The Wisconsin River is known as the hardest-working river in the nation because of the 27 dams located on the river, providing flood control and hydroelectric power for homes and businesses in Wisconsin. Flowing from the northern border of Wisconsin to Prairie du Chien in the southwest corner, and then merging with the mighty Mississippi, the Wisconsin River watershed covers one-quarter of the state. Grandfather Falls Dam is the largest of eight hydroelectric power plants Wisconsin Public Service operates on the river.

The Lincoln County Recreational Area
Wildlife and Fisheries
Wildlife

Most of the Lincoln County recreational area remains undeveloped and provides an excellent habitat for northwoods wildlife. Deer and bear abound, while bald eagles and osprey, both threatened species, may be seen soaring through the shoreline treetops. In addition, at least one pack of timber wolves calls the area home. Eager anglers can find action with several species of fish, including walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass, panfish and even the occasional muskie. Wisconsin Public Service provides a continuous release of water from Grandfather Falls Dam into the river's channel, increasing the habitat for the natural propagation of fish and expanding fishing opportunities for visitors to the area.

Boats can be launched north of Grandfather Falls Dam on the east shore south of County Road I and at the Rock Falls Public Boat Ramp. Facilities downstream include Camp New Wood County Park, the Town of Merrill Boat Ramp, Lokemoen Boat Ramp, Council Grounds State Park and the Wisconsin Public Service West Shore Boat Ramp. And canoe portages at Grandfather Falls Dam and Alexander Dam are clearly marked. Handicapped fishing access is available at the Grandfather Falls Dam and Council Grounds State Park.

Lincoln County stretches from just above Grandfather Falls Dam on the Wisconsin River to Alexander Dam near Merrill, Wisconsin. The land, more than 1,000 acres, is owned by Wisconsin Public Service and is part of a cooperative lands management agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The Grandfather Falls and Alexander hydroelectric project lands are joined together by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' 1,500-acre Bill Cross Recreation Area.

Grandfather Falls Dam has been producing electricity since 1906. It takes advantage of a 94-foot drop between the dam and its power station, with the falling water propelling the plant's 17,200-kilowatt turbine generators. Alexander Dam has been producing electricity since 1924 and produces 4,200 kilowatts of electric power.

Join Us!
Wisconsin Public Service invites you to enjoy the Lincoln County recreational area. Fishing and canoeing are the most popular water activities in the area, but there's more!

You'll want to bring your binoculars, because the area is prime for watching birds, including osprey and bald eagles. And if you'd like to take a little hike, you're in luck, because the Lincoln County recreational area has a 0.8-mile-long hiking trail along the spillway for your use. There is also a section of the statewide Ice Age Trail System crossing the area. When the snow flies, bring your cross-country skis or snowmobile—there are trails for both, as well as other winter sports opportunities in the area.

If you're a camper, facilities are available at both Camp New Wood and Council Grounds State Park. Whatever your outdoor interests, the Lincoln County recreational area welcomes you.
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Council Grounds State Park

Council Grounds State Park offers recreation for just about everyone, featuring a 217-foot beach, a modern campground, fishing, boating, nature trails, a physical fitness trail and shelters.

It’s also the site of Krueger Pines Scientific Area, named after former state senator Clifford “Tiny” Krueger. Senator Krueger served Wisconsin for 34 years and was a leading conservationist and advocate of natural resources programs. The 21-acre area is the state’s 20th scientific area and a classic example of old-growth white pines. These trees reach an average height of 124 feet and an average diameter of 21 inches.

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The Hard-Working Wisconsin River

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Stay Safe—Stay Away from Dams

Critical Danger Zones

A) Hazardous areas marked by buoy lines
B) Sudden water discharge from dam gates
C) Strong, unpredictable currents above and below dams
D) Sudden turbulent discharge from automatic generators
E) Deceitful reverse currents below the spill
F) Slippery surfaces on dam structures and shorelines
G) Submerged hazards above and below dams
H) Open spillways that may not be visible from above a dam
I) Debris passing over or through the dam
J) In cold weather, thin unsafe ice forming near the dam

Please Keep These Guidelines in Mind

Wisconsin Public Service wants you to enjoy your time in these recreational areas. We have only a few rules, which ensure a safe, enjoyable visit for all of our guests:

• Fires are not permitted. If you would like to have a campfire, grills and campfire rings are located throughout local parks.
• Camping is permitted only in county parks or other public or private campgrounds in the area.
• Off-road vehicles (including motorcycles) are not allowed. Exception: All-terrain vehicles are allowed on some snowmobile trails during the snowmobile season.

Thank you.