



SUMMER RECREATION ABOUNDS

The Douglas County Forest and Parks Offer Many Diverse Recreational Opportunities for Visitors and Area Residents



The Douglas County Forestry Department ... also manages three public campgrounds, five day-use parks, a wildlife sanctuary and a trail system.

By James Anderson

Douglas County boasts some of the finest forestland in Wisconsin. Many people know that the county has one of the largest forests in the state. Some may even know that it is the second largest contiguous forestland, second to the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. What many people don't know about are the rich recreational opportunities the Douglas County Forest affords residents and visitors.

The Douglas County Forestry Department, in addition to managing the 280,000-acre forest, manages three public campgrounds, five day-use parks, a wildlife sanctuary and multiple trails. This park system provides world-class recreational opportunities for citizens and visitors. Summer is definitely the time of year when these parks really shine in their full glory.

The best-known county park is likely Lucius Woods County Park, located in the heart of Solon Springs on the sandy shores of Upper St. Croix Lake. Campers may access 13 electrical sites and 11 rustic (nonelectric) sites – all of which are drive-in accessible. The park features a swimming beach, shower facilities, shore fishing and a nearby public boat launch.

What really makes this park unique are the pavilion and amphitheater. Music aficionados know the pavilion as the home performance space for the Lucius Woods Performing Arts Center and its summer concert series. In 2018, camping here is \$18 per night for electric sites and \$15 per night for nonelectric sites. Lucius Woods and all county parks require on-site registration and payment; no advance registration or reservation is possible. The 2018 concert series opens with a free public concert on June 30 which features The Fractals. For the full 2018 concert series



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CATHY KHALAR

schedule and tickets, visit the Lucius Woods Performing Arts Center online at www.lwmusic.org.

Further south in Douglas County, campers and people seeking more remote wilderness retreats will find the Gordon Dam County Park and Mooney Dam County Park to meet their camping, fishing and wildlife viewing needs. Each of these parks offer more remote and primitive experiences, which help visitors to get away from it all and enjoy the natural splendor around them.

The Gordon Dam County Park is located along the St. Croix Flowage. This campground offers 12 camping sites with electric hookups and 21 nonelectric sites – all of which are drive-in sites. The park also offers day-use facilities. World-class fishing in the flowage is available within the park. Visitors may also visit the dam, boat launch and enjoy an extensive trail system that includes access to the North Country Trail. In 2018, camping here is \$18 per night for electric sites and \$15 per night for nonelectric sites.

To the east of Gordon is the Mooney Dam County Park (the most primitive of the three campgrounds), which lies along the shores of Lower Eau Claire Lake and at the headwaters of the Eau Claire River. Here campers will find 12 drive-in sites with electric hookups and two nonelectric sites. This park features day-use facilities, access to the Mooney Dam, a boat launch and fishing.



The Douglas County Forestry Department also provides the Douglas County Wildlife Area to the public, which is also known as the Bird Sanctuary. There are several access points to this wildlife area between Solon Springs and Gordon to the west of Wisconsin Highway 53. To the south of Solon Springs, look for Bird Sanctuary Road. Visitors have an opportunity to spot over 200 species of wildlife, including the sharp-tailed grouse. A bird observation blind, operated by Friends of the Bird Sanctuary (www.fotbs.org), offers visitors an observation area to take in the abundant wildlife; the observation blind is available only in the spring.

The North Country Trail System includes a trail that traverses through the wildlife area. A trailhead can be found just off Highway 53 south of Solon Springs. In addition, the Douglas County Wildlife Area offers a horse area and clubhouse, which can be rented together by contacting the Douglas County Forestry Department. Rental is available on a per-day basis and is currently \$50 per day for both facilities.

While visiting county campgrounds and parks, please keep safety in mind. First, visitors are asked to observe the statewide ban on the movement of firewood (to prevent the spread of invasive insect species). Firewood may be purchased either at parks or from private vendors in communities near the parks. All-terrain vehicle use is prohibited within county parks. The use of firearms and fireworks is also prohibited. Horseback riding is only permissible on posted horse trails within the Douglas County Wildlife Area, and all roads and trails in the forest. Visitors are asked to read the park visitors guide or read the posted rules at each facility for their safety, and the safety and enjoyment of others.

Campground sites may be rented on a first come, first served basis at each campground. Visitor guides may be obtained at the Douglas County Forestry Department Office or downloaded online (contact information below).

Douglas County Forestry Department
 (715) 378-2219
 Office: 9182 E. Hughes Ave., P.O. Box 211,
 Solon Springs, WI 54873
forestry@douglascountywi.org
www.douglascountywi.org/forestry
www.facebook.com/douglascountyforestrydepartment

New Members Join Douglas County Board of Supervisors

Following the April 2018 spring elections, the Douglas County Board of Supervisors welcomed four new members. Joining the board are: Mike Raunio (8th District), Joe Moen (18th District), Steve Long (19th District) and Jim Borgeson (20th District). Leaving the board are Robert Mock, Dan Corbin, Dave Conley and John Robinson.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUE SANDVICK, DOUGLAS COUNTY CLERK



New members (from left): Steve Long, Jim Borgeson, Mike Raunio, Joe Moen.



Douglas County Board of Supervisors (front row, from left): Pat Ryan, Susan Hendrickson, Douglas Finn, Rosemary Lear, Larry Quam. Second row: Chairman Mark Liebaert, Mary Lou Bergman, Mike Raunio, Alan Jaques, Jim Borgeson, Nick Baker. Third row: Terry White, Charlie Glazman, Ron Leino, Sam Pomush, Peter Clark. Back row: Scott Luostari, Keith Allen, Steve Long, Joe Moen. Not pictured: Marvin Finendale.