

# LA CROSSE COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



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2025-2029



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Prepared by: Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission





# La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan



RESOLUTION # 11- 9/25

TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ITEM # 9-10

**BOARD ACTION**

Adopted: ☒  
For: 28  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 2  
Vote Req: -  
Other Action: -

**PUBLIC WORKS  
AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
COMMITTEE  
ACTION**

Adopted: ☒  
For: 7  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 0

**RE: APPROVAL OF LA CROSSE COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN 2025-2029**

**WHEREAS**, outdoor recreation is an integral part of the human environment; and,

**WHEREAS**, the first outdoor recreation plan for La Crosse County was developed in 1970 and subsequent outdoor recreation plans were developed in 1972, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2006, 2013 and 2019; and,

**WHEREAS**, the La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan has been developed and will be utilized to improve, enhance and expand the outdoor recreational opportunities available in La Crosse County; and,

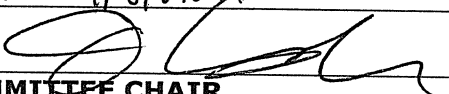
**WHEREAS**, this plan makes local units of government eligible for the state's stewardship local assistance grant program known as the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the federal Land and Water Conservation (LWCF) grant program; and,

**WHEREAS**, this plan has been developed to be consistent with Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law and aid La Crosse County in meeting several of the state requirements in the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan;

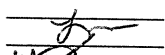

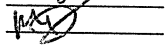
**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the La Crosse County Board hereby authorizes the La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2029;

**FISCAL NOTE:** Any steps to implement this plan will be considered in the Facilities Budget for fiscal years 2026 through 2029.

Date: 9/8/2025

  
COMMITTEE CHAIR

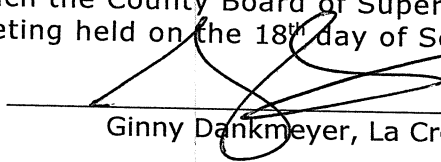
  
RECORDING CLERK

	Reviewed Only	Recommended	Not Recommended	
Co. Admin.				Requested By: Kathleen Stewart
Fin. Director				Date Requested: July 7, 2025
Corp. Counsel				Drafted By: Corporation Counsel
Board Chair				

Adopted by the La Crosse County Board this 18 Day of September, 2025

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
COUNTY OF LA CROSSE

I, Ginny Dankmeyer, County Clerk of La Crosse County do hereby certify that this document is a true and correct copy of the original resolution required by law to be in my custody and which the County Board of Supervisors of La Crosse County adopted at a meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025.

  
Ginny Dankmeyer, La Crosse County Clerk





To whom it may concern,

La Crosse County has long been recognized as a place where natural beauty, community well-being, and economic opportunity intersect. As the region continues to grow and evolve, so must its commitment to the planning and stewardship of its invaluable outdoor spaces.

I know both La Crosse County and Explore La Crosse are deeply aligned with the desire to deliver high-quality services and experiences to citizens and visitors. Our parks, trails, waterways, and natural areas provide more than scenic views—they offer accessible spaces for physical activity, mental wellness, environmental education, and meaningful connection among residents and visitors alike. These resources are essential for fostering equity in public health, enhancing quality of life, and strengthening the local economy through tourism and outdoor-related industries.

Tourism in La Crosse County has an economic impact of over \$500 million, supporting nearly 4,000 full-time and part-time jobs while generating over \$35 million in state and local taxes. Also, in terms of Tourism and its economic impact, La Crosse County ranks 9th out of 72 counties throughout Wisconsin in terms of direct visitor spending, at over \$300 million.

Visitors come to our area for many reasons (such as conventions and meetings, to experience the arts or shop in our vibrant historic downtowns, or to attend or enjoy one of many festivals), and outdoor recreation can play a key part in attracting people to the region. We live in a unique and beautiful part of the world, and our visitors enjoy what we offer, whether it's hiking, biking our trails and roads, or the region's many water sports.

While Explore La Crosse does not have the data to back up exactly how many visitors come to our region for only outdoor recreation, I can share with you that according to the Wisconsin Department of Outdoor Recreation, our state saw a 9.4% year-over-year growth in 2023 with Outdoor Recreation contributing \$11.2 billion to the state's GDP.

An updated Outdoor Recreation Plan ensures La Crosse County can respond to changing community needs, preserve its natural assets for future generations, and continue to appeal to tourists interested in outdoor recreation. It is an opportunity to reimagine how outdoor spaces can be inclusive, climate-resilient, and responsive to the diverse ways people experience nature today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A.J. Frels", is written over a horizontal line.

A.J. Frels  
Executive Director  
Explore La Crosse



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Photo Credit: Explore La Crosse

# Chapter 1: Introduction



## Introduction

### Outdoor Recreation in La Crosse County

La Crosse County recognizes the need for a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, as the county is rich in outdoor recreation opportunities. This Outdoor Recreation Plan provides an outline for preserving, improving, and expanding parks, trails, and open spaces to meet the needs of residents and visitors. The plan covers information on existing recreational opportunities and public spaces, including parks, trails, and natural areas across the county, while also identifying future needs and priorities. Outdoor recreation is important to the quality of life in La Crosse County, from hiking trails to water recreation and events or gatherings in parks. This plan evaluates these existing facilities and identifies areas for improvement, while integrating community identified priorities and population growth.



Photo Credit: <https://www.instagram.com/baileyjn5>



Photo Credit: <https://www.instagram.com/ryanigirtler>

Designed to guide county officials and local decision-makers over the next five years, this plan is not just about current needs, but it is a vision for the future. By working together and considering available state and federal funding, the region can continue to improve its outdoor spaces, creating healthier, more connected communities. Access to quality outdoor spaces has been shown to boost physical activity, reduce stress, enhance social connections, improve quality of life, and attract new residents which are all important factors in building strong and vibrant communities. This plan will serve as a guide for the future of outdoor recreation in La Crosse County.

## Planning Process

The planning process utilized in the development of this plan update relied on participation and input from the public, the County Board of Supervisors, Town and Village officials. Public participation and input was achieved through public meetings and information requests. The following is a list of activities utilized to gain local government involvement and public participation during the planning process:

- Inventory and proposed project questionnaire sent to Town Clerks, community groups promoting outdoor recreation, conservation groups.
- Community survey was created and shared, received 404 responses.
- Draft plan reviewed by the Bluffland Coalition, Outdoor Recreation Alliance, and Friends of the Marsh in July 2025.
- Draft plan was reviewed by the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee in April 2025.
- A public engagement meeting took place on July 14, 2025 at 6:00 pm at the Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library in West Salem.

The first step in the planning process consisted of gathering data by collecting input on park facilities from various governmental units, a review of the previous recreation plan and initiatives, and completing an inventory of park facilities with the assistance of County, Town, and Village officials. The collection of this information and input led to the development of “goals and objectives” and a complete inventory of recreation facilities. The next step in the planning process was to determine if the recreation demands of La Crosse County were being met. In part, this was accomplished by reviewing public input contained in the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) which detailed recreational demand statewide. The statewide recreational demands identified in SCORP were then coupled with information gathered from area residents and local units of government regarding future recreational needs. Local plans were reviewed to gather outdoor recreation projects. A list of projects was then identified to meet the future recreational needs of La Crosse County. The final step in the planning process was to prioritize the projects, develop an action plan to implement the projects and identify funding sources.



## Outdoor Recreation as Economic Development

Enhancing access to outdoor recreation activities is a strategic advantage when attracting a workforce that can help the region compete in a global marketplace. The competition for workforce, especially young, educated professionals, is widely recognized (La Crosse Bluffland Plan, 2016).

Regions compete for talent, and the topic dominates strategic planning discussions for most chambers and economic development organizations. Talented workers who possess the technical skills, education levels, and innovative capabilities sought by top employers are key to any well-reasoned economic development strategy. The good and bad news is that talent is more mobile than at any time in our history (Regan and Tarleton, 2016).

Economic opportunity has historically taken precedence over lifestyle or quality of life in developed countries. However, labor mobility is now product of two main factors: economic opportunity and quality of life. Developing outdoor recreation opportunities is a simple, inexpensive, and impactful way to improve quality of life.

## Goals and Objectives

La Crosse County's objective in preparing this Outdoor Recreation Plan is as follows; the first is to provide an orderly framework for guiding future development of the 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 overview 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 residents and visitors.
2. Formulate an action agenda plan to meet the needs or unsatisfied public demands for outdoor recreation facilities in each municipality.
3. Encourage the private sector to provide certain quality services and facilities for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The County must ensure that public funds are utilized only for facilities which are publicly owned or private property that guarantees to be open to the public for recreational purposes.
4. Quantify the impact on the local economy of the many visitors and tourists in the area that utilize the county and municipal outdoor recreation facilities.
5. Collaborate with community organizations to develop outdoor recreation infrastructure.
6. Receive maximum benefits from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and State Stewardship Program funds.

## Terms and Definitions

To assist in the interpretation and implementation of the La Crosse 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.

Mini Park (Less than 1- acre) – A park described as 1 acre or less that includes specialized facilities that serve a concentrated or limited population, or specific group such as tots or senior citizens.

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 a very 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.

Publicly Owned Facility - Any building, space, or property that is owned, managed, or operated by a governmental body. This includes local, state, or federal agencies. These facilities are generally acquired and maintained using public funds, such as taxes, and are intended to provide services or benefits to the general public. Examples range from local parks and libraries to government buildings and public transportation systems.





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## Chapter 2: Description of Planning Area

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## Description of Planning Area

### Geopolitical

#### **County Overview**

La Crosse County is located within the state's Western Upland. This region is in the Driftless Area that covers southwestern Wisconsin. This area was missed by the most recent glacial advance and was shaped by meltwater from the retreating glacier approximately 11,000 years ago. What remains are scenic ridges and valleys that make up the area now commonly referred to as the "Coulee Region."

#### **Size and Location**

La Crosse County is comprised of 307,274 acres and is 480 square miles in size. The county is 25 miles at its widest point and 25 miles at its longest point (La Crosse County). The county is bordered on its north by Trempealeau, Jackson, and Monroe counties, on the east by Monroe County, and on the south by Vernon County. The main channel of the Mississippi River and the State of Minnesota border the county to the west. La Crosse County has 6 incorporated communities and 12 towns.

#### **Surface Waters**

The county's surface waters are one of the county's most popular environmental resources from a recreation perspective. Like most counties in the Western Upland, there are few natural inland lakes in the county. The surface waters of the Mississippi River, Black River, Lake Onalaska, and Lake Koshong are the biggest contributors to surface water recreation. Lake Onalaska has 7,688 surface acres of water and Lake Koshong offers 606 surface acres of water for recreational activity. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources La Crosse County also has all or parts of at least 20 streams that are classified as trout waters. WI DNR wetland inventory maps show that within La Crosse County there are over 37,000 acres of wetlands of five acres or more in size.

#### **Climate**

La Crosse County is in the humid continental climatic zone of the Midwest which is characterized by warm summers, cold winters, and moisture throughout the year. January is the coldest month of the year with an average daytime high of 26 degrees Fahrenheit while July is the warmest month of the year with an average daytime high of 84 degrees Fahrenheit. (US Climate Data). La Crosse County annually receives approximately 35 inches of precipitation and 46 inches of snowfall (La Crosse Climate Data).

"The intersection between climate and tourism and outdoor recreation is complex. Impacts are going to vary depending on the location as well as the type of business, activity, or client base.

There are a lot of different factors that complicate the matter of how climate change will impact tourism and outdoor recreation in the state. We do know that the industry is very important to our economy in Wisconsin” (<https://wicci.wisc.edu/2021-assessment-report/people/reflections-on-climate-change-and-tourism-and-outdoor-recreation/>)

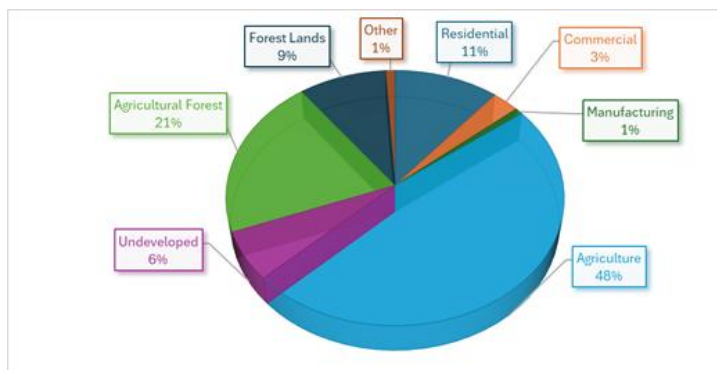
## Soils

The soils of La Crosse County vary by their location and proximity to the rivers. The southern half of the county is primarily made up of limestone soil types, and the northern part of the county consists largely of sandstone soil types. The western edge of the county along the Mississippi River is dominated by alluvium and marshland soil types.

## Woodlands

The most recent forest statistics of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue reported that there are 19,380 acres of forest land in La Crosse County (Table 1). The native forest of the county is mostly hardwood or deciduous trees. Oak is the predominant hardwood in the area. The softwood resources of the county mainly consist of jack pine and red pine.

**Figure 1. Land Classification Percentages**



**Table 1. Land Classification Acres**

Land Classification	Acres	% of Total Land Acres
Residential	23,123	11.04
Commercial	5,899	2.82
Manufacturing	1,784	0.85
Agriculture	101,225	48.31
Undeveloped	12,993	6.20
Agricultural Forest	43,027	20.54
Forest Lands	19,380	9.25
Other	2,085	1.00
Total	209,516	11.04

Source: Wis. Dept. of Revenue 2023  
Statement of Assessment



## Wildlife

La Crosse County is rich in wildlife thanks to its location in the Mississippi River Valley. White-tailed deer, gray squirrels, coyotes, red fox, beavers, eastern cottontail rabbits, and raccoons are just some of the most common mammals. Birds such as American robins, Canada geese, red-tailed hawks, blue jays, woodpeckers, northern cardinals, mourning doves, and bald eagles are a regular sight. The waters hold a variety of fish including largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, and bluegill. This is just a small look at La Crosse County's wildlife, but it shows how its natural diversity makes it such a unique place.



## Socio-Economic

### Population

Table 2 details the population in La Crosse County in 2020 and the population of the county in 2024. The table shows that in 2024 the estimated population of the county was 122,451 and the population in 2020 was 120,019, meaning that there was a 2% increase between 2020 and 2024. The table also shows that the city of La Crosse is the largest city in the county with a population of 52,115. This growth in population will place more demands on outdoor recreation facilities and increase the need for an updated outdoor recreation plan.

**Table 2. Population and Population Projections**

Municipality Name	Final Estimate 2024	Census 2020	Numeric Change	Percent Change
T. Bangor	626	617	9	1.46%
T. Barre	1,301	1,267	34	2.68%
T. Burns	954	946	8	0.85%
T. Campbell	4,220	4,284	- 64	- 1.49%
T. Farmington	2,148	2,140	8	0.37%
T. Greenfield	2,180	2,187	- 7	- 0.32%
T. Hamilton	2,414	2,428	- 14	- 0.58%
T. Holland	4,635	4,530	105	2.32%
T. Medary	1,612	1,604	8	0.50%
T. Onalaska	5,902	5,835	67	1.15%
T. Shelby	4,774	4,804	- 30	- 0.62%
T. Washington	515	519	- 4	- 0.77%
V. Bangor	1,623	1,437	186	12.94%
V. Holmen	12,060	10,661	1,399	13.12%
V. West Salem	5,400	5,277	123	2.33%
C. La Crosse	52,115	52,680	- 565	- 1.07%
C. Onalaska	19,972	18,803	1,169	6.22%
<b>La Crosse County</b>	<b>122,451</b>	<b>120,019</b>	<b>2,432</b>	<b>2.03%</b>

DOA Municipality Final Population Estimates 2024

## Age and Ethnicity of the Population

The median age of La Crosse County residents is 36.6 years. This is compared to a median age of 39.9 years for the State of Wisconsin. In La Crosse County, 19.5 percent of the population is under the age of 18, while 80.5 percent are 18 years or older and 17.1 percent of the population is over the age of 65. The age class with the largest percentage of the county population is the 25-to-34-year age class with 13.0 percent of the population.

The majority of the population of the county is Caucasian (89.4%). African American residents make up 1.5 percent of the population, while residents of Asian descent comprise 4.5 percent of the county population. This is compared to the State of Wisconsin which is 82.5 percent Caucasian, 6.2 percent African American, and 2.9 percent Asian. This data was gathered from the Wisconsin 5 Year ACS Demographic and Housing information estimates from 2022.

## Local Economy

La Crosse County has a diverse economy with employment opportunities in many different industry sectors. In May of 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Midwest Information Office stated that the industry sectors with the largest percentages of employees in the county are Education and Health care sector employing 18,600, the Trade, Transportation, Utilities sector employing 16,500, and the Manufacturing sector employing 8,500 (Figure 2). In 2024 La Crosse County had total civilian labor force of 78,300 people with an unemployment rate of 2.6%. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the per capita personal income (adjusted for inflation) in La Crosse County was \$62,336 compared to \$64,976 for the State of Wisconsin and \$69,810 for the United States.

**Figure 2. Industry sector and employee numbers for La Crosse County**

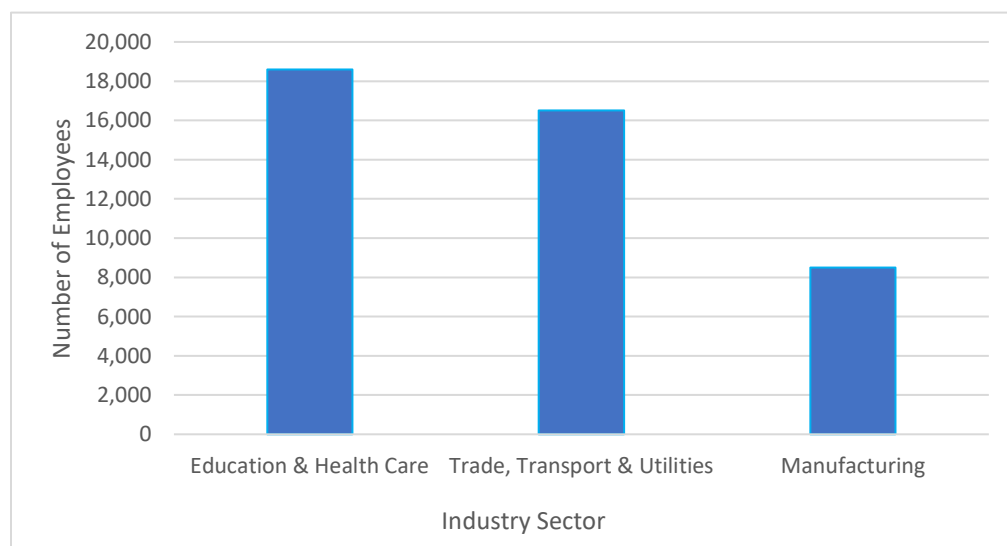


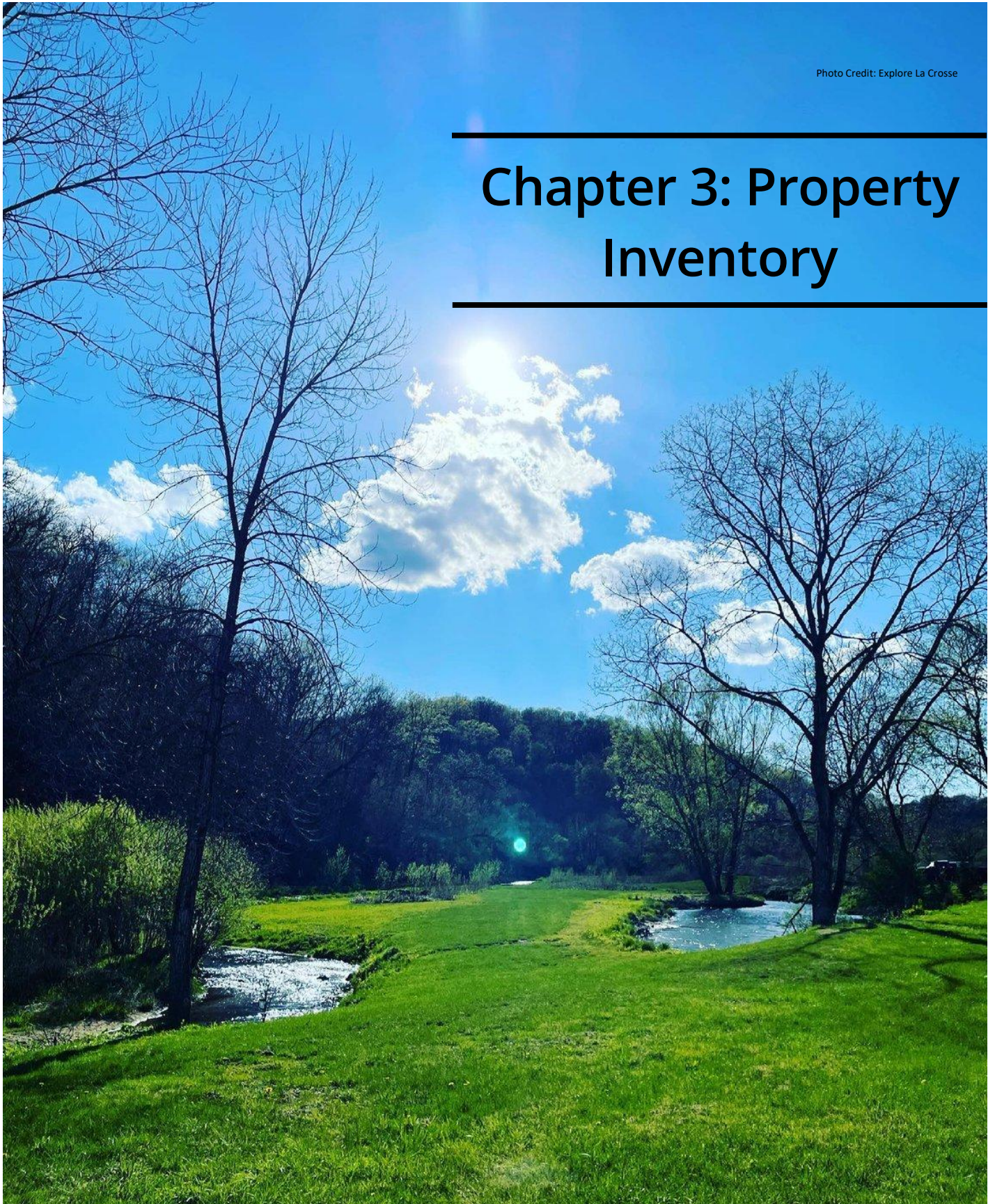


Photo Credit: Explore La Crosse

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# Chapter 3: Property Inventory

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## Property Inventory

The outdoor recreation industry is a vital part of both the state and national economy. Recreation facilities promote local tourism by showcasing the natural beauty of the native environment. These locations also support community health, providing opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, hobbies, community events, and time with family and friends. As participation increases “it will be increasingly important to support the industry and its partners in our backyard,” says Mary Monroe Brown, director of the Wisconsin Office 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. What follows is an inventory of nature-based recreational activities available in La Crosse County owned parks and properties. “Nature-based” is defined in the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) as “activities that are related to natural resources and where experiences are enhanced with higher quality natural habitats.”

Maps of outdoor recreation opportunities in La Crosse County can be found in Appendix B.

As part of the planning process, an inventory of recreational facilities and areas was conducted with the assistance of local municipalities and La Crosse County staff. The various facilities and areas in La Crosse County are detailed on the following pages.

## **County Owned Parks and Recreation**

Listed below is an inventory of all county recreation facilities and areas. The top 20 SCORP activities available at each location have been included in the inventory.

### **County Forest Preserve – Town of Burns**

The County Forest Preserve in the Town of Burns is an open space covering 70 acres. Activities available at the site include hunting, hiking, walking, nature photography, and bird/wildlife watching. The preserve consists of forested land with no developed park facilities.

### **Lake Onalaska East Shoreline Access (aka Fisherman's Landing)**

Lake Onalaska East Shoreline Access is a waterway access area of 1 acre. Fishing is the main activity available at this location, with no additional facilities provided. There is access to the Great River State Bike Trail from this location.

### **Hoeth Forest**

Hoeth County Forest is over 430 acres located in the North East of the county off of County Road Q. Hunting is permitted in accordance with state and local laws. See WI DNR site for laws and restrictions pertaining to hunting. Motorized vehicles are restricted to Lockington and Radcliffe Road only. Camping and fires are not permitted. Hoeth Forest is located off of Radcliffe Road, Mindoro, WI 54644.

### **County Forest Preserve – Bice Forest in the Town of Farmington**

Bice County Forest is over 450 acres located in the North East corner of the county. Bice Forest offers 5 miles of maintained trails for hiking and biking and groomed for skiing in the winter. Hunting is permitted in accordance with state and local laws. See WI DNR site for laws and restrictions pertaining to hunting. Use of motorized vehicles is not authorized. Camping and fires are not permitted. The authorized parking area and trailhead access is located at N9430 Vogel Road, Mindoro, WI 54644.

### **Lake Neshonoc South County Park**

Lake Neshonoc South County Park is a community park covering 60 acres. Activities at the park include fishing, hiking, walking, swimming, motor boating, canoeing/kayaking, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, and waterskiing/tubing/wakeboarding. The park features a half mile of lake shoreline access, parking area, boat ramp, picnic tables, portable toilet, and a handicapped fishing pier.

### **Neshonoc Swarthout County Park**

Neshonoc Swarthout County Park is a community park covering 20 acres. Available activities include motor boating, fishing, hiking, walking, canoeing/kayaking, nature photography, and bird/wildlife watching. The park features a picnic shelter, tables, playground, boat launch ramp, open play area, and a dam.

### **Goose Island County Park and Campground**

Goose Island County Park and Campground is a community park covering 771 acres. Activities available at the park include camping, fishing, hiking, walking, swimming, motor boating, beach visiting, canoeing/kayaking, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, dog walking on trails, and biking. The park includes 350 campsites, boat ramps, canoe, and kayak rental, hiking trails, five picnic shelters, playgrounds, volleyball courts, mini golf, a beach, a dump station, basketball court, showers, toilets, laundry, store, game room, and a horseshoe pit. There are seven miles of hiking trails that are groomed for cross-country skiing when conditions allow. The park has a new 18-hole disc golf course, named "Goose Island Disc Golf Course".

### **Veterans Memorial County Park and Campground**

Veterans Memorial County Park and Campground is a community park covering 232 acres. Available activities include camping, fishing, hiking, walking, swimming, canoeing/kayaking, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, dog walking on trails, and biking. A new disc golf course is scheduled for completion this year but is playable now. It is called the "O.K. Disc Golf Course". The park includes four picnic shelters with tables and grills, playgrounds, ball diamonds, volleyball courts, a 120-site campground (now accepting reservations online), canoe access to the La Crosse River, hiking trails, a camp store, a stocked fishing pond, toilets, showers, a dump station, horseshoe pits, and bike trail access to the La Crosse River State Trail and US Highway 16.

### **Highway 108 Boat Landing**

This property is not currently a park but is part of the La Crosse County Facilities properties. It is primarily a canoe and kayak launch, and many users fish there as well. It has an improved parking lot, with easy access to the La Crosse River.



## City/Town/Village Owned Parks and Recreation

Town and Village recreation facilities and areas offer county residents additional recreational outlets. Over 50 town/village community or neighborhood parks are located throughout La Crosse County. The Top 20 SCORP activities available at each location have been included. Listed below are the town and village recreation facilities and areas in La Crosse County.

### **Town of Bangor**

- The Town of Bangor does not have any town facilities available.

### **Town of Barre**

- Barre Park- A neighborhood park covering 10 acres. Activities at this site include hiking, walking, nature photography, and bird/wildlife watching. The park is equipped with playground equipment, picnic tables, and a shelter house. The Barre Town Park is open to the public and available for rent for \$75. Rental includes shelter, kitchen sink, hot water, small refrigerator, electrical outlets, bathroom, tables for set up and picnic tables for eating.



### **Town of Burns**

- The Town of Burns has no town facilities available.

### **Town of Campbell**

- Lieder Park- Covers 1.8 acres and currently offers no facilities but provides an open play area and playground equipment.
- Breezy Point Rd. Park- Covers 0.5 acres and provides no facilities but has a playground, picnic tables, basketball, and a portable restroom.
- Plainview Park- Covers 0.96 acres and offers no facilities but has a basketball surface, standard, picnic tables, and portable toilets.
- Dauphin (chur)- A 2.75-acre community park that provides no facilities but includes a baseball field equipment, a backstop and fence, a batting cage, picnic tables, a pavilion, playground equipment, a play area, open and closed shelters, and a portable restroom.

- Baumgartner Park- A 0.25-acre park that provides limited facilities such as playground equipment and a major ball diamond used for tournament play.
- Western Ave. Park- A 0.25-acre park that provides limited facilities such as playground equipment and a major ball diamond used for tournament play.
- Callaway Ball Field- A 2.0-acre park that provides limited facilities such as playground apparatus equipment and a major ball diamond used for tournament play.
- 2nd Ave. East- Covers 0.25 acres and offers basic playground equipment and portable restrooms.
- Sky Harbour- Offers basic playground equipment and portable restrooms.
- Church Drive (Jolivette) Park- Covers 1.5 acres and includes a volleyball court, basketball paving and stand, new playground equipment, picnic tables, two tennis courts, a shelter, and a portable restroom.



- Copus Court Park- An open space of 0.4 acres with a non-regulation-size ball field with a backstop and portable restroom.
- Eagles Nest Park- Covers 3 acres and provides playground equipment, a ball field backstop, a fence, team benches, and a portable restroom.
- Frog Pond- A 6-acre waterway access area, offers fishing, hiking, walking, nature photography, and bird/wildlife watching, with facilities for fishing and wildlife observation.
- Richmond Bay Landing- Provides motor boating access, with a boat ramp to Richmond Slough.
- Richmond Park- Covers 0.62 acres.
- Upper & Lower Dike Access- Includes developed boat ramp facilities.
- Nelson Park- A community park maintained by the Town with fishing, nature/wildlife watching, and nature photography opportunities, including picnic tables, three shelters, portable toilets, swings, a boat ramp, a pavilion, and a wildlife viewing platform.

## **Town of Farmington**

- Ballfield - parcel 05-00935-002, includes Charlie Timm Field, a lighted ball field, pitching cage, smaller t-ball field, this was the former Mindoro High School football field given to the Town by the Melrose-Mindoro School District in the 1970's. Lights need replacing/updating from the early 1970's.
- Old Brown Valley School Park- A 1-acre park that offers bird and wildlife watching, with two pit toilets, playground equipment, and a recreation center.
- Browns Valley School - Parcel 5-275-0, One room schoolhouse used by the community for card party's potlucks, includes playground equipment and privy.
- Mindoro Park- formerly part of the La Crosse County Park System, was purchased in the early 70's with LAWCON monies, county, and town contributions as well as money from the Mindoro Lions Club. It was recently transferred from county control to town control. Currently trails are being developed including a planned cross-country trail.
- Playground - parcel 05-00935-004, former playground of the Mindoro Elementary School given to the town after closure of said school. Includes playground equipment, paved parking lot that was used for school events as well as the adjacent ballfield listed above, as well as the adjacent Mindoro Lions Park to the east, parcel 05-00928-001. Mindoro Lions Park is owned by the Mindoro Lions Benevolent Association, Inc.

## **Town of Greenfield**

- Town of Greenfield Park- A 6.4-acre community park that features a lighted softball field with bleachers, a shelter house with picnic facilities, a children's play area, and municipal water and sewer systems. The park also has a 50x50 concrete basketball court and two restrooms.



## **Town of Hamilton**

- The Town of Hamilton does not have any town facilities available.

## **Town of Holland**

- Country Estates Park- A 3.0-acre park that has a softball diamond, playground equipment, picnic tables, and one shelter.
- Gaynor's Rolling Hills Addition Park- Covers 2.0 acres and features a softball diamond, volleyball court, and play equipment.
- Holland Town Park- A community park covering 25 acres, offers hiking, walking, nature photography, and bird/wildlife watching, with two ball diamonds, two volleyball courts, a full-sized basketball court, four horseshoe pits, a sledding hill, a restroom, three shelters, and playground equipment.

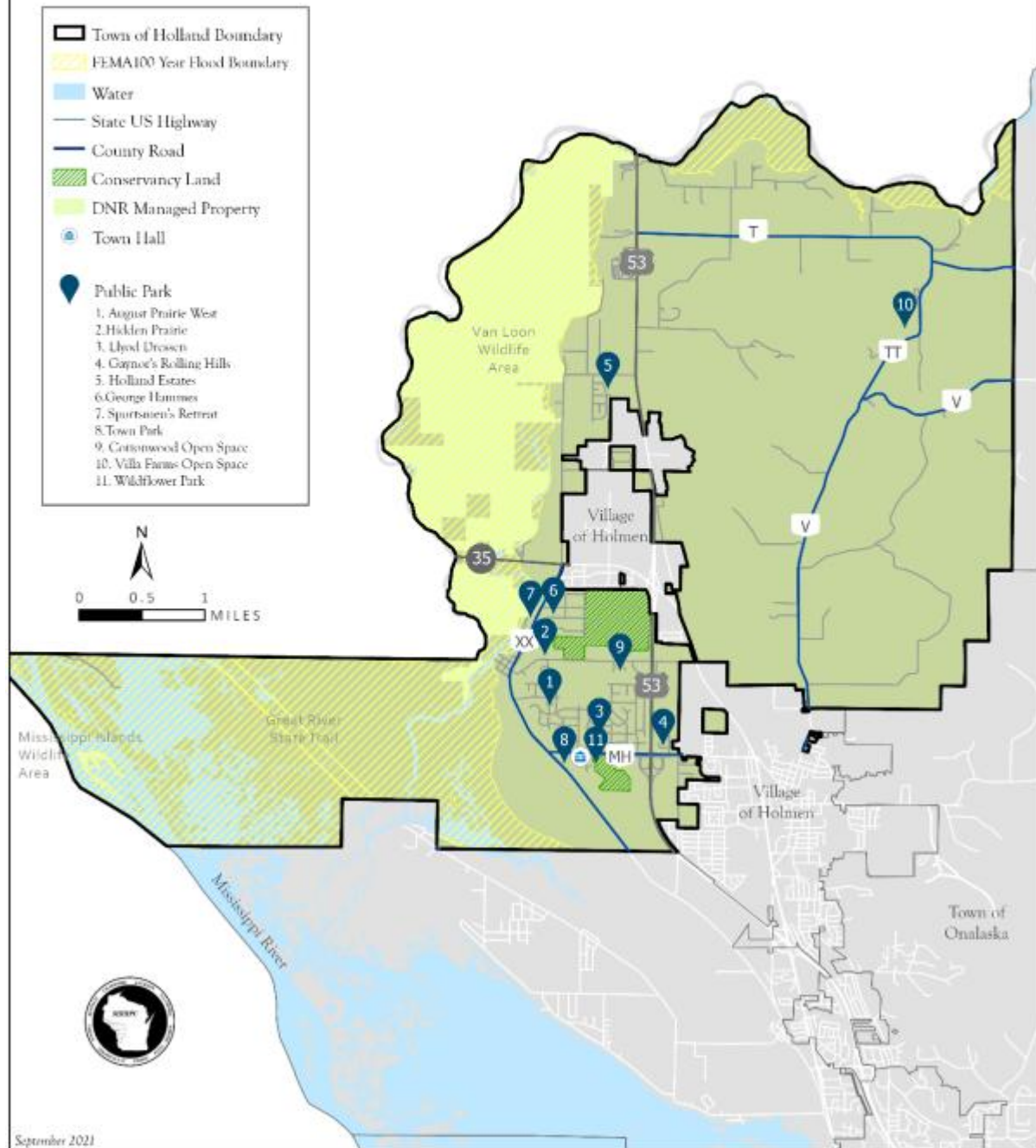


- Holland Estates Park- A 4.6-acre park that has a shelter house and play equipment with future expansion possible.
- August Prairie Park- Covers 2.4 acres and has half of a basketball court and play equipment that was installed in 2007.
- George Hammes Memorial Park- A 6.4-acre park that has play equipment and sledding hills.
- Wildflower Park- Covers 1.2 acres with facilities such as shelters and play equipment. basketball courts, walking trails, and open spaces.



# TOWN OF HOLLAND

## TOWN PARKS



## **Town of Medary**

- Wolfridge- A 13.0-acre area of open and wooded space with no facilities.
- Green Hills- A 1.0-acre area of open and wooded space with no facilities.
- Meadowood- An 8.0-acre area of open and wooded space with no facilities.
- Town Hall Park- A 2.0-acre neighborhood park with playground equipment and a ball field.

## **Town of Onalaska**

- Homestead Park- A 1.0-acre neighborhood park with green space and playground equipment.
- First Prairie Park- A 2.32-acre neighborhood park with a ballfield, open shelter, and playground equipment.
- Roth Field- A 3.52-acre community park with a baseball field with open shelter, picnic tables, a batting cage, half of a basketball court, and playground equipment.
- Brice Prairie Swarthout Park- A community park covering 5.22 acres that offers a large picnic shelter, horseshoe, tennis court, volleyball court, and playground equipment.
- Mulder Field- A 1.25-acre neighborhood park with a baseball field and shaded playground area.
- Prairie Heights- A 1.2-acre neighborhood park with a sandlot field, picnic tables, and playground equipment.
- Meadow Estates- A 0.75-acre mini park with a small parking pad and playground equipment.
- Town Hall- A 0.25-acre mini park with a swing set, slide, and merry go round.
- Terrace Heights (Circle) Park- A 1.0-acre neighborhood park with a basketball hoop and playground equipment.
- Strawberry Commons- A 3.52-acre neighborhood park with a softball field, open shelter, open space, and playground equipment.
- Heritage Hills- A 1.7- acre neighborhood park with a basketball court and playground apparatus.
- Sandy Knolls- A 2.91-acre neighborhood park with a ballfield, open shelter, and playground equipment.
- Thunderbird Hills- A 1.92-acre neighborhood park with a basketball court, open space, volleyball court, and playground equipment.
- Apple Valley- A 3.3-acre community park that features a variety of active use like a ballfield, tennis courts, and playground equipment.
- Sobkowiak Park- A 1.5-acre neighborhood park with a basketball court, sandlot, and playground equipment.

- Sun Valley Park- A 2.52-acre neighborhood park with an open shelter, a playground, a steep hill, and open space.
- Mesa Grande Park- A 3.01-acre neighborhood park with picnic tables, playground equipment, and a shelter.
- Schaller Lake Park (Balduzzi) – A 0.98-acre neighborhood park with picnic tables and playground equipment.
- Marvin Gardens Park- A 3.52-acre neighborhood park with open space, a covered bridge, enclosed shelter, and playground equipment.



## **Town of Shelby**

### [Town of Shelby interactive park map](#)

- Arbor Hills- Developed park of 2.15 acres that has playground equipment, a basketball court, tennis court, and a short walking trail. Tennis court needs to be reconstructed.
- Battlestone Station Park- Park includes a walking trail, green space, and off-street parking.
- Boulder Ridge Park- Includes playground equipment.
- Breidel Coulee Park- Includes playground equipment.
- Brookwood Park- A 2.15-acre park that has playground equipment.
- Gazebo Park- Includes a little free library, a gazebo, and board games.
- Pammel Creek Park- An 18.0-acre park with covered shelter, playground equipment, soccer nets, 2 ball fields, batting cage, walking trails, little free library, and a parking area.
- Forest Hills- 1.32-acre park
- Goose Island Connector Trail - The north terminus of the Goose Island Connector Trail (GICT) will connect to the existing Pammel Creek multi-use trail at Sunnyside Drive and



the extensive bike/ped trail system in the City of La Crosse/La Crosse County which includes connections to the La Crosse River and Great River state trails. The south terminus of the GICT will connect to CTH GI which provides access to the Goose Island County Park/campground and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The GICT will provide a safe bike/ped connection to Southern Bluffs Elementary School, residential neighborhoods, and commercial businesses. The project proposed to construct the 6,860-foot-long Goose Island Connector Trail (GICT). The 10-foot wide paved shared-use trail will be constructed adjacent to STH 35 and begin at CTH GI and end at Sunnyside Dr. roundabout.

- Hills of Home- A 0.15-acre park that includes playground equipment.
- Mormon Coulee Park E- Park includes covered shelter, a disc golf course, playground equipment, basketball court, fishing, restrooms, road walking, water faucet access, and parking.
- Mormon Coulee Park W- Park includes an enclosed shelter, 2 covered shelters, a disc golf course, playground equipment, 2 little free libraries, a ball field, restrooms, parking, and a walking bridge across Mormon Coulee creek.
- Mormon Creek Trail – Project has been scoped but properties need to be acquired to complete the project.
- Nolop Estates Park- Includes playground equipment and a basketball court.
- River Hills- A 0.42-acre park with playground equipment, a basketball court, and winter sledding.
- Scenic Addition- (9.11 acres),
- Shelby Field- (12.5 acres),
- Skyline- A 4.29-acre park with playground equipment, a basketball court, a little free library, and winter sledding.
- Smyth Park- A 1.63-acre park including covered shelter, playground equipment, a basketball court, and a ball backstop.
- Upper Wedgewood Terrace Park- Park includes playground equipment, a tennis court, and a basketball court. Tennis courts need to be reconstructed.
- Wedgewood Lower Terrace Park- Park includes playground equipment.
- Wedgewood Valley Park- Park includes playground equipment, a little free library, and a short walking path.



## Town of Washington

- Ridge History Park- A neighborhood park with a schoolhouse, educational museum, and meeting room.



## Village of Rockland

- Gaylord Memorial Park- A 14-acre community park with hiking, walking, soccer fields, softball fields, batting cages, a basketball court, playground, shelter, and a sand volleyball court.
- Village Hall Park- A 2-acre park that offers a playground, portable restroom, shelter, basketball court, volleyball court, and softball field.
- Brooks Park- Rocklands smallest park with swings and a play structure.



## Village of Bangor

- Bangor Veterans Memorial Park- A community park covering 18.85 acres. Activities at the park include hiking, walking, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, and fishing. Facilities at the park include three shelter houses, playground, two restrooms, a baseball field, a horseshoe court, a skate ramp, and a picnic area with tables.



Bangor Veterans Memorial Park



## Village of West Salem

[Village of West Salem interactive park map](#)



- Village Park- Has a playground, picnic area, baseball facilities, and a gazebo.
- Jim Zanter Park- Features a playground, a basketball court, and picnic areas.



- Pineview Park- Features playground equipment, a soccer field, and an open shelter.
- Corral Park- Includes playground equipment and half of a basketball court.
- Greene Park- Offers open green space.



- Riverview Park- Features two baseball fields and bleachers.
- Lewis Point Park- Includes Caryn Modawell Memorial Dog Park, picnic areas, a portable restroom, and a bike playground area. The playground has quickly become a valuable community asset, inviting families and wheeled sports enthusiasts to get outside and have fun. Designed for users of all ages and abilities, it offers diverse recreational opportunities in a sustainable and enjoyable environment.
- Veteran’s Memorial Park- Includes Paws Dog Park, a gazebo, a playground, picnic areas, and half of a basketball court.
- Neshonoc Swarthout Park- Features a playground, shelter, picnic areas, lake access, restrooms, a fishing dock, and a volleyball court.
- Lake Neshonoc South Park- Includes a fishing dock, lake access, picnic areas, and a portable restroom.

### **Village of Holmen**

- Whispering Pines Park - A 1.66-acre park featuring a playground, basketball court, open shelter, and open field.
- Cedar Meadows East Park - A 1.46-acre park with a basketball court, volleyball court, open field, and picnic shelter.
- Cedar Meadows West Park - A 1.18-acre park that includes a playground and a walking trail.
- Countryside Park - A 1.18-acre park with a playground and a walking trail.
- Deer Wood Park - A 40-acre park offering a playground, 3 baseball/softball fields, 4 tennis courts, a half-mile walking trail, basketball courts, an ice hockey rink, batting cage, nature trails, sledding hills, restrooms, a picnic shelter, and nearby aquatic center.
- Halfway Creek Park - A 14.51-acre park featuring a playground, reservable band shell, restrooms, trail access, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, two enclosed reservable shelters, and picnic areas.
- McGilvray Park - A 2.62-acre park with a playground, open space, basketball courts, shade structure, and benches.
- Pertzsch Park - A 2.83-acre park offering a playground, open space, soccer fields, and an open shelter with 2 family restrooms.
- Ponderosa Park - A 1.06-acre park featuring a playground, a basketball court, and a T-ball field.



- Remington Hills Park - A 7.5-acre park with a playground, open space, a reservable open shelter, volleyball court, soccer/football field, basketball court, softball/baseball field, 2 pickle ball courts, and a tennis court with lines for 2 additional pickleball courts.
- Seven Bridges Park - A 14.96-acre park offering a playground, walking pathway, open space, open shelter with restrooms, soccer/football field, and a softball/baseball field.
- Sylvan Park - A 1.94-acre park with a playground, basketball court, open shelter, and a soccer field.
- Timberline Park - A 2.5-acre park featuring a playground and a basketball court.
- Viking Park - A 0.53-acre park with a playground and a basketball court.

### **City of La Crosse**

- All Abilities Trane Park - Features an enclosed shelter, playground, indoor bathrooms, green space, and drinking fountains.
- Badger/Hickey Park - Includes a basketball court, playground, indoor bathrooms, a drinking fountain, bike racks, and an enclosed shelter.
- Black River Beach - Offers a volleyball court and a neighborhood center.
- Bluffview Park - Provides baseball and softball fields, a basketball court, batting cages, drinking fountains, a tennis court, bathrooms, a playground, and green space.
- Cameron Park - Features green space, a playground, bathrooms, and a swing set.
- Chad Erickson Memorial Park – Includes bike racks, fishing access, a playground, trail access, green space, indoor bathrooms, and reservable spaces.
- Civic Center Park - Offers drinking fountains, green space, a playground, bathrooms, scenic views, and reservable space.
- Copeland Park - Includes baseball and softball fields, a batting cage, bike racks, drinking fountains, fishing access, green space, indoor bathrooms, ice rinks, a playground, reservable space, a scenic view, splash pads, and a tennis court.
- Green Island Park - Features fishing access, a gazebo, green space, ice rinks, bathrooms, reservable space, and trail access.
- Haas Tract – offers 1.31 miles of hike-only trails.
- Hixon Forest – Summer – Offers hiking and bicycling trails. Hixon Forest is 850 acres of forested land in La Crosse with 34 miles of trails. The recreational area is split into two main sections: Upper Hixon, which has 9 miles of mountain bicycling trails, a pump track and a 10-acre planted prairie; and Lower Hixon, which has 3.5 miles of shared-use (hike/bike) trails and 11 miles of looping (hike only) trails.
- Hixon Forest/ Forest Hills – Winter – Offers 4.35 miles of cross-country skiing, and 12.3 miles of hiking, bicycling and snow/ fat bike trails.

- La Crosse River Marsh – Offers 1.35 miles of unpaved and 3.6 miles of paved walking and bicycling trails.
- Lueth Park - Provides bike racks, drinking fountains, green space, bathrooms, reservable space, a scenic view, a skate park, and sledding.
- Mathy Quarry Trails – Offer 3.2 miles of hike only trails and 2 miles of hike/bike trails
- Myrick Park - Offers an amphitheater, bike racks, canoe and kayak access, a dog park, drinking fountains, fishing access, green space, indoor bathrooms, a tennis court, and trail access.
- Pettibone Park - Includes canoe and kayak access, a disc golf course, green space, a gazebo, bathrooms, showers, a scenic view, trail access, and a volleyball court.
- Red Cloud Park - Features a basketball court, fishing access, green space, horseshoes, bathrooms, a playground, a swing set, tennis courts, and trail access.
- Riverside Park - Provides an amphitheater, canoe, and kayak access, drinking fountains, fishing access, a gazebo, ice rinks, bathrooms, trail access, and a scenic view.
- Skemp Tract – 0.65 miles of hike/bike trails
- Springbrook Park - Includes bike racks, green space, horseshoes, bathrooms, a playground, and a splash pad.
- South Library Park - Features bike racks, drinking fountains, green space, bathrooms, and a playground.
- The Gateway – Offers 4.84 miles of hiking and bicycling trails.
- Weigent Park - Offers baseball and softball fields, bike racks, green space, a playground, tennis courts, and an enclosed shelter.



## City of Onalaska

- Coachlite Greens Park - A 1.42-acre mini park with a flexible open field, playground with equipment, bicycling and walking pathway, basketball court, and pedestrian trail.
- Community Park - A 13.26-acre community park featuring a flexible open field, ADA-compliant play equipment, and a playground. Visitors can enjoy bicycling and ADA-accessible walking pathways, pedestrian trails, and sports facilities, including a baseball/softball field, basketball court, and tennis courts. Additional amenities include exercise stations, a picnic area with an open shelter, restrooms, pedestrian access, parking lots, and ADA-accessible parking spaces. Recreational activities such as horseshoes, ladder golf, and bean bags are also available.
- Dash Park - A 0.62-acre community park that includes bicycling and ADA-accessible walking pathways, a pedestrian trail, an amphitheater, and a designated events area for gatherings and performances. The park features pedestrian access, transit capabilities, and parking lots with ADA-accessible spaces.
- Elmwood Hills Park - A 2.70-acre mini park offering flexible open fields, a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, basketball courts, and pedestrian trails. It also features a picnic area and an open shelter for gatherings and relaxation.
- Glen Fox Park - A 3.77-acre neighborhood park with a flexible open field and a variety of play equipment, including a playground. Visitors can enjoy bicycling and walking pathways, as well as pedestrian trails. Sports facilities include a baseball field, softball field, and basketball court, along with recreational activities like horseshoes. Additional amenities include restrooms and a picnic area with an open shelter.
- Great River Landing - A 54.22-acre community park offering play equipment and a playground, along with bicycling and walking pathways and multi-use trails. It features a trailhead visitor center with restrooms, pedestrian access, and convenient off-street parking.
- Greens Coulee Park - A 153.61-acre community park featuring pedestrian trails, multi-use trails, fire pits and picnic tables, minimal wayfinding and educational signage, and a parking lot.
- Highway 35 Wayside and Sunfish – A 4.49-acre community park that includes a parking lot, access to the Great River Trail, and a photo opportunity with Sunfish.





- Hilltopper Heights Park - A 2.48-acre park.
- Holiday Heights Park - A 20.07-acre neighborhood park featuring a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, a basketball court, a pedestrian trail, and a picnic area with an open shelter.
- Meier Farm Park - A 9.45-acre neighborhood park that includes a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, a basketball court, exercise stations, and pedestrian access.
- Nathan Hills Park - A 0.29-acre neighborhood park with play equipment and a playground, and pedestrian access.
- Oak Knoll Park - A 0.22-acre mini park with play equipment and a playground.
- Oak Park #1 - A 1.48-acre mini park featuring a flexible open field, bicycling, and walking pathways, a basketball court, a pickleball court, restrooms, and ADA-accessible paths.
- Oak Park #4 - A 0.99-acre mini park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, and pedestrian trails.
- Oakwoods Park - A 0.88-acre mini park featuring a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, a basketball court, and pedestrian trails.
- Park Avenue Park - A 0.32-acre mini park with play equipment and a playground, and a basketball court.
- Parkridge Park - A 3.42-acre neighborhood park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, a basketball court, a pickleball court, tennis courts, pedestrian access, and off-street parking.
- Pierce Park - A 5.5-acre neighborhood park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, a basketball court, pedestrian trails, and a picnic area with an open shelter.
- Robinson Park - A 5.69-acre neighborhood park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, a basketball court, pedestrian trails, and a picnic area with an open shelter.
- Rowe Park - A 25.00-acre community park that includes Onalaska Skate Park, a flexible open field, a disc golf area, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, and pedestrian trails. It also includes a baseball/softball field, tennis courts, and recreational activities such as horseshoes, ladder golf, and bean bags. Additional amenities include picnic tables, fire pits, restrooms, and a picnic shelter building. The park offers pedestrian access, a parking lot, and programmed uses.
- Sandalwood Park - An 11.95-acre neighborhood park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, and a basketball court.
- Thomas Farm Park - A 1.47-acre mini park with a flexible open field and play equipment and a playground.

- Valley View Park - A 5.07-acre community park with an extensive tree canopy and significant topography. The site is unimproved but holds the potential for new types of park amenities.
- Van Riper Park - A 40.14-acre community park that includes Onalaska Dog Park, a flexible open lawn, a restroom, and pavilion, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, and a pedestrian trail. It includes a soccer field, baseball/softball field, and a sand volleyball court. Additional amenities are a parking lot, an aquatic center, a pavilion with a drinking water fountain, and the Omni Center.
- Wellington Greens Park - A 3.89-acre mini park with a flexible open field, play equipment and a playground, bicycling and walking pathways, a soccer field, basketball court, a pedestrian trail, and a picnic area with an open shelter.



## Federal and State Outdoor Recreation Facilities

Listed below are the federal and state recreation facilities in La Crosse County. The top 20 SCORP activities available at each location have been included in the inventory table below.

Name	Type	Acres	Miles	Top Activities	Facilities
Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge	Open Space	22,790	N/A	Camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, walking, swimming, motor boating, canoeing/kayaking, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, waterskiing/tubing/wakeboarding	Undeveloped, natural riverine habitat with changes from navigation dams
Coulee Experimental Forest	Open Space	3,109	N/A	Hiking, walking, bird/wildlife watching, nature photography, hunting	Hiking trails
La Crosse River State Trail	Trail	212	15.4	Hiking, biking, walking, bird/wildlife watching, nature photography	Crushed limestone fines bicycling and hiking trail, ADA accessible
Wis. Tourist Info. Center, Town of Campbell	Wayside	9	N/A	Walking, bird/wildlife watching	Restroom, tourist information, walking pathway, picnic tables, benches
Historical Marker – Mindoro Cut, Town of Farmington	Historical Marker	N/A	N/A	None at this time	Historical Marker
La Crosse River Fishing Area, Town of Hamilton	Open Space	17	N/A	Fishing	Native cover, public access to the river, no facilities
St. Hwy. 16 Historical Marker, Wayside, Town of Hamilton	Wayside	0.4	N/A	Bird/wildlife watching, nature photography	"Hamlin Garland" historical marker, view of Lake Neshonoc
St. Hwy. 35 Historical Marker, Wayside, Town of Holland	Wayside	2.2	N/A	Motor boating, canoeing/kayaking	Boat landing access to Black River
Van Loon Wildlife Area	Open Space	3,570	N/A	Fishing, hunting, hiking, walking, motor boating, canoeing/kayaking, bird/wildlife watching, nature photography, camping, dog walking on trails	Few walk-in canoe or small boat sites, canoe campground along waters
McGilvary Road Trail	Trail	N/A	2.5	Hiking, walking, bird/wildlife watching, nature photography	Hiking trail
St. Hwy. 16 Side Path, Town of Medary	Trail	N/A	3.75	Hiking, walking	Concrete walkway on east side of STH 16, connecting Valley View Mall with La Crosse Street
Black River	River	N/A	N/A	Canoeing/kayaking, fishing, hunting, motor boating, nature photography, bird/wildlife watching, swimming	Canoeing, fishing, boat access at bridge head of STH 35
Lake Onalaska	Lake	7,688	N/A	Canoeing/kayaking, fishing, hunting, motor boating, swimming, nature photography,	Lake was created in 1937 by Corps of

Name	Type	Acres	Miles	Top Activities	Facilities
				bird/wildlife watching, waterskiing/tubing/wakeboarding	Engineers Lock and Dam 7
Clearwater Landing, Town of Onalaska	Waterway Access	N/A	N/A	Canoeing/kayaking	Canoe and small boat landing, 4-car gravel parking lot, 300-foot foot trail
Mosey Boat Landing, Town of Onalaska	Waterway Access	N/A	N/A	Canoeing/kayaking, motor boating	Two-lane paved boat ramp, parking for 11 cars, ice fishing access
Adams Valley Creek, Town of Burns	Creek	N/A	2.5	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Bergen Coulee Creek, Town of Washington	Creek	N/A	1.4	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream
Big Creek, Town of Burns	Creek	N/A	1.7	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
Bostwick Creek, Town of Bangor	Creek	N/A	12.4	Fishing	Class I, II, III Trout Stream
Bunker Hill Creek, Town of Washington	Creek	N/A	0.6	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
Burns Creek, Town of Burns	Creek	N/A	10.3	Fishing	Class I and II Trout Stream
Burr Oak Creek, Town of Farmington	Creek	N/A	2	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Coon Creek, Town of Washington	Creek	N/A	6	Fishing	Class I; 3 miles north of CTH H classified as Class II
Creamery Creek, Town of Farmington	Creek	N/A	3.9	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
Davis Creek, Town of Farmington	Creek	N/A	3.4	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Dutch Creek, Town of Bangor	Creek	N/A	9.4	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Eggens Coulee Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	1.4	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Fish Creek, Town of Bangor	Creek	N/A	5.2	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
Fishback Creek, Town of Greenfield	Creek	N/A	1.5	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Gills Coulee Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	3.2	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Halfway Creek, Town of Onalaska	Creek	N/A	6	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Hoyer Coulee Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	1.8	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream
Johns Coulee Creek, Town of Greenfield	Creek	N/A	1.8	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream



Name	Type	Acres	Miles	Top Activities	Facilities
Jostad Coulee Creek, Town of Onalaska	Creek	N/A	2.2	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
La Crosse River, Town of Burns	River	N/A	0.5	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Larson Coulee Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	3.4	Fishing	Class I and II Trout Stream
Little Burns Creek, Town of Burns	Creek	N/A	1.3	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream
McKinley Valley Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	2.8	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Mormon Coulee Creek, Town of Shelby & Greenfield	Creek	N/A	14.6	Fishing	Class II Trout Stream
Neshonoc Creek, Town of Hamilton	Creek	N/A	4.8	Fishing	Class II and III Trout Stream
Poplar Creek, Town of Washington	Creek	N/A	0.9	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream
Sand Creek, Town of Burns	Creek	N/A	2.5	Fishing	Class I Trout Stream
Smith Valley Creek, Town of Medary	Creek	N/A	1	Fishing	Class III Trout Stream
Great River State Trail	Trail	161	13.8	Hiking, biking, walking, bird/wildlife watching	Hiking and bicycling trail
Lyttles Landing, Town of Onalaska	Waterway Access	0.5	N/A	Canoeing/kayaking	Launch site for canoes, vault toilet, parking, 300-foot foot trail
Brice Prairie Walkdown, Town of Onalaska	Waterway Access	0.5	N/A	Bird/wildlife watching, fishing, nature photography	Walk-in access with roadside parking
Coon Creek Fishery Area & Easement	Open Space	126	N/A	Fishing, hunting, hiking	Trout stream, hunting, fishing, hiking
North Bend Bottoms Wildlife Area	Open Space	32	N/A	Hunting, hiking, walking	Hunting and hiking
Larson Coulee Trout Fishing Easement	Open Space	48	3.4	Fishing	Fishing access, no facilities
Wayside Park U.S. 14/61, Town of Greenfield	Wayside	5	N/A	Bird/wildlife watching	1 restroom facility, picnic area
Bishop View Wayside, Town of Greenfield	Wayside	5	N/A	Bird/wildlife watching	"Coulee Region" historic plaque, picnic tables, grill, parking for 14 cars
Interstate 90 Rest Area/Historic Marker	Wayside	26	N/A	Bird/wildlife watching	Information center

## State Fishery Areas and Fisherman Access

State fishery areas in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, are managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to protect aquatic habitats, maintain water quality, and provide opportunities for fishing and outdoor recreation. These areas play an important role in conserving fish populations, particularly in cold-water streams, while also supporting public enjoyment of natural resources. Programs like the Stream Bank Protection Program also improve water quality and public access by restoring stream corridors. The information in this section is sourced directly from the Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Areas Website.



### **Bohemian Valley Fishery Area**

Bohemian Valley Creek is a class 1 trout stream. Uplands consist of a mix of hardwoods, pine, and underbrush.

- Activities:
  - Angling opportunities- Shore and wading fishing
  - Recreational Activities- Hunting, trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, and berry picking
- Objective: Bohemian Valley Fishery Area is managed to protect the public trust, enhance cold water fishery (game and non-game), and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

### **Bostwick Creek Fishery Area**

Bostwick Creek is a class 2 trout stream. Uplands consist of a mix of hardwoods, pine, and underbrush.

- Activities:
  - Angling opportunities- Shore and wading fishing
  - Recreational Activities- Hunting, trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, and berry picking
- Objective: Bostwick Creek is managed to protect the public's trust, enhance cold water fishery (game and non-game), and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

### **Coon Creek Fishery Area**

The Coon Creek Fishery Area comprises several properties in Vernon, Monroe, and La Crosse County along Coon Creek and its tributaries. Included are sub-properties Bohemian Valley (La Crosse County), Rullands Coulee (Monroe County), and parcels adjacent to Chaseburg, along State Hwy 162 and Koll Road, along Spring Coulee, and along Timber Coulee (Vernon County).

Coon Creek, Bohemian Valley Creek, Timber Coulee Creek, Spring Coulee Creek, and Rulland Creek are all class 1 trout streams. The upland habitat consists of a mix of hardwoods, pine, and underbrush. Deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, cottontail rabbits, wood ducks, and woodcock are game species that inhabit the area.

- Activities:
  - Angling opportunities- Shore and wading fishing
  - Recreational Activities- Hunting, trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, and berry picking
- Objective: The Coon Creek Fishery Area is managed to protect the public trust, enhance cold water fishery (game and non-game), and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

### **La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area**

La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area comprises many small parcels in Monroe, La Crosse, Vernon, and Crawford Counties. Names of properties in Crawford County include portions of Sugar Creek and Copper Creek. Names of properties in La Crosse County include portions of Burns Creek, Larson Coulee Creek, Bostwick Creek, Dutch Creek, and Mormon Creek. Names of properties in Monroe County include portions of Farmer's Valley Creek and Little La Crosse River. Names of properties in Vernon County include Coon Creek, Hornby Creek (Upper and Lower), and Tainter Creek.

- Activities:
  - Angling opportunities- Shore and wading fishing
  - Recreational Activities- Hunting, trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, and berry picking
- Objective: The La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area is managed to protect the public trust, enhance cold water fishery (game and non-game), and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

### **Myrick Park**

Myrick Park is a 22-acre, mostly wetland property within the La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area. It is located in La Crosse County and is adjacent to a 13-acre park owned by the City of La Crosse. The city park includes a handicap-accessible playground, a fenced-in dog park, restrooms, public shelters, Indian mounds and a La Crosse River marsh trail system with Wildlife viewing platforms. The La Crosse Marsh Trail is linked to the adjacent Hixon Forest Nature Center trails.

- Activities:
  - Angling opportunities- Shore and wading fishing
  - Recreational Activities- Wildlife viewing, fishing, and bird watching
- Objective: Myrick Park is managed to protect the public trust, enhance coldwater fishery (game and non-game), and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

## 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 information in this section is sourced directly from the Wisconsin DNR State Natural Areas Website.

Allowable activities:

In general, the activities listed below are allowed on all DNR-owned SNA lands. Exceptions to this list of public uses, such as SNAs closed to hunting, are posted with signs on site.

- Hiking
- Fishing
- Cross country skiing
- Hunting
- Trapping
- Scientific research (permit remit required)
- Outdoor education
- Wild edibles
- Pets
- Wildlife viewing

Prohibited activities:

- Horseback riding
- Rock climbing
- Vehicles, including bicycles, ATVs, aircraft, and snowmobiles except on trails and roadways designated for their use.
- Collecting animals, non-edible fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead. Collecting for scientific research requires a permit issued by the DNR.
- Collecting plants including seeds, roots, or other non-edible parts of herbaceous plants such as wildflowers or grasses
- Camping and campfires
- Geocaching



## **Berg Prairie & Billy Goat Ridge**

Berg Prairie and Billy Goat Ridge contain a mosaic of dry-mesic forest, open oak woodland, and dry prairie openings on the rugged ridge and coulee terrain of Wisconsin's Driftless Area. Located along a ridge top and steep south-facing slope, Berg Prairie is the forest's largest dry prairie remnant with characteristic species including little bluestem, side-oats grama, prairie dropseed, yellow coneflower, silky aster, whorled milkweed, wild bergamot, prairie dropseed and Indian grass. Other small, scattered prairie openings are found within forested areas of this site as well.



Billy Goat Ridge is a complex of small, dry prairie openings and dry cliffs located along a steep east-to-west ridgeline on the northern edge of the Forest. Characteristic plant species include lead plants, short green milkweed, pasqueflower, purple prairie clover and prairie violet. Important grasses are big bluestem, prairie satin grass, little bluestem, side-oats grama and needle grass. The prairie is embedded within a forested area of white oak, bur oak, red oak, black oak, white birch, aspen and shagbark hickory.

Some of the characteristic open oak woodland species are absent due to past grazing and wood species encroachment. However, the presence of some quality understory species, prairie species, and open-grown bur and black oak indicates the potential for savanna and native grassland restoration. Berg Prairie and Billy Goat Ridge is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2009.

## **Great River Trail Prairies**

Great River Trail Prairies features two very diverse sand prairie remnants located on an old railroad right-of-way. Unintentional fires started by the sparks of passing locomotives helped maintain the prairies through time. Today, management such as brushing and prescribed burning helps sustain the prairies. One of the last remnants of the Trempealeau Prairie, feature grasses such as big and little blue-stem, and flowering plants including leadplant, blazing-star, wild bergamot, vervain, spiderwort, hoary puccoon, prairie rose white sage. The prairies also harbor a healthy population of rare plants. Great River Trail Prairies are owned by the DNR as part of the Great River State Trail and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.



## Holland Sand Prairie



Situated on an expansive, gently rolling Mississippi River sand terrace, Holland Sand Prairie protects the last sizable sand prairie remnant between Trempealeau and Prairie du Chien. The prairie is diverse with nearly 150 native plant species identified to date. Large patches of uncommon plants such as prairie smoke, silky prairie clover, and sand dropseed are scattered throughout the site. Other species include little bluestem, side-oats grama, June grass, clasping milkweed, silky aster, prairie coreopsis, rough blazing-star, hairy puccoon, purple prairie clover, and goat's-rue. Of note is the presence of a state-threatened plant.

The landscape also contains large vegetated "dunes" that are an extremely rare geological landform in the area, which were created thousands of years ago by wind-swept sands on the Mississippi River Terrace. The prairie has been heavily studied and used over the years by area students, teachers, and researchers. Very few comparable sites remain on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi and most occur within railroad rights-of-way. Numerous individuals and groups collaborated to permanently protect this site including the citizens of Holland Township, Mississippi Valley Conservancy, and the Wisconsin DNR. Holland Sand Prairie is owned by Mississippi Valley Conservancy and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

## La Crosse River Trail Prairie

The La Crosse River Trail Prairie is situated in the Western Coulees and Ridges ecoregion of Wisconsin and features stretches of dry-mesic to dry prairie in a former railroad right-of-way. The long, linear remnants lie on a sandy terrace of the La Crosse River and are indicative of the once vast prairie and savanna complex that covered this portion of the state. The prairie flora is diverse with big and little blue-stem, Indian grass, and switch grass dominating. The drier Monroe County remnant includes species such as white wild indigo, cream wild indigo, white and purple prairie clover, leadplant, prairie bush-clover, plains larkspur, pasqueflower, prairie coreopsis, stiff cinquefoil, sky blue and silky aster, thimbleweed, and more.

The La Crosse County segment is more mesic with a different assemblage of species including heath aster, compass plant, stiff and showy golden rod, and New Jersey tea. A few wet pockets also exist with cattail, sedges, prairie cord grass, cup plant and Canada milk vetch. Scattered along the right-of-way are young bur oak openings and small sand blows being stabilized by false heather. The La Crosse River Trail Prairie is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1983.



### **Midway Railroad Prairie**



Midway Prairie is a small dry-mesic sand prairie remnant on a western-facing slope of a Mississippi River terrace. Soils are Sparta and Plainfield sands and loamy sands. Although the site was originally established to preserve the early spring show of pasque flowers, the prairie is diverse and contains more than 70 species of prairie plants.

Representative forb species include leadplant, puccoons, silky aster, and purple prairie-clover; the dominant grasses are porcupine grass, switchgrass, June grass, big bluestem, and little blue-stem. Common animals are field sparrows, red-winged blackbirds, and American goldfinch. Midway Railroad Prairie is owned by the US Fish and

Wildlife Service and was designated a State Natural Area in 1955.

### **Northeast Coulee Oak Woodland**

Situated at the northern edge of the Coulee Experimental Forest, this site features a large block of mature southern dry-mesic forest that is developing old-growth characteristics and has excellent structure and composition. The forest occurs on the north-facing slope of a sandstone ridge and is dominated by large red oak up to 45 inches in diameter with white oak, basswood, and red maple. Canopy associates include shagbark hickory, white ash, American elm, and black cherry. The most intact areas are of excellent quality, showing little to no evidence of past disturbance. Characteristic herbaceous species include wild sarsaparilla, maidenhair fern, wild geranium, large-flowered bellwort, and enchanter's nightshade.



More mesic patches support two-leaved miterwort, blue cohosh, and Goldie's fern. At the southern end of the site is a small dry prairie located on a very steep south-facing slope. Numerous characteristic species include little bluestem, side-oats grama, lead plant, silky aster, and gray goldenrod. Also present are moist outcroppings of limy sandstone near the crest of a steep north-facing slope. This area supports species such as bulblet fern, fragile fern, wild columbine, hairy goldenrod, and harebell. Also present is the uncommon jeweled shooting star, a plant found primarily within the Driftless Area. Breeding birds include the yellow-billed cuckoo, the eastern wood pewee, veery, wood thrush, ovenbird, mourning warbler, scarlet tanager, and rose-breasted grosbeak. Northeast Coulee Oak Woodland is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2009.

### **Van Loon Floodplain Forest**



Van Loon Floodplain Forest features a mature floodplain forest situated between channels of the Black River. Canopy dominants are large silver maple, white swamp oak, and green ash. Associated species include river birch, cottonwood, yellow bud hickory, American elm, basswood, and black ash. Swamp white oak is reproducing well and there is good distribution of both size and age classes for most tree species, although very large individuals are relatively infrequent. The site is dissected by several flood channels and topography is nearly level. The shrub layer is moderately dense and composed of prickly ash, elderberry, buttonbush, common winterberry, and nannyberry.

Characteristic ground layer species include cut-leaved coneflower, Virginia wild rye, Virginia waterleaf, wild ginger, wood nettle, sensitive fern, meadow rue and calico aster. Throughout the floodplain are pockets of sloughs, ponds, wet meadows, and shrub swamps. Avifauna includes many rare and uncommon species. Other birds include pileated woodpecker, wood duck, green heron, eastern wood-pewee, yellow-throated vireo, blue-gray gnatcatcher, ovenbird, American redstart, and indigo bunting. Van Loon Floodplain Forest is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.



## Van Loon Floodplain Savanna

Situated on sand and gravel deposits of the Black River, Van Loon Floodplain Savanna features groves of scattered oak forest with green ash. The sparse canopy of the savanna has permitted the development of prairie grasses and forbs, and the exceptionally rich ground layer has over 100 species documented. Plants include white wild indigo, creamy indigo, rough blazing star, tall green milkweed, lupine, culver's root, and field milkwort. Rare and uncommon

species present on the site include snowy campion, pirate perch, weed shiner, pug-nose minnow, and Pecatonica mayfly. Birds include wood duck, pileated woodpecker, great-crested flycatcher, tufted titmouse, blue-gray gnatcatcher, yellow warbler, American redstart, ovenbird, rose-breasted grosbeak, and northern oriole. Van Loon Floodplain Savanna is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.



## School Recreation Facilities and Areas

The public schools, private schools, universities, and colleges within La Crosse County provide additional recreational facilities (neighborhood playgrounds) offering many traditional recreational opportunities, see Table 3. The schools in the county provide 52 recreational sites containing over 575 acres of recreational facilities. The sites are mainly baseball and softball fields, football and soccer fields, tracks, tennis, and basketball courts.

**Table 3. School Recreation Facilities and Areas**

School Recreation Areas	Location	Number of Parks or Areas	Acres
Bangor	V. of Bangor	1	15.0
Holmen	V. of Holmen	6	163.0
La Crosse	C. of La Crosse	17	126.0
Onalaska	C. of Onalaska	8	112.0
West Salem	V. of West Salem	1	32.0
Coulee Region Christian	V. of West Salem	1	5.0
Aquinas	C. of La Crosse	1	3.0
Blessed Sacrament	C. of La Crosse	1	1.0
Cathedral	C. of La Crosse	1	1.5
Summit Elementary School	T. of Campbell	1	1.0
St. Patrick's	C. of Onalaska	1	0.5
Mount Calvary-Grace Lutheran	C. of La Crosse	1	1.5
Immanuel Lutheran	C. of La Crosse	1	0.5
St. Paul's	T. of Onalaska	1	1.0
Luther High School	T. of Onalaska	1	6.0
Faith Baptist	C. of La Crosse	1	1.0
First Evangelical Lutheran	C. of La Crosse	1	1.0
Christ St. John's Lutheran	V. of West Salem	1	1.0
UW-La Crosse	C. of La Crosse	3	84.0
Viterbo University	C. of La Crosse	2	20.0
Western Wisconsin Technical College	C. of La Crosse	1	2.0

## Campground Facilities

La Crosse County has a variety of campground facilities with nine private and public campgrounds, See Table 4. There are over 1,000 camping sites within the county. The camping parks available to the general public consist of 1,022 acres. La Crosse County maintains and operates two of the campgrounds. The campgrounds are located throughout the county and provide residents and visitors with excellent opportunities to enjoy the natural resources of the county. The campgrounds that are public county parks were previously listed.

**Table 4. Campground Facilities**

Campgrounds	Number of Sites	Acres	Public/Private	Facilities
Goose Island County Park and Campground	350	771.0	Public	See County Owned Parks and Recreation Section
Neshonoc Lake Side Campground	258	49.0	Private	Playground, pool, beach, rec. hall, laundry, restrooms, showers, dump station, volleyball, basketball, dock, boat landing, rentals for kayaks, canoes, and motorboats
Whispering Pines Campground	75	39.0	Private	Electricity hook-up, camp store and concession area
Bluebird Springs Recreation Area	120	209.0	Private	X-country skiing, hiking, playground apparatus, basketball court, volleyball court, recreation hall, store, snack bar, drink bar, showers, toilets, laundry, dump station, spring fed swimming pond, two fishing ponds, picnic shelter
Veterans Memorial County Park and Campground	120	230.0	Public	See County Owned Parks and Recreation Section
Pettibone Resort	25 tent sites, 183 RV sites	40.0	Private (Land owned by City of La Crosse and leased for campground)	Fishing, boat landing, camp store, bar, basketball, horseshoes, playground, electric, game room, shelter house, banquet hall
Camp Ehawee, Girl Scout Camp	Not available for the general public - camping for girl scouts and other specified groups	214.0	Private	Camp equipped with 2 lodges (bunkhouse, kitchen, showers, fireplace), swimming pool, amphitheater, canoe landing with access to Black River, hiking trails, dining hall, mini-store, ball diamond and recreation field, 4(+) camping areas with fire pits and wooden platforms for tents
Gateway Council Boy Scout Camp	Not available for the general public - camping for boy scouts and other specified groups	330.0	Private	Hiking trails, canoe landing, group campgrounds, selected camp buildings (e.g., cafeteria, bathroom facilities)

Campgrounds	Number of Sites	Acres	Public/Private	Facilities
Upper Mississippi River Fish and Wildlife Refuge	There are no designated camping areas, campfire rings, drinking water or restroom facilities on the islands	Primitive camping is allowed free of cost on islands on the Mississippi River that are within refuge boundaries (unless posted otherwise)	Public	See County Owned Parks and Recreation Section



## Specialized Recreation Areas

La Crosse County also has Specialized Recreation Areas, see tables below. These areas consist of golf courses, rod and gun clubs, trails, fair grounds, ski resorts, heritage, and nature centers, etc.

**Table 5. Trails/ Trail Systems**

Property	Location
Hixon Forest	C. of La Crosse
The Gateway	C. of La Crosse
La Crosse River Marsh	C. of La Crosse
Mathy Quarry	C. of La Crosse
Hass Tract	C. of La Crosse
Skemp Tract	C. of La Crosse
La Crosse River State Trail	C. of La Crosse and V. of West Salem
Halfway Creek trail	T. of Onalaska
Great River State Trail	T. of Onalaska

**Table 6. Golf Courses**

Golf Courses	Location	Yards	Par	Acres	Public/Private
Fox Hollow – 18 holes	C. of La Crosse	5,593	70	109.0	Public
Drugan’s Castle Mound – 18 holes	V. of Holmen	6,150	72	96.0	Public
La Crosse Country Club – 18 holes	C. of Onalaska	7,180	72	103.0	Private
Coulee Golf Bowl – 18 holes	C. of Onalaska	3,060	36	50.0	Public
Cedar Creek – 18 holes	C. of Onalaska	6,751	71	200.0	Semi-Private
Forest Hills – 19 holes	C. of La Crosse	6,000	71	160.0	Public
Walsh Golf Center– 9 holes	C. of La Crosse	2,177	32	45.0	Public
Pettibone Park Disc Golf Course – 27 holes	C. of La Crosse	2,721	83	NA	Public
Rowe Park Disc Golf Course – 9 holes	C. of Onalaska	715	33	NA	Public

**Table 7. Other Specialized Park and Recreation Facilities and Areas**

Other Park and Recreation Facilities and Areas	Location	Acres	Facilities
West Salem Rod and Gun Club	T. of Burns	128.0	Rifle, pistol, and archery outdoor shooting range
Coulee Archers	T. of Farmington	40.0	Archery Range, club house, meeting room
Mindoro Lions Club Park	T. of Farmington	NA	Tractor pull track, restrooms, bleachers, picnic tables, shelter house, kitchen
Gunslick Trap Club	T. of Holland	42.0	Clay Pigeon Shooting Available, meeting room
Holmen Rod and Gun Club	T. of Holland	75.0	Shooting range for archery, pistol, and rifle. Lodge by shooting range
Alpine Ski Area – Mt. La Crosse	T. of Shelby	200.0	18 slopes and ski trails, 516-foot vertical drop, 5,300-foot run – Wisconsin’s longest, chalet, ski shop, 3 chair lifts
Norskedalen Heritage Center	T. of Washington	400.0	Museum, 2 restroom facilities, meeting room, pond, hiking and cross-country skiing trails
Stry Foundation Nature Center and Conservancy	C. of La Crosse	5.0	Restroom facility, pond, hiking trails
Stry Foundation Conservancy Site	C. of La Crosse	5.0	Trails
Native Prairie	T. of Holland	80.0	Native prairie land. Last remaining native prairie on a sandy terrace are located here. Site has statewide significance.
Natural Prairie	T. of Holland	350.0	Natural prairie. Grassy prairie where 22 separate bird species have been reported, seven of which are of special concern to the State because of their scarcity.
La Crosse Interstate Fairgrounds	T. of Hamilton	114.0	Paved racetrack, animal barns, show arena
Houska Dog Park	C. of La Crosse	5.0	Drinking fountains, restrooms, adequate parking, and doggie bag dispensers.

## Miscellaneous Recreation Categories

**Table 8. Water Recreation**

Water Recreation	Type	Location
Goose Island Campground and Park	Canoe trails and rentals	C. of La Crosse
Pettibone Equipment Rental	Rentals for kayaks, tandem kayaks, paddle boards, canoes, and aquatic bikes	C. of La Crosse
Neshonoc Lakeside Campground Resort	Canoe and kayak rentals	V. of West Salem
Upper Mississippi Refuge Canoe Trails	Various paddling trails	C. of Onalaska
Onalaska Waterfront and Spillway	Rentals for canoes and kayaks	C. of Onalaska
KayoeSUP	Paddleboard instruction, guide, and rental service.	Throughout region
Island Outdoors	Rentals for canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, water bikes	C. of La Crosse
Schafer's River Rentals	Rentals for canoes and kayaks as well as fishing boats and pontoons on Lake Onalaska	C. of Onalaska
Lake Neshonoc Fishing Pier	Accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.	V. of West Salem

**Table 9. Pools**

Pools	Location
Erickson Pool	C. of La Crosse
North Side Community Pool	C. of La Crosse
Veterans Memorial Pool	C. of La Crosse
Onalaska Aquatic Center	City of Onalaska
Swarthout Pool	Village of West Salem
Holmen Aquatic Center	Village of Holmen

**Table 10. Boat Landings**

Boat Landings	Location
Veterans Freedom Park Boat Launch	C. of La Crosse
East Copeland Boat Launch	C. of La Crosse
7 <sup>th</sup> St. Boat Launch	C. of La Crosse
Municipal Harbor Boat Launch	C. of La Crosse
Lytle's Landing	T. of Onalaska
Mosey Landing	T. of Onalaska
Upper Brice Prairie Boat Landing	T. of Onalaska

**Table 11. Fishing Piers**

Piers	Location
Pettibone Lagoon East	C. of La Crosse
Pettibone Lagoon West	C. of La Crosse
NASA Fishing Pier	C. of La Crosse
Copeland Park Fishing Pier	C. of La Crosse
Green Island Fishing Pier	C. of La Crosse

**Table 12. Beaches**

Beaches	Location
Black River Beach	C. of La Crosse
Pettibone Beach	C. of La Crosse
Lake Neshonoc	V. of West Salem

**Table 13. Ice Skating Rinks**

Ice Skating Rinks	Location
Poage Park	C. of La Crosse
Copeland Park Oktoberfest Shelter	C. of La Crosse
Riverside Park	C. of La Crosse
Deer Wood Park	V. of Holmen

**Table 14. Baseball/ Softball Fields**

Field	Location
Carroll North	C. of La Crosse
Carroll Center	C. of La Crosse
Carroll South	C. of La Crosse
Copeland Baseball	C. of La Crosse
Erickson #1	C. of La Crosse
Erickson #2	C. of La Crosse
Houska Park	C. of La Crosse
Copeland Softball	C. of La Crosse
Houska Park	C. of La Crosse
Goose Green Park	C. of La Crosse
Riverview 1	V. of West Salem
Riverview 2	V. of West Salem
Village Park	V. of West Salem

Christ St. Johns	V. of West Salem
Little Hitters Baseball	V. of West Salem
WSHS Fields	V. of West Salem
Deer Wood Park	V. of Holmen
Remington Hills Park	V. of Holmen
Seven Bridges Park	V. of Holmen
Glenn Fox Ballfield	C. of Onalaska
Jaycees Ballfields	C. of Onalaska
Jimmy Olson Ballfields	C. of Onalaska
Onalaska Middle School Ballfields	C. of Onalaska
Rowe Park Ballfield	C. of Onalaska



**Table 15. Tennis Courts**

<b>Tennis Courts</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b># of Courts</b>	<b>Lighted?</b>
Copeland Park	C. of La Crosse	4	Yes
Weigent Park	C. of La Crosse	2	Yes
Bluffview Park	C. of La Crosse	2	Yes
Green Island Park	C. of La Crosse	7	Yes
Red Cloud Park	C. of La Crosse	2	No
Forest Hills	C. of La Crosse	6	No
Green Island Park	C. of La Crosse	6	No
Deer Wood Park	V. of Holmen	4	Unknown
Remington Hills Park	V. of Holmen	1	Unknown

**Table 16. Pickleball Courts**

<b>Pickleball Courts</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b># of Courts</b>
All Abilities Trane Park	C. of La Crosse	8
Bluffview Park	C. of La Crosse	2
Remington Hills Park	V. of Holmen	4

**Table 17. Other Park and Recreation Facilities and Areas**

<b>Other Park and Recreation Facilities and Areas</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
West Salem Rod and Gun Club	T. of Burns	128.0	
Coulee Archers	T. of Farmington	40.0	Archery Range, club house, meeting room
Mindoro Lions Club Park	T. of Farmington	NA	Tractor pull track, restrooms, bleachers, picnic tables, shelter house, kitchen
Gunslick Trap Club	T. of Holland	42.0	Clay Pigeon Shooting Available, meeting room
Holmen Rod and Gun Club	T. of Holland	75.0	Shooting range for archery, pistol, and rifle. Lodge by shooting range
La Crosse Interstate Fairgrounds	T. of Hamilton	114.0	Paved race track, animal barns, show arena
Alpine Ski Area –Mt. La Crosse	T. of Shelby	200.0	18 slopes and ski trails, 516-foot vertical drop, 5,300-foot run – Wisconsin’s longest, chalet, ski shop, 3 chair lifts
Norskedalen Heritage Center	T. of Washington	400.0	Museum, 2 restroom facilities, meeting room, pond, hiking and cross-country skiing trails

Other Park and Recreation Facilities and Areas	Location	Acres	Facilities
Stry Foundation Nature Center and Conserve.	C. of La Crosse	5.0	Restroom facility, pond, hiking trails
Stry Foundation Conservancy Site	C. of La Crosse	5.0	Trails
Native Prairie	T. of Holland	80.0	Native prairie land. Last remaining native prairie on a sandy terrace is located here. Site has statewide significance.
Natural Prairie	T. of Holland	350.0	Natural prairie. Grassy prairie where 22 separate bird species have been reported, seven of which are of special concern to the State because of their scarcity.

## Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

La Crosse County and the City of La Crosse in Wisconsin are dedicated to providing accessible parks and recreational facilities for individuals with disabilities. Here's a summary of the accessibility features and programs available:

### Key Accessible Parks and Features:

- **All Abilities Trane Park (City of La Crosse):** This is an inclusive park specifically designed for individuals with cognitive, sensory, and physical challenges of all ages. It features:
  - Colorful play areas with synthetic ground coverings for wheelchair use and soft landings.
  - Separate sections for different sensory experiences.
  - A fully fenced park for safety.
  - Accessible play equipment.
  - A children's theater.
  - Respite pods for individuals who may become overwhelmed.
  - A looping trail.
  - An adult fitness zone.
  - Disabled parking spaces.
  - Drinking fountains.

- **Myrick Park (City of La Crosse):** The city park adjacent to the La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area includes:
  - A handicap-accessible playground.
  - Restrooms.
  - A La Crosse River marsh trail system with wildlife viewing platforms, linked to Hixon Forest Nature Center trails.
- **Riverside Park (City of La Crosse):** This park is noted for its "fabulous accessibility" and offers views of the Mississippi River.
- **La Crosse Community Forest (City of La Crosse):** Features include:
  - A handicap-accessible linkage trail.
  - Inclusive stations and features.
  - Plans for a wheelchair-accessible treehouse.
- **The Nature Place at Myrick Park (City of La Crosse):** This facility is ADA compliant and dementia friendly. It offers:
  - Designated accessible parking spots.
  - Accessible entrances with power-operated buttons at some locations.
  - Sidewalk ramps.
  - Accessible restrooms with propped-open doors for increased accessibility.
  - An outdoor all-terrain wheelchair (Action Trackchair) available for free use during outdoor programs.
- **Goose Island County Park & Campground:** This park in the Mississippi River features:
  - Designated accessible campsites.
  - Accessible restroom/shower facilities.
  - Boat launch.
- **Veterans Memorial Park & Campground:** Located on the La Crosse River, it offers:
  - Accessible campsites.
  - Modern, family-friendly restrooms with flush toilets and hot showers.
  - Access to the La Crosse River State Bike Trail.

## General Accessibility Initiatives and Programs:

- **Special Recreation Programs (City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department):** Offers year-round clubs, monthly events, and trips for individuals with special needs of all ages and abilities.
- **Special Olympics Wisconsin - La Crosse Area:** Provides sports opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ages 8 and older).
- **Inclusivity Assessment Tool (IAT):** University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students have used this tool to assess the physical, administrative, and programmatic inclusion of various outdoor recreation sites in the Coulee Region, including La Crosse County parks.
- **La Crosse ADA Transition Plan:** The City of La Crosse engaged Benesch to develop a plan for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for public facilities, including buildings and parks. This includes assessing various features like entrances, parking, accessible routes, curb ramps, restrooms, and playgrounds.
- **Assistive Devices:** The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of La Crosse County has assistive technology devices available for short-term loan and demonstration.
- **Transportation:** The La Crosse Area MTU (Mass Transit Unit) is an option for transportation, emphasizing that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can use the system.
- **Voting Accessibility:** While not specific to parks, La Crosse County provides accessible voting options, including assistive devices at polling places and information on accessible voting from the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition.



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## Chapter 4: Recreational Demand

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## Recreational Demand

### Statewide

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. (<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.”

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 La Crosse County are shifting. La Crosse County’s median age increased 1.1 years since 2017 (ACS 5 Year Survey U.S. Census Bureau 2017 and 2022). Though



Photo Credit: Explore La Crosse

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

For guidance on the demand for recreational outdoor activities, a review of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2024-2028 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 and La Crosse County lies in the Mississippi River Corridor. Table 18 indicates the participation rate of recreation activities in the State. The Recreation Opportunity Analysis gives more detail on the Mississippi River Corridor Region including the activities that residents of the Mississippi River Corridor Region participate in at higher rates than the state average. These activities include fishing (from a boat, canoe, or kayak), harvesting berries/mushrooms, etc., and hunting (big game).

**Table 18. Estimated Participation Rates in Outdoor Recreation Activities by Wisconsinites**

Outdoor Recreation Activity	Estimated Participation Rate of Wisconsinites
Walking/Hiking/Running (on paved or unpaved trails)	68%
Swimming in lakes, ponds, or rivers	46%
Wildlife watching/Nature photography	45%
Picnicking	44%
Fishing	40%
Motorboating (including pontoons)	40%
Visiting a nature center	40%
Canoeing, kayaking, row boating, SUP	36%
Bicycling - all types	34%
Gardening	31%
Using splash pads or outdoor pools	30%
Camping (tent & RV/pop-up/van)	28%
Riding a motorized vehicle (ATV, 4WD, motorcycle)	24%
Visiting a dog park	22%
Playing court sports (e.g., basketball, pickleball, tennis)	21%
Hunting	19%
Recreational firearm range shooting (target, clays, trap)	17%
Playing field sports (e.g., soccer, football, baseball)	17%
Foraging or gathering (e.g., wild edibles, medicinal plants)	15%
Managing land (e.g., restoring habitats, building trails)	12%
Playing disc golf	10%
Water skiing, wakeboarding	10%
Snowmobiling	9%
Downhill skiing/Snowboarding	8%
Snowshoeing	8%
Cross-country skiing	6%
Inline skating/Roller blading	5%
Horseback riding	5%
Geocaching	4%
Rock climbing outdoors with climbing gear	3%
Trapping	3%
Bouldering outdoors (with crash pads)	2%

Source: WI DNR survey data

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' mission includes providing a healthy, sustainable environment in which a full range of outdoor opportunities may be enjoyed by all people. To better understand existing outdoor-based recreation opportunities and future recreation needs in each region of the state, the department conducted a study known as the Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA). The study involved collecting and analyzing information from the public, local governments, recreation groups, and department property managers. The ROA identifies future needs to provide high-quality recreation experiences and the role that department properties can help to meet those needs. The ROA is intended to be a resource during department property planning processes. (WI DNR) Popular activities that were selected by respondents are seen in Table 19. The bold activities in the table were the most popular activities that the SCORP survey indicated residents in the Mississippi River Corridor Region participate in. The activities that respondents to the ROA input form participate in vary from the results of the random sample of Mississippi River Corridor Region residents generated by the SCORP survey.

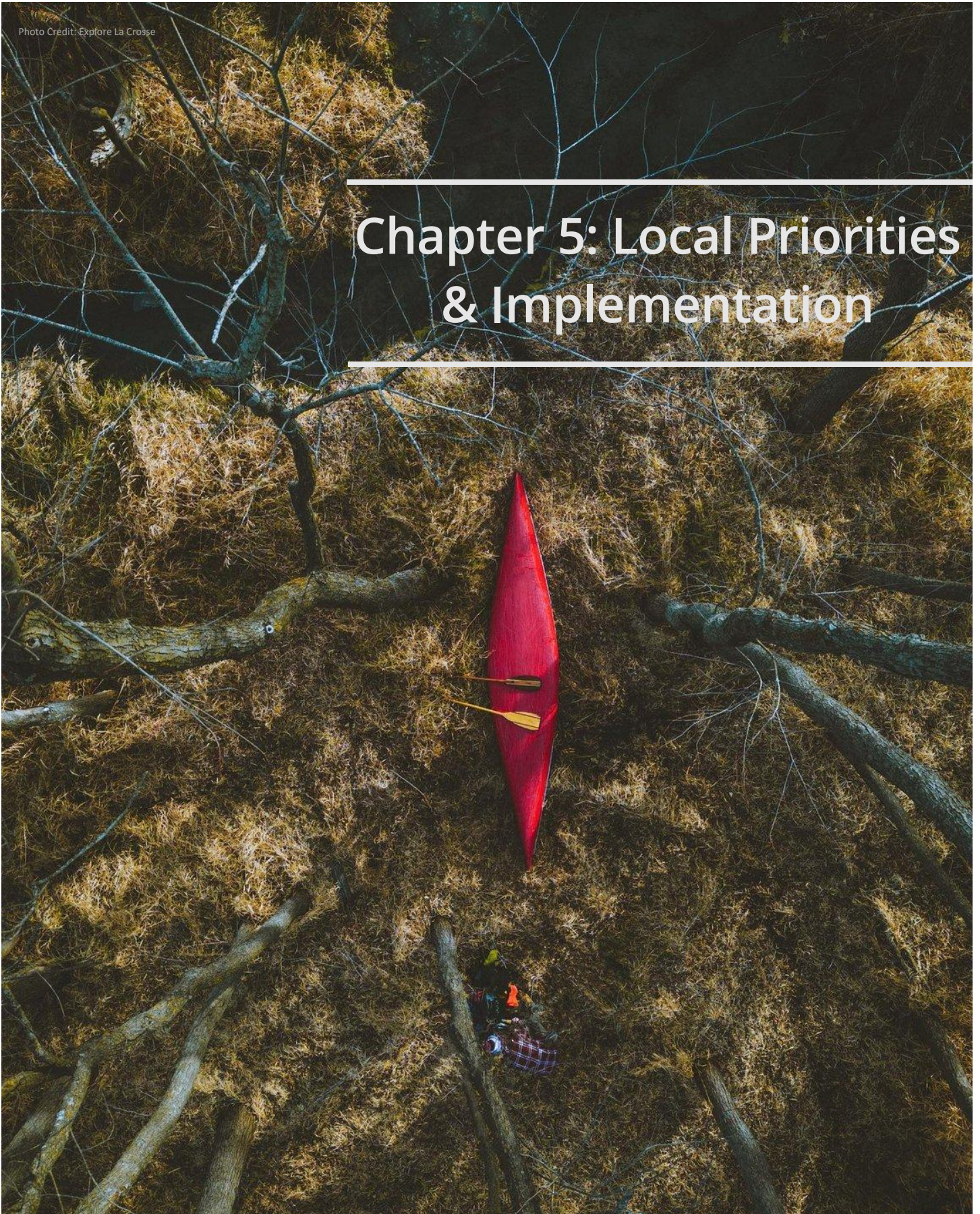
**Table 19. Popular Recreation Activities**

<b>Activity</b>
<b>Bicycling – paved trails</b>
Bicycling – mountain biking, single track
Bicycling – winter/fat tire
Camping – tent
Canoeing/kayaking
Cross-country skiing/ snowshoeing
<b>Fishing – from a boat, canoe, or kayak</b>
<b>Fishing – from shore</b>
<b>Harvesting berries, mushrooms, etc.</b>
<b>Hiking, walking, running on trails</b>
<b>Swimming</b>
<b>Wildlife/bird watching</b>

Source: ROA for Mississippi River Corridor Region



## Chapter 5: Local Priorities & Implementation





## Local Priorities & Objectives

### Survey Process

La Crosse County staff worked with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) to develop this plan. Together they created a survey to ask for public input on outdoor recreation facilities and activities offered in the County.

Information from the survey was taken to develop local priorities and objectives for the future planning of La Crosse County outdoor recreation facilities. The list of priorities and objectives will be referenced frequently by County staff to secure funding for projects. This plan will be reviewed and updated every 5 years to keep priorities and objectives current. Municipalities will be given the opportunity to update local municipal plans and adopt the County plan once the planning process is completed.

La Crosse County prepared a survey during the process of updating its Outdoor Recreation Plan. The survey was made available on La Crosse County's website and shared on social media platforms hosted by La Crosse County and Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. A total of 400+ responses were received, and the results are shown below.

### Survey Results

Key findings from the survey include: (see Appendix E for full results)

- **Demographics:** The majority of respondents live in the City of La Crosse (147) and have lived in the area for 10+ years (300). The largest age group represented in the survey is 46-65 (178 respondents).
- **Participation in Outdoor Activities:** "My Spouse/Significant Other" is the most frequent companion for outdoor recreation activities.
- **Favorite Parks:** Goose Island Park is the favorite La Crosse County Park.
- **Frequency of Park Use:** A significant number of respondents use La Crosse County parks and/or outdoor facilities often (one or more times a week).
- **Favorite Activities:** Walking and hiking are the most popular outdoor recreation activities, followed by bicycling and wildlife viewing/bird watching.
- **Desired Sports, Programs, or Events:** Respondents expressed interest in more family events not revolving around alcohol, cross-country mountain bike trails, organized trail races, and more nature-oriented programs.
- **Need for Facilities:** There is a perceived need for new or additional facilities for paved walking and biking paths/trails, unpaved walking and biking paths/trails, and winter trails.



- **Park Improvements:** Maintaining and upgrading existing parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open spaces, as well as expanding and developing pedestrian and bike trail systems, are considered the most important park improvements needed in La Crosse County.
- **Importance of Outdoor Recreation:** The vast majority of respondents believe that outdoor recreation opportunities are "Extremely important" to improve the quality of life for their family and La Crosse County residents.
- **Travel for Outdoor Recreation:** A significant number of respondents have traveled away from La Crosse County specifically for outdoor recreational activities, with popular destinations including Winona, MN State Parks, and various locations for mountain biking, hiking, and camping.
- **Big Ideas for Outdoor Recreation:** Suggestions for ideal outdoor recreation experiences include creating a community immersed and connected to outdoor recreation, developing safe surface-level bike and pedestrian trails, and establishing a multi-event sports complex. Several responses also emphasize the need for improved trails for walking, hiking, and biking, including specific mentions of the area around Lake Neshonoc.

## Statewide Needs

The 2024-2028 SCORP rates recreational activities as high, medium, or low relative to needs of the region. The groupings for the Mississippi River Corridor Region are as identified in the SCORP Recreation Opportunities Analysis Report, are as follows:

**Table. 20 Future Recreation Needs**

Future Recreation Needs – High	Future Recreation Needs – Medium	Future Recreation Needs – Low
Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding	ATV/UTV riding	Dog sledding/skijoring
Bicycling - mountain biking/off-road bicycling	Bicycling - fat tire/snow bicycling	Dog training
Bird or wildlife watching	Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier	Field trials (dogs) – 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, stand-up paddling
Dog walking	Hunting - migratory birds	Snowmobiling
Fishing - lake fishing from a boat, canoe, or kayak	Hunting - small game	Scuba diving/snorkeling
Fishing - river fishing from a boat, canoe, or kayak	Hunting - turkey	Whitewater rafting
Fishing - stream or river fishing from shore or wading	Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)	Dog sledding/skijoring
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	Swimming in lakes and rivers	Dog training
Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking	Target shooting - archery	
Hunting - big game	Target shooting - firearms	
Nature photography	Trapping	
Participating in nature-based education programs		
Picnicking		
Snowshoeing		
Visiting a beach, beach walking		

## Improvement Recommendations

### The La Crosse Bluffland Trail - Trails and Access Points

The highest priority recreation improvement in the Blufflands is establishment of the La Crosse Bluffland Trail - a regional trail that traverses the bluffs from north to south. The maps in Appendix G show an approximate proposed route for this trail. While it would eventually run almost the entire length of the County, Phase 1 would be that portion that connects Hwy 14/61 to County Highway B. This segment traverses the greatest concentration of lands already protected in some way, requiring relatively few additional acquisitions to make the trail feasible. It is a long-term goal to establish this regional trail as a shared-use trail across its entire length, meaning it can be used by both hikers and bikers, and to provide some form of access and connection to/from all public-access parcels in the region with this regional trail. Because some of the Bluffland parcels have easements that prohibit biking, La Crosse Blufflands Trail includes a contiguous route from Shelby to Holland that can accommodate bikes. A traversing trail route is also recommended in and around the City of La Crescent, extending from Veteran's Park up to Apple Blossom Overlook, running west and south through various roads and City lands on the bluffs, and then traversing the bluff south of the City.

This trail is intended to be accessible to most people. Except where conditions and conservation needs require otherwise, this trail should generally have a "shallow" slope and be wide enough (at least 6 feet) to allow users to pass comfortably. It will be important to establish and reinforce good trail etiquette by all users, both through recreational clubs and groups like ORA, and with signage

#### New Bicycling-Oriented Trails

Various public input sources and a review of current Blufflands resources indicate that the supply of trails that allow bicycling does not satisfy the demand for such trails. While conflicts between bicyclists and hikers on shared-use trails such as Vista in the City of La Crosse have been minimal, the current concentration of bike-permitted trails in Hixon Forest and Upper Hixon is increasing the likelihood of such conflicts. As recreational trail use increases with the implementation of this plan, it will be important to establish new bicycling trails that expand and disperse that use to other sites. Whereas the La Crosse Bluffland Trail is proposed a shared-use trail that allows bikers in a touring mode, other new trails dedicated primarily to bicycling use would be a valuable addition to The Blufflands. This could include downhill and freeride trails, in areas of lesser ecological importance deemed appropriate for the more extensive disturbance typical with such trails. The maps on the following pages show (with a diagonal hatch) four properties that should be considered candidates for future bike trail development. The future acquisition of any of these parcels could include ORA in some way and should not occur with Stewardship funding that would prevent bicycling use. One of the proposed new

sites for bicycling trails is a parcel that adjoins the Hixon Forest property south of Grandad Bluff Road. When updating its master plan for the Forest, the City of La Crosse should consider new shared-use trails on the adjacent portion of the existing park.

### Focus on User Experience

As the Blufflands are gradually transformed into a renowned recreation destination, it will be important to make improvements to the overall user experience, especially for occasional or first-time users. The following techniques should be applied throughout the region.

### Loops, Loops, Loops

Most trail users prefer loop routes rather than two trips on the same route. Loop routes should be a priority of site planning and trail improvements.

### Options for all Users

The Blufflands should be a recreation resource for anyone and everyone in the region. The most popular sites and trailheads should offer easy routes with short loops, minimal slopes, and wide paths. This should include, on some sites, a limited amount of paved or well-maintained gravel paths that are wheelchair accessible. At the other end of the difficulty spectrum, there should be more challenging and technical routes for experienced hikers and bikers. There should also be a selection of trail options that allow bikes and that do not allow bikes at most of the major trailheads.

### Difficulty Ratings and Trail Signage

All users, and especially new users, want to know what they're getting into before setting off on a hike. Trails should be graded for difficulty in a uniform way across the region (green circle, blue square, black diamond). Trailhead signage should communicate those ratings, as well as trail length, total elevation change, and permitted uses. Trail marker posts along the way should be used on most trails to give people the confidence that they're on the right track and information about their distance to or from the trailhead. See also the section about signage at the end of this chapter.

### Manage Trail Congestion and Density

Most people who head off into the woods for a hike or ride prefer to see only a few other people while there. On busier sites, such as Upper and Lower Hixon, the trail density and frequency of use ensures more frequent interactions among users. It is a central objective of this plan to attract users to other, less well-known sites, to relieve use pressure on Hixon.

### Maintenance and Access Control

Popular trails can be damaged quickly by users when conditions change, especially during seasonal warm-ups when the trail is soft. Likewise, treefalls or washouts can lead people to find alternate routes, forging rogue trails. These risks can be minimized with a routine of frequent

trail inspections and repair, and with access control gates at the trailhead with signs that clearly communicate the reason for the closure.

## Trail Access Improvements

The region's trails are often accessed via improved trailheads - sites with parking, trail maps, and sometimes a toilet facility of some sort. Two types of trailheads are recommended. A "Level 1" trailhead at major Bluffland access points that accommodates higher visitor volumes and multiple use types. A "Level 2" trailhead is recommended for more remote sites with low to moderate traffic. A third category of trail access is also identified, allowing pedestrian or bike access from a connecting roadway but lacking any vehicle parking, major signage, or other improvements. See the maps on pages 56-62 for existing and proposed trail access locations. All trailheads and access points should be named by the street location (e.g., "Easter Road Access").

### Level 1 Trailhead

Level 1 trailheads are those that are likely to attract the most users due to their location and/or the number of trails and uses they provide access to. These trailheads should have the following amenities:

- Gateway ID sign
- Regional Blufflands Map
- Site Map
- Trail Rules and Etiquette sign
- Parking for at least ten vehicles
- Convenient access to a short, easy trail
- Permanent or temporary toilet
- Rest area with benches, picnic tables, and/ or flat rocks
- Consider a shelter with drinking water and bathrooms in a few places, such as Hixon Forest and Upper Hixon

The following Level 1 trailheads are recommended. Some new locations are for existing protected lands, but most are for sites not yet acquired.

1. Bluffview Court / King's Bluff (T. Holland)
2. Marco Road (C. Onalaska)
3. Eagle Bluff Elementary School (C. Onalaska)



4. Great River State Park Trail Trailhead (C. Onalaska)
5. National Weather Service Center (C. La Crosse)
6. Milson Court (C. La Crosse)
7. Granddad Bluff (C. La Crosse)
8. Chad Erickson Memorial Park (C. La Crosse)
9. US 14/61 (T. Shelby) – either location near Brickyard Ln (west) or near CTH MM (east)
10. Great River Rd / WIS 35 (T. Shelby) – Near South County limits
11. Apple Blossom Overlook Park (T. Campbell, MN)
12. Veteran’s Park (C. La Crescent, MN)
13. HWY 16 (T. La Crescent, MN)

### Level 2 Trailhead

Level 2 trailheads are recommended for lower-volume access points and should include the following amenities:

- Gateway ID sign
- Site Map
- Trail Rules and Etiquette sign
- Parking for at least five vehicles
- Temporary toilet
- Rest area with natural seating (e.g., flat rocks)

The following Level 1 trailheads are recommended. **Entirely new locations are bolded.** Some new locations are for existing protected lands, but most are for sites not yet acquired.

1. Timberwood Lane (V. Holmen)
2. Raptor Road (T. Onalaska)
3. Riders Club Road (C. Onalaska)
4. Stonebridge Avenue (C. Onalaska)
5. Old Hickory Drive (T. Medary)
6. Humming Bird Road (C. Onalaska)

7. CTH FA - Cul-de-sac (T. Medary)
8. Bliss Road (C. La Crosse)
9. CTH F (C. La Crosse)
10. Thistledown Dr (C. La Crosse)
11. Apple Orchard Lane (T. Shelby)
12. Hagen Road / ?? Park (T. Shelby)
13. Easter Road (C. La Crosse)
14. Skyline Drive (T. Shelby)
15. Vetsch Park (C. La Crescent, MN)
16. Skunk Hollow Road (T. La Crescent, MN)

#### [Other Access Points](#)

Trails sometimes cross existing roads or utilize a segment of existing road, sidewalk, or off-street path in the public right-of-way as part of a designated trail route. In these cases, there is access to the trail for hikers and bikers from that public road. These locations should have signs to identify the trail, at minimum. If there is access to multiple trails from or near the access point, a small map kiosk sign post (Type A) is recommended. If parking is not permitted on the adjacent roadway, that restriction should be clearly signed near the trail entrance. The following access points are recommended.

1. Curt Road (V. Holmen)
2. State Street (V. Holmen)
3. CTH S (T. Onalaska)
4. Green Coulee Lane (T. Onalaska)
5. Innsbruck Road (T. Onalaska)
6. Aspenwood Trail (T. Onalaska)
7. Fair Meadow Way (C. Onalaska)
8. Country Club Lane (C. Onalaska)
9. Meadow Wood Road (T. Medary)
10. Green Coulee Road (C. Onalaska)

11. Rim of the City Road (C. La Crosse)
12. Ebner Coulee Road (T. Shelby)
13. Old Vineyard Road (T. Shelby)
14. State Road Elementary School (C. La Crosse)
15. Mormon Creek Trail (C. La Crosse)
16. Royal Court (C. La Crescent, MN)
17. Aerie Heights Lane (T. Campbell, MN)
18. Crescent Hills Drive – Cul-de-sac (C. La Crescent, MN)
19. McIntosh Road (C. La Crescent, MN)
20. Crescent Hills Drive – Cul-de-sac (C. La Crescent, MN)

### Trash Collection

Trash receptacles are generally not advised at any locations that do not also have on-site staff. They tend to become a maintenance headache, even in some cases attracting illegal dumping. All users at all trailheads should be encouraged to “pack it in, pack it out.”

### Law Enforcement

Because the Blufflands span multiple jurisdictions, the coordination of law enforcement resources has been and will continue to be a challenge. Different sites have different rules, depending on their jurisdiction, and users may often be unaware of the various regulations. And the need for enforcement actions may sometimes affect certain jurisdictions in a disproportionate way. For example, if an access point for the regional trail is located in a town and becomes popular, it may be appropriate for other jurisdictions to support the policing of that site. The coordinating body that is created by this plan (i.e., the Bluffland Coalition) can serve as the lead entity to address this issue. Members can use it as a venue to raise and address law enforcement challenges, involving local law enforcement staff in the process as appropriate

## Climate Action Goals and Recommendations relevant to Outdoor Recreation - La Crosse County Climate Action Plan

- Explore opportunities to establish tree nurseries to produce stock for plantings at County parks.
- Use federal, state, or non-profit programs that promote afforestation and purchase lands to improve continuity and expansion of the county forests. Sequester carbon through planting on new vegetation in these areas.
- Identify opportunities for increased forestry and forest management at county parks and county forests. Sequester carbon by planting more trees at county-owned properties.
- Create a land bank initiative to acquire and assemble priority infill sites, preserve land for stormwater retention and flood mitigation, and create parks and dedicated public green spaces.
- Work with community groups to maintain and improve existing county recreational facilities, including but not limited to trails, parks, and ecological enhancements.

## Implementation Priorities

The La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan will improve the region's recreational opportunities if fully implemented. One of the keys to achieving the goals identified in this plan will be for municipalities to cooperate with one another in implementing the various elements. As illustrated earlier in the plan, the county has a vast amount of recreational resources. The action programs primarily focus on improving existing facilities or developing recreational facilities at identified locations. The following "Action Programs" have been developed as a result of public and community involvement during the planning process.

### **Outdoor Recreation "Action Programs"**

The outdoor recreation planning process identified projects that need to be undertaken to address future recreational demands of La Crosse County and its municipalities. The following action programs have been developed for each municipality that identified future recreation projects. The projects were prioritized by the cooperating municipalities.

#### La Crosse County Action Program

##### Continued Operation and Maintenance of Existing Recreational Facilities

La Crosse County maintains a Facilities Department that is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the existing county recreation facilities and areas. The Facilities Department maintains an annual Parks budget for the operation and maintenance of existing facilities. Table 10 illustrates La Crosse County's actual revenues, expenditures and improvements for the recreational facilities and areas from 2010 – 2017 and the budgeted revenues, expenditures, and improvements for 2018-2019.

In order to maintain and operate the parks, the Facilities Department has a permanent staff of seven employees. In addition, the department employs ten seasonal employees and privately contracts with one campground manager. The department also cooperates with other county departments in meeting maintenance demands (i.e., Highway Department).



**Table. 21 Actual and Budgeted Outdoor Recreation Funding for Selected Years**

Year	Revenue actual	Expenditures actual	Improvements actual
2015	\$640,019	\$851,423	\$214,410
2016	\$644,268	\$866,474	\$96,104
2017	\$668,328	\$908,158	\$202,620
2018	\$686,045	\$886,791	\$218,143
2019	\$748,340	\$921,207	\$292,637
2020	\$845,291	\$1,006,444	\$179,354
2021	\$1,015,823	\$1,041,149	\$57,497
2022	\$1,139,333	\$1,328,960	\$507,657
2023	\$1,042,140	\$1,294,396	\$447,805
2024	\$861,897	\$1,340,690	\$310,073
Year	Revenue Budgeted	Expenditures Budgeted	Improvements Budgeted
2025	\$928,460	\$1,297,408	\$377,283

**Table. 22 La Crosse County Facilities Department Projects Completed Since 2010**

Park Name	Project(s)	Estimated Cost	Implementation Year
Veterans Memorial County Park	Pond Improvements- dredged, rip rap placed along damaged shoreline areas and installed a hybrid wind/electric aerator	\$28,100	2015
Goose Island County Park	Campground Store Exterior Log Repairs	\$31,975	2015-2024
Neshonoc Swarthout County Park	Pave Park Road & Beach Parking Area (Friends of Lake Neshonoc Contributed \$17,500)	\$78,000	2015
Goose Island County Park	Re-Roof Shop	\$17,500	2015
Goose Island County Park	Re-Roof Pavilion	\$21,050	2024
Goose Island County Park	Installed Dock at North Boat Landing. Added on ADA dock	\$41,985	2015-2023
Veterans Memorial County Park	Campground Store Improvements- Handicap accessible store entry and concrete	\$15,000	2015
Goose Island County Park	Bathhouse #3- Replace roof, windows, and siding	\$25,973	2016-2020
Goose Island & Veterans Memorial County Parks	Fire Rings and Picnic Table Replacement	\$84,000	2016-2024
Neshonoc South County Park	Repair culvert Washout on park road (FEMA reimbursement 87.5%)	\$20,000	2016
All County Parks	Road Repairs	\$298,483	2015-2024
Goose Island County Park	Electrical and water upgrades in Goose Island	\$254,284	2017-2024
Veterans Memorial County Park	Maintenance shop for park staff- new construction and relocated in Veterans Memorial Park	\$150,000	2014-2017

Park Name	Project(s)	Estimated Cost	Implementation Year
Veterans Memorial County Park	Campground Store Improvements- new windows, siding, gutters, soffit, and fascia	\$29,559	2016-2020
Goose Island County Park	Remodel of Bathhouse #1- new partitions and tiling in shower areas, new windows, new paint inside and outside	\$44,133	2017-2024
Veterans Memorial County Park	Replace roofs on Park Shelters 1, 3 and 4	\$20,869	2017-2023
Goose Island County Park	New construction and relocation of Shelter #2 and Shelter #3	\$161,000	2018
Goose Island County Park	Purchase and install rip rap- north and west shoreline	\$32,300	2018
All County Parks	Playground Equipment	\$54,550	2019-2024
Neshonoc South County Park	Purchase and install rip rap	\$67,262	2018-2019
Veterans Memorial County Park	Install fiber line for internet access	\$25,000	2019
All County Parks	Ash tree removal and tree replanting	\$175,358	2017-2022
Goose Island County Park	FLAP Grant Match (grant match is \$793,838)	\$1,130,000	2019-2020
All County Parks	Vault toilet facilities repairs (roof, windows, dividers)	\$12,575	2019-2023
Goose Island County Park	Bathhouse #2 Improvements	\$58,579	2019-2024
Goose Island County Park	Bathhouse #1 Improvements	\$13,970	2019-2022
All County Parks	New Signs, entry, interior, trails, etc.	\$ 46,633	2019-2022
Goose Island County Park	Microwave system for wireless internet and improvements	\$62,427	2020
Neshonoc South County Park	Tilson Street Culvert Repair	\$30,150	2020
Veterans Memorial County Park	Campground Store Improvements	\$10,560	2020
Veterans Memorial County Park	Shelter Roof replacement #2	\$9,800	2021
Veterans Memorial County Park	Host site Upgrades	\$7,005	2021
Goose Island County Park	Shop Garage Door Replacement	\$5,544	2022
Goose Island County Park	Disk Golf Course	\$5,700	2022
Goose Island County Park	Campground Vault Toilet Facilities - new	\$61,040	2022
Veterans Memorial County Park	Pond Improvements	\$133,946	2022-2023
Veterans Memorial County Park	Vets Park Road improvement	\$189,774	2022
All County Parks	Tree Removal and Replacement	\$24,886	2022-2024
All County Parks	Habitat Restoration	\$14,882	2022-2024
Veterans Memorial County Park	Bathhouse #1 Roof Replacement	\$15,000	2023
Veterans Memorial County Park	Disk Golf Course	\$5,400	2023-2024

Park Name	Project(s)	Estimated Cost	Implementation Year
Neshonoc Swarthout County Park	Shelter Roof replacement	\$13,163	2023
Veterans Memorial County Park	Vault Toilet #1 Replace and Access Improvement	\$44,839	2024
Goose Island County Park	Shelter #5 Hand pump platform replacement	\$7,082	2023
Goose Island County Park	Basketball court replacement	\$31,040	2023
Goose Island County Park	Repaint Vault Toilets #1,2,3,5	\$10,400	2024
All County Parks	Playground Equipment replacement parts	\$5,807	2024
Goose Island County Park	Shelter #4 Vault Toilet Replacement	\$47,127	2023

**Table 23. Future Projects – listed in order of priority**

Park Name	Project(s)	Estimated Cost	Implementation Year
All County Parks	Road Repairs - Annually	\$41,903	2025- TBD
Veterans Memorial County Park	Vault Toilet between 2 & 3 shelters replacement	\$107,873	2025
Goose Island County Park	GI Bathhouse #1 Ceiling & Lighting Replacement	\$7,100	2025
Goose Island County Park	GI Rip Rap Shoreline	\$10,000	2025
Goose Island County Park	GI Shop Garage Door Threshold & Concrete Repair	\$5,000	2025
All County Parks	Habitat Restoration - Annually	\$5,000	2025-TBD
All County Parks	Fire ring/ Picnic table replacement - Annually	\$10,000	2025-TBD
All County Parks	Tree Removal and Replacement- Annually	\$10,000	2025-TBD
Goose Island County Park	GI wood Bin Replacement	\$10,000	2025
Goose Island County Park	GI Bathhouse #2 Plumbing Replacement	\$30,000	2025
Veterans Memorial County Park	Vets Park Pond overhaul	\$60,000	2025
All County Parks	Playground equipment	\$5,000	2025
Veterans Memorial County Park	VT pond Improvements (additional aerators, ADA accessible fishing pier and sidewalk	\$50,000	2025
Neshonoc Swarthout County Park	South Road Erosion Control	\$5,000	2025
Goose Island County Park	Bathhouse #3 Septic Drain Field Replacement	50,000-100,000	2025-2026
Goose Island County Park	Electrical and water upgrades in Goose Island	\$40,000	2025-2027

**Table 24. Unfunded Projects**

Park Name	Project(s)	Estimated Cost
Neshonoc South County Park	Construct biking and hiking trails	\$ 500,000.00
Veterans Memorial Campground	New Signage Throughout	\$ 10,000.00
Veterans Memorial Campground	Passenger transport Van for Canoe and Kayak Rentals	\$ 60,000.00
Veterans Memorial Campground	Canoe and Kayaks for rentals	\$ 15,000.00
Goose Island Campground	Goosey Golf replacement	\$ 25,000.00
Veterans Memorial Park	Playground equipment replacement	\$ 200,000.00
Goose Island Park	Playground equipment replacement	\$ 200,000.00
Neshonoc South County Park	ADA compliant canoe and kayak launch	\$ 50,000.00
Goose Island Campground	Bathhouse #3 Drain field replacement	\$ 100,000.00
Goose Island Park	Shelter #5 Replacement	\$ 200,000.00
Goose Island Park	Shelter #4 Renovations	\$ 120,000.00
Veterans Memorial Park	Shelter #1 Renovations	\$ 25,000.00
Veterans Memorial Campground	Paving of all gravel roads within campground	\$ 300,000.00
Goose Island Park	Shelter #5 Playground structure	\$ 150,000.00
Bice Forest	18 Hole USDGA Disc Golf course	\$ 20,000.00
Neshonoc South County Park	Dock Replacement with added fishing pier	\$ 30,000.00
Veterans Memorial Park	Storage facility with wash bay	\$ 200,000.00
Goose Island Park	Storage facility with wash bay	\$ 200,000.00
Bice Forest	Vault Toilet	\$ 75,000.00

## Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation and Other Plans

The following plans intersect with and have contributed to the 2025-2029 La Crosse County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The most recent Outdoor Recreation Plan has completed an updated inventory of County-owned land and infrastructure improvements.

### **La Crosse County Climate Action Plan**

The La Crosse County Climate Action Plan, completed in May 2025, represents a significant step towards addressing climate change at the local level. Built upon public feedback from the "Envision 2050" Comprehensive Plan, which identified sustainability as a top priority, this plan aims to enhance local resilience, reduce energy costs, preserve natural resources, and decrease harmful emissions. A key overarching goal, solidified by a 2020 resolution, is to achieve carbon neutrality for all county government operations by 2050. This plan is designed as a two-part document, analyzing both the county's own buildings and fleets, and the broader environmental sustainability of the unincorporated areas.

The plan's multi-faceted approach to climate action includes promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and solid waste, and increasing recycling efforts. It also emphasizes public education, environmental conservation, natural resource protection, supporting alternative modes of transportation, and efficient and responsible land use. The plan outlines a strategic path forward with recommended actions categorized by their timeline (short-term, mid-term, long-term) and estimated GHG reduction impact, allowing for flexible prioritization based on feasibility and funding.

Beyond county operations, the broader City of La Crosse also has its own Climate Action Plan, adopted in January 2023, which sets a community-wide goal of 40-50% GHG emission reduction below 2019 levels by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. This demonstrates a comprehensive and coordinated effort within the La Crosse area to address climate change. Both plans underscore the importance of ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation as technology and opportunities evolve, highlighting a commitment to a sustainable future for the region.



## **La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan (2022) (amended 2024)**

The La Crosse County Comprehensive Plan, titled "Envision 2050," serves as a guiding document for the county's development and decision-making through the year 2050. This plan is a comprehensive framework that addresses various critical aspects of community growth, including land use, housing, transportation, economic development, farmland preservation, and natural resource policies. It is a collaborative effort reflecting the values and ambitions of the community, and its core purpose is to ensure that all land use decisions made within the county are consistent with its long-term vision, as mandated by Wisconsin state law.

Key elements of "Envision 2050" encompass a wide range of topics crucial for a sustainable and thriving future. These include an analysis of existing conditions, strategies for farmland preservation, a focus on sustainability, economic development initiatives (particularly workforce attraction and development), intergovernmental cooperation, and plans for utilities and community facilities. The plan also dedicates attention to cultural and natural resources, housing needs, and ensuring equity across the county. Public input and community engagement played a vital role in shaping the plan, which provides both a strategic action plan and implementation tools, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, to achieve its stated goals.

## **La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2024**

The La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2024 served as a crucial guide for maintaining, improving, and expanding outdoor recreational opportunities across the county. This comprehensive plan aims to address the current and future recreation needs of both residents and visitors, recognizing that outdoor recreation is vital for healthy and vibrant communities. A key motivation for developing and adopting this plan was to ensure that La Crosse County and its local municipalities remained eligible for significant state and federal grant programs, such as the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which provide essential funding for acquiring and developing public outdoor recreation sites.

The planning process for the 2019-2024 plan emphasized public participation and input from various stakeholders, including county board supervisors, town and village officials, and the general public. This inclusive approach helped to identify specific recreational needs and opportunities within the county. The plan outlined several core goals, including the protection of the natural environment, ensuring that the county's outdoor recreation program responds effectively to community needs, and promoting economically feasible methods for maintaining and improving recreation programs. Furthermore, a significant objective was to encourage

future developments to incorporate greenways and recreational linkages, such as trails and open space corridors, to enhance connectivity throughout La Crosse County.

The plan also detailed various action programs and funding options to achieve its objectives. This included strategies for acquiring properties that would connect existing trails or expand and preserve open space corridors, often through state grant funding. It also explored the viability of implementing recreational use impact fees and boat launch fees to generate additional funding for facilities and programs. Ultimately, the La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2019-2024 provided a roadmap for sustainable recreation development, aiming to safeguard natural resources while providing diverse and accessible outdoor experiences for everyone.

### **La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan 2020-2029**

La Crosse County included goals and an action plan for natural resources in the 2020-2029 County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. The plan includes 7 chapters: Chapter 1 covers the introduction and plan development, Chapter 2 covers the 2007-2011 plan accomplishments, Chapter 3 covers water quality assessment, Chapter 4 covers agricultural performance standards, Chapter 5 covers agricultural performance standards implementation, Chapter 6 covers urban performance standards implementation, and Chapter 7 covers non-metallic mining ordinance.

### **La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2017)**

In 2017, the Emergency Management Department updated the Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is a comprehensive assessment of natural and man-made disasters that could pose a threat to La Crosse County. The assessment includes risks, emergency response plans, and strategies for mitigation, as well as an inventory of critical facilities and services in the County.

# APPENDIX A - Grant Opportunities

Funding Programs: Funding for recreational development can come from several sources, both public and private. Most funding for this type of development comes from public local funds. Primarily, local funds come from a number of sources including the sale of bonds, allocations from the local tax base, and donations from individuals and organizations. Non-local funding can come from a number of sources, either in the form of a grant or a loan. Currently, the DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and Rural Development (RDA) provide competitive funding relating to outdoor recreation.

## State Grants

### Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is a main source of funding for outdoor recreation facilities. The Stewardship Program, administered by the DNR, is a fund designed to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, protect land sensitive to environmental degradation, conserve and restore wildlife habitat and protect water quality. As a prerequisite to the following WDNR funding programs, applicants must first submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, such as this plan, or a master plan that has been approved by resolution by a local governing unit, or a plan of a higher unit of government. Applicants submitting qualifying comprehensive outdoor recreation plans or master plans may receive eligibility to apply for funding for up to five years. The DNR's priority for funding is land acquisition, followed by facility development.

### Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grants - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

#### Terms and conditions of Stewardship grants

- Grant recipients have perpetual obligations. Grant sponsors and all subsequent owners have the obligation to keep the land purchased or site developed compliant with program rules in perpetuity. Unless DNR approves a transfer of title, grant recipients must maintain legal control and oversight of the property.
- Public access is required of Stewardship funded projects. Any land purchased in fee with Stewardship dollars must be open to the public. Development projects must be on publicly accessible lands. If Stewardship funds acquire landlocked property, applicants will need to obtain an easement for access purposes over adjoining property.

- Land purchased with Stewardship funds must be open to the public for nature-based outdoor activities (NBOA): hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross-country skiing. DNR may allow a prohibition of one or more of the NBOA only if the Natural Resource Board determines that the prohibition is necessary.
- Stewardship laws specify signage requirements. Per section 23.09165, Wis. Stats., most lands purchased with Stewardship funds must be posted with signs that give notice to the public:
  1. that the land was acquired with Stewardship funds; and
  2. which primary activities are allowed or prohibited on the property. See signage information for more detail.
- Grantees must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, administrative rules that will affect the Stewardship property, including but not limited to, general and special zoning, land use permit requirements, accessibility for persons with disabilities, environmental quality, and historical and archaeological preservation.
- DNR's interest in the property must be recorded. Most Stewardship grant contracts are recorded, and for many grant subprograms, DNR's interest must also be reflected in the deed to Stewardship-funded property.
- Stewardship law governs user fees. Grantees may charge reasonable user fees to offset operation and property maintenance costs. Daily user fees shall not exceed the current cost of a daily pass at a Wisconsin State Park.
- Income accrued from Stewardship land must be used to further the objectives of the project as stated in the grant agreement or contract or used to further the objectives of another Stewardship project.
- Any lease, sale, or conveyance of any interest in Stewardship land must be approved by DNR. Stewardship lands may not be converted to uses other than or incompatible with the purposes of the grant. DNR must approve conveyance of any interest in Stewardship land, including utility easements or leases, lands conveyed for road projects, agricultural leases, etc. DNR may require replacement land in some circumstances.
- Stewardship lands may not be conveyed to another party without DNR approval. Any transfer of Stewardship land to a party other than the grantee must be approved by DNR, and the new owner must agree to the terms of the grant contract or agreement.
- Stewardship land may not be used as security for any debt unless DNR previously approves this arrangement. If necessary, DNR could take action to prevent the

placement of liens, judgments or encumbrances on property purchased with Stewardship funds.

## NONPROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION (NCO) Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grants - Subprograms

### **Habitat Area Grants**

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

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

### **State Natural Area Grants (SNA)**

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

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

### **Streambank Protection Grants**

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

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

### **State Trail Grants**

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



## Federal Grants

### Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

RTP funds may only be used on trails which have been identified in or which further a specific goal of a local, county, or state trail plan included or referenced in the SCORP. These include traditional trails as well as water trails recognized by the DNR;

Maintenance and restoration of existing trails;

Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages;

Construction of new trails (with certain restrictions on federal lands\*); and

Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors (must comply with the provisions of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended).

### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

ADR grants may only be used to support projects that acquire development rights to support nature-based outdoor recreation. Funding Priorities: The following types of properties are given priority consideration for ADR grant funding:

- Land with water frontage;
- Land that provides a buffer between developed and natural areas;
- Land that connects existing natural resource protection areas; and
- Land with other priority characteristics specified in statute/code.
- Has other priority characteristics specified in statute/code; and
- Involve two or more governmental agencies.

### Rural Development Administration (USDA - Rural Development)

The USDA provides a loan program, which provides Community Facility Project Loans to applicants with areas of less than 20,000 people, for the purpose of constructing, enlarging, or improving community facilities for health care, public safety, or public services. These loans should be secured with bonds or notes pledging taxes, assessments, or revenues. There are many Rural Development programs that are different areas of community development that could provide loans, or possibly grants, if criteria are met for income and utility rates, for facilities in the communities that are smaller in size.

### Transportation Assistance Program (TAP) Wisconsin Department of Transportation

This program provides funds for non-traditional projects within programs called the Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancements, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program. The TAP program provides up to 80 percent reimbursement grants for approved projects that target transportation-oriented pedestrians and bicycle planning and construction.

## Community Development Block Grant, Department of Administration

This program funds support infrastructure and facility projects for communities. Examples of eligible projects include improvements, repairs, or expansions of streets, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and community centers.

## Urban Green Space (UGS)

Projects that acquire land within or in proximity to urban areas that provides open space, protects unique natural features, and/or provides opportunities for community gardening are eligible to apply for UGS grants. Development projects are not eligible for UGS grants. Funding Priorities: UGS funding priorities include acquisition of land that:

- Preserves land on the natural heritage inventory database;
- Implements elements of approved water quality plans or initiatives;
- Has unique natural features;
- Provides a linear corridor connecting open natural areas;
- Has water frontage;
- Is of regional or statewide significance;
- Land related to brownfields redevelopment
- Land can accommodate all NBOA uses; hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and cross country skiing
- Provides area for community gardens;

## Urban Waters (UR)

Urban Waters Federal Partnership (EPA led): This program focuses on reconnecting urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with local revitalization efforts. It offers financial, technical, convening, outreach, and education assistance. Over 15 federal agencies are involved in this partnership, working in various designated locations across the country.

Land acquisition and development projects that provide opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation are eligible for UR grants. Funding Priorities: UR program funding priorities include projects that:

- Restore river corridors following dam removal;
- Support redevelopment of brownfields;
- Acquire land with unique natural or aesthetic values;
- Acquire land that connects with previous land acquisitions;
- Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for diverse urban populations;
- Provide new or expanded access to urban waterways;

- Involve two or more governmental agencies;
- Support local/regional plans; and
- Have other priority characteristics specified in statute/code.

### Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP) Subprogram

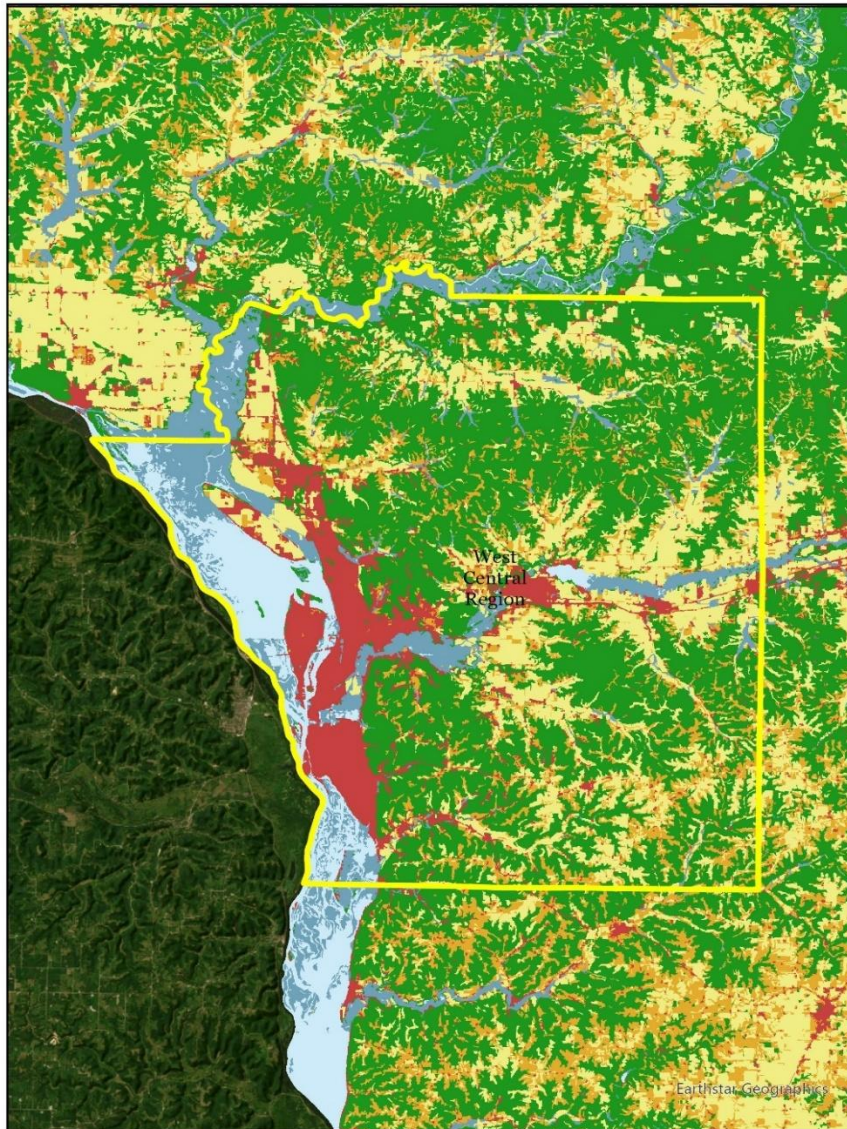
Land acquisition and development projects that provide opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation are eligible for ADLP grants. Funding Priorities: ADLP funding priorities include projects that:

- Support a local CORP;
- Support multiple uses, for multiple seasons;
- Are of regional/statewide significance;
- Result in a first-of-a-kind facility for the applicant;
- Projects that involve the use of materials or products utilizing Wisconsin recycled products.
- Provides recreation opportunities for elderly, minorities, disabled, and low-income populations.
- Project facility planned will be more basic in attributes than elaborate.
- Projects to renovate existing facilities that are in danger of being lost for public use.
- Provide accessible recreation opportunities; and
- Have other priority characteristics specified in statute/code.

## APPENDIX B: Maps

### Map B-1 Land Cover

#### Land Cover



The Land Cover map was created using the Wiscland 2 dataset. Wiscland 2 is a representation of the land cover throughout the state of Wisconsin as of 2016. The dataset is primarily derived from remote sensing imagery acquired by the Landsat 5, 7, and 8 satellites between 2010 and 2014.

#### Legend

La Crosse County Boundary

#### Land Cover Type

Urban/Developed

Agriculture

Grassland

Forest

Open Water

Wetland

Barren

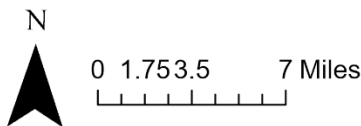
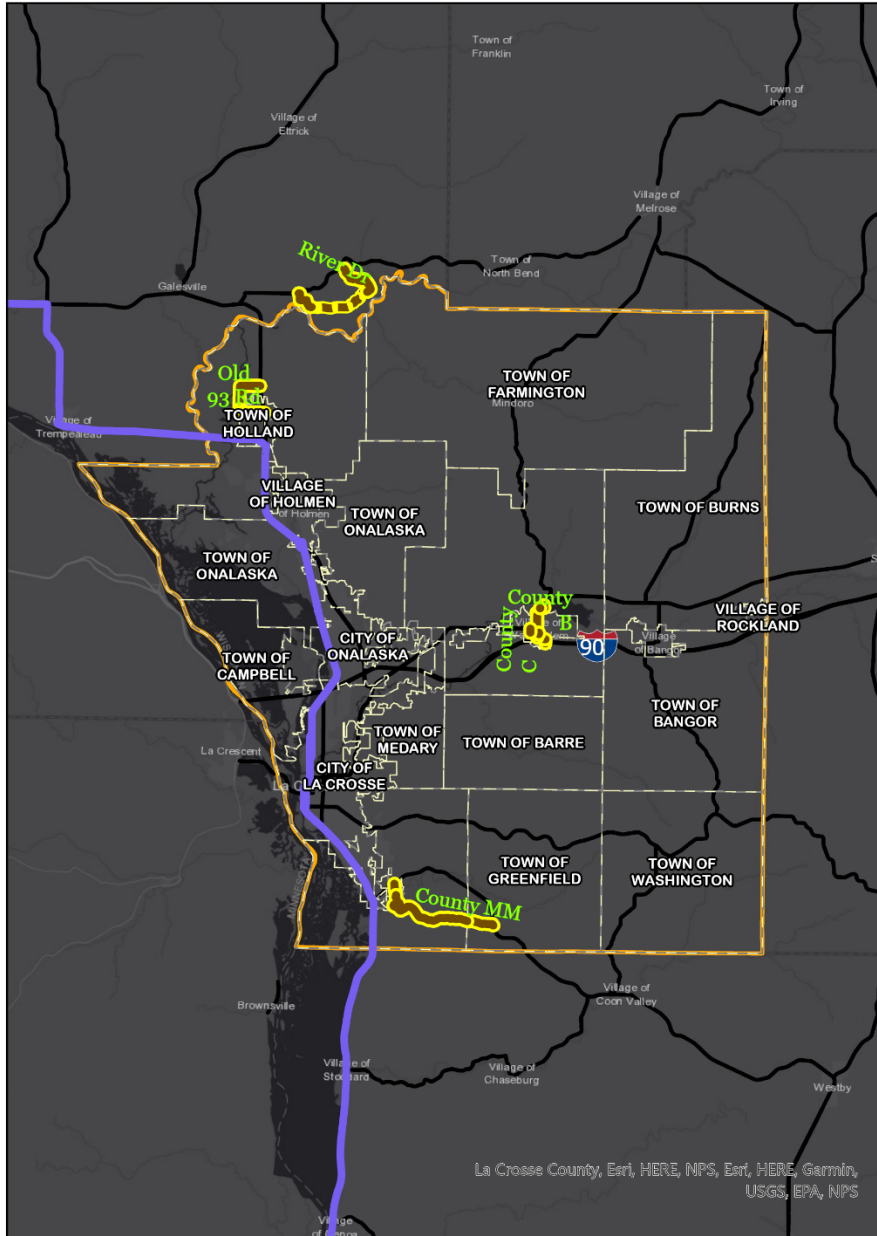
Shrubland



0 1.252.5 5 Miles

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

# Scenic Byways and Rustic Roads



The Scenic Byways program is a cooperative effort between local communities and WisDOT to identify and promote state and local highway corridors with scenic and/or historical attributes that provide travelers an enjoyable visual, educational and recreational experience.

The Rustic Roads program was created over 45 years ago to provide hikers, bicyclists and motorists an

**Legend**

**Major Roads**

Major Roads

**La Crosse County Boundary**

La Crosse County Boundary

**Municipality Limits**

Municipality Limits

**RUSTIC\_ROAD**

**Surface Type**

Paved Paved

Unpaved Unpaved

**Scenic Byways**

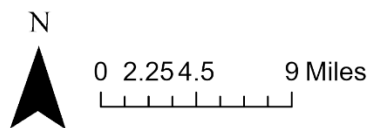
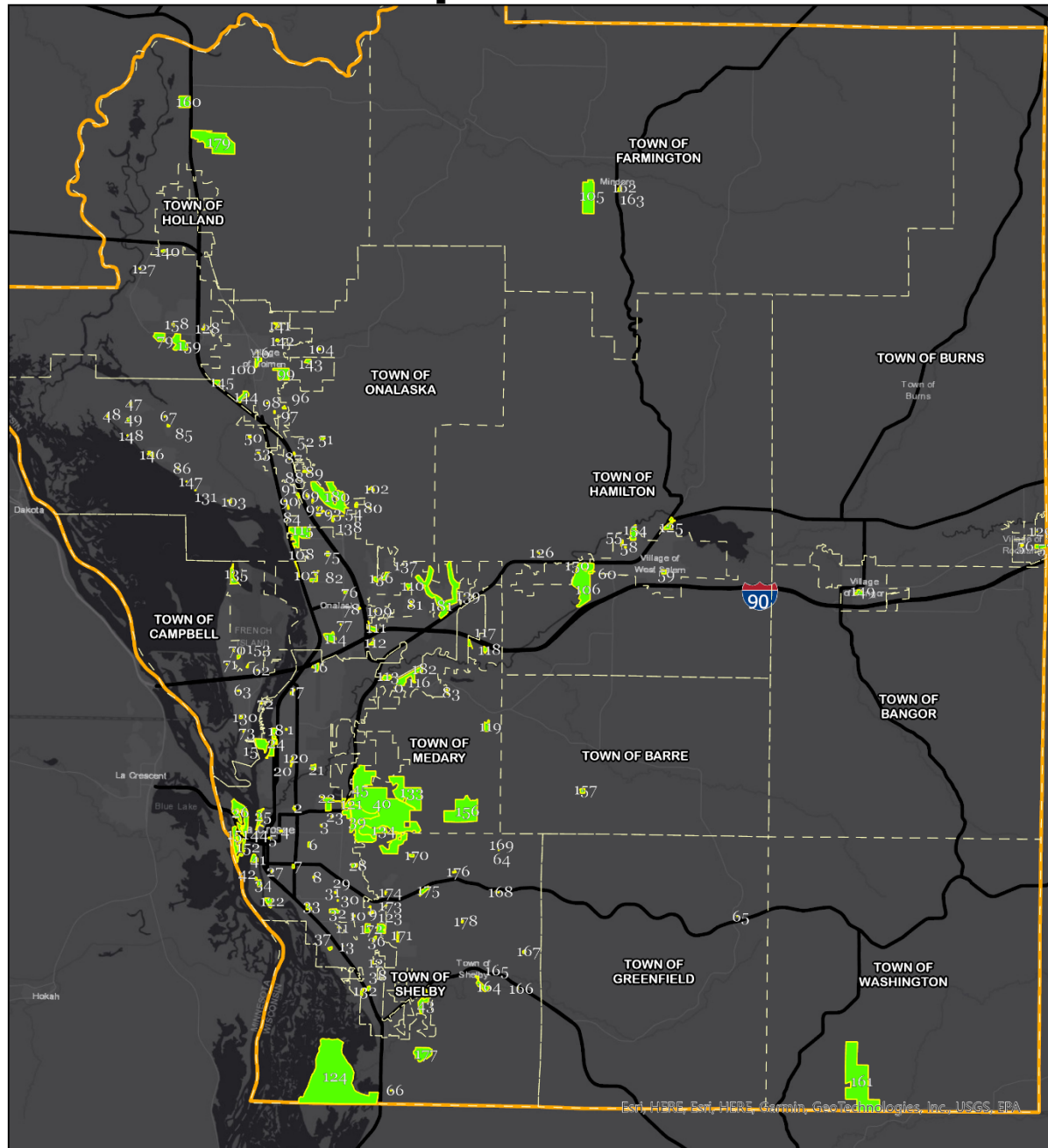
Great River Road

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



Map B-3 Recreational Facilities in La Crosse County

# Recreational Properties



## Legend

- Municipal Boundaries
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Recreation Areas

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Map Key B-3 Recreational Facilities

0	Merry Meadows Park
1	Northside Community Pool
2	Leuth Ballfield & Park
3	Memorial Pool
4	Burns Park
5	Cameron Park
6	Weigent Park
7	Powell Ballfield & Park
8	Tower Park
9	Starlite Park
10	Glendale Park
11	Diagonal Park
12	Springbrook Park
13	Highland Park
14	Civic Center Park
15	Veterans Freedom Park & Boat Launch
16	Wittenberg Park
17	Badger-Hickey Park
18	Black River Beach & Neighborhood Center
19	Goose Green Ballfield & Park
20	Goose Green South Park
21	Red Cloud Park
22	Myrick Park
23	Crowley Park
24	Copeland Park & Ballfields
25	Riverside Park
26	Pettibone Park
27	Poage Park
28	Bluffview Ballfield & Park
29	Verchota Park
30	Coulee Park
31	Schuh Park
32	Erickson Ballfields & Park
33	Trane Ballfield & Park

34	Carroll Field
35	Chad Erickson Memorial Park
36	Hass Park
37	Seminary Park
38	Clayton Johnson Park
39	Forest Hills Golf Course
40	Hixon Forest
41	Houska Ballfield & Park
42	Municipal Boat Launch
43	Roesler Park
44	Jay Street Pier
45	Roellig Park
46	Park Woods Park
47	First Prairie Park
48	Homestead Park
49	Roth Ballfield & Park
50	Prairie Heights Park
51	Apple Valley Park
52	Cedar Meadows East Park
53	Meadow Estates Park
54	John Bosshard Park
55	Pineview Park
56	Village Of Rockland Hall & Park
57	Gaylord Park
58	Corral Park
59	Village Of West Salem Ballfield & Park
60	Waterloo Heights Park
61	Island Park Block 8 Park
62	Island Park Playground
63	Jolivet Park
64	Hills Of Home Park
65	Park & Lift Station
66	River Hills Park
67	Maple Shade Playground

68	Swarthout Park & Shelter
69	Thomas Farms Playground
70	Ashland Park
71	Baumgartner Park
72	Cherokee Avenue Park
73	Dorns Park
74	Schallers Oak Park 5 Park
75	Parkridge Park
76	Hilltopper Heights Playground
77	Oak Knoll Playground
78	Oakwoods Playground
79	Town Holland Hall & Ballfield & Park
80	Sobkowiak Park
81	Elmwood Hills Playground
82	Northern Hills Park
83	Green Hill Park
84	Heritage Hills Park
85	Mulder Ballfield & Park
86	Lake Park
87	Cedar Meadows West Park
88	Sandy Knolls Ballfield & Park
89	Thunderbird Hills Park
90	Terrace Heights Park
91	Strawberry Commons Park
92	Schallers Oak Park 3 Park
93	Schallers Oak Park 2 Park
94	Schallers Oak Park 1 Park
95	Schallers Oak Park 4 Park
96	Timberline Park
97	Flora Park
98	Cliffside Estates Park
99	Deerwood Park
100	Holmen Park
101	Wellington Greens Park
102	Marvin Gardens Park
103	Mesa Grande Park

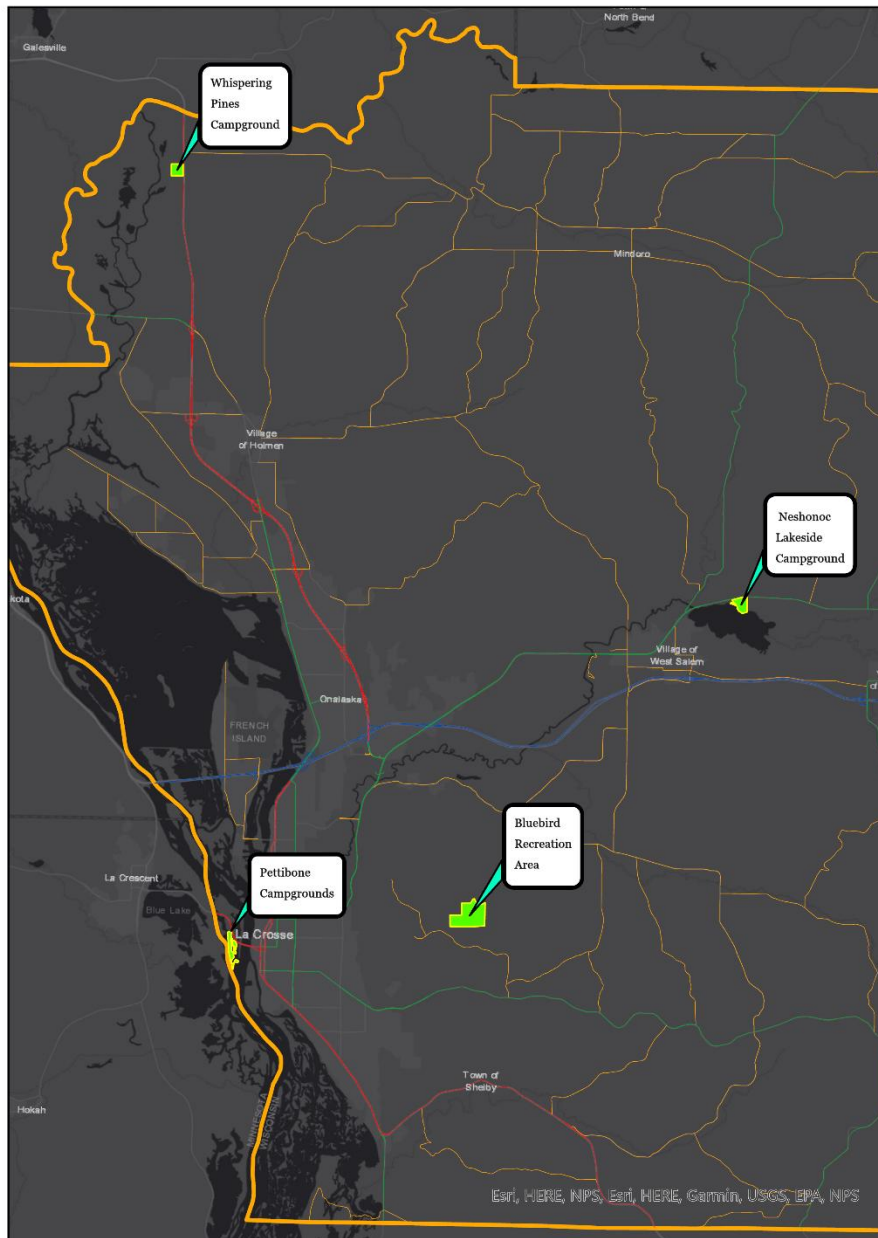
104	Rocky Top Park
105	Mindoro Park
106	Veterans Memorial Park
107	Park Avenue Playground (Wayside Park)
108	State Road 35 Wayside & Park
109	Coachlite Playground
110	Meadow Wood Park
111	Sandalwood Park
112	Glen Fox Ballfield & Park
113	Holiday Heights Park
114	Rowe Park
115	Van Riper Ballfields & Park
116	Springbrook Playground
117	Valley Vue Park
118	Pine View Estates Park
119	Wolf Ridge Park
120	Goose Green North Park
121	Hixon Forest Nature Center
122	Green Island Park
123	Wedgewood Terrace Upper Park
124	Goose Island Park
125	Neshonoc Swarthout Park
126	Briarcliffe Park
127	Sportsmen Retreat Park
128	Gaynors Rolling Hills Park
129	Hummingbird Heights Park
130	Eagles Nest Ballfield & Park
131	Lake Onalaska Walkway
132	Sherwood Manor Park
133	Upper Hixon Forest
134	Grandad Bluff Park
135	Nelson Park & Ballfield & Boat Launch
136	Aspen Valley Park
137	Clearwater Park
138	Meier Farm Park & Disc Course
139	Nathan Hills Park

140	Mcgilvray Park
141	Evergreen Park
142	Lee Estates Park
143	Forest View Park
144	Cole Add One Park
145	Remington Hills I Park
146	Fred Funk Boat Landing
147	Lake Onalaska Lookout
148	Black River Walkway
149	Village Of Bangor Ballfield & Park
150	Village Of West Salem Park
151	Pettibone Campgrounds
152	Pettibone Marina
153	Plainview Ballfield & Park
154	Village Of West Salem Ballfields & Park
155	Wedgewood Terrace Lower Park
156	Bluebird Recreation Area
157	Barre Park
158	Skogen Field
159	Holland Sand Prairie State Natural Area
160	Whispering Pines Campground
161	Norskedalen
162	Mindoro Lion's Club Park
163	Charlie Trimm Ballfield
164	Mormon Coulee Park East
165	Mormon Coulee Park West
166	Brookwood Park
167	Breidel Coulee Park
168	Battlestone Park
169	Nolop Estates Park
170	Arbor Hills Park
171	Skyline Park
172	Shelby Hillview Ball Fields
173	Gazebo Park
174	Wedgewood Valley Park
175	Pammel Creek Park

176	Smyth Park
177	Mount La Crosse
178	Boulder Ridge Park
179	Drugan's Castle mound
180	Golf Club at Cedar Creek
181	La Crosse County Club
182	Walsh Golf Center

Map B-4 Campgrounds

## Private Campgrounds



### Legend

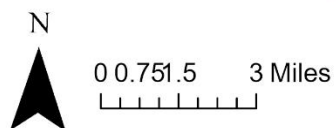
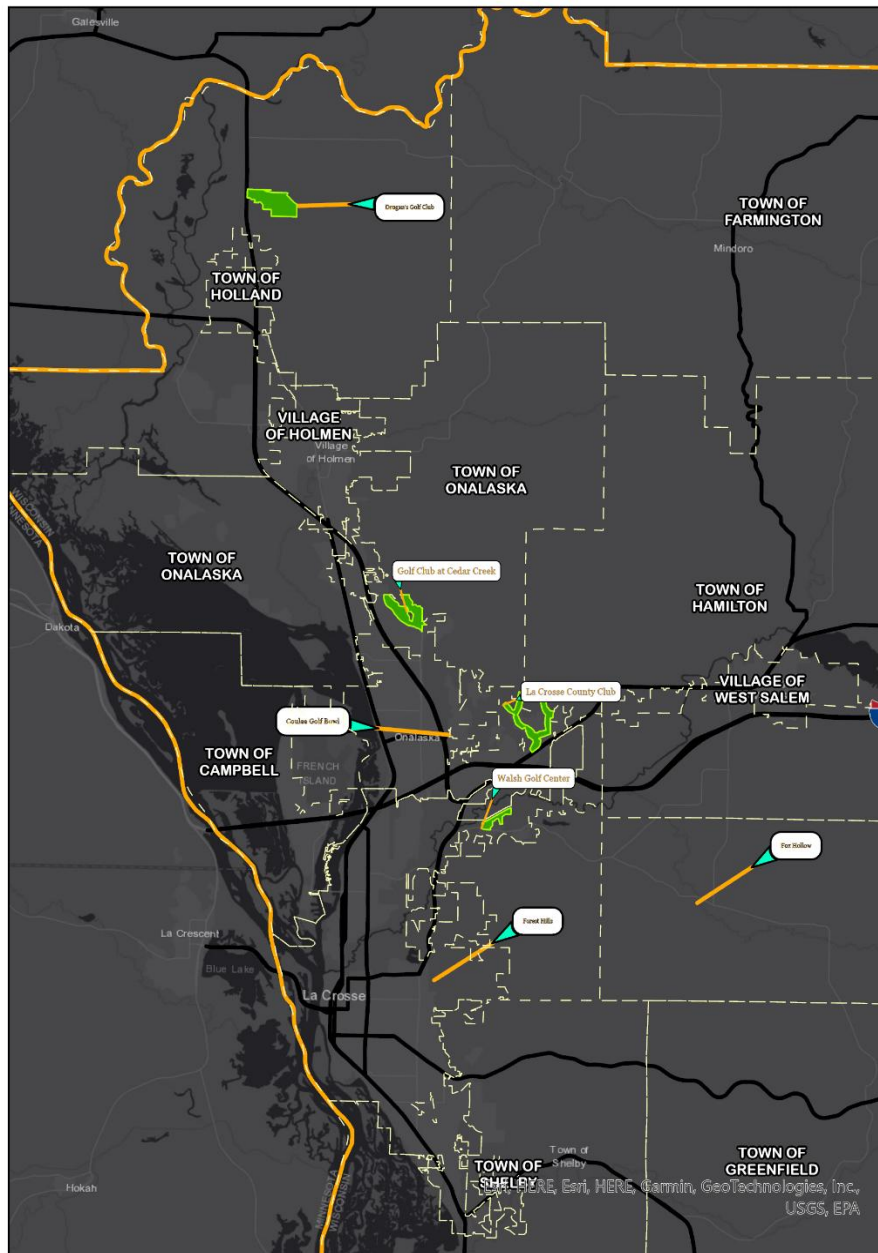
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Private Campgrounds

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



## Map B-5 Golf Courses

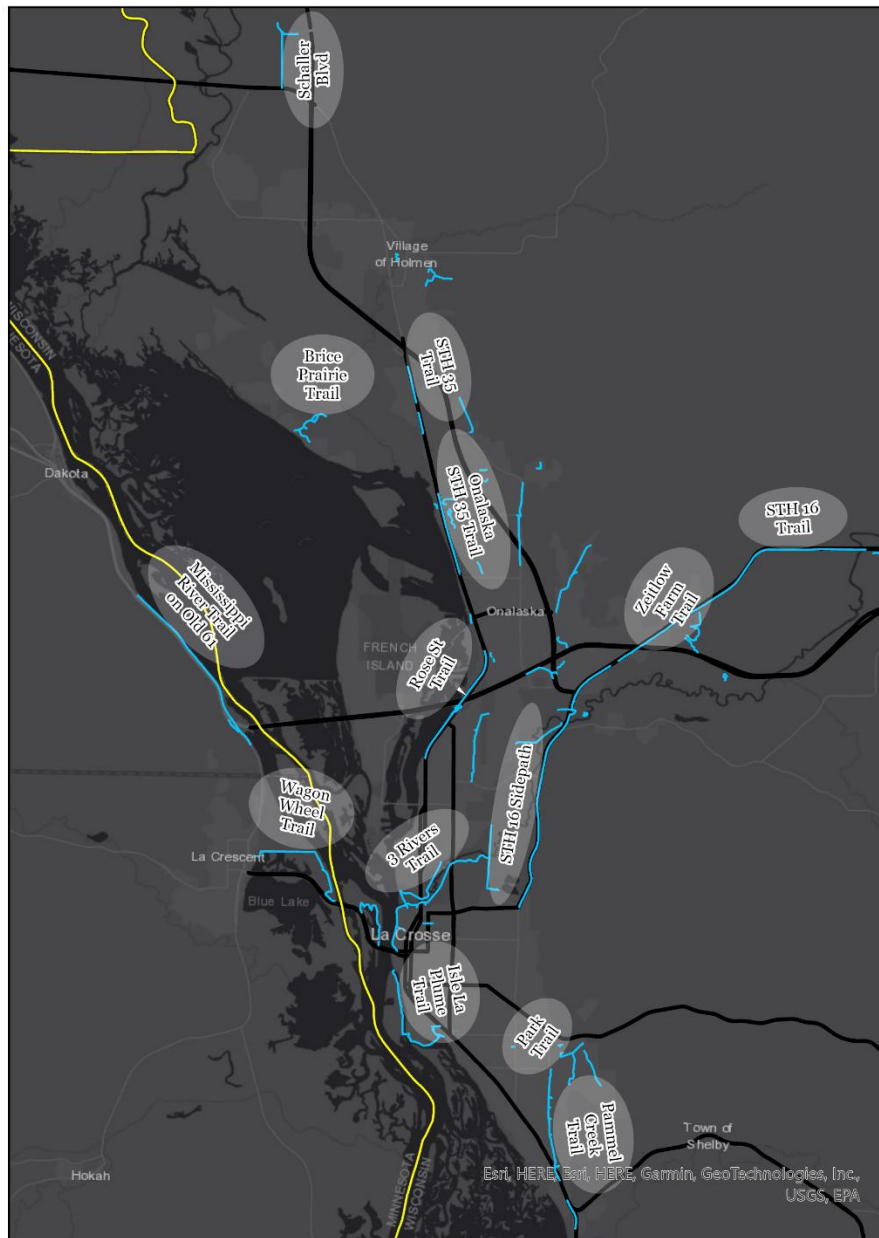
# Golf Courses



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Map B-6 Paved Surface Trails

# Paved Surface Trails



Paved multi-use trails  
in La Crosse County.

### Legend

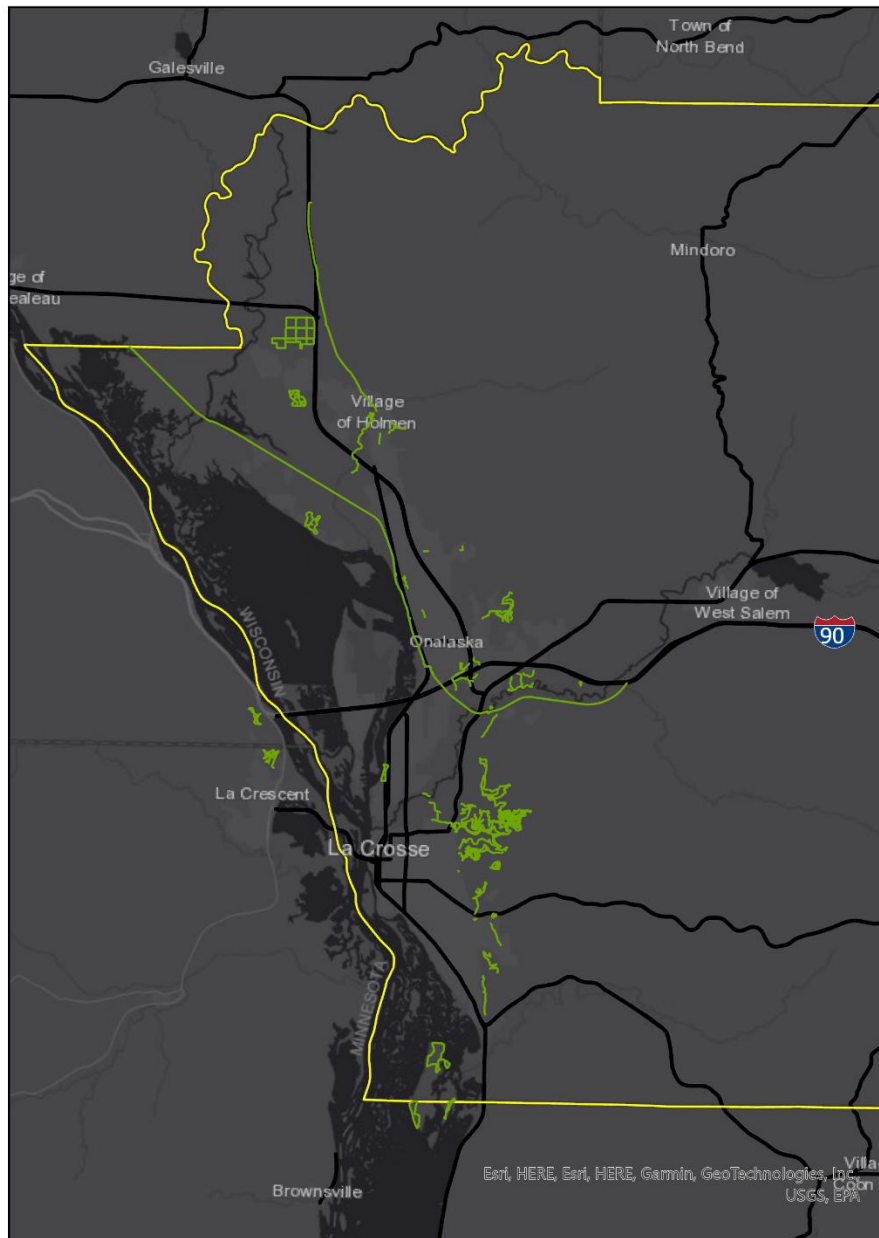
- Major\_Roads
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Paved Trails



Map authored by: Jack  
Zabrowski - MRRPC

Map B-7 Natural Surface Trails

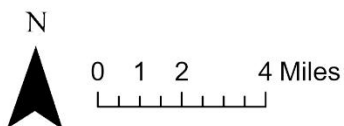
## Natural Surface Trails



Natural surface  
shared-use trails in  
La Crosse County.

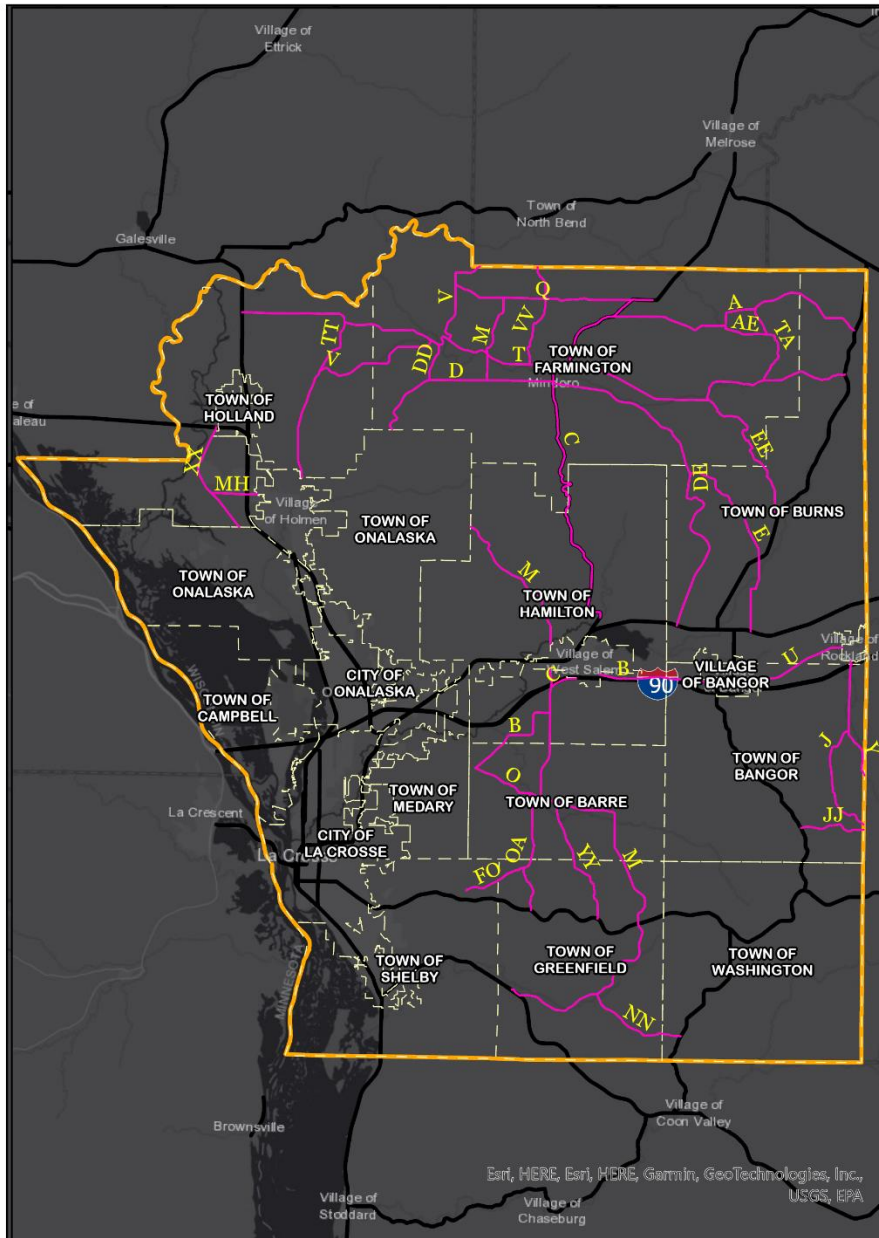
### Legend

- Major\_Roads
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Natural Surface Trails



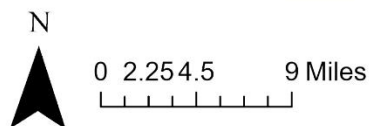
Map authored by: Jack  
Zabrowski - MRRPC

# ATV Routes



**Legend**

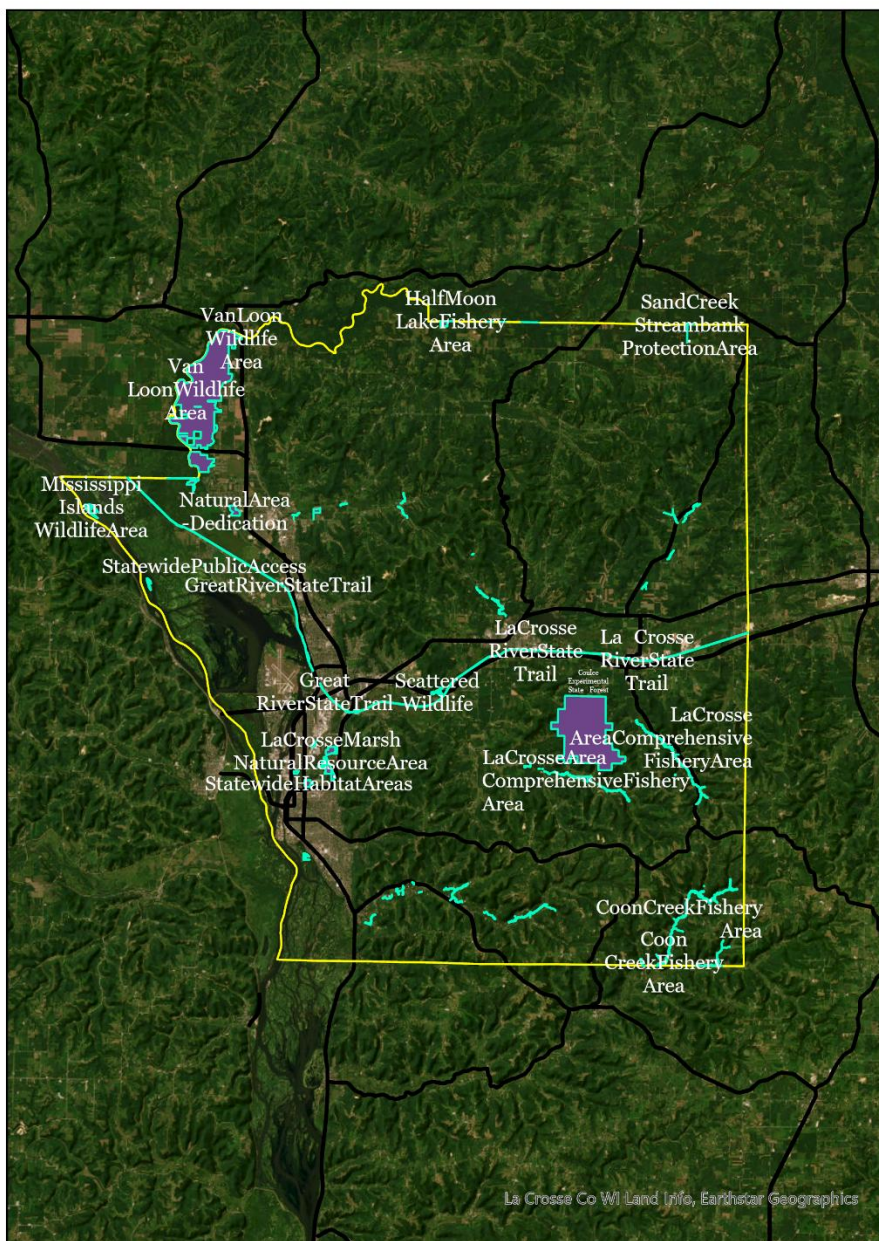
- Municipal Boundaries
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Major Roads
- ATV Routes



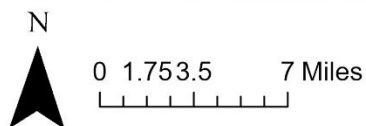
Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



# DNR Managed Properties



This map is derived from the DNR Managed Lands dataset. This layer contains fee simple (DNR owned) land, DNR easement on private land and DNR lease on federal- and county-owned land. DNR easements on privately held property are not included.

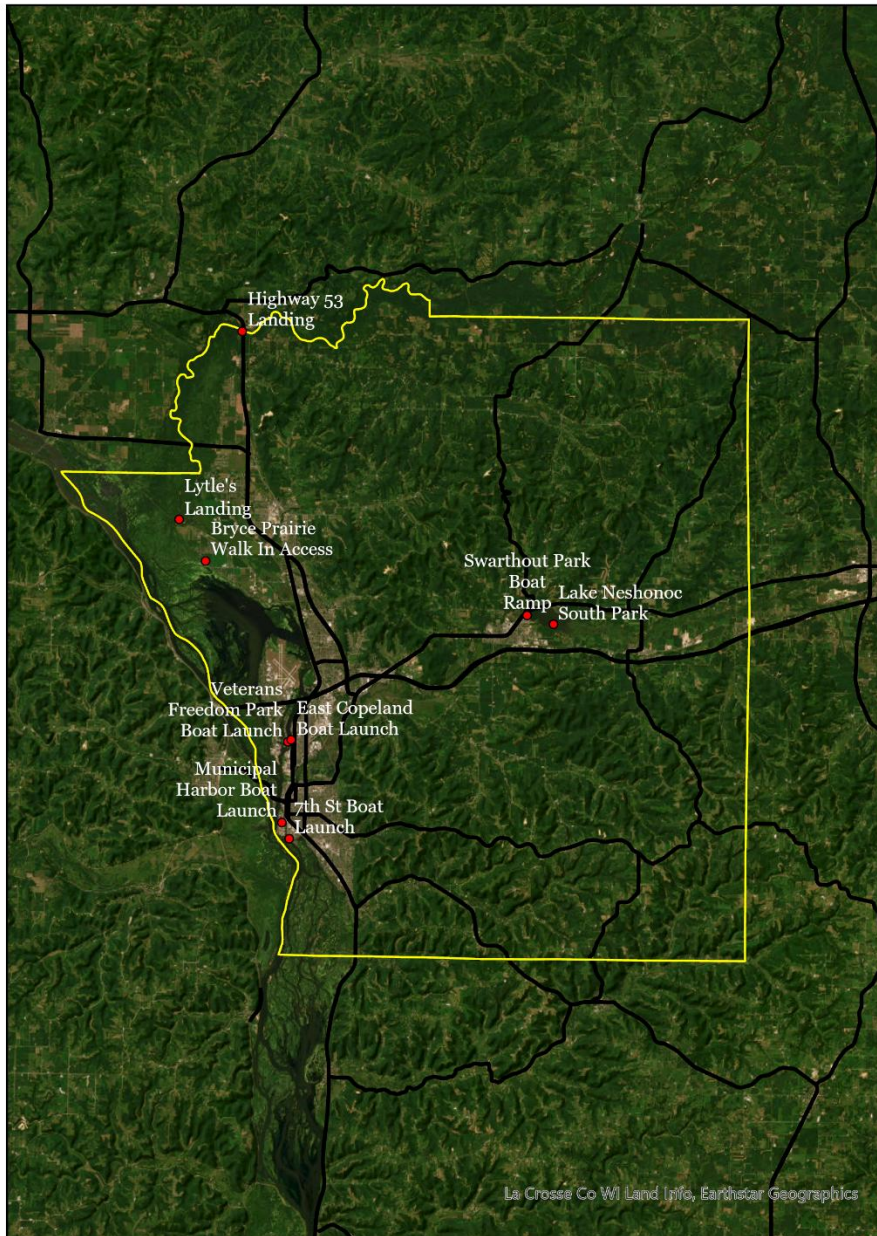


Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



## Map B-10 Boat Access Points

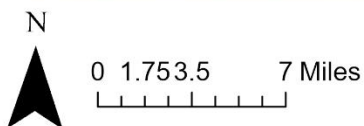
### Boat Access



Wisconsin DNR and  
Non-DNR water  
access points in La  
Crosse County.

#### Legend

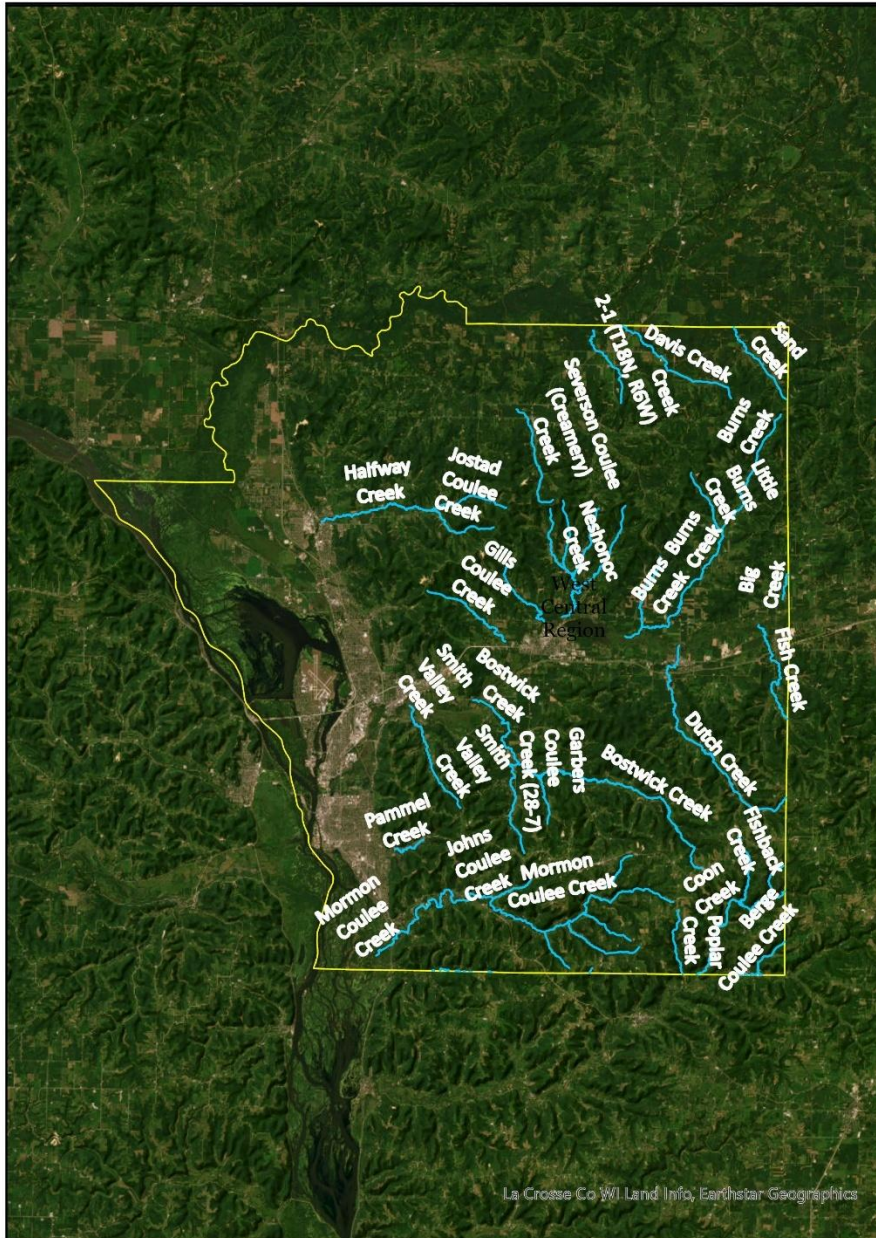
- Major\_Roads
- La Crosse County Boundary
- Water Access



Map authored by: Jack  
Zabrowski - MRRPC

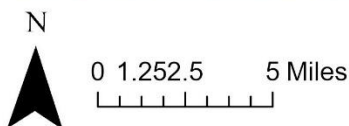


# Trout Streams



## Classified Trout Streams

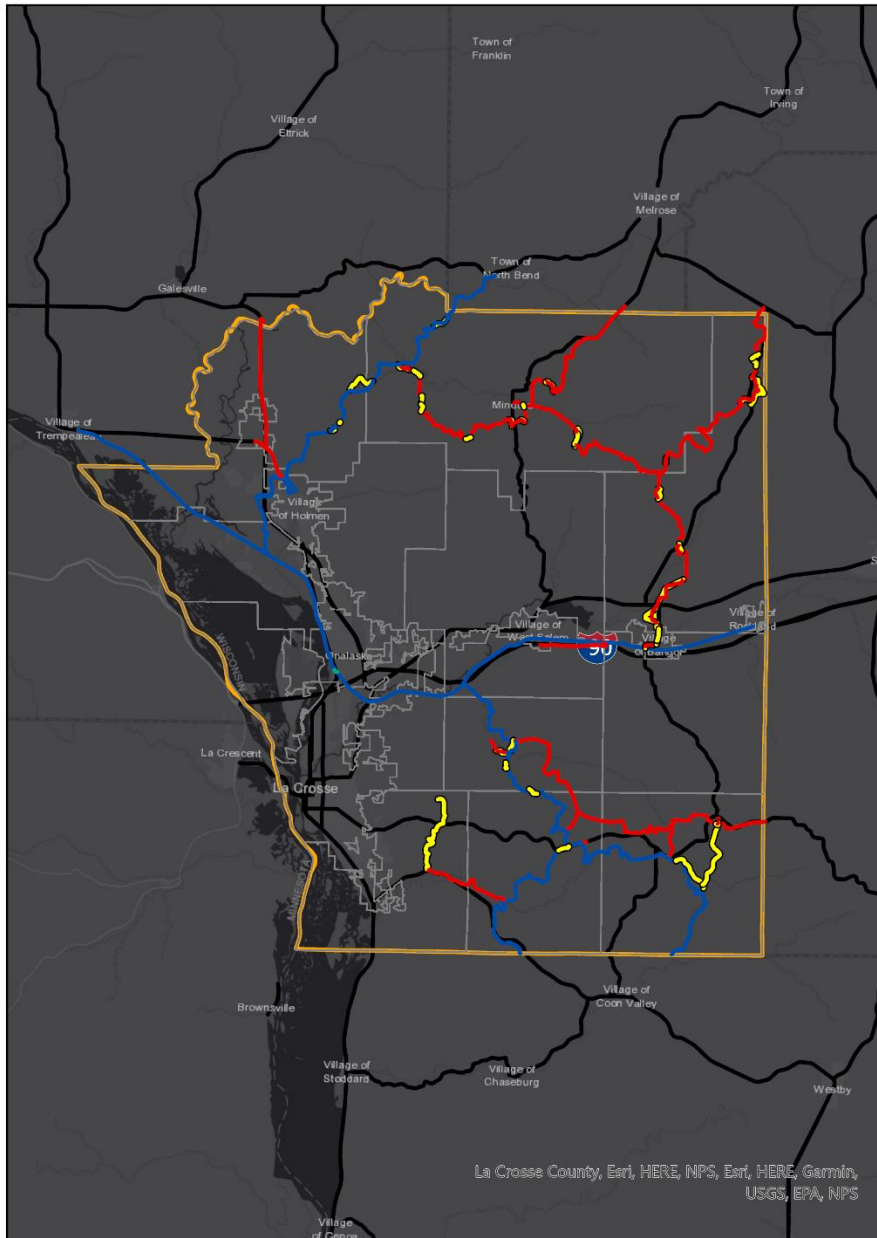
The DNR uses three categories to classify the different types of trout streams throughout Wisconsin. These are evident in [Wisconsin Trout Stream Maps](#), which provide a comprehensive list of trout streams and a set of trout stream maps covering most of the state. Efforts have been made to list all trout streams in the State of Wisconsin, but it is recognized that this listing is not exhaustive.



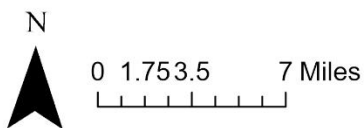
Map authored by:  
Jack Zabrowski -  
MRRPC

## Map B-12 Snowmobile Trails

# Snowmobile Trails



The La Crosse county snowmobile alliance maintain approximately 160 miles of trails for the six member clubs that handle the marking and maintaining of the trail system

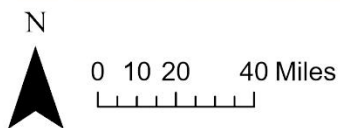


Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



Map B-13 State Planned Trails

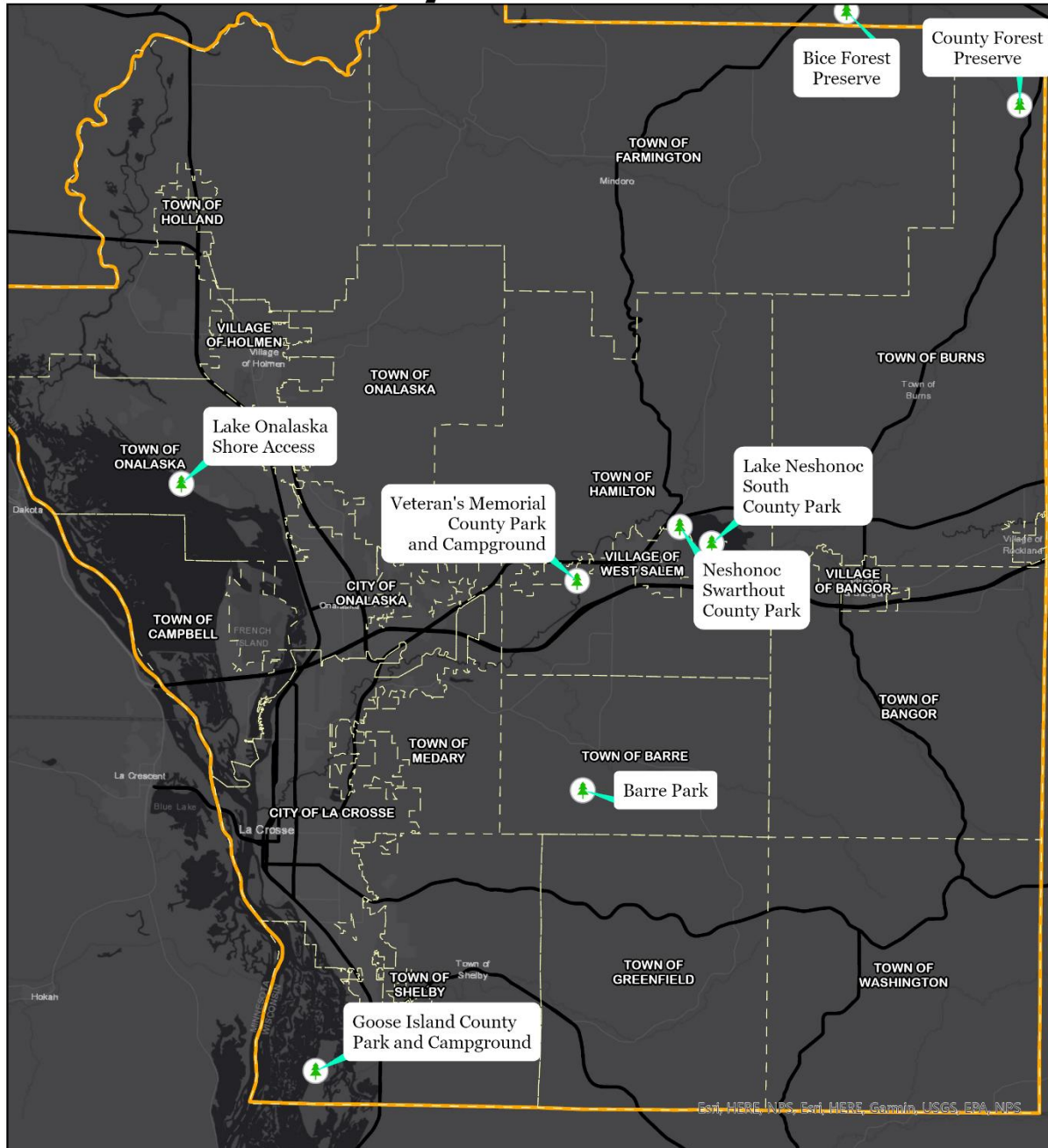
## Planned Trail Corridors



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## La Crosse County Properties

### La Crosse County Parks and Forests



0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles

#### Legend

Municipal Boundaries

Major Roads

La Crosse County Boundary

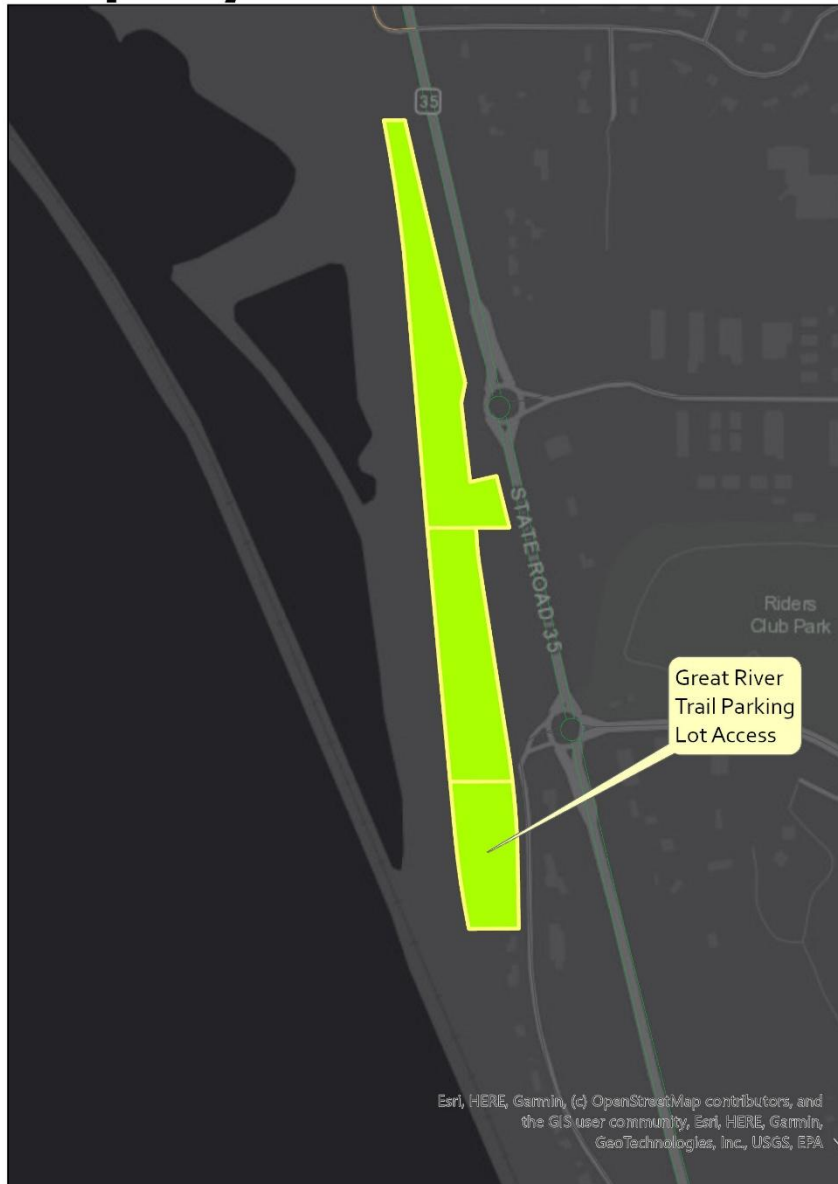
County Managed Parks

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



## La Crosse County Managed Lands

### La Crosse County Managed Property



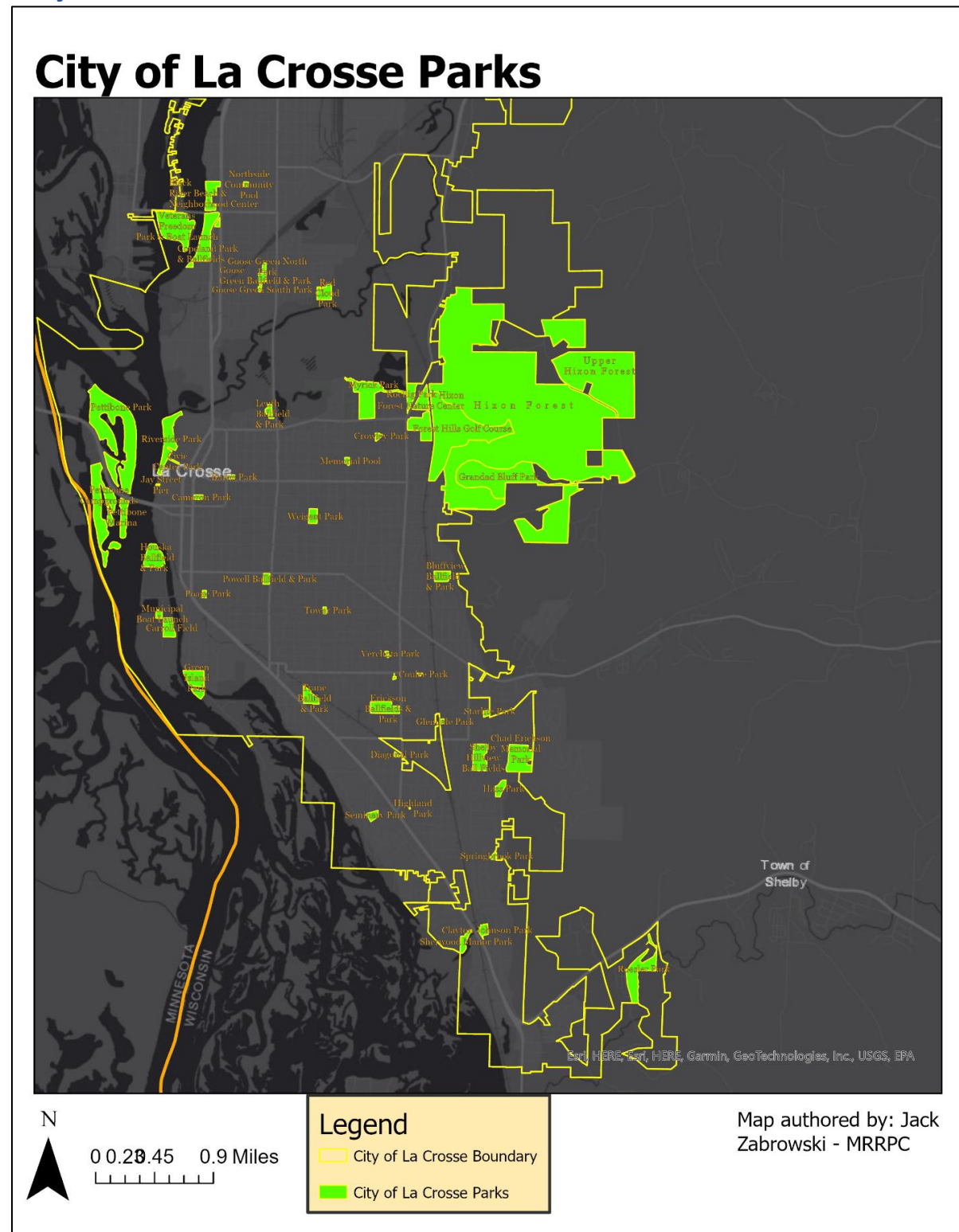
0 0.030.06 0.12 Miles



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

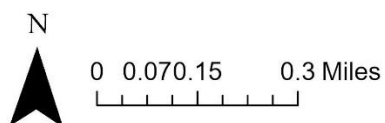
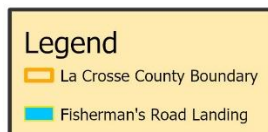
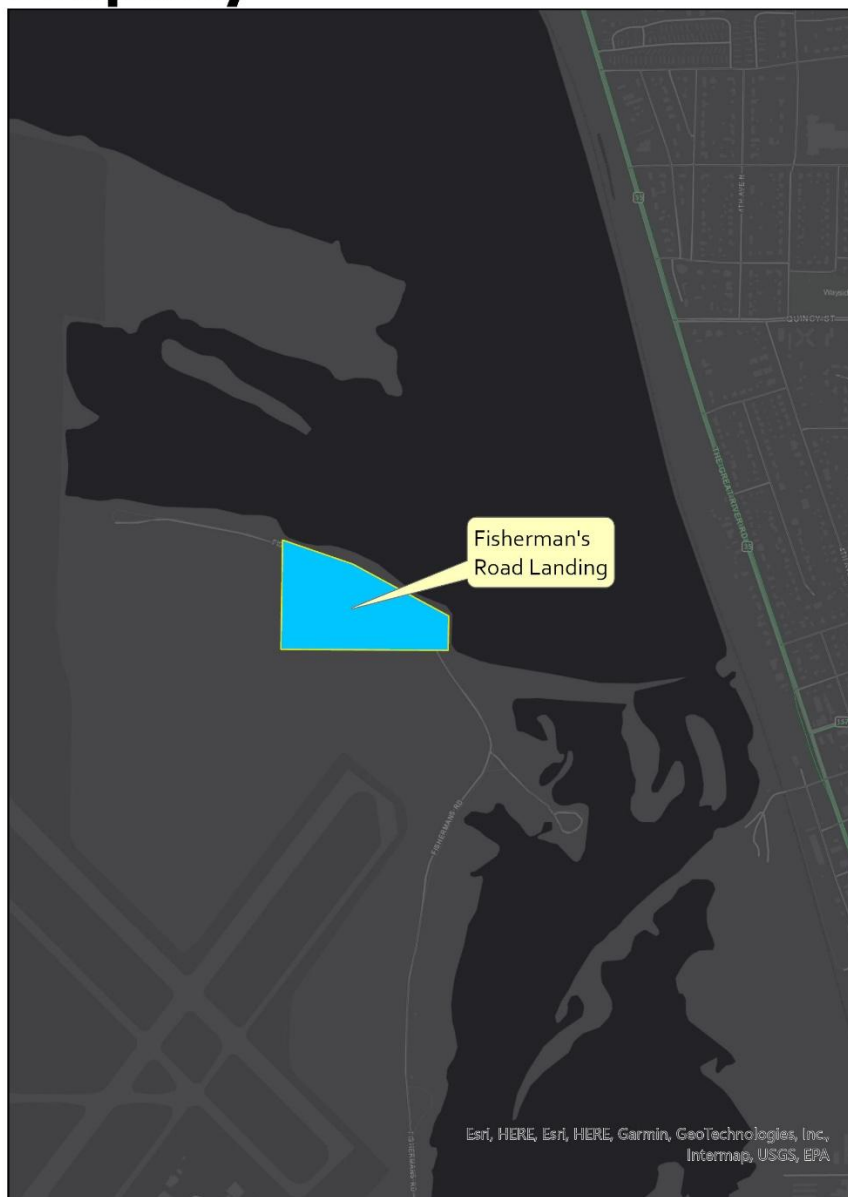
## City, Village, and Town Parks

### City of La Crosse Parks



## City of La Crosse Managed Land

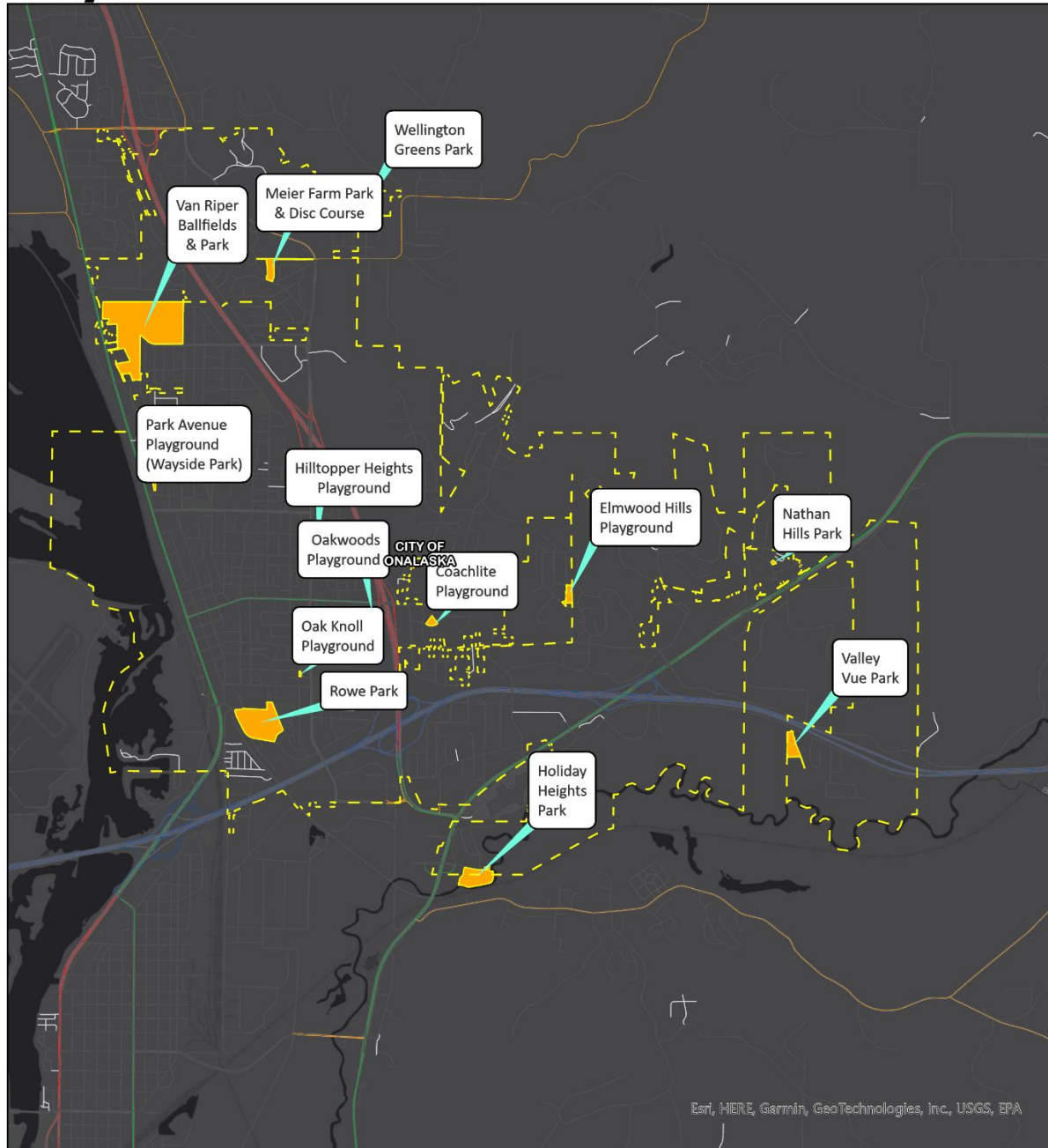
### City of La Crosse Managed Property



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## City of Onalaska Parks

# City of Onalaska Parks



0.1 0.35 0.7 Miles

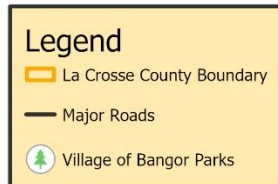
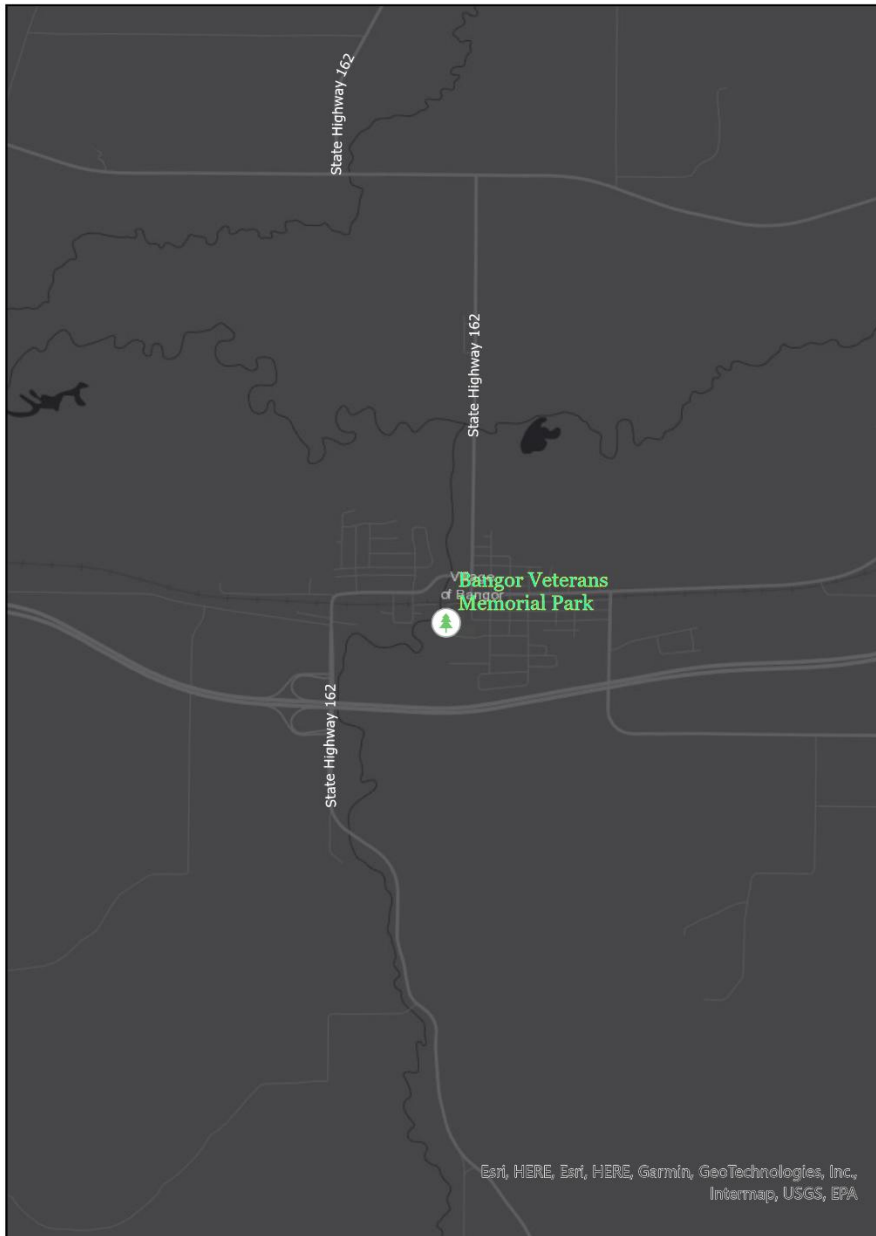
### Legend

- City of Onalaska Parks
- City of Onalaska Boundaries

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Village of Bangor Parks

# Village of Bangor Parks

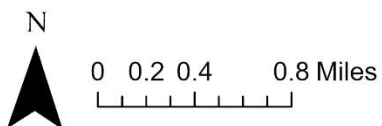
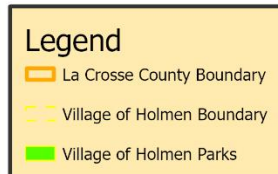
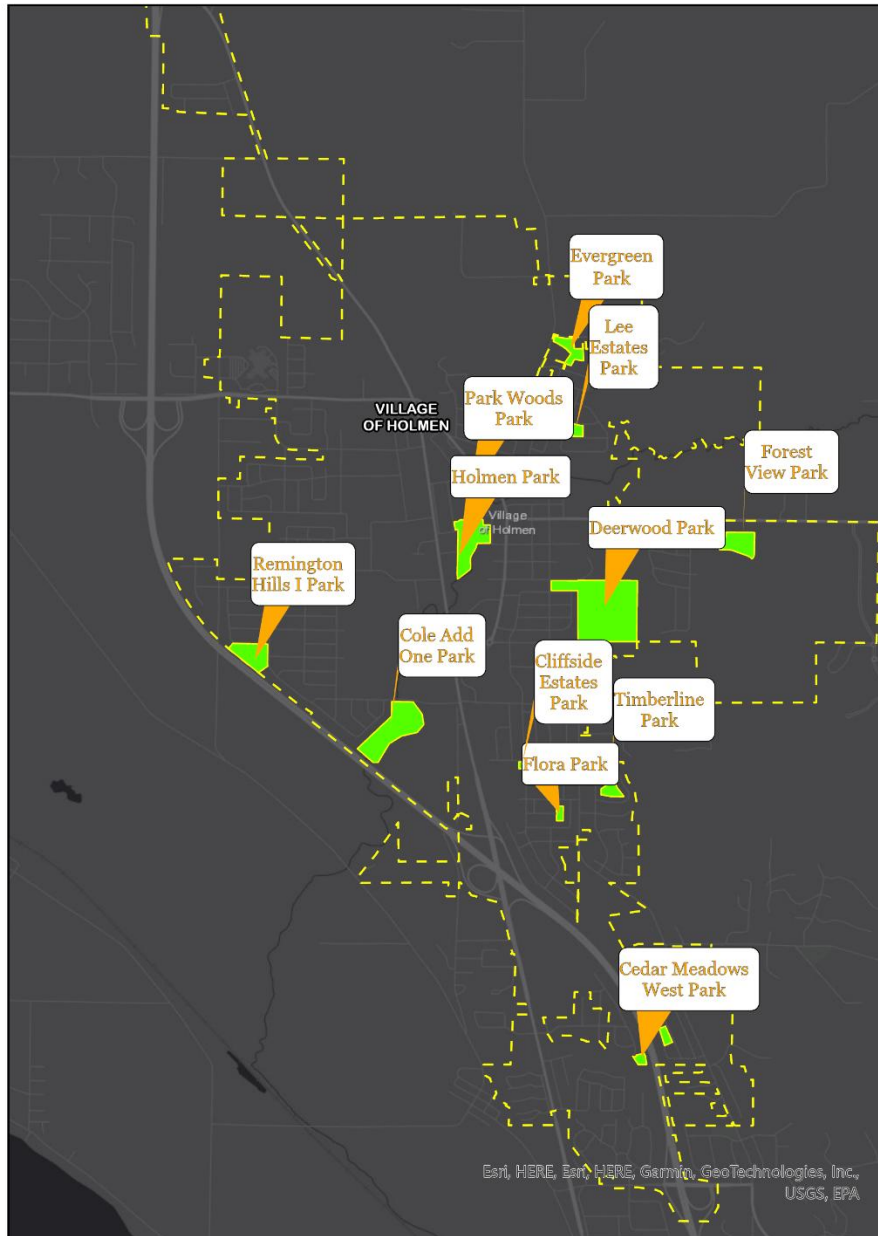


Map authored by: Jack  
Zabrowski - MRRPC



## Village of Holmen Parks

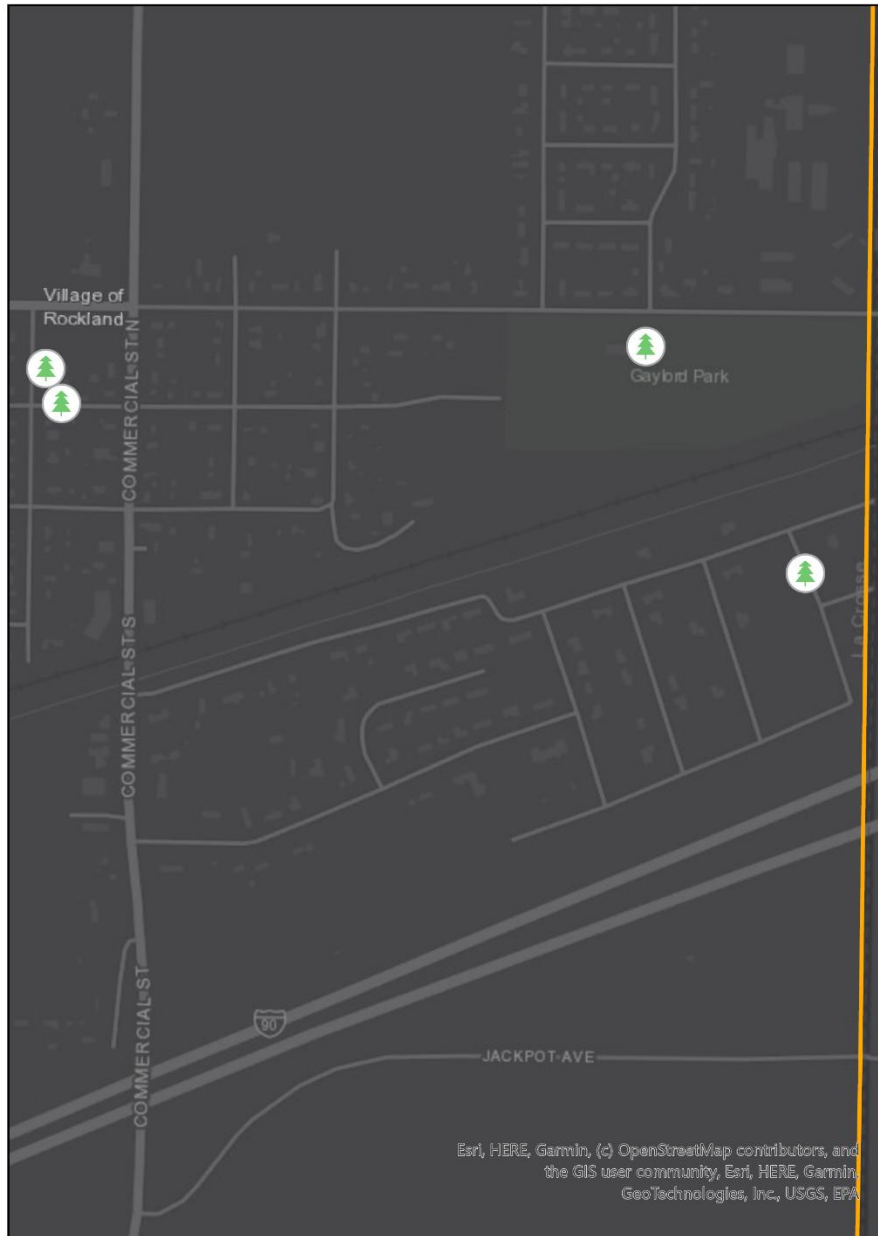
# Village of Holmen Parks



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

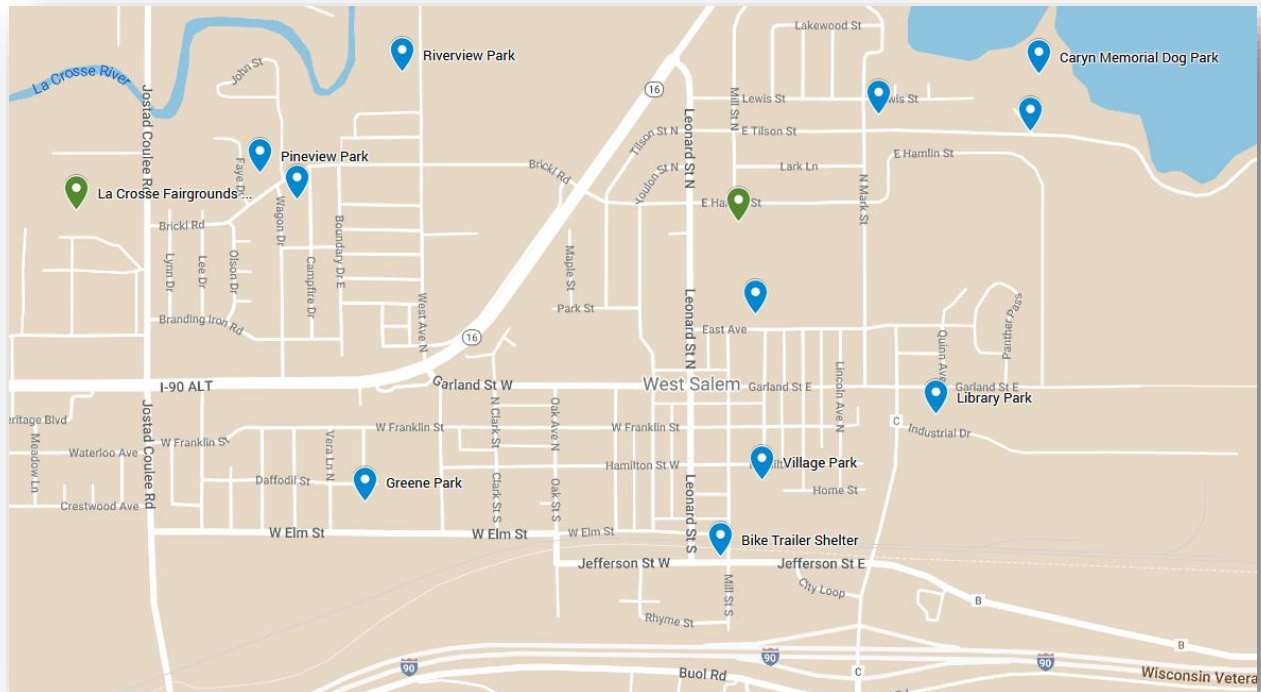
## Village of Rockland Parks

# Village of Rockland Parks

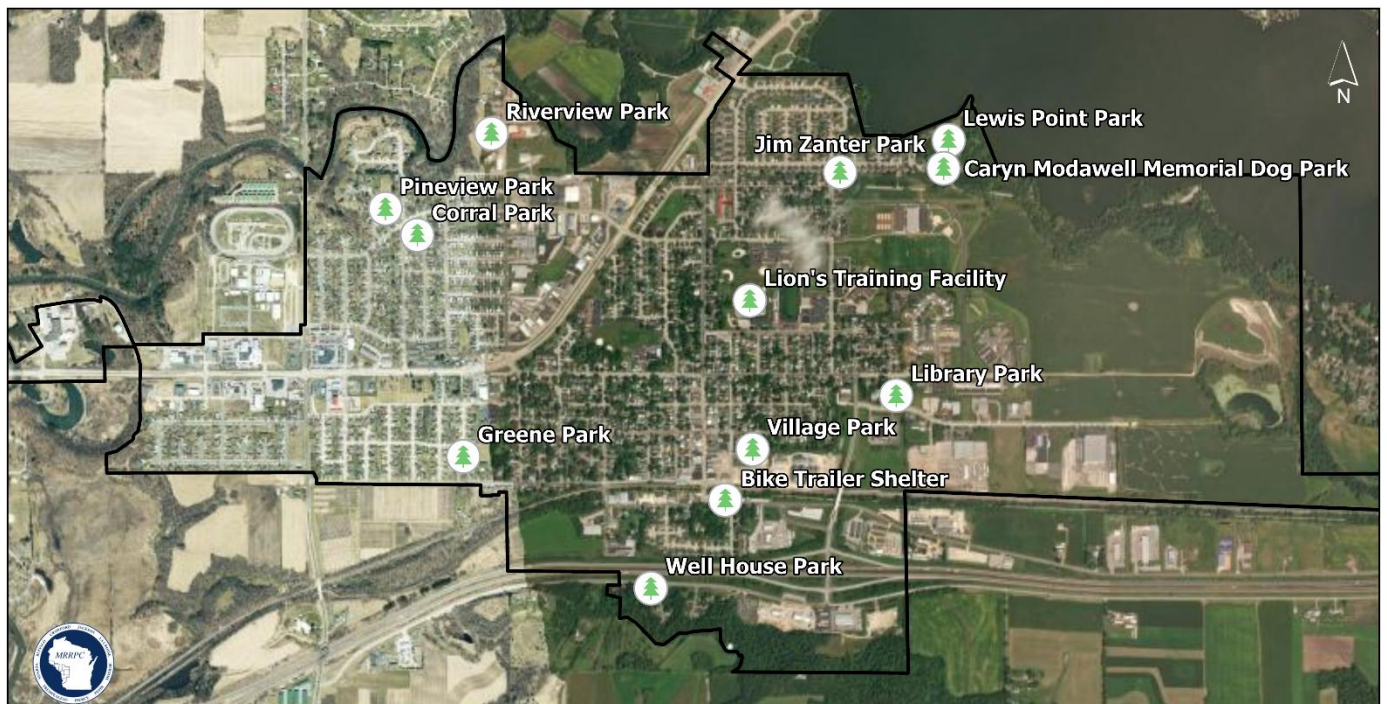


Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Village of West Salem Parks

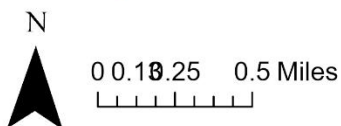


## Parks in the Village of West Salem



## Town of Campbell Parks

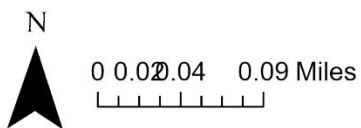
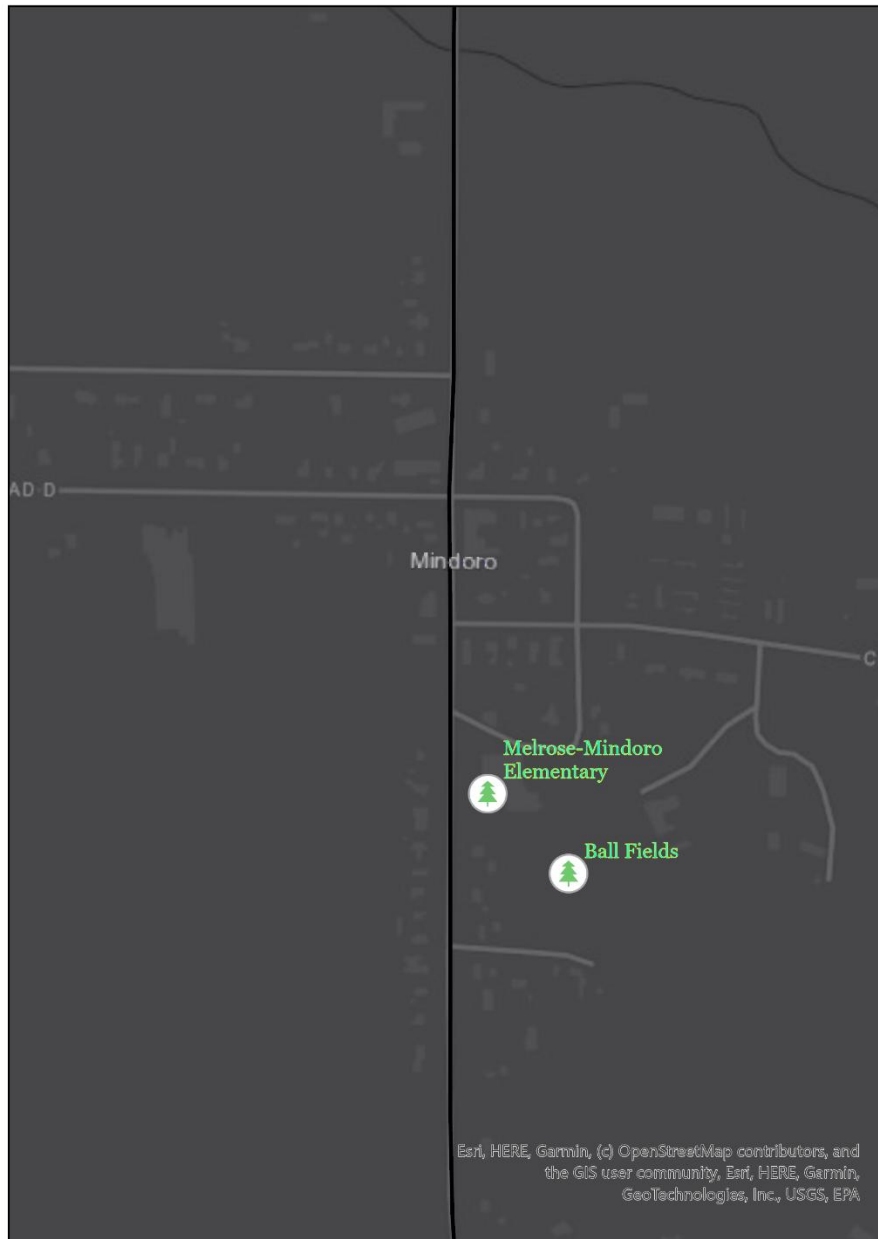
# Town of Campbell Parks



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



# Town of Farmington Parks

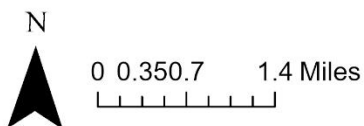
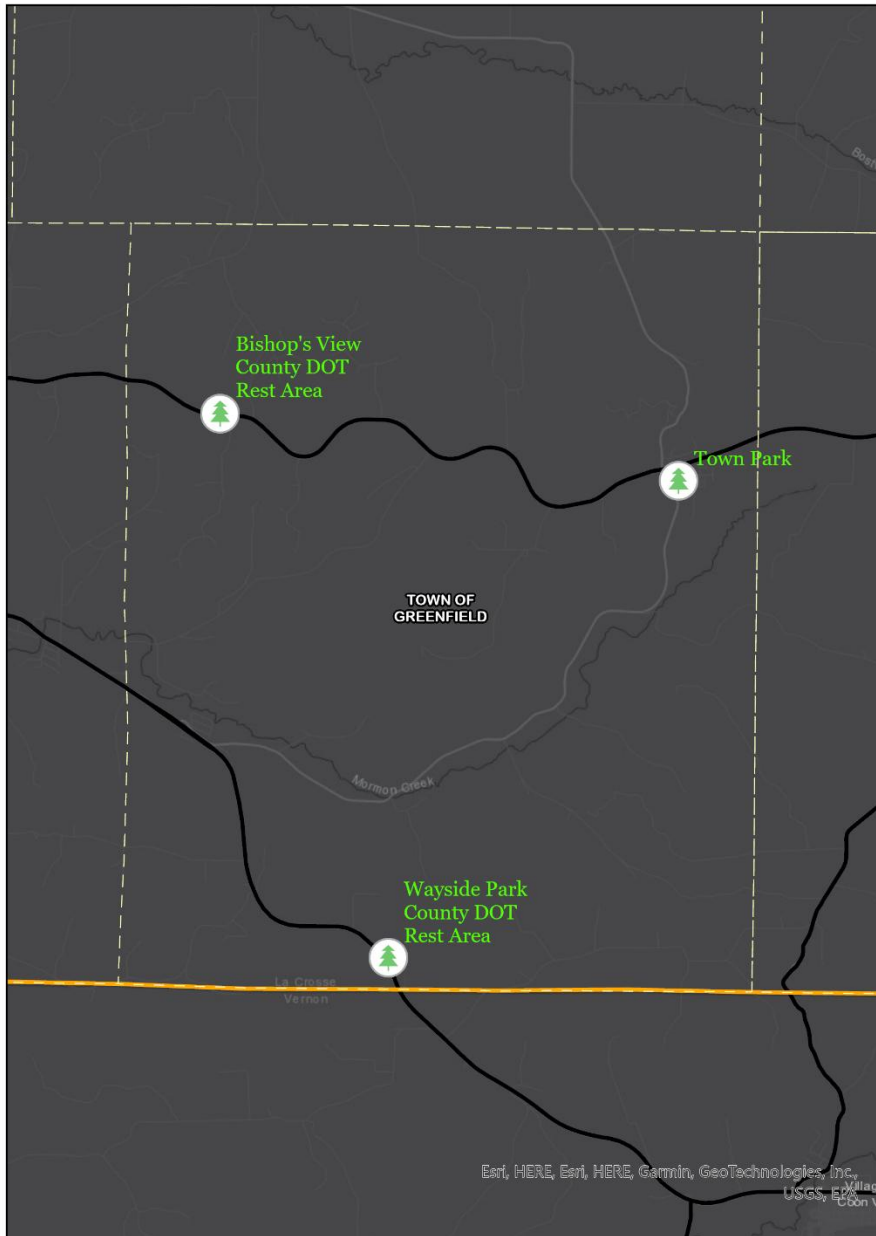


Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



## Town of Greenfield Parks

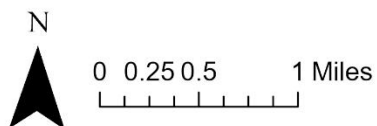
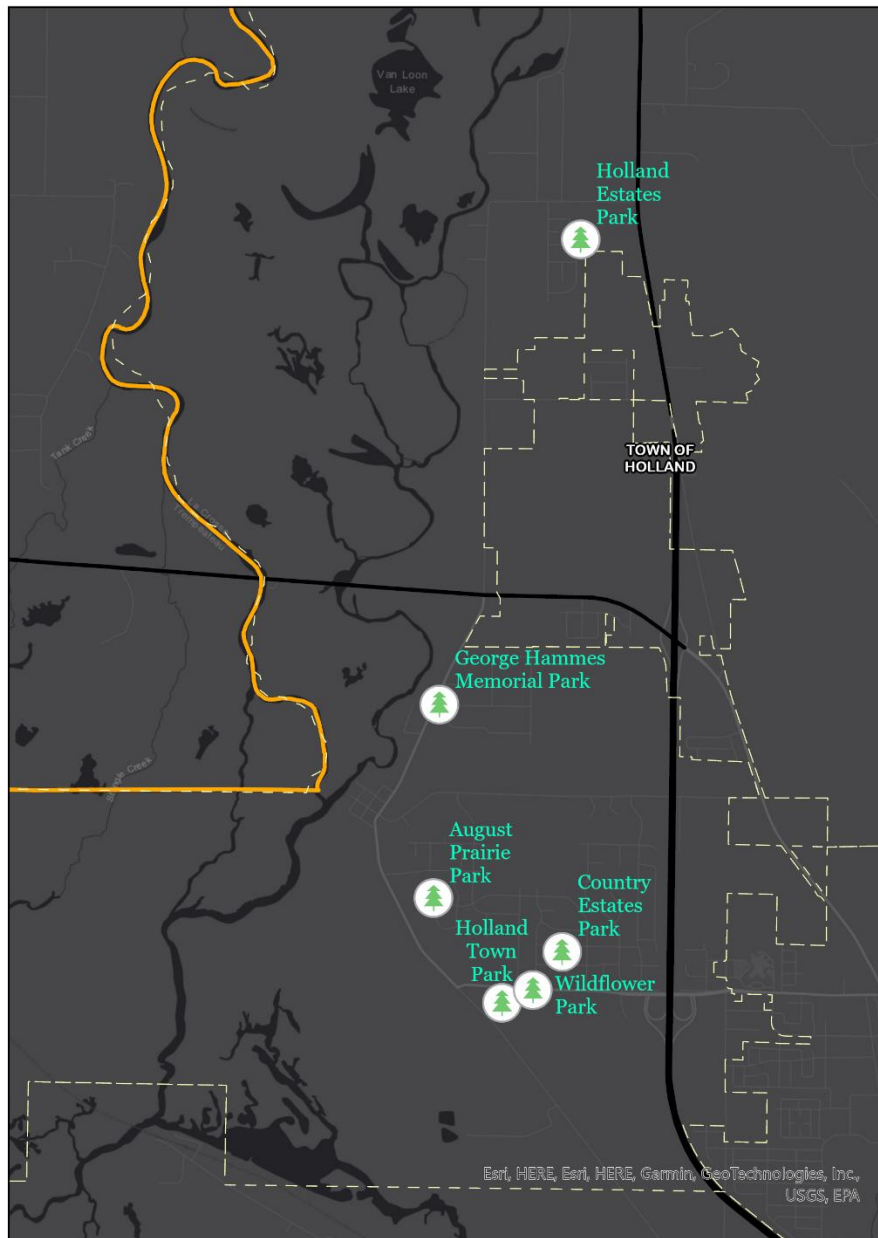
# Town of Greenfield Parks



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Town of Holland Parks

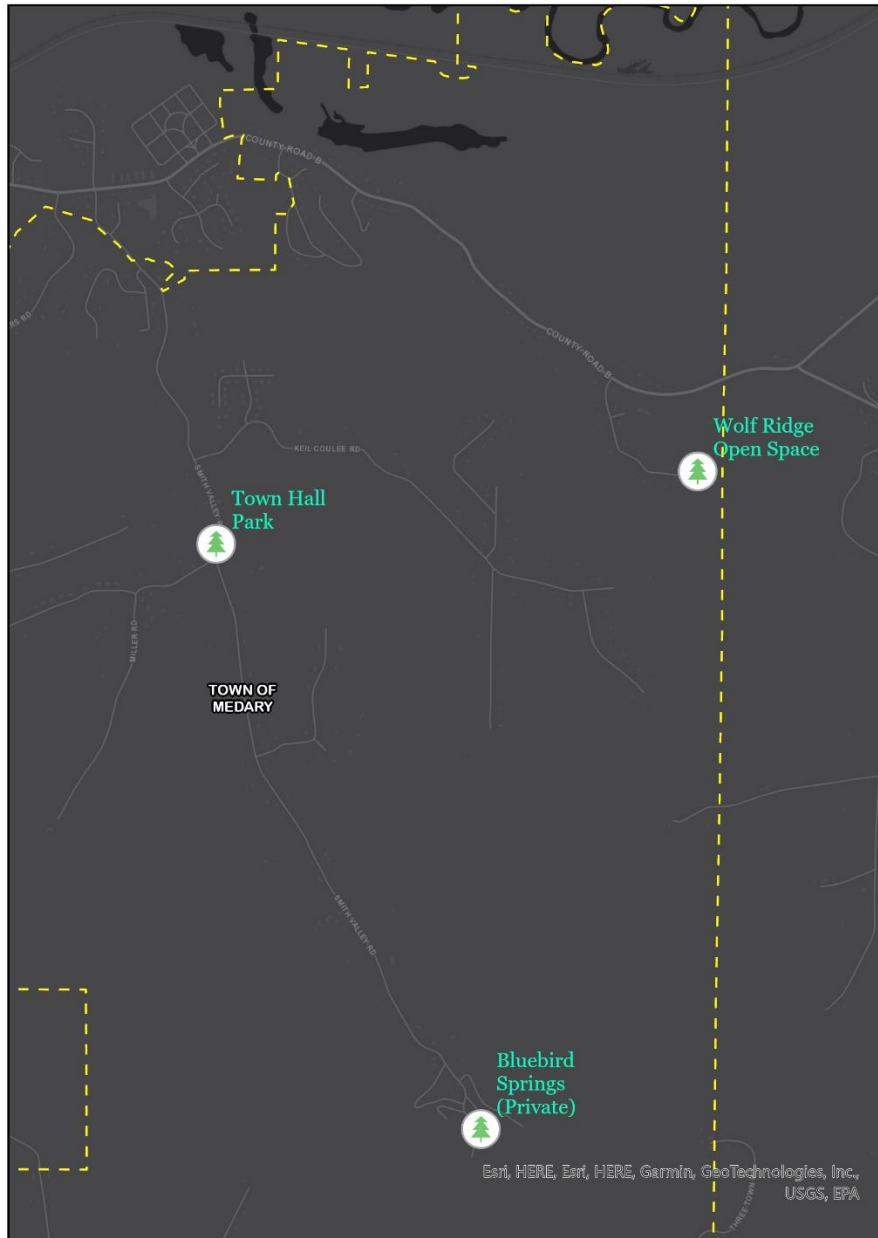
# Town of Holland Parks



Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Town of Medary Parks

# Town of Medary Parks



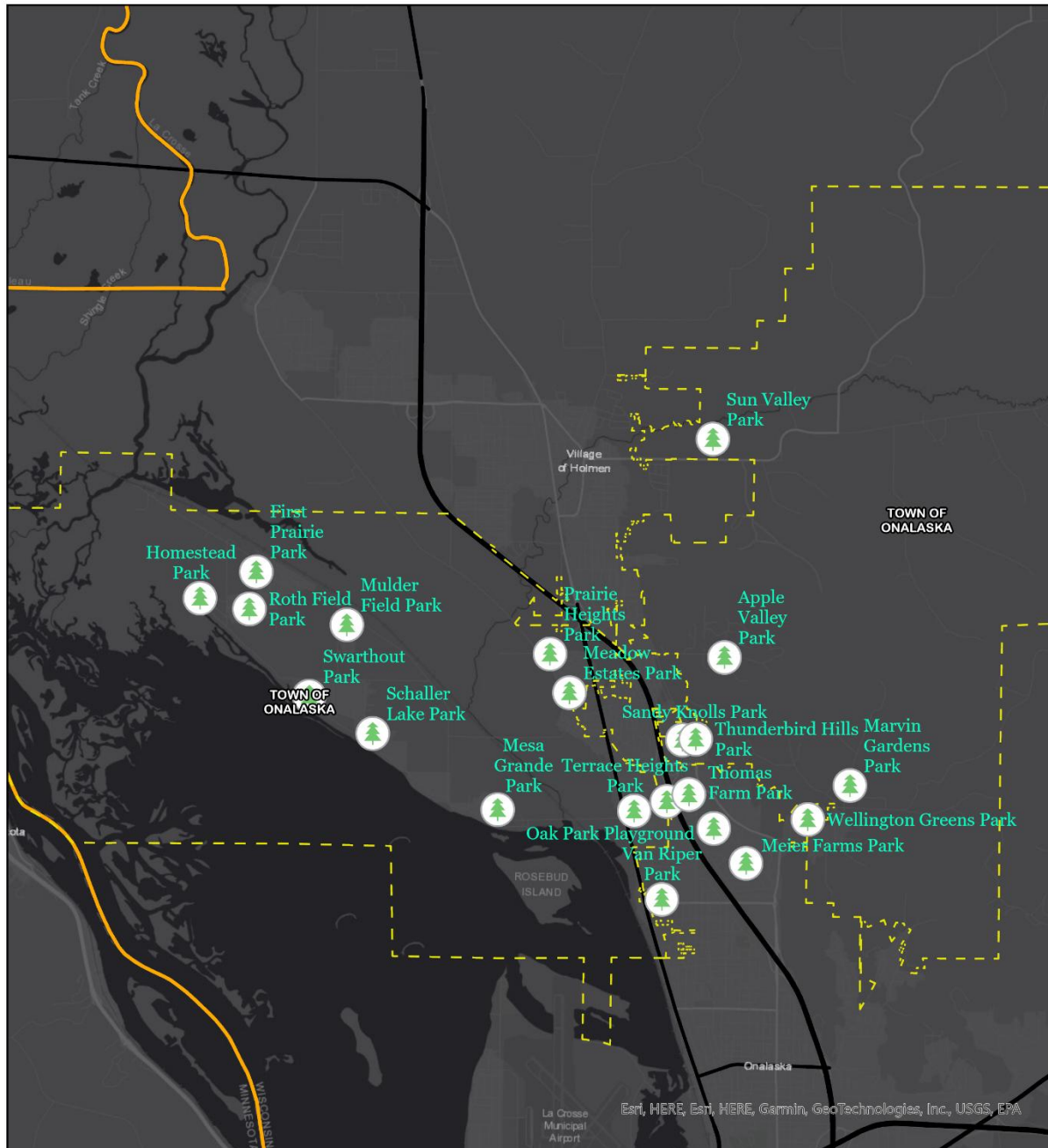
### Legend

- La Crosse County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Town of Medary Parks
- Medary Boundary

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Town of Onalaska Parks

# Town of Onalaska Parks



0 2.25 4.5 9 Miles

### Legend

- La Crosse County Boundary
- Town of Onalaska Parks
- Major Roads
- Town of Onalaska Boundary

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC

## Town of Shelby Parks

# Town of Shelby Parks



0 0.1 0.25 0.5 Miles

### Legend

- La Crosse County Boundary
- Town of Shelby Parks
- Major Roads
- Shelby Boundary

Map authored by: Jack Zabrowski - MRRPC



## **APPENDIX C: Adoption Resolution**

## **APPENDIX D: Outdoor Recreation Community Partners**

The strength of the outdoor recreation program in each community of La Crosse 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.

# Outdoor Recreation Alliance

## 2025 La Crosse County Outdoor Rec Plan Recommendations



1. **Table 12:** La Crosse County Action Program Future recreation projects identified by the County of La Crosse. **P. 27**

- a. We'd like to see the last item, #20, remain in the plan. Was the 2024 allotment ever used? What happens to that money? Does it exist, earmarked for its intended purpose, or was it never a funding pot that ever developed?

Park Name	Project(s)	Est Cost	Year
Lake Neshonoc South	Construct Hiking & Biking Trails	\$500k	2024

2. **More Connections to public places, Easements through private land, Corridors, and Off-road connector trails to increase recreational access to residents and tourists**

- a. Mentioned as priorities in:
- The Bluffland Plan
  - Former County Outdoor Recreation Plans
  - The WI SCORP
  - Confluence Plan
  - City of La Crosse 2040 Comprehensive Plan
  - West Salem Comprehensive Plan
  - La Crosse County Envision 2050
  - Others
- b. Some potential connections that have high impacts:
- The entire Bluffland Traverse Plan via off-road trails and/or pedestrian lanes
  - Connecting La Crescent to La Crosse via off-road trails
  - Connecting Upper Hixon and Lower Hixon properties to Gateway Trails via entirely off-road trails
  - Connecting Gateway Trails to Dobson Tract via off-road trails
  - Connecting Dobson Tract to Shelby Butterfly Trails to ORA Community Trail Farm via off-road trails
  - Connecting State Road school to ORA Community Trail Farm via off-road trails, or pedestrian lanes
  - Connecting ORA Community Trail Farm to Hass Tract via off-road trails
  - Connecting Hass Tract to Welch Tract via off-road trails
  - Connecting ORA Community Trail Farm to Goose Island County Park via off-road trails, with the addition of protected pedestrian lanes
  - In Summary:** Connections from the bluffland properties to other bluffland properties, and to other public community assets (schools, parks, open spaces, county land, preservation land, etc.) via off-road trails or pedestrian lanes that are protected are of the highest priority for our area.

### 3. ORA Mission, History, Overview

#### **Mission Statement:**

ORA Trails is dedicated to building happy, healthy, and resilient communities by providing access to equitable and sustainable outdoor recreation experiences.

#### **Vision Statement:**

We believe in the betterment of the human condition by connecting all people to the natural world.

#### **Core Values:**

1. Community: Welcoming all to be part of the greater goal through intentional invitations and radical hospitality.
2. Sustainability: Acting in intentional ways that promote ecological, financial, and social balance.
3. Impact Through Action: Taking bold action on ambitious visions to advance our mission.

ORA Trails is committed to fostering a culture where diversity is celebrated, and inclusivity, equity, and respect guide the actions of our members, employees, volunteers, and leadership. We honor and value the diverse experiences, backgrounds, and heritages that shape our community, recognizing the profound and interconnected relationship between people and the land—past, present, and future. Acknowledging that good intentions alone are insufficient, we actively strive to amplify and embrace voices and contributions from individuals across all social, political, and cultural boundaries. Through deliberate action and accountability, we work to build a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

#### **We Will:**

1. Respect the diverse voices and experiences of all people.
2. Be inspired and led by the needs and desires of our community.
3. Build meaningful relationships with community partners.
4. Acknowledge the value of healthy ecosystems and use recreation as an instrument in raising awareness.
5. Make decisions rooted in environmental, social and economic sustainability.

#### **The History of ORA Trails**

ORA Trails, formally Human Powered Trails, was founded in 2001 with a goal to improve and increase trail access for the LaCrosse cycling community. Over the years, ORA Trails has grown into a leader in outdoor recreation for the Driftless community.

ORA Trails thrives on innovation, collaboration, and the passion of over 700 dedicated volunteers, fostering a culture of inclusion, stewardship, and connection to nature. Through high-impact community initiatives, dynamic public-private partnerships, and engaging events, the organization inspires action and strengthens ties among donors, volunteers, and the broader community. Whether building all-abilities playgrounds, maintaining and expanding trail networks, or empowering community champions through education, ORA Trails is dedicated to making outdoor recreation an accessible

and integral part of daily life in the Driftless Region. This commitment is reflected in its transformative projects, impactful programs, and vibrant events, each contributing to a healthier, more connected community.

## **Key Programs and Initiatives**

### Projects

At ORA Trails, we believe that vibrant outdoor recreation opportunities should be accessible to everyone. By harnessing the power of collaboration and innovation, we have made a lasting impact on the community through the following transformative projects:

*Community Trail Farm* - currently in development. With a focus on conservation, recreation, and education, the Community Trail Farm will protect and share landscapes with ecological, cultural, recreational, and historical significance. The project will revolve around a robust network of shared-use trails and the amenities needed to lower the barriers of getting people outside and embracing a wider audience in nature.

*Bluffland Traverse* - ongoing: A point-to-point route running from the northern to the southern end of La Crosse County, following the Mississippi River and the bluffs that overlook it. The route utilizes a combination of road, gravel bike path, shared-use trail, and other single-track trails on public property to connect the county and its various communities. This route was identified in the Bluffland Plan as a desired goal and ORA Trails is working with various members of the Bluffland Coalition to accomplish this goal. This trail is in its infancy with many opportunities to continue to improve the connections and experience..

*West Salem Bike Playground* - 2024. ORA Trails, in partnership with the Village of West Salem, has created a universally accessible bike and wheeled equipment pump track at Lewis Point Park. Featuring interconnected large and small pump tracks, skill-building stations, and a flat access path, this space is designed to challenge and empower users of all abilities. Beyond recreation, it serves as a community hub for inclusive events like family bike days and adaptive cycling workshops, fostering social connections, building confidence, and teaching essential bike safety and riding skills in a welcoming environment.

These projects represent just a glimpse of the impactful work ORA Trails has accomplished. Other notable initiatives include the Chad Erickson All Abilities Park & Treehouse (2023), Bud Hendrickson Nature Trail (2023), Trempealeau Bicycle Playground (2022), Miller Bluff Hiking Trail (2021), La Crosse Community Forest Outdoor Classroom (2021), and The Gateway Trails on Grandad Bluff (2020-21). Each project underscores our commitment to creating accessible, enriching outdoor experiences that inspire and connect communities.

In addition to these impactful projects, ORA Trails remains committed to ongoing community improvement initiatives. This includes maintaining and enhancing trail safety and accessibility through a year-round, collaborative approach involving volunteers, professional crews, and partnerships with local municipalities, landowners, and organizations.

*Trail Maintenance & Construction:* Key initiatives include the development, maintenance, and construction of public and private trails, ongoing work at Upper and

Lower Hixon and the Gateway trail systems, annual park cleanup events, and brush and invasive species burns to keep outdoor spaces welcoming and well-maintained.

*Tree Clearing:* ORA organizes chainsaw-certified teams to provide tree clearing to quickly and safely clear downed trees and storm debris, utilizing tools like the Trailbot app and Slack for efficient communication and reporting.

*Ski and Fat Bike Trail Grooming (winter):* ORA grooms trails for skiing and fat biking, ensuring diverse recreation opportunities are available year-round.

These initiatives exemplify ORA Trails' commitment to sustaining and improving the outdoor experiences that connect and enrich the community.

### Programs

ORA Trails continues to broaden its impact with programs and initiatives that inspire, educate, and empower the community.

*La Crosse Mountain Bike Team:* This dynamic program offers middle and high school students the chance to participate in NICA-sanctioned mountain biking practices and competitions. Guided by a dedicated program director and supported by trained coaches, parent volunteers, and ORA staff, the team thrives through organized practices, events, and a collaborative approach to fundraising, marketing, and outreach. This initiative not only promotes athletic development but also fosters teamwork, confidence, and community engagement.

*Women's Mountain Bike Clinic:* In collaboration with Brook's Adventures, this clinic invites beginner and intermediate women riders to enhance their skills, build confidence, and connect with a supportive community of mountain bikers. Beginners will learn the fundamentals of riding, progressing to a higher skill level, while intermediate riders will refine their techniques and tackle new trail features. The clinic focuses on overcoming fear, mastering challenging terrain, and empowering participants to ride with greater confidence and enjoyment.

*Bluffland Coalition:* ORA is an active member of The Bluffland Coalition, an umbrella organization made up of local governments and non-profit organizations tasked with the conservation of land in the Upper Mississippi Blufflands in the La Crosse - La Crescent region. Our mission is to identify new, creative ways to conserve the blufflands that support our communities and preserve the region's unique identity. Our primary goals are to:

- Protect land near urban areas from development
- Preserve natural spaces for habitat restoration
- Create an accessible space for public recreation

*Training and Education Initiatives:* ORA Trails is dedicated to empowering volunteers and community members through annual training opportunities that foster skill development, safety, and leadership. Key offerings include:



- Chainsaw Certification: Provided annually by Chainsaw Safety Specialists to ensure safe and effective tree clearing.
- TrailMaster and TrailMaster Lite Certification: Conducted by Trail Design Specialists to enhance trail maintenance and construction expertise.
- Invasive Species Treatment: Herbicide use certifications through the Wisconsin DNR, offered as needed.

Through these initiatives, ORA equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to make meaningful contributions to outdoor recreation and community improvement - and to get outside into the outdoors.

### Events

ORA Trails has a proud history of organizing and collaborating on events that inspire passion for outdoor activities and introduce participants to diverse, lifelong sports. Events not only create revenue but play a vital role in promoting our mission by fostering community engagement and showcasing the region's outdoor recreation opportunities.

*ORA Trails Fest* is an annual two-day, three-event bike racing weekend designed for the whole family! Held in Upper Hixon Forest, this fun-filled event offers riders of all skill levels a chance to experience the thrill of biking on a variety of trails. Featuring food trucks, a beer garden, Trek Bikes, and local vendors at the event center, Trails Fest highlights the vibrancy of our outdoor recreation community. Thanks to the dedication of summer work crews and volunteers, trails are meticulously groomed and prepared to ensure an unforgettable experience for all participants.

*Omnium*, by ORA Trails, is the Midwest's premier spring cycling classic, bringing professional and amateur racers together for an exhilarating three-day competition. Organized by a dedicated race director and supported by a passionate team of volunteers, this annual event showcases the region's vibrant cycling culture. The Omnium features a variety of challenging races across scenic and urban landscapes, offering an unforgettable experience for participants and spectators alike.

*Goose Island Grind*, an annual event, adds variety to ORA's offerings with both competitive and recreational paddling opportunities, inviting participants to kayak, canoe, or paddleboard around Goose Island in La Crosse.

*Candlelite Hikes* ORA Trails brightens the dark days of winter with a series of free hikes planned around the full moon to maximize natural light. These free, all-ages events offer easy to moderate trails, making them accessible for walking, rolling, or strolling. Guests can enjoy fire pits, s'mores, snacks, and beverages while connecting with the community in a cozy, welcoming atmosphere.

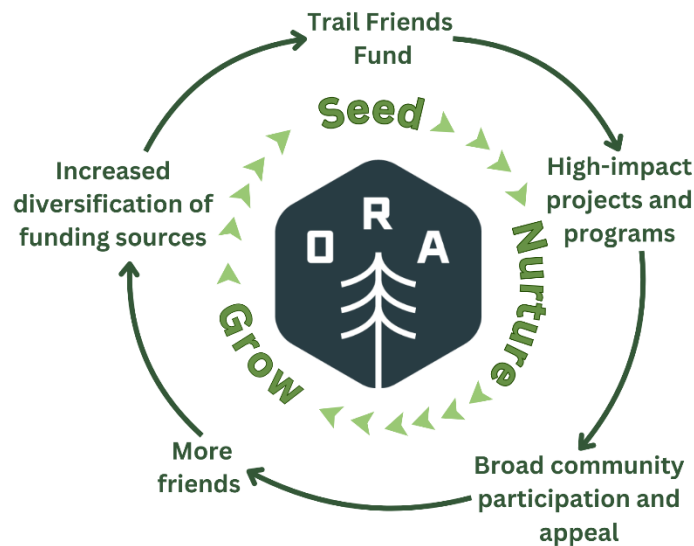
### Funding Strategy

This flywheel encapsulates our continuous cycle of growth through three key phases: Seed, Nurture, and Grow.

**Seed** – The cycle begins with planting the seeds of enthusiasm and support by creating and executing high-impact projects and programs. Funded through the Trail Friends Fund, these initiatives inspire excitement for our mission, generating broad appeal and showcasing the value of outdoor recreation for all.

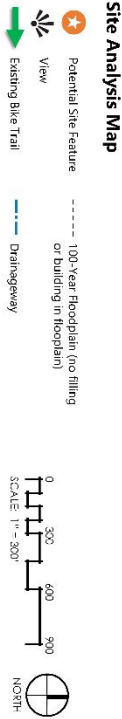
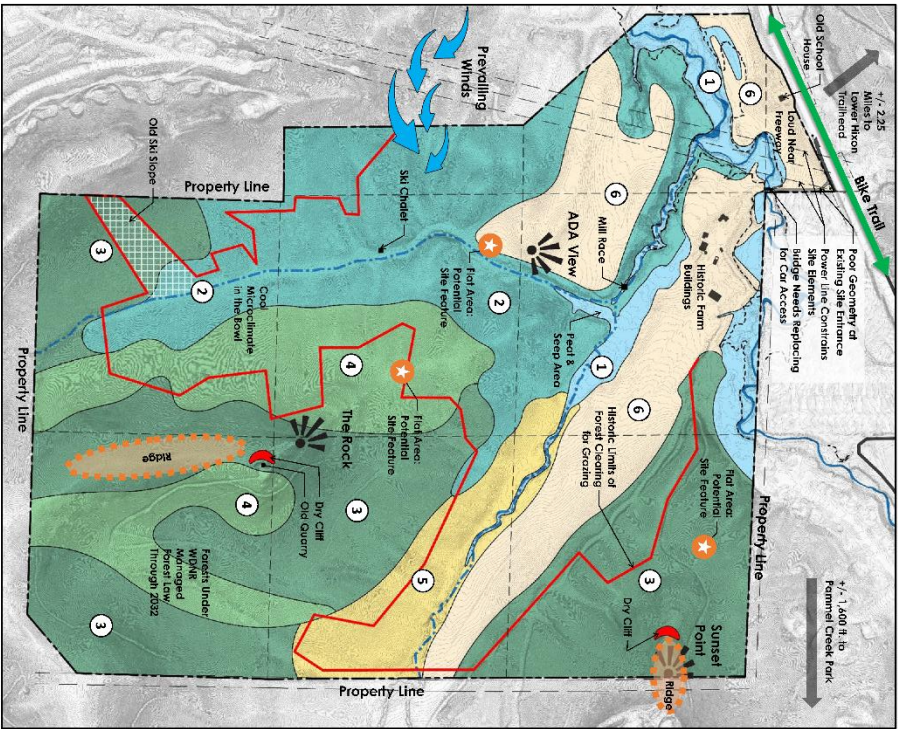
**Nurture** – By fostering a welcoming atmosphere, building strong relationships, and cultivating community ties, we ensure broad participation and awareness. As these relationships deepen, we “make more friends” who are inspired to contribute to ORA Trails' mission.

**Grow** – As our network of supporters grows, we see measurable results, including increased donations and diversified funding sources, allowing us to expand and improve. This growth fuels future projects and programs, bringing more people into the cycle of engagement, support, and outdoor recreation.

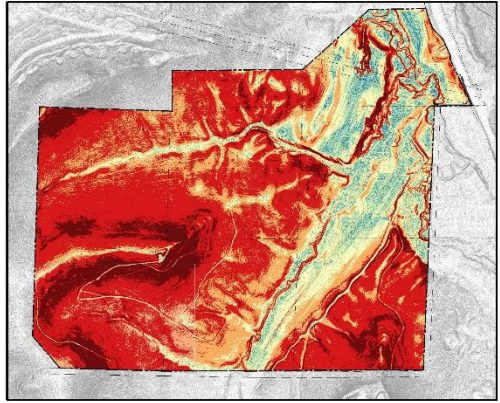


This flywheel is at the heart of ORA Trails' work. With each turn of the wheel, we strengthen our resources and our impact on the community. This growing network of supporters helps ORA Trails create a symbiotic cycle of growth, one that gets more people active and outside while generating the resources needed to sustain and expand these opportunities. As more individuals and families participate in these activities, the ripple effect of community impact grows stronger—empowering ORA Trails to continuously fulfill its mission of fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and active outdoor culture. This is the very heart of ORA Trails: to connect people to nature, promote health and wellness, and shape a thriving, resilient community for generations to come.

SUSTAINABLE LAND USE AUDIT



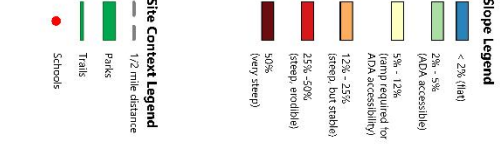
ORA Trail Farm La Crosse, Wisconsin



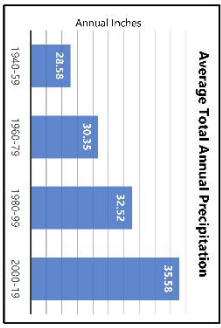
Accessibility: Slope Analysis Map

Existing Plant Community Types

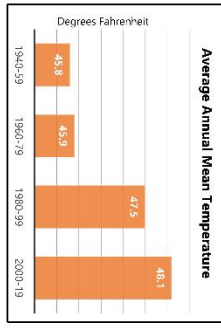
- Area 1, 113.5 acres:** Floodplain Forest Wetland. Dominant invasive buckberry, but oak and basswood.
- Area 2, 159.8 acres:** Disturbed Southern Mesic Forest. Second growth forest that was formerly cleared for pasture land. Dominant invasive shrubby layer of Arundinacea, common buckthorn, hybrid red maple, and black cherry. Canopy of red oak, cottonwood, black walnut, box elder, and ash.
- Area 3, 106.4 acres:** Southern Dry-Mesic Forest. Forest that occurs on drier and steeper slopes. Dominated by a canopy of some larger trees such as red oak, hickory, and black cherry, with an understory of invasive barberry.
- Area 4, 411.8 acres:** Southern Mesic Forest. Forest that tends to occur on the moister valleys or steeper slopes. Canopy of red oak, hickory, and black cherry, with an understory of barberry, blackberry, and common buckthorn.
- Area 5, 115.2 acres:** Oak Woodland. Scattered oaks on a hillside that was formerly grazed pasture. Scattered red oak, hickory, and black cherry, with an understory of blackberry, Canada goldenrod, and Canada dry grass.
- Area 6, 166.3 acres:** Surrogate Grassland. Former farmland that has been allowed to go fallow. Dominant species include giant foxtail and Virginia wild rice.
- Area 7, 10.1 acres:** Dry Cliff. Areas of protruding rock that potentially provide good habitat for rare plant and animal species, with eastern red cedar and paper birch clusters.



Site Context Map



Geology of the Driftless Region



## Blufflands Coalition

The Bluffland Coalition is an umbrella organization made up of local governments and non-profit organizations tasked with the conservation of land in the Upper Mississippi Blufflands in the La Crosse - La Crescent region.

### Blufflands Coalition 2025 Goals:

- Continue to work on implementation of the strategic plan developed in early 2024. Emphasis on completion of the community outreach strategy.
- Complete trail marking and develop trailhead kiosks for the Bluffland Traverse. Publicize the trail to the public and continue to work on improved trail routing.
- Continued efforts to acquire ownership or easements for bluffland green spaces, emphasizing conservation and protection from development compatible with land use plans of local governmental units and creating public recreational opportunities for users of all ability levels.
- Get jurisdictions working together to further develop a network of interconnected multiuse trails in the blufflands connected to other destinations in the area. Investigate future funding opportunities and options to accomplish goals of the Blufflands Coalition and governmental units.
- Complete planning for a trail connecting the blufflands of La Crosse County with those of La Crescent and farther into Houston County. Trail completion in summer of 2026 with the construction of the Mississippi West Channel Bike & Pedestrian Bridge.
- Publicize the existence of the trails system and green spaces. Encourage area residents and visitors of all ability levels to get out and enjoy these recreational opportunities.
- Continue conservation efforts in the blufflands – controlling invasive species, restoring degraded prairies, and doing reforestation where needed.
- Protect the rare and threatened species found in area blufflands

## Friends of the Marsh

The Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the La Crosse River Marsh through community action, advocacy, and education.

Located at the confluence of the La Crosse and Mississippi Rivers, the La Crosse River Marsh is a vital thousand-acre wetland in the middle of the city. The Friends group plays a crucial role in its protection and enhancement. The Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh 2024 Annual Report is provided below:



## *Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh*

### 2024 Annual Report



#### *Friends of the Marsh,*

Like a holiday letter to the family, it's time for us at the start of a new year to check in with you, our *Friends of the Marsh* family. We hope you had a healthy and happy 2024.

Our organization is now twelve years old, and still constant to our original mission, "*To preserve, protect, and enhance the La Crosse River Marsh and serve the community through action, advocacy, and education.*"

Constant in an age of transformation. Thanks to an atmospheric river in May that soaked northern Minnesota and Wisconsin we experienced the third highest June flood here at home. The marsh filled up, trails were closed, and the marsh critters had it almost to themselves. Before that and for the rest of 2024 it was relatively dry and that has carried on into this winter.

The marsh is an urban wetland, as we know, and that was demonstrated this summer by the persistent challenges posed by unhoused community members. Anticipating flooding the WDNR ordered a large homeless encampment removed from the floodplain along the Black River. Many moved to higher ground, camping along the Vietnam Veterans Trail and at other locations scattered throughout the marsh. Faced with two resolutions at the city Board of Public Works to prohibit camping in the marsh, I spoke to the committee opposing the very idea of camping in the marsh (it is remote from service, inaccessible, and at that time tinder dry) but also in opposition to the resolutions

at hand as there were no provisions for where the homeless could go. Nonetheless, the second resolution passed and shortly thereafter the city cleared the camps in the marsh, dispersing the homeless across the city. How to make a bad situation worse.

That said, here's our report to you.

Chuck Lee

### **Planning for the Future**

We are party to a few exciting projects, stakeholders in ongoing city efforts. Here's a snapshot look.

- **The La Crosse River Marsh Restoration Project.** Begun in 2020 with the City Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department in the lead, this project has three priorities: 1) improved wetland hydrology, 2) protect and build habitat, and 3) maintain sustainable trails. The strategy adopted for the project is to address hydrology improvement first and by doing so improve both habitat and trails. The goal is to move water through the marsh and see some seasonal variation in water depths. We should see some construction later this year on the Grand Crossing Trail that will include larger openings strategically placed under the trail to better facilitate the movement of water, both in and out; hardening the spillway so that it doesn't wash out with each high-water episode; a new asphalt surface for the entire length of the trail.
- **River Point Natural Area.** Cross the La Crosse River on the footbridge at the north end of Riverside Park and you will be in what will become the River Point Natural Area. See a perched wetland on your right and a sandy prairie and a floodplain forest on your left. This area is slated to become a natural respite between the mixed-use development to the north and the city center to the south. The plan is for low, minimally maintained vegetation, open sightlines, undeveloped wetland, and no permanent structures. We shared the cost, with Parks, of a vegetation inventory and planting / maintenance plan for this area done by Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery

- **PAH (Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons ) Remediation.** On the south edge of the marsh in Myrick Park and near the Cottonwood Trail trailhead some trees will be removed and the slope excavated to remove one of the legacies of the old shooting club, clay pigeon shards contaminated with PAH. In the process this should improve sightlines out over the marsh and access to the Cottonwood Trail.



### **Outreach and Education**

For several years we have partnered with The Nature Place to offer monthly programs on a variety of environmental subjects. Free and open to the public, *Enviro-Wednesdays* is the first Wednesday of each month. Watch for announcements via email or on our Facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/friendsofthelacrossemarsh](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofthelacrossemarsh)

A new opportunity presented itself this year when the city offered Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF) grants to individuals ages 15-24 courtesy of a Bloomberg Philanthropies grant to the city. Each proposal had to feature a mentoring and fiscal agent non-profit, which is where we came in. Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins and Chuck Lee shouldered the mentoring task. A group of five Aquinas High School students produced brief audio recordings featuring each of the marsh trails with information about the trail itself, nearby habitat, and the significance of the marsh with reference to the city's Climate Action Plan. Scan



the QR codes linked to each audio attached to the trail kiosks or click the link to each audio on our web page.

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



### **Our Wetland Community**

We could not accomplish what we do each year without your help. This year we benefitted from a total of 670 hours of volunteer help. Board members and volunteers gave their time and effort to surveys, programs and work outings, including:

- ***The Great Backyard Bird Count.*** Conducted on the second weekend of February each year, this citizen science survey is organized by the Cornell University Ornithology Lab and Audubon Society. It's a world-wide effort to measure bird populations from year to year. Here, volunteers count in our "backyard," the marsh.

- ***Frog and Toad Chorus Survey.*** Three times each spring and summer we ask for help with this statewide survey. Amphibians are key indicator species of environmental health. In addition to chorus frogs, grey tree frogs, leopard frogs, green frogs, and American toads, we have recently documented the presence of Blanchard's cricket frogs, a rare and endangered species in Wisconsin.
- ***Water Quality.*** Along with other agencies and groups we have compiled a multi-year record of water quality in the marsh, testing for nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, and chloride.
- ***Earth Fair.*** We help support and exhibit at Earth Fair every April. Long the primary Earth Day celebration in La Crosse, the fair is now organized by the Sustainability Institute at WTC.
- ***Marsh Cleanup.*** In conjunction with Earth Fair in April we organize a trash and litter cleanup in the marsh. It's a big effort and we attract a lot of volunteers. Additionally, the last couple of years we have had a second cleanup along Lang Drive in the fall.
- ***Homeless Camp Cleanup.*** On an as-needed basis we help clean up abandoned homeless camps in the marsh. This year the largest such camp was along the Veterans Trail and on the floodplain below that trail. We are limited in what we accomplish with these camps by the volume of trash and the tools available to us to do the work.
- ***Habitat.*** The marsh features perhaps the most diverse natural habitat in the city. We have tried to build upon that biodiversity by planting native trees and shrubs, seeding perennials, and cutting and removing invasives like buckthorn and honeysuckle, each time with help from volunteers. We have also helped maintain trails by cutting back woody vegetation along the edges.



- **Trail Use Survey.** With the help of over thirty volunteers we conducted a trail use survey, recording walkers and bikers along the five trails in the marsh over one day in June, one in August, and two more in October. A previous trail use survey was conducted in the 1990s, so this was overdue. We noted at its conclusion:

The *overall number of trail uses* was surprisingly large. For example, on Thursday, October 10, we counted 638 uses during the three survey hours. Extrapolating, it seems likely that during 10 daylight hours, at least 2,000 uses occurred. Even on a low-count day we tallied 216 uses.

It appears *weather* influenced numbers more than whether we counted on a weekend day or a weekday and whether we counted in summer or fall



**Fiscal Year 2024**

Income

Donations and Memberships	5,642.35
Climate Action Grant	<u>5,000.00</u>
total	\$10,642.35

Expenses

Wis Wetlands Conference	550.00
Insurance	265.00
Marketing (Earth Fair)	250.00
Post Office Box	176.00
First Aid Kit	60.09
Pay Pal Fees	10.62
Lab testing	558.00
Consulting Fee (Neil Diboll)	<u>4,965.00</u>
total	\$6,834.71

**Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh Board of Directors**

Chuck Lee, President

John Sullivan, Treasurer

Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins, Secretary

Karen Acker

Sue Knopf

Nancy Heerens-Knudson

Ralph Knudson

The Board wishes to thank John Sullivan and Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins for their dedication, support, and work through these last several years. John and Carolyn have left the board. Our very best to true friends of the marsh.

**Email: [friendsofthemarsh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthemarsh@gmail.com)**

**Web Page: [www.friendsofthelacrosserivermarsh.com](http://www.friendsofthelacrosserivermarsh.com)**

**Facebook: [facebook.com/friendsofthelacrosemarsh](https://facebook.com/friendsofthelacrosemarsh)**

**Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh**

**P.O. Box 1642**

**La Crosse, WI**

**54602-1642**

## Marsh Trail Use Count Report

### Friends of the La Crosse River Marsh Trail Use Count Report 2024: FAQs

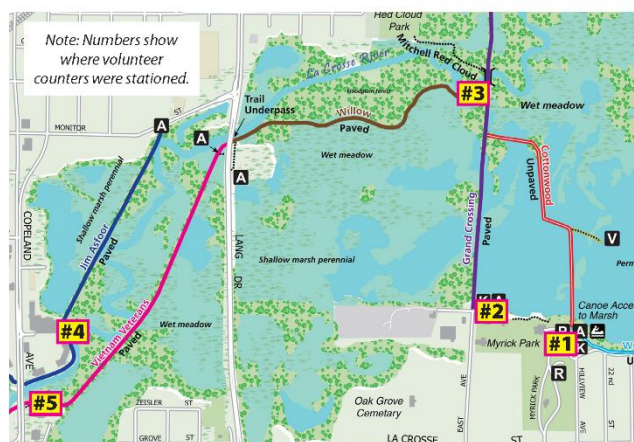
**Q: Why did Friends of the Marsh perform this count?** We wanted to have an idea of how many people use the marsh and what they use it for. We chose three 1-hour shifts on each of two summer days—one weekday and one weekend day (June 18 and August 10)—and two fall days, also one weekday and one weekend day (October 10 and October 13), to see if there was a difference in usage in summer and fall, possibly because in fall more college students would use the trails.

**Q: How many volunteers helped count?** Thirty-four offered to count, and almost all of them did. A few were not available when we had to reschedule the original summer weekend date.

**Q: On which trails were counts made?** Volunteers counted on the Cottonwood, Grand Crossing, and Willow Trails as well as the portions of the Jim Asfour and Vietnam Veterans Trails east of Copeland Avenue (see map at right).

**Q: What did the volunteers do?** Volunteers were assigned to one of three one-hour shifts—morning, noon, and late afternoon—and one of five stations (see map at right). During their shift they simply sat and recorded on a tally sheet what each person who passed them was doing—walking, running, biking, or other.

**Q: How do you know someone wasn't counted more than once during a given shift?** We don't; we were counting *instances of trail use* ("uses") rather than literally how many people used a trail. For example, someone could have been counted twice on the Grand Crossing Trail—heading out from the dog park area and returning. Or maybe one volunteer counted someone heading north on the Cottonwood Trail from near the Gun Club Shelter and another counted the same person exiting the marsh at the dog park. Because the shifts were only an hour long, probably not a lot of this happened, but some inevitably did.

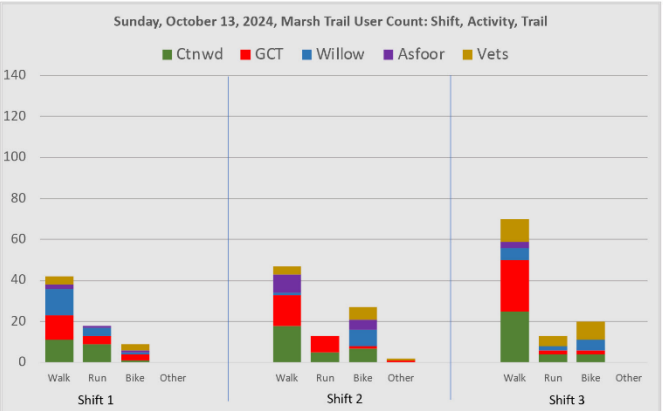
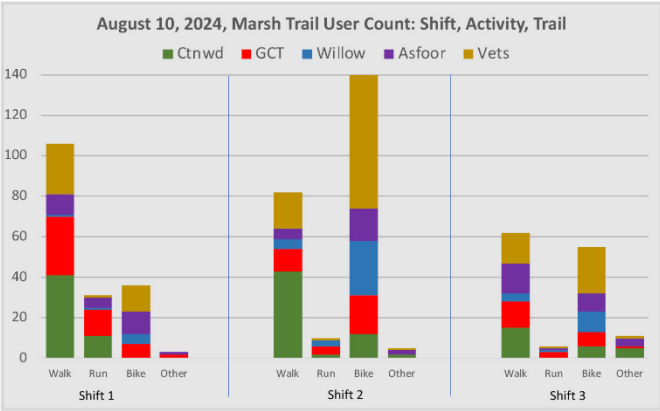
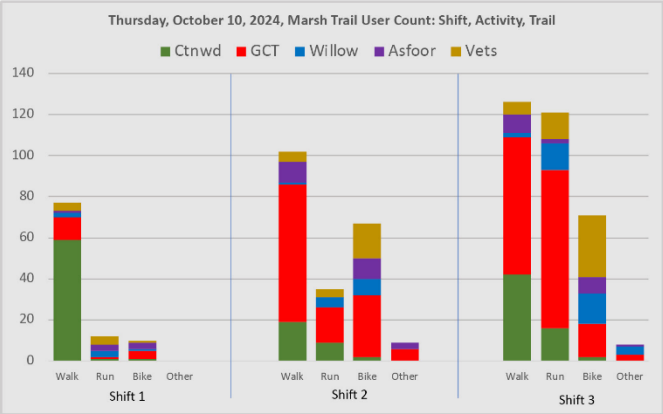
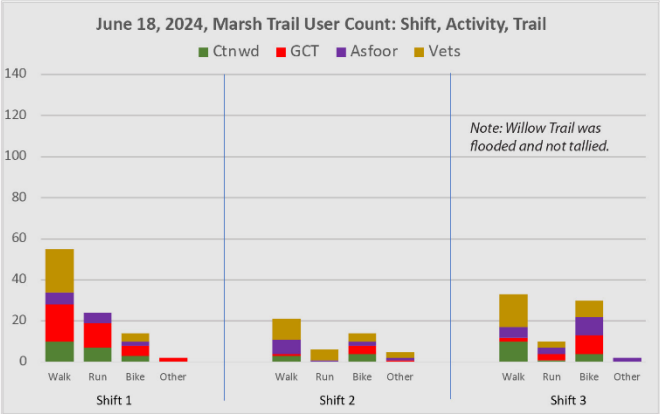


**Q: What are some interesting takeaways gleaned from studying the statistics?**

- The **overall number of trail uses** was surprisingly large. For example, on Thursday, October 10, we counted 638 uses during the three survey hours. Extrapolating, it seems likely that during 10 daylight hours, at least 2,000 uses occurred. Even on a low-count day we tallied 216 uses.
- It seemed as though **weather** influenced numbers more than whether we counted on a weekend day or a weekday and whether we counted in summer or fall.
- On most days, **walking** and **biking** were more popular than running.

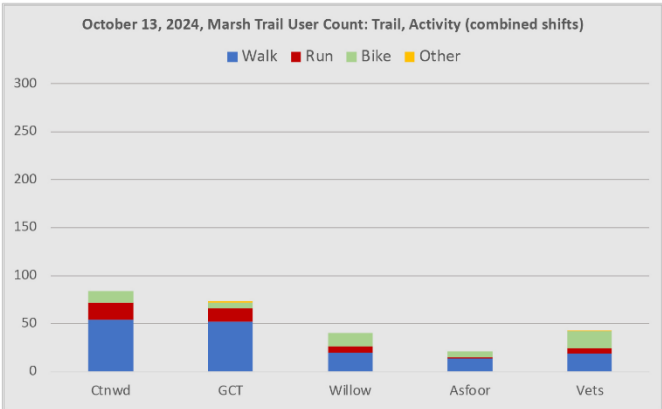
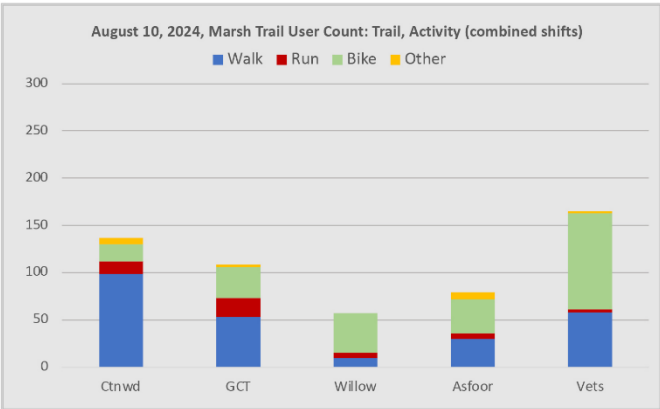
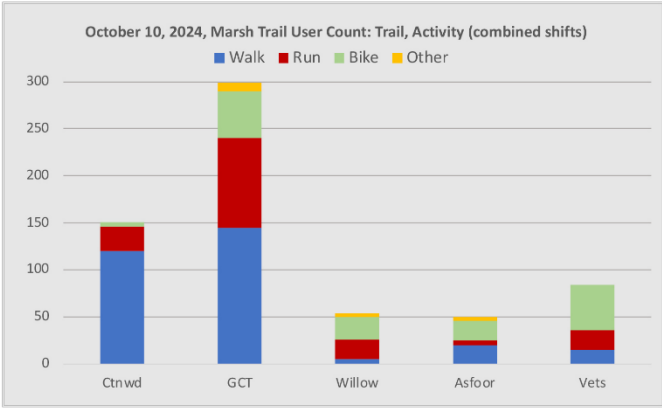
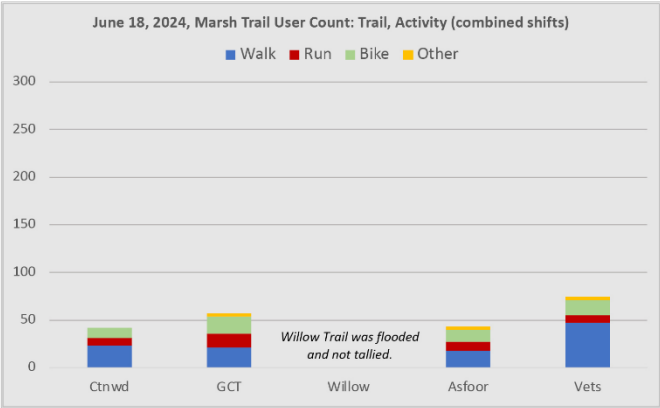
**What trends do you see? Please let us know by emailing [friendsofthemarsh@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofthemarsh@gmail.com).**  
The count totals are on page 6.

By shift: Bars show activities with subdivisions showing trails

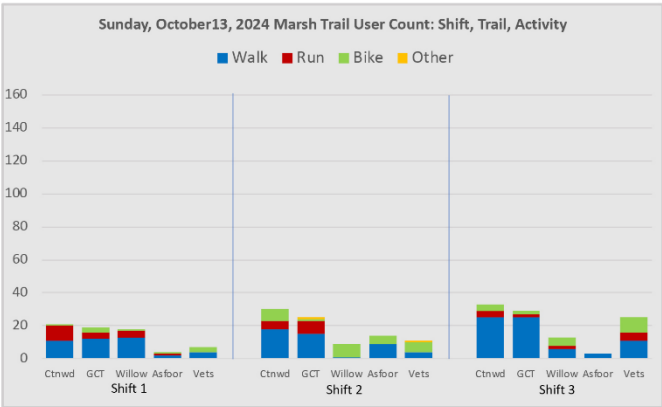
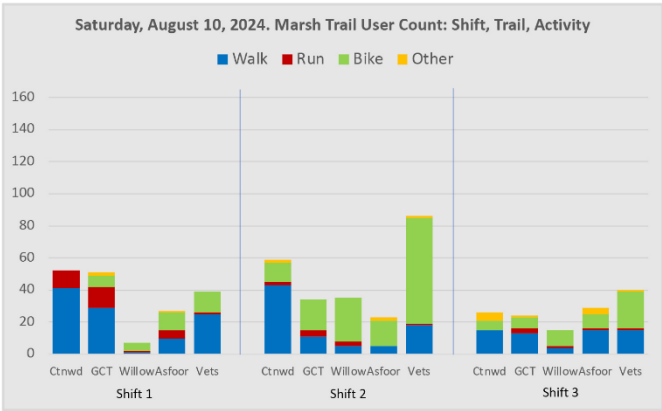
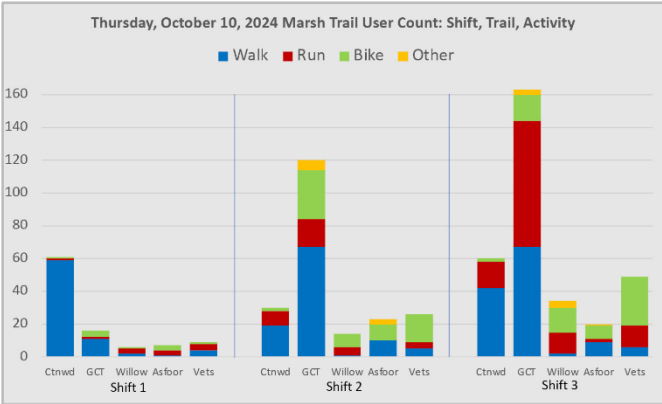
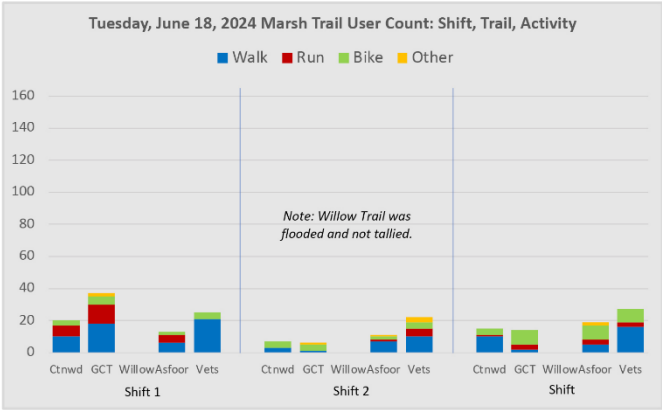




Combined shifts: Bars show trails with subdivisions showing activities



By shift: Bars show trails with subdivisions showing activities



Below are the numbers used for the graphs on the preceding pages

1 Cottonwood Trail					2 Grand Crossing Trail					3 Willow Trail				4 Jim Asfoor Trail				5 Vietnam Veterans Trail			
TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024 — <i>Weather hot, big clouds, windy, high 90</i>																					
Shift	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Flooded, not tallied				Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	TOTAL
1	10	7	3	0	18	12	5	2					6	5	2	0	21	0	4	0	95
2	3	0	4	0	1	0	4	1					7	1	2	1	10	5	4	3	46
3	10	1	4	0	2	3	9	0					5	3	9	2	16	3	8	0	75
T	23	8	11	0	21	15	18	3					18	9	13	3	47	8	16	3	216
SATURDAY, AUGUST 10, 2024 — <i>Weather pleasant, sunny, big clouds, breezy, high 77</i>																					
Shift	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	TOTAL
1	41	11	0	0	29	13	7	2	1	1	5	0	10	5	11	1	25	1	13	0	176
2	43	2	12	2	11	4	19	0	5	3	27	0	5	0	16	2	18	1	66	1	237
3	15	0	6	5	13	3	7	1	4	1	10	0	15	1	9	4	15	1	23	1	134
T	99	13	18	7	53	20	33	3	10	5	42	0	30	6	36	7	58	3	102	2	547
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024 — <i>Weather pleasant, sunny, high 74</i>																					
Shift	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	TOTAL
1	59	1	1	0	11	1	4	0	2	3	1	0	1	3	3	0	4	4	1	0	99
2	19	9	2	0	67	17	30	6	1	5	8	0	10	0	10	3	5	4	17	0	213
3	42	16	2	0	67	77	16	3	2	13	15	4	9	2	8	1	6	13	30	0	326
T	120	26	5	0	145	95	50	9	5	21	24	4	20	5	21	4	15	21	48	0	638
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024 — <i>Weather overcast, blustery, high 57, a couple of very light showers</i>																					
Shift	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	Walk	Run	Bike	Other	TOTAL
1	11	9	1	0	12	4	3	0	13	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	4	0	3	0	69
2	18	5	7	0	15	8	1	1	1	0	8	0	9	0	5	0	4	0	6	1	88
3	25	4	4	0	25	2	2	0	6	2	5	0	3	0	0	0	11	5	9	1	99
T	54	18	12	0	52	14	6	1	20	6	14	0	14	1	6	0	19	5	18	0	256

## APPENDIX E: Tank Creek Bridge – Great River State Trail

The recent destruction of the Tank Creek Bridge by fire on May 15, 2025, has rendered a crucial section of the Great River State Trail impassable. This unfortunate event underscores the bridge's critical role in the trail's integrity and the regional recreational infrastructure. Its loss disrupts the seamless experience for users, impacting local tourism and the overall accessibility of the trail, especially given the lack of an immediate detour. Rebuilding the Tank Creek Bridge is therefore not just about replacing a structure, but about restoring a vital connection that contributes significantly to the economic, recreational, and environmental well-being of the communities along the Great River State Trail.

The Tank Creek Bridge, located approximately three miles east of Trempealeau, Wisconsin, was a significant structure on the popular Great River State Trail. This bridge, over 200 feet long, wasn't originally built for recreation but rather for the rigors of rail transportation. Constructed in 1957, it served as a vital part of the Chicago-Northwestern railroad line, a network that connected bustling cities like Chicago with the Twin Cities and the Dakota Territory. This history speaks to the engineering prowess of the mid-20th century, adapting to the challenging terrain of Wisconsin's Driftless Area with numerous bridges to span the region's many waterways.

Following the abandonment of this railroad line in the 1970s, the corridor found a new purpose. In 1984, the route was acquired by the state of Wisconsin, eventually becoming part of the Great River State Trail, which officially opened in 1988. This transformation from a commercial rail artery to a public recreational pathway highlights a broader trend in trail development across the country, where disused rail lines are repurposed for the benefit of communities and outdoor enthusiasts. The Tank Creek Bridge, like many other bridges on the trail, became a testament to this adaptive reuse, blending its industrial heritage with its new role as a scenic crossing.

The significance of the Tank Creek Bridge to the Great River State Trail, and indeed to the wider region, cannot be overstated. The Great River State Trail itself is a 24-mile crushed limestone pathway that meanders through the stunning Upper Mississippi River Valley, connecting communities like Trempealeau and Onalaska. It is part of a larger network of trails known as the "Bike 4 Trails," offering an expansive and accessible route for cyclists, hikers, and snowmobilers. The trail traverses diverse landscapes, including prairies, bottomlands, and hardwood forests, passing through important natural areas like the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.

As one of the 21 bridges that punctuate the Great River State Trail, the Tank Creek Bridge was essential for maintaining the continuous flow of this recreational artery. Its location, within the Mississippi Flyway, offered trail users unique opportunities to observe a rich variety of wildlife, from migratory birds like great blue herons and egrets to deer, squirrels, and fox. The bridge not only facilitated travel but also provided picturesque viewpoints of the surrounding natural beauty, including the tranquil waters of Tank Creek, where swimmers were sometimes seen enjoying its shallow depths.

Rebuilding the Tank Creek Bridge is therefore not just about replacing a structure, but about restoring a vital connection that contributes significantly to the economic, recreational, and environmental well-being of the communities along the Great River State Trail.



# APPENDIX F: Outdoor Recreation Survey Results

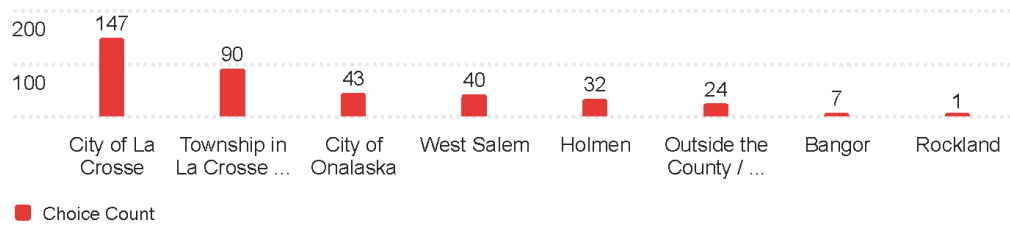
This document summarizes the results of the La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Survey.

Key findings from the survey include:

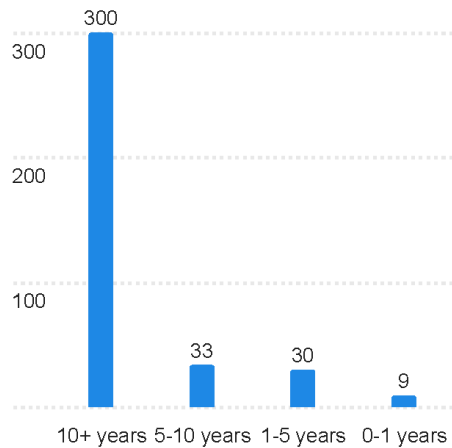
- **Demographics:** The majority of respondents live in the City of La Crosse (147) and have lived in the area for 10+ years (300). The largest age group represented in the survey is 46-65 (178 respondents).
- **Participation in Outdoor Activities:** "My Spouse/Significant Other" is the most frequent companion for outdoor recreation activities.
- **Favorite Parks:** Goose Island Park is the favorite La Crosse County Park.
- **Frequency of Park Use:** A significant number of respondents use La Crosse County parks and/or outdoor facilities often (one or more times a week) or sometimes (a few times a year).
- **Favorite Activities:** Walking and hiking are the most popular outdoor recreation activities, followed by bicycling and wildlife viewing/bird watching.
- **Desired Sports, Programs, or Events:** Respondents expressed interest in more family events not revolving around alcohol, cross-country mountain bike trails, organized trail races, and more nature-oriented programs.
- **Need for Facilities:** There is a perceived need for new or additional facilities for paved walking and biking paths/trails, unpaved walking and biking paths/trails, and winter trails.
- **Park Improvements:** Maintaining and upgrading existing parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open spaces, as well as expanding and developing pedestrian and bike trail systems, are considered the most important park improvements needed in La Crosse County.
- **Importance of Outdoor Recreation:** The vast majority of respondents believe that outdoor recreation opportunities are "Extremely important" to improve the quality of life for their family and La Crosse County residents.
- **Travel for Outdoor Recreation:** A significant number of respondents have traveled away from La Crosse County specifically for outdoor recreational activities, with popular destinations including Winona, MN State Parks, and various locations for mountain biking, hiking, and camping.
- **Big Ideas for Outdoor Recreation:** Suggestions for ideal outdoor recreation experiences include creating a community immersed and connected to outdoor recreation, developing safe surface-level bike and pedestrian trails, and establishing a multi-event

sports complex. Several responses also emphasize the need for improved trails for walking, hiking, and biking, including specific mentions of the area around Lake Neshonoc.

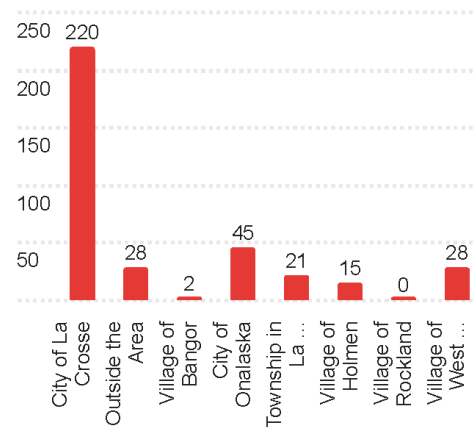
### I live in:



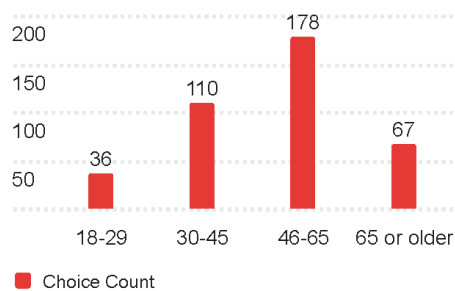
### How long have you lived here?



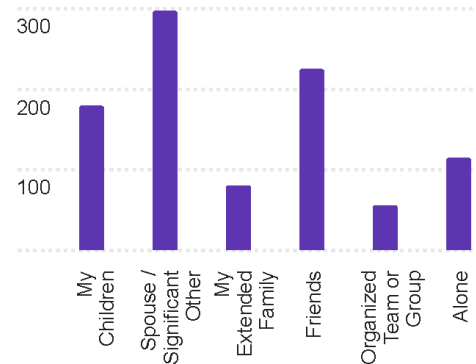
### I work in:



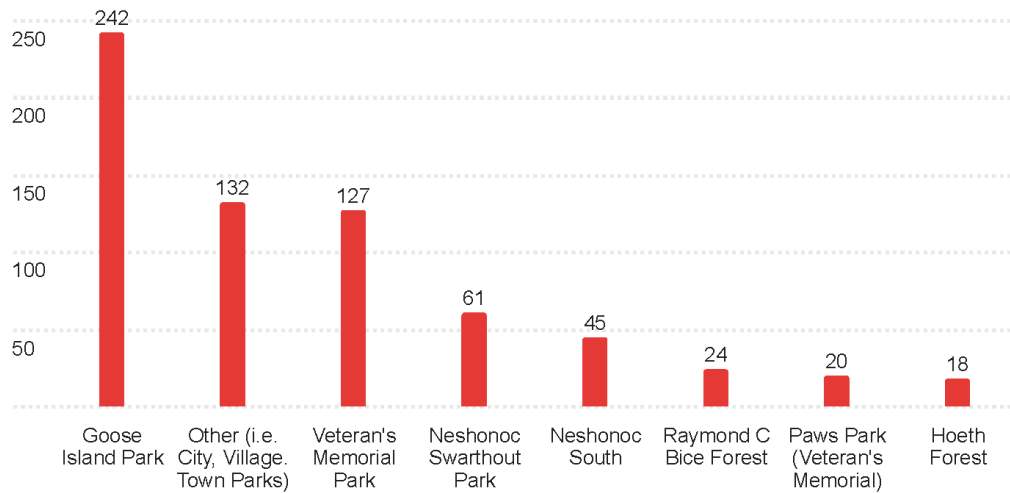
### Which age group do you belong too?



### Who most often participates with you in outdoor recreation activities?



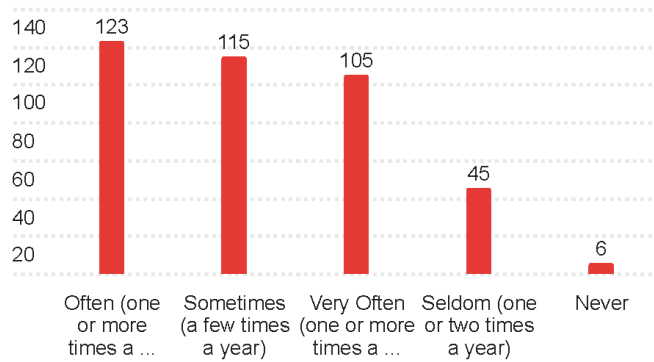
### My favorite La Crosse County parks are (you may select more than one)



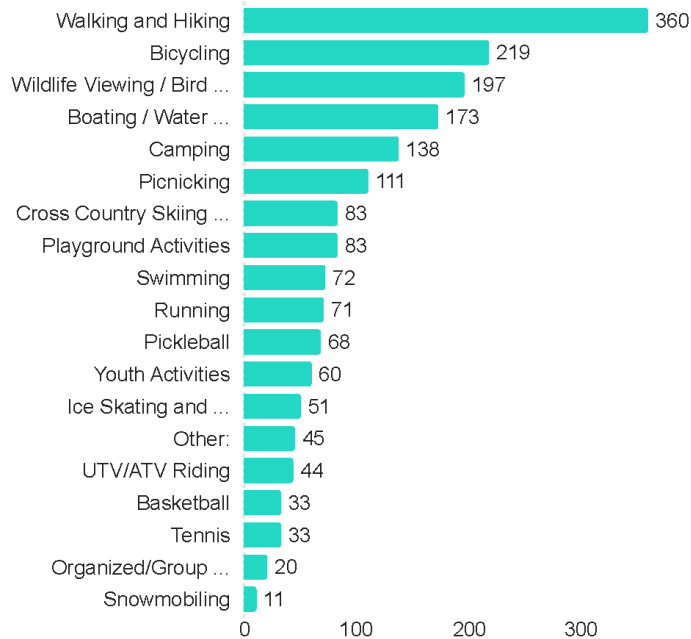
Other (i.e. City, Village, Town Parks) - Text

Mormon coulee park  
 Halfway Creek trail in Holmen, state bike trails  
 Myrick Park  
 Hixon forest  
 Deerwood Park Holmen  
 Trane Park, Shelby Butterfly Trails, Upper Hixon  
 Hixon forest  
 Hixon Forest, Grandad Bluff Park  
 Riverside and Pettibone.  
 Neshonoc Shorewood  
 La Crosse River Marsh, Hixon Forest, La Crosse Blufflands  
 Hixon Forest  
 Myrick Park  
 Hixon Forest  
 Hixon Forrest  
 Riverside Park  
 Hixon Forest  
 Veterans freedom Park  
 Hixon Forest, Experimental Forest  
 Hixon Forest

### How often do you use La Crosse County parks and/or outdoor facilities?



### What are your favorite outdoor recreation activities? Select all that apply...



Other: - Text

Mountain biking

Outdoor concerts

Fishing

Paddle sports

Fishing

Paddling and Fishing

Walking my dog

fishing

Disc Golf!!!!!!

Geocaching

Disc Golf

kayaking

Golf

hunting, fishing, trapping

disc golf

Mountain biking

Kayaking

Dog park

kayaking

Mountain Biking



## I would like to see the following sports, programs, or events in La Crosse county.

I would like to see the following sports, programs, or events in La Crosse county.

More family events not revolving around alcohol

Cross country mountain bike trails

Broad non competitive family friendly social outdoor activities

A complex to be able to hold events both youth and older, like you find in Mauston and DeForest to bring back events, such as Stars of Tomorrow that made this area a prime place to attend over the summer months.

Organized trail races

Mountain biking

?

The current line up is outstanding

More nature oriented programs: birding, Ecology about protecting water: rivers and lakes and natural areas on the parks

More hikes with a guide that can teach something about the hike area.

Continue to expand cycling facilities, camping amenities, and integrated access (transit, cycling, 'alternative' transportation to and from activities)

Outdoor ice skating, youth ultimate frisbee

More guided educational hikes highlighting our natural resources for kids and adults

Outdoor trail, hiking / biking events. Outdoor woods beer garden type event.

More hockey! This seems obvious, after the departure of the Chill. Also why do we not have cyclocross here, that seems a missed opportunity.

More family friendly events. Low or no cost

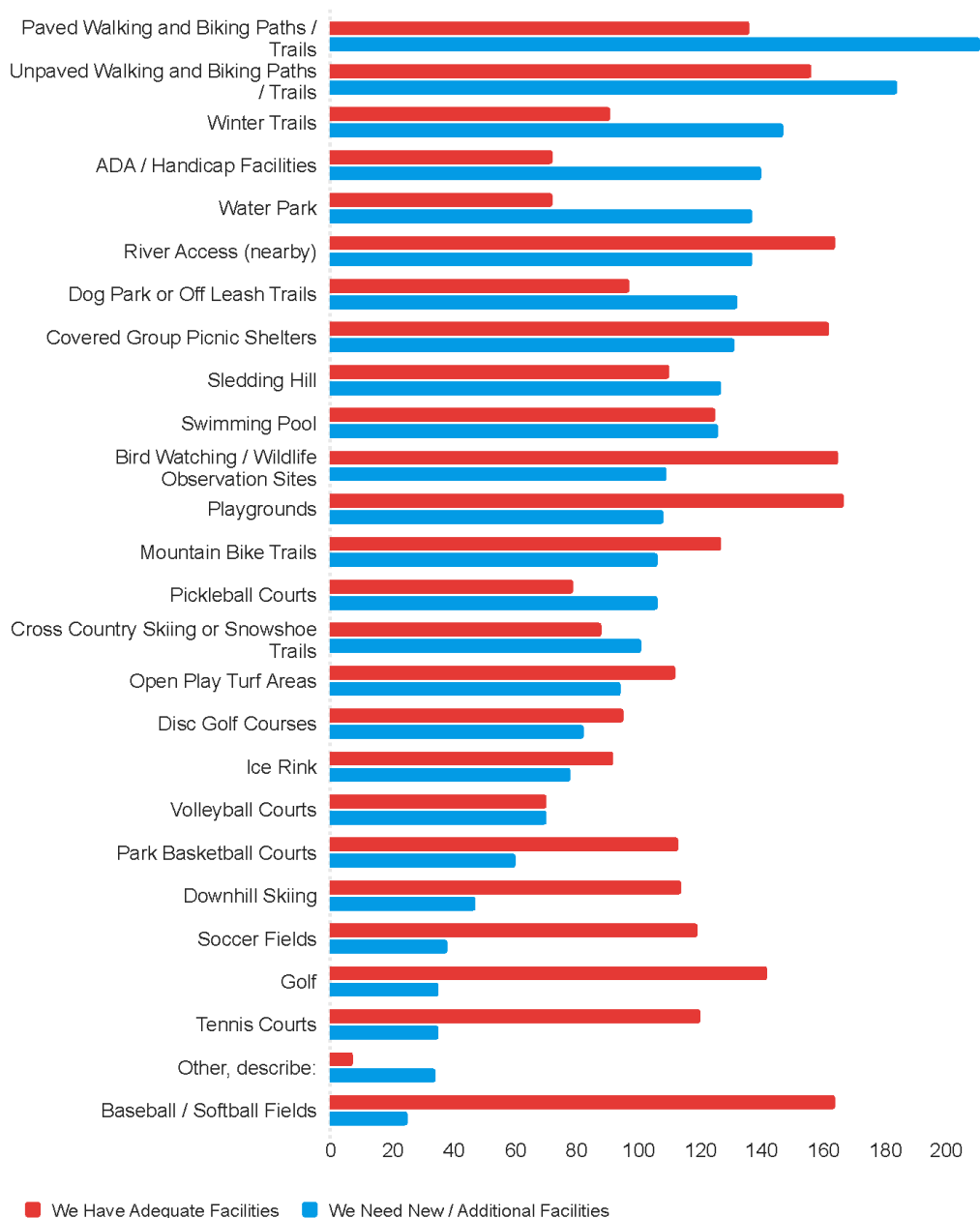
Pickel ball classes and leagues

More for teens

utv and atv trails

More cycling programs to attract new riders.

From the list below, please assess the need for public recreation facilities...



Other, describe: - Text

## Safe bike lanes

### Hiking trails

Kayaking river trails that are groomed on the La Crosse River from the county line to the Mississippi River

Outdoor ice skating

atv utv trails

We need more amenities on our bike trails such as camping spots for touring cyclists and shelters along the trail to rest, picnic and protection from storms.

kayak/canoe access

Outdoor ice skating -speed, hockey and exercise

walking trail next to lake- there is an easement for this

Driving range for golf

More camping locations

UTV access.

Outdoor ice with additional cooling for our warmer winters

kayaking

community urban agriculture

Fishing Access

A lacrosse county all sport training and gaming facility with ice rinks and other sports would be a great addition to house all sport events and generate revenue for the county and have accessibility from around the area and Midwest.

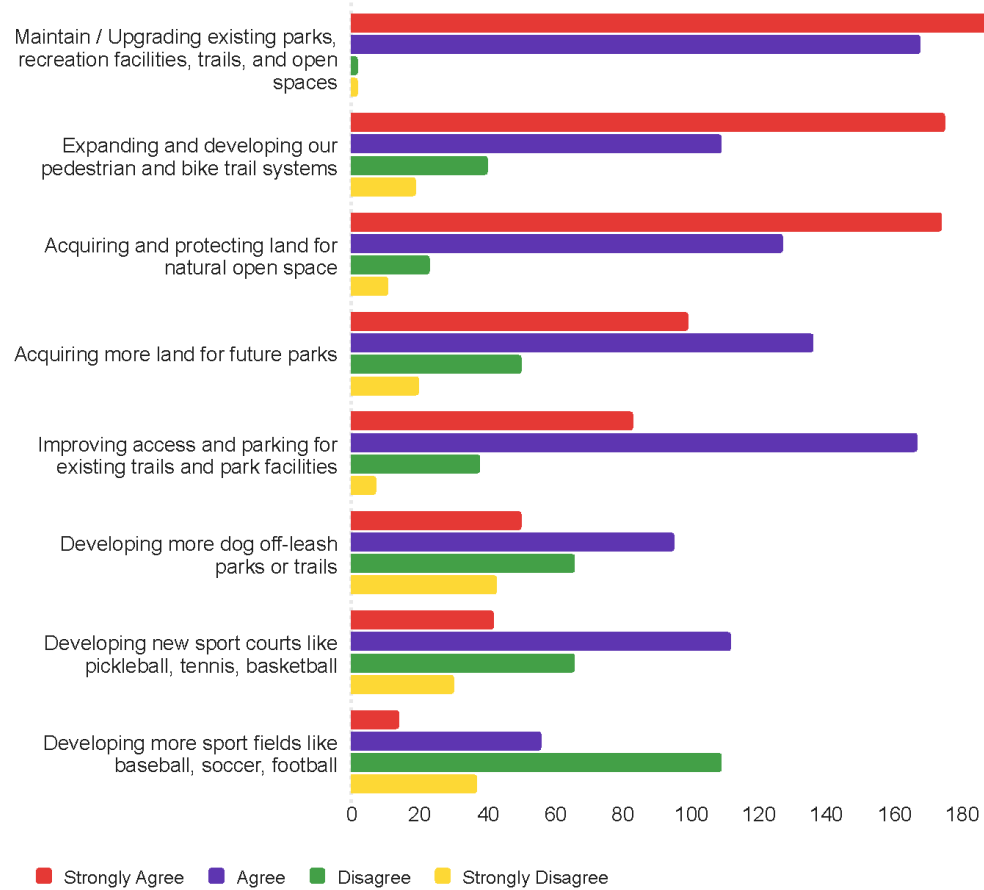
I would like to see improvements in bicycle routes for transportation.

Indoor walking/recreational facilities

In door dog park area



## Most important park improvements needed in La Crosse County.



Other Park improvements not listed above:

Need local voices when parking at boat landing, signage for no cars boats and trailers area. At goose Island GI road, no sitting benches trees were put in instead

Connecting separate sections of bike path and mountain bike trails.

Trails for walking only, where there are no mountain bikes. Mountain bikes make trails so dangerous for walkers and ruin forest land.

Integrate trail planning into relieving traffic congestion and provide safe ways to navigate traffic on a bike

Definitely need more trails. The area around Lake Neshonoc is prime, yet the funds budgeted are not spent.

More contiguous, protected trails for walking and biking

Related to a previous question- sledding hills need to be advertised and parking areas defined when marketing. This was a big deal when we still lived in the County.

Changing rooms and shower facilities so I can use the space during lunch hours and not have to go home to change.

Canoe and Kayak Launch and access and improve safety of waterways for inexperienced paddlers

More trail connections throughout the county. Ways to get from one area to another without a vehicle.

Lake Neshonoc- walking trail development- there is an easment for this behind homes on lake neshonoc.

Dogs need to be on leash in city limits and townships. SO many dog bites have been occurring!!

We need more bike and pedestrian facilities for transportation, not just recreation

More shelters for all weather gatherings

Roads

increase connectedness to parks and trails - bike lanes on county roads, in particular

Basketball courts

Improving parks helps to improve the health of residents.

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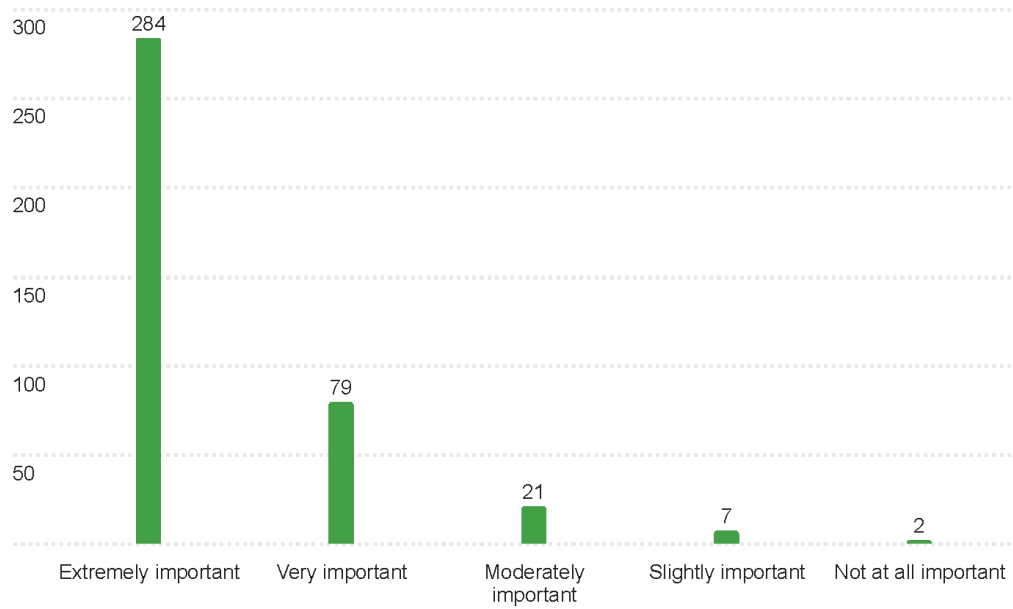
Improve boat landings, restroom facilities and create a campground in the north section of the county

Local history and lore on signage, benches, flower gardens, feeding stations, small animal park, places to fly kites, grassy and shaded picnic areas, sandy beaches





Do you think outdoor recreation opportunities are important to improve the quality of life for your family and the La Crosse County residents?



I have traveled away from La Crosse county to specifically pursue outdoor recreational activities.



Yes, please let us know where you went and what activity you were pursuing. - Text

Winona lake walking path, trempealeau reserve walking, chaseburg and coon valley walking paths  
 MN state parks and bike trails  
 Green Bay  
 Bentonville AR and Crosby MN for mountain biking  
 Numerous mountain bike trail centers across WI and the country  
 Various locations regionally and nationally for mountain biking, downhill skiing, surfing, hiking, and rafting  
 La Crescent, Winona, MN State parks  
 Perrot Park, Trempealeau Refuge, Winona Holzinger and lake, Vetsch Park La Crescent. Hiking in all these places. We go often!  
 Mauston and DeForest for baseball  
 Houston County, MN, Door County, WI, Okoboji, IA  
 Better camping, many locations. Outdoor basketball, many locations. Organized trail racing, varied locations.  
 Minnesota paved bike trails, hiking state parks  
 Kickapoo Valley Reserve, hiking and biking. Yellow River State Forest, biking  
 Kayaking, Winona  
 Snow activities UTV  
 Hayward. mountain biking.  
 Paved bike trails  
 Tomahawk area for paved bike trails through wooded lands  
 Hiking trails  
 UP for biking and skiing

# My Big Idea!

Your BIG Idea!

If you could create the ideal outdoor recreation experience in the La Crosse County, what would it be?

Keep up the great work in updating Goose Island!

Re design the road into Goose Island. Easier walking to water to fish, replace a few trees with benches, Then the landings for boat launching are not user friendly. Simple fix. More paved area for parking a camper in the campground

Open a site on top of the bluffs near La Crosse/Upper Hixon large enough to accommodate field camping to host a NICA youth mountain bike race.

It would be the entire community immersed in and connected to outdoor recreation. The Bluffland Traverse Trail, and its ancillary systems would tie into every neighborhood in our community. There would be safe, surface level bike and pedestrian Trails to commute and recreate on. There would be Whitewater parks at Lake Neshonoc and the Onalaska Spillway. Businesses would have full bike racks year round.

Walking and hiking trail in forested area, no pavement, mowed grass, bird viewing, river viewing, bluff hike, no bicycles and for sure no mountain bikes.

A multi event sports complex to bring back some of the big events that use to be prevalent in lacrosse in the past

Large traditional park location with varied large quantities of recreation options. Most parks in the County are spread out and only draw for their specific interest. A large park with open space, multiple sports courts and fields, trails, food and bathroom facilities, youth recreation options, etc would be a much higher draw than a smaller park with camping and afterthought sports and then another park 35 minutes away with good sports courts, but no open space, playground, or bathrooms for example.

The two largest County parks focus on camping, but lack draw to people not currently camping there. City and village parks have better local draw, but are often small, only have one or two recreation options so tend to be overcrowded, and strongly lack food, bathroom facilities, and other commodities.

More comprehensive cross country ski experience

Create a similar feel to successful outdoor recreation towns such as Bentonville, Arkansas and Cuyuna, MN. These towns use outdoor recreation to drive tourism which directly supports the economy. Investing in this provides long term benefits both to local residents and visiting people. La Crosse has all the natural resources needed, and the landscape is much more beautiful than both the other towns mentioned. Investment is needed to bring La Crosse up to the level that these other towns have achieved.

Bluffland Traverse signed and trails completed in the woods

A park in wooded location with paved hiking and biking paths.

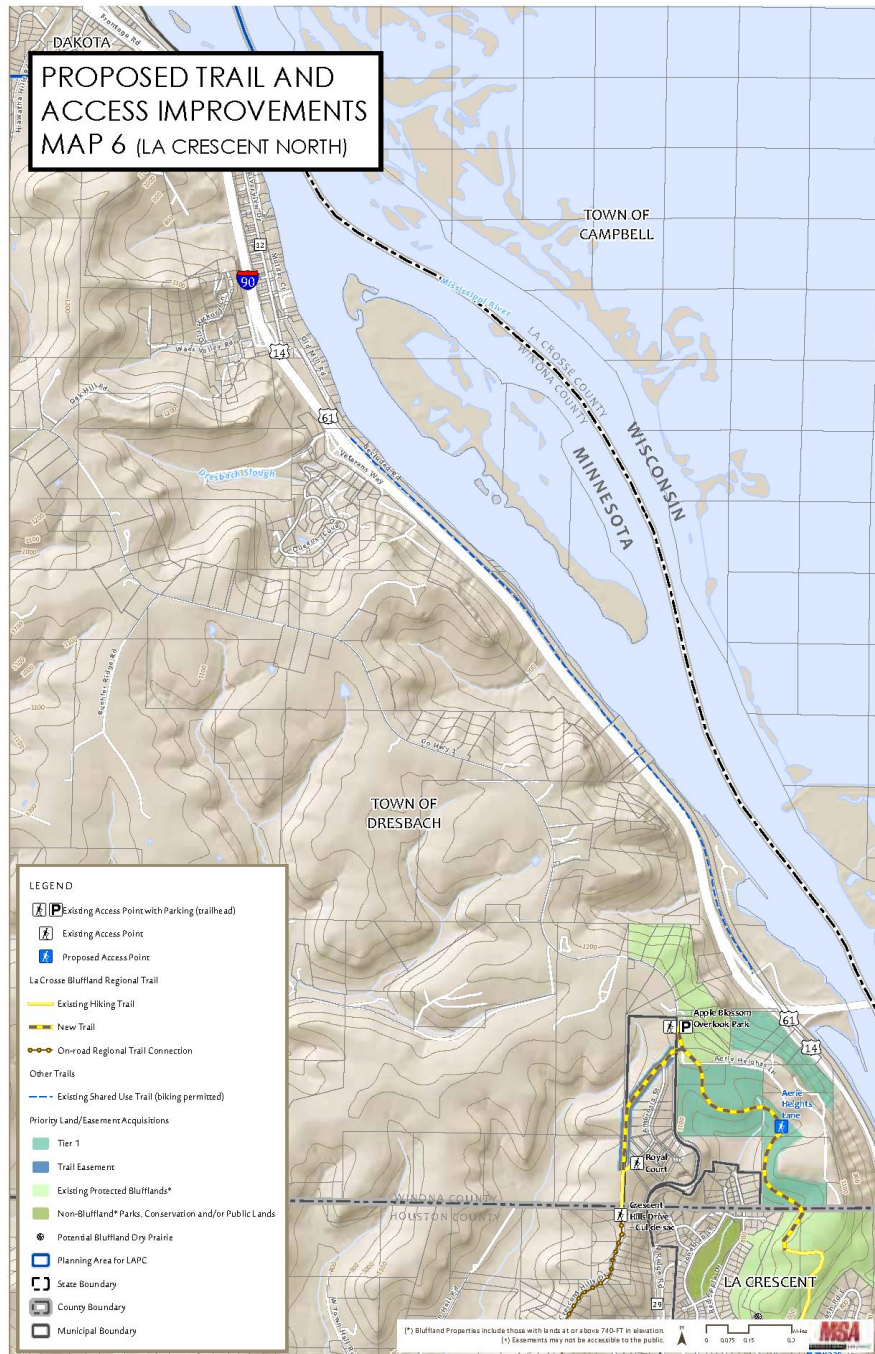
It would be a well groomed trail that allowed you to play in water, climb on rocks and picnic.

Beautiful hiking trails up to bluff top vistas with great views

More trails for walking, running, and biking. The area around Lake Neshonoc would be perfect.



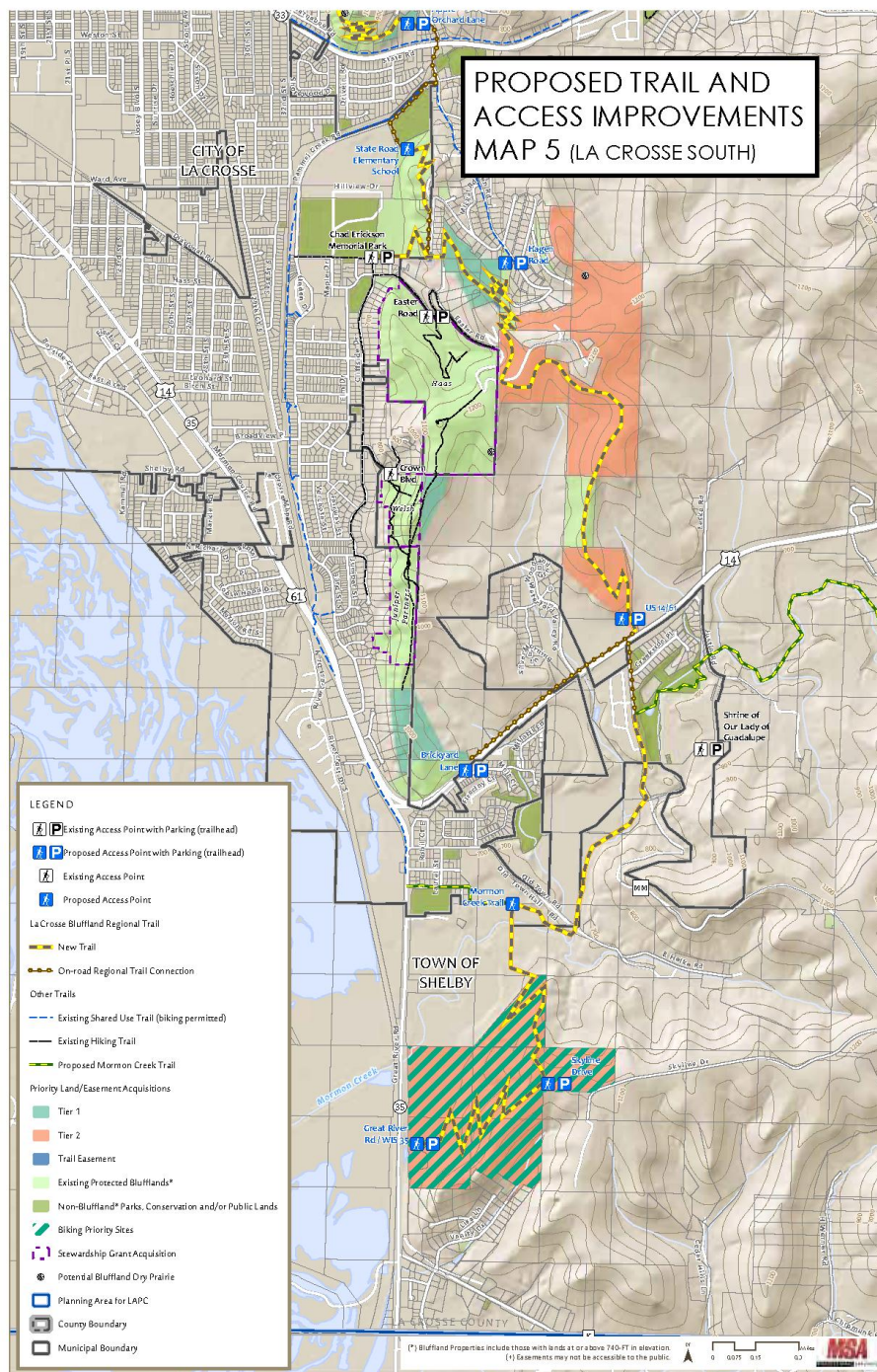
# APPENDIX G: 2016 Bluffland Plan Regional Trail Maps

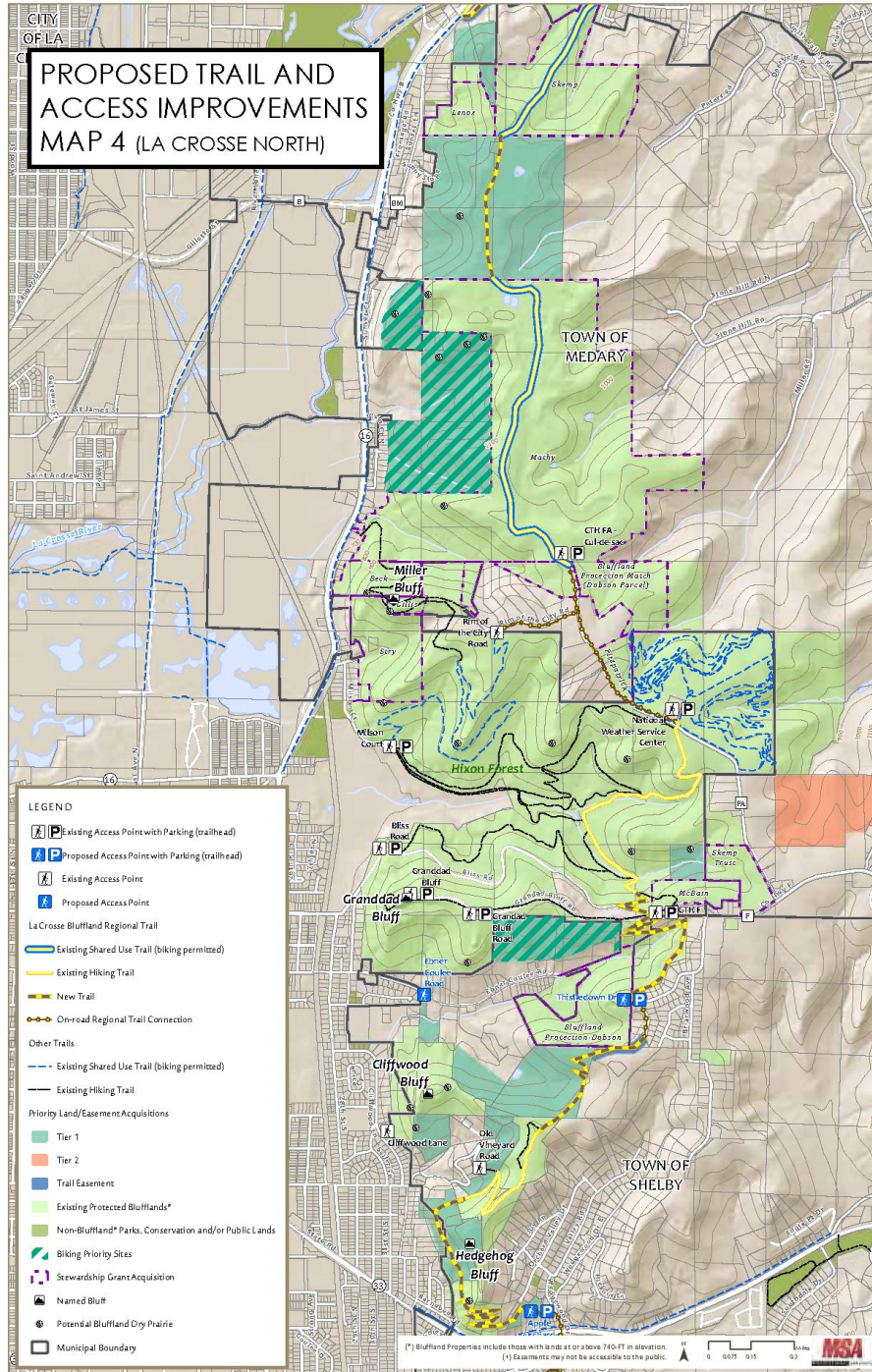


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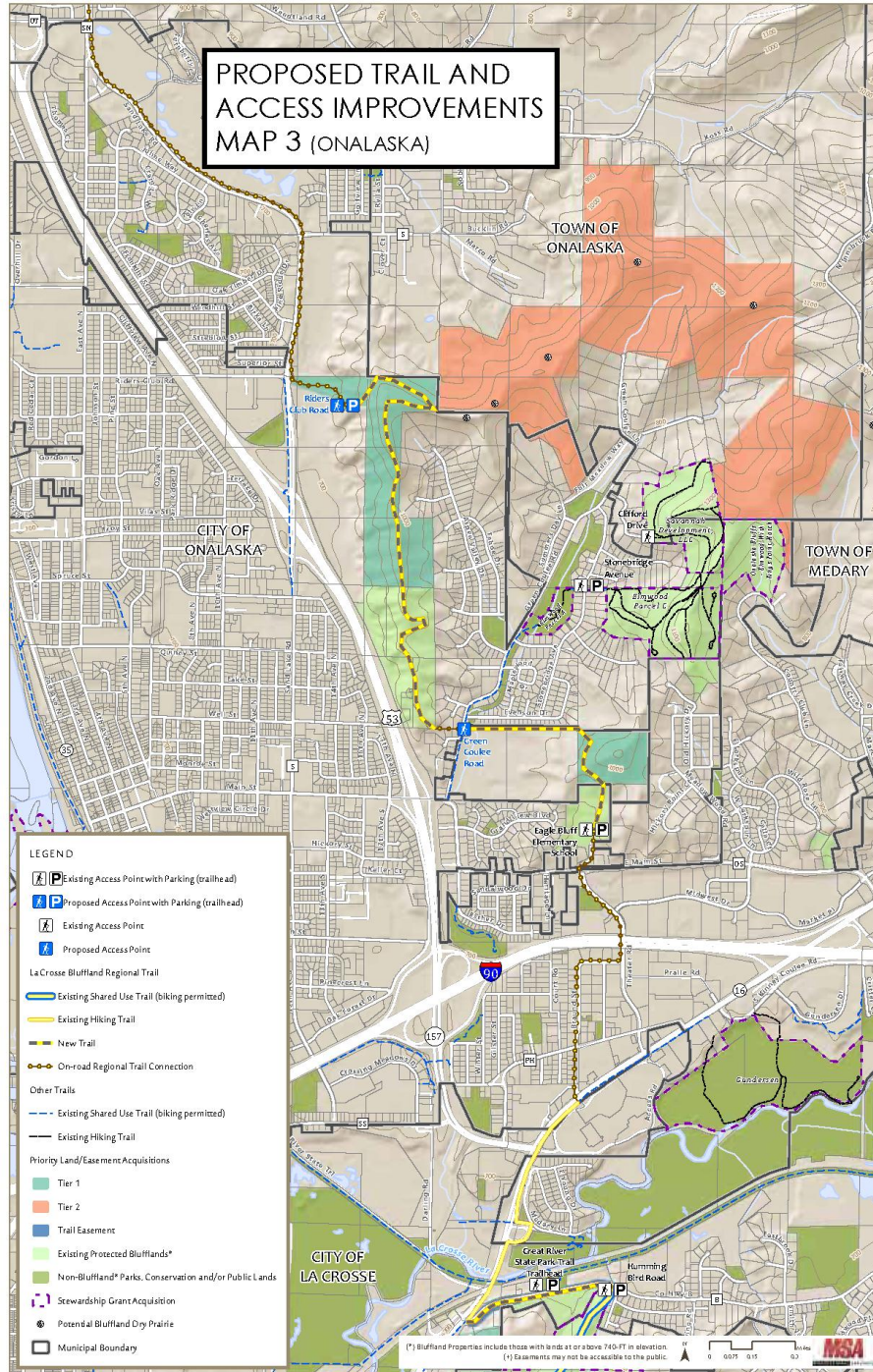
Bluffland Recreation



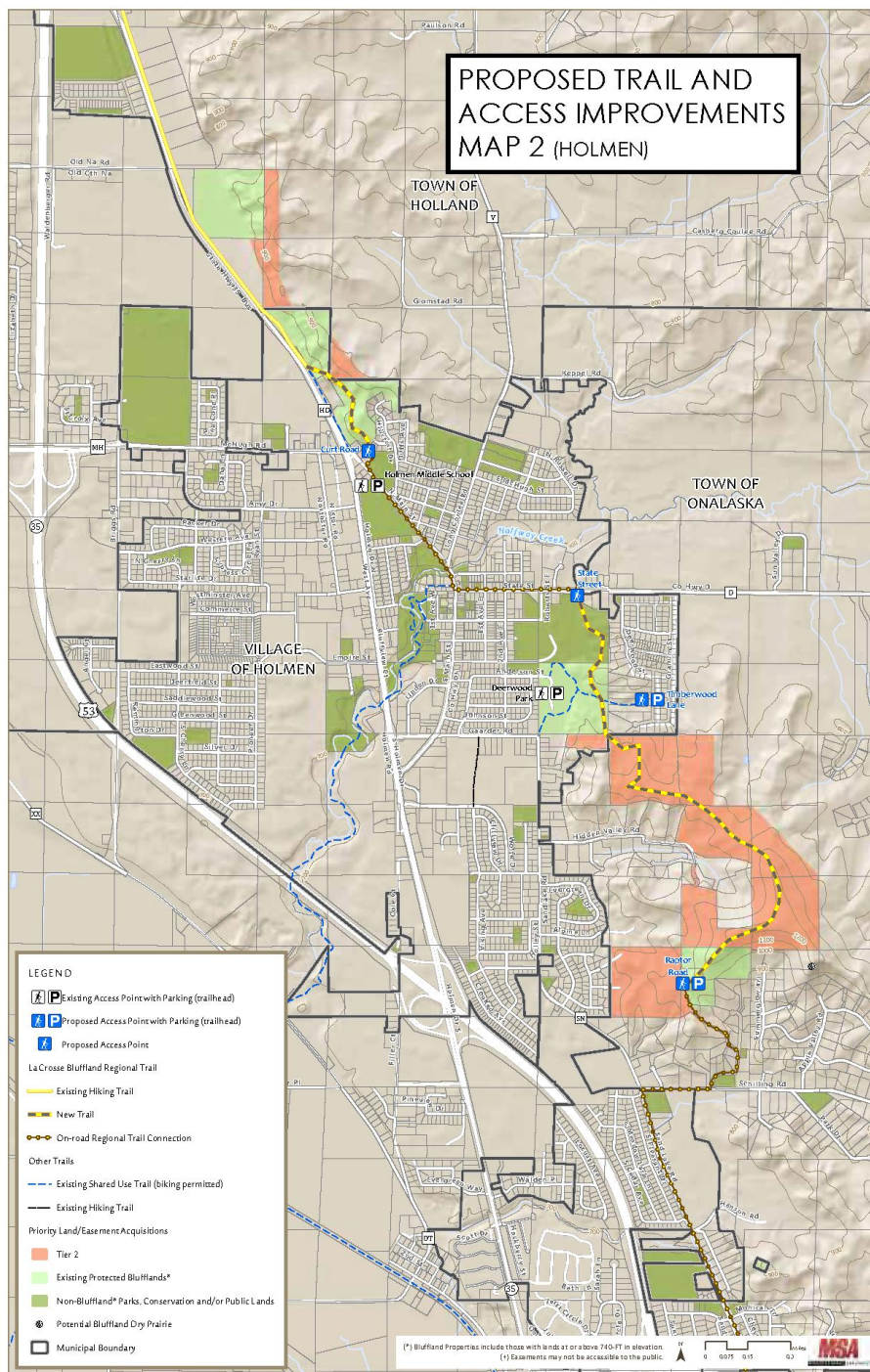








Blufflands Regional Plan



Bluffland Recreation



