

Draft

Town of Plum Lake

5 Year

Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023

Attached is the draft Town of Plum Lake 5 Year Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The Town of Plum Lake Planning Committee has posted this document for public review and comment. Comments should be sent to the Planning Committee email address:

townofplumplanning@gmail.com

Written comments will be accepted through 12/23/2022. The Committee will hold an open meeting on January 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m., following a scheduled Planning Committee meeting, to receive oral comments or to address any questions the public may have.

Town of Plum Lake

Five Year Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023

The Town of Plum Lake is located in central Vilas County. Much of the land in the Town is owned by the State of Wisconsin as part of the Northern Highland State Forest. Additional land is included within the Vilas County Forest.

A variety of Northwoods outdoor recreational opportunities are offered within the large amount of public forest land located in the Town. State Forest campgrounds are located at Plum Lake, Crystal and Muskellunge Lakes, Razorback Lake, Starrett Lake, and two facilities on Star Lake. Several of these campgrounds include public swimming beaches and picnic areas, as well as public boat landings.

A variety of lake resources are available within the Town. These range from small completely undeveloped lakes to several large, more extensively developed lakes. Popular larger lakes include Plum, Star, Big Muskellunge, Irving, Ballard, Laura, Escanaba, Palette, Razorback, and Allequash lakes. Approximately 31 boat landings are maintained for public access within the Town, including 25 within the State Forest. The forest lands within the State Forest are primarily managed for timber production. There are however, four separate State Natural Areas within the Town that are managed as mature growth forests, with unique “old growth” characteristics.

Resorts and both permanent and seasonal lakefront homes have been developed on most of the available private lake property. Many once seasonal lake cottages are now being converted to year-round vacation and retirement homes. Demand for lakefront property is increasing dramatically as new homes are being constructed, sometimes after removal of the original lake cottages. These lakefront developments make up the majority of the Town’s equalized property value, and therefore the tax base.

The Town is located in the headwaters of two drainage basins – the Manitowish River basin flowing to the west, and the Wisconsin River basin flowing to the south. Several smaller streams are managed for trout, with Plum Creek receiving the largest attention by trout anglers.

Hunter hiking trails within the Town are maintained by Vilas County at two locations in the County Forest. These trails are also open for hiking and mountain biking during the summer, and cross-country skiing during the winter.

The resident population of the Town of Plum Lake is relatively small. The 2020 census identifies a population of 553 people. The population is divided as follows. 491 individuals (or 88.8 percent), are of voting age, and 62 individuals, or 11.2 percent, are under the age of 18.

The small resident population however, belies the large influx of seasonal residents and visitors that travel to the Town for outdoor recreation. The large number of resort facilities, campgrounds, seasonal homes, private home rentals, and day visitors, all add to the people utilizing outdoor recreation facilities in the Town.

Vilas County ranks in the top 100 Counties in the nation in terms of total seasonal and recreational housing units. University of Wisconsin-Extension has estimated that the peak summer population swells significantly of people serviced by the Town. This is about a tenfold increase over the resident population.

Area residents are highly dependent on the tourism industry for many of their local employment opportunities. The outdoor recreation facilities provided in the Town of Plum Lake, therefore, are also an important infrastructure component supporting the local economy.

The Town of Plum Lake Planning Committee conducted a survey in the summer of 2022 to measure the interest residents, property owners, and visitors may have in the Town providing additional opportunities for recreation within the Town. The survey was intended to provide the Town Board and Planning Committee a sense of what areas had the highest support for enhanced recreational opportunities. The survey had a very good response, with 31 % of contacts responding. The results clearly indicate increases in silent sport opportunities received the strongest support. A summary of the survey results is included here.

TOWN OF PLAN LAKE PLANNING COMMITTEE SURVEY RESULTS
AS OF MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2022

FINAL

Number of surveys returned			
Via mail	145	Seasonal	170
Via email	76	Full Time	119
Via drop off	72	Percent Seasonal	58%
Total responses		293 Percent Full Time	41%
Total mailed		953 [???	
Response rate		31%	

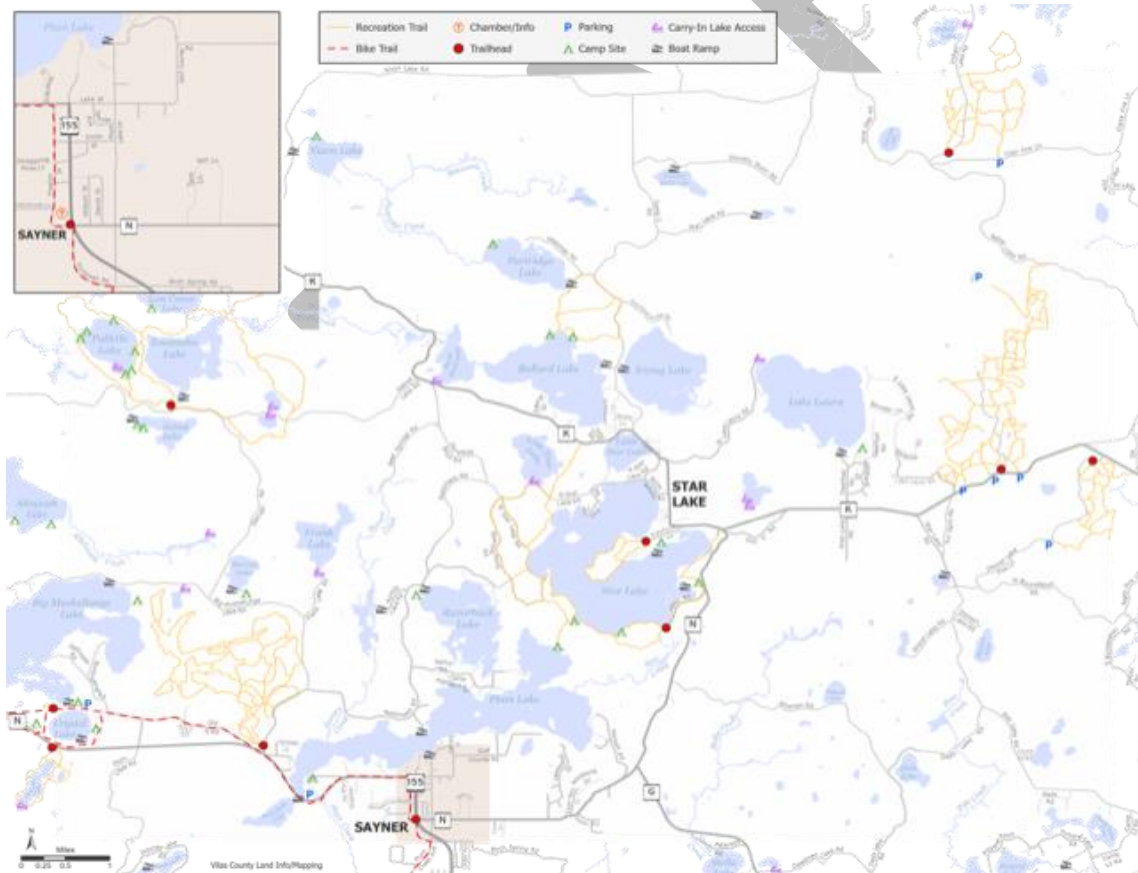
All Responders	Yes		No	Total Responses
	Events			
		242	34	276
	In Favor	Indifferent	Not in favor	
a) walking paths	166 58%	53 19%	67 23%	286
b) community center	149 52%	94 33%	45 16%	288
c) dog park	76 26%	79 28%	132 46%	287
d) additional bike paths	212 73%	39 13%	39 13%	290
e) tennis/pickle ball courts SL	102 35%	111 39%	75 26%	288

Seasonal Responders	Yes		No	Total Responses
	Events			
		141	18	159
	In Favor	Indifferent	Not in favor	
a) walking paths	105 63%	29 17%	33 20%	167
b) community center	76 46%	71 43%	19 11%	166
c) dog park	42 25%	55 33%	71 42%	168
d) additional bike paths	134 80%	20 12%	14 8%	168
e) tennis/pickle ball courts SL	58 35%	67 40%	41 25%	166

Full Time Responders	Yes		No	Total Responses
	Events			
		99	13	112
	In Favor	Indifferent	Not in favor	
a) walking paths	61 53%	24 21%	30 26%	115
b) community center	72 61%	22 19%	24 20%	118
c) dog park	34 30%	24 21%	57 50%	115
d) additional bike paths	77 65%	18 15%	23 19%	118
e) tennis/pickle ball courts SL	43 36%	43 36%	32 27%	118

Outdoor Recreation Facilities and Needs

The Town of Plum Lake maintains several recreational facilities in the Town. Facilities include a recreational park with playgrounds, tennis/pickleball courts, a ball field, two pavilions, fishing piers, boat landings, and trails for hiking, biking, cross country skiing, and snowshoeing. A map of the Town shows the distribution of facilities the Town provides as shown below.



Community Center Recreation Park

Facilities and Analysis:

Several acres of land surrounding the Town Hall within Sayner have been extensively developed and maintained by the Town for outdoor recreation. This park area serves as a focal point for many of the outdoor recreation activities for area residents.

Facilities located at this park area are extensive and include the following:

- A lighted ball field park with fencing, concession stand, dugouts, bleachers, and scoreboard.
- A lighted outdoor basketball court with breakaway hoops and safety fencing along the roadway.
- A picnic shelter building 60' by 100' with picnic tables and electrical outlets.
- A barbeque shelter with large barbeque pits and electrical hookups for cooking.
- A fenced trout pond for 4th of July festivities.
- An ice-skating rink area with water outlet.
- Two tennis/pickleball courts with perimeter fencing, nets and benches.
- A playground area with 2 seating shelters, a small pavilion, a youth basketball hoop, swings, a slide unit, spring horses, merry-go-round, horizontal bars, and monkey bars.

In addition to these outdoor recreation facilities, a large indoor recreation activity building is also located on this site. The facility features an indoor basketball court, which is also used for pickleball, a kitchen area, drinking fountain and restrooms.

Recommendations for Development Projects at Community Center Recreation Park:

1. New and upgraded playground equipment has been proposed by the Sayner Star Lake Lions Club, to include ADA compliant structures. Fund raising for these upgrades is currently underway. (see details on the next page).
2. New restroom facilities with enhanced security are needed which would meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements for accessibility.
3. Access to safe drinking water fountain.
4. Baseball field repairs, including replacing the roof on the home team dugout, repairing the backstop and outfield fencing, repairing the bleachers, and upgrading the infield area.
5. Surface repair/treatment of the basketball court area.
6. Improving doors and security of the indoor recreation building.

Plum Lake Public Pier and Boat Landing

Facilities and Analysis:

A popular boat launching area and pier is located on a small parcel (about ¼ acre) near the community center area. This facility is owned by the town. The pier is often used for swimming by area children as well. The site features a paved boat landing.

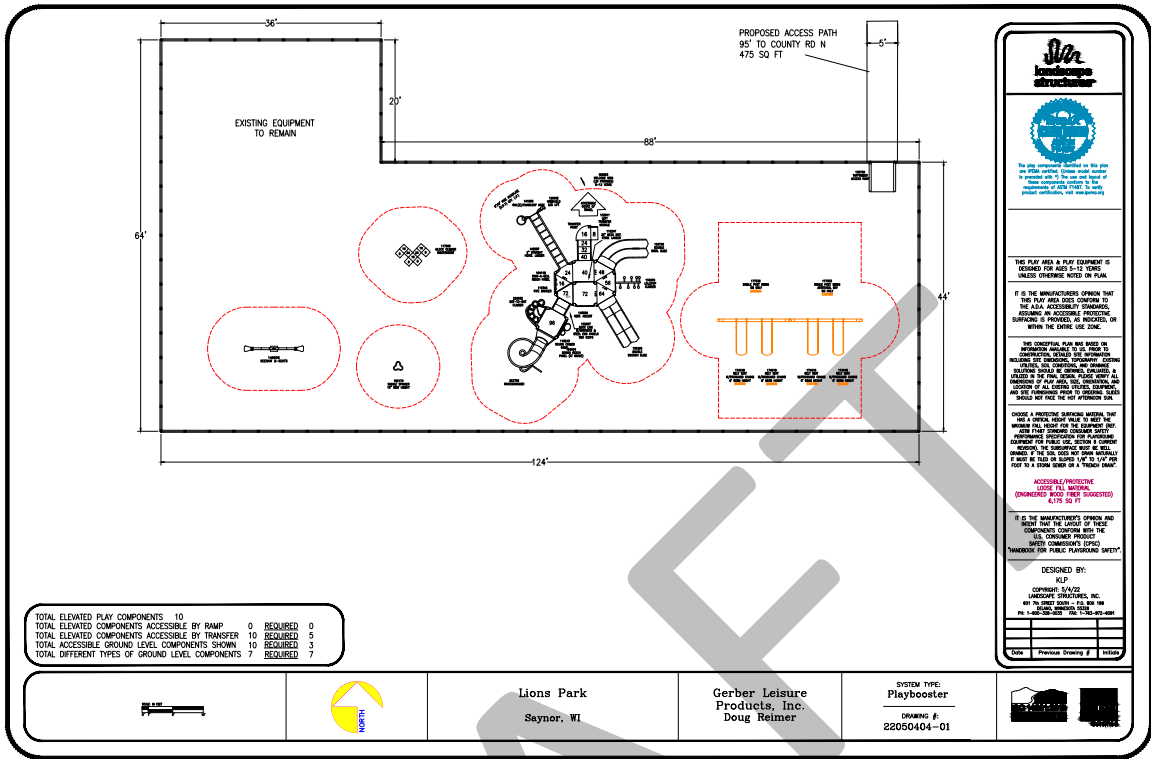
Recommendations for Development Projects in the Park:

1. None identified.

Plum Lake State House Point Boat Access and Waterski Park

Facilities and Analysis:

This area consists of a couple of acres of State Forest land on Plum Lake maintained by the Town under a Land Use Agreement with the Wisconsin DNR. A paved boat launch with concrete ramps, launching pier and informational signage is extensively used. Outdoor pit toilets are located at the park. The Plum Ski-ers waterski club conducts regular shows at this area during the summer season. The



waterski club has constructed a storage building for their equipment, a changing house for the show, bleachers, and ski ramp.

Recommendations for Development Projects:

1. Upgrade the outdoor pit toilets to meet ADA requirements.
2. Improve/upgrade the waterski show facilities in conjunction with the ski club.
3. Improve security systems.

Plum Lake Public Fishing Pier and Trail

Facilities and Analysis:

This site, also known as Warner's Pier, is located on State Forest land, along Highway N about 1 mile west of Sayner. The facility consists of a marked parking lot and a trail that leads to a public fishing pier. The trail and pier are located on a portion of a railroad corridor originally built in the early 1900's as part of the first timber harvesting in the area.

Recommendations and Development Projects:

1. Repair or replace pier deck boards as needed.

Star Lake Picnic Point

Facilities and Analysis:

Star Lake Picnic Point is located on several acres of State Forest land on Star Lake maintained by the Town under a Land Use Agreement with the Wisconsin DNR, and is adjacent to the northern Star Lake State Forest Campground facility. This park is primarily used by area residents, seasonal residents and visitors living or staying near the community of Star Lake. The facilities consist of a gravel road access to the point area, a picnic shelter building about 48' by 60', and playground equipment including swings and spring horses. The grassy park also provides a short pathway to a fishing pier, and an access point for swimming in Star Lake, as well as a picnic area for boaters.

Recommendations and Development Projects:

1. Improve the picnic area by providing electric service to the park.

2. Upgrade/add playground equipment.
3. Improve restroom facilities.

Non-Motorized Recreational Trails

Bike Paths

Facilities and Analysis:

The popularity of biking throughout Vilas County inspired the Town of Plum Lake to build a paved biking and hiking path connecting the community of Sayner with campgrounds on Plum Lake and at Crystal/Muskellunge Lakes, and westerly to the Boulder Junction Area Trail System (BATS). These trail systems continue to be developed, creating an infrastructure similar in scope to that of the snowmobile trails.

Recommendations and Development Projects:

1. Evaluate biking activities within the community of Sayner, to determine how to better connect trip generating areas within the Town with the existing trail system.
2. Complete a planning study to determine facility possibilities to link the communities of Sayner and Star Lake, and possibly from Star Lake to the Boulder Area Trail System (BATS).

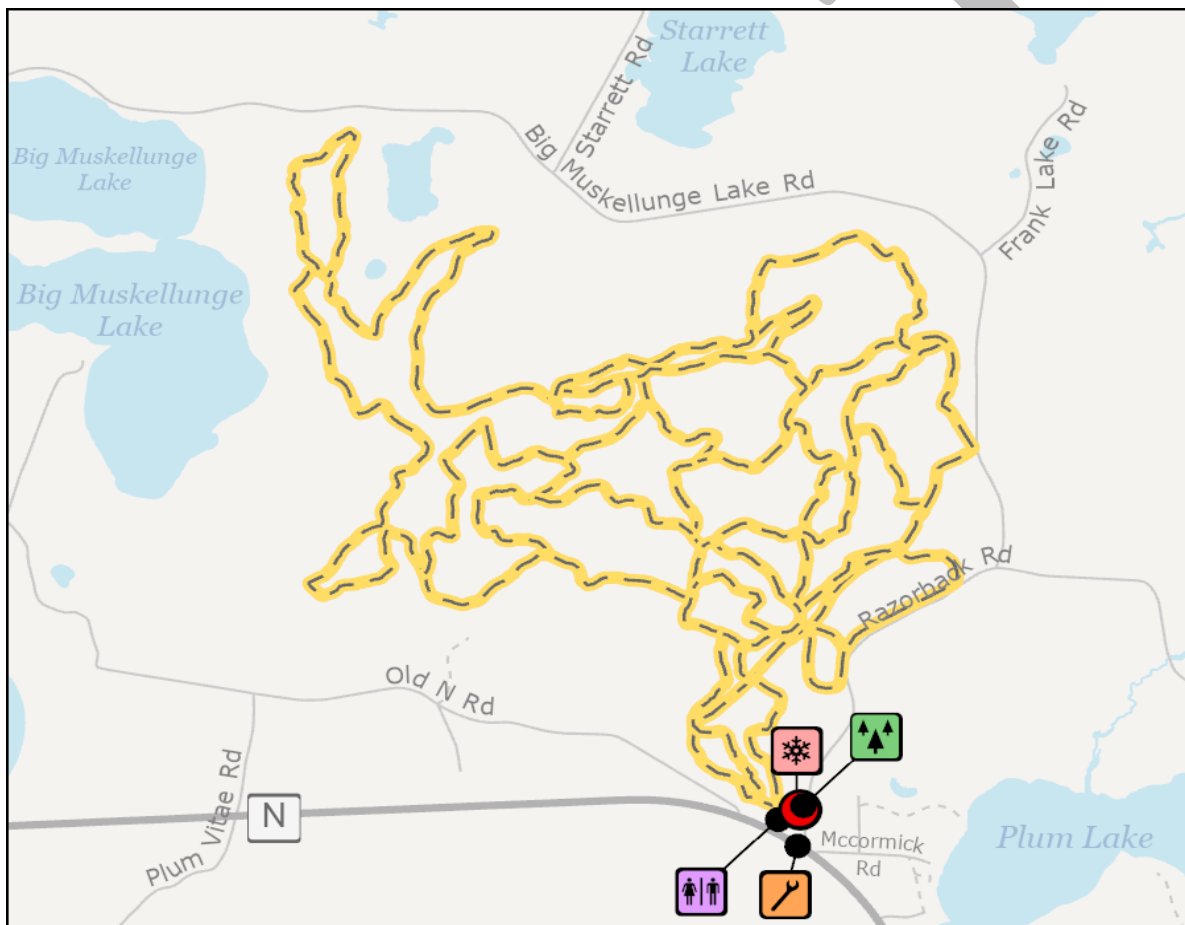
Razorback Ridges Trail System

Facilities and Analysis:

Located two miles west of Sayner, the trail system consists of about 30 miles of brushed and mowed mountain bike trails, and approximately 18 miles of groomed and tracked cross country ski trails. The facility was built primarily on the State Forest land with a Land Use Agreement with the Wisconsin DNR and the Sayner Star Lake Lions Club, with the trailhead built on Town property. The majority of the ski trail loops are groomed and tracked for both diagonal stride and ski skating techniques.

The Razorback Ridges trail system has become recognized as an outstanding cross-country ski and mountain bike area. The quality of the trail system with its diversity of mostly one-way trail loops has received attention from sports publications.

The trail system is maintained by the Sayner Star Lake Lions Club under a cooperative agreement with the DNR. Upkeep of the system depends upon private donations, Sayner Star Lake Lions Club fund raising, and numerous volunteer hours. Trail maps are printed by the Sayner Star Lake Lions Club with funding provided by paid advertisements from local businesses.



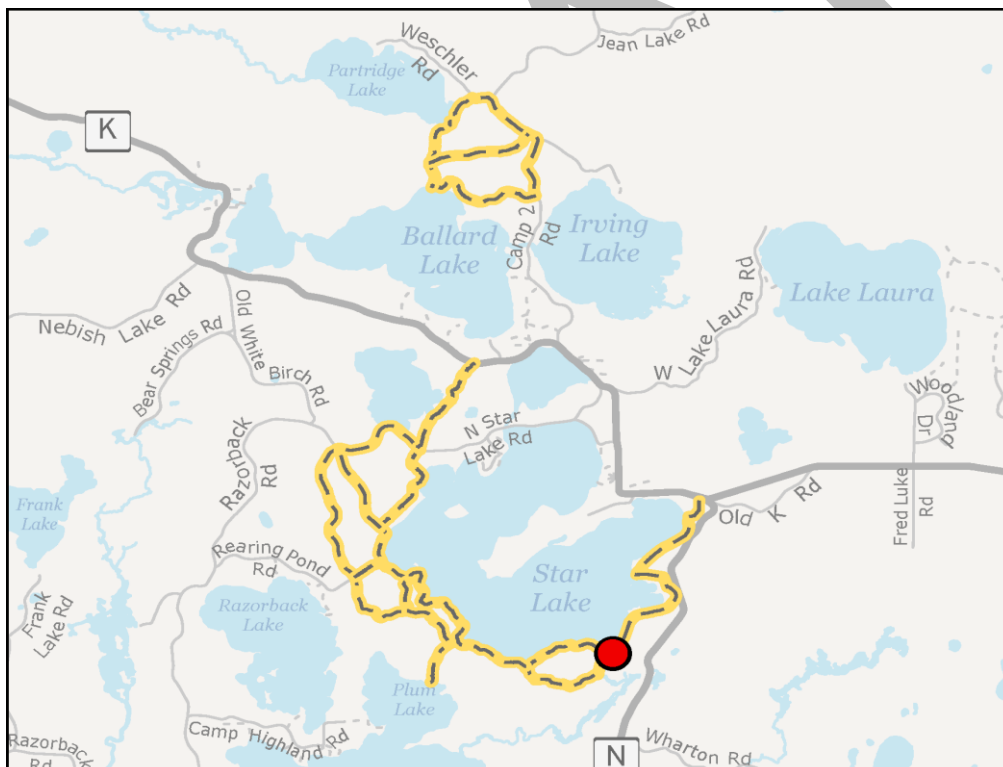
Recommendations and Development Projects:

1. Evaluate and develop and trail system to better link mountain bike systems in the area. Potentially linking Razorback Ridges, with the Escanaba Lake trails, and trails under development near Witches Lake.

Trampers Trail Hiking path

Facilities and Analysis:

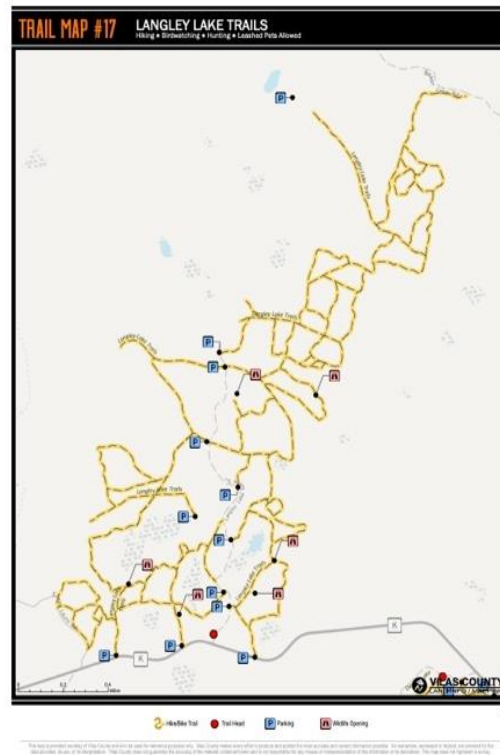
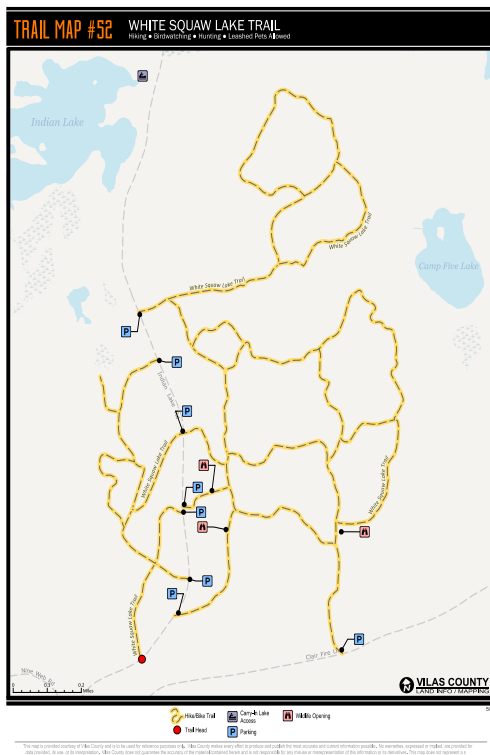
Trampers Trail is a hiking path developed on State Forest land by the Star Lakers Club, a group of individuals that are residents, seasonal residents, and visitors to the greater Star Lake area. The trail is maintained by the Club and is authorized under a Land Use Agreement between the Town and the Wisconsin DNR. The trail travels along the shoreline of portions of Lone Tree Lake, and Star Lake, with a portage trail linking Star Lake with Plum Lake.



A recent addition to the trail system includes a trail loop between Ballard Lake and Partridge Lake, with access off Camp Two Road.

Vilas County Trails

Vilas County Forestry maintains two trail systems within the Town of Plum Lake. The trail systems are maintained in part with infrequent maintenance to provide trails that are passable but blend with the environment of the County Forest. These trail maps available from Vilas County are the Langley Lake Trail and the White Squaw Lake Trail.

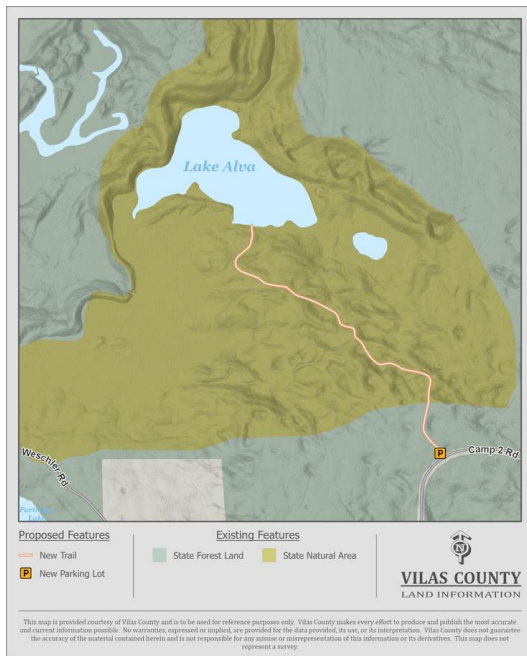


Recommendations and Development Projects:

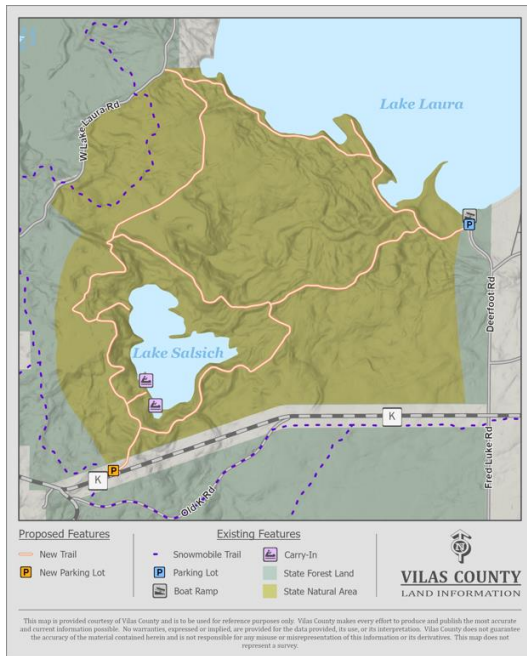
The Town of Plum Lake recognizes the value that both Razorback Ridges and Trampers Trail provide to enhance the personal outdoor experience people enjoy when visiting these trail systems. The Town also appreciates the efforts that are made by the sponsoring clubs and service groups. Without these club sponsorships, these trail systems could not be maintained by the Town alone.

The Town would like to expand the opportunities the public experiences by increasing the number of trails if additional sponsoring groups were to come forward. To further entice new trail development, the Town would propose that the initial trail clearing could be completed utilizing work crews from the Camp McNaughton Correctional Facility, and would consider offering small yearly stipends to help offset the costs incurred by club members of routine maintenance. Potential trail opportunities could include:

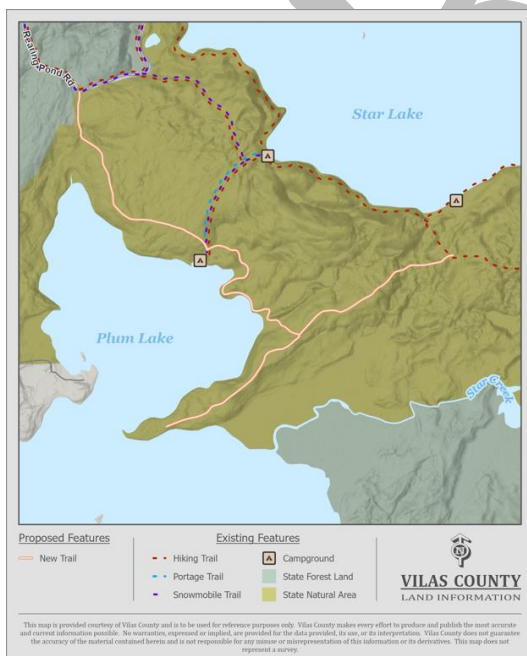
1. A trail system through the Alva Lake State Natural Area, off Camp 2 Road, northeast of the community of Star Lake.



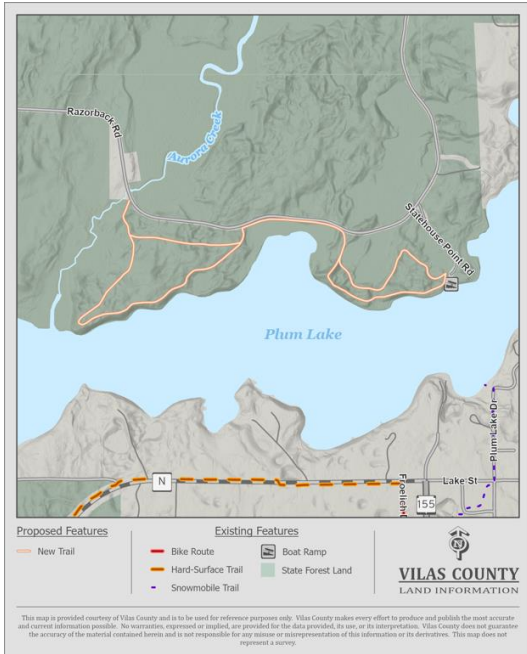
2. A trail system through the Salsich Lake State Natural Area, and could include a trail along the west shore of Laura Lake.



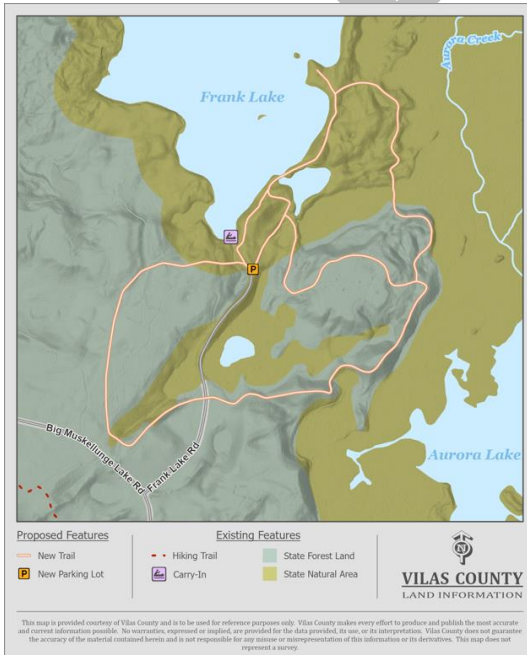
- An expansion of Trampers Trail, by adding a trail along the Plum Lake shoreline, potentially including a path on Hook's Point. This system is also located in a State Natural Area.



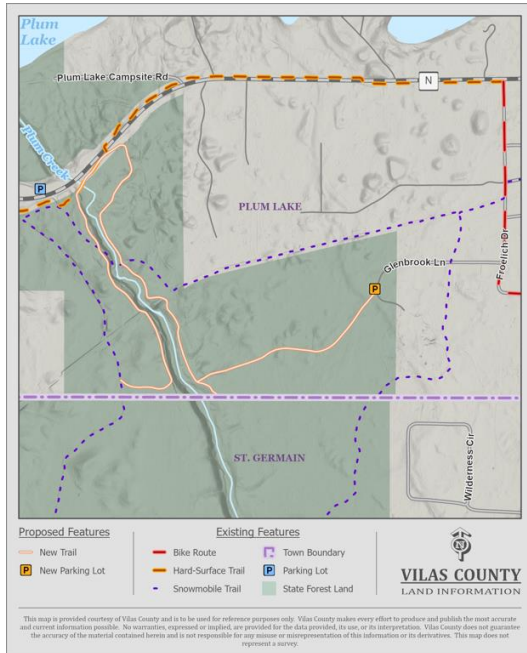
- A trail system along the western shoreline of Plum Lake, traveling from State House Point (the site of water ski shows), southwesterly to Aurora Creek and return.



- A trail system between Frank Lake and Aurora Lake through another State Natural Area.



6. A trail system along Plum Creek, with a link to the community if Sayner.



Motorized Trail Systems

Snowmobile and ATV/UTV Trail System

Facilities and Analysis:

An extensive system of snowmobile trails have been developed and are maintained by the Barnstormers Snowmobile Club in cooperation with the Wisconsin DNR and Vilas County. Grooming is provided through the Club. Funding for this trail system is under a separate DNR outdoor recreation program.

The Barnstormers Snowmobile Club is also sponsoring efforts to provide UTV/ATV opportunities within the Town. Currently UTV/ATV trail connections are planned to connect Businesses in the communities of Sayner and Star Lake with other existing ATV/UTV trail systems. These connections need upgrades before ATV/UTV usage can begin.

Recommendations and Development Projects:

In addition to the facilities discussed above, there are other privately owned facilities, such as the Plum Lake Golf Course, and Plum Pines RV Park, which are available to the public.

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