

Chapter 7:

RECOMMENDATIONS & CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The recommendations and capital improvements are ways of satisfying issues identified during the planning process, which included citizen input, staff ideas, and analysis. Although it is unlikely that all recommendations presented in this plan will be undertaken in the next five years, they should be recognized as examples for action as the opportunity or need arises.

7.1 Local Government Recommendations

See capital improvement lists for each municipality under 3.7 in Chapter 3.

7.2 County Recommendations

1. Improve Walking & Bicycling Countywide

Question 17 on the spring 2025 Parks & Trails survey asked respondents what outdoor recreation improvements are needed in Wood County. The #1 desire was more walking/hiking trails, and the #2 desire was more bicycling trails.

Recommendation: Continue to implement the **Wood County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2025**. This plan is considered to be part of this county recreation plan by reference.

2. Support ATV/UTV Routes

Roads are open to ATVs and UTVs throughout Wood County.



Recommendation 1: Continue keeping roads and county highways open to ATV & UTV use as appropriate.

Recommendation 2: Continue working with local governments and clubs to provide ATV & UTV route connections where gaps exist.

Recommendation 3: Continue sponsoring state-funded ATV/UTV trails.

Recommendation 4: Continue providing ATV/UTV Intensive Use Area.

Recommendation 5: Continue providing an ATV/UTV campground in Dexter Park.

3. Support Snowmobiling Routes

Snowmobile routes currently exist throughout Wood County.



Recommendation 1: Continue providing snowmobile route access across the County Forest as appropriate.

Recommendation 2: Continue sponsoring state-funded snowmobile trails that are maintained by the member clubs of the Wood County Snowmobile Council.

4. Pursue State and National Historic Register Designation

According to records at the State Historical Society (Office of the State Archaeologist) there are 163 identified archaeological sites in Wood County. Seven of these sites have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and all seven sites are located along the Wisconsin River.

Recommendation 1: Promote research needed to list the known 7 sites onto the State and National Registers of Historical Places.

Most of the 163 identified archaeological sites were found while completing archaeological surveys for proposed highway corridors, or for the relicensing of impoundments on the Wisconsin River. The Wisconsin 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.

Recommendation 2: Consider pursuing an archaeological investigation to identify what type of archaeological sites are out there.

5. Promote the Yellowstone Trail

Before there were numbered highways in the United States there were names attached to roads to help the motorist navigate from town to town or from county to county. In 1912 before the vision of the interstate highway was conceived, a small group of men envisioned a road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound and called it the Yellowstone Trail.

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

Recommendation 1: Identify any possible remnants of the Yellowstone Trail (yellow boulders) in Wood County and seek State and National Registers of Historical Places designation. After existing historic boulders are documented, consider installing new boulder markers.

Recommendation 2: Encourage all chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus in communities along the Yellowstone Trail to promote the Yellowstone Trail.

Recommendation 3: Consider having the Highway Department coordinate the installation of official Yellowstone Trail signs along the whole route in Wood County, with signs possibly donated by various chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus.

Recommendation 4: Encourage libraries in communities along the Yellowstone Trail to acquire books about the Yellowstone Trail.

6. Promote the Cranberry Highway

The Cranberry Highway is a 50-mile self-guided drive along century-old cranberry beds in Wood County. The route offers views of vibrant cranberry beds during harvest and stunning fall colors.

See map of Cranberry Highway on **Map 3**.

Recommendation 1: All chambers of commerce and visitors' bureaus in Wood County to continue promoting the Cranberry Highway.

Recommendation 2: Consider having the Highway Department coordinate the installation of Cranberry Highway signs along the whole route.

7. Improve County Park Wayfinding

Even with the rise of remote work and phone maps, people still want to disconnect from their technology and travel to areas of natural beauty to recharge themselves. Therefore, there is still a need for local wayfinding using physical signage to find points of interest – like county parks.

Wayfinding to a site

Getting to a park includes directional signs, entrance signs, and gateway features.

Wayfinding within a site

Within a site that includes multiple park lodges, shelters, and picnic areas, having each facility physically signed and identified on park maps helps everyone find the correct location.

An additional reason for directional signs on highways is to advertise that a county park exists in the area. This is a very inexpensive advertising campaign, because once installed, a sign lasts for many years. People visiting an area and residents alike will be continually reminded that a county park or boat launch is nearby.

Recommendations:

1. Continue adding county park directional signs on state and county highways and local roads.
 - No Dexter County Park signs exist on STH 80 for any of the 4 driveways.
2. As necessary, review and update maps of facilities within each park that has a map.
3. When multiple types of the same facility exist in the same park, then consider physically labeling each lodge, shelter, and picnic area with its name on the exterior of the building or on a freestanding sign.



Sample highway directional sign

Source: Google Street View



Sample highway wayside sign

Source: Google Street View



Sample lodge sign (Hemlock).


Source: Breanna Moore at CWES


8. Improve Dexter Park Entrance Aesthetics

First impressions are important to visitors, otherwise they will spend less money or not return. The area around Dexter Lake has dense groves of majestic red pines and deciduous trees. These woodlands so close to STH 54 and throughout the area are highly aesthetically pleasing. This is what makes driving to a park so desirable to city dwellers.

Recommendation: Consider planting evergreen bushes and trees per the images below to screen the County yards and pole buildings.



 = possible new evergreen bush and tree plantings to form a screen

 = main entrance to Dexter County Park

7.3 County Facility Capital Improvements, 2026-2030

Capital improvements to parks are the addition of labor and materials that improve the overall value and usefulness of that park facility. Routine maintenance is considered the normal cycle of repair and upkeep for existing facilities and is traditionally funded through the Parks & Forestry Department's operations budget. Upgrading an outdoor restroom facility for universal access would qualify as a capital improvement, while repainting an outdoor restroom would be considered routine maintenance.

Staff from the Wood County Parks & Forestry Department projected what recreational needs face each County facility and the capital improvements needed to improve the facility.

See **Appendix I** for the current outdoor recreation Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for Wood County's Parks & Forestry Department.

Projects listed below and in **Appendix I** (CIP) are subject to receiving County budgetary approval or private group fundraising. All listed projects may not be completed over the next 5 years.

Future County Park & Recreation Area Projects – 2026-2030

Wood County Cera Park

- Complete remodeling of large shelter building, to include new roofing, pocket door replacement, and exterior hardscaping around building
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Upgrade park electric service and internal underground electric lines throughout park
- Upgrade campsite electrical pedestals to 50 amp service
- Widen, replace culverts, and resurface existing parking lots and park roads
- Relocate camper water fill/ dump station closer to campground.
- Remove and repurpose swimming pool site
- Construct beach, splash pad, or swimming pond
- Remodel existing pool restroom building for new repurposed area
- Enlarge and improve existing boat landing to accommodate more vehicles/trailers, and add a boat washdown area
- Construct additional docks near boat landing to accommodate additional boat traffic and allow for slip rentals throughout the season
- Construct large firewood storage shed
- Repurpose or remove old marina building at boat landing
- Construct camping cabins
- Construct additional restroom buildings at boat landing and within campground
- Campsite additions/improvements to accommodate larger campers/RV's
- Replace underground water lines throughout the park

Nepco Lake County Park

- Construct vault toilet building at trailhead parking lot
- Construct canoe/kayak launch
- Addition to shelter building to include a covered outdoor patio area
- Resurface parking lot and entrance road
- Replacing rip-rap and walk trail between boat landing and beach area
- Treatment and control of invasive species in the park
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment

South Wood County Park

- Repair/replace failing boat mooring sites within campground
- Maintain/repair dam, as required by WIDNR
- Campground addition, to include full hook up and pull through sites. To include roadways, dump station, shower building, playground, ranger station, and additional restrooms as needed
- Construction of a 2nd shower building in existing campground
- Water faucets added to existing campsites
- Resurface multi-use trail on the north side of Lake Wazeecha
- Replacement of campground vault toilets with flush toilet buildings
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- White Beach accessible walk path down to the beach
- Enclosed shelter improvements for cool weather events- heated bathrooms, furnace for shelter building
- Addition of patio area near shelter buildings with canopy/gazebo for weddings and special events
- Construction of an accessible canoe/kayak launch area
- Create a fenced in “off leash” area for dogs
- Improve fish population by improving fish habitat in lake
- Red Sands Beach terracing to reduce erosion and to enhance area to attract more events

North Wood County Park

- Construction of a new vehicular bridge to access the campground
- Remodel/replace beach house and add additional open air shelter
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Concrete overlay of lower dam
- Construction of a new snowmobile/ATV/pedestrian bridge near lower dam
- Walk trail improvements
- Disc Golf course drainage improvements and walk trails
- Campsite surface improvements
- Basketball court addition to campground

Dexter County Park

- Improve sections of multi-use trail system with black top or recycled blacktop
- Expand ATV camping area with new sites and amenities
- Replacement of outdated playground equipment
- Outside patio area at shelter building
- Paved walk trail, with fishing pier, near shelter building
- Paved walk trail from shelter to restrooms and playground
- Replace beach restroom, to include open shelter
- Improve fish population by improving fish habitat in lake

Powers Bluff County Park

- Continue upgrading multi-use trails from natural surface to gravel surface
- Improve signage for the existing trail system to include interpretive signage for cultural, and natural history of the park
- Dig a recreational/fishing pond, and create a sledding hill and ice skating rink near trail head
- Complete entrance road, parking lot, and shelter building at the trail head
- Continue entrance road and install 3-phase power to the base of the ski/tube hill
- Restore disturbed areas within the sensitive areas on the south slope of the park
- Dig cooling pond and install snow making equipment
- Lengthen the ski run and tow system, and lengthen the tube tow system
- Install lights on the tube and ski hill
- Install playground equipment near trailhead shelter building

ATV Intensive Use Area

- Install drinking fountain
- Remodel shelter building with new siding/windows
- Construct additional trails in adjacent county forest

Public Rifle Range

- Improve accessibility of range
- Parking lot improvements
- Construction of vault toilet
- Create berms between shooting lanes
- Consider archery shooting area

Other County Park Areas and County Forest Property

- Construction of additional ATV/UTV trails, and support facilities
- Construction of horse riding trails, and support facilities
- Create “off leash” areas for dogs