Overview

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recognizes a successful and sustainable property plan is compatible with the ecological and social context of a property. That is, a property plan should not only be consistent with a property’s ecological capabilities, but it should also be created through partnership with the public. DNR encourages citizen input throughout the planning process. This public participation plan outlines the strategy for soliciting public review and input into the development of the Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan revision.

The master plan revision will be based on and influenced by existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, the capabilities of the resources at the park, judgment of resource and recreation management professionals, and public input. The local and regional recreational supply, economy and social conditions will also be considered. The plan revision, if approved, will replace the current Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan, which was approved in 2005.

Planning Process

The planning process is divided into three primary phases:

*Phase one*: pre-planning preparatory work.

Reliable, current information on the property’s resources and public uses, as well as the regional demands and opportunities is needed as a foundation for the planning process. In this phase, the department gathers natural resource and recreational use data for the property and the region in order to better understand the property’s current and potential future roles in helping support the ecological, social, and economic needs of the area.

*Phase two*: plan development and public involvement.

This phase begins with a formal public announcement that the property’s management plan will be updated. The announcement is soon followed by a public open house to share information on the planning process, the property and region, and to gather public feedback on important issues to be addressed in the plan. This phase results in a draft master plan that is presented to the public for their review and comment. The draft plan is then revised as needed based on these comments.

*Phase three*: presentation of the proposed master plan to the Natural Resources Board for their consideration and potential approval.
Opportunities for Participation in Planning

The department’s goals for public involvement in property planning are to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of DNR properties, and to provide a means for interested people to stay informed about the property and planning progress. Public review and comment will be formally sought at key milestone points during the plan’s development and approval process, though public comments are welcome at any time. Formal public input may take place throughout the process. Those that occur at specific points in the process are:

- at the beginning of the plan development process (Phase two) to help identify important issues to be considered in the plan;
- to review and comment on the draft master plan; and
- lastly, the Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to provide input to them when they consider approval of the proposed master plan.

Ways To Make Your Voice Heard

*Public meetings:* DNR staff will hold informal public meetings at key points in the planning process to present and discuss information on the property and plan proposals, and to hear public comments and suggestions.

*Public input forms:* The department will develop input forms to gather public input on various property planning issues. The forms will be available online at the DNR website (dnr.wi.gov, keyword: Property Planning) and as a hard copy at the public meetings.

*Other ways to comment:* Comments may be submitted to the planning team at any time during the planning process by email, postal service or by phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document and online.

DNR may use additional methods to engage the public according to project demands and resources.

How the Department will Provide Planning Information

*Issue Press Releases*

Press releases will be issued to state and local media at key stages of the project to announce public meetings, provide information updates and to solicit public comments.

*Direct Email*

The department uses GovDelivery, an electronic notification list, to keep interested parties informed about upcoming events and discussions. The email system is used at key points in the planning process to provide information about the property and planning issues, and to announce meetings, decisions, and other planning developments. To sign-up for GovDelivery notifications, go to the DNR webpage, type in the key word “property planning” and look for Rib Mountain State Park under “Property-based plans in progress.” Click on “Subscribe to Updates.” Or, contact the department at the address or phone number listed at the end of this document.

*Plan Web Page*

The department has set up a web page for this planning process. Information about the property, the planning process, draft plan documents, notices, planning progress reports and other important planning information will be posted here. To access this website, go to dnr.wi.gov, search keyword “property planning,” and click on the link for Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan Revision.

*Planning Reports*

After each formal public comment period the department will summarize the input received. Additional progress reports will be posted, if needed, on the property planning website.
Consultation with Other Governmental Units

As necessary throughout the planning process, the planning team will consult with local governments, state and federal agencies, and others regarding planning issues.

How Plan Decisions will be Made

In developing an effective property plan the department listens to many voices. Recreation users, commercial interests, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials, other government agencies, tribal representatives, and other interested persons or groups are all encouraged to participate. Input received at each major step in the planning process will be considered as the plan is developed. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the plan will be made based on the park’s ecological capabilities, the role of the property in its local, regional and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Further, the plan must comply with applicable Federal Laws, State Statutes, Administrative and Department Codes, and facility design standards. While a broad range of interests will be listened to and considered in developing a proposed master plan, the final decision-making responsibility and authority on the master plan rests with the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board.

How DNR Identifies Interested Parties

Through press releases, direct email distribution lists and the plan web page, DNR hopes that all people interested in property planning are able to be informed. DNR will also identify interested groups and stakeholders by:

- Using past records of interested parties or groups.
- Consulting statewide partners.
- Contacting local units of government.
- Working with Friends groups and other department partners.

By following the methods listed in this public participation plan, DNR hopes to inform as many interested parties as possible to make sure they have the opportunity to make their voice heard.

Contact

To provide comments or suggestions on the planning process, to receive materials, or to sign up for the mailing list, contact:

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