

VILLAGE OF MERRILLAN WISCONSIN OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN



2024

2029



Revised 12 18 2024



Village of Merrilan Outdoor Recreation Plan



PREPARED BY THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF THE VILLAGE OF MERRILLAN PLANNING
COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL



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INTRODUCTION

Outdoor Recreation in the Village of Merrillan

The Village of Merrillan recognizes the need for a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. Concerned citizens understand the need for local outdoor recreation facilities and are aware that the needs within Merrillan change with time. This plan is intended to serve as a guide to the Village of Merrillan for the development of specific recreation programs and long-range objectives. The plan is also intended to assist with budgetary considerations regarding the maintenance, development, and expansion of recreation facilities. The recommendations and proposals found within this plan are aimed at the continued preservation, acquisition, development, and improvement of Merrillan's outdoor recreation facilities. It is the Village of Merrillan's responsibility to reference this plan's recommendations as they relate to the growth, development, and maintenance of the village's outdoor recreation resources.



The completion of this 5-year Outdoor Recreation Plan, along with its adoption by the Village, will make the Village eligible for funding programs offered by several state departments and agencies, such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Arts Alliance, and Wisconsin Department of Transportation. This plan is also intended to ensure the Village's eligibility to participate in the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF), Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space Program (UGS), and Urban Rivers Grant Program (URGP). The existence of a recreation plan will also assist the



Village with its overall planning and development efforts, for which financial assistance designed to assist in the development of viable communities is available through programs from other federal agencies, state programs, private organizations, and non-profits. Providing adequate recreation facilities is a goal that concurs with the national emphasis on improving the quality of life in our communities and preserving a balanced environment.



Priority Areas and Projects:

The Village of Merrillan's objective in preparing this Outdoor Recreation Plan is to provide an orderly framework for guiding the future development of Merrillan's own recreation properties. This plan will be a publicly accessible document that neighboring municipalities and Jackson County can reference for future planning purposes. For a complete list of action items for 2024-2029, please see the Local Goals & Objectives Section for a comprehensive list of implementation priorities and objectives.

To accomplish this objective, the following goals have been identified:

- 1. Continue to maintain the Village's outdoor park and recreation facilities.**
- 2. Protect and enhance the unique natural resources within Merrillan.**
- 3. Use the Village's resources efficiently and enhance funding opportunities for the park and recreation needs of the Village.**
- 4. Provide and improve public access to outdoor recreation, land, and water.**
- 5. Work with the State (DNR), County, area Schools, Businesses, Clubs, Sports Leagues, Veterans Organizations, Health Care Providers, and other interested parties to promote, utilize, maintain and improve the recreational facilities of Merrillan and the region.**

LOCAL GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This plan section expands upon the goals initially outlined in the introduction. Additionally, it will focus on some implementation actions and includes input from the community survey.

Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Continue to maintain the Village's outdoor park and recreation facilities.

Objective 1: Extend water and sewer mains into Gile Memorial Park.

With increased year-round recreational activity in Gile Park, the Village wishes to extend water and sewer mains into the park. Extending these municipal surveys into the park would allow the village to maintain water quality and sanitary sewers for park structures and campsites. By achieving this goal, the village expands its ability to increase revenue from park usage.

Park Drive, which cuts through Gile Park, has two residences that are not currently served by these municipal services. An extension of municipal water and sewer mains could also serve these private properties.

Objective 2: Build a new multi-purpose municipal community building.

A new multi-purpose municipal building would help bolster the Village's community programming while serving other community needs. Ideally, this building would be a heated structure available for year-round use. It would provide enhanced views of the waterfall without distracting the park's beauty. This building would include public bathrooms and shower facilities. It would be designed to meet all ADA Compliance regulations. While intended as a community meeting space, the Village would also like to design this building with emergency services in mind, equipping it with a natural gas-powered backup generator. In the event of natural disasters, long-term power outages, or other major emergencies, the Village could utilize this space for individuals seeking safety and/or emergency shelter. Including a concessions area within the building would also allow it to be used as an emergency feeding site in partnership with Jackson and Clark County Emergency Management Departments. In addition to its recreation and emergency uses, this building could house the Village Government Offices. The current Village building needs major renovations and updates.

The community also needs storm shelters for campers, those living in homes that may not survive a serious storm, and those visiting our parks. This building and some other facilities (like new restrooms) can be built to [FEMA specs for safe rooms](#).

Objective 3: Address Transportation Needs for Gile Memorial Park

If plans move forward for the Village to build a new structure at the park, there may be a need to relocate existing park roads and address parking needs. Both of these concerns should be addressed in the early stages of planning for the building.

Objective 4: Designate Gile Memorial Park, Mill Street Park, and the Dam/Waterfall as Historical Sites.

Seek formal recognition and designation of Gile Memorial Park, Mill Street Park, and Dam / Waterfall as Historical sites from the Wisconsin Historical Society. Ensure these designations are added to the State and National Registry of Historic Parks. Once this has been achieved, coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) and Jackson County to install and maintain directional signage to the Parks location. Park signage on Hwy 12/27 and State Hwy 95 must be replaced or updated.

Objective 5: Address Park management and maintenance needs

Standing water can become a breeding ground for mosquitos and diseases, posing a threat to public health if not properly addressed. It is recommended that the Village plans to mitigate and manage any areas where standing water may often occur. One potential mitigation action would be the installation of drain tile that can direct standing water into the watershed.

The village should develop a strategy for addressing park vegetation to maintain parks that support public recreation and the natural environment. This strategy would help manage brush overgrowth, remove diseased or wind-damaged trees, and replace removed trees. Utilizing tree and plant species indigenous to North America (particularly the driftless region) will also aid in standing water management, as these species can be more accustomed to the precipitation patterns of the region's climate.

The existing park structure should be remodeled to include garage doors, allowing the village to use the structure for park storage needs.

It is recommended that the village install security cameras throughout the park and in buildings. This will reduce vandalism, lower liability, and aid the enforcement of fees and park rules.



Goal 2: Protect and enhance the unique natural resources within Merrilan.

Objective 1: To preserve the natural beauty of the picturesque dam/waterfall and the surrounding green space.

Maintaining the dam, one of the most photographed locations in the State of Wisconsin, remains a top priority for the Village. To better support public viewing and accessibility, a large concrete area with seating will be installed near the dam. This would allow the public to enjoy picnics and celebrations with the waterfall as the backdrop. This installation should be able to withstand annual spring flooding.

Stormwater runoff has caused erosion issues in Mill Street Park. These erosion issues could be addressed by installing retaining walls on the East End of Mill Street and the west side of US Hwy 12/27. This area should also include stairs and a handrail, both of which should withstand annual spring flooding.

In past years, the lack of erosion mitigation has caused debris to accumulate in the green space near the dam. It is recommended that the village address these erosion issues and work with local organizations to prevent erosion from reaching the trout stream.

Objective 2: Shore land protection and restoration.

The Village currently has Ordinances in place to protect shoreland (Chapter 13). The Village desires to maintain its beautiful shorelines by correcting defects such as erosion, tree falls, unauthorized discharge, and other obstructions interfering with natural beauty, aquatic life, and recreational usage.

Goal 3: Use the Village's resources efficiently and enhance funding opportunities for the park and recreational needs of the Village.

Objective 1: Develop a Formal Park Development Plan for Gile Memorial Park.

It is recommended that the Village of Merrilan work with Jackson County Parks and Recreation, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and other groups and agencies to develop a formal park development and layout plan before making any significant modifications or changes to Gile Park. The Village should seek out funding sources for the development of this planning, including all necessary studies, engineering, and permits.



Goal 4: Provide and improve public access to outdoor recreation land and water.

Objective 1: Install Fishing Piers for Trow and Oakwood Lakes.

Seek funding and permits to install all-access fishing piers on Trow (Lower) Lake and Oakwood (Upper Lake). Many residents and tourists used the piers on these lakes in the past. However, they had to be removed due to structural failure and safety concerns. This objective provides positive, responsible sportsmanship for the youth and disabled citizens.

Additionally, improving parking near the fishing and observation piers will be important to ensure easy access for people with disabilities.

Objective 2: Maintain the current boat landing on the lower lake (Trow Lake) and make improvements as necessary.

Installing a combination fishing, observation, and boat dock will further ensure the safe use of the lower lake.

Objective 3: Installation of a canoe/kayak landing near the all-access fishing/ observation pier on the upper lake (Oakwood Lake).

This access will provide non-motorized boat access to Upper Lake (Oakwood) and Halls Creek.



Goal 5: Work with the State (DNR), County, area Schools, Businesses, Clubs, Sports Leagues, Veterans Organizations, Health Care Providers, and other interested parties to promote, utilize, maintain and improve the recreational facilities of Merrillan and the region.

Objective 1: Market Merrillan as a regional destination for Outdoor Activities.

Merrillan is centrally located among a number of excellent recreational facilities including Bruce Mound Winter Sports Area, Levis Mound Trail System, East and West Arbutus Parks and Campgrounds, Wildcat Park, and the Black River Forest. In addition, there are several state fishing and natural areas nearby. Also, in the Merrillan area our outdoors is home to more than 3,500 acres and more than one million plants and trees produced annually at Northern Family Farms. We are the Christmas Tree Village.

Objective 2: Make the Village of Merrillan Parks accessible to residents, organizations, and visitors.

Merrillan's park facilities, playing fields, lakes and waterways should be available to local groups like the Lions Club (for special events, movies and car shows), businesses for picnics and events, organizations for tournaments and games, and the community and our guests in general. From flea markets to camping Merrillan will continue to grow as an outdoor community.

Objective 3: The Village of Merrillan relies on the support of a number of partners in the development, use and promotion of our facilities and outdoor activities.

Other government entities like the State and County provide great regional recreational facilities. Local entities like our schools, businesses and their employees, clubs, and sports leagues provide programming and support for our community. Finally, the Lions Club, other organizations, local health care facilities and staff, Village employees, and our individual volunteers all are a large part of the team that makes Merrillan a great community. We want to both recognize and thank these volunteers for their support.



Village of Merrillan Overview

Merrillan is located within Wisconsin's Western Upland and on the northeast edge of the Driftless Area, a region that includes parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. "Drift" refers to the deposits of various sediment left behind by retreating glaciers. During the last ice age, this region was untouched by glacial drift, preserving the Driftless Area's characteristic topography of scenic bluffs and river valleys. These river valleys are often referred to as "coulees," a word derived from the French word "couler," meaning "to flow." The Wisconsin portion of the Driftless Area is often called the "Coulee Region." Halls Creek, a tributary of the Black River, cuts through the Merrillan and continues to the southeast.

Size and Location

The Village of Merrillan is approximately 1.34 square miles. The Village is located in the Northcentral portion of Jackson County, about 12.5 miles North of Black River Falls and 3.7 miles East of Alma Center.

Climate

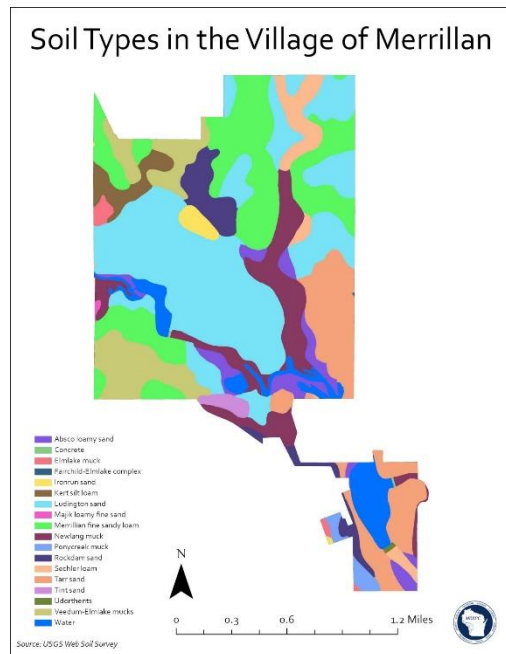
Merrillan's climate is continental, characterized by warm summers, cold winters, and moisture throughout the year. While publicly available data for smaller municipalities is not readily accessible, looking at larger municipalities in the region can give us a sense of the climate in Merrillan. The region sees average annual temperatures ranging from 44.1°F (Marshfield) to 48.9°F (La Crosse). The average annual precipitation in Black River Falls is 40.95 inches. For more information, visit the [NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information](#) website.

Changing weather patterns have caused Merrillan to experience seasonal variations in temperature and precipitation. These seasonal variations have led to milder winters, hotter summers, wetter springs, and increased occurrences of extreme weather events. Snow cover disappears earlier in the spring than in previous decades, causing snow-covered areas to shrink in recent years. Early snowmelt can increase flooding risks and shorten the winter sports season. It can also increase the spring rain season, leading to soggy ground, which impacts trail areas and maintenance. An increase in days when temperatures reach 90 degrees increases the risk of heat-related illnesses while providing an environment favorable to vector-borne diseases from ticks and mosquitos. As Merrillan plans for future outdoor recreation needs, the effects of changing weather patterns will be considered to sustain local park systems for the future.

Soils

There is a good variation of soil in Merrillan. The most common soil type is Ludington sand, with a 1 to 6 percent slope. The second most common is Merrillan fine sandy loam, with a slope of 0 to 3 percent. See larger map in Appendix B Map 3.

The Ludington series consists of moderately well-drained soils, moderately deep to paralytic contact with interbedded sandstone and shale. They formed in siliceous sandy alluvium and loamy residuum on pediments. Permeability is rapid in the sandy alluvium, moderately slow in the loamy residuum, and very slow to moderately slow in the interbedded sandstone and shale. The Elm Lake series consists of poorly drained soils with moderately deep to paralytic contact with interbedded sandstone and shale. The soils formed in siliceous sandy alluvium overlying loamy residuum from the underlying interbedded sandstone and shale on pediments.



Topography

The Village of Merrillan is located within the Western Upland region. It is a physiographic province consisting of high ridges and their associated steep-sided valleys, locally known as coulees, resulting from thousands of years of water erosion and weathering. The elevation is relatively flat within Merrillan. The topography surrounding the village, particularly the ridges south towards Black River Falls, is characteristic of the bluff land in the Coulee Region, Driftless Area, and Western Uplands.

Surface Waters

Merrillan is home to Oakwood Lake and Trow Lake. Halls Creek forms both of these lakes as it travels southeast to converge with the Black River. These three water bodies offer many aquatic recreation activities, including fishing and canoeing.



Social Characteristics

Population

Appendix B Table 1 details the population trends in Merrilan since the 2000 Census. In 2020, Merrilan had a population of 562, a 6.9% decrease from its 2000 population. This decrease does not reflect the population changes at the county and state levels, with Jackson County and Wisconsin increasing by 10.7% and 9.9%, respectively. About a third of Merrilan's population is under 18, and a quarter of the population is over 60. If the population remains consistent, the Village should focus on improving existing facilities to better suit the population's needs.

Population Age

According to the 2022 American Community Survey (see Appendix B Table 2), Merrilan had a median age of 37.1. This is comparable with Jackson County's median age of 42.2 and Wisconsin's median of 39.9. 32.9% of Merrilan's population is under the age of 18, which is higher than the county, state, and national percentages, which all hover around 20%. Merrilan's population over the age of 60 is 25%, which is on par with the county (27.6%), state (24.6%), and national (23.8%) levels. This is typical for a predominantly rural area and should be considered when determining future outdoor recreation needs. Merrilan should prioritize facilities that people of many ages can utilize.

Disability Characteristics

According to the [2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), 21.1% of the Merrilan population has a disability. Of Merrilan residents 17 and younger, 9.4% have a disability. 24.2% of residents between 35 and 64 years old have a disability. 37.8% of residents between 65 and 74 years old have a disability. Among those 75 and older, 67.7% have a disability. This should be kept in mind for outdoor recreation facilities – both assessing the accessibility of current facilities and designing new facilities to be as accessible as possible.

Household Income

According to the [2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), the median household income in Merrilan in 2022 was \$50,000, or 70.5% of the State median household income, \$70,996. 33% of households in Merrilan made less than \$25,000.

Employment

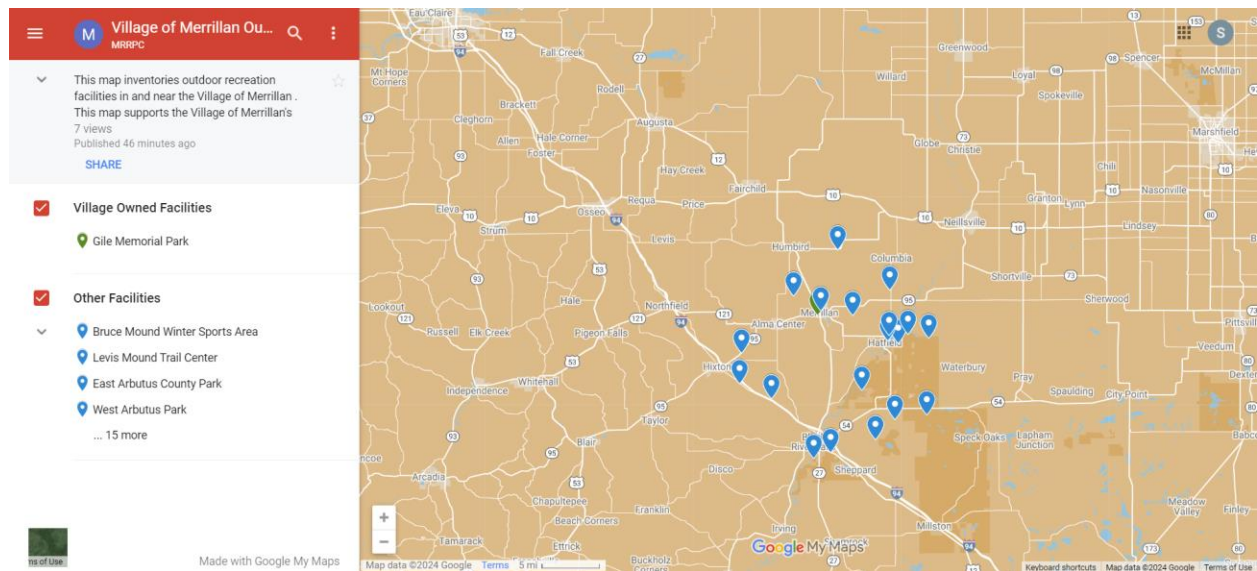
62.9% of Merrilan residents over the age of 16 are employed. According to the [2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), the largest occupations in Merrilan in terms of employment were service occupations, at 31.5%, and Sales and Office occupations, at 22.5%. See Appendix B Table 4 for a further breakdown of employment statistics.

PROPERTY INVENTORY

Maintaining adequate recreation facilities is important for any municipal parks and recreation department. The following is an inventory of Merrillan’s owned parks and properties. After reviewing the village facilities, this inventory covers non-city owned recreation facilities, such as County, State or Federal facilities/parks near the community.

An online interactive map of outdoor recreation facilities is available [HERE](#):

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1LKKGtI4ckSbiOajKBLyAEeBGYoESAsc&usp=sharing>



PROPERTY INVENTORY LEGEND:

	ADA Accessible		Playground Area		Historic Marker		Hiking
	Restrooms		Leashed Pet Area		Wildlife Viewing		Biking
	Campground		Boat Launch		Hunting		Snowshoeing
	RV Camping		Paddle Sports		Night Sky Viewing		Horse Trails
	Picnic Area		Swimming Area		Foraging		Snowmobiling
	Shelter		Fishing		ATV/UTV		

Merrillan Owned Parks and Recreation

Gile Memorial Park

100-198 Park Dr
Merrillan, WI 54754

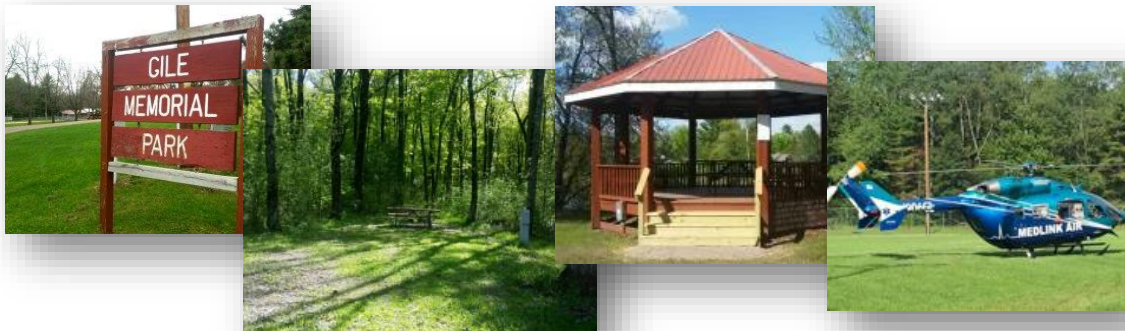


[Gile Memorial Park](#) is 13.92 acres in size, with options that appeal to all age groups. With 20 electric campsites, bathroom facilities, shelters to rent, playground structures, and large open spaces to bring your family, this park is a staple in the village. Gile Park has also been designated as the landing space for community-based med flights.

Facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bathroom facilities Ball Dimond / Soccer 20 Electric Campsites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Shelters (3) Playground Volleyball

Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camping Events and Programing ATV / UTV Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picnics and Shelters Baseball and Soccer Play / Tournaments Emergency Evacuation (Med Flights)

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend water and sewer mains into the park. (Eventually Campground) Work with Jackson County, the DNR, Army Corps, and other groups and agencies to develop a formal park plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate existing park roads and address parking needs. New City Building (see above) Future Weather Station and Data Upgrade Bathroom Facilities / Storm Shelter



Mill Street Park

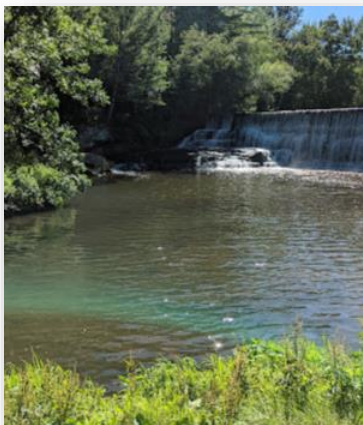


Small community park adjacent to Gile Memorial Park.

Facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic Table • Bench 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter

Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photography and Nature

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Shelter • Historic Designation and Signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Retaining Walls and Parking • Potential Rest Room / Storm Shelter



Lower Lake Beach Park



The Village maintains the beach and tests the water for safety and accessibility for the community and visitors.

Facilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic Table • Bench • Parking lot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter • Boat landing • Primitive Restrooms

Programs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming • Boating (both motorized and non-motorized) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Boat Landing • Improve restrooms / Storm Shelter • Improve parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new, "all access" fishing observation pier • Update signage



Detailed Information for Merrillan Park Access as of 1/9/201

GENERAL INFORMATION

Landing Name	Merrillan Park Access
Landing Type	RAMP
Waterbody Name	Trow Lake
Municipality	VILLAGE OF MERRILLAN
County	Jackson
Latitude	44.43967801
Longitude	-90.82491749
No. of Launch Lanes	1
Launch Surface	Paved
Launch Depth	less than 3 feet
Boarding Dock Present	No
No. of Vehicle and Trailer Stalls	6-10
No. of Vehicle Stalls	6-10
Type of Restrooms	Vault
Fish Cleaning Area	No
Lighting Present	No
Potable Water	No
Marine Pumpout	No
Ramp Slope %	5
Utilities Present	ELECTRIC
Comments	This ramp is located within the Village of Merrillan Park which has a picnic shelter with electric and tables.

School Recreation Facilities and Areas

Public School Districts are entities allowed to apply for Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LAWCON). Most schools have playground equipment and sports fields that may be available for use by the public throughout the year.

Lincoln Elementary School

[Lincoln Elementary School](#) in the Village of Merrillan serves 4k-6th grade students and is located in the School District of Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan. It has a playground that is available for public use.



Other Local Parks and Recreational Facilities

Bruce Mound Winter Sports Area

N791 Bruce Mound Avenue
Merrilan, WI 54754



[Bruce Mound Winter Sports Area](#) provides various winter recreation for all ages. This area has snow tubing hills, ski trails, snowboarding trails, and a chalet with a restaurant. This park has been operating since 1960 and brings an enjoyable experience for all.

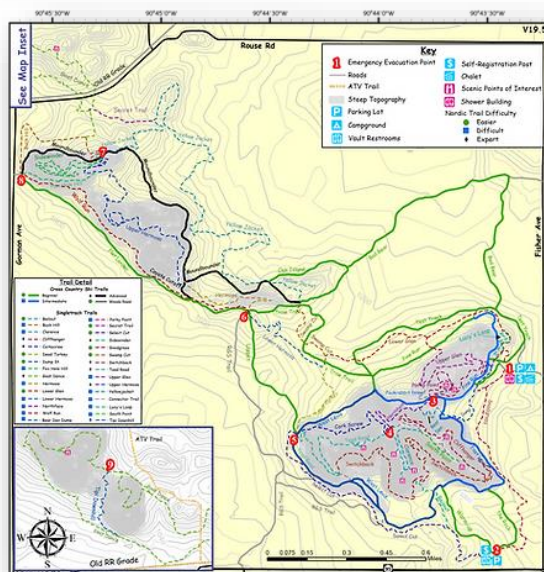
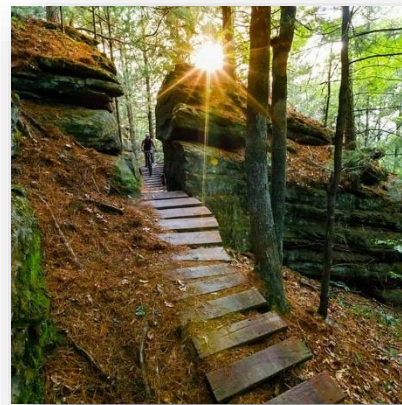
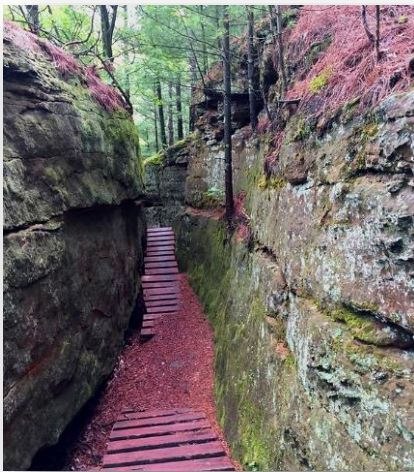


Levis Mound

1589 Fisher Ave.
Neillsville, WI 54456



Levis Mound is a non-motorized trail system in Clark County. It has over 41 miles of trails that are suited for hiking, mountain biking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, and ATVing. The main trails have access to water, flush restrooms, an open-air shelter, showers, and a warming chalet during the winter. There are also 8 non-electric campgrounds available.



Levis/Trow Mound Recreation Area

1589 Fisher Ave.
Neillsville, WI 54456

Levis Mound Trail User Fees

Mountain Biking

Individual Daily Pass \$ 8.00
Individual Season Pass \$ 30.00
Family Season Pass \$ 60.00

Combination All-Trails

Individual Season Pass \$ 60.00
Family Season Pass \$ 120.00

Cross County Ski Trails

Individual Daily Pass \$ 8.00
Individual Season Pass \$ 40.00
Family Season Pass \$ 80.00

Hiking & Snow-Shoeing

No trail fee or pass required

No hiking on any groomed winter trail

No snow-shoeing on groomed ski trails

BIKERS AND SKIERS MUST PURCHASE A PASS BEFORE USING THE TRAIL SYSTEM.

Trails subject to seasonal closures for all users.

Fees subject to change.

Passes can be purchased online or at the trailhead.

www.co.clark.wi.us

Join A Club
Become Involved



East Arbutus Park and Campground

W7898 Duck Hill Rd
Merrillan, WI 54754



[East Arbutus](#) is a Jackson County Park and Campground located on the shoreline of Lake Arbutus, providing many aquatic recreation activities. Some activities include fishing, water skiing, swimming, and boating. There are also 187 campsites at this park which have access to water, showers, picnic areas, play areas, a shelter building, a boat launch, a swimming beach, and hiking trails. This park also has two handicap-accessible campsites.



West Arbutus Park and Campground

N9548 Thunderbird Ln
Merrillan, WI 54754



[West Artubus](#) is a Jackson County Park and Campground located on the shoreline of Lake Artubus. Some activities available at the park include fishing, boating, swimming, and camping. 44 campsites at the park have access to the playground, the beach, restrooms, showers, a shelter building, and a boat launch. The Village of Hatfield is also within walking distance of the park, providing more entertainment.



Russell Memorial Park and Campground

W8180 South Road
Merrillan, WI 54754



[Russell Memorial Park and Campground](#) is a Clark County Park located on the shoreline of Lake Arbutus. This park offers various amenities, including 3 Shower Houses, a Boat Launch, Campsites, a Convenience Store, Drinking Water, Electrical Hookups, Firewood, Fishing Access, Flush Toilets, Full R.V. Hookups, Play Areas, Picnic Areas, Trail Access, ATV trails, Wi-Fi, and a sheltered building. This park is also near Levis Mound, which provides many recreational trails.

Lake Arbutus consists of 821 acres of surface water and is touted as the best fishery in Clark County. Four convenient boat landings offer ample opportunities for water-based recreation.



Wildcat Park

W9841 CTY HWY B
Humbird, WI 54746



[Wildcat Park](#) is a Clark County Park located in the Town of Mentor. It offers scenic hiking and views of sandstone bluffs and cliff faces. Wildcat Mound is a large scenic attraction within the park. The park also offers drinking water, picnic tables, and restrooms.



STATE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Black River State Forest

Located east of Black River Falls and south of Wisconsin Highway 54, Black River State Forest is a 15-to-20-minute drive from the city. The Wisconsin DNR provides the following description of this State Forest:

Two forks of the Black River flow through this 68,000-acre forest comprised of pine and oak woods under high sandstone abutments. This central Wisconsin property offers many recreational opportunities, including camping, canoeing, hunting, hiking, skiing, and ATV riding. Visitors may even see elk roaming the forest. Elk was released in 2015 and 2016 after being absent from the area for over 125 years.

State Fishery Areas

The state's first land purchase for conservation occurred in 1876 when 40 acres were purchased south of Madison for the Nevin Fish Hatchery. More recently, fishery projects that meet both habitat and public use needs have broadened in scope to include lands adjacent to streams and lakes. These lands protect the watershed and provide compatible recreational uses such as hunting, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Fishery areas along streams, rivers, and lakes protect water quality by reducing erosion and run-off and improving habitat and fishing opportunities. The Village of Merrillan has four State Fishery Areas nearby.

Halls (Stockwell) Creek Fishery Area

Size: 812.34 acres

Location: W11455 Sand Rd, Merrillan, WI 54754

Recreation: Hunting, trapping, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, berry picking, and canoeing.

Habitat: Emergent wet meadow wetland, forested wetland.

North Branch Trempealeau River Fishery Area

Size: 183.45 acres

Location: N9112 WI-95, Hixton, WI 54635

Recreation: Hunting, trapping, hiking, snowmobiling trails, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, berry picking, and canoeing.

Habitat: Scrub wetland, forested wetland.

Smith Pond

Size: 95.73 acres

Location: 13223 Green Acres Rd, Hixton, WI 54635

Recreation: Hunting, trapping, hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, and berry picking.

Habitat: Emergent wet meadow wetland, forested wetland, lowland shrub wetland, and cultural sites.

Tank Lake

Size: 502.84 acres

Location: N7608 Charcoal Rd, Hixton, WI 54635

Recreation: Hunting, trapping, hiking, snowmobiling trails, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, fishing, bird watching, berry picking, and canoeing.

Habitat: Includes wet meadow wetlands, forested wetlands, lowland shrub wetlands, and cultural sites.

For more information on State Fishery Areas in Jackson County, see the [Wisconsin DNR website](#).

State Natural Areas

State Natural Areas (SNAs) are areas being preserved by the DNR to protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape. The Village of Merrillan has seven of these designated sites located nearby. The following are allowable and prohibited activities.

Allowable activities: The activities listed below are generally allowed on all DNR-owned SNA lands. Exceptions to this list of public uses, such as SNAs closed to hunting, are posted with signs on site.

- Hiking
- Fishing
- Cross-country skiing
- Hunting
- Trapping
- Scientific research (permit remit required)
- Outdoor education
- Wild edibles
- Pets
- Wildlife viewing

Prohibited activities:

- Horseback riding
- Rock climbing
- Vehicles, including bicycles, ATVs, aircraft, and snowmobiles, except on trails and roadways designated for their use.
- Collecting animals, non-edible fungi, rocks, minerals, fossils, archaeological artifacts, soil, downed wood, or any other natural material, alive or dead. Collecting for scientific research requires a permit issued by the DNR.
- Collecting of plants, including seeds, roots, or other non-edible parts of herbaceous plants such as wildflowers or grasses
- Camping and campfires
- Geocaching

Arbutus Oaks SNA

Arbutus Oaks is located south of Arbutus Lake and has over one mile of undeveloped land on the shoreline. This SNA has oak and white pine and is over 90 years old. It also includes a small area of white pine-red maple swamp and southern dry-mesic forest.

Upper Black River State Natural Area

Upper Black River was designated a State Natural Area in 2010. It ranges from Hatfield Dam to Black River Falls and includes Morrison Creek, Valentine Creek, and Dickey Creek. It features habitats like floodplain and dry-mesic forests, sandstone cliffs, and high-gradient streams. Rare species, including the uncommon Louisiana waterthrush, are found here, and it is a highly protected area due to its rich biodiversity and unique landscapes.



East Fork Black River SNA

The East Fork of the Black River in southern Wisconsin is a long stretch of untouched river. It has pre-Cambrian granitic bedrock along its shores. This area features diverse terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, housing rare plants and animals. The area includes ridges with mature, dry-mesic forests and swales supporting various wetland communities. There is also a rich bird habitat with species like pine, black-throated green, and hermit thrush. It was recognized by the DNR as a State Natural Area in 2010.



Catfish Eddy Terraces SNA

Catfish Eddy Terraces are on the east bank of the Black River. They have a diverse ecosystem with both terrestrial and aquatic elements. There is a northern dry-mesic forest along the river's slopes. Within these forests are species such as white and red pines, red oak, white oak, and red maple. There are also many springs, spring runs, moist cliffs, and seepages. To the south of the terraces is Perry Creek, which supports rare bird species like the Louisiana Waterthrush. Catfish Eddy Terraces earned the designation of State Natural Area in 2010.



Castle Mound Pine Forest SNA

Castle Mound Pine Forest SNA is located east of Brockway, just south of Highway 12. The SNA includes a hiking trail and an observation tower. Various tree species are featured here, including Hill's oak, white oak, paper birch, red maple, large-toothed aspen, and jack pine. Castle Mound is known for some unique bird sightings, including the red-breasted nuthatch, solitary vireo, black-throated green warbler, and pine warbler, all of which are more common in northern Wisconsin. Castle Mound Pine Forest was one of the first locations to become a Wisconsin State Natural Area, receiving this designation in 1952.



Brockway Ponds SNA

Brockway Ponds contains five separate ponds which have sand exposed on their shorelines. It is a very sensitive ecosystem, so a single disruption to the water could have a major impact on the species living there. It is owned by Jackson County and was designated a State Natural Area in 2010.



Bauer Brockway Barrens SNA

Bauer Brockway Barrens has jack pine and hills oak on top of sand prairie and shrubs. This area has diverse butterfly and moth species. Indian Grave Creek runs through it, adding to its diversity. It is owned by the DNR and Jackson County and was designated a state natural area in 1997.



State Review of Recreation Demand (SCORP)

Introduction

The State of Wisconsin has determined that planning outdoor recreation facilities is of utmost importance for developing healthy and viable communities. Three important parts of recreation planning are:

- (1) Determine the demand for several types of outdoor recreation activity,
- (2) Inventory the existing facilities which accommodate outdoor recreation activities,
- (3) Evaluate the existing facilities and determine whether improvements or additions are needed to meet the existing and anticipated recreational demand.

Recreational Demand

As we progress into a new century, events and issues that influence outdoor recreation in the future are changing. Issues that will influence future outdoor recreation activities include:

- Land use patterns are shifting,
- Ownership patterns in rural areas are changing,
- Budgets for operation and maintenance of recreation resources are not expected to increase.



A review of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019-2023 was conducted to provide guidance on the demand for recreational outdoor activities. During the development of the SCORP, numerous Wisconsin residents were questioned about how often they participate in various recreation activities. Data was collected at 8 regional levels; Black River Falls lies in the Mississippi River Corridor.

5

This plan lays out **five** overarching goals for outdoor recreation.

-  1. Boost participation in outdoor recreation
-  2. Grow partnerships
-  3. Provide high-quality experiences
-  4. Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits
-  5. Enhance funding and financial stability



Village of Merrillan Outdoor Recreation plan 2024 - 2029

Favorite Places to Visit Based on Public Input (SCORP)

Of the people providing input, the majority (67%) selected the quality of trails as one of the top four most crucial factors in determining their favorite property to visit. This mirrors the results from the Black River Falls survey. Wisconsinites have historically participated in outdoor recreation at higher rates than the national average. Seventy-seven percent of SCORP respondents believe more outdoor recreational opportunities are needed in the Mississippi River Corridor Region. The opportunity that was most frequently selected as needed in the Mississippi River Corridor Region was more trails for hiking, walking, or running, which was selected by nearly half of respondents.

Future Recreation Needs from State Plan (SCORP)

Based on the 2019-2023 SCORP, the Mississippi River Corridor Region rates recreational activities as high, medium, or low relative to needs of the region. The groupings are as follows:

Future Recreation Needs - High	Future Recreation Needs - Medium	Future Recreation Needs - Low
Bicycling – touring/road riding	ATV/UTV riding	Dog sledding/ skijoring
Bicycling – mountain/off road	Bicycling – fat tire/snow	Dog training
Bird or wildlife watching	Fishing – lake from shore	Dog Trialing
Camping – developed	Fishing – ice fishing	Geocaching
Camping – primitive	Four-wheel vehicle driving	Off-highway motorcycle riding
Canoeing or kayaking	Horseback riding	Rock climbing
Cross Country Skiing	Horse cart driving	Sailing, windsurfing, rowing, etc.
Dog Walking	Hunting – migratory birds	Snowmobiling
Fishing – lake from vessel	Hunting – small game	Scuba diving/snorkeling
Fishing – river from vessel	Hunting – turkey	Whitewater rafting
Fishing – stream or shore wading	Motorboating (waterski, tubing)	
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	Swimming in lakes and rivers	
Hiking, walking, trail running	Target shooting – archery	
Hunting – big game	Target shooting – firearms	
Nature photography	Trapping	
Nature based education		
Picnicking		
Snowshoeing		
Visit a beach, beach walking		



Implementation, Priorities, and Action Items

Merrillan Priorities, Objectives & Action Items for 2024-2029

We have included several guidelines for the implementation of this plan moving forward. First our goals and objectives will serve as a guideline for making good decisions and prioritizing our efforts.

Next, we included very specific needs for each publicly owned facility and park in our plan. We will use our goals and community input combined with our partners and available resources to complete as many of these projects as possible over the life of this plan.

Finally, we will review our survey results and other community input to develop new spaces, parks, and facilities that will serve the community for years to come. In many cases this will involve working with our partners like the County, State, businesses or others to minimize the impact on our taxpayers.

Goals From Earlier in Plan

Continue to maintain the Village’s outdoor park and recreation facilities.

Protect and enhance the unique natural resources within Merrillan.

Use the Village’s resources efficiently and enhance funding opportunities for the park and recreation needs of the Village.

Provide and improve public access to outdoor recreation, land, and water.

Work with the State (DNR), County, area Schools, Businesses, Clubs, Sports Leagues, Veterans Organizations, Health Care Providers, and other interested parties to promote, utilize, maintain and improve the recreational facilities of Merrillan and the region.

Suggested Park Improvements from Earlier in Plan

Gile Park Improvements

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend water and sewer mains into the park. (Eventually Campground) Work with Jackson County, the DNR, Army Corps, and other groups and agencies to develop a formal park plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate existing park roads and address parking needs. New City Building (see above) Future Weather Station and Data

Mill Street Park Improvements

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve Shelter Historic Designation and Signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve Retaining Walls and Parking

Lower Lake Beach Park

Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Boat Landing • Improve primitive restrooms • Improve parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new, “all access” fishing observation pier • Update signage

...and The Community

We never want to forget the creative ideas from our community members. Our survey yielded dozens of ideas for the future include below. Our partnerships with the County, Civic Groups, Sports Clubs / leagues / Associations, The State of Wisconsin and others will also continue to guide us as we continue to find ways to improve our outdoor recreational activities.



PLANNING PROCESS

This plan for Merrillan Wisconsin has been developed through meetings with several key stakeholders, elected officials, and people with an interest in outdoor recreation and the community. We also conducted a comprehensive survey for the plan. Then an extensive review of the existing park facilities in the community, potential improvements for these facilities, and possible expansion and new systems to enhance the outdoor recreational experience was conducted.

Working with these various groups, the team developed a set of goals and discussed what objectives would be necessary to meet these goals over the next several years. The community will work on these Goals and Objectives as well as the specific improvements outlined in this plan in a fiscally responsible manner in the coming years.

Through this process it became apparent that recreation in Merrillan extends beyond village government to our business community, Jackson County, the State, and the countless individuals, coaches, teachers, volunteers and others that add so much to the experience that is Merrillan outdoor recreation. Thanks to all these individuals and entities for their input and assistance in the preparation of this plan and their greater contributions to the Village of Merrillan.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A: Grant/Funding Opportunities

Funding Programs: Funding for recreational development can come from several sources, both public and private. Most funding for this type of development comes from public local funds. Primarily, local funds come from several sources including the sale of bonds, allocations from the local tax base, and donations from individuals and organizations. Non-local funding can come from several sources, either in the form of a grant or a loan. Currently, the DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and Rural Development (RDA) provide competitive funding relating to outdoor recreation. We have also included Grant Finder a service to find potential grants and funding.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



The [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Grant Programs](#) is a main source of funding for outdoor recreation facilities. [The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund](#) was created in 1989 to preserve important natural communities, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation., administered by the DNR, is a fund designed to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, protect land sensitive to environmental degradation, conserve and restore wildlife habitat and protect water quality. As a prerequisite to the following WDNR funding programs, applicants must first submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, such as this plan, or a

master plan that has been approved by resolution by a local governing unit, or a plan of a higher unit of government. Applicants submitting qualifying comprehensive outdoor recreation plans or master plans may receive eligibility to apply for funding for up to five years. The DNR's priority for funding is land acquisition, followed by facility development.

Rural Development Administration (USDA - Rural Development)

The [USDA](#) provides a loan program, which provides Community Facility Project Loans to applicants with areas of less than 20,000 people, for the purpose of constructing, enlarging, or improving community facilities for health care, public safety, or public services. These loans should be secured with bonds or notes pledging taxes, assessments, or revenues.





Village of Merrillan Outdoor Recreation plan 2024 - 2029

There are many Rural Development programs in different areas of community development that could provide loans or possibly grants, if criteria for income and utility rates are met, for facilities in smaller communities.

Transportation Assistance Program (TAP) Wisconsin DOT



The [Wisconsin Department of Transportation TAP program](#) provides funds for nontraditional projects within the Safe Routes to School Program, Transportation Enhancements, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program. The TAP program provides up to 80 percent reimbursement grants for approved projects that target transportation-oriented pedestrians and bicycle planning and construction projects.

Community Development Block Grant, Department of Administration

The [Wisconsin CDBG program](#) funds support infrastructure and facility projects for communities. Examples of eligible projects include improvements, repairs, or expansions of streets, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and community centers.



Grant Finder

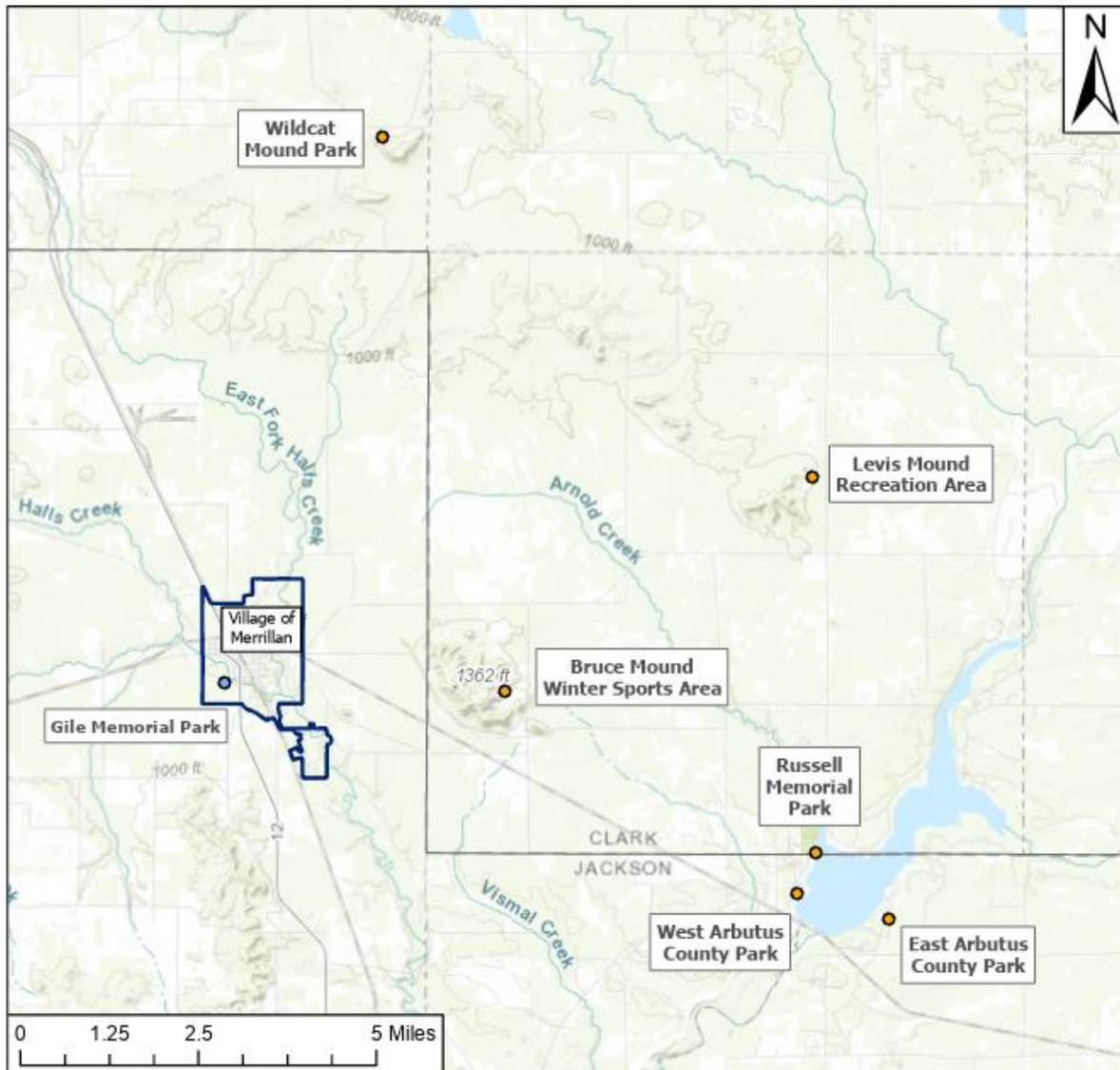


The Wisconsin League of Municipalities is adding [GrantFinder](#) as a new service for their members to identify eligible grants. This Grants database will identify state, federal, corporate and foundation grants available to local governments. This is a free service for League members.

APPENDIX B: MAPS

Map 1: Local Parks

Local Parks



Legislative Technology Services Bureau

Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS

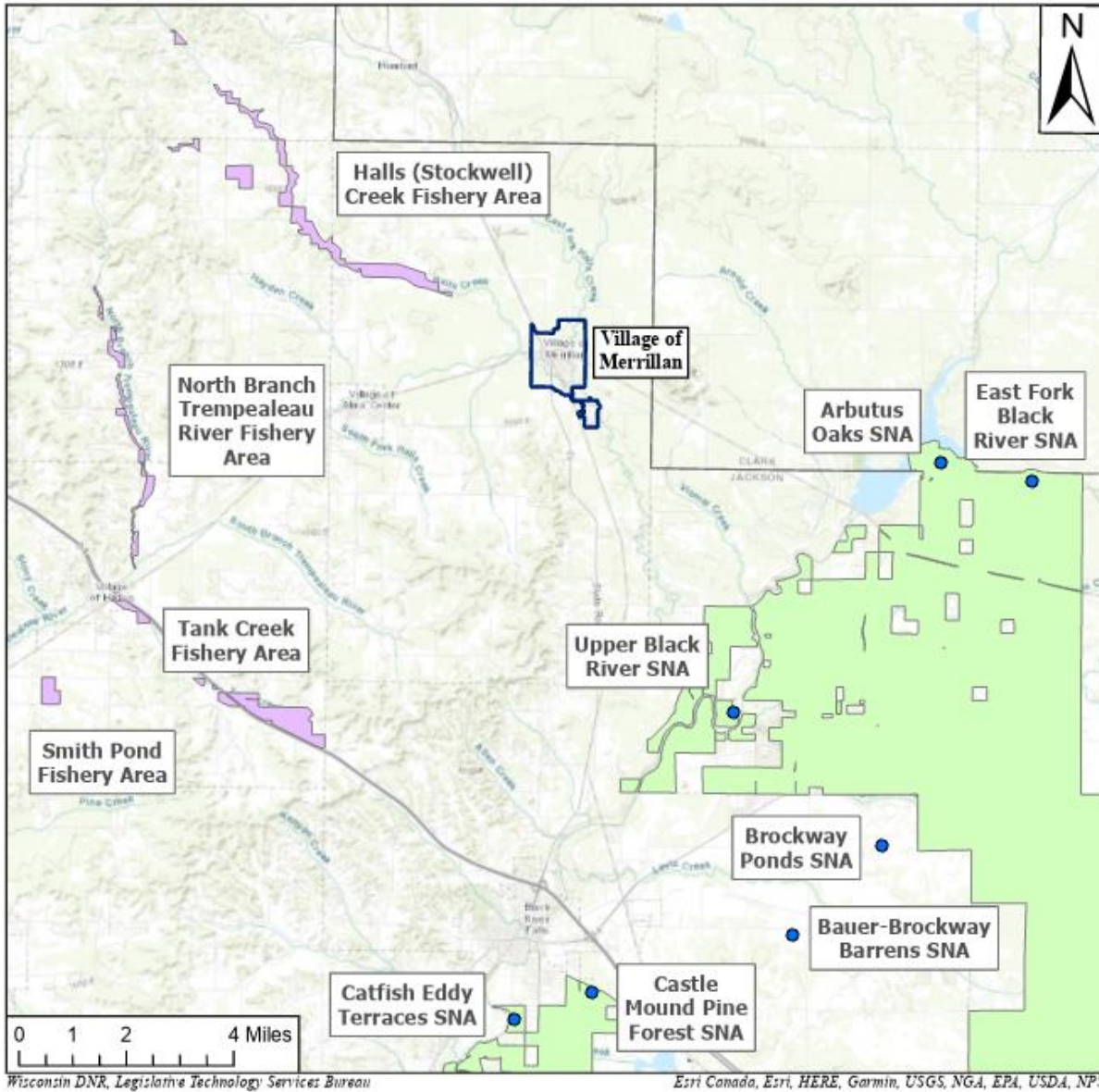


Legend

- Village of Merrillan
- Village Parks
- Other Local Parks
- County Boundary



Map 2: State Forests, Natural Areas, Fishery Areas State Forests, Natural Areas, and Fishery Areas



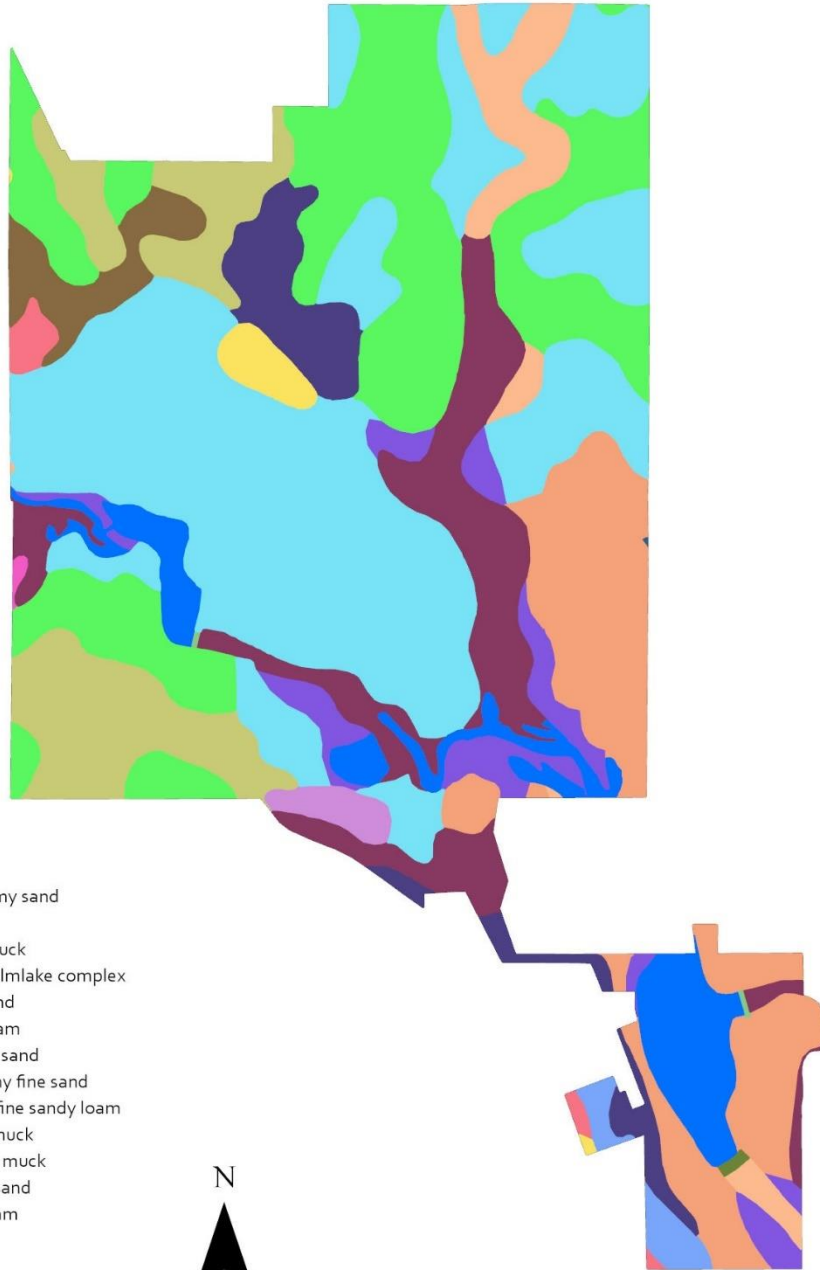
Legend

-  Village of Merrillan
-  County Boundary
-  Black River State Forest
-  State Natural Areas
-  State Fishery Areas



Map 3: Soil Types

Soil Types in the Village of Merrillan



- Absco loamy sand
- Concrete
- Elmlake muck
- Fairchild-Elmlake complex
- Ironrun sand
- Kert silt loam
- Ludington sand
- Majik loamy fine sand
- Merrillian fine sandy loam
- Newlang muck
- Ponycreek muck
- Rockdam sand
- Sechler loam
- Tarr sand
- Tint sand
- Udorthents
- Veedum-Elmlake mucks
- Water



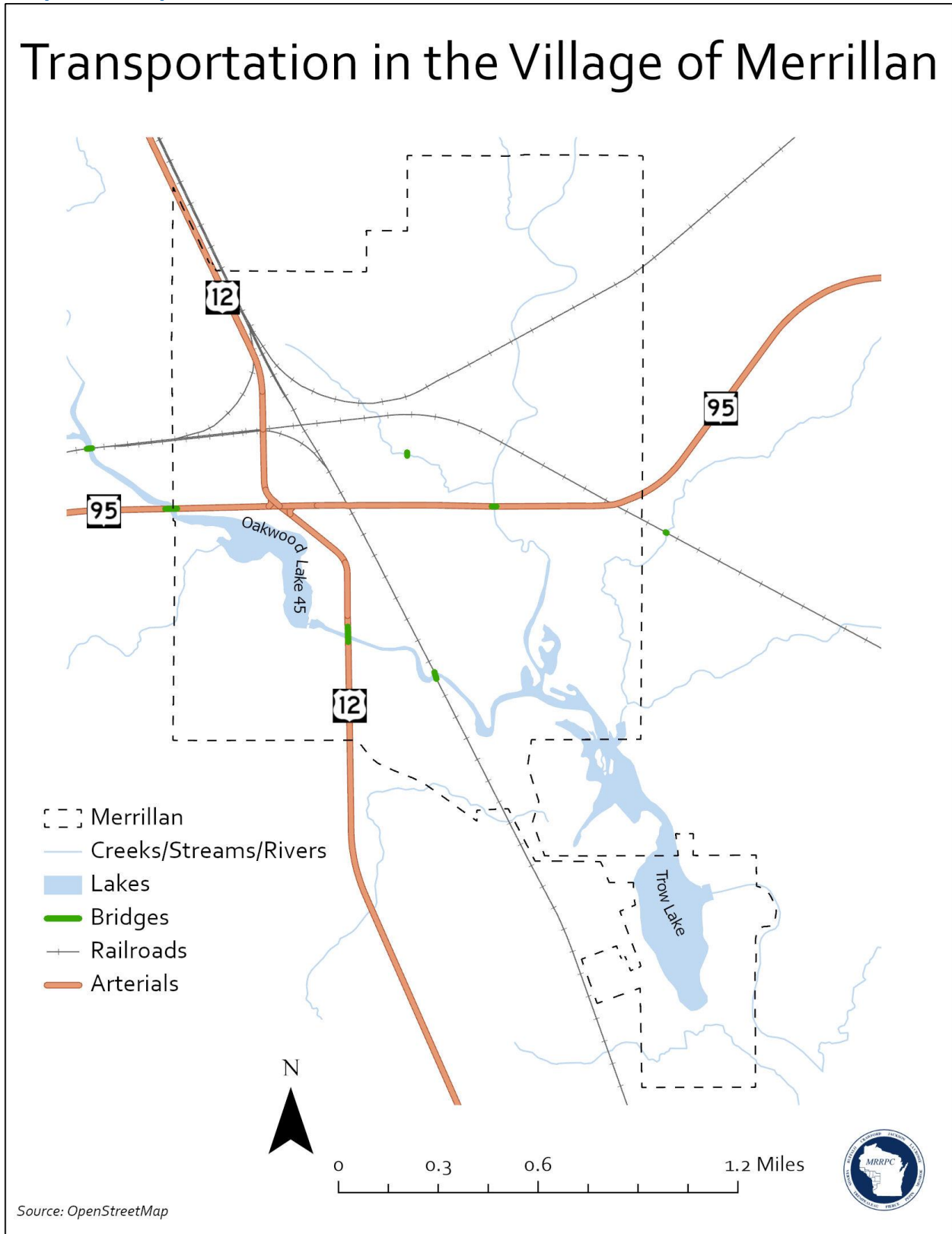
0 0.3 0.6 1.2 Miles



Source: USGS Web Soil Survey

Map 4: Transportation

Transportation in the Village of Merrillan



APPENDIX B: TABLES

Table 1. Population

Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	Percent Change
Village of Merrillan	604	542	562	-6.9%
Jackson County	19,100	20,449	21,145	10.7%
Wisconsin	5,363,715	5,363,675	5,893,718	9.9%

Source: Decennial U.S. Census – US Census Bureau

Table 2. Age Characteristics

	Total	Percent
Total Population	583	(X)
Age		
Under 5 years	33	5.7%
5 to 9 years	41	7.0%
10 to 14 years	88	15.1%
15 to 19 years	53	9.1%
20 to 24 years	11	1.9%
25 to 29 years	10	1.7%
30 to 34 years	19	3.3%
35 to 39 years	66	11.3%
40 to 44 years	30	5.1%
45 to 49 years	23	3.9%
50 to 54 years	34	5.8%
55 to 59 years	29	5.0%
60 to 64 years	33	5.7%
65 to 69 years	44	7.5%
70 to 74 years	38	6.5%
75 to 79 years	13	2.2%
80 to 84 years	7	1.2%
85 years and over	11	1.9%
Selected Age Categories		
5 to 14 years	129	22.1%
15 to 17 years	30	5.1%
Under 18 years	192	32.9%
18 to 24 years	34	5.8%
15 to 44 years	189	32.4%
Summary Indicators		
Median age (years)	37.1	(X)
Sex ratio (males per 100 females)	120.0	(X)

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, [S0101 Age and Sex](#)

Table 3: Village of Merrillan Household Income

Income	Percent of Households
Less than \$10,000	10.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	18.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	7.3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	9.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	28.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	2.8%
\$200,000 or more	0.0%
Median Household Income	
Geography	Median Income
V. of Merrillan	\$50,0000
Wisconsin	\$70,966

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, [Table S1901](#)

Table 4: Employment

	Total	Percent of Pop. Over 16
Population 16 years & over	418	(X)
In workforce	263	62.9%
Employed	213	51.0%
Unemployed	50	12.0%
Armed Forces	0	-
Occupation	Total	Percent of Workforce
Management & Business	29	13.6%
Service Industry	67	31.5%
Sales & Office	48	22.5%
Natural Resources & Construction	24	11.3%
Production & Transportation	45	21.1%

Source: 2022 U.S. Census Data; ACS – 5 Year Estimates Data Profiles, [Table DP03](#)



APPENDIX C: Survey Results

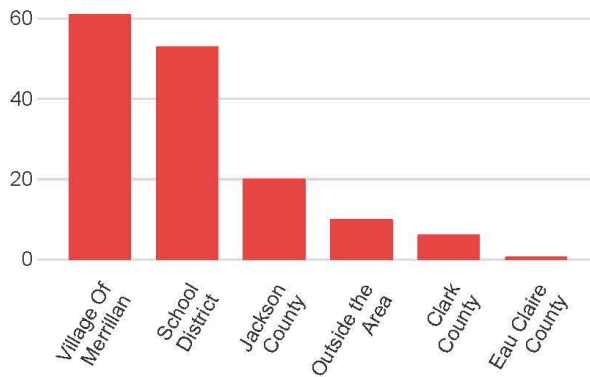
1

Village of Merrillan Outdoor Recreation Survey

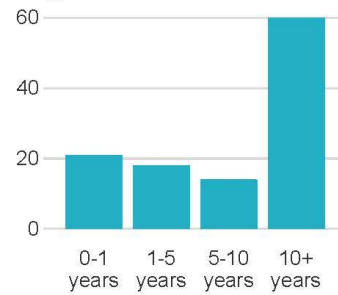


Demographics

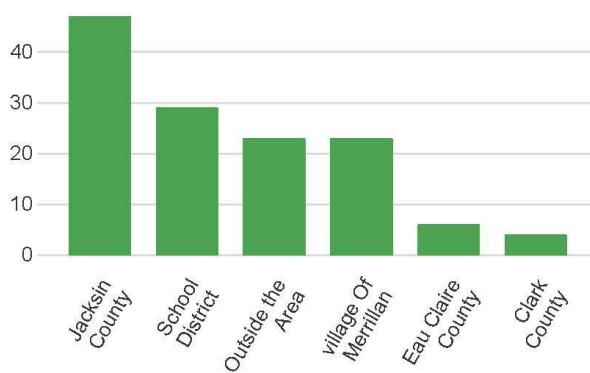
1) I live In:



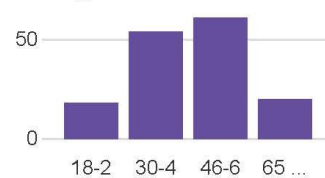
2) If you live here, how long have you lived in lived in the Village of Merrillan?



3) I Work In:

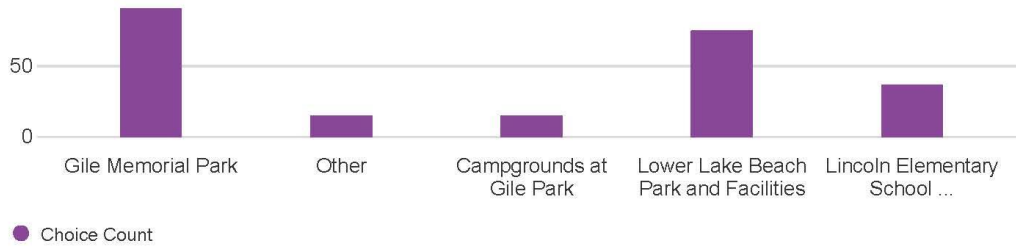


4) Which best describes the age group you belong too?



Park and Facilities Data

5) My Favorite Parks are... - Selected Choice



Other - Text

County trails

ATV trails

lake wazzee

Black River Falls All Abilities Playground

Most parks we frequent are outside of Merrillan but would love to start

East Arbutus

Humbird pond

Wazee, Lake Arbutus,

Wazee Lake

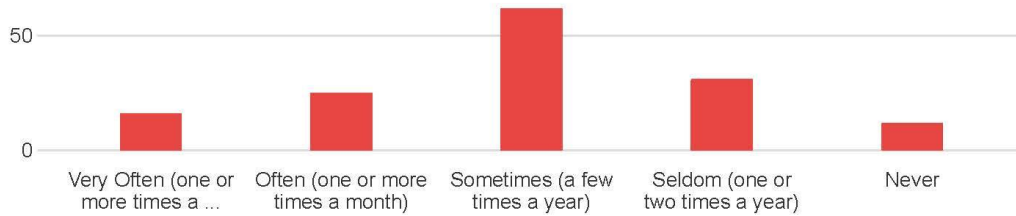
Russell

All abilities brf

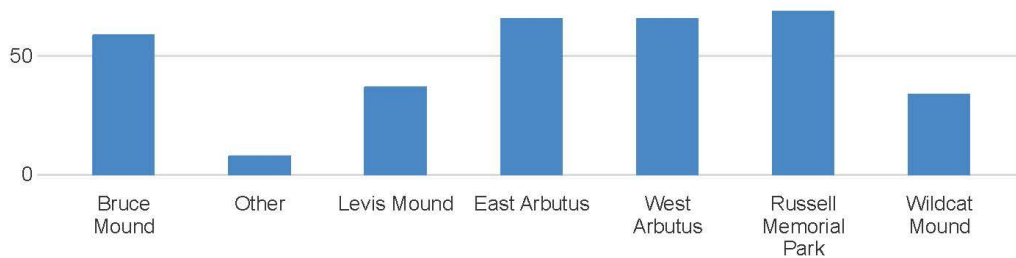
Lunda Park

Ettrick

6) How often to you use the Village of Merrillan parks and/or Outdoor facilities?



7) My Favorite Parks Near the Village are... - Selected Choice



Other - Text

Lower Lake

Coming to explore on ATV's

lake wazzee

Black River playgrounds

Wazee, Rustic Mill, Arburitum, Snyder Lake, High Ground.

Wazee co park

None

Activities

8) What are your favorite outdoor/recreation activities?

Field	Mean	Responses
Outdoor festivals	4.20	113
Outdoor Music, Movie or performance (amphitheater)	4.19	106
Flea markets / vendor or Craft fairs	4.08	115
Fishing	4.04	115
Boating	3.92	108
Camping	3.88	109
Swimming	3.81	102
Hiking	3.74	106
Picnicking	3.73	105
Special Events (car, motorcycle, tractor shows)	3.66	102
Walking my Pet(s)	3.66	105
Playground Activities	3.56	98
UTV/ATV Riding	3.55	109
Canoeing / Kayaking / SUP board	3.54	106
Wildlife Viewing / Bird Watching	3.51	100
Organized Sports Activities: Baseball, Softball, Soccer, Swimming, Track, Volleyball, Sports Camps	3.37	94
Basketball	2.76	90
Biking Trails Paved / Gravel	2.50	94
Pickleball	2.34	89
Snowmobiling	2.24	93
Cross Country Skiing / Snowshoeing	2.20	90
Running	2.10	90
Mountain Biking / Bike Parks	1.83	89

Other: - Text

- Outdoor games, horseshoe, disc golf
- Music in the Park, Community Ed gatherings, etc
- ATV group over 65 like to ride trails in the woods
- Horseback Riding
- Family Gatherings, Family Events.
- Hunting
- Dog park or run
- ice skating rink
- Enclosed area for kids to play
- Drive in movies



9) I would like to see the following organized sport, program or event in Village of Merrillan.

I would like to see the following organized sport, program or event in Village of Merrillan.

Music

Music, performances, artist workshops. With camping and kayaking as part of the program.

outdoor events, music

A monthly music in the park at least in the summer months, replacement for Hatfield's flea market if it's being cancelled due to property owner no longer wanting to do it, community ed classes at either Lincoln school or Gile Park shelter, an organic (or at least non pesticide) community garden where Dale's used to be or in front of the school

Any youth sport

More music.

ATV trails accessible from rental homes in area close to gas stations and restaurants. Group of 8-10 age 65+ coming in August.

drive in movies are always a good time

Fresh food market

Outdoor concerts sound pretty cool!

Marathon

Softball and baseball

Bring back softball tournaments, youth baseball.

Would love a baseball field at Gile park!! Having a baseball field in the Village would open up community opportunities for pickup baseball and softball games!

Beach Volleyball

Pickleball for adults. Any youth sports opportunities

Lights would be awesome for baseball games

Softball tournaments to return to Gile Park. Such a wonderful park that's not being used for whatever the excuses are.

Pickleball or cornhole

Adult volleyball league

New / Improved Facilities

10) From the list below, please address needs for public recreation facilities...

Field	Adequate Facilities	No Interest	Need New / Additional Facilities
Fishing Pier	10	17	89
Paved Walking and Biking Paths / Trails	9	26	74
Water Park / Splash Pad	4	35	70
ADA / Handicap Facilities	10	32	70
Dog Park or Off Leash Trails	5	38	69
Event Space	23	17	69
Lake Access	35	12	67
Playgrounds	28	21	66
Swimming Pool	6	38	65
Amphitheater / Stage	9	35	65
Sledding Hill	16	32	63
Park Basketball Courts	12	35	63
Boat / Kayak Rentals	9	40	62
Unpaved Walking and Biking Paths / Trails	17	34	58
Covered Group Picnic Shelters	37	16	58
River Access	26	26	57
Ice Rink	6	53	51
Pickleball Courts	0	59	50
Bicycle Park	7	58	46
Bird Watching / Wildlife Observation Sites	21	43	45
Sand Volleyball Courts	17	48	43
Village Baseball / Softball Fields	45	26	41
Open Play Turf Areas	20	47	36
Cross Country Skiing or Snowshoe Trails	13	58	35
Disc Golf Courses	2	68	35
Winter Trails	15	58	33
Tennis Courts	0	73	33
Skate Park	1	78	30
Soccer Fields	8	72	29

Other, describe: - Text

Flushable toilet at gile park

Camping

Community garden

ATV trail's

Swim beach/ lake facilities

Love the splash pad idea!

Fishing pier on upper lake

Facilities for physical activities and workouts indoor/outdoor.

Special needs playground equipment

Kayak access to both lakes and clear access between them. Also updated camping sites, bathroom facilities, shelter upgrades.

Better restrooms at gile park

Better rest rooms and ruts/holes at lower lake boat ramp. Facilities are dirty and most avoid using them.

Shared court spaces

Flea Market area



Village of Merrillan Outdoor Recreation plan 2024 - 2029

9

11) Most important park improvements needed in Village of Merrillan.

Field	Very Important	No Opinion	Not Important
Upgrading existing parks, recreation facilities, trails and open spaces	90	18	3
Concentrating on maintaining existing parks and facilities only	72	30	6
Expanding and developing the trail system for pedestrian and bike use	68	24	14
Improving access and parking for existing trails and park facilities	61	34	12
Acquiring and protecting land for natural open space	59	34	16
Developing more dog off-leash parks or trails	50	39	18
Developing new sport courts like pickleball, tennis, basketball	49	37	20
Acquiring more land for future parks	48	38	21
Developing more sport fields like baseball, soccer, football	41	44	22
Developing a bicycle / Skateboard Park	19	44	44

12) Other Park improvements not listed above:

Other Park improvements not listed above:

Bicycle trails! Interpretive nature walks. Native species or heirloom gardens. Reflection, meditation, and quiet spaces.

Developing a good Facebook page giving information on what's available would be great!

Bring water, sewer, and electric to Gile campground. Put in modern bathrooms at both lower lake and Gile park. Update playground equipment at Gile Park, clean up and expand lower lake beach, add security systems to both facilities to hold people accountable.

We have basketball hoops already at the school and a nice softball field that the townsmen can't seem to weed whack or mow to make the park look nice and kept. If we get new facilities I don't believe there will be any effort in maintaining the upkeep that's needed. The town is really looking rundown and unkept these last couple years and it's a shame cuz Merrillan was looking very nice up until a few years ago.

I don't live in Merrillan but have had a place there since 2013. It would be nice to have a fishing pier above the water fall for kids to fish.

Restrooms facilities with showers for campers.

Campgrounds

New handicap fishing piers at both lakes. bathhouse, updated toilets!

Newer restrooms and shower rooms at Gile park

Updating current parks and I see people skating as biking in the shelters. Kids are biking in the streets on blind corners and I believe they deserve somewhere safe to ride. Maintaining natural resources and making trails to explore Merrillan I believe would bring in more tourists and increase revenue especially since the trails run right through here.

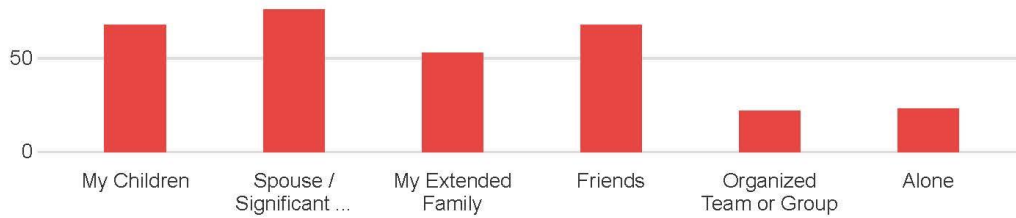
Actual toilets and running water at lower lake park. A playground at lower lake park. Beach and boat ramp upkeep!!

ADA based playground equipment for all ages (babies to young adults with special needs)

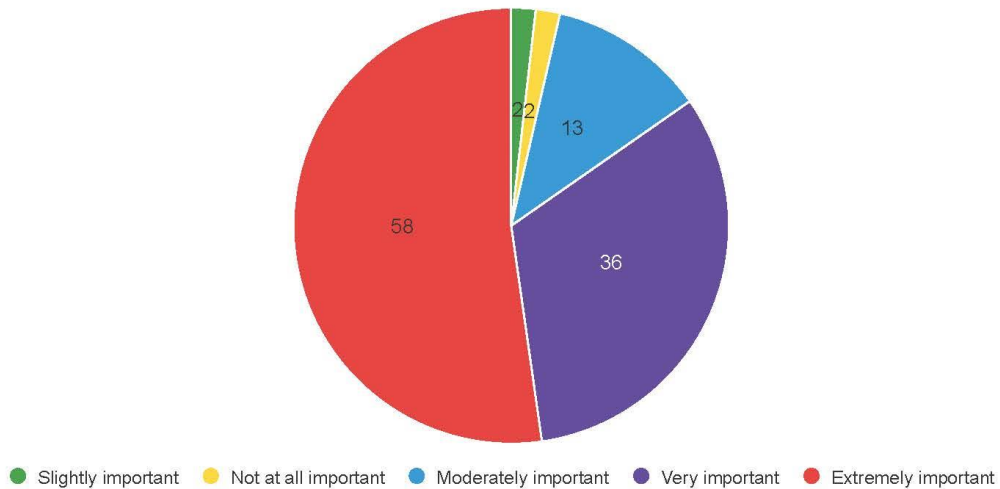
Good bathroom, shower, and community hall at the park and Campground. Park venue capable of supporting community events with areas from vendors, car or tractor shows, and carnival games and rides. Plus additional spectator parking adjacent to the park.

Involvement

13) Who most often participates with you in outdoor recreation activities?
Please select all that apply...



14) Do you think outdoor recreation opportunities are important to improve the quality of life for your family and the Village of Merrillan residents?



15) I have traveled away from Village of Merrillan to specifically pursue outdoor recreational activities.



Yes, please let us know where you went and what activity you were pursuing. - Text

Blackriver falls for water park and Lunda center

Black River canoeing

kayaking

Wazee for hiking trail, Hoffman Aquatic or AC HS for clean water swimming, Lunda for music in the park, Hatfield flea market and Russell Park beach/ski show/fireworks, I miss Merrillan having fireworks over Oakwood Lake!

Levi's hiking

Hikikg

Levis mound, wildcat, Russell Park

Hurley, Clam Lake, Hatfield, Mercerr

USA, camping,hiking

Hiking

Walking, hiking and biking

Fishing, dog walking, biking, and hiking

hiking blacktop trails

Softball

Bruce Mound, Levi's Miund, Wildcat Mound, rollerblading, softball/baseball at friends' houses

Lunda park, lake arbutus, KOA, campgrounds in Hatfield

Black River falls And neillsville, sports activities, skatepark, dog park, tennis, soccer, hiking, walking trail, park and playground

BRF, Warren's, Eau Claire, Sparta, Madison LaCrosse

BRF for running trails, BRF for a park more suited to younger kids, BRF for outdoor swimming pool/splash pad

Baseball in hixton

Q17 - Your BIG Idea! If you could create the ideal outdoor recreation experience in the Village of Merrillan, what would it be?

Your BIG Idea!

If you could create the ideal outdoor recreation experience in the Village of Merrillan, what would it be?

I would improve Gile Park by having flushable toilets, showers. I would be sure to have enough to adequately supply services for current campers and future campers. And park Shelter rentals. I would also build a band shelter for entertainment. I would like to see the baseball field improved and better equipped to help with the current emergency helicopter landing pad more picnic areas and a better road throughout the park

Non-motorized waters for kayaks, canoes, small fishing boats with electric motors, paddle boards, etc. Tent and primitive camping with walking trails. Destination bike trails that also connect to county and state lands. Wildlife viewing. Art displays/sculptures. An amphitheater.

?

Organic/companion gardening community garden that's low maintenance that members of the community can see a plexiglass encased replaceable map of what is growing each year and images of plants to keep versus what to help weed, maybe also pics of what ripe looks like for the kids to know when to pick vs letting ripen more. Letting families get their hands dirty building a healthy microbiome through gardening. Doing it at the plot where Dale's used to be would be beautiful use of the empty lot and highly visible for safety of garden and those visiting it.

For a park that all kids can play in. For special needs kids that can enjoy also

Trails for ATV's in the woods with access to Gas stations and lodging close with restaurants and grocery stores.

Walking paths. Access to lake. Pier

Walking trails

A nice dog park area would be great!

Outdoor pool and paved biking trails

A foundation trail like Black River Falls has. Not in Hatfield. In Merrillan.

Indoor recreational building.
basketball,
softball/baseball pitching and batting area.
Weight room.

Add camping to lower lake, modernized facilities at gile Park and campground, modernized facilities at lower lake beach, a handicap fishing pier at upper lake and lower lake. Make Gile park UTV accessible, improve the two pavilions at gile Park for rental purposes. Once completed properly maintain facilities for the future

A space where families can go enjoy outdoor activities. A good playground for children, including those with disabilities. A space for people to play sports they enjoy outside of school. Improved softball and baseball fields so more games can be held locally and access for more practice opportunities.

Unsure. Need more healthy outdoor activities for all residents of Jackson county.

Would love paved or even just cleared running trails, would love a safe park for little ones with updated safe equipment, splash pad (even just a simple one) would be amazing and a fullsize baseball field (or even a few if we are dreaming!) and bathrooms with running water near the park (also some sort of lighting/security camera)

Sand volleyball court, pickleball courts and playground for all ages.

Fix up field park ball field bleachers and infield maybe add a scoreboard and lights for little league games and adult softball leagues

Od like to see a place where the park is used more than it is now.

Safe place for children to play and communicate with others. Give seniors a place to enjoy the outdoors with grandkids or other seniors.





APPENDIX D: ADOPTION RESOLUTION

**Village of Merrillan
Jackson County, Wisconsin
Resolution No. _____**

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE VILLAGE OF MERRILLAN
OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN, 2024-2029 AS THE OFFICIAL
COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Village of Merrillan and an ad hoc plan update committee representing various stakeholder groups, in cooperation with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, has developed and updated a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan for the Village; and,

WHEREAS, the Village of Merrillan participated in the plan update; and,

WHEREAS, the plan lists available outdoor recreation facilities and identifies foreseeable outdoor recreation demand for the Village of Merrillan; and,

WHEREAS, the plan identifies specific recommendations and priorities for improving the recreational facilities and opportunities within the Village of Merrillan; and,

WHEREAS, municipalities are required to have a community outdoor recreation plan on file with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in order to be eligible for certain State and Federal cost-sharing financial aids for the development or improvement of outdoor recreation facilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Merrillan, Village Board hereby adopts the Village of Merrillan Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2024-2029 as the official comprehensive outdoor recreation plan for the Village of Merrillan.

Dated this _____.

Chairman

Attest - Clerk