

Potawatomi Advocates for Trees, Conservation and Heritage (PATCH) is a citizen group committed to supporting comprehensive plans for Potawatomi State Park that honor its natural landscape, protect its wilderness character and preserve its heritage for future generations. We believe thoughtful stewardship today ensures a thriving Park tomorrow

For release 04/28/2026

In 2026 contractors began the demolition of components of Potawatomi State Park and tree clearing. The work is in the campground areas (electrical, drainage, plumbing) and along S. Norway Rd. and the southern portions of Shoreline Rd. (tree clearing). **ZONE 2 ON MAP M-4**

The work is in accordance with Pavement and Utilities replacement drawing issued 12/3/2025 Peter Kolaszewski PE, project manager .

In 2025 the DNR issued press releases describing up- coming work in the park. The press releases described tree cutting along the Cherryland Airport runway approaches and water-line/electrical work and other work in the campground areas.

None of the information released by the DNR ever revealed that there would be significant tree clearing along S. Norway Road and the majority of Shoreline Road. There was one mention of “road re-surfacing” but no mention of road widening or bike paths.

The press releases never mentioned:

- Tree clearing in areas other than the runway approach
- Road removal and widening. Total asphalt width increases from 18-20 feet (with no bike lane) to 28’ which encompasses two 3’ bike lanes as part of the asphalt surface.
- A 150’ swath of tree cutting to “straighten” Norway rd. near Grondin Rd.
- Destroying historic traffic calming plantings as a median
- Destroying parking lot screening trees

In addition the DNR:

- Never had a public hearing
- Never released drawings or sketches
- Never informed the “friends” group of the actual scope
- Violated the DNR’s own 2018 Potawatomi Park master plan, pages 39-49 of Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Regional Master Plan which established 200’ buffer zones from escarpment features in Zone 2 of the park
- Destroyed historic trees in the traffic calming medians (see Claude summary of historic traffic calming trees)
- Violated DNR’s general criteria for preserving the natural beauty of the Park
- Said that this work was included in the 2018 master plan and there is nothing in the master plan regarding bike lanes, widening the road(s).
- Plans to construct bike lanes that are inconsistent with Wisconsin DOT’s standards as stated in the The Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook
- Violates the 2018 master plan, pages 43 and 44 under “LONG TERM PRESCRIPTIONS:” *The level of development, open and closed status, and the miles of roads will remain consistent with the Land Management Classification.”* Nothing in Zone 2 states or implies that a more intensive use is desired. In fact the opposite is the case.

The public outcry over the significant tree cutting and increased paving is building.

The DNR and Park employees have stated this project is only Phase One and that same “improvements” will be made along N. Norway Road

The Public believes that Potawatomi State Park is the Public’s Park and not the DNR’s Park .

As such, projects of this scope cannot be allowed to happen without public input regardless of whether they are supposedly included in a “Master Plan”.

CALL TO ACTION:

- **We believe since the current work is inconsistent with the 2018 master Plan it should be halted so all of the questions raised can be evaluated in a public forum**
- **We believe that plans for a “Phase 2 “ should be evaluated in a public forum**

Sincerely,

P.A.T.C.H

THE FOLLOWING WDNR PRESS RELEASES
AND RELATED NEVER MENTION CUTTING
TREES ALONG PARK ROADS, NOR WIDENING

02/20/2026 NO MENTION OF TREE REMOVAL

ONGOING TREE REMOVAL AT POTAWATOMI STATE PARK MAINTAINS SAFE AIRPORT CLEARANCE

STURGEON BAY, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shared today that an ongoing tree-clearing project has been taking place at [Potawatomi State Park](#) to remove obstructions from the flight path of the Door County Cherryland Airport, which neighbors the property.

Trees needed to be removed to maintain a safe path of travel for aircraft utilizing the neighboring airport's runways. Any trees or near obstructions or encroachments that impacted the airport's required clearing areas and aviation easements (agreements that allow the airport to use the airspace above the property) required removal. This project has been contracted by the Department of Transportation, in coordination with the Door County Cherryland Airport and the DNR.

Tree removal has been taking place on both sides of Potawatomi State Park's entrance road, in the vicinity of the park's maintenance or service area. Vehicles and equipment have been crossing the entrance road and the snowmobile trail to the south throughout this project.

The entrance road has remained open to the public throughout the project, and signage has been posted to alert park users to the ongoing work. Visitors are reminded to be careful when traveling near the work area.

The snowmobile trail through Potawatomi State Park is closed for the duration of the tree removal project. Updates on the status of the snowmobile trail can be found on the [Door County Alert Center](#).

The impact on visitors is expected to remain minimal. However, to ensure safe clearance within the airport clearing areas and the aviation easements, a large number of trees have been removed, resulting in a noticeable change to the property. The tree removal work is anticipated to be complete soon.

PRESS RELEASE UPDATED

2026 ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND CAMPGROUND CLOSURES

Beginning in 2026, a large road construction, water line replacement and electric service project will be taking place at Potawatomi State Park that will affect availability of all campsites, the accessible cabin, amphitheater, the south shore shelter and access to the universal fishing pier. The construction area includes the Daisy Field campground, group campground, the southern portion of S. Norway Road (from the Entrance Road T-intersection east to Shoreline Road) and the southern portion of Shoreline Road. Access to trails in the south end of the park will be impacted throughout the construction period. Watch for "Road Closed" and "Trail Closed" signs and keep out of areas posted as closed.

Park staff will work with the contractor to minimize the time period for all campsite and facility closures. The tentative closure dates include:

Campsites: All campsites are closed in the reservation system from Jan. 1 through June 2026.

Campers may utilize the "Notify Me" button on the [reservation website](#) to receive email alerts when these sites become available. The "Notify Me" button will appear after searching for your desired location (Potawatomi State Park) and your selected dates for camping.

Accessible Cabin: The [accessible cabin](#) is closed May through June 2026. Applicants may request reservation dates during the closure period.

Amphitheater: The amphitheater is closed in the reservation system from Jan. 1 through June 2026.

South Shore Shelter: The shelter is closed in the reservation system from Jan. 1 through September 2026.

Ice Age Trail: The Ice Age Trail is expected to remain open during the majority of the construction period. Please use caution at road crossings within the construction area.

Construction dates are subject to change. Updates to the Potawatomi State Park construction project will be posted to this page. (Updated 3/23/26)

ON FRIENDS FACEBOOK

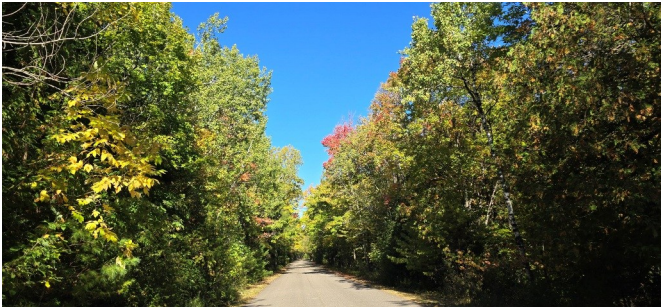
Please be aware when coming to the park that site work for the park's Campground Road Resurfacing and Waterline Replacement project kicked off this week on S Norway Road east of the group campground and the southern section of Shoreline Road. Utility work on Shoreline Road is expected to start on February 16th. Additional work areas include the campground and group campground. Please watch for and abide by Road Closed and Trail Closed signs, and stay out of construction areas for your own safety and the safety of construction workers. Additional information and impacts can be found on the park's website: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/potawatomi>. Questions or comments may be directed to Park Superintendent Erin Brown Stender at Erin.BrownStender@wisconsin.gov or by calling the park office



“before” at the start of the Run Wild 5k , near parking area 3



After



BEFORE



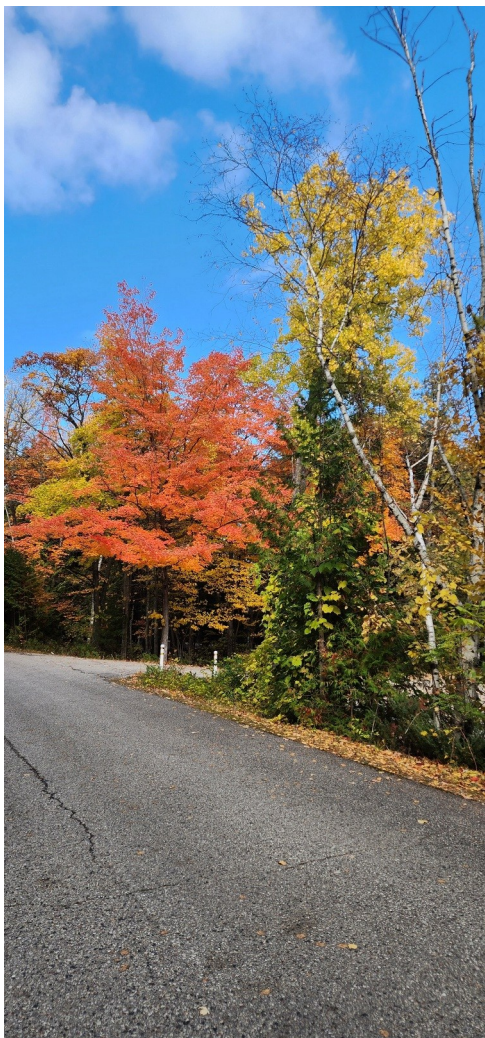
BEFORE



AFTER



After Historic traffic calming trees removed



Tree screening of parking lots has been removed



The enchanting road lanes are gone



**Ice Age trail junction with Shoreline Rd
(Hills Point)**





150' wide swath cut through forest near Grondin Rd.



Examples of cutting along Shoreline Road and South Norway Road



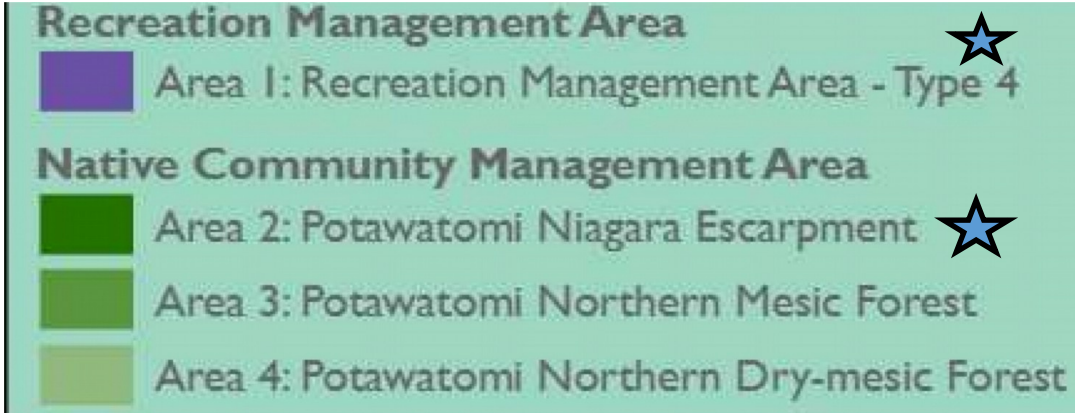
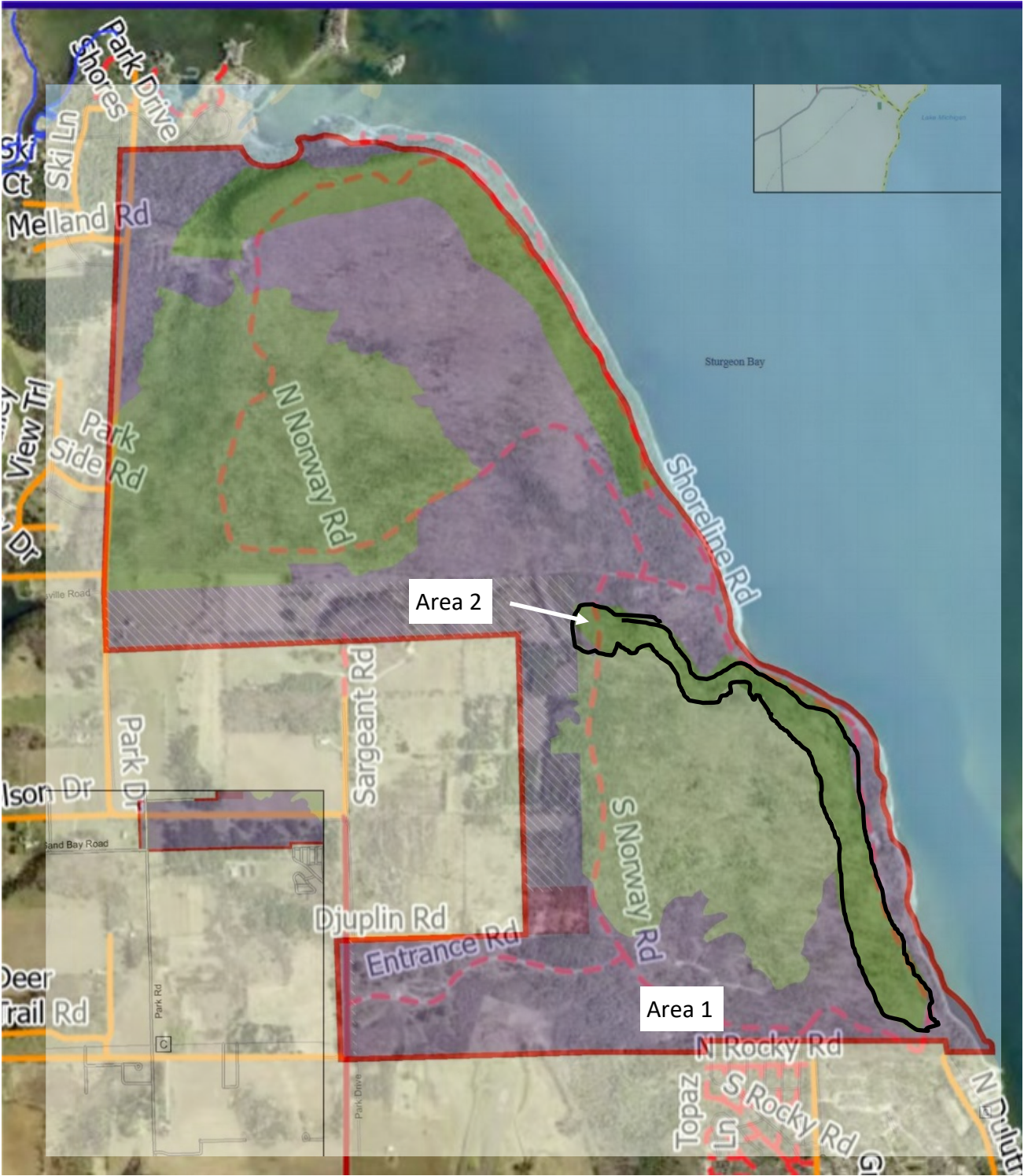
Many areas where cutting encroaches the 200' barrier established by the Park's 2018 master plan revision

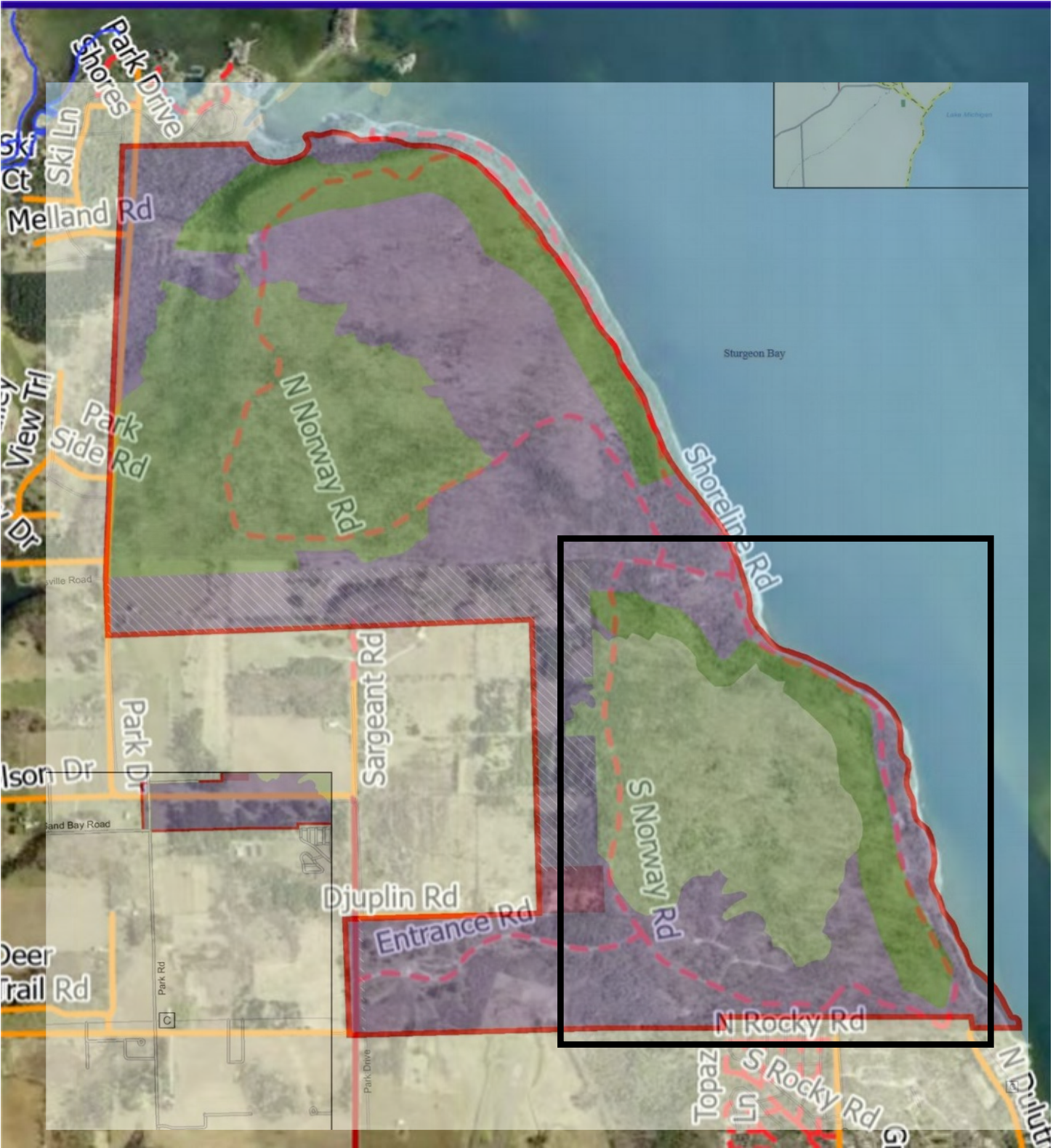


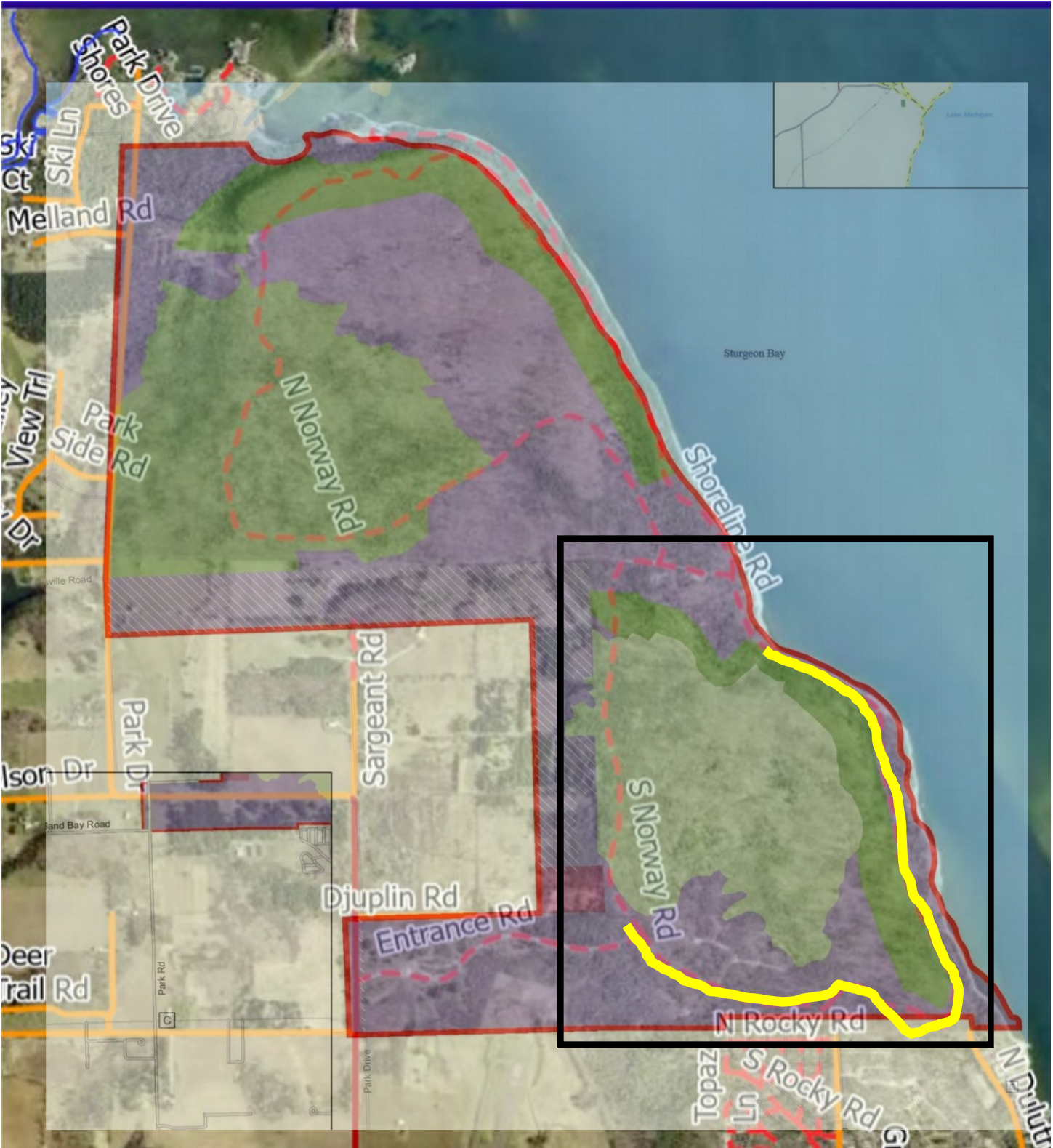
DNR MAP M-4 showing Zone 2 which places restrictions on cutting within 200 feet of the escarpment.

Numerous rock outcroppings/cliffs are within 200 feet of tree cutting.

See numbered locations (Table #1) that show road width and distance to rock faces







TREE CUT AREA ALONG SHOLELINE AND NORWAY ROADS (1.75 miles)



See table#1 (page 21)

The following excerpts are from the Northern Lake Michigan Coastal Regional Master Plan.

Pages 39-49 encompass the entire Potawatomi Master Plan. The excerpted pages refer to Area #2 (see Map#4) which is on the west and north sides of Shoreline and Norway roads, the areas that have been cut.

Violations of the Master Plan include cutting trees within the 200' buffer zone required by the master plan

CHAPTER 2: Management, Development and Use

Area 2: Potawatomi Niagara Escarpment

Classification: Native Community Management Area

Size: 147 acres

Site Description: This site represents a significant portion of the Niagara Escarpment within Potawatomi State Park.

Below the steep escarpment face, the forest of white birch and northern white cedar provides habitat for rare plants, such as climbing fumitory, and rare snails, including state threatened and endangered species. Unlike other places within the forest, there is a well-developed shrub layer of mountain maple and red-berried elder on these talus slopes. These areas provide habitat for the least flycatcher and veery, both Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) (WDNR 2005).

Significance: This site provides habitat for a diverse group of rare terrestrial snails that have occupied the area since the last Ice Age. These snails have restricted ranges, limited dispersal ability, very specific biotic and abiotic habitat requirements, and are vulnerable to management activities that alter temperature, moisture, and/or food supplies. Talus slopes contain vents that carry cold air, moisture, and nutrients that some snail species are dependent on. These vents, located throughout the slope and on bedrock outcrops on top of the escarpment, are vulnerable to compaction and filling-in.

Management Considerations: Impacts from activities that disturb the soil or open the forest canopy, can create warmer and drier conditions, increase sedimentation, introduce invasive plant species, and cause vent compaction, all of which adversely affect the rare snails. To minimize the potential impacts of activities above and below the escarpment face, this site includes a 200-foot buffer for the escarpment face.

Creating buffer zones that allow uses that do not negatively impact the core area of the Niagara Escarpment is one technique outlined in the [Niagara Escarpment Plan](#). This Niagara Escarpment Plan guides management of the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario, an area designated in 1990 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Biosphere Reserve.

Additional management considerations include invasive species control, reducing off-trail use, and road and trail maintenance that minimizes impacts to the endangered and threatened species at the site. A lookout tower is located within the site near the old ski hill.

Management Objectives

- Passively manage the forests to provide ecological reference areas.
- Protect the Niagara Escarpment by minimizing the potential impacts of activities above and below the escarpment face.
- Attain and maintain old forest characteristics on suitable sites.
- Allow for natural recruitment of coarse woody debris (large diameter timber) and standing snags.
- Protect and enhance rare species populations and their habitats.

Management Prescriptions

- Within a 200-foot buffer zone of the escarpment face, do not conduct management or development (e.g., timber harvesting, new parking lot or building construction), or allow uses



CHAPTER 2: Management, Development and Use

that would disturb soil and forest canopy cover and negatively impact the core habitat area of the Niagara Escarpment.

- Allow natural processes to shape the structure of the forest communities.
- Rare species habitat enhancement could include: rerouting trails, installing cordwalks, and selectively removing canopy cover by hand felling trees for increased sunlight.
- Following a catastrophic event (e.g. wind, fire, ice damage, forest pests), salvage may be done along trails, access roads, and other infrastructure for human safety after consultation and direction by the Parks and district ecologist, forester and property manager. Additional salvage may be conducted if it fits with the ecological considerations for the site.

Area 3: Northern Mesic Forest

Classification:	Native Community Management Area
Recreational Use Setting	Type 3
Size:	235 acres

Site Description: This site features a Northern Mesic Forest with sugar maple, red oak, American beech, white birch, and hemlock. Also present are low dolomite cliffs, scattered boulders, and Northern Dry-mesic Forests dominated by white pine, red oak, and white birch.

Exposed bedrock within this site can contain vents that provide moisture and nutrients to rare terrestrial snails on the face of the Niagara Escarpment.

Significance: This site provides vital migratory bird stopover habitat for up to 10,000 neo-tropical land birds each spring and fall, harbors exposed bedrock with vents that provide moisture and nutrients to rare species on the Niagara Escarpment. The site offers opportunities to promote older forest characteristics in a landscape dominated by agriculture and small woodlots. One rare species was located within the site.

Management Considerations: This site warrants special management consideration including invasive species control.

Management Objectives

- Protect the Niagara Escarpment by minimizing the potential impacts of activities above and below the escarpment face.
- Maintain, protect and enhance the area’s natural features, including the old forest characteristics, to provide a high quality, scenic setting for non-motorized recreational uses and snowmobiling.
- Promote the development of old forest characteristics where applicable, particularly northern red oak stands.
- Allow interior white birch stands to succeed to northern hardwoods.
- Protect and enhance rare species populations and their habitats.
- Allow for natural recruitment of coarse woody debris (large diameter timber) and standing snags.
- Invasive species objective



TABLE #1 Area 2 Niagara Escarpment. (see page 16)

#	LOCATION	CURRENT ASPHALT WIDTH	DISTANCE FROM STAKES TO-CLIFF*	LAT/LONG
1	Duluth gravel trail	22'	Na	44.85158/- 87.40266
2	parking area 1	19'	115'	44.85325/- 87.40379
3	parking area 2	20'	65'	44.85556/- 87.40500
4	Parking area 4	18'	105'	44.85866/- 87.40581
5	Ice Age Trail junction with Shoreline Rd.	19'	NA	44.85996/- 87.40590
6		18'	75'	44.86134/- 87.40902

* Offset distance from stakes to actual work area not known. Typically would be less than 4 feet

The demolition/construction plans for S. Norway Rd. and Shoreline rd. show:

A) Proposed typical section shows 11 feet per side (22 feet total) paved drive lanes plus a paved 3' bike lane on either side. Total paved width 28' plus approx. 4' maintained shoulder = 36' total improved area versus 18-20' presently. Disturbed area is many feet on either side of improved area.

B) No colored sketch exists to show what the finished areas will look like

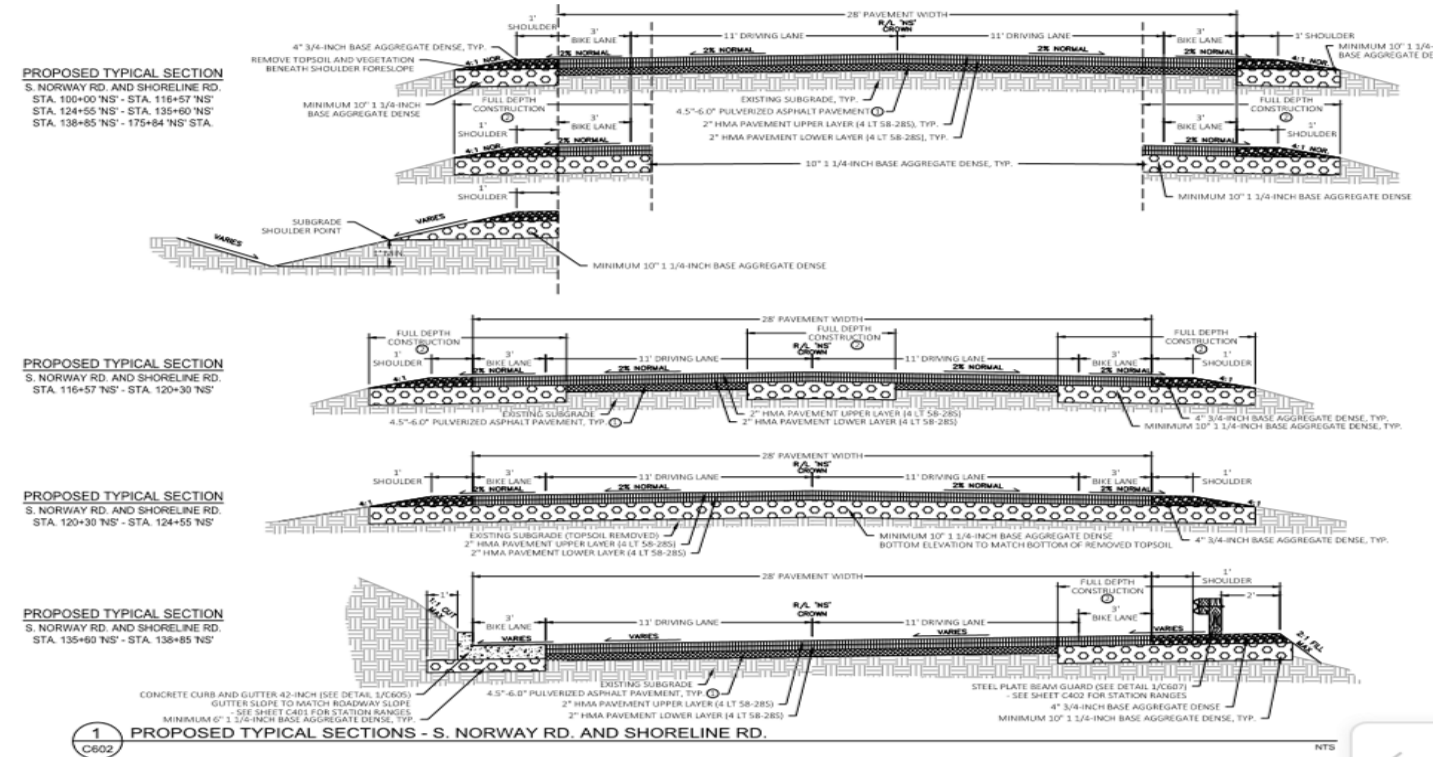
C) topsoil and seeding is specified for disturbed areas that are not reconstructed. This creates a mowing issue for a park that rarely needed mowing. This is especially critical for the to be abandoned portion of S. Norway road.

D) 3' bike lanes are not to recommended WISDOT standards. The Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook (figure 3-21) specifies a minimum of 4' for a bike lane (not including a pedestrian lane). Shared use paths should be at least 10' wide.

This means pedestrians will be walking on the road where traffic speeds will likely increase because of the increased width.

Also, 3' bike lanes will cause numerous instances of bicyclists entering traffic while going around slower cyclists. Compared to the historical road use where motorists were always aware of bicyclists and pedestrians, the "improved" road will decrease driver awareness.

E) traffic calming islands with mature and historic pines have been eliminated. This violated the historic character and increases traffic speeds. Islands separating parking areas from the road have been removed and will be seeded. This increases mowing (see above) and eliminates screening (see appendix)



RESOURCES:

2018 MASTER PLAN:

https://widnr.widen.net/s/mqtfbjggjd/fl_mp_el_northernlakemichigancoastal_regionalmasterplan_2018

ORIGINAL MASTER PLAN (ARCHAIC)

https://widnr.widen.net/s/zsqxxljp9g/fl_mp_potawatomisp_masterplan_1987

WISCONSIN BICYCLE FACILITY DESIGN HANDBOOK

<https://wisconsindot.gov/documents/projects/multimodal/bike/facility.pdf>

THE FOLLOWING AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST:

Pavement and Utilities replacement drawing issued 12/3/2025 Peter Kolaszewski PE, project manager

Claude research into historical trees in traffic calming boulevards