

# WILLOW FLOWAGE

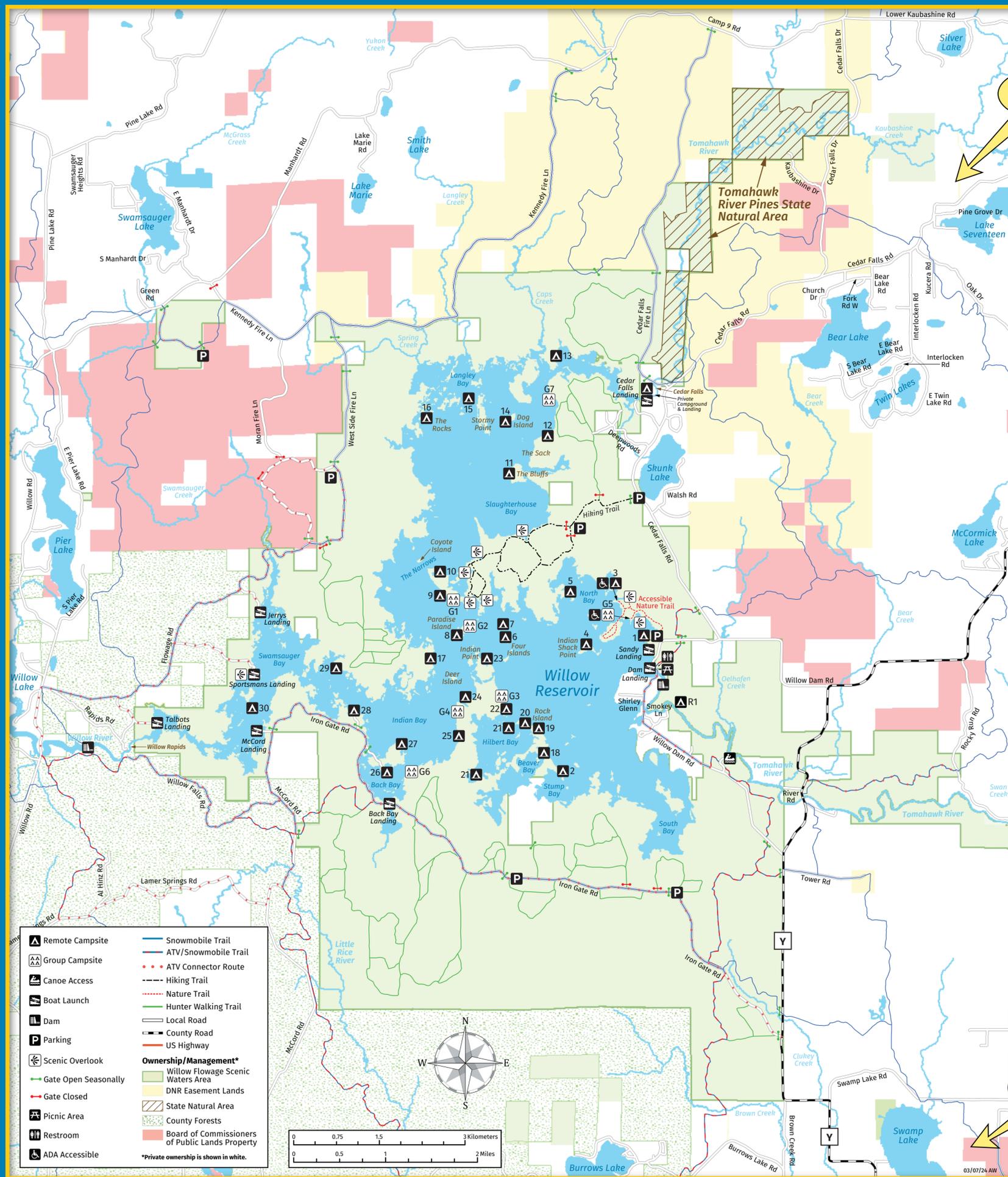
## Scenic Waters Area

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
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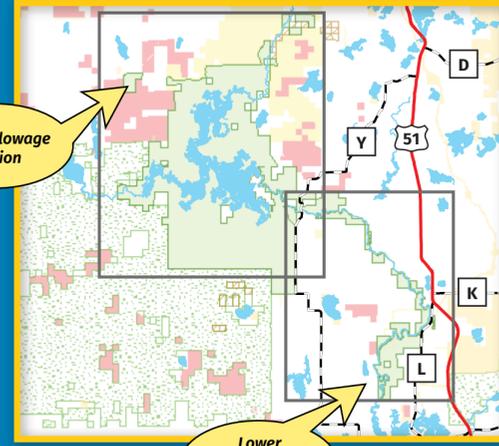


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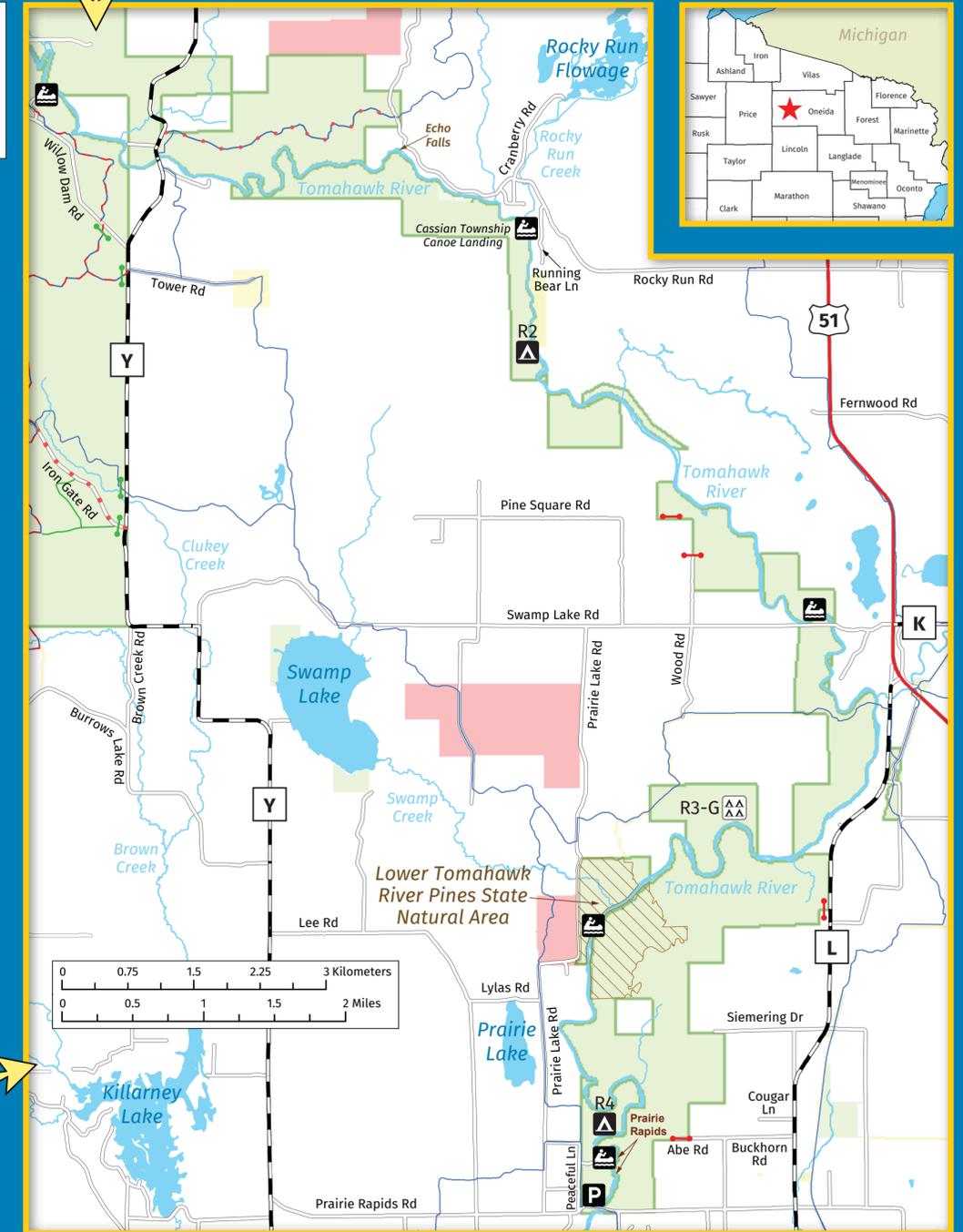
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Willow Flowage Section



Lower Tomahawk River Section



Lower Tomahawk River Section



# WELCOME TO WILLOW FLOWAGE SCENIC WATERS AREA!

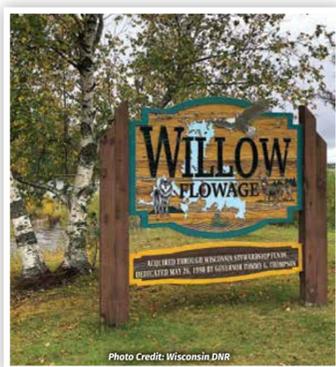


Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

*“Almost Canada” is how one visitor described the wild beauty of the Willow Flowage. Surrounded by forests, swamps, bogs and other watery lowlands, the 28,000-acre property is isolated from roads and development. The remoteness, abundant wildlife, high-quality fishery and beautiful natural shoreline make the Willow Flowage a truly unique and treasured place. Largely a result of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, the flowage is mostly owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and is protected from fragmented shoreline development. A visit to Willow Flowage is a true Northwoods experience.*

## FOREST MANAGEMENT

The forests of Willow Flowage are managed to highlight sustainable forestry best practices, protect wildlife, emphasize forest diversity and promote a natural and aesthetically pleasing appearance for future generations.

A buffer of aspen, balsam fir, birch, maple and scattered pine around the shoreline gives the Willow Flowage a wild, scenic appearance from the water. Future thinning of selected trees will eventually restore the shoreline to older forest conditions dominated by long-lived tree species like hemlock, maple and red and white pine.

The interior of the property is dominated by young aspen forests. Aspen is maintained in diverse age classes through active harvesting along with many other timber types on the property. Some acreage on appropriate sites may be converted to pine and mid-successional species like red maple, balsam fir and spruce.

## WILDLIFE

Forests on the property provide abundant food, water and shelter for many songbirds, ruffed grouse, turkey and woodcock. You will also find white-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, furbearers and occasionally moose. The flowage itself provides habitat for many species of waterfowl, bald eagles, ospreys, common loons and herons.

Wildlife viewing opportunities abound in this remote and wild setting, but please remember to observe from a distance. Stay at least 100 yards away from eagle, osprey and loon nests.

## TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

Ticks are common across Wisconsin and may be found in the forest. Lyme disease is an illness that can be spread to humans from the bite of a tick. You can protect yourself against Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases using these tips:

- Stay in the middle of trails.
- Apply insect repellent on exposed skin and over clothes.
- Wear light-colored clothes to spot ticks more easily.
- Do a full-body tick check after outdoor activities.

## FISHERY

The Willow Flowage provides excellent fishing opportunities. Walleye, northern pike and panfish are abundant. Less common are musky and smallmouth and largemouth bass. Two seasonal fish refuges, located at Cedar Falls and Willow Rapids, protect spawning walleye and musky. Angling is prohibited from mid-April to mid-May in these posted areas. Anglers must have a fishing license to fish in the flowage, and should also review current Wisconsin fishing regulations prior to fishing.



Photo Credit: JLB Design, LLC

## CAMPING

The property offers 41 remote, semi-primitive campsites (37 Flowage campsites; 4 River campsites). **Flowage campsites** are available on a first-come, first-served basis with no fees or registration. **River campsites** are available by reservation only, either online at [wisconsin.goingtocamp.com](http://wisconsin.goingtocamp.com) or by calling **1-888-WIParks**. Camping fees apply. All campsites are accessible by watercraft. Campsites 26 and 28 are also seasonally available via a short walk from a small parking area. Walk-in access is also available to campsites 1, 3 and G5 via the **Nature Trail**.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

### Family Campsites

The 33 family campsites (30 Flowage campsites; 3 River campsites) each have a fire ring, picnic table and box latrine. These campsites are designed for a single camping party only. A single camping party may consist of an individual, a family or a group not exceeding six unrelated persons. **(A family is defined as a parent(s) with their dependent children and no more than two guests.)**

### Group Campsites

There are eight group campsites (7 Flowage campsites; 1 River campsite) each with a larger fire ring or two fire rings, two picnic tables and two box latrines. Group campsites may be occupied by up to 15 people.

### Fires And Firewood

Confine campfires to the metal rings at each campsite. When vacating a campsite, or if leaving for a short time, **be certain the fire is completely out**. Campers are allowed to gather dead and downed wood from upland areas (see “Driftwood” for wood located at or below the ordinary high-water mark). Natural upland firewood is becoming scarce, so consider purchasing local firewood.

Firewood can harbor invasive pests that threaten forests including emerald ash borer, spongy moth and the fungus that causes oak wilt. **It is illegal to bring firewood to any state property from more than 10 miles away or from out of state.** Do not transport firewood away from the area.

Remember that standing trees (including brush and shrubs), whether dead or alive, may not be cut down. Standing dead “snag trees” provide valuable wildlife habitat for insects, birds and small mammals, and serve as an excellent perch for large raptors like hawks, eagles and ospreys.

**Potable water is available seasonally at Sandy Landing.** Campers can also purchase water locally, or filter or boil flowage water to make it potable.

Campsites are remote, so campers should share their plans with friends or relatives prior to arriving. Cell phone reception is **not guaranteed in all areas**. In emergencies, attempt to move to an area with reception and dial 911.

Wisconsin DNR staff **patrol campsites daily** to collect occupancy information and inspect campsites.

## CAMPING REGULATIONS

- There is a **10-day camping limit** at **Flowage campsites**. Campers must occupy a campsite the day they set up camp, and may not leave the site unoccupied for more than one night thereafter. Leaving unattended camping equipment to save a campsite is not allowed.
- **River campsites** have a **one-day camping limit** per campsite.
- **Camping is allowed in designated campsites only** (see map). Campers may not establish new campsites.
- **Power equipment** (e.g., chainsaw or generator) is not allowed at campsites.
- **Any fireworks** that fly in the air, emit sparks or explode are illegal on Wisconsin DNR-owned lands.

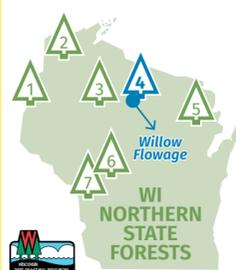


Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR



Photo Credit: Gary Cina

- Campers are allowed to **park their vehicle overnight** (for up to 10 nights) at any of the DNR-owned boat landings, canoe landings or Nature Trail parking lot. No special stickers, fees or permits are required at any of the DNR-owned Willow Flowage landings, parking lots or trails.
- Though rare, black bears occasionally visit campsites. **Do not leave food items on picnic tables or stored in tents, as this could attract bears (or other animals).** No garbage facilities are provided, so **campers must carry out all garbage**. Dry paper can be burned in fire rings, but **it is illegal to put plastic, glass, tin or aluminum in fire rings or toilets**. It is also illegal to bury refuse on Wisconsin DNR-owned lands.



**Come Back Soon!**

And be sure to visit **Wisconsin's other Northern State Forests**

- 1 Governor Knowles State Forest.... 715-463-2898
- 2 Brule River State Forest..... 715-372-5678
- 3 Flambeau River State Forest ..... 715-332-5271
- 4 Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest ..... 715-542-3923
- 5 Governor Earl Peshtigo River State Forest ..... 715-757-3965
- 6 Black River State Forest..... 715-284-4103
- 7 Coulee Experimental State Forest ..... 608-785-9007

## BOATING

More than 6,300 acres of water offer scenic boating opportunities and access to the 117 islands and backwaters of the Willow Flowage.

The eastern boat access locations, near the Willow Dam, offer two improved landings and paved parking lots for vehicles with trailers. The Willow's other landings, including Talbots, Sportsmans, Jerrys, McCord and Back Bay, each provide rustic access roads and parking for up to eight vehicles with trailers. The privately-owned Cedar Falls Campground landing has parking for 15 vehicles with trailers, and visitors are required to pay a small access fee for parking and landing boats.

Refer to the map on the back for landing locations and consult the current issue of *Wisconsin's Handbook of Boating Laws and Responsibilities* prior to boating on the Willow. Toilets are provided at the Dam Boat Landing and at Cedar Falls Campground.

Because water levels fluctuate and submerged hazards are numerous, boaters should practice caution, use slow speeds and remain in the Willow Flowage's deeper channels.

**Exotic species are a major threat to the native Northwoods environment.** Visitors can help prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species (e.g., zebra mussels, Eurasian water-milfoil, spiny water fleas) by cleaning their boats, trailers and livewells before arriving and after leaving the Willow Flowage. Wisconsin law prohibits releasing bait or water from a boat into any waterbody.



Photo Credit: Gary Cina

## CANOEING AND KAYAKING

The Tomahawk River provides excellent canoeing and kayaking. Paddlers can put in at Camp 9 Road to enjoy the section north of the Willow Flowage, which offers low-gradient, easy paddling. The upper river flows through the Tomahawk River Pines State Natural Area, providing fantastic scenery. Paddlers must use caution at the lower end of this section near the Cedar Falls Campground. There is a series of four-foot-high falls directly below the bridge that accesses Cedar Falls Campground. **Paddlers should portage around the falls.**

The lower section of the Tomahawk River can be accessed directly below the Willow Dam. **All River campsites** are located along this lower river section. Although this section is mostly low-gradient, there are a few sections with potentially dangerous class II rapids. Echo Falls (the first section) is about two miles downstream from the County Highway Y bridge. **Paddlers should use caution, and portaging around the rapids is highly recommended.**

The river is mostly gentle and low-gradient downstream from Echo Falls for the next 14 miles until you reach Prairie Rapids. This rapids section includes two separate class II rapids, and **portaging is highly recommended.** Canoe landings and parking along the lower river are located at the Dam Landing, Willow Dam Road, Running Bear Lane (town-owned), Swamp Lake Road, Prairie Lake Road and Peaceful Lane.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

## HUNTING AND TRAPPING

All Willow Flowage lands are open for hunting during scheduled seasons. Ruffed grouse, turkey, black bear and white-tailed deer are the primary game species. Trappers can find beaver, muskrat, otter, raccoon, fisher and mink on the property. Hunters and trappers must obtain required licenses and should review current regulations before hunting or trapping. Firearms must be cased and unloaded within 100 yards of campsites. Willow Flowage contains more than 30 miles of hunter walking trails which are periodically maintained and mowed for access.

## FOOT TRAILS

An accessible **Nature Trail** (see map on back) is located one-quarter mile north of the dam on Willow Dam Road. A paved parking lot provides access to the trail, which includes over one mile of crushed granite surface. Interpretive signs, scenic vistas and benches are located along the trail. **Walk-in access is available to campsites 1, 3 and G5 via the Nature Trail.**

Another primitive multi-loop **Hiking Trail** (see map on back) is located approximately 1.8 miles north of Willow Dam Road on Cedar Falls Road. The trailhead is located about one mile west of Cedar Falls Road. The **Hiking Trail** provides visitors with more than five miles of mowed and signed trails, multiple scenic vistas and benches for relaxing.

## HORSES

Horseback riding is allowed on all interior roads and trails of the Willow Flowage, except for the Nature Trail or other signed and posted areas.

## BIKING

Mountain biking is allowed on all interior roads and trails of the Willow Flowage. Please be courteous and use caution if hikers or hunters are also using the trails.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

## SNOWMOBILES AND ATVS

Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are allowed on Wisconsin DNR-owned lands on designated trails only. For trail locations, consult maps from Willow Flowage (on back), Oneida County and local club trail maps. ATVs and snowmobiles are allowed on the ice of the flowage, but be certain conditions are safe and have a route in mind before venturing onto the ice. Some areas in winter are uneven and hazardous because of water currents or fluctuating water levels. All motorized vehicles are prohibited from driving on the shoreline of the flowage.

A 15-truck/trailer stall, year-round parking lot is located on Peaceful Lane near Prairie Rapids. Two smaller ATV parking areas are located along Iron Gate Road.



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

## PROTECT THE FLOWAGE

With its undisturbed shorelines and islands, the flowage offers many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in a scenic wilderness-like setting. Please help us protect the Willow Flowage by following these rules:

- **Do not damage trees** by pounding nails into them, peeling or carving bark or pruning tree limbs. **Keep lanterns away from trees**, as heat can damage bark. Damaging trees creates hazards for other campers and can eventually kill the tree.
- **Dogs must be kept on leash until July 1** (due to nesting loons and waterfowl). **Dogs must not damage the fragile shorelines and banks** at campsites. If damage occurs due to dogs, owners may receive citations or be held liable for repair costs.

### Driftwood

Driftwood (dead and downed wood found at or below the ordinary high-water mark) provides valuable fish and wildlife habitat and adds unique character to the property. Much of the driftwood was created in the 1920s when the area was flooded. Unfortunately, driftwood is disappearing due to natural processes and illegal harvest. Driftwood is a natural feature and **is illegal to remove or burn.**



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

## WILLOW FLOWAGE SCENIC WATERS AREA

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- Emergencies**..... Dial 911
- Oneida County Sheriff Non-Emergency Assistance**..... 715-361-5100
- To Report a Violation**..... 1-800-TIP-WDNR
- Camping and Recreational Questions**..... Clear Lake Visitor Station 715-356-3668
- Willow Flowage Manager**..... 715-892-0143



http://dnr.wi.gov/tiny/1526

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**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**  
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[dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov)  
**DNR Call Center 1-888-936-7463** (toll-free 7 a.m.-10 p.m.)

DNR PUB-FR-287 2024



Photo Credit: Wisconsin DNR

## WILLOW FLOWAGE SCENIC WATERS AREA

# VISITOR'S GUIDE

SEE MAP INSIDE



Photo Credit: Gary Cina

**WELCOME!**

Your guide to the many ways you can enjoy the flowage year-round.

**Willow Flowage Manager • 715-892-0143**



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