

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN



Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan Amendment

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recognizes sound planning is a partnership effort with the people it serves and that the end product must be broadly supported by them as well as fit the capabilities of the property. The WDNR encourages citizen input throughout the planning process. This document outlines the strategy for soliciting public review and input in the Amendment review for the Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan. This planning process continues and builds upon the planning efforts that culminated in the 2005 property master plan.

A Master plan Amendment development will be based on and be influenced by existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, management opportunities and resources capabilities, surveys, judgment of resource management experts, and stakeholder and public opinion. The local and regional recreational supply and demand, economic and social needs also will be considered. Management alternatives for the property are influenced by these factors with the final master plan representing a balance of key benefits.

The Master Plan Amendment process is guided by the following state regulations:

- The Master Plan Amendment for Rib Mountain State Park will be developed within the parameters of Administrative Code NR 44, which governs Master Planning for DNR properties and includes requirements of WEPA (Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act) as further defined under Administrative Code NR 150.
- Public use activities on DNR properties are governed by Administrative Code NR 45 (Use of Department Properties).

Overview of the Planning Process

The master planning amendment process has three primary phases.

Phase 1 – Inventory and Analysis

Phase one is completing preparatory work. Good, current information on the resources of the property, public uses, as well as on regional demands and opportunities is needed as a foundation for the planning process. Prior to an announcement that the plan amendment development is starting, the Department is busy updating natural resource and recreational use data for the property and collecting regional data in order to better understand the best capabilities of the property and their present and potential functional role within the region. At Rib Mountain State Park this will include collecting geospatial data on all recreational trails and other park attributes.

Phase 2 – Preferred Alternative and Draft Plan

Phase two is the plan amendment development. It begins with a formal public announcement that a Master Plan Amendment process will be undertaken with public participation for the property.

This announcement is followed by a public meeting and comment period to review the work of the planning team, to review current management issues and general management alternatives, and to identify important issues that should be addressed going forward in the planning process. Thereafter, draft goals along with alternative management and use strategies will be developed and evaluated, including the preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. The last step of this phase is to develop a draft master plan amendment. The public is a valued partner with the Department in each step of the plan amendment's development. How the public can give input into these activities is discussed below.

Phase 3 – Final Draft Plan and Approval

Phase three is a presentation of the draft Master Plan Amendment recommendation to the Natural Resources Board for action.

Opportunities for You to Participate in the Plan

The Department's goals for public involvement in master planning are to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of their favorite 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. The Department may announce additional public reviews or other public involvement activities at any time during the planning process if deemed warranted. Please note that your comments may be submitted at any time throughout the process as well.

Formal public review/input points are listed below:

During Phase 2

- At the beginning of the plan development process to help identify important issues to be considered in the plan,
- To review and comment on the draft master plan and its environmental assessment and,

During Phase 3

- Lastly, the Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to provide input to them when they consider approval of the proposed master plan amendment.

Ways You May Make Your Voice Heard

Public Meetings

DNR staff will hold informal public informational meetings at key points of the master planning amendment process (described above). The purpose of these meetings is to present and discuss information on the property and plan proposals, and to listen to your comments and suggestions for improving the plan. These meetings will be held in the vicinity of the property and in other locations as appropriate.

Other ways to comment

If you are unable to attend a meeting, or if you think of comments you want to give after the meeting you may submit comments to the planning team by e-mail, postal-mail or by phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

How the Department will Provide Planning Information to You

Issue Press Releases

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

Direct Mailings (regular and e-mail)

A list of interested and potentially affected parties will be developed and maintained. This list will be used to keep interested parties informed about upcoming planning events. Mailings will be done at key points in the planning process to provide valuable information about the property and planning issues, to announce meetings or the availability of drafts for review, and to inform about other planning developments. The planning team compiles the initial contact list by considering who may have an interest or would be affected by the plan. This typically includes nearby landowners and businesses, property recreational users, stakeholders, sporting clubs, environmental groups, service groups, news media, local and county governments, state and federal agencies, and Indian Tribes. Throughout the planning process the Department actively solicits interested parties to add to the contact list. You may sign up for the mailing list by contacting the Department at the address or phone number given at the end of this document.

Web Page

The Department will set up a special web page for the Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan Amendment where information about the property, the planning process, draft plan documents, notices, planning progress reports and other important planning information will be posted. Please go to dnr.wi.gov and search for "Rib Mountain State Park master planning".

Planning Reports

After each formal public input step the Department will send out a planning report summarizing the results of the review. Additionally, when needed, a progress report will be prepared to keep you informed on the status of the plan's development. These will be sent to everyone on the planning mailing list and posted on the master planning web page.

Conduct Special Meetings

Additional public meetings may be held, if needed, at various stages of the planning process to discuss specific issues in depth. All meetings will be publicly announced ahead of time. Topic focused meetings may also be held to work through special management issues or other concerns that arise.

Consultation with Other Governments

As needed, throughout the planning process the Department will consult directly on a Government-to-Government basis on mutual planning interests with other government bodies. This includes town and county officials, committees or boards; federal agencies; and Indian Tribes.

How Plan Decisions are Created

To make sound master plan recommendations the Department must, on one hand, consider technical data and meet statutory and code requirements and Department policies; and, on the other hand, at the same time the Department must listen to the many and varied voices of the public. Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the plan amendment and on how to best incorporate them will be made based on the property's purpose (i.e. state park, state trails etc.), its physical/biological capabilities, the best role of the property in its local, regional and state-wide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Every reasonable effort will be made to communicate the reasons for key plan decisions.

While a broad range of public interests and staff recommendations will be listened to and considered in developing a proposed master plan, the final decision-making responsibility and authority on the plan rests with the DNR's citizen policy-making Natural Resources Board.

Master Planning Contact Person

For more information about the planning process or to give comments or suggestions on this public involvement plan, or to add your name to the mailing list contact:

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