public and Private Campgrounds .....	3
Limited Development Activities.....	5
Table 4-2 Jackson County Sportsmen Clubs .....	8
Water Activities .....	8
Table 4-3 Jackson County Trout Streams.....	9
Winter Activities .....	12
Viewing and Interpretive Activities.....	13
5. RECREATION RESOURCE INVENTORY .....	1
Federal Outdoor Recreational Facilities .....	1
State Outdoor Recreational Facilities .....	1
State Fishery and Wildlife Areas .....	2
State Fishery Areas .....	3
State Wildlife Areas .....	3
State Wildlife Areas Located in Jackson County .....	4
State Natural Areas.....	5
State Fishery Areas .....	10
County Outdoor Recreational Facilities .....	11
6. ACTIONS .....	1
West Arbutus County Park.....	1
Motorized Trails.....	1
Wazee Lake Recreation Area .....	1
Merlin Lambert County Park.....	1
East Arbutus County Park .....	1
Adoption Resolution .....	2

---

---

---

# INTRODUCTION

Outdoor recreation aids citizens' physical health, as well as the health of the economy, as high-quality recreation opportunities attracts visitors to the County each year. Jackson County recognizes the need for an updated comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. County, city, village and town officials as well as concerned citizens are aware of the need for local outdoor recreation facilities and are also aware that the needs vary within the County and its municipal subdivisions in the development of specific recreation programs and long-range objectives. The plan is also intended to assist in local government's budgetary considerations when planning for the maintenance and further development of recreation facilities. The recommendation and proposals found within this plan are aimed at the continued preservation, acquisition, development, and improvement of the area's outdoor recreation facilities. It is local government's responsibility to periodically further investigate and seriously consider the recommendations cited within this plan that provide for the orderly growth, development, and maintenance of the area's outdoor recreation resources.

This plan is also intended to assure the County's and municipalities' eligibility to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LAWCON) and the State Stewardship Program. The existence of a recreation plan will also assist the County and communities with their overall planning and development efforts for which financial assistance is also available from other federal and state programs designed to promote and assist in the development of viable communities. The provision of adequate recreation facilities is a goal that concurs with the national emphasis on improving the quality of life in our communities and preserving a balanced environment.

## Goals and Objectives

Jackson County's objective in preparing this Outdoor Recreation Plan is twofold; the first is to provide an orderly framework for guiding future development of the County's own recreation properties; and the second is to provide a single source document in which the individual community plans can be brought together to provide a County-wide inventory of existing outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities and also to provide an opportunity to view the entire County for future planning purposes.

To accomplish this objective the following goals have been identified:

- 1) Maintain an outdoor recreation program that protects the natural environment and responds to the outdoor recreational needs of the area's citizenry.
- 2) Formulate an action agenda plan to meet the determined needs or unsatisfied public demands for outdoor recreation facilities in the County and municipalities.
- 3) Have a program that enables the County and municipalities to continually maintain and improve their recreation programs in a way that is economically feasible and environmentally sound.
- 4) Encourage the private sector to provide certain quality services and facilities for outdoor recreation enthusiasts.
- 5) Consider the impact on the local economy of the many visitors and tourists in the area that utilize the County and municipal outdoor recreation facilities.
- 6) Establish a policy of re-evaluating goals and objectives and project plans when necessary.
- 7) Receive maximum benefits from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and State Stewardship Program funds.

## Authority

The Jackson County Park Committee requested the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) to prepare this County Outdoor Recreation Plan. The Assistant Administrator for the Jackson County Forestry and

---

Parks Department was authorized to be the local liaison between the MRRPC and the County and local communities.

## Community Participation and Cooperation

The strength of the outdoor recreation program in Jackson County can be gauged by participation and enthusiasm of numerous local citizen groups and service clubs that create outdoor recreational opportunities and support governmental efforts at improving outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities. Below are some of these groups and events that help make outdoor experiences of all kinds available in the County.

## Citizen Groups and Service Clubs

Adams-Helwig-Randals Post #162	Jackson County Historical Society
American Legion Building Post #200	Jackson County Homemakers Clubs
Andrew Blackhawk Post #129	Jackson County Little League
Barnyard Trail Riders (Snowmobile club)	Jackson County Snowmobile Alliance
Black River Falls Foundation	Jackson County Trail Riders
Bohemian Lodge Ratolest WI #196	Jackson County Wildlife Fund
BR Trail Riders (Snowmobile club)	Jackson County Youth Theater Company
BR Arts Alliance Inc.	Karner Blue Garden Club
BRF Figure Skating Club #253	Lions Club - Black River Falls
BRF Gun Club	Lunda Community Charitable Trust
BRF Sportsman Club-Shaftbusters	Melrose Area History Recalled
BRF Youth Hockey Association	Melrose Rod & Gun Club
Community Garden	Miles-Hagen Post #200
Davis Porter Post #140	Millston Knights ATV Club
Ducks Unlimited	Millston-Knapp Sportsmen Club
Friends of the Black River	Motorcycle Club-ABATE
Hanson-Lien Post #368	Neil S. Lewison Post #439
Hatfield Roadrunners	Robinson Creek Preservation Association
Hixton Rod & Gun Club	Robinson Creek Riders (Snowmobile Club)
Ho-Chunk Heritage Preservation	Rotary Club
Jackson County ATV Association	Taylor Rod & Gun Club
Jackson-Trempealeau Ridge Runners	Thomas/Leonard Johnson Post #541
Jackson County 4-H Clubs	Thompson-RedcloudVFW Post #1959
Jackson County 4-H Shooting Sports	Wazee Riders Horse Club
Jackson County Bird Club	White Tails Unlimited
Jackson County Forestry & Parks	Woodland Riders



# 1. GEOPOLITICAL PROFILE

## Jackson County

Located in west central Wisconsin, Jackson County’s 2019 American Community Survey population was 20,522. The County is shaped like a “T” lying on its side. The top of the “T” is closest to the Mississippi River, while the bottom points in an eastern direction towards Wisconsin Rapids. The southernmost portions of the County (in the top of the T segment) are about a 30-minute drive to the urban center of La Crosse/Onalaska. The northern most portions are approximately the same distance to Eau Claire. The County borders La Crosse and Monroe County to the south, Trempealeau County to the west, Eau Claire and Clark County to the north, and Portage and Juneau Counties to the east. The County has an area of 1,000 square miles. The largest city in Jackson County is Black River Falls with a 2019 estimated population of 3,496. Jackson County is easily accessible to population centers to the north and south. An excellent highway system serves the area. The Interstate system, I 94, runs northwest across the County from the Town of Millston to the Town of Garfield. U.S. Highway 12 traverses and connects several communities in the County and State Highways 54 and 95 also serve as key arterials for the County.



## The Landscape

According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue 2019 Statement of Assessment, Jackson County has 360,887 acres of assessed lands. Of this amount 140,679 acres or 39.0% of the total assessed lands in Jackson County are used as Agriculture. When you add the Ag. Forest category it climbs up to 57.4% of the land use. In some areas of the County, farming is hindered due to steep valleys, ridges, and undesirable soil conditions. The second largest land cover category in the County is Forest Land with 75,686 acres or 21.0% of the total acreage. The County’s forestland contains many species of pine trees, with Red and White Pine covering richer forestland and Jack Pine covering the poorer growth areas. These lands are valuable for the commercial timber crop as well as for wildlife and watershed conservation purposes and their contribution to the overall scenic attributes of the County.

**Table 1-1 Jackson County Land Use**

Land Classification	2012		2019		2012-2019	
	Acres	% of County	Acres	% of County	Acreage Change	% Change
Residential <sup>(1)</sup>	13,033	3.42	12,108	3.36	-925	-7.10
Commercial <sup>(1)</sup>	1,523	0.04	1,918	0.53	395	25.94
Manufacturing <sup>(1)</sup>	1,577	0.41	2,695	0.75	1,118	70.89
Agriculture <sup>(1)</sup>	151,648	39.8	140,679	39.0	-10,969	-7.23
Undeveloped <sup>(1)</sup>	57,224	15.0	57,825	16.02	601	1.05
Agriculture Forest <sup>(1)</sup>	67,643	17.8	66,284	18.4	-1,359	-2.01

Forest Land <sup>(1)</sup>	84,548	22.2	75,686	21.0	-8,862	-10.48
Other <sup>(1)</sup>	3,528	0.93	3,692	1.02	164	4.65
<b>County Total <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>380,724</b>		<b>360,887</b>			

(1) Wis. Dept. of Revenue Div. of State and Local Finance - 2005 and 2010 Real Property Equalized Value and Acreage Figures

(2) Includes total area of County - both land area and water area. Source: Jackson County Land Information Office

- Class 1 - **Residential** Any parcel (or part of a parcel) of untilled land not suitable to produce row crops, on which a dwelling or other form of human abode is located» Vacant land where the most likely use is residential development. Mobile homes assessed as real property are classified as residential. Apartment buildings of up to three units are also classified as residential.
- Class 2 - **Commercial** Land and improvements primarily devoted to buying and reselling goods. Includes the providing of services in support of residential, agricultural, manufacturing and forest uses.
- Class 3 - **Manufacturing** - See Section 70.995, Wis. Stats., State assessment of manufacturing property.
- Class 4 - **Agricultural** State law Section 70 .32(2)(c)1g., Wis. Stats., describes this as "land, exclusive of buildings and improvements, which is devoted primarily to agricultural use." Land devoted primarily to the production of crops (excluding forestry operations) or the keeping, grazing, or feeding of livestock for the sale of livestock or livestock products. Buildings and dwellings associated with growing, production and associated services are classified as "Other" (Class 7). Agricultural Assessment Guide for Wisconsin Property Owners provides classification examples.
- Class 5 - **Undeveloped Land** See Section 70.32(2)(c)4., Wis Stats., Areas commonly called marshes, swamps, thickets, bogs or wet meadow. Fallow tillable land (assuming agricultural use is the land's highest and best use). Road right-of-way, ponds and depleted gravel pits» Land because of soil or site conditions is not producing or capable of producing commercial forest products.
- Class 5m - **Ag Forest Land** - See Section 70.32(2)(c)1d, Wis. Stats., defines agricultural forest as land producing or can produce commercial forest products, if the land satisfies any of the following: Forest land is contiguous to a parcel that is classified in whole as agricultural land. The forest land and the contiguous agricultural parcel must have the same owner. Contiguous includes separated only by a road. Forest land is located on a parcel containing agricultural land for the January 1, 2004 assessment and on January 1 of the current assessment year. Forest land is located on a parcel where at least 50% of the acreage was converted to agricultural land for the January 1, 2005 assessment year or thereafter.
- Class 6 - **Productive Forest Land** - See Section 70.32(2)(c)2., Wis Stats. Land producing or capable of producing commercial forest products. Forest land cannot include buildings and improvements. Forested areas that are managed or set aside to grow tree crops for "industrial wood" or to obtain tree products (ex: sap, bark, seeds). Forested areas with no commercial use made of the trees, including cutover. Cherry orchards, apple orchards and Christmas tree plantations are classified as agricultural property. Lands designated Forest Crop Land and Managed Forest Land by the Department of Natural Resources are entered separately in the assessment roll. Improvements on Forest Crop Lands and Managed Forest Land must be listed as personal property under state law (sec. 77 .04(1) and sec. 77 .84, Wis. Stats.). Forested areas primarily held for hunting, trapping or in the operation of game preserves, must be classified as forest, unless clearly operated as a commercial enterprise or exempt.
- Class 7 - **Other** - See Section. 70.32(2)(c)1m, Wis. Stats. Buildings and improvements on a farm (ex: houses, barns and silos along with the land necessary for their location and convenience)

Jackson County has important natural water resources. The Black River is the most important river in Jackson County. The river divides the County into east and west halves. The headwaters for both the Trempealeau River and the Buffalo River are in Jackson County. Smaller waterways, such as Indian Grave Creek, Kenyon Creek, and other feeder streams are scattered about in the County and are an important part of the area's natural environment. Lake Wazee, the deepest inland lake in the state, is in Jackson County.

Jackson County's land and water resources provide exceptional habitat for wildlife resources. Deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, gray and fox squirrels and waterfowl are the most important game species in Jackson County. Upland game hunting is excellent on wooded, brushy uplands and along wooded and brushy portions of streams and rivers with an abundance of waterfowl hunting. Trapping is possible due to the large populations of furbearers. Trout are found in many streams and the major rivers provide a variety of warm water fish.



Lake Wazee

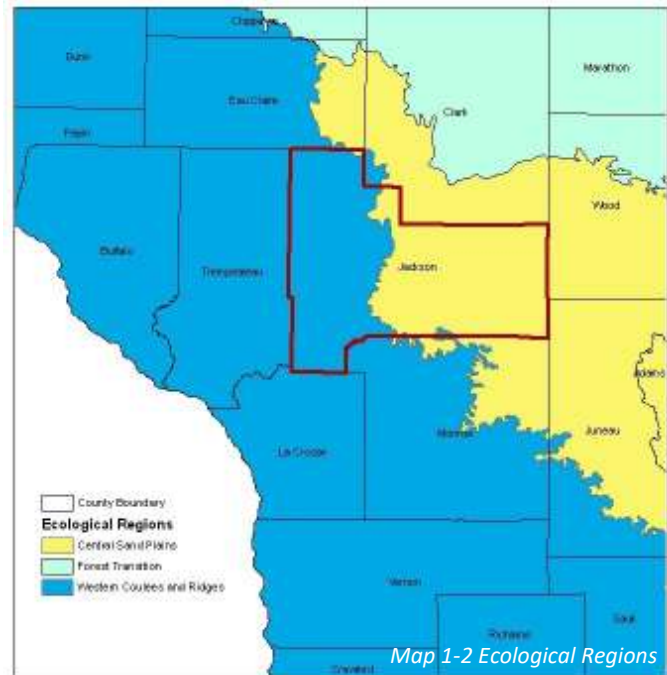
## Local Governments

The County has 6 incorporated communities and 21 townships. The 21 town governments range in size from the Town of Melrose's 28 square miles to the Town of City Point that covers 90 square miles. The villages range in size from Taylor's 0.73 square miles to the Village of Merrillan with 1.33 square miles. The only city in the County, Black River Falls, is 8.21 square miles in size.

## Ecological Landscape

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has divided the state into 16 ecological landscapes based on topography, soils, aquatic features, current vegetation, past vegetation, and other factors. Within each ecological landscape, legacy places have been identified. Jackson County's land area is within the Western Coulee and Ridges Landscape and the Central Sand Plains. The landscape in the western portion of the County (from a line running approximately north-south a little west of the City of Black River falls) is characterized by its highly eroded, driftless topography and relatively extensive forested landscape. Soils are silt loams (loess) and sandy loams over sandstone residuum over dolomite. The landscape of the eastern part of the County lying in the Central Sand Plains is characterized by an extensive, nearly level expanse of outwash sand that originated from a huge glacial lake. Sand was deposited in Glacial Lake Wisconsin by outwash derived from melting glaciers to the north.

Soils are excessively drained, with very rapid permeability, very low available water capacity, and low nutrient status. The landscape is mostly forest or wetland.



## Driftless Area

The Driftless area, an area covering 15,425,920 acres or 24,103 square miles covers all or part of 57 counties in southeast Minnesota, southwest Wisconsin, northeast Iowa and a small portion of northwest Illinois in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The western part of Jackson County is part of this unique area, an area that was by-passed by the last continental glacier some 10,000 years ago resulting in a steep, rugged landscape. The area is characterized by karst topography with shallow limestone bedrock, caves and sinkholes.



## 2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

### Population

The population of Jackson County decreased by less than 1% between 2015 and 2019. As shown in the following table, the County decreased by 21 people from 2015 to 2019. The towns experienced an increase of 340 people or 2%, while the incorporated communities experienced a decrease of 361 people or -6%. Projections made by the Wisconsin Department of Administration indicate that the County will continue to grow, and its population will increase 13.5% by the year 2040. The projected growth in population will place more demands on outdoor recreation facilities and increases the need for an updated outdoor recreation plan. **Map 2-1** on page 2-6 shows the location of the incorporated cities and villages and unincorporated towns, and their 2019 populations.

**Table 2-1 Jackson County Population Estimates**

Municipality	2015	2019	Percent Change 15-19	Estimate 2020	Projection 2030	Projection 2040
T. Adams	1,487	1,310	-12%	1,460	1,585	1,610
T. Albion	1,179	1,177	0%	1,325	1,450	1,495
T. Alma	836	1,135	36%	1,145	1,250	1,280
T. Bear Bluff	100	158	58%	140	140	135
T. Brockway	2,839	2,846	0%	3,030	3,280	3,335
T. City Point	187	179	-4%	190	170	160
T. Cleveland	585	572	-2%	515	550	550
T. Curran	375	272	-27%	335	330	305
T. Franklin	382	467	22%	500	555	580
T. Garden Valley	382	329	-14%	445	470	470
T. Garfield	612	714	17%	735	835	885
T. Hixton	598	608	2%	705	755	760
T. Irving	747	783	5%	845	950	1,000
T. Knapp	260	256	-2%	320	345	350
T. Komensky	609	451	-26%	550	605	625
T. Manchester	735	860	17%	750	800	800
T. Melrose	442	564	28%	535	605	640
T. Millston	160	144	-10%	170	185	190
T. North Bend	405	438	8%	550	615	645
T. Northfield	716	708	-1%	695	750	760
T. Springfield	641	646	1%	650	685	685
V. Alma Center	514	430	-16%	540	585	595
V. Hixton	423	424	0%	440	450	435
V. Melrose	620	512	-17%	495	485	450
V. Merrilan	648	609	-6%	535	525	485
V. Taylor	487	434	-11%	495	515	500
C. Black River Falls	3,574	3,496	-2%	3,675	3,725	3,565

Jackson County	20,543	20,522	0%	21,770	23,195	23,290
Wisconsin	5,742,117	5,790,716	1%	5,678,675	6,048,675	6,491,635

Source: US Census 2010, 201-2019 American Community Survey (ACS), DOA Demographic Service Center 2013

## Population Age

Jackson County, according to 2019 ACS figures, had a median age of 41.7. This is an increase of 0.7 years since the 2010 Census. It is higher than the median age of the State, which was 39.5, and the Nation, which was 38.1. The County's percentage of population 65 years and older was 18.5%, this figure is also higher than the State's percentage of 16.5% and the Nation's, 15.6%. On the other end of the age scale the percentage of the County's population that is under the age of 20 was 24.1%, which is lower than the State's 24.9% and the Nation's 25.2%.

## Gender Characteristics

In 2019 the population breakdown in the County by gender was 48.5% male and 51.5% female. The Town of Brockway had the largest gender difference with 63.5% male and 36.5% female, **Table 2-2**. An interesting fact is that the Towns had a larger percentage of males while the City and Villages have a larger percentage of females.

**Table 2-2 Gender Characteristics - 2019 ACS**

Municipality	Male	% Male	Female	% Female	Total
T Adams	724	55.3%	586	44.7%	1,310
T Albion	660	56.1%	517	43.9%	1,177
T Alma	645	56.8%	490	43.2%	1,135
T Bear Bluff	92	58.2%	66	41.8%	158
T Brockway	1,806	63.5%	1,040	36.5%	2,846
T City Point	91	50.8%	88	49.2%	179
T Cleveland	325	56.8%	247	43.2%	572
T Curran	130	47.8%	142	52.2%	272
T Franklin	258	55.2%	209	44.8%	467
T Garden Valley	163	49.5%	166	50.5%	329
T Garfield	393	55.0%	321	45.0%	714
T Hixton	340	55.9%	268	44.1%	608
T Irving	399	51.0%	384	49.0%	783
T Knapp	153	59.8%	103	40.2%	256
T Komensky	264	58.5%	187	41.5%	451
T Manchester	456	53.0%	404	47.0%	860
T Melrose	327	58.0%	237	42.0%	564
T Millston	82	56.9%	62	43.1%	144
T Northbend	214	48.9%	224	51.1%	438
T Northfield	358	50.6%	350	49.4%	708
T Springfield	374	57.9%	272	42.1%	646
V Alma Center	196	45.6%	234	54.4%	430
V Hixton	197	46.5%	227	53.5%	424
V Melrose	244	47.7%	268	52.3%	512
V Merrilan	318	52.2%	291	47.8%	609
V Taylor	214	49.3%	220	50.7%	434
C Black River Falls	1,533	43.9%	1,963	56.1%	3,496
<b>Jackson County</b>	<b>10,956</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	<b>9,566</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>20,522</b>

Source: 2019 ACS

## Urban/Rural

According to the 2019 ACS, Jackson County has 27.8% of its population living in incorporated communities. This percentage has remained constant for the last 50 years. In 1970 the County had 21.1% of its population living in incorporated communities. The percentage for the 1980 and 1990 Census were 20.4%, and 21.0% respectively. The small decrease this past decade reversed the increase of 7.6% from 1990 to 2000. This movement of people will have an impact on the access and number of public lands for recreation purposes. The small lot urban dweller, whether it is a city of 2,000 or a village of 200, does not have the capability to provide a myriad of extensive outdoor recreation experiences on his or her own land and therefore is more dependent upon a public park system which offers a broader range of outdoor opportunities including hunting, hiking, camping, and picnicking. As more people move to the incorporated communities and rural areas and farms are sold off for development, lands previously used for recreation are lost. Many rural residents can find extended outdoor recreation experiences on their own land. Snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hunting, hiking, and scenery viewing can all be done on their own property and their dependence upon a government sponsored recreation facility may be primarily for support of team sports such as softball.

## Farming

Farming is a major part of the landscape in Jackson County. The past 4 decades have seen an overall decline in the number of farms and the number of acres in farming within the County. In 1970 there were 1,230 farms with a total of 290,000 acres in the County. By 2007 this number has declined to 945 farms on only 238,978 acres. In 2017 there were 855 farms on 248,342 acres. This is a decline of 90 farms or 9.5% but an increase in 9,364 acres or 3.9%.

## Housing Trends

Table 2-3 shows housing trends in Jackson County and the State of Wisconsin from 2011-2019. During this period both Jackson County and the State's housing units increased by 3.2%. The 2019 ACS reported that of the 9,933 housing units reported, 82.5% were occupied housing units and 17.5% were vacant.

**Table 2-3 Jackson County Housing Trends**

Municipality	2011	2015	2019	% Change 11-19
T Adams	791	888	840	6.2%
T Albion	538	522	589	9.5%
T Alma	419	453	534	27.4%
T Bear Bluff	53	70	101	90.6%
T Brockway	866	822	881	1.7%
T City Point	162	261	241	48.8%
T Cleveland	215	257	251	16.7%
T Curran	212	194	195	-8.0%
T Franklin	240	210	227	-5.4%
T Garden Valley	224	166	190	-15.2%
T Garfield	250	316	363	45.2%
T Hixton	294	313	320	8.8%
T Irving	313	320	322	2.9%
T Knapp	195	201	171	-12.3%
T Komensky	222	187	140	-36.9%
T Manchester	397	417	465	17.1%
T Melrose	180	201	209	16.1%
T Millston	113	109	139	23.0%
T Northbend	192	203	244	27.1%
T Northfield	278	313	321	15.5%

T Springfield	275	253	255	-7.3%
V Alma Center	223	232	213	-4.5%
V Hixton	212	206	214	0.9%
V Melrose	216	259	240	11.1%
V Merrilan	383	384	325	-15.1%
V Taylor	175	239	226	29.1%
C Black River Falls	1,985	1,759	1,717	-13.5%
<b>Jackson Co.</b>	<b>9,623</b>	<b>9,755</b>	<b>9,933</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Wisconsin	2,609,819	2,641,627	2,694,527	3.2%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2011, 2015, 2019

## Employment

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the top employment industry in the County is educational services, health care and social assistance. This industry employed 19.2% of the County's residential workforce. The next largest employment industry is manufacturing, with 16.3% of the workforce followed by agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining with 11.4%. It is important to note that there are large numbers of residents who commute to places of employment outside the County, especially to the cities of Eau Claire and La Crosse. The Wisconsin Department of Work Force Development reported the County unemployment rate for 2018 was 3.1%. This rate was down from the 2009 unemployment rate of 9.1%. Table 2-4 shows occupations by industry for Jackson County.

**Table 2-4 Jackson County Occupations by Industry**

INDUSTRY	Wisconsin		Jackson County	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	2,982,359		9,386	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	66,179	2.2	1,068	11.4
Construction	172,389	5.8	625	6.7
Manufacturing	543,309	18.2	1,527	16.3
Wholesale trade	79,069	2.7	207	2.2
Retail trade	329,313	11	873	9.3
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	135,231	4.5	462	4.9
Information	47,499	1.6	111	1.2
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	181,084	6.1	431	4.6
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	250,422	8.4	397	4.2
Educational services, health care and social assistance	698,568	23.4	1,803	19.2
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	252,805	8.5	857	9.1



Other services, except public administration	124,066	4.2	374	4
Public administration	102,425	3.4	651	6.9

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Employers

The largest employer in 2020 located in Jackson County was Mills Transfer with approximately 350 employees. The second largest was Ho-Chunk Gaming and the Jackson Correctional institution with an estimated 300 employees. The next largest employers with between 150 and 300 employees are: Regal Beloit- Fasco, Hoffman Construction, and D & S Manufacturing. See Table 2-5.

**Table 2-5 Jackson County Employers**

Establishment	Aprx. Number of Employees (2020)
Millis Transfer	350
Ho-Chunk Gaming	300
Jackson Correctional Institution	300
Regal Beloit-Fasco	260
Hoffman Construction	200
D & S Manufacturing	170

Source: State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development, Data Axel 2020

## Per Capita Personal Income

Jackson County's per capita personal income according to the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates was \$26,481. This amount is 20.7% lower than the state's average of \$33,375 and 22.4% lower than the National average of \$34,103. The Town of Curran had the highest per capita personal income at \$36,812 and the Town of Brockway had the lowest at \$17,411.

## Tourism Expenditures

Visitor expenditures in Jackson County decreased from \$38.2 million in 2017 to \$37.8 million in 2018, Table 2-6.

This same trend was prevalent in over 80% of other

counties in the State. The neighboring counties of Clark, La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau increased visitor expenditures from 2017-2018, while Eau Claire County experienced a decrease. Although spending increased the number of jobs attributed directly to tourism in the County declined from 557 to 541, a decrease of 2.8%.

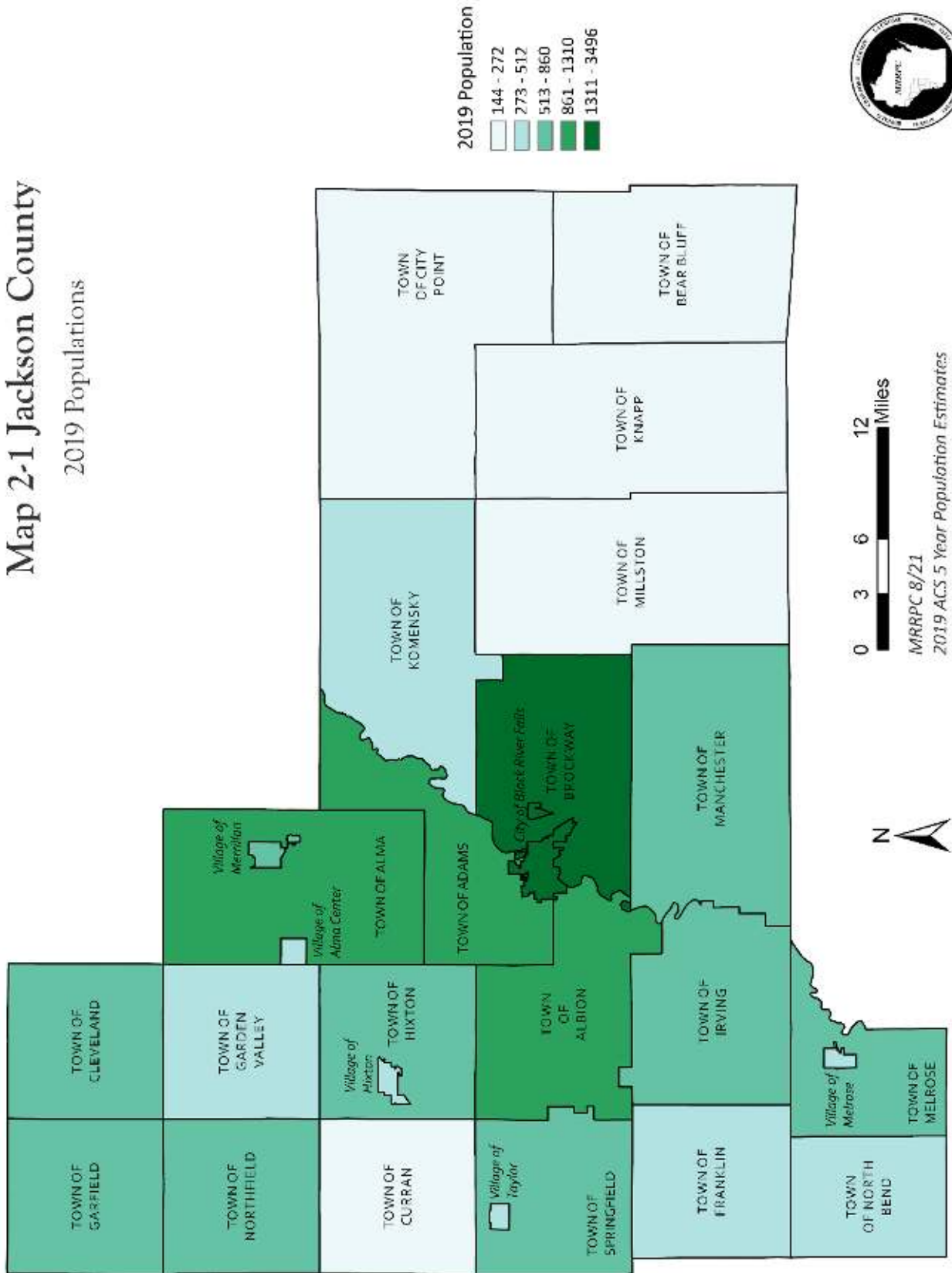
**Table 2-6 Tourism Impact**

County Name	Visitor Spending (Millions)		Employment	
	2017	2018	2017	2018
Jackson County	38.2	37.8	557	551
Clark County	27.7	30.8	346	352
Eau Claire County	259.9	255.8	4,589	4,612
La Crosse County	263.7	279.0	4,339	4,496
Monroe County	80.3	85.5	1,151	1,169
Trempealeau County	26.0	26.9	355	362

Source: <http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/>

# Map 2-1 Jackson County

## 2019 Populations



### 3. STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP) 2019-2023

#### Introduction

The planning of outdoor recreation facilities is of utmost importance for the development of healthy and viable communities. Three important parts of recreation planning are: (1) Determine the demand for different types of outdoor recreation activity, (2) Inventory the existing facilities which accommodate the various types of outdoor recreation activity, and (3) Evaluate the existing facilities and determine the need for improvements or additions to meet the existing and anticipated recreational demand.

According to the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (<https://recreationroundtable.org/impact/>):

*“The outdoor recreation industry does more than bring joy to millions of Americans: It helps drive our economy. In 2018, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) included outdoor recreation in its calculations of U.S. GDP for the very first time—a significant step that formally recognizes the critical role the industry plays in supporting economic growth in the United States. In addition, the BEA found that the outdoor recreation industry is growing rapidly, eclipsing the average increase in overall U.S. GDP. Outdoor recreation is also a major generator of quality American jobs in industries ranging from manufacturing to retail to tourism. These jobs can be found from coast to coast and play a critical role in the economic health of local and state economies.”*

#### Recreational Demand

As we progress into a new decade, events and issues that influence outdoor recreation in the future are changing. Issues, which will influence future outdoor recreation activities include:

- Land use patterns are shifting
- Ownership patterns in rural areas are changing
- Budgets for operation and maintenance of recreation resources are not expected to increase

In addition, the demographics of the County are shifting. As pointed out earlier in this plan, the County’s median age increased 0.7 years since 2019. Though this may not seem significant, the State and County have historically seen a steady increase in median age showing a trend likely to continue in the future. As people age, recreation

Activity Group	% of WI residents that participated at least once in the last 12 months
<b>Hiking</b>	<b>68%</b>
Hiking/walking/running on trails	
<b>Nature Observation</b>	<b>66%</b>
Bird/wildlife watching	
Nature photography	
Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.	
<b>Boating-related</b>	<b>61%</b>
Motor boating	
Canoeing/kayaking	
Personal watercraft (jet-ski)	
Sailing	
Stand-up paddle boarding	
Waterskiing	
<b>Fishing</b>	<b>49%</b>
Lake fishing	
Stream/river fishing	
Ice fishing	
<b>Camping</b>	<b>41%</b>
Tent camping	
RV/pop-up camping	
<b>Dog-related activities</b>	<b>38%</b>
Walking/running dog on trails	
Visiting a dog park	
<b>Bicycling</b>	<b>35%</b>
Bicycling on rail-trails or other developed trails	
Mountain biking	
Fat-tire biking/snow biking	
<b>Hunting</b>	<b>27%</b>
Big game hunting	
Turkey hunting	
Small game hunting	
Migratory bird hunting	
<b>Motorized trail-based activities</b>	<b>25%</b>
ATVs/UTVs on trails-routes	
Snowmobiling	
4-WD vehicles on trails-routes	
Motorcycles on trails-routes	

activities they participate in may change. The changes in family structure (an increase in single parent families) also changes recreation choices.

For guidance on the demand for recreational outdoor activities, a review of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023 was conducted. During the development of SCORP, numerous Wisconsin residents were questioned as to how often they participate in various recreation activities. Data is collected at 8 regional levels; Jackson County lies in the Mississippi River Corridor. The box to the right indicates the most popular recreation activities in the State with activities **bolded** indicating the top activities in the Mississippi River Corridor Region.

### Favorite Places to Visit Based on Public Input

Of the people providing input, the majority (67%) selected the quality of trails as one of the top four most important factors in determining their favorite property to visit. This is expected, given that many respondents noted their participation in a variety of motorized and non-motorized activities. The following were the next three important factors to determine favorable places to visit:

1. Desire to be in a quiet place
2. Maps, signs, or information about the property
3. The quality of the habitat

Wisconsinites have historically participated in outdoor recreation at higher rates than the national average. The table on the previous page shows participation rates of Wisconsin residents for general groupings of nature-based recreation activities. For comparison, 46% of Wisconsin residents participated in ball sports (golf, tennis, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer, and handball).

77% of respondents believe more outdoor recreational opportunities are needed in the Mississippi River Corridor Region. The opportunity that was most frequently selected as needed in the Mississippi River Corridor Region was more trails for hiking, walking, or running, which was selected by nearly half of respondents.

These communities are partnering with local citizen groups, raising funds, and developing parks, trails, and accesses to waterways, attracting visitors year-round. The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) was enacted by Congress in 1965 “to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States” through outdoor recreation. From 1965 to 2017, Jackson County was awarded \$419,232 by the LWCF and have used this funding for 14 projects.

According to Spending Potential Index, based on Esri forecast for 2020 and 2025, Jackson County residents spend more money per year on water sports equipment than the national average. The MPI (Market potential Index), which measures the likelihood of adult spending behaviors based on purchasing patterns, is another indicator used by Esri to predict spending patterns in a region from 2020 to 2025. Based on these projections, Jackson County residents participate approximately 25% more in horseback riding, 75% more in rifle and shotgun hunting, and 50% more in archery than the national average.

**Popular recreation activities in which respondents to the State survey participate**

**Bicycling – paved trails**  
 Bicycling – mountain biking, single track  
 Bicycling – winter/fat tire  
 Camping – tent  
 Canoeing/kayaking  
 Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing

**Fishing – from a boat, canoe, or kayak**

**Fishing – from shore**

**Harvesting berries, mushrooms, etc.**

**Hiking, walking, running on trails**

**Swimming**

**Wildlife/bird watching**

## Future Recreation Needs

Based on the 2019-2023 SCORP, the Mississippi River Corridor Region rates recreational activities as high, medium, or low relative to needs of the region. The groupings are as follows:

Future Recreation Needs – High	Future Recreation Needs – Medium	Future Recreation Needs – Low
Bicycling – touring/road riding	ATV/UTV riding	Dog sledding/ skijoring
Bicycling – mountain/off road	Bicycling – fat tire/snow	Dog training
Bird or wildlife watching	Fishing – lake from shore	Dog Trialing
Camping – developed	Fishing – ice fishing	Geocaching
Camping – primitive	Four-wheel vehicle driving	Off-highway motorcycle riding
Canoeing or kayaking	Horseback riding	Rock climbing
Cross Country Skiing	Horse cart driving	Sailing, windsurfing, rowing, etc.
Dog Walking	Hunting – migratory birds	Snowmobiling
Fishing – lake from vessel	Hunting – small game	Scuba diving/snorkeling
Fishing – river from vessel	Hunting – turkey	Whitewater rafting
Fishing – stream or shore wading	Motorboating (waterski, tubing)	
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	Swimming in lakes and rivers	
Hiking, walking, trail running	Target shooting – archery	
Hunting – big game	Target shooting – firearms	
Nature photography	Trapping	
Nature based education programs		
Picnicking		
Snowshoeing		
Visit a beach, beach walking		

## Definitions

To assist in the interpretation and implementation of the Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan, the following terms have been identified.

*Community Park (30-50 acres)* – A park designed to serve several municipalities or neighborhoods and to provide many recreational opportunities for people of all ages.

*Neighborhood Park (1-10 acres)* – A park usually less than 2 acres in size, designed to serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

*Neighborhood Playground* – A facility often provided in conjunction with a community school. It is designed to serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood and can accommodate a variety of informal or active athletic activities.

*Specialized Recreation Area* – Areas restricted by design to certain uses and may not always be available for use by the public. In some cases, they may serve an exceedingly small segment of the community’s population. Golf courses, historic sites, and conservancy areas are examples of specialized recreation areas.

*Open Space* – Primarily land and water that is owned or managed by federal, state, or local governments, or a conservancy organization that is preserved for public use. Examples include wetlands, woodlands, wildlife refuges, prairies/meadows, rock outcroppings, etc.

*Pathways and Parkways* – Spaces that are connections related to travel such as trail or water trail providing connectivity for recreation and/or transportation purposes.

*Recreation Trail* – A travel way established through construction or use and is passable by the following, including but not limited to foot traffic, bicycles, cross country skis, off road recreation vehicles, snowmobiles, etc.

*Wayside* – Locations adjacent to a public highway that provides motorists with a convenient opportunity to stop and rest. Historical markers, restrooms, drinking water, picnic area, and waste disposal are commonly found at waysides.

## Recreation Standards

One accepted way to measure the adequacy of a County’s park system is to determine the number if people the system serves or has the capacity to serve. This is accomplished by assigning an acreage requirement for each

type of recreation facility for every 1,000 people in the service area. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has set the following “rule of thumb” standards for designing recreation facilities:

**“Rule of Thumb” Standards**  
Neighborhood Playground: 2 acres per 1,000 people  
Community Park: 5 acres per 1,000 people  
Specialized Recreation Area: as needed

These standards are dependent on the physical and cultural features of a given County. In this Outdoor Recreation Plan, one of the guidelines to be used to determine the adequacy of recreational facilities and areas is the standard of 12 acres per 1,000 people. It has been determined through the planning process that this standard is acceptable to apply in the Jackson County recreational planning process.

## 4. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

Outdoor recreation is an integral part of the fabric of human environment. Over 87% of Wisconsinites enjoy some form of outdoor recreation. Therefore the planning of outdoor recreation facilities is of utmost importance for the development of healthy and viable communities. Three important parts of recreation planning are: (1) Determine the demand for different types of outdoor recreation activity, (2) Inventory the existing facilities which accommodate the various types of outdoor recreation activity, and (3) Evaluate the existing facilities and determine the need for improvements or additions to meet the existing and anticipated recreational demand.

Proactive planning is important to ensure that recreation is accessible to all citizens. One of the greatest challenges is understanding the ever-changing needs of those participating in outdoor recreation. The 2011-2016 SCORP examines outdoor recreation by recreation setting, the environment in which people recreate. The activities were divided into five groupings:

1. Developed Land
2. Limited Development
3. Water
4. Winter
5. Viewing and Interpretive

### Developed Land Activities

Outdoor recreations in developed settings are those activities which use some form of manmade development (such as roads or sidewalks) or involve a high level of social interaction. The following section is an outline of developed land activities and their locations in Jackson County.

#### *Driving for Pleasure*

Jackson County has one road officially recognized as a “Rustic Road,” through the provision of State Statute Chapter 83.42. This program creates an opportunity to recognize roads with outstanding natural features along their borders such as rugged terrain, native vegetation, native wildlife, or open areas with agricultural vistas. The roads should be lightly traveled, primarily serving adjacent properties, rather than serving as an arterial or collector. The road, because of its use characteristics, should not be scheduled or anticipated for major improvements that would change its rustic characteristics. Ideally, it should have a minimum length of two miles, and if possible, should provide a completed closure of loop or connect with more significant roads at both ends.



*Pray Road Fall Colors – Scenic View*

The Rustic Road in Jackson County is R-54. It is North Settlement Road from CTH O on the south to STH 54 on the north. It is a paved Town of Millston road and is 12.3 miles in length. The road travels through the Black River State Forest, including numerous flowages and the Dike 17 Lookout Tower, and the Pigeon Creek Campground. Along the way a careful observer can see sandhill cranes, bald eagles, ducks, geese, and other wildlife. Sphagnum moss beds and native wildflowers are abundant.

### Camping

There are few other outdoor recreation experiences where the demands or expectations of the participants vary so widely. Some campers want amenities such as electricity, hot showers, laundry facilities, and amusements like miniature golf and movies. Other campers seek solitude and campfires with their amusement being morning bird song and hiking. Private for-profit campgrounds in the County make no apologies for trying to meet the expectations of the former group. The expectations of the latter or "wilderness" group will probably not be fully met anywhere in Jackson County simply because there is no "backpack trails - high mountain country" terrain in the County. Frequently, camping is the primary purpose of the trip, but camping can also be an adjunct to another purpose. For example, families may view camping as a way to save lodging money while on a vacation.



There are six private campgrounds in Jackson County. These facilities help to respond to the needs for camping facilities and supportive activities. Following is a brief description of four of these facilities.

- Parkland Village Campground – This camping facility offers 80 campsites. It is located near the city of Black River Falls in the Town of Brockway. Of the 80 sites, 20 are seasonal and 6 are pull-through, there are various combinations of sewer, water, and/or electric hookups. There is a separate area for tent campers. The facility provides laundry, showers, swimming pool, playground, horseshoes, volleyball, basketball, recreation hall, game room and lounge. ATV trails are nearby. The campground is open year-round.
- KOA Campground - This camping facility is located in the Town of Garden Valley. The KOA campground offers 66 sites, including 19 full hook-ups and 37 pull-through. A separate area is available for tent campers. Sleeping cabins are also available for rent. Facilities offered include showers, flush toilets, laundry, game room, and snack bar. Recreation facilities include a swimming pool, volleyball courts and horseshoes.
- Lost Falls Camping and Cabins – This camping facility is located 10 miles south east of Black River Falls in the Town of Irving. The facility offers 30 total sites, 10 with full hook-ups. There are separate sites available for tent and group campers. There are camping trailers, cabins and housekeeping cottages for rent. Recreation facilities include a swimming beach, playground, horseshoes, volleyball, basketball, fishing and trails. Canoes, kayaks and tubes are available to rent.
- Motel 95 and Campground– This facility offers 18 campsites with water and electric hook-up. There is also a 14-room motel on the premises. There is a trout stream nearby and access to snowmobile and ATV trails.

In addition to the private camping facilities, there are several public camping facilities. Over six hundred campsites have been developed in fourteen public campgrounds. Almost half of these are provided by the County Park system within the Jackson County Forest. The Black River State Forest provides 102 campsites on three separate campgrounds. Two villages, Taylor and Merrillan, supply the remainder.

Generally, the camp spaces are good-to-excellent in condition and are designed to accommodate both trailer and tent campers. Sanitary facilities are excellent at the state parks, but modern toilet buildings are needed at the County and community campgrounds. Because of the sites' proximity to other outdoor recreation resources,



such as swimming, fishing or boating, all are capable and usually hold campers for extended periods of time. Other nearby public camping facilities available to Jackson County residents and visitors to the region are in Buffalo, Trempealeau, Eau Claire, and La Crosse Counties.

All public and private campgrounds were inventoried with results tabulated and shown in Table 4-1 and Map 4-2 on page 4-15.

**Table 4-1 Public and Private Campgrounds**

Name/Area	Owner	Camp Sites
Castle Mound, T. Brockway	State	35
Hawk Island Canoe Camp, T. Brockway	State	2
East Fork, T. Komensky	State	24
Pigeon Creek, T. Millston	State	38
Crawford Hills, T. City Point	County	25
East Arbutus, T. Komensky	County	187
West Arbutus, T. Komensky	County	44
Merlin Lambert, T. Knapp	County	30
Spaulding Pond, T. City Point	County	25
Wazee Lake, T. Brockway	County	12
Gile Memorial Campground, V. Merrillan	Village	20
Hixton Village Campground, V. Hixton	Village	20
KOA Campground, T. Garden Valley	Private	66
Jamboree Campground, T. Alma	Private	200
Lost Falls Camping and Cabins, T. Irving	Private	30
Parkland Village Campground, T. Brockway	Private	80
Aurora Gardens, T. Northfield	Private	25
Motel 95 and Campground, T. Hixton	Private	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>881</b>

Source: Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, 2021

### *Golf*

As long ago as 1990, citizen outdoor recreation planning sessions in western Wisconsin attached a “Medium” priority to the development of golf facilities, with a general agreement that more courses were needed for the existing population and growing number of golfers. A generally accepted standard for determining golf course capacity is that one 9-hole golf course can accommodate 250 golfing occasions per day.

There are two golf courses available to the public in Jackson County. The city owned, privately operated, Skyline Golf Club in Black River Falls, has two separate 9-hole courses, each with distinctly different character. The courses can be played individually, or as an 18-hole course. The full 18-hole course is 6,371 yards with par 72. Near the community of North Bend, in the southern part of the County, there is a 9 hole commercially owned and operated course, Riverbend, located along the Black River. This 2,888-yard course has a par of 35.

The private sector has typically been a participant in developing golf courses, although acquisition and continued operation of former membership “country clubs” by local governments is also common. Demand for new courses needs to be mentioned in the market place, as the establishment of new courses is capital intensive as well as having environmental impacts.

### *Tennis*

Tennis is both a participatory and spectator sport, which gained great popularity in the late 70's and early 80's. Many small communities constructed tennis courts in their village parks. It is not an activity which has been

traditionally associated with such other outdoor recreation activities as hunting and fishing, but the federal Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) Fund has funded many of the courts and now is being used for major rehabilitation of existing facilities. Demand is varied from community to community based upon local interest and programs.

Tennis is the type of outdoor activity usually associated with urban parks. The individual communities must evaluate their own residents' desire for tennis courts versus the other park activities. Existing courts should be maintained and rehabilitated as necessary to ensure a quality-playing surface.



Tennis Courts in Community Park - V. Taylor

*Picnicking*

Picnicking implies that people are traveling to a predetermined location to eat a meal in an outdoor setting. It may be the major purpose of the outing, or it may just be auxiliary to a camping trip or a ball game. Many areas with picnic tables located along highways are used for resting more often than picnicking. Some picnic areas, especially in village or city parks, are often used for large family gatherings or reunions which last for several hours, while some highway rest stops are used almost exclusively by travelers for just a few minutes.

Roadside parks and some city waysides provide picnic tables that are used primarily by transients or visitors to the area. Also, private and public camping areas include picnic tables, but these are used primarily by campers. The specific number of tables varies from year to year, or even during the season. Unfortunately, as the Department of Transportation budget becomes more constrained, the DOT has been reducing maintenance costs at the highway waysides by removing picnic tables. Many waysides that were once picnic spots are now merely overlooks and parking spots as the tables have been removed.

There are many developed, publicly owned picnic areas in the County. The roadside rest areas maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) are primarily aimed at the transient motoring public. WisDOT has 2 rest stops, rest area 53 and 54. Rest area 53 can accommodate 110 cars and 41 trucks parking. Rest area 54 can accommodate 136 cars and 43 trucks parking. Both have access to restroom facilities with running water, a pet exercise area, vending machines, payphone, and weather information. The Black River State Forest has 6 sites that include formal picnic facilities such as tables and grills. Day use of these areas is permitted in addition to the camping provided at 3 of the sites. The County has set aside 5 sites as camping and day-use picnic areas. Most of these sites are within the larger County Forest land, which are always open to informal trailside lunches. Town Picnic and Park Areas and DOT rest areas are shown on Map 4-3, page 4-17.

At the local level, the City of Black River Falls operates 9 parks, the Village of Merrilan, 2, and the Villages of Alma Center, Hixton, Melrose, and Taylor each have picnic facilities in their parks. In addition, the Towns of Brockway, City Point, and Millston operate parks with at least minimal picnic facilities. The County Fairgrounds at Black River Falls provides picnic facilities especially targeted to people attending events at the fairgrounds.



Picnic Shelter in Tank Park - V. Melrose

The theoretical "standard" for measuring the use of picnic areas assumes each picnic "event" involves four people and the turnover rate per table per day is one and one-half. This means that each picnic table provided for the public accommodates six people per day. Although this seems very low, especially when you consider the many people that may sit at a table in a given day at a busy highway rest area; they are also averaged in the day long family parties. Since no projected demand figures exist, no theoretical number of tables to meet the potential demand can be stated. Picnic areas that exist as part of a broader outdoor recreation experience or that are located in a pleasant environment are more apt to be used than a table in a small park or one haphazardly located.

Each community can observe the pressure for picnic tables at its own parks and determine if additional units should be added. As with most types of demands, the peak period is only a small portion of the total time; but picnic tables, especially if added nearby to existing tables, are a relatively inexpensive outdoor recreation device.

#### *Playground Activities*

The term "Playground Activities" as used here refers to playground facilities including ballfields, swings, slides, general-purpose recreation fields, and other facilities that provide for outdoor games or activities. The fact that most of the participants using playgrounds are children should not detract from its importance as an outdoor activity.

Playgrounds can range from simple to elaborate. Any community planning to develop or expand its playground apparatus should consult with experts at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, or other recreational departments for an update on the latest technology. Installation of playground equipment, while a primary responsibility of the municipality operating the park is also a good project for community civic groups. Individual community park plans present additional information on specific needs and actions regarding playgrounds, and the appendix contains information on apparatus safety considerations.

#### *All-Terrain Vehicle Trails*

Jackson County is a bountiful paradise for ATV/motorcycle users, as the County Forest and State Forest lands have over 100 miles of designated trails for this use. These trails provide a loop trail to the southeast from Black River Falls to Millston and Pigeon Flowage. Another trail leads east and northeast from Black River Falls and serves the East Arbutus County Park, the Crawford Hills ATV campground, and City Point near the east County line. A spur trail leads to the community of Pray. There are designated parking areas at points along the trail for ATV trailers and on-road vehicles. All-terrain vehicles are also permitted on the ice, except Lake Wazee where no vehicles are allowed on the ice. ATVs are permitted on the Buffalo River State Trail between May 15-October 31. The Jackson County Forest and the Black River State Forest have 96 miles of designated trails for ATV use. See Map 4-1 on page 4-15 for locations of trails.



*Figure 1 Wauzee Trail*

## **Limited Development Activities**

Limited Development activities take place in undeveloped, or primitive sites and general involve hiking, camping, or some form of hunting. Following is an inventory of the land based and limited development activities in Jackson County.

#### *Trail Activities*

Providing “trails” can accommodate many of the most popular outdoor recreational activities. Activities such as wildlife watching or bird watching can be enjoyed through the use of trails, in addition to the more traditional trail activities such as walking and bicycling. Trails serve a multitude of recreational activities, although bicycle trails can also serve as legitimate transportation facilities. With the exception of snowmobile and cross-country ski trails, which are treated separately, trails are definite features existing on the ground, and are maintained in order to keep them serviceable. Hiking, walking, nature walking, horseback riding, all-terrain vehicle, and bicycle trails are considered together in this section. Map 4-4 on page 4-15 shows significant walking trails, and bicycling suitability of the public road system.

Hiking and Walking Trails - Outdoor recreation planners define "hiking" as a walking trip of more than four hours (*usually 8 miles*) duration. Often times camping facilities are associated with this type of long-distance hiking trail. A "walk" is any foot travel for pleasure of less duration than a hike and may include a rugged terrain interpretive nature trail two or three miles long, or a paved surface a few hundred feet in length from a parking lot to a scenic overlook.

The County lies on the transition zone between two major geographic regions: the unglaciated Western Uplands, or “Coulee Region,” and the glaciated Central Sand Plain. The vegetative cover in the Central Sand Plains is similar to that found much farther north in the state: Jack Pine, and northern bog plants. This incursion of a more “north woods” ambiance into the lower latitudes of the state within a three-hour drive of Madison induces hiking or walking, as a recreational pursuit for many visitors to the area.

9.5 of the 36 miles that make up the Buffalo River State Trail run along the northern edge of Jackson County. The 68,000-acre Black River State Forest has approximately 24 miles of marked and brushed hiking trails, and the 120,000-acre Jackson County Forest has approximately 7 miles of designated hiking trails in the managed forest areas plus another 15 miles surrounding the Wazee Lake recreation area. In addition, both forests provide virtually unlimited hiking opportunities on unimproved logging roads and the trails primarily intended for ATV’s and horse riders, as well as the ability to walk without trails through the woods and brush in virtually any direction without fear of trespassing onto private land or encountering a major highway. There are also smaller parcels of federal land and paper company land open to the public under the provision of the State Managed Forest Law. Most of these lands are interspersed among the larger state and County holdings in the eastern part of the County. Cross-country backpacking and camping are permitted in the two forest properties, although safe drinking water and sanitary facilities are only available at the developed day use or campground areas.

Public land hiking opportunities are not restricted to the major public forest areas of the eastern part of the County. In the more agriculturally dominated Western Upland portion of the County, that basically lies west of a North-South line connecting Merrillan and Black River Falls, there are several state land holdings totaling approximately 6,100 acres scattered from the northwest corner in the Town of Garfield to the Black River south of Melrose. Although these parcels are primarily intended as public hunting and fishing areas, they do provide opportunity for unstructured walking through woods and marsh.

Bicycle Trails - Wisconsin is fortunate to have the fine bicycle trail system it has developed statewide. It was one of the first states to promote a “rails to trails” program. The previously mentioned Buffalo River State Trail gives east-west access across the northern edge of the County on a former Northwestern Railway right-of-way. Established in 1976, the surface of this trail is not finished, many areas of old cinder ballast or sand blows make this trail better suited for mountain bikes or hiking rather than the typical narrow tired touring type bicycle.

The Black River State Forest has 29 miles of designated bike trails. Trailheads are at the Castle Mound and Pigeon Creek campgrounds and the Smrekar and Wildcat cross-country ski trail parking lots. In addition, there are 6 miles of either paved or finely crushed limestone surfaced bike trail in the Wazee Lake Recreation Area developed from the former Jackson County Iron Mine property.

Bicycles are considered vehicles by state statute and have a legal right to operate on any public roadway except where specifically prohibited, such as on the Interstate highway system or other freeways, or on some bridges. Not all bicyclists feel comfortable, or are able to ride in certain traffic conditions, just as some motorists feel uncomfortable in heavy or fast traffic conditions. The Department of Transportation (DOT), with input from County highway and district DOT staff has examined several variables, with traffic volume (Average Daily Traffic-ADT) and roadway and shoulder width being the major ones, to classify all state and County roads in unincorporated areas as having “Best”, “Moderate”, or “Undesirable” conditions for bicycling. In cooperation with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW) four maps, which together cover the entire state, have been published and are available for public sale. Town roads were not evaluated, but generally the low traffic volumes on these roads would be favorable to bicyclists; but in most of western Wisconsin, including Jackson County, the limited sight distances and lack of shoulders on Town roads would be factors making them less suitable for slow moving bicyclists. The highway suggested as “Best” for bicycling in the County is USH 12 between Merrilan and the north County line. Highways considered as “Moderate suitability for bicycling” include STHs 54 and 71 in the southern part of the County, USH 12 between the south County line and its junction with STH 27 just south of Black River Falls, and USH 12/STH 27 between the north side of Black River Falls and the Village of Merrilan and STH 54 from Sand Pillow Road east to the County line. State and federal highways recognized as “Undesirable for bicycling” include: all of USH 10 in the County, STH 95 between the west County line and the village of Hixton, and the same highway east of Merrilan to the Village of Neillsville in Clark County, STH 54 from Black River Falls to Sand Pillow Road, STH from Black River Falls and Melrose and STH 108 from Melrose to the south County line, and STH 27 between Sparta and Black River Falls.

Horseback Riding on a Trail - Horseback riding on a trail is not an activity that has a lot of participation Statewide. Esri predictions on spending patterns in the region from 2020 to 2025 showed Jackson County residents participate approximately 25% more in horseback riding than the national average. Horseback riding is permitted on the Buffalo River State Trail between May 15 and October 31. See Map 4-4 on page 4-15 for locations of trails. No commercial horse rental or riding stables are located in the County.

### *Hunting*

Hunting and consumptive uses of natural resources in general, has come under increasing criticism from an urban population that is removed from the land; yet true sportsmen hunters are sensitive to environmental issues and have, through license fees and personal financial and labor contributions, improved land cover conditions so that all people, hunters and non-hunters alike, may enjoy wildlife observation. This of course cannot ignore the fact that some persons carrying firearms in the field, by their actions, cause public condemnation for their behavior, which threatens, continued public support for all hunting activities.

Statewide, hunting remains a popular sport. According to Esri predicted spending patterns in the region from 2020 to 2025, Jackson County residents participate approximately 75% more in rifle and shotgun hunting, and 50% more in archery than the national average.

Public hunting areas with enough land to allow safe hunting, need to continue to be maintained and expanded as necessary. Local sportsmen’s clubs should continue to cooperate with state and national conservation organizations and with the Department of Natural Resources in hunter education programs, and in maintaining good relations between hunters and landowners.

The County’s land and water resources provide valuable habitat for wildlife and in turn offers some of the best hunting in the state with large populations of deer, turkey, small game and waterfowl. Although privately owned lands provide most of the hunting opportunities in Jackson County there are also public lands open to hunting shown in Map 4-2 on page 4-16.

### Private Hunting Clubs:

There are quite a few sportsmen’s clubs around the County that provide their members with hunting and target shooting opportunities. It should not be assumed these lands are open to public use without permission. The following is a list of the Jackson County based sportsmen’s clubs, as shown in the commercially published Jackson County land atlas and plat book, that own land in the County.

**Table 4-2 Jackson County Sportsmen Clubs**

Club	Location	Size
Beaver Creek Hunting Club	T. Bear Bluff	5 acres
Trebor Hunt Club Ltd.	T. Curran	105 acres
Big Slough Hunt Club	T. Curran	216 acres
North Branch Conservation Club	T. Garden Valley	80 acres
Futurist Hunting Club, Inc.	T. Knapp	40 acres
Genesee Outdoorsmen, Inc.	T. Knapp	40 acres
Hatfield Sportsmen’s Club	T. Komensky	small tract
Game Stoppers Hunting	T. Manchester	40 acres
Hook and Rifle Club	T. Manchester	small tract
Melrose Rod and Gun Club	T. Melrose	53 acres
Millston- Knapp Sportsman	T. Millston	20 acres
York-Northfield Rec Club	T. Northfield	small tracts
Taylor Rod and Gun Club	T. Springfield	52 acres
Hixton Rod and Gun Club	T. Hixton	5 acres



Jackson County has more land available for public hunting than any other County in the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission area. Local sportsmen’s clubs should continue to cooperate with state and national conservation organizations and with the Department of Natural Resources in hunter education programs, and in maintaining good relations between hunters and landowners. Private landowners will continue to provide hunting opportunity for themselves and friends, although as individual parcels of private ownership become smaller, and sub urbanization increases, more and more private lands will undoubtedly be posted against hunting.

## Water Activities

Water-based outdoor activities are among the most popular recreation activities in Wisconsin. Jackson County is blessed with an abundant supply of water and surface water bodies spanning 3,119 acres. They are mostly of a shallow type best suited for waterfowl and pan fishing. These lakes range in size from 839-acre Lake Arbutus, a man-made flowage partly in Clark County, with a maximum depth of 50 feet, to small farm ponds of less than one acre that are only 2 or 3 feet deep much of the year. Lake Wazee, spring fed and formed from an abandoned iron mine, has a surface area of 146 acres, and a maximum depth of 355 feet. The unglaciated portion of Jackson County does not have natural lakes, but the eastern portion of the County has a combination of natural wetlands and small lakes and “flowages” that have been created for wildlife management or cranberry production. Lakes Arbutus and Wazee, the two principal boating lakes in the County are both in the eastern part. The unglaciated, more rugged, western part of the County contains most of the trout streams.

Siltation and continuous water turbidity can affect the quality of facilities and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Many sloughs, ponds, and marshes can fill with silt, resulting in undesirable boat launch sites, hazardous pleasure boating, and decreased habitat for waterfowl and fish. This “non-point” pollution consisting of soil runoff from farms, construction projects, and other disturbed soil; and biologic wastes from inadequately protected farms and home septic systems is often a significant cause of water quality degradation. The marshy lowlands of eastern Jackson County are the headwaters of many small streams, which flow into larger rivers; so much of the water quality of central and southern Wisconsin is influenced by what inputs are made into the marsh.

Watershed planning and adherence to the plans over time will help make the rivers and lakes of Jackson County cleaner and more enjoyable for outdoor recreation use. Recreational water resources in Jackson County are shown on Map 4-4 on page 4-18.

**Fishing**

Fishing and Wisconsin are almost synonymous in many people's minds, especially visitors from Illinois. Jackson County offers an abundance of streams, rivers, and small lakes to accommodate the high demand placed upon it. The more important sport fish species found in these waters are Bluegill, Crappie, Walleye, Northern Pike, Large Mouth Bass, Small Mouth Bass, (Black River) and Catfish.



Trout fishing is also possible in Jackson County. According to a comprehensive Trout Stream list prepared by the DNR in 2021, there was approximately 340 miles of trout streams in Jackson County. These trout streams are classified into three classes. Class I streams are those which have good water conditions with high natural reproduction and suitable density of native trout with little or no hatchery stocking needed. There are 1113.02 miles of Class I streams. Class II streams have good water conditions and may have some natural reproduction, but light to moderate stocking is necessary to insure adequate density for good sport fishing. There are 153.6 miles of Class II streams. Class III streams totaling 74.1 miles have marginal water conditions for sustaining trout populations on a year-round basis. Continual hatchery stocking is necessary to provide adequate fishing.

Walk-in access to trout streams is often via easement or at public road crossings, in which case public access may be limited to the streambed via wading. There are approximately 5,400 acres of State land designated as State fishing areas in the western part of the County, which serve trout streams. Some of this acreage also includes upland areas for hikers and hunters, and another 1,400 acres is designated as state wildlife area, which includes limited water access, but fishing is not the principal resource. The only "public amenity improvements" at these State parcels in the western part of the County are provisions for off-road parking. The larger acreages of State and County Forests in the eastern part of the County also serve fisherman access to ponds and flowages in this area.

Most of the small inland lakes in the County either do not allow motorboats, or limit use to electric motors. Bank and bridge fishing is a popular form of fishing access. The Black River and its backwaters, including the "Lake Arbutus" can be fished with motorboats via ramps or entry from the main river.

There is a need for developed bank fishing facilities and for additional fishing sites accessible to the physically handicapped population. There is also a need for more walk-in access sites for ice fishing, and adequate, safe parking is needed for both ice fishing access as well as the bank and handicapped access sites. The Department of Natural Resources will continue to acquire fishing easements as the need arises. Boat/canoe access sites and roadside parking areas at bridges over rivers would help increase the usefulness of the water resource.

**Table 4-3 Jackson County Trout Streams**

Local Name	Start Mile	End Mile	Trout Class	Local Name	Start Mile	End Mile	Trout Class
Allen Creek	0.0	4.15	I				
Amo Cr.	0	3.08	II	Stony Cr.	0	8.15	III

Beltz Cr.	2.32	4.22	I	Stony Cr.	0	5.38	I
Cisna Cr.	0	5.15	II	Tank Cr.	0	6.66	I
Clear Cr.	0	5.81	III	Trempealeau R.	61.98	69.85	III
Clear Cr.	0	1.04	I	Trempealeau R.	69.85	81.51	II
Coffee Cr.	0	2.72	I	Trout Run	0	2.27	III
Columbus Cr.	0	2.16	I	Trout Run	2.27	7.55	III
Curran Cr.	0	5.28	III	Cr. 10-10	0	7.77	I
Davis Cr.	0	6.86	II	Cr. 10-10	0	0.98	I
Douglas Cr.	2.06	4.12	II	Cr. 10-2	0	5.10	II
Douglas Cr.	4.13	9.99	I	Cr. 13-3a	0	0.29	I
East Branch Trout R.	0	3.55	II	Cr. 13-3b	0	0.23	I
French Cr.	0	4	I	Cr. 14-14	0	1.10	II
French Cr.	4	5.73	I	Cr. 16-2	0	2.12	I
French Cr.	5.73	10.05	I	Cr. 17-2	0	1.28	I
Glenn Cr.	0	2.91	III	Cr. 17-8	0	3.19	III
Halls Cr.	13.2	25.87	II	Cr. 18-10	0	2.53	II
Hoffman Cr.	0	3.23	II	Cr. 19-16	0	2.67	I
Jay Cr.	2.7	10.38	III	Cr. 2-5b (T25n, R5w)	0	3.46	II
Jermstad Cr.	0	3.13	II	Cr. 21-16 (T24n, R6w)	0	1.42	I
Judkins Cr.	0	5.49	III	Cr. 21n, 5w, 13sesw (Cr. 13-12)	0	3.04	I
Kay Cr.	0	2.06	I	Cr. 22n, 4w, 33nenw (Cr. 33-2)	0	0.6	I
Kenyon Cr.	0	3.86	II	Cr. 23-11	0	1.56	I
Levis Cr.	0	4.3	I	Cr. 24-4	0	1.05	II
Levis Cr.	4.3	8.98	II	Cr. 25-2	0	1.45	I
Lowe Cr.	0	1.1	II	Cr. 26-7	0	1.95	I
Lowe Cr.	1.1	4.17	III	Cr. 27-7	0	1.41	I
30-15 Cr - North Branch Shake Hollow Cr.	0	1.17	II	Cr. 28-6	0	0.81	I
N. Branch Douglas Cr.	1.16	3.95	I	Cr. 29-5	0	1.06	I
N Branch Tremp. R.	0	11.35	I	Cr. 3-12	0	1.96	1
North Fork Beaver Cr.	11.59	19.49	II	Cr. 30-5	0	1.72	I
North Fork Buffalo R.	4.82	15.75	I	Cr. 30-6	0	1.64	I
Papoose Cr.	0	3.15	II	Cr. 34-10	0	0.55	II
Perry Cr.	6.11	10.24	II	Cr. 4-10	0	1.85	I
Pigeon Cr.	0	4.96	III	Cr. 5-10	0	0.65	I
Pigeon Cr.	7.93	14.89	III	Cr. 5-11	0	0.67	III
Pigeon Cr.	14.89	21.72	II	Cr. 5-3	0	0.40	II
Pine Cr.	0	7.32	I	Cr. 7-10	0	0.82	III
Rindahl Cr.	0	3.45	I	Cr. 7-5	0	1.32	I
Robinson Cr.	0	12	II	Cr. 7-7	0.9	1.90	I
Robinson Cr.	12	15	II	Cr. 9-13	0	2.04	I
Robinson Cr.	15	23.66	II	Local Water	0.77	2.06	I
Sand Cr.	0	10.21	I	Unnamed Cr. (T22n, R3w, S17)	0	0.72	I
Schermerhorn Cr.	0	5.44	III	Unnamed Cr. 23-1	0	2.81	I
Schoolhouse Cr.	4.73	9.1	I	Unnamed Cr. 25-13	0	2.03	I
Shamrock Cr.	0	2.6	III	Unnamed Trib. 20n,6w, 17nenw	0	2.34	I
Skutley Cr.	0	3.91	II	W. Fork Halls Cr. (T23n, R5w, S12)	0	3.72	II
Skutley Cr.	3.91	6.28	I	Valentine Cr.	0.95	2.79	I
Snow Cr.	0	3.77	I	Vismal Cr.	0	3.76	I
Solum Cr.	0	2.36	I	Vosse Coulee Cr.	0	6.27	I
S. Branch Tremp. R.	0	8.7	II	Washington Coulee Cr.	0	3.74	I
Buffalo R. - South Fork	5.42	16.63	I	Wyman Cr.	0	0.82	III
South Fork Halls Cr.	0	8.89	II	Wyman Cr.	1.67	4.02	II
Squaw Cr.	0	7.93	I	Wyman Cr.	4.28	8.15	I

Source: WDNR 2021

## Swimming



There are at least 8 formal, or recognized, public beaches or swimming access points to streams and lakes in the County. Public beaches can be found in the Black River State Forest at Pigeon Creek Recreation Area, and at County Parks; East and West Lake Arbutus, Spaulding Pond, and Lake Wazee. Informal swimming opportunities exist at canoe landings and camping areas along the Black River on the State lands. A local government, which provides a formal public swimming beach, is the Village of Merrillan at Lower Lake Park, on Trow Lake.



Public outdoor swimming pools are provided by the City of Black River Falls and the Village of Melrose. The City of Black River Falls, in cooperation with the Black River Falls School District, provides an indoor pool at the middle school in the city. Motels, commercial campgrounds, and resorts in Jackson County provide indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities for their guests, and an outdoor beach on Lake Lee in Millston is owned by a local property owners association. Poor water quality and erratic currents make river and stream swimming undesirable. Map 4-4, page 4-18 shows the location of these public swimming facilities.

#### *Motor Boating/Water Skiing and Jet Skis*

No restrictions on motor size exist in Jackson County and public boat access sites are abundant, Map 4-4, page 4-18. Personal watercraft are a controversial issue in water use as inexperienced jet ski operators have caused serious injury or death to themselves and others, and the impact of only a few craft operating at high speed can adversely affect many other water users and wildlife habitat.

Water skiing is an established sport and is dependent upon motorboats for its conduct. It requires a lot of room and allows little opportunity for other users on the water while skiing is occurring. Water skiing and motorboating are recreational sports that require large, flat-water areas, and other than Lake Arbutus there is little opportunity for the activity in Jackson County. The other lakes are either too small to allow unlimited motor cruising or have restrictions on motorboat use due to the unique character of the resource, such as Lake Wazee, or the flowages managed for waterfowl. Related to water skiing but gaining in popularity are tubing behind a boats and wake boarding. Both of these activities are included within the water skiing category.

#### *Canoeing/Kayaking and Sailing*

These three water sports are generally low impact activities, although in some parts of the state popular canoeing waters can become very crowded with the resultant adverse impact on the natural environment. Jackson County offers considerable opportunity for canoeing, as the Black River is one of the more notable streams in the state for relatively easy, non-demanding canoeing for novices and occasional indulgers. A typical trip between Black River Falls and New Amsterdam near the Black River mouth in La Crosse County is a pleasant two or three day experience.

Within the Black River State Forest, above the Black River Falls dam, there is canoe access at Halls Creek canoe landing, on the west bank of the river on CTH E about a quarter mile south of West Road in the Town of Komensky. There is a small parking lot at this site. It is estimated to be about a 3-½ hour trip to the Black River Falls dam. Another State Forest maintained canoe launch is Morrison Creek, which is upstream from Halls Creek on the east side of the river near the Winnebago Mission. Below the dam are State Forest maintained canoe launch points with vehicle parking lots at Perry Creek and Hawk Island. Hawk Island also is a canoe campground.

The State Forest provides other water access points for localized canoeing, as well as fishing. These are at Oxbow Pond-6 acres/5 feet, Robinson Pond-12 acres, Pigeon Creek Flowage-34 acres/9 feet, and ten other flowages concentrated along Town of Millston's North Settlement Road. The second largest flowage in the County, after

Lake Arbutus, is Potter Flowage-348 acres/24 feet in the Town of Knapp. The County maintains two access points on this flowage.

### *Scuba Diving*

Recreational Scuba Diving is a sport that is dependent upon large clear bodies of water. Lake Wazee is one of the best scuba diving locations in the Midwest and draws divers from all over the country. A description of Lake Wazee can be found on page 5-12.

## **Winter Activities**

Snow-and Ice based activities are those that involve some form of frozen water. The following are winter activities in Jackson County.

### *Snowmobiles*

Snowmobile registrations, administered by the Department of Natural Resources, provide a funding source to acquire trail easements and to maintain trail by grooming and signing. Snowmobile clubs also participate in trail building and maintenance. The number of snowmobiles registered in Jackson County, and throughout the state, seems to have peaked in the 1970's. There was a decline throughout the 80's, but interest has picked up again over the last decade, as seen by the increased number of registrations.

Because of the access to public lands, and the County's active trail program, the County attracts nonresidents and out of state snowmobilers who trailer their machines to Jackson County for the purpose of riding the many miles of trails on both public and cooperative private lands. The County participates in the State funded snowmobile trail program, and there are 266 miles of state assisted trail, with about 172 miles established and maintained through cooperative agreements with private landowners. The Buffalo River State Trail between Mondovi and Fairchild, operated by the DNR, provides snowmobiling opportunity, as well as 51 miles of trail on State Forest land. Map 4-1, page 4-15 shows the location of these trails within the County.

### *Downhill/Cross Country Skiing & Snowboarding*

These popular winter sports are mentioned together although only cross country or "touring" skiing uses a trail system. Downhill or "alpine" skiing and snowboarding areas require groomed slopes and a lift to be considered by serious sportsmen. Jackson County does not have any formal downhill ski areas, but there are hills in nearby counties. A trail used for biking or hiking in the summer is usually suitable for use as a cross-County ski trail in the winter, except for some hiking trails especially in wooded areas which may be too steep or curved for ski trails.

There are 10 miles of trails along the Buffalo River State Trail, however, the typical cross-County skier seeks a quiet solitude and therefore trails, which permit snowmobiling, such as the Buffalo River State Trail, are usually not considered prime cross-County skiing trails. The surface condition of a snowmobile trail is not usually conducive to good skiing. There are 7.5 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails on the Black River State Forest land. There are 11 miles of trails on the Wazee Park lands. Other large public holdings can provide some cross-country skiing opportunities even if they do not have sufficiently maintained trails.

### *Ice Fishing*

Jackson County offers excellent ice fishing on the Black River and in the many cranberry bogs.

### *Ice Skating/Hockey*

Within Jackson County, there appear to be a few more or less formally designated public ice skating rinks, most of which are created by flooding a land area after outside temperatures hold below freezing. Skating on rivers and lakes can be dangerous, as ice thickness is often not determined, and cannot be controlled. Since the sport has grown slightly in popularity, and due to our climate, sports such as ice hockey have become more popular. Schools or local

civic organizations sponsor teams, in which some have indoor practice facilities that can be utilized by the public when not in use by the teams.

Since most of the skating is done in facilities that are manmade, it is important for municipalities to continue to provide skating rinks. Sometimes skating facilities are made by flooding parking lots, but this has the disadvantage of reducing parking space at a recreation facility even as it is being used. Flooding portions of a golf course, or ball diamond has detrimental effects on the turf cover in the springtime. At least one facility in a municipality will provide lights for night skating, for the recreational needs of the working person. A warming house is also a desired facility to consider to along with an ice rink.

## Viewing and Interpretive Activities

### *Historical and Cultural Sites*

Scientific or natural areas may never attract as many tourists as water slides or ball games, but tourism is not their primary purpose. The County and local communities should support efforts to identify and preserve unique ecological or cultural features within the County.

The Wisconsin State Historical Society lists 31 historic places/structures or points of interest in Jackson County. The list includes such things as the Black River Falls Public Library which is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Warren & Ouachita Valley Railroad Steam Locomotive #1, 4 different bridges and numerous structures. That inventory can be found at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>. Jackson County is rich in historical sites and points of interest that should meet the needs of the population pursuing this outdoor recreation pursuit.

### *Historical Sites*

There are five sites in the County on the National Register of Historic Places. In the City of Black River Falls, the old Union High School on North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is on this list. Gullickson's Glen in the Town of Irving, designated as a State Natural Area, is also on the Historic Register due to the presence of Native American petroglyphs dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Unfortunately, modern-day vandalism has destroyed some of the carvings, but most major research on the site had been completed prior to the destruction. The third National Historic Register site in the County is also a Native American remnant, the Silver Mound Archaeological District located in the Towns of Hixton and Garden Valley. The fourth is the Blackhawk Powwow Grounds in the Town of Komensky. The Black River Falls Public Library is the fifth on the list.

There are other historic sites of local interest, but they have not been permanently marked or publicized. Potential historic recognition could be given to such structures as the old Melchoir Brewery and Hotel at Trempealeau, old log structures still existing throughout the County and early homes or stores which are unique in their architectural style or historic value. Communities should recognize the scenic and cultural value of architecture. A building need not have been the home of a famous person, or a site where a famous treaty was signed to warrant preserving. If the building's style represents a particular era or adaptation of form to function, it has the potential to be preserved.

### *State Historical Markers*

Wisconsin has more than 530 official Historical Markers in the State. These markers tell the stories about events, individuals, buildings, or sites of local, state, or national significance. Jackson County has 7 historical markers within the County.



*Historical Marker on State Highway 27*

*Cultural Events:*

The Native American nation formerly known as the Winnebago, and now called the Ho Chunk, have a strong presence in Jackson County. The tribe owns, or is the beneficiary to through trust arrangements, about 800 acres of land in the County, primarily in the Town of Komensky. The annual Pow Wow held each year around Labor Day at the tribe's Pow Wow grounds provides a view of the tribe's history and traditions.

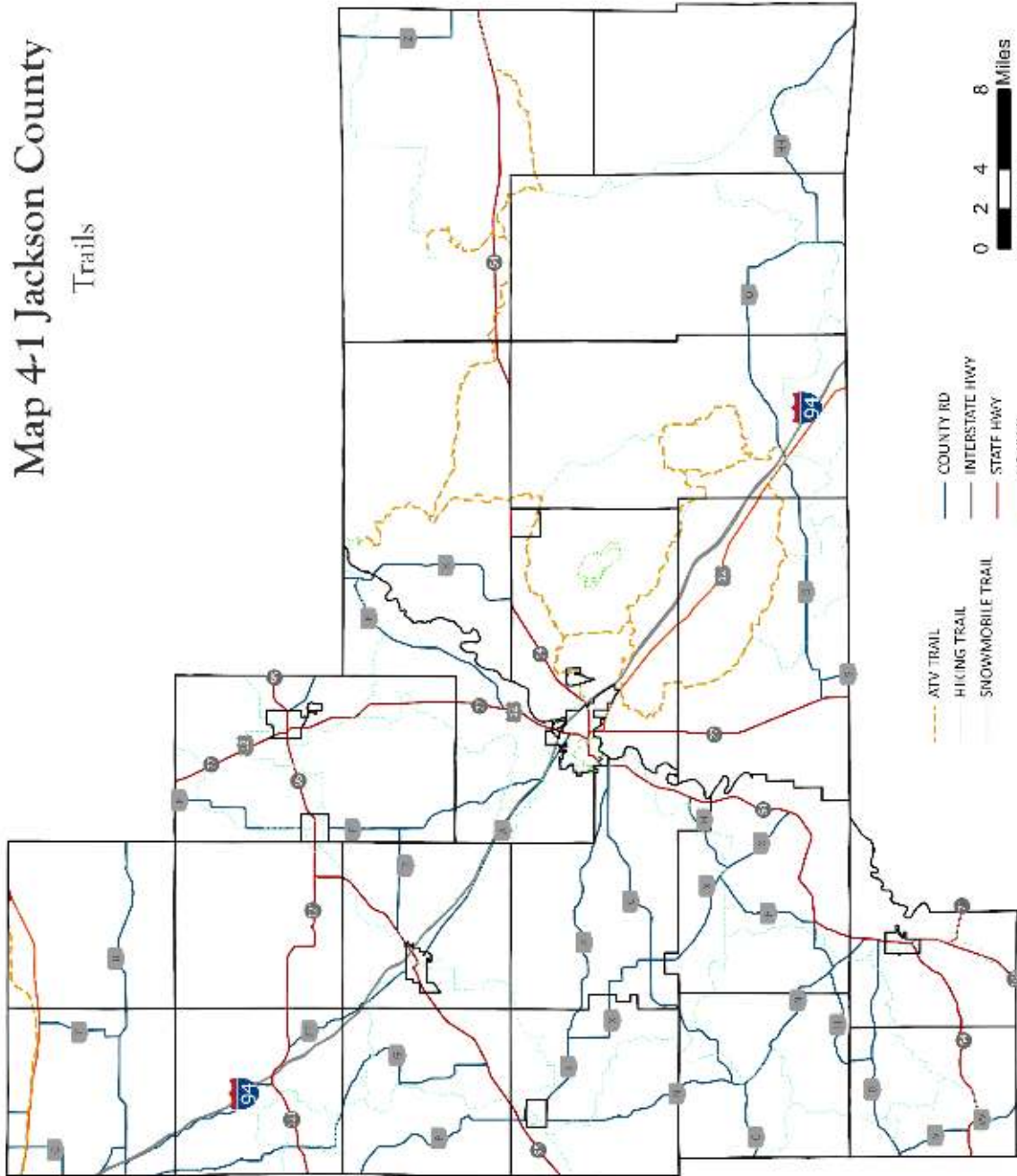
Other festivals and outdoor celebrations emphasize local history or unique natural resources and agricultural products. Alma Center, the "Strawberry Capital of Wisconsin," has its annual Strawberry Days in June. Hixton is known for its community 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, and Taylor is home to the "Taylor Old Fashion Days," which is also held in June.

Merrillan calls itself the "Christmas Tree Capital," because of the large acreage of plantation grown evergreens in the area, and the cranberry bogs in the marshes further east in the County are also a unique site to see. Tours of both these unique crop producing areas and processes can be arranged. A cranberry museum is located at Warrens, just south of the Jackson County line in Monroe County, though the bogs featured are mostly in Jackson County.

*Sightseeing*

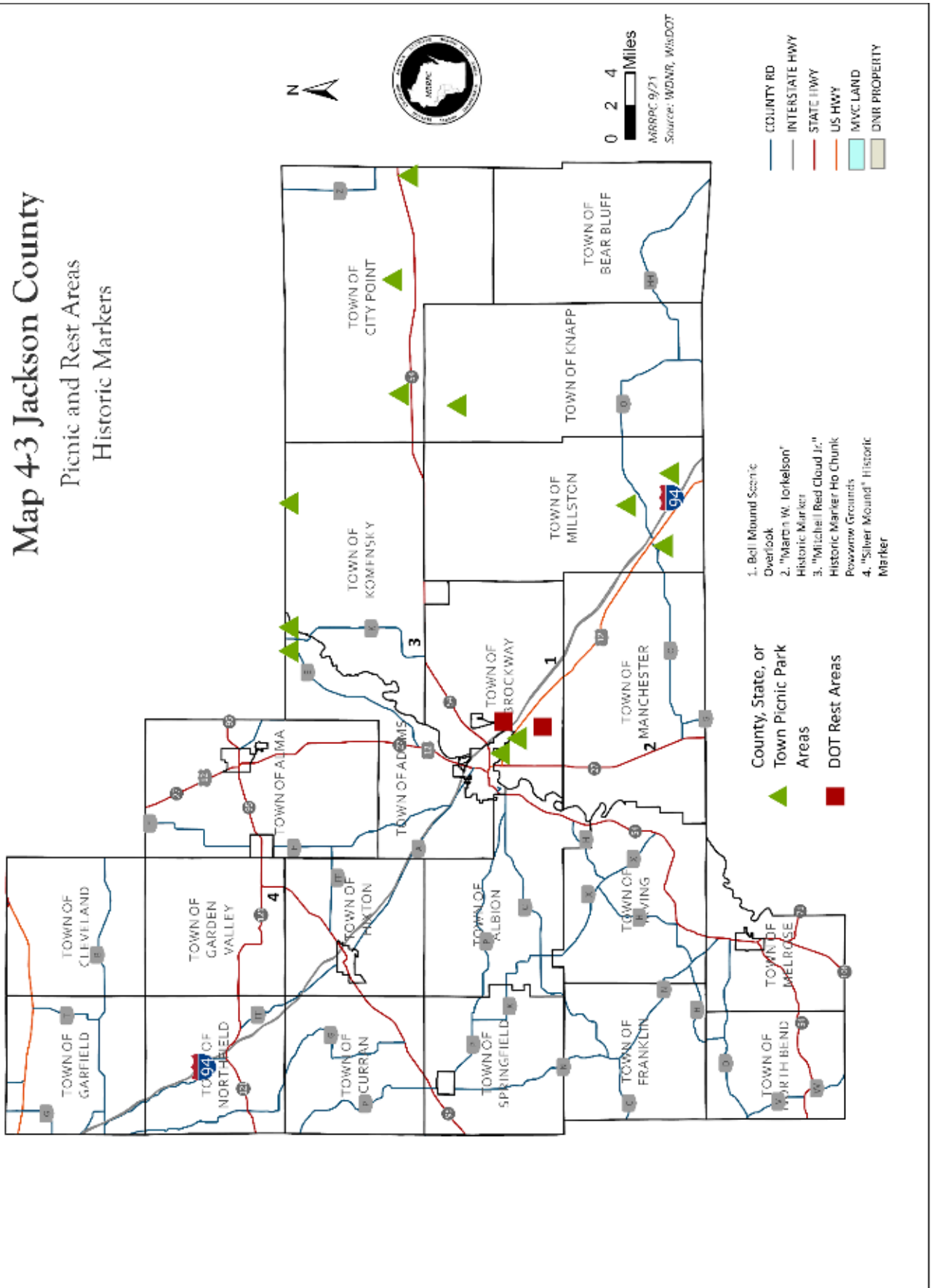
Western Jackson County is located in the Driftless region with land surrounded sculpted by glacial melt waters. Spectacular overlooks are abundant and country roads are overflowing with picturesque beauty. The eastern part is very rural with many wetland and forested areas which provides numerous opportunities to view wildlife. The Black River State Forest with over 68,000 acres of land offers many opportunities to view wildlife and fauna.

# Map 4-1 Jackson County Trails



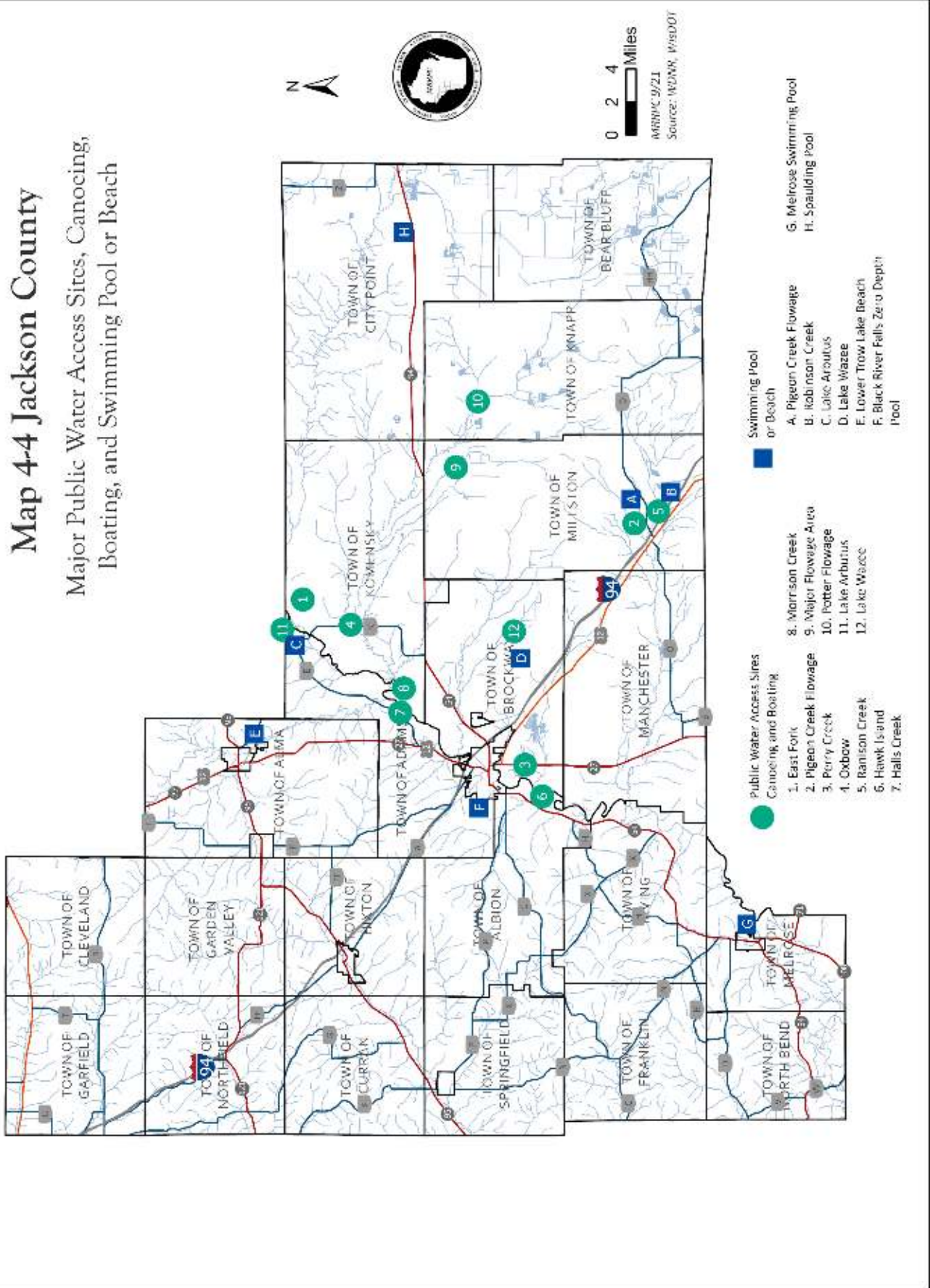


# Map 4-3 Jackson County Picnic and Rest Areas Historic Markers



# Map 4-4 Jackson County

Major Public Water Access Sites, Canoeing, Boating, and Swimming Pool or Beach





## 5. RECREATION RESOURCE INVENTORY

So far in this recreation plan each activity has been considered individually. Jackson County offers an abundance of year round recreational opportunities for residents and tourists. The County offers some of the best hunting in the state with its sizeable populations of deer, turkey, small game and waterfowl and its three rivers offer exceptional fishing for bass, catfish, walleye and panfish. Trout streams are also plentiful in the County. Picnicking, hiking, biking, cruising the river, canoeing or kayaking are all popular during the summer and during the winter recreationists enjoy ice fishing, snowmobiling, skating, and cross country skiing. Residents and tourists alike have the opportunity to view the huge flocks of ducks, geese, and other waterfowl gathering during their spring and fall migrations.

This section reviews the physical facilities available in the unincorporated areas of the County available upon which to carry out some of these activities. Jackson County has a broad scope of recreational resources from private, local governments, and state and federal governments. Lands owned by Public School Districts in Jackson County may be treated ambiguously in this plan. In some cases Public School outdoor recreation facilities are specialized in function for school purposes and are not available for general public use. In other cases, School Districts provide facilities that are available for general public use. This latter category of school lands is mentioned as appropriate in the community recreational inventories. When Public School-owned lands are available for general public use, they are also eligible for LAWCON and Wisconsin Stewardship funding provided the school district has adopted the outdoor recreation plan.

### Federal Outdoor Recreational Facilities

There are scattered parcels of land in federal ownership in eastern Jackson County totaling approximately 1,980 acres. Most of this is in the Central Wisconsin Conservation Area (CWCA), a 57,612-acre area, mostly marsh and lowland habitat, leased from the federal government and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the Meadow Valley wildlife area. Most of the area lies in neighboring Juneau County. One of the largest parcels of federal land is Hawk Island on the Black River, which is administered by the DNR as part of the Black River State Forest and is developed as a camping area for canoeists. Other smaller individual parcels of federal land lie within the State Forest, and from a recreational consideration, are administered as part of the forest property.

### State Outdoor Recreational Facilities

The Black River State Forest is the largest piece of state ownership in the County, and at approximately 68,000 acres, it is one of the larger blocks of State-owned conservation land anywhere in the state. The overall boundaries designated as within the State Forest encompass approximately 76,000 acres, but the difference between that figure and the actual state ownership is comprised of privately held lands. As these private parcels within the overall forest boundary become available for purchase on the open market consideration is given by the DNR toward making an offer to purchase. Some of these “inholdings” are forested land owned by the Ho Chunk Native American Nation, or paper companies, and from a hiking or non-consumptive use point of view, movement on foot between the different ownership parcels is unimpeded. Although the entire State Forest is open to the public, certain areas have been developed specifically for public visitation. These improvements may be as little as a graded and graveled parking lot primarily for use by hikers, hunters, and canoeists, to hand pumps and picnic shelters, and hot showers and flush toilet rest rooms. Specific areas with some form of “improvement” to facilitate public visitation to the State Forest are:

#### - Castle Mound Recreation Area

Near junction of USH 12 & STH 27, 1 mile south of Black River Falls. 35 campsites, toilets, showers. Winter camping. Hiking trails and scenic overlook. Picnic area with shelters.

- East Fork Campground

2 miles north of community of Clay on Campground Road, near North County line. 3 separate areas, including group camp and horse camp areas. Vault toilets & hand pump. 26 Primitive camping sites.

- Outdoor Group Campground

Adjacent to East Fork Campground. Area intended for organized group camping. Capacity 50 people. Space for maximum of 8 RV's, remainder must be tents. Open mid-April till Nov. 30th.

- Pigeon Creek Recreation Area

Off CTH D on North Settlement Rd, approx. 2 ½ miles east of Millston. 38 campsites, 3 sets of vault toilets, hand pump. Swimming beach and boat access to 34 acre Pigeon Creek Flowage. Picnic area. Entry fee.

- Rangeline Wayside

Access to Rangeline Flowage. Vehicle parking.

- Perry Creek

Picnic tables. Hand pump drinking water, hiking trail, Black River bank access.

- Oxbow Flowage

Picnic tables. Drinking water, access to 6-acre Oxbow Pond.

- Dike 17 Wildlife Area

2,035 acres administered as wildlife area. Hiking trails and parking. No other facilities.

- Hawk Island Canoe Camp

Canoe access to Black River. Primitive canoe camp area. No water, one pit toilet.

- Halls Creek

Canoe access to Black River. Vehicle parking.

- Morrison Creek

Canoe access to Black River. Vehicle parking.

## State Fishery and Wildlife Areas

In addition to the Black River State Forest there are approximately 12,000 acres of State Wildlife or Fishery lands in Jackson County. The largest of these is Dike 17 Wildlife Area, 3,700 acres located within the boundary of the Black River State Forest. The South Beaver Creek and North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Areas are also both over 1,000 acres and are located in the southwestern portion of the County south and west of the Village of Melrose. The other state properties that are designated as hunting/fishing lands lie in the western portion of the County, in scattered parcels ranging in size from 64 to 860 acres. Some of these designated areas are supplemented by a total of 633 acres of easement or leased lands.

These wildlife and fishery management lands are owned by the state and are available for general public access. These areas provide a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses. All Wildlife/Fishery Areas allow hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, nature study and berry picking. Some wildlife/fishery areas also allow camping, bicycling, horseback riding, dog training, field trials (dog competition), and snowmobiling. Any restricted uses of wildlife areas will be designated with signs at the property. For safety, non-hunters should be aware that hunting season, especially deer season, is not the best time to be in these properties.

## State Fishery Areas

Buffalo River Fishery Area - This area, along the Buffalo River, accessed by the State Trail and other roads, lies in both Jackson and Trempealeau Counties with scattered discontinuous tracts of approximately 884 acres of state owned land and 400 acres of leased land to total approximately 1,290 acres, stretching 6 to 8 miles either side of Osseo. About 596 of the state owned acres are in the Jackson County Towns of Garfield and Cleveland along the Buffalo River. Wildlife includes deer, and other furbearers, turkeys, ruffed grouse, and a variety of waterfowl. The habitat varies throughout, and is classified in parts as shrub marsh and upland forest. Trout fishing is one of the features of this property.

Northland Lake Fishery Area - Located 2 miles north of Northfield, this 598.4-acre area is grassland and upland forest. Northfield Lake, a 38-acre impoundment of Beaver Creek, is a central feature of this property. The principal wildlife is deer, turkey, pheasant, and squirrel. There are two gravel parking areas.

Trempealeau River (North Branch) Fishery Area - This 373.6-acre area is classified as having stream bottomland, and upland forest habitats. Located 3 miles north of Hixton, the primary types of wildlife are pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, furbearers, deer, turkey and waterfowl.

Stockwell Creek Fishery Area - Also classified as stream bottomland and upland forest habitat, similar varieties of wildlife are located here as in the Trempealeau River Area with the addition of grouse and woodcock. This area is located 3 miles northwest of Merrilan and contains 797.9 acres of recreational land.

Trump Lake Fishery Area - At 424 acres, the upland forest and lake habitats contain deer, ruffed grouse, squirrels, and turkeys. The Trump Lake Fishery area is located 5 miles south of Taylor.

Low Creek Fishery Area - 95 acres comprise this area of land 1 mile south of Hixton. It consists of marsh and upland forest habitats that contain primarily pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, and turkeys.

Tank Creek Fishery Area - 470.92 acres located 4 miles southeast of Hixton is also a marsh and upland forest habitat with varieties of wildlife including deer, ducks, furbearers, rabbits, ruffed grouse, squirrels, and turkeys.

Sand Creek Fishery Area - Approximately 40 acres of this 740-acre property are located in Jackson County with the remainder immediately adjacent in Monroe County. It is located 3 miles south of Melrose. It is composed of stream, and upland and lowland forests. The primary varieties of wildlife are deer, furbearers, squirrels, and turkeys.

Jackson Central Wisconsin Conservation Area - This area covers 1,060 acres, and is located 23 miles east of Black River Falls with access from Hwy 54. A combination of marsh and lowland brush, it contains deer, sharp-tailed grouse, turkeys, and waterfowl.

## State Wildlife Areas

Wisconsin can take pride in its vast treasure of natural resources, particularly its wildlife. Since 1876, the Wisconsin has been acquiring land to meet conservation and recreation needs. Wildlife areas are managed to sustain the wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses. These include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, nature study and berry picking. Dog training or trialing (hunting dog competitions) may be allowed by permit. A limited number of properties allow additional outdoor recreation at designated locations; like camping, bicycling, horseback riding and snowmobiling. In Jackson County there are five State Wildlife Areas, the following table identifies these five areas.

## State Wildlife Areas Located in Jackson County

Name	Description	Access	Acres	Recreational Opportunities
<b>West Taylor Wildlife Area</b>	This property is located within the heavier soils of Jackson County and was primarily farmed or grazed historically. However, 40 acres of marsh land did provide good wintering habitat for pheasants, which was the main reason for the primary purchase. Recently, pine plantations and fencing have allowed for a return to a forested landscape of oaks and pines with some open fields.	West Taylor Wildlife Area is located southwest of Taylor, in western Jackson County. Access points can be found along Rabbit Run Road and Hamilton Road. Take Highway 95 to River Road (which turns into Rabbit Run).	177	Birding Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting - especially noted for waterfowl, deer, turkey and bear Trapping Wild edibles gathering Wildlife viewing
<b>Lakes Coulee Wildlife Area</b>	The wildlife area is managed to maintain aspen and native shrub species and control invasive species. Timber harvests are used to regenerate oak and other mid-succession tree species in order to maintain the species within oak-dominated or mixed cover types and improve the oak age class distribution. Grasslands and savanna are managed to increase the block size to benefit grassland dependent species.	Lakes Coulee Wildlife Area is located 2 Miles southwest of Blair on both sides of STH 95 in Trempealeau County.	808	Birding Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Fishing - trout Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting - especially noted for rabbits, squirrels, deer, turkey, ruffed grouse and pheasants (stocked) Trapping Wild edibles/gathering Wildlife viewing
<b>North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area</b>	North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area is located outside the town of North Bend, in southwest Jackson County. The property consists of floodplain forest, bottomland hardwoods, marshy oxbows and some upland fields. The Black River borders the property on the North.  This property is the jewel of the Black River, providing outstanding habitat for wetland dependent species. The Black River provides a critical corridor for a variety of animal, bird and plant species - making any trip down the Black a trip worth remembering.	Access points can be found along Highway VV.	1,500	Birding Boating (launches available along Highway VV) Canoeing (launches available along Highway VV) Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Fishing (along the Black River) Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting - especially noted for waterfowl, deer, turkey and bear Trapping Wild edibles/gathering Wildlife viewing
<b>South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area</b>	South Beaver Creek Wildlife Area is located west of Melrose in western, Jackson County. The property consists of upland hardwood forest with a large impoundment of water and some smaller scrapes. South Beaver Creek runs through the property	Access can be gained along County Highway D, and Erickson and Busse road which come off of County Road D.	1,000	Birding Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Fishing Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting - especially noted for waterfowl, deer, turkey, pheasant and bear Trapping Wild edibles/gathering Wildlife viewing
<b>Morgan Marsh Wildlife Area</b>	Morgan Marsh Wildlife Area is located approximately 11 miles west of Black River Falls at the junction of County Road C and County Road N in the township of Franklin just outside of the town of Franklin. The property consists of oak uplands and high quality wetlands with a couple of open water potholes. The North Branch Beaver Creek, which is a class II trout stream, flows through the property.		192	Birding Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Fishing (along Franklin Creek) Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting Trapping Wild edibles/gathering Wildlife viewing
<b>Dike 17 Wildlife Area</b>	This large 3,700-acre area is located 5 miles east of Black River Falls with access from Hwy 54. Due to the fact that it is such a large expanse of land, there is greater variety of habitat, and therefore wildlife. The land consists of marsh, wet prairie, uplands, and brush. The wildlife includes geese, bald eagles, sandhill cranes, loons, short-eared owls, ducks, deer, sharp-tailed grouse, turkeys, black bears, yellow-headed blackbirds, bob-o-links, karner blue butterflies, massasauga rattlesnakes, and timber wolves.	Access can be gained by taking Highway 54 east and turning south either on Wildcat Road and then east on Battlepoint, or by turning south on North Settlement Road.	3,700	Birding Cross country skiing (no designated trail) Fishing Hiking (no designated trail) Hunting - Note: refuge closed from Sept. 1 - Dec. 31 with the exception of the gun deer season Trapping Wild edibles/gathering Wildlife viewing

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## State Natural Areas

State Natural Areas (SNAs) are areas that are being preserved by the DNR to protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape. The DNR has designated 655 State Natural Areas encompassing over 362,000 acres in the State; Jackson County has 22 of these designated sites within its boundaries. All 22 are open to the public year-round unless otherwise noted at the State Natural Area site. Natural areas are not appropriate for intensive recreation such as camping or mountain biking, but they can accommodate low-impact activities such as hiking, bird watching and nature study. As such, many State Natural Areas contain few or no amenities such as parking areas, restrooms, or maintained trails. Collecting of plants, animals, fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead is not permitted in State Natural Areas. However, fishing, trapping, and hunting are allowed on most DNR-owned properties in accordance with state regulations. The following table contains a brief description and how to access these 22 State Natural Areas:

Name	Description	Access	Acres
<b>Buffalo River Trail Prairies</b>	Located along the Buffalo River State Trail in Jackson and Trempealeau Counties. The Buffalo River Trail Prairies contains four high quality remnants located along the Buffalo River State Recreation Trail. Once an old railroad right-of-way near the meandering Buffalo River, the trail now harbors diverse stretches of prairie that were historically maintained by the unintentional fires sparked by passing railcars. The four prairie remnants stretch between Eleva and Osseo. One is located west of Eleva, two east of Strum and the largest --a five-mile stretch east of Osseo. The prairies contain numerous species with grasses. Buffalo River Trail Prairies is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.	Access to the prairies can be made from the junction of I-94 and STH 10 in Osseo. From there go east on STH 10 four miles to a parking area on the north side of the highway. The largest section of prairie runs about 3 miles west and 2 miles east of the parking area. The other three natural area remnants are all accessible via the recreational trail.	153
<b>Bear Bluff</b>	Bear Bluff SNA is situated within an extensive, wetland complex that occupies a significant portion of the bed of the extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. It is a small remnant of the "Great Swamp of Central Wisconsin", much of which has been altered for cranberry cultivation. Of note is the presence of a forested community dominated by white pine and red maple, which occupies a landscape position between wet, acid forested wetlands of black spruce and tamarack, and dry forests comprised of pine and oak. This community type is uncommon in the state with a high percentage occurring in and around the bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. A small portion of the site contains a more open wetland. And in contrast to many of the poor fens that are common within this landscape, this open wetland is an acid peatland. Bear Bluff is owned by the DNR and Jackson County. It was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.	It can be accessed from the town of Mather in northeast Juneau County, go west on CTH H 0.7 miles, then north on CTH HH 5 miles, then continue north on Goodyear Road 2.8 miles. The site lies east and west of the road.	186
<b>Castle Mound Pine Forest</b>	Castle Mound Pine Forest is located within the Black River State Forest. Castle Mound is a long, narrow, weathering butte rising 180 feet above the surrounding sand plain and composed of Cambrian sandstone about 400 million years old. A variety of exposures and microclimates has resulted in contrasting forest communities on opposite sides of the mound. Exposed and shaded cliffs up to 30 feet high occur along the central backbone ridge, and sandstone boulders litter the sloping forest floor. The protected northeast slope is forested with a mixed pine forest of white and red pines with Hill's oak, white oak, paper birch, red maple, and large-toothed aspen. The dry southwest face is wooded with jack pine and oak. Bird species usually found further north have been seen here. A hiking trail traverses the area and there is an observation tower near the center of the mound. Castle Mound Pine Forest is owned by the DNR and was designated a state natural area in November 1952.	Access to the Pine Forest can be made from the intersection of STH 27 and USH 12 on the south side of Black River Falls, go east on USH12 0.7 miles to the entrance of Castle Mound Park, then west on the access road to the picnic area parking lot. A trail leads to the observation tower.	91
<b>Gullickson Glen</b>	Gullickson's Glen preserves the best known assemblage of petroglyphs in Wisconsin. This small wooded site is dissected by Trout Run Creek, which has cut through the soft sandstone forming steep banks, vertical cliffs, and overhangs. Under the main overhang are numerous carvings in the sandstone. Natural erosion of rock chunks and defacing by people has destroyed some of the carvings. The rock shelter was completely excavated in the 1950's, which recovered deer, elk, bear, fish, turkey, and mountain lion bones. Although use of the rock shelter dates back some 11,000 years, the petroglyphs date to the middle Woodland or Upper Mississippi period (1100-1150 A.D.). Numerous spring seeps emanate from the bases of the southern rock wall before it enters Trout Run Creek, a clear medium hard-water creek that harbors a diversity of aquatic invertebrates. The seeps contain many rare species. In all, there are about 40 species of aquatic insects known from this small area. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Gullickson's Glen is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1976.	Gullickson Glen can be accessed from Black River Falls, go south on State Hwy. 54, then west on CTH H 3 miles, then northwest on CTH X 3.2 miles to the natural area.	4

Name	Description	Access	Acres
<b>Washburn Marsh</b>	Washburn Marsh is located within the Black River State Forest. Washburn Marsh is situated in a large wetland basin; it is an undisturbed wetland that includes expanses dominated by sedges and sphagnum moss, black spruce-tamarack swamp and some white and red pine in the surrounding area. The southern and central parts are dominated by sphagnum moss and wire-leaved sedges with Massachusetts fern found in shady, wet peaty ground. Towards the northeast the dominance shifts to broad-leaved sedges, and some uncommon sedges. The northwest portion of the site contains an acid conifer swamp of black spruce and tamarack. The marsh edge is entirely forested by red maple, oak, and white pine and red pine. Washburn Marsh is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1983.	Access to the Marsh is from the junction of I-90 and CTH O in Millston. From there go east on CTH O three tenths of a mile, then north on North Settlement Road 0.6 mile, then southwest and north on Stanton Creek Road 3.3 miles, then north about 1 mile on an access road. Walk east into the natural area. Or from I-90 and O, go northeast on North Settlement Road 2.65 miles, then northwest on a snowmobile trail about 1.5 miles to the east side of the natural area. Or access the north side via a snowmobile trail just east of Wildcat Flowage off Kling Road.	297
<b>Robinson Creek Pines</b>	Robinson Creek Pines is located within the Black River State Forest. Robinson Creek Pines contains a scenic corridor of large white pines along the floodplains of Wyman and Robinson creeks. Swampy pockets of red maple, birches, white pine, and cinnamon and royal ferns are present along the floodplain. Uncommon plant species include Massachusetts fern and long sedge. Smaller white pine, red pine, and oak dominate the upland terrace south of the creeks. Some white pine reproduction is occurring. Drier sites are occupied by Jack pine, oaks and hazelnut with quite a few barrens and dry prairie species present. The federally endangered Karner blue butterfly has been found here. Both streams are Class II trout waters with fast, clear water that is soft and light brown. Several birds associated with older growth forests are found here including barred owl, pileated woodpecker, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager. Robinson Creek Pines is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1983.	Access to the site can be made from Millston. From there go west on CTH O 0.7 miles, then north on a fisherman access road just west of Lake Lee to the natural area.	85
<b>Jay Creek Pine Forest</b>	Jay Creek Pine Forest is a diverse mix of dry to wet pine woods lying in the flat, poorly drained bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The uplands are northern dry-mesic forest of white and red pine, red maple, and white oak. Most significant is the excellent white pine-red maple swamp on gently sloping wet sand along Jay Creek, an unusual community found only within the bed of former Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Two rare plant species, northern long sedge and the Massachusetts fern, disjunct here from its nearest population in Pennsylvania, are also common. Jay Creek is a fast, cold soft water stream inhabited by brook trout. Jay Creek Pine Forest is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1990.	Access to the Forest is made from the intersection of I-94 and CTH O in Millston. From the intersection go east on CTH O 6.5 miles, then south on Arrow Road 2.8 miles, then east on E. Starlight Road 0.8 mile to a parking area north of the road. Walk north along an old access lane.	360
<b>Ketchum Creek Pines</b>	Ketchum Creek Pines is located within the Black River State Forest. Ketchum Creek Pines slopes gently from north to south with a dry, sandy upland forest grading rapidly into a northern wet-mesic forest. The site becomes increasingly wetter moving toward the south end of the property and the wet-mesic forest gives way to a tamarack black spruce bog and eventually an open sedge meadow. Thin muck soils overlay wet sand and sphagnum moss covers much of the forest floor. Scattered across the forest floor is a tangle of raised tree roots filled with pockets of cold, dark water. Two rare plants, Massachusetts fern and northern long sedge, are common in these root pockets. The understory is a dense sea of 3-4 foot high cinnamon ferns. Northern flying squirrel and porcupine inhabit the forest. Ketchum Creek Pines is owned by the DNR and was designated in 1991.	Access to the site can be made from the intersection of I-94 and CTH O in Millston, go east on CTH O 4.2 miles, then north and west on Smrekar Road 1.2 miles to the right-angle corner. Park along the road and walk south into the site.	160
<b>Bauer Brockway Barrens</b>	Bauer-Brockway Barrens features scattered jack pine and Hill's oak within a matrix of sand prairie and shrubs located on the level sandy soils characteristic of the extinct Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The site has a diverse butterfly component including one of the most diverse moth fauna of any other barrens in the state. The federally endangered Karner blue butterfly occurs here along with the state-threatened phlox moth and frosted elfin butterfly. Five other rare butterflies occur here - dusty, cobweb, Leonardus skippers, mottled duskywing, and the Gorgone checkerspot. Wild lupine, the larval food of the Karner blue butterfly, has been planted in some of the restored areas to help maintain healthy numbers of this endangered species. Indian Grave Creek runs northwest southeast through the barrens adding to the overall site diversity. Bauer-Brockway Barrens is owned by the DNR and Jackson County and was designated a state natural area in 1997.	Access to this State Natural Area is from the intersection of I-94 and STH 54 in Black River Falls, go east on STH 54 four tenths of a mile, then east on West Bauer Road 3.8 miles, then north on Brockway Road 0.2 mile to a parking area east of the road.	240

Name	Description	Access	Acres
<b>North Bend Wet Prairie</b>	Located within the Black River floodplain, North Bend Wet Prairie features pockets of wet prairie, a rare natural community type within the region and throughout the state. Ditching, grazing, and fire suppression have altered or destroyed most of the wet prairie that remains in Wisconsin. Grasses include prairie cordgrass, big bluestem, switchgrass, and little bluestem. Characteristic herbs are white wild indigo, flowering spurge, spotted joe-pye weed, false dragonhead, calico aster, evening primrose, and Missouri goldenrod. Numerous birds are found in the prairie and surrounding area. Species observed include Sandhill crane, yellow-billed cuckoo, barred owl, yellow-bellied sapsucker, alder flycatcher, eastern kingbird, tufted titmouse, blue-gray gnatcatcher, warbling vireo, blue-winged warbler, American redstart, rose-breasted grosbeak, and indigo bunting. North Bend Wet Prairie is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.	From the intersection of Highway 54 and County VV in North Bend, go south on County VV 1.9 miles and park. Walk north along the edge of an old field 0.15 miles, then go northeast another 0.15 miles into the site.	34
<b>Half Moon Bottoms</b>	Half Moon Bottoms is located within North Bend Bottoms State Wildlife Area. It can be found along a nearly one-mile stretch of the Black River. It features a floodplain forest dominated by silver maple, green ash, river birch, and swamp white oak. Monkey flower, wood nettle, and cut-leaved coneflower are common in the understory. Oxbow lakes are common and pine-clad sandstone cliffs are prominent in some areas. Birds include wood duck, belted kingfisher, common snipe, brown creeper, hairy woodpecker, and great-blue heron. The large floodplain canopy trees are also important nesting habitat for the state-threatened red-shouldered hawk. Half Moon Bottoms is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.	From North Bend, go south on County VV 0.8 miles. Walk southwest along the rivers edge 0.2 miles into the site.	202
<b>Black River Savanna</b>	Located within the North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area, the Black River Savanna supports a diverse sand prairie and barrens flora on the sandy, semi-open river terrace of the Black River. Rare and uncommon species include prairie parsley and prairie larkspur. Scattered small to medium-sized black or Hill's oak are present along with a few bur oak and red cedar. Smooth sumac is common throughout the site. Rare animals include red-shouldered hawk and the Blanding's turtle two state-threatened species. Black River Savanna is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.	The site is best reached by canoe. From the Highway 107 boat launch just south of Melrose, canoe downstream nearly 6 miles to the eastern edge of the site.	566
<b>Catfish Eddy Terraces</b>	Located within the Black River State Forest, it can be found along the east bank of the Black River south of Black River Falls, Catfish Eddy Terraces supports a complex of both terrestrial and aquatic features. Along the river's steep slopes is a northern dry-mesic forest, which has been inaccessible to timber harvest. White and red pines with red oak, white oak, and red maple are the canopy dominants. Overall, the site conditions are generally dry-mesic but numerous springs, spring runs, moist cliffs, and seepages are present along the steep terrace slopes. These features are high in microsite diversity and thus tend to support numerous rare plants and invertebrates. Just to the south is Perry Creek, which flows through a steep-walled gorge of Cambrian sandstone that is geologically unique. This area also harbors a number of rare and uncommon bird species including the Louisiana Waterthrush. Catfish Eddy Terraces is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From the intersection of Highways 54 and 12/27 in Black River Falls, go south on 27 1.2 miles, then west on W. 7th Street to its intersection with River Drive (~0.3 miles). Walk west to the river terrace.	75
<b>East Fork of Black River</b>	Located within the Black River State Forest. The East Fork of the Black River is one of the longest stretches of undammed and essentially undeveloped river corridors in the southern 2/3rds of Wisconsin. The southern extremity of the Canadian Shield, or Laurentian Plateau, is exposed here, exemplified by pre-Cambrian granitic bedrock outcroppings that occur along the shores. The site is a biologically significant mosaic of terrestrial and aquatic communities and supports a number of rare plants and animals. Along with the East Fork proper, the primary features at this site include a series of ridges and swales that parallel the river on its south side. Here, the ridges support mature dry-mesic forest of white and red pine and oak. The swales contain a variety of wetland communities, including white pine-red maple swamp, tamarack swamp, northern sedge meadow, and alder thicket. These natural communities harbor a diversity of bird species. The rare cerulean warbler is found here. The East Fork of the Black River is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From the intersection of County E and K in Hatfield, go south on K 0.7 miles, then east on Clay School Road 2.3 miles, then north on Campground Road 1 mile to the East Fork Recreation Area. Park and then follow the East Fork of the Black River east about 0.4 miles. Or for carry-in boat access, from the intersection of County E and K in Hatfield, go south on K 0.7 miles, then east on Clay School Road 4.3 miles, then north on East Fork Road 0.6 mile miles to the boat access site along the East Fork.	513

Name	Description	Access	Acres
<b>Starlight Wetlands</b>	<p>Located within the Black River State Forest, Starlight Wetlands features a diverse mosaic of natural communities representative of the Central Sands including white pine-red maple swamp, black spruce swamp, dry-mesic forest, northern sedge meadow, and central poor fen. The poor fen is a large peatland dominated by a narrow-leaved sedge over a dense carpet of sphagnum moss. Woody species such as hardhack, swamp dewberry, and cranberries are also common. In some areas are extensive patches of the common yellow lake sedge, a broad-leaved species. Along the margins of the open wetlands and within the peatland's interior are swamp conifers of black spruce, tamarack, and occasionally, jack pine. The black spruce-tamarack swamp communities occur primarily in the southeastern portion of the wetland basin. On the upslope margins is a transition to the white pine-red maple swamp with yellow birch present. The forest is situated on shallow moss peat over moist sand and features an understory of sphagnum, cinnamon fern, skunk cabbage, winterberry, Massachusetts fern, and long sedge. Seepages and occasional spring runs are found within the forest. The dry-mesic uplands support forests of red oak, black oak, red maple, and white oak. The understory is quite open with a shrub layer of American hazelnut, huckleberry, bracken fern, and early low blueberry. The forests, especially the wet coniferous forest, are noteworthy for the number of northern species they support. The wetlands support a number of rare plants including hidden-fruited bladderwort, long sedge, bog fern, yellow screwstem, and crossleaf milkwort. Starlight Wetlands is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.</p>	<p>From the intersection of I-94 and County O in Millston, go east on O 4 miles to the intersection with Smrekar Road. Park and walk south 0.4 miles into the site.</p>	1,054
<b>Upper Black River</b>	<p>Located within the Black River State Forest, Upper Black River is a highly complex system of both aquatic and terrestrial communities and diverse in terms of hydrology, topography, soils, animal life, and vegetation. The site protects the stretch of the Black River that runs from the Hatfield Dam at Lake Arbutus south to the city of Black River Falls. Also included are narrow corridors along Morrison Creek, Valentine Creek, and Dickey Creek. Major streamside features include low terraces vegetated with floodplain forest or black ash swamp, slightly higher terraces supporting rich mesic hardwood forest, steep bluffs clad in dry-mesic forest of pine and oak, and numerous smaller sites containing sandstone cliffs, coves, spring seeps and spring runs. This extensive and diverse site is home to many rare species, some of which are area-sensitive while others are restricted to "southern" habitats such as rich maple-basswood forests. Others are habitat specialists found primarily on cliffs, in seepages, or in association with high gradient streams. Protected within this site is Morrison Creek and its associated cliffs and forests. The creek flows through a 2-3 mile long, steep-walled gorge of Cambrian sandstone. The stream gradient is steep, and the bottom has cobbles, boulders, gravel, and sand. Seepages occur along the cliffs flanking the creek. The steep slopes of the narrow Valentine Creek gorge feature a mature dry-mesic forest composed of large white pine and red maple. The upper slopes contain a dense layer of shrubs and saplings. Small, nearly level terraces occur on the inside bends of meanders and oxbows. The gorge itself opens to the floodplain of the Black River. Resident birdlife includes species more commonly found in the northern forests such as pine warbler, black-throated green warbler, red-breasted nuthatch, and hermit thrush. The steep sandy slopes along the Dickey Creek corridor support a mature second-growth northern dry-mesic forest. White pine is dominant with some large individuals exceeding 20 inches in diameter. Slopes above the creek vary from nearly vertical, with slumping sandy or clay-shale slopes, to almost level terraces. Upper Black River is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.</p>	<p>From the intersection of I-94 and Highway 12 in Black River Falls, go west on Highway 12 2.1 miles, then north on County E 2.5 miles, then east 0.4 miles on an access road to a carry-in boat access.</p>	1,562
<b>Wildcat Ridge</b>	<p>Located within the Black River State Forest, Wildcat Ridge is a long sandstone ridge that rises to a height of about 300 feet above the surround plain. The mound itself is an eroded sandstone bluff that supports an extensive unfragmented, mostly deciduous dry-mesic forest, especially on the cooler northern and eastern slopes and in saddles and coves along the ridge. Dominant trees are red oak and white oak. Very old, charred stumps are present, indicating past episodes of logging and wildfire. A drier forest of jack pine and black/Hill's oak occurs on south-facing slopes with Pennsylvania sedge, bracken fern, and various prairie species. Several rare species occur here including the federally-endangered Karner blue butterfly and the state-endangered sand violet, which is found in oak barrens, dry woods, and savannas of Wisconsin's Central Sand Plains. Wildcat Ridge is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.</p>	<p>From the intersection of County O and I-94 in Millston, go east on O about 0.3 miles, then north and northeast on N. Settlement Road 3.2 miles, then north on Shale Road 2.1 miles.</p>	379



Name	Description	Access	Acres
<b>Deer Island</b>	Deer Island is located within the Jackson County Forest. Four separate units comprise Deer Island and support a large block of wet forest in the core of the Central Sand Plains Ecological Landscape. White pine and red maple swamp dominate narrow bands at the wetland/upland interface. This unique community type is found only within this region and harbors several rare plant species. Upslope, the forest transitions to one dominated by oak. In the wetter portions of the site, tamarack, black spruce, and white pine are common and eventually grade into a bog birch and open poor fen. The forests provide habitat for many boreal bird species well south of their normal range including hermit thrush, blue-headed vireo, and golden-crowned kinglet. Rare Wisconsin species such as the golden-winged warbler, Canada warbler, Connecticut warbler, and the Jutta arctic butterfly, all appear to thrive in this area. Deer Island is owned by Jackson County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From Mather, go north on 1st Avenue 8.3 miles, then northwest on Bear Bluff Road North 1.5 miles, then north on Deer Island Road 0.6 miles to the 90 turn in the road. Park and walk north into the site. Or continue west another 3.8 miles on Deer Island Road and park. Walk north into the site.	121
<b>Glen Creek Barrens</b>	Located within the Jackson County Forest, Glenn Creek Barrens is situated on the sandy uplands along both sides of Glenn Creek just east of its confluence with Robinson Creek. This site features a superb pine barrens with jack pine, white pine, and black oak. The denser stands of jack pine are quite open underneath except for scattered thickets of hazelnut. In the late 1990's, the northern stands of jack pine were thinned by an outbreak of budworm, which killed or seriously damaged roughly 50% of the trees. While this native needle-feeding caterpillar is generally considered the most significant pest of jack pine in the North Central Region, it has evolved to play an integral part in perpetuating jack pine ecosystems. After the outbreak, the groundlayer responded with vigorous growth by many barrens species. Plants include little bluestem, June grass, flowering spurge, lyrate rock-cress, bastard toadflax, whorled loosestrife, long-leaved bluets, northern slender lady's-tresses, and the state-threatened dwarf milkweed. This site also supports the Karner blue butterfly. Glenn Creek Barrens is owned by Jackson County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From the intersection of State Highway 12 and County O in Millston, go west on 12 0.9 miles to an ATV trailhead located west of the highway. Walk west on the trail 1.2 mile to the southern unit (near Marker 17.0) or continue on the trail across Glenn Creek 0.15 miles into the northern unit.	84
<b>Brockway Ponds</b>	Located within the Jackson County Forest, Brockway Ponds is comprised of 5 separate ponds and associated wetlands. The ponds have naturally fluctuating water levels that periodically leave a broad apron of sand exposed along the shoreline. Plants colonizing this habitat include at least on rarity, with its distribution centered in the Atlantic coastal plain of the Eastern U.S. This and other plants found here depend on the fluctuating water levels that allow them to compete with other species only under these specific environmental conditions. Most are only seen during low water levels. The plants are also easily damaged by trampling and illegal vehicular use that often comes during years of drought or low water. In fact, a single rider could easily devastate the pond and its unique plant species in minutes. Most of Wisconsin's other coastal plains marshes are found primarily in Marquette and Waushara counties, making this outlier especially significant. Brockway Ponds is owned by Jackson County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From Vaudreuil, go east on Highway 54 4.6 miles, then south on Funmaker Road 0.5 miles. Walk south across County lands to the ponds.	84
<b>Spaulding Fen</b>	Located within the Jackson County Forest, Spaulding Fen features one of the least modified sedge fens found in the Central Sand Plains with nearly all others being modified through ditching, roads, or mowing. While mowing has occurred here, much of the site still retains its ecological integrity. Classified as a "central poor fen", this low nutrient, open peatland is dominated by sedges and contains a few scattered areas of tamarack stands. Rare birds such as Henslow's sparrow, LeConte's sparrow, American bittern, and sharp-tailed grouse have nested here. Other birds include hermit thrush, warbling vireo, Nashville warbler, Connecticut warbler, and bobolink. Spaulding Fen is owned by Jackson County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From Spaulding, go south on Spaulding Road 1.1 mile to State Highway 54. The fen lies south of the highway. Access is also provided from the west off Lone Pine Road by heading west on Highway 54 1.2 miles, then south on Lone Pine Road about 1.3 miles. Walk east into the fen.	479
<b>Millston Sand Barrens</b>	Located within the Jackson County Forest. Situated on an area of extensive sandy outwash and punctuated by sandstone outcrops is Millston Sand Barrens a large expanse of even-aged Hill's oak that originated after an intense fire in 1977. The forest varies from dense and at times impenetrable stands of oak to open areas. Pennsylvania sedge dominates the herbaceous layer although other dry prairie species including wild lupine, prairie violet, prairie alum-root, and grasses are also present. Running through the center of the site is a 100-200 foot high sandstone ridge harboring dense stands of oak with scattered small openings that harbor sweet fern, lyrate rock cress, poverty oat grass, false heather, huckleberry, rough blazing star, round-headed bush-clover, and early low blueberry. Along the north slope of the ridge is an "amphitheatre", a highly diverse bowl-like valley. This 5-acre hillside sand prairie features species such as silky aster, little bluestem, annual false foxglove, evening primrose, prairie coreopsis, sand milkweed, butterfly milkweed, hairy puccoon, prairie phlox, and goat's-rue. This site contains an abundant population of Karner Blue butterfly and numerous prairie insects. Oak Barrens are one of the rarest natural communities in the U.S. and Jackson County has recognized this site for its ecological values and rare species habitat. Millston Sand Barrens was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.	From Millston, go 5 miles northwest on Old US Highway 12, then 1.5 miles north, then southeast on Lambert Road. Walk east into the site.	181

## State Fishery Areas

The state's first land purchase for conservation occurred in 1876 when 40 acres were purchased south of Madison for the Nevin Fish Hatchery. This and other hatcheries later established helped replenish native fish populations that had diminished from over-harvesting and deteriorating habitat and water quality. More recently fishery projects that meet both habitat and public use need have broadened in scope to include lands adjacent to streams and lakes. These lands protect the watershed, and provide for compatible recreational uses such as hunting, hiking, and cross-country skiing. The following table identifies Fishery Areas and Rearing Stations located within Jackson County.

Name	Description	Location/Access	Recreation Opportunities
<b>Albion Fish Rearing Station</b>	Albion Fish Rearing covers 62 acres and holds seven ponds for fish rearing. The fish ponds are not open to the public. However, other activities are permitted on the property.	Albion Fish Rearing Station is located about 7 miles west of Black River Falls. Take County Hwy C west 7 miles from Hwy 54, then left on Cloverdale Dale Road 1/10 mile, then right on Soupbone Road 1/2 mile.	Hunting - deer, turkey & small game Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing (no developed trails) Wildlife Viewing Bird Watching Pets - Dogs must be on a leash April 15 - August 15 Berry Picking
<b>Buffalo River Fishery Area</b>	Buffalo River Fishery Area contains over 1,600 fragmented acres in Jackson and Trempealeau Counties. The North Fork Buffalo River in Jackson County is a class 1 trout stream. The remainder of the properties contain emergent wet meadow wetland, lowland shrub wetland and forested wetland, springs/seeps, and cultural sites.  <i>Angling Opportunities</i> Shore and wading for trout. All forks - Category 4 trout regulation - bag limit 3, minimum size 12 inches (brown trout), 8 inches (brook trout). Except small segment on Main Fork Category 5 (special) trout regulation - bag limit 2, only 1 may be a brown trout, minimum size limit 18 inches (brown trout), 10 inches (brook and rainbow trout). Artificial lures only.	Jackson County; Cleveland and Garfield Townships; T 24N, R 5W, sections 6, 7, 17, 19, 30; T 24N, R 6W, sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33.	Hunting - bear, deer, small game, turkey Trapping Hiking Snowmobiling Trail ATV Trail Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching Biking Berry Picking Canoeing
<b>Halfmoon Lake Fishery Area</b>	Halfmoon Lake Fishery Area is an "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI) that includes warmwater fish species. The property also includes forested wetland, lowland shrub wetland, and cultural sites.  Halfmoon Lake Fishery Area is also next to North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area.	North Bend Township; T 19N R 6W, section 3	Hunting - bear, deer, small game, and turkey Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - warmwater fish species Bird Watching Berry Picking
<b>Halls (Stockwell) Creek Fishery Area</b>	Halls (Stockwell) Creek Fishery Area, a class 2 trout stream, is considered an "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI). The property also includes emergent wet meadow wetland, forested wetland, and cultural sites.	Cleveland, Garden Valley, and Alma Townships; T 24N, R 5W, sections 27, 34, 35; T 23N, R 5W, sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 12; T 23N, R 4W, sections 7, 16, 17, 18.	Hunting - bear, deer, small game, and turkey Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching Berry Picking Canoeing
<b>North Branch Trempealeau River Fishery Area</b>	North Branch Trempealeau River Fishery Area is a class 1 and 2 trout stream that is considered "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI) and is designated an Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW). The property also includes lowland scrub wetland, forested wetland, and cultural sites.	Hixton and Garden Valley Townships; T 22N, R 5W, sections 4, 9, 16; T 23N, R 5W, sections 20, 28, 29, and 33.	Hunting - bear, deer, small game, and turkey Trapping Hiking Snowmobiling Trail Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching

	Shore and wading for trout. Category 4 trout regulation - bag limit 3, minimum size 12 inches (brown trout), 8 inches (brook trout). Except small segment Category 5 (special) trout regulation - bag limit 2, only 1 may be a brown trout, minimum size limit 18 inches (brown trout), 10 inches (brook and rainbow trout). Artificial lures only.		Berry Picking Canoeing
<b>Northfield Lakes Fish Rearing Station (Beaver Creek Rearing Station)</b>	Northfield Lakes Fish Rearing Station (Beaver Creek Rearing Station), includes Bill's Pond. Of the 598 acres, 37 acres have been developed into 2 fish rearing ponds. Northfield Lake was constructed in 1970 and has 33 surface acres formed by an earthen dike. Bill's Pond was constructed in 1977 and has 4 surface acres formed by an earthen dike. The fish rearing ponds are not open to the public. However, the grassland and hardwood forest are open to the public.  No angling allowed.	Northfield Lakes Fish Rearing Station is located 2 miles north of the village of Northfield, adjacent to I-94. Take I-94 to State Hwy 121 (Northfield Exit), west on State Hwy 121 1/4 mile, north on County Hwy FF for 3 miles, right turn (east) on Gilbertson Road for 1/2 mile.	Hunting - stocked pheasant, small game, turkey, and deer Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing (no developed trails) Wildlife Viewing Bird Watching Pets - Dogs must be on a leash April 15 - August 15 Berry Picking
<b>Smith Pond Fishery Area</b>	Smith Pond Fishery Area is a class 2 and 3 trout stream also considered an "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI). The property includes emergent wet meadow wetland, forested wetland, lowland shrub wetland, and cultural sites.	Hixton Township; T 22N, R 5W, sections 29 and 30	Hunting - bear, deer, turkey, and small game Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching Berry Picking
<b>Tank Creek Fishery Area</b>	Tank Creek Fishery Area is a class 1 trout stream that is considered an "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI). The property also includes wet meadow wetland, forested wetland, lowland shrub wetland, and cultural sites.	Hixton Township; T 22N, R 5W, sections 16, 26 and 27	Hunting - bear, deer, small game, and turkey, Trapping Hiking Snowmobiling Trail Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching Berry Picking Canoeing
<b>Trump Coulee Rearing Station</b>	Trump Coulee Fish Rearing Station is 424 acres, 25 of which are developed into a 14-acre fish rearing pond. The fish rearing pond is not open to the public. The uplands include mixed hardwood forest, red pine plantation, and limited small grass openings.  No angling allowed.	Trump Coulee Fish Rearing Station is located on the western border of Jackson County, about 3 miles south of the Village of Taylor. Take County Hwy N south from the Village of Taylor, go 3 miles on County Hwy N and then go right on Kennedy Road, follow Kennedy Road for 3/4 mile; property is on left side of Kennedy Road.	Hunting - small game, turkey, and deer Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing (no developed trails) Wildlife Viewing Bird Watching Pets- Dogs must be on a leash April 15 - August 15 Berry Picking
<b>Washington Coulee Fishery Area</b>	Washington Coulee Fishery Area includes a class 1 trout stream, forested wetland, emergent wet meadow wetland, and lowland shrub wetland and the waters are classified as "Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest" (ASNRI) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW).	Washington Coulee Fishery Area is located in Trempealeau and Jackson Counties; Ettrick Township (T 20N, R 7W, section 24) and Franklin Township (T 20N, R 6W, section 30).	Hunting Trapping Hiking Cross Country Skiing Wildlife Viewing Fishing - brook and brown trout Bird Watching Berry Picking

## County Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Jackson County Forest - The 119,400-acre Jackson County Forest lands include approximately 1,800 acres that are designated as County Parks. The entire County Forest lands are open for public access, but the areas designated as Parks have amenity improvements such as parking areas, campgrounds, picnic facilities, toilets, and maintained trails. The County Forest Lands are in three major acreage masses that are not contiguous to each other. The

largest acreage lies east of the Black River State Forest, primarily in the northeast part of the County, in the Towns of Komensky, City Point, Bear Bluff, and Knapp. The second largest contiguous acreage is between the two parts of the State Forest, south and east of Black River Falls, in the Towns of Brockway, Millston, and Manchester. The smallest contiguous area of the County Forest lands lies north and east of the Village of Merrilan in the Town of Merrilan. Just as is the State Forest, the County Forest lands are managed for multiple uses, with pulpwood and saw timber being cut under the direction of professional foresters to insure sustained product yields. The following is an inventory of each County Park.

East Arbutus County Park - This 300-acre park is located on Lake Arbutus 10 miles north of Black River Falls off CTH K. The park has 190 campsites, 170 with electricity, 4 shower buildings, toilets, 1 open shelter, 2 miles of hiking trails, ATV and snowmobile trail access, 34 ATV campsites, a beach area, boat launch with dock and parking area and a Park Office Building.

West Arbutus County Park - This 20-acre park is located on the west side of Lake Arbutus, east of the community of Hatfield. The park has 46 campsites of which 44 have electricity, a shower building, 1 toilet, 1 open shelter building, a picnic area with tables and grills, a beach area, boat launch with dock and parking area, and a park office building.

Crawford Hills - This 25-acre park is located 15 miles East of Black River Falls on STH 54. It contains 16 campsites, an open picnic shelter, one toilet, and one picnic area with grills. None of the campsites have electricity but they all have access to public ATV trail. The primary activities of this park are ATV and motorcycle trail use.

Merlin Lambert County Park – is a 35-acre park located 16 miles East of Black River Falls south of STH 54 along the Potter Flowage. There are 20 non-electrical campsites, a picnic area with tables and grills, one toilet, a boat launch with dock and parking area.

Wazee Lake Recreation Area - Of all the County Parks, Wazee Lake is the most unique, and within the fraternity of recreational Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA) divers it sets the County apart from virtually all others, at least in the Midwest. Wazee Lake is the spring-fed pit of the former Jackson County Iron Mine, which was dug and operated from the early 1960s to the shutdown of operations in 1983. Because it is a human created mining pit there is very little surface watershed and there was little human development of the area before the mining operation began, so the ground water aquifer spring water filling the lake is quite pure. When the mine was active approximately 800 gallons of water per minute were pumped out of the pit, so that is the approximate rate of inflow.

Wazee Lake is the deepest inland lake in the state; some 119 feet deeper than the deepest natural lake, Big Green Lake in Green Lake County. Visibility in the lake averages 30-40 feet in the summer months, and in the summer water temperature at the surface are approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit and 40 degrees below the thermocline, which in the summer is at a depth of about 30 feet. There is another thermocline at about 60 feet, below which the water remains at approximately 34 degrees year-round.

The circular haul roads that were made as part of the mining operation remain around the sides of the lake to the bottom and provide interesting diving venues. The sides of the lake are hewn from bedrock and are marked by steep walls, especially on the west side of the Lake, and these walls are one of the unique diving features. Three access points provide diving access. The North Dive Access is on the west side of the lake. It is a one lane steep approach to an old boat landing. Walk-in is recommended and there is a large grassy area at the lakeshore for dive preparation although the only comfort amenity is a portable toilet. A diving platform, marked by a buoy, is in the water at this point at about 23 feet below the surface in a total of 30 feet of water. There are submerged trees and fish cribs at this location, in addition to the steep wall. The East Dive Access, which is on the north side of the lake, has a large unpaved approach road and a lot of parking near the Lake. There is also a dive platform at this location. The largest area of submerged trees, known as Sherwood Forest, is best accessed from this site, as well

as an area of large submerged boulders. There are also several fish cribs accessible from this site. The South Boat Landing, which actually is on the south shore of the lake, is the most popular dive access point. There is a boat landing with a pier for those visitors who prefer to remain on the surface of the water, and a bathroom/dressing room is located at the top of the hill by the parking area. Entry into the water is relatively shallow with a slope, making this the most popular site for beginning divers. There are two dive platforms accessible from this location. There is a 25' x 40' open sided picnic shelter.

Because of the desire to keep the lake waters as pristine as possible, development of the park has been kept minimal. A vigorous afforestation effort has placed grass cover on the rock overburden piles and restored native tree and shrub cover to the disturbed surface areas that do drain into the lake.

In addition to the boat launch ramp and pier, and toilets at the South Access point, there is a sandy beach, picnic shelter, toilets, and changing house at the east end of the lake. SCUBA diving access is not permitted at this location. There is a scenic overlook on the south side of the lake west of the South Boat Landing, and the fish cribs and diving stations have been installed underwater at the North and East access points. Six miles of hiking trails wind through the park and connect to trails that lead into the larger Jackson County Forest property. There is a 3-mile bike trail between the North and South access points. A primitive site campground with 12 campsites is located near the North Dive Access. Boats and canoes are permitted on the lake, but no gasoline motors are allowed.



*Scuba Diver Lake Wazee*



## 6. ACTIONS

This recreation plan will only be beneficial if it influences how the County makes park and recreation planning and budgeting decisions. This plan is intended to become a key policy document for local government officials in the development of desired and well-coordinated recreation activities that will improve public health, safety and economy of the County. The following improvements are planned for the various County Parks.

### ACTION PLAN

<b>West Arbutus County Park</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>
Replace Vault Toilet Building	\$175,000	2023
Replace Shower Building	\$300,000	2024

<b>Wazee Lake Recreation Area</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>
Create 50 additional campsites	\$500,000	2023
Construct a paved bicycle trail link to the City of Black River Falls	\$1,200,000	2025
Construct circular paved walking trail around lake	\$800,000	2024
Construct a Visitors Center	\$1,500,000	2025
Create 50 additional campsites	\$500,000	2023

<b>Merlin Lambert County Park</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>
Pave Park Roads	\$150,000	2024
Electrify 5 campsites	\$12,000	2025

<b>East Arbutus County Park</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>
Install 50 Amp Electrical Service at 20 camp sites	\$15,000	2022
Enclose Shelter and Install plumbing and electricity	\$300,000	2025

<b>Motorized Trails</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Year</b>
Rehabilitate 10 miles of trail	\$400,000	All
Provide paved crossings on public roadways	\$1,200,000	All
Expand camping opportunities	\$200,000	2024
Maintenance of Motorcycle Only trails	\$5-8,000 annually	All

**Adoption Resolution**

Resolution # 28-08-2022

**ORIGINAL**

**Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan**

**WHEREAS**, Jackson County is interested in obtaining grants for future recreational projects and or improvements to current facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, certain grant applications require the Municipalities to have a recreational plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission has prepared a 2022-2026 Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan is intended for the development of recreation activities that will improve public health, safety and economy of Jackson County;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Jackson County Board of Supervisors approve 2022-2026 Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan;

Respectfully submitted  
Jackson County Forestry and Parks Committee

Executive & Finance Committee

Ed Chamberlain

Tom Clark

Jill Higgins

Jill Higgins

Oacle Hoff

Ron Carney

[Signature]

[Signature]

Tom Clark via zoom

[Signature]



I HEREBY CERTIFY

RESOLUTION # 28.08-2022

WAS ADOPTED ON 8/15/2022

BY JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Cindy Altman

CINDY ALTMAN, JACKSON COUNTY CLERK

YES 18 NO 0

Absent 1