

## 7 Parks and Open Space

The park and open space land use and facility recommendations for the town of St. Germain are presented in this section. Open space and park and recreational facilities are a positive attribute to the community, and are an important public investment to provide leisure opportunities. These facilities are necessary to maintain the community's attractive atmosphere and enhance its growth and overall health. These facilities are also necessary for citizens to take pride in living, working and raising a family within a community. They also provide visitors the opportunity to enjoy recreational and leisure activities.

All people enjoy quality leisure time activities. Therefore, it is necessary to provide adequate areas and facilities to accommodate these activities. All levels of government meet some portion of these recreational demands. The local level of government is recognized as having the responsibility to provide nearby and accessible neighborhood and community-type open space and park facilities.

The purpose of the park and open space plan element is to provide the town with a comprehensive guide that will direct the acquisition and development of park and recreation facilities, needed or desired, to satisfy the demand of the town's residents and tourists. It will also enable the town to compete for matching grant funds under federal and state recreation financial assistance programs.

The first portion of this section provides an inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities within the town. The second portion consists of a parkland facility analysis. The final portion of the section provides recommendations with which the town may work to provide adequate recreational opportunities to the community.

### 7.1 Park and Open Space Inventory

In order to determine the current supply of park facilities in the town of St. Germain, it was necessary to inventory the existing park facilities. The following narrative describes the existing recreational facilities and experiences offered within the town of St. Germain as identified through a field survey conducted in summer of 1998. These facilities are managed by the town, private entities, the Northland Pines School District and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

#### Town of St. Germain

##### Park System

- ◆ Lost Lake Park  
Lost Lake Park is owned by the town of St. Germain and is two acres in size. Park facilities include a baseball field and a shelter. This park is located on the north side of Lost Lake.

- ◆ "Downtown" Park  
This six acre park facility called "Downtown" park is located east of the St. Germain Elementary School. Facilities at the site consist of two baseball fields (one has lights, bleachers and a scorer's booth), two shelters, two soccer fields, playground equipment, two tennis courts, restroom facilities and a walking trail connecting the park to the adjacent elementary school.
  
- ◆ St. Germain Public Golf Course  
St. Germain's 18-hole public golf course, called the St. Germain Golf Club, occupies 300 acres of town land, and is located in the western portion of the town, northwest of the intersection of STH 70 and CTH C. The first nine holes were opened in 1993, and the course was expanded to 18 holes by 1996. In addition to the golf course, there is a practice range, putting and chipping green, practice bunker, and full-service golf shop.

**Public Access**

- ◆ Boat landings are located at Lost Lake, Big St. Germain Lake and the West Bay of Little St. Germain Lake.

**Vilas County Facilities**

**Public Access**

- ◆ Snowmobile Trails - Both the State and private clubs provide the funding for snowmobile trails that are maintained as part of Vilas County's groomed snowmobile trails. The local snowmobile club, the St. Germain Bo-Boen Tribe, has built and maintains nearly 100 miles of trails which connect with neighboring communities in Vilas and Oneida Counties. The Tribe has developed a trail marking system and engineered grooming equipment that is copied nationally and internationally. It is the second largest club in the state with approximately 376 members.

**Northland Pines School District Owned**

- ◆ St. Germain Elementary School (K-5)  
The St. Germain Elementary School, recently constructed in 1997, is a 10.0 acre site which is owned and managed by the Northland Pines School District. The school is equipped with two 50' x 50' playscapes that include six swings and woodchip surfaces. In addition there are two basketball courts, of which one court has standards and one does not, and a large open space area.

## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

### Public Access and Facilities

- ◆ Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest (NHAL) - This state owned and managed working forest provides a variety of recreational opportunities for the town of St. Germain residents and the general public. The NHAL Forest encompasses over 220,000 acres between Vilas and Iron counties. Approximately 7,059 acres are located within the town of St. Germain. The WDNR is currently revising the master plan for the NHAL Forest, which is discussed in detail in Section 9.2 of this report.

The Shannon Lake Nature Trail, located within the NHAL Forest and managed by the state, is located within the town of St. Germain. The trail is accessible off of Found Lake Road from the south, or off CTH G in the north. The trail was constructed in 1993 and provides opportunities for both cross-country skiing and nature hiking. It is seven miles in length and includes three loops (two for beginner and intermediate skiers, and one for advanced skiers). Approximately one-half of the trail runs through an area that was just recently logged. The remainder of the trail meanders through a variety of northern hardwoods. The loop which circles Shannon lake is especially scenic.

### Quasi-Public

- ◆ Fern Ridge Trail is located on the east side of STH 155 north of Big St. Germain Drive. It is considered a rugged trail, and is in an area of contrasting terrain. The trail is open all seasons and is surrounded by wildflowers, trees and non-flowering plants. It takes about 40 minutes to hike the entire trail. An American Plan resort maintains this trail (which is located on State lands), therefore, permission must be granted to use these trails.

This inventory of the existing park and public lands within the town of St. Germain demonstrates that the community offers an abundance of recreational opportunities in the variety of public lands, natural resource areas, and specialized recreational use areas (i.e., boating access). A detailed analysis of the park and public lands follows.

## 7.2 Classifications and Service Areas

Use of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Guidelines for the classification of parks and delineation of the services areas will assist the town in determining the type and location of future park and public land areas. The classification guidelines of the NRPA are presented in Table 7-1 in addition to the corresponding existing facilities for the town of St. Germain. It is important to note that not all park and public land facilities will meet all of the criteria for a specific classification, rather the park or public land areas will "generally" fit the characteristics.

**Table 7-1  
Parks and Open Space Classification  
National Recreation and Park Association Guideline**

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria	Size Criteria	Existing St. Germain Facilities
Mini-Park	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than a ¼ mile distance in residential setting	Between 2500 sq. ft. and 1 acre in size.	Lost Lake Park (2 acres)
Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood park remains the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5-10 acres is optimal.	None
School Park	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex, and special use.	Determined by location of school district property	Variable-depends on function.	St. Germain Elementary School (10 acres)
Community Park	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community-based unique recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhoods and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.	Downtown Park (6 acres)
Natural Resource Areas	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.	Northern Highland American Legion State Forest
Special Use	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable-dependent on specific use.	Variable.	St. Germain Public Golf Course (300 acres) Boat Landings snowmobile Trails
Park Trail	Multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas. Focus is on recreational value and harmony with natural environment.	N/A	N/A	Shannon Lake Nature Trail

Source: National Recreation and Park Association: [Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines](#), 1995, page 94.

As presented in Table 7-1, the town of St. Germain does not have any neighborhood parks at this time. The lack of this type of park is a function of the town's character. The relatively low-density residential developments do not provide adequate demand at this time for localized neighborhood parks.

There is one mini-park located within the town called Lost Lake Park. It is a small park (two) acres which is rather isolated and addresses limited recreational needs (baseball field).

The St. Germain Elementary School provides the one school park in St. Germain. The resources at this park provide active recreational opportunities for the youth of the town.

Downtown Park, located adjacent the St. Germain Elementary School is St. Germain's only community park. The provision of active recreational opportunities, a walking trail, shelters, and restroom facilities allows for broader use by the local population. However, relative to the town of St. Germain, the park is not centrally located for easy access by all residents.

The natural physical characteristics of the town provide the abundance of natural areas for St. Germain. These natural areas include not only the lakes and rivers, but also the state forest areas. Access to these natural areas is provided primarily by the town and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These natural areas in the town of St. Germain generally incorporate boat or canoe access with the lakes and waterways. Preservation of these natural areas is secure by the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest, as well several resource protection programs. Private land management programs are discussed in detail in Section 9.2, Land and Resource Protection Programs.

St. Germain also offers a variety of specialized use areas for recreational opportunities. These specialized areas include: St. Germain Public Golf Course, boat landings, and snowmobile trails. These specialized use areas provide services to the specific demand of individuals or groups such as, snowmobilers, skiers, golfers, and anglers.

Two park trails offer both active and passive recreational opportunities in the town. The Fern Ridge trail is primarily for more active, "rugged" hiking while offering beautiful scenery. The Shannon Lake Nature Trail provides both hiking and cross-country skiing; this trail can be used for more active recreation or for a leisurely walk.

The service areas for the existing park and recreational facilities within the town of St. Germain are difficult to delineate due to the distribution of low density residential areas, as well as the seasonal population fluctuations. There are not any distinct centers or areas that provide a great demand for the park facilities at this time. As the population continues to grow and the residential development densities expand, St. Germain will likely experience demand for neighborhood and additional community and park facilities.

### 7.3 Park and Public Land Jurisdictional Standard

To determine the overall need for park and public lands within the town of St. Germain, the following standard was used: for every 1,000 residents, 100 acres of park and public land should be provided. The 100 acres should be composed of:

- ◆ 70 acres of passive parks or public lands per 1,000 population. Acreage includes public forests, wildlife preserves, and portions of state and county parks suitable for activities such as hunting, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing, and environmental education.
- ◆ 30 acres of active recreational open space per 1,000 population. Acreage includes facilities such as picnic and play areas, ball fields and courts, swimming, and sledding.

Of this 100 acres, jurisdictional standards have been developed to help determine which levels of government are responsible for providing outdoor recreation facilities. The responsibility is divided among four levels: the state, Vilas County, the town of St. Germain, and the private sector. The standards are as follows:

- ◆ State of Wisconsin 70 acres/1,000 population
- ◆ Vilas County 15 acres/1,000 population
- ◆ Town of St. Germain 10 acres/1,000 population
- ◆ Private Sector 5 acres/1,000 population

Based on these requirements, Table 7-2 was constructed to determine any deficiencies that might exist in the town of St. Germain parks and public land areas.

**Table 7-2  
Park & Public Land Analysis by Jurisdiction  
Town of St. Germain**

Jurisdiction	Existing Number of Acres in St. Germain	Recommended No. of Acres per Standard		Surplus (+) Deficiency (-)	
		1997*	2015*	1997	2015
State of Wisconsin	7,059	100.4	107.5	+6958.6	+6951.5
Vilas County	0	21.5	23.1	-21.5	-23.1
Town of St. Germain**	318	14.3	15.4	+303.7	+302.6
Private	221.6	7.2	7.7	+214.4	+213.9

Source: Foth & Van Dyke Park and Public Land Jurisdictional Standards; Wisconsin Department of Administration Official Municipal Population Projections, 1993.

\*\*Includes St. Germain Elementary School Facility, owned and managed by the Northland Pines School District.

As Table 7-2 demonstrates, town of St. Germain residents benefit from the availability of public lands for recreational purposes. Although, the county does not offer any recreational opportunities as demonstrated by the deficiencies in the park and public land acreage, of these limitations are overcome by the abundance of state and town lands.

#### 7.4 Park Land Requirements by Park Type

In addition to assessing the total acreage amounts necessary to provide park and public lands for the entire community, determining the adequacy of the types of local park and recreation facilities is also necessary. These measurements are commonly generated using acreage standards. According to the type and size of a community. The acreage standards presented in Table 7-3 will be used as a guideline for assessing the adequacy of the town of St. Germain existing park and recreation facilities. Recommendations will also be made for future park and recreation facility needs.

**Table 7-3  
Local Acreage Standards by Park Type**

Jurisdiction	Type	Acreage Standard
Local	Mini	.5 acres/1,000 population
	Neighborhood	2.0 acres/1,000 population
	Community	5.0 acres/1,000 population
	Other*	4.5 acres/1,000 population
<i>TOTAL:</i>		<i>12 acres/1,000 population</i>

Source: Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan 1994-1999, page 39; National Recreation and Park Association.

\*Modified by Foth & Van Dyke 1998.

Based upon these standards by park type for a local community, the existing park facilities for the town of St. Germain can be analyzed to determine park type deficiencies. It is important to note however, that these standards are just guidelines. Each local community will have different circumstances that might affect these standards such as the seasonal population fluctuations. Table 7-4 represents the existing acreages by park type for St. Germain relative to the standards for their 1997 population and the 2015 projected population.

**Table 7-4  
Local Needs Analysis by Park Type  
(St. Germain & Vilas County Parks)  
Town of St. Germain**

Type of Park	Existing Acres	Local Needs		Local Deficiency (-) or Surplus (+)	
		1997*	2015*	1997	2015
Mini	2	0.7	0.8	+1.3	+1.2
Neighborhood	0	2.9	3.0	-2.9	-3.0
Community Park	6	7.2	7.7	-1.2	-1.7
Other**	310	6.5	6.9	+303.5	+303.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>+300.7</b>	<b>+299.6</b>

\* Acreages calculated based upon the most current population estimate and projected by the Department of Administration Official Population Projections (Town of St. Germain 1997 estimate 1,434 and 2015 projection 1,535).

\*\* Other includes the St. Germain Elementary School Park and St. Germain Public Golf Course. Acreages for Natural Resource Areas, Other Specialized Use areas, and park trails are not incorporated into the Park Type Analysis, however their importance in providing recreational opportunities for the town and general population is recognized.

Table 7-4 demonstrates the town of St. Germain has sufficient park land available to meet the needs of the existing and projected population to the year 2015. It is also important to recognize the acreages by park type are guidelines and should be used for informational purposes. Specifically, the very slow growth projected over the planning period by the Department of Administration's projections would suggest that St. Germain would not require any additional park land. Despite this indication, the town has been experiencing significant fluctuations in the seasonal population which can affect the demand on the local park and recreational resources.

However, as demonstrated in Table 7-4, deficiencies in park acreages do arise when the specific park type is reviewed, such as the complete lack of neighborhood parks in the town of St. Germain. However, before any recommendations are made to build a neighborhood park it should be noted that this deficiency is a function of the town's predominately rural environment and low density residential development. Therefore the apparent deficiency in neighborhood parks should not be an immediate concern, but should be considered later in the planning period if residential developments become more clustered and of a higher density.

Another park type to consider is community parks. The existing acreage is slightly shy of the recommended acreage. In addition, the entire community of St. Germain does not have adequate access to this area since

it is not centrally located. Because Downtown Park is located in the southern portion of St. Germain, those residents living in the in the central or northern portions of the town have a considerably greater distance to travel to utilize the park facilities.

## 7.5 Park and Public Land Needs Analysis and Recommendations

Overall, the town of St. Germain has an abundance of parks and public lands due to the abundance of forested areas and surface water features (lake and rivers) for recreational opportunities. The analysis identifies that both active and passive recreational opportunities are sufficiently provided for within the town. Specific recommendations for future park and public land development follows:

- ◆ **Active and Passive Recreational Opportunities**

The analysis demonstrated that the town of St. Germain offers an abundance of passive recreational opportunities with the variety of public lands and natural areas which are owned and maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (NHAL State Forest) and private landowners. Active recreational opportunities are also abundant including specialized recreation such as golfing, boating, fishing, skiing, hiking, playground equipment at the St. Germain Elementary School and Downtown Park, and athletic fields including baseball fields, soccer fields and tennis courts at Downtown Park (and one baseball field and Lost Lake park).

Since the town is predominately a rural residential community, there is not a current need or demand for localized neighborhood or mini parks. However, both the St. Germain Elementary School and Downtown Park are located in the southern portion of the town which limits the use of these facilities by all residents.

The town has indicated the need for improvements at the downtown park due to high volume of use, especially during seasonal peak population.

The town is also considering a large community park shelter facility in Downtown Park to accommodate community service needs.

The town should continue to maintain and improve the existing town parkland facilities which offer both active and passive recreational opportunities. The town should also maintain involvement with other entities which provide other recreational opportunities in the town of St. Germain, such as the WDNR, Northland Pines School District, and private landowners.

- ◆ **Northern Highlands American Legion (NHAL) State Forest**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is in the process of updating the management plan for the Northern Highland American Legion (NHAL) State Forest. The purpose of master plans is to ensure the balance between the natural environment of the forest and the demands of the users. The approximately 7,059 acres of the state forest in the town of St.

Germain provides significant specialized recreational opportunities, such as hiking, walking and skiing to both local residents and visitors.

The WDNR has completed the Identification of Issues and Review of Involvement Plan. The setting of goal and objectives was completed in November 1998, and the development and evaluation of alternatives is currently in progress and will continue until January 2000. The writing of the master plan and environmental analysis will begin in February 2000 and continue until July 2001. The plan will then be reviewed for approval by the Natural Resources Board (NRB) from August 2001 - September 2001.

It is very important that the town of St. Germain maintain an active presence in the Master Plan process of the WDNR. The involvement of St. Germain in the process will ensure that the interest and concerns of the residents are addressed, particularly since a significant portion of the town is covered by the state forest.

- ◆ According to the Town of St. Germain Community Planning Survey conducted in 1997, property owners in the town identified the types of recreational programs and/or facilities they would like to see developed within St. Germain, and those they feel the town should discourage. The following identifies the facilities, in order of level of support, that property owners would like to see be developed:
  - ▶ Fitness/Walking Paths (57.1%)
  - ▶ Wildlife Observation Areas (44.3%)
  - ▶ Senior Center (42.5%)
  - ▶ Paved Bike Trails (41.9%)
  - ▶ Snowmobile Trails (41.2%)
  - ▶ Cross Country Ski Trails (40.4%)

The town should investigate the feasibility of providing additional recreational opportunities as identified by the survey.

## 7.6 Funding Alternatives

To assist the town in implementing the recommendations made regarding park and recreational facilities, the following funding alternatives have been identified:

### State Funding Programs

The state government provides money to local governments for the acquisition and development of parks. It is important to note that all of the programs require that a local government submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or master plan, which has been approved by resolution by the submitting local government, to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. By adopting the *St. Germain Year 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan* with an official resolution, the eligibility requirement for these grant

programs will be met through the year 2005. This section provides general information and contact names on all of the grant programs that may be used to acquire and develop local park facilities.

In 1989 the Wisconsin Legislature created the Stewardship Program to provide for park and recreation opportunities and the ongoing preservation of natural resources for future generations. This program was established with a budget of \$250 million to be distributed over a 10-year period to fund the enhancement of Wisconsin's outdoor recreational resources. Currently, the program is on its last grant cycle of this 10-year period. However, the Stewardship program was approved in October 1999 to be continued for the time period of 2000-2010, during which the program will receive \$46 million/year.

The Stewardship Program provides funds for state and local governments, as well as non-profit conservation organizations (NCO's). To encourage partnerships and cooperation between the WDNR, local governments, and NCO's, the Stewardship Program provides funds on a matching grant basis. Table 7-5 identifies those programs which are available to local governments and non-profit conservation organizations through the Stewardship Program.

**Table 7-5  
State Stewardship Program  
Program Descriptions**

Program/Description	Eligibility	Financial Assistance	1999 Annual Allocation
<b><i>Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks</i></b> Assist in purchasing land and developing public outdoor recreation facilities	*counties, cities, towns, villages, tribal governments, nonprofit conservation organizations	Up to 50% matching grant	\$2,250,000
<b><i>Urban Green Space</i></b> Purchase land to provide open natural space near or in urban areas for ecological protection, passive recreation and noncommercial gardens	*counties, cities, towns, villages, lake districts, tribal governments, nonprofit conservation organizations	50% matching grant	\$750,000
<b><i>Urban Rivers</i></b> Purchase land adjacent to urban rivers to improve access and recreation opportunities, assist economic revitalization, preserve or restore natural areas	*counties, cities, towns, villages, lake districts, tribal governments	Up to 50% matching grant	\$1,900,000
<b><i>Streambank Protection</i></b> Purchase land for the protection of water quality and aquatic habitat in rivers and streams	*counties, cities, towns, villages, lake districts, tribal governments, nonprofit conservation organizations	50% matching grants	\$300,000
<b><i>Habitat Restoration Areas</i></b> Purchase land for the restoration of wildlife habitat lost to agriculture or development	Nonprofit conservation organizations	50% matching grant	\$1,500,000

Program/Description	Eligibility	Financial Assistance	1999 Annual Allocation
<i>Natural Areas Acquisition</i>	Nonprofit conservation organizations	50% matching grant	\$1,500,000
Purchase land for protection of endangered species or to preserve the natural, scientific or ecological value			

\* Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan required.

Source: WDNR, Wisconsin Stewardship, 1999 Open Project Selection Process.

For additional information, or to apply for funding available through the Stewardship Program, the local WDNR Community Services Specialist (CSS) should be contacted. At the time of this report preparation, the CSS for the northern region may be contacted at:

WDNR, Northern Region  
 Community Services Specialist  
 107 Sutliff  
 Rhinelander, WI 54501  
 (715) 365-8928

## Federal Funding Programs

The federal government also provides money to local units of government for parkland acquisition and development. One of the major federal programs is the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON). This program was established to assist counties, cities, villages, towns, tribal governments, and school districts in purchasing land and developing public outdoor recreation facilities. Financial assistance is in the form of 50% matching grants.

The federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to counties, cities, villages, towns, tribal governments, school districts, state and federal agencies, and incorporated organizations for the development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. The funding for this program comes from through the transfer of federal gas excise taxes paid on fuel used in off-highway vehicles. This program was initially authorized in 1991 and was reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). Funding is available for up to 80% of the total project costs of a recreational trail project.

The Urban Forestry Program, which contains both state and federal funds, is designed primarily to fund projects that improve a community's capacity to manage its trees including the development of urban forestry plans, staff training, public education, and conducting street tree inventories. Projects which help preserve, protect, expand or improve the urban forest resource (e.g., planting, hazard tree removal, pest control) are also considered for funding. Eligible recipients of the 50% matching grants available through this program include counties, cities, villages, towns, tribal governments, and non-profit conservation

organizations. In Wisconsin, this program is administered by the WDNR, Bureau of Forestry.

A comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or master plan which has been approved by resolution by a local governing unit must be submitted with the application for the LAWCON, RTP, and TEA-21.