

Chapter V: **Alternatives considered but not selected.**

A) Introduction

Chapter III described the preferred option for the proposed Glacial Heritage Area, both in terms of the components of the network and the potential implementation. This chapter presents the alternatives that were evaluated over the course of developing the proposal, but that were not incorporated into the project.

Of course, in a project as complex as the Glacial Heritage Area, many variations in many aspects of the project were considered – some were slight, others were significant. This chapter presents the substantively different alternatives that were evaluated, but not each of the minor adaptations that were discussed.

B) Alternatives to where the potential project could be located.

Following completion of the *Wisconsin Land Legacy Report*, the Department assessed options to address the increasing demand by residents to participate in various outdoor recreation activities close to where they lived. The activities of greatest interest included hiking, wildlife watching, fishing, biking, hunting, horseback riding, paddling, cross country skiing, and camping.

The Department reviewed many variables to identify one or more areas of the state where the demand for different types of outdoor recreation could most effectively be met. The Department considered factors including:

- Locations and recreation uses of existing federal, state, county, and local public lands.
- Population distribution and road networks.
- Land ownership and land use patterns.
- Diversity of habitats, natural features (including water), and conditions that could support a range of recreation activities.
- Price of land.

The Department evaluated southern and eastern Wisconsin for potential locations to establish properties to provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Although many other areas had different attributes that would help meet the demand for particular activities or groups of activities, the GHA project area had the highest combination of characteristics to help provide a range of outdoor activities to the greatest number of people at the least cost. Much of the data that were evaluated are presented in the regional assessment (Chapter IIA).

The Department also evaluated alternatives regarding the overall approach to providing outdoor recreation close to where many people live. One option was to establish 4 to 8 large properties (5,000+ acres) scattered around southern and eastern Wisconsin. These properties would each be large enough to support most if not all of the targeted outdoor activities. These large blocks of land would be spaced about 30-50 miles apart. This alternative was not chosen because the feasibility of purchasing areas large enough to meet this goal from willing sellers was determined to be impractical.

A second alternative was to design a large number of small properties (100 acres or less) scattered across the southern and eastern region of the state. Each property could provide opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in one or more outdoor activities. Because of the large number of these properties (several hundreds), most residents would live relatively near one or more. However, they may not live near properties that provide opportunities for the recreation activities in which they want to participate.

C) Alternatives to the places proposed to be part of the network.

1) Conservation Parks.

Several alternatives to the number, location, size and proposed recreation and conservation goals of the conservation parks were assessed. Many sites were evaluated for potential inclusion in the collection of proposed new or expanded conservation parks, with most of the information being drawn from the county park and open space plans. Most of the sites that were considered were not included in the preferred alternative because the External Advisory Team and the Department concluded that, for various reasons, the sites did not possess high enough recreation or conservation value. Sites considered but not selected included:

Red Cedar outlet. A drainageway running from Red Cedar Lake to Lake Koshkonong between County Road A and Kruetz Road. The area consists of seeps, wet meadows, and wet prairie remnants that have never been drained

White Crow's Village. This area was occupied by several Native American groups from pre-historic times to the early 1800's. Numerous refuse pits, post molds, wall trenches, stone and bone tools, and shell and copper implements have been unearthed here. The site is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Lake Koshkonong shore. No parks have yet been developed with access to Lake Koshkonong. The lake is a favorite for fishing and water sports. Over 450 Indian antiquities sites have been documented along the lakeshore and historic duck hunting lodges dot the area. The Glacial River Trail runs adjacent to State Highway 26 just east of the lake but currently does not connect to it.

Cold Spring Prairie. More than 100 plant species have been identified on these small but rich remnant prairies along County Road N, south of Cold Spring. Land on the east side of County Road N supports remnant wet prairie and oak openings.

Lower Spring Lake Oak Opening, Low Prairie, and Fen. A small but good quality oak opening, with remnant prairie vegetation, a calcareous fen and low prairie.

Jefferson Drumlin Field. County Road G traverses a drumlin field with the second highest point in the county at 1,060 feet above sea level is located along this road. Some of the wooded drumlins are not developed and offer scenic vistas of the rural landscape.

The Oak Hill Kettle Woods. This forest is located north of County Road CI. It is an upland ground moraine forest with red and white oak, shagbark hickory, and ironwood. In a steep-sided kettle hole the woods become dominated by sugar maple and basswood with mesic ground layer species. Residential housing and a campground are now located in parts of the woods.

Yunkers Woods. This forest harbors a dry-mesic forest with red oak, sugar maple, American elm, and basswood and a diverse ground layer. The woods are known for the diverse population of bird species, however, housing development is occurring within the woodlands.

Rock Lake Road/North Shore Road Area. Wooded drumlins, creeks, wetlands, overlooks, and a rural

landscape characterizes this area. Uncommon red oak woodlands are found just north of Interstate 94.

Pitzner Archaeological Site. This is an Native American village site representing all Woodland periods. Numerous pottery, lithic, and well-preserved plant and animal remains have been excavated at the site, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bakertown Road Area. Extensive wetlands, woods, and agricultural lands border this scenic, winding road.

Stoney Brook. Wooded drumlins, wetlands, and remnant wet prairies are found along this stream. Winding roads, historic farmsteads, and one room schoolhouses add to the charm of this area (Burlingham, 1997).

Springer Road Area. Rolling topography with overlooks, wetlands, wet forest, remnant savannas, and a natural kettle pond dominate this site. It is adjacent to the extensive Waterloo Wildlife Area and cooperative trail use could be incorporated.

Huebner Drumlin area. Rolling drumlin topography and Stoney Brook are found on this site.

Camp Rubidell Woods. Large woods on the east bank of the Crawfish River dominated by swamp white oak, black ash, green ash, silver maple, basswood, hackberry, and the unusual blue beech. The understory includes uncommon plants such as green dragon, Virginia waterleaf, white avens and maidenhair fern. Numerous bird species nest in the woods.

Watertown Maple Woods. A low broad drumlin and a mesic woods with 80% composition of sugar maple. Other trees include red oak, black cherry, basswood, and shagbark hickory.

Pipersville Fish Weirs. An unidentified Indian tribe built ten fish weirs across the Rock River at and near this point where the Oconomowoc River joins the Rock River. The weirs were used to channel fish to the east side of the river and were 3 to 4 feet tall and equally as wide.

Each of the proposed new or expanded conservation parks presented in the preferred option was evaluated for potential size based on location, land cover and land use, water features, topography, land ownership pattern, and other factors. A range of alternative sizes were considered for most conservation parks. Alternatives considered but not selected included:

- Cold Spring Park – 150 acres, 400 acres
- Dorothy Carnes Park – 140 acres
- Red Cedar Lake Preserve – 100 acres
- Cushman Mill Park – 300 acres
- Hope Lake Park – 400 acres
- Oakland Highlands Park – 250 acres
- Scuppernong Valley Park – 1,000 acres
- Stoney Brook Drumlin Park – 600 acres

Each of the proposed new or expanded conservation parks presented in the preferred option was also evaluated for potential recreation activities that would fit well with existing conditions, land cover, soils, water features, surrounding land uses, location relative to other recreation opportunities, and other factors.

2) Linking Trails.

Many options for trails linking cities and villages, conservation parks, wildlife areas, river-based conservation areas, and other attractions were considered. Most of the linking trails that would have

passed through the edges of the wildlife areas were not included in the preferred option due to potential impacts to the hunting uses of these properties and the desire to maintain these areas as undisturbed habitat. Other linking trails that were likely to be less popular due to potential destinations, length, location, or other factors were also not included. Linking trails considered but not selected included:

- Marshall to Langer Park and to Deansville Wildlife Area
- Waterloo to Goose Lake Wildlife Area to Deerfield
- Watertown to Mud Lake Wildlife Area
- Watertown to Glacial Drumlin Trail on west side of Rock River
- Jefferson to Jefferson Wildlife Area to Cushman Mill Park
- Glacial Drumlin Trail to Jefferson Wildlife Area
- Fort Atkinson to Silverwood Park
- Cam-Rock Park to Silverwood Park
- Milton to Storrs Lake & Lima Marsh Wildlife Areas to Whitewater
- Whitewater to Princes Point Wildlife Area to Cushman Mill Park
- Whitewater to Allen Creek to the Glacial River Trail
- Glacial Drumlin Trail to Rome Pond Wildlife Area to Scuppernong Valley Park

3) River-based Conservation Areas.

Three types of lands along rivers are proposed to be included in river-based conservation areas: small-scale recreation sites, large high-quality habitat blocks, and narrow bands of permanent vegetation along the major rivers and streams. The alternatives that were considered for each of these types of lands ranged broadly.

The small-scale recreation sites in the preferred option do not have designated locations, but rather the number and attributes are identified. The alternatives considered to the sites included the overall number, their general size, and the facilities proposed to be present. The preferred option of establishing up to ten 5 to 10 acre sites was based on the presence of existing access sites and the level of improvement and facilities currently present.

Only a small number of alternatives were considered for the high quality habitat areas along rivers, primarily a function of the existing quality of riparian zones throughout the Study Area. One collection of sites that was considered but not included in the GHA proposal is the set of large high quality wetland communities found around the shores of Lake Koshkonong. Many of these sites are currently owned by hunt clubs and provide high quality waterfowl hunting experiences for their members. These areas were not included in the preferred option because public protection of these sites was believed to be unnecessary to maintain their ecological quality. Although these areas could provide high quality public waterfowl hunting experiences if owned by the Department, the proposed expansions to the existing State Wildlife Areas, which would also provide significant public waterfowl hunting, were considered to be higher priority. One of the largest and highest quality wetlands along the Lake Koshkonong is included in the proposed expansion to the Lake Koshkonong State Wildlife Area.

Some alternatives were considered to the proposed narrow bands of permanent habitat along major rivers and streams. These focused on the width and overall number of miles of waterbodies that could be reasonably included. Although establishing permanent vegetation along all running water and waterways would significantly improve water quality in the Study Area, public protection to achieve this goal is neither necessary nor practical. Similarly, many of the major rivers and streams receive most of their water from drainage outside of the Study Area. As a result, the alternatives considered but not selected focused on more or less acreage to potentially acquire.

4) Wildlife Areas.

Alternatives to the expansions of the Wildlife Areas that were evaluated considered location, land cover and land use, land ownership patterns, existing roads, and other factors. This assessment led to the development of several alternative scenarios for expansions to each of the wildlife area properties. The preferred option for the expansions to the 11 State Wildlife Areas presented in Appendix D represents what the Department believes to be the best balance between providing functional native habitat and wildlife-related recreation areas and the desire to minimally affect existing land use patterns (particularly farming viability). Of the alternatives evaluated, the proposed expansions are believed to have the highest degree of overall potential success.

The Department also evaluated different options for the proposed new Crawfish Prairie Habitat Area, including incorporating it into the Waterloo Wildlife Area. This alternative was not selected because the conservation goals and approach to land protection within the Crawfish Prairie Habitat Area are substantially different from the Wildlife Area. Different sizes, both for the project boundary and the acquisition goal were evaluated. The preferred option is believed to be the best balance between providing functional native habitat and wildlife-related recreation areas and the desire to minimally affect existing land use patterns (particularly farming viability).

Other lands were considered for inclusion in expanded or new wildlife areas within the Study Area but were not selected. Most notably are the large drained wetlands currently used for sod, vegetable, and crop farming. Many of these lands have been restored through the NRCS's Wetland Reserve Program. If the profitability of some of these farmed wetlands continues to be challenged, there may be opportunities for the Department to work with landowners, federal and county agencies, and non-profit conservation organizations to acquire and restore these wetlands. These large muck farms were not included in the proposed GHA due to the large number and size of these properties and their distribution throughout the Study Area. **If the Department or partners have the opportunity to acquire and restore one or more large farmed wetlands and incorporate them into the GHA project, the Department will bring these projects to the Natural Resources Board on a case by case basis.**

The Wildlife Areas are used primarily for hunting and trapping. Several alternatives to provide facilities and improvements that could support and encourage a broader range of the recreation uses on the Wildlife Areas were considered. Many of the Wildlife Areas have physical, topographical, or other features that limit the type and amount of non-consumptive wildlife-related recreation activities that could occur. Four of the Wildlife Areas (Goose Lake, Rome Pond, Princes Point, and Zeloski Marsh Unit of Lake Mills) were considered to have portions of the properties that are suitable for supporting facilities to encourage and accommodate non-consumptive uses such as hiking and wildlife watching.

D) Alternatives to implementation of the network.

Given the complexity of the proposed network, not surprisingly a wide range of implementation alternatives were considered. These alternatives considered timing, priorities, and roles.

Initial alternatives focused on assessing if the project should seek to implement the network in stages. That is, to focus on just a small subset of the potential conservation parks, linking trails, river-based conservation areas, and expansions to just some of the wildlife areas. Or similarly, an alternative would be to just focus on acquiring and developing one component of the overall project (e.g., just the conservation parks). This alternative was not selected due to the variability of opportunities for land acquisition that results from following a willing-seller approach. However, the preferred option includes criteria to give higher priority to acquiring lands that are near or adjacent to existing protected lands with the intent of focusing on assembling functional amounts of protected land for parks, linking trails, or conservation areas rather than protecting scattered lands throughout the project area.

Alternative roles for the Department and partners in implementation were also considered. The proposed GHA project is intended primarily to meet state-significant recreation needs and secondarily to meet state and regionally significant conservation needs. Because of the quality and range of both recreation experiences and habitats that the project seeks to address, one alternative is to have the state take on the entire responsibility of implementing the project. That is, because the GHA project is designed to meet state-significant needs, it is rightly the state's role to implement the project. This alternative was not selected for two primary reasons: (a) because many partner groups, most notably Jefferson County, have expressed a desire to both assist in the design and implementation of the project, and (b) because the Department likely does not have adequate staff or funding resources to implement the GHA project on its own and thus the likelihood of success would be impaired.

Another alternative implementation scenario evaluated the option of the Department focusing solely on the Wildlife Areas and the partner groups focusing on the conservation parks, linking trails, and river-based conservation areas. This alternative would require the portions of the network playing the biggest role in meeting state-significant outdoor recreation needs would be shouldered by local and county governments and other non-profit groups. Thus, partner groups would need to develop and maintain considerable staffing and funding resources. This alternative was not selected because local and county governments and non-profit groups do not have the funding or resources to implement the conservation parks, linking trails, and river-based conservation areas on their own and thus the likelihood of success would be significantly impaired.