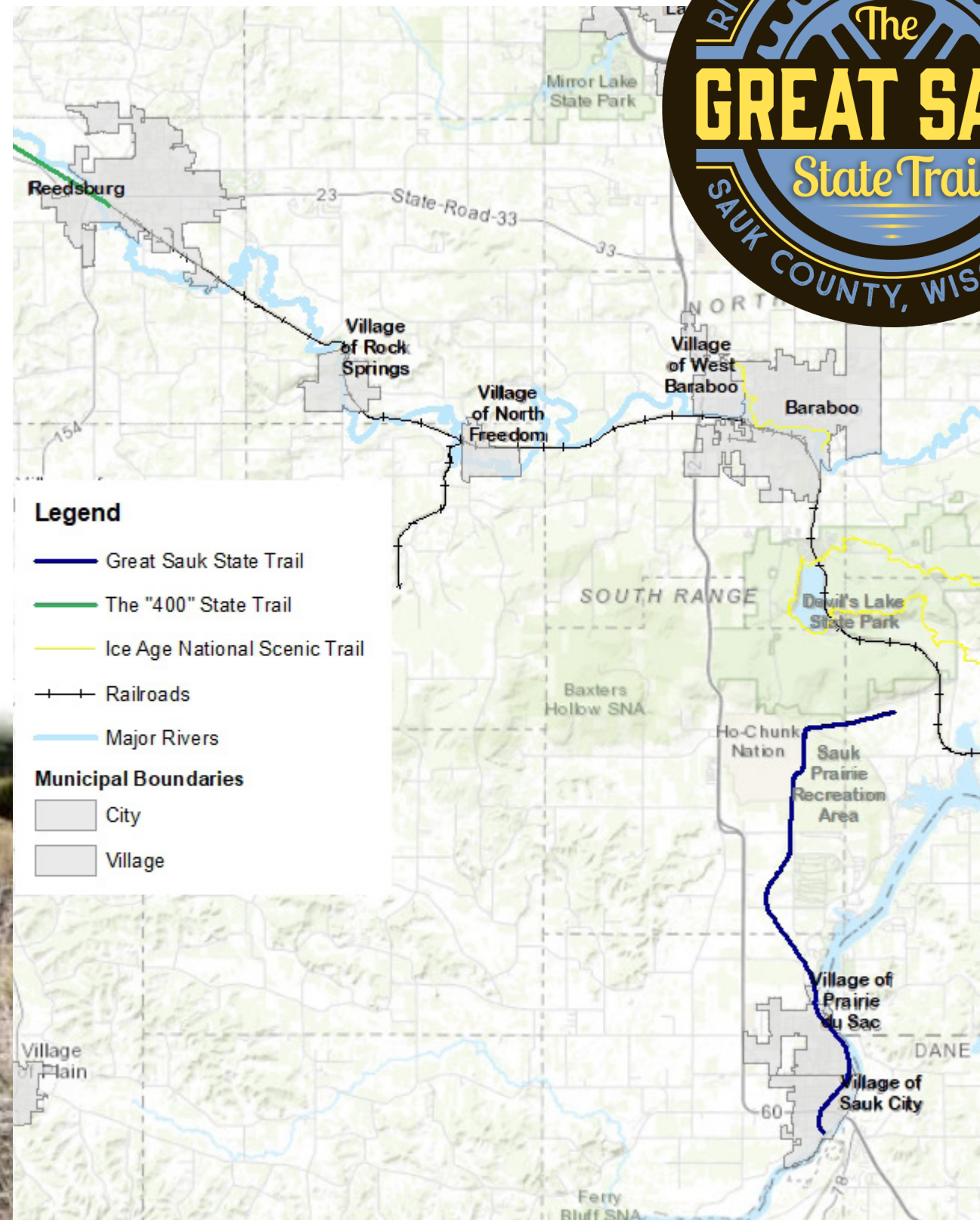


# GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL

## Introduction

Located in southcentral Wisconsin, Sauk County sits at the edge of the Madison Metropolitan area, where public demand for access to outdoor recreational opportunities is steadily increasing. Sauk County is rich in natural resources, diverse landscapes, and opportunities for outdoor recreation and wishes to expand these opportunities by continuing the planning for and construction of the Great Sauk State Trail (GSST). The constructed part of the trail spans approximately 10.5 miles through the Villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac and into the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area (formerly the Badger Army Ammunition Plant). The vision is a fully constructed trail that traverse Sauk County connecting the Sauk Prairie Area to Devil's Lake State Park to the Baraboo Area, and finally to the 400-State Trail in Reedsburg. The trail will connect trail users to Sauk County communities along the way and will become an anchor that encourages community investment and economic development. Equally important, the trail will continue what has already begun which is a fully constructed world-class trail that includes interactive opportunities through interpretive signage, art, and strong connections to natural resources and community history.



## Community Areas

Community interest in the future trail project has been nothing short of exceptional. Routing the trail from the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area to the 400 State Trail presents both opportunities and challenges both logistically in terms of actual trail routing and extended to the planning process which will require consensus within and among communities. Many of our communities have been talking about the possibilities of this trail for years such as a 'peddle paddle' concept with the Baraboo River, connections to new and existing municipal parks, connections to schools, new and expanded outfitter opportunities, and places to eat; just to name a few. The possibilities are almost endless, and our communities are looking forward to working on this project to make the Great Sauk State Trail in their communities a reality.



# GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL

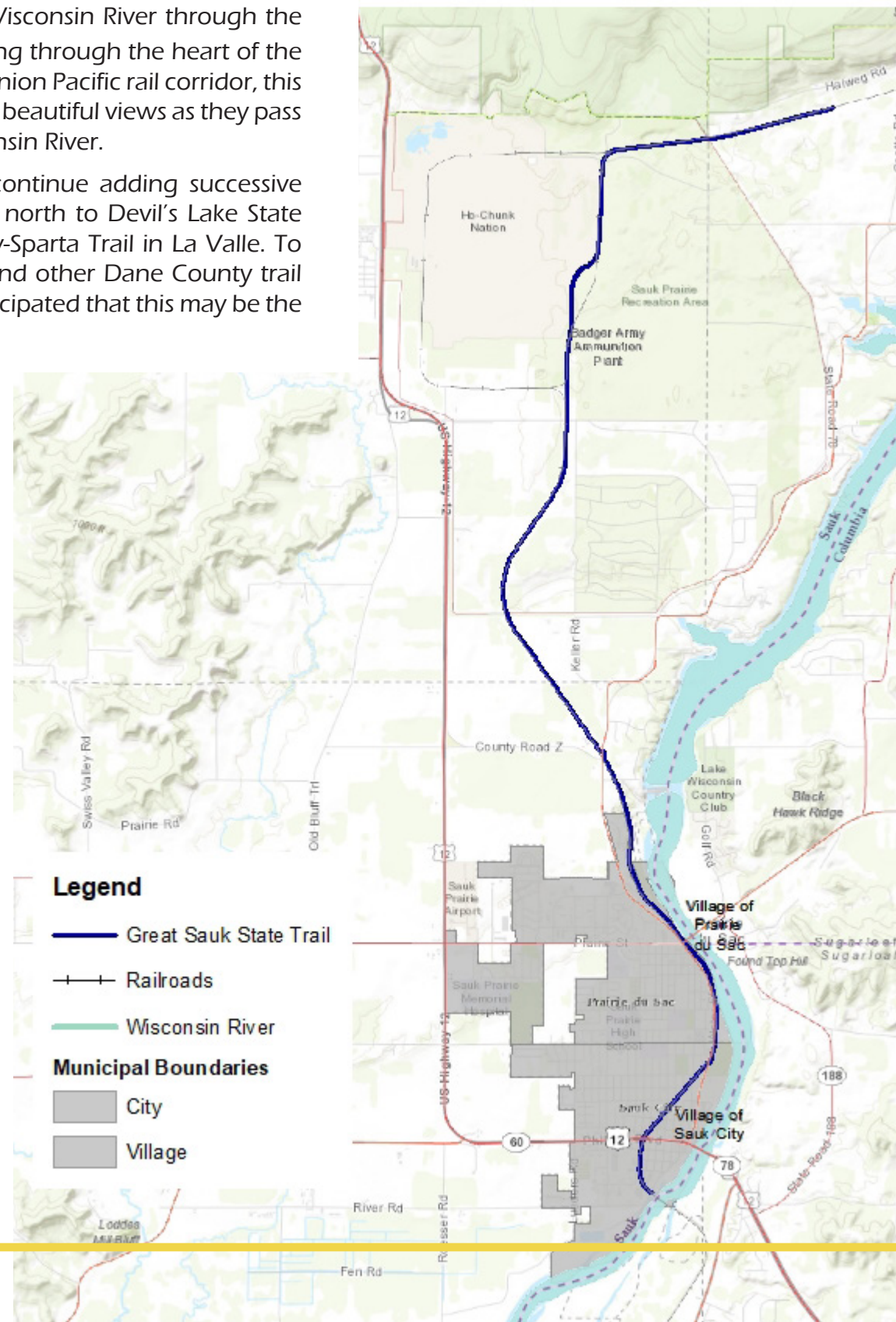
## Current Trail

The Great Sauk State Trail (est. 2017) parallels the Wisconsin River through the communities of Prairie du Sac and Sauk City, extending through the heart of the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area. Built on a former Union Pacific rail corridor, this 10.5-mile trail is paved with asphalt. Visitors can enjoy beautiful views as they pass through two historic towns nestled above the Wisconsin River.

The current trail is part of a larger idea that will continue adding successive segments and eventually connect this trail heading north to Devil's Lake State Park, the 400 State Trail in Reedsburg, and the Elroy-Sparta Trail in La Valle. To the south, it will connect to the Walking Iron Trail and other Dane County trail systems via a bridge over the Wisconsin River. It is anticipated that this may be the most used trail in the State of Wisconsin.

## Trail Features

### Custom Site Furnishings



Artwork  
Nature  
&  
History



Access  
For  
All  
Ages  
&  
Abilities



# THE GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL



### GSST Amenities

- Art Pieces Along the GSST
- Mile Markers
- Purchase GSST Trail Pass
- Mountain Biking
- Bike Repair Station
- Great Sauk State Trail (GSST)
- Alternate Access to GSST
- Riverwalk Path
- Other Bike/Ped. Paths
- Alternate Bike Loop
- Parks

### Sauk Prairie Amenities

- Police Station
- Sauk Prairie Hospital
- School
- Outdoor Pool
- River Arts Center

### Public Amenities

- Public Parking
- Restroom/Portable Toilet
- Boat/Canoe Launch
- Camping
- Eagle Viewing

### Sauk Prairie Rec. Area Amenities

- Northern Trails - Bike/Hike/Horses
- Central Trails - Bike/Hike/Horses
- Southern Trails - Bike/Hike
- Navigation (Rescue) Point
- Closed Area (No Public Access)
- Public Access Roads
- Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

- Dairy Forage Research Center
- Ho-Chunk Nation
- Devil's Lake State Park
- Museum of Badger Army Ammunition
- Suggested Road Side Parking

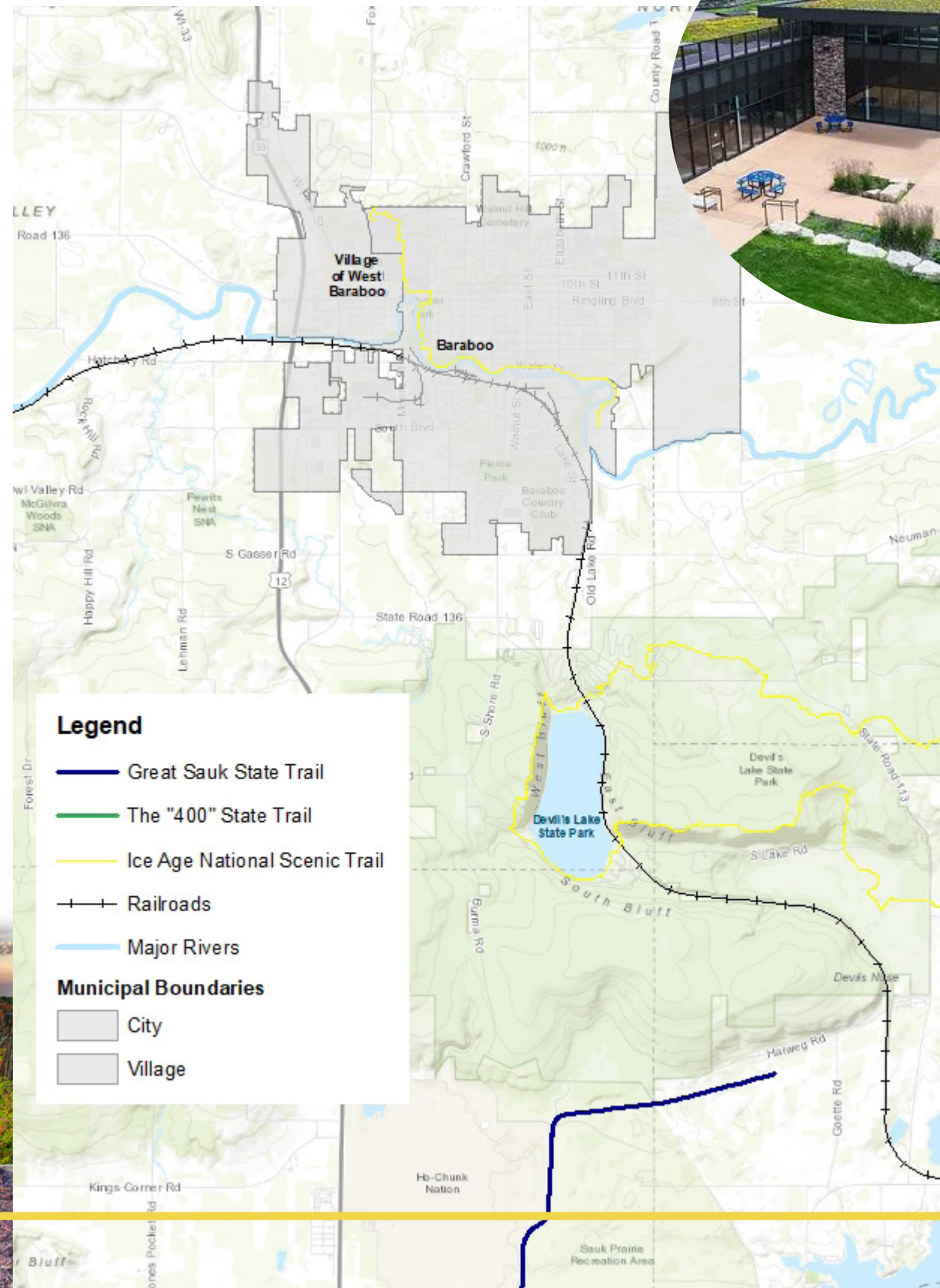
# GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL

## Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area

The Badger Army Ammunition Plant, located adjacent to Devil's Lake State Park, produced smokeless powder, rocket propellant, and other explosives used in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Declared as excess property in 1997 by the U.S. Army, the 7,500 acre site transferred to new ownership: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Ho-Chunk Nation and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources which designated their lands as the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area (SPRA). The built section of the GSST traverses the Army's former lands and is primarily located in the SPRA where it essentially ends. From this location, the future trail plan will identify where and how the trail will travel into Devil's Lake State Park while navigating the slope into the Baraboo Range.

## Devil's Lake State Park

Situated along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Devil's Lake State Park offers magnificent views from 500-foot quartzite bluffs overlooking a 360-acre lake. Visitors enjoy nearly 30 miles of hiking trails, lakeshore picnic areas, swimming beaches, paddling opportunities, and year-round naturalist programs. The most popular state park, it attracts about 3 million visitors per year. The over 10,000-acre park anchors more than 27,000 acres of parkland and natural areas open to public recreation in Sauk County. Historically Devil's Lake or "De Wakacak", which means Spirit Lake, sits on ancestral Ho-Chunk land and contains ancient effigy mounds dating back to AD 750-1200.



## Baraboo Area

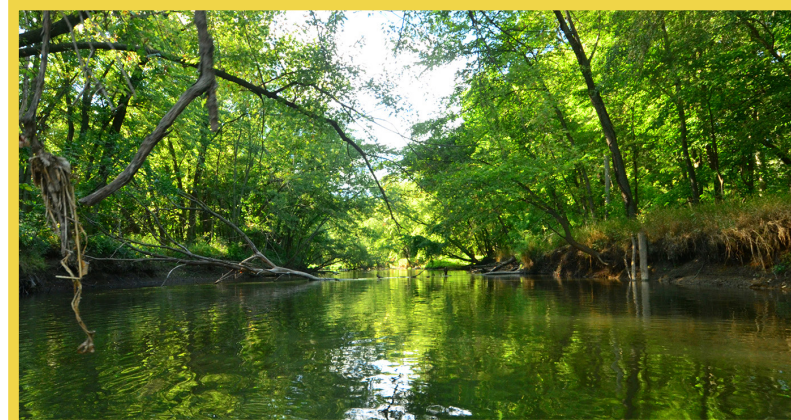
North of Devil's Lake State Park, the trail will make its way into the City of Baraboo and its sister community, the Village of West Baraboo. Once in the Baraboo area, there are many opportunities to connect the trail to amenities such as restaurants and lodging as well as to schools and the University of Wisconsin Platteville- Baraboo/Sauk County campus. Completed in April 2017, each of the Baraboo communities, the Village of North Freedom and Sauk County adopted Phase I Baraboo River Corridor Plan, which focuses on opportunities that will spur recreation, tourism and development to establish the region as, "THE premier water recreation destination in south central Wisconsin." While this plan focuses on river recreation development, there may be opportunities to cross the future trail plan with the River Corridor Plan.



# GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL

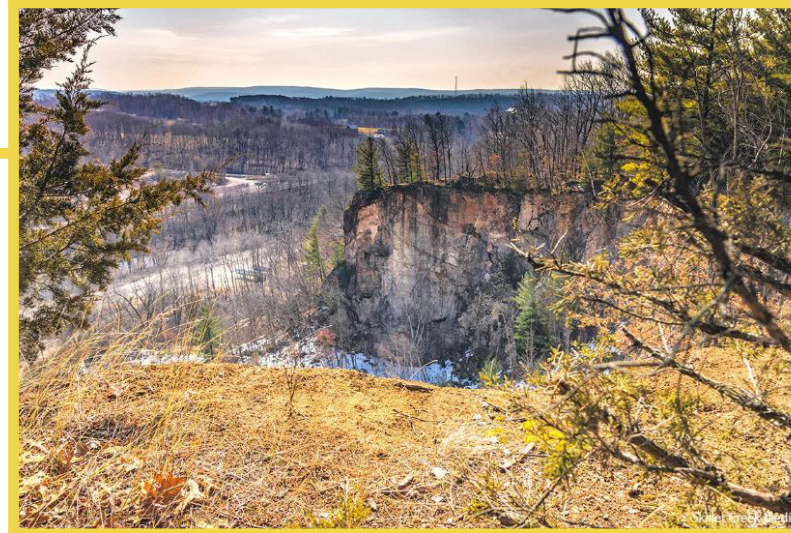
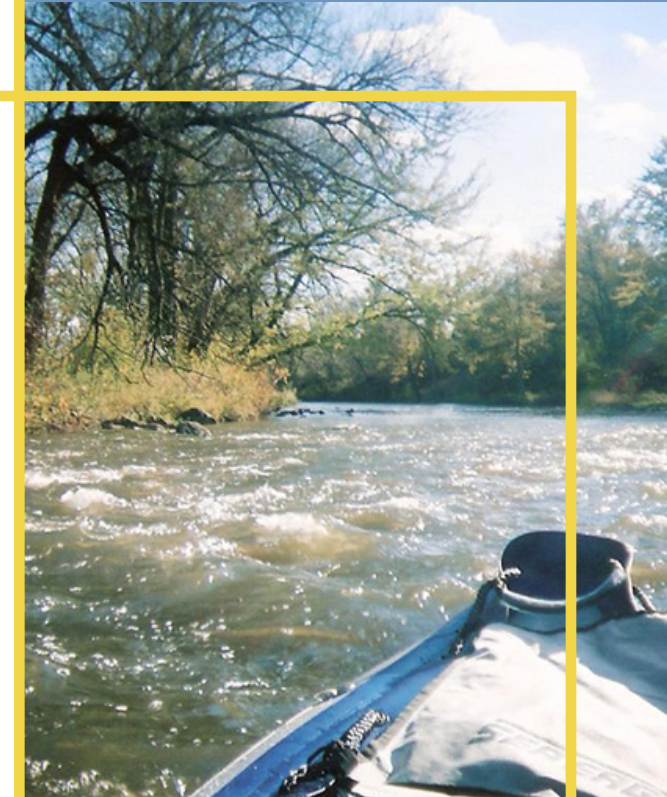
## Village of North Freedom

Located about 5 miles apart, the Village of Rock Spring and North Freedom may serve as main line trail stops or be on spur trails connected to the main trail. Both villages offer opportunities to connect the trail to amenities, historic features and natural resources, including connections to the Baraboo River. Nestled along the Baraboo River, the Village of North Freedom offers a classic quiet, laid back vibe where buildings from a bygone era still maintain their charm. North Freedom's history is its identify; originally a mining town established with the discovery of ore in the Proterozoic Freedom Formation.



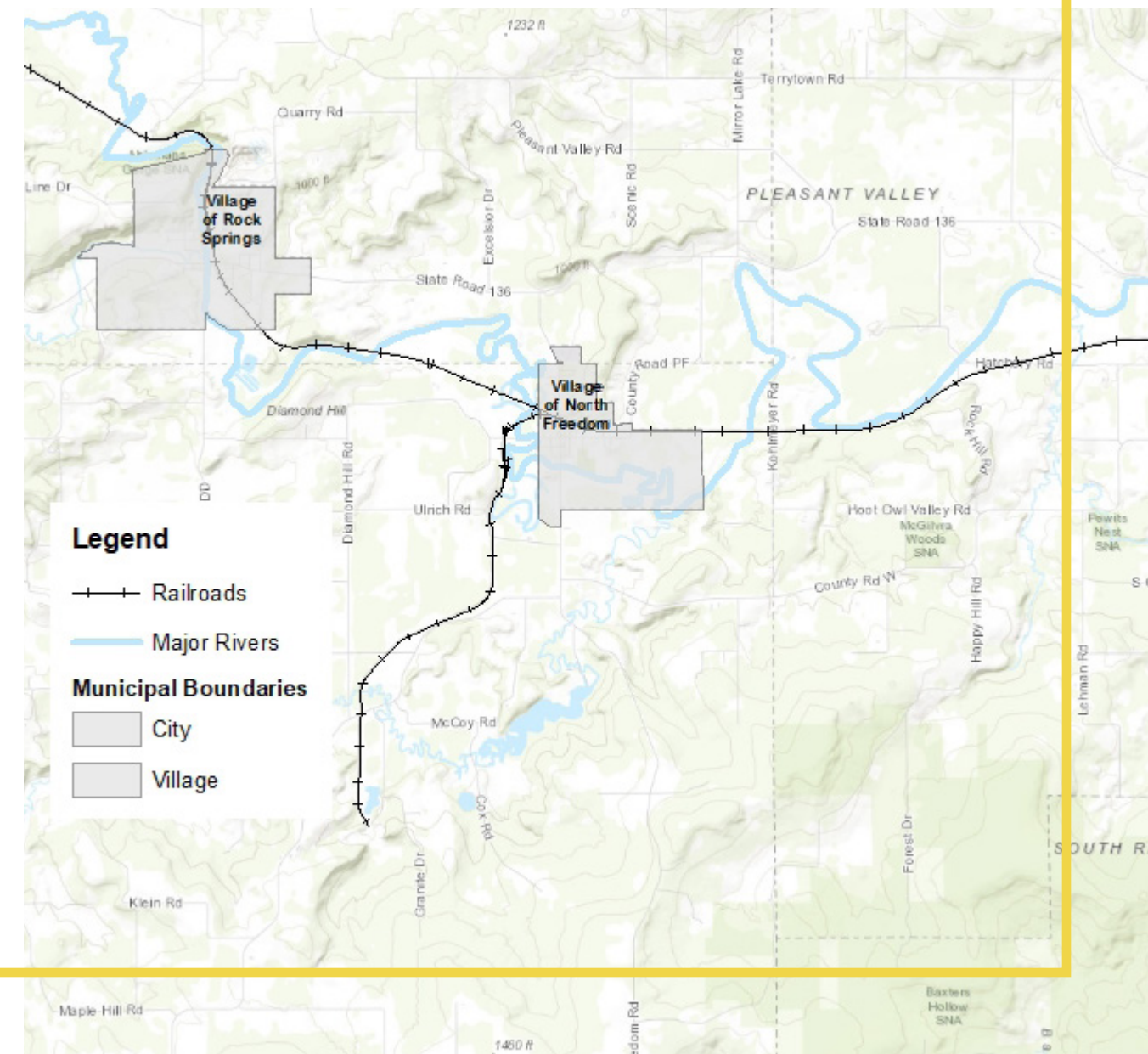
## Baraboo River

In 2002, the final dam on the Baraboo River was removed, making it the longest free-flowing river in the nation to be restored to its pre-settlement condition. As the only undammed river in the state, its meandering through driftless and glaciated Wisconsin makes it a special place to paddle.



## Village of Rock Springs

The 1880 History of Sauk County, describes Rock Springs as "The place is beautifully situated at the base of the famous Baraboo Quartzite range, in full view of the romantic and wonderful spot known as the Upper Narrows. The surroundings are cheerful and grandly picturesque." Rock Springs is home to Ableman's Gorge cut by the Baraboo River through Baraboo quartzite, Cambrian sandstone, and conglomerate with cliffs that rise 200 feet above the river. Just across from Ableman's Gorge is the Rock Springs Artesian Well which offers free cold spring water to passerby's or future trail users.



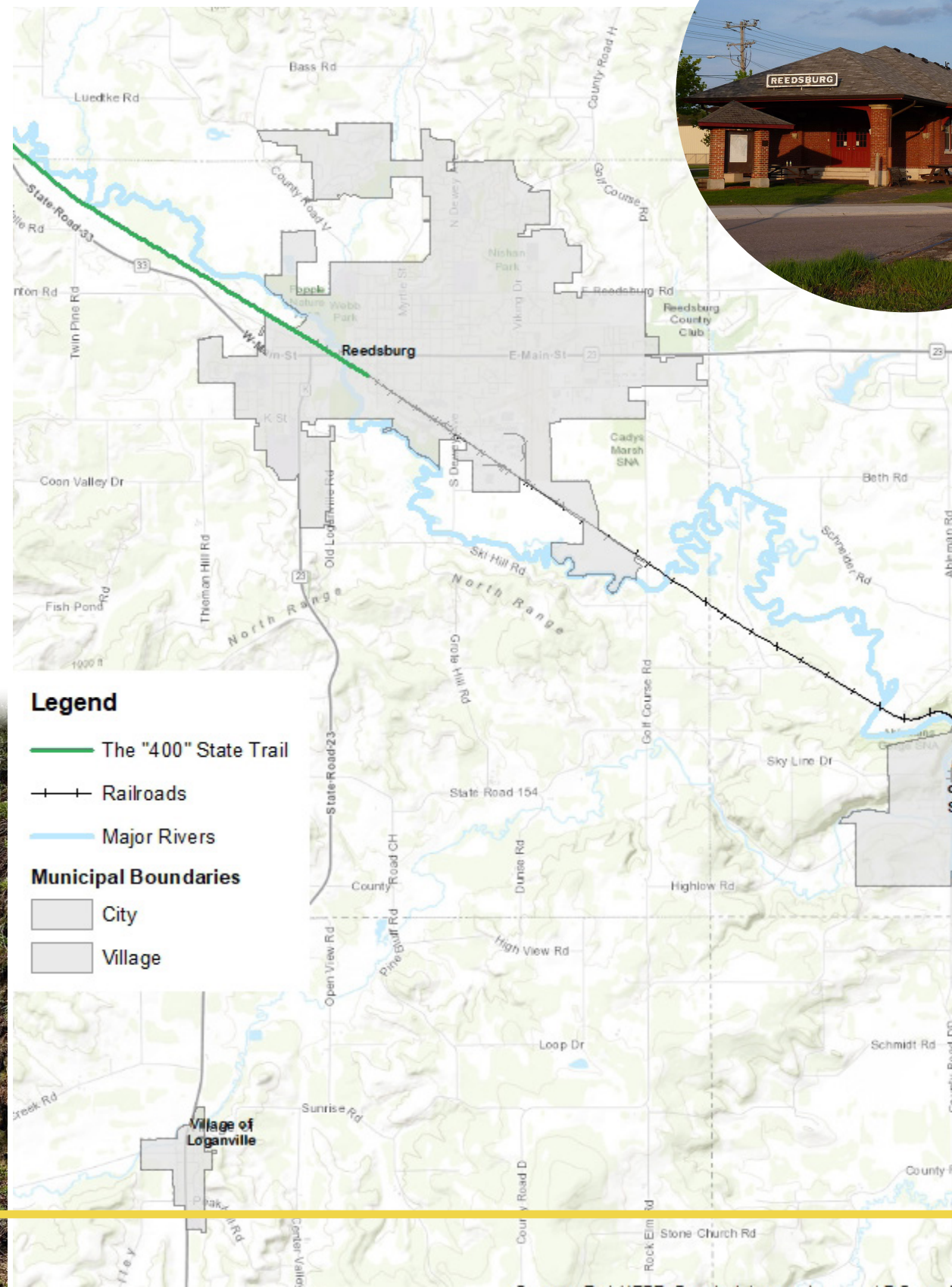
# GREAT SAUK STATE TRAIL

## City of Reedsburg

Classically midwestern with a small-town charm, the Reedsburg area offers an authentic slower paced mystique with many welcoming family-friendly events offered throughout the year. As the trail traverses the City of Reedsburg, it will connect with the 400 State Trail at the site of the former Chicago and North Western Railway Depot. The Depot was built in 1906 and operated as a passenger station until its closing in 1963. Currently, the station houses the Reedsburg Chamber of Commerce and is the headquarters for the 400 State Trail and in the future will be the Reedsburg hub for the Great Sauk State Trail.

## The 400 State Trail

The trail is named for the Chicago-Northwestern passenger train that ran on this grade. The train traveled the 400 miles between Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul in 400 minutes. Wetlands, wildlife, sandstone bluffs, rolling croplands and pastures are just a few of the sights you can enjoy on the 400 State Trail as it repeatedly crisscrosses the Baraboo River. The entire length of the 22-mile trail follows along the river valley from Elroy to Reedsburg passing through the communities of Union Center, Wonewoc and La Valle.



## Conclusion

This project will be a cooperative project between Sauk County and participating cities, villages, and towns, with Sauk County serving as the lead agency. A successful planning process will transform community ideas into tangible plans that provide for bicycle, pedestrian and partially snowmobile access to exceptional recreation opportunities, natural resources, and community destinations. Once fully developed, the trail will feature points of interest through the installation of art along the trail, interpretive signage, installation of rest areas, and connections to natural and historical features such as the Baraboo River, long range viewing areas, historical sites, etc.

