Town of St. Joseph
St. Croix County Wisconsin
Outdoor Recreation Plan

April 2017

AUTHORITY

The Town Board of the Town of St. Joseph (Town), having been authorized by the Town meeting under Wis. Stats. § 60.10(2)(c) to exercise village powers under Wis. Stats. §60.22(3), established a Plan Commission under Wis. Stats. §61.35 and §62.23 to be the "Town Planning Agency" by creating Chapter 35 of the *St. Joseph Town Code*. This *Town of St. Joseph Outdoor Recreation Plan* is adopted by the Town of St. Joseph Town Board under Chapter 35 §13 – §17 of the *St. Joseph Town Code* regarding comprehensive planning and under *Wisconsin Statutes* Chapter 66§1001 regarding comprehensive planning.

Resolution 2013 – 04

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Town of St Joseph 2013 Town Board
Outdoor Recreation Plan Subcommittee
Town of St Joseph 2013 Plan Committee

Resolution 2017 - 02

Update to the 2013 Outdoor Recreation Plan

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Town of St Joseph 2017 Town Board
Tom Spaniol, Chair
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Special Thanks To

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TOWN OF ST. JOSEPH OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION and PURPOSE

a. **Introduction** - This outdoor recreation plan represents the effort to analyze the Town of St. Joseph's present recreation needs, and to foresee and plan for its future recreation needs. The plan offers residents desired recreational opportunities, while it preserves and makes accessible unique natural and historic resources that are part of the Town's identity. The plan will be a guide for future public decisions regarding recreation in the community, and it will help maintain a pleasant and satisfying environment for future generations.

This plan is a visionary look at outdoor recreation possibilities for Town residents and the wider community who may access facilities in the Town. Implementation of any part of this plan depends on priorities set by future Town planning processes and on the availability of future funding opportunities.

b. **Purpose** – Provide a variety of park and recreational facilities to meet the needs of all community residents. The Outdoor Recreation Plan will help the Town to build a system of parks and trails that meets its residents' needs in several ways:

- Helps to protect and enhances important natural resources and resource corridors.
- Preserves and interprets the Town's history and character.
- Identifies proposed park and trail location ahead of most development to minimize system costs and impacts to current residents.
- Provides direction to developers regarding park dedication requirements and park development policies.
- Helps create a vision for future park amenities.
- Helps the Town to maintain the quality and value of its neighborhoods and its quality of life for the future.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

a. 2012 Population Projections

Table 1 shows population and household projections from the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau assuming 1% growth**.**

Table 1

Population and Residential Projections – Updated with 1% Growth

2010 Census Information	
2010 Population	3842
2010 Households	1388
2020 Projections	
2020 Projected Population	4244
2020 Projected Households	1533
2010-2020 Additional population (4,244 – 3842)	402
2010-2020 Additional Households (1,533 – 1388)	145

Table 1
Population and Residential Projections – Updated with 1% Growth

2025 Projections	
2025 Projected Population	4,460
2025 Projected Households	1,611
2010-2025 Additional population (4,460 – 3842)	618
2010-2025 Additional Households (1,611 – 1388)	223
2030 Projections	
2030 Projected Population	4,688
2030 Projected Households	1,694
2010-2030 Additional population (4,688 – 3842)	846
2010-2030 Additional Households (1,694 – 1388)	306

b. Parks, Playgrounds and Land for Athletic Fields Needs Assessment

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards suggest a guideline of 6.25-10.5 acres of park and recreation per 1000 residents. The Town of St Joseph has previously set guidelines of 12.5 acres of park and recreation per 1,000 people. The 12.5 acres per 1000 people guideline can be broken into an equal ratio between active parkland and open space. Using those guidelines and based on the 2010 census, the Town should have 48 acres of park. The Town currently has direct access to 41 acres of park land as follows: 29 acres in the Town Hall Park, 1.5 acres in the Nelson Farm Road Park, 10 acres at Houlton Elementary and 0.5 acres at the Perch Lake Boat Landing. In addition, the City of Stillwater's Kolliner Park is accessible to residents by water only at this time. Finally, 80 acres in Homestead Parks (St. Croix County) and 1,600 acres in Willow River State Park are within the Town but are owned by other governmental entities and require fees upon entry.

The town has these surplus acreages from County and State fee for service parks, however, these do not support the need for free public access to active and passive recreation.

Additional parks have been proposed in the 2006 Comprehensive Plan to provide recreation opportunities for the residents of St. Joseph. The Town intends to use land dedication and St. Croix River Crossing mitigation funds to obtain land for park purposes.

Continued development and improvement of the local park facilities will be important to meeting local park needs. If the town continues to grow at its expected rate, there may be a need for additional facilities, i.e. ball fields, additional trails, etc. The Town should focus its efforts on providing park facilities at local parks.

III. EXISTING RECREATION AREAS

The following map indicates the location of existing recreational areas.

Map of Existing Parks in the Town of St. Joseph

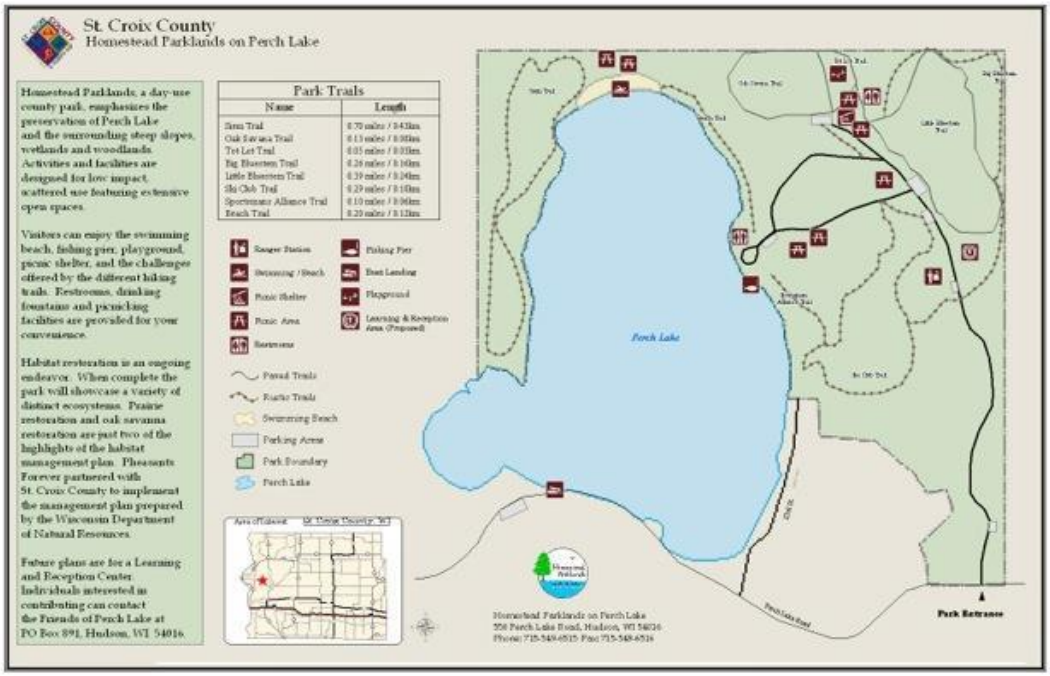
The first step in developing a recreation-planning program involves the inventory of the community's recreation facilities. The inventory includes an estimate of acreage of publicly and privately owned properties developed or designated for public recreational use. It includes an analysis of the number and condition of existing facilities and of land development potential for parks within the community.

The Town of St. Joseph is bordered to the west by the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway and to the southeast by the Willow River.

Willow River Falls in Spring and Winter

Willow River State Park is located partially in the Town.

Homestead Parklands on Perch Lake is a St. Croix County Park located entirely within the Town.



Map of Homestead Parklands on Perch Lake

Facilities in Homestead Parkland on Perch Lake

Both parks have a user fee and are heavily used by both residents and visitors.

Bass Lake is located almost entirely within the Town but has no public access within the Town. The rivers and lakes are major components of the area's attraction to homeowners. The recreational use of the rivers and lakes is very high.

The Hudson School District's Houlton Elementary School is located within the Town. The playground and ball fields are available for public use during non-school functions. (See Table 2 for information on how to schedule a group.) The Town of St. Joseph Outdoor Recreation Plan supports and endorses the Houlton Elementary Outdoor Learning Space Plan. (See Reference A).

The town directly provides only two recreational facilities to its residents, the Town Park located south of the Town Hall and the Perch Lake Boat Landing. There are extensive recreational opportunities within the town, but these are state, county or privately operated.

TOWN OF ST. JOSEPH OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

A description of the town's recreational areas follows.

Table 2
EXISTING PARK/TRAIL FACILITIES IN THE TOWN OF ST. JOSEPH

Name	Acres	Access	Facilities
St. Joseph Town Hall Park	29	Public	Softball/Little League Baseball diamond, benches, bleachers, and upper parking lot; picnic shelter and tables; playground equipment; hiking trail; restroom facilities
Houlton Elementary School playground and outdoor learning facility	10	Public	Two log, playground structures, ball field with backstop & basketball hoops. To schedule group activities, contact Hudson School District Office. 715-377-3722.
Settler's Glen Hiking Trail	~1.5 miles	Public	Hiking Trail - No other facilities – No parking
St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail (4.5 miles) in both MN & WI	~2 miles	Public	Under construction. Completion date 2017. Parking available.
Nelson Farm Road Park	1.5	Semi-Public	Undeveloped open space.
Bass Lake Boat Landing, north end of the lake, in Town of Somerset	350 .5	Public	Landing and parking lot. County maintains.
Homestead Parklands on Perch Lake	80	Public, County Park User Fees	Swimming beach, playground, hiking trails, picnic shelter, handicap accessible fishing pier, canoe and boat rental facilities, and scuba diving. County Maintains.
Perch Lake Boat Landing, south end of the lake	43 .5	Public	Landing for non-motorized boats, parking lot, port-a-potty & waste receptacle. Town maintains.
Willow River State Park	1,680 of 3,200	Public State-Park User Fees	Lake, trout stream, boat launch, picnicking, 120 camp sites, bath house & swim beach, nature center, parking, restrooms, hiking trails, sightseeing & passive recreation areas, sliding, rock climbing, , handicapped fishing piers, hunting, canoe, kayak and water craft rental & cross-country skiing. DNR maintains & operates.

Table 2
EXISTING PARK/TRAIL FACILITIES IN THE TOWN OF ST. JOSEPH

Name	Acres	Access	Facilities
Game Unlimited	760 of 827	Private	Licensed shooting preserve. Members-only.
Kolliner Park, City of Stillwater West of Houlton on the St. Croix	49	Access by water only	None
Bicycle Routes	County Highways E, A & I.		
Snowmobiling Routes	Southeast section of town. Local clubs maintain.		
Scenic Routes	Trout Brook Road also known as Rustic Road 13.		

IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES/POLICIES and ACTION PLAN - Parks and Open Space

The following goals and objectives/policies, which could be adopted by the Town, represent the ends to which the proposals in this plan are directed. These goals and objectives/policies will provide a sound basis for future planning decisions in the communities with regard to outdoor recreation.

a. Goals – Parks and Open Space

1. To create a balance and variety of **PASSIVE and ACTIVE** recreational opportunities to meet the needs of all age groups.
2. To identify, acquire, develop, maintain and retain land for active and/or passive outdoor recreation purposes, for the conservation and protection of scenic, threatened, environmentally sensitive, historic, natural or cultural resources and native natural areas.
3. To preserve and protect wetland, areas of significant natural resource and ecological sensitive areas from new development.
4. To provide for, in addition to St. Croix County passive recreational facilities, active recreational facilities which are convenient and safe for children as well as adults.
5. To obtain, when opportunities arise, sites for future parks, playgrounds, etc.
6. To preserve and protect land uses adjacent to existing community parks and playgrounds.
7. To provide opportunities for rural residents to enjoy the community's parks and recreation areas.
8. To coordinate the community's recreation program with the programs of other levels of government and with private enterprise to ensure maximum public benefit.
9. To provide access and adequate parking for streams and lakes and public recreation areas.
10. To provide for the recreation needs of people with physical and mental disabilities in the community.
11. To preserve and protect scenic areas of unique and natural beauty within the community.

b. Objectives/Policies - Parks and Open Space

1. Assess the recreational needs of the community to determine the popularity of a multi-use playing field complex.
2. Acquire land for a Town park along the Lower St Croix, adjacent to or close proximity to existing State, Town or County parks. Acquire lands in close proximity to Perch or Bass Lake watersheds. Acquire lands adjacent to or in close proximity to Preservation Residential or the Natural Resource Corridors as identified in the Town of St. Joseph Comprehensive Plan and the St. Joseph Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Plan.
3. Work with other governmental entities in both Minnesota and Wisconsin to pursue an appropriate recreational use for Kolliner Park located on the St. Croix River where the Stillwater Lift Bridge makes landfall in Wisconsin;
4. Pursue the development of playground equipment and picnic areas in undeveloped park space.
5. Protect designated open space from land development to enhance recreation opportunities and protect wildlife habitat.
6. Create an event space featuring an amphitheater or large shelter in a community park.
7. Encourage the creation of new neighborhood or mini parks within new developments or as stand-alone entities.
8. Pursue the development of restroom buildings in the park system.
9. Ensure the new and existing park equipment is accessible and ADA compliant.
10. Create a consistent signing policy for all parks and trails, including directional and informational signs.

c. Action Plan - Parks and Open Space

1. St. Joseph Town Park

History

The original town park property, consisting of 10 acres, was purchased in 1978 with a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Part of the park site was used for a new town hall, fire station and parking area. In 1981, a ball field was built using town park funds. The ball field is maintained by the town and used extensively by town residents and surrounding communities. Other projects completed include the installation of bleachers at the ball field and the construction of a sign identifying the Town Park site.

In 1995, with aid from a second DNR grant, 24 acres of adjacent land was purchased and added to the Town Park. This land included wetland and upland areas.

Town Hall Walking Trail

In 1996, with assistance and support from the DNR and Pheasants Forever, approximately 15 acres were seeded using native prairie grasses and flowers. The prairie and wetland areas provide habitat for wildlife. In 2012 a boardwalk was installed on the trail over a swampy section of the trail. See map below.

Map of Town Hall Park

Town Hall Picnic Shelter and Playground

Plan

The Town Park is the center of many community activities. Development of this facility should continue. Improvements to the park will be planned and implemented as funds become available, as outlined in Table 3. To avoid high maintenance, costs alternatives, such as contracting for services and part-time help, should be considered.

Table 3

TOWN PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Improvement Project	Features
Informational Kiosk	Sign to provide information on local flora and fauna.
Horseshoe Pits	Sand pit base & wood backstop
Double Volleyball Court	Standards, net and sand pit base
Hiking/Cross-Country Skiing Trails	Handicapped accessible to connect play areas, picnic areas & fields, with boardwalk to observe wetland areas.
Winter Activity	Sledding Hill, Ice Rink
Boardwalk	Educational boardwalk across wetlands
Landscaping	Shade trees & bushes
Increased Parking	Pavement (consider pervious surfaces), directional & speed signs, handicapped parking spaces, parking stops, trellis for shade and screening & bicycle racks. Identify old school site with signage.
Parking Lot Screening	Evergreen Trees and bushes

2. **Nelson Farm Road Park**
   The Nelson Farm Road residents should be encouraged to provide passive recreation for the neighborhood. Give consideration to this site being a mini park.
3. **Perch Lake Boat Landing and Parking Lot**
   Significant improvements need to be considered and made to the parking lot. These include management of water run-off, erosion control, invasive species control and maintaining the existing parking lot. Create new, safe pedestrian access and crossings from the parking lot to the boat landing. Consider acquiring land to replace the existing boat landings, provide an additional boat landing or expand existing boat landings to add shoreline fishing and create additional parking, picnic facilities, possibly through coordination and partnership with the DNR and St. Croix County.
4. **Bass Lake Boat Landing**
   Although the landing is not in the Town, access to the lake, which is largely within the

Town, is via this landing. Supporting further improvements in collaboration with other governmental entities is encouraged.

5. **Future Park Sites**

   The Town should establish a program for future land acquisition and funding for park sites using a Natural Resources Inventory. The Town's Parks, Trail and Recreation Committee, Plan Commission and Town Board should

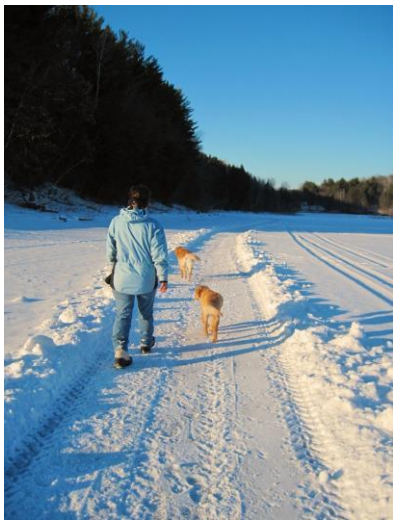
carefully examine new subdivisions looking for suitable land to purchase for neighborhood and community parks. The Town should evaluate all sites for future residential development needs so that adequate parks are provided for future generations. The Town should consider identifyingi sites with unique natural beauty and accessibility, which would make excellent parks.

6. **Community Destination Park I**
   Provide a community destination park such as a public lake swimming beach/playground area or pavillion.
7. **Community and Destination Park II**
   Develop an additional 20 acres or more of active or passive recreational facilities adjacent to or in close proximity to existing State, Town or County parks. These active facilities could include, but are not limited to, a multipurpose playing field (10 + acres), sand volley ball courts (.25 acres), tennis court (.25 acres), an amphitheater (1 acre), and horse shoe pits..
8. **Neighbor hood or Mini Park**
   Develop future neighborhood or mini parks of approximately 2 acres or more located among residential neighborhoods. These parks could include a playground, basketball half court, open playing field and picnic areas. There is a need for local and accessible facilities conveniently located within neighborhoods and within walking distance.

9. Historical Resources/Trails
Integrate historical resources into the Trail System.

V. GOALS, OBJECTIVES/POLICIES and ACTION PLAN - Hiking, Biking, and Other Trails

The trail system should be an integrated loop system, connecting the Willow River State Park, the County Homestead Parklands Park, and the Loop Trail of the St. Croix River Crossing, Town of St. Joseph Parks, and adjoining communities' trail systems, especially the Town of Somerset, the Town of Hudson, and other points of interest. Benches / rest areas / viewing sites / landscape plantings should be incorporated to unify the look of the trail system. Trail connectivity should be a primary consideration when determining trail locations.



a. Goals - Hiking, Biking, and Other Trails

1. Provide an accessible and interconnected loop trail system that links parks, open space, and points of interest.
2. Provide trail facilities that are scenic, provide a satisfying recreational experience and are in harmony with the Town's natural resources.
3. Create multipurpose trail corridors where uses are compatible.
4. Create trails which connect with other communities' trail systems and which connect with recommended St. Croix County trail corridors.
5. Work with other governmental entities to determine who is best suited to accept ownership of the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail from the Historic River Bridge to the new river bridge.

b. Objectives/Policies - Hiking, Biking, and Other Trails

1. Create a list for the development of the designated trail system.
2. Acquire land or property easements to continue the development of the trail system.
3. Develop pathways in roadway rights-of-way as roads in the community are improved.
4. Provide off road trails whenever possible since these are safer and more pedestrian and user friendly than those along roadways.
5. Develop trails so that the residents in the Town are no more than 1 mile from a hiking/biking trail.
6. Designate the use of snowmobile and horse trails to help maximize the safety

of trails for all users.

7. Minimize the removal of trees, shrubs and other vegetation to preserve the natural beauty of the area when constructing bicycle and pedestrian trails in wooded and wetland areas.
8. Trails should be located within a 20' easement if possible.
9. Trails should be 8'-10' wide, and made of bituminous material, if possible.
10. To the extent economically and physically feasible, create American Disabilities Act compliant accessibility.

c. **Action Plan - Hiking, Biking, and Other Trails** (See Map after Item 8)

1. **River Road (From State Highway 35 to County Road I)** An off-road hiking/biking bituminous trail could be constructed from State Highway 35 to County Road I along the River Road corridor. This will connect the Willow River State Park with the Loop Trail of the St. Croix River Crossing assuming the connection of a trail along State Highway 35 from River Road to the Loop Trail of the St. Croix River Crossing.

   To achieve this, the Town of St. Joseph needs to work with St. Croix County and the State Department of Natural Resources to secure a Federal Transportation Enhancement Grant which could fund up to 80% of the construction costs. In addition, a 50/50 matching DNR grant should be secured to fund the remaining balance.

   Application for this Federal Grant may be available in January of each year with an application deadline of approximately May 1.

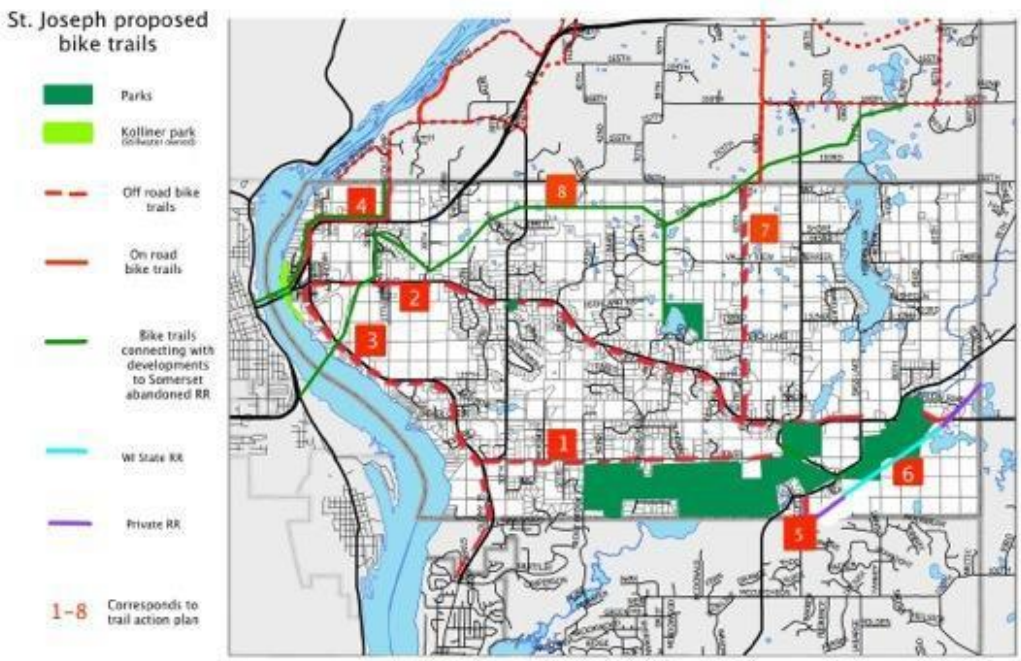
2. **County Road E (From the St. Croix Crossing Loop Trail to County Road A to the eastern Town of St. Joseph line.)**
   Encourage and support St. Croix County to upgrade the bicycle route on County Road E to an off-road trail/paved shoulder, where possible, from the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail to Homestead Parklands on Perch Lake and eventually to the bicycle route on County Road A from Hudson to New Richmond. Additional trail underpasses may be necessary to connect to the Loop Trail near Houlton School. We believe it is very important to connect the Houlton School with the Town Park located at County Road E and County Road V. This can be funded by WisDOT, DNR, and County budgets.

3. **State Highway 35 (From the St. Croix Crossing Loop to the Town of St. Joseph town line with the Town of Hudson)**
   As improvements are made to Highway 35, encourage WisDOT to develop an off-road bicycle/hiking path from the St. Croix River Crossing Loop Trail to North Hudson. This allows for connectivity to the hiking/biking River Road Trail. (#1 above) This can be funded by WISDOT and DNR budgets.

4. **Anderson Scout Camp Road to Loop Trail (From Town of St. Joseph/Somerset Town line to the Loop Trail)**
   As road reconstruction takes place on the portion of State Highway 35 that is turned over to the Town of St. Joseph, a biking/hiking trail connecting the Town of Somerset to the Loop Trail could be constructed. This gives access to the Town of Somerset directly through the Town of St. Joseph to the Loop

Trail. Mitigation funds could be applied for reconstruction of this segment of road to include an off-road biking/hiking connecting trail.

5. **Scott Road (From County Road A to the Town of Hudson)**
   A hiking/biking on-road trail could be constructed on the short portion of Scott Road that is in the Town of St. Joseph. This connects the on-road bike trail to the Town of Hudson. This can be achieved by striping the road to join the striping already in place on Scott Road in the Town of Hudson. The cost could be borne by the Routine Maintenance line of the Public Works portion of the Town of St. Joseph budget.
6. **Former Railroad bed in the Southeast corner of the Town of St. Joseph**
   The St. Croix County Outdoor Recreation Plan contains an action plan to develop an off-road trail on the former railroad bed from Hudson to Willow River State Park and eventually to New Richmond. A small part of this enters the Town of St. Joseph. This trail is currently used in the winter by snowmobilers. Either acquisition and/or long term easements will be needed. There are a few landowners/residents of the Town of St. Joseph who will need to be contacted concerning possible land acquisition and/or long term easements. Since the snowmobile clubs may currently have easements, investigation of these current easements is necessary. Funding of the possible acquisition and/or long term easements could be provided for by the DNR and County budgets.
7. **60th Street (From Town of Somerset Line to County Road E)**
   The Town of Somerset currently has an on-road trail from the city of Somerset on County Road I heading south. When it reaches 160th street it no longer follows County Road I, but it heads south on 63rd Street due to safety considerations. An on-road hiking/biking trail is much safer on a less traveled road. After a small jog westward, it meets up with 60th Street in the Town of St. Joseph. Heading South, 60th Street passes the Bass Lake Cheese Factory, Perch Lake Road, near to Homestead Parklands, and then to County Road E near the Willow River State Park. This is a desirable hiking/biking trail. Unfortunately, 60th Street has no bituminous shoulders. A 5' on-road bituminous shoulder would be ideal for this hiking/biking trail. Funding for this could be from Mitigation Funds.
8. **Potential Off Road Hiking/Biking Trail (From 60th Street at the Town of St. Joseph town line to the north and Settlers Glen)**
   This 6 mile stretch, of which a portion was an abandoned railroad, could potentially be a non-bituminous hiking/biking trail. Much work would be needed to acquire land and/or long term easements. However, due to its uniqueness, it could be a very desirable amenity to the Town of St. Joseph. Stops and rest areas along this route could include bird watching or other wildlife viewing stations because of its meandering path and lack of development along its path. Acquisition and/or long term easements could be funded by Mitigation Funds and DNR 50/50 land acquisition monies.



Map of Proposed Hiking and Biking Trails

The trails shown in the grey areas on the above map which are NOT located within the Town of St. Joseph are depicted for the purposes of showing potential connections to surrounding communities and may not currently exist nor be public trails in the communities.

VI. PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

The following park types and standards are recommended for consideration when parks are developed.

1. MINI PARKS

Description: Mini Parks offer specialized facilities that serve a centralized or limited population or specific group such as young children or senior citizens. These parks may include limited play equipment, small field games (horse-shoes or shuffleboard), landscape plantings, benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, trash containers and signage. These parks could be owned either by the Town, by a neighborhood Home Owner's Association or by a commercial property on a case by case basis.

2. COMMUNITY PARKS

Description: Community parks are intermediate in size and are able to accommodate visitors from the surrounding community and multiple neighborhoods. These parks offer both passive and active recreational opportunities available for the entire community, such as large recreational spaces, playgrounds, picnic areas, multiple trails, nature study, picnic shelters, restroom facilities and special uses that provide community destinations.

3. TOWN-SCHOOL PARKS

Descriptions: Joint Town-School parks allow for shared uses and benefits for a wider section of the public. While schools use the facilities during daytime weekday hours, sport associations and the public may use the facilities during the evenings and weekends utilizing the park to its full potential. Example Houlton Elementary School

4. DESTINATION PARKS

Description: Destination Parks provide a unique attraction for the community and visitors. These parks offer a special single-purpose destination. These parks vary in size and add a distinctive resource to the fabric of the park and trail system.
Example Willow River State Park and Homestead Park

5. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS -

Description: Neighborhood Parks provide passive and active recreational needs for neighborhood residents. They should be accessible to a wide variety of user groups living in close proximity to the park. These parks typically would not provide organized athletic programs but could include play equipment, game areas (half-court basketball, informal play fields), benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, trash containers and signage,. The site for a neighborhood park should contain natural features, i.e. views, shade trees, etc. that provide a pleasant outdoor experience. These parks could be close to trails and designated open space to expand the function of all types of spaces. These parks should not function as a private parks.

6. COMMUNITY PLAY FIELDS Community play fields are designed for athletic activities providing facilities, space and parking for organized sports. These playfields may be a stand-alone park or part of a community park or school athletic facility. These play fields may include sport fields (baseball, soccer, football, etc.), ice rinks, volleyball/tennis/basketball courts, small play equipment, internal trails, equipment buildings, concession building, benches, water fountains bike racks, trash containers and signage. Consideration should be given to sites with level terrain with good drainage.

7. OPEN SPACE/NATURAL PARKS – Open Space/Natural Parks contain high quality natural resource areas, i.e. lakes, wetlands or woodlands, as identified on a Natural Resources Inventory. Recreational uses are secondary to preservation of natural open space and conservation of the area's amenities. Recreational uses could include hiking, picnicking and nature study. Facilities should be minimal but could include trails, parking, benches, bike racks, trash containers and signage. Size depends on the natural resources

VII. **TRAIL STANDARDS** Trail specifications are located in the Chapter 149 of the *St. Joseph Town Code* and the accompanying plates.

VIII. FUNDING METHODS

1. Public and private partnerships
2. Obtain open space through land dedication or conservation easements
3. Property tax
4. State or Federal grants
5. St. Croix River Crossing Mitigation Funds
6. General funds
7. Potential to increase both Residential and Commercial land dedication fees
8. Referendum funds dedication

IX. TOWN ACTION PLAN

1. Develop and codify standards for parks.
2. Develop park management plan.

3. Develop a Park Survey to determine resident's interests/needs for park facilities.
4. Develop grant writing team to oversee applications for development and maintenance funding.
5. Consider the possibility of a referendum to fund park activities.
6. Work cooperatively with surrounding communities, St. Croix County, WisDNR, local landowners and others to implement this plan to make the most of the available resources.
7. Review and update plan as required or needed.

X. DEFINITIONS

Recreation, Active – Organized recreation facilities such as tennis courts, swimming pools, skateboard parks, motorized sports, i.e. snowmobiling or organized league sport facilities, i.e. baseball diamonds, soccer fields.

Recreation, Passive – Outdoor, nature based facilities such as shoreline fishing, boating, picnicking, walking/hiking trails, biking trails, swimming beaches, and nature observation/study.

Trails, off road – Off road trails are independent of a road surface. These trails may be in close proximity to but physically separated from the road surface or these trails may be located some distance from a road or some combination of the two methods.

Trails, on road – On road trails are trails that are part of the road surface/shoulder.

REFERENCE A

Houlton Elementary School Outdoor Learning Space Plan

Although attached and referenced hereto, it must be noted that the Houlton Elementary School Outdoor Learning Space Plan is not officially a part and parcel of the Town of St. Joseph Outdoor Recreation Plan and it is attached as reference material since it is endorsed and referenced in this document on page 5.

Houlton Elementary School Outdoor Learning Space Plan

Our Mission:
Houlton Elementary School students, staff and families learn, care and grow by working together thinking deeply, and caring for our community.

Background

Houlton School is one of five K-5 elementary schools in the Hudson School District. It is located in Houlton, which is an unincorporated burg in the Town of St. Joseph. The school has a stable enrollment and in some ways has the feel of a country school (an active farm with cattle is directly south and across the road from the school). The school sits on 15 acres north of CTH E with woods/houses on the west and fields of corn and alfalfa on the north and east.

The site today includes some patches of prairie, a river rock pile, a small observation platform, a small ball field, some miscellaneous play equipment, two perennial beds, and two raised bed vegetable gardens. The St. Croix River Crossing will include an access highway just east of the school site. This may provide opportunities for expanding the role of the site and needs to be explored in the context of the planning process.

Introduction & Purpose

Houlton Elementary School and St. Joseph Township residents will benefit from improving the use of their outdoor space. Houlton is in need of an update to reflect the dedicated and innovative staff and students attending this school and to continue to meet the needs of a growing and vibrant township community. The Houlton Outdoor Learning Space Committee, with the help of the University of Wisconsin – River Falls Site Design students and their instructor, Dick Thompson, has initiated the development of a five-year plan to this end.

The purpose of the Outdoor Learning Committee's plan is to create a guideline for project development, implementation, and installation of an expanded outdoor learning area. The plan will help to organize and prioritize projects among collected ideas and goals while also providing estimated costs, issues, and planned locations for each project. The plan will be updated annually to address any additional issues of the learning space. The plan is but a small piece within Houlton School's goal of enhancing the learning space for students as well as striving to be an integral part of the surrounding community now and in the future.

Opportunity

The school has very active parent/volunteers and a dedicated and innovative staff. The Outdoor Learning Space Committee consists of 12 members, four student members,

four adult community members and four staff members. This committee oversees planning for the outdoor spaces.

The plan includes a number of recommendations to enhance the learning opportunities and usability of the surrounding outdoor space. With the issue of child-hood obesity as a background, the school sees the need to provide quality outdoor activities to encourage children to use the spaces more, especially children and families who live nearby.

Stakeholders

The major stakeholders for this project are the students, staff and parents of the Houlton School. Secondary stakeholders include the Hudson School District, Houlton/St. Joseph community and the general public.

Site Inventory - Land

Houlton Elementary School resides on 15 acres of land. There is approximately 9 acres of usable open space to develop proposed facilities.

The type of soil on the Houlton property varies from loam to sandy loam. According to the soil study by the UWRF group, all levels of nutrients that help plants grow effectively are sufficient, except for potassium. The potassium levels are considered low. The soil test also recommended adding a small amount of nitrogen, along with a small amount of phosphorus. It is recommended that these nutrients are replaced each year.

The property is fairly flat, with a gentle slope from the northwest corner of the lot. There is a depression that runs east to west in the middle of the lot, a slope just east of the school building, and a depression next to the existing greenhouse. There is a drainage pipe located in the depression next to the greenhouse, as well as east of the school building.

Land use immediately adjacent to Houlton include farmland and a single-family subdivision. Immediately east and south of the property is now owned by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, in preparation for the highway (St. Croix River Crossing Project) that will begin to be constructed in spring of 2013.
Vegetation on the site includes flowers (perennials and annuals), vegetables, and prairie plants. The UWRF group identified the following vegetation:

- Black-eyed Susan – a common plant that is tough and reliable. It is yellow in color and stands from 1-3 feet in height.
- Aromatic Aster – a prairie plant that is home to dry areas. This plant is violet and reaches about 1 foot in height.
- Dotted Blazing Star – this plant attracts butterflies and is an excellent addition to prairies. It is pinkish to lavender in color and is about 1 foot tall.
- Little Bluestem – this prairie grass thrives on drier soil and is blue in the spring and red in the fall. This grass reaches from 1-3 feet in height.
- Whorled Milkweed – a slender prairie white plant that reaches about 1 foot tall.
- Purple Prairie Clover – this prairie plant thrives in loamy soil and attracts butterflies and bees. It reaches 1-2 feet in height and is purplish pink in color.

Ash and Burr Oak are also located on the site.

REFERENCE A

Houlton Elementary School Outdoor Learning Space Plan

Man-made Structures

Two soccer fields are located in the northwest portion of the lot, as well as two lacrosse fields in the central northern area of the property. A baseball field is just south of the soccer fields. Just north of the school building are exposed septic access pipes. There are two wooden playground structures and a set of swings, as well as a sand digging area. There is also a short basketball court with four square and another painted activity area on the blacktop west of the school building.

REFERENCE A

Houlton Elementary School Outdoor Learning Space Plan

Potential Costs & Funding Sources

Facility / Equipment	Estimated Cost (Equip/Labor)	NOTES
Low Rope Challenge Course	$250 - $2,000	
Weather station	$90	
Tree House	$5,000 - $15,000	
Benches/Bleachers	$500 - $1,500	
Handball court	$1,000 - $5,000	
Seasonal green house	≥ $5,000	Expanded Green House
Rain Gardens	$5 - $25 per sq ft	
Rain Barrels	$100 - $300	Donated
Picnic Tables	$500 - $1,000	Catalog
Circle of Logs/Fire Pit	$500 - $1,000	
Fitness Trail	$6,000	Annual Maintenance
Labeled Raised Beds	$100 - $250/each	
(Koi) Pond	$500	

In-kind, parent, and student help is expected to cut down on costs of hiring professionals to complete the proposed facilities and equipment. Do-it-yourself projects will be encouraged not only to decrease costs, but also to encourage teamwork and a sense of community while these projects are being completed. Fundraisers and grants will also aid in covering the costs.

Conclusion

This site plan will serve as a reference to develop future facilities and the outdoor learning space surrounding Houlton Elementary. With the continued help of volunteers, district staff, and the Houlton and St. Joseph township communities, this development plan will enhance the learning of generations of students and families.