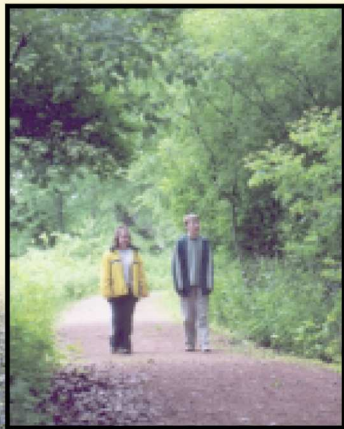


P.A.T.H.S.*

...of rediscovery

A Vision for Portage Area Trails



What This Is...

This Vision Plan hopes to plant the seed of an idea in the hearts and minds of the people of Portage. It proposes to link all the natural and historic wonders of the Portage area into a comprehensive system of trails and bike/pedestrian ways allowing for increased recreational, economic and environmental opportunities for all. This plan, designed for both residents and tourists would allow a route between such elements as The Indian Agency House, the Portage Canal, Surgeon's Quarters at Fort Winnebago, Pine Island Wildlife Area, Duck Creek, the Historic Walking Tours and the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. It would follow forests and fields, rivers, the Canal and city streets. Most trails would permit bikes and blades. Others, only foot traffic. Some trails and routes shown on the plan already exist. Others are proposed to link existing trails and routes with key natural and historic features in and around Portage. The exact location of these proposed trails is yet to be determined. Wherever the trails are established, the primary directive of the PATHS system is to protect private interests. Trails would be located only with full positive support of the plan.

Concept

Consider the Portage Canal and Ice Age Trail as the spine of the PATHS system. All other trails flow from them either directly or indirectly. The Big Loop Trail encircles the city and intersects the Canal twice. Other trails such as the Pine Island Trail, Duck Creek Trail and others flow from the Big Loop. This hierarchy of trails will make the system easy to comprehend and use.

This is a Work in Progress

This map is produced with the intent to share this idea of a comprehensive trails system with you. Talk it over with your friends and family. Then call us and let us know what you think. If you think a potential trail segment may fall on or near your property, we would like to meet with you and talk about the benefits a trail can offer, both economically and environmentally.

The PATHS system offers a means to enhance the health, economic and recreational opportunities for residents of and visitors to Portage. We hope you agree.

Have a Comment?

Contact:

Tim Raimer
Portage Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department
806 Silverlake Drive
Portage, WI 53901
608-742-2178

Fred Galley
Portage Area Trails Heritage System
P.O. Box 181
Portage, Wisconsin 53901
608-742-6151

Want to Help?

We need your help with continuing the planning of the PATHS system and the improvement or repair of existing trails in the area. We could use your help. Contact Tim Raimer at the above address or phone.

RECREATION

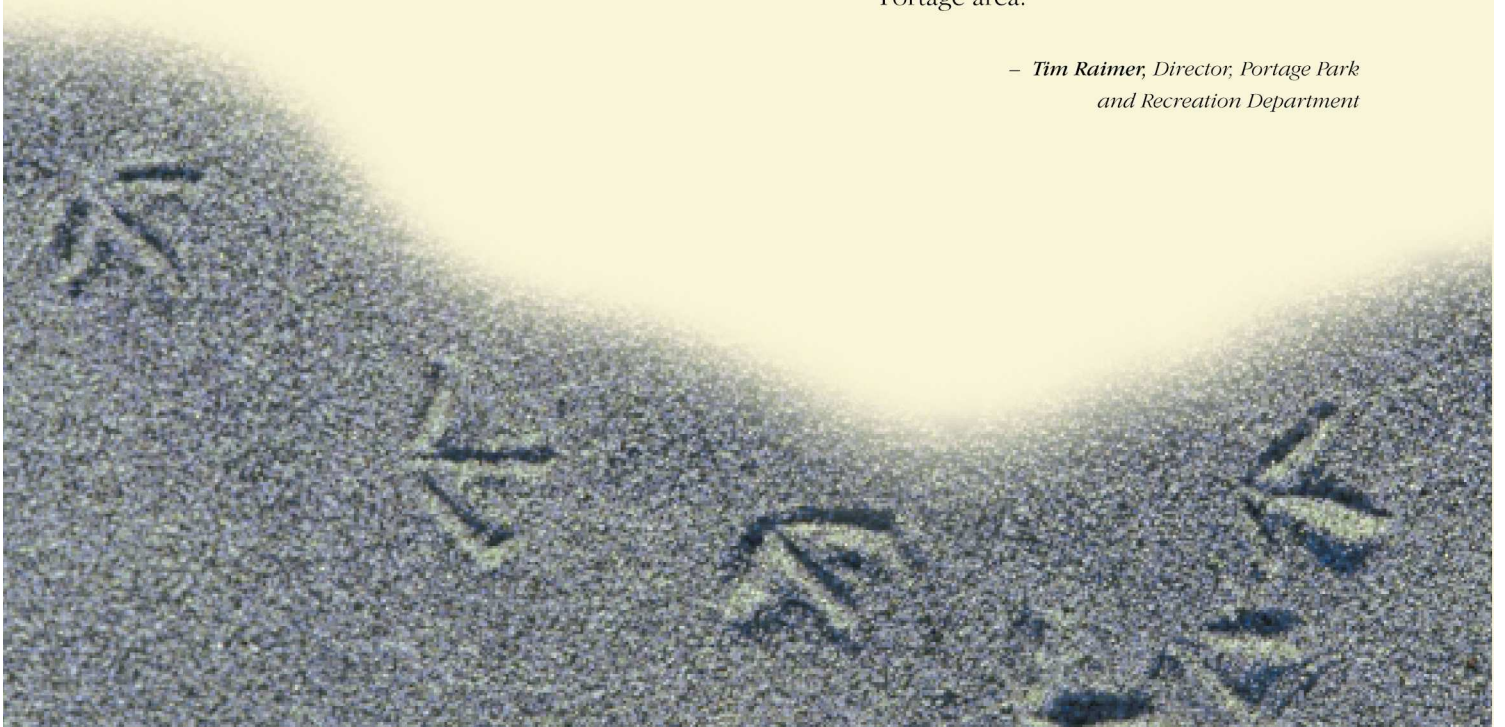
“There are some who find a trailhead, or a path through the woods which curves invitingly out of sight, simply irresistible. Thoreau was such a person, and before him, Wordsworth. And today it’s me and probably you. Sometimes we need just to set out, afoot or a-bike, to go where a path takes us.”

– *Charles E. Little, Greenways for America, p. 92*



“Trails offer a great recreational opportunity – from exercise to bird watching, to just taking in the sights with your friends. Trails are a great way to get out and enjoy the beauty of the Portage area.”

– *Tim Raimer, Director, Portage Park and Recreation Department*



ECONOMICS & COMMUNITY

“Three new gift shops have recently opened, another bike shop, a jewelry store, an antique and used furniture store, a thrift shop, a Wendy’s Restaurant and a pizza and sandwich shop have also cropped up. All this is happening, and only with the PROSPECT of the trail opening in July. There is an air of excitement and anticipation now within this community. Something Connellsville has not felt for many years.”

– *Chris Wagner, Executive Director of the Greater Connellsville Chamber of Commerce, Pennsylvania. From Rails-to-Trails Conservancy fact sheet: Benefits of Trails and Greenways*

“The future development of the proposed trail and bike/pedestrian transportation system has sparked renewed interest in future economic development for the Portage area. This system will be an excellent opportunity for both visitors and local residents to enjoy the historical and natural beauty of the Portage area.”

– *Ken Jabn, Director, Portage Area Chamber of Commerce / Downtown Business Improvement District*



HEALTH & WELLNESS

“Every time we go to see the Doctor, the recommendation is ‘exercise’. Having local trails to hike in the Portage area would be a great way to follow the Doctor’s orders.”

– *Dr. Cathy Doyle, Pediatrician,
Portage Clinic-Deancare*

“I can think of nothing that would improve the physical and mental health of Portage residents more than getting outside and taking a hike on Portage trails.”

– *Dr. David Gregory, Family Practitioner,
Portage Clinic-Deancare*

“City residents are often trapped within a network of high speed road and rail corridors, isolated from their natural surroundings. Trails and paths can be a great way to break free of this isolation and restore our connection with nature.”

– *Dr. Stewart Taylor, Orthopaedic
Surgeon, Portage*



“The health consequences of a sedentary lifestyle are alarming: an increased risk of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and other chronic diseases and conditions.”

– *“Effects of the Pedestrian Environment on
Physical Activity in Adults and Children”,
from the Bicycle Federation of America*

*Brochure design provided by a
grant from the National Park
Service Challenge Cost
Share Program*



CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

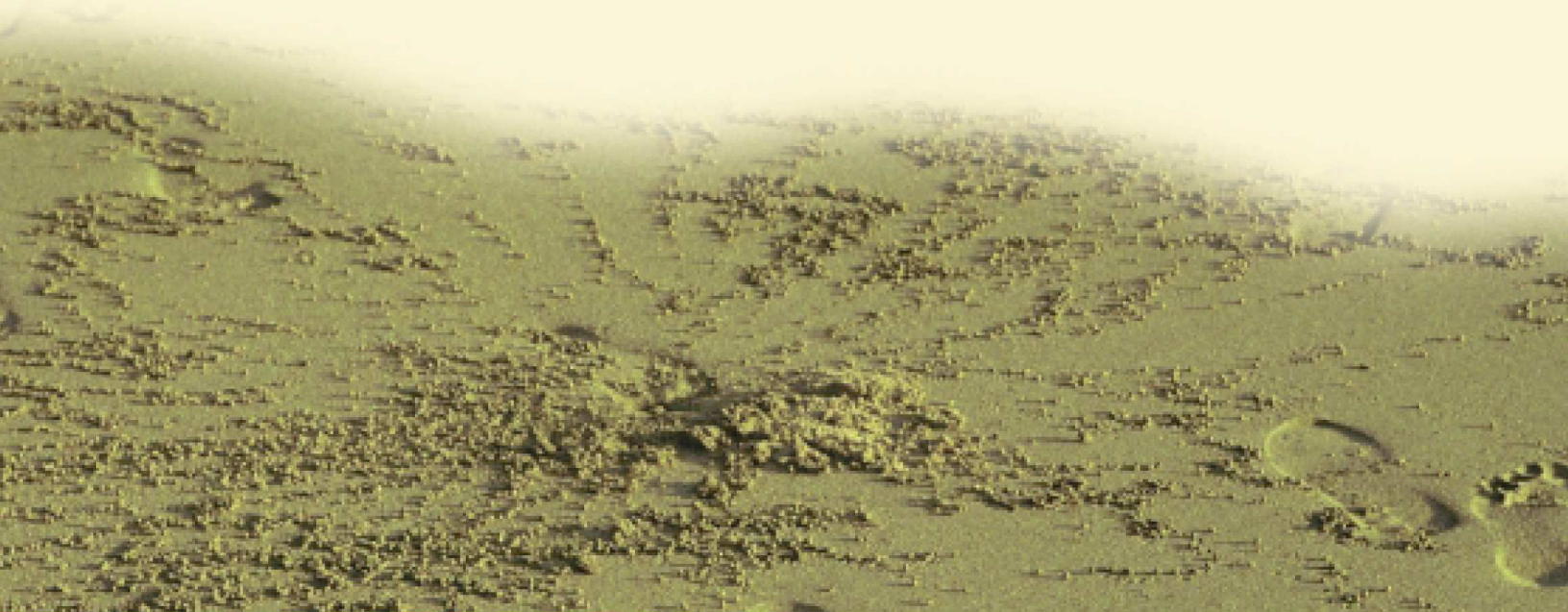
“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land. By land is meant all of the things on, over or in the earth. Harmony with land is like harmony with a friend: you cannot cherish his right hand and chop off his left.”

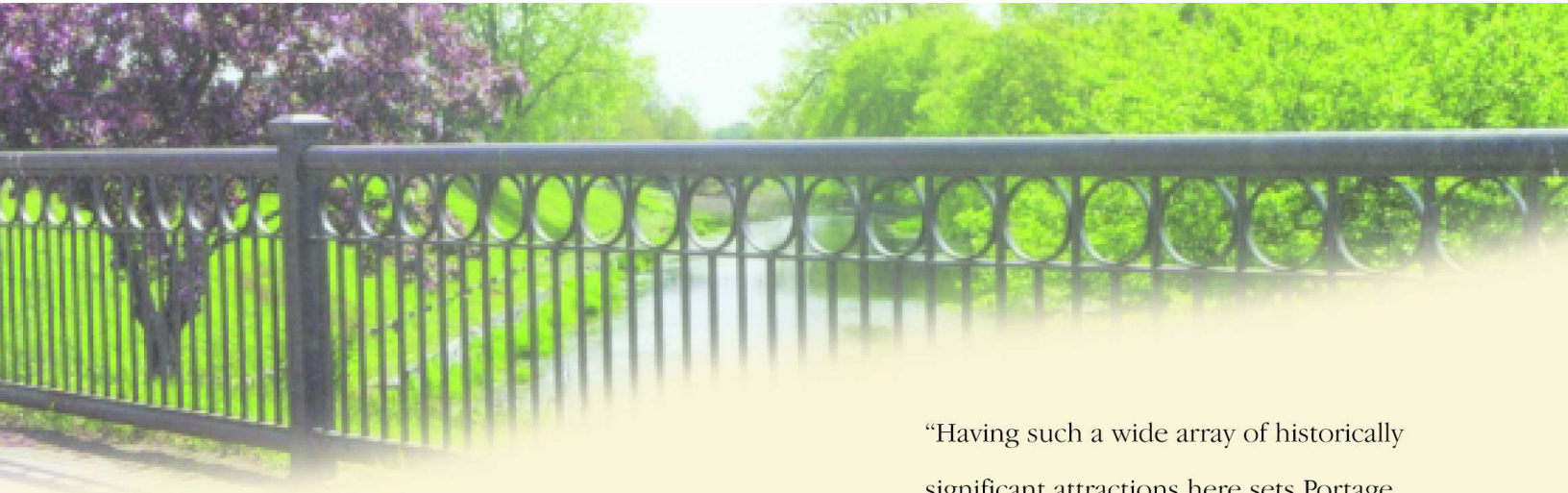
– *Aldo Leopold: Round River, Oxford University Press New York, 1993, pg. 165*



“Trails are places for learning about geography and nature, but also are places to truly understand life and our connection to the natural system.”

– *Jean Potter, Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation*





HISTORY

“Trails and greenways have the power to connect us to our heritage by preserving historic places and by providing access to them. They can give people a sense of place and an understanding of the enormity of past events.”

– From *Rails-to-Trails Conservancy fact sheet: Benefits of Trails and Greenways*



“Having such a wide array of historically significant attractions here sets Portage apart from most other Wisconsin cities. What better way to link these attractions together than a system of trails and bike/pedestrian ways.”

– *Gil Meisgeier, Portage Canal Society*

The Portage Trails Team

Gil Meisgeier, *Portage Canal Society*

Kathy Taylor, *Portage City Council*

Fred Galley, *Portage Historical Society*

Tim Raimer, *Manager, City of Portage Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department*

Gary Mercer, *Portage Canal Society*

Ken Jahn, *Director, Portage Area Chamber of Commerce / Downtown Business Improvement District*

Jean Potter, *Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation*

Mark Weaver, *National Park Service, Rivers and Trails Program*

PORTAGE CANAL TOWPATH TRAIL

The historic Portage Canal Towpath Trail, also known as the Portage Canal segment of the Ice Age Trail, links the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers. This segment accesses the historic Surgeon's Quarters at Fort Winnebago, the historic Indian Agency House, historic downtown walking tours and the 'Top O' the Levee Trail. To the north, the Marquette segment of the Ice Age Trail, also known as the Joliet-Marquette/Boy Scout Trail links Portage with Governor's Bend Park, John Muir Memorial Park, and the boyhood home of John Muir at Fountain Lake. To the south of the Towpath Trail one can access the Pine Island Wildlife Area made famous by Aldo Leopold.

WAUONA TRAIL

This road closely follows the "Wauona" wet and dry season portage routes taken by Native Americans and Voyageurs for hundreds of years, between the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. A short trail just north of the Fairgrounds connects the trail to the Portage Canal Towpath Trail.

BIG LOOP TRAIL

The west half of this trail follows city streets and could act as a walking trail between the schools and the Wisconsin River. The south portion of the Big Loop would incorporate most of the 'Top O' the Levee Trail. The east half could serve as a walking/hiking trail running along or near the existing snowmobile trail from Portage Schools to the trailhead at Highway 33 and the Canal, then southward to Highway 51 near Southtown Road. A short spur trail could connect the Fort Winnebago County Wayside with the Old Fort Winnebago Cemetery.

PINE ISLAND TRAIL

This trail could follow Rustic Road 49, (also known as Levee Road) for bikers, and along the top of the parallel levee for hikers. It could provide access to the Pine Island Wildlife Area for great nature viewing. This non-looping trail could extend to the county line.

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS

The Rich architectural, cultural and literary heritage of Portage is exhibited in five Historic Walking Tours: Industrial Waterfront Historic District; Retail Historic District; Church Hill Historic District; and Society Hill Historic District.

THE NORTH LOOP

This walking/hiking trail (and potential High School Cross-Country route) follows New Pinery Road north from Collins Road, then north on CX a short distance. From there, it could turn east toward the Fox River then turn southward just east of Mooreland Circle, to its destination at the High School.

BLACK HAWK TRAIL

There is an existing levee running southeast from Highway 33 along the south bank of the Wisconsin River. It leads to local roads that loop back to the levee. This offers a great opportunity to provide hiking access to the river from Black Hawk Park and Highway 33.

DUCK CREEK TRAIL

Duck Creek Trail could lead from the existing “Top O’ the Levee Trail” that parallels the Wisconsin River to a short segment next to Highway 51. From there it could turn onto Duck Creek Road bringing the hiker and biker into a beautiful wetland area for wildlife viewing. From there, Duck Creek Trail could continue to its destination at the Old Military Road Wayside at the corner of Dunning Road and Highway 51.

SAND COUNTY CANOE TRAIL

This canoe trail, which renowned environmentalist Aldo Leopold mythically referred to as Sand County, follows the Wisconsin and Baraboo Rivers. The Wisconsin River segment could begin at the Kilbourn Dam in Wisconsin Dells and pass through Portage to its destination at Merrimac on Lake Wisconsin. The Baraboo River segment could begin near the Highway 33 and I-94 junction and could provide users with a unique tour of typical meandering, slow-moving river.

FOX RIVER CANOE TRAIL

From Swan Lake canoeists could follow the Fox River to the Fort Winnebago Wayside.

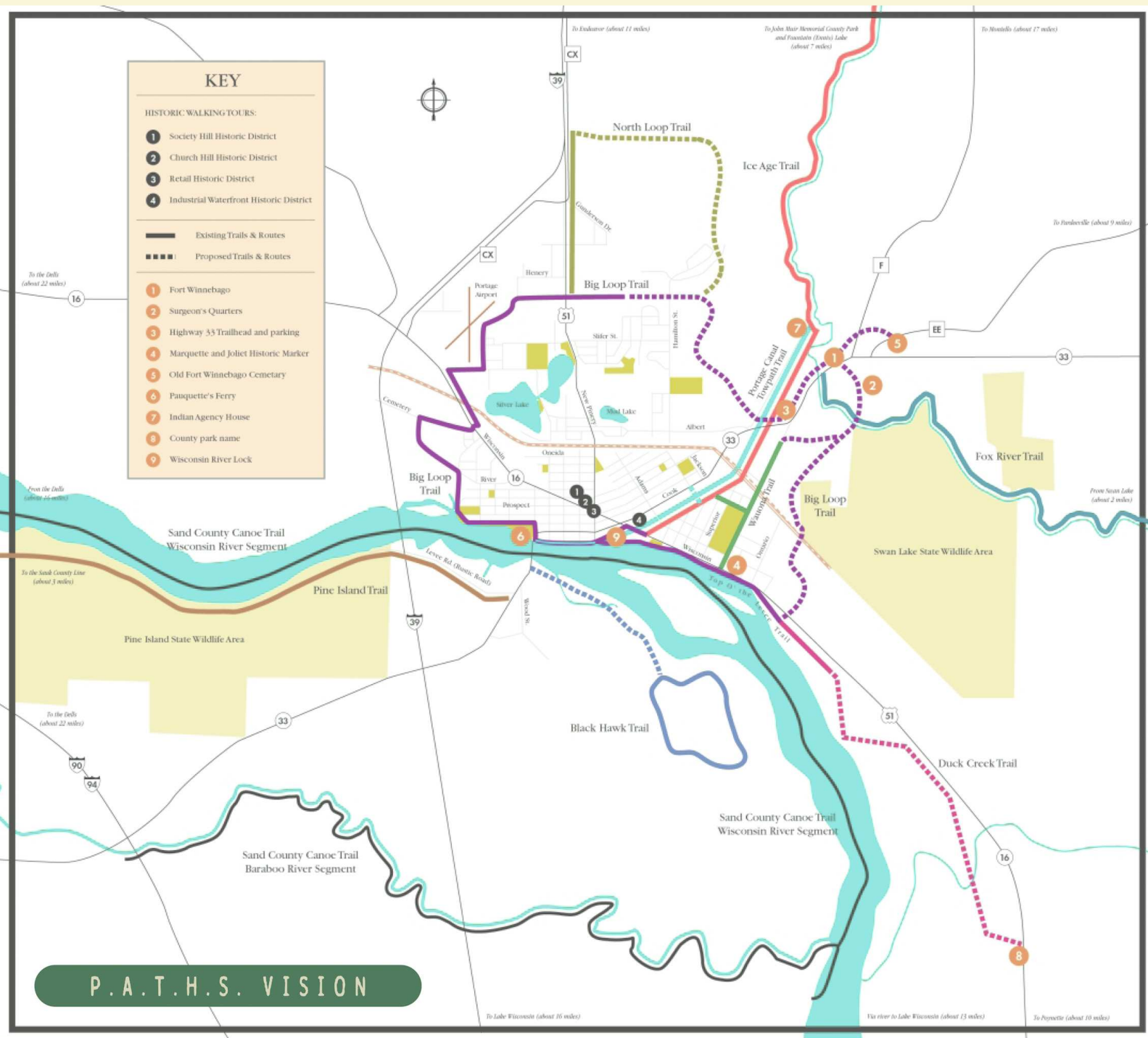
KEY

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS:

- 1 Society Hill Historic District
- 2 Church Hill Historic District
- 3 Retail Historic District
- 4 Industrial Waterfront Historic District

- Existing Trails & Routes
- Proposed Trails & Routes

- 1 Fort Winnebago
- 2 Surgeon's Quarters
- 3 Highway 53 Trailhead and parking
- 4 Marquette and Joliet Historic Marker
- 5 Old Fort Winnebago Cemetery
- 6 Pauquette's Ferry
- 7 Indian Agency House
- 8 County park name
- 9 Wisconsin River Lock



P.A.T.H.S. VISION