

# **PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WEST SHORE OF GREEN BAY**

**PUBLIC ACCESS SITES ALONG GREEN BAY  
FROM MARINETTE TO HOWARD, WISCONSIN**

**JUNE 2005**

**PREPARED BY:  
BAY-LAKE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**







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## PREFACE

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### CONTENTS

The *Public Access to the West Shore of Green Bay* report contains a preface, six chapters, a bibliography, a glossary, and an index. The preface offers background information on the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, environmental corridor mapping projects they have undertaken, and explains the purpose and funding for the report.

Chapter 1 provides an understanding of public access and a brief description of the project area. Information about how the areas in question were categorized as public and an explanation of the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map the project area has been included.

Chapter 2 provides specific information about each inventoried public access site and a summary of the findings from the study.

Chapter 3 provides information on public access policy. An overview of the public trust doctrine at the federal and state level and a description of local efforts such as the WDNR Basin Management Plans to preserve public access and recreational opportunities have been included in this section.

Chapter 4 describes the values and benefits of public access and having an inventory of such sites. In addition, the chapter presents some economic advantages associated with public access to waterways.

Chapter 5 describes some of the threats associated with public access.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter of the *Public Access to the West Shore of Green Bay* report. It provides an evaluation of the project, including a discussion on data availability, inventory limitations and issues, and the limitations discovered in attempting to acquire historical records. This chapter also discusses the enhancement potential present at some of the inventoried public access sites and methods to improve those sites.

For ease of use, a bibliography, a glossary, and an index have been included at the end of the document.

### BACKGROUND

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission was created in April 1972 under section 66.945 of the Wisconsin Statutes as the official area-wide planning agency for northeastern Wisconsin.

At the request of seven county boards within the region, Governor Lucey established the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission by Executive Order 35. In December 1973, Florence County joined the Commission, bringing the total number of counties within the region to eight.

The Commission serves a region in northeastern Wisconsin consisting of the counties of Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, and Sheboygan. The Bay-Lake Region is comprised of 185 units of government: 8 counties, 17 cities, 39 villages, 120 towns, and the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. The total area of the region is 5,433 square miles or 9.7 percent of the area of the State of Wisconsin (Map 1). The region has over 400 miles of coastal shoreline along Lake Michigan and Green Bay and contains 12 major watershed areas that drain into the waters of Green Bay and Lake Michigan.

The official Wisconsin Department of Administration 2004 population estimate of the region is 574,623 persons or 10.4 percent of the State of Wisconsin's estimated population of 5,532,955 people.

Map 1: Bay-Lake Region



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

As development in coastal areas increases, many of the original public access points to the bay of Green Bay are lost due to development or conversion to private lands. Moreover, in the Green Bay West Shore area, those public access points that still exist are not marked or markings are not clear, and disputes occur when sportsmen make use of the access points for hunting or fishing purposes. Oconto County has indicated that they receive questions from sportsmen on a regular basis about the status of road-ends and other access points. An inventory and assessment of the access points will allow officials to determine how many access points are available for the public to use.

### **PURPOSE**

This inventory will provide residents, visitors, and local officials with information about publicly accessing the waters of Green Bay. The information was presented through a report and maps indicating the number and location of access points and any threats or opportunities that might exist for the site. The project will provide local and county officials with information on how they can continue to provide their citizens with access to the bay. The report will provide recommendations on measures to preserve access sites, as well as how to ensure access is provided in the future.

The inventory of public access sites enhances the awareness of local officials about the importance of maintaining access to Green Bay for the public to appreciate and enjoy. The report developed from this project was distributed to each of the nine municipalities and three counties within the study area for their information and use and is available from the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC).

The *Public Access to the West Shore of Green Bay* project had the following goals:

- Develop a GIS and tabular database of public access sites to Green Bay.
- Provide the public with information on the location and use of these public access sites.
- Provide local officials with information on preserving and/or enhancing these sites and additional public access opportunities.

## **FUNDING**

The *Public Access to the West Shore of Green Bay* project was funded in part by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP). The WCMP is part of the Wisconsin Department of Administration and receives financial assistance from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The WCMP was established in 1978 to preserve, protect, and manage the resources of the Lake Michigan and Lake Superior coastline. All funds provided by the WCMP were equally matched by Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission.



# **CHAPTER 1 : PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE WEST SHORE OF GREEN BAY**

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## **WHAT IS PUBLIC ACCESS?**

The state of Wisconsin holds ownership to all beds of natural lakes in trust for the public. Those who own land adjoining the waterbody have title to the land above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). The Wisconsin Supreme Court has defined the OHWM as “the point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the water is so continuous as to leave a distinct mark either by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other easily recognized characteristic (WDNR, 2005).” It is important to understand that the OHWM is a permanent mark that does not change with temporary fluctuations in water height. It is not imperative that the area between the OHWM and the water’s edge be navigable in order to be used freely by the public. However, private interests must follow the law when accessing public waters. Private property owners that hold lands adjacent to the water body have exclusive rights to the exposed lakebed below the OHWM, and the public must be granted permission to access these areas. However, the public holds the right to use any navigable body of water for the purpose of navigation, including boating, swimming, hunting, fishing, or other recreational activity. Furthermore, any lands that are held by a government body (i.e., Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, a town or municipality, the National Park Service, etc.) are deemed for public use unless otherwise specified by law (WDNR, 2005).

## **Determining Public Access Status**

Public access points were distinguished from private areas by first addressing plat books which describe tracts of land by ownership, size, and location. After each of the sites were investigated and thoroughly photographed, each county land records office was visited to ascertain if the areas were indeed public. Various county records verified current and historic ownership status.

## **PROJECT AREA**

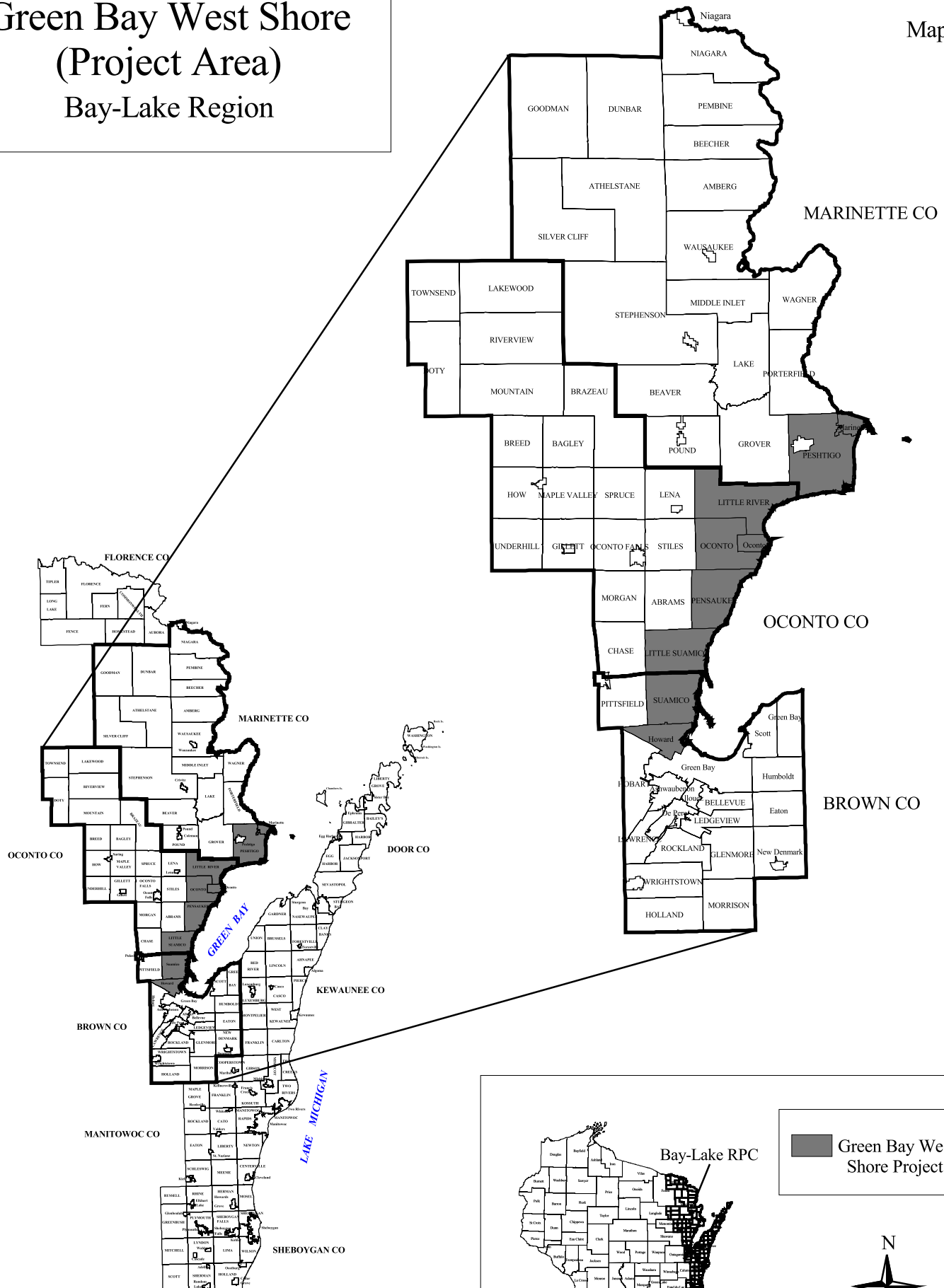
The project area identified for this study included the region commonly referred to as the “Green Bay West Shore”, which covers the western shoreline of Green Bay from the city of Marinette in Marinette County, through Oconto County south to the village of Howard in Brown County (Map 2). Specifically speaking, the project area covered the city of Marinette (Map 3), and town of Peshtigo (Map 4) in Marinette County; the city of Oconto (Map 7), and the towns of Little River (Map 5), Oconto (Map 6), Pensaukee (Map 7), and Little Suamico (Map 8) in Oconto County; and the villages of Suamico (Map 9) and Howard (Map 10) in Brown County.





# Green Bay West Shore (Project Area) Bay-Lake Region

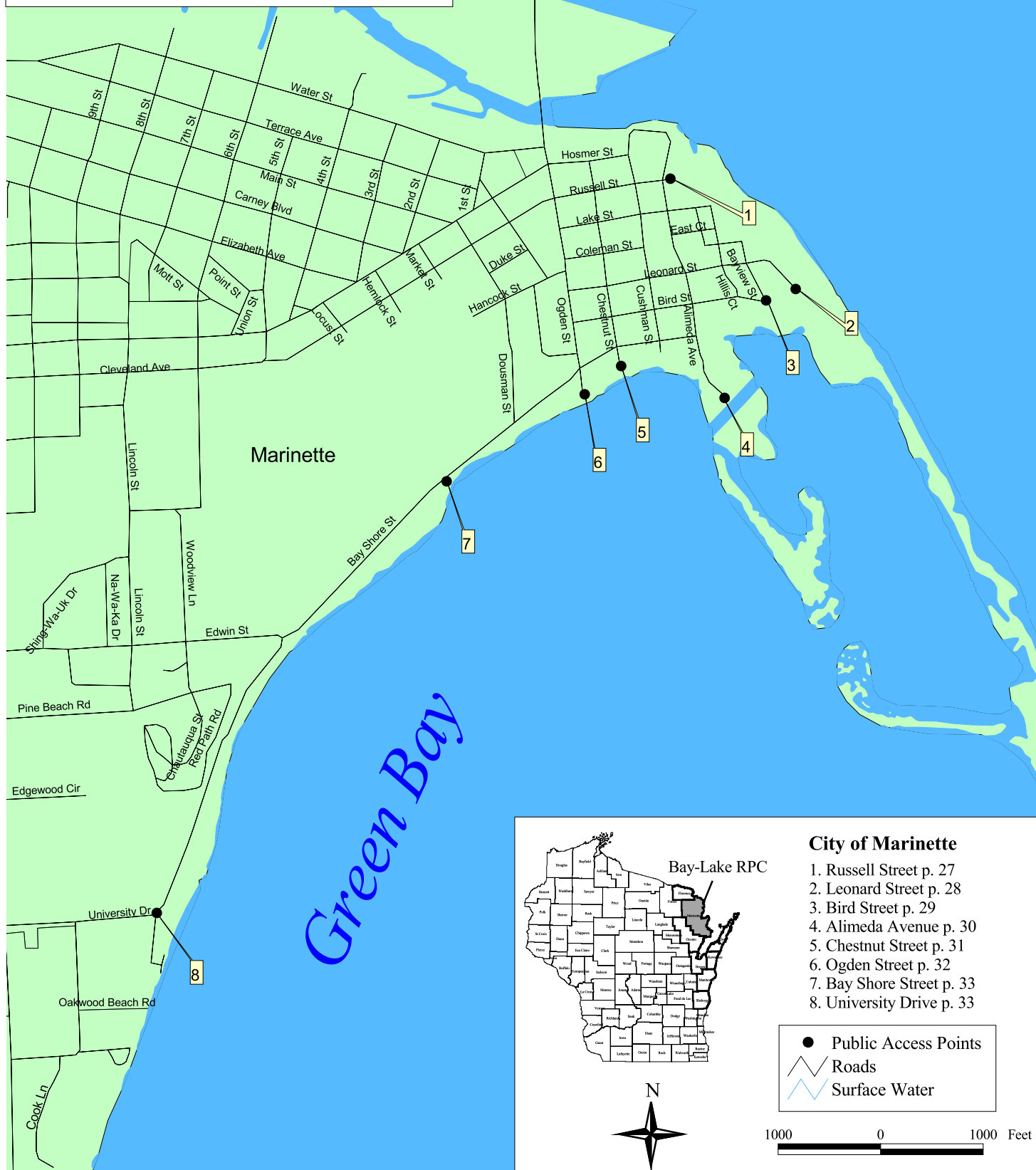
Map 2





# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay City of Marinette Marinette County, WI

Map 3



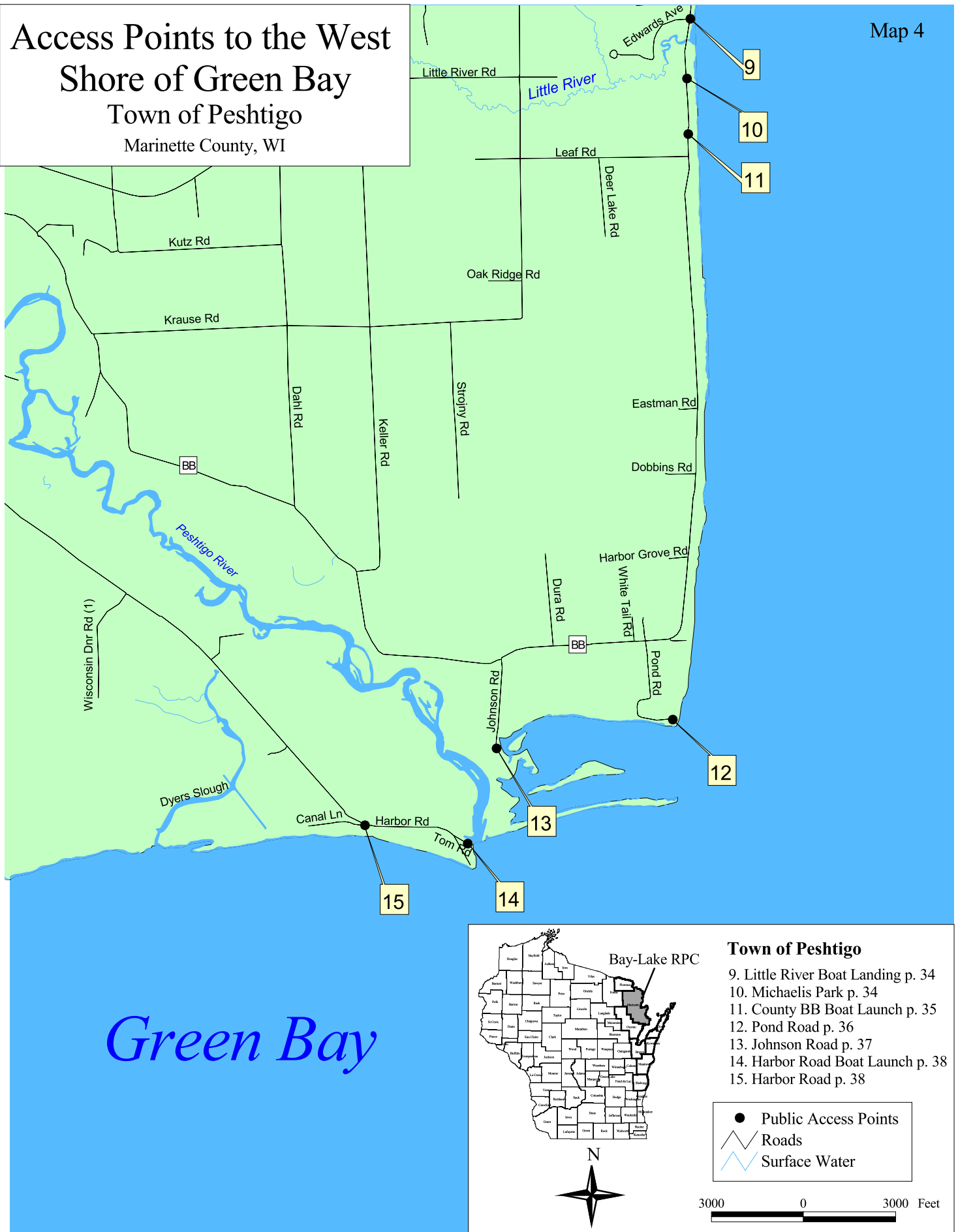
q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
Source: WDNr; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.





# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay Town of Peshtigo Marinette County, WI

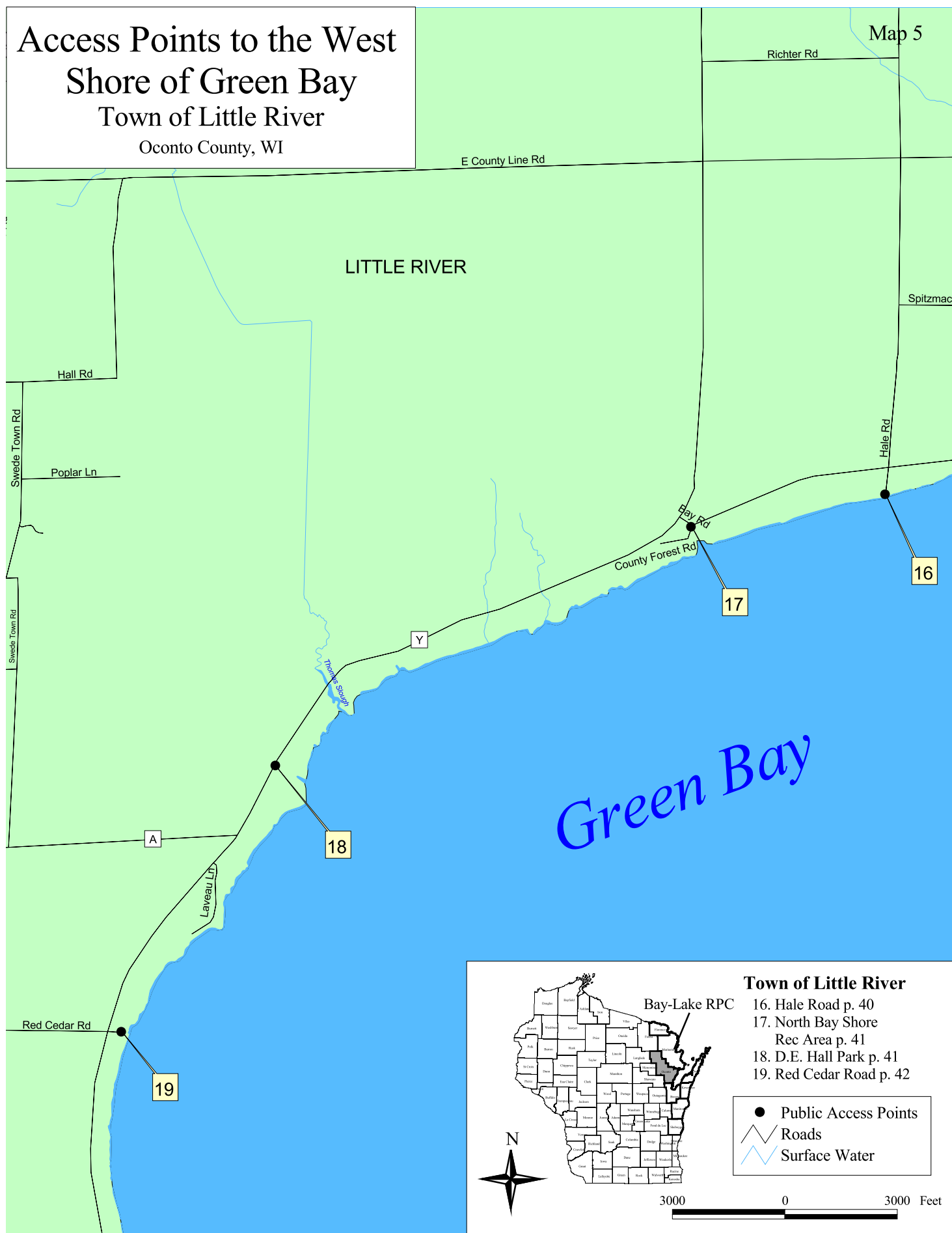
Map 4



q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.



# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay Town of Little River Oconto County, WI



q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.

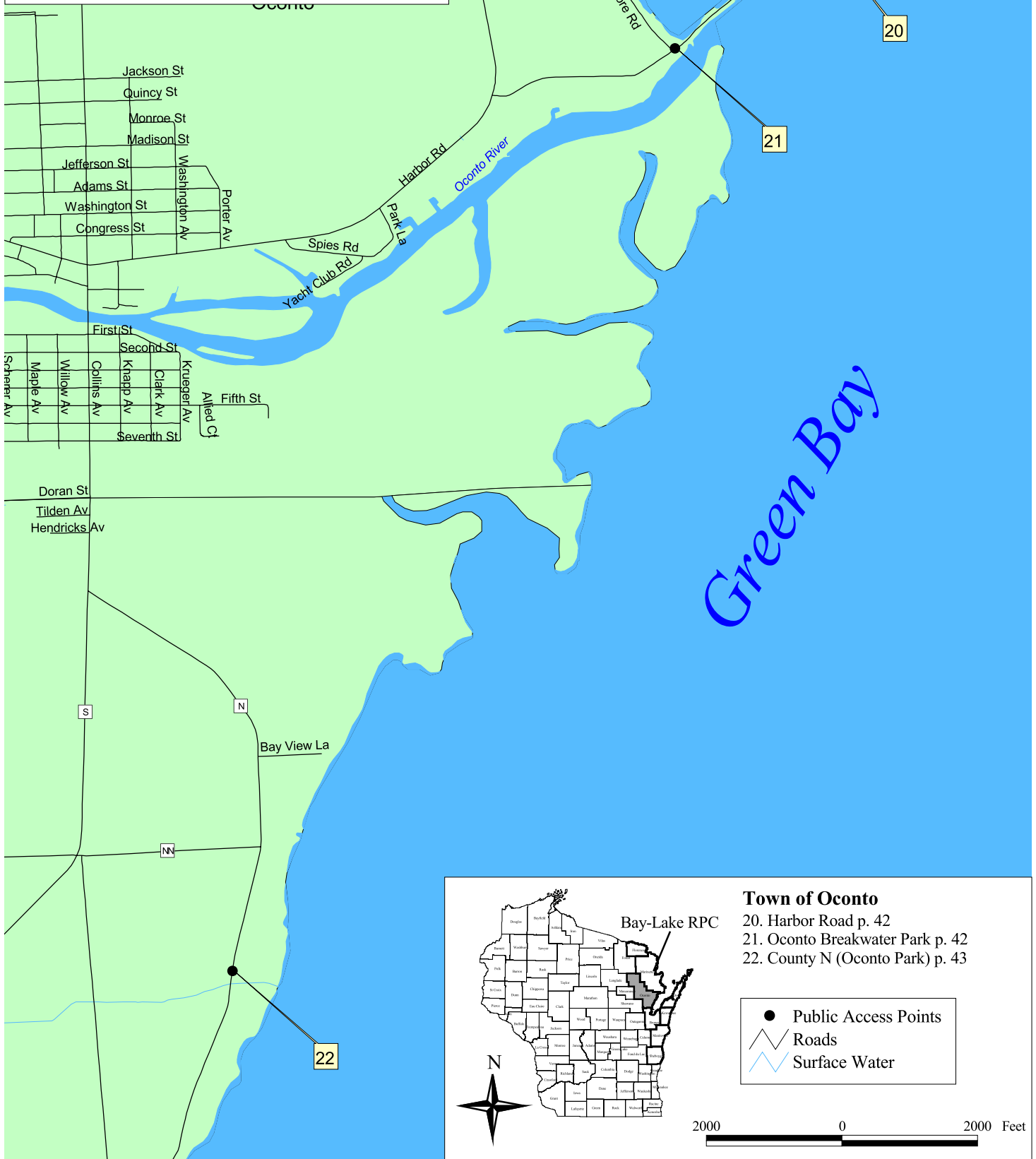


# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay

Town of Oconto

Oconto County, WI

Map 6



q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
 Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.



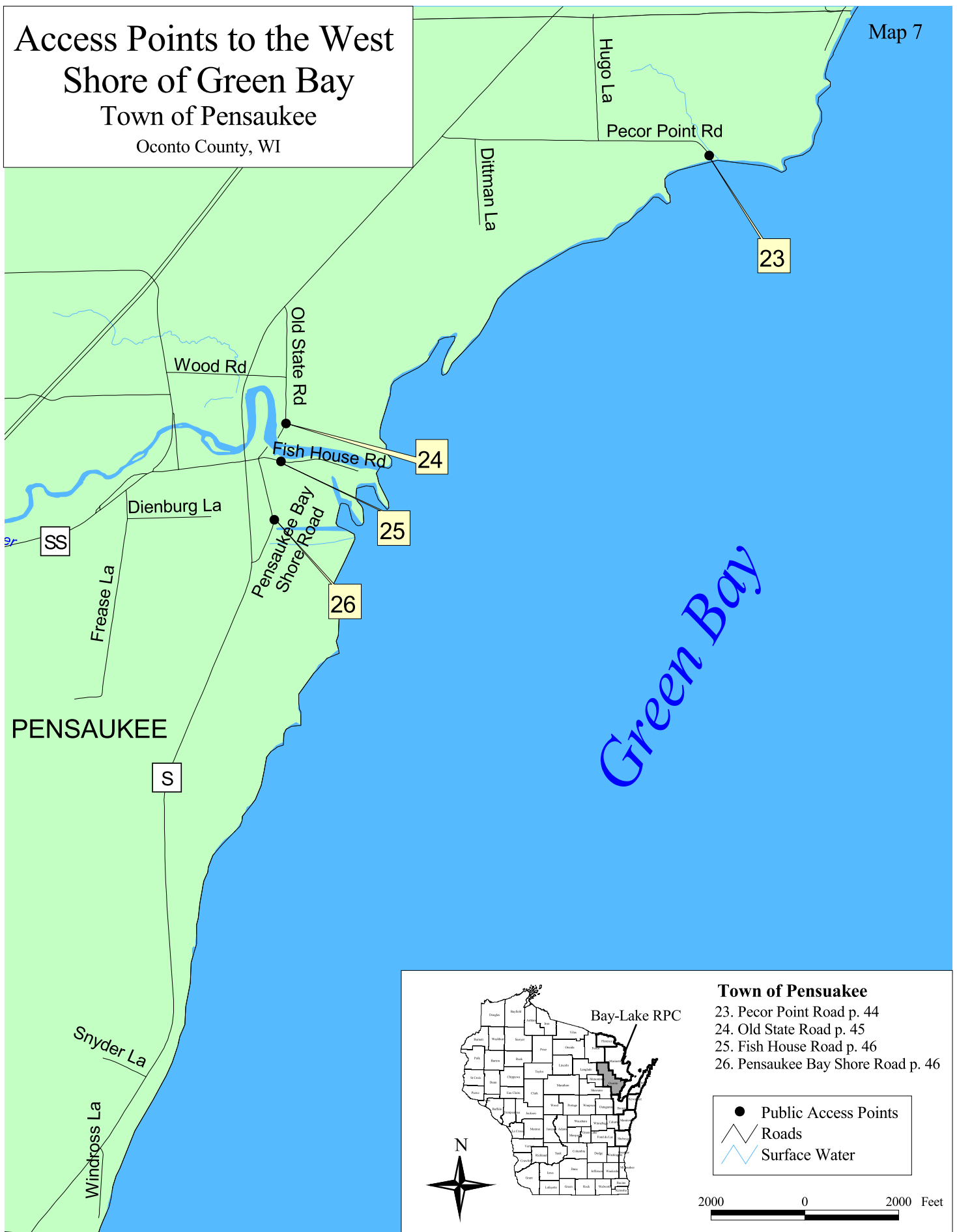


# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay

Town of Pensaukee

Oconto County, WI

Map 7



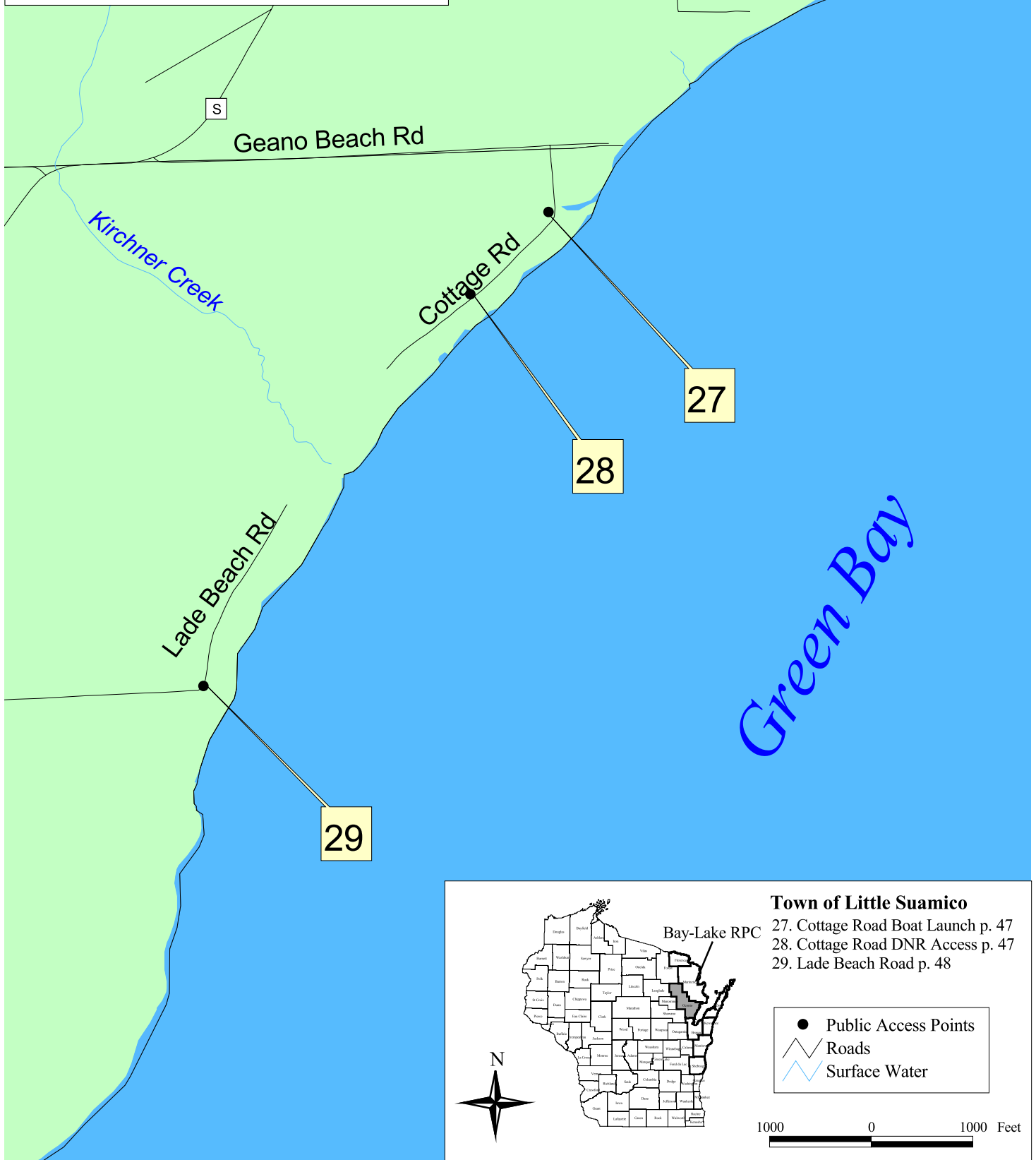
q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
 Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.



# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay Town of Little Suamico

Oconto County, WI

Map 8



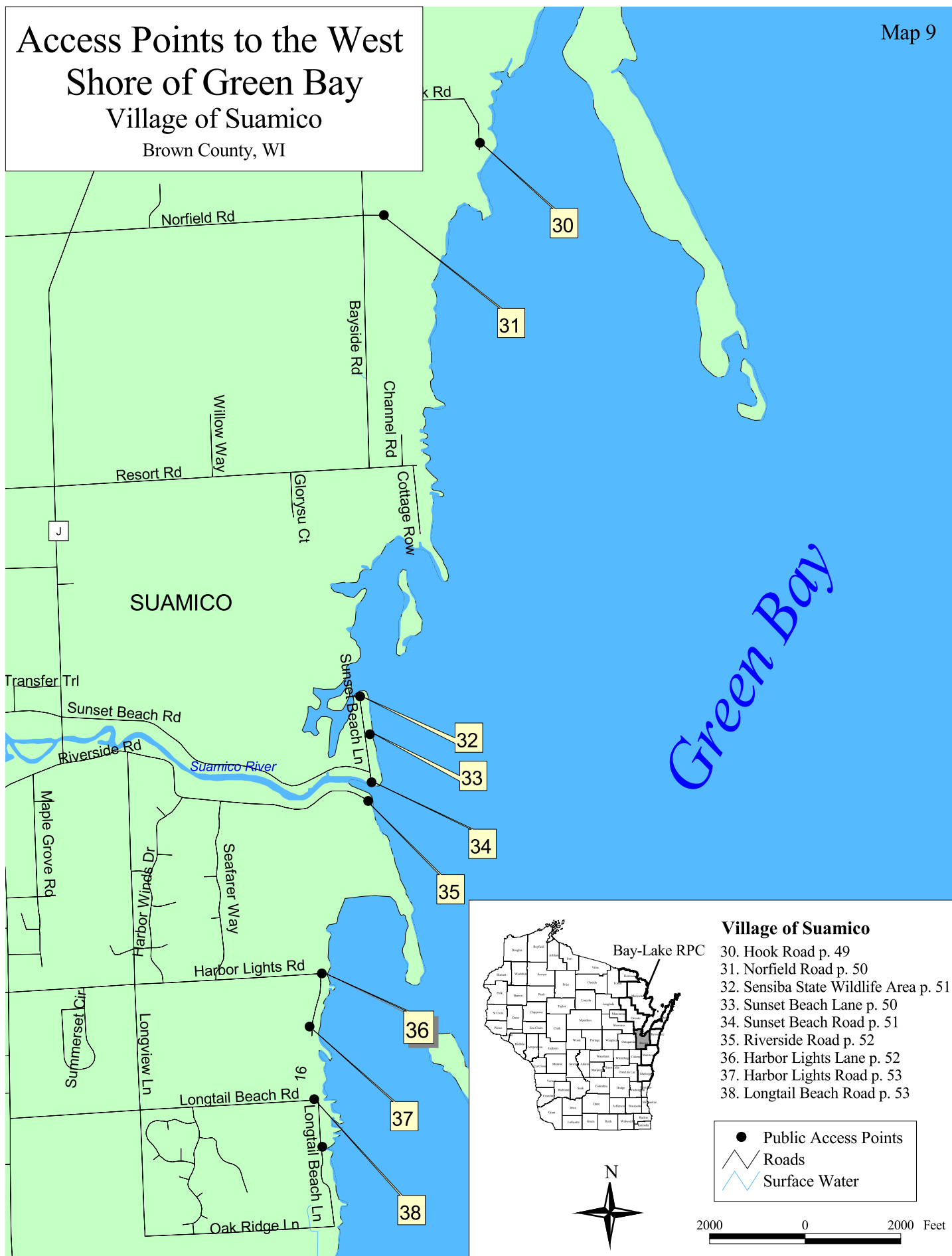
q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
 Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.



# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay Village of Suamico

Brown County, WI

Map 9



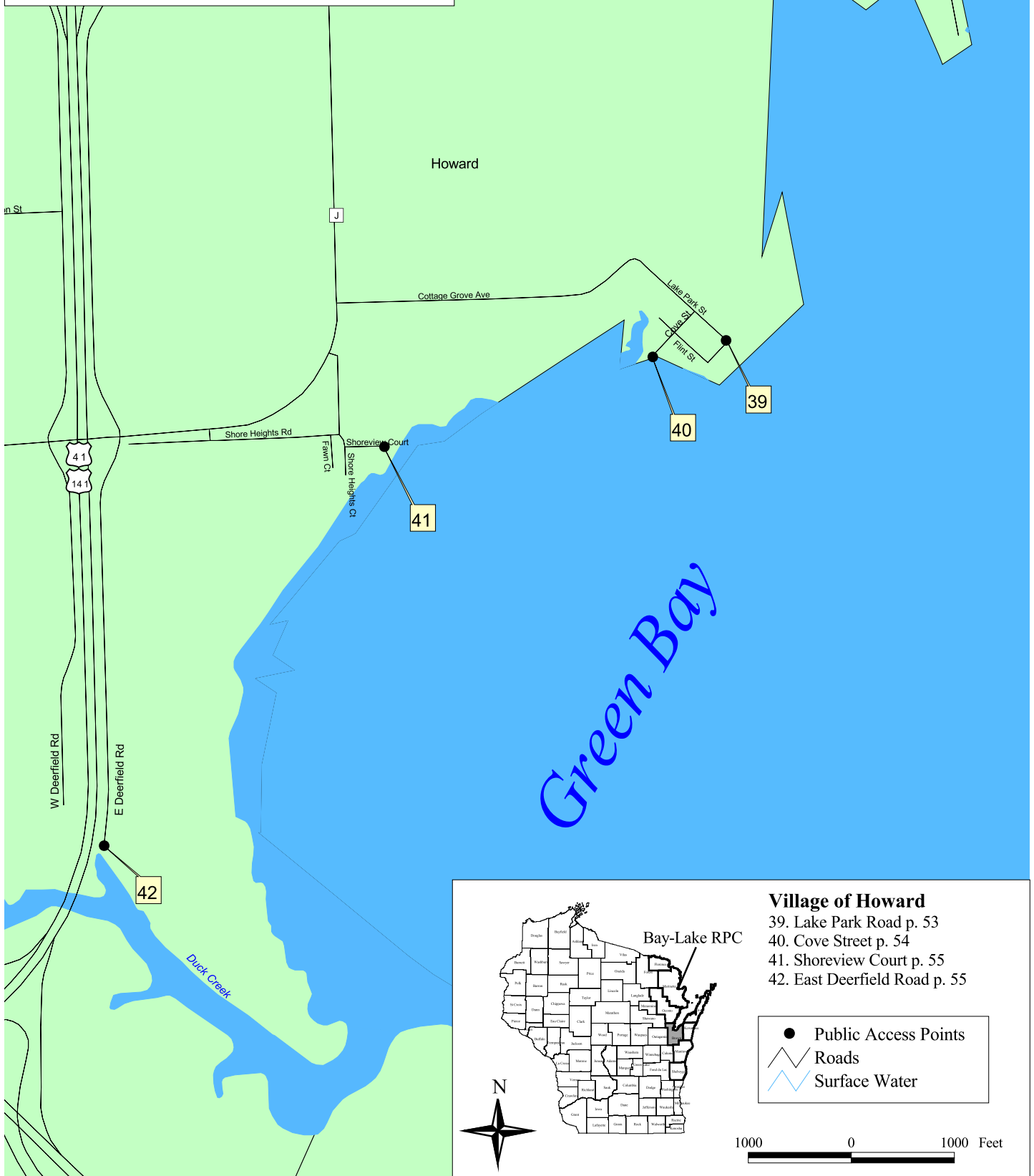
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 Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.





# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay Village of Howard Brown County, WI

Map 10



q:/myfiles/region/roadend/roadend.apr  
 Source: WDNR; WisDOT; Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2005.

## **SCOPE OF PROJECT**

Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (“the Commission”) inventoried and evaluated access points to Green Bay along the West Shore. This effort required the Commission to identify the locations of any undocumented access points in order to conduct a public access inventory.

The public access inventory involved a field inventory of each public access site to evaluate the physical characteristics and document the site through a photographic survey. The Commission then conducted a review of local government records for the communities within the project area to identify roads and other public access sites to the bay of Green Bay within the project area and determine the current public status of these access points.

The outcome of the process was a detailed inventory that evaluated the status and condition of existing public access points along the Green Bay West Shore. The Commission also produced a GIS and tabular database of the West Shore public access sites. A technical report detailing the status of each site and making recommendations for preserving or improving public access sites was developed and distributed to the counties within the study area, and made available to the public and other agencies or local officials.

## **INVENTORYING ACCESS SITES**

In order to determine possible access sites along the West Shore of Green Bay, an extensive field inventory was conducted. Initially, plat books for Brown, Oconto, and Marinette counties were reviewed in order to ascertain which roads would provide possible opportunities to access Green Bay. Web maps (listed below in the section on “County Web Mapping Sites”) of Brown and Oconto County were also utilized to predetermine the status of the parcels. All roads that were determined to have a possibility of providing access to the water were then driven. Identification of possible access points included those points that provided foot trails, possible parking areas (including gravel and paved), boat launches (for both small and large craft), and other recreation areas. Each site along the roads that appeared to provide some point of access were photographed and a detailed description was written. Items that were documented included the type of access that was provided at the site, an assessment of the surrounding area (i.e., natural areas, residential, woodlands, etc.), the size of the access point, and any signage that was found at the site.

## **RESEARCHING ACCESS SITES**

City and county offices that hold land information were visited in each location to review such records as parcel ownership information, town and city platting records, gas tax maps, highway maps, and subdivision plats. This allowed for the identification of roads and other public access sites to the bay within the project area and determining the current public status of these access points.

In Brown County, the Land Information Office was consulted to verify the status of each Brown County road. Certified survey maps (CSM) were first viewed to determine if the roads were originally intended to go directly to the water. CSMs depict situations in which large plots of land are divided into four or less lots. Town board meeting notes were also consulted for the same purpose. Tract books were then used to establish the history and current ownership of each parcel. Tract books depict the first sale of the land from the federal government to private landowners. They also describe the physical description of the parcel, ownership changes, and

lien information. When this information was not available in the tract books, GIS parcel information was consulted. Copies were made of all maps, records, and notes that were utilized and all resources were accurately documented.

The Land Information Office in the Oconto County Courthouse was visited for further research. Each parcel in each county has a permanent record and a tax key number. Large county maps were used to find the tax key number of each site in question, which was then used to access the ownership status via the AS400 computer system, which is an application system used to retrieve property information. Available deeds were pulled and printed to apply to the working inventory of road end sites. There was less of a need to access historical data in Oconto County because the county maps and AS400 system clearly delineated the areas as public or private, and provide ownership history for each parcel.

The Marinette County Surveyor's Office was used to research the northernmost roads. Property ownership maps from 2002 were utilized to determine public access. Deeds were used to determine ownership status when the property ownership maps were not available. CAD maps were utilized in the city of Marinette zoning office, and city employees were interviewed regarding the status of all roads within the City of Marinette.

As the study progressed, research methods were often adjusted to accommodate the availability of information. Each county or city office was organized in a different manner, with a range of different resources available for public use. As the research effort moved north, the process was streamlined, and fewer resources were needed to find the same information.

## **MAPPING ACCESS SITES**

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program recognize the importance of mapping community assets, which include natural resources important to northeastern Wisconsin. All roads leading to Green Bay were researched and documented thoroughly, facilitating the development of a detailed GIS base map. An important component of this particular project included consulting existing internet mapping sites made by individual communities to assure the quality of our product was consistent with local geographic features. An inventory of public access sites with a clear and concise map and written report will enable communities to make better-informed planning and management decisions regarding its recreational needs.

## **Methodology**

In order to provide organized data to residents, visitors, and state and local officials, the mapping process began with creating an ArcView 3.3 Geographic Information Systems (GIS) project of the Commission's West Shore study area. The study area encompassed the entire shoreline of Oconto and Marinette Counties and continued south through the town of Suamico in the northwestern part of Brown County. The GIS data layers ("themes") utilized for this project included Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT) roadways, county roadways, orthophotography, county parcel information, WDNR 24K Hydro data, and county boundaries. These themes were layered over the West Shore study project to provide a comprehensive database. Counties, critical access roads, and major water bodies were labeled using county land-use web maps to ensure labeling accuracy. The web links to these maps have been provided at the end of this section. The public and private access points encompassed within the study were identified and labeled accordingly. Map layouts were created for each village and township to

provide enhanced detail of access roads and rivers along specific segments of the West Shore. ArcView was utilized to design a GIS project of all of the access points along the entire West Shore project area. Several maps were created for each municipality along the West Shore. The GIS and tabular database of public access points has been presented in ArcView 3.3.

The report and maps created from this study were distributed to Brown, Oconto, and Marinette counties in digital format as a portable document file (PDF) written to a compact disc (CD). The report and maps are available in hard copy form by contacting the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission. The GIS data layers are available as well.

### **County Web Mapping Sites**

Brown and Oconto counties have provided online maps for public and private use. Brown County utilizes ArcIMS (Internet Mapping Service), which allows users to pan, zoom, and access a collection of geographic features. Oconto County also utilizes ArcIMS in a system called SOLO (Search Oconto County Land Information Online). Maps may be printed directly from these sites.

- Brown County: [http://www.co.brown.wi.us/Land\\_Information\\_Office/IMS.htm](http://www.co.brown.wi.us/Land_Information_Office/IMS.htm)
- Oconto County: <http://solo.co.oconto.wi.us/ocontoco/>
- Marinette County did not have a web-mapping site available at the time this report was developed.

## CHAPTER 2 : GREEN BAY WEST SHORE PUBLIC ACCESS INVENTORY

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### **STUDY AREA INFORMATION**

The study area encompasses 290 square miles and more than 91 miles of shoreline within Brown, Oconto, and Marinette counties. Nearly 52,000 people reside in the nine communities within the study area, while more than 282,000 people live in the three coastal counties covered by the study. Currently, several notable tracts of public lands provide access to Green Bay, including Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area, the County Line Swamp, Oconto Marsh, Long Tail Point, and Little Tail Point. The *Public Access to the West Shore of Green Bay* study focused on those sites offering direct access to Green Bay or those that have a single point of access that may face future encroachment.

The West Shore of Green Bay is rich with wetlands, which serve as valuable spawning grounds for sport fish species. A diverse amount of wildlife inhabit these coastal areas, including cranes, terns, turtles, ducks, and other migratory animals. The cycling of nutrients is integral to the life support that coastal wetlands provide. Seasonal fluctuations of the water level ensure the cycling of nutrients and provide fish the opportunity to move inland to spawn and feed. The coastal wetlands are a vital part of their lifecycles, and their survival depends on the ecological integrity of the shoreline. The Lake Michigan Shorelands Alliance, WDNR, and others have identified the Lower Green Bay, the Pensaukee River Wetland Complex, the Peshtigo Harbor Marsh, and Seagull Bar as priority conservation areas. It is imperative that these sensitive areas be protected from increasing development that is currently moving northward from the Green Bay area.

### **GREEN BAY WEST SHORE PUBLIC ACCESS SITES**

The West Shore of Green Bay offers 42 public access sites (at the end of 39 roads) for various recreational uses. The following is a listing of those sites by county, along with many of the photographs taken while inventorying the sites. The public access detailed below, proceed in series from north to south. The TRS-data has been listed for each site. The TRS-data provides the location by the Township (T.), Range (R.), and Section (S.) format used in Plat Books. Much of the listed TRS-data offers north (N), south (S), west (W), and/or east (E) directions as well. The TRS-data is listed in parentheses after each public access site name. Map 12 displays the location of each site and Table 1, at the end of the site descriptions in the “Summary of Findings” section, provides information about specific features offered at each public access site.

#### **Marinette County**

Marinette County contains 15 public access sites at the end of 14 roads along the Green Bay West Shore. The following is a listing of those sites.

##### **Russell Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

At the end of Russell Street, there is access to a paved trail leading to Red Arrow Park. The road end was verified to be public by City of Marinette land records; therefore, the trail can be accessed via this road. However, the site offered no parking (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Russell Street Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Leonard Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

Leonard Street leads to the north end of Red Arrow Park (Figure 2). The park provides picnic areas with barbeque grills as well as ample parking. The Bay is accessible via a small beach area (Figure 3). In addition, the park offers a paved trail leading to the Menominee River (Figure 4).

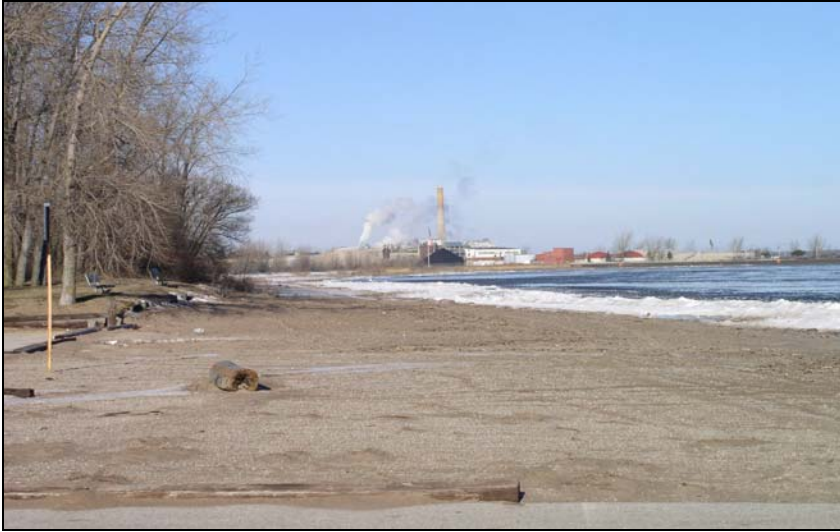
Figure 2: Leonard Street Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.



Figure 3: Leonard Street Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 4: Leonard Street Public Access Site 3



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Bird Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

The southern end of Bird Street leads to Red Arrow Park and the Seagull Bar State Natural Area. The park provides a public boat landing with ample parking (Figure 5) and a variety of other services such as a concession pavilion, playground, and picnic areas (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Bird Street Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 6: Bird Street Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Alameda Avenue (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

At its' intersection with Bay Shore Street, Alameda Avenue turns into a dirt road that becomes hard to navigate as it approaches the Bay (Figure 7). There were foot-trails located all along the road leading to the Bay (Figure 8). Parking was possible along the road, although there was no specific designated parking area. The area seems to be heavily traveled by vehicles including all-terrain vehicles. City of Marinette records confirm that the lands surrounding this road can be used by the public to access the water.



Figure 7: Alameda Avenue Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 8: Alameda Avenue Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Chestnut Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

The southern end of Chestnut Street is a dead-end that leads into the drive of a private residence. The city of Marinette records confirmed that the land that extends directly from the road to the Bay is publicly owned; however, lands lying to either side are privately owned (Figure 9). In addition, no parking is available along the road at any point. The presence of a residential home and other personal property on the land surrounding the road end would likely make a visitor apprehensive about the public status of the access site. Therefore, access to the water via this site is very limited.

Figure 9: Chestnut Street Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Ogden Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.9)**

The southern end of Ogden Street is a dead-end lined with private residences on both sides. A trail extending from the road end provides public access to the Bay, as confirmed by City of Marinette records (Figure 10). There was a sign located on one side of the road that stated, “No Trespassing”. The sign was likely placed for the benefit of the private residence abutting the public access site. However, its position in reference to the site would likely make a visitor apprehensive about the public status of the access site.

Figure 10: Ogden Street Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Bay Shore Street (T.30N-R.24E-S.8)**

North of the intersection of Edwin Road and Bay Shore Road, within property owned by the City of Marinette, a nature walk runs along the northwestern side of the road. At one point, the trail exits out onto Bay Shore Road, then leads to a sidewalk lining the road. Directly across from this exit point there was a trail leading to Green Bay (Figure 11). Parking was available along the side of the road and there were several benches present.

Figure 11: Bay Shore Street Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **University Drive (T.30N-R.24E-S.17)**

There is a park located at the end of University Drive, across from the University of Wisconsin - Marinette property. The park is open from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm (Figure 12) daily with some parking available along the road. Within the park, there was a foot trail leading directly to Green Bay (Figure 13).

Figure 12: University Drive Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.



Figure 13: University Drive Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Little River Boat Landing (T.30N-R.24E-S.30)**

Little River Boat Landing, located directly off County Road BB, provides access to Green Bay via the Little River (Figure 14). The location provided ample parking, restroom facilities, and a foot trail leading to the water.

Figure 14: Little River Boat Landing Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Michaelis Park (T.29N-R.24E-S.30)**

Michaelis Park is located directly off County Road BB. Access to Green Bay by foot is possible although there were no visible trails identified at the time of the site visit (Figure 15). Picnic tables and barbeque grills were located at this site.

Figure 15: Michaelis Park Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **County BB Boat Launch (T.30N.-R.24E.-S.30.)**

Located north of Leaf Road and south of Michaelis Park is a public boat landing, County BB Boat Launch, provided by the Town of Peshtigo (Figure 16 and Figure 17). A private residence closely neighbors this landing, which limits available parking.

Figure 16: County BB Boat Launch Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 17: County BB Boat Launch Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Pond Road ends as a dead-end turnabout that allows access to Green Bay, which is approximately ½-mile away, via foot trails (Figure 18). Marinette County land records indicated all lands surrounding this road end are owned by WDNR and can therefore be used by the public to access the bay.

Figure 18: Pond Road Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Pond Road (T.29N-R.24E-S.18)**

Pond Road is a dirt road that is difficult to travel. However, there is a public boat landing located at the road end providing a large access site with limited parking (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Pond Road Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Johnson Road (T.29N-R.23E-S.13)**

Many public access points to Green Bay were located at the end of Johnson Road by means of walking trails. Some trails were located in close proximity to the water (Figure 20), while others were located ½ to 1 mile away from the Bay (Figure 21). Marinette county land records confirmed that all lands surrounding Johnson Road are owned by the WDNR therefore public access is available at all locations.

Figure 20: Johnson Road Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 21: Johnson Road Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Harbor Road (T.29N-R.23E-S.23)**

Located just east of the intersection of Harbor Road and Canal Lane is the Theodore G. Thompson Recreation Area. The site provided access to the water by foot and may provide boat access at times of high water (Figure 22). There were no signs indicating parking regulations or launching rules. A restroom facility was located at the site.

Figure 22: Harbor Road Public Access Site 1 (Marinette Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Harbor Road ends as a public site offering a boat launch with direct access to Green Bay (Figure 23). A variety of signs providing information on launching and fishing regulations were posted at the site. Two worn foot trails provided access to the water and ample parking was available (Figure 24 and Figure 25).



Figure 23: Harbor Road Public Access Site 2 (Marinette Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 24: Harbor Road Public Access Site 3 (Marinette Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 25: Harbor Road Public Access Site 4 (Marinette Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Oconto County**

Oconto County contains 14 public access sites at the end of 12 roads along the Green Bay West Shore. The following is a listing of those sites and their status at the time of this inventory.

#### **Hale Road T.29N.-R.22E.-S.24.**

The paved portion of Hale Road ends approximately one mile from Green Bay. There was a visible trail leading to the water that appeared to be used primarily by vehicles (Figure 26). Oconto County land records indicated that this land extending to the water is publicly owned. There was no parking available at this site and all lands surrounding the road end are privately owned. Therefore, access via this site is limited.

Figure 26: Hale Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.



### **North Bay Shore Recreation Area (T.29N-R.22E-S.24)**

Located right off of County Road Y, North Bay Shore Recreation Area provides a large public boat launch area with access to Green Bay (Figure 27). A 10:30 p.m. curfew was in effect at this launch. There was camping and picnic sites, fire pits, and other recreational facilities available as well.

Figure 27: North Bay Shore Recreation Area Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **D.E. Hall Park (T.29N-R.22E-S.34)**

D.E. Hall Park is located off the highway approximately one eighth of a mile north of Laveau Lane. The park contains a small boat launch to accommodate small crafts such as canoes (Figure 28). There were no other facilities in the area and parking was limited.

Figure 28: D.E. Hall Park Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Red Cedar Road (T.28N-R.22E-S.4)**

Red Cedar Road comes to a dead-end approximately 500 feet away from the water (Figure 29). Oconto County land records verified that the land extending directly from the road to the water is publicly owned. There was no parking available in this area therefore access to the bay is very limited. All lands surrounding the road are privately owned; therefore, visitors should be careful when visiting the site to ensure only public lands are being accessed.

Figure 29: Red Cedar Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Harbor Road (T.28N-R.22E-S.16)**

Oconto Breakwater Park is located along Harbor Road offering direct access to Green Bay via the Oconto River by way of multiple boat launches located approximately 500 feet upriver (Figure 30 and Figure 31). There were multiple facilities located at the park including a picnic area, vending machines, restrooms, and a restaurant that is open from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. between May and September and from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. from October to May.

Figure 30: Oconto Breakwater Park Access Site 1 (Oconto Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 31: Oconto Breakwater Park Access Site 2 (Oconto Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Harbor Road follows the Oconto River all the way to the bay and ends in a turnabout (Figure 32). This site appears to be a popular area for fishing and there were several garbage receptacles present, as well as signs stating “No cleaning fish here”.

Figure 32: Harbor Road Public Access Site 1 (Oconto Co.)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **County Road N (T.28N-R.22E-S.32)**

Along County Road N, there is access to the water by foot at the City of Oconto Park. It did not look as though launching a boat from this area would be possible (Figure 33). The park contains a playground, picnic tables, fire pits, and volleyball courts (Figure 34). There was ample parking within the park, but no parking was allowed along the road.



Figure 33: County Road N Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 34: County Road N Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Pecor Point Road (T.27N-R.22E-S.6)**

Pecor Point Road ends in a turnabout located about 500 feet from the water. There was access to the water by foot and possibly by boat if the water comes in far enough (Figure 35 and Figure 36). There was a sign located in this area, but it was unreadable. At the time this site was inventoried, there was litter scattered on the ground and even a small fire pit indicating the frequent use this site receives. Oconto County land records confirm that all lands surrounding the road end are owned by WDNR.

Figure 35: Pecor Point Road Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Figure 36: Pecor Point Road Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Old State Road (T.27N-R.21E-S.11)**

On the south end of Old State Road, there is access to the Pensaukee River by foot; however, there was no room to launch a boat and there was no parking in this area (Figure 37). Oconto County land records indicate that the road is publicly owned to the end; however, lands lying to the east and west of the property are privately owned therefore visitors should be careful when visiting the site to ensure only public lands are being accessed.

Figure 37: Old State Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Fish House Road (T.27N-R.21E-S.11)**

The Pensaukee Boat Launch is located on Fish House Road and allows access to the bay of Green Bay from the Pensaukee River (Figure 38). There was ample parking at this location.

Figure 38: Fish House Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Pensaukee Bay Shore Road (T.27N-R.21E-S.11 and S.14)**

A large portion of the southern end of Pensaukee Bay Shore Road was surrounded by WDNR property. There was one well-marked trail entrance about ½-mile away from the road, which may provide access to Green Bay (Figure 39). In addition, this road provided access to the Pensaukee State Wildlife Area, which may provide access to Green Bay at some point.



Figure 39: Pensaukee Bay Shore Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Cottage Road (T.26N-R.21E-S.9)**

There is a privately owned boat landing containing about eight slips located on Cottage Road that could be used by the public for a fee (Figure 40). There is a large gravel parking lot located across the road from the boat landing that provided ample parking.

Figure 40: Cottage Road Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Approximately three quarters of a mile southwest of the boat launch there was a small gravel lot that provided access to the water (Figure 41). Oconto County land records indicated this parcel of land is a publicly owned road therefore this site can be used by the public to access the bay.

Figure 41: Cottage Road Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Lade Beach Road (T.26N-R.21E-S.8 and S.17)**

At the turn in Lade Beach Road, a medium-sized gravel parking lot provided access to Green Bay by foot, but rocks blocked any possible boat launching (Figure 42). Oconto County records indicated that the land that extends directly from the road to the water is publicly owned. In addition, a sign stating, "No Parking Anytime" was located along the road just before the lot, as well as a pedestrian crossing sign. Lands located to the north of the small parking area are privately owned therefore visitors should be careful when visiting the site to ensure only public lands are being accessed.

Figure 42: Lade Beach Road Public Access Site 1



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

The woods lining the right hand side of this road, before the bend, appeared to be light, which may allow people to walk through them and gain access to the water, although there were no visible trails (Figure 43). Public records showed that this area is owned by WDNR.



Figure 43: Lade Beach Road Public Access Site 2



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Lade Beach Road ends as a dead-end and offers no access to the Bay.

### **Brown County**

Brown County contains 13 public access sites at the end of 12 roads along the Green Bay West Shore. The following is a listing of those sites and their status at the time of this inventory.

#### **Hook Road (T.25N-R.21E-S.26)**

At the curve in Hook Road, a visible, manmade trail leads to the water (Figure 44). At the time of the site visit, tire tracks were found leading from the road to the trail. It is possible that this area is being used to access Green Bay with small craft, such as canoes. However, “No Parking” signs are posted on both sides of the road. From the parcel records, it was concluded that this property is owned by WDNR and therefore considered public land. There is no other access available along this road.

Figure 44: Hook Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Norfield Road (T.25N-R.21E-S.6 and S.7)**

Norfield Road turns into a dirt road as it crosses Bayside Road and heads east toward Green Bay (Figure 45); however, the road stops before it reaches the water. There was a “No Trespassing” sign posted at the point where the dirt road ended. Land ownership information indicates that the WDNR owns the property that lies to the northeast of the road, and the land that lies to the southeast is privately owned. No parking was available in this location.

Figure 45: Norfield Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Sunset Beach Lane (T.25N-R20E-S.24 and S.13)**

The south end of Sunset Beach Lane was a dead-end that leads to private driveways on each side. Land ownership information indicates that the land, which extends directly from the road to the water, is publicly owned. There was no parking available in this area, which would limit any public access via the road end.

North of the intersection of Sunset Beach Road and Sunset Beach Lane there was a parcel of land that provides access to the bay of Green Bay (Figure 46). There was ample parking available at this spot; however, there was a very old sign posted that indicated that the beach was closed. According to parcel ownership information, the Village of Suamico owns this property.

Figure 46: Sunset Beach Lane Public Access Site (North)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

The north end of Sunset Beach Lane dead-ends and allows access to the Sensiba State Wildlife Area, which is owned by the WDNR (Figure 47). However, there was no parking available in this location. In addition, all lands located on the eastern side of the road are privately owned. Therefore, access to public lands in this area is limited.

Figure 47: Sunset Beach Lane Public Access Site (South)



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Sunset Beach Road (T.25N-R.20E-S.24)**

The Suamico boat landing, which is owned by Brown County, is located on the south side of Sunset Beach Road approximately one half of a mile away from Green Bay. There was ample parking available where this road ends as it intersects with Sunset Beach Lane. Sunset Beach Road ends as it intersects with Sunset Beach Lane.



### **Riverside Road (T.25N-R.20E-S.24)**

Riverside Road ends at the waters edge as a paved parking area that allows public access to the water by foot. There was a sign indicating parking is not allowed one hour before and after sunset. Wisconsin DNR lands to the southwest of this road can be accessed from this parking area (Figure 48). Lands located on the northeast side of the road end are privately owned therefore visitors should be careful when visiting the site to ensure only public lands are being accessed.

Figure 48: Riverside Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Harbor Lights Lane (T.25N-R.20E-S.25)**

Located at the far northern end of Harbor Lights Lane there is a small gravel parking area that would provide sufficient parking for several cars (Figure 49). Located at this site was a manmade trail that allows access to Green Bay by foot. From land ownership records, it was discovered that this property is owned by WDNR.

Figure 49: Harbor Lights Lane Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Harbor Lights Road (T.25N-R.20E-S.24 and S.25)**

Harbor Lights Road ends as it turns and becomes Harbor Lights Lane. There was no evidence present to conclude that the road end was being used to access Green Bay. From land ownership information, it was found that the land, which extends from the road end directly to the water, is public property. In addition, lands lying to the southeast of the road end are owned by WDNR. Therefore, access to the bay would be available via the road end and WDNR lands. There was no official parking area available at this site. It should be noted that lands lying to the northeast are privately owned therefore visitors should be careful when visiting the site to ensure only public lands are being accessed.

### **Longtail Beach Road (T.25N-R.20E-S.25)**

After reviewing county information, it was found that at the end of Longtail Beach Road there is a small tract of publicly owned land, between a boat yard and a private residence, that extended out toward the water (Figure 50). Upon visiting the site, it appeared that this small parcel of land served drainage purposes making access to the water at this site extremely difficult.

Figure 50: Longtail Beach Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Lake Park Road (T.24N-R.20E-S.1)**

Lake Park Road dead-ends approximately three quarters of a mile away from Green Bay. There were several manmade foot trails identified in this area that allowed access to the water (Figure 51). Land ownership documents show that the land, which extends from the road directly to the water, is public property. Furthermore, all land surrounding the road end is owned by Brown County Parks (except a small parcel that lies northwest of the road end) and has been designated as part of the Fort Howard Wildlife Area. Access to the Bay is possible in this location; however, parking is limited to the road, which may limit the number of people that may use the site at one time.

Figure 51: Cottage Grove/Lake Park Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **Cove Road (T.24N-R.20E-S.1)**

Cove road ends in a turnabout that serves as a parking area and a hunting blind for disabled waterfowl hunters (Figure 52). This area was created by the WDNR, Brown County Park Management, Wisconsin Conservation Corp, and the Green Bay Duck Hunters Association to serve disable hunters. The property is part of the Fort Howard Wildlife Area and during the off-season, the area serves as a wildlife observation site and offers access to Green Bay via foot.

Figure 52: Cove Road Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.



### **Shoreview Court (T.24N-R.20E-S.11)**

Shoreview Court is a dead-end with access to Green Bay. There were several trails leading from the paved road to the water, including tracks from vehicles (Figure 53). There were no signs along the road indicating any parking limitations. Upon review of county documents, it was found that the property along this road was surveyed as an entire subdivision in 1924. At that time, the parcels were set according to the low water mark. According to the Brown County Land Information Office, all lands that lie below the high water mark are property of the State of Wisconsin. Therefore, the land that leads directly from the road to the water should be considered public property. However, the public should secure permission from the landowner before accessing areas between private property and the waterbody located below the ordinary high water mark.

Figure 53: Shoreview Court Public Access Site



Source: Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

### **East Deerfield Road (T.24N-R.20E-S.11)**

East Deerfield Road is a frontage road to Highway 41, dead-ends at a large turnabout where parking may be possible; however, there were no signs found on the road indicating any parking restrictions. The turnabout was located approximately 150 feet from the water and access by foot was possible, although there was no evidence of recent access during the visit to the site. Brown County land records show that all lands surrounding the road end are owned by the WDNR.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission completed the study to locate and evaluate existing public access sites along the West Shore of Green Bay (Map 11). The study examined sources of data and identified limitations on the uses and availability of the data, and evaluated the benefits and methods of preserving and improving public access sites.

Table 1 represents a summary of findings from the study. The table lists such information as parking availability, boat ramp facilities, and recreational opportunities available at each site. Parking facilities are entered to reflect the amount of parking that is available. Large parking denotes there is room for five or more cars to park, while small parking areas only have room for

less than five vehicles to park. Restroom facilities at various points differ immensely from modern to those that are more rustic. Those sites that are designated as having a recreation area provide space for various recreational activities, but most often represents a playground. Notes are also included in the table as a way to incorporate information that may not be represented in one of the columns. The numbers listed in the table correspond directly to the location maps that are included within the report. The information presented in Table 1 represents observations and pieces of information that were collected at the time of the study. It is important to note that the availability of resources may change overtime.

# Access Points to the West Shore of Green Bay

Map 11

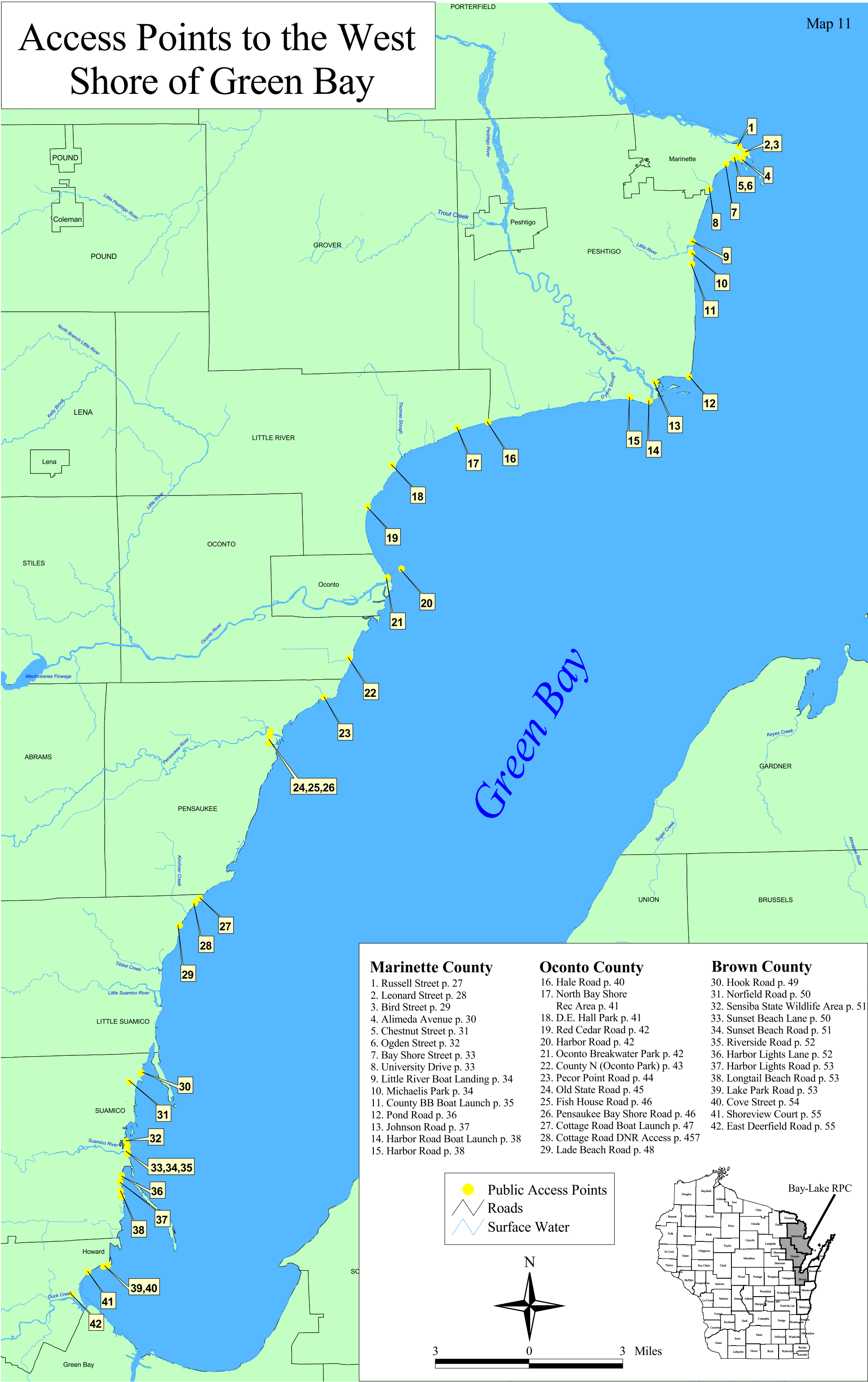


Table 1: Public Access Amenities along the Green Bay West Shore

	Road	Parking Availability (S = Small; L = Large)	Boat Ramp/ Launch	Trails	Beach	Restrooms	Picnic Area	Recreation Area	Notes
Marinette County	1 Russell Street			•					
	2 Leonard Street	L		•	•	•	•		Red Arrow Park, nature trail
	3 Bird Street	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	Red Arrow Park, nature trail
	4 Alameda Avenue	S		•					
	5 Chestnut Street								
	6 Ogden Street			•					
	7 Bay Shore Street	S		•					City of Marinette nature walk
	8 University Drive	S		•					Park open from 7 am - 11 pm
	9 Little River Boat Landing	L	•	•		•			
	10 Michaelis Park	L				•	•		
	11 County BB Boat Launch	S	•						
	12 Pond Road	S	•	•					
	13 Johnson Road			•					Peshtigo Harbor east side
	14 Harbor Road	L	•	•					Peshtigo Harbor west side, fishing
	15 Harbor Road	S	•	•		•			Theodore G. Thompson recreation area, fishing
Oconto County	16 Hale Road			•					
	17 North Bay Shore Recreation Area	L	•	•	•	•	•	•	Camping available, trails for hiking and biking, fishing
	18 D.E. Hall Park I	S	•	•			•		Small picnic area, fishing
	19 Red Cedar Road								
	20 Harbor Road	L							Fishing
	21 Oconto Breakwater Park	L	•			•	•	•	Concessions available, shelters can be reserved for use
	22 County Road N	L			•	•	•	•	City of Oconto Park, fishing
	23 Pecor Point Road	S							
	24 Old State Road			•					
	25 Fish House Road	L	•						Pensaukee Boat Launch, fishing
	26 Pensaukee Bay Shore Road			•					Pensaukee Bay Shore Wildlife Area
	27 Cottage Road	L	•						Boat ramps are privately owned but can be used for a fee
	28 Cottage Road	S				•			
	29 Lade Beach Road	S		•					No parking allowed along the road
Brown County	30 Hook Road			•					
	31 Norfield Road			•					Limited access
	32 Sensiba State Wildlife Area			•					
	33 Sunset Beach Lane	L		•	•				
	34 Sunset Beach Road	L	•						Suamico boat landing
	35 Riverside Road	S		•					Parking restricted one hour before and after sunset
	36 Harbor Lights Lane	S		•					
	37 Harbor Lights Road								
	38 Longtail Beach Road								Access very limited at this site
	39 Lake Park Road			•					Part of the Fort Howard Wildlife Area
	40 Cove Street	S		•					Provides a disabled hunter waterfowl blind
	41 Shoreview Court			•					
	42 East Deerfield Road	S							

Source: County and/or city websites; observations made by the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission; 2005.



## CHAPTER 3 : PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY

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Policies have been established at all levels of government, including non-governmental, dealing with public access to waterways, including federal, state, and local policies.

### **Federal**

The public trust doctrine is a body of common and statutory law that essentially establishes the legal right of the public to use certain lands and waters. The rights of the public are vested in the States by requiring that the States hold all titles to navigable waters in trust, while the federal government acts as the protector of those rights. The principle roots of the federal public trust doctrine can essentially be traced back to the case of *Illinois Central Railroad Company vs. State of Illinois*, 146 U.S. 387 (1892). In 1869, the Illinois legislature had granted away a large portion of the waterfront property in the City of Chicago to the Illinois Central Railroad, but then repealed the grant in 1873. Illinois Central Railroad filed suit to challenge the rescission. In its final decision, the Supreme Court ruled that Illinois officially held the title to the land underlying Lake Michigan that was within the State's boundaries in trust for its citizens. Therefore, Illinois could not give these lands to any other party if the transaction jeopardized the public's rights of navigation and fishing in those waters. Although the precedence of this case sets standards regarding the right of the public to access navigable waters, it does not address lands that can be used to access the waters.

Despite the lack of firm legislation to deal with the issue of how people are supposed to access navigable waters, citizens have historically supported the expansion of federal ownership of lands to be used for recreational purposes. By the mid 1950's, demand for these lands had increased to such an elevated degree that Congress deemed the creation of federal regulation necessary in order to preserve public lands. As a result, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was created in 1965; and has since served as the primary source of funding for acquiring public recreation lands. The majority of federal lands, approximately ninety-five percent, are acquired and managed by four agencies: the Forest Service in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. In addition to providing funding to these agencies, the Land and Water Conservation Fund also provides matching grants to States for the purpose of land acquisition, recreation planning, and facility development. Since 1965, these grants have funded about 38,000 state and local projects leading to the acquisition of approximately 2.3 million acres of land.

In 1972, Congress passed the first Coastal Zone Management Act, which declared "[I]t is the national policy...to encourage and assist the states to exercise effectively their responsibilities in the coastal zone through the development and implementation of management programs...which programs should at least provide for...public access to the coasts for recreational purposes... (§ 1452(2))." Under Section 306A, the Act also required that the coastal and Great Lakes states and territories define a planning process for protecting and providing access to public coastal areas that may have environmental, recreational, historical, aesthetic, ecological, or cultural value.

## **State of Wisconsin**

Article IX, Section I of the Wisconsin Constitution contains the State's version of the public trust doctrine. Under Wisconsin law, the State is the rightful owner of the beds of all navigable waters, with the exclusion of navigable streams up to the ordinary high water mark.

Most litigation involving the land trust doctrine today, results from conflict that occurs between public rights to access navigable waters and the rights of riparian owners. Riparian owners are those that own the land that lies alongside a waterway. Riparian owners are granted certain rights, including the use of the shoreline, the reasonable use of the water, and the right to build piers for navigation. However, according to the public land trust doctrine, these rights are considered secondary to the rights of the public interest in regards to the usage of navigable waters. Although the public land trust does protect the public's right to access navigable waters, it does not require that the public have access to those waters. In the case of *Doemel v. Jantz* (180 Wis. 225, 234 (1923)), the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled that the riparian owner has exclusive privilege of the shore in order to access his land and water. The court ruled that public rights extend only to the water's edge. Therefore, according to the ruling, persons traveling between the ordinary high and low water mark would be trespassing on private lands.

Under section 80.41, *Wis. Stats.*, counties and communities are required to provide for public access and replace public access losses resulting from necessary abandonment. According to NR 1.92(2), *Wis. Admin. Code*, counties or communities seeking to abandon public waterway access must provide a replacement waterway access of equal or better quality and quantity before abandonment can be permitted.

Section 236.16(3)(a), *Wis. Stats.*, states that "All subdivisions abutting on a navigable lake or stream shall provide public access at least 60 feet wide providing access to the low watermark so that there will be public access." Furthermore, section 236.16(3)(b), *Wis. Stats.*, maintains that no public access established under section 236.16 may be vacated, except through circuit court action.

As a way to ensure the right of the public to access all navigable waters, the Department of Natural Resources, along with other municipalities, have, overtime, acquired public access areas along many lakes and streams. Section 23.09(10), *Wis. Stats.*, gives WDNR and other municipalities the right to use state funds in order to acquire "any and all" easements that will augment public access to navigable waters for the use of hunting and fishing and for enjoyment of scenic beauty. Between 2003 and 2004, the WDNR purchased 18,381 acres of land and secured easements on 2,777 acres of land spending a total of \$36 million. As of 2004, the WDNR owns over 1.4 million acres of land with about 90 percent of the land being open for hunting, fishing, and related recreational activities.

Article X, Section 7 of the Wisconsin Constitution, created the Board of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL) in 1848. The mission of the agency is to safeguard State Trust Funds and Trust Lands for the benefit of all Wisconsin citizens. The agency is currently responsible for approximately 80,000 acres of Trust Lands most of which lie in the northern third of Wisconsin, including Marinette County. The agency recognizes that traditional outdoor activities require access to public lands; however, they also acknowledge that access must at times be controlled in order to ensure the long-term productivity of lands for future generations.

In considering natural areas and outdoor recreation preservation, the WDNR produces a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. The SCORP offers a research base and overall guidance document for all providers of outdoor recreation throughout the state. The SCORP also provides direction for developing comprehensive plans required under the Wisconsin Statutes.

### **Local**

The Lower Fox River Basin Integrated Management Plan, which was prepared by the WDNR and the Lower Fox River Basin Partnership Team in 2001, developed a number of specific goals, objectives, and strategic projects for the management area. The goals established in this plan regarding access to fish and wildlife opportunities included ensuring that the recreational public has equal access opportunities to natural resources, improving parking and existing access points on state lands, and using comprehensive plans to address acquisition boundaries to roads thereby simplifying access for the public. The plan also noted the importance of agency participation in public and private planning efforts in order to develop public use and recreation approaches that sustain ecosystem development.

Similarly, the Upper Green Bay Basin Integrated Management Plan, prepared by the WDNR and the Upper Green Bay Basin Partnership Team and stakeholders, lays out goals to improve public access to fish and wildlife opportunities. The plan supports the acquisition, development, and maintenance of public access points for fishing boats and stresses the importance of partnerships with local units of government in building and maintaining these points. It is also stated within the plan the need for the WDNR to ensure that the hunting and angling public have equal access opportunities to natural resources.





## **CHAPTER 4 : VALUE AND BENEFITS OF PUBLIC ACCESS**

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### **VALUE OF PUBLIC ACCESS**

Locations providing public access to navigable waters and other recreational areas offer opportunities for personal, social, environmental, community, and educational benefits. According to University of Wisconsin Extension and WDNR, in their document *Planning for Natural Resources*, lands providing public natural areas fulfill a number of functions including outdoor recreation, outdoor education, buffers, flood and stormwater management, habitat preservation, air and surface water quality improvement, protection of groundwater recharge areas, aesthetics, and providing community focal points.

Outdoor recreation can contribute to an individual's well-being in that it provides a wide range of physical fitness, stress reduction, learning opportunities, and safe places for children to play. Public access areas allow individuals and groups to come together to develop skills and build new relationships between people and organizations. Furthermore, outdoor recreation provides space for families and communities to build a sense of unity through various activities. Through the usage of public lands for recreational activities, individuals and groups often form emotional attachments to a place. These emotional attachments represent a distinctive sense of place that have implications for managers of public lands when considering policies that may affect the ability of the public to access these lands. In general, according to the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan (SCORP), communities that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation reap positive impacts, as preserving, protecting, and providing parks and natural areas enhances the desirability of an area while also contributing to the safety and enjoyment of its residents and visitors.

Lands that are designated for public use can provide benefits to the environment by protecting the biodiversity and ecological integrity of ecosystems, preserving pieces of the natural environment, safeguarding watersheds for the gain of improved water quality, and providing opportunities for landscape-scale management. As pointed out by Wisconsin SCORP trail and path systems created for recreational purposes often serve a dual purpose in that they save energy and protect air quality by encouraging non-motorized transportation.

### **Economic Considerations of Public Access**

The availability of parks and recreational services plays an important role in a region's economic development. There are many economic incentives presented by conservation of natural areas and creation of public access areas.

Providing natural areas presents a way for a community to invest in itself. Because businesses are no longer tied down to business centers, often located in downtown and industrial areas, they are now able to choose the location in which they reside. This choice is often based on a community that provides a high quality of life, which includes a significant amount of natural areas, near-by recreation, and a pedestrian friendly environment. Availability of recreation areas may also heavily influence where business locate and individuals prefer to live.

Outdoor recreation offers outstanding tourism opportunities ranging from wilderness activities to swimming at beaches. According to the Trust for Public Land, travel and tourism is the nation's third largest retail sales industry. Many communities have recognized that natural areas, which

provide public access to scenic views and nature, are often a draw for tourism. Outdoor recreation also provides a year round commodity and therefore often results in additional jobs within a community.

Public access locations that provide natural areas can also reduce potential property damage costs by mitigating hazards such as flooding, slope instability, and structural fire damage. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, flood damages in the United States cost \$4 billion annually in property loss and emergency assistance. Undeveloped floodplains contain no property to be damaged, while also protecting developed downstream and lowland areas from destruction.

Development of natural areas also presents a major threat to the nation's watersheds, especially those that provide water to the public. Development of watersheds results in pollution from septic systems, chemicals from lawn treatment, and runoff from impervious surfaces such as roads and parking lots. This pollution results in increased water treatment costs to communities. Increased amounts of impervious surfaces also direct rainwater runoff to streams and culverts, thereby keeping it out of drinking water aquifers. This results in a water quantity issue for some communities.

Often when natural areas are available, debate arises within a community regarding whether or not to develop the space. According to the American Planning Association, efforts to conserve natural areas often fail as community members and local officials tend to believe that there is more financial benefit in development. However, the taxes generated by new growth are often not enough to cover the cost of the new development. Residential developments require services, such as roads, schools, solid waste disposal, fire and police protection, and additional resources to cope with the increased traffic of which parks and natural areas do not require. Therefore, parks and natural areas are usually less costly for public agencies to maintain and operate. Setting aside natural areas for public use will result in increased health benefits and lower medical costs to users and less money spent on other recreational outlets, as well as decreasing capital spent on youth crime prevention programs.

To recover the costs of creating and maintaining park areas, some communities in the western states are placing an additional tax on tourist-related items. In 2001, tourists spent \$1.2 billion on fishing related items and trips in the state of Wisconsin, and generated \$90 million in state and local sales tax (Wisconsin Department of Tourism). A slight increase in taxes for fishing or hunting related items could potentially generate millions, which could be allocated for park and natural areas conservation.

### **BENEFITS OF IDENTIFYING PUBLIC ACCESS**

Identifying public access points will allow officials to determine the amount of recreational opportunities available for the public to use, while also providing information on how they can continue to provide their citizens with access to public lands. By deciding which lands need protection for recreation, community character, conservation of natural resources, and natural areas, a community will be able to avoid unnecessary and poorly planned growth, which consumes more land than necessary while also requiring more tax-supported infrastructure such as roads and sewer lines. Most importantly, identification of public access sites will assist in any recreation planning efforts a community may undertake.

As park systems are serviced by federal, state, county, and local agencies, it is important that all decisions made regarding parks and outdoor recreational areas consider inter-community and

regional relationships while coordinating closely with other jurisdictions. Therefore, identification of and planning for public access sites will help in building and maintaining important partnerships amid all levels of government.

Lastly, an inventory of public access points will allow local and state officials to identify areas that need additional funding for improvement of those sites. Development of a public access inventory also allows communities to expand and promote eco-tourism within the region.





## CHAPTER 5 : PUBLIC ACCESS THREATS

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### **ENCROACHMENT**

As development in coastal areas increases, many of the original public access points to Green Bay are lost due to encroachment of development or conversion to private lands. Furthermore, encroaching private lands leave little room for recreational facilities, such as parking, pavilions, shelters, picnic and camping areas, and restroom facilities. Under section 236.16 (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, all subdivisions abutting a navigable lake or stream must provide access to the public. However, no public access established under this section can be vacated except by circuit court action as provided in section 236.43, *Wis. Stats.* According to section 236.43 (1)(a) and (b) of the Wisconsin Statutes, areas dedicated to the public may be altered or vacated if “the plat was recorded more than 40 years previous [and] during all that period the areas dedicated for streets, roads or other public ways were not improved as streets roads or other public ways.” Furthermore, section 236.43(3), *Wis. Stats.*, mandates that in regards to lands located in a city, county, village or town, that are platted as a public park, vacation of the land can only occur where the land has never been developed by said landowner or by filing for vacation with the circuit court. This study revealed several instances where encroachment of public lands by private landowners would be possible. In one instance, a piece of public land lay between two pieces of private property belonging to one landowner. It appeared in this case, the landowner has maintained his property, as well as that which was considered public property. In other situations, it was observed that private landowners were likely using public lands for dumping of personal property.

As the demand for public access to waterways increases, so will pressure to develop these areas. Intensified waterfront development leads to adverse effects on water resources and recreational activities. To assure that the recreational activities occurring in communities appropriately match the available resources, the SCORP plan recommends that communities form partnerships with the WDNR to plan effective current and future recreational projects. By utilizing the knowledge of the WDNR, local communities can establish a healthy balance between natural resource protection and economic benefit. This partnership will effectively educate the public on the best way to utilize the available natural resources. The plan suggests that outdoor safety and education be a part of the recreational experience. Fewer and fewer people are familiar with useful outdoor skills, and as a result, natural resources are misused. By initiating public education on outdoor skills and recreational opportunities in the area, it is projected that obvious recreation locations will become less congested and valuable outdoor knowledge will be shared with others. The SCORP suggests that better land use planning will prevent the loss of recreational opportunities. It is important that conflicting land use patterns be prevented from harming natural resources available for economic gain. The SCORP endorses land purchases by citizen-based and non-profit conservation organizations to protect these valuable assets. At the same time, these areas should be inventoried and made known to the public, encouraging participation in local planning and land use initiatives.

### **All-Terrain Vehicles**

A common source of encroachment has been the use of off-road vehicles on public lands. Although all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are a growing source of outdoor tourism, they result in air,

water, and noise pollution. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimated that two-stroke engines, which are often found in these vehicles, discharge 25 to 30 percent of their burned fuel into the air and water. In addition, ATVs may impede on typical land-use patterns when riders are not respectful of trail limitations and regulations. However, if trails are placed in a manner that does not disturb nesting sites, swamps and marshes, or other environmentally sensitive areas, ATV use can generate revenue for rural municipalities and create opportunities for families and community groups to explore nature. Increased awareness of proper trail use can prevent environmental damage by ATV users.

### **ADVERSE POSSESSION**

Individuals may gain title to public land by using the land uninterrupted for twenty years, as set by section 893.25, *Wis. Stats.* The parcel of land must be openly used, cultivated, or improved in order for one to establish ownership under adverse possession. Continued use of the land is legal under section 893.28, *Wis. Stats.*, which states that “any person who in connection with his or her predecessor in interest has made continuous adverse use of rights of the land of another for twenty years, except as provided by section 893.29, *Wis. Stats.*, may commence an action to establish prescriptive rights under chapter 843.” Under section 893.29, *Wis. Stats.*, adverse possession of property belonging to the state or a city, village, town, county, or any other unit of government within Wisconsin is illegal unless a continuous fence line is maintained.

## **CHAPTER 6 : PROJECT EVALUATION**

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### **DATA AVAILABILITY**

By providing an inventory of public access areas, local communities will be able to consider these sites when promoting local economic expansion and recreational enhancement, and enable the evaluation of recreational opportunities to ensure they are sufficient for the population. The study offers a unique opportunity to utilize eco-tourism and manage sensitive ecological areas in a responsible manner. The methodology used to complete the project can easily be applied to the entire west coast of Lake Michigan. The information utilized for this study is available for public use in land records offices throughout the state. For this study, we utilized Plat books, county land records-including deeds, tract books, and survey information-county maps, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) records, and county web mapping websites.

### **Inventory Limitations and Issues**

Throughout the inventory process, several limitations were encountered in the field. The most common limitation encountered was the ability to determine visually if a piece of land was public or private, making it difficult to determine when trespassing was occurring. Therefore, before the inventory could be completed, it was necessary to complete multiple trips to several of the sites after consulting land records.

Other issues encountered in the field included poorly signed roads; roads that no longer existed, or had never existed but were included on the plat map; and access limitations due to road construction, resulting in repeat site visitations.

### **Mapping Limitations and Issues**

Initially, the Wisconsin DOT roadways layer was used to create a GIS map of the West Shore study area. However, it was found that the information was often outdated as the DOT roadways layer is only updated once a year. This was particularly a problem in Oconto County so the map had to be revised to replace the DOT data with Oconto County data. Since the Oconto County roadways data layer is updated numerous times per year, it provided accurate information about the roads leading to Green Bay.

### **Record Acquisition Limitations and Issues**

As the project progressed north up the West Shore of Green Bay, less digital and online resources were available for public use. This was especially apparent in the City of Marinette. Online maps were instrumental to gaining information about parcel ownership status, so the lack of web mapping in Marinette County hindered the progress of the project. In addition, certified survey maps in the City were only available on parcels that had been subdivided and Parcel maps and/or municipal board meeting notes were not available for each road. Therefore, the methodology changed for each road researched when investigating whether or not the road was originally plotted to Green Bay and if it was indeed public. In Marinette County, the 2002 Property Ownership book was not always available for use because it was being utilized by other community members. As a result, county maps were required to complete the research.

### **WEST SHORE PUBLIC ACCESS SITES WITH ENHANCEMENT POTENTIAL**

As part of this report, the public access sites along the Green Bay West Shore were evaluated for their potential to improve and/or to offer more recreation options for the public. Through the

inventory process, detailed descriptions regarding facilities and opportunities at each site were recorded. Several sites were found to offer various recreational alternatives, such as picnic areas, campgrounds, and boat launches, while others were found to provide only access to the water via worn foot trails. The following lists the enhancement potential for some sites in each of the counties inventoried.

### **Marinette County**

Although Marinette County offers many trails and public access parking areas, it could benefit from providing more restroom facilities, recreation areas, and camping sites for those accessing the abundant trails. However, further recreational improvement is inhibited by encroaching private lands. These encroaching areas make access to Green Bay by way of Ogden Street, Chestnut Street, and County Road BB intimidating. Although Ogden Street provides public access to Green Bay, a neighboring landowner has placed a “No Trespassing” sign in a way that may lead visitors to believe the area is privately owned. Proper signage concerning the public status of the area is recommended. Additional parking would also improve the Ogden Street location.

The first public access site on Pond Road provides access to the water via a public boat landing. Access to this site was provided via a dirt road that was not well maintained. Therefore, in order to increase accessibility to the boat launch it is recommended that the road be improved and additional parking be provided. This site also provides a beautiful view of the Bay and may serve as a good park area. Additional recreational facilities are recommended to improve usability of the area. The road end of Pond Road, Johnson Road, and University Drive may contain sensitive wetland areas; therefore, it may be wise to limit use of these areas.

County Road BB provides access to Michaelis Park. Although recreational facilities were present onsite, enhancement is possible through the addition of playground equipment, shelters, and foot trails to provide access to Green Bay.

One major limitation found at Alameda Avenue was the lack of a street sign located at the intersection with Bay Shore Street. Improved trail maintenance and designated parking is also recommended for Alameda Avenue to ensure that users do not trespass on neighboring properties or disrupt sensitive plant life along the trail system. When visiting this site, it was evident that ATV’s were being used to gain access to Green Bay. Information about the allowable forms of transportation may need to be displayed in the vicinity. The area appeared to support sensitive wetland areas therefore it might be wise to limit further development of the area.

Bird Street, Leonard Street, and Russell Street all provide sufficient access to Green Bay, as well as many recreational resources and paved trails. However, it is suggested that a small parking area be added to the Russell Street location to create a user-friendly atmosphere and prevent visitors from intruding on neighboring private properties in search of parking.

### **Oconto County**

Although fewer trails were available along the Oconto County segment of the West Shore of Green Bay, there were many parks, boat launches, beaches, picnic areas, and parking spots available for public use. Obstructions to public use of Old State Road, Red Cedar Road, and Hale Road are the result of encroaching privately held lands. Access along Red Cedar Road and Hale Road is also restricted by surrounding privately held lands, leaving little room for parking or

other recreational resources. Opportunities to improve the usability of many of the sites are limited by boundary lines. However, Hale Road appears to be surrounded by valuable wetlands, which may be better served as a restricted natural corridor.

Lade Beach Road leads to a fantastic scenic view of the water, and a parking lot is provided; however, the beach is blocked off by large boulders that prevent any use of the water. This site would make a very nice small park with beach access or perhaps a small craft boat launch. Shelters, picnic tables, and benches are recommended, as well as sufficient waste receptacles to prevent littering. Additional trails along other portions of the road would also be beneficial.

Pensaukee Bay Shore Road provides a well-marked trail to the Pensaukee State Wildlife Area; however, it is unknown if this trail eventually leads to the water. Clearly designated parking around the trail opening would be beneficial, as well as interpretive educational signs about the wildlife. Fish House Road also offers recreational opportunities by way of a very well kept boat launch that provides access to the Pensaukee River. This site would benefit from typical park equipment such as benches and restroom facilities.

Pecor Point Road provides access to the water by means of foot trails and it is possible to launch a boat if water levels are high enough. However, the only sign present onsite with potentially valuable information about the area was unreadable. Because this site appears to be a valuable wetland area to local and migratory wildlife, it may be best to leave this site in its present state. It is suggested that this area offer sufficient signage to notify visitors of the recreational limitations, and offer educational information about the West Shore wetlands and their ecological significance. In addition, a high amount of litter was observed upon visitation of the site. Therefore, in order to preserve the natural state of the site, the addition of waste containers and restroom facilities is recommended.

D.E. Hall Park along County Road Y provides a boat launch for small crafts such as canoes; however, parking is very limited. Additional parking is recommended, as well as other recreational facilities. The park is rather small, so further development would likely be limited to a small recreational area that could include several picnic tables, grills, and restroom facilities.

Red Cedar Road offered no recreational opportunities. This site would benefit the most from improvements however because this site is surrounded by private lands available space for further development is extremely limited.

### **Brown County**

The western Brown County coastal areas are known as valuable hunting resources due to the nutrient rich wetlands that line the waters of Green Bay. The most popular of the hunting sites are Duck Creek, Deadhorse Bay, and the public hunting grounds of Sensiba, Pensaukee, and Peshtigo Harbor (Wisconsin Sportsman). Enhancements made to the Brown County portion of the West Shore of Green Bay could incorporate strategies that would improve waterfowl populations and hunter usability. Because unobtrusive activities are integral to the function of these areas, improvement of the following sites should be considered with caution.

East Deerfield Road and Harbor Lights Road may benefit the most from clearly designated trail ways and better signage concerning parking if the WDNR wishes to improve usability of these sites. The same is true for Shoreview Court; however, it is strongly recommended that prospective users check with the surrounding landowners if they wish to utilize the area. Cove



Road is very clearly designated as a hunting location for disabled members of the community. Because it is important to the integrity of the site to remain undisturbed, additional notices describing the importance of keeping the site intact and quiet may improve the quality of the area.

Lake Park Road has perhaps the greatest potential for tourist activity on the west side of Brown County. Most of the areas surrounding the road end are owned by Brown County Parks and have been designated as the Fort Howard Wildlife Area. In order to maintain the ecological stability of the site, it may be beneficial to make it known to visitors that the area is a valuable environmental corridor by adding educational signs describing the natural and ecological significance of the area. Additional parking and maintained walking trails may improve the public use of the area.

Because Riverside Road and Sunset Beach Road allow direct access to the water and includes sufficient parking, the locations may benefit the most from designated places for shoreline fishing. They are beautiful, scenic areas that would serve as wonderful spots for picnic tables, benches, and shelters. However, lands lying to the northeast of Riverside Road are privately owned and should be avoided by visitors.

Sunset Beach Lane provides beautiful scenic views of Green Bay. However, lands lying north and south of the road end are private and may inhibit any additional recreational facilities. The area lying between the road end and the water would benefit most from additional well-labeled trails or perhaps benches or picnic tables. According to the signs posted at the site, the beach lying along the north end of Sunset Beach Lane has been closed. Cleanup and restoration initiatives would best enhance the recreational benefits of the area. This site offers immense potential for recreational use, and it would benefit from a small pavilion or shelter, including picnic tables and benches. Restrooms and waste receptacles would also improve usage of the site. Additional parking at the northern end of Sunset Beach Lane is also recommended to improve access to the Sensiba State Wildlife Area.

Because Norfield Road was not sufficiently signed at the time of the inventory, it was impossible to judge the ownership status of the surrounding areas just by visiting the site. Additional signage, as well as available parking and well-marked trails, is recommended for the northeast portion of the road if further development is desired. Lands lying to the southeast are private and should be avoided.

Hook road was insufficiently delineated as public property upon visitation, even though it is owned by the WDNR according to public land records. Visible trails made it evident that the area was being used to access the water via small watercraft. Improved landing sites for boats and canoes are recommended, as well as designated parking areas.

Efforts to clean up Green Bay, and the prevention of further environmental degradation, will improve the experience offered by the enjoyment of abundant natural resources available to local citizens and tourists. In addition, providing information about bird watching, sight seeing, and photography opportunities may greatly increase outdoor activity along the West Shore. With increased attention given to trail maintenance and expansion of recreational opportunities, Brown County has an opportunity to enhance its outdoor experience.

## **Summary of West Shore Public Access Enhancement Potential**

Overall, it would be advantageous to the entire study area to take part in programs highlighting the historic, ecological, and cultural importance of the West Shore of Green Bay. Signage displaying information about the uniqueness and importance of the West Shore wetlands, native vegetation, hydrologic features, significant flora and fauna, and cultural/historical influences could be placed on trails along, and leading to Green Bay. A tri-county trail system linking many of the public coastal lands of the West Shore of Green Bay would greatly increase enjoyment of the Bay area. These trails should be accessible by foot, bike, and horseback in order to appeal to a greater portion of the population and limit damage to sensitive landscape features. To better aid prospective tourists, it is suggested that the counties in the study area invest in a cooperative mapping or brochure program in which all of the public access sites and available amenities are identified. The West Shore of Green Bay is a common and significant natural resource for all three of the counties and ought to be treated as such. Investing in joint initiatives will assuredly cut the costs of introducing more resident and tourist activities and open the door to new and unique investment opportunities for businesses. However, the expansion of coastal recreation areas to include parking lots and other recreational facilities must be considered carefully as it may diminish the natural beauty of the areas under consideration and could be disruptive to local wildlife.

## **Methods of Enhancing Public Access Sites**

The main way to enhance many of the sites inventoried in this study would be to provide some sort of signage indicating the right of the public to use the site as a way to access Green Bay. Signage was especially lacking at sites that did not provide additional recreational facilities such as boat launches or picnic areas. Many of the sites containing boat launches, although well marked as public access sites, offered no signage to indicate rules and regulations (i.e., launch fees, invasive species warnings).

Many of the sites inventoried would benefit from some level of maintenance. Several sites had signs that have been knocked down and/or are badly weathered. Many of the sites would benefit from increased parking areas, encouraging more people to utilize them. However, where parking areas were available, most were in need of some repair. At a minimum, sites that provided limited access with trails could be enhanced by the addition of trash receptacles and bathroom facilities in order to ensure that the sites remain clean and free of waste.

Intuitively, the addition of supplementary recreational opportunities would augment many of the sites. Such additions could include simple enhancements such as fire pits, picnic tables, grills, and benches, as well as major improvements such as boat launches, campgrounds, volleyball courts, playgrounds, and picnic pavilions. However, not all of the sites inventoried would be able to accommodate such development. Each site would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine what, if any, improvements would be feasible based on the size and location of the site. Section NR 1.91, *Wis. Stats.*, provides a formula that will help communities determine the appropriate number of parking spaces for vehicles with boat trailers on any given body of water.

## **Funding to Enhance Public Access Sites**

Communities are encouraged to explore funding options to enhance the public access to waterways. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has grant programs, such as a “Recreation Boating Facilities” grant, to help fund such enhancements as river walks, waterfront

parks, boat landings, canoe ramps, fishing piers, and shore-fishing stations for people with disabilities. The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program offers funding, such as a “Public Access and Historic Preservation” grant and a “Coastal Land Acquisition” grant to enhance public access and recreational opportunities to the Great Lakes.

For further information about grant programs to enhance public access, you may contact the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission’s Natural Resources Planner. Contact information may be obtained online by visiting [www.baylakerpc.org](http://www.baylakerpc.org).

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## GLOSSARY

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**ArcIMS** - (standing for ArcInternet Map Server) an online Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping product, produced by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), designed to serve maps across the Internet. Sometimes these maps are just static images allowing simple panning and zooming, whilst others are more complex pages which allow fuller interaction between users and maps.

**ArcView** - a desktop Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software package written and marketed by Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI).

**AS400** - a computer application system used to retrieve property ownership information.

**Biodiversity/biological diversity** - the abundance of different plant and animal species in an area.

**BLRPC** - Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission

**CAD** - Computer Aided Drafting

**Certified survey maps (CSM)** - a map of a proposed land division prepared by a registered land surveyor. CSMs are required in Wisconsin for land divisions that create one to four parcels where one of more of the parcels is less than thirty-five acres. Land divisions creating five or more lots generally require a subdivision plat.

**Commission, the** - Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission

**Database** - a collection of data arranged for ease and speed of search and retrieval.

**Deed** - a document sealed as an instrument of bond, contract, or conveyance, especially relating to property.

**Development** - any manufactured change to improved or unimproved real estate, including, but not limited to the construction of buildings, structures or accessory structures; the construction of additions or substantial improvements to buildings, structures or accessory structures; the placement of mobile homes; ditching, lagooning, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations, and the deposition or extraction of earthen materials.

**DOT** - Department of Transportation

**Eco-tourism** - tourism involving travel to areas of natural or ecological interest, typically under the guidance of a naturalist, for the purpose of observing wildlife and learning about the environment.

**Encroachment** - to advance beyond the usual or proper limits.

**Executive Order** - an order issued by a government's executive based on authority specifically granted to the executive branch.

**GIS** - Geographic Information Systems

**Lakebed** - the bottom of a lake.

**Land Use** - the present usage of the land.

**Navigable waters** - in Wisconsin: lakes and streams in which it is possible to float a canoe or small recreational craft at sometime during the year.

**NOAA** - National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration



**Ordinary high water mark** - the boundary between upland and lake or riverbed. The point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of surface water is so continuous as to leave a distinctive mark such as by erosion, destruction or prevention of terrestrial vegetation, predominance of aquatic vegetation, or other easily recognized characteristics.

**Orthophotography** - the process of aerial photographs that have been rectified to produce an accurate image of the Earth by removing tilt and relief displacements, which occurred when the photo was taken.

**Parcel** - contiguous quantity of land in possession of, owned by, or recorded as property of the same claimant person or company.

**Plat book** - book of maps showing actual or planned features, such as streets and building lots.

**Public land** - land owned by a government.

**Riparian** - Relating to, living, or located on the bank of a natural watercourse.

**Subdivision** - a division of a lot, parcel, or tract of land by the owner thereof or the owner's agent for the purpose of sale or of building development where:

1. The act of division creates 5 or more parcels or building sites of 1-1/2 acres each or less in an area; or
2. Five or more parcels or building sites of 1-1/2 acres each or less are created by successive divisions within a period of 5 years.

**Tabular database** - data stored in tables that are related by key fields.

**TAC** - Technical Advisory Committee

**Tax key number** - unique number assigned to each parcel in a county.

**Tract book** - records sale of land by the Federal Government to the first purchasers. The records include names of purchasers, amount of land purchased, legal description of property, price paid and date of purchase.

**Watershed** - a geographic area of land bounded by topographic features and height of land that drains waters to a shared destination. Not only does a watershed drain, it also captures precipitation, filters and stores water, and determines its release. A watershed, therefore, is a drainage basin that divides the landscape into hydrologically defined areas.

**WCMP** - Wisconsin Coastal Management Program

**WDNR** - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Web mapping** - a simplified Geographic Information Systems (GIS) web-based application that allows open access for the public to view and alter dynamic maps and data at no cost.

**Wetland** - an area that is inundated or saturated to the surface for a sufficient time to foster the growth of hydrophytic plants and/or the development of hydric soils.

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# ***Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission***

## ***June, 2005***

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