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Appendix 3:

PLACES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR NATURE-BASED RECREATION

Visitors participate in nature-based outdoor recreation activities in different settings in order to realize desired experiences. These settings range considerably. At one end of what is often referred to as the "recreation opportunity spectrum" are large areas dominated by high-quality native habitats that provide remote, primitive, non-motorized settings. At the other end are smaller, highly developed sites that provide amenities including shelters, visitor centers, developed campgrounds, toilets and drinking water, paved trails, and other similar features.

Governments and private conservation organizations provide a wide range of opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation. In addition to the places that are open to the public, many private enterprises (e.g., fishing and hunting guides, marinas, bike rental shops, horse stables and canoe liveries) facilitate the public's participation in outdoor activities and are critical components of the outdoor recreation system in Wisconsin.

Almost 7.5 million acres in Wisconsin – 21% of the state – are open to the public for a variety of different outdoor activities. These range for small neighborhood parks in cities and villages to the 1.5-million acre Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Similarly, they range from densely developed outdoor sports complexes to remote corners of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore that see only the most adventurous visitors. These places, publicly and privately owned, encompass many of the most popular, treasured, and scenic sites in Wisconsin.

A summary of public lands, by county, is provided in the accompanying table on page 74.

Park standards

For many years the goal of 10 acres of park land per 1000 residents was a widely held standard.

Today, communities recognize that there are many factors that go into determining appropriate goals for park land – some communities seek to provide more than 10 acres, others fewer.

Publicly-owned lands open for outdoor recreation

Federal

The **U.S. Forest Service** owns more than 1.5 million acres across 11 northern Wisconsin counties in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The land is managed for multiple uses including forestry, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, fisheries management, special forest products gathering, wilderness and natural areas management.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest offers the full spectrum of outdoor recreation opportunities. From developed campgrounds to primitive camping, to beaches, boat launches and picnic areas, to non-motorized and motorized trails, and the thousands of miles of roads open to vehicles, the Forest provides a variety of outdoor experiences that contribute economically and culturally to local communities.

The **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** (FWS) owns 149,500 acres in Wisconsin in seven National Wildlife Refuges and two Wetland Management Districts. The bulk of the FWS land in Wisconsin is within the refuges, the two largest being Necedah and Horicon. These two properties have a variety of facilities to support visitors and are among the most popular places in the state for bird watching.

The FWS also owns and manages over 50 Waterfowl Production Areas totaling over 13,000 acres in 17 counties throughout the state. The WPAs have very limited facilities for visitors.

The **National Park Service** owns 68,000 acres, primarily within the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. These properties are managed to provide remote, wild experiences in two of the most spectacular settings in the state. A range of basic facilities are present.

The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** owns about 14,000 acres, primarily in the Mississippi River valley as part of the lock and dam system. The lands along the Mississippi River are cooperatively managed with the FWS as part of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which provides high-quality and diverse hunting, fishing and boating opportunities that draw visitors from throughout the Midwest.

In addition to these lands, the Department of Defense (Army) owns over 60,000 acres in central Wisconsin as part of Fort McCoy and associated properties. Although access is regulated, the public can hunt, fish, trap, and cross-country ski on portions of the property.

State

The **Department of Natural Resources** (DNR) is the principal state agency providing places for outdoor recreation. The DNR owns 1.5 million acres spread across 71 of 72 counties (not Menominee County). These properties range from small boat launches to the 232,000-acre Northern Highland American Legion State Forest.

The DNR manages the full range of facilities to accommodate nature-based outdoor recreation including hiking, biking, equestrian, snowmobile, ATV, and other types of trails, campgrounds, nature centers, picnic shelters, fishing piers, and wildlife watching blinds.

The DNR also owns easements along streams and rivers throughout the state to provide fishing opportunities and to manage critical streambank habitats. Many of these easements are along trout streams. Finally, the DNR owns public access easements across large blocks of forested lands as part of the federal Forest Legacy program. This program is designed to maintain healthy and economically viable working forests open to some forms of public recreation.

The Board of Commissioners of Public Land

(BCPL) owns about 76,000 acres, mostly in northern Wisconsin. These lands, remnants of the millions of acres of land granted to the state by the federal government at statehood, are managed to provide quality forest habitat and an income stream to fund public education in the state. These lands have minimal facilities and are primarily used for hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife watching.

Publicly-owned lands open for outdoor recreation

County

Counties provide a very wide diversity of opportunities for outdoor recreation. Most northern counties own large acreages that are enrolled in the **County Forest** program. These lands, totaling nearly 2.4 million acres, primarily came to public ownership due to tax delinquency in the 1920s and 1930s following the mass clear-cutting of trees throughout the north combined with the country's economic collapse. These lands are managed to provide a multitude of forest products that help support local communities. Collectively, these lands also provide extensive trail networks, campgrounds, some of the best hunting and fishing in the state, and remote experiences.

In the southern part of the state is the award-winning Milwaukee County Parks program that consists of over 140 parks and nearly 15,000 acres. With facilities ranging from basketball courts to disc golf courses and swimming pools to botanical gardens, these lands receive millions of visits each year.

In between are countless county properties that provide a critical blend of natural areas and developed settings. Increasingly, many of Wisconsin's more populated counties host dog parks, camping opportunities, and a variety of trail networks. The number and total acreage within county park, recreation, and conservation lands is not known, but is estimated to be about 70,000 acres.

Cities, Villages, and Towns

The bulk of participation in outdoor recreation in Wisconsin likely takes place on the many and varied city and village public lands found throughout the state. With ball fields, playgrounds, urban trails, picnic sites, and many other facilities, these places are easily accessible to the state's 3.6 million residents that live in urban settings. As such, they are typically heavily used.

Excluding the City of Milwaukee (because most of the park land within the city is owned and managed by the county), the nine largest cities in the state are estimated to hold over 15,000 acres of park, recreation, and conservation lands. If the remaining 180 cities and the 402 villages average 10 acres per 1000 residents, this would encompass an additional 15,000 acres. With these assumptions, it is estimated that cities and villages own and manage about 30,000 acres of park, recreation, and conservation lands in Wisconsin.

Some towns have small, but typically well-used, parks. There are 1,259 towns in the state. It is unknown how many towns have park and recreation properties, nor how large they average. If 25% of towns have park and recreation lands which average 20 acres, then towns in Wisconsin would hold about 6.000 acres.

About 51,000 acres of city, village and town lands are enrolled in the Community Forest program. Much, but not all, of this land is believed to be included in the preceding estimates. In sum, cities, villages and towns are estimated to hold about 65,000 acres of park and recreation land in Wisconsin.

School Forests

Over 425 school forests encompassing nearly 28,000 acres have been established throughout the state. These properties are heavily used as outdoor environmental education resources. Some also have physical education facilities, such as ropes courses. When these lands are not being used as part of educational programs, many are open to the public for some types of recreational uses. These forests are managed for (and to showcase) sustainable forest management. The school forest program is administered by LEAF: Wisconsin's K-12 Forestry Education Program housed at UW-Stevens Point.

School and university properties

Wisconsin is home to over 2,200 public schools, nearly all of which have facilities to support outdoor recreation. For many students, these fields, playgrounds, and courts are where most of their participation in outdoor recreation takes place. Many of these places are open to the public when school activities are not underway. The number and type of facilities and acres within these properties are unknown.

Some universities own and manage arboretums, botanical gardens, and other places that are open to the public, generally for walking, photography, nature study, wildlife watching and similar activities. The number of these properties and acres within them are unknown.

Privately-owned lands open for outdoor recreation

Non-profit organizations

Non-profit groups in Wisconsin have been actively involved in providing outdoor recreation opportunities for decades. Many of these groups are organized as land trusts and have land protection as a central goal for their operations. A list of land trusts is available on Gathering Waters' (Wisconsin's alliance for land trusts) web page.

Other non-profit groups that have protected lands open to the public in Wisconsin include Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, the Trust for Public Land, and other similar organizations.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship fund provides matching grants to non-profit organizations for the acquisition of qualifying parcels. Lands acquired since 2008 using Stewardship funds must be open to the public for hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, and crosscountry skiing unless an exemption is provided by the Natural Resources Board.

In addition, many other lands protected by land trusts prior to 2008 and not subject to the Stewardship requirement are open to the public for hiking, wildlife watching, nature study and photography, and similar activities. Some of these lands are also open to hunting and fishing.

Voluntary Public Access

The Voluntary Public Access (VPA) program is administered by the DNR and provides financial incentives to private landowners who open their property to public hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation. Funding was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. Enrollment in the program and use of these lands has grown steadily since inception and now encompasses about 32,000.

Managed Forest Law and Forest Crop Law programs

Wisconsin's forest tax laws encourage sustainable forest management on private lands by providing a property tax incentive to landowners. Some of these privately held forest lands also allow public access for recreation. Lands enrolled under the Managed Forest Law program as "open" to public access (about 1.05 million acres) allow for hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, and cross-country skiing. Lands enrolled under the Forest Crop Law program (about 104,000 acres) allow for public hunting and fishing.

Both tax laws require that all hunting and fishing follow the DNR hunting and fishing seasons and regulations.

Businesses

A large number of privately owned businesses and enterprises provide places or opportunities for the public to participate in outdoor activities. Examples include campgrounds, marinas, ski hills, and horse stables. Although there is not a central database of these enterprises and as such their number and distribution is unknown, these places are critical components of the recreation infrastructure in the state.

Tribal lands open to the public for outdoor recreation

Wisconsin is home to 11 federally recognized Native American Nations. These Nations own and manage reservation lands which provide a range of conservation benefits and recreational opportunities for both the tribal and non-tribal public. As an example, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is a key partner in helping meet demand for outdoor recreation in Bayfield County. They provide public recreational opportunities including camping and hiking on several of their properties and also serve as an access point for fishing, boating, snowmobiling, and other outdoor adventures in the Bayfield Peninsula and Apostle Islands area.

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Table 13: Public lands, by County

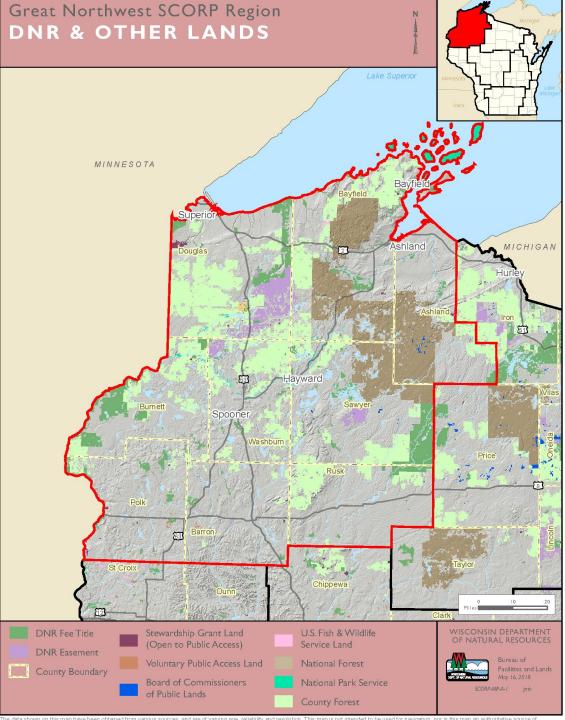
		FEDE	RAL			STA	COUNTY			
	National US Fish &			Army	Department of Natural Resources Board of					
	Park	Forest	Wildlife	Corps of	Fee	Easements on	Forest Legacy	Commissioners	County	
County	Service	Service	Service	Engineers	ownership	private land*	easements	of Public Land	Forest	TOTAL
Adams		-	344	1,833	17,676	68	9,088	180	-	29,190
Ashland	39,609	181,597	-	-	14,965	438	-	2,106	40,305	279,020
Barron	-	-	-	-	6,604	1,106	-	-	16,265	23,974
Bayfield	3,982	272,832	1,431	-	26,229	339	2,793	86	172,021	479,713
Brown	-	-	-	-	3,475	84	-	-	-	3,560
Buffalo	-	-	2,610	472	13,981	21	-	5	-	17,089
Burnett	9,376	-	-	-	73,793	79	-	81	111,101	194,430
Calumet	-	-	-	-	11,802	18	-	-	-	11,820
Chippewa	-	-	-	-	12,627	886	-	82	34,654	48,249
Clark	-	-	-	-	409	397	-	-	134,672	135,478
Columbia	-	-	3,763	-	22,172	67	-	-	-	26,002
Crawford	-	-	-	-	14,640	5,298	-	-	-	19,938
Dane	-	-	1,720	-	22,179	1,114	-	-	-	25,013
Dodge	-	-	21,716	-	23,933	383	-	-	-	46,032
Door	-	-	-	-	14,614	2,185	-	-	-	16,799
Douglas	1,811	-	-	-	60,310	132	64,066	79	280,066	406,465
Dunn	-	-	1,196	-	16,744	1,084	-	38	-	19,062
Eau Claire	-	-	-	-	3,499	189	-	39	52,671	56,398
Florence	-	85,269	-		18,862	1,634	36,318	2,085	36,395	180,564
Fond du Lac	-	-	2,133	-	25,337	185	-	-	-	27,656
Forest	-	344,765	-	-	4,128	84	24,940	21,779	14,827	410,523
Grant	-	-	-	6,355	18,758	1,184	-	-	-	26,298
Green	-	-	-	-	5,248	468	-	-	-	5,716
Green Lake	-	-	-	-	18,751	46	-	-	-	18,797
Iowa	-	-	-	-	21,502	795	-	-	-	22,296
Iron	-	-	-	-	83,550	5	16,992	4,186	175,308	280,041
Jackson	-	-	1,424	-	76,765	346	-	40	122,450	201,024
Jefferson	-	-	246	-	20,456	293	-	-	-	20,995
Juneau	-	-	77,843	-	11,901	505	-	88	17,799	108,136
Kenosha	-	-	-	-	7,453	150	-	-	-	7,604
Kewaunee	-	-	-	-	3,221	89	-	-	-	3,310
La Crosse	-	-	-	3,677	7,432	586	-	50	-	11,745
Lafayette	-	-	-	-	5,860	597	-	-	-	6,457
Langlade	-	32,763	-	-	16,909	744	19,107	1,389	130,001	200,913
Lincoln	-	-	-	-	12,272	239	20,527	573	100,843	134,454
Manitowoc	-	-	256	-	9,642	395	-	3,570	=	13,863
Marathon	-	-		-	28,720	159	1,368	-	30,195	60,441
Marinette	-	-	-	-	36,305	51	16,767	-	229,939	283,062
Marquette	-	-	1,240	-	12,321	1,106	-	-	-	14,666
Menominee	-	-	-	-	-	-	_	-	-	-
Milwaukee	-	_	-	_	480	20	-	_	_	500

Table 13: Public lands, by County (continued)

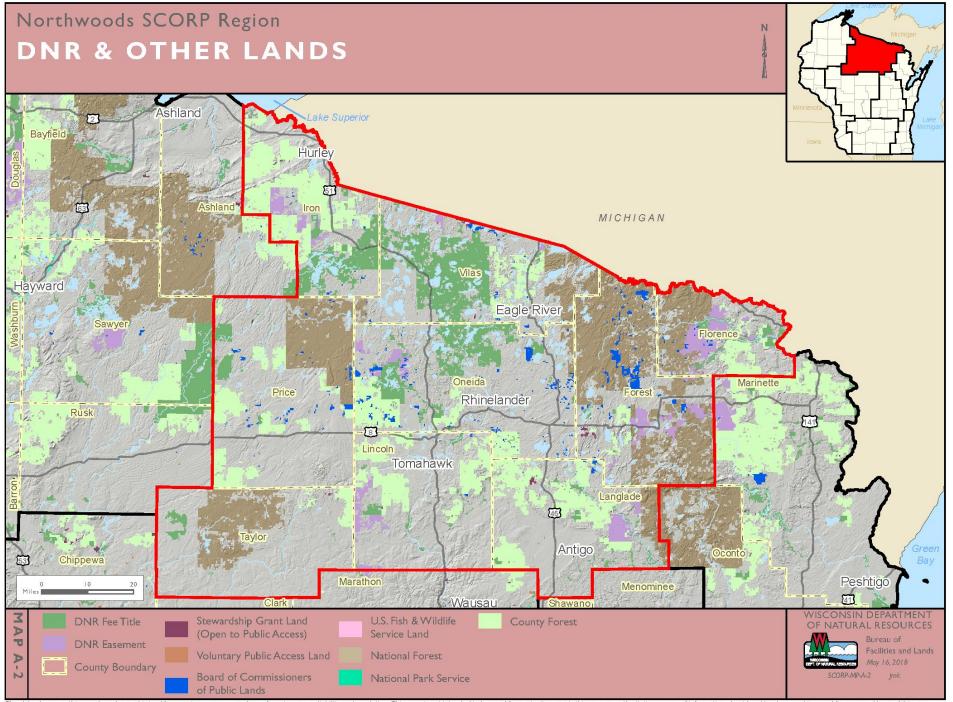
		FEDE	RAL			STA	COUNTY			
	National	US	Fish &	Army	Department of Natural Resources			Board of		
	Park	Forest	Wildlife	Corps of	Fee	Easements on	Forest Legacy	Commissioners	County	
County	Service	Service	Service	Engineers	ownership	private land*	easements	of Public Land	Forest	TOTAL
Monroe	-	-	15,470	-	5,420	792	-	-	7,281	28,963
Oconto	-	140,781	139	-	7,008	121	-	-	43,706	191,756
Oneida	-	11,209	-	-	95,182	3,933	8,468	23,738	82,399	224,929
Outagamie	-	-	34	-	11,393	177	-	-	-	11,603
Ozaukee	-	-	710	-	2,985	248	-	-	-	3,943
Pepin	-	-	-	-	5,491	60	-	33	-	5,584
Pierce	-	-	-	223	4,573	197	-	-	-	4,993
Polk	3,307	-	1,177	-	24,881	940	-	25	17,166	47,496
Portage	-	-	-	-	34,730	212	-	-	-	34,941
Price	-	150,165	-	-	19,682	211	-	8,412	92,302	270,772
Racine	-	-	-	-	3,764	58	-	-	-	3,821
Richland	-	-	-	-	8,327	3,964	-	-	-	12,291
Rock	-	-	423	-	9,517	377	-	-	-	10,317
Rusk	-	-	-	-	18,564	222	-	122	89,324	108,233
Saint Croix	1,183	-	5,769	-	11,399	1,778	-	-	-	20,129
Sauk	-	-	236	-	28,605	9,990	-	-	-	38,831
Sawyer	3,607	126,626	-	-	82,771	26	18,175	2,019	115,197	348,421
Shawano	-	-	107	-	15,923	305	-	2	-	16,337
Sheboygan	-	-	723	-	21,870	458	-	-	-	23,052
Taylor	-	124,024	-	-	9,352	86	-	81	17,688	151,230
Trempealeau	-	-	3,935	144	6,802	380	-	-	-	11,261
Vernon	-	-	0	1,642	5,947	881	-	-	1,887	10,358
Vilas	-	54,505	-	-	151,754	3,111	1,042	4,796	41,141	256,349
Walworth	-	-	-	-	15,492	1,077	-	-	-	16,568
Washburn	4,590	-	-	-	10,015	376	8,577	232	149,956	173,747
Washington	-	-	-	-	12,822	381	-	-	-	13,203
Waukesha	-	-	-	-	20,381	68	-	-	-	20,449
Waupaca	-	-	-	-	9,888	764	-	-	-	10,653
Waushara	-	-	267	-	19,515	175	-	-	-	19,956
Winnebago	-	-	2,379	-	11,441	7	-	-	-	13,827
Wood	-	-	2,247	-	15,977	183	-	-	37,826	56,233
WISCONSIN	67,465	1,524,536	149,538	14,346	1,506,996	55,126	248,229	75,917	2,395,385	6,037,538

^{*} Includes easements owned by the DNR on private lands that allow the public to pursue some types of recreation (e.g., fishing access easements along trout streams, conservation easements donated by land trusts and conservation organizations that allow some forms of recreation).

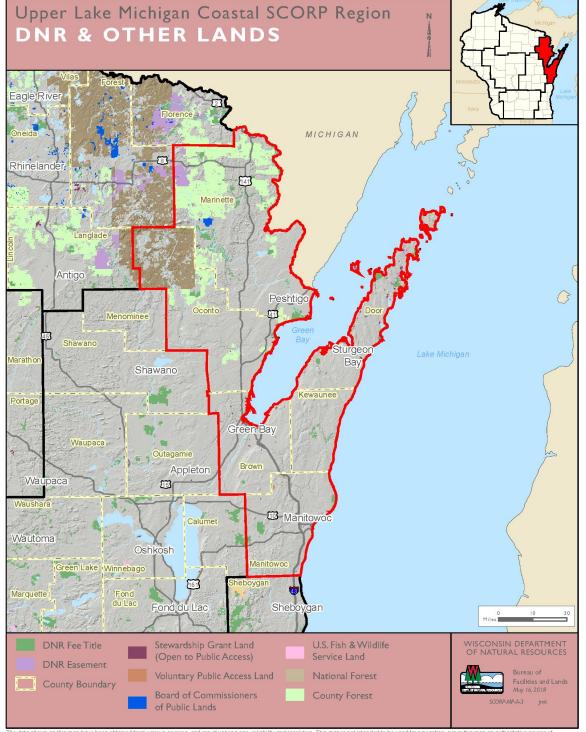
This table does not include lands where accurate statewide data are unavailable (i.e., county or municipal parks). Generated from DNR database 10/03/2018, Protected Areas Database-US (PADUS), and federal data.



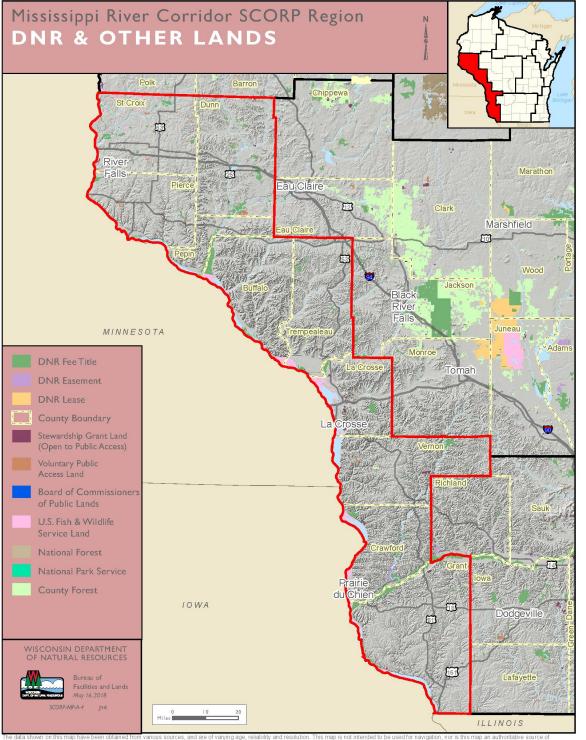
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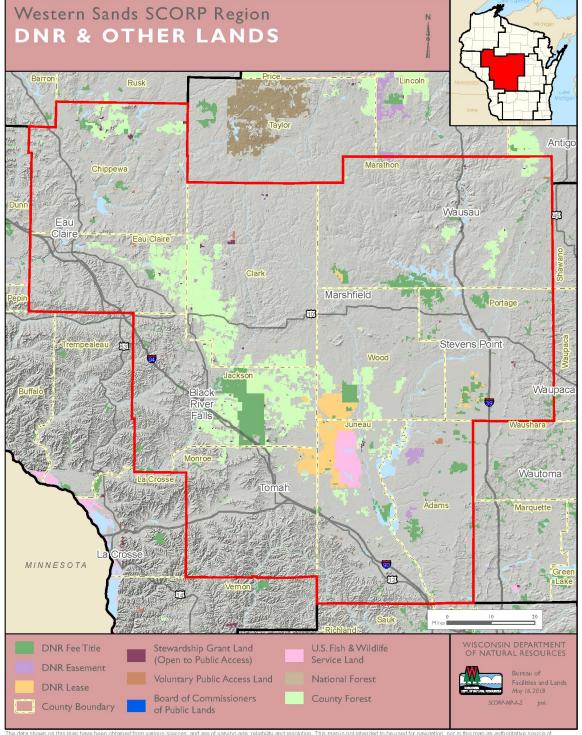
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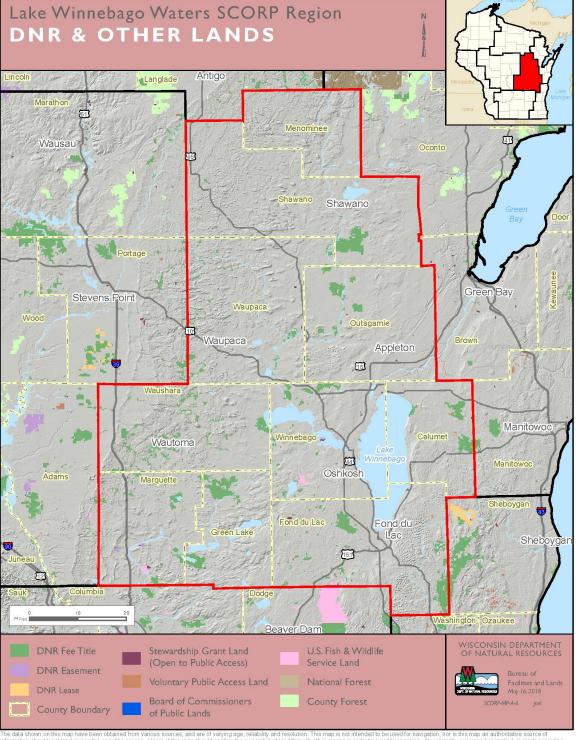
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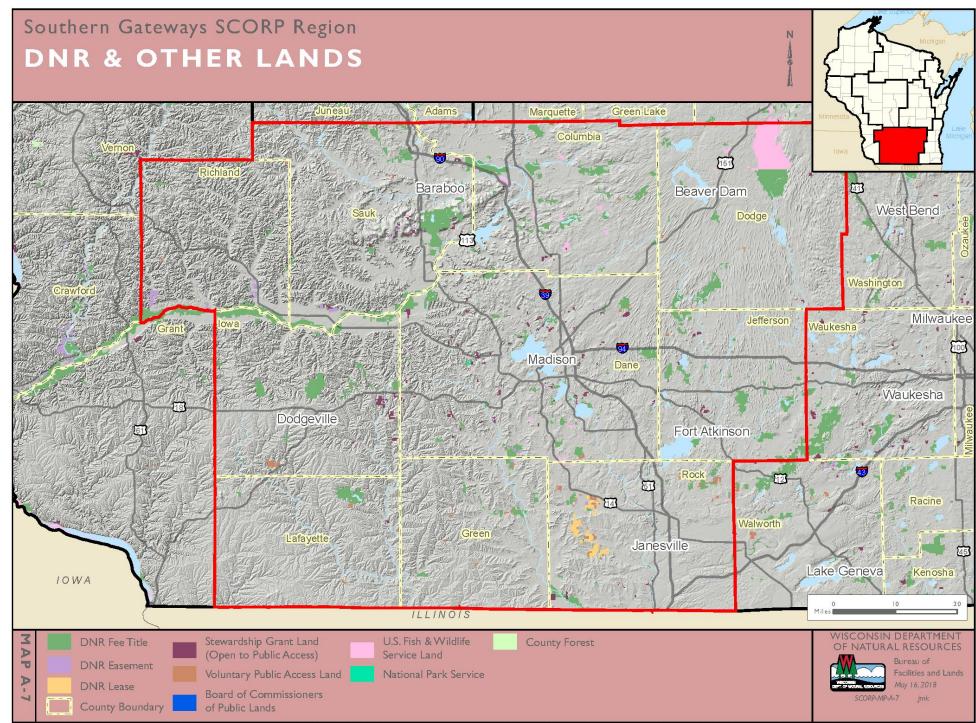
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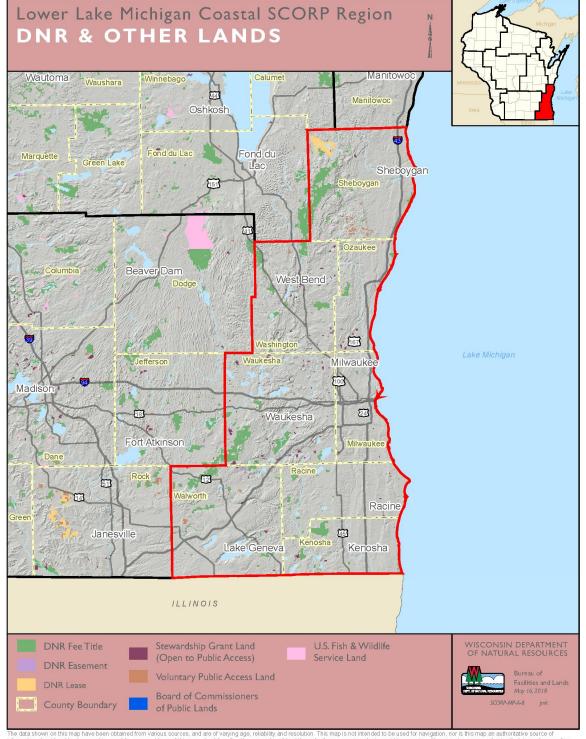
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