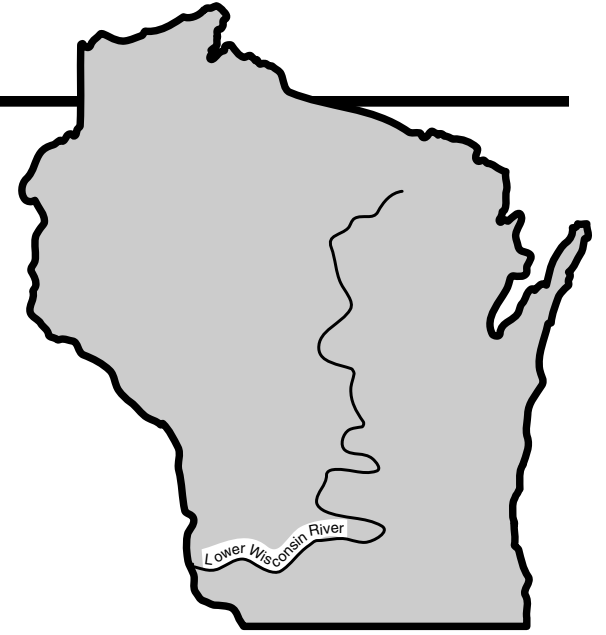


# Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Visitor



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources • Lower Wisconsin State Riverway • 1500 N. Johns St. • Dodgeville, WI 53533 • 608-935-3368

## Welcome to the Riverway

Please explore the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. Only here can you find so much to do in such a beautiful setting so close to major population centers. You can fish or hunt, canoe or boat, hike or ride horseback, or just enjoy the river scenery on a drive down country roads. The Riverway abounds in birds and wildlife and the history of Wisconsin is written in the bluffs and marshes of the area. There is something for every interest, so take your pick. To really enjoy, try them all!

A decade of cooperative effort between Citizens, Environmental Groups, Politicians, and the Department of Natural Resources ended successfully with the passage of the law establishing the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway and the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board. This law established the land management and acquisition standards for the riverway and became effective on August 9, 1989.

### Early Beginnings

The Wisconsin River flows unimpeded by any man-made structures for 92.3 miles from the dam at Prairie Du Sac downstream to its mouth at the Mississippi River. Approximately 80,000 acres of land on both sides of the river have been designated as the lower Wisconsin State Riverway. This area has a rich history of conservation practices and resource management, beginning in 1917 with the establishment of Wyalusing State Park (originally named Nelson Dewey State Park). In 1922, Tower Hill State Park was established near Spring Green. Two decades passed and the state's holdings increased again when the family of Louis A. Clas presented the Wisconsin Conservation Commission a gift of a 66 acre island near Sauk City to be used for a

bird and game refuge and a place to relax while canoeing.

Efforts began in earnest following World War Two when Game Managers began to lease lands for public hunting and fishing. In 1960 money from the Federal Pittman-Robinson program—tax moneys from the sale of sporting firearms and ammunition—assisted by providing 75% of the necessary funding. By 1980 over 22,000 acres were owned and another 7,000 were held under protective easement. Most of the work to manage the property was also provided by hunters, trappers and anglers using license revenues.

### About the River

The upper Wisconsin River has been called the hardest working river in the nation, a title well deserved. It contains 25 hydroelectric dams with 21 storage reservoirs, more than any other stretch of river in the United States. From its point of origin on the Wisconsin-Michigan border at Lac Vieux Desert, the river flows south, then west to its confluence with the Mississippi, a distance of 430 miles.

The Wisconsin drains 12,280 square miles (7,859,200 acres) or about one third of the state. The dam at Prairie Du Sac is the farthest downstream and marks the upper end of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. The 92.3 miles of the LWSR is the longest free-flowing section of river anywhere in the Midwest. The river current ranges from one to five miles per hour and can be faster during high water periods. *Locally heavy rains can cause the river to rise two to three feet overnight.* Canoeists must always be cautious when using the river and choose campsites with this in mind.



*The Wisconsin River valley is a scenic marvel comprised of stately bluffs, mysterious wooded bottomlands and over 500 miles of sandy shoreline. Numerous islands provide camping and outdoor recreational opportunities free from crowds.*

### Riverway Recreation

Two thirds of river users can be found on the stretch of river between Prairie Du Sac and Spring Green. Those looking for a more private experience will enjoy the middle section from Spring Green to Boscobel, and for the user wishing solitude, the stretch below Boscobel is the most secluded.

Camping is allowed on state owned islands and sandbars except for a two mile stretch from Ferry Bluff downstream to Grape Island. Campers must access their campsite by boat or canoe, and are allowed to camp for a maximum of three nights at one location *Glass containers are prohibited in the riverway, and all trash must be taken out with you.* All boats and canoes must carry a waterproof container

with them for litter. Canoes are the most popular method of transportation and may be rented from liveries listed elsewhere in this publication. Fishing and recreational boating are also popular, so please be courteous, load and unload quickly at the boat landings, and let everyone enjoy the river!

### Be Safe

Safety is the main concern of the riverway staff. The cautions listed in this publication are intended to help you have a safe and enjoyable experience. Please read them carefully.

Relax and enjoy the river and the fine resources of the valley. Come again when you can.

## Unique Resources

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway contains a fantastically diverse resource with a wide variety of historical and archeological sites, wildlife, fisheries, and scenic beauty found nowhere else. You will enjoy your visit here and likely return again and again.

The Riverway boundary contains 79,275 acres, of which over 44,000 are in state ownership, divided into 26 management units. Signs identifying each are installed when state ownership is significant enough to avoid trespass problems. The management is a team



*These distinctive signs identify various State Riverway work units located along the project's 300-mile perimeter.*

effort by wildlife managers, fisheries staff, foresters, park managers, wardens land agents and various natural resource specialists. The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board, a unique and separate State agency, is responsible for the scenic protection of the river valley. (See article on page 2.)

### River Ethics

**Have a good time.  
Pickup after yourself.  
Don't bother others.**

## Leave No Trace

Try to imagine 1,000 people on the Wisconsin River on a hot summer weekend. Then try to imagine the waste they will create. Anglers, campers and sunbathers all generate waste in the riverway—it's a fact of life.

People must take the trash they create with them. We have a "carry-in, carry-out" policy. Riverway law requires a waterproof container for trash in every boat/canoe and glass containers are prohibited. But what about the other stuff?

Human wastes don't have to have an adverse affect on the river if disposed of properly. Nobody likes to find them by accident when they are disposed of improperly.

To properly dispose of such waste requires little effort. Find a place where there is some vegetative shelter and soil mixed with the sand. Simply dig a hole 6 inches deep to bury your group's waste.

Deeper is not better since it inhibits the bacteria that breaks down the waste. Shallower depths increase the chance it will be exposed by wind or high water. Lastly, provide a paper sack for used toilet paper and feminine hygiene products. Either pack the sack out or burn it right before you douse your campfire. For more information on "Leave No Trace" principles, go to [www.blm.gov/education/](http://www.blm.gov/education/) nt Please, don't bury campfires, sand will smother but not extinguish the fire and it will burn for hours or even days. People walking barefoot on sandbars can severely burn their feet in a thinly buried fire pit. Try to use up all the charred firewood. Blackened logs are unsightly and mar the beauty of a sandbar.

If you carry along a plastic grocery sack, you have a handy water carrier to put out your campfire and it will serve double duty as a trash collector.

# Aesthetic Protection Pioneers

## The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board

By Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director  
Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board

*"The Wisconsin River is very broad with a sandy bottom forming many shallows which render navigation difficult. It is full of vine clad islands. On the banks appear fertile lands diversified by woods, prairies and hills. We saw oak, walnut, basswood and another kind of tree armed with long thorns."*—Father Jacques Marquette (June 1673)

Over three hundred years have passed since Father Marquette penned the first known written description of the Wisconsin River. Remarkably, in many places, the river has retained the same "look" viewed by the first European explorers and the countless generations of indigenous people before the famed voyage of Marquette and Joliet. The tremendous scenic quality of the lower Wisconsin River valley and the richness and diversity of the local flora and fauna provided the State of Wisconsin with an opportunity to create and implement a new and unique plan for protection and preservation of the valley's natural and aesthetic resources. Enacted in 1989, the project, now known as the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, seeks to protect and preserve the scenic beauty and natural character of the river valley, seeks to manage the resources of the area for the long term benefit of the citizens of the state and seeks to provide a quality public recreational area in a manner consistent with the resource and aesthetic protection goals and objectives. The agency responsible for assuring scenic protection of the valley is the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board, a nine person citizen board with headquarters in Muscoda.

*"On the 8th of October, we put our canoes into the Wisconsin River which flows with a strong but smooth current. The water is very clear and through it you can see a fine and sandy bottom free of rocks. In the river are a few islands which are quite wooded. The land near the river seems to be excellent but, at a distance, is full of mountains said to abound in lead."*—Jonathan Carver (October 1766)

Creation of the Riverway project was not an easy task. After years of planning and hundreds of hours of public meetings, a consensus had not been achieved. Many divergent opinions existed regarding the type of protection needed and the degree of regulation, if any, which should be involved. Eventually, a compromise was forged and the Riverway law was passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Tommy G. Thompson in August of 1989. The new law detailed the major goals and objectives of the Riverway project and also created a new state agency, the Riverway Board, to administer the scenic protection regulations. The establishment of the Riverway Board was important to address concerns regarding retention of local control over the future destiny of the valley. As a result, the Riverway Board is dominated by local representation with six of the nine members coming from the affected counties (Dane, Sauk, Iowa, Grant, Richland and Crawford). The other three "at-large" members represent recreational users and must reside outside of the Riverway counties.

The Riverway Board administers a system of regulations, known as "performance standards," which are designed to protect and preserve the aesthetic integrity of the valley. The regulations are not designed to prohibit development but, rather, to control land use and development to assure consistency with the objectives of the project. Permits are required for construction of new buildings, modification of existing structures, placement of mobile

homes, construction of utility facilities as well as walkways or stairways which provide access to the river. Permits also are required for timber harvests conducted on the 80,000 acres within the project boundary.

*"The Wisconsin River is a wide and shallow stream running over a bed of sand with transparent waters and chequered with numerous small islands and sand bars. It has an alluvial valley bounded by calcareous hills which frequently present naked precipices toward the river. The predominating trees are oak, elm and maple. The navigation of the river is considerably impeded by the sandbars and small islands and some time is lost in searching for the proper channel. The river bluffs continue, sometimes receding a mile or two from the river and giving place bottomlands and patches of prairie, then shutting in close upon the water's edge."*—Henry Schoolcraft (August 1820)

The intent of the Riverway regulations is to minimize the visual impact of an activity when viewed from the river during leaf-on conditions. The performance standards vary depending on the type of activity and visibility of the site from the river. For sites not visible from the river, the regulations are minimal. In the case of new structures or modification of existing structures not visible from the river, the sole restriction is on the height of the structure to assure it does not become visible from the river. For timber harvests on lands not visible from the river, a permit must be obtained to certify the harvest area is not visible from the river. While there are no restrictions on the harvest, recommendations are made to assure the harvest is conducted in a manner consistent with sound forestry management practices.

For new construction on lands visible from the river, compliance with the performance standards must be achieved in order to render the structure "visually inconspicuous" during leaf-on conditions. "Visually inconspicuous" is defined as "difficult to be seen or not readily noticeable" and does not mean the structure must be totally unseen when viewed from the river. The performance standards require screening vegetation between the structure and the river, the use of exterior colorization which harmonizes with the natural surroundings during leaf-on conditions (earth tones) and a limitation on the height of the structure. When building on a bluff, the slope of the site is limited to 20% or less and sufficient safeguards to prevent erosion must be utilized. To assist landowners, the board has developed a "Standardized Color Chart" which generally defines the parameters of acceptable exterior colorization. The palette of colors includes nearly fifty shades of greens, browns and grays.

For timber harvests on lands visible from the river, the regulations vary according to zone. In the area immediately adjacent to the river, the "River Edge Zone," only selective harvesting is allowed. On the hillsides visible from the river,



Timber cutting performance standards ensure that scenic views from riversides will remain virtually unchanged for a long, long time.

diseased or insect infested trees or trees which represent a safety hazard. The timber harvest performance standards have been proven to mirror sound forestry management practices and provide ample flexibility for a variety of management practices to occur.

*"The Wisconsin River valley is a wide, gloomy, mountain-girt valley, with great sandbars and thickly-wooded morasses. Settlement is slight. The few villages are generally a mile to three miles back, at the foot of the bluffs, out of the way of the flood, and the river appears to be but little used. None but a hermit could enjoy those long stretches of waterway where one may float for a day without seeing man or animal on the forest bound shores and where the oppression of solitude is felt with such force that it takes but slight stretch of the imagination to carry ones self back in thought and feeling to the times when the black robed members of the Company of Jesus first penetrated the gloomy wilderness."*—Reuben Gold Thwaites (August 1877)

Administration of the Riverway regulations and protection of the resource is very much a cooperative endeavor. While the board is responsible for the scenic protection regulations, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for resource and recreational management issues and land acquisition. In the shoreland and floodplain zoned areas, each Riverway county administers local zoning ordinances which require minimum setbacks for buildings and limits on the amount of woody vegetation which may be removed. A partnership has been established between the board, the county zoning administrators and the DNR to assure the goals of the Riverway are achieved and the responsibilities of the respective jurisdictions are met. Much of the success of the Riverway is the result of the cooperation between these governmental entities.

Ultimately, the success of the project rests on the cooperation of Riverway landowners. From inception, the biggest challenge facing the Riverway Board was to maintain the fragile and delicate balance between protection of the scenic beauty and natural character of the Riverway and protection of the rights of Riverway property owners and local residents. The concept of land use regulations for the purpose of preserving scenic quality is often difficult for landowners to understand. Some landowners consider the regulations onerous and unnecessarily restrictive and remain opposed to

the "Riverview Zone," selective harvesting is permitted and small clear cuts are allowed. On the tops of the bluffs, the "Bluff Zone," again, only selective harvesting is allowed. A minimum number of trees must be retained in the residual stand for all three zones and the location and design of logging roads also are restricted. Harvesting is limited to the late fall and winter months. Exceptions to the cutting regulations are provided for the removal of dead, damaged,

the Riverway concept. However, in the vast majority of cases, landowners and local residents have been cooperative and supportive. The Riverway Board works diligently to maintain a positive working relationship with landowners and attempts to minimize the impact of the regulations on the daily lives of Riverway residents. The board recognizes the importance of protecting the rights of property owners and local individuals and constantly seeks ways to achieve maximum protection of the resource with minimum regulation. The continued cooperation and support of landowners and local residents is the key to the success of the project.

*"There are aspects of wilderness still, at its headwaters as well as near its mouth: in the wooded islands, the hill slopes, the forest country—and a kind of nostalgic wilderness in its: Wisconsin. Its waters, rising in a country of evergreens, birch, aspen, oak and ash, flow into the Father of Waters among honey locusts, chinquapin oak, black maple, and sycamores: once these were forests, reaching skyward, and they are only now beginning to come back—something starting over, something coming again, as if time were turning back to say that the prairie grass, the oak groves, the wilderness will return, not revenants of past time, but reality once more, to erase the marks remembered now, the ways the Indians went, and the trappers and the miners, the raftsmen and lumberjacks, the pioneers...."*—August Derleth (1942)

The Riverway law is indeed unique and innovative and is another example of the proud tradition of resource protection in Wisconsin. With the law in place, the people of Wisconsin are assured that the beauty and biological diversity of the river and its valley will remain for generations to come. With the continued sound stewardship of the land by private property owners, the effective and thoughtful management of the resource by the DNR and local authorities, and, with the scrupulous administration of the aesthetic protection regulations by the Riverway Board, the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway will remain one of the gleaming jewels in Wisconsin's natural resources crown.

*"Yet there remains the river, in a few spots hardly changed since Paul Bunyan's day; at early dawn...one can still hear it singing in the wilderness...Perhaps our grandsons, having never seen a river, will never miss the chance to set a canoe in singing waters."*—Aldo Leopold (1947)

For further information regarding the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board and the aesthetic protection regulations, contact Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director, at the address or telephone number or visit the Riverway Board web site at <http://lwr.state.wi.us>.

### Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board

202 N. Wisconsin Ave.  
P.O. Box 187  
Muscoda, WI 53573  
739-3188 or 1-800-221-3792  
FAX (608) 739-4263  
[mark.cupp@wisconsin.gov](mailto:mark.cupp@wisconsin.gov)

## Information Sources

**Boscobel Chamber of Commerce**  
800 Wisconsin Ave.  
Boscobel, WI 53805  
(Grant County)  
608-375-2672  
[www.boscobelwisconsin.com](http://www.boscobelwisconsin.com)  
[bchamber@centurytel.net](mailto:bchamber@centurytel.net)

**Dodgeville Chamber of Commerce**  
338 N. Iowa  
Dodgeville, WI 53533  
(Iowa County)  
608-935-5995,  
877-863-6343  
[www.dodgeville.com](http://www.dodgeville.com)  
[info@dodgeville.com](mailto:info@dodgeville.com)

**Mazomanie Chamber of Commerce**  
Being organized at this time  
608-795-2100

**Muscoda Chamber of Commerce**  
PO Box 587  
Muscoda, WI 56573-0578  
(Grant County)  
608-739-9158  
[www.muscoda.com](http://www.muscoda.com)

**Richland Area Chamber of Commerce**  
PO Box 128  
397 W. Seminary St.  
Richland Center, WI 53581-0128  
(Richland County)  
608-647-6205,  
800-422-1318  
[www.richlandchamber.com](http://www.richlandchamber.com)  
[info@richlandchamber.com](mailto:info@richlandchamber.com)

**Spring Green Area Chamber of Commerce**  
PO Box 3, 259 E. Jefferson St.  
Spring Green, WI 53588-0003  
(Sauk/Iowa Counties)  
608-588-2054  
800-588-2042  
[www.springgreen.com](http://www.springgreen.com)  
[info@springgreen.com](mailto:info@springgreen.com)

**Sauk-Prairie Area Chamber of Commerce**  
421 Water Street, Suite 105  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578  
(Sauk County)  
608-643-4168,  
800-683-2453  
[www.saukprairie.com](http://www.saukprairie.com)  
[information@saukprairie.com](mailto:information@saukprairie.com)

**Prairie du Chien Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Council**  
PO Box 326, 211 S. Main  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821-0326  
608-326-8555  
800-732-1673  
[www.prairieduchien.org](http://www.prairieduchien.org)  
[info@prairieduchien.org](mailto:info@prairieduchien.org)

### Other Publications Available

**The Uplands, Inc.**  
PO Box 202  
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572  
800-279-9472  
[www.uplands.ws](http://www.uplands.ws)  
[swwisc@aol.com](mailto:swwisc@aol.com)

**HiddenValleys, Inc**  
P.O. Box 29  
Richland Center, WI 53581  
608-739-3500  
800-592-6968  
[www.hiddenvalleys.com](http://www.hiddenvalleys.com)  
[hv@mwt.net](mailto:hv@mwt.net)

**Wisconsin Department of Tourism**  
123 W. Washington Ave.  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-266-2161  
800-372-2737 (WI and neighboring states)  
800-432-TRIP (National)  
[www.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.travelwisconsin.com)  
[tourinfo@travelwisconsin.com](mailto:tourinfo@travelwisconsin.com)



## Have Fun, Be Safe

The Wisconsin River is described as the hardest working river in the world. With many dams regulating the flow and providing power for communities along the upper stretches, it may well be. On the Lower Wisconsin Riverway, however, it takes a break from work and flows in a slower lazy manner.... Or does it? The river here often only looks lazy and slow, and the many inviting sandbars can be a trap to the visitor who is not aware of the power hidden from view.

Even at its normal flow, the current is strong enough to sweep a grown adult off their feet, and in only a short time the flow can increase to a strength that can overturn a full-sized car. This flow is often not even noticeable to the person standing on the bank or wading in the shallow water at the edge of a sandbar, but is strong enough that even a strong swimmer may not be able to swim against it.

Even more dangerous is the effect that this current has on the sandy bottom of the river. Sandbars are constantly moving, and the downstream end is often unstable and will not support a person walking on it. Sometimes the sand is even undercut and

an unsuspecting person can step from a few inches of water into a deep hole.

Many people have tragically drowned in the waters of the Wisconsin River because they did not understand or did not respect its power. A few simple things can keep you and your family and friends safe when using the river.

If you wade in the river, wade in pairs and walk on the upstream end of the sandbars.

If you find yourself in deep water, **do not** try to swim upstream. Use your strength to stay on top of the water and float downstream to an area where you can safely get out of the water.

Wear a PFD. Personal flotation devices will keep you on top of the water if you do step into a deep hole. DNR encourages everyone to always wear a life preserver when in or on the river.

Signs have been placed at each point of public access along the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway warning visitors of the current and the drop-offs. Please heed the warnings and be careful when using the river. **Have fun, be safe, and come back again!**

## Lower Wisconsin State Riverway on the Internet

These websites will provide you with some additional information about the Riverway.

**[www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us)** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website. You can link to all DNR information from this site.

**[www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net)** The Wisconsin State Parks website. Will take you directly to Wisconsin State parks information

**<http://lwr.state.wi.us>** The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board site. You can get information pertaining to the Riverway performance standards and contact Riverway Board staff for information and assistance. Also links to interesting related sites.

**[www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel)** Gives you latest road conditions as well as information on detours and construction sites statewide.

**[www.wvic.com](http://www.wvic.com)** Wisconsin Valley Improvement Corporation website. WVIC is the company that maintains the dams on the Wisconsin River upstream from the LWSR. This site contains much information on the Wisconsin River and provides information on water levels and flow conditions upstream.

Most of the Chambers of Commerce within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway also have their own websites. Those sites are listed along with mailing address

and phone information under the heading "Information Sources," elsewhere on this page.



## Emergency Services

The Wisconsin River is normally a calm river, but rapidly changing weather conditions and the sometimes rapidly rising water levels can lead to dangerous situations for persons traveling and camping on the river. Many Riverway users carry cell phones for emergency use. If you do, there are precautions you can take to ensure that the help you need will be able to find you. The Lower Wisconsin Riverway is 93 miles long and borders 7 counties, so it may be difficult for Emergency Services to determine where you are in order to dispatch the nearest agency to assist you. **You should be aware that not everywhere in the River Valley has cell phone service.** However, every county along the Riverway has 911 capabilities, so a call to 911 will reach an emergency dispatcher. The dispatcher, however, will have no way to know exactly where you are unless you are able to tell them. At each landing along the river you will see a sign identifying that landing, and telling you the distance downstream to the next landing. By noting this information, you will know the name of the landing you passed last, and when you passed it. This will enable a dispatcher in any of the counties along the river to dispatch the nearest emergency service agency to your assistance. **Have fun on the river! Be safe!**

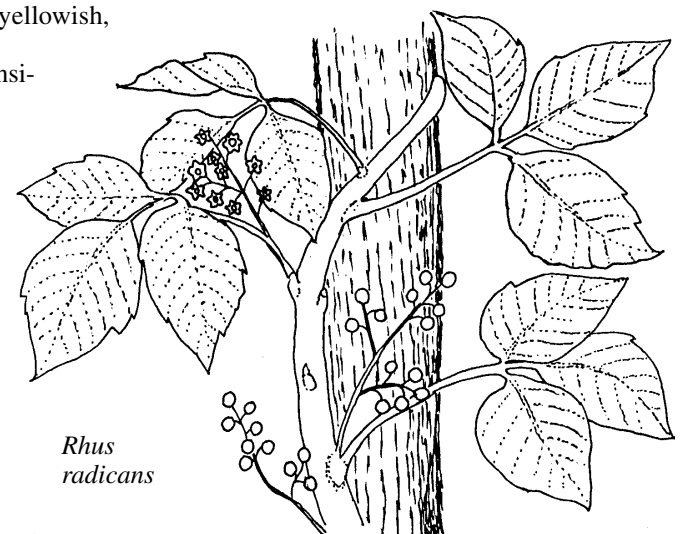
## Poison Ivy

Virtually every island with vegetation and most shoreland areas within the State Riverway contains poison ivy. Learn to recognize its 3 leaves! Poison ivy (*Rhus radicans*) is a member of the cashew family of plants. It grows as a small creeping plant, a climbing vine or as a shrub. The stems are woody. The leaves are alternate with three glossy to dull dark green leaflets; the leaf margin can be wavy, smooth or lobed. From mid-summer through winter many poison ivy plants support dense clusters of pea-sized white berries.

An oil, urushiol, is contained in the leaves, flowers, fruits, bark and roots of poison ivy. It can cause skin irritation, inflammation, itching, and swelling, often followed by yellowish, watery blisters.

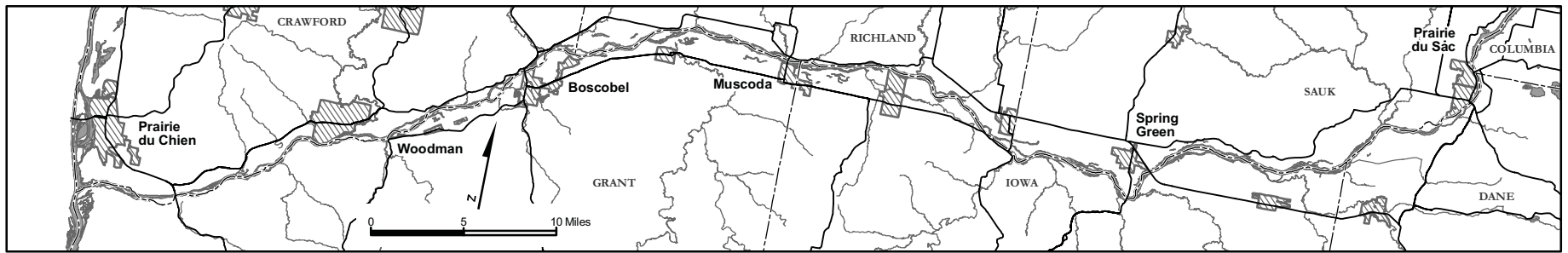
People vary in sensitivity to poison ivy. Some individuals are very sensitive to its effects while others seem to be immune. Symptoms usually appear within 24 hours of exposure, though reaction time can range from a few hours to several days.

Firstaidtreatment



*Rhus radicans*





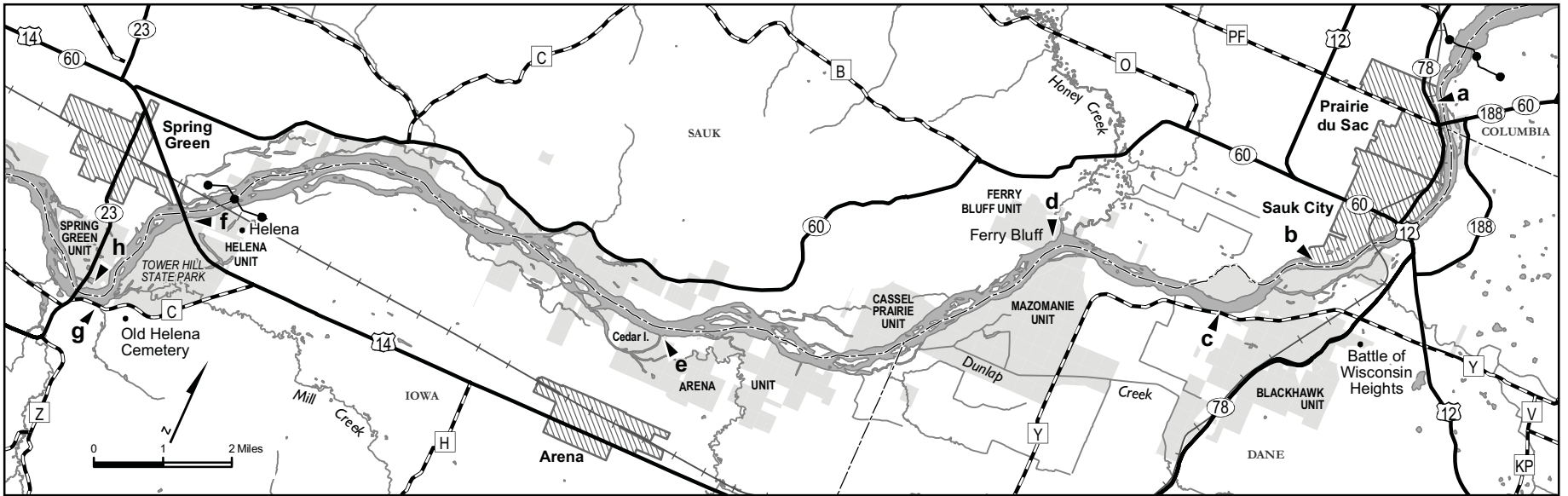
Woodman to Prairie du Chien Segment

Muscodia to Woodman Segment

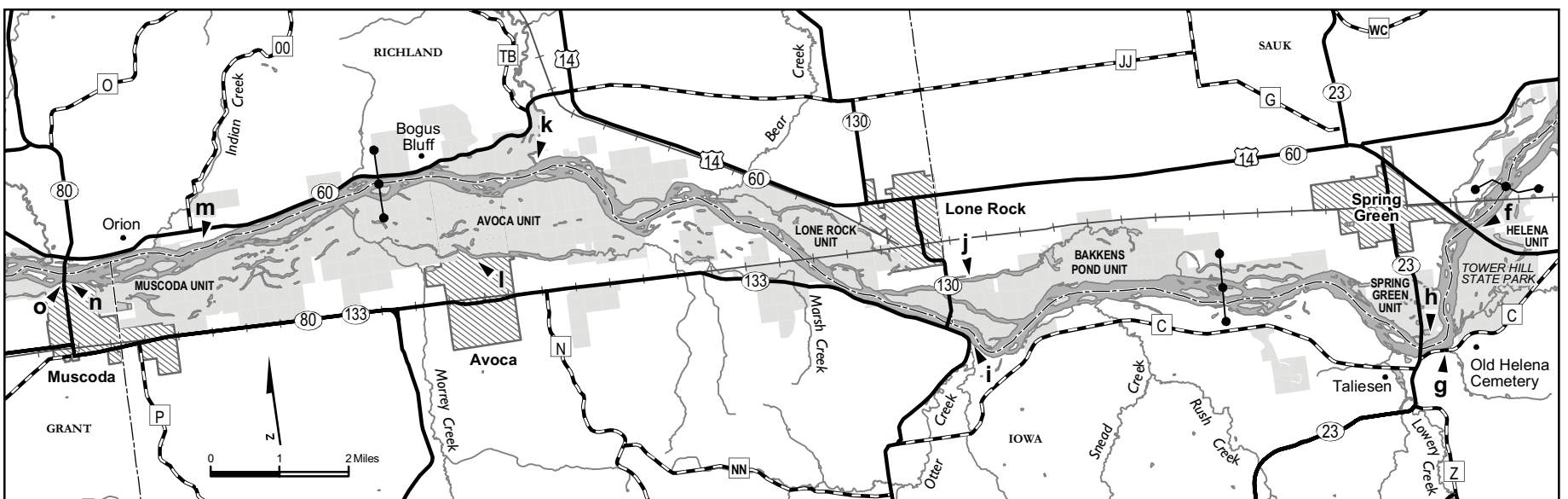
Spring Green to Muscodia Segment

Prairie du Sac to Spring Green Segment

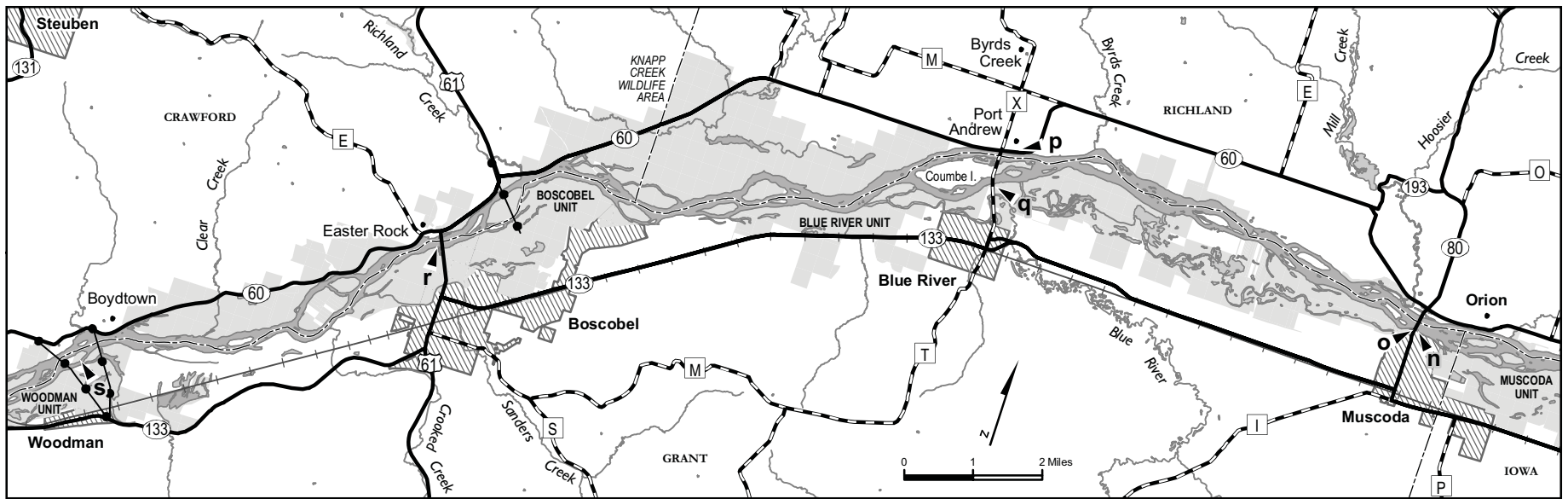
Prairie du Sac to Spring Green Segment



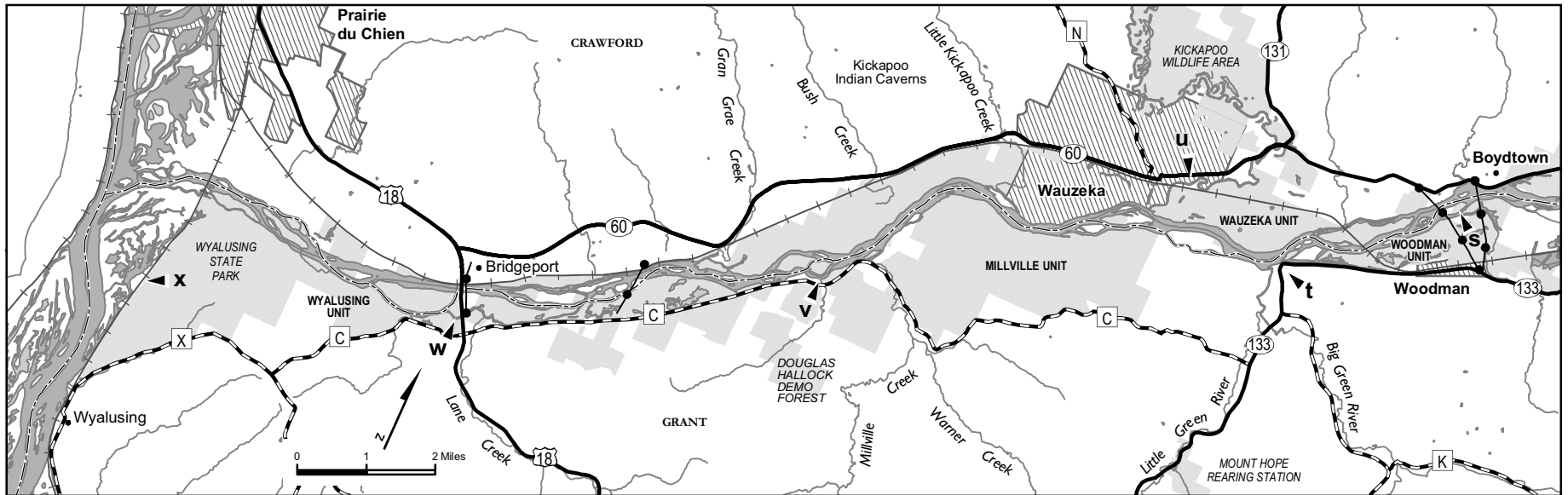
Spring Green to Muscodia Segment



Muscodia to Woodman Segment



Woodman to Prairie du Chien Segment



- Major Access Point
- Lower Wisconsin State Riverway State-owned (DNR) Property
- Powerline River Crossing
- City or Village
- County Boundary

Interactive mapping can be found at [www.dnr.wi.gov](http://www.dnr.wi.gov)

04/2007

04/2007

### Major Public Access Points Shown on Area Maps\*

	Restrooms	Potable Water
a Veterans Memorial Park (Prairie du Sac)	Y	Y
b Sauk City	Y	N
c Town of Mazomanie	Y	N
d Ferry Bluff	N	N
e Arena	Y	N
f Highway 14 Bridge	N	N
g Tower Hill State Park	Y	Y
h Peck's Landing	Y	N
i Otter Creek	N	N
j McKenna Park (Long Lake)	N	N
k Buena Vista Boat Landing (Gotham)	N	N
l Avoca Lake Park (questionable access to river)	Y	Y
m Orion	Y	N
n Riverside Park (Muscodia)	Y	Y
o Muscodia (west side of Hwy. 80)	N	N
p Port Andrews	N	N
q Blue River Recreation Area	Y	N
r Boscobel Recreation Area	Y	Y
s Woodman Lake	N	N
t Woodman Recreation Area (Green River)	Y	N
u Wauzeka Public Landing	Y	Y
v Millville Recreation Area	Y	N
w Bedford Slough and Bridgeport	N	N
x Wyalusing State Park	Y	Y

\* In addition to the access points listed above, several other private and older access points (not maintained or lost to erosion) do exist along the river. Restrooms and water will be available approximately May through mid-September. A Boat Access website can be found at [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/boataccess](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/facilities/boataccess) to find over 2,000 public boat access sites statewide.

## Warning Riverway Recreation is Dangerous— Please Be Careful

**Dropoffs**—The water depth on the downstream side of a sandbar can drop from a few inches to many feet with one step. Water erosion can cause the unexpected collapse of sandbars and shorelines. Walk in pairs and wade upstream on sandbars!

**Current**—Avoid flow through hazards such as tree branches overhanging the shoreline. Even in slow water, these can sweep you out of your boat or capsize your craft.

Do not swim against the current. Float downstream to an area where you can safely get out of the water.

**Flow**—River flow can change overnight with excessive rain or through water level management of Lake Wisconsin that is through the Alliant Energy/Wisconsin Power and Light Company - Prairie du Sac Hydroelectric Project. Learning what the water levels are doing can help you determine if your trip will be difficult in low water times or hazardous if the water is high. You can check the river water level in Muscodia by going to the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service at <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/ahps.cgi?arx&musw3>. You can also call toll free to 1-800-242-1077 to find out how much water in “cubic feet

per second” is being discharged at the Prairie du Sac Dam. Taking note of the river conditions using these services will help you in planning future river trips.

**Drownings**—Drownings can be prevented if Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are worn. A person can disappear under the water in seconds. DNR encourages you to always wear a life preserver when in or on the river.

If You Are Not Prepared To Swim It; Do Not Canoe Or Wade It.

### The Elements

The sun can be devastating to your skin when you're on the river for any length of time. Use sunscreen, bring a hat and always have extra clothing to extend your stay.

Poison ivy is very abundant along the river shore and on all islands. Avoid contact with its three (3) leaves!

Mosquitoes are most abundant near vegetation and backwater of the river. Don't forget the insect repellent!

Water levels can rise quickly if rains occur in or near the river valley. Always secure your canoe and equipment well.

### Emergency

Dial 911



### Popular Canoe Routes

Destination	Miles	Canoeing Time
Sauk City to Arena	11.0	3½ hours
Arena to Spring Green	10.0	3 hours
Spring Green to Muscodia	22.0	6 hours
Muscodia to Blue River	8.0	2 hours
Blue River to Boscobel	10.0	3 hours
Boscobel to Bridgeport	23.0	6 hours

## Limited Access Areas

The area that surrounds the **Mazomanie Beach** is closed to camping or use from **8 p.m. to 6 a.m.** The closed area extends from one mile upstream from the beach to one mile downstream from the beach. A map is available at [www.lwr.state.wi.us](http://www.lwr.state.wi.us) or by contacting the property manager. In addition, there is a posted closed area directly adjacent to the beach that prohibits **any entry for any reason** from April 1 to September 15.

The following areas are closed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. with exceptions for hunters entering during established hunting seasons, provided it is no earlier than one hour prior to the opening of hours or when there are no hunting hour restrictions and fishermen that enter prior to the closing hour for the sole purpose of fishing.

- ❖ Prairie du Bay—Grant County—Boscobel Township

- ❖ Sauk Launch—Sauk City—Prairie du Sac Township

- ❖ WI Heights/Black Hawk Unit—Dane County—Mazomanie Township  
The following areas are posted closed for any entry from November 15 through March 31 as winter eagle roost areas

- ❖ Ferry & Cactus Bluffs—Sauk County—Prairie du Sac Township

- ❖ Roundtop—Dane County—Roxbury Township

- ❖ West of Clifton Rd.—Dane County—Roxbury Township

### Camping

Camping is restricted to no more than 3 days on State owned islands and sandbars. Camping at these locations is restricted to persons and their equipment arriving

by watercraft only. A camping permit is not required.

### Restrictions on Transporting Firewood

In order to prevent the movement of invasive forest insects and diseases, firewood burned must originate from within the state and within 50 miles from the property where the wood will be used. Firewood from sources approved by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is allowable. Firewood includes all wood, processed or unprocessed, intended for use in a campfire. The Department may seize and dispose of firewood possessed in violation of this rule. For more information on firewood regulations, please visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/firewood/>

## Boat And Canoe Rentals

Private vendors along the Wisconsin River can help you plan your trip as well as provide rental services. Rentals are usually by the hour, day, or longer. Shuttle services may be available. Be sure to ask about anticipated changes in river flow and island or sandbar camping.

**Bob's Riverside Resort**  
S13220 Shifflet Road  
Spring Green, WI 53588  
608-588-2826  
[www.bobsriverside.com](http://www.bobsriverside.com)  
[bobs@mhtc.net](mailto:bobs@mhtc.net)

**Sauk-Prairie Canoe Center, LLC**  
500 Water Street  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
608-643-6589  
[www.spcanoorentals.com](http://www.spcanoorentals.com)

**Erick's Adventures.LLC**  
6901 High Point Rd.  
Arena, WI 53503  
312-925-0287  
[www.ericksadventures.com](http://www.ericksadventures.com)  
[info@ericksadventures.com](mailto:info@ericksadventures.com)

**Wisconsin River Outings**  
715 Wisconsin Ave.  
Boscobel, WI 53805  
7554 St. Hwy. 12  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
866-41CANOE  
[www.86641canoe.com](http://www.86641canoe.com)  
[Scottat@yahoo.com](mailto:Scottat@yahoo.com)

**Blackhawk River Runs**  
PO Box 57  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
608-643-6724

**Bluff View Canoe Rental**  
614 Spruce St.  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
608-643-8247

**Trader's Canoe Rentals**  
6147 Hwy 14  
Arena, WI 53503  
608-588-7282  
800-871-0115

[www.tradersbarandgrill.biz](http://www.tradersbarandgrill.biz)  
[traders@tradersbarandgrill.biz](mailto:traders@tradersbarandgrill.biz)

**River View Hills**  
24678 St. Hwy 60  
Muscodia, WI 53753  
608-739-3472  
[bremmer@mwt.net](mailto:bremmer@mwt.net)

**Captain's Cove**  
13389 USH 18 & 35  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821  
608-994-2860  
[captainscovecanoeing.com](http://captainscovecanoeing.com)  
[hklotz@tds.net](mailto:hklotz@tds.net)

**Willy & Nellies Canoe Rentals**  
400 W. Blackhawk Ave.  
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821  
608-326-8202

**Wauzeka Canoe Rental**  
1304 E. Main  
Wauzeka, WI 53826  
608-875-6766

**Waz Inn**  
234 Oak St.  
Lone Rock, WI 53556  
608-583-2086

**Wyalusing State Park Concession Canoe & Kayak Rentals**  
13081 State Park Lane  
Bagley, WI 53801  
608-996-2333  
(May thru mid-October)  
[www.wyalusing.org](http://www.wyalusing.org)

**Hubl's Motel (rowboats only)**  
41120 Hwy 60  
Boscobel, WI 53805  
608-375-4277

**K and E Fishing Haven**  
(motor boats, boat launch)  
7554 Hwy 12  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
608-643-3243

## Riverway Camping

**Veteran's Memorial Park**  
VFW Drive  
Prairie du Sac, WI 53578  
608-643-6848

**Cedar Hills Campground**  
9798 Dunlap Hollow Road  
Mazomanie, WI 53560  
608-795-2606

**Tower Hill State Park**  
5808 County Hwy C  
Spring Green, WI 53588  
608-588-2116

**Bob's Riverside Resort**  
S13220 Shifflet Road  
Spring Green, WI 53588  
608-588-2826  
[www.bobsriverside.com](http://www.bobsriverside.com)  
[brhs@mhtc.net](mailto:brhs@mhtc.net)

**Valley RV Park**  
E5016 Hwy 14 and 23  
Spring Green, WI 53588  
608-588-2717

**Snuffy's Campside**  
7539 Hwy 12  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
608-643-8353  
[www.snuffyscampground.com](http://www.snuffyscampground.com)  
[info@snuffyscampground.com](mailto:info@snuffyscampground.com)

**Victoria Riverside Park**  
River Road, P.O. Box 106  
Muscodia, WI 53753  
608-739-4094  
[www.muscoda.com](http://www.muscoda.com)  
[rivercamping53573@yahoo.com](mailto:rivercamping53573@yahoo.com)

**Wyalusing State Park**  
13081 State Park Lane  
Bagley, WI 53801  
608-996-2261  
[www.wyalusing.org](http://www.wyalusing.org)



# State Riverway Valley— Diverse and Abundant Resources

*Selection from A Voyagers Guide to the Lower Wisconsin River by Stan Nichols*

## The Valley of the Wisconsin

The geography of the Lower Wisconsin River is strikingly different from its upper stretches. Geographically, the Lower Wisconsin starts near the site of the Prairie du Sac dam. Heading north by car from Sauk City you drive over a small rise a short ways past the dam site on Highway 78 which is the terminal moraine from the last glaciation. Below this point the river flows westward through a great gorge which has been unaltered by past glacial activity. Looking to the north or south you can see the walls of the gorge rising abruptly 300 to 400 feet. The gorge is over four miles wide at Prairie du Sac, narrowing to two miles at Muscoda and a half mile at Bridgeport.

## Drop and Speed

The river descends slowly through the gorge on its way to the Mississippi—dropping approximately 1½ feet per mile. River currents upstream range from 3 to 5 miles per hour, but the average speed at Muscoda is only 1 to 2 miles per hour. The Lower Wisconsin River has no rapids or falls. It is clearly a river for people who like to travel at a leisurely pace.

## Soft Stone—Wide Valley

The walls of the gorge are sandstones and limestones, laid down by the shallow seas of Cambrian and Ordovician times. The Cambrian sandstones dominate the valley walls on the Sauk City end of the river. This sandstone is relatively soft and has allowed the river to carve a valley much wider than at Bridgeport where the harder Ordovician age dolomites dominate the bluffs.

## Migrating Sand Bars

Because of the gentle drop, the slow current of the river is neither cutting down nor building up its bed. It erodes soil horizontally, scooping sediment from the outside of one meandering loop and depositing it on the inside of the next loop. The shore can lose or gain a lot of ground that way. The sandbars migrate downstream, like lazy canoers. Some move very slowly; other sandbars, however, travel downstream as much as 800 feet per year. The river carries over ten tons of sediment a day past Muscoda.

## The Rich Flora

The plant life of the Lower Wisconsin River is very diverse. About 34 species of plants are found in the Wisconsin driftless (unglaciated) area that are found nowhere else in the state. Other species are more common here than elsewhere because of migration patterns or unique habitats.

The steep cliffs and sand barrens are examples of unique habitats which support uncommon plants. A small, little known plant, *Sullivantia renifolia* is found only on steep cliffs in the driftless area. Its closest relatives grow on cliffs in southern Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. Buttonweed, found only in Wisconsin on the sand blows north of Arena, is another example.

Some plant species more characteristic of southern states were able to move up the Mississippi River Valley over long periods of time and grow along the Lower Wisconsin. American lotus, buttonbush, honey locust and river birch are examples of such species.

Some species may have had a larger range which was cut off by glacial ice. They disperse slowly and have failed to move back into glaciated country.

## The Diverse Landscape

The landscape along the Lower Wisconsin is complex and hard to read. Because of periodic flooding and the sandy soil, a few feet of change in elevation can make the difference between a floodplain forest and a sand barren. The vegetation of the river valley falls into seven basic types: bottomland forest, wetlands, prairies, blows and bars, upland forest, savanna, cliffs.



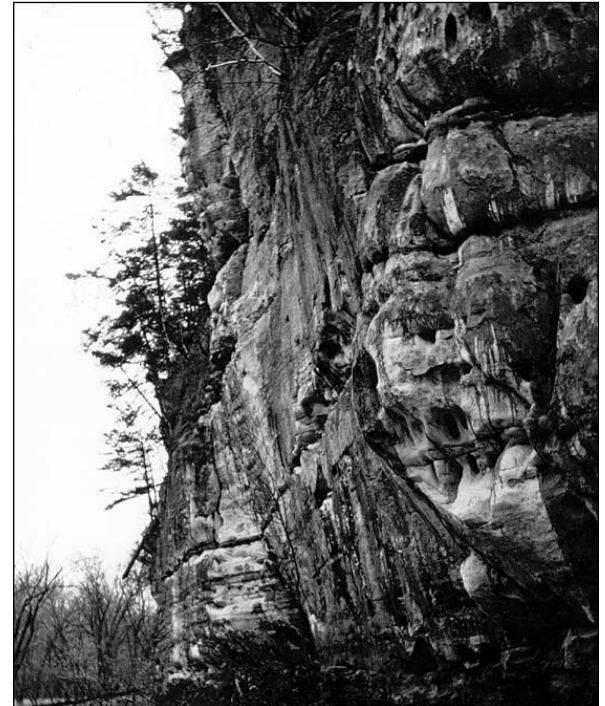
Watchable wildlife opportunities are abundant within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway with 285 bird and 45 mammal species challenging your observation abilities.

# Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Fund

The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Fund was created by Mr. Paul Brandt of Boscobel, a DNR wildlife Manager for 33 years who passed away in September of 2006. Before he died, Mr. Brandt created this endowed fund through the Natural Resources Foundation's Wisconsin Conservation Endowment to permanently support the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' wildlife habitat restoration and management activities along the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. Mr. Brandt helped build the Fund during his lifetime, and left a last gift to the Fund in his will. It was his hope that others who utilize the Riverway and who care deeply about its health will contribute to its protection through additional gifts to the Fund.

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for individuals and organizations who care about the conservation of Wisconsin's lands, waters and wildlife to: deepen their understanding and appreciation of these resources; support state and local conservation programs; and establish conservation endowments. For more information

on the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, or the Lower Wisconsin Riverway Fund, visit [www.wisconsinconservation.org](http://www.wisconsinconservation.org), call toll-free (866) 264-4096, email [info@wisconsinconservation.org](mailto:info@wisconsinconservation.org) or write the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, P.O. Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701.



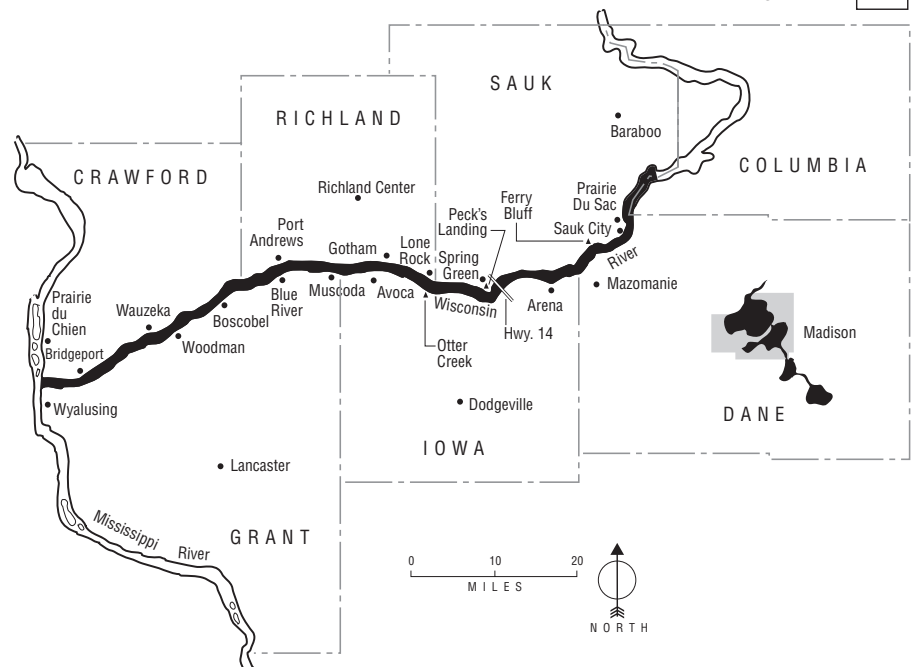
The steep cliffs of southwestern Wisconsin provide a unique environment for certain very rare plants as well as aesthetic splendor.

# Mileage Between Popular Landings

	Ferry Bluff	Mazomanie	Arena	Hwy 14	Peck's Landing	Otter Creek	Lone Rock	Gotham	Muscoda	Blue River	Boscobel	Woodman	Wauzeka	Bridgeport	Wyalusing
Sauk City	5	6	11	21	23	31	32	36	43	51	61	67	73	84	90
Ferry Bluff	1	6	11	18	24	25	31	38	46	56	62	68	79	85	
Mazomanie		7	16	17	23	24	30	37	45	55	61	67	78	84	
Arena			10	12	18	19	25	32	40	50	56	62	73	79	
Hwy 14				2	8	9	15	22	30	40	46	52	63	69	
Peck's Landing					6	7	13	20	28	38	44	50	61	67	
Otter Creek						1	7	14	22	32	38	44	55	61	
Lone Rock							6	13	21	31	37	43	54	60	
Gotham								7	15	25	31	37	48	54	
Muscoda									8	18	24	30	41	47	
Blue River										10	16	22	33	39	
Boscobel											6	12	23	29	
Woodman												6	17	23	
Wauzeka													11	17	
Bridgeport														6	



The Lower Wisconsin State Riverway traverses seven counties and at least 15 communities.





# History Along the Lower Wisconsin

For thousands of years, long before European explorers and entrepreneurs entered the Lower Wisconsin region, native people recognized the importance of the Mississippi River and her tributaries as a water highway system. The Fox-Wisconsin riverway provided a valuable link between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Raw materials and finished goods from all over the continent travelled the river system in trade networks dating back over 3000 years.

## Before Columbus

Archaeologists have found evidence of people in the Lower Wisconsin region as early as 10,000 years ago. By 1000 BC, the rich natural resources of the floodplains, terraces and upland bluffs had attracted people who settled along the riverway. Social and religious gatherings, held in the warmer months when food was plentiful, brought people from surrounding camps together for ceremonies and trade. Pottery making appeared around this time and similarities in design linked the inhabitants of the Lower Wisconsin to traditions along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers to the south.

Around the time of Christ, the first intercontinental trade network developed. Traders from the Hopewell culture, originating in Ohio, spread goods and ideas through what is now the eastern United States, using the rivers as highways. Copper from Lake Superior, shell from the Gulf of Mexico, mica from Georgia, obsidian from Wyoming and flint from North Dakota are just a few of the items that travelled the Wisconsin river at this time. These traders also brought their culture with them and we find vestiges of burial practices, pottery design, and economic and political organization interwoven with local customs.

By AD 600, the influence of the Hopewell culture had disappeared and a local tradition, called Late Woodland, flourished. This tradition is unique to the area encompassing southwest Wisconsin, and portions of eastern Iowa, northern Illinois and southeastern Minnesota. The most pronounced features of Late Woodland sites are earthworks built in the form of birds, animals and reptiles. Numerous examples of these mounds are found on the bluffs and terraces of the Lower Wisconsin. Associated with the mounds are villages where these people lived. This

tradition continued until about 1300 AD and it was during this time period that the bow and arrow and corn agriculture were introduced to the region.

## Exploration

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European explorers and fur traders recognized the importance of the river highway. Nicolet, Radisson and Groseilliers, and Marquette and Joliet traversed the rivers between Prairie du Chien and Green Bay on their way to claim lands for France. Entrepreneurs such as La Salle and Perrot established trading relations with the native people they found along the rivers.

In 1766, Jonathan Carver described his journey down the Lower Wisconsin. Near present day Prairie du Sac, Carver sighted a large village occupied by Sauk Indians whose chief was Pyesa, the father of Black Hawk. Two years after Carver's visit, the Sauk moved their village to the Rock River in Illinois.

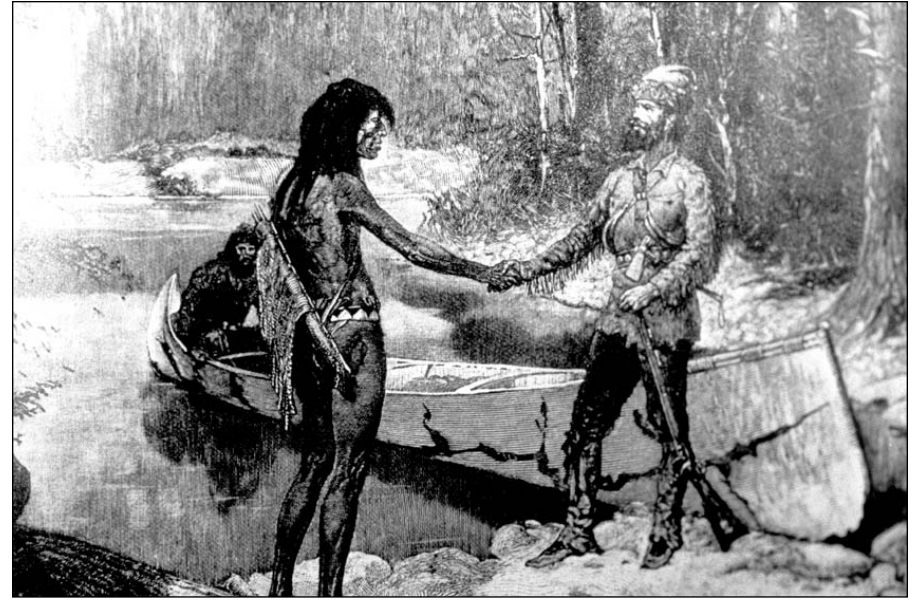
It was in this village, Saukenauk, that the seeds of the Black Hawk War were sown.

## Black Hawk War

The importance of the lead mines of the Lower Wisconsin region was recognized as early as the American Revolution. The Sauk and Fox Indians, under the direction of Julien DuBuque, shipped large quantities of lead to American markets in the east. In 1804, the Sauk and Fox entered into a treaty with the United States government. This treaty caused thirty years of unrest, culminating in the Black Hawk War of 1832.

The United States government began leasing mines in 1817 and by the 1830s, the region was the most densely populated area in the Northwest territories. The increasing number of skirmishes between settlers and Indians led to the construction of two military forts along the Lower Wisconsin; Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien and Fort Winnebago at the portage of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers. In 1831, the United States government moved the Sauk and Fox from their Illinois lands to the western side of the Mississippi.

In April of 1832, Black Hawk and 1200 men, women and children crossed the Mississippi to return to their village on the Rock River. This crossing began a four month long conflict called the Black



Early native Americans used the Wisconsin River for hunting, fishing, and traveling. River tribes included Chippewa, Ho-Chunk, Sac and Fox.

Hawk War. 4500 American regular and volunteer troops chased Black Hawk and his band through northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The war ended with the Battle of Bad Axe where all of the band except Black Hawk and few of his followers were captured or killed. Black Hawk was taken prisoner three weeks later. The war had cost the Americans about 200 men in the fighting, less than 150 of Black Hawk's band had survived.

One of the most important encounters of the war, called the Battle of Wisconsin Heights, occurred at a crossing on the Lower Wisconsin River south of Prairie du Sac. Black Hawk hurried his starving band to the river with soldiers in close pursuit. Greatly outnumbered, the Sauk chief and a few warriors stopped the troops advance as the remainder of the band built rafts to cross the river. The battle lasted for two hours in pouring rain until sunset. The American soldiers camped at the base of the bluffs that evening ready to resume fighting at the first sign of daylight. At sunrise, they found that Black Hawk had moved his band across the Wisconsin during the night and disappeared into the rugged country north of the river. Black Hawk's strategy in this battle has been acclaimed as one of the most skilled in the American Indian Wars.

By 1848, when Wisconsin became a state, steamboats plied the river. Communities grew up along the river competing for

leadership in the transportation industry. The railroad entered the area in the 1850s and bypassed the river communities as it sought a more direct overland route between the major ports and cities.

Even though the Lower Wisconsin is no longer used for transportation of people and goods to major markets, the shores and valleys of the river still hold the echoes of its former glory. Thousands of years of human occupation remain buried within the valley walls. Keeping the river free of intensive development will ensure that this history will be preserved for generations to come.

Wisconsin law protects both Native American and Euro-American archaeological sites on state-owned lands and streambeds. Many of these sites contain features which are sacred to contemporary Indian tribes. Please help preserve the rich heritage of the river by leaving the sites undisturbed.



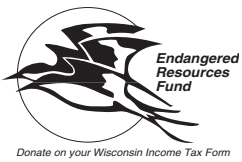
The Hopewell culture arrived in the Wisconsin River Valley about the time of Christ. Earthworks in the form of birds, animals, and reptiles were a local tradition called Late Woodland.

## Map of Mounds Sites Available

For persons interested in visiting effigy mounds sites in the Riverway and surrounding area, a beautiful brochure/map is available. The Effigy Mounds Grand Tour provides a map for self-guided tours of a variety of mound sites. The sites are located on federal, state, tribal and private lands, most of which are located in or near the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. Access to the sites ranges from easy (drive to the site) to adventurous (park and hike). Some sites provide beautiful vistas and some sites are accessible by watercraft. The map was produced by a not-for-profit organization, Cultural Landscape Legacies, Inc., which is devoted to protection and preservation of mounds and other archeological sites in the Upper Midwest.

To obtain a copy of the Effigy Mounds Grand Tour brochure, contact the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board at 1-800-221-3792 or 608-739-3188 or by e-mail at [mark.cupp@wisconsin.gov](mailto:mark.cupp@wisconsin.gov). For more information on Cultural Landscape Legacies, visit the Web site at [www.clli.org](http://www.clli.org).

## Endangered Resources



The State Riverway protects a fantastic array of endangered, threatened and uncommon plant and animal species! Twenty Natural Areas cover over 6,000 acres provide an environment vital to the survival of several natural communities. State Natural Areas are established to protect examples of all types of biotic communities and other significant features native to the state...for education, research, and most

importantly to secure long term protection of the state's genetic diversity for benefit of future generations. Some state natural areas along the Lower Wisconsin Riverway are Blue River Sand Barrens, Avoca Prairie-Savanna, and Ferry Bluff.

The globally rare fame flower, *Talinum rugospermum*, is found in the valley. Other endangered or threatened plant species include pink milkwort, yellow giant hyssop, round-stemmed false foxglove, tubercled orchid and wild quinine. Threatened wildlife include bald eagles and red-shouldered hawks. Other wildlife of special concern includes Cerulean warbler, bobolink, Arcadian flycatcher, Kentucky warbler and osprey.

Other endangered, threatened or special concern species include 13 types of fish, 10 mussels, 2 amphibians and 7 reptiles. The Pecatonica River mayfly recently found in Grant County waters was thought to be extinct in Wisconsin!

In total, 62 species of endangered, threatened or special concern status exist within the State Riverway boundaries. Future protection and management will ensure we can all continue to enjoy unusual educational opportunities along the Wisconsin River!

## Wyalusing State Park



The last bluff west marks the western reaches of the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway and the site of one of Wisconsin's most beautiful state parks—Wyalusing.

The bluff overlook alone makes your trip to this 2,600 acre park worthwhile as the view of the Wisconsin River joining with the Mississippi provides an awe-inspiring site.

The park offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities including family and group campsites. Reservations for family and group campsites can be made 11 months in advance by calling Reserve America at 888-947-2757 or online at [www.wiparks.net](http://www.wiparks.net). The Hugh Harper indoor Group Camp offers indoor lodging for 108 people. The facility consists of four dormitories and a main lodge with a fully equipped kitchen and dining facilities. Each dormitory has showers, sinks and flush toilets. Reservations are made

through the park office up to one year in advance.

The park is accessible by boat and canoe from the Mississippi River. Canoeists should watch for canoe trail signs as they enter from the west for a chance to enjoy a twisting, winding tour of river bottoms in a great watchable wildlife showroom! Canoe and kayak rental is available at the park concession. The park maintains a marked canoe trail through the backwater of the Mississippi River.

Showers are available in the Homestead and the Wisconsin Ridge Campgrounds. Firewood can be purchased at the park concession stand. Nature programs are provided by the park naturalist. The nature center is located next to the concession stand in the Peterson Shelter adjoining the Wisconsin Ridge Campground.

Admission stickers are required on all vehicles. Camping and reservation fees are in addition to admission stickers. Visit [www.wyalusing.org](http://www.wyalusing.org) or call 608-996-2261 for more information.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

This publication is available in alternate format (large print, Braille, audio tape, etc) upon request. Please call 608-266-0823 for more information.



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JG



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Lower Wisconsin State Riverway  
1500 N. Johns Street  
Dodgeville, WI 53533

## Riverway Forests

The forest community provides scenic background for river users, habitat for wildlife, and fiber for consumption. All timber within the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway boundary is protected by performance standards administered by the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board. There are several major forest types within the riverway.

### Bottomland Hardwoods

Also known as floodplain forest or southern wet-mesic forest, this is the dominant forest type (28,000 acres) in the riverway. Seasonally flooded and typically growing on river-deposited, poorly drained soils, this forest type contains more species of trees than any other type in Wisconsin.

The floodplain is dominated by silver maple, river birch, swamp white oak, American elm, green and black ashes, cottonwood, and black willow. Of interest is the presence of sycamore. Although a common tree south of Wisconsin, sycamore is a rare species of "special concern" in the state. Small populations exist near Arena in Iowa County and near Gotham in Richland County.

### Upland Hardwoods

Found primarily on hillsides and ridgetops, upland hardwoods within the river corridor include the southern mesic (moist), dry-mesic (medium moist) and dry forest types. Mesic forests, found generally on moister, north and east-facing slopes, are

dominated by sugar maple, basswood, red oak and white ash. On slightly dryer slopes, dry-mesic forest of white and red oaks, with ironwood and basswood predominates.

The most xeric (dry) sites—ridgetops, etc.—are wooded with forests of black and white oaks, shagbark hickory, and black cherry. Several other tree species such as a black walnut, hackberry, burr oak and red maple are also found in the upland forests. Upland hardwoods cover over 17,000 acres of the State Riverway.

The oak timber types are of special concern. Changes in land use since pre-settlement times (1840) have made natural regeneration by oak species more difficult. Additionally the commercial value and beauty of the wood creates a high demand for harvest of mature trees. Therefore, to insure oak for all uses by future generations in Wisconsin a forest management plan should be followed. Forest management plans can be prepared by private forest consultants or by foresters with the Wisconsin DNR.

Plans should reflect the goals of the forest landowner, and individual concerns should be identified before consulting a forester. Enjoy your woodland and enjoy the river valley. Persons seeking forestry assistance can contact a DNR Lower Wisconsin Riverway Forester at 608/588-2591.

## Step Back in Time at Tower Hill



The area now known as Tower Hill State Park was already ancient when the first white explorers saw it in 1673. They were Pere Jaques Marquette and Joliet who passed this way as they explored the Wisconsin River.

It was better known but still only lightly populated in 1830 when Daniel Whitney of Green Bay noticed the sharply rising bluff as he traveled the river. He was a businessman and saw potential here for construction of a shot tower. Thomas Bolton Shaunce arrived in 1831 and spent 187 days over the next two years digging the 120-foot deep shaft and the 90-foot tunnel between the shaft and the riverbank so that the shot tower could be built. This was the beginning of a flurry of growth and prosperity that lasted for about 30 years as the shot making business flourished.

The village of Helena was built on the river's edge near the shot tower, but was torn down during the Black Hawk Indian War when the US Army needed materials to raft its men and supplies across the river in pursuit of Black Hawk. Undaunted, the

villagers rebuilt Helena and persisted until 1860 when the shot tower was closed. The final chapter came when the railroad passed Helena by and it simply ceased to exist.

The next stage in the history of the area began in 1889. The Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, a Unitarian minister from Chicago purchased the site as a retreat for his fellow ministers. Upon his death, his widow donated the land to the State of Wisconsin and in 1922 it became Tower Hill State Park. The shelter and the foundation of Jones' stone barn still stand as remnants of his time here.

The wooden shaft and the smelter house at the top have been rebuilt and a video program and displays show how shot was made when the Shot Tower was in operation. A picnic area, hiking trails, canoe landing and a 15-site campground are also available for the use and enjoyment of park visitors. The park is open May–October.

Additional information is available by contacting: Tower Hill State Park, 5808 Cty C, Spring Green, WI 53588, or calling 608/588-2116.

