

COMPREHENSIVE
PARKS
AND
RECREATION
PLAN

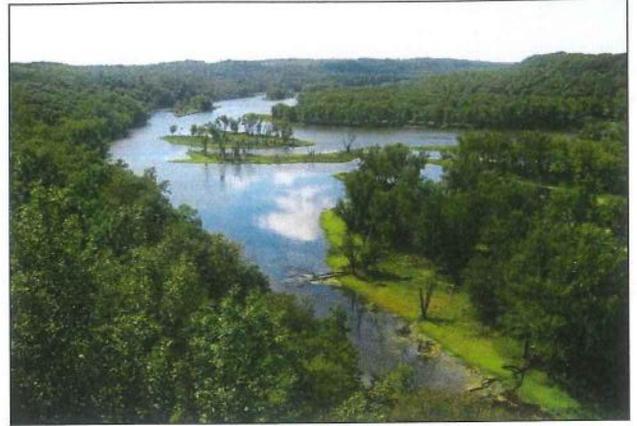
2019-2023

Prepared By

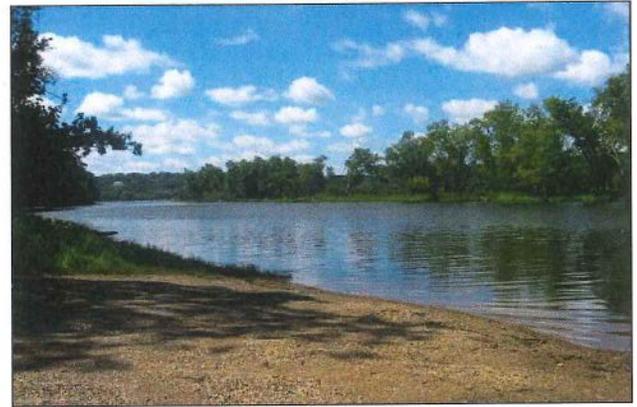
Town of Somerset

PARKS, RECREATION &
PLANNING COMMITTEE

January 2019



St. Croix River



Twin Springs



Bass Lake



Parnell Prairie Preserve



Pine Lake

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PARKS & RECREATION MAP

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Somerset values parks and recreation as an important local public service. The purpose of the Town of Somerset: Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (2019-2023) is to suggest and promote ways and means of providing recreation for all the citizen groups in the Town. The Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan will provide an inventory and evaluation of existing parks, analyze demographic trends, develop criteria for potential future park locations, create goals, objectives, and policies, prioritize projects and identify funding resources. The public parks and recreational areas should reflect the Town's goals and values.

The Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (2019-2023) seeks to identify the needs of the present community and also research the needs of the Town over the next five years. The State of Wisconsin requires communities to prepare and adopt a five-year park and outdoor recreation plan to maintain eligibility for State and Federal grant and loan programs. This document is also intended to be used as a basis for local capital budgeting.

The recommendations herein are based on the following factors: population, the existing landscape, representative citizen attitudes and desires, existing recreational facilities, available funding assistance, and the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to acquire, develop, and maintain a creative, efficient, and responsive park system available to all residents and non-residents. The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee strives to provide a variety of park areas that contribute to the

attractiveness of the Town, the social and economic health of the community, and the well-being of individuals and families while protecting, conserving, and enhancing the Town's natural, historical, and cultural resources.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7 PM. All meeting agendas are posted. The public is invited to attend. The Town of Somerset: Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (2019-2023) was discussed and completed during these regular monthly meetings.

While the process may vary from community to community, developing a park plan includes the following steps:

Identify Park Facility Needs - A community begins by analyzing its park facilities and the services it provides with an emphasis on its adequacy to serve the people and identify future park improvement needs.

Prepare Project Descriptions - After determining the need for park improvements, it is necessary to collect details on the project so that its implementation priority can be accurately and equitably assigned.

Set Project Priorities - Since a community will often identify more projects than can be funded, priorities must be established. By doing so, priorities can be established so that limited financial resources are allocated efficiently.

Develop and Adopt Park Plan - The final park plan combines the individual project descriptions and priorities into a recommended schedule of capital projects. Upon general consensus of local officials, the park plan should be adopted by resolution supporting the recommended program.

Implementation and Updating - It should be emphasized that the park plan is a flexible and dynamic document that is updated annually to reflect changing needs and new priorities. Each year the community will identify new projects, monitor fiscal capacity, and set new priorities for the upcoming year. Through annual review and updating, the park plan will reflect the most current goals and priorities of the community.

SUMMARY OF PAST COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANS

The Town of Somerset: Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan 2008 – 2012 was the first comprehensive outdoor parks and recreation plan completed by the Town of Somerset Park & Rec Committee and was updated for 2013-2017. The Town conducted a survey using the Town of Somerset *Parks and Recreation Questionnaire (July 10, 2006)*. In preparation of this document, *Parks and Recreation Questionnaire (July 10, 2006)*, the St. Croix County Outdoor Recreation Plan (January 17, 2006) and the Village of Somerset Outdoor Recreation Plan 2007 - 2012 were reviewed.

The third update of the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Park & Recreation Plan for 2019-2023 was accomplished by further review of St. Croix County's Outdoor Recreation Plan (2018) and St. Croix County's Bike & Pedestrian Plan (2018). The Town of Somerset recognizes the importance of intergovernmental cooperation. It is the intention of the Town to share information and coordinate efforts with the Village of Somerset, Neighboring Towns, City of New Richmond and St. Croix County in coordinating plans, policies, and programs that address and resolve issues of mutual interest.

TOWN OF SOMERSET ~ BACKGROUND

General Information

The Town of Somerset, St. Croix County is located in scenic northwestern Wisconsin. Geographically, it is the largest town in the county. St. Croix County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The county and region have experienced rapid growth in the past decade.

Although the Town has a rural atmosphere, it is served by and well connected to larger urban areas by its transportation routes. The St. Croix River Crossing Bridge has been completed and opened August 2, 2017. A Bike & Ped 5-Mile Loop Trail will open in 2019, connecting the Historic Stillwater Bridge to the newly constructed St. Croix River Crossing Bridge. This loop trail will connect two states and bring bikers and walkers from around the region to the area as a tourist attraction and economic developments. Local residents will benefit from the recreational opportunities the Loop Trail will provide. The St. Croix River Crossing Bridge and highway facility has created a corridor directly linking the Town of Somerset to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. Much of the growth in the Town can be attributed to its proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. Growth and expansion of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area is also influencing growth patterns of other nearby communities in Wisconsin.

The Town of Somerset now faces issues of a largely rural community on the fringe of a major metropolitan area. The community is dynamic and each new development is viewed as an opportunity for some and a threat to a rural lifestyle by others. As land is continuing to be developed and the demand for public facilities increase, the Town recognizes the need to effectively plan for and finance park and recreation facilities.

Population and Housing Projections

Population and housing projections are important in estimating future residential development in a community. When combined with the community's residential development standard (the average number dwellings per unit of land) the

potential amount of land consumed in the future can be predicted. To develop the housing projections requires projecting the growth of the community's population and forecasting the number of persons in the average household in the future. This information will help determine the projected future park and recreation facilities needs for the Town.

TABLE 1

| POPULATION FORECAST • 2010 to 2040 | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Town of Somerset | | | | | | |
| 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 |
| 4,036 | 4,250 | 4,770 | 5,220 | 5,650 | 5,945 | 6,175 |

Source: Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035

TABLE 2

| HOUSING UNIT PROJECTION • 2010 to 2040 | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Town of Somerset | | | | | | | |
| | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 |
| Population | 4,036 | 4,250 | 4,770 | 5,220 | 5,650 | 5,945 | 6,175 |
| Persons per HH | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 |

Source: Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035

So, the housing forecast is a function of the population projection (TABLE 1) and the housing unit projection (TABLE 2), as dividing population by the persons per household yields the number of housing units necessary.

TABLE 3 shows a housing forecast using the trend in household size. It reveals that by the year 2030 the Town of Somerset will have a projected 2,233 housing units or an annual increase of about 44 dwelling units.

TABLE 3

| HOUSING FORECAST w/ HOUSEHOLD TREND 2010 to 2040 | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Town of Somerset | | | | | | | |
| | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | 2035 | 2040 |
| Population | 4,036 | 4,250 | 4,770 | 5,220 | 5,650 | 5,945 | 6,175 |
| Persons per HH | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 | 2.90 |
| Housing Units | 1,391 | 1,465 | 1,644 | 1,800 | 1,948 | 2,050 | 2,129 |

Source: Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035

According to the population projections, the Town of Somerset is estimating a total population of 5,220 by 2025. The number of persons per household is forecasted to be 2.90. The number of total households is projected to be 1,800. This correlates to a total of 409 new households.

Other important demographic information for the Town of Somerset can be found in the Town of Somerset Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035.

PARKS & RECREATION SERVICE STANDARDS

The service standards for the Town of Somerset's park facilities have been identified by the Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee. The Town of Somerset proposes a minimum of twenty (20) acres of park lands and one and one-half (1.5) miles of trails for every 1,000 people.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF PARK LANDS

The following selected classifications are intended to be used as guidelines at the local level. Presently, the suggested classifications are considered most appropriate for the Town of Somerset:

Community Parks

These serve a broader purpose than a neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

- Serve a larger area composed of many neighborhoods (within ½ to 3-mile distance).

- Size and location are determined by the quality and suitability of the site (usually between 30 to 50 acres).

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. A neighborhood park provides open space for passive recreation for all ages within a neighborhood, with emphasis on youth and families. An ideal neighborhood park site is geographically centered and easily accessible to the neighborhood population. The park should be accessible by safe walking trails, bicycle access and other non-motorized vehicle access.

- Playgrounds, informal play areas, passive walkways and seating areas.
- Usually 5 to 10 acres in size.

Conservancy / Natural Resource Areas

Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering. Size and location vary. A conservancy protects and manages the natural and cultural environment. Recreation is secondary.

Greenways

Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment. Size and location vary.

Sports Complex

Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community. These facilities are strategically located for community-wide access. Size is determined by projected demand, usually 25 acres minimum, with 40 to 80 acres optimal.

Special Use

Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use, such as a boat landing or snowmobile trail.

Park Trails

Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreation value and harmony with natural environment.

Connector Trails

Multipurpose trails that emphasize safe travel for pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles to and from parks and around the community. Focus is as much on transportation as it is on recreation.

On-Street Bikeways

Paved segments of roadways that serve as a means to safely separate bicyclists from vehicular traffic. Minimal enhancements with road maintenance, paint and signage.

Specialty, Non-motorized Trails/Off Road Bicycle & Pedestrian Paths

- Multi-purpose trails or paths located within greenways, parks, natural resource areas, easement or road right-of-ways for special uses such as cross-country skiing, horseback riding, walking, bicycling and other non-motorized vehicles.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal #1

Provide quality park and recreation opportunities for current and future residents and non-residents.

Objectives:

- Be responsive to community needs
- Promote safe and secure parks and recreational areas

- Provide active and passive recreational opportunities to meet the needs of community residents of all age groups
- Inform citizens of available park and recreation services
- Encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process
- Partner with neighboring municipalities, governmental agencies, private entities, athletic associations, etc. on park and trail planning/funding, development, and maintenance
- Be responsive to overall park planning
- Conduct ongoing review of the Comprehensive Park and Recreation plan
- Encourage and support recreational and local clubs, such as ATV, snowmobile, bicycle etc.

Policies / Actions:

- Acquire land for future parks and recreation needs
- Offer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parks and recreational areas when feasible
- Implement the proposed bike and walking trail plan
- Maintain a map of the total Town of Somerset park system
- Provide access and adequate parking for parks and recreation areas
- Protect land uses adjacent to existing parks and recreation areas
- Create an informational brochure identifying existing park and trail locations. Make available on the Town's website, at the Town Hall, Village of Somerset Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Promote parks and recreation on the Town website.
- Promote connector path/trail network between existing and new developments for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Promote connector path/trail network between other municipalities and existing paths/trails.

Goal #2

Protect and enhance natural resources.

Objectives:

- Acquire land for the purposes of preservation and/or conservation
- Preserve and protect surface waters, wetlands, shorelands, and floodplains to maintain wildlife habitat.
- Protect and conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources
- Provide public access to area lakes, rivers, and natural areas

- Policies / Actions:
 - Rezone sensitive natural resource areas conservancy, when possible
 - Utilize conservation easements when appropriate
 - Create development standards that preserve high quality environmental features
 - Protect natural resources where feasible from sediment and other forms of pollution through the use of vegetation, erosion control measures during construction, settling ponds, and other structural and non-structural means
 - Protect drainage ways and areas that drain to the river and lakes from pollutants
 - Protect sites of historical significance from development
 - Adopt a historical preservation ordinance to provide a degree of protection for historic resources
 - Work with Local, State and Federal agencies to provide better access to public lands

Goal #3

Keep maintenance and future park costs to a minimum. Be fiscally responsible.

Objectives:

- Operate efficiently, effectively, and within available resources
- Limit the tax burden of the existing property owners
- Provide safe parks for residents and non-residents
- Cooperate with surrounding communities, public agencies, private entities, community organizations, and groups
- Develop parks that are sustainable

Policies / Actions:

- Actively pursue financial assistance through federal, state, and local grant and loan programs
- Actively pursue financial assistance through private funding
- Identify local groups and organizations willing to volunteer labor and resources
- Encourage citizen resource contributions
- Encourage community organizations and residents to “adopt-a-park” and help with basic maintenance and cleanup
- Approach land owners concerning land donations to include: conservation easements, trusts, and/or path and trail easements.
- Utilize park fees to pay for park improvements due to new development and growth
- Develop a cost-effective maintenance plan that minimizes negative impacts on the environment
- Design park facilities for minimal maintenance costs
- Explore joint maintenance agreements and strategies with neighboring communities and public agencies

INVENTORY

Existing Facilities Inventory

The Town of Somerset maintains three boat landing facilities:

Turtle Lake Boat Landing at 751 205th Avenue, Somerset.

Turtle Lake is a seepage lake that is 52 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 12 feet.

Inventory:

- ✓ Access to lake of 52 acres.
- ✓ Three (3) parking stalls.
- ✓ Gravel road access.
- ✓ Boat landing.

Access:

- ✓ Public.
- ✓ No ADA facilities.

Proposed Improvements:

- ✓ Additional parking stalls.
- ✓ Land Acquisition.
- ✓ Fishing pier(s).
- ✓ Boat landing improvements.
- ✓ Signage.

Seepage Lakes

These lakes do not have an inlet or an outlet, and only occasionally overflow. As landlocked waterbodies, the principal source of water is precipitation or runoff, supplemented by groundwater from the immediate drainage area. Since seepage lakes commonly reflect groundwater levels and rainfall patterns, water levels may fluctuate seasonally. Seepage lakes are the most common lake type in Wisconsin.

Pine Lake Boat Landing at 2249 50th Street, Somerset

Pine Lake is a no wake lake. It is an 89-acre seepage lake with a maximum depth of 19 feet.

Inventory:

- ✓ Lake access with boat launch
- ✓ Off shoulder parking along road: four striped boat trailer spaces and two striped vehicle spaces and one handicapped parking space.
- ✓ Shoreline fishing
- ✓ Dock/ fishing pier
- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Dry hydrant
- ✓ Picnic Area
- ✓ Picnic Tables & Benches
- ✓ Swimming Beach

Access:

- ✓ Public
- ✓ ADA facilities

Proposed Improvements:

- ✓ Additional parking
- ✓ Land Acquisition
- ✓ Boat landing improvements

Twin Springs Park at 1478 Twin Springs Road, Houlton

The Town has also developed a park and parking area in cooperation with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway that allows public access to the St. Croix River at the southern Town boundary. The Town of Somerset owns the road.

Inventory:

- ✓ Boat launch
- ✓ Parking in gravel lot for about 8 vehicles or 5 vehicles with trailers
- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Self-Serve Fee box (\$5.00 daily launch and or parking fee)

Access:

- ✓ Public (Daily Permit or Annual Launch/Parking Permit can be obtained from Town of Somerset Clerk)

Proposed Improvements:

- ✓ Land acquisition
- ✓ Improve facilities on Town-owned bluff land property
- ✓ Signage
- ✓ Additional parking (for 4-6 cars and boats)
- ✓ Dock
- ✓ Interpretive signage

Parnell Prairie Preserve 1823 45th Street, Somerset ~ The Town co-owns with the Village of Somerset 49.5 acres of park land.

Inventory:

- ✓ Gravel lot for 10-12 vehicles
- ✓ Parking Lot Lighting/Light Pole for Safety
- ✓ 1.4 miles of mowed hiking trails
- ✓ Cross country ski trails
- ✓ 30 acres of restored prairie
- ✓ Signage

Access:

- ✓ *Public*
- ✓ *No ADA facilities*

Proposed Improvements:

- ✓ *Interpretive Signage*
- ✓ *Interpretive activities*
- ✓ *Geocaching*
- ✓ *Paved or gravel trails*
- ✓ *Control of Invasive Species*
- ✓ *Benches*
- ✓ *Picnic Shelter(s)*

Other Facilities and Water Resources Located in the Town of Somerset

Andersen Scout Camp 168 Andersen Scout Camp Trail, Houlton

The Camp owns over one mile of St. Croix River frontage and is available for hiking with prior notice to the Camp Ranger.

Somerset Landing/Marine Landing 261 Marine Road, Somerset

The National Park Service operates and supports a boat launch and parking area that provides access to the St. Croix River at the Town's northern boundary. The National Park Service owns the land and maintains the boat landing. The Town of Somerset owns the road. Amenities provided by the National Park Service include bathrooms, picnic tables, and a grill. No camping or camp fires.

Bass Lake Boat Landing 745 153rd Avenue, Somerset

Bass Lake is a 417-acre seepage lake with a maximum depth of 35 feet. The Department of Natural Resources owns approximately 2 acres of land on Bass Lake. St. Croix County maintains the DNR property. St. Croix County acquired an additional 13.76 acres of adjacent property in 2017 purchased with St. Croix River Crossing Mitigation Funds. The site has a boat landing for two launches, two courtesy docks, signage, and a parking lot with 17 stalls, including one ADA accessible stall. The Town would like to consider a swimming area as a future improvement.

Apple Falls Flowage

The Apple Falls Flowage is a drainage lake with an area of 200 acres. This body of water has a maximum depth of 30 feet. Public has access to this water resource by a walk-in trail.

Drainage Lakes

These lakes have both an inlet and outlet where the main water source is stream drainage. Most major rivers in Wisconsin have drainage lakes along their course. Drainage lakes owing one-half of their maximum depth to a dam are considered to be artificial lakes or impoundments.

St. Croix River

The St. Croix River is a tributary of the Mississippi River, approximately 164 miles long. The lower 125 miles of the river forms the state line between Wisconsin and Minnesota. The river is a National Scenic Riverway under the protection of the National Park Service.

Apple River

The Apple River is a tributary of the St. Croix River, about 70 miles long.

Please see TOWN OF SOMERSET PARKS & RECREATION MAP.

Other Facilities Utilized by the Town

Many residents in the Town of Somerset utilize park facilities located in the Village of Somerset, St. Croix County Homestead Park/Perch Lake and Willow River State Park/Hudson. For a complete and up-to-date list of the facilities located in the Village, please refer to the updated Village of Somerset Outdoor Recreation Plan. For a complete and up-to-date list of the facilities located within St. Croix County, please visit the website at www.sccwi.gov, under Parks or please refer to St. Croix County's Bike & Pedestrian Plan and Outdoor Recreation Plan.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of park and recreation facilities

Evaluation of park and recreation needs should take the following into consideration:

- The Town's identified acre per thousand population standard is a minimum standard
- A purely quantitative analysis does not consider the quality and extent of recreational facilities desired by area residents and non-residents
- Quantitative analysis alone is not an adequate measure of a park's service capability
- Park serviceability is of utmost importance to this plan and is the basis for any future recreational land acquisition
- Adequacy of site size is dependent on the intended number of users and the types of activities to be offered
- Parks and recreation facilities should serve all age groups in the area with a variety of recreational opportunities
- Locations should be suitable in relation to standard walking distances or other customary modes of transportation
- Potential site development should adequately serve the activities to be provided
- Site location should be reviewed in relation to traffic hazards, means of access, networking with other trails/paths and adjacent land uses
- Recreation areas receive very heavy use during summer by non-residents

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Town of Somerset values parks and recreation as an important component to maintain a healthy lifestyle. As more and more people participate in outdoor activities, the increased pressures on existing parks and recreational facilities need to be addressed. The St. Croix River Crossing and Loop Trail will increase the demand for park facilities and on/off road bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Deficiencies

The identified standard of 20 acres of park land and 1.5 miles of trail/paths per 1,000 people would equate to approximately 84 acres of park land and 6.3 miles of trail needed for the 2018 population of 4,199 people. As of 2018 the Town of Somerset had 49.5 acres of park land (owned jointly with the Village of Somerset) and 1.4 miles of trail/paths. **This equates to a current deficiency of at least 34.5 acres of park land and 4.9 miles of trails/paths.**

Future Needs

With the projected population of 4,770 in 2020, the Town of Somerset will need a total of approximately 95.4 acres of park land and 7.15 miles of trail/paths to satisfy the Town standard.

Thus, based on a projected population increase of 1,021 people between 2018 and 2025, the proposed impact of new residential development is for a total of 11.4 acres of park land (*95.4 acres minus the existing 49.5 acres minus the 34.5-acre deficiency*) and a total of 2.25 miles of trail (*7.15 miles of trail minus the existing deficiency of 4.9 miles*) as well as additional park, bicycle and pedestrian trails/path improvements due to new growth.

The Town proposes any of the following future park improvements in order to meet the objectives and goals of the *Town of Somerset Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan*:

- Trail development, especially bicycle, pedestrian and other non-motorized vehicles

Examples include, but are not limited to...

- ✓ Bike path that parallels Landing Hill that connects CR V to CR VV
 - ✓ Bike trail that leads north on County Road I from the Village of Somerset
 - ✓ Public trails connecting subdivisions to each other
 - ✓ A network of public trails for bicycle, pedestrian and other non-motorized vehicles
 - ✓ Land acquisition for bicycle, pedestrian, other non-motorized vehicles parking area
 - ✓ Bike trail on the Rustic Road
 - ✓ On road bike route from 150th Avenue terminating on 160th Avenue at County Road I
 - ✓ Andersen Scout Camp trail
 - ✓ 80th Street from County Road C to Polk/St. Croix County Line
- Playground equipment
 - Picnic tables
 - Benches
 - Trash receptacles
 - Restroom facilities
 - Boat Landing Improvements
 - Fishing piers.
 - Parking areas
 - Signage
 - Disc Golf Park
 - Skateboard Park

- Other ball fields or courts
- Outdoor skating/hockey rink
- Natural vegetation / landscaping
- Access to rivers and other water resources:

Examples include, but are not limited to...

- ✓ Apple River areas near the Hideaway, Apple River Lane, Apple Falls
Flowage above the Xcel dam
- ✓ Purchase property along the St. Croix River
- ✓ Partner with the National Park Service for periodic access to
St. Croix (for example Glen Brae)

- Swimming areas—

Examples include but are not limited to...

- ✓ Pine Lake

- Shelters and other site amenities.
- Natural areas such as forest preserve, prairie preserve, etc.

Examples include but are not limited to...

- ✓ Parnell Prairie Preserve

IMPLEMENTATION – GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations to implement the goals and policies expressed in this plan. The following actions are suggested in no particular order:

General Park Design / Site Master Plan

From both the standpoint of economic efficiency and of aesthetic and historical considerations, it would be beneficial to establish certain design standards for the Town parks. The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee should make broad recommendations regarding styles of lighting, benches,

and signage needed for the parks. This would be cost effective by making it possible to purchase such equipment in larger quantities. Identifying a design style for the equipment, such as Contemporary, Rustic, Victorian, or another style, would also be helpful as a basis for designing landscape improvements.

Similarly, it is important to consider the balance between natural and formal landscaping. More formal landscaping, which may require intensified seasonal maintenance, can be appropriate for small areas in some of the Town parks. Town staff, Garden Clubs, and other various volunteer groups can be helpful in designing and maintaining small, more frequently landscaped areas.

Signage

- The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to develop sign design standards for all park signage.
- All parks have been assigned addresses and address signs have been installed for identification and safety purposes

Land Acquisition

The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee will continue to evaluate the need for additional parks and open space. The need for future parkland acquisition or open space is a priority for the Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee in the effort to protect the natural resources in the Town. The Committee would also like to protect the natural resources along the rivers or lakes in the Town.

The Committee proposes to negotiate public land dedications, including both park and trail dedications, as part of the approval process for all residential developments and incorporate the conclusions of such negotiations into a Developer Agreement for each project.

Overall, the Committee would like to acquire sufficient lands to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive resources or native natural areas. The Committee proposes:

- To identify areas of particular interest, unique plant or animal life, scenic views, environmentally sensitive areas, or native natural areas
- To ensure the protection of wildlife and plant life, and the rivers and its habitat
- Acquire lands through a combination of federal, state, and county/local grants, gifts, donations, and Town resources
- Identify, sign, and protect endangered plant species on Town land or right of ways.
- Acquire land along Apple and St. Croix Rivers for preservation, conservation, or trail development
- Acquire historical properties when available

Naming of Town Parks

The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee needs to provide a plan for naming of Town Parks.

Proposed Trail Corridors

The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to develop a trail system in and around the Town. Please see TOWN OF SOMERSET PARKS & RECREATION MAP. These proposed trails are only general corridor locations and would only be pursued if the property developed or was specifically sold to the Town for trail purposes. The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee would like to emphasize that no taking of land will be considered. Providing a Proposed Trail Corridor plan will serve as a guide to illustrate to developers the Town's desire to incorporate trail system improvements and key connecting linkages into new subdivision plats and other developments. This map also can be used as a

guide for other communities in the area to understand the Town's future desires.

The Parks and Recreation Committee proposes:

- To develop a comprehensive trail system connecting neighborhoods, bike, walking and other non-motorized vehicle paths, to parks
- To develop specifications for trail composition, width, slope, use, and signage requirements
- To create ADA compliant accessibility where economically and physically feasible
- To design trails to be accessible by emergency vehicles
- To create additional access to parks and recreation facilities through a comprehensive network system of recreational trails

Parks and Recreation Funding

The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to utilize outside funding sources whenever possible, including but not limited to State, Federal and local grants.

Along with the future park planning, a prominent issue that will need to be addressed is the funding for the development of future parks and the maintenance and upkeep costs associated with the parks and recreation system. Future parks and recreation funding and maintenance may have to be addressed through user fees, grants, volunteerism, donations, fund raising, or taxes. Local expenditures and private contributions should be applied as the locally funded matching funds under cost-share programs.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to coordinate Town park planning with the planning efforts of St. Croix County, Village of Somerset, Towns of St. Joseph & Star Prairie and City of New Richmond and the surrounding communities. The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee

proposes to develop formal agreements or joint boards with other governing bodies, when necessary, for the implementation of specific projects.

Some cooperation ideas include:

- Invite participation from other jurisdictions
- Provide plan drafts to neighboring communities and jurisdictions
- Meet regularly with other governmental units
- Share information and data
- Conduct joint educational efforts
- Develop a joint planning area
- Promote multi-jurisdictional plans

Historic Parks / Land Preservation

The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to preserve, protect, rehabilitate, and/or reconstruct significant historic structures and properties located within the Town of Somerset.

The Parks and Recreation Committee will identify standards and guidelines on a variety of factors, such as historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, and intended interpretation. A program to identify, study, record, and preserve sites and events of regional or local interest should be completed by the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Per Wisconsin State Statute 60.64 Historic Preservation

The Town Board, in the exercise of its zoning and police powers for the purpose of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the community and of the state, may regulate any place, structure or object with a special character, historic interest, aesthetic interest of other significant value for the purpose of preserving the place, structure or object and its significant characteristics. The Town Board may create a landmarks commission to designate historic landmarks and establish historic districts. The Board may regulate all historic landmarks and all property within each historic district to preserve the historic landmarks and property within the district and the character of the district.

Ordinance Development

The Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes to review any existing park and recreation ordinances (See Chapter 26 *Parks and Recreation* in the Town of Somerset Ordinances section) and will continue to develop the following ordinances:

- Park Regulations and General Rules Ordinance
- Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Conservancy Ordinance
- Park Land Development

Preserve Diversity of Plant and Animal Species

It is the intention of the Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee to help preserve diversity of native plants and animals in the Town to

- Promote a natural mix of many different species which provides for a healthy environment
- Preserve Wisconsin threatened and endangered species
- Protect historic plants and habitats for future generations
- Preserve plants important to butterflies and other insects
- Preserve plants which may be future sources for medicines, treatments
- Help maintain a varied and attractive landscape

Did you know?

With more acres of public land in roadsides than in all parks in the state, the chances are good of finding protected species there. In fact, a roadside sometimes provides a plant's preferred conditions.

The Town may mark park areas or right-of-ways once a species is identified. A no-mow area is often all it takes to keep these special plants safe. It is recommended that an ecologist make a plan for each identified site.

Stream Bank Protection and Restoration

The Town of Somerset Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee proposes stream bank protection and restoration practices along any waterways located in the Town of Somerset. These practices may include any of the best management practices identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

While adding new park land is important to serving residential areas, the Parks, Recreation & Planning Committee is committed to a program of maintaining existing parks in good condition and providing sufficient funds for operations. Operations and maintenance costs are often overlooked during the parks systems planning stages. Such maintenance and operations include providing sufficient budget for the following:

- Maintaining and replacing facilities equipment, as needed
- Mowing and maintaining the grassed lawn areas and landscaped areas
- Maintaining parkland parking areas
- Maintaining prairie lands using recommended burn plan
- Maintaining bicycle, walking, and other non-motorized vehicles paths
- Maintaining on-street bikeways
- Keeping the park lands litter-free.
- Park Patrol

These operations and maintenance need to be considered as part of the overall budgeting for park facilities. As new lands and trails/paths are added to the park system, sufficient additional funds need to be budgeted for maintenance and operations.

It is recommended that an operations and maintenance plan be developed for each park and recreation area in the Town.

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Local Sources

Locally generated sources of revenue available to local units of government include the establishment of impact fees (as provided for in section 66.0617 of the Wisconsin Statutes), subdivision dedication requirements (as provided for under Chapter 236 of the Wisconsin Statutes), special fees, and use of general tax revenues. Local governments can also accept gifts and donations of land or rights to the land.

The Town of Somerset has a park fund. The fund and ordinance are described in Chapter 26 "Parks and Recreation" Article VII Park Development Fees on the Town of Somerset's Website Ordinances section at www.townofsomersetwi.com.

State and Federal Sources

The state and federal governments have several financial resources available to assist local communities in the acquisition of land for parks and open space. Federal & State funding sources, including TAP grant funding will be sought.

In addition, the WDNR administers a number of grant programs that focus on the acquisition of land or rights in land, restoration, or development of land for conservation and public outdoor recreation purposes.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund includes several key local assistance programs. These programs provide aids for the acquisition and development of local parks, urban green space grants, urban rivers grants, and grants to fund the acquisition of development rights. Chapter NR 51 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code governs administration of the different grant programs under the Stewardship Fund. A Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is

required if the community wishes to apply for certain funding under the Stewardship Program. Guidelines for these plans are available from WDNR.

WDNR Lake Management Protection Grants also include a land acquisition component. Federal funding programs include the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Recreation Trails Program administered by WDNR. A key component of these programs is cooperation and partnership between the WDNR, the federal government, local units of government, and nonprofit conservation organizations. To foster this partnership, the programs provide matching grants (usually 50%) to eligible sponsors, including local units of government and nonprofit conservation organizations.

Guidelines, application forms, and other information about these programs are available by contacting a WDNR regional office community services specialist or through the WDNR Bureau of Community Financial Assistance's website: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/.html>.

Private Sources

Community nonprofit conservation organizations (e.g., local land trust organizations) can play an important role in meeting the conservation and recreation needs of local communities and Wisconsin residents. Additional grants for acquisition of land, trails/paths and rights in land and habitat restoration are available to these organizations through the Stewardship Land Acquisition subprogram. These funds can be used for projects including natural areas, habitat areas, fisheries, streambank protection, wildlife areas, state riverways, bluff protection, preservation of endangered and threatened species, and habitat restoration.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

2018

- Update Parks and Recreation Plan available on Town website.
- Maintain and improve existing Town parks
- Plan and obtain bids for construction of picnic shelter at Parnell Prairie Preserve
- Provide funding for parks within Town Budget
- Implement plan for bike trail that parallels Landing Hill
- Control invasive species in parklands

2019

- Apply for grants, especially TAP grant for Landing Hill path
- Continue to plan for bike trail that parallels Landing Hill
- Construct picnic shelter at Parnell Prairie Preserve
- Control burn at Parnell Prairie Preserve
- Continue to maintain existing parks
- Develop strategies for Public Safety and maintenance at parks
- Continue upgrades at Pine Lake Boat Landing
- Develop one mile of trail.
- Provide funding for parks within Town Budget

2020

- Continue planning and seek funding for Landing Hill path
- Apply for grants
- Develop plan for acquiring Apple River access and/or St. Croix River access
- Continue to maintain existing parks and improvements at Parnell Prairie Preserve
- Develop one mile of trail

- Control invasive species in parklands
- Establish bike route signage and paint on-road bike ways
- Provide funding for parks within Town Budget

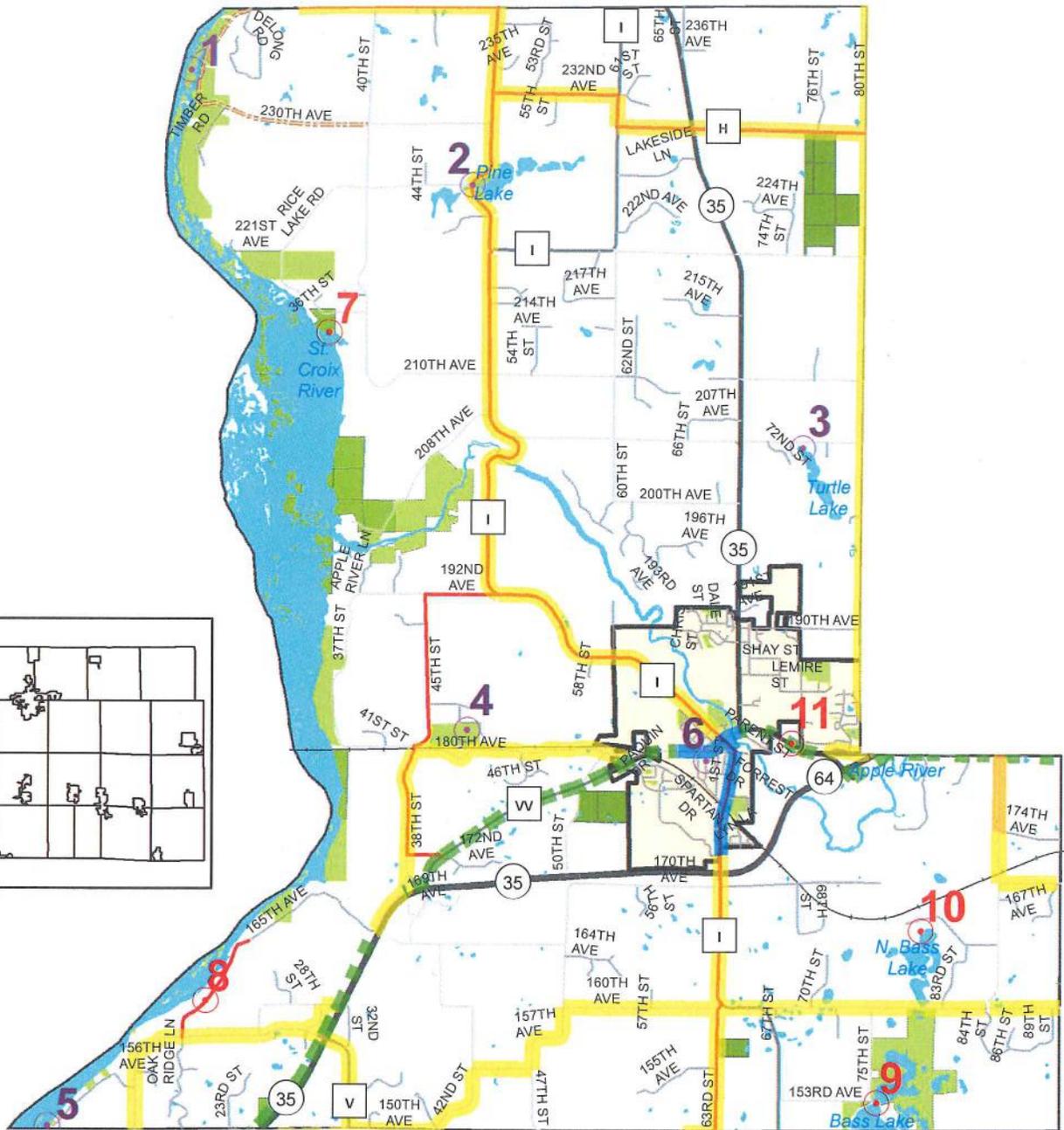
2021

- Apply for grants for natural and conservancy areas
- Acquire and purchase property devoted to natural and conservancy areas
- Develop one mile of trail.
- Control invasive species in parklands
- Continue to maintain and improve existing parks
- Provide funding for parks within Town Budget
- Continue planning for Landing Hill path

2022

- Build/Construct Landing Hill path
- Apply for grants
- Conduct an evaluation and community survey
- Control invasive species in parklands
- Develop one mile of trail-begin construction of Landing Hill path
- Create parks and trail brochure; post on website
- Provide funding for parks within Town Budget

Town of Somerset Parks & Recreation Map



Legend

- Town of Somerset
- Village of Somerset
- State Roads
- Town Roads
- County Roads
- Rustic Roads
- Bike & Pedestrian Routes
- Path (Full Build Alignment)
- Bike Lanes
- Paved Shoulders (4-5 ft)
- Minor Enhancement Recommendations
- Waterbodies
- Parks
- Federal Land
- State of Wisconsin

Town Parks and Historic Lands

- 1** Somerset Landing
- 2** Pine Lake Boat Landing (no wake lake)
- 3** Turtle Lake Boat Landing
- 4** Parnell Prairie Preserve
- 5** Twin Springs Park
- 6** Historic Town Hall

Other Facilities

- 7** WI DNR St. Croix River Access (carry-in)
- 8** Andersen Scout Camp (Private)
- 9** Bass Lake Boat Landing
- 10** North Bass Lake Access (path only)
- 11** Town Hall

