

A PLAN FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

SAWYER COUNTY, WISCONSIN

2021-2025

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Introduction

The primary purpose of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction toward meeting the current and future recreation needs of Sawyer County. This is accomplished by investigating Sawyer County's existing outdoor recreational resources, studying population trends, anticipating future demands, and developing guidelines and recommendations for public outdoor recreation facilities. These comments and suggestions are intended as guides for the County and its municipalities.

Objectives

- Meet existing as well as the foreseeable future recreational needs of Sawyer County residents and visitors.
- Maintain quality recreation areas while protecting Sawyer County's natural and scenic resources.
- Provide and improve the aesthetic and environmental values of the county's resources through acquisition, easements, zoning and other legislation, and to provide educational programs.
- Identify and preserve sites having scientific, historic, architectural or archeological significance.
- Consider this plan a program for development of year-round recreational facilities which will provide opportunities for all citizens and visitors.
- Encourage the efforts of municipalities to provide "community" recreation facilities such as ball fields, playgrounds, tennis courts etc.
- Encourage private development of quality recreational areas.
- Provide recreational opportunities for people with disabilities whenever feasible and environmentally possible.
- Develop coordinated countywide recreational trail systems.

Background

Population

Sawyer County, the 5th largest county in land area in the state, had a 2010 population of 16,557 according to census data, which is approximately 0.3 percent of the total state population. Overall, Sawyer County population trends do not reflect recreational activity in the county as overnight visitors and second homeowners account for a substantial recreation use. Based on 2010 census data, 50.6 % of homes within the county are second homes designated as seasonal or for recreational use.

Population Trends in Sawyer County (1980-2010)

Municipality	1980 CENSUS	1990 CENSUS	2000 CENSUS	2010 CENSUS	CHANGE 1980-2010	PERCENT CHANGE
Town of Bass Lake	1,288	1,717	2,244	2,483	1,195	48%
Town of Couderay	394	386	469	479	85	18%
Town of Draper	242	208	171	208	-34	-16%
Town of Edgewater	441	509	586	640	199	31%
Town of Hayward	2,331	3,017	3,279	3,601	1,270	35%
Town of Hunter	594	557	765	841	247	29%
Town of Lenroot	926	966	1,165	1,349	423	31%
Town of Meadowbrook	202	192	146	155	-47	-30%
Town of Meteor	105	111	170	183	78	43%
Town of Ojibwa	264	250	267	327	63	19%
Town of Radisson	394	412	465	480	86	18%
Town of Round Lake	786	727	962	1,115	329	30%
Town of Sand Lake	768	821	774	885	117	13%
Town of Spider Lake	331	362	391	419	88	21%
Town of Weirgor	386	356	370	424	38	9%
Town of Winter	704	801	969	1,135	431	38%
Village of Couderay	114	92	96	94	-20	-21%
Village of Exeland	219	180	212	206	-13	-6%
Village of Radisson	280	237	222	218	-62	-28%
Village of Winter	376	383	344	353	-23	-7%
City of Hayward	1,698	1,897	2,129	2,340	642	27%

Landscape Characteristics

Sawyer County is geographically located in the northwest corner of the state in what could be defined as the “Northwoods” region of Wisconsin. The County lies primarily within the North Central Forest physiographic region of Wisconsin. The topography of the county has glacial origin, glaciers eroded hilltops and filled valleys, thus reducing relief resulting in a topography best described as an undulating plain dissected by many lakes, rivers, and streams. The northeastern corner of the County is quite hilly and the southwestern corner contains many high quartzite ridges. The highest elevation (1800 feet) occurs at Meteor Hill with the “Blue Hills” region of southern Sawyer County. The terrain in the southeastern portion of the County is generally considered flat.

Climate

The climate of Sawyer County is classified as continental with an average annual temperature of 42.5 degrees Fahrenheit according to the Hayward Ranger Station weather station. The winters are long, cold and snowy, while summers are relatively short and warm with only brief periods of hot, humid weather. Springs and falls are often short and mixtures of both summer and winter. Mean temperatures drop below freezing in mid-November and freeze up of lakes follows soon after. The average annual precipitation in Hayward is 31.67 inches, snowfall averages between 60 and 70 inches per year. The growing season averages about 120 days with the date of the last killing frost ranging from mid-May to mid-June.

Land-use

Sawyer County encompasses 863,859 acres with the greatest percentage of the county being rural and semi-wilderness in nature. Over 38% of Sawyer County’s land base is under some form of public ownership or management. Public lands are prevalent across much of the northern and eastern areas of the county. Sawyer County has 115,197 acres in county forest lands.

The federal government owns and manages 126,728 acres of land in Sawyer County. The largest federal holding is the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF). There are currently 123,805 acres of National Forest System lands within Sawyer County. The National Park Service (NPS) also owns and manages 2,922 acres of land within the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway.

The State of Wisconsin owns and manages 81,719 acres of land within Sawyer County, the largest contiguous state holding is the Flambeau River State Forest which manages 64,707 acres. Approximately 14,000 acres of state-owned lands are adjacent to the Chippewa Flowage, the largest wilderness lake in Wisconsin. Numerous state-owned islands are located within the flowage, the remaining approximately 3,000 acres of state land is comprised of state wildlife and fishery areas and recreational trails.

Nearly two-thirds of the landscape of Sawyer County is covered by forestlands while open water and wetlands cover nearly one-third, less than six percent of the landscape is considered cropland or developed areas.

Soils

The soils of Sawyer County are primarily upland and outwash from glacial drift, generally acidic in nature. The sandy soils occur along the Namekagon River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Round and Grindstone Lakes region. More organic soils, including silt loams and peats are found in much of the eastern half of the County.

Supply of Existing Recreation Resources

Introduction

In 2020, all of the major recreational facilities and resources in Sawyer County were inventoried to determine the types and numbers of recreational areas and facilities available for public use. From this inventory, it was determined that Sawyer County has an extensive base of recreational resources and facilities.

WATER BASED ACTIVITIES

Fishery Resources

Many of the surface waters in Sawyer County provide excellent fishing opportunities. Of the 550 named and unnamed lakes in the county, 220 lakes with an area of 53,716 acres have game and panfish populations. The remaining 330 lakes with an area of 3,127 acres have no fish or only minnow populations. The lakes are further classified in Table 2 by the number of lakes and their total acreage where each game and panfish species occur.

There are also nearly 690 miles of perennial streams and rivers in the county, including 265 miles of trout stream which are also important to the county's fishery resources.

Table 2. Lake Fishery Resources in Sawyer County		
Fish Species	Occurrence (number of lakes)	Acres
Muskellunge	67	42,093
Walleye	82	49,568
Northern Pike	76	43,365
Largemouth Bass	170	52,560
Smallmouth Bass	53	44,693
Panfish	194	53,619
Trout Lakes and Springs	37	1,527
Minnow only, or none	330	3,127

Boating

There are 15 natural lakes and impoundments of over 500 acres in size that offer a total of 40,235 acres of surface water. There are an additional 20 lakes between 200 and 500 acres providing another 6,075 acres of surface water to the boater. Altogether these 35 lakes account for 81 percent of all the surface water (46,310 acres) in the county. The largest of these lakes are the Chippewa Flowage, Lac Courte Oreilles, Round, Grindstone, Nelson, Chetac, Moose, Lost Land, Spider, Teal, Sand, Tiger Cat, Sissabagama, Whitefish, and Windigo. Boating

is available on a number of the other named lakes and flowages throughout the county, depending on access and some lakes may have local restrictions on speeds and water skiing.

Of the 35 lakes over 200 acres, thirty have one or more public access points.

Canoeing-Kayaking-Paddle Sports

Sawyer County contains a large number of paddling rivers, many of them are often categorized as the best in the Midwest. Fourteen different rivers lend themselves to a variety of paddling experiences with a total mileage of approximately 268 miles. Rivers and mileage are shown in table 3. Access is good and varies from developed landing sites to more rustic bridge put-ins. The numerous area lakes and flowages also offers paddling opportunities.

Table 3. Canoeing/Kayaking Rivers in Sawyer County	
River Name	Length (miles)
Brunet River	40
Chief River	6.1
Chippewa River	27.1
Couderay River	16.3
East Fork Chippewa River	17
Moose River	10.1
Namekagon River	26.7
North Fork Flambeau River	32.8
South Fork Flambeau River	7.7
Teal River	4.1
Thornapple River	39.3
Torch River	3
Totogatic River	11.2
West Fork Chippewa River	27.4
Total Miles	268.8

Swimming Areas

Sawyer County has many lakes which provide excellent sand beaches for swimming. Both developed and undeveloped sites located in the county. Table 4 lists the developed swimming areas and location. Other lakes may also have boat access, privately owned beaches, or road rights-of-way where public swimming may be permitted.

Table 4. Developed Swimming Areas in Sawyer County		
Name	Ownership	Location
Round Lake Peninsula Beach	Town of Hayward	Northwest
Smith Lake	Town of Lenroot	Northwest
Silverthorn Lake	Town of Lenroot	Northwest
Hayward Beach	City of Hayward	Northwest
Connors Lake	Flambeau River State Forest	Southeast
Black Lake	Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Northeast
Moose Lake	Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest	Northeast

LAND BASED ACTIVITIES

Camping

Camping on the county forest is permitted in many areas, in general, most of the forest is open to camping with a tent, trailer, truck camper or other camping shelter for a period not to exceed ten days. A camping permit is required for a per night fee. A large percentage of campers on the county forest are hunters during the gun hunting deer season. At this time, there are no designated campgrounds on Sawyer County Forest Lands.

The Flambeau River State Forest offers two family campgrounds, primitive canoe sites along the Flambeau River and an ADA accessible yurt. The Lake of the Pines Campground has a total of 30 sites, all non-electric and there are no ADA designated sites. Connors Lake Campground has 29 sites with two ADA designated sites, 4 sites have electric service. There are also 12 primitive canoe campsites along the Flambeau River within Sawyer County. Each landing provides room for one to three individual campsites and includes a picnic table, fire ring and pit toilet.

The Chippewa Flowage contains 18 primitive island campsites. Each public campsite is marked with a sign and has a fire ring, picnic table and open-air box latrines. All campsites are accessible by water only. Of the 18 total campsites on the flowage, 11 are on WDNR owned islands, one is on an island under Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest ownership and the remaining 6 are on Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal ownership and are managed by the Lac Courte Oreilles Conservation Department.

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway provides 11 different primitive shoreline campsites along the Namekagon River.

The Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest offers camping facilities at two campground recreation areas. Black Lake Recreation Area provides 29 sites on Black Lake. All campsites provide a hardened parking area, picnic table, and fire ring. Some sites can accommodate a 45-foot trailer. Moose Lake Recreation Area offers 15 campsites, 3 of which are tent only, the rest

can accommodate RV's from 25-45 feet. Each site is equipped with a parking spur, picnic table and campfire rings.

Several Towns in Sawyer County also offer campground facilities. The Town of Ojibwa provides camping at Ojibwa Park. The park has 16 camper sites and 3 tent sites. The park is bordered by the Chippewa River and the Tuscobia State Trail. An RV dump station, drinking water, and pit toilets are available. The Town of Draper has a tent and RV campground located off the Tuscobia Trail. The sites are level and graveled, have fire rings and picnic tables. Electric service is available for each site. The Town of Radisson provides camping along the Couderay River.

Other private campgrounds are distributed throughout the county with a variety of camping amenities and densities, there is a growing demand in recent years for seasonal campsite rentals with many sites in private campgrounds being occupied by the same campers all season long.

Picnic Areas-Day Use Parks

Sawyer County has many picnic and day use area parks distributed throughout the county, county, state, federal, township and villages all provide day use areas with multiple amenities and facilities available.

Nature Study and Hiking Trails

There are many suitable areas for nature study and hiking within the county. Among the designated trails are:

- Uhrenholdt Memorial Forest, 1.8 miles of trail through WDNR forest management demonstration area.
- Ojibwa Park Trails, 1-mile Turkey Feather Nature Trail. Also, a 1.5-mile skiing/hiking trail.
- Town of Hayward County Hill Recreational Forest Trails
- Sawyer County Forest Green Lake/Little Sissabagama non-motorized trail, 2.5 miles.
- Mino-giizhigad Trail, WDNR trail located east of the CC North Boat Landing.
- Moss Creek-Hay Creek skiing/hiking trails on WDNR land on the north side of the Chippewa Flowage, 2.0 miles.
- Hatchery Creek Park Nature Trail
- Lynch Creek State Wildlife Area, ¼ mile interpretive nature trail.

Bicycling- Mountain Biking

Sawyer County offers a wide variety of biking opportunities. From paved county and town roads, paved bike paths, to excellent trail riding mountain biking.

There are no marked or signed bike routes for road touring within Sawyer County, there are, however, many paved county and town roads that offer excellent low traffic routes. A map for Sawyer County designating road and highways as routes for bicycle travel is available from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/travel/bike/bike-maps/county.aspx>

The City of Hayward provides a 6.6-mile paved bike path and connecting road routes. The path is slightly sloped, is separated from traffic and has safety signals at road crossings. A map can be viewed at <https://cityofhaywardwi.gov/wp-content/uploads/bike-trail.jpg>

There are great trail and off-road biking opportunities in Sawyer County on public lands. The Sawyer County Forest, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, and Hayward Area Memorial Hospital provide miles of trails, including winter fat biking opportunities. The trail system was developed, built, marked, mapped and maintained by the Chequamegon Area mountain Bike Association (CAMBA). It provides a diverse, beginner to expert variety of mountain biking trails and includes approximately 41.5 miles of singletrack trails, 46-miles of winter Fat Bike trails, over 220 miles of gravel road and two-track road routes throughout Sawyer County.

Additionally, built in 2016 the Hatchery Creek Bike Park located at Sawyer County Forest Hatchery Creek Park is a popular facility among CAMBA's trail and riding experiences. The bike park includes a pump track, singletrack climbing trail and two descending lines: a jump line and a flow line. The bike park also includes a skills area designed to accommodate beginner, intermediate and more advanced riders. Features include: rock gardens, skinnies, drops, benchcut singletrack, teeter-totters, log lifts/ride-overs, and ladder bridges. Maps can be viewed for Sawyer County mountain bike and fat bike opportunities at the CAMBA website: <https://cambatrails.org/trails/>

ATV/UTV Trails

ATV/UTV (All terrain vehicle/ Utility terrain vehicle) is a popular activity that continues to grow throughout the county. Trail systems are provided for on the Sawyer County Forest, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF), Flambeau River State Forest (FRSF), Tuscobia State Trail, and some private landowners within Sawyer County. Sawyer County currently manages 150.4 miles of summer use state funded trails which includes the Tuscobia State Trail and trails on the CNNF in cooperation with the Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance which is the primary contract holder for all maintenance and grooming. There are approximately 25-miles of additional trail available on the FRSF as well as on the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribal Lands. There is also 149.8 miles of winter use ATV trails available in the county.

In 2012, the State of Wisconsin established a permanent program for UTV's, also known as side-by-sides, are allowed on all ATV trails managed by Sawyer County. These vehicles have been increasing in popularity every year.

Snowmobile Trails

Sawyer County has one of the best snowmobile trail networks in the Midwest. The trail system has over 600 miles of groomed trails which includes 383.2 miles of state funded trails under the management of Sawyer County. This system is part of the statewide network of snowmobile trails which links Sawyer County with adjoining counties as well as the rest of the state. The County has a single contract with the Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance to maintain the state-funded trails. The Alliance is very dedicated to keeping the trails in good condition.

The Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance is a non-profit corporation made up of 11 snowmobile and ATV clubs within Sawyer County. The purpose of the Alliance is to help create and maintain some of the best ATV/Snowmobile trails around.

A link to the snowmobile and ATV trails within Sawyer County can be found at:

<https://sawyercountyalliance.com/sawyer-county-snowmobile-atv-trail-maps/>

Cross-Country Skiing

There are extensive cross-country ski trails and associated facilities throughout Sawyer County. The American Birkebeiner Ski Trail includes trails from the north county line of Sawyer County to Highway 77 just outside of Hayward, which covers 32.5 miles of the original trail as well as the more recent addition of the classical trail which runs from the county line to the double OO trailhead facility. Facilities and trailheads associated with the birkie trail include Fish Hatchery Park- with parking, drinking water, pit toilet, warming building. Mosquito Brook – with parking, warming building, drinking water. Double “OO” Trailhead Building – with parking, indoor bathrooms and gathering area, and drinking water. Boedecker Trailhead – with warming building, parking, and drinking water. Firetower – Warming building, limited parking, drinking water.

Several loop trails are available at Hatchery Creek Park, Hayward Area Memorial Hospital Trails, Mukwonago Ski trail on CNNF, Seeley Hills Ski trail on Sawyer County Forest, Town of Hayward Recreational Forest Trail, Flambeau Hills Ski Trail on FRSF and the Turkey Feather Ski Trail in Ojibwa Park.

Lighted ski trails are also located at the “OO” trail facility on the Birkie Trail and at the Hatchery Creek Park.

Snowshoeing

Anywhere hiking is permitted in the county snowshoeing is also possible. The CAMBA single track trails at Hatchery Creek Park are a designated snowshoe trail. Mosquito Brook and “OO” trailheads also have designated and marked snowshoe trails. The Hayward Hospital trails as well as the Town of Hayward Recreational Forest Trail also provide trail opportunities.

Hunting

There are approximately 330,000 acres of publicly owned lands open for hunting in Sawyer County. There are 115,197 acres of county land, 81,719 acres of state land, and 126,728 acres of federal land. A map of public lands in Sawyer County is included in this plan. In addition to public lands, hunting is also permitted by law on over 86,000 acres of private forest under the State's forestry tax programs.

State Natural Areas Within Sawyer County

State natural areas (SNA's) protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape of natural communities, significant geological formations and archeological sites. Sawyer County has 16 valuable state natural areas 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. Sawyer County has the following SNA's

- Bass lake Peatlands
- Flambeau River Hardwood Forest
- Ghost Lake
- Hanson Lake Wetlands
- Kissick Alkaline Bog Lake
- Lake Helene
- Lake of the Pines Conifer – Hardwoods
- Moose River Cedar Hills
- No-Name Lake
- Oxbo Pines
- Snoose Creek
- Spring Brook Drumlins
- Swamp Lake
- Thornapple Hemlocks
- Upper Brunet River
- Wilson Lake

More information can be found at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/naturalareas/index.asp>

Recommendations

Introduction

Previous sections of this plan have dealt with supplies, trends, and demands of recreational facilities of Sawyer County. This final section will analyze existing facilities and makes recommendations for possible improvements.

The plan is divided into two sections, the first discusses the projected needs by activity and makes general recommendations that may be implemented by a variety of governmental units. Existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities are listed in the next section, with more specific recommendations where applicable.

Recreational Needs by Activity

Water Based Activities

Fishing

Sawyer County's abundance of lakes, rivers and streams assures of an adequate fishery resource for many years to come. Improvements that could be considered are additional development of public access sites.

On the larger lakes, increased parking could be developed. Boat ramps could be improved to hard-surfaced concrete planks or cement pads. Handicap accessible docks should also be incorporated. Small lake public access sites should be designed to discourage deep draft boats and large motors. Walk-in access for small, lightweight hand-carried crafts should be provided on smaller bodies of water where possible.

Boating

According to the 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), motorboating remains a high recreational demand in the northwest region of the state. In order to continue to accommodate a large number of boaters in the county, additional public boat launches may need to be developed, and existing launches and facilities improved.

Canoeing/Kayaking

Rivers and streams suitable for canoeing and kayaking are abundant in Sawyer County. Increased public access points and maintaining the existing access should be adequate to meet projected demands.

Swimming

Sawyer County has several beaches throughout the county, but many areas of the county need well-developed public swimming areas.

Land Based Activities

Camping

Sawyer County has a number of private campgrounds as well as public campgrounds available on state and federal lands. Primitive camping is available throughout the county forest. Much of the increased demand for camping is provided for through private campgrounds.

Picnic – Day Use Areas

There hasn't been a demand for additional picnic facilities in Sawyer County. Picnic facilities will generally be better utilized if combined with other recreation activities such as swimming beaches, recreational trails/trailheads, playground equipment etc. Picnic areas should be included at any new park development.

A number of parks are being recommended for future improvements, additional grills and picnic tables will be incorporated into the parks to accommodate day-use activities.

Nature Study and Hiking Trails

Sawyer County offers many hiking and nature study opportunities to the public. Development of any hiking trails could include modifying the trail for disabled individuals, constructing boardwalks, providing interpretive signs and trail brochures, and creating overlooks and rest areas along the trail. These improvements will help satisfy nature study and hiking trail demands.

The Grindstone Lake Foundation currently has a project acquisitioning a former cranberry bog on Grindstone Lake to provide water quality protection, provide low-impact public recreation and educational experiences and demonstration of wetland, shoreline and nearshore habitats and land restoration which would be a benefit for Sawyer County for nature study.

Bicycling-Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is a sport that is increasing in popularity in Sawyer County every year. Sawyer County provides many miles of both singletrack, two track, and gravel road routes throughout the county. Proposed improvements to the trails system would include on-going trail maintenance, improvements and rehabilitation of older trails. Reclamation of degraded trail segments. Expansion of gravel route system, including mapping and marking routes. Upgrading trailhead kiosk facilities and upgrading wayfinding signage.

ATV/UTV Riding

As ATV/UTV use is constantly growing, facilitating trail improvements and developments on the Sawyer County state funded trail system will be a priority. Trail rehabilitations, developments

of new trail and trail facilities will help to address the growing demand for trail riding opportunities. Sawyer County will continue to work with the Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance as well as other units of government and other landowners to maintain and improve the trails. Bridge and trail rehabilitation will continue as needed. Development of shelters, restrooms and other trailhead facilities are recommended for remote locations along the trail system. Trail interconnectivity will also be a focus for any future developments.

Snowmobile Trails

Sawyer County continues to be a destination for snowmobiling and continues to experience a high demand on snowmobile trails throughout the county. Sawyer County will continue to work with the Sawyer County Snowmobile and ATV Alliance as well as other units of government and landowners to maintain and improve the trails. Bridge and trail rehabilitation will continue as needed. Development of shelters, restrooms and other trailhead facilities are recommended for remote locations along the trail system. Trail interconnectivity will also be a focus for any future developments.

Cross-Country Skiing

Sawyer County also continues to be a destination for cross country skiing as well, with the world-famous American Birkebeiner Ski Trail as well as several other smaller loop trail systems throughout the county provides facilities for the increasingly popular activity in the county. Sawyer County will continue to work with the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation and other local groups to provide and improve trail and trailhead facilities within the county.

Summary

Sawyer County has ample natural resources that are attractive to residents and nonresidents alike. The key to keeping this attractive is adequate resource protection, maintenance of current facilities, and expansion of facilities in the areas previously discussed.

The next section analyzes and makes recommendations for improving existing parks and facilities.

Recommendations

County Facilities

- Hatchery Creek Park

A former DNR fish hatchery, Hatchery Creek Park was established as the first county park in 1984. Hatchery Creek Park has become a focal point for many events including the Chequamegon Fat Tire mountain bike race, American Birkebeiner ski race, and regional high school cross-country meets. These events bring thousands of participants and spectators from around the world to the area each year.

In addition to large, competitive events the park hosts many smaller, private functions and provides opportunities for outdoor education and recreation. Opportunities include ski trails with lights for night skiing, trout fishing, picnicking and a nature trail for hiking. Mountain bikers access singletrack trails and pump park bike area from the trailhead at the park. Located at the park, the Hatchery Creek Trailhead provides access to the southern portion of the Birkie trail within a short distance of Hayward

Existing Facilities

- Paved parking area and trailhead on the southern portion of Sawyer County Forest Seeley Block
- Restrooms
- Heated log pavilion/shelter with picnic tables
- Fire ring and benches
- Picnic tables and grills
- Trail information
- Lighted ski loops
- Nature/ educational trail
- Drinking water

Recommendations

- Increase opportunities for multi-season use
- Improve nature/educational hiking trail signs
- Replace picnic tables and grills

- American Birkebeiner Trail

The primary focus of development will be for year-round recreational use as well as providing support for annual events.

Existing Facilities

- Mosquito Brook Trailhead
 - Warming Building
 - Parking

- Drinking water
- Pit Road Trailhead
 - Warming building
 - Limited parking
 - Drinking water
- Double OO Trailhead Center
 - Indoor bathrooms
 - Meeting area
 - Parking
 - Fitness park
 - Drinking water
- Boedecker Road Trailhead
 - Warming building
 - Limited parking
 - Drinking water
- FireTower Trailhead
 - Warming building
 - Limited parking
 - Drinking water
- Birkie Ridge Trailhead
 - Parking area

Seeley Fire Tower

The location of the now removed Seeley Fire Tower provides a unique vista south across miles of the Sawyer County Forest. The site is adjacent to the birkie trail and CAMBA singletrack bike trails and is used as a stopping point by hikers, mountain bikers, skiers and snowmobilers.

Recommendations

- Develop an elevated overlook
- Information kiosk

Nelson Lake Wayside

Former Department of Transportation wayside located on State Highway 27 North, adjacent to the County owned Totogatic Dam that forms Nelson Lake and immediately upstream from the WDNR Totogatic Wildlife Area. Managed in cooperation with the Town of Lenroot.

Existing Facilities

- Paved parking Area
- Picnic table and grills
- Pit toilets
- Boat landing

- Pavilion
- Native plant display

Eagles Landing Park

A 1.42 acre park and landing on the Namekagon River, which is accessible from Airport Road. Improvements will emphasize the natural setting and aesthetics of the Namekagon River and improve wildlife and shoreline habitat.

Existing Facilities

- Gravel parking area
- Artesian well
- Handicap accessible restroom
- Wildlife viewing benches
- Picnic area
- Walkway to river access
- Pier for river access

Recommendations

- Shelter/pavilion

Sawyer County Fairgrounds

A 10.65 acre site adjacent to the County Highway Shop on CTY Hwy B. The fairgrounds are available to organizations for events and storage of county equipment.

Existing Facilities

- Pavilion
- Exhibit hall
- Large animal barn
- Hog/sheep barn
- Poultry barn
- Milking parlor
- Motocross track
- Grandstand
- 4-H building
- Large parking area

Recommendations

- Surface improvements for walkways and road
- Insulate and install HVAC system in exhibit hall
- Bleachers
- Outdoor public bathrooms
- Storage building for fair equipment

Boat Landings

- Nelson lake Dam Boat Landing, developed
- Nelson Lake Tag Alder Landing, developed
- Weirgor Lake, walk in landing
- Price Dam Landing, Lake Winter, developed
- Windfall lake, developed
- Spring Lake, developed
- Tiger Cat Flowage, developed
- Deer Lake, developed
- Winter Dam, Chippewa Flowage, developed
- Green Lake, undeveloped

Township Recreational Facilities

Town of Bass Lake

Existing Facilities

- Durphee Boat Landing – Cement ramp with limited parking located on County Road KK
- Grindstone Scenic Overlook
- Grindstone Shallows Park – Boat landing, pavilion, picnic area, grills, restrooms and rustic nature trail
- Harvey Park – Rustic walkway with benches at LCO shoreline with limited parking located on Circle Drive at the end of County Road KK.
- Henks Park
- Little LCO Boat Landing
- Spring Lake Boat Ramp – Cement ramp and dock with limited parking located at the junction of Williams Road and County Road E
- Windigo Boat Landing – Cement boat ramp with dock, gazebo, view shed, large paved parking area, picnic area, grills and restroom located on Highline Road.

Town of Draper

Loretta/Draper Municipal Park

Existing Facilities

- Pavilion
- Picnic area
- Restrooms
- Ball field

Tent/RV Campground

Town of Hayward

The Town of Hayward maintains a lake access and swimming area on Peninsula road and boat landing with parking on Linden Road, both sites are on the west side of Round Lake.

County Hill Recreational Forest

A year-round park for non-motorized recreation located on County Hill Road adjacent to the WDNR Kissick Swamp Wildlife Area.

Existing Facilities

- Picnic/warming shelter
- Handicap accessible restroom
- Gravel parking area
- Sledding hill
- Natural lake
- Trail system for hiking, hunter walking trail, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing

Recommendations

- Signage
- Develop interpretive trail for forest management practices and native trees and vegetation
- Benches
- Power to shelter building
- Trail lighting
- Develop Kozniesky pond area
- Gravel pit reclamation for skating rink

Town of Lenroot

The town of Lenroot owns and maintains two recreation facilities and a boat landing. The facilities are on Silverthorn Lake and Smith Lake, with the boat landing on Nelson lake.

Eytcheson Park – Smith lake

Existing Facilities

- Boat landing and parking
- Swimming beach
- Restrooms
- Picnic area
- Pavilion

Silverthorn Lake Park

Existing Facilities

- Swimming beach
- Shelter/pavilion
- Restrooms
- Tennis court
- Playground equipment
- Baseball field

Town of Meteor

Existing Facilities:

- Softball field
- Sand volleyball court
- Paved court area
- Picnic pavilion with grill and tables

Recommendations:

- Continue development of recreation center at Town Hall.

Town of Ojibwa

Ojibwa Park

The Town of Ojibwa owns and maintains the former Ojibwa State Park. The Town has a 4 member park committee who oversees maintenance/ management of the Ojibwa Park. The Park provides access for snowmobilers and ATVs to the Tuscobia State Trail, as well as a campground. The Turkey Feather Trail is a one mile marked hiking trail on the north side of Highway 70 in Ojibwa Park. A two mile ski loop starts at the Turkey Feather Trailhead.

Existing Facilities:

- Restrooms
- Picnic areas & large grill
- Sixteen camper sites and three tent sites

Existing Facilities

- Drinking water
- RV waste station
- Shelter building
- Playground equipment for pre-school to age 10
- Turkey Feather Trail – hiking & skiing

Recommendations:

- Develop/install shower unit in campground

Baird Community Park

Located on the north side of the Chippewa River.

Existing Facilities:

- Picnic tables
- Grills
- Restrooms
- Ball Field with dugouts
- Concession stand
- Canoe access to the river

Recommendations:

- Replace concrete floor in shelter
- Roll grounds in ball park outfield

Ojibwa Park-Canoe Access

A small parking area adjacent to the Ojibwa Park that provides scenic access and a canoe take-out point on the north side of the Chippewa River.

Existing Facilities:

- Picnic area
- Improved canoe access point
- Gravel parking area

Town of Round Lake

The Town of Round Lake utilizes the Town Hall located on CTH A for Town meetings and annual functions. Hall/Community Building is also used by multiple lake and property associations for meetings and informational forums.

Existing Facilities:

- Parking area

- Non-motorized boat launch
- Scenic area with fishing access (West Fork Chippewa River)
- Battle of the Horsefly historical site/marker

Recommendations:

- Develop picnic facilities including grills and tables, pavilion, and landscaping.
- Restrooms
- Drinking water
- Hiking/Snowshoe trail development on 40 acres of town property adjacent to Town Hall.
- Develop water access/swim/picnic area, possibly in conjunction with adjacent Towns.

Town of Sand Lake

Recreation facilities in the Town of Sand Lake are provided primarily for Stone Lake area residents, visitors and tourists.

Stone Lake Lions Park

The park is located on STH 70

Existing Facilities:

- Softball field with improved fencing and players benches
- Pavilion. With adjoining serving area (roll serving doors and picnic tables)
- Picnic areas with tables and grilles
- Fire Pit
- Playground Equipment
- Equipment Storage Building and Garage
- Restrooms (Pit Toilets)
- Basketball court
- Pickle Ball court
- Volley Ball court

Recommendations:

- Add Horseshoe courts
- Provide a water source to the park
- Paint the existing Pit toilets
- Build Restrooms with running water and sewer.

Stone Lake Elementary School

Previously the Stone Lake Elementary school building, the building and lot is now owned by the Stone Lake Cranberry Fest, Inc. and used as a community park.

Existing Facilities:

- Playground Equipment , 2 groupings

Recommendations:

- Move one grouping of Playground equipment to Lions Park (Replacement) or Lions Hall (New Play Area)

Town of Winter

Archery Range – Lagoon Road

Existing Facilities:

- Pavilion
- Small storage shed
- Parking
- Porta-potty (owned by archery club)

Recommendations:

- Expand facility to include rifle and pistol range
- Expand parking area to accommodate approximately 20 vehicles and/or trailers
- Develop recreational vehicle operation training area for youth lessons/certifications
- Plant a buffer of trees
- Provide a water source to the area
- Provide restroom facilities
- Provide playground equipment
- Develop a picnic area with shelter, tables and grills
- Provide electricity to site

Lake Winter Boat Landing – Tower Road (NE side of lake)

Existing Facilities:

- Seasonal boat dock
- Handicap accessible fishing dock
- Parking area

Recommendations:

- Develop playground area with shelter and equipment
- Provide electricity to picnic area
- Provide picnic tables
- Provide water source
- Provide restroom facilities

Village recreational facilities

Village of Couderay

The recreation facilities are provided within the village located on the Couderay River.

Ed Anderson Recreation Area

Existing Facilities:

- Two ball fields
- Playground equipment
- New pavilion
- Picnic area
- Restrooms

Recommendations:

- New barrier free restrooms should be added
- New chain-link backstops on both fields
- New line fencing on both fields
- Picnic area with tables and grills could be developed along the river within the park
- Acquire Eddy Creek Park from the County and improve

Village of Radisson

Four outdoor recreation areas are located in the village. All town roads are open to ATV and Snowmobiles.

New Project Recommendations:

- Create path and rehabilitation of boat landing/public rest area on Couderay River. Property lies within Town of Radisson and owned by North Central Power.
- Develop biking/walking/rollerblade path to Tuscobia Trail to create a circular recreational path

Radisson Recreational Park

Existing Facilities:

- Eight campsites with electric & water hookup
- 5 tent sites
- Picnic tables
- Pavilion with electricity & water
- Restrooms
- Playground equipment for preschool
- Volleyball net

- Basketball hoop
- RV waste station
- ATV wash station
- ATV unloading ramp

Recommendations:

- Shower building
- Blacktop parking area

Radisson Ball Park

Existing Facilities:

- Restrooms
- Concession stand
- Ball field

Recommendations:

- Add a chain-link backstop and outfield fence

Village Firehall Park

Located adjacent to the Firehall on the Tuscobia State Trail.

Existing Facilities:

- Pavilion
- Restrooms inside the pavilion
- Basketball court

Recommendations:

- Remodel Village Hall restrooms

Former Radisson Elementary School

Existing Facilities:

- Ball field
- New playground equipment

Recommendations:

- Upgrade existing ball fields for youth leagues

Village of Winter

Excellent outdoor recreation facilities are provided in the village.

Dr. H.A. Smith Park and V.F.W.

Existing Facilities:

- Picnic area
- Ball field
- Pavilion
- Restrooms – barrier free 2006

Recommendations:

- Park signage
- Recondition softball diamond
- Repaving
- Event shelters with electricity
- Construct two ballpark dugouts
- Construct ballpark concession stand

CM Olson Athletic Field

The Winter School District also provides excellent facilities at the school.

Existing Facilities:

- Baseball diamond
- Asphalt track
- Playground equipment

Friends of Tuscobia – Winter Depot Trailhead

Existing Facilities:

- Historic Village of Winter railroad depot near the Tuscobia Trail for use as a multi-use trailhead including ATV, snowmobiles, hiking, and biking.

Recommendations:

- Provide entrance and parking areas to accommodate vehicles and trailers
- Establish picnic area with shelter, tables and grills
- Establish a water source
- Restrooms
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Fencing
- Signage

Village of Exeland

The Village of Exeland has excellent and well used recreation facilities.

Swan Creek Park

Existing Facilities:

- Shelter.
- Camping.
- Water pump.
- Restrooms.
- Horseshoe pits.
- Little League field.
- Grass open play area with playground equipment.

Recommendations:

- Create a multi-use community recreation facility. A fishing area for children could be developed at the park where the Swan and Weirgor Creeks come together. A small shelter and a stream-side handicap accessible fishing dock could be included.
- Ice skating rink
- Tennis courts
- Bathroom/shower facility for camp area

Exeland Sports Center

Excellent recreation opportunities are available at this facility.

Existing Facilities:

- Rod & Gun Club with a trap and rifle range
- Softball field
- The major facility of the Exeland baseball field
- New restrooms
- Concession stand
- New batting cages & dugouts
- Pavilion
- New sand volleyball court
- Playground equipment
- Open and covered bleachers

City recreational facilities

City of Hayward

Hayward, the county seat of Sawyer County, has shown substantial growth in the past thirty years-

-from a 1980 population of 1,698 to a 2010 census population of 2,340, an increase of 27 percent.

The Town of Hayward, which surrounds the city, increased from 2,331 in 1980 to 3,601 people in the 2010 census. This is an increase of 35 percent. The City and Town of Hayward now have a combined population total just under 6,000.

This dramatic increase has placed increased pressure on existing recreation facilities and created demand for new recreational opportunities. The City of Hayward's existing recreation facilities receive extremely heavy use during high tourist periods. The lack of major picnic open-space play area is evident. The city swimming beach, which is the only public swimming area in Hayward, is now accessible via the biking/walking trail that circumnavigates the city limits.

Hayward functions as a popular service center for area second home residents, and resorts and receives extremely sharp population increases in the summer months. Special events as the Musky Festival, Lumberjack World Championships, Winterfest, Fat Tire Festival and the American Birkebeiner cross-country ski race bring additional thousands of visitors into the area. Hayward is also fortunate to be the home of the National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame. This facility is located adjacent to the city beach.

The Hayward area presently supports men's and women's summer softball leagues, Little League baseball, a men's city baseball team, youth soccer, logrolling and amateur ice hockey programs. The majority of organized team recreation activities take place at the Hayward Sports Center located adjacent to the Middle School.

Hayward Community School District

Hayward Primary School

Existing Facilities:

- Ball fields
- New playground equipment
- Gymnasium
- Soccer field
- Paved parking

Recommendations:

- Upgrade ball fields (new backstops)

Hayward Intermediate School

Existing Facilities:

- Access to paved fitness trail
- New playground equipment

- Gymnasium
- Paved parking

Hayward Middle School

Existing Facilities:

- Shares outdoor fields with Sports Center and High School
- Large gymnasium
- Paved parking
- Football field
- Sand volleyball court

Hayward Senior High School

Existing Facilities:

- Baseball fields
- Softball fields
- Track facility
- Football field
- Soccer fields
- 4 tennis courts
- Auditorium
- Access to paved fitness trail

Recommendations:

- Upgrade tennis courts

Erik and Randy Lawry Skate Park

Excellent skateboard and rollerblade park (44,167 sq ft.). Located adjacent to the High School and Middle School. Open to the public.

Hayward Sports Center

This 28 acre sports complex is on land owned by the City of Hayward but is administered by the Hayward Sports Center Board of Directors and provides recreation opportunities for Sawyer County and area residents, and visitors.

Existing Facilities:

- 28,000 sq. ft. indoor arena providing ice hockey, meetings, concession, restrooms, and year round activities
- Softball field with restrooms
- 3 Little League fields with concession and storage
- Playground equipment

Recommendations:

- Bury overhead electric lines
- Develop swim park

Dog Park (formerly Nyman Park)

A 9.2-acre parcel located along Smith Lake Creek on the north side of the city with 77,700 sq. ft. of mowed area.

Existing Facilities:

- Vehicle parking area
- Designated area for unleashed dogs
- Walking trail for leashed dogs

Smith Creek

Recommendations:

- Develop a plan to address problems and utilize the potential of the creek.

Upper Shues Pond

This area is adjacent to the Senior Citizens Center.

Existing Facilities:

- Benches
- Trails (.3 miles)

Recommendations:

- Develop a picnic area with a small pavilion

Pedestrian/Bike Trail

Year-round, paved fitness trail originates near the City Beach, continues through the business park, past the school campuses and down Nyman Ave, continuing past the Sherman & Ruth Weiss public library, and ends at the city limits on Highway 77 near Walmart/Slumberland. The trail provides access to the Middle School, Sports Center, Intermediate School, and Primary School locations, as well as the public library.

Recommendations:

- Complete bike/walking trail and work with adjacent townships to make a regional trail.
- Utilize the trail corridor for the Tree City/Bird City initiative

Jaycees Tot Lot

This small playground and ice skating rink is located at the corner of Wisconsin and Fourth Street

in the City of Hayward (34,956 sq. ft.).

Existing Facilities:

- Playground equipment
- Outdoor skating rink

Recommendation:

- Additional lighting

City Beach

Existing Facilities (121,000 sq. ft.):

- Swimming beach
- Restrooms
- Open shelter
- Basketball court
- Boat ramp
- Accessible Pier
- Picnic area with tables and grills
- Playground with a variety of equipment

Recommendations:

- Define parking for boat access

Shues Pond

This attractive area provides beautiful inter-city open space (90,000 sq. ft.). The annual “Lure of the Lights” display is held here. The pond is used by a variety of wildlife, and many residents enjoy viewing the wildlife while having lunch.

Existing Facilities:

- Gazebo
- Picnic tables
- Flag pole
- Playground equipment

Recommendations:

- Plant a pollinator garden to attract birds and butterflies.
- Utilize the area for the Tree City/Bird City initiative

Library Nature Park

Existing Facilities:

- Nature park
- Walking trails
- Viewing pier
- Bridge
- Informational kiosks
- Plant identification signs
- Outdoor amphitheater/classroom

Recommendations:

- Upgrade/improve/maintain outdoor amphitheater
- Conserve and restore the wetland and upland areas
- Invasive species control
- Reforestation/habitat management

SUMMARY

Sawyer County has a diverse natural resource base providing a variety of recreational opportunities. Many of the opportunities take place on public lands such as Sawyer County Forest, Chequamegon National Forest, State of Wisconsin lands managed by the DNR, and the Namekagon River National Scenic Riverway. The area offers many nationally recognized recreational events.

Sawyer County has a unique group of citizens who, through volunteer efforts, are able to make things happen, and provide unique recreational opportunities and world class recreation events. The county's role is that of managing and maintaining its vast county forest system as a viable multi-use recreation base as well as providing quality forest products. The municipalities in the county must continue to provide and maintain community based recreation facilities that have made Sawyer County one of the most livable areas in the Midwest.

APPENDIX A - FINANCIAL AIDS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Program

This is a federal program administered in all states that encourages creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received by the DNR for this program are split between DNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities.

Grants cover 50 percent of eligible project costs.

Eligible applicants

Towns, villages, cities, counties, tribal governments, school districts or other state political subdivisions are eligible to apply for grants for acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Eligible projects

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

Ineligible project examples

- A project that is not supported by a local comprehensive outdoor recreational plan.
- Acquisition and development of golf courses.
- A project where storm water management is the primary purpose.
- Motorized recreation trails.
- Lands that include cell towers.
- Land that will be used for non-outdoor public recreation purposes.

Deadlines and funding cycles

- Submit completed applications by **May 1** of each year

to: [Lavane Hessler](#)

Local government grant manager

Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 7921

Madison WI 53707-7921

608-267-0497

- Department of Natural Resources regional staff review and rate eligible projects in **early June**.
- Final project listing is compiled in **July** with projects ranking the highest selected for grants to the extent funds are available.
- Final selected projects will be reviewed and approved by the National Park Service prior to the sponsor receiving an agreement with the DNR.

Application materials

Because these grants are often coupled with grants from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, LWCF grant application materials appear in the same booklet as [Stewardship Local Assistance grant application materials](#).