

# Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation & Open Space Plan

February 2009



Prepared By:



In Association With:





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RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

AGENDA NO. \_\_\_\_\_

# RESOLUTION

## ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Public Works Committee  
INITIATED BY \_\_\_\_\_



Lori Williams, Parks Director  
DRAFTED BY \_\_\_\_\_

Public Works  
& Planning and Development Committees  
SUBMITTED BY \_\_\_\_\_

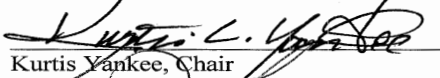
January 22, 2009  
DATE DRAFTED \_\_\_\_\_

### **Adoption of the Rock County Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan**

- 1   **WHEREAS**, it is good management practice for the Rock County Parks Division to have a long-
- 2   range plan for its operation and assets; and,
- 3
- 4   **WHEREAS**, Rock County needs to update its current Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space
- 5   (POROS) Plan in order to remain eligible for State, Federal, and foundation grants, which can be
- 6   used to help improve the County's parks, outdoor recreation facilities, and open space areas to the
- 7   benefit of Rock County citizens; and,
- 8
- 9   **WHEREAS**, the proposed Rock County POROS Plan is comprised of a Vision Statement, an
- 10   Introduction, Current Parks & Recreation Services, Community Needs Assessment, Goals &
- 11   Objectives, Plan Implementation, and Maps and Park Conceptual Master Plans; and,
- 12
- 13   **WHEREAS**, the POROS planning process included extensive public participation including a
- 14   Delphi Committee, mail and telephone surveys, staff input sessions, and public input sessions;
- 15   and,
- 16
- 17   **WHEREAS**, the 2009-2014 POROS Plan goals and priorities recommended by the Public Works
- 18   Committee, the Parks Advisory Committee, and Planning & Development Committee are based on
- 19   this extensive process of public input; and,
- 20
- 21   **WHEREAS**, the POROS plan is intended to be used by the Rock County Board of Supervisors to
- 22   direct the Public Works Committee and county staff to pursue appropriate park, outdoor recreation
- 23   and open space items and projects; and,
- 24
- 25   **WHEREAS**, the proposed POROS Plan has been reviewed and recommended for adoption by both
- 26   the Parks and Planning Department Staffs; and,
- 27
- 28   **WHEREAS**, the proposed POROS Plan is consistent with the Rock County Comprehensive
- 29   Plan 2035.
- 30
- 31   **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Rock County Board of Supervisors on this
- 32   \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009, hereby adopts the 2009-2014 Rock County Parks, Outdoor
- 33   Recreation, and Open Space Plan as chapter twelve of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035;
- 34   and,
- 35
- 36   **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors shall pursue the
- 37   implementation of the Rock County Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan as
- 38   opportunities and resources are presented and available.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

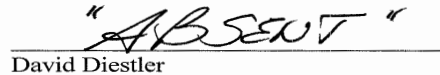
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

  
Kurtis Yankee, Chair

  
Betty Jo Bussie, Vice-Chair

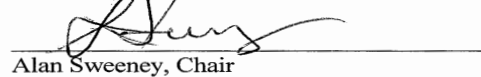
  
Richard Ott

  
Eva M. Arnold

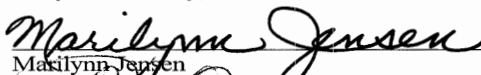
  
"ABSENT"  
David Diestler


RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

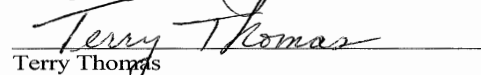
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

  
Alan Sweeney, Chair

  
Mary Mawhinney, Vice-Chair

  
Marilynn Jensen

  
Phillip Owens

  
Terry Thomas

FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution adopts the 2009-2014 POROS Plan, which has no fiscal impact on Rock County operations in and by itself. Implementation of elements of the Plan would require fiscal resources as approved by the County Board.

  
Jeffrey A. Smith  
Finance Director

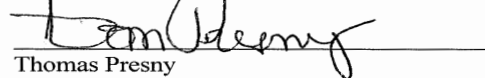
LEGAL NOTE:


The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to § 59.69 and 66.1001, Wis. Stats.

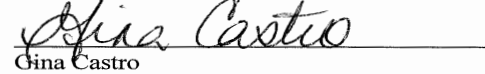
  
Jeffrey S. Kuglitsch  
Corporation Counsel

ENDORSED BY

PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

  
Thomas Presny

  
Floyd Finney

  
Gina Castro

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

I recommend the adoption of a POROS plan to keep Rock County eligible for grant funds and lay out a blueprint for possible development of parks assets. There is much good information in this Plan. Whether the County Board agrees with the specific development recommendations laid out in the Plan is a matter of policy.

  
Craig Knutson  
County Administrator



- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

Rock County Park, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan

In order to remain eligible for State, Federal and foundation grants, Rock County needs to have and update the POROS Plan. These grant funds, along with local matching funds, can continue to be utilized to help improve the County's parks, outdoor recreation facilities, and open space areas for the benefit of Rock County citizens' quality of life. The Plan has a five-year planning horizon. It will need to be updated in 2014 for the next five-year planning period.

The POROS planning process included a data gathering process that used extensive public participation including a Delphi Committee, mail and telephone surveys, staff input sessions, and public input sessions.

The proposed Rock County POROS Plan update includes the following sections: 1) An introduction including discussion of previous planning efforts, Purpose and Goals of the Plan, 2) Current Assessment of Rock County Park System, 3) Community Needs Assessment, 4) Goals, Objectives and Policies, 5) Plan Implementation, and 6) Maps and Park Conceptual Master Plans.

We are aware that this is ambitious, but without enumeration, those projects would not be eligible for grant or other funding options. With anticipated increased funding levels for parks as the result of the American Transmission Company payment, catch-up on previously identified but not completed projects is intended.

A total of \$1,228,819.86 in capital projects were completed over the last five years as a result of having a POROS plan and being eligible for various grant opportunities. Grant funded dollars accounted for \$438,253.50 of the improvements with \$790,566.36 funded by Rock County.

The controversial provisions regarding land use and fees contained in the previous POROS Plan version have been deleted or otherwise referred to in other sections of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035.

The proposed POROS plan has been reviewed and recommended for adoption by both the Parks and Planning Department Staffs. The proposed POROS Plan update is consistent with the Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035 and will be included as chapter twelve of the Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Williams  
Parks Director

**The Rock County Board of Supervisors**

The Rock County Board is composed of 29 members. Currently, the Board is made up of the following members:

District 1 - Mary Beaver  
 District 2 - Alan Sweeney  
 District 3 - Sandra Kraft  
 District 4 - Mary Mawhinney  
 District 5 - Marv Wopat  
 District 6 - Eva Arnold  
 District 7 - Hank Brill  
 District 8 - Brian Knudson  
 District 9 - David Diestler  
 District 10 - Louis S. Peer  
 District 11 - Kurtis Yankee  
 District 12 - Marshall Bown  
 District 13 - Anna Maria Johnson  
 District 14 - Jennifer Bishop  
 District 15 - Robert Fizzell  
 District 16 - Phillip Owens  
 District 17 - Betty Jo Bussie  
 District 18 - Ron Combs  
 District 19 - James Joiner  
 District 20 - Jane Thompson  
 District 21 - Terry Thomas  
 District 22 - J. Russell Podzilni  
 District 23 - Richard Ott  
 District 24 - Richard Bostwick  
 District 25 - William Grahn  
 District 26 - Larry Wiedenfeld  
 District 27 - Marilyn Jensen  
 District 28 - Ivan Collins  
 District 29 - Katie Kuznacic

**Administrative Staff**

Ms. Lori A. Williams, Director  
 Rob Baller, Community Coordinator  
 Deb Lawton, Secretary  
 Dan Cahill, Parks Patrolman  
 Jim Hessenauer, Parks Patrolman  
 Adam Fisher, Parks Patrolman

**Rock County Public Works - Parks Division**

3715 Newville Road  
 Janesville, WI 53545  
 Phone: (608) 757-5450  
 Fax: (608) 757-5470  
<http://www.co.rock.wi.us/Dept/PublicWorks/Parks.htm>

**Rock County Public Works**

Eva Arnold  
 Betty Jo Bussie, Vice-Chair  
 David Diestler  
 Richard Ott  
 Kurtis L. Yankee, Chair

**Parks Advisory Members**

Gina Castro  
 Floyd Finney  
 Tom Presny

**Rock County Planning & Development Committee**

Alan Sweeney, Chair  
 Mary Mawhinney, Vice-Chair  
 Marilyn Jensen  
 Phillip Owens  
 Terry Thomas

**Planning Staff**

Scott Heinig, Director  
 Carrie Houston, Planner II  
 Mary Robb, Planner II  
 Wade Thompson, Planner II  
 Colin Byrnes, Zoning Administrator  
 Steve Schraufnagel, Planner III  
 Andrew Baker, Planner II  
 Jennifer Borlick, GIS Manager



**Delphi Committee Members**

Rebecca Houseman, Chairperson - (Planner, City of Beloit, City of Janesville Resident)

Jim Hessenauer, Vice Chairperson - (Parks Patrolman, Town of Harmony Resident)

Peggy Corning - (City of Beloit Resident, Alcoa Wheels)

Mike Guisleman - (Former Parks Director, Town of Fulton Resident)

Sandy Hendricks - (City of Janesville Resident)

Ben Lawton - (City of Janesville Resident, MacFarlane Pheasants)

Martha Mitchell - (Visit Beloit Executive Director, City of Rockford Resident)

Richard Ott - (Retired Alliant Employee, County Board Supervisor - City of Janesville)

**Consultant Team****Lead Firm & Park & Recreation Consultant**

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Tod J. Stanton: President

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Applied Ecological Services, Inc.

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Brodhead, WI 53520

P: 608-897-8641

Carl Korfmacher, President

**Special Thanks to:**

We would like to thank Ms. Lori A. Williams and her staff at the Rock County Parks Division for input and guidance throughout the master planning process.

**Previous Planning Efforts**

In 2003, the Rock County Planning & Development Agency Staff developed a five year Park, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan that created a vision for the Parks Division of the Rock County Public Works Division. The POROS Plan provided a vision for the park system with very specific recommendations about how the park system should be developed.

Five years after the adoption of the plan, very few of its goals have been implemented and much remains to be done. In an effort to advance the unfinished business of the park system, this plan is offered as a means of implementing those goals.

**This Planning Effort**

Since the primary purpose of this POROS plan is to develop feasible goals and objectives that can be implemented over the next five years, it was important that the process manage the expectations of everyone involved.

This plan does not include everything that everyone wanted. But through negotiation of reasonable goals and objectives, it does contain that which most of the community wanted and that which the Rock County Board of Supervisors can reasonably fund.

Therefore, the purpose of this plan is to establish reasonable goals and objectives that represent the negotiated views of the community and to begin the process of implementing those goals.

Recognizing that community input is the most valuable piece of the project, this plan focuses on what matters most to the residents of Rock County. This plan focuses on the process to move

forward.

Therefore, the Rock County Park Systems goals and objectives cannot be random or even determined by national benchmarks. This plan needs to assume that Rock County is unique and needs to manage its growth using careful consideration.

This plan recognizes that Rock County's needs are a function of the difference between the services that Rock County has and the services that its citizens want and are willing to pay to provide.

To assess what services the community needs, and is willing to pay for, community needs assessments went beyond public hearings. While public hearings were held, more effective techniques were used to gather information.

The most effective method was assessment using social science survey research. To identify Rock County's community needs, two types of surveys were specified by the Rock County Park System. The first was a telephone survey of a random sample of community residents. The second was a mail survey of community residents asking similar questions.

The reason that two survey methodologies were used was that each has its own strength and its own limitation. For instance, telephone surveys have face validity because they tend to be less skewed than mail surveys. Mail surveys must be voluntarily returned, while telephones are less voluntary.



Both collect representative samples of the community. The findings, which are valid because every household has the same chance of being selected to be surveyed.

On the other hand, social science researchers know that telephone survey respondents are less likely to be critical, due to the fact that a human being (the surveyor) is asking the question and respondents might not want to offend them. Mail survey respondents feel more willing to be critical because they are doing so on paper rather than in person.

The Rock County Board of Supervisors chose to contract with Strategic Management Alliance and Design Perspectives because they offered a blended methodology where survey data from both data gathering techniques could be used.

Using the two methodologies, the offsetting strengths and weaknesses of telephone and mail surveys result in findings closer to being representative of public opinion. Earnestly concerned with fulfilling public needs, seeking the best tools to identify those recreational needs was important.

Another technique that enhanced the planning process was the gathering of data from community leaders, called the Delphi method. Community leader opinion is important because it is understood that community leaders shape public opinion in general. Community leaders are more informed than the general public about public policy, the availability of financial resources, and the potential for intergovernmental cooperation

that can conserve financial resources. The public knows this to be true and is often guided by leaders' opinions.

Another method used in this planning effort was gathering input from interest groups. County park systems in Wisconsin tend to serve as hosts for recreational programs operated by community-based nonprofit organizations such as friends of the park groups and other community recreation special interests. These organizations serve thousands of people. As interest groups, they can be mobilized to support the funding of the construction of new facilities to fit their needs. It is also clear that their opinions matter.

To summarize the needs assessment process, this plan conducted public hearings, a telephone survey, a mail survey, meetings with interest groups, meetings with the staff and board, and the creation of a Delphi committee of community leaders to provide input.

Based on the input received, this plan recommends meaningful goals and objectives that take into consideration Rock County's unique needs and its ability to pay to meet those needs.

### **Purpose of the Plan**

This POROS Plan is for the period of 2009-2014. Five years is generally considered a reasonable horizon in master planning because social, cultural and political conditions tend to change enough over five years for the goals, objectives and policies that derived from the plan to change.

This plan begins with a review of the previous goals and objectives that were not implemented to determine if any are still relevant or priorities. The community was asked what it would like to see done. If any objectives previously considered by the board re-emerged, consideration was given to making them a high priority.

However, if new goals and objectives appeared as priorities, it was assumed that conditions had changed in Rock County and that a new direction for the parks and recreation department is in order.

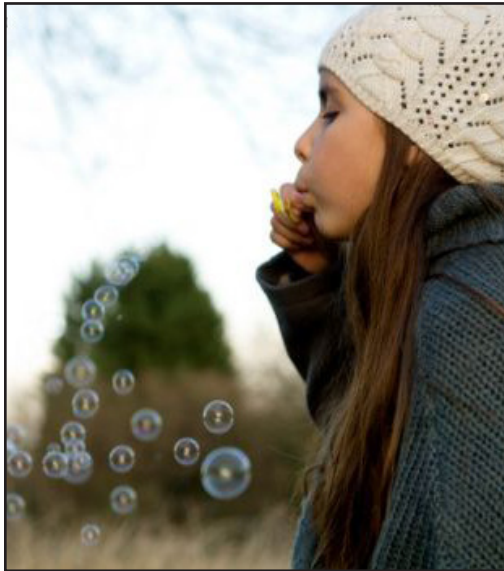
### **Relationship to the Rock County Comprehensive Plan**

While existing as a separate plan, this POROS Plan and Planning Manual will also be incorporated as an element of the 'Rock County's Comprehensive Plan - 2035' upon adoption.

The 'Rock County Comprehensive Plan - 2035' provides plan maps and policies to control and direct the use and development of property according to their present and future use.

This POROS Plan follows the outline established in Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, which defines the elements and structure of a comprehensive plan. This incorporation insures that parks, outdoor recreation and open space areas are afforded equal importance with the other elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan - 2035. Parks, outdoor recreation and open spaces

are thus recognized as a valuable component of our community's quality of life, adding value to surrounding privately owned land and insuring recreational benefits for current and future generations. The Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSA) and their accompanying policy weight, as specified in the original POROS plan will continue to be part of this plan as outlined in the goals, objectives and policies.



### **Structure of this Plan**

The most important ideas contained in a plan are the goals and objectives that it generates. The primary purpose of the plan is to identify goals and objectives to improve parks and recreation services for the Rock County Park System.

This plan does so by describing how the goals and objectives were derived, how the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee collected information about the needs and desires of the public, how the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee interpreted the data that it received, and how it translated those needs and desires into themes.

The process includes the levels of engagement between the county Public Works & Parks Advisory Committees, County Board Supervisors, friends groups and other governmental units.

It tells how the park system expanded the mission of improving parks and recreation services to include the collection of input from a Delphi committee of community leaders and that the committee brainstormed ideas that led to a prioritization of administrative goals and objectives.

This is important because even though the planning horizon is five years, within the next five years new county supervisors and Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee members may be elected and appointed, new park staff may be hired and new people will move into the community.

These new people may not feel the ownership in the plan that the previous Public Works & Parks Advisory Committees, staff and community members felt. However, it needs to be assumed that desires of the public are still the same, so the agreement needs to be in force.

The planning process is unveiled in four sections of this 2009-2014 POROS.

The second section (12.2) of this plan is an inventory of the current parks and recreation services offered by the Rock County Park System. These services include an inventory of the park system's parks, trails and amenities. It also includes the services offered by friends groups and other partners.

The third section (12.3) of this plan tells how community needs were assessed. The telephone survey and its findings are presented. The mail survey responses are compared to the telephone survey responses, with the level of reliability of the survey instruments considered and the validity

of process discussed. Additionally, it includes summaries of the public hearings which members of the general public participated and summaries of interest group meetings. Meetings with the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee and staff are also included.

Within the third section (12.3), there are the recommendations made by the Delphi committee, which met on several occasions, producing their own suggested goals and objectives for the Parks Division.

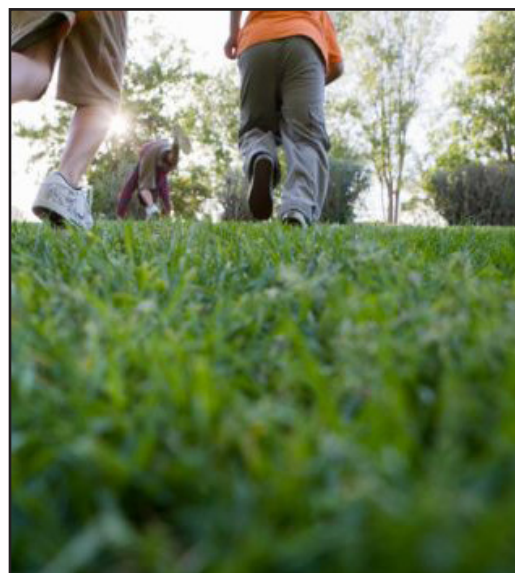
The fourth section (12.4) is the most important. Based on the rationale presented in the preceding three sections, the fourth section presents the goals, objectives and policies for the Rock County Park System for the period of 2009-2014. The goals are supported by specific objectives and policies, which if implemented, will lead to the attainment of the goals. A policy is defined as a course of action as pursued by a government, organization or individual entity.

The categories of the goals and objectives are administration, programming, land acquisition and development and park maintenance. Perhaps the most important of these are those dealing with administrative changes.

The fifth and final section of this plan will be the implementation schedule. This section articulates the bonding process that is already underway to fund land acquisition and facility development.

It discusses the grant schedule with which the Rock County Park System will participate to raise funding to accomplish its capital goals and objectives.

The implementation section of this plan also presents the timeline within which administrative goals will be achieved and the new schedule for operating services will be provided. To implement these goals, commitment rather than funding will be the issue, making these goals largely strategic.





## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

For purposes of categorizing existing park land in this chapter, County park lands have been classified into the following categories: County Community Parks, County Regional Recreation Areas, County Regional Open Space (Passive) and Trails. Inevitably, there is some overlap in these categories and a single facility can sometimes serve more than one type of need depending upon its function.

### **County Community Parks**

Parks that may contain play areas and equipment, playfields and paved surfaces for court games such as tennis and basketball, as well as limited natural areas. They are generally less than or equal to 25 acres in size and are located within a 15 minute drive from the populations they are designed to serve.



### **County Regional Recreation Areas**

These park areas serve regional needs with active uses such as swimming, tennis, boating or other active recreation activities. Generally, these Regional Recreation Areas are more highly developed facilities, with amenities such as interpretive facilities, picnic areas, play areas, turf meadows, trails, camping facilities and equestrian facilities. They are typically less than 200 acres in size. River access facilities, while generally smaller in size, are also included in this category.

### **County Regional Open Space (Passive)**

Regional Open Space contains passive recreation as the dominant use, and typically have only developed facilities (parking lots, trail head and restrooms). They are generally 200 acres in size, or larger, although there are some exceptions. Passive recreation includes hiking, mountain bike riding, horseback riding and picnicking. Regional Open Space Parks provide for public access, use and enjoyment. As larger facilities, they also play a greater role in preserving functioning ecosystems.

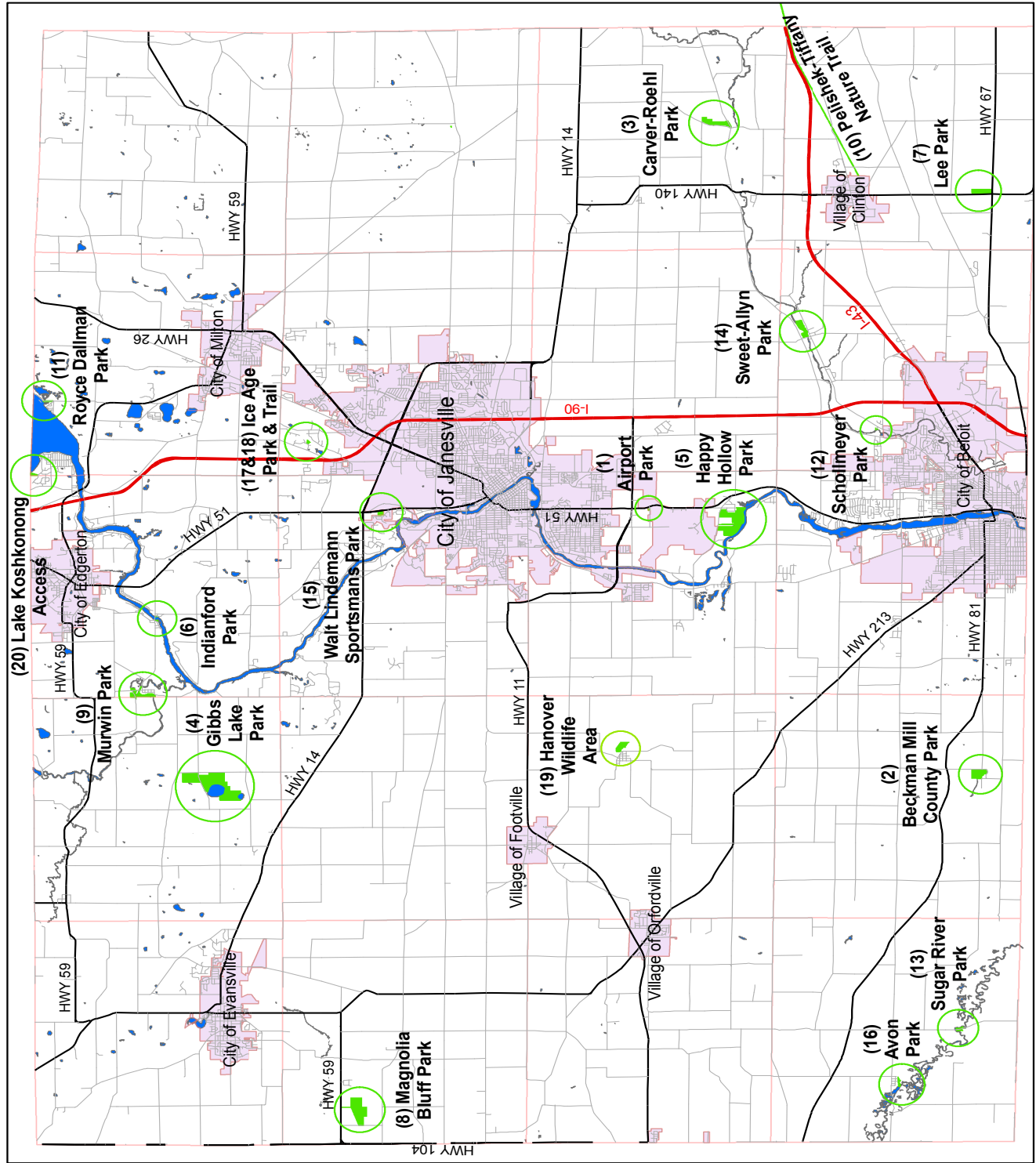
### **Trails**

Trails are facilities which provide access to and opportunities to experience cultural and natural resource areas. Trails provide non-motorized access (generally pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian or multi-use, as designated for the particular trail segment). A multi-use trail is generally

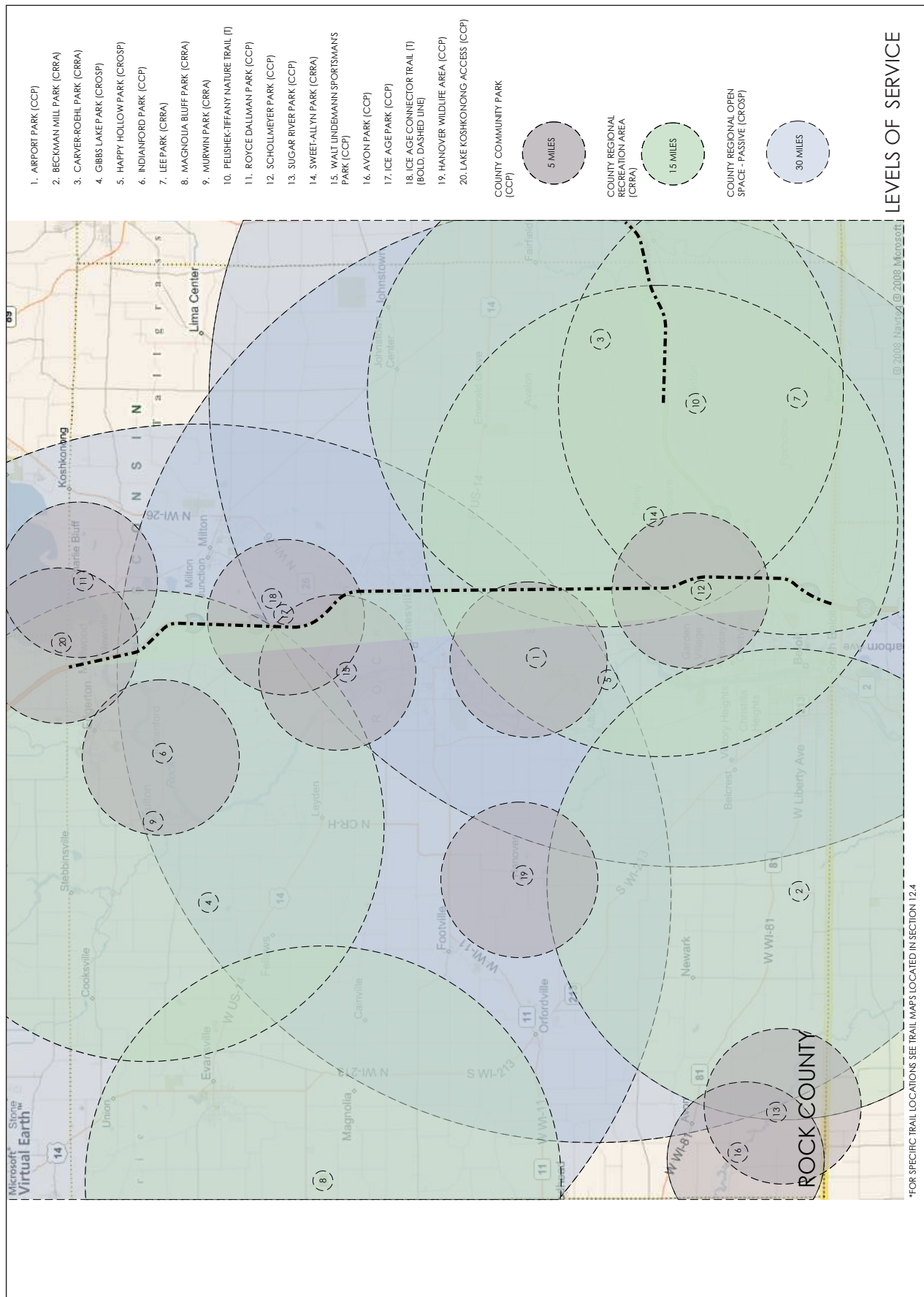
defined as any trail used by two or more different types of users. The combination of user types may vary depending on the trail, location, season and could change over time, as established by the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee. Trails traverse a wide variety of terrain, ranging from urban streets to open rangelands, flood control channels, utility corridors and former railroad rights-of-way.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

Facility Type	Acres Per Thousand Population	Suggested Acreage	Service Area	Primary Providers	Defining Characteristics
County Community Parks (CCP)	3.25/1000	Less than or equal to 25 acres	Park Planning Area (5 miles)	Non-profit organizations, public schools, cities, county service areas & special districts	Play areas, sports fields & picnicking
County Regional Recreation Areas (CRRRA)	5/1000	Less than 200 acres (also includes access sites to public waterways)	Park Planning Area (15 miles)	County	Generally above 25 acres where 10% of the area is devoted to developed recreation facilities (boat launching facilities, campgrounds, swimming, beaches, play areas, sports fields)
County Regional Open Space - Passive (CROSP)	15/1000	Less than or equal to 200 acres	Regional (Approximately 30 miles)	County	Resource management with public access
Trails (T)	1 mile/ 10,000 people	None	Regional	County, State	Located primarily outside of parkland areas



Rock County Parks



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Natural Resources Inventory & Management Plan For the Rock County Parks Division Rock County, Wisconsin**

#### **Introduction**

On July 9 and 10, 2008, an Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) ecologist accompanied the team from Design Perspectives, Inc. to visit and evaluate the natural areas of most of the Rock County Parks, in Rock County, Wisconsin. A brief walk-through of the site was conducted, noting natural areas, dominant species of those areas, and management recommendations. The following recommendations included in this section include a description of each park, the dominant species in each natural area, and management recommendations for each park. If no natural areas were found in the park, only a description of the park is provided.

Descriptions of the parks was provided by:

[http://www.co.rock.wi.us/Dept/PublicWorks/parks/county\\_parks.htm](http://www.co.rock.wi.us/Dept/PublicWorks/parks/county_parks.htm)

The park descriptions and recommendations from (AES) will follow each park description.

#### **Natural Resources Inventory**

An Applied Ecological Services, Inc. (AES) ecologist was on site to complete a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) and take photographs. Twelve county parks were visited and management units were mapped and the dominant and problem species were described in each. Photographs were taken of management units to document current vegetation and management needs and are included in this section.

AES recommends the following general management recommendations for the Rock County Parks. Restore degraded woodlands and savannas to higher quality mesic or dry mesic woodlands and savannas, restore degraded grasslands to mesic prairie or oak savanna depending on existing oaks and/or prairie, and maintain existing restored areas. Activities for nearly all communities should include a prescribed burn program with variable frequency depending on the target community (2-3 years for prairie; 3-4 years to initiate/allow oak savanna restoration; 3-5 years to maintain oak savanna; and every 5 years for woodlands). Invasive species control has been limited in the parks and should become a higher priority particularly at preserve boundaries, edges, and trails where disturbance is greatest. An annual monitoring program should be established to search for and locate early detection invasive/weedy species in all communities, and to establish a system for making annual management recommendations. These two activities should be considered top priorities. Invasive species will take several years to control depending on availability of staff and funds, and long-term management will be required afterwards. The Enhancement Seed Mix List By Community Type is listed in Appendix A and the 5 Year Management Table is listed in Appendix B.





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**Park Name:** Airport Park

**Park ID:** 1

**Park Location:** Hwy. 51 & Knilians Rd.

**Park Size:** 2 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Picnic tables, benches, shelter, parking

**General Park Impressions:** The park has a great view of the airport, but is under utilized.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Needs rest room facilities
- 2) Parking lot needs paving and organization
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) 1 existing light
- 5) Wood bollards encompass area
- 6) Lots of open space



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Airport Park**

Airport Park is located at the intersection of Highway 51 and Knilans Road, at the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport's northern boundary. This two acre park provides a grassy picnic area for families to watch airplanes taking off and landing at the Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport. Park amenities include parking, picnic tables, and fire rings. No natural areas are found at this park.

### **Recommendations**

None.



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**Park Name:** Beckman Mill Park

**Park ID:** 2

**Park Location:** S. Cty Road H & W Mill Pond Rd

**Park Size:** 51.6 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

**Park Amenities:** Picnic shelters, rest room facilities, educational museums, water pump, old machinery, gardens, prairie, oak savanna, river access, trails, parking, pond, dam, wetlands

**General Park Impressions:** A park embracing history, needs access to all areas.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below Average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Parking lot is in good shape
- 2) Park hosts tours and events throughout the year
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Mowed trails through the woods are well maintained
- 5) New shelter with ADA access
- 6) All buildings are in good shape with ADA access
- 7) Fishing pier on the other side of the river (not owned by the Parks Division, but on their property)
- 8) Beckman Mill membership, group for the preservation and enjoyment of rural heritage
- 9) Welty Environmental Center





## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### Beckman Mill Park

Beckman Mill Park contains 50 acres, and is home to the historic Beckman-Howe Mill, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The mill has been restored to its original 1920s era condition by the Friends of Beckman Mill, Inc. Also located in the park are the Welty Environmental Center and a covered footbridge. Park amenities include drinking water, restrooms, picnic areas, and fireplaces. Several natural areas exist on-site and include a prairie planting, riparian shorelines, an oak savanna, woodlands, and a wetland complex.

The prairie planting at Beckman Mill Park contains several native species and is dominated by cup plant (*Silphium perfoliatum*), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), and goldenrod species (*Solidago gigantea*) and (*Solidago canadensis*) (Photo 1). Several other native species were observed, including wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*), spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohiensis*), and yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*). The shorelines and wetland areas of Mill Pond were dominated by reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), and willow species (*Salix babylonica*) and (*Salix interior*) (Photos 2, 3, and 4). The oak savanna appeared to be in the process of restoration, and was dominated by bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis*) and cup plant (Photo 5). Woodland areas were dominated by oak species, Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and wood avens (*Geum canadense*) (Photos 6).

### Recommendations:

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails in shoreline and wetland areas.
- Selective cut and stump-treat willow and maple trees along shoreline.
- Use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie and savanna areas to treat cool-season grasses.
- Restore shoreline area, minimum 35'
- Reduce mowing



Photo 1. Beckman Mill Park, native planting.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 2. Beckman Mill Park, stream bank and dam.



Photo 3. Beckman Mill Park, stream bank.



Photo 4. Beckman Mill Park, stream bank.



Photo 5. Beckman Mill Park, oak savanna.



Photo 6. Beckman Mill Park, woodland.





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**Park Name:** Carver-Roehl Park

**Park ID:** 3

**Park Location:** E. Creek Rd. & S. Carvers Rock Rd.

**Park Size:** 52 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

**Park Amenities:** Picnic shelter, benches, rest room facilities, swings, historic grave site, trails, water pump.

**General Park Impressions:** New picnic shelter able to host outings, limited ADA access.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Outdated swings with no access
- 2) Rest room facility needs a new roof
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Entry drive acts as spill way when the creek floods, closing the park from visitors
- 5) Trails with defined paths, in some areas the path is a little rough
- 6) Bridges on the trail network are in good shape
- 7) Benches and bench shelters placed throughout the trail network
- 8) Road has new pavement, entry drive damaged during the flood
- 9) No area set aside for parking



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Carver-Roehl Park**

Carver-Roehl Park is located northeast of Clinton, on S. Carvers Rock Road. It is Rock County's second oldest park dating from 1950. The park contains one of Rock County's most outstanding geological features, which is a limestone outcropping stretching throughout the 53-acre park. Amenities of this park include hiking and cross-country ski and nature trails, picnic shelters, fire pits, playground equipment, and picnic tables. The natural areas of this park include floodplain forests, a riparian corridor along the Spring Brook, and woodland areas.

The natural areas of Carver-Roehl Park consisted of mainly woodland and floodplain forested areas. The woodlands had a diverse flora but with some disturbance along hiking/ski trails. The dominant species in the woodlands included oak species, black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), Virginia creeper, and enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea lutetiana canadensis*) (Photo 8). Floodplain forested communities generally consisted of the same plant and tree species as the woodland, but contained orange jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and reed canary grass in the ground layer of the riparian corridor (Photos 7 and 10). Small wet prairie areas were found along the stream bank, and were also dominated by reed canary grass (Photo 9).

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass within riparian corridors and wet prairie areas.

- Cut and stump treat common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in woodland areas.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



Photo 7. Carver-Roehl Park, stream channel and banks.

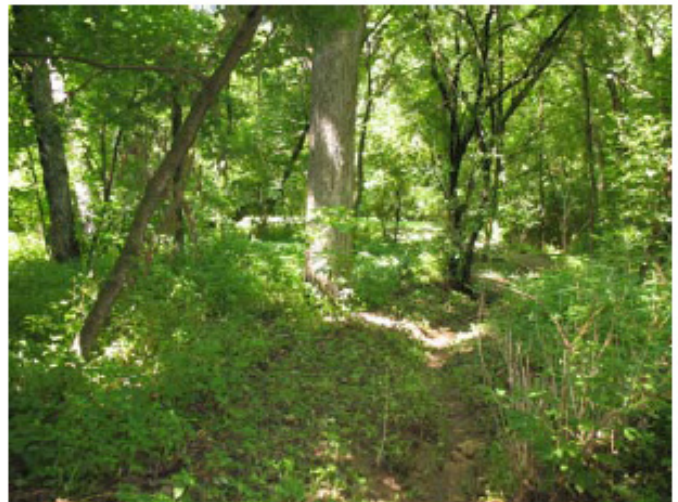


Photo 8. Carver-Roehl Park, woodland.



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 9. Carver-Roehl Park, wet prairie.



Photo 10. Carver-Roehl Park, stream channel and banks.



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**Park Name:** Gibbs Lake Park

**Park ID:** 4

**Park Location:** W. Gibbs Lake Rd. & N. Fox Rd.

**Park Size:** 286.6 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Open Space  
- Passive

**Park Amenities:** Picnic area, rest room facilities, parking, trails, lake access, water dock, park grills, water pump, bench shelter

**General Park Impressions:** Picnic area needs to be defined and ADA accessible.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Motor boats no larger than 3.9 hp allowed on Gibbs Lake
- 2) Separate parking lot for equestrian parking
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Gravel parking lots



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Gibbs Lake Park**

Gibbs Lake Park is Rock County's largest park, containing 286.6 acres, surrounding most of Gibbs

Lake and the northern half of Little Gibbs. The park is located one-half mile west of the intersection of W. Gibbs Lake Road and N. Eagle Road, in the Town of Porter. Gibbs Lake is the largest of any lake lying entirely in Rock County. Gibbs Lake Park amenities include hiking and cross-country ski trails, bridal path and parking area, boat landing area, picnic areas, and parking facilities. The natural areas of Gibbs Lake include shorelines of the lakes, wetland complexes, woodlands, prairie, and savanna areas.

The shoreline of Gibbs Lake included species such as sandbar willow (*Salix interior*), silver maple, common buckthorn, reed canary grass, and narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) (Photos 11 and 12). Very few native species were present. The wetland complexes surrounding the lakes were dominated mainly by reed canary grass (Photo 17). Woodlands on the property consisted of shagbark hickory (*Carya ovata*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), common buckthorn, and Virginia creeper as dominate species (Photo 13). Open prairie and savanna areas of the property were dominated by cool-season grasses such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) and timothy (*Phleum pratense*), and wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) (Photos 15 and 16). Several shrub species were also present including gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*) and olive (*Elaeagnus* species).

invasive plant and shrub/tree species.

- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails along shorelines and in wetland complexes.
- Cut and stump treat common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in woodland and shoreline areas.
- Use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie and savanna areas to treat cool-season grasses.
- Cut and stump treat gray dogwood and olive species in open prairie/savanna areas.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide



**Photo 11. Gibbs Lake Park, shoreline.**

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 12. Gibbs Lake Park, shoreline.



Photo 13. Gibbs Lake Park, woodland.



Photo 14. Gibbs Lake Park, degraded savanna.



Photo 15. Gibbs Lake Park, prairie from horse lot.



Photo 16. Gibbs Lake Park, prairie/savanna on north side of Gibbs Lake Road.



Photo 17. Gibbs Lake Park, wetland surrounding Little Gibbs Lake





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**Park Name:** Happy Hollow Park

**Park ID:** 5

**Park Location:** Hwy 51 & S. Driftwood Dr.

**Park Size:** 191.2 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Open Space  
- Passive

**Park Amenities:** Bench shelter, rest room facilities, boat launch, equestrian trails, hiking trails

**General Park Impressions:** Park was under water.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Park is under water
- 2) Roadway and parking area need repair
- 3) Erosion on riverbank along hiking trails
- 4) Lots of down trees/debris from flooding



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Happy Hollow Park**

Happy Hollow Park is located between Janesville and Beloit, just off of W. Happy Hollow Road. This 191.2-acre park features a boat landing and access to the Rock River, hiking trails, picnic tables, shelters, and restrooms. At the time of investigation, most of the park was under 6-12 inches of water due to the high spring rainfalls of 2008. Flood water in the park had not yet receded; therefore a natural resource inventory could not be completed (Photos 18 and 19). Below are recommendations, based on aerial photograph interpretations of the site and photos taken at the site entrance.



Photo 19. Happy Hollow Park, river and floodplain.

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control invasive species that may be present in any natural area.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



Photo 18. Happy Hollow Park, floodplain forest.





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**Park Name:** Indianford Park

**Park ID:** 6

**Park Location:** N. CTY. TK. F & W. CTY. TK. M

**Park Size:** 1.2 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Picnic area, rest room facilities, parking, river access.

**General Park Impressions:** Add a picnic shelter with ADA access to it, good view of river dam.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Notes:**

- 1) Re-surface the parking lot
- 2) Add a fishing pier or overlook
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Indianford Park**

Indianford Park is a 1.2-acre park located in an area commonly called Indianford in Fulton Township. The park was obtained from Wisconsin Power and Light when the generating station was shut down. Park amenities include picnic tables, fishing, restrooms, water pump, and parking. A brief site assessment was conducted to assess the natural areas of the site. The only natural area on site was the shoreline of the dammed Rock River. Very few native species were observed, growing through the rip-rapped shoreline of the Rock River. Dominant species of the shoreline included reed canary grass and smart weed (*Polygonum* species) (Photo 20).

### **Recommendations:**

- Install shoreline enhancement seed mix to increase native diversity and decrease a risk in slope stability.



Photo 20. Indianford Park, stream bank.





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**Park Name:** Lee Park

**Park ID:** 7

**Park Location:** WI-140 & WI-67

**Park Size:** 40 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

**Park Amenities:** Picnic shelter, rest room facilities, baseball field, benches, water pump, prairie restoration, trails, parking, arboretum.

**General Park Impressions:** Potential for an outdoor education center

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Parking and road are gravel
- 2) Benches and fence look good by the baseball field, the field needs work
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Few trails lead to dead ends
- 5) Shelter needs a new roof
- 6) Trail through woods, some tree species marked



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### Lee Park

Lee Park is a 40-acre park located at the intersection of State Highway 140 and State Highway 67. This park features hiking/nature trails, an arboretum, picnic shelters, a softball diamond, a prairie restoration project, and an intermittent stream. The township bought the land and donated it to Rock County in 1966. Another 0.134 acres were added in 1975, which created a driveway so park visitors could enter and leave the park from the north end as well. Several natural areas were found in the park. The majority of the park is woodland, with a small prairie planting on the north end of the park, an arboretum on the northeast side, and a small intermittent stream runs east and west through the central portion of the park and bisects the property.

The dominant species of the woodland area, which consisted of the majority of the 40-acre parcel, included bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) and American elm (*Ulmus americana*) (Photos 22 and 23). The understory was dominated by box elder (*Acer negundo*), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and Missouri gooseberry (*Ribes missouriense*). Many other native species were observed in the understory. The prairie restoration project was dominated by Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) and several cool season grasses including Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome, and quack grass (*Agropyron repens*) (Photo 24). Many native species were present in the prairie planting, but none were considered a dominant. The intermittent stream was dominated solely by reed canary grass, with very few other species present (Photo 21).

### Recommendations:

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass around intermittent stream.
- Cut and stump treat common buckthorn, box elder, and multiflora rose in woodland areas.
- Use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie restoration to treat cool-season grasses.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



Photo 21. Lee Park, intermittent stream channel.



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 22. Lee Park, woodland.



Photo 23. Lee Park, nature trail and woodland.



Photo 24. Lee Park, prairie restoration.



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**Park Name:** Magnolia Bluff Park

**Park ID:** 8

**Park Location:** WI-59 & N. Croak Rd.

**Park Size:** 112.1 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

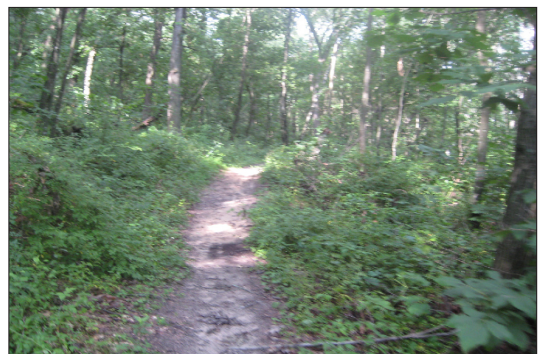
**Park Amenities:** Rest room facilities, water pump, fire pit, park grills, hiking trails, equestrian trails, parking.

**General Park Impressions:** Many trails throughout the park. Erosion is a problem in different areas of the park.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Add erosion control measures throughout the bluff and park
- 2) Trails need some cleaning of brush and path enhancement
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Rest room facilities need to be replaced
- 5) Needs picnic shelter/gazebo, possibly two (at the top and bottom of the park)
- 6) Electricity needed





### Magnolia Bluff Park

Magnolia Bluff Park is nearly the highest point in Rock County and contains 112.1-acres located on N. Croak Road just south of State Highway 59 in the township of Magnolia. A scenic overlook from the bluff and other open areas of the park are the dominant features of the park. The park contains the only naturally occurring stand of white birch trees in Rock County, created by the microclimate of the bluff. Other park amenities include picnic areas with tables, hiking/nature trails, equestrian trails, restrooms, and fire pits. Natural areas contained in this park include wooded areas, prairie/savanna areas, a bluff restoration, and a wetland complex.

The woodland areas comprise the majority of the site. Dominant species of the woodland areas are bur and white oak, American elm, and basswood (*Tilia americana*) (Photos 27, 29, and 31). Dominant understory vegetation of the woodland consisted of smooth brome grass along edges, Virginia creeper, and common buckthorn. The bluff restoration project has layered cut brush along the eroded area to prevent water from flowing over the bluff edge and further eroding the soil (Photos 25 and 26). A degraded prairie/savanna area existed on top of the bluff area, and consisted of coolseason grasses such as smooth brome, timothy, and Kentucky bluegrass, with few other weedy native species present (Photo 28). Other areas of prairie/savanna are present along the roadsides, and were dominated by cool-season grasses, red oak (*Quercus rubra*), and black walnut (Photo 30). Several other native species were present, but in small quantities. A wetland complex located along N. Croak Road is

dominated by narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) and reed canary grass (Photo 32).

### Recommendations:

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails in wetland complex.
- Use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie/savanna and along woodland edges to treat cool-season grasses.
- Cut and stump treat common buckthorn, box elder, mulberry, and multiflora rose in woodland areas.
- Use erosion control blanket and plant a native prairie buffer around bluff edge to further prevent erosion.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



Photo 25. Magnolia Bluff Park, bluff restoration.





Photo 26. Magnolia Bluff Park, bluff restoration.



Photo 27. Magnolia Bluff Park, woodland north of horse parking lot.



Photo 28. Magnolia Bluff Park, degraded prairie/savanna.

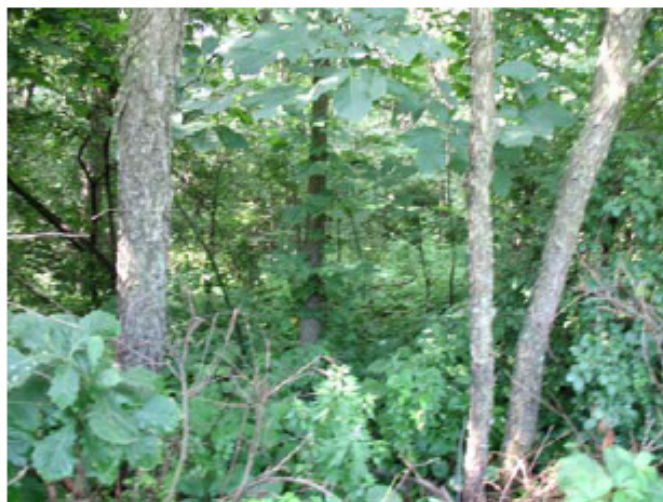


Photo 29. Magnolia Bluff Park, woodland on south end of horse parking lot.



Photo 30. Magnolia Bluff Park, savanna along roadside.



Photo 31. Magnolia Bluff Park, woodland slope facing north

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 32. Magnolia Bluff Park, wetland along  
N. Croak Road.





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**Park Name:** Murwin Park

**Park ID:** 9

**Park Location:** W. Caledonia Rd. & N. CTY. TK. H

**Park Size:** 42 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

**Park Amenities:** Park grills, picnic tables, water pump, restroom facilities, parking, river access.

**General Park Impressions:** Access to the river, but elements need to be up-dated

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Rest room facilities need to be replaced
- 2) Central parking lot needs to be re-surfaced and add relief to the tree on the perimeter
- 3) West parking lot is gravel
- 4) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 5) Canoe access to river, but area floods
- 6) Area east of N. CTY. TK. H is fragmented from the rest of the park
- 7) Add picnic shelter





## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Murwin Park**

Murwin Park is located in an area commonly referred to as Fulton on N. CTY. TK. H. This 42-acre park is a favorite fishing spot along the Yahara River. Additional amenities include picnic areas with tables, restrooms, fire pits, and parking. The natural areas that were assessed at the park include shorelines of the Yahara River, roadside woodlands, and wetland complexes.

The stream banks at the park along the Yahara River consisted of mainly reed canary grass and scattered black locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), with few other scattered weedy native species (Photo 33). The roadside woodland along W. Caledonia Road consisted of American elm, basswood, and mulberry (*Morus alba*) trees, and Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and Virginia creeper in the understory (Photo 34). The wetland complexes along the floodplain had several different compositions. The wetland complex on the west side of the Yahara River was dominated by reed canary grass and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) (Photo 35). Other wetland complexes were dominated by reed canary grass and various wetland trees and shrubs such as gray dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*).

### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass along stream banks and in wetland complexes.
- Cut and stump treat Tatarian honeysuckle and

mulberry in roadside woodland areas, and black locust along stream banks.

- Use herbicide or hand-pull garlic mustard in roadside woodland.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.
- Restore stream bank 35' buffer



Photo 33. Murwin Park, stream bank.

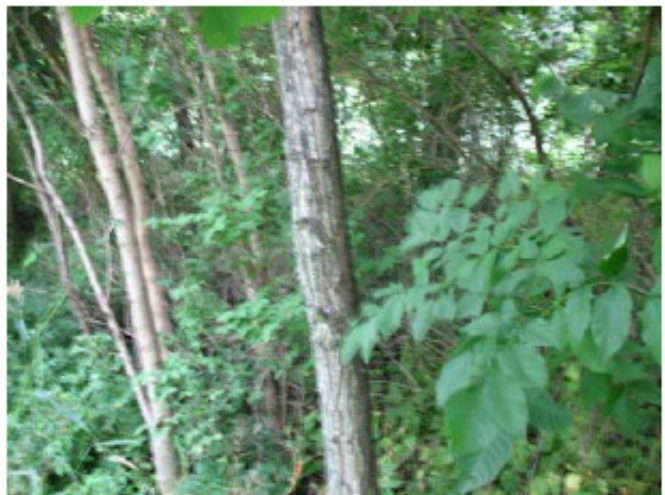


Photo 34. Murwin Park, degraded roadside woodland.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 35. Murwin Park, wetland complex.



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**Park Name:** Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail

**Park ID:** 10

**Park Location:** WI-140 & Mill St.

**Park Size:** 6 Miles

**Park Type:** Trails

**Park Amenities:** Picnic area, parking, benches, rest room facility, trail, parking, fire pit.

**General Park Impressions:** Good trail, should add some small crushed gravel for surface.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Benches & shelters throughout the trail
- 2) Newer rest room facility
- 3) Bridge is in good shape
- 4) Connect trail to other parks or trails in area
- 5) Clean up gravel parking lot
- 6) Make picnic and shelter areas ADA accessible



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail and Snowmobile Trail**

The Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail is over six-miles long and runs from Clinton to Allens Grove in Walworth County. Acquired by the County in 1995, this trail is used for hiking and bicycling during the summer months. During the winter, it is part of the 208-mile Rock County Snowmobile Trail. No other wheeled, motorized vehicles are permitted. The snowmobile trail encircles the county with connectors to the Sugar River State Trail to the west; Dane County trails to the north; the Clinton trail which leads south to Illinois; and to the Walworth County trail to the northeast. The trail did not have a natural resource inventory completed.

### **Recommendations**

The Parks Division will continue to work in a cooperative manner with the trail foundation to facilitate continued trail enhancements.





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**Park Name:** Royce Dallman Park

**Park ID:** 11

**Park Location:** N. Charley Bluff Rd. & E. CTY.  
TK. N

**Park Size:** 2.3 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Water access, fishing pier, bench shelter, restroom facility, parking, water pump, picnic shelter.

**General Park Impressions:** Park was flooded, will need cleaning and maintenance to all areas of the park.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Park was flooded, not able to see all elements
- 2) Vegetation will need replacing due to flood
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Royce Dallman Park**

The Royce Dallman Park is located just off of E. Country Trunk N north of Milton on N. Charlie Bluff Road. While only 2.3-acres in size, a picnic shelter completed in 2006, restrooms, and water are provided. This park provides an excellent landing to launch small fishing boats onto Lake Koshkonong. A major renovation of this park was completed in 2006. No natural areas were present on this site; therefore no natural resource inventory was conducted. Shoreline recommendations are listed below if management is needed or desired in the future.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns along shoreline to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Herbicide any invasive species that are or may become a problem along shoreline.
- Install enhancement seed mixes along shoreline following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



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**Park Name:** Schollmeyer Park

**Park ID:** 12

**Park Location:** Trail Dr. & Shopiere Rd.

**Park Size:** 1.0 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Open space, river access.

**General Park Impressions:** Hard to find, feels like you are in the backyards of the residents.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) No signage off of Shopiere Rd.
- 2) No parking
- 3) Nice views with the river access
- 4) Under utilized
- 5) River access could be enhanced for a canoe launch





## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Schollmeyer Park**

Schollmeyer Park, a one acre site on Turtle Creek, provides public access for canoeing and fishing on Turtle Creek. It is located on the west side of E. CTY. TK. S (Shopiere Road) just north at the end of Trail Dr. A brief site assessment and natural resource inventory was conducted on site. Natural areas present on site include the stream bank, which was dominated by reed canary grass with few other species present, and the mowed turf grass picnic area (Photos 36 and 37). Management recommendations for the stream bank are listed below.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns along stream bank to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Install enhancement seed mixes along stream bank following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass along stream bank.
- Provide a 35' buffer at a minimum



Photo 36. Schollmeyer Park, picnic area and stream bank.



Photo 37. Schollmeyer Park, stream bank.



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**Park Name:** Sugar River Park

**Park ID:** 13

**Park Location:** W. Beloit-Newark Rd. & S.  
Nelson Rd.

**Park Size:** 6.5 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** River access, parking, fire pit.

**General Park Impressions:** Gives people a  
place to launch their boat into the Sugar  
River.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below  
average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Boat launch needs to be top dressed with  
soil and gravel
- 2) Park is mainly under water during the flood  
season
- 3) Gravel entry drive and parking
- 4) No structures on site due to periodic  
flooding





## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Sugar River Park**

The Sugar River Park is 6.5 acres located on the Sugar River next to S. Nelson Road just south of the bridge. A boat ramp and litter disposal is provided. It is a good spot for fishing and launching boats.

This park is also a good place to put in or take out while canoeing the Sugar River. A brief site assessment and natural resource inventory were conducted on site. The majority of the site is floodplain forest, and was still inundated with 6-12 inches of water from spring 2008 flooding (Photo 39). Other natural areas in the park include the stream bank to the Sugar River (Photo 38).

Management recommendations for the site are listed below.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Conduct prescribed burns in natural area where enough fuel is present to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Cut and stump treat box elder and common buckthorn shrubs/trees in floodplain forest.
- Herbicide patches of reed canary grass in floodplain forests and along stream bank.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in natural areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.



Photo 38. Sugar River Park, stream bank and river.



Photo 39. Sugar River Park, floodplain forest.





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**Park Name:** Sweet-Allyn Park

**Park ID:** 14

**Park Location:** CTY. TK. J

**Park Size:** 39 Acres

**Park Type:** County Regional Recreation Area

**Park Amenities:** Playground, picnic tables, picnic shelter, rest room facilities, memorial area, baseball field, river access, fire department tug-of-war area, parking, sand volleyball, benches, park grills, water pump, dog area, basketball.

**General Park Impressions:** Dog area could be developed into an enclosed dog park.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Picnic shelter has lights, no ADA access
- 2) Memorial area is nice, but no accessibility
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Baseball infield needs work, fence in good condition
- 5) Path to rest room facility too steep and un-even for ADA access
- 6) No dedicated basketball court, uses parking lot
- 7) Sand volleyball court has no nets or posts
- 8) Out-dated playground equipment
- 9) Dog area on North side no fencing



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### Sweet-Allyn Park

The Sweet-Allyn Park is located on CTY. TK. J, an area called Shopiere. It is 39+ acres in size and borders the Turtle Creek. Park amenities include picnic shelter and tables, restrooms, fire pits, and parking. Playground equipment is also available as well as a baseball diamond. This park was Rock County's first park, a gift of Aida Louise Sweet in April, 1943. A site assessment and natural resource inventory were conducted on site. Natural areas found on site are the stream bank, woodland areas, and a seasonally flooded drainage way.

The stream bank along the Turtle Creek was dominated by reed canary grass and few other native weedy species (Photo 40). The woodland adjacent to the stream bank was composed of box elder and green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica subintegerrima*) trees, with a thick understory of cool-season grasses and other non-native or weedy native species (Photo 40). The woodland behind the ball diamond was dominated by green ash, silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) trees, with an understory of riverbank grape (*Vitis riparia*), Virginia creeper, and other scattered weedy native species (Photo 42). The seasonally flooded drainage way is typically mowed, but with high precipitation levels this past spring, vegetation was not mowed. The dominant species in the swale included Kentucky bluegrass and reed canary grass (Photos 41 and 42).

### Recommendations:

- Conduct prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant and shrub/tree species.
- Use herbicide to control reed canary grass along

stream banks and seasonal swale.

- Cut and stump treat common buckthorn and box elder in woodland areas.
- Use grass-selective herbicide along shoreline and woodland edges to treat cool-season grasses.
- Install enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.
- Restore a 35' buffer



Photo 40. Sweet-Allyn Park, stream bank and woodlands.



Photo 41. Sweet-Allyn Park, drainage swale.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services



Photo 42. Sweet-Allyn Park, drainage swale and woodland.





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**Park Name:** Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park

**Park ID:** 15

**Park Location:** US-14 & US-51

**Park Size:** 10 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Deer display, playground, water pump, picnic shelter, soccer field, rest room facilities, park grills

**General Park Impressions:** Great tree canopy, Mystic White Deer area is the main focus.

**Accessibility Level:** ADA accessibility is below average

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Shelter/Restroom facilities needs renovations, new roof & has cracks in foundation
- 2) Outdated playground equipment needs replacement
- 3) Need ADA accessibility to all park elements
- 4) Soccer field needs re-seeding
- 5) Rock County Cooperative Pheasant Project Building in corner of the site
- 6) Cottage & garage on edge of park



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### **Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park**

The Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park is located on US-51 north of Janesville. This 10- acre park has many features such as wooded picnic areas, picnic shelters, restrooms, and parking (Photo 43). Play equipment is also provided. This park is home to the White-tailed Deer Display, sponsored by Jim and Nancy Schoonover (Photo 44). A brief site assessment was conducted to determine if any natural areas were present at this park. At this time, no natural areas were present; therefore no management recommendations are provided.



Photo 44. Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park,  
White-tailed Deer Display.

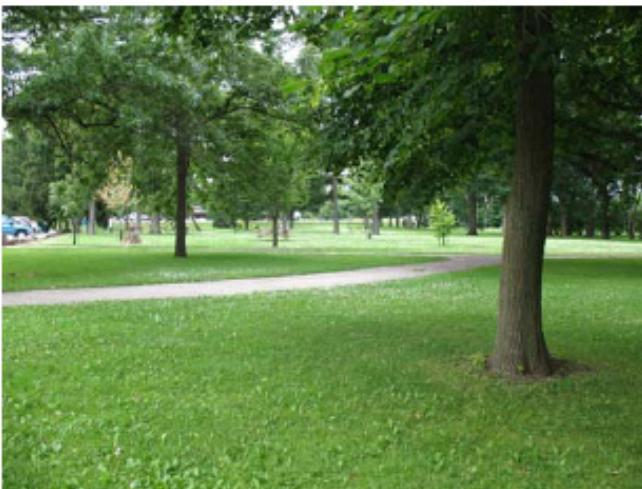


Photo 43. Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park,  
picnic area.





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**Park Name:** Avon Park

**Park ID:** 16

**Park Location:** Town of Avon, on West Pleasant Street

**Park Size:** 17 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Undeveloped

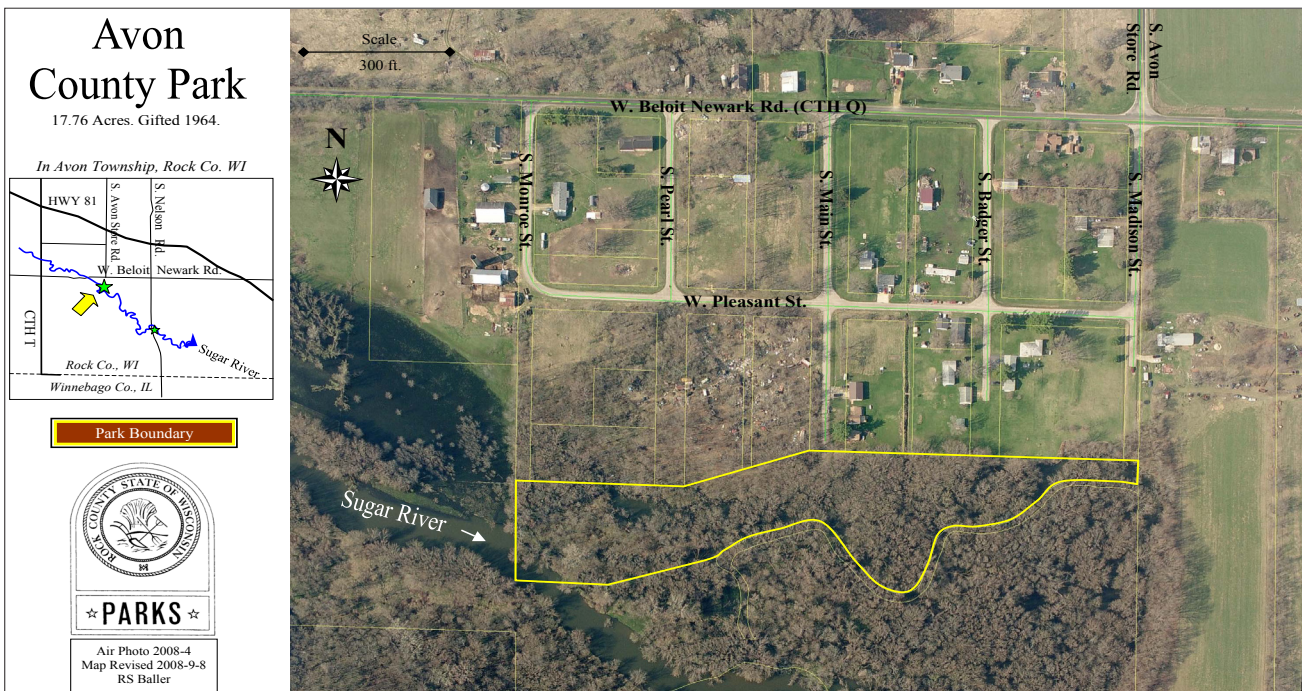
**General Park Impressions:**

There is no visible sign for the park location, has limited access, mature tree canopy covering entire park site, has a small access area to the Sugar River

**Accessibility Level:** None

**Site Observations:**

- 1) Avon Park has potential for access to Sugar River.







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**Park Name:** Ice Age Park

**Park ID:** 17

**Park Location:** North Sable Drive, Town of Harmony

**Park Size:** 3.4 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Benches, picnic tables, pond, signs

**General Park Impressions:** Small park with access to Ice Age Connector Trail

**Accessibility Level:** None

**Notes:**

1) Has potential for a trailhead and improved multi-use trails.





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**Park Name:** Ice Age Connector Trail

**Park ID:** 18

**Park Location:** Runs from Milton to Janesville

**Park Size:** 3.7 Miles\*

**Park Type:** Trail

**Park Amenities:**

**General Trail Impressions:** Good signage and wide trail section.

**Accessibility Level:** Average

**Notes:**

1) Needs improved trailheads and crossing markings.



\*Mileage is from the Ice Age Trail Foundation. The trail system is still changing and fluctuating due to route changes and negotiation of land and so other resources may have a different mileage for this segment of the trail.



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**Park Name:** Hanover Wildlife Area

**Park ID:** 19

**Park Location:** East of Highway H, Town of Hanover

**Park Size:** 17.6 Acres

**Park Type:** Trail

**Park Amenities:** None

**General Park Impressions:** Mature tree canopy covering entire park site.

**Accessibility Level:** None

**Notes:**

1) Has potential for walking trails







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**Park Name:** Koshkonong Lake Access

**Park ID:** 20

**Park Location:** Lakeside Drive, Town of Milton

**Park Size:** 12.7 Acres

**Park Type:** County Community Park

**Park Amenities:** Open Space

**General Park Impressions:** Undeveloped

**Accessibility Level:** None

**Notes:**

- 1) Needs ADA accessibility
- 2) Koshkonong Lake Access has potential for habitat restoration and elevated boardwalk for lake access.



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### Comparable Agencies

To understand the role of the Rock County Park System should play in providing parks and recreation services it is useful to understand the role that county park systems in general play. It is also important to understand how county park services are different from national, state or municipal services.

National parks are massive tracts of land that serve as vacation destinations or wilderness areas. They are run by the Department of Interior of the United States government, with most of them in the western part of the country.

State parks exist as conservation areas, scenic drives, or as weekend getaways, typically away from population centers. State parks are often designed to encourage tourism, but their primary purpose is to serve residents of their respective states. **This leaves the function of county park systems to fill in the gaps that municipalities and state parks do not serve. The methodology in this plan focuses only on the County parks and does not include any municipal or town owned park land into the analysis or comparisons made to other counties.**

Municipal parks exist to serve residents of municipalities, sometimes on an hourly basis, as hosts for active athletic or recreation programs.

This leaves the function of county park systems to fill in the gaps that municipalities and state parks do not serve.

The gaps can include serving a municipal function in portions of the county with municipalities too small to have enough resources to provide parks.

County parks also provide larger conservation areas that municipalities cannot provide. County parks can also provide tourist venues for people

outside the county.

In order to compare the Rock County park system to other county park systems, it is important to establish basis of comparison.

The most reasonable bases of comparison include population, location and structure of government.

Population and location are straightforward enough. But structure of government needs to be explained.

In states like Ohio and Illinois, county park services are delivered by special districts, separate from general purpose county governments which provide police and public works services.

In states like Indiana and Wisconsin, county park services are provided by the general purpose county governments that provide police and public works services. In these states county park services are provided by parks departments or divisions of public works departments.

Wisconsin County Departments which are part of their general purpose county governments will be compared to Rock County first because they are more similar in terms of competition for county funding.

In this analysis, since Wisconsin county park systems would be considered relevant in terms of location and structure of government, Wisconsin county park systems of similar population would be considered the most relevant.

Unfortunately, in Wisconsin, there are only a few comparable agencies in terms of population to Rock County. Since that sample is small, case study analysis will be used.

# 12.2 current parks & recreation services

Later in this report, to expand the analysis, other parks departments within the Midwest will be considered to provide a broader base of comparison.

## Wisconsin County Park Systems

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services maintains a website which provides population estimates of county populations and updates them on a regular basis.

This analysis searched that website and found nine counties which had populations of between 112,000 and 195,000.

To perform meaningful case study analysis, SMA and Design Perspectives selected four smaller and four larger Wisconsin counties to compare to the Rock County park system. The distribution is presented in the following table:

### Most Comparable Counties in Wisconsin

La Crosse	112,000
Sheboygan	116,000
Washington	129,000
Rock	159,000
Kenosha	162,000
Winnebago	164,000
Outagamie	174,000
Racine	195,000

In terms of relevant data to compare to Rock County, the number of parks that the comparable systems operate, the total of park acreage that they maintain, and their total operating and capital budget required to do so would be the most important variables to measure.

The following table presents findings gathered from phone calls to the listed counties.



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

### Comparative Statistics For 2008

County	Population	Parks	Total Acreage	Operating Budget	Capital
La Crosse	112,000	5	1136	\$774,700	\$125,000
Sheboygan	116,000	1	304	NA	NA
Washington	129,000	11	1200	\$1,300,000	\$168,000
Rock	159,000	17	1007	\$560,000	\$80,000
Kenosha	162,000	7	865	\$1,600,000	\$512,000
Winnebago	164,000	1	270	\$1,300,000	NA
Outagamie	174,000	9	900	\$750,000	\$185,000
Racine	195,000	25	2264	\$1,800,000	\$190,000

It should be noted that the table above only includes expenditures from the counties park system operations. It does not include large or medium size facility operations that some of these counties operate, which Rock County does not.

In order to compare these counties to Rock County, which has no such similar facilities, rec programs, golf courses and ice rinks were deleted from consideration in the table. But it should be noted that other counties in Wisconsin do far more than just provide parks and trails.

### Averages

The previous table shows a number of phenomena. One phenomenon is that Sheboygan and Winnebago counties only operate one park. In both cases the county rolled the park budget into the public works department, making in difficult for anyone at those counties to report how much money they spent to maintain or develop that one park.

Considering the budgets of the six counties that did segregate their budgets from other departments in the county, the six comparable counties averaged \$1,244,940 in operating expenditures per year. This average is nearly \$685,000 more per year spent on Rock County Parks Division operating budgets than Rock County's \$560,000.

On a per capita basis this computes to \$3.52 per Rock County resident to provide park services from its operating budget. Considering the average population of the six counties reporting their operating budgets being 151,000, per capita expenditures from the six reporting counties is \$9.74, nearly three times the \$3.52 per capita operating expenditures budgeted by Rock County.

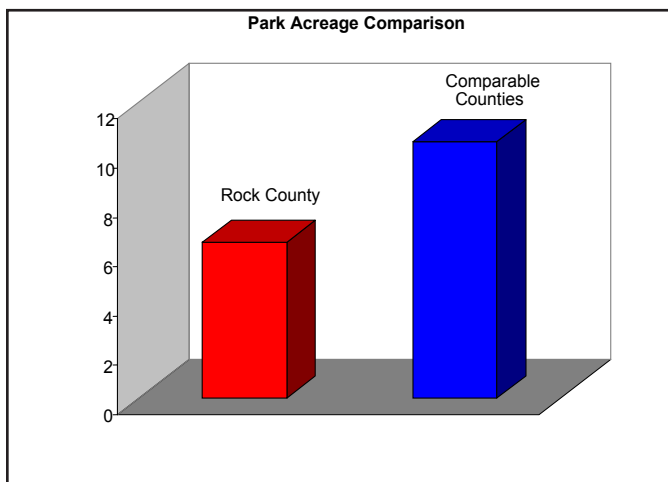
## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

The average capital expenditures by the five counties reporting capital expenditures were \$236,000 year. This computes to \$1.52 per person per resident of the five reporting counties, about three times the \$.50 spent per resident by Rock County for capital improvements. .

The previous table also shows that Rock County has 17 total park sites. This compares to an average of 10 parks provided by the eight similar sized counties.

One observation is that Sheboygan and Winnebago counties only provide one park each. This lowers the average.

In terms of total acres within those parks, including Sheboygan and Winnebago counties, the average acreages operated by the eight Wisconsin counties is 1377 acres. This is about 50% more acres than the 1007 operated by Rock County. On a per capita basis, with Rock County having a population of 159,000 and providing 1007 acres of parks, their per capita acreage computes to 6.33 acres per thousand residents. Considering that the eight reporting counties averaged 148,125 residents, their per capita park acreage averaged 10.39 acres per thousand. This difference is presented graphically below.



### **Amenities**

Another level of comparison is county park system amenities. These are nearly impossible to quantify with any meaning, so this study will not even attempt to do so. Rather, this analysis will present the ones that are readily available, either through website analysis or phone interviews.

For instance, beginning with the smallest county in the previous table, La Crosse County operates campgrounds, nature centers, and a miniature golf course, As mentioned Marathon County has an indoor ice rink, Kenosha and Racine counties have golf courses. In addition, Washington County has a golf course and historical sites. Rock County in contrast, has one existing historical site. Rock County does operate equestrian, biking, walking and snowmobile trails, boat launches, fishing areas and a swimming beach, which nearly every comparable system also operates.

### **The Midwestern Study**

The data from the previously mentioned nine Wisconsin counties was gathered in February 2008 by George Williams College (GWC) of Aurora University in a study conducted that analyzed the levels of services provided by county park systems in the Midwest.

Twenty county Rock County Parks Divisions and park districts volunteered to respond to the survey.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

The counties that responded did so anonymously. But most of them indicated within which state they resided, shown in the table below.

**State within which County Resided**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Illinois	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
Indiana	3	15.0	15.0	35.0
Missouri	1	5.0	5.0	40.0
Ohio	8	40.0	40.0	80.0
Wisconsin	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

\* It should be noted that the counties that submitted information were anonymous

The table shows that eight of the responding counties were from Ohio, four were from Wisconsin, four from Illinois, three from Indiana, and one from Missouri.

While the responses of twenty agencies do not represent a generalizable statistical sample, they do provide a basis for case study comparison, allowing the services provided by the Rock County Park System to be placed in a perspective beyond Wisconsin.

There were several bases of comparison between the twenty county park systems. The first that will be analyzed in this report will be population, to see if the agencies serve populations of equivalent size.

The second basis of comparison will be park sites that the county agency provides, the third will be acreage that the county agency provides and the fourth will be the funding that it provides for operating and capital budgets.

To maintain a level of comparison, park sites, park acreage and expenditures will all be controlled for population.

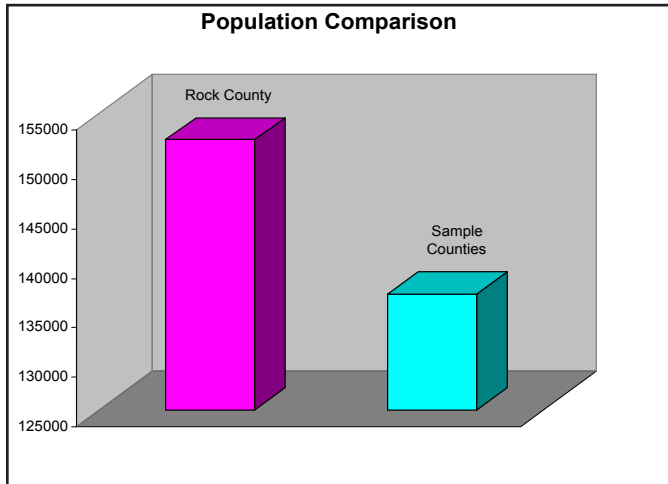
### **Population**

As mentioned, the Wisconsin Department of Health estimates the population of Rock County, Wisconsin to be 159,000 persons.



## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

The average population of county agencies responding to the George Williams College (GWC) study is compared to Rock County in the graph below.



The graph shows that Rock County is somewhat higher in population than the comparative counties that responded to the survey, with the responding Midwestern counties averaging 136,703 people.

A standard of measurement of services in parks and recreation is the number of park sites that an agency has per 1,000 residents. This statistic is achieved by dividing the total population of the county by 1,000 and dividing that number into the total number of park sites.

Not counting the trail systems, which were not counted as parks in the Midwestern survey, Rock County maintains 17 park sites of various acreages. This computes to .1118 park sites per 1,000 people.

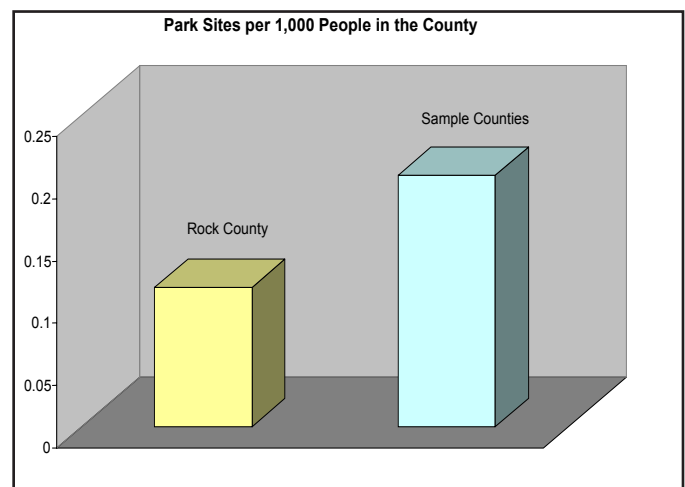
To create a more meaningful statistic, this computes to 1 park in Rock County for every 8,945 people.

In the sample of Midwestern county park systems, the following table shows the average number of park sites per 1,000 people.

Number of Responding Agencies	Park Site Per Thousand
20	.2013

The table shows that the responding county park agencies provided .2013 park sites per thousand people. To compare that to Rock County, that means that the responding counties have 1 park for every 4,968 people.

Presenting this graphically helps put those numbers into perspective.



The findings suggest that Rock County, while above the sample Midwestern counties in population, is below the sample Midwestern counties in terms of the number of park sites it provides.

Another basis of comparison that is commonly used in parks and recreation is the statistic of acres of park land per thousand that an agency provides.

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

Again, not counting the trail system, the Rock County Park System maintains about 1,000 total acres of park land. This computes to 6.549 acres per thousand people living in the county.

Comparatively, the acres per thousand provided by the sample of Midwestern county park agencies is presented in the table below.

Number of Responding Agencies	Park Site Per Thousand
20	22.715655

The table shows that Midwestern county park agencies average 22.72 acres per thousand residents, nearly four times the acres per thousand that the Rock County Park System provides.

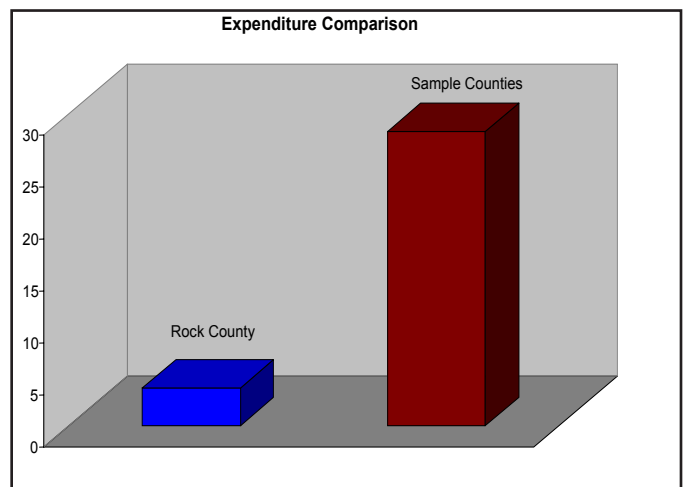
Considering the operating budget that Rock County and the Midwestern agencies spend to support their park system, the typical statistical comparison in parks and recreation is the amount of the total operating budget (excluding capital expenditures) divided by the population of the county.

Based on its operating budget of approximately \$550,000, it was determined that the Rock County Park System spends about \$3.60 per resident to maintain its parks and trails.

Comparatively, the Midwestern study showed that county agency budgets average \$2,279,873 as shown in the following table.

	Number of Agencies Responding	Mean
Total Operating Expenditures	19	2,279,873.21
Expenditures Per Resident	19	28.2676

The table also shows that the average expenditure by Midwestern county park systems responding to the survey is \$28.27 per resident, nearly eight times the per capita expenditures by Rock County.



Finally, Rock County has not yet set its capital expenditure budget for the park system, making a comparison difficult. However, most of the Midwestern county park agencies were able to report theirs. The average is in the table below.

	Number Responding	Average
Total Capital Expenditures	18	\$1,895,914
Per Capita		\$9.74

## 12.2 current parks & recreation services

The table shows that the average annual expenditures by county governments on their park systems was reported to be \$1,895,914 per year in the Midwestern survey.

In terms of per capita capital expenditures by the Midwestern counties responding to the survey, the following table shows the agency average.

	<b>Number Responding</b>	<b>Average</b>
Capital Expenditures per Capita	18	10.3461

The table shows that the per capita expenditures in the responding Midwestern counties was \$10.35 per resident, in line with the \$9.74 spent by Wisconsin counties similar in population to Rock County.

### **Conclusions**

It is important to understand that this type of research provides a keen insight into the way the business of park and recreation for Rock County was conducted in the past. The analysis is sure to raise a few eyebrows in terms of the funding level and the direct correlation to the state of the park system. This research provides both the appointed management team as well as the elected officials a clear picture of the real needs of the current park system.

As discussed earlier, the needs of Rock County Parks Division are unique to the agency. This plan will develop specific strategies to implement the goals and objectives identified from the multiple

layers of public feedback. However, we cannot overlook the fact that all of this research points to the need to increase the resources available to the Parks Division. The conclusion is that, compared to Wisconsin counties of similar population, Rock County provides less park acreage per thousand residents on average and spends less to maintain and improve them.

The bigger question is whether the public is eager for an improved Rock County Park System as compared with similar systems or are they satisfied with the level of service currently found throughout the county.



**Community Surveys**

The purpose of this section is to provide the Rock County Park System an overview of the data that has been received from telephone and mail surveys in support of its five-year plan.

The findings presented contain several graphs because graphs make the interpretation of findings easier to understand. But tables, which are more difficult for those unfamiliar with statistics to understand, will also need to be used.

The data findings from this analysis provide a basis by which goals, objectives and policies for the five-year park open space and recreation plan for the Rock County Park System can be identified.

Since this study is intended to be representative of the entire population of Rock County, a discussion of the study methodology is relevant. The survey content is listed in Appendix C.

**Methodology**

In order to initiate the mail and telephone surveys, a draft questionnaire was developed by Strategic Management Alliance (SMA) and Design Perspectives.

The draft questionnaire was presented to the Rock County Parks Director who forwarded it to the County Administrator, Public Works Director and Advisory Board for revisions. The mail questionnaire is in the Appendix of this report.

The methodology of the mail survey was to select a random sample of the entire list of Rock County households. The database for the sample was

provided by Rock County and the cities of Beloit and Janesville from their tax bill databases.

This database of 62,100 households was used to draw a random sample of 2,250, selected by a random sample computer generated program at the Northern Illinois University Public Opinion Laboratory (POL).

It was assumed that some of the tax bill addresses could have expired since tax bills were mailed out in January 2008. To maintain the integrity of the database, 250 addresses were held back and 2,000 surveys were sent out.

Approximately 100 survey envelopes were returned as undeliverable. From the 250 addresses held back, an 100 additional surveys were sent by selecting replacement addresses from the remaining 250 addresses held for that purpose. .

The response rate from the 2,000 mail surveys sent has been 558 responses, a response rate of 27.9%. Such a response rate is considered high in mail surveying.

The same questionnaire was used to develop the script for the telephone survey.

The methodology for the telephone survey was similar. To create the database for the telephone survey, the POL utilized a professional sampling company to match listed residential addresses with telephone numbers.

## 12.3 community needs assessment

From the list of approximately 62,100 addresses, a random sample of 600 listed phone numbers was selected.

From the 600 household sample, the POL attempted calls to 392 of the numbers. Dialing attempts were administered with the help of the Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system which tracks calling attempts per number dialed.

The POL's protocol for community projects include up to 8 attempts per number to reach an adult 18 years old or older in the household who will complete the interview.

Calling attempts are made on different days of the week and at different times of day. This technique allows interviewing of the harder to reach respondents who often have different views than more readily accessible respondents.

Before officially launching the survey, POL implemented a pilot test to pinpoint problem questions, and streamline the questionnaire. Minimal changes were made following this retest and the survey was officially launched on July 22.

While six interviewers were trained to call, two interviewers completed nearly three-fourths of the interviews.

Overall, a response rate of 29% was obtained taking into account those numbers which lead to non-qualified respondents. The POL dialed 392 numbers and made 878 calls to complete the 102 surveys.

Table 1 contains the final call dispositions for each of the 392 numbers called.

**Table 1: Final Call Dispositions - Rock County Parks Division**

Description	Records
Completed Interview	102
Non-Qualified	36
Household Members Away During Interview Period	2
Language Barrier - Non-English	4
Out of Geography - Not Rock County	2
Not a Private Residence - Business	4
Non-Working/Disconnected	21
Dedicated Fax Line	2
Physical Impairment/Hard of Hearing	1
Refusals/Not Available	254
Adamant Refusal	74
Respondent Not Available	173
Partial Complete	7
Phone Numbers Dialed	392

The reason that a telephone survey was conducted in addition to the mail survey was to blend the data in order to minimize biases. The selection of sample size for each survey represents a weighting that would dampen any skewing of data.

## 12.3 community needs assessment

The biases that could occur are endemic to social science research. In mail surveying, respondents have a motivation to complete and return surveys. Sometimes their motivation is to express their opposition to issues such as tax increases.

In telephone surveying, a human being is asking questions of another person which can cause respondents to be more supportive of issues.

For these reasons, when responses to questions can be affected by the inherent biases in surveying techniques, findings will be presented in categories, using means testing to create averages.

Toward the end of this analysis, findings will also be divided into groups using independent sample means testing to compare differences in the groups.

For instance, some responses to questions from households with children will be compared to households without children, responses from females will be compared to those from male respondents, and some responses to questions will be compared by age groups.

Using these comparisons, this report will take a systematic approach in analyzing responses to questions. The purpose will be to present findings that are both thoughtful and representative of the sentiments of the entire population of Rock County. Thus, findings can help officials form goals and objectives that will guide the Rock County Park System in its future endeavors.

### Demographic Considerations

The first category of questions to analyze dealt with where respondents resided and their longevity there. Question 1 asked respondents within which city, village or town they resided.

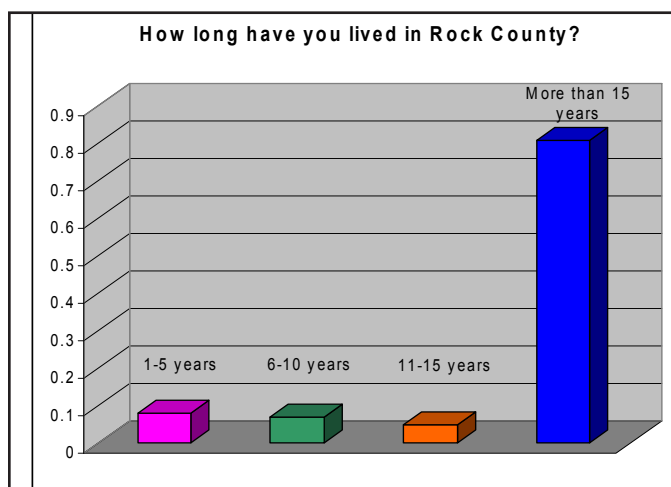
The following table compares the frequency of responses.

Municipality or Town	Frequency	Percent
Town of Avon	4	.6
City of Beloit	102	15.5
Town of Beloit	1	.2
Town of Bradford	1	.2
City of Broadhead	4	.6
Town of Center	6	.9
Village of Clinton	14	2.1
City of Edgerton	31	4.7
Town of Emerald Grove	2	.3
City of Evansville	26	3.9
Village of Footville	4	.6
Town of Fulton	2	.3
Town of Hanover	1	.2
Harmony	3	.5
Town of Harmony	10	1.5
City of Janesville	257	38.9
Town of Janesville	15	2.3
Johnstown	2	.3
Town of Johnstown	1	.2
Town of La Prairie	4	.6
Town of Lima	1	.2
City of Milton	46	7.0
Town of Milton	5	.8
Town of Newark	11	1.7



Municipality or Township	Frequency	Percent
Town of Newark	3	.5
Village of Orfordville	12	1.8
Town of Plymouth	2	.5
Town of Porter	6	.9
Town of Rock	22	3.4
Shopiere - Unincorporated	1	.2
Town of Spring Valley	1	.2
City of Stoughton	1	.2
Tiffany - Unincorporated	2	.3
Town of Turtle	10	1.5
Union	4	.6
City of Whitewater	2	.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>94.5</b>

The table shows a distribution of responses that is fairly representative of the percentage of people who actually reside within the communities of Rock County. This finding is reassuring that the sample is representative of the distribution of the county population.



Considering the responses to the second survey question, where respondents were asked how long they had lived in the County, the following

graph compared their responses.

The graph shows that 8% of those responding to the survey said they lived in the county for 1-5 years, 7% for 6-10 years, 5% for 11-15 years and 81% for more than 15 years.

This finding suggests that respondents were more likely to respond to the survey if they had resided within the county for more than 15 years.

That conclusion is based on the 2000 Census which showed that only 26.3% of respondents had lived in their current home for 15 years or more. The Census does not track how long people had lived within the county moving from house to house, but it is clear that the response rates to the mail and telephone surveys were skewed heavily toward longtime residents.

A survey bias toward long time residents is to be expected because, like political opinion polling for elections, young adults and new residents are difficult to include in a database. Since young adults often reside in apartments, paying their property taxes through their rents, and often have cell phones but no land lines, their opinions are more elusive.

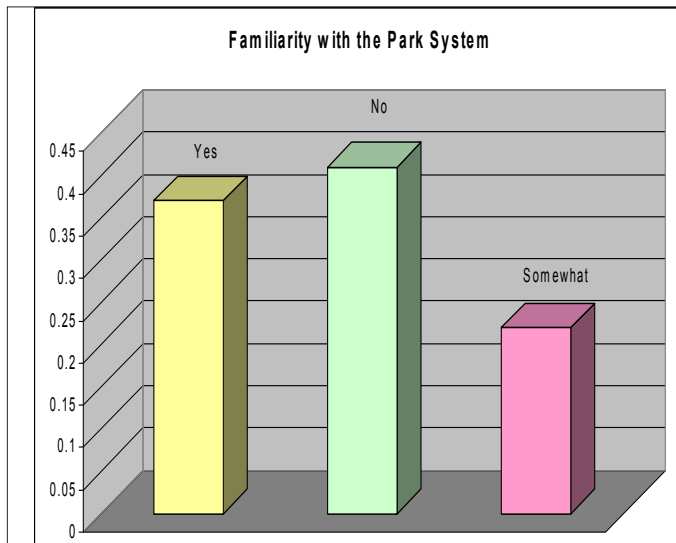
### **Familiarity with the Rock County Park System**

The next category of questions dealt with the familiarity of respondents to the Rock County Park System, and if they were familiar with it, how did they become familiar.

Question 3 provided respondents with three choices: yes, they were familiar, they were somewhat familiar, and that they were not really familiar.

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The following graph presents the percentages from combined mail and telephone respondents who answered each.



The graph shows that 37% of respondents were sure they were familiar with the Rock County Park System, 41% said they were somewhat familiar and 22% were not really familiar.

Question 3 is an occasion to test the hypothesis that there are differences between how telephone and mail survey respondents might answer questions of familiarity.

It would be intuitive to believe that telephone survey respondents might be more likely to answer that they were definitely or somewhat familiar with the Park System in order to please the interviewer than mail survey respondents.

Pleasing the human interviewer tends to bias questions of familiarity, making testing this hypothesis a relevant concern.

Separating the mail and telephone survey

responses contradicts that belief as the following table shows.

Response	Survey	Number Responding	Per-centage
Yes	Mail	557	40%
	Tele-phone	102	22%
Some-what	Mail	557	43%
	Tele-phone	102	31%
Not Really	Mail	557	17%
	Tele-phone	102	47%

The table shows that 47% of telephone respondents said they were not really familiar with the Rock County Park System compared to 17% of mail survey respondents.

This counter-intuitive finding indicates that pleasing the interviewer is not in play here. Rather, it is an indication that people familiar with the Rock County Park system would be motivated to return mail surveys more than people who were not familiar with it.

This might be because telephone respondents cooperate with interviews, even though they do not know what it is about. But mail survey respondents have an opportunity to read the survey, and if they are not familiar with the agency, don't take the time to respond.

Concerning the previous graph where familiarity with the agency is tested, in surveying it is common to consider the answer "somewhat" as a "soft yes."

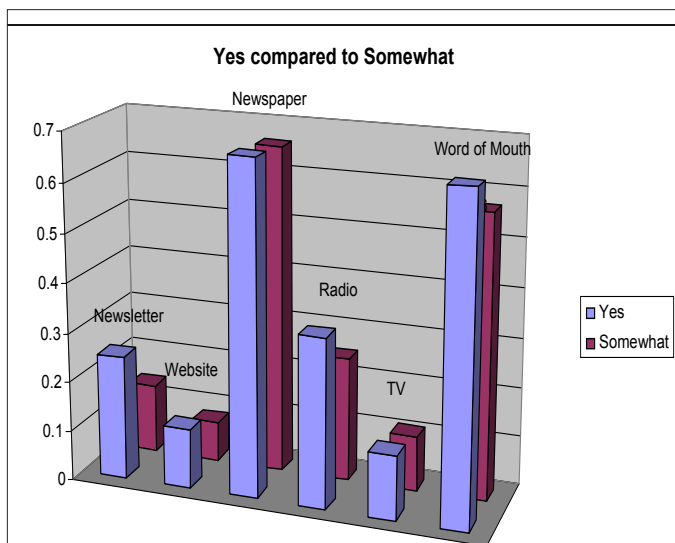
## 12.3 community needs assessment

This is because some respondents don't always understand the question or they think that familiarity with the agency means thoroughly understanding it, not just knowing that it exists.

How do we know that? We don't for sure. But we do know that most of those who answered "somewhat," answered Question 4 about how they had heard about the park system at nearly the same rates as those who said they were definitely familiar with the park system, which means they probably know it exists.

The following graph applies independent samples t-testing to show that most of those who were "somewhat" familiar with the park system also responded that they had heard about the park system through various media outlets.

To support the assertion that those answering "somewhat" familiar know how they've heard about the agency, the following graph presents the findings in a visually compelling manner. .



The graph suggests two conclusions. The first is that people who are definitely familiar with the park system and those who are somewhat familiar responded to how they heard about it in nearly the same percentages.

The graph also shows the leading ways that respondents said they heard about the park system. Fifty-three percent had heard about it through the newspaper, 23% through the radio, and 48% via word of mouth.

The graph suggests that, while many people were not willing to admit definitively that they had heard about the Rock County Park System, they know how they heard about it.

The implication of this finding is that, in order to improve the visibility of the Rock County Park System, officials should focus on newspapers and radio outlets.

This conclusion should be tempered with the understanding that 81% of mail and telephone respondents lived in Rock County for more than 15 years, somewhat skewing the finding.

The findings also show the Rock County Park System should be concerned that 37% of the public, most of whom have resided in the county for a long time, are not totally sure that they were familiar with the Park System.

This would suggest that the park system should focus on making residents more familiar with the agency for two reasons.



## 12.3 community needs assessment

One is that agency image is a function of familiarity. The other is that usage of the county park system services might be as well..

### Activities within which Residents Participate

Question 5 asks respondents to identify the recreation activities in which they participate at the County Park System or elsewhere.

Since responses to this question were fairly consistent between mail and telephone surveys returned, there is no reason to separate the samples. The following table is used to present the combined findings.

**Recreational Activities**

Activity	Number Responding	Percentage Who Participate
Walking/hiking	660	71%
Jogging	660	12%
Walking Pets	660	27%
Biking	660	37%
Camping	660	15%
Horseback riding	660	3%
Picnics	660	44%
Fishing	660	34%
Kayaking/ canoeing	660	12%
Skateboarding	660	2%
Sledding/ tobogganing	660	18%
Cross-country skiing	660	8%
Swimming	660	26%
Power boating	660	13%

Bird/nature watching	660	25%
Nature Center visits	660	18%
Youth/adult athletics	660	18%
Frisbee golf	660	6%
Snowmobiling	660	4%

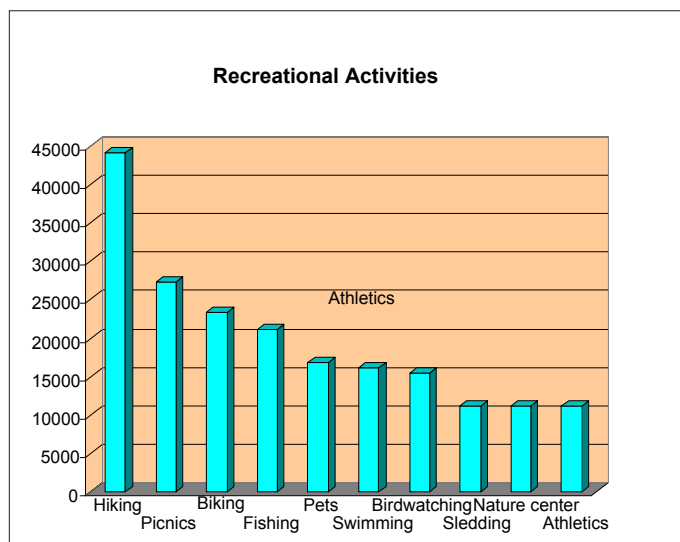
The table shows that walking for recreation is the highest participated activity with 71% of respondents participating in walking.

Generalizing this finding over the total population of Rock County would suggest that 44,100 of the 62,100 households in the county have someone who participates in walking for recreation.

The second highest activity in which respondents reported participating was picnicking at 44%. Generalizing this finding to 62,100 households would suggest that 27,300 of them would participate in picnicking.

The third highest activity in which respondents reported participating was biking for recreation. Thirty-seven percent of Rock County households participating in biking for recreation generalizes to 23,000 households having members participating in biking.

The following graph shows the most popular recreational activities.



The graph compares activity participation numbers in a dramatic fashion. It shows that literally tens of thousands of households in Rock County participate in the most popular ones.

The implications of these findings are that parks and recreation services affect the lives of most of the residents of Rock County.

Because such high percentages of residents do participate in recreational programs, the services that the Rock County Park System offers could play an important role in meeting those needs.

### Park Usage

It goes without saying that not all of those residents who participate in recreational activities do so through the Rock County Park System.

To determine what percentage of residents do, Question 6 asked which of the Rock County parks or trails respondents or their families visited.

who reported using each park is present below. Again there is no separation of mail and telephone survey findings.

Rock County Park/Trail	Number of Respondents	Percentage who use park
Airport Park	642	8%
Beckman Mill Park	642	26%
Carver-Roehl Park	642	15%
Gibbs Lake Park	642	27%
Happy Hollow Park	642	18%
Ice Age Park	642	30%
Indianford Park	642	13%
Koshkonong Lake Access	642	21%
Lee Park	642	3%
Magnolia Bluff Park	642	21%
Murwin Park	642	6%
Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail	642	5%
P&T Snowmobile Trail	642	1%
Snowmobile Trail	558	4%
Royce Dahlman Park	642	5%
Schollmeyer Park	642	1%
Sugar River Park	641	15%
Sweet-Allyn Park	642	23%
Sportsman's Park	641	28%

The table showing the percentages of respondents

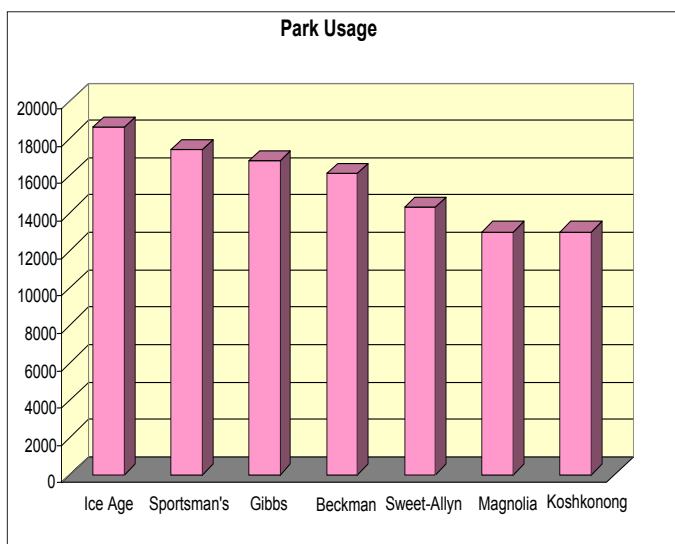
## 12.3 community needs assessment

The table shows that the Ice Age Trail is the most frequently visited Rock County Park amenity with 30% of respondents utilizing it.

Generalizing this percentage to the entire number of households in Rock County would suggest that 18,600 households have visited Ice Age Trail at least once, and probably more often than within the past year.

The second most utilized park reported to be visited by respondents was Sportsman's Park at 28%. Multiplying the percentage times the total number of households in the county suggests that 17,400 households visit Sportsman's Park within the past year.

Comparing the most frequently visited parks or trails, the following graph shows the numbers of households that said they use the Rock County Parks or Trails.



The graph shows that tens of thousands of Rock County households use Rock County Parks, suggesting that the county park system has a

major role in meeting the recreational needs of county residents.

The finding also illustrates the priorities about where and in what order capital improvements should be made to maximize the benefits to the Rock County public.

The frequency of park usage was asked in Question 7, where respondents were provided four choices of usage. The first was once a year, the second two to five times per year, the third six to 10 times per year, and the fourth more than 10 times per year.

The following table presents the findings, separating mail from telephone responses.



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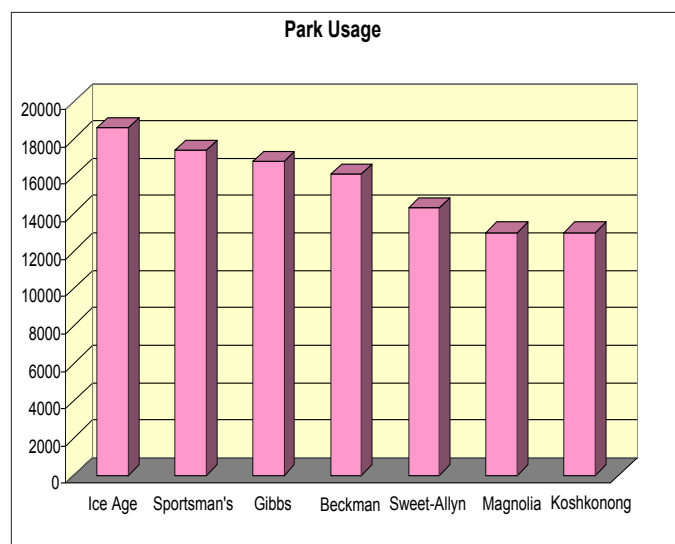
Frequency	Survey	Number of Responses	Percentage
Once a year	Mail	530	17%
	Telephone	84	21%
2-5 times per year	Mail	529	39%
	Telephone	84	48%
5-10 times per year	Mail	529	16%
	Telephone	84	8%
More than 10 times per year	Mail	529	18%
	Telephone	84	23%

The table shows that there are differences between mail and telephone survey responses, with telephone survey respondents reporting higher park and trail usage in the more than 10 year frequency rate, more in the once per year frequency rate, and less in the other two.

This could be due to the halo affect in telephone surveying reported earlier, but it is an interesting phenomenon nevertheless. It could indicate that some mail surveys were returned by people who didn't use the parks very often in a effort to express their opposition to possible tax increases.

This can be confirmed by the finding that 10% of mail survey respondents did not answer the question, suggesting that they don't use the park system at all.

Generalizing the combined mail and telephone percentages of respondents to the total households of Rock County households, the following graph shows the number of households in the county that would be expected to use the parks and trails at each frequency rate.



The graph illustrates that almost 25,000 Rock County households use the park and trail systems two to five times per year, 40% of the total 62,100 households in the county.

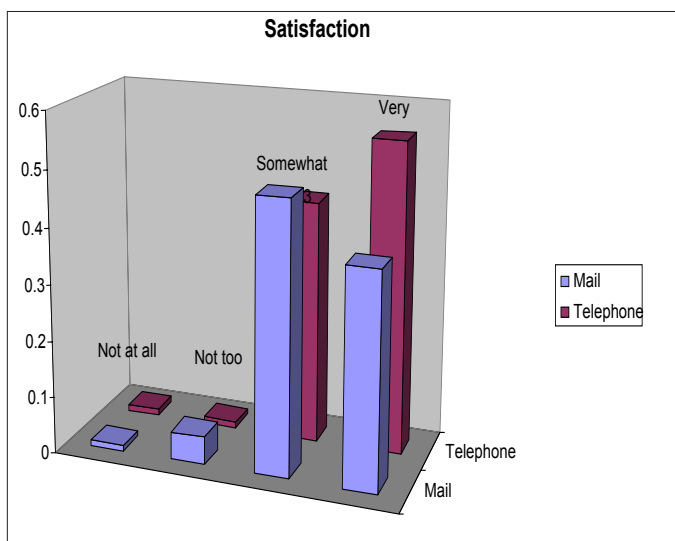
The graph also shows that over 9,000 households use the park system five to 10 times per year and over 11,000 households use the system over 10 times per year.

The implication of the finding is that, except for maybe the public works function of county government, the Rock County Park System probably directly impacts the lives of more households than any other service the county provides.

### Satisfaction

Satisfaction is often an important indicator of the willingness of the public to fund improvements for a public agency.

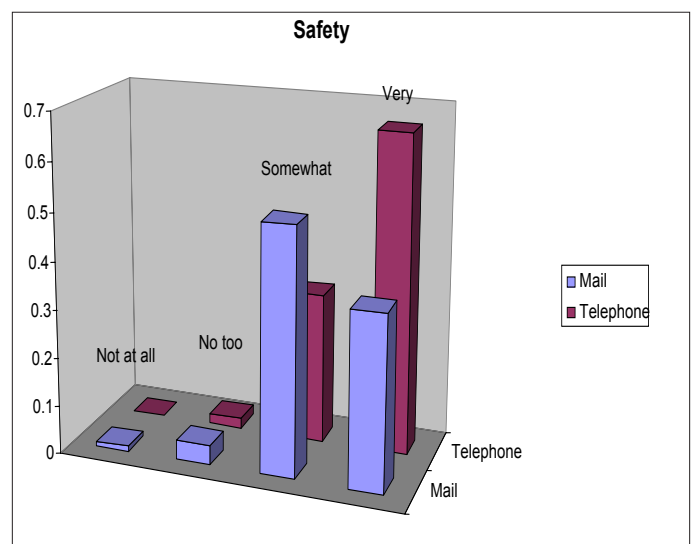
The following graph compares satisfaction levels expressed as responses to Question 8. In Question 8, respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the maintenance of the parks and trails. Because of a potential halo affect, responses have been separated by survey type.



The graph shows that there was a difference in satisfaction levels, depending on whether a mail or telephone survey was administered. Mail survey respondents tended to respond that they were somewhat satisfied more frequently than telephone survey respondents.

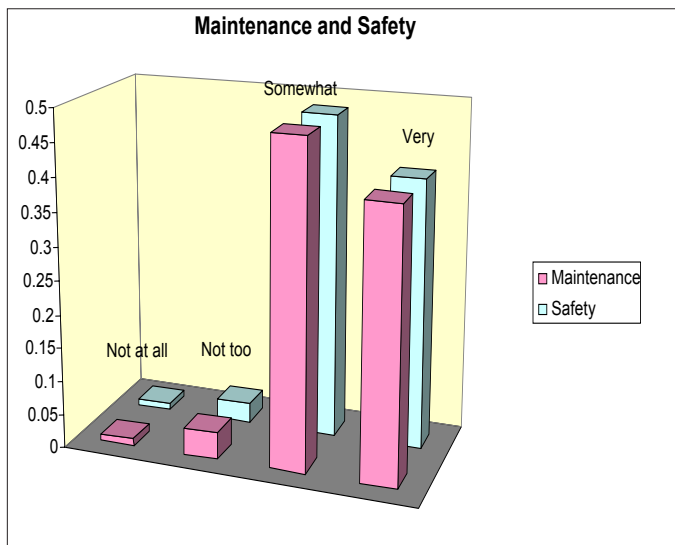
Which methodology, mail or telephone, is more representative of true public opinion? In this case, the answer is that neither is, which is why the blended data is probably more relevant.

The same phenomenon was true with Question 9, where respondents were asked about their feelings of safety while using Rock County's parks and trails.



The findings again show a significant difference in mail and telephone survey responses to the issue of safety, with mail survey less enthusiastic about their satisfaction with safety.

Blending the data provides a better indication of satisfaction toward park and trail maintenance and safety, as the following graph portrays.



The graph shows that the percentages of respondents who answered questions 8 and 9 about their satisfaction levels of maintenance and safety averaged the same levels of satisfaction.

There is some reason for concern with these responses. The fact that they are identical is not a concern.

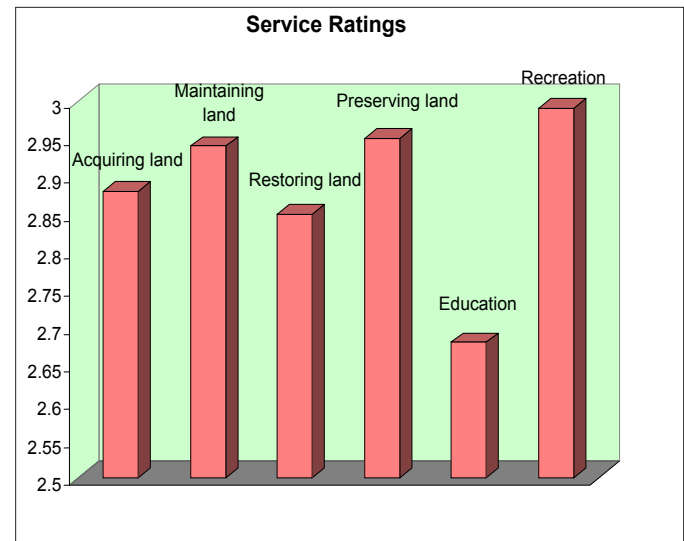
What is a concern is that the "somewhat satisfied" responses about maintenance and cleanliness and the identical feelings of being "somewhat safe" compared to feeling "very satisfied" or "very safe" are not overwhelming indicators of high levels of satisfaction.

To further dissect the levels of satisfaction into more categories, Question 10 asked respondents to rate the park system in six areas: acquiring land, maintaining land, restoring land, preserving land, education, and recreation.

Responses were entered as Likert Scale data with a very good valued at 4, a good rating at 3, a fair

rating at 2, a poor rating at 1 and not knowing as no score.

The following graph compares the ratings for the six categories of service.



The graph shows that the highest rated park system service was recreation and the lowest for education programs.

The interesting aspect of these responses is that the Rock County Park System does not really provide many recreation programs per se, even though its parks and trails exist for recreation purposes.

As far as education programs, likewise the county park system does not offer much in the way of education programs, even though some of the Friends groups do.

Considering that, other than education and recreation, the Rock County Park System's highest marks were for the services that it has focused its efforts on during the past few years and that acquiring land and restoring it are not



## 12.3 community needs assessment

services which the system has focused upon, the ratings of those efforts show that the public is generally paying attention.

Whether acquiring land or restoring it are endeavors which the public believes the park system should focus upon can be tested in Question 12.

### Tourism as a Mission of the County Park System

Question 11 asked respondents whether they thought the Park System has a role in bringing visitors (tourists) to Rock County in an effort to improve the local economy.

The following table shows the percentage of combined mail and telephone respondents who felt that the Park System has that role.

**Mail & Telephone Survey Respondents**

Question 11	Number Responding	Percentage Who Agree
Role bringing visitors	455	78%

There was very little difference between mail and telephone responses to the question of whether the Rock County Park System had a role in improving the local economy by attracting visitors to the area.

The table shows that 78% of those responding believed that the County Park System does have a role in bringing visitors into the county to improve the local economy, but that nearly a third of the respondents were undecided.

This is an occasion where this study can attempt to determine how the undecided respondents really feel.

Telephone respondents were much less undecided than mail survey respondents, probably because another human being was asking the question instead of a paper survey. For the telephone survey, only 3% were undecided but for the mail survey 36% were undecided.

Having a human being ask the question influences telephone survey respondents to make a choice. But when they do, the outcome is nearly the same, as the following table shows.

**Mail Compared to Telephone Survey Response**

Question 11	Survey Type	Percent Responding	Percent Agreeing
Role bringing visitors	Mail	64%	78%
	Telephone	97%	79%

This is a good point to view the responses of the few people who visited the Rock County Park website to test their sentiment.

Of those unsolicited surveys sent in by people visiting the website or asking for them, the percentage of those was slightly higher nearly identical to the random sample.

**Unsolicited Responses**

Question 11	Number Responding	Percentage Who Agree
Role bringing visitors	5	80%

These findings suggest that the public believes the Rock County Park System has a definite role in the tourism portion of the local economy. If there were strong sentiment to the contrary, this study would have detected it.

**Initiatives**

One of the most important questions is Question 12 which asked how respondents would rate the importance of the capital initiatives the Rock County Park System could pursue.

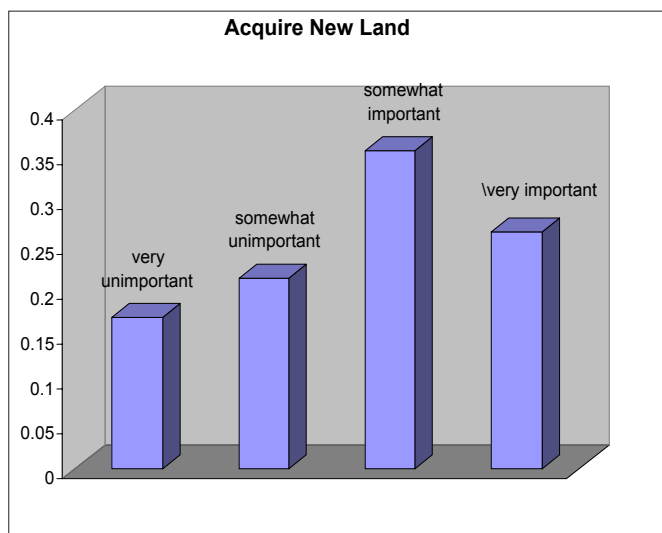
This question provides an indication of the direction that the System ought to go in meeting the needs of county residents and drawing visitors into the county.

It also expands the choices from the generalities expressed in Question 10, to discussion of specific amenities that respondents would like to see.

In rating the importance of capital improvement initiatives, data was entered using a Likert Scale, with the very important response entered as 4, the somewhat important response as 3, somewhat unimportant response as 2 and very unimportant response as 1. "No opinion" responses were not quantified.

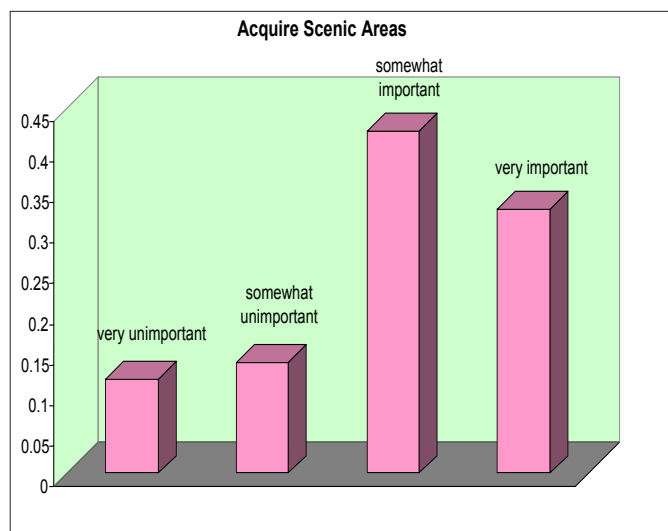
Findings are presented in graphical form as percentages of respondents who choose each amenity rating.

Again, a higher percentage of mail and low percentage of telephone respondents expressed no opinion. But for two methods, the percentages for those responding were nearly identical in all cases.

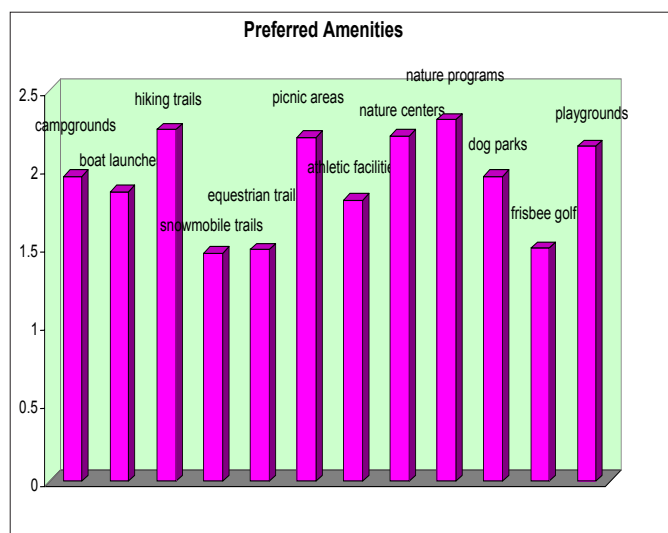


The graph shows that 26.4% of respondents felt that acquiring new park land was a very important initiative and 35.5% that it was somewhat important. Only 38.1% felt that it was somewhat or very unimportant.

The next option was acquiring scenic areas, a different choice than just acquiring land for parks. This choice was more limited in its scope.

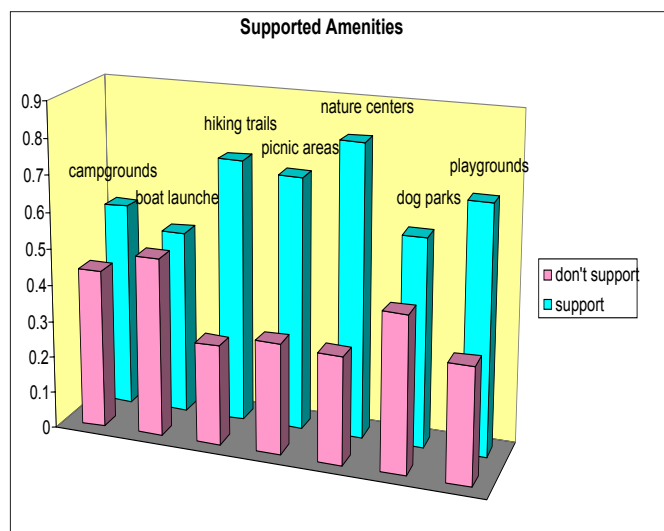


As far as attributes that new or existing parks might contain, the following graph compares the amenity initiatives that those new or existing parks and trails might contain using Likert Scale scores.



The graph shows that the most popular amenities are nature center with nature center programs, picnic areas, hiking trails and playgrounds.

Considering the most popular amenities, the following graph compares their levels of support.

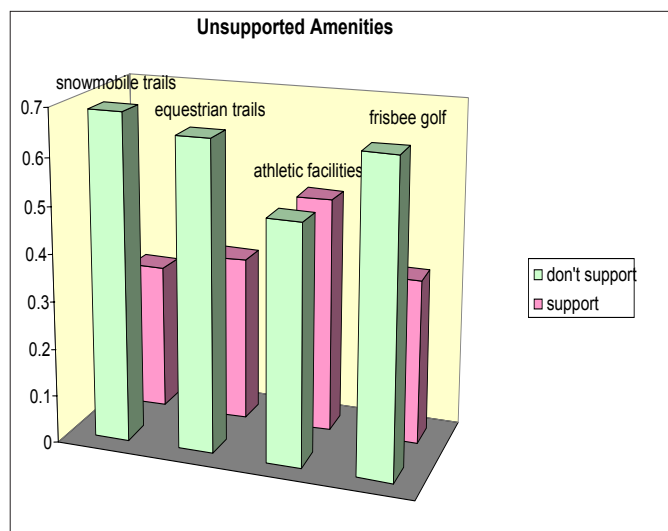


The graph shows that additional hiking trails, picnic areas, nature centers, dog parks, and playgrounds are overwhelmingly supported by Rock County residents, with significantly more than 50% of respondents saying that the importance of these amenities was either very important or somewhat important.

Campgrounds and boat launches, two amenities that would draw additional visitors to the county are marginally supported in the graphed data, with more than 50% of respondents saying that their importance was either very important or somewhat important.

Considering other amenities which might also draw visitors to Rock County, the following graph compares levels of support for snowmobile trails, equestrian trails, athletic facilities, and Frisbee golf course construction.





The graph shows that there is less than 50% support for the addition of snowmobile trails, equestrian trails, athletic facilities, and Frisbee golf courses, although the addition of athletic fields is a close call.

The implications of these findings are that, even though Rock County residents overwhelmingly support the role that the Rock County Park System has in bringing visitors to the county, their preferences are to add amenities to the park system that would benefit themselves first.

Considering the responses to Question 13, where respondents were allowed to make amenity suggestions of their own, the list of responses is in the Appendix.

The open-ended responses to Question 13 often are not responses to the question of additional amenities at all. Sometimes respondents took the opportunity to express other sentiments, such as their opposition to tax increases (which hadn't even been asked yet), or to park maintenance issues.

Sometimes respondents expressed their desire for specific amenities to be made to certain parks or trails.

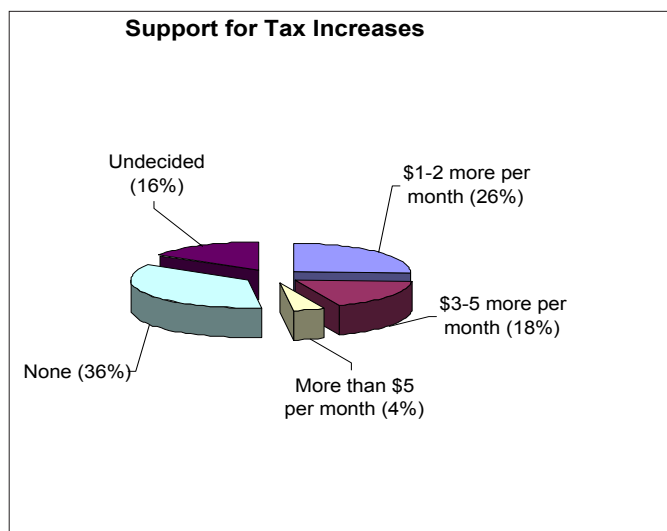
The most frequent amenity that was on the topic of the question was ATV trails. There seems to be a group of residents who have ATVs who feel that their needs should be met by the Rock County Park System, just as the snowmobilers and equestrians needs are met with trails of their own.

Overall, the responses to Questions 12 and 13 suggest that residents support building amenities for themselves first. This could be considered a good thing, for without it there might not be support for tax increases if increases would be spent just on visitors.

### Taxes

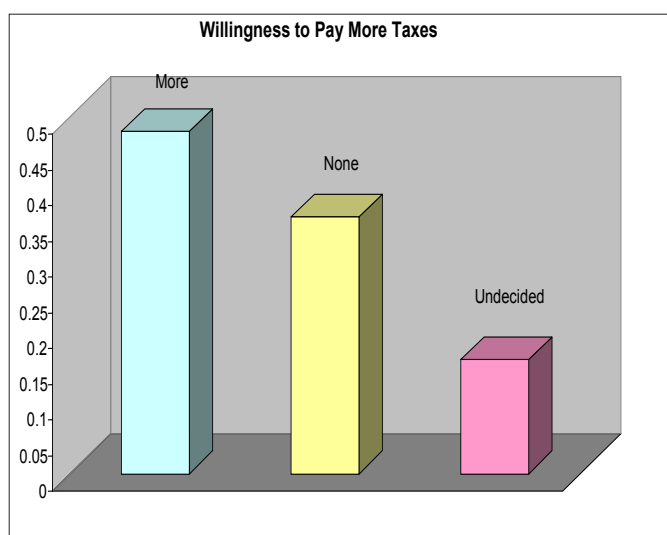
Perhaps Question 14 is the most important of all. It asks the amount of property tax respondents would be willing to pay to acquire more park land or add new amenities to the Rock County Park System. It is a measure of their conviction.

Considering the combined mail and telephone survey data, the findings are illustrated in the following chart.



The chart shows that 26% of the combined mail and telephone respondents are willing to pay \$1-2 more per month for park acquisition of new amenities, 18% were willing to pay \$3-5 more per month, 4% were willing to pay more than \$5 per month, 36% didn't want to pay any more per month, and 16% were undecided.

Combining the totals of those willing to pay more and comparing the new total to those unwilling or undecided, the following graph is presented.



The graph shows that 48% of respondents are willing to pay more compared to 36% not willing

and 16% undecided.

This finding would be considered less than satisfying because there is a question of which way the undecided respondents would break if the issue were put to a vote at the polls.

To answer that question, in surveying, there is a general rule that those who say they don't know are generally considered "soft yes" answers.

One way of verifying that finding is by doing independent samples t-testing, separating mail from telephone survey data. This is done because, as we have seen for earlier questions, mail survey respondents tend to be more undecided than telephone survey respondents. Telephone respondents are asked the question by a person, not a document, and tend to vacillate less.

The following table uses a statistical method called independent samples t-testing, which allows comparison by survey type.

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<b>Tax Increase Option</b>	<b>Survey Method</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage Who Supported Tax Increase</b>
\$1-2 per month	Mail	555	25%
	Telephone	102	32%
\$3-5 per month	Mail	554	16%
	Telephone	102	29%
More than \$5 per month	Mail	554	4%
	Telephone	102	7%
None	Mail	554	36%
	Telephone	102	31%
I don't know	Mail	554	19%
	Telephone	102	0%

The telephone survey data shows that a slightly smaller percentage of respondents said they were unwilling to pay any tax increase, 31% compared to 36% for the mail survey. That could be attributed to the affect discussed earlier, where people with an anti-tax agenda return their mail surveys..

As for the telephone survey, the "I don't know" responses completely went away, with respondents selecting an amount they were willing to pay or expressing an unwillingness to pay anything.

As discussed, this could be attributed to the effect of respondents speaking to a human interviewer, and a halo affect of people wanting to please the interviewer. Or it could just be an accurate depiction of the average sentiment of residents to pay more taxes for better services.

In the telephone survey, with respondents choosing a response and no one being undecided, it can be seen how the undecided responders break. They are mostly willing to pay more taxes for more services, 68% in favor and 31% opposed.

The point is, doing independent samples t-testing shows that there is strong reason to believe that the "I don't know" respondents in the mail survey are probably people who are willing to support a tax increase, they just need to learn more about the Park System.

Another piece of information that supports the hypothesis that those who didn't know if they supported a tax increase were really supporters in the unsolicited surveys received from the website viewers.

As stated earlier, the unsolicited surveys are usually an indicator of the level of anger in the county, and overall opposition to tax increases.

## 12.3 community needs assessment

The following table shows that there probably is not that much anger with taxes in Rock County.

### Unsolicited Survey Support of Tax Increases

	N	Mean
\$1-2 per month	6	33%
\$3-5 per month	6	17%
More than \$5	6	0%
None	6	17%
I don't know	6	33%

The table shows that, of the six people who were motivated to return surveys, only one opposed a tax increase and two were undecided. The three others supported it.

While far from scientific, this bit of qualitative information is another indicator that the undecided respondents are probably not opponents.

### Demographic Data

Questions 15 and 16 asked about the ages and gender of respondents and the ages of those living in their households.

The reason these questions were asked was to determine if the age and gender differences between respondents could be useful in understanding their responses of support or opposition to park acquisition and amenity improvements as well as the tax increases need to support them.

Considering the gender of respondents, the following table shows the combined survey percentages of respondents.

### Male Respondents

	N	Mean
Male	635	47%

Considering responses to Question 16 from the telephone survey, 50% of the respondents were males. The higher percentage males in telephone surveys can be attributed to the telephone survey script in the Appendix.

In the script, those who answer the phone are asked to put the youngest male over 18 on the line. Doing that drives down the average age of respondents and increases the percentage of males, allowing the demographics of respondents to be more representative of Census data.

But even still, respondents to surveys tend to be older and more female compared to Census Data.

Considering whether higher percentages of females respond to surveys skews the data, there are methods to determine if that occurs. A method used earlier is independent samples t-testing.

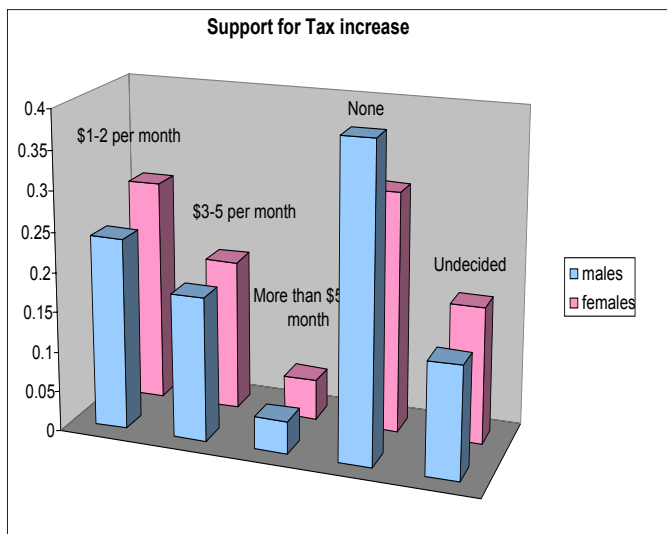
One hypothesis that can be tested is whether there is a difference between males and females about their willingness to support tax increases for new park land or new amenities.



## 12.3 community needs assessment

In national political polling, it is often found that men tend to be more fiscally conservative than women. A question is, would that be the case at the local level?

The following graph separates the responses of males and females for Question 14 which asks how much of a property tax would respondents be willing to support?



The graph shows that Rock County female respondents were more willing to pay tax increases than males. This finding is supported by the higher percentages of women responding affirmatively to \$1-5 (28% compared to 24%), \$3-5 (19% compared to 18%) and more than \$5 (5% compared to 4%).

A higher percentage of males said they were not willing to pay more, 39% compared to 30% of women. And a higher percentage of women were undecided, 17% compared to 14% of men.

One theory of the difference between men and women that is offered in national political arenas is that females tend to be more focused on

issues and services related to families than men. For whatever reason, there does seem to be a difference.

Relative to families, Question 15 asked the ages of people living in the household of the respondents? With most people answering that question, it was possible to identify households with children and without children.

Creating the new variable of households with and without children allows a hypothesis that households with children would be more likely to participate in recreational services and be willing to pay more in taxes to pay for those services.

## Recreational Habits

Recreational Activity	Kids/No Kids	Number of Respondents	Percentage Who Participate
Walking/hiking	Kids No Kids	188 436	77% 71%
Jogging	Kids No Kids	188 436	19% 9%
Walking Pets	Kids No Kids	188 436	30% 28%
Biking	Kids No Kids	188 436	50% 32%
Camping	Kids No Kids	188 436	21% 14%
Horseback Riding	Kids No Kids	188 436	5% 3%
Picnics	Kids No Kids	188 436	54% 42%
Fishing	Kids No Kids	188 436	44% 31%
Kayaking/Canoeing	Kids No Kids	188 436	14% 12%
Skateboarding	Kids No Kids	188 436	6% 1%
Sledding/tobogganing	Kids No Kids	188 436	36% 11%
Cross Country Skiing	Kids No Kids	188 436	9% 7%
Swimming	Kids No Kids	188 436	50% 18%
Power boating	Kids No Kids	188 436	15% 12%
Bird/nature watching	Kids No Kids	188 436	18% 29%
Nature center visits	Kids No Kids	188 436	22% 16%
Youth/adult athletics	Kids No Kids	188 436	32% 12%
Frisbee golf	Kids No Kids	188 436	9% 5%
Snowmobiling	Kids No Kids	188 436	6% 3%

## 12.3 community needs assessment

Beginning with the hypothesis that households with children under 18 years of age participate in recreational activities at higher rates than those without children, the previous table compares the two categories.

The table shows that approximately 30% of responding households had children. This percentage compares closely with 2000 Census data that showed 31% of households had children under 18 years of age, allowing the assumption to be that the survey data is comparative to Census figures.

The table also shows that for every recreational activity except bird watching, higher percentages of households with children participate than without children.

Considering park and trail usage, the following table compares usage of Rock County Parks and Trails by families with children under 18 years of age to households without.

**Park Usage**

<b>Park or Trail</b>	<b>Kids/No Kids</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage Who Participate</b>
Airport Park	Kids	184	6%
	No Kids	422	10%
Avon Park	Kids	184	5%
	No Kids	422	6%
Beckman Mill Park	Kids	184	24%
	No Kids	422	29%
Carver-Roehl Park	Kids	184	14%
	No Kids	422	16%
Gibbs Lake Park	Kids	184	28%
	No Kids	422	27%
Happy Hollow Park	Kids	184	15%
	No Kids	422	21%
Ice Age Park	Kids	184	18%
	No Kids	422	11%
Multi-Use Trail	Kids	184	20%
	No Kids	422	10%
Ice Age Trail	Kids	184	38%
	No Kids	422	27%
Indianford Park	Kids	184	14%
	No Kids	422	13%
Koshkonong lake access	Kids	184	23%
	No Kids	422	22%

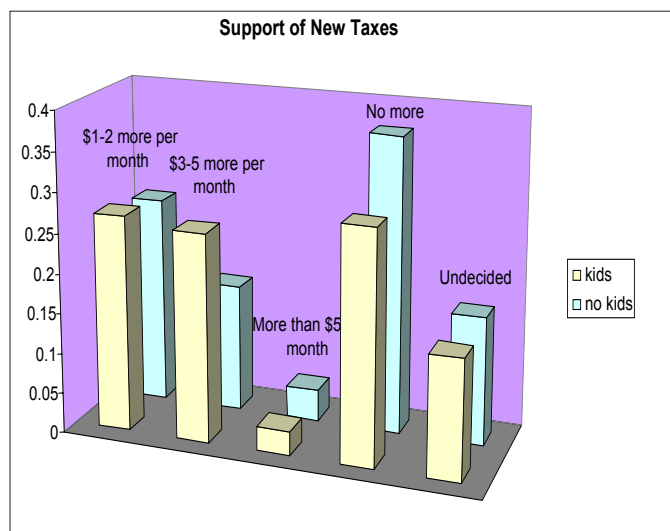
Park or Trail	Kids/No Kids	Number of Respondents	Percentage Who Participate
Lee Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	4% 3%
Magnolia Bluff Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	24% 21%
Murwin Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	5% 7%
Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail	Kids No Kids	184 422	4% 5%
P&T Snowmobile Trail	Kids No Kids	184 422	2% 0%
Snowmobile Trail	Kids No Kids	184 422	5% 3%
Royce Dahlman Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	5% 5%
Schollmeyer Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	1% 0%
Sugar River Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	14% 17%
Sweet-Allyn Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	22% 24%
Sportsman's Park	Kids No Kids	184 422	30% 28%
Beloit Janesville Peace Trail	Kids No Kids	188 436	23% 15%

The table shows that Rock County Park and Trail usage is pretty evenly split between households with children and households without children. An equal number of parks and trails are used more by households with children as without.

The finding would suggest, that even though households with children may participate more in recreational activities in general than households without, the usage of Rock County facilities is about of equal importance to both.

Considering their levels of willingness to pay a tax increase, the following graph extends that comparison to the issue of taxes.





The graph shows that respondent households without children were more opposed to paying a tax increase to acquire more park land or add new amenities to the Rock County Park System than households with children. But both were far below 50%.

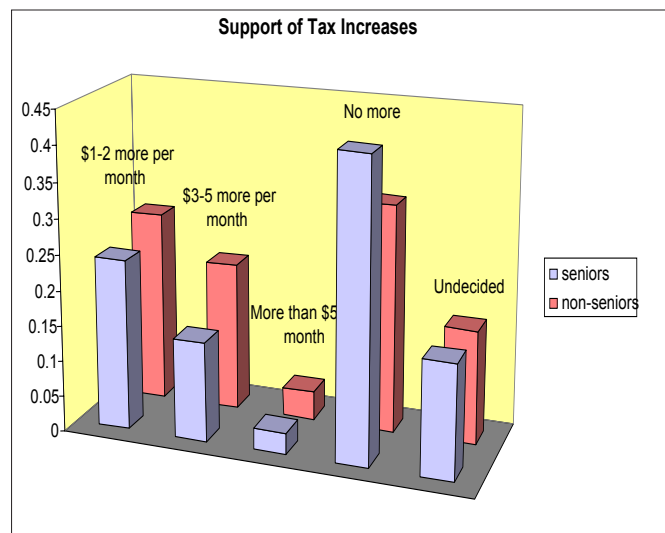
Fifty-six percent of households with children were willing to pay more compared to 46% of households without children. Both were nearly the same percentage being undecided, but only 29% of households with children were opposed to tax increases outright compared to 37% of households without children.

Considering the responses to Question 15 separated by age categories of respondents, it is possible to compare the responses of people 65 years of age and over, generally referred to as senior citizens, and everyone else.

A theory that could be tested is whether senior citizens would be more or less willing to pay tax increases than everyone else. The basis for such a hypothesis would be that seniors are more

fiscally conservative than other age groups, partly because they are less likely to utilize services of governmental agencies at the local level.

The following graph compares senior citizens' willingness to pay more in property taxes to support the acquisition of new park land and new amenities.



The graph shows that there is reason to believe that seniors are less likely to support a tax increase than the other age groups. The graph shows that 37% of seniors responding said they would not support a tax increase compared to 29% of respondents in other age groups. Both groups were equally undecided at 16%.

The finding would suggest that respondents under the age of being considered senior citizens are more supportive than seniors of tax increases to support the acquisition of new parks and construction of new amenities.

### Conclusions

The survey findings suggest that, if anything, the responses were biased toward older Rock County

## 12.3 community needs assessment

residents who have lived here 15 years or longer. That would skew the findings to be more fiscally conservative than they might be in reality.

Nevertheless, there is substantial evidence to support the assertion that the residents of Rock County are actively engaged in recreational programs (Question 5), utilize the county parks in high numbers (Question 6), would like to see more land acquired and more amenities developed (Question 12), and are willing to pay more taxes for them (Question 14), regardless of their gender or whether there are children in the household or not.

One finding that needs to be revisited is the concept of familiarity with the Rock County Park System and respondents' willingness to support more in taxes for additional amenities.

Question 3 asked if respondents were familiar with the park system. Previously it was considered that the response of being somewhat familiar was an expression of familiarity.

Considering that a response of being somewhat familiar is not a precise expression of a respondents familiarity, comparing the yes responses to the not really responses about tax increases presents an interesting finding.

	<b>Familiarity With Park System</b>	<b>Number Responding</b>	<b>Percentage Who Agree</b>
\$1-2 per month	Yes	242	30%
	Not Really	142	18%
\$3-5 per month	Yes	242	19%
	Not Really	142	18%
More than \$5	Yes	242	6%
	Not Really	142	5%
None	Yes	242	27%
	Not Really	142	47%
I don't know	Yes	242	18%
	Not Really	142	11%

The table shows that there is a significant difference between the responses of those who are familiar with the Rock County Park System and those not really familiar with it.

Of those respondents not familiar with the system, 47% said they would not be willing to pay a tax increase for new parks or amenities. For those familiar, only 27% were opposed to a tax increase.

Conversely, of those familiar, 55% supported a tax increase compared to 41% of those respondents not familiar with the park system.

Interestingly, more of the respondents who were familiar with the system, 18%, were undecided compared to 11% of those not familiar.

The findings would suggest that to know the park system is to support its initiatives. Or respondents not to know that the Rock County Park System exists or what it is trying to do can interfere with the support that the public knowing about it might provide.

### **Policy Implications**

One possible policy implication is that the Rock County Park System should focus on its image through use of media outlets. To do so might require that the system add a staff person with the responsibility of media relations, including the writing of news releases, fostering of positive stories, and development of the website to expand word of mouth awareness of the system.

Another policy implication is that the Rock County Supervisors should be made aware of the public's recreational habits, its use of the park system, its willingness to use the system to bring visitors to the county, and the public's willingness to pay for park land expansion and amenity improvements.

To make the County Supervisors aware of the importance of the Rock County Park System to its residents should help them see fit to fund operating and capital initiatives.

Finally, it would be important for the Public Works Parks Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee and staff to develop capital and land acquisition projects which reflect the priorities of the public as reflected in the survey questions expressing the most popular parks that the public uses and the most desirable amenities that public prefers.

### **Public Meetings**

Every planning effort should allow the community to attend a public meeting to voice concerns and express their vision for the future of Rock County Parks Division. The following is a list of meeting dates and purpose of the meeting:

July 16th: Listening

August 12th: Survey Results

September 3rd: Park Improvements

These types of meetings are usually difficult to have the community attend unless a controversial issue is being debated or considered.

### **Special Interest Group Meetings**

From special interest group meetings overall goals were generated and discussed as bold ideas to accomplish in the future of the Rock County Parks Division.

1. Develop memberships
2. Find funding
3. Remove invasive plant species
4. Facility improvements (safety, lighting, parking, trail signs, playgrounds)
5. Create a separate parks commission
6. Create more Friends of the Parks groups
7. Start a foundation for the county

## Delphi Committee

### Introduction

What is a Delphi Committee? Why was Delphi selected as the name committee? What is the committee expected to do? These are the questions most frequently asked at the first meeting.

To answer them out of order, Delphi in Greece was the city where the Oracle of Apollo was kept. The city was the venue where ancient Greeks and Romans would go to seek wisdom.

That's why this committee was named the Delphi Committee; because the Rock County Park System needed a place to go to seek wisdom.

The committee was really a focus group of people who live in the community who pay attention to what is going on.

The committee was expected to meet at the time and place of its own choosing over the period of about a month. The committee's initial work consisted of familiarizing itself with the Rock County Park Division operations.

Based on its expert opinions, the Delphi Committee provided some insight into the administrative direction that the Rock County Park System should take.

Directions were broad rather than narrow, focusing on administrative and policy issues. Capital improvement topics specific to individual parks were covered by the community survey, public hearings and interest group meetings.

The final product of the work of the Delphi

Committee is a report of five pages where recommendations were made.

Its report is presented verbatim as follows:

### Committee Members:

Rebecca Houseman, Chairperson - (Planner, City of Beloit, City of Janesville Resident)

Jim Hessenauer, Vice Chairperson - (Parks Patrolman, Town of Harmony Resident)

Peggy Corning - (City of Beloit Resident, Alcoa Wheels)

Mike Guisleman - (Former Parks Director, Town of Fulton Resident)

Sandy Hendricks - (City of Janesville Resident)

Ben Lawton - (City of Janesville Resident, MacFarlane Pheasants)

Martha Mitchell - (Visit Beloit Executive Director, City of Rockford Resident)

Richard Ott - (Retired Alliant Employee, County Board Supervisor - City of Janesville)

The Rock County Park System Delphi Committee was organized with a goal of providing a broad direction for the future of the Rock County Park System to be utilized during the upcoming Rock County Parks, Outdoor Recreation, and Open Space Plan 2009-2014.

The committee consisted of eight individuals representing different segments of Rock County's population. Each group member lives and/or works in Rock County and shares a common interest in the future the County's park system.

The committee reviewed and discussed several topics



throughout an intense six-week meeting schedule, focusing on the administrative and policy issues of each topic. Topics discussed included public relations and image; relationships with other government entities, groups, and committees; encouraging, empowering, and supporting volunteers and friends' organizations; direction for growth and change; capital improvements; and administrative and political support. Each of these topics will be discussed more thoroughly.

Throughout these discussions, it became clear to the committee that budgetary constraints are a major concern for the future of the park system. State, county, and municipal budgets will only get smaller as each government unit continues to be pressed to provide the same or more services with less money and resources.

The group acknowledged the fiscal reality that the County faces but strongly felt that the park system is an asset that must be invested in and maintained.

The committee's process included extending speaking invitations to several people who have an interest in the County's park system including a former Rock County Parks Director, three Parks Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee members and the current Parks Department Community Coordinator.

Inviting these individuals to share their values and thoughts regarding the future of the park system helped the committee to understand the motivation and goals of these stakeholders.

### **Public Relations and Image**

With the recent efforts toward sustainability by everyone from government entities to individuals working to reduce their own carbon footprints, the committee concurred that the County parks are an obvious source of sustainable recreation. Most of the County's parks are within biking, hiking, and easy-driving distance of major population centers and provide local recreation opportunities. However, most of the committee members acknowledged that there is a lack of public information regarding the locations, uses, and activities available in the parks.

To address this issue, the committee recommended creating a new, individual image and logo solely for the Parks Division. The image makeover includes changes and improvements to the County's website, new park brochures, clothing, decals on trucks, and signage all featuring a newly-designed Rock County Parks logo.

With the goal of increasing public information and attendance at the parks, the committee also suggested that local newspapers run monthly "park profiles" informing people of the outdoor opportunities throughout the County.

The committee suggested uniform park signage including the new logo and road signs located along state highways.

The committee also suggested new, professional brochures for each park and one larger brochure which would include information regarding all the County parks. These brochures could be located in County, Municipal, and Town Hall buildings and distributed at local festivals and events.

Using existing community resources to accomplish these goals may be done with a little creativity. For example, Blackhawk Technical College, UW-Rock County, or Beloit College could be contacted to see if a new parks website could be undertaken as a class project.

A county-wide contest could take place for a new Parks Department logo. Both of these suggestions would accomplish the project goals as well as increase public awareness of the park system.

#### **Relationships with Government Entities, Groups, and Committees**

The committee discussed the importance of developing and maintaining positive relationships with other government entities, including the municipal governments in Rock County, the townships, adjoining county governments, the Department of Natural Resources and other state agencies, and the federal government.

Coordination with other Rock County departments, educational institutions, local green industries, scouting and youth groups, and convention bureaus were also discussed as local resources.

Developing and maintaining positive relationships with municipal governments in Rock County should be a goal of the County administration in general, but it also should be a goal of the Park Division.

The County parks are located throughout the roughly 720 square-mile area of Rock County, and are often in closer proximity to municipal

governments than County offices and facilities. Although it has been attempted in the past without much success, the Committee recommended that an informal equipment or manpower exchange be reviewed with municipalities, townships, or even adjacent counties. If possible and efficient, this type of exchange could benefit all parties involved.

The State of Wisconsin and the Federal government often provide grants and other financial assistance for specific local government programs. Taking advantage of these available funds may provide additional resources for local projects without requiring financial support or investment by the County.

The committee also suggested using the resources of the Rock County Planning and Development Department for expertise in mapping and planning, the Highway Department for large-scale park maintenance and structural repairs, the Sheriff's Department for Rock County Education and Criminal Addictions Program (RECAP) participants, and Rock County Tourism to include public information.

#### **Encouraging, Empowering, and Supporting Volunteers and Friends' Organizations**

The Committee discussed the importance of encouraging, empowering, and supporting volunteers and "Friends" organizations. Understanding the reality of budgetary constraints, the committee recognized how much more may be accomplished in the parks by utilizing volunteers.

## 12.3 community needs assessment

The Parks system is very fortunate to have several organized groups of volunteers who call themselves “Friends” of specific parks. These friends groups, including many groups organized around the goal of keeping specific parks clean, maintained, safe, usable, and friendly, will be paramount to the future of the Parks system. As such, the time and efforts of these groups must be embraced, encouraged and supported by the County. The Committee also recognized the need to coordinate County goals and efforts with those of the groups.

A liaison between the volunteers and the County Parks Department is essential for coordination and communication. Without a full-time Parks staff member to coordinate the efforts of the groups and ensure the groups are not just creating more work for the County, the volunteering efforts become detrimental.

The Committee recommended that a full-time staff person be dedicated to act as a liaison between the County and volunteer community groups.

A critical component in using the Friends' groups to the County's advantage would be coordination. The committee recommended that Parks staff develop a form and/or work order to approve projects from Friends' groups before the work occurs. Parks staff should develop and update a volunteer handbook available to give friends' groups and volunteers.

The group also suggested that a formal policy be developed for working with friends groups and volunteers to maintain equal treatment of all groups and to provide information for groups

looking to form and assist in the parks.

The group noted that some local corporations encourage their employees to seek out volunteer opportunities by providing grants. The Committee felt that these opportunities should be sought out by the Parks Department in an attempt to increase volunteering and fundraising. The County should pursue grants and corporate funding to supplement public funding.

### **Direction for Growth and Change**

The largest and most broad topic which the committee discussed was the direction for growth and change in the park system.

The committee discussed everything from land acquisition to maintenance of existing parks to transportation and recreational trails. Preservation and active vs. passive park use were also discussed.

Land acquisition for more parkland was discussed at length. The committee recommended that the County accept donations of land from trusts and wills, under the caveat that smaller pieces may be sold or traded for more desirable and usable park lands.

The committee suggested that impact fees be researched and developed for new rural residential subdivisions in order to acquire more park land.

The committee also recommended developing a brochure to show people how to donate land to park system through wills, trusts, and other methods. The Committee recommended that the County encourage land donations.

## 12.3 community needs assessment

The committee discussed the possibility of reducing the grass-mowing and maintenance levels at certain County parks. However, the maintenance levels are believed to be at a minimum at this time.

The committee recommended that maintenance continue as it is now, and that the Parks Department may consider relying on volunteer groups, with proper coordination and oversight, for improvements beyond basic maintenance.

The committee discussed obtaining existing city and/or township parks, including the possibility of trading existing County parks such as Sportsman's and Airport Parks for existing city parks or other city-owned land or in-kind payment.

The committee also discussed the possibility of the City of Beloit's Big Hill Park becoming a County park. The committee did not make definitive recommendations regarding this issue but believed that it should be reviewed further in the future.

County parks are low impact with regard to uses and natural areas. This committee recommended that the County take care not to attempt to overlap higher impact City park functions such as addition of dog parks, ice skating, Frisbee golf, or other high-maintenance activities. County parks are more appropriately used for passive

recreation.

Finally, the committee recommended that preservation of existing natural areas, park land, and farmland continue.

### Capital Improvements

While the mission of the Delphi Group was not to suggest specific capital improvements for the individual parks, the group still thought it important to discuss possible large-scale improvements to the park system on a County-wide basis.



One long-term goal suggested by the group was a bicycle/pedestrian trail system throughout the County, linking to City trails and other County trails and linking County parks to each other.

The committee suggested the possibility of using capital funds, instead of operating funds, to accomplish some major goals, including park signage. The group suggested that adding signage to state highways would increase awareness and use of parks.

The committee noted that several of the proposed capital improvements from the previous POROS plan have been accomplished. The Committee recommended that completing more of these projects, already endorsed by the County Administration and County Board, would be a positive step to improving the Parks System.



## 12.3 community needs assessment

Specifically, the Committee recommended that the long-term goal of providing restroom facilities at a rate of one park per year should be continued.

### **Administrative and Political Support**

The County Board and Administration recognize the value in a County-wide park system, however, other seemingly more pressing issues have been thrust into the forefront by outside influences. It is important, however, to recognize the value of each park and the assets each park bring to the County as a whole. In a world of plowing highways and providing social services, parks may not be the priority. However, the parks are of significant importance to the quality of life of Rock County citizens and out-of-county visitors.

Quality of life issues are essential for encouraging future economic growth and development. The parks are used by thousands and thousands of people each year, and that number will only increase as public information regarding the parks increases.

The Delphi committee recognized the importance of administrative and political support of the POROS plan, and even more important, the commitment to implement this plan.



**Vision**

Rock County is a growing system of parks, trails, and open spaces that are designed to preserve areas of natural beauty and significant ecological and historic value, while balancing land stewardship with recreational opportunity and fiscal responsibility.

**Goals & Objectives**

Planning goals are functional ideas and values that help guide the planning process. Goals address major essential issues, which become apparent through the planning process. They are ideas and values, which are in the public interest and provide an end toward which the planning process is directed. Goals are followed by objectives, which are more specific statements that further define the goal and help shape the direction of the plan. Objectives also help measure progress toward meeting the established goals. A policy is defined as a course of action as pursued by a government, organization or individual entity.

Thus far, this plan has reviewed input provided by a number of sources in the community. Public comment sessions have been conducted, friends groups have been consulted, a group of community leaders have offered their suggestions, a mail and telephone survey of over 500 households has been analyzed, and the staff and board have provided their ideas.

All of these sources need to be taken into consideration to determine the needs of the community as well as the needs of the Rock County Park System. For this reason, goals and objectives of this plan will be categorized as administrative, programming, land acquisition and park development and park maintenance goals.

Administrative goals have emerged based on input from the board and staff, input from interest groups, and the work of the Delphi committee.

Programming goals emerged from the telephone and mail surveys, input from the staff and the work of the Delphi committee.

Land acquisition and park development goals resulted from mail and telephone survey analysis, input from interest groups, input from the board and staff, and the work of the Delphi committee.

Park maintenance goals were largely a result of input from the staff, but with some input from interest groups and the mail and telephone surveys.

## Rock County Administrative Goals

The source of administrative goals and objectives are largely from the work of the Delphi Committee, comprised of community experts who are actively engaged with the political environment. One of the committee's findings was that "in the work of plowing highways and providing social services, parks may not be the priority, however, the parks are of significant importance to the quality of life of Rock County Citizens and out-of-county visitors."

The Delphi committee believed that there needs to be a concerted effort to inform County Supervisors and administration of the important contributions that the Rock County Park System makes to the quality of life with the understanding that "quality of life issues are essential for encouraging future economic growth and development."

Therefore, the first set of goals and objectives of this plan focus on the ones that don't cost any money in the short term, but will lead to the improvement of the Rock County Park System in the long run.

### 12.1

**Allow the Rock County Parks Director greater opportunity to educate the County Supervisors about the mission and importance of the Rock County Park System.**

#### Objectives:

##### 12.1.1

Include a written and verbal annual report at County Supervisor regular meetings about the contributions it has made to the quality of life in Rock County.

##### 12.1.2

Schedule regular meetings between the County Administrator and the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee to discuss operations and budgetary items as needed.



## **12.4** goals, objectives & policies

### **12.2**

**Make better use of the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee by providing them greater responsibility and autonomy in the oversight of operational issues.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.2.1**

Continue to provide the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee with the responsibility of developing the policies that affect the operations of parks and recreational services.

### **12.3**

**Improve the public image of the Rock County Parks Division.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.3.1**

Develop a logo solely for the Rock County Parks Division that provides an understanding of what the department is and what it does.

##### **12.3.2**

Update and improve the Rock County Parks Division website, providing the public with maps and images of the county parks and the amenities they contain.

##### **12.3.3**

Develop informational brochures about the county parks and recreation services that the Parks Department provides, including brochures for each park.

##### **12.3.4**

Improve departmental identity, make sure that the Rock County Parks Division employees wear departmental clothing and have logos on all departmental vehicles.

##### **12.3.5**

Install uniform signage at county parks, trails and amenities.



## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### 12.3.6

Provide the media with regular news releases about the activities of the department, park services, and any recreational opportunities offered by the department or friends groups.

### 12.3.7

Offer quarterly town hall meetings to the public where the Rock County Parks Division can update residents about services and issues relevant to their concerns.

## 12.4

**Improve and maintain relationships with related governmental groups and committees.**

### Objectives:

#### 12.4.1

Meet regularly with the municipal parks and recreation departments within Rock County as well as the Department of Natural Resources and other state and federal agencies.

#### 12.4.2

Coordinate with county departments, local green industries, scouting and youth groups, and convention bureaus to promote park services within the county (4-H, FFA, ect.).

#### 12.4.3

Continue to use the resources of the Rock County Planning and Development Department for expertise in mapping and planning.

#### 12.4.4

Continue to use the resources of the Rock County Public Works Highway Division for large scale maintenance and structural repairs.

#### 12.4.5

Continue to use the resources of the Rock County Sheriff's Department for help in policing and police related matters.

#### 12.4.6

Continue a partnership with the Rock County Tourism Bureau to promote Rock County and its parks as a tourist venue.



## **12.4** goals, objectives & policies

### **12.5**

**Encourage friends' organizations to maintain and improve their partnerships with the Rock County Parks Division.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.5.1**

Continue to develop and update formal agreements for collaboration with friends groups.

##### **12.5.2**

Have the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee approve projects before they are initiated by friends groups.

##### **12.5.3**

Develop volunteer handbooks to give to groups and volunteers.

##### **12.5.4**

Encourage local corporations to support their employees in seeking out volunteer positions with Friends groups.

### **12.6**

**Set a new direction for growth and improvement.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.6.1**

Based on the community surveys, public meetings, and friends group meetings, we recognize that the residents of Rock County support the acquisition and preservation of additional park land and scenic areas.

##### **12.6.2**

Make the public aware that the Rock County Parks Division is willing and able to accept the donation of land from trusts and wills for future park sites or working capital.

##### **12.6.3**

Have the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors that impact fees be researched for possible development of rural residential subdivisions in order to acquire more park land.

## **12.4** goals, objectives & policies

### **12.6.4**

Promote tourism in Rock County in the services the department provides.

### **12.6.5**

Separate the functions of municipal and county park services by having the county parks focus on natural resource management, provision of tourist supportive amenities, and the maintenance of trails.

## **12.7**

**Promote capital initiatives for the Rock County Parks Division consistent with this plan.**

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.7.1**

Recognize from the community surveys, public meetings, and friends groups that the residents of Rock County support research to develop camping areas, boat launches, picnic areas, hiking trails, equestrian trails and snowmobile trails.

#### **12.7.2**

Inform other municipalities that the Rock County Parks Division is willing to trade existing county parks, such as Sportsman's Park for existing city parks or other city-owned or in-kind payment.

#### **12.7.3**

Consider the possibility of the City of Beloit's Big Hill Park becoming a county park.

#### **12.7.4**

Focus on the securing of grant monies for land acquisition and amenity development.

#### **12.7.5**

Develop a plan to continue to provide restroom facilities at a rate of one park per year.

#### **12.7.6**

Develop specific site improvement plans for each existing county park and trail based on the survey results which show the prioritized public preferences.

## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### 12.8

**Develop stable and sufficient financial support for Rock County's Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space facilities.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.8.1**

Provide adequate County funding for land acquisition, facility improvement, operation and maintenance to update and improve an aging infrastructure.

##### **12.8.2**

Utilize Federal, State and private grants as available.

##### **12.8.3**

Promote intergovernmental cooperation in providing parks, outdoor recreation and open space facilities.

##### **12.8.4**

Research and expand the user fee system for Rock County Parks.

##### **12.8.5**

Continue to utilize the Capital Improvements Plan for Rock County Parks according to the needs and resources available.

### 12.9

**Inform the citizens and County Board supervisors about the division, its facilities and programs.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.9.1**

Get information to the citizens and County Board through PSA's, written annual reports, quarterly meetings and the Rock County website.





### Rock County Programming Goals

#### 12.10

**Develop an outdoor environmental education program series focusing on recreation for children.**

#### Objectives:

##### 12.10.1

Recognize from the survey that environmental education programming ranked high on the needs of the community.

##### 12.10.2

Partner with outside organizations where possible, but retain control of new programs to provide a new revenue stream for the Parks Division.

##### 12.10.3

Provide valuable outreach in terms of visibility within the community.

##### 12.10.4

Focus new programs on the age group of 3 to 6 year olds due to the need of this age group to learn and explore.

#### 12.11

**Develop outdoor recreation programs surrounding current natural features found within the existing park system.**

#### Objectives:

##### 12.11.1

Develop program opportunities within the existing park system for meaningful recreation program opportunities. An example would be a sailboat class at Gibbs Lake.

#### 12.12

**Develop a family special event series based on the agricultural heritage of Rock County.**

## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.12.1**

Create and host special events.

#### **12.13**

**Investigate additional program ideas/revenue sources.**

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.13.1**

Explore various programs such as: tree program, educational programs, special events (1 per quarter), trail passes, etc.

#### **12.14**

**Help public officials and citizens understand and embrace county parks as being available for local citizens to use as their neighborhood park.**

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.14.1**

Establish a dynamic neighborhood park area service plan for each county park that can respond to new parks, outdoor recreation and open space needs of the local residents while also accommodating the needs of all residents of the County.

#### **12.14.2**

Provide park, outdoor recreation and open space facilities which encourage the use of county parks by the people who live in close proximity.

### **Rock County Land Acquisition and Development Goals**

#### **12.15**

**Invest In Park Development.**

This goal suggests that the agency needs to continue to prioritize capital monies in its financial strategies into the development of its park lands. This would cover both new park development and re-development of the existing sites.

Development goals should approve an overall goal of providing 20 acres of county parkland for every 1,000 residents. For purposes of assessing parkland needs, county parks are broken down further into two subcategories as listed below.

**County Community Parks:** Community Parks are generally less than or equal to 25 acres in size and located within a 5 mile drive of the population centers they serve. Play areas, sports fields and picnicking areas are some of the facilities they provide. For the purposes of assessing parkland needs for this Plan, a guideline of 3.25 acres/thousand population is used for county community parks.

**County Regional Recreation Areas:** Regional Recreation Areas are generally less than 200 acres in size and are located within a 15 minute drive of the population centers they serve. River Access facilities provide access to waterways; generally smaller in size. They are also included in this category. For purposes of assessing parkland needs for this Plan, a guideline of 5 acres/thousand population is used for county recreation areas.

**County Regional Open Space (Passive):** Regional Open Space areas are generally greater than or equal to 200 acres in size. They feature more passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, bicycling and wildlife observation. They are operated by the County. For purposes of assessing parkland needs for this Plan, a guideline of 15 acres/thousand population is used for passive regional recreation areas. The size of the passive regional recreation facilities is generally determined by the resources that they protect rather than facility-driven needs for specific population centers. As larger facilities, they play a greater role in preserving functioning ecosystems in the larger biophysical landscape. As these larger parks are joined, they also help to preserve wildlife corridors. Passive public use of these areas is consistent with preserving the resources and allowing for a wide range of recreation opportunities including, but not limited to hiking, biking, running, horseback riding and wildlife observation.

**Trails:** Trails cover a regional service area in both the state and county. A general rule for miles of trail per population is 1 mile/10,000 population. The trails are primarily located outside of parkland areas.

#### Defining Characteristics of the County Regional Parks

Facility Type	Acres/1,000 Population	Size	Service Area	Primary Providers	Differentiating Factors
County Community Parks (CCP)	3.25/1000	Less than or equal to 25 acres	Park Planning Area (5 miles)	Non-profit	Play areas, sports fields & picnicking
County Regional Recreation Area (CRRRA)	5/1000	Less than 200 acres (also includes access sites to public waterways)	Park Planning Area (15 miles)	County	Generally above 25 acres and where 10% of the area is devoted to developed recreation facilities (boat launching facilities, campgrounds, swimming, beaches, play areas, sports fields)
County Regional Open Space - Passive (CROSP)	15/1000	Greater than or equal to 200 acres	Regional (Approximately 30 miles)	County	Resource management with public access
Trails (T)	1 mile / 10,000 people	None	Regional	County, State	Located primarily outside of parkland areas

**Areas of County Recreation Parks/Thousand Population by Park Planning Area**

<b>Park Planning Area</b>	<b>Total Population for the Planning Area (2009)</b>	<b>Total Acres of County Community Parks (CCP)</b>	<b>Acreage Guideline at 3.25 Acres /1,000 Population</b>	<b>Recommended Land Acquisition By Year 2014</b>
County Total	159,000	74.5	516.75 Acres	442.25

<b>Park Planning Area</b>	<b>Total Population for the Planning Area (2009)</b>	<b>Total Acres of County Regional Recreation Area (CRRRA)</b>	<b>Acreage Guideline at 5 Acres/1,000 Population</b>	<b>Recommended Land Acquisition By Year 2014</b>
County Total	159,000	337.1	795 Acres	482

<b>Park Planning Area</b>	<b>Total Population for the Planning Area (2009)</b>	<b>Total Acres of County Regional Open Space - Passive (CROSP)</b>	<b>Acreage Guideline at 15 Acres/1,000 Population</b>	<b>Recommended Land Acquisition By Year 2014</b>
County Total	159,000	478	2385 Acres	1880

<b>Park Planning Area</b>	<b>Total Population for the Planning Area (2009)</b>	<b>Total Miles of Trails (T)</b>	<b>Miles Guideline at 1 mile/10,000 Population</b>	<b>Recommended Land Acquisition By Year 2014</b>
County Total	159,000	9.7*	15.9 Miles	6.2 Miles

\*Mileage for the Ice Age Connector Trail (3.7 miles) is from the Ice Age Trail Foundation. The trail system is still changing and fluctuating due to route changes and negotiation of land and so other resources may have a different mileage for this segment of the trail.



## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.15.1**

Implement the Capital Development Plan as described in this master plan. This would include re-developing many of the existing park sites.

#### **12.15.2**

Seek grant funding as a priority for each year for larger capital park projects. Re-invest or roll-over grant reimbursement monies into the next grant application as a vehicle to continually fund within the grant cycles.

#### **12.15.3**

Explore additional grant possibilities to off-set capital improvement costs as the project takes shape.

#### **12.16**

**Develop an Improved Pathway System within the Park Spaces for a variety of transportation and recreational trail routes.**

This goal is that the agency develops an improved pathway system within the parks and connects parks by paths when possible. To achieve this goal, a few objectives need to be achieved.

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.16.1**

Identify funding sources for the improved pathway system.

#### **12.16.2**

Where possible, apply for grants and assemble the matching resources to fund construction of specific paths.

#### **12.16.3**

When initial portions of the system are complete, develop a map of the paths, including it on the agency's website and program brochure information.

Creation of pathway systems within parks would be a major capital improvement for the agency where there is external funding available. It would be used by a substantial percentage of the community and is also an initiative which can begin immediately without much need for citizen participation, unlike more ambitious projects.

#### **12.16.4**

Continue to develop, implement and promote the Rock County Bike Plan and work with volunteers and enthusiasts of this plan to create more trails and areas for bikes.

## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### 12.17

#### **Develop Plans for a New Environmental Education Center.**

This goal suggests that, based on recreation program needs identified in survey research, from public hearings, the Delphi committee and user groups, there is an unmet need for environmental education. The form the environmental education center should take is not clear at this point. To clarify its form, a number of objectives need to be achieved.

#### **12.17.2**

Develop an inexpensive preliminary design of a facility should be developed, providing the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee with a starting place for discussions.

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.17.1**

Perform a market analysis, convening a citizen's Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee specifically to oversee that process.

##### **12.17.3**

When concept plans are ready to be rolled out, the agency should contract with an outside consultant to do a financial feasibility study of the probability of how the building will succeed on a financial and programmatic basis.

The order of the objectives is important to the success of developing plans to build a new environmental education center. Making plans to pursue the construction of a new center without creating a citizens Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee that would determine the need for the facility lacks credibility.

Without developing a preliminary design, the Public Works & Parks Advisory Committee does not know what the staff thinks is needed.

Without exploring alternative sources of financing the debt to build the facility, the public might not be convinced that property tax support is needed. And without a study affirming that the facility can meet its goals, the public may wonder if more property taxes will be needed later.

### **12.18**

#### **Acquire Additional Park Space**

This goal shows through survey research and level of service analysis, there is a need to acquire land to increase the acres per thousand residents.

## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.18.1**

Perform market analysis of parcels of different size and location within the target areas for a new County Recreation Park. The target area would be within the northwest area of the county.

#### **12.18.2**

Perform market analysis of parcels of different size and location with the target areas for a new County Recreation Park. The target area would be within the I-39 corridor between Janesville and Beloit.

#### **12.18.3**

Review current land holdings for strategic location within the county. When opportunities are present within or in close proximity to local government jurisdictional boundaries, seek out potential land exchange with local park and recreation agencies for like kind parkland located further away within county from local municipality.

#### **12.19**

**When developing areas of land, identify and conserve environmentally significant resources and effectively manage them as 'Green Infrastructure.'**

### **Objectives:**

#### **12.19.1**

Maintain the integrity of Rock County's ecosystems by preserving landforms, watersheds and wildlife corridors and other essential components of the natural environment.

#### **12.19.2**

Promote public and private participation in the stewardship of resources such as forests, woodlands, lakes, rivers, wetlands and floodplains.

#### **12.19.3**

Where applicable, restore the integrity of natural resources in areas that have been degraded or damaged.

#### **12.19.4**

Maximize the ability of natural resources to control run-off and flooding.

#### **12.19.5**

Upgrade park management practices to improve air and water quality.

#### **12.19.6**

Identify existing wetlands, hydric soils, natural areas, groundwater recharge areas, floodplains, steep slopes, surface waters, shoreland area setbacks, kettles and depressions, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources land, Federal Agency land, county parks and open space and town land to help assure adequate surface storm water drainage and quality groundwater for public consumption.

## **12.4** goals, objectives & policies

### **12.19.7**

Preserve lands identified in the Rock County 'Natural Areas' Survey and other ecological areas of importance as environmentally significant open space.

### **12.19.8**

Encourage conservation practices that improve the quality of the land and water.

### **12.19.9**

Encourage use of land and natural resources in accordance with their character and capabilities.

### **12.19.10**

Protect the natural beauty, amenities and character of the rural landscape.

### **12.19.11**

Preserve suitable areas of open space to act as buffers to insure each community's identity.

### **12.19.12**

Provide open space areas for both education and habitat preservation.

### **12.19.13**

Encourage the continuation of open space owned by Federal, State and local governments along with non-profits and trusts.

### **12.20**

**Preserve and enhance areas with historic and cultural value.**

#### **Objectives:**

#### **12.20.1**

Enhance, preserve and use historic and cultural assets by collaborative planning, design, investment and management techniques.

#### **12.20.2**

Support the important role of the arts in contributing to Rock County's quality of life.

#### **12.20.3**

Study and preserve Rock County's archaeological sites.



## 12.4 goals, objectives & policies

### 12.21

**Promote economic development by emphasizing park, outdoor recreation and open space as part of our high quality of life to encourage new business, employees and tourists to locate and visit Rock County.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.21.1**

Improve Rock County's park infrastructure, facilities and services so visitors feel they are safe, secure and healthy.

### **Park Maintenance Goals**

### 12.22

**Professionally and effectively manage Rock County's park, outdoor recreation and open space facilities.**

#### **Objectives:**

##### **12.22.1**

Continue to partner with nonprofit, volunteer and Friends organizations to wisely use their abilities to supplement Rock County resources.

##### **12.22.2**

Prepare and update individual site plans for all Rock County parks.

##### **12.22.3**

Provide substantial increase in the level of maintenance for existing parkland and recreation facilities through sufficient personnel, material and equipment.

##### **12.22.4**

When appropriate, utilize professional planning and design services to aid in preparing future park site plans and outdoor recreation and open space facility plans.

##### **12.22.5**

Undertake a thorough facilities inventory.

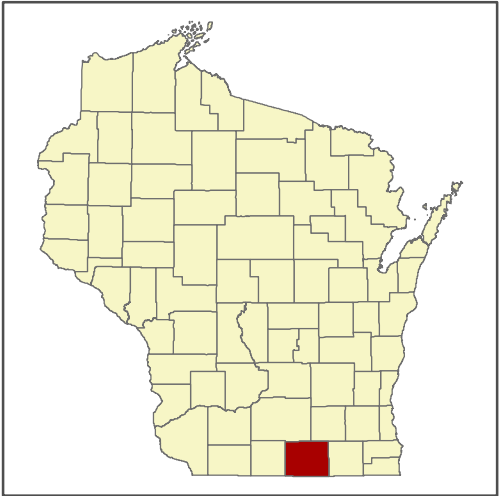
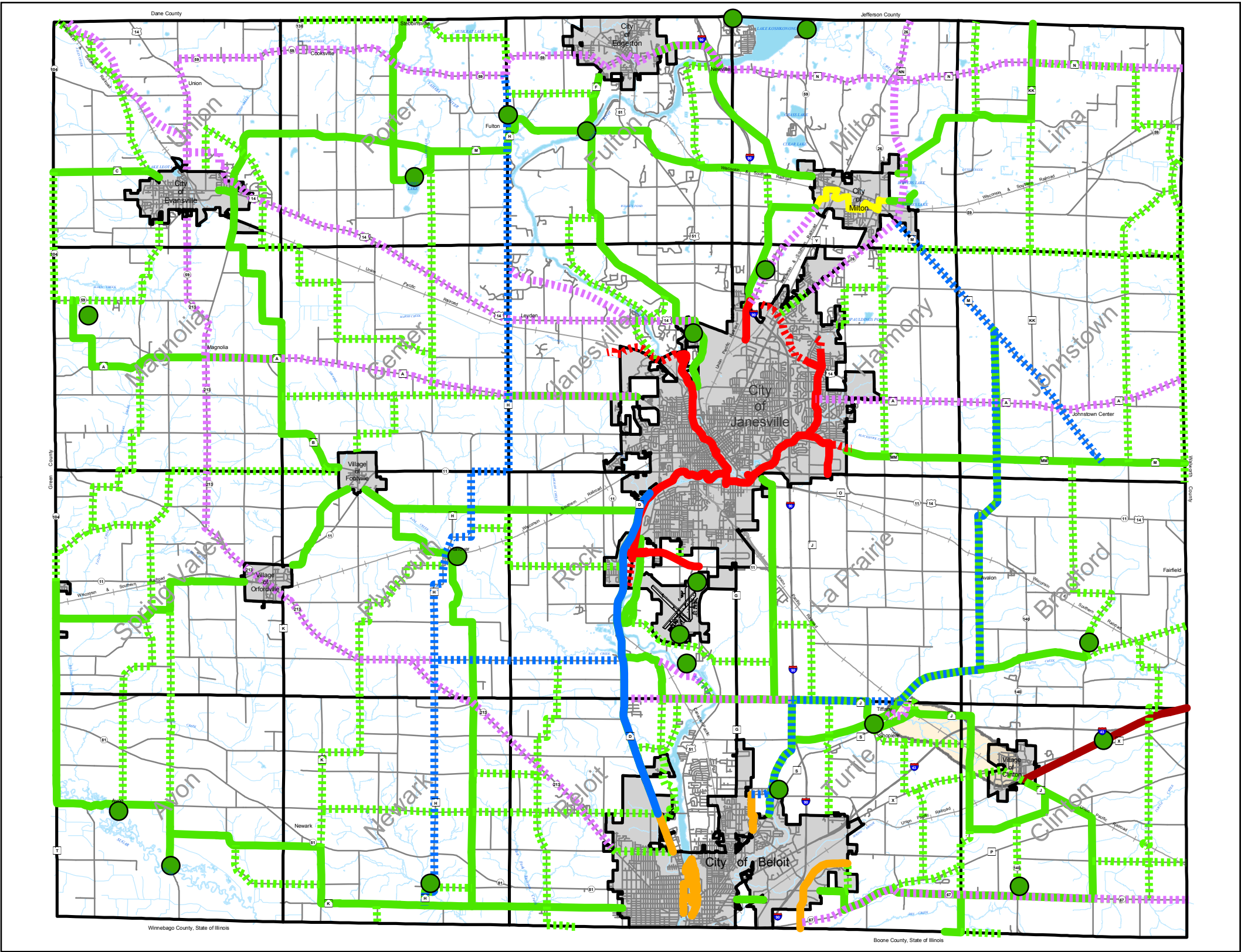
##### **12.22.6**

Implement a facilities management plan for the next 5 years.

The following updated maps reference the existing POROS plan policies that follow them. These policies will be continued in the 2009-2014 POROS Plan.

# Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes and Trails Plan

Rock County, Wisconsin



- County Park/Recreation Area
- ice\_age\_multi-use\_trail
- Existing Designated Bicycle Lane
- Proposed Designated Bicycle Lane
- Proposed Bicycle / Pedestrian Trail (Off Road)
- Existing City of Janesville Bicycle Trail
- Proposed City of Janesville Bicycle Trail
- City of Beloit Bicycle Trail
- Existing Rock County Bicycle Route
- Proposed Rock County Bicycle Route
- Pelishek Nature Trail
- City of Milton Ice Age Trail



Data Source: Rock County Planning and Development.

**12.23**

trails.

**Rock County Bicycle/Pedestrian Routes and Trails**

The Rock County Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan will connect centers of activity and communities in a direct and safe manner. This would include places of employment, place of residence or recreational and natural areas. Two criteria used in determining bicycle route locations are the relative lack of hilly terrain, and the low volume traffic intensity of the route. Loop routes were established to enable bicyclists of all abilities to enjoy this form of recreation.

**Route & Trail Policies****12.23.1.a**

The Bicycle/Pedestrian Routes and Trails are herein established as part of the Transportation Plan element of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan - 2035.

**12.23.1.b**

Rock County shall design a network of bicycle/pedestrian routes and trails to connect population centers to places of employment, recreation and scenic beauty.

**12.23.1.c**

Off road bicycle/pedestrian trails shall be developed in conjunction with major state trunk and county trunk highway improvements projects in rural areas.

**12.23.1.d**

Abandoned rail corridors shall be acquired for development of off road bicycle trails if the development of such a trail furthers the county's goals for a bicycle and pedestrian system of

**12.23.1.e**

Rock County shall complete the Janesville/Milton trail as a multi-modal component of the Rock County Transportation Plan. This facility for bicycling, pedestrian and equestrian activities will also serve as a connection segment for the National Ice Age Trail System.

**12.23.1.f**

The existing Rock County Bicycle/Pedestrian Routes where appropriate shall include blacktop shoulders to allow for safe biking.

**12.23.1.g**

Trailheads with parking and restroom facilities shall be located at convenient locations along the bicycle and pedestrian system and should be clearly identified. Spacing for trailheads shall be based upon a 4-5 mile radius. All bicycle facilities must meet current AASHTO standards as set forth in their "Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities."

**12.23.1.h**

All bicycle facilities shall utilize signage as set for in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

**12.23.1.i**

The county's Bicycle/Pedestrian Routes & Trails Plan shall be reevaluated every 5 years to determine if the goals set forth are being met and if any changes in the plan are necessary to meet established goals.

### **12.23.1.j**

New bicycle routes shall have signs installed when the route is established.

### **12.23.1.k**

The Public Works Division shall be responsible for the manufacture, installation and maintenance of the signs.

### **12.23.1.l**

Complete plans for bicycle/pedestrian trails, separate from roadways, and submit them for Federal and State grants and matching funds.

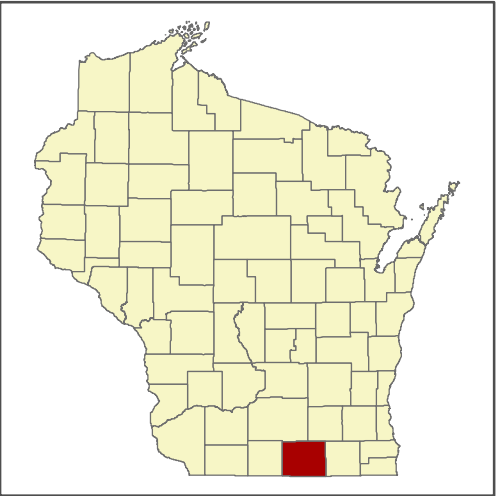
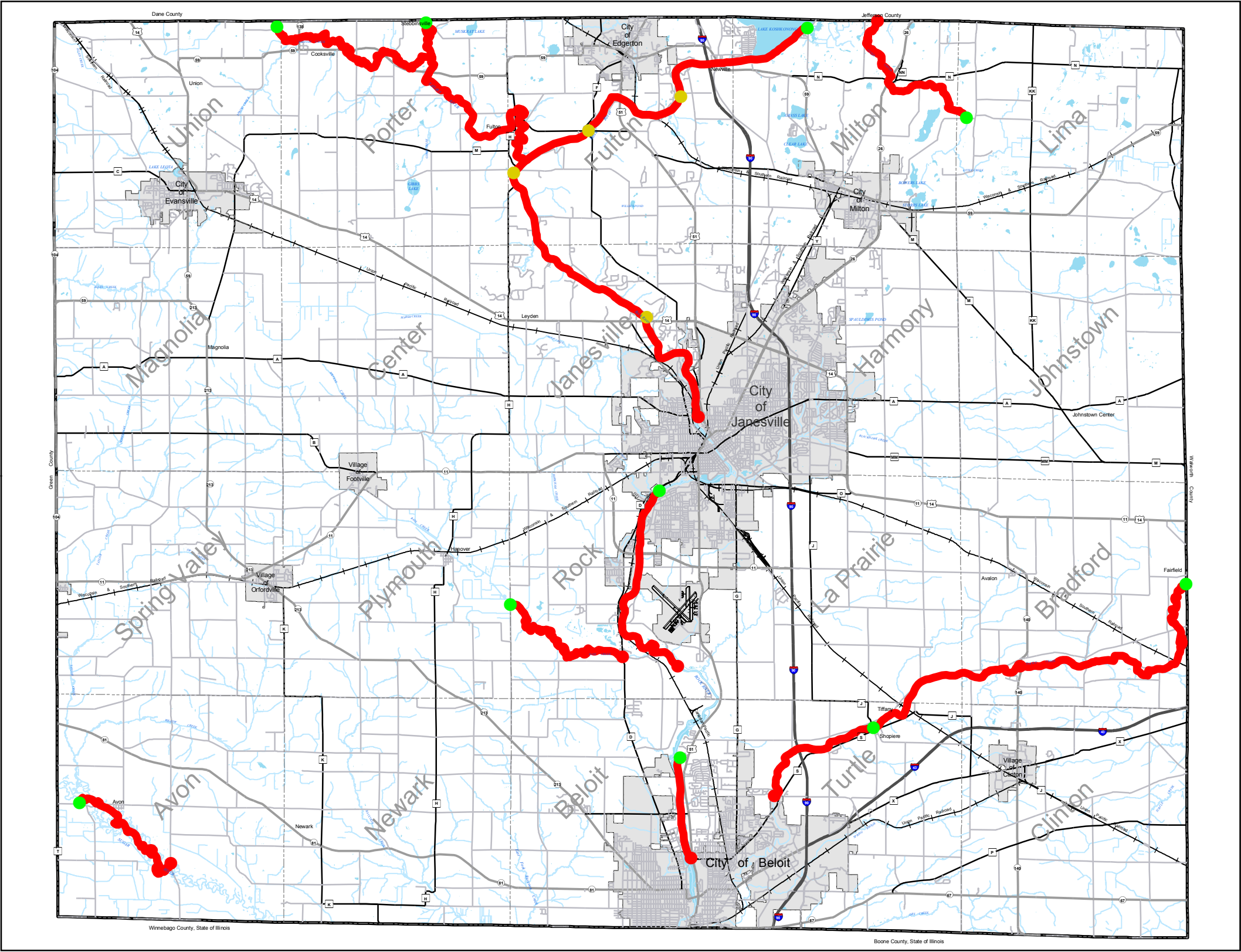
### **12.23.1.m**

The bicycle/pedestrian trails and routes shall provide regional interconnectivity as a component of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Janesville Area Transportation Study, the State Line Area Transportation Study and surrounding counties, such as connecting to the Jefferson County trail north of Milton.



# River Trails Plan

Rock County, Wisconsin



- Put In
- Take Out
- Put In or Take Out
- River Trail Segment
- Rivers and Streams
- Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds
- Township Boundary
- Cities and Villages
- Rock County
- Railroad
- Roads**
- Other Roads
- County Trunk
- Highway
- Interstate



Data Sources: Rock County Planning and Development.

Rock County Geographic Information Systems (GIS)  
Planning, Economic and Community  
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### **12.24**

#### **River Trails Plan**

The River Trails Plan Map located rivers and streams in Rock County that are favorable for canoeing/kayaking. Rivers and streams were selected based upon their scenic value, location of dams, and the ease in which to embark and disembark and the relative lack of powerboat traffic. The map indicates put-in and take-out points along the thirteen particular streams selected. The launch sites are both improved and unimproved. The plan attempts to connect both existing and future county park sites along the river trails.

#### **Policies**

##### **12.24.1.a**

Rock County, with citizen input, shall implement a system of river trails for canoeing and kayaking.

##### **12.24.1.b**

The Rock County River Trail System shall include existing and future parklands and will consider provisions for primitive or improved camping areas along these trails.

##### **12.24.1.c**

Interpretive signing shall be installed at sites along the trail for education purposes depicting flora and fauna.

##### **12.24.1.d**

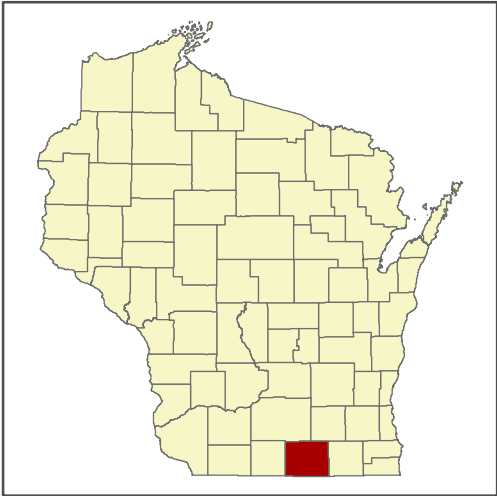
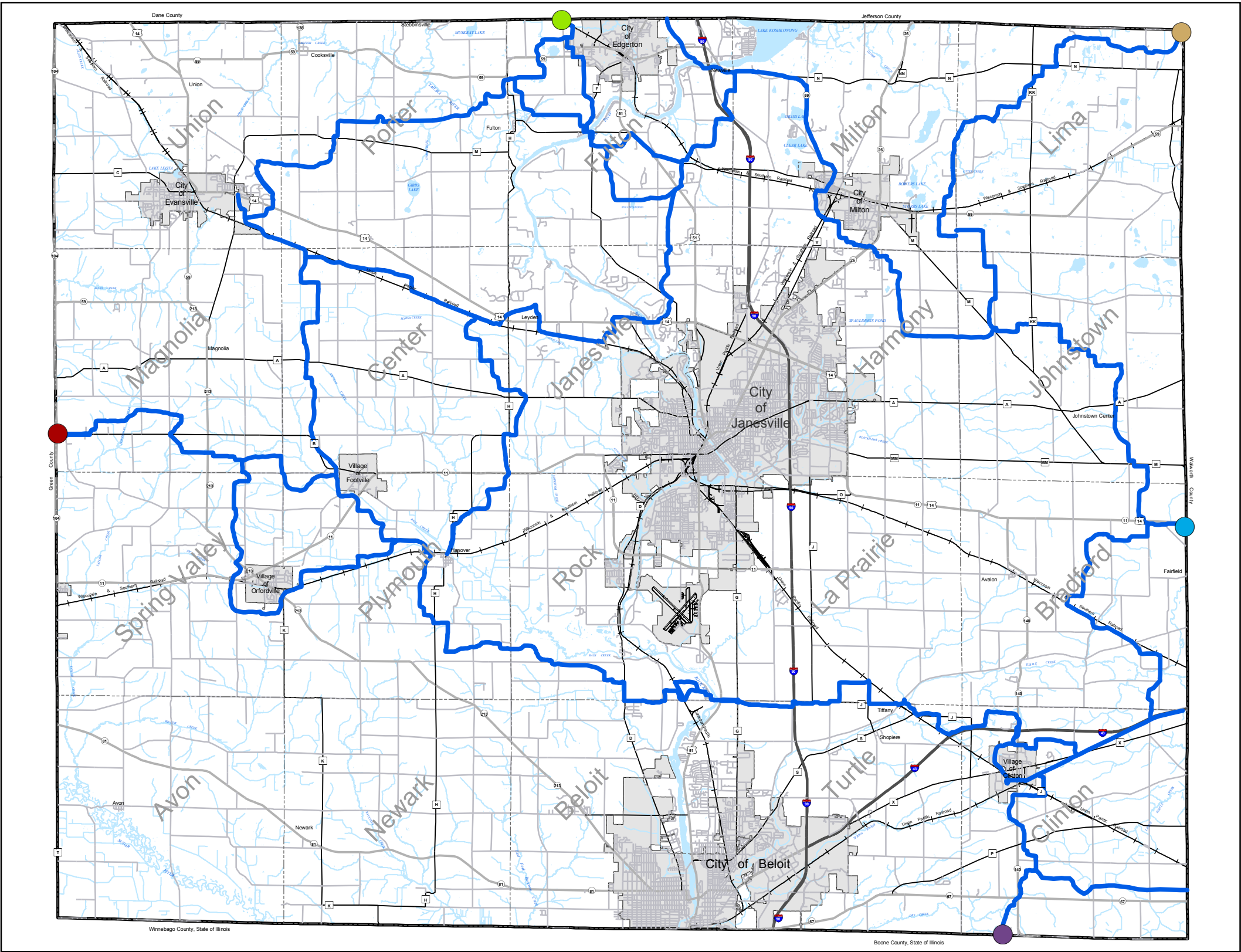
Signs are needed to indicate put-in and take-out places along the trail.

##### **12.24.1.e**

Provide promotion and education via brochures and maps to advertise the location of trail sites.

# Snowmobile Trails Plan

Rock County, Wisconsin



- Dane County Trail
  - State of Illinois Gateway Trail
  - Sugar River State Trail
  - Walworth County Trail
  - Walworth County Whitewater Trail
  - Rock County Snowmobile Trails
- Township Boundary
  - Cities and Villages
  - Rock County
  - Rivers and Streams
  - Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds
  - Railroad
- Roads**
- Other Roads
  - County Trunk
  - Highway
  - Interstate



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### 12.25

#### **Snowmobile Trail Plan**

The snowmobile Trail Plan takes full advantage of the Wisconsin Snowmobile Trail Aid Fund. This translates into 100% funding for acquisition of trail easements, 75% in advance and 25% upon inspection for the development and maintenance of the trail easements. Also, since the beginning of the program 22 bridges have been funded via the grant program. The most current (2002) route of the snowmobile trails in Rock County covers 226 miles. The trail encircles the entire county with numerous trail spurs with connection not only to other trails within Rock County but also adjoining counties and the State of Illinois.

#### **Policies**

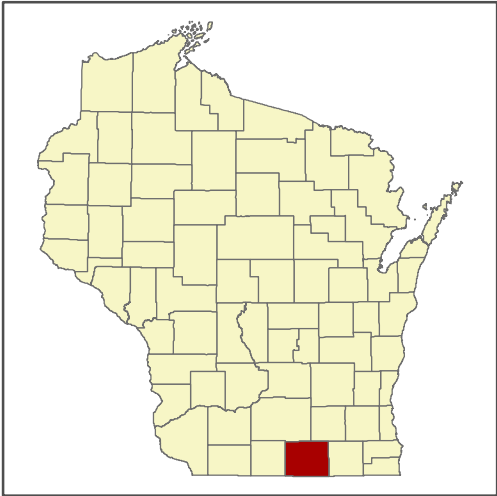
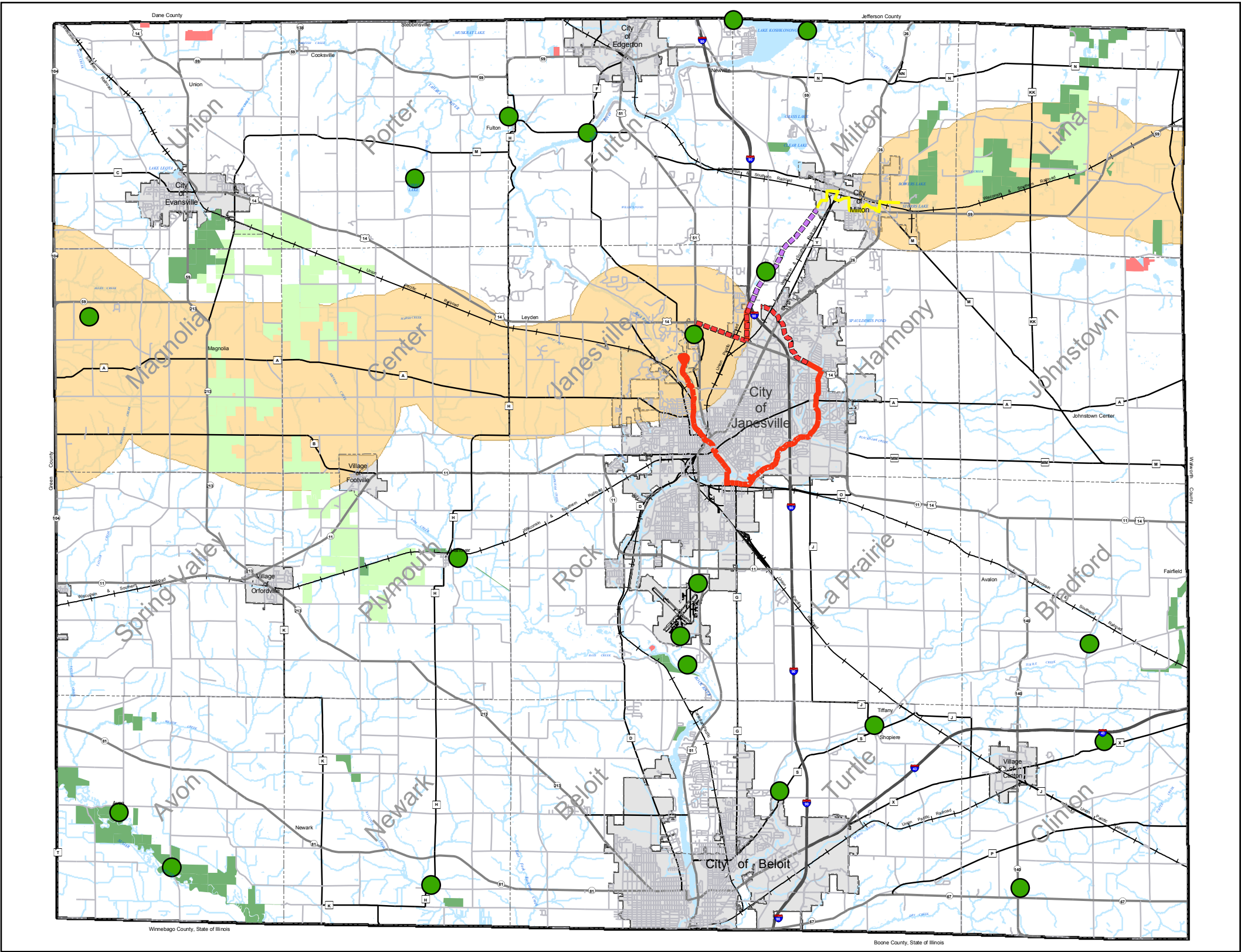
##### **12.25.1.a**

Rock County shall continue to implement the Snowmobile Trail Map originally adopted on June 11, 1981. Yearly reviews and updates are to be incorporated into each year's application for funding at 100% from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The bulk of this development and maintenance work will be contracted with the Rock County Alliance of Snowmobile Clubs.

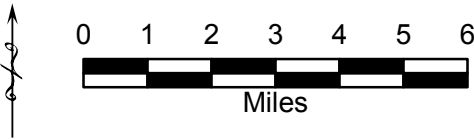


# Ice Age Trail Corridor Plan

Rock County, Wisconsin



- County Park/Recreation Area
- Proposed Ice Age Trail Connector Segment
- Proposed Ice Age Trail Segment
- Existing Ice Age Trail
- City of Milton Ice Age Trail
- Public Land - Federal Land
- Public Land - DNR Leased Land 2002
- Public Land - DNR Lands
- Proposed Ice Age Trail Study Corridor
- Township Boundary
- Cities and Villages
- Rock County
- Rivers and Streams
- Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds
- Railroad
- Roads**
  - Other Roads
  - County Trunk
  - Highway
  - Interstate



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**12.26****Ice Age Trail Corridor Plan**

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail (Ice Age NST) is a 1,200 mile trail that follows features left by the last glacial advance in Wisconsin. This includes Rock County. The Ice Age NST is built primarily for pleasure walking and hiking, and in some places cross-country skiing. Motorized vehicles are not a permitted use on any segment of the trail. Rock County will complete the Janesville/Milton rail trail that incorporates the Ice Age NST as one of its uses. This segment of trail is multiple-use and is also open to bicycling and horseback riding.

The roughly 4 mile corridor of Ice Age NST will extend from Walworth County in the eastern portion of the county and extend to the City of Milton, then proceed south to the City of Janesville along the rail/trail. The trail would then continue from the western edge of Janesville to Green County in the vicinity of Magnolia County Park. Existing public lands would be utilized whenever possible as a trail location.

**Policies****12.26.1.a**

Rock County shall foster cooperative relationships with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, National Park Service and the Rock County Chapter of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail to complete the Rock County segments of the Ice Age Trail.

**12.26.1.b**

Rock County shall work with the local chapter of the Ice Age Trail to identify an off-road footpath route for the trail through Rock County.

**12.26.1.c**

Rock County shall work with the local chapter of the Ice Age Trail to build the Ice Age NST through the Storrs, Lima and State Wildlife Areas and connect up with existing Ice Age Trail in Walworth County.

**12.26.1.d**

Rock County shall work in the study corridor areas to take the trail from the west side of the City of Janesville to Magnolia Bluff County Park and west to the Rock-Green County line.

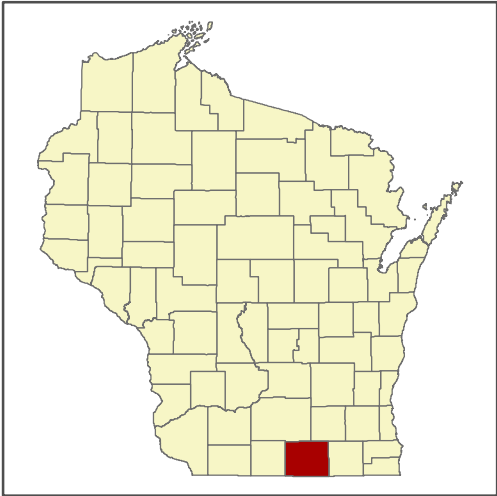
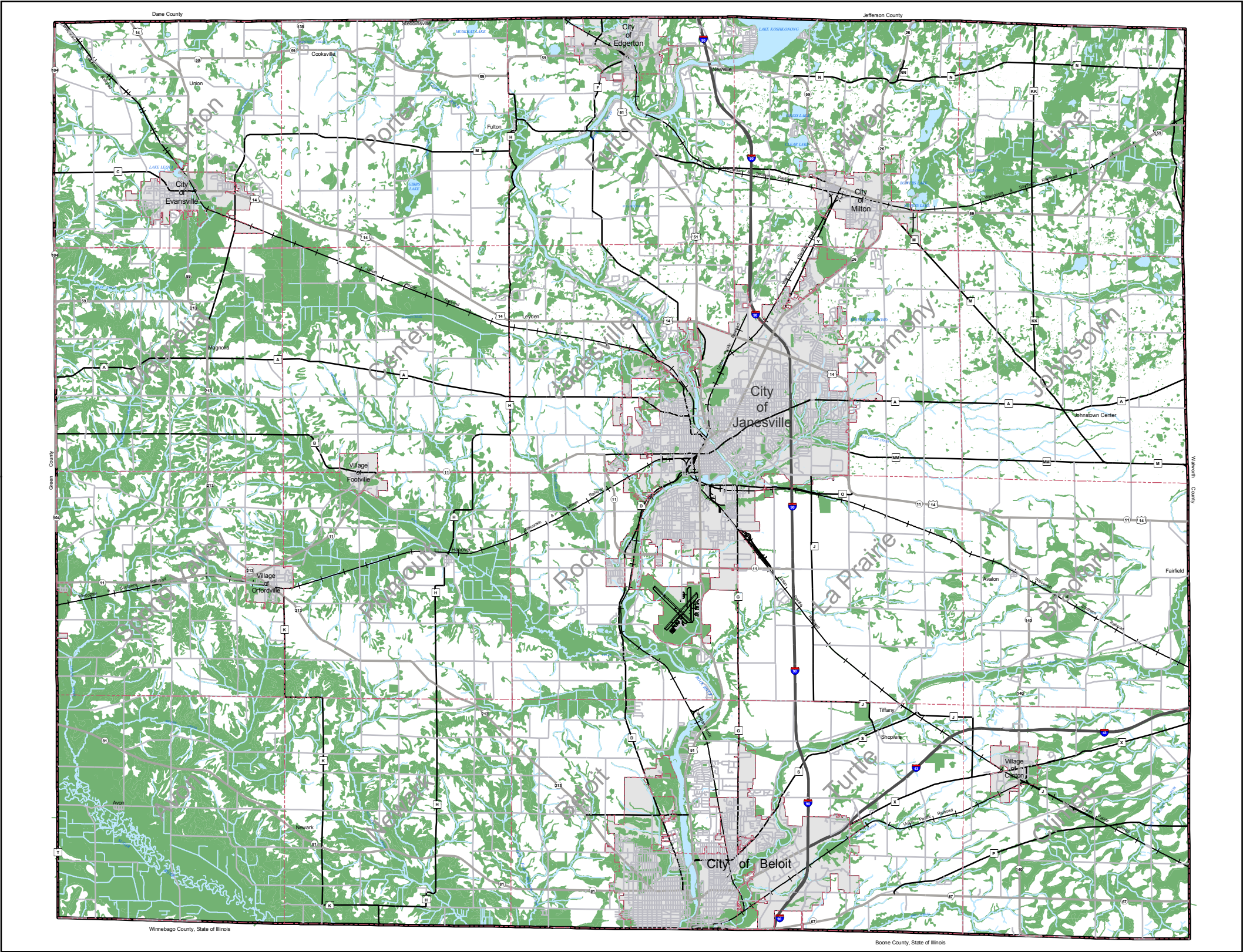
**12.26.1.e**

Rock County shall support and be responsible for the bulk of the work of the local Ice Age Chapter partnership agreement. Rock County shall assist with the development of the corridor for trail development and maintenance.

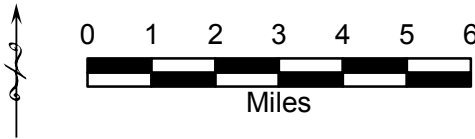


# Environmentally Significant Open Space Area (ESOSA)


Rock County, Wisconsin



- ESOSA
- Township Boundary
- Cities and Villages
- Rock County
- Rivers and Streams
- Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds
- Railroad
- Roads**
  - Other Roads
  - County Trunk
  - Highway
  - Interstate



Data Sources: Rock County Planning and Development.



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**12.27****Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas**

It is the goal and intent of Rock County to identify and conserve Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSA's) and to effectively manage them as "Green Infrastructure" to maintain and improve our environment for current and future generations. The ESOSA's and their governing policies were created during the last update to the Parks, Outdoor Recreation, Open Space Plan (POROS), and shall, continue to govern and outline the County's goals, objectives and policies regarding regulation, preservation and development activity within areas designated as ESOSA's.

However, it is further the intent that the ESOSA's eventually be incorporated into, and as part of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan, and thus, removed from the POROS plan in time. The Planning and Development Committee will consider the creation of new ESOSA methodologies, formulated using new, updated data, debated in a public process, and thereafter creating regulations and policies for consideration as part of this transition from the POROS plan to the Comprehensive Plan. Once that process is completed and the ESOSA's are consistent with and incorporated within the Rock County Comprehensive Plan, they shall be removed from this park plan update. It is expected that this transition shall take place by the end of 2010.

Environmental Significant Open Space Areas serve people as green infrastructure connecting park system components together to form a continuous park and open space environment. More importantly though, these areas provide for natural resource protection, rejuvenation, open landscapes, and scenic views.

**12.27.1****Comprehensive Plan Policies****12.27.1.a**

Rock County shall incorporate and integrate the efforts to identify and preserve environmentally significant open space areas as described in this plan into the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resource Element of the Comprehensive Plan described in Section 66.1001, Wisconsin State Statutes.

**12.27.1.b**

Rock County shall inventory (map, catalogue, monitor) areas of natural resources and archaeological, cultural, and historic significance as described in the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resource Element of the Comprehensive Plan described in Section 66.1001, Wisconsin State Statutes.

**12.27.1.c**

New trails, where practical, shall be located in Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas.

**12.27.1.d**

Rock County shall continue to consider the local natural resources and physical characteristics as basic shaping factors in the preparation of the Rock County Comprehensive Plan - 2035.

**12.27.2****Physical Characteristics Policies****12.27.2.a**

The following shall be considered Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas and are critical elements of this Plan to protect and manage this "green infrastructure" in the natural environment and within the limitations of their physical characteristics and features.



- i. Surface water and intermediate streams
- ii. 75-foot shoreland setback areas.
- iii. Wetlands
- iv. Floodplains
- v. Steep slopes greater than or equal to 16%
- vi. Hydric soils
- vii. Natural areas
- viii. Potential groundwater protection areas
- ix. Kettles and depressional areas.
- x. DNR hunting lands
- xi. Federal lands
- xii. Airport open space areas
- xiii. Rock County Town land, open spaces, and recreational areas
- xiv. County parks

**12.27.2.b**

An Environmentally Significant Open Space Area map shall be developed composed of the fourteen items listed above.

**12.27.3****Natural Resources Policies****12.27.3.a**

Rock County seeks to acquire lands, easements, and development rights to protect areas identified as Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas.

**12.27.3.b**

Rock County shall initiate a comprehensive survey of the county's natural areas, building on the documentation contained in the Rock County Natural Areas Survey –2001.

**12.27.3.c**

Rock County shall encourage enhancement of the natural resource values of reclaimed nonmetallic mines in the county.

**12.27.3.d**

Rock County shall integrate erosion control and storm water management practices for all park improvements to enhance water quality, ensure safe swimming areas and protect habitat for game fish.

**12.27.3.e**

Rock County shall develop shore land and stabilization management plans for all county parks having water frontage.

**12.27.3.f**

Land containing identified rare or endangered plants or animals shall be incorporated into the Rock County Park, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space system through conservation easements, and dedications or outright purchase.

**12.27.3.g**

All natural areas delineated in the Rock County Natural Areas Study ranked five and above shall be preserved.

**12.27.3.h**

Rock County seeks to enhance viability and promote restoration of original prairie vegetation.

**12.27.3.i**

Rock County shall continue to identify and map components of environmental significance.

**12.27.4****Green Infrastructure Policies****12.27.4.a**

Rock County shall support the preservation of kettle areas.

**12.27.4.b**

Rock County seeks to preserve its groundwater supply from overuse or pollution by conducting studies and inventories of the natural features associated with groundwater recharge.

**12.27.4.c**

Rock County shall continue to implement the state's Farmland Preservation, Floodplain and Shoreland protection programs that serve to preserve open space.

**12.27.5****Development Policies****12.27.5.a**

Rock County shall support the development of land use and site plans that promote development in areas best suited by natural features and existing facilities.

**12.27.5.b**

Rock County shall adopt provisions in its Land Division Regulations that incorporate protection of environmentally significant open space areas.

**12.27.5.c**

Rock County shall support the use of "Conservation Subdivisions" within the county that cluster development and preserve open space.

**12.27.5.d**

Rock County shall develop ordinances and programs that minimize construction site erosion and post-construction storm water runoff to help protect aquatic habitat, insure water-based recreational opportunities, and minimize property damage caused by storm water runoff.

**12.27.5.e**

Rock County shall encourage the management of public and private development, open space, natural and community resources, continuing their availability and providing cost-effective facilities and services for current and future generations.

**12.27.5.f**

New trails, where practical, shall be located in Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas.

**12.27.5.g**

All county parks, specialty parks and recreation areas shall be included as a component of the county's Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas.

**12.27.5.h**

New parks and existing park expansions shall be located within Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas depicted on the plan map. The location and characteristics of these areas need to be considered as an integral part in the park site planning process.

### Plan Implementation

A plan is only as good as its ability to be implemented. The previous chapter outlined specific goals and objectives that have the ability to make the Rock County Parks Division a stronger and more successful agency. This chapter is organized into a series of action plans that should be implemented to meet the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. All of the work involved in this plan is represented in the following pages. It is the culmination of all the research, meetings, responses and discussions that have transpired during the planning process. The end goal of this plan is to set priorities for the Parks Division to follow with the support of the public each year that will positively impact the quality of life for the residents.

The following sequence of action items should be viewed as an agreement between the agency and the public. It is specific in nature to make significant improvements to the agency in a short amount of time. One of the key items that will allow for continued improvements and implementation are frequent internal staff discussions regarding project costs and direction as well as the timeframe that will be necessary to accomplish the project. This is encouraged to match the agency's financial position with capital project funding. This is a key step to ensure project success. It is important to have a clear funding picture for the projects of this master plan to get the necessary buy-in at all levels within the organization. This will ensure the financial monies are in place during the upcoming budget years to move forward with each component of the implementation action plan. The costs that follow are only preliminary numbers and will need to be finalized each budget year.

In review of the recent survey data, the preferred amenities include the following ranked in order:

1	Acquire more scenic areas
2	Start nature programs
3	Build more hiking trails
4	Build nature centers
5	Build more picnic areas
6	Build more playgrounds
7	Acquire new park land
8	Build dog parks
9	Build more campgrounds
10	Build more boat launches
11	Build more athletic fields
12	Build more equestrian trails
13	Build frisbee golf courses
14	Build more snowmobile trails

The action items outlined by year are based on the public survey data, public meetings and meetings with various county groups and staff. The conceptual ideas for each park are subject to change as each specific park is looked at. Final programming and development for each park will be developed with a master plan and public input process specific to that park.

The Rock County Parks Division has certain infrastructure needs and obligations, such as maintaining the trail network, facilities and service roads and creating safe environments that will continue to be reviewed and evaluated.

The chart below is the Quality of Service Scorecard. It takes four categories (facility use, cost, level of service and impact) and ranks each park or facility. The highest scores are the most important items, which should be focused on first.

Park	Facility Use	Cost	Level of Service	Impact	Score
New Buildings	3	3	4	3	13
Gibbs Lake Park	3	3	3	3	12
Regional Trail Development	3	3	4	2	12
Park Land Acquisition	1	3	4	3	11
New Park Development	2	3	4	2	11
Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail	1	3	4	2	10
Ice Age Connector Trail	2	1	4	3	10
Sweet-Allyn Park	3	3	2	2	10
Beckman Mill Park	3	3	2	1	9
Happy Hollow Park	2	2	3	2	9
Magnolia Bluff Park	2	3	2	2	9
Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park	3	2	1	3	9
Carver-Roehl Park	2	3	2	1	8
Murwin Park	1	3	2	2	8
Lee Park	1	2	2	2	7
P&T Snowmobile Trail	1	1	4	1	7
Snowmobile Trail	1	1	4	1	7
Ice Age Park	3	1	1	1	6
Sugar River Park	2	2	1	1	6
Indianford Park	2	1	1	1	5
Koshkonong Lake Access	2	1	1	1	5
Royce Dahlgren Park	1	2	1	1	5
Airport Park	1	1	1	1	4
Schollmeyer Park	1	1	1	1	4
Avon Park	1	1	1	1	4
Hanover Wildlife Area	1	1	1	1	4
	1 - Low Use	1 - Low Cost (\$300,000 & Under)	1 - Low (CCP)	1 - Low Impact	
	2- Medium Use	2 - Medium Cost (\$300,000 - \$800,000)	2 - Medium (CRRA)	2 - Medium Impact	
	3 - High Use	3 - High Cost (\$800,000 & Up)	3 - High (CROSP)	3 - High Impact	
			4 - High (Special Use/Trails)		



### 2008-2009 Projects In-Process

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	Carver-Roehl Park Entrance Work	\$75,000
2	Happy Hollow Road	\$40,000
3	Gibbs Lake Vault Toilet	\$20,000
4	Murwin Park Vault Toilet	\$20,000
5	Beckman Mill Park - Boardwalk, Fishing Pier, Lighting	\$175,000
6	Sweet-Allyn Park Dam Construction	\$TBD
7	5 Arch Bridge Viewing Project	\$TBD

### 2009 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	Gibbs Lake Park	\$350,000-\$400,000
2	Happy Hollow Park	\$200,000-\$250,000
3	Beckman Mill Park	\$500,000-550,000

#### Gibbs Lake Park

**Park Description:** Gibbs Lake Park is 286.6 acres and currently has equestrian and hiking trails, boat launch, two parking areas – one for equestrian trailers and one for cars. The area also includes lake shoreline, wetlands, woodlands, prairie and savanna areas. The Rock County Parks Division is looking to acquire more land to the northwest of the park.

**Recommendations:** They include one main trail that is multi-use and possibly paved with asphalt or compacted stone with a series of fitness stations (not the equestrian trails), a mountain bike circuit, a new restroom building, a small playground, site furnishings, picnic shelter, native landscaping, nature education pods, a small fishing pier, ADA accessibility to all park elements.

**Environmental Recommendations:** They include conducting prescribed burns to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails along the shoreline and in wetland complexes, cut and stump treating common buckthorn and multiflora rose in woodland and shoreline areas, using grass-selective herbicide in the prairie and savanna areas to treat cool-season grasses, cut and stump treating gray dogwood and olive species in open prairie/savanna areas and installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatment.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$350,000-\$400,000**

**Happy Hollow Park**

Park Description: Happy Hollow Park is 191.2 acres bordering on the Rock River. It provides hiking trails, equestrian trails, a boat launch, parking area, shelter with benches, picnic tables, drinking water access and restroom facilities.

Recommendations: They include upgrading the trail system, provide erosion control along the Rock River, adding a shelter, adding a small playground, providing ADA access to park elements and upgrading Happy Hollow Road.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control invasive species that may be present in any natural area and installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$200,000-\$250,000**

**Beckman Mill Park**

Park Description: Beckman Mill Park is 51.6 acres and currently includes educational museums, picnic shelters, flushing and non-flushing restroom facilities, water access, old machinery and demonstration areas, river access, trails, fire ring and parking area. The park also contains the Beckman Howe Mill and the Welty Environmental Center. Natural areas on site include a prairie planting, riparian shorelines, oak savanna, woodlands and wetlands.

Recommendations: They include providing a trail head with new trails/boardwalk area on the north side of Mill Pond, adding an overlook and fishing pier, environmental education signs, adding a nature themed playground, site furnishings, native landscaping and ADA access to park elements.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments, using herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails in shoreline and wetland areas, selective cut and stump-treating willow and maple trees along shoreline, use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie and savanna areas to treat cool-season grasses, restore shoreline area (minimum 35 feet) and reduce mowing.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$500,000-\$550,000**











### 2010 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	New Buildings	\$TBD
2	Park Land Acquisition	\$800,000
3	Carver-Roehl Park	\$800,000-850,000
4	Sweet-Allyn Park	\$100,000-150,000
5	Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park	\$150,000-\$200,000

#### New Buildings:

During the course of this planning study, the need for indoor recreation space was identified. There is an initiative under way with the Welty Environmental Center to create an improved nature center. The County should seek out a partnership for a nature center at Beckman Mill Park that focuses on the use of green building technology. There is also a need at strategic park locations for small park support buildings to be primarily used for storage, restrooms, and programming. These buildings would range in size from 2,000 to 3,000 square feet. Finally, the County should explore partnership opportunities for a 25,000 SF community center for county residents to use. The programming for this community center will be developed in cooperation with allied agencies.

#### Park Acquisition:

Acquire 50-80 acre parcel in NE part of County

**Estimated Project Cost: \$800.000 (\$10,000 an acre)**

Acquire additional land at Magnolia Bluff if possible

Acquire 100 acre plus size park parcel between Beloit and Janesville for Regional Park (Tourism Draw)  
(Look at Rockford Park District ((IL) Sports Core as an example for Wisconsin prototype)

#### Carver-Roehl Park

**Park Description:** Carver-Roehl Park contains 51.8 acres of hiking and cross-country skiing trails, group shelter, swings, non-flushing restroom facilities, benches, historic grave site, water access, and picnic tables. The area also includes floodplain forests, a riparian corridor along the Spring Brook and woodland areas.

**Recommendations:** They include improving the entryway into the park to prevent it from flooding and possibly adding a second park entrance off of E. Creek Road, adding a small parking area by the main group shelter, adding a second parking area with picnic shelters and a small nature center, upgrading the bridges throughout the trails system and improving the existing trails by resurfacing.

**Environmental Recommendations:** They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass within riparian corridors and wet prairie areas, cut and stump treating common buckthorn and multiflora rose in woodland areas, and installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$800,000-\$850,000**

**Sweet-Allyn Park**

Park Description: Sweet-Allyn Park is 39 plus acres bordering Turtle Creek and includes a playground, picnic tables, picnic shelter, restroom facilities, a memorial area, a baseball field, boat or canoe launch area, fire department tug-o-war area, sand volleyball, benches, park grills, drinking water access, dog area, basketball area and parking. Natural areas include stream bank, woodland areas and drainage way.

Recommendations: They include upgrading the playground area, providing a dog park, upgrading the backstop fencing, upgrading ADA accessibility, adding micro soccer field overlays, and adding a basketball court.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass along stream banks and seasonal swale, cut and stump treating common buckthorn and box elder in woodland areas, using grass-selective herbicide along shoreline and woodland edges to treat cool-season grasses and installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000-\$150,000**

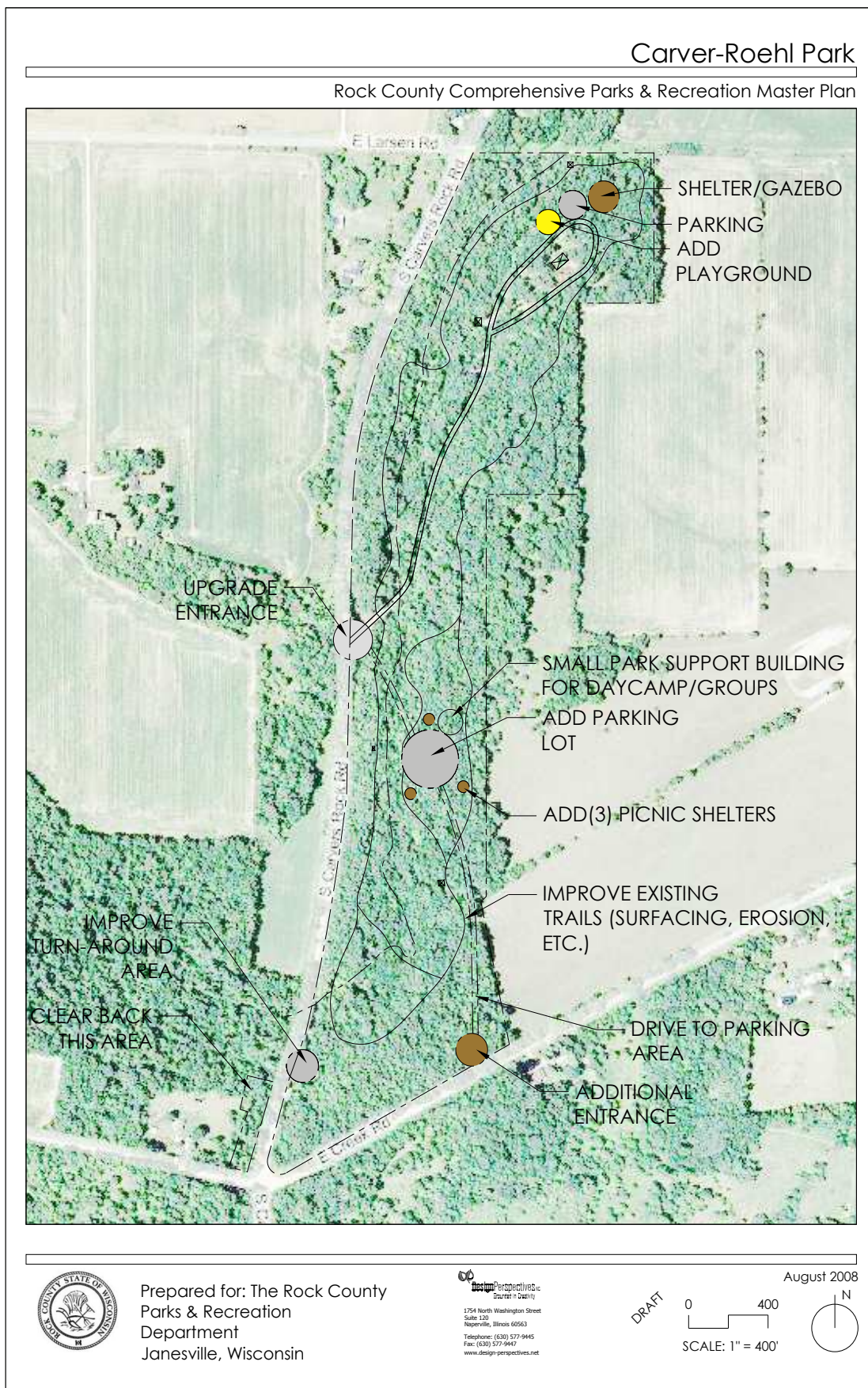
**Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park**

Park Description: Walt Lindemann Sportsman's Park is 10 acres and includes a deer observation area, playground, drinking water access, picnic shelter, an open area with soccer field overlays, restroom facilities and park grills. There are also several buildings on site including the Rock County Cooperative Pheasant Project (which is now used for storage) and two storage sheds on the north end of the park.

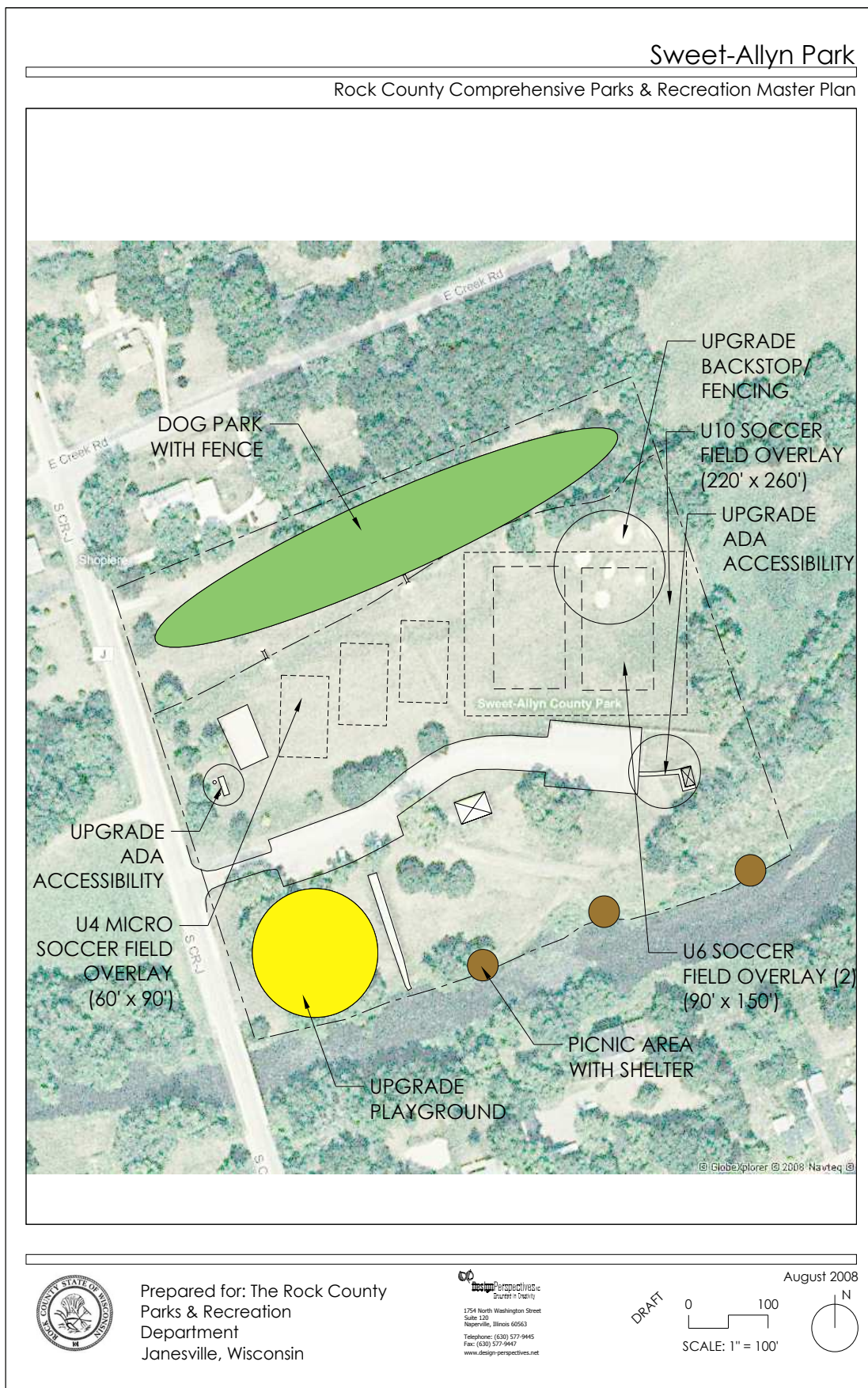
Recommendations: They include re-paving the parking area, adding a multi-use paved path, adding a small playground and large themed playground, renovating the existing shelter, upgrading the deer area and adding a shelter.

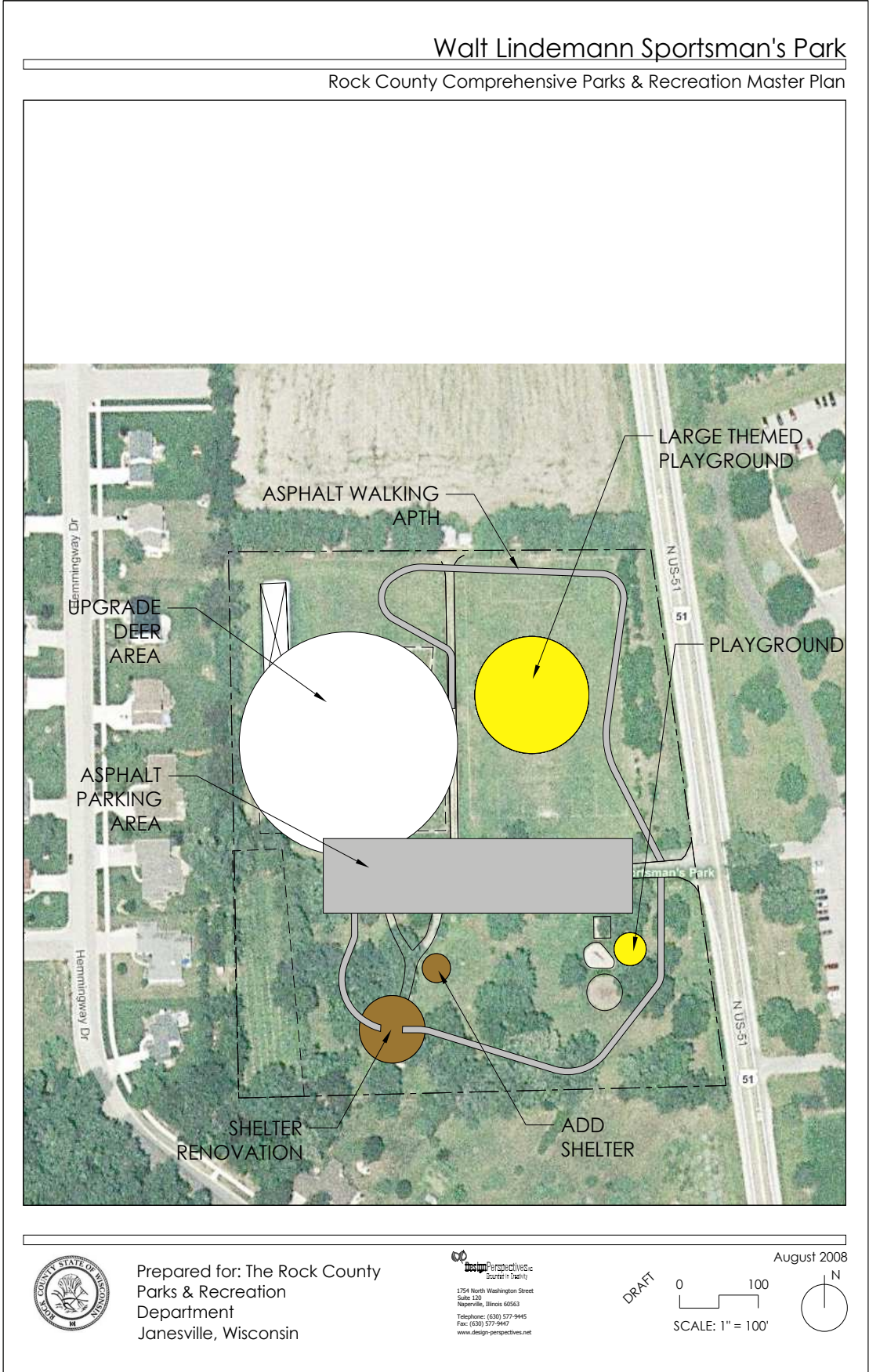
**Estimated Project Cost: \$150,000-\$200,000**













### 2011 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	Regional Trail Development	\$TBD
2	Pelishek-Tiffany Nature Trail Ice Age Connector Trail P&T Snowmobile Trail Snowmobile Trail	\$TBD \$TBD \$TBD \$TBD
3	Gibbs Lake Park	\$300,000-\$350,000
4	Happy Hollow Park	\$350,000-\$400,000
5	Beckman Mill Park	\$5,000,000-\$5,500,000
6	Magnolia Bluff Park	\$1,500,000-\$2,000,000

#### Regional Trails

Seek out funding partnerships and acquire needed easements to complete missing or incomplete trail. Look at developing a "Rock River Trail" running from North of Janesville to IL state line. This would be a fantastic multi-use trail that could become a regional draw.

#### Trails

Continue to improve trail connections to all areas around the county. Seek out funding to help with trail improvements.

#### Gibbs Lake Park

Park Description: Gibbs Lake Park is 286.6 acres and currently has equestrian and hiking trails, boat launch, two parking areas – one for equestrian trailers and one for cars. The Rock County Parks Division is looking to acquire more land to the northwest of the park. The area also includes lake shoreline, wetlands, woodlands, prairie and savanna areas.

Recommendations: They include expanding the boat launch area, upgrading the parking lot, adding a park sign, a campground and park shelter.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$300,000 - \$350,000**

**Happy Hollow Park**

Park Description: Happy Hollow Park is 206 acres bordering on the Rock River. It provides hiking trails, a boat launch, parking area, shelter with benches, picnic tables, drinking water access and restroom facilities.

Recommendations: They include adding parking, upgrading the boat launch area and site furnishings.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$350,000 - \$400,000**

**Beckman Mill Park**

Park Description: Beckman Mill Park is 50 acres and currently includes educational museums, picnic shelters, flushing and non-flushing restroom facilities, water access, old machinery and demonstration areas, river access, trails, fire ring and parking area. The park also contains the Beckman Howe Mill and the Welty Environmental Center. Natural areas on site include a prairie planting, riparian shorelines, oak savanna, woodlands and wetlands.

Recommendations: They include asphalt paving the entrance drive and parking area, a nature center, park sign and a second entrance.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$5,000,000 - \$5,500,000**

**Magnolia Bluff Park**

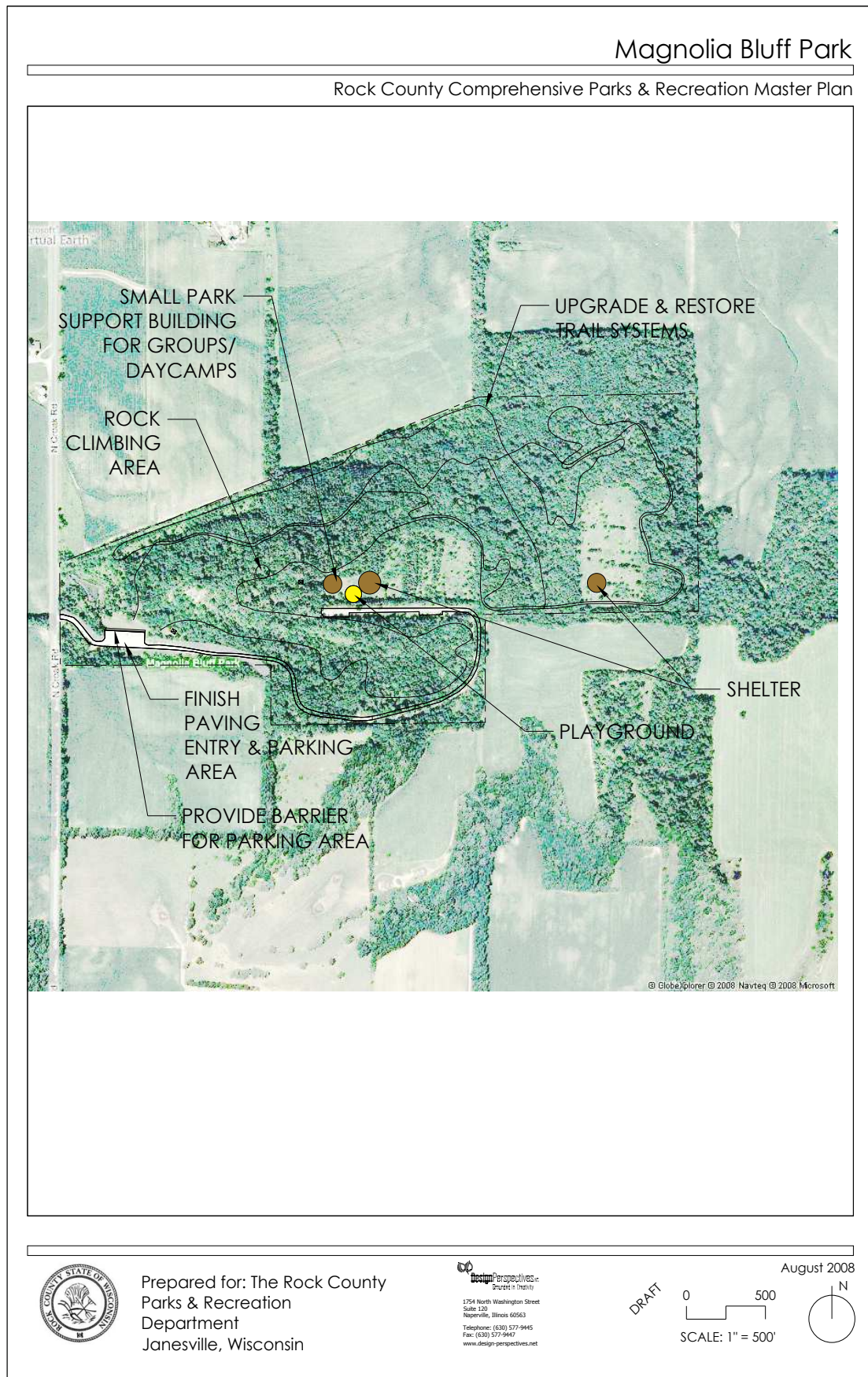
Park Description: Magnolia Bluff Park is 120 acres and contains the highest point in Rock County. The park contains a picnic areas, restroom facilities, drinking water access, fire pit, park grills and a series of trails, including hiking and equestrian trails. There are also two parking areas, one at the bottom of the bluff and one at the top. Natural areas include woodland, prairie/savanna, bluff restoration and wetlands.

Recommendations: They include completing paving of the entry road and lower parking area, remove the guard rails on the lower parking area, possibly expand the equestrian parking area and provide a more natural barrier, adding a playground, rock climbing area, a small nature center that can be opened when needed for large group activities, adding two park shelters and upgrading the trail system to help prevent erosion (designate trails for both equestrian and hiking and also have equestrian only and hiking only trails). Erosion control measures should also be continued on the bluff and throughout the park.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass and cattails in wetland complex, using grass-selective herbicide in the prairie/savanna and along woodland edges to treat cool-season grasses, cut and stump treating common buckthorn, box elder, mulberry and multiflora rose in woodland areas, using erosion control blanket and plant a native prairie buffer around bluff edge to further prevent erosion and installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$1,500,000 - \$2,000,000**





## 2012 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	Sugar River Park	\$350,000-\$400,000
2	Indianford Park	\$250,000-\$300,000
3	Ice Age Park	\$75,000

**Sugar River Park**

Park Description: Sugar River Park is 6.5 acres and sits on the Sugar River, Park amenities include a boat launch area, parking and a fire pit. Much of the park is floodplain forest and stream bank.

Recommendations: They include paving the entrance and parking areas, improving the boat launch area and providing a second launch area, adding a picnic shelter and adding hiking trails (possibly a boardwalk area, since much of the forest area is flooded during the year) and adding ADA accessibility to park elements.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in natural areas where enough fuel is present to control invasive plant material, cut and stump treating box elder and common buckthorn shrubs/trees in floodplain forest, using herbicide on patches of reed canary grass in floodplain forests and along stream bank and installing enhancement seed mixes in natural areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$350,000 - \$400,000**

**Indianford Park**

Park Description: Indianford Park is made up of two parcels (1.2 acres) of land on both sides of the Rock River. Currently it has non-flushing restroom facilities, parking area, picnic table and shoreline for fishing. The shoreline is dammed with rip-rap and has a dominant species of reed canary grass and smart weed.

Recommendations: They include upgrading the parking area to asphalt and striping the parking stalls, adding an asphalt path to a new picnic shelter and new pre-fabricated restroom facilities, screening the existing dumpster, adding a new park sign, adding a canoe launch and enhancing the shoreline with a seed mix to increase native diversity and slope stability.

Environmental Recommendations: They include installing a shoreline enhancement seed mix to increase native diversity and slope stability.

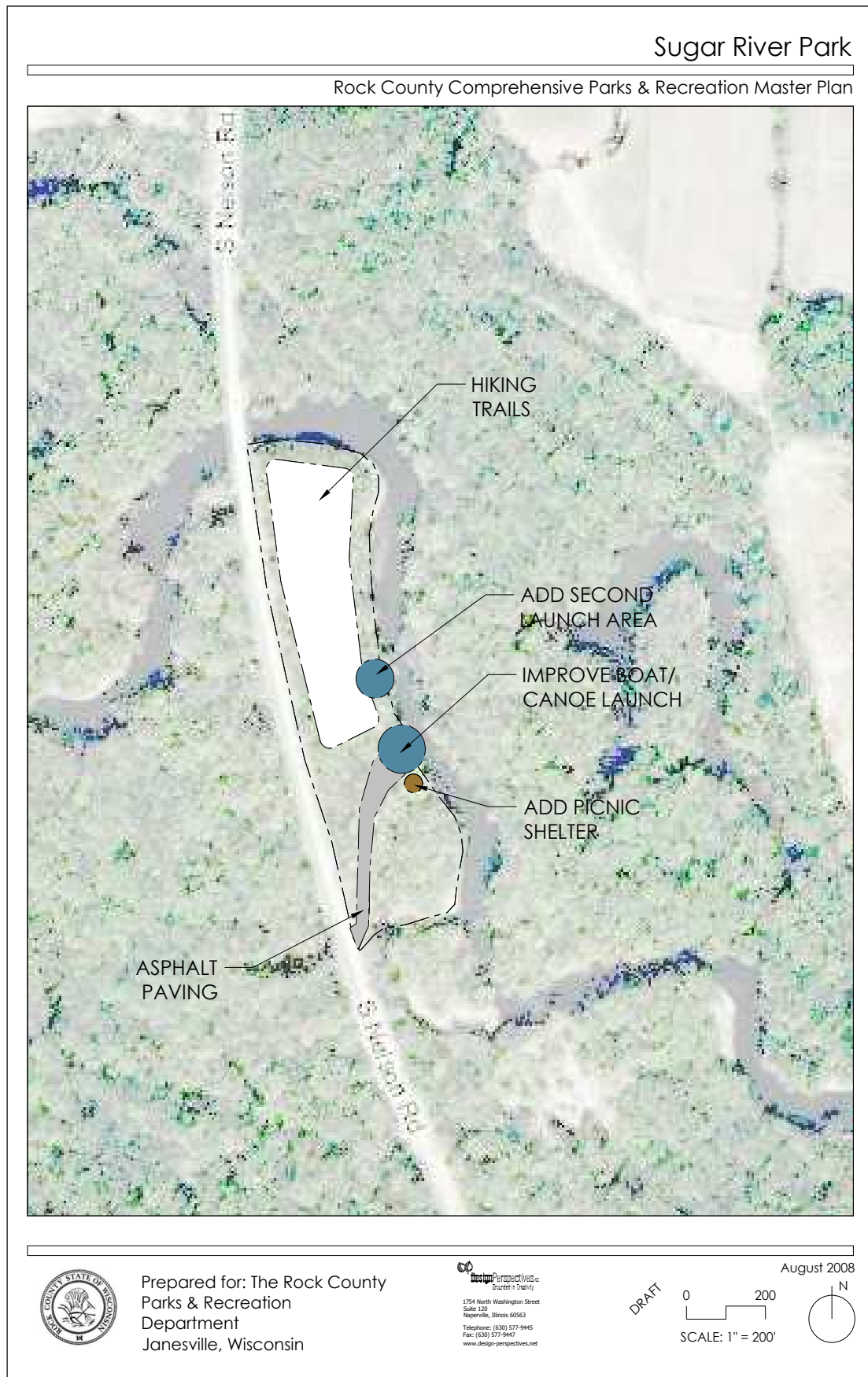
**Estimated Project Cost: \$250,000 - \$300,000**

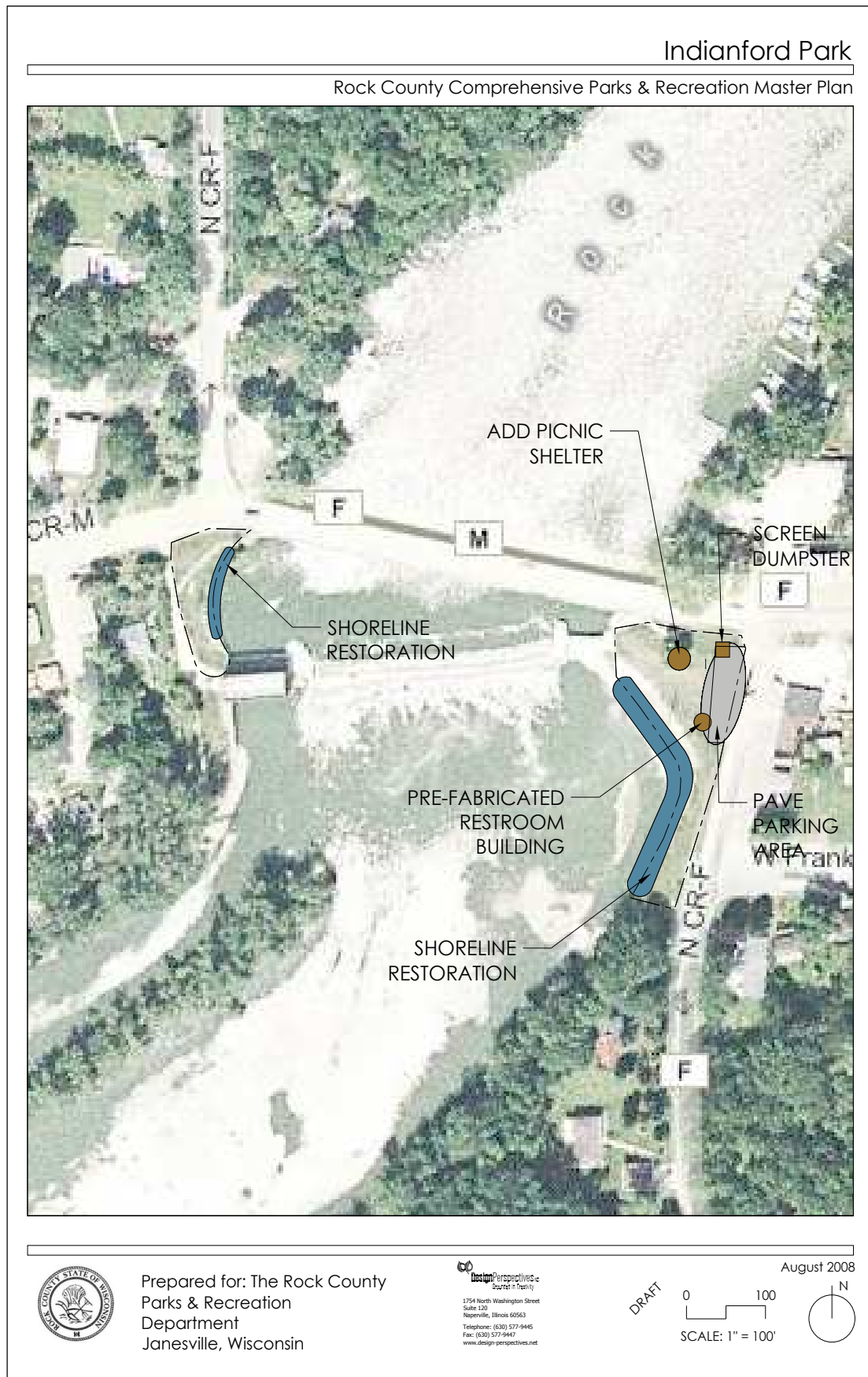
**Ice Age Park**

Park Description: This is a small park with access to the Ice Age Connector Trail. Site amenities include benches, picnic tables and a pond.

Recommendations: They include adding a trailhead and improved multi-use trails.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$75,000**









### 2013 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	Murwin Park	\$850,000-\$900,000
2	Lee Park	\$650,000-\$700,000
3	Royce Dallman Park	\$550,000-\$600,000

#### Murwin Park

Park Description: Murwin Park is 42 acres and located on the Yahara River. It currently provides river access, picnic tables, drinking water access, park grills, restroom facilities and a parking area.

Recommendations: They include paving the parking areas, adding a playground, providing a canoe launch from the parking area on Calendonia Road, adding a multi-use trail to connect all park elements and make them ADA accessible, add a primitive camping area for tent camping only, add a restroom facility and bridge to cross the Yahara River.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass along stream banks and in wetland complexes, cut and stump treating Tatarian honeysuckle and mulberry in roadside woodland areas and black locust along stream banks, using herbicide or hand-pull garlic mustard in roadside woodland, installing enhancement seed mixes in all areas following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments and restoring the stream bank (35 feet buffer).

**Estimated Project Cost: \$850,000 - \$900,000**

#### Lee Park

Park Description: Lee Park is 40 acres of woodland with a small prairie area and a small stream running east to west in the property. The park contains an arboretum, baseball field, non-flushing restroom facilities, picnic shelter, benches, drinking water access, trails (both mown and woodchip) and two small parking areas.

Recommendations: They include expanding the prairie area, providing a parking area for the north end of the park, upgrade the arboretum (trails, signs), expand the mown trail network (possible boardwalk area through the wetland), pave the two small parking areas.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns in all areas to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to control reed canary grass around intermittent stream, cut and stump treating common buckthorn, box elder and multiflora rose in woodland areas, use grass-selective herbicide in the prairie restoration to treat cool-season grasses.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$650,000 - \$700,000**

### **Royce Dallman Park**

Park Description: Royce Dallman Park is 2.3 acres and currently has a fishing pier, bench shelter, parking area, drinking water, picnic shelter and restroom facilities.

Recommendations: They include re-grading much of the site to help with flood prevention and create bio-swales to absorb excess water. Other amenities include upgrading the shelter and adding another launch area, add a playground by the newly constructed shelter and pave the parking area.

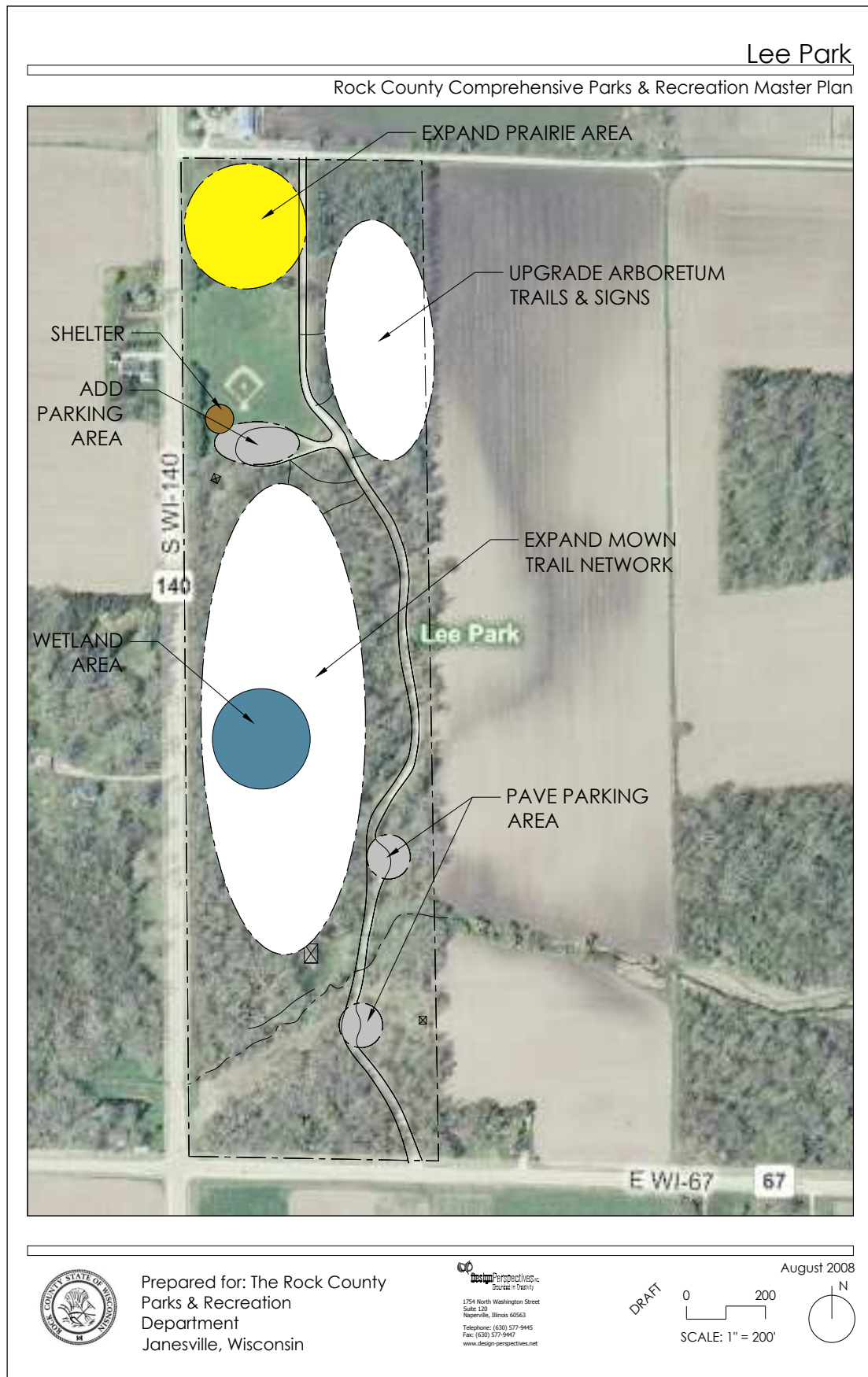
Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns along shoreline to control invasive plant material, using herbicide to treat any invasive species that are or may become a problem along the shoreline, installing enhancement seed mixes along the shoreline following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments.

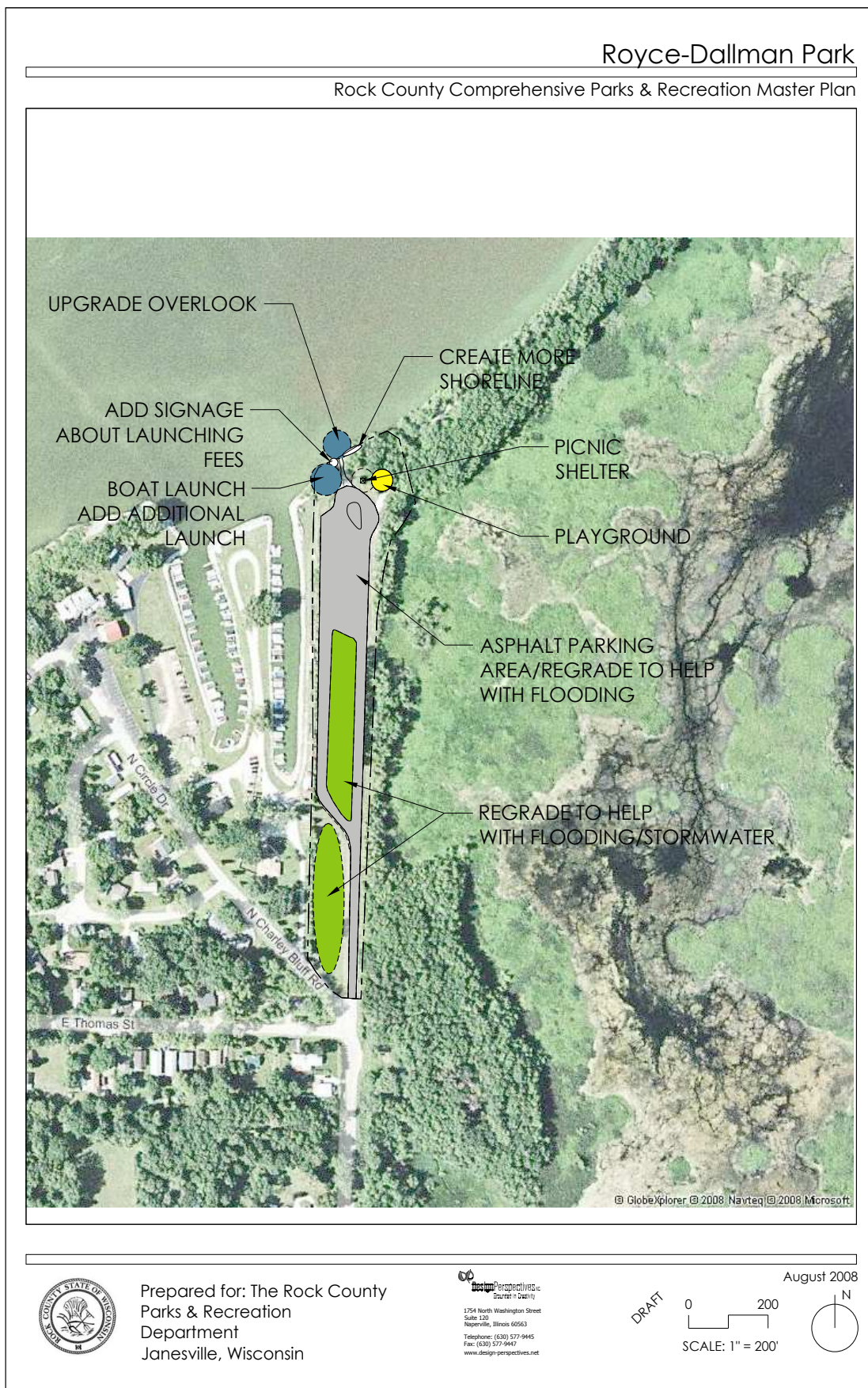
**Estimated Project Cost: \$550,000 - \$600,000**











### 2014 Action Plan

Priority Ranking	Action Item	Cost
1	New Park Development	\$400,000-\$450,000
2	Airport Park	\$120,000-\$170,000
3	Schollmeyer Park	\$100,000-\$150,000
4	Avon Park	\$50,000
5	Hanover Wildlife Area	None
6	Koshkonong Lake Access	None

#### New Park Development

Develop the 50-80 acre parcel in the NE part of the County that was purchased in 2010.

Recommendations: They include asphalt trail network, native landscaping, environmental interpretive signs, wayfinding signage, parking, site furnishings, restroom and playground.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$400,000 - \$450,000**

#### Airport Park

Park Description: Airport Park is a small park located adjacent to the airport. It has a gravel loop drive and two benches.

Recommendations: They include a parking lot upgrade, picnic shelter, park sign, native plantings and site furnishings.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$120,000 - \$170,000**

#### Schollmeyer Park

Park Description: Schollmeyer Park is a very small park on Turtle Creek. It currently has no development.

Recommendations: They include a picnic shelter, canoe access, small parking area and signage.

Environmental Recommendations: They include conducting prescribed burns along the stream bank to control invasive plant material, installing enhancement seed mixes along stream bank following prescribed burning or herbicide treatments, using herbicide to control reed canary grass along stream bank and providing a 35 foot buffer at a minimum.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000 - \$150,000**

#### Avon Park

Park Description: This park is currently undeveloped.

Recommendations: Opportunities should be explored for potential land exchange with the Town of Avon. Long range improvements beyond this plan include adding signage and access to the Sugar River.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$50,000**

#### Hanover Wildlife Area & Koshkonong Lake Access

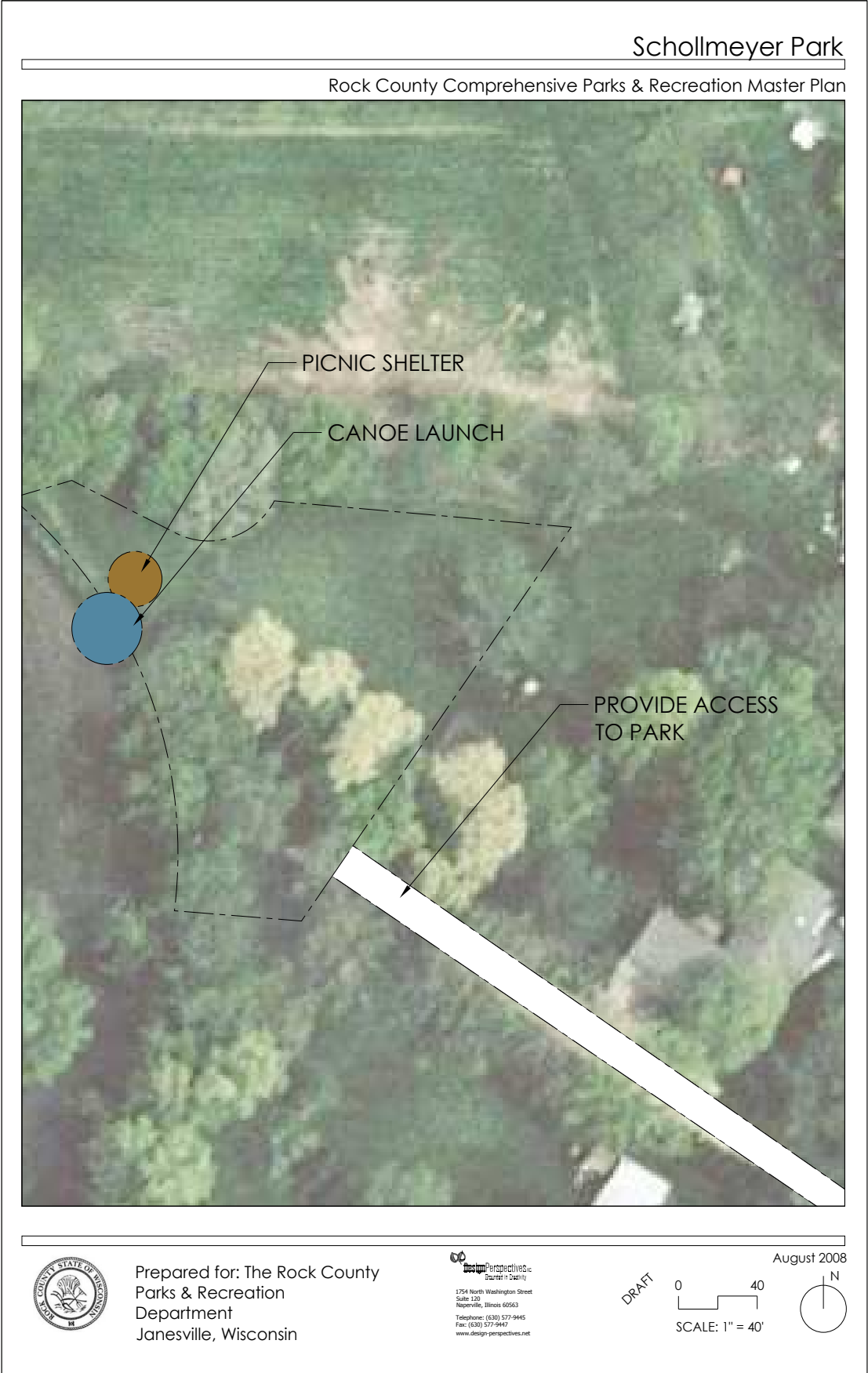
Park Descriptions: Hanover Wildlife Area consists of open space with mature tree canopy covering the site. Koshkonong Lake Access is undeveloped with an area for launching boats.

Recommendations: There are no recommendations within this time frame to address improvements at these parks.









**Conclusion**

The future for the Rock County Parks Division is sure to make significant strides to becoming a noticed agency. For this to happen, ownership of this master plan and the leadership to implement it must occur and occur quickly. The master plan and subsequent follow up studies need to be first and foremost in decision making. It is all too often that the momentum is lost due to a lack of action early after the plan adoption. Once this happens, the agency cannot recover from it. Progress must be visible to the residents. We must not be naïve in thinking we will get to "it" next week, next month, next time. There is too much that needs to be accomplished in the finances, organization structure, recreational programming and capital development. This master plan does not provide every answer because we do not know all the potential questions. It does however give detailed recommendations based on layers of analysis. Improvement needs to be charted regularly, and the plan used frequently in the next five years.

The plan has the mission to re-connect the community with the agency. It is a worthwhile goal and with teamwork, communication and a bit of luck, it can be accomplished.





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Appendix A  
Enhancement Seed Mix Lists By Community Type



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## Long Term Management

After the recommendations of this plan are followed and short-term management is complete, it is very important that long-term management continues to help maintain the ecological condition of the natural areas. Long-term maintenance may include some or all of the short-term management techniques, but is expected to be required less frequent as prescribed burning becomes the primary management tool for controlling non-native species. Annual inspections by a qualified professional should continue to properly assess the site conditions and recommend management measures.

### Long Term Goals:

- Continue conducting prescribed burns.
- Continue eradication and control of invasive species.
- Adjust monitoring programs as necessary as ecological conditions improve.
- Increase plant diversity, richness, and C-value.
- Continue public education on the process of restoration and ecological change.

## Enhancement Seed Mix Lists By Community Type

### Floodplain Forest Enhancement Seed Mix

<i>Bromus pubescens</i>	Hairy wood chess
<i>Carex lupulina</i>	Hop sedge
<i>Carex sprengeii</i>	Long-beaked sedge
<i>Elymus virginicus</i>	Virginia wild rye
<i>Muhlenbergia mexicana</i>	Leafy satin grass
<i>Sphenopholis obtusata</i>	Prairie wedge grass
<i>Actinomeris alternifolia</i>	Wingstem
<i>Anemone canadensis</i>	Meadow/Canada anemone
<i>Aster lateriflorus</i>	Calico aster
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	False aster
<i>Campanula americana</i>	Tall bellflower
<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Virgin's bower
<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	Purple Joe-pye weed
<i>Hypericum pyramidatum</i>	Great St. John's wort
<i>Napaea dioica</i>	Glad mallow
<i>Penstemon calycosus</i>	Smooth beard tongue
<i>Rosa setigera</i>	Illinois rose
<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	Green-headed coneflower
<i>Rudbeckia subtomentosa</i>	Sweet black-eyed Susan
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden alexanders

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### **Prairie/Savanna Enhancement Seed Mix**

<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	Side-oats grama
<i>Carex bicknellii</i>	Bicknell's/Prairie sedge
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little bluestem grass
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass
<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Nodding wild onion
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly milkweed
<i>Aster azureus</i>	Sky blue aster
<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	Prairie coreopsis
<i>Dalea purpurea</i>	Purple prairie clover
<i>Desmodium illinoense</i>	Illinois sensitive plant
<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Pale purple coneflower
<i>Heliopsis helianthoides</i>	Ox-eyed/false sunflower
<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Rough blazing star
<i>Monarda punctata</i>	Dotted/horse mint
<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Common evening primrose
<i>Potentilla arguta</i>	Prairie cinquefoil
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow coneflower
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black-eyed susan
<i>Silphium terebinthinaceum</i>	Prairie dock
<i>Solidago nemoralis</i>	Old-field goldenrod
<i>Tradescantia ohimensis</i>	Common spiderwort
<i>Verbena stricta</i>	Hoary vervain

### **Stream bank/Shoreline Enhancement Seed Mix**

<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big bluestem
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>	Indian grass
<i>Carex annectens</i>	Small yellow fox sedge
<i>Carex scoparia</i>	Pointed broom sedge
<i>Elymus virginicus</i>	Virginia wild rye
<i>Juncus dudleyi</i>	Dudley's rush
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Common/soft rush
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switch grass
<i>Scirpus atrovirens</i>	Dark green bulrush
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Prairie cord grass
<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild bergamot

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<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp/Marsh milkweed
<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Rattlesnake master
<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>	False aster
<i>Coreopsis tripteris</i>	Tall coreopsis
<i>Desmodium canadense</i>	Showy tick trefoil
<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Common boneset
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Dogtooth daisy
<i>Hypericum pyramidatum</i>	Great St. John's wort
<i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Common evening primrose
<i>Penstemon calycosus</i>	Smooth beard tongue
<i>Polygonum species</i>	Smartweed
<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>	Yellow coneflower
<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	Cup plant
<i>Solidago rigida</i>	Stiff goldenrod
<i>Verbena hastata</i>	Blue vervain

#### **Woodland Enhancement Seed Mix**

<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Nodding wild onion
<i>Anemone quinquefolia</i>	Wood anemone
<i>Anemone virginiana</i>	Virginia anemone
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild columbine
<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	Jack-in-the-pulpit
<i>Aster lateriflorus</i>	Side-flowering aster
<i>Aster sagittifolius</i>	Arrow-leaved aster
<i>Campanula americana</i>	Tall bellflower
<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Virgin's bower
<i>Dodecatheon meadia</i>	Shooting star
<i>Eupatorium rugosum</i>	White snakeroot
<i>Euphorbia corollata</i>	Flowering spurge
<i>Erythronium albidum</i>	Trout lily
<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Wild geranium
<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	May apple
<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	Jacob's ladder
<i>Polygonatum canaliculatum</i>	Smooth Solomon's seal
<i>Rudbeckia triloba</i>	Brown-eyed Susan
<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	Bloodroot
<i>Thalictrum dioicum</i>	Early meadow rue

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<i>Bromus pubescens</i>	Woodland brome
<i>Hystrix patula</i>	Bottlebrush grass
<i>Sphenopholis intermedia</i>	Slender wedge grass

### **Wet Prairie/Wetland Enhancement Seed Mix**

<i>Acorus calamus</i>	Sweet flag iris
<i>Actinomeris alternifolia</i>	Wingstem
<i>Alisma subcordatum</i>	Water plantain
<i>Angelica atropurpurea</i>	Great angelica
<i>Asclepias incarnata</i>	Swamp milkweed
<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England aster
<i>Aster umbellatus</i>	Flat-top aster
<i>Bidens cernua</i>	Swamp tickseed
<i>Bidens frondosa</i>	Common beggar's ticks
<i>Caltha palustris</i>	Marsh marigold
<i>Chelone glabra</i>	Turtlehead
<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	Spotted Joe-pye weed
<i>Helianthus grosseserratus</i>	Saw-tooth sunflower
<i>Hypericum prolificum</i>	Shrubby St. John's wort
<i>Iris virginica shrevei</i>	Blue flag iris
<i>Liatris spicata</i>	Marsh blazing star
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal flower
<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	Great blue lobelia
<i>Lycopus americanus</i>	Water horehound
<i>Lythrum alatum</i>	Winged loosestrife
<i>Mentha arvensis villosa</i>	Wild mint
<i>Mimulus ringens</i>	Monkey flower
<i>Polygonum pensylvanicum</i>	Pennsylvania knotweed
<i>Pycnanthemum tenuifolium</i>	Slender mountain mint
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	Arrowhead
<i>Silphium perfoliatum</i>	Cup plant
<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	Giant goldenrod
<i>Vernonia fasciculata</i>	Common ironweed
<i>Zizia aurea</i>	Golden alexanders
<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>	Prairie brome
<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Blue-joint grass
<i>Carex comosa</i>	Bristly sedge



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<i>Carex lacustris</i>	Lake sedge
<i>Carex stricta</i>	Tussock sedge
<i>Eleocharis obtusa</i>	Blunt spike rush
<i>Juncus dudleyi</i>	Dudley's rush
<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>	Rice cut grass
<i>Scirpus acutus</i>	Hard-stemmed bulrush
<i>Scirpus fluviatilis</i>	River bulrush
<i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i>	Common bur reed
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Prairie cord grass

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Appendix B  
5-Year Management Table

A five-year schedule has been developed as a time frame for implementing the monitoring and maintenance of the Rock County Parks Sites. This time frame will allow the ecological changes associated with restoration intervention to be monitored more effectively and will minimize the annual time commitment for volunteers and Parks staff, as well as contracting labor costs, as needed. The schedule format identifies each restoration action per quarter (season) per year. Brackets indicate the recommended quarter for restoration activities. It is recommended that this schedule be re-examined and adjusted as necessary to reflect the management needs of these areas.

### Short-term (5-year) Monitoring and Maintenance Schedule

	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
		Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	Quarter	Quarter
1.	<b>Prescribed Burn Site Inspection:</b> Assess site conditions to determine feasibility & fuel load conditions.					
		1 2 3 4	1 [2] [3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4
2.	<b>Burn Administration:</b> Apply for permits, schedule burn, contact local authorities, finalize burn plan.					
		1 2 3 4	[1][2] 3 4	[1][2] 3 4	[1][2] 3 4	[1][2] 3 4
3.	<b>Conduct Burn:</b> Beginning the second or third year following seeding.					
		1 2 3 4	1 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 4	1 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 4
4.	<b>Weed/Brush/Debris Management and Site Inspection:</b> Assess site conditions, identify threats (i.e. invasive species, debris jams). Recommend debris removal, mowing, brushing where necessary and/or design herbicide application plan.					
		1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4
5.	<b>Debris Removal:</b> Conduct as needed, preferably during winter months.					
		[1] 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 [4]	[1] 2 3 [4]
6.	<b>Mowing:</b> Conduct twice in the first year; once annually thereafter, where feasible.					
		1 [2][3] 4	1 [2] 3 4	1 [2] 3 4	1 [2] 3 4	1 [2] 3 4
7.	<b>Herbicide Management:</b> Conduct twice during first growing season, annually or as needed for weed control thereafter.					
		1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4
8.	<b>Vegetation Monitoring:</b> Biannual quantitative field sampling and reporting for regulatory agencies (predicted).					
		1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4	1 [2][3] 4
9.	<b>Supplemental Seeding/Planting:</b> Conduct as needed to meet performance standards for vegetation cover and establishment.					
		1 [2] [3] 4	1 [2] [3] 4	1 [2] [3] 4	1 [2] [3] 4	1 [2] [3] 4

Note: [ ] Brackets surrounding a number indicates the quarter when the desired restoration activity should occur.

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Appendix C  
Rock County Parks Survey



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## Rock County Parks Survey

The Rock County Parks Division is required to update its comprehensive plan in order to secure state and federal grants. As part of the planning process, you have been chosen to participate in a survey to assist in identifying Rock County's park and recreation needs.

Please take a few minutes to answer these questions, and return this questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope within the next few days. Your contribution to the Rock County Park System and its success is greatly appreciated.

Please note, the Rock County Park System is completely separate from local municipal park systems run by cities such as Beloit and Janesville. The Rock County Park System includes 18 properties and 1000 acres across Rock County, mostly in rural areas.

1. Within which city, village or town do you reside \_\_\_\_\_?

2. How long have you lived in Rock County? (Please check the appropriate answer)

\_\_\_ 1-5 years    \_\_\_ 6-10 years    \_\_\_ 11-15 years    \_\_\_ more than 15 years

3. Are you familiar with the Rock County Parks System?

\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ Somewhat    \_\_\_ Not really

4. If yes or somewhat, how do you periodically hear about the Rock County Park System?  
(please circle all that apply)

Newsletter    Website    Newspaper    Radio    Television    Word of Mouth

5. In which of the following recreational activities do you and your family participate at the Rock County Park System or elsewhere?

a. Walking/hiking	_____	k. Sledding/Tobogganing	_____
b. Jogging	_____	l. Cross-country skiing	_____
c. Walking pets	_____	m. Swimming	_____
d. Biking	_____	n. Power Boating	_____
e. Camping	_____	o. Bird/nature watching	_____
f. Horseback riding	_____	p. Nature center visits	_____
g. Picnics	_____	q. Youth/Adult Athletics	_____
h. Fishing	_____	r. Frisbee golf	_____
i. Kayaking/Canoeing	_____	s. Snowmobiling	_____
j. Skateboarding	_____	t. Other (Please specify)	_____

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**Please answer the questions on the back of this page.**

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6. Which of the Rock County parks and trails do you or your family visit? (Please check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Airport Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Age Trail	<input type="checkbox"/> Snowmobile Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Avon Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Indianford Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Royce-Dahlman Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Beckman Mill Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Koshkonong Lake Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Schollmeyer Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Carver-Roehl Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Lee Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Sugar River Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Gibbs Lake Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia Bluff Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet-Allyn Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Happy Hollow Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Murwin Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Sportsman's Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Age Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Pelishek –Tiffany Nature Trail	<input type="checkbox"/> Beloit-Janesville Peace Trail
<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-use Trail	<input type="checkbox"/> P&T – Snowmobile Trail	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

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7. How often do you or your family visit these parks or trails? (Please circle the best answer)

Once a year      2-5 times per year      6-10 times per year      more than 10 times

8. How satisfied are you with the appearance, maintenance and cleanliness, of Rock County's parks and trails? (Please circle the best answer)

Not at all satisfied      Not too satisfied      Somewhat satisfied      Very satisfied

9. Do you feel safe while using Rock County's parks and trails? (Please circle the best answer)

Not at all safe      Not too safe      Somewhat safe      Very safe

10. How would you rate the Rock County Park System in the following areas? (Please check the best answer)

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Acquiring land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restoring land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preserving land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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11. Do you think the Rock County Park System has a role in bringing visitors to Rock County in an effort to improve the local economy? (Please circle the best answer)

Yes

No

I don't know

12. How would you rate the importance of the following initiatives that the Rock County Park System could pursue? (Please check the best answers):

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Opinion
Acquiring new park land	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Acquiring more scenic areas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more campgrounds	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more boat launches	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more hiking trails	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more snowmobile trails	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more equestrian trails	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more picnic areas	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building athletic facilities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building nature centers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Starting nature programs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building dog parks	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building Frisbee golf courses	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Building more playgrounds	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

13. What other amenities or facilities would you like to see added to the existing Rock County Parks? (Please list them in the space below)

\_\_\_\_\_

14. How much of a property tax increase would you be willing to pay to acquire more park land or add new amenities to the Rock County Park System?

\_\_\_ \$1-2 per month    \_\_\_ \$3-5 per month    \_\_\_ more than \$5 per month    \_\_\_ none    \_\_\_ I don't know

**Please answer the questions on the back of this page.**

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15. Beginning with yourself, what are the ages of the people living in your household?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

16. What is your gender?

- a) Male
- b) Female

17. Please feel free to add any comments you might have about the Rock County Park System.

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Thank you very much for your time. Please return this questionnaire as soon as you can. Survey results will be posted on the Rock County Park System website by the end of August (<http://www.co.rock.wi.us/Dept/PublicWorks/Parks.htm>)



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Appendix D  
Public Hearing Minutes

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County of Rock  
Public Works Department

Highways  
Parks  
www.co.rock.wi.us  
Airport



3715 Newville Road  
Janesville Wisconsin 53545  
Telephone: 608/757-5450  
Fax: 608/757-5470

### **Public Hearing Minutes**

POROS Plan Draft Document  
Monday, November 17, 2008 – 6:00 p.m.  
Rock County Job Center  
1900 Center Avenue - Janesville, WI 53546

Welcome & Introductions. Lori Williams thanked everyone for coming. Chair Yankee introduced members of the Public Works Committee: Supervisors Bussie, Arnold, Ott, and the Parks Advisory Committee Members, Floyd Finney and Tom Presny. He also introduced County Board Supervisor Grahn.

#### In Attendance:

Floyd Finney	Shirley May	Sharon Jones
Ron Gehrieg	Neil Deupree	Mel Jones
Sarah Huth	Kay Deupree	Tammy Van Pamel
Tod Stanton	Richard Ott	Tom Presny
Phyllis Anderson	Kurt Yankee	B. J. Bussie
Suzie Smith	Eva Arnold	Art Boehminz
Diane Papcke	Billy Bob Grahn	Carolyn Brandeen
Kricket Jewett	Nancy Pope	

Presentation of Draft POROS Plan Document. Tod Stanton and Sarah Huth went over the plan.

#### Question & Answer.

Suzie Smith appreciates the time and efforts of Tod's Company. Feels the survey was very small sampling. Does not adequately reflect the concerns of Friends groups. About plans – who is going to build and maintain. Native landscaping is labor intensive. Erosion control for 2011 at Magnolia Bluff – that project can't wait. Lori stated we are already doing something about that. We know it needs to be included. Suzie stated it can't wait until 2011.

Tod feels other parks have a higher use than Magnolia Bluff.

Suzie stated you just have a small sampling and we disagree with using that as a scorecard. She feels bathrooms are very necessary for every park. Those 3-6 year-olds will need to use a potty.

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Tod discussed native landscaping and how much cheaper it is to maintain.

Supervisor Ott stated the methodology used is an accepted practice. Tod stated when the mail and telephone survey numbers agree, you know you have a good number.

Kricket Jewett: Royce Dallman has major renovations – it was just renovated in 2006. \$500,000 seems high. 15% of the people responded they camp in Rock County Parks – Rock County Parks does not have camping. 37% stated they have biked in Rock County Parks – that would be 23,000 bikers.

Pages 23-27: Accessibility below average at all parks. ADA is required if you upgrade the park.

Gibbs Lake: Equestrians want lot to remain gravel. Shelter in the equestrian lot.

Promote land donation: that is already happening; 3.86 acres near Indianford was donated.

New maps should be at the park.

Page 72: County Parks avoid having dog parks and Frisbee golf and Page 77 states dog parks and Frisbee golf courses are wanted. Which is it? Lori stated that started out as a focus and then decided we did not want to duplicate those facilities.

Kricket discussed the fact that people will go to the southern Kettle Moraine State Park area not a county park.

Shirley May: More multi-use trails. Minnesota and Illinois have multi-use trails and in the populated areas. It's a no-brainer.

Kay Deupree: Chart with Quality of Services – highest number to the highest cost – lowest cost should get highest number. List recommendations for each year. Friends groups were not advised what they could do.

Nature Centers – where does Welty fit into this plan? They already do nature programs for children. Do not need to build these little nature centers. They already have staff – don't need to hire more.

Private lands available for public use: Beloit College, GRAS, etc. How does that fit into the plan? Need to have one plan where you list all recreation activities. That kind of summary would be helpful.

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City dogs need a place to run and so the city has provided a dog park. Does not understand the need for county dogs to have a park.

Special areas we need to protect that are not part of a park.

Lori: A master plan will be developed for each park and the friends groups will be consulted.

Chair Yankee stated we have the tourism book listing the different parks. Maybe incorporate that into the plan. Lori agreed.

List all county parks and state owned land, etc.

Supervisor Arnold stated a map of county and state and city and village recreation areas could be shown.

Supervisor Grahn: He drives around the county on the weekend and had difficulty finding county parks. Would like to see signs placed on major highways and local roads directing the public to the parks. He would also like to see better playground equipment at Sportsman's Park. We have fallen behind in receiving state and federal funding. Wants friends groups to research funding.

Carolyn Brandeen: What about Lone Rock erosional stack and 5-Arch Bridge? Lori stated it has been noted and will be included. Also Carolyn wants the Ice Age corridor mentioned in the plan. Tod stated that would be considered under Regional Trail Development.

Carolyn would like all parks to have water available and restrooms and better signage.

Nancy Pope: Putting a campground at the park – no one feels it is a good idea. Forestry management needs to be taken care of. There are a lot of dead trees that need to be removed and the buckthorn is all over. We need to plant more trees and remove stumps in areas that are utilized.

Sharon Jones: She is not clear on duties of Advisory Board. Lori explained Sharon should bring any questions to her. The Advisory Board is the Public Works Committee. Lori explained the Delphi Committee was made up of 15 people and their work has been completed. The Public Works Committee is made up of County Board members and the Parks Advisory Committee is appointed by the County Board Chair.

Lori stated we have aging infrastructure that needs to be replaced.



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Sharon Jones: Pg 15 outdated swingset was put in in 2006. Needs ADA access – we have ADA access.

Pg 84: Resurface existing trails with what? Tod stated it could be any surface such as limestone.

Sharon wants to protect Carver-Roehl Park and keep its country look - no asphalt paving.

Tom Presny: Scorecard process is intriguing - the totality of the dollars versus what we can actually fund. After 2009, it does not seem realistic. Perhaps laying out the road map without dates but rather priorities. Need to prioritize – not necessarily by park.

This information is available for people to educate themselves. Need inventory of all the parks and objectives at each park and then a needs list.

Tom stated park acreage and need for preservation of land is very near and dear to his heart. Function of a county park draws us because it is unique and desirable.

He feels we should follow the standard for minimum acreage in a county park.

He feels we have 6-7 parks and the rest are just something we take care of. Need to categorize the parks. We have 1000 acres in 17 parks = 60 acres average. We are less than half of any other county. We have relatively few parks we are willing to drive 35 miles to get to. Land acquisition should be among the highest priorities. Land acquisition and preservation, floodplain lands are meaningful and should try to protect them. Would like to see commentary about trail linkages.

Stephanie Dobson: Friends of Welty Environmental Center is building a 6,000 sq ft environmental center Beckman Mill County Park in about three years.

Supervisor Grahn stated it really is fantastic to be here because without your hard work and base plan, the powers that be will not listen to us.

Sharon Jones: It is a wonderful plan. We told you at the first meeting to take care of what you have. Let's get the County back to taking care of its own. There is no more staff planned. Is there any intent on the County's part to employ more people.

Supervisor Ott replied, no, to that comment.

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Lori stated it is a goal to grow enough to meet the needs of our parks system one step at a time.

Closing. Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Written statements are shown below.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Lawton  
Secretary

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Written Comments Received From:

Name: Cricket Jewett  
Address: 7428 E Schmidt  
City: Fort Atkinson WI 53538  
Phone: 868-2609

Pg 7 – Pelishek also allows equines

Pg.7 Royce Dallman had major renovation in 06 – Do we really need \$550.000 more?

Pg 7-9 Spray all water lines – is that environmentally safe?

Pg 30 the table compares Rock to 4 counties on water Lake Michigan and Mississippi River– does this change the numbers

Pg 43 15% responded that they camp in Rock Co. parks – Rock Co does not provide camping

Pg 43 37% use Rock Co. trails for biking – only County trail with bikes is Milton/Jvl . Multi use

23,000household bike in Rock Co. parks???

Pg 2 Wasn't there supposed to be a 5 yr plan and a 20 year plan in this?

Pg 4 5 paragraphs repeat the same info

Pg 13- 27 all parks Accessibility level below average ??

Pg 16 Gibbs Lake gravel lots – the equestrian lot should stay grass

Is ADA required for all parks?-

Pg 20 Mag. Bluff says trails need cleaning - RCMUTG spent several hundred hours working there this summer- most trails have been cleared of brush and debarmed , and several areas rerouted to not go directly downhill and filled, prevent future erosion.

Pg 79 – We would like to see a 6 picnic table size shelter at Gibbs Lake in the equestrian lot

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Pg 66 – Land donations already happening – 3.6ac near Indianford possible boat launch or park

Pg 64 new brochures for each park....Add map boxes to each trail head or park entrance most needed place for maps and info

Pg 71 – Have the Advisory Board approve projects

- isn't that already done by park director? Does that mean work permits to do basic

work need approval prior to trimming?

Pg 72 – Have the county parks avoid containing dog parks, ice rinks, Frisbee golf, and other high maintenance activities - Pg 77 table Plan implementation – dog parks, athletic fields, Frisbee golf so which is it?

Pg 73

- Land Acquisition and Development goals- 20ac/ 1000 people Rock Co has....

14,7000 acres DNR land  
1007 acres County Parks  
2580 acres

Jvl parks

938 acres Beloit parks

????? acres small town parks Milton, Evansville, Footville, Brodhead etc

19,225 acres plus available for use / 160(people) = 120 acres of open space per 1000 people

Pg 79 Include shelter at equestrian lot Gibbs Lake

Pg 79 Happy Hollow - Asphalt trail system? Multi use includes equestrian use – NO paving

Pg 81At Gibbs Lake mountain bike circuit is put over equestrian parking lot?

Pg 84 25,000sf community center at Regional park .

Which regional park Do we have one?

Pg 84 – land in NW corner - is there really a need or demand – from there you are so close to S. Kettle 21,000 acres, would a 50 acre park be used or needed?

Pg 84 Carver Roehl



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- money is already in the 09 budget for entrance improvements would \$800,000 more be needed in 2010? Pg 15 says bridges are in good shape – why upgrade?

Pg 85 Sweet Allyn  
park add dog park see page 72 avoid dog parks

Pg 90 Happy Hollow includes equestrian trails  
Consider purchasing farm land and woods to the west of park road so that the main section of the park can connect to the west section going to the road.

Pg 90 Small nature center for large groups? Look at adding an equestrian parking lot, not just a spot to pull off the park road – many horse trailers are now 30 feet or more and require more turning space than available in the park road.

Page 79 – Gibbs Lake – do not want to see any asphalt or compacted stone on any of the equestrian trails – that would NOT be an improvement. Restroom building just put in this past year – need park shelter as mentioned on page 89 before a new restroom.

Page 84 – Acquire 50-80 acres in NW part of County. Don't believe acres should be purchased just because no park is in that area. The acres would have to have the amenities for a park to make it worthwhile purchasing.

Agree additional land at Magnolia – wooded area is available.

Page 90 – Beckman Mill.

Nature Center for \$5 Million?

What part of the survey indicates a center would be used to that extent. Where would monies of that size come from?

Page 90 – Magnolia Bluff – Playground and nature center questionable.

Magnolia Bluff

- Need donation box and a larger kiosk for pamphlets placed at trail head.

(RCMUTG has \$ to put towards project – needs approval and building)

Magnolia Bluff

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- I strongly disagree that trails should be designated as equestrian only and hiking only. They should all be multi-use without any sign designation so the trails can be connecting and continuous. That would mean hikers would have to stay off equestrian trails and vice versa! Who would enforce this signage? Equestrians and hikers can co-exist on same trails. Equestrian people have been maintaining both hiking and equestrian trails. I have yet to see a hiker help with trail maintenance. Extensive maintenance work has been done this past year (by horse people) and will continue to be made every year assuming the trails remain multi use.

If shelter built in that grassy area to the right (behind the pine trees), would need adequate tie up area for the horses and mounting blocks.

There are two badly eroded rocky trails that the County is supposed to maintain. That needs to be done.

Is there \$ set aside for maintenance on "service road" in park?

Magnolia Bluff Park; 1) establish an access route via the strip of land running north/south from Hwy 59, so that a larger equine parking "lot" and camp could be established with a small pavilion

2) Donation Box and Larger Kiosk placed at upper Trailhead, so we can obtain users' surveys, have slots for maps, Multi-Use trails membership slips, etc. Need more room on the kiosk board for "current posting" or notices

3) ALL bathrooms need replacing!!!!

4) Trails should be "multi-use

5) Rock Co is responsible to fix/maintain the "service roads" in the park. The worst is the east-west route straight away from the upper trailhead and the first "left" = Rocky Road going down the hill....BAD erosion!!!!

6) Wooden bridge on perimeter trail near the pond at the "wet" area....currently covered with road base rock and gravel which is a temporary fix

7) Paint the lower parking lot guard rails brown to help them blend in....don't spend huge amt of money to replace them!!!!

\*\*\*Magnolia Bluff Park is NOT the place for snowmobiles/bikers!!!!

Gibb's Lake: Pavilion at equine parking area big enough for 8 picnic tables. Happy Hollow...again no asphalt on the trails, I like the idea of a shelter.

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Beckman Mill Park...A nature center for \$5,000,000 when other parks need so much?

Magnolia Bluff...I like the idea of acquiring more land, need new toilets in the lower parking area and the upper area. Don't like the idea of separate trails for horse and hikers...these need to be multi-use. What kind of natural barrier are they talking about in the lower parking area? Big rocks like is around the park now? Love the thought of erosion control measures. Would like a larger horse parking area, but don't know if that is possible...kind of limited space to add to the current one. I'm not sure I like the idea Suzie sent out about moving the parking area to the north...a lot of trees would need to be cut down in order to have a parking area here. We definitely need a new kiosk to provide maps, donation box and a spot for user survey or sign in and out. The parks also need to maintain the park service trails inside the park (badly eroded).

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Budgets will not support Design Perspectives proposals. Surveys of use not accurate. No one I know has been surveyed. Frisbee golf – who wants that. Our swingset at Carver-Roehl Park was built in 2005 outdated may be their opinion, but we want to keep our park as natural as possible. No campgrounds. Signing with amenities listed. A lot of wishful thinking not reality. Today's economy will not allow.



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Although I can appreciate the time and effort that Tod's company spent on their evaluation, I don't believe it reflects enough of the concerns of the Friends of the Parks. The surveys (written/phone) came from a small percentage of the population. Many "friends" do not want to "citi-fy" the county parks as they value the unique characteristics. For example, each park doesn't need a playground. Basic amenities such as bathrooms, picnic tables, parking area and water are important. I've included specific recommendations:

Gibbs Lake: Pavilion at equine parking area big enough to shelter 8 picnic tables.

Magnolia Bluff:

1. Establish an access route via the strip of land running north-south from Hwy 59 so that a larger equine parking lot and camp could be established with a small pavilion.
2. Donation box and larger kiosk placed at the upper trailhead so users' surveys, maps and multi-use trails membership forms can fit into slots. Need room to post notices and updates.
3. All bathrooms need replacing!
4. Trails should be multi-use.
5. Rock County is responsible to fix and maintain the service roads. The worst is the east-west route straight away from the upper trailhead including the Rocky Road (1st left) going down the hill. BAD EROSION.
6. Would propose a wooden bridge in perimeter trail near the pond (west border of park) at the wet area that currently is patched with gravel which is a temporary fix!
7. Paint lower parking lot guardrails brown to help them blend in – don't spend money replacing them!
8. Do NOT allow bikers or snowmobilers.
9. Acquire more land to expand park.

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Pg 79: Gibbs Lake – do not think asphalt or compacted stone is appropriate on ANY equestrian trails.

Pg 90: Magnolia Bluff- strongly disagree that trails should be designed as equestrian only and hiking only. They should all be multi-use without any sign designations so the trails can be connecting and continuous. Equestrians and hikers can coexist on some trails. Equestrian people have been maintaining both trails – I have never seen a hiker help on any of the trails. Impossible to enforce. Need donation box and larger kiosk for pamphlets at trail head. If shelter built in grassy area, need adequate tie up for the horses and mounting blocks. Additional land acquisition appropriate because of wooded area available. Also the connection of Magnolia Bluff to Hwy 59.

Pg 90: Beckman Mill. I have to question the large expenditure for a nature center. Same for Magnolia Bluff. Don't need two centers.

Pg 84: Acquire land in NW part of county. Don't believe acres should be purchased just because no park in that area. The acres should have the amenities for a park to make it worthwhile purchasing.

Pg 79: Gibbs Lake – New restroom put in this past year.

At Magnolia Bluff – those two highly eroded rocky trails Service roads need work soon. They are in need of major repair.

Lori: Very glad to hear you say when you get to point of each park's need you'll talk with Friends group. Each park has specific amenities and should be developed.

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At the very start of this process, the one thing every person who uses county parks wanted was better bathrooms – will this be a priority now?

I am very opposed to the idea of a mountain bike area being developed at Gibbs Lake (page 81). The equestrian parking area was developed by equestrian volunteers – bikes and horses do NOT mix!

The plan needs to be proofread by someone who can make complete sentences and check spelling.

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I am concerned about maintenance when all of this money is spent, will we have money left to maintain all of this.

My comments are all on Carver-Roehl Park. I read in the plan that the swingsets are outdated – the friends group worked very hard to put in those swings in 2005. I personally don't want to see any asphalt trails in CRP. Pg 86 – a campground in the park is the most ridiculous thing. Can you imagine the problems that would make because of the clientele we are trying to control there now? So glad Rob will be fulltime. He is a great asset!



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1. Friends Groups – what role – who projects can they help accomplish?
2. Proofread
3. Nature Center – how does Welty fit in? Contract with Welty to lead programs in various parks.
4. State lands – how to mutually enhance and maximize enjoyment.
5. Private lands – GRAS, Beloit College
6. Chart for all parks – what is available in each?
7. Dog Parks? Why?
8. Special concern – areas to protect – make a list.