

# Chapter 3:

## OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreational facilities in Wood County, which will focus primarily upon public facilities. Some private facilities may be listed for reference purposes. The private sector provides many recreational opportunities, but this plan’s purpose is to identify public facility improvements that may qualify for state and federal money.

Intensively used outdoor recreation facilities are generally located near population concentrations like the Marshfield and Wisconsin Rapids urbanized areas, on school district properties, and in town centers. There may not be any parks in towns with low population densities.

### 3.2 County Maintained Recreation Facilities

See Chapter 4 for Wood County owned and maintained outdoor recreation facilities.

### 3.3 Linear Facilities

#### ATV Trails & Routes

ATV trails and routes are described in Chapter 4, and are generally shown on a map in **Appendix F**, which is the Wood County ATV/UTV planning map.

#### Snowmobile Trails

Snowmobile trails are described in Chapter 4, and are shown on **Map 3**.

#### Silent Sport Trails

Under “4.3 County Forest,” see the silent sport trail facilities that are on county forest land:

- cross country ski trails;
- snowshoe trails;
- mountain bike trails; and
- hunter/hiking trails.

## **Bicycle Trails & Routes**

Bicycle trails and routes are described below and are shown on **Map 3**.

Proposed paths and on-road routes from this plan are shown on **Maps 4, 6, 7, & 8**.

### **Wood County Bicycle Routes**

The County's 1996 bicycle plan proposed a series of bicycle routes and trails countywide. The 2025 Plan includes many of the 1996 routes and trails, and includes some different alignments based upon public feedback of the current system.

### **Ahdawagam Multi-Use Trails**

The network is made up of five connected trails from between three to seven miles in length. Over 21 miles of multi-use trails in Wisconsin Rapids make up the Ahdawagam trail network.

### **City of Marshfield Multi-Use Trails**

There are 14 off-road trails in the City and one trail system directly to the north of the city that Marshfield residents often use. There are approximately 22 miles of recognized trails in or near the City of Marshfield.

### **George W. Mead Wildlife Area Trails**

About 70 miles of hiking trails exist. No bike trails exist.

### **McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area Trails**

The Marsh has a seasonally open bicycle loop trail and a connected seasonally open walking trail. The Marsh is fully within Marathon County, but is adjacent to the City of Marshfield (in Marathon County). City residents often use these trails.

## **Water Trails**

A water trail is a network of access points, resting places, and attractions for users of watercraft on lakes and rivers. There are many streams and rivers providing canoeists many miles of routes in Wood County.

The Wisconsin River Centennial Trail is a water trail that was established in 2007 to commemorate Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation's (WVIC) 100th year of coordinating flow on the Wisconsin River. Mile markers are typically located on the right side of the bridges and at portage take out sites.

All navigable water is available to canoe on according to the Public Trust Doctrine (Art. 1, §1, WI Constitution). Wisconsin law recognizes that owners of lands bordering lakes and rivers—riparian owners—hold rights in the water next to their property. These riparian rights include the use of the shoreline, reasonable use of the water, and a right to access the water. Members of the public may use any exposed shore area of a stream without the permission of the riparian (i.e., landowner) only if it is necessary to exit the body of water to bypass an obstruction. In addition, a member of the public may not enter the exposed shore area except from the water, from a point of public access on the stream, or with the permission of the riparian landowner. Obstructions could consist of trees or rocks, shallow water for boaters or deep water for wading trout anglers. The bypass can involve areas up to the ordinary high water mark and should be by the shortest possible route. Under this law, using the exposed shoreline for purposes such as picnicking and sunbathing is not allowed (Ch. 30.134, WI Stats.).

### **Yellowstone Trail**

Roads were initially established by the repeated use of horses and wagons. Most roads were packed earth that became soft when it rained and became severely rutted when used while soft. Roads were also slippery due to horse excrement. Before there were numbered highways in the United States there were names attached to roads to help the motorist navigate from community to community.

Bicyclists and the new motorists were vocal and persistent. The decades around 1912 saw the beginning of high volume auto manufacturing and the Good Roads Movement, started by bicyclists, meant the time had come to be serious about roads and long-distance routes. Many auto clubs were established, and several multi-state named road routes were established, some of which crossed the whole country—like the Lincoln Highway, dedicated in 1913. Area men of vision were called together for a Good Roads meeting in Ipswich, South Dakota, on April 23, 1912, to do something about the roads crisis. That meeting started the next 18 years of work developing the Yellowstone Trail.

Although there are many more route choices when traveling today, much of the Yellowstone Trail can still be traveled. More information on the Yellowstone trail can be found at Yellowstone Trail Association, LLC online at <https://yellowstonetrail.org/>

See partial map of Wood County segment in **Appendix G**.



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### **Cranberry Highway**

The Cranberry Highway and Cranberry biking trail were started in the late 1990s to promote tourism in South Wood County associated with cranberry culture. What first started as a promotional tour has evolved into a cultural experience where participants can take a self-guided auto drive or bicycle ride on a 50-mile route. Although the tour can be taken any time during the year, the cranberry harvest and changing colors make the fall season the optimum time of year to experience it. On the tour there are opportunities to tour cranberry marshes, dine at local establishments, and shop at unique specialty stores that sell items unique to the area.



Wisconsin Rapids Area  
Convention & Visitors Center

See **Map 3** for the Cranberry Highway and Cranberry Biking Trail.

### 3.4 Points of Interest

Wood County contains both historic and contemporary points of interest of cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and scientific importance. A number of private sites are open to the public, while others in private ownership are closed.

Find historical buildings in Wood County by going online to Wisconsin Historical Society and search under: "Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory."

The North Wood County Historical Society, South Wood County Historical Corporation, and the Wisconsin Historical Society assist the public with finding a variety of culturally significant sites on an annual basis.

#### **Historical Markers**

- A state historical marker titled: Cranberry Culture is located on STH 54, 5 miles west of Port Edwards.
- A state historical marker titled: Centralia Pulp and Paper Mill is located in Wisconsin Rapids at the intersection of STHs 54 & 73.
- A state historical marker titled: Point Basse is located in Riverside Park along STHs 54 & 73 in Nekoosa.
- A state historical marker titled: Prisoners of War is located in a wayside at the intersection of STHs 10 & 13.
- A state historical marker titled: Myron "Grim" Natwic is located at the South Wood County Historical Museum 540 3<sup>rd</sup> Street South in Wisconsin Rapids.
- A state historical marker titled: Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Champions is located in South Wood County Park & Campground, west of the Lake Wazeecha Red Sand Beach.

#### **Historical Attractions & Memorials**

The ***Rudolph Grotto Shrine*** is located in the Village of Rudolph. The Grotto was started in 1920 by Father Philip Wagner and consists of over five acres of lush gardens, numerous shrines, museum, and a gift shop. It is constructed using rock and broken glass and is set among meandering paths and crooked bridges, with shady, intimate areas for meditation as well as more formal memorials and open picnic grounds.

***Historic Point Basse*** is one of Wood County's most historically significant areas, which is located on the east side of the Wisconsin River just south of the City of Nekoosa. Point Basse, as the site is called, is the French term for "low point" or "shallows." Prior to development by Robert and Mary Wakely on June 2, 1837, as a trading post, warehouse, inn, and home for themselves, the site marked the crossing point for Native Americans as they made their way on an east and west trail that ran from Lake Poygan to Black River. Many of the original buildings at Point Basse have been moved, burned or razed. The only original building is the Wakely home, and other structures have been donated or reconstructed. Over the years Point Basse has hosted many events that focus on the history of the area and interpretation of the lives of the eleven Wakely family members that resided there. The site also offers nature education through events and a nature walk and prairie garden. More information on Point Basse and scheduled events can be found at [www.historicpointbasse.com](http://www.historicpointbasse.com)

The **Wisconsin River Papermaking Museum** is located at 730 First Ave. South in the City of Wisconsin Rapids. The museum is open to the public and features changing exhibits that focus on paper making over the years. Some exhibits include antique papermaking tools and large wooden papermaking vats from China and Japan.

The **Alexander House** is located at 1131 Wisconsin River Drive in the Village of Port Edwards. It was founded by the Alexander Charitable Foundation of Port Edwards in 1990. It is named for the late John E. Alexander, who was instrumental in establishing the lumbering and paper industry. Since opening in 1991 tens of thousands of people have visited the art and history displays. The art display changes throughout the year and features many local and Midwestern artists. The second floor of the house contains many historic items from the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company.

The **Wisconsin State Firefighters Memorial** is located on the southwest side of Wisconsin Rapids, in Ben Hansen Park. The memorial at this scenic location along the Wisconsin River was constructed to pay tribute to the firefighters from the State of Wisconsin who made the ultimate sacrifice while in service to their communities.

The **Wood County Veteran's Memorial** is located near the courthouse entrance at 400 Market Street. The memorial pays tribute to the veterans that paid the ultimate price in defending the principles and freedoms of the United States of America. Veterans listed by name on the monument served in the following wars: Spanish American; Civil War; World War I; World War II; Vietnam War; Korean War; Gulf War; and Iraq War. The memorial was established by a volunteer committee that wanted to make sure that all Wood County service men and women who died as a result of combat-related wounds, injuries or causes are not forgotten. Inspiration for the monument comes from the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., and the Highground in Neillsville, Wisconsin.

### **Archaeological Sites**

According to records at the State Historical Society (Office of the State Archaeologist) there are presently 269 archaeological sites in Wood County. One site—Powers Bluff—is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Eight other sites are eligible to be listed on the National Register. The archaeological sites are typically relating to early tribal villages or burial grounds, such as those at Ross Lake or Powers Bluff, or from the pre-Contact period. The majority of the archaeological sites that have not been considered for application to the National Register of Historic Places, have not been evaluated in enough detail to warrant such application. (State Archaeologist, 2025)

Most of the 269 identified archaeological sites were found while completing archaeological surveys for proposed highway corridors, or for the relicensing of impoundments on the Wisconsin River. The Historical Society has emphasized that "these sites probably represent only a fraction of the sites actually present within Wood County as little systematic archaeological survey work has been undertaken." Wood County should pursue an archaeological investigation to identify important sites. Such an investigation would be educational for area residents and may uncover archaeological areas of statewide or national significance. Without an archaeological investigation, important sites stand the chance of being inadvertently destroyed by unknowing developers. (State Archaeologist, 2025)

## 3.5 Public Access Points to Water Bodies

Public access points to water bodies vary from primitive (i.e., canoe launches) to well developed (i.e., boat launches). Multiple jurisdictions own the access points while the County maintains many of them.

All public access points are shown on **Map 1**. You may review an interactive map online of public access points by searching for “WDNR boat and shore fishing access map.”

See Chapter 4 for Wood County maintained public access points to waterbodies.

See “3.7 Local Government Facilities” for those public access points maintained by local governments.

See “3.8 State Facilities” for those public access points maintained by the State.

## 3.6 School District Facilities

Six public school districts and some private schools have additional local recreation opportunities in Wood County that may be open to the public. School yards often have playgrounds with play equipment, ball diamonds, and basketball hoops. These school yards range in size from 1 to 15 acres. See **Map 5** for locations.

### School properties NOT always publicly available:

- Each school’s playground is NOT open to the public during school hours.
- Parochial school grounds are on private property and may not be open to the public at all.
- School forests may not be available – contact school forest owner for rules.

### Each school district maintains the following outdoor facilities in Wood County:

#### Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools

The School District maintains:

- 1 school forest about 46 acres is adjacent to the high school in Wisconsin Rapids (see **Map 7**).
- 1 school forest about 8 acres is actually business park land.
- There is a 182 acre school forest that also is the City of Wisconsin Rapid’s wooded well fields (see **Map 7**).
- Located in the Wisconsin Rapids area:
  - 8 elementary schools (early learning center) with outdoor recreation
  - 1 middle school with outdoor recreation
  - 1 high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 9 tennis courts
  - 6 ball fields
- Located in the Rudolph area:
  - An elementary school with outdoor recreation

### **Assumption Catholic Schools – Wisconsin Rapids**

The School District maintains:

- A high school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A middle school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- Two elementary schools with outdoor recreation facilities.

### **School District of Marshfield**

The School District maintains:

- Located in the Marshfield area:
  - 5 elementary schools with outdoor recreation
  - a middle school with outdoor recreation
  - a high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 8 tennis courts
  - 2 soccer fields
  - 1 ball field
- Marshfield Senior High School Forest is about 320 acres in the Town of Rock (see **Map 5**).

### **Columbus Catholic Schools – Marshfield**

The School District maintains:

- A high school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A middle school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- An intermediate school with outdoor recreation facilities.
- A primary school with outdoor recreation facilities.

### **School District of Auburndale**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Auburndale:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle/high school with outdoor recreation
  - a varsity football field & track
  - a soccer field
  - 5 ball fields
- Auburndale School Forest, about 40-acres in Auburndale (see **Map 5**).

### **Port Edwards School District**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Port Edwards:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle/high school with outdoor recreation
  - a varsity track
  - a soccer field
  - a ball field
- Port Edwards School Forest, about 40-acres in Port Edwards (see **Map 8**).

### **School District of Nekoosa**

The School District maintains:

- Located in Nekoosa:
  - an elementary school with outdoor recreation
  - a middle school with outdoor recreation
  - 1 high school Facility
  - a varsity football field & track
  - 2 soccer fields
  - 5 ball fields
- NELL (Nekoosa Environmental Learning Loop), about 53-acres in Nekoosa (see **Map 8**).

### **School District of Pittsville**

The School District maintains:

- A K-12 school with the following outdoor recreation facilities in Pittsville:
  - a playground
  - a varsity football field & track
  - a soccer field
  - 2 ballfields
- Pittsville Public Schools Forest, about 137-acres in the Town of Remington (see **Map 5**).



## 3.7 Local Government Facilities & Capital Improvement Lists

This section is an inventory of the existing outdoor recreation facilities that are managed by each local government. Parks, special use facilities, trails, local forests, and boat launches are all included here.

**Map 5** shows local government managed outdoor recreation.

A local government can find out how much land is needed for a tennis court, for example, or many other park features in **Appendix B** – Facility Development Standards.

**ADA Accessibility** – All local municipalities must ensure that park and recreation programs and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. If not done already, local municipalities shall complete an evaluation of the accessibility of its existing facilities, programs, and services. This will provide future direction on how to achieve compliance with ADA requirements.

### **Proposed Projects from 2026-2030**

The projects listed may occur from 2026-2030. Projects are not listed in priority order and are subject to change. Each local government created the following capital improvement lists. All upgrades and new construction will take into consideration meeting ADA standards. As funds become available, the following projects may be completed.

### **City of Wisconsin Rapids**

See the City of Wisconsin Rapids Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The City's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

**Map 7** shows Wisconsin Rapids' area outdoor recreation.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Wisconsin Rapids has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

### **City of Marshfield**

See the City of Marshfield Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The City's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

**Map 6** shows Marshfield area outdoor recreation.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Marshfield has its own Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

## **City of Nekoosa (See Map 8)**

**Riverside Park** – This approximately 31-acre park is along the Wisconsin River, east of CTH 73, between about 13<sup>th</sup> St and 5<sup>th</sup> St. Park facilities include about 1 mile of Wisconsin River shoreland, open play space, wooded area, playground, ball field, band shell, 1.2 miles of paved multi-use trail with benches, artwork on park buildings, disc golf baskets (holes), restrooms, picnic areas with grills & tables, the Nekoosa Veterans Memorial, and Point Basse historical marker. Domtar owns the land which is leased by the City of Nekoosa. There is a festival area in the park that includes 3 large open-air picnic shelters, an enclosed shelter with restrooms, parking lot, and open space with electrical hook-up pedestals. This park is home to the Nekoosa GIANT Pumpkin Festival, Nekoosa Area Hometown Christmas, and other community events.

The shelters are ADA accessible, but not the restrooms. A concrete panel boat launch exists with parking for about 5 boat trailers. The transition to the boarding dock is not ADA accessible. There is an accessible fishing platform near the boat launch. Fishing is also allowed along the riverbank.

**William Kautzer Recreational Plaza** – This 12.7-acre park is located at 1002 Market St. Park facilities include open play space, 3 ball fields, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts & ice rink, 2 non-ADA accessible portable toilets, warming house, batting cage and pitching machine, and a small parking lot by the tennis courts.

**John E. Thompson Park** – This 0.3-acre park is located in downtown, across the street from 418 Market St. Park facilities include open space with shade trees, a picnic table, a bench, and a park sign. Domtar owns the land.

**Jim Freeman Memorial Boat Landing** – This 8.5-acre boat launch park shares a driveway with the wastewater treatment plant, located at 1348 Point Basse Ave, along the Wisconsin River. The boat launch has 4 concrete launch lanes, 2 ADA accessible boarding docks, 51 boat trailer parking spots, about 5 vehicle parking spots, ADA accessible restrooms, picnic tables, and a few acres of wooded and open play space.

**Point Basse Avenue Riverfront** – This approximately 4-acre park is along the Wisconsin River, south of the Nekoosa Dam on the east side of Pointe Basse Avenue/CTH AA. This location is passive open space that is available to the public. Domtar owns the land.

**Lynn Creek** – This 63.9-acre park is on the west side of the City, on the north side of Wood Avenue/STH 173. A majority of this City owned site is undeveloped wooded land. The Nekoosa Police Department shooting range is located on the property. The area along Fawn Lane is used as a sledding hill in the winter. Recreational activities may be developed in the future.

**Sacred Heart Playground** – This 3-acre park is on the west side of Vilas Ave at 7th St, that is a combination of parcels owned individually by Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Domtar, and the City of Nekoosa. The park is primarily used as the Sacred Heart School playground that is closed to the public during the school day. After school, on weekends, and in the summer, this park is open to the public. Park facilities include a playground with safety surface, open play space, soccer field, parking, and a small fenced area.

## Proposed Projects for 2026-2030

General Cost: \$\$\$\$ = high cost \$=low cost

Priority: 1=highest priority 5=lowest priority

Riverside Parks		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Enhance disc golf course (designated route, signage, launch pads, etc.)	\$	1
Restroom facility	\$\$\$	1
Plant trees by playground for shade	\$	1
Install dog waste receptacles	\$	1
Address goose waste issue	\$	1
Address water issues/flooding	\$\$	1
Expand Christmas display	\$\$	1
Install a natural surfaced multi-use trail on north side of park	\$	2
Upgrade lighting	\$\$	2
Install Wi-Fi	\$\$	2
Address shoreline erosion	\$\$	3
Improve gravel parking lot	\$\$	3
Upgrade crosswalk at 1 <sup>st</sup> St & Wilhorn Rd	\$\$	3
Construct a canoe/kayak launch	\$\$	3
Create picnic shelter	\$\$	3
Upgrade boat landing dock	\$\$	3
Make improvements to the band shell	\$\$\$\$	4
Re-pave park road	\$\$\$	5

William Kautzer Recreational Plaza		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Install splash pad	\$\$\$	1
Develop multi-use paths	\$\$	1
Install Wi-Fi	\$\$	1
Address park boundary fencing	\$	2
Update restrooms	\$\$\$	2
Create an additional parking lot	\$\$\$	2
Add pickleball court to tennis court	\$	3
Create a picnic shelter	\$\$	3
Restripe parking lot	\$	3
Create a recreation plaza and building	\$\$\$\$	4
Create an educational boardwalk in the wetland area	\$\$\$	4
Install plaza entry monuments	\$\$	5

John F. Thompson Park		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Install more picnic tables	\$	1
Consider land acquisition	?	1
Develop a small picnic shelter	\$\$\$	2
Install garbage and recycling receptacles	\$	2
Upgrade electrical in park	\$	3

Jim Freeman Memorial Boat Landing		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Install a picnic shelter	\$\$	1
Develop 2 fishing piers	\$\$\$	2
Install a playground	\$\$	3
Upgrade the restrooms	\$\$\$	4
Create a campground	\$\$\$	5
Install a fish cleaning station	\$\$	5

Point Basse Avenue Riverfront		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Create a paved off-street multi-use path	\$\$\$	1
Install a canoe/kayak launch	\$	1
Preserve and protect the shoreline	\$\$\$\$	1
Install dog waste garbage receptacles	\$	1
Consider land acquisition	?	2
Develop picnic areas	\$	2
Install picnic shelter and restroom building	\$\$\$\$	3
Develop fishing piers	\$\$\$	5

Lynn Creek Area		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Prepare park master plan	\$\$	1

Charles and JoAnn Lester Library		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Install a small playground	\$\$\$	1
Create picnic areas	\$	2
Install a gazebo or pergola	\$\$	2
Install garbage and recycling receptacles	\$	3
Install benches	\$	4
Create an outdoor reading and recreation addition	\$\$\$\$	5

Nekoosa Community Center		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Plant more trees and landscaping	\$\$	1
Create an outdoor wedding venue	\$\$\$	1
Install a small playground	\$\$\$	3
Create green space east of the parking lot	\$\$	5

Nekoosa School District		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Develop paved trail system	\$\$	1
Connect School trails to City trail system	\$\$\$	1
Improve access to Nekoosa Environmental Learning Loop (NELL) from Sunny Ridge Circle	\$\$	2
Create a small stage	\$\$\$	2
Develop a pavilion	\$\$	3
Develop exercise stations along trail	\$\$	3
Control invasive species in the park	\$	4
Develop athletic complex	\$\$\$\$	4
Enhance playground equipment	\$\$\$	4
Dredge pond	\$\$\$	5
Develop trail maps and interpretive signs	\$	5

Sacred Heart Playground		
Project	General Cost	Priority
Update playground equipment	\$\$\$	3
Install picnic shelter	\$\$	4
Plant trees	\$	5

## **City of Pittsville**

See the City of Pittsville Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The City's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The City of Pittsville has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

## **Village of Arpin**

**Kandy Kane Park** – This 7.8-acre park is next to the Village Municipal Building. Parking access is available off of Park Lane, and at 3 parking areas off of Main Street. Park facilities include play equipment, lighted softball field, tennis/pickle ball court, volleyball court, basketball court, 8 picnic tables, 3 cooking grills, an open shelter, an enclosed shelter, restrooms, concession stand, a covered walking bridge, a pond, a gazebo, sand box, and rope climber. The shelters and restrooms are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Kandy Kane Park**

- Playground equipment updates and upgrades
- Pond dredging
- Beautification focused on tree replacement
- New signage

## **Village of Auburndale**

**Auburndale Park**– This 7.5-acre park, located at 10654 Park Ave., is surrounded by School District of Auburndale athletic fields. Park facilities include a parking lot; open play space; playground; 2 softball fields (one lighted); 2 youth ball fields tennis/pickleball court; 3 volleyball courts; basketball court; picnic tables; open shelter; enclosed shelter with kitchen, restrooms, and concession stand. There is a walking path around the entire park.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Auburndale Park**

- Expanding the walking path through the school forest and out to North Road
- Build separate pickleball courts
- New PA system for announcements during events
- Residing the shelter house
- Buying land to expand the walking path.
- New youth sports building for storage.
- Install parkwide Wi-Fi
- Plant trees for walking path
- Install new signage parkwide
- Add security cameras
- Add AC unit for shelter house
- Upgrade bleachers

## **Village of Biron**

**Biron Park** – This 2.7-acre park is located at 780 S Biron Dr. Park facilities include open play space, a parking lot, baseball field, playground on sand, lighted tennis court, volleyball court, 2 ½ basketball courts, an open picnic pavilion with about 8 picnic tables, drinking fountain, ice rink. Everything except the playground is ADA accessible.

**Gateway Park** – This 1-acre park is located at 2420 1st St N on the Wisconsin River. Park facilities include a 12-space parking lot, picnic table, viewing deck, kayak launch, fishing pier, and little library.

**Bridgewater Park** – This 16.8-acre wooded area is located at 2923 N Biron Dr. Park facilities include a gravel parking area with connecting trail to the main Bridgewater trail along the Wisconsin River, an open-covered pavilion with 4 picnic tables and power outlets, and restrooms with running water.

**Sunset Point Park** – Along the Wisconsin River on Sunset Point Drive at Bridgeview Drive sits this 0.45-acre park with about 400 feet of shoreline. Park facilities include unobstructed views of the Wisconsin River, wheelchair accessible fishing pier, public parking for 4 vehicles, and a little library. Bridgewater Trail passes through this park.

**Bridgewater Trail** – This is a 10-foot wide asphalt paved walking & biking trail. The trail begins at the east end of the Village at N 80th St and the Wisconsin River (3315 Biron Dr). There is a small parking lot just off 80th Street (5163 N 80th St). From this parking lot, the path goes west along the shores of the Wisconsin River, along Sunset Point Drive, then along N Biron Drive/Cty Rd U and continues west onto S Biron Drive. Once on S Biron Drive the path turns south down Kahoun Road for about a ½-mile, passing the Municipal Center, and then it turns west onto an off-road section through the woods towards Gateway Park at S Biron Rd (1243 S Biron Dr) and then south, connecting to the Wisconsin Rapids Trail system.

### **Boat Landings**

The Village has 2 boat landings operated by Consolidated Water Power Company (CWPCo).

The Biron Boat Landing is a small boat access landing along S Biron Drive, about 240 feet west of Kahoun Rd.

The second boat landing is located on the East end of the Village at the end of Anchor Landing Drive. This boat landing has 90 boat trailer parking spaces and 20 vehicle parking spaces, a boat washing station, and restrooms with flush toilets.

## **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

### **Bridgewater Park**

- Possibly add cross-country ski trails
- Possible add hiking/biking trails

### **Sunset Point Park**

- Upgrade landscaping
- Possibly add a second kayak launch

## **Village of Hewitt** (See Map 6)

**Hewitt Village Park** – This 2-acre park is located at 7688 McLean Dr., behind the Village Hall. Park facilities include 2 basketball courts, playground, volleyball court, 2 enclosed shelters, one of which includes a kitchen and restrooms, and parking exists for 40 vehicles. Both shelters are ADA compliant.

**Yellowstone Recreation Park** – This 14-acre park is located at 7658 Yellowstone Dr. Park facilities include 2 ball diamonds, 2 volleyball courts, play equipment, enclosed concession building that includes a kitchen, restrooms, and storage area; open picnic shelter, parking for 200 vehicles, bicycle/pedestrian trails, and trail head for Hewitt-Marsh Trail. All buildings, parking lot, and the trail are ADA compliant.

**Hewitt Marsh Trail** – This is an asphalt and gravel surfaced walking and biking trail that is about 0.7-mile long on a Village access driveway and private property. This trail connects 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets to Marshfield's walking and biking trail.

**Hewitt Lagoons** – This 10-acre parcel is southeast of wastewater treatment facility. The site is maintained in natural state and has some unpaved recreational trails.

**Hewitt Natural Area** – This 19-acre parcel is east of the wastewater treatment facility. The site is maintained in natural state and has some unpaved recreational trails.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Hewitt Village Park

- Resurface parking lot in asphalt.

#### Yellowstone Recreation Park

- Resurface parking lot in asphalt.

#### Hewitt Marsh Trail

- Reseal walking/biking trail.

## **Village of Milladore**

**Village of Milladore Park** – This 12.7-acre park is located at 722 Bradley St, and has a second parking lot off of County Rd N. Park facilities include open play space; lighted softball field; tennis court; 2 volleyball courts; basketball court; band shell; horseshoe pits; 24 picnic tables; 6 cooking grills; 2 open shelters; and an enclosed shelter with kitchen, restrooms, and concession stand. Only the restrooms are ADA compliant.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Village of Milladore Park

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- \_\_\_\_\_



## **Village of Port Edwards (See Maps 7 & 8)**

**Edwards Alexander Park** – This 2.5-acre park is located at 210 2nd St. Park facilities include open play space, an open shelter adjacent to an enclosed shelter that has restrooms and a kitchen, 12 picnic tables within the shelters, 2 cooking grills next to the shelters, splash pad, horseshoe pits. Playground equipment includes adult and tot swings, teeter-totter, horizontal ladder, and hobby horse swings. All play equipment playground equipment complies with U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines. Both shelters are ADA accessible. The open and enclosed shelters with kitchen and restroom facilities are ADA compliant. Not all the playground equipment is ADA accessible.

**Ripple Creek Park** – This 22.6-acre park is located at 670 Ver Bunker Ave. Park facilities include open play space, tot lot, 2 parking lots, 3 softball fields, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, volleyball court, walking path, 12 picnic tables, 4 cooking grills, open shelter, restrooms, ice rink, warming house, toboggan/sledding hill, horseshoe pits. Developed play area consists of adult and tot swings, hobby horse swings, and a variety of wood play equipment that are in poor condition. The warming house with restrooms and the open shelter are ADA compliant. All playground equipment is ADA compliant.

**Aubey Park** – This 0.9-acre park is located at \_\_\_\_\_. Park facilities include

**Triangle Park** – This 0.7-acre park is located at 1<sup>st</sup> St and Jefferson Ave. Park facilities include open play space, and a playground.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Edwards Alexander Park

- Replace 20 year old playground equipment
- Resurface splash pad
- Repaint shelter house
- Replace 10 picnic tables

#### Ripple Creek Park

- Replace 20 year old playground equipment with new state of art equipment with rubber matting instead of sand base.
- Resurface tennis courts and add two pickle ball courts.
- Pave a 1 mile walking trail around park.
- Purchase and install 10 new picnic tables.

#### Aubey Park

- Resurface Basketball courts.
- Add new play ground equipment.

#### Triangle Park

- Build a 15x15 shelter with 2 picnic tables

## **Village of Rudolph**

**Rudolph Community Park** – This 20.8-acre park is located at 1757 Park St. Park facilities include open play space, 2 softball fields, baseball field, 1 lighted ball field, 2 tennis courts, 3 volleyball courts, walking path, 25 picnic tables, open shelter, restrooms, concession stand, and the Dick Trickle Memorial. The open shelter and memorial are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Rudolph Community Park**

- Create a splash pad area.
- Update the park shelter area.

## **Village of Vesper**

**Cameron Park** – This 2-acre park is located 5032 Benson Ave. Park facilities include open play space, 6 picnic tables, 1 cooking grill, enclosed shelter, and restrooms. Building is ADA accessible.

**Vesper Recreation Center** – This 20-acre park is located at 6435 Cameron Ave. Park facilities include open play space, a half mile crushed granite walking path, 2 softball fields (1 lighted), 2 tennis courts, 2 volleyball courts, 1 basketball court, 12 picnic tables, 1 open shelter, 2 restroom facilities, concession stand, gazebo, Gardens, and dog park. The building and walking path are ADA accessible.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Cameron Park**

- Full renovation of the Community Center, including bathroom upgrades and installing AC; renovation of the grill/picnic hut; and improve landscaping
- Replace lighting on the outside of the Community Center

#### **Vesper Recreation Center**

- Repairs to scorekeeper buildings
- Repair/replace cabinets in the Recreation Center, install rollup doors
- Reset/repair/replace ballpark, tennis court/basketball court fencing
- Repair tennis court/basketball court surface
- Rebuild/repair gazebo and picnic tables
- Repair/replace playground equipment, basketball hoops
- Install lighting at dog park and basketball/tennis courts
- Repair retaining walls and upgrade landscaping

## **Town of Arpin**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Arpin.

### **Town of Auburndale**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Auburndale.

### **Town of Cameron**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cameron.

### **Town of Cary**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cary.

### **Town of Cranmoor**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Cranmoor.

### **Town of Dexter**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Dexter.

### **Town of Grand Rapids**

**Weslan Park** – This 2.5-acre park, located on Grassmere Drive, has a developed play area, picnic tables, softball field, tennis court, volleyball court, basketball court, and horseshoe pit. All facilities are ADA compliant.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

##### Weslan Park

- None.

### **Town of Hansen**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Hansen.

## **Town of Hiles**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Hiles.

## **Town of Lincoln**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Lincoln.

## **Town of Marshfield**

**Old Township Landfill** – This 16-acre natural area is west of Stadt Road and a portion of the Hewitt-Marsh trail crosses the property and connects to the City of Marshfield trail.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

- None.

## **Town of Milladore**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Milladore.

## **Town of Port Edwards**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Port Edwards.

## **Town of Remington**

**Babcock Community Park** – This 0.3-acre park is located next to the Town Hall in Babcock on STH 80. The park has a landscaped picnic area with 2 picnic tables, a playground, and a gazebo. Restrooms are only available when the Town Hall is open.

**Babcock Baseball Park** – This 2.3-acre park is located at the intersection of STH 80 and Taylor Ave. This park includes a baseball diamond with fence dugouts, aluminum bleachers on one side and wooden bleachers on the other side, and a scoreboard.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### **Babcock Community Park**

- Replace picnic tables.
- Install a restroom, or at least a dark green ADA accessible portable toilet.
- Replace the sand under the playground with 6-inches of soil planted in grass.
- Replace playground with new one.

#### Babcock Baseball Park

- Need to level the ballfield's infield.
- Install a second aluminum bleacher.
- Replace scoreboard.
- Install a restroom, or at least two dark green portable toilets (one of which will be ADA accessible).
- Create covered dugouts.

### **Town of Richfield**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Richfield.

### **Town of Rock**

**Lindsey Community Park** – This 1-acre park is located at 8413 CTH V. Park facilities include an open air picnic shelter with about 8 picnic tables, a grill next to the shelter, parking lot, play equipment, restrooms, and a veterans memorial.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

##### Lindsey Community Park

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### **Town of Rudolph**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Rudolph.

### **Town of Saratoga**

See the Town of Saratoga Outdoor Recreation Plan for a listing of their parks. The Town's plan is considered to be part of this County recreation plan by reference here.

#### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

The Town of Saratoga has its own Outdoor Recreation Plan. See that plan for recommendations within the city limits.

## **Town of Seneca**

**Town of Seneca Park** – This 4-acre park, located on CTH Q, has a baseball field, volleyball court, 6 picnic tables, open shelter, and restrooms. All facilities are ADA compliant.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Town of Seneca Park

- Update pit toilets and shelter house.
- Update volleyball court.
- Add horseshoe pits.
- Add disc golf.
- Add pickleball courts.

## **Town of Sherry**

**Anderson Park** – This 1.6-acre park is located adjacent to the Town Hall (9285 2<sup>nd</sup> St.). The parking lot is shared between the Town Hall, the bar, and the park. Park facilities include an open play field, playground, separate playground equipment at other side of park, open air picnic shelter filled with picnic tables. This park is owned by the Sherry Volunteer Fire Department.

### **Proposed Projects for 2026-2030**

#### Anderson Park

- Replace playground equipment
- Remove trees in decline and replant with new trees.

## **Town of Sigel**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Sigel.

## **Town of Wood**

Refer to **Map 5** for recreational facilities near the Town of Wood.

## 3.8 State Facilities

Wisconsin can take pride in its vast treasure of natural resources, particularly its wildlife. Since 1876, Wisconsin has been acquiring land to meet conservation and recreation needs. Public lands managed by the DNR provide many opportunities and public spaces for you and your family to hunt, fish, trap, hike, canoe or watch and photograph wildlife.

Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses that are open to the public on that parcel.

### State Wildlife Areas

All wildlife areas are managed to sustain the wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses. These include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and nature study. Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus and watercress may be removed by hand without a permit for the purpose of personal consumption by the collector. Dog training or trialing (hunting dog competitions) may be allowed by permit. A limited number of properties allow additional outdoor recreation — such as camping, bicycling, horseback riding and snowmobiling — at designated locations.

The following wildlife areas in Wood County (see **Map 1**) may be owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources:

The **George W. Mead Wildlife Area** occupies more than 33,000 acres in Marathon, Portage, and Wood counties. About one tenth of the total area (3,200 acres) is located in the northeastern part of Wood County.

Nestled in the Little Eau Pleine River valley, the George W. Mead Wildlife Area encompasses over 33,000 acres of open marshes, hardwood and aspen forests and grasslands. Mead is one of the largest wildlife areas in Wisconsin, comprising the most extensive contiguous state ownership of wildlife lands. Two conifer bog state natural areas showcase the tamarack and black spruce ecosystems on the property.

Mead's diverse habitats harbor abundant wildlife species such as deer, turkey, bear, grouse, otter, beaver, muskrats, herons, prairie chickens, fox, coyote, eagles, wolves and bobcats. It is an important resting, feeding and nesting site for migrating waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds. Over 267 bird species have been documented on the property. Except for designated refuge areas, the property is open to hunting and trapping during the regular seasons.

The **Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area** occupies about 3,000 acres in Wood and Portage counties, with less than half the acreage located in the east-central part of Wood County. This area has non-native, cool season grassland and shrub-carr wetland habitat, and is managed for the Greater Prairie-chicken and other grassland dependent species.

The **Sandhill Wildlife Area** occupies about 9,150 acres of a series of gently rolling sandy ridges in the southwestern part of the County. This property boasts a unique 9-foot deer-proof fence, which creates an ideal environment for wildlife research. Special permits and restrictions are in place within the fenced area of the property; however, visitors are welcome to enter through the designated entrance gates to explore and recreate. DNR staff manage the Sandhill Wildlife Area, Wood County Wildlife Area and the Meadow Valley

Wildlife Area collectively. Together, these three Wildlife Areas are called the Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit. They make up the largest block of state-managed wildlife lands in Wisconsin. Nearly 150 square miles of public lands lie within the work unit.

The **Wood County Wildlife Area** occupies about 21,000 acres in the southwestern part of the County. This property lies within the bed of historic Glacial Lake Wisconsin, an area characterized by large expanses of wetlands interspersed with forested uplands and islands. The original vegetation consisted primarily of sedge, grasses, tamarack and black spruce in the wetlands and white and red pine forests mixed with oak on the uplands. Advancing forest and shrub growth displaced prairie openings and prairie chicken but created excellent habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. Sharp-tails prospered until the 1960s, when forest growth displaced them in favor of the more traditional wooded species, the ruffed grouse. However, remnant openings on the western portion of the area remained, providing suitable habitat for sharp-tailed grouse through to the present day.

The area lies between the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area on the south and the Sandhill Wildlife Area on the north. Collectively, these three areas are referred to as the Sandhill-Meadow Valley Work Unit, the largest block of state-managed wildlife lands in Wisconsin. Nearly 150 square miles of public lands lie within the work unit.

In 1939, the Wisconsin Conservation Department negotiated a long-term lease with Wood County. The lease transferred management responsibility to the department for which the county received an annual lease payment. This lease dedicates the property to be managed for wildlife production and public recreation. It reflects the commitment of Wood County and the state to a sound, long-term management program.

### **State Fishery Areas**

State fishery areas have been purchased to help preserve and manage headwaters and springs that often form the biological base for stream fisheries. These lands protect and improve spawning grounds for lake fisheries and prevent private blocking of important waterways, game lands, and lakes. Boundary signs posted near parking lots and along borders explain the uses on that parcel.

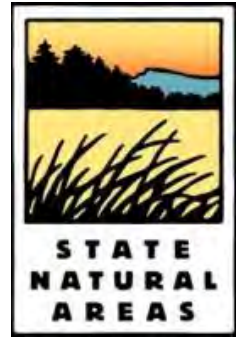
The following fishery area in Wood County (see **Map 1**) is owned by the State of Wisconsin and managed by the Department of Natural Resources:

- ***Ten Mile Creek Streambank Protection Area in the Town of Saratoga.***



## **State Natural Areas (SNA)**

State natural areas were designated to protect the state's natural diversity, provide sites for research and environmental education, and serve as benchmarks for assessing and guiding use of other lands in the state. Natural areas are defined as tracts of land or water, which have native biotic communities, unique natural features, or significant geological or archeological sites. These sites do not have much facility development, though there may be a designated trail on the site.



The restrictions and guidelines that follow are applicable to most SNAs, though sites owned by agencies and organizations other than the DNR may have additional rules.

- Most SNAs are open to the public year around unless otherwise noted in the SNA site descriptions or posted at the site. SNAs within State Parks are generally open between 6:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M.
- Please recognize and respect the property of private landowners adjacent to SNAs by not trespassing. Seek the landowner's permission before crossing private lands.
- Do not collect plants (including fruits, nuts, or edible plant parts), animals, fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead. Collecting for scientific research requires a permit issued by the DNR.
- Vehicles, including bicycles, ATVs, aircraft, and snowmobiles, are prohibited except on trails and roadways designated for their use. Access is only by foot, skis, snowshoes, and watercraft. Some trails are wheelchair accessible.
- Pets are allowed on most DNR-owned SNAs, but must be kept on a leash no longer than 8', unless they are dogs being used for hunting purposes. Pets are prohibited on sites owned by The Nature Conservancy and most other private conservation organizations. Horseback riding is not allowed.
- Camping and fires are generally prohibited.
- Rock climbing and rappelling are prohibited, except on SNAs #98 and #164.
- Fishing, trapping, and hunting are allowed on most DNR-owned properties in accordance with state regulations.

Each site was given a statewide identification (**No. #**) by the DNR. The Department of Natural Resources listed the following areas within Wood County:

**Hiles Wetlands SNA (No. 524)** is 561 acres within the Wood County Forest—Hiles Block.

Hiles Wetlands is a large complex of tamarack poor fen and sedge meadow, which have seen relatively little human disturbance as compared with other similar community types in this area. The wet meadow contains an abundance of blue-joint grass, manna grass, and prairie cord grass. Other species include swamp milkweed, boneset, spotted Joe-Pye-weed, northern bugleweed, sensitive fern, wool-grass, and grass-leaved goldenrod. The wilderness aspect of this site adds to its ecological significance. Hiles Wetlands is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2006.

**Hog Island Tamaracks SNA (No. 579)** is 462 acres in the Wood County Wildlife Area.

Situated within the flat, sandy bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin, Hog Island Tamaracks features a northern wet forest of tamarack and black spruce. Low sandy ridges are interspersed within the flat plain. The shrub layer is dominated by huckleberry with winterberry and mountain holly. The herb and low shrub layer is typical of this community type and includes Canada bunchberry, swamp dewberry, cinnamon fern, and tawny cotton grass. This peatland community provides habitat for numerous Species of Greatest Conservation Need found at their southern range limit including Canada warbler, Connecticut warbler, and veery. In addition several bird species with northern affinities such as hermit thrush, white-throated sparrow, yellow-rumped warbler, and Nashville warbler nest within this coniferous forest. Hog Island Tamaracks is owned by Wood County and the U.S. Government. It was established as a State Natural Area in 2008.

**Mead Conifer Bogs SNA (No. 373)** is 932 acres within the George Mead Wildlife Area.

Mead Conifer Bogs are extensive areas containing northern wet forests dominated by black spruce and tamarack. Both species are reproducing well. The center of the tract is dominated by black spruce, which is gradually replaced by larger tamaracks at the perimeter. Ground cover is a firm carpet of sphagnum moss dominated by leather-leaf and cotton grass.

Poison sumac may be locally abundant. Other species include bog birch, bog-rosemary, Labrador-tea, blueberry, bogbean, yellow blue-bead-lily, bogbean, pitcher plant, bunchberry, Canada mayflower and royal, cinnamon and interrupted fern. Alder-dogwood shrub-carr dominates on the eastern edge near the uplands. Animal life includes bog lemming, Sandhill crane, American redstart, common yellowthroat and Nashville warbler. Mead Conifer Bogs is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.

**Owl Creek Fen Savanna SNA (No. 521)** is 814 acres located in the Wood County Forest—Dexter Block.

Owl Creek Fen Savanna is a large peatland complex that supports a diversity of natural features including central poor fen, tamarack swamp, alder thicket, and upland islands of pine and oak. Of note are unique savanna-like stands of open-grown aspen situated in a wet meadow dominated by blue-joint grass. Central Poor Fens are acidic, low-nutrient wetlands dominated by sedges including *Carex oligosperma*, *C. lanuginosa*, and *C. utriculata*.

Found within the Central Sand Plains of Wisconsin, they often intergrade with Tamarack Swamp. Other characteristic species include three-way sedge, fowl manna grass, swamp candles, cotton grass, bog goldenrod, swamp milkweed, bulblet water hemlock, and blue-flag iris. Birds include sandhill cranes, purple finches, and black-and-white warbler. Owl Creek Fen Savanna is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2006.

**Powers Bluff Maple Woods SNA (No. 131)** is 60 acres located in Powers Bluff County Park.

Powers Bluff Maple Woods features a mature southern mesic forest perched on a 300-foot high monadnock, an isolated remnant hill made of erosion-resistant quartzite. The 1.6 billion-year-old bluff is round-shaped due to the durability of the quartzite, which has resisted erosion. This contrasts with other less durable sandstone bluffs in the area that have weathered parallel to their vertical planes giving them very steep slopes. Dominant trees are sugar maple, yellow birch, and bitternut hickory with scattered red oak, white ash, and basswood.

The understory is quite open and there is little herbaceous ground cover due to the low light levels. Some common species include plantain-leaved sedge, blue cohosh, maidenhair fern, and bloodroot. The forest floor is strewn with boulders and two boulder trains extend southeast and southwest from the bluff suggesting that glacial ice moved over and around the bluff from at least two different directions. On the south end are quartzite outcrops with columbine and common polypody fern. Birds found are typical mesic forest species including least flycatcher, eastern wood pewee, red-eyed vireo, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager. Powers Bluff Maple Woods is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 1976.

**Red Oak Bottoms SNA (No. 523)** is 25 acres in the Wood County Forest—Seneca Block.

Situated along Hemlock Creek, Red Oak Bottoms supports an old-growth floodplain forest, which contains an unusual abundance of red oak in the canopy. While large floodplain forests occasionally have a red oak component, it is unique to have red oak co-dominant in these situations. Along with silver maple, this one and three-quarter mile reach of the creek supports basswood and some swamp white oak. The 35-mile Hemlock Creek is a soft-water stream that flows in a southerly direction and joins the Yellow River south of Babcock. Sand, gravel, and rubble are the dominant bottom types, but boulders, bedrock, and silt are also present.

Fish include walleye, northern pike, bluegill, rock bass, bullheads, perch, and pumpkinseed. Migrating ducks use the creek and mallard, teal, and wood ducks nest along the stream. The large maple and red oaks provide important habitat for a state-threatened bird while numerous cavities offer nesting sites for prothonotary warblers and brown creepers. Red Oak Bottoms is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

**Skunk Creek Woods SNA (No. 522)** is 66 acres located in the Wood County Forest—Hiles Block.

Skunk Creek Woods features a northern dry-mesic forest situated within a large expansive peatland. Medium to large red oak and white pine dominate the canopy. Associated trees include white oak, black cherry, mountain ash, and paper birch. Yellow birch, sugar maple, red maple, and eastern hop-hornbeam are also present. Common shrubs are huckleberry, northern bush-honeysuckle, American fly-honeysuckle, maple-leaved viburnum, and sweet fern. The ground layer contains many dry-mesic associated species.

Plants noted include wild columbine, wild sarsaparilla, big-leaf aster, three-leaved goldthread, Canada bunchberry, wild strawberry, American starflower, partridgeberry, naked miterwort, round-leaved shin-leaf, rosy twisted stalk, Canada mayflower, and nodding trillium. Breeding birds include a broad-winged hawk, black-billed cuckoo, pileated woodpecker, great-crested flycatcher, yellow-throated vireo, black-

throated green warbler, pine warbler, ovenbird, and scarlet tanager. Skunk Creek Woods is owned by Wood County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2007.

**Yellow River Floodplain Forest SNA (No. 580)** is 86 acres located in the Sandhill Wildlife Area.

Situated along the meandering Yellow River, this mature, intact floodplain forest is dominated by silver maple with river birch, basswood, and red oak. The canopy is composed of large trees with a good mix of sizes and age classes. Protection of intact stands of bottomland forest is a high priority along this river corridor and opportunities are increasingly scarce on this landscape. A rich and diverse ground layer includes spring ephemerals such as trout lily, spring beauty, and bloodroot. Other species are nodding trillium, Virginia waterleaf, green dragon, meadow-rue, woodland phlox, marsh marigold, golden ragwort, swamp rose, false mayflower, Michigan lily, Sprengel's sedge, fox sedge, blue joint grass. This assemblage of understory plants is highly localized and relatively rare within this area. The Yellow River flows through the site and is of extremely low gradient, with many meanders, oxbows, sloughs, and ponds. This stretch of river is an important component of a highly significant riverine corridor that is threatened by intensive timber harvest and, in some areas, cranberry farm development. Birds include pileated woodpeckers, eastern phoebe, wood duck, and a state-threatened species. Yellow River Floodplain Forest is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2008.

### 3.9 Forested Lands – Not State or County Owned

Forested lands that may be open to the public but are not part of the county forest are privately held lands by individuals and corporations that are enrolled in either the Forest Crop Law or the Managed Forest Law. Currently, lands can only be newly enrolled in Managed Forest Law.

As of 2025 there are 80 acres enrolled under the Forest Crop Law (FCL) in Wood County, which are open to the public to hunt and fish.

#### **MFL “open” property NOT always publicly available:**

- It is the responsibility of the user to know where they are, and which land is open to the public.
- MFL “open” lands may be closed within 300 feet of any building.
- MFL “open” lands may be closed within 300 feet of a harvesting operation.

As of 2025 there are about 53,943 acres enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program in Wood County. Of that MFL acreage, there are about 5,157 acres designated “open” to the public for hunting (not trapping), fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross-country skiing only (s. 77.83(2)(a), Wis. Stats.).

See [Forest Legacy Areas](#) map in **Appendix E** to see generally where FCL & MFL lands (“Taxlaw Entries” as shown on map) are located, which includes both open and closed to the public lands.

Other than the following exception, MFL lands enrolled as open shall not be posted to restrict access. All MFL program participants can restrict access without penalty to the landowner to areas that are within 300 feet of any building or harvesting operation. Access by motor vehicles or snowmobiles may be prohibited by the landowner on open lands. Open MFL lands can be found on the DNR’s website. It is the responsibility of the user to know where they are and which land is open to the public.