

Using this Atlas

The Public Access Lands (PAL) atlas is designed to help you find publicly accessible land in Wisconsin.

The atlas consists of four sections:

- 1) Atlas Introduction
- 2) Legend and Map Index
- 3) 444 Maps
- 4) Property Index and Contact Info

If you are looking for a specific property, begin your search with the Map Index found on the back cover of the atlas or page 3. Locate the desired property in the Index and use the grid number to get the map page:

Grid number = Page number.

If you don't know the property location, use the Property Name Index to find the page number(s) on which the property is found.

Atlas Map Caveats

Not displayed in the maps are publicly accessible lands which may change over time. This includes private lands enrolled in the Managed Forest Lands (MFL) and Voluntary Public Access (VPA) programs. Additionally, due to lack of spatial information, lands that are leased by the department or local school forests are not displayed in the maps. See the Contact Information to learn more about these properties.

To keep the maps from becoming cluttered and unreadable, smaller and clustered properties may not be labeled. State Natural Areas located within state or federal properties are not labeled.

Easements

Fishing-related easements are typically 66 feet wide and difficult to display at the atlas map scale; therefore, the symbology for these easements are exaggerated by 400 feet to display clearly on the maps. A result of this exaggeration is that the easement will appear to extend beyond the actual easement area. Please respect on-ground postings to stay within the easement boundary and avoid trespassing on private land.

Activities will vary on easements; some may be open for hunting and fishing, some may allow fishing but restrict hunting. Always observe and obey on-ground signs posted at the property. If in doubt, contact the property manager at <https://dnr.wi.gov>. Keyword: Contact

Map Legend

Township and Range Line

In the 1840s, state surveyors created a gridwork to delineate the land of our new state; this grid is referred to as the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). First-level grid division is the Town (north to south) and Range (west to east). In Wisconsin, Range is split into East and West sectors by the 89th meridian (located in the western quarter of the state).

The crossing of the Town and Range lines creates a Township, which is an area of about 36 square miles. PAL map pages are organized by Town/ Range. Map extent is four townships.

Section Line

The second-level division of the PLSS is the Section. There are 36 Sections per Township; therefore a Section is one square mile. Sections are numbered with Section One starting in the northeast corner of the township and running in a back-and-forth manner or 'as the cow plows'. There are other methods used to divide land at this level, e.g. government lots, land grants. To simplify map display, PAL atlas will categorize land divisions at this level with the same symbology.

Cities and Villages

Municipality type is distinguished by the label text case.

CITY NAMES are capitalized
Village Names are proper case

State Trail

There are 41 designated state trails. The Ice Age Trail and North Country National Scenic Trails are federally designated but are considered under the state trail network. Portions of the Ice Age Trail which cross private land without a permanent easement are not displayed on the maps.


Federal Land


Land owned and managed by a federal government agency, such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

County Forest Land


Land owned by county government and enrolled in the Wisconsin County Forest Program under s 28.10, Wis. Stats.


State-Owned Land

 Land owned by DNR and purchased with money from the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund.

 Land owned by the state of Wisconsin, e.g. Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation or Bureau of Commissioners of Public Land (BCPL). Stewardship funds were not used to purchase these lands.

DNR Easement on Private Land

 Private land on which the DNR holds a permanent easement. Stewardship funds were used to purchase these easements.

 Private land on which the DNR holds a permanent easement. Stewardship funds were not used to purchase these lands.

Local Park

Public land owned and managed by local or county government.

Non-DNR Land Funded by Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund

Local park and non-government conservation organization (NCO) land funded in part by the Stewardship Fund.

Stewardship Grant Land Manager

Symbol identifies the property manager associated with the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant. Number references the index in back of the atlas.

Shallow Shipwreck

Off-shore location of shipwreck remains. More information on the shipwreck can be found at:
<http://www.wisconsinshipwrecks.org/>

Internal DNR Road

Road located within a DNR property. These are permanent, all-season roads however use can vary between seasons. Check conditions before use.

Outside of Map Extent

Indicates that the map features are displayed on an adjacent map page or exists outside the state boundary.