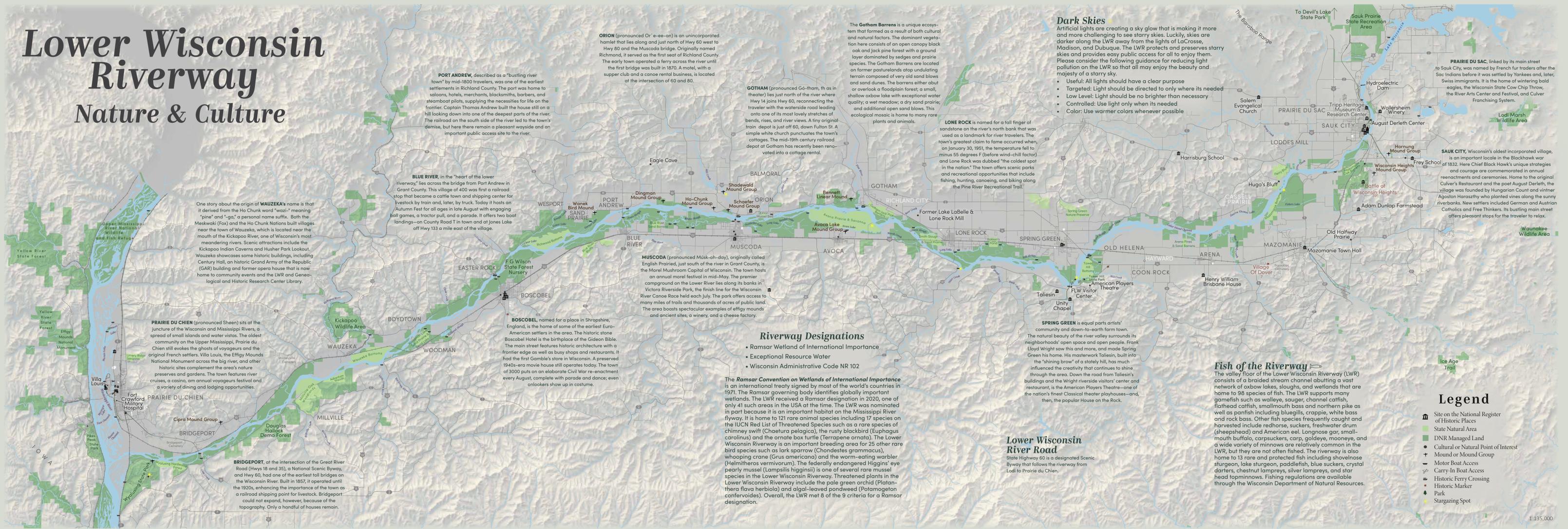


# Lower Wisconsin Riverway

## Nature & Culture



One story about the origin of **WAUZEKA's** name is that it derived from the Ho-Chunk word "wauz," meaning "pine" and "-ga," a personal name suffix. Both the Meskwaki (Fox) and the Ho-Chunk Nations built villages near the town of Wauzeke, which is located near the mouth of the Kickapoo River, one of Wisconsin's most meandering rivers. Scenic excursions include the Kickapoo Indian Caverns and Husher Park Lookout. Wauzeke showcases some historic buildings, including Century Hall, an historic Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) building and former opera house that is now home to community events and the LWR and Geographical and Historic Research Center Library.

**PRAIRIE DU CHIEN** (pronounced Sheen) sits at the juncture of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, a spread of small islands and water vitals. The oldest community on the Upper Mississippi, Prairie du Chien still evokes the ghosts of voyageurs and the original French settlers. Villa Louis, the Effigy Mounds National Monument across the big river, and other historic sites complement the area's nature preserves and gardens. The town features river cruises, a casino, an annual voyageurs festival and a variety of dining and lodging opportunities.

**BRIDGEPORT**, at the intersection of the Great River Road (Highways 18 and 35), a National Scenic Byway, and Hwy 60, had one of the earliest toll bridges on the Wisconsin River. Built in 1857, it operated until the 1920s, enhancing the importance of the town as a railroad shipping point for livestock. Bridgeport could not expand, however, because of the topography. Only a handful of houses remain.

City descriptions provided by the Great River Road brochure and Mark Cupp

### PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

**Effigy Mounds National Monument**

**Limery Ridge Savanna**

**The Francois Verteuil House**, one of the oldest houses in Wisconsin still on its original land, is an example of the French-Canadian architectural style. Verteuil built the house in the early 1820s. It is now privately owned.

**The Strange Powers House** was constructed between 1818 and 1824. Now privately owned, it is an intact example of fur-trade era French colonial architecture.

**McGregor Museum**

**McGregor Public Library**

**Pikes Peak State Park**

**St. Feriolo Island** sits **Villa Louis**, an Italian villa-style mansion developed by Hercules Doussan II and his wife Nina. The mansion replaced the Georgian red brick house built by Hercules father, a chief officer of the Astor Fur Company. Both houses were built on top of nearly 2,000-year-old Hopewell mounds. Fort Shelby and the first Fort Crawford are nearby.

**Fort Crawford Military Hospital**

**Prarie du Chien Veterans Memorial Library**

**Prarie du Chien Veterans Memorial**

**Old Rock School**

**Evergreen Cemetery**

**The United States negotiated the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of 1825** with representatives from nine Native Nations in the shadows of the first Fort Crawford. It was one of the largest treaty councils ever held in the United States as thousands of native people made the journey to Prairie du Chien. Government-to-government negotiations supposedly established tribal territorial boundaries and the allocation of hunting lands throughout the Upper Midwest. However, once tribal boundaries were established, the U.S. government sought additional concessions from individual tribes.

### WYALUSING

**Wyalusing Shore Park**

**Wyalusing Hardwood Forest**

**Wisconsin Badger Camp** is a summer camp for children and adults with developmental disabilities located south of Bridgeport. The camp's goal is "to provide a positive natural environment where individuals with developmental disabilities can learn about their surroundings and realize their full potential."

**The lower sediments of the Bridgeport Terrace** are magnetically reversed, indicating that the Wisconsin River has flowed past Bridgeport for over 760,000 years. During recent glacial epoch, wind-blown silt deposits, or "loess," draped most of southwestern Wisconsin. The catastrophic draining of Glacial Lake Wisconsin over 18,000 years ago removed the older loess deposits from the surface of the Bridgeport Terrace, indicating that the glacial floodwaters here were at least 10 m (35') above the river channel here. Sediment structures at the junction of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers suggest that glacial floods temporarily reversed the flow of the Wisconsin River from westward-flowing to eastward-flowing during glacial flooding. The catastrophic draining of Glacial Lake Wisconsin is responsible for much of the sand deposited in the Lower Wisconsin Riverway.

### WAUZEKA to WOODMAN

**Kickapoo Wildlife Area**

**Woodman Badger Camp**

**Woodman used to be connected to Fenimore** (southeast of Woodman) by the longest narrow-gauge railroad in Wisconsin. Called the "Dinky," the railroad operated between 1878 and 1926. A locomotive similar to the original is on display at the Fenimore Railroad Historical Society Museum.

**Millville native and three-time Hugo and one-time Nebula Award winning author Clifford D. Simak often set his science fiction stories in his hometown**, including his award-winning novels *Way Station* and *All Flesh is Grass*.

**Millville native and three-time Hugo and one-time Nebula Award winning author Clifford D. Simak often set his science fiction stories in his hometown**, including his award-winning novels *Way Station* and *All Flesh is Grass*.

### BOSCOBEL

**Central House Hotel**

**John Caumba operated a state-chartered ferry in Port Andrew** that early settlers depended on to transport people and goods across the river. He also used steamboats and flatboats to ship livestock and grain from his Tippecanoe Farm to markets in Galena, Prairie du Chien and others. He named his 307-acre farm after the Ho-Chunk village he found when he arrived from England in 1838. Archeological research suggests that both Meskwaki and Ho-Chunk people lived on this land before it became the Tippecanoe homestead.

**ORION** (pronounced Or'-ee-an) is an unincorporated hamlet that lies along and just north of Hwy 60 west to Hwy 80 and the Muscodia bridge. Originally named Richmond, it served as the first seat of Richland County. The early town operated a ferry across the river until the first bridge was built in 1870. A motel, with a supper club and a canoe rental business, is located at the intersection of 60 and 80.

**GOTHAM** (pronounced Goh-tham, th as in theater) lies just north of the river where Hwy 14 joins Hwy 60, reconnecting the traveler with the waterside road leading onto one of its most lovely stretches of bends, rises, and river views. A tiny original train depot is just off 60, down Fulton St. A simple white church punctuates the town's cottages. The mid-19th century railroad depot of Gotham has recently been renovated into a cottage rental.

**LONE ROCK** is named for a tall finger of sandstone on the river's north bank that was used as a landmark for river travelers. The town's greatest claim to fame occurred when, on January 30, 1951, the temperature fell to minus 55 degrees F (before wind-chill factor) and Lone Rock was dubbed "the coldest spot in the nation." The town offers scenic parks and recreational opportunities that include fishing, hunting, canoeing, and taking along the Pine River Recreational Trail.

**Dark Skies**  
Artificial lights are creating a sky glow that is making it more and more challenging to see starry skies. Luckily, skies are darker along the LWR away from the lights of LaCrosse, Madison, and Dubuque. The LWR protects and preserves starry skies and provides easy public access for all to enjoy them. Please consider the following guidance for reducing light pollution on the LWR so that all may enjoy the beauty and majesty of a starry sky.

- Useful: All lights should have a clear purpose
- Targeted: Light should be directed to only where its needed
- Low Level: Light should be no brighter than necessary
- Controlled: Use light only when its needed
- Color: Use warmer colors whenever possible

### Riverway Designations

- Ramsar Wetland of International Importance
- Exceptional Resource Water
- Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 102

**The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance** is an international treaty signed by most of the world's countries in 1971. The Ramsar governing body identifies globally important wetlands. The LWR received a Ramsar designation in 2020, one of only 41 such areas in the USA at the time. The LWR was nominated in part because it is an important habitat on the Mississippi River flyway. It is home to 121 rare animal species including 17 species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species such as a rare species of chimney swift (*Chaerula pelagica*), the rusty blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) and the ornate box turtle (*Terrapene ornata*). The Lower Wisconsin Riverway is an important breeding area for 25 other rare bird species such as lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), whooping crane (*Grus americana*) and the worm-eating warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorum*). The federally endangered Higgins' eye pearl mussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) is one of several rare mussel species in the Lower Wisconsin Riverway. Threatened plants in the Lower Wisconsin Riverway include the pale green orchid (*Platanthera flavo-herbifolia*) and signal-leaved pondweed (*Potamogeton confervoides*). Overall, the LWR met 8 of the 9 criteria for a Ramsar designation.

### Fish of the Riverway

The valley floor of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway (LWR) consists of a braided stream channel abutting a vast network of oxbow lakes, sloughs, and wetlands that are home to 98 species of fish. The LWR supports many gamefish such as walleye, sauger, channel catfish, flathead catfish, smallmouth bass and northern pike as well as panfish including bluegills, crappie, white bass and rock bass. Other fish species frequently caught and harvested include redear sunfish, suckers, freshwater drum (sheepshead) and American eel. Longnose gar, smallmouth buffalo, carp, carp, goldieye, mooneye, and a wide variety of minnows are relatively common in the LWR, but they are not often fished. The riverway is also home to 13 rare and protected fish including shovel-nose sturgeon, paddlefish, blue suckers, crystal darters, chestnut lampreys, silver lampreys, and star head topminnows. Fishing regulations are available through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

- ### Legend
- Site on the National Register of Historic Places
  - State Natural Area
  - DNR Managed Land
  - Cultural or Natural Point of Interest
  - Mound or Mound Group
  - Motor Boat Access
  - Carry-In Boat Access
  - Historic Ferry Crossing
  - Historic Marker
  - Park
  - Stargazing Spot