

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the various bicycle, pedestrian, and recreational resources that are offered in the county. Bicycling has become increasingly popular as not only a mode of transit for residents of the county, but as a recreational and fitness activity as well. Recreation and sporting activities are prominent throughout the county among residents and visitors alike given the vast outdoor and water access available. With five state parks and a plethora of county and local parks, biking and hiking are common outdoor recreation activities, especially in the summer season; horseback riding has also gained some popularity. Green Bay and Lake Michigan, as well as inland lakes and ponds, offer recreation opportunities for boaters, kayakers/canoers, fishermen and women, swimmers, and beach-goers. The winter months provide a variety of recreation activities including snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice hockey/skating, ice fishing, and more.

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN RESOURCES

### BICYCLE ROUTE INVENTORY

Door County's bike network, as designated by Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), extends the majority of the county, and bikers are able to access most roads and trails. The current bicycle route inventory contains identified paved shoulders only on State Trunk Highways (STHs) 42 and 57, categorized by traffic volume, road condition, and biking desirability. There are various sections of STHs 42 and 57 that are high traffic volume areas or do not have paved shoulders, and are designated "Undesirable" routes for cyclists. This disrupts the bike connectivity on the STHs and brings about safety concerns for bikers.

The "Best Condition" bike routes span many of the county highways and are therefore safer and better routes for cyclists to take. WisDOT's map does not identify other roads in the county with paved shoulders, such as county highways. All local roadways, except the Michigan Street Bridge in the City of Sturgeon Bay, allow for shared-use with bicycles. Additionally, there are two WisDOT designated bicycle paths, the Ahnapee State Trail and the Sister Bay Trail (see Figures 12.1 and 12.2), as well as identified mountain bike trails, and all of the state parks offer bicycling trails.

The US Green Building Council defines a bicycle network as a continuous network consisting of any combination of the following:

- 1) Off-street bicycle paths or trails at least 8 feet wide for a two-way path and at least 5 feet wide for a one-way path;
- 2) Physically designated on-street bicycle lanes at least 5 feet wide; and/or
- 3) Streets designed for a target speed of 25 miles per hour or less.

Currently, the City of Sturgeon Bay is the only municipality in the county with a designated bicycle network, along with plans for additional bike routes in the future. (See Figure 12.3.) In addition, the City has been awarded the Bronze ranking for bicycle friendly communities by the League of American Bicyclists. The City of Sturgeon Bay is one of just 24 communities in the State of Wisconsin to be designated as a bicycle friendly community.

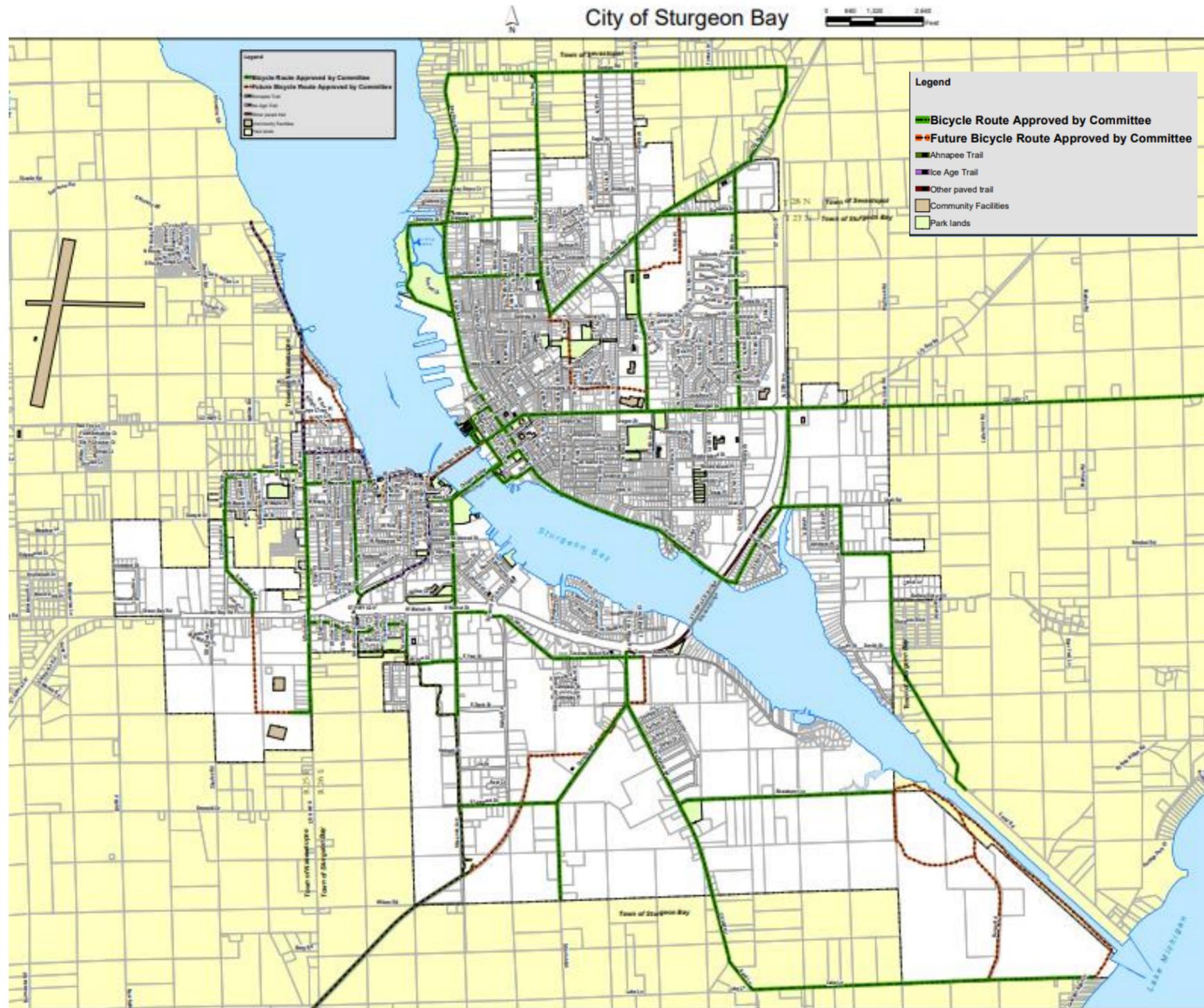
Figures 12.1 and 12.2: Door County Bicycle Route Network, South & North





Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Bike Maps, Door County, 2020.

Figure 12.3: Sturgeon Bay Bicycle Network



Source: City of Sturgeon Bay, 2018.

## **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING**

Bicycle and pedestrian plans in Door County have been developed at both the community and municipal level. A community-developed multi-modal trail plan completed in 2024 is the most recent. The City of Sturgeon Bay and the Towns of Baileys Harbor, Gibraltar, and Egg Harbor also have bicycle plans in place.

## **COMMUNITY MULTI-MODAL TRAIL PLANNING**

Multi-use trails are usually physically separated from the roadway and typically accommodate bi-directional travel by both bicyclists and pedestrians. They provide safe, efficient routes for non-motorized travel and have been shown to increase property values, encourage economic development, and promote active lifestyles. Multi-use trails serve as a vital link between neighborhoods, schools, businesses, parks, and other community amenities. They also provide for a variety of affordable modal options, which is particularly relevant for those who are unable to drive, would prefer not to drive, or cannot afford the costs associated with automobile ownership.

In 2023, a public/private partnership between the Door County Community Foundation and various other agencies and organizations formed to discuss the potential for developing multi-modal trails across the county that would connect the city, villages, and towns. Under the umbrella of the Community Foundation's Green Fund, the Door County Multi-Modal Trails Task Force's primary goal became to develop a comprehensive map of all trail-related projects, both existing and planned, throughout the entire county. The purpose of the map was to provide information to communities to aid in the development of trails.

Development of the map included reviewing all current bike and trail plans as well as reaching out to all 19 municipalities for information on what trails they maintain or are planning to develop in the next 5, 10 and 20 years. One of the primary sources of information was the 2014 Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities Plan. Other key sources of information came from Peninsula State Park, the Villages of Egg Harbor, Ephraim, and Sister Bay, and the Town of Gibraltar. The Green Fund report and map, completed in June of 2024, is available on-line at <https://www.doorcountygreenfund.org/trails/maps/>.

Note that the Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 (this Plan) supercedes the 2014 Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities Plan. The 2024 Green Fund Multi-Modal Trails Task Force Report map is now the official county map that will guide planning efforts. This map will be updated over time as community and municipal level efforts evolve.

## **CITY OF STURGEON BAY**

The City of Sturgeon Bay adopted its Bicycle Master Plan in 2011 to guide decision-making regarding facility improvement and installment, education opportunities, and funding. The Bicycle Master Plan outlines the following goals for the City’s bike network and facilities:

- 1) Develop a well-connected bicycle network that links a variety of destinations together into a cohesive transportation system.
- 2) Increase the utilization, availability, and demand for funding to improve bicycle facilities.
- 3) Design roads to be compatible with surrounding uses and be pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly.
- 4) Reduce the number and severity of vehicular crashes with particular emphasis on reducing vehicle-bicycle conflicts and crashes
- 5) Supplement facilities improvements with adequate education, encouragement, and enforcement programs.
- 6) Enhance intergovernmental cooperation and coordination for improving multimodal transportation.
- 7) Enhance the livability of Door County by improving transportation variety throughout the region and establishing Sturgeon Bay as the gateway.
- 8) Increase the numbers of commuters who live within the urbanized area that bicycle to work.
- 9) Continue to monitor progress toward implementing this plan and increasing mode share for non-motorized transportation.

## **TOWN OF GIBRALTAR and VILLAGE OF EGG HARBOR**

The Town of Gibraltar and Village of Egg Harbor each adopted their own Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2010 to guide the development of shared-use paths, demarcate on-street facilities, provide design guidelines and policies for facilities, and highlight funding opportunities to pursue. The main goal of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans is to establish and maintain a safe, comprehensive, and integrated bicycle and pedestrian network that encourages that use of bicycles and walking for commuting, recreation, and other trips.

The Town of Baileys Harbor adopted a bicycle plan in 2011, however, the plan is currently not available on-line.

In 2017, the Village of Egg Harbor implemented the Eggy Bike Share, a program which provides free shared bikes for locals and visitors alike. Bike share racks are located throughout the village, encouraging sustainable, car-free travel, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

## **WISDOT-FUNDED BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) administers the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) intended to “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.” TAP projects often include Safe Routes to School programming as well as Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities programming. Door County municipalities have received various federal grants administered through WisDOT for bicycle and pedestrian projects, as listed in Table 12.1. The City of Sturgeon Bay and the Village of Sister Bay are the only municipalities to have received grant money for pedestrian-related projects. Bicycle facilities, as defined by the American Association of State

Highway and Transportation Officials, include shared roadways (no signs or markings), signed shared roadways, bicycle lanes, and shared-use paths.

- Shared roadways have no bicycle designations or facilities. In Door County, shared roadways include all local roads, collectors, and minor arterials with low traffic volumes that are safe for bicycle travel.
- Signed shared roadways are designated by bicycle route signs and serve either to provide continuity to other bicycle facilities or to designate preferred routes through high-demand corridors.
- Bicycle lanes are established with appropriate pavement markings and signage along streets in corridors where there is significant bicycle demand and where there are distinct needs that can be served by the lanes. The purpose of bicycle lanes is to improve conditions for bicyclists on the street.
- Shared-use paths are bikeways that are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier and either within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. Shared-use paths may also be used by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers, and other non-motorized users. Most shared-use paths are designed for two-way travel.

**Table 12.1: WisDOT-Funded Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects, Door County**

Year	Project Title	Municipality	Cost
1994	Ahnapee Trail	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$220,000
1994	Ahnapee Trail	Door County	\$148,300
1994	Tri-County Recreational Corridor	Door County	\$500,000
1998	Ahnapee Trail Extension	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$56,500
1999	Sister Bay Bike/Pedestrian Path	Village of Sister Bay	\$71,000
2000	Ephraim/Fish Creek/Gibraltar/Egg Harbor Bike Path	Town of Gibraltar	\$181,100
2000	Regional Bike Plan	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$45,500
2000	Sturgeon Bay Bridge Bike Path	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$140,000
2000	Sister Bay Bike Path STH42	Village of Sister Bay	\$421,000
2004	Ahnapee Trail Extension	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$165,000
2007	Sturgeon Bay School District SRTS Plan	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$60,000
2008	Sidewalk Addition & Education Program	City of Sturgeon Bay	\$203,864
2010	Door County Bike & Pedestrian Plan	Door County	\$100,000
2016	Bay-Lake Regional Bike & Pedestrian Plan	Bay-Lake Region	\$108,000
2020	Walk, Bike, Eggsplore Egg Harbor	Village of Egg Harbor	\$1,382,880

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

### **WALK, BIKE, EGGSPLORE EGG HARBOR**

The most recent project funded by WisDOT in Door County is Walk, Bike, Eggsplore Egg Harbor. The Village of Egg Harbor received funding to construct 4,700 feet of pedestrian facilities and on-road bike accommodations on County Highway (CTH) G and STH 42. The project will provide bike and pedestrian connectivity to the Village's commercial center, public beach, parks, village hall, public library, and other points of interests within the Village.

### **RENTAL & MAINTENANCE FACILITIES**

There are multiple facilities in the county which offer rental bikes throughout the busy season, and some year-round, including many of the state parks in the county.

- Cave Point Paddle and Pedal
- Door County Bike
- Edge of Park (Peninsula State Park)
- Door County Kayak Tours
- Kayak Door County
- Island Adventure Company
- Island Rides
- Nicolet Beach Rentals
- Nor Door Sport and Cyclery
- Potawatomi State Park Store

Additionally, Nor Door Sport and Cyclery offers bicycle repair and maintenance services at both their locations, City of Sturgeon Bay and Fish Creek (Town of Gibraltar). The Welcome Center for Destination Door County in the City of Sturgeon Bay also contains self-service bike service stations for public use.

### **TOURS**

For visitors who want an active vacation, bicycle tours are a great option to see the natural beauty and small-town charm of the county. There are various groups that offer traditional bicycle tours, as well as e-bike tours, in Door County's state and county parks, and to main tourist attractions, such as the county's well-known curvy road that leads to Northport, the launch point of the Washington Island Ferry Line.

- Door County Bike
- Door County Kayak Tours
- Pedal Across Wisconsin

### **RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

Door County has many outdoor recreational resource areas, including state, county, and local municipal parks and preserves, as well as physical recreation centers. Table 12.2 lists the location and acreage of the state and county parks. All parks, including municipal parks, are shown on Map 6.8, Preserved Lands, found at the end of this document.

There are also many preserved lands in the county offering public recreation opportunities in addition to those discussed below. Preserved lands are discussed in Chapter 6, Natural Resources, and depicted on

Map 6.8. Note that not all lands depicted on the map are open to the public, such as certain lands under conservation easements and federal preserves.

## **PARKS**

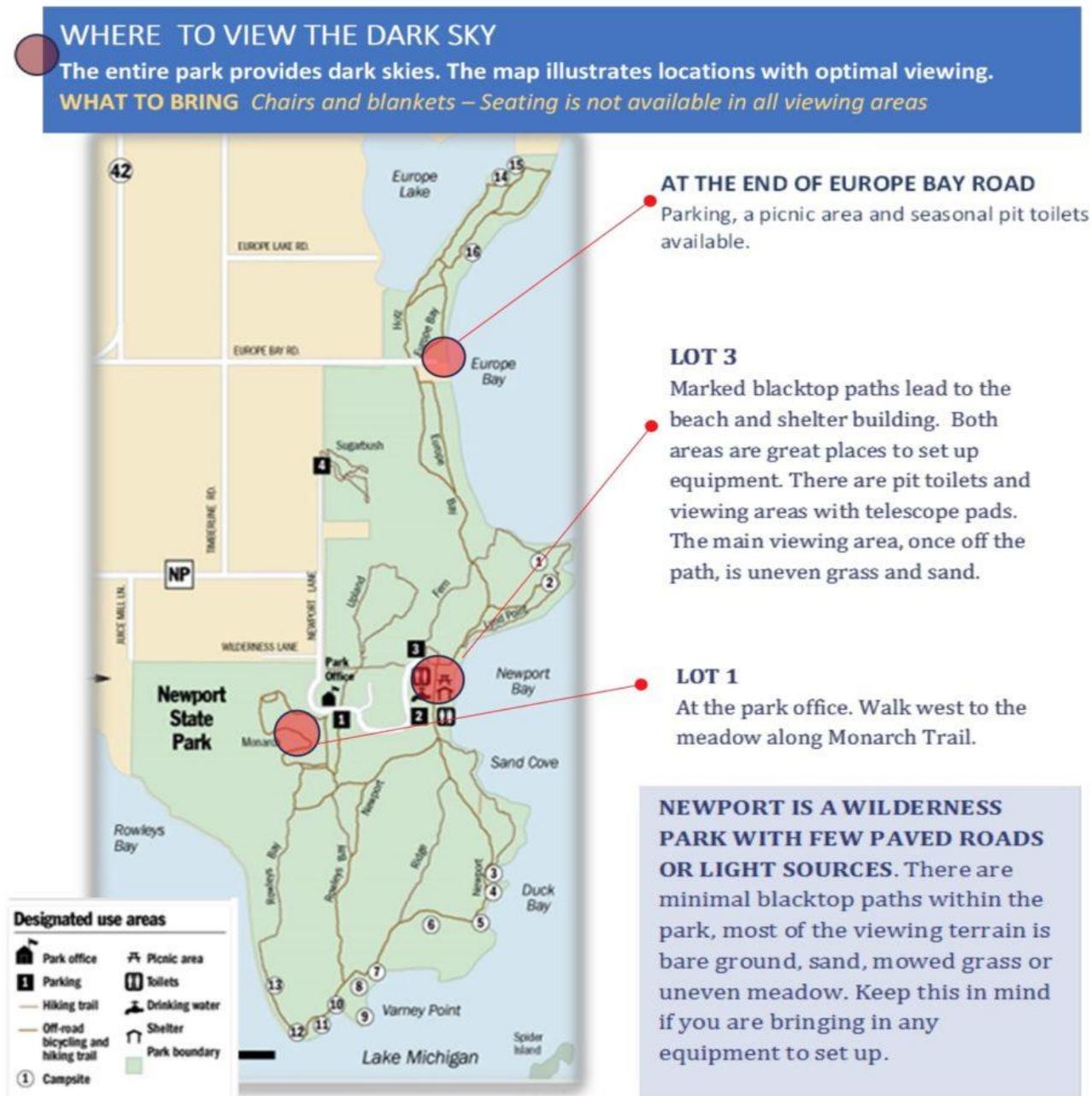
Door County has over 10,000 acres of county and state parks. The vast outdoor space is a large draw to visitors and perk for residents. There are also many local parks throughout the county in the municipalities.

### **STATE PARKS**

Door County has five state parks, more than any county in Wisconsin, described below. All are owned and managed by the DNR.

- **Newport State Park**, Wisconsin’s only formally designated “Wilderness Park” is located northeast of Ellison Bay in the Town of Liberty Grove on the tip of the Door Peninsula. The park contains over 2,300 acres of forest on 11 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. Cool winds off Lake Michigan create habitats similar to boreal forests, supporting plant life typically found in Canada. The park contains evergreen and hardwood forests, wetlands, and upland meadows. It also offers an interpretive center, naturalist programs, camping sites, picnic areas, and over 30 miles of hiking trails, 17 of which are open to off-road bicycles. In the winter, 26 miles of trails are available for cross-country skiing, including 12.5 miles for classical skiing and 2 miles for skate skiing, and there are 4.5 miles of trails open for snowshoeing. Newport, one of the darkest spots in the state, is also designated as a “Dark Sky Park” by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA), which means it is completely absent of light pollution, making it a prime destination for stargazing. (See Figure 12.4.) Newport is one of 18 designated Dark Sky Parks in the United States, and only the second in the Midwest.
- **Peninsula State Park** is a 3,776-acre park in the Town of Gibraltar and the Village of Ephraim. Established in 1909, it is one of the largest and most well-attended state parks in Wisconsin, receiving over one million visitors annually. The park has nearly seven miles of Green Bay shoreline and contains a landscape of forests, meadows, wetlands, and 150-foot rocky bluffs. The majority of the park is forested, mainly with white birch and other northern hardwoods. The park offers a wide variety of summer and winter outdoor recreational activities, including: trails for nature study, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and road biking; camping; a swimming beach; a picnic area with concessions; a boat launch; a nature center; a lighthouse open for tours; 75-foot observatory tower offering views of Green Bay, the Village of Ephraim, and the Town of Gibraltar; and a golf course.
- **Potawatomi State Park** is in the Town of Nasewaupee, on the shores of Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay. This 1,225-acre park ranges from flat or gently rolling terrain to steep slopes along the shoreline. Most of the park is heavily wooded. The park offers a variety of year-round activities including camping, hiking, swimming, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. A 75-foot observation tower rises above the forest canopy, giving a panoramic view of Sawyer Harbor and Green Bay.

Figure 12.4: Dark Sky Locations, Newport State Park



Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

- **Rock Island State Park** is a primitive island off the tip of Door County and northeast of Washington Island. Rock Island offers hiking trails, the oldest lighthouse in Wisconsin, campsites, and 2,000 feet of sand beach. Stone buildings, including the historic Thordarson Boathouse and museum, built by Chester Thordarson and his family, are available for touring. The Thordarson Boathouse has been deemed one of the most historically significant buildings in

the state, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Vehicles and bicycles are not allowed on the 912-acre island.

**Figure 12.5: Thordarson Boathouse, Rock Island**



*Source: Peninsula Pulse.*

- **Whitefish Dunes State Park** is an 867-acre “day use” park set along Lake Michigan. It was established in 1967 to protect the fragile dune environment. Whitefish Dunes has more visitors than any other day use park in Wisconsin. Its shoreline, composed of sandy shores and rocky bluffs, extends nearly three miles. An observation deck offers views of the park’s forests, wetlands, and the shoreline. For people with disabilities, the park has an accessible beach grid system and interpretive loop. Whitefish Dunes has 14 miles of hiking trails, 11 of which are groomed for winter skiing. The park is a designated State Natural Area offering a combination of natural features including the Lake Michigan shoreline, shoreline on an interior lake, dense upland forest, a winding creek with wetlands, and the highest sand dunes in Wisconsin.

## COUNTY PARKS

Door County has 19 county parks—including the state-owned, county-leased and -operated Ahnapee Trail—comprising approximately 1,097 acres. Tornado Memorial Park was the first county park, purchased and created by the Door County Board of Supervisors in 1927, followed by the purchase and creation of Robert La Salle Park in 1929 and Frank E. Murphy Park in 1933. The 19 county parks are listed in Table 12.2 and described below. Brief discussion regarding county parks is provided below, and a description of the recreation plan guiding parkland acquisition and management can be found in Chapter 10, Land Use.

- **Ahnapee State Trail** is owned by the State of Wisconsin, but leased to and maintained by Door County. It's approximately 15 miles of trail (encompassing 144 acres), connecting the City of Sturgeon Bay to the City of Algoma, and offers hiking, biking, horseback riding, nature study, and snowmobiling.
- **Baileys Harbor Ridges Park** is a 30-acre park in the Town of Baileys Harbor immediately adjacent to and surrounded by The Ridges Sanctuary. It offers a swimming beach, parking, and restroom facilities. The park is also home to two range lighthouses that aid in private navigation.
- **Cana Island Lighthouse** is a 9-acre park in the Town of Baileys Harbor. The island is accessible only via a rocky causeway. Tours of the lighthouse are offered during the summer season.
- **Cave Point Park** is just under 19 acres and located in the Town of Sevastopol, immediately adjacent to Whitefish Dunes State Park. Cave Point features wave-worn limestone bluff edges and underwater caves. The park offers a one-half mile hiking trail, a picnic area, parking, and restroom facilities.
- **Chadoir's Dock Park** is a 5-acre park located in the Town of Union on Green Bay. The park offers a protective breakwater and dock, a boat launch, and restroom facilities.
- **Door Bluff Headlands** is a 252-acre, largely undeveloped park located in the Town of Liberty Grove, featuring scenic views of vertical bluffs and a variety of tree and plant species.
- **Ellison Bluff Park** is a 174-acre park located in the Town of Liberty Grove offering a picnic area, restrooms, parking, a viewing platform that overlooks Green Bay, and hiking trails.
- **Forestville Dam Park** is a 79-acre park in the Town of Forestville that lies along the east side of the Forestville Pond. The park features a small boat launch, picnic area, and parking areas as well as access to the Ahnapee State Trail and the Ahnapee River.
- **Frank E. Murphy Park** is a 34-acre park in the Town of Egg Harbor with a sand beach, boat launch, bathhouse for swimmers, picnic and restroom facilities, and a dock for fishing. Horseshoe Bay Cave (Tecumseh Cave) is also located within the park with tours available throughout the summer season.
- **George K. Pinney Park** is a 15-acre park in the town of Sevastopol with a fishing area, a boat launch, and picnic and restroom facilities.
- **John Miles Park** is a 60-acre park located in the City of Sturgeon Bay offering soccer fields, a playground, parking, picnic and restroom facilities, and the county fair and stock car races in the summer.
- **Lily Bay County Park** is 0.45-acre park located in the Town of Sturgeon Bay with a boat launch.
- **Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary** is an undeveloped 40-acre park in the Town of Jacksonport featuring a wildlife sanctuary serving as a nesting ground for various species of waterfowl.
- **Meridian Park** is a 155-acre park located in the Town of Jacksonport, contiguous with Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary. The park is largely undeveloped except for a small wayside located in the southeast corner of the park, on State Trunk Highway 57, which contains a monument noting the site's location halfway between the equator and the North Pole. The wayside has picnic, parking, and restroom facilities.
- **Percy Johnson Memorial Park** is a 5-acre park and sand beach in the Town of Washington on the eastern side of Washington Island. The park offers picnic, restroom, and swimming facilities.
- **Robert La Salle Park** is a 23-acre park located in the Town of Clay Banks with 440 feet of public access to Lake Michigan. The park offers swimming, a picnic area, parking, restrooms, and volleyball courts.

- **Robert M. Carmody Park** is a 10-acre park in the Town of Gardner offering a large boat launch, parking, and restroom facilities.
- **Sugar Creek Park** 40-acre park in the Town of Gardner with a boat launch, fishing, a picnic area, parking, restrooms, volleyball courts, and a disc golf course.
- **Tornado Memorial Park** is a 3-acre park in the Town of Gardner, with picnic and restroom facilities. It became the first county park in 1927 and the Door County Historical Society recognizes it as a historical site.

**Table 12.2: Door County Parks**

Name	Geographic Location	Acreage
Ahnapee State Trail	City of Sturgeon Bay; Towns of Sturgeon Bay, Nasewaupée, Forestville; Village of Forestville	144
Baileys Harbor Ridges	Town of Baileys Harbor	30
Cana Island Lighthouse	Town of Baileys Harbor	9
Cave Point	Town of Sevastopol	18.6
Chaudoir's Dock	Town of Union	5
Door Bluff Headlands	Town of Liberty Grove	252
Ellison Bluff	Town of Liberty Grove	174
Forestville Dam	Town of Forestville	79
Frank E. Murphy	Town of Egg Harbor	34
George K. Pinney	City of Sturgeon Bay	15
John Miles	City of Sturgeon Bay	60
Lily Bay	Town of Sturgeon Bay	0.45
Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary	Town of Jacksonport	40
Meridian	Town of Jacksonport	155
Percy Johnson Memorial	Town of Washington	5
Robert La Salle	Town of Clay Banks	23
Robert M. Carmody	Town of Gardner	10
Sugar Creek	Town of Gardner	40
Tornado Memorial	Town of Gardner	3
Newport State Park	Town of Liberty Grove	2,373
Peninsula State Park	Town of Gibraltar	3,776
Potawatomi State Park	Town of Nasewaupée	1,225
Rock Island State Park	Town of Washington	912
Whitefish Dunes State Park	Town of Sevastopol	867

Source: Door County Parks; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

## **LOCAL PARKS**

In addition to state and county parks, nearly all of Door County’s municipalities own and operate their own park and recreation systems. There are over 70 municipal parks within the county—city, village, and town-owned—totaling approximately 630 acres.

## **RECREATIONAL CENTERS**

Door County has two YMCA locations, one in the City of Sturgeon Bay and one in Fish Creek (Town of Gibraltar). The YMCA offers a variety of programs for children, adults, and seniors. Both locations have a swimming pool, exercise room, weight room, and track. The Sturgeon Bay facility offers childcare, a young adult room, an outdoor track, and a gymnastics facility. This facility recently underwent a major expansion to increase group-exercise program space, including the wellness center and community-room spaces; improve accessibility; have a universal locker room and sauna; provide additional social/lobby space; and add a kitchen and youth activity center. The new youth activity center allows the YMCA to offer its day camp onsite and use the adjacent Peterson Park.

Washington Island (Town of Washington) has its own community recreation center, the Mosling Recreation Center.

## **DESIGNATED CAMPGROUNDS**

Camping is a major recreation activity in the county, with many of the State Parks offering campsites. Many campgrounds around the county allow for various levels of camping, including tent camping, campers and RVs, or rustic cabins. Listed below are the campgrounds and sites available for use throughout Door County.

- Aqualand Campground
- Baileys Grove Campground
- Baileys Woods Campground
- Beantown Campground
- Door County KOA
- Dovetail Acres Campground
- Egg Harbor Campground
- Fish Creek Campground & RV
- Frontier Wilderness Campground
- Geitner Homestead Equine Campground
- Hy-Land Court Campground
- Monument Point Camping
- Newport State Park Campsites
- Peninsula State Park Campsites
  - Tennison Bay Campground
  - Weborg Campground
  - Welcker’s Point Campground
  - North Nicolet Campground
  - South Nicolet Campground
  - Group Campground
- Potawatomi State Park – Daisy Field Campground
- Rock Island State Park Campsites
- Rustic Timbers Door County Camping

- Tranquil Timbers Camping Resort
- Wagon Trail Campground
- Washington Island Campground
- Yogi Bear’s Jellystone Park

## **ROUTES AND TRAILS**

### **LAKE MICHIGAN STATE WATER TRAIL**

Water trails are aquatic pathways defined by regular, legal access points to the water and are primarily oriented around non-motorized boating. Water trails often serve other public recreation uses that require access to water, such as fishing, swimming, and sightseeing. Developed water trails offer access points with public amenities such as parking, picnic areas, restrooms, wayfinding signs, and campsites. Formally delineated water trails can be particularly helpful in planning and implementing infrastructure for shoreline segments where geographic conditions necessitate the installation of a dock, a staircase, or other types of structures necessary for access.

The Lake Michigan State Water Trail is Wisconsin’s 523-mile segment of the Lake Michigan Water Trail, a continuous water route paralleling the shores of four states. The entire trail provides over 1,600 miles of scenic skylines, coastal bluffs, and rare dune and swale habitats, as well as various water-recreational opportunities. There are 90 access points along Door County’s coastline, with varying degrees of accessibility, as described below:

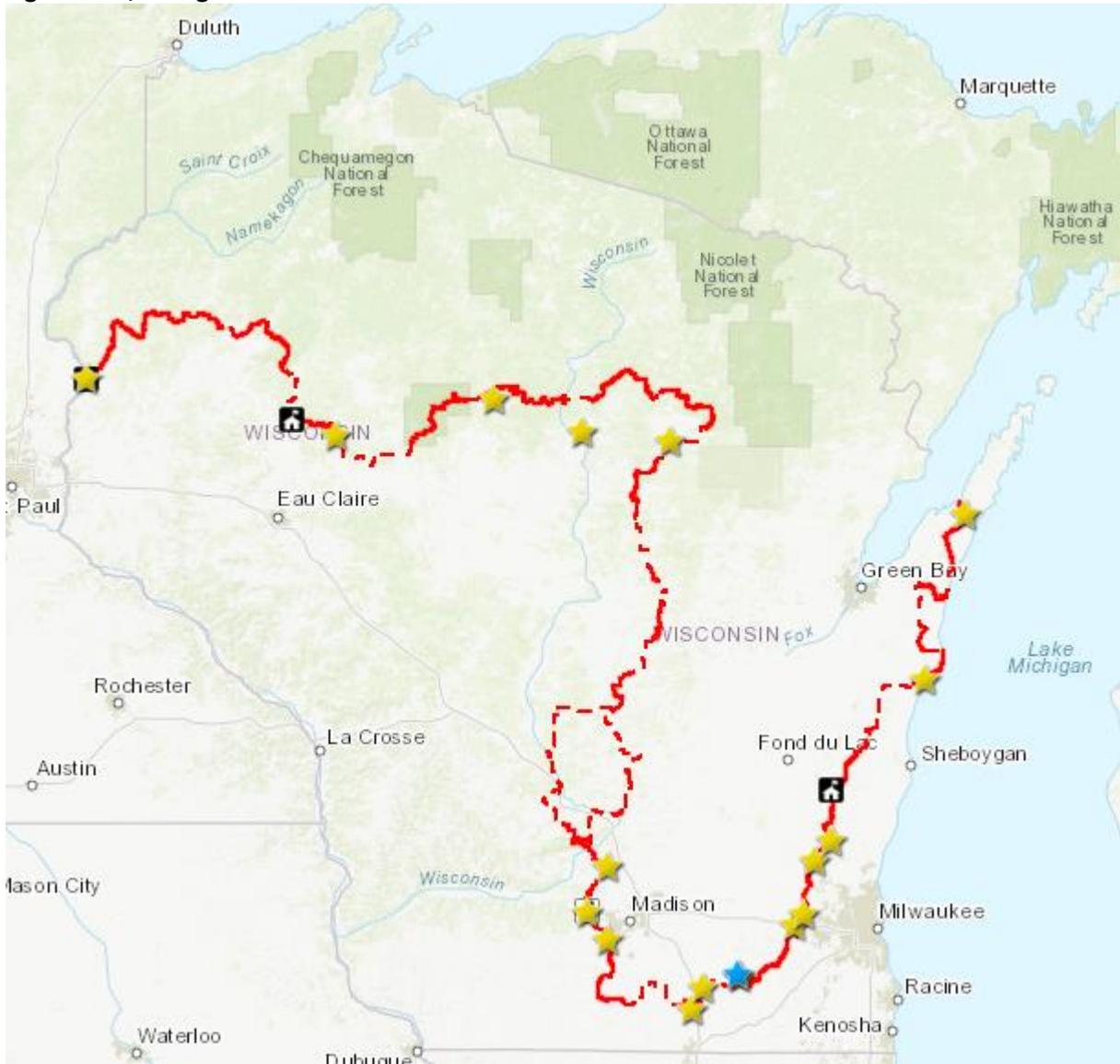
- **Developed Access.** A site that provides water access via a public boat ramp or dock. (35 sites)
- **Carry-In Access.** A site with a beach that provides easy kayak access to the water with little user conflict from adjacent landowners. (32 sites)
- **Alternate Access.** Non-ideal carry-in access site that may be only a road that ends at the water. Alternate access sites may have a bit of a steep slope to the water, require wading or paddling through marsh, or present minimal potential for user conflict from adjacent landowners. (7 sites)
- **Emergency Access.** Use of these sites (primarily road ends) is restricted by limited parking options, high user conflict potential, or agreements with site owners that only permit emergency egress. (16 sites)

The trail has no more than five miles between sites with restroom facilities and no more than ten miles between sites with public camping.

### **ICE AGE TRAIL**

Sturgeon Bay is the eastern terminus of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and hosts one of seventeen Ice Age Trail Communities across the state. (See Figure 12.6 below.) The trail runs along the Ahnapee State Trail, and ends in Potawatomi State Park.

**Figure 12.6, Ice Age Trail**



Source: Ice Age Trail Alliance

**KAYAKING**

Kayaking and other forms of paddling are popular watersports in the county, especially during the summer months. Along with the paddling trails highlighted by the Lake Michigan Water Trail, there are many inland streams, lakes, and ponds that offer great kayaking conditions. Kayak and other paddling/paddleboard rentals available in the county are listed below. Many of the rental facilities also offer paddling tours of the various natural wonders of the county, such as Eagle Bluff and Cave Point.

- Bay Shore Outfitters
- Cave Point Paddle & Pedal
- Door County Adventure Center
- Door County Kayak Tours and Rental

- Fish Creek Boat Rentals
- Island Adventure Company
- Kayak Door County
- Lakeshore Adventures
- Nicolet Beach
- Peninsula Kayak Company
- Sister Bay Boat Rental
- South Shore Pier Boat Rental

## **FISHING**

With both Green Bay and Lake Michigan on either side, the Door Peninsula and Washington Island have some of the best fishing in the country. FishingBooker, a large international fishing trip booking platform, named Sturgeon Bay as one of the Top Spring Fishing Spots across the US in 2023, specifically for walleye and smallmouth bass. Other waters, including inland lakes and streams, offer trout, salmon, whitefish, northern pike, and perch for catch. Fishermen and women from the county and around the country come throughout the year to participate in tournaments and recreational fishing. There are various fishing charter services available in the county, listed below.

- Angler's Edge Sportfishing Charter
- Cast N Catch Charters
- Fox 1 Charters
- Green Bay Trophy Fishing
- Hooked Up Sport Fishing Charters
- Nooo Problem Charters
- Reel Action Sport Fishing
- Reel Impression Sportfishing
- Salmon Depot Charter Fishing
- Sturgeon Bay Charter Fishing LLC
- Sturgeon Bay Outdoors
- Tite Line Fishing Charters

## **STRAWBERRY CREEK CHINOOK FACILITY**

Fish spawning (egg-taking) keeps the Great Lakes stocked with non-native fish for sport fishing, including Coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead (migratory rainbow trout), and some brown trout. Salmon and trout are stocked in tributaries of Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, where they imprint on the scent of the water before moving into the lakes. When the fish are adults, they return to their original tributaries to spawn, but the streams get too warm for the young fish to survive. The role of the DNR is to gather the eggs from the adults, hatch the eggs, and rear them at state fish hatcheries. When the fish are six inches long they are ready to smolt, trading in their dark spots for a silvery sheen, after which they are released into tributary streams, where the cycle begins again.

## **HORSEBACK RIDING**

Horseback riding has become more popular in the county throughout the years, with trails available as well as various riding lessons and trainings. Ahnapee State Trail allows horseback riding on their trails. The following entities provide daily horseback riding lessons and outings, along with longer term training.

- **Door County Horsemanship, LLC.** Provides riding lessons, horsemanship, boarding, and ranch horse training
- **Kurtz Corral**
- **Rocking L Stables, LLC**

### **WINTER RECREATION**

Winter sports and recreation have become increasingly popular in Door County with various activities available for residents and visitors to enjoy.

### **CROSS COUNTRY SKIING & SNOWSHOEING**

Many of the hiking trails throughout the county's parks and recreation areas are open for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing during the winter months. Ski, snowshoe, and accessories are available for rental or purchase at the following entities:

- Bay Shore Outfitters
- Ecology Sports
- Kayak Door County
- Nor Door Sport & Cyclery

### **ICE FISHING**

Once a necessity for survival in the county, ice fishing has become a favorite winter pastime among residents and visitors alike. Anglers flock to Door County, one of the top ice fishing destinations in the country, to catch whitefish, trophy walleye, northern, and trout. When the ice becomes thick enough (over 4 inches), many locals set up their shanties and drill their fishing holes. For visitors, the following fishing charter companies offer ice fishing tours with guides who provide gear and their expertise:

- Hooked Up
- Reel Action
- Silver Strike Charter Fishing

It is important to note that ice safety is the number one priority while on the ice; see the Wisconsin DNR Ice Safety Tips in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter.

### **ICE HOCKEY/ICE SKATING/BROOMBALL**

The Sister Bay Sports Complex opens an outdoor ice-skating rink every winter, offering rental skates and concessions during open skate times. The rink hosts the Northern Door Broomball League; broomball games take place every Wednesday night throughout the winter months. In addition, each February, dozens of teams compete in the Door County Pond Hockey Tournament. As many as 49 teams have entered in the event in past years.

### **SNOWMOBILING**

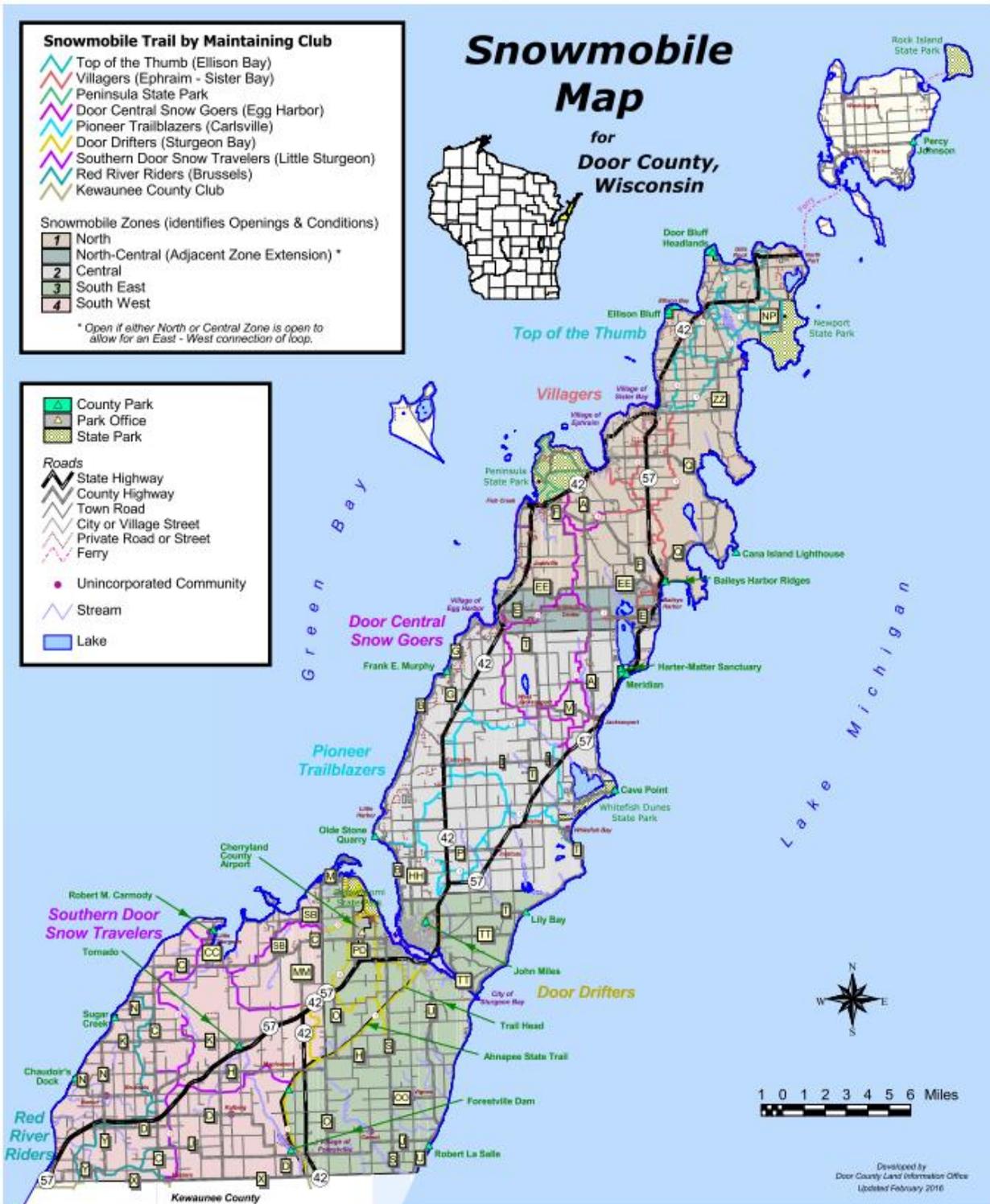
Door County has over 250 miles of state and club snowmobiling trails, connecting every corner of the county from rural restaurants to downtown districts. There are several snowmobiling clubs, along with Peninsula State Park, that maintain trails throughout the county, and are open for residents to join, listed below. Visitors are able to rent snowmobiles by the hour at Door Peninsula Sales & Storage, Ltd.

- Door Central Snow Goers

- Door Pioneer Trailblazers
- Red River Riders
- Southern Door Sno-Travelers
- Sturgeon Bay Door Drifters
- Top O' The Thumb
- Villagers

Figure 12.7 below provides a detailed map of the snowmobile trails in Door County, as well as the club that maintains each different trail.

Figure 12.7: Snowmobile Trails & Clubs, Door County



Source: Door County Facilities and Parks.

## RECREATION EVENTS

### January

- Whitefish Dunes State Park Winter Candlelight Ski

### February

- Crossroads Fire & Ice Candlelight Ski and Snowshoe
- Door County Ice Fishing Tournament
- Door County Pond Hockey Tournament
- Fish Creek Winterfest Fruit Loop Fun Run
- Newport State Park Candlelight Ski/Hike/Snowshoe Event

### March

- Baileys Harbor Brown Trout Tournament

### April

- Barney Fun Run & Walk

### May

- Annual Sturgeon Bay Open Bass Tournament
- Blackhawk Bassmasters Sturgeon Bay Canal Tournament
- Blossom Run
- Door County Half Marathon
- Jacksonport Lake to lake 10k & 2 Mile Fun Run
- Nicolet Bay 5k
- Sturgeon Bay Bass Tournament
- Titledown Bass Assassins Sturgeon Bay Tournament
- Wisconsin Bass/Adrians Memorial Team Open

### June

- Crossroads Trail Run
- Maple Bassmasters Door County Tournament
- Peninsula Century Spring Classic
- Reel Steel Challenge

### July

- Belgian Days Run/Walk
- Door County Triathlon
- Hairpin Run
- Kewaunee/Door County Salmon Tournament
- Milwaukee Bassers Sturgeon Bay Tournament
- Washington Island Rec Run
- WE Swim Death's Door

### August

- Coho Derby

### September

- Door County Brewing Co. Hey Hey 5k
- Door County Century Ride
- Peninsula Century Fall Challenge
- Sturgeon Bay Open Fall Bass Tournament
- S.W.C. Little Sturgeon Bay Fishing Tournament

**October**

- Fall 50
- Maple Bassmasters Classic
- Potawatomi State Park Run Wild

**November**

- One Barrel 2.62 Run
- Turkey Trot

## RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### REGIONAL AND STATE AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

FishingBooking ([Top Spring Fishing Spots in the US for 2023 \(Updated 2023\) \(fishingbooker.com\)](#))

Ice Age Trail Alliance ([Ice Age National Scenic Trail Wisconsin | Ice Age Alliance \(iceagetrail.org\)](#))

Travel Wisconsin ([Wisconsin Nature Parks & Attractions | Travel Wisconsin](#))

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ([Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) | Wisconsin DNR](#))

- Lake Michigan State Water Trail ([Lake Michigan State Water Trail | Wisconsin DNR](#))
- Strawberry Creek Chinook Facility ([Strawberry Creek Chinook facility | Fishing Wisconsin | Wisconsin DNR](#))

Wisconsin Department of Transportation ([Wisconsin Department of Transportation \(wisconsin.gov\)](#))

### LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

Door County Parks ([Door County Parks | Door County, WI](#))

Door County YMCA ([Door County YMCA | Door County YMCA](#))

City of Sturgeon Bay ([Welcome to Sturgeon Bay, WI \(sturgeonbaywi.org\)](#))

Mosling Rec Center ([Washington Island Mosling Recreation Center \(moslingreccenter.org\)](#))

Town of Gibraltar Bike Plan ([Bike & Pedestrian Plan – Town of Gibraltar \(gibraltarwi.gov\)](#))

Village of Egg Harbor ([Village of Egg Harbor](#))

- Green Initiatives ([Green Initiatives - Egg Harbor \(eggharbordoortcounty.org\)](#))
- Bike/Pedestrian Grant ([Walk, Bike, and Eggsplore Egg Harbor - Parks and Public Works Committee - Village of Egg Harbor](#))