

DRAFT DOOR COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN 2026-2030

Door County Facilities and Parks Department, Parks Division



Adopted by the Door County Board of Supervisors on *March/April XX, 2026*

Door County Parks website: <https://www.co.door.wi.gov/174/Facilities-and-Parks>

Acknowledgments

Door County Facilities and Parks Department, Parks Division

Wayne Spritka, Director
Marc Moore, Parks Manager
Samantha Birnschein, Administrative Assistant
Justin Owens, Maintenance Technician
Andrew Schwark, Maintenance Technician
John White, Maintenance Technician

Door County Highway and Facilities Committee

Walter Kalms, Chairperson
Ken Fisher, Vice Chairperson
David Enigl
Elizabeth Gauger
Jeffrey Miller
Todd Thayse

Door County Land Use Services Department

Karyn Behling, Director
Jeff Kussow, Planner

Door County, along with the lands of our Facilities and Parks are located on, are the ancestral homelands of the Menominee Nation. Currently, there are 11 federally recognized Native American sovereign nations in Wisconsin. We acknowledge these indigenous communities who have stewarded this land throughout the generations and pay respect to their elders past and present.

[Placeholder for Approval Resolution]

DRAFT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Acknowledgments i**
- Chapter 1: Introduction1**
 - A. Purpose1
 - B. Parks Division Vision, Mission, and Core Values1
- Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives2**
 - A. Parks Goals and Objectives2
- Chapter 3: Understanding the plan4**
 - A. Definitions4
 - B. Classifications4
 - C. Description of Process5
 - D. Amending the Plan6
 - E. Summary of Park and Outdoor Recreation Planning in Door County6
 - F. Other Relevant Statewide and Regional Plans 10
 - G. 2025 Door County Public Input Survey 14
- Chapter 4: Description of Planning Region, and Proposed Park and Recreation Improvements.....16**
 - A. Description of the Planning Region 16
 - B. Physical Characteristics of the Region 20
 - C. Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory 22
 - D. Proposed Improvements Plan 28
 - E. Funding Programs 30
- Chapter 5: Planning Considerations32**
 - A. Guidelines for Potential Land Acquisitions 32
 - B. Questions to Consider for Potential Land Acquisitions: 32
 - C. Guidelines for Potential Park Improvements 33
 - D. Questions to Consider for Potential Park Improvements: 34
 - E. Guidelines for potential relinquishment of county-owned park land: 34
- Appendix A: Outline of Planning Process35**
- Appendix B: Public Input Survey Results36**

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Purpose

The primary purpose of the Door County Parks and Open Space Plan, hereinafter referred to as “this Plan”, is to guide county efforts to ensure that residents, visitors, and future generations have safe public access to streams, lakes, and bays, while supporting the protection, restoration, and management of natural areas, historic sites, and locations of significant ecological or scientific value. This plan provides a framework for preserving, enhancing, and connecting Door County’s natural and cultural resources for long-term public benefit.

B. Parks Division Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The Door County Facilities and Parks Department, overseen by the Door County Highway and Facilities Committee, includes the Parks Division. The Parks Division is managed by a full-time Parks Manager, under the direction of the Facilities and Parks Director. The division also has four full-time technicians and hires approximately ten seasonal limited-term employees between April and November. The Parks Division vision, mission, and core values are described below.

Vision:

Door County’s parks, natural areas, and open spaces will be cherished world-class landscapes that restore the human spirit, support ecological health, and celebrate our connection to nature.

Mission:

Door County Parks acquires, restores, and manages lands to protect and preserve public open spaces, natural areas, and scenic landscapes in an ecologically healthy state for the education, enjoyment, and recreation of the public—now and for generations to come.

Core Values:

- **Stewardship:** Commitment to the responsible management and protection of natural and cultural resources.
- **Sustainability:** Practices that maintain long-term ecosystem health while supporting responsible public use.
- **Public Benefit:** Ensuring lands provide meaningful opportunities for recreation, education, and enjoyment.
- **Education and Outreach:** Promoting understanding and appreciation of natural and cultural resources through programs and community engagement.
- **Collaboration:** Working with government agencies, organizations, and volunteers to enhance conservation and access.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Providing safe, inclusive, and equitable access to parks and open spaces for all.



Chapter 2: Goals and Objectives

A. Parks Goals and Objectives

The Parks Division has established the following goals to guide management, planning, and decision-making:

Goal 1: Stewardship and Sustainability

Protect and manage Door County's natural, cultural, and historic resources to ensure long-term ecological integrity, scenic quality, and recreational value.

Objectives:

1. Implement habitat restoration, invasive species management, and forest health monitoring projects across all county-managed parks.
2. Maintain and enhance park infrastructure to minimize environmental impacts while supporting safe, responsible public access.
3. Preserve and protect historic, cultural, and archaeological sites as integral parts of the County's identity and park system.
4. Increase awareness of historically and culturally significant sites through incorporation into educational and recreational opportunities.
5. Pursue opportunities to expand open space and natural area protection, including shoreline access and reforestation efforts.
6. Ensure that all park management practices and new developments consider climate resilience and long-term ecological sustainability.



Goal 2: Public Engagement and Education

Provide meaningful, year-round opportunities for recreation, learning, and connection to Door County's natural, cultural, and artistic resources.

Objectives:

1. Expand interpretive programs, signage, and educational materials to promote understanding of the County's natural, cultural, and historical heritage.
2. Support and expand efforts that grow four-season recreational opportunities, particularly winter-based recreation.
3. Enhance and promote existing park facilities, including trails, beaches, pavilions, and water access points, to meet diverse recreational needs.
4. Develop partnerships with schools, civic groups, and community organizations to deliver educational and volunteer programs that foster stewardship.
5. Promote community events, festivals, and cultural activities that celebrate Door County's heritage and encourage outdoor participation.
6. Promote the variety of recreational events, clubs, and competitions in which residents and visitors can partake throughout the year.

Goal 3: Collaboration, Equity, and Accessibility

Foster partnerships and ensure inclusive, safe, and equitable access to Door County’s parks, open spaces, and natural areas through a connected and sustainable recreation network.

Objectives:

1. *Collaborate with municipalities, state and federal agencies, and community organizations to develop and maintain a connected system of parks and trails.*
2. *Expand safe biking and pedestrian routes to serve neighborhoods, schools, recreational areas, and community centers.*
3. *Provide a safe system of multiuse trails that can be utilized in all seasons.*
4. *Improve physical access, wayfinding, and amenities to enhance accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, including ADA compliance.*
5. *Identify underserved populations and rural areas to ensure equitable distribution of recreation opportunities throughout the County.*
6. *Enhance and develop new water access sites to encourage water-based recreational activities.*
7. *Encourage volunteer and community involvement in park stewardship, restoration, and programming efforts.*



Chapter 3: Understanding the plan

A. Definitions

This section defines terms used throughout this Plan to describe programs, facilities, and recommended actions. Consistent terminology ensures clarity and understanding for implementation and future reference.



Acquisition: The process of obtaining land or property through purchase, donation, lease, or easement to protect, preserve, or provide public access.

Restoration: Activities that return natural areas or landscapes to a healthy, functioning ecological state, including reforestation, invasive species management, and habitat enhancement.

Management: Ongoing care and maintenance of parks, natural areas, and open spaces to ensure ecological integrity, public safety, and quality recreational experiences.

Public Access: Safe and equitable opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy streams, lakes, bays, parks, trails, and other natural areas.

Ecological Health: The condition of ecosystems that allows them to function naturally, support biodiversity, and maintain resilience against environmental stressors.

Historic Sites: Locations with cultural, historical, or archaeological significance that are protected and interpreted for public education and enjoyment.

Open Space: Lands preserved in a natural, scenic, or undeveloped state, including parks, trails, forests, wetlands, and other areas that provide ecological, recreational, or aesthetic benefits.

Education and Outreach: Programs, interpretive signage, workshops, and other efforts designed to increase understanding and awareness of natural and cultural resources.

Collaboration: Partnerships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, volunteers, and the community to enhance conservation, programming, and public access.

Equity and Accessibility: Ensuring facilities, programs, and lands are available and safe for all individuals, regardless of age, ability, or background.

Recommended Actions: Specific strategies, projects, or initiatives proposed by the plan to achieve its goals, implement policies, or enhance park and open space resources.

B. Classifications

This section defines the classification system used to describe parks, facilities, and other recreational or conservation features recommended by this Plan. Standardized classifications ensure consistency in planning, management, and reporting.

Park Types

Regional Park: Large areas providing a wide range of recreational opportunities, natural resource protection, and public access. Serves residents and visitors from across the County and surrounding regions.

Community Park: Medium-sized areas serving local neighborhoods, offering recreational facilities, trails, and natural areas for everyday use.

Neighborhood Park: Smaller areas intended for local residents, providing passive or active recreational opportunities close to home.

Natural Area / Open Space: Undeveloped lands preserved for ecological health, scenic value, wildlife habitat, and low-impact recreation.

Facility Types

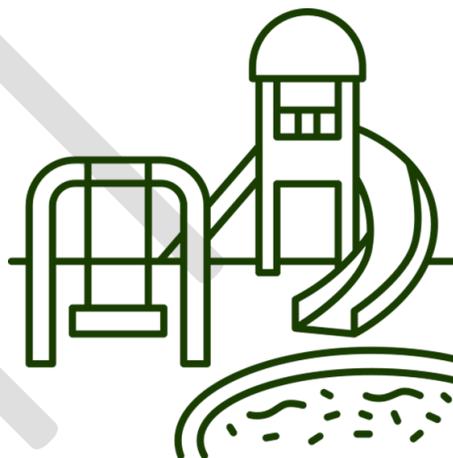
Trails: Designated walking, biking, or multi-use pathways connecting parks, neighborhoods, and natural areas.

Picnic / Shelter Areas: Spaces for public gatherings, including pavilions, benches, and tables.

Playgrounds / Recreation Facilities: Designed areas for active play or organized recreation.

Water Access Facilities: Boat launches, docks, fishing piers, or shoreline access points for lakes, streams, and bays.

Interpretive / Educational Features: Signage, kiosks, or structures designed to educate visitors about natural, cultural, or historical resources.



Recommended Actions Classifications

Acquisition / Land Protection: Purchase, donation, or easement to protect or expand public open space.

Restoration / Habitat Enhancement: Projects to improve ecological health, including reforestation, invasive species management, and wetland restoration.

Facility Development / Improvement: Construction, expansion, or rehabilitation of trails, shelters, restrooms, and other visitor facilities.

Programming / Outreach: Initiatives to educate and engage the public, including workshops, tours, or interpretive programs.

Partnership / Collaboration: Actions undertaken with agencies, organizations, or volunteers to achieve conservation and public access goals.

C. Description of Process

The planning process for the Open Space Plan began with a comprehensive assessment of existing parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational facilities, alongside an evaluation of ecological, historical, and cultural resources. Community input was gathered through meetings, a public input survey, and collaboration with local organizations and government agencies to identify priorities. Based on this engagement, goals and objectives were developed to guide land use, conservation, and facility improvements. Environmental, regulatory, and financial factors were considered to determine opportunities and constraints. The final recommendations were

reviewed by county leadership and committees, refined through public feedback, and formally adopted to support long-term stewardship, access, and recreation.

The process included six meetings with the County Highway and Facilities Committee, an online survey, a public information meeting, and numerous meetings with County staff. An outline of the planning process is included in Appendix A.

County staff met with the Highway and Facilities Committee several times throughout the process on January 8, 2025, May 14, 2025, October 8, 2025, November 5, 2025, January 14, 2026, *and March/April XX, 2026*.

A public information meeting was held on February 18, 2026. An overview of the plan purpose and recommendations was presented. The public also had opportunity to submit comments on the proposed plan.

The Highway and Facilities Committee recommended adoption of the plan to the County Board on *March/April XX, 2026*, and the County Board adopted the plan on *March/April XX, 2026*.

D. Amending the Plan

This Plan is intended to guide long-term management, preservation, and public access initiatives. However, changing conditions, new opportunities, or emerging community needs may require periodic updates or amendments.

The Door County Facilities and Parks Department reviews the plan every 5 years to assess progress, update inventories, and evaluate new opportunities, in addition to making minor updates annually to reflect current conditions. If amendments are proposed they are evaluated for consideration, public input is sought, and final approval is sought through the Highway and Facility Committee. Once approved they are documented in the living document and maintained as part of the counties official planning records.

E. Summary of Park and Outdoor Recreation Planning in Door County

Door County has had some form of a county-wide parks plan in place since 1964. Starting in 1974, the County regularly adopted five-year outdoor recreation plans every five years through the year 2011. After 2011, the County outdoor recreation plan was not updated until the most recent outdoor recreation plan, Door County Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025, which was adopted in May 2020. Summaries of the County's Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025 and other recent park and outdoor recreation plans are provided below.

Door County Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025

The Door County Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025 was developed by Door County staff. This plan built off of previous County outdoor recreation plans and outlined the County's strategy for managing county-owned parks, open spaces, and other outdoor recreation facilities. The objective of this plan was to encourage the development and maintenance of high-quality, sustainable parks and recreational amenities that meet the needs and demands of County residents and visitors, using the following guiding principles:

- *Resource Management*
- *Sustainability*
- *Land Use Balance*
- *Public/Private Relationships and Partnerships*

This plan included vision and mission statements, four overarching goals, and recommended projects and improvements. Projects and improvements identified in the County Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025 which have been completed since 2020 or are scheduled for completion are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: County Parks and Open Space Plan 2020-2025 Completed Projects

Ahnapee Trail	Installation of boot bushes at trailheads (2020).
Baileys Harbor Ridges County Park	Parking lot pavement repair/replacement (2025).
Cana Island County Park	Construction of Cana Island Interpretive Center (2020) Historic restoration of Keeper’s Quarters (2022)
Chaudoir’s Dock County Park	Installation of automated boat launch fee pay system (2020)
Ellison Bluff County Park	Roadway paving improvements (2021)
Forestville Dam County Park	Millpond drawdown project (2021) Boat Ramp Replacement (2021) ADA Boat Dock Replacement (2022) Paving of parking lot (2022) Acquired adjacent 0.6 acres (2022) Prairie planting/development 1.5 acres (2025)
Frank E. Murphy County Park	Boat ramp repairs (2020) Electrical upgrades (2024) Construction of phase 1 of Beach-to-Beach Trail, connecting park to the Village of Egg Harbor’s beach (2025)
George K. Pinney County Park	Breakwater maintenance/repair (2020 & 2023) Installation of waterless cleaning station (2020) Installation of automated boat launch fee pay system (2020)
Lily Bay County Park	Boat ramp approach repairs (2020 & 2023)
Meridian County Park	Replaced pit toilet with vault toilet (2021)
Plum Bottom County Park	Replaced pit toilet with vault toilet (2022)
Robert M Carmody County Park	Installation of waterless cleaning station (2020) Installation of ADA kayak launch (2021) Installation of automated boat launch fee pay system (2020)
Robert La Salle County Park	New pavilion/shelter (2020) Shoreline restoration (2022) Construction of lower path (2020)
Sugar Creek County Park	New pavilion/shelter (2024) Prairie planting development .6 acres (2025) Paving of parking area and roads (2022)
Tornado County Park	Paving of parking area (2022)



John Miles County Park Recreation Plan, Phase 1 (2017)

This report was developed by Door County staff and contains results from the first phase of planning for John Miles County Park, which focused on a vision for recreational aspects of the park. The plan includes a detailed site assessment of the park that inventories current conditions, plans and studies regarding recreation in general and in John Miles County Park, and demographics of residents and visitors. The plan also includes a summary of input regarding the park gathered through public meetings, an on-line survey, emails, and in-person discussions. This input was also organized into potential action items with timelines for completion dates. Projects and improvements identified in the park plan which have been completed since 2020 or are scheduled for completion include the following:

- *Midway and Grounds ADA accessibility and paving project (2020)*
- *Repaired lift pump station (2020)*
- *Installed new drain line to pond #1 (2020)*
- *Installed electrical campsite pedestal by south Grandstand (2021)*
- *Installed concrete concession stand area under the Grandstand (2021)*
- *Added 0.26 miles of walking path (2022)*
- *Installed new safety fencing by turns one and two of race track (2022)*
- *Installed gas service to maintenance garage (2023)*
- *Installed safety rails in the Grandstand (2023)*
- *Installed electric camp pedestals at soccer fields (2023)*
- *Repaired pavement at the north entrance, Alabama Street (2024)*
- *Constructed new accessible playground (2024)*
- *Constructed pavilion (2025)*
- *Installed water bottle fill stations at soccer fields (2025)*
- *Installed back gate entrance (2025)*



Management Plan for Horseshoe Bay Cave (2014)

The Management Plan for Horseshoe Bay Cave was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Door County Soil & Water Conservation Department, and Door County Parks Department as a uniform guide for the management and development of Horseshoe Bay Cave. Horseshoe Bay Cave is one of the longest known caves in Wisconsin and has been identified as a significant bat hibernaculum within the WDNR Natural Heritage Inventory. The only known entrance to Horseshoe Bay Cave is located at Frank E. Murphy County Park in the Town of Egg Harbor. This plan outlined objectives, opportunities, actions, procedures, policies, and recommendations for long-term management, protection, education, access/special activities, and future inventory, monitoring and preservation of the cave. This plan also served as the State-required White Nose Syndrome site-specific prevention plan.

General access to the cave is closed each year from October 1st through May 15th to prevent disturbance to hibernating bats. Access to the cave outside of this time period is limited and only allowed with an access permit obtained from the Door County Facilities & Parks Department. Access to the cave must meet the County or State's goals and objectives for cave/bat management and therefore, access proposals must demonstrate why and how the knowledge gained from the specific visit will advance the goal of cave protection and preservation. The Door County Facilities & Parks Department offers annual public cave tours during two days in the Summer each year.

Door County should continue to develop and implement a cave education and interpretive program and cave trustee program, as identified in the management plan, to increase public awareness and education about this special natural resource in the County. Door County, in cooperation with the cave trustee program, should also consider exploring offering additional cave tours as a tool to accomplish increased public awareness and education.

Door County Green Fund Multi-Modal Trails Task Force Report (2024)

The Door County Green Fund Multi-Modal Trails Task Force Report was completed in 2024 under the direction of the Door County Green Fund, a fund of the Door County Community Foundation, Inc. The goal of this report was to gather information on existing and planned trails from all Door County communities, and put it into a visual form as a guide for trail planning and development throughout Door County. The resulting report provides visual resources to help government, municipalities, individual stakeholder organizations, and residents see how individual projects can contribute to a larger network of connections. This report is incorporated by reference in the Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045, describe below.

Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 (2024)

The Door County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 was adopted by the Door County Board of Supervisors in November 2024 and became effective on January 1, 2025. This plan serves as a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of the County.

Volume I of the County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 describes and provides the issues, opportunities, and vision statements for each of the nine elements required to be contained and addressed in comprehensive and farmland preservation plans, which includes parks, open spaces, and recreational resources. Volume 1 also provides overall plan goals, policies, and action items. Chapter 10 of Volume 1 provides issues, opportunities, a summary of current conditions, and a vision statement for bicycle, pedestrian, and recreation resources in Door County. Chapter 11 of Volume I provides plan goals and associated objectives and policies, some of which are related to parks, open space, and recreational facilities in Door County. These goals and associated objectives and policies were referenced when developing goals and objectives of this County Parks & Open Space Plan in order to ensure consistency between both plans.

Volume II of the County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 provides demographic and other information required by the Wisconsin Statutes for comprehensive and farmland preservation plans, and serves as a resource for local municipalities and organizations. Chapter 12 of Volume II describes bicycle, pedestrian, and recreational resources in Door County. Furthermore, Chapter 12 states that the County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045 supersedes the 2014 Door County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Recreational Facilities Plan, and that the 2024 Green Fund Multi-Modal Trails Task Force Report map is now the official county map that will guide multi-modal trail planning efforts.

The County Parks and Open Space Plan is a component of and referenced in the County Comprehensive and Farmland Preservation Plan 2045.

Door County Trails, Inc., Strategic Master Plan (2026)

Established in 2024, Door County Trails, Inc., is a nonprofit organization with a mission to develop a safe bicycle and pedestrian trail network connecting Door County communities. As part of this mission, Door County Trails is in the process of developing a Strategic Master Plan to guide the future trail development across the Door County peninsula. This plan will create a unified, county-wide vision that connects people, communities, and places. A county-wide survey to gather community input and stakeholder meetings are currently underway. Door County should consider incorporating the Door County Trails Strategic Master Plan and its

recommendations into this Plan after its completion to ensure consistency and efficiency in trail development efforts throughout the County. Plan completion is anticipated in late Spring 2026.

F. Other Relevant Statewide and Regional Plans

Statewide outdoor recreation plans and analyses also need to be considered when identifying outdoor recreation trends and needs in Door County. The Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA), and their relationship to park and open space planning in Door County are described below.

Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2025-2030 (SCORP)

States are required to complete SCORPs every five years to be eligible to participate in the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program. SCORPs are intended to evaluate outdoor recreation trends and issues of statewide importance and set forth ideas about recreation's future role in the state. The Wisconsin SCORP 2025-2030 was adopted in January 2025 and will be in effect through 2030. This plan lays out the following three overarching goals and ten strategies for outdoor recreation in Wisconsin. Many of the goals, objectives, recommendations, and proposed improvement included in this Plan are consistent with and supported by the SCORP.

SCORP Goals:

- *Ensure that all Wisconsinites have equitable opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation, regardless of where they live or their ethnicity, gender, income, abilities, or age.*
- *Maintain and expand the sustainability of recreational opportunities in our state, ensuring that existing opportunities are well funded and have the support to grow and expand where needed.*
- *Grow the collaborative partnership approach across federal, state, regional and local agencies and private non-profit organizations and businesses to provide high-quality outdoor experiences for all Wisconsinites.*

SCORP Strategies:

1. *Provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation close to home.*
2. *Provide needed recreation facilities.*
3. *Improve affordability of participation.*
4. *Support, develop, and enhance mentoring programs.*
5. *Create more welcoming outdoor spaces.*
6. *Improve the distribution of information on recreation opportunities.*
7. *Expand and diversify funding sources.*
8. *Adapt to new environmental conditions both in terms of participation in outdoor activities as well as the management of recreation opportunities and facilities.*
9. *Lead by example on climate change mitigation.*
10. *Create an implementation plan that identifies desired outcomes as well as the partners to coordinate and advocate for outdoor recreation throughout Wisconsin*

Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA)

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) compiled a Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA) to ensure that the WDNR is providing high quality recreation experiences at places well-suited to support those uses and compile information on current recreation opportunities, existing gaps and needs, and WDNR-managed properties that may be well-suited to help address gaps and needs. This analysis was released in 2018 and updated in September 2020.

Due to varying recreation opportunities and demands across the State, the ROA divides the State into eight regions. Door County is part of the Upper Lake Michigan Coastal region. As a result of the ROA, the WDNR identified needs for recreational activities in the Upper Lake Michigan Coastal region as listed in Figure 2 below. Many of the goals, objectives, recommendations, and proposed improvement included in this Door County Parks and Open Space Plan are consistent with and supported by the ROA.

Figure 2: Upper Lake Michigan Coastal Region Recreational Activity Needs

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycling - bicycle touring/road riding or mountain biking/off-road biking • Bird or wildlife watching • Camping • Canoeing or kayaking • Fishing - lake, river or stream fishing from a watercraft, shore, pier, or wading • Hiking, walking, trail running or backpacking • Horseback riding • Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft) • Visiting a beach, beach walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATV/UTV riding • Cross country skiing • Dog walking • Four-wheel vehicle driving • Hunting - big game, small game or turkey • Nature photography • Off-highway motorcycle riding • Participating in nature-based education programs • Picnicking • Sailing, windsurfing, rowing, stand-up paddling • Snowmobiling • Swimming in lakes and rivers • Target shooting – archery or firearms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycling - fat tire/snow biking • Dog sledding/skijoring • Dog training • Dog trialing • Fishing - ice fishing • Gather mushrooms, berries, etc. • Geocaching • Horse cart driving • Hunting - migratory birds • Rock climbing • Scuba diving/snorkeling • Snowshoeing • Trapping • Whitewater rafting

Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

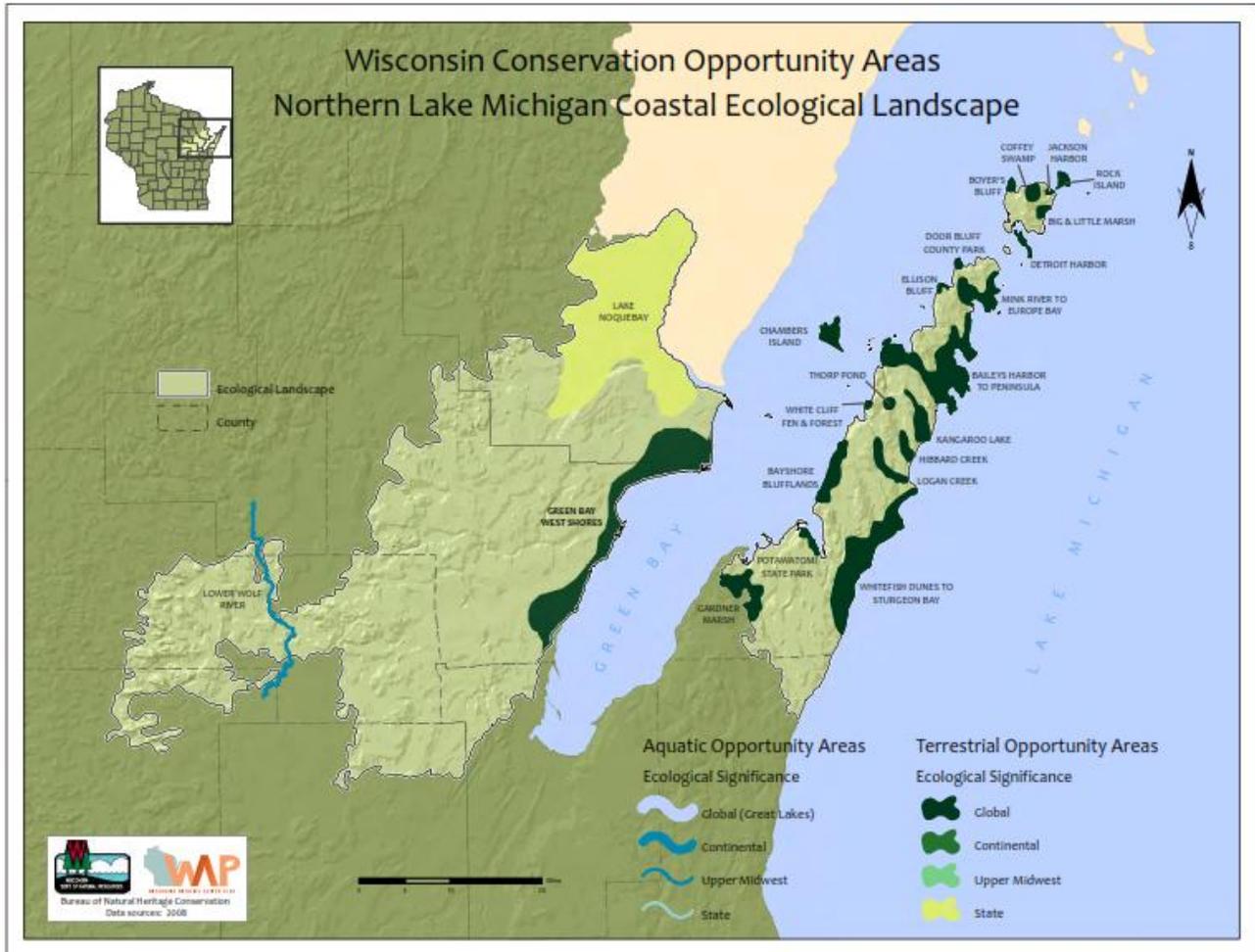
States are required to have an approved State Wildlife Action Plan to satisfy funding eligibility through the State Wildlife Grant Program, which is administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and is the only nationwide program to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. The Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan (WWAP) serves as the approved State Wildlife Action Plan and addresses the eight elements required by the USFWS. The WWAP 2015-2025 was approved by the USFWS in May 2016.

The WWAP identifies Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and natural communities associated with those species. Almost all SGCNs are classified as such, in part, because the area of habitat suitable for their survival has been decreased or it has been degraded or fragmented below their tolerance and ability to adapt and sustain viable populations. This plan also identifies aquatic and terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs), which are places that:

- Contain ecological features, natural communities, or SGCN habitat for which Wisconsin has a unique responsibility for protecting; or
- Contain habitat with dominant responsibility for conservation when viewed from the global, continental or upper Midwest perspectives.

COAs identified in Door County are shown on Maps 1 and 2 and listed in Figure 3 below. All but one are designated as COAs of global significance. Additionally, all five State parks within Door County and several County parks are located within one of the COAs. Door County should carefully consider SGCNs and COAs identified in the WWAP when proposing development and management activities within County parks.

Map 1: Conservation Opportunity Areas – Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape



Map 2: Conservation Opportunity Areas – Central Lake Michigan Coastal Ecological Landscape

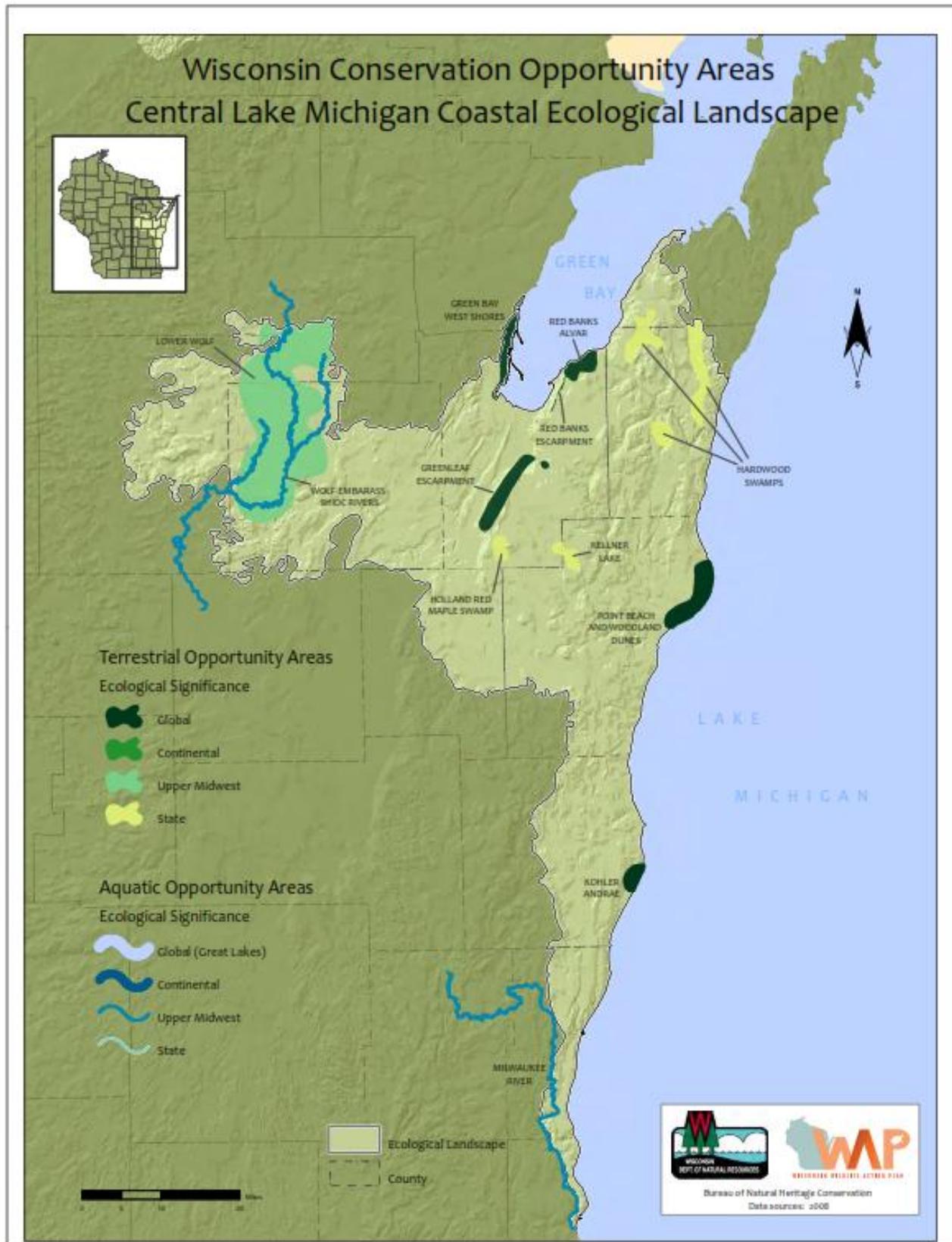


Figure 3: Conservation Opportunity Areas (COA) in Door County

COA Name	Location	COA Type	Ecological Significance
Lake Michigan/Green Bay	County-wide coastal	Lake	Global
Baileys Harbor to Peninsula	Baileys Harbor, Ephraim, Gibraltar, Liberty Grove	Terrestrial	Global
Bayshore Blufflands	Egg Harbor (town), Sevastopol	Terrestrial	Global
Big & Little Marsh	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Boyer's Bluff	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Chambers Island	Gibraltar	Terrestrial	Global
Coffey Swamp	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Detroit Harbor	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Door Bluff County Park	Liberty Grove	Terrestrial	Global
Ellison Bluff	Liberty Grove	Terrestrial	Global
Gardner Marsh	Brussels, Gardner	Terrestrial	Global
Hardwood Swamps	Brussels, Forestville, Union	Terrestrial	State
Hibbard Creek	Baileys Harbor, Jacksonport	Terrestrial	Global
Jackson Harbor	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Kangaroo Lake	Baileys Harbor, Gibraltar, Jacksonport	Terrestrial	Global
Logan Creek	Jacksonport	Terrestrial	Global
Mink River to Europe Bay	Liberty Grove	Terrestrial	Global
Potawatomi State Park	Nasewaupee, Sturgeon Bay (city)	Terrestrial	Global
Rock Island	Washington	Terrestrial	Global
Thorp Pond	Egg Harbor, Gibraltar	Terrestrial	Global
White Cliff Fen & Forest	Egg Harbor (town & village), Gibraltar	Terrestrial	Global
Whitefish Dunes to Sturgeon Bay	Clay Banks, Sevastopol, Sturgeon Bay (town & city)	Terrestrial	Global

G. 2025 Door County Public Input Survey

In order to gather public opinion on key issues and opportunities relating to parks and outdoor recreation in Door County, an online public input survey was created. The survey was made available to the public on July 14, 2025, and was promoted through the County’s website and two press releases. The survey was available online and closed on August 1, 2025. A total of 278 responses were received. General findings are summarized below. See Appendix B for complete survey results.

Door County Parks Usage. The top three activities that survey respondents and members of their household like to do at County parks are:

1. Passive activities such as walking/hiking, relaxing, picnicking, playing, sketching/painting, sight-seeing, nature study, photography, etc.
2. Non-motorized water-based activities such as beach use, swimming, paddling (canoes, kayaks, paddle boards, etc.), surfing, dock/ice fishing, etc.
3. Non-motorized Ahnapee Trail activities such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain/fat biking, hiking/running, horseback riding, etc.

Door County Parks Frequency of Usage.

- Over 70% of survey respondents use Cave Point, Frank E. Murphy, and George K. Pinney County Parks, and the Ahnapee State Trail at least once per year. These same County parks and recreational trail are the most frequently used parks with over 52% of those that use these parks visiting the park three or more times per year
- Cave Point County Park is the most used park with over 85% of survey respondents using this park at least once per year. Of those that use that use this park at least once per year, almost 60% use this park three or more times per year.
- Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary and Plum Bottom County Parks are the least used parks.
- Less than 9% of survey respondents use Percy Johnson Memorial, Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary, Tornado Memorial, Plum Bottom, and Meridian County Parks more than two times per year.

Door County Park Amenities. The top three issues or projects related to amenities within Door County Parks that survey respondents would like addressed in the next five years are:

1. Develop additional pathways/natural trails
2. Develop/improve playground facilities
3. Develop/improve restroom facilities

Signage, Roads, and Parking for/within Door County Parks. The top three issues or projects related to signage, roads, and parking for Door County Parks that survey respondents would like addressed in the next five years are:

1. Develop/improve trailer parking
2. Improve internal park roads
3. Develop/improve internal directional signage within parks

Environmental Preservation & Quality within Door County Parks. The top three issues or projects related to environmental preservation and quality within Door County Parks that survey respondents would like addressed in the next five years are:

1. Improve quality of beaches
2. Manage invasive species
3. Reduce shoreline erosion

Planning for Trails for Walking, Biking, and Other Non-Motorized Uses. The following areas of collaboration are identified by survey respondents as the most important areas of collaboration between different trail-planning groups (i.e., Door County Parks, DNR, municipalities, non-profits, etc.) when planning for trails in the County:

1. Increase funding opportunities (i.e., grants, donations, etc.)
2. Close gaps and increase trail connectivity throughout the County
3. Connect County parks with other parks, trails, and historical cultural sites

Door County Parks Annual Entrance Fee. Over 50% of survey respondents stated they do not support the implementation of an annual entrance fee to Door County parks. Of the survey respondents which support an annual entrance fee, the majority considered \$5-\$10 a reasonable annual entrance fee.

Age of Survey Respondents. Over 56% of survey respondents were 55 years of age or older and less than 12% of survey respondents were younger than 35 years old.

Residency or Lodging Location Preference of Survey Respondent. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (over 34%) are either City of Sturgeon Bay residents or, if not County residents, prefer to rent/camp/lodge in the City of Sturgeon Bay.

Chapter 4: Description of Planning Region, and Proposed Park and Recreation Improvements

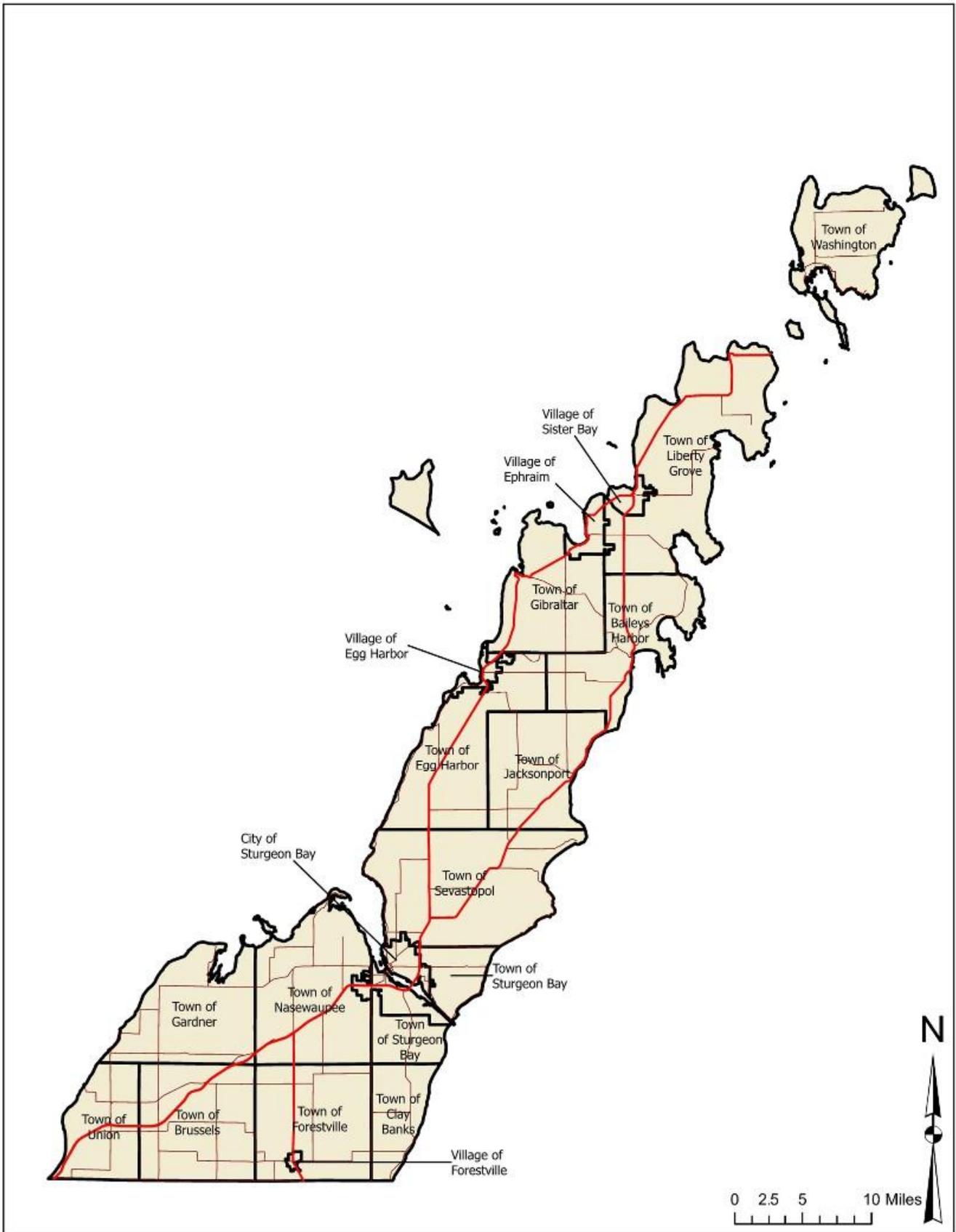
A. Description of the Planning Region

Door County is part of a narrow peninsula located in northeastern Wisconsin. The County lies between the waters of Green Bay to the west, and Lake Michigan to the east and north. Its entire southern border is adjacent to Kewaunee County. Door County is over 68 miles in length from its southwestern corner to the northern tip of Rock Island. The County seat is the City of Sturgeon Bay, and is located approximately 10 miles from the County's southern border, 45 miles from the City of Green Bay, 157 miles from Milwaukee, 185 miles from Madison, and 246 miles from Chicago.

Door County encompasses approximately 488 square miles of land and 300 miles of coastal shoreline – one of the highest numbers of miles of coastal shoreline of any county in the United States. The County is comprised of the following 19 local municipalities and shown on Map 3, Door County Municipalities:

- City of Sturgeon Bay
- Villages of Egg Harbor, Ephraim, Forestville, and Sister Bay
- Towns of Baileys Harbor, Brussels, Clay Banks, Egg Harbor, Forestville, Gardner, Gibraltar, Jacksonport, Liberty Grove, Nasewaupsee, Sevastopol, Sturgeon Bay, Union, and Washington

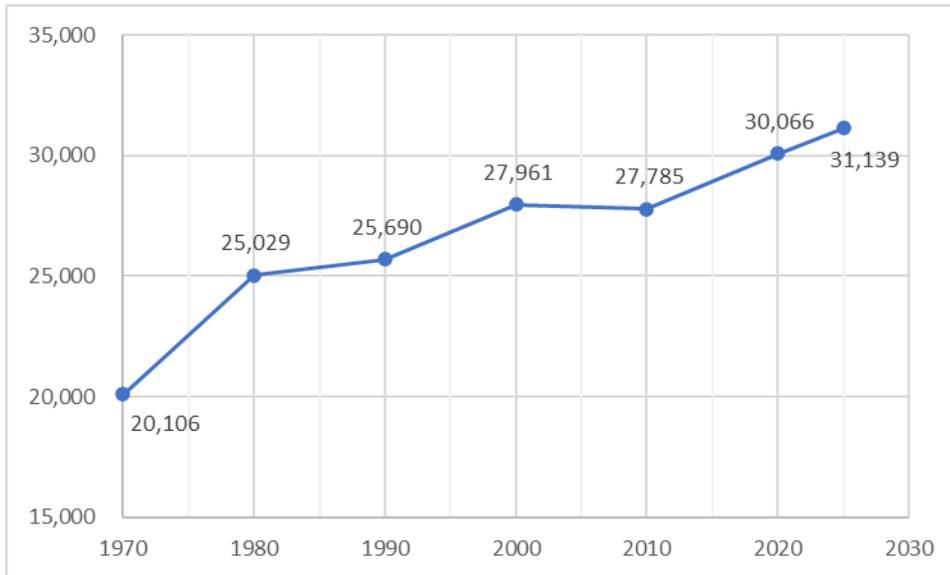
Map 3: Door County Municipalities



Population Trends and Projections

There is a direct relationship between population trends and projections, and park and recreation facility needs. As seen in Figure 4, Door County’s population has seen relatively steady population growth over the last 50 years, with a 55% increase in population since 1970. The highest growth period was between 1970 and 1980 when the County’s population grew by over 24%. On the contrary, the County experienced a slight population decline of 0.6% between 2000 and 2010.

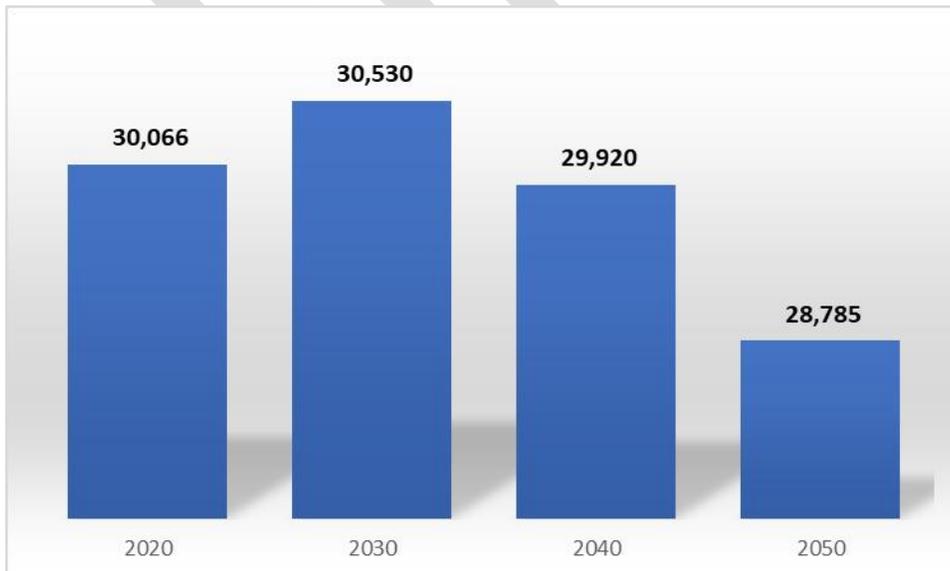
Figure 4: Population (1970-2025)



Sources: Decennial Census (1970-2020), U.S. Census Bureau; County Population Estimates (2025), Wisconsin Demographics Services Center

Figure 5 shows population projections for Door County through the year 2050, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographics Services Center. Door County’s population is projected to increase slightly by 2030, followed by two consecutive decades of projected population loss. The County’s population is projected to decrease 4.3% by 2050, when compared to the County’s 2020 population.

Figure 5: Population Projections

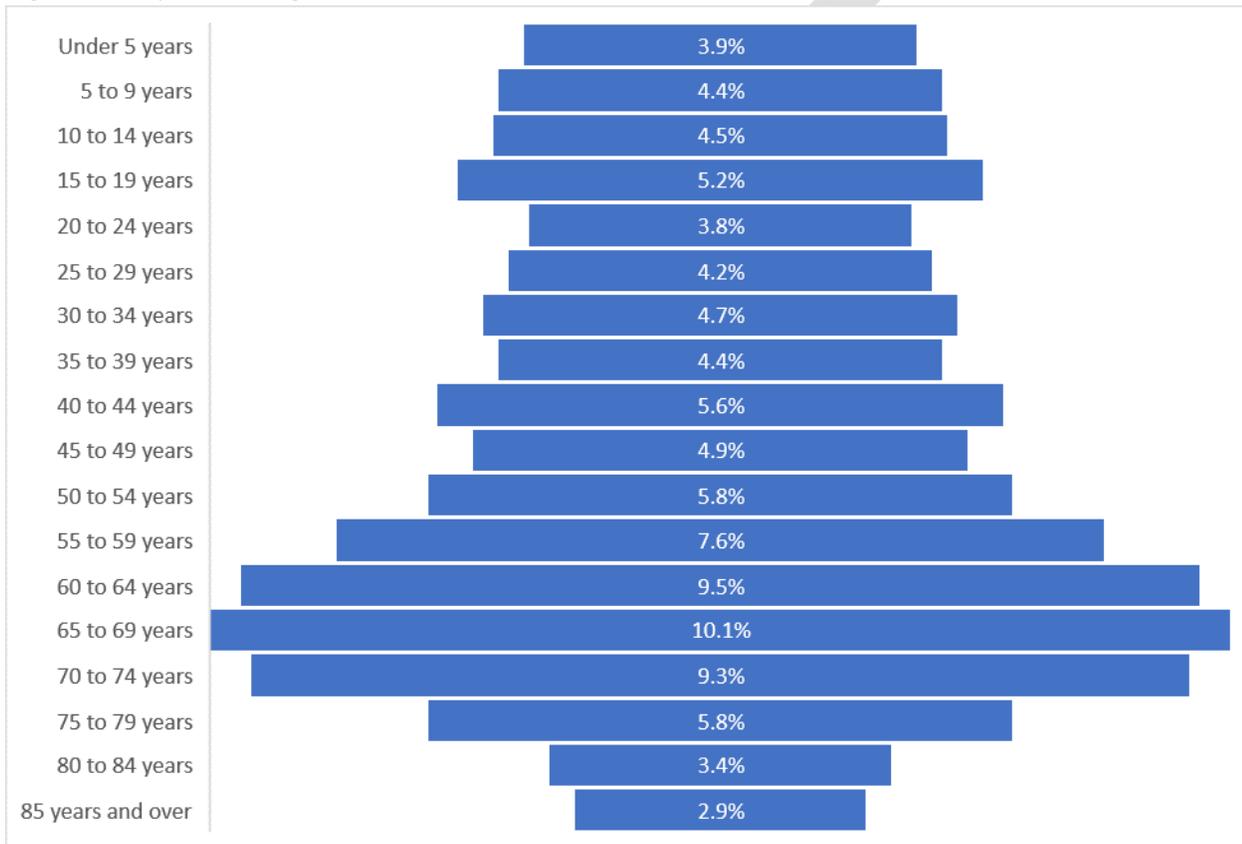


Sources: Decennial Census (2020), U.S. Census Bureau; County Population Projections (2024), Wisconsin Demographics Services Center

Door County’s age distribution is shown in Figure 6, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Door County’s population is an aging population with almost 32% being of retirement age (65 years or older). Over 29% of the County’s population is of prime working age (25-54 years) and slightly under 22% is younger than 25 years old.

When comparing the County’s age distribution to the State as a whole, the share of people in Door County which are of retirement age is almost twice that of the State, with only 18% of the State’s population being 65 years of age or older. Additionally, the percentage of people in the County which are of prime working age and younger are significantly less than that of the State, with 37% of the State’s population being of prime working age and almost 31% being younger than 25 years old.

Figure 6: Population Age



Source: 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, U.S. Census Bureau

Race:

According to the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the largest percentage of County residents (93.3%) were “White”. The second largest group was “two or more races” (4%), followed by “some other race” (1%), “American Indian or Alaska Native” (0.8%), “Black or African American” (0.7%), and “Asian” (0.3%).

Employment and Economy:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), an estimated 17,022 people were employed in Door County in August 2025, which is higher than total employment in August 2020 (16,045) and August 2015 (16,391). The estimated unemployment rate in Door County was 2.6% in August 2025, which is the same as the State’s August 2025 unemployment rate and significantly lower than the County’s unemployment rates in August 2020 (4.8%) and August 2015 (4.1%).

Leisure and hospitality continues to be the largest industry sector in Door County, employing an average of over 3,200 people on a monthly basis in 2024. This is due to the abundance of tourism in the County, which further emphasizes the importance of planning for and developing quality parks and recreation facilities for residents, employees, and visitors alike. Other primary industries within the County include trade, transportation and utilities, education and health services, and manufacturing, all employing over 2,000 people on a monthly basis in 2024. Major employers within the County include Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding, Door County Medical Center, and Door County government.

B. Physical Characteristics of the Region

The natural features of Door County define its scenic beauty, ecological diversity, and recreational value. Understanding these characteristics helps guide the preservation and management of open spaces, natural areas, and park resources.

Topography

Door County occupies the northernmost portion of the Door Peninsula, a narrow landform extending between Lake Michigan on the east and Green Bay on the west. The County covers approximately 482 square miles of land area and features gently rolling terrain shaped by glacial activity. The most distinctive topographic feature is the Niagara Escarpment—a dolostone ridge that runs the length of the peninsula and is part of one of North America’s most important geological formations.

The Niagara Escarpment is globally significant because it represents a continuous bedrock feature stretching over 650 miles from New York through Ontario, Michigan, and Wisconsin. It is recognized as a **UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve** in Ontario, highlighting its ecological and geological importance. In Door County, this escarpment rises sharply 60 to 200 feet above the surrounding landscape, creating dramatic cliffs and bluffs that overlook Green Bay and Lake Michigan. These cliffs harbor ancient white cedar forests, rare alvar ecosystems, and globally rare species such as the **Hine’s emerald dragonfly** and **dwarf lake iris**, making the area a biodiversity hotspot.

Elevations in Door County generally range from about 580 feet above sea level along the shoreline to approximately 880 feet in the interior uplands. These unique landforms—ridges, swales, dunes, and bluffs—are shaped by the escarpment and glacial processes, contributing to Door County’s scenic character and influencing patterns of vegetation, drainage, and land use. The escarpment’s microclimates and karst features provide critical habitat for species found nowhere else, reinforcing its global conservation value.



Water Resources

Water resources define much of Door County's identity. Bordered by Lake Michigan and Green Bay, the County has over 300 miles of shoreline, more than any other county in Wisconsin. Numerous bays, inlets, and harbors provide opportunities for recreation, boating, and habitat protection. Inland, the County contains a variety of streams, wetlands, ponds, and small inland lakes, many of which are connected to the peninsula's groundwater system. Wetlands are especially important for water filtration, wildlife habitat, and stormwater retention. The shallow and fractured bedrock characteristic of Door County allows for rapid groundwater recharge but also makes the region highly vulnerable to contamination. Protecting surface and groundwater quality remains a key priority for maintaining both environmental health and recreational value.



Climate

Door County experiences a humid continental climate moderated by the surrounding waters of Lake Michigan and Green Bay. This proximity tempers temperature extremes, leading to cooler summers and milder winters compared to inland areas. The average annual temperature is approximately 45°F, with an average annual precipitation of 33–34 inches and an average annual snowfall of about 48 inches. The growing season averages 140–160 days, supporting diverse plant communities and agricultural uses. Recent climate trends indicate slightly warmer annual temperatures, more frequent heavy precipitation events, and fluctuating lake levels. These changes may impact shoreline stability, wetland hydrology, and vegetation composition—factors that must be considered in long-term open space management.

Soils

Door County's soils are strongly influenced by its glacial history and dolostone bedrock. In many areas, soils are thin and rocky, with limited depth to bedrock. These shallow soils, particularly prevalent in northern and coastal areas, restrict development potential but contribute to the area's distinctive natural character. The dominant soil associations include the Summerville–Omena–Solona complex and the Longrie–Emmet–Kolberg series, typically well-drained to moderately well-drained loams and silt loams. The fractured dolostone beneath the surface produces sinkholes, caves, and disappearing streams, influencing drainage and groundwater movement. Soil conservation and careful land-use management are critical in maintaining water quality and preventing erosion in sensitive areas.

Flora and Fauna

Door County supports an exceptionally rich diversity of plant and animal life due to its varied topography, microclimates, and proximity to two large water bodies. The County's ecosystems include mixed hardwood forests, conifer stands, wetlands, dune complexes, and alvar habitats found along the Niagara Escarpment. Dominant forest species include sugar maple, basswood, beech, white cedar, red oak, and hemlock. Wetlands support cattails, sedges, tamarack, and black ash, while rare plant communities such as limestone cliff and boreal forest occur in protected areas like Rock Island and Newport State Parks. Common wildlife includes white-tailed deer, red fox, coyote, raccoon, and various small mammals. Door County is also an important area

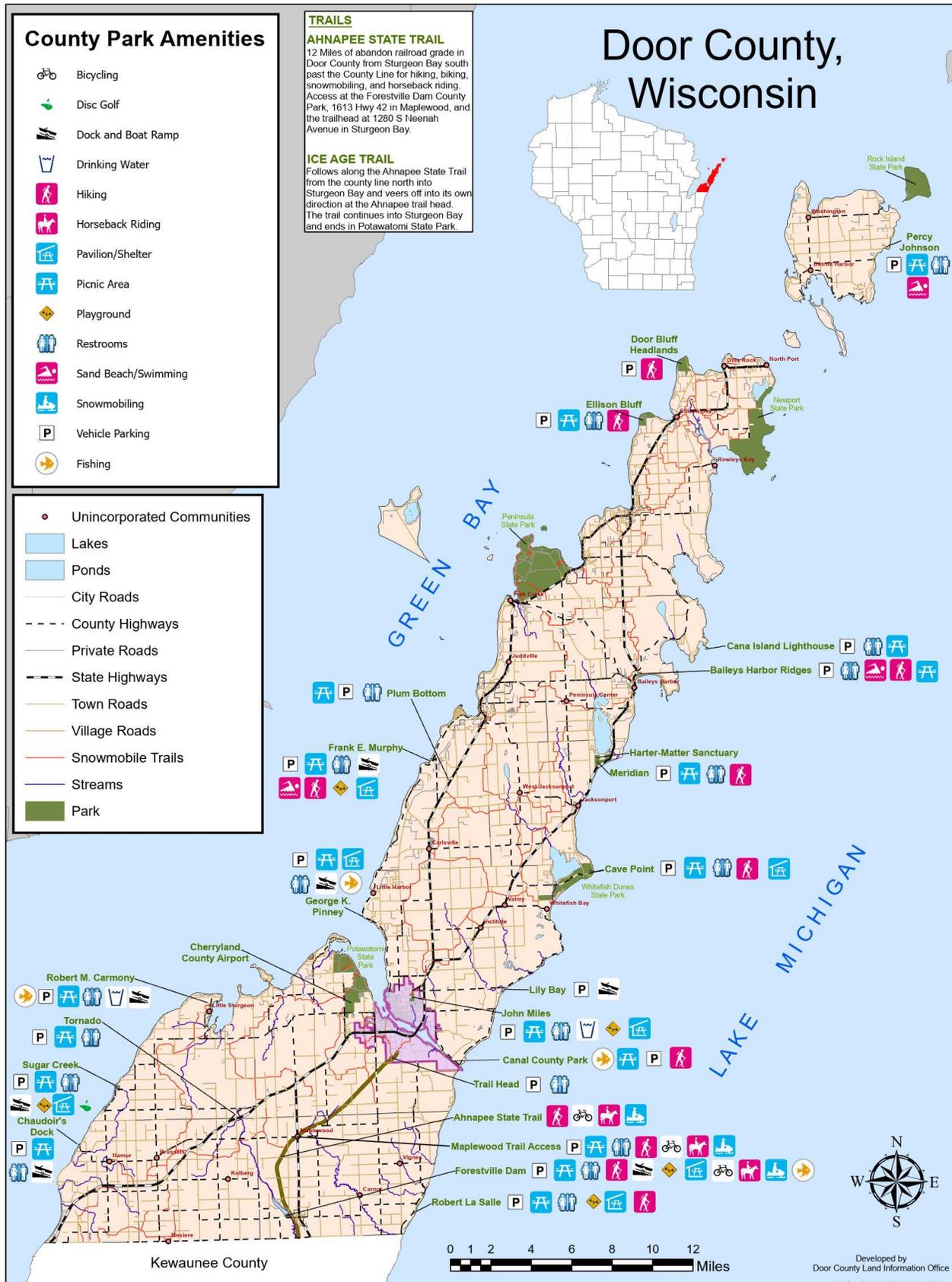
for migratory birds, including waterfowl and neotropical songbirds. The surrounding waters support fish species such as smallmouth bass, walleye, northern pike, trout, and salmon. Maintaining healthy habitats and ecological corridors across public and private lands is essential to sustaining Door County’s biodiversity and scenic integrity.



C. Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory

Door County’s 21 county-managed parks and Trail system provide over 1,000 acres of recreational space, offering a balanced mix of developed and undeveloped areas that ensure public enjoyment while protecting ecological integrity, scenic vistas, and cultural heritage. See Map 4, County Parks.

Map 4: County Parks



Developed County Parks

Figure 7 describes existing developed County parks, including access, use, and recreational facility types.

Figure 7: Developed County Parks

Baileys Harbor Ridges		2301 Ridges Road, Baileys Harbor
	<p>Park Type/Size: Regional Park, 40 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Beach parking lot on 2301 Ridges Rd. Baileys Harbor</p> <p>Current Use: Swimming beach, picnic, kite surfing, parking</p> <p>Facility Types: Water access, picnic areas, trails</p>	
Cana Island Lighthouse		8800E Cana Island Road, Baileys Harbor
	<p>Park Type/ Size: Regional Park, 12.1 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking lot on East Cana Island Road</p> <p>Current Use: Historic interpretive programs, shoreline access Benches, hiking, scuba diving from shore, kayaking, after hours photography</p> <p>Facility Types: Water Access, picnic areas, Interpretive features, restrooms, parking</p>	
Canal		2501 Canal Road, Sturgeon Bay
	<p>Park Type/Size: Regional Park, 79.4 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: options for parking along Canal Rd, and parking at the end of barge Rd</p> <p>Current Use: Passive recreation, fishing, hiking, maritime observation, habitat preservation</p> <p>Facility Types: Trails, Picnic areas, Water access, Interpretive features</p>	
Cave Point		5360 Schauer Road, Jacksonport
	<p>Park Type/Size: Regional Park, 19.3 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking lot on 5360 Schauer Road</p> <p>Current Use: Hiking trails, scenic overlooks, photography, nature observation, after hours photography, bow hunting</p> <p>Facility Types: Trails, Picnic areas, Shelter, interpretive features</p>	
Chadoir's Dock		10865 County Highway N, Union
	<p>Park Type/Size: Community Park, 4.7 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking lot on 10865 CTY Rd N, Union</p> <p>Current Use: Harbor of refuge, fishing, boat launch</p> <p>Facility Types: Water access, picnic areas</p>	
Frank E. Murphy		7119 Horseshoe Bay Road, Egg Harbor
	<p>Park type/Size: Regional Park, 34 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Main entrance on 7119 Bayshore Dr, Egg Harbor</p> <p>Current Use: Volleyball, swimming, boating, grilling, active play, bow hunting</p> <p>Facility Types: Shelter/picnic area, water access, playground/ recreation facility, trails, interpretive features, Horseshoe Bay Cave</p>	

Figure 7: Developed County Parks (continued)

Forestville Dam		479 Mill Road, Forestville
	<p>Park type/Size: Regional Park, 72 acres Public Access Points: Parking lot on 479 Mill Rd, Forestville Current Use: Fishing, boating, river-based recreation, trail access, hunting Facility Types: Picnic area /shelter, water access, playground, trails</p>	
George K. Pinney		4879 Bay Shore Drive, Sturgeon Bay
	<p>Park type/Size: Community Park, 11.7 acres Public Access Points: Parking lot on 4879 Bayshore Dr. Sturgeon Bay Current Use: Harbor of refuge, fishing, boating, picnic areas, after hours photography Facility Types: Picnic area/ shelter, water access, interpretive features</p>	
John Miles		916 N 14th Avenue, Sturgeon Bay
	<p>Park type/Size: Regional Park, 54.7 acres Public Access Points: Main entrance on 916 N 14th Ave, Sturgeon Bay Current Use: Soccer fields, horse arena, playgrounds, pavilion, oval dirt track with grandstands, Music Pavilion Facilities types: Picnic area/shelter, multipurpose building rental, playground, recreation</p>	
Plum Bottom		6725 State Highway 42, Egg Harbor
	<p>Park type/Size: Neighborhood Park, 5 acres Public Access Points: Parking off 6725 WI-42, Egg Harbor Current Use: Trails, picnic areas Facility types: picnic area, interpretive features</p>	
Sugar Creek		2349 County Highway N, Gardner
	<p>Park type/Size: Regional Park, 35.6 acres Public Access Points: Parking off 2349 CTY Rd N, Gardner Current Use: Trails, picnic areas, disc golf course, bow hunting eastern 15 acres Facility types: Picnic area/Shelter, water access, trails, recreation facilities</p>	
Lily Bay		E4449 County Highway T, Sturgeon Bay
	<p>Park type/ Size: Neighborhood Park, 0.5 acres Public Access Points: Parking on E4449 CTY Rd T, Town of Sturgeon Bay Current use: Natural shoreline, wetlands, parking, fair weather small vessel boat access, photography Facility types: Water access, interpretive features</p>	
Maplewood Trailhead		1613 State Highway 42, Maplewood
	<p>Park type/ Size: Neighborhood Park, 0.3 acres Public Access Points: 1613 WI-42, Maplewood Current use: Wayside and trailhead, bicycle maintenance Facility types: Trails, picnic area</p>	

Figure 7: Developed County Parks (continued)

Robert LaSalle		404 Lower Lasalle Road / 408 County Highway U, Algoma
	<p>Park type/ Size: Community Park, 29.3 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking on 404 Lower Lasalle Rd & 408 CTH U, Algoma</p> <p>Current use: Historic site, with natural prairie, forest, access to Lake Michigan, bow hunting</p> <p>Facility types: Picnic areas/ Shelter, playground, interpretive features, trails, water access</p>	
Robert M. Carmody		3570 County Highway CC, Gardner
	<p>Park type/ Size: Community Park, 10.4 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Boat ramp and parking on 3570 CTY Rd CC, Gardner</p> <p>Current use: Public access, Harbor of refuge, boat ramps, kayak launch, picnic areas</p> <p>Facility types: Water access, picnic facilities</p>	

Undeveloped County Parks

Figure 8 describes existing undeveloped County parks, including access, use, and recreational facility types.

Figure 8: Undeveloped County Parks

Door Bluff Headlands		12900 Door Bluff Park Road, Gills Rock
	<p>Park type/ Size: Natural Area, 252.6 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking lot off 12900 Door Bluff Park Rd, Gills Rock</p> <p>Current Use: Bluff-top hiking, scenic overlooks, hunting</p> <p>Facility type: Trails, Interpretive features</p>	
Ellison Bluff		12050 Ellison Bluff Road, Liberty Grove
	<p>Park type/ Size: Natural Area, 194.3 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Parking on 12050 Ellison Bluff Rd, Liberty Grove</p> <p>Current Use: Hiking trails, nature observation, hunting</p> <p>Facility types: Trail, Interpretive features</p>	
Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary		6799 State Highway 57, Jacksonport
	<p>Park type/ Size: Natural Area, 39.8 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Access by hiking through Meridian County Park at 6799 STH 57</p> <p>Current Use: Wildlife observation, preserved habitats and wetlands</p> <p>Facility types: Natural area</p>	
Meridian		6799 State Highway 57, Jacksonport
	<p>Park type/ Size: Natural Area, 142.3 acres</p> <p>Public Access Points: Limited access at 6799 STH 57</p> <p>Current Use: State Natural Area, passive recreation, habitat protection, hunting</p> <p>Facility types: Trails, Interpretive features</p>	

Figure 8: Undeveloped County Parks (continued)

Percy Johnson Memorial 640 Lakeview Road, Washington Island	
	<p>Park type/ Size: Neighborhood Park, 4.9 acres Public Access Points: Parking off 640 Lakeview Rd, Washington Island Current Use: Minimal infrastructure, scenic enjoyment Facility types: Water access, picnic area, interpretive features</p>
Tornado Memorial 1961 County Highway DK, Gardner	
	<p>Park type/ Size: Neighborhood Park, 2.6 acres Public Access Points: Parking on 1961 CTY DK, Town of Gardner Current Use: Picnic area, historic resources Facility types: Picnic areas, interpretive features</p>

County Trails

Ahnapee State Trail

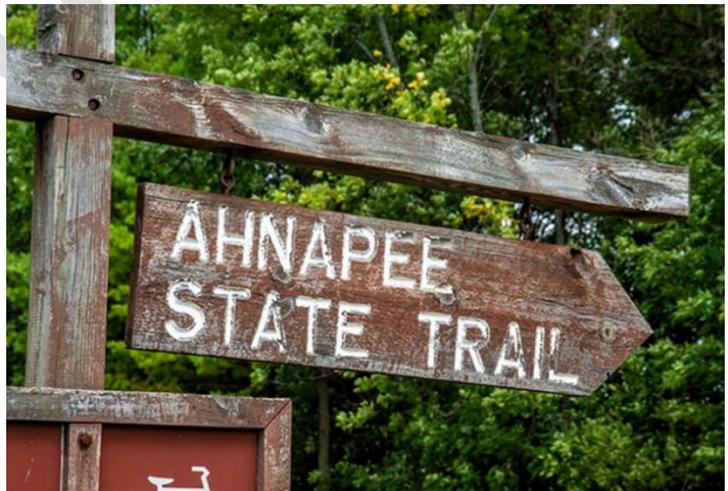


The Ahnapee State Trail is a 48-mile multi-use recreational trail developed along a former railroad corridor. It spans Door and Kewaunee Counties and is cooperatively managed by both counties in partnership with the State of Wisconsin.

Door County's 12-mile segment begins in the City of Sturgeon Bay, continues through the Town of Maplewood, and passes through the Village of Forestville before entering Kewaunee County. This scenic trail is open to pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians from April 15 to November 15, and is also available for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing during the winter months. Trailheads with restroom facilities are located at:

- Sturgeon Bay Trailhead
1820 Neenah St., Sturgeon Bay
- Maplewood Trailhead
1613 STH 42, Maplewood
- Forestville Dam County Park
479 Mill Rd., Forestville

These access points provide convenient entry and amenities for year-round trail users.



Ice Age National Scenic Trail



The Ice Age Trail is a nationally and state-designated scenic trail that begins (or ends) in Door County, marking its eastern terminus. Portions of the Ice Age Trail overlap with the Ahnapee State Trail, incorporating the Sturgeon Bay and Forestville Segments. This trail tells the story of the Ice Age and continental glaciation, guiding hikers along a scenic footpath shaped by ancient geological forces. It offers both educational and recreational opportunities, making it a unique feature of Door County’s natural landscape.

Door County Snowmobile Trail System



During the winter months, Door County offers over 250 miles of designated snowmobile trails, providing scenic and well-maintained routes throughout the region. The exact trail locations may vary annually due to new developments or land use changes. For the most current trail maps and conditions, please contact the Door County Parks Department or reach out to one of the local snowmobile clubs responsible for maintaining the trails:

- Door Central Snow Goers
- Door Pioneer Trailblazers
- Red River Riders
- Southern Door Snow Travelers
- Sturgeon Bay Door Drifters
- Top O’ The Thumb
- Villagers

These clubs play a vital role in grooming and maintaining the trail system, ensuring safe and enjoyable riding experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Door County Trails, Inc.

Door County Trails, Inc., is a nonprofit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors established in 2024. This organization emerged from a series of collaborative, community-focused efforts aimed at connecting communities across the County through a comprehensive trail network. Their mission is to develop a safe bicycle and pedestrian trail network connecting Door County communities. Door County Trails works to achieve this mission by collaborating with and assisting communities with trail planning, development, and professional assistance for trail projects linking towns, villages, the city, and neighborhoods throughout the County for everyday transportation and recreation purposes. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this Plan, Door County Trails is currently in the process of developing a Strategic Master Plan to guide the future trail development throughout the County, and Door County should consider incorporating the Strategic Master Plan and its recommendations into this Plan after its completion to ensure consistency and efficiency in trail development efforts throughout the County.

D. Proposed Improvements Plan

Figure 9 is the proposed improvements plan for County parks and trails., including access, use, and recreational facility types. This is a list of potential/anticipated projects and approval of this Plan does not obligate the County to complete the specified projects within the specified timeframe (or at all).

Figure 9: Proposed Improvements Plan

Project Name	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Funds
Ahnapee State Trail (trailhead)						
Trail resurfacing (if needed)		\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	County/Grant
Culvert Clean Out	\$7,500					County /Grant/private
Culvert Replacement	\$9,200					County/Grant/private
Trail Maintenance brushing and mowing	\$12,000					County/Grant/private
Trailhead lot improvement/signage						County/Grant/private
Baileys Harbor Ridges						
Stripe Parking lot	\$5,000				\$5,000	County
Cave Point						
Restripe parking lot	\$5,000					County
Park pass collection system		\$35,000				County
Cana Island Lighthouse						
Whitewash tower					\$125,000	County/private
Canal Park						
Rebuild timber steps and benches/Signage	\$2,500					Grant/private
Repair Benches	\$2,500					Grant/private
Replace historic signage	\$4,000					Grant/private
Door Bluff Headlands						
Resurfacing road			\$20,000			County
Ellison Bluff						
Trail development in authorized northeastern area				\$50,000		County/ Grant/private
Forestville Dam						
Install boat launch lighting(electrical)		\$10,000				County
Frank E. Murphy						
Mobi-Mats and dispenser (accessibility)	\$50,000					County/grant/private
Volleyball court repair and replacement	\$21,000					County/grant/private
Seal parking lot and restripe	\$10,000					County
Beach to Beach trail interpretive signage		\$15,000				County/Grant/Private
Cave historical study					\$50,000	County/Grant/Private
Cave Interpretive structure					\$250,000	County/Grant/Private
George K. Pinney						
Break wall inspection/survey		\$7,500				County/grant
Anticipated repairs to the break wall			\$20,000			County/grant
John Miles						
Acquire additional property					\$450,000	County/grant/private
Build indoor sports complex					\$23,500,000	County/grant/private
Replace Pit Row fencing	\$10,000	\$10,000				County/private
Lily Bay						
Replace existing dock structure(accessibility)		\$80,000				County/grant
Meridian						
Replace Kiosk	\$4,500					County
Plum Bottom						
Replace pavilion	\$15,000					County/private
Robert M. Carmody						
Wave attenuator resurfacing and repair		\$35,000				County/grant
Restripe parking lot	\$5,000					County
Sugar Creek						
Design and build Playground	\$48,000					Grant/private
Tornado Memorial						
Vault toilet replacement				\$130,000		County

E. Funding Programs

Funding for recreational development can come from a number of sources, both public and private. Most funding for this type of development comes from local, funding sources.

Local Funding Sources

Local funding comes from a number of sources including the Special Revenue Accounts, allocations from the local tax base, and donations and grants from individuals and organizations, including but not limited to the following organizations:

- Friends of the Door County Park System, Inc.
- Door County Community Foundation, Inc.
- Destination Door County
- Raibrook Foundation, Inc.
- Door County Trails, Inc.



Non-Local Funding Sources

Non-local funding can come from a number of sources in the form of a loans, grants, and loan guarantees. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD) are primary sources of non-local funding and provide competitive funding opportunities relating to outdoor recreation.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Programs

County Conservation Aids. The County Conservation Aids provide funds to counties to carry out fish or wildlife management projects that enhance fish and wildlife habitat or fishing and hunting opportunities.



Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration. The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration provides funding for sport fish restoration and access, including the construction of boat landings and fishing piers.

Recreational Boating Facilities Program (RBF). The Recreational Boating Facilities program is a quarterly grant program which provides funds to local units of government and qualified lake associations for the construction of capital improvements to provide safe recreational boating facilities, such as boat ramps, launches, parking lots, restrooms and other boating-related improvements. The RBF program also provides financial assistance for feasibility studies related to the development of safe recreational boating facilities, purchase of aquatic weed harvesting equipment, purchase of navigation aids, dredging of channels of waterways, and chemical treatment of Eurasian water milfoil. The Wisconsin Waterways Commission approves projects to receive RBF funding on a quarterly basis.

Recreational Trails Program. The Recreation Trails Program provides funds for motorized and non-motorized recreation trail rehabilitation, trail maintenance, trail development, and trail acquisition. This is a federal program administered by the WDNR.

Snowmobile Trail Aids. Snowmobile Trail Aids provide funds to maintain trail systems that provide passage through a county and connections with adjacent counties.

Stewardship Local Assistance - Acquisition and Development of Local Parks. Stewardship Local Assistance - Acquisition and Development of Local Parks provides funding to acquire land, rights in land, and develop public outdoor recreation areas for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes. Projects focus on providing access for the greatest number of potential users, and providing the greatest opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation.

Stewardship Local Assistance - Acquisition of Development Rights. Stewardship Local Assistance - Acquisition of Development Rights provides funding for the acquisition of development rights that provide or enhance nature-based outdoor recreation areas. Projects must be part of an approved Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF provides financial assistance to state agencies, counties, villages, towns, school districts, cities, and Indian tribes for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The program provides up to 50 percent reimbursement grants for approved state and local projects. Competition for LWCF funds is on a statewide basis. This is a federal program administered by the WDNR.



Chapter 5: Planning Considerations

When considering potential land acquisitions, donations, or improvements to existing Door County parks, it is envisioned that the Parks Division vision, mission and core values in Chapter 1 and parks goals and objectives in Chapter 2 will be used in conjunction with the following guidelines and questions.

A. Guidelines for Potential Land Acquisitions

Properties for potential parkland are brought to the attention of the Parks Division in a variety of ways, including unsolicited outreach by interested sellers and via ongoing conversations with various public and not-for-profit entities. The Parks Division will continue to rely upon an evolving set of creative land acquisition and financing techniques to stretch and leverage its land acquisition funding. The following are guidelines for potential land acquisitions.

- Prioritize acquisitions that are a good value, that help stretch public land acquisition dollars.
- Prioritize acquisitions where there is a willing seller and local political support so that the acquisition will not be delayed for years in costly, contested proceedings.
- Prioritize acquisitions/donations where other organizations can contribute to the cost and/or care of new sites. Collaborate with other agencies, such as the Door County Land Trust or The Nature Conservancy, to increase conservation and recreation opportunities.
- Prioritize acquisitions/donations that connect or expand, link to, add to, fill in, or buffer existing holdings, and other connections that support mission and goals.
- Prioritize acquisitions/donations of sites that contain remnant native populations or unique natural resources as well as those with unique ecological, historical, archaeological, topological, cultural, or other significant features.
- Prioritize acquisition of land adjacent to lake waters to increase public water access, particularly on the Lake Michigan shore between Rowleys Bay and Sturgeon Bay.
- Prioritize acquisitions/donations of larger sites to take advantage of lower land costs and larger opportunity sites.
 - Smaller isolated sites present management and maintenance challenges and should only be considered where there is a strong case that the site would contribute to the Parks Division vision, mission and core values, and parks goals and objectives of this County Parks and Open Space Plan.
 - Explore acquisition of failed development projects as large-site opportunities at reduced costs.

B. Questions to Consider for Potential Land Acquisitions:

- Does the acquisition support the overall Parks Division vision, mission and core values, and parks goals and objectives of this County Parks and Open Space Plan?
- Is the land located adjacent to or near an existing county park? If yes, is adjacent land acquisition recommended by this plan?
- If adjacent or near an existing county park, how would the acquisition complement the existing county park?
- Would the acquisition provide greater connectivity between existing county parks?
- Is there potential to partner with another organization on the acquisition?
- Does the land have sensitive natural features that need to be protected? If so, is there a conservation organization that may be a better steward?
- Does the land have unique geological features (i.e., drumlins, steep slopes, varied terrain, scenic view, etc.)?

- Does the land have historical significance? If so, would a historical organization be a better steward?
- Does the land have potential to be restored back to native species with feasible expense?
- Is the land located on or near the County's recommended bicycle network?
- Is the land located on a segment of a county highway that has 3 foot or greater shoulder width?
- Would the land provide an interesting or convenient stop for bicyclists or other silent sports enthusiasts?
- Is the land located within an area identified as an enhancement zone by the Lake Michigan State Water Trail?

C. Guidelines for Potential Park Improvements

- Prioritize activities that will engage new users, promote healthy lifestyles, connect people to nature, and protect sensitive natural features.
- Prioritize use of limited capital funds for improvement of the parks system by evaluating conditions and needs as well as information on projected public uses or unique resources. This may require consultant support. Some new capital projects can be added in response to requests from the public and staff members via public input opportunities. Grant funding and contributions from land use and utility license agreements are also increasingly a factor in prioritizing new capital investments.
- Maintain a policy that ensures adequate compensation to the County when granting exclusive use of county park facilities and/or resource lands to non-county agencies, groups or individuals, or granting easements or other permanent rights to park and resource land.
- Improve user experience by providing at least basic facilities at all county parks, including:
 - Potable water supply for drinking, washing, and fire defense purposes.
 - Adequate access and designated parking areas.
 - ADA accessibility and inclusivity improvements such as:
 - ADA-accessible toilets, preferably vault-type where more sophisticated systems are not practical.
 - Features that will aid handicapped people such as specialized walkways, hard-surfaced walkways, wide doorways, grab-rails in restrooms, special seating at picnic areas and at spectator events, and special playground apparatus.
- Build the County parks brand identity, including:
 - Provide consistency in signage, markers, and structures.
 - Identify park entrance(s) and boundaries.
 - Identify opportunities to ensure a safe and easy-to-navigate trail system within county parks.
 - Provide baseline information on the current trail system.
 - Recommend new policies for managing trails.
 - Create a process for assessing requests to improve unrecognized trails.
 - Prioritize future capital improvement projects to enhance trail systems.
- Develop areas that provide the potential to accommodate a variety of activities, as opposed to single purpose activities.



D. Questions to Consider for Potential Park Improvements:

- Does the potential improvement support the overall Parks Division vision, mission and core values, and parks goals and objectives of this County Parks and Open Space Plan?
- Is the improvement identified in this plan or another appropriate action plan?
- Would the improvement enhance current uses and/or enhance current users' experience?
- Would the improvement help protect sensitive natural features?
- Is there potential to partner with another organization or entity on the improvement?
- Would the improvement provide a unique interactive experience that cannot be commonly found elsewhere and would attract new users?
- Would the improvement enhance the educational and/or historical aspect of the park?
- Is the upgrade at a park that is located along the Lake Michigan State Water Trail?
- Would the upgrade fulfill a need within an enhancement zone, as identified by the Lake Michigan State Water Trail plan?
- Will the improvement serve a niche interest, if so, is there an economic impact?

E. Guidelines for potential relinquishment of county-owned park land:

Relinquishment of county-owned park land for purposes other than preservation or recreation shall be dependent upon:

- The impact on fulfillment of the overall Parks Division vision, mission and core values, and parks goals and objectives of this County Parks and Open Space Plan.
- The long-term impacts on park and recreational use throughout Door County.
- An equal exchange of land value is provided in return.
- The dedication of revenues to additional park lands and improvements.
- Actions are consistent with local and regional plans.
- A determination that the land is not needed for county park and open space purposes, both at the present and in the future.
- Consideration of the total costs and benefits of ownership of the land.
- Protective deed restrictions placed on title of property.



Appendix A: Outline of Planning Process

Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (January 8, 2025): Parks Manager reported to the Committee that the Facilities and Parks Department will begin working on the 2026-2030 Plan in coordination with the Land Use Services Department, with anticipated adoption in May 2026.

Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (May 14, 2025): Parks Manager reported to the Committee on the plan update process/status and public input survey.

Public Input Survey (July 14, 2025 – August 1, 2025): Parks Manager and County Planner developed a public input survey for the purpose of gathering public feedback to identify priorities and needs. The survey was made available to the public on July 14th and closed on August 1st. The survey was available online, and was promoted through the County's website and two press releases.

Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (October 8, 2025): County Planner provided an update of the planning project and the planning process timeline, and provided a summary of the public input survey results. Timing and logistics of a public information meeting to present the plan to the public and gather public input was discussed.

Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (November 5, 2025): Parks Manager reviewed State guidelines for county outdoor recreation plans and explained that, after review, it was determined there was a need to adjust the plan development/adoption timeline in order to address State guidelines. Parks manager also reviewed draft goals and objectives, and a draft list of projects/improvements with the Committee. The Committee had no objections with the adjusted timeline or draft goals and objectives.

Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (January 14, 2026): Committee review of pre-final draft plan. Scheduling of the public information meeting and determining public notification procedures.

Public Information Meeting (February 18, 2026): Public information meeting to present draft plan to public for public review/comment.

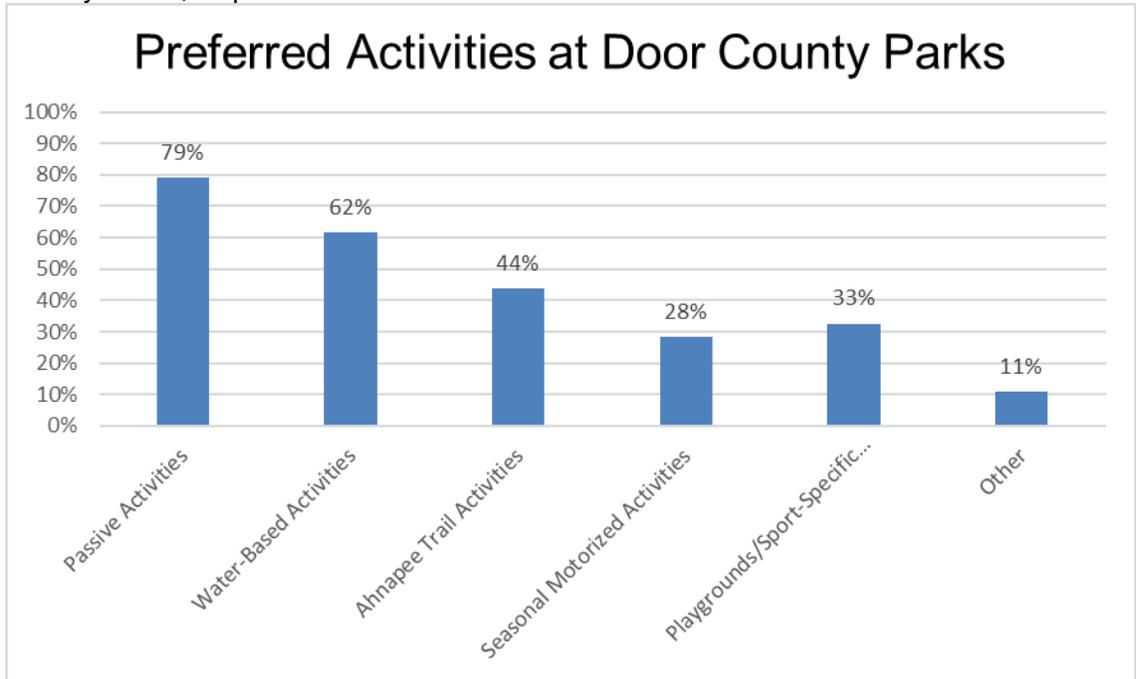
Highway and Facilities Committee Meeting (March/April XX, 2026): *Committee review of draft plan and public comment(s) from public information meeting. Committee approval and recommendation to adopt, if no significant changes.*

County Board of Supervisors Meeting (March/April XX, 2026): *Review and adoption of plan.*

In addition to the process and meetings described above, County Facilities and Parks Department and Land Use Services Department staff met on numerous occasions throughout the planning process to review and discuss past parks/outdoor recreation planning documents and existing park conditions to understand issues and opportunities within the County parks system. Plan goals, objectives, and future recommendations were also discussed.

Appendix B: Public Input Survey Results

Question #1 – Door County Parks Usage. What activities do any members of your household like to do at the Door County Parks? Check off all that apply. If your household does not use any of the Door County Parks, skip to Question #3.



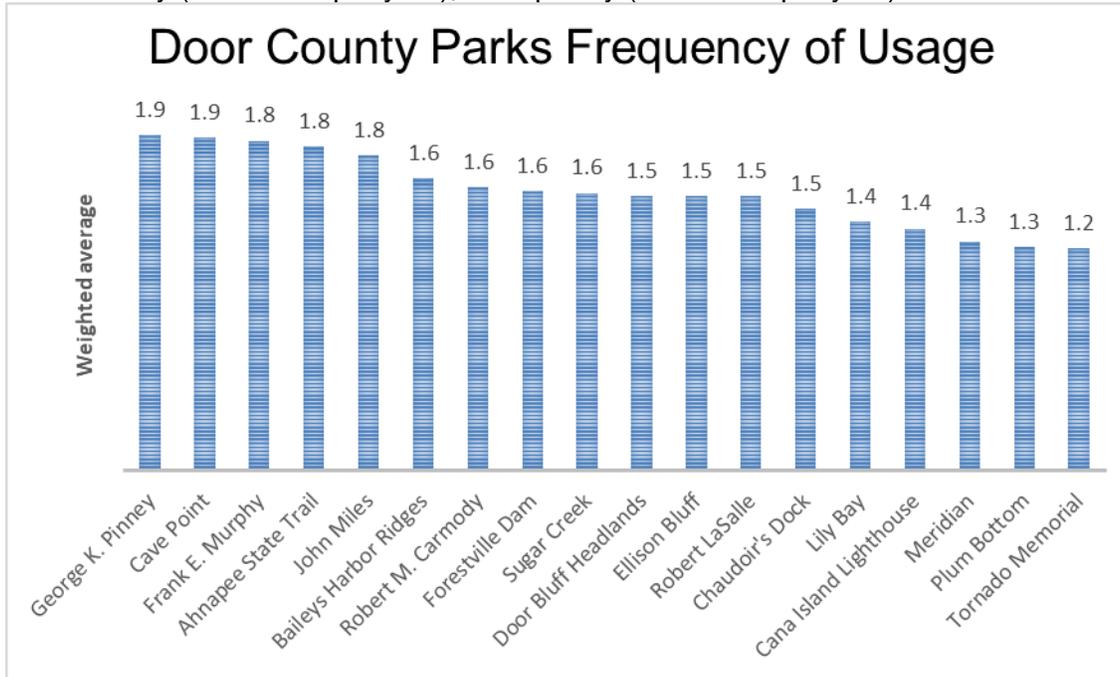
Park Activities	%	Total Responses
Passive Activities (e.g., walking/hiking, relaxing, picnicking, playing, sketching/painting, sight-seeing, nature study, photography, etc.)	79%	216
Water-Based Activities, Non-Motorized (e.g., beach use, swimming, paddling, surfing, fishing, etc.)	62%	168
Ahnapee Trail Activities, Non-Motorized (e.g., cross country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain/fat biking, hiking/running, horse back riding, etc.)	44%	119
Seasonal Motorized Activities (i.e., motor boating, snowmobiling on Ahnapee)	28%	77
Playgrounds or Sport-Specific Activities (e.g., soccer, car racing at John Miles County Park, disc golf, volleyball, etc.)	33%	89
Other	11%	30

“Other” Response Comments
Snowmobiling
Also, snowmobiling in Potawatomi Park
Snowmobiling
Snowmobiling
Hunting
Pickleball.
Snowmobiling
Snowmobiling
Please clean up Haines Beach for the Southern Door Area!

Open the Ahnapee to atv/sxs use
Snowmobiling around all of door county including ahnapee trail
PICKLEBALL!!!!
Hiking
playgrounds
Hiking on nature trails
Hiking, fiends and family get togethers
Boat launch Pinney
Non-motorized (hiking, biking, XC ski, snowshoe) activities at parks beyond Ahnapee Trail
Caving
Hiking - parks than Ahnapee Trial; foraging
Cana Island
Hunting/Fishing
meeting people; socializing
Walking in park
Walking my dog
It sure would be nice to have something for the kids to do inside...when the weather is not so nice. Yeah, we have the YMCA but not all families and/or kids use the Y.
HIKING
Hiking trails.
I don't use county parks that allow dogs
drive thru to view the seasonal changes of the parks

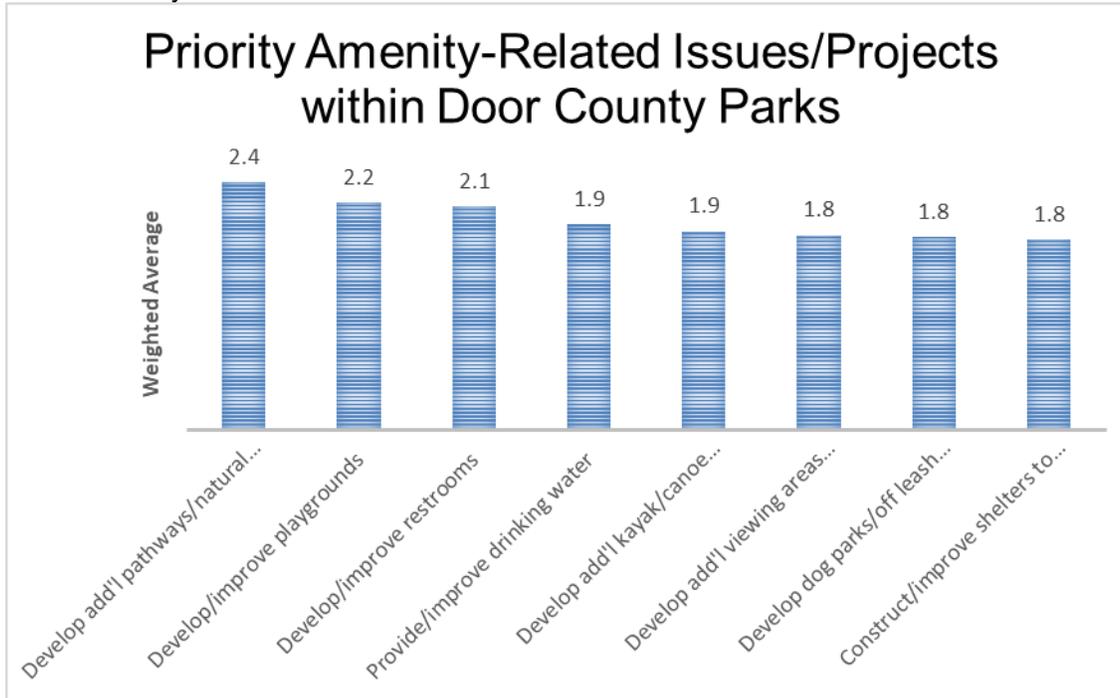
DRAFT

Question #2 – Door County Parks Frequency of Usage. Of the Door County Parks that your household uses, please check the frequency of usage: Frequently (6 or more times per year); Occasionally (3 - 5 times per year); Infrequently (1 - 2 times per year)



Door County Parks	Frequently (6+ times/year)	Occasionally (3-5 times/year)	Infrequently (1-2 times/year)	Total Responses	Weighted Average
George K. Pinney	28%	31%	41%	195	1.9
Cave Point	26%	33%	40%	238	1.9
Frank E. Murphy	24%	36%	40%	195	1.8
Ahnapee State Trail	29%	23%	48%	209	1.8
John Miles	27%	23%	50%	187	1.8
Baileys Harbor Ridges	16%	31%	53%	188	1.6
Robert M. Carmody	21%	16%	63%	143	1.6
Forestville Dam	19%	19%	62%	165	1.6
Sugar Creek	17%	22%	61%	139	1.6
Door Bluff Headlands	16%	22%	63%	161	1.5
Ellison Bluff	15%	23%	62%	166	1.5
Robert LaSalle	14%	25%	61%	154	1.5
Chaudoir's Dock	14%	18%	68%	153	1.5
Lily Bay	11%	16%	73%	124	1.4
Cana Island Lighthouse	9%	16%	74%	172	1.4
Meridian	9%	10%	81%	121	1.3
Plum Bottom	5%	15%	80%	114	1.3
Tornado Memorial	7%	10%	83%	125	1.2
Lyle-Harter-Matter Sanctuary	5%	12%	83%	112	1.2
Percy Johnson Memorial	4%	8%	88%	120	1.2

Question #3 – Door County Park Amenities. Please assign a priority-level for up to three issues/project related to amenities within the Door County Parks that you would like addressed within the next five years.



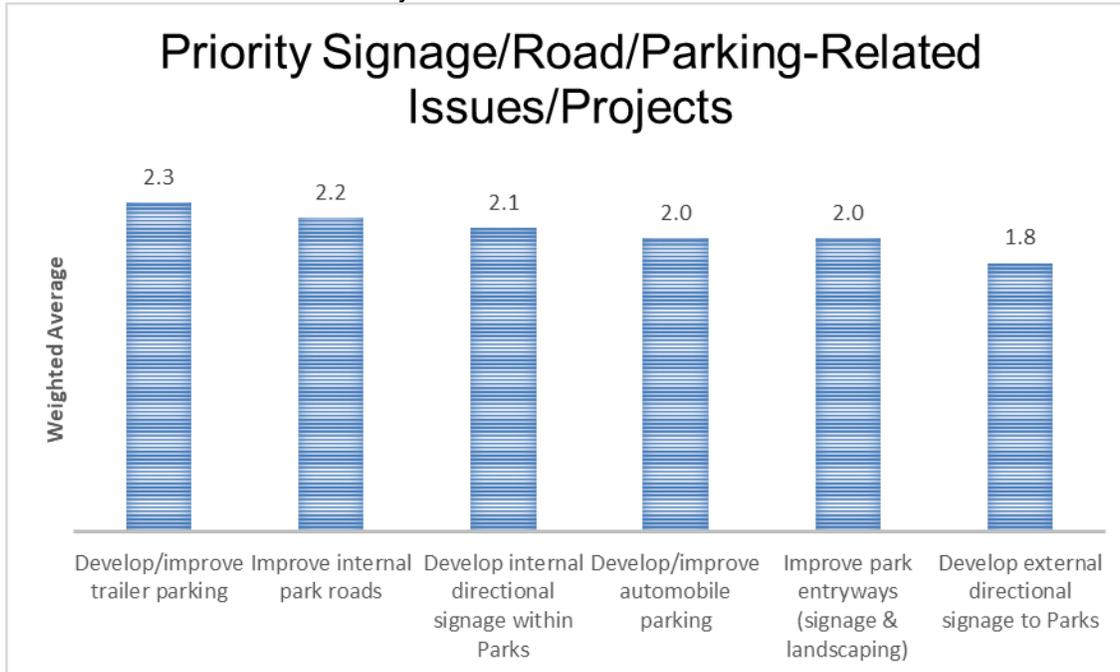
Amenity-Related Issues/Projects	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	Total Responses	Weighted Average
Develop add'l pathways/natural trails	56%	23%	21%	154	2.4
Develop/improve playgrounds	39%	37%	24%	59	2.2
Develop/improve restrooms	41%	31%	29%	133	2.1
Provide/improve drinking water	35%	25%	40%	55	1.9
Develop add'l kayak/canoe launch docks	25%	39%	36%	69	1.9
Develop add'l viewing areas and/or stairs to access water	16%	52%	32%	85	1.8
Develop dog parks/off leash areas within non-natural areas	21%	42%	38%	53	1.8
Construct/improve shelters to better accommodate year-round & seasonal use	26%	29%	45%	89	1.8
Other				39	

"Other" Response Comments
Snowmobiles trails
More snowmobile trails
Improve snowmobile/multi model trails
Snowmobiling
Develop areas where we can swim with our horses
More snowmobile trail access
Open Ahnapee for atv/sxs use
Snowmobile access priority 1
Snowmobile trails

DRAFT Door County Parks and Open Space Plan 2026-2030

More snowmobile and hunting access
Keep snowmobile trail funding
Snowmobile trails
I snowmobile to all of rig county parks in southern door county multiple times per year
please add EV chargers to various parks and also solar panels on newer shelters.
Snowmobile trails
Add fish cleaning equipment to launch ramps
Improve trails/signage at Door Bluff
strengthen the role of nature
develop outdoor showers or rinse off stations near beaches
duck pond improvements
Improve surface water quality
Keeping parks rustic adds to the charm of the area
Rather than developing more infrastructure, maintain current infrastructure in tiptop condition.
Improve access for wheelchair users
Manage/conservate native habitats- 1st priority
Tennis Backboard / Rebounded for single tennis players
LaSalle Park could use more play equipment. Please do not build any more playgrounds with a rubberized surface. Rubber playgrounds are notorious for their flammability. Search on the internet and you will find several dozen or so stories of lovely playgrounds, burnt to a crisp. Typical culprit is just boys being stupid. They think it is funny, but once that rubber starts burning it really burns thoroughly and wrecks the whole playground. It is easy to imagine someone playing with fireworks or sparklers on the new John Miles playground and wrecking it. Not that it is such a bad thing to have, but really one is enough. The more that are built, the more likely someone will be a pyro on one of them. Instead, use woodchips, or if you are interested in ADA compliance, spend the extra money for Engineered Wood Product and leave a rake around so the parents can rake it flat. The Southern Door Playground has a really nice wheelchair rocker that does not require a rubber playground surface. The metal ramp goes straight to the blacktop lot. Wheelchair rockers accessible from sidewalk or blacktop can be a thoughtful addition to your woodchip playgrounds instead of replacing them with a rubber playground. Some of the historical interpretive signs along the Ahnapee Trail are showing their age. Please go through them and replace or at least clean the glass for the ones that look worn or are hard to read.
Improve handicap parking at Chadoirs Dock, quite a distance uphill
Properly clean up the mess that was made with the failed draw down of the Forestville Millpond
Get easements for more snowmobile trails (multi-moto).
Need mountain bike trails and disc golf course
more benches on trails so older people can rest more frequently.
It would be wonderful to have a functioning beach in southern door county to relax/swim at.
Keep parks as natural as possible
Clean up Sugar Creek and make the beach accessible. Clean up Haines Beach and make it usable again.
Add gravel trail to Door Bluff Headlands park like the beautiful Ellison Bay park has.
play grounds for children.
no recommendations
Quiet areas

Question #4 – Signage, Roads, and Parking for/within Door County Parks. Please assign a priority-level for up to three issues/project related to signage, roads, and parking that you would like addressed within the next five years.

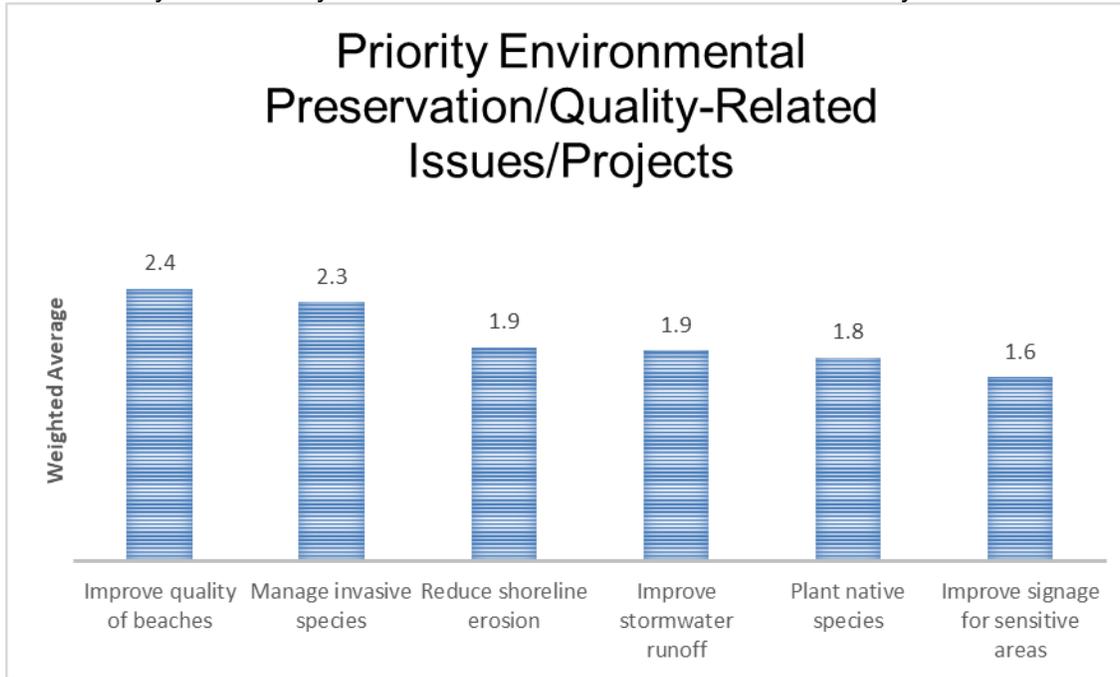


Signage/Road/Parking-Related Issues/Projects	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	Total Responses	Weighted Average
Develop/improve trailer parking	44%	38%	18%	55	2.3
Improve internal park roads	42%	32%	27%	120	2.2
Develop internal directional signage within Parks	40%	29%	32%	101	2.1
Develop/improve automobile parking	31%	39%	30%	106	2.0
Improve park entryways (signage & landscaping)	31%	39%	30%	114	2.0
Develop external directional signage to Parks	28%	28%	44%	82	1.8
Other				31	

“Other” Response Comments
Bike racks
mew snowmobile trails
improve snowmobile trailer parking
Snowmobile trails
Don't forget about access for snowmobiling
Maintain snowmobile access
Add permanent snowmobile signs
Open Ahnapee for sxs use
Keep snowmobile trails open to door county parks
Add EV Chargers!!!
Cave Point County Park feels destroyed from its overuse, the woods around it chopped down for increasing paved parking lots. Please help our beautiful parks from being "loved to death".
less is more!!!
trail signage along routes
All of these topics are already good.

I think signage is adequate
Build/improve bicycle lanes and trails
The parks are very good, as is.
Keep as natural as possible
Try to keep as much native /natural landscaping as possible while doing road improvements.
Improve access for wheelchair users
All the above are currently sufficient for my needs and use
1 priority: Widen roads for possible trail accessibility (walk/bike paths)
Good fences make good neighbors. Part of the problem is signage. It is hard to tell where the border is sometimes if you are in the woods. Landowner KEEP OFF NO TRESPASSING signs give a bad feeling. What would give me joy to see are creative, original looking park boundary signs to be fabricated by high school shop classes and installed facing the park side of your property boundaries. The barn quilt program is an ingenious anti-vandalism program. Because the quilts are made by youth, other youth ought to respect them, the way they might not respect something that was made by adults. The quilts act as a deterrent so that they don't tag up or torch barns that have the barn quilts on them. Shhhh! If they knew it was an anti-vandalism campaign, that might lose respect. The repeated bathroom vandalism could perhaps have been prevented, if original artwork or creative signage made by shop classes on the building. I feel you could ask for youth-made signage for both property borders, bathroom buildings, and maybe elsewhere. This could take years, but it could reduce vandalism and help people avoid trespassing without feeling unwelcome to the area.
Stop the ice fishing guides from taking up the whole parking lots
Hard surface hike/bike paths
Keep costs down for taxpayers
wider roads to accommodate bikes
Focus on southern door county
Keep as natural as possible
Lasalle could use improvement for lower park on hwy U

Question #5 – Environmental Preservation & Quality within Door County Parks. Please assign a priority-level for up to three issues/projects related to environmental preservation and quality within Door County Parks that you would like addressed within the next five years.



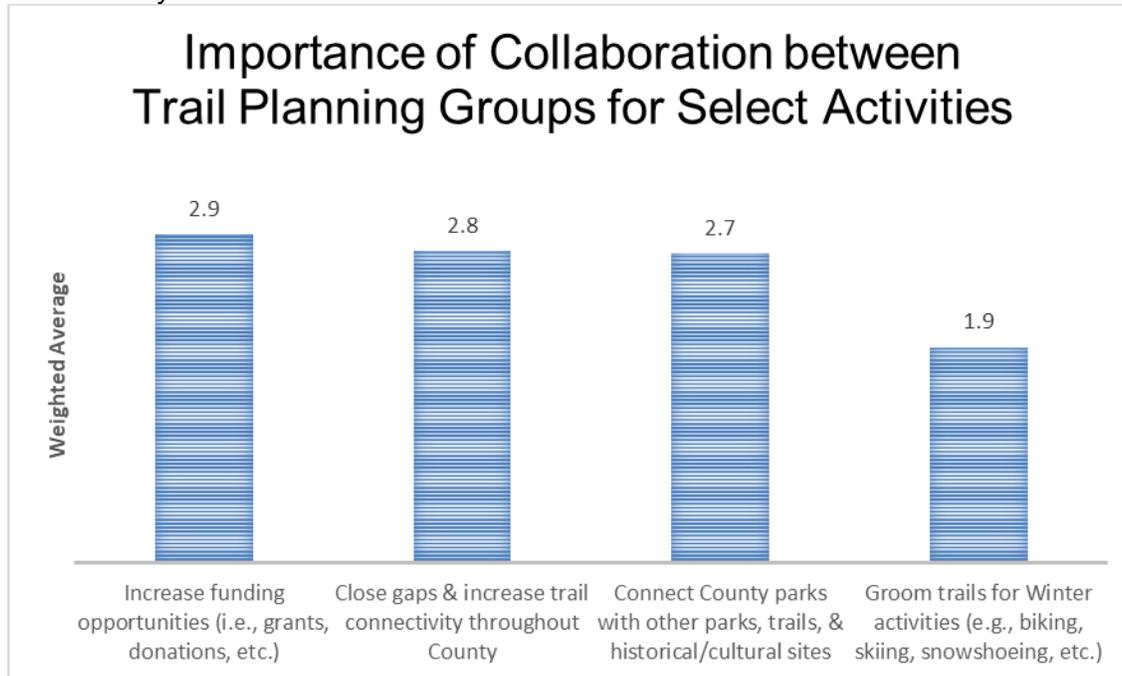
Environmental Preservation/Quality-Related Issues/Projects	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	Total Responses	Weighted Average
Improve quality of beaches	57%	26%	17%	149	2.4
Manage invasive species	51%	28%	22%	170	2.3
Reduce shoreline erosion	19%	51%	30%	132	1.9
Improve stormwater runoff	23%	41%	37%	79	1.9
Plant native species	24%	32%	44%	117	1.8
Improve signage for sensitive areas	18%	26%	56%	68	1.6
Other				13	

“Other” Response Comments
Please clean up Haines Beach to have a functional park
Open Ahnapee for atv/sxs use
yes to all
I don't see a spot for this, but implement a 1000 dollar fine for jumping at Cave Point.
Baileys Harbor Ridges Beach improvements were a fiasco a few years ago. The sand replacement for filtering water was vile. If anything, the mucky standing water on the beach side of the, 'dune' that was created was deplorable.
Top priority for me would be to reduce impact on trees along Cave Point bluff edge trail. Currently tremendous impact on root system of trees. Many of those trees will be dying off in the next ten years because of this impact.
Plant native species - 4th priority
It is nice to have trees that both birds and children can eat from. You could plant some more of them in places where people like to go. The Door County Maritime Museum maritime museum parking lot has a lot of juneberry trees. You could do that too. I like the electric beach signs and hope they are all eventually installed

so they are flush with the ground around them. No stubbing your toe on a corner. In winter, for traction, sand is dirtier looking but better for the environment when there are roadways and parking lots near the water.
southern door county
My three all tie for first! All important!
Improve prairie planting
Dark night sky
reforestation should always be a practice

DRAFT

Question #6 – Planning for Trails for Walking, Biking, and Other Non-Motorized Uses. How important do you think it is for the different trail-planning groups (i.e., Door County Parks, DNR, municipalities, non-profits, etc.) to work together on the following activities when planning for trails in Door County?



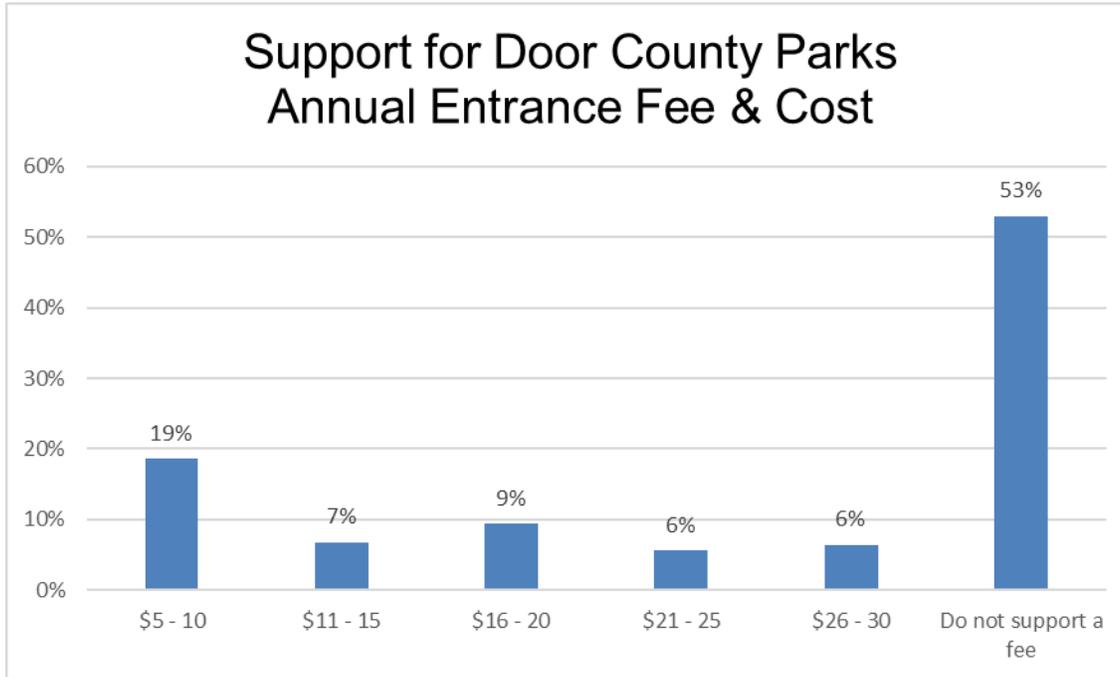
Trail Planning Activities	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Total Responses	Weighted Average
Increase funding opportunities (i.e., grants, donations, etc.)	6%	7%	15%	34%	38%	256	2.9
Close gaps & increase trail connectivity throughout County	8%	11%	15%	30%	36%	261	2.8
Connect County parks with other parks, trails, & historical/cultural sites	9%	12%	15%	23%	40%	261	2.7
Groom trails for Winter activities (e.g., biking, skiing, snowshoeing, etc.)	16%	21%	26%	28%	8%	255	1.9
Other						19	

"Other" Response Comments
Snowmobile trails
Snowmobiling
Add more snowmobile trails
The county is missing out on hundred of thousands of dollars in lost revenue with a closed ahanapee trail for sxs/atv usage
Snowmobile trails!!
More snowmobile funding for trails and bridges
Keep trails throughout door county connected go snowmobiles
Grants for Solar Panels and EV chargers.
What is it that we wish to be our legacy. Native Americans looked out seven generations
promote preservation and keeping parks clean
Fine electric bike users

Lighting should be installed on as many trails as possible. It's a danger to pedestrians to have trail users without lights. The amount of bicycles that are parked at bars give you an idea how many bicyclists ride their bikes after drinking.
Over use of sensitive areas is ruining the simplicity of Door County that makes it so special. Hiking isn't pleasant sharing trails with fat tire bikes. Cross Country skiing is iffy, at best, due to highly variable snow falls. Spending money on trails is a waste of cash, and. I speak as someone whose family enjoys XX skiing since the 70's..
Make trails safe: separate from car traffic!
For more children's play areas
Please communicate with the Door County Land Trust to see if they would accept your rules for their parks, and get an ordinance passed so that the rules on their parks can be enforced directly by the Sheriff's office. Rather than just not enforcing things on their parks, or if it must be enforced, trespassing them from it.
ensure geolocation information is available on the trails in the event of emergencies or displacement so people can be found and wayfind
Muti-Moto trails!
Add gravel trail to Door Bluff Headlands park like the beautiful Ellison Bay park has.

DRAFT

Question #7 – Door County Parks Annual Entrance Fee. Do you support the implementation of an annual entrance fee to the Door County Parks and, if so, what price range per vehicle do you consider reasonable?



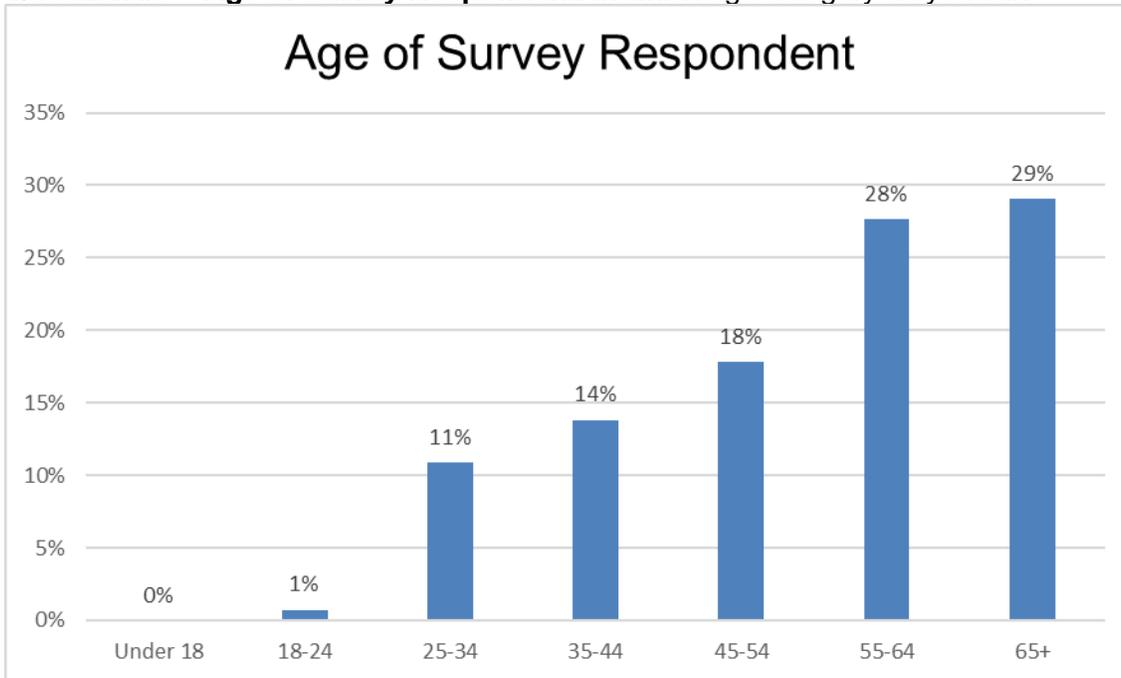
Cost of Annual Entrance Fee	%	Total Responses
\$5 - 10	19%	49
\$11 - 15	7%	18
\$16 - 20	9%	25
\$21 - 25	6%	15
\$26 - 30	6%	17
Do not support a fee	53%	140
Other		48

"Other" Response Comments
25\$ Fee for non year round residents
Minimum for residents more for non
I support a fee for non residents
For non residents only
As long as these funds go towards the park improvements
Our Property & Count .5% Tax Dollars already support our county parks. Maybe non-year round residents & tourists visiting should pay a fee for the use of our parks.
Support if County Residents have a reduced or no fee
As a local year round resident I pay enough in taxes!
Not for county residents
By keeping fees at a lower cost will sell more passes
Only if residents have the option for a reduced rate annual fee
They should be accessible by all. If a fee must happen though, we would pay annually.
to maintain or improve the wellbeing of nature

DRAFT Door County Parks and Open Space Plan 2026-2030

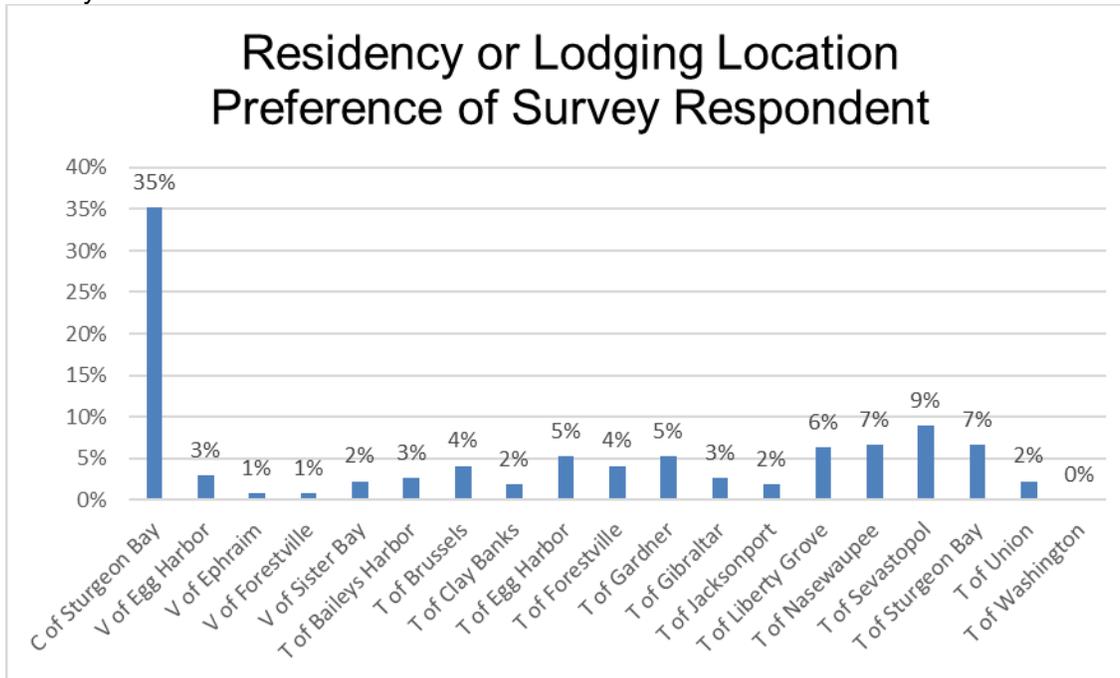
I already pay for access through my taxes. However, I would support charging out of state people to use the parks if you could figure out a manageable way to do it.
sliding scale and or waivers for those within poverty guidelines as this is often the only way many can "vacation" without having any budget for it.
I would support a fee for non residents (anyone who is not a full time resident of the county), would not support a fee for full time year around residents of the county
This needs to remain free for families with limited funds
Already paying taxes
No fee for WI resident; \$35 fee for nonresident
Fee for non door county year around residents. Year around free
Fees for out of state visitors only
If proof of residence then no fee. Let all the tourists pay
Not for county residents
There should also be a substantial Door County Resident discount
Door County is becoming expensive for average families. There should be some areas free of charge.
Tax the tourists with a .025% June July August tax.
Would not be able to enforce it.
Might be hard to enforce but a fee would help raise funds and also limit the amount of users at specific places from being overran (i.e. Cave Point)
Non-resident fee
This is why we pay taxes. Not so we can be nickel and dimed everywhere we go. Some years I don't buy a state parks pass.
Not for Door County property owners who pay with property tax. Yes for non-property owners.
And 15 for residents
have a reduced rate for locals/full time residents
Please no window stickers. Use a hang tag on rearview mirror like National Parks and Recreation areas do.
If you do have a fee, make it a year round sticker.
As long as this increases funding and not replace general tax dollars already supporting parks.
one fee that covers all
Have a residential price and out of county price and have an annual, day, week pass for both; similar to the fishing license.
if fee is implemented, is it possible to have a rate for residents and higher rate for non-residents?
Supportive of entrance fees, but would like to see some kind of assistance program for low-income families to access parks for free/cheaper
Please do not do this. Not everyone here can afford it and it excludes families who utilize year round. This is exclusionary and wrong.
Annual pass, not per visit.
How about an out of state plate fee-we already can't afford homes-now you want to charge a fee to use our own public parks.
I believe this could be different for family vs. single person, also allow for veteran/senior discount; would this apply for soccer families?
Before we were residents (13+ yrs ago) we ALWAYS bought the yearly park access tickets. Would like to see the daily access a dollar less expensive.
I do not support a fee for locals. But we have a lot of usage from those outside of Door County that we support with our taxes. If you want to implement a fee for those living outside the area, I would support that. Kind of like how state parks, hunting, fishing, if you are outside of the state, you always pay more.
Offer up opportunities to donate while enjoying the park.
tax payers should not be charged to us a county park

Question #8 – Age of Survey Respondent. In which age category do you fall?



Age	%	Total Responses
Under 18	0%	0
18-24	1%	2
25-34	11%	30
35-44	14%	38
45-54	18%	49
55-64	28%	76
65+	29%	80

Question #9 – Residency or Lodging Location Preference of Survey Respondent. If you reside in Door County year-round, which municipality is your residence located? If you do not reside in Door County year-round, where do most members of your household prefer to rent/camp/lodge in Door County?



Municipality	%	Total Responses
C of Sturgeon Bay	35%	95
V of Egg Harbor	3%	8
V of Ephraim	1%	2
V of Forestville	1%	2
V of Sister Bay	2%	6
T of Baileys Harbor	3%	7
T of Brussels	4%	11
T of Clay Banks	2%	5
T of Egg Harbor	5%	14
T of Forestville	4%	11
T of Gardner	5%	14
T of Gibraltar	3%	7
T of Jacksonport	2%	5
T of Liberty Grove	6%	17
T of Nasewaupee	7%	18
T of Sevastopol	9%	24
T of Sturgeon Bay	7%	18
T of Union	2%	6
T of Washington	0%	0



DOOR
COUNTY
WISCONSIN