

Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan

2022-2027



Plan completed by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department with assistance provided by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

JUNE 21, 2022



**EAU CLAIRE COUNTY
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN
2022 – 2027**

prepared by:

**Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department
and the
Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan Update
Steering Committee**

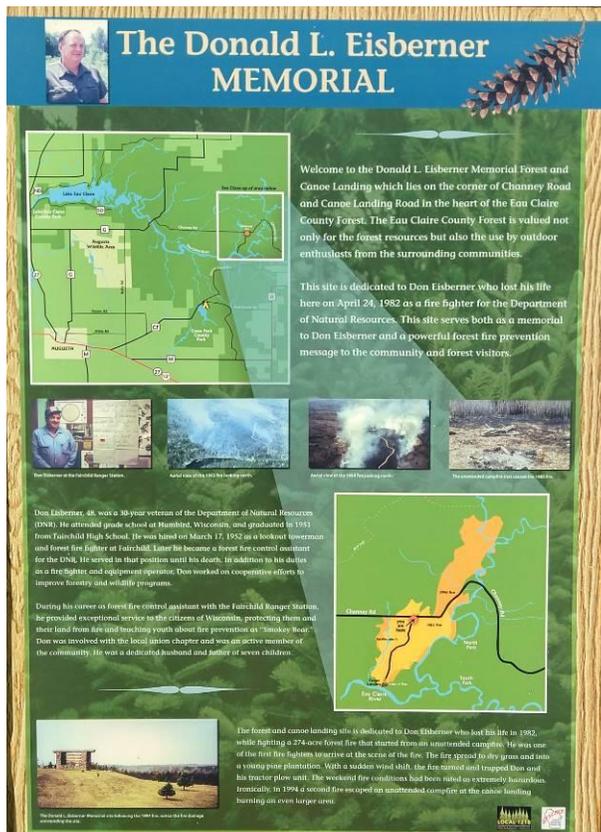
with assistance by:

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

**Adopted by the
Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors – June 16, 2022**

Dedication

On April 24, 1982, Wisconsin DNR employee Don Eisberner lost his life while battling a 274-acre wildfire in the Eau Claire County Forest, which ignited from an unattended campfire. Don was stationed at the Fairchild Ranger Station and was an active member of the community, including teaching youth about fire prevention as Smokey Bear. The Donald L. Eisberner Memorial Forest & Canoe Landing was dedicated in his honor.



2022 is the 40th anniversary year of Don's tragic death and this outdoor recreation plan update is dedicated to his memory. The canoe landing memorial and his death serve as a poignant reminder that the Eau Claire County Forest is at risk of large wildfires and that most wildfires in Wisconsin occur during the month of April.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following individuals for their active role in this update of the Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan:

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Photo Credits

2016-2020 Eau Claire County CORP, including County Parks & Forest Department, Matt Michels, & Sue McDonald
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Access to outdoor recreation and open space is important for the health, wellness, and quality of life for residents of Eau Claire County. As the population grows and recreational trends change and evolve, the County must regularly evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities to meet the needs and wants of residents and develop an achievable plan to develop additional recreational facilities and capacity. This plan was developed with extensive input from the public, parks users and stakeholders, and leaders from the County and local jurisdictions and is intended to serve as a guide to Eau Claire County in the development of parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

As an update to the *2016-2020 Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan*, this plan serves to identify and inventory County recreational facilities and determine the demand and desire for additional facilities and amenities. In addition, the plan will provide the County and its municipalities with eligibility for certain grant funds.

A. OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNING AS A GRANT PREREQUISITE

Wisconsin municipalities are required to maintain a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (CORP) in order to be eligible for certain grant programs available through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, most notably:

- Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program grants (i.e., Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks, Urban Green Space grants, Urban Rivers grants, and Acquisition of Development Rights)
- Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON)
- Federal Recreational Trails Act (RTA) funds

Eligible grant projects must support or enhance public outdoor recreation activities. In the past, the focus of these grant programs has been on nature-based outdoor recreation projects, such as land acquisition for parks/trails or the construction of trails, canoe launches, fishing piers, park shelters, campgrounds, picnic areas, and restrooms. However, the LAWCON Program can now also fund active outdoor recreation facilities, such as ballfields and splash pads.

To be eligible for these grant funds, the county or community must have adopted its outdoor recreation plan within the past five years and the plan must meet WDNR standards. Plans older than five years must be updated prior to pursuit of related grant funding. A CORP is not a prerequisite for the separate WDNR Motorized Stewardship Grants program for ATV & Snowmobile trail aids, which has an April 15th deadline.

B. PLANNING PROCESS

This CORP serves as a guide for the development of parks and outdoor recreation facilities in Eau Claire County and participating local communities. It is an update of the *2016 to 2021 Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan* and ensures the continuation of an orderly procedure to identify and evaluate the need for additional or improved recreation facilities. The Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department took the lead role in managing the development of this plan with direction of an ad hoc Outdoor Recreation Plan Update Steering Committee and facilitation support from West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). The Parks and Forest Department invited representatives from various outdoor recreation stakeholder groups to participate on the Steering Committee, which met virtually three times during late 2021 through early 2022 to provide input on related issues, opportunities, goals, strategies, and the planning effort in general. A web-based survey was used to obtain input from Eau Claire County residents and visitors regarding their use of County park facilities and needed improvements. A second, brief web-based survey was also sent to stakeholder groups for additional input on concerns and ideas specific to each group's area of interest. Where appropriate, information from other County and community plans has also been integrated into this document.

Each city, village, and town in Eau Claire County without a recently adopted CORP was also invited to participate in the plan update. WCWRPC worked with representatives from the participating community as part of Section VII to inventory and assess their outdoor recreation needs and develop their individual community outdoor recreation plan sections.

The final draft *2022-2027 Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan* will be adopted by the County and participating communities during properly noticed public meetings, which will provide additional opportunities for public input on the local recreational amenities, goals, and recommendations discussed in this document.

C. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNING IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY

The first CORP for Eau Claire County was adopted in 1973. Since then, Eau Claire County has routinely amended the plan every five years in accordance with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requirements to maintain eligibility for grant funding assistance for various outdoor recreation improvements. For example, between 1965 to 2017, there has been \$1,254,062 in Land & Water Conservation Fund grants awarded for 37 projects in Eau Claire County.

Priority projects identified within the CORP are then incorporated into the Parks and Forestry Department's Capital Improvement Plan, which is updated each year during the County budget process. In this respect, the recommendations within this plan are directly associated with the County budget process and the resulting improvements made on an annual basis to the County Park system. This CORP intends to address outdoor recreation "needs" while at the same time meet current demand and trends, all within the confines of Eau Claire County's budgeted financial means. To this end, the projects identified within this Plan are to be considered "recommendations" and may not necessarily be carried out within the next five years.

D. PLAN MAINTENANCE AND AMENDMENTS

The Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Committee will be responsible for providing recommendations to the Eau Claire County Board that ensure that the implementation of the Plan is consistent with the Plan's goals, objectives, and policies.

Conditions, needs, opportunities, and recreational interests change. This CORP may be amended as necessary to address changing conditions to prolong the effectiveness of the parent plan. And it is anticipated that the Plan will be fully updated within five years following adoption

Plan amendments to Sections I-VI of this CORP should require formal approval of the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors after consideration of an advisory recommendation from the Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Committee. Participating municipalities may also amend their respective portions of the plan within Section VII by resolution of the municipality. It is recommended that a local amendment be followed by a motion recognizing these changes by the Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Committee but is not required. Any adopted plan revisions or amendments should be sent to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Community Services Specialist for the west-central region in Eau Claire.



Lake Altoona Winter Panorama, photo: Matt Michels

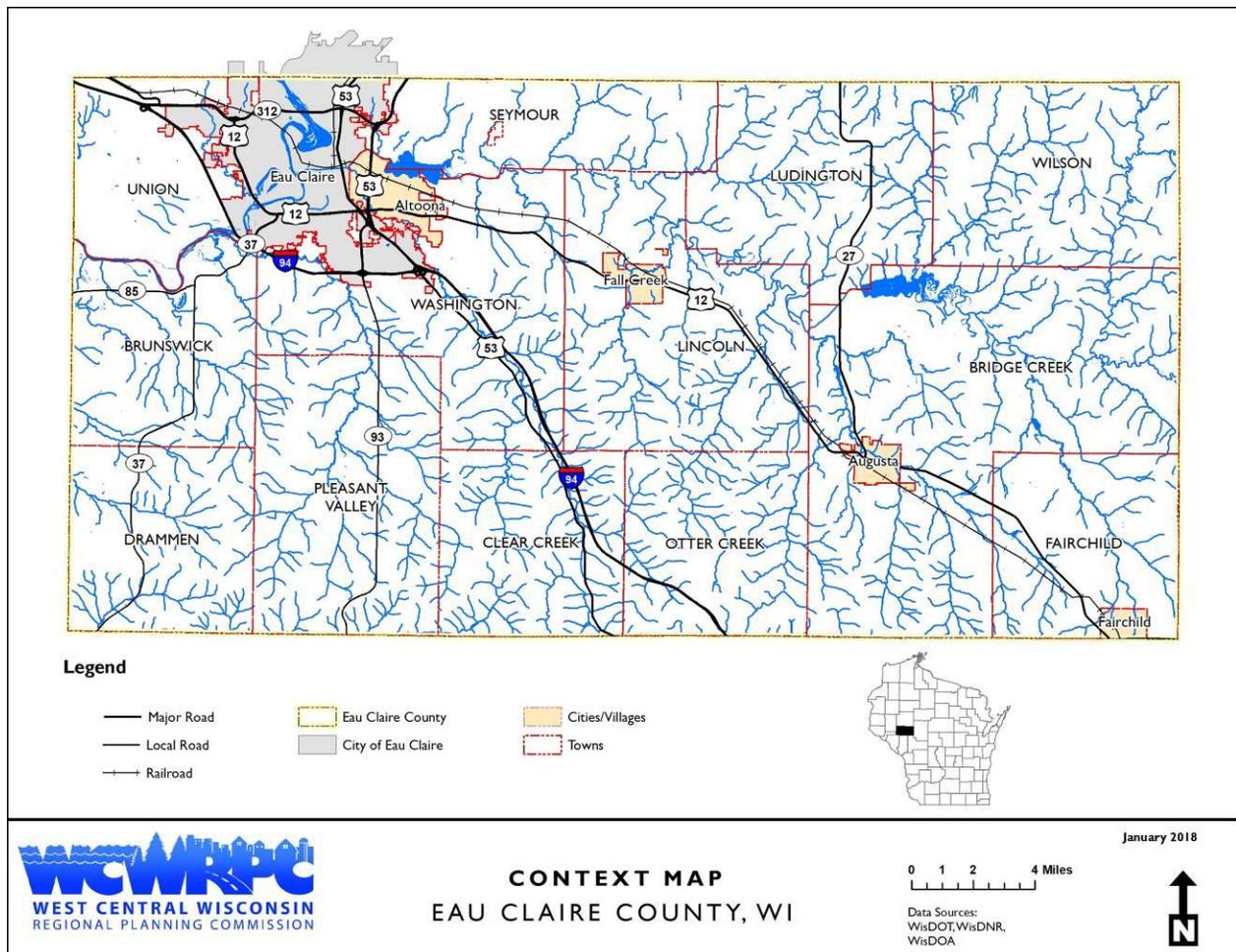
SECTION II

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANNING AREA

A. PHYSICAL SETTING

Eau Claire County is located in west central Wisconsin. It is rectangular in shape, covering an area of 419,200 acres, or 655 square miles. Municipalities within the County include 13 towns, 3 cities and 2 villages. The towns are: Bridge Creek, Brunswick, Clear Creek, Drammen, Fairchild, Lincoln, Ludington, Otter Creek, Pleasant Valley, Seymour, Union, Washington, and Wilson. The cities and villages include City of Eau Claire in the northwest part of the County, Altoona bordering on the east side of the City of Eau Claire, and three municipalities which run northwest to southeast across the County in a straight diagonal along US Highway 12 - Village of Fall Creek, City of Augusta, and the Village of Fairchild. **Map 1** shows the location of these governmental units within the County. Eau Claire County is bordered on the north by Chippewa County, on the east by Clark County, on the west by Pepin and Dunn counties, and on the south by Jackson, Trempealeau, and Buffalo counties.

Map 1. Geographic Location of Eau Claire County



i. TOPOGRAPHY/ GEOLOGY

Eau Claire County is located in a transitional area between the formerly glaciated area to the north and the formerly un-glaciated area to the south, commonly known as the “Driftless Area”. The County’s topography can be characterized as an irregular plain, which reflects this transition. In the southwestern part of the County, south of the Chippewa River, the surface of the land consists of open hills with gentle slopes on the uplands. The mean elevation ranges from 750 to 1,000 feet above sea level in northern Eau Claire County to 1,000 to 1,250 feet above sea level in the southern portion of the County.

The bedrock geology of the County is upper Cambrian. This formation is chiefly characterized by fine to coarse grained sandstone. There are also some dolomitic and shale beds.

The northern and eastern parts of the County are generally level and quite flat, but are occasionally interspersed with razorback ridges and isolated outlying hills. The Chippewa River passes through the northwestern part of the County, while the Eau Claire River passes through the eastern and north-central part of the County. These rivers and their tributaries have extensive flood plains and are often flanked by postglacial terraces. Not only do the two rivers dominate the natural scene, they also account for most of the surface water. Their flood plains are sites of major urban clusters which account for over three-fourths of the County's population.

ii. SURFACE WATERS

Map 2 on the following page shows the surface waters, floodplains, and wetlands of Eau Claire County. Many outdoor recreation activities and parks are located near or within these environmentally sensitive areas.

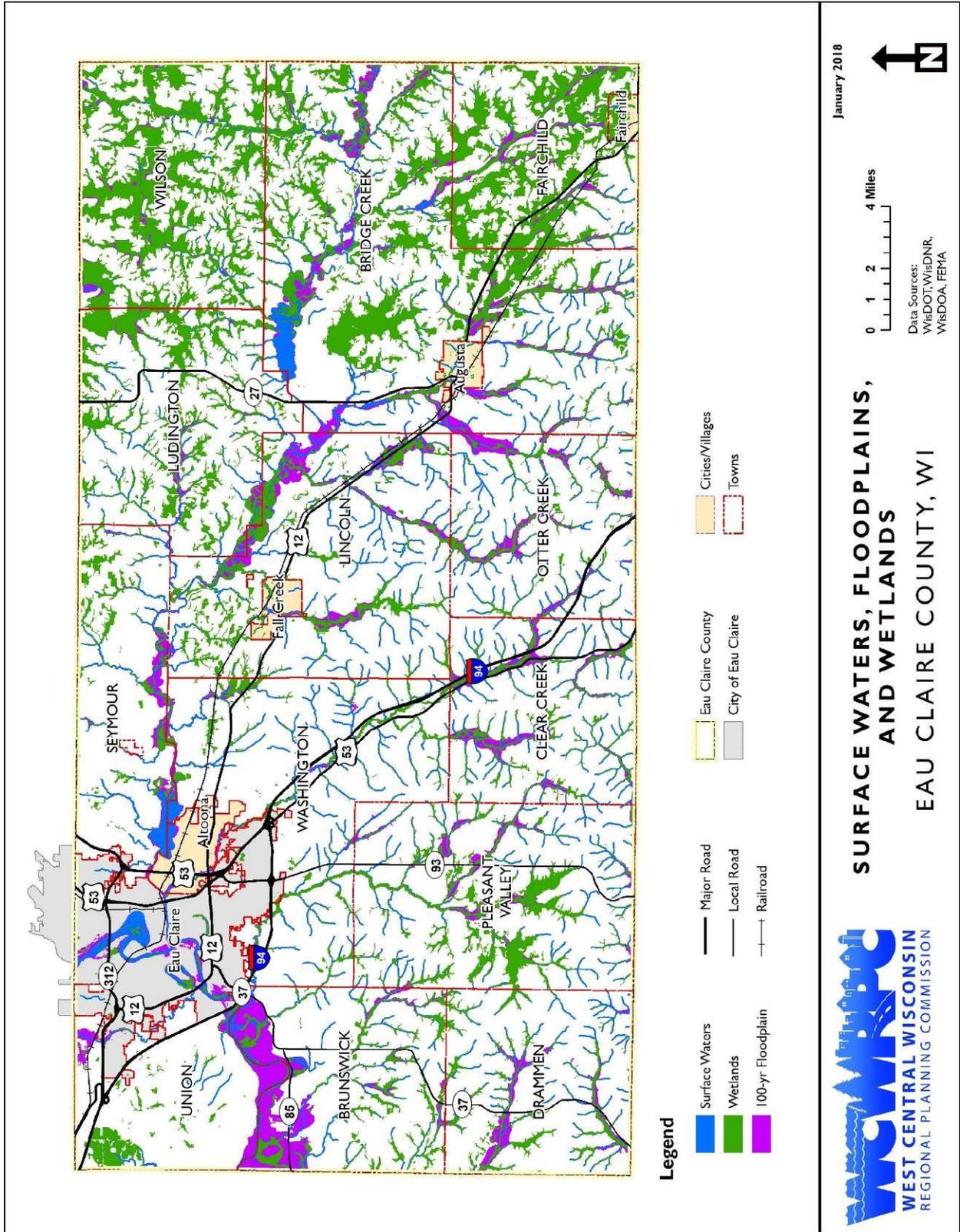
Eau Claire County ranks 41st among the 72 Wisconsin counties in total water acreage of lakes and the 51st in number of lakes, according to a Department of Natural Resources survey. The total surface water acreage of the County is 5,600 acres and consists of 18 lakes (approximately 3,000 acres). Water impoundments account for about 90 percent of the total water acreage of the lakes.

Four lakes in the County have water surface area of greater than 100 acres. These include: Lake Eau Claire (1,188 acres), Lake Altoona (840 acres), Dells Pond (727 acres), and Half Moon Lake (132 acres). Canoeing is possible on the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers, but the number of dams severely limits their potential as major canoe routes.

iii. CLIMATE

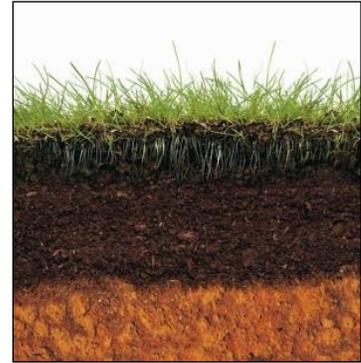
The climate of Eau Claire County is classified as mid-latitude Continental, which is characterized by warm, humid summers and cold, snowy winters. The average monthly temperature ranges from 15 degrees Fahrenheit in January to 73 degrees Fahrenheit in July. Extremes in temperature can range from below minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit to above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The County averages about 32 inches of precipitation annually with about two thirds occurring as rain in the spring and summer months. The growing season averages about 150 days per year.

Map 2. Surface Waters, Floodplains, & Wetlands of Eau Claire County



iv. SOILS

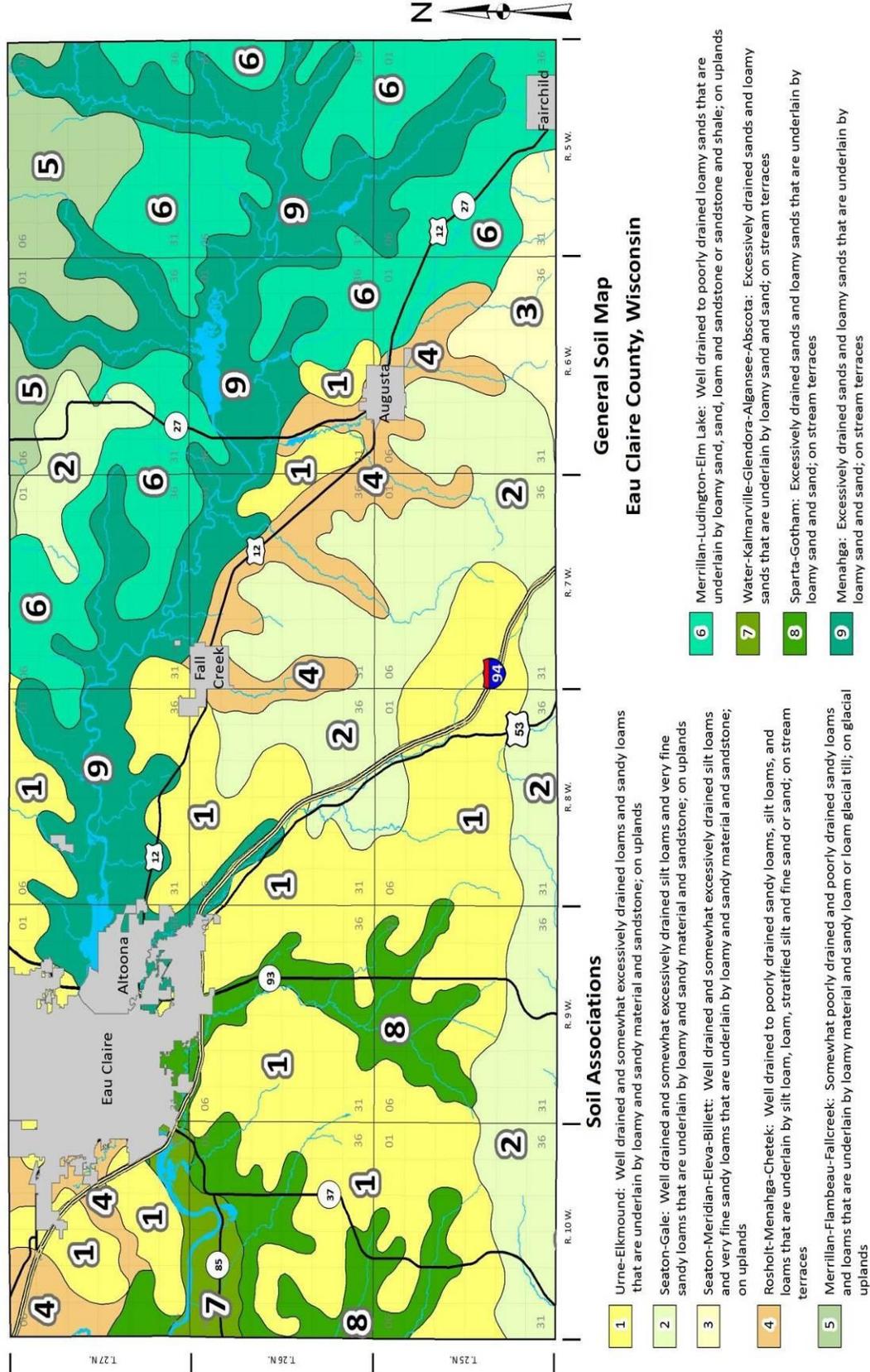
Soils should be considered when planning for land use and vegetative land cover. Certain soil types may not be appropriate for more intensive recreational use and related construction and amenities. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has grouped the soils of Eau Claire County into 12 major soil associations (see **Map 3**). These associations are:



1. Seaton-Gale-Otterholt Association
Moderately deep to deep, well-drained with gently sloping to steep silty soils over sandstone or loamy glacial till; this association occurs in the southern and central part of Eau Claire County.
2. Caryville-Sandy Alluvial Land-Whitehall Association
Moderately deep, well to somewhat poorly drained with silty and loamy soils underlain by sandstone and sandstone with shale layers; these soils are primarily located in the western part of the County along the Chippewa River.
3. Elk Mound-Plainbo-Plainfield Association
Flooding does not occur in this association, which is located in the western part of the County. The depth to the water table is more than five feet. The depth to bedrock is 20-40 inches for the Elk Mound and Plainbo series and more than five feet for the Plainfield series.
4. Plainfield-Gotham Association
Deep, excessively drained with nearly level to sloping sandy soils, on stream terraces or on outwash plains; it is located throughout the County, generally in the eastern, northern and central areas.
5. Seaton-Benches-Curran Association
Deep, well to somewhat poorly drained, with nearly level to sloping silty soils; it includes some moderately deep, well to poorly drained, nearly level to sloping, loamy soils underlain by sand. It occurs in the east central part of the County.
6. Northfield-Elk Mound Association
Shallow, well-drained, with the gently sloping to steep soils underlain by sandstone or shale sandstone; small areas of wet mineral and organic soils are along streams and depression areas; this association occurs in various locations throughout Eau Claire County.
7. Withee-Loyal Association
Not flooded but depth to water table is seasonal, usually one to three feet; depth to bedrock is more than five feet. It is located in the northeastern area of the County.
8. Kert-Vesper Association
Deep, somewhat poorly drained with nearly level to gently sloping loamy and silty soils underlain by sandstone with shaley layers on the low lying uplands; found in the east central area of the County.

9. Chetek-Northfield Association
Shallow to moderately deep, well-drained, gently sloping to steep loamy and silty soils underlain by sand and sandstone; occurs in the northwestern part of the County.
10. Billet-Shiffer-Meridian Association
Moderately deep, well to somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to sloping loamy soils underlain by sand; found in the northwestern part of the County.
11. Merrillan-Humbird-Boone Association
Moderately deep, excessively drained to somewhat poorly drained; the soils are loamy and sandy, underlain by sandstone and sandstone with shale layers on uplands. This soil association is located in eastern Eau Claire County and in the southeastern corner.
12. Vilas-AuGras Association
Deep, excessively to somewhat poorly drained with nearly level to sloping soils; wet mineral and organic soils are along streams and in depressional areas. This association is found in eastern Eau Claire County and near the Merrillan-Humbird-Boone Association.

Map 3. Soil Associations of Eau Claire County



B. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Population distribution, growth, and demographics all influence the demand for outdoor recreational facilities.

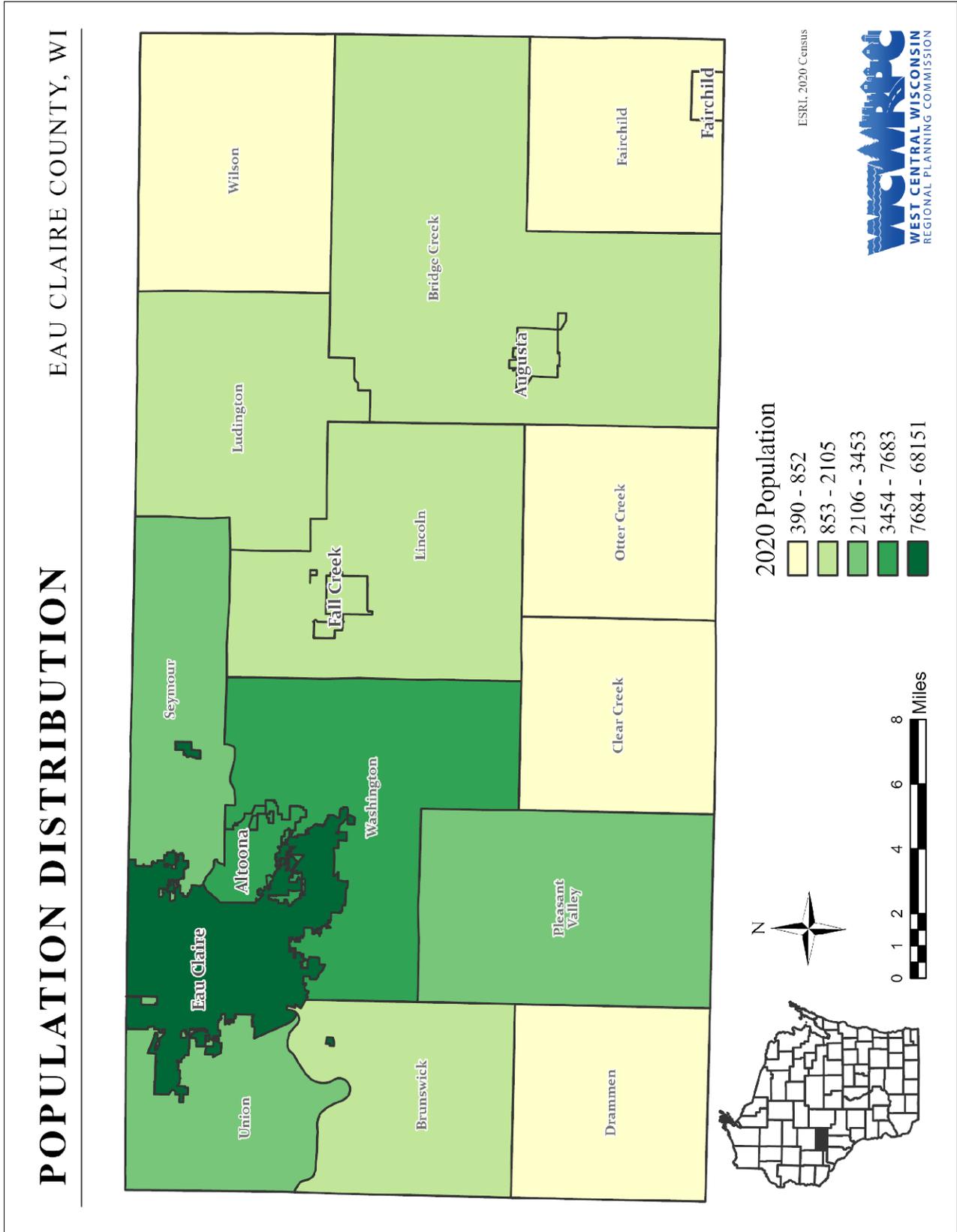
i. POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND TRENDS

As shown in **Table 1** as well as **Map 4** of the following page, 71.3% of the County’s population is concentrated in the cities of Altoona and Eau Claire, while only 25.4% is located in the unincorporated towns. Overall, Eau Claire County’s population has increased by 21.2% between 1990 and 2020, with nearly all minor civil divisions contributing to this growth. The County’s overall rate of population growth since 2010 was 6.6%, which is slightly higher than the 6.0% growth during the prior decade. The towns had the fastest rate of growth (7.9%) between 2010-2020. However, two communities—the Village of Fall Creek & City of Augusta—have experienced small population decreases since 2010.

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>% Change 2010-2020</u>
Towns:					
Bridge Creek	1,440	1,844	1,900	2,097	10.4
Brunswick	1,506	1,598	1,624	1,777	9.4
Clear Creek	692	712	821	902	9.9
Drammen	767	800	783	864	10.3
Fairchild	312	351	393	378	10.2
Lincoln	1,002	1,080	1,096	1,203	9.8
Ludington	906	998	1,063	1,084	2
Otter Creek	459	531	500	547	9.4
Pleasant Valley	2,076	2,681	3,044	3,460	13.7
Seymour	2,757	2,978	3,209	3,352	4.5
Union	2,446	2,402	2,663	2,802	5.2
Washington	6,276	6,995	7,182	7,752	7.9
Wilson	477	420	485	500	3.1
Villages:					
Fairchild	504	564	550	607	10.4
Fall Creek	1,034	1,236	1,315	1,291	-1.8
Cities:					
Altoona	5,889	6,698	6,706	8,062	20.2
Augusta	1,510	1,460	1,550	1,517	-2.1
Eau Claire*	<u>56,806</u>	<u>59,794</u>	<u>63,902</u>	<u>67,065</u>	<u>4.9</u>
Total:	86,859	93,142	98,736	105,260	6.6

*Portion of city in Eau Claire County only
SOURCE: 2019 American Community Survey

Map 4. Eau Claire County Population Distribution



ii. RURAL POPULATION DENSITY

According to the 2020 Census, the unincorporated towns in the County with the greatest density of persons per square mile are Washington, Seymour, and Union (see **Table 2** and **Map 5**). These towns are in the northwestern portion of the County, adjacent to the metropolitan area including the cities of Altoona and Eau Claire. About 90% of the County's population lives in this urbanized corner of the County. Densities in the eastern portion of the County are the lowest (Wilson, Otter Creek, and Fairchild) where much of the land is in agricultural production or County Forest.

Table 2 EAU CLAIRE COUNTY RURAL POPULATION DENSITIES: 2000 - 2020			
Town	Persons Per Square Mile		
	2000	2010	2020
Bridge Creek	17.5	18.6	17.7
Brunswick	41.9	43.9	44.0
Clear Creek	19.5	22.8	20.4
Drammen	22.0	21.7	22.7
Fairchild	10.2	11.5	10.8
Lincoln	18.0	18.9	19.1
Ludington	21.3	23.1	23.0
Otter Creek	14.6	13.9	15.0
Pleasant Valley	48.9	56.4	54.1
Seymour	90.2	103.5	95.3
Union	84.3	98.6	84.9
Washington	129.5	133.0	126.7
Wilson	8.7	10.4	9.1

Source: Eau Claire County Department of Planning and Development

iii. AGE DISTRIBUTION

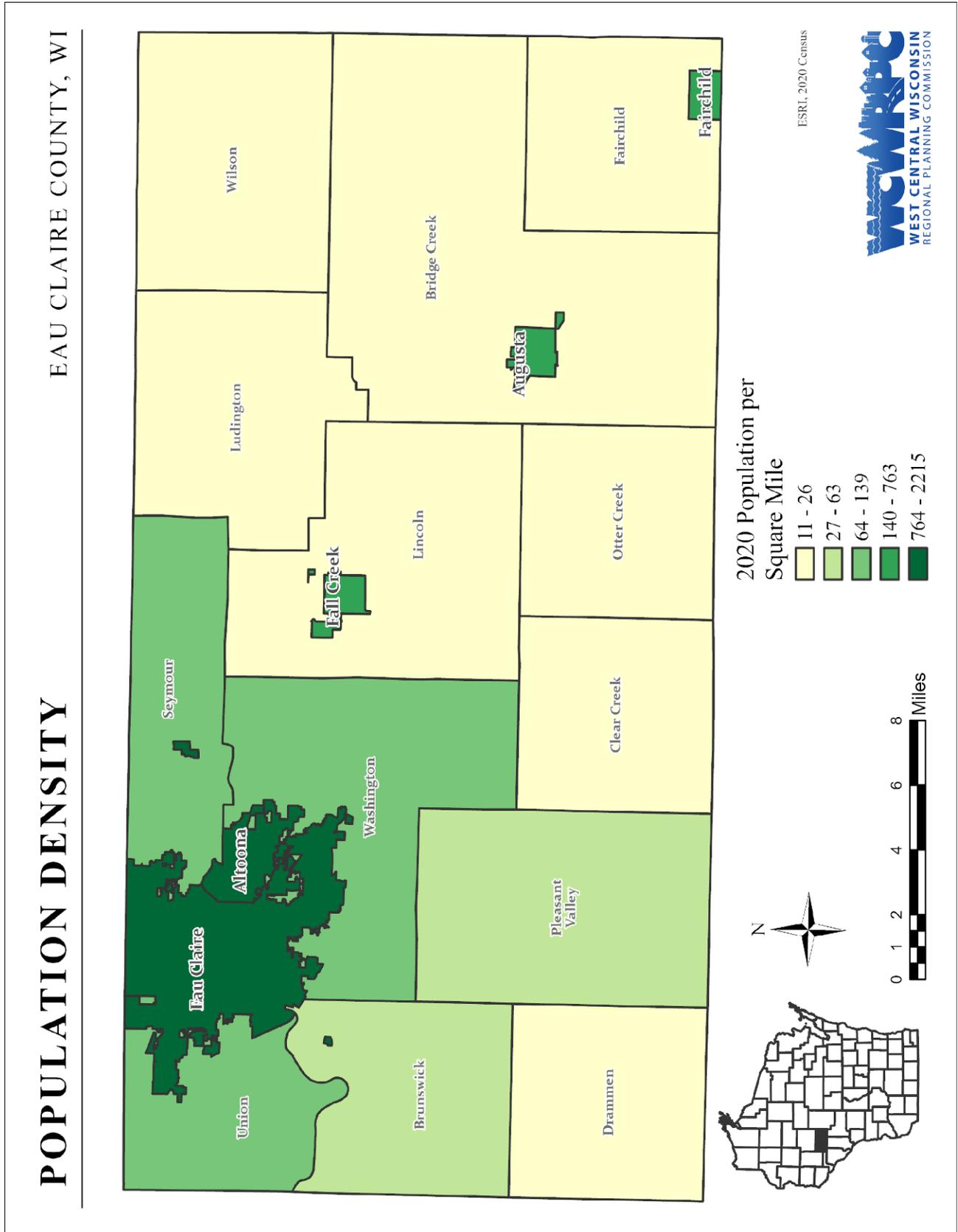
The percentage of individuals in younger age groups (19 and under) has declined from 28.5% in 2000 and 25.8% in 2010 to 24.7 (see **Table 3**). The percentage of those of working age (20 to 64) increased from 59.3% in 2000 to 61.6% in 2010. However, this trend did not continue into 2020, with a large decrease to 55.1%. The 65 and older population saw an increase of 2.4%.

Table 3 EAU CLAIRE COUNTY AGE DISTRIBUTION							
Age Group	2000	% of		2010	% of		
		Population	Population		2020	Population	
Under 5	5,565	6.0		5,859	5.9	5,879	5.7
5-19	20,994	22.5		19,656	19.9	19,682	19.0
20-44	36,114	38.8		36,385	36.8	33,284	32.2
45-64	19,074	20.5		24,401	24.8	23,780	23.0
65 & Over	11,395	12.2		12,435	12.7	15,665	15.1
Total	93,142	100.0		98,736	100.0	103,514	100.0

Source: 2019 American Community Survey

The median age of Eau Claire County residents has been slowly increasing. The median age was 34.5 years in 2020, compared to 33.4 years in 2010, 32.4 years in 2000, and 30.3 years in 1990.

Map 5. Eau Claire County Population Density by Municipality



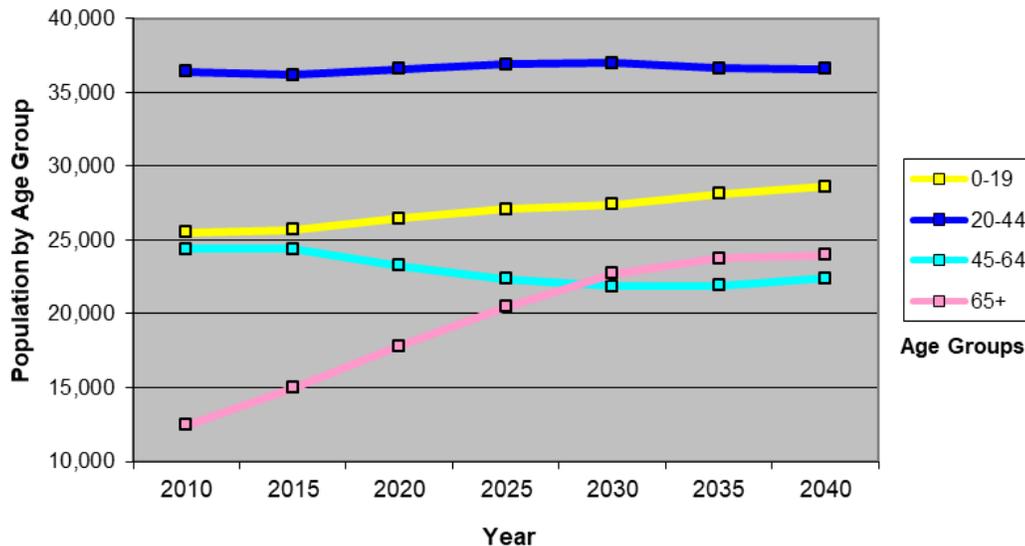
When compared to Wisconsin and the larger region, Eau Claire County’s average ages are impacted by its post-secondary educational institutions. The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has an annual enrollment exceeding 10,000 students. Other institutions include Chippewa Valley Technical College and Immanuel Lutheran College. Due to the student and faculty populations at these educational institutions, the City of Eau Claire’s average age in 2020 was 32.2 years. Median ages for the remainder of the County are closer to or higher than the State’s 2020 average of 39.6 years given the increasing size of the 60-64 age cohort. The general exception are those towns with a significant Amish population. For example, the median age in the Town of Fairchild, which has a significant Amish population was 36.7 years compared to the Town of Drammen which had a median age of 50.1 years.

iv. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Overall, Eau Claire County’s population is relatively homogenous, though increasingly diverse, with 90.0 percent of the population in the white, non-Hispanic racial group in 2019 compared to 92.3 percent in 2016. During the past decade, the population in all racial groups increased, with the Asian and White Hispanic or Latino groups increasing most to become the largest minority populations in Eau Claire County. The Hmong population of Eau Claire County accounts for roughly two percent of the total population, with much of this ethnic minority residing in the City of Eau Claire.¹ Eau Claire County is also home to several Amish communities, estimated to be around 1,240 individuals or 180 families in 2012.²

v. POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The chart below shows Eau Claire County’s projected population by age group, reflecting that the baby boomer generation is dramatically becoming a larger proportion of the County’s population.



data source: Wisconsin Department of Administration.

1 J J Christian, PSL Moua, I Vogeler. “The Cultural Landscape of the Hmong in Eau Claire, Wisconsin (2008-2009).” Wisconsin Geographer, Vol. 23, pp. 3-19.

2 “Amish Population by State (2012).” Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College.

Table 4 shows the Wisconsin Department of Administration’s population projections by municipality and for the County. It is projected that Eau Claire County will have a population of over 111,000 by 2040. Nearly all communities are expected to grow, with the highest rates of growth in the unincorporated towns.

However, these projections (as well as the projections in the previous chart) were prepared in 2013 and have not been updated recently, so caution is advised in their use. For comparison, Eau Claire County was projected to have a 2020 population of 106,750, which is higher than the State’s official 2020 population estimate of 103,959.

Table 4. Eau Claire County Population Projections – 2010 to 2040

Municipality	Census 2010	Proj. 2020	Proj. 2025	Proj. 2030	Proj. 2035	Proj. 2040	% Change 2010-2040
Towns							
Bridge Creek	1,900	1,960	2,000	2,030	2,045	2,060	8%
Brunswick	1,624	1,740	1,785	1,825	1,850	1,870	15%
Clear Creek	821	910	950	990	1,020	1,050	28%
Drammen	783	805	810	815	810	805	3%
Fairchild	343	345	345	345	340	340	-1%
Lincoln	1,096	1,145	1,170	1,190	1,200	1,210	10%
Ludington	1,063	1,100	1,125	1,140	1,150	1,160	9%
Otter Creek	500	500	500	500	495	485	-3%
Pleasant Valley	3,044	3,355	3,505	3,655	3,765	3,875	27%
Seymour	3,209	3,370	3,455	3,530	3,575	3,615	13%
Union	2,663	2,920	3,060	3,180	3,280	3,375	27%
Washington	7,134	7,525	7,710	7,880	7,975	8,060	13%
Wilson	485	510	525	535	540	545	12%
Subtotal:	24,665	26,185	26,940	27,615	28,045	28,450	15%
Villages							
Fairchild	550	560	565	570	570	570	4%
Fall Creek	1,315	1,335	1,355	1,370	1,370	1,370	4%
Subtotal:	1,865	1,895	1,920	1,940	1,940	1,940	4%
Cities							
Altoona	6,706	7,265	7,485	7,695	7,825	7,945	18%
Augusta	1,550	1,550	1,555	1,555	1,540	1,525	-2%
Eau Claire*	63,950	67,200	68,850	70,200	71,050	71,750	12%
Subtotal:	72,206	76,015	77,890	79,450	80,415	81,220	12%
Eau Claire County	98,736	104,095	106,750	109,005	110,400	111,610	13%

source: U.S. Census Bureau & Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center.

*Portion of city located in Eau Claire County only.

These demographic trends result in a number of potential implications for outdoor recreation planning:

- As the population increases and development occurs, demand for outdoor recreation amenities will also increase.
- The Eau Claire County population is aging and becoming more diverse; therefore, the types and locations of amenities that are needed may also be changing.
- Many of the County’s parks and outdoor recreation facilities, including the County Forest, are located in more rural areas of the County, while the far majority of the County’s

population is located in the urban area to the northwest. Residents in the urban area may have challenges accessing these County facilities, and there could be a lack of awareness of what recreational opportunities are available in the rural parts of the County.

- Municipalities have a responsibility to make public recreation accessible to all residents.

vi. Other Household and Community Characteristics

This subsection includes some additional characteristics that may influence recreational programming/amenities or may pose barriers to access. According to 2021 ESRI Community Analyst estimates for Eau Claire County:

- The average household size was 2.38 individuals.
- 25.5 % of households had at least one child.
- 10,121 households (23.6% of all households) had a person with at least one disability.
- 2,390 households (5.6% of all households) did not have a vehicle.
- 13% of households (5,234) were living below the poverty level.
- About 10% of the population did not speak English well.
- The County has relatively high educational attainment with 34% of residents having a bachelor's or higher degree, 36% having an Associate's degree or some college, and 25% having a high school diploma.
- 61.5% of residents worked in white collar jobs, while 22.9% were blue collar and 15.6% in services.
- Eau Claire County's daytime population is 4.6% higher than its resident population.

The economic structure of Eau Claire County is dominated by jobs in the wholesale-retail trade, services, and government sectors. These sectors comprise 75.6 percent of all jobs found in the County (**Table 5**). The City of Eau Claire serves as a regional health and retail trade center drawing consumers from a large area. Manufacturing jobs in Eau Claire County have declined in recent years. Following national trends, agricultural employment has continued to decline steadily.

As of April, 2020, the unemployment rate for Eau Claire County was 2.7 percent.³ The unemployment rate was lower than that of the State of Wisconsin (6.4%) and the national rate (8.1%). Generally speaking, unemployment rates in the County have averaged less than 7% since the late 1980's, which compares favorably to both the state and federal rates during that same time period. April, May, and June 2020 were one exception to this trend, when unemployment rates rose to 13.1% due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2020

Table 5
PERCENT OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
Eau Claire County

Occupations	2010	2020
Management, Business, Science, & Arts	33.4%	37.9%
Services	19.3%	18.9%
Sales & Office	27.4%	19.2%
Natural Resources, Construction, & Maintenance	6.2%	6.7%
Production, Transportation, & Materials Moving	13.7%	17.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau

Median household income for Eau Claire County rose from \$45,846 in 2010 to \$59,476 in 2020. According to the 2020 Census, income levels in the County tend to be lower than that found in the State as a whole (median household income of \$61,747 for the same period), but are higher than those of surrounding counties. The cost of living in the area, especially for housing, tends to be lower than the State average as well. As shown in **Table 6**, almost 20 percent of the County's population has a household income less than \$25,000 per year.

Table 6
2020 ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME
Eau Claire County

<u>Income Level</u>	<u>% Of Population</u> *
Less than \$10,000	4.4%
\$10,000-\$14,999	6.1%
\$15,000-\$24,999	8.9%
\$25,000-\$49,999	23.0%
\$50,000-\$74,999	19.4%
\$75,000-\$99,999	14.2%
\$100,000+	24.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

* Does not add to 100% due to rounding

It is also important to keep in mind that median household income also varies widely by community. For example, the Town of Pleasant Valley had the highest 2020 median household income of \$109,901, while the Village of Fairchild had the lowest at \$39,783.

C. LAND USE

Map 6 on the following page shows the general land cover in Eau Claire County based on 2020 satellite imagery. The most common land covers are forest (47%) and agriculture (35%), with built (developed or urban) areas as the next highest (9.4%).

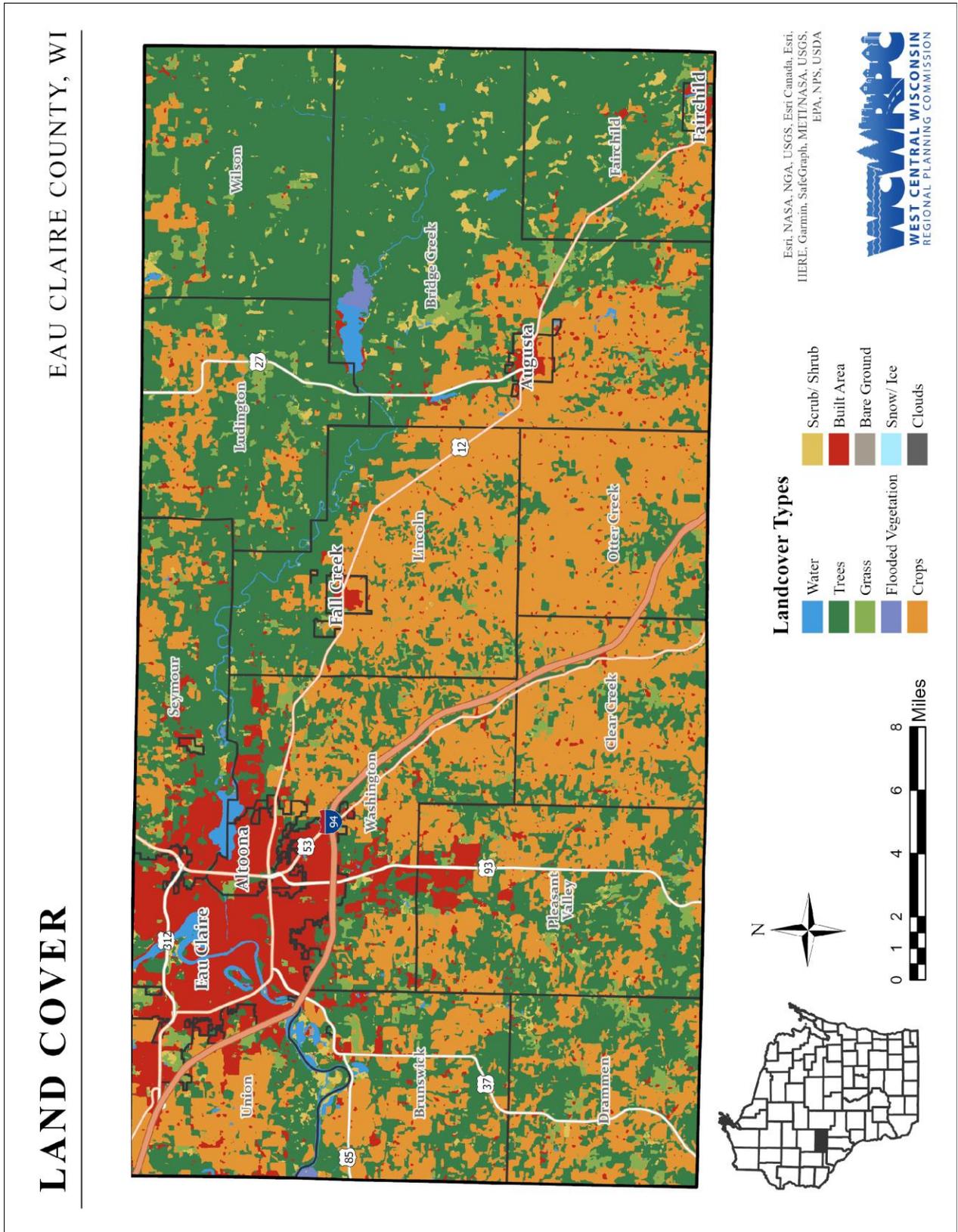
The County has an overall population density of about 161 persons per square mile, significantly higher than the 105 persons per square mile for the State of Wisconsin. Based on State official population projections, the County's density is projected to increase to 174 persons per square mile by 2040, compared to 100 persons per square mile statewide.

Residential land use accounts for over 10.7 percent of assessed acreage in the County. Over 31 percent of all residential-improved parcels and over 78 percent of all residential-assessed acreage in Eau Claire County is located in the unincorporated towns. Residential development in unincorporated areas is typically at low densities within the County, with some higher concentrations of residential development occurring at the edge of forested areas and along or near rivers and lakes.

The most prevalent land uses in Eau Claire County are agriculture and forest. In fact, 51 percent of the assessed land in the County is considered agriculture and over 24 percent is forest or agricultural forest. In addition, over 56,000 acres of the County is public, tax-exempt forest and other public resource lands. As seen in Map 6, much of the eastern portion of the County is forested with the majority of agricultural land located in the central and southern portions of the County. Over 10 percent of the County is assessed as "undeveloped"; and when including the acres of public natural resource lands, over 75 percent of the County is agricultural, forest, wetlands, surface waters, or is otherwise undeveloped.



Map 6. Eau Claire County Land Cover



D. OUTDOOR RECREATION AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

According to a 2020 Wisconsin Department of Tourism report, outdoor recreation contributes \$7.8 billion to Wisconsin’s gross domestic product, which is larger than mining and farming combined. This sector of the State’s economy is also growing faster than the State’s overall economy. It is also estimated that outdoor recreation employs 93,000 people in Wisconsin across various sectors, with 9 out of every 100 of these jobs in outdoor recreation manufacturing.⁴



As a partly rural county with a large amount of public land, outdoor recreation and related tourism is a very important part of Eau Claire County’s economy. According to Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimates, in 2019, visitors spent an estimated \$257.8 million in Eau Claire County, resulting in 4,624 jobs, \$115.9 million in labor income, \$417.2 million in business sales, and \$32.4 million in state and local taxes as visitor spending

moves through the Eau Claire County economy. Visitor spending included accommodations, food & beverage, retail, entertainment, recreation, and transportation. In 2020, these numbers would dip due to COVID-19. And, while outdoor recreation is just one component of the County’s tourism economy, Eau Claire County ranks 17th out of Wisconsin’s 72 counties in the most direct visitor spending.

It is estimated, on average, that a Eau Claire County household spent the following annually on the following outdoor recreational-related activities and equipment⁵:

docking/landing fees for boats & planes	\$7.37
camp fees	\$21.40
payments on RVs or boats	\$45.17
rental of RVs or boats	\$17.93
exercise equipment & gear	\$46.85
bicycles	\$26.33
camping equipment	\$17.79
hunting & fishing equipment	\$46.51
winter sports equipment	\$5.60
water sports equipment	\$7.48
other sports equipment	\$6.16
rental/repair of recreational/sports equipment	\$2.40
photographic equipment	\$14.05

⁴ Wisconsin Department of Tourism. *Economic Impact of Wisconsin’s Outdoor Economy, 2020.*

⁵ ESRI Community Analyst. *Recreation Expenditures, 2021 Forecast* derived from the 2018 and 2019 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In fact, this data source further estimated that Eau Claire County residents participated in the following outdoor activities in the last year at rates significantly above the national average:

- archery
- fresh water fishing
- hunting with a rifle
- hunting with a shotgun
- backpacking
- canoeing/kayaking
- motorcycling
- spending on sports/rec equipment
- birdwatching
- overnight camping
- attending state/county fair

While outdoor recreation is important to tourism, it is also a quality-of-life asset. Like much of the State, Eau Claire County is experiencing a workforce shortage. The County's many outdoor recreation opportunities, large amounts of public lands, and small-town lifestyle can be an important part of attracting and retaining workforce, which is an advantage not available in many areas. In addition, the quality of life of a community can be a deciding factor when businesses are deciding to invest in new facilities or expansions. However, smaller, lower-income communities with a very limited tax base can find it especially



challenging to provide and maintain outdoor recreational facilities and programming, further placing them at an economic disadvantage.

On the following page is a Lifestyle Profile summary of those general characteristics and outdoor recreational interests for a majority of Eau Claire County households. Consistent with the Lifestyle Profile, outdoor recreation participation and spending among Eau Claire County resident was significantly more diverse than other nearby, more rural counties. It was notable that Eau Claire County residents, on average, spent more on equipment rental, while some purchases/payments were lower than nearby counties. With these pieces of information in mind, it is easy to see the importance of recreational activities as an economic driver for the County.

Eau County Lifestyle Profile

ESRI has used census data, consumer surveys, and other databases to classify geographic areas across the United States into neighborhoods with similar characteristics, purchasing patterns, and lifestyle behaviors.

Eau Claire County has a very diverse mix of lifestyles compared with other area counties. For example, 92% of the County's resident households fall within 14 different types of neighborhoods or lifestyle tapestries compared to 91.3% of households falling within three tapestries in Clark County. This diversity creates a challenge due to different outdoor recreation interests, participation rates, and potential use conflicts.

ESRI does organize these tapestries into 14 different, broader LifeMode groups. 78.8% of Eau Claire County's households fall within four of these groups—Middle Ground (26.5%), GenXurban (23.8%), Cozy Country (17.8%), and Scholars & Patriots (10.7%). The following are some common characteristics among these LifeMode groups pertinent to outdoor recreation:

- The two largest LifeMode groups (Middle Ground & GenXurban) are dominated by younger millennial and GenX households located in the urban area.
 - These households often have fewer or no children.
 - Frequently or always online.
 - Leisure activities include the beach, travel, hiking, going to museums and rock concerts, & walking for exercise.
- Geographically, much of the County falls into the Cozy Country group, which is dominated by empty nesters, though spending time with family is important.
 - These households often have pets and many have 3+ vehicles.
 - Domestic trucks, motorcycles, & ATV/UTVs are popular.
 - Enjoys outdoor activities, such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, gardening, and birdwatching.
- The Scholars & Patriots group is geographically centered around the UW-EC and CVTC area and primarily falls within the College Towns lifestyle tapestry.
 - Includes many nonfamily households, including student dorms and low-rent apartments; limited incomes.
 - Bicycle/pedestrian and environmentally friendly market.
 - Digitally engaged with a strong online presence.
 - Leisure activities include movies, music events, going out with friends, backpacking, Pilates, and Frisbee.

SECTION III

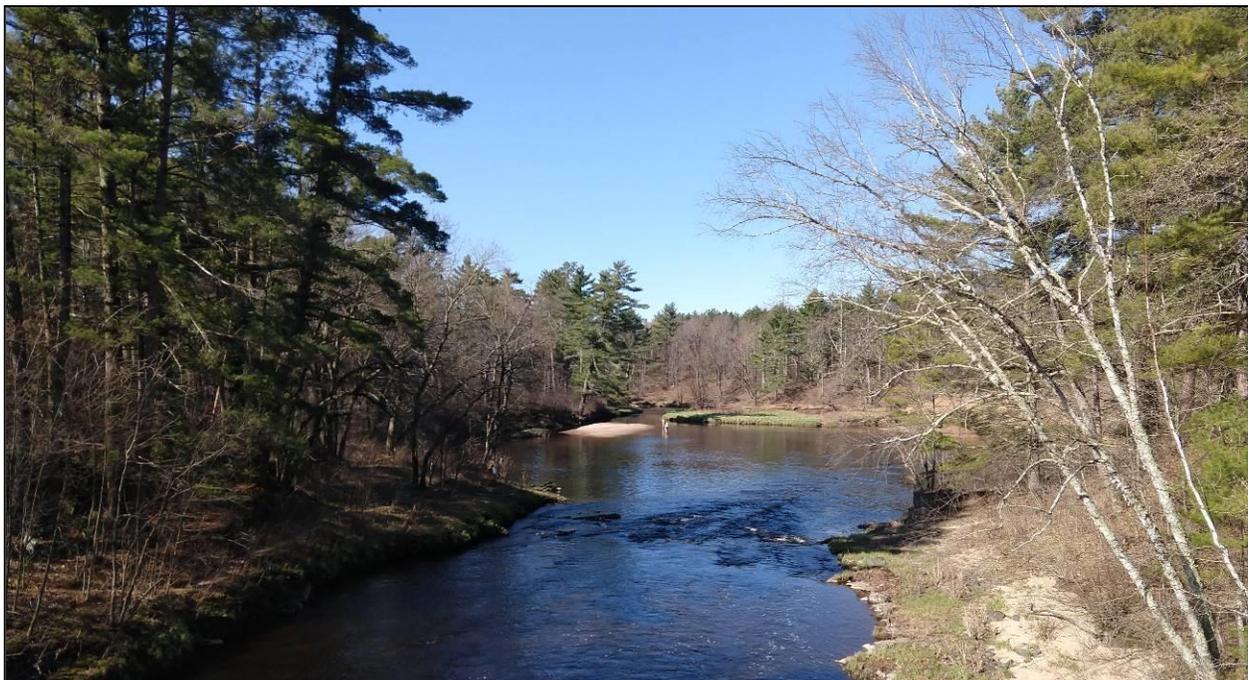
PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

The first step in developing a recreation planning program involves the inventory of the community's existing facilities. Residents of Eau Claire County are fortunate to have convenient access to a wide variety of outdoor recreational facilities. These facilities are provided and maintained by the County, local communities, the private sector, schools, and other organizations. An inventory of existing facilities is necessary to help determine if current recreational needs are being adequately met. To promote some consistency with the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the various facilities are grouped into five (5) different resource types:

- Developed Land
- Limited Development
- Water-Based Activities
- Snow/Ice-Based Activities
- Viewing/Interpretative Activities

A. SUMMARY OF EAU CLAIRE COUNTY RECREATIONAL SUPPLY

Table 7 provides a summary of the supply of selected outdoor recreational facilities listed in this section of the County Plan.



**Table 7
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY RECREATION SUPPLY - 2022**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Estimated Supply</u>
Camping	over 480 campsites, 3 private & 11 public campgrounds
Picnicking	670 picnic tables, 513 grills, 56 shelters
Golfing	Two 9-hole golf course, five 18-hole courses
Frisbee (Disc) Golf	Three 18-hole courses
Canoeing	54.5 miles of navigable streams, plus lakes and ponds
Public Hunting Lands	54,532 acres, 6 target ranges
Hiking and Nature Trails	19.4 miles of dedicated trails, including 7.2 miles of self-guided nature trails, 11 miles of the Chippewa River State Trail and 2 miles of the Chippewa River State Trail- Lake Hallie; plus County Forest Roads and 32.4 miles of cross-country ski trails that can be used for hiking
Bicycling	31.5 miles of dedicated bicycle trails, including 11 miles of the Chippewa River State Trail, 2 miles of the Chippewa River State Trail – Village of Lake Hallie, 3.5 miles of County Road QQ, and 1 mile along Spooner Avenue in Altoona; plus various bike routes on roads and streets including 37 miles of the North-South Wisconsin Bikeway
Mountain Bicycling	25 miles of off-road trails located at Lowes Creek County Park, Otter Creek Park in Altoona, and Northwest Park adjacent to North Crossing are available for mountain biking
Cross-country Skiing	32.4 miles
Snowmobiling	181 miles
Swimming	5 public beaches with 6.16 acres of beach; 6 pools generally available for public use, including 4 pools owned by the Eau Claire Area School District, the City of Eau Claire's Fairfax Pool, and the Augusta Area School District swimming pool + 4 private pools
Fishing	161 miles of trout streams, 7 lakes over 25 acres each (3,019 total acres)
Boating	2,755 acres of surface water (lakes over 100 acres in size)
Horseback Riding	Approximately 22 miles of dedicated trails
Field Sports and Playgrounds:	
	Softball fields 56 fields
	Baseball fields 28 fields, plus one baseball stadium
	Volleyball Courts 19 courts
	Basketball Courts 86 courts
	Tennis Courts 51 courts
	Horseshoe Courts 35 courts
	Playgrounds 69 playgrounds
	Soccer Fields 15 fields
	Ice Skating Rinks 10-11 outdoor rinks; 3 indoor rinks
ATV Trails	30 miles of trails largely on County Forest lands in eastern part of County that connect to the Clark County and the Buffalo River State Trails. In addition, ATV use is allowed on many local roads.

A. PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION INVENTORY (SUPPLY)

i. DEVELOPED LAND ACTIVITIES

When most individuals think of outdoor recreation, it usually involves some form of manmade development, such as road, trails, athletic fields, picnic areas, and campgrounds. Developed outdoor recreational settings tend to offer a wide mix of activities that may appeal to a broader number of individuals. For example, picnicking/tailgating/cookouts and hiking/walking/running on trails are the two most popular nature-based recreational activities in Wisconsin, both considered as Developed Land activities. This section will review facilities and opportunities for Developed Land recreational activities in Eau Claire County as they exist today.

CAMPGROUNDS

Eau Claire County has seen a growth in the number of campsites from 230 to at least 480 over the last twenty years, which is more than double. Campsites are available at fourteen different locations, including three public campgrounds and eleven private campgrounds. The following is a discussion concerning both the public and private campgrounds in Eau Claire County. **Table 8** lists all of the campgrounds and the number of campsites available at each. **Map 7** shows the location of these campgrounds.



Public Campgrounds

Eau Claire County owns and operates three campgrounds with a total of 180 campsites. Coon Fork County Park offers 57 sites with electricity and 51 sites without, for a total of 108 sites. Sixty-four of the sites can be reserved. There is no electricity available at the 27 sites located at Harstad County Park. Both park campgrounds cater to families, with access to water and playground facilities. The third County campground is not located at a park, but is at the Expo Center, which is described on the next page.

Private Campgrounds

Eau Claire County has eleven private campgrounds with between 300 to 469 sites.⁶ Five campgrounds had fewer than 25 sites and most of these are accessory to the property's principal use. In some cases, the number of sites includes cabins. Some of these campgrounds have other amenities such as swimming areas, playground equipment, recreation rooms, and laundry facilities. Temporary State campground licenses have also been issued for The Blue Ox Music Festival (200+ sites) and a nearby private property (26-50 sites) and are only used during festivals. Country Jam, Inc., has a license for a 1,200-site campground in the Town of Union, known as Whispering Pines, but this event will be re-locating outside of Eau Claire County in 2023.

There are also many excellent camping options just outside Eau Claire County. Lake Wissota State Park is about 10 miles north of the County, Brunet Island State Park is about 30 miles north, the

⁶ When the number of sites for a campground was not readily available on websites, etc., the State campground licensing database was used, which provides a range for the number of sites.

Chequamegon National Forest is about 50 miles northeast, and the Black River State Forest is about 50 miles southeast of the County.

**Table 8
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**

<u>Public Campgrounds:</u>		<u>Number Of Sites</u>
1.	Coon Fork County Park	108
2.	Harstad County Park.....	27
3.	Eau Claire County Exposition Center.....	45
	Subtotal	180
<u>Private Campgrounds:</u>		
1.	Woodland Campground, Rt. 1, Augusta	35
2.	Sandy Hill Campground, E21100 County Road ND, Augusta	32
3.	Trail's Edge Saloon and Campground, State Road 27, Augusta	50
4.	Le Mere's Landing and Campground, S8095 Bartig Road, Augusta.....	35
5.	The Longshot Campground, 644 E. Main, Fairchild.....	12
6.	Little Creek Campground, 627 Tioga Road, Fairchild	55
7.	Black Creek Lodge, S13231 County Road H, Fairchild	77 to 150
8.	Eau Claire Rod & Gun Club, 801 Schoettl Avenue, Eau Claire	1-25
9.	Halmar Lakeside Campground, E20345 Greens Landing, Augusta	1-25
10.	Off Grid Inn, S1058 S. Woodland Valley Road, Fall Creek	1-25
11.	Mike's Buckhorn Bar & Campground, S6604 Highway 27, Augusta	1-25
	Subtotal	300-469
	Total	480-649

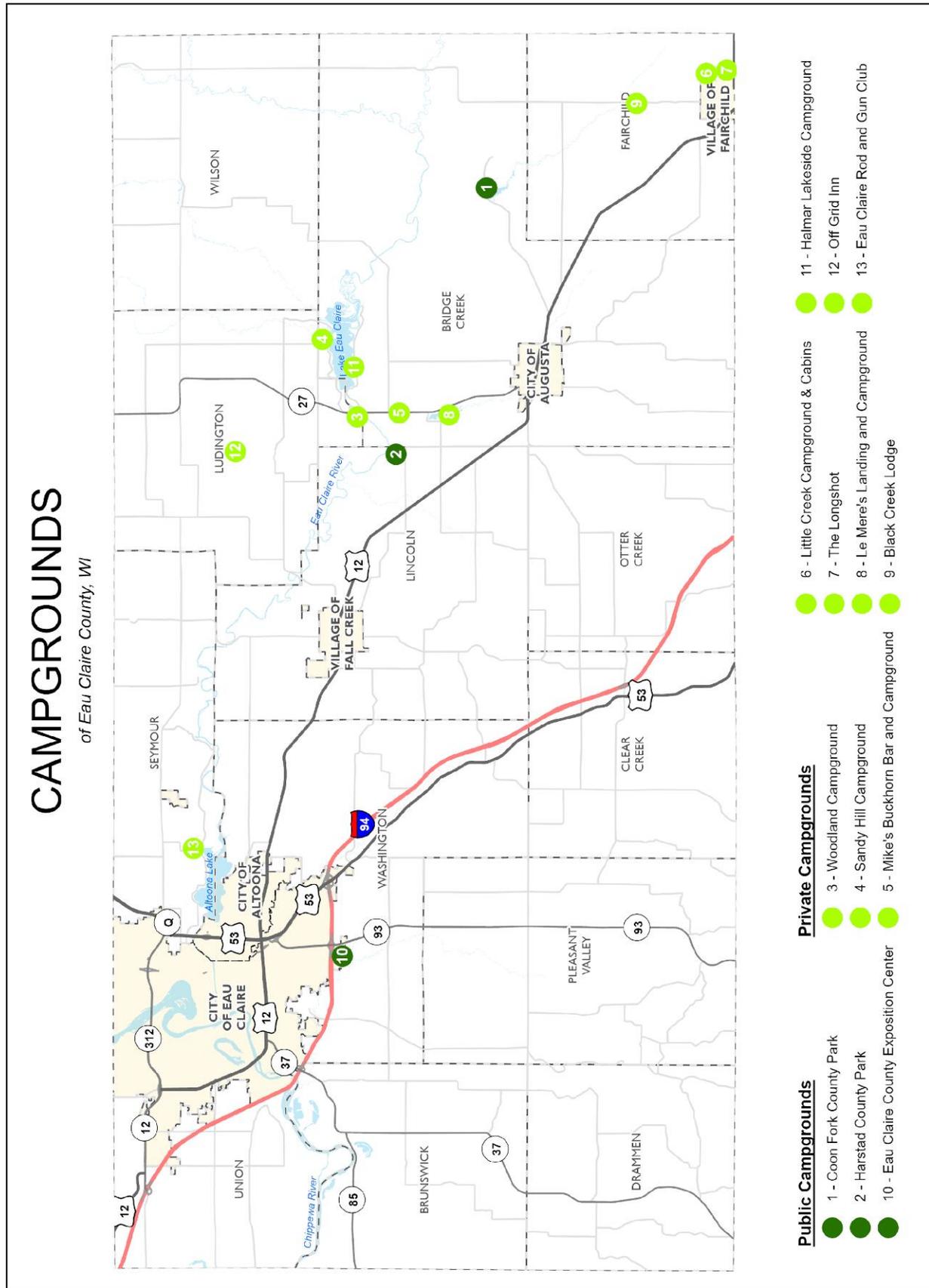
Eau Claire County Expo Center

Public camping is also available at the Eau Claire County Expo Center, with 36 total sites available. However, campsites may not be available to the general public during large events. Located on over 20 acres on the south side of the City of Eau Claire, the Expo Center hosts many events, including the County Fair. The Expo Center has a mix of indoor and outdoor amenities, including:

- Exhibit hall with curling rink and kitchen can accommodate 500 people.
- Meeting rooms
- Barns, Concessions, & Winter Storage buildings
- 36 Camping sites – 14 without electric, 18 w/ 15-amp service, & 4 w/ 30-amp service
- Picnic pavilion w/ 12 tables
- Fenced dog agility area
- Horse arena & space for horse camping
- Additional open space for activities
- Bike trail connection to Lowes Creek Park trails



Map 7. Campgrounds in Eau Claire County



FIELD SPORTS AND PLAYGROUNDS

In many parks and at some schools throughout Eau Claire County, open space has been set aside for field sports. In many cases, the space has been improved for activities such as softball, volleyball, or horseshoes. Soccer fields are located at UW-Eau Claire as well as at both North and Memorial High Schools in the City of Eau Claire. The City of Eau Claire offers 18 holes of disc golf at Mount Simon Park, and two 18-hole disc golf courses are provided at the County's Tower Ridge Recreation Area. Unimproved open park space is also used for football, Frisbee, croquet, soccer, and other field sports.

Table 9 includes an inventory of field sport facilities, playgrounds, and picnic areas in Eau Claire County. The list is based on readily available current information. However, many municipalities did not participate in this plan update and a survey or site visit of each facility was not conducted. It is very possible that additional facilities may have been added and a few facilities were retired or removed. For a County-level planning effort, it is more important to have a general understanding of the available outdoor recreational supply, rather than having exact, accurate numbers.



Lake Altoona County Park, photo: Matt Michels

Table 9 Field Sports, Playgrounds, and Picnic Areas									
Parks	Softball	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Tennis	Basketball	Playground	Shelters	Restrooms	Other
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FACILITIES:									
Big Falls County Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Harstad County Park	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	Open Space
Coon Fork County Park	0	2	2	0	1	3	1	4	Open Space
L.L. Phillips County Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Lake Altoona County Park	0	2	2	0	0	3	2	2	Open Space
Lake Eau Claire County Park	0	4	2	0	0	2	8	3	Open Space
Lake Eau Claire Outlots	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
Lowes Creek County Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	Fitness Course
Tower Ridge Ski Cabin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Tower Ridge Disc Golf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Beaver Creek Reserve	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	inside	Archery, Fitness Course
Expo Center	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOWN OF SEYMOUR FACILITIES:									
Seymour Recreation Park (Seymour)	4	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	Two Baseball Diamonds, Outdoor Ice Skating Rink
Lion's Youth Camp	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
TOWN OF WASHINGTON FACILITIES:									
Little League Ball Diamonds & Conservancy Area (Washington)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Open Space, Two Baseball Diamonds
Town of Washington Little League Field	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Three Baseball Diamonds
TOWN OF WILSON FACILITIES:									
Town of Wilson Memorial Park	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	Open Space, Pavilion
VILLAGE OF FAIRCHILD FACILITIES:									
Foster Park (Fairchild)	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	Open Space, Outdoor Ice Rink
Olson Memorial Park (Fairchild)	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Chat-A-While Park	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	Open Space
Rod and Gun Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	Open Space, beach, boat dock, Archery Range

Parks	Softball	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Tennis	Basketball	Playground	Shelters	Restrooms	Other
VILLAGE OF FALL CREEK FACILITIES:									
Keller Park (Fall Creek)	1	4	0	2	1	1	3	2	Open Space, Outdoor Skating Rink
Fall Creek Schools	1	0	0	0	3	1	0		Open Space, Outdoor Skating rink, one baseball diamond
Crystal Creek Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Open Space
Fall Creek Memorial Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	Open Space
Randall Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Open Space
CITY OF ALTOONA FACILITIES:									
Cinder City Park	3	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1 Baseball Field, 1 Youth Ball Field, Community Building used for Ice Skating & Hockey in winter; Two Shuffle Boards
Altoona City Park (10th Street Park)	1	0	0	5	1	2	1	4	Open Space, Rec. Building, Outdoor Ice Skating Rink
Highland Park	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	Open Space
St. Mary's Elementary	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	
Altoona High School	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Open Space, Running Track
Altoona Middle School	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	Baseball Field, Four Tether Ball Poles, Paved Area
Pedersen Elementary School	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	Paved Area, Sledding Hill
Devney Park	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	Open Space, Lighted Ball Field, Pavilion, Rec. Building
Fairway Park	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	Pickle Ball, Open Space
River Prairie Park	0	0	0	0		1	1	2	Open Space
Lake Front Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
CITY OF AUGUSTA FACILITIES:									
Memorial Field	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	Football, Open Space, Ice Skating Rink
North Side Park	0	6	0	0	0	1	3	2	Open Space, picnic area
Augusta Community Center	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	Open Space

Parks	Softball	Horseshoes	Volleyball	Tennis	Basketball	Playground	Shelters	Restrooms	Other
Fourth Ward Jaycee Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	Open Space
Augusta High/Grade School	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	Open Space
Lion's Club Park	1	0	2	0	0	1	1	2	Open Space
N. Stone Street by Bridge	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	Ice Skating Rink
Lincoln Street Park	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CITY OF EAU CLAIRE FACILITIES:									
Carson Park (Eau Claire)	2	15	1	3	0	1	4	4	Open Space, Football and Baseball Stadium
Mt. Simon Park (Eau Claire)	1	0	2	0	0	1	2	2	Open Space, Archery, Frisbee Golf, Two Baseball Fields
Owen Park (Eau Claire)	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	Open Space, Bandshell
Bollinger Fields/ University Athletic Complex	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Three Soccer Fields, One Rugby Field, One Baseball Diamond
Kessler Field (Eau Claire)	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	Open Space, Outdoor Ice Skating Rink
North High School Athletic Complex (Eau Claire)	3	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	One Soccer Field, Three Football Fields, Track, Three Baseball Fields
Memorial High School Athletic Complex (Eau Claire)	2	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	One Soccer Field, Two Football Fields, Track, Two Baseball Fields
Delong & South Middle School Athletic Complex (Eau Claire)	4	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	One Soccer Field, Two Football Fields At Each School, Track At Each School, Three Baseball Fields At South, Three Baseball Fields And Archery Range at Delong
Mitscher Park	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
Other Playgrounds, Parks, School Properties, and Special Areas In the City of Eau Claire	14	0	1	2	60	35	0	0	Two Baseball Fields, Eleven Ice Skating Rinks at 8 sites
TOTAL:	54	35	17	51	87	71	50	61	

HIKING/WALKING TRAILS

Marked trails for walking, nature study, serious hiking, fitness, or multiple uses continue to remain popular. About 7.2 miles of marked trails specifically for nature study are found in the County. Coon Fork County Park, L.L. Phillips County Park, and Beaver Creek Reserve have self-guided nature trails used most often by grade school students for nature study classes (**Table 10**). County forest roads, although not specifically marked for hiking, can be used for that purpose. In addition, Carson Park in the City of Eau Claire has 1.5 miles of hiking trails.

Table 10 SELF-GUIDED NATURE TRAILS IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY	
<u>Trail</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Guettinger Woods	.8
Beaver Creek Reserve	1.2
L.L. Phillips County Park	1.2
Coon Fork County Park	1.5
Putnam Park	<u>2.5</u>
TOTAL:	7.2

Trails specifically used for fitness, or Par Courses, involve a series of stations where calisthenics are performed. Lowes Creek County Park, Carson Park, Beaver Creek Reserve, and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire have excellent fitness trails. Owen Park in the City of Eau Claire has a calisthenics park. And United Way Chippewa Valley has installed and maintains five Born Learning Trails in Altoona (2), Fairchild, Eau Claire, and Augusta, each with a series of ten interactive signs that offer fun, active learning activities for young children and their families.

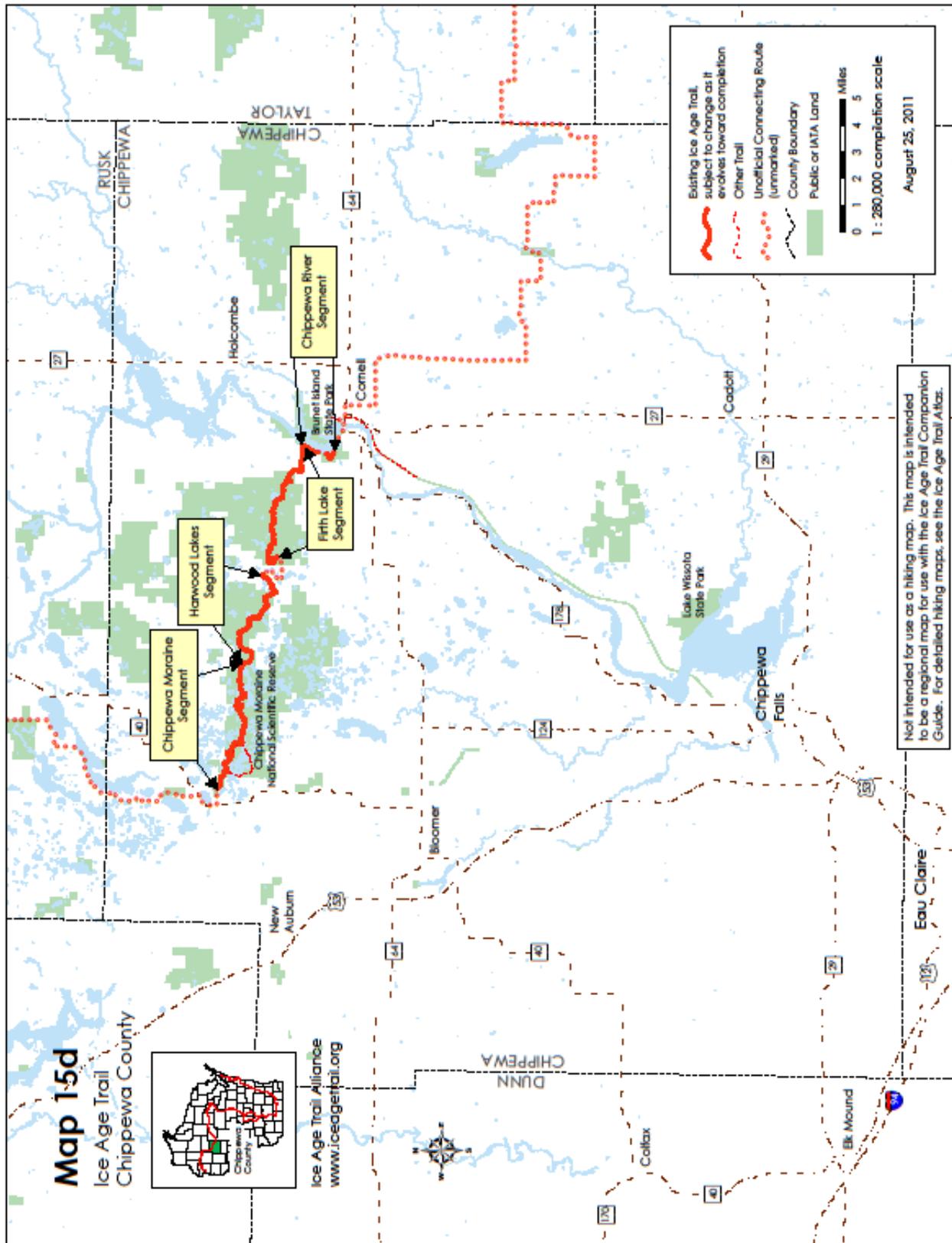
For serious hiking, the Wisconsin Ice Age Trail winds its way across the State just to the north and east of Eau Claire County. **Map 8** shows the Chippewa Moraine Segment of the Ice Age Trail. Other hiking opportunities are available on County forest roads and on over thirty miles of cross-country ski trails.



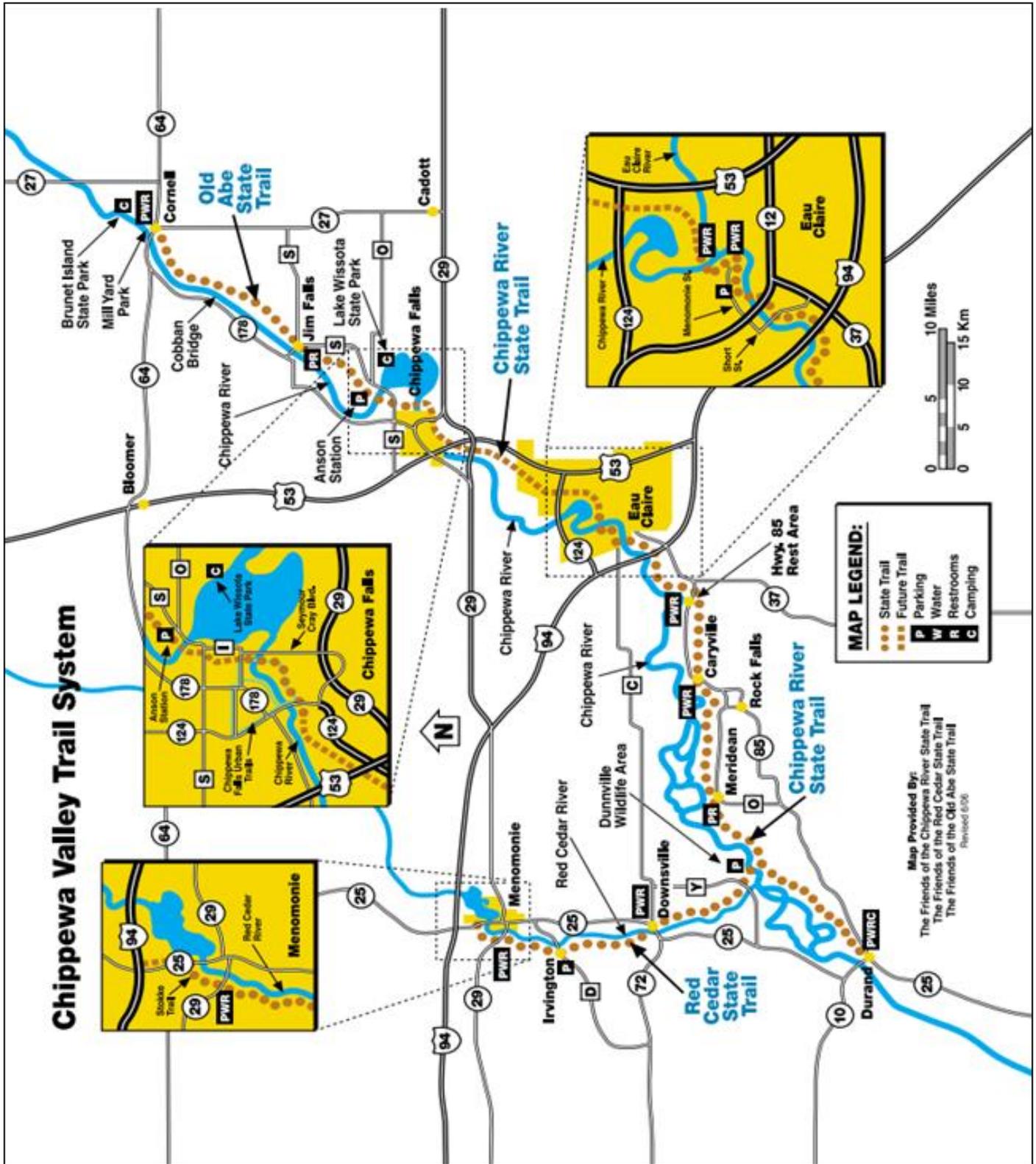
The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and several municipalities in the area have worked together to develop what has come to be known as the Chippewa Valley Trail System, which is a multi-modal trail for walking and bicycling uses. This off-road alignment biking and hiking trail includes the Chippewa River State Trail that runs through Eau Claire County as well the Old Abe State Trail that connects Eau Claire to Cornell and the Red Cedar State Trail that connects Menomonie to Durand. The Buffalo River State Trail, which connects Fairchild to Mondovi, is also available for walking. The Chippewa Valley Trail System is shown in **Map 9**.

The *Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan* provides additional information about walking opportunities in Eau Claire County and related recommendations.

Map 8. Chippewa Moraine Segment of the Ice Age Trail



Map 9. Chippewa Valley Trail System



BICYCLING

Although most casual bicyclists limit their activity to short rides on city streets, more and more cyclists are taking to the open road on longer, more demanding trips. Bike trails are not often separated from motor vehicle traffic because of the great expense involved in constructing separate trails. Bike routes are normally found on lightly traveled, paved roads.

Eau Claire County has the following bicycling trails and facilities:

- ***Chippewa River State Trail:*** Shown previously in **Map 10**, this abandoned railway corridor is a paved 30-mile trail, which starts in Durand and passes through the communities of Meridean and Caryville before its eastern terminus in the City of Eau Claire. In Eau Claire, it connects via a City trail to the Old Abe State Trail. The trail has an asphalt (18 miles) and asphalt emulsion (12 miles) surface. Activities allowed on the Chippewa River State Trail include walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiles.

The Chippewa River State Trail is a part of the Chippewa Valley Trail System. The system includes the Red Cedar State Trail from Menomonie to the Dunnville State Wildlife Area and the Old Abe Trail which connects to the Chippewa Valley State Trail in Eau Claire and travels north to the City of Cornell. When the last segment was completed in 2019, the system now features 80 miles of trail in Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, and Pepin counties.

- ***Buffalo State Trail:*** This 36-mile trail stretches between the Village of Fairchild and the City of Mondovi. The trail is open to bicycles, as well as horses and motorized recreation vehicles. However, the state DNR's trail webpage notes that the trail surface of railroad ballast and limestone screenings is not suitable for bicyclists, with the exception of mountain bikes.
- ***Stage Coach Bike Trail:*** This on-road, signed bicycle route winds between the City of Augusta and the Village of Fairchild. The scenic route is 21 miles long, with several additional loops, passing by Amish farmland, schools, and shops. Bicyclists share the road with motorists as well as horse-drawn buggies. According to the 2019 Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan, the route is in need of some maintenance. Much of the bicycle signage along the route is missing and better signage to trailheads is needed as well as an updated map to reprint and distribute. Currently, there is no map of this trail posted online.
- ***Other Trail Segments:*** Other trail segments also exist around the City of Eau Claire area. The trail along the east side of Highway 93 in the City of Eau Claire and the Town of Washington adds approximately four miles of paved surface. Additionally, a branch connector extends along County Road Q (Olson Drive), east to Peterson Avenue and west, across North Crossing (Highway 312), to Old Wells Road. Branches of this four-mile trail extend into the neighborhoods immediately adjacent. This trail also connects to the Chippewa River State Trail via Marquette Street. With the improvements on the Hastings Way corridor, two miles of bike and multi-use paths have been added that permit travel along either side of Business 53 (So. Hastings Way) from Clairemont Avenue (US Highway 12) to Birch Street, and to the Chippewa River State Trail. The City of Altoona has also completed significant multi-modal trail improvements connecting their new River Prairie development to other neighborhoods as well as to trails in the City of Eau Claire.

- ***Bike Routes/Paved Shoulders:*** There are several other Eau Claire County highways that currently have paved shoulders that are used by bicyclist enthusiasts. A paved shoulder needs to be at least four feet wide for higher volume highways, to provide more separation between motor vehicles and bicycles, according to the Federal Highway Administration. Some of the paved shoulders have rumble strips for much for all of their width, making them unsuitable for bicyclists. A wider paved shoulder, such as seven feet, is needed as traffic volumes increase.

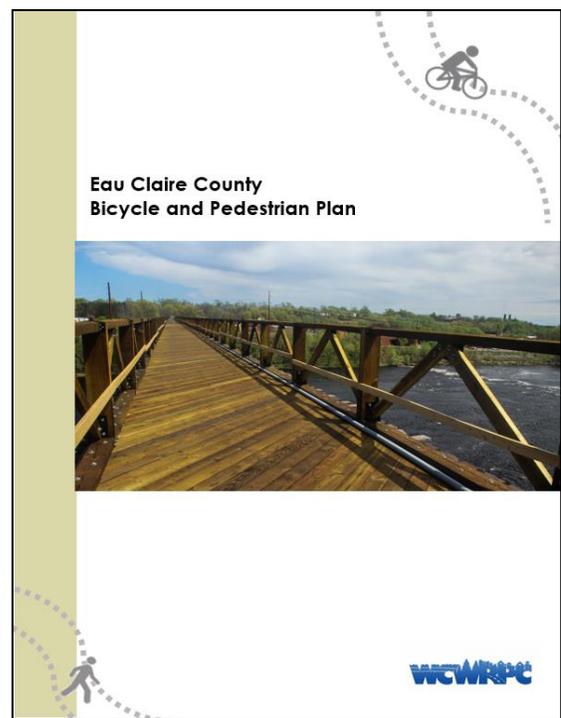
Some County highways and most town roads in the County are lightly traveled and are suitable for cycling. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has produced an **Eau Claire County Bicycle Map (Map 10)**, which identifies bicycle trail locations and assesses the suitability of Federal, State, and County highways for bicycling. For the Eau Claire urban area, a **Chippewa Valley Bike Map** was produced in 2019 that shows bike trails and suggested routes in detail.

In 2019, an **Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan** was completed, which assessed bicycling and walking conditions and included recommendations to create a stronger multi-modal surface transportation network throughout the entire County that focuses on bicycling and walkability, linkages, safety, health, economic opportunities, and breaking down barriers to walking and biking. This plan includes various statistics, maps, and public input results regarding biking and pedestrian trails, routes, and activities, including an **Eau Claire County Bicycle Route Plan (Map 11)**.

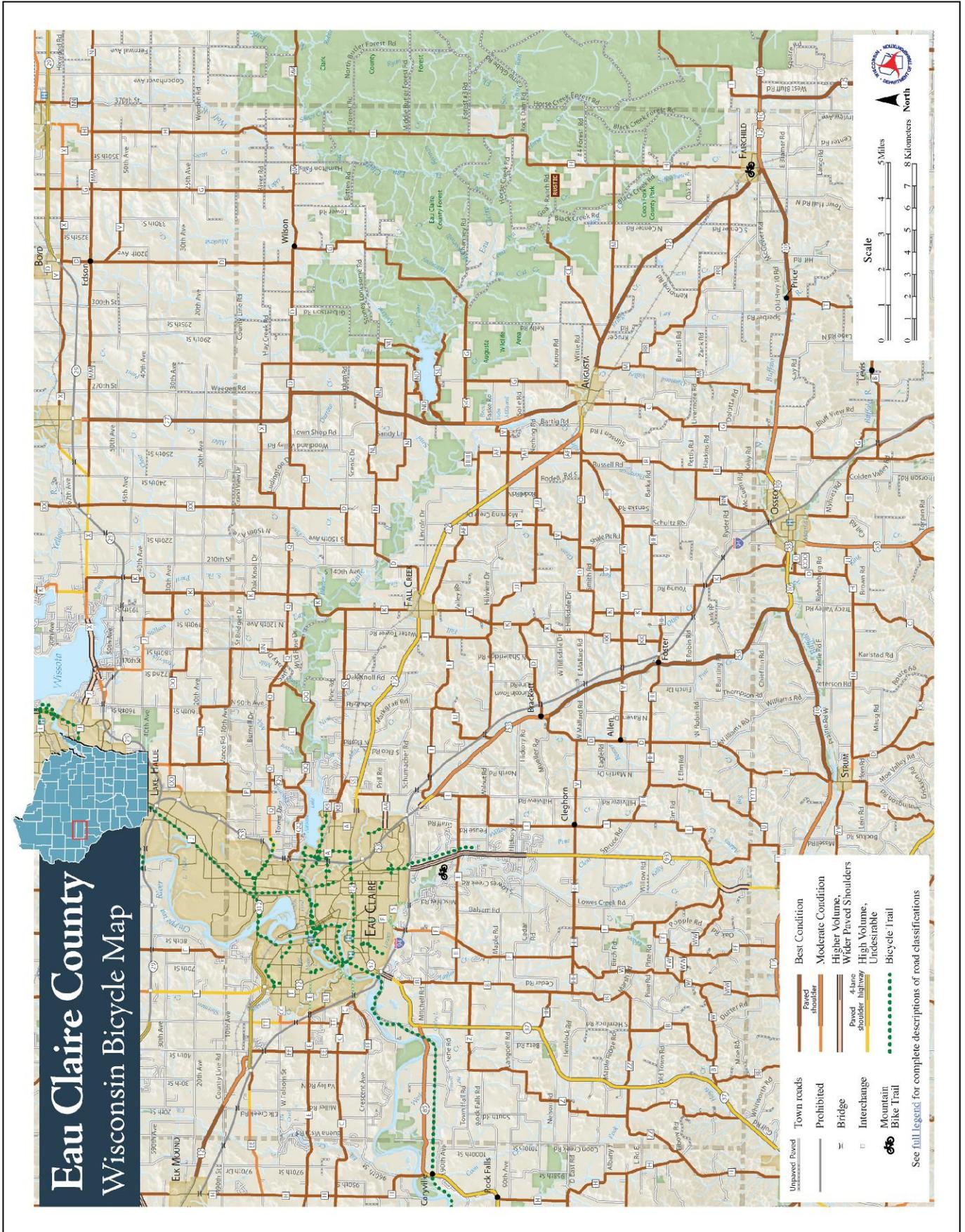
- ***Internal Park Trails:*** A number of trails exist within municipal, County, and State parks as well as the County Forest. Not all of the trails are open to bicycles, but some are open to bicycles and a variety of other activities, such as horseback riding.

For off-road bicycling enthusiasts, a 17-mile off-road trail network in Lowes Creek Park (**Map 12**) is available for use by mountain bikes, cross-country skiing, and walking or running. In addition, Otter Creek Park in Altoona offers three miles of off-road multi-use trails. Finally, Northwest Park, adjacent to North Crossing (State Highway 312) in the northwest area of the City of Eau Claire, offers another five miles of off-road biking opportunities for residents and visitors. Collectively, 25 miles of off-road bicycling trails are available in the Eau Claire metropolitan area within Eau Claire County.

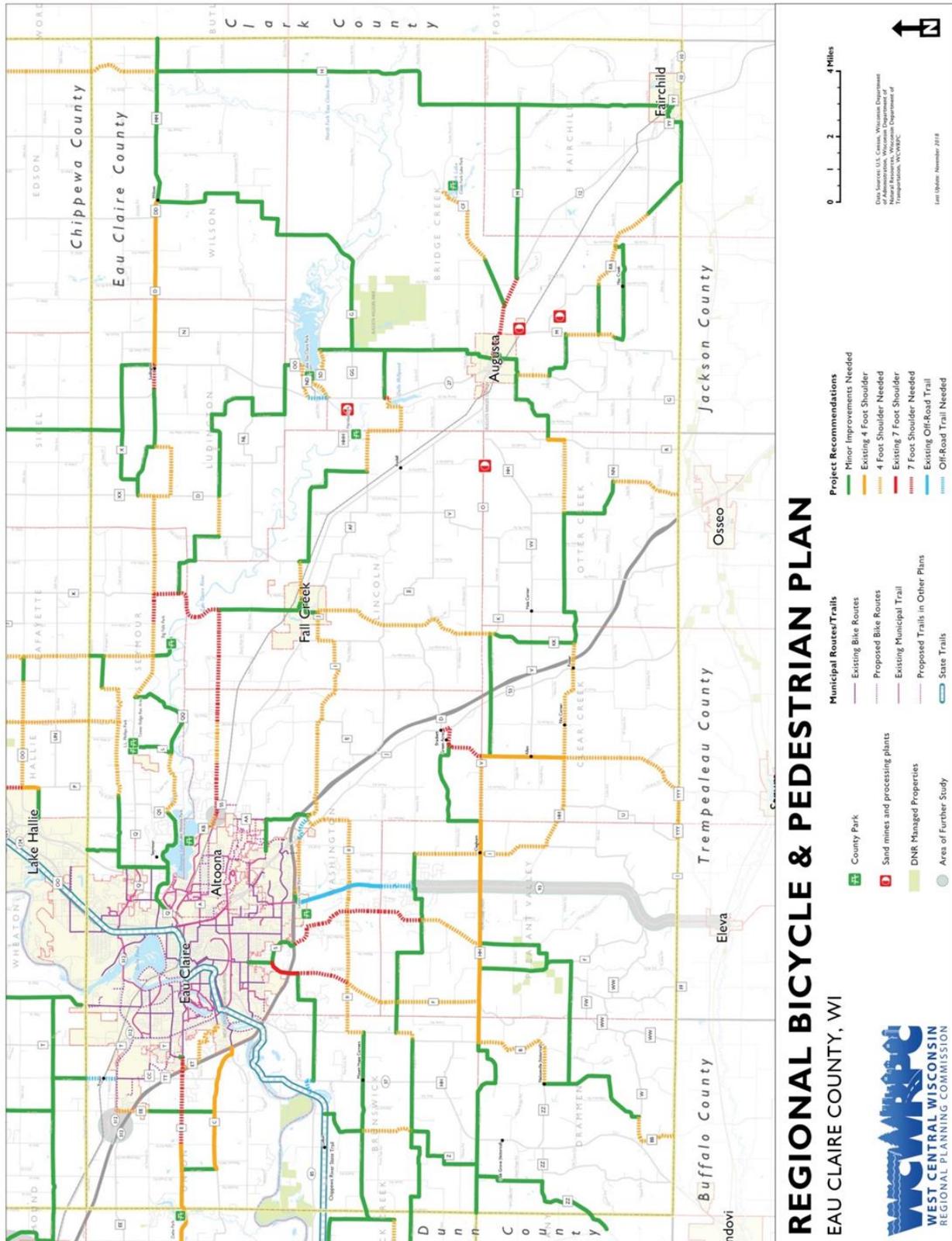
In summary, there are more than 30 miles of dedicated right-of-ways intended for use by bicycles in Eau Claire County and 25 miles of mountain biking trails, in addition to the many miles of roads identified by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and in the County Bike & Pedestrian Plan as suitable cycling routes.



Map 10. WDOT Eau Claire County Bike Map



Map 11. Eau Claire County Bicycle Route Plan



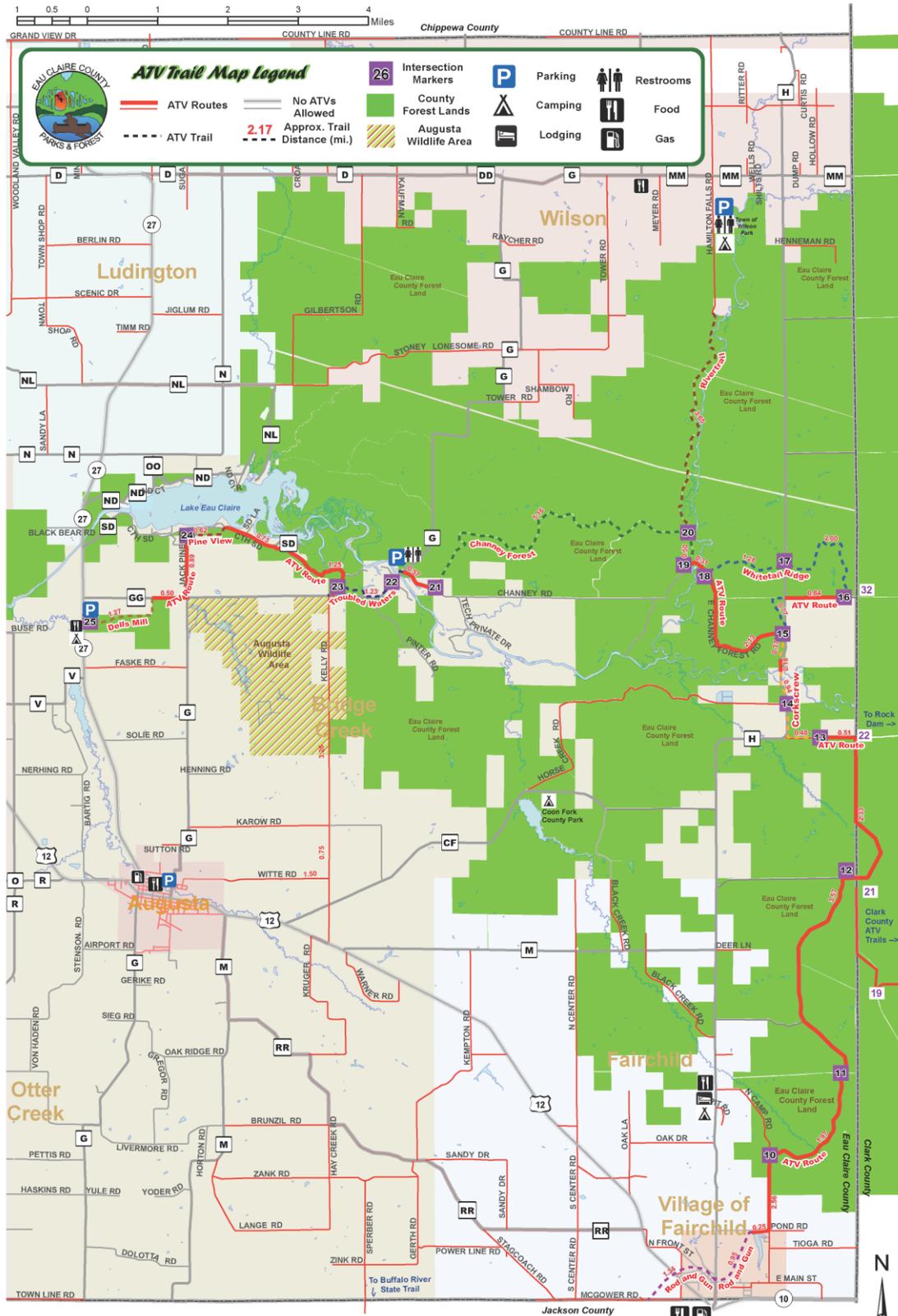
Note: CAFOs are shown on this map to warn bicyclists of the increased potential to encounter larger implements of husbandry that may occupy both the driving lane and the paved or unpaved shoulder due to the width of the machinery or extended appendices.

ATV TRAILS AND RIDING

Another popular recreational activity in Eau Claire County is ATV/UTV trail riding. A 30-mile trail network sponsored by the Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department is provided in the eastern portion of the County, connecting the City of Augusta and Village of Fairchild to the Clark County and Buffalo River trails in neighboring counties, primarily through County Forest lands (see **Map 13**). There is an annual trail closure from March 15 until May 15 to minimize erosion potential on the soft, moist soils. The larger UTVs are only allowed on trails from May 15th to November 30th. Trail maps are available from the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department and the Chippewa Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau. The Quad County ATV Club in Fairchild has also produced a map of ATV trails and routes in the Fairchild area, which is available at local businesses.

In addition to the County-sponsored ATV trail system, many public roads in rural areas of the County are also designated ATV routes, with the requirement to operate on the extreme right side of the roadway. Given the increases in popularity of this activity, additional recreation-oriented businesses, most notably campgrounds, have emerged in the Fairchild area.

Map 13. Eau Claire County-Sponsored ATV Trail System



Eau Claire County ATV Trails

GOLF

The locations of the six golf courses in Eau Claire County are shown on **Map 14**. All courses in the County are privately owned, with one course limited to use by club members and guests (see **Table 11**). There are eight additional golf courses located within 25 miles of Eau Claire, as follows: Timber Terrace Golf Course in Chippewa Falls, Lake Wissota Golf near Chippewa Falls, Lake Hallie Golf in Lake Hallie, Ojibwa Country Club in Chippewa Falls, Whispering Pines in Cadott, the Osseo Country Club, Whitetail Course near Colfax, and The Valley near Mondovi.

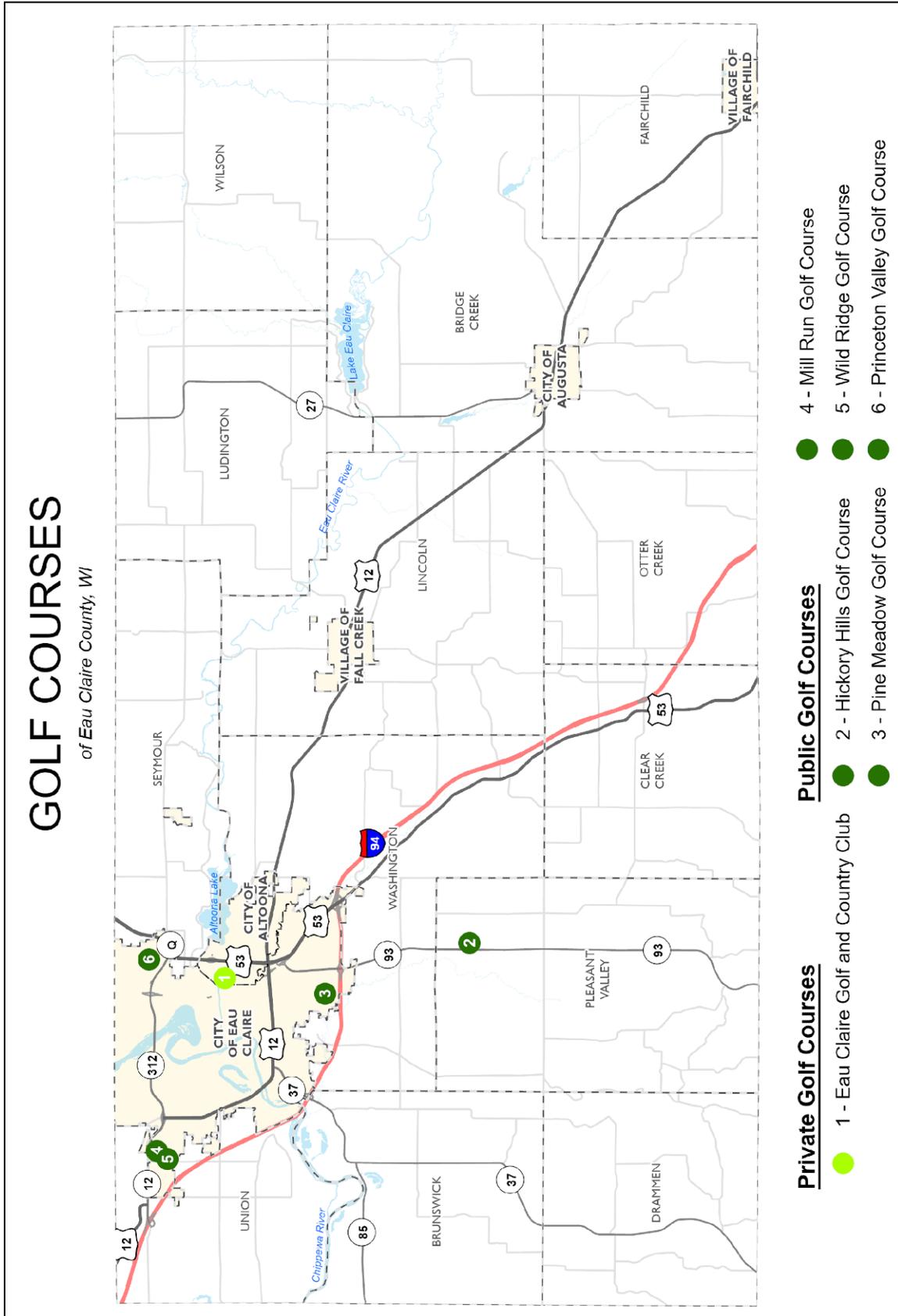


Mill Run Golf Course, photo: Matt Michels

Table 11 EAU CLAIRE COUNTY GOLF COURSES				
<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>No. Holes</u>	<u>Par</u>
1. Eau Claire County Club (Altoona)*	836-8420	163	18	71
2. Hickory Hills Golf Course (Pleasant Valley)	878-4543	100	18	63
3. Pine Meadows Golf Course (Eau Claire)	832-6011	16	9	27
4. Mill Run Golf Course (Eau Claire)	834-1766	330		
Hidden Creek at Mill Run			18	70/71
Wild Ridge at Mill Run			18	72
5. Princeton Valley Golf Course (Eau Claire)	834-3334	<u>140</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>36</u>
	TOTAL:	749	90	

* Members and guests only

Map 14. Eau Claire County Golf Courses



PICNICKING

Villages and cities provide the greatest number of facilities and acres for picnicking; the County also provides extensive picnicking facilities. However, with basket in hand, a small cooler, and a blanket to throw on the ground, picnicking could almost occur on any public land. Community parks are popular places for picnicking and are used by both municipal residents and visitors to the area.

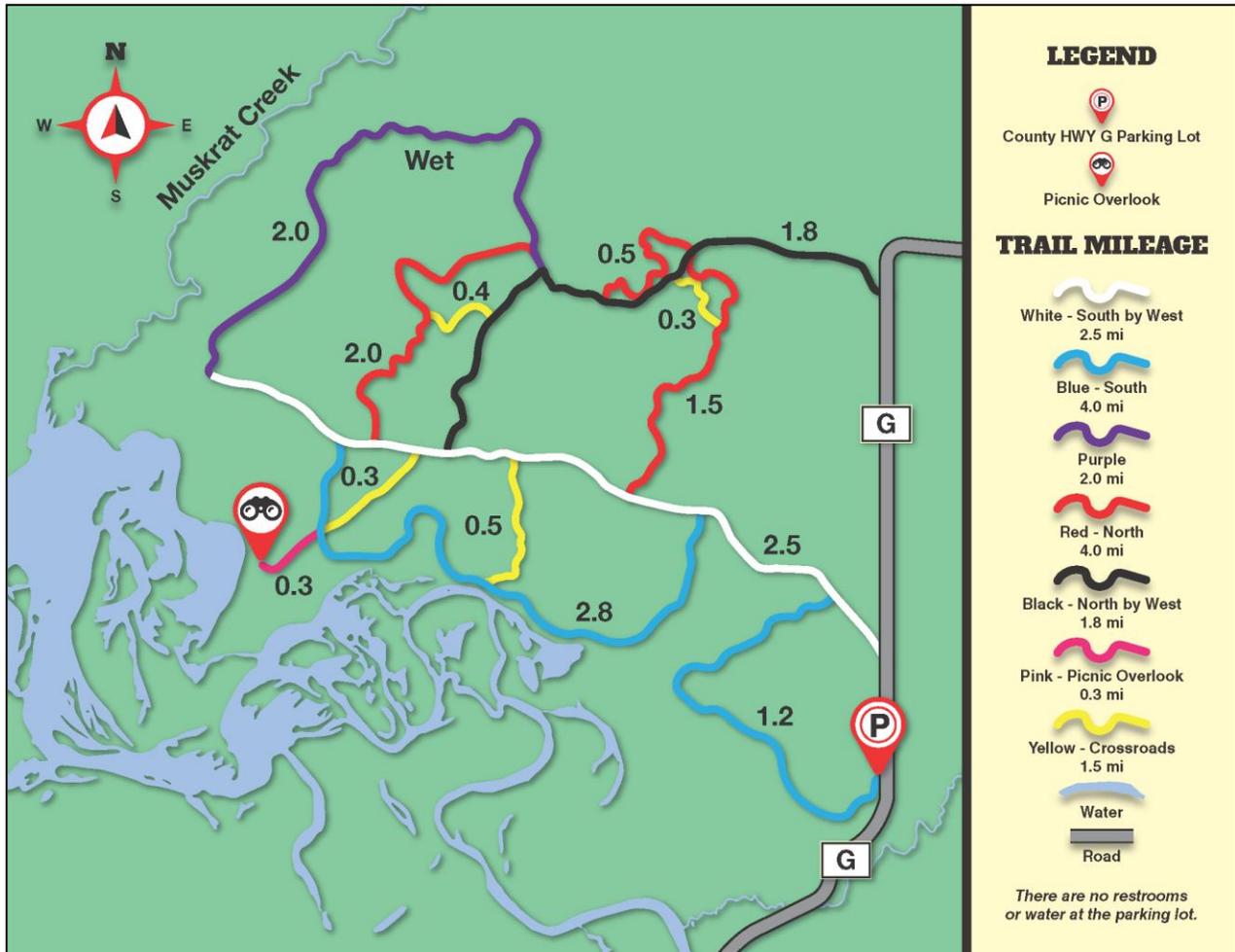
The inventory distinguishes between waysides, which offer a few tables and no other type of recreation, and more developed picnic areas. Picnic areas are often found in combination with other facilities such as campgrounds and community parks, and supplement the range of recreational facilities offered at that site. **Table 12** summarizes existing waysides, while **Table 9** previously listed the public parks and whether these parks have picnic shelters/pavilions and restrooms.

Table 12
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY WAYSIDES – 2015

<u>Wayside</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>No. of Tables</u>	<u>Toilets</u>	<u>No. of Grills</u>
1. Cooley Lake - State Road 85	NW-NE, Sect. 10, T26N-R10W	5	yes	2
2. State Road 93	NW-NW, Sect. 34, T25N-R9W	1	no	0
3. Highline Boat Landing	NW-NE, Sect. 20, T27N-R8W	0	no	0
4. County Road ND Boat Landing	SW-NW, Sect. 3, T26N-R6W	1	yes	0
5. County Road SD West Boat Landing	SE-SE, Sect. 5, T26N-R6W	0	yes	0
6. County Road SD East Boat Landing	NW-NW, Sect. 11, T26N-R6W	1	yes	0
7. County Road ND Wayside	SW-NW Sect. 3, T26N-R6W	2	no	0
8. Lake Eau Claire Beach	SW-NW Sect. 3, T26N-R6W	<u>2</u>	yes	<u>1</u>
Total:		12		3

In addition, Area Historical Tribute Inc. maintains a wayside park on U.S. Highway 12 that is open to the public on U.S. Highway 12 just north of the Village of Fairchild. This park offers picnic tables and porta-potties and is discussed in detail within the Town of Fairchild outdoor recreation plan in Section VII.

Map 15b. Backwaters Horse Trails



ii. LIMITED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Outdoor recreation activities which tend to occur in open spaces that may be owned by a government agency or non-profit organization and are available to the general public are considered “Limited Development” activities. These activities require very limited or no man-made developments to facilitate usage as the typical participant wants to experience pristine natural surroundings. Common activities in this recreation type include hiking, primitive camping, or some forms of hunting.



HUNTING AND SHOOTING

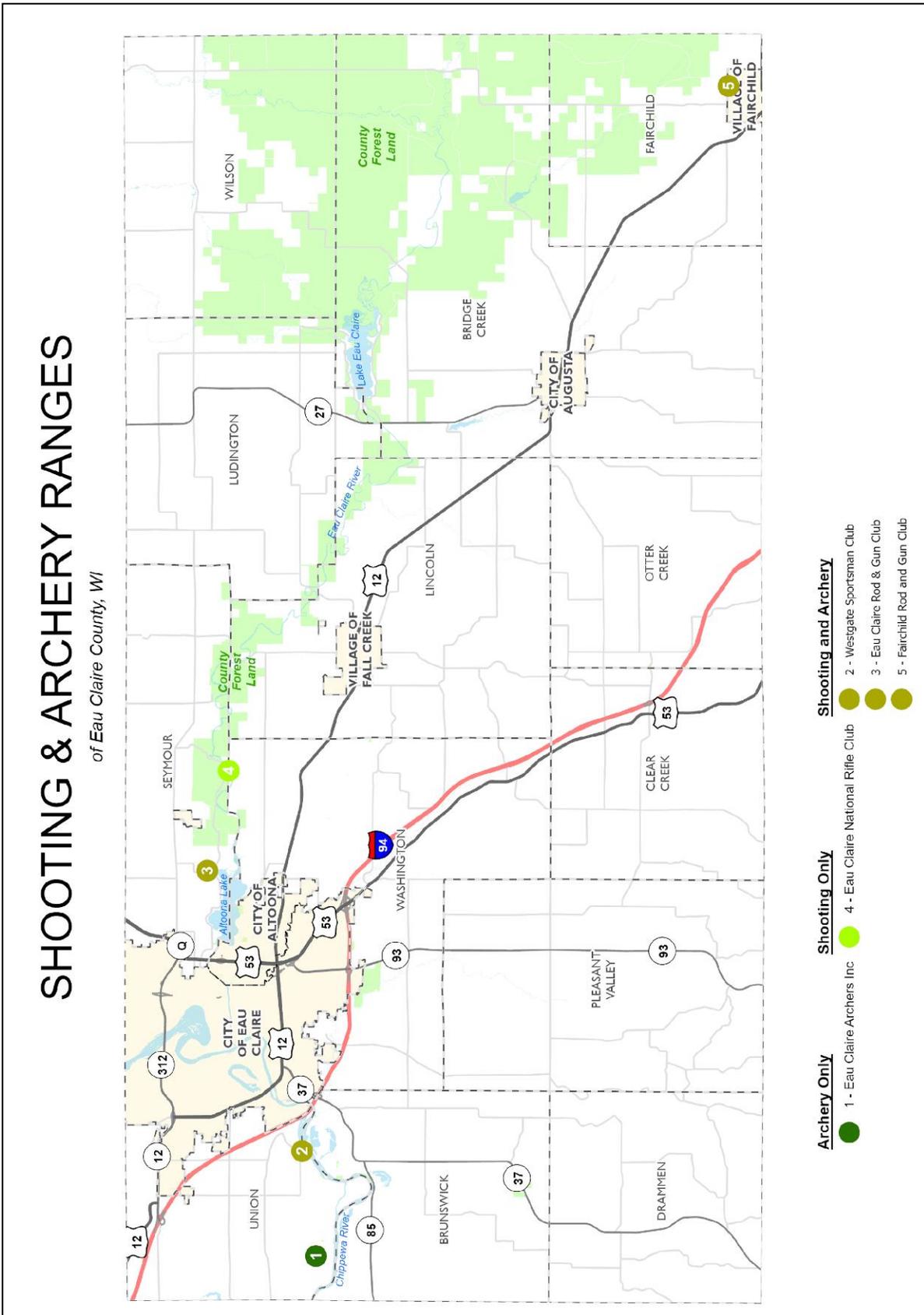
Most hunting in Eau Claire County is for deer, but other game hunting such as bear, squirrels, ducks, and grouse are also quite popular. Much of the hunting is done on private property. A total of about 52,712 acres of public forest land are located in the County, with 52,044 available for hunting. Target shooting and plinking are allowed in almost all areas of the County Forest. The County Forest covers 52,712 acres while one state hunting area covers 2,118 acres. More details on regulations can be obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Area Office at 1-888-936-7463. Publicly owned or leased hunting lands are shown on **Map 16** and summarized in **Table 14**.

Table 14 PUBLIC LAND OPEN FOR HUNTING - 2015	
<u>Public Hunting Area</u>	<u>Approximate Acres</u>
State-owned: Augusta Wildlife Area	2,118
State-owned: Lowes Creek Fish/Land Properties	370
County-owned: County Forest	<u>52,044</u>
TOTAL:	54,532

Aside from public areas for actual pursuit of game, hunters can take advantage of several ranges to practice shooting skills. Bow hunters can practice at Rod & Gun Club Park in Fairchild. In addition, private sportsmen’s clubs allow members to practice firearm shooting precision. The Eau Claire National Rifle Club maintains a 16-point range in the Town of Seymour. **Table 15** describes the location of these facilities.

Table 15 EAU CLAIRE COUNTY SHOOTING AND ARCHERY RANGES	
<u>Range</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. Eau Claire Archers Club	Murphy Road, (SE-NW, Sect 32, T27N, R10W) Union
2. Westgate Sportsman Club	County Road EE (NW-NW, Sect. 35, T27N-R10W) Union
3. Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club	Schoettl Ave. (SE-NW, Sect 18, T27N, R8W) Seymour
4. Eau Claire National Rifle Club	County Road QQ (SW-SW, Sect. 15, T27N-R8W) Seymour
5. Fairchild Rod and Gun Club Park	Pond Road, Town & Village Fairchild

Map 16. Eau Claire County Shooting & Archery Ranges



PRIMITIVE CAMPING

For individuals who may want to get off the beaten path or stray away from developed campgrounds, primitive camping opportunities exist in or near Eau Claire County. In addition to the County Forest, Federal recreation facilities located within a 50-mile radius of Eau Claire County include the National Ice Age Trail and Eau Galle Federal Reservoir (maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers). The State of Wisconsin also maintains three state parks, a hiking trail, and a recreation area in nearby counties.

HIKING AND BACKPACKING

Unlike walking or jogging, which in general, requires the establishment of a trail system or the use of roads, hiking or backpacking is based upon the use of unimproved open spaces. The lure for many is the opportunity to get off the beaten path and to “rough it,” surrounded by only nature. This activity has started to regain popularity in the United States. Map 9 illustrates that large tracts of land are publicly owned and available to the general public for these types of activities.

GEOCACHING AND ORIENTEERING

A relatively new outdoor recreational activity, geocaching first began in 2000 when GPS satellites were opened for public use. The term geocaching comes from “geo,” meaning earth, and “cache,” meaning a hiding place someone would use to temporarily store items and the memory cache in computers. The idea is to locate hidden containers with “treasures” inside in any public place with specific coordinates for others to try to find, much like a game of hide and seek. Participants then share their experiences on an online forum. Importantly, this activity is indeed outdoors and combines information and the technology that one has at one’s home with hiking or backpacking in the outdoors, to form as an excellent combination of mental and physical activity for participants. According to Geocaching.com, there are an estimated 4-5 million geocachers worldwide and an estimated 1.1 million hidden caches. Although it is a relatively new activity, geocaching has quickly caught on. More information on this trending outdoor recreational activity can be found at the Wisconsin Geocaching Association website (www.wi-geocaching.com), which identifies that the oldest cache in Eau Claire County was hidden in 2001.

Orienteering is similar to geocaching in that destinations are often referenced in a coordinate system. The difference is that the participants are using topographic maps and compasses rather than GPS units to find hidden caches or destinations. This is exploring in its more primitive form and tends to be more challenging for individuals due to the mental challenge it provides. For competitive individuals who are interested in orienteering, Adventure Racing is a type of endurance racing that typically includes orienteering components. This type of racing has been popularized by modern television programming like the Eco-Challenge, Primal-Quest and more recently the Discovery Channel’s Adventure Race. Whether the participant is looking for a more leisurely activity or an endurance test, this type of recreational activity continues to grow in popularity throughout the United States. Although Eau Claire County does not contain any official courses at this time, more information relating to orienteering or adventure racing may be found at the Badger Orienteering Club website (<https://badgerorienteering.com/>).

iii. WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Recreational use of the State’s abundant water resources continues to be a cornerstone of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin. Recreational opportunities range from high-speed motor-boating to kayaking; swimming in a lake or stream to floating in a tube or raft; visiting a beach or outdoor swimming pool to walking the shoreline of Lake Michigan; fishing for that trophy trout to catching sunfish with a child; etc. Whatever the activity, you can be sure to find it here in Wisconsin. According to statistics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, just 3% of the earth’s water is fresh water. However, 2% is locked in polar caps meaning that just 1% of the earth’s reachable freshwater is found in lakes and streams. The Great Lakes account for approximately 20% of this amount. When one considers this information, there is no denying the vast importance that freshwater means to Wisconsin, both environmentally and economically.



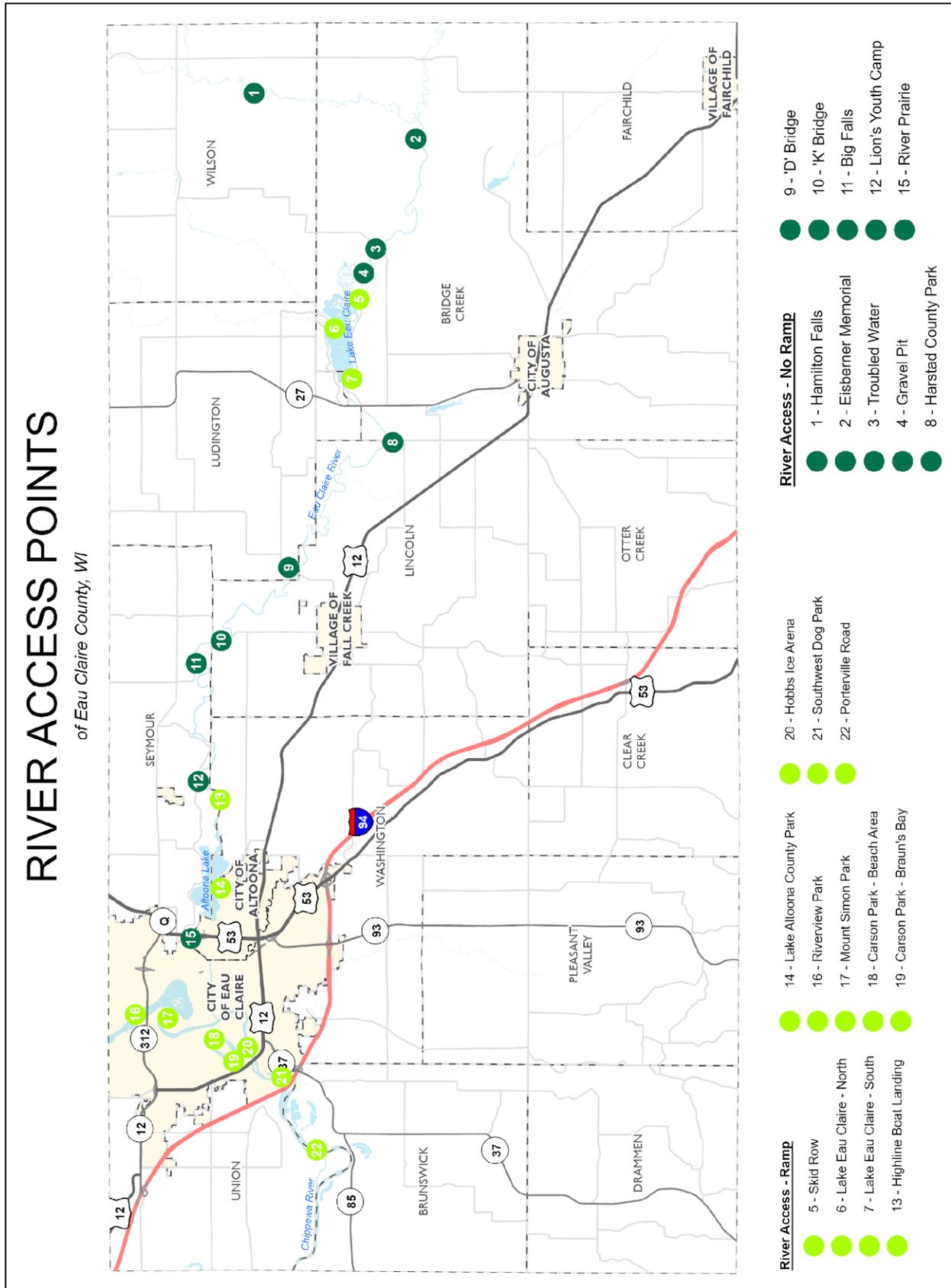
Playing in Lake Altoona, photo: Matt Michels

BOATING

Pleasure boating and sailing are most common on Dells Pond, Lake Altoona, and Lake Eau Claire. Most pleasure boating is done in conjunction with fishing and waterskiing. On relatively small lakes such as those in Eau Claire County, waterskiing and power-boating can conflict with other users of the lake, including individuals who are fishing, sailing, and canoeing. Half Moon Lake is posted for non-motorized use only. Only electric trolling motors are allowed on Coon Fork Lake. Sedimentation in Lake Eau Claire and Lake Altoona also limits the use of these lakes for waterskiing and power-boating; shallow water can be found on the east end of both lakes. Boat landings on County lakes and rivers are listed in **Table 16** and shown on **Map 17**.

Table 16 PRIMARY EAU CLAIRE COUNTY BOAT LANDINGS	
<u>Boat Landings:</u>	<u>Location:</u>
1. Lake Eau Claire - North	SE-NW, Sect. 3, T26N-R6W
2. Lake Eau Claire - #1 South	SE-SE, Sect. 5, T26N-R6W
3. Lake Eau Claire - #2 South	NW-NW, Sect. 11, T26N-R6W
4. Lake Altoona County Park	SW-NW, Sect. 24, T27N-R9W
5. Highline Boat Landing	NW-NE, Sect. 20, T27N-R8W
6. Coon Fork County Park - Day Side	SE-NW, Sect. 32, T26N-R5W
7. Coon Fork County Park - Campground Side	SE-SW, Sect. 29, T26N-R5W
8. Riverview Park	2900 Block, Riverview Dr., Eau Claire
9. Mt. Simon	Eddy and Addison Avenue, Eau Claire
10. Hobbs Ice Arena	Tenth Ave. & Menomonie St., Eau Claire
11. Carson Park	NW-SW, Sect. 19, T27N-R9W
12. Ferry Street	NE-NW, Sect. 36, T27N-R10W
13. Porterville Road	NW-NE, Sect. 3, T26N-R10W

Map 17. Eau Claire County Boat Landings & River Access Points



It is generally recognized that motor-boating is best accommodated on lakes in excess of 100 acres. Because of the limitation for non-motorized boating on Half Moon Lake, the only lakes that are most suitable for motor-boating include Lake Altoona, Lake Eau Claire, and Dells Pond in Eau Claire, for a total of 2,755 acres.

CANOEING & KAYAKING

Canoeing and Kayaking are popular water sports in Eau Claire County. The most popular and scenic routes are found on the Eau Claire River and the Chippewa River, offering nearly 40 river miles of canoeing and kayaking possibilities. Numerous access points on both rivers allow easy entry and exit with parking space for cars and boat trailers. Canoeists and kayakers must portage around dams on the rivers, and low water levels can sometime be a problem. There are several tributaries of the Eau Claire River that are also navigable by canoe. Overall, there are 14.5 miles of streams in addition to the 40 miles of the Eau Claire and Chippewa River that can be canoed, for a total of 54.5 miles.



photo: Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department

The access points on both the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers are listed in **Table 17** and are shown previously on **Map 17**. The boat landings on Map 17 can also be used for canoe and kayak access points. The action plan recommendations in Section VI includes a number related to the improvement of canoeing and kayaking facilities to accommodate more convenient and safe access to our rivers and lakes as well as providing for increased visitation and recreational tourism in the eastern part of Eau Claire County.

Table 17
EAU CLAIRE COUNTY RIVER ACCESS POINTS

Map Number	Landing Name	Location	Section, Township, Range
1	Hamilton Falls	North of falls on river	Sec 26, T27N, R5W
2	Eisberner Memorial	End of Canoe Landing Forest Road. Approximately 1 mile south of Channey Road.	Sec 16, T26N, R5W
3	Troubled Waters	North side of river	Sec 12, T26N, R6W
4	Skid Row	End of Highway SD	Sec 11, T26N, R6W
5	North Side	North boat landing at Lake Eau Claire	Sec 3, T26N, R6W
6	South Side	South boat landing at Lake Eau Claire	Sec 5, T26N, R6W
7	Harstad County Park	Follow main entrance road in park to river	Sec 13, T26N, R7W
8	“D” Bridge	SE side of bridge	Sec 33, T27N, R7W
9	“K” Bridge	Off highway on NW side of bridge	Sec 19, T27N, R7W
10	Big Falls	Park area – from north or south side	Sec 13, T27N, R8W
11	Lion’s Youth Camp	Just off North Shore Drive (L/QQ)	Sec 16, T27N, R8W
12	Highline	.3 miles south from North Shore Drive on Highline	Sec 20, T27N, R8W
13	Lake Altoona County Park	Boat landing in park	Sec 24, T27N, R9W
14	River Prairie	Below highway 53 bypass	Sec 15, T27N, R9W
19	Hobbs Ice Arena	Behind Hobbs Ice Arena	Sec 30, T27N, R9W
20	Porterville Road	End of Porterville Road	Sec 3, T26N, R10W

FISHING

Fishing is popular on both lakes and streams in Eau Claire County. **Table 18** lists the seven lakes that are more than 25 acres in size. Public access is available to all but a few of these lakes; commercial facilities such as gasoline, bait, boat rental, etc., can be found nearby on many of the lakes. There are a number of additional smaller ponds, lakes, and flowages that are also popular for fishing, such as the ponds in Fairchild and Fall Creek.

Table 18 FACILITIES INVENTORY OF LAKES OVER 25 ACRES IN SIZE IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY					
<u>Lake Name</u>	<u>Surface Area Acres</u>	<u>Max. Depth</u>	<u>Public Access</u>	<u>Commercial Facilities Nearby</u>	<u>Fish Species</u>
Lake Altoona	840	25 ft.	boat ramp	yes	Musky, Walleye, Bass, Panfish
Lake Eau Claire	1,118	25 ft.	3 boat ramps	yes	Musky, Bass, Northern, Walleye, Panfish
Coon Fork Flowage	80	20 ft.	2 boat ramps	no	Musky, Bass, Panfish, Perch
Dells Pond (Eau Claire)	727	30 ft.	boat ramp	yes	Musky, Bass, Northern, Walleye, Panfish
Half Moon Lake (Eau Claire)	132	12 ft.	boat ramp	yes	Northern, Bass, Walleye, Panfish
Rodell Millpond (Town of Bridge Creek)	68	7 ft.	private ramp and public carry-in	yes	Panfish, Bass
Elk Creek Lake (Town of Union)	54	n/a	boat ramp	yes	Panfish, Bass
TOTAL:	3,019 acres				

Rivers and streams in the County are home to a wide variety of fish as well. The major rivers with convenient access are the Chippewa and the Eau Claire. Anglers can try for musky, northern pike, walleye, bass, panfish, and rough-fish at nearly any point on these rivers. Smaller streams provide excellent trout fishing.

Eau Claire County has over 161 miles of trout streams. Of this total, 25 miles are Class 1, 72 miles are Class 2, and 64 miles are Class 3. Some Class 1 streams are portions of Beaver Creek, Clear Creek, Darrow Creek, Deinhammer Creek, Elk Creek, Hay Creek, Pine Creek, Schoolhouse Creek, and Seven Mile Creek. Improvements to stream banks and habitat have steadily increased the miles of Class 1 streams in the County.



SWIMMING: LAKES & RIVERS

The County maintains six areas designated for swimming (see **Table 19** and **Map 18**). Beaches are located as follows: one at Lake Altoona County Park, three at Coon Fork County Park (one primarily for campers located on the east side of the lake and two for day users on the west side of the lake), and one on the north shore of Lake Eau Claire off of County Road ND. The Big Falls County Park is not officially designated as a beach area, but is a popular destination for swimmers and waders. The County no longer provides lifeguards at any of the County’s swimming beaches.

Table 19 DEVELOPED PUBLIC BEACHES IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY - 2015					
Name	Bath- House	Toilets	Life- Guard	Acres Swim Area	Size in Feet
1. Lake Altoona County Park (Lake Altoona)	yes	yes	no	2.81	175 x 700
2. Coon Fork County Park – Campground (Coon Fork Flowage)	no	yes	no	0.92	200 x 200
3. Coon Fork County Park - Day Side, North Beach (Coon Fork Flowage)	yes	yes	no	1.93	280 x 300
4. Coon Fork County Park - Day Side, South Beach (Coon Fork Flowage)	no	yes	no	0.14	50 x 120
5. Lake Eau Claire (North Shore)	yes	yes	no	0.36	125 x 125
6. Big Falls County Park	yes	yes	no	undesignated	
7. Riverview Park (City of Eau Claire)	yes	yes	no	undesignated	
8. Half Moon Lake (City of Eau Claire)	no	no	no	1.25	160 x 330
TOTAL:				7.41 acres	

One of the main problems with swimming at the designated beaches is periodic poor water quality. High bacteria (e.g., E. Coli) counts have also forced temporary closing of beaches in the Eau Claire River watershed, particularly after significant rainfalls. Further, later in the summer, algae growth can become excessive on some lakes. County residents also travel to other beaches just outside the County. The nearest and largest is on Lake Wissota in Chippewa County.

SWIMMING POOLS & SPLASH PADS

The public has access to the swimming pools identified on **Map 19**. Only the City of Eau Claire offers a municipal outdoor swimming pool—Fairfax Swimming Pool. The facility includes a shallow pool for children, which is connected to a competition-style pool. There is also a separate diving pool with a high and low diving board. The facility is also equipped with a waterslide. In addition, one private country club offers the use of a pool to their members and guests - Eau Claire Country Club.

The Eau Claire Area School District has five swimming pools - one at each of the three middle schools (DeLong, South and North Star) and one at each high school (North and Memorial). All of these pools are the rectangular competitive-design type, approximately 36 feet wide by 75 feet long. The pools are used by the City Recreation Department for open swimming and for lessons at various times throughout the year. A competition-style indoor swimming pool was constructed by the Augusta Area

School District in 1998. The swimming pool serves as a community pool for city residents when not being used for school purposes.

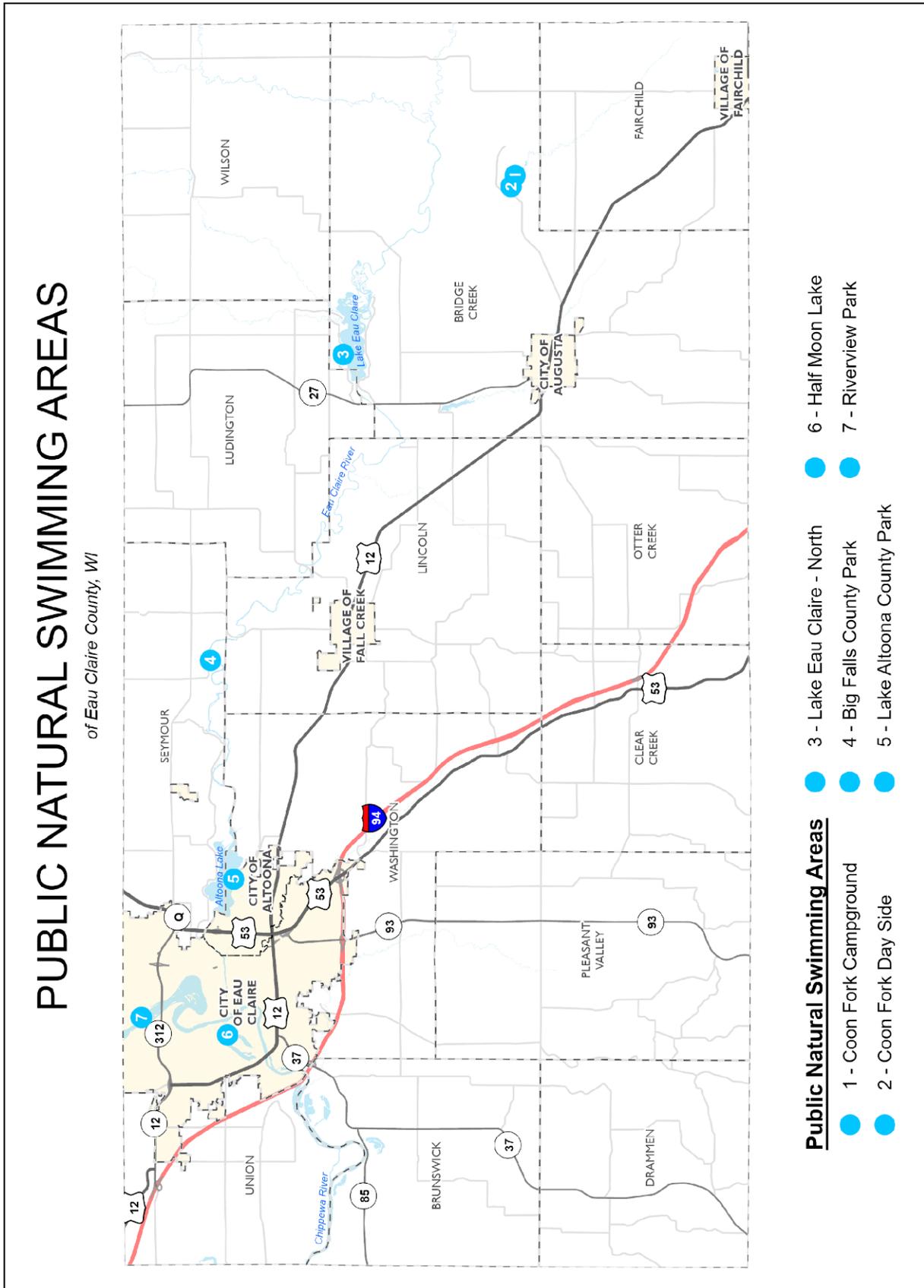
Private indoor pools include the YMCA pool, Gold's Gym, and the pool at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire (42 feet by 75 feet with a depth of 12 feet). The YMCA also has a small instructional pool that is 20 feet by 40 feet and only 2 feet deep. The Chaos Indoor Waterpark is located adjacent to Action City, which serves as a year-round entertainment venue for families.

The availability of splash pads has been growing throughout west central Wisconsin. Since the County's previous outdoor recreation plan update, the cities of Altoona and Eau Claire now offer splash pads at River Prairie Park in Altoona and at Haymarket Plaza in downtown Eau Claire.

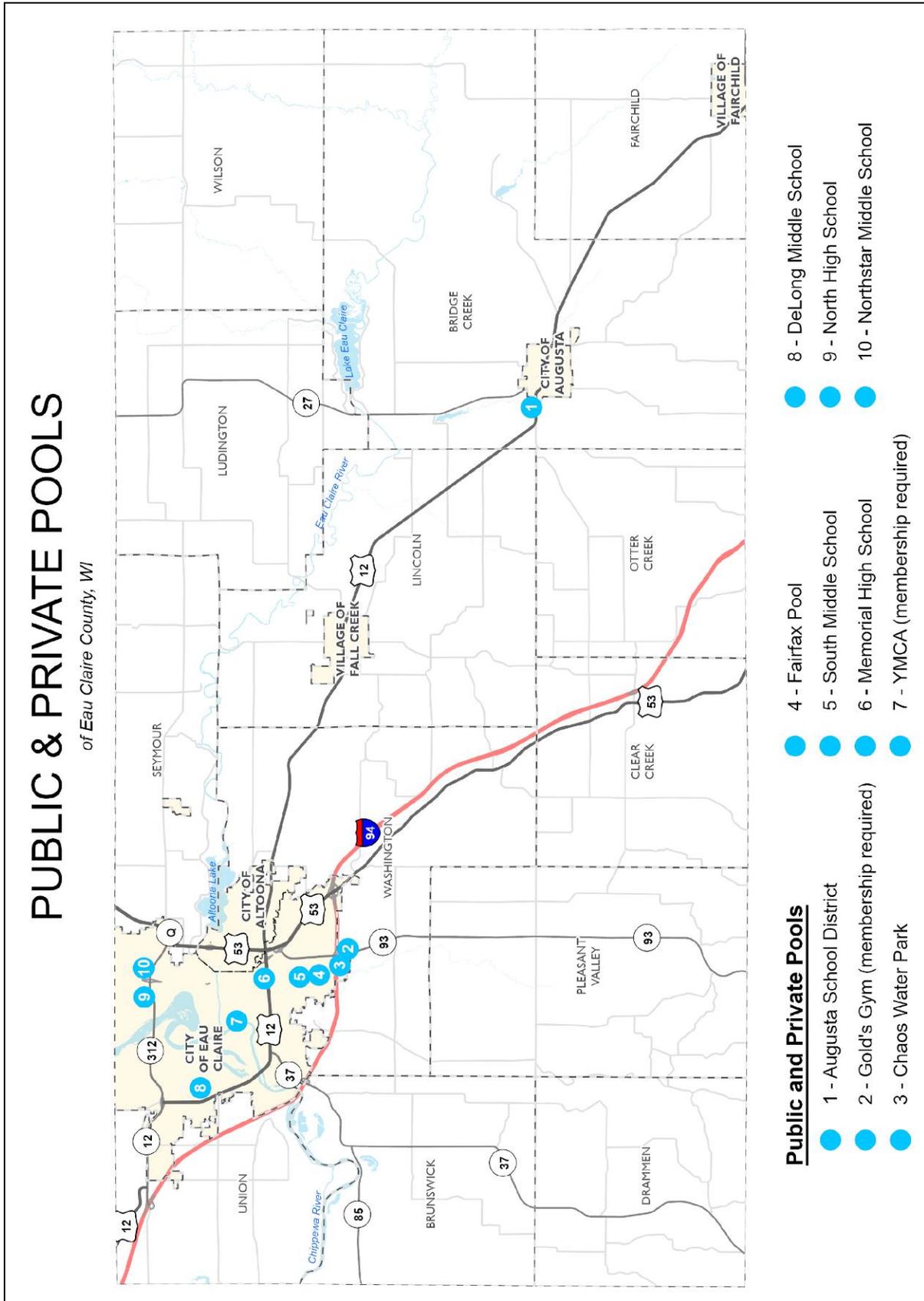


Lake Altoona Beach, photo: ECC Parks & Forest Dept

Map 18. Eau Claire County Public Natural Swimming Areas



Map 19. Eau Claire County Swimming Pools Available to the Public



iv. SNOW- AND ICE-BASED ACTIVITIES

These activities involve some form of frozen water and remain very popular among Wisconsinites, with more than 45% of the population participating in some form of snow- or ice-based recreational activity. Sledding is by far the most popular of these activities, with more than 28% of the State’s population participating according to the SCORP. Snowmobiling continues to gain popularity as new trails emerge and sled technology improves. Skating and ice fishing are also activities that have seen noticeable gains, while downhill skiing continues to see interest wane.

SNOW SKIING

There is only one small downhill ski slope in the County (Mount Washington run by the Flying Eagles Ski Club); however, numerous ski areas are located within a two-to-four hour drive, including all of the facilities in Wisconsin, several in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and in eastern Minnesota. The closest facility is the Bruce Mound Winter Sports Area, located in Clark County about 15 miles southeast of the Village of Fairchild, which offers a wide range of facilities for winter use, including cross-country ski trails, down-hill skiing, snow-tubing and has a snowmobile trail nearby. Other nearby sites include Trollhaugen in Polk County (near Dresser), Hardscrabble in Barron County (near Rice Lake), Christie Mountain in Rusk County (between Rice Lake and Bruce), Sylvan Park and Rib Mountain in Marathon County (near Wausau), Powers Bluff in Wood County (near Wisconsin Rapids), White Tail Ridge in Monroe County (near Sparta), Mt. La Crosse in La Crosse County (near the City of La Crosse) and several facilities in east central Minnesota including Coffee Mill near Wabasha, Welch Village near Welch, and Afton Alps near the Twin Cities.

The County is served by two ski jumping facilities, which host local, national, and international competitions (see **Map 20**). The Silver Mine Ski Jump, located just southwest of the City of Eau Claire, is the home of the annual *Silver Mine Invitational* event and will host an international FIS ski jumping event in February 2016. The other ski jumping facility in the area is the Mount Washington Ski Jump, located at the Junction of Menomonie Street and Mt. Washington Avenue in Eau Claire.

Cross-country skiing is a very popular recreational activity in the area. Its popularity stems from the fact that it is a relatively low-cost sport and it is an excellent aerobic and cardiovascular exercise. The County has several dedicated cross-country ski trails that have been developed on public land. **Table 20** lists the public cross-country ski trails and their mileage.

Table 20 CROSS-COUNTRY SKI TRAILS IN EAU CLAIRE COUNTY	
<u>Trail</u>	<u>Miles</u>
1. Tower Ridge Ski Area	13.0
2. Lowes Creek County Park	4.9
3. Beaver Creek Reserve	4.0
4. Evergreen County Trail	2.2
5. Coon Fork County Park	3.1
6. Riverview Park-Wells Area (Eau Claire)	3.0
7. Fairfax Park (Eau Claire)	1.2
8. Carson Park (Eau Claire)	<u>2.0</u>
	TOTAL: 32.4

Most cross-country trails are aimed at beginner- and intermediate-level skiers but both Tower Ridge and Evergreen have more challenging advanced trails as well. Where possible, on both City and County facilities, trails are

groomed for both skating and striding. Trails at Tower Ridge, Evergreen, and Lowes Creek are groomed for both skating and striding; however, trails at Coon Fork and Beaver Creek Reserve are groomed for striding only. Cross-country skis and snowshoes can be rented at the Reserve.

SNOWMOBILING

A County-wide system of trails allows snowmobilers to use 181 miles of Department of Natural Resources-approved trails (See **Map 21**). In addition, snowmobile clubs maintain many more miles of trails for their own use. The County trails are sponsored by the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department and maintained with help from the Associated Snowmobile Clubs of Eau Claire County under a maintenance agreement. The County-wide trails link to Dunn County to the west, Chippewa County to the north, Clark County to the east, and Trempealeau County to the south. Maps of the snowmobile trails are available at the Eau Claire County Clerk's Office and the Eau Claire County Parks and Recreation Department.



OTHER WINTER ACTIVITIES

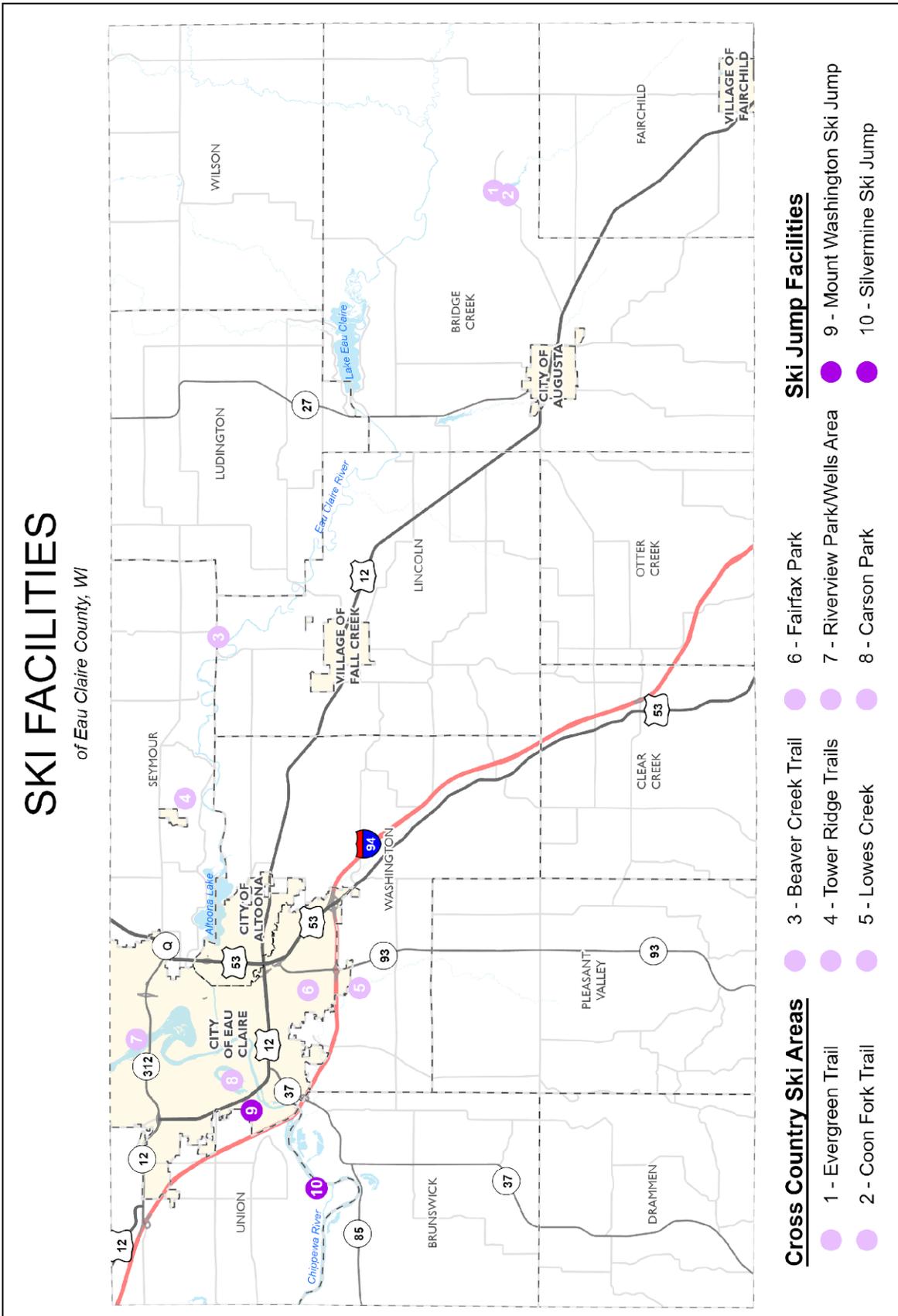
Ice-skating, snowshoeing, sledding, hockey, ice fishing, and similar activities are very common if ice and snow conditions are acceptable. The City of Eau Claire maintains two indoor ice centers, and the City of Altoona has an indoor ice center. All three facilities have artificial ice-making equipment. The number of outdoor ice rinks has been decreasing. The following communities offer temporary skating rinks during the winter season: City of Eau Claire (9 rinks) and Village of Fall Creek (1 rink). The Town of Seymour sometimes provides an outdoor rink based on community demand. A total of 13 skating rinks, including the 3 indoor rinks, are available for use. Uniquely, River Prairie in Altoona opened a crokicurl rink in 2022, which is somewhat similar to curling.



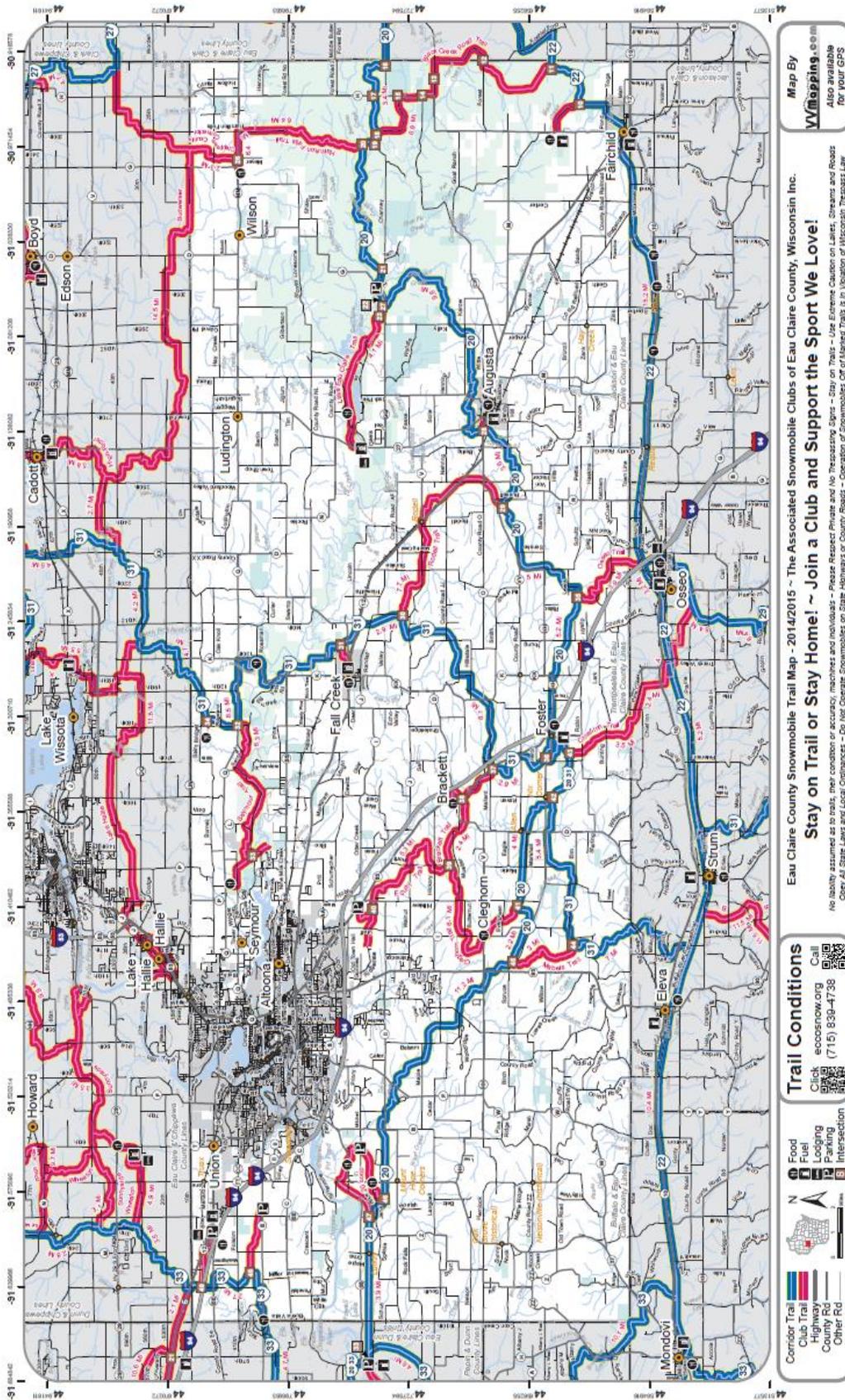
As an alternative to cross-country skiing, more people are taking up snowshoeing. Snowshoeing trails and areas open to snowshoeing are available in both County and City parks. Residents are also welcome to snowshoe anywhere in the County Forest. The only official sledding hill is at Oakwood Hills. However, numerous unadvertised and unsupervised sledding hills are popular within the City of Eau Claire including: Pinehurst Hill off of Locust Lane, Forest Hill off of Huebsch Boulevard (also referred to as Seven Bumps), Mt. Simon Park, and the "X"-Hill just off of Starr Avenue near the airport. For more exhilarating tubing rides, one may

travel one hour north to Christie Mountain or one hour west to the Badlands near Hudson. Both courses are open to the public for a fee and offer some great rides and family fun. Finally, ice fishing opportunities are available at lakes and ponds throughout the County.

Map 20. Eau Claire County Ski Facilities



Map 21. Eau Claire County Snowmobile Routes (from Snowmobile Clubs of Eau Claire County)



VIEWING AND INTERPRETATIVE ACTIVITIES

The definition of outdoor recreation has continued to evolve in recent years to include passive observation or appreciation activities in the outdoors in which physical activity is not the primary objective, but a complementary component of the activity. Attending sporting events, nature centers, photographing wildlife, sightseeing, gathering wild plants and berries for consumption, or visiting historical sites are all examples of activities that individuals may choose to do to recreate and enjoy Wisconsin's outdoors. According to the SCORP, rates of participation in viewing and interpretative activities are higher in Wisconsin than in other states.



**Eau Claire Express game at Carson Park
photo: Matt Michels**

Due to the nature of these activities, it is difficult to plan for or develop facilities to promote or congregate activities other than sporting event complexes (like Carson Park pictured below). Eau Claire County has, therefore, not historically invested time or effort into promoting these activities as part of the County's outdoor recreation plan. With that being said, the Beaver Creek Reserve



Butterfly Garden at Beaver Creek Reserve

provides numerous opportunities for viewing and interpretative activities. Located just east of Big Falls County Park and encompassing approximately 200 acres, the Reserve includes a space observatory, hiking and cross-country ski trails, youth camp, butterfly house, and a science center. The Reserve, along with many of the other amenities already identified within this Plan, ensures that the citizens and visitors to Eau Claire County have the necessary amenities to meet the needs of this growing type of outdoor activity. More information regarding Beaver Creek Reserve can be found in Section VI. C.

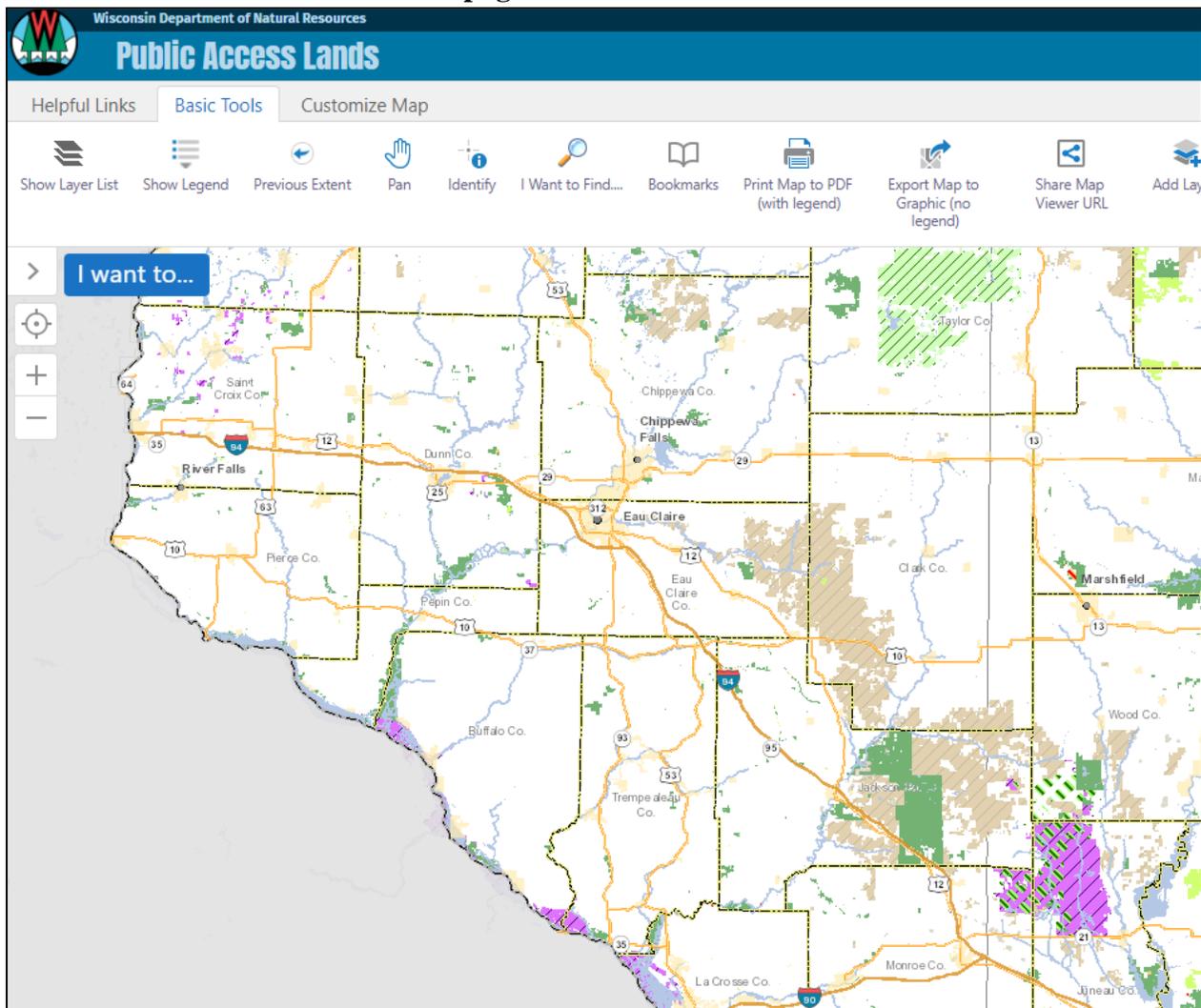
Efforts may be made in the future to map historical sites and other points of interest for individuals who may wish to visit them. The other points of interest may include wild scenery, vegetation, birding areas, etc. Sight-seeing tours have been used extensively in some parts of the State to encourage motorists to visit and enjoy.

B. NEARBY FEDERAL AND STATE RECREATION FACILITIES

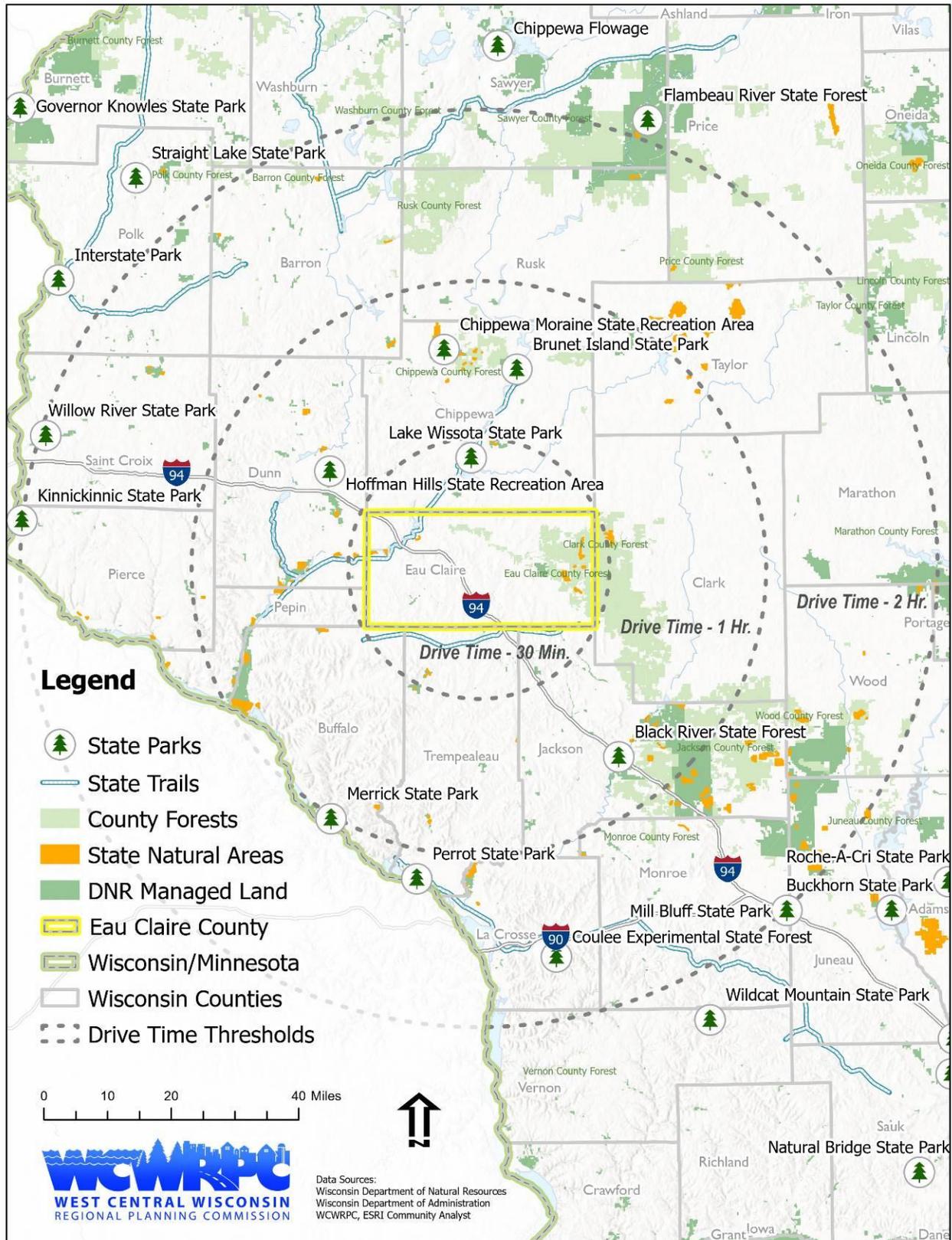
As shown on **Map 22**, there is a wide array of state recreation facilities located within an estimated 2-hour drive radius of Eau Claire County. The facilities include Lake Wissota State Park, Brunet Island State Park, Black River State Forest, Merrick State Park, Perrot State Park, Willow River State Park, Coulee Experimental State Forest, Red Cedar State Trail, Hoffman Hills Recreation Area, National Ice Age Trail, and Chippewa River Trail. The map on the next page shows some of these facilities, along with County Forest land, State natural areas, and DNR Managed Land.

If you are interested in a more detailed map with all the available recreational facilities, the DNR has an interactive Public Access Lands map on their website that will give you an in-depth view into all the publicly available lands across Wisconsin.

WDNR's Public Access Lands Webpage



Map 22. Nearby State Outdoor Recreational Facilities



SECTION IV

OVERALL RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following primary sources were used to identify outdoor recreation needs or demand for Eau Claire County:

- a) Outdoor recreation trends identified in the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.
- b) Consideration of any needs, issues, or opportunities identified in other relevant plans.
- c) The 2021 Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Survey and the discussion of the survey results with the County Parks & Forest Committee.
- d) A brief analysis of the distribution of area recreational facilities compared to the County's population.

A. STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

Assessing the outdoor recreation needs of Wisconsin's residents and visitors is a major component of the *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP). States are required to complete SCORPs every five years to be eligible for participation in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) guidelines for outdoor recreation planning encourage local planning efforts to consider the needs, issues, and priorities identified in the SCORP.

The 2019-2023 SCORP recognized that Eau Claire County has a relatively large amount of County-owned public lands—52,671 acres—compared to an average of 33,269 acres for all Wisconsin counties. However, many counties to the north and northeast of the County have large amounts of State and Federal public lands, while Eau Claire County only has 3,727 acres of State land and no Federal land. The SCORP also noted:

- Governmental units and conservation or trail organizations in Eau Claire County have received 37 Land & Water Conservation Fund grants between 1964 to 2017 totaling \$1,254,062.
- The Millennial Generation (ages 18-36) spends more time and money on outdoor recreation than the average consumer. This generation tends to seek experiences over material goods,

State of Wisconsin's Goals for Outdoor Recreation



1. Boost participation in outdoor recreation



2. Grow partnerships



3. Provide high-quality experiences



4. Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits



5. Enhance funding and financial stability

participates in active outdoor pursuits (e.g., hiking, kayaking, mountain biking), and is more likely to rent than own, use social media to share experiences, and have pets (especially dogs).

To inform the SCORP, the WDNR completed a Recreational Opportunities Analysis (ROA) in June 2018. The ROA divides the State into eight regions; Eau Claire County is part of the Western Sands Region and received input from over 1,000 individuals regarding the opportunities and needs of the region. The largest number of responses in the region (and entire State) was from the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls, Stevens Point, and Wausau areas.

The diverse landscape of the Western Sands Region provides outdoor recreation for those looking for a mix of developed recreation facilities. Much of what recreationists look for can all be found here: regional trail networks for various forms of trail use; large properties for migratory bird and larger game hunting; State and county park properties with camping, picnic areas, and hiking trails as well as surface waters for fishing, boating, and canoe/kayak use. The ROA notes that Eau Claire urban area has an extensive trail network that continues to grow. The ROA also recognized that Eau Claire County (and some nearby counties) has large blocks of forest land, which provides benefits including forest products, fisheries and wildlife habitat, many types of outdoor recreation, and water quality protection.

Popular activities in the Western Sands region are:

- bicycling (surfaced trails & mountain biking)
- camping (tent & RV/pop-up)
- canoeing/kayaking
- cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
- fishing from boat, canoe, or kayak
- hiking, walking, or running on trails
- horseback riding
- swimming
- wildlife/bird watching

Notable differences in participation between the Western Sands region and the State are:

- Residents participate in hunting big game at higher rates than the State average.
- Residents participate in sailing or stand-up paddle boarding, downhill skiing and snowboarding, visiting a dog park, and jet skiing at lower rates than the State average, though this could be impacted by opportunity.

Top 10 Recreation Opportunities Needed in Western Sands Region

1. More hiking/walking/running trails
2. More natural surface (dirt) biking trails
3. More rustic/quiet campgrounds
4. More horseback trails
5. More paved bicycling trails
6. More trails for motorized recreation
7. More public shore access to lakes & streams
8. More developed campgrounds
9. More local parks & playgrounds
10. More wildlife watching decks or platforms

The ROA also identifies the top recreational opportunities needed in the region, which are identified in the previous box. Four of the top five needs involved trails. Respondents in the Western Sands region identified equestrian trails, motorized recreation trails, and public campsites as a need at a higher rate than the State average, while hiking/walking running trails, bicycling trails, public shooting ranges, and outdoor tennis, handball, and basketball courts were identified less frequently as a need compared to the State average.

B. OTHER RELEVANT EAU CLAIRE COUNTY PLANS

Eau Claire County is unique compared to its neighbors; it contains a large, urbanized area. Larger populations typically require additional planning efforts. Two County plans have been identified and summarized below that have a significant impact on outdoor recreation. **Table 21** on the following page outlines additional plans potentially related to outdoor recreation in the County.

Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan – Adopted March of 2021

The *Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan* provides a vision for the future and recommendations to achieve this vision. The primary elements of the County’s Comprehensive Plan most related to outdoor recreation are transportation and natural resources.

Related transportation recommendations include:

- Reconstructing or resurfacing roads will improve upon or create bicycle facilities (e.g., striped or larger shoulders).
- New development in the County’s municipalities should address the necessity of Safe Routes to School and adequate walking/ biking in general, while promoting the connection to current or existing trails/ routes.
- The County also will help leverage state/ federal funds to implement the projects for the various Bicycle and Pedestrian plans that have been adopted in the County.

One of the County’s stated natural resources goals is to “*Protect sensitive environmental resources, wildlife habitat, rural vistas, and local cultural resources for current and future residents of Eau Claire County.*” To this end, the plan also strives to:

- Ensure the long-term access to green spaces, recreation areas, waterways, and trails.
- Areas that have been designated as permanent open space or environmental corridors will be considered for educational or recreational opportunity.
- Preserve water resources and air quality, which has outdoor recreation implications.

Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan – Adopted May of 2019

The *Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* was one piece of a larger tri-county planning process completed in partnership with Dunn County and Chippewa County. The primary goal was to develop an interconnected transportation network within each of these counties; however, it also emphasizes the creation of a strong regional network. In support of this goal, an extensive inventory of the existing and future on/ off-road bicycle routes/ facilities was analyzed for their suitability in supporting a greater network. Routes that connected existing or planned trail developments were

prioritized, especially when they connect the urban centers (cities and villages) within the County. Routes within the urbanized areas were not detailed within the Plan. Like all bicycle and pedestrian plans, the principal focus is not on recreation, but instead aims to promote connectivity, safety, and multi-modal transportation. Improved outdoor recreation facilities is simply a positive by-product of these plans.

Other Potentially Relevant Plans

Table 21 identifies other Eau Claire County and municipal plans that may include intergovernmental policies, issues, or opportunities regarding outdoor recreation that may be important to the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations of the *Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan*. During the planning process, the cities, villages, and towns with their own outdoor recreation plans were requested to provide input on any intergovernmental issues or recommendations in their respective plans.

Table 21. Other Relevant Plans in Eau Claire County		
Name of Plan	Adoption Date	Intergovernmental Notes
Bike and Pedestrian Plans		
City of Eau Claire Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	December 2018	Recommended that the City of Eau Claire continues to encourage trail connectivity between jurisdictions, primarily in Eau Claire County. The City also stated it would encourage the increase of bicycle parking at County facilities. No specific linkages or locations were identified.
City of Altoona Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Final Review	No intergovernmental comments that would impact the County’s outdoor recreation plan.
Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	August 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advisory committee was asked to identify issues that needed to be addressed to improve biking or walking within the metropolitan area. Cross-jurisdictional cooperation between municipalities and the County was emphasized in regard to Hwy KB and for S. Beach Rd. • In regard to the implementation of the plan recommendations, emphasis is placed on the need for intergovernmental cooperation to promote the continuity of bicycle and walking routes beyond individual municipal boundaries.
Eau Claire Bicycle and Pedestrian Future Study Areas	Final Draft	No intergovernmental comments that would impact the County’s outdoor recreation plan.
Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plans	varies	The Altoona, Eau Claire, & Fall Creek School Districts have all adopted SRTS Plans. No intergovernmental comments of note.

Name of Plan	Adoption Date	Intergovernmental Notes
Other Municipal Outdoor Recreation Plans (from communities not participating in this plan)		
Village of Fall Creek Outdoor Recreation Plan	February 2022	No intergovernmental comments that would impact the County’s outdoor recreation plan.
Town of Union Outdoor Recreation Plan	Draft as of October 2020. No adoption date	A recommendation regarding the Town of Union Conservancy was made to work closely with the County Forester to improve overall forest management and the removal of invasive species.
City of Altoona Place Plan	April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City aims to proactively cooperate with the County to preserve natural areas, identify future parks, and trail routes. • Multiple roads were cited to have bike or pedestrian facilities to be improved that are either partially or fully controlled by the County, including Spooner Avenue, Mayer Road, Prill Road, and others. • Lake Altoona County Park is located within the City. Park development requires zoning permits and coordinate with the City. The City has a track record of parks & open space development and recognizes the value of this park, so cooperative development is a possibility. • Altoona envisions a thorough network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including to the County Park and outside the City. These are largely reflected in the regional bicycle & pedestrian plan, but are important to note as they are both transportation and recreational facilities. • Generally, the plan notes the importance of improving the water quality of Lake Altoona, Eau Claire River, and Otter Creek. Preservation of lands in these corridors are contemplated, including for recreational purposes
City of Eau Claire Outdoor Recreation Plan	May 2018	The plan states that it aims to plan in cooperation with the County and other jurisdictions in order to reduce the cost of operations and open space development.

Name of Plan	Adoption Date	Intergovernmental Notes
Municipal Comprehensive Plans (in progress or current; excluded expired)		
City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan	In Progress	A community’s comprehensive plan should be consistent with and incorporate the recommendations of the community’s outdoor recreation plan.
City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan	5-year review ongoing	
Town of Pleasant Valley Comprehensive Plan	January 2014	For municipalities participating in this outdoor recreation plan, their respective subsections of Section VII should have considered and be consistent with their comprehensive plans. For other municipalities, their outdoor recreation plans were reviewed and summarized above.
Town of Seymour Comprehensive Plan	June 2021	
Town of Washington Comprehensive Plan	February 2018	
Surface Water Plans		
Lake Plans	various	<p>The lake districts for Lake Altoona & Lake Eau Claire and the Village of Fall Creek have adopted lake management plans. A planning effort for Fairchild Pond is underway.</p> <p>Water-based recreation is a driving factor of these plans. The plans include goals and recommendations regarding fisheries and fish habitat, water quality, sedimentation, and recreational improvements. These lake groups partner with Eau Claire County Land Conservation, Public Health, and others to achieve their plan goals. Eau Claire County maintains a Lake Rehabilitation Grant program to assist with these activities.</p>
Eau Claire River Watershed Plan (9-Key Elements Plan)	approved by EPA & WDNR on July 10, 2017	The focus of this multi-county plan is on non-point source runoff (e.g., phosphorus & sediment loading) to surface waters. The plan also includes data and strategies regarding fisheries & aquatic habitat, aquatic invasive species, and public beach closures. Eau Claire County Land Conservation is a very active participant in the Eau Claire County Watershed Coalition that is working to implement the Watershed Plan.

Name of Plan	Adoption Date	Intergovernmental Notes
Other Plans		
2021-2036 Eau Claire County Forest Land Use Plan	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan’s goal is to encourage the planned development and management of the County Forest to support the multiple land uses within the forest system, including recreational opportunities. • Includes policies on which types of signs are allowed/not allowed on County Forest land. For instance, signs erected by non-profit recreational trail groups will be allowed if they are for interoperative use, public lands, trail markers, scientific, historical, geological, facility markers, or directional markers. • The plan dedicates an entire chapter to recreation, stating that it understands the value and growing popularity of outdoor recreation. Refer to this Plan for additional information on recreation types, funding, and regulations.
Eau Claire County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan	February 2019	<p>Guided by Eau Claire County Emergency Management with assistance from WCWRPC, this plan is a pre-requisite for certain FEMA grant dollars. The plan includes the following related to outdoor recreation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on interest, pursue grant funding for installation of safe rooms (storm shelters) at campgrounds, RV parks, recreational properties, festival grounds, and other public-owned facilities (e.g., Expo Center). Fairchild, Altoona, & Eau Claire all expressed interested in safe rooms for parks and/or recreational facilities. Such a safe room has recently been discussed as a possibility at Coon Fork County Park campground. • The City of Eau Claire desired to install a P.A. or other communication system at City parks as well as require Park event users to submit emergency plans.

Name of Plan	Adoption Date	Intergovernmental Notes
Other Plans (cont.)		
<p>Eau Claire County Land & Water Resource Management Plan-2012 to 2022</p>	<p>2012</p>	<p>Eau Claire County has a very active Land Conservation Division responsible for a variety of educational and enforcement activities to protect the farmlands, waters, and natural resources of the County. The Department developed and implements the <i>Eau Claire County Land and Water Resource Management Plan</i>. The Department also provides assistance to the County’s lake districts and lake associations, and is responsible for a range of additional activities that benefit the natural environment and enhance outdoor recreation.</p> <p>In 2010, the Eau Claire County Land Stewardship Program was established to protect and preserve key lands that offer recreational opportunities for the public and/or have significant ecological value.</p>

C. EAU CLAIRE COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY

In early 2022, a web-based public opinion survey was conducted to obtain resident and visitor input on the County's outdoor recreational conditions and needs. A total of 492 responses were received of which about 84% were Eau Claire County residents. This section provides some highlights from the survey; more complete results can be found in **Appendix B**.



Frequency of County Park & Facility Use

Respondents were asked how often they use each Eau Claire County outdoor recreation facility in a typical year:

Most Used Facilities (frequently or often)

1. Various Bike Routes or Trails (69%)
2. Lowes Creek County Park (50%)
3. Tower Ridge Recreation Area (42%)
4. Various County Boat Landings (37%)

Least Used Facilities (rarely or never)

1. Eau Claire National Rifle Club (96%)
2. Guettinger Woods & Wildlife Area (95%)
3. Other Shooting or Archery Ranges in the County (92%)
4. Harstad County Park (91%)
5. ATV/ UTV Routes & Trails Within the Eau Claire County Forest (89%)
6. Other ATV/ UTV Routes & Trails outside the Eau Claire County Forest (89%)
7. L.L. Phillips County Park (88%)
8. Snowmobile Routes & Trails – Various Locations (88%)

Non-residents were most likely to respond that they frequently use the bike routes or trails, Tower Ridge, Coon Fork County Park, or Lowes Creek County Park. Coon Fork is the only County park or facility that has significantly more non-residents traffic than residents. Lowes Creek had the 3rd highest use for non-residents (14%), but residents still utilize this park more with 34% indicating its general popularity. The facility least used by residents that responded to the survey was the Eau Claire National Rifle Club, though this facility is very specialized.

Demand for Recreational Activities

Respondents were also asked, in their opinion, if the current park and outdoor recreation opportunities in Eau Claire County for 37 different activities are meeting the demands of residents and visitors.:

Top Activities that Meet or Mostly Meet Demand (little or no improvements needed)

1. Walking, Jogging, Running (78%)
2. Picnicking (78%)

3. Canoeing and Kayaking (67%)
4. Hiking and Backpacking (61%)
5. Natural Open Space (61%)
6. Snowshoeing (60%)
7. Pleasure Driving & Sightseeing (60%)

Top Activities Requiring Significant Improvements (demand not being met)

1. Swimming (Beach, pool, splash pads) (26%)
2. Road Cycling (non-motorized) (23%)
3. Hiking & Backpacking (21%)
4. Primitive, tent, or survival camping (21%)
5. Nature-based Educational Programs (20%)
6. Skateboarding & Inline Skating (19%)

On average, 46% of the responses to this question were “No Opinion”, which suggests that these respondents had very limited familiarity with the activity.

Issues/Threats to Outdoor Recreation

The plan update steering committee was particularly concerned with illegal dumping and invasive species on County lands. To gain a better understanding of the public’s knowledge and willingness to address these issues, several related questions were asked in the survey.

While the threat of invasives seems to be fairly well known, with two-thirds of respondents recognizing it, only half of those that understand the issue are willing or are able to volunteer to help remedy the issue. However, this represents over 50 individuals who agreed or strongly agreed that they would be willing to help with educational or management efforts regarding invasive species. Further, over 90 individuals indicated that they would be willing to volunteer 1-2 days per year with garbage pick-up, general cleaning, and basic maintenance activities at parks and forest lands.

Additional Public Comments

The survey included two opportunities for respondents to comment on Eau Claire County’s outdoor recreational opportunities and to suggest improvements. The most frequently provided feedback are summarized here:

Park Facilities, Amenities, & Programming Comments

- Campground improvements needed including improved bathrooms, better electrical service, and to accommodate RV’s.
- Many requests for increased camping options, especially backpacking/primitive campsites and a horseback riding campsite(s) on the east side of the County.
- More bathrooms or bathroom improvements may be needed, specifically at the day-use side of Coon Fork and at Harstad.
- Water quality issues (e.g., sedimentation, algae, vegetation growth) are impacting fisheries and fishing opportunities.

Strategic & Operational Comments

- The County and County park staff were complemented by many respondents for their amenities, maintenance, and management. “I feel so fortunate to live here and enjoy all of the resources available in Eau Claire County.”
- The recreational opportunities in Eau Claire County are assets that contribute to the economy and quality of life. “We have some beautiful parks and there's been so much added and improved upon!”
- However, some commented that more effort needs to be made to take advantage of these opportunities. More promotion, marketing, maps, and information about the recreational opportunities in the County, including the municipalities, is needed. “Some of the county parks I hadn't even heard of!”
- Finally, several respondents mentioned the issue of dumping as being a huge issue, along with vandalism and guns. “Sometimes it feels like the Wild West out there.”

D. STAKEHOLDER GROUP SURVEY

In March 2022, Eau Claire County Parks & Forestry invited representatives from various outdoor recreational groups in Eau Claire County to participate in a very brief, web-based survey to obtain additional public input. The following organizations participated:

Lake Altoona Protection & Rehabilitation District
 Lake Eau Claire Protection & Rehabilitation District
 Augusta ATV Club
 Chippewa Off Road Bicycle Association (CORBA)
 Horseback Riding enthusiast
 Eau Claire Ski Striders-Kickin' Kids

Respondents identified the following issues of greatest concern:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Maintenance of parks | • Need for more horse trails |
| • Vandalism & abuse of facilities | • Open trails to UTVs in winter |
| • Global warming | • Lake water quality & sedimentation |
| • Lack of volunteers to maintain trails | • Beach closures due to bacteria |
| • County roads are closed to ATVs | |

Respondents also commented on the importance of private-public partnering with the County, Wisconsin DNR, and others for resources to address these concerns. One suggestion was to use inmates or students (e.g., Challenge Academy) to assist with trail renovation or invasive species control. Lake Eau Claire noted that the use of the Lake has been increasing in recent years, including among the Amish community. And it was noted that the public survey likely underestimates horseback trail riding in the County Forest. There may be value in more study of park and recreation facility use and the economic value of these facilities. Multiple respondents suggested that more public information about recreational opportunities is needed, such as when trails are groomed for skiing. More promotion for under-utilized facilities, such as more promotion of the ski trails at Coon Fork and including horseback riding opportunities on County trails maps.

Another suggestion was to explore rental equipment (e.g., cross-country skis, snowshoes) during the winter months to introduce more residents to these activities, while helping to keep residents active and mentally healthy during the winter months.

E. CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

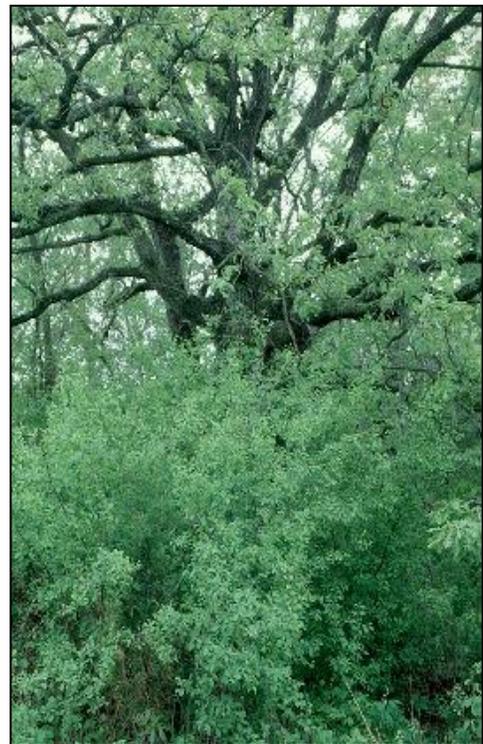
During the planning process, the following four key challenges or threats to outdoor recreation in Eau Claire County were identified.

Vandalism and Dumping

Vandalism and dumping are a threat to public safety and the environment, while degrading the natural habitat and enjoyable experience that many recreationalists seek on County Forest and other public spaces. In addition, many County staff hours are spent on repairs and clean-up, when such time and dollars could be used for other facility maintenance and enhancements. Vandalism activities identified included: shooting firearms at signs and electrical poles, pulling down gates, and trespassing with motor vehicles (creating tire tracks/ ruts). Stakeholders also identified a wide range of commonly dumped items including, but not limited to: large truck tires, deer carcasses, couches, and refrigerators. While these challenges occur in a vast array of settings and landscapes, they have a particularly large impact on different public lands in the County. The plan update steering committee suggested that there are areas in the County Forest that are particularly prone to vandalism and dumping.

Invasive Species

Unfortunately, with greater mobility of humans, comes negative consequences like invasive species. These species can cause great harm to the environment and can even cause the extinction of native plants or animals if proper mitigation strategies are not implemented. Species of particular interest include but are not limited to, Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea Stoebe*), Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus*), and Curly-Leaf Pondweed (*Potamogeton Crispus*). Mentioned previously in the recreational inventory for hunting and shooting section, some consider Eau Claire County to have some of the best Ruffed Grouse habitat in the State. Ruffed Grouse require deciduous and mixed forests, with scattered clearing and dense undergrowth. With the growing issue of invasive species in our forests, it is critical that proactive management take place to protect such native habitats. While it is difficult to eradicate such invasives once they are well-established, an emphasis could be placed on preventing the spread. For example, Buckthorn is fairly well established in the Eau Claire urban area, so it may be advantageous to focus on containment and areas where small, new growth is found.



Common Buckthorn, photo: WNRD

Equitable Access

One of the greatest challenges that isn't often discussed is equitable access to different outdoor recreation opportunities. Equity can have several different meanings; however, the context that will be discussed here is referring to low-income and minority populations. The value of the outdoors is infinite. However, an important piece to remember are the physical and mental benefits natural resources have on our everyday lives. While many used the outdoors as an escape during the COVID-19 pandemic, it underscored the issue of access for these traditionally underserved populations. Some of the barriers could include lack of resources or historic discrimination. The inability to afford park passes, licenses, or a certain type of recreation equipment (e.g., snowshoes, ATV, mountain bike, boat) is one type of barrier and can exclude residents from participating in outdoor recreation for financial reasons. Many of the Eau Claire County parks require the use of motorized vehicles to access them, which can be a large limiting factor for many residents who do not own a vehicle. It is also important that all residents have access to information about the outdoor recreational opportunities available in the County. Relying solely on the Internet for information sharing may exclude residents without Internet access due to income, lack of broadband service, or by choice. Eau Claire County is also becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, so language or cultural differences could be a barrier to access for some residents.

Surface Water Quality

While the first three challenges were identified by the plan update steering committee, aspects of this fourth threat—surface water quality—were frequently mentioned during the previous survey efforts. These challenges most commonly fell into three basic categories:

- Sedimentation of lakes and rivers, which can degrade aquatic habitat and fishing as well as restrict boating access.
- Algae blooms and overgrowth of aquatic plants due to excess phosphorus and nutrients in surface waters.
- Beach closures due to bacteria levels. This is notable since “swimming at a beach” had the highest “demand not met” score in public opinion survey.



As noted previously, lake groups, the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition, Eau Claire County Land Conservation, and other partners are working to address these water quality issues through a wide variety of related plans and initiatives. As one example, the Lake Altoona District is currently partnering with City-County Public Health to pilot a bacteria-testing project in an attempt to definitively identify the sources of the bacteria that is resulting in the beach closures.

F. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES DISTRIBUTION & DEMAND

Another tool used to identify parks and recreation needs for Eau Claire County considers the amount and types of parkland available in the context of the potential recreation population. Eau Claire County had a 2020 population of about 105,260 residents, which is projected to increase to 111,610 by 2040 or a 6% increase. According to the following National Recreation and Park Association's general service metrics for an agency serving 100,000-250,000 residents:

The typical County park and recreation agency offers one park for every 7,881 residents served, with 8.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

Using the inventory provided previously in Sections III. and V.C., Eau Claire County manages 1,764 acres as public park land at nine park facilities; this includes the 710 acres at Tower Ridge and the 123 acres at Guettinger Woods and Wildlife Area, but excludes the County Forest. Based on the above NRPA metric:

- Eau Claire County Parks & Forest should offer 13 to 15 parks given its current and projected population. This suggests that the current number of County park facilities (9) is less than average when compared to a typical County park agency. This first metric is not a good fit for analyzing facilities demand in Eau Claire County given that about 71% of the population is concentrated in the cities of Altoona and Eau Claire, both of which have their own robust municipal park system.
- Eau Claire County should offer around 993 acres of parkland by 2040 based on its population. In terms of gross acreage, the County's current supply of 1,764 acres of public parkland exceeds the average service standard of 8.9 acres per 1,000 residents.

Further, the following additional factors must also be considered:

- The nine parks' acreage only includes the County parks and not the thousands of acres of County Forest lands, the County Expo Center, Beaver Creek Reserve, WDNR lands, and park facilities provided by local communities, school districts, and others.
- The timber of the County Forest lands is also managed as an important revenue source for Eau Claire County.
- Despite having abundant park acreage available for public use, much of these lands is maintained in a natural state and is inaccessible for many park users who may have limited mobility or other use factors.
- Of the nine County parks highlighted in this plan, only one—Lowes Creek—is located within the urban area. The majority are located in the eastern parts of the County.



In summary, Eau Claire County, overall, has sufficient park acreage to meet local demands, especially if County Forest, Beaver Creek Reserve, and municipal park systems are considered,

though much of the County's outdoor recreational acreage is unimproved. Given that sufficient acreage is available, the following factors are of greater importance for Eau Claire County and may necessitate the development or improvement of additional park facilities in the future:

- Growing or changing recreational demands by residents and/or visitors are not being met by the use, function, and amenities of existing park facilities. For instance, the survey suggests that there may be an unmet demand for certain activities and amenities.
- Park amenities or specific uses are overly concentrated in a single area at such levels that use conflicts are created and/or the carry capacity of facilities and the natural environment is being exceeded. The survey comments suggest a number of potential conflicts, most notably between ATV/UTV use and other potential trail users (e.g., snowmobile, equestrian, hiking, biking).
- Beyond park space, there may be other reasons to acquire more open space or outdoor recreational acreage, such as water quality protection, flood mitigation or storage, wetland mitigation, protection of environmentally sensitive areas or critical habitat, creating or enhancing environmental corridors, improving public access to surface waters, or the preservation of archeological or historic sites. The Eau Claire County Land Stewardship Program was created, in part, to guide and help facilitate such acquisitions.



Grouse Competitive Run in the Eau Claire County Forest, photo: CVGDA

Eau County Forest as a Recreation Area

With over 52,700 acres of County Forest, the demand for open space for general public use is well met. County Forest lands are open to a wide variety of year-round, recreational opportunities, including hunting, hiking, snowshoeing, wildlife viewing, and river access for fishing and paddle sports. ATV/UTV routes also cross the County's forest lands. But did you know the Eau Claire County Forest is recognized as one of the top three competitive field trial areas for Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock hunting dogs?

Eau Claire County's aggressive forest management practices are very important for maintaining early succession forest, which is essential for songbirds, deer, grouse, woodcock, and many other species to flourish.

Established in 1968, the Chippewa Valley Grouse Dog Association (CVGDA) has been utilizing the Eau Claire County Forest for over 50 years, in particular the Hamilton Falls fire lane from Wilson Park to Channey Road. The CVGDA provides a venue to showcase Grouse and Woodcock hunting dogs at three courses that parallel and meander along the Eau Claire River. It is paramount to have large tracts of land, with prime habitat and generous amounts of birds, to provide competitive settings for these trails. Competitors come throughout the United States, which supports the local economy. CVGDA considers the County Forest a one-of-a-kind gem and is very appreciative that Eau Claire County provides this opportunity.

SECTION V

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & POLICIES

The function of any planning, whether in our personal lives or as a community, is to achieve goals and objectives. Individuals or communities seldom act without implicit goals and objectives, yet plans and actions without goals can often be wasted. This section identifies the County's outdoor recreation goals and objectives as a basis for planning and future decision making for Eau Claire County and the municipalities participating in this planning effort. How each unit of government addresses and interprets these goals and objectives can vary.

Goals may be defined as general statements of desirable ends while objectives are measurable statements of desirable ends. Objectives are more specific and can reflect policy, but at all times they are in harmony with stated goals. Policies are decision-making guidance in support of the goals and objectives. As community desires and needs change, so also must its goals and objectives. Goals and objectives should be continuously refined.

GOAL #1: Provide and maintain quality, safe park facilities and varied outdoor recreational opportunities and experiences to meet the needs of County residents, both now and in the future.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain and improve existing park facilities to meet the recreational needs of the entire community while enhancing the physical and mental health benefits these facilities provide to residents.
2. Acquire land in fee or by easements for recreation areas, as per applicable codes.
3. Coordinate the development of public parks and recreation areas with other land uses to ensure compatibility.
4. The County, other units of local government, state, and federal government agencies should coordinate their efforts to acquire and develop outdoor recreational sites and facilities in appropriate areas to ensure that high-quality recreational resources are available to all Eau Claire County residents.
5. All levels of government and the private sector should avoid unnecessary duplication of recreational services and functions.
6. Reduce County and community staff time spent on regular maintenance, vandalism repairs, and pick-up on garbage/illegal dumping at outdoor recreation areas.
7. The County's goals, objectives, and policies for outdoor recreation should be periodically reviewed to maintain and improve the County's recreation program.

POLICIES

1. Maintaining existing park facilities that meet a resident need or demand should generally take priority over the creation of new recreational amenities or parks. With increasing use and age, the costs of maintaining existing facilities are increasing.
2. Develop a coordinated system of County parks, recreation facilities, and opportunities emphasizing resource-based recreation areas. Eau Claire County shall develop, maintain, and/or encourage regional and specialized outdoor recreational facilities for which a need is demonstrated that benefits of all of Eau Claire County. Generally, community parks and active outdoor recreational amenities that serve a small geographic area or require a significant amount of regular maintenance and/or high oversight (e.g., splash pads, ice rinks, dog parks, skate parks) are best provided and maintained by local cities, villages, towns, and community organizations, while Eau Claire County is better positioned to provide nature-based or resource-based outdoor activities requiring large amounts of acreage.
3. Coordinate the County's recreation program with the programs of other levels of government and with private enterprise and non-profits to achieve maximum public benefit.
4. Capitalize on partnerships to provide cost-efficient recreational programming and to grow initiatives. Invite schools, historical societies, Beaver Creek Reserve, and other non-profit organizations to offer educational programming at County parks and outdoor recreation facilities.
5. Provide an equitable park, trail, and outdoor recreation system that complies with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards and offers a variety of recreation opportunities accessible for all residents of the County regardless of age, ability/disability, income, race, type of household, or place of residence. ADA standards and related policies are discussed in greater detail at the end of this section.
6. When considering recreational facility design, amenities, and programming, consider opportunities to enhance physical and mental health.
7. For existing and new park areas, safety aspects should be evaluated and considered. Park facilities and playground equipment should meet the latest safety standards set by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and allow seniors to age in place.
8. Working cooperatively with Eau Claire County Emergency Management, campgrounds should have posted information with recommended actions for visitors in cases of severe weather or weather warnings. When constructing or replacing park and campground buildings, consider the use of mitigation grant funding for the integration of community safe rooms (storm shelters).
9. Partner with community organizations, schools, and special interest groups to conduct clean-up and maintenance activities and to consider innovative approaches to reduce vandalism as well as related public educational efforts. Target these efforts in areas that experience the most dumping and vandalism.



10. Fund or take part in the funding of parks, recreation areas, or facilities within the County which fit in with County objectives as outlined in the Outdoor Recreation Plan.
11. Strive to mitigate or reduce conflicts between park uses and trail uses as well as between recreational facilities and adjacent land uses.
12. Implement the recommendations in the *Eau Claire County Bike and Pedestrian Plan* to ensure the interconnectivity of existing trail segments, parks, and other outdoor recreation facilities and to strengthen multi-modal connections within and between neighborhoods and communities.
13. Utilize the County's Subdivision Code to require dedication of: (i) public access to surface waters as required by State statutes and (ii) usable open space/park land for new proposed residential subdivisions in areas that have been determined to be deficient in adequate park space based on the population demands of existing and proposed development or payments in lieu of dedication for areas that have been determined to be adequately served by existing park space.
14. Planned activities should be prioritized so that limited funds can be directed toward projects that are most needed. Long-term operations and maintenance costs should be part of the planning and decision making for new park facilities, amenities, and programs, with an emphasis on low- or no-maintenance alternatives. A seasonal schedule for facility maintenance should be maintained. If significant expenditure is required, incorporate larger maintenance and construction projects and purchases into a five-year capital improvements plan.
15. Maintain the County's eligibility to participate in federal and state financial and technical aid programs having recreation planning requirements.
16. Align, and update if needed, the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations within the County's outdoor recreation plan with the goals of the Eau Claire County 2022 Strategic Plan to ensure consistency between the two plans

GOAL #2 Increase the visibility and awareness of Eau Claire County's outdoor recreational opportunities among residents and visitors, while benefitting the County's economy.

OBJECTIVES

1. County residents and visitors should be aware of the available outdoor recreational opportunities in Eau Claire County. Consistent overcrowding at one park while another park is virtually empty, points to a need for informing the public about attributes of underutilized facilities.
2. Increase the promotion of the County's parks and forests among non-resident visitors.
3. Increase recreational tourism in Eau Claire County and the benefits to related businesses.

POLICIES

1. Include regular funding for marketing and outreach activities as part of the County Parks & Forest Department budget.
2. Identify County recreation facilities through branded directional/informational signs.

3. Partner with Visit Eau Claire and communities in the County to increase the awareness and marketing of outdoor recreational opportunities, including the attraction and hosting of regional and national events at County facilities.
4. Outreach and marketing efforts to increase awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities should strive to reach or be accessible to all residents. For example, web-based and social media marketing may be more effective at reaching younger adults.
5. The quality of park and outdoor recreational facilities, amenities, and programs plays an important role in attracting and retaining residents, and contributes to Eau Claire County's image as a positive place to live, raise a family, or start a new business. These additional benefits should be considered, and, if possible, quantified, when considering a new facility. Such considerations may also impact park design and amenities. The County and its communities should continue to look for innovative ways to work with local Chambers, local businesses, and Eau Claire County Economic Development Corporation to co-market their park amenities and the County as a great place to visit, shop, work, play, and live.

GOAL #3 Eau Claire County's parks and outdoor recreational facilities are a diverse, healthy ecosystem that is managed in a sustainable manner that preserves and protects natural and historical resources and educates the public about these resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. Recreational uses, activities, and programming should complement and not endanger, harm, or impair surface water quality, wetlands, wildlife habitat, archaeological sites, valued historical sites, and other environmentally sensitive features.
2. Enhance and protect the surface water features and water quality in Eau Claire County for public recreational uses such as fishing, boating, canoeing and swimming. Reduce the frequency and length of beach closures due to elevated bacteria levels.
3. Identify and preserve sites having aesthetic, educational, scientific, historical, or archaeological significance.
4. Enhance and protect land within the County Forest boundaries as established by County Board action.
5. Park and outdoor recreational facilities and programming should strive to be sustainable, energy efficient, carbon neutral, and not negatively impact the natural environment.
6. Strive to prevent the spread of and the introduction of new terrestrial and aquatic invasive species into public outdoor recreational areas outside the urbanized area and in surface waters.

POLICIES

1. Use multiple approaches to resource protection including acquisition, easements, zoning, and legislation.
2. Combine resource protection with park and recreational development where feasible through multiple-purpose projects.
3. Protect the County's recreation areas and water resources from visual blight and degradation.
4. Consider the environmental impact to the County's parks and forests when developing recreational programs.
5. When constructing and maintaining parks and outdoor recreational facilities, consider structural designs, equipment, materials, programming, and maintenance approaches that are energy-efficient, environmentally low-impact, and are cost-efficient over the long-term.
6. Encourage practices and partnerships to improve fisheries and address surface water quality concerns in the County that are detrimental to outdoor recreation (e.g., beach closures, sedimentation, stormwater runoff), including the efforts of the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition, lake groups, Rain to Rivers, and WDNR. Support efforts to implement the Eau Claire River Watershed's 9-Key Element Plan as well as lake management plans. Continue to offer County cost-sharing support to community and lake group efforts through the Eau Claire County Lake Rehabilitation Grant program, which can also be used to leverage WDNR and other grant dollars or technical support.
7. Explore wetlands mitigation as a strategy to create new public open space.
8. Partner with community organizations and special interest groups to educate on and mitigate the spread of invasive species.



ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

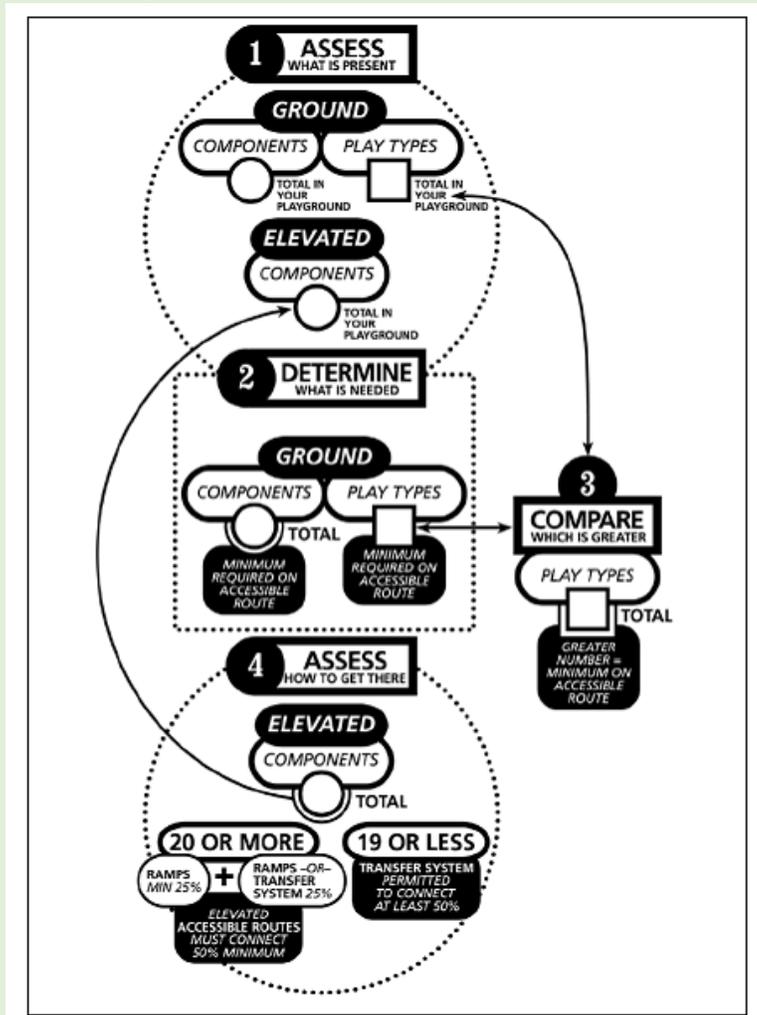
A community's recreational programs and activities play an important part of the life of community. No physical or policy barriers should exist that keep people with disabilities from participating. Eau Claire County and its communities are committed to providing ample recreational options for persons with disabilities, but also recognize that some trails and non-play areas may not be conducive to such improvements due to topography and other site factors. Currently, not all Eau Claire County and community park facilities, walkways, trails, play equipment, and restrooms are fully accessible for persons with disabilities and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The County and its communities have made progress in improving such facilities and equipment, but there is still more work needed.

When new recreational facilities or amenities are built, they must comply with ADA standards, which have specific technical requirements for elements and spaces, such as accessible parking spaces, accessible routes, toilet facilities, public telephones, and spectator seating areas. For elements and spaces without specific technical standards, such as ball fields, the community should use the standards as a guide, providing a reasonable number, but at least one facility, that is accessible and providing an accessible route to the area of play and the spectator areas.

Alterations to existing recreational facilities and amenities must also comply with ADA standards, even if these facilities pre-date ADA. However, this should not be considered a legal protection for a community to improve other recreational and communities facilities, while ignoring needed ADA improvements elsewhere. Public entities have a broad legal obligation and responsibility to make their facilities accessible, especially if such changes are "readily achievable" based on ease-of-modification, cost, etc.

As can be seen in the flowchart to the right, ADA design guidelines for park and playground accessibility contain many details and can be

Evaluating a Play Area for ADA Accessibility



source: U.S. Access Board, <http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/part3.htm>

complicated. These guidelines include details such as surface types, surface widths, slopes, handrails, and transfer stations. At least one of each type of ground-level play component that is present in the play area must be on an accessible route. However, the number and variety of ground-level play components required to be on an accessible route is also determined by the number of elevated components provided in the play area.

The play area guidelines apply to alterations made to existing play areas that affect, or could affect, the usability of the play area. Examples include removing a climbing play component and replacing it with a spring rocker or changing the ground surfacing. Alterations provide an opportunity to improve access to existing play areas. Where play components are altered and the ground surface is not, the ground surface does not have to comply with the ASTM F 1951-99 standard for accessible surfaces unless the cost of providing an accessible surface is less than 20 percent of the cost of the alterations to the play components. If the entire ground surface of an existing play area is replaced, the new ground surface must provide an accessible route to connect the required number and types of play components.

Accessibility standards for trails, picnic and camping areas, viewing areas, beach access routes, and other components of outdoor-developed areas have now been established by the U.S. Access Board for federal lands. The Board intends to develop guidelines for non-federal outdoor sites covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and areas developed with federal grants and loans covered by the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) through a subsequent rulemaking. Counties and communities would be well-served by considering such guidelines during the planning or improvement of their outdoor-developed areas.

The U.S. Access Board has issued a guide to the ADA accessibility guidelines for recreation facilities and a webpage with Standards for Outdoor Developed Areas, which are available at their website: <https://www.access-board.gov/>. The County and its communities may need to obtain professional assistance to address these rules and guidelines.

Aging in Community (or Aging in Place)

Related to accessibility is the concept or goal of “aging in community.” Aging in community is the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably regardless of age, income, or ability level. Given the aging population of Eau Claire County and the region, this concept is increasing in importance.

This concept is not limited to housing design and construction, but should be expanded to encompass the entire community and include aspects of other plan elements such as parks and recreational facilities, transportation, access to goods and services, social opportunities, and urban design.

SECTION VI

ACTION PLAN

This action plan outlines a generalized program for improvement to the outdoor recreation facilities in Eau Claire County and includes the following:

- A. General Policies for Selected Recreation Activities
- B. General Strategy Recommendations
- C. Recommendations for County Park Facilities
- D. Recommendations for Recreational Linkages
- E. Outdoor Recreation Funding

This action plan provides a guide for County Parks & Forest Department staff, elected officials, and their designated boards and committees. While the goals, objectives, and policies in Section V apply to the County as well as the other municipalities participating in this planning effort, Section VI primarily focuses on parks and outdoor recreation facilities offered by Eau Claire County through its Parks & Forest Department. Section VII focuses on the recreational supply, demand, and action plans for the participating communities.

Utilization of this document will allow local officials to prioritize and appropriate tax dollars for outdoor recreation facilities in an informed manner and to integrate these recommendations into capital improvements planning efforts. This action plan does not constitute a capital improvement program, and certain recommendations may require additional master planning and/or analysis to determine scope and feasibility. This plan is also not intended to inhibit new recreational activities and programming not specifically addressed in this document.

A. GENERAL POLICIES FOR SELECTED RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The following policy recommendations are provided as decision-making guidance and build upon the goals, objectives, and policies in Section V. While these policy recommendations primarily apply to Eau Claire County, they may also benefit and be adopted by the municipalities participating in this planning effort.

Fishing

Eau Claire County and its communities should continue to support efforts to improve water quality and fish habitat on lakes, rivers, and trout streams as well as accessibility to these waters (e.g., fishing piers, accessible boat launches) for all persons.

Hiking, Walking, and Running

County roads and trails through County-owned land could be considered a hiking opportunity. Abandoned rail beds, utility corridors, and river corridors could also be developed and incorporated into a trail network. County forest land could be considered for new nature trails. Emphasis should

also be placed on avoiding conflicts associated with multi-use trail networks by providing adequate signing and use planning. Recreational linkages are discussed further later in this section.

Bicycling

Policy and strategy recommendations for bicycling are discussed at length in the *Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan*. Community survey results suggest that new mountain biking trails at Lowes Creek or a new area may be needed. Recreational linkages are also discussed further later in this section.

Camping

Throughout the region, camping and visitor numbers increased during the COVID pandemic of 2020-2021. Community survey results suggest there is increasing demand for a diversity of camping types. As reflected in Section VI.C., some County campgrounds are at or near capacity (e.g., Coon Fork). Many campgrounds are also in need of improved amenities (e.g., water, bathrooms, showers, electricity, larger RV spaces, etc.) associated with modern camping. There is also growing demand for specialized or more unique camping experiences. Master planning for campground improvements should consider emerging trends. While Eau Claire County focuses on maintenance and improvement of existing campsites and support facilities, other municipal and private campground development should be encouraged.

The development of primitive campsites should also be considered, especially along the Eau Claire River for canoeists and potential hikers. Primitive campsites require far less maintenance/ management and would be a low cost option for the



Emerging Campground Trends

A 2018 presentation by the Gorin+Cohen Group to the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professional identified the following emerging trends in campground design:

- larger sites
- privacy
- water, sewer, & 50-amp electric
- patios
- pull-through sites
- green space
- pet friendly – dog parks, dog washes
- various accommodations - RV sites, cabins, yurts, glamping tents, tents, tree houses, etc.
- unisex bathrooms

The presentation also suggested that each RV site include:

1. Full hookups now include water, sewer, 20/30/50-amp electric, cable television and Wi-Fi or internet.
2. Each site should have a hard surface or pad a minimum of 60'x10' and an attached 10'x20' patio area.
3. Each site should have a picnic table.
4. Low-level lighting at the street.
5. A clearly readable site number sign.
6. A fire ring or charcoal or propane grill.
7. Electric meter.

County to consider when expanding this recreation type. Such primitive camping areas should adopt a “leave no trace” policy.

Picnicking

Eau Claire County should continue to monitor picnicking opportunities and evaluate the placement and distribution of picnicking facilities throughout the County Park system to better provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities. Adding smaller, multiple picnic shelters with related amenities, rather than very large pavilions or structures, should be the focus.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

In partnership with the Eau Claire Ski Striders, Kickin Kids, and other enthusiasts, continued efforts should focus on the Tower Ridge trail system. This trail system is considered one of the premier cross-country ski trail systems in the area. Community survey results suggest that additional trail maintenance and grooming may be needed at times as well as additional signage to delineate different trails for different uses. Eau Claire County should monitor its existing parks and cross-country trails to meet the demand of the cross-country skiing community. As funding permits, additional support facilities should be considered. This is also a good opportunity to work jointly with private clubs and other municipalities to develop trails in and around the population centers. Providing additional cross-country skiing trails could also provide additional opportunities for hiking, walking, and running activities. Since trail development and maintenance is costly, the County should work with interested local clubs and available state and federal grants for future trail development. Use social media, an app, and/or websites to increase public awareness of skiing opportunities and when skiing trails have been groomed. In particular, promote skiing trails at Coon Fork, which are underutilized.

Golf

As the demand for golf increases, expansion of existing courses or additional courses may be necessary. Eau Claire County should continue to support the golf courses and clubs where appropriate.

Hunting

Eau Claire County should continue to support safe hunting practices and explore opportunities to reduce potential use conflicts.

Archery and Rifle Ranges

Eau Claire County’s archery and rifle ranges are currently supported and maintained by local clubs. Eau Claire County should continue to work with these local clubs to monitor use and the need for improvements. There are no known archery ranges that are available for use by the non-club-member general public.

Swimming, Beaches, and Pools

Eau Claire County should continue to support and maintain its existing swimming facilities, while exploring opportunities for additional swimming areas in the future. Efforts should also focus on weed control, erosion control, and beach improvements. Work with lake groups, City-County Public Health, and County Land Conservation to identify and mitigate the sources of non-point source pollution that cause beach closures and degrade water quality. In addition, local communities should

evaluate and support other opportunities to provide swimming at safe, suitable locations such as community pools and splash pads.

Water Skiing/Pleasure Boating

Eau Claire County should continue to improve water access points where appropriate. “No wake” zones should be established in areas vulnerable to bank erosion and speeds enforced in waters close to shore.

Canoeing/Kayaking

Paddle sports have been increasing in popularity in the County. Eau Claire County should continue efforts to improve water access and available amenities for canoeing, such as pull-over locations for picnicking and primitive campsites, to improve the canoeing opportunities of the County. As resources and opportunities allow, install additional kayak/canoe launches that are designed for easier access by beginners and persons with physical mobility limitations.

Horseback Riding

Along with new horseback riding trail development to reroute trails off of roads and ATV trails, support facilities such as campsites, staging areas, shelters, parking, and shower/restrooms could be considered. Since trail development and maintenance is costly, the County should work with interested local clubs and available state and federal grants for future trail development.

Snowmobile

Eau Claire County should continue to work with the State, clubs, and associations to provide an adequate trail system. Continue to discourage ATV/UTV use on groomed trails during the snowmobile season.

ATVs and UTVs

Some community survey respondents requested additional trails be developed in different areas of the County. ATVs and UTVs are getting larger in size and horsepower, which should be closely monitored to determine if legislative or policy action is needed to limit or control. As related trail development and maintenance costs continue to rise, additional funding avenues need to be explored. Increased enforcement is needed for improper use, such as leaving designated trails. Recreational linkages are discussed further later in this section.

Off – Road Motorcycle

Along with new off-road motorcycle trail development to reroute trails out of sensitive areas, support facilities such as campsites, electricity, shelters, and shower/restrooms as needed. Limited maintenance funding opportunities has put increased responsibility on local volunteer clubs and the County. Eau Claire County should continue to work with the state, clubs, and associations to provide an adequate trail system.

B. GENERAL STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following ongoing, short-term, and long-term strategies are intended to apply to multiple or all of the outdoor recreation facilities operated and maintained by Eau Claire County. These are recommended actions that are more general or system-wide in nature; Eau Claire County is not committed to their implementation. For some strategies, additional discussion and analysis may be needed to determine feasibility prior to implementation. And the exclusion of a strategy or action here does not limit the County's ability to undertake other projects, actions, or policies that support the Plan's goals. And while these are County-level recommendations, this does not mean that the County Parks & Forest Department is solely responsible for all of these strategies.

Ongoing Strategies

1. Consider the Outdoor Recreation Plan's goals, objectives, and policies in Section V when making decisions on parks and outdoor recreation facilities, improvements, and programming. This includes implementing recommendations related to outdoor recreation, forest management, and surface water quality found in other plans, such as the *Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan*, the *Eau Claire County Forest Comprehensive Land-Use Plan*, and the Eau Claire River Watershed's 9-Key Element Plan.
2. Generally, facility maintenance and upkeep are Eau Claire County's current priorities, rather than the development and expansion of new facilities. Many public park systems are experiencing increasing user demand that is outpacing maintenance and operations budgets. Deferring park maintenance can increase capital costs over the long term and reduce park use.
3. The County will continue to improve ADA accessibility of park features and amenities, including any specific recommendations in Section VI.C.
4. Continue regular beach monitoring, and partner with municipalities and lake groups on monitoring when new beaches are proposed. Work with lake groups and other partners to identify the predominant source(s) of bacteria that is necessitating the closure of Eau Claire County beaches and develop a strategy to reduce the frequency and length of these closures if possible. A related bacteria testing pilot project involving Lake Altoona is underway.
5. Consider the creation of master plans for Eau Claire County's most-used parks prior to implementing any major renovations or improvements identified for these parks in the next subsection.
6. Continue to support intergovernmental cooperation to improve multi-modal connectivity of routes and trail systems. A number of such opportunities are addressed in the other plans summarized in Section IV.B.

Short-Term Strategies (1-5 years)

1. Consider developing a brand marketing strategy for Eau Claire County's park system or, more broadly, the County's outdoor recreation opportunities. Partner with Visit Eau Claire, local chambers, area communities, UW-Eau Claire, and area businesses to increase the promotion of the unique outdoor recreational amenities and opportunities of Eau Claire County. Use a mix of online and printed materials and maps to inform residents and visitors of available opportunities. The information program could include brochures, updated park maps, a

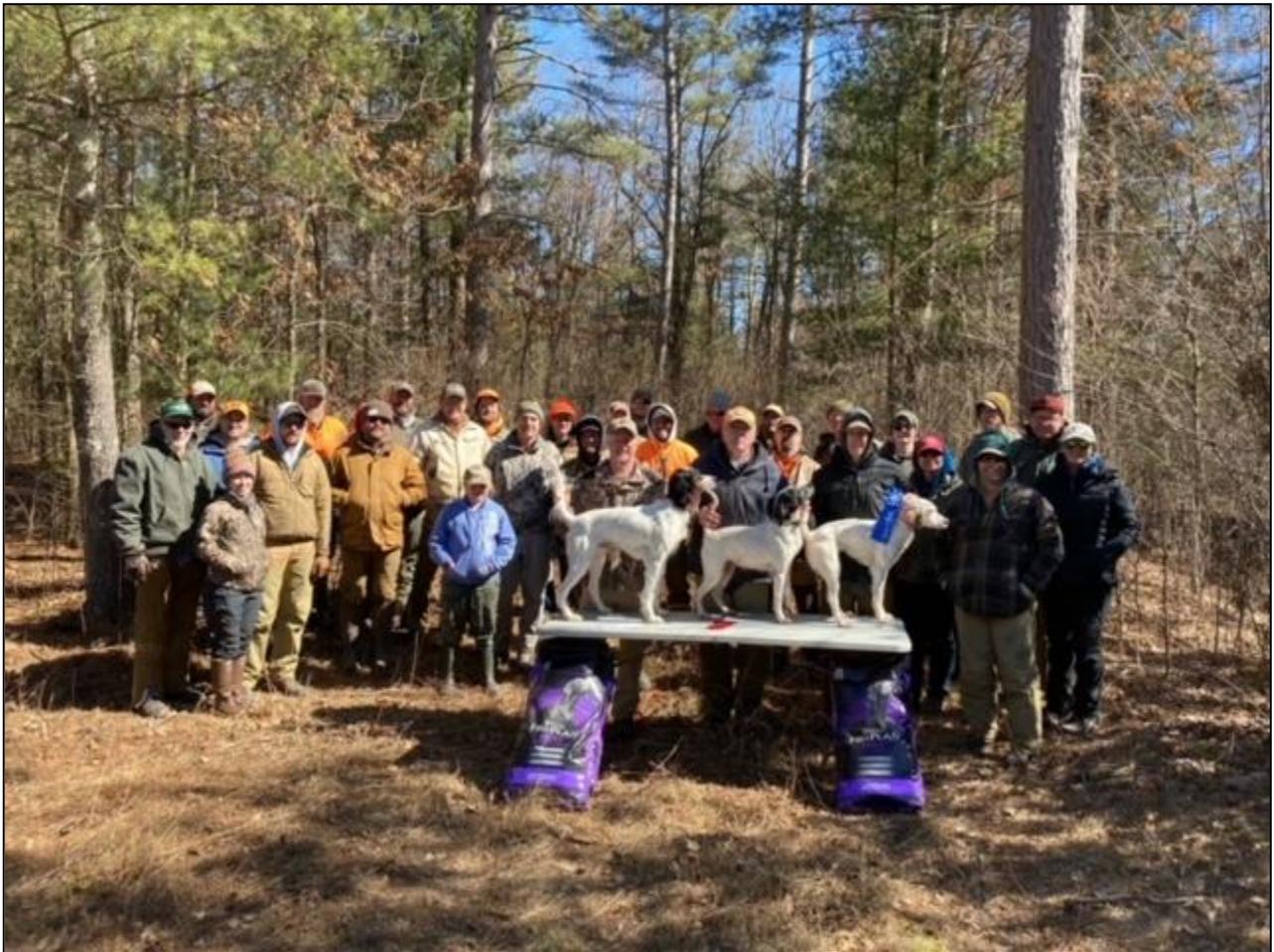
periodic newsletter, tours or special events and the like. Continued effort should be made to keep data current. Specialized materials aimed at canoeing, camping, bicycling, hunting, horseback riding/camping, etc. should be distributed to clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, tourism promoters, public libraries, and retail establishments. Similarly branded materials and outreach could focus on educating the public about invasive species, illegal dumping, vandalism, and how to get involved in addressing such challenges.

2. Partner with WDNR, law enforcement, and local communities to increase enforcement of improper use of recreational facilities and lands, including the use of motorized recreational vehicles outside of designated areas/trails, littering, vandalism, and improper use of campfires. Explore the potential use of inmates and community service to assist with clean-up and maintenance efforts for trails, parks, and the County Forest.
3. Conduct a complete inventory of park, playground, and recreational facility access, equipment, and fall protection for safety and people with mobility challenges or disabilities. Incorporate recommended improvements into maintenance and improvement budgets as resources allow.
4. Identify illegal dumping and vandalism “hot spots.” Form an ad hoc County task force or a park system “friends’ group” (e.g., Friends of Eau Claire County Forest) to identify strategies that address illegal dumping and vandalism in the County Forest and other County lands. Emphasize grassroots or “bottom-up” solutions that also engage area schools, youth organizations, ATV and other clubs, and the private sector (e.g., landfill, recreation-oriented businesses).
5. Support the efforts of the Lower Chippewa Invasives Partnership to reduce the spread of terrestrial invasive species in the County. Encourage the Partnership to work with other interest groups (e.g., fishing and hunting clubs, paddlers, Prairie Enthusiasts) to increase public awareness of these threats and to conduct periodic invasive treatment/removal events. Support efforts of lake groups to conduct Clean Boats, Clean Water programming.
6. Increase awareness of available equipment rental programs so that residents can try new outdoor recreation activities and limited-income households can access such activities. Such rentals (e.g., cross-country skis, snowshoes) may be especially important during the winter months to help keep residents physically and mentally healthy.

Longer-Term Strategies (5-10 years)

1. Consider conducting a meeting with community groups, historical societies, and school districts to discuss volunteer-supported options to increase educational programming and signage within County parks and the County Forest.
2. Work with schools, historical societies, and other interest groups to increase interpretative signage in County Parks and along trails to educate the public on natural resources, ecosystems, good stewardship practices, volunteer recognition, and the health and economic benefits of our park facilities.
3. Explore the installation of electric vehicle plug-ins at popular County parks.
4. Develop a County-wide ATV trail/route map and a County-wide Bike trail/route map.
5. Work with paddling groups to create a canoe/kayak trail on the Eau Claire River.

6. Encourage communities and other partner organizations to host an educational speaker(s) on ADA and safety requirements and designs for play equipment and outdoor recreation amenities. Some facilities could be redesigned or retrofitted to remove barriers. Paved walkways, ramps instead of stairways and accessible rest rooms allow the disabled to enjoy recreation facilities. Specialized playground apparatus designed for all children, including those with disabilities, is also encouraged.
7. Partner with other organizations to evaluate use trends at County Park facilities and to conduct an economic impact analysis of the value of the surface waters, outdoor recreation, and related tourism in Eau Claire County.
8. Explore opportunities to provide electronic kiosks with security systems at parks and campgrounds for payments and permits, while potentially serving as Wi-Fi hotspots.
9. As part of the next outdoor recreation plan update, conduct a survey of minority, low-income, and/or disabled persons to evaluate the use, participation, barriers, and needs regarding outdoor recreation opportunities in Eau Claire County.



Grouse Competition Awards Ceremony in the Eau Claire County Forest, photo: CVGDA

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

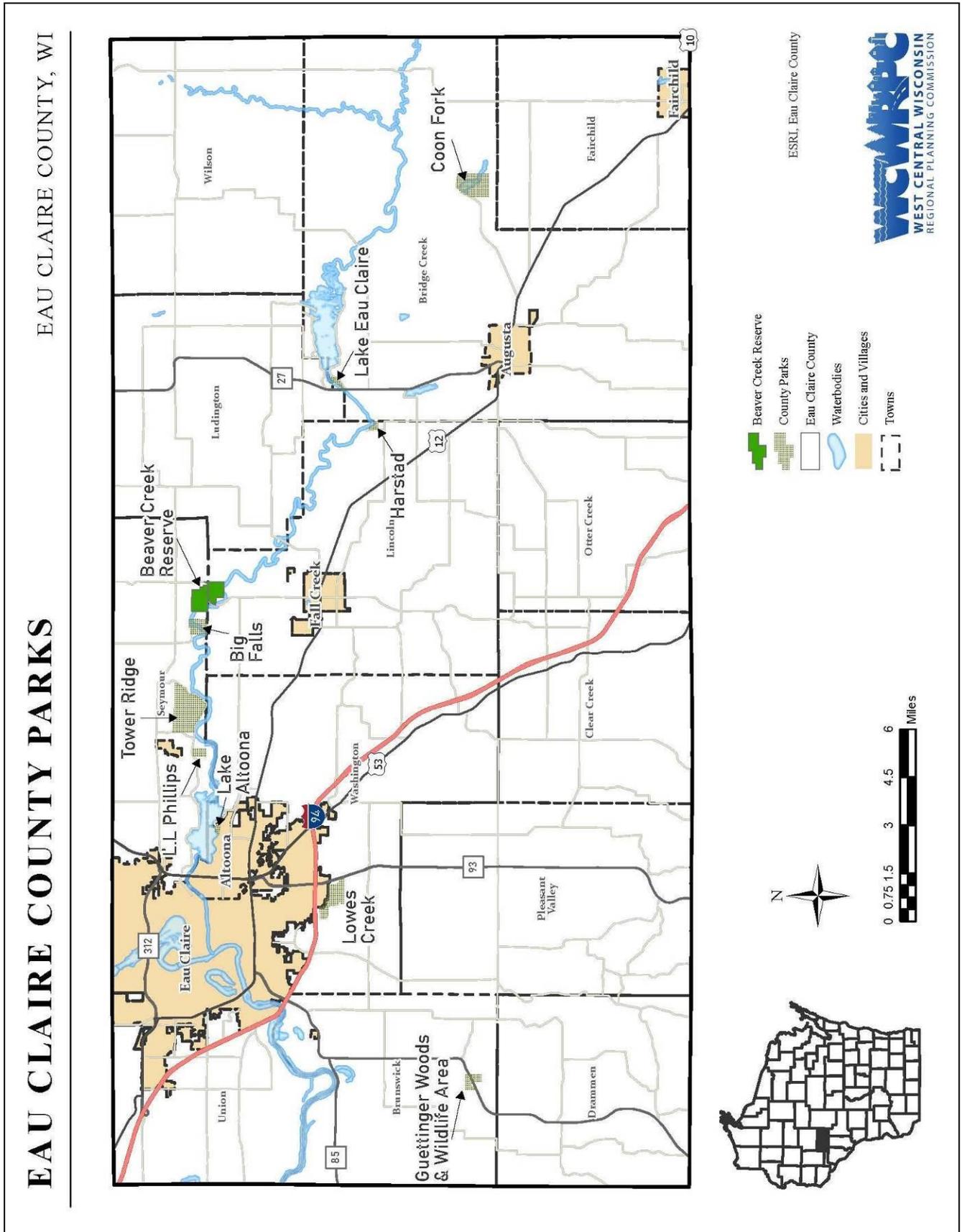
While the previous sections identified general policies and strategy recommendation, this subsection identifies specific features, amenities, improvement needs, and opportunities for existing Eau Claire County-owned recreation facilities, in addition to Beaver Creek Reserve. Each recommendation is accompanied by a cost estimate and suggested timeframe. The cost estimates, when available, are a reasonable approximation and will vary based on site-specific characteristics and the final design. The actual timeframes for implementation will also vary based on available resources and other priority needs within the community.

Similar to the previous section, these recommendations are based on desired improvements if resources are available. It may not be feasible for Eau Claire County to complete all of the recommended projects. In some cases, additional planning or analysis may be needed to determine feasibility; and these recommendations do not limit the County from undertaking additional projects not included herein.

Map 23 on the following page identifies the locations of the park facilities in this section:

1. Big Falls County Park
2. Coon Fork County Park
3. Harstad County Park
4. Lake Altoona County Park
5. Lake Eau Claire County Park
6. L.L. Phillips County Park
7. Lowes Creek County Park
8. Tower Ridge Recreation Area
9. Guettinger Woods and Wildlife Area
10. Miscellaneous County Projects
11. Beaver Creek Reserve

Map 23. Eau Claire County Parks



i. Big Falls County Park

ADDRESS: 500 N 110th Avenue, Eau Claire (North Entrance); 600 Big Falls Forest Road, Fall Creek (South Entrance)

PARK TYPE: Community/Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Swimming, Fishing, River Access; Scenic Landmark
	SIZE: 135 acres	USE: Heavy spring & summer

PRIMARY USES

This area is primarily used for swimming, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and canoe/kayak/ tubing access to the Eau Claire River. It is a popular fishing spot during the spring and is heavily used by college-age users during the summer.

KEY FEATURES

Big Falls County Park, with its excellent non-motorized river access, scenic natural beauty, and exposed rock, offers many different recreation opportunities. The Park can be accessed from two different directions, the south entrance is in the direction of the village of Fall Creek, the North entrance is in the Town of Seymour.



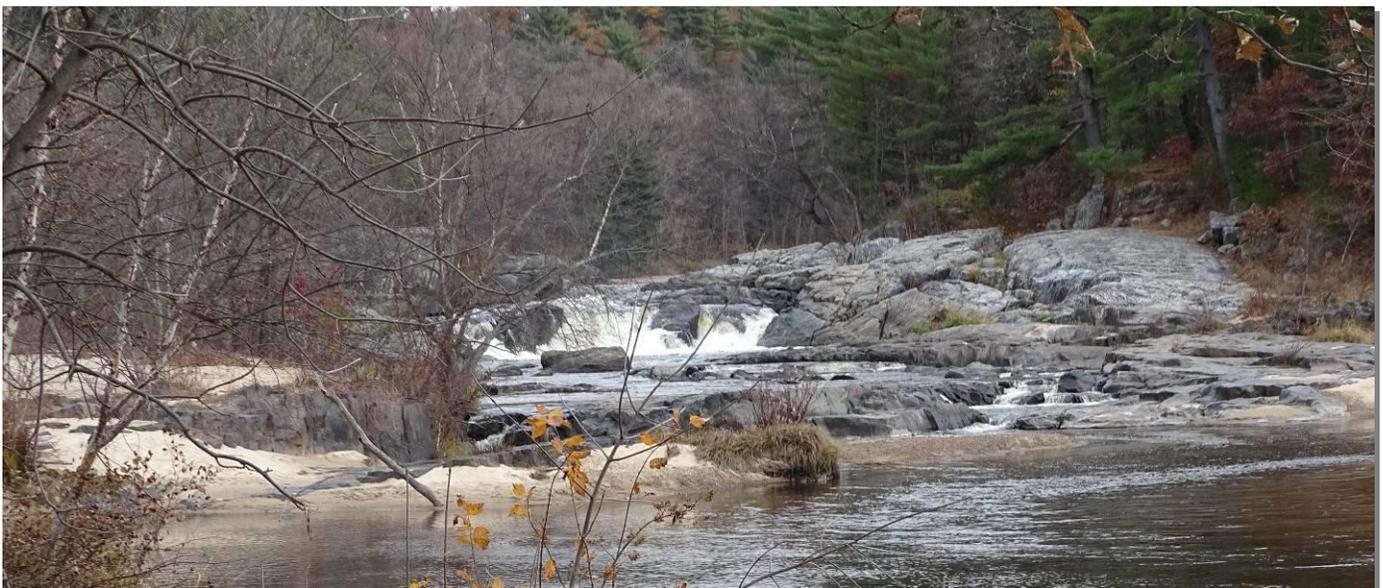
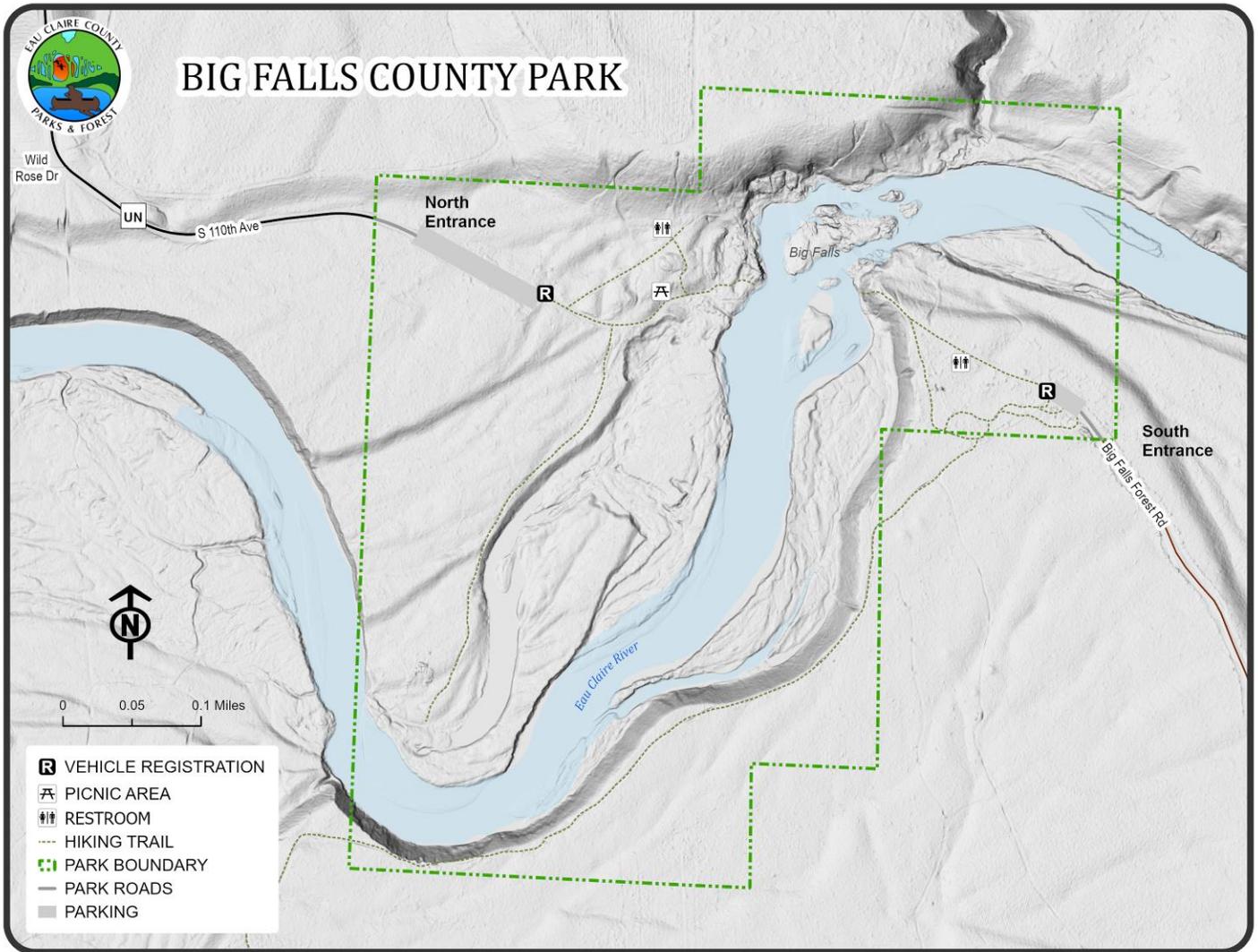
FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Shoreline fishing
- Picnic areas with grills
- Sandy beaches
- Pit toilets
- Canoe/kayak landing
- Paved Parking lots
- Waterfalls
- Nature Trail

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Repave Trails North and South	RTP/County Capital/Donations	\$85,000	1-3 years
Install Security Lights at Parking Lots	County Capital/Donations/LAWCON	\$75,000	3-5 years
Repave South Parking Lot	County Capital/LAWCON/Donations/Op. Budget	\$20,000	1-3 years
Develop accessible overlook/deck near pit toilet on north side with view of falls	County Capital/LAWCON/Donations/Op. Budget	\$34,000	3-5 years
Construct Picnic Shelter on North Side	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$40,000	3-5 years
Construct Observation Platform on south side	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$26,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department.



ii. Coon Fork County Park

ADDRESS: E25501 Co Rd CF, Augusta, WI 54722

PARK TYPE: Specialty	KEY FUNCTION:	Family and group camping in a wooded setting; year-round non-motorized trails; paddle sports
	SIZE: 383 acres	USE: High Seasonal Use

PRIMARY USES

This area is primarily used for activities such as camping, shore fishing, nature walks, hiking/cross-country skiing trails. Coon Fork Lake is a popular kayak and canoeing destination. The campground is over 95% occupied during summer, though the skiing trails may be underutilized.

KEY FEATURES

Coon Fork has two primary sections: the day-use area (west side of the lake) and the campground (east side of the lake). The west side is located 4 miles east of the City of Augusta and includes a beach, boat landing, and a reservable picnic shelter. The campground is for the use of registered campers and their guests with spacious campsites in a wooded, natural setting. There are 70 reservable campsites, with the remaining being on a first-come first-serve basis at the campground office. Of the 108 camp sites, 20 are designated for self-contained camping units, with water and electricity hook-ups.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Boat/ Canoe Landing
- Picnic shelters for reservation
- Rest rooms
- 108 campsites (some with electric, handicap accessible, and lakeside sites)
- Drinking water
- Dump station
- Canoe, kayak, paddle, rowboat rentals
- Ice and firewood sales
- Beach
- Trails (hiking, mountain biking, and cross country skiing)

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Develop outdoor amphitheater area and fire pit	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$125,000	3-5 years
Add electric to Dayside Pavilion	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$30,000	1-3 years
Add 2 Yurts to camping areas	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$110,000	1-3 years
Develop Group Campsite area	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$47,000	3-5 years
Repave park roads	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$85,000	1-3 years

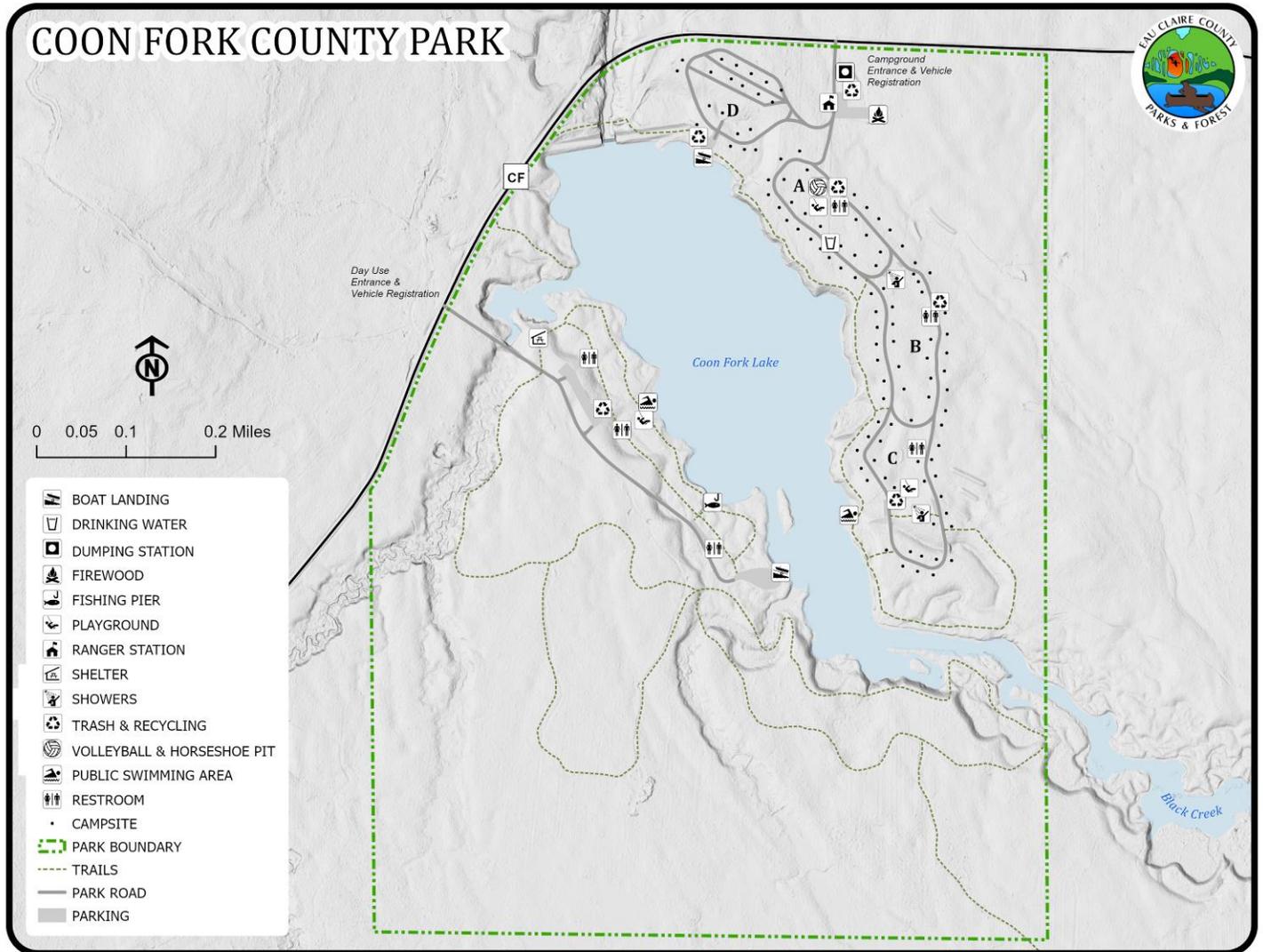
COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

Construct Maintenance Garage	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$88,000	1-3 years
Construct hiking bridge south of Coon Fork Lake over Black Creek and develop hiking trail around lake	RTP/County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$80,000	5+ years
Construct additional beach shelter with electric	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$65,000	5+ years
Construct Storm Shelter Building	PDM Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$818,000	1-3 years
Construct Bathroom and Shower Building D Loop	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$350,000	3-5 years
Construct new camping area for ATV access	ATV trail Aids/County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$550,000	3-5 years
Install 2 park payment kiosks	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$20,000	1-3 years
Replace Pit Toilet Buildings	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$120,000	1-3 years
Firewood Vending machine	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$12,000	3-5 years
Coon Fork Dam bridge	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$150,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

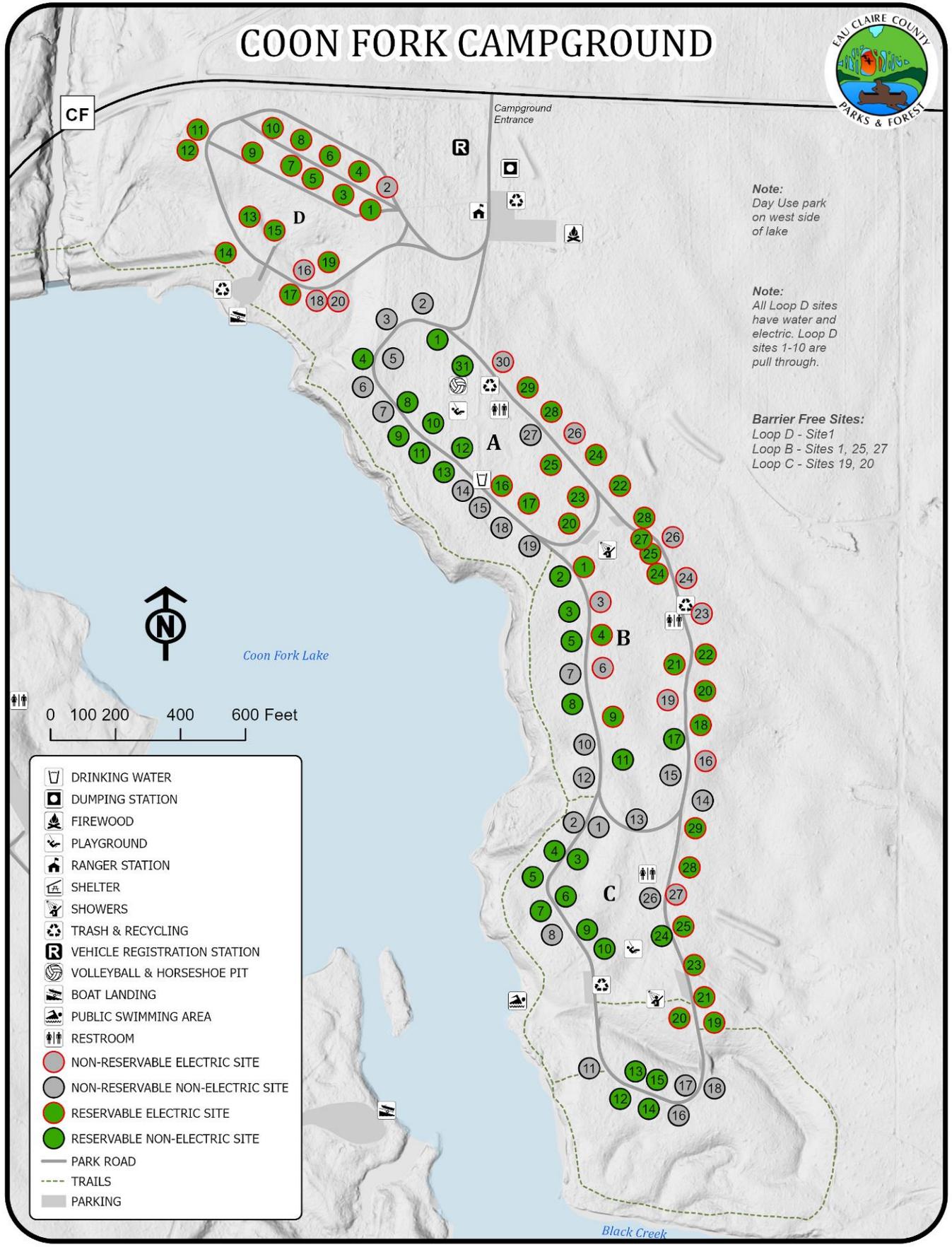
This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department.







COON FORK CAMPGROUND



Note:
Day Use park on west side of lake

Note:
All Loop D sites have water and electric. Loop D sites 1-10 are pull through.

Barrier Free Sites:
Loop D - Site 1
Loop B - Sites 1, 25, 27
Loop C - Sites 19, 20

- DRINKING WATER
- DUMPING STATION
- FIREWOOD
- PLAYGROUND
- RANGER STATION
- SHELTER
- SHOWERS
- TRASH & RECYCLING
- VEHICLE REGISTRATION STATION
- VOLLEYBALL & HORSESHOE PIT
- BOAT LANDING
- PUBLIC SWIMMING AREA
- RESTROOM
- NON-RESERVABLE ELECTRIC SITE
- NON-RESERVABLE NON-ELECTRIC SITE
- RESERVABLE ELECTRIC SITE
- RESERVABLE NON-ELECTRIC SITE
- PARK ROAD
- TRAILS
- PARKING

iii. Harstad County Park

ADDRESS: S6455 Co Rd HHH, Augusta, WI 54722

PARK TYPE: Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Rustic Camping (more primitive); Group gatherings
	SIZE: 43 acres	USE: Moderate, Year-round; Heavy River Use during summer



PRIMARY USES

This area is primarily used for activities including camping, shore fishing, and the canoe landing to access the Eau Claire River. A large picnic area and shelter are available as well as a playground and ball diamond.

KEY FEATURES

Harstad is Eau Claire County’s first County park. The rustic campground is located along the Eau Claire River, providing access to great fishing, watercraft activities, scenic river views, and excellent river fishing opportunities. The Park is heavily used for river access during the summer months. The

campground offers 27 primitive campsites, with no electricity or running water. A ball field and picnic shelter are available to rent.

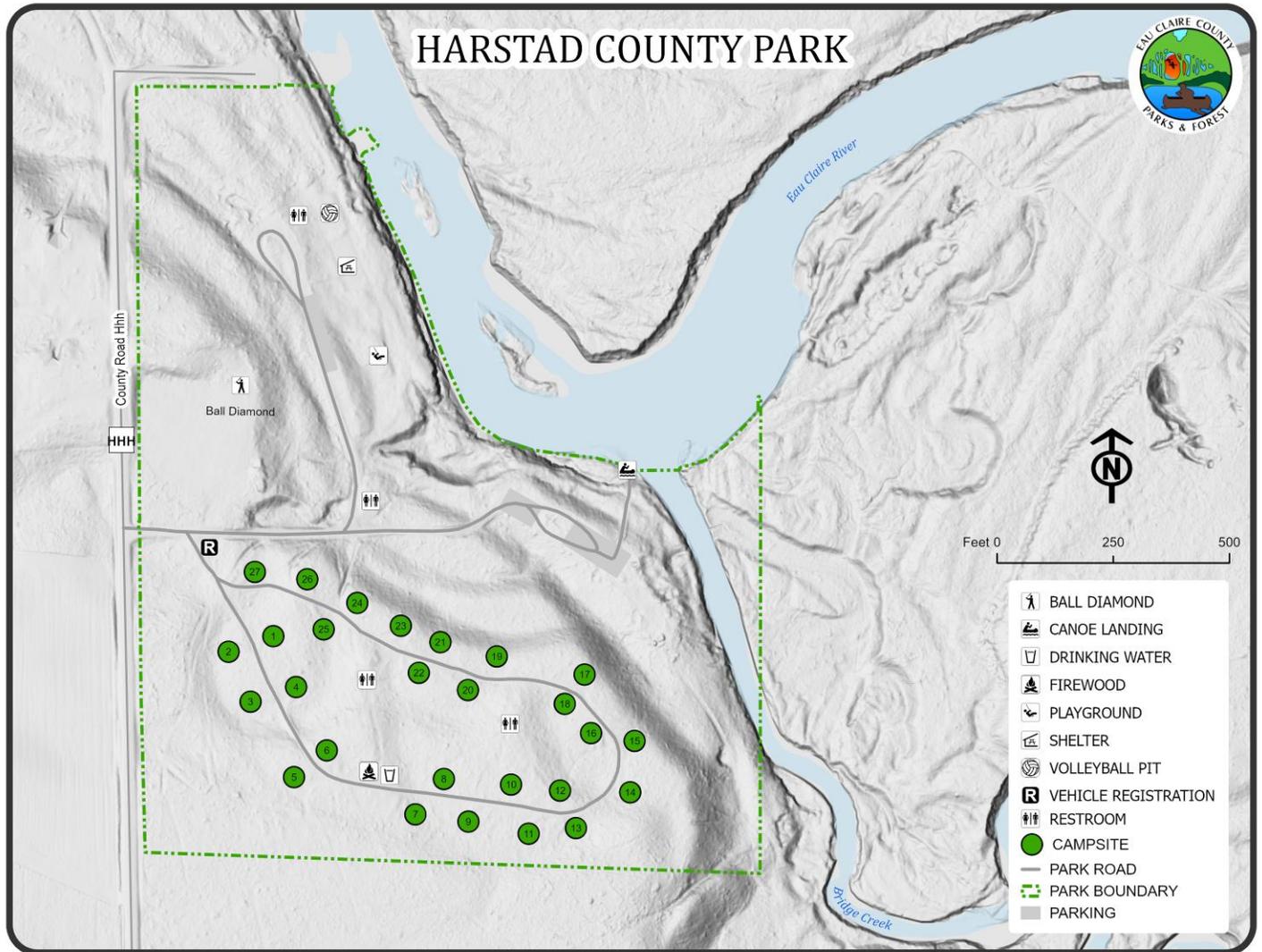
FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- 27 primitive campsites
- Ball Diamond & Volleyball area
- Hand pump for drinking water
- Fishing access
- Picnic shelter
- Picnic areas
- Pit toilets
- Canoe landing
- New playground equipment

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Install Electric service to half campsites	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$54,000	1-3 years
Replace Pit Toilet Buildings	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$100,000	1-3 years
Purchase land or easement to access Lake Eau Claire Park	Stewardship/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$550,000	5+ years
Park Payment Kiosk	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$10,000	1-3 years
Park paving	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$52,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department.



iv. Lake Altoona County Park

ADDRESS: 604 N Beach Rd, Altoona, WI 54720

PARK TYPE: Community/ Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Beach & Family Events
	SIZE: 13 acres	USE: High day & beach use; Heavy Use from Memorial Day through Labor Day

PRIMARY USES

This park’s primary attractions are the sandy beach area and a great place for picnics. It is a popular gathering spot for family reunions and graduation parties. The park also hosts the Ski Sprites Water Ski Show during the summer months.

KEY FEATURES

Located in the City of Altoona, this County Park provides access to a large lake with a wide array of recreational opportunities on and off land.

The park offers a nature trail, along with all the amenities required for a good day at the beach. Volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, and a playground can all be found at this park.



Nonmotorized water activities include swimming, canoeing, and kayaking. Motorboats are allowed on the lake, where one can waterski, fish, and water tube.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Flush toilets
- Large clubhouse with a kitchen
- Clothes changing areas
- Drinking water
- Picnic shelter
- Picnic areas
- Parking lots
- Nature trail
- Fishing
- Volleyball courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Boat landing
- Canoeing
- Waterskiing

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Remove Overhead Electric Line near clubhouse	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$15,000	1-3 years
Construct new Park pavilions and restroom	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$585,000	1-3 years

New Clubhouse	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$2,800,000	3-5 years
Park Concession Stand and Restrooms	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$1,500,000	5+ years
Maintenance Shed	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$300,000	3-5 years
Water, Sewer, Electric, and Storm Water Updates	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$200,000	1-3 years
Additional Parking	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$165,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department. The Lake Altoona Protection & Rehabilitation District is a key partner for fisheries and water quality improvements at the Lake.



v. Lake Eau Claire County Park

ADDRESS: E19230 Cty Rd SD, Augusta WI 54722

PARK TYPE: Community/Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Boating, Fishing, Gatherings
	SIZE: 37 acres	USE: Heavy in Summer & for Ice Fishing

PRIMARY USES

This County park’s excellent public access to Lake Eau Claire at its three boat ramps makes it a popular, year-round fishing destination. Shoreline access is also available at the park and downstream of the dam. A historic clubhouse building and other amenities make the park popular for family functions and ground gatherings.

KEY FEATURES

Located north of the City of Augusta in the Town of Bridge Creek, the County park has several picnicking amenities including the large clubhouse with a kitchen and a porch, a BBQ grill pit, several picnic shelters, volleyball courts, a ballfield, and horseshoe pit. A handicapped-accessible playground is also available.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Multiple picnic shelters of varying sizes
- Clubhouse with a kitchen and back porch
- BBQ grill pit
- Volleyball Courts
- Handicap accessible playground
- Ballfield
- Horseshoe pits
- Barrier-free fishing pier
- Nature trail
- Flush and pit toilets

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Reconstruct Cosgrove Boat Landing	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$167,000	1-3 years
Replace Pit Toilets at Boat Landings (3)	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$75,000	1-3 years
Fix Launch approach at North boat landing	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$45,000	1-3 years
Skid Row Boat landing improvements	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$76,000	1-3 years
Resurface park drive and overflow parking lot	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$48,000	3-5 years

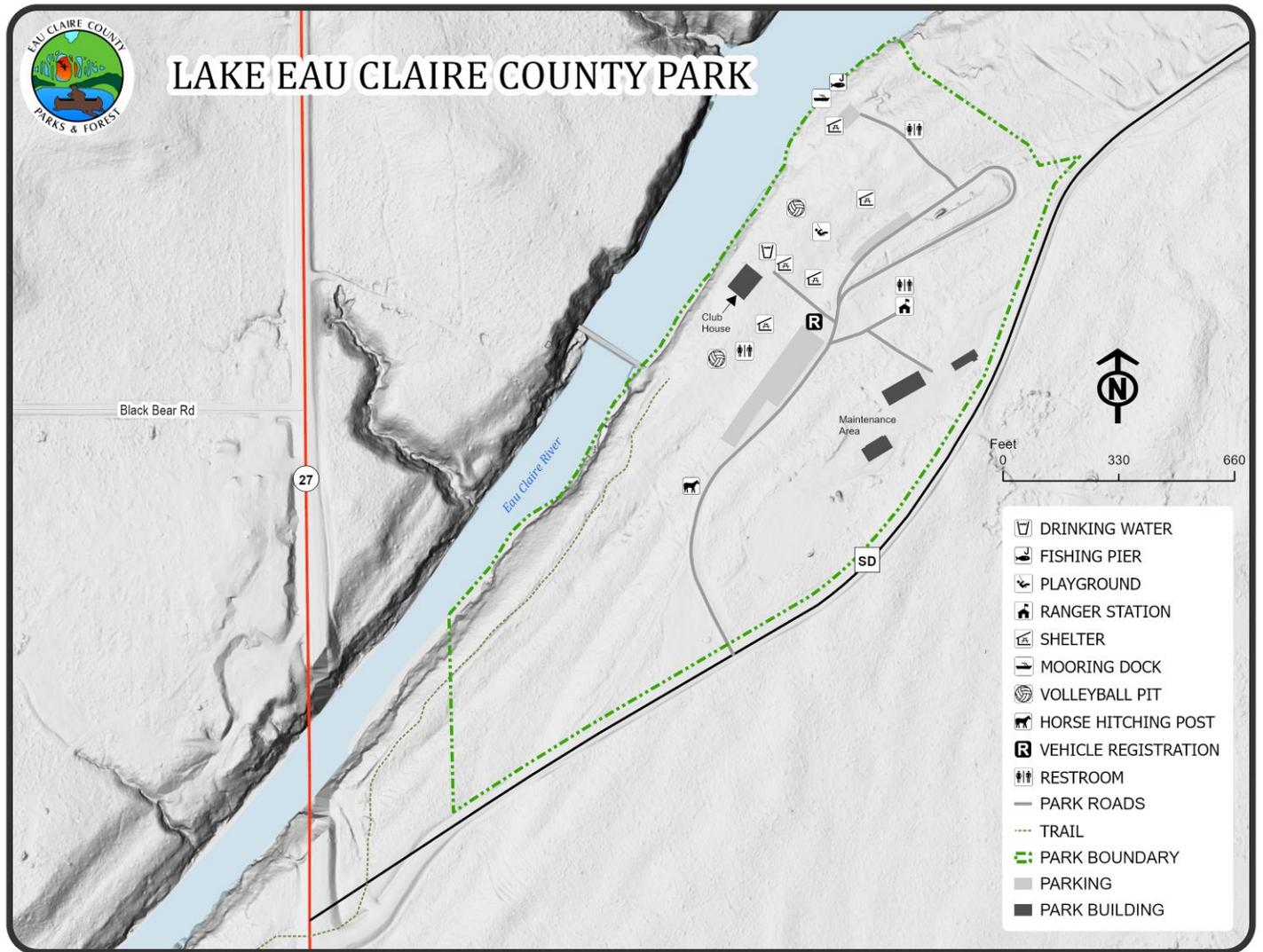
COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

Clubhouse Building improvements	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$900,000	1-3 years
Replace pit toilet buildings in day use area	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$50,000	3-5 years
Repave access walks to clubhouse	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$30,000	1-3 years
New fencing along river channel	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$17,000	3-5 years
Extend electric service to east restroom	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$15,000	3-5 years
Park Payment Kiosk	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$10,000	1-3 years
Shelter Replacement	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$54,000	3-5 years
Playground improvements	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$85,000	5+ years
Field Office Rehab	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$45,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department. The Lake Eau Claire Association and Lake Protection & Rehabilitation District are key partners for programming and water quality improvements at the Lake, including fisheries enhancements such as the fish sticks and fish crib projects in the photos below provided by the Lake District.





vi. L.L. Phillips County Park

ADDRESS: North Shore Drive/ Cty Rd QQ, Town of Seymour

PARK TYPE: Regional

KEY FUNCTION:

Hiking/Snowshoeing; Tranquil

SIZE: 70 acres

USE: Moderate year round

PRIMARY USES

This park is largely undeveloped, providing the opportunity to spend time in nature, enjoy small picnics at the shelter, and hike or cross-country ski the trails. It is a popular winter snowshoe area.

KEY FEATURES

Located in the Town of Seymour and five minutes from the City of Eau Claire, L.L. Phillips County Park is just down the road from Tower Ridge, another popular park in the County. A short loop trail is available for those who wish to go for a day hike, with a picnic shelter and pit toilets nearby.



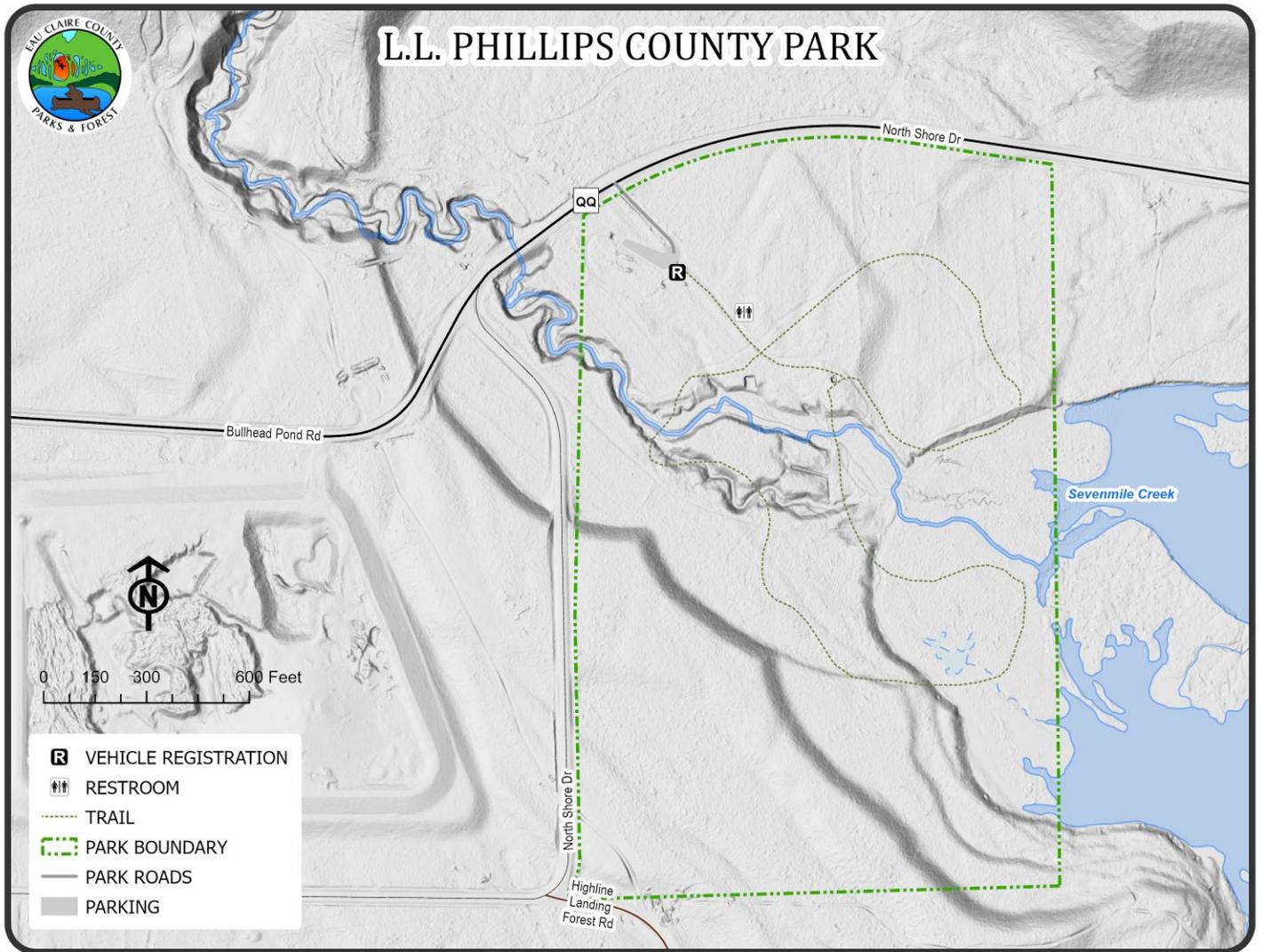
FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Hiking/Skiing/Snowshoeing trail
- Picnic Shelter
- Parking Lot
- Pit toilets

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Resurface road to highline boat landing	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$54,000	1-3 years
Nature signage for hiking trails	Donations/ Op. Budget	\$5,000	1-3 years
Drill new well and hand pump near shelter	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$12,000	3-5 years
New pit toilet building	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$20,000	3-5 years
Pave Parking Lot	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$21,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department.



vii. Lowes Creek County Park

ADDRESS: 5238 South Lowes Creek Road (West entrance); 5530 Fairview Dr. (East Entrance)

PARK TYPE: Community/Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Mountain biking & Other Non-Motorized Trail Use
	SIZE: 250 acres	USE: High, Year-Round Trail Use

PRIMARY USES

The primary uses include mountain biking/fat-tire biking, dog walking, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing, including hosting non-motorized trail racing events.

KEY FEATURES

Located one and a half miles south of the City of Eau Claire, Lowes Creek is a highly utilized County park with a wide variety of recreational user groups. An extensive trail system is maintained within the park, including thirteen miles of single-track and five miles of double-track trails. These trails are used by mountain bikers, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, hikers, and runners. A designated winter dog walking trail loop and parcourse fitness course are also available.



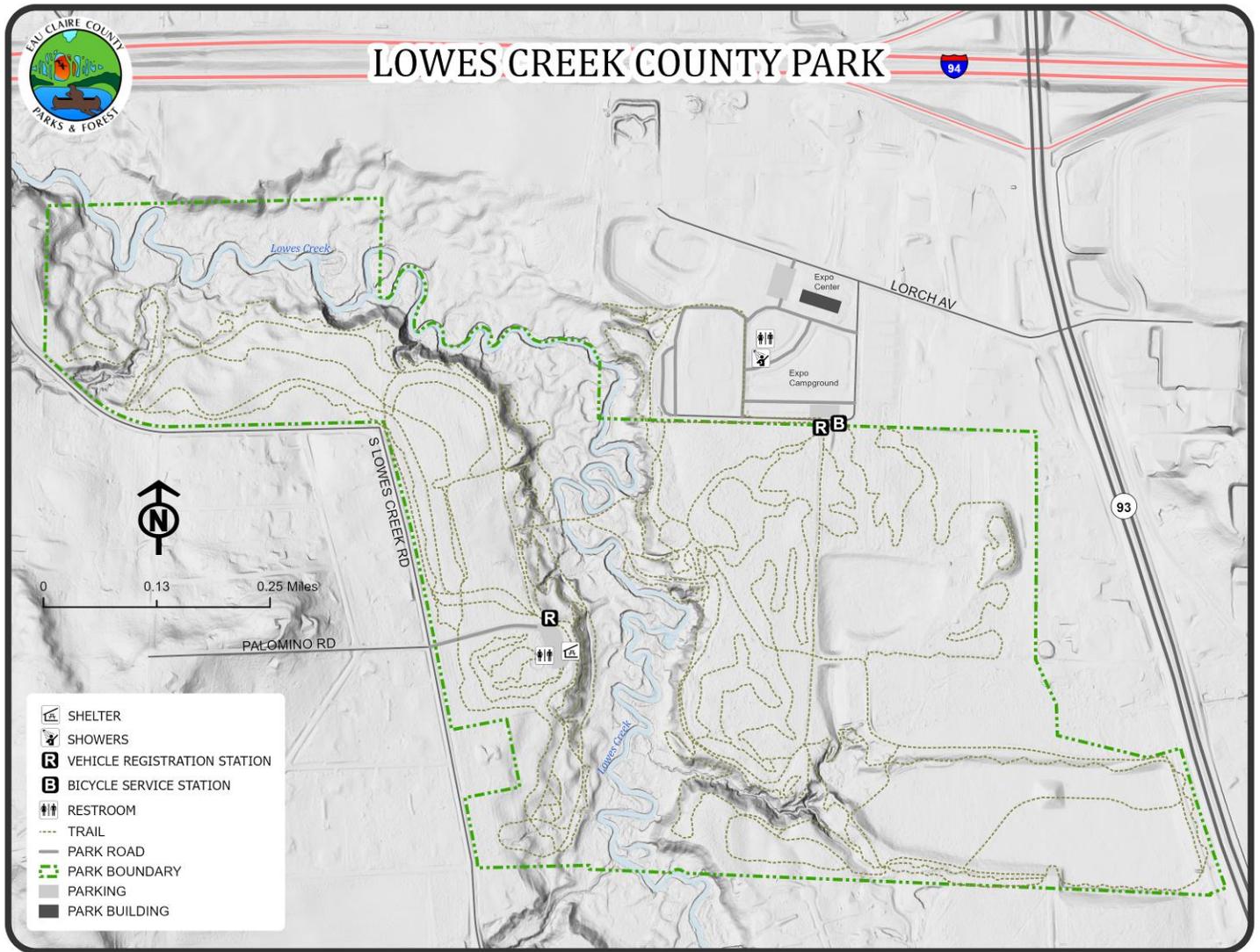
FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- 13 miles of single-track trails
- 5 miles of double-track trails
- Reservable picnic shelter
- Pit toilets
- Trout stream fishing
- Parcourse Fitness Course
- Paved roads
- Parking lots

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
New Restroom Facility	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$250,000	3-5 years
Pave parking lot	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$65,000	5+ years
Install Electric at picnic shelter and security lighting	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$23,000	3-5 years
Install Playground Equipment	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$35,000	5+ years
Develop Buckthorn management area with signage	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$15,000	1-3 years
Replace bridge with wider one to accommodate groomer	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$65,000	1-3 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department. CORBA, a volunteer-based organization that works throughout the Chippewa-Valley to help maintain multiuse trails, has largely taken over the development and maintenance of the Lowes Creek trail system.



viii. Tower Ridge Recreation Area

ADDRESS: 955 S 82nd Ave, Eau Claire 54703

PARK TYPE: Community	KEY FUNCTION:	Disc Golf, Walking, Cross-country Skiing, Horseback
	SIZE: 710 acres	USE: High, Year-Round

PRIMARY USES

The primary use of this park changes based on the season. During the warmer months, disc golfing is the most popular activity, while in the colder months it serves as a state-of-the-art cross-country ski facility.

KEY FEATURES

Located in the Town of Seymour, just 5 miles off Hwy 53, Tower Ridge is the largest park in the County. Two 18-hole disc golf course are maintained on the property with narrow, heavily wooded, fairways to provide a challenging course. Horseback riding is also permitted on designated trails within the park. During the winter months, 15 miles of groomed trails are maintained for cross-country skiers with access to a ski chalet. Snowshoes are also allowed within the park but are not permitted on the groomed ski trails.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- 15 miles of groomed cross country ski trails
- Chalet (Available for rent between April 1st – November 30th)
- 2 18-hole disc golf courses
- Drinking water
- Vault rest rooms
- Designated horseback riding trails

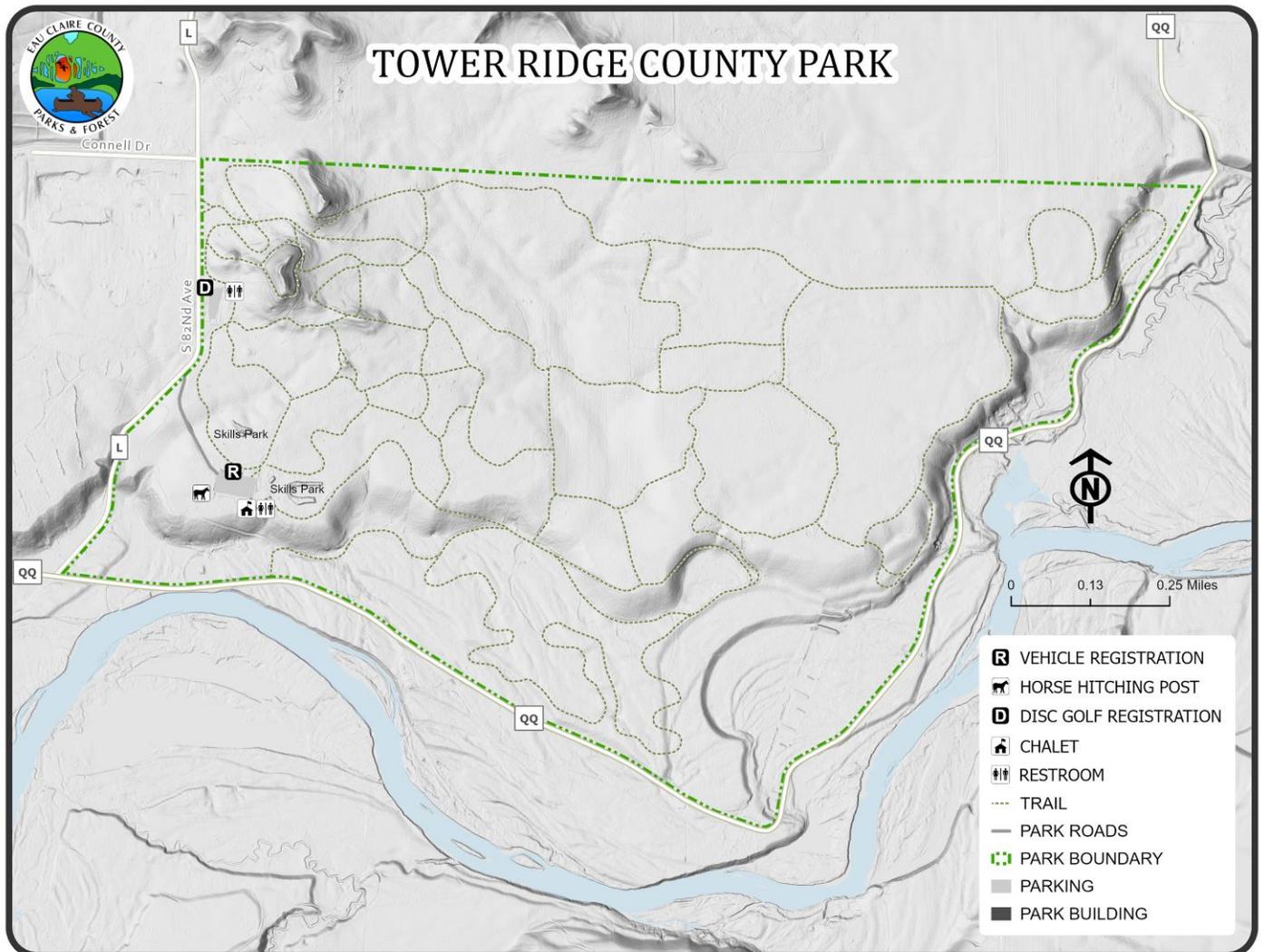
PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Maintain cross country ski trails and provide frequently groomed trails for classical and skate skiing. Install additional signage that clarifies trail-related rules and designates an “easy” or beginners’ trail. Selectively brush and replace oaks with pines along trails.	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget/ Eau Claire Ski Striders	\$40,000	1-3 years
Pave Main Parking lot	RTP/County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$45,000	3-5 years
Pave Disc golf lot	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$18,000	3-5 years

COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

Purchase mini piston bully groomer	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$190,000	3-5 years
Construct observation platform/tower	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$42,000	3-5 years
Develop trail/stairway to observation tower/platform	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$10,000	5+ years
Develop small shelters at trail intersections	RTP/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$24,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department. The Chippewa Valley Disc Golf Organization also helps in the operation of the course, installing and removing the baskets seasonally. The Eau Claire Ski Striders provides significant support to the County related to cross-country ski trail maintenance and amenities. The Ski Striders desires to conduct brushing and to replace oaks with pines along the trails since oak leaves can hamper skiing.



ix. Guettinger Woods and Wildlife Area

ADDRESS: Sandberg Rd, Brunswick, WI 54755

PARK TYPE: Community/Regional	KEY FUNCTION:	Nature Trails/Hiking/Wildlife watching
	SIZE: 123 acres	USE: Low, Seasonal interests



PRIMARY USES

This area is primarily used for hiking, snowshoeing, and wildlife viewing in a mature oak forest.

KEY FEATURES

One of the least-known recreation areas in the County, Guettinger Woods and Wildlife Area does not have many of the amenities that other parks in the County may have (like toilets or picnic areas). The wildlife area is 7 miles south of the City of Eau Claire, in the Town of Brunswick. A few small parking lots are available to those who wish to explore the area, with a trail system that can be hiked or snowshoed.

FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Hiking trails
- 3 Parking Lots

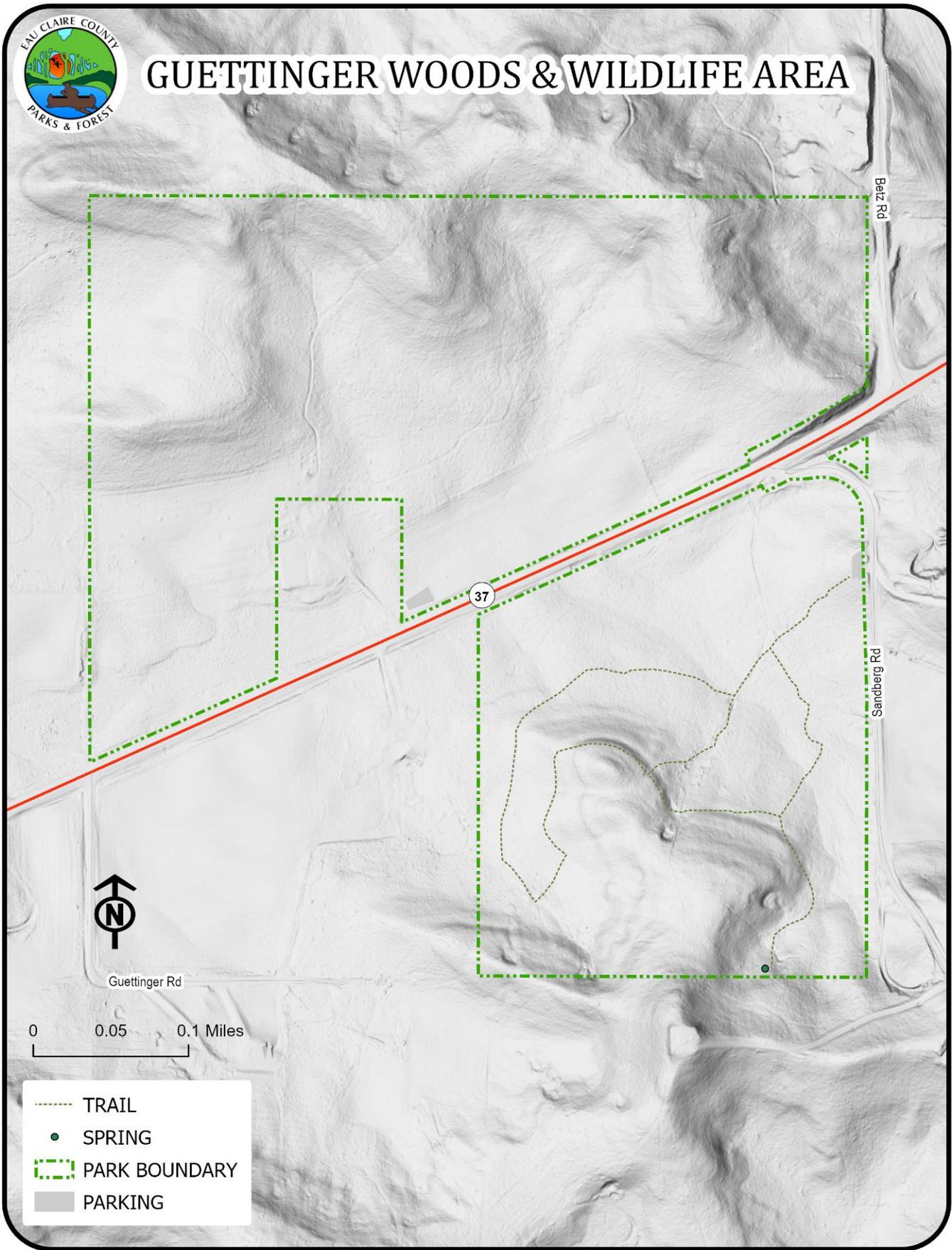
PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
Guettinger Woods trail development west of Hwy 37	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$8,000	3-5 years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This recreation area is maintained by the Eau Claire County Parks and Forest Department.



GUETTINGER WOODS & WILDLIFE AREA



- TRAIL
- SPRING
- PARK BOUNDARY
- PARKING

10. Miscellaneous County Projects

The projects listed below were placed into this category for several reasons including, but not limited to: not being within one of the previously mentioned County parks; the location of the project has not yet been determined; or the project does not have a single, specific location. Projects with a specific location are shown on **Map 24**.

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
1. New park entrance signage at most County parks.	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$20,000 per	1-5 years
2. Troubled Waters Horse Campground development	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$245,000	3-5 years
3. Multi-modal, non-motorized trail connection with City of EC and new Highway Dept Shop	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$250,000	3-5 years
4. Develop primitive campsites along Eau Claire River for canoeists	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$15,000	1-3 years
5. Pinter Pines Yurt Development (2 yurt cabins for families & small groups)	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$60,000	3-5 years
6. Construct ATV wash station with electric	ATV Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$40,000	3-5 years
7. Develop new marketing tools for digital and print	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$15,000	1-3 years
8. Coon Gut Creek walking bridge for trail near Coon Fork Park	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$60,000	3-5 years
9. Snowmobile Warming Hut	Snowmobile Trail Aids/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$75,000	5+ years
10. Lions Club area rehab- Restrooms, shelter, parking	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$60,000	1-3 years
11. Dam upgrades for remote operation	Municipal Dam Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$250,000	3-5 years
12. HWY 27 ATV lot upgrades, pit toilet	ATV and Snow Grants/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$30,000	5+ years

13. Highway H and Channey area ATV Parking lot	ATV and Snow Grants/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$40,000	5+ years
14. Highway D Canoe Landing improvements for better access given the existing slope.	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$25,000	3-5 years
15. Eisberner Memorial Landing improvements, including repaving and potentially re-locating the landing for easier access.	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$30,000	1-3 years
16. Highlines Boat landing site improvements, including repaving and other site access upgrades.	Rec Boating Grant/ County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$13,000	3-5 years
17. Upgrade and expand electrical service as well as other campground improvements at the Eau Claire County Expo Center	County Capital/ LAWCON/ Donations/ Op. Budget	\$20,000- \$60,000	3-5 years

The **Eau Claire National Rifle Club, Inc.** was established in 1922. The current range was finished around 1949 on property owned by Eau Claire County and leased to the Club (see **Map 16**). According to the Club's *Projected Range Improvements* plan as of April 2022, the following future improvements are proposed:

1. Build door gates that will attach to sound fence. This will keep more sound from escaping and keep trespassers out. (Fall 2022)
2. Plant pine trees along new parking area and range along with trees in between retaining blocks in parking area. (Spring to Fall of 2022)
3. Replace cable gate on our campground side with a swinging gate. (Fall 2022)
4. New flagpole at entrance. (2022)
5. Replace entrance signpost. (2022)
6. Put in new shooting benches at the 400 yard, 500 yard and 600 yard line.
7. Buy more Electronic Targets. (Spring 2023)
8. Replace buildings in pits with shipping containers. (2024)
9. Build a learning center on club land on south side of the road. (2030)



Eau Claire National Rifle Club Inc.
Projected Range Improvements
 Updated April 19, 2022

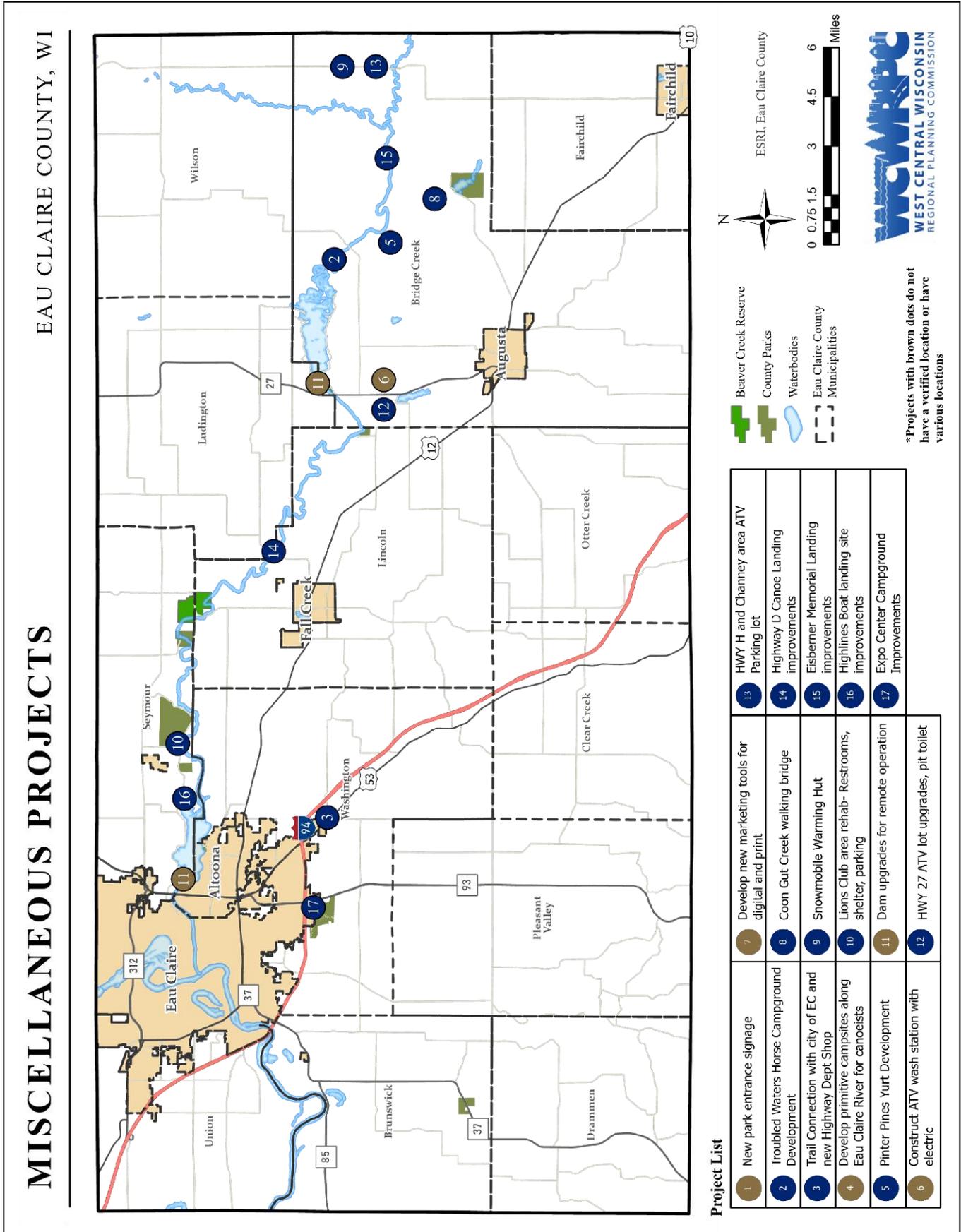
Table of Contents

- I. Objectives
- II. Range History
- III. ECNRC Improvement Plans
 - A. Phase One (Range Upgrades)
 - B. Phase Two (Range Improvements)
- IV. Fundraising (Grant & Club activities)
- V. Range Improvement Site Map



Club members are also contemplating the creation of a Biathlon track at the range and are interested in potentially connecting this new trail to the existing cross-county ski trails at Tower Ridge County Park.

Map 24. Eau Claire County Miscellaneous Projects



xi. Beaver Creek Reserve

ADDRESS: SI County Hwy K, Fall Creek, WI 54742

PARK TYPE: Regional/Specialty	KEY FUNCTION:	Natural Area & Environmental Education Center
	SIZE: 400 acres	USE: High; Educational

PRIMARY USES

This area has several unique, native ecosystems that make it ideal for visitors to become more knowledgeable about the environment. The Reserve also has cabins to rent for group events.

KEY FEATURES

This area is unique to the other facilities because it is not technically a County park; however, the County does contribute to the reserves funding. The reserve is located near Big Falls County Park in the Town of Seymour. A variety of different habitats can be found within the 400 acres, with nearly 9 miles of hiking trails. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are also allowed on certain trails. A butterfly house, nature center, youth camp, Hobbs Observatory, and the Wildland’s Charter School are all located on the Reserve’s property.



FACILITIES & AMENITIES

- Nearly 9 miles of trails
- Archery Range
- BB Gun Range
- Picnic areas
- Observatory
- Kayak rentals
- All-Terrain Track Wheelchair rental
- Nature Center
- Restrooms
- Shower facilities
- Cabins for group rental
- Tent locations
- Obstacle course
- Storm shelter
- Butterfly house
- 2 Nature Nook playgrounds

PLANS OR RECOMMENDATIONS	FUNDING SOURCE	COST ESTIMATE	TIME FRAME
YC-Trails-Replace erosion stairs on north trails	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$15,000	3-5 Years
YC-Trails-Replace board walk on nature trail	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$6,000	3-5 Years
YC- Main Lodge siding, soffit, and flashing	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$40,000	3-5 Years

COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

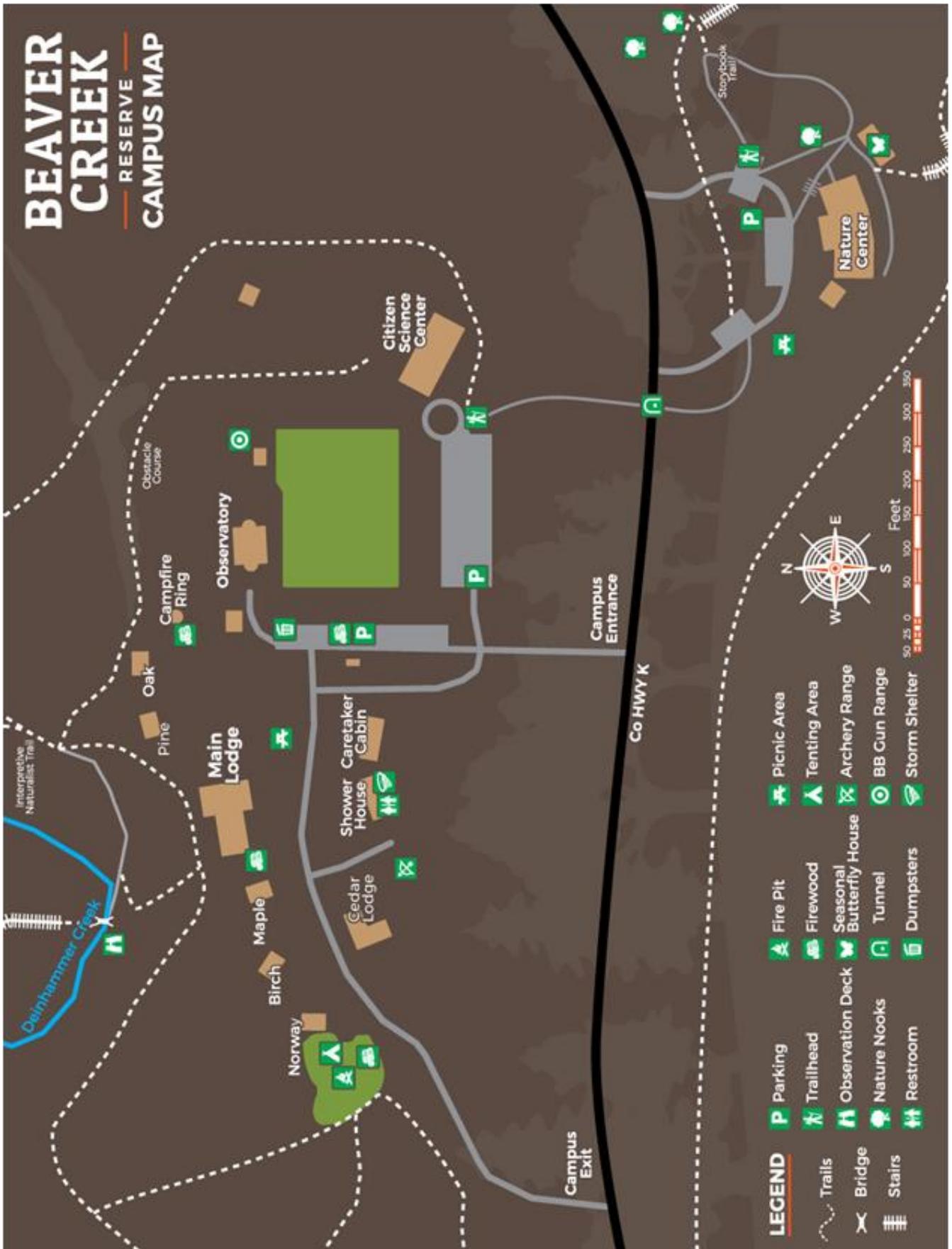
NC-Remodel- Insulate above NC elevator and attic. Install Gutters on N side and S side over deck	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$30,000	3-5 Years
NC - new marsh blind observation deck	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$1,500	5+ Years
NC-Trails Replace erosion wall along handicap loop	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$15,000	5+ Years
NC-Remodel- Replace Deck	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$20,000	5+ Years
YC Plan-Shooting Range	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$73,744	0-3 Years
NC-Remodel- New Metal siding on North side of NC	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$25,000	5+ Years
NC-Trails Seal coat handicap walk NC	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$10,000	3-5 Years
NC - outside cage with access for the indoor only raptor cage	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$5,000	5+ Years
YC Plan-Wayfinding	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$29,498	3-5 Years
YC - clean up around ball field area, new backstop, new volleyball area	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$3,000	5+ Years
YC - bridge over Dienhammer	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$10,000	5+ Years
NC - modification to raptor cages to provide secondary entrance/ vestibule to prevent escapes	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$3,000	3-5 Years
Plumbing-YC-Replace Septic system	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$60,000	5+ Years
YC - finish obstacle course	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$25,000	5+ Years
Misc-Expand Nature Nooks	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$50,000	5+ Years
NC/CSC - family bathroom remodel/lactation room	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$15,000	0-3 Years
NC Accessible trail resurfacing	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$50,000	3-5 Years
Trails- plant replacement maple for sugar bush	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$65,000	3-5 Years
YC Plan-Secondary Pathways	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$20,000	3-5 Years
NC - move and improve the sugar shack	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$65,578	5+ Years
NC - outdoor eating area	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$10,000	3-5 Years
YC Plan-Multi-Use Lawn-YC	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$20,000	3-5 Years
YC-Trails-Erosion wall by Deinhammer creek	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$107,495	5+ Years

COUNTY PARK FACILITIES

YC Plan-Maintenance Yard - move materials from YC location, Fix Shed and Garage at Beaver Den for maintenance	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$10,000	0-3 Years
YC Plan-Main Pathways	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$275,860	3-5 Years
parking lot/driveway sealcoating	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$20,000	3-5 Years
Equipment- Purchase grooming equipment for ski trails (roller, groomer)	Grants, Capital Fund, Donations	\$30,000	5+ Years

AGREEMENTS/PARTNERSHIPS FOR USE, MANAGEMENT OR PROGRAMMING

This Beaver Creek Reserve is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, which owns, manages, and provides programming at the Reserve. The previous list of recommended improvements was provided by the Reserve. Eau Claire County government provides funding assistance to the Reserve.



D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL LINKAGES

Numerous community survey comments suggested improvements to the County's pedestrian, bicycle, ATV, and snowmobile linkages (trails, routes, etc.) In addition to the trail-related recommendations specific to the County Parks in the previous section, the following are some additional recommendations for improving recreational linkages and connections within Eau Claire County. The following recommendations may be advanced by Eau Claire County or by its cities, villages, or towns.



1. **SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING** – Signage on County trails should complement, not detract from, the experience of users, while not providing additional maintenance burden for County staff. Work with businesses and trail user groups to establish a general wayfinding (directional signage) strategy and brand for County trails. Develop, advertise, and enforce clear rules regarding the placement of unapproved signs and vandalism, with penalties that deter potential violators. Repair/replace and maintain existing County-owned directional signage and informational kiosks. (short-term/ongoing)
2. **ATV/UTV/SNOWMOBILING** – When feasible and possible, preference should be given to maintaining the off-road trail network versus on-road routes. Continue to restrict ATV/UTV use on groomed snowmobile trails. (ongoing)
3. **HIKING/BACKPACKING** – Explore opportunities for expanded hiking trails as well as additional backpacking sites, non-motorized primitive sites, or remote, walk-in only campsites. Increase the marketing of existing such opportunities. (short- to long-term)
4. **WALKING/BIKING** – Pursue implementation of the strategies identified in the Eau Claire County Bike & Pedestrian Plan that improve connectivity and safety. (short- to long-term)
5. **TRAIL SITING & DEVELOPMENT** – When siting new trails, preference should be given to passive, non-motorized trail uses in areas that are environmentally sensitive or have unique natural features or other characteristics that can greatly enhance the experience of non-motorized trail users. (ongoing)
6. **TRAIL MONITORING** – Monitor trail systems for the spread of invasives, dumping, improper usage (e.g., leaving the trail), etc. Work with volunteer organizations to focus efforts on “hotspots” and to address any discovered invasives as soon as possible.
7. **WALKING/BIKING** – Work with the Lake Eau Claire District & Lake Association to explore the potential creation of a walking and biking/mountain biking trail around Lake Eau Claire.
8. **HORSEBACK RIDING** – Partner with riding enthusiasts to increase awareness of available horse trails in the County and encourage volunteer support for related amenities and maintenance costs.

E. OUTDOOR RECREATION FUNDING

Eau Claire County and its communities will continue to identify and leverage a mix of funding resources and partnership support from a wide variety of potential sources for outdoor recreation improvements and maintenance.

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

For larger projects, Stewardship grant dollars from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (e.g. Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program) or related Federal sources (e.g., Recreational Trails Act, Land & Water Conservation Fund) have long been key to major park and recreational trail improvements in Wisconsin communities. Due to the application, administration, and reporting requirements for most Federal and State grant programs, such funding programs are best suited for larger projects. All WDNR Stewardship grants have a 50% local match. This local cost share can come from donations (cash, materials, services), in-kind labor from volunteers or municipal staff, and some Federal grants.

In the past, the focus of these Stewardship grant programs has been on nature-based outdoor recreation projects, such as land acquisition for parks/trails or the construction of trails, canoe launches, fishing piers, park shelters, campgrounds, picnic areas, and restrooms. However, the Land & Water Conservation Fund Program can now also fund active outdoor recreation facilities, such as ballfields and splash pads. Playground equipment as a stand-alone project is not WDNR grant eligible. However, playground equipment may be grant eligible if it is not too big of a part of a larger park (or campground) development or redevelopment project. Income-generating facilities (e.g., concession stands) are also not generally eligible for these grants. Planting and landscaping are eligible as long as it not just solely for restoration value (e.g., removing buckthorn) or it is not too extravagant (e.g., a large, very expensive fountain, an artificial river). Stormwater management, such as rain gardens and bioswales, and stream restoration projects are also eligible. However, landscaping may be a more competitive grant project if it is part of a larger development or redevelopment project.

Other WDNR Grant Programs for Local Governments

- The **Motorized Stewardship Grants** program provides ATV & Snowmobile trail aids, including funds to acquire, insure, develop, and maintain ATV/UTV trails, areas, and routes. Snowmobile trail grants are available to counties and tribes to apply for funding to provide a statewide system of well-signed and well-groomed snowmobile trails for public use and enjoyment.
- The **Recreational Boating Facilities Grants** program can fund a variety of boating-related projects including ramps and service docks to gain access to the water, purchase of aquatic weed-harvesting equipment, navigation aids, and dredging waterway channels.
- WDNR has a variety of additional grant programs for resource management that are indirectly related to recreation, such as Surface Water Grants, Municipal Dam Grant Program, and various forestry-related grants.

Other Funding Sources

Many private foundations also fund parks and other outdoor recreational facility improvements and programming. Foundation grants are often well suited for smaller projects and typically have fewer application and reporting requirements compared to government grant programs. However, many foundations will only provide grants to non-profit organizations; a community may need to partner with a local non-profit to tap into such dollars. Many foundations focus on specific types of projects or certain geographic areas. For example, the American Academy of Dermatology awards grants for installing permanent shade structures at pools and playgrounds, so communities may need to perform some research to find grant opportunities that meet specific needs. Foundationcenter.org is a good place to start such a search. For playgrounds, KaBoom! is a popular source of private grant dollars, with Good Sports a potential source of sports equipment funding.

Additional Federal, State, and foundation grant dollars are available depending on the nature of the activity (e.g., arts or educational programming, boat ramps, community gardens) or attributes unique to the site (e.g., historic preservation, resource conservation, acquisition of floodplain properties, brownfield remediation). For example, many outdoor sports have national organizations that provide funding for their sport, such as the U.S. Soccer Foundation.



Local government financial resources for parks and outdoor recreation potentially include standard operating budgets and general fund dollars; capital improvements budgets; loans, bonding, and notes; user fees; tax increment financing; and developer impact fees/exactions and contributions. The most appropriate mix of such funding sources for future, major outdoor recreation projects should be incorporated into a five-year capital improvements plan, if possible.

Donations of volunteer time, dollars, or property from local residents, businesses, recreational groups, non-profits, and other service organizations are becoming increasingly important. It is not unusual for a certain local organization, club, or non-profit to take the lead in developing and/or maintaining a recreational facility or program (or part thereof). Often, the time and donations of these local partners can be used as a grant match to leverage other grant sources. Local businesses that are subsidiaries or local places of business for a larger organization (e.g., financial institutions, chain retailers) or are part of a larger professional association (e.g., realtors association, medical) may also have access to grant programs. Such partnerships are crucial to a robust, strong parks and recreation system, which improves the quality of life for the entire community.

SECTION VII.

COMMUNITY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANS

Providing a complete, efficient outdoor recreational system that meets the diverse needs of all Eau Claire County residents requires partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation. As suggested in the policies in Section V, community parks and outdoor recreational amenities that serve a small geographic area are best provided and maintained by local cities, villages, towns, and community organizations.

This section contains the outdoor recreation plans for the five Eau Claire County towns and village that agreed to participate in this planning effort: Village of Fairchild, Town of Fairchild, Town of Pleasant Valley, Town of Seymour, and Town of Washington. The following municipalities have their own, stand-alone outdoor recreation plans: Altoona, Augusta, Eau Claire, Fall Creek, and Town of Union. During the planning process, each participating municipality was responsible to complete an inventory of the community's outdoor recreation facilities, assess current and future demand and needs, and identify recommendations to guide park system improvements.

The following sub-sections detail the methodology used to determine the recreation needs for the participating cities, the community action program outlining the general recommendations for all of the communities, and the community-specific Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for each individual community.

A. PARK NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the needs that exist in the local communities, the plan establishes a park area standard—a general rule for the provision of park area for a given population. It is important to note that this standard is merely a guide to be used as a decision-making tool for planning purposes. In some areas, local demands may be more or less based on the desires of the local citizenry and the function or amenities of each facility. Such park standards must be further supplemented with local information and evaluated in the context of local circumstances.

Park Standards

The population ratio method is a widely used method of determining minimum requirements for outdoor recreation. **The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has identified the following metrics for communities with fewer than 20,000 residents, which applies to all cities and villages participating in this outdoor recreation plan update:**

- **median of one park for every 1,231 residents and**
- **12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents.**

This metric can be used to help assess whether or not the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents. Such standards should be viewed as a guide and they address minimum, not maximum goals.

Ideally, the parkland acreage would be distributed among the parks as outlined in the NRPA classification system below:

Park Type	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1,000 pop.	Use and Characteristics
Mini-Park	< 0.25 mile radius	1 ac or less	0.25 – 0.5 acres	specialized facilities serving a concentrated population (e.g., apartments, seniors, tots)
Neighborhood Park/Playground	0.25 – 0.5 mile radius up to 5,000 pop.	1 to 5+ acres (see footnote) ⁷	1 – 2 acres	intensive recreation area within safe walking distance; may be a school-park facility
Community Park	1-2 mile radius	5 to 25+ acres	5 – 8 acres	may include both passive & active recreation; easily accessible to neighborhoods served
Regional Park	several communities; w/in 1 hour	200+ acres	5 – 10 acres	contiguous to or encompassing natural resources
Specialized Area	varies; may be regional	varies	varies	located in the community; may include conservancy areas and greenspace

This technique is accomplished by assigning an acreage requirement for various classifications of parks for each 1,000 persons in a community. Preferably, this acreage should be distributed throughout the community so that residential areas, various age groups, and activity needs are served in the best possible manner. However, the total population size of each Eau Claire County community must also be considered since some communities have fewer residents than a single neighborhood in many urban areas.

Additional discussion on the above NRPA standards for different park types can be found in **Appendix C**. The NRPA definitions and standards are suggested guidelines for planning purposes and are based on commonly used terminology and the primary intent of each park type. Although other types of parks can be found in some of Wisconsin's communities, the ones defined here are sufficient to analyze recreation areas in Eau Claire County. For purposes of this plan, most park facilities owned by Eau Claire County can be classified as **community or regional parks** due to their relatively larger sizes, user groups, and relationship to County Forest lands. Some facilities, such as Beaver Creek Reserve, may be better classified as specialized areas. The smaller parks and playgrounds, with more limited service areas, are more typically found within the cities, villages, and towns.

⁷ The NRPA standards for the desirable size of Neighborhood Parks/Playgrounds and Community Parks are 15+ and 25+ acres, respectively. However, after consideration that such standards were developed with large, densely populated urban cities in mind, a decision was made to reduce the desirable sizes of these park types to better reflect the park system, park functions, and population characteristics of smaller, rural communities in west-central Wisconsin.

Comparisons of park definitions, areas, and services should not be made among the State's municipalities. Each community is unique in its size, demographics, geography, and distribution of population; therefore, the classifications applied in a given community result from a community's judgment of how that community's parks function in meeting local and nonresident recreation needs. In small communities, such as those participating in this plan, the size and acreage recommendations are less important than the uses and function, since a relatively small park within a smaller community can provide important neighborhood and community recreational functions.

Application of population ratio standards typically does not include school properties, golf courses, undeveloped or vacant land, or public areas and open spaces not developed for public recreational use. The above standards also do not provide insight into the appropriate mix of amenities to be offered at the recreational facilities (e.g., playground equipment, picnic tables, court games, trails).

In short, while the above guidelines are helpful for evaluating outdoor recreation demand in Eau Claire County's communities, it is more important that the types of parks and the mix of recreational amenities be evaluated, discussed, and determined locally based on local needs.

Structure of the Community Outdoor Recreation Plans

Each individual community outdoor recreation plan includes three main sub-sections for those municipalities that participated in this planning effort:

1. The first section, entitled **SUPPLY**, is an inventory of the existing community outdoor recreation facilities. The inventory includes the identification of the park and recreation areas, an estimate of the acreage of the area, and a brief analysis and description of the amenities and types of recreation activities that are supported by the area.
2. The second section, **DEMAND/NEEDS**, examines three factors to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:
 - i. **Space Needs**—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population based on 20-year population forecasts and the previous NRPA metrics for number of parks and parkland acreage per capita. School and private recreational facilities are not included in these calculations.
 - ii. **Service Needs**—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are accessible and adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
 - iii. **Activity/Amenity Needs**—Whether or not the existing, available parklands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.
3. The final section, **RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN**, provides the recommendations and action plan to satisfy the community needs. The recommendations tend to be more general, while the action plan provides guidance for specific, actionable outdoor recreation improvements for each community.

B. GENERAL COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM

The community action program is made up of two major sections. This first section is the general recommendations for the four participating communities in the County, which is followed by the outdoor recreation plans specific to each individual community.

General Recommendations

The following general recommendations identify recreational concerns that can generally apply to all communities in Eau Claire County. Such recommendations provide a broad framework from which communities can approach park planning and implementation decisions.

- **Consistency with the Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan.** This document should be considered as a whole. The individual community plans in the next subsections are part of this overall plan. The background and inventory information (Section II and III) and overall needs assessment (Section IV) are relevant to recreational decision-making for Eau Claire County's communities. And the recreational linkages and outdoor recreation funding sources discussed in Sections VI are important to Eau Claire County's cities, villages, and towns. By adopting this outdoor recreation plan, the participating cities, villages, and towns are not only adopting this section (Section VII), but are also adopting the overall goals, objectives, and policies (Section V) as their own.
- **Municipal/School District Cooperation.** Promote continued and increasing cooperation between municipalities and school districts in meeting community recreational needs. With good planning, cooperation may take the form of cost sharing for land acquisition, facility development, and/or programming/maintenance. Intergovernmental agreements for public use of existing school facilities during non-school hours may also be needed.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance.** With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), local governments must ensure that all programs and facilities, including parks and other recreational offerings, are accessible to people with disabilities. To determine compliance with ADA regulations, it is recommended that communities conduct an evaluation of the accessibility of its services, programs, and facilities, and prepare a transition plan describing how compliance will be achieved.

All existing park facilities that are repaired or replaced, and any new park development, should meet the requirements of ADA. Examples of incorporating accessible, barrier-free designs include: ramps in place of steps, hard-surface walkways, wide doorways, grab rails in restrooms, wider parking spaces, and specialized playground equipment.

- **Service/Social Group Involvement.** Involve organized groups in needed park and recreation development, educational efforts, and programming, including development of competitive sports areas and neighborhood parks. Traditionally, service and social groups have been an active participant in the development of recreation facilities. Due to public funding limitations, the involvement of service, social, and non-profit groups is essential.
- **Citizen Participation/Committee Creation.** Municipalities are strongly encouraged to establish a park and recreation committee or board that can oversee or guide park planning,

development, operation, maintenance, administration, and program activities. The committee may act as a liaison with other municipalities, the County, and State agencies regarding park and recreation matters. The committee should be composed of citizens as well as elected officials. Municipalities should actively seek citizen input into the planning and development of new park and recreation facilities.

- **Future Park Planning.** In areas where growth is expected, communities should make provisions to incorporate the park areas within expected development. One such method would be to encourage new developments to include dedicated park area within each neighborhood. This would provide the communities with a system of convenient and accessible neighborhood parks. Another method would be to utilize easements in order to limit land acquisition costs for neighborhood parks. When appropriate, integrate parks and recreational issues and plans into other community plans (e.g., comprehensive plans, development plans).
- **Aid Programs.** Take advantage of State and Federal financial and technical aid programs designed to assist communities in meeting recreational needs, and maintain community eligibility for such programs as discussed in Section VI.E.
- **Capital Improvements Schedule.** As recommended in Section V, community officials are encouraged to develop a five-year capital improvements schedule for recreation that reflects the implementation proposals made in this plan and the priorities they place on them. While it is unlikely that all of the recommendations offered by this plan would be undertaken within the next five-to-ten years, recognition of the increasing demands for recreation space and facilities may require action. To be functional, the capital improvements program should be flexible and be subject to annual review.

C. VILLAGE OF FAIRCHILD OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

SUPPLY

The following section inventories the existing public and private properties developed or designated for outdoor recreation purposes within the Village of Fairchild. **Map 25** at the end of this subsection shows the location of these recreation areas.

Mini-Parks

CHAT-A-WHILE PARK (between N. Front St. & Huron St.)

0.2 ACRES

This downtown park features a small shelter with built-in benches, a standalone bench, and some limited landscaping. It is largely an open space owned by the Village that has been used during community events in the past, such as inflatable “bounce houses” during Fun Days. The community is considering moving playground equipment from the school to this location.



MCCREADY TRIBUTE (bet. 111 & 121 N. Front Street)

<0.1 ACRES

This very small pocket park is located on private land located between the post office and bank in downtown Fairchild. Amenities include a short walkway, flag pole, bench, signage, and a tribute to Fairchild Police Chief Patrick McCready who lost his life in service to the community. The mini-park is maintained by the Fairchild Lion’s Club.

Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

Due to its small size, the Village does not have any neighborhood parks or playgrounds; the Village’s community parks effectively serve as neighborhood parks.

Community Parks

FOSTER PARK (111 County Highway “H”)

3.25 ACRES

Foster Park is an ideally located community park within easy walking distance for most village residents. Facilities include bathrooms with flush toilets, large picnic shelter with 5 tables, 2 permanent grills, a drinking fountain with spigot, paved parking, a flagpole, and historical tribute to the Foster family. Recreational amenities include a variety of playground equipment, basketball court, volleyball court, and a tennis court. Much of the play equipment and the volleyball court were added in 2005, though repairs of the volleyball court are needed. United Way has installed and maintains an educational trail with markers (i.e., Born Learning Trail) for young children. The tennis court was recently sealed, but lacks a net. Some improvements to the ball courts are needed, and community members expressed interest in potentially using the tennis courts for pickleball. Community members decorate the Park with lights each Christmas season.

ROD & GUN CLUB PARK (600 Pond Road)**3.2 ACRES**

Located on the northwest side of Fairchild Pond, the Rod & Gun Club Park functions as a community park and community gathering place, offering opportunities for both indoor and outdoor recreation activities. The park is on Village-owned property that is leased to the Rod & Gun Club (d/b/a Fairchild Sportsmen's Club), which maintains the park and its amenities.

While there is about nine acres owned by the Village on the northwest side of the Pond, most of this area is undeveloped. Roughly 3.2 acres on the north side of this area closest to Pond Road is improved and/or maintained with amenities as a park-like atmosphere.



There is a large building (the clubhouse) located at the site, which is used by the Sportsmen's Club, residents, and other community organizations for various events. In 2019, events hosted by the Sportsmen's Club, in partnership with the Fairchild Lions Club and other community organizations, attracted over 2,450 visitors to Fairchild Pond from throughout west-central Wisconsin.

Additional recreational amenities include an archery range (with the only permanent raised shooting platform in Wisconsin), picnic area with picnic tables and grills, toilets, an ADA-accessible, mobile fishing pier, a permanent fishing pier, an outdoor shelter with barbecue pit, a small boat ramp, parking area, and an informational kiosk. The park is frequently used by Amish, who will typically park their horses and buggies just north of the clubhouse along the tree line where a metal hitching post has been installed. The sand driveway at the entrance off Pond Road can be very soft and wet, especially in early spring. Immediately to the north, the Rod & Gun Club also owns and maintains a 2.25-acre shooting range on the north side of Pond Road, which is located in the Town of Fairchild.



Specialty Outdoor Recreation Facilities

RON OLSON MEMORIAL PARK (BALLFIELD) (522 Camp Road) 2.3 ACRES

Located on the northeastern side of the community, the main attraction of Olson Memorial Park is the lighted ballfield with bleachers, scoreboard, concession stand, and pit toilets. Since it is roughly 260 feet from home plate to the outfield wall, the field is a bit small for older youth and adult baseball, but is popular for softball, youth t-ball, and kickball. Since this park also includes some playground equipment, a small picnic shelter with tables, and a barbecue pit, it also functions as a neighborhood or community park at times.

FAIRCHILD POND 17-18 ACRES

Originally created as a mill pond in the 1800s, the dam was rebuilt in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps as a recreational amenity. In the past, the Pond was used for hockey and ice-skating, and swimming, but today is primarily used for fishing (ice & no ice), hunting, trapping, boating, and wildlife viewing today. Shoreline fishing is available from the public lands that surround the pond on its north end. A lake management plan is currently being created for the Pond, which will include recommendations regarding water quality, vegetation management, the fishery, and related outdoor recreation.

BUFFALO RIVER STATE TRAILHEAD (355 North Street) 7.83 ACRES

The Buffalo River State Trail is a WDNR-maintained, multi-use trail that extends 36 miles between Fairchild and west to Mondovi on a former railroad grade. The surface is a combination of railroad ballast and limestone screenings. The eastern trailhead is located on 7.8 acres of WDNR-owned land in the northwest part of the Village. The trailhead includes signage and limited parking, but the property is largely undeveloped. Community members have expressed concern with the littering and the lack of routine maintenance at the trailhead. The limited space for vehicle and trailer parking can be an issue during busy summer and fall weekends.

OTHER RECREATIONAL ROUTES & TRAILS

The Village of Fairchild is well connected to the recreational trails in Eau Claire and Clark counties, making the area a destination for ATV/UTV enthusiasts. ATV/UTV use is allowed on all Village streets. ATV/UTV traffic will sometimes use Union Pacific property between the Buffalo River State Trailhead and southeast to downtown Fairchild. In the past, ATV/UTV traffic was allowed to use an off-road trail under an easement between Quad County ATV Club and three private landowners between County Highway “H” and north to Pond Road, but this trail has been closed due to vandalism and needed repairs.



DEMAND/NEEDS

Three factors are examined to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:

1. Space Needs—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population.
2. Service Needs—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
3. Activity/Amenity Needs—Whether or not the existing, available park lands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.

Standards are available to help address the first two factors, which is the focus of this subsection, while the third factor is considered as part of the Action Plan recommendations. And while standards are helpful, the community itself is best positioned to analyze these factors.

Space Needs. The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has found, for communities with less than 20,000 residents: a median of one park for every 1,231 residents and 12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents. This metric can be used to help assess whether or not the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents.

According to the population figures shown in the table below, the 2020 population for the Village of Fairchild was 535 persons. The projected population change from the 2020 estimate to 2040 shows an expected increase of 35 persons, or +6.5 percent.

Park and Recreation Area Need • Village of Fairchild

Year	Population	Recommended Acreage	Total Existing Acreage	Surplus/Deficit Acres
2020	535	6.42	8.95	+2.53
2025	565	6.78	8.95	+2.17
2030	570	6.84	8.95	+2.11
2035	570	6.84	8.95	+2.11
2040	570	6.84	8.95	+2.11

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Estimates (1/1/20) and Projections 2010-2040 (12/10/13)

With the Village’s smaller population, only one public park would be needed to meet the NRPA minimum metric of one park for every 1,231 residents. The total land area devoted to outdoor recreation in Fairchild, not including the WDNR trailhead or Pond itself, is about 8.95 acres. Currently, this number slightly exceeds the desired amount of park acreage for the population according to the NFPA metric. Although the population for the community is projected to increase by the year 2040, existing park acreage should continue to meet the needs of the community based solely on the standard. However, the Village should continue to regularly monitor population change and community growth in order to evaluate future park needs.

Service Areas. Service areas vary for different types of parks as summarized in **Appendix C**. Community parks have facilities that are intended to serve the entire community, including several neighborhoods or an area having a radius up to two miles. Residents are expected to travel to community parks, therefore major streets and roads do not present barriers to accessing this type of park.

Neighborhood parks and playgrounds, on the other hand, are intended to serve an area of ¼ to ½ mile in radius and are intended to serve young children; consequently, major streets and roads can present barriers to accessing this type of park.

Due to its small geographic size, all Village residents are located within two-mile radius of all community parks. However, U.S. Highway 12 and the County highways within the Village do pose some barriers for children from certain neighborhoods.

Activity/Amenity Needs. The community has determined that its existing park and recreation areas provide sufficient open space to accommodate desired activities and amenities, with one exception:

- The Village desires to establish a swimming area and beach at Fairchild Pond, with bathhouse and picnic area. The best location for such improvements would be on Village-owned land on the northeast side of the Pond, in the area where the Pond is relatively shallow with a sandy bottom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and action plan serves as a guide for the Village of Fairchild in the acquisition, development, and improvement of outdoor recreations sites and facilities within the community. The Village will set priorities, adjust timelines, and address the most urgent needs as funding and resources allow. However, priorities, opportunities, and resources can change over time, and new projects not included here may be considered. Likewise, it is also recognized that not all of these recommendations and action plan items will necessarily be implemented during the next 5-10 years.

1. Develop and maintain Fairchild’s outdoor recreation and park system in a manner that follows the intent of the goals, objectives, and recommendations in Section V.
2. Encourage the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to expand the parking area at the Buffalo River State Trailhead and install a restroom and informational kiosk/signage.
3. Implement the recommendations of *Fairchild Pond Management Plan* that support the Pond’s continued use as an outdoor recreation destination and community-gathering place. The *Management Plan* envisions that the Pond will be the area’s preeminent family-fishing destination and includes recommended actions directly related to recreation, such as dredging near the boat launch, , improving opportunities for shoreline fishing, selective dredging near shorelines, continued fish stocking, and various other actions to improve water quality, manage aquatic vegetation, prevent new invasive species, and reduce sediment loading. The Management Plan includes an action plan detailing these recommended strategies, including related resources, partnerships, and suggested timelines.
4. Explore opportunities and community/landowner interest in converting the former ATV/UTV trail linkage on private land between County Highway “H” and north to Pond Road to non-mechanical recreational use, such as hiking, biking, and snowshoeing. Related conversion and improvements could be grant eligible.

5. Implement the recommended action items in the following action plan as resources and community priorities allow.

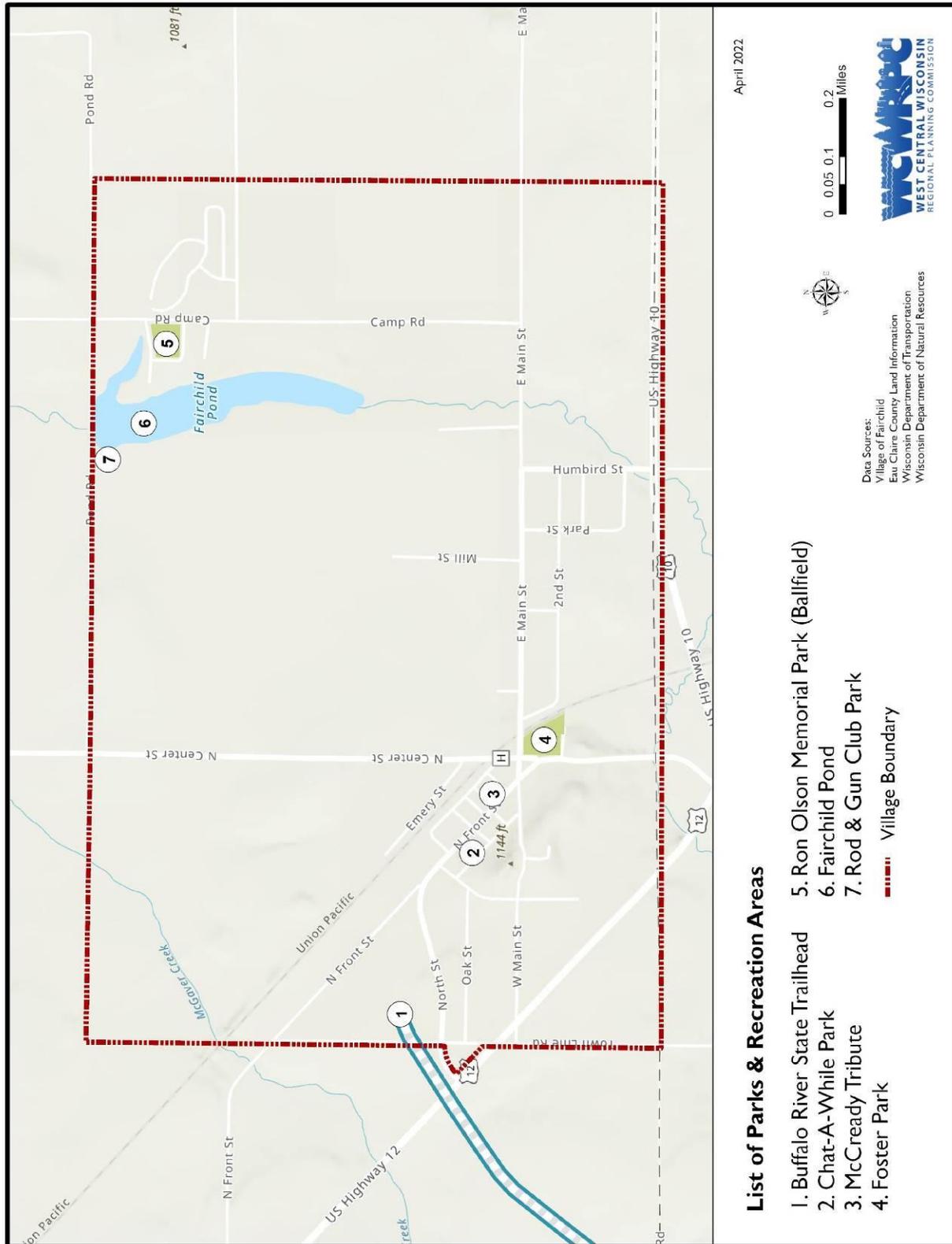
ACTION PLAN

Facility	Action Items	Cost Estimate	Time Frame
Chat-A-While Park	Move playground equipment from School to the Park with ADA-accessibility and fall zone improvements.	\$1,000- \$5,000	1-3 years
Foster Park	Restore/renovate the volleyball and basketball courts	\$3,000- \$10,000	1-3 year
	Install tennis court netting and potentially re-stripe and/or include adjustable netting for pickleball use.	\$1,000- \$3,000	1-3 years
	Improve lighting at the park, perhaps with additional electrical outlets for Christmas lighting.	\$2,500- \$10,000	3-5+ years
	Explore the potential addition of a skate park and/or a short disc golf course.	undetermined	5+ years
Rod & Gun Club Park	Improve driveway entrance near Pond Road	\$10,000- \$30,000	3-5 years
	Improve boat ramp, including potentially dredging from ramp to main channel and, potentially, the installation of a boat dock.	\$20,000- \$50,000	3-5+ years
	Create additional family-fishing areas on Village-owned land around the Pond as envisioned in the <i>Fairchild Pond Management Plan</i> , including selective dredging, related amenities, and, potentially, the installation of a boardwalk south of the Clubhouse for additional shoreline access.	undetermined	3-5+ years; may be developed in phases
Ron Olson Memorial Park	Install new lighting.	\$5,000- \$15,000	1-3 years
	Install new restrooms, potentially as part of a new storage building and/or concession stand.	\$35,000- \$95,000	1-3 years
	Replace aging playground equipment and other site improvements to make the site more family friendly and accessible.	\$10,000- \$25,000	3-5 years

Fairchild Pond “Beach Park”	Establish a beach and swimming area on the northeast side of the Pond, with bathhouse/restrooms and picnic area.	\$50,000- \$90,000	3-5 years
	Add an ADA-accessible fishing pier.	\$15,000- \$30,000	5+ years
	Potentially add a floating raft for swimmers.	\$1,000- \$5,000	5+ years

A number of the above projects are potential candidates for grant assistance from the WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship local assistance grant program; keep in mind that this grant program generally does not fund maintenance activities or standalone equipment. The WDNR Recreational Boating Facilities Grant program is a potential grant source for the Rod & Gun Club Park action items listed above. Please see Section VI. E., which discusses outdoor recreation funding in more detail.

Map 25. Village of Fairchild Parks and Recreation Areas



Note: The proposed creation of family-fishing areas or “pods” may not be limited to the west side of the Pond near the Clubhouse and may include other shoreline areas on Village-owned land on the north half of the Pond.

D. TOWN OF SEYMOUR OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

SUPPLY

The following section inventories the existing public and private properties developed or designated for outdoor recreation purposes within the Town of Seymour. **Map 26** at the end of this sub-section shows the location of these recreation areas.

Neighborhood-Park

NORTHSHORE PARK (Northshore Drive & Indian Hills Drive)

0.88 ACRES

This small park space is mostly comprised of open space and manicured grass with some shade trees. Residents have planted flowers, shrubs, and prairie grasses in addition to creating walking paths. The site has a park bench and picnic table. A water pump was also installed, and the area is frequented by bicyclists, pedestrians, and nearby residents.



Community Facilities

SEYMOUR RECREATION PARK (County Rd QS & Tower Drive)

3.25 ACRES

Located next to the Seymour Town Hall, the Seymour Recreation Park serves as a community park. Facilities include six ball fields with fencing and scoreboards, a concession stand, playground equipment, a basketball court, two tennis courts recently resurfaced and updated to include pickleball, a volleyball court, eight picnic tables, a medium-sized open shelter with electricity, and the option for an ice-skating rink based on community demand. There is also additional open space for field sports. A recreation building is located at the park with indoor restrooms, and a large, paved parking lot is available for large sporting or outdoor events.



The park includes a well-developed ballfield with lighting, newly updated brick and chain link fencing, and a new concession stand and scoreboard. The ballfield is equipped with team dugouts, bleachers for spectators, and restrooms. There are also bike racks on site and ample parking along the street.

The Seymour Ball Club utilizes the park space frequently for competitive youth sports and is an excellent partner that funds considerable improvements at the park. The club also hosts Fever Fest in the summer

that brings in thousands of visitors to raise funds for improvements to park facilities and presents a unique opportunity for matching funds to be utilized towards grant funded future park improvements.

Town park amenities include:

- Large, enclosed, four season shelter with full kitchen and restrooms and a recent addition to expand capacity.
- Six ballfields with lights, dugouts, bleachers, and restrooms. New fencing around the field along with a new concession stand and new scoreboard
- Pavilion with picnic tables
- Playground equipment
- Volleyball and basketball courts
- Manicured grass and shade trees

113-ACRE PARKLAND (Olson Drive, West of N 120th Avenue)

113 ACRES

This is the Town's newest recreation area that has yet to be developed. Currently, the area is mostly forested with some primitive trails used for hiking and nature exploration. There is a semi-improved parking area allowing access to the parkland which also serves as a loading/unloading area for snowmobile users with direct access to the network of snowmobile trail opportunities in Eau Claire County.

Due to its size, this area has the potential to support several year-round recreational uses. The Town will continue to work with residents to identify projects and potential uses to develop the site over time as funding and other resources become available.

Special Use Areas

LION'S YOUTH CAMP (8254 N Shore Dr County HWY QQ)

This quasi-public facility has a spring-fed, manmade pond which is posted for use as a fishing spot for youth ages 16 and under. Adjacent to the pond is a shelter with fireplace, toilets, and open space for primitive overnight youth camping.

EAU CLAIRE ROD & GUN CLUB (Address: 801 Schoettl Ave.)

Organized in 1907, the Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club is the oldest continuously operating sportsman's club in the state of Wisconsin. The Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club offers, hosts and supports many different activities and groups that allow members and the general public many opportunities to enjoy the shooting sports, conservationism, the outdoors and camaraderie.

EAU CLAIRE NATIONAL RIFLE CLUB (8768 N Shore Dr.)

The Eau Claire National Rifle Club is located 8 miles east of Eau Claire on County Highway QQ. The range has 20 firing points from 200, 300 and 600 yards with bench rests at 100, 200, and 300 yards. The range is available to all current club members to become proficient in rifle marksmanship, promoting professional, recreational and sport shooting. Also, to encourage responsible handling of firearms.

The following Eau Claire County special use areas are described in detail along with recommendations and action plan items in Section VI.C of this document:

- L.L. Phillips County Park
- Big Falls County Park
- Tower Ridge Recreation Area

DEMAND/NEEDS

Three factors are examined to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:

1. Space Needs—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population.
2. Service Needs—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
3. Activity/Amenity Needs—Whether or not the existing, available park lands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.

Standards are available to help address the first two factors, which is the focus of this subsection, while the third factor is considered as part of the Action Plan recommendations. And while standards are helpful, the community itself is best positioned to analyze these factors.

Space Needs. The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has found, for communities with less than 20,000 residents: a median of one park for every 1,231 residents and 12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents. This metric can be used to help assess whether or not the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents.

According to the population figures shown in the table below, the 2020 population for the Town of Seymour is 3,352 persons. The projected population change from the 2020 estimate to 2040 shows an expected increase of 263 persons, or +7.8 percent.

Park and Recreation Area Need • Town of Seymour

Year	Population	Recommended Acreage	Total Existing Acreage	Surplus/ Deficit Acres
2020	3,352	40.2	4.13	-36.1
2025	3,455	41.5	4.13	-37.4
2030	3,530	42.4	4.13	-38.3
2035	3,575	42.9	4.13	-38.8
2040	3,615	43.4	4.13	-39.3

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Estimates (1/1/20) and Projections 2010-2040 (12/10/13)

The total land area devoted to parks and developed outdoor recreation in the Town of Seymour, not including the undeveloped 113 Acre Park, is about 4.13 acres. This number is below the recommended acreage for 2020 based on the NRPA standard. While the above space needs calculations suggest there is a deficit in park and recreation lands, this is not necessarily the case for a number of reasons:

1. The NRPA standard of 12 acres to 1,000 residents is better suited for incorporated cities and villages or more developed towns. Rural towns with lower population densities typically have larger residential lots and plenty of other open space within private lands that are available for recreation. In such cases, the backyard often serves as the playground.
2. The total existing acreage above does not include other undeveloped, public open spaces in the community that are available for outdoor recreation, such as the 113 acres of land owned by the Town that is expected to be developed over time for recreation purposes.
3. Rural residents have motor vehicles and are accustomed to traveling outside their neighborhood or even community for a desired service or destination. There are many acres of County park and forest lands available to Town residents that were not considered as part of the total existing acreage above, such as L.L. Phillips County Park, Big Falls County Park, and Tower Ridge Recreation Area that together provide over 910 acres of public land for a variety of four-season recreation opportunities.

During the update of this outdoor recreation plan and other relevant community planning efforts, Town officials did not identify a need for the acquisition of additional park or outdoor recreation lands. However, the Town should continue to regularly monitor population change and community growth in order to evaluate future park needs.

Service Areas. Service areas vary for different types of parks as summarized in **Appendix C**. Community parks have facilities that are intended to serve the entire community, including several neighborhoods or an area having a radius up to two miles. Residents are expected to travel to community parks, therefore major streets and roads do not present barriers to accessing this type of park. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds, on the other hand, are intended to serve an area of ¼ to ½ mile in radius and are intended to serve young children; consequently, major streets and roads can present barriers to accessing this type of park.

Activity/Amenity Needs. The community has determined that its existing park and recreation areas provide sufficient open space to accommodate desired activities and amenities, with one exception:

- The Town desires to make improvements at the 113 Acre Parkland to expand recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. This includes establishing year-round trail networks to support hiking and biking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and action plan serves as a guide for the Town of Seymour in the acquisition, development, and improvement of outdoor recreations sites and facilities within the community. The Town will set priorities, adjust timelines, and address the most urgent needs as funding and resources allow. However, priorities, opportunities, and resources can change over time, and new projects not included here may be considered. Likewise, it is also recognized that not all of these recommendations and action plan items will necessarily be implemented during the next 5-10 years.

1. Develop and maintain Seymour's outdoor recreation and park system in a manner that follows the intent of the goals, objectives, and recommendations in Section V.

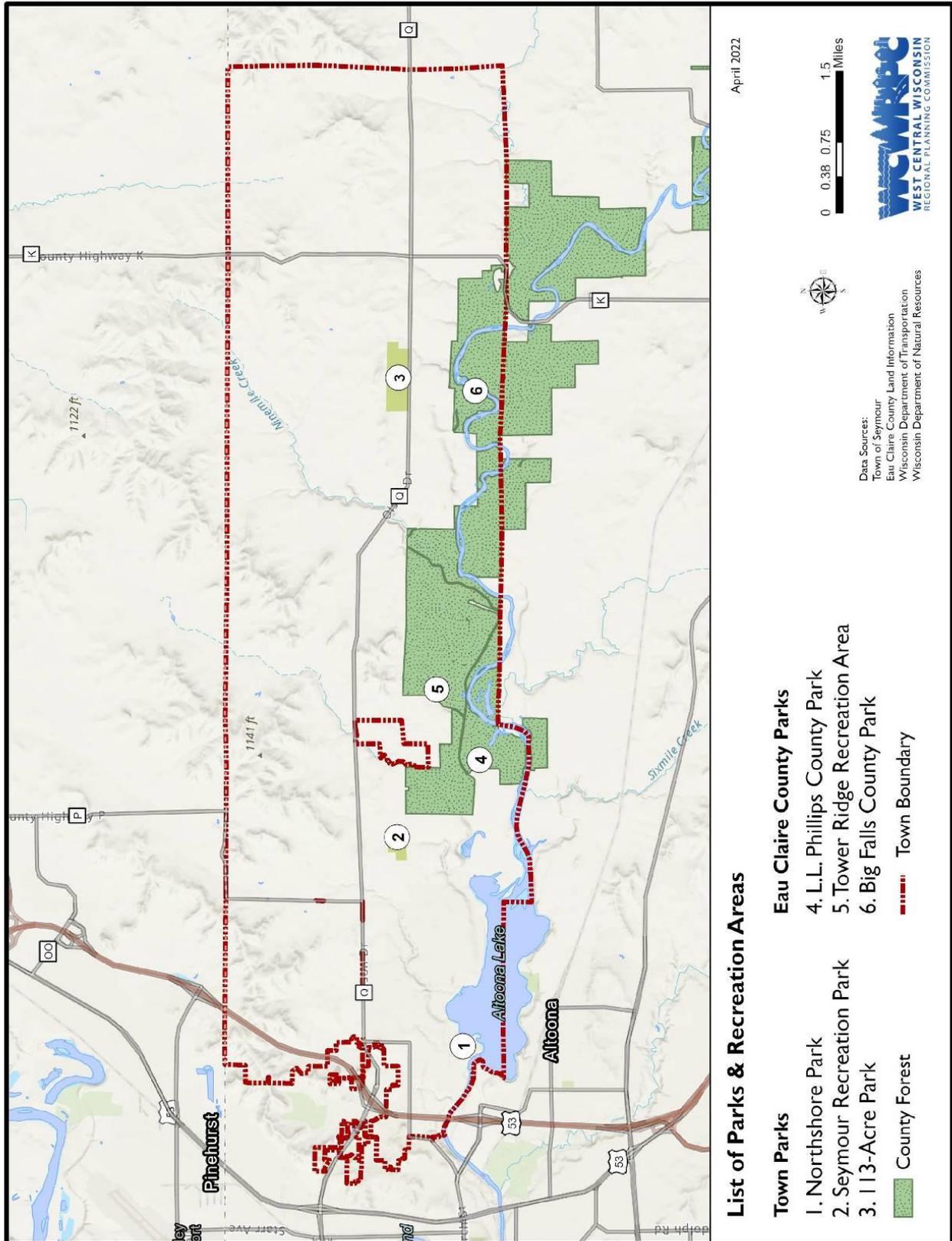
2. Continue to partner with organizations seeking to contribute volunteers, funding, and other resources towards the improvement of Town parks and recreation opportunities.
3. Identify grants or other funding opportunities to help leverage Town resources towards parks and recreation related improvements for the benefit of Town residents and visitors to the area.
5. Implement the recommended action items in the following action plan as resources and community priorities allow.

ACTION PLAN

Facility	Action Items	Cost Estimate	Time Frame
Seymour Recreation Park	ADA Accessible Playground	\$50,000	3-5 years
	New Shelter/Pavilion	\$15,000	5+ years
	Partner with Seymour Ball Club for the Following:		
	Additional ball field	\$50,000	1-3 years
	Internet/Wi-Fi	\$10,000	3-5 years
	New concession windows and siding	\$25,000	3-5 years
	LED lighting throughout park	\$75,000	5+ years
Northshore Park	Fix drainage problems on the walking path	\$25,000	5+ years
	New/expanded restroom facility	\$150,000	5+ years
113-Acre Park	Field lighting updates as needed	\$25,000	Ongoing
	Playground equipment	\$25,000	5+ years
	General maintenance and upkeep	\$500-\$1,000	Ongoing
	Develop site master plan	Committee/volunteers	1-3 years
Community	Safety improvements around “mine area” open pit	\$5,000	1-3 years
	Parking improvements	\$5,000	3-5 years
	Develop hiking/biking trail networks	\$25,000	5+ years
	As new development occurs, work with developers and existing residents to identify open space or other recreation amenities to support growth	Committee/volunteers	Ongoing
	Explore new or expanded recreation opportunities	Committee/volunteers	Ongoing

A number of the above projects are potential candidates for grant assistance from the WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship local assistance grant program; keep in mind that this grant program generally does not fund maintenance activities or standalone equipment. Please see Section VI. E., which discusses outdoor recreation funding in more detail.

Map 26. Town of Seymour Parks and Recreation Areas



E. TOWN OF PLEASANT VALLEY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

SUPPLY

The following section inventories the existing public and private properties developed or designated for outdoor recreation purposes within the Town of Pleasant Valley. **Map 27** at the end of this sub-section shows the location of these recreation areas.

Community Facilities

CLEGHORN SCHOOL PARK (County Highway HH/I)
 Located next to the Pleasant Valley Town Hall and the Township Fire Station, this recreation area serves as a community park. Facilities include a softball field (with bleachers and ball field lights), a large open grassed area, a picnic area, a pavilion with kitchen and restrooms, and playground equipment. The old town hall was recently relocated to the park property as well. A large parking lot is also available. The property has a designated nature trail with benches for wildlife observation.

9.1 ACRES



Town park amenities include:

- Playground equipment
- Pavilion with 30' x 50' covered area, stainless steel kitchen, public address system, and restrooms
- Cooking shelter
- Professional grade softball field with lighting and electronic scoreboard
- Asphalt parking
- Safety lighting
- Nature trail
- Manicured grass, open space, and shade trees

Special Use Areas

HICKORY HILLS GOLF COURSE (E4080 Hickory Rd)

100 ACRES

This course is a 100-acre, 18-hole executive length course geared towards the recreational golfer. The Par 63 course offers a pro shop, practice green, practice bunker, free Wi-Fi internet access, and banquet facilities.

DEMAND/NEEDS

Three factors are examined to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:

1. Space Needs—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population.

2. Service Needs—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
3. Activity/Amenity Needs—Whether or not the existing, available park lands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.

Standards are available to help address the first two factors, which is the focus of this subsection, while the third factor is considered as part of the Action Plan recommendations. And while standards are helpful, the community itself is best positioned to analyze these factors.

Space Needs. The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has found, for communities with less than 20,000 residents: a median of one park for every 1,231 residents and 12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents. This metric can be used to help assess whether the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents.

According to the population figures shown in the table below, the 2020 population for the Town of Pleasant Valley is 3,791 persons. The projected population change from the 2020 estimate to 2040 shows an expected increase of 2,000 persons, or +53 percent.

Park and Recreation Area Need • Town of Pleasant Valley

Year	Population	Recommended Acreage	Total Existing Acreage	Surplus/Deficit Acres
2020	3,791	45.5	9.1	-36.4
2025	4,291	51.5	9.1	-42.4
2030	4,791	57.5	9.1	-48.4
2035	5,291	63.5	9.1	-54.4
2040	5,791	69.5	9.1	-60.4

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Estimates (1/1/20) and Projections by Town of Pleasant Valley, based on current growth trend of at least 30 new housing units per year and nearly 100 additional residents each year.

The total land area devoted to parks and developed outdoor recreation in the Town of Pleasant Valley is about 9.1 acres. This number is below the recommended acreage for 2020 based on the NRPA standard. While the above space needs calculations suggest there is a deficit in park and recreation lands, this is not necessarily the case for the following reasons:

1. The NRPA standard of 12 acres to 1,000 residents is better suited for incorporated cities and villages or more developed towns.
2. Rural towns with lower population densities typically have larger residential lots and plenty of other open space within private lands that are available for recreation. In such cases, the backyard often serves as the playground.
3. Rural residents have motor vehicles and are accustomed to traveling outside their neighborhood or even community for a desired service or destination.

During the update of this outdoor recreation plan and other relevant community planning efforts, Town officials did not immediately identify the need to acquire additional park or outdoor recreation lands. However, the Town is experiencing significant growth and if a similar trend continues, should monitor

and evaluate future park needs to accommodate the recreation needs of new and future residents or neighborhoods in the community.

Service Areas. Service areas vary for different types of parks as summarized in **Appendix C**. Community parks have facilities that are intended to serve the entire community, including several neighborhoods or an area having a radius up to two miles. Residents are expected to travel to community parks, therefore major streets and roads do not present barriers to accessing this type of park. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds, on the other hand, are intended to serve an area of ¼ to ½ mile in radius and are intended to serve young children; consequently, major streets and roads can present barriers to accessing this type of park.

Activity/Amenity Needs. The community has determined that its existing park and recreation areas provide sufficient open space to accommodate desired activities and amenities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and action plan serves as a guide for the Town of Pleasant Valley in the acquisition, development, and improvement of outdoor recreations sites and facilities within the community. The Town will set priorities, adjust timelines, and address the most urgent needs as funding and resources allow. However, priorities, opportunities, and resources can change over time, and new projects not included here may be considered. Likewise, it is also recognized that not all these recommendations and action plan items will necessarily be implemented during the next 5-10 years.

1. Develop and maintain Pleasant Valley’s outdoor recreation and park system in a manner that follows the intent of the goals, objectives, and recommendations in Section V.
2. Continue to partner with organizations seeking to contribute volunteers, funding, and other resources towards the improvement of Town parks and recreation opportunities.
3. Identify grants or other funding opportunities to help leverage Town resources towards parks and recreation related improvements for the benefit of Town residents and visitors to the area.
4. Implement the recommended action items in the following action plan as resources and community priorities allow.
5. Continue to monitor population growth trends to support outdoor recreation demands and opportunities for current and future residents of the community.

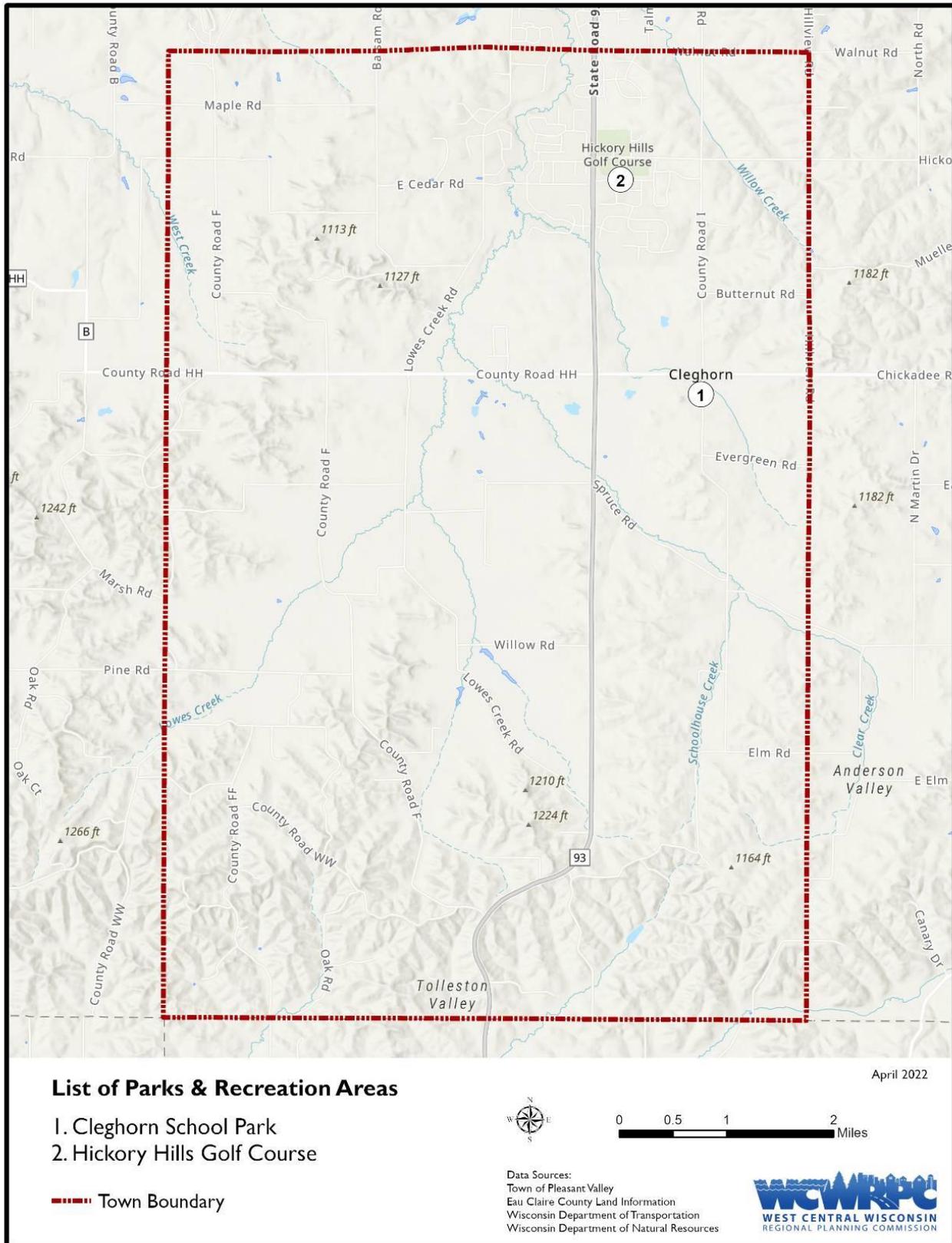
ACTION PLAN

Facility	Action Items	Cost Estimate	Time Frame
Cleghorn School Park	Dugout covers for the softball field	\$5,000	1-3 years
	Install fan deck at the ball field	\$25,000	3-5 years
	Install weather alert siren	\$15,000	3-5 years

	General maintenance and upkeep	\$500-\$1,000	Ongoing
Community	Additional picnic areas and bench seating	\$5,000	1-3 years
	Assist in renovation of the old town hall	Committee/ volunteers	5+ years
	Develop/maintain nature trail opportunities	Committee/ volunteers	5+ years
	If population growth continues, seek WDNR grant funds to support the acquisition and development of a new community park to support increased recreation demands and opportunities.	\$50,000- \$100,000	3-5 years

Several above projects may be potential candidates for grant assistance from the WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship local assistance grant program; keep in mind that this grant program generally does not fund maintenance activities or standalone equipment. Please see Section VI. E., which discusses outdoor recreation funding in more detail.

Map 27. Town of Pleasant Valley Parks and Recreation Areas



F. TOWN OF FAIRCHILD OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

SUPPLY

The following section inventories the existing public and private properties developed or designated for outdoor recreation purposes within the Town of Fairchild. As a rural, low-density community without any large subdivisions, the Town does not have any traditional neighborhood or community parks. However, there are a number of specialized outdoor recreational facilities located in the Town. **Map 28** at the end of this sub-section shows the location of these recreation areas.

Specialty Outdoor Recreation Facilities

FAIRCHILD AREA HISTORICAL TRIBUTE (S 15052 Old Highway 12)

3 ACRES

Located on U.S. Highway 12 less than one-mile northwest of the Village of Fairchild, the Historical Tribute is a wayside park that serves the community and highway travelers year-round. Area residents, including the area's Amish population, frequently use the park for picnics, while it is growing in popularity as a rest stop as more travelers become familiar with its existence.

The Tribute is on land owned by the Town of Fairchild and managed under an agreement with The Area Historical Tribute, Inc., which is a 501(c)(3). The Area Historical Tribute formed in 2001 to:

Commemorate those who lived, sacrificed, and suffered to build the legacy of our community, and to display community pride, share local community history, and to show the heart and soul of red-blooded American patriotism.

As shown to the right, the Tribute is largely open space with a small area of pine to the north and a few other scattered trees. Access to the Tribute is from Old Highway 12, which is a sand-gravel "eyebrow-style" side road. A small parking area is available immediately off this road at the main section of the developed park area.

The Tribute currently includes the following features and amenities:

- a large sign oriented to highway w/ wayside name
- a train caboos with items of historical interest inside
- 8 flag poles
- a kiosk with local historical information
- a small, open-sided pavilion with built-in bench seating and 2 picnic tables
- a smaller, closed-sided gazebo with picnic table

Fairchild Area Historical Tribute



- a small pedestrian bridge over the stormwater drainage swale
- a community bulletin board
- a bench surrounded by landscaping and veteran memorials
- Tribute brick displays
- a dropbox for the retirement of old or damaged American flags
- portable toilets
- maintenance shed
- various landscaping, plantings, and public art, including old mill stones at the bridge



Generally, the north side of the bridge is more of a military and veteran tribute, while the south side celebrates the area's history more broadly. However, there is a desire to re-evaluate the property's layout and develop a new site plan, so this could change. Some initial discussions have taken place with UW-Madison Extension's placemaking program to potentially assist with this park master planning effort. It is important that such site planning consider and address the

property's stormwater runoff challenges from U.S. Highway 12 to the west, which is built-up or elevated higher than the park. There is also interest in constructing a restroom building with potable water. However, the high groundwater table at the property would likely pose challenges to installing an on-site wastewater treatment system. Improving ADA accessibility at the wayside is also a priority.

STAGE COACH BIKE TRAIL

21 miles total

This 21-mile, on-road bicycle route connects the Village of Fairchild and the City Augusta, with a substantial portion located in the Town of Fairchild. As noted previously, route signage improvements are needed as well as a nice map for marketing purposes.

BUFFALO RIVER STATE TRAIL

36 miles total

The Buffalo River State Trail is a WDNR-maintained, multi-use trail that extends 36 miles from Fairchild and west to Mondovi on a former railroad grade. The surface is a combination of railroad ballast and limestone screenings. About 0.70 miles of the trail lies within the Town of Fairchild and the eastern trailhead is located on 7.8 acres of WDNR-owned land in the northwest part of the Village of Fairchild.

FAIRCHILD SPORTSMEN'S CLUB SHOOTING RANGE (Pond Road)

2.25 ACRES

This rifle and small arms shooting range is located just north Fairchild Pond along Pond Road. This is a private facility; use of the shooting range is principally limited to Club members and for Club-sponsored events. The Pond and remaining Club facilities are located immediately to the south within the Village of Fairchild.

FAIRCHILD SCHOOL FOREST (County Highway "H" near Gravel Pit Rd)

40 ACRES

The former Fairchild School District's school forest is located on the west side of County Highway "H" just north of Gravel Pit Road. Schoolhouse Creek runs along the west side of the property. This wooded property is now owned by the Town of Fairchild. In recent years, that Town has leased the property to a

nearby game farm operator. The property's forested nature and access to the Creek as well as convenient access to the County Forest and a locally popular restaurant with ice cream nearby may be an opportunity for the Town to develop the property as a public park, possibly with a campground or other specialized outdoor recreation use, in the future.

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY FOREST

7,892 ACRES

About one-third of the Town of Fairchild is County Forest land, which is managed by the Eau Claire County Parks & Forest Department for timber and for a range of public outdoor recreation uses as discussed in Section III.

OTHER RECREATIONAL ROUTES & TRAILS

The Town of Fairchild is well-connected to the recreational trails within Eau Claire and Clark counties, making the area a destination for ATV/UTV enthusiasts. ATV/UTV use is allowed on all Town roads. As shown in Section III, a major ATV and snowmobile route extends through the County Forest on the Town's east side.

DEMAND/NEEDS

Three factors are examined to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:

4. **Space Needs**—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population.
5. **Service Needs**—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
6. **Activity/Amenity Needs**—Whether or not the existing, available park lands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.

Standards are available to help address the first two factors, which is the focus of this subsection, while the third factor is considered as part of the Action Plan recommendations. And while standards are helpful, the community itself is best positioned to analyze these factors.

Space Needs. The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has found, for communities with fewer than 20,000 residents: a median of one park for every 1,231 residents and 12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents. This metric can be used to help assess whether the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents.

According to the population figures shown in the table below, the 2020 population for the Town of Fairchild was 361 persons. The projected population change from the 2020 estimate to 2040 shows an expected increase of 38 persons, or +10.5 percent. In terms of assessing recreation space needs, this isn't a significant change in population.

Park and Recreation Area Need • Town of Fairchild

Year	Population	Recommended Acreage	Total Existing Acreage	Surplus/ Deficit Acres
2020	361	4.33	3.00	-1.33
2025	370	4.44	3.00	-1.44
2030	379	4.55	3.00	-1.55
2035	389	4.67	3.00	-1.67
2040	399	4.79	3.00	-1.79

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Estimates (1/1/20) and Projections 2025-2040 based on the Town's 0.53% annual population growth rate between 2010 to 2020.

With the Town's smaller population, only one public park would be needed to meet the NRPA minimum metric of one park for every 1,231 residents. If the Historical Tribute was considered the only public park in the Town of Fairchild, the above table would suggest that there is a slight deficit in available public outdoor recreation land in the community. However, this is misleading for a number of reasons:

1. The NRPA standard of 12 acres to 1,000 residents is better suited for incorporated cities, villages, and more developed towns. Rural towns with lower population densities typically have larger residential lots and plenty of other open space within private lands that are available for recreation. In such cases, the backyard often serves as the playground.
2. Most rural residents have motor vehicles and are accustomed to traveling outside their neighborhood or even community for a desired service or destination. There are many acres of County park and forest lands nearby that are also available to Town residents that were not considered as part of the total existing acreage above. In addition, public park land and playgrounds are available nearby within the Village of Fairchild.
3. The Amish community is a large segment of the Town of Fairchild's population. Some Amish schools offer play equipment and play areas for youth.

During the update of this outdoor recreation plan and other relevant community planning efforts, Town officials did not identify a need for the acquisition of additional park or outdoor recreation lands, though there may be an opportunity to support the local tourism economy by creating a new park or campground at the former School Forest property. Regardless, the Town should continue to regularly monitor population change and community growth in order to evaluate future park needs.

Service Areas. Service areas vary for different types of parks as summarized in **Appendix C**. However, the Town of Fairchild does not have any traditional neighborhood or community parks. As mentioned previously, the Town's development pattern is very low density with no large residential subdivisions or housing developments. As such, there is not an expectation that public parks or other public outdoor recreational amenities should be available within walking distance for all Town residents and such a goal would not be financially feasible.

Activity/Amenity Needs. The community has determined that its existing park and recreation areas provide sufficient open space to accommodate desired activities and amenities. While improvements are desired for the Historical Tribute wayside, no land acquisition is planned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and action plan serve as a guide for the Town of Fairchild in the acquisition, development, and improvement of outdoor recreations sites and facilities within the community. The Town will set priorities, adjust timelines, and address the most urgent needs as funding and resources allow. However, priorities, opportunities, and resources can change over time, and new projects not included here may be considered. For example, the Historical Tribute will complete the projects for the wayside park as soon as adequate funding and resources are available. Likewise, it is also recognized that not all of these recommendations and action plan items will necessarily be implemented during the next 5-10 years.

1. Develop and maintain the Town of Fairchild’s outdoor recreation and park system in a manner that follows the intent of the goals, objectives, and recommendations in Section V.
2. Encourage the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to expand the parking area at the Buffalo River State Trailhead and install a restroom and informational kiosk/signage.
3. Encourage Eau Claire County and bicycling interest groups to improve on-route signage for Stage Coach Bike Trail and to produce a map that can be used to market the trail’s availability.
4. If deemed feasible, explore opportunities to develop a park, campground, and/or other specialized outdoor recreation use at the former Fairchild School Forest. This is likely a longer-term recommendation and may be dependent on the ability (or inability) of the Town to lease the property as a source of revenue. In the interim, activities allowed under lease agreements at the School Forest should not prevent the property’s potential future use for public outdoor recreational purposes.
5. In collaboration with The Area Historical Tribute, Inc., implement the recommended items in the following action plan as resources allow.

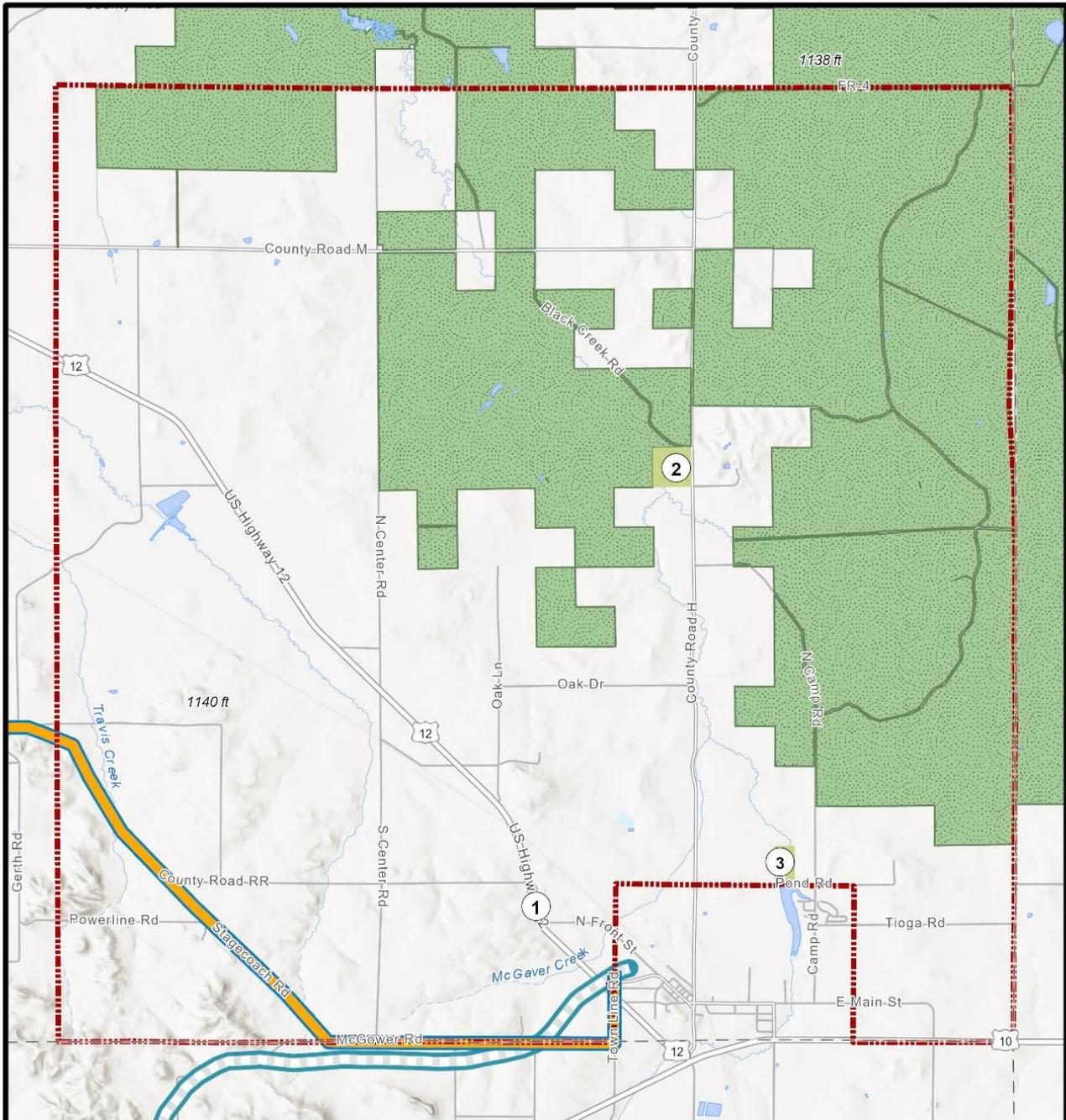
ACTION PLAN

Facility	Action Items	Cost Estimate	Time Frame
Fairchild Area Historical Tribute wayside park	Refurbish the exterior of the caboose (e.g., sandblasting, repainting)	\$4,000-\$6,000	2022
	Develop a master site plan to improve layout, aesthetics, and attractiveness of the park, including the placement of desired new amenities. This may be completed with support from the Extension Placemaking Program. Consider a REALTORS placemaking grant to support this activity or assist in implementation.	\$1,000-\$10,000	1-3 years

Fairchild Area Historical Tribute wayside park <i>(continued)</i>	Explore the potential relocation of the old schoolhouse currently at the Town Hall site to the wayside park, including the installation of a slab/foundation as needed.	undetermined	1-3 years
	Coordinate with The Highground, veterans’ organizations, and other area military tributes to create a Military History or Tribute Trail with mapped routes for motorcycle and other tribute/charity rides. The route would include stops at military or veteran tribute locations, including the Fairchild Area Historical Tribute. Create, print, and distribute the maps.	\$500-\$1,000; costs to be shared among tribute groups	1-3 years
	Install new landscaping, signage, electrical, and lighting based on the master site plan. Relocate some existing structures and amenities. Coordinate with WDOT to address stormwater runoff and regrade as part of the landscaping effort. Provide ADA-accessible parking, paths, and picnic areas.	\$45,000-\$75,000	2-5 years; sooner or phased-in as funding allows
	Install ADA-accessible restrooms and potable water. Restrooms will likely use holding tanks.	\$25,000-\$50,000	3+ years; sooner or phased-in as funding allows
	Install playground equipment (perhaps train themed), family-oriented “things to do,” and other picnic amenities (e.g., grills, waste containers) as guided by the master planning and placemaking efforts.	undetermined	3+ years; sooner or phased-in as funding allows
	Explore options to provide ADA accessibility to the caboose.	undetermined	3+ years; sooner or phased-in as funding allows

A number of the above projects are potential candidates for grant assistance from the WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship local assistance grant program keeping in mind that this grant program generally does not fund maintenance activities or stand-alone equipment. Since The Area Historical Tribute, Inc., is not a conservation or trails organization, the Town of Fairchild would need to be the applicant for such WDNR grants under current rules. The Historical Tribute organization desires to maximize “sweat equity” and in-kind donated time as part of local cost sharing for grant projects. Please see Section VI. E., which discusses outdoor recreation funding in more detail.

Map 28. Town of Fairchild Parks and Recreation Areas

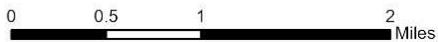


List of Parks & Recreation Areas

1. Fairchild Area Historical Tribute
2. Town of Fairchild Former School Forest
3. Fairchild Sportsman's Club Shooting Range

 Buffalo River State Trail	 County Forest
 Stage Coach Bike Trail	 Town Boundary

April 2022

Data Sources:
 Town of Fairchild
 Eau Claire County Land Information
 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



G. TOWN OF WASHINGTON OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

SUPPLY

The following section inventories the existing public and private properties developed or designated for outdoor recreation purposes within the Town of Washington. **Map 29** at the end of this sub-section shows the location of these recreation areas.

Community Facilities

LITTLE LEAGUE BALL DIAMOND & CONSERVANCY AREA (Horlacher Lane) 13.49 ACRES

Located near the Township Fire Department, Inc. Dispatch Center, this recreation area serves as a community park. Facilities include two Little League baseball fields (with fencing, scoreboard, and bleachers), a tee-ball field (with fencing), batting cages, and a concession stand/storage building. A large, asphalt parking lot is available. A wetland area on the property has been designated as a nature conservancy area.



SEVEN MILE CREEK PARK (W. Park Creek Road)

5.81 ACRES

This park site was dedicated to the Town of Washington when Park Creek Estates was created. This site has a backstop for baseball and softball, wooden benches, and a walking path connecting East Park Creek and West Park Creek Roads. The ballfield area has been converted to a prairie grass area.



TRILLIUM PARK (Talmadge Road & White Owl Lane)

10.11 ACRES

This park site was dedicated to the Town of Washington when Trillium Estates was created.

This site has bike racks, metal benches, wetlands, and a paved walking trail connecting Talmadge Road, White Owl Lane and State Highway 93.



BIKE TRAIL (along Highway 93)

2.5 MILES

This bike trail was dedicated to the Town of Washington when State Highway 93 was expanded in 2005. The trail is paved from Friedeck Road to Walnut Road along the Highway 93 corridor.



County Facilities

LOWES CREEK COUNTY PARK (South Lowes Creek Road/State Road 93)

226.4 ACRES

This is a four-season recreation area owned and maintained by Eau Claire County. Amenities include a reservable picnic shelter, pit toilets, trout stream, Paracourse Fitness Course, and dozens of miles of single-track trails used for hiking, dog walking, show shoeing, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking.

DEMAND/NEEDS

Three factors are examined to determine the need for additional outdoor recreational sites and facilities:

1. **Space Needs**—Whether or not there is adequate land or open space to serve the needs of the population.
2. **Service Needs**—Whether or not outdoor recreational sites are adequately located to serve the needs of the community.
3. **Activity/Amenity Needs**—Whether or not the existing, available park lands allow for a specific, desired recreational activity or amenity.

Standards are available to help address the first two factors, which is the focus of this subsection, while the third factor is considered as part of the Action Plan recommendations. And while standards are helpful, the community itself is best positioned to analyze these factors.

Space Needs. The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) has found, for communities with less than 20,000 residents: a median of one park for every 1,231 residents and 12 public park acres for every 1,000 residents. This metric can be used to help assess whether or not the community has adequate open space to serve the outdoor recreational needs of residents.

According to the population figures shown in the table below, the 2020 population for the Town of Washington is 7,662 persons. The projected population change from the 2020 estimate to 2040 shows an expected increase of 398 persons, or +5.2 percent.

Park and Recreation Area Need • Town of Washington

Year	Population	Recommended Acreage	Total Existing Acreage	Surplus/Deficit Acres
2020	7,662	91.9	29.4	-62.5
2025	7,710	92.5	29.4	-63.1
2030	7,880	94.6	29.4	-65.2
2035	7,975	95.7	29.4	-66.3
2040	8,060	96.7	29.4	-67.3

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Official Municipal Population Estimates (1/1/20) and Projections 2010- 2040 (12/10/13)

The total land area devoted to parks and developed outdoor recreation in the Town of Washington, is about 29.4 acres. This number is below the recommended acreage for 2020 based on the NRPA standard. While the above space needs calculations suggest there is a deficit in park and recreation lands, this is not necessarily the case for several reasons:

1. The NRPA standard of 12 acres to 1,000 residents is better suited for incorporated cities and villages or more developed towns. Rural towns with lower population densities typically have larger residential lots and plenty of other open space within private lands that are available for recreation. In such cases, the backyard often serves as the playground.

2. The total existing acreage above does not include other undeveloped, public open spaces in the community that are available for outdoor recreation.
3. Rural residents have motor vehicles and are accustomed to traveling outside their neighborhood or even community for a desired service or destination. There are also many hundred acres of County Park and forest lands available to Town residents that were not considered part of the total available acreage owned and managed by the community. Lowes Creek County Park for example, provides several hundred acres of well-developed hiking and biking trails that are available for use year-round, along with other picnic, fitness, and day use facilities and amenities.

During the update of this outdoor recreation plan and other relevant community planning efforts, Town officials did not identify an immediate need for the acquisition of additional park or outdoor recreation lands. However, the Town should continue to regularly monitor population change and community growth in order to evaluate future park needs.

Service Areas. Service areas vary for different types of parks as summarized in **Appendix C**. Community parks have facilities that are intended to serve the entire community, including several neighborhoods or an area having a radius up to two miles. Residents are expected to travel to community parks, therefore major streets and roads do not present barriers to accessing this type of park. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds, on the other hand, are intended to serve an area of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile in radius and are intended to serve young children; consequently, major streets and roads can present barriers to accessing this type of park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations and action plan serves as a guide for the Town of Washington in the acquisition, development, and improvement of outdoor recreations sites and facilities within the community. The Town will set priorities, adjust timelines, and address the most urgent needs as funding and resources allow. However, priorities, opportunities, and resources can change over time, and new projects not included here may be considered. Likewise, it is also recognized that not all these recommendations and action plan items will necessarily be implemented during the next 5-10 years.

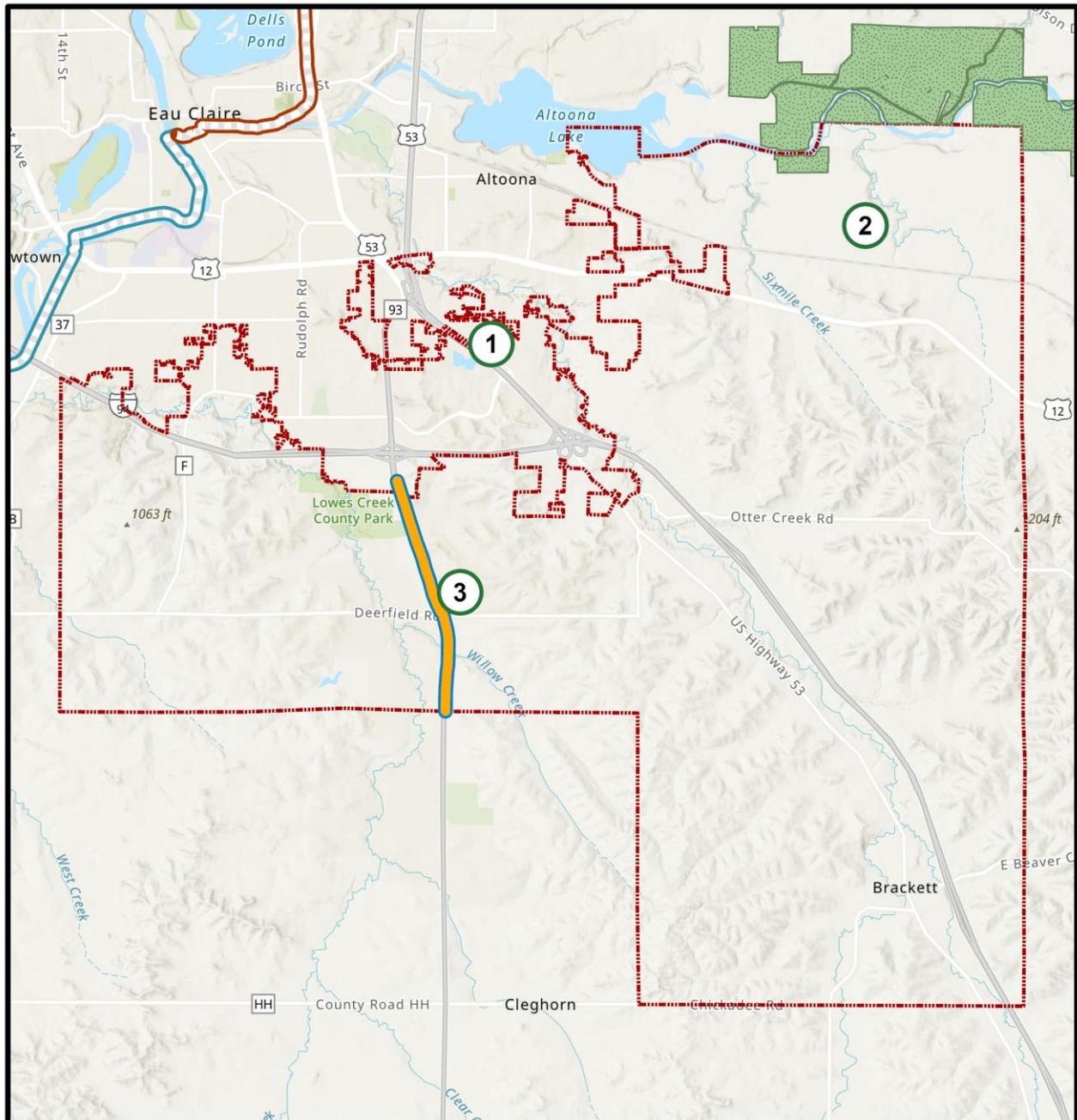
1. Develop and maintain Washington's outdoor recreation and park system in a manner that follows the intent of the goals, objectives, and recommendations of this plan.
2. Continue to partner with organizations seeking to contribute volunteers, funding, and other resources towards the improvement of Town parks and recreation opportunities.
3. Identify grants or other funding opportunities to help leverage Town resources towards parks and recreation related improvements for the benefit of Town residents and visitors to the area.
4. Partner with Lowes Creek Little League in their three-year capital improvement plan.
5. Investigate the acquisition and/or development of other park sites.

ACTION PLAN

Facility	Action Items	Cost Estimate	Time Frame
Little League Ball Diamond & Conservancy Area	Contribute to Little League Capital Improvement Plan	\$35,000	1-3 years
	Research relocation of Little League Park for expansion	Committee/Volunteers	1-5 years
Seven-Mile Creek Park	General maintenance and upkeep	Committee/Volunteers	Ongoing
Trillium Park	Install park signage	\$5,000 to \$25,000	1-3 years
	Prairie grass plantings	\$5,000 to \$15,000	1-3 years
	General maintenance and upkeep	Committee/Volunteers	Ongoing
Community Projects	Investigate the acquisition and development of additional neighborhood parks and trails as new development occurs.		
	Potential sites include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property adjacent to Town Municipal Building – playground equipment, table, benches, stationary grills, etc. 	\$50,000	1-5 years
	Support bike/walking trail connections to surrounding communities and State trail networks including extension of the existing trail to Lowes Creek County Park. Continue to support and encourage expanded/connected trail networks with new development.	\$10,000 to \$50,000	1-5 years

Several of the above projects are potential candidates for grant assistance from the WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship local assistance grant program; keep in mind that this grant program generally does not fund maintenance activities or standalone equipment. Please see Section VI. E., which discusses outdoor recreation funding in more detail.

Map 29. Town of Washington Parks and Recreation Areas



List of Parks & Recreation Areas

- 1. Little League Ball Diamond & Conservancy Area
- 2. Seven-Mile Creek Park
- 3. Trillium Park

- Chippewa River State Trail
- Old Abe State Trail
- Town of Washington Trail
- County Forest
- Town Boundary

June 2022



Data Sources:
Town of Washington
Eau Claire County Land Information



APPENDIX A

ADOPTING RESOLUTIONS

APPENDIX B

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY RESULTS

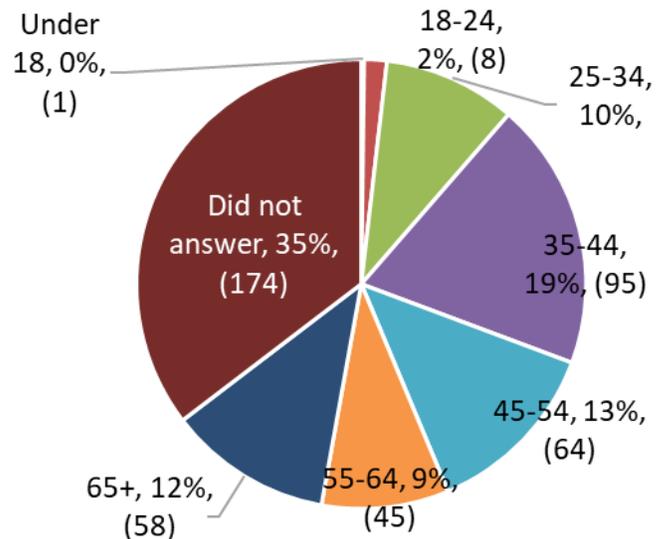
Methodology

To obtain resident and visitor input on the County’s outdoor recreational conditions and needs, a web-based community opinion survey was performed utilizing SurveyMonkey. At its December 22nd, 2021, meeting, the Eau Claire County plan update steering committee discussed the survey format and questions. The committee recognized that a web-based survey would limit participation to those with access to the internet and would not be a “scientific survey”, but it is a cost-efficient approach that would still provide valuable insights for updating the Plan’s objectives and recommendations. The committee also felt that the survey response rate would be more valuable if it was kept short with a limited number of questions.

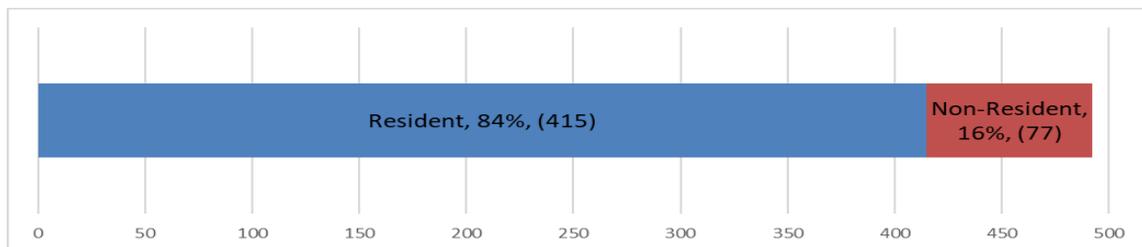
The survey’s availability was advertised through a press release to County media outlets, through email lists, and social media. Responses were collected from January 1st to January 31st, 2022. A total of 492 individual responses were received from 434 IP addresses.

About the Survey Participants

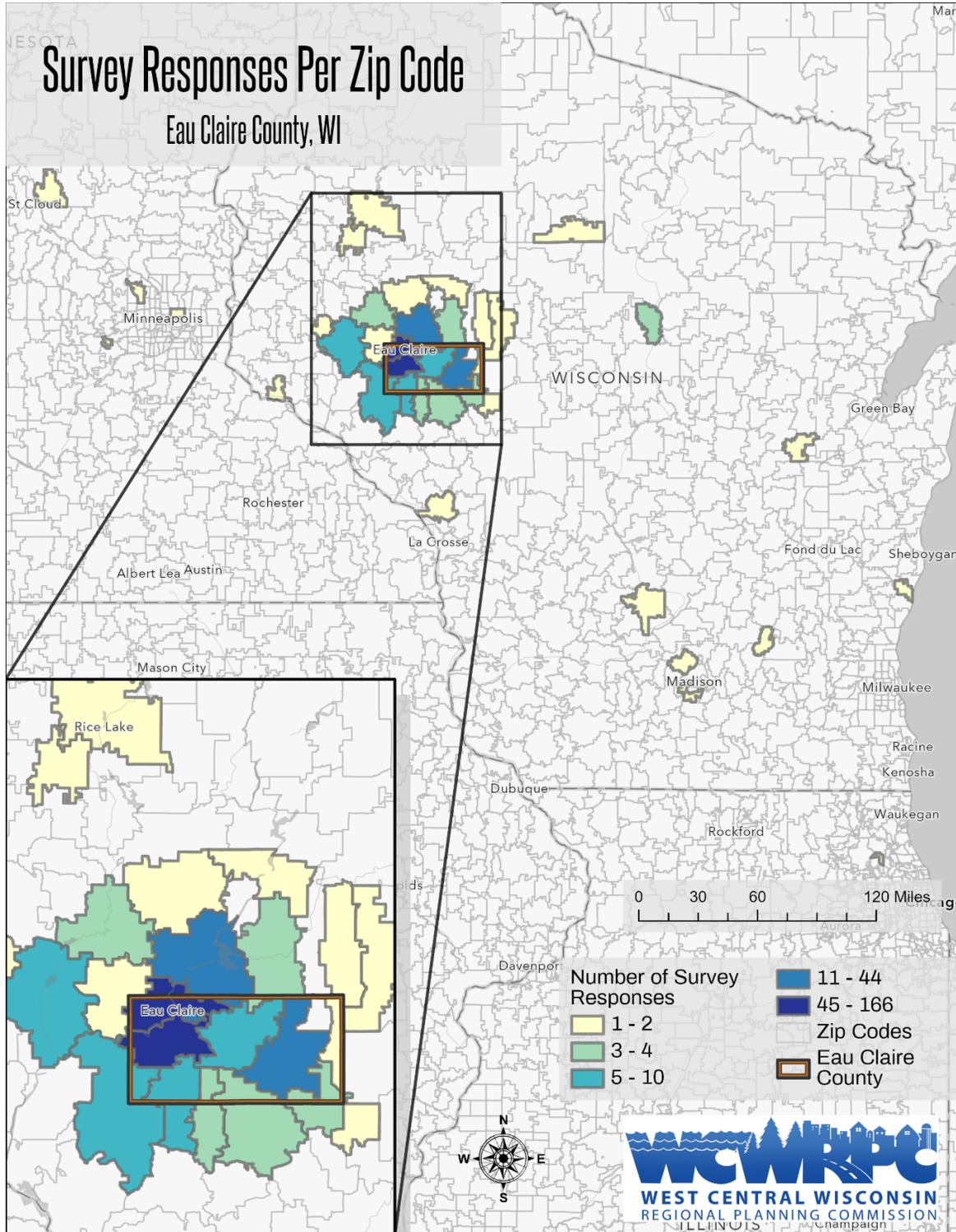
Based on the responses received, the respondents were fairly evenly spread across the age groups, with the largest age group of respondents being 35-44 (19%). Just over a third (36%) of respondents indicated they did not have children under the age of 18 residing in their household. However, over one-third of respondents did not answer these questions.



Place of Residence of Respondents



As reflected on the map below, more than 60% of all responses (313) came from the City of Eau Claire zip codes. There was one Eau Claire County zip code (54726) located in a portion of the Town of Wilson that had no responses. It should also be noted that there is one response not shown on the map, which came from northwest California.

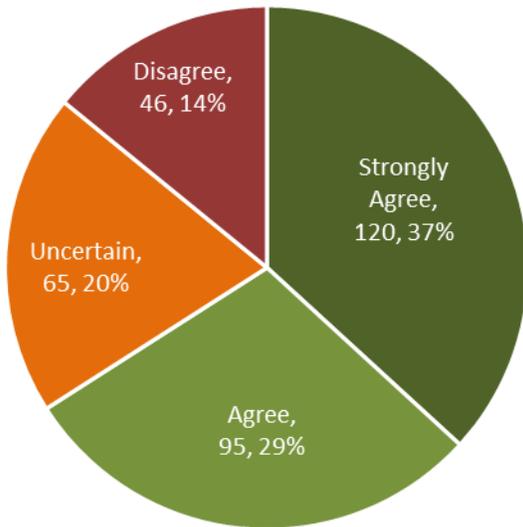


Issues/Threats to Outdoor Recreation

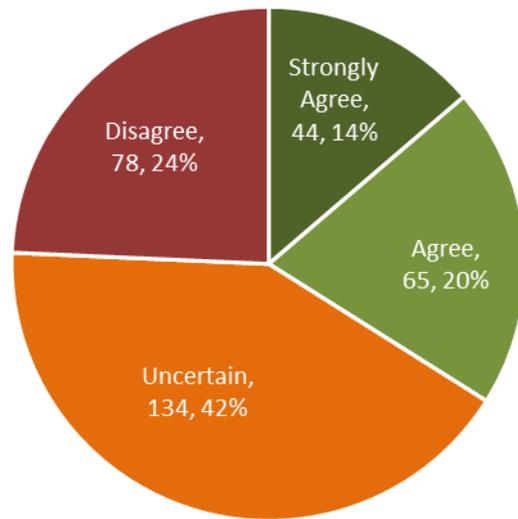
During the first steering committee meeting, attendees emphasized that there were several underlying issues or threats to outdoor recreation in the County. Invasive species, particularly buckthorn, was identified as a threat to the quality of the forestland and outdoor recreation. The other threat to the quality and safety within these facilities were increasing problems and costs with garbage, illegal dumping, and vandalism.

To understand the public’s knowledge of the threat that invasives pose, respondents were asked if they were aware of the issues buckthorn might create and their willingness to volunteer to help address this threat. The education of the threat of invasives seems to be well understood, with two-thirds of respondents recognizing it, however only half of those that understand the issue are willing to volunteer. 166 respondents skipped this question.

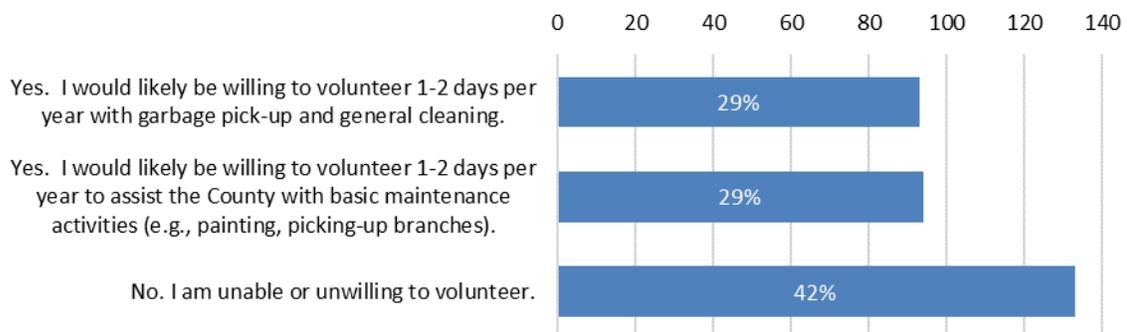
Question 1: I am aware of the threat that Buckthorn poses and related management efforts to reduce its spread.



Question 2: I am willing to volunteer to help with educational and/or management efforts to address the spread of Buckthorn in Eau Claire County



A following question inquired about people’s willingness to address garbage, vandalism, & dumping. Over half of the participants that chose to respond said they would be likely to help address the issue by either doing a general garbage pickup or basic maintenance tasks. 172 participants skipped this question.



Frequency of County Park & Facility Use

Respondents were asked how often they use each Eau Claire County outdoor recreation facility in a typical year. City, village, and town parks were excluded. 448 respondents answered the question and 44 skipped.

Most Used Facilities (frequently or often)

1. Bike Routes or Trails - Various Locations (69%)
2. Lowes Creek County Park (50%)
3. Tower Ridge Recreation Area (42%)
4. County Boat Landings – Various Locations (37%)

Least Used Facilities (Rarely or Never)

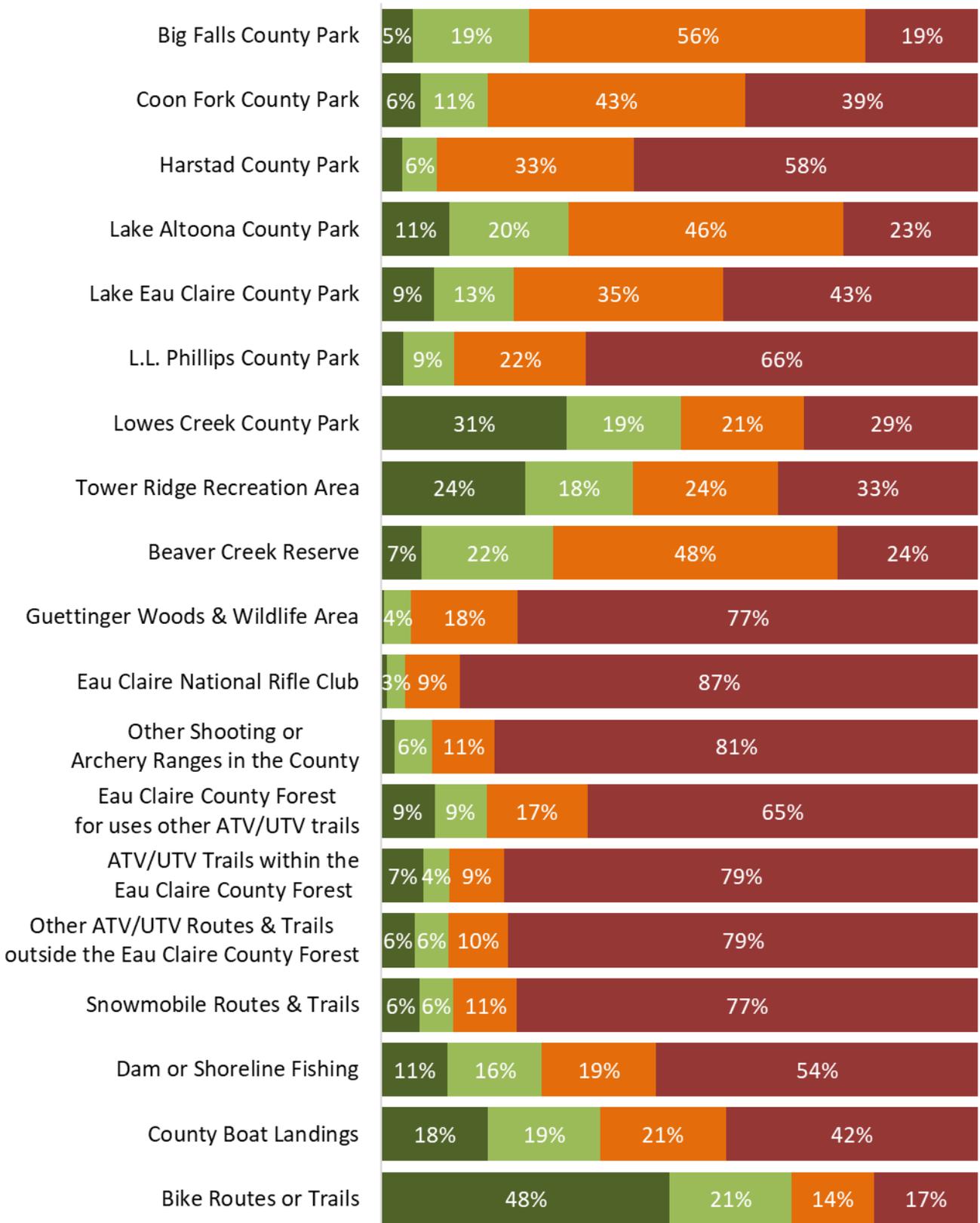
1. Eau Claire National Rifle Club (96%)
2. Guettinger Woods & Wildlife Area (95%)
3. Other Shooting or Archery Ranges in the County (92%)
4. Harstad County Park (91%)
5. ATV/ UTV Routes & Trails Within the Eau Claire County Forest (89%)
6. Other ATV/ UTV Routes & Trails outside the Eau Claire County Forest (89%)
7. L.L. Phillips County Park (88%)
8. Snowmobile Routes & Trails – Various Locations (88%)

Non-residents were most likely to respond that they frequently use the bike routes or trails, Tower Ridge, Coon Fork County Park, or Lowes Creek County Park. Coon Fork is the only County park or facility that has significantly more non-residents traffic than residents among survey respondents. Lowes Creek had the 3rd highest use for non-residents (14%), but residents still utilize this park more with 34% indicating its general popularity. The facility least used by residents was the Eau Claire National Rifle Club.

Facility use among respondents under age 45 compared to those over 45 was similar for most facilities. The responses suggest that the use of County boat landings and Tower Ridge were slightly higher for those over the age of 45. Lake Altoona was used slightly more by respondents under age 45.

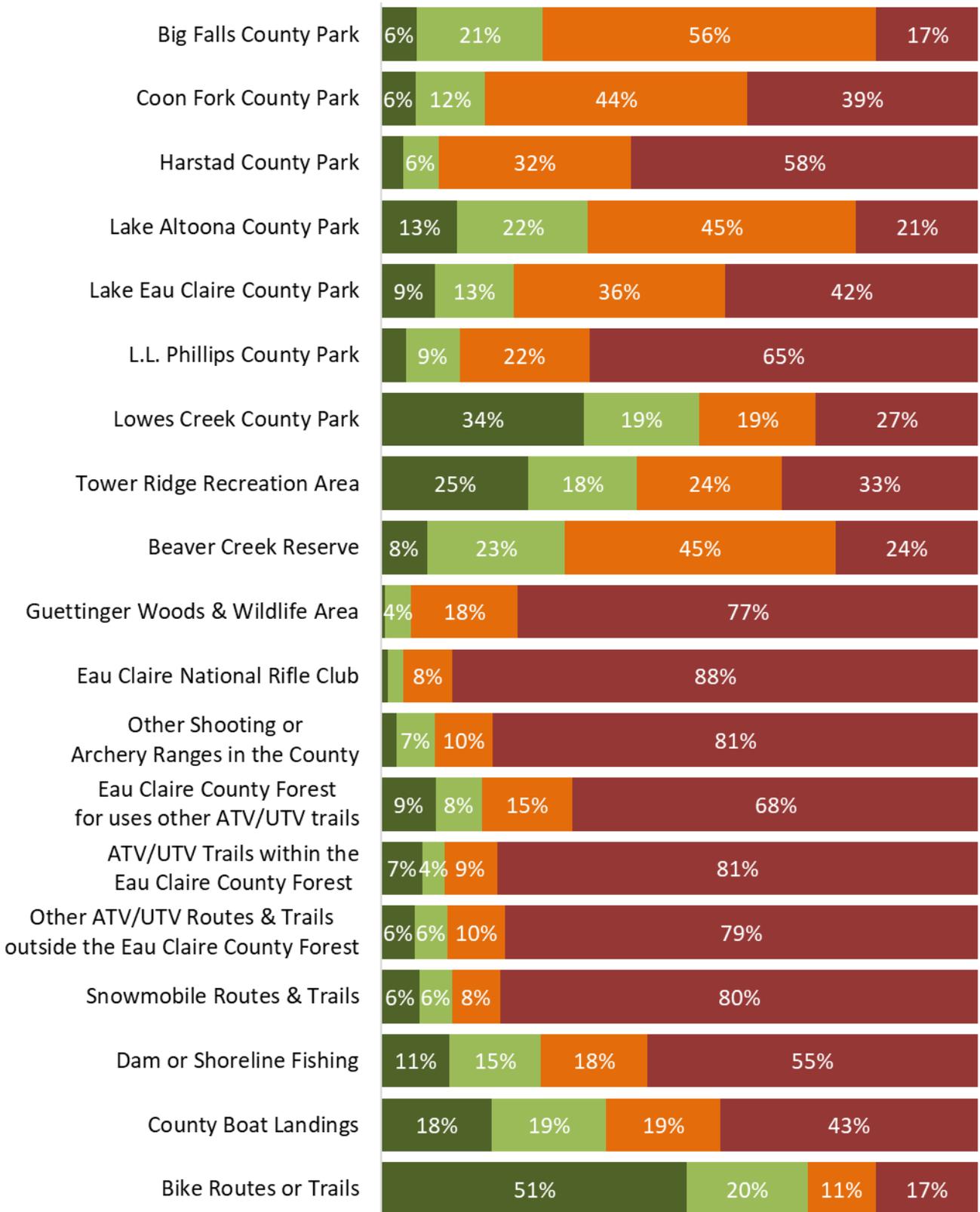
Facility use among respondents with and without children under the age of 18 living in the home was also similar for most facilities with a couple of key differences. Lowes Creek, Tower Ridge, and the bike routes were more popular with respondents with children. County Forest land for uses other than ATV/ UTV were more popular for those without children as well as County boat landings.

All Responses – Facility Use



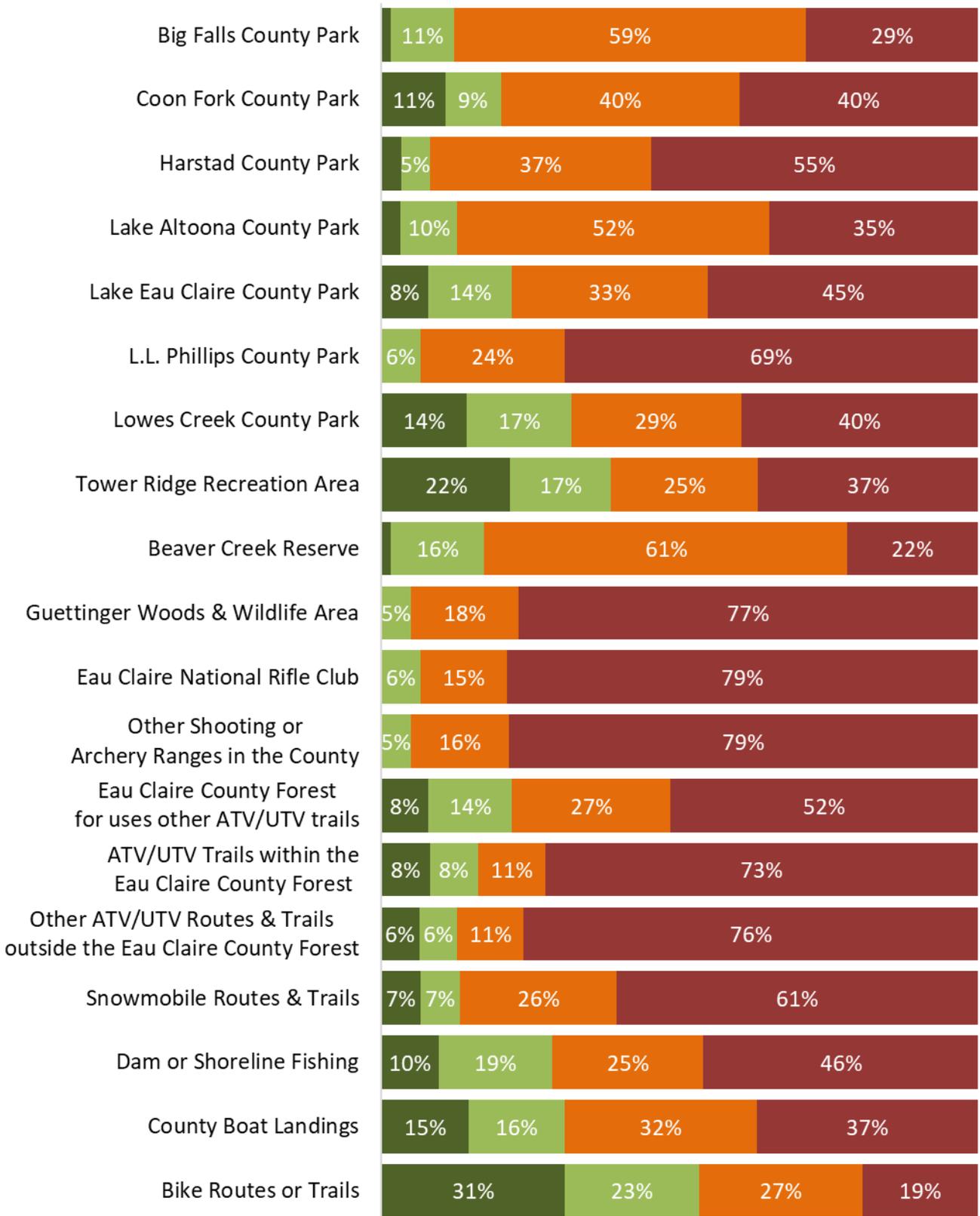
■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Resident – Facility Use



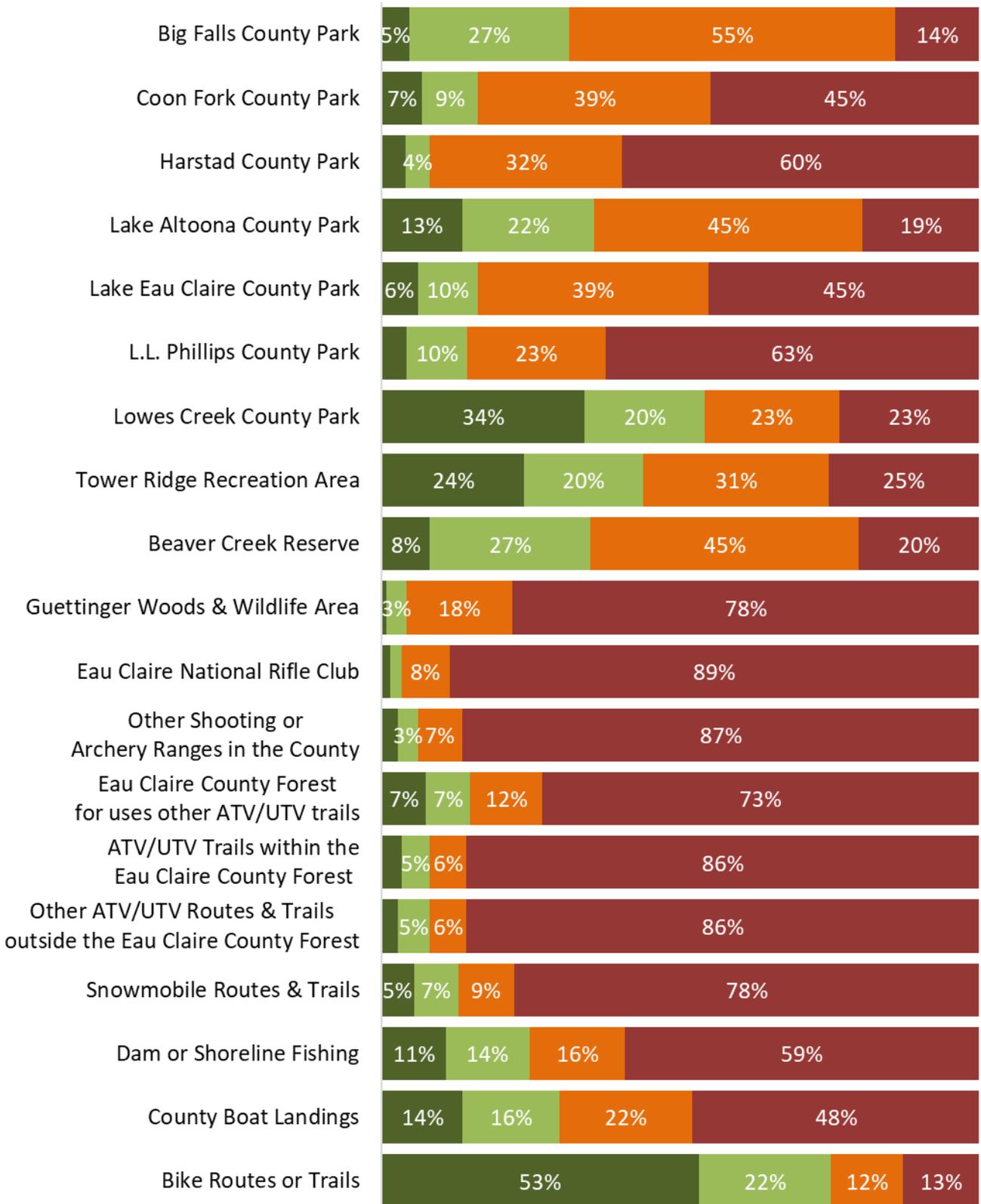
■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Non-Resident – Facility Use



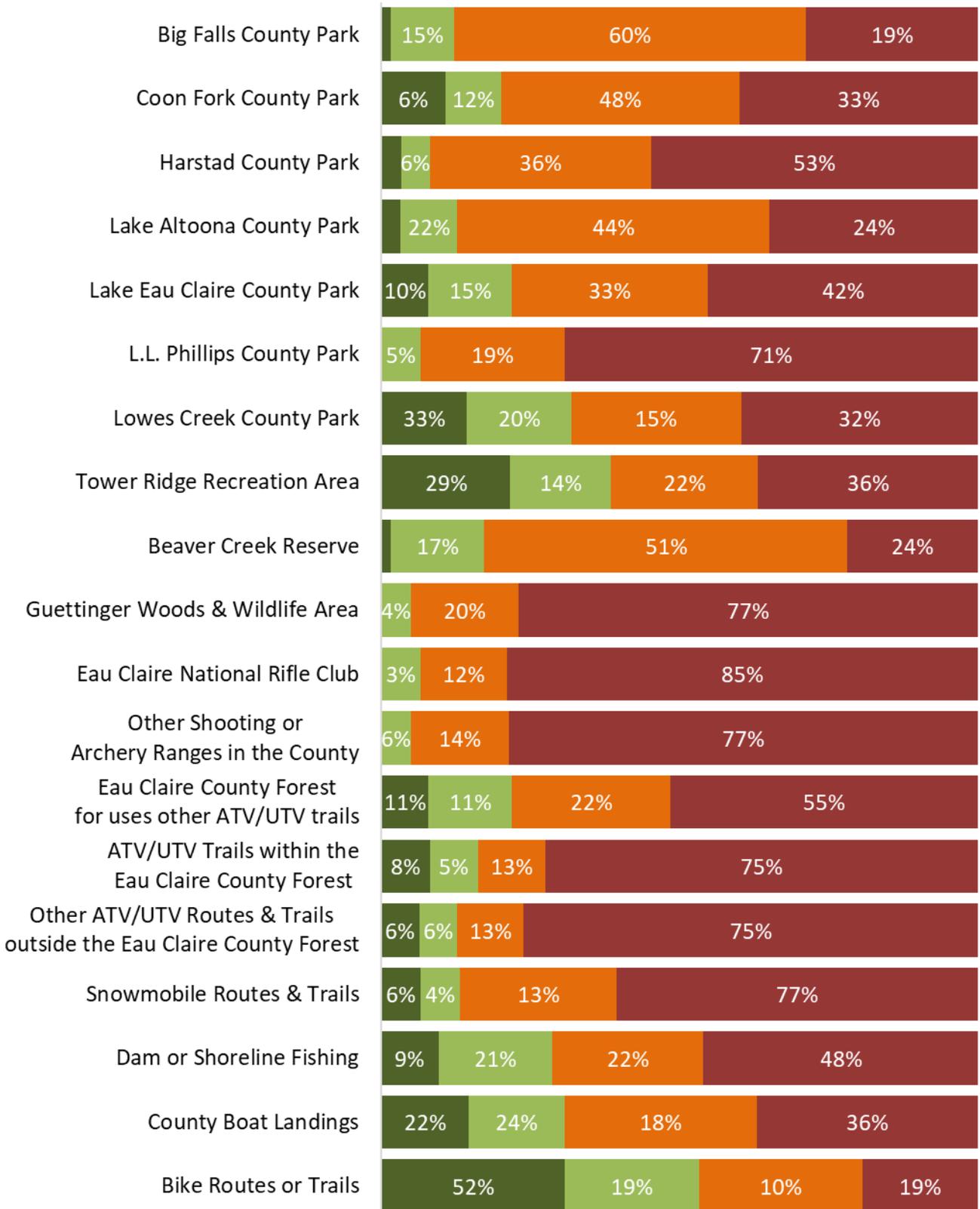
■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Responses by Age Group (Under 45) – Facility Use



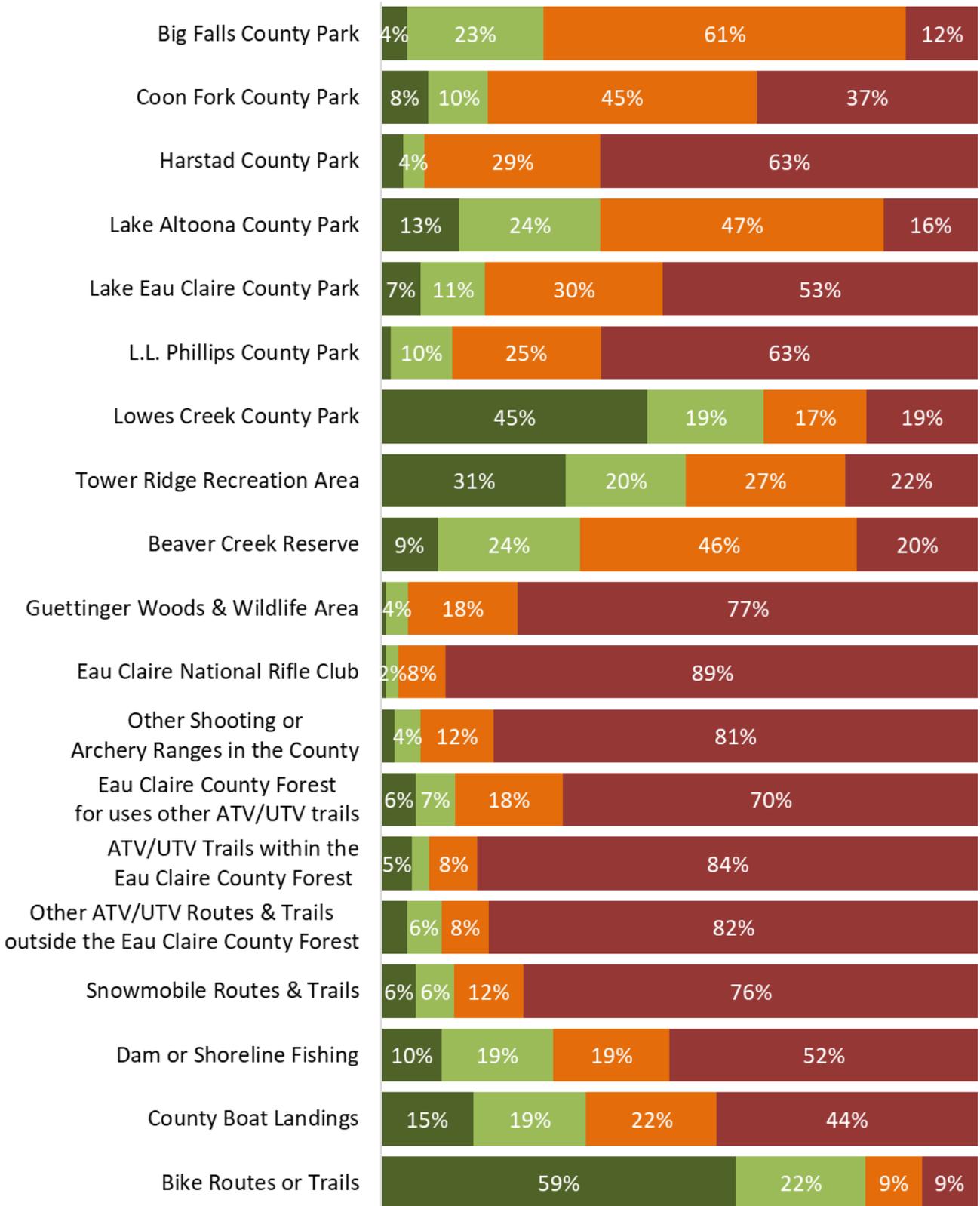
■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Responses by Age Group (Over 45) – Facility Use



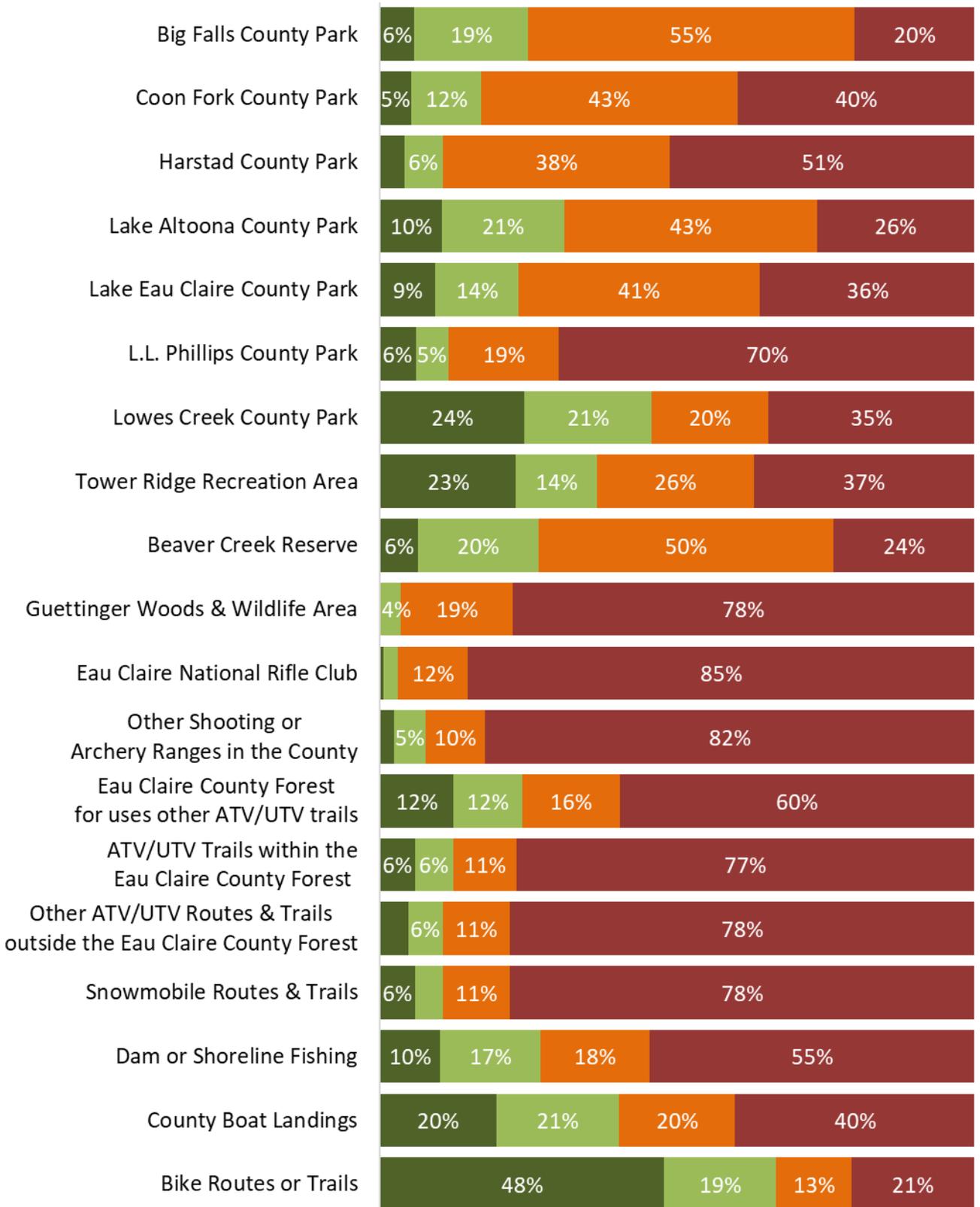
■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Households with Children under 18 – Facility Use



■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Households w/o Children under 18 – Facility Use



■ Frequently (at least once a month) ■ Often (at least once every 3 months) ■ Rarely (1-2 times per year or less) ■ Never

Demand for Recreational Activities

Respondents were asked, in their opinion, are the current park and outdoor recreation opportunities in Eau Claire County for 37 different activities meeting the demands of residents and visitors? 333 respondents answered the question and 159 skipped.

Top Activities that Meet or Mostly Meet Demand (little or no improvements needed)

1. Walking, Jogging, Running (78%)
2. Picnicking (78%)
3. Canoeing and Kayaking (67%)
4. Hiking and Backpacking (61%)
5. Natural Open Space (61%)
6. Snowshoeing (60%)
7. Pleasure Driving & Sightseeing (60%)

Top Activities that have Little or No Demand (no improvements needed)

1. Geocaching or Orienteering (5%)
2. ATV/ UTV (4%)
3. Pleasure Driving & Sightseeing (4%)
4. Horseback Riding (4%)
5. Golfing (4%)
6. Outdoor Archery, Target Shooting, & Rifle Range (4%)
7. Skateboarding & Inline Skating (4%)

Top Activities Requiring Significant Improvements (Demand Not Being Met)

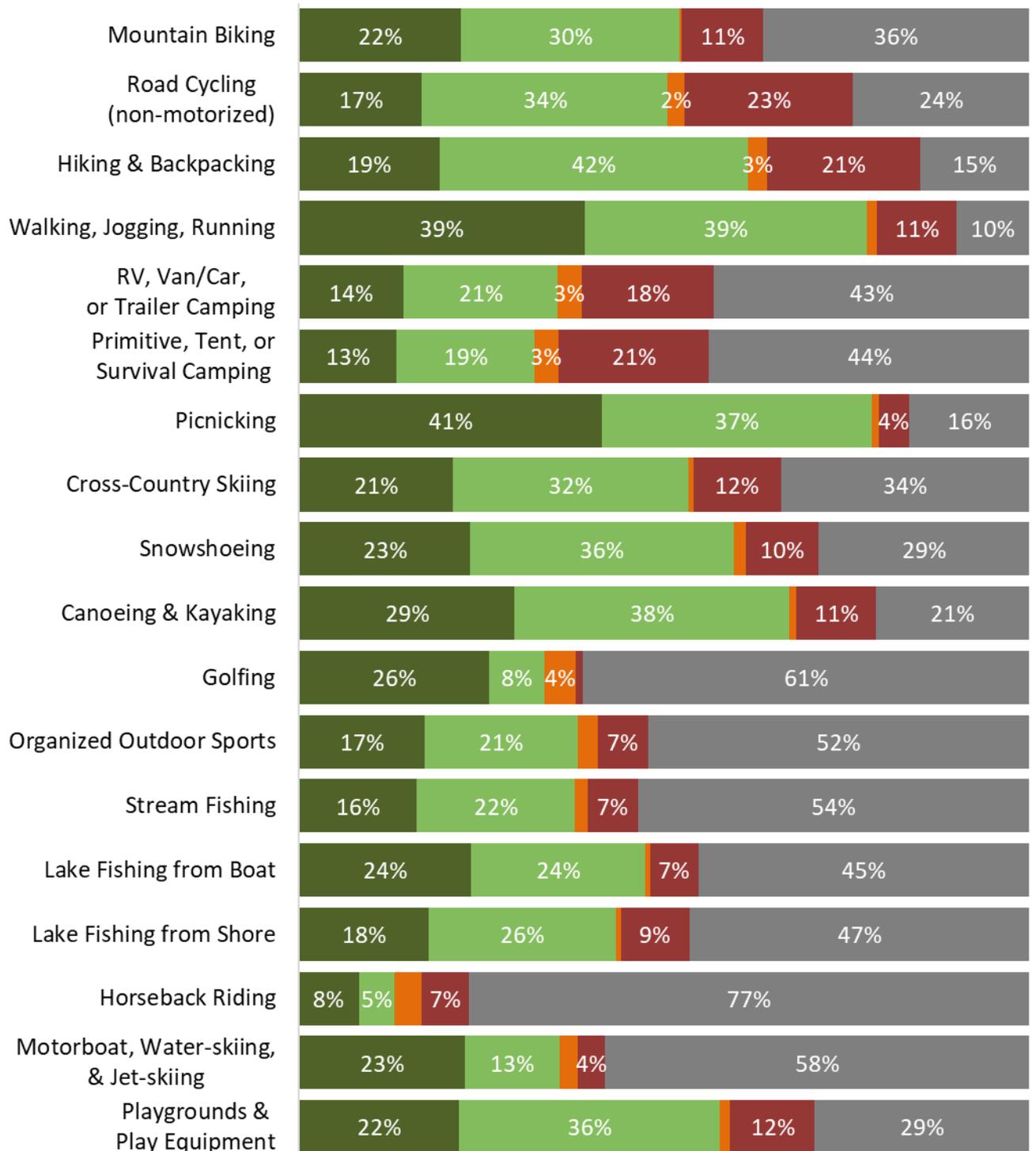
1. Swimming (Beach, pool, splash pads) (26%)
2. Road Cycling (non-motorized) (23%)
3. Hiking & Backpacking (21%)
4. Primitive, tent, or survival camping (21%)
5. Nature-based Educational Programs (20%)
6. Skateboarding & Inline Skating (19%)

On average, 46% of the responses to this question were “no opinion”. When considering the results, the category of “no opinion” could be potentially be combined with the “Little or No Demand” category.

Caution is advised when comparing the resident vs non-resident charts. While the data shows all question categories, it does not show the total numbers of responses in each category. On average, 250 residents responded as opposed to an average of 38 non-resident respondents. With this in mind, residents were far more likely to feel as that demand was being met for mountain biking, picnicking, outdoor ice skating, tennis & pickle ball, and outdoor basketball courts. More non-residents felt that demands were being met or mostly met for lake fishing from boat and from shore.

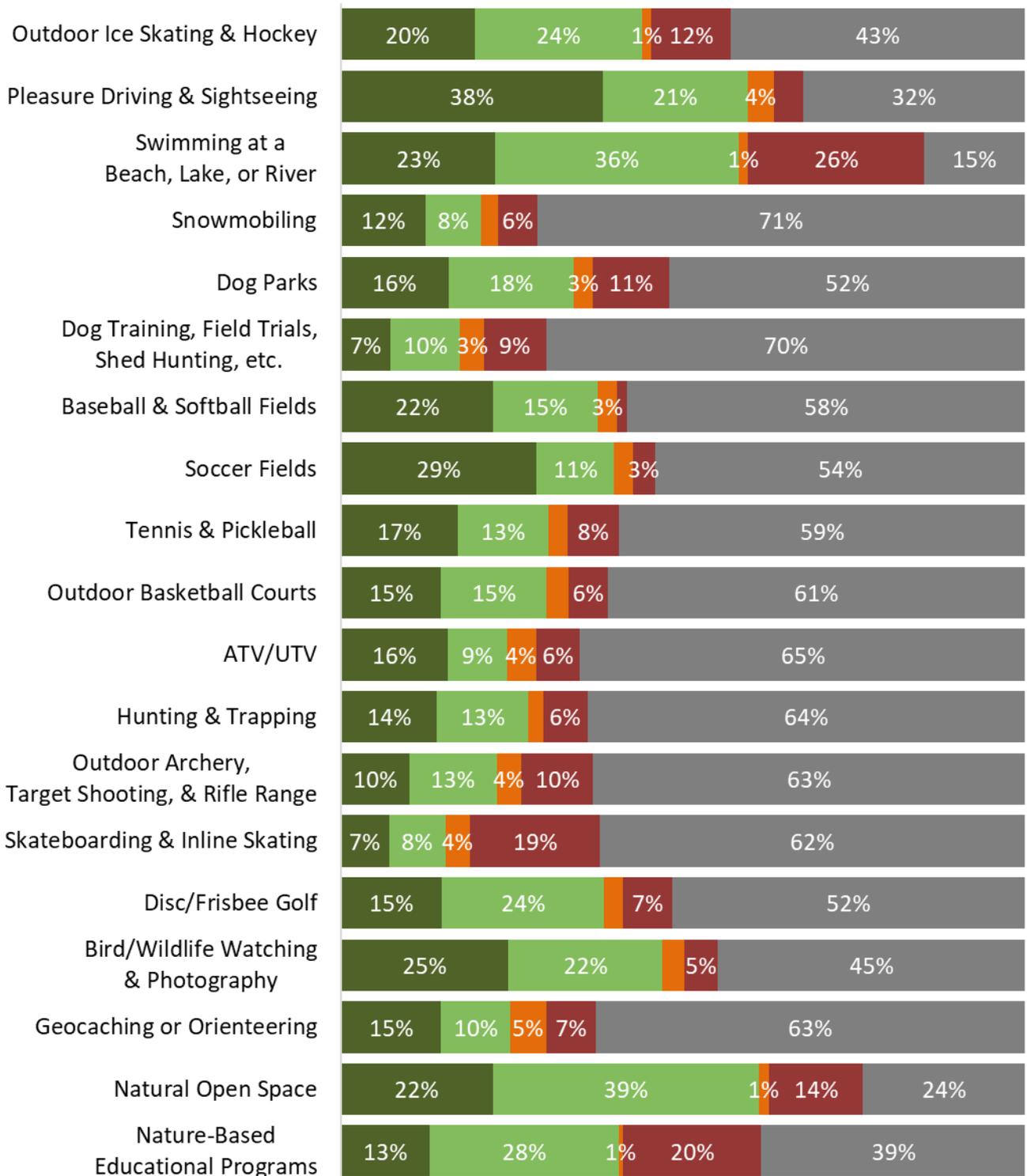
When comparing respondents with different demographic indicators, such as under or over age 45 and with or without children, responses were very similar, without any major differences.

All Responses – Demand



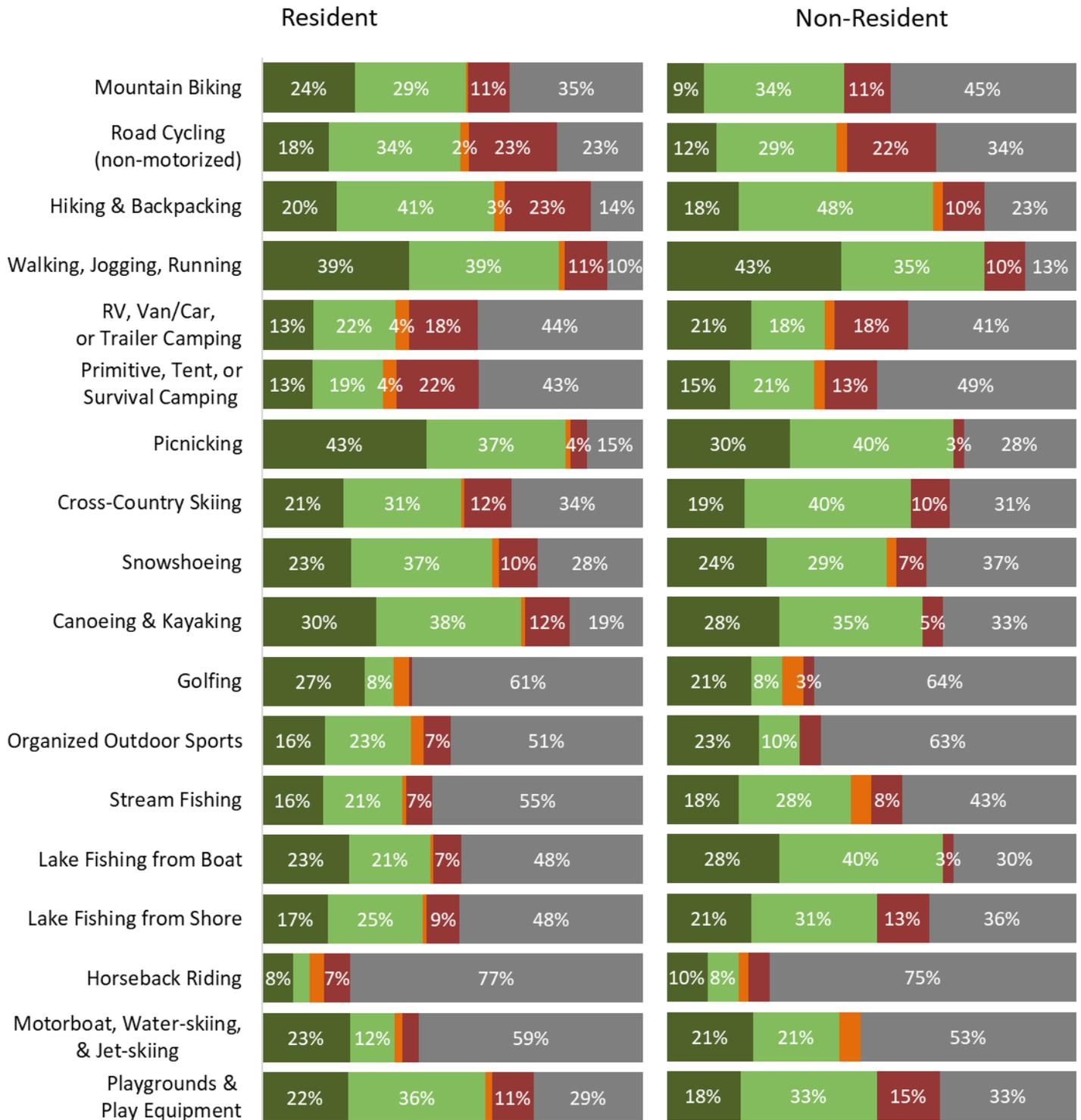
■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

All Responses – Demand (continued)



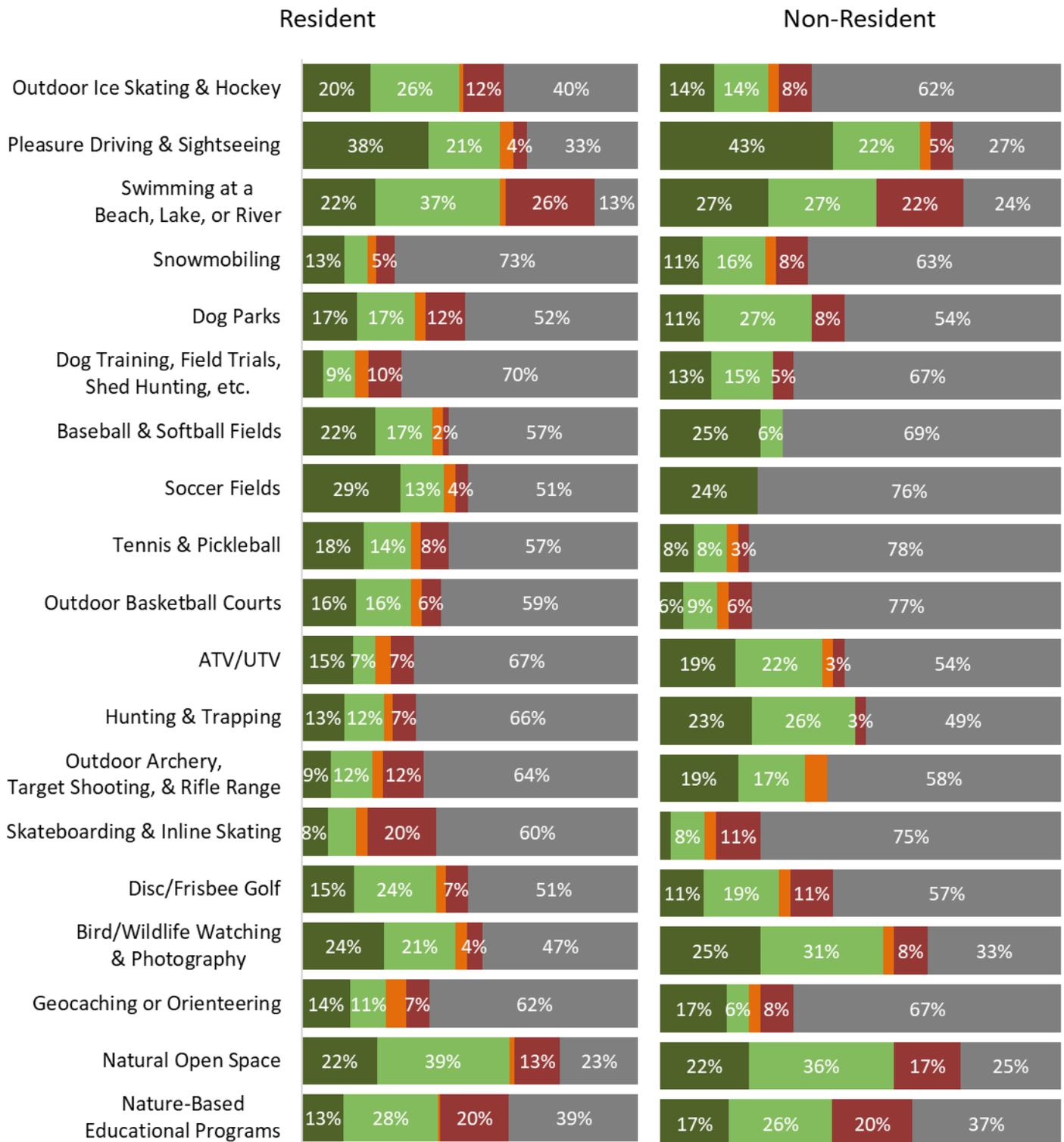
Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 No opinion

Resident vs Non-Resident – Demand



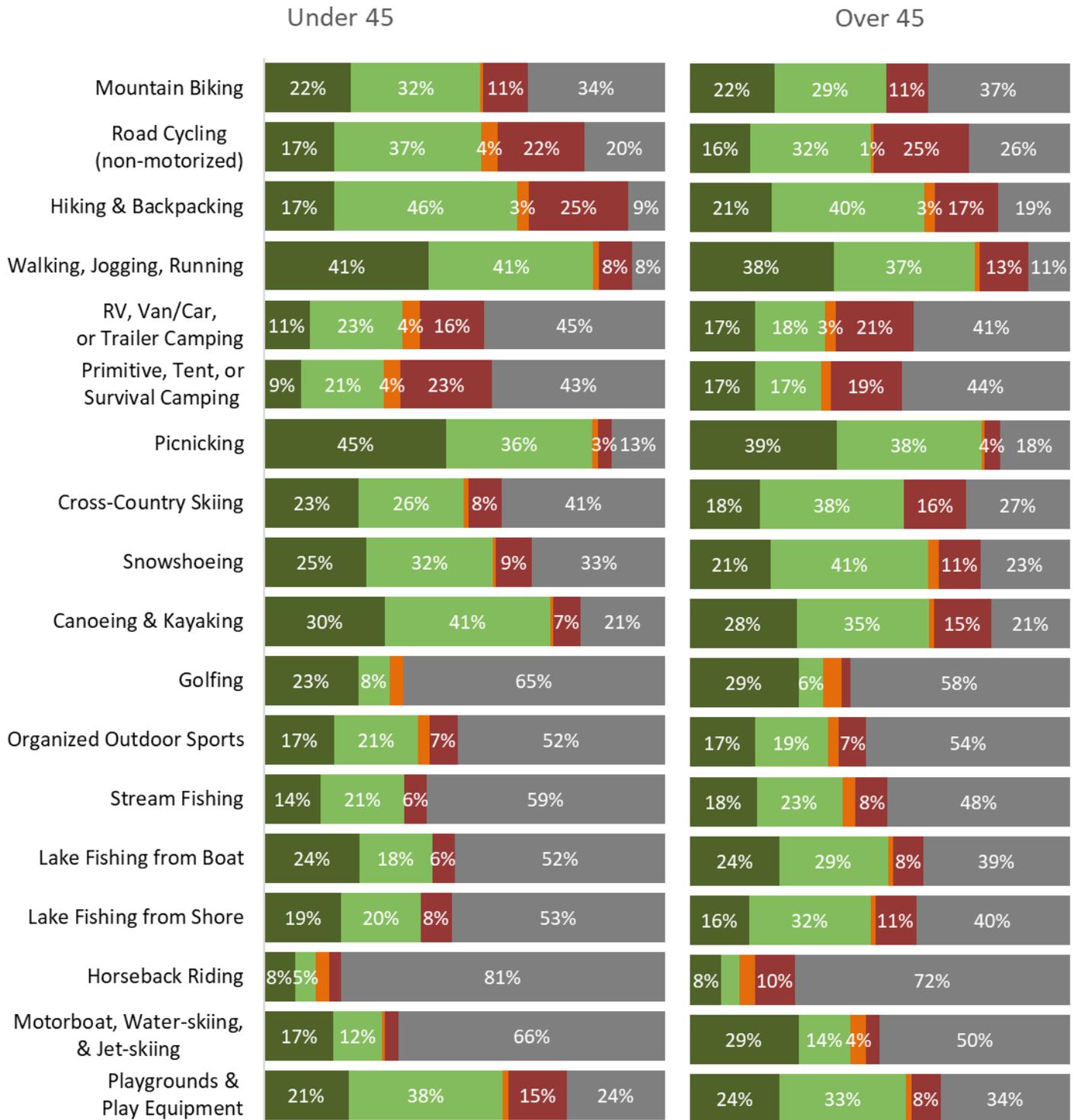
■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

Resident vs Non-Resident – Demand (continued)



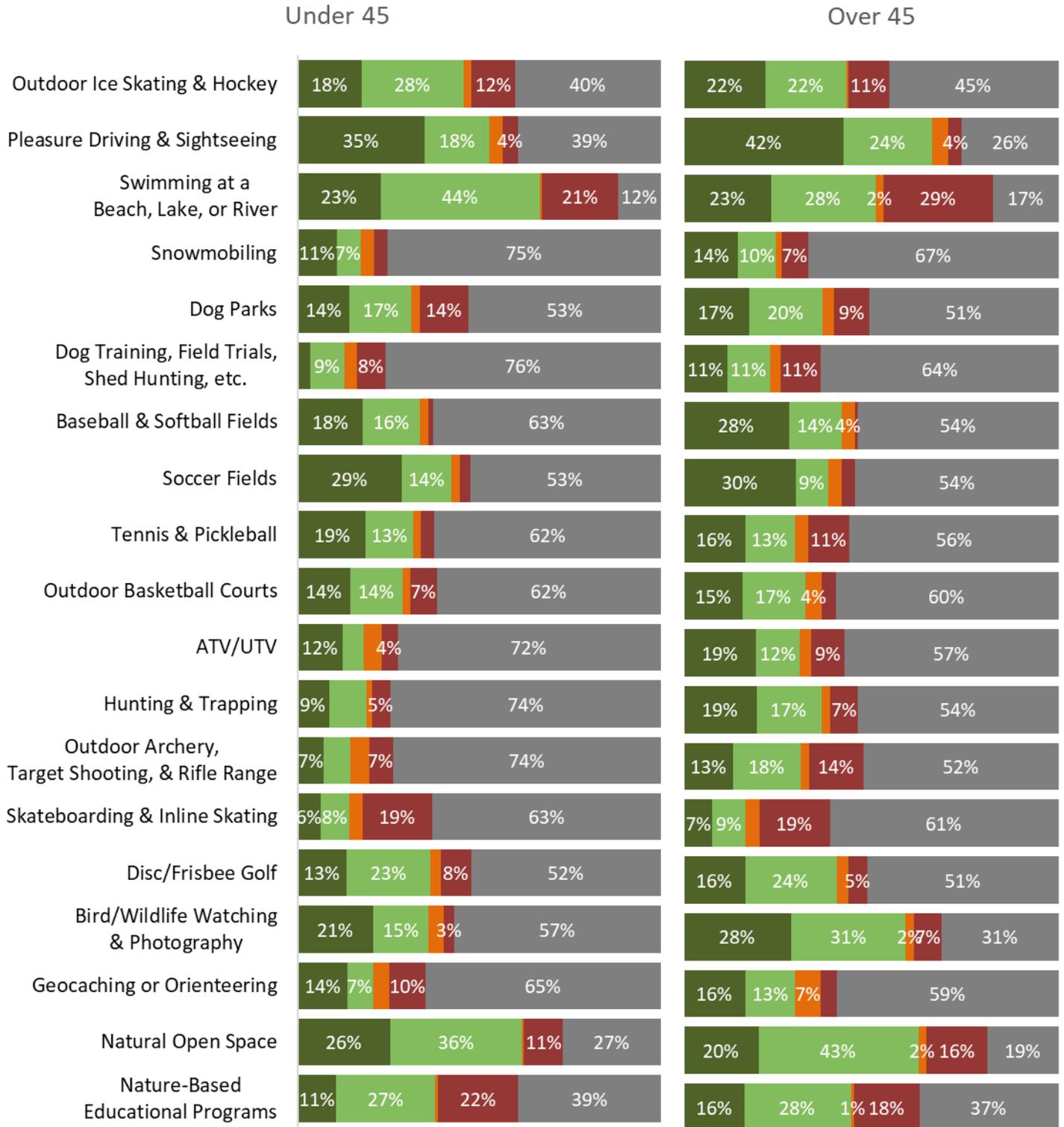
■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

Age – Demand



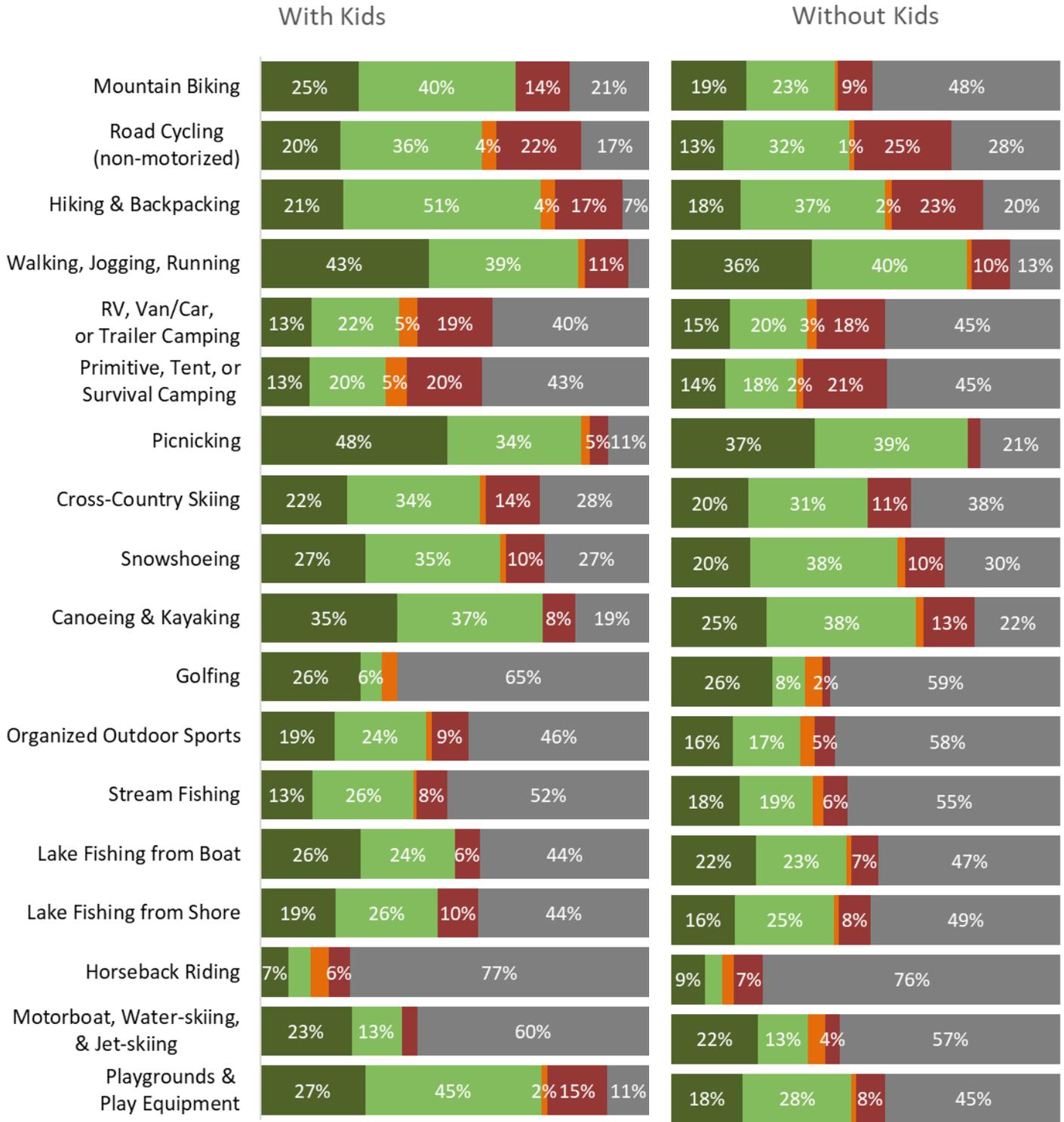
■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion
 ■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.

Age – Demand (continued)



■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

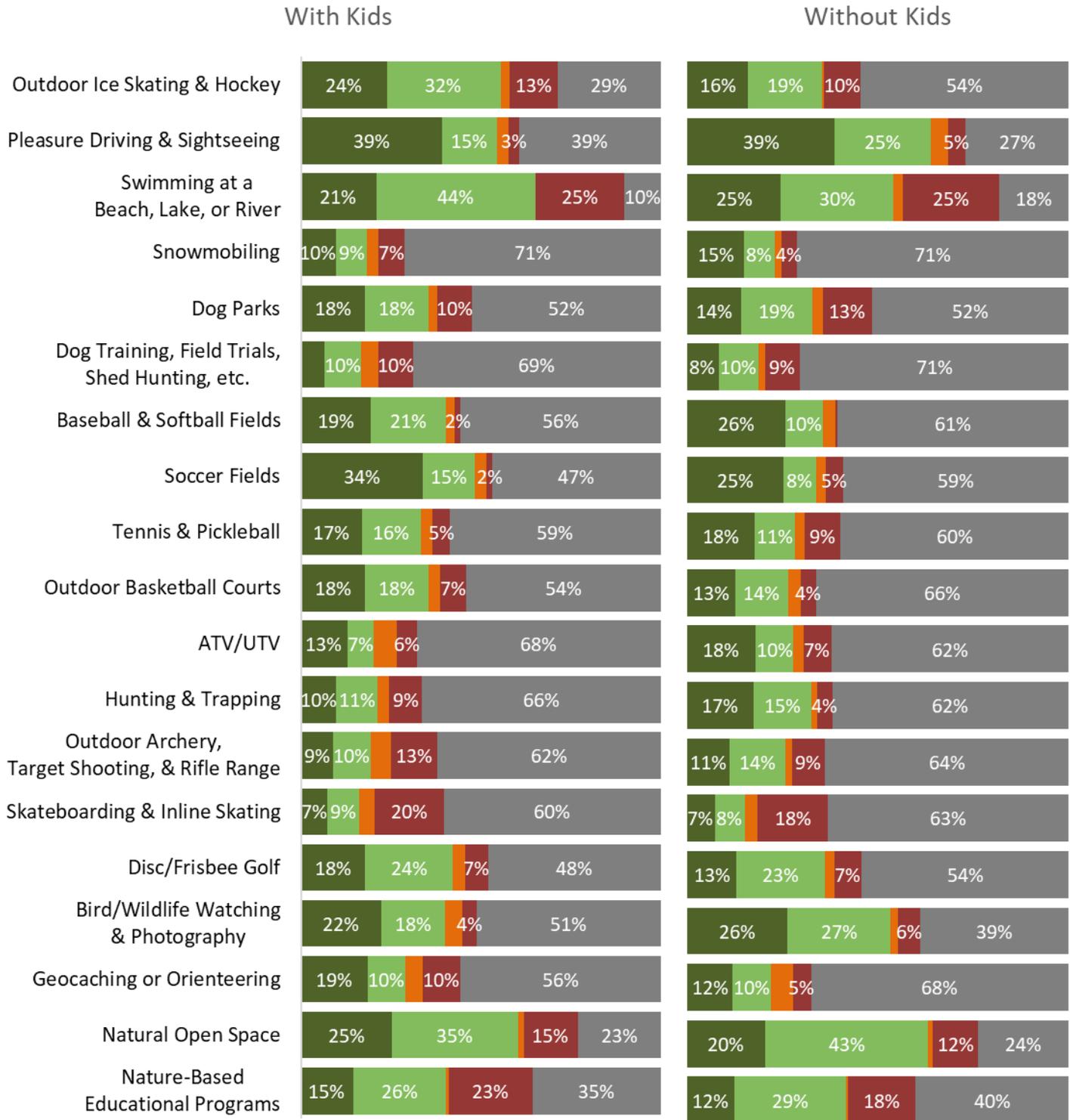
Households with Children under 18 – Demand



■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.

■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

Households with Children under 18 – Demand (continued)



■ Meets demand. No significant improvements needed.
 ■ Little or no demand for this use. No improvements needed.
 ■ Demand not being met. Significant improvements needed.
 ■ No opinion

■ Demand mostly met. Minor improvements needed.

Comments if “Demand Not Met”

Respondents that answered “*Demand not met. Significant improvements needed.*” to one or more activities were invited to provide brief comments or suggested improvements. The following are the comments received from 154 respondents. Some comments from individual respondents have been broken-up and placed under different categories.

Parks & Playgrounds

- More city and county playgrounds certainly.
- water and restroom at Tower Ridge Horse Trails parking lot
- Continue updating playground equipment where necessary. County owned campgrounds need updated entrance stations and nature/education based outdoor activities. Shower and restroom facilities need to be updated. Roadways need pull off areas for safe parking. Lowes creek need flush toilets and larger parking lot. Major renovation at the lowes creek trail head needed on the south side.
- Wood outhouses are inadequate. Without a car not so easy to use the county facilities. Using bicycle, ebike, to access facilities on roads not designed for sharing the road is limiting use. First impressions entering facilities screen old, worn out and neglected. Kind of a self fulfilling.
- Could include larger natural areas in new development. Nobody seems to maintain them. As for
- county restrooms are atrocious at Harstad and Coon Fork day use and Beach areas probably others like those
- All day use for parks should be free
- Need flush toilets installed in EAU Clare clubhouse. Great place for weddings. Needs to be used much more. Flush toilets across the the street not okay.
- Could use more playground equipment on county properties
- Open space - will always be on demand as urban sprawl continues....
- Not sure if this survey includes amenities within Eau Claire County, but provided by City of Eau Claire. For example, I see several basketball courts in the city, but can't think of others outside of the city limits. That said, there seems to be a need for an outdoor basketball court with lights.
- Also at Lowes Creek, many people treat it like a dog park. Dogs off leash. Dogs poop not picked up.
- Finally, there can never be too much open space to wander.
- Some smaller playgrounds could use updating. And bathrooms being unlocked at all of then would be very very nice
- more free transportation to parks
- That said, there are plenty of unmotorized activities that can happen year round in public spaces. Please also consider installing electric vehicle chargers in public parking lots with the standard (non-Tesla) plugs. Thank you!
- Better or more bathrooms on the day beach side at coon forks
- A lot parks seems to have no dogs allowed. Can we please change that. We pay for these parks we should allowed to bring our dogs
- Some parks need more picnic tables.

- The access to big falls county park needs to be majorly updated. It is a very dangerous path to get down to the water area for anyone older or with young kids.
- There was animal poop on the Lake Altoona beach for most of the fall.
- Riverview Park was extremely over populated with geese. The water quality was horrible this last year and boat ramps covered with goose poop.

Mountain Biking

- CORBA is using their own funds for trail maintenance. There has been lots of erosion in places like Lowes Creek and require more maintenance. Overall, many mt bike trails are heavily used by runners, bikers, and hikers. Lots of demand. It's great, but becoming too busy and more trails are needed. Its also a safety issue with number of bikers vs runners/hikers.
- The bike trails are awful. My friends from out of county refuse to come here anymore. We are loosing tourists dollars. No one I talk to have trail passes, they say the trails aren't worth paying for , while others say no one is checking. I am praying that some one will read this survey and take action because we have a beautiful county with lots of potential. But the facts are trails are getting run down and need work.
- Feel demand for mountain biking not met by Lowes Creek. Could use another major site.
- mountain biking at lowes is fabulous. Thank you, an amazing asset for EC county.
- Would like more mountain bike options. Lowes creek is great but loved to death.
- Mountain biking -- very good progress being made but it seems like this sport is really taking off locally so it would be good to stay ahead of it by developing new trail mileage.
- Trails at Lowes Creek County Park are seeing increased use due to the explosion of youth cycling programs. The increased use has increased the need for maintenance. The volunteer group CORBA does a great job showcasing the trails and raising funds to support the trails through events and regular group activities. CORBA volunteers spend hours on maintenance and improvements to make the trails sustainable often sacrificing their personal recreational time. Grant funds could support maintenance and improvements. A skills area would be a popular attraction that is often included at many parks with mountain bike trails. Additionally, some sort of commitment from other user groups could provide a boost for the park. The youth cycling programs use the trails but have shown little support for the trails. It is common for cross country teams to use the park but typically they park across the road instead of purchasing a pass. Imagine the progress that could be made to the trails if some of these users took ownership and participated in trail days.
- I'm not aware of any single-track mountain biking available on county forest land
- More off road biking opportunities. Big epic trail systems. Look at Cayuga, Bentonville, Marquette. Bikes can drive tourist economies. Develop more of the land for biking
- More trails for hiking and mountain biking.

Camping

- While there seems to be a decent amount of car/RV camping available nearby, it seems as if I need to go out to state forest land on the ice age trail for primitive/wild camping
- Primitive hike-in camp sites would nice. I know of none.
- I don't know any location to backback and primitive camp in Eau Claire County.

- Toys in the campground area at Coonforks. Making sure there are enough Rangers on duty, as a life time user of Coon Forks, Tess is short staffed and she goes over and above to keep a wonderful family campground clean & safe!
- RV/trailer parking - I haven't seen any or heard of any, so I'm assuming the demand is not being met.
- Loved camping at Harstead, sad it's turning into a homeless shelter. No wood sale also sucks
- Big recent increase in demand for campgrounds and RV parks. Developing an RV park could be a good money maker for Eau Claire County. We have stayed at others run by local municipalities across the country.
- I would love to see more camping options in Eau Claire county.
- More campgrounds within the county would be nice especially with lake sites
- The only campground I know of is Coon Forks - nothing in the western part of the county. I don't know of any trails for back country camping. Is camping allowed anywhere besides Coon Forks?
- Hiking and backpacking + primitive camping are literally nonexistent in Eau Claire county. I believe that there is demand for them.
- Rv Camping - not enough close by in good quality conditions.
- More camping options, including allowable boondocking.
- Need more camping areas everything from tent, camper, camp grounds that are Atv or Utv friendly.
- A camping location close or within the city of Eau Claire is needed. Some folks prefer camping instead of hotels. A campground near a bike trail would be excellent!
- The pandemic has greatly changed the way the public utilizes the outdoors. EC County would greatly benefit from forward thinking improvements to their campgrounds and both motorized and non-motorized trail systems. Additionally, land acquisition for the forest to ensure adequate access for the increased use should be a top priority.
- I would like to see a horseback riding campground in the forest. Maybe off of highway H.

- More camping with power and water. Just more camping hard to get camp sites. More nature programs at campgrounds.
- Eau Claire county forest is big enough to expand trails and allow a horse campground.
- more spaces to rent for camping
- Not enough camping options. Reopen Harstad park to camping. More back country/tent camping options. Not enough hiking trails.
- I would love more information made available for primitive camping to be done locally. And at the same time I kind of like being where nobody else is!
- If I could pick one thing to improve, it would be to create some "in-city" tent camping options. I have a lot of friends with kids who would love to try camping, but want to near home. I think having a few spots in Carson Park (that one road behind the playground would be a good location, or the on top of the sledding hill area in the Eastside Hill, or behind South Middle School by the baseball diamonds would be cool spots). The ability rent a site and go somewhere close to home would appeal to a lot of people. You could even have volunteers be campsite hosts on weekends or something like at the National Forests.

Trails, Routes, Hiking, & Road Cycling (Warm weather)

- More trails in county parks not related to ATV use.
- Safer biking opportunities going outside of town in county.
- could use more bike lanes for safer biking and walking//I use snowmobile/UTV/ATV trails but not for those activities//use them for walking etc
- more horse trails
- Bike paths need line down middle to indicate 2 way traffic. Signs stating such
- Rural bicycle/ walking trails around Altoona, hwy 12 area, would be fantastic with much residential/business expansion in this area would be nice to have trails to enjoy the beauty of the area between eau claire, Altoona and fall creek.
- Paved bike trails south of EC are in terrible condition. Not usable.
- On the section between Eau Claire to Caryville, the bike trail is very rough with several pot holes. Significantly worse Caryville to Durand, but I think that's Dunn County.
- Signs connecting bike trails. Destroyed downtown with tall apartments
- A bicycle trail along airport road would be SPECTACULAR. I THINK this is still in EC County. This area is cleared up nicely for plane traffic and sits atop the river valley. If you enjoy a run in the sun, this spectacular except there is heavy traffic and ZERO roadside area to walk or run, so rather than spectacular it is a nightmare to walk or run.
- No way to bike safely from southside by Target and Mall to other areas in town. Many areas on southside aren't safe for kids to bike to school, like South.
- How often are park passes checked? I see many dog walkers without passes or daily passes using lowes creek. Who would enforce where people fish. Who would enforce hikers staying off ski trails.
- Most of the bike and roller blade are not safe for either. In my opinion this should be top priority.
- The Chippewa River trail is shot! Needs to be totally resurfaced. Go to MN to learn how to build and maintain bike trail
- The lack of a dedicated bike lane/wide shoulder on most county roads means that road biking is more dangerous than it should be
- Safer crossing of Hwy 12 in Altoona for pedestrian traffic
- There is very limited rural public space for hiking/walking available. Additional county lands should have trails and parking available. There are also very limited horse trails. The county owns a large portion of the county acreage. Recreational uses for everyone, not just ATV'ers and hunters, should be made available. Any trails on the eastern side of the county feel unsafe to use as hiking/walking due to trapping and ATV use.
- Would love better paced trails for outdoor quad skating.
- I don't know of any really safe places to road bike in EC County.
- Bike trails are few and far between. There are some for long distance pleasure rides but hardly any for getting around town safely. Outside of downtown requires biking on large busy roads which is not safe especially for kids trying to get around by bike. More dedicated bike trails that connect all parts of EC are needed for better travel by bike and safe autonomy for our children.
- Inline skating on trails get to be very limited when pavement starts to crack. Small skate wheels don't handle cracks compared to large bicycle wheels.

- I don't know where to go hiking/backpacking/snowshoeing, but I would like to more.
- In regards to road cycling, early spring shoulder sweeping needed, less pea gravel repair, consider wider shouldered roads on higher used roads in the county, and signage on frequently bicycled roads reminding motorists to beware and share the road.
- Needs to be more biking/hiking trails in the city of Eau Claire.
- Road biking and walking/running through city. Large intersections are not safe. Specifically Clairemont and Menomonie street.
- Trails for cycling are not well-maintained compared to other cycling destinations we frequent as a family. Cracked trails with growth in the cracks, branches down, stretches of trail that are gravel... etc. There are few biking trails that are maintained well enough for our long family bike rides as somewhat serious family cyclists and most rural roads are too dangerous for our kids.
- The State trails in our county are pathetic. I realize funding probably is a state issue, but something needs to change!!!
- Eau Claire county has more than enough room for creating more atv trail possibilities
- Would like to see trails opened to licensed dual sport motorcycles.
- Regarding road cycling, as county roads are updated dedicated bike lanes or sharrows should be included.
- Guettinger Woods trails are no longer clearly marked. Significant improvements needed
- While bike lanes have been expanded and bike trails are available in the area, there are few places I feel comfortable biking. Bike trails are deteriorating and roads- specifically those outside city limits- often lack a dedicated bike lane. Therev is beautiful countryside that would be great to set up a few bike routes, but this is often missing.
- Biggest areas to improve and expand are dedicated bicycle trails separate from auto traffic.
- I am a quad skater, there are very very few places to go outside. I have to find indoor spaces.
- I am also an avid hiker and enjoyer of nature and I absolutely love all of the county forest available to me. I have had some unfortunate experiences in the county forests though, after many many years of utilizing them I no longer feel all that safe going alone. I've been stalked multiple times in the woods out at one of the unofficial beaches off of QQ. Called the sheriff both times and they responded well. Persons never found. I love all the horse trails for hiking. And all the trails along creeks and waterways. I carry protection on me now (bear spray, knife) as a female, and I bring my dog with me, I try to bring a friend but that's not always possible.
- The activities which are most accessible to the majority of the population usually have the most neglected infrastructure. Bicycle and walking paths are crucial to residents and tourists alike.
- Need more trails for hiking, biking and skiing/snowshoeing that are off limits to ATVs/UTVs. Many previous trails are now ruined from the heavy ATV traffic and the damage that ensues from the heavier and faster vehicles.
- Road riding needs improvement by adding better transitions from trail to road to trail Larger shoulders on county roads
- I'm a bird watcher. I'd also like to see trails through a variety of habitats: not just forests, but also grasslands or boardwalks through wetlands. These could double as off road

bicycle trails or winter snowshoe trails, too. There was some more open habitat at LEPhillips, but it's now getting over grown. Do a burn to keep some area there open and have some maintained trails. Also I've seen vehicles get stuck in water holes on that road. I suspect it's because of trucks in there four wheeling, but maybe a little more road maintenance could be used?? It would be nice to see a blind or two for bird watching.

- Walking, Jogging, running, road cycling; improve bike lanes, improve street lighting, improve paved trails.
- Road cycling needs lots of improvement (much wider paved shoulders or very wide bike lanes).
- More atv/ utv trails& routes in the county are needed.
- Bike paths and trails need resurfacing for runners, walkers, bikers, rollerskiers. I'd like to see more trails put in, but I would take improvement on the trails we have over that.
- Safer shoulders and bike paths to increase safe routes for biking in the county.
- As a cyclist I would like to see more bike lanes and SHarrows on most roads. And keep up with reflective paint that is well marked. I'd also like to see more bike paths that connect.
- County roads are not safe for road cycling. Wider shoulders/bike lanes are needed.
- Eau Claire County needs more designated bike lanes
- We need more shoulder to accommodate road cycling to make it safer for everyone.
- Painted lines on roads are not effective at protecting cyclist. They are often disregard by motorist and crossed. Painting bike path symbols in the middle of the road is a waste of funds, it's already implied that the road is shared if a bike path or bike lane aren't present. If we truly want to embrace cycling, there needs to be physical barriers to separate cyclists and motorist, even just a bit of curb would be sufficient.
- Tower Ridge no longer welcomes horseback riding which is a complete waste of the trails that are not used all summer long. Need more access at Tower Ridge which is under utilized in the summer and really with our warmer winters there isn't much skiing that can be done.
- ya'll need to fix the bike path to Careyville every time I ride my bike out that way I'm scared my tire is going to deflate.
- ATV UTV not enough trails in the city of Eau Claire and Altoona. Time to get with the times and open the roads as so many others have done very near us. It's too bad we have to trailer to another city and spend our money at their gas stations and restaurants
- Road Cycling is very dangerous in many places and often times very disconnected.

Trails, Routes, Hiking, & Cross Country Skiing (Winter activity)

- Lowes Creek needs more signage to keep hikers off ski trails. There are new signs, but groomed trails don't last very long as hikers destroy them.
- The trails are appreciated, but need to be shoveled more diligently in the Winter. There is an increase in Winter cycling. I know because I'm out there often.
- We need snow making so we can start cross country skiing before we get snow. More attention to grooming ski trails
- for country-skiing nearby (Lowes or Tower), it seems the grooming is good but could be better. At Lowes, people frequently walk on groomed trails. I see the signs (thank you),

but people are not seeing it. the sign by the expro entrance is excellent and obvious. but the signs by lowes creek rd entrance are maybe being missed by walkers.

- More frequent grooming of the cross country ski trails. Another sign on the neighborhood end of the Northwest Park cross country ski trail so people entering from the new development on that end are instructed not to walk on the trails. It ruins it for skiers, and grooming is expensive. Also, when grooming is so infrequent, a good trail is ruined for a long time due to boot and dog tracks all over the ski trail. It is dangerous in times of thaw and freeze, and sometimes makes the trails unsafe to ski. Please add another sign that says no walking on the ski trails. In Wausau, their sign indicates that trail grooming is expensive, and people shouldn't ruin the trails by walking on them.
- Better grooming at Tower Ridge.
- Finally, paved, shoveled paths for running that are planned throughout the city that connect to the cleared paths downtown would be much appreciated. It's great to have a cleared trail system in downtown but getting there means driving and for long runs I would rather run there safely on cleared paths that connect to it.
- Need improved grooming equipment for Tower Ridge and other parks to be able to handle big snowfalls and icy conditions better.
- Tower ridge is an awesome facility for XC skiing. Would be good to expand the amount of lighted trails over time.. Lowes creek is great for XC skiing, can be rather busy at times, so some other skiing area near Eau Claire would help take some of that pressure off.
- Hiking/walking options off groomed ski trails in the winter - more options need to be developed.
- Extra groomed trail opportunities for winter sports and more single track mountain biking/trail running would be welcomed as this community continues to grow.
- Really appreciate the great skate ski grooming at Lowes Creek and Tower ridge! I live to ski. Only hate that walkers cut up the trails when it's in the high 20's. Not much you can do about that though. Education I guess.
- Horseback riders think any trail through the woods is for them, & they are not. Those riders have eroded the snowmobile trails on the hills & those trails are not for them, the horseback trails see very little use, while the snowmobile trails need much repair due to their unauthorized use & they do not work on the repairs.
- Manmade snow for skiing should be brought to the area. There's a group that's trying, but it's slow. The demand for early season snow is there.
- Need groomers with greater expertise to groom ski trails at Tower Ridge.
- I see a demand for winter groomed hiking trails. You see this in the damage done to groomed mtb and ski trails by hikers and dog walkers.
- I frequently mt bike, hike and ski at Lowes Creek. Every year there are more trail users and no additional trails are being built. Suggest that the county have a long term plan to address additional trails close to the city. I would also suggest that the county switch to a user fee rather than a parking fee. Most trails have made that transitions. I ski frequently at Lowes Creek and Tower Ridge. There has been a noticeable improvement in the trail grooming so far this winter. Seems to be an ever increasing use of the ski trails which requires additional trail grooming to keep them in good skiing condition.

- Very poor grooming. A piston bull is desperately need. Demand for cross country skiing is at an all time high yet quality grooming is very low. The track left by the machine are uneven and poorly maintained.
- Would like more places and longer routs for snow shoeing
- Add a dog walking loop to the east side of Lowes Creek Park. There is too much boot traffic on the single track fat bike trails in the winter. This degrades the the winter riding experience significantly by leaving divots in the trail base. Directing all boot traffic to the dog walking loops (one already exists on the west side) would preserve the trail base of the ski trails and the single track bike trails

Hunting & Shooting

- more areas free from trapping and hunting
- Archery areas (old archery park off main st) are not available or I am not aware. Private places but not public....
- I would like to see an archery range and a rifle range.
- Eau Claire needs a public outdoor shooting range.
- We also need to keep the natural spaces safe for children and dogs, so I think that shooting ranges should be privately owned and operated businesses. I have a lot of cross-country camping experience and nothing ruins camping more than gun shots, dirtbikes and ATVs. Let's keep the parks quaint and habitable to people and wildlife.
- Rifle ranges in Eau Claire could greatly benefit from the ability to apply and pay for membership online.
- Also, more public access to the rifle range.
- Eau Claire County needs more archery ranges

Fishing, Swimming, & Water Sports

- Beach improvements in Eau Claire city needed.
- need more easy access kayak launches
- Also, the Riverview park is VERY HIGH on potential as a nice beach family area however meets the bare minimum and draws a rough crowd as a result. The sand bar is excellent. But the riverside is horrible. Would love for this to be made nice and user friendly.
- Many shorelines are getting destroyed by fisherman. Not sure how to address this. But garbage and fishing hooks are found in very pretty shorelines. Takes away from enjoying the beauty. Should be more fishing specific zones. But problem with many things I said is enforcement.
- Would also love to see a better beach in Eau Claire with picnic areas.
- Kayaking needs a lit more attention in regards to put in/take out landings. Other parts of the state rock like on the brule or flambeau. Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers can do better. Example fall creek D bridge is horrible to take out. Better around the bend with improvements. Poor spot on 37 at the wayside.
- I would also like to know where to go shore fishing, besides the dock at half moon lake.
- Seymour boat landing on Indian Hills Drive was upgraded but needs a dock for the safety and convenience of boaters.
- Play equipment and beach at lake Altoona park poor

- The boat landings on Lake Eau Claire are some of the worse in the entire state of Wisconsin and have been for some time. A two lane boat ramp is needed at the north shore landing. Skid row is not even usable do to the sediment issues, and the south landing is way to steep and trailer frames rub on the ground. I have fished all over the state of WI and these are the worse by far. Please enforce the parking fees as well. The sediment issue should be a county issue on the lake. It is filling in on the east end, and FAST.
- The boat landings in Augusta could use a lot of help. Even though they are used often by the people in the area, the landings have been an issue for years.
- Stream fishing, where? Is there nature trail signage that mentions locations to trout fish?
- The south shore landing at Lake Eau Claire definitely needs to be updated. Almost impossible to get boats in and out of the lake and can barely get off the lake with a vehicle during ice fishing season. Most locals prefer to use south landing because out of towners and people that only summer fish take all available parking at the north shore landing, which causes traffic jams not only for vehicles but for boats launching out and trying to get in. Also if the sand traps off of skid row (end of SD) were taken care of, I'm sure most locals would love to be using that as a boat access also.
- Would like nicer areas for swimming.
- Regarding fishing. My preference is little to no development to keep the hard to reach areas difficult to access. Keeps the riff raff out and the fishing is better.
- Would LOVE to see kayak rentals at some parks that are near lake or river access.
- Also, need to seriously address the number of cars parked along the road during the summer at the County Road K bridge. Many people canoe/kayak from the D Bridge to the K Bridge. The D Bridge has enough parking but County Road K is very dangerous. There needs to be a parking lot developed at that location and also access to the river to get the canoes/kayaks out of the water and room left over for the people that just want to be on the beach. Drivers come around those corners and can't slow down in time for the families that are trying to get in and out of their cars parked along the road.
- Kayaking: improve take outs and put ins. Parking expanded
- I really wish that there was a safe lake for swimming, including lifeguards, on Lake Altoona.
- Hard to fish on lakes in the county because of idiot waterskiers and jet skis....they can't stay away from the fishing boats even though there I s half the lake empty....need to fine them more
- Need more parking and designated put in and take out areas for kayaks and canoes, separate from motorboat landings.
- Would love to see showers at Lake Altoona beach
- River view beach needs a major overhaul. Those rocks are horrendous. More tables needed by beach areas in general. Most have one table close to beaches. Bathroom access is crucial. Carson park is fine. Use \$\$\$ to upgrade the other parks!!!
- more access to waterways for fishing
- I also often feel like the beaches in EC County are often packed with people.

Water Quality

- better water quality at coon forks

- I know it's largely out of your control, but it seems that significant improvements elsewhere are needed to reduce the number of days beaches are closed due to unsafe bacteria levels.
- Anyway to help the algae blooms on Altoona?
- Parks are closed too often from the County Health Department for swimming
- The major problem in the area is the algae blooms that occur starting midsummer
- swimming and beaches-improvement of water quality very important-summer swimming activities curtailed too much due to poor water quality
- I wish EC had places to swim, the water here isn't safe.
- Water quality of lakes needs to be improved.
- More money needs to be put in to lake rehab. To improve water quality in the county lakes.
- I often go to Altoona beach, which sometimes becomes closed during the summer due to bacteria. It leaves us with limited choices.

Winter Sports, excluding trails/routes

- More outdoor ice skating rinks with warming house and cheap rental needed for size of community.
- They forgot snow tubing for families with children. A group of over 20 wanted to go snowsledding/ downhill tubing. A google search turned up nothing so they went to Augusta, and shopped and ate there. A list of hills...some with tow ropes is top of my wish list.

Dog Parks

- I also am unaware of any dog parks or training facilities, some county parks don't allow dogs.
- West side dog park is lovely but there are too many holes in the fence line. While great for dogs who stay near their owner it is not good for those who run off. I had lost my dog the first time I brought him and had to run him down over the course of an hour.
- It would also be great to have a dog park in the Augusta Area.
- Dog parks, I believe there is only one. Over by Walmart on the south side of EC.
- County parks are very unwelcoming to dogs. I think all public spaces should be dog friendly
- Dog training field access - I am unaware of the locations available for this use. Would like to see some beach access available to dogs.

Disc Golfing

- The demand for Disc Golfing is immense in Eau Claire and the parks are often crowded. There are not enough trash cans and maintenance of the goals. New courses and upkeep is needed.
- Eau Claire has a high demand for Disc Golf and would benefit from more 18-basket courses.
- My answers are from the perspective of an Eau Claire city resident. Disc Golf, there is only one city-maintained disc golf course. Mt. Simon. And it is very nice. The other

courses are on school property and not great. If you would like help building the next city maintained course I'm happy to consult

- Need to add more courses
- We would love more options for family friendly disc golf.

Marketing & Outreach

- Consider targeted outreach and special events to meet the needs of activities currently unavailable (ex: host a special event over 1-2 weekends that accommodates residents who wish to use a county park off off-leash dog field training). Additionally, consider providing outdoor recreation classes to residents of the county to better understand how to enjoy local resources (ex: information on how to snow shoe or bird watch. Provide information on where to rent necessary equipment to do these activities.) Not all residents are aware of the ways they can utilize the county parks or don't know what activities are permitted within them.
- Whoever came up with this list did a great job! What an exciting list to offer. I think the greatest improvement would be easier access to the information of what is available. A central place to look online. If there could be an online map for each of these activities with the activities highlighted with different prices and age level suggestions that would be the greatest. Also a list of where things can be rented and what is available and prices. And if there were videos on line of these locations being enjoyed...everyone has a phone that can take 3 second videos...have a contest. I want to get my family to move here or at least want to vacation here more often. Showcase what we have. I love calendars full of choices online, with chat or phone number available for questions.
- The Parks and Forest Department has made some nice improvements in the last 5 years. For many years things seemed to be overlooked and not improved. I believe they have some talented staff in place there now so let's help them improve the county's parks and recreation and keep funding and improving our great resources.
- A more robust and accessible map distribution. It is incredibly hard to find either a paper copy or digital copy to print a map. The website for the county is not helpful in this regard. Please see Boulder Open Space Mountain Parks (<https://bouldercolorado.gov/government/departments/open-space-mountain-parks>) as a guide to providing robust resources. Eau Claire County has the open space, beauty, and natural resources to make Eau Claire an outdoor destination. It's just not as accessible or promoted as it could be. The right investments and buy in from the community could create some amazing changes in Eau Claire.
- We have some beautiful parks and there's been so much added and improved upon over the past several years.

Nature-based education

- If offer educational services, how do we find out about them?
- Families are looking for opportunities to get children out in nature
- Beaver Creek educational classes for kids needs to be expanded to fit more kids
- We also would appreciate more outdoor recreation and learning opportunities like camps and events for kids to learn about nature and the area in all seasons and all kinds of weather (this has been particularly lacking during COVID when being in the outdoors would be safer than indoor play and learning events and activities).

- County sponsored events such as organized nature hikes, animal tracking, bird watching, etc.
- Would like to see a dedicated orienteering facility.

Skateboarding

- As for Skateboarding, I'm too old to skateboard now but I did for about a decade when I was a kid and it was a great alternative physical fitness solution that kept me and my friends out of trouble and away from parties. Again happy to consult.
- Skate boarding is a sport done by ALL ages. Other cities/counties our size have a skate park that includes a variety of skills, lights... Livingston Montana is a good example - city of about 7000 with a great park!
- A skateboard park would be appreciated by many.
- Skateboard - more is badly needed to get kids off streets.
- Eau Claire County needs improved/more skateparks
- And we definitely need that new skatepark that is already in the making.

Other Activities & Comments

- Need more nature based programs//more natural spaces with solitude
- Stop putting so much effort in the Southside. Think about the Northside. I hate going to the Southside of town. I live 2 blocks inside Chippewa county but city of Eau Claire. Northside could use some love too. But not by cutting down a whole bunch of trees. Work with nature don't take it over.
- More geocaching
- There are no orienteering courses with maps to print or download.
- I feel like a lot of space allows hunting and atv/snowmobiles. There are a lot of people like myself who want to be outdoors in the quiet of nature.
- Not sure if this survey includes amenities within Eau Claire County, but provided by City of Eau Claire. For example, I see several basketball courts in the city, but can't think of others outside of the city limits. That said, there seems to be a need for an outdoor basketball court with lights.
- Know of no sightseeing, driving or bird/wildlife watching opportunities and would use them. If there are some maybe better communication is needed.
- With increased pop. Needs should be addressed
- Businesses need to shovel their sidewalks! Several parts of the trail, such as along Hastings Way, have snow piled on them, which forces people to walk through the slushy parking lot. And with the corners not shoveled, you have to walk in front of cars to get to an area where you can access the parking lot to pass through.
- More outdoor tennis courts needed.
- Had a hard time finding pickleball courts.
- Would like to see a dedicated area for kubb tournaments.
- Discontinue park fees so they actually are utilized and not sitting empty.
- The bird watching areas have been diminishing around Eau Claire county.
- We need a winter doom for soccer , football, running, baseball and running . Soccer field especially fairfax the goals and nets are wore out .
- A good pleasure drive adventure would be kind of cool.

- Need a skate rink back in the park for kids, dog park
- invasive species- buckthorn- needs to be under control. also major trash issues from some users. needs to be cleaned up
- There's considerable garbage dumping in the forests including deer carcasses off of QQ.
I think there are wonderful resources for hunters and people who are using ATVs... I wish there were more resources such as more accessible maps of trails and more signage for non-motorized forest users. I do really appreciate that it is largely undeveloped- I think many of the problems that come with a large forest area without much supervision I do except because I really appreciate the solitude and ability to be out in the forest without a ton of other users around. There's benefits and problems with that, not sure how the safety issues could be solved without changing the overall wild-ness of the forest. I like the fact that not many people really know about the county forest, but I'm often afraid of who I'm going to run into out there. Nature doesn't scare me, but people do.

Other Comments

108 respondents chose to provide additional comments, concerns, or recommendations that would enhance parks and outdoor recreation in Eau Claire County, which are provided below.

Parks & Playgrounds

- Many groups using forest. Potential is there to cause conflict. No conflict yet but as more people use same areas it's possible
- Keeping areas natural and native is more important to me than improvements.
- Fix Riverview please!
- Don't over develop some areas as in Harstad, nice park just could use up dated toilet facilities
- Centennial Park is one of the worst for Buckthorn.
- Enhancing signage at parks and adding trails to Big Falls would be a welcome addition. Also paved trail sections linking Eau Claire to the Altoona system would be awesome.
- EC county park facilities are very poor, plus fees are charged for inadequate facilities, poorly maintained and old facilities. Apparently EC county puts a very low priority on the park system which includes a substantial lack of funding. Actually find most of the facilities awful considering the population of the county.
- parks are well kept and portapoties are a great addition
- Allow pets on leash. We would use EC County parks much more often if we could bring our dogs with us. EC County parks should get in sync with state and community parks
- Drop the special winter pass for Tower Ridge. If residents buy county park pass it should be for all parks all year. Snowshoeing would be fun there but I will not pay extra to do it.
- Make all spaces dog friendly
- We held our daughters wedding reception at lake Eau Claire cty ok last June and it was wonderful. Ranger Tom Mayer was excellent to work with!!
- More than ever, people are heading to the outdoors for recreation and entertainment. This increased pressure on the resource highlights the importance of the county's parks and forest resources. Land acquisition and improvements to some of the highest use areas and

trails should be a priority for the county moving forward. Additionally, the county should consider EJ issues as they look at areas for expansion and improvements to ensure opportunity in some of the underserved areas of the county.

- I think maybe the County should consider a User Pass instead of a parking permit for Tower Ridge. A lot of the Frisbee golfers park on the road. At least 1 horse trailer comes with 4 different people several times a week.
- pets allowed
- More garbage cans at smaller parks. Picnic tables or benches. Bathroom access. Drinking Water access.

Mountain Biking

- I enjoy the cross country skiing and mountain biking opportunities the area has to offer.
- Coon Forks mountain bike and hiking signage needs to be revisited / reposted.
- County support of CORBA is fantastic and greatly appreciated.
- I utilize the cross country ski trails and mountain bike trails and feel you are doing a good job working with the volunteer groups to maintain them.
- Wanted to say thank you for keeping Lowes accessible and well groomed. I'm part of CORBA and help with single track trail, we live near the park and use it daily. Good job !!

Camping

- Addition of a camping loop at coon fork would be nice. Another 20-30 sites. Backpacking sites and development of a trail around the lake connecting the campground and day use would be ideal. ATV/UTV campground development far away from coon fork may be an option. Please never allow ATV/UTV use at coon fork.
- Put in a campground on the south end of EAU Clare lake park.

Trails, Routes, Hiking, & Road Cycling (Warm weather)

- Enjoy the walking/bike trails and appreciate quick snow removal.
- We in our 70's and love to walk trails with our small dog. However, it has become too stressful and dangerous in the past couple of years. People brag an to treat the tails as a dog park and let their dogs run loose. They charge up to us, have knocked us down and terrify our small, leashed dog. Please post signs and enforce the leash law on the trails so we may use them again. I see other dog owners on Facebook complaining also so it is a wide-spread issue.
- Recommendation: Add a set of the Mayo Clinic equipment that can be found at the Red Cedar Trail in Menomonie. We need a set here as well. Also, more gazebos.
- I think the cycling and running community would benefit from better overall maintenance of trails year-round and connection to larger trail systems.
- Love having paved and off road bike trails! We could have more with the demand of the community.
- Signage on trails for directional walking. Good CORBA trails, but it is hard to walk pets on a single track trail when there are bikes- what is the right of way? More walking trails near the river would be great

Trails, Routes, Hiking, & Cross Country Skiing (Winter activity)

- I wish there was a more obvious way to indicate which trails are ski trails at Lowe's Creek County Park so fewer people walked or snowshoed on them. Maybe sawhorses at trail intersections to encourage walkers to actually read the signs?
- Continue to enhance the cross country ski facilities and options!
- Please continue to maintain and develop our parks for mountain biking and cross country skiing.
- As xc ski enthusiasts, we are very concerned with misuse of the county groomed ski trails. Lowes creek for example is misused daily by walking traffic (boot/shoe). There is complete disregard for the notices/signage. Walking traffic comes in from various access points, not just parking lot users. The damage to trails is a danger to the skier which can cause falls and broken equipment. Also, we come across 90% of dog owners with their dogs off leash! One Saturday in Dec 2021 there were five dog owners I met on the MTB trails and not one had a leashed dog. Hate to see all the time, money, and efforts of the county to be damaged. We purchase winter passes for Tower and annual county passes as multi-users for xc skiing, mtb biking, fat biking, and walk/hiking. Thank you for your hard work.
- As an avid Nordic skier who has groomed trails, put on races, coached athletes to include Olympic athletes, I think a new groomer is needed at Tower Ridge
- I really enjoy the trails at Lowes Creek and Tower Ridge. The XC skiing is excellent at Tower. I think there could be more/better signs/maps for snowshoeing at Tower.
- Just please have businesses shovel. And house occupants in the East Hill- so many with the corner access not shoveled. Thank you so much!!
- I work on snowmobile trails, as I am a club member. Other groups need to step up to the plate & help maintain any trails they use.
- Winter activities and the trails that are kept for skiing are a big part of our life. Thank you very much.
- Strongly feel that we need to have more snowmobile trails and UTV and ATV trails in the city of Eau Claire and Altoona. We are on a snowmobile club in volunteer our time. We would enjoy our club in Eau Claire or Altoona if we had trails in to use

Fishing, Swimming, & Water Sports

- Lake Eau Claire desperately needs help restoring the Skid Row boat landing and the area where the Eau Claire river and lake intersect.
- Yes. Updating to the lake eau claire boat landings would be greatly appreciated
- The boat landings on Lake Eau Claire are some of the worse in the entire state of Wisconsin and have been like this for some time. This is not a power loading issue. A two lane boat ramp is needed at the north shore landing. Skid row is not even usable due to the sediment issues, and the south landing is way too steep and trailer frames rub on the ground. I have fished all over the state of WI and these are the worse by far. Please enforce the parking fees as well. The sediment issue should be a county issue on the lake. The lake is filling in on the east end, and FAST.
- Improve boat landings.
- More bathrooms on day side beach and more tables for people or families to sit at
- Kayak or canoe rentals

- I would love to see more fisherman friendly items in the parks
- more access to waterways, boat landings, docks

Water Quality

- I am concerned about having to close our Altoona beach so often for poor water quality. Need more coordination between our local govts to address lake altoona and its viability as a lake!...ie sand dredging, etc
- Water quality of lakes and streams
- EC County should assist the Lake Altoona Rehabilitation District with funding for dredging, etc. to maintain and improve the lake and water quality.

Marketing & Outreach

- You all really do a wonderful job doing so much, just know that. The county parks in place, the ski trails, really well done so far.
- Thank you for all you do!
- We are blessed with gorgeous outdoor recreational opportunities. That is why I moved here 45 years ago. Many improvement have been made over the years, which is a compliment to the DNR and others volunteers for their great work BUT we do need to put improvements into what needs repair before it completely becomes useless and falls apart.
- In general Eau Claire county does a good job in providing recreational opportunities for its residents. The one big exception is the poor road bike trails.
- I feel so fortunate to live here and enjoy all of the resources available in EC county,
- Eau Claire County is the Best!
- I believe that improving outdoor recreation in Eau Claire would greatly increase it's overall appeal. The City has only a few favorable spots, but too few. Thank you for your interest in my opinion.
- Thanks for all you do to provide us with outdoor recreation opportunities. I'm pleased you are conducting this survey because it says the County isn't complacent and is looking for ways to improve facilities, natural areas, and access.
- I would rank our parks and rec department very high especially in park maintenance.
- No, Just a thank you for all you do!
- overall, doing a great job. moved here from west coast and i am loving the easy access to multiple road bike, mountain bike and skiing trails. i don't know much about water access but am looking forward to canoeing etc. Also looking forward to camping next summer. Thanks for asking!
- Thanks for all the hard work that county employees and volunteers do to keep the parks very nice and useful here.
- Love our parks! Live camping, boating , kayaking, skiing and hiking!
- Thank you!!!!
- We have excellent people working at parks, ie Maintenance-appreciate their work!
- Thanks for all you do!

- Some of the county parks on the first page I hadn't even heard of! I'm interested in checking them out now and potentially utilizing them. More awareness of open spaces like that would be nice.
- There is so much opportunity here. Please do not follow the status quo. It's time to look at bold models that preserve, enhance, protect, and create buy in from the greater community for these beautiful open spaces. People want these opportunities, sometimes they just need a stronger invitation than an open door.
- We have really wonderful parks and it's a big reason I choose to live in Eau Claire, so continued investment is really appreciated.
- It might be great to have occasional free admission days that would highlight the gems that Eau Claire County has to offer -- maybe a weekend in February for CC skiing or in October for fall color at Coon Forks.
- Our Parks & Rec crews do a fabulous job of grooming and maintaining the city parks we use and we just want to say Thank You!
- Please continue to do the good work that you are doing.

Nature-based education

- More materials like maps, "how to" for using the parks, and general outreach to residents would help the public engage and appreciate the park system. Pursue grants related to workshops to educate and inform people about things like kayaking, backpacking, hunting, birding, snowshoeing, etc.
- We as a community should embrace all the wonderful recreation opportunities we have. We need to find a way to educate parents with young kids about all the wonderful outdoor activities and clubs in EC County. In the past, schools would distribute material, but they don't do it now. It is very difficult to inform parents of what is out there for kids. An example is Kicking Kids. The program is amazing, but a very, very small fraction of parents know it exists. There are similar organizations out there, and educating/informing parents is a huge barrier to get people doing these things or even knowing what is out there.
- More educational courses in the parks- nature related, etc.

Dumping and Invasives

- Honey Locust, Honey Suckle and garlic mustard also need to be evaluated and controlled.
- We spend a lot of time in the fall of the year on Channey Rd and would like to help keep it clean but don't know where to take the garbage.
- Garbage haulers should be charged a fee to clean up the roads on the way to the dump
- Vandalism, garbage and GUNS! Sometimes it feels like the Wild West out there. We shouldn't have to feel like we should be packing to enjoy county lands. Trails and trail maps on site and online.
- I agree buckthorn is a huge problem - breaks my heart every time I go to Lowes Creek.
- Hire people in work programs to help clean it up if you need a hand. I think over 25% of our taxes go to law enforcement efforts, borrow some of that, and pay people in need of work to do work.
- More enforcement for dumping. The amount of trash I have found is disturbing at times.

- Punish those that dump garbage more....this can easily be stopped

Other Activities & Comments

- More select cutting verses clear cutting//after logging make sure trails are useable. Make sure activities are compatible such as keeping trapping away from areas where dogs can be//loud activities such as shooting, traffic don't make a safe environment for horses.
- Would be a visitor from 150 miles away from Eau Claire Coming to enjoy horse riding trails at Tower Ridge Horse Trails. We are DNR approved Adopt-A-Trail group for Hartman Creek State Pk, Waupaca WI. There must be local horse riding clubs involved in clean-up and minor maintenance in Eau Claire county that perform these service duties.
- Make the parks FREE to use for all! These park passes are not advantageous to get better use. I avoid these parks as much as possible for this reason and would believe there are others like me.
- I would also be willing to help with small maintenance of county areas but the last question only allowed me to choose one option (either cleaning or maintenance but not both)
- More police for drugs and alcohol over use
- Provide additional public lands for use by the public!
- I like the idea of citizen 'ownership' of a park. Volunteers, neighborhood groups, schools, or business to own a park similar to highway cleanup areas
- Check out what the city of Duluth Minnesota is doing or Marquette Michigan to get people outdoors.
- Do away with fees. Tax dollars should fund public spaces. I don't have to pay if I visit city parks.
- I appreciate the previous questions about volunteering to help. My partner and myself each volunteer at least 40 hours/year through CORBA which often includes clearing branches and trees.
- EC Co. residents should not have to pay same rate for use of facilities as non-residents
- Prioritize frisbee-golf, cyclists, pedestrian and hiking paths, ice skating, playgrounds, campsites, swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing and education (those plaques posted alongside trails that state local ecology facts are fun.) Consider installing basic outdoor fitness equipment for adults.
- Recycling containers. Keep bathrooms open in winter.
- There is more to EauClaire County than just the city of EauClaire.
- Can you confirm whether the High Bridge in EC by the paper mill and Anderson St is being currently repaired? Thank you very much!
- More support of silent sports - mountain biking, skateboarding, XC skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, canoe/kayak river access, tent camping
- At Lowes Creek some form of enforcement would help with vandalism. Night drive through of parking areas on summer nights, "park ranger" presence on busy weekends performing trail education, monitoring pet leash rules and pass enforcement. As Eau Claire continuous to grow in population the trail system need to keep pace.
- Disc Golf has grown tremendously and more courses/expanding existing courses can ease congestion

- Shade for handicap areas
- More camera for safety of everyone
- Most counties don't charge an entrance or parking fee for their parks. It is spread out more for their maintenance thru taxes. I would visit more if I didn't have to pay each time.
- as a disabled person, I need better parking spaces close to the activities I pursue as breathing issues prevent me from walking long distances. Not enough disabled parking spaces and often not enforced.
- Need to have liscence fees based on horse powered engines not auto parking. Take up with dnr- legislators.
- List more information on hunting in the Eau Claire county parks/ forest

APPENDIX C

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

In contrast to County, State, and Federal agencies that have quite varied and extensive recreation and resource protection responsibilities, smaller, local governments are most often concerned with meeting local, daily recreation needs. These local community needs can best be met by providing a variety of parks that serve all age groups of the resident population.

The National Recreational and Park Association published guidelines in 1983 that classified different park areas based on use, service area, size, and desirable site characteristics⁸. This classification system has been largely incorporated into this plan utilizing the following selected definitions of types of parks considered most appropriate for the community. The acreage recommendations are less important than the functions for smaller communities, where a relatively small park can provide important neighborhood and community recreational functions. It is also important to note that all of the following types of parks may incorporate sites or features of social, historical, or cultural significance (e.g., historical marker, war memorial, art display, community bulletin board).

MINI-PARKS

A mini-park is a small, outdoor recreation area, typically less than 1-acre in size, that offers specialized facilities providing a single use or very limited number of amenities. Mini-parks will also serve a concentrated or limited population, such as very young children or senior citizens. Mini-parks are typically located in very close proximity to high-density residential development, such as a large apartment complex, townhouse development, or specialized housing for the elderly. However, mini-parks might also serve a principal commercial area with workers and shoppers the primary park visitors. Mini-parks can provide active (e.g., limited playground equipment) or passive (e.g., benches, picnic tables) recreation opportunities. Most mini-parks are for daylight use only and must be easily accessible to their target users.

Mini-Parks

- < 1 acres
- specialized
- not multi-use
- targeted users

Neighborhood Parks & Playgrounds

- 15+ acres
- passive & active
- multi-use
- serves a specific neighborhood

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS

Neighborhood parks and playgrounds are suited for intense development areas and should be easily accessible to their neighborhood population by both pedestrian and bike travel. The service area for neighborhood parks and playgrounds is approximately ¼ to ½ mile, with playground service areas potentially being larger. These facilities are typically for daylight use only, though some recreational court games and skating rings may be lighted. A neighborhood park or playground will typically offer a diversity of recreational amenities and is significantly larger than a mini-park. A desirable size for a neighborhood park and playground offering both passive and

⁸ Lancaster, Roger A., editor. "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines." National Recreation and Park Association. Alexandria, VA. 1983.

active recreational opportunities in an area of high-density urban residential development is 15+ acres. However, many neighborhood parks and playgrounds may be smaller, especially in smaller cities and villages. Neighborhood parks and playgrounds may also be provided in conjunction with a school district or other such facility.

A neighborhood park provides open space for passive recreation needs to serve a neighborhood. The physical concept generally involves an imaginatively landscaped natural environment with limited facilities for active use. Site development could include sidewalks or trails for strolling, benches, picnicking areas, and a limited amount of play equipment such as a sandbox, swing, slide, etc.

A neighborhood playground provides an area for active intensive play that serves a neighborhood. The physical concept involves a combination of paved and landscaped areas with an imaginative layout of facilities and equipment. This type of park may include some supervised playground program including games, physical skills, and low-level competition primarily for grade school age children. Activities and equipment may include swings, sandboxes, slides, climbers, fitness units, merry-go-round, etc., picnic tables, benches, grills, and parking. The playground may also include a ball field and basketball court primarily used by neighborhood and school children.

COMMUNITY PARKS

A community park serves several neighborhoods or the entire community and is generally larger (25+ acres) and much more spacious than a neighborhood park or playground. The community park is designed to serve a full range of ages, including teenagers and adults with various recreational activities. Community parks can include play fields, participation sports areas, (baseball/softball fields, typically designed for organized league play), swimming pools, basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball, horseshoe area, and shuffleboard area. Often, community park amenities may be unique or large scale (e.g., water parks) not found elsewhere in a community. Community parks can also include picnic areas, sanitary facilities, shelter facilities, benches, playground equipment, concession buildings, and grills. The physical setting should be a combination of game areas in a natural or landscaped setting, though a community park may also include prominent natural features such as water bodies. The service radius should be 1 to 2 miles allowing both daylight and evening use. Parking should also be provided in a sufficient amount to accommodate the use and character of the park, but the park should be easily accessible to the neighborhoods served.

Community Parks

- 25+ acres
- passive & active
- multi-use
- may have unique and large-scale amenities
- serves multiple neighborhoods or all of the community

REGIONAL PARKS

A regional park not only serves the entire community, but offers amenities which are an attraction to several communities within a one-hour driving time. In a large County, a regional park may function as a County-wide or community park. Regional parks are very large (200+ acres) and serves some or all types of a community's recreation needs. It can provide a wide range of activities for all age groups or it can be very specific (e.g., a zoo). In addition to some of the facilities provided by other types of parks, regional parks typically encompass or are contiguous to natural resources allowing for nature study, hiking and riding trails, marinas, boat launching, pond fishing,

Regional Parks

- 200+ acres
- passive & active; multi-use
- significant natural resources
- may have unique or large-scale amenities and attractions
- serves a very large urban area or several communities

and numerous other nature-based activities. Regional parks often also include large, active play areas and game fields (e.g., soccer fields, basketball/volleyball courts) which allow for spectator viewing.

The physical concept of the regional park is generally a natural area imaginatively landscaped and providing picnicking and other passive activities as well as cultural and active needs served by general-purpose buildings and game fields. Regional parks provide a full range of urban area recreation needs and are used

during both daylight and evening hours. Also, because people would more likely drive to a park of this type, parking and sanitary facilities are necessary.

SPECIALIZED OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS

Golf courses, outdoor sports complexes, historic sites, conservancy areas, fairgrounds, and floodplains are examples of specialized recreation facilities and open spaces. Depending on the community, certain school facilities may also be considered specialized recreations facilities.

Most of these specialized facilities have limited active recreation value, are not developed as multi-purpose recreation areas, or are not always available for use by the public. Although such areas are often not included in total park acreage calculations for a community, it must be recognized that specialized areas are an important adjunct to a community's outdoor recreation and open space program.