

Pearl Island Recreational Path

A highlight of the Pearl Island Recreational Corridor is a 2.7-mile, crushed limestone path that hugs the west bank of the mill race from its southern terminus at the old power house in Brodhead to its northern terminus at the Decatur Lake dam. The well-maintained path is open year-round and offers a variety of recreational activities including walking, running, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, and fishing.

As it meanders north, the path traverses progressively more natural settings from its urban beginning in Brodhead to its park-like access at Decatur Road to its woodland preserve near the headgates and beyond. Each bend offers something new to view and the occasional bench provides a place for rest and contemplation. The path comes to an end at the dam, where an unobstructed view of Decatur Lake and the Three Waters Reserve awaits.

Volunteers have installed bird houses along the path and duck houses in the shallows of the mill race. Chances for wildlife viewing are excellent with Pearl Island's population of birds, waterfowl, deer, and beavers.

Access to the path can be gained from N 11th Street in Brodhead, County Hwy F near the city limits, Decatur Road, and Headgates Park off Golf Course Road.

A shelter, picnic table, grill, and pit toilet are available at Headgates Park. Additional grills are located along the path across from Headgates Park and at the dam. Piers are located at 11th Street, Decatur Road, Headgates Park, and Decatur Dam.

The southern terminus of the path in Brodhead lies a couple of blocks from the downtown square where local businesses provide additional amenities.

Follow the link for a path map that illustrates access sites and mileage.

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS: In 2019, a shelter and pit toilet are planned at the Decatur Road access site. A covered bridge spanning the mill race at Putnam Park in Brodhead is also due for completion. Putnam Park offers a shelter with picnic tables, grills, playground equipment, toilets, and an outdoor pool.

LOOP OPTION: Starting at either N 11th St in Brodhead or at the bridge on County Hwy F, follow the path north. At the headgates, cross over into Headgates Park. Take the park road to Golf Course Road and turn right (East). In 0.25 miles, the Sugar River Trail crosses over Golf Course Road. Turn right* (south) onto the Trail and follow it back into town. Cross over Decatur Road and continue straight on W 3rd Street to County Hwy F for a 4-mile loop or to N 11th St. for a 5-mile loop.

*Turn left (north) onto the Trail for a 0.25-mile detour to see the trail's 110-foot long covered bridge that spans Norwegian Creek. The bridge is a replica of the Clarence Covered Bridge, which once spanned the Sugar River south of Brodhead and was of the last known covered bridges in use in Wisconsin.