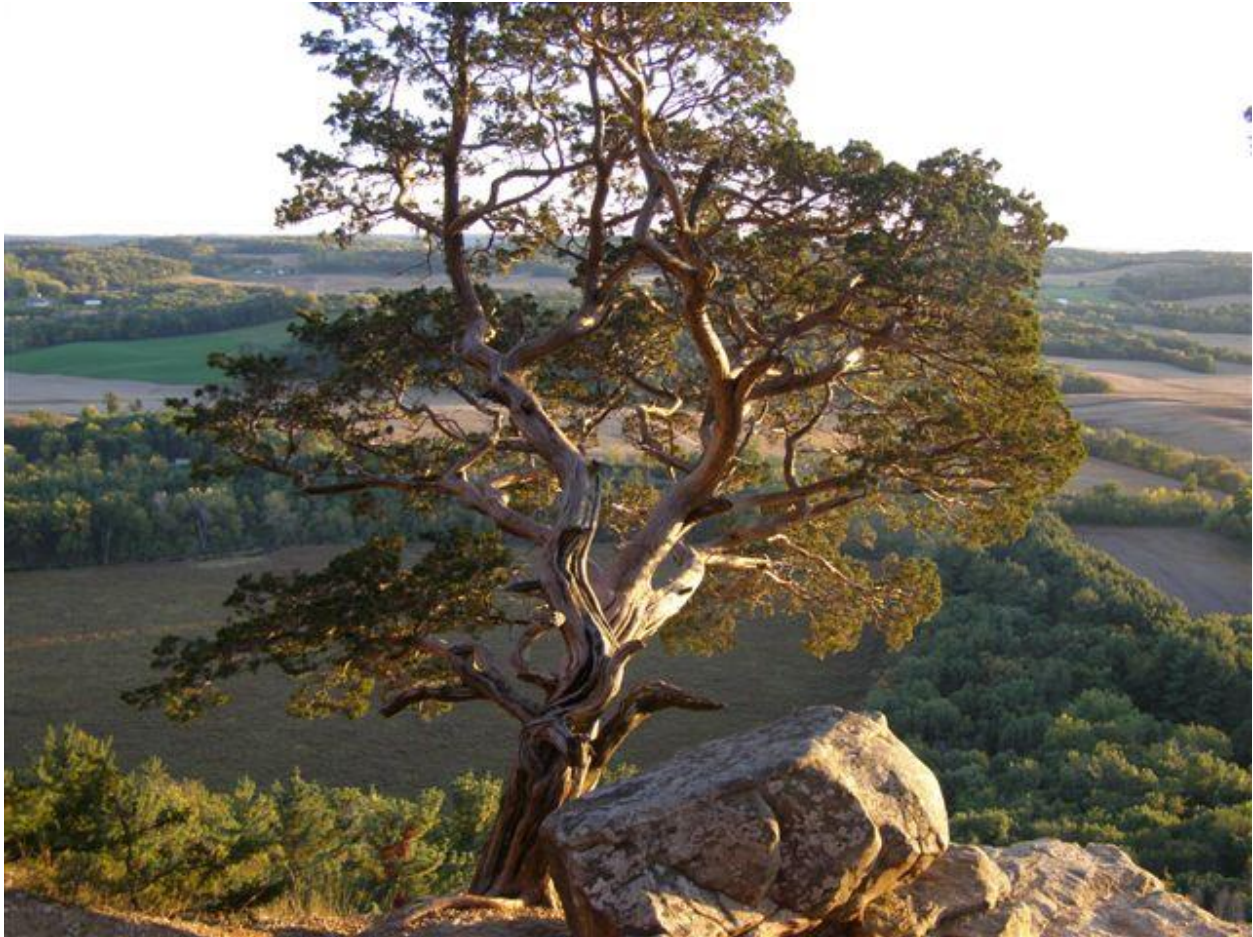


TOWN OF WEST POINT

2009

OUTDOOR OPEN SPACE & NATURAL AREA PLAN



Gibraltar Rock - Picture by Ute Promberger

TOWN OF WEST POINT, COLUMBIA COUNTY, WISCONSIN
Adopted May 14th, 2009

**TOWN OF WEST POINT
2009
OUTDOOR OPEN SPACE & NATURAL AREA PLAN**

TOWN OF WEST POINT, COLUMBIA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

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OUTDOOR OPEN SPACE & NATURAL AREA PLAN 2009

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TOWN OF WEST POINT

OUTDOOR OPEN SPACE & NATURAL AREA PLAN - 2009

INTRODUCTION

This plan for the Town proposes recreation improvements and land preservation through the year 2018. The purpose of this plan is threefold:

- 1) To guide the decisions of the Town and other providers of open space and recreational lands in the area as needs and demands increase,
- 2) To establish Town eligibility for recreation improvements and land preservation grant funds.
- 3) To recommend proposals for recreation development and land preservation within the Town.

Updates of this plan should be done every five years to maintain the Town's eligibility for recreation grant funds and to update and revise the Town's development goals, proposed recreation improvements and land preservation recommendations and/or actions.

The demand for outdoor recreation resources has been increasing for some years and the trend will most likely continue. With demands from work and family, there will likely be a need for recreational activities closer to home even with expenditures in local communities. The demand for recreational facilities will increase as the resident and tourist population in the area continues to grow. It is important to keep pace with these trends in order for all government levels, as their responsibility dictates, to adequately provide parks and recreational facilities for active recreation and/or preserve open space to protect natural habitats and provide renewal for the human spirit.

The State of Wisconsin requires an approved recreation plan not more than five years old to maintain eligibility for grant funding. Grant funding is often vital to the undertaking and completion of needed projects.

This plan addresses recommendations for future park development, including the preservation of lands for future parks and open space areas, and expansion of existing parks and facilities. The process of developing the plan began with a detailed inventory of public and private outdoor recreation facilities in the Town of West Point. Policies, goals and objectives were then developed on which to base the planning process. The inventory and input from natural resource professionals, conservation groups, and the public was then used to analyze needs. Recreation needs were analyzed considering per capita standards for acreage, facility requirements, and spatial distribution. Based upon identified needs; proposals were developed for the ten year period from 2008 to 2018, recommending a plan for acquisition and development to meet the recreational needs of the people of the Town of West Point. A number of projects are proposed in this plan to improve, update, preserve and further develop park and recreation areas of the Town.

This plan is intended to foster communication between local, county, state and government, and non-profit groups and organizations who share a common interest in outdoor recreation and open space needs. It is hoped that all providers of recreational facilities will coordinate their projects with other communities in order to compliment resources, prevent the duplication of facilities, improve the existing recreational facilities, and create new opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of West Point offers an exceptional setting to live, work, invest, and visit.

This plan is the cornerstone for the development of a coordinated and continuous system of parks, trails, and open spaces that serve the needs of residents and the larger community. The goal will be to make appropriate use of our agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, open spaces, and shorelines while protecting and preserving them for current and future generations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives establish an end to be achieved and means to achieve the desired end. The outdoor recreation and open space goals and objectives that provide the basis for this plan and represent its purpose are:

- 1) A Town-wide system of parks, recreation, and open space that provides safe and accessible recreational opportunities to meet the needs and demands of the citizens of the Town of West Point and its visitors.
 - A. Acquire park and recreation sites and develop facilities to meet or exceed recommended standards and community needs.
 - B. Provide recreational lands and facilities for all Town residents within a readily accessible location and distance.
- 2) A system of recreation and open space and natural areas that preserve significant natural, cultural or historical resources of the Town.
 - A. Acquire or encourage other governmental acquisition of environmentally sensitive and unique lands for open space recreation to preserve them from damaging development.
 - B. Design park and recreational facilities with the natural environment in mind by considering project impacts to the environment.
- 3) Parks and open space areas used as a means to guide urban and rural developments and growth.
 - A. Proactively acquire lands for recreation and open space use in areas where development is likely to occur, seeking lands not well suited for development such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and wooded areas.
 - B. Preserve undeveloped shoreline along Lake Wisconsin wherever possible.
 - C. Preserve lands within environmental corridors and/or lands that serve as buffers to environmental corridors
 - D. Preserve lands and provide recreational facilities consistent with the goals, objectives and policies within the elements of the Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan
- 4) A park and natural areas system utilizing input and resources from the public, organizations, and other agencies in the planning, development and operation.
 - A. Coordinate park activities/facilities with civic, private, Town, County, and state agencies and organizations to compliment offerings without unnecessary duplication.
 - B. Update the Town Park and Outdoor Recreation Plan every five years and solicit input from interested Town residents.
 - C. Encourage the establishment and activities of "Friends" and local user groups as a means to obtain valuable comments, recommendations and resources.

- 5) A park and natural area system developed, improved and operated in a cost efficient and effective manner.
 - A. Utilize this plan following the recommendations established for facility planning.
 - B. Utilize, to the extent possible, state and federal resources and grant programs to offset local expenditures to develop and maintain needed and quality facilities.
 - C. Utilize, where practical, a multi-jurisdictional approach to acquiring and developing park and open space areas.
 - D. Utilize, to the extent possible, local private resources such as friends groups, organizations and Individuals willing to donate expertise time, labor, money, land and other resources to develop and maintain needed and quality facilities.
 - E. Coordinate and utilize a variety of resources including local citizens and officials, County, state and federal agencies who share mutual goals and objectives.

TRENDS INFLUENCING THE PLANNING PROCESS

A number of nationwide trends can affect the park and open space planning process. These environmental, social, economic and demographic trends should be considered in order to efficiently and effectively plan and deliver park and open space services and facilities. National trends adapted from Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines that may be applicable to park and open space planning in Columbia County and the Town of West Point include the following:

- 1) **Disappearing Resources** - Significant open spaces and natural habitats, original landscapes, wetlands and natural drainages are being lost to development.
- 2) **Environmentally Sensitive Lifestyles** - Low impact, nonconsumptive use (walking, biking) and increased aesthetic appreciation and green life style choices.
- 3) **No Growth and “Not in My Backyard” Attitudes** - Resistance to change, growth and development.
- 4) **Water Quality Concerns** - Natural drainage systems (wetlands and waterways) become more important.
- 5) **Increasing Concerns for Personal and Family Health, Safety and Well-being**
- 6) **Increasing Importance of “Wellness” and Health Conscientious Activities**
- 7) **Increased Inclusiveness** - Laws and public policies addressing accessibility of public facilities and services regardless of race, sex and physical abilities.
- 8) **Leisure Services Provided by Multiple Partners and Providers** - Private and public partnerships to address needs with less individual resources.
- 9) **Growing Importance and Interest in Eco-Tourism and Eco-Travel** - Natural resource based vs. manmade attractions.
- 10) **Recognition of Economic Value of Parks and Open Spaces with Regard to Community Attractiveness to Residents, Tourists, Businesses and Industries**
- 11) **Aging of the Population - by 2030**, one-third of national population will be senior citizens.
- 12) **Increased Sprawling Development** - Located primarily along major transportation corridors.
- 13) **Historic Preservation** - Valuing heritage resources as treasures.
- 14) **Climate Change** – Growing awareness of human induced climate change and an understanding of the term “carbon footprint.”

SETTING

Location

The Town of West Point is located in the southwestern corner of Columbia County, Wisconsin. The Town is adjacent to the Town of Roxbury in Dane County, the Towns of Merrimac and Prairie Du Sac in Sauk County and the Town of Lodi in Columbia County. The Town of West Point has the distinction of being bordered by Lake Wisconsin on the entire west and north sides. A ferry has been in operation since 1844 and traverses the Wisconsin River between the Town of West Point and Town of Merrimac in Sauk County. Downtown Milwaukee is about 95 miles southeast of the Town of West Point and the City of Madison is approximately 30 miles south of the Town. State Highways 188 and 113 are the major north-south transportation routes in the Town of West Point. State Highway 60 is a major east-west road. County Highways V, VJ, J and also provide important transportation routes through the Town.

Physical and Cultural Features

Glacial activity thousands of years ago shaped the Town of West Point's topography. The Town is characterized by steep bluffs interspersed with level valleys, scattered wetlands, small ponds, the shoreline of Lake Wisconsin (a Wisconsin River impoundment), and the shoreline of Crystal Lake. Elevations vary by about 500 feet. The lowest elevations of about 740 feet above sea level occurs in the northwestern part of the Town at the Wisconsin River. The highest elevation of about 1,247 feet above sea level occurs in the northeastern portion of the Town at Gibraltar Rock.

The Wisconsin River is the dominant surface water feature. The Wisconsin River forms the entire northern and western border of the Town. West Point has a limited amount of wetlands which cover over only one percent of the area of the Town. Another 12.3 percent of the area of the Town is covered by floodplain.

Land Use and Economy

The Town of West Point's land use patterns are closely tied to the Town's economy. Much of the central and southern portions of the Town are involved in agricultural activities. While a large portion of the Town's land area is devoted to agriculture only 6.3 percent of the Town's workforce was employed in the agriculture industry according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The northern and western portions of the Town, mainly along the shores of Lake Wisconsin, have seen significant amounts of residential development. The three largest industry groups that employed Town residents in the year 2000 were Education and Health (20.8%), Retail Trade (12.5%), and Construction (12.0%). These types of jobs are not readily available within the Town of West Point meaning a large number of Town residents leave the Town each day to commute to work. The 2000 U.S. Census indicated that 72 percent of the Town residents worked outside the County in 2000 with the vast majority of these commuters likely residing in these northern and western residential areas. Below is some additional information on land use distribution within the Town of West Point.

Agriculture or Other Open Space

The Agriculture or Other Open Space land use category occupies the majority of land area in the Town of West Point encompassing approximately 18,795.8 acres or 90.24 percent of the total land area of the Town. The majority of the lands in the Agriculture or Other Open Space land use category are productive farmlands, pastures, and woodlands that provide the Town of

West Point with its rural character and agricultural heritage. West Point with its deep valleys contains some excellent soils for agricultural production. As Map 3 in the Appendix indicates (Lands Enrolled in Farmland Preservation) a substantial proportion of the Town has been enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program. Many of these lands also contain physical features such as floodplains, wetlands, and water bodies that place limits on agricultural productivity. A key planning issue is the amount of land in the Agriculture or Other Open Space land use that is being converted for development purposes and the locations where conversions are taking place. Overall, however, the amount of land devoted to Agriculture or Other Open Space use is high within the Town of West Point.

Rural Single-Family Residential

Rural single-Family Residential land uses in the Town of West Point account for approximately 1,128.3 acres or 5.42 percent of the total land area of the Town. Only the Agriculture or Other Open Space land use category contains more area than the Single-Family Residential land use category. Overall, the amount of residential land use is relatively high within the Town of West Point.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-Family Residential land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 76.3 acres or 0.37 percent of the total land area of the Town. The multi-family residential land uses that exist in the Town of West Point consist mainly of mobile home parks. None of the multi-family residential land uses in the Town of West Point is located within areas where public sewer service is available. Overall, the amount of multi-family residential land use in the Town of West Point is relatively low.

Commercial

Commercial land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 25.9 acres or 0.12 percent of the total land area of the Town. The commercial uses that exist in the Town of West Point generally consist of service based retail trade establishments such as restaurants, taverns, and automobile repair. Most commercial development in the Town of West Point is located along major highways or near Lake Wisconsin and Crystal Lake. Overall, the amount of commercial land use in the Town of West Point is relatively low.

Industrial and Permitted Surface Non-metallic Mining Extraction

Industrial and Permitted Surface Non-Metallic Mining Extraction land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 26.7 acres or 0.13 percent of the total land area of the Town. Permitted Surface Non-Metallic Mining Extraction (e.g. gravel pits) is the majority of this category with some limited manufacturing use.

Institutional/Public

Institutional/Public land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 30.0 acres or 0.14 percent of the total land area of the Town. Institutional/Public land uses in the Town generally consist of government facilities and other institutions that are open to the general public in some capacity. Overall, the amount of Institutional/Public land use in the Town of West Point is relatively low.

Utilities

Utility land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 8.1 acres or 0.04 percent of the total land area of the Town. Utility land uses in the Town generally consist of lands and facilities used to provide public utilities. Overall, the amount of Utility land use in the Town of West Point is relatively low.

Recreational Areas

Recreational Area land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 190.9 acres or 0.92 percent of the total land area of the Town. Recreational Area land uses in the Town generally consist of parks, a golf course, and other public recreation areas. Overall, the amount of Recreational Area land use in the Town of West Point is relatively low.

Transportation

Transportation land uses in The Town of West Point account for approximately 547.0 acres or 2.63 percent of the total land area of the Town. Transportation land uses in the Town generally consist of road and railroad right-of-ways. Transportation land uses are one of the more common land uses in the Town. Only the Agriculture or Other Open Space and the Single-Family Residential land use categories contain more area than the Transportation land use category. As a result of being a common land use type, the amount of Transportation land use is fairly high. Auto/truck, rail (minor), and recreational boating are the primary modes of transportation. There is considerable interest in developing biking, walking, hiking, and waterway trails and routes.

The Ice Age Trail (IAPTF) In the Town of West Point the Ice Age Trail currently consists of the 2.1 mile Colsac Segment loop running south from the STH-113 Ferry Wayside. Future trail is very much in the offing with the DNR acquisition of the 79 acre Murphy property (with an additional 8 acres pending) adjacent to the Colsac Segment, and the 7 acre Mills property at the corner of Slack and Hillcrest Roads.

These new properties are in addition to the DNR acquisition of the 55 acre former Richmond Memorial Park at Gibraltar Rock and adjacent 92 acre Horton property. The DNR's primary justification for all of these acquisitions was the creation of additional State Ice Age Trail Area (SIATA). Trail analysis, layout, and design of the Murphy property will occur in 2009-10. Trail analysis at Gibraltar will be part of a DNR-led Gibraltar Master Planning, with input from the IAPTF, Town of West Point, Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley, and others. The goal of the IAPTF and its DNR and US Park Services partners is to create a continuous Trail from the Ferry Wayside to the Lodi Marsh in Dane County. All Ice Age Trail in the Town of West Point is and will be maintained by volunteers of the Lodi Valley Chapter of the Ice Age Trail.

POPULATION

Population trends, projections, distributions, age compositions and other population characteristics are important elements in effective park and open space planning. National standards for park and open space developments are based upon population trends and projections. Population distribution helps determine where facilities should be located; and age compositions help determine the types of facilities to be developed.

Trends and Projections

The Town of West Point's population increased by 882 people (117%) between 1960 and 2000. The population has increased every decade since 1960. The population increased dramatically from 1970 to 1980 (249 people) and again between 1990 and 2000 (349 people). Estimated current population trends for the Town also indicate a significant population increase since 2000 (173 people). Table 1 shows the long term population trends for the Town of West Point and Table 2 shows estimated current population trends for the Town.

TABLE 1
Long Term Population Trends, Town of West Point, 1960 - 2000

Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1960-2000	Total New Persons 1960-2000
Population	752	873	1,122	1,285	1,634	117%	882

Source: US Census of Population, the Department of Administration and Columbia County Planning and Zoning

TABLE 2
Estimated Current Population Trends, Town of West Point, 2000 - 2007

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	% Change 2000-2007	Total New Persons 2000-2007
Population	1,634	1,656	1,672	1,684	1,750	1,750	1,785	1,807	10.6%	173

Source: U.S. Census & WI Department of Adm.

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) Demographic Services Center prepared baseline population projections to the year 2025 for the communities and counties of Wisconsin. According to the projection model, the Town of West Point will have a population of 2,132 by 2025. The Town of West Point will gain 497 new persons by 2025, which is a 30.4 percent increase in population from 2000 to 2025. Table 3 displays the population projections for the Town of West Point.

TABLE 3
Town of West Point Population Projections, 2000-2030

Year	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	% Change 2000-2025	Total New Persons 2000-2025
Population	1,634	1,740	1,844	1,941	2,032	2,132	30.4%	497

Source: WI Department of Administration

Age Composition

A review and analysis of the age compositions for the Town is helpful in understanding who lives in the Town and, thus what types of recreational facilities will be most in demand. Generally, older populations require more passive facilities such as picnic areas, trails, and natural areas. A greater emphasis is needed on active recreation facilities such as ball fields and playgrounds for high youth populations. Table 4 identifies the age composition in 2000.

TABLE 4
Age Composition, Town of West Point and Columbia County - 2000

Age	Town of West Point		Columbia County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	100	6.12%	3,218	6.13%
5 - 9	107	6.55%	3,589	6.84%
10 - 14	119	7.28%	3,965	7.56%
15 - 17	66	4.04%	2,449	4.67%
18 - 24	59	3.61%	3,725	7.10%
25 - 34	172	10.53%	6,671	12.71%
35 - 44	260	15.91%	9,000	17.15%
45 - 54	288	17.63%	7,472	14.24%
55 - 64	217	13.28%	4,812	9.17%
65 - 74	132	8.08%	3,783	7.21%
75 and Over	114	6.98%	3,784	7.21%
Total Under 18:	392	23.99%	13,221	25.20%
Total 18 - 64:	996	60.95%	31,680	60.40%
Total Over 65:	246	15.06%	7,567	14.42%
Totals	1,634	100.00%	52,468	100.00%
Median Age	42		38	

Source: U.S. Census

The Town seems to have a somewhat older population with the number of people under age 5 less than half the number of people 65 and over. However, the percentage of people under 18 years of age is only slightly less than the County, 24 percent versus 25 percent. The age 35 – 54 categories have the largest percentage of the Town's and Columbia County's population. Compared to Columbia County, the Town of West Point has a smaller percentage of residents less than 44 years of age, whereas Columbia County has a lower percentage of citizens over the age of 45.

Other Population Characteristics

The median household income in the Town of West Point in 1999 was \$55,781. Comparatively, the median household income for Columbia County in 1999 was \$45,064. West Point's 1999 median household income figure is significantly higher than the median household income for Columbia County (includes cities, villages and towns) as well as most other towns in Columbia County.

PARK AND OPEN SPACE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Definitions used in this plan are modifications of definitions used by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). They are used to classify the existing recreation system and to guide plans for its future. They begin with the smallest and most intensely developed and used, and proceed to the largest and least developed. Neighborhood and community facilities are normally provided by municipalities. Larger recreation areas are normally provided by larger units of government or private developers.

Neighborhood Playgrounds and Parks

A neighborhood playground mainly serves the active recreational needs of people of all ages. Neighborhood Playgrounds are typically developed for intensive recreational activities and usually offer play apparatus; open areas for athletics or outdoor activities. Population density is important for determining the space needs and service area of a neighborhood playground.

A neighborhood park provides open space for the passive recreation of all age groups in a neighborhood and enhances the overall neighborhood environment. An attractive natural setting such as a lake, stream or woods is a desirable location for a neighborhood park. Facilities may include trees, lawn, benches and tables, open areas for sitting and sunning, walking paths, shelters, drinking fountains, lighting and toilet facilities. Neighborhood playgrounds may be included within neighborhood parks.

Community Playfields

The community playfield provides for the active recreational needs of the town. It provides more facilities than a neighborhood park or playground. Facilities may include: swimming area, multi-purpose courts, community center, fields for sporting competition, ice-skating area, sanitary facilities, a playground and landscaping to buffer the playfields from surrounding properties. Population size and density area important for determining the space needs for a community playfield. Neighborhood facilities might be included in a community playfield.

Community Parks

The community park is intended to serve the passive recreational needs of the town. It may include wooded areas, varied topography and water features, undisturbed natural areas, scenic lookouts, picnic areas, hiking or riding trails, boating and swimming areas, and some area for active recreation on a less formal scale than the community playfield. The park may also be utilized for winter activities. Community parks may also serve surrounding neighborhoods.

County & Regional Parks

The county or regional park fills the gap between intensively developed urban facilities and resource protection-oriented state parks and resource areas. County parks shall offer a variety of active and passive recreational experiences. They may be designed for day-long or overnight use by the entire family. In general, a location for a county park should emphasize interesting topography and be characterized by scenic views, wooded areas, lakes or rivers.

Special Purpose Parks

Special purpose parks may be created by a municipality or by a larger unit of government. These areas are located to take advantage of natural or unusual landscape features to preserve areas of historic value and provide a variety of outdoor recreation activities. Special purpose parks might be created to provide access to lakes and rivers or to protect bluffs, ledges and geologic features with steep slopes. Special Purpose Parks may also include sites of cultural, archaeological or historical importance and certain recreation facilities such as golf courses, boat launching ramps and marinas might be considered special purpose parks. Waysides and historical markers are special purpose parks designed to serve motorists and bicycle riders. They are important to a tourist industry as a means of providing rest and information. They may include restrooms, picnic areas, shelters and other facilities. The size and location of special purpose parks depends upon natural features and the functions they are intended to serve. If oriented to vehicles and water craft, traffic volumes may be considered. Size requirements, specific functions and service radius are difficult to assign to special purpose parks because of their variety and uniqueness.

Preserves, Greenbelts & Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Preserves are usually located outside urban concentrations and include large tracts of land which are undeveloped but may have agricultural use. Resource protection is the primary function for these areas. Preserves may be established to protect environmental services, and areas having cultural, scenic or natural values. Improvements are possible and they are usually located in one section on the preserve so that the area remains largely undeveloped. Recreational uses might include backpacking, boating, camping, fishing, hunting, picnicking, swimming, trail use, and water sports.

The greenbelt has basically the same characteristics and function as the preserve. However, a greenbelt may be used to shape development. It may be a buffer between a developed area and surrounding rural areas and may connect parks within an area.

Linear Parks

Linear parks are areas developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross country skiing, canoeing and pleasure driving. Typically linear parks are built on or follow existing natural or developed corridors. Examples of linear parks include, railroad or utility right-of-ways, bluff lines, rivers and streams, roads and other systems that link facilities or component of a recreational system. Linear parks can be located within communities to link schools, parks, downtown areas, and other community facilities or they can be located within rural areas to link village, city, county, park systems or significant facilities or sites. There are no particular size standards for linear parks, but they do need to have sufficient width to protect the resource or provided a buffer between adjacent uses. The desired width should be determined by the types and amount of future use. Linear parks can also serve as important transportation links for alternative modes of transportation.

State Parks & Trails

Stated owned and leased lands and trails are part of the Wisconsin State Park System. Trails or lands are part of the Natural Park or Trail System.

RECREATION AND RESOURCE INVENTORY SUMMARY

The Town of West Point's system of parks, open spaces, and natural areas is comprised of Town-owned, County-Owned, State-owned, and privately-owned properties. The park system provides ample opportunity for citizens to enjoy a wide variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. The following are brief descriptions of each of West Point's recreation sites. The inventory of existing recreation facilities is shown on Table 5.

Public Recreational Areas

- 1) **Selwood Park** - is a 1.2 acre neighborhood park and playground located within the Selwood Subdivision. The park contains a play system and swing set along with a volleyball court and park shelter. An identification sign, information kiosk, open grass field, and a paved parking lot also are present at the park.



Playground at Selwood Park



Play Equipment at Ryan Park

- 2) **Ryan Park** - is a 16.8 acre community park and playground located in Section 9 on the north side of STH 188. The park contains a play system and swing set along with a volleyball court and a basketball court. An identification sign, information kiosk, open grass field, and a paved parking lot also are present at the park. The Town of West Point Town Hall is also located at the park and provides parking, restrooms, and serves as a community center with indoor meeting space. Lands adjacent to the Town Hall and recreation facility are currently used for agriculture.
- 3) **Lussier County Park (Dane Co.)** - is a 136.1 acre county park located on the southern border of the Town on Schoepp Road. While the park itself is not located in the Town of West Point, travel through the southern edge of the Town is required to access the park. As a result of its proximity to the Town, the park provides a valuable recreational resource to Town residents in the southern portion of the Town. The park facilities include signage, gravel parking area and over 3000ft of shoreline access on Fish Lake. Shoreline fishing, canoeing/kayaking, picnicking, and hiking are the main activities available at the park. A picnic shelter and boat landing is located along the west shore of Fish Lake.
- 4) **Aleray Boat Landing** - is a 0.4 acre special purpose park located in Section 10 at the end of Lake Drive in the Aleray Subdivision. The park contains a paved public boat landing owned by the Town of West Point. No parking is available at the park. Boat launching and shoreline fishing are the main activities available at the park.



Aleray Boat Landing



Ferry Wayside

- 5) **Ferry Wayside** - is a 3.0 acre special purpose park located in Sections 11 and 12 at the intersection of State Highways 113 and 188 and the Merrimac Ferry. The park contains a picnic area with picnic tables, grills, and trash receptacles, a shelter, restrooms, a historical marker, two information kiosks, and a paved parking area. The park serves as a resting area for travelers using the Merrimac Ferry to cross Lake Wisconsin and also provides shoreline fishing opportunities. The park's parking and restroom facilities also serve the Ice Age Trail that traverses the park.

- 6) **Okee Boat Landing** - is a 2.0 acre special purpose park located in Section 7 on Old Sauk Road. The park contains a paved public boat landing owned by the Wisconsin DNR with parking for approximately 24 vehicles and trailers. The boat landing has two launch slips and a floating pier. The park also contains an identification sign, information kiosk, and two portable restrooms, one of which is handicap accessible. Shoreline fishing is also available at the park.



Okee Boat Landing



Pleasant View Boat Landing

- 7) **Pleasant View Park Boat Landing** - is a 0.1 acre special purpose park located in Section 11 off of Pleasant View Drive in the Pleasant View Subdivision. The park contains a paved public boat landing owned by the Town of West Point. No parking is available at the park. Boat launching and shoreline fishing are the main activities available at the park.

- 8) **Public Access Areas** - are special purpose parks located in the various subdivisions along the shores of Lake Wisconsin. The purpose of these public access areas is to provide

residents a location where the lake shore is accessible by foot. Most of these access areas are unmarked and unimproved and many are obscured by adjacent residential development.

- 9) **Sunset Bay Boat Landing** - is a 2.2 acre special purpose park located in Section 11 on STH 188. The park contains a paved public boat landing owned by the Wisconsin DNR with parking for approximately 27 vehicles and trailers. The boat landing has two launch slips and a floating pier. The parking lot is paved and lighted. The park also contains an identification sign, two information kiosks, and two portable restrooms, one of which is handicap accessible. Shoreline fishing is also available at the park.
- 10) **Blackhawk Roost DNR Easement** - is a portion of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway nature preserve area located in Section 31 north of STH 60. The land is privately owned but the State of Wisconsin has purchased a conservation easement on the property to protect the Bald Eagle roosting areas on the site. Currently the purchased easement covers only a portion of the area proposed for protection by the State.



Lower Wisconsin State Riverway

- 11) **Lower Wisconsin Riverway** - nature preserve area that was created in 1989 to protect the aesthetic integrity of the Lower Wisconsin River and extends over 92 miles from the Prairie du Sac Dam to the rivers confluence with the Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien. Only a small portion of the Riverway's boundary is located within the Town of West Point. Currently, State owned property within Riverway boundary consists of lands near the STH 60 bridge and an easement at the Blackhawk Roost area. Access and parking for the Riverway within the Town of West Point is located along State Highways 60 and 188 and off of Old Highway 60 Road. No developed recreational facilities exist on the Riverway properties, however the properties offer hiking, shoreline fishing, and canoeing/kayaking opportunities.
- 12) **Alliant Energy/WP&L Lands** - are nature preserve land areas along the shore of Lake Wisconsin that were purchased by Wisconsin Power and Light during the construction of the dam at Prairie du Sac. These lands are usually unimproved and often difficult to access but are open to public use such as shore fishing or boating.
- 13) **Ice Age Trail** - is a National Scenic Trail located entirely within Wisconsin. One segment of the trail has been completed within the Town of West Point. That segment runs from the Ferry Wayside in Section 12 east along the north side of STH 113 then south across the highway towards a planned future connection to the Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and its partners, the National Park Service, the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, volunteers groups, county and local governments, and private land owners cooperatively work together to develop and

maintain the Ice Age Trail. The trail is also one of 42 designated Wisconsin State Trails, and the only one specifically designated as a "State Scenic Trail". The Ice Age Trail, when complete, will wind more than 1,000 miles from Interstate State Park on the Minnesota border to Potawatomi State Park on Lake Michigan following the edge of the last continental glacier in Wisconsin.



Ice Age Trail

- 14) **Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area** - is a 146 acre property located in Sections 13 and 18 off of CTH V. It is a flat-topped butte rising 200 feet above the surrounding landscape with a sheer rock face overlooking a large leather-leaf bog and offers panoramic views of the Wisconsin River Valley and Lake Wisconsin. Several unique plant communities and species are found on the property. Because of these unique features, a portion of this property has been designated as a State Natural Area (SNA). The facilities at this property include a gravel parking area, an information kiosk, and a memorial plaque. An old asphalt road whose surface has not been maintained provides a relatively clear path and access to the top of the butte. Various unmarked trails crisscross the property as well.

The State Ice Age Trail corridor passes through the property. The property is managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a unit of Devils Lake State Park and by the DNR SCR State Natural Areas program. Recreational opportunities at the site include hiking, sightseeing, observation of plant and animal species, and hunting.

Private Recreational Areas

- 1) **Schoepp's Resort Boat Landing** - is a privately owned special purpose park containing approximately 8.5 acres located in Section 35. The park consists of a recreational vehicle resort with a private boat landing on Crystal Lake. Shoreline fishing, swimming, and boating are recreational activities available to customers of the resort.
- 2) **Crystal Lake Campground** - is a privately owned special purpose park containing approximately 40.0 acres located in Section 35. The park consists of a recreational vehicle resort with a private boat landing on Crystal Lake. Shoreline fishing, swimming, and boating are recreational activities available to customers of the resort.
- 3) **Lake Wisconsin Country Club** - is a privately owned special purpose park containing approximately 142.0 acres located in Sections 25 and 30 along the shore of Lake Wisconsin. The park contains an 18 hole golf course with a club house and restaurant. A small marina also exists at the site.



Lake Wisconsin Country Club



Lake Wisconsin Boat Club

- 4) **Lake Wisconsin Boat Club** - is a privately owned special purpose park containing approximately 6.0 acres located in Section 11 along the shore of Lake Wisconsin. The park contains a private club house with a gravel parking lot, a boat landing, and a marina. Also present at the park is a small picnic area with tables, identification sign, and two horseshoe pits. Shoreline fishing, swimming, and boating are recreational activities available to members of the club.

- 5) **Snowmobile Trail System** - within the Town of West Point is part of an almost 300 mile system of trails within Columbia County. The majority of the trails are located on private property and have been established through an easement with the land owner. The Wisconsin DNR funds the trails by awarding annual funding to Columbia County for the County's trail system. The trails are maintained by local snowmobile clubs who receive funding from the County.

Additional Recreational Resources

In addition to the above mentioned park and recreational facilities, Town of West Point residents also have access to recreational resources in nearby cities and villages. In particular, the cities of Lodi and Sauk City as well as the Village of Prairie du Sac contain a number of recreational resources as described below:

The City of Lodi offers six parks for public use. These parks include Goeres Park, Glenview Park, Habermann Park, Spring Creek Park, Strangeway Playlot, and Veterans Memorial Park.

The City of Sauk City also offers six parks for public use. These parks include Meyer Oak Grove, Jaycee Athletic Park, Junge Park, August Derleth, the River Walk, and Fuchs Park.

The Village of Prairie Du Sac offers four parks for public use. These parks include Marion Park, Florance Park, Elsing Park, and Westwynd Park.

These recreational facilities that are available to residents in the Town of West Point include a variety of recreational facilities such as play equipment, shelters, basketball courts, tennis courts, volleyball courts, soccer fields, baseball diamonds, hiking biking trails, and a swimming pool at Goeres Park in Lodi.

TABLE 5
Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities, Town of West Point, 2009

Town of West Point Existing Recreational Facilities 2009		PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS									
		Selwood Park	Ryan Park	Lussier County Park (Dane Co.)	Aleray Boat Landing	Ferry Wayside	Okee Boat Landing	Pleasant View Park Boat Landing	Public Access Areas	Sunset Bay Boat Landing	Blackhawk Roost DNR Easement
CLASSIFICATION		Neighborhood Park / Playground	Community Park / Playground	County Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Preserves, Greenbelts, & Environmentally Sensitive Areas
ACREAGE		1.2	16.8	140.0	0.4	3.0	2.0	0.1	N/A	2.2	N/A
ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES	Basketball Court		1								
	Volleyball Court	1	1								
	Football Field										
	Open Playfield	1	1			1					
	Golf Course										
	Swimming Pool										
	Swimming Beach										
PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES	Picnic Acres	1.0	1.0			2.0					
	Picnic Tables	1				5					
	Cooking Grills					2					
	Shelter Building	1				1					
	Benches		1								
	Shore Fishing			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
PLAYGROUND FACILITIES	Play System	1	1								
	Swings - Senior	2	2								
	Swings - Toddler	2	2								
	Slide	2	2								
	Sandbox										
	Climbing Equipment	1	1								
	Horseshoe Pit										
RECREATION SUPPORT FACILITIES	Total Parking Spaces	10	43	20	0	14	24	0	0	27	0
	Handicap Parking	1	3				1			2	
	Restrooms		2			2	2			2	
	Community Center		1								
	Information Kiosk	1				2	1			2	
	Identification Sign	1	1	1							
	Storage Building					1					
	Historic Marker					1					
	Marina										
	Boat Launch				1		2	1		2	
	Trash Receptacles					11					
	Pier						1			1	
	Lighting									1	

**TABLE 5 (Cont.)
Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities, Town of West Point, 2009**

Town of West Point Existing Recreational Facilities 2009		PUBLIC RECREATION AREAS				PRIVATE RECREATION AREAS				
		Lower Wisconsin Riverway	Alliant Energy/WP&L Lands	Ice Age Trail	Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area	Schoepp's Resort and Boat Landing	Crystal Lake Campground	Lake Wisconsin Country Club	Lake Wisconsin Boat Club	Snowmobile Trail System
CLASSIFICATION		Preserves, Greenbelts, & Environmentally Sensitive Areas	Preserves, Greenbelts, & Environmentally Sensitive Areas	Linear Park	State Parks & Trails	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Special Purpose Park	Linear Park
ACREAGE		N/A	N/A	N/A	146.4	8.5	40.0	142.0	6.0	N/A
ACTIVE RECREATION FACILITIES	Basketball Court						1			
	Volleyball Court									
	Football Field									
	Open Playfield									
	Golf Course							1		
	Swimming Pool						1			
	Swimming Beach					1	1		1	
PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES	Picnic Acres								0.5	
	Picnic Tables								3	
	Cooking Grills									
	Shelter Building									
	Benches									
	Shore Fishing	1	1			1	1		1	
PLAYGROUND FACILITIES	Play System									
	Swings - Senior									
	Swings - Toddler									
	Slide									
	Sandbox									
	Climbing Equipment									
	Horseshoe Pit								2	
RECREATION SUPPORT FACILITIES	Total Parking Spaces	0			15			50	35	
	Handicap Parking									
	Restrooms									
	Community Center									
	Information Kiosk				1					
	Identification Sign	Many		Many					1	
	Storage Building									
	Historic Marker				1					
	Marina							1	1	
	Boat Launch					1	1		1	
	Trash Receptacles									
	Pier									
	Lighting									

ANALYSIS OF NEEDS AND DEMANDS

Standards

Basic minimum standards to help communities assess their local recreational system have been established by the National Recreation and Park Association and are generally accepted across Wisconsin and the nation. These standards are primarily based upon a community's population, and offer guidelines for the minimum size and number of recreation areas and facilities that would be necessary to provide an adequate level of recreational opportunity for the people of a community. They also establish desirable service areas for recreational sites. Park standards are for guidance only and provide a scale against which the outdoor recreation system can be measured and future directions set. Many communities strive to exceed recommended standards, while others find it impossible to meet the recommended minimums. However, the standards provide a target toward which most communities strive.

Space Standards and Needs

Space standards are the most commonly used measure of a recreation system's adequacy. Recreational space needs are expressed as a ratio of land acreage per 1,000 population. Based on a compilation of standards taken from recommendations from the National Recreation and Park Association a "core" system of park and recreational land should be based on about 12.5 acres per 1,000 population. The "core" system covers active and passive activities for all ages and would typically be found in neighborhood and community park facilities. A well-rounded recreation system goes beyond the "core" system and includes special purpose parks, linear parks, and reservations and preserves.

An analysis of existing recreational areas is provided to determine if the recreational needs of the residents are being met. This analysis includes an evaluation of the space devoted to recreational use, the existing recreational facilities and the service areas. The 2010 projected population of 1,844 will be used in determining current recreational needs. The projected population of 2,132 for the year 2025 will be used in determining future recreational needs. Table 6 shows the amount of land devoted to community and neighborhood recreation facilities and evaluates whether or not the current and future population of West Point can be adequately served.

TABLE 6
Space (Acreage) Needs Neighborhood and Community Parks
Town of West Point 2010 - 2025

Type of Park	Existing Acreage	Standard	Minimum Required		Surplus or Deficiency	
			2010	2025	2009	2025
All Playgrounds <small>(acreage include within other parks)</small>	0.4	2.5/1000 People	4.6	5.3	(4.2)	(4.9)
All Playfields <small>(acreage include within other parks)</small>	4.2	3.0/1000 People	5.5	6.4	(1.3)	(2.2)
Neighborhood Parks	1.2	4.5/1000 People	8.3	9.6	(7.1)	(8.4)
Community Parks	16.8	8.0/1000 People	14.8	17.1	2.0	(0.3)
Park Totals:	18.0	12.5/1000 People	23.1	26.7	(5.1)	(8.7)

Source: Columbia County Planning and Zoning Department, based on National Recreation and Park Association, Department of Natural Resources and others.

Based on recreational space standards and population figures, a minimum of 23.1 acres and 26.7 acres of neighborhood and community parks are recommended for the years 2010 and 2025, respectively. The table indicates that the total amount of neighborhood and community parkland currently available within the Town is below the 2010 and 2025 standards. The Town is currently two acres above the minimum acres recommended for community park land, but will fall 0.3 acres below the standard for 2025 if no additional land is added.

Facility Standards and Needs

Standards for recreational facilities are also expressed as a ratio of facilities to population. They estimate the number of people necessary to justify developing one facility. Too few facilities per recommended population standard could result in facility overcrowding. Facility analysis is necessary in addition to space analysis since an adequate amount of space without an adequate number and range of facilities will fail to meet most recreational needs. However, some facilities should be present in order to satisfy the demand for them regardless of the size of the community. Baseball and softball diamonds, basketball courts, tennis courts, picnic areas, and picnic tables are primary facilities because of the general popularity of the activities associated with them. Towns, villages, and cities are encouraged to cooperate to jointly fund, operate, and provide these facilities for their residents, particularly when the municipalities are unable to fund a complete needed facility on their own.

Table 7 lists some of the more popular recreational facilities and those that might be considered for facilities in West Point and evaluates whether or not the population can be adequately served by these facilities. This analysis is again based on the 2010 and 2025 projected populations in relation to the standards for the amounts of the different facilities.

TABLE 7
Facility Needs: Town of West Point 2010 - 2025

Facility	# of Existing	Minimum Ratio To Population	Minimum Recommended		Above/Below (-) Minimum	
			2010	2025	2010	2025
Picnic Tables	8	1/100	18.4	21.3	(10.4)	(13.3)
Picnic Acres	4.5	1/500	3.7	4.3	0.8	0.2
Shelter Buildings	2	1/1000	1.8	2.1	0.2	(0.1)
Playgrounds	2	1/1000	1.8	2.1	0.2	(0.1)
Basketball Court	2	1/2000	0.9	1.1	0.1	0.9
Tennis Courts	0	1/2000	0.9	1.1	(0.9)	(1.1)
Ice Skating Rinks	0	1/2500	0.7	0.9	(0.7)	(0.9)
Softball Fields	0	1/3000	0.6	0.7	(0.6)	(0.7)
Volleyball Courts	2	1/3000	0.6	0.7	1.4	1.3
Football Field	0	1/4000	0.5	0.5	(0.5)	(0.5)
Baseball Fields	0	1/6000	0.3	0.4	(0.3)	(0.4)
Trails: Multi-use (miles)	2	1/6000	0.3	0.4	1.7	1.6
Horse Shoe Pits	2	1/7500	0.3	0.3	1.7	1.7
Soccer Fields	0	1/8000	0.2	0.3	(0.2)	(0.3)

Source: Columbia County Planning and Zoning Department, based on National Recreation and Park Association, Department of Natural Resources and others.

Table 7 indicates that most basic facilities provided in the Town, with the exception of picnic tables, meet the minimum standards for the population. The facilities not being provided such as tennis courts, ice skating rinks, softball fields, football fields, baseball fields, and soccer fields are not typically found in a community the size of West Point. It should be noted that the amount of some recreation facilities provided would be very close to the minimum amount needed by 2025. The Town should consider increasing the amount of playgrounds and shelter buildings prior to that time. Also of note is that the master plan for Ryan Park calls for the future development of a soccer and baseball field as illustrated on the diagram located in the Appendix.

POLICIES FOR PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Before any park and recreation standards are applied and recommendations developed, basic policies should be considered. Listed below are the standard policies that are paramount in obtaining a balanced allocation of land to meet a community's social, physical and economic needs. Most of these policies have been adapted from the National Recreation and Park Association.

- The open space and natural area system should provide opportunities for all persons regardless of race, creed, age, sex or economic status.
- Future land acquisition based upon this park and open space system plan should begin immediately in order to prevent the loss of high quality sites to other developments.
- Funding for land acquisition i.e. fee title or easement shall come from a variety of sources including Knowles Nelson Stewardship grants, other state and federal grants, donations and matching funds from private not for profit organizations.
- Town of West Point policy is to facilitate, sponsor, and/or coordinate land acquisition and protection rather than use funds that originate directly from the town budget.
- Town of West Point policy is to seek and develop partnerships, and share information on land protection and to seek out and take advantage of all funding sources including but not limited to grants, donations, and matching funds.
- Park facilities should be centrally located within the area they are intended to serve and must have safe and adequate access for maximum convenience to persons being served.
- Land acquired for park facilities, for recreation, or natural areas should be suitable for the specific intended use, and when possible, for multiple uses.
- Land adjacent to recreation or open space areas should be used in ways which will not interfere with the purposes for which the recreation or open space land was intended, and in addition, recreation and open space areas should be compatible with surrounding land uses. Recreation and open space land should be protected in perpetuity against encroachment by other uses that will inhibit the recreation or open space nature of the land.
- The design of individual park and recreation sites should be as flexible as possible to reflect changing patterns of recreation needs in a given service area.
- Special efforts should be made to provide easy access and use of all facilities by the elderly, ill and handicapped, very young and other less mobile groups.
- Parks, recreation areas, and natural areas, should be used to separate incompatible land use and guide future development.
- Citizen involvement in the recreation and open space decision-making process should be encouraged and expanded.

- Facility development must be done with safety in mind, adhering to accepted installation and maintenance standards.
- Designated open space should form the spine on which other recreational lands and activities are located.
- Needs for recreation land and facilities are based upon generally accepted standards. However, modifications to those standards may be necessary to accommodate specific local characteristics, such as significant variations in age distribution, trends and other characteristics, which influence needs and demand.
- Minimum recreation area size guidelines are applied to determine needs within individual communities. Where a single municipality's population is insufficient to justify a minimum sized recreation site, combined recreational development with an adjoining municipality is encouraged.
- Where and when possible, park facilities should be linked to other facilities by open space environmental areas, trails or other means which provide non-vehicular access.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations contained in this plan are intended to maintain and upgrade the recreation system in the Town of West Point by providing and distributing a diversity of recreational facilities equitably throughout the Town. Map 1 in the Appendix shows the location of existing recreation facilities, floodplain and wetland natural areas, and the general location of many of the proposed new recreation sites.

The Plan recommendations are divided into General Recommendations, Specific Site Recommendations and New Acquisition and Development Recommendations. General Recommendations primarily reflect administrative functions in carrying out the policies established in this plan. Specific Site Recommendations and New Acquisition and Development Recommendations address both administrative and facility development functions in order to upgrade or enhance existing facilities and develop new facilities according to the Goals and Objectives of the plan.

General Recommendations

- 1) Parks and recreation facilities should be available to all people, regardless of their personal disabilities. Special attention should be given to the needs of senior citizens and the handicapped in the development of park facilities.
- 2) There should be close cooperation among Town, School, County and State in providing recreation facilities in order to prevent duplication of facilities and maximize recreational opportunities for children, Town residents, and visitors.
- 3) Priorities should be established for acquisition, development, and maintenance. Costs should be estimated for each plan element. A five-year capital improvements program for parks and recreation that generally reflects the proposals made in the plan should be developed and reviewed annually.
- 4) The Town should enforce or demand the enforcement of Land Division Ordinances (created by the Town, County, State and Federal governments as they apply) which requires mandatory dedication of recreation sites or fees in lieu of site dedication for all new plats. The ordinance provision helps the community in developing needed recreational sites and facilities as the demand is created.
- 5) The Town should make maximum use of LAWCON, Stewardship, and other cost-sharing funds for outdoor recreation planning, acquisition and development.
- 6) Civic and service organizations should be approached for help in defraying costs and assisting with development and maintenance of facilities.
- 7) The Town should be sensitive to potential acquisition of recreation land inside and outside its present boundaries. This is particularly important where a recreational resource can be preserved for future use, or developmental pressures indicate that a site will eventually serve a neighborhood.
- 8) In order to be of value in expanding the tourism industry, tourists must be attracted to the parks and be able to find them easily. This requires good informational and directional signs

within the Town and along the major highways leading into the Town. A signage system is recommended. Information about recreational facilities and opportunities should be included in the Town of West Point web site.

- 9) Detailed site plans should be developed for existing parks if such plans have not been done, or are out of date.
- 10) As stated in the Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan, the Town should provide information to landowners on conservation practices and programs and develop an information and education program on natural resource and environmental issues.
- 11) A standing Open Space Natural Area Implementation Committee should be established to work closely with the Town Parks Committee, Plan Commission, Town Board, area conservation groups (i.e. Land Trusts) and agencies to assure the goals and objectives of the plan are implemented.

Specific Site Recommendations – Public Recreational Areas

- 1) **Selwood Park** - was developed as part of the approval of the last phase of the Selwood residential area. The park facility is fully developed and it is available for use by all residents of the Town of West Point. The plan does not recommend further development.
- 2) **Ryan Park** – Map 2 in the Appendix shows the long-term plan for Ryan Park, a Community Park and Community Playfield. An additional 7 acres of land at the site is currently leased for agriculture. The plan recommendation is to maintain the existing facilities and develop a long-term plan for the park to be implemented. Stormwater improvements are recommended as necessary. The plan recommends restoration of the remaining 7 acres to a native vegetation community with assistance and funding from conservation partnerships. The restoration would include habitat enhancements for breeding birds and other wildlife. A modest trail system is recommended for access and for management via prescribed burns.
- 3) **Lussier County Park and Fish Lake County Park** – consists of a total of 136.1 acres adjacent to Fish Lake in the Town of Roxbury in Dane County. The 2006 to 2011 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan includes the following recommendations for this Community Park:
 - Relocate the boat launch at Fish Lake Park to Lussier County Park.
 - Develop a master plan for the entire Fish Lake Natural Resource Area.Fish Lake and this park facility is a valuable asset to the community. The plan recommendation is to support the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan recommendation and the Town of West Point should contact the Dane County Parks Department about participating in the master plan process for the Fish Lake area.
- 4) **Aleray Boat Landing** - is located at the end of Lake Drive and it is bounded by residential properties. There are no parking facilities for vehicles or trailers and the water depths at the landing are too shallow for launching motorized watercraft. The landing is best suited as a put-in or take-out location for canoes or kayaks as there is little opportunity to develop parking facilities without changing existing land uses. The plan recommendation is to add signage at the landing and maintain the existing vegetation and drainage features at the site.
- 5) **Ferry Wayside** - is owned by WISDOT and managed by Columbia County. The existing facility appears to have adequate picnic and restroom facilities. The Park is ideally suited for

use for fishing and wildlife observation . The plan recommendation is to partner with Columbia County, WISDOT, and WDNR to develop a pier/facility for these uses.

- 6) **Okee Boat Landing** - is owned and operated by the Wisconsin DNR. All lands have been developed at this facility. There is little opportunity for expansion as near shore wetlands are located adjacent to the landing and parking lot. The landing is at capacity on weekends during the summer months but there are no plans for expansion because of the previously mentioned limitations. The plan recommendation is to maintain the existing landing and parking facility in good working order.
- 7) **Pleasant View Park Boat Landing** - has limited space for parking and use by motorized watercraft would likely be disruptive to neighborhood residents. The recommendation is to identify the area with signage and state that access is available for put in and take out of non-motorized watercraft.
- 8) **Public Access Areas** - consist of approximately 17 public access points. They are narrow strips of land, mostly drainage features, that convey runoff to Lake Wisconsin. The Town of West Point Ordinance Section 10.30 does not permit any permanent structures on these lands. Adjoining landowners can lease a public access according to Sections 10.47 and 10.48, of the Town of West Point Ordinances. The recommendation is to continue this policy and procedure. The plan also recommends that a point to point waterway trail be established between public access areas for non-motorized watercraft (see Open Space Recommendations).
- 9) **Sunset Bay Boat Landing** - is very similar to the Okee Boat Landing in that the landing is owned and operated by the Wisconsin DNR and all lands have been developed. There is little opportunity for expansion because of physical features (wetlands). The plan recommendation is to maintain the existing landing and facility in good working order.

It is likely that another landing site would be chosen on the lake as a motorized launch area rather than expand an existing facility. The plan recommendation is to develop non-motorized access as a priority.

- 10) **Blackhawk Roost DNR Easement** - This property is a southwest facing bluff top with a commanding view of the Lower Wisconsin River Valley. It is also one of several local sites that provide roosting for Bald Eagles that overwinter in the area. The property is privately owned but DNR has a scenic easement to protect the bluff top from residential development and other undesirable land uses. At present the easement does not allow public access.

The views of the Lower Wisconsin River Valley are assumed to be very attractive from the top of the bluff. However, this is an environmentally sensitive area and an important eagle roosting location. The plan does not recommend changes to the current easement including the prohibition of public access.

- 11) **Lower Wisconsin Riverway** - The plan recommendation is to support efforts by the DNR and partner with DNR if feasible to acquire the remaining private lands along the riverway corridor from the Prairie du Sac dam to the Dane County line. Much of this land is within the 100 year floodplain and development potential is limited. Resource protection is the best use for the river corridor especially the floodplain areas. The recommendation is consistent with the overall goal of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway which reads “to provide a quality public use area for unique river corridor activities and compatible recreational pursuits; maintain the generally natural and scenic landscape of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway; and

manage the corridor's natural resources for the long-term benefit of the citizens of the area and State." Plan recommendations also include the following:

- Long-term vegetation management to control exotic species and maintain the sand prairie barrens community type.
 - annual or semi-annual campaigns to collect and dispose of litter.
 - Continue the policy of closing areas during eagle roosting and overwintering.
 - Continue limiting vehicular use.
 - No development of parking facilities.
- 12) **Alliant Energy/WP&L Lands** - The plan recommends that surplus lands below the Prairie Du Sac dam not needed for the dam operation and maintenance should be incorporated into the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway properties.
- 13) **Ice Age Trail** - The Town and DNR agree on the long term goal of establishing a trail between Lodi Marsh and the Merrimac Ferry. Gibraltar Rock SNA would be an important link in this connection. The Town's goal is to be an active partner with the Ice Age Trail Foundation, DNR, and other area groups to work towards completion of a trail system. A developed trail corridor would create substantial recreational opportunities for town and area residents and contribute to nature based economic development in the area.
- 14) **Gibraltar Rock State Natural Area (SNA)** - The DNR will be preparing a master plan for the property as a new acquisition has increased the size of the property substantially. The Town and DNR are in agreement on the following long term goals:
- Connect Gibraltar Rock with Lodi Marsh via the Ice Age Trail Corridor
 - Connect the Merrimac Ferry with Gibraltar Rock via the Ice Age Trail Corridor
 - Possible expansion of the current 146 acre property depending on whether adjoining lands make the long term property goals work better (pers. communication, DNR park planning staff)

Long-term plans for the property include passive recreation (hunting, hiking, day use, possibly camping) and vegetation management consistent with SNA properties.

The plan recommendation is that the Town of West Point partner with DNR in acquiring the properties that include the leather leaf bog at the base of the butte or bluff to assure long term preservation and management. The town intends to be an active participant in the master planning process along with other interested parties.

Specific Site Recommendations – Private Recreational Areas

- 1) **Crystal Lake Campground** - the Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan, Element #6 (Economic Development), recommends that the Crystal Lake area be designated as a desired commercial development area. The plan recommendation is to support family-based recreational opportunities at the Crystal Campground consistent with the carrying capacity of the existing utilities and facilities, public infrastructure including roads and trails, and natural resource values. Objective 7 of Element #6 in the Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan encourages the provision of goods and services that support the needs of the lake(s) recreational community.
- 2) **Schoepp's Resort Boat Landing at Crystal Lake** - The same plan recommendation as the Crystal Lake Campground is applicable to Schoepp's Resort

- 3) **Lake Wisconsin Country Club** - is an important recreational resource to the Town in that it not only provides opportunities for golfing but it is a facilities that hosts social functions and boat dock facilities. The opportunities for expansion are limited at the facility and the plan recommendation is to support the existing operation.
- 4) **Lake Wisconsin Boat Club** - the Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan, Element #6, states that Sunset Bay be designated as a desired commercial development area. The plan recommendation is to support continued use of the docking facility for boat club members as this may relieve some of the pressure on the Okee and Sunset Bay public boat landings.
- 5) **Snowmobile Trail System** - The Yellow Thunder Snowmobile Club has access agreements with private landowners. The Plan recommendation is to encourage Yellow Thunder to maintain the current off-road trail system that is well established and to work cooperatively with landowners to address their concerns.

Open Space Recommendations

The Town of West Point enjoys a good supply of natural resources, which enhances the environmental and rural character of the Town. These resources should be preserved to the extent possible. Resources that should be protected include surface water, wetlands, floodplains, woodlots, steep slopes, historical, special scenic value and archaeological sites. Protection of these natural areas is recommended through conservation easements, fee simple acquisition, zoning restrictions or other means. Many of these areas are unsuitable for development without changes to infrastructures i.e. roads and utilities and the plan recommends that they should be used for open space purposes. Rezoning and/or development of natural areas should be highly discouraged. Long range cooperative land acquisition and development plans by all public bodies should be encouraged. The goal of preservation and protection measures is to preserve environmentally sensitive and other open lands consistent with the goals and objectives for future land uses in the Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan. To implement protection measures the policy is to rely on a number of strategies including land owner agreements, conservation easements, fee title acquisition and protection involving multiple partners. All land preservation efforts are contingent on **voluntary participation** by land owners. This Plan is intended to fully respect private property rights.

Preservation Criteria

Lands considered to be priorities for preservation have been evaluated according to two sets of criteria :

- Lands that contribute to protection of water quality surface and groundwater, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and ecosystem diversity. These attributes are often referred to as environmental or ecosystem services.
- Lands where opportunities exist for preservation and lands that are vulnerable to land uses inconsistent with goals and objectives of the Town's long-term Comprehensive Plan.

1) Environmental/Ecosystem Services Criteria

- A. Water Quality Protection** – Lands that protect water quality from non-point source pollution serve as buffers surrounding aquatic resources. Land, location, slope and vegetation are factors that determine the value at a given property as a buffer. In general lands suitable as buffers include undeveloped shoreline, wetland systems including shallow marshes, forested wetlands, and lands along stream courses and spring systems.

Map 4 located in the Appendix illustrates environmental corridors displayed in green. Environmental corridors are areas on the landscape that contain high value natural, scenic, historic, scientific, and recreational features. These corridors often function as buffers that protect water quality. Environmental corridors in the plan are as follows:

- Floodplains
- Wetlands
- A 35 foot buffer on all surface waters
- Public owned/managed open space i.e. parklands
- Shallow soils
- Slopes greater than 12%
- Woodlots of 20 acres or larger

Lands that meet these criteria function to protect both surface and groundwater when managed according to best practices.

- B. Wildlife Habitat** – Wisconsin's Biodiversity Report (1995) states ecological simplification, habitat fragmentation, and environmental pollution are often products resulting from intensive use of the landscape.

Ecological simplification - means that interrelationships between organisms and their environment are reduced in number and complexity. Disturbances such as overgrazing, improper woodland management, changes in drainage and hydrology contribute to simplification.

Habitat fragmentation – is the breaking up or disruption of large continuous ecosystems like forests, wetlands, stream corridors and lakeshores. The remaining smaller areas are often surrounded by disturbed areas. These fragmented areas tend to support fewer species of wildlife. Wildlife populations become isolated because of physical barriers and unsuitable habitat types and species diversity declines. Some species do well in altered landscapes especially along the edge of fragmented lands.

Environmental pollution – Human introduced pollutants affecting land, air, and water harms plant and animal communities both terrestrial and aquatic. Often air and water pollution are regional because of transport mechanisms.

All lands in the Town are subject to regional environmental pollution and much of the land is bisected by roads and farmsteads. However, there are lands in the town that have significant value as wildlife habitat and should be preserved. Lands that have high value as wildlife habitat are as follows:

- Large contiguous parcels without significant edge impacts
- Well buffered lands within environmental corridors,
- Large wooded tracts connected via natural corridors like surface waters and woodlands,
- Lands that have unique natural features.

These lands are best suited to support diverse wildlife populations and often include niches for species that have unique habitat requirements. These may need active management and restoration to improve wildlife habitat values.

- C. Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry-** USDA soil surveys classify soils according to their ability to produce agricultural products. The most productive agricultural soils or prime farmland contains soils listed Class I, II, and III. Map 5 in the Appendix displays Productive Agricultural Soils or prime farmland in brown. These soils, when managed according to best practice, are the foundation for the town's agricultural economy and should be preserved. Woodlands enrolled in forest tax law programs like Managed Forest Law (MFL) assure a sustainable supply of forest products, provide wildlife habitat, and protect water quality. These lands should be preserved for future generations. Map 6 in the Appendix displays woodlands in green and the MFL parcels are shown as cross hatched.
- D. Groundwater protection –** Lands that contribute to groundwater recharge or discharge as well as buffer lands are critical to the protection of groundwater resources. These lands assure an abundant supply of groundwater to meet the needs of the town's residents, and support area farming operations. In general significant groundwater recharge areas include:
- Well drained sandy or loamy soils located higher on the landscape.
 - Lands with shallow soils over bedrock. Groundwater recharge occurs through joints and fractures (depending on the geologic formation).

Lands with shallows soils over bedrock also can discharge groundwater through springs and seepage areas. Wetlands also provide important groundwater protection functions. In most cases (with exceptions) wetlands function as discharge areas.

Bedrock elevations are in the 800 to 1,000 foot Mean Sea Level (MSL) range (Groundwater Resources and Geology of Columbia County Circular 37) in the town. Bedrock outcrops tend to track the wooded ridge top and bluffs. Map 7 in the Appendix shows the two major soil associations in the town. Both soil associations do not have heavy clay subsoils that would retard or slow infiltration. In general, soils located on ridge tops, or lower areas with knolls or rolling hills are associated with groundwater recharge.

The wooded ridges in the town are especially important in protecting groundwater resources. Forested or wooded areas are generally unaffected by fertilizers or pesticides use associated with croplands, or nitrate contamination from lawn fertilization and septic systems in residential areas. Forested or wooded land also acts as a natural filter removing potential groundwater contaminants.

Lands with hydric soils and wetland areas also contribute to groundwater function and protection. Groundwater resources can be protected via best practices on agricultural lands and by maintaining permanent vegetative cover (wooded or grassland) on critical recharge areas.

2) Threats and Opportunities

- A. Lands vulnerable to development –** Lands vulnerable to development have the following attributes:
- These lands include residentially zoned lands adjacent to existing development.
 - These lands include parcels with scenic views or other natural features that make them attractive as homesites.
 - Lands that border water features and/or environmental corridors.
- B. Recreation potential with public access -** In general lands with potential for recreation have unique natural features, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat, and public access. These lands have characteristics similar to the Environmental/Ecosystem Service criteria listed above. But they may need minor infrastructure improvements like trails and parking facilities. Safe public access from roads is an important criterion along with access points that do not interfere with existing land uses like active farming operations.

Evaluation of Open Space Areas

The analysis of open space needs, service areas, facility needs and population concentrations reveals that new recreation sites and facilities should be developed in order to provide adequate and equitable recreational opportunities for all the residents of West Point.

The following sites or areas are intended to preserve environmentally sensitive and other open lands, provide facilities in deficient areas of the Town for local residents, and where possible provide needed recreational offerings for residents and tourists to be consistent with the goals and objectives for future land uses in the Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan.

A summary of locations for improvement of parks and open space preservation are listed below and shown on Map 2 in the Appendix. Each of these areas was evaluated according to environmental/ecosystem services criteria listed above. The evaluations, a sample of which is located in the Appendix, involved a review of maps, soil survey data, and a field tour. A brief summary of the significance of each site/area and the plan recommendation is as follows:

1) **Miller Court/ Jensen Dr. Eagle Roosting Area**

Existing Land Use – Woodland and residential

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection - yes, *environmental corridor has buffer lands*

- Wildlife Habitat - yes, *meets all criteria*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - yes, *portions of area in forest tax law*
- Groundwater Protection – yes, *contains ridge tops and bluff potential recharge area*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Lands are vulnerable to development, has scenic views, potential public access, and unique natural features*

This unique area has outstanding scenic features, extensive woodland, and is designated as a roosting area for bald eagles (Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan). Low density residential development is present along Jenson Drive/Court. The area has excellent potential for a public private partnership that would involve modest development and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. The Plan recommendation is to seek a partnership between the town, and public funding sources (state/federal), and land trusts, to preserve the most environmentally sensitive areas.

2) **Town Transfer Station Site**

Existing Land Use – Open land/old field and solid waste facility

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection - *no, not within environmental corridor(on border)*
- Wildlife Habitat - *open land with potential to restore to grassland*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *no*
- Groundwater Protection – yes, *contains ridge tops and bluff potential recharge area*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Lands are not vulnerable to development, has scenic views, potential public access, and unique natural features*

This property has scenic qualities, it is publicly owned and access could be improved by separating the transfer facility via gates and fencing. A shallow pond has potential as a waterfowl habitat. The recommendation is to convert the property to grassland including areas around the shallow pond, and to develop an observation point for the public.

3) **Lakeshore Area along UP Railroad Line NE of Section 7**

Existing Land Use – Lakeshore and transportation corridor residential homesites

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – yes, *within environmental corridor and upland buffer but very narrow*
- Wildlife Habitat - no, *has significant edge without large wooded areas, grasslands, or unique natural features*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry – no
- Groundwater Protection – no

Threats and Opportunities

- *Some lands are vulnerable to development with residential zoning and lakeshore areas.*

The land does have recreational potential if access (rail corridor) can be worked out. The rail line creates an access problem that will be difficult to overcome. There would also need to be a title search to confirm ownership along narrow strips of land between the rail

line and the Lake Wisconsin shoreline. A positive feature is the Ice Age Trail corridor parallels a portion of the area to the ferry landing. The plan recommendation is to support a partnership between the railroad, the Ice Age Trail Foundation, and the town to establish lake access for shore fishing, wildlife observation or other uses that do not conflict with the rail operation. A very long-term option would be a rails to trails project if the rail line were discontinued.

4) **Undeveloped shoreline along Lake Wisconsin Sections 17, 20, 19, 30**

Existing Land Use – Crop land, woodland, open land

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes, within environmental corridor or borders a corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *yes – however, wooded shoreline is relatively narrow with scattered areas with larger woodlands and open lands associated with drainage ways*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry
- Prime farmland or MFL land – *yes, prime farmland is located within this area*
- Groundwater Protection – *no this area is located along a former pre-glacial terrace that does recharge groundwater to Lake Wisconsin but the area does not have extensive wetlands or shallow bed rock*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Lands are residential zoned and vulnerable to development, there are scenic views that border water and parts of the lands are environmental corridors. The lands have recreational potential with public access (unique natural features, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat, and public access.)*

This area includes most of the remaining undeveloped shoreline along Lake Wisconsin in the Town of West Point. Wooded shore cover provides important near shore habitat for the Lake Wisconsin fishery. Wooded cover also buffers surface water from agricultural and residential development and it provides habitat for birds using the riparian corridor.

The area also includes prime farmland some of which is relatively flat and easy to farm. Several drainage ways (to the lake) are partially wooded. These areas provide wildlife habitat and buffer the effects of agriculture. Wider buffers both along the shoreline and drainage ways would be more beneficial to water quality. In Section 20, a drainage way, crop fields, and old fields form a connection with one of largest wooded areas in the town. This connection is separated by STH 188.

A large area of the opposite shoreline on the Sauk County will be transferred to WDNR as part The Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) closure. This presents an opportunity to connect wooded shoreline and restored grassland habitat on the former BAAP property with lands in the Town of West Point. Aldo Leopold a pioneer in wildlife ecology and land stewardship conducted early research (as a professor at UW Madison) on areas along the lakeshore and adjacent uplands at this location in the town.

Wildlife habitat fragmentation is present in the Town of West Point as agricultural land uses predominate. Fertile soils, abundant water resources, and a rich agricultural heritage are part of the cultural fabric of the town.

Wildlife habitat fragmentation has an adverse effect on three groupings of wildlife species as follows:

- Area sensitive species (species requiring large home ranges)

- Edge sensitive species (species that do not do well where there are extensive ecological edges)
- Isolation sensitive species (species that do not disperse well in widely separated habitats).

It is possible to balance agricultural land uses with preservation and development of wildlife habitat. Preservation of undeveloped shoreline at this location could favor area sensitive species like grassland birds because of the planned restoration work at BAAP.

The plan recommendation is to pursue a partnership between landowners, state and federal agencies to preserve the shoreline and adjacent lands. Several funding sources, both public and private, are the preferred option. Fee title or easement protection could still allow farming in the immediate future while long-term plans for habitat restoration, and/or recreational facilities are being developed. In fact lands under protection of easement could remain in agriculture indefinitely depending on land owner desires and needs.

5) **Depressional Wetlands**

Map 8 in the Appendix includes the wetlands and hydric soils within the town. Most of the wetland areas are shallow depressional sites that hold water either seasonally or permanently. They are, as the map illustrates, scattered throughout the Town. These areas were formed from the action of glaciers during the last active glacial episode.

They are important landscape features for a number of reasons:

- They store surface water and function as groundwater discharge areas and at specific locations may function as groundwater recharge areas.
- They buffer nearby surface waters from adjacent land uses especially depressional wetlands within environmental corridors.
- They are very important to wildlife:
 - For waterfowl they warm early in the spring and aquatic organisms provide a food source during season migration
 - Wetland ponds without fish provide habitat to herptal species (frogs, toads, and salamanders)
 - Exposed mud flats provide a food source for wading bird and songbirds

Virtually all permanent and seasonal depressional wetlands are protected by the Clean Water Act regulatory process and state water regulation laws in Chapter 30, of Wisconsin Statutes.

Wetland functions can be improved at several of the wetlands sites by establishing or extending upland buffers of permanent vegetative cover around the wetland basins. Several state and federal cost share and easement programs are available to landowners with these unique resources on their properties. The plan recommendation is to encourage and assist landowners who are interested in enhancing wetlands on their properties, by coordinating with agencies, hosting workshops, and events that share information with landowners. There are restorable wetlands at several locations within the town.

6) **Alder Pond Section 34**

Existing Land Use – Kettle pond

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes, within environmental corridor or border a corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *no* crop fields, roadway, and farm buildings border the property on three sides, is wildlife habitat and there is a potential to enhance existing habitat. Woodland and bluff border on the north.
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *yes* (agricultural tourism site)
- Prime farmland or MFL land – *yes*
- Groundwater Protection – *yes*, wetlands and high bluffs with shallow bedrock

Threats and Opportunities

- *Wetland/waterway protected by wetland regulations, surrounding areas may serve as a rural homesite but must meet town and county ordinances. The land has recreational potential (unique natural features, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat) but no public access*

The Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan (page 128) includes a detailed description of Alder Pond. The wide wetland fringe, a floating bog, and a maximum depth of 26 feet make this a unique natural resource. The upland areas surrounding the pond would provide excellent waterfowl nesting if this area were converted to permanent vegetative cover. The cropped areas are not prime farmland. The plan recommendation is to encourage resource agencies to discuss acquiring a permanent easement from the landowner and to convert the cropland to permanent grass cover. Public access to the pond, perhaps using a boardwalk, would provide recreational opportunities.

7) **Lantz Pond Section 36**

Existing Land Use – Crop land, woodland, open land

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes, within environmental corridor or borders a corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *yes* – *deep kettle pond with wide wetland border adjacent to larger woodland to the south*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *no*
- Prime farmland or MFL land – *no*
- Groundwater Protection – *yes*, wetland kettle pond is a unique relict of recent glaciation.

Threats and Opportunities

- *Wetland/waterway protected by wetland regulations. The land has recreational potential (unique natural features, scenic view sheds, wildlife habitat) and the landowners have an agricultural tourism business)*

As stated above, the Town of West Point's Comprehensive Plan (page 128) includes a detailed description of Lantz Pond. The landowner is restoring a hill prairie community by removing red cedars from the bluff top to the north of the pond. The plan recommendation is to support the restoration effort. A conservation easement would provide the landowner with income and assure that the bluff and pond area is protected permanently.

8) **Ryan Pond Section 21**

Existing Land use – Crop land, barn yard

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *not within environmental corridor, close to active barnyard*

- Wildlife Habitat – *no, limited because of location next to active farming operation*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - yes
- Prime farmland or MFL land – yes
- Groundwater Protection – yes, *but not well buffered from active farming operation*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Wetland/waterway protected by wetland regulations. The pond does border a road and is very close to an active farming operation, recreational potential is limited*

The Town of West Point’s Comprehensive Plan states that this is a dug pond that was excavated in the 1860s. The adjacent farming operation and adjacent town road places limits on the pond as a natural resource. The plan recommendation is to support best practices to control barnyard runoff into the waterway.

9) **Unnamed Pond Section 22**

Existing Land Use – Crop land, open land

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes within environmental corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *no buffered but bordering agricultural lands*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - yes, prime farmland on border
- Prime farmland or MFL land – yes
- Groundwater Protection – yes, *but not well buffered from active farming operation*

This shallow lake/pond is an important landscape feature as described above (#5 depressional wetlands). The plan recommendation is to support and encourage participation in programs that would extend the upland buffer around the waterway in order to protect water quality and provide nesting habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Threats and Opportunities

- *Wetland/waterway protected by wetland regulations. Has recreational potential but access is limited, opportunity to view wildlife from road*

10) **Unnamed Pond Section 9**

Existing Land Use – Woodland and lake shore homesites

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes within environmental corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *no, limited because of lakeshore development*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - no
- Prime farmland or MFL land – no
- Groundwater Protection – yes, has a wooded buffer

Threats and Opportunities

- *Wetland/waterway protected by wetland regulations. The pond is close to lakeshore development. It has a wooded border that would benefit some species of wildlife and it is visually attractive.*

This small wetland pond is within the riparian corridor of Lake Wisconsin but it is adjacent to lakeshore development. See plan recommendation for undeveloped Lake Wisconsin shoreline (site/location #4).

11) **Bluff Tops and Wooded Environmental Corridors –Largest Woodland Areas**

Existing Land use – Woodland, cropland and open land

The plan identifies four areas within the town that include large woodland areas. These are generally associated with ridge tops and have shallow soils. The areas are as follows:

Area A Sections 20, 28, 34, and NE ¼ of Section 29

Area B Sections 31, 32, 33 T10N, R7E

Area C Section 26

Area D Section 12.

Environmental Services

- *Water Quality Protection – yes all areas include enough woodland to meet environmental corridor criteria*
- *Wildlife Habitat – yes, these areas contain the largest continuous woodlands in the town*
- *Sustainable agriculture or forestry - yes*
- *Prime farmland or MFL land – yes all areas have at least some acreage in MFL*
- *Groundwater Protection – yes, many areas likely function as groundwater recharge*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Area D has easier road access and a greater density of homesites. Other areas would require new roads or driveways for homesites and compliance with the town and county land division ordinance. Portions of Area D are included in the Ice Age Trail corridor. A portion of area A is near the undeveloped shoreline of Lake Wisconsin. Area B is an important Bald Eagle Roosting area.*

As stated above, all of the areas have unique natural features and/or locations that result in several critical environmental services. A lake shore preservation project that includes Area A would provide an ecological connection with the shoreline and grasslands of the BAAP. Area D is the most fragmented of the four wooded areas but a section of the Ice Age trail through this area would connect wooded areas to Gibraltar Rock and provide hiking opportunities. Area B is near Wisconsin River lands (Blackhawk Roost) already under conservation easement. Finally Area C has probably the largest continuous woodland in the town and Van Ness Road, which is a scenic road, passes through the parcel.

The plan recommendation is to support efforts to enroll more of these lands in MFL. The town should host land owner forums on woodland management, and emphasize to landowners the importance of these areas. There is potential for a large scale partnership between land owners, the town, land trusts and agencies that would involve conservation easements.

12) **Leather leaf Bog Gibraltar Rock SNA SE Section 13**

Existing Land use – Wetland and park land

Environmental Services

- *Water Quality Protection – yes within environmental corridor*
- *Wildlife Habitat – yes*
- *Sustainable agriculture or forestry - no*
- *Prime farmland or MFL land –no*
- *Groundwater Protection – yes unique wetland type for the area adjacent to bluff*

Threats and Opportunities

- *This type of wetland is unique to the area as bog communities are more common in northern Wisconsin. This is likely a relic of cooler climatic conditions during the last period of glaciation. As stated above wetlands are protected by state and federal regulations but surrounding uplands are not. Often land uses on adjacent uplands diminish the value of wetlands.*

The plan recommendation is to partner with DNR to encourage purchase of the bog property and adjacent uplands from willing sellers. The town could play an important role by making landowner contacts and acting as a sponsor as part of an acquisition effort. The town should also work closely with DNR during the master planning process for the Gibraltar Rock park and SNA (see Gibraltar Rock SNA plan recommendations).

13) **Point to Point Waterway Trail**

Existing Land use – Recreation

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes within environmental corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *yes*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *no*
- Prime farmland or MFL land –*no*
- Groundwater Protection – *yes*

Threats and Opportunities

- *Development of a designated waterway trail along the West Point shoreline would encourage eco tourism and West Point as an eco-tourism destination point*

The plan recommendation is to support designation of a waterway trail (with signage both inland and along the Town shoreline) to ensure safe and scenic travel with concern for both public access and private land. We can also support and enhance eco-tourism in cooperation and partnership with local government agencies, adjacent communities, commercial business, and nonprofit groups.

14) **Crystal Lake Shoreline Area south half of Section 35**

Existing Land Use – Wetland, shoreline, croplands

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *yes within environmental corridor*
- Wildlife Habitat – *no, not well buffered from agricultural activity*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *no*
- Prime farmland or MFL land –*no*
- Groundwater Protection *yes but restored wetlands would actually benefit surface waters*

Threats and Opportunities

- A ditch system at this location carries surface water including agricultural runoff into Crystal Lake. Drainage problems appear to limit productivity on these lands. The long-term lake level rise at Crystal Lake is a contributing factor to the drainage problems.

The plan recommendation is to support wetland restoration through a partnership with landowners, the County Land Conservation Department and/or NRCS/ US FWS Partners for Wildlife. The town could play a role in a project through land owner contacts.

15) **Bike Routes – All Sections**

Existing Land Use – Roadway transportation

Environmental Services

- Water Quality Protection – *no*
- Wildlife Habitat – *no*
- Sustainable agriculture or forestry - *no*
- Prime farmland or MFL land –*no*
- Groundwater Protection – *no*

Threats and Opportunities

- *A designated bike route would ensure safe travel and encourage West Point to be an eco-tourism destination point.*

The plan recommendation is to support designation of a bike trail thru the Town to ensure safe and scenic travel thru the Town. We can also support and enhance eco-tourism in cooperation and in partnership with government agencies, adjacent communities, commercial business, and nonprofit groups.

Additional Recreational Development

- 1) **Rustic Roads** - Van Ness Road passes through a bluff top and wooded environmental corridor and the east end of the road has a panoramic view of the Baraboo Hills and Gibraltar Rock. This road is an ideal connector road between Prairie du Sac, Lodi and the Merrimac Ferry as well as between State Hwy 60, 113, and 188. The road is ideally suited for the Rustic Road Program. The plan recommendation is to explore funding opportunities for the designation of Van Ness Road as a Rustic Road.
- 2) **Auto/Bike Tour of Historic Sites** - The West Point Area Historical Society has developed a map with Historical Points of Interest. Interpretative Signs could be placed at significant historical sites and an auto or bike tour of these sites could be developed. The plan recommendation is to explore funding opportunities for a historic site tour.
- 3) **Additional Park and Recreation Facilities** - should be considered for acquisition and development when it is economically feasible or when the opportunity presents itself and where it is appropriate to serve the needs of the Town residents. The plan recommends that special consideration is necessary as new subdivisions are proposed which substantially increase residential densities of a particular area.
- 4) **Bike Trail** – The Town of West Point is ideally suited for general bike transportation, recreational touring and associated ecotourism. It is already a highly sought out destination point for recreational riders from Madison, surrounding communities and visitors to the area either as a final destination , starting point, or wayside for travel to Devils Lake State Park. With the completion of the Hwy 12 bike path to Madison, commuting by bike to Madison's westside has increased.

Improving the bicycling environment can provide non-transportation related benefits as well. The community benefits from bicycle riders who purchase food and other needs

locally. The tourism industry benefits as more bicyclists are attracted from outside the community. Most importantly, the quality of life of the community is enhanced by the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians, for example, when social interactions occur spontaneously, or when people feel safer being outdoors.

Bicycle facilities have been shown to have a positive effect on both nearby property values, and an increase in business reported by owners of businesses near bicycle facilities.

The plan recommendation is to explore creation of a bike plan for the area to be included in the existing State Biking Map. This would highlight preferred historic, scenic and safe travel routes of various distances thru West Point and further designate food, lodging and business options.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance of the park system is necessary to keep the parks in good shape and safe. Inadequate inspections and maintenance can lead to playground injuries and run down facilities making the park system a community liability instead of a community asset. Additionally, a maintenance inventory and schedule should be developed to identify all maintenance functions, the person responsible for the function and its timing. At present, the park maintenance and operations functions fall under the Highway Superintendent's responsibilities. Upon purchase and development of a park facility, it should be expected that part-time seasonal worker(s) will need to be hired to mow the grass, clean the facilities, make routine inspections and repairs and to perform other maintenance functions as necessary. In some cases, the maintenance and support can be managed and completed with the help of civic and non-profit organizations such as is done with the Ice Age Trail Foundation.

FUNDING

Funding assistance for acquiring and developing parks and recreation facilities can be obtained through a variety of grants and programs. Additionally, many communities have good success with local fund-raising campaigns for large specific projects and local service organizations can be an excellent source of manpower and funding for smaller projects. Local business and corporate funding and support should also be encouraged. Another potential source of funding to acquire and develop parklands is parkland dedication or impact fees placed upon developers when creating residential lots.

Some of the grant and financial programs administered by the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources that are available to Towns include:

- 1) ADLP - Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks. Provides up to 50 percent matching grants for the acquisition, development and renovation of local parks.
- 2) NRTA - (NM) National Recreational Trails Act, Non-motorized. Federal program that provides 50 percent grants to acquire, develop, renovate and maintain non-motorized trails.
- 3) RBF - Recreational Boating Facilities Program. Provides 50 percent matching grants to develop facilities for access to water. Program also provides 50 percent cost sharing assistance for the dredging of channels of waterways for recreational boating.
- 4) UGS - Urban Green Space Program. Provides 50 percent matching grants for land acquisition with the intent to provide natural space within or near urban areas or protect scenic or ecological features.
- 5) UR – Urban Rivers Grants. Provides up to 50 percent matching grants for land acquisition on or adjacent to rivers that flow through urban areas, in order to preserve or restore riverfronts for economic revitalization or recreational development.

Staff at the Department of Natural Resources - South-Central Region should be contacted for additional information and assistance in preparing applications for projects.

Department of Natural Resources - South-Central Region
3911 Fish Hatchery Road
Fitchburg, WI 53711
(608) 275-3218

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PROCESS

Public involvement in the planning process is vital to ensure the development of a plan that serves to meet the needs and demands of its citizens and intended users. Development of this plan involved two basic levels of public involvement or comment.

- 1) Town Board Meetings:
Two meetings open to all interested Town residents were held by the Town Board to solicit ideas and provide feedback on components of the plan in its development stages. Needs and demands, policies, goals and objectives and recommendations for the park, recreation and open space plan and system were reviewed and developed in part at these meetings.
- 2) January 30, 31 and February 1, 2006 .Focus Groups on Natural, Cultural, and Agricultural Resources within Town as Part of the Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan development.
- 3) A series of meetings were held to seek ideas on the Town's need for future recreational facilities, and parks, as well as preservation of unique natural areas:

Meeting Schedule

- June 3, 2008 West Point Historical Society and Commission – 7:00 p.m.
 - June 5, 2008 Town of West Point Plan Commission – 8:00 p.m.
 - June 12, 2008 Town Board -8:00 p.m.
- 4) West Point Parks Committee –June 10, 2008
 - 5) The committee chair met with Curt Calkins the County Land Conservationist on July 9, 2008.
 - 6) The County Conservationist provided recommendations on land preservation priorities.
 - 7) On July 21, 2008 a meeting was held with the DNR Regional Park and Recreation Supervisor and DNR Parks Planning staff to discuss long range plans for Gibraltar Rock SNA and the Ice Age Trail corridor. DNR staff provided comments on these facilities that are included in the plan.
 - 8) Meeting held in conjunction with the Town of Lodi on the subject of eco-tourism (2007 and 2008)
 - 9) Public Hearing:
A public hearing was held prior to adoption of the plan by the Town Board to solicit final comments on the draft plan.

The plan recommendation is for The Town Board to continue involvement and maintain communication links with municipal officials and interested citizens and groups to keep up with changing attitudes and priorities. As needs, demands, and priorities change the plan will be updated.

CHANGES AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

This plan should be scheduled for review, update or complete revision at least every five years. However, various circumstances and certain opportunities may warrant changes to the plan prior to the next scheduled update or revision. Changes or amendments to this plan require a petition to or action by the Town Board. The petition shall specify the change requested and reasons for the change.

The Town Board shall hold a public hearing upon publishing a Class I notice. When deemed appropriate by the Town Board, written notification of the public hearing may be sent to user groups, organizations, municipalities or individuals believed to be directly or adversely affected by the proposed change.

After the public hearing, the Town Board shall vote on passage of the proposed change or amendment. The change or amendment shall be effective upon passage.

LIST OF REFERENCES, DOCUMENTS, REPORTS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED

Town of West Point Comprehensive Plan (CP)
Soil Survey of Columbia County, USDA July 1978
Wisconsin's Biodiversity as a Management Issue, Department of Natural Resources, May 1995
Managing Habitat for Grassland Birds, A Guide for Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources, 1997
Final Environmental Impact Statement and Master Plan, Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Department of Natural Resources, August 1988
Ground-Water Resources and Geology of Columbia County, Wisconsin, U.S Dept. of Interior Geological Survey, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Information Circular Number 37, 1978
Wisconsin Land Use Megatrends: Forests, Center for Land Use Education/UW Extension, 2005
Prairie Forest Border Eco-Region A Conservation Plan, 2000, The Nature Conservancy et al
Rapid Assessment Methodology for Evaluating Wetland Functional Values , Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, circa 1999
Lake Planning Grant Town of West Point Lakeshore Property Owner Survey
Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, James D Mertes, Ph.D., CLP and James R. Hall, CLP, 1996
Guidelines For the Development of Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, Wisconsin DNR, Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Jeff Prey, WDNR Planner – Plan for Gibraltar Rock Property and Ice Age Trail Corridor
Greg Delwiche, WDNR Real Estate Specialist – Open Space Recommendations
Curt Calkins, Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department – Open Space Recommendations
Brian Zirbes, Columbia County Planning and Zoning Department – Plan development
Stefanie Brouwer, WDNR Financial Assistance Specialist – Funding Sources
Rich Evans,, WDNR Regional Parks Program Manager – Gibraltar Rock Property and Ice Age Trail Corridor
Tim Larson, WDNR Fisheries Biologist and Area Supervisor – Public Boat Landings
Sara Kehrl, WDNR, Wildlife Biologist – Plan Recommendations
Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (2008)