



River & Roots - Planned Unit Development (PUD)

General Development Plan (GDP)

Town of Union, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

1. General Description of the Project

Rivers & Roots is a proposed agritourism-focused rural destination located on approximately 83 acres along the Chippewa River in the Town of Union. The project is intended to transform the former Country Jam site into a multi-use property centered on agriculture, nature-based experiences, and low-impact rural tourism.

Agricultural use is the foundation of the property, with agritourism serving as the primary organizing framework for the overall development. The project is intended to integrate agricultural production, nature-based experiences, short-term rental cabins, small-scale retreats, weddings, and a limited number of larger gatherings in a manner that supports and enhances the site's agricultural character while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding rural landscape.

The Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning designation is requested to allow a coordinated, site-specific approach that integrates these complementary uses in a manner that is appropriately scaled, managed, and compatible with surrounding properties.

2. Existing Site Conditions

The subject property consists of approximately 83 acres and includes existing access drives, internal circulation routes, open fields previously used for large-scale events, wooded areas, varied topography, and river frontage along the Chippewa River. The current zoning district designation is RH - Rural Home.

The site also contains existing stage infrastructure, accessory buildings, power and site lighting and areas of gravel and informal parking. The property's prior use as a large event venue has established a baseline condition of accommodating significant gatherings, while also providing an opportunity for a more refined future use.

3. Proposed Land Uses

Primary uses include agritourism operations, weddings, short-term rental cabins, and small-scale events and retreats.

Agritourism uses include crop production and U-pick operations such as flowers, berries, pumpkins, and other seasonal plantings. These uses represent the majority of day-to-day operations and support the property's agritourism focus. Agritourism activities may also include educational experiences, workshops, and farm-based gatherings such as flower harvesting events, bouquet-making events, and similar hands-on experiences.

Existing buildings on the property may be repurposed to support agritourism operations, including a small retail sales area for flowers, produce, honey, value-added agricultural products, and other farm-related goods produced on or associated with the property.

Weddings will initially operate using temporary event tents, with the long-term goal of constructing a permanent indoor event building (approximately 8,000-10,000 s.f.), subject to future approvals and detailed site planning.

Short-term rental cabins will be developed in phases and will provide lodging for guests seeking a rural and nature-based experience. The total number of cabin units will not exceed nine (9) units, consisting of a mix of smaller cabins (600-800 s.f.) to support 2-4 occupants and larger structures (800-1200 s.f.) to support 4-6 occupants. New private well and wastewater systems will be developed as needed to support the new short term rental cabins.

Small-scale retreats and wellness-focused gatherings may occur on the property and are intended to be lower in intensity and integrated with the natural setting.

Accessory uses include small-scale food and beverage service, outdoor gathering spaces, trails, passive recreation, and agricultural support activities including limited small-scale animals for land management purposes.

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4. General Development Plan (see attached "Property Use map")

The site is organized into three primary development areas.

The western portion of the property serves as the activity and event zone. This area includes the primary entry sequence, main parking areas, wedding venue location, temporary event tent location, existing stage infrastructure, and agritourism support areas.

The central portion of the property serves as the agritourism zone. This area includes U-pick fields, seasonal agricultural plantings, open space, and internal circulation routes.

The eastern and rear portions of the property serve as the quiet residential and nature zone. This area includes short-term rental cabins, retreat areas, trails, passive recreation, and river access. This portion of the site is intended to remain lower in intensity and separated from higher-activity areas.

The overall site layout is intentionally designed to transition from higher-intensity uses near the entrance to lower-intensity uses toward the east and north of the property.

The Property Use Map is intended to illustrate the general location and relationship of proposed uses throughout the site. As development occurs over time, specific improvements may be adjusted or refined while maintaining the overall intent and character of the development described in this General Development Plan.

5. Circulation (Vehicular and Pedestrian)

Access to the site will be provided via existing drives. Internal circulation will utilize a combination of existing gravel roadways, improved drive aisles, and pedestrian and golf cart paths. Circulation will be organized to provide safe and efficient access, maintain emergency access throughout the site, and minimize conflicts between different types of users. To the extent practicable, event traffic and cabin-related traffic will be managed to reduce overlap and congestion.

6. Parking Plan

Parking will be distributed across the site based on use and event intensity.

Daily agritourism and cabin uses will be served by smaller, localized parking areas. Weddings will utilize dedicated parking areas located near the event venue. Larger events will utilize existing open fields and overflow areas previously used for similar purposes on the north end of the property. Parking areas will be scaled to match anticipated attendance and will be managed to maintain safe and orderly operation and separation from pedestrian paths.

7. Utilities and Infrastructure

Utilities will be developed in phases to support the evolving needs of the site. All infrastructure improvements will be coordinated with each phase of development.

Septic systems will be designed based on phased development and anticipated occupancy levels. Water service will utilize existing wells with future improvements as needed to support any new buildings. Temporary facilities such as portable restrooms may be used for larger events. Permanent restroom facilities will be incorporated over time as development progresses.

8. Natural Features and Environmental Considerations

The development will be designed to work with and preserve the site's natural features.

Existing wooded areas will be maintained where feasible and development will respond to existing topography to minimize grading and disturbance. Agricultural plantings will provide both functional and visual benefits.

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Vegetative buffers, berms, and additional plantings may be incorporated in targeted areas on the east side of the property to reduce adjacent interstate traffic noise, enhance visual screening, and improve overall site integration. Open space, agriculture, and the existing wooded areas will remain a defining characteristic of the property.

9. Operational Characteristics

The operational framework is intended to clearly define intensity, frequency, and seasonal patterns of use in a manner that is compatible with surrounding properties.

A. Daily Operations (Agritourism)

Agritourism activities include U-pick operations, seasonal farm experiences, educational workshops, and farm-based gatherings such as flower harvesting and bouquet-making events.

These activities are considered ongoing operations rather than special events. These uses are primarily seasonal and generally occur during spring, summer, and fall months, with potential for limited winter-related activities such as holiday-themed experiences.

Typical hours of operation for agritourism activities are anticipated to occur between approximately 9:00 AM and 7:00 PM, with reasonable variation based on season and daylight conditions.

B. Weddings

Weddings are a primary use of the property and are easily integrated into the natural & agricultural setting.

In the initial phase, weddings will be conducted using temporary event tents and will primarily occur during warmer months. In the future, a permanent indoor event building may allow for expanded seasonal or year-round use.

Maximum attendance is limited to 300 guests per event. Weddings are anticipated to occur at a maximum of 50 events annually. Typical wedding-related activities are anticipated to occur between approximately 10:00 AM and 10:00 PM.

C. Larger Events

Larger events are limited to a maximum of 4 events per calendar year.

Attendance is anticipated to be up to approximately 5,000 people during initial phases, with the potential for larger events of up to 15,000 attendees in the future, subject to infrastructure and operational readiness.

These events may include concerts, festivals, recreational events, or seasonal community events such as fall festivals, mud runs, or holiday-themed experiences.

These events will generally occur during late spring through early fall and are anticipated to be limited in duration, typically occurring within 1-3 days with controlled setup and takedown. Events would begin no earlier than 6:30am and end no later than 10pm, for the purpose of clearing the property by midnight.

D. Small Events and Gatherings

Smaller events may occur periodically and are generally associated with agritourism activities.

These may include small music nights, seasonal celebrations, workshops, and farm-based experiences.

These events are lower in intensity and are considered part of the normal operations of the property rather than large-scale events.



E. Traffic and Noise Management

Traffic associated with the development will vary depending on the scale of activity. Daily operations are expected to generate traffic levels consistent with rural agritourism uses. Larger events will be limited in frequency and will utilize the site's existing access points and internal circulation network, which has historically supported higher attendance levels of up to 30,000 guests.

Parking areas are distributed throughout the site to reduce congestion and allow for efficient movement. For larger events, traffic management strategies may include directional flow, staff coordination, and use of multiple access points to maintain safe and orderly conditions.

Noise impacts are addressed through site design and operational controls. Higher-intensity activities are concentrated in the south/central portion of the property, maximizing separation from neighboring properties and quieter uses. Natural topography, existing vegetation, and potential berming and supplemental plantings will further reduce sound transmission.

Lower-intensity uses are located toward the north and eastern portions of the site, creating a transition to quieter areas. The combination of event limits, site organization, and buffering is intended to maintain compatibility with surrounding properties.

10. Development Schedule / Phasing

Phase 1 includes establishment of agritourism operations, initial short term rental cabin development (likely 2-3 units), small-scale events, and limited larger event activity.

Phase 2 includes additional short term rental cabins, expanded agritourism operations, and potential construction of a permanent wedding and event building.

Phase 3 includes full buildout of remaining short term rental cabins, additional infrastructure improvements, and continued operation of events within defined limits.

11. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

The proposed development supports Comprehensive Plan goals by promoting agricultural-based economic activity, supporting rural tourism and recreation, preserving open space, reusing existing site infrastructure, and adapting a previously developed property to a lower-intensity and more diversified use pattern.

12. Justification for Planned Unit Development (PUD)

The PUD zoning designation is appropriate because the project integrates multiple complementary uses that cannot be accommodated within a single zoning district.

The development requires flexibility while maintaining clearly defined operational parameters. The project has been designed to manage traffic, noise, and environmental impacts through site planning, operational limits, and phased implementation.

The PUD will allow the County to establish site-specific standards tailored to the unique characteristics of the property.

Tuesday, June 9, 2026



Appendix A – Attachments:

- Existing conditions topographic survey map from GeoPro Mapping Solutions
- Property Use Map identifying proposed uses and their locations on site