# Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

# Village of Argyle

April 07, 2021









PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY



# **Resolution Adopting the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

WHEREAS, the Village of Argyle has recognized the need for a Comprehensive Outdoor
Recreation Plan based upon an inventory of outdoor recreation facilities and natural resources
within the Village, Lafayette County, and Southwest Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the development of the plan will serve as a guide for making future decisions related to outdoor recreation in the Village of Argyle and through its adoption will make the Village eligible to participate in state and federal recreation aid programs; and

WHEREAS this comprehensive outdoor recreation plan has been prepared for the Argyle Village Board by Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission; and

WHERAS, this recreation plan is based on sound planning principles and long-range goals and objectives for the Village's recreational development;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board for the Village of Argyle hereby goes on record to adopt the Village of Argyle Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as the Village's guide for future outdoor recreation improvements and development;

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village board requests the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to provide eligibility to the Village of Argyle for participation in the state and federal cost-sharing programs for an additional five-year period.

Dated this  $\frac{7^{\text{H}}}{\text{day of }}$   $\frac{April}{\text{pril}}$ , 2021

VILLAGE OF ARGYLE

Thomas Moore, President

Sandra Flannery, Clerk

#### ATTEST:

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the resolution passed by the Village Board of the Village of Argyle at the regular meeting thereof held on this 7th day of Ari/2021.

Sandra Flannery, Clerk

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# **Table of Contents**

| Executive Summary                               | 4  |
|---|----|
| Introduction                                    | 5  |
| Goals and Objectives                            | 6  |
| Definitions and Classifications                 | 7  |
| Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan | 9  |
| Planning Process                                | 10 |
| Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation Plans    | 12 |
| Description of Planning Region                  | 13 |
| Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory             | 22 |
| Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment             | 24 |
| Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation          | 25 |
| Appendix A: Capital Improvement Schedule        | 27 |
| Appendix B: Maps                                | 28 |

# **Executive Summary**

## **Purpose**

This plan is an update of the Argyle's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) prepared in 2015. Specifically, this plan will guide the development and improvement of the village's outdoor recreation facilities over the next five years in order to meet therecreational needs and demands of local residents.

Policy decisions made by the Argyle Park Commission and the Argyle Village Board for park programs and improvements shall be guided by the goals, objectives, findings, and recommendations of this adopted plan. Actual policy decisions are contingent on funding sources, new opportunities, changing growth patterns, budget priorities, and changing community needs and desires. For this reason the plan should be reviewed annually and a detailed update such as this should be completed every five years. Updating the plan every five years is also a requirement of the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) for a community such as Argyle to stay eligible for matching government funds for parkland acquisition and facility improvements. But just as importantly, the Village of Argyle needs to set a course of action for continued improvement of its parks and outdoor recreational system.

#### Goals

The Village of Argyle obviously takes pride in this role by virtue of its excellent park system. The goals and objectives below are vital to the efforts in providing this important service

- Continue to provide excellent maintenance to Argyle's parks and recreation facilities
  - Continue to make Argyle more handicap accessible by incorporating updates into the formal maintenance schedule
  - Provide additional park amenities and facilities in existing parks including playground equipment, sports equipment, picnic tables, grills, benches and others.
  - Continue to provide excellent equipment maintenance, repairing and replacing items like trash cans, water fountains, and recycling bins.
- Develop new parks and recreational facilities that meet the needs of Argyle residents and visitors
  - Create a less-steep boat ramp on the southern branch of the Pecatonica River to provide easier access to the shallow portion of the river
  - Develop a Recreational Vehicle campsite on the river near the Old Dam Fishing Site and the Argyle Boat Launch
- Continue to utilize existing funding streams and find new funding solutions for Argyle's park system
  - Explore new funding opportunities for updating and expanding existing park equipment
  - Continue to cooperate and coordinate work with the school district, county, and state agencies to provide efficient outdoor recreation programs and opportunities.

## Recommendations

Under the current park and open space classification system, Argyle has ample park space provided for its population of 919 people. Instead of focusing on providing additional park spaces, this plan's recommendation features two distinct focuses: 1) to strengthen existing park assets though ongoing maintenance improvements and by providing additional park amenities 2) to strategically enhance opportunities and connections to the Pecatonica River. More detailed information on recommendations for outdoor recreation within the Village of Argyle can be found in the "Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation" section on page 25.



Image 1: Erickson Wetlands



# Introduction

This comprehensive outdoor recreation plan for the Village of Argyle is an expression of the community's goals for and objectives for current and future needs for recreational facilities. The intent of this document is to plan for the maintenance and improvement of Argyle's recreational and open space resources by outlining a strategy to manage existing resources and to develop new resources to meet future needs and demands.

Parks can serve a limited neighborhood area, a portion of the community, or the entire community or region and provide area and families for outdoor recreation for residents and visitors. Open space can take the form of parks, greenbelts, wetlands, and floodplains. Open space can also serve many functions for a community other than recreation, such as the following:

- Preservation of scenic and natural resources
- Flood management
- Protecting the area's water resources
- Preserving prime agricultural land
- Limiting development that may occur
- Buffering incompatible land uses
- Structuring the community environment

A parks and facilities plan should incorporate private as well as public open space areas in the community. The development and continual updating of the outdoor recreation plan becomes a valuable asset to a community and contributes to its stability and attractiveness.

# **Plan Purpose**

This plan is an update of the Argyle Outdoor Recreation Plan prepared in 2015. The specific purpose of this plan is to guide the development and improvement of the village's outdoor recreation facilities over the next five years in order to meet the recreational needs and demands of local residents.



Policy decisions made by the Argyle Park Commission and the Argyle Village Board for park programs and improvements shall be guided by the goals, objectives, findings, and recommendations of this adopted plan. Actual public policy decisions are contingent on funding sources, new opportunities, changing growth patterns, budget priorities, and changing community needs and desires. For this reason the plan should be reviewed annually and a detailed update such as this should be completed every five years. Updating the plan every five years is also a requirement of the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for a community such as Argyle to stay eligible for matching government funds for parkland acquisition and facility improvements. But just as importantly, the Village of Argyle needs to set a course of action for continued improvement of its parks and outdoor recreational system.

Image 2: American Legion Community Park Walkway



# **Goals and Objectives**

One of the most important roles of local government is its responsibility to provide open space, parks and recreation facilities and programs for public use. The Village of Argyle obviously takes pride in this role by virtue of its excellent park system. This portion of the Updated Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is to provide village officials with some general policies to show in guiding the future growth and development of Argyle's park system and outdoor recreation facilities. The goals and objectives below are vital to the efforts in providing this important service.

- Continue to provide excellent maintenance to Argyle's parks and recreation facilities
  - Continue to make Argyle more handicap accessible by incorporating updates into the formal maintenance schedule
  - Provide additional park amenities and facilities in existing parks including playground equipment, sports equipment, picnic tables, grills, benches and others.
  - Continue to provide excellent equipment maintenance, repairing and replacing items like trash cans, water fountains, and recycling bins.
- Develop new parks and recreational facilities that meet the needs of Argyle residents and visitors
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  - Continue to cooperate and coordinate work with the school district, county, and state agencies to provide efficient outdoor recreation programs and opportunities.



# **Definitions and Classifications**

## **Recreation Open Space Need Standards**

Standards can be a good starting point or reference when determining a community's outdoor recreation land and facility needs, however each community's needs are different based on such factors as a community's demographic profile and what types of facilities and outdoor recreation priorities the citizenry deem important.

Resident input in the form of surveys and/or public hearings are also important when recreation and park planners look at future development and/or preservation of public lands. Based on recommendations from the DNR and SWWRPC the standard of 12 acres of developed park lands/open space per 1,000 population is used throughout this plan. This figure is viewed as a target number when recreation and park planners analyze a community's park, recreation land, and open space composition. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) endorsed a park and open space classification system which will serve as a guide for the Village of Argyle.

NRPA's standards have been modified to more accurately define park, recreation land, and open spaces within the Village of Argyle. For example, NRPA recommends that a Neighborhood Park/Playground have a desirable size of 15+ acres. In Argyle, most parks of this nature are in the 1 to 10 acre range. This has been noted in the definition section below. All parks, recreation lands and open space under the jurisdiction of the Village of Argyle or the Argyle School district have been assigned one primary classification or code using the following titles and abbreviations:

- M-P: Mini Park (or Tot Lot)
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 acre or less
  - Service Area: 1/8 1/4 mile
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 0.5 1.0 acre
  - Use: Specialize facilities that serve a concentration of limited population or groups such as senior citizens or young children
  - Site Characteristics: Within neighborhoods and in close proximity to concentrations of family housing or housing for the elderly
- NP/P: Neighborhood Park/Playground
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 1 to 10 acres
  - Service Area: 1/4 1/2 mile radius
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 2 3 acres
  - Use: Area for intense recreational activities such as field games, court games, crafts, playground apparatus area, ice skating, picnicking, volleyball, etc.
  - Site Characteristics: Suited for intense development; easily accessible to neighborhood population; geographically centered with safe walking and biking access. May be developed as a joint school/park facility
- C/CP: Community Park
  - Desirable/Typical Size: 10 to 25 acres
  - Service Area: 1 2 miles
  - Acres/1,000 Population: 6 9 acres
  - Use: Area of diverse environmental quality. May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities such as athletic complexes or large swimming pools. May be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing sitting, and picnicking. May be any quality for outdoor recreation such as walking, viewing, sitting and picnicking. May be any combination of the above depending on site suitability and community need.



- Site Characteristics: May include natural features such as water bodies and areas suited for intense development. Easy access by all modes of transportation.
- SU: Special Use Area
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Variable depending on type of facility
  - Service Area: Entire Community
  - Acres/1,000 Population: Variable
  - Use: Areas for specialized or single purpose recreational activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, conservancies, arboreta, display gardens, arenas, outdoor theaters, gun ranges, and downhill ski areas. Also plazas or squares in or near commercial centers boulevards or parkways.
  - Site Characteristics: Located within the community
- LP: Linear Park
  - Desirable/Typical Size: Sufficient width to protect resources and to provide maximum use
  - Service Area: No applicable standard
  - o Acres/1,000 Population: Variable
  - Use: Are developed for one or more varying modes of recreational travel or activity such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, fitness trails/cross-country skiing and canoeing. May include active play areas.
  - Site Characteristics: Built on natural corridors such as utility or railroad right-of-way, bluff lines, vegetation patterns and roads that link other components of the recreation system or community facilities such as school, libraries, commercial areas, and other park areas.

## **Recreational Facilities Development Need Standards**

Facility standards for the development of recreation facilities are similar to open space standards because they are expressed in facility units per population ratio. The purpose of evaluating a recreation system from a facility viewpoint, in addition to an open space viewpoint is to determine the amount of needed facility development in each recreation area.

Problems related to using facility development standards can be seen in the assumption of desired opportunities by the resident population. For example, an examination of the facilities standards may show that a horseshoe area is needed based on the municipality's population. In reality, it is possible that very few people in the community enjoy playing horseshoes, which may eliminate the need for this type of facility.

Age, income, and education all contribute to the people's recreational preferences, yet facility standards sometimes ignore these variables. Another problem with using standards is that they are developed primarily for urban communities and have limited application to rural areas.

Despite these problems, facility development standards have a place in recreation planning. Community leaders can use them to approximate the adequacy of their park systems. A listing of recreation facility development standards, prepared by the American Planning Association and the United States Access Board can be found on their respective websites:

> American Planning Association Outdoor Recreation Facility Standards: https://www.planning.org/pas/reports/report194.htm

> > United States Access Board:

http://www.access-board.gov/quidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas



# **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

"Our effectiveness in meeting future recreation needs will be shaped by many factors including the shifting demographics of our population, the quality of habitats and the impacts from invasive species and changing climate conditions, our ability to improve the compatibility between and among recreation participants, and sustainable financial resources. Parks and nature preserves, wildlife areas and refuges, and forests and trails connect people to the natural environment. These places, from small neighborhood parks to the large national, state and county forests, are the stages on which we enjoy the outdoors, improve our health, protect our air and water, and provide a large economic boost, particularly to our rural areas. – Wisconsin Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2019-2023 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), provided recommendations to guide public outdoor recreation policy, planning decisions, the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund money that comes to Wisconsin, and other Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administered grant programs.

The plan indicated that high-quality outdoor recreation experiences available in Wisconsin contribute to our exceptional quality of life, reflected in sustained economic growth and in outdoor recreation traditions passed down through generations. From community river walks to expansive public forests, public recreation lands and facilities enhance our lives, draw millions of visitors, and support businesses large and small. The economic, social, and health benefits of outdoor recreation in Wisconsin far outweigh our investment.

To support the development of SCORP, a statewide survey of Wisconsin residents was conducted regarding their outdoor recreation participation and frequency, as well as their opinions about future needs. In addition, the DNR undertook an assessment of recreation opportunities and needs in each region of the state. Together, these supporting documents showed that an estimated 95% of Wisconsin adults participated in some type of outdoor recreation in the past year. Activities in which residents most frequently engaged tend to be those that require little preparation or travel time and can provide a high-quality experience in a limited amount of time. Examples include hiking and walking on trails, fishing, bicycling, dog walking, and bird/wildlife watching.

#### SCORP goals include:

- Boost participation in outdoor recreation
- **Grow partnerships**
- Provide high-quality experiences
- Improve data to enhance visitor experiences and benefits
- Enhance funding and financial stability

Additionally, the SCORP highlights regional recreational demands that supports Argyles's priorities for its location in the Southern Gateways Region. The top five (5) most frequently identified recreation opportunities, needed in the Southern Gateways Region, based on public input gathered during the SCORP Recreation Opportunities Analysis (ROA) process include:

- More trails for motorized recreation (ATVs, UTVs, off-road motorcycles, etc.)
- More hiking/walking/running trails
- More natural surface (dirt) bicycling trails
- More paved bicycling trails
- More rustic/quiet campgrounds (pit toilets, no electricity or generators)



# Plan Process

The planning process for the 2021-2026 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan involved four stages:

- 1. Creating an inventory of existing community recreational assets and facilities
- 2. Development of Relevant data and trends.
- 3. Coordinating outreach to the population that uses Argyle's outdoor recreation facilities
- 4. Plan Development, Review and Approval

To develop Argyle's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, SWWRPC tackled these four baseline functions, while receiving guidance from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Figure 1: Plan Process



Each baseline function provided the planning process with essential insight into the community's assets, needs, and priorities; and were essential for the development of the final plan. To create an inventory of existing community recreational assets, SWWRPC updated the list of parks, facilities, and equipment in the 2015 plan with data provided by Argyle's Park Committee. Data and mapping is an activity that was carried throughout the planning process. SWWRPC compiled data related to the village's age, demographics, and economic makeup and mapped it in relation to the existing parks. Finally, outreach is the most important plan activity. A summary from all plan activities and projects in the 2015 Plan were presented in a public forum to the Argyle Village Board and Park Committee on February 3rd, 2021. During the meeting, members of the Village Board and Park Committee provided feedback on projects within the plan which had been completed within the last five years. Also, the Village Board, Park Committee, and other residents who were present during the meeting provided information on additional projects that they wanted to be included in the 2021 plan. Additional comments which have also been included in the plan were received from the Driftless Area Land Conservancy via email. Plan goals and objectives were developed for the final planning document based on the proposed changes. Village Board, Park Committee, and community feedback were compiled and added to the plan, incorporating implementation strategies for formal adoption and approval.

Table 1: Plan Activities

| Activity              | Date Conducted |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Park Inventory Update | March 2021     |
| Data and Mapping      | March 2021     |
| Outreach              | March 2021     |
| Review and Approval   | April 2021     |

## **Amending the Plan**

Plan amendments are common and should be considered part of the planning process. They frequently represent good implementation or plan usage and should be acceptable for consideration by local decision makers. Amendments must follow the same process as when the original plan was prepared. Amendments generally prolong the effectiveness of the original plan.

The following steps will ensure the new amendment is approved with respect to state statues and to the citizens of Argyle.

- 1. Initial meetings/framing the amendment: Depending on the size and scope of the amendment, the Park Supervisor and the Park Committee meet several times to discuss the proposed amendment.
- 2. Opportunity for Public Input: A public forum should be provided with ample time for the community to know about the proposed changes to the plan. Then a public meeting should be held so the community can understand the need for amendment and have an opportunity to provide direct feedback on the proposed changes.
- 3. Draft Amendment: The Park Supervisor and Park Committee develop a draft amendment that still captures the need for the amendment and feedback from the public.
- 4. Amendment Adoption: At an official public meeting, with 30 days of notice, the Village Council will vote to approve the plan amendment with the recommendation of the Park Board.
- 5. WI DNR Approval: The council action on the plan amendment should be sent in writing to the Department of Natural Resources for re-certification of the village's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with the new changes. The plan amendment will not be effective until a letter is received from DNR indicating their approval.

Image 3: American Legion Community Park/Argyle School Basketball Courts



# **Summary of Previous Outdoor Recreation Plans**





Argyle's previous Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) was completed in 2015 by the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC). Recommendations of the 2015 CORP largely focused on improvements to the Erickson Conservancy Area. Suggested improvements which have since been completed include trail expansion and maintenance, provision of signage along the trail for both navigation and learning opportunities, and signage to direct traffic through the American Legion Community Park. The 2015 plan also recommended expanding Argyle's recreation resources to increase the amount of tourists visiting Argyle for camping, fishing, and ATV trail use.

# **Description of the Planning Region**

## Social characteristics of Argyle

According to the 2019 US Census Estimates, the Village of Argyle is a small community in Lafayette County with 919 residents. Argyle's racial composition is largely homogenous, 98.2% of the village's populations being white. Argyle's lack of racial diversity is standard for the southwestern Wisconsin region, however it lags behind the state average, with 85% white and a 15% split of other ethnicities, black being the highest at 6%.

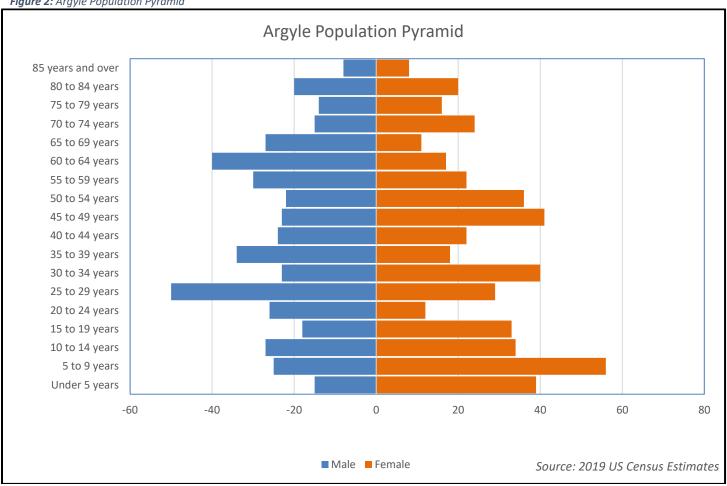
While many communities in southwestern Wisconsin are aging, the Village of Argyle maintains a median age of 37.7, similar to the State of Wisconsin's median age of 39.9. Table 2 illustrates that roughly 55% of the community is between 20 and 64 years old. This wide working-age base helps ground the community economically and provides stability. However, the relatively small youth population means the village will likely struggle with sustainable long term growth.

Table 2: Argyle Age Cohorts

|                                  | Total<br>Population |        | Total Male |       | Total | Female |   |                        |  |  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------------|-------|-------|--------|---|------------------------|--|--|
| Total Population                 | 919                 | 100.0% | 441        | 48.0% | 478   | 52.0%  |   |                        |  |  |
| Under 5 years                    | 54                  | 5.9%   | 15         | 3.4%  | 39    | 8.2%   | T. 1 . 1                                | 2/                     |  |  |
| 5 to 9 years                     | 81                  | 8.8%   | 25         | 5.7%  | 56    | 11.7%  | Total<br>"youth"                        | <b>27%</b><br>of total |  |  |
| 10 to 14 years                   | 61                  | 6.6%   | 27         | 6.1%  | 34    | 7.1%   | population                              | population             |  |  |
| 15 to 19 years                   | 51                  | 5.5%   | 18         | 4.1%  | 33    | 6.9%   | 247                                     | population             |  |  |
| 20 to 24 years                   | 38                  | 4.1%   | 26         | 5.9%  | 12    | 2.5%   | Total<br>working-<br>age<br>population  |                        |  |  |
| 25 to 29 years                   | 79                  | 8.6%   | 50         | 11.3% | 29    | 6.1%   |   |                        |  |  |
| 30 to 34 years                   | 63                  | 6.9%   | 23         | 5.2%  | 40    | 8.4%   |   |                        |  |  |
| 35 to 39 years                   | 52                  | 5.7%   | 34         | 7.7%  | 18    | 3.8%   |   | <b>55%</b><br>of total |  |  |
| 40 to 44 years                   | 46                  | 5.0%   | 24         | 5.4%  | 22    | 4.6%   |   |                        |  |  |
| 45 to 49 years                   | 64                  | 7.0%   | 23         | 5.2%  | 41    | 8.6%   |   | population             |  |  |
| 50 to 54 years                   | 58                  | 6.3%   | 22         | 5.0%  | 36    | 7.5%   | 509                                     |                        |  |  |
| 55 to 59 years                   | 52                  | 5.7%   | 30         | 6.8%  | 22    | 4.6%   |   |                        |  |  |
| 60 to 64 years                   | 57                  | 6.2%   | 40         | 9.1%  | 17    | 3.6%   |   |                        |  |  |
| 65 to 69 years                   | 38                  | 4.1%   | 27         | 6.1%  | 11    | 2.3%   |   | 18%                    |  |  |
| 70 to 74 years                   | 39                  | 4.2%   | 15         | 3.4%  | 24    | 5.0%   | Total retired-age population <b>163</b> |                        |  |  |
| 75 to 79 years                   | 30                  | 3.3%   | 14         | 3.2%  | 16    | 3.3%   |   | of total               |  |  |
| 80 to 84 years                   | 40                  | 4.4%   | 20         | 4.5%  | 20    | 4.2%   |   | population             |  |  |
| 85 years and over                | 16                  | 1.7%   | 8          | 1.8%  | 8     | 1.7%   |   |                        |  |  |
| Source: 2019 US Census Estimates |                     |        |            |       |       |        |   |                        |  |  |

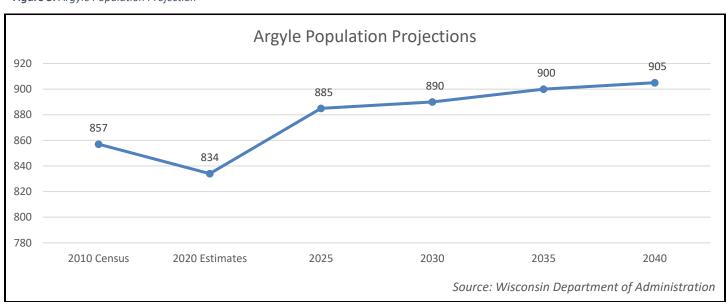
Figure 2 is a population pyramid showing a snapshot of Argyle's population taken from the 2019 US Census Estimates. As mentioned previously, the largest portion of the pyramid is the "working-age" population between 20 and 64 years. The middle section of the pyramid is bloated and the top and bottom are narrow. This means that while the Village's population is currently stable, in the future it will decline, unless more residents move into the Village.

Figure 2: Argyle Population Pyramid



However, population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) indicate that Argyle's population will increase. According to the DOA, Argyle's population will increase consistently from 2020 to 2040. Because, Argyle lacks a strong youth population, this increase in population will likely be due to in-migration.

Figure 3: Argyle Population Projection



## **Economy**

While Argyle is too small of a community to have a designated "Metropolitan Statistical Area," it is the only municipality within the 53504 zip code. So while, the 53504 zip code is larger than Argyle's municipal boundary, some data can be used to gain an understanding of the local economy, even if it is not 100% defined by Argyle's village limits. Within the 53504 zip code, the local economy is driven by businesses within the "Animal Production", "Crop Production", and "Printing and Related Support Activities" industries. The Village of Argyle has an estimated 5.3% unemployment rate according to the 2019 US Census estimates and approximately 167 people at or below the poverty level. The median household income for people living in the village is \$47,557.

# **Physical Characteristics of the Region**

#### Location

The Village of Argyle is approximately .62 square miles of territory that sits near the eastern border of Lafayette County in southwestern Wisconsin. Immediately to the northwest of Argyle are well-preserved natural wetlands, maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The natural resource of the Erickson Conservation Area has the potential to be a valuable local and regional recreation asset.

Figure 4 is a map depicting Argyle's distance to other recreation areas. Argyle is well-positioned to provide residents with nearby recreation activities. Within 25 miles residents can utilize Yellowstone Lake State Park, Yellowstone Golf Course, Blackhawk Memorial Park, and others. Within 50 miles residents can utilize Governor Dodge State Park, Blackhawk Lake Recreational Area, Badfish Creek State Wildlife Area, and more.

Figure 5 is a map that illustrates the local recreational assets within the Village of Argyle. Even though Argyle is a relatively small community, residents can enjoy recreation at several local parks, or enjoy the immediate natural recreation areas such as Erickson Conservation Area.



Figure 4: Argyle's Distance to other Recreation Areas

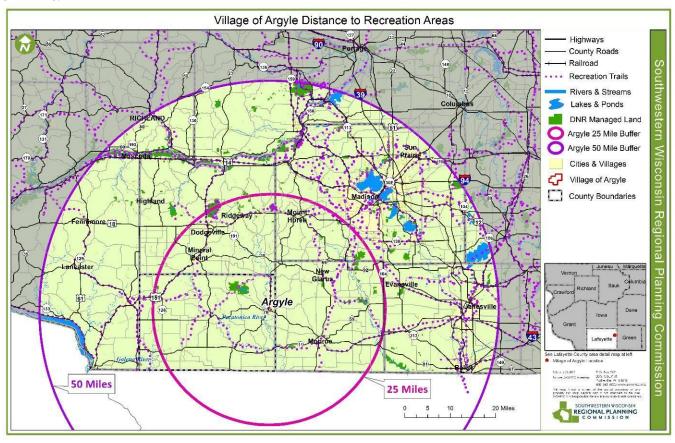
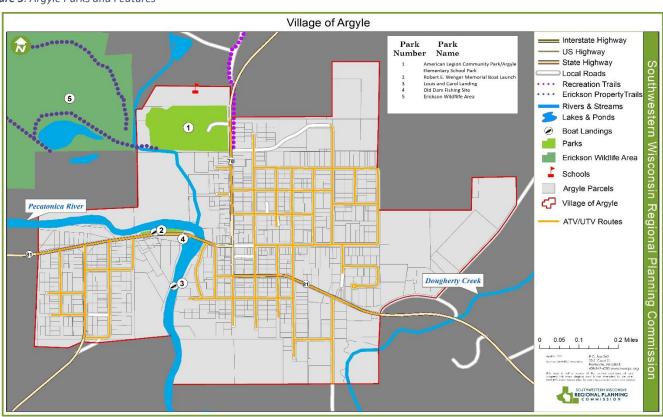


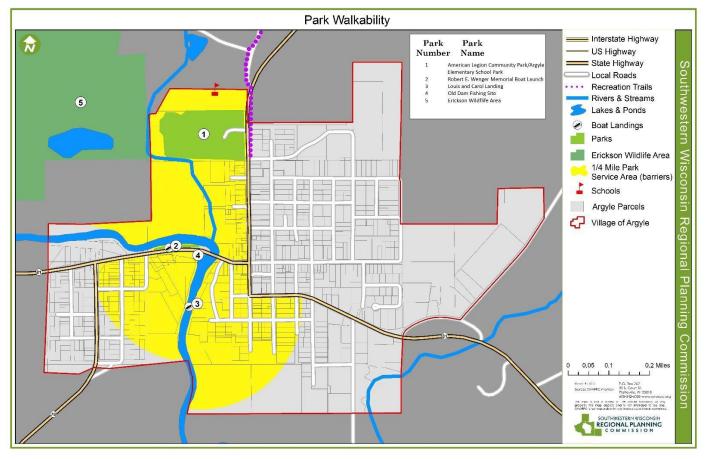
Figure 5: Argyle Parks and Features



#### Walkability

In terms of access, approximately 50% of the village is within one-quarter mile walking distance of a park. Figure 6 is a map depicting pedestrian access to each of Argyle's recreation areas. A yellow buffer was drawn around every recreation area in the village. This highlighted section represents the quarter-mile distance to a park. A quarter-mile is conventionally considered to be "walkable" in most communities. This map also accounts for pedestrian obstacles such as highways or natural features that are difficult for a pedestrian to cross. There are very few recreational assets on the east side of the village, and access to recreational assets is prohibited by Highway 81. However, in Argyle, sidewalks and crosswalks have been constructed to connect the unserved residential areas in the northeast portion of the village to the parks. This will alleviate hazardous conditions especially for young children walking to the parks.

Figure 6: Park Walkability



#### **Topography**

Argyle is located in a geographic area known as the "Driftless Region." The Driftless Region is classified as an area that avoided "glaciation," when prehistoric glaciers melted, carving the landscape and creating lakes through the Midwest. Because Argyle is in the Driftless Region it does not have many natural lakes, instead its landscape is defined by rivers, streams, and hills. Argyle, and the region surrounding it, is defined by its steep hills and deep valleys. The Pecatonica River is a prominent geographical feature of the area. The river cuts into Argyle from the west and bends suddenly, traveling south.

Argyle is located at the intersection of Wisconsin State Highway 78 and 81. While Argyle is nestled in a rural setting, the existing infrastructure allows for easy access to regional economic hubs like Monroe and Darlington. However its isolation makes it difficult to travel to larger cities such as Madison and Dubuque.

Figure 7 is a Topography map for the Village of Argyle. Argyle is a prime example of the topography of the Driftless Region. Its most distinctive feature is a large steep hill that peaks on the north side of the village at 950ft. Even though the entire community is elevated, this hill towers over the lowlands of Argyle by nearly 150ft.

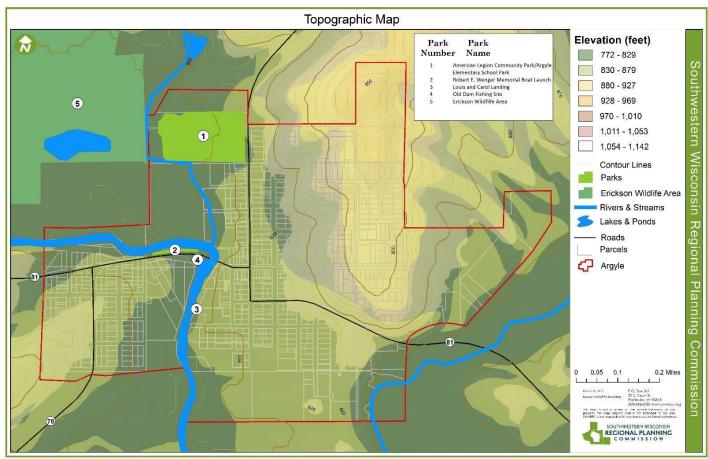


Figure 7: Argyle Topographic Features

#### **Climate**

The climate of Argyle and the surrounding region is continental and typical of the central areas of a continent in the middle latitudes. Winters are cold and snowy with extended periods of rain during the spring and autumn and intermittent periods of hot humid summer weather. Air temperatures are subject to large seasonal change and yearly variations. Precipitation in Argyle for the six month period from April through September falls largely as rainfall and may range in

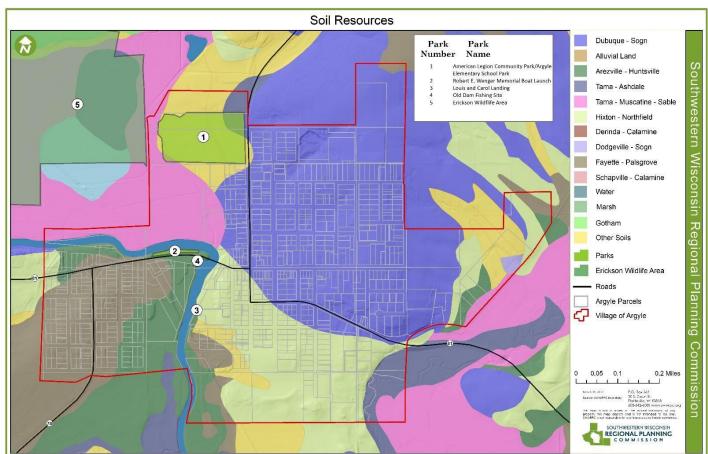
intensity and duration from showers to destructive thunderstorms. The snowfall average for Lafayette County is about 40 inches annually. Prevailing winds are westerly in winter and southerly in summer.

#### Soils

Throughout the Driftless Region the work of weathering has continued since long before glacial period and produced a mantel of residual soil. This forms a notable contrast with the remainder of the state, where the continental glacier scraped away nearly all the residual soil and left a sheet of transported soil. Generally the soils of the region have been classified as the Grayish-Brown Unglaciated Silt Loam, hilly or steep. There soils were formed from parent materials reflecting native vegetation such as prairie, oak-hickory, forestry and oak savannas. Their basic materials include clay residue from weathered limestone, weathered sandstone and loess stream-laid sand and gravel. The latter occurs in valleys of large streams, while the first three are wide spread. The entire southwest Wisconsin region is covered with a thick blanket of loess (windblown silt and sand). Over most of the region the loess is largely silt and is two to three feet thick. In addition some sandy areas along the Wisconsin River have active dunes.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of soil resources within the Village of Argyle. The majority of the village sits on top of the Dubuque soil group. Dubuque soils are defined as "silty and well drained." These soils have a low natural fertility, however within the right conditions they can hold a lot of moisture. The second largest soil group is from the Hixton series. Unlike the Dubuque soils, Hixton soils are less fertile and shed water at a rapid rate.





#### Flora and Fauna

Argyle is located within the Southwest Savanna ecological landscape in Wisconsin. The Southwest Savanna was once dominated by fire-dependent natural communities of Prairie, Oak Savanna, Oak Woodland and Oak Forest. It is now predominately dominated by agriculture, however, remnants of the former natural communities do exist but typically in low-quality. Less than one-percent of the land in this eco-region are in public ownership so care for the public lands are important. The WIDNR believes this landscape offers the best opportunity in the state for large scale grassland management and restoration. Small and scattered remnants of prairie and oak savanna exist and harbor many rare plant species. High quality streams also exist in this eco-region making buffer zones adjacent to them important.

Threats from invasive plant species have been increasing and control of them should be considered. Invasive plants reduce opportunities for recreation, increase chances for erosion, decrease habitat, and lessen the aesthetics of areas. Some of these invasive plants include: Alliaria petiolata (Garlic mustard), Centaurea stoebe (Spotted knapweed), Cirsium arvense (Canada thistle), Coronilla varia (Crown vetch), Dipsacus sylvestris (Common teasel), Elaeagnus umbellata (Autumn olive), Euonymus alatus (Burning bush), Hesperis matronalis (Dame's rocket), Lonicera tatarica (Tartarian honeysuckle), Lythrum salicaria (Purple loosestrife), Morus alba (White mulberry), Pastinaca sativa (Wild parsnip), Phalaris arundinacea (reed canary grass), Robinia pseudoacacia (Black locust), Rosa multiflora (Multiflora rose). Any plant that is dominating an area could be considered as invasive.

Common trees of the area historically would include fire tolerant Oaks, Shagbark Hickory and Hazelnut undergrowth. Ravines and near waterways would have been Maple, Basswood dominated. However, due to mesophication, woodlands are becoming dominated by other low-quality tree species and stocking rates are much higher today than historical standards.

Most of the landscape (70%) is covered in agricultural crop production. Grassland, forest and residential areas comprise the remainder. The grasslands are primarily pasture, with some containing scattered open-grown oaks. These pastures mimic the historical oak savanna structure. Prairie remnants persist in areas poorly suited to agriculture. The area provides much potential for grassland and savanna restoration.

The Southwest Savanna contains public lands which provide abundant recreation opportunities with some of the most popular being surface trail bicycling, paddlesports, fishing and hiking, and walking or running on trails. The Southwest Savanna also contains nine Class I waters, 78 Class II waters, and four Class III waters. The protection of these waterways in imperative to any land use plan.

#### **Water Resources**

The most prominent water feature in Argyle is the Pecatonica River. The river cuts through the southwestern corner of the village. Argyle's location on the Pecatonica River makes it an ideal location for recreational boating or fishing. As mentioned above, there are no natural lakes in Southwestern Wisconsin due to the fact the area was never covered by glaciers. However there are a few man-made lakes in the region, most of which are located in state parks or other public recreation areas. In addition to the Pecatonica River, Dougherty Creek passes in and out of the village to the southwest and the Erickson Conservation Area to the northwest. Figure 9 illustrates the availability of water within the Village of Argyle.



Figure 9: Argyle Water Resources



# **Outdoor Recreation Supply Inventory**

To determine what course of action village officials must take to provide a comprehensive recreation program, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of existing areas and facilities in meeting demands for recreation. This section of the report provides an inventory of Argyle's recreational facilities. The location of all park and recreation areas is recorded on Figure 5.

The Village of Argyle has four village-owned developed recreation areas. The following is a short description and inventory of existing village-owned park assets, community assets utilized for recreation, and potential assets for future recreation.

# American Legion Community Park/Argyle Elementary School Park

Located on the north side of the village along State Highway 78, the park was developed in the late 1940s through the efforts of the American Legion. Now operated and maintained by the village. In 1993, through a cooperative effort between the village and Argyle School District, new playground equipment was installed in the park. New lighted basketball courts were added just south of the school, located next to the park. Additionally, American Legion Community Park features a refurbished F-86H Saberjet. Argyle Elementary School Park is located behind the Argyle school campus along State Highway 78 on the north side of the village. This playground, is adjacent to Argyle Legion Community Park

- Classification: Community Park
- 14 Acres/.75 Acres
- Landscaped
- Refurbished F-86H Saberjet
- 26 Picnic tables
- 3 Benches
- 4 Shelters
- 2 Drinking fountains
- 13 Trash cans
- 7 Recycling bins
- 2 Restrooms (1 Handicap accessible)
- 1 Soccer Field

- 4 Concession stands
- 2 Playground apparatuses with woodchip bases
- 2 Swing set
- Sandbox with shovel machine
- 1 Nature observation deck
- 2 Half basketball courts
- 1 Football field
- 1 Baseball field
- 1 Softball fields
- 8 Mud volleyball fields
- 1 Children's baseball/softball field

# Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch

The village operates a small park and boat launch/landing on the East Branch of the Pecatonica River along State Highway 81 and just west of the bridge. This launch affords numerous opportunities for fishing, boating, and canoeing. Many area residents enjoy canoeing from "Thunder Bridge" along Old Q Road north of Argyle. The boat launch also offers a small covered shelter house with some picnic tables; the spot is ideal for a pre or post trip snack or refreshments.

- Classification: Special Use
- .5 Acres
- Landscaped
- 2 Picnic tables

- 1 Trash Can
- 1 Open space
- 1 Boat Ramp

# **Old Dam Fishing Site**

Only remnants of the dam now remain in the waters of the Pecatonica River, but the site continues to be a fishing hot spot, especially during the spring walleye run. The fishing site draws anglers from throughout the tristate region in pursuit of northern pike, muskellunge, and catfish.

Classification: Special Use

.32 Acres

Landscaped

2 Picnic tables

1 Trashcan

1 Memorial Bench

## **Louis and Carol Landing**

The Village of Argyle has utilized the Louis and Carol landing to allow more users to access the river. This boat launch is more handicap accessible than the Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch.

Classification: Special Use

.76 Acres

Landscaped

1 Trash can

1 Boat ramp

1 Fishing sit

1 Picnic table

## Other Recreation Areas

In addition to the previously mentioned developed areas for recreation, Argyle also has immediate access to the 220acre Erickson Conservation Area, owned by the Driftless Area Land Conservancy. This large, preserved wetland area is accessible through a walking path on the western edge of American Legion Community Park. The Erickson Conservation Area is open to the public year round for non-motorized uses including hiking, bird-watching, nature observation, skiing, hunting, fishing and trapping. Vehicles are not permitted on the property but ample parking is available. Visitors can enjoy a variety of scenic vistas and habitat types including wetlands, Pecatonica River frontage, oak savanna, and prairie. Additionally, the Driftless Area Land Conservancy is working with a volunteer group to continue managing the site for the benefit of the wildlife that utilize this wild natural area, and to continue to make the area accessible for local residents and visitors to the region alike. Since 2015,

- A three sided kiosk and two entry metal cut-out sculptures located at the trail head at the beginning of the board walk have been added to the entrance to the preserve.
- The hiking trail has been updated with trail maps along the trail route.
- A crop field has been planted to prairie and the trail system expanded to include a loop around its exterior.
- The site is actively managed for invasive species and to enhance its natural beauty.

#### Future plans include:

- A continuation of management on the site to continue to improve and enhance its natural beauty.
- Efforts to engage the local youth and residents of all ages with educational activities on site.



# **Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment**

#### **Public Forum**

A summary from all plan activities and projects in the 2015 Plan were presented in a public forum to the Argyle Village Board and Park Committee on February 3nd, 2021. During the meeting, members of the Village Board and Park Committee provided feedback on projects within the plan which had been completed within the last five years. Also, the Village Board, Park Committee, and other residents who were present during the meeting provided information on additional projects that they wanted to be included in the 2021 plan.

Additional comments which have also been included in the plan were received from the Driftless Area Land Conservancy (DALC) via email. Plan goals and objectives were developed for the final planning document based on the proposed changes. Park Board and community feedback were compiled and added to the plan, incorporating implementation strategies for formal adoption and approval.

Needs identified through public participation:

- Priorities for park maintenance should be: restroom maintenance, improving amenities, increasing efforts like landscaping and beautification, as well as facility maintenance
- Park attendance needs to be improved
- Argyle and regional residents need to know about existing opportunities to the natural environment like **Erickson Conservation Area**
- Argyle residents need more opportunities to interact with nearby undeveloped natural assets
- Argyle residents need more walking and biking opportunities
- Argyle residents need access to winter recreational activities
- Parks need to continue to be updated to become more handicap accessible
- Parks need regular equipment and maintenance improvements
- Continual funding is critical for the existing and future needs of the Argyle Parks system
- Argyle can benefit from linking up with a regional motorized trail system



# **Recommendations for Outdoor Recreation**

# **Action Program**

Under the current park and open space classification system, Argyle has enough open space for its population of 919 people. There are very few recreational assets on the east side of the village, and access to recreational assets is prohibited by Highway 81. However, in Argyle, sidewalks and crosswalks have been constructed to connect the unserved residential areas in the northeast portion of the village to the parks. This will alleviate hazardous conditions especially for young children walking to the parks. The following section features two sets of recommendations 1) to strengthen existing park assets though ongoing maintenance improvements and by providing additional park amenities 2) to strategically enhance opportunities and connections to the Pecatonica River.

# **Recommendations by Park**

#### American Legion Community Park/Argyle Elementary School Park

A bike rack should be installed at the park entrance. Also, add a gaga ball pit. Additionally, data received from the onsite park inventory indicated that some recreational equipment should be updated.

#### **Louis and Carol Landing**

The boat launch could be improved by paving or graveling the launch. Currently it is dirt and mud. Land next to the launch and fishing area could be developed into additional bank fishing spots with benches, picnic tables, and parking.

#### **Old Dam Fishing Site**

A picnic table could be added to the fishing pier. Also, add a picnic table at the area behind the power plant.

#### **Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch**

Handicap-accessible fishing benches should be added along the shoreline. Also a picnic table or two should be added with some recycling bins.

#### **Addition of Recreation Spaces**

Other additional recreation spaces include:

- Adding a less-steep boat ramp on the southern branch of the Pecatonica River to provide easier access to the shallow portion of the river.
- A recreational vehicle campsite on the river near the Old Dam Fishing Site and the Argyle Boat Launch could be a major asset as motorized trails expand though the county and the region.
- A walking trail along the southern bank of the Pecatonica River, linking the Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch, The Old Dam Fishing Site, and the Louis and Carol Landing



## **Capital Improvement Schedule**

Over the next five years, the Village of Argyle will focus on the improvements outlined in the previous section. These recommendations are in addition to the standard operations and maintenance schedule that the village currently operates under. A full copy of the Capital Improvement Schedule with priorities, cost, and timeline estimates can be found in Appendix A. The highest priority outlined in the Capital Improvement Schedule are the addition of a gaga ball pit at the American Legion Community Park, which is expected to be completed within the first year of plan implementation. The next highest priorities are many of the park-specific recommendations as well as the addition of picnic tables at the Old Dam Fishing Site.

Table 3: Park Improvement Timeline

| Year | Park                                  | Recommendation   |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1    | American Legion Community Park        | Add bike rack near the park entrance   |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add a gaga ball pit  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2    | Old Dam Fishing Site                  | Add picnic table at to the fishing pier  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add a picnic table at the area behind the power plant                              |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | Louis and Carol Landing               | Improve access to the landing by paving or graveling the path/parking lot          |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add additional picnic tables and benches to the land near the landing              |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3    | Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch | Add handicap accessible fishing benches along shoreline                            |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add picnic table   |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add recycling bins   |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | Additional Recreational Spaces        | Add a less-steep boat ramp on the southern branch of the Pecatonica River to       |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | provide easier access to the shallow portion of the river                          |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Develop a recreational vehicle campsite on the river near the Old Dam Fishing Site |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4-5  |                                       | and the Argyle Boat Launch   |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |                                       | Add a walking trail on the Pecatonica River  |  |  |  |  |  |

# **Appendix A: Capital Improvement Schedule**

**Table 4** - Capital Improvement Schedule

| Park/Recommendation  |    | Cost Estimate | Funding Source   | Priority                                | Timeline  |
|--|----|---------------|--|---|---|
|  |    |               | GF = General Fund  DNR = Department of Natural Resources | 1 - 5<br>1 being<br>highest<br>priority | Within 1 year<br>2 years<br>3 years<br>4 years<br>5 years |
| Robert E. Wenger Memorial Boat Launch  |    |               |  |   |   |
|  |    |               |  |   |   |
| Add handicap accessible fishing benches along shoreline  | \$ | 3,000.00      | GF   | 3                                       | Within 3 years  |
| Add picnic table   | \$ | 580.00        | GF   | 3                                       | Within 3 years  |
| Add recycling bins   | \$ | 300.00        | GF   | 3                                       | Within 3 years  |
| Total:   | \$ | 3,880.00      |  |   |   |
| American Legion Community Park   |    |               |  |   |   |
|  |    |               |  |   |   |
| Add bike rack near the park entrance   | \$ | 550.00        | GF   | 1                                       | Within 1 year   |
| Add gaga ball pit  | \$ | 4,000.00      | GF   | 1                                       | Within 1 year   |
| Total:   | \$ | 4,550.00      |  |   |   |
| Old Dam Fishing Site   |    |               |  |   |   |
|  |    |               |  |   |   |
| Add picnic table at to the fishing pier  | \$ | 580.00        | GF   | 2                                       | Within 2 years  |
| Add a picnic table at the area behind the power plant  | \$ | 580.00        | GF   | 2                                       | Within 2 years  |
| Total:   | \$ | 1,160.00      |  |   |   |
| Louis and Carol Landing  |    |               |  |   |   |
|  |    |               |  |   |   |
| Improve access to the landing by paving or graveling the path/parking lot  | \$ | 5,000.00      | DNR,GF   | 2                                       | Within 3 years  |
| Add additional picnic tables and benches to land near the landing  | \$ | 1,160.00      | GF   | 2                                       | Within 3 years  |
| Total:   | \$ | 6,160.00      |  |   |   |
| Additional Rec Spaces  |    |               |  |   |   |
|  |    |               |  |   |   |
| Add a less-steep boat ramp on the southern branch of the Pecatonica River to provide easier access to the shallow portion of the river |    | TBD           | GF, DNR  | 3                                       | Within 5 years  |
| Develop a recreational vehicle campsite on the river near the Old Dam<br>Fishing Site and the Argyle Boat Launch                       |    | TBD           | GF, DNR  | 3                                       | Within 5 years  |
| Add a walking trail on the Pecatonica River  | \$ | 10,000.00     | GF, DNR  | 5                                       | Within 5 years  |
| Total:   | \$ | 10,000.00     |  |   |   |
| Total:   | \$ | 25,750.00     |  |   |   |

# **Appendix B**

