
**WISCONSIN
STATEWIDE
COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR
RECREATION
PLAN
(SCORP) 2019-2023**



Did You Know?

Wisconsin has received

\$81 million

from the federal
Land & Water
Conservation Fund

County Forests

are the largest public
land holding in
Wisconsin

2.4 million acres

60%

of Wisconsin residents rely on
public lands and waters mostly
or entirely when participating in
their **favorite** outdoor activity

Participation in most nature-
based activities declines as
people reach middle age

The exception?

Bird and wildlife watching

which peaks around age 65

95%

of Wisconsin residents
participate in some form
of **outdoor recreation**

Consumer spending
on outdoor
recreation in
Wisconsin totals

\$17.9 billion

Wisconsin's
urban population
has more than tripled
in the last 100 years

1910 = 1 million
2010 = 3.5 million

Wisconsin's **goals**
for outdoor recreation:

Boost participation

Grow partnerships

Provide high-quality experiences

Improve data

Enhance funding and financial stability

Wisconsin residents' TOP 5

nature-based outdoor activities

Favorite

Walking, hiking
Fishing
Hunting
Bicycling
Camping

Most frequent participation

Bird/wildlife watching at home
Hiking/walking/running on trails
Picnicking/tailgating/cookout
Visit a beach/beach walking
Swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers

Most needed in their home county

Hiking, walking, or running trails
Bicycling trails
Public shore access to lakes, rivers and streams
Public campsites
Public shooting ranges

2019-2023
Wisconsin
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Prepared by:

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ACRONYMS

4WD Four wheel drive

ATV All terrain vehicle

BCPL Board of Commissioners of Public Land

DNR Department of Natural Resources

DOT Department of Transportation

FWS U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

GOMESA Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act

LWCF Land and Water Conservation Fund

NPS National Park Service

OPSP Open Project Selection Process

ROA Recreation Opportunities Analysis

SCORP Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

UTV Utility task/terrain vehicle (aka, side-by-side)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	3
Chapter I: Introduction	5
Background	7
Purpose of SCORP	8
SCORP Requirements	9
Land and Water Conservation Fund	10
Public Participation and SCORP Development	13
Chapter II: Recreation in Wisconsin	15
Outdoor Recreation: At the Crossroads of Our Quality of Life	16
Factors Affecting Recreation Participation	17
Regions of the State and Their Recreation Opportunities	18
The Current State of Outdoor Recreation	20
WHO We Are	20
WHAT We Do	24
WHERE We Participate	29
WHEN We Participate	32
WHY We Participate	34
HOW We Benefit	36
Issues and Factors Influencing the Future of Outdoor Recreation	42
Gaps and Needs in Our Existing Recreation Opportunities	46
Chapter III: Looking Ahead	49
State of Wisconsin's Goals for Outdoor Recreation	50
Land and Water Conservation Fund Priorities in Wisconsin	56

Tables		Page
1	Nature-based recreation activities for this SCORP	7
2	Required SCORP components and their location in the SCORP	9
3	LWCF grants by county, 1965 to 2017	12
4	Wisconsin population projected change, 2010 Census - 2040 projection, by age group	21
5	Wisconsin resident participation rates of grouped nature-based recreation activities	24
6	Wisconsin resident participation rates of specific nature-based recreation activities	25
7	Lands in Wisconsin open to the public for recreation	30
8	Frequency of estimated hours per day participants typically engage in selected nature-based recreation activities	33
9	Top ten reasons to get outside, US Residents, Age 6+	34
10	Top ten reasons to not get outside, US Residents, Age 6+	34

Figures		Page
1	Public lands in Wisconsin	4
2	LWCF grants to Wisconsin	10
3	LWCF grant use in Wisconsin	11
4	Portion of SCORP recreation participation survey	13
5	Recreation regions of Wisconsin	18
6	Wisconsin urban and rural population, 1900 Census - 2010 Census	20
7	Wisconsin population projected change by age group, 2010 Census – 2040 projection	21
8	Percent of Wisconsin population age 65 or older by county, 2015 estimate – 2040 projection	22
9	Population density by Census tract, 2010 Census	22
10	Number of Wisconsinites with a disability	23
11	Percent of Wisconsin population with a disability	23
12	Number of outdoor recreation activities in which Wisconsin residents participate	24
13	Wisconsin resident participation in outdoor recreation activities, by age group	25
14	Frequency of participation in the 25 most popular nature-based recreation activities	27
15	ATV, UTV, and snowmobile registrations in Wisconsin, 2007 – 2018	28
16	Lands in Wisconsin open to the public for recreation	30
17	Healthy Communities Designations, 2018	37

Appendices		Page
1	Wisconsin wetlands strategy	62
2	Population attributes and projections	64
	Table 11: County population projections – 2010 to 2040	
	Table 12: County health metrics	
3	Places open to the public for nature-based recreation	70
	Descriptions	
	Table 13: Public lands, by county	
	Maps of DNR and other lands, by region	
4	Recreation opportunities, trends and needs, by region	84
	Table 14: Existing recreation opportunities at county park properties	
	Table 15: Trends in recreation participation at county park properties	
	Table 16: Top recreation needs at county park properties	
	Table 17: Estimated statewide participation change in selected nature-based recreation activities from 2020 to 2040	
5	Tourism economic impact, by county	88
	Table 18: Tourism economic impact, by county	
	Map of direct tourism spending in 2017, by county	

Appendices (available online)	
6	Outside in Wisconsin: results of the 2016 SCORP recreation participation survey
7	Public Lands Visitor Survey: a methodological comparison pilot project
8	Recreation Opportunities Analysis report
9	2018 Grant Program Guidance for LWCF and other grants
10	Recreation grants and guidelines for the development of local recreation plans

FOREWORD

Dear Fellow Wisconsinites:

I am pleased to present Wisconsin's 2019-2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This document will provide you with updated information on the status of Wisconsin's outdoor recreation. This plan also provides guidance for distributing money through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other grant programs administered by the Department of Natural Resources that support outdoor recreation projects on state properties and in local communities throughout the state.

High-quality outdoor recreation experiences available in Wisconsin contribute to our exceptional quality of life, reflected in sustained economic growth and in outdoor recreation traditions passed down through generations. From city riverwalks to expansive public forests, public recreation lands and facilities enhance our lives, draw millions of visitors, and support businesses large and small. The economic, social, and health benefits of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin far exceed our investment.

Thanks to the vision, economic investments and dedication of earlier generations, the portfolio of outdoor recreation opportunities in our state is unrivaled. From the Brule River to Chiwaukee Prairie, we are blessed with beautiful places to enjoy the outdoors in a plethora of ways. Yet, there are many ways and many opportunities to continue enhancing the recreation offerings throughout Wisconsin and to grow our recreation-based economy.

I'd like to thank all those who answered a survey, attended a public meeting or sent in comments

during the development of the plan. The information, ideas and suggestions you provided are integral to the success of this SCORP. I also want to extend my appreciation and recognition for the work, wisdom and counsel of the SCORP Advisory Team. Their collective passion for the outdoors and desire to enhance the recreation opportunities in Wisconsin weaves through these pages.

Many agencies and organizations are involved in shaping outdoor recreation in the state. City, village and county park programs, federal agencies, conservation groups and recreation clubs, chambers of commerce, foresters and biologists, health care providers and countless others all play a role. The Department of Natural Resources is committed to working with agencies, local governments, businesses, organizations, and private citizens to expand and modernize outdoor recreation programs and facilities to serve changing public outdoor recreation preferences.

My hope is that the information presented in this report encourages people and groups to continue cooperatively growing our recreation infrastructure and enhancing opportunities for all our residents – and generations to come – to enjoy Wisconsin's great outdoors.



Preston D. Cole
Secretary, Department of Natural Resources

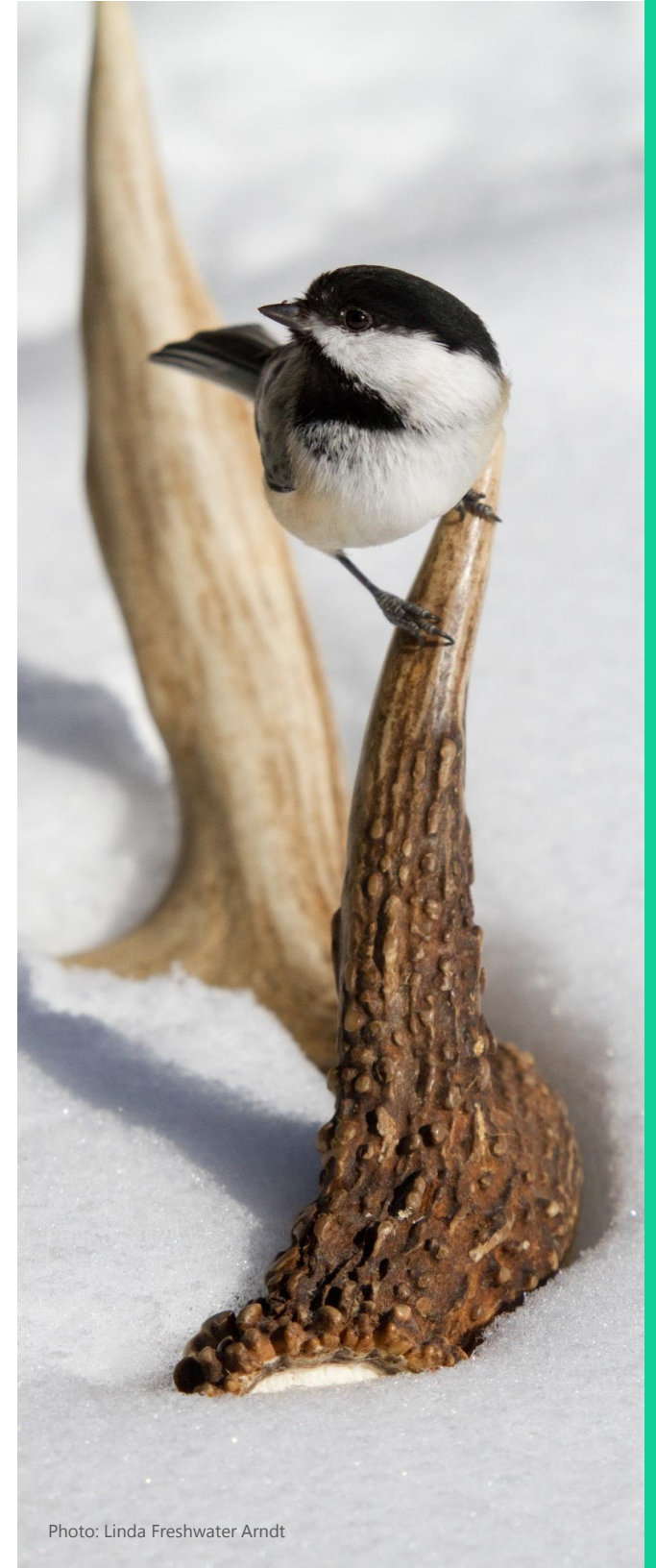


Photo: Linda Freshwater Arndt

5

This plan lays out **five** overarching goals for outdoor recreation.

Priorities for **LWCF grants** in Wisconsin include projects that:

- Meet the needs of urban areas.
- Provide recreation opportunities that serve diverse populations.
- Develop facilities in areas with limited outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Provide multi-use facilities.
- Meet outdoor recreation needs identified by local communities.



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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document comprises the 2019-2023 iteration of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The plan provides recommendations to guide public outdoor recreation policy and planning decisions, the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund money that comes to Wisconsin, and other Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administered grant programs.

To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding their outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as their opinions about future needs. In addition, the DNR undertook an assessment of recreation opportunities and needs in each region of the state. Together, these supporting documents (Appendix 6 and Appendix 8) provide the foundation of the SCORP.

Remarkably, although maybe unsurprisingly, an estimated 95% of Wisconsin adults participated in some type of outdoor recreation in the past year. Activities in which residents most frequently engaged tend to be those that require little preparation or travel time and can provide a high-quality experience in a limited amount of time. Examples include hiking and walking on trails, fishing, bicycling, dog walking, and bird/wildlife watching.

Although this SCORP provides some basic information on a wide variety of outdoor activities, the focus is on those activities that are related to natural resources and where experiences are enhanced with higher quality natural habitats. In this document, these are referred to as nature-based recreation activities.

Top priority needs include providing more places near urban centers to support a variety of nature-based recreation. Of particular note is the demand for more trails (both non-motorized and motorized) and water and shore access for fishing, boating and swimming.

Our effectiveness in meeting future recreation needs will be shaped by many factors including the shifting demographics of our population, the quality of habitats and the impacts from invasive species and changing climate conditions, our ability to improve the compatibility between and among recreation participants, and sustainable financial resources.

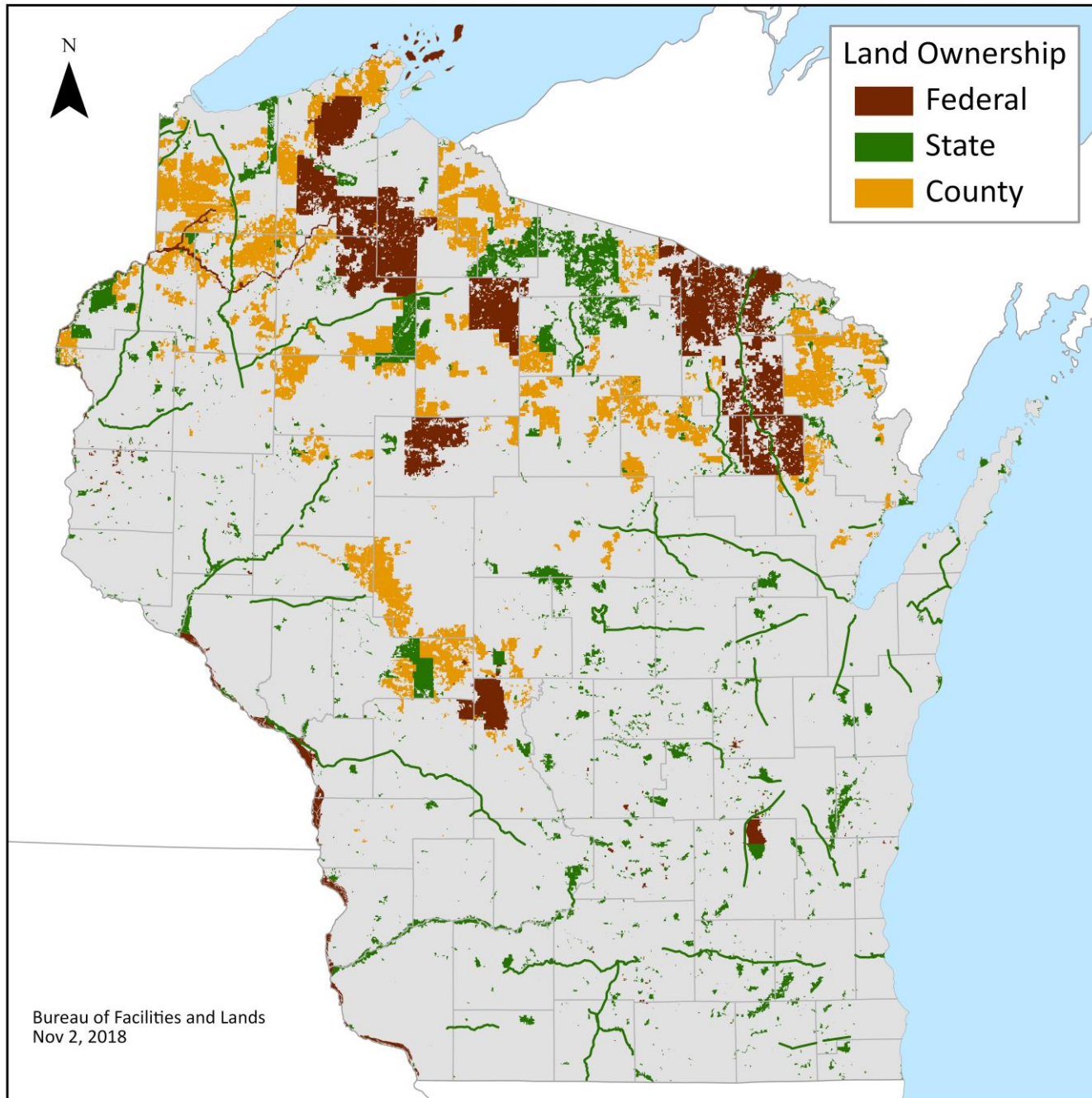
Parks and nature preserves, wildlife areas and refuges, and forests and trails connect people to the natural environment. These places, from small neighborhood parks to the large national, state and county forests, are the stages on which we enjoy the outdoors, improve our health, protect our air and water, and provide a large economic boost, particularly to our rural areas.

This document presents the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin.

This SCORP is designed to both provide a broad overview of issues affecting nature-based recreation as well as include information, much of which is in the appendices, that the public and decision-makers can use in evaluating local and regional needs and opportunities.



Figure 1: Public lands in Wisconsin



See **Appendix 3** for maps of public lands by region

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION



Photo: Tom Davenport



Photo: Liz Herzmann



Photo: Dixie Brumm



Photo: Greg Sanderson



Photo: Greg Sanderson



“Outdoor Recreation Activities”

include all 58 activities that were included in the survey of Wisconsin residents’ recreation participation. See Appendix 6.

“Nature-Based Activities”

include a subset of 40 of these “outdoor recreation activities” that require or occur in natural habitats or settings. See Table 1.

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin's economy and the exceptional quality of life our residents enjoy are intertwined with our abundant and rich natural resource base. From deep forests to Great Lake shorelines, from urban trails to secluded campsites, Wisconsinites have unparalleled opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Whether motivated by the desire to relax, exercise, or be with friends and families, Wisconsinites participate in outdoor recreation with an uncommon passion.

For many citizens, what makes our state special is directly tied to the good times we have at our favorite places to camp, hunt, walk, ride snowmobiles or ATVs, bike, fish, or simply enjoy the peace and quiet of a natural setting.

Public conservation lands in Wisconsin protect some of the state's most notable, scenic and cherished places. Although these places collectively meet many recreation demands, numerous other places – from school forests to land trust preserves to local parks – also play critical roles in providing high quality recreation opportunities to residents and out-of-state visitors.

On behalf of the State of Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources has developed this SCORP with the help of many partners and the public. This document brings together a variety of information on the outdoor recreation opportunities in Wisconsin and lays out goals and priorities for the future. What that future ultimately becomes will depend on the collective effort of elected officials, public agencies, private organizations and, most importantly, residents.

Some types of outdoor recreation, notably ball sports, occur on athletic fields and sport courts provided by local units of government. LWCF grants in Wisconsin fund a wide variety of outdoor facilities important to local communities, including athletic fields. Participation in many of these activities varies considerably across the state making their inclusion in a statewide plan difficult.

Other types of recreation take place outdoors but aren't related to natural resources (e.g., walking on sidewalks or roads, driving for pleasure, attending an outdoor music festival). Consistent with past SCORP efforts, many of these activities were included in the survey of state residents' participation in outdoor recreation.

Although this SCORP addresses all types of recreation that occur outdoors (as required by federal legislation), its focus is on "nature-based recreation" activities that are typically provided at larger public lands and require or occur in natural habitats or settings (see Table 1).

NOTE: *the term "nature-based" is used in other policies, codes and laws. Its use here in SCORP only applies to this document and does not influence or affect use of the term in other contexts.*

Table 1: Nature-based activities for this SCORP

- Bicycling – rail-trails, mt. biking, fat-tire/snow biking
- Bird/wildlife watching - at home & away from home
- Camping – tent, RV/pop-up
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Cross-country skiing
- Downhill skiing/snowboarding
- Driving 4-WD vehicles on trails/routes
- Fishing – lake, stream, river
- Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.
- Geocaching
- Hiking/walking/running on trails
- Horseback riding on trails
- Hunting – big & small game, turkey, migratory bird
- Ice skating
- Motor boating
- Nature photography
- Personal water craft riding
- Picnicking/tailgating/cookout
- Riding ATVs/UTVs on trails/routes
- Riding motorcycles on trails/routes
- Sailing
- Snowmobiling
- Snowshoeing
- Stand-up paddle boarding
- Swimming – lakes/rivers/ponds
- Target shooting – firearms, archery
- Trapping
- Visiting a nature center
- Visiting a beach/beach walking
- Visiting a dog park
- Walking/running dogs on trails
- Waterskiing/tubing/wakeboarding

PURPOSE OF SCORP

The SCORP provides data related to the supply and demand for outdoor recreation in Wisconsin that can help inform local and state-level recreation decision making.

The objectives of this SCORP are to:

- Provide an analysis of outdoor recreation supply and demand.
- Provide information and context that is useful to counties, local units of government, organizations, Native American Nations, and others as they develop plans and policies for recreation opportunities in their communities.
- Ensure Wisconsin's continued eligibility for National Park Service LWCF state-side grants.
- Establish priorities for LWCF grants and guidance for other applicable state and federal funds.

The DNR will use the SCORP to help guide decisions related to recreation, including land acquisition, property management and development of facilities.

States are required to complete SCORPs every five years to be eligible to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program. SCORPs are intended to evaluate outdoor recreation trends and issues of statewide importance and set forth ideas about recreation's future role in the state. There are several required elements for SCORPs, including identifying priorities for use of LWCF grants. Of the many important issues related to outdoor recreation in Wisconsin, the SCORP highlights the areas of greatest need, thus providing a framework for evaluating LWCF grants.

Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governments, school districts and other state political subdivisions are eligible to apply for LWCF grants for acquisition or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Of course, these government entities best understand their citizens' needs, as well as the opportunities to leverage their local resources and assets. As such, the focus of this SCORP is on providing a range of information, at the county level where possible, to help the public and their elected officials place local conditions, needs, and opportunities into a broader framework.

While this SCORP brings together a range of information on outdoor recreation in Wisconsin, it is not intended to provide guidance at a site or project level, nor does it attempt to address all outdoor recreation issues. Rather, the SCORP identifies general outdoor recreation participation patterns, trends, issues and opportunities, and provides recommendations for future steps.

Collaborative planning at local and regional scales along with cooperative implementation of policies and programs by governments, businesses, health care providers, community organizations, and others will continue to be essential in achieving the priorities described in the SCORP.



SCORP REQUIREMENTS

The National Park Service identifies five components required in all Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans. Table 2 lists where the required elements can be found in this SCORP.

Component	Requirement Description	Location
Process & Methodology	The plan must describe the process and methodology(s) used by the State to develop the SCORP and meet LWCF program guidelines.	Page 13
Public Participation	The planning process must include ample opportunity for public participation involving all segments of the state's population.	Page 13 Appendix 6 Appendix 8
Comprehensive Information	The plan must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify outdoor recreation issues of statewide importance; 2) Evaluate public outdoor recreation demands; and 3) Evaluate available outdoor recreation resources. 	Chapter 2 Appendix 6 Appendix 4 Appendix 8
Implementation Program	The plan must have an implementation program of sufficient detail for use in developing project selection criteria for the State's Open Project Selection Process (OPSP).	Page 56 Appendix 9 Appendix 10
Section 303 Compliance	The plan must contain a wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, including the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Be consistent with the National Wetlands Priority Conservation Plan, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 2) Provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources; 3) Contain a listing of those wetland types which should receive priority for acquisition; and 4) Consider outdoor recreation opportunities associated with its wetlands resources for meeting the State's public outdoor recreation needs. 	Appendix 1



Photo: Judy Klippel

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Did You Know?

Since 1965, Wisconsin has received **\$81 million** from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to support recreation projects throughout the state.

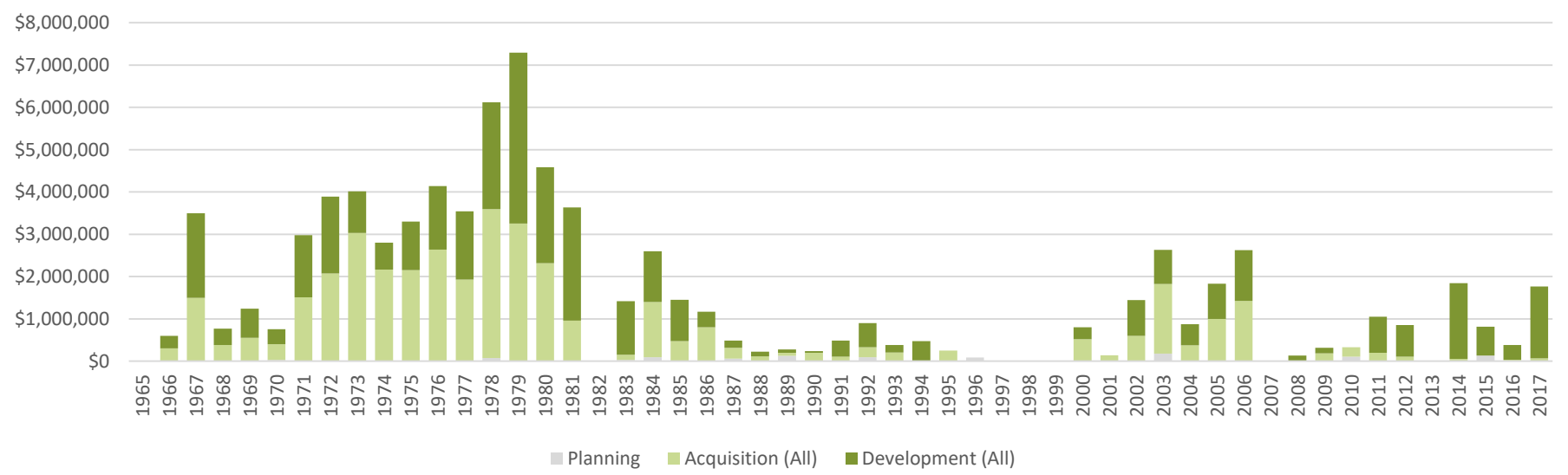
Background

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) was enacted by Congress in 1965 “to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States” through outdoor recreation. A portion of the LWCF supports development of outdoor recreation opportunities in national parks and other federal lands and a portion is passed to states for projects on state, tribal, and local properties. A related federal program is the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA), which was passed in 2006. States have flexibility to determine how to use these funds, either

on state properties or as pass-through to eligible grant recipients (local governments, school districts, and Native American Nations).

The National Park Service (NPS) administers the program at the federal level. Each state designates an agency responsible for administering the program in partnership with NPS. In Wisconsin, the LWCF program is administered by DNR. In the associated figures presented here, the LWCF and GOMESA funds are combined.

Figure 2: LWCF grants to Wisconsin



Funding

The LWCF is funded through lease and production fees paid to the federal government by energy companies operating in federal waters. The total LWCF appropriation is set annually by Congress. Funds are allocated to all U.S. states and territories via a formula that incorporates population and proximity to leased lands in the Gulf of Mexico. Annual LWCF and GOMESA appropriations have varied dramatically over the years, largely due to fluctuations in oil and gas activity and competing Congressional priorities. Wisconsin’s allocations from these funds have varied considerably over the years (Figure 2). In FY2019, Wisconsin received \$2.9 million, a significant increase in funding that was due to a change in the GOMESA formula.

LWCF and GOMESA support a wide variety of public outdoor recreation projects. Grant recipients are required to provide a minimum of 50% non-federal matching funds. Projects proposed for LWCF grants must be selected through an open project selection process, which is designed to ensure that available funds are used to address priority outdoor recreation needs at the state and local level. Unique to Wisconsin, the LWCF also supports acquisition and development projects that expand the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and North Country National Scenic Trail.

LWCF Impact in Wisconsin

LWCF grants have touched communities in every one of Wisconsin’s 72 counties (see Table 3 – pg. 12). Over 1,800 state and local projects have received LWCF support, leveraging more than \$81 million in federal funds. Since the program began, 72% of LWCF projects in Wisconsin have been implemented by local communities, 27% by DNR, and the remaining 1% by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Tribal governments. In early years of the program (1960s and 1970s), LWCF grants were used about evenly between land acquisition and development projects (Figure 3). This balance has shifted over time in favor of development projects. In the past 10 years, nearly 90% of LWCF dollars spent in Wisconsin supported a development project in a state or local park.

LWCF grants have supported a wide diversity of recreation facilities including trails, picnic shelters, and athletic fields as well as facilities such as splash pads, dog parks and skateparks. LWCF is a key funding resource for local governments, as it is the only grant program administered by the DNR that funds development of active recreation facilities.

Figure 3: LWCF grant use in Wisconsin

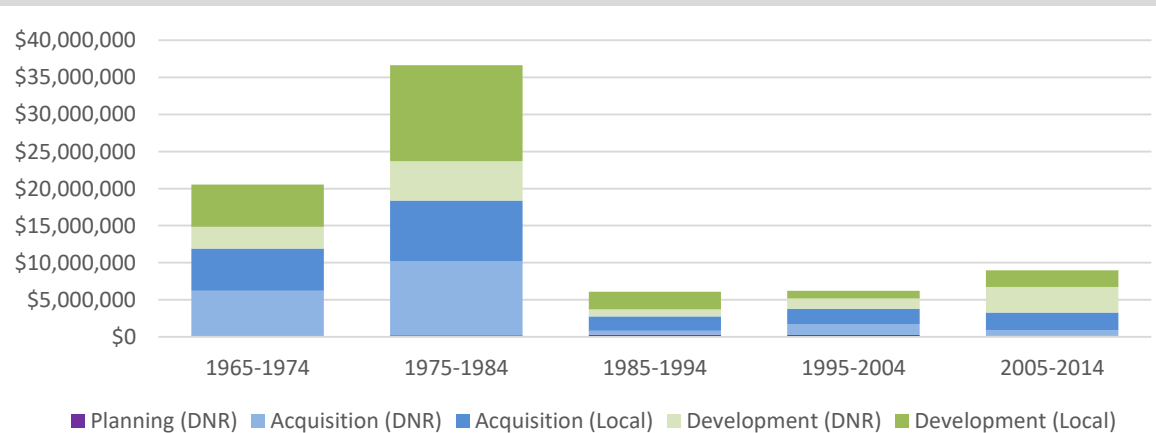


Table 3: LWCF grants by county, 1965 to 2017

County	Total Grant Awards	# Projects	County	Total Grant Awards	# Projects	County	Total Grant Awards	# Projects	County	Total Grant Awards	# Projects
ADAMS	\$116,777	5	FLORENCE	\$136,911	5	MARATHON	\$515,672	27	RUSK	\$133,956	8
ASHLAND	\$271,775	11	FOND DU LAC	\$584,970	29	MARINETTE	\$1,269,858	23	SAUK	\$4,066,862	72
BARRON	\$404,834	14	FOREST	\$148,643	7	MARQUETTE	\$283,834	9	SAWYER	\$471,893	17
BAYFIELD	\$378,527	21	GRANT	\$1,251,766	34	MENOMINEE	\$6,893	1	SHAWANO	\$766,796	31
BROWN	\$2,473,758	59	GREEN	\$252,496	12	MILWAUKEE	\$3,476,761	44	SHEBOYGAN	\$1,053,706	31
BUFFALO	\$142,871	20	GREEN LAKE	\$130,912	12	MONROE	\$295,229	20	ST. CROIX	\$1,993,784	38
BURNETT	\$403,144	21	IOWA	\$937,708	19	OCONTO	\$158,013	9	TAYLOR	\$184,632	7
CALUMET	\$617,628	25	IRON	\$354,284	9	ONEIDA	\$921,486	26	TREMPEALEAU	\$395,494	22
CHIPPEWA	\$2,648,342	42	JACKSON	\$419,232	14	OUTAGAMIE	\$954,018	39	VERNON	\$454,910	12
CLARK	\$285,242	12	JEFFERSON	\$230,296	18	OZAUKEE	\$395,554	15	VILAS	\$462,214	28
COLUMBIA	\$412,507	19	JUNEAU	\$953,072	22	PEPIN	\$72,150	8	WALWORTH	\$1,185,262	23
CRAWFORD	\$1,261,435	10	KENOSHA	\$3,289,116	23	PIERCE	\$1,034,941	21	WASHBURN	\$513,144	6
DANE	\$7,991,977	121	KEWAUNEE	\$282,454	11	POLK	\$2,068,979	29	WASHINGTON	\$1,443,211	37
DODGE	\$821,513	31	LA CROSSE	\$636,281	30	PORTAGE	\$1,734,602	31	WAUKESHA	\$3,674,591	56
DOOR	\$3,907,803	43	LAFAYETTE	\$429,494	15	PRICE	\$25,053	3	WAUPACA	\$677,432	28
DOUGLAS	\$691,357	24	LANGLADE	\$2,472,965	15	RACINE	\$1,420,556	24	WAUSHARA	\$147,150	15
DUNN	\$429,381	20	LINCOLN	\$126,406	6	RICHLAND	\$118,157	9	WINNEBAGO	\$1,824,796	43
EAU CLAIRE	\$1,254,062	37	MANITOWOC	\$1,199,544	47	ROCK	\$763,578	24	WOOD	\$537,189	24

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SCORP DEVELOPMENT

Developing a plan for outdoor recreation requires understanding residents’ participation patterns and their perspectives on the future. The DNR gathered public input several ways in developing this document. A 17-member SCORP Advisory Team – consisting of representatives from public agencies, conservation organizations, recreation groups, the University of Wisconsin, and the health care industry – provided invaluable assistance and guidance on a wide range of issues affecting outdoor recreation in the state.

As part of the Recreation Opportunities Analysis, which was undertaken to support the development of this SCORP, the DNR hosted meetings in each region of the state to gather public input on existing recreation opportunities and future needs. Hundreds of people attended these meetings and thousands of people submitted comments. In addition, county park directors and staff were asked to provide input on recreation opportunities, needs and trends at their properties.

Finally, the DNR surveyed a random sample of 6,400 residents to gather statistically-significant data on recreation participation, issues of concern, and future needs. A portion of the survey is shown in Figure 4. Following this data collection effort, the DNR provided the opportunity for the public to complete the same survey online; over 16,500 people did, which presented an additional set of perspectives.

This SCORP builds on the work of earlier iterations and uses the eight regions first delineated in the 2005-2010 SCORP to describe recreation uses, patterns and needs. In drafting this SCORP, the DNR combined the extensive public and Advisory Team input with staff expertise. Staff began their work in 2015 gathering background information and assembling the Advisory Team. Over the ensuing three years the Team provided advice, input and direction on plan’s content and the goals, objectives, and desired action items.

In 2017 the DNR received an extension in the timeline from the National Park Service in order to devote considerable effort in developing the Recreation Opportunities Analysis to help inform the SCORP. This effort generated extensive information on existing opportunities and high priority needs for the future, including an assessment of DNR properties that may be well-suited to help meet these needs.

Figure 4: Portion of the SCORP recreation participation survey (Appendix 6)





Photo: Joseph Warren



Photo: Linda Freshwater Arndt



Photo: Wisconsin Bike Fed



Photo: Angie Tornes

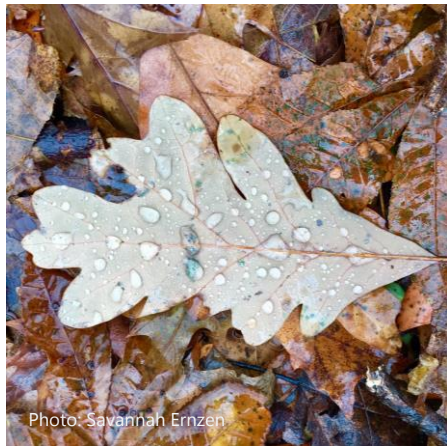
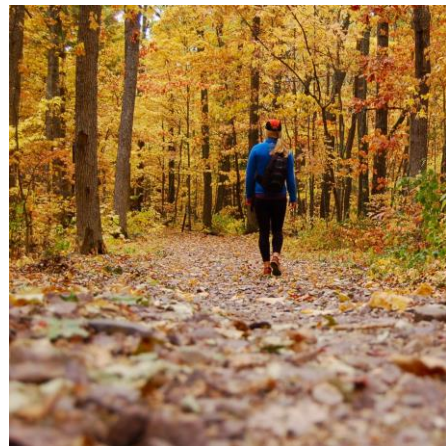


Photo: Savannah Ernzen



Photo: Gretchen Marshall



CHAPTER II RECREATION IN WISCONSIN





OUTDOOR RECREATION: AT THE CROSSROADS OF OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

Outdoor recreation influences many aspects of our lives and the larger communities in which we live. For example, people that participate in outdoor recreation, especially from an early age, tend to have stronger connections to nature and conservation ethics.^{1,2} In turn, these connections often lead to stronger support for the protection of natural resources. Thus, **participation in nature-based activities is likely to be increasingly important in the public's level of support for protecting air and water quality, open spaces, and wildlife.**

As has been described in previous SCORPs and in many other studies, participation in outdoor recreation also plays a critical role in promoting health.^{3,4,5} Whether walking their dog, canoeing, mountain biking, hunting, camping or engaging in countless other activities, the fresh air, exercise, natural settings and companionship with others helps people feel physically and mentally refreshed. Engaging in outdoor recreation activities is an effective way to aid in preventing and treating many chronic illnesses including obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In addition, participating in outdoor recreational activities is increasingly recognized for its benefits to people's mental health. A further description on the health benefits of outdoor recreation can be found on page 36.

People often participate in outdoor recreation as a group activity. The shared experiences among family and friends help create social bonds among participants. Participation in outdoor activities also creates social connections among people pursuing the same activities, even if they don't participate together. Interactions between people participating in different recreation activities can provide opportunities to learn about respective needs and desired experiences. A further description on the social benefits of outdoor recreation can be found on page 38.

Generating almost \$18 billion in consumer spending, 168,000 jobs, \$5.1 billion in wages and salaries, and \$1.1 billion in state and local tax revenue, outdoor recreation is a financial engine in Wisconsin.⁶ A further description on the economic benefits of outdoor recreation can be found on page 40.

Finally, lands and waters that provide the spaces for outdoor recreation often also have important environmental benefits, including habitats for rare and game species, flood control, carbon sequestration and groundwater replenishment. A further description on the environmental benefits that places for outdoor recreation provide can be found on page 41.

FACTORS AFFECTING RECREATION PARTICIPATION

Many factors influence participation in outdoor recreation. Some, such as the weather, vary daily and seasonally resulting in spur of the moment trips or skipped outings that had been planned well in advance. Other factors – including demographic characteristics, population distribution, and technological advances – evolve over extended periods. A summary of major issues affecting participation in outdoor recreation in Wisconsin follows.

Demographics

Population characteristics such as age and gender play important roles in determining participation levels in many types of recreation.

From childhood to early adulthood, participation in many outdoor activities generally increases.

Younger age groups tend to participate in activities that are more physically demanding, rugged, faster-paced or motorized. Examples include team sports, running, tent camping, hunting, whitewater canoeing, snowmobiling, all terrain vehicle (ATV) riding, downhill skiing, and riding personal watercraft.

People's participation in outdoor activities changes over time. Older age groups tend towards less strenuous and slower-paced forms of recreation such as wildlife watching (in particular bird watching), golf, nature photography, walking, utility task vehicle (UTV) riding and camping with recreational vehicles.

Gender also plays a big role in participation. In general, males participate in more outdoor activities and more frequently than females. Hunting is one of the outdoor activities most skewed towards men; in Wisconsin, almost 75% of hunters are male. Women tend to participate in nature photography and dog-related activities more than men.

Access to Opportunities

Although many people travel to seek out unique recreation experiences, most people have limited time for leisure activities and tend to participate most frequently in activities for which opportunities are located nearby. As a result, urban residents participate in ball sports, bicycling, running, visiting dog parks and other similar activities at higher rates than rural residents. Conversely, rural residents participate in hunting, fishing, trapping, ATV/UTV and snowmobile riding at higher rates than urban residents.

Since many opportunities for nature-based recreation activities are in rural areas, as more and more of our residents move to cities their ease of access to places to pursue activities such as hunting, snowmobiling, ATV and UTV riding and horseback riding will decline. Places near the state's major urban areas that provide opportunities for these activities are often heavily used.

Another obstacle for some people is the cost of travelling to places for recreation or feasible transportation options. Residents with limited incomes can find it difficult to access opportunities to participate in outdoor activities, let alone afford necessary equipment. Although many underserved communities are located in urban settings, access to affordable opportunities also affects lower-income rural residents.

Another factor that influences access is knowledge about how to engage in activities successfully and exposure over time. Family experiences, traditions, and the transfer of know-how can play substantial roles in participation rates.^{7, 8, 9, 10}

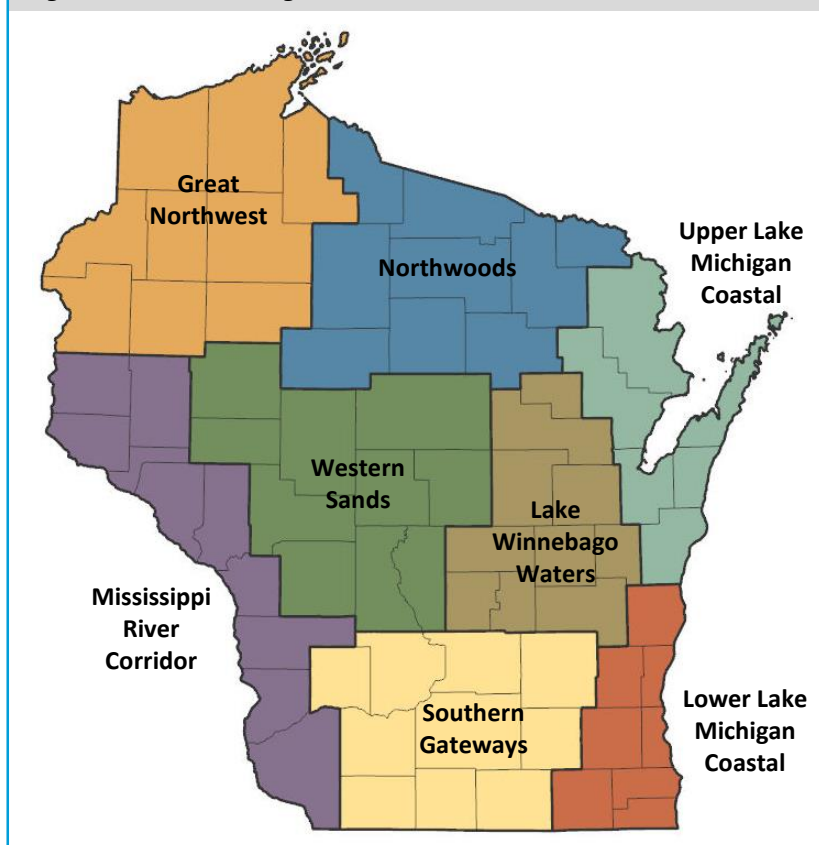
People are more likely to participate in activities in which their parents, other close family members or friends engage. This is most noticeable in activities, like hunting and trapping, that take considerable skill and experience to succeed.

Health

People's health is often related to and influenced by their participation in outdoor recreation. The benefits of outdoor recreation on one's physical and mental health has been well documented recently.

REGIONS OF THE STATE AND THEIR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Figure 5: Recreation regions of Wisconsin



Previous SCORPs divided the state into eight regions based on similarities in their recreation attributes, visitation patterns, natural resources, and general features. This SCORP uses the same eight regions in describing recreational supply and demand.

Great Northwest

The Great Northwest Region has an abundance of natural resources such as Lake Superior, the Namekagon and St. Croix rivers, numerous inland lakes, and large forest blocks. Not surprisingly, tourism is a large and growing industry within the region. In addition to Wisconsin residents, visitors from the Twin Cities and surrounding suburban areas, utilize the region's recreational resources. Seasonal home development, particularly along rivers and lakes, has increased dramatically within the region.

Mississippi River Corridor

The Mississippi River Corridor Region includes the state's western border counties running along the "Mighty Mississippi." The river and its backwater sloughs and wetlands are used for a variety of water-based recreational activities. In addition to the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, a number of popular state parks and natural areas occur along the corridor. A number of clear, cold trout waters are found in the region that draw anglers from throughout the Midwest.

Northwoods

The Northwoods Region has one of the largest concentrations of lakes in the country and has been a tourist and seasonal home destination for over a century. Increasingly, retirees are moving to the region and converting their vacation houses to permanent residences. With a number of popular public lands including the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest and the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, tourism is an important business here. The construction of an extensive bicycle trail network along with a growing number of ATV/UTV routes and trails, has increased visitation.

Western Sands

The Western Sands Region has an abundance of public lands that draw visitors from Milwaukee, Chicago and the Twin Cities. From camping to ATV riding and hunting to bird watching, the county and state forests and the expansive wildlife areas here support a wide diversity of recreation. Although largely rural, easy highway access and relatively inexpensive land prices within the region have increasingly made it a popular location for seasonal home development.

Lake Winnebago Waters

The Lake Winnebago Waters Region is centered on the Lake Winnebago watershed which includes the lakes of Butte des Morts, Winneconne, and Poygan as well as the Fox and Wolf rivers. Together, these waters are the major recreational resource within the region and draw visitors from throughout the state and beyond for boating, fishing, hunting, bird watching and more. The region is home to the popular sturgeon fishing season. Urban and suburban development within the region continue to grow in the Fox River Valley.

Southern Gateways

The Southern Gateways Region contains a variety of environments - rolling hills in the south, the centrally-located Wisconsin River, and large marshes in the east - the combination of which provides a wide array of recreational opportunities. The region also has a number of important geologic features, including Devil's Lake, a craggy glacial lake surrounded by high cliffs and scenic overlooks that is one of Wisconsin's most popular recreation destinations. The rapid development around Madison has also increased demand for urban-based recreation opportunities such as dog parks, bicycle trails and developed sports facilities.



Betty LaBarbera

Upper Lake Michigan Coastal

The Upper Lake Michigan Coastal Region is heavily influenced by Lake Michigan. Although many residents and visitors to the region use Lake Michigan for their recreational needs, other water resources such as the Peshtigo, Menominee, and Manitowoc rivers also attract visitors with their abundant fishing and paddling opportunities. Door County contains over 250 miles of picturesque shoreline (more than any other county in the United States) and 10 historic lighthouses, features that attract many tourists and seasonal residents. Peninsula State Park, located along the shores of Green Bay, is one of the most popular state parks in Wisconsin.

Lower Lake Michigan Coastal

The Lower Lake Michigan Coastal Region is the most urban and populous of the eight regions. The urban influence of Milwaukee and its surrounding suburbs has led to an extensive network of trails and associated recreation facilities such as dog parks, athletic fields and sport courts. Despite this urban influence, some areas of the region offer opportunities for undeveloped outdoor recreation. The five units of the Kettle Moraine State Forest are easily accessible not only to the region's residents but also the greater Chicago metropolitan area and are some of the most heavily used public lands in the state.



My Story: Traditions

Betty LaBarbera

Betty LaBarbera, 91, has been buying a fishing license for as long as she can remember. Residents around Long Lake talk about the old plywood boat that she and her late husband, Joe, frequently rowed around the lake. Other boaters with modern, high-tech rigs slowed to no wake and gave a wide, respectful berth to the couple as they fished and enjoyed the scenery.

Nowadays, Betty's children and grandchildren pick her up for family fishing trips to the same Long Lake cabin that has been in the family since the turn of the last century. They still have the plywood rowboat that grandpa made, but they prefer to fish and swim from the multi-colored pontoon boat, "Grandma Betty's Barge."

The family fishing trips continue to follow a familiar pattern.

"First, we buy our license at Din's Market in Dundee," explains Betty, "and a dozen nightcrawlers. Joe is probably looking down from heaven and shaking his head; he'd always dig worms in the garden."

After filling up on groceries and gas at Din's, Grandma Betty sometimes treats everyone to burgers and ice cream cones at the Hamburger Haus drive-in or a meal at Benson's on the north end. When she's done helping the local economy and reminiscing with old-timers from the Long Lake Fishing Club, it's time to go fishing.

Betty gives her annual lesson in how to put just the right size piece of nightcrawler on the bare hook. When the sun finally sets on another day on the lake, she says, "Whose gonna cook grandma's fish? Remember, we only keep 'em if we're gonna eat 'em."

After a fresh panfish supper, the LaBarbera tradition dictates that everyone in the family pitch in for the evening ritual. While some do the dishes, others start the campfire or prepare the s'mores. When the fire is lit, everyone gathers, and stories are told of memorable days gone by, fishing with friends and family.

The warmth lingers long after the last ember fades.

Mark LaBarbera
Outdoor Heritage Education Center

THE CURRENT STATE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

WISCONSINITES WHO WE ARE

Over the last 50 years, Wisconsin's population has increased at a rate of about 0.6%/year. The state's population is projected to grow from 5.8 million today to 6.5 million in 2040, an increase of about 0.5%/year (Table 4, Figure 7 – pg. 21).

The state's rural population has remained relatively stable over the last century (at about 1.5 million) while the urban population has more than tripled to over 3.5 million (Figure 6). While Wisconsin's urban population is growing considerably faster than the rural population, the state's rural population is relatively strong compared to nearby states that are dominated by very large urban centers.

Following national trends, our population is increasingly urban, more ethnically and culturally diverse, and older (Figure 8 – pg. 22).^{11, 12} Although Wisconsin's population is less diverse than other states, populations of people of color continue to grow. The Hispanic population nearly doubled from 2000 to 2015 and now comprises 6.9% of the state's residents. Wisconsin's Black/African American population increased nearly 10% since 2000 and is now 6.7% of Wisconsin's population.¹⁴ Wisconsin's Asian population has grown to be 2.9% of the population while people identifying as two or more races have increased to 1.9% of the state's population. The Native American population now numbers more than 60,000 in Wisconsin.

The increasing diversity of our population will continue. With over 44% identifying as people of color, the Millennial generation is more diverse than any preceding generation.¹⁵ And the next younger age cohort, is even more diverse.

The distribution of Wisconsin's population is concentrated in several areas: the southeast metropolitan area centered on Milwaukee (Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha, Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee counties), Madison and surrounding communities (Dane County), the Fox Valley (Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties), La Crosse (La Crosse County) and the region near the Twin Cities (St. Croix County). Together, although these 12 counties comprise just 11% of the state's land area, they harbor 56% of the state's population (Figure 9 – pg. 22). Current and projected population numbers by county are shown in Appendix 2.

The number of Wisconsin residents living with disabilities continues to climb (Figures 10 and 11 – pg. 23). In part, this is due to the rise in our aging population and the increase in chronic diseases. Over 32% of Wisconsin residents over age 65 report living with one or more disabilities.¹⁶ Many communities are building and upgrading facilities to meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities.

Participation in most outdoor activities declines after age 50; after 70, participation drops considerably (Figure 13 – pg. 25). Much of this decline in participation is likely due to health-related issues.

Figure 6: Wisconsin urban and rural population, 1900 Census - 2010 Census¹³

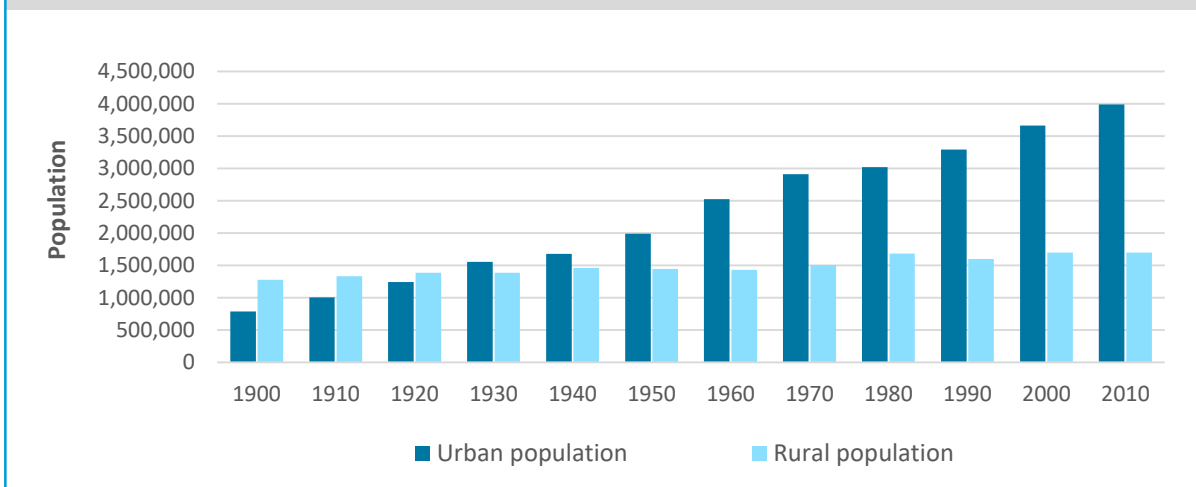
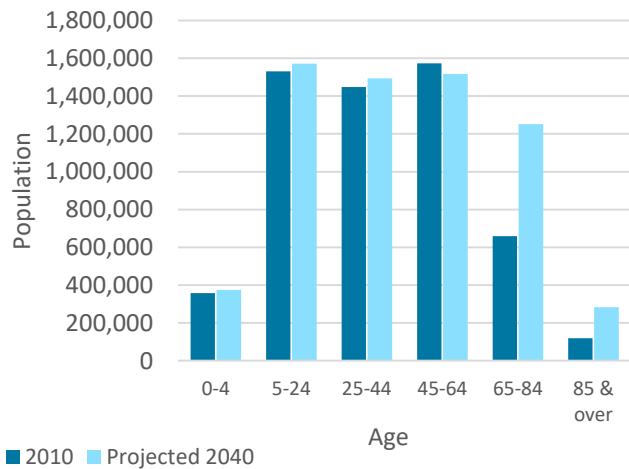


Table 4: Wisconsin population projected change, 2010 Census - 2040 projection, by age group¹¹

Age Group	Numerical Change	Percent Change
0-4	15,497	4.3%
5-24	41,060	2.7%
25-44	46,235	3.2%
45-64	-56,194	-3.6%
65-84	592,956	90.0%
85 & over	165,095	139.3%
TOTAL	804,649	14.1%

Figure 7: Wisconsin population projected change by age group, 2010 Census – 2040 projection¹¹



The Millennial Generation: the country's largest age group

Understanding the lifestyles and interests of younger generations can be helpful in anticipating the activities and experiences that may be popular in the future as these groups age. The Millennial generation (typically defined as those born from 1982 to 2000 and 18 to 36 years old today) is having a large impact on outdoor recreation. Not only are they the largest age group in the country (they surpassed the Baby Boomers in 2015) but they also spend more time and money on outdoor recreation than the average outdoor consumer.¹⁷ This cohort, more than other age groups, generally has the following attributes related to outdoor pursuits:



Committed to health and wellness

More than previous generations, Millennials spend considerable time exercising and are the least obese age group.¹⁸



Seek experiences over material goods

More than three-quarters of Millennials would choose to spend money on a desirable experience or event over buying something desirable.¹⁹ This may be linked to the sharing of experiences on social media, which may entice others to try similar or other experiences.



Participate in active outdoor pursuits

Younger people typically engage in more active forms of recreation (e.g., hiking, kayaking, and stand-up paddling) than their elders, a pattern that continues with Millennials. However, Millennial participation in newer, more strenuous activities (endurance races, trail running and mountain biking) is particularly notable. This is also linked to their desire to live healthy lives.



Are more likely to rent than own

This approach includes a range of items (e.g., cars, music and bicycles) and provides a greater degree of flexibility and mobility than traditional ownership.²⁰ Millennials tend to move more frequently than older generations did in when they were young adults and they continue the long-standing pattern of young adults moving from rural areas and small cities to large metropolitan areas (both in-state and out-of-state).



Use social media to share their experiences

Posting pictures, stories, reviews and endorsements on various internet-based platforms is likely to become an even more dominant way that participants communicate about their outings and influence others' participation.



Have pets

Nearly three-quarters of 30 to 39 year old's (the older Millennials) own dogs.²¹

Figure 8: Percent of Wisconsin population age 65 or older by county, 2015 estimate – 2040 projection²²

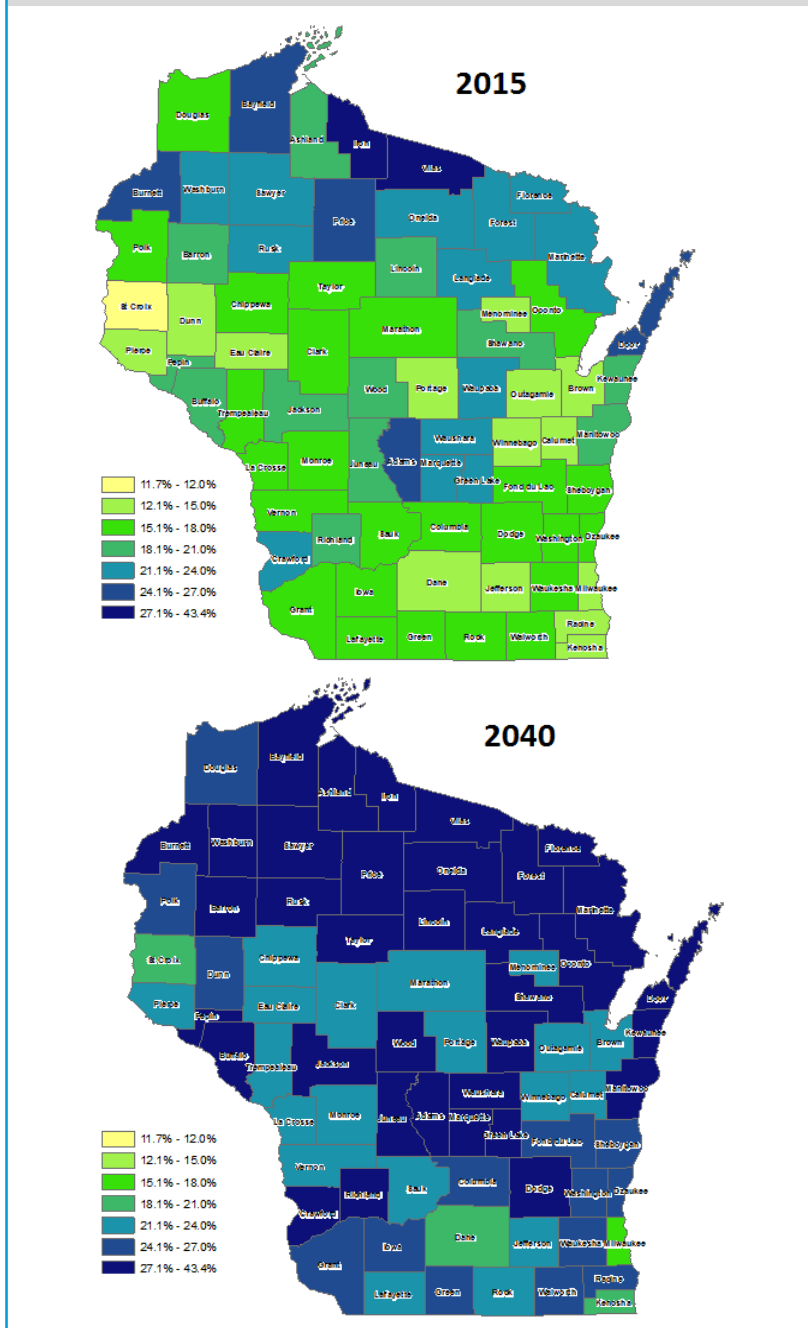


Figure 9: Population density by Census tract, 2010 Census²³

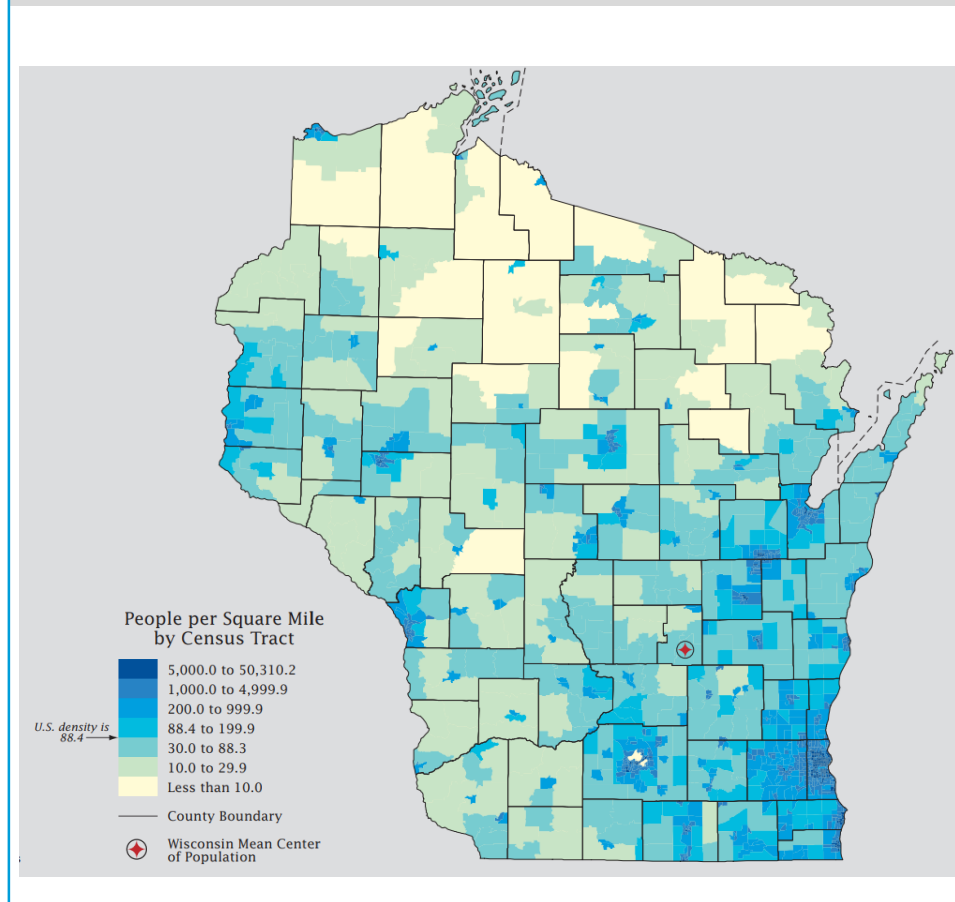


Figure 10: Number of Wisconsinites with a disability²⁴

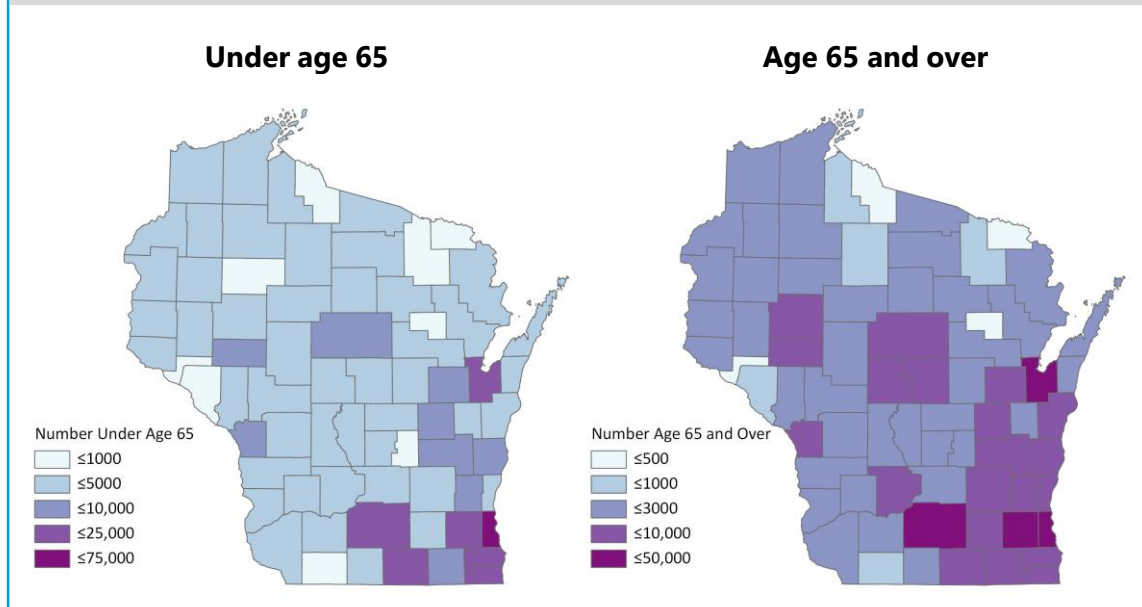


Figure 11: Percent of Wisconsin population with a disability²⁴

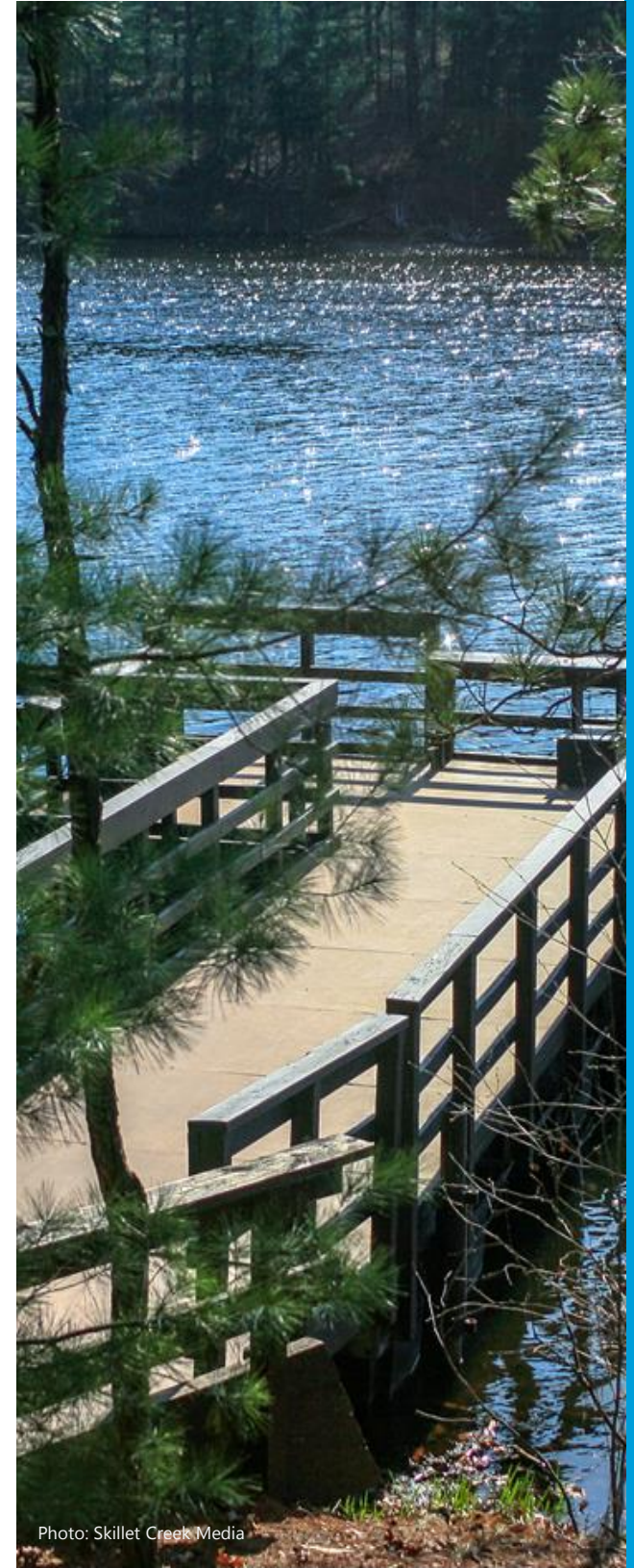
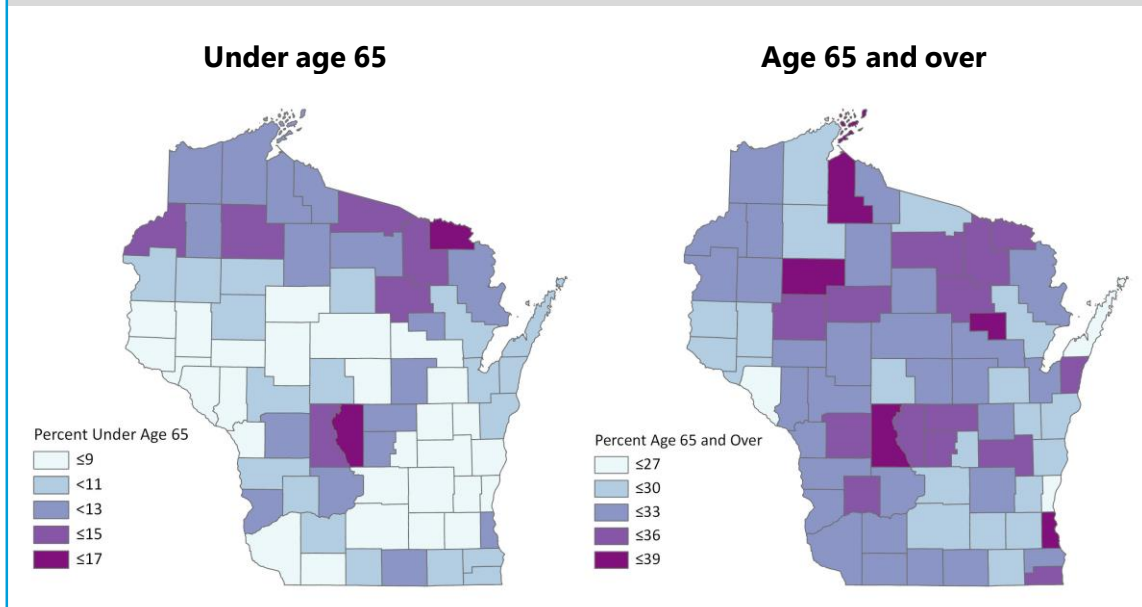


Table 5: Wisconsin resident participation rates of grouped nature-based recreation activities²⁵

Activity group	% of WI residents that participated at least once in last 12 months
Hiking Hiking/walking/running on trails	68%
Nature observation Bird/wildlife watching Nature photography Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.	66%
Boating-related Motor boating Canoeing/kayaking Personal water craft (jet-ski) Sailing Stand-up paddle boarding Waterskiing	61%
Fishing Lake fishing Stream/river fishing Ice fishing	49%
Camping Tent camping RV/pop-up camping	41%
Dog-related activities Walking/running dog on trails Visiting a dog park	38%
Bicycling Bicycling on rail-trails or other developed trails Mountain biking Fat-tire biking/snow biking	35%
Hunting Big game hunting Turkey hunting Small game hunting Migratory bird hunting	27%
Motorized trail-based activities ATVs/UTVs on trails-routes Snowmobiling 4-WD vehicles on trails-routes Motorcycles on trails-routes	25%

WISCONSINITES WHAT WE DO

Participation Rates

Wisconsinites have historically participated in outdoor recreation at higher rates than the national average. This is likely largely attributable to our abundant natural resource base, the quantity and quality of public lands and waters, and cultural traditions that value the outdoors. It is estimated that more than 95% of state residents participated in some form of outdoor recreation in the past year.

Table 5 shows participation rates of Wisconsin residents for general groupings of nature-based recreation activities. For comparison, 46% of Wisconsin residents participated in ball sports (golf, tennis, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer, and handball).

A list of the 20 most popular specific nature-based activities is presented in Table 6. A full listing of participation rates for recreation activities is found in Appendix 6.

Most residents participate in many outdoor recreational activities. Of the activities that were included in the participation survey, over half of residents noted that they participated in at least 16 different activities in the last year (Figure 12).

Outdoor enthusiasts recreate in many different ways. One common thread is that people often participate in multiple activities on the same trip or outing. Canoeists watch wildlife while paddling down a river. Horseback riders take nature photographs. Motor boaters swim and fish; hunters ride ATVs and camp.

What differs, often dramatically, is the overall type of outdoor experience that people favor. Some prefer quiet, secluded settings where they can experience the sights, sounds, and smells of the natural world with few (if any) other nearby groups or distractions. Popular activities for these people include wildlife watching, fishing, canoeing, tent camping, hiking, hunting and horseback riding.

Others prefer more active, strenuous experiences such as cross-country skiing, trail running, mountain biking and geocaching. Still others prefer the thrill of faster, often motorized activities such as ATV riding, motor boating, personal watercraft riding and snowmobiling (see Appendix 6 for activity clusters).

Figure 12: Number of outdoor recreation activities in which Wisconsin residents participate²⁵

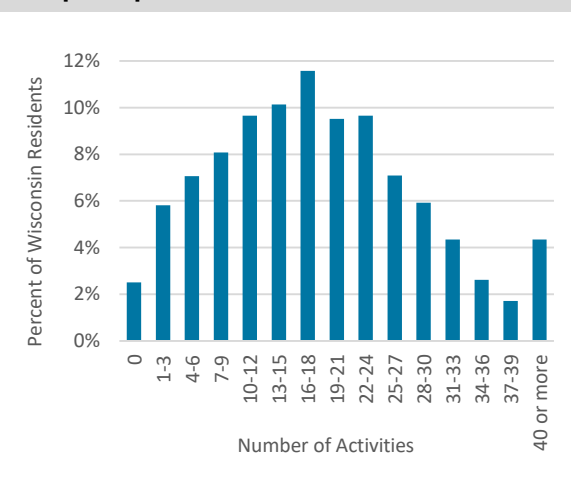
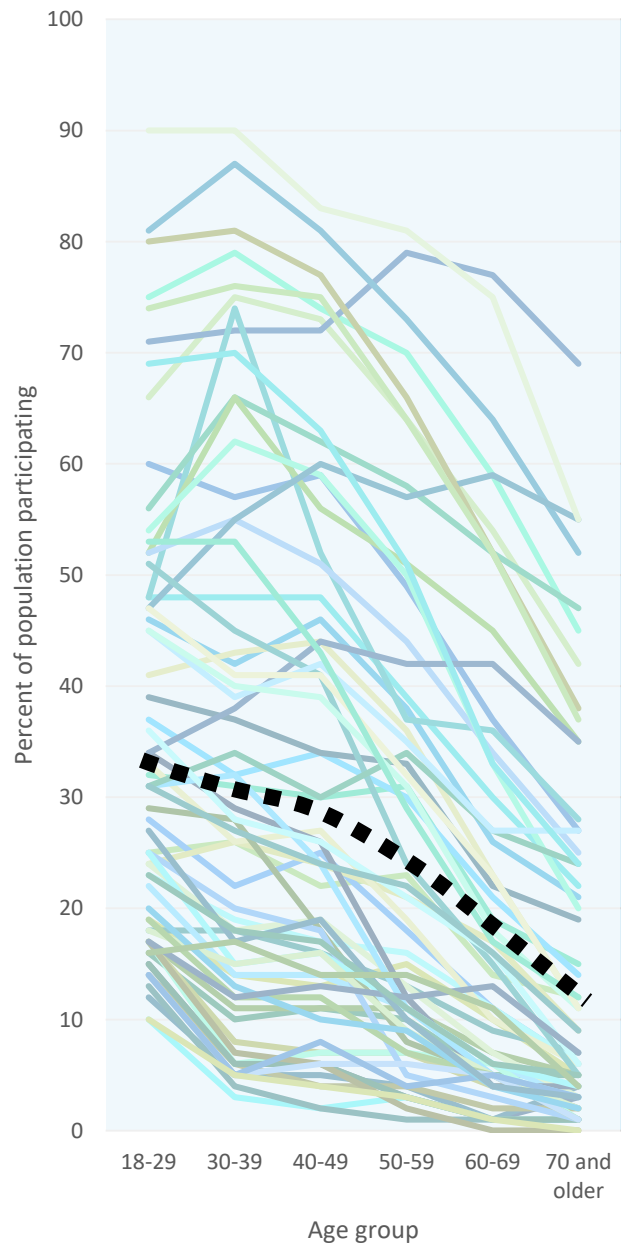


Figure 13: Wisconsin resident participation in outdoor recreation activities, by age group²⁵



Age

As mentioned earlier, age plays an important role in participation rates. Although participation in most activities decreases with age, there is variation in the degree to which participation drops.

Figure 13 shows **participation rates by age group** (that is, the percentage of the state’s population within each age group that participates). Each line depicts a different recreation activity and the average of all the activities is shown as a **dashed black line**.

It is likely that activities with relatively stable participation rates across age groups “pick up” participants in other activities as people age.

For example, it is likely that some people that downhill ski as young adults shift to cross-country skiing in later years (participation in downhill skiing drops from 27% of the population in the 18 to 29 age group to 4% for the 60 to 69 age group while cross-county skiing only declines from 17% to 13% for the same age groups).

Did You Know?

With over 200,000 registered snowmobiles and over 25,000 miles of trails, Wisconsin is the nation’s snowmobiling champion.

Table 6: Wisconsin resident participation rates of the 25 most popular nature-based recreation activities.²⁵

Participation Rate	Activity
74%	Picnicking/tailgating/cookout
68%	Hiking/walking/running on trails
65%	Visiting a beach/beach walking
55%	Bird/wildlife watching at home
54%	Swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers
52%	Visiting a nature center
45%	Motor boating
40%	Lake fishing from shore or a pier
39%	Bird/wildlife watching away from home
37%	Lake fishing from a boat/canoe/kayak
37%	Nature photography
34%	Bicycling on rail-trails/developed trails
34%	Canoeing/kayaking
32%	Tent camping
32%	Dog walking on trails
31%	Gathering berries, mushrooms, etc.
29%	Target firearm shooting
23%	Ice fishing
23%	Visiting a dog park
21%	Hunting big game on private land
21%	RV/pop-up camping
21%	Stream/river fishing from shore/wading
21%	Water skiing/tubing/wakeboarding
20%	River fishing from a boat/canoe/kayak
19%	Target archery outdoors

Participation Frequency

Understanding overall demand for recreation requires knowing both the number of people participating and how often they participate. Together, these provide a picture of the total “recreation days” in which residents engage.

As part of the survey on recreation participation, the department collected data on frequency of participation using the following categories: 0 days/year, 1-2 days/year, 3-9 days/year, 10-29 days/year, and 30+ days/year. Results are listed in Appendix 6.

As can be seen in Figure 14 (pg. 27), for some activities (e.g., canoeing/kayaking and tent camping) participants typically engaged in the activity less than 10 days in the last year. For other activities, most notably bird/wildlife watching at home, people that participate tend to participate often. Unsurprisingly, people tend to engage most frequently in activities that can occur near their homes, require little preparation or can provide a high-quality experience in a limited amount of time.

Although the frequency of participation is comparable across many activities, there are several factors to bear in mind. For example:

Hunting, fishing and trapping regulations

The harvest seasons for different game animals can limit participation. For example, most residents can only legally hunt turkeys in the spring during one of the six, one-week periods. Thus, someone who participated in turkey hunting 3-9 days in the last 12 months could have participated during the majority or entirety of their legally allowed days.

Seasonality

Some activities are dependent on conditions associated with seasons. For example, there may

be a limited number of opportunities for people to participate in snow or ice-based activities, particularly in the southern part of the state, simply due to a lack of adequate conditions. Thus, although ice fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing registered fewer days of average participation than activities such as nature photography or bird/wildlife watching, the people participating in winter activities may be participating in a higher percentage of the available days.

Value vs. Frequency

Activities in which people participate infrequently can still be very important to them. For example, someone may only go camping once per year, but it may be an annual family reunion that is their favorite outdoor activity of the year.

Favorite Outdoor Activities

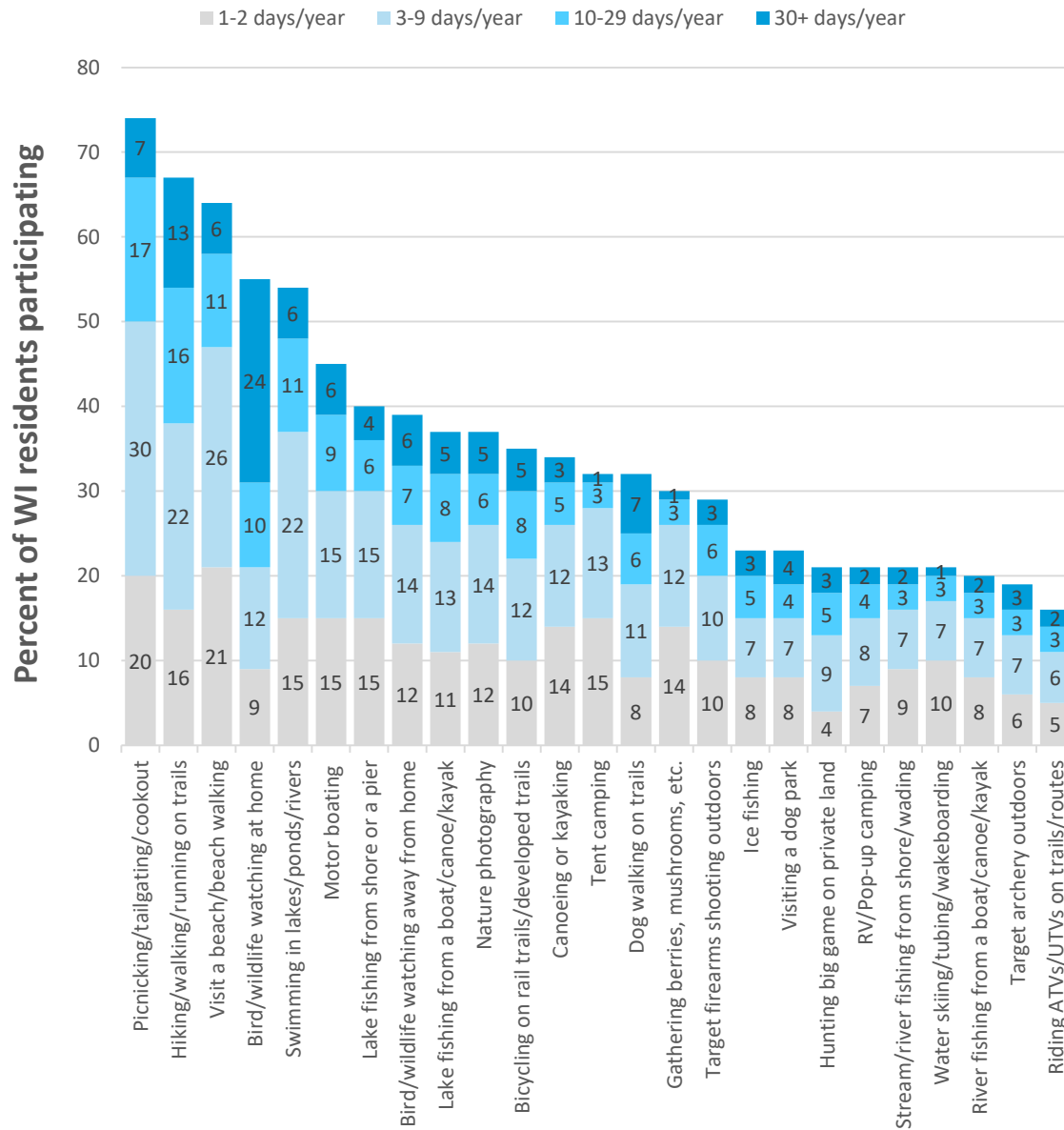
Of course, frequency of participation can be independent of passion for an activity. That is, people’s favorite outdoor activities are not necessarily those in which they participate most frequently.

When asked to name their favorite outdoor activity, the top five responses were:

1. **Walking, hiking**
2. **Fishing**
3. **Hunting**
4. **Bicycling**
5. **Camping**



Figure 14: Frequency of participation in the 25 most popular nature-based recreation activities²⁵



My Story: Childhood Explorer The Spaul Family

Hannah and her husband Mike love spending time outdoors and have taken their son, Oscar, along pretty much everywhere since he was born. Oscar was 3 months old on his first camping trip and was canoeing before he could walk; his mom would hold him while he paddled.

Unsurprisingly, Oscar wants to do everything his parents do so they make sure he has equipment, but in his size. His paddle, fishing pole and net, headlamp and walking stick fit him well. His parents also change things up to keep him interested.

"We might start a scavenger hunt while on a hike or stop for snacks by the lake. And we give him as much control over what he wants to do as we can. Instead of moving at our desired pace, we slow things down and let him appreciate that cool rock or shell he just found," says Hannah.

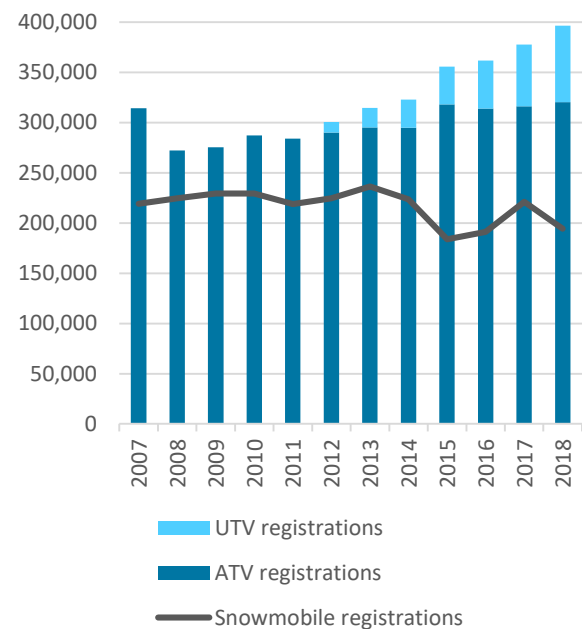
Most kids, unfortunately, don't get this type of exposure to the outdoors or the benefits. Surveys reveal children are not spending enough time outdoors. "I don't think it's just an issue for children. People are not spending much time outdoors, which means they're not taking their children outside either. Some children I know are afraid to go out in nature because they have no experience with it. But most children enjoy spending time outdoors when it's well-facilitated and they have the companions and the supplies they need to be comfortable," says Hannah.

Oscar's favorite place to visit is The Nature Conservancy's Lulu Lake Preserve in southeast Wisconsin. "When we take him canoeing there, he hops off the side of the canoe with his life jacket and his snorkel set. He'll swim around looking at fish until he's blue," reports Hannah.

Oscar is now ten and in fourth grade. He loves swimming, snorkeling, canoeing, fishing and taking short hikes. He digs in the dirt, collects rocks and loves bugs. When asked why she thinks it's important for Oscar to spend time in the outdoors, Hannah responds, "It's healthy, and it encourages independent learning and problem-solving. It's also a great way to unplug and spend time with other people - from family and friends to park rangers and naturalists. Nature adventures and discovery are a big part of our lives, and it's a gift we want to give to Oscar."

Paul Heinen
The Nature Conservancy

Figure 15: ATV, UTV, and snowmobile registrations in Wisconsin, 2007 - 2018²⁶



**Recreation Trend Example
Motorized recreation**

While ATV use has been generally constant in Wisconsin over the last decade, UTV use has increased considerably. This growth is likely due both to the substantial number of Baby Boomers (older riders tend to prefer UTVs more than ATVs) and also because on-going upgrades in UTV features have expanded their appeal and utility.

Given the projected growth in older age groups, there is likely to be an increase in the number of people that will participate in UTV riding.

Participation Trends

Future participation levels will be affected by the size of our population and the rates at which residents engage in different activities. The state’s population is projected to grow by about 700,000 additional residents by 2040 and as a result most activities will see increases in the number of participants, even if participation rates for many activities decline as our population ages.

Of course, participation rates in activities rise and fall as trends come and go.^{27,28} Newer forms of recreation provide users with more options for enjoying the outdoors, and in some cases supplement users’ recreational experiences. For example, fat-tire bikes can extend biking opportunities into the winter months, kayaking can be another way to fish small streams, UTVs can be a way for groups to get to a favorite hunting spot, and drones can be a new way to photograph nature. As battery technology continues to improve, it is possible that many applications will affect outdoor recreation in the future.

Based on the number of residents that are projected to be in different age groups in 2040, if future participation rates for each age group are the same as

today’s rates, the largest increases in the number of participants in nature-based recreation are expected for bird watching, picnicking/tailgating/cookout, visiting a nature center, and hiking/walking/running on trails (Appendix 4, Table 17).

Because the methods to survey recreation participation in Wisconsin have changed over time, it is not possible to analyze current and past data to quantitatively identify trends in statewide participation rates or frequencies. To address this, qualitative input was gathered from county recreation providers on their perspectives of how recreation participation has changed over the past five years at their properties. The recreation opportunities in highest demand on county-managed properties are campsites, hiking/walking/ running on trails, mountain biking and recreational biking trails, motorized trails, and shore access to lakes, rivers and streams (Appendix 4, Table 16).

Trends in participation at county parks, forests and trails

Activities with largest increases in participation over the last five years at county properties:

- Bicycling – winter/fat-tire biking
- Camping – RV/pop-up
- Bicycling – mountain biking
- Riding ATV/UTVs
- Canoeing/kayaking
- Bicycling – recreational/rail-trail biking
- Picnic areas/day use/beaches
- Paddle boarding
- Dog walking on trails
- Hiking/walking/running on trails
- Fishing

ATV and UTV - What’s the difference?

ATV (all terrain vehicle): usually meant for a single rider that straddles a saddle and steers using a handlebar system.

UTV (utility task or terrain vehicle, sometimes referred to as side-by-side): can seat multiple people and riders sit in bench or bucket seats. Driver uses a steering wheel.

See State Statutes 340.01 and 23.33(1)(ng) for legal definitions.

WISCONSINITES

WHERE WE PARTICIPATE

With 7.5 million acres of land open to the public, there are abundant opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor recreation experiences in Wisconsin. Approximately half of this acreage is managed by state and federal agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service. Local and tribal governments also manage a broad portfolio of places available to the public for outdoor recreation, including local parks, school forests and nearly 2.4 million acres of county forest land.

In addition, the public has access to private lands enrolled in some conservation programs and lands where agencies have acquired public access easements. Descriptions of the types of lands open to the public for nature-based recreation and acreages for each county are listed in Appendix 3. In addition, Table 14 in Appendix 4 provides an overview of the recreation opportunities at county-managed properties.

Although public conservation and recreation lands comprise only about 17% of the state (Table 7 – pg. 30), a sizable percentage of residents use public lands for outdoor recreation. When asked about their top two favorite outdoor activities, nearly two-thirds of residents said their participation was “entirely” or “mostly” on public lands or waters. However, 65% of respondents that listed hunting as their favorite outdoor activity used private lands “entirely” or “mostly.” This is not surprising since public lands – especially in the southern part of the state – are typically crowded during hunting seasons.

Given the distribution of our population as well as our public lands, it is logical that for some activities there are geographic patterns of visitation. The large public land holdings in central and northern Wisconsin draw visitors for multi-day outings, including camping, ATV/UTV and snowmobile riding, hunting and fishing. Public lands in the southern and eastern parts of the state, which tend to be smaller, are heavily used by people pursuing shorter outings (half-day or less) to hike, walk a dog, watch birds, ride a bike, picnic, fish, hunt, gather edibles and other similar activities.

Frog Bay Tribal National Park Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa



Photo: Michael Defoe

Frog Bay Tribal National Park is the **first tribal national park in the United States**. Established in 2012, the 300-acre conservation area includes a 170-acre park that is open to the public for hiking on several trails that lead to 4,000 feet of Lake Superior shoreline.

The property includes pristine sandy beaches, old-growth boreal forest, and a high-quality coastal estuary that provides critical habitat for many native species. The park provides views of the Apostle Islands including Oak, Basswood, Hermit, Raspberry and Stockton islands.

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa also provides public camping and hiking opportunities at other properties it manages in Bayfield County.

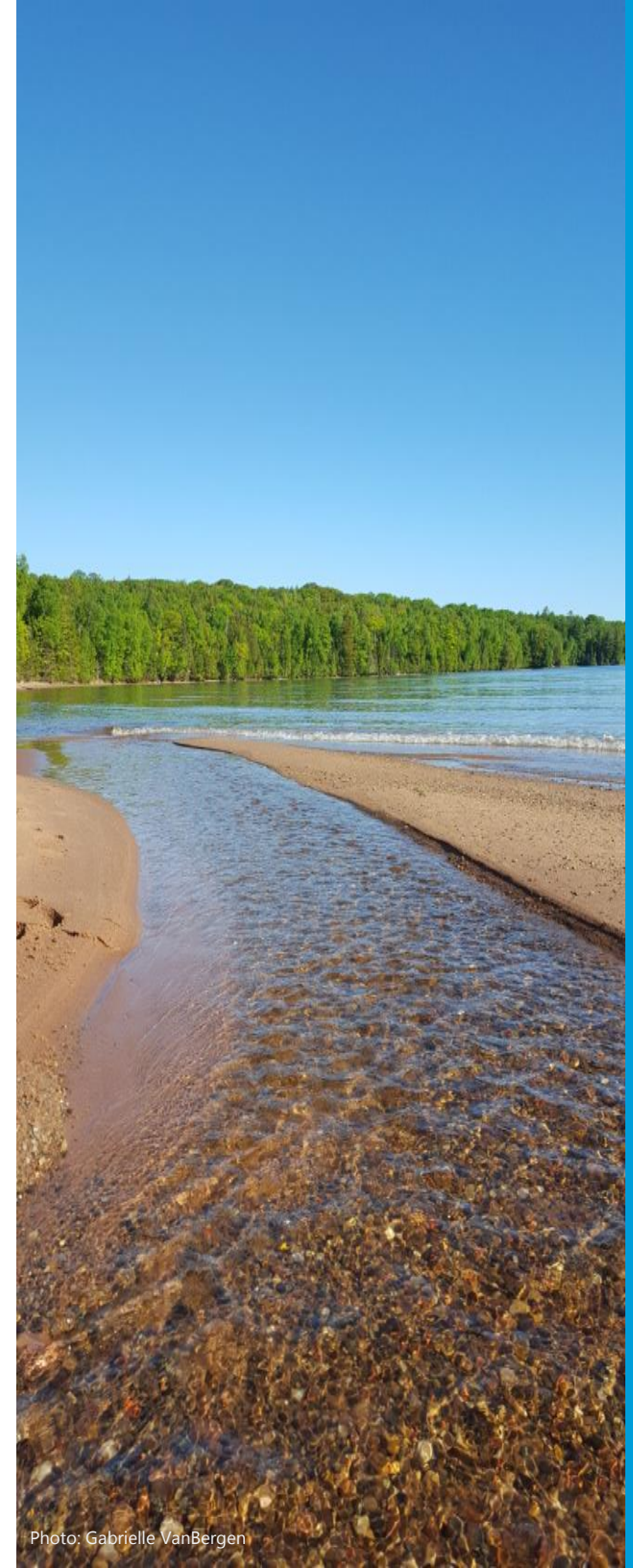
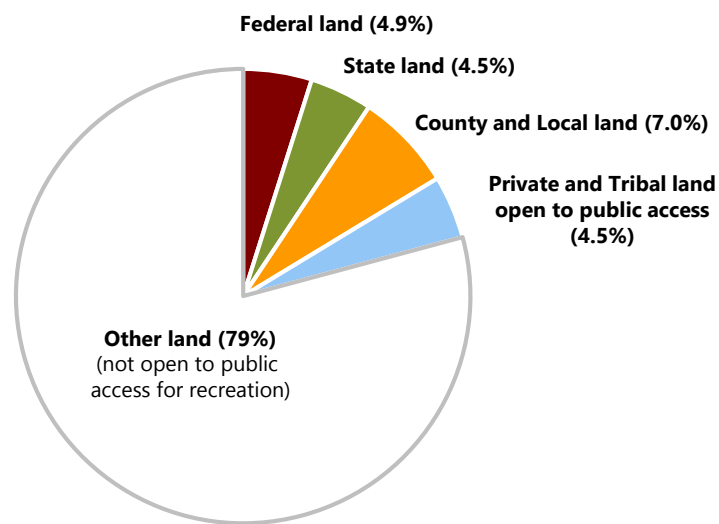


Photo: Gabrielle VanBergen

Figure 16: Lands in Wisconsin open to the public for recreation²⁹



Ways to value land purchases for recreation

Governments acquire land for a variety of purposes. In determining where to purchase property for outdoor recreation, agencies must evaluate costs and benefits to determine the most effective and efficient use of public funds.

Lands that are least expensive to purchase often provide limited recreation opportunities, given their location and the type and quality of experiences the land can provide.

When viewed using metrics other than dollars/acre, higher-priced places near population centers may be a more effective use of public funds than less-expensive lands distant from cities. For example, applying metrics such as visitor-days or the economic returns accruing to nearby communities from these visitors’ spending may show that recreation lands near urban areas provide a better return on investment than lower-priced lands in remote areas that are less frequently used.

Similarly, the benefits of improved health and quality-of-life will affect substantially more people when places are available near urban areas for outdoor recreation.

Table 7: Lands in Wisconsin open to the public for recreation²⁹

<i>Public Ownership</i>		Acres Owned	Percent of the State
Federal	U.S. Forest Service	1,524,500	4.2%
	National Park Service	67,500	0.2%
	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	149,500	0.4%
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	14,300	0.0%
	Total Federal	1,755,800	4.9%
State	Department of Natural Resources - Fee title	1,507,000	4.2%
	Board of Commissioners of Public Land	75,900	0.2%
	Total State	1,582,900	4.5%
County and Local	County Forests	2,395,400	6.7%
	County Parks (estimate)	70,000	0.2%
	City, Village, and Town recreation properties funded by Stewardship matching grants	15,000	0.0%
	City, Village, and Town recreation properties not funded by Stewardship matching grants (estimate)	50,000	0.1%
	School Forests	27,900	0.1%
	Total County and Local	2,558,300	7.2%
Total public lands open to public recreational access		5,897,000	16.5%

Table 7: Lands in Wisconsin open to the public for recreation (continued)

<i>Private and Tribal Ownership</i>	Acres Open to the Public	Percent of the State
Non-government organization lands funded by Stewardship matching grants	70,000	0.2%
Managed Forest Law land open to the public*	1,081,600	3.0%
Forest Crop Law land**	125,800	0.4%
Forest Legacy program easements	248,200	0.7%
Department of Natural Resources – easements on private lands	55,100	0.2%
Voluntary Public Access (VPA) lands	32,000	0.1%
Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	200	0.0%
Total private and tribal lands open to public recreational access	1,612,900	4.5%

* By statute, open for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, and cross-country skiing.

** By statute, open for hunting and fishing.

Total: Land Open for Public Recreation	
State of Wisconsin (acres)	35,640,000
Land in the state open for public recreation (acres)	7,509,900
Percent of the State of Wisconsin open for public recreation	21%

See Appendix 3 for maps and a listing of public lands by county.





WISCONSINITES WHEN WE PARTICIPATE

Wisconsin’s four-season climate supports a wealth of opportunities for outdoor recreation throughout the year. The seasonal patterns of participation vary across activities; some are popular year-round while others are limited by conditions – like adequate snow or migration events – or by specific dates (for example hunting, fishing and trapping seasons). In addition to participation patterns related to the seasons, there are also ebbs and flows of participation across the days of the week and the times of the day.

Participation in outdoor activities varies from outings of an hour or two (often after work) to half-day or day-long trips (often on weekends) to multi-day vacations. Although people pursue the full gamut of activities in each of these types of getaways, activities differ in the length of time needed to provide a high-quality experience.

For example, participants in activities such as dog walking, trail running, or nature photography can have an excellent experience in as little as a half-hour. Other activities, such as horseback riding, hunting, fishing, canoeing and bicycling are often pursued for two to three hours or longer. Table 8 shows estimates of the frequency of the duration of people’s participation in different recreation activities.

Where people go to participate in outdoor activities is, of course, a function of available time and locations of opportunities. One’s willingness to travel different distances is often directly related to the time available

to participate in an activity. Typically, people are willing to invest a total travel time (getting to and from the destination) no more than the same amount of time they will recreate. If the travel time is much beyond the recreation time, then most people conclude the enjoyment of participating in the outing isn’t worth the cost or effort.

Combining travel time and the participation time needed for a high-quality experience provides an indication of what types of activities people typically engage at different distances from home. As an example, since most people walk their dog for 30 minutes to an hour at a time, they typically travel no more than 15 to 30 minutes to a place that would provide a high-quality experience. Thus, most dog walking happens close to home and a map showing where participation takes place would mimic our state’s population map.

For other activities, a map of participation would be quite different. Participants in hunting and many motorized activities often spend four to six hours or more a day engaged in these activities; occasionally, participants spend several days in a row on trips. Participants are typically willing to spend four or more hours travelling to locations that provide first-rate experiences. And, of course, camping involves multi-day trips. For these types of activities, a map showing where participation occurs would be more influenced by the locations and characteristics of existing opportunities rather than where people live.

Table 8: Frequency of estimated hours per day participants typically engage in selected nature-based recreation activities*

Recreation Activity	Hours of participation within a day											Multi-day
	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Water skiing/tubing/wakeboarding	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Swimming in lakes/ponds/rivers	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Dog walking on trails	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Target firearm shooting	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Target archery	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Trapping	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Hiking/walking/running on trails	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Nature photography	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Mountain biking	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Gathering berries, mushrooms and other wild edibles	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Visiting a beach/beach walking	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Cross-country skiing	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Lake/river fishing from a boat/canoe/kayak	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Lake/river/stream fishing from shore/wading/pier	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Motor boating	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Horseback riding	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Canoeing or kayaking	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Bicycling on rail-trails or other developed trails	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Bird/wildlife watching away from home	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Hunting small game	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Ice fishing	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Riding motorcycles on trails/routes	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Riding ATVs/UTVs on trails/routes	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Snowmobiling	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Driving 4-WD vehicles on trails/routes	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
Hunting big game	0.5	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	5	6	7	8+	
RV/pop-up camping												
Tent camping												

Estimated Frequency	
Rarely (less than 2% of trips) or not applicable	
Infrequent (3% to 9% of trips)	
Occasional (10% to 19% of trips)	
Common (20% to 39% of trips)	
Most common (40% or more of trips)	

**These estimates are based on department staff consultations with outdoor organizations and their professional judgement.*

My Story: Empowered Sarah Lisiecki

The outdoors is a space for me. A space where there aren't expectations or "shoulds" and a space where I can go to be a happier, healthier, more creative version of the person I was when I went in. As a woman, I spend a lot of time being told how to behave, feel, act and believe.

The outdoors offers me a place to transcend those "shoulds" and focus on who I am at the core and who I want to be as my future self.

Being outdoors – hiking, biking, climbing, kayaking, trail running, camping – allows me to be physically challenged and to confront fear and be brave. Here I feel empowered yet find a peacefulness that is unique to time spent without walls. It allows me to see my body for all it can accomplish and not what it can't. It allows my mind to be relaxed, yet focused.

In the outdoors I build my thoughts, find my peace, overcome and gain confidence. People in the outdoors foster a community; there is something special about these places that brings people together.

Being outdoors and void of distractions help me deepen friendships, family relationships and my relationship with myself.

Maybe it's the struggle followed by the reward or maybe it's being reminded of what's essential and having the opportunity to relish beauty uninterrupted.

Sarah Lisiecki

WISCONSINITES WHY WE PARTICIPATE

Table 9: Top ten reasons to get outside, US residents, Age 6+³³

Reasons to get outside	% of respondents
Get exercise	64%
Be with family and friends	55%
Keep physically fit	50%
Observe scenic beauty	49%
Be close to nature	47%
Enjoy the sounds and smells of nature	47%
Get away from the usual demands	40%
Be with people who enjoy the same things I do	31%
Experience excitement and adventure	32%
Experience solitude	20%

Table 10: Top ten reasons to not get outside, US residents, Age 6+³³

Reasons to <i>not</i> get outside	% of respondents
Too busy with family responsibilities	21%
Outdoor recreation equipment is too expensive	18%
Do not have anyone to participate with	17%
Do not have the skills or abilities	16%
Have a physical disability	14%
My health is poor	11%
Places for outdoor recreation cost too much	10%
Too busy with other recreation activities	10%
Places for outdoor recreation are too far away	10%
Do not have enough information	7%

Considerable research has been conducted by various organizations to understand what motivates people to participate in outdoor recreation and what obstacles exist. The results of these research efforts consistently identify social and health benefits as primary drivers of participation. At heart, many people spend time outdoors simply to have fun and get away from daily stresses.

In addition to the reasons that draw people to outdoor activities listed in Table 9, another motivation is the desire to eat locally-grown, sustainable, organic food. This has led some people to take up or increase their participation in hunting, fishing and gathering wild edibles – cultural traditions that have been practiced and maintained by Native Americans and settlers of the region since before Wisconsin achieved statehood.

Although many people understand the health and social benefits of ongoing experiences in nature and are interested in pursuing outdoor activities, there can be a substantial gap between “concept and reality.”³⁰ Competing priorities for time, lack of easy access to places or people to go with, and cost of equipment are often cited as obstacles to participation. Although some types of equipment can be expensive, it should also be noted that the price of computers, phones, Internet and phone

service, cable television and other technology can also be costly. For example, Americans spent \$36 billion on video games in 2017.³¹ This is more than the combined spending on all fishing and hunting equipment (\$34 billion).³²

Table 10 lists top reasons people identify for not getting outside.



Photo: TJ Brusoe



Photo: TravelWisconsin



Photo: Mark LaBarbera



Photo: Mark LaBarbera

My Story: AccessAbility Monica Spaeni

As daylight faded and the northern Wisconsin forest darkened in the early evening, Monica saw 300 pounds of shadow move closer to her wheelchair. The hungry bruin moved through the trees slowly, pausing often.

Unlike most other hunters, she wasn't in the relative safety of an elevated tree stand. Seconds seemed like minutes and minutes seemed like hours as Monica sat still, her senses tingling with excitement. Monica was focused solely on the bear moving among the shadows. It stepped into an opening nearby. Monica's heart raced. She raised her .308 and shot, killing the bear and filling her freezer.

Her guide, Wayne, and friend, Steve, made it possible for her to hunt bear despite her spinal cord injury.

Monica was in a wheelchair because of a skiing accident when she was chaperoning her child's field trip. She resisted feelings of self-pity and did not settle for a sedentary life.

After the diagnosis that she would not walk again, Monica focused on how she and others could enjoy a life filled with accessible outdoor recreation activities.

It didn't take long for Monica to discover the Action TrackChair, a motorized all-terrain wheelchair that allows anyone to go afield where normal wheelchairs cannot. Soon, Monica was tracking through corn stubble on pheasant hunts, navigating rough trails to fish streams, and traversing wooded terrain in pursuit of whitetails. Dog park trails near home were easy for her motorized wheelchair as she exercised her dog.

She did not stop there. She wanted others to have access to the all-terrain chairs. With help from the local chapter of Pheasants Forever, AccessAbility was born and has grown into an independent, non-profit organization that is building a fleet of chairs throughout the state that can be used by anyone at no cost.

What started as a ski accident that threatened to limit her mobility and future recreation opportunities, has turned into a series of accomplishments that has improved opportunities and access for not just Monica, but so many others.

Mark LaBarbera
Outdoor Heritage Education Center

WISCONSINITES

HOW WE BENEFIT

Chronic Diseases and Their Costs

Wisconsinites currently face chronic health issues related to society's increasingly sedate lifestyle.

Despite the growing awareness of the problem, the obesity rate for adults in our state has doubled since 1990.³⁴

Maybe more troubling, 25% of adolescents are overweight or obese.

In addition, more than 350,000 Wisconsinites have been diagnosed with diabetes.³⁵ And in both Wisconsin and the United States, heart disease is a leading cause of death; one-third of all deaths in the state were due to cardiovascular disease.³⁶ A table of some health care indicators, by county, is presented in Appendix 2.

Chronic diseases exact a substantial cost on the state's economy. The direct costs of these diseases to just the Medicaid system are estimated to total \$1.15 billion annually in Wisconsin; if costs to the private sector were included, the amount would be significantly higher.³⁷

Health benefits

Most people participate in outdoor activities for enjoyment and because it helps them feel energized and revitalized. The fresh air, exercise, natural settings and companionship with others helps people feel physically and mentally refreshed. Participating in outdoor recreational activities, or simply being in peaceful natural settings, can have substantial benefits to one's mental health. Outdoor exercise has been shown to reduce stress, boost the immune system, diminish the risk of disease and increase life expectancy.

And from walleyes to ducks to mushrooms, "consumptive activities" can be a nutritious source of lean, organic, sustainable food. For many years the DNR has hosted a Learn to Hunt program that links novice hunters with experienced ones. The program is increasingly popular with young urban residents interested in connecting with the state's hunting heritage and harvesting locally-grown, healthy food.

As the physical and mental health benefits of spending time outdoors are better understood, the health care community is developing creative ways to encourage patients to get outside. In one of the better-known examples, some physicians are recommending "park prescriptions" to patients with various chronic diseases.⁵²

The health care cost savings generated by participating in outdoor recreation, particularly more strenuous activities, is just beginning to be explored. Given the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation, several programs in Wisconsin (along with many other states) have embarked on campaigns to draw people outside and become more active. Three of these efforts are highlighted on the adjacent page.

Did You Know?

OutWiGo is a statewide initiative encouraging people to improve their overall health and wellness by being active in the outdoors.

Since launching in May 2018, over 2,000 residents have pledged to be active in Wisconsin's Parks, Forests and Trails. OutWiGo aims to reach additional users through outreach, partnership events and social media marketing.

Learn more at:
<https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/outwigo.html>



Wisconsin Healthy Communities Designation³⁸

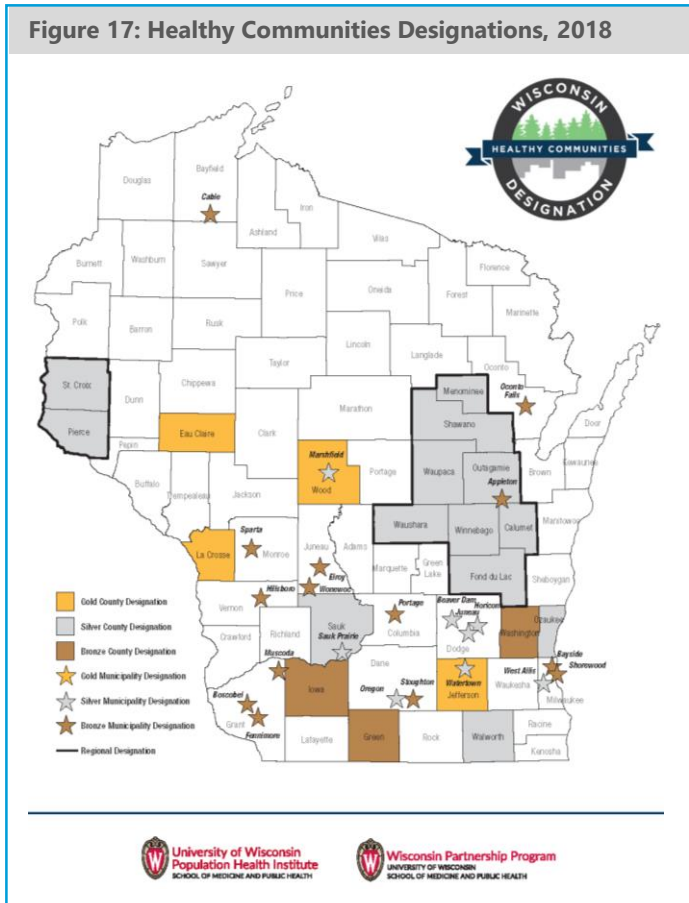
This new program encourages achievements in health improvement in Wisconsin by recognizing communities that focus multiple, connected efforts – including health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment – to improve the health of their residents. The program’s inaugural round of gold, silver or bronze designations was announced in September 2018 and included 31 communities (Figure 17).

One of only four gold designations went to Jefferson County, which was recognized for its efforts to reduce obesity rates through outdoor exercise strategies (among other

programs geared to improving resident’s health). The county’s Parks Department has been a leader in providing natural-resource-oriented parks and trails that make it easy for residents to get outside, exercise, and enjoy the woods, prairies, and rural landscape. Examples include expanding the popular Glacial River Trail, constructing a new bicycle trail from Watertown to Oconomowoc, increasing recreational offerings in parks, and developing a series of water trails for paddlers.

These and other efforts appear to be paying off; the county’s health ranking jumped from 33rd in the state in 2012 to 12th in 2018.

Figure 17: Healthy Communities Designations, 2018



Wisconsin Active Together³⁹

Wisconsin Active Together is an initiative that provides recognition awards to community groups or coalitions that are making it easier for people to walk, bike and be active and meet basic criteria to demonstrate that commitment. The initiative was developed in 2017 by a diverse group of state-level and community-based partners that identified the need to support more local-level action on strategies that make physical activity easy, safe and fun in community settings.

Wisconsin Active Together focuses on coalitions and processes working on policies, systems and environments that build physical activity into routine daily life.

The first set of communities recognized were:

Appleton
Fond du Lac
Fox Valley
La Crosse Region

New Holstein
Watertown
Wausau

Marathon County Strategic Plan

Marathon County recently adopted their 2018-2022 Strategic Plan with an overarching goal to be the healthiest, safest, and most prosperous county in Wisconsin. Their plan recognizes that:

“Health is not merely restored at the doctor’s office, but instead starts in our families, in our schools and workplaces, in our playgrounds and parks, and in the air we breathe and the water we drink. We recognize that health and well-being are lifelong pursuits and that our communities can support positive, healthy lifestyles.”



Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department plays a key role in helping meet this goal. With 13 parks and over 30,000 acres of county forest, residents have abundant opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation and stay active as part of efforts to improve their health. In addition, the lands managed by the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department improve air and water quality in the county.



Social benefits

Participation in many nature-based outdoor activities is often a group activity. Families and friends tend to camp, bicycle, ride snowmobiles, ATVs and UTVs, horseback ride, bird watch and hike in groups (see Table 9 - pg. 34: 55% of people stated that they participated in outdoor recreation to “be with family and friends”).

The bonds that form through the collective outdoor experiences shared by groups are part of the “social glue” that brings people together. And the stories that accompany particularly memorable outings – whether because of a rare bird sighting, attempting an activity for the first time, reeling in a trophy fish, getting lost in the woods, or the inevitable mishaps that leave people laughing – often become family legends that are retold over and over.

Group activity: Rock climbing

Not only does rock climbing provide participants with sizeable physical and mental benefits, but by its very nature it is a communal and cooperative activity. Participants depend on each other for their personal safety and enjoyment of the experience. Climbers often form tight social bonds that span differences in age, gender, education, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds.

Wisconsin is home to some of the best outdoor climbing and bouldering opportunities in the Midwest. Devil’s Lake, Governor Dodge, Interstate, and Willow River state parks draw thousands of participants annually.

Participation in climbing and bouldering has steadily increased both nationally and in Wisconsin. Climbing at Devil’s Lake, by far the most popular location in the state, is estimated to have quadrupled over the last several decades. New opportunities are in demand throughout the state.

Outdoor recreation can also be an opportunity for people to meet and better understand each other’s perspectives, needs, and motivations. Like sports, the arts, religion, social clubs and school, outdoor recreation can bring together diverse groups of people interested in a common pursuit and provide a forum to interact, learn new customs, and better understand each other. This in turn can strengthen community cohesion and connections to natural resources.

Recent research has indicated a connection between greenspace and the amount of time spent in nature with reduced crime and how people view their surroundings.⁴⁰ In Wisconsin, local park programs are increasingly customizing new outdoor recreation facilities to reflect the heritage and current ethnic diversity of the surrounding community. These city parks can serve two purposes – one as an outdoor recreation facility and also as a source of cultural education.

The link between physical activity and academic achievement in a range of school-age children has been the topic of ongoing research. Several studies have shown a positive connection between children’s participation in physical pursuits, including nature-based outdoor activities, and improved educational outcomes.⁴¹

Outdoor recreation groups

Wisconsin has numerous clubs representing hunters, bicyclists, birders, horseback riders, and many other participants. These groups have been exceptionally key players in organizing events, volunteer work days, educational and outreach programs, and in advocating for policies and funding to support outdoor recreation. Participation in these groups is on the rise. For example, the number of snowmobile clubs has grown from 575 to 615 over the last ten years.



Photo: Gretchen Marshall



Photo: Gretchen Marshall



Photo: Gretchen Marshall

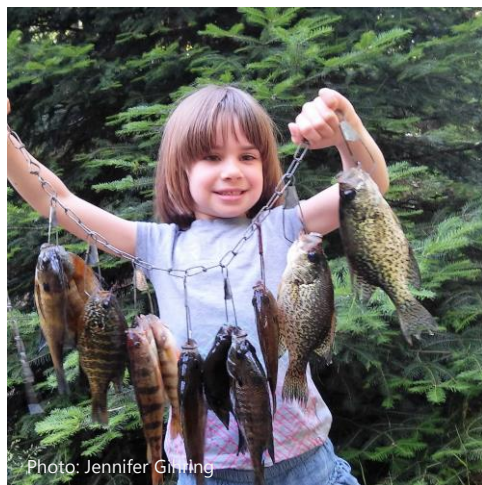


Photo: Jennifer Gilling

My Story: The Outdoors – from Passion to Occupation

Chase Cummings, Pepin County Land Conservation & Planning Director

The Tri-County School Forest is a 280-acre parcel in rural Waushara County that provides an excellent educational setting for students as well as recreational opportunities for the community. Area students from kindergarten through high school visit the property multiple times each year. The school forest is also open to the public to hunt, snowshoe, bicycle, cross-country ski, and picnic.

Rain or shine, Chase Cummings has always enjoyed being outside and connected with natural resources. For Chase, learning was easier in the woods or fields where he could see, hear, and feel his surroundings. It would be an understatement to say that he was very excited to visit the school forest each year.

When he reached high school, Chase became an Environmental Education (EE) Counselor at the forest. In his role, he coordinated field trips for the district's teachers and led a variety of lessons for other kids. Chase had to learn to identify different plants and animals, display leadership ability, and be a good communicator – skills that have benefited him in his career. The EE Counselor program helped give him the boost of confidence needed in more challenging experiences, such as public speaking, that are common elements of his career.

After high school, Chase pursued a degree in Soil and Waste Resources and now works as the Pepin County Land Conservation & Planning Director. Building on his experience at the school forest, in 2011 Chase started Conservation Field Days for 5th and 6th grades in Pepin County.

Students and teachers look forward to their twice-yearly trips out in the field learning about natural resources and their management; it has grown into a very successful program.

As a kid growing up, Chase was fortunate to have opportunities to connect with the outdoors. With the Field Days program he created, he's passing that good fortune on to the next generation and planting the seeds for future conservationists.

Gretchen Marshall
Wisconsin School Forest Program

My Story: Small business success Suzann and Montgomery “Mo” Mouw

How does outdoor recreation drive the tourism economy in Wisconsin? The story of ROAM Adventure Basecamp, located in Seely and offering a modern twist to trailside camping, shows how a couple’s passion and love for outdoor recreation and the Northwoods led to a successful new business.

The Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) develops, maintains and promotes over 300 miles of user-friendly biking, skiing and hiking trails in northwest Wisconsin. The extensive trail network was the primary reason Suzann and Mo Mouw have owned a trailside second home in the Hayward area since 2004.

After they acquired 96 acres of land on the American Birkebeiner ski trail in the heart of the CAMBA trail system, Suzann and Mo thought it would be nice to share their love of trailside living with others. Mo states, “though there are a number of campgrounds in the area, none catered specifically to bikers and skiers - thus, the idea of ROAM was hatched.”

Started in 2017, the business provides both traditional tent camping sites and trendy, comfortable “tiny house” cabins with easy access to the trails. At the end of the day, guests can unwind in the campsites, eco-friendly cabins, or around a campfire with friends in a secluded natural setting.

The overwhelming feedback they receive from guests is their appreciation of being trailside with direct access to Wisconsin’s premier Northwoods trail system. “No more loading gear every time they start an adventure.”

The backbone of Wisconsin’s tourism industry is small business owners and small family-run operations.

“On any given weekend we bring over a hundred plus people to the area that likely would have gone somewhere else if we did not offer our services,” states Mo. Suzann and Mo’s ROAM Adventure Basecamp is just one of many examples of how individuals turn their passion for the outdoors into a thriving business that generates travel, creates jobs, and drives economic impact in Wisconsin.

by David Spiegelberg
Wisconsin Department of Tourism

Economic benefits

From manufacturers of outdoor gear to resorts and restaurants, outdoor recreation is a financial powerhouse throughout Wisconsin. People’s participation in outdoor recreation results in several types of economic activity. The most obvious is the travel-related spending that occurs on trips. These costs can include gas, meals, supplies (e.g., fuel for motors, bait, and shotgun shells), equipment rentals, overnight accommodations, entry fees, guide services, and various souvenirs. Of course, the amount of spending associated with travel varies considerably. Spending varies due to the distance participants travel, type of activity, personal preferences and other factors.

Typically, people engaged in many nature-based outdoor activities (e.g., bird watching, fishing, hunting, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding or cross-country skiing) spend about \$20 to \$50/party on day trips (see the sidebar on page 41 for citations).

People participating in motorized activities (snowmobiling and ATV/UTV riding in particular), and overnight trips tend to spend considerably more on a daily basis. It is not uncommon for these participants to spend more the \$100/person each day on travel-related expenses.⁵⁶

Another major form of economic activity associated with participation is the purchase and upkeep of outdoor gear. Although most of the supplies and equipment that residents purchase, including from local stores, are made in other states or countries, Wisconsin is home to many manufacturers of equipment used in nature-based recreation. Examples include fishing rods and lures, bicycles, motorboats and boat engines, canoes and kayaks, firearms and bows, and saddles.

In looking at the financial benefits that accrue to an area due to people’s participation in outdoor recreation, it is important to highlight money that “moves into” an area from visitors.

In Wisconsin, estimates of overall economic activity related to outdoor recreation range considerably due to differences in the accuracy of data collected, recreation activities and expenditures included, how indirect and induced regional impacts are calculated, the geographic scale of analysis and other factors.

Importantly, outdoor recreation has long been one of the key mechanisms by which economic activity and wealth is transferred from urban areas (and out-of-state visitors) to the state’s rural communities.

A tabulation, by county, of the broader tourism industry’s economic impact in Wisconsin is provided in Appendix 5.

Did You Know?

Wisconsin hosts dozens of **manufacturers** of outdoor recreation equipment – from fishing rods to sailboats and canoes to bicycles.



Photo: Maggie Kailhofer

Not only does the state's economy benefit from the spending generated by people participating in outdoor recreation, but additional financial benefits are generated by the places that are protected to provide high-quality experiences for residents and visitors.

The property values of privately-owned lands near federal, state, county and local parks, trails, fish and wildlife areas, forests, natural areas and other protected places are typically higher and more stable than other private properties. A recent study for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service found that, all else being equal, homes within a half-mile of wildlife refuges are valued on average 3% to 9% higher than houses further away.⁵³ In Wisconsin, a study found that lots adjacent to the Mountain-Bay State Trail in Brown County sold for an average of 9% more than similar property not located next to the trail.⁵⁴

The places that provide outdoor recreation opportunities also contribute to nearby communities' quality-of-life, which in turn has a direct impact on their ability to attract businesses. The experiences available at parks, trails and other recreation lands and waters are key selling points that communities use to entice companies to locate and expand their operations.

In today's economy, high technology and service-sector industries are prime sources of wealth creation and growth; their workers are typically interested in a diverse range of outdoor activities. Communities that can tap into their natural resource base to provide opportunities for active experiences – from biking to rock climbing to kayaking – stand to benefit economically.⁵⁵

Finally, providing opportunities for outdoor recreation complements other natural resource-based industries in the state, most notably the forest industry in the north. Similarly, several utility companies manage flowages throughout the state for power generation and flood control. They also provide the public with boat access sites and associated facilities on some of Wisconsin's most popular waterbodies.

Did you know?

Places open for public recreation also provide a wide range of high-quality habitats that support a diversity of native plants and animals. Indeed, some of the most ecologically important places in the state – Devil's Lake and Peninsula state parks, Kettle Moraine State Forest, the Apostle Islands and Horicon Marsh – are also among our most popular recreation destinations. It is estimated that over 75% of the Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin are found on public lands in the state.⁵⁹

In addition to their habitat values, places open for public recreation also provide a range of ecological services including: flood control, groundwater replenishment, water and air filtration, nutrient capture, refuges for insects that pollinate agricultural crops, carbon sequestration, and temperature moderation.⁵⁷

A recent study found that the benefits generated from ecosystem services on lands acquired by the Minnesota DNR ranged from \$19 to \$154 per acre, annually.⁵⁸ It is likely that public lands in Wisconsin provide similar values.

Outdoor recreation: big business in Wisconsin!

Some examples of the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin:

- **Consumer spending on outdoor recreation** in Wisconsin totaled **\$17.9 billion** which resulted in 168,000 directly-related jobs, \$5.1 billion in wages and salaries, and \$1.1 billion in state and local tax revenue.⁴²
- Properties in the **Wisconsin State Park system** draw an estimated **14 million visitor-days** that generate more than **\$1.0 billion in annual expenditures** in local communities.⁴³
- **\$19 million** in trip and equipment expenditures associated with **waterfowl hunting** in Wisconsin.⁴⁴
- **\$1.5 billion** in retail sales, 36,000 jobs and \$235 million in state and local tax revenue generated by **wildlife watchers** in Wisconsin.⁴⁵
- **\$425 million** in output and personal incomes related to **bicycle manufacturing** in Wisconsin.⁴⁶
- **\$1.6 billion** annual total spending and economic impact generated by **trout fishing** in the Driftless Area (much of which is in Wisconsin).⁴⁷
- **\$1.4 billion** in sales generated by Wisconsin's **horse industry**.⁴⁸
- Research conducted for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism indicates that **day visitors** to tourism events (which includes outdoor recreation trips) **spend an average of \$64 per visitor** and **overnight visitors spend \$144 per visitor**.⁴⁹
- Wisconsin **ATV riders** spend on average **\$164 per day** while out-of-state riders spend an average of **\$573 per trip** to Wisconsin.⁵⁰ A more recent study found that ATV riders spent between \$355 and \$427 per trip while visiting the network of trails in Jackson County.⁵¹

ISSUES, CONCERNS, AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE FUTURE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

This section summarizes key topics that are expected to affect the future demand for outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as the nature of experiences, in Wisconsin.

Demographic Changes

The continued evolution of our population's demographic characteristics will drive changes in recreation participation. As our population continues to age, urbanize and diversify, participation rates and frequencies in outdoor recreation will change. Existing data suggest that the increase in older residents will drive an increase in the popularity of activities such as hiking, dog walking, bicycling, UTV riding, nature photography and bird watching.

Condition of Recreation Facilities

Ongoing maintenance is key to protecting public investments in outdoor recreation and ensuring that existing facilities continue to provide satisfying experiences for the public. Although many recreation facilities are modest in design and scale, they require ongoing maintenance to remain safe, useable and enjoyable. The flip-side of a long history of outdoor recreation infrastructure in Wisconsin is a large portfolio of older infrastructure in need of upgrades to meet user expectations and heavier use (e.g., conversion of pit toilets to plumbed toilet/shower buildings). Adequate funding is key to adequate maintenance. For example, in 2017, all projects supported with LWCF grants on state properties involved repair or renovation of existing facilities.

Technology Advances

Technological advances affect all aspects of our lives, including outdoor recreation. From electric bikes to WiFi in campgrounds, technology is changing recreational experiences and providing new ways for people to engage in the outdoors. These changes require recreation providers to develop and implement new policies, manage an increasing number of uses (many of which can conflict with more traditional ones) and adapt to shifting conditions and demands. Adequate funding is also key to support modernization of outdoor recreation infrastructure to meet public expectations.

Social media provides a means to share experiences quickly and widely, which can help recreation providers attract a broader audience and better understand the features and attributes that drive demand. Attention and interest on social media can also result in visitation spikes.



Photo: Greg Sanderson

Access to Public Lands

A longstanding issue complicating efforts to provide opportunities for several types of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin is the distribution of where many of the state's residents live and the locations of most public conservation and recreation lands. In large part driven by historical land use patterns and the economic fallout of the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s, over half of the lands open to the public (over 3.1 million acres) are located in just ten northern counties. Over half of the state's population resides in just nine counties, all in the southern or eastern part of Wisconsin.

This inverse distribution of public land and people means that for many residents wanting to participate in activities that require larger expanses of land they often must travel multiple hours. And as peoples' lives become busier and they have less time to devote to outdoor recreation (and the travel time required), the use of many public lands near urban centers – for example, Kettle Moraine State Forest, Devil's Lake, High Cliff and Kohler-Andrae state parks, and Richard Bong State Recreation Area – has grown significantly.



Photo: Susan Braun

Access to Private Lands

A generation or two ago, a higher percentage of our population lived in rural settings (see Figure 6 on page 20) and people who lived in cities were likely to have a relative or close friend that lived in the country. Consequently, many residents could get permission to hunt, fish, hike, pick berries or other activities on land owned by someone they knew. More and more residents now live in urban or suburban settings and no longer have direct contact with rural landowners.

In addition, there has been a loss of public access to industrial forest land in recent decades as paper companies, which historically owned over a million acres in the state and allowed public access, have sold most of their land holdings to timber investment management organizations or real estate investment trusts. These new owners typically have not re-enrolled their lands into programs that allow public access (Managed Forest Law).

Two programs administered by the DNR facilitate public access to private land for recreation purposes:

Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program

The program reduces property taxes for eligible landowners in return for implementing a certified forest management plan for their property. Landowners can choose to allow public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, and cross-country skiing (for which they receive a greater financial benefit).

Voluntary Public Access (VPA) Program

Landowners who are willing to allow the public to hunt, fish, trap and watch wildlife on their property can enroll in this program and receive a modest payment. Recently, 32,000 acres had been enrolled.

Compatibility

The overwhelming majority of outdoor recreation occurs without significant conflicts between participants in the same or different activities. However, on occasion, conflicts emerge that can impact participant's satisfaction. Often, an underlying cause of recreation conflict is simply the density of use in an area. Even activities that are prone to conflict with one another (e.g., water skiing and fishing on the same lake) can co-exist if the number of interactions is minimal. Yet, as the number of participants in an area increases, overcrowding can easily emerge and result in conflicts and displacement of visitors. Many outdoor recreation providers increasingly must devote resources to address conflicts.

Aspects that can influence compatibility include:

- Expectations of participants about interactions with others.
- Skill and experience level of participants.
- Duration and intensity of interactions.
- Tolerance levels of participants, including social values and beliefs.

Techniques that can increase compatibility and decrease conflicts include:

- Education, outreach, and signage.
- Community engagement and self-policing by groups and clubs.
- Regulations and enforcement.
- Separation of participants in time and/or space.

Invasive Species and Habitat Quality

People have moved living things - sometimes purposefully, sometimes inadvertently - for millennia. Occasionally when non-native species are brought into a new area, they will spread rapidly and widely. When this happens, major impacts can occur to native wetland and upland ecosystems, farm and ranch lands, lakes and streams, and other settings. Invasive plants, animals, and pathogens can alter ecological relationships among native species and can affect ecosystem function, economic value of ecosystems, and human health.

Invasive plants and animals can significantly affect recreational experiences. Hunters, hikers and birdwatchers can find they are no longer able to walk in their favorite areas. Thorny multiflora rose, dense stands of buckthorn and other invaders can fill in the understory of once open native forests and grasslands. As habitats are modified by invasive plant species, wildlife that depend on native vegetation are affected. Invasive animals such as the mute swan can also change wildlife opportunities by chasing away waterfowl from the waterbodies they occupy.

Fishing outings can result in disappointment when aquatic invasive species modify lake and stream habitat. Eurasian water-milfoil clogs boat motors and invasive animals, such as the rusty crayfish, devour aquatic plants, reducing habitat for native fish at every stage of their life cycle.

Weather Patterns and Changing Climate

Weather patterns directly affect participation in outdoor recreation – a rainy weekend can result in cancelled camping or bicycling plans, while a very snowy winter in the north can attract lots of snowmobilers and skiers from Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago.

The changing patterns of our climate over extended periods of time may also affect the type and timing of participation. If, as predicted, spring arrives earlier and autumn later, opportunities for many types of outdoor recreation activities will be extended while others may be reduced. For example, reduced snow cover may lead some cross country skiers to shift to fat-tire biking, which doesn't require as much snow pack for an enjoyable experience.

Species' ranges and migration periods are projected to continue shifting as well.⁶⁰ This is likely to affect activities such as bird watching, hunting, and fishing over time.

Funding for Providing and Operating Places

Purchasing lands, developing and maintaining recreation facilities, managing habitats, enforcing regulations, and the other tasks associated with operating Wisconsin's recreation infrastructure is costly. Federal, state, and local agencies spend millions of dollars managing public lands each year.

Funds to maintain and operate conservation lands and recreation facilities come from a variety of sources, including hunting, fishing and trapping licenses and stamps, park entrance fees, trail passes, excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment, grants and donations.

In addition to LWCF funds, over the last 25 years the DNR, local units of government, and non-profit conservation organizations have used funds from the Wisconsin Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program to help pay for many of the lands and facilities that provide recreation opportunities around the state.

The Stewardship funding is currently \$33.25 million per year, allocated as follows:

- DNR land acquisition: \$9.0 million (1/3rd for purchasing land, 2/3rd for purchasing easements)
- DNR property development: \$3.75 million
- Grants to counties to acquire lands for county forests: \$5.0 million
- Matching grants to local units of government (LUGs) for property development and land acquisition: \$6.0 million
- Matching grants to non-profit conservation organizations for land acquisition: \$7.0 million
- Recreational boating aids: \$2.5 million



Photo: Savannah Erzen



Photo: Dan Thoftne





GAPS AND NEEDS IN OUR EXISTING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

In developing the following statewide needs and gaps in our recreation opportunities, the department incorporated information from:

- The SCORP recreation participation survey question regarding needed recreation opportunities in residents' home county (Appendix 6).
- Recreation Opportunities Analysis, which identified recreation needs for each of the eight regions of the state (Appendix 8).
- The SCORP survey of county park directors, which asked about needs at the county level (Appendix 4).
- The SCORP Advisory Team and department staff.

Statewide Recreation Needs:

Places near population centers

Because of the inverse distribution of our population and public lands as well as the limited amount of time people have to participate, there is a very large need to provide more places for people to participate in outdoor recreation near where they live. In particular is the need to provide opportunities for residents to visit places after work or for a couple of hours on a weekend. Places that provide opportunities for hiking, all types of bicycle riding, dog walking, picnicking, and different water-related activities such as fishing, canoeing and kayaking are likely to be heavily used.

Trails

By nearly every measure, the largest need throughout the state is for more trails that enable people to experience natural settings, visit the vibrant downtowns of our cities and villages, commute to work, and access favorite sites. All types of trails are in demand – hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, ATV/UTV and motorcycle riding, and 4WD vehicle trails.

Water access – shoreline and boat launches

Lakes, streams and rivers are a defining feature of Wisconsin. From the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River, from the thousands of inland lakes and the tens of thousands of miles of flowing water, residents and visitors have been drawn to the water's edge to fish, hunt, launch any manner of watercraft, bird watch and beach walk. Access to water remains a universal need throughout the state.

Camping opportunities

With a large cohort of retirees travelling in RVs combined with an adventurous younger generation, demand for camping has grown in recent years and is likely to remain popular for years to come. Given the divergence in desired experiences – some campers wanting access to hot showers and WiFi while others wanting neither – recreation providers will need to collaborate and coordinate on providing the camping experiences best suited to different public lands.

Statewide Recreation Needs: (cont.)

Dog parks and exercise areas

Taking care of a dog has many benefits, not the least of which is the exercise people get in walking their pets. With the steady rise in dog ownership (75% of people in their thirties own a dog) and an urbanizing population has come an increasing demand for places to walk, play with, socialize and train our canine friends. Many municipal and county dog parks are among their most visited properties.

Target shooting ranges

Many hunters and shooting sports participants live in rural areas or belong to gun clubs and practice their craft on their or the club's property. However, as our population continues to urbanize there is a growing need for places where people can practice gun and archery marksmanship and safety. By their nature, firearm ranges generate considerable sounds and siting new ranges has been a challenge in more populated areas of the state.

Statewide Policy Needs:

Better understand place-based recreation and associated outcomes

The survey conducted for this SCORP on recreation participation generated considerable data on which outdoor activities residents pursue and how often (see Appendix 6). What is not well known is where these "participation days" actually take place – that is, where, when, and why they occur at different places. Questions for which more detailed, property-specific, place-based data are needed include:

- How many people visit the place or property?
- When and what are the patterns of visitation?
- What recreation activities do they pursue?
- How far do visitors travel to reach the property and why did they visit the particular property (as opposed to other options)?
- What would improve their satisfaction?
- What are the economic, health, and social benefits associated with their visit?

With a more complete understanding of property use and the features and attributes that draw people, agencies can make more informed decisions about what types of recreation facilities to build and maintain at different places. And the public can better understand their "return on investment."

Better understand the nature-based recreation preferences of our diversifying population

Data are needed on the recreation preferences of our changing population. For a range of reasons, people of varying ages, residential settings, incomes, and social, racial, ethnic and cultural identities participate in different types of outdoor activities in different places. More information is needed on the types of activities and settings sought by the diversity of Wisconsin residents. In addition, data on how and where to most effectively provide quality experiences for people with varying backgrounds and cultures are needed.

Enhance and stabilize funding for outdoor recreation

Funding for conservation and recreation is derived from many sources and the overall total has fluctuated considerably from year to year. This has complicated efforts to plan, develop, and maintain recreation facilities. Some states have implemented funding sources that provide a more stable source of money for conservation and recreation projects. In addition to more consistent funding, there is a need to broaden the network of people and sources that help pay for the management of public lands in the state.

Expand collaborations among recreation providers

Each recreation provider has unique capabilities and their lands offer different types of experiences, features, facilities, and opportunities. There would be substantial benefit in continuing and expanding collaborations among federal, county and local governments. Focus should be placed on identifying ways to coordinate recreation experiences in each region of the state, minimizing duplicative efforts, and maximizing the benefits of recreation investments.

Together, providing well-planned, safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities that visitor's value will increase support for local communities and businesses, strengthen tourism, respond to evolving demographic and visitor needs, reduce user conflicts and improve natural settings.

Regional Recreation Needs (high needs identified in the Recreation Opportunities Analysis – see Appendix 8)

Great Northwest Region

ATV/UTV riding
 Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping - developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Fishing
 Four-wheel vehicle driving
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Hunting - big game
 Motor boating (inc. waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)
 Off-highway motorcycle riding
 Swimming in lakes and rivers

Western Sands Region

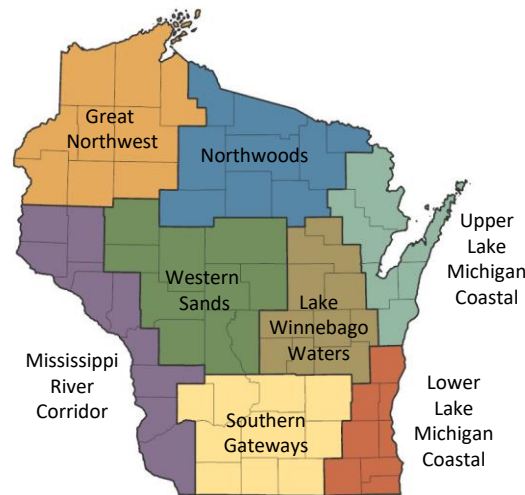
Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping - developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Cross country skiing
 Dog walking
 Fishing
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Horseback riding
 Hunting - big game
 Picnicking
 Snowshoeing
 Swimming in lakes and rivers

Mississippi River Corridor Region

Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping - developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Cross country skiing
 Dog walking
 Fishing
 Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Hunting - big game
 Nature photography
 Participating in nature-based education programs
 Picnicking
 Snowshoeing
 Visiting a beach, beach walking

Northwoods Region

ATV/UTV riding
 Bicycling – bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Camping – developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Fishing
 Four-wheel vehicle driving
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Hunting – big game
 Off-highway motorcycle riding
 Participating in nature-based education programs
 Snowmobiling



Southern Gateways Region

ATV/UTV riding
 Bicycling – bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping – developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Fishing
 Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Motor boating (inc. waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)
 Picnicking
 Snowshoeing
 Swimming in lakes and rivers

Upper Lake Michigan Coastal Region

Bicycling – bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping – developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Fishing – all types
 Hiking, walking, trail running or backpacking
 Horseback riding
 Motor boating (inc. waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)
 Visiting a beach, beach walking

Lake Winnebago Waters Region

Bicycling – bicycling touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping – developed and primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Cross country skiing
 Dog walking
 Fishing
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Hunting – big game
 Motor boating (inc. waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)
 Nature photography
 Participating in nature-based education programs
 Picnicking
 Swimming in lakes and rivers
 Visiting a beach, beach walking

Lower Lake Michigan Coastal Region

Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding and mountain biking/off-road biking
 Bird or wildlife watching
 Camping - primitive
 Canoeing or kayaking
 Cross country skiing
 Fishing
 Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.
 Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking
 Motor boating (inc. waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)
 Nature photography
 Picnicking
 Snowshoeing
 Swimming in lakes and rivers

CHAPTER III LOOKING AHEAD

Wisconsin has beautiful places, a four-season climate, healthy and diverse habitats, and citizens that care deeply about the environment and enthusiastically participate in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities.

Together, these provide the framework for identifying goals for the future.

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



BOOST PARTICIPATION

Increase Wisconsin residents' participation and frequency of participation in outdoor recreation.

Objectives

- Increase the economic, social, and public health benefits resulting from residents' and out-of-state visitors' participation in outdoor recreation in Wisconsin.
- Enhance residents' overall quality of life.

Desired Actions

- Increase promotion and marketing of places that provide high-quality outdoor experiences.
- Continue improving the Public Access Lands maps and online mapping application.
- Continue upgrading and developing recreation facilities to meet demand.
- Evaluate visitor use at different types of public lands and waters.
- Identify and implement strategies to improve access, reduce barriers, and provide desired experiences, particularly for groups that have traditionally had lower participation rates or limited access.
- Expand efforts among federal, state, county, and local governments to coordinate and collaborate on providing recreation opportunities that leverage the unique features and facilities available at their lands and waters.
- Identify and implement programs to encourage more residents to participate in outdoor recreation, particularly as they age.



GOAL 1

Photo: Joseph Warren



GOAL 2

GROW PARTNERSHIPS

Continue to strengthen connections and partnerships across the spectrum of agencies, organizations, and businesses with a vested interest in outdoor recreation.

Objectives

- Improve the effectiveness of public and private recreation providers in delivering high-quality experiences for residents and out-of-state visitors.
- Enhance the success of industries that manufacture outdoor recreation equipment and businesses that provide a range of facilities, retail opportunities and travel-related services associated with outdoor recreation.
- Facilitate support and advocacy for policies, programs and funding to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Integrate and coordinate SCORP, local outdoor recreation plans, and other agencies' and organizations' recreation plans.

Desired Actions

- Strengthen collaborations across public and private owners of land that provide recreation opportunities. Identify ways to provide more and enhanced participation opportunities across the collective portfolio of public and private lands.
- Continue building partnerships between outdoor recreation providers and the health care industry to improve residents' physical and mental health.
- Bring together manufacturers of outdoor gear & equipment with recreation providers to identify ways to market Wisconsin-made products and increase participation.
- Cultivate collaboration between outdoor recreation groups and non-traditional partners.
- Increase outdoor recreation opportunities by coordinating recreation interest groups, health care providers, recreation providers, elected officials and others to collaboratively develop outdoor recreation projects.



PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY EXPERIENCES

Provide opportunities and settings – across the full range of public and private recreation lands – that, collectively, meet the state’s recreational needs.

Objectives

- Encourage participation across all types of recreation.
- Provide recreation opportunities that properties are well-suited to provide.
- Seek to improve compatibility and lessen conflict among and between recreational uses.
- Maintain and enhance the ecological health of recreation properties and enrich people’s connection with nature.
- Tailor recreation opportunities provided at places to match local conditions, needs, and requests.

Desired Actions

- Provide collections of recreation experiences that are matched to property conditions, needs and opportunities and that maximize compatibility.
- Identify and proactively address potential obstacles, conflicts and issues related to providing high-quality outdoor recreation experiences.
- Assess satisfaction of participants in a range of outdoor activities.



GOAL 3

IMPROVE DATA TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND BENEFITS

On an ongoing basis, gather, analyze and distribute data on recreation participation in Wisconsin and associated economic, health and social benefits.

Objectives

- Improve the public's and elected officials' understanding of the economic, health and social benefits from public and private investments in outdoor recreation.
- Improve property managers' and administrators' understanding of both property-specific patterns of use and potential ways to improve visitor experiences.
- Improve public and private providers' understanding of regional recreational demands.
- Inform the next iteration of the Wisconsin SCORP.
- Better understand the recreation facilities and amenities that draw visitors to different types of properties.

Desired Actions

- Develop a standard protocol to assess visitation and satisfaction that can be applied to a wide variety of outdoor recreation properties.
- Gather data at an initial set of places on numbers of visitors, activities pursued, patterns of visitation, levels of satisfaction, travel-related spending and, as feasible, other information related to property use and management.
- Apply information related to property visitation to the DNR's property planning process for decisions related to individual properties and broader regional needs.
- In support of the development of the next iteration of the Wisconsin SCORP, assess overall outdoor recreation participation in Wisconsin and associated issues through a statewide survey.

GOAL 4

ENHANCE FUNDING AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Broaden and strengthen the funding sources for developing and managing outdoor recreation facilities and lands.

Objectives

- Provide a robust, long-term, and stable funding framework for outdoor recreation facilities and lands in Wisconsin.
- Identify ways for all participants in outdoor recreation to contribute equitably to the development and management of recreation opportunities.

Desired Actions

- Facilitate collaboration among federal, state, tribal, and local governments and other partners to fully utilize available LWCF and state funding to maintain, develop, and enhance outdoor recreation facilities.
- Develop and distribute materials that describe the economic, health and social values of outdoor recreation.
- Continue building and encouraging public property friends groups.
- Survey outdoor recreation participants to identify their support for different options to fund the development and operation of recreation facilities.
- Explore opportunities for public land management agencies to cooperatively develop creative funding solutions and efficiencies to meet recreation needs.



GOAL 5



Photo: City of Madison

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND PRIORITIES IN WISCONSIN OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

As required by federal guidelines, Wisconsin has developed an Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) that provides criteria and standards for grant selection to distribute LWCF funds. The OPSP assures equal opportunity for eligible project applicants to participate in the benefits of the LWCF State Assistance Program.

Wisconsin has developed a project selection process that evaluates and selects projects based on quality and conformance with its priority rating system. Grants cover 50% of eligible project costs. The adjacent information provides guidance for how the State of Wisconsin will utilize LWCF monies to help achieve its recreation goals and objectives.

Wisconsin Open Project Selection Process (OPSP)

As described in Wisconsin Administrative Code (ch. NR 50.06), Wisconsin divides its LWCF allocation between state projects and pass-through grants to local governments, school districts, and Native American tribes. For state projects, LWCF project selection occurs via the DNR capital budget development and property planning process.

Proposed projects are evaluated and prioritized on three criteria: compatibility with the property master plan, compatibility with the six-year facility plan, and available matching funds.

Local projects are selected through a competitive grant process. Applications are accepted once per year. DNR grant staff score applications on a series of criteria that reflect statutory requirements, administrative code, and program policies. Projects are awarded funds in rank order until funds are fully utilized. Program application materials are reviewed and revised annually (Appendix 9). The DNR works closely with selected project sponsors to conduct final reviews and submit proposed grants to NPS for review. Each grant must be approved by the NPS.

LWCF Grants:

Eligible Applicants

- Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governments, and school districts are eligible.

Eligible Projects

- Land acquisition or development projects that will provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation.
- Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries and reservoirs that will provide water-based outdoor recreation.
- Property that provides special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains, wetlands and areas adjacent to scenic highways.
- Natural areas and outstanding scenic areas, where the objective is to preserve the scenic or natural values, including wildlife areas and areas of physical or biological importance. These areas shall be open to the general public for outdoor recreation use to the extent that the natural attributes of the areas will not be seriously impaired or lost.
- Land or development within urban areas for day use picnic areas.
- Land or development of nature-based recreation trails.
- Development of basic outdoor recreation facilities.
- Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities which are in danger of being lost for public use.

Funding Priorities

- Meet the needs of urban areas.
- Provide recreation opportunities that serve diverse populations.
- Develop facilities in areas with limited outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Provide multi-use facilities.
- Meet outdoor recreation needs identified by local communities.

See **Appendix 9** for more information on grant guidance



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**Since 1965, the following 532 entities have received grants from the
Land and Water Conservation Fund
to help fund recreation projects throughout Wisconsin.**

Native American Nations		Cities			Villages			Towns		Schools and park commissions		
Menominee Indian Tribe Oneida Indian Tribe		Abbotsford	Janesville	Platteville	Allouez	Deerfield	Lone Rock	Stockholm	Allouez	Pleasant Spring	Algoma School Dist.	Ondossagon School Dist.
State agencies		Adams	Jefferson	Plymouth	Alma Center	Deforest	Luxemburg	Stoddard	Angelica	Richmond	Arbor Vitae Woodruff Park Comm.	Oregon School Dist.
		Algoma	Juneau	Port Washington	Aniwa	Dickeyville	Lyndon Station	Strum	Armstrong Creek	Shelby	Arkansaw Joint School Dist. No 1	Pepin School Dist.
		Alma	Kaukauna	Portage	Arena	Dorchester	Maribel	Suring	Bass Lake	Sheldon	Bayfield School Dist.	Phillips School Dist.
Department of Natural Resources Department of Transportation University of Wisconsin		Altoona	Kenosha	Princeton	Argyle	Dresser	Mcfarland	Taylor	Belle Plaine	St. Lawrence	Beaver Dam Unified School Dist.	Plum City School Dist.
		Antigo	Kewaunee	Racine	Arpin	East Troy	Melrose	Theresa	Bellevue	Suamico	Black River Falls School Dist.	Portage School Dist.
		Appleton	Kiel	Reedsburg	Ashwaubenon	Edgar	Mishicot	Tigerton	Bellevue	Sullivan	Bloomer School Dist.	Potosi-Tennyson Park Commission
Counties		Arcadia	La Crosse	Rhineland	Athens	Eleva	Montfort	Trempealeau	Bone Lake	Troy	Bowler School Dist.	Prentice School Dist.
		Ashland	Ladysmith	Rice Lake	Auburndale	Elk Mound	Monticello	Turtle Lake	Brussels	Wabeno	Butternut School Dist.	Princeton School Dist.
		Baraboo	Lake Geneva	Richland Center	Baldwin	Ellsworth	Mount Horeb	Twin Lakes	Caledonia	Washington Island	Cassville School Dist.	Pulaski School Dist.
Barron	Lake Mills	River Falls	Balsam Lake	Elmwood	Mukwonago	Viola	Caledonia	Waumandee	Chilton School Dist.	Rib Lake School Dist.		
Bayfield	Lancaster	Seymour	Bangor	Endeavor	Muscoda	Warrens	Clay Banks	Wescott	Chippewa Falls School Dist.	Ripon Public School District		
Beaver Dam	Lodi	Shawano	Barneveld	Ephraim	Nashotah	Waunakee	Clayton	Weston	Cornell School Dist.	Seneca School Dist.		
Beloit	Madison	Sheboygan	Bay City	Ettrick	Nelsonville	West Salem	Clinton		Cuba City School Dist.	Seymour School Dist.		
Berlin	Manawa	Sheboygan Falls	Bear Creek	Fall Creek	New Glarus	Weston	Cottage Grove		D.C. Everest School Dist.	Cottacon School Dist.		
Burnett	Racine	Black River Falls	Belmont	Fall River	Niagara	Westport	Dunn		DeForest Area Schools	South Milwaukee School Dist.		
Calumet	Richland	Blair	Big Bend	Forestville	North Hudson	Weyerhaeuser	Eagle Point		Dodgeville School Dist.	Southwestern WI Community Sch Dist.		
Chippewa	Rock	Bloomer	Biramwood	Fox Lake	Norwalk	White Lake	Eau Pleine		Durand School Dist.	Sparta School Dist.		
Clark	Sauk	Boscobel	Black Creek	Francis Creek	Oakfield	Whitelaw	Fitchburg		East Troy School Dist.	St. Croix Falls School Dist.		
Columbia	Sawyer	Brillion	Black Earth	Fredonia	Oregon	Whiting	Florence		Elk Mound Area School Dist.	Stanley-Boyd Area Schools		
Dane	Shawano	Brodhead	Bloomington	Friendship	Orfordville	Wilton	Genesee		Elkhart Lake School Dist.	Sun Prairie School Dist.		
Dodge	Sheboygan	Brookfield	Blue Mounds	Friesland	Pardeeville	Winneconne	Gilmanton		Flambeau School Dist.	Thorp School Dist.		
Door	St. Croix	Buffalo	Bonduel	Gays Mills	Pepin	Wittenberg	Gordon		Florence School Dist.	Turtle Lake School Dist.		
Douglas	Taylor	Cashton	Bowler	Germantown	Plainfield	Woodville	Grant		Germantown Junction School Dist.	Unity School Dist.		
Dunn	Trempealeau	Cedarburg	Boyceville	Gilman	Plover		Green Lake		Glidden School Dist.	Verona Area School Dist.		
Eau Claire	Vernon	Chilton	Brandon	Glenbeulah	Poplar		Greenfield		Greendale School Dist.	Wabeno Joint School Dist. No 1		
Florence	Vilas	Chippewa Falls	Brownsville	Tomah	Port Edwards		Greenville		Hazel Green School Dist.	Washburn School District		
Fond du Lac	Washburn	Clintonville	Butler	Grantsburg	Prentice		Harrison		Holmen Public Schools	Whitnall School Dist.		
Forest	Washington	Cuba City	Cambria	Greendale	Randolph		Holland		Hudson School Dist.	Wild Rose School Dist.		
Green Lake	Waukesha	Darlington	Camp Douglas	Gresham	Redgranite		Iron River		La Crosse School Dist.	Wilmot Union High School Dist.		
Iron	Waupaca	De Pere	Campbellsport	Hammond	Rib Lake		Ixonia		Ladysmith-Hawkins School Dist.	Wisconsin Dells School Dist.		
Jackson	Waushara	Delafield	Casco	Hancock	Roberts		Jacobs		Lake Holcombe School Dist.	Wrightstown Comm. School Dist.		
Jefferson	Winnebago	Dodgeville	Cassville	Hatley	Rosendale		Knight		Lake Tomahawk Parks Committee			
Juneau	Wood	Durand	Cazenovia	Highland	Rothschild		Kronenwetter		Lodi School Dist.			
Kenosha		Eagle River	Cecil	Hollandale	Ruddolph		Lafayette		Luck School Dist.			
Kewaunee		Eau Claire	Cedar Grove	Hortonville	Sauk City		Lebanon		Markesan Joint School Dist.			
La Crosse		Edgerton	Clayton	Howard	Saukville		Liberty Grove		Marshall School Dist.			
Lafayette		Fennimore	Clear Lake	Howards Grove	Scandinavia		Liberty Grove		McFarland School Dist.			
Langlade		Fond du Lac	Cleveland	Hustler	Sharon		Lima		Menomnie School Dist.			
Lincoln		Fort Atkinson	Cobb-Highland	Iola	Sherwood		Menasha		Monona Grove School Dist.			
Manitowoc		Galesville	Cochrane	Iron Ridge	Shorewood		Merton		Monroe School Dist.			
Marathon		Glenwood City	Coleman	Junction City	Sister Bay		Middleton		Montello School Dist.			
Marinette		Grand Chute	Colfax	Kellnersville	Slinger		Minocqua		Mt. Horeb Joint School Dist. No 6			
Marquette		Green Bay	Coloma	Kendall	Soldiers Grove		Mt. Pleasant		Muskego-Norway School Dist.			
Milwaukee		Green Lake	Combined Locks	Kewaskum	Somerset		Norway		N. Fond Du Lac School Dist.			
Oconto		Hartford	Coon Valley	Kimberly	Spring Green		Oakdale		Nekoosa School Dist.			
Oneida		Hillsboro	Cross Plains	La Farge	Spring Valley		Onalaska		New Auburn School Dist.			
Outagamie		Hudson	Dane	Lake Delton	St. Cloud		Oregon		New Richmond School Dist.			
Ozaukee		Hurley	Darien	Little Chute	St. Nazianz		Oulu		Northwood School Dist.			
Pepin		Independence	De Soto	Lomira	Stockbridge		Pewaukee		Onalaska School Dist.			

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Wisconsin

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