



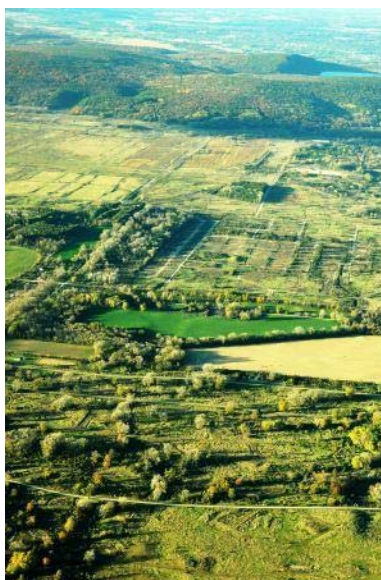
Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area

Draft Master Plan &
Final Environmental Impact Statement

November, 2016



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Parks & Recreation



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All Department of Natural Resources properties are required to be covered by a Master Plan describing the scope, purpose and management of the project. This Master Plan complies with NR 44, Wis. Adm. Code - Master Planning for Department Properties.

To the Reader

In 1997, the U.S. Department of Defense decommissioned the Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP). Following negotiations with the General Services Administration¹, the Ho-Chunk Nation (HCN), Dairy Forage Research Center (DFRC), Sauk County and others, the Department of Natural Resources (department) agreed to accept former BAAP lands that were not transferred to HCN or DFRC. In 2002, the Natural Resources Board approved creation of the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area on lands that the department ultimately received. In 2004, the department formally applied to the National Park Service's Federal Lands to Parks program and began receiving title to parcels in 2011. The department has received 3,051 acres to date; the deeds for the last three parcels are expected to be transferred to the department soon.

Department properties are required to have plans describing their use and management, typically over a 15 year period. In developing these master plans, the department follows Administrative Code NR 44. The planning process gathers information about regional ecological and recreational needs and opportunities, public ideas and perspectives, property characteristics and features, alternative management strategies, and potential positive and negative impacts. The public has multiple opportunities to provide input during the planning process.

Chapter NR 150, Wis. Admin. Code, defines property master plans as integrated analysis actions that do not require additional environmental analysis. Because of the timing and uniqueness of this project, however, the department determined to follow the environmental impact statement (EIS) process for this project.

The department prepared a draft version of the master plan and a draft environmental impact statement based on the previously developed Badger Reuse Plan, the Regional and Property Analysis, the many previous inventories and documents related to the BAAP, and public input. The department also periodically met with representatives from the HCN, DFRC, Sauk County, Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG), and other interested groups during the development of the draft plan.

The department released the initial draft master plan and draft environmental impact statement for public review on August 11, 2015 for a 45-day comment period. A public open house and hearing was held September 10, 2015 in Sauk City. The department received extensive comments during the public review period. The initial draft master plan document and EIS were modified based on those comments.

This revised master plan document and final EIS contains descriptions of the proposed use and management of the property, potential impacts, alternatives evaluated, the public's inputs and perspectives on the draft document and the department's responses. As such, it is both a proposed property master plan and a final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is in compliance with ch. NR 150, Wisconsin Administrative Code, and s. 1.11 Wisconsin Statutes. The purpose of an EIS is to inform decision-makers and the public of the anticipated effects on the quality of the human environment of a proposed action or project and alternatives to the proposed action or project. The EIS is an informational tool—it is not a decision document.

The department may not begin implementing the master plan for the Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area until it is approved by the Natural Resources Board.

Note: The WIARNG currently conducts limited helicopter training exercises at the SPSRA. The department fully supports this use; however, it appears that conditions related to the transfer of the property to the department restrict the WIARNG's ability to continue conducting training exercises here. As such, unless the situation changes, the WIARNG will be required to phase out training at SPSRA. Further information on this issue is found on page 35.

¹ The General Services Administration (GSA), among other responsibilities, is a branch of the federal government that facilitates the transfer of surplus property.