

2014-2018

# Douglas County Outdoor Recreation Plan





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## **Douglas County, Wisconsin**

### **2014-2018**

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this plan is to investigate Douglas County's existing outdoor recreation resources and anticipate future demands by developing recommendations for county administered outdoor recreation facilities. Maintenance, replacement and expansion of recreational facilities is necessary to continue to meet the needs of thousands of visitors to County facilities throughout all four seasons.

The recommendation by the Forest, Parks and Recreation Committee to the Douglas County Board of Supervisors to approve the outdoor recreation plan allows the Forestry Department/County to continue to be eligible to apply for state and federal aids in supporting recreational improvements. Preparation of this document was done so following guidance found in Wisconsin Statute 23.30 Outdoor Recreation Program.

An overview of the County and its recreational facilities provides the reader with an overview of the resources under County management. Select other recreational resources are also identified. Later in the document, specific activities are identified for recreational facility development.

The objectives below are intended as guides for the County as it relates to outdoor recreational facilities.

- ❖ Develop a countywide park and recreation system that will provide opportunities for all citizens.
- ❖ Maintain quality outdoor recreation areas while protecting Douglas County's natural and scenic resources.
- ❖ Promote and improve aesthetic and environmental values and access to the county's other legislation and to encourage ongoing outdoor educational programs.
- ❖ Identify and preserve sites having scientific, historic, architectural, or archeological significance.
- ❖ Consider this plan a program for development of year-round recreational facilities.
- ❖ Encourage the efforts of municipalities to provide "community" recreational facilities such as ball fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and other recreational interests, which will complement the county's facilities.
- ❖ Encourage controlled private development of quality recreational areas.
- ❖ Provide for barrier free access to public recreation facilities.
- ❖ Continue to develop a coordinated countywide recreational trail system.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DOUGLAS COUNTY**

### **History**

Throughout Douglas County, historical records indicate the public was engaged in enjoying the outdoors and recreational resources offered by area lakes, rivers, and forests. Historical recreational use would indicate activity dating from Native American settlements, particularly along the St. Croix and Brule River systems, to the development of fishing and hunting camps in the early 1900's. An example of early recreation use in Douglas County is reflected with the inception of Lucius Woods Park at Solon Springs. The former Omaha Railroad originally owned a major portion of the site occupied by Lucius Woods Park. A group from Eau Claire purchased the property from the railroad and they operated a hunting and fishing retreat until Nick Lucius and three other parties purchased the site in 1891. Several years later, Nick Lucius and P.E. Waterbury bought the other two out. During the Lucius-Waterbury partnership, ten cabins were constructed on the property and tourists moved their families and baggage up to Solon Springs by train to stay for several weeks or the entire summer. In 1945, Mr. Lucius bought out Mr. Waterbury and continued to operate the park for day-use and camping. In 1950, Mr. Lucius sold the park to the State of Wisconsin for use as a State Park. In 1990, the State deeded the park to Douglas County. The park was officially named Lucius Woods County Park in recognition of Mr. Lucius for his efforts in conserving the virgin growth woods, which has resulted in the beautiful park setting of today.

### **Geography**

The landscape of Douglas County varies greatly from north to south. The Lake Superior lowland, which adjoins Lake Superior, consists of a clay plain about 10 to 20 miles wide and slopes gently from the Superior escarpment to the lake. Short, swift streams flowing north into Lake Superior have cut deep V-shaped valleys below the plain. During the glacial period, the Lake Superior lowland was submerged under glacial Lake Superior and red clay was deposited on the old lake bed.

The Superior escarpment or Douglas Copper Range is probably the most noticeable geologic feature in Douglas County. It extends east to west across the county from the Bayfield County line to Foxboro and in some places it rises 350 to 400 feet above the lowlands. It is not a continuous bedrock range but is divided into three main ridges by the streams that cross it. These streams have cut deep gorges and have many rapids and falls where they drop from the hard rock of the escarpment to the soft clays and sandstone of the lowland.

Pattison State Park, 11 miles south of Superior, includes two such falls. Big Manitou Falls on the Black River, the highest waterfall in Wisconsin with a 165-foot drop, is located on the cataract of the Superior escarpment. Little Manitou Falls, a second waterfall having a 30-foot vertical drop, is located about one mile upstream from Big Manitou Falls.

## Climate

Douglas County has a humid, continental type of climate. This means that the county has long, cold winters with rather short, moderately warm summers. However, this climate is modified somewhat by the tempering influence of Lake Superior and by local variations in topography. Lake Superior acts as a large storage basin for heat (or cold) and thus tends to increase the number of frost-free days along the lake, but it also acts as a coolant in the summer. Consequently, the extreme northern part of the county adjoining Lake Superior has longer growing seasons, cooler summers, and slightly more precipitation than is found in the southern part of the county. The 140 to 160 day growing season along the lake is as long as the growing season in the extreme southern counties of Wisconsin. The county's annual precipitation averages slightly more than the state's average (32.1 inches).

## Population

Douglas County is comprised of one (1) city, five (5) incorporated villages, and 16 towns. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Douglas County was 44,159 in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau) and as of January 1, 2013 the final estimated county population was 44,279 (Wisconsin Department of Administration).

County population levels have rebounded since 1970 when the county population was 41,758. Based on population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration Douglas County's population is projected to be 47,063 by 2030.

<b>Douglas County &amp; Municipal Population Levels</b>			
	<b>2000 Census</b>	<b>2010 Census</b>	<b>2013 Population Estimate</b>
<b>Towns</b>			
Amnicon	1,074	1,155	1,168
Bennett	622	597	608
Brule	591	656	664
Cloverland	247	210	208
Dairyland	186	184	185
Gordon	645	636	638
Hawthorne	1,045	1,136	1,123
Highland	245	311	312
Lakeside	609	693	702
Maple	649	744	753
Oakland	1,144	1,136	1,155
Parkland	1,240	1,220	1,233

Solon Springs	807	910	919
Summit	1,042	1,063	1,073
Superior	2,058	2,166	2,189
Wascott	714	763	766
<b>Villages</b>			
Lake Nebagamon	1,015	1,069	1,078
Oliver	358	399	419
Poplar	552	603	609
Solon Springs	576	600	596
Superior	500	664	611
<b>City</b>			
Superior	27,368	27,244	27,220
<b>County</b>			
Douglas	43,287	44,159	44,279

In addition to the Douglas County population base, the City of Duluth and its surrounding urban population add slightly over 100,000 people that can have direct access to Douglas County's recreational areas in as little as a 30 minutes drive.

### **The Region**

Recreational resources of the surrounding region play an important role in Douglas County's outdoor recreation program. These regional attractions, many of which are of national significance, draw a great number of tourists and area residents.

Douglas County's proximity to Duluth and northeast Minnesota reflects a tremendous diversity of natural and manmade recreational resources. When planning for and developing recreation facilities in Douglas County, the impact of visitors from the Duluth metropolitan area must be considered. In the spring and summer, Douglas County's recreation areas receive substantial use from Minnesota residents.

### **Regional Recreation Areas**

The Superior-Duluth area has a vast amount of open space along with its proximity to the 31,820 square mile Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world. The Douglas County mainland shore bordering Lake Superior contains approximately one hundred three miles of shoreline. The shoreline is very irregular with many large bays, inlets, and peninsulas.

Sport fishing, including both ice and open water, are activities available on Lake Superior and many of the inland lakes. Other popular recreational activities pursued along the lake include swimming, sailing, boating, and kayaking.

Regional ski areas include Mt. Ashwabay near Bayfield, Spirit Mountain in Duluth, and Mont du Lac west of Superior.

The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway also has a significant regional impact. The purpose behind this area is to preserve it in a near primitive condition and to protect and make it accessible for public outdoor recreational use. The portion of the St. Croix River from the Gordon Dam south in Douglas County lies within the National Scenic Riverway and is managed by the “General Management Plan”.

Bayfield County, to the east of Douglas, also has many recreational resources. The Chequamegon National Forest, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and Namekagon River,

Forest	Acres
Aspen	163,153
Mixed deciduous/coniferous	116,948
Mixed/other broad-leaved deciduous	95,778
Jack Pine	40,621
Red Pine	19,529
Maple	14,374
Mixed/other coniferous	10,689
Red Oak	7,264
Northern Pine Oak	1,500
Oak	128
Forested Wetlands	
Coniferous	29,829
Broad-leaved deciduous	26,552
Mixed deciduous/coniferous	7,546

a portion of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway are resources of national significance.

The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore provides unique recreation opportunities for visitors in the region. Since it was set aside for preservation and public recreation in 1970, it has been a popular place for people throughout the United States to visit. Camping, fishing, picnicking, boat docking facilities, trail systems, and interpretive areas are all part of the Islands’ opportunities.

The Lake Superior Water Trail (Wisconsin) is a regional network of mapped access points and recreational resources along Wisconsin’s Lake Superior south shore. The LSWT consists of two segments: a 40-mile segment from the St. Louis River to Port Wing and a 30 mile segment from Ashland to the Montreal River at the Wisconsin-Michigan state line.

### **Forest Lands**

Over three quarters of the land area of Douglas County is forested. Large blocks of these forested areas are in a single ownership class, either county forest land or land controlled by paper companies. Douglas County has 277,034 acres of forest land currently certificated under the standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Forest Stewardship Council. Independent, third-party certification means management of the county forests meets strict standards for Douglas County ecological, social and economic sustainability. Following is a chart which breaks down the forest land located in Douglas County into separate species of tree.

With slightly over 277,000 acres of forest lands, the Douglas County Forest is the largest county forest in Wisconsin. Approximately eighty percent of the county forest is

commercial forest land with the remaining twenty percent being brush prairies, lakes, rivers, dams, flowages, and marsh wetlands. Large aspen blocks are being managed for wildlife such as deer, ruffed grouse, and woodcock, as well as other associated upland non-game species. In addition, several scientific and benchmark areas have been established throughout Douglas County where unusual or rare resource features are being observed, studied, and protected.

## **EXISTING RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES**

Approximately 350 miles of multiple-use recreational trails are located throughout Douglas County. The Forestry Department oversees the development and maintenance of approximately three hundred miles of snowmobile and seasonal ATV trails, ten miles of cross-country ski trails, and numerous nature hiking trails. Five abandoned railroad corridors have been converted to multiple-use recreational trails connecting with main corridors from other counties and states. Aside from the traditional functions, the trails are also used for snowshoeing, dog sledding, horseback riding, hiking, and nature and wildlife viewing. The following information describes recreational activities and some of the natural resources that are available in Douglas County.

### ***Camping***

Douglas County operates and maintains excellent public camping facilities at Mooney Dam, Gordon Dam, and Lucius Woods. State operated campgrounds exist in the Brule River State Forest, Amnicon Falls State Park, and Pattison State Park. A number of private campgrounds are also available within the County.

### ***Picnicking***

There are numerous picnic areas throughout the county. They are primarily located adjacent to swimming facilities, bodies of water or within developed parks, and recreation areas. Almost all designated picnic areas have restrooms, tables, and grills.

### ***Swimming***

Douglas County lakes provide excellent sandy bottom and clear water swimming opportunities. Located throughout the county are both developed and undeveloped outdoor swimming facilities.

#### **County Swimming Areas:**

Lake Minnesuing County Park  
Bass Lake County Park  
Gordon Dam County Park  
Lucius Woods County Park  
Anna-Gene County Park  
Long Lake County Park

#### **State Swimming Areas:**

Pattison State Park (Interfalls Lake)

#### **City of Superior Swimming Areas:**

Barkers Island

#### **Village Swimming Areas:**

Lake Nebagamom- Community Beach

## ***Hiking***

Hiking possibilities are abundant throughout Douglas County's vast and scenic county forest lands. Most are provided within state parks and forests, including Amnicon, Pattison, and the Brule River State Forests. Additionally, the City of Superior provides trails within the Superior Municipal Forest. The Douglas County Wildlife Area, more commonly known as the Bird Sanctuary, has a hunter-walking trail system. Other hiking trails include the following.

### Brule - St. Croix Portage Trail

At one time, the Mississippi-Lake Superior waterway was a common route of travel by the Native Americans, explorers, and fur traders. In traversing the 1.9 miles from Lake St. Croix to the Brule River, or vice versa, these early travelers were forced to carry their canoes and baggage over this divide. It is still an interesting hike. A marker designates the trail where it crosses CTH "A". This trail is on the Wisconsin list of historic places.

### Brule - St. Croix Lake Trail

This 26-mile trail, beginning at St. Croix Lake and ending at the State Fish Hatchery, is groomed for snowmobiling and provides an excellent hiking opportunity during warm months.

### North Country Trail

The North Country National Scenic Trail is a premier footpath that one day will stretch more than 4,000 miles to link outstanding scenic, natural, recreational, historic, and cultural areas across seven northern states, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota. Approximately sixty-seven miles will travel east to west through a large portion of Douglas County. The North Country Trail connects with the Brule - St. Croix Portage, which was used long ago by early explorers to reach the Brule River and Lake St. Croix or the St. Croix River. The trail will turn north at the Gordon Dam, proceed to Pattison State Park, and on to Jay Cooke State Park in Minnesota.

Potential exists for the following historically significant trails:

### Empire Grade Trail

The Empire Grade was a logging railroad. The original survey of the road was made in the fall of 1898 followed by the cutting through of the right-of-way a few months later. The 27 miles of main line track was graded, bridges built, and 40 lb. steel rail laid the following summer - from Dedham on the Great Northern Railway south to the log landing on the St. Croix, about one mile upstream from the Coppermine Dam. This landing is shown on old maps as Sauntry or Sauntry Landing. This work (building the grades) was all done by hand—no horses used--the final laying of ties and rail was done with locomotive and cars. The road was officially opened December 15, 1899 and incorporated as the St. Croix & Duluth Railway. (Some maps show it as the Duluth & St. Croix). This was the property of the Empire Lumber Co. of Winona, Minnesota.

### Old Stagecoach Trail

Segments of this old trail, which ran from Superior to Spooner in the late 1800's, still exist near the Moose River and Pikes Peak on county forest lands.

### ***Boating***

Within Douglas County, there are 11 natural lakes and impoundments over 200 acres in size that offer suitable surface water conditions to the pleasure boater. The total water area of these lakes amounts to 5,861 acres or 26 percent of the surface waters. All of these lakes lie within easy driving distance of the Superior area and for this reason, most of these lakes are heavily developed and receive moderate to heavy boating pressure. In 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had 7,864 boats registered in Douglas County. Of the 11 mentioned lakes, Amnicon, Lower Eau Claire, Lyman, Minnesuing, Nebagamon, St. Croix Flowage, and Upper St. Croix Lakes are probably the most important boating waters within the county. Public access is available to all these waters.

### ***Canoeing & Kayaking***

Canoeing and kayaking continues to be a very popular sport in Douglas County because of the great waters available to paddlers. Streams as described in Canoeing The Wild Rivers, Northwest Wisconsin Canoe Trails, Inc., includes the famous Bois Brule River, St. Croix River, Eau Claire River, Moose River, Black River, Nemadji River, Totogatic River, and Lower Ox Creek River.

### Bois Brule River Water Trail

This river, famous for its trout fishing, beautiful scenery, and many exciting rapids, is one of the most enjoyable canoe trails in Wisconsin. The 44-mile long river rises east of Solon Springs near St. Croix Lake and flows in a general east and north direction into Lake Superior. For its entire length, the river is within the boundaries of the Brule River State Forest. Canoe trips usually start from Stone's Bridge (CTH "S") with take out at STH 2. The Copper Range Campground is located 1.5 miles south of Johnson's Bridge (CTH "FF"). The lower river trip below STH 2 is a full and adventuresome day's trip to the mouth of the river. There is a great deal of privately owned land along the Brule River, but there are developed and primitive camping facilities at several locations. Outboard motors are prohibited on the Brule River by local ordinance except at the mouth. The Bois Brule River is also discussed in the Unique Resources Section.

### St. Croix River Trail

In Douglas County, this trail runs from Gordon Dam to the county line. It is part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway System. This provides some of the best whitewater canoeing on the St. Croix. There is a developed canoe landing with parking, restrooms, and camping at the Gordon Dam County Park maintained by the Douglas County Forestry Department. Future signage and map development may occur in coordination and consultation with organizations sponsoring development activities along the waterway.

### Eau Claire River Trail

The most commonly traveled portion of the river is from Lower Eau Claire Lake downstream to the Eau Claire River Flowage. Shorelines are quite wild most of the way. The trip should be made during medium or medium-high water levels or shallows will be encountered. Future signage and map development may occur in coordination and consultation with organizations sponsoring development activities along the waterway.

### Lake Superior Water Trail-Wisconsin

The Lake Superior Water Trail identifies public access points across Lake Superior's south shore from Wisconsin Point in Douglas County easterly to the Montreal River in Iron County.

### Lower Ox Creek

This little stream offers a short canoe trip in a wilderness setting. Bald eagles, deer, ducks, and other wildlife are commonly seen. Medium or higher water levels are necessary.

### Moose River

This trail is subject to water conditions and flows into the St. Croix below Gordon Dam. Medium or higher water levels are necessary.

### Black River

The Black River flows into the Nemadji and may be difficult to navigate subject to trees and water levels.

### Nemadji River

The majority of this river in Wisconsin is canoeable with little gradient along its entire length.

The Lake Superior Water Trail (LSWT) is a network of mapped access points and recreational resources along Wisconsin's Lake Superior south shore. The water trail provides a framework for a wealth of environmental, historical, and cultural experiences accessible along the Lake Superior coastline. The LSWT consists of two segments: a 40-mile segment from the St. Louis River to Port Wing and a 30 mile segment from Ashland to the Montreal River at the Wisconsin-Michigan state line

### ***Fishing***

Douglas County has 154 named and 277 unnamed lakes totaling 14,113 acres. Fishing resources are abundant, especially in the southern part of the county. Some of these lakes include Amnicon, Whitefish, Minnesuing, Nebagamon, St. Croix, and the Gordon Flowage.

Popular game fish include walleye, bass, musky, pan fish, and northern pike. Largemouth bass are the most abundant game fish species in the county and northern pike rank second. Lakes lying within the Amnicon River watershed are known for their muskies.

Trout streams number 59 and comprise about two hundred thirty-three miles of streams. Streams are classified I, II, or III with the majority being Class I. There are 111.1 miles of class I trout streams, 55.8 miles of class II, and 66.3 in class III in Douglas County.

Class I streams have high quality trout waters that have sufficient natural reproduction to sustain populations of wild trout at or near carry capacity. Consequently, streams in Class I require no stocking of hatchery trout. These streams or stream sections are often small and may contain small or slow-growing trout, especially in the headwaters. Class II Streams may have some natural reproduction, but not enough to utilize available food and space. Therefore, stocking is required to maintain a desirable sport fishery. Class II streams have good survival and carryover of adult trout, often producing some fish larger than average size. Class III waters are marginal trout habitat with no natural reproduction occurring. They require annual stocking of trout to provide trout fishing. Generally, there is no carryover of trout from one year to the next. Ten of the streams have more than one classification. Good trout waters exist within the watersheds of the Bois Brule River with brook trout as the main species.

The waters of Lake Superior adjoining Douglas County contain walleye and fishing in the St. Louis River has become popular particularly in the spring and early summer. This is largely because of warmer water temperatures and a general lack of high quality spawning streams and offshore shoal areas near the west end of the lake. The most commonly creeded fish species of these waters are lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, silver (coho) salmon, northern pike, walleye, and smallmouth bass. Seasonal seining of smelt is also a popular springtime recreational pursuit.

### ***Golfing***

Several excellent golf courses are located throughout Douglas County providing recreational opportunities to the amateur and experienced golfers. The following is a list of golf course in Douglas County.

Forest Point GC -	9 holes	Pattison Park GC -	9 holes	Bottens Green Acres -	9 holes
Norwood GC -	9 holes	Poplar GC -	18 holes	Gordon Pines GC -	9 holes
Hidden Greens N GC -	18 holes	Nemadji GC -	36 holes		

### ***Downhill Skiing***

Mont du Lac, located in the far NW corner of Douglas County is the only downhill ski area in the County offering skiing, snow-boarding, and tubing. It has 12 runs, with the longest being 3,000 feet and is accessible by four (4) chair lifts. At approximately 80 acres in size, it is accessible via STH 23. Outside Douglas County, Spirit Mountain in Duluth, Minnesota, also provides downhill skiing, snowboarding, and tubing facilities.

### ***Cross Country Skiing***

Three groomed cross country skiing areas are available in Douglas County.

- Douglas County Forest

The Douglas County Forest is the largest county forest in Wisconsin, with 277,034 acres. These lands are managed for multiple uses to provide a variety of recreational opportunities, including cross country skiing, as well as to provide timber for production.

The Douglas County Ski Trails area is 10.35 miles of groomed ski trails overlooking the scenic St. Croix River and pine forests in the Towns of Solon Springs and Gordon, just east of STH 53. The entire ski trail system is rated as easy. Two trail head parking areas are available with the north trail head parking area located off Hungry Bear County Forest Road and the south trail head located off Flowage Lane. Informational kiosks are available at each trailhead.

- City of Superior Municipal Forest Ski Trails

The Superior Forest Ski Trails are located near the City of Superior, Wisconsin, with over 26 kilometers of groomed, beginner to advanced trails, part of which are designated for skate skiing. Use of the trail system is on a fee-based system. Skijoring (Dog-Assisted, Cross Country Skiing) is available on a 5-mile portion of the Orange Trail on Chase's Point (shared with snowmobiles/ATVs).

- Brule River Forest Ski Trails

The Afterhours Ski Trail is located within the Brule River State Forest. Trail head parking is located on Afterhours Road, just south of USH 2, and includes a heated shelter and restrooms. Approximately 25 kilometers of groomed ski trail are available for track and skate-skiing. A state trail pass is required for all users 16 years of age or older and can be purchased at the trailhead using the self-registration materials provided.

A snowshoe trail system is also located within the Afterhours Ski Trail area and accessible at the trailhead parking area.

### ***Target Shooting and Rifle, Paintball, and Archery Ranges***

A number of facilities are located throughout Douglas County providing target, trap, rifle shooting, archery, and paintball experiences.

- Ambridge Gun Club, sign on CTH "Z" in Parkland Township
- Aurora Wisconsin Outdoors Club in Oakland Township
- Douglas County Rifle/Pistol Club, Inc., near CTH "K", Parkland
- George Constance Sr. Memorial Rifle Range on CTH "Z", near Superior
- Fort Douglas Shooting Center in Parkland Township
- Hawthorne Trap Club, just off CTH "B"
- Superior Firepower Paintball range in the Town of Superior
- Superior Municipal Archery Range, City of Superior
- Superior Trap and Gun Club, Town of Superior near STH 35
- Northwoods Rifle Range, Town of Gordon east of STH 53 on CTH "Y"

### ***Trail Corridors***

Recreational trails and trail opportunities are abundant in Douglas County. Trail use ranges from motorized to non-motorized with extensive use on public lands primarily in the Douglas County Forest.

Major trail corridors include the Tri County Corridor Trail, Gandy Dancer Trail, the Wild Rivers Trail, Saunders Grade Trail, and numerous other interconnecting routes which function primarily as snowmobile trails.

### ***ATV Trails***

In 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recorded 5,405 ATVs registered in Douglas County. This represents a 13 percent increase in registered vehicles since 2007. UTVs (Utility Terrain Vehicle) have increased in popularity. As of 2013, 291 registered UTVs are recorded in Douglas County. Douglas County forest lands provide 295.8 miles of winter-use only trails. The Douglas County Forest, Parks, and Recreation Committee with the Forestry Department continue to develop year-round ATV trails and to create through-county links and trail loops, however their ability is often limited by geographical and environmental concerns/features. Vegetation, soils, and water resources can tolerate some use but overuse causes damage. Repeated passes by wheeled vehicles can kill vegetation and lead to soil erosion. Operating vehicles in streams, rivers, or lakes lowers water quality, damages stream banks, and disrupts aquatic vegetation. Therefore, to minimize damage, all users are required to operate their vehicles in such a manner to avoid damage to vegetation, soils, or water resources. In addition to the 295.8 miles of Douglas County winter-use only ATV trails, the Tri County Trail Corridor and Brule River Forest have ATV routes available. Development of summer ATV trails has been increasing over the past five years. As of 2013, 86.2 miles of summer ATV trails were available throughout various locations.

***Snowmobile Trails*** Douglas County provides hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails. In 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources had 2,149 snowmobiles registered in Douglas County, compared to 2,099 in 2007. Over 300 miles of state funded trails, club trails, and Brule River State Forest Trails contribute to the countywide network of excellent groomed trails. In addition to the 300 miles of the Douglas County trail system, the Tri County Corridor is available for snowmobile use.

The Tri-County Corridor Trail is a year-round, multi-use recreational trail. It consists of over 60 miles of trail, paralleling portions of STH 2, stretching from Superior to Ashland. The corridor is a major connecting route to all other trails in Douglas, Bayfield, and Ashland Counties and passes through many rural communities. The Tri-County Corridor is under the jurisdiction of and maintained by the Tri-County Corridor Commission.

The Wild Rivers Trail is a 96-mile multi-use recreational trail traveling along the abandoned Soo Line railroad grade. The trail meanders through Barron, Douglas, and Washburn Counties and passes through numerous charming and unique northland

communities. The route was originally established by the railroad to connect the growing ports of Duluth and Superior to the rest of the state and nation.

The Gandy Dancer State Trail is a county-operated 98-mile multi-use trail that crosses the Wisconsin/Minnesota border twice on its way from St. Croix Falls to Superior. A highlight is the 520-foot bridge over the scenic St. Croix River near Danbury.

The Brule State Forest has designated snowmobile trails within its boundary. A snowmobile parking area and shelter are located south of Brule along STH 27 providing snowmobilers with access to the Brule-St. Croix Snowmobile Trail (Trail 27 and 27A).

### ***Off-Highway Motorcycle Trails***

Developed in 2009, the Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) trail system is located in the Town of Summit along Foxboro-Chaffey Road, approximately 7.5 miles west of STH 35. A trail head has been developed for vehicles with trailers and has direct access to the trail. The OHM trail is located on Douglas County Forest property and consists of 5 miles of single-track trail and connects directly to 27 miles of single track and 18 miles of multi-use trails within Minnesota's Nemadji State Forest.

### ***Horseback Riding***

Town roads, public land roads, and old logging trails offer numerous horse riding trail opportunities in Douglas County. The Douglas County Wildlife Management Area (Bird Sanctuary) has approximately 14 miles of maintained horse trails in addition to trailer parking, stables, and corrals located near a clubhouse facility.

The Brule State Park offers many miles of trails/roads for horseback riding, including the Brule-St. Croix Snowmobile Trail, hunter walking trails and numerous back roads. The North Country Trail is for foot traffic only.

Persons can ride on the entire length of the Tri-County Corridor, 8.4 miles of the Saunders Trail, 17.6 miles of the Gandy Dancer Trail, and all of the Wild Rivers Trail in Douglas County. Riders should be aware that motorized use is also allowed on these trails. All county forest roads and trails on county land open for motorized use are also open for horseback riding.

### ***Public Lands***

Over 37 percent of the land surface area of Douglas County is in public ownership which includes county, state (WDNR), and federal (Park Service).

### ***Hunting***

Over 400,000 acres are open to public hunting and trapping in Douglas County with approximately 65 percent of this being county forest land. Game species include deer, squirrels, rabbits, turkey, grouse, woodcock, bear, and waterfowl. In addition to the extensive public land holdings, private forest cropland, mainly industrial forest ownership, is also open for hunting. Extensive recreation trail development provides access to many of these hunting areas.

### ***Scenic Roads and Sightseeing***

Douglas County has many scenic roads. Paved and gravel roadways and many miles of improved forest roads that provide for enjoyable travel through very beautiful northwoods country.

### ***Lake Superior***

Douglas County boundaries encompass a portion of Lake Superior. The mainland shore bordering Lake Superior is approximately one hundred three miles in length or about 17 percent of Wisconsin's Lake Superior shore. The Superior harbor and St. Louis River basin provide the only shelter area for recreational boating along the Douglas County shore. In addition, there are other boat launching ramps at the mouths of the Amnicon, Middle, and Bois Brule Rivers providing small boat access to the lake. Also, boat access is available in Oliver for the St. Louis River and in the City of Superior. The climate and weather is favorable for recreational activities during the months of May through October. Popular recreational activities along the Lake Superior shore include fishing, kayaking, hunting, camping, hiking, and scenic pursuits. Swimming in Lake Superior is hampered by extremely cold water. Water sport activities, such as sailing and pleasure boating, are steadily increasing and now make up over 50 percent of the boating activity on the lake.

### ***Summary of Existing Lake Superior and St. Louis Bay Access Sites in Douglas County***

Public access to Lake Superior takes many forms, whether walking or drive-up. The "Lake Superior Public Access Study" and Lake Superior Water Trail identifies all known access points and inventories features of each location.

### ***Partially Developed Sites***

Partially developed sites include those sites that provide some but not all of the minimum small boat access design standards.

#### ***Sajec Landing - Douglas County & Village of Oliver***

Facilities: Concrete launch ramp with dock, parking area and trash barrel.  
This is a major boat access to the upper St. Louis River on the Wisconsin side.

Access: One lane gravel road ¼ mile from CTH "W".

Development Constraints: Parking limited due to available space.

Ownership: State of Wisconsin.

#### ***McClures Landing - Superior***

Facilities: Winter Access Only. No restrooms.

Access: Adjacent to Billings Drive in the City of Superior.

Ownership: City of Superior

#### ***Billings Park - City of Superior***

Facilities: Small parking area at the base of a steep narrow access road with a good ramp. Located in Billings Park on N. 21<sup>st</sup> Street.

Access: Adjacent to Billings Drive.  
Development Constraints: Development limited due to space.  
Ownership: City of Superior.

Amnicon River - Douglas County

Facilities: A concrete ramp and parking provide a protected small boat access to Lake Superior on the Amnicon River. The main parking area is located approximately 150 yards up a steep road from a small turnaround with parking at the ramp.  
Access: Three miles from STH 13 on gravel road.  
Development Constraints: Limited space at ramp will confine expansion to upper parking area.  
Ownership: Douglas County.

Arrowhead Bridge - City of Superior

Facilities: Located at the old bridge site. Facilities include double ramp and dock, paved parking launch area, lighting, restrooms, day-use picnicking and fishing pier.  
Access: On Billings Drive - City of Superior.  
Development Constraints: Limited space for expansion of parking.  
Ownership: City of Superior.  
User Fees: Boat launch fee.

Barkers Island - City of Superior

Facilities: Paved parking area, ramp and dock, fish cleaning facilities with area lighting. Restroom facilities are available.  
Access: On Barkers Island in City of Superior.  
Development Constraints: Limited amount of space available.  
Ownership: City of Superior.  
User Fees: Boat launch fee.

Loons Foot Landing - City of Superior

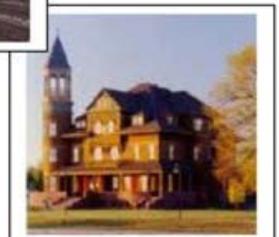
Facilities: Restrooms, fish cleaning facilities, large paved parking area (+50 units), double ramp and docks.  
Access: Adjacent to STH 2.  
Development Constraints: Limited to existing space.  
Ownership: City of Superior.  
User Fee: Boat launch fee.

**Unique Resources**

*Historical Sites*

The following is a list of known historical sites within Douglas County.

- S.S. Meteor
- Fairlawn Mansion and Museum



- Burlington Ore Docks
- Evergreen Park Sanitarium (Middle River Health Care Facility)
- Brule River
- “Historical Marker”, Wisconsin Point
- Overlook Park - Chief Kabamabe

### ***Bois Brule River***

The Bois Brule River is Wisconsin’s most famous and scenic trout stream. It is also noted for canoeing and its scenery. Spring fed and bordered predominantly by a northern coniferous forest, the Brule flows in the former channel of a larger river, which once flowed in the opposite direction and drained the waters of the melting ice of glacial Lake Duluth. The receding glacier created Lake Superior and carved the valley now occupied by the Brule. Instead of flowing southward out of Lake Superior, the Brule now flows northward into it.

The Bois Brule River is 44 miles in length with 325.3 surface acres. From its headwater fork downstream to Lake Superior, the river falls a total of 420 feet. The characteristics of the upper and lower sections of the Brule River are strikingly different and are divided by the Copper Range, near Copper Range Campground. The upper 26 miles of the river has a drop of only 92 feet, an average fall of 3 feet per mile. The lower 18 miles of the river from the start of the Copper Range to Lake Superior has a fall of 328 feet, for an average drop of 17 feet per mile. The upper river, from its source downstream to the Cedar Island area, flows through a broad, flat wilderness bog valley rich in springs.

The recreational value of the Bois Brule River valley was recognized and its immediate watershed was set aside as a state forest in 1907. Today, the boundary of the Brule River State Forest encompasses the entire stream and approximately 56,000 gross acres within the boundary; the state currently owns approximately 47,000 acres. Approximately 25 miles of the river’s frontage are now in public ownership.

At the mouth of the Bois Brule River where it empties into Lake Superior is a beautiful sandy beach, a limited use boat landing, restroom facilities, and parking area. Public access to the Bois Brule River is available at nine public road crossings and seven walking trails from public hunting and fishing parking lots along the river. Private development on the river is light but concentrated south of STH 2.

### ***Brule River State Forest***

Annually, over 120,000 people visit the Brule River State Forest. The Forest was created in 1907 with a gift of 4,300 acres for forestry purposes. The Brule River State Forest received a big 100th birthday gift in 2007- close to 6,000 acres. The land acquisition was due to a collaboration of the Conservation Fund and Wausau Paper Mills, Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Fund, a total of 5,889.13 acres of property were added to the Brule River State Forest, bringing the total property size to almost 47,000 acres. This was an important acquisition because the land will now be left undeveloped for public use without the possibility of becoming fragmented in the future.

The goals adopted by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for future management of the Brule River State Forest are to protect, perpetuate, and restore the unique natural character of the Brule River and its adjoining state forest lands. This state forest is part of a bigger picture that includes the regional landscape, communities and many diverse interests statewide. To balance human needs with the ecological integrity of the forest, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources must prepare an updated forest master plan. This master plan will address both the use and management of forest lands and will reflect the Brule Forest's unique character and its relationship to the regional landscape, providing ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits for present and future generations.

Other benefits provided by the state forest include: timber harvesting, public hunting and fishing, beautiful scenery, snowmobiling, hiking, canoeing, camping, picnicking, and sightseeing. The Brule Ranger Station, located 1.25 miles south of STH 2 on the east bank of the Brule River, is the forest headquarters. The Brule Fish Hatchery is also located within the forest west of STH 27 about one mile south of Brule. The Brule River State Forest offers exceptional recreational opportunities, including wildlife viewing, five State Natural Areas, a 16-mile stretch of the North Country National Scenic Trail, eight miles of frontage on Lake Superior, the Bois Brule State Fish Hatchery, and much more.

There are two campgrounds within the forest. The Bois Brule Campground, with 20 primitive sites (17 pull-in and 3 walk-in), is located on the Brule River, one mile south of STH 2 on the road to the Brule Ranger Station. The Copper Range Campground, with 15 primitive sites, is near the river four miles north of Brule on CTH "H".

### ***St. Croix Flowage***

The St. Croix Flowage is located on the St. Croix River west of Gordon, sometimes called Gordon Lake. The flowage was constructed in 1936-37 as a WPA project and is approximately 1,913 acres in size. Mean depth of the flowage is 7 feet. The shoreline of the St. Croix Flowage is relatively undeveloped due partly to the low and swampy nature of the shore, abundant aquatic vegetation and the county owns much of the lakeshore. The area is considered an outstanding waterfowl and furbearer producer. The fishery is composed of northern pike, largemouth bass, and pan fish. Douglas County has a developed access located on the north shore. Approximately 24 miles of the flowage's 29.1 miles of shoreline is county owned. There is also excellent access at the Gordon Dam Park on the west end of the flowage.

### ***Douglas County Forest***

A total of 277,034 acres of county owned land is entered under the County Forest Law within Douglas County. Approximately 80 percent of the county forest is classed as commercial forest, while the remaining 20 percent is classified as non-forest area, such as water, marsh, and right-of-ways.

These large tracts of publicly owned forest lands provide unlimited opportunities for a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Hiking, picnicking, hunting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, berry picking, camping, and sightseeing are available.

The mission of the Douglas County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2006-2020 states “The primary responsibility of the Douglas County Forest Department is to, on behalf of Douglas County residents, provide stewardship to forest resources, develop and maintain recreational opportunities, and serve as an informational resource to the public. County Forest resources should be protected from natural catastrophes such as fire, insect and disease outbreaks, and human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation, and excessive development. Although managed for environmental needs such as the protection of watersheds and rare plant and animal communities and the maintenance of plant and animal diversity, these same resources also must provide for societal needs, including recreational opportunities and production of raw materials for wood-using industries. Management must balance local needs with broader state, national, and global concerns by integrating sound forestry, practices related to, wildlife, fisheries, endangered resources, water quality, soil, and recreation.”

County forest resources are recognized as an asset of the people and should be protected from natural catastrophes such as wildfire, insect, and disease outbreak and from the impacts of human threats such as encroachment, over-utilization, environmental degradation, and excessive development. While managing for environmental needs such as air, water, soils, endangered resources, and biological diversity, these same resources must be managed for sociological needs which include provisions for recreational opportunities and the production of raw materials for wood-using industries. Forest managers must balance local needs with broader concerns through integration of resource management practices. Integrated management will provide this variety of products and amenities for the future while sustaining, protecting, and enhancing the county forest resources.

### **Natural Areas**

About 5,000 acres of nearly pristine northern forests, pine barrens, wildlife flowages, wetlands, and bogs in Douglas County have been permanently preserved as State Natural Areas. The areas were designated through work done by the County’s Forestry Department and the State Department of Natural Resources.

- **Bear Beach (Brule State Forest)** features several extensive stretches of undeveloped beach along the Lake Superior shore, west of the Brule River mouth. The beaches are composed mostly of sand and are unvegetated due to their exposure to wave and ice action. Locally, there are small, scattered pockets of cobblestones and driftwood "gardens". The site includes the slump clay banks that contain uncommonly occurring combinations of plants and animals. Bear Beach represents a rare opportunity to protect beach and clay banks on over five miles of undeveloped, unobstructed Lake Superior shore.
- **Belden Swamp (Douglas County Forest)** is a huge wetland straddling the divide between two major watersheds. It forms the headwaters of the Spruce River, which flows south into the Mississippi River watershed; and the Black River, which flows north into the Lake Superior drainage basin. The wetland complex contains the largest remaining undisturbed open bog in Wisconsin. The large size, isolated location, and

roadless aspect provide excellent habitat for the resident pack of timber wolves. Also present are four rare species: LeConte's sparrow, yellow-bellied flycatcher, northern harrier, and the Jutta Arctic butterfly.

- **Big Manitou Falls and Gorge (Pattison State Park)** contains a unique river gorge carved out of both sandstone and basalt and includes the 165' high roaring, cascading falls of the Black River. In the few thousand years since the last glacier retreated, the river slowly eroded through the layers of soft sandstone and clay and gradually formed the steep sided gorge. While the river forged a relatively easy pathway through the sandstone, upon meeting the resistant lava rock, the river could not erode as rapidly, and the water's power was expended downwards, creating Big Manitou Falls. Big Manitou Falls is the fourth highest waterfall east of the Rocky Mountains.
- Located on end moraine, **Black Lake Bog (Douglas County Forest)** contains a vast, inaccessible, undisturbed wetland complex of bog lake, open bog, and northern wet forest, a community poorly represented in the younger drift-west zone. The bog and Black Lake form the headwaters of the Black River. Wildlife found on the tract includes waterfowl, great blue heron, beaver, and short-eared owl, which may nest in the bog. The area is also within the territory of a pack of timber wolves.
- The **Bois-Brule River (Brule River State Forest)** is an outstanding south-shore stream of Lake Superior, flowing north in the former south-flowing outlet of Glacial Lake Duluth. Numerous small springs and several large spring ponds occur upstream and downstream of the natural area. Bird life is exceptionally varied. Such uncommon species as olive-sided flycatcher, golden-crowned kinglet, Lincoln's sparrow, saw-shet owl, and black-backed woodpecker nest here regularly.
- **Blueberry Swamp (Douglas County Forest)** occupies a drainage divide between the Brule River to the east and Poplar River to the west. The eastern half comprises the headwaters region of Blueberry Creek, which flows southeast for 3 miles before joining Nebagamon Creek that continues east and enters the Brule River. The core of the swamp holds mineral-rich waters and harbors a forest of black ash and white cedar. The swamp provides important habitat for numerous rare plant and animals including a diverse array of orchids. Birds include yellow-bellied flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*), golden-winged warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), Canada warbler, evening grosbeak, and blue-headed vireo. The relative undisturbed core of this site makes it an extremely valuable ecological reference area since it has been rated one of the top hardwood swamps in all of northern Wisconsin.
- **Brule Glacial Spillway (Brule River State Forest)** represents features following the retreat of the glaciers, where Lake Superior drained southwestward through what are now the Bois Brule and St. Croix River valleys. This created the long, narrow, steep-sided and relatively straight valley, which exists today and possesses many unusual ecological attributes. The present Brule River originates from springs within an extensive conifer swamp near Solon Springs, and flows north to Lake Superior. The

upper stretches of the river are slow, with many meanders, and receive cold, clean water from numerous springs and seepages.

- **Brule River Boreal Forest (Brule River State Forest)** situated along the steep slopes and terraces bordering the Brule River is in various stages of recovery. The most mature stands feature large, white pine, white spruce, balsam fir, balsam poplar, and occasionally white cedar on the slopes. White spruce is reproducing well. The younger stands are generally aspen dominated with paper birch being a significant component of more disturbed stands. Shrubs include alder, northern bush honeysuckle, early low blueberry, and round-leaved dogwood. Characteristic herbs are large-leaved aster, wild sarsaparilla, twinflower, lady fern, bracken fern, wild strawberry, American starflower, and Canada mayflower.
- **Brule Rush Lake (Brule River State Park)** features a 22-acre soft-water seepage lake with an undisturbed shoreline and a good example of an inland lake beach. The lake is slightly alkaline and has clear water, a sandy bottom, and a maximum depth of 9 feet. The lake experiences significant natural water level fluctuations, which have kept the littoral zone open and allowed colonization by several distinct floristic associations. The surrounding uplands are forested with jack pine, red pine, and aspen.
- **Buckley Creek and Barrens (Douglas County Forest)** contains extensive pine/oak barrens with surrounding wetlands including northern sedge meadow, northern wet forest, alder thicket, streams, and spring pond. Both the barrens and wetlands are structurally diverse and rich in species. Numerous butterfly species can be found here including four rare Wisconsin species: the dusted skipper, cobweb skipper, Henry's elfin, and Gorgone checkerspot. Birds include the clay-colored sparrow, brown thrasher, field sparrow, Brewer's blackbird, Nashville warbler, and the Connecticut warbler, a species of special concern. Osprey and bald eagle have also been found here.
- Located at the confluence of the Pokegama and St. Louis Rivers near Lake Superior, **Dwight's Point and Pokegama Wetlands (Superior Municipal Forest)** feature boreal forest, emergent marsh, and wet clay flats supporting shrub swamp and wet meadow. The natural area borders the St. Louis River estuary, which dissects the uplands into a series of narrow, steep-sided ridges, the largest of which is Dwight's Point. Resident birds include many species associated with mature conifer forests, such as Blackburnian, black-throated green, Cape May, and pine warblers. Rare plants found here include the threatened sweet colt's-foot, endangered clustered bur-reed, and small yellow water crowfoot.
- **Empire Swamp (Douglas County Forest)** is a vast peatland complex that serves as the headwaters of the Tamarack River. This extensive site supports a diversity of natural communities including northern sedge meadow, northern wet forest, tamarack swamp, black ash swamp, alder thicket, open bog, and muskeg. This large wetland supports a great number of rare plant and animals species including 11 birds, 5 butterflies, and 9 plants.
- **Erickson Creek Forest and Wetlands (Douglas County Forest)** harbors a rich combination of natural communities with a diverse composition of species. Erickson

Creek forms the western boundary of the natural area before joining the Amnicon River on its journey to Lake Superior. Eighteen rare species have been identified in the natural area, including several birds, butterflies, and plants. This is the only known location in the state for the titania fritillary.

- **Flat Lake (Douglas County Forest)** is a shallow, 65-acre soft-water seepage lake with a fluctuating shoreline and a lush emergent and submergent marsh community. Sedges and rushes dominate the emergent vegetation. Of note is the presence of nesting Trumpeter Swans, the largest native waterfowl species in North America.
- **Goose Lake (Douglas County Forest)** is an undeveloped 22-acre soft-water seepage lake that supports a high quality, diverse inland beach community. The lake and wetlands are situated in sandy outwash areas that were once dominated by pine barrens prior to European settlement. These areas were subjected to regular fires along the lakeshores and sometimes throughout the wetlands creating habitat for sun-loving plants.
- **Mott's Ravine (Brule River State Forest)** lies on an old glacial outwash channel and contains the full range of vegetation expected on glacial outwash: natural jack pine forest, scrubby Hill's and bur oak thickets, and small pine barrens remnants. Historically, the vegetation of much of this area was pine barrens and pine-oak scrub with scattered patches of dry forest. Today, these community types are rare and declining throughout the western Great Lakes making their presence here very significant.
- **Nemadji River Floodplain Forest (Douglas County Forest)**, along the banks of the Nemadji River, supports a type of forest unusual in composition and perhaps unique in the state. Floodplain forests are very rare along rivers flowing north into Lake Superior, most being located along major rivers emptying into the Mississippi or Lake Michigan. Resident birds include the common raven, Nashville warbler, northern waterthrush, ovenbird, red-eyed vireo, hermit, and wood thrush, and rose breasted grosbeak. Nemadji River Floodplain Forest is owned by Douglas County as a County Forest Special Use Area.
- **Pokegama Carnegie Wetlands (Douglas County Forest)** situated on level clay flats between the Pokegama and Little Pokegama Rivers, feature an extensive mosaic of wetland vegetation containing many rare plant species. A tall complex of shrub wetlands composed of speckled alder and willows has the greatest coverage with small patches of open sedge meadow dominated by coarse leaved sedges and bluejoint grass also present.
- **Solon Springs Sharptail Barrens (Douglas County)**, situated on the rolling glacial outwash sand plain that extends from Burnett to Bayfield Counties, features a large pine barrens with widely scattered clumps of jack pine, Hill's oaks, bur oak grubs, and occasional red pine. Maintained by fire, the barrens are one of the best sharp-tailed grouse habitats in Wisconsin. Bird life is dominated by species, which require extensive

open landscapes including the rare sharp-tailed grouse, upland sandpiper warbler, and Tennessee warbler.

- **Upper Nemadji River Floodplain Forest (Douglas County Forest)**,s situated on terraces inside the sharp meanders of the Nemadji River is a forest type unique to the Lake Superior Clay region. The canopy of dominated by black ash with green ash, basswood, yellow birch, red maple, silver maple, balsam poplar, and bur oak. Scattered conifers are also present in the canopy but are most numerous on the steep slopes bordering the river and terraces. Included among these are white spruce, northern white cedar, white pine, and balsam fir.

State natural areas dedicate sites offering prime examples of native plant and animal communities that have largely escaped the influence of human settlement. These places are often the last refuges for rare and endangered plants and animals. Official dedication as a State natural area permanently protects the parcels for scientific research, teaching of conservation biology and preservation of their natural values for future generations. The Wisconsin's State Natural Area Program is the oldest of this kind in the nation having begun in 1951.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Class I Recreation Areas**

Douglas County administers and maintains four major recreational areas, Mooney Dam Park, Gordon Flowage Park, Lucius Woods County Park, and the Douglas County Wildlife Area (Bird Sanctuary). These facilities are classified as Class I areas as set forth by Douglas County Ordinance. All of these facilities receive heavy annual use and provide the backbone to the Douglas County recreation areas. General recommendations for these facilities include an overall program of landscaping, erosion control, maintenance of heavy traffic areas, upgrading of facilities, and shoreland restoration. Recommendations also address providing for accessibility in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for handicap access. Following are Douglas County Class I park descriptions and recommendations.

## MOONEY DAM COUNTY PARK

14293 S. Fowlers Circle, Gordon (Park)

14333 S. Fowlers Circle, Gordon (Boat Launch)



Located approximately 12 miles east of Gordon and 5 miles south of Barnes, Mooney Dam County Park provides camping, picnicking, and boating access to Lower Eau Claire Lake. Mooney Dam County Park is 35 acres in total size with 7 acres develop for recreational purposes.

Eleven drive-in non-electric campgrounds are located throughout the park with each site having a gravel parking, picnic table, garbage can, and fire ring. A water pump is available within the park for public use. Seasonal camping is open from two Fridays before Memorial Day to one week after Labor Day.

Administration and maintenance of the park consists of general supervision and camper registration handled by one seasonal lead worker and one seasonal helper. Staff split their time between Mooney Dam County Park and Gordon Dam County Park.

In addition to the camping area, a county maintained public boat launch is located east of the campground and Lower Eau Claire Lake Dam. The boat launch consists of a concrete pad and 24-foot dock. The dock is removed in late fall prior to ice-up and reinstalled in the spring shortly after ice-out.

### **Existing facilities:**

- Eleven camping sites (non-electric) with picnic table and fire ring
- Restroom (vault/no showers)
- Paved boat launch and concrete pad at waters edge
- 24' boat dock



A number of improvements have been made to the Mooney Dam County Park over the past several years. These park and boat launch improvements benefit both day users and campers.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
Erosion control measures including rip-rap along the river bank adjacent to the camp sites.
Campsite improvements.
Improved service road to campground and launch.
New pre-cast vault restroom w/ handicapped accessibility.
New county park entrance sign and consolidated signage within the Park.
New boat launch dock (2008).



Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing park facilities will continue. Improvements to the Dam wing wall are scheduled to occur between 2014 - 2016.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Provide landscaping measures with vehicle barriers (large rocks eg.) at the northwest corner of the park	\$2,500 - \$3,500
Provide campsite improvements to include gravel pads, better delineated campsites, picnic tables and benches, and in-ground fire rings/grill tops.	\$2,500 per site
Provide ongoing reforestation measures in the camping area.	\$1,000 - \$3,000
Repair lake bottom at landing due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000

## GORDON DAM COUNTY PARK

7201 East County Highway Y, Gordon



Located approximately 7 miles west of Gordon, Gordon Dam County Park provides camping, swimming, play equipment, hiking, and boating access to the St. Croix Flowage and St. Croix River. Gordon Dam County Park has a total of 18 acres and borders National Park Service land associated with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

A total of 33 campsites are available (12 electric and 21 non-electric) with each site having gravel parking, picnic table, garbage can, and fire ring. Two water pumps are available within the park for public use. Seasonal camping is open from two Fridays before Memorial Day to one week after Labor Day. After Labor Day, off-season camping is available, to include winter camping. Services are limited with no electricity, no garbage, no road plowing.

Administration and maintenance of the Park consists of general supervision and camper registration handled by one seasonal lead worker and one seasonal helper. Staff split their time between Gordon Dam County Park and Mooney Dam County Park.

Day visitors to the Gordon Dam County Park have access to picnic sites, improved boating facilities (motor and canoe), swimming beach, vault toilets, and trails. A county maintained public boat launch to the St. Croix Flowage is located within the Park. The boat launch consists of a concrete pad and 24-foot dock. A walk-in canoe/kayak launch area is available to access the St. Croix River.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- 33 campsites with picnic tables & fire rings
- Hiking
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables & Grills
- Playground
- Paved Boat Launch



A number of improvements have been made to the Gordon Dam County Park over the past several years, benefiting both day users and campers.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
RV campsites with electrical hook-ups (20, 30, and 50 amp service).
New pre-cast vault restroom w/ handicapped accessibility.
Improved service road to campground and launch.
Applied erosion control measures and repairs to earthen dike.
New county park entrance sign and consolidated signage within the Park.
New blacktop along service road and boat launch

Over the next five years general maintenance and upkeep of the existing park facilities will continue.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Construct timber steps, retaining walls, or landscape in all areas where erosion is occurring, particularly from lake side campsites to water.	\$2,500 - \$3,500
Campsite renovation including gravel camp parking pads, delineated camp sites, and area wide landscaping, picnic tables, and in-ground fire rings/grill tops.	\$2,500 per site
Construct secure tool shed/maintenance building.	\$8,000 - \$15,000
Replace older/broken playground equipment and add additional equipment.	\$15,000 - \$30,000
Repair lake bottom at landing due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000



## LUCIUS WOODS COUNTY PARK

9231 E. Marion Avenue, Solon Springs



Located in the Village of Solon Springs along the shores of Upper St. Croix Lake, Lucius Woods County Park provides camping, swimming, playground equipment, picnic and event gathering facilities, canoe/kayak carry-in, and hiking trails all within the 41-acre park. The Park contains many virgin pine trees. The Lucius Woods Performing Arts Center is located in the park and is home to a variety of

summer performances. Performances are held under the band shelter with seating on the grassy hillside.

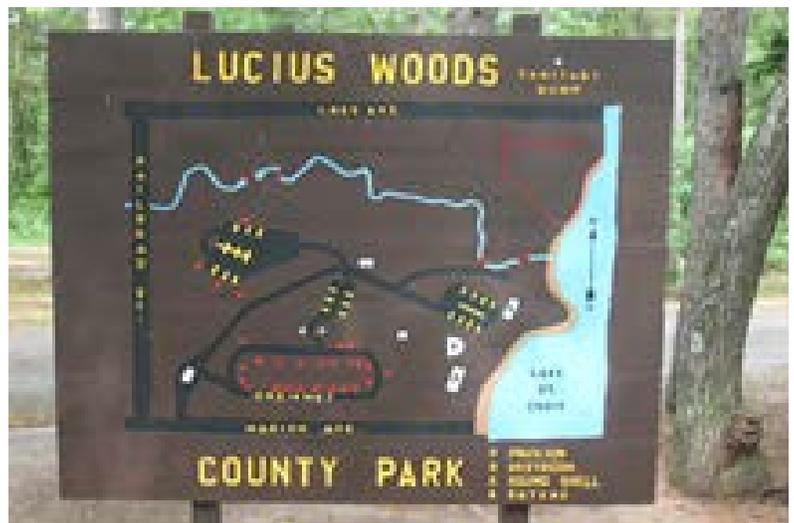
A total of 28 campsites are available (13 electric and 11 non-electric and 4 non-electric RV) within the Park with each site having unimproved parking, picnic table, garbage can, and fire ring. A water pump is available within the park for public use. Seasonal camping is open from two Fridays before Memorial Day to one week after Labor Day. Shower facilities, flush toilets, and running water is available for campers. A sanitary dump station for RV vehicles is located within the Park.

Administration and maintenance of the Park consists of one seasonal lead worker and two seasonal helpers.

Day visitors to the Lucius Woods County Park have access to picnic sites, picnic shelters (2) on a first come first served basis, swimming beach, restrooms, trails, and playground.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- Hiking Trails
- Multi Use Trail (Paved & Unpaved)
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables with Grills
- Playground
- 24 campsites with picnic tables & fire rings
- Sand swimming beach





A number of improvements have been made to the Lucius Woods County Park. These improvements benefit both day users and campers and strengthen the commitment to long-term availability for users.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
Constructed new hard surface access to park near the Village Hall.
Upgraded playground equipment (2013)
Refurbished upper shower rooms with epoxy (2013).
Refurbished lower bathrooms with epoxy (2013)
Replaced pavilion roof (2011)
New county park entrance sign and consolidated signage within the Park.
New blacktop within portions of the Park (2011-2013).
Upgraded existing 13 electrical sites to 50amp service and added water hook-ups to all electrical sites.
Continued reforestation efforts.

Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing park facilities will continue.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Continue landscaping with seeding and mulching through-out park and new tree planting.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Continue erosion control measures.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Continue reforestation efforts.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Replaced band shell roof.	\$20,000-\$30,000



## BIRD SANCTUARY

½ mile west of Hwy 53 on CTH M, Gordon and Solon Springs



Located in the Towns of Gordon and Solon Springs the Douglas County Wildlife Area is represented by 4,005 acres (994 acres under the ownership of the State of Wisconsin and 3,011 acres owned by Douglas County). The entire 4,005 acre Wildlife Area is managed by the Wisconsin DNR for sharp tailed grouse (includes the 3,011 acres the DNR leases from Douglas County). The area is located three miles north of Gordon, five miles from Solon Springs and one-half mile west of State Highway 53 on CTH "M".

The "Bird Sanctuary" is a 20 acre developed recreational property within the Wildlife Area, where a horse area (stables, corral, and kennels) and clubhouse is located. Within the Wildlife area national dog field trails take place and several miles of horse trails exist.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- Clubhouse
- Horse Stables and Corral
- Dog Kennels
- Horse Trails
- Camping
- Restrooms
- Picnic Shelter and Area



A number of improvements have been made to the Bird Sanctuary property. These improvements benefit the commitment to long-term availability of the property for users.

2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS
Constructed new horse stables and corral.
Continued to make improvements to trail system.
Installed new toilet facilities.
Continued to make maintenance improvements to clubhouse.
Created additional parking areas near clubhouse / stables.
Continued to make landscaping, signage, reforestation, and erosion control improvements.
Constructed a native plant garden.
Completed electrical upgrades in the Clubhouse and barn (2013)

Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS	COST ESTIMATES
Repaint the clubhouse building.	\$5,000 - \$8,000
Construct a new well.	\$10,000 - \$15,000
Upgrade and expand trail network.	\$5,000 - \$10,000
Provide reforestation measures.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Apply erosion control techniques.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Landscape around the facilities.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Consolidate signage throughout the area.	\$1,000 - \$3,500
Repair Clubhouse porch entrance area and improve accessibility (ADA) to the main entrance.	\$5,000 - \$10,000



## Class II Recreation Areas

Several Class 2 recreation areas are maintained by Douglas County. Class 2 recreation areas are distinctly different than Class 1 recreation areas in that Class 2 areas are “day-use-only” and do not allow overnight camping.

### ANNA-GENE PARK



This day-use area, located on Lyman Lake, is approximately 38 acres in size and located in the Town of Oakland approximately 8 miles west of State Highway 53 at the intersection of CTH L. The picnic area has 11 picnic tables and grills and a children’s playground. The paved entrance road is lined with large rocks and leads to a paved and designated 64-car parking lot. Camping is not allowed in the park. A system of trails is located in the wooded area of the Park.

Access to Lyman Lake is available at the improved boat launch. Seasonal help provide maintenance during the year.

#### **Existing Facilities:**

- Hiking Trails
- Vault Toilets
- Picnic Tables
- Grills
- Potable Water
- Playground
- Paved Boat Launch



A number of improvements have been made to the Anna-Gene County Park property. These improvements benefit the commitment to long-term availability of the property for users.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
Consolidated signage within the Park.
Continued to make park maintenance improvements to structures and road infrastructure.
Constructed hard surface path for handicapped access to restrooms.

Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Provide on-going landscape improvements.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Replace existing playground equipment.	\$10,000 - \$25,000
Continue park maintenance of structures and road infrastructure.	\$2,000 - \$15,000
Continue erosion control measures.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Continue reforestation/tree planting within the park.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Repair lake bottom at landing due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000



## LAKE MINNESUING COUNTY PARK

7837 South County Highway P, Bennett



This day-use swimming and picnic area is approximately 30 acres in size and located in the Town of Bennett on the north side of Lake Minnesuing. There is a 100 foot sandy beach, picnic area, and restrooms.

The boat landings to Lake Minnesuing (DNR and County) are not located within the Park. The DNR boat access is located approximately 3 miles from the Park along the southwest shoreline off Park Road. The County boat access is approximately 1 mile from the Park along the northwest shoreline off Hallberg Road.

A local citizens group has suggested significant improvements to the Park. Included in the proposal is a new paved parking area, walking paths through the Park leading to a fishing pier, picnic pavilion and restroom. Landscaping and tree plantings are also part of the proposed improvements.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- Picnic Tables & Grills
- Restrooms (vault)



A number of improvements have been made to the Lake Minnesuing County Park property. These improvements benefit the commitment to long-term availability of the property for users.



<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
Removal of old CTH P pavement, base and landscape.
Continued to make erosion improvements throughout the park.
Consolidated signage throughout the park.
Continue to provide tree planting throughout the park area.
Delineated parking area.
Boat launch road improvement (road) at launch located ¼ mile from Park.

Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Provide on-going landscape improvements near the swimming beach and park areas.	\$3,000 - \$8,000
Construct a hard surface ramp/path meeting ADA requirements from the parking area to the picnic, restrooms, and beach areas.	\$4,000 - \$8,000
Improve erosion issues throughout the Park.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Install playground equipment.	\$10,000 - \$30,000
Continue reforestation/tree planting within the park.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Construction of a pavilion	\$15,000 - \$25,000
Repair lake bottom at landings (near park) due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000



**Existing Facilities:**

- Youth Fishing Pier
- Picnic Tables

**PARK CREEK POND**



The Park Creek Pond Youth Fishing Area is an 11-acre pond located just west of Business 53 adjacent to the Douglas County Forestry Department in the Village of Solon Springs. The area is designated as a child’s fishing area. Children under the age of 14 can use this facility. This is a cooperative effort between the County, Village, Town of Solon Springs and Wisconsin DNR. Brook trout are the only existing species in the pond. It is stocked as needed. Benches and picnic tables adjacent to the county forestry building on the north side of the pond are available.

As part of a Douglas County Forestry maintenance facility near the Park Creek Pond, a master landscape plan for the Park Creek Pond has been developed. Parking improvements, walking paths and expanded youth fishing opportunities are planned in the future.



A number of improvements have been made to the Park Creek Pond property.



2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS
Continued annual weed control project.
Removed one wood retaining wall and reconstructed with natural materials.
Removed blighted buildings on the grounds.
Installed youth fishing pier.

Moving forward over the next five years a number of improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS	COST ESTIMATES
Remove remaining wood retaining wall and reconstruct with natural materials.	\$15,000 - \$18,000
Improve access to fishing pier, pavilion, and sidewalks, with an ADA accessible path.	\$15,000 - \$20,000
Annually monitor lake weed control efforts.	\$500
Consolidate signage to key locations.	\$2,000 - \$3,500
Continue reforestation/tree planting and landscaping within the park.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Improve parking area	\$5,000-\$10,000
Construction of a pavilion	\$15,000 - \$25,000
Construction of a floating walkway from the fishing pier to the sidewalk	\$50,000 - \$60,000

## LONG LAKE



Long Lake County Park is three acres in size and is a day-use area located in the Town of Solon Springs approximately 7 miles east of the Village of Solon Springs.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- Picnic Tables and Grills
- Restroom (vault)

A number of improvements have been made to the Anna-Gene County Park property. These improvements benefit the commitment to long-term availability of the property for users.

### 2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS

Gravel parking lot and access road (2010).

Moving forward over the next five years a number of ongoing improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.



2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS	COST ESTIMATES
Landscape Park with top soil, seed and mulch.	\$2,000 - \$4,000
Apply erosion control techniques.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Provide reforestation measures.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Develop landscaping within the park.	\$3,000 - \$8,000
Consolidate signage to key locations.	\$2,000 - \$3,500
Annually monitor lake weed control efforts	\$500
Improve parking area with secure parking barriers.	\$4,000 - \$10,000



## BASS LAKE COUNTY PARK



Bass Lake County Park is three acres in size and is a day-use area located in the Town of Solon Springs approximately 8 miles east of the Village of Solon Springs.

### **Existing Facilities:**

- Picnic Tables and Grills
- Restroom (vault)

A number of improvements have been made to the Bass Lake County Park property. These improvements benefit the commitment to long-term availability of the property for users.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
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General maintenance of the grounds.
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Moving forward over the next five years a number of ongoing improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

<b>2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>
Continue maintenance of gravel roadway.	\$500 - \$3,000
Develop landscaping within the park.	\$2,000 - \$3,000
Apply erosion control techniques.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Provide reforestation measures.	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Consolidate signage to key locations.	\$2,000 - \$3,500
Explore weed control measures within the lake.	\$500 - \$2,000



**LYMAN LAKE BOAT LANDING**



Lyman Lake Boat Landing is located in the Town of Oakland and has no facilities.

Improvements made to the Lyman Lake Boat Landing have included the following.

<b>2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS</b>
Updated signage (2013).
General maintenance.
Boat dock pier (2008)

Moving forward over the next five years a number of ongoing improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS	COST ESTIMATES
Continue maintenance of gravel roadway and boat access.	\$500 - \$2,000
Develop landscaping within the park.	\$2,000 - \$3,000
Apply erosion control techniques.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Develop informational signage to one key location.	\$2,000 - \$3,500
Provide reforestation measures	\$200 - \$500
Repair lake bottom at landing due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000



## NORTH FLOWAGE

North Flowage Boat Landing is located in the Town of Gordon and is approximately two acres in size. At the boat landing, facilities include a concrete boat landing with dock, restrooms (vault), ADA parking, trap rock parking lot, and gravel road.



Improvements made to the North Flowage Boat Landing have included the following.

2009-2013 IMPROVEMENTS
Repaired source hole at end of concrete boat pad.
Extended the concrete boat pad to make it longer
General maintenance.
Boat dock pier (2008)



Moving forward over the next five years a number of ongoing improvements have been identified. General maintenance and upkeep of the existing facilities will continue.

2014-2018 RECOMMENDATIONS	COST ESTIMATES
Continue maintenance of gravel roadway and boat access.	\$1,000 - \$2,000
Continue erosion control measures and landscaping.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Apply erosion control techniques.	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Continue reforestation measures, if necessary.	\$200 - \$500
Repair lake bottom at landing due to scouring from boats power loading.	\$1,000 - \$5,000

## Appendix

The draft 2014-2018 Douglas County Outdoor Recreation Plan was made available to the public in a number of venues. Copies of the plan were distributed to all County Board members, and chief elected officials of each city, town, and village. A news release was distributed to local media. Copies of the plan were made available at the Superior Public Library, Douglas County Clerk's Office, and Douglas County Forestry Department. A digital copy of the plan was placed on the Douglas County website and that of Northwest Regional Planning Commission. The availability of the plan was posted on the Douglas County Facebook page. A questionnaire was provided to make public comments and was included with all distribution letters, as well as a fill-in-form on the county and planning commission websites.

Public comments were received and are summarized into three main areas; access to placed deep within public forest lands, bicycle paths/trails, and dam replacement and lake preservation. A summary of the comments included the following.

- There needs to be more access to the interior properties of Douglas County Forests, via access roads, primarily for elderly persons to access hunting, fishing, hiking.
- Listing of historical sites of public interest.
- Ownership of a dam and preservation of a lake the dam controls.
- Development of a county-wide bicycle plan and potential bicycle trails and lands.

Douglas County Forestry staff reviewed the public comments and contacted individuals who submitted public comment, where identifiable.

	Park and Recreation Areas Activity and Facility Table										
	County Parks							Recreation Areas			
	Anna-Gene	Lucius Woods	Gordon Dam	Mooney Dam	Lake Minnesuing	Long Lake	Bass Lake	Park Pond	Creek	The Bird Sanctuary	Forestry Dept.
<b>Activities</b>											
Fishing			X		X	X	X	X			
Multi-use Trail			X						X	X	
Hiking	X	X								X	
Swimming	X	X	X		X	X	X				
CC Skiing										X	
<b>Facilities</b>											
Restrooms	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Handicapped Acc.	X	X	X								
Parking	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	
Camping			X	X							
Fee Camping		X	X								
Picnic Shelter		X		X							X
Picnic Tables	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Grills	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Drinking Water	X	X	X	X							
Benches	X		X	X				X			
Garbage	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Playground	X	X	X								
<b>Boating</b>											
Paved Launch	X		X	X							
Unpaved Launch											
Dock			X	X	X-at launch						

