



Comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012-2016

Waushara County, Wisconsin



WAUSHARA COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE OPEN SPACE AND
RECREATION PLAN

2012-2016

Prepared by
Waushara County Parks Department
and the
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Adopted by Committee on: February 22, 2012
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ABSTRACT

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This report describes existing conditions, projects future growth, and offers recommendations to guide the future growth and development of recreational facilities in Waushara County. Its intent is to be used as a benchmark and vision for promoting healthy lifestyles and safe recreational opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

PAST RECREATION PLANNING

Waushara County's natural resources and outdoor recreational facilities provide a wide range of active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Picnicking, swimming, boating, hunting and fishing, camping, hiking, bicycling, downhill and cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling are some of the more popular recreational activities. In Waushara County the primary responsibility for accommodating recreational demand has traditionally rested with the County and local units of government and private recreational businesses.

With increasing amounts of leisure time available, the demand for many types of recreational activities has grown during the past three decades. In most parts of Wisconsin the availability of recreational opportunities and facilities helps attract tourism dollars into the local economy. For smaller rural areas like Waushara County, recreational resources and facilities, both public and private, are vital to their economic health and often make tourism the area's most important industry.

Waushara County officials have come to recognize the value of the county's natural resources and recreational facilities in attracting visitors to the area. Accommodating the recreational needs of both resident and visitor is reflected by the ongoing commitment the County has made to maintain and upgrade its park system since its last *Outdoor Recreation Plan* was adopted in April 2006.

To ensure needed recreation facilities continue to be provided in a coordinated fashion, Waushara County, with the assistance of a citizens' advisory committee, has used earlier plans prepared in 1975, 1988, 1994, 2000, and 2006 as a basis for this plan update. Like its predecessors, this version of the plan reaffirms longstanding goals and objectives, inventories existing park and recreational facilities, identifies countywide park and recreation needs and opportunities, and presents recommendations and an action program for addressing the system's growth and development.

While protecting its natural resources is essential to maintaining the county's attraction as a tourism destination, Waushara County is in an excellent position to attract additional visitor dollars by building upon its unique combination of "up north" atmosphere within easy driving distance of major population concentrations. It continues to be to the advantage of the County, its municipalities, and private enterprise to work together to increase the economic impact of tourism through appropriate recreational development and promotion. In recent years, county residents have come to recognize that linear recreational facilities such as the Ice Age Trail can make an important contribution in providing more diverse recreational opportunities for local residents and in attracting tourism dollars. Not only do these linear facilities accommodate recreational activities generally growing in popularity, they are destination-oriented, allowing several local economies to benefit from their presence.

The attractiveness of the Waushara County landscape suggests that, in addition to planning for new and expanded recreational opportunities, the plan also needs to address undesirable land use changes, unwise land management practices, and other potential environmental problems.

Development pressures, some emanating from the presence of the county's resources themselves, are being felt. An attractive place to live as well as visit, Waushara County's population in many outlying rural areas is steadily growing. This growth has resulted in more intensive development of areas once enjoyed by the whole county. Lakeshores and woodlands continue to be subdivided and developed for residential use. In addition, the conversion of many seasonal and weekend lakefront properties into year-round retirement residences has placed additional pressure on existing resources. This has been a particular problem in the central third of the county, where the lakes and large wooded tracts are concentrated.

In recent years, the demand for the county's rural land for home sites and recreational properties has extended to agricultural lands. This has caused raw land prices, still relatively low compared to many areas of the state, to escalate. Combined with the downturn in the agricultural economy, these higher land prices have made the sale of some or all of their farmland for these purposes an attractive option for many farmers. For those farmers seeking to maintain viability through expansion, the higher prices commanded by these other types of land use makes the acquisition of additional acreage cost-prohibitive. As a result, perhaps the most important threat facing Waushara County today is the continued loss of its farms and productive farmland.

Additionally, some past agricultural practices were not always protective of the county's two most precious nonrenewable resources, its soil and water. Drainage of marshlands, as has occurred in many areas in the eastern part of the county, takes away their natural ability to filter nutrients from surface runoff while the conversion to agricultural land further adds to nutrient loads. This practice also reduces wildlife habitat. In western portions of the county, the use of large boom sprinkler irrigation systems has exposed thousands of acres of highly erodible sandy soils to the effects of wind, not only carrying away tons of topsoil but on occasion drastically reducing air quality. Removal of windbreaks to accommodate the long arms of the irrigation booms has compounded the problem. A related and equally important concern is the threat of widespread groundwater contamination caused by the buildup of pesticide residuals that percolate freely through the porous soils. All of these factors need to be viewed as threats not only to the county's natural resources but also to its residents and their present way of life.

PURPOSE

Like its predecessors, the 2011 version of the *Waushara County Outdoor Recreation Plan* seeks to help preserve the county's natural environment and at the same time allow residents and visitors alike to play, learn, enjoy and live in harmony with it. In addition to setting forth new recommendations based on present needs, the adopted plan will enable Waushara County to once **again compete for matching funds available through the Department of Natural Resources' Stewardship Program** if available. Funding components of this program, target monies for parkland acquisition and development projects as well as for numerous other projects and activities that preserve, protect and enhance important land- and water-based natural assets. Collectively, grants available through the Stewardship Program, its predecessors, and the inactive federally funded Land and Water Conservation (LAWCON) Program have effectively doubled the local funding commitment for acquisition and development of parkland and other public recreational facilities. Over the years, over \$984,000 has been awarded to Waushara County and local municipalities for park and open space acquisition and development (Table 1). **Waushara County itself has received slightly over \$490,000 of the county's total allocation.**

Since 2000, Waushara County has received over \$240,000 in funding for park acquisition or development. The **largest grant was for \$200,000 to match the County's share for acquiring the George Sorenson Natural Area site.**

Table 1
PAST FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR
PARK ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Waushara County

Sponsor	LAWCON/ORAP	Stewardship	Total Grants
Waushara County	\$ 77,681	\$412,896	\$490,577
City of Wautoma	21,036	67,920	88,956
Village of Coloma	4,300	28,000	32,300
Village of Hancock	13,208	13,908	27,116
Village of Plainfield	17,100	0	17,100
Village of Redgranite	1,481	20,000	21,481
Village of Wild Rose (\$60,000 Roberts Trail)	0	80,000	80,000
Town of Coloma (Pleasant Lake Park)*	0		
Park Development	0	25,000	
Land Acquisition	0	110,000	135,000
Town of Hancock	0	5,000	5,000
Town of Poy Sippi	0	40,000	40,000
Town of Springwater*	0	80,000	80,000
Gilbert Lake Advancement Assoc.	0	306	306
Johns Lake Association	0	195,372	195,372
Long Lake Association	0	330	330
Mt. Morris Rehab District	0	31,307	31,307
Wild Rose School District	12,172	0	12,172
TOTAL	\$146,978	\$1,110,039	\$1,259,417

Although many County and local recreation needs have been met during the past three decades, some still exist, others have changed and, in some cases, new needs and opportunities have arisen. The purpose of this plan is to identify these changing recreational needs and to present recommendations to ensure that Waushara County will continue to provide a wide variety of recreational facilities for residents and visitors to enjoy. Selected local sites in unincorporated communities have also been **included in the County's plan as these outlying parks and recreational** areas augment facilities and recreational opportunities found in the county park system. Following local, County and state approval, the plan will allow the County and participating communities to retain or reestablish eligibility for the Stewardship Program if applicable.

To provide help in updating the *Waushara County Open Space and Recreation Plan*, a 9-member planning committee representing interests from throughout the county was formed. The role of the committee was to help identify present and future needs and opportunities at the county level and transform the concerns addressed above into recommendations that could be used by the

Parks Development/Solid Waste Committee and ultimately the County Board as a framework in decision making. Implementing these recommendations is considered by the committee to be essential in ensuring that Waushara County residents and visitors continue to enjoy a wide variety of recreational opportunities in a quality environment.

Outdoor Recreation Planning Committee members included:

Name	Interest
Everett Eckstein	County Board of Supervisors, Public Works Committee; Town of Springwater; and County Land Use Planning Committee
Donna Kalata	County Board of Supervisors, 1 st Vice-Chair, Town of Dakota; Public Works Committee
Jeff Scherer	Citizen, Village of Lohrville President
James Tomasko	Wildlife Technician, WDNR
Terri Dopp-Paukstat	County Zoning Administrator
Scott Schuman	County Parks Superintendent
Barb Barker	Waushara Co. 4-H and Youth Agent
Randel Lennartz	WDNR, Forestry Technician, Ice Age Trail correspondent, retired
Shannon Rhode	Health Promotion Program Coordinator at Waushara County

This version of the *Waushara County Outdoor Recreation Plan* draws upon the goals and objectives of the County's previous plans. While these remain virtually intact, the planning committee recognizes that not only have the scope and priorities of recreational needs changed in the past thirty years, so too has the responsibility for meeting some of these needs. In addition, there is increased awareness of environmental problems as well as the need for accommodating disabled and elderly recreationalists who may wish to use park facilities.

WAUSHARA COUNTY GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Waushara County is located in the east central part of Wisconsin, approximately 75 miles north of Madison and 110 and 200 miles northwest of Milwaukee and Chicago respectively. Rectangular in shape, the county is 36 miles from east to west and only 18 miles from north to south. I-39 (U.S. 51), a four-lane divided freeway paralleling the county's western boundary, and STH 21, an east-west route across its south central portion, are its two major traffic arteries. STH 22, 73, and 49 are other important through routes.

Municipalities in Waushara County include two cities, six villages, and 18 towns. The City of Wautoma is the county's retail hub and county seat and, along with the Village of Redgranite and the Town of Marion, each have slightly over 2,000 residents (ECWRPC Trends, 2010; Table 1). A small portion of Berlin, a city of 5,524, located primarily in Green Lake County, is also in Waushara County. The county's other villages, Plainfield, Wild Rose, Hancock, Coloma, and Lohrville, are each less than 1,000. In addition to the Town of Marion, six other towns have populations exceeding 1,000 residents. These towns include Bloomfield, Dakota, Leon, Mount Morris, Springwater, and Wautoma.

After a half century of a slow **declining trend**, **Waushara County's population** began to grow following the 1970 census. Between 1970 and 2010, the county's population increased 65.6 percent, considerably higher than the 33.8 percent growth registered by the state. Growth was particularly high in the Village of Redgranite, which more than tripled in population during that 40-

year interval. Other municipalities experiencing at least a doubling of their population over that time included the towns of Deerfield, Leon, Marion, Mount Morris, Rose, and Springwater. Of Waushara County's 2 cities, Berlin, the part in the county, doubled it's population from 1970 to 2010.

A common characteristic of Waushara County's most rapidly growing towns is that they have significant lakeshore development. During the past few decades, much of this growth has corresponded with the conversion of seasonal residences to fulltime use. These towns have also been prime areas for new lakeshore development as well as scattered rural subdivisions and individual home sites. Between 2000 and 2010 the towns having the most rapid growth were Deerfield (17.2%), Coloma (14.1%), and Leon (12.3%). The highest growth however in the County occurred in the Village of Redgranite with (106.6%)* in those 10 years with the City of Wautoma showing just an (11.0%) change.

Table 2 - WAUSHARA COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS, 1970 - 2010

Jurisdiction	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1970-2010
C. Berlin (pt.)	41	91	67	83	89	117.1%
C. Wautoma	1,624	1,629	1,784	1,998	2,218	36.6%
V. Coloma	336	367	383	461	450	33.9%
V. Hancock	404	419	382	463	417	3.2%
V. Lohrville	213	336	368	408	402	88.7%
V. Plainfield	642	813	839	899	862	34.3%
V. Redgranite*	645	976	1,009	1,040	2,149	233.18%
V. Wild Rose	585	741	753	765	725	23.9%
T. Aurora	802	890	846	971	985	22.8%
T. Bloomfield	798	931	922	1,018	1052	31.8%
T. Coloma	382	437	499	660	753	97.1%
T. Dakota	752	994	1,092	1,259	1,227	63.2%
T. Deerfield	367	445	454	629	737	100.8%
T. Hancock	346	426	467	531	528	52.6%
T. Leon	651	844	992	1,281	1,439	121.0%
T. Marion	877	1,333	1,478	2,065	2,038	132.4%
T. Mount Morris	517	685	767	1,092	1,097	112.2%
T. Oasis	346	403	389	405	389	12.4%
T. Plainfield	447	574	529	533	550	23.0%
T. Poy Sippi	823	913	929	972	931	13.1%
T. Richford	322	404	455	588	612	90.1%
T. Rose	319	515	486	595	640	100.6%
T. Saxeville	612	776	846	974	986	61.1%
T. Springwater	584	924	1,011	1,389	1,274	118.1%
T. Warren	637	573	550	675	668	4.9%
T. Wautoma	723	1,087	1,088	1,312	1,278	76.8%
Waushara County	14,795	18,526	19,385	23,066	24,496	65.6%

Source: U.S. Census: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010.

*Village of Redgranite's growth was contributed mostly by the increase of the prison population.

Waushara County's recent history of significant population gains has caused state demographers to adjust their projections upward from those applied in the 2006 plan (Table 3). As a result, the

county's population is projected to grow by about 4.7 percent between 2000 and 2035, increasing by nearly 5,000 residents (from 23,066 to 27,852).*

Table 3
POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2000 - 2030
Waushara County

MCD Type & Name	Census 2000	2005 Estimate	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	Numeric Change	Percent Change
T Aurora	971	1,057	1,096	1,139	1,181	1,216	1,240	269	27.70%
T Bloomfield	1,018	1,047	1,055	1,069	1,081	1,088	1,087	69	6.80%
T Coloma	660	736	782	831	877	919	951	291	44.10%
T Dakota	1,259	1,271	1,285	1,306	1,325	1,336	1,340	81	6.40%
T Deerfield	629	667	702	741	777	809	834	205	32.60%
T Hancock	531	568	587	609	630	647	659	128	24.10%
T Leon	1,281	1,420	1,509	1,604	1,693	1,772	1,836	555	43.30%
T Marion	2,065	2,207	2,342	2,485	2,622	2,740	2,836	771	37.30%
T Mount Morris	1,092	1,123	1,176	1,234	1,289	1,335	1,371	279	25.50%
T Oasis	405	398	389	382	376	367	358	-47	-11.60%
T Plainfield	533	560	560	561	564	562	558	25	4.70%
T Poysippi	972	970	957	949	941	929	911	-61	-6.30%
T Richford	588	611	636	664	689	711	727	139	23.60%
T Rose	595	619	635	653	671	685	694	99	16.60%
T Saxeville	974	1,016	1,042	1,073	1,102	1,125	1,138	164	16.80%
T Springwater	1,389	1,429	1,488	1,553	1,616	1,668	1,707	318	22.90%
T Warren	675	711	733	759	783	803	816	141	20.90%
T Wautoma	1,312	1,353	1,382	1,419	1,452	1,479	1,494	182	13.90%
V Coloma	461	470	479	490	501	509	513	52	11.30%
V Hancock	463	453	451	451	451	448	444	-19	-4.10%
V Lohrville	408	411	413	417	421	423	422	14	3.40%
V Plainfield	899	891	880	874	868	857	843	-56	-6.20%
V Redgranite	1,040	2,049	2,013	1,992	1,969	1,937	1,894	854	82.10%
V Wild Rose	765	744	727	715	702	687	668	-97	-12.70%
C Berlin	83	83	82	82	82	82	80	-3	-3.60%
C Wautoma	1,998	2,094	2,145	2,204	2,262	2,307	2,335	337	16.90%
County Total	23,066	24,958	25,546	26,256	26,925	27,441	27,756	4,690	20.33%

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2008 population projections.

In addition to the county's base population, its seasonal population is also an important consideration in planning for the county's open space and recreational needs. It is estimated that as many as four-fifths of all recreationalists found in Waushara County on a typical summer

weekend day live outside the county. About one-third of the county's housing stock, for example, is seasonally occupied. Most of these visitors are within an 1 hour driving radius, such as the Fox Valley, Madison, and the Stevens Point area (Figure 3). An estimated, 63 million dollars in tourism expenditures were spent in the County in 2010. Overall, \$1.4 billion in state-wide revenues were generated by traveler spending in 2010 with another \$662 million taken in by local government revenue generated by traveler spending state-wide.*

According to the 2010 Visitors Study for Green Lake, Marquette, and Waushara Counties conducted by the UW-Extension Small Business Development Center at UW-Oshkosh College of Business, a dense number of visitors occur in the center of the state. The majority of non-local visitors are repeat visitors attending events. While in the area, visitor activities also include food & dining, lake-related activities, shopping and fishing/hunting. These activities are should be **marketed together and called the "visitor experience."**

Additionally, a number of large seasonally occupied campgrounds also exist in the county and immediate vicinity. The county is also **home to a number of youth camps. The county's proximity** to larger urban centers also attracts numerous day-visitors. Since the demand placed on recreational facilities and open space as well as many other types of services is similar to that generated by a population of 100,000 or more, it is easy to see that providing adequate recreational facilities to accommodate the demand will continue to be a major challenge of the Waushara County park system in coming years.

Another factor that must be considered when evaluating existing and future recreational needs in Waushara County is the distribution of its population by age group. This information suggests the likely demand for certain types of recreational opportunities and facilities. Proportionally, **Waushara County's population is comprised of a relatively high number of elderly residents.** In 2010, 24.2 percent of county residents were age 62 and over, compared to 16.8 percent for the state as a whole. At the same time, 19.7 percent were under the age of 18, while 23.6 percent of state residents were in this age group.**

With the distribution of its population skewed toward elderly residents, it is not surprising that the median age of Waushara County residents is relatively high. The county's 2010 median age of 46.2 exceeded the state's median age of 38.5 by over seven years.* Additionally, while in most rural counties, towns generally have a lower median age than incorporated communities, this distinction is not clear-cut in Waushara County. The higher **median age in Waushara County's** towns reinforces the popularity of the county's rural areas for retirement living. The median age for the townships of Springwater (54.6), Marion (52.6), Hancock (52.8), and Mount Morris (54.0); for example, makes them among the "oldest" municipalities in the state.* Providing recreational opportunities for this segment of the population, with a high amount of time available and an overall desire to maintain a more active lifestyle than their parents, should be a priority. Activities such as bicycling, hiking, and cross-country skiing are becoming increasingly popular among retirees.

**According to the Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism, 2010.*

***According to American Fact Finder, Census 2010 SF-1 data.*

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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The following goals and objectives are designed to serve as a guide for Waushara County officials as they set about to improve and develop the county's park and recreation system. These goals and objectives, reaffirmed with slight modifications from the county's earlier *Outdoor Recreation Plans*, provide a basis for establishing public policy regarding the acquisition, development and management of park and recreation lands and other important resource areas in Waushara County. They address the two components of a park and recreation system the provision of recreational opportunities and the preservation of unique natural and cultural resources. The goals are general statements indicating the type of park and recreation system the County would like to provide for local residents and visitors. Objectives are more specific statements of how the goals can be achieved.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Goal 1: Provide throughout the county a planned system of parks and recreation areas that will enable county residents and visitors alike to participate in and enjoy a diversity of recreational activities.

Objectives:

- Use sound planning principles in the design and development of all parks and park facilities. As part of this objective, ensure that cost-effective measures are taken both in their initial design and in their future maintenance.
- Acquire and develop recreation lands needed to meet the demand for high quality recreational facilities for permanent and seasonal residents of Waushara County. As part of this objective, cooperate with other public and private entities in identifying jurisdictional responsibility for providing needed recreational areas.
- Provide recreational facilities that are lacking or in short supply. As part of this objective, ensure that all facilities, as much as possible, are designed to accommodate the special needs of disabled recreationalists and an aging population.
- Encourage maximum and appropriate use of all public recreation lands within the county. As part of this objective, encourage a policy of intergovernmental cooperation, particularly between communities and adjacent towns, in providing and utilizing recreational facilities, as a way of avoiding unnecessary duplication of facilities and associated costs.
- Identify and establish priorities for acquiring or developing needed recreation areas and facilities.
- Preserve or obtain and develop an appropriate level of public access to rivers, lakes, and streams to maximize their potential as recreational resources.
- Link major county and community recreation areas by utilizing natural watercourses, geologic features, and transportation or utility rights-of-way.

- Encourage a high standard of maintenance in the county park system as a way of promoting the county's park and recreation facilities.
- Promote linkages to trails on-street and off where appropriate, to provide a county network.
- Create ADA compliant trails and boat landings to accommodate individuals who are physically challenged by providing a safe recreational activity making it accessible to all.

UNIQUE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Goal 2: Preserve scarce and valuable resources important to the ecological, sociological, and economic life of the county.

Objectives:

- Encourage the acquisition, preservation and restoration of archaeological and other historic sites by public agencies and private organizations.
- Encourage the preservation and enhancement of the county's natural features and protect them from encroachment by all man-made development including both public and private intensive recreational development.
- Promote an awareness of the importance of maintaining high quality natural areas free from intensive development.
- **Protect and preserve the intrinsic value of the county's wildlife and fishery resources.**
- Conserve trees and other vegetation needed to prevent erosion, siltation and floods, and to protect air and water quality.
- Use timber harvesting as a silvicultural tool by means to maintain healthy woodlots throughout the County.
- **Maintain the quality of the county's lakes, including the means to prevent or minimize the introduction of invasive species.**
- Conserve lands with soils and terrain highly suitable for agricultural activity.
- Preserve wetlands necessary for continued fisheries and wildlife habitat and for groundwater recharge purposes.
- Conserve other important ecological areas containing sensitive plant life or unique and irreplaceable plant and animal communities.
- Preserve unique or unusual geological features.
- Promote the scientific and educational value of the county's unique ecological, geological and historical areas in the schools.

- Encourage wise land use planning practices in the placement of structures for all types of development activity to prevent problems such as excessive erosion on steep slopes, pollution of both surface water and groundwater, and flood magnification.
- Use Waushara County's Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify all archeological and historical sites in the county, including cemeteries.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Goal 3: To encourage continued involvement of County residents when planning for parks and recreational development

Objectives:

- Encourage ongoing participation by all residents at County Public Works Committee meetings, i.e., continue with notices in Argus and other publications.
- Explore the support of community groups, service organizations, and volunteers for ways of funding and/or for making improvements to the county parks system by increasing the amount of recreational opportunities.
- Continue to solicit comments from residents on all aspects of park and recreational programming and management via website comments, online polls , surveys, etc.
- Encourage residents to promote "in Memory of" benches, trees, etc. along trails and in parks through donations.

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RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

The character of the attractive Waushara County landscape changes from east to west across the county. Largely the legacy of past glacial activity, most of the county's landforms, water bodies, and other natural features are examples of glacial deposits, including end and recessional moraines, drumlins, till plains, glacial lake basins, and outwash plains. Isolated granite monadnocks and sandstone outcroppings are the county's most dramatic topographic features and add to its visual character. Together, these features played an important role in how the county grew and developed and remain a major influence on how the county's land resource is utilized, particularly for recreational and agricultural activities. In recent years, these landscape features have become increasingly attractive for residential development.

Surface Water

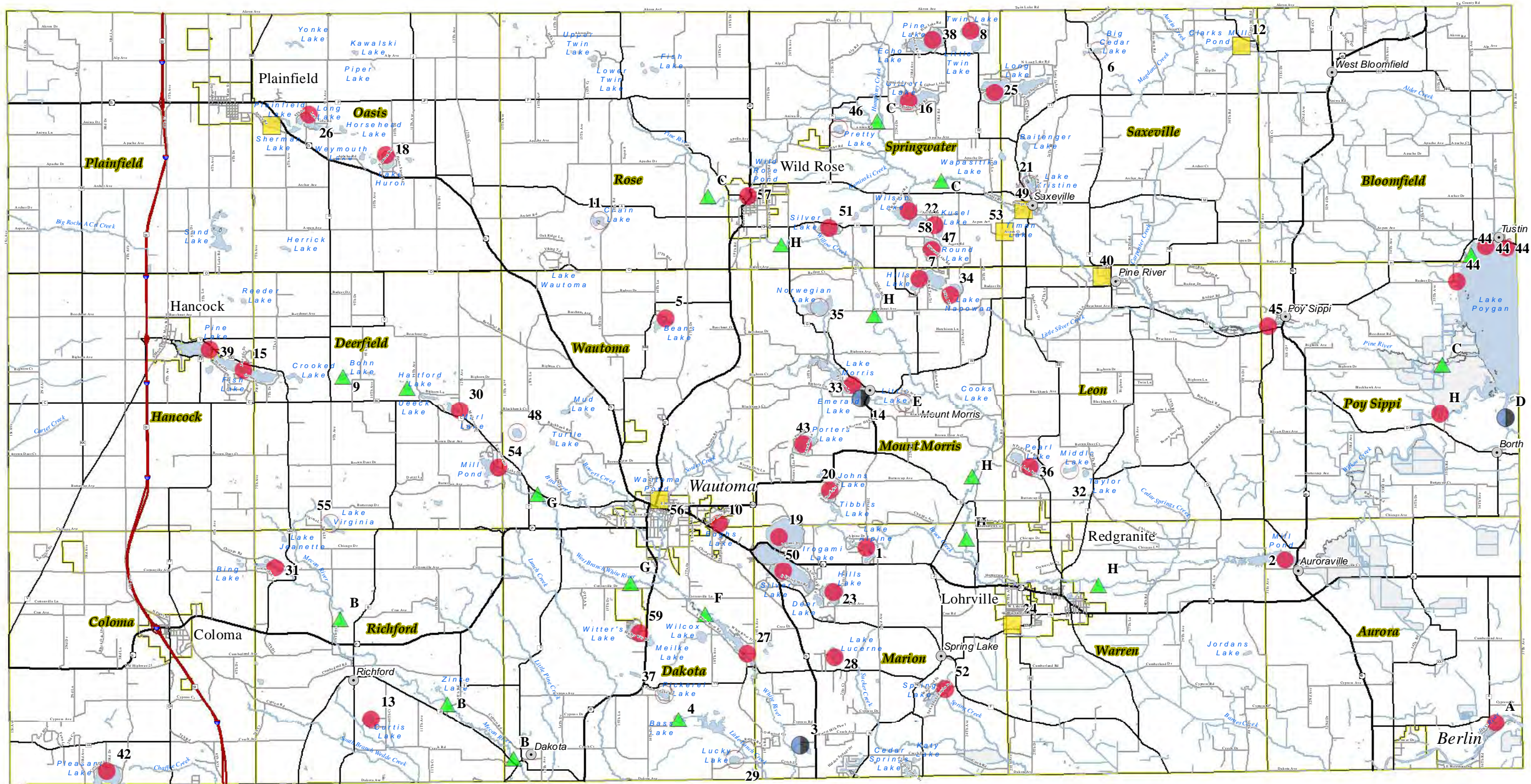
Waushara County's 136 lakes, 96 of which are named, comprise about 7,000 acres of surface water. While the western end of Lake Poygan, the second largest natural lake in Wisconsin, lies in the county, other lakes in Waushara County are relatively small. Silver Lake and Irogami Lake, both east of Wautoma, and Long Lake, in the towns of Springwater and Saxeville, are the only natural lakes larger than 200 acres. Six other lakes and three impoundments exceed 100 acres in size. These and several other smaller lakes provide a diversity of boating and fishing opportunities. The greatest concentration of lakes is found among the moraines and drumlins in the central and western portions of the county.

Because Waushara County straddles the watersheds of both the Wisconsin and Fox-Wolf River systems, its many small headwater streams – collectively totaling over 150 miles -- support native trout populations. Most of these small streams best accommodate walk-in fishing opportunities. Downstream from prime trout habitat, several of these streams are considered to have potential for canoeing and kayaking. Among these are the White, Pine and Mecan rivers and Willow Creek. The Fox River, located in the southeastern corner of the county, provides boating opportunities.

Thirty-six Waushara County lakes have ramp access, nine have road access, three have walk-in access, and two are accessible from their outlet streams, (Table 4 and Figure 1). Nine Waushara County lakes identified as significant in East Central's 1981 study *Public Access to Lakes and Streams* **are among the region's 46 named lakes presently having no access. The largest of these** is the 94-acre Norwegian Lake. Other smaller yet significant lakes unavailable for public use include Kristine, Lucky (Fratzke), Pickerel, and Round lakes. Access to the county's streams is generally good; DNR owns and leases land along most of the important trout streams and road crossings provide a degree of access to some of the county's navigable streams. To more fully utilize appropriate streams for canoeing, however, additional and improved access is needed, along with stream clean-up efforts. Significant streams are shown on Table 5 and Figure 1. More detailed information on public access can be found on the Waushara County website.

Table 4 SIGNIFICANT LAKES IN WAUSHARA COUNTY

Map		Area	Depth	Shoreline	Present
<u>Code</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>(Acres)</u>	<u>(Feet)</u>	<u>(Miles)</u>	<u>Access</u>
1	Alpine, Lake	66	20	2.6	Ramp
2	Auroraville Millpond	209	6	5.9	Ramp
3	Bannerman Lake	5	6	0.5	Water
4	Bass Lake	14	28	0.6	Walk-in
5	Beans (Hensel) Lake	22	13	0.9	Ramp
6	Big Cedar Lake	8	46	0.5	--
7	Big Hills Lake	135	20	2.6	Ramp
8	Big Twin Lake	92	17	2.3	Ramp
9	Bohn Lake	13	24	0.7	Walk-in
10	Bughs Lake	25	18	0.8	Ramp
11	Chain Lake	21	13	1.3	--
12	Clarks Millpond (drained)	68	5	2.6	Road
13	Curtis Lake	33	41	0.9	Ramp
14	Emerald Lake	11	14	0.8	Water
15	Fish Lake	177	42	4.0	Ramp
16	Gilbert Lake	130	65	2.6	Ramp
17	Hartford (Lyman's) Lake	9	27	0.5	Walk-in
18	Huron, Lake	48	37	1.1	Ramp
19	Irogami (Fish) Lake	289	5	2.6	Ramp
20	Johns Lake	67	41	1.6	Ramp
21	Kristine Lake	26	20	1.1	--
22	Kusel Lake	79	29	2.2	Ramp
23	Little Hills Lake	81	23	1.5	Ramp
24	Lohrville Quarry	4	120	0.5	Road
25	Long Lake	272	71	4.4	Ramp
26	Long Lake	45	6	2.0	Ramp
27	Lower White River Millpond	110	22	6.0	Ramp
28	Lucerne (Egans) Lake	48	34	1.1	Ramp
29	Lucky (Fratzke) Lake	17	46	0.7	--
30	Marl Lake	41	34	1.4	Ramp
31	Mecan Springs	41	21	3.6	Ramp
32	Middle Lake	20	14	1.0	--
33	Mount Morris Lake	163	40	5.3	Ramp
34	Napowan (Funk) Lake	51	18	1.3	Ramp
35	Norwegian Lake	94	31	2.0	--
36	Pearl Lake	92	50	2.2	Ramp
37	Pickrel Lake	28	51	0.8	--
38	Pine Lake	143	48	2.6	Ramp
39	Pine Lake	163	15	2.3	Ramp
40	Pine River Millpond	28	4	1.2	Road
41	Plainfield Lake	31	5	0.8	Road
42	Pleasant Lake	127	30	2.4	Ramp
43	Porters Lake	68	18	2.0	Ramp
44	Poygan, Lake	14,102	12	25.5	Ramp
45	Poy Sippi Millpond	57	7	2.9	Ramp
46	Pretty Lake	14	24	0.7	--
47	Round Lake	71	18	1.5	Ramp
48	Round Lake	27	14	0.7	--
49	Saxeville Millpond	13	4	0.8	Road
50	Silver Lake	328	46	4.7	Ramp
51	Silver Lake	48	52	1.3	Ramp
52	Spring Lake	71	37	2.3	Ramp
53	Timan Lake	9	16	0.5	Road
54	Upper White River Millpond	64	29	2.1	Ramp
55	Virginia Lake	11	28	0.6	--
56	Wautoma Millpond	35	12	2.0	Road
57	Wild Rose Millpond	15	8	0.9	Ramp
58	Wilson Lake	66	15	1.8	Ramp
59	Witters Lake	51	18	1.0	Ramp



Types of Access

- Adjacent
- No Public
- Ramp
- Walk In
- Water

Note: See Table 4 for codes.

- Local Road
- B County Highway
- 73 State Highway
- 39 Interstate Highway
- Municipal Boundary
- Unincorporated Community
- Streams
- Lakes

Figure 1
EXISTING PUBLIC ACCESS TO LAKES AND STREAMS
Waushara County, WI

0 3 6 Miles

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Source: Base map data and access points provided by Waushara County Land Records Office December, 2011.



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Table 5
SIGNIFICANT STREAMS IN WAUSHARA COUNTY

Map Code	Stream	Area (Acres)	Length (Miles)	Width (Feet)	Gradient (Ft./Mi.)	Avg. Present Access
A	Fox River	61.3	4.4	115	0.23	Ramp
B	Mecan River	32.5	10.3	26	2.14	Road
C	Pine River	143.6	28.2	42	5.90	Road
D	Pumpkinseed Creek	3.2	1.1	23	0.88	Water
E	Rattlesnake Creek	6.4	1.7	32	2.15	Road
F	White River--Main Branch	29.1	8.0	30	2.25	Road
G	White River--West Branch	23.2	6.0	32	5.00	Road
H	Willow Creek	217.8	33.9	53	6.57	Ramp

Woodlands

According to Waushara County's most recent land use inventory, woodlands comprise over 160,000 acres, nearly 40 percent of the county's total area. The amount of wooded acreage has increased by over 40,000 acres since the early 1970s. The woodlands reach their greatest concentration in a 20-mile wide band that angles from northeast to southwest across the county, closely paralleling those portions of the county where moraines and other topographic relief are common. Fewer woodlands are found in the flatter northwestern and southeastern corners of the county, where more of the land is in agricultural production. The county's woodlands are not only commercially important, they also help support the county's wildlife base and provide a variety of other recreational opportunities. With its combination of topography, surface water, woodland and cropland, the county annually ranks in the top ten among the state's counties in deer harvest. These features are also becoming increasingly desirable for rural home sites, which could pose a long-term threat for the natural resource base and the wildlife and fisheries habitat it supports.

Upland woods dominated by tree species in the oak-hickory association, often interspersed with pines, are found in much of the county. In the western part of the county, the jack pine-scrub oak association is common, with aspen and birch found in nearby lower areas. Stands dominated by maple, basswood, elm, and ash are less common, generally found on the heavier soils in the eastern third of the county. While remnant stands of white pine exist in scattered locations, most of the larger coniferous stands today are comprised of red pine, a species that was initially introduced to be grown in plantations or serve as windbreaks.

The growth and harvest of Christmas trees, which may be considered an agricultural crop, is an important component of Waushara County's economy. At its peak, it was estimated that as many as 10 million future Christmas trees were growing on county soil. However, with the recent downturn in the profitability of Christmas tree production, the larger growers have begun to sell off some of their acreage to buyers seeking recreational acreage or wooded homesites.

Wetlands

Digitally mapped wetlands based on an inventory conducted by DNR in 1994 from aerial photos, indicate that Waushara County had an estimated 68,860 acres of wetland at that time. This total represents nearly 35 percent of the county's land area and probably has remained relatively stable since that time because of regulatory controls. While small wetlands can be found adjacent to many lakes and streams throughout the county, nearly all the larger wetlands are located in the eastern third. Poygan Marsh, the county's most extensive wetland area, is largely under the ownership of DNR as part of the Poygan Marsh State Wildlife Area.

Wetlands have come to be recognized as valuable resources that serve as a filtering system to purify water, maintain and stabilize the quantity of water, and provide important fish and wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, infringing land use changes can quickly and permanently destroy these fragile natural areas. Too often in the past, the benefits of protecting the state's wetlands were unrecognized and many were drained or filled. Waushara County's wetlands historically have been subject of such abuse, particularly in the eastern portion of the county, where they were relatively easy to drain and convert into agricultural production. As a result, as much as one half of the county's original wetland acreage may have been lost over the years. Although wetlands have come under the protection of increasingly stringent regulations, the loss of additional wetland acreage remains a threat, particularly in areas where development infringes.

The county started a new initiative in 2005 to help update the digital wetlands survey from its base map as it was fairly out of date and had many errors. A new wetland inventory has been digitized by the DNR still using the 1994 photos and was adopted by the County. The new inventory better reflects what is current today. There are still concerns with the data as a wet spring may indicate more acres listed than what is presently on the ground today.

Floodplains

FEMA Floodplains **have also just been completed by the DNR for the county's preliminary** floodplain maps. These will also be a digitized product overlaid on aerial photos when done. They will go through a public review process soon and should be adopted within the next year or so. The County currently has approximately 40,836 acres of floodplains which represents **6% of the county's landmass.**

IMPORTANT NATURAL AND CULTURAL SITES

Appreciation of the unique ecological, geological, historical, and archeological heritage of Waushara County is a significant educational aspect of public outdoor recreation. Perhaps the most important of these are the six designated State Natural Areas (SNA), which are listed on Table 6 and described in detail below. There are also a number of other important sites in the county, but few have been officially designated and some may no longer exist. The county has three sites on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), including the Waushara County Courthouse complex in Wautoma, the Whistler Mound Group near Hancock, and the Alanson M. Kimball House in Pine River. In addition to these three sites, five other sites in Waushara County are eligible for listing in the National Register. These include the Silver Lake Site in the Towns of Dakota and Marion; the Two Faces Site in the Town of Marion; and the David Lockerby House, Charles T. Taylor House, and the Arthur J. Walker Farmstead, all in the City of

Wautoma. At present, the county's only two official historical markers are located on CTH J in the Town of Oasis and adjacent to the Auroraville millpond on STH 49 in the Town of Aurora. A number of other important natural and cultural sites considered to be at least of county significance are also listed. The existence of many of these sites needs to be verified. Rare and endangered species can be found on many of these sites and other undisclosed locations in the county.

Bass Lake Fen

Located about four miles south of Wautoma, Bass Lake features a 20-acre calcareous fen located on the undeveloped shore of Bass Lake. The fen is exceptionally diverse with many small springs, openings, and ponds providing a calcium-rich habitat that supports 125 species of plants, including several rare or threatened species adapted to the alkaline conditions.

The 5-acre Bass Lake and adjacent wetlands form the headwaters of Little Lunch Creek. DNR owns about 77 acres of the 106 acres in the project boundary.

Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes

Located about a mile east of Plainfield, the Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes provide specialized habitat for **Fassett's locoweed, one of the rarest plants found in Wisconsin.** A federally threatened species, this plant is found only on the fluctuating shorelines of lakes in the Central Sands area of Wisconsin and nowhere else on earth. Trampling by humans and disturbance from off-road vehicles pose the most serious threats to these sensitive plants. This site was designated a SNA in 1990 by DNR, which owns the 88-acre site.

Karner Blue Meadow

Located about three miles east of Wild Rose, this 40-acre tract was designated by DNR as a SNA in 1998. Karner Blue Meadow features a dry sand prairie that is home to a strong population of the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. The Karner blue is one of the many plants and animals native to the shady oak savannas and dry prairie habitat that have declined dramatically over the past several decades. The Karner blue butterfly is restricted to habitats that contain wild lupine, the larval butterfly's only food plant.

Upper Fox Headwaters

The Upper Chaffee Creek Meadow is one of three segments of the Upper Fox Headwaters SNA, which is also located in Marquette County. Located directly north of the southbound I-39 rest area in the Chaffee Creek State Fishery Area, the meadow features a wetland complex of fen, wet-mesic, and wet prairie with over 100 native plant species. Chaffee Creek runs through the site, which was designated a SNA in 1998. A spur trail from the rest area leads to the Ice Age Trail, which winds through the meadow.

Table 6

**IMPORTANT NATURAL AND CULTURAL SITES
Waushara County**

Name	Location	Ownership
STATE NATURAL AREAS:		
Bass Lake Fen	T. of Dakota	DNR
Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes	T. of Oasis	DNR
Karner Blue Meadow	T. of Springwater	DNR
Upper Fox Headwaters	T. of Coloma	DNR
Lunch Creek Wetlands	T. of Dakota	DNR
Mecan Springs	T. of Coloma; T. of Richford	DNR
OTHER ECOLOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SITES:		
Mt. Morris Oak Forest	T. of Mt. Morris	Public
Coloma Prairie	North of Coloma	Private
Pasque Flower Area	Northwest of Wautoma	Private
Baitenger Lake Fen	T. of Saxeville	Private
Redgranite Quarry Oak Forest	V. of Redgranite	Public
Malloy Tract	Southeast of Wautoma	Private
Christopher Prairie Remnant	Northwest of Coloma	Private
State Fish Hatchery Parcel	T. of Rose	Public
Mt. Morris Monadnock	T. of Mt. Morris	Public
Redgranite Quarry	V. of Redgranite	Public
Lohrville Quarry	V. of Lohrville	Private
Flynn's Quarry	T. of Marion	Public
ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORICAL SITES:		
Waushara Co. Courthouse Complex(NRHP)	C. of Wautoma	Public
Whistler Mounds Group (NRHP)	V. Hancock	Public
Alanson M. Kimball House (NRHP)	Pine River	Private
Residence #3	V. Plainfield Area	Private
Hasse Site	T. of Poy Sippi	Private
George Lee Site	T. of Poy Sippi	Private
Schwartz Site	T. of Poy Sippi	Private
Lind Site	T. of Bloomfield	Private
Edwin Smith Site	T. of Bloomfield	Private
Welch Resort Site	T. of Poy Sippi	Private
Residence	V. of Wild Rose	Private
Town of Rose Hall	V. of Wild Rose	Unknown
Wild Rose Historical Society	V. of Wild Rose	Private
Wild Rose Merchantile Company	V. of Wild Rose	Private
Haeft Burial #1	T. of Poy Sippi	Private
Meeting House	T. of Mt. Morris	Private
School House	T. of Mt. Morris	Private
Methodist Church	V. of Plainfield	Private
Residence #1	V. of Plainfield	Private
Residence #2	V. of Plainfield	Private
Auroraville Residence	T. of Aurora	Private
St. Petri Ev. Lutheran Kirche	T. of Richford	Private
Spring Lake Methodist Church	T. of Marion	Private

Lunch Creek Wetlands

Located about 3.5 miles south of Wautoma in conjunction with the White River State Fishery Area, Lunch Creek Wetlands contains one of the most diverse and species rich sedge meadows in Wisconsin situated within a mainly undisturbed watershed, an uncommon occurrence in the state. This large wetland complex is free of exotic species and dominated by fen and sedge meadow communities containing a total of 115 plant species, including many uncommon ones. The area provides ideal habitat for grassland and upland birds such as the northern harrier, a species of special concern in Wisconsin. Lunch Creek Wetlands was designated a SNA in 2000.

Mecan Springs

Mecan Springs, designated as a SNA in 2002, is located about three miles northeast of Coloma. Situated in the bottom of a moraine depression, Mecan Springs protect the large clearwater springs that are the headwaters of the Mecan River, one of the finest Class I trout streams in central Wisconsin. The site is part of the Mecan River State Fishery area. The Ice Age Trail skirts the springs, providing overviews into the site.

Other Natural and Cultural Sites

Most of the sites identified to have value as natural and cultural resources are presently in private ownership. Many of the historic sites provide evidence of past Native American cultures. Among the most important sites are those near Gilbert, Huron, Fish (Hancock) and Silver (Wautoma) lakes. Whistler Mounds, one such group on the west shore of Fish Lake, was recently incorporated into the Village of Hancock's park system. Several other village and camp sites, enclosures, caches, cemeteries, garden beds, and mound groups exist in the county but, for the most part, specific locations are kept from the general public to prevent their destruction by an unthinking or inconsiderate public. The present status of other sites is unknown; many may no longer exist. An up-to-date inventory that would both ascertain the status and significance of presently known sites and identify other sites would be valuable.

EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Over 20,000 acres of public land and an additional 3,537 acres of private land are available for outdoor recreational activities in Waushara County (Table 7). Public open space comprises 4.8 percent of the county's total land area, a figure that compares favorably with surrounding counties. The only federal open space in Waushara County is a 272-acre tract in the Town of Dakota, which is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and managed for waterfowl. **The state's DNR is the largest public landowner in Waushara County, controlling 18,400 acres (Figure 2).** The county park system makes up 815 acres of publicly owned open space while the Town of Rose forest and three school forests contribute 819 acres. In addition, parks and schools located **within the county's incorporated communities contribute over 350 acres of open space.** As a rule, however, because these local parks and school properties are assumed to address primarily local open space needs, they traditionally are not included in determining the amount of regional open space available in the county.

Table 7
EXISTING OPEN SPACE, 2012
Waushara County

	TOTAL ACRES	Passive Acreage	Active Acreage
Federal Lands (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)	272	272	0
Department of Natural Resources	*18,400	18,176	721
State Natural Areas	**375		
Fishery Areas	11,632		
Wildlife Areas	4,953		
Ice Age Trail <i>615 miles</i> Park	106		
Wild Rose Fish Hatchery	235		
Other DNR Owned Land	759		
Miscellaneous	715		
County Parks and Other Facilities	815	281	486
Town and School Forests	819	819	0
Local Total Acres:	1,641	1,100	486
Total: Publicly Owned Open Space	20,313	19,548	1,207
Forest Crop Land	1,054	1,054	0
Managed Forest Lands	***60,953	***60,953	***0
Open Managed Forest Lands	1,863	1,863	0
Closed Managed Forest Lands	***58,850	***58,850	***0
Golf Courses	370	0	370
Campgrounds	250	0	250
Total: Privately Owned Open Space	3,537	2,917	620
TOTAL OPEN SPACE	23,843	22,465	1,827

*DNR, 2010-2011. **Some State Natural Areas are within the boundaries of State Fishery Area
***Closed Managed Forest Lands not included in total; not available for public use

COUNTY PARKS

Waushara County's park system is comprised of 18 sites containing a total of approximately 815 acres (Figure 2 and Table 8). Mt. Morris County Park, which contains 383 acres, is one of the largest county-operated parks in the state. Kusel Lake Park, 92 acres, and Sorenson Natural Area, 71 acres, are other sizable parcels. The county park system is considered to primarily provide active recreational opportunities. Mt. Morris County Park, which remains largely in its natural state, Sorenson Natural Area, and newly acquired Buehler Natural Area, presently undeveloped, are exceptions.

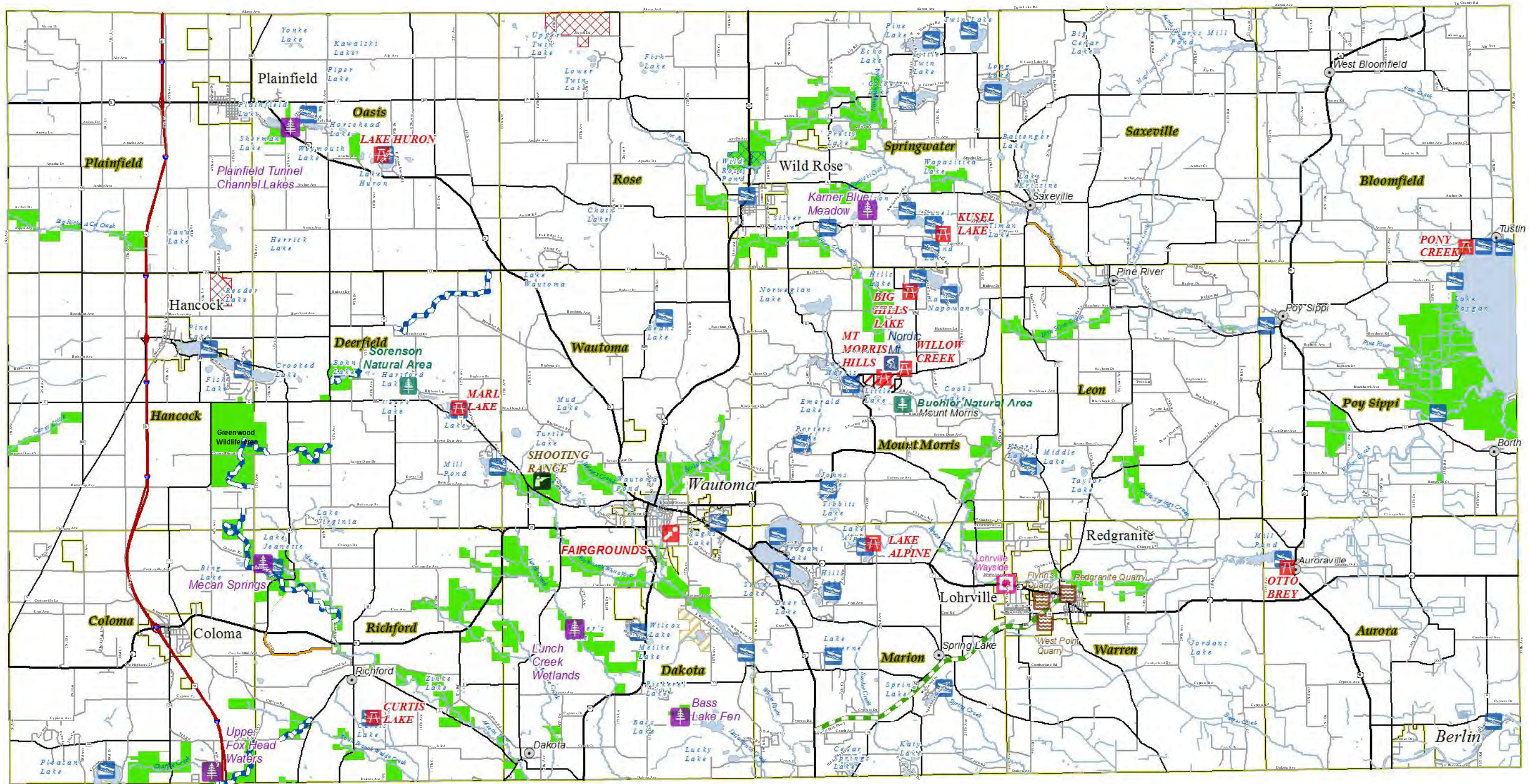
Upgrading existing facilities to make them more attractive and maintenance-free has been a priority in recent years. Consistency in signing, painting, and standards of maintenance has increased awareness of the county's park system and has been well received by park visitors. The addition of Pony Creek Park near Tustin and Otto Brey Park in Auroraville during the past 10-15 years has helped meet the need for recreational facilities and open space in the eastern portion of the county.

Table 8 COUNTY OWNED LAND, 2012

Code	Park/Recreational Site	Acres	General Recreational Use
A	Lake Huron County Park (b)	2	Primarily boat access
B	Marl Lake County Park (b)	24	Primarily active recreation
C	County Shooting Range (d)	5	Target/sighting range
D	Curtis Lake County Park (b)	1	Primarily boat access/swimming
E	Waushara County Fairgrounds	35	Fairgrounds, exposition site
F	Sorenson Natural Area	71	Kettle lake walk-in access; passive recreation
G	Bannerman Trail (7 miles)	63	Multi-use recreational trail
H	Flynn's Quarry Property (e)	40	Primarily passive recreation, Scuba diving
I	Lake Alpine County Park	17	Primarily active recreation
J	Otto Brey County Park	6	Primarily active recreation
K	Mt. Morris County Park	383	Active/passive recreation
L	Willow Creek County Park	1	Primarily walk-in stream access
M	Big Hills Lake County Park	5	Primarily active recreation
N	Kusel Lake County Park (a)	92	Primarily active recreation
O	Pony Creek County Park (c)	16	Shore fishing, other active recreation
P	Buehler Natural Area	6	Primarily passive, hiking trails, and fishing
Q	West Point Quarry (e)	48	Primarily passive recreation, Scuba diving
Total Acres:		815	

- (a) 33 ac. owned by county; 59 ac. leased from town
- (b) town owned; leased by county for development and maintenance
- (c) owned by state; County has permanent easement
- (d) owned by state; County has land use agreement
- (e) owned by County but leased by dive club

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- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Boat Launches | DNR Fish Hatchery | Local Road |
| County Park | DNR Owned Land | County Highway |
| Fairgrounds | US Fish and Wildlife | State Highway |
| Natural Area | Other Public Lands | Interstate Highway |
| Quarry | Mt Morris County Park | Rustic Road |
| Shooting Range | | Municipal Boundary |
| Ski Hill | | Unincorporated Community |
| State Natural Area | Bannerman Trail | Streams |
| Wayside | Ice Age Trail | Lakes |

Figure 2
PUBLIC FACILITIES
Waushara County, WI

0 3 6 Miles



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Source: Base map data and facility locations provided by Waushara County Land Records Office and the WDNR, December, 2011.



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Mt. Morris County Park

Located on CTH W in the Town of Mount Morris, Mt. Morris County Park's 383 acres comprise over half the parkland in the county park system. Mt. Morris itself, the granite monadnock on which the park is located, is one of the most prominent features in Waushara County. An overlook area protected by safety fencing provides panoramic views 300 feet above the surrounding countryside. Most of the park's developed areas are located on flatter areas near the top of the hill. Facilities include a shelter house, tables and grills, three restroom buildings, play equipment, drinking water, two tennis courts, basketball goals, volleyball courts, a fenced ball diamond and concession stand. The ball diamond receives light use from Mount Morris area citizens. In 2002, the County purchased an additional 7.4 acres along CTH W and has begun a prairie restoration.

The northern slope of Mt. Morris is leased out as a ski hill complex, with tubing and snowboard runs added in 2007. The parking area at Nordic Mountain serves as a trailhead for 7.4 km. of county-maintained cross-country ski trails. About three-fourths of the trail is in Mt. Morris County Park while the remainder is in adjacent Willow Creek County Park and adjacent private lands. In 2005 the County entered into a lease arrangement with Nordic Mountain's new owner.

Willow Creek County Park

This one-acre site provides walk-in access to Willow Creek, a class I trout stream. A small parking area off the entrance road into Nordic Mountain Ski Hill serves the park. A restroom building and picnic facilities are available. The park is on a loop of cross-country ski trail that originates at the Nordic Mountain parking lot. Much of this trail parallels the west bank of the stream, contrasting with the more wooded and hillier terrain of the trails in Mt. Morris County Park.

Lake Alpine County Park

This 17-acre county park lies about a quarter mile north of STH 21 midway between Wautoma and Redgranite in the central portion of the county. Recreational facilities include a shelter, restrooms, boat ramp, picnic facilities, a variety of play apparatus, drinking water, and volleyball courts. A portion of the shoreline is used for swimming. Parking is considered generally adequate while the restrooms are considered inadequate. As part of this site, Waushara County also owns and is responsible for maintaining the dam and adjacent dikes. Improvements to the dam and dike riprapping were undertaken several years ago and further improvements were made in 2004. In 2003 a boundary survey was conducted and property lines marked. A natural shoreline restoration project in 2006 helps to maintain the lake's appearance while adding erosion control.

Kusel Lake County Park

Kusel Lake is one of the county's most fully developed and heavily used parks. Waushara County owns 33 acres of the 92-acre park while the remaining 59 acres are leased from the Town of Springwater. A new lease agreement with the Town was entered into in 2001. Much of the park lies beneath the canopy of a mature pine plantation. Facilities near the water's edge include a boat launch, play equipment, picnic facilities, shelter building with restrooms, and parking. A portion of the shoreline is used for swimming. Parking capacity in this area is considered inadequate while erosion control along the shoreline remains an ongoing problem. Upland development includes an additional shelter/restroom, other picnic facilities, two tennis courts,

basketball goals, play equipment, security lights, and a large parking area. Drinking water is available in both areas. The lower parking area serves as the trailhead for 5.0 km. of County-maintained ski trails, consisting of two loops through the park. In 2003, the boat landing and tennis courts were resurfaced, the lower shelter was renovated, and its former hand pump was replaced with a water fountain and jug filler. In 2005, renovation of the park's upper shelter was begun. Another 2005 project was a property survey and boundary markings. The County continues to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on an ongoing prairie restoration project.

Marl Lake County Park

Located in the west central portion of Waushara County between Wautoma and Hancock on CTH C, Marl Lake County Park occupies a 24-acre wooded site leased from the Town of Deerfield on the west side of 12th Avenue. Facilities include a paved boat ramp, a shelter, restroom facilities, picnic facilities, play equipment, and drinking water. Park visitors use a portion of the shoreline for swimming. Erosion control remains a problem in this area. Because parking capacity is limited, parked vehicles often infringe on adjacent lawn areas. Recent projects include a property survey and boundary markings in 2001, resurfacing of the boat landing in 2003, and installation of a fishing/boarding pier in 2005.

Curtis Lake County Park

Curtis Lake County Park in the Town of Richford serves the southwestern portion of Waushara County. The one-acre site fronts the east shore of Curtis Lake, a relatively pristine 33-acre body of water located about a mile south of CTH JJ on 10th Court. Development consists of a boat ramp, restrooms, a swing set, and picnic facilities. The natural beach, although not officially designated for swimming, is popular with park visitors. Additional land is needed to more effectively develop and utilize this site. Since completion of the 2000 plan, a boundary survey has been conducted, the boat landing resurfaced, and the parking area seal coated.

Lake Huron County Park

Located four miles east of Plainfield in the Town of Oasis, Lake Huron County Park serves residents in the northwestern portion of the county. The 1.5-acre park functions primarily as a boat access site to Lake Huron, widely regarded as one of the county's finest lakes. Facilities include a boat ramp, restroom building, and picnic equipment. Erosion control measures undertaken several years ago adjacent to the ramp have proven to be relatively effective. In 2002 a boundary survey was undertaken and property lines staked. More recently, a fence has been installed along the south property line.

Big Hills Lake County Park

Located in the Town of Mt. Morris in the north central portion of Waushara County, Big Hills Lake County Park occupies a 5-acre parcel at the southwest end of Big Hills Lake. An undeveloped portion of the site is located away from the lake west of CTH WW. Facilities adjacent to the lake include a boat ramp, a paved parking area, a restroom building, a merry-go-round, and picnic equipment. Dusk-to-dawn lighting is available. Another park feature is a stormwater runoff detention buffer, which was done in cooperation with the Big Hills Lake Association, DNR, and the Land Conservation District (LCD). To ensure the future aesthetics of the park, the County has established an ongoing tree replacement program to replace deteriorated trees as they are removed. A boundary survey was conducted in 2001 and a boarding pier was installed in 2003.

Otto Brey County Park

Occupying a six-acre site on the southern shore of the Auroraville Millpond in the Town of Aurora, Otto Brey County Park serves residents in the southeastern portion of Waushara County. The park features a softball field and a large shelter suitable for local functions, which was a major project undertaken by a local service club. Other development includes restrooms, play equipment, picnic facilities, a boat ramp with a fishing/boarding pier and a paved parking area along Cottonville Court. Recent activity includes erosion control work at the boat landing.

Pony Creek County Park

Development of this site as a county park was encouraged by DNR, which granted the County a permanent easement to the land in 1991. Since its development, the 16-acre site has become one of the most heavily used parks in the county. Located west of Tustin where Pony Creek empties into Lake Poygan, the park has been designed to provide an extensive shoreline fishing area. Development consists of a paved parking area; parking area fencing; park sign; benches, picnic tables and grills; restrooms; shelter; electrical service; shoreline path; and handicapped drinking fountain. Future plans call for the installation of play equipment and development of a nature trail and boardwalk. Existing parking has been found to be inadequate during peak bank fishing periods.

NATURAL AREAS

Sorenson Natural Area

Purchased about five years ago, this 71-acre site in the Town of Deerfield is located on the north shore of Hartford (Lyman's) Lake, a 9-acre kettle pond some 27 feet deep. The County intends to limit development of this site so that its natural character is preserved. Walk-in access to the lake and a boarding pier is provided but use of the lake will be limited to canoes, kayaks, and other non-motorized craft. Sorenson Natural Area lies within the identified corridor of the Ice Age Trail and could provide modest overnight camping facilities for trail users without compromising the beauty and natural setting the site provides. An extensive trail system for hiking and snowshoeing is presently available. Other site improvements include a well and septic system.

Buehler Natural Area

This 6-acre site, recently acquired by the county in 2010, is located in the Town of Mount Morris at Rattlesnake Springs in the Willow Creek Fishery Area. Currently fishing and hiking trails exist on the site. The County would like to keep this area in its natural setting with limited development.

RECREATIONAL QUARRIES

Flynn's

Flynn's Quarry is a 40-acre County-owned recreational property that surrounds a former granite quarry on CTH N near the Village of Lohrville. Near vertical rock walls surrounding a deep 3-acre quarry pond make the parcel one of the county's most unique recreational properties. Remnants of two former mine buildings are found on the site along with a number of abandoned artifacts,

which are submerged on the floor of the quarry. While the steep rock walls and deep pond create some safety problems, cliff diving and scuba diving are unique recreational experiences traditionally enjoyed by visitors to the site. However, vandalism and after-hours use have created **long-term problems for the County in managing this parcel. At the present time, Flynn's Quarry is** leased to a dive shop for site management. Public use for scuba activities is arranged through Precision Sports Shop in Oshkosh.

West Point

Several years ago, the County looked at ways to integrate its adjacent 48-acre West Point quarry tract into the property and also assessed other options for the two parcels. The West Point site is also currently being leased out to a diving club, Mountain Bay Scuba Inc. in Appleton but privately owned and is located off of CTH N near Lohrville. The location of the two sites on the Bannerman Trail and possible tie-ins with similar quarries in Redgranite, Berlin, and Montello may offer potential for historical interpretation. With this in mind, it was felt there might be interest by DNR and/or State Historical Society (SHS) in managing the two sites. Since neither has expressed serious interest in pursuing this option, thoughts have been given to selling these properties.

Bannerman Trail

This County-owned recreational trail provides seven miles of linear recreational opportunities for snowmobiling and hiking. The trail utilizes an abandoned railroad right-of-way, which once linked the quarries of the Redgranite/Lohrville area with the nation's rail system. The trail extends from the south side of STH 21 in Redgranite to STH 73 north of Neshkoro. Gates have been installed at some road crossings to prevent unauthorized vehicles from gaining access to the trail. Although an attempt to provide off-street parking near the Redgranite trailhead was unsuccessful, **interest in pursuing this further has been identified in the village's comprehensive plan.** Portions of the trail surface are in need of upgrading.

Waushara County Shooting Range

The County has a land use agreement with DNR to maintain a five-acre site on CTH C west of Wautoma as a public shooting range. Facilities include five shooting stations (three different distances) with rear bunkers. Lateral bunkers would be needed to bring the range up to safety standards. The entrance road from CTH C into the range requires routine grading. Although more restrictive hours have been set, the need for short-term staffing should be assessed on an annual basis.

Waushara County Fairgrounds

There are about 35 acres of recreational land available at the Waushara County Fairgrounds in Wautoma. The fairgrounds include the typical complement of livestock, exhibition, and concession buildings. The grandstand, with its upgraded seating, fronts a ½-mile dirt track, which is used for harness racing. Other facilities available at the fairgrounds include picnic equipment, restrooms, shelter house, and drinking water. Among the more recent improvements are perimeter fencing, a new show ring, and a livestock building. Other improvements include an **upgrade of the fairground's electrical system and lighting, extension of city water, and** the extension of the midway. Restroom facilities, although updated, continue to remain inadequate for major events such as the county fair.

OTHER RECREATIONAL

Redgranite Quarry

This 6.69 acre quarry is located on the north-side of Hwy. 21, behind the Post Office. Discovery of red granite at the quarry site in the 1880's sparked a mining boom that brought skilled stone cutters from Europe to settle the hamlet known as Sand Prairie. Granite paving blocks from the quarry were used in streets as far away as Chicago. The quarry was designated as a village park in 1986. Today, the water-filled quarry is used by scuba instructors for deep water diving certification.

STATE OWNED LANDS

Land owned by DNR in Waushara County totals 18,400 acres (Table 9). Nearly 11,600 acres are designated as state fishery areas while an additional 5,000 acres are state wildlife areas. Other significant holdings include State Natural Areas (359 acres), the Leach Natural Resource Center (356 acres), and the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery (235 acres). The largest contiguous block is the Poygan Marsh State Wildlife Area, which closely follows the outline of the Poygan Marsh.

Table 9
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES LAND
Waushara County

	Acres
Greenwood State Wildlife Area	1,441
Poygan Marsh State Wildlife Area	3,512
White River Fishery Area	2,981
Mecan River Fishery Area	3,528
Pine River Fishery Area	1,927
Willow Creek Fishery Area	2,172
Big Roche A Cri Creek Fishery Area	502
Carter Creek Fishery Area	240
Little Silver Creek Fishery Area	219
Pony Creek Fishery Area	16
Thorstead Creek Fishery Area	47
Bass Lake Scientific Area	82
Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes S.A.	88
Lunch Creek Scientific Area	149
Karner Blue Scientific Area	40
Ice Age Trail (existing trail miles 615)	106
Leach Natural Resource Center	356
State Fish Hatchery	235
Other DNR Owned Lands	759
TOTAL DNR OWNED LANDS	18,400

Source: DNR, 2010.

Among the county's municipalities, DNR holdings are most extensive in the Towns of Poy Sippi (3,994 acres), Richford (2,567 acres), Springwater (2,114 acres), Dakota (2,105 acres), Hancock (1,495 acres), and Wautoma (1,387 acres). Aurora and Saxeville are the only two towns with no DNR acreage. DNR's holdings generally are considered to provide passive recreational opportunities.

Wild Rose Fish Hatchery

The DNR's Wild Rose Fish Hatchery is located directly north of the village. Historically, this fish hatchery has been the state's largest cold water facility, producing some 120,000 pounds of fish annually. Among the species produced there are Chinook salmon, brown trout, rainbow trout, spotted Muskie, northern pike, lake sturgeon, suckers, and flathead minnows. This facility was recently renovated adding walleyes and expanding the number of fish currently produced. Because this facility is a popular destination for visitors, the renovation included a new visitor/aquatic education center with space for displays, aquariums, and public restrooms. The hatchery is working with the village in completing the boardwalk/bike trail, which connects the hatchery with the downtown area. **The boardwalk extension through Robert's Park was funded through a DNR Stewardship grant.**

Leach Natural Resources Center

In 2003, Pete and Lucy Leach of rural Poy Sippi gave a gift of land to the citizens of Wisconsin. The property, located in eastern Waushara County, is over 350 acres in size and contains numerous wetland and prairie developments for the benefit of waterfowl, grassland nesting birds, and other wildlife. Ms. Leach still resides on the property under a life tenancy and, while she is living on the property, the Leach family has retained all of the land management and access control of the property. For this reason, the property is not open to the public for any purpose at this time except under controlled events managed by the DNR staff at Wautoma.

This generous gift of land and buildings will be known as the Leach Natural Resources Center. It will be used for outdoor skills training and nature-based education purposes throughout the year. The DNR currently provides some limited outdoor skills training such as trapper education classes. Such programs are announced as they are scheduled along with information regarding how to participate. The property has also been used as a training ground for technical school natural resource students. In the future, this property will be available for use by area school classes and other groups for hands-on nature-based education.

State Rest Areas

The state maintains a fully equipped set of rest areas on I-39 south of Coloma near the Waushara/Marquette county line. Although both rest areas are actually in Marquette County, the southbound rest area is adjacent to the Chaffee Creek State Fishery Area and presently serves as a trailhead at the southern terminus of the Waushara County segment of the Ice Age Trail. The only other state-maintained wayside in Waushara County is located on STH 21 west of Redgranite. A former wayside on STH 22 south of Wautoma is now a town park adjacent to the new Dakota Town Hall.

OTHER PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Three school forests and a town forest provide 819 acres of passive open space (Table 10). These holdings are generally ignored by the public for recreational activity, but they have excellent potential for providing linear recreational opportunities. In addition to this acreage, locally maintained parks comprise over 250 acres while school sites provide over 100 acres of additional open space. For the most part, parks and school properties lying within the confines of a community provide the types of facilities needed to accommodate active recreation. Because these sites are primarily intended to meet the needs of local residents, their acreage is typically not included in determining countywide needs.

Table 10
OTHER RURAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
Waushara County

<u>Undeveloped Rural Open Space Acreage</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Tri-County School Forest	230
Wild Rose School Forest	128
Coloma School District	40
Town of Rose Forest	421
TOTAL:	819

QUASI-PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Waushara County has nearly 4,000 acres of regionally important recreational land in private ownership (Table 11). This total includes a tract recently purchased by the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA), land enrolled in the Forest Cropland and Open Managed Forest Lands Programs, a private recreational facilities available for public use. In Waushara County the major private facilities include about a dozen campgrounds, three golf courses, Nordic Mountain Ski Hill, and numerous resorts. The county also has private recreational land that is not generally available for public use. Church and youth camps as well as land owned by sportsmen's clubs and other conservation organizations comprise the bulk of this acreage. Other private recreational land includes an untold number of privately owned hunting tracts.

Forest Cropland/Open Managed Forest Lands

Waushara County has 1,278 acres of privately owned wooded land in the Forest Cropland Program and an additional 1,863 acres of land in the Managed Forest Land Program that is open to the public. Parcels in the Forest Cropland Program are available to the public for hunting and fishing only while lands in the Managed Forest Land Program are available for walk-in activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, and cross-country skiing. The financial benefits to participating landowners as well as other specifics of each program are detailed in Chapter 77 of the State Statutes. While these programs make a valuable contribution in the amount of land available for outdoor recreation, most of the acreage is located in the western third of the county.

Table 11
QUASI-PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE, 2011
Waushara County

	Acres
Waushara Country Club	212
Two Oaks North Golf Course	158
Private Campgrounds	250
Forest Cropland	1,278
Open Managed Forest Lands	1,863
TOTAL QUASI-PUBLIC/PRIVATE OPEN SPACE	3,761

Campgrounds

According to the Department of Health and Family Services, sixteen private campgrounds providing an estimated of 1,700 camping sites exist in Waushara County. Another large private campground just south of the county line in Marquette County and several campgrounds in the Waupaca area, including the state-operated facility at Hartman Creek State Park, also are convenient to other recreational opportunities in Waushara County. In addition, Village Park, east of Hancock on Fish Lake provides 50 campsites. Because a high proportion of the campground sites in Waushara County are seasonal rentals, a shortage of overnight or short-term campsites continues to exist in the county. Most of the campgrounds offer a diversity of recreational activities including swimming, boating and fishing.

Golf Courses

There are three golf courses presently located in Waushara County. Waushara Country Club, located on STH 21 east of Wautoma, has recently been expanded to a 27-hole facility. Although the course is semi-private, guests are always welcome. Two Oaks North Golf Course, located on CTH F about four miles southeast of Wautoma, is an 18-hole facility. The par 72 course measures 6,582 yards from the back tees. Marl Links, a par 3 course located near Marl Lake, is also available for public play.

Nordic Mountain Ski Hill

Located on the north flank of Mt. Morris on land leased from the County, Nordic Mountain (1,135 ft. above sea level) is one of Central Wisconsin's finest downhill ski hills. Thirteen lighted runs with vertical drops up to 250 feet accommodate a range of skill levels and are served by a variety of lifts, along with tubing runs and a terrain park area for snow boarders. The site also serves as a trailhead for 7.4 km. of County-maintained cross-country ski trails. The County entered into a lease with a new owner in 2005.

Summer recreational activities such as a disc golf course, and a wake park that pulls the rider along a cable skimming the water have been added. Mountain biking along the trails has also become a popular summer activity.

Church and Youth Camps

Waushara County has long been a popular area for churches and other organizations to develop camps and retreats for members and their children. There are a number of these facilities in the county, collectively occupying nearly 2,000 acres of land. While the facilities they provide are generally not available to the public, the county benefits from goods and services they obtain from local vendors. In recent years, some of these camps have been sold off.

Sportsmen's Clubs, Conservation Organizations, and Private Hunting Clubs

Over a dozen parcels in the county are owned by a variety of sportsmen's and conservation groups and private hunting clubs. These sites total an estimated 800 acres and accommodate a variety of uses, including trap and other shooting ranges, a snowmobile club, hunting and fishing grounds, areas set aside for preservation and, in the case of private hunting clubs, hunting opportunities on a fee basis. Some of the hunting clubs also provide overnight accommodations. Depending on the activity each site provides and the user groups it accommodates, it can make a noticeable contribution to the local economy. Because some of these lands provide public recreational opportunities at times, they also help reduce user pressure on public land holdings.

LINEAR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Forms of recreation in which participants can travel great distances before reaching their destination or returning to their point of origin have become increasingly popular during the past two decades. Pleasure driving and touring and snowmobiling have been joined by bicycling, hiking/backpacking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing as activities pursued by growing numbers of people. To varying extents, opportunities exist to partake in these activities in Waushara County.

Snowmobile Trails

About 289 miles of state-funded public snowmobile trails are available in Waushara County. The public trail network and 50 miles of interconnecting privately maintained club trails are readily accessible to all portions of the county and link up with trails of surrounding counties as part of a statewide system. Most of the public trails are wintertime easements which cross private property. A notable exception is the previously discussed Bannerman Trail between Redgranite and Neshkoro. Snow permitting, the public snowmobile trail system has a major impact on the county's economy during the winter months.

Cross-country Ski Trails

The Waushara County Parks Department maintains about 12.4 km. of cross-country ski trail. Trailheads are located at Nordic Mountain (Mt. Morris) and Kusel Lake County Park. Opportunities for developing a more extensive trail system on public and private lands abound in the county, particularly if user groups can be found for undertaking trail maintenance and grooming. The County is also currently developing more hiking/XC ski trails on county land to maximize the manpower needed to maintain these facilities.

Bicycle Routes

Over 1,000 miles of highly scenic low volume rural roads provide abundant opportunities for bicycling and bike touring in Waushara County. Attempts have been made at the state level to identify those roads most suitable for biking in the county and, although Waushara County has developed a bicycle route booklet and has a map of these routes on its website, no formal action has been taken by the County to officially designate bicycle routes. The State would like each county to ultimately develop a county bike plan. A component of the plan would be the development of a bike route network that could be integrated into a statewide system, providing the same opportunities for bicyclists that snowmobilers currently enjoy. Once again, the economic spin-offs to the individual counties are obvious. *(See Appendix C for a map from the DOT of current conditions).*

Rustic Roads

The Rustic Roads System was created by the state legislature in 1973 to help citizens and local units of government preserve scenic lightly traveled country roads for the leisurely enjoyment of bicyclists, hikers and motorists. They offer excellent opportunities to travel through an attractive rustic area by car, bicycle, or foot. The scenic qualities of these roads are protected by agreement with bordering property owners and by controlling roadside maintenance practices so that wildflowers and other native flora are allowed to extend to the edge of the pavement. A town road (26th Rd.) in Saxeville, beginning at County Highway H northwest to County Highway W, is currently enrolled in the Rustic Roads program as well as in the Town of Richford Cumberland Road and 7th Avenue off of STH 21 are in the program. Other roads in the county may have the same potential.

Ice Age Trail

A 1,200-mile dream that traces Wisconsin's rich glacial history, the Ice Age Trail is a foot trail that angles across Waushara County as it loops through the state from Sturgeon Bay to Interstate Park on the St. Croix River. The completed trail will use a combination of public land, easements across private property and, where necessary, low volume highways to provide a unique and exceptional resource for recreationalists wishing to hike its entire length or merely a small portion of it. For several years now, a joint planning effort involving the National Park Service (NPS), the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA), DNR, and the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

(ECWRPC) has been underway to identify a trail corridor and initiate the acquisition of property from willing landowners. This has resulted in the purchase of several key parcels, enabling new segments of the trail to be completed. At the present time, about 20 miles of trail have been designated in Waushara County, including segments near Chaffee and Wedde Creeks, the Mecan Springs area, the Greenwood Wildlife Area, and across private lands in the Town of Deerfield.

The completed trail is expected to be approximately 50 miles long, traversing the best examples **of Waushara County's glacial landscape from the I-39 rest area near the Marquette County line to Heffron on the Portage County line.** A Corridor Plan and Environmental Assessment was published in May of 2007 to show these trail alternatives. A Trailway Protection Strategy is underway with the IATA, DNR, the NPS and ECWRPC to determine the means of land protection available and to identify priorities on land acquisition for these alternative routes.

RECREATIONAL NEEDS

RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Three factors are assessed to determine how well the recreational needs of Waushara County residents are being met: 1. The amount of recreational land available, 2. It's location, and 3. The supply of existing recreational facilities. As a first step, surpluses and deficiencies in open space acreage for both active and passive recreational activities are identified and a determination is made of how well various public and private agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities in providing recreation land. The location of parks is then assessed to determine how well each area of the county is served. Finally, an analysis of specific recreation facilities existing in the county is made to determine which facilities are not available or in short supply. Based on this analysis, needs for new county parks or additional recreation facilities can be identified.

Various recreation standards are used as a basis for determining recreation needs. Those adopted by the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission are listed below and used as indicators of recreational need in Waushara County. While these acreage and service area standards help identify park land needs, the county's recreation facility needs are best identified by local citizen participation. To identify some of these needs, a short survey was sent out via the web through the Survey Monkey service to help recognize those needs and to provide some insight on what the public is looking for. (See Appendices A-1 and A-2) County publications such as the Argus and County Guide can also be used as a parameter to measure needs of residents.

RECREATIONAL LAND NEEDS

To determine the overall need for park and recreational land in Waushara County, the standard utilized is that a minimum of 100 acres of open space or outdoor recreational land should be available for every 1,000 persons. This area should be comprised of:

- 70 acres of passive recreational open space. This acreage includes national, state, and county forests, wildlife areas, hunting preserves, and other lands which have development limited to that needed to accommodate extensive recreational activities such as hiking, nature study, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing.
- 30 acres of active recreational open space. This acreage includes portions of state and other regional parks and county parks designed to accommodate intensive recreational activities such as picnic areas, campgrounds, swimming beaches, ball fields, and play areas. Also included are privately operated facilities such as campgrounds and golf courses that are open to the general public.

As a second standard, a minimum of 10 additional acres of land should be available for every 1,000 residents to meet local day-to-day needs. This land, which includes local parks and school sites, is not counted when assessing the adequacy of the county's supply of outdoor recreational land. Applying these standards to Waushara County's current resident and seasonal population estimates indicated a peak demand in 2000 of 11,533 acres of recreation land – 8,073 for passive use and 3,460 for active use. When applied to the county's population projections, land needs increase to over 14,000 acres by the year 2030 (Table 12).

Table 12**WAUSHARA COUNTY OPEN SPACE DEMAND**

	Resident	Seasonal	Total	Demand (in acres)		
Year	Population	Population	Population	Passive	Active	Total
2000	23,066	92,264	115,330	8,073	3,460	11,533
2010	24,496	105,396	129,892	9,223	3,952	13,175
2020*	26,925	110,072	136,997	9,631	4,128	13,759
2030*	27,756	112,204	139,960	9,818	4,208	14,026

Sources: Census 2010, *DOA Population Projections, 2008.

Comparing existing and projected demand with the existing supply of outdoor recreational land suggests that Waushara County presently has and will continue to have an overall surplus of land available (Table 13). DNR holdings account for nearly three-quarters of the total acreage. Nearly all of this land is considered to provide passive recreational opportunities, however, and although the result is a substantial surplus in the amount of passive open space acreage in the county, a deficiency of over 2,100 acres of active recreational land presently exists. This deficiency is projected to increase to about 2,381 acres by the year 2030 if additional land is not developed for active recreational activities.

Table 13**WAUSHARA COUNTY OPEN SPACE NEEDS
(Acres)**

	DEMAND			SUPPLY			SURPLUS OR DEFICIENCY		
Year	Passive	Active	Total	Passive	Active	Total	Passive	Active	Total
2000	8,073	3,460	11,533	23,571	1,827	25,398	+15,498	-1,633	+13,865
2010	9,223	3,952	13,175	23,571	1,827	25,398	+14,348	-2,125	+12,223
2020	9,631	4,128	13,759	23,571	1,827	25,398	+13,940	-2,301	+11,639
2030	9,818	4,208	14,026	23,571	1,827	25,398	+13,753	-2,381	+11,372

Source: ECWRPC, 2012.

JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEETING LAND NEEDS

Standards have also been developed to help gauge how well various levels of government as well as the private sector are doing in meeting their responsibility of providing outdoor recreational facilities. These guidelines suggest that, of the total 100 acres of open space that should be available for each 1,000 residents, federal and state governments are responsible for providing 80 acres; the County and local jurisdictions, 15 acres; and the private sector, five acres. Based on

these guidelines, the State and private sectors are fulfilling their obligation in providing recreational land, while the County lags slightly behind (Table 14).

Table 14

WAUSHARA COUNTY LAND NEEDS BY JURISDICTION (2000-2030)

	Existing Acres	Recommended Acres Provided				Surplus or Deficiency			
<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Provided</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2030</u>
State/Federal	19,169	9,226	10,540	11,007	11,221	9,943	8,629	8,162	7,948
County/Local	1,641	1,730	1,976	2,064	2,104	-89	-335	-423	-463
Private Sector	3,537	577	659	688	701	2,960	2,878	2,849	2,836
Totals:	24,347	11,533	13,175	13,759	14,026	12,814	11,172	10,588	10,321

LOCATIONAL NEEDS

The location of various parks and other available open space is analyzed to determine how well existing parks and recreational land serve residents and visitors in different portions of the county. The main concern is that these facilities are accessible to a majority of residents so that recreational opportunities are equitably distributed.

To determine if there are areas in Waushara County that may not be adequately served by existing parks, both regional and county parks were identified and analyzed according to each recommended service area. Regional parks are considered to have a service radius of 50 miles or one hour driving time, while county parks serve an area of 15 miles or one-half hour driving time. (See Figure 3, Drive Time Analysis)

State Parks

State parks are year-round recreation areas predominantly used for recreational pursuits such as nature study, hiking, bicycling, picnicking, boating and camping. They are usually located in an area of unique environmental quality, such as a river basin, lake or unusual topography. While no state parks exist in Waushara County, Hartman Creek State Park, located a few miles north of the county line in adjacent Waupaca County, lies within an hour's drive of virtually the entire county. Roche a Cri and High Cliff State Parks are other recreational opportunities within an hour's drive of the county seat. (See Figure 3)

County Parks

Ideally, county parks should contain from 50 to 500 acres and provide a wide variety of passive and active recreational opportunities such as hiking trails, picnic areas, swimming, boating access and play equipment. **Like many counties, some of Waushara County's county parks are truly too small to provide more than a limited range of recreational opportunities.**

While there are a number of reasons why specific sites were developed as county parks in Waushara County, the end result is that, despite their tendency to be concentrated in the central part of the county, one or more county parks are convenient to most areas in the county. Areas along the county's eastern boundary, once not as well served as other areas, have benefited from recent development of Otto Brey and Pony Creek County Parks. The recently acquired Sorenson Natural Area helps fill a void for county open space in the west central portion of the county. However, in general, a limited range of recreational opportunities continues to exist in this area.

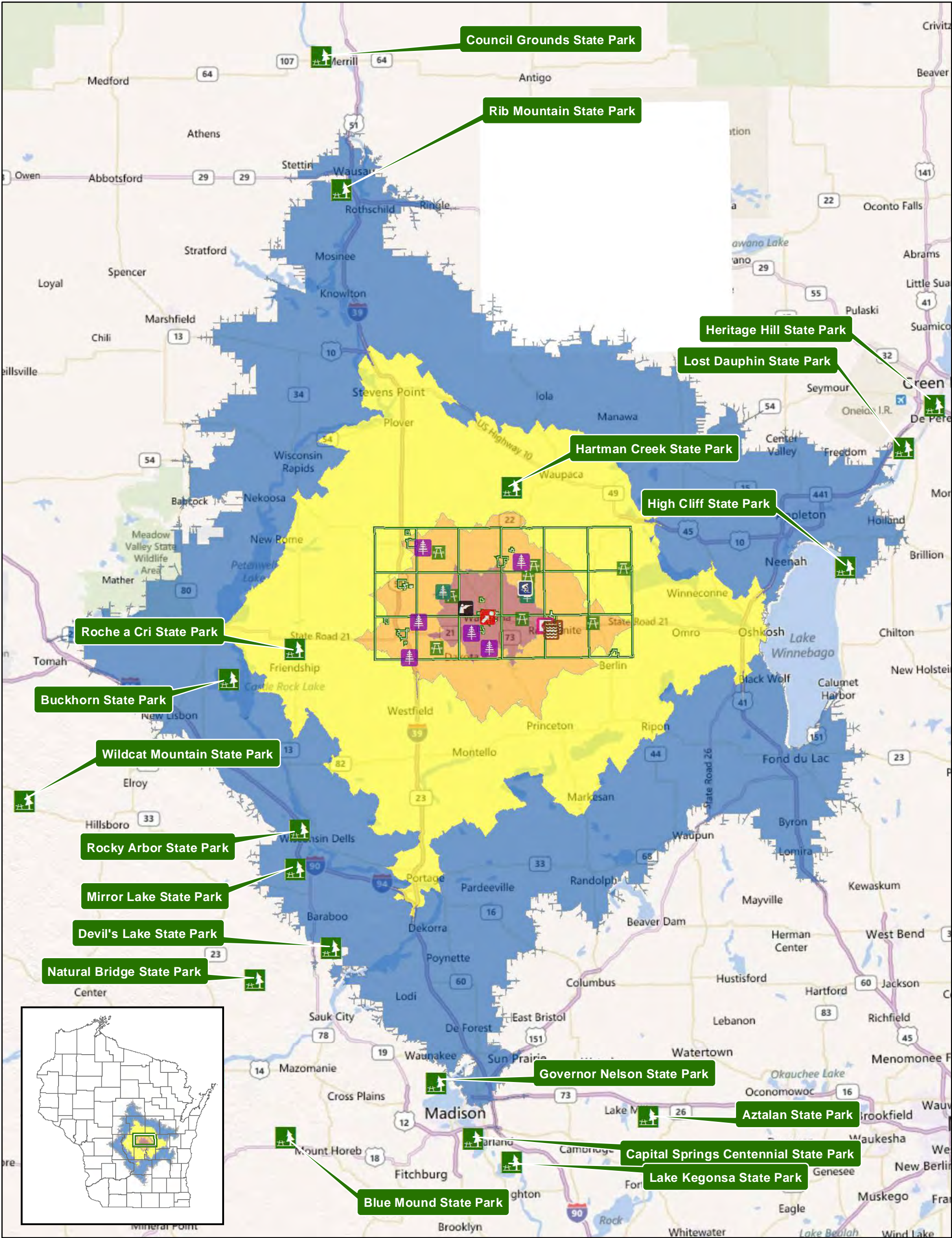


Figure 3
PARK DRIVE TIME ANALYSIS
Waushara County, WI

County Facilities

- County Park
- Fairgrounds
- Natural Area
- Quarry
- Shooting Range
- Ski Hill
- State Natural Area
- Wayside
- State Parks*

Legend

- WIDNR Managed Lands
- Waushara Municipal Boundary

Drive Times

- 15 minutes
- 30 minutes
- 60 minutes
- 90 minutes



Sources: Base map data and access points provided by Waushara County Land Records Office December, 2011. ECWRPC Business Analyst ran the drive times. General guide, not to be used as a navigational tool. Wautoma City Hall was used as the start point. *State Parks provided by the WDNR, See website for more info: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/>

Prepared January, 2012
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FACILITY NEEDS

The committee segregated the identification of facility needs into general facilities and site-specific facilities. In assessing general facility needs, the committee determined that certain types of recreational opportunities presently are not available or are in limited supply in the county. These general needs are not necessarily intended to be provided in the county park system nor is their provision necessarily the sole responsibility of the County or other governmental unit. Among general facility needs identified were:

- The ongoing commitment to meeting ADA compliance in all county parks and facilities needs to continue. The Waushara County Parks Department has been responsive in its efforts to retrofit existing facilities and develop new facilities that accommodate the needs of disabled and elderly recreationalists.
- **There is a need to provide recreational opportunities for the county's** high proportion of aging residents. Designing facilities that can easily be used by this segment of the population is one way to address this need.
- The level of facility maintenance in the County's park system needs to be maintained or increased.
- Improved boat launching opportunities, and primarily expanded parking capacity, are needed on several lakes in the county.
- Additional swimming opportunities are needed throughout the county.
- There is a need for more active uses (i.e., rustic/primitive camping) in the County's park system. Sorenson Natural Area would provide an excellent camping experience being connected to the Ice Age Trail allowing the user rural backpacking and using the carry in / carry out guideline.
- Continuation of stepped-up law enforcement is needed throughout the park system.
- Debris removal and/or additional public access are needed to provide or enhance canoeing opportunities on downstream portions of selected headwaters trout streams.
- Trail facilities that accommodate linear recreation such as hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding are needed.
- Species diversification is needed as re-landscaping and landscaping of county park sites is undertaken.
- Additional and improved shoreline fishing opportunities are needed.

In determining site-specific needs, the committee feels that the overall range of recreational facilities that exist in the county park system is generally adequate for the role Waushara County's parks play in meeting the recreational needs of its residents and visitors to the county. At the

same time, however, the committee recognizes that present sites do not adequately serve the western portion of the county and that acquisition of additional park acreage needs serious consideration if this problem is to be addressed.

For most existing parks, the committee believes that cost-effective improvements that can prolong the useful life of existing facilities and conditions are generally preferable to extensive development of new facilities, particularly if funding levels necessitate a choice. One factor is that several of the existing parks - particularly a number of those that are town-owned - are limited recreationally and may not justify major investment. In these cases, the committee encourages the County to consider acquiring and developing alternate sites with more potential. The committee feels that low cost facilities, such as volleyball courts, which could expand recreational opportunities at appropriate parks, are a worthwhile investment. The committee also believes that investment in projects that result in reduced maintenance and/or promote a high standard of system-wide maintenance should also be pursued.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations for improving Waushara County's recreational system are intended to serve as a guide for the future growth and development of park and recreation land and recreational opportunities in the county. Consistent with the goals and objectives outlined earlier in this document, they are designed to meet the present and future recreational needs of Waushara County residents and visitors while conserving, protecting and enhancing the environmental, historical and cultural resources of the county.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Waushara County's numerous natural and cultural resources make it a popular recreation area and an attractive area in which to live. The county's natural resources offer a wide variety of passive recreational opportunities that require a minimum amount of development while its cultural resources provide insight into the county's past which, if lost, are irreplaceable. The County, therefore, should take an active role in preserving and enhancing these unique resources. To do this, the County should:

- **Continue to work with local municipalities to encourage changes/updates to adopted local land use plans, which can be used to provide insight into the outdoor recreation countywide plan.** These plans have enabled the County and local units of government to make more informed and effective decisions on future land use proposals.
- **Encourage innovative development proposals that protect important resources, such as wetlands, lakeshores, river corridors, prime agricultural lands, and other areas of natural or cultural significance.** Strategies that stimulate this type of development should be encouraged in all local land use plans and, if necessary, appropriate language added to County-administered zoning and subdivision ordinances. The County's Solid Waste Management Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan, and the Land and Water Resources Management Plan are three existing documents that also provide a sound basis for wise resource use.
- **Continue to encourage farmers to implement good agricultural practices, particularly those that control erosion and protect groundwater through the County's Land and Water Resources Management Plan.**
- **Continue to support efforts by the DNR and other public and private entities to ensure the long-term protection of the county's high quality wildlife and fishery resources.** These resources not only have intrinsic values that support the quality of life enjoyed by county residents, they also provide recreational opportunities and contribute to local economies.
- **Continue to work with the DNR, other state agencies, and the private sector in providing multiple-use facilities for activities such as hiking, nature study, cross-country skiing, hunting, and fishing on county and state-owned lands where multiple-use of the land is appropriate and environmentally sound.**

- **Make educational and technical assistance available to the Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council, lake districts, and lake property owners associations that wish to address water quality, invasive species, and other related environmental issues, as well as use conflicts, and support the concept of a regional effort to address aquatic invasive species.** Addressing these types of concern not only helps protect and maintain an important county resource, it also serves to create a more enjoyable environment for recreationalists as well as lakeshore property owners. As an example, the County could work with UW-Extension to coordinate a shoreline vegetation demonstration project on Marl Lake similar to the ongoing project on Lake Alpine.
- **Make use of the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) to identify all archeological and historical sites in the county, including cemeteries.** As a component of this activity, encourage local historical societies to work closely with the County to collectively undertake an up-to-date inventory of these sites. Steps should be taken to have significant sites enrolled on the National Register of Historic Places. Additional promotion of important historic sites should also be considered.
- **Maintain efforts to identify, prioritize, survey, and clearly mark existing county park boundaries.** Since Waushara County's last plan was completed, substantial progress has been made to survey and mark park boundaries. Marked boundary lines are important not only for park users and maintenance personnel, but also for adjacent property owners. The County should continue this program until all its park holdings are surveyed and marked.

PARK AND RECREATION GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

For the most part, the recommendations developed by the committee call for actions to improve rather than expand the existing county park system. The committee believes that, given the County's policy of fiscal restraint, it is more important to provide fewer well-maintained facilities than a greater number of parks and facilities in which maintenance suffers. When improvements occur, attention should be given to minimizing the need for ongoing long-term maintenance.

The recommendations proposed in this plan update are consistent with those that have resulted in a significant implementation of the 2006 **plan's action program**. Among the highlights of that program was an emphasis on making existing and new facilities comply with ADA requirements for handicapped-accessibility, upgrading restrooms and other ancillary facilities, and expanding recreational opportunities through the development of relatively inexpensive new facilities. These **improvements have helped make the county's parks** more user-friendly and the expanded range of recreational opportunities has made them more attractive for group outings.

The committee has also made recommendations to address those recreational opportunities that are not necessarily dependent on publicly owned land. These opportunities, too, are an important ingredient of the county's overall recreational system and help attract visitor dollars into the local economy.

EXISTING COUNTY PARKS:

General recommendations for all park facilities:

- Make sure all parks have refuse bins and barrels available and empty on routine basis.
- Update and maintain older playground equipment to comply with safety standards.
- Better venting in vault restrooms where no electric exists.
- Create a tree program and maintain current tree growth.
- Add benches and landscaping for aesthetic value.

Big Hills Lake County Park.

- None at this time, general maintenance.

Curtis Lake County Park.

- Additional land should be acquired for park expansion.
- The parking area should be expanded.
- The picnic area should be expanded.
- A small shelter should be constructed to serve the picnic area.

Kusel Lake County Park.

- The County should work with the Town of Springwater to update the current lease.
- Improve parking near the boat landing/beach and lower shelter.
- Additional effort should be committed to improving the beach area and addressing erosion problems.
- A larger flush type restroom with changing areas should be considered.
- Maintain the trails in and around the park area should be considered.

Lake Alpine County Park.

- A larger flush type restroom building should be constructed to replace the existing facility, which is too small.

- Horseshoe pits should be installed.
- Volleyball court needs to be maintained with new netting and weed free sand base.

Lake Huron County Park. Other than routine maintenance, the following improvement was suggested for this park.

- Evaluate the current lease and update with the Town of Oasis.
- Consideration should be given to updating the grilling units in the park.

Marl Lake County Park.

- Evaluate and Update the lease with the Town of Deerfield.
- Steps should be taken to control erosion along the shoreline by using best management practices.
- Electrical service should be installed and lights with light pollution shades and outlet(s) provided in the shelter.
- The restroom building should be renovated with a power vent installed and changing areas added.

Mt. Morris County Park.

- A second shelter building is a high priority need and should be constructed to accommodate picnickers and group activities at the lookout on top of the hill.
- Groom ball diamond free of weeds to promote team play.
- Increase the number of trails for skiing, hiking and mountain biking.
- Maintain the parking area.
- The county should consider resurfacing of the tennis courts, major cracks exist.
- Maintain the sand in the beach volleyball and horseshoe pit areas.

Otto Brey County Park.

- Maintenance of the volleyball court should be done on a routine basis.
- Maintenance of the ball diamond infield should be done on a routine basis.

Pony Creek County Park.

- Maintain the weed growth along the shore in late summer as to not hinder the view to the lake and allow for better fishing opportunities.
- Maintain ADA accessible trail.
- Consider adding parking to the area to accommodate fishing in the spring months.
- Maintain the wooden fence along the parking lot.

Willow Creek County Park.

- The installation of lighting to accommodate evening cross-country skiing should be evaluated.
- Maintain the existing trails.
- Consideration should be given to add mountain bike trails, could be multi-use.
- Maintenance of the parking lot should be considered by adding more crushed gravel to as to eliminate the sandy areas as well as offer more parking spaces.
- Consideration should be given to adding a well and electricity.

EXISTING COUNTY FACILITIES:

Bannerman Trail. -

- Investigate off-street parking along the trail.
- Necessary repairs to trail surface should be made and maintained.

Waushara County Fairgrounds. The following improvements are proposed for the Waushara County Fairgrounds:

- Additional restroom capacity should be provided to accommodate major events. This is considered a low priority as short-term rental of portable toilets has been used successfully to address large crowds.
- The performance stage should be roofed to provide a better setting for scheduled events.

- A study should be undertaken to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of roofing the present grandstand, which has limited seating capacity. Construction of a new roofed grandstand may be a better long-term solution.
- The existing horse arena should be improved. (surface/safety)
- A tree planting program should be continued to provide shaded areas in strategic locations throughout the fairgrounds.

Waushara County Shooting Range. Because of the high cost to construct lateral bunkers needed between shooting lanes to comply with safety standards, the committee recommends that if Waushara County cannot receive financial assistance from public funding or by soliciting funds from private sources such as user groups for this project, the County should consider canceling its lease with DNR. In the meantime, the committee recommends that the use of short-term staffing, which has proven to be successful, should be continued.

EXISTING NATURAL AREAS:

Buehler Natural Area.

- Signage should be added and be similar to the rest of the county facilities.
- Consideration should be given to installing a fishing pier along the shore
- Trails in the area should be re-established.

Sorenson Natural Area. Since purchase of this unique 71-acre parcel, the County has razed the former house on the property, created a small parking area, and provided walk-in access to Hartford Lake. This site has excellent potential to augment the Ice Age Trail, which is expected to pass nearby. Suggested improvements at this site include:

- Basic rustic campsites to accommodate overnight camping for ice age trail users should be considered.
- A restroom building should be considered.
- A small shelter with limited picnic facilities and restrooms should be considered.
- Existing hiking/snowshoe trails should be maintained.

Other Recreational Opportunities

Ice Age Trail. The committee recommends that the Waushara County Parks Department continue to work closely with the Waushara County Chapter of the Ice Age Trail Alliance (IATA) to continue the development of the Ice Age Trail within its borders. Three major segments are currently in place and efforts should focus on obtaining linkage as opportunities present

themselves. There is also an opportunity to connect with an existing segment that accesses Hartman Creek State Park.

The trail provides hiking and cross-country skiing opportunities that are enjoyed by both county residents and visitors. A new 1-mile route segment was just added in June of 2011 through the Greenwood Wildlife Refuge in the Towns of Hancock and Deerfield. A linking spur to Hartford Lake in the George Sorenson Natural Area (Town of Deerfield) is planned for the near future.

Rustic Roads Program. The committee encourages the County through the Public Works Committee to seek out new candidates for inclusion in the Rustic Roads Program. The county should look at the adopted comprehensive land use plans on what roads should be considered as potential candidates.

Designated County Bike Routes. *(See Appendix D for DOT map of routes)* Opportunities for bike touring abound in Waushara County and additional promotion of this activity would attract visitors to the county. *Waushara County Bike Routes*, a booklet prepared by the Waushara County Parks Department in 1997, was an excellent first step. The booklet is a user-friendly guide that provides detailed information on ten suggested **routes or “loops” to all portions of** the county. As a next step, the planning committee recommends that the route system be expanded to provide linkage between the loops as well as to link population centers with recreation areas, other points of interest, and routes in adjacent counties. Existing and potential Rustic Roads and the Bannerman Trail should be incorporated into the route system as well as the Ice Age Trail where feasible. These bike routes should also be included on the County's promotional brochure and map. Most town roads presently are capable of safely accommodating bicyclists with no special improvements required. For more heavily traveled highways, however, the Parks Committee should work with the County's **Highway Committee** to ensure that, as these roads are upgraded, improvements to accommodate safe bicycling, such as striped and paved shoulders, are undertaken. Although striped and paved shoulders are generally not required when daily traffic volumes are less than 1,000 vehicles, they should be **considered in areas of concentrated development, such as around the county's lakes, where on-**road use by pedestrians and bicyclists is high. To encourage these improvements on local town roads, the County should offer to cost-share with towns where these upgrades are desirable. The County should look into doing an overall bike and pedestrian plan to further designate the desired routes.

Improved Public Access. The committee recommends that the County continue to assess opportunities to provide public access on lakes that presently have none. Norwegian Lake is the only county lake over 50 acres without access. Steps should also be taken to expand parking areas at several boat ramps to accommodate day use activities. Lakes that may benefit from additional parking capacity include Irogami, Pleasant, Johns, Long Lake (Plainfield), Napowan, Porters, Big Silver, Upper White River Pond, and Wilson. This said, however, the amount of public access provided should not only consider the size and other physical and environmental characteristics of the water body but also the potential for adverse impacts that it may have on shoreland property users. The threat of inadvertently introducing an invasive species should also be evaluated. The County and/or town should contact the DNR about available funding programs and technical assistance. The County should continue to use its Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capability to update the data layer(s) that identifies all existing public access sites on its surface waters and keep it published to the website for public use.

Canoe Stream Clean-up. Recognizing that Waushara County's streams offer potentially many miles of excellent canoeing, the committee acknowledges that many of these streams are presently unusable because of overhanging and fallen trees and debris. Among streams believed to offer the most potential are portions of the White, Pine, and Mekan rivers and Willow Creek. The committee recommends that the County take the lead in verifying and coordinating an effort of stream clean-up activities. Because many of the streams are also trout waters, perhaps an even more valuable resource, only those portions downstream from prime trout habitat should be considered for clean-up activities. Given the State's commitment to preserving trout waters, the County should work closely with DNR to ensure that resource management objectives are not compromised and the interests of anglers and private landowners are considered in selecting candidates for clean-up. The committee also recommends that stream clean-up activities coincide with County efforts to obtain more access sites along these waterways. Stream segments suitable for canoeing should be identified on the County's promotional materials.

County Snowmobile Trails. Waushara County should continue to work with local clubs to maintain its existing public snowmobile trail network. These trails serve all areas of the county and, while minor changes in routing are inevitable from year to year, the scope of the trail network should remain intact.

Auroraville Wayside. The County accepted ownership of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's former wayside on STH 49 in Auroraville. This attractive little site contains a historical marker and is leased by the County to an area service club, which is responsible for its maintenance.

PARK SYSTEM POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Unique Opportunities for Parkland Acquisition

In recent years, the County has made a significant commitment to evaluating opportunities to expand its park acreage by acquiring parcels that meet its criteria for parcel size, attractiveness, and/or location. It is likely that other important sites having lake frontage or other unique natural qualities may become available in the near future as well as a number of similar but presently unforeseen opportunities. Several of these unique parcels would have excellent potential as county parks. For example, should a youth or church camp be offered for sale on the open market, its acquisition as a county park site should have strong consideration by the committee? To cite another example, Christmas tree growers have begun to dispose of large holdings, providing another potential opportunity to acquire land for a new county park.

Opportunities for Augmenting Park Funding / Volunteers

There are a number of avenues that may be available to provide additional funding to the Waushara County Parks Department, local entities, and support groups to acquire and develop new sites and facilities, perform needed improvements, and address other management issues. Each of the examples cited below should be explored in more detail in the near future.

- The County currently has a hospitality tax on overnight accommodations. This could be a potential funding source that could further promote the area. These funds not only

could be used for administrative and promotional literature and activities, they could also be used to expand and improve the number and types of facilities that attract visitors and their dollars into the local economy. Worthwhile projects such as the development of new parks and facilities are certainly candidates for these funds, which can be used as all or part of a local match to further reduce the reliance on tax dollars.

- User fees, such as requiring a fee to launch a boat or hike a trail, are another source of funding. In general, however, the committee does not favor implementing mandatory user fees because the revenue generated may not be adequate to offset the collection cost, let alone outweigh the anticipated adverse public reaction. However, the use of collection boxes where voluntary contributions can be solicited may help provide a revenue stream, particularly if the boxes specify what and where the funds are targeted. For example, boxes at boat launches that solicit funds for the eradication of invasive species, which are often introduced by trailered boats, could be expected to draw some interest, particularly by recreationalists that are concerned about the problem the funds are targeted to address.
- The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin could possibly be another source of funding or volunteer work for conservation in the County. Since 1960, it has protected more than 162,000 acres of forests, wetlands, prairies, lakes and streams for current and future generations to enjoy. The Conservancy currently is working with farmers and other partners to take a targeted approach to improving water quality.
- The Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust is another potential source as it works with landowners to create voluntary conservation agreements that protect special places and specialize in permanent conservation agreements that keep land in private ownership and prevent or limit future development

Park System Management

The planning committee recommends that the following opportunities for controlling operational costs be explored by the Outdoor Recreation Planning Committee:

- Local service clubs, youth groups, betterment organizations and recreational interests should be encouraged to provide or assist with funding for facility development in the county park system. They should be made aware that, for most types of development, their contributions can constitute the local share of funding programs available through DNR, effectively doubling the value of their assistance. Opportunities for utilizing these groups as a source of manpower also should not be overlooked. Assistance with the development and maintenance of the Ice Age Trail and canoe stream clean-up efforts are two examples where this approach could be effectively utilized.
- The appearance of well-maintained parks and facilities should be viewed as an important component of County and local efforts to attract visitors and visitor dollars. A number of the county parks are leased from the town in which they are located. In 2002, Little Hills Lake County Park was decommissioned as a county facility when the **County's lease with the Town of Marion was not renewed. The County will need to make a similar decision on several other parks, including those at Marl, Kusel, and Huron. Because of the economic impact of visitors to the county, it is in the County's**

interest that parks receive consistent levels of maintenance. Concern has been expressed that overall maintenance of these sites could suffer if County responsibility no longer exists. Perhaps more importantly, the County is hesitant to commit its funds on needed improvements without a long-term commitment that these sites will remain as county facilities. The committee recommends that future lease renewals have a minimum 25-year target life to provide the assurances the County needs to undertake major capital expenditures. Other than remedial maintenance, investment in new facilities should be postponed until these types of lease extensions can be obtained.

- The Parks Department should work closely with UW-Extension, DNR and groups such as the Wisconsin Family Forest Organization and the Waushara County Watershed Lakes Council to conduct periodic education programs to familiarize park personnel and the public at large with the identification of and effective eradication techniques available for curtailing the spread of exotic/evasive species. The program could be expanded to include the identification of protected species such as **Fassett's locoweed and the Karner blue butterfly**.
- The Parks Department and other action groups such as area lake associations should continue to pursue potential funding sources that may be available through the **WDNR's Aquatic Invasive Species program** or **Waterways Commission** for controlling exotic/invasive species.
- As much as possible, the County should incorporate recommendations and implementation strategies that relate to the preservation of open space and the provision of outdoor recreational facilities found in the various local land management plans and **the County's comprehensive plan** recently adopted. These reports confirm that residents through-out the county place a high priority in protecting the county's natural resources and value them as recreational and aesthetic assets. They are concerned, however, that overuse and user conflicts can diminish their enjoyment of these resources whether they are a participating recreationalist or a nearby landowner. For the most part, these plans suggest that rural residents are heavily dependent on the state, County and nearby communities for meeting their recreational needs.

Recreational Programming

Although the Parks Department presently is not adequately staffed to assume a recreational programming function, it has been able to assist on a limited basis with groups such as the Waushara Prevention Council. With proper staffing, it may be possible for the County Parks Department to assume a more expanded role either directly or indirectly in countywide recreational programming activities in the future. Offering certain programs at the county level, with its broader population base, may increase viability. An example of an indirect role may be to provide a clearinghouse or coordinative function for programs offered by local communities and other public and private providers. Volunteers from local communities could also assist.

LOCAL PARK PROJECTS

As part of this Outdoor Recreation Plan update, the planning committee contacted local communities throughout the county to determine if there were specific projects that should be considered for acquisition and/or development during the next several years.

Town of Coloma

The Town of Coloma has recently purchased property for a new park on Pleasant Lake and was recently awarded a Stewardship Land Acquisition and Development grant to help in the improvement. They have installed portable toilets, developed a site plan with help from the **County's Land Conservation Department**, and may possibly request a variance to put in privies at a later date. (Table 1)

Town of Springwater

The Springwater covered bridge over the Pine River west of Saxeville is a popular attraction for visitors to the area. A creatively designed, privately owned riverfront park has been developed adjacent to the bridge and has been taken over by the township with maintenance provided by the Share A Garden **Master's Gardeners** group. Because this little park is an exceptional complement to the bridge, the Town was awarded a Stewardship Grant for the land acquirement and to also help in making upgrades to the parcel. (Table 1)

Village of Wild Rose

The Village of Wild Rose has expressed a strong interest in linking its downtown area and Roberts Park to the Wild Rose Fish Hatchery north of the village. Because the fish hatchery is an important visitor destination, this project has received encouragement from the DNR, as it ties in nicely with the completed renovation of the hatchery, which includes a visitor/aquatic education center. It is also consistent with plans to develop a spur trail from the proposed Ice Age Trail into the Village, providing trail users with access to food, lodging, and other support services.

The boardwalk, trail, and parkland expansion for Phase I of this project is nearly completed from the 2005 grant award. In 2010, another Stewardship grant was awarded to the Village for 60,000, plus a \$60,000 local match, to complete the extension of the Roberts Park Trail around the Mill pond. This Phase II of the trail will connect the west trail to the Old Red Mill area and Dam as well as create parking at the artesian spring at North (Dopp) Park. It will also add parking, ADA-accessible trails, and a picnic area to the north end of the Boardwalk.

The boardwalk is accessible to non-motorized traffic only. The trail begins at Main Street, Wild Rose, just across from the Vintage Garden Restaurant. It follows River Street to Roberts Park and continues on the west shoreline of the Mill Pond.

Village of Lohrville

The Village is looking into a beautification project, landscaping and signage, as well updating the playground and picnic areas to Alborn Park. New grading of the parking lot near the Bannerman trailhead is another top priority. The Village would also like to preserve the Lohrville Stone Company building as a historic site and is looking into means of adding the structure to the Wisconsin Historic Registry.

Other future local park projects may be taken in consideration with priorities listed in the action plan (Table 15) and recommendations made from communities not listed above. Funding, staff time and land acquisition should be considered and based on environmental aesthetics, unique features, and if areas are close by to county owned facilities. Stewardship grant funds should be sought to offset costs for any future projects.

ACTION PROGRAM

ACTION PROGRAM

Priorities for improving park and recreational facilities in Waushara County for the next five years and beyond are shown by level of priorities low, medium, and high, (L,M,H) to form the basis for the Action Program. These are projects that the County deemed as important but are only to be used as a guideline for planning. Budget funds and time of staff may vary from year to year to allow these improvements to occur.

High priority projects identified by the planning committee include additional parking near the lower shelter at Kusel Lake Park, a larger flush type restroom building at Lake Alpine, and a second shelter at Mt. Morris. The committee also would like to see initial development activity for primitive camping at the Sorenson Natural Area, particularly as Ice Age Trail segments are completed in the vicinity. In addition, the Action Program developed by the committee proposes that the County continue to give priority to maintaining or improving the condition of existing facilities with many priorities listed as on-going. Some of the proposed actions are designed to remedy existing problems that detract from park aesthetics or require extra maintenance for work crews. Others are contingent on the renewal of leases of various town-owned sites.

The Five-Year Action Program (Table 15) outlines the level of priority for implementing the recommendations identified in this plan. Most of the projects identified in the Action Program would be eligible to receive matching funds through a component of WDNR's Stewardship Program. Local tax dollars can be further maximized by using private donations of funds or land to augment the local share. In addition, the Action Program identifies a budget appropriation for several other projects that could be cost-effectively accomplished using Park Department crews.

Table 15
FIVE YEAR ACTION PROGRAM
(2012-2016)

Priority Coding: H= High M= Medium L = Low O = Ongoing		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
COUNTY PARKS:						
BIG HILLS COUNTY PARK						
None at this time (fishing pier updated)						
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>						
CURTIS LAKE COUNTY PARK						
Additional land for expansion					M	
Expansion of parking area					M	
Expansion of picnic area					M	
Construct small shelter					M	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>					4-M	

KUSEL LAKE COUNTY PARK						
Update lease with the town	H					
Improve parking area			M			
Maintain beach, erosion control	O	O	O	O	O	
Flush restroom /w changing facilities						L
Maintain trails	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H, 2-O	2-O	1-M, 2-O	2-O		1-L, 2-O
LAKE ALPINE COUNTY PARK						
Replace restroom with larger facility		H				
Install horseshoe pits	L					
Maintain volleyball court	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-L, 1-O	1-H, 1-O	1-O	2-O		1-L, 2-O
LAKE HURON COUNTY PARK						
Evaluate lease	H					
Update grill units	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H, 1-O	1-O	1-O	1-O		1-O
MARL LAKE COUNTY PARK						
Evaluate and update lease	H					
Erosion control along shoreline	O	O	O	O	O	
Update restroom w/ changing areas		H				
Upgrade shelter with electric		H				
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H, 1-O	2-H, 1-O	1-O	1-O		1-O
MT. MORRIS COUNTY PARK						
Construct 2nd shelter on hill			H			
Maintain ball diamond	O	O	O	O	O	
Increase ski, hiking, and mountain bike trails	H/O	H/O	H/O	H/O	H/O	
Maintain Parking area	O	O	O	O	O	
Resurface tennis courts	O	O	O	O	O	
Maintain sand in volleyball court	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H, 5-O	1-H, 5-O	2-H, 5-O	1-H, 5-O		1-H, 5-O
OTTO BREY COUNTY PARK						
Maintain volleyball court	O	O	O	O	O	
Maintain baseball infield	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	2-O	2-O	2-O	2-O		2-O

PONY CREEK COUNTY PARK					
Maintain weed growth along lake	O	O	O	O	O
Maintain ADA trail	O	O	O	O	O
Add parking to area					L
Fix wooden fencing/maintain	O	O	O	O	O
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	3-O	3-O	3-O	3-O	1-L, 3-O
WILLOW CREEK COUNTY PARK					
Add lighting for x-country trails			M		
Maintain trails	O	O	O	O	O
Addition of Mountain Bike Trails	H				
Parking lot maintenance, additional parking		H			
Addition of well / electricity					M
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H, 1-O	1-H, 1-O	1-M, 1-O	1-O	1-M, 1-O
Sub-Total of County Park Priorities:					
2012: 5 High, 0 Medium, 1 Low, 16 On-going					
2013: 5 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 16 On-going					
2014: 2 High, 2 Medium, 0 Low, 16 On-going					
2015: 1 High, 4 Medium, 0 Low, 17 On-going					
2016: 1 High, 1 Medium, 1 Low, 17 On-going					
COUNTY RECREATION FACILITIES:					
COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS					
Additional restroom facilities			H		
Performance stage roof					L
Grandstand roof					L
Improvement of the horse arena (surface/safety)		M			
Landscaping / maintain tree planting program	O	O	O	O	O
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-O	1-M, 1-O	1-H, 1-O	1-O	2-L, 1-O

COUNTY SHOOTING RANGE						
Investigate lateral bunkers	M					
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-M					
BANNERMAN TRAIL						
Investigate off street parking along the trail	M					
Maintain/repair trail surface	O	O	O	O	O	
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-M, 1-O	1-O	1-O	1-O	1-O	1-O
Sub-Total of County Facility Priorities:						
2012: 0 High, 2 Medium, 0 Low, 2 On-going						
2013: 0 High, 1 Medium, 0 Low, 2 On-going						
2014: 1 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 2 On-going						
2015: 0 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 2 On-going						
2016: 0 High, 0 Medium, 2 Low, 2 On-going						
COUNTY NATURAL AREAS:						
BUEHLER NATURAL AREA						
Add signage	H					
Install fishing pier along shore				L		
Re-establish trails		M				
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-H	1-M		1-L		
SORENSEN NATURAL AREA						
Construct restroom facility			H			
Improve hiking/snowshoe trails	O	O	O	O	O	
Develop rustic campsites - Ice Age Trail users				M		
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>	1-O	1-O	1-H, 1-O	1-M, 1-O	1-O	1-O
Subtotal County Natural Areas Priorities:						
2012: 1 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 1 On-going						
2013: 0 High, 1 Medium, 0 Low, 1 On-going						
2014: 1 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 1 On-going						
2015: 0 High, 1 Medium, 1 Low, 1 On-going						
2016: 0 High, 0 Medium, 0 Low, 1 On-going						

General recommendations for all parks					
Add bins/barrels to parks		0	0	0	0
Update older playground equipment/maintain		0	0	0	0
Provide for better venting in vault restrooms		0	0	0	0
Tree program and maintenance		0	0	0	0
Add benches/landscaping for aesthetics		0	0	0	0
<i>Subtotal of Priorities:</i>		5-0	5-0	5-0	5-0
Summary by year:					
Total County Priorities:					
2012: 6 High, 2 Medium, 1 Low, 19 On-going					
2013: 5 High, 1 Medium, 0 Low, 19 On-going					
2014: 4 High, 2 Medium, 0 Low, 19 On-going					
2015: 1 High, 5 Medium, 1 Low, 20 On-going					
2016: 1 High, 1 Medium, 3 Low, 20 On-going					

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RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO. 10-03-12
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADOPTION OF THE
WAUSHARA COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (2012-2016)

WHEREAS, Waushara County is interested in providing quality park and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Waushara County and protecting its unique natural and cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, Waushara County has requested assistance from the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in updating its outdoor recreation plan; and

WHEREAS, a planning committee comprised of county board members, recreation and resource specialists, and interested private citizens was formed to assist East Central Planning; and

WHEREAS, the plan and its recommendations, which address the county's recreational development and resource protection needs over the next five years and beyond, was accepted by the Planning Committee on February 22, 2012; and

WHEREAS, County adoption of said plan is required for Waushara County to become eligible for cost sharing aid programs administered by the State of Wisconsin;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Waushara County Board of Supervisors that the *Waushara County Outdoor Recreation Plan (2012-2016)* be adopted as the approved recreation plan for the County.

Resolution No. 10-03-12

Ayes _____ Nays _____ Abstain _____ Absent _____ ☒ Voice Vote

Approved and adopted this 20th day of March, 2012.

Approved:



Ruth Zouski
Corporation Counsel

Submitted by:



Everett Eckstein, Vice Chairman
Public Works Committee

Attest:



Melanie R. Stake
Waushara County Clerk



Norman Weiss, Chairman
Waushara County Board of Supervisors

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EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

400 Ahnaip Street, Suite 100 Menasha Wisconsin 54952 (920) 751-4770 Fax (920) 751-4771
Website: www.eastcentralrpc.org Email: staff@eastcentralrpc.org

Celebrating 40 Years of Fostering Regional Collaboration!

January 24, 2012

Dear Waushara County Official,

Waushara County has recently appointed an 11-member Ad Hoc Outdoor Recreation Plan Committee to update its Five-Year (2012-2016) Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This committee is comprised of County Board members, the Parks Director, the WIDNR, 4-H, the County Health Department, and a number of private citizens. The purpose of the plan is to establish an action program for parkland acquisition and development during the next five years (2012-2016) and enable Waushara County to **participate in DNR's Stewardship Program, which provides matching funds** for identified projects. The plan is expected to be ready for adoption in early spring, March/April.

As the recreational planner for ECWRPC assigned to this project, I am writing to each Waushara County Representative to extend the opportunity to offer recommendations and comments to be included within **the county's plan. I have, with the committee's input, put together a short survey for county residents to** comment and give us feedback on the current recreational facilities. Feel free to fill out the short 6 question survey on your own by using the web link below or you may send your comments directly to myself by mail or email before Friday, **February 10, 2012.**

Also, if your town or village has a project that involves purchasing or developing parkland or recreational **facilities in the near future, including your project(s) in this document will satisfy DNR's requirement for** an adopted comprehensive open space plan. This will eliminate the need for your town or village to prepare a stand-alone plan, should you attempt to apply for these grants during the next five years.

Please send any comments/recommendations for the plan by regular mail to:
Trish Nau, GIS Coordinator/Recreation Planner,
ECWRPC, 400 Ahnaip Street, Suite 100, Menasha, WI 54952.

Or by:
Email: tnau@eastcentralrpc.org

Or by:
On-Line Survey at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WausharaCoParks2012_6QuestionPoll

Sincerely,

Trish Nau, GIS Coordinator/Recreation Planner

Cc:
Waushara County Officials
Outdoor Parks and Recreation Committee



2012 Parks and Rec Survey Results

Survey conducted
From Friday January 20, 2012 – Friday February 17, 2012

Total Started Survey: 104
Total Completed 104 (100%)
Survey: completion
rate

Waushara Co Parks and Recreation 2012

1. What municipality do you live in?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
T. AURORA	0.0%	0
T. BLOOMFIELD	3.9%	4
T. COLOMA	9.7%	10
T. DAKOTA	2.9%	3
T. DEERFIELD	3.9%	4
T. HANCOCK	4.9%	5
T. LEON	5.8%	6
T. MARION	1.9%	2
T. MOUNT MORRIS	1.0%	1
T. OASIS	0.0%	0
T. PLAINFIELD	2.9%	3
T. POY SIPPI	5.8%	6
T. RICHFORD	1.0%	1
T. ROSE	1.9%	2
T. SAXEVILLE	7.8%	8
T. SPRINGWATER	3.9%	4
T. WARREN	0.0%	0
T. WAUTOMA	1.0%	1
V. COLOMA	6.8%	7
V. HANCOCK	0.0%	0
V. LOHRVILLE	4.9%	5
V. PLAINFIELD	0.0%	0
V. REDGRANITE	3.9%	4
V. WILD ROSE	21.4%	22
C. BERLIN	1.0%	1
C. WAUTOMA	3.9%	4
Other (please specify)		1
<i>answered question</i>		103
<i>skipped question</i>		1

Number	Response Date	Other (please specify)	Categories
1	Feb 7, 2012 2:57 AM	City of Oshkosh	

2. Age of person filling out this survey?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
15-25	0.0%	0
26-35	1.9%	2
36-45	7.7%	8
46-55	13.5%	14
56-65	16.3%	17
66+	60.6%	63
<i>answered question</i>		104
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Distribution by age:



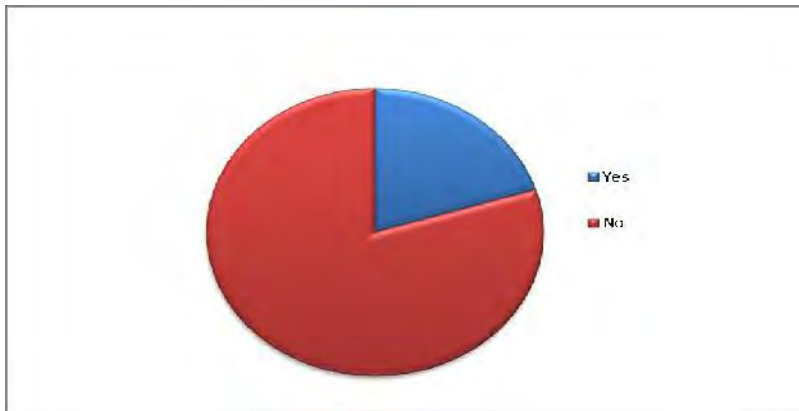
3. How many do you have living in your household?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1-2	81.7%	85
3-4	11.5%	12
5-6	6.7%	7
7+	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		104
<i>skipped question</i>		0



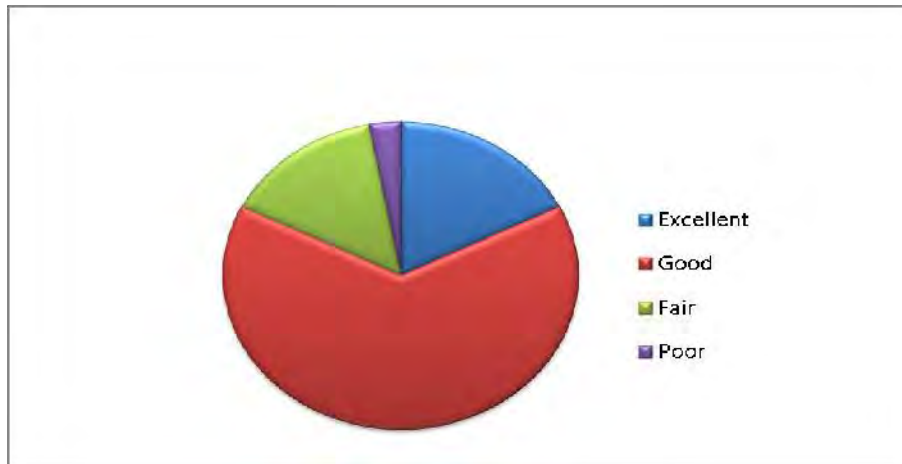
4. Does anyone in your household have physical limitations?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	20.2%	21
No	79.8%	83
<i>answered question</i>		104
<i>skipped question</i>		0



5. In your opinion, how would you rate the county's current park and recreation amenities?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent	17.6%	18
Good	64.7%	66
Fair	14.7%	15
Poor	2.9%	3
<i>answered question</i>		102
<i>skipped question</i>		2



6. Please provide us with any other comments that would help improve the Parks and Recreational Areas in Waushara County in terms of services and amenities.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	30
<i>answered question</i>	30
<i>skipped question</i>	74

Comments provided:

In the Town of Bloomfield, we have the Pony Creek County Park located on the west end of Lake Poygan. It has already a nice shelter, bathroom facilities, grills ,and a nice mowed area to access the water for fishing off shore. In our comprehensive plan for future plans it calls for a possible nature trail and boardwalk to the existing park. As the town chairman I have heard of requests that we could add some playground equipment to that list.

State Highway Bathroom facilities; the ones that we have close to soon in the season.
Make them accessible so all can use them

Try to get the best section of cross country ski and hiking trails back. That portion that runs through the campground and rolling woods was a real gem with a variety of terrain. When the trails were open the previous years they were well maintained. Waushara county parks are the best skiing and hiking within 45 minutes of Oshkosh. Thanks! Tom Salzer 920-233-2640

I would have rated them Excellent but after the budget cuts of the past couple of years one can tell some areas are starting to slip. Less brushing, grooming, painting and general upkeep of park areas and trails. Not the Rec departments fault... it is what it is.

Additional parking spaces for major events.

Skating area

In Lohrville, we would love to see a pavilion or type of shelter house for picnics, parties, etc.

Supervision to stop kids from trouble

Shelters

Love the Otto Brey park- Convenient- Easy to get into and park- Clean!

Excellent- Kusel Lake- have family reunions there!

More or easier Wheelchair accessible areas and facilities.

The Mt. Morris Town Park located on County Road G in the Town of Mt. Morris is equipped with toilets, handicap accessible pier, swimming area, picnic benches, children's play equipment, public boat landing and a small pavilion/shelter. The pavilion is very old and badly deteriorated. We would like to tear it down and put up a new pavilion/shelter that would better serve our community. Also, our park is on a hillside next to Lake Morris. We have a severe erosion problem that we would also like to correct. We would like to correct both of these problems.

Thank You, Greg Foster - Supervisor #1 Town of Mt. Morris

Research avenues of funding to further improve existing parks and the possible purchase of new properties that may become available. Determine whether it would be feasible to utilize the use of volunteers to help maintain existing park properties, (possibly Huber workers). Don't frequent them but when I have they are kept in good condition.

Fund the park department with enough resources so that they are able to plan, developed, and maintain cross country ski trails and snow shoe trails.

Form a strong partnership with the Ice Age Trail Local Chapter and work together to complete all of the proposed Ice Age Trail off roads. We are close, but need a large base of support to finish the northern section... Wild Rose

The Ice Age Trail has the potential to be a huge economic boost to the county with the right marketing and development strategies.

There are already three Bed and Breakfasts in Waushara listed on the Inn to Inn Ice Age Trail brochure and there is so much potential for positive economic influence through the Ice Age Trail, it is an opportunity that should be utilized.

Groom the cross country ski trails more regularly.

Current method of resealing roads with gravel hampers biking opportunities in the county.

It would be nice to see outdoor equipment available for citizens and/or groups in the county to rent out or use for recreational use. Items suggested would be snowshoes, cross country skis, bikes, canoes, kayaks. This type of program was offered at UWSP when I was a student there, and it was wonderful. I think it would be beneficial to the local schools and groups such as 4H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Youth groups, school clubs, etc. to have this as a resource. Each group should not have to work independently to get these resources, it would be nice to work together to have these resources available to all. Also a great way to promote exploration of the great outdoors available in Waushara County.

I think the parks are in very good condition. They take good advantage of the resources that are available and are well dispersed. I think the park crew does a great job.

One weakness I see is in the "Bike Route" system. The available brochure is well done and maps out excellent routes. However a brochure alone is not all that user friendly. The routes need to be well marked so as to provide convenience and a comfort level that ultimately makes them more enjoyable. An example I would use is the Green Circle Trail in Portage County. This 20 mile trail is routed through what would appear to be an impossible maze of city streets, county roads, parks and bike paths, but it is so well marked you can enjoy the ride without the use of a map. A plus for residents and visitors. Signage of course is expensive but it is low maintenance and routes could be phased in over time.

A few more cross country ski and swimming options would be nice.

The Use of ATV trails.

Parks don't really offer options for those in wheelchairs or who have trouble getting about. There are no decent paths if a person with physical limitations wants to go fishing. There is lack of seating near the water. There is no handicap parking that I ever remember seeing. Even those without physical limitations find it difficult to tread some of the terrain.

If parks plan on buying any land, make sure it borders a lake stream or even a quality wetland

Flush toilets would be nice. I know Kusel has flush toilets and it would be nice if all the parks had them.

I think most folks would be willing to pay a reasonable amount for a restroom to be built. \$3-\$5/parcel seems reasonable amount to charge to upgrade existing facilities.

Garbage receptacles need to be emptied more frequently.

Bath houses/bathrooms provided at parks with swim beaches.

An outdoor water park with food and water rides would be nice to see put in. People have to travel so far to enjoy one of these, (Wisconsin Dells or Berlin). Possibly one near Wautoma, which would be centrally located for the smaller communities to enjoy.

Improvements to lake access areas & boat launch facilities.

We have a lot of public land and some great county parks, but I would like to see more open to horse owners. A parking area and some marked trails would be such a nice amenity in Waushara County. Even being able to use the county parks (the fairgrounds or Bird Creek (just to name 2). Then we would not have to haul to neighboring counties and our admission money could stay local. There are a lot of clubs, individuals and organizations that would be willing to take on the responsibility of keeping up the trails if it is just made known that the possibility is there.

By Email:

I would like to give my enthusiastic support for an incredible group of volunteers in Waushara County that contribute time, money, energy for the Ice Age Trail. They put on several fantastic events for the community that take place on the Ice Age Trail in Waushara County.

We are currently getting ready for our 13th annual Feb Candlelight Hike this Feb 4th. We are expecting to have over 200 people participating. There will be chili/soup, beverages, cookies, live music (Clausen Family Band), outside bon fire with marshmallows to roast.... I hope you can stop by. It is really great.

I would also like to acknowledge WOW. Waushara Outdoor Women. This group plans about 25 events throughout the year. These include: hiking, biking, snowshoeing, skiing, tubing, kayaking, with an occasional indoor event thrown in. This group is loosely organized around a twice a year planning gathering and an email distribution list of about 30 members to let people know what events are planned for the future.

Thanks Jean Clark

Note: Survey provided by use of the SurveyMonkey.com website, original formatting is maintained.

Waushara County

Wisconsin Bicycle Map

