

*PARKS
AND
RECREATION
PLAN*

2014-2018

Prepared By

Town of River Falls

*PARK AND RECREATION
COMMITTEE*

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January 2009*

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Planning Assistance Provided By



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INTRODUCTION

The Town of River Falls values parks and recreation as an important local public service. As land costs become increasingly expensive, acquisition of parklands can become challenging. It is important to identify the parks and recreation needs of the community. Recreation is 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 may jeopardize the natural resources that appeal to the residents and non-residents of the Town.

The purpose of the Town of River Falls: Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan is to suggest and promote a 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, and prioritize projects. The public parks and recreational areas should express loudly and clearly the Town's goals and values.

The Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan 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.

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

PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Town of River Falls Park and Recreation Committee is established under Ordinance 2007-10 Section 1.21 and shall have those powers set forth in Section 11.05.

The Park and Recreation Committee shall consist of five members, one of which shall be a Town Board member, and the other four of which may be citizen members. Members shall be appointed by the Town Chair for 3-year staggered terms commencing at the Park and Recreation meeting in May of the year of appointment.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Town of River Falls Park and Recreation Committee to acquire, develop, and maintain a creative, efficient, and responsive park system available to all residents and non-residents. The Park and Recreation 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.



TOWN OF RIVER FALLS ~ BACKGROUND

As of 2005, the Town of River Falls is a community of 2,399. In 2010, the town population grew to 2,401. The Town is located in the St. Croix River Valley, approximately 30 miles east of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. Adjacent to the City of River Falls, the Town is about 8 miles northeast of the City of Prescott.

Although the Town has a rural atmosphere, it is served by and well connected to larger urban areas by its transportation routes. Improvements to the surrounding roadways are planned and it is suspected this will only increase residential housing. The Town has been experiencing significant growth in recent years and has concerns about the impact of this new growth and the need to better plan for and manage it.

In a Community Attitudes Survey conducted by Pierce County, 68.2% of the town residents indicated a need for more recreational facilities.

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DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

Demographic background information and projections can provide insight into the future composition of the Town of River Falls residents. Population and household growth may require more park space while an increase in children ages 1 – 5 may require more playground equipment.

Historic Population, Households, and Housing Units Trends

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town’s population grew by 18.5% or 360 persons and the total number of households increased by 27.5% or 173. The Town realized a 27% increase in housing units.

Age and Gender Distribution

The median age of residents of the Town is 36.8. The 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age cohorts are substantially larger than any other age group.

Future Population Projections

According to the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, the Town of River Falls is expected to have a population of 2,617 by 2015.

| <i>Population Projections</i> | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 |
| Population | 920 | 1,642 | 2,168 | 1,944 | 2,304 | 2,516 | 2,617 | 2,724 | 2,846 |

For more information regarding population projections, age and gender distribution, please see the Town of River Falls Comprehensive Plan, Adopted March 28, 2005.

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PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING & SERVICE STANDARDS

As the population escalates, so does the need for providing additional outdoor recreational opportunities in the Town of River Falls. The Park and Recreation Committee and Town Board assume the lead role in providing public outdoor recreation and determine the levels of outdoor recreation opportunities that are available and what additional resources are needed or will be needed at some point in the future.

Determining how much land is needed for parks and recreational activities is complex. The amount necessary is usually determined through an analysis of neighborhood and community-wide needs for outdoor recreation areas, for natural and cultural resource protection and

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management, and for other open space uses such as aesthetics and buffers. However, communities are extremely varied in their population characteristics, the opportunities for providing open space, and the needs for natural resource management. Therefore, local examination of needs is very important and requires understanding the physical and social resources of the community and the community's goals for parks and open space.

The Town of River Falls strives to offer park and outdoor recreation areas that offer a high level of service. The Town is continually striving to improve service to its residents; therefore the Town needs strong park and outdoor recreation planning standards. The Town recognizes the importance of the level of service standard as:

- An expression of minimum acceptable facilities for residents.
- A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation facilities.
- A basis for relating recreational needs within the Town's park system.

A park planning standard is simply a ratio expressing the quantity of parks and recreation facilities compared to population.

PROPOSED SERVICE STANDARD

The planning standards established in this park plan are tailored to meet the needs of the Town of River Falls. The park standards presented are meant to be used for park planning standards for the Town of River Falls.



These standards are established in Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines as published by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA).

| <i>Proposed Service Standard</i> | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Type of Park | Acres per 1,000 population |
| Community Parks | 20 |
| Neighborhood Parks | 5 |
| Linear Parks | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Open Space / Natural Area | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Historic Parks / Land | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Total | 25 |

** Note: The park standards reflect a goal for future development. Past development has not necessarily conformed to these standards.*

Town of River Falls Service Standard = 25 acres per 1,000 population.



EXISTING LEVEL OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICE

The Town of River Falls 2005 Population is 2,399. Existing level of service by park classification formula:

$$\text{Existing park acres/classification} \div \frac{\text{Total 2005 population}}{1,000 \text{ people}} = \text{Level of Service}$$

Under current conditions, the existing Level of Service is:

| Existing Parks | Total Acres | Existing Level of Service | +Surplus/- Deficiency |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Community Parks | 13.7 | 5.71 acres / 1,000 | - 14.29 acres |
| Neighborhood Parks | 11.59 | 4.82 acres / 1,000 | - 0.18 acres |
| Linear Parks / Pathways | - | <i>Not Applicable</i> | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Open Space / Natural Areas | 23.13 | 9.64 acres / 1,000 | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Historic Land | 1 | 0.42 acres / 1,000 | <i>Not Applicable</i> |
| Total | 49.42 | 20.59 | -14.47 |

NEEDS ASSESSMENT ~ PARK FACILITIES

- According to the identified service standard and the existing facilities, the Town of River Falls **currently has a deficiency of 14.47 acres of park land** based on the 2005 population of 2,399.
- According to future population projections, it is anticipated that the Town will need approximately **5.45 acres of additional park land by 2015.**

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CLASSIFICATIONS OF PARKS AND PATHWAYS

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

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to serve several neighborhoods providing more space and additional park facilities. These parks are designed to meet recreational needs of residents of all ages.

- Serve a larger area composed of many neighborhoods
- May provide athletic fields, passive open space, and community facilities

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. These neighborhood parks are generally created as a result of subdivision dedication required by Town Ordinance. Currently, this requirement is 10%. Each neighborhood park is intended to serve an area with a radius of ¼ mile and to address the recreational needs primarily of younger children.

- Playgrounds, informal play areas, passive walkways and seating areas

Linear Parks / Pathways

Linear parks are parks with functions that relate to travel and/or are located along a river (they are not necessarily linear in shape). Connectivity of a linear park system will have recreational, aesthetic, and practical implications.

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- Emphasis on safe travel for pedestrians to and from parks and around the community
- Function related to travel
- Run adjacent to a waterway

Open Space / Natural Areas

Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics / buffering.

- Open spaces that are left largely undeveloped

Historic Land

Historic landscapes range from thousands of acres of rural tracts to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Like historic buildings and structures, these special places reveal aspects of the Town's origins and development through their form and features and the way they were used.

Local historic parks and lands are areas in which historic buildings and / or landscapes are protected by public review.

- Property that contributes to an ensemble that is worth protecting by virtue of its historic importance or architectural quality

Please see **MAPS** for a map of the Existing Park Facilities and a map of the Proposed Trail System.

INVENTORY AND EVALUATION

The Town of River Falls has ten (10) public parks. They include: one (1) Community Park, three (3) Neighborhood Parks, three (3) Linear Parks / Pathways, three (3) Open Space / Natural Areas, and one (1) Historic Area. Parks that have been developed are: Halverson, Hillwood, Rocky Branch, South Ridge and South Valley. Anderson and Birch Cliff are presently undeveloped, in a managed natural state.

COMMUNITY PARKS (13.7 acres total)

ROCKY BRANCH PARK

N8272 1015th Street
(City Access Devin Lane)



Existing Facilities

- 13.7 acre park in a natural state located on the Rocky Branch Creek
- City of River Falls owns the creek bottom on both sides of this Town Park
- bordered by steep bluffs covered with a variety of different species of trees on both sides
- trout stream, Rocky Branch Creek, runs through it and one bridge crosses it
- existing paths (single-track, natural pathways)
- existing amenities include one picnic table



Proposed Improvements

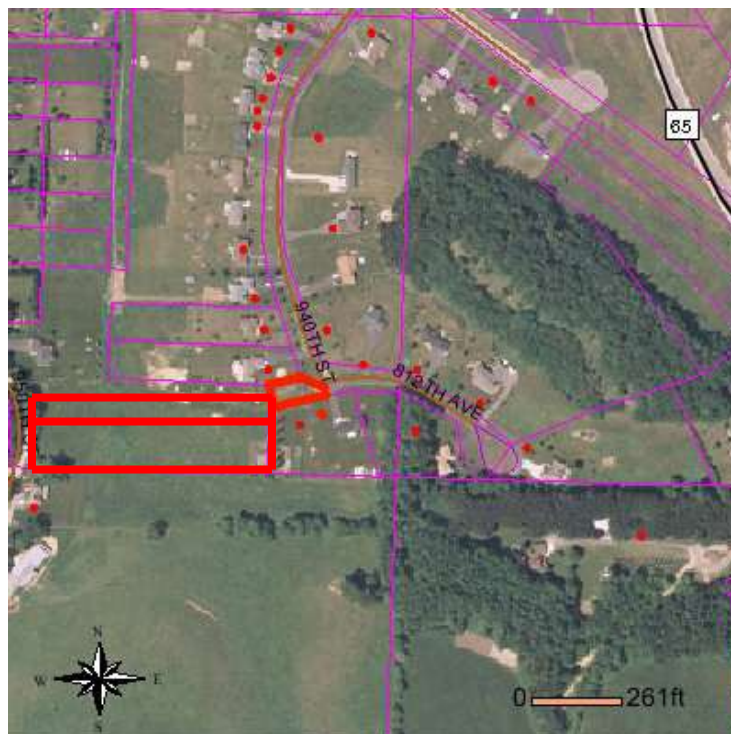
- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency.
- Add a kiosk (standard) to primary point of entrance prepare and post a trail map in it.
- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries

- Address encroachment issues
- Add benches and/or picnic tables (using standards)
- Maintain/groom all entrances, bridge and existing trails
- Evaluate the need for vehicle parking designation and signage and continue cooperative relationship with the City of River Falls on signage and entrance issues
- Remove and manage invasive species
- Add Town of River Falls geocache to increase visitation

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (11.59 acres total)

SOUTH VALLEY PARK

N8117 940th Street



Existing Facilities



- located on the north end of the Town at the south end of the South Valley subdivision
- 2.15 acre (2.86 acres including road easement) semi-developed park with land that would be ideal for playground equipment, picnic tables, etc.
- currently, no road access unless a road is constructed on the 66 ft road easement but vehicles can park on the short easement
- Currently a park sign and soccer net are in place
- Trees have been planted around the perimeter, and the park is mowed on a regular basis

Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency
- Add a kiosk (standard) to primary point of entrance
- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Address encroachment issues
- Add benches and/or picnic tables (using standards)

- Maintain/groom existing turf (mow) and plantings
- Evaluate the need for vehicle parking designation and signage and access to the park
- Reach out to athletic club sports who use open space (Ultimate Frisbee, Kickball, etc.) and schools/childcare centers to promote awareness
- Add 10' trail through park to South Valley Road
- Add land to park as development south occurs
- *a road is proposed to be constructed that would connect 940th Street with Knollwood Lane (950th Street) passing in front of South Valley Park*

ANDERSON PARK [Phase #1]

W9908 792nd Avenue

Existing Facilities

- located in the subdivision at the corner of Hwy 29 and Happy Valley Road with access off of 792nd Avenue.
- approximately 2.849 acres of undeveloped land



Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance sign placement for consistency

Existing Facilities



- located in the northwest corner of the Town
- 6.59 acres of managed natural land with the east-side of the park adjacent to the Mann Valley Creek
- Mann Valley Creek has trout activity in spring and summer when water levels are higher
- private property surrounding park
- entrance coming from Hillwood Drive or 880th Avenue on the west-side of the park
- 20 ft. unsigned easement east of Hillwood off 887th Avenue from the east (need to cross creek to get to park)
- Amenities include a trail, kiosk, picnic table and benches.

Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency
- Map the trail and post in the entrance kiosk

- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Address encroachment issues
- Maintain/groom all entrances and existing trails
- Evaluate the need for vehicle parking designation and signage
- Remove and manage invasive species
- Add Town of River Falls geocache to increase visitation (private geocache exists)

LINEAR PARKS / PATHWAYS

The acquisition of land for the uninterrupted flow of a Linear Park System is a high priority. Acquisition of land, particularly along the west and north side of Birch Cliff, adjacent to the Town Hall, South Fork River, and the Trimble River should be pursued aggressively when opportunities arise.

SOUTH VALLEY (10 ft.) PATHWAY

Existing Facilities

- access from 950th Street (Knollwood Lane) to a future road to be developed
 - this pathway is approximately 470 feet long
- City of River Falls has developed a 2.3 acre park at the south end of Knollwood subdivision with a paved path running along the south side of the subdivision, the entrance from Knollwood Lane (950th Street) to the park.
 - this path is in very close proximity to South Valley Pathway

Proposed Improvements

- Signed trail
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Create 10' paved trail West to East (approximately 403')
- Create 10' trail from #3, south approximately 700' to South Valley Park along road easement
- Benches

ANDERSON (20 ft.) PATHWAY [Phase #1]**Existing Facilities**

- gravel pathway

Proposed Improvements

- Sign both ends of trail
- Mark boundaries
- Keep path clean of weeds and brush

SOUTH RIDGE PATHWAY [Outlot #1] –where is it??

Existing Facilities

- approximately .61 acres
- private property on both sides
- undeveloped grass area



South Ridge park path on top of Bluff

Proposed Improvements

- Utility easement crosses Subdivision from east to west prohibiting improvements.

OPEN SPACE / NATURAL AREAS (23.31 acres total)

HALVERSON PARK

W9342 830th Avenue



Existing Conditions

- 5.24 acres of managed natural area containing woodlands, wildlife, and an active dry run on its east side
- donated by the Halverson Family with the provision it be kept in its natural state
- identified by signage
- groomed trails have been cut and are maintained
- designated parking, benches and a picnic table are on site



*Halverson park, log crossing
dry run (Active water flow)*



*Halverson park, corner of Hwy #65 and Cemetery
Road*

Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency
- Add a kiosk (standard) to primary point of entrance
- Prepare and post trail map in kiosk

- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Address encroachment issues
- Maintain/groom all entrances and existing trails
- Remove and manage invasive species
- Add Town of River Falls geocache to increase visitation
- Expand park north along Hwy #65 as development occurs
- Land acquisition adjacent to park

SOUTH RIDGE PARK [Out-lot #4]

W9701 818th Avenue

Existing Facilities

- 8.19 acres of managed, natural land
- located on the south-side of the South Ridge subdivision on top of the bluff
- beautiful view of South Ridge and the southern side of the City of River Falls
- steep access to the park
- park access is limited
 - private driveway east

Halverson park, corner of Hwy #65 and Cemetery Road



- steep trail up the public side *South Ridge park view West*
- natural pathways on top of bluff
- benches have been added to the top of the bluff/park

South Ridge park view North, High School on right, back left new college dorm, far back water tower at RF Golf Course

Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency
- Add a kiosk (standard) to primary point of entrance and map
- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Address encroachment issues
- Maintain/groom all entrances and existing trails
- Remove and manage invasive species
- Evaluate the need for vehicle parking designation and signage
- Add Town of River Falls geocache to increase visitation

BIRCH CLIFF BLUFF PARK

N8471 1015th Street



Existing Conditions



Birch Cliff park view South, proposed FF Sports Complex 40 acre field



Birch Cliff park view Southwest.

- 8.86 acres of managed natural land
- located on northwest side of the Town
- undeveloped

- two very steep and difficult to climb public access points:
 - one on the west-side of the bluff
 - one on the north-side
- provides a beautiful overlook of the surrounding area
- very steep hillside with thick dense vegetation cover and trees
- approximately ½ acre of land on top of the bluff
- steep bluff will create a challenge for hikers
- surrounded by private residential homes

Proposed Improvements

- Review entrance point signage to ensure consistency
- Add a kiosk (standard) to primary point of entrance
- Survey, if needed, to determine boundaries
- Locate and mark boundaries
- Address encroachment issues
- Evaluate feasibility of a trail system (addressing concerns of terrain)
- Maintain/groom all entrances
- Remove and manage invasive species
- Evaluate the need for vehicle parking designation and signage
- Add Town of River Falls geocache to increase visitation

SOUTH VALLEY [Outlot #1] – sold in November, 2008

HISTORIC LAND (1.5 acres total)

TOWN HALL



Existing Facilities

- serves as the base of program operations for all Town government including the parks
- park meetings are held here monthly
- building and grounds were dedicated to the Town
- kiosk for public announcements

Proposed Improvements

- Land acquisition

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.
- There is no way that a park's service capability can be measured in a quantitative analysis.
- Park facility serviceability is of utmost importance to this plan and is the basis for any future recreational land acquisition.
- Adequacy of site size to accommodate intended number of users.
- Adequacy of parks and recreation facilities to serve all age groups in the area with a variety of recreational opportunities.
- Suitability of location in relation to standard walking distances or other customary modes of transportation.
- Adequacy of development in relation to site capabilities and activities to be provided.
- Suitability of site location in relation to traffic hazards, means of access, and adjacent land uses.

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- The very heavy use of many recreation areas during summer by non-residents.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

While adding new park land is important to serving residential areas, the Park and Recreation 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
- Keeping the parks litter-free

These operations and maintenance need to be considered as part of the overall budgeting for park facilities. As new lands 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.

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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.
- Protect and conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources.
- Preserve and protect surface waters, wetlands, shorelands, and floodplains to maintain wildlife habitat.
- Inform citizens of available park and recreation services.
- Encourage citizen participation in the decision-making process.
- Be responsive to overall park planning.
- Conduct ongoing review of the comprehensive park and recreation plan.

Policies / Actions:

- Acquire land for future park needs.
- Offer Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parks and recreational areas where available.

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- Implement the proposed bike and walking trail plan.
- Protect sites of historical significance from development.
- Adopt a historical preservation ordinance to provide a degree of protection for historic resources.
- Adopt a map of the total Town of River Falls park system.
- Provide access and adequate parking for parks and recreation areas.
- Protect land uses adjacent to existing parks and recreation areas.
- Rezone sensitive natural resource areas conservancy, when possible.
- Create development standards that preserve high quality environmental features.
- Protect natural resources where available 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 from pollutants.
- Create an informational brochure identifying existing park and trail locations. *Make available at the Town Hall, City of River Falls Chamber of Commerce, etc.*
- Create a bulletin board at the Town Hall dedicated to park and recreation.



- Promote parks and recreation on the Town website.

Goal #2

Keep maintenance and future park costs to a minimum.

Objectives:

- Operate efficiently, effectively, and within available resources.
- Limit (not increase) the tax burden of the existing property owners.
- Provide safe parks for residents and non-residents.
- Cooperate with public agencies, community organizations, and groups.
- Develop parks that are sustainable.

Policies / Actions:

- Actively pursue financial assistance through federal, state, and local grant and loan programs.
- 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 trail easements.



- Utilize impact fees to pay for park improvements due to new development and growth.
- Develop a cost-effective maintenance plan.



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 Park and Recreation 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

PARKS & RECREATION

- The Park and Recreation Committee proposes to develop sign design standards for all park signage.
- After sign standards are developed, it is suggested that all parks will be posted with signs.
- In addition, it is proposed to identify each park with addresses or fire numbers.



Example of Town Park Sign

Land Acquisition

The Town of River Falls Park and Recreation 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 Park and Recreation Committee in the effort to protect the natural resources in the Town. The board would also like to protect any of the natural resources along the rivers in the Town.

The board 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 board would like to acquire sufficient lands to protect scenic and environmentally sensitive resources or native natural areas. The board 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 grants, gifts, donations, and Town resources.
- Identify, sign, protect endangered plant species on Town land or right of ways
- Acquire land along Trimbelle, South Fork and Kinnickinnic Rivers for preservation, conservation, or trail development
- Acquire historical properties when available

Naming of Town Parks

It is proposed to name Town of River Falls town parks after long time property owners, family homesteads, property owners that donate park lands, land features, or any other significant historical references.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Trails Plan

The Park and Recreation Committee propose to develop a trail system in and around the Town. They would also propose to incorporate trail system improvements and key connecting linkages into new subdivision plats and other developments as well as other communities in the area. The Park and Recreation Committee propose:

- To develop a trail system connecting neighborhoods, bike paths, parks, etc.



- To develop specifications for trail composition, width, slope, use, and signage requirements
- To create ADA compliant accessibility where economically and physically feasible
- To create additional access to parks and recreation facilities through a comprehensive system of recreational trails

Parks and Recreation Funding

The Park and Recreation Committee proposes to utilize outside funding sources whenever possible, including but not limited to Wisconsin's "Stewardship Fund", the federal "LAWCON" program and any park funding programs available from Pierce County.

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.

User Data

The Park and Recreation Committee propose to identify use levels of the various public parks. A park survey could be conducted to determine resident interests, needs, and wants. This is important for



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several reasons: one, such information can give direction in planning for present and future parks; two, it can help identify whether the development of parks or if open space activities should be more encouraged; and three, the data can be used to argue and justify expenditures or not.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

The Park and Recreation Committee propose to coordinate Town park planning with the planning efforts of Pierce County, City of River Falls, and the surrounding communities. The Park and Recreation Committee propose to develop formal agreements or joint boards with other governing bodies when necessary for the implementation of specific projects.

Currently, the extraterritorial zone (ETZ) is represented with one member on the Town of River Falls Park and Recreation Board. There exists a long-term Joint Powers Agreement between the City Park and Recreation Board and the River Falls School District which benefit the surrounding Towns. Short term agreements between the Town of River Falls Park and Recreation Committee and other agencies at the City, other Towns or County levels could create a mechanism for the sharing of funding and other responsibilities involved in the development of larger scale recreational facilities. The data collected on use levels would pinpoint the jurisdictions or bodies to target for a joint effort.

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 Park and Recreation Committee propose to preserve, protect, rehabilitate, and/or reconstruct significant historic structures and properties located within the Town of River Falls.

§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 or 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

The Park and Recreation Commissioners 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 Park and Recreation Commissioners.

Ordinance Development

The Park and Recreation Committee propose to review any existing park and recreation ordinances and will consider developing the following ordinances:

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

Preserve Threatened and Endangered Species

It is the intention of the Park and Recreation Committee to help preserve Wisconsin threatened and endangered plants in the Town to:

- Promote a natural mix of many different

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.

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species which provides for a healthy environment.

- 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, etc.
- Help maintain a varied and attractive landscape.

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 River Falls Park and Recreation Committee propose stream bank protection and restoration practices along any water ways located in the Town of River Falls. These practices may include any of the best management practices identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



FINANCING PARK & OPEN SPACE LAND ACQUISITIONS

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.

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 sources of funding include:

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Recreational Trails Act.

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.

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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 is 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>.



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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 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: 2009 - 2013

2009

- **Hillwood Park** – Continue work to improve trail and add bird/bat houses to the park.
- **Rocky Branch Park** – Continue work to improve trails and construct bridge connecting east and west bank trails.
- **South Valley Park** – Design master site plan, add ground, grade, level, and plant grass/trees as needed. Equip with picnic tables and bat/bird houses.
- **Anderson Park** – Equip with bat/bird houses.
- Negotiate/discuss acquisition of land.

2010

- **Hillwood Park** – Continue general trail improvement/maintenance.
- **Rocky Branch Park** – Continue park/trail improvements and general bridge/trail maintenance.
- **South Valley Park** – Continue implementation of master plan.
- **Anderson Park** – Design master site plan, grade, and plant grass/trees as needed. Equip with picnic tables and benches.
- **Halverson Park** – Design master site plan and establish trail.
- Negotiate/discuss acquisition of land.

2011

- **Rocky Branch Park** – Continue park/trail improvements and general bridge/trail maintenance.
- **Hillwood Park** – Continue general trail improvement/maintenance.
- **South Valley Park** – Continue park maintenance.
- **Anderson Park** – Continue implementation of master plan
- **Halverson Park** – Continue work to improve trail system and general trail maintenance.

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- **South Ridge** – Design and implement master plan. Create entrance and circular trails and improve current viewing areas. Equip with benches and bat/bird houses.
- Negotiate/discuss acquisition of land.

2012

- **Rocky Branch Park** – Continue park/trail improvements and general bridge/trail maintenance.
- **Hillwood Park** – Continue general trail improvement and general maintenance.
- **South Valley Park** – Continue park improvements and general maintenance.
- **Anderson Park** – Continue park improvements and general maintenance.
- **Halverson Park** – Continue work to improve trail and general trail maintenance.
- **South Ridge** – Design and implement master plan. Create entrance and circular trails, and improve current viewing areas. Equip with benches and bat/bird houses.
- Negotiate and discuss acquisition of land.

2013

- **Rocky Branch Park** – Continue park improvements and general bridge/trail maintenance.
- **Hillwood Park** – Continue trail improvement and general maintenance.
- **South Valley Park** – Continue park improvements and general maintenance.
- **Anderson Park** – Continue park improvements and general maintenance.
- **Halverson Park** – Continue work to improve trail and general trail maintenance.
- **South Ridge** – Continue implementation of master park plan.
- **Birch Cliff Park** – Design and implement master plan. Create the two entrance trails, a circular top trail, and viewing areas. Equip with benches and bird/bath houses.

- Negotiate and discuss acquisition of land.

