

# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Richland County, WI

February, 2023



PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY



SOUTHWESTERN WISCONSIN  
**REGIONAL PLANNING**  
COMMISSION

**RESOLUTION NO. 23 – 14**

A Resolution Adopting The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

WHEREAS, Richland County has recognized the need for a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan based upon an inventory of outdoor recreation facilities and natural resources within the municipalities, Richland County, and Southwest Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the development of the plan will serve as a guide for making future decisions related to outdoor recreation in Richland County and through its adoption will make the county eligible to participate in state and federal recreation aid programs; and

WHEREAS this comprehensive outdoor recreation plan has been prepared for the Richland County Board of Supervisors by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, this recreation plan is based on sound planning principles and long-range goals and objectives for the county’s recreational development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Richland County Board of Supervisors that approval to adopt the Richland County Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as the county’s guide for future outdoor recreation improvements and development;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Richland County Board of Supervisors requests the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to provide eligibility to Richland County for participation in the state and federal cost-sharing programs for an additional five-year period.

BE IT FURTHER REOLVED, that this Resolution will become effective upon passage and publication.

VOTE ON FOREGOING RESOLUTION

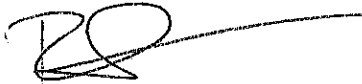
RESOLUTION OFFERED BY THE FAIR, RECYCLING,  
& PARKS STANDING COMMITTEE  
(25 JANUARY 2023)

AYES \_\_\_\_\_ NOES \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION ADOPTED

FOR            AGAINST

DEREK S. KALISH  
COUNTY CLERK



KERRY SEVERSON  
TIM GOTSCHALL  
DANIELLE RUDERSDORF  
GARY MANNING  
SCOTT GALD  
SANDY CAMPBELL  
GARY DEEVER  
ERIC SIEMANDEL  
JOHN COLLINS  
CINDY CHICKER

X  
  
  
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DATED: FEBRUARY 21, 2023

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## Introduction

The county, by virtue of this plan, has placed itself in a position of leadership among all providers of recreation in the county. Its most basic responsibility will be to lead a program that protects public and private investment, ensures wise use of natural resources, and provide its citizens and their guests with the most fulfilling recreation experiences possible. As such, the county will serve as the coordinator and facilitator of partners and projects geared towards creating and maintaining recreation opportunities in the county.

Richland County is very conducive to outdoor recreation. Its topography, natural features, low population density and location from populated cities makes it a popular spot. The county also has a long tradition as a recreational area. However, Richland County's role in providing and promoting the development of outdoor recreational opportunities is varied because of its intermediate position between federal, state, town, and municipal governments. In addition, private enterprises, which is becoming an emerging market, often provides recreation opportunities similar to those offered by the county.

This plan will consider the contributions of all providers of recreation, evaluate these contributions in relation to demands for them, and develop recommendations for action to satisfy recreational deficiencies identified by this study. Both quantity and quality of opportunities are considered and have direct bearing on decisions for specific recommendations. The county will not be responsible for implementing all recommendations. Many, in fact, will be aimed at other units of government and private enterprise.

**Parks** can serve a limited neighborhood area, the entire community, and the region as a whole. They provide outdoor recreation for both residents and visitors. **Open spaces** are not limited to parks but also include greenbelts, wetlands, scenic overlooks, and floodplains. Open space can also serve many functions for a community in addition to recreation, such as:

- Preservation of scenic and natural resources
- Flood management
- Protecting the area's water resources
- Preserving prime agricultural land
- Limiting development that may occur
- Buffering incompatible land uses
- Structuring the community environment
- Preservation of archaeological sites



*Image 1: Steamboat Rock an example of the geological features found in Richland County*



## Plan Purpose

This plan is an update of the Richland County’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) 2019 – 2024. The purpose of this plan is to guide the development and improvement of the county’s outdoor recreation facilities over the next five years in order to meet the recreational needs and growing demands of the county.

Policy decisions made by the Richland County Board of Supervisors for park programs and improvement shall be guided by the goals, objectives, findings, and recommendations of this adopted plan. Actual public policy decisions or choices are contingent on funding sources, new opportunities and ideas, changing growth patterns, budget priorities as well as changing county needs and desires. For this reason, the plan should be reviewed annually, and a detailed update such as this should be completed every five years. Updating the plan every five years is also a requirement of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for a jurisdiction such as Richland County to stay eligible for matching government funds for parkland acquisition and facility improvements. But just as importantly, Richland County needs to set a course of action for continued improvement of its parks and outdoor recreational system.

*Image 2: Typical Rural Scene in Richland County*



## Goals and Objectives

This plan is designed to provide a feasible program for meeting the recreational needs of Richland County. Agreement upon basic goals and objectives is necessary to set the general direction for developing this program. Four goals related to recreational and resource protection are outlined below. The goals point toward final ends while the eight objective statements are more directly related to achieving those ends through specific actions.

### Goals

- To preserve the county's open space resources and to protect them from visual blight and degradation of quality.
- To provide quality parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of county residents.
- To provide opportunities for nonresident recreational activity to an extent compatible with preserving irreplaceable resources.
- To identify and preserve sites having scientific, historic, or archaeological significance.



## Objectives

- To use multiple approaches to resource protection, including acquisition and easements.
- To combine resource protection with park and recreation development, where feasible, through multi-purpose projects.
- To coordinate the county's recreation program with the programs of other levels of government and with private enterprise in order to achieve maximum public benefit.
- To provide areas and facilities for those activities specified in the plan as a county responsibility.
- To develop a coordinated system of river access points emphasizing resource-based recreation areas.
- To maintain the quality of recreational experiences offered within the county by adhering to the standards contained in the plan.
- To encourage quality development of privately owned recreation facilities, particularly for nonresident-oriented activities.
- To maintain the county's eligibility to participate in federal and state financial and technical aid programs having recreation planning requirements.

*Image 3: Signage at Orion Boat Landing*



# Recommendations for Improving Recreation Facilities

The following recommendations for improvement by the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee follow the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (Appendix B). These recommendations will be completed based on availability of county funding and grant availability.

## **Akey School and Museum:**

The Akey School and Museum is located in Orion Township on County Highway TB. It was developed as such in 1976 to commemorate the nation's bicentennial. It sits on one acre of land and the museum is open to the public on Sundays June – August. The site is a cooperative with the Richland County Historical Society who staffs the site. Visitors can view a restored one-room schoolhouse setting and experience what rural schools were like before the development of larger community schools. It also serves as a wayside for motorists when not open and includes two picnic tables, parking for five to six vehicles and a portable toilet.

- (1) Update the signage.
- (2) Remove brush around the outhouse and improve attractiveness.
- (3) Maintain school building with periodic painting.

## **Ash Creek Community Forest:**

Ash Creek Community Forest began as a flood control project in 1975. After many idle years it began to develop into today's form in 1990 when trees were planted, and thirty acres were enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. Forty more acres were enrolled in 2000. Trails were also developed; a parking lot and toilets were provided. A plan was completed in 1997 to include further developments. Recently, a parking lot on Mutch Lane was added.

Currently, there are two parking lots comprising of twenty spaces, three miles of horse trails, four miles of hiking/biking trails, and three miles of Class One trout stream. It is open to fishing and hunting in season. Responsible forestry practices have been ongoing which provide income to the ongoing needs of the park. This, including new tree plantings, should continue as to demonstrate a working forest.

- (1) Update all signage.
- (2) Installation of a small parking lot off Hillview Road.
- (3) Invasive species management throughout.
- (4) Install portable toilets during peak use periods.
- (5) Proper Timber Stand Improvement practices.
- (6) Install fence around new parking lot
- (7) Overall trail maintenance program.
- (8) Expansion of trail system.

## **Orion Boat Landing:**

Orion Boat Landing was constructed in the 1970's to allow public access to the Wisconsin River. It is located between Muscoda and Gotham on Highway 60 and is two acres in size. It is a popular access point for both paddlers and motorboats and has simple amenities. Recently, life vest loaner stanchions were added recently by a local organization. This small park serves as an important access point to the



Wisconsin River and should be given more attention.

- (1) Improve signage visibility.
- (2) New asphalt paving to entrance and parking lot.
- (3) Ramp improvements.
- (4) Replace/add benches and picnic tables.

**Pier County Park at Rockbridge:**

Rockbridge Park and its natural bridge and unique geological formations have been a location of interest since the settlement of the area. Its development as a public park has been ongoing since, at least, 1922. It officially became part of Richland County in 1955. Making it the oldest park in the county park system. Currently it offers a footbridge, short hiking trails, shelter houses, well, playground areas, kayak port, and historical markers. The park is prone to flooding, which should be considered when making future plans. Recently, a canoe launch was added as well as primitive camp sites. The park is important to the county and has much potential to be further utilized.

- (1) Convert pit toilet structure to other use such as for information.
- (2) Update pavilions.
- (3) Focus on campers' needs involving payments, UTV friendliness, and tourism information.
- (4) Replace or repair play structures mainly swing set.
- (5) Remove dead trees.
- (6) Paint bridge.
- (7) Consider removing wet areas from mowing.

**Pine River Trail:**

Following a decline of railroad usage on the line between Lone Rock and Richland Center in the 1980's. It was abandoned officially in 1992 when it was converted to a recreation trail. It opened to the public in 1997. Since then, it has served as a heavily used feature in the area for bicyclists, hikers, and snowmobiles. The development of the trail has been dependent on Department of Transportation and WDNR grants as well as some local funding. This 14.8-mile-long surface includes fifteen bridges that all require oversight and maintenance.

- (1) Resurface sections in most need of repair, widen, and ensure all sections are properly draining.
- (2) Update all signage accordingly.
- (3) Install bike 'Fix-It' stations at Twin Bluffs and Gotham.
- (4) Add additional rest area near Gotham.

**Port Andrews Boat Landing:**

Like the Orion Boat Landing, Port Andrews Boat Landing was constructed in the 1970's to allow public access to the Wisconsin River. It is located in Richwood Township off of Highway 60 and is just one acre in size. It is an access point for both paddlers and motorboats and has simple amenities and parking for twenty vehicles. Recently, life vest loaner stanchions were added.

- (1) Re-pave the entrance and parking lot.
- (2) Make 'Port Andrew Landing' Historic Site marker more visible.

### **Richland County Fairgrounds:**

The Richland County Fairgrounds has a long tradition of serving the community at this location since the 1870's. Many additions and improvements have been made during its long history. Today it is a thirty-nine-acre complex with numerous buildings and hosts dozens of events and functions throughout the year. Central to the site is the annual Richland County Fair. Permanent camping spots have begun to be offered and new shelter houses have been constructed as well as a kayak landing site on the Pine River. This facility should be further developed to meet the needs of Richland County and to utilize its convenient location.

- (1) Focus on increasing camping and overnight lodging opportunities at the Richland County Fairgrounds property, both primitive and RV style sites.
  - a. Separate areas for short-term stays and for those using generators
  - b. Plant trees in new sites accordingly
- (2) Use the new revenue streams to offset maintenance costs at the fairgrounds.
- (2) Hook up city water, upgrade electricity needs, and sewer lines to the fairgrounds complex including a dump station.
- (3) Expand amenities at the kayak port to include primitive camping, parking, and picnic tables.
- (4) Convert the 'Conservation Building' into a modern overnight lodging structure and utilize the revenue to fund fairgrounds needs.
- (5) Bury electrical lines where applicable and upgrade outdoor lighting.
- (6) Construct an additional pavilion.
- (7) Upgrade track lights and run water lines to the Dull Building in order to serve food at events.

### **Richland Rifle Range:**

The Richland County Rifle Range is a nine-acre site north of Richland Center on Cooper Hill Road. It was developed in the 1970's within partnership with the Pine River Sportsman Club and local law enforcement groups. The original shelter and garage were destroyed by fire in 1998. Today, the structure contains six shooting sites to shoot between 50-200 yards, a primitive pit toilet, and has parking for thirty vehicles. Several specialized shoots occur each year. It is open during daytime hours.

- (1) Replace the outhouse structure with new ADA compliant bathrooms or portable toilet(s).
- (2) Update shooting pavilion: re-insulate, re-set target stands, fix siding tear.
- (3) Update signage
- (4) Remove hazardous dead trees near parking lot and structure.
- (5) Consider additional lighting.

### **Viola County Park:**

Viola County Park is located two miles east of Viola in the northwest corner of the county. It is a picturesque country setting on five-acres and provides a shelter house, primitive toilets, and primitive camping sites. Its expansive lawn allows for the potential of activities. It is generally underused but could be made into a well-used park.

Recently, a new well was installed and plans for pit toilet replacements are ongoing.

- (1) Replace the outhouse structure with new ADA compliant bathrooms or portable toilet(s).
- (2) Make necessary improvements to the pavilion.

- (3) Add new picnic tables
- (4) Survey the park to add non-electrical camping sites.
- (5) Improve fire ring.

## Plan Process

This section of the report gives a brief description of the sequences of events that took place during the development of the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP). It also describes the process that can be used to amend the plan.

### Description of Process

Richland County has had Outdoor Recreation Plans in place since 1975. However, there is always a need to evaluate progress and update the plan to meet the future goals for recreation in this county. Therefore, the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee (the agency currently responsible for park and recreational development in Richland County) met to discuss what had been done since the last plan. After the Committee understood what had been accomplished in the past, they looked to the future. Results from the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee meeting were added and shared with the Richland County Board. Feedback from Richland County stakeholders were compiled and added to the project recommendations proposed which are detailed as follows:

- Continue to upgrade all parks (public accesses) the county owns. Bring all facilities up to ADA standards over the next five to ten years.
- Implement a fee structure at each of the overnight camping locations and utilize a digital service to organize and accept payments.
- Use camping fees as revenue to offset maintenance costs at the parks.
- Upgrade the toilets and make them ADA accessible over the next five to ten years. Specifically, the pit toilets should be upgraded to new style vault toilets or porta-potty style. Build shells around porta-potties to obscure their appearance.
- Promote the safe and open use of ATV/UTV's in the county.
- Upgrade all outdoor lighting to high efficiency with dark sky considerations.
- Work to develop the 'Pine Valley Property' to someday include a kayak landing and fishing pier.
- Consider including paved shoulders as part of future road reconstruction projects to allow safer passing of slower moving vehicles which would benefit ATV/UTV, bicycle, and farm implement traffic.
- Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to plan a solution to safely cross Route 14 south of Richland Center by UTV's.
- Work to connect the Pine River Trail and other bike trails to areas outside of the region as to be a part of a regional network.
- Remove fee prices from ordinances to make price increases more streamlined in the future.
- Design all camping areas to be UTV friendly.
- Continue strong tourism marketing to increase park users.

The Richland County Fair Committee listed their top five priorities as:

- ❖ Focus on increasing camping and overnight lodging opportunities at the Richland County Fairgrounds property.



- ❖ Use the new revenue to offset maintenance costs at the fairgrounds.
- ❖ Hook up city water and sewer to the fairgrounds complex including a dump station.
- ❖ Expand amenities at the kayak port to include primitive camping, parking and picnic tables.
- ❖ Convert the ‘Conservation Building’ into an overnight lodging structure and utilize the revenue to fund other fairgrounds’ needs.

The Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee used these priorities as talking points in an invitation to the public to attend and participate in the planning process. The Committee, with assistance from the Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) then developed a preliminary draft of the updated Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, based on the recommendation of the Committee, and the public.

The updated report was reproduced in draft form and copies given to members of the Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee for their review and comment. After suggesting revisions to the planning document, the Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee were then asked to endorse the draft Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as their guide for future decisions related to park development in Richland County. The Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee reviewed a proposed resolution to be taken to the Richland County Board of Supervisors regarding adoption of the planning document. Following this meeting the Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee produced the final report and provided copies to all County Board members for their review and comments. The County Board was also given a copy of the proposed resolution recommending adoption of the plan as the county’s official park and recreation plan for the next five-year period. Upon adoption, the plan will be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requesting re-certification for participation in the state’s park and recreation cost sharing programs.

## Amending the Plan

Plan amendments are common and should be considered part of the planning process. They frequently represent good implementation or plan usage and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision makers. Amendments must follow the same process as when the original plan was prepared. Amendments generally prolong the effectiveness of the original plan.

The following steps will ensure any new amendment is approved with respect to state statutes and to the citizens of Richland County:

1. **Initial meetings/framing the amendment:** Depending on the size and scope of the amendment, the Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee will meet to discuss the proposed amendment.
2. **Opportunity for Public Input:** A public forum should be provided with ample time for the community to know about the proposed changes to the plan. Then a public meeting should be held so the community can understand the need for amendment and have an opportunity to provide direct feedback on the proposed changes.
3. **Draft Amendment:** The Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee develop a draft amendment that still captures the need for the amendment and feedback from the public.
4. **Amendment Adoption:** At an official public meeting, with 30 days of notice, the County Board will vote to approve the plan amendment with the recommendation of the Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee

5. **WIDNR Approval:** The board action on the plan amendment should be sent in writing to the WIDNR for re-certification of the county's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with the new changes. The plan amendment will not be effective until a letter is received from DNR indicating their approval.

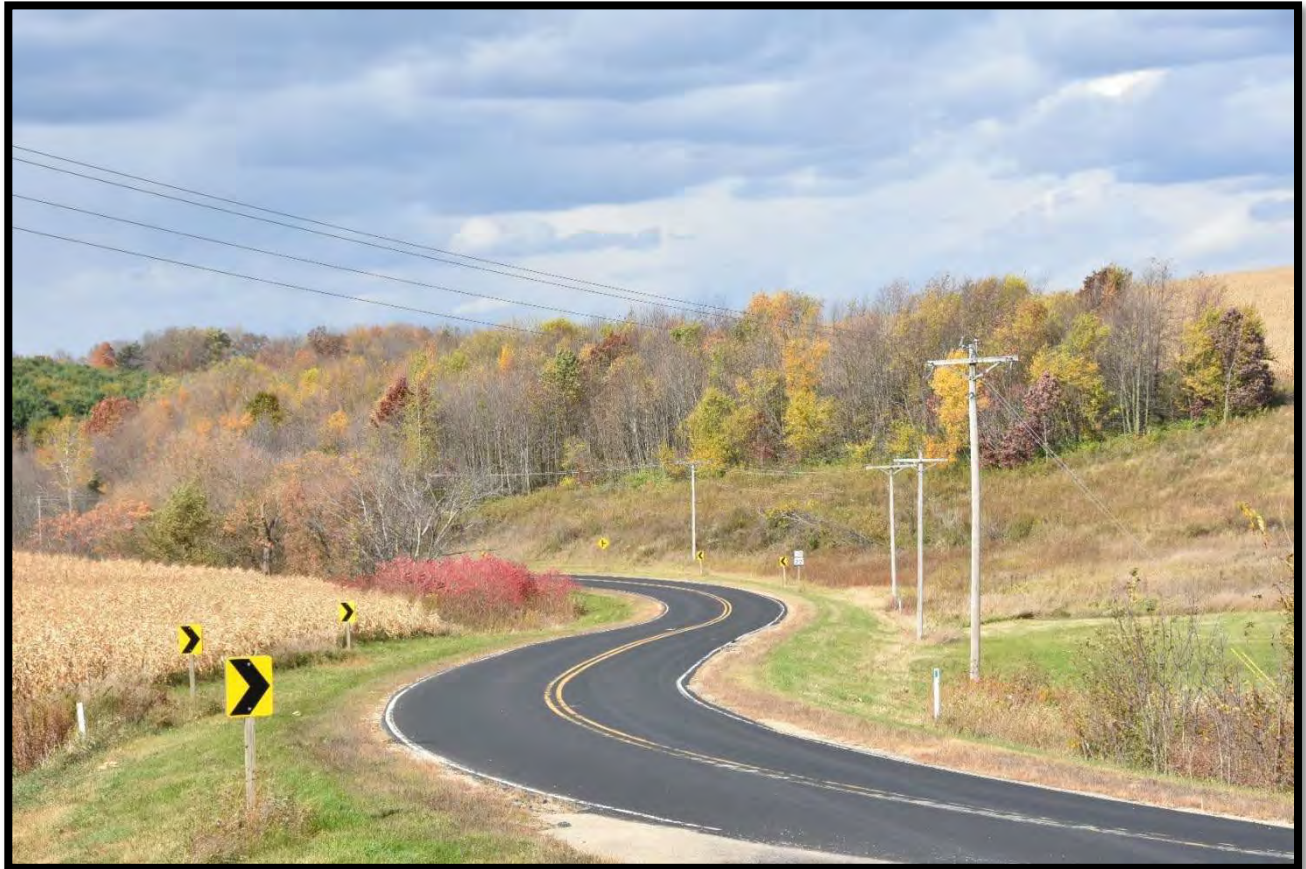
*Image 4: Elephant Rock in Rural Richland County*





# Summary of State, Regional and Local Planning Efforts

Image 4: Rural Road Scene in Richland County, WI



## Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides recommendations to guide public outdoor recreation policy, planning decisions, the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund money, and other WIDNR administered Richland programs.

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*“Our effectiveness in meeting future recreation needs will be shaped by many factors including the shifting demographics of our population, the quality of habitats and the impacts from invasive species and changing climate conditions, our ability to improve the compatibility between and among recreation participants, and sustainable financial resources. Parks and nature preserves, wildlife areas and refuges, and forests and trails connect people to the natural environment. These places, from small neighborhood parks to the large national, state and county forests, are the stages on which we enjoy the outdoors, improve our health, protect our air and water, and provide a large economic boost, particularly to our rural areas. – Wisconsin Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan*

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

To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as opinions about future needs. In addition, WIDNR undertook an assessment of recreation opportunities and needs in each region of the state. Together, these supporting documents show that an estimated 95% of Wisconsin adults participated in some type of outdoor recreation in the past year. Activities in which residents most frequently engaged tend to be those that require little preparation or travel time and can provide a high-quality experience in a limited amount of time. Examples include hiking and walking on trails, fishing, bicycling, dog walking, and bird/wildlife watching.

SCORP goals include:

- Boost participation in outdoor recreation.
- Grow partnerships.
- Provide high-quality experiences.
- Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits.
- Enhance funding and financial stability.

Additionally, the SCORP highlights regional recreational demands that supports Richland County's priorities for its location in the Southern Gateways Region. The top twelve (12) most frequently identified recreation opportunities, needed in the Southern Gateway Region, based on public input gathered during the SCORP Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA) process include:

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

The entire 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) can be found read here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/fl/PropertyPlanning/Scorp>



## Regional Planning Efforts

In 2010, SWWRPC initiated a regional visioning and planning project titled “Grow Southwest Wisconsin” as part of the Sustainable Communities program of the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Environmental Protection Agency. Goal 3 of the Culture and Creativity element is to “Attract people from outside Southwestern Wisconsin through regional branding and marketing,” with Strategy 3.5.2 recommending that the region’s leaders “Connect the marketing of arts and culture opportunities with recreational trails such as bike and ATV.” Goal 2 of the Transportation element also recognizes the importance of prioritizing safety in all transportation projects with Strategy 2.2.1 recommending the needs of all users in road construction projects. Strategy 2.2.3 of the same goal also recommends adhering to or exceeding the Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

## Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation Plan

Richland County’s previous Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan was completed in 2020 by the Richland County Parks Commission, with technical assistance from the Richland County Conservationist. This plan focused primarily on upgrading the parks by bringing all facilities up to ADA standards and increasing access to the Pine River for paddlers. Recommendations in the 2019 plan which have since been implemented include:

- New well at Viola Park
- New kayak port at Rockbridge
- Cooperate with user groups to expand ATV/UTV routes
- Expand camping options in the county

# Description of the Planning Region

## Social characteristics of Richland County

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the population of Richland County is 17,304, which is sharply down 717 persons from the 2010 US Census count. Richland County’s racial composition is largely homogenous with 93.4% of the City’s population being white. The remaining 6.6% is primarily split between the “Some Other Race” and “Two or More Races” categories. Richland County’s lack of racial diversity is standard for the southwestern Wisconsin region, and lags behind the state average, with 80.4% white and a 19.6% split of other races, black being the highest at 6%.

Richland County maintains a median age of 45.8, similar to many communities in southwestern Wisconsin. Table 2 illustrates that 53% of the county is between 20 and 64 years old. This wide working-age base helps ground the county economically and provides stability. There is a large portion of this age group nearing retirement age in the coming years. The relatively small youth population means that the county will likely not have sustainable long-term growth. Also, the large retired age population will mean greater demand for services as they continue to age.

Table 1: Richland County Age Cohorts

	Total Population		Total Male		Total Female			
Total Population	17408	100%	8717	50.07%	8691	49.93%		
Under 5 years	884	5.08%	441	5.06%	443	5.10%	4160 Total "youth" population	<b>23.9%</b> of total population
5 to 9 years	1041	5.98%	514	5.90%	527	6.06%		
10 to 14 years	1153	6.62%	623	7.15%	530	6.10%		
15 to 19 years	1082	6.22%	532	6.10%	550	6.33%		
20 to 24 years	895	5.14%	506	5.80%	389	4.48%	9227 Total working-age population	<b>53%</b> of total population
25 to 29 years	798	4.58%	421	4.83%	377	4.34%		
30 to 34 years	827	4.75%	422	4.84%	405	4.66%		
35 to 39 years	996	5.72%	484	5.55%	512	5.89%		
40 to 44 years	826	4.74%	458	5.25%	368	4.23%		
45 to 49 years	1033	5.93%	511	5.86%	522	6.01%		
50 to 54 years	1095	6.29%	533	6.11%	562	6.47%		
55 to 59 years	1387	7.97%	703	8.06%	684	7.87%		
60 to 64 years	1370	7.87%	663	7.61%	707	8.13%		
65 to 69 years	1359	7.81%	683	7.84%	676	7.78%	4021 Total retired-age population	<b>23.1%</b> of total population
70 to 74 years	876	5.03%	445	5.10%	431	4.96%		
75 to 79 years	750	4.31%	340	3.90%	410	4.72%		
80 to 84 years	450	2.59%	215	2.47%	235	2.70%		
85 years and over	586	3.37%	223	2.56%	363	4.18%		

Source: US Census 2020 ACS 5-year Estimates

Figure 1 is a population pyramid that shows a snapshot of Richland County’s population taken from the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-year Estimates. As mentioned previously, the largest portion of the pyramid is the “working-age” population between 20 and 64 years. The older portion of the “working age” population is the largest portion of the pyramid, meaning that there are a significant number of people approaching retirement. This means that the county’s population is rapidly aging and will continue to decline in the future unless more residents move into the county.

Figure 1: Richland County Population Pyramid

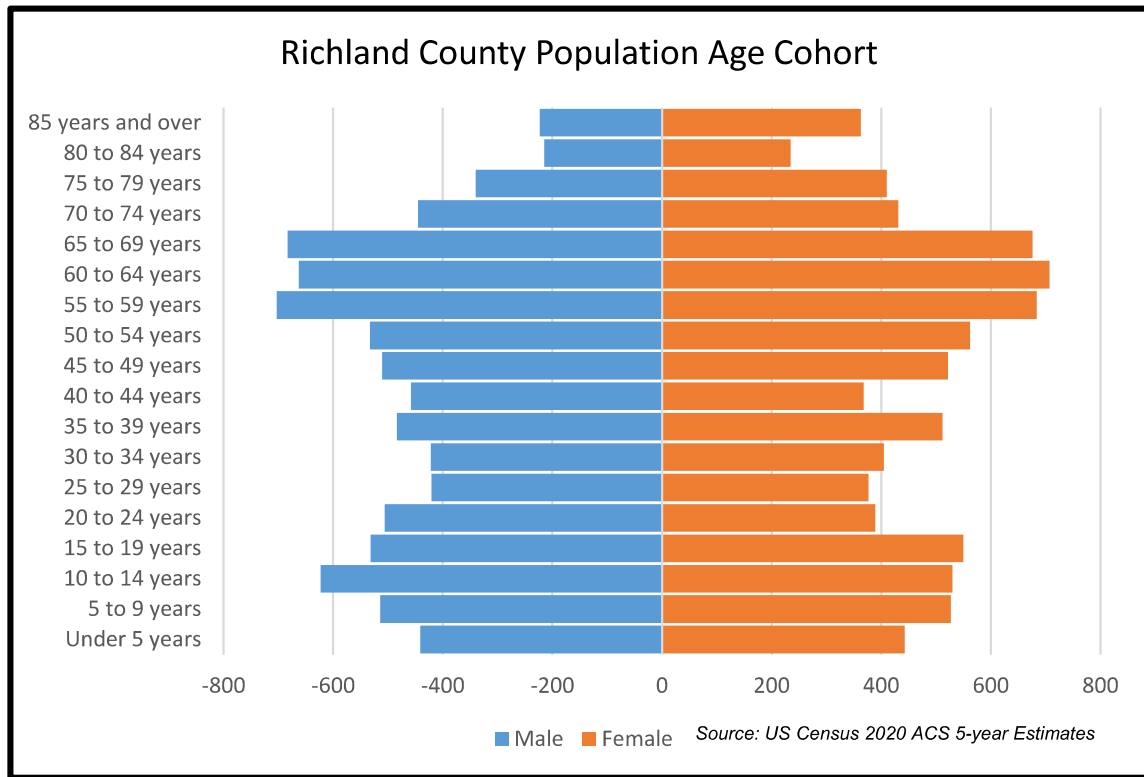
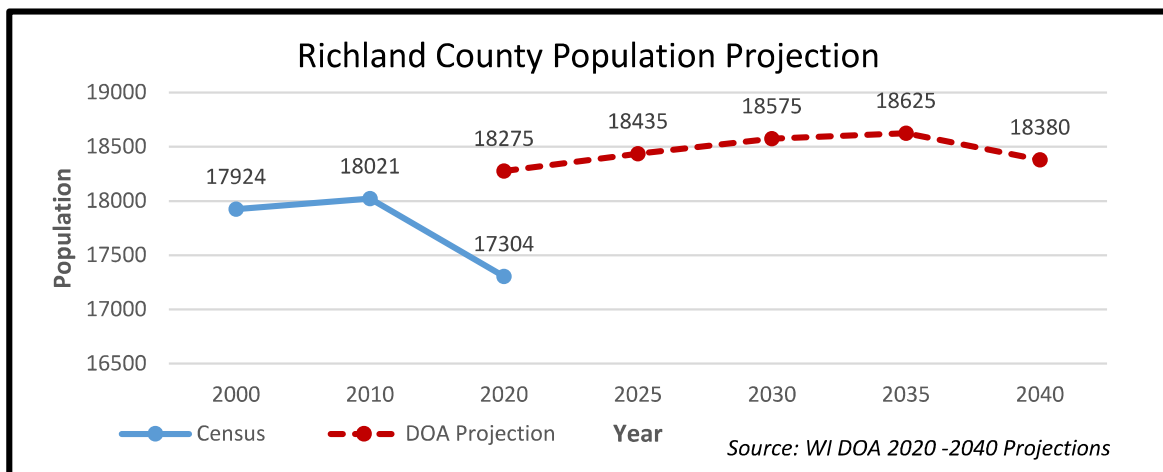


Figure 2: Richland County Population Projection



The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) released estimates are based on the 2010 Census and analysis of contemporary data including housing units, dormitory and institutional populations, automobile registrations, and other indicators of population change. According to the DOA, Richland County’s population was projected to slowly increase from 2010 through 2035, but as the 2020 census shows, the population decreased significantly between 2010 and 2020. As the large “working-age” population advances in age, there will not be enough of a youth population to support their loss and the community will likely continue lose residents from 2025 through 2040. Figure 2 illustrates the potential decline in population.

Table 2: Regional Tourism Impacts

Total Tourism Impacts															
Municipality	Direct Visitor Spending			Total Business Sales			Employment			Total Labor Income			State and Local Taxes		
	Millions			Millions			Total			Millions			Millions		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
<b>Wisconsin</b>	\$13,667.8	\$9,803.6	\$12,856.3	\$22,223.4	\$17,267.1	\$20,928.7	202,217	157,332	169,707	\$5,902.1	\$5,143.9	\$5,798.3	\$1,610	\$1,165.4	\$1,388.2
<b>Richland County</b>	\$22.1	\$18.1	\$22.2	\$37.2	\$31.3	\$35.8	339	297	317	\$7.2	\$7.1	\$7.80	\$2.5	\$2.0	\$2.27
<b>Crawford County</b>	\$42.8	\$35.4	\$45.5	\$64.9	\$54.6	\$66.7	661	585	661	\$12.8	\$12.7	\$15.0	\$5.3	\$4.6	\$5.5
<b>Grant County</b>	\$55.1	\$47.0	\$56.8	\$97.3	\$83.6	\$94.9	978	862	976	\$24.5	\$23.7	\$27.4	\$6.4	\$5.3	\$6.3
<b>Iowa County</b>	\$37.7	\$33.2	\$44.7	\$60.7	\$53.2	\$66.5	426	384	429	\$12.1	\$11.3	\$12.8	\$3.5	\$2.8	\$3.4
<b>Sauk County</b>	\$1,145.3	\$960.7	\$1,485.5	\$1,460.0	\$1,235.8	\$1,779.3	11,542	9,517	11,234	\$257.9	\$223.8	\$278.3	\$128.7	\$101.9	\$136.7
<b>Vernon County</b>	\$41.6	\$36.6	\$44.8	\$65.0	\$56.9	\$66.3	541	457	528	\$12.0	\$11.7	\$13.3	\$4.4	\$3.7	\$4.2

## Economy

Within Richland County, the local economy is driven by employment within the “Educational services, and health care and social assistance”, “Manufacturing”, and “Retail trade” industries. Richland County has an estimated 1.3% unemployment rate according to the 2020 US Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates and approximately 13.4% of people at or below the poverty level. The median household income for people living within the city is \$52,052 according to the 2020 US Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates.

The impact of tourism in the county is shown above. It demonstrates an opportunity for growth by being proactive with outdoor recreation needs.



## Physical Characteristics of Richland County

### Location

Richland County, approximately 589 square miles in area, is located in southwestern Wisconsin. Richland County has become an emerging recreational area with its assets of natural beauty, trout streams, and access to the Pine and Wisconsin Rivers. Elevations range from 656 feet along the Wisconsin River to 1256 feet in Bloom Township. Figure 3 shows some recreational opportunities in Richland County. The county is well-positioned to provide residents and visitors with a variety of recreation activities, including the Lower Wisconsin Waterway, Bear Creek Fishery Area, Camp Creek Fishery, Elk Creek Fishery, Fancy Creek Fishery, Hansell Creek Fishery, Knapp Creek Fishery and Wildlife Area, Milancthon Creek Fishery, Mill Creek Fishery, Pine River/Yuba Fishery, Sabin Springs Fishery Area, Willow Creek Fishery Area, County recreation facilities also include two county owned public accesses along the Wisconsin River. Many also utilize the numerous smaller rivers and streams and view geological features. This makes outdoor recreation a large part of the local economy. The locations of all public access lands and state parks in Richland County can be found at the following websites:

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*Richland County's Public Access Lands PDF:*

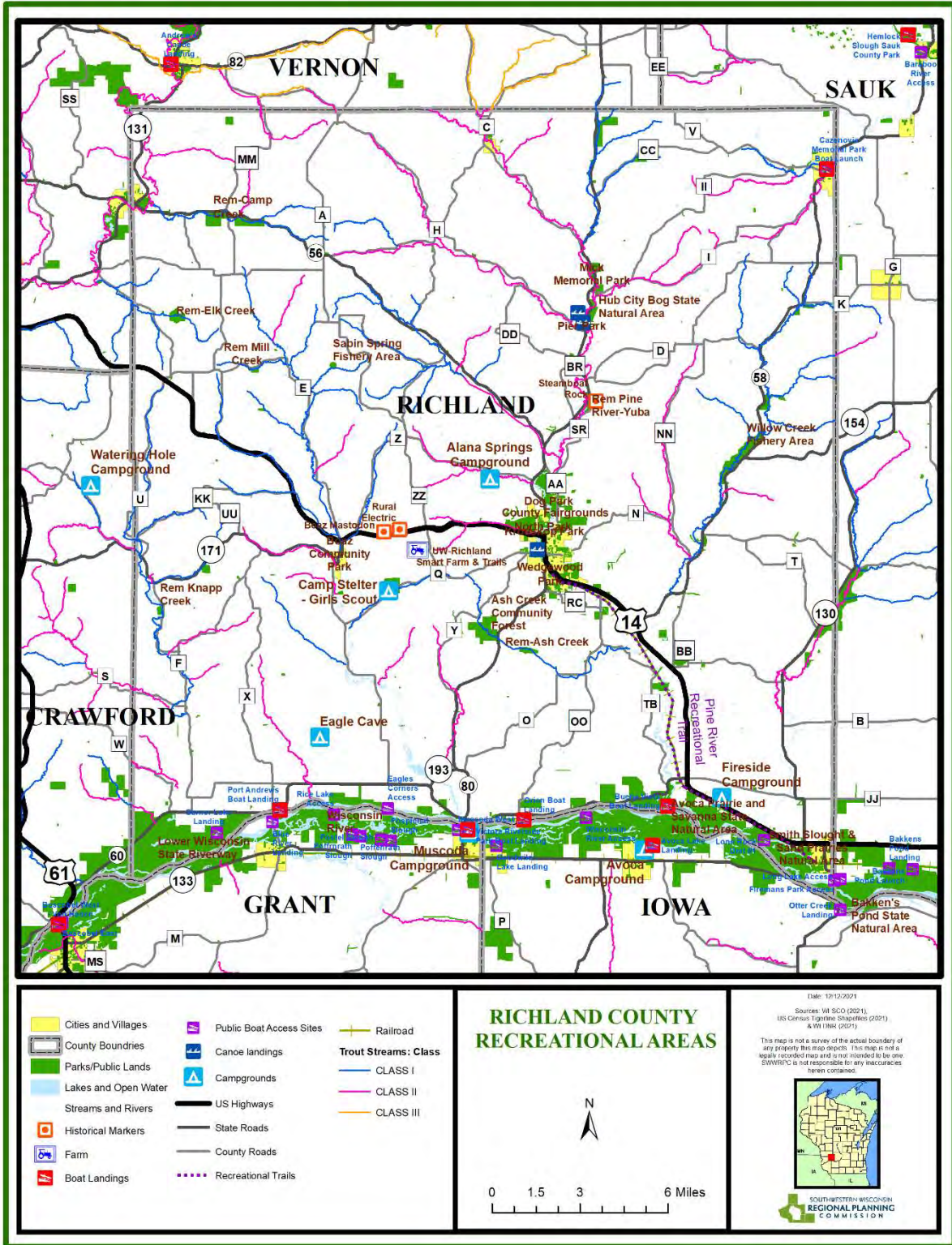
[https://embed.widencdn.net/pdf/plus/widnr/btxe5czufo/LF0076\\_Richland.pdf?u=6c5niw](https://embed.widencdn.net/pdf/plus/widnr/btxe5czufo/LF0076_Richland.pdf?u=6c5niw)

*Wisconsin's Public Access Lands Web Map:*

[https://dnrmaps.wi.gov/H5/?Viewer=Public\\_Access\\_Lands](https://dnrmaps.wi.gov/H5/?Viewer=Public_Access_Lands)

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Figure 3: Recreation Opportunities in Richland County



## Topography

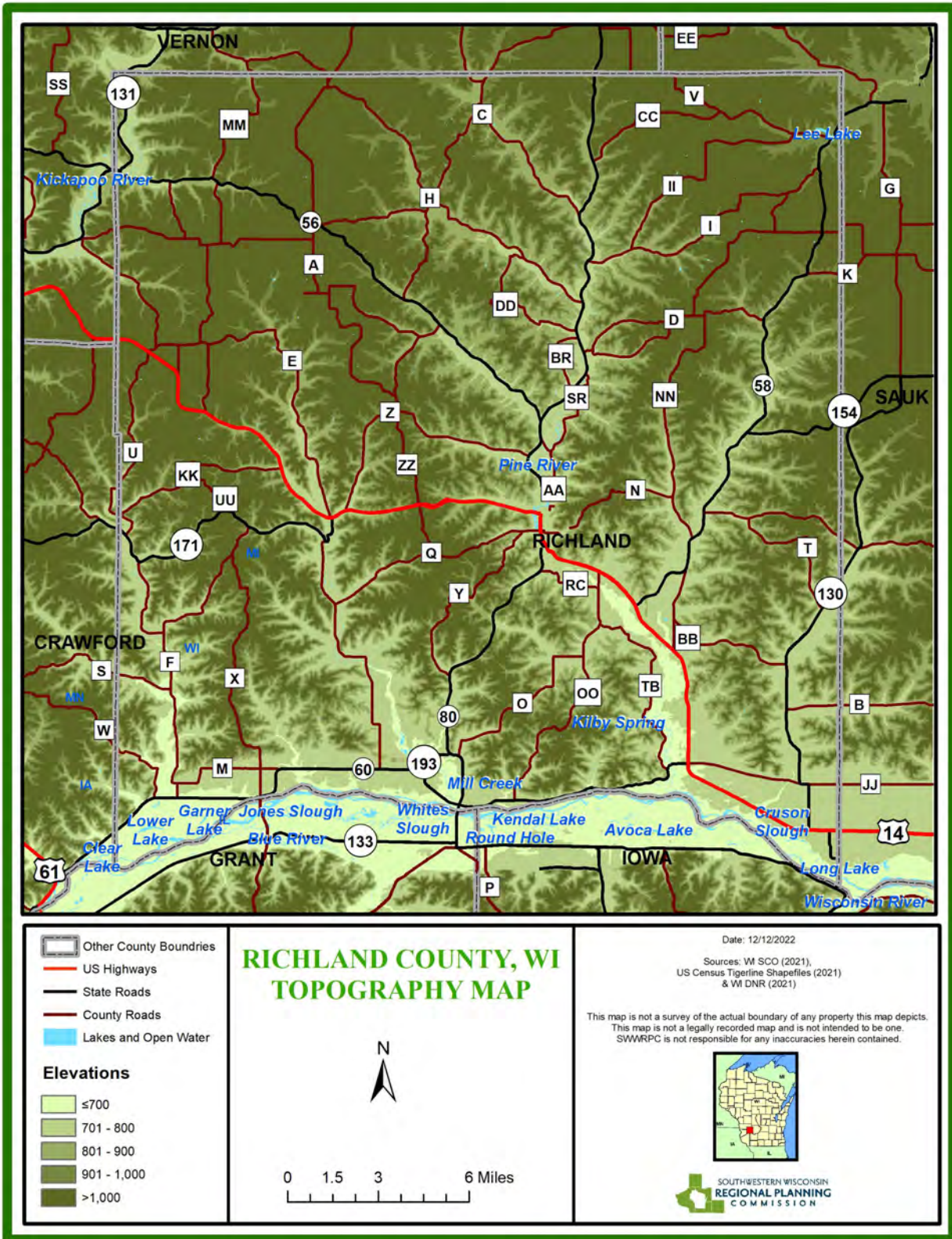
Richland County is located entirely within the Western Coulee and Ridges ecological landscape of Wisconsin, a sub-region of the larger Driftless Area. The hills of Richland County are known locally as the “Ocooch Mountains.” The Western Coulee and Ridges is a geographical region covering much of the western half of Wisconsin. Unlike other parts of Wisconsin, the surface of the Western Coulees and Ridges Ecological Landscape was not shaped by recent glaciation. The Western Coulees and Ridges is a dissected landscape with narrow to broad ridges; narrow sloping shoulders; steep to very steep valley sides, escarpments, and caves. Elevations range from about 615 feet (200 meters) at Prairie du Chien to 1,594 feet (486 meters) at Sauk Point in the Baraboo Hills. Aside from the Upland itself, the strongest topographic features of the region are the trenches of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers and their numerous branches. One of the most dominant features of Richland County is the cold spring-fed headwaters streams. They are common in many parts of this ecological landscape. A large number of springs have been documented in the Western Coulees and Ridges, and they are critical contributing water sources for many streams in the county. These springs help support populations of pollution-intolerant invertebrates, rare nongame fish, and native brook trout. Most of these cold-water streams with suitable habitat are WDNR-designated trout streams. They also provide great recreation and tourism for the county.

The presence of the Wisconsin River is also important to Richland County. The Lower Wisconsin flows through an extensive and relatively undisturbed and unbroken corridor of forested and prairie bluff lands, sand terraces, floodplain forests, shrub swamps, marshes, and wet meadows. Forest cover is high along some of the Wisconsin’s tributaries as well as on some of the surrounding uplands, helping to maintain a viable and diverse range of habitat conditions for many sensitive species within this corridor. Archaeological sites are also present with influence to the local topography.

Richland County is located within a dynamic ecological landscape due to the topography and care should be taken to protect these areas during development.



Figure 4: Richland County Topographic Features



## Climate

Richland County's climate is continental and typical of the central areas of a continent in the middle latitudes. Winters are relatively cold and snowy with extended periods of rain during the spring and autumn and intermittent periods of hot humid summer weather. Air temperatures within the county are subject to large seasonal change and yearly variations. Precipitation in the county for the six-month period from April through September may range in intensity and duration from showers to destructive thunderstorms. The snow fall average for Richland County is about 40 inches annually. Prevailing winds are westerly in winter and southerly in summer.

## Soils

Throughout the Driftless area, the work of weathering has continued since long before the Glacial Period and has produced a deep mantle of residual soil. This forms a notable contrast to the remainder of the state, where the continental glacier scraped away nearly all the residual soil and left a sheet of transported soil. Generally, the soils of the region have been classified as the Grayish-Brown Unglaciated Silt Loam, hilly or steep. These soils were formed from parent materials reflecting native vegetation such as prairie, oak-hickory, oak/maple forest, and oak savanna. Their basic materials include clay residue from weathered limestone, weathered sandstone, loess and stream-laid sand and gravel. The latter occurs in valleys of large streams, while the first three are wide spread. The entire southwest Wisconsin region is covered with a thick blanket of loess (windblown silt and sand). Over most of the region the loess is largely silt and is two to three feet thick. In addition, some sandy areas along the Wisconsin River have active moving sand dunes.

## Flora and Fauna

Richland County is located within the "Western Coulee and Ridges" ecological landscape in Wisconsin. This was once dominated by fire-dependent natural communities of Prairie, Oak Savanna, Oak Woodland and Oak Forest. They are now predominately dominated by agriculture; however, remnants of the former natural communities do exist but typically in small low-quality pieces. Three percent of the land in the Western Coulee and Ridges eco-region are in public ownership so care for the public lands are important. The Western Coulee and Ridges eco-region also includes high quality streams. In the Western Coulees and Ridges Ecological Landscape, about 465,000 acres, or 7.5% of all land and water, is publicly owned (WDNR 2005a). This is far less than the statewide average of 19.9% public ownership.

Threats from invasive plant species have been increasing and control of them should be considered in both ecosystems. Invasive plants reduce opportunities for recreation, increase chances for erosion, decrease habitat, and lessen the aesthetics of areas. Some of these invasive plants include: Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*), Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea stoebe*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Crown vetch (*Coronilla varia*), Common teasel (*Dipsacus sylvestris*), Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*), Tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), White mulberry (*Morus alba*), Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*). Any plant that is dominating an area could be considered invasive.

Common trees of the area historically would include fire tolerant Oaks, Shagbark Hickory and Hazelnut undergrowth. In ravines and near waterways would have been Maple, Basswood dominated. However, due to mesophication, woodlands are becoming dominated by other low-quality tree species and stocking rates are much higher today than historical standards. Richland County contains outstanding ecological

management opportunities.

Public lands which provide abundant recreation opportunities with some of the most popular being surface trail bicycling, paddle sports, fishing, and hiking, and walking or running on trails. The cold and cool water streams are also vital to recreation opportunities and their protection and enhancement should be imperative to any land use decision. Warm water streams with small mouth bass populations should also be prioritized.

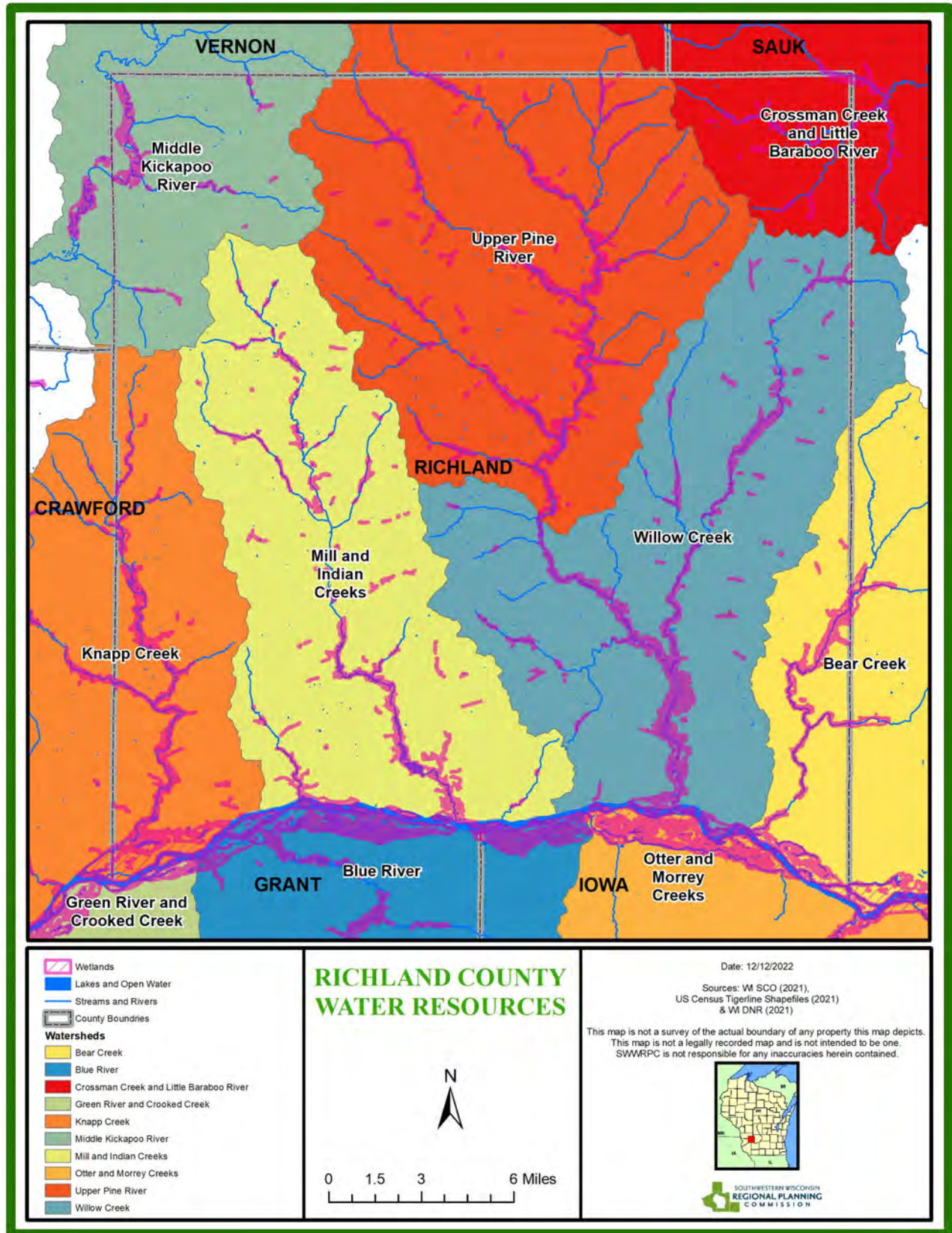
## **Water Resources**

The county contains 1,762 acres of surface water. Most being the important Wisconsin River. There are no natural lakes in Richland County. Those existing were created by the artificial diversion or impoundment of a stream. The Wisconsin River is the largest contributor to water acreage and, accordingly, sustains the largest amount of recreation activity. However, the streams of Richland County provide great value for their allotment of the total. The Kickapoo, and Pine Rivers along with Mill Creek are the best canoeing and kayaking waters in the County and a source of visitorship to the area. Combined, they provide approximately 64 miles of canoeing and kayaking opportunities and reveal a full measure of Richland County's diverse scenery. Most notable of water resources is the 260 miles of cold-water trout streams which provide habitat for trout, and the springs that supply water to them. Fishing, paddling, hunting, and trapping are the principal recreational uses of Richland County waters. Surface waters are also valuable because of their aesthetic qualities. The WDNR has identified Richland County as host to many Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW) and Class 1 Streams. This is one of the county's greatest attributes and care should be given to these waterways.

All the streams of the county are prone by man-caused pollutants to one degree or another. None, however, have been abused to the point that they are no longer capable of serving the recreationist. Major sources of surface water degradation in Richland County are soil and chemical runoff from agriculture and erosion. Much of the adverse damage is caused during heavy rainfall events. Additional references to the county's waters, their use and potential will be made in subsequent sections of the plan. The county should support conservation practices in the county and encourage greater public access to streams.



Figure 5: Richland County's Water Resources



## **Fish and Game**

A variety of fish species are available in Richland County, and it is difficult to say that one species is more popular than others. Trout ranks high in popularity due to the presence of many fine trout streams. Figure 6 shows the trout streams in Richland County. Richland County has a total of 260 miles of trout streams. The majority of the trout water in Richland County is Class II. Class I Trout Water is water that has a reproducing population of trout that will maintain a fishable population without stocking. Class II Trout Water is water that is adequate to maintain a fishable population of trout including carryover trout if a stocking program is carried on. Class III Trout Water include waters that are marginal trout habitat with no natural reproduction occurring and require annual stocking of trout to provide trout fishing.

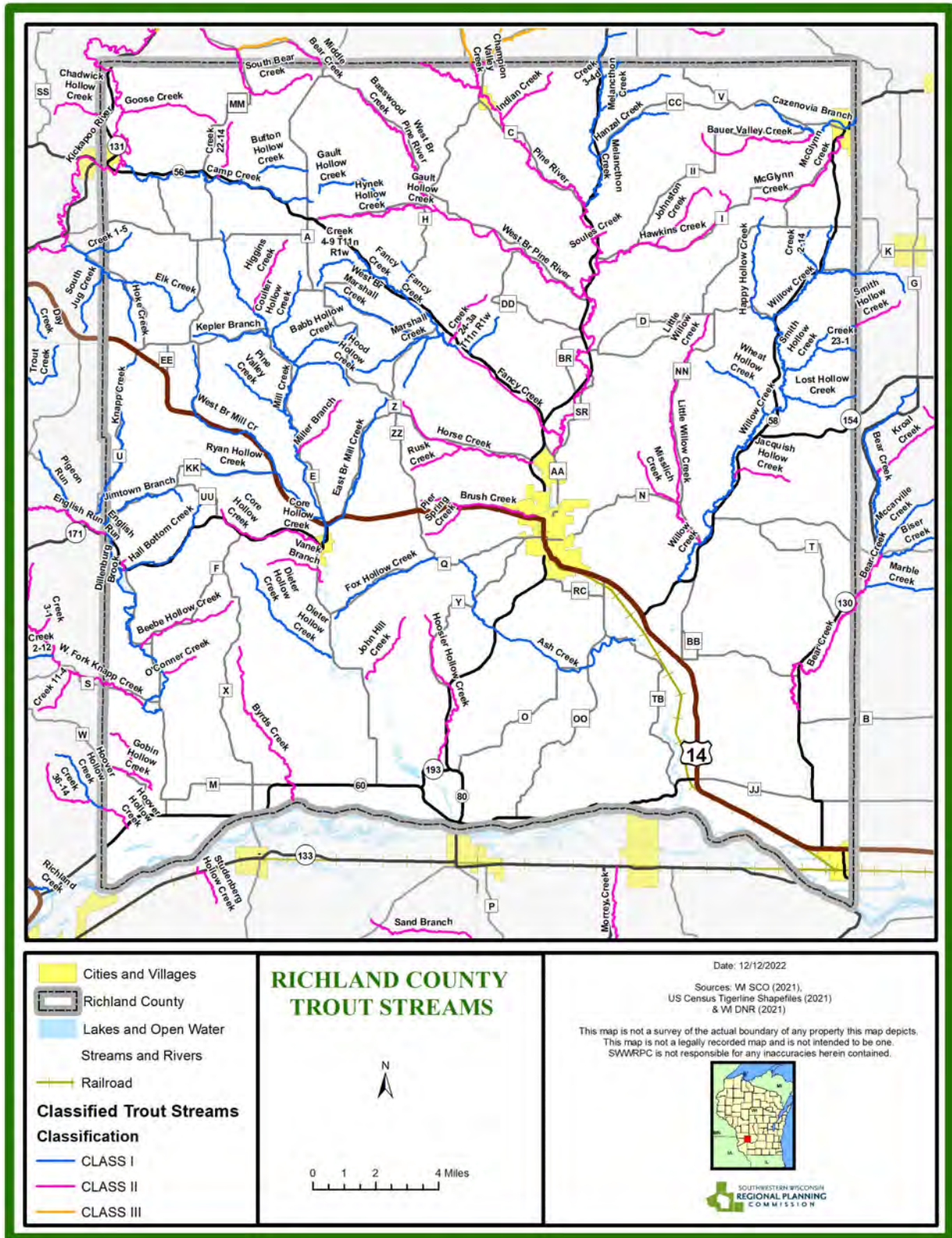
Other fish of importance to the recreationist in Richland County include largemouth and smallmouth bass, bluegills, catfish, northern pike, and walleye. Oxbow lakes of the Wisconsin River, Wisconsin River sloughs, and the county's larger streams support the bulk of the warm water fishery.

Richland County hunters have a wide variety of game to pursue. The white-tailed deer, which is most abundant in the northern part of the county, is the most sought-after game species. Other popular game species include squirrel, woodcock, pheasant, ruffed grouse, raccoon, rabbit, and waterfowl. Muskrat, mink and beaver inhabit marshes along the rivers and are of special interest to trappers. Since being reintroduced to the state in the 1970's, wild turkeys can now be found in every county in Wisconsin. Richland County's topography provides ideal habitat for turkey hunting during spring and fall seasons which has grown substantially over the past years.

Both uplands and wetlands provide habitat for numerous smaller mammals and a very wide variety of birdlife. Although these segments of the county's wildlife population may not always be of interest to hunters, they are of interest to people engaged in nature study, hiking, photography, and sightseeing. Hunting, and outdoor recreation in general, is important to the Richland County economy.



Figure 6: Richland County's Trout Streams



## Land Use

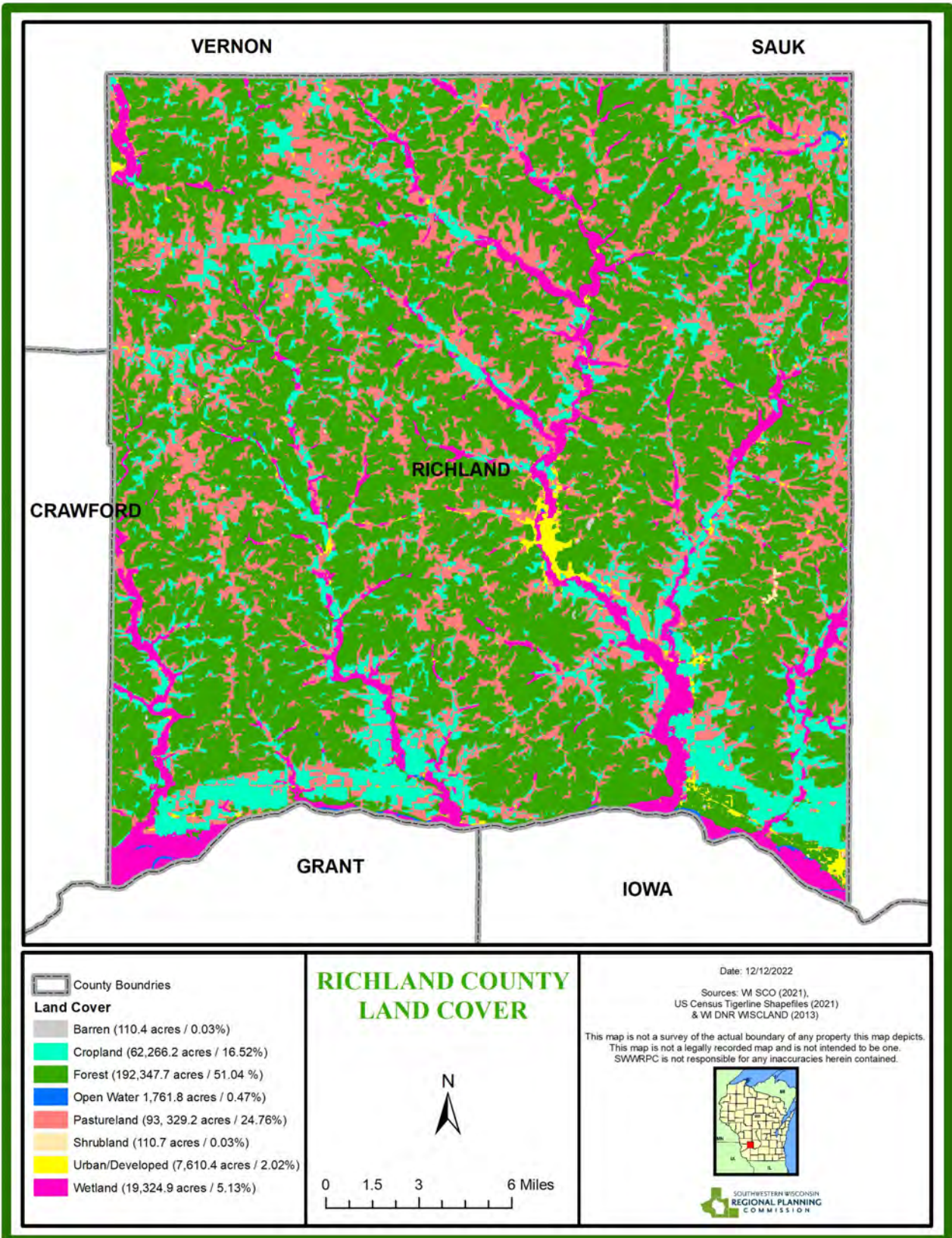
It is estimated that approximately 41 percent of Richland County's land area is used for agricultural purposes. This agricultural land (over 155,000 acres) is composed of cropland or pasture. The remaining acreage is devoted to community developments, transportation routes, parks, wildlife reserves, and many forms of other municipal improvements. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns and manages approximately 8,203.33 acres of recreational land within Richland County including a great deal of land located along the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway.

The amount of land specifically devoted to recreational purposes is minor in relationship to the total land area of Richland County. However, it is recognized that a considerable amount of farm acreage is used for extensive forms of recreation, like hunting, hiking, nature study, and snowmobiling. These activities seldom require elaborate recreation facilities or a financial investment of consequence.

Forestry is also a land use that has a positive impact on recreation. It is estimated that about 51 percent of the land area of the county is forest covered. Forests complement numerous outdoor recreation activities, like sightseeing, nature study, and hunting, and provide visual variety to the agricultural landscape. They also protect the soils and water supplies of the county.



Figure 7: Richland County Land Use



# Standards for Park and Recreation Planning

The standards system is a method of assessing an area's outdoor recreation needs. The National Recreation and Park Association developed standards to provide a scale against which the existing recreation system can be measured. Standards can be used to create guidelines for future needs. Typically, standards link park acreage to the area's population, or link the number of recreation facilities to the population. In addition, service area standards are also used to determine recreational needs.

## Recreation Open Space Standards

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has endorsed a park and open space classification system which will serve as a guide throughout much of this plan. These standards pertain only to parks, recreation lands, and other open spaces discussed in this plan. Standards can be a good starting point or reference when determining a county's outdoor recreation land and facility needs. However, each county's needs are different based on such factors as the county's demographic profile and what types of facilities and outdoor recreation priorities the citizenry deem important. Resident input in the form of surveys and/or public hearings are also important when recreation and park planners look at future development and/or preservation of public lands.

NRPA's standards have been modified to more accurately define park, recreation land and open spaces within Richland County. For example, NRPA recommends that a County Park have a desirable size of 15+ acres. In Richland County, most parks of this nature are in the 5 to 100+ acres range. This has been noted in the definition section below. All parks, recreation lands and open space under the jurisdiction of Richland County have been assigned one primary classification or code using the following titles and abbreviations: (CP) County Park; (LP) Linear Park; (SU) Special Use Area.

- CP: County Park
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 5 to 100+ acres
  - Service Area: 1 – 15 miles.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
  - Use: Area of diverse environmental quality. This may be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting or picnicking. It may be any combination of the above depending upon site suitability and community need.
  - Site Characteristics: May include natural features, such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. The site has easy access by all modes of transportation.
- SU: Special Use Area
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Variable depending on type of facility.
  - Service Area: Entire County, or part of the county.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
  - Use: Areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservancies, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, and downhill ski areas. Also includes plazas or squares in or near commercial centers, boulevards, or parkways.
  - Site Characteristics: Located within the county.



- LP: Linear Park
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Sufficient width to protect resources and to provide maximum use.
  - Service Area: No applicable standard.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
  - Use: Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel or activity such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, fitness trails/skiing and canoeing. May include active play areas.
  - Site Characteristics: Built on natural corridors such as utility or railroad right-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.

## Recreational Facility Development Standards

Standards for the development of recreation facilities, similar to open space standards, are expressed in facility units per population ratio. The purpose of evaluating a recreation system is to determine the amount of needed facilities in each recreation area.

Recreation facility development standards serve as an excellent resource guide when local officials are developing a new park or are upgrading an existing recreation area. These standards provide recommendations regarding space requirements for various recreation activities. They also provide recommendations regarding size and dimensions for each activity, the best orientation to avoid sunlight in the eyes, a recommended service radius for each activity, and other criteria to be considered when locating a recreation facility/activity.

Age, income, and education all contribute to people’s recreational preferences, yet facility standards sometimes ignore these variables. Another problem with using standards is that they have been developed primarily for urban communities and have limited application to rural areas. Despite these problems, facility development standards have a place in recreation planning. County leaders use them to approximate the adequacy of their parks systems.

A listing of the NRPA’s park and open space standards and suggested facility development standards can be found in this report. Included in the listing of recreation facility development standards are such activities as baseball, softball, football, field hockey, soccer, volleyball, tennis, badminton, ice hockey, archery range, golf-driving range, and track running.

# Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory

To determine what course of action county officials must take to provide comprehensive outdoor recreational opportunities, it is necessary to evaluate the supply of existing areas and facilities. This section of the report provides an inventory of Richland County's recreational facilities. Recreational opportunities in Richland County are provided by the state, county, communities, and private enterprise. For ease of presentation, activities based on land resources are discussed separately from those based on water resources.

## Land-Based Activities

### Golfing

There is one golf course in Richland County. The privately owned Quail Run Golf Course near Richland Center provides open play to the residents of the county with leagues and memberships available for discounted rates. It is located just west of the city of Richland Center on County Road Y. Other options outside the county are available in Spring Green, Plain, and Reedsburg.

### Tennis / Pickleball

There are two locations to play tennis within Richland County. There are two courts located at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville at Richland campus in Richland Center and three at Krouskup Park. Tennis opportunities are generally limited in southwest Wisconsin. Pickleball has emerged recently, and opportunities are also available at Krouskup Park and the Community Center Gym. Pickleball courts are adaptable and should be arranged to meet demand.

### Sightseeing

Few counties in Wisconsin offer greater opportunities for sightseers than does Richland County. The county road system through Richland County offers great sights including the Wisconsin River, wooded hills, rock bluffs and outcroppings, and the sculptured agrarian landscape typifies the county's visual amenities. Route 60 from Gotham to the Crawford County line offers a spectacular drive. This is one of the strongest opportunities to promote for visitors.

### Hiking and Nature Study

Both of these activities can take place without assistance from developed facilities. When facilities are provided, however, enjoyment is typically increased. The only developed public trail systems in Richland Center are at the Miner Hill Trail Park, along the Pine River Trail, and at Ocooch Mountain Trails. Ash Creek Forest offers four miles of trails, 1.5 miles at Eagle Cave and a short trail at Rockbridge/Pier County Park. Park areas along the Lower Wisconsin Riverway also offer short hiking experiences.

There are six state natural areas in Richland Center that provide opportunities for botanical study. A list of Richland County's natural preserves can be found at the following link: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Lands/NaturalAreas/county.html#Richland>. Further detail can be found in this plan under *Scientific Areas and Natural Areas*.

## Snow Skiing and Snowshoeing

Although official trails can be used (listed above in as Hiking Trails) these activities can be done anywhere when adequate snow cover exists. The City of Richland Center has begun to offer snowshoe rentals. There is much opportunity to grow this activity in Richland County with expansion of trails and promotion.

## Camping

There are 6 publicly and privately owned campgrounds in Richland County. Most offer a mix of sites to accommodate tents, RVs, and group sites along with a combination of options ranging from overnight to seasonal stays. The privately owned Fireside Campground, located south of Richland Center and the county owned Richland County Fairgrounds offer the most sites. The six offerings range greatly in the experience they offer but all do provide water. Camping demands are high in Richland County and the region. The county should work to better take advantage of the opportunity to provide overnight experiences to visitors both for a single night and longer-term overnight camping opportunities.

**Table 3: Campground Inventory of Richland County**

Name of Campground	Ownership	Number of Sites
Alana Springs	Private	34
Cazenovia Memorial Park	Village of Cazenovia	6
Eagle Cave Natural Park	Private	50
Fireside Campground	Private	60
Pier County Park	Richland County	6
Richland County Fairgrounds	Richland County	100
Viola County Park	Richland County	6

## Hunting

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) provides thousands of acres of land for the purpose of hunting and propagating wildlife. Some of these lands are owned by the state and others are leased. Species of game found on this land include grouse, whitetail deer, rabbit, squirrel, turkey and a variety of waterfowl. Public agencies provide acres of land, wetland, and water for public hunting. Most of the land area in public ownership is in the bottomlands of the Wisconsin River and is used primarily as backup land for the propagation and hunting of waterfowl and hunting is allowed at the county owned Ash Creek Community Forest. However, considerable hunting in the county takes place on privately-owned lands at the discretion of the landowners. The species of game sought on private owned lands and public lands are alike. Hunting is a strong tradition in the region and the county is advised to cater to visitors for a pleasant experience.

## Target Shooting

The county owned Richland County Rifle Range satisfies most of the demand needed for this activity. Located north of Richland Center is equipped for rifle, pistol, and archery shooting. The facility is open during daylight hours and is satisfactory in condition. The county should look at updating some of the most needed attributes.

## Picnicking

Picnicking supply is difficult to determine since a picnic table does not necessarily reflect the recreational opportunity. Some highway waysides and municipal parks, for example, have picnic tables, but they were omitted from the inventory because they are underutilized or because they lack the support facilities necessary or lack other cultural experiences. This activity typically sees a high participation rate. Every local park that is mentioned has picnic tables, but the number fluctuates with the use or movement by need or other reasons. The picnic areas considered to have an impact on outdoor recreation on a countywide basis are listed below. Nearly all the picnic areas inventoried offer recreational opportunities in addition to picnicking.

**Table 4: Picnic Area Inventory of Richland County**

Name of Area	Ownership
Akey School Wayside	Richland County
Boaz Community Park	Village of Boaz
Cazenovia Memorial Park	Village of Cazenovia
Fireman’s Village Park	Village of Lone Rock
Garrison / Battery Park	Village of Lone Rock
Gotham Bicentennial Park	Buena Vista Township
Highway 14 Wayside	State of Wisconsin
Ithaca Lions Park	Ithaca Lions Club
Krouskop Park	City of Richland Center
Miner Hill Trails Park	City of Richland Center
North Park	City of Richland Center
Northlake Park	City of Richland Center
Orion Boat Landing	Richland County
Patterson Park	Village of Lone Rock
Pier County Park	Richland County
Richland County Fairgrounds	Richland County
Strickland Park	City of Richland Center
Twin Bluffs Picnic Area	Private Owner
Viola County Park	Richland County
Wedgewood Park	City of Richland Center
Westside Community Park	City of Richland Center
Yuba Community Park	Village of Yuba

## Bicycling

The Pine River Recreation Trail provides the greatest opportunity for bicycling in Richland County. The trail connects Richland Center with the Village of Lone Rock and offers 14.8 miles of surfaced trails. The condition of the surface ranges but is generally acceptable and work is ongoing to improve the riding experience. The City of Richland Center provides three miles of trails on its levee in the heart of the city. The city has also been proactive in making bicycling within its boundaries safer. In addition, the Ash Creek Community Forest can be used for mountain biking. The county should consider the needs of bicyclists during road and park improvement projects.

## **Horseback Riding**

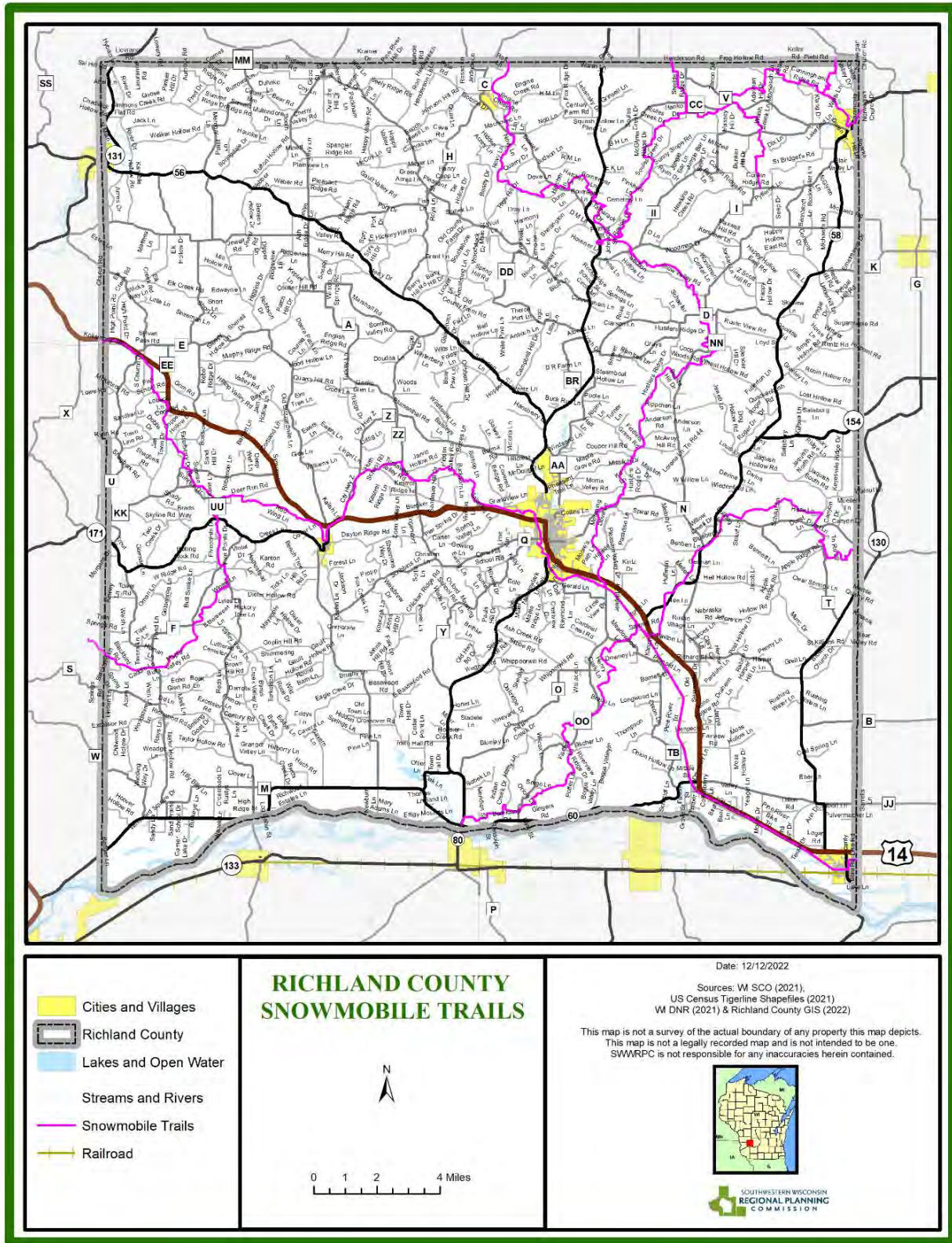
Richland County has limited options for public horse trails. Only one trail is designated specifically for horseback riding. It is located at Ash Creek Community Forest where there are four miles of trails available. However, parking for trailers is needs improvement. Most of the horseback riding done in the county is on private property or along the shoulders of lightly travelled roads. There is more room for opportunity in this activity for public trails in Richland County.

## **Snowmobiling**

Snowmobiling is an important and growing activity in Richland County. There are currently 134 miles of maintained trails in the county. All trails are maintained and groomed by volunteers with local snowmobile clubs that are members of the Richland County Snowmobile Alliance. Snowmobiling provides a tourism draw during an otherwise slow period. There is much potential to grow this recreational segment. This provides a strong revenue source in an otherwise slow season when snow is present. Figure 8 shows existing snowmobile trails in Richland County.



Figure 8: Snowmobile Trails in Richland County

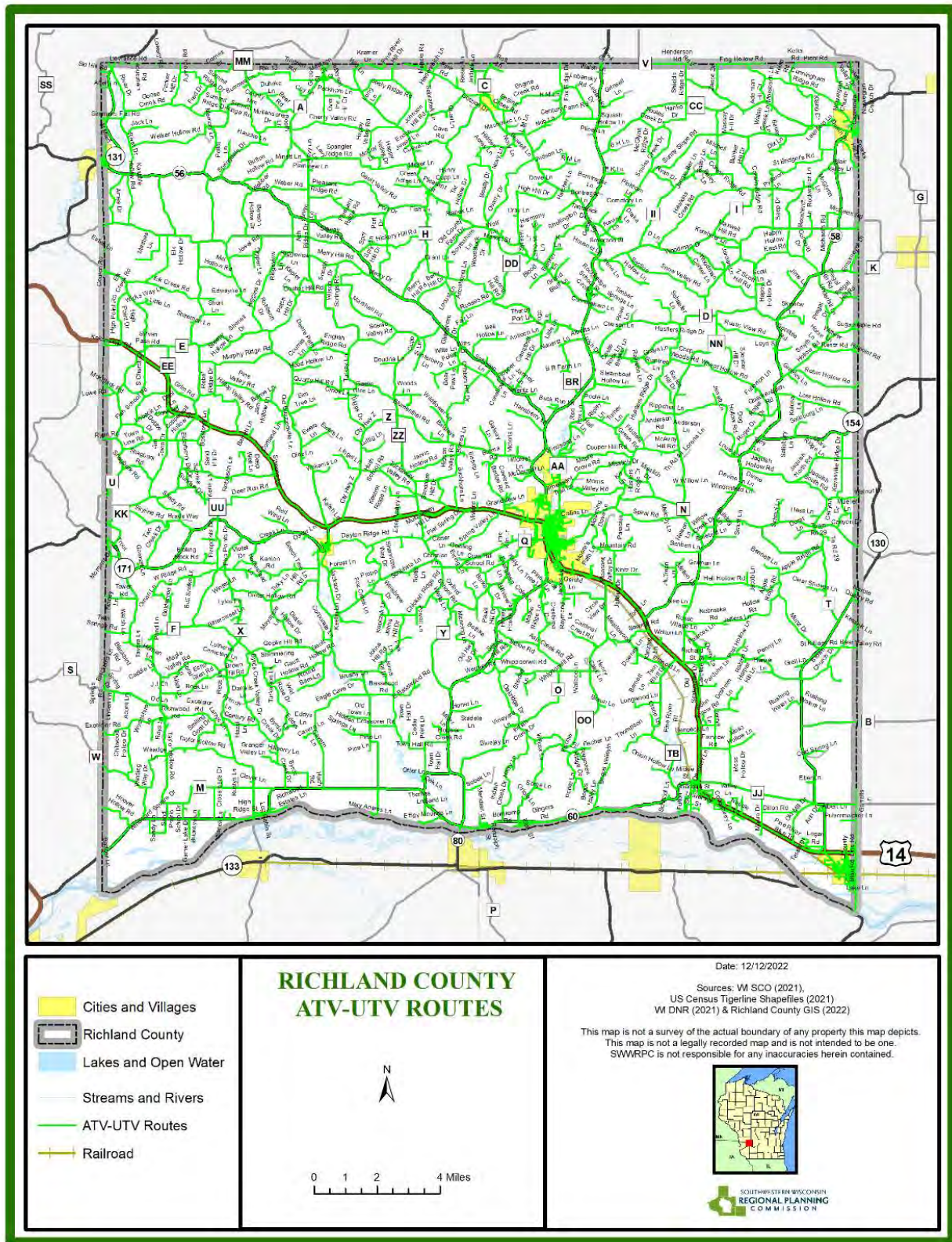


## **ATV/UTV Routes**

All-Terrain Vehicle usage has seen significant demand in the region during the last twenty years. The WDNR highly recommends meeting the market demand for this activity. Richland County allows open ATV/UTV riding on a township basis. Currently, thirteen of the sixteen townships in the county allow ATV/UTV riding. Selected roads are not permitted to drive on and are marked. The area south and east of Richland Center proves to be a difficult area for travel and the county should work with state transportation officials to find solutions. Proper signage, maps, camping, lodging, and access to information is crucial to the expansion of this market.



Figure 9: Richland County ATV/UTV Routes



## Water-Based Activities

### Fishing

The State of Wisconsin has overall responsibility for managing fishery resources. It shares with the county and other units of government responsibility for providing public access to the resources and for adoption and enforcement of measures that will protect the resources from degradation.

Richland County has approximately 4,727 acres of fishable surface waters, including those waters of the Wisconsin River within the boundaries of the County. Other water acreage represents 474 acres. Fishing opportunities, accordingly, are abundant and diversified, which explains the popularity of fishing among county residents and their guests. Located between the Mississippi River and the Wisconsin River, Richland County provides some of the highest premium fishing spots in the Midwest. Most notable is the 260 miles of cold-water trout streams which provide habitat for trout. In the Wisconsin River, anglers vie for northern, blue gills, smallmouth bass, catfish, walleye, and sauger. Today there are ample opportunities for fishing in Richland County, as well as numerous miles of secluded trout and bass streams sought after by anglers. Opportunity exists also at Lee Lake in Cazenovia which is forty acres. The county should work to expand public access to streams through easements or landowner agreements.

### Boating and Water-Skiing

Motorized boating and water-skiing require large areas of unobstructed and deep water. The Wisconsin River, for example, is not recommended for high-speed boating because of the abundance of floating debris it carries, its shifting bottom profile and is generally too shallow. Other streams within the county lack the size and consistent depth to make Richland County a strong destination for motorboats. However, Lee Lake and the Wisconsin River are utilized in small numbers. This experience is not considered to be a strength in Richland County.

### Canoeing and Kayaking

The Wisconsin, Kickapoo, and Pine Rivers along with Mill Creek are the best canoeing and kayaking waters in the County. Combined, they provide approximately 64 miles of canoeing and kayaking opportunities and reveal a full measure of Richland County's diverse scenery. Other streams can be canoed or kayaked at certain times of the year and along limited stretches of their lower reaches. For the most part, however, they provide very limited opportunities for enjoyable canoeing and kayaking. They are not included in the inventory for this reason. Log jams and debris in the river has been noted as an obstacle to providing greater opportunities in this segment. In the past, volunteer groups have provided the service of clearing blockages. The county and the City of Richland Center have been working to provide greater access with success, including new kayak ports. The canoeing and kayaking segment is proving to be a small industry in Richland County and the county should continue to work with partners to ensure that this activity can grow.

### Swimming

Supervised swimming pools provide most of the swimming opportunities in Richland County. Public pools are located in Richland Center and Lone Rock with modern “splash pads” as well. In addition, the City of Richland Center and a facility at UW-Platteville Richland Center has an indoor ‘Aquatic Center’ providing great year-round amenities to residents.

However, no quality beaches in natural water exist in the county due to the physical characteristics of it.



Therefore, the county must ensure that the existing Aquatic Center be maintained and continues to operate at its greatest potential.

## State Owned Waysides

The state has one wayside located in Richland County.

- **Gotham Wayside:** Highway 14 one mile east of Gotham. Pit restroom and picnic tables.

## Historic Sites

Sites, events, and other mementos of historic interest are important components of a community or county recreation program. In addition, there are several native American burial grounds adjacent near the Wisconsin River and its tributaries. Consideration should be given to those during development. Many sites in Richland Center also exist such as the A.D. German Warehouse. Throughout southwestern Wisconsin, intensive efforts have been made to protect areas of outstanding historical importance and signs have been erected by the state of Wisconsin Areas (and sites) of this level of importance identified in the county include:

- Ada James in Richland Center
- Bear Valley Cemetery and Brown Church at Sextonville
- Birthplace of GTE in Richland Center
- Boaz Mastodon near Boaz
- Krouskop Park in Richland Center
- Ocooch Mountains near Boaz
- Pier Park at Rockbridge
- Richard Brewer near Boaz
- Rockbridge Natural Bridge at Rockbridge
- Rural Electrification near Boaz
- St. Patrick's Church near Hub City
- The Little Rock at Rockbridge
- The Purist West near Gotham
- Troop Encampment at Rockbridge
- Wisconsin Purple Heart Memorial Highway in Richland Center

## Scientific and Natural Areas

State natural areas (SNAs) protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape of natural communities, significant geological formations, and archeological sites. Encompassing 406,000 acres on lands owned by the state and its many partners, including land trusts, local and county governments, and private citizens, Wisconsin's natural areas are valuable for research and educational use, the preservation of genetic and biological diversity and for providing benchmarks for determining the impact of use on managed lands. They also provide some of the last refuges for rare plants and animals. There are 6 registered scientific areas in Richland County. The following descriptions are provided by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR):

### **Bear Creek Sedge Meadow**

Location: Within Bear Creek Fishery Area, Richland & Sauk County. T9N-R2E, Section 1. T10N-R3E, Sections 19, 20. 80 acres.

Bear Creek Sedge Meadow contains two separate parcels--both sedge meadow communities with Bear Creek flowing through them. Also present is some shallow marsh along the creek. Both are recovering well from past grazing. Sedges are dominant and forbs are present in higher than normal densities. Cattail and bulrush are found in the wettest areas while the highest ground supports wet prairie vegetation. A midwestern endemic plant is present along the creek. Other plants include blue-joint grass, sweet Indian-plantain, swamp aster, marsh marigold, swamp thistle, boneset, bottle gentian, mountain mint, and cup-plant. Breeding birds include wood duck, sandhill crane, belted kingfisher, alder flycatcher, willow flycatcher, sedge and marsh wren, common yellowthroat, and swamp sparrow. Clean water flows through the meadows suggesting the possibility of groundwater seepage. Bear Creek Sedge Meadow is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.

### **Gotham Jack Pines Barrens**

Location: Within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Richland County. T8N-R2E, Sections 4, 5. T9-R2E, Section 32. 412 acres.

Located on Wisconsin River sand terraces, Gotham Jack Pine Barrens contains the largest and best remaining black oak and Jack pine barrens in Richland County. Also present is a floodplain forest of young timber and a small, shallow oxbow lake of high water quality, a sedge and grass dominated wet meadow, dry sand prairie, and open sand blows. The barrens is located on undulating terrain composed of very old sand blows and dunes and is recovering from past grazing. The tree canopy is quite closed and the understory remains nearly shrub-free with a ground layer dominated by sedges. Some areas are still moderately rich in native species including big and little blue-stem, Indian grass, prairie cord grass, green milkweed, silky aster, flax-leaved aster, prairie coreopsis, gray goldenrod, rough blazing-star, goat's-rue, and bird's-foot violet. The floodplain forest is composed of silver maple, green ash, river birch, swamp white oak, and American elm. The unusual wet meadow is dominated by cord grass, blue-joint grass, rushes, and sedges and contains no shrubs and is nearly devoid of forbs. The area contains numerous rare plants and animals. Gotham Jack Pine Barrens is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1994.

### **Hub City Bog**

Location: Richland County. T11N-R1E, Section 3. T12N-R1E, Section 34. 107 acres.

Hub City Bog features an unusual tamarack bog island and tall shrub community with pine/hemlock relicts and associated shaded cliffs also present. This uncommon Driftless Area bog was formed in an oxbow lake left by the meandering Pine River. To the east of the bog is Soules Creek which flows at the base of a 75-foot sandstone cliff. The north facing cliff on the UW property supports a northern forest of hemlock,

white pine, and yellow birch with a ground cover of Labrador-tea, trailing arbutus, bunchberry, wintergreen, and Sullivant's cool-wort. The project area was expanded in 2007 to include more of the remaining unique pine/hemlock relicts found in this area. Only a small portion of the relicts are currently protected by the DNR. The tamaracks in the bog have suffered nearly 70 percent mortality due to an infestation of larch bark beetle. However, some tamarack reproduction is taking place. Many springs are present in the tamarack swamp. Most typical bog plants are absent, although sphagnum moss and some very showy species are found. Hub City Bog is owned by the DNR and UW Board of Regents. It was designated a State Natural Area in 1970.

### **Orion Mussel Beds**

Location: Within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Richland County. T8N-R1E, Sections 4, 5, 6. T9N-R1E, Sections 33, 34, 35. 170 acres.

Orion Mussel Beds features a narrow corridor of Wisconsin River bottom and adjacent shoreline that is critical habitat for numerous rare animals. Fifteen rare animals are known from this site including mussels, mayflies, dragonflies, beetles, and fish. The river bottom contains a rock and gravel substrate with underwater sandstone ledges, which contrasts with the shifting sands that are more typical of the Lower Wisconsin River bottom. The firm substrate that supports these species is restricted to a very narrow zone beginning at the shoreline extending south over the course of 4.2 miles. A diversity of rare mussels, invertebrates and fish are found here. In addition to the mussel beds, the natural area includes 1,500 feet of Wisconsin River frontage that supports one of the best preserved and least disturbed mound groups in Wisconsin. Built by the Effigy Mound Culture of the Late Woodland period between AD 750 and 1000, the site features the Twin Lizards and Catfish mound group, which consists of 15 mounds including 3 birds, 1 bear, 2 lizards, 1 conical, and 8 lineal mounds. The mounds were carefully sculpted and look much as they did when they were built. Orion Mussel Beds is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1996.

### **Richwood Bottoms**

Location: Within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Richland County. T8N-R2W, Sections 7, 8, 18. T8N-R3W, Sections 12, 13. 926 acres.

Richwood Bottoms features one of the best floodplain forests along the Lower Wisconsin Riverway dominated by swamp white oak, with some of the largest oaks reaching 2 feet in diameter. The extensive bottomland forest varies from a typical southern wet-mesic forest along the river to a drier bottom forest located on sandy alluvial ridges divided by swales. Swamp white oaks with basswood dominates the low ridges while the flats contain silver maple with American elm, green ash, and river birch. Also present are hackberry and bitternut hickory. The understory includes buttonbush, cardinal flower, wood nettle, ostrich fern, royal fern, lance-leaf fog-fruit, false nettle, and groundnut. Poison ivy is common throughout.

This area provides good quality habitat for wildlife that requires isolated blocks of mature forest. Richwood Bottoms is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1991.

### **Smith Slough and Sand Prairie**

Location: Within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Richland County. T8N-R2E, Section 11 and Section 12, 397 acres.

Smith Slough and Sand Prairie contains a large complex of plant communities located in the Wisconsin River floodplain on alluvial sand deposits that fluctuate no more than 6 feet in topography. The site hosts a shallow seepage-fed oxbow lake that has become hydrologically isolated from the river. Lying south and west of the lake is a large undisturbed complex of sedge meadow, shrub-carr, and aquatic emergents that grades into big bluestem dominated sand prairie and swamp white oak savanna on slightly elevated ridges. On the sand terraces along the lake is a narrow band of black oak barren with a ground flora of sedges, big and little blue-stem, and cream wild indigo. On higher ground is an area of open sand and old dunes that are now stabilized by false heather, black oak, and river birch. Also present is a bottomland hardwood forest dominated by swamp white oak with silver maple, green ash, American elm, and river birch in lower swales and swamp white oak, red oak, basswood, and yellowbud hickory on slightly higher ground. Some trees are in excess of 4 feet in diameter. Numerous uncommon fish species are found here. Smith Slough and Sand Prairie is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1991.

## Capital Improvements Schedule

This section is designed to serve as a guide over the next five years to assist Richland County to charting the course of future park and recreation facility development. The Capital Improvement Schedule (CIS) for the county parks included in Appendix B is located at the back of this plan. It was prepared by the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee. The CIS not only prioritizes each facility as to which year during the five-year period the improvement will take place, it also provides an estimate of what the cost will be for each improvement in 2021 dollars. The CIS includes those facility improvements that will be made to each park to implement the handicap accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

It is important to realize that the CIS is only a summary of estimated costs based on current year figures. Project costs will be examined more closely when particular improvement plans are being developed. It is recommended that this portion of the plan be updated on an annual basis by the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee. Changes will be made that reflect changing user trends, citizen interest, the economy and county budget considerations. Before capital improvement projects are undertaken, the Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee members with citizen input will: analyze all proposed projects and determine priorities each year; determine cost estimates for each development project; determine project budgetary limitations and potential funding sources.

The Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee is hopeful that a number of the recommended improvements to the county parks can be carried out with financial assistance from the Department of Natural Resource Stewardship Funds and/or other Federal Park Development funds. At the same time, however, the county recognizes that a considerable investment will also be required at the county level if the recommendations discussed in this plan are ever going to be carried out. The CIS provides a good indication of what level of assistance is going to be required during any particular year in the planning period.



## Appendix A

### Richland COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEDULE

<b>Park</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<u>Year</u>		
<b>Akey School</b>	Update signage	\$2,000
2023		
	Remove brush from around the outhouse	\$500
2023		
	Paint Structure	\$5,000
2024		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>
<b>Ash Creek Forest</b>	Update all signs	\$5,000
2023		
	Install a new parking lot off Hillview Rd.	\$5,000
2023		
	Conduct Timber Stand Improvement	\$2,000
2024		
	Install fences around parking lot(s)	\$5,000
2024		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>
<b>Orion Boat Landing</b>	Update Signage and Visibility	\$2,500
2023		
	New asphalt paving at entrance	\$10,000
2024		
	Improve Boat Ramp	\$5,000
2024		
	Replace / add benches and Picnic Tables	\$5,000
2025		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$22,500</b>
<b>Pier County Park</b>	Convert existing pit toilet to other use	\$10,000
2024		

	Update Pavillons 2023	\$2,500
	Update Play Structures 2024	TBD
	Remove dead trees near public areas 2023	\$2,500
	Paint foot bridge 2023	\$2,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,500</b>
<b>Pine River Trail</b> 2024	Resurface select sections	\$25,000
	Update ALL Signage 2024	\$7,500
	Install “Fix-It” Stations 2025	\$5,000
	Add additional Rest Area 2026	\$7,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>Port Andrews Landing</b>		
<b>Total</b>	Update Signage 2023	\$2,000
	Make Historic Marker visible 2023	\$500
	Add Trash Receptacle 2023	\$500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,000</b>
<b>County Fairgrounds</b>	Connect city utilities, improve electricity to sites 2023	\$10,000
	Upgrade Track Lights at Dull Building 2023	\$2,500
	Plant Trees 2023	\$2,500
	Expand amenities at Kayak Port 2023	\$10,000
	Convert Conservation Building to Lodging 2024	\$25,000
	Bury all electric lines and update lighting 2025	\$5,000

	Construct a new Pavilion 2025	\$5,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,000</b>
<b>Rifle Range</b>	Replace Outhouse Structure 2023	TBD
	Upgrade Shooting Pavilion 2023	\$2,500
	Update Signage 2023	\$2,000
	Remove Dead Trees near parking area 2024	\$5,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Viola County Park</b>	Replace Outhouse Structure 2023	TBD
	Upgrade Pavilion 2023	\$2,500
	Update Signage 2023	\$2,000
	Conduct Survey to add camping sites 2023	TBD
	Add Picnic Tables 2024	\$5,000
	Improve Fire Ring 2024	\$1,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		

<b>Park</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<u>Year</u>		
<b>Applicable to all parks and recreational facilities 2023-2028</b>	Upgrade all county public accesses along the Wisconsin River. Bring all facilities up to ADA Standards.	TBD
	<b>Total</b>	<b>TBD</b>
<b>Additional recreation needs</b>	Consider including paved shoulders as part of future road reconstruction projects to allow safer passing of slower moving vehicles	

2023-2028	which would benefit ATV/UTV, bicycle, and farm implement traffic.	TBD
2026	Install new lighting at all parks	TBD
2026	Design all Camping Areas to be UTV Friendly	TBD



## Appendix B

### **RICHLAND COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND EXTENSION COMMITTEE MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION SCHEDULE**

The following is an overview of the **Richland County Fair, Recycling, and Parks Committee** annual maintenance and operation schedule, including, task performed and budget amount.

#### **PARK MAINTENANCE AREAS**

Akey School

Ash Creek Community Forest

Orion Boat Landing

Pier County Park at Rockbridge

Pine River Recreation Trail

Port Andrews Boat Landing

Richland County Fairgrounds

Richland County Rifle Range

Viola County Park

# Maintenance and Operations Schedule

The county recognizes the value of having a maintenance and operations schedule for the county parks system. Such a schedule not only evaluates the on-going maintenance responsibilities at the parks, it also considers the implications of the CIS on the county's future operation and maintenance capabilities. All work required in the parks is listed for each year, by season. An attempt is also made to break the list down to individual work items, and below each work item, list the tasks required to complete the work item. The Operation and Maintenance Schedule for Richland County is included in Appendix C.

## PARKS ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

April – October

All mowing, restroom cleaning and maintenance is completed by the park's foreman, a volunteer, and/or an assistant. As portable toilets become more popular attention should be given to work with the contracted maintenance of them, where applicable.

Tasks performed:

- Mowing and trimming
- Cleaning and painting
- Cleaning restrooms and shelters
- Equipment inspection and complete all necessary repairs
- Remove garbage and recyclables
- General maintenance
- Small capital improvements

## Appendix C

### NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION (NRPA) PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL RECREATION OPEN SPACE

#### A. LOCAL/CLOSE TO HOME SPACE:

- M-P: Mini Park (or Tot Lot)
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 acre or less.
  - Service Area: 1/8 – 1/4 mile.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 0.5 – 1.0 acre.
  - Use: Specialized facilities to serve a concentration of limited population or groups such as senior citizens or young children.
  - Site Characteristics: Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to concentrations of family or senior housing.
  
- NP/P: Neighborhood Park/Playground
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 to 10 acres.
  - Service Area: 1/4 – 1/2 mile radius.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 2 – 3 acres.
  - Use: Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, ice skating, picnicking, volleyball, etc.
  - Site Characteristics: Suited for intense development; easily accessible to neighborhood population; geographically centered with safe walking and biking access. May be developed as a joint school/park facility.
  
- C/CP: Community Park
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 10 to 25 acres.
  - Service Area: 1 – 2 miles.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 6 - 9 acres.
  - Use: Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes or large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting, and picnicking. May be any combination of the above depending on site suitability and community need.
  - Site Characteristics: May include natural features such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. Easy access by all modes of transportation.

## **B. REGIONAL SPACE:**

- Regional/Metropolitan Parks
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 200+ acres
  - Service Area: Several communities, 1 hour driving time.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 5-10 acres.
  - Use: Area of natural or ornamental quality for outdoor recreation, such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping, and trail uses; may include play areas.
  - Site Characteristics: Contiguous to or encompassing natural resources.
  
- Regional Park Reserve
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1,000+ acres; sufficient area to encompass the resource to be preserved and managed.
  - Service Area: Several communities, 1 hour driving time.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable
  - Use: Area of natural quality for nature- oriented outdoor recreation, such as viewing, and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail uses. May include active play areas. Generally, 80% of the land is reserved for conservation and natural resource management, with less than 20% used for recreation development.
  - Site Characteristics: Diverse or unique natural resources, such as lakes, streams, marshes, flora, fauna, and topography.

## **C. SPACE THAT MAY BE LOCAL OR REGIONAL AND IS UNIQUE TO EACH COMMUNITY:**

- SU: Special Use Area
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Variable depending on type of facility.
  - Service Area: Entire Community.
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
  - Use: Areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservancies, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, and downhill ski areas. Also includes plazas or squares in or near commercial centers, boulevards, or parkways.
  - Site Characteristics: Located within the community.
  
- C: Conservancy
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Sufficient to protect the resource.
  - Service Area: No applicable standard.



- Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
  - Use: Protection and management of the natural/cultural environment with recreation use as a secondary objective.
  - Site Characteristics: Variable, depending on the resource being protected.
- 
- LP: Linear Park
    - Desirable/Typical Size: Sufficient width to protect resources and to provide maximum use.
    - Service Area: No applicable standard.
    - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable.
    - Use: Area developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel or activity such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, fitness trails/cross-country skiing and canoeing. May include active play areas.
    - Site Characteristics: Built on natural corridors such as utility or railroad right-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns, and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.

## NRPA's SUGGESTED OUTDOOR FACILITY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes	Number of Units per Population
Badminton	Singles – 17' x 44'  Doubles – 20' x 44' width  5' unobstructed area on both sides	1,622 sq. ft.	Long axis north – south	¼ mile usually in school recreation center or church facility. Safe walking or biking access.	1 per 5,000
Basketball  1. Youth  2. High School  3. Collegiate	46' – 50' x 84'  50' x 94'  50 x 94 with 5' unobstructed space all sides	2400-3036 sq. ft.  5040-7280 sq. ft.  5600-7980 sq. ft.	Long axis north-south	¼- ½ mile. Same as badminton. Outdoor courts in neighborhood /community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.	1 per 5,000
Handball (3-4 wall)	20' x 40' with a minimum of 10' to rear of 3-wall court. Minimum of 20' overhead clearance	800 sq. ft. for 4-wall  1000 sq. ft. for 3-wall	Long axis is north- south.  Front wall at north end	15-30 min. travel time. 4-wall usually indoor as part of multipurpose building. 3-2 all usually in park or school setting	1 per 20,000
Ice hockey	Rink 85' x 200' (Min. 85' x 185').	22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	Long axis is north- south if outdoors	½ - 1 hour travel time. Climate important consideration affecting no. of units. Best as part of multipurpose facility.	Indoor – 1 per 100,000  Outdoor – depends on climate
Tennis	36' x 78'. 12 ft. clearance on both ends.	Min. of 7,200 sq. ft. single court area (2 acres per complex)	Long axis north-south	¼ - ½ mile, best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood / community park or near school site.	1 court per 2,000
Volleyball	30' x 60'. Minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft.	Long axis north-south	½ - 1 mile	1 per 5,000
Field Hockey	180' x 300' with a minimum of 10'	Minimum 1.5 A	Fall season – Long axis northwest or	15-30 minute travel time. Usually part of baseball, football, soccer	1 per 20,000

	clearance on all sides		southeast. For longer periods north/south.	complex in community park or adjacent to high school.	
<b>Activity Format</b>	<b>Recommended Size and Dimensions</b>	<b>Recommended Space Requirements</b>	<b>Recommended Orientation</b>	<b>Service Radius and Location Notes</b>	<b>Number of Units per Population</b>
Baseball  1. Official    2. Little League	Baselines – 90' Pitching Dist. – 60.5' Foul lines – Min. 320' Center field – 400' + Baselines – 60' Pitching distance – 46'  Foul lines – 200' Center field – 200'-250'	3.0-3.85 A min.   1.2 A min	Locate home plates so pitcher is not throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitchers mound to run east-northeast.	¼ - ½ Mile. Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields part of community complex.	1 per 5,000    Lighted 1 per 30,000
Football	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Minimum 1.5 A	Same as field hockey	15-30 Min. travel time, Same is field hockey.	1 per 20,000
Soccer	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with 10' minimum clearance on all sides.	1.7-2.1 A.	Same as field hockey	1-2 miles. Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to larger fields.	1 per 20,000
Golf – Driving Range	900' x 690' wide Add 12' width each additional tee	13.5 A for min of 25 tees	Long axis is southwest – northeast with golfer driving northeast.	30-minute travel time. Park or golf course complex, As separate unit may be privately operated.	1 per 50,000
Multiple use court (basketball, tennis, etc.)	120' x 80'	9,840 sq. ft	Long axis of court with primary use north and south	1-2 miles, in neighborhood or community parks.	1 per 10,000
Archery Range	300' length x minimum 10' between targets. Roped, clear area on side of range minimum of 30',	Minimum 0.65 A	Archer facing north  + or – 45 degrees	30 minutes travel time. Part of a regional/metro complex	1 per 50,000

	clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.				
<b>Activity Format</b>	<b>Recommended Size and Dimensions</b>	<b>Recommended Space Requirements</b>	<b>Recommended Orientation</b>	<b>Service Radius and Location Notes</b>	<b>Number of Units per Population</b>
¼ mile running track	Over-all width – 276' Length – 600'  Track width for 8-4 lanes is 32'	4.3 A.	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest – southeast, with finish line at north end	15-30 minute travel time. Usually part of a high school or community park complex in combination with football, soccer, etc.	1 per 20,000
Softball	Baselines: 60'  Pitching Dist:45' / 40' women  Fast Pitch Field radius from plate: 225'  Slow pitch 275' (men)  250' (women).	1.5 – 2.0 A	Same as baseball	¼ - ½ Mile. Slight differences in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.	1 per 5,000 (if also used by youth baseball.
Trails	Well defined head maximum 10' width, maximum average grade is 5% not to exceed 15%, Capacity Rural trails – 40 hikers/day/mile. Urban Trails – 90 hikers/day/mile	N/A	N/A	N/A	1 system per region
Golf					
Par 3 (18 hole)	Average length varies –600 – 2700 yards.	50-60 A		½ - 1 hour travel time	
9-hole Standard	Average length 2250 yards.	Minimum of 50 A	Majority of holes on north/south axis.	9-hole course can accommodate 350 people/day	1 per 25,000
3.18-hole standard	Average length 6500 yards.	Minimum 110 A		Course may be located in community, district or regional/metro park.	1 per 50,000



Activity Format	Recommended Size and Dimensions	Recommended Space Requirements	Recommended Orientation	Service Radius and Location Notes	Number of Units per Population
Swimming pools	<p>Teaching – min. 25 yds x 45’ even depth of 3 - 4 ft.</p> <p>Competitive min. 25m x 16m. Min of 25 sq. Ft. water surface per swimmer. Ratio of 2 to 1 deck to water</p>	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually 1-2 A sites, relation to afternoon sun	None, but care must be taken in sitting lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	<p>15 to 30 minute travel time. Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching competitive and recreational purposes with enough to accommodate 1m and 3m Diving boards.</p> <p>Located in community park or school site.</p>	1 per 20,000  (pools should accommodate 3 to 5% of total population at a time)
Beach Areas	<p>Beach area should have 50 sq. ft. of land and 50 sq. ft. of water per user. Turnover rate is 3.</p> <p>There should be a 3-4 acre supporting area per acre of beach.</p>	N/A	N/A	<p>½ to 1 hour travel time. Should have a sand bottom with a maximum slope of 5% Boating areas completely segregated from swimming areas. Locate in Regional/metro parks.</p>	N/A