

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

FISH MANAGEMENT BUREAU

ADMINISTRATION REPORT NUMBER 2

November, 1973

THE STATUS OF ACCESS
FOR
3 NORTHERN AND 3 SOUTHERN COUNTIES

Richard R. Cornelius
Staff Specialist

THE STATUS OF ACCESS FOR THREE NORTHERN AND THREE SOUTHERN COUNTIES

Introduction

The intention of this report is to evaluate the current access situation to lakes of six representative Wisconsin counties. Expanding this data statewide, a measure of progress and a determination of needs of ongoing land acquisition and access aid programs are discussed.

Three northwest counties (Ashland, Barron, Burnett) and three southeast counties (Kenosha, Racine, Waukesha) were selected for study. Access information was gathered from county surface water resources reports, county public boat access site inventories, and in some instances from area fish managers. The amount and type of access for each lake in the six counties was documented, and a determination of the adequacy of access for each lake was made. Access for each lake was classified as either adequate, access available but inadequate, or no public access.

There were general guidelines followed in determining whether a lake had adequate access. Basically, lakes over 50 acres in size were considered to have adequate access if they had appropriate boat launch facilities and nearby off-street parking. Large lakes need a boat ramp capable of handling fairly large craft, while small lakes need only a ramp adequate for small boat launching.

To determine adequacy of parking, the number of parking stalls available to a lake were divided into the lake acreage. In high population areas, about one parking space for every 10 acres of lake is necessary on small lakes, while for large lakes up to around 45 acres per parking space is still considered adequate. In areas of less dense population, slightly less parking is needed to provide adequate access.

Boat ramps were generally not considered necessary for lakes under 50 acres, but some type of public access or frontage was considered desirable in all instances. In the case of several large, shallow lakes which suffer complete annual winterkill, a launching site was not considered necessary.

Access was considered inadequate if the above requirements were not met, or if exorbitant launching fees were charged, or if the access was restricted by town officials or local property owners.

Results

Figure 1 shows the status of access on all lakes in each county, and Figure 2 illustrates the situation on lakes over 100 acres in size. Considering all lakes, Ashland County has the highest degree of adequate access at 45%. In contrast, in Waukesha County only 15% of the lakes are considered to have adequate access. In Barron and Waukesha Counties, 70% of the lakes have no public access whatsoever.

Looking at lakes over 100 acres in size, the situation improves somewhat. Most lakes of this size have some degree of access, but in most cases the access is inadequate. Poor or nonexistent launching and/or parking facilities are the main causes for this inadequacy. Racine County is the only county of the six in which more than half the lakes greater than 100 acres have adequate access. By contrast, in Kenosha County only 13% of the lakes greater than 100 acres have adequate access. Local policies and pressures undoubtedly have a measurable effect on the quality of access provided.

On a statewide basis, this data seems to show that access of any kind is still lacking on many lakes, but the majority of these are small lakes. On larger lakes, which are more desirable from a recreational standpoint, there is usually some access, but in many cases it is inadequate. An average of only 30% of the lakes over 50 acres in the six counties have adequate access. On a number of large lakes the only access amounts to town road frontage with no developed ramp or parking. The development of adequate access in these situations should be of high priority. However, in many such cases local resistance plus high acquisition costs make providing adequate access difficult.

Recommendations

At the present time there are three state programs underway to provide access: the County Conservation Aid Program, which provides about three developed access sites a year; the Park, Forest and Access Road Program, which usually provides about five developed access sites a year; and the Water Access Aid Program, which provides about seven developed access sites and another five access improvement or acquisition projects a year. In addition, LAWCON funds are sometimes used for access development. This means about 16 new and five upgraded access sites are presently being developed a year. This does not include local projects done without state assistance.

Cost of access sites varies considerably, depending on size of access, difficulty of construction, land costs and location. On an average, however, it is estimated that a new developed access with concrete plank ramp and a 15 to 20 car parking lot costs in the neighborhood of \$15,000 to construct. Improvement of an existing facility usually costs considerably less.

There are approximately 1,917 lakes over 50 acres in the state (Threinen, 1961). If it is assumed the six counties in this report give a representative picture of access statewide, then approximately 1,363 (70%) of the lakes over 50 acres in the state lack adequate access. At the present rate of about 20 new or improved sites a year, it will take 68 years to provide adequate access to all lakes over 50 acres. This does not consider lakes under 50 acres, which, though generally of a lower priority, also deserve some degree of access. At the present time somewhat over \$300,000 a year is available to the state for access and access aid. This does not include LAWCON funds which are only occasionally used for inland lake access. However, a considerable portion of this approximately \$300,000 is used for projects other than inland lake access, such as fish and game habitat improvement, county bounty payments, and river and Great Lakes access.

Setting a goal of providing adequate access (ramp and parking) to all lakes greater than 50 acres by the year 2025, an average of 27 access sites a year would have to be constructed or improved. Setting the average cost of construction or improvement at \$12,000 per access, this would mean an annual cost of \$324,000 toward inland lake access alone. Part of these funds would be provided by local governments under the Water Access Aid Program.

To meet such a goal, strong support and assistance from local governments would be necessary. Also, inflation and availability of land must be considered. However, with recreational demands on lakes steadily increasing, an accelerated access program is warranted if we are to satisfy user demands (prevent overcrowding and use conflicts on our lakes).

Figure 2. Adequacy of Access for Lakes 100 Acres or more in Each County.

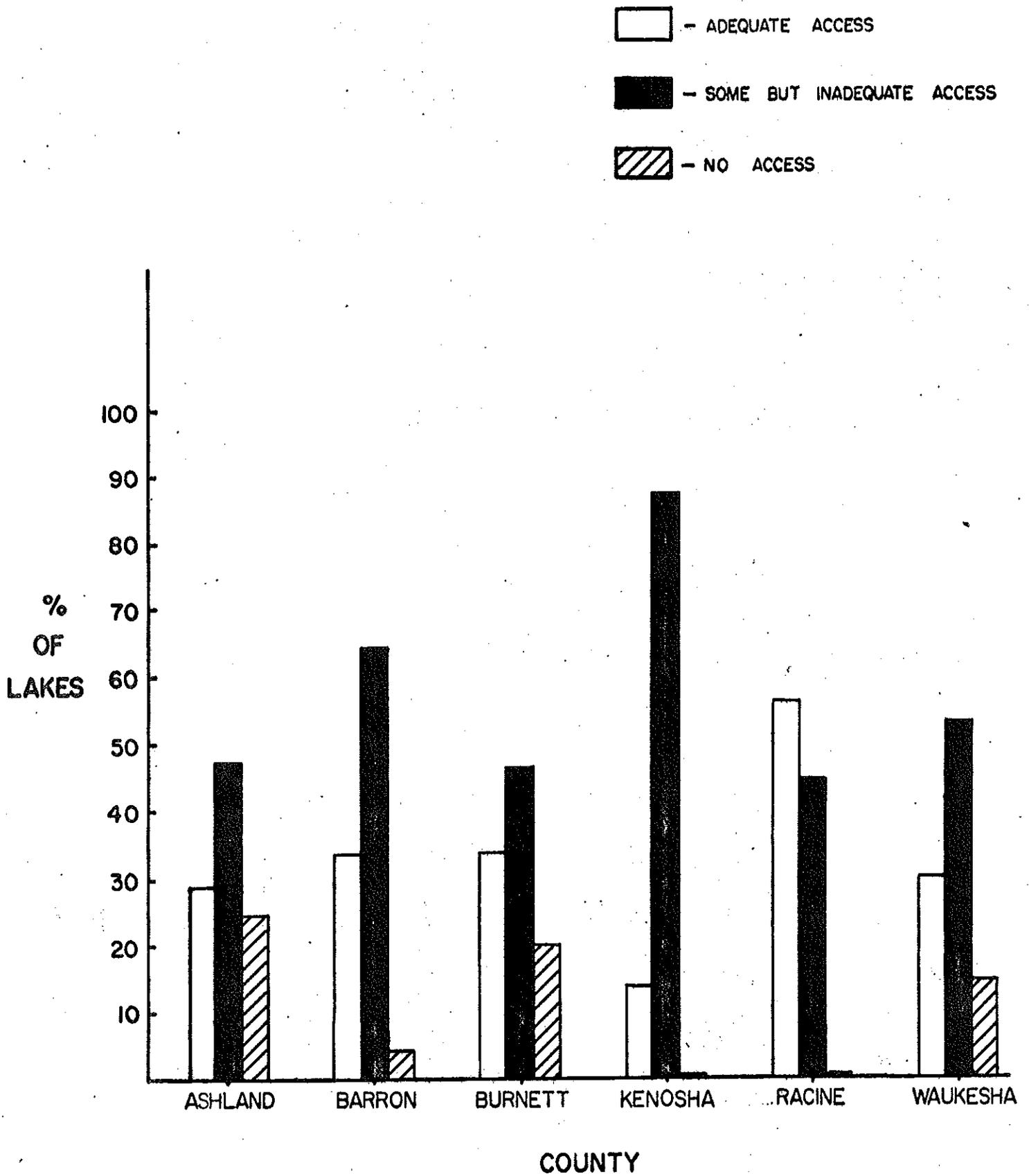
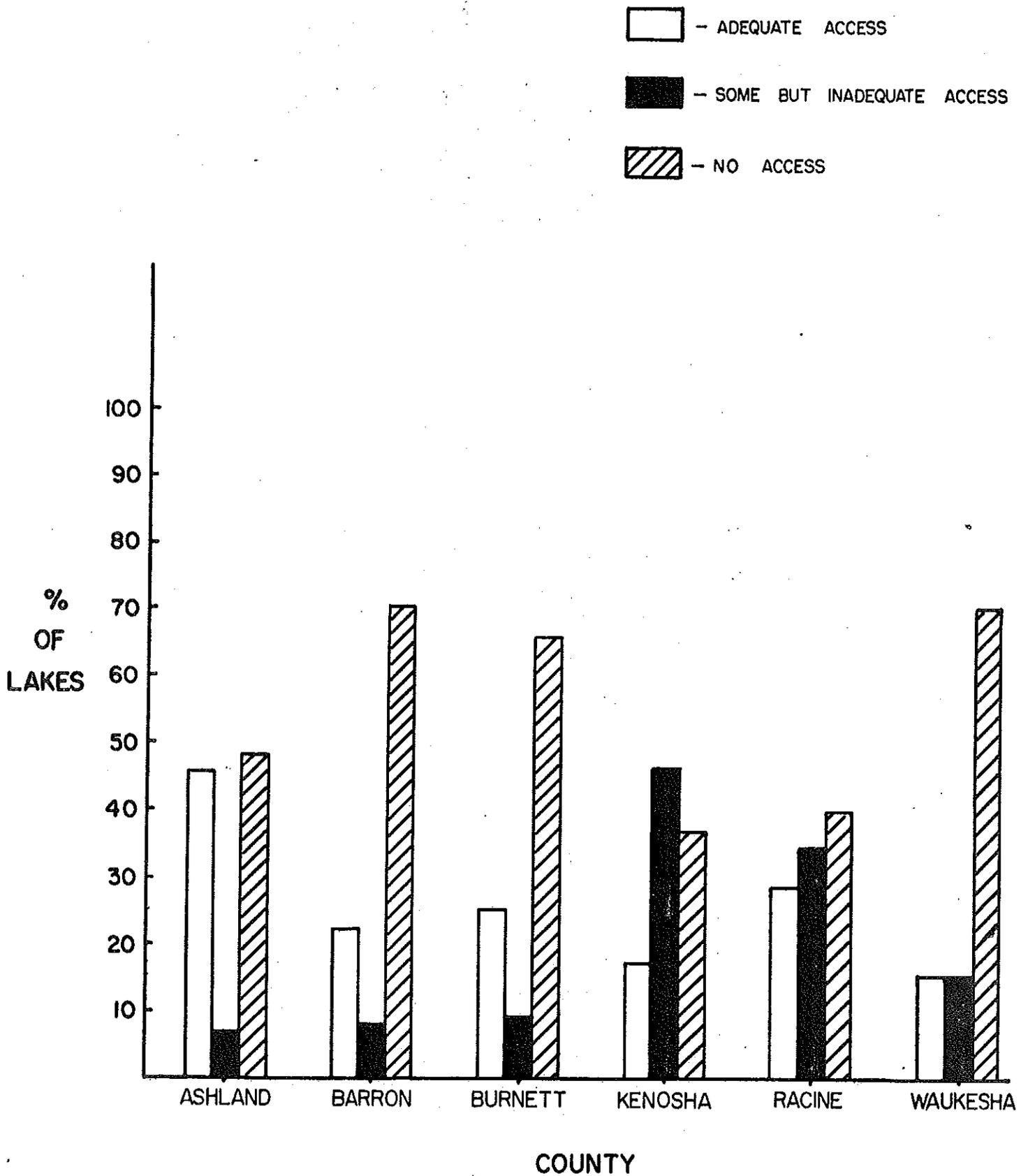


Figure 1. Adequacy of Access for all Lakes in Each County.



References

- Blackman, R., Sather, L. and C. W. Threinen
1966. Surface Water Resources of Burnett County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 166 p.
- Poff, R. and C. W. Threinen
1961. Surface Water Resources of Kenosha County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 37 p.
- Poff, R. and C. W. Threinen
1961. Surface Water Resources of Racine County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 37 p.
- Poff, R. and C. W. Threinen
1963. Surface Water Resources of Waukesha County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 69 p.
- Sather, L. and C. W. Threinen
1966. Surface Water Resources of Ashland County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 129 p.
- Sather L. and C. W. Threinen
1964. Surface Water Resources of Barron County. Wisconsin Conservation Dept., 135 p.
- Threinen, C. W.
1961. Some Spatial Aspects of Aquatic Recreation. Wisconsin Conservation Dept. Fish Mgmt. Miscellaneous Report No. 6., 11 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Ashland County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 2 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Barron County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 5 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Burnett County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 3 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Kenosha County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 2 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Racine County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 2 p.
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Waukesha County Public Boat Access Sites. Department of Natural Resources Publ., 2 p.

Table 1e. Adequacy of Access in 3 Northwest Counties

County	Size Class	Total No. Lakes	No. Lakes With Adequate Access	Percent	No. Lakes With		Percent	No. Lakes Without Access	Percent	Total Frontage (Miles)	Public Frontage (Miles)	% Public Frontage
					Some But Inadequate Access	Inadequate Access						
Ashland	<20	103	44	43%	0	0%	59	57%	43.6	16.6	38%	
	20-49	24	14	58%	0	0%	10	42%	19.5	13.4	69%	
	50-99	11	6	55%	3	27%	2	18%	21.1	9.0	43%	
	100-499	17	5	29%	8	47%	4	24%	78.9	17.3	22%	
	500-999	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	0	-	
Total	155	69	45%	11	7%	75	48%	163.1	56.3	35%		
Barron	20	286	49	17%	0	0%	237	83%	130.0	19.8	15%	
	<20-49	36	16	44%	0	0%	20	56%	50.7	4.0	8%	
	50-99	16	5	31%	9	56%	2	13%	37.9	7.3	19%	
	100-499	23	7	31%	15	65%	1	4%	108.5	4.2	4%	
	500-999	2	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	17.1	.2	1%	
Total	368	80	22%	28	8%	260	70%	427.8	39.0	9%		
Burnett	20	237	49	21%	0	0%	188	79%	112.5	19.3	17%	
	<20-49	79	24	30%	0	0%	55	70%	89.0	10.6	12%	
	50-99	42	10	24%	7	17%	25	59%	68.3	11.2	16%	
	100-499	58	22	38%	22	38%	14	24%	196.8	11.3	6%	
	500-999	9	2	22%	7	78%	0	0%	51.1	6.9	14%	
Total	429	107	25%	40	9%	282	66%	534.2	61.3	12%		
Northwest Co.'s Combined	<20	626	142	23%	0	0%	484	77%	286.1	55.7	20%	
	20-49	139	54	39%	0	0%	85	61%	159.2	28.0	18%	
	50-99	69	21	30%	19	28%	29	42%	127.3	27.5	22%	
	100-499	98	34	35%	45	46%	19	19%	384.2	32.8	9%	
	500-999	11	3	27%	8	73%	0	0%	68.2	7.1	10%	
Total	952	256	27%	79	8%	617	65%	1,125.1	156.6	14%		

Table 1b. Adequacy of Access in 3 Southeastern Counties

County	Size Class	Total No. Lakes	No. Lakes With		Percent	No. Lakes With		Percent	No. Lakes		Percent	Total Lake		Public	% Public
			Adequate Access	Inadequate Access		Inadequate Access	Without Access		Frontage (Miles)	Frontage (Miles)		Frontage			
Kenosha	<20	6	1	0	17%	0	0	0%	5	3.0	83%	3.0	0	17%	
	20-49	4	1	1	25%	1	1	25%	2	4.5	50%	4.5	.5	2%	
	50-99	6	1	3	17%	3	2	33%	2	9.5	33%	9.5	.6	6%	
	100-499	7	1	6	14%	6	0	86%	0	26.9	0%	26.9	3.0	11%	
	500-999	1	0	1	0%	1	0	100%	0	5.4	0%	5.4	.1	2%	
>1000	0	0	0	0%	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0%		
Total		24	4	11	17%	11	9	46%	37%	49.3	37%	49.3	4.3	9%	
Racine	<20	6	0	0	0%	0	6	100%	6	3.9	100%	3.9	0	0%	
	20-49	2	0	1	0%	1	1	50%	1	1.8	50%	1.8	.2	11%	
	50-99	1	0	1	0%	1	0	100%	0	2.2	0%	2.2	.1	5%	
	100-499	7	4	3	57%	3	0	43%	0	25.6	0%	25.6	1.3	5%	
	500-999	2	1	1	50%	1	0	50%	0	10.1	0%	10.1	.1	1%	
>1000	0	0	0	0%	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	0%		
Total		18	5	6	28%	6	7	33%	39%	43.6	39%	43.6	1.7	4%	
Waukesha	<20	68	7	0	10%	0	61	0%	61	38.7	90%	38.7	3.0	8%	
	20-49	16	3	3	19%	3	10	19%	62%	40.8	62%	40.8	2.7	7%	
	50-99	12	2	4	17%	4	6	33%	50%	21.8	50%	21.8	.7	3%	
	100-499	14	2	8	14%	8	4	57%	29%	44.2	29%	44.2	.7	2%	
	500-999	4	2	1	50%	1	1	25%	25%	28.6	25%	28.6	.3	1%	
>1000	4	2	1	50%	1	1	25%	25%	47.7	25%	47.7	.8	2%		
Total		118	18	17	15%	17	83	15%	70%	221.8	70%	221.8	8.2	4%	
Southeastern Co's Combined	<20	80	8	0	10%	0	72	0%	72	45.6	90%	45.6	3.5	8%	
	20-49	22	4	5	18%	5	13	23%	59%	47.1	59%	47.1	3.0	6%	
	50-99	19	3	8	16%	8	8	42%	42%	33.5	42%	33.5	1.4	4%	
	100-499	28	7	17	25%	17	4	61%	14%	96.7	14%	96.7	5.0	5%	
	500-999	7	3	3	43%	3	1	43%	25%	44.1	25%	44.1	.5	1%	
>1000	4	2	1	50%	1	1	25%	25%	47.7	25%	47.7	.8	2%		
Total		160	27	34	17%	34	99	21%	62%	314.7	62%	314.7	14.2	5%	

lp/sfs
11-29-73

50--60-D7706