

Form 1100-1
Rev. 10-77

Item _____ Minutes of _____

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Madison, Wisconsin

ITEM RECOMMENDED FOR NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA

TO THE SECRETARY:

Date May 24, 1982

FROM: John M. Keener

SUBJECT: MASTER PLANNING - Approval of master plan for the Albany Wildlife Area, Green County, with an acreage goal of 1,580 acres; and approval to increase the Green County Extensive Wildlife Habitat Program by 510 acres.

1. To be presented at June Board meeting by David L. Gjestson.

2. Appearances requested by the public:
Name

Representing whom?

3. Reference materials to be used:

Memorandum from John M. Keener to C. D. Besadny dated May 24, 1982
Albany Wildlife Area Master Plan (Concept Element)

4. Environmental Assessment
Summary:

The Department has completed the Concept Element of the Albany Wildlife Area Master Plan. The property goal is to manage a state-owned property for public hunting, compatible recreation and education.

5. Recommendation: That the Natural Resources Board approve the Concept Element of the Albany Wildlife Area Master Plan including revised purchase goals of 1,580 acres for the Albany Wildlife Area and 510 acres for a new unit of

APPROVED: Green County Extensive Wildlife Habitat Program.

James R. Huntton 5-27-82
James R. Huntton, Administrator Date

A. C. Damon
A. C. Damon, Deputy Secretary Date

C. D. Besadny 5-28-82
Secretary Date

Signed:

John M. Keener
John M. Keener, Director
Bureau of Wildlife Management

- cc: Judy Scullion - ADM/5
- James R. Huntton - ADM/5
- Ron Nicotera - ADM/5
- John M. Keener - WM/4
- David L. Gjestson - WM/4

- Carl Evert - OL/4
- Eric Jensen - IGP/3
- Douglas Morrisette - Nevin

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: May 24, 1982

File Ref: 2300

To: C. D. Besadny

From: John M. Keener *gmk*

Subject: Albany Wildlife Area

The final Concept Element of the subject Plan is presented for your approval. The Plan has been subjected to a 45-day review by the appropriate Department functions, advisory groups and other resource agencies.

Comments received have been reviewed by the Bureau of Wildlife Management and the Southern District. Agreement was reached on the treatment of comments, the majority of which were incorporated into the final draft. Advisory group and outside agency comments along with Department responses are shown in the Plan Appendix. No public controversy has been brought to our attention during the review process.

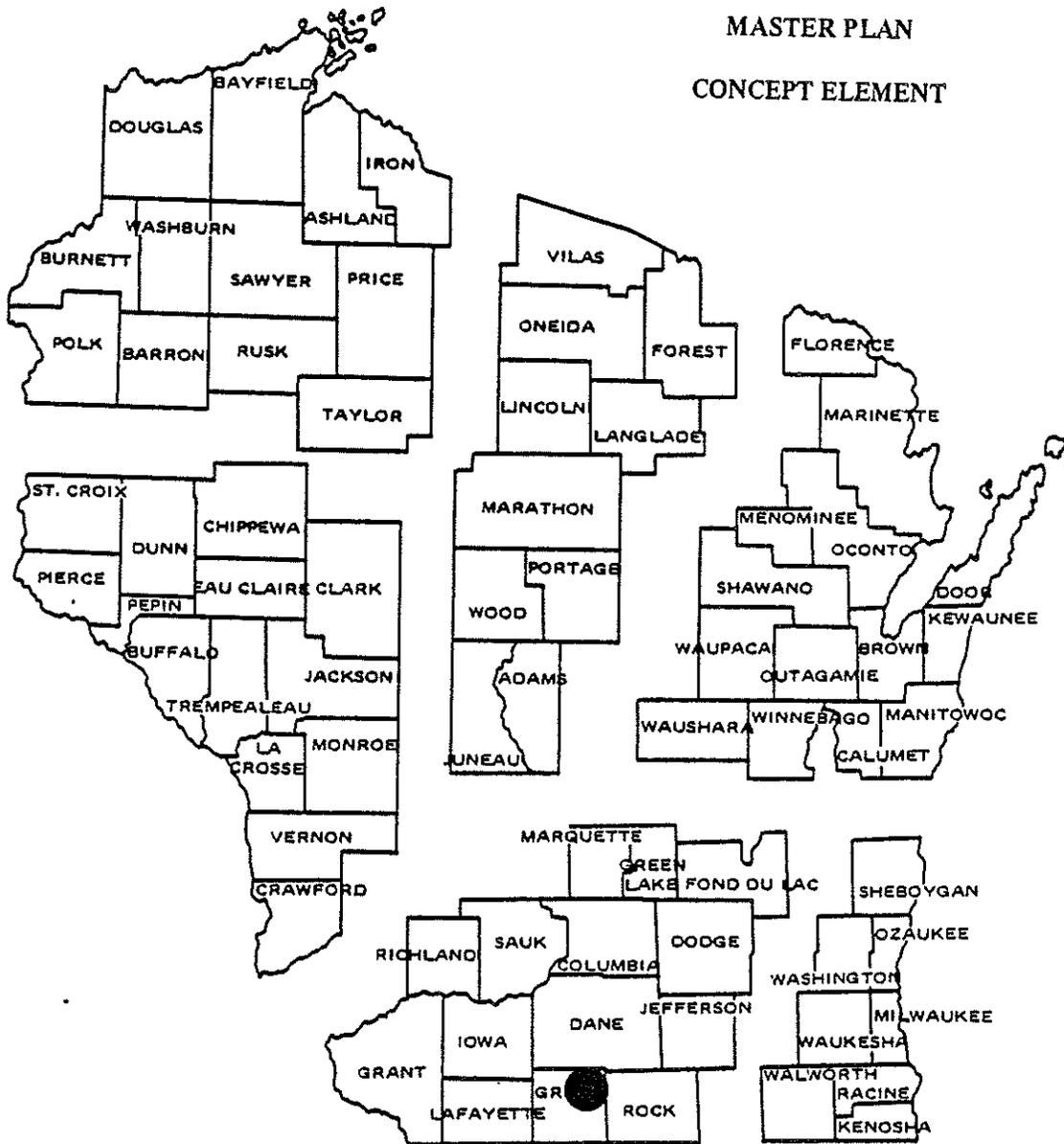
The Plan establishes objectives to duck and pheasant hunting, fishing and protection of one historic and one scenic area.

Currently, the state owns 1,556.62 acres. It is proposed to reduce the purchase goal from 3,219.73 acres to 1,580 acres for the wildlife area while increasing the Green County Extensive Wildlife Habitat Program by 510 acres. Land acquisition boundaries will be modified accordingly.

DLG:df

cc: Judy Scullion - ADM/5
James R. Huntoon - ADM/5
Ron Nicotera - ADM/5
Carl Evert - OL/4
John Keener - WM/4
Dave Gjestson - WM/4
Eric Jensen - IGP/3
District Director - Douglas Morrissette, SD

ALBANY WILDLIFE AREA
 MASTER PLAN
 CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

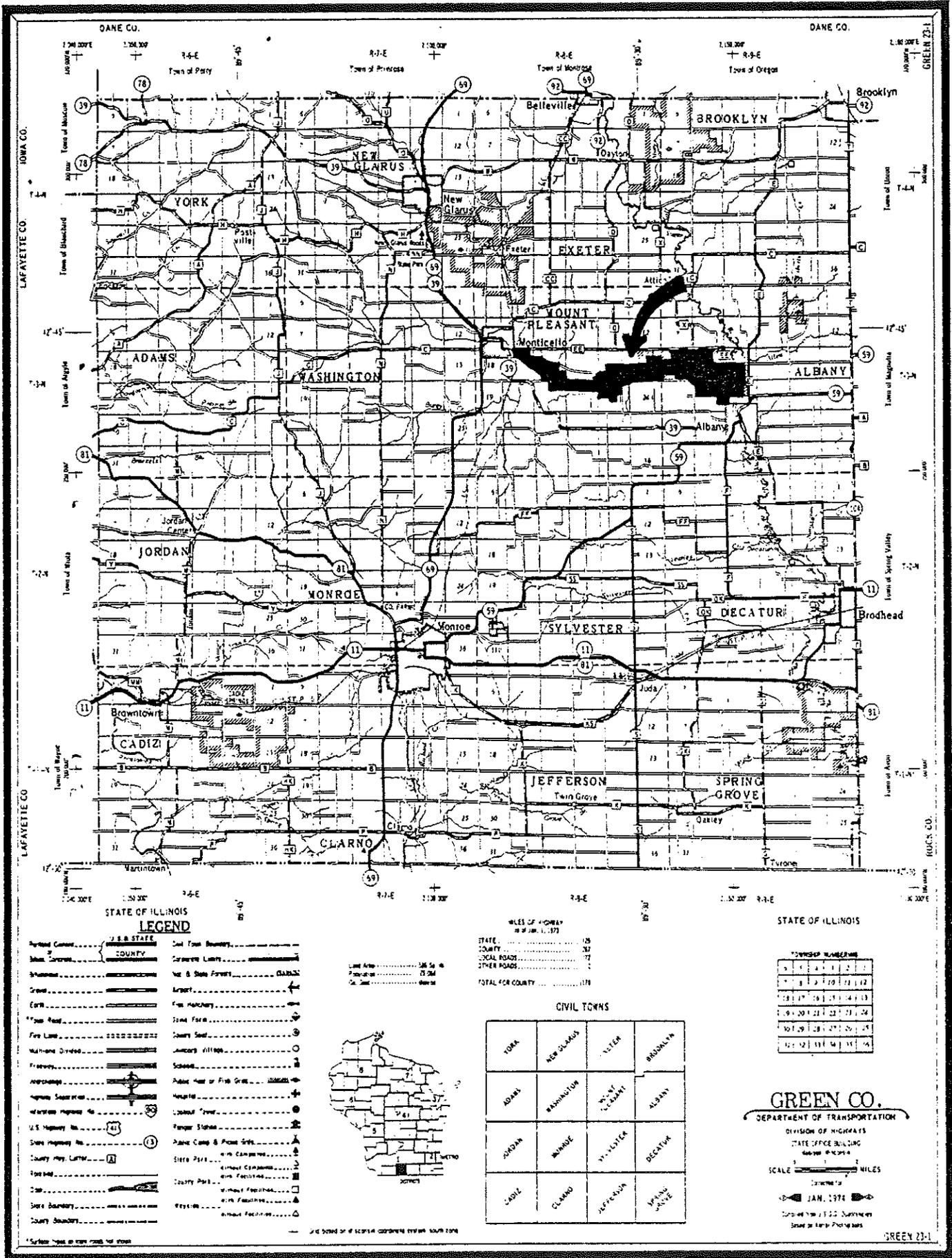
Leader: BRUCE FOLLEY, WILDLIFE MANAGER
 REYNOLD ZELLER, PARK MANAGER
 CHARLES PILS, RESEARCH
 RAY AMIEL, FOREST MANAGER
 LARRY JOHNSON, LAW ENFORCEMENT

Approved By:

June, 1982

Date:

By DNR Board



STATE OF ILLINOIS

LEGEND

Political Center	U.S. STATE	State Boundary
State Boundary	COUNTY	County Line
Shaded Area	U.S. State Forest	State Forest
Gravel	Airport	Airport
Earth	Fire Station	Fire Station
Four Road	State Fair	State Fair
Five Lane	County Seat	County Seat
Multilane Divided	County Village	County Village
Freeway	School	School
Interchange	Public Hall or Fire Station	Public Hall or Fire Station
Highway Shoulder	Highway	Highway
U.S. Highway No.	Lookout Tower	Lookout Tower
State Highway No.	Range Station	Range Station
County Hwy. Letter	Public Camp & Post Office	Public Camp & Post Office
Feet Road	State Park	State Park
State Boundary	County Park	County Park
County Boundary	Public Facility	Public Facility

WILES OF HIGHWAY
as of June 1, 1971

STATE	125
COUNTY	37
LOCAL ROADS	77
OTHER ROADS	7
TOTAL FOR COUNTY	246

CIVIL TOWNS

YORK	NEW GLARUS	EXETER	BROOKLYN
ADAMS	WASHINGTON	YOUNT PLEASANT	ALBANY
JORDAN	MONROE	SYLVESTER	DECATUR
CADIZ	CLARNO	JEFFERSON	SPRING GROVE

STATE OF ILLINOIS

TOWNSHIP NUMBERS

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35

GREEN CO.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
STATE OFFICE BUILDING
GREEN CO. ILLINOIS

SCALE 1" = 1 MILE

JAN. 1974

GREEN 23-1

FIGURE 1- LOCATOR

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Albany Wildlife Area
Section I - Actions
GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OTHER BENEFITS

Goal:

To manage a state-owned wildlife area for public hunting and compatible outdoor recreation and education.

Annual Objectives:

1. Provide 375 days of duck hunting by producing one duck per 2 acres of production area including brood water and nesting cover (100 ducks).
2. Provide 500 angler days of fishing.
3. Provide 2,200 days of pheasant hunting by producing a fall population of 120 rooster pheasants and stocking about 650 rooster pheasants.
4. Protect and maintain one historic and one scenic area for aesthetic, recreational and educational purposes.

Annual Additional Benefits:

1. Provide opportunities for about 600 participant days of deer hunting (gun and bow).
2. Provide 100 trapper days of recreation.
3. Provide 175 hunter days of other small game hunting.
4. Accommodate 2,500 participant days of camping and picnicking recreation associated with the Sugar River State Trail.
5. Accommodate 1,250 participant days of additional nonhunting recreation and education.
6. Benefit nongame species indigenous to the area.
7. Contribute to the habitat of resident and migratory, endangered and threatened species.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In accordance with the proposed goal and objectives of the wildlife area, uplands will be managed for hunting cover, duck and pheasant production (Figure 2).

Dense nesting cover will be planted at a rate of 20-30 acres per year. About 60 percent of the 335 acres of cropland (200 acres) will be rotated into nesting cover. Remaining croplands (135 acres) will continue in the sharecrop program. Portions of the Department's share of the corn will be left standing for food patches.

Timber will be managed to maximize wildlife and aesthetic values of the area. However, if oak wilt, two-lined chestnut borer or overmaturity becomes a problem, a timber sale will be set up by the Green County Forester. Firewood will be only sold if the management need arises. Several plantings of pine trees on the area will be thinned in the next 5-8 years. If this is not done, insect damage will reduce the value of the trees.

Suitable wetlands will be managed to provide brood and pair water for waterfowl. Muskrats will also benefit from this practice. Water levels in these wetlands will be restored and/or enhanced by building small dikes and or plugging drainage ditches. Feasibility engineering will have to be done prior to construction.

Prescribed burns will be conducted in grass and brush sites on a rotational basis. This will control brush invasion in upland nesting areas and wetlands of value to waterfowl. It will also enhance the wetland/brush and wetland/brush/timber types for wildlife.

A canoe launch is proposed for construction to improve hunter access and will also serve fishermen. The canoe launch will be developed with a gravel base to prevent bank erosion. The intersection of the Sugar River Trail and wildlife area access road will be posted with stop signs to prevent crossing conflicts.

To supplement the wild pheasant population and increase pheasant hunting opportunity, about 650 rooster pheasants will be released annually, at appropriate intervals consistent with the statewide stocking program.

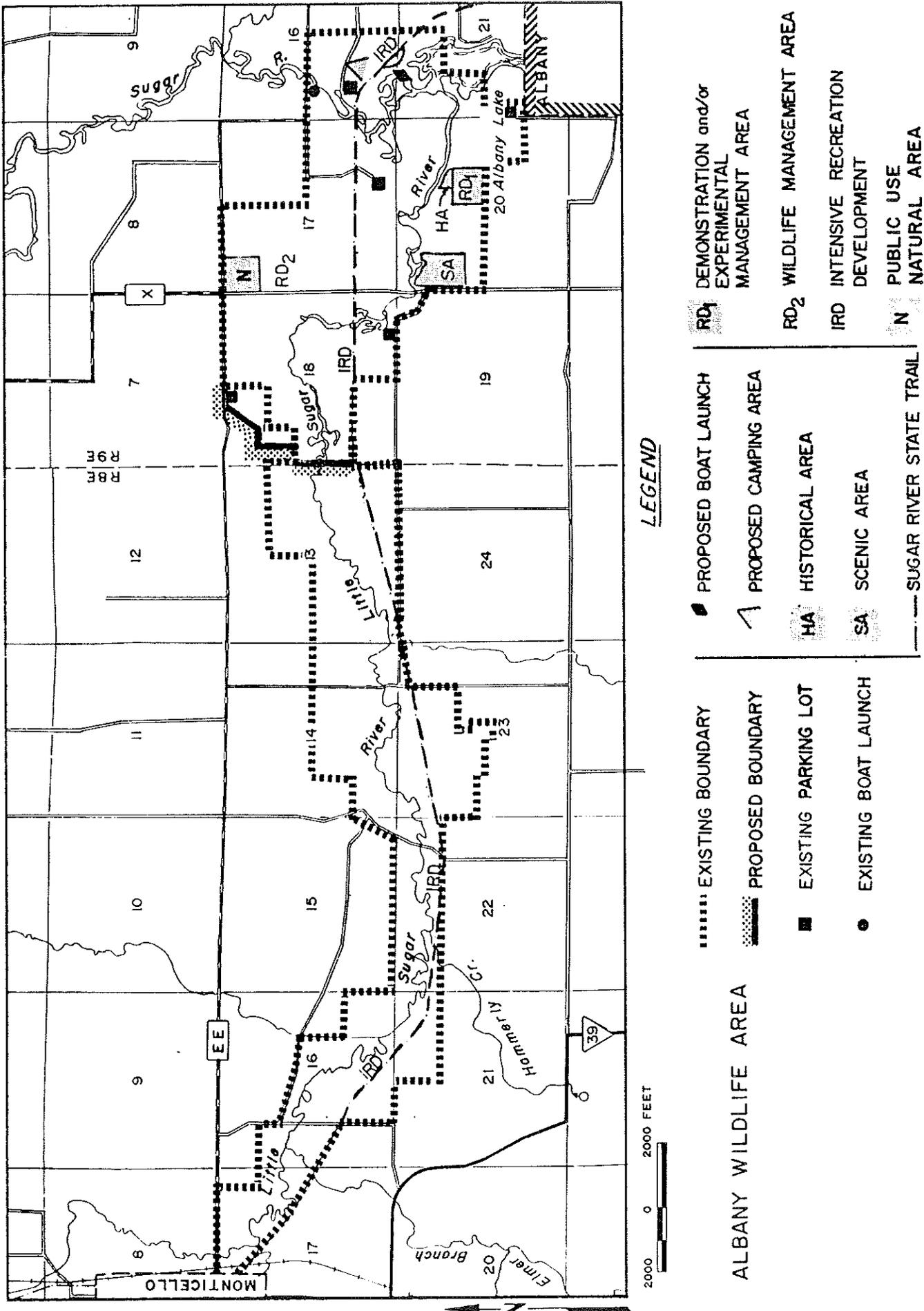


FIGURE 2
DEVELOPMENTS AND LAND USE POTENTIAL

A scenic area in section 20 will be managed to maintain the view of the Little Sugar River valley. Management will focus primarily on controlled burning, mowing, cutting or chemical treatment to control brush invasion. A trail for access to the area will be mowed.

A Historic Area (Reuben Folsoms Cave) also in section 20 will receive little management action. Vandalism and high rates have already eliminated much of the historic value of the cave. However, if a local group wishes to attempt restoration of the cave, a Land Use Agreement may be implemented.

The primitive campground is proposed for development in Section 17 in conjunction with the approved master plan for the Sugar River State Trail. Because of funding constraints, it is likely that development will not occur for several years.

A short, 1/2 mile bridle trail will be maintained in Section 16 because of local interest. Horse riders have indicated a preference for an unmowed trail.

A complete biological inventory of the property will be conducted as funds permit. Additional property objectives may be developed following completion of such an inventory.

All areas proposed for development will be examined for the presence of endangered and threatened wild animals and wild plants. If listed species are found, development will be suspended until the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator is consulted, the site evaluated, and appropriate protective measures taken.

All areas of future development will also be investigated for the presence or absence of historical or archaeological sites and appropriate protective measures taken to protect significant sites. Should any sites be found during development, construction will be suspended until the State Historical Preservation Office is consulted.

Land Acquisition (Figure 3):

The current land purchase goal is 3,219.73 acres. Of this goal, about 48 percent (1,556.62 fee simple, 1.23 easement) is under Department control. An additional 847 acres are leased for public hunting and includes land in and adjacent to the property boundary. Because land acquisition is projected to continue at a very slow rate and costs have become extremely high, a boundary modification is recommended to improve the cost effectiveness of the property. The following changes are proposed:

1. Eliminate the wildlife area lands west of Section 18 and reduce the property purchase goal by 1,639.73 acres to 1,580 acres.
2. Establish a new Green County Extensive Wildlife Habitat Unit (EWHU) of 510 acres west of Section 18 of which 310 acres are state-owned.
3. Trade or sell 120 acres located outside of the boundary Section 19 to purchase a like amount of land in the boundary.
4. Modify the north boundary to include 30 acres of state-owned land.
5. Summary:

<u>Property</u>	<u>Current Goal</u>	<u>Proposed Goal</u>	<u>Controlled</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Albany WA	3,219.73	1,580.00	1,246.62	78.9
Green Co. EWH	750.00	1,260.00	381.60	30.3

Timetable:

Acquisition will proceed as rapidly as land is offered to the DNR for purchase. Establishment of dense nesting cover on lands under Department ownership will require 10 years to complete. The canoe launching site should be installed within 5 years.

Cost Estimates:

Wildlife area and EWHU land acquisition: \$524,000.00 (655 acres at \$800/acre).

Dense nesting cover establishment: \$25,000.00 (200 acres at \$125/acre).

One canoe landing: \$3,000 (estimate from Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Management Plan).

Total property maintenance: \$1,000/year

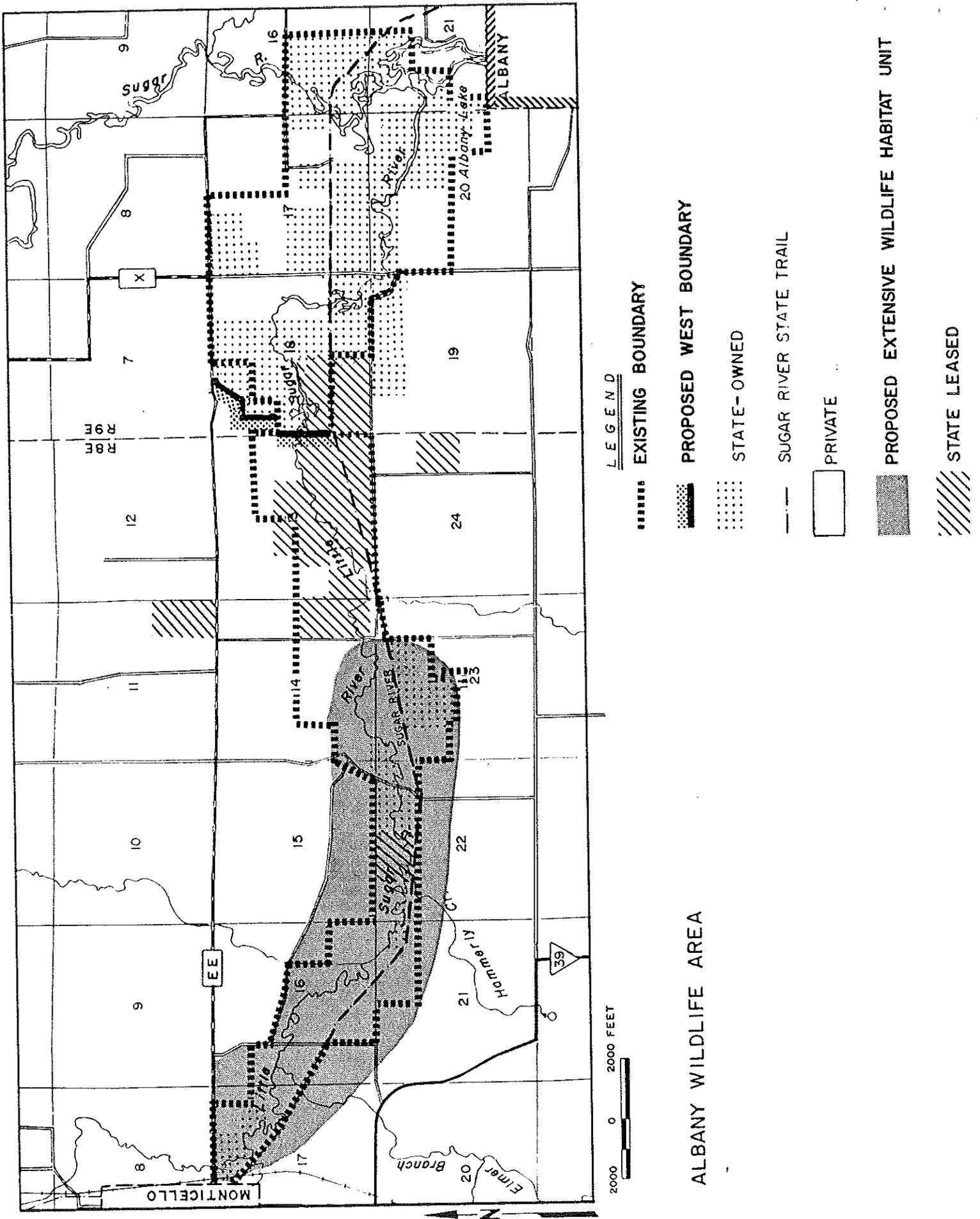


FIGURE 3
LAND CONTROL

Section II - Support Data
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Physical Setting:

The Albany Wildlife Area is located in northeastern Green County. In general, the wildlife area runs parallel with the Little Sugar River between the Villages of Albany and Monticello. The property also runs parallel with and adjacent to parts of the central portion of the Sugar River State Trail. The trail itself runs from the Villages of Brodhead and New Glarus and is 23 miles long. The region is rural in nature with small to moderately sized dairy farms being the dominant social and economic unit. The population centers of Madison, Janesville and Monroe are located approximately 35 miles, 20 miles and 12 miles to the north, east and southwest, respectively.

History of Property Creation:

The wildlife area was activated in September of 1956 as a Federal Aid Fish and Wildlife Restoration Project. At that time, the area delineated for future acquisition encompassed 840 acres. This acreage was adjacent to a leased public hunting grounds containing approximately 2,000 acres. Since that time, the property has been enlarged by expansion and consolidation with other wildlife acquisition projects to its present size and location.

The establishment of the wildlife area was originally intended to curtail and prevent the drainage and other alteration of important wetland types as well as to provide public hunting opportunity. The prevention of drainage and habitat development and restoration were aimed primarily at upland game, waterfowl and fur-bearing species. In the 20+ years that have elapsed since the establishment of the property, this same need and justification is still valid.

Current Management and Use:

Current management activities are aimed primarily at pheasants and ducks. These include establishment of dense nesting cover (switch grass) and corn food patches planted by sharecroppers and Department personnel. Controlled burns are used to a limited degree to control woody vegetation. In the past, trees and shrubs were planted to provide cover for pheasants, rabbits and bobwhite quail. Approximately 650 rooster pheasants are released annually to supplement the natural population.

The primary uses of the wildlife area are hunting and trapping although some fishing occurs. Six parking areas (160 car capacity) and one developed boat launch provide access to property (Figure 2).

A reasonable best estimate of hunter use is 1,775 participant days annually. This includes 900 participant days by pheasant hunters, 250 by duck hunters and 125 by small game hunters. Use of the wildlife area by deer hunters, both gun and bow and arrow, is substantial. While no accurate figures on deer hunter use are available, a reasonable estimate is about 500 hunter days per year.

It is estimated that there are 100 trapper participant days occurring annually. These estimates include all Department-owned lands. Estimates of use on the adjacent public hunting ground acreage (847 acres) is about 25 percent of that taking place on the state-owned property.

An estimated 2,000 participant days of other recreation occurs annually. This includes bikers from the Sugar River Trail and others entering the wildlife area to observe wildlife, for fishing, hiking and related activities. This figure is undoubtedly conservative in light of the 35,000 to 40,000 annual visitors to the Sugar River Trail.

RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

Soils:

The wildlife area is strongly associated with the lowland/alluvial areas of the Sugar and Little Sugar Rivers. Most of the soils are somewhat poorly drained and are subject to flooding. Extensive soils include the Billett sandy loam which is well drained; the Lawler silt loam, Dells silt loam or Orion silt loam, all three of which are somewhat poorly drained; and the poorly drained Ettrick silt loam, Otter silt loam and Marshan silt loam. Areas of well drained soils are restricted, and are occupied by Tell silt loam, Billett sandy loam and Elkmound sandy loam which is shallow over sandstone.

Sandstone formations are exposed in many locations along the Little Sugar River. However, a majority of the exposures lie outside the wildlife area boundary. Uplands are gently sloping to very steep. Upland soils are generally shallow eroded by both wind and water. Runoff and sedimentation are major hazards.

In general, characteristics of management center around the wetness and poor drainage of the lowland soils and the erosion hazards on the upland soils. Other than these somewhat critical factors, there are no other particular soil management concerns that need be addressed.

Fish and Wildlife:

Eleven wildlife species merit specific management consideration or will benefit from management activities: 1) Ring-necked pheasant, 2) Bobwhite quail, 3) Waterfowl - mallard, blue-winged teal and wood duck, 4) Cottontail rabbit, 5) Fur-bearers - mink, muskrat, beaver and raccoon and 6) White-tailed deer.

The major game species reproducing and providing harvest recreation on the wildlife area are cottontail rabbits, ring-necked pheasants, wood ducks, muskrats, raccoons and white-tailed deer.

At least 220 species of birds are known or expected to use the property. This figure is probably conservative due to the migratory nature of most species. At least 115 species are expected to be nesting summer residents. These summer residents are the species most affected by management. A partial listing includes: herring gull, black terns, Canada goose, ring-necked duck, scaup, wood duck, hooded merganser, blue and green-winged teal, pin tail, shoveler, green heron, great blue heron, American bittern, ring-necked pheasant, bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse, red-tailed hawk, sparrow hawk, great horned owl, mourning dove, downy woodpecker, wood pee wee, phoebe, black capped-chickadee, robin, brown thrasher, red-eyed vireo, palm warbler, kingfisher, northern oriole, cardinal, fox sparrow, and horned lark.

A minimum of 39 species of mammals are found on or use the wildlife area at some time. Cottontail rabbits, furbearers and aquatic species are those most affected by management. Other species present includes: white-tailed deer, gray and fox squirrels, woodchucks, muskrat, otter, beaver, raccoon, red and gray fox, coyote, badger, skunk, weasel, mink, opossum, eastern and least chipmunks, 13-lined ground squirrel, northern flying squirrel, and white-footed deer mouse.

The Sugar River has one of the most diverse warmwater fisheries in southern Wisconsin. At least 50 different species have been identified, including several panfish and game species. Panfish present are black bullheads, black crappies and five species of sunfish. Game fish found in the river are channel catfish, flathead catfish, and large and smallmouth bass. Most of the fishing pressure is directed towards channel catfish and smallmouth bass, although many people fish for panfish, suckers, redhorse, buffalo and carp. The silver chub, redbreast shiner, least darter and slenderhead darter, all uncommon species in Wisconsin, are found in the river, as well as the threatened river redhorse and Ozark minnow.

Except for the presence of two threatened fish species, no endangered or threatened species are known to use the wildlife area. If, however, any known species are found, efforts will be made to protect both the species and its habitat as directed by the District Endangered and Nongame Species Coordinator (DNR).

Vegetative Cover (Figure 4):

Table 1 shows the approximate acreages of the various vegetative types found within the boundary. Species typically found in the forested portions include silver maple, box elder, white oak, swamp white oak, red oak, ironwood, black walnut, hazel, green ash, silky dogwood, black cherry, and formerly, at least, American and red elm. Scattered clumps of aspen occur at various locations, as do dense stands of grasses, sedges and nettles.

The endangered pink milkwort (*Polygala incarnata*) and rough white lettuce (*Prenanthes aspera*) have been found on the property. One threatened plant, wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*), is also known to occur on the wildlife area.

Upland areas are dominated by a tremendous variety of herbaceous species, primarily grasses of both native and introduced origin. The grassland areas are, for the most part, fallow and "abandoned" agricultural fields. These areas are dominated primarily by introduced species. At some sites, notably along and adjacent to portions of the Sugar River Trail, native grasses, such as big and little bluestem and Indiangrass, are surviving and, in some cases, spreading.

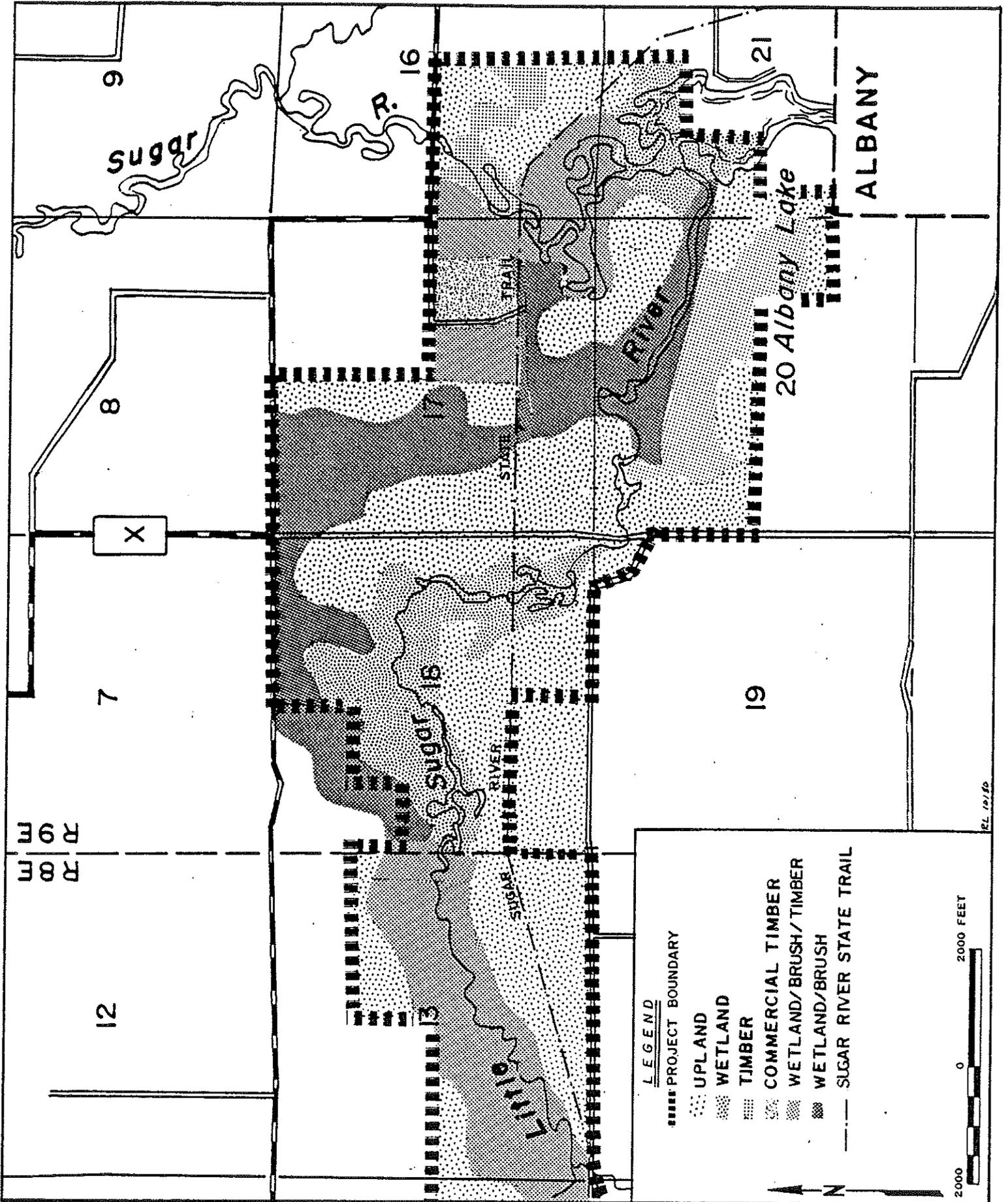


FIGURE 4 VEGETATION

ALBANY W.A. (EAST HALF)

MATCH WITH EAST HALF

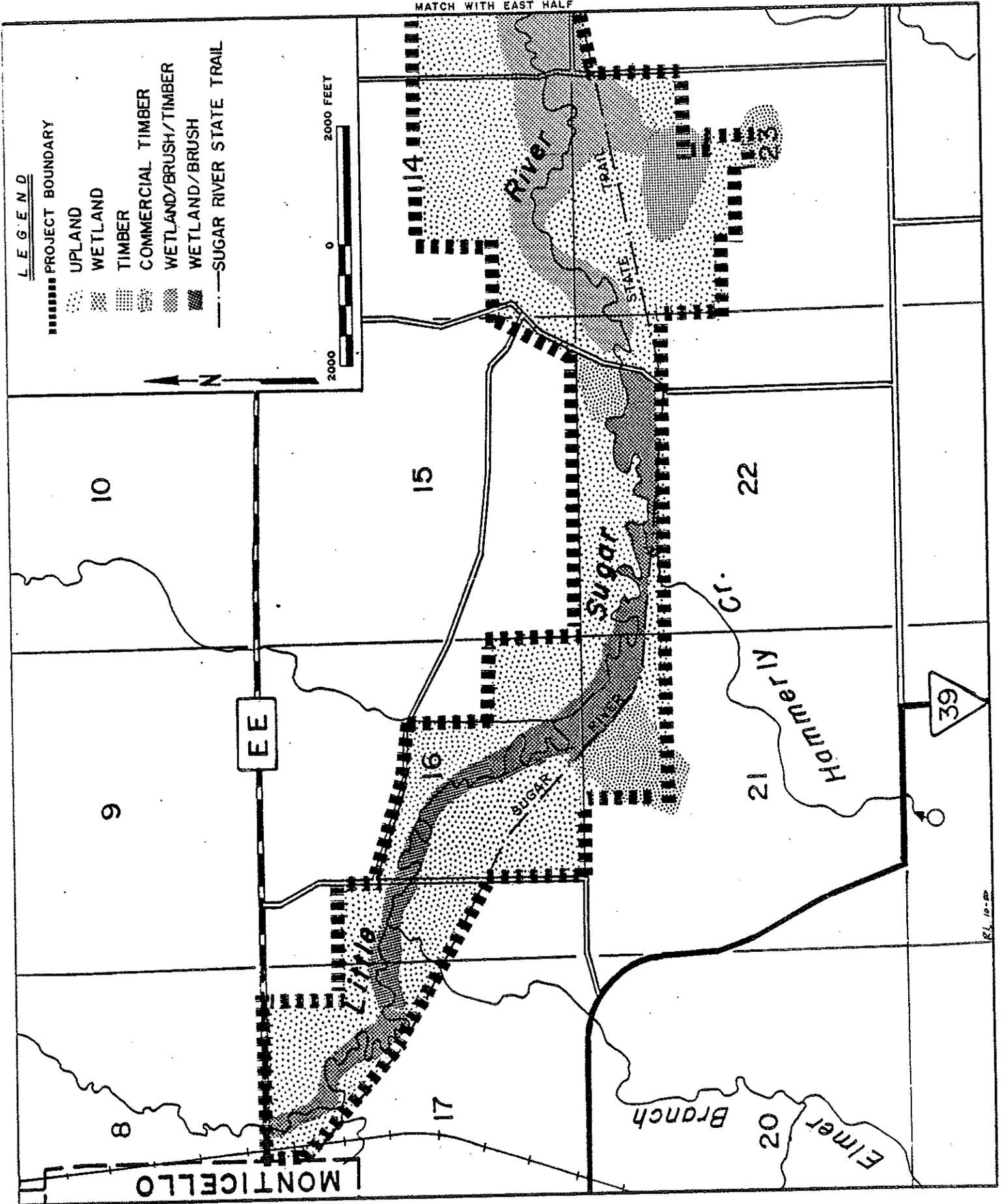


FIGURE 4 VEGETATION

ALBANY W.A. (WEST HALF)

Table 1. Vegetative and Land Use Types.

Type	Acreage	
	EXISTING Boundary	Proposed Boundary
<u>DNR Owned</u>		
Crop	190	160
Herbaceous Cover	325	216
Timber/Brush (med./low stocking)	275	35
Wetland	185	338
Timber Brush/Wetland (low stocking)	340	238
Timber (upland)	230	138
TOTALS:	1,545	1,125
<u>DNR Leased</u>		
PUBLIC Hunting Grounds	847	847
<u>Privately Owned</u>		
Crop (half prime)	745	175
Timber/brush (med./low stocking)	440	57
Timber/brush/wetland (low stocking)	65	45
Timber (upland)	45	30
Commercial Timber	40	20
Wetland/pasture	280	108
Buildings, etc.	60	20
TOTALS:	1,675	455

Scattered throughout the property (especially prevalent in proximity to low areas) is a brush component composed primarily of various willows, dogwoods and, to a limited degree, alder. Reed canary grass is generally found in association on these sites.

Privately owned cropland areas are devoted primarily to corn and, to a much smaller extent, soybeans. Only about 90 acres would be considered prime agricultural land. It should be noted that a significant amount of cropland is proposed to be removed from the wildlife area boundary.

Water Resources:

The wildlife area is associated with a varied and abundant water resource. One lake and seven streams are found in or in very close proximity. All of the streams involved flow through agricultural areas. As such, all of the streams carry heavy silt loads resulting from land misuse. In addition, all of the streams suffer from excessive fertility as a general result of adjacent agricultural and suburban development.

An example of the deterioration which has taken place is Hamerly Creek which was once a natural brook trout stream with well defined banks, deep pools and abundant riffles. On this stream, habitat deterioration has been so severe that it currently supports a trout fishery only through the annual stocking of brown trout.

Due to the somewhat linear shape of the wildlife area, the Little Sugar River has the greatest surface area of any water body associated with the property. Beginning in southern Dane County, the river runs through northeastern Green County and becomes quite large when it merges with the Sugar River at the Albany Mill Pond. Bank erosion is heavy in the adjacent pastured areas and several stretches have been straightened and ditched. The fishery of the river is dominated by forage species.

The Sugar River is Green County's largest and most important surface water resource. Bank cover along the river is very good and, in general, erosion is not a serious problem. However, most of the river's tributaries flow unprotected through pasture and experience varying degrees of bank erosion.

In the Village of Albany, an old mill pond dam with a seven-foot head forms an impoundment on the Sugar River. The Sugar as well as the Little Sugar River enters in the northwestern portion of the pond and this area consists of a delta of shallow backwaters and islands. The turbid waters of both rivers contribute a heavy silt load to the pond and, consequently, the average water depth has been reduced to less than three feet. This greatly lowers the aesthetic quality of the lake and significantly impairs the recreational value for boating and fishing.

Although water depths are shallow, an abundance of carp in the pond preclude the development and establishment of aquatic vegetation of benefit to waterfowl. In addition, the village habitually opens the mill pond dam during the fall. This further reduces the value of the area to migrating ducks and resident furbearers, especially muskrats. If done a little later in the year, it may have long-term, beneficial effects on vegetation if carp can be controlled.

Historical and Archaeological Features:

The history of the Albany area is interesting. Richard W. Dexter of the State Historical Society points out that at least 12 prehistoric Indian campsites have been reported to the Society by amateur archaeologists from the area. While the exact location of these sites is not known, approximate locations are shown in Figure 2.

There were several settlements established by the early white settlers but the exact location is unknown. One site of local historical importance is a cave in which Mr. Reuben Fulsom resided. Mr. Fulsom, made his living in the traffic of furs and hides. The cave, located on Department property was his only residence. The location of the cave is well known and has deteriorated due to high water and vandalism.

Land Use Potential:

Land use designations are shown in Figure 2. The majority of the area will be designated as a Wildlife Management Area (RD₂). A Scenic Area and a Historic Area are located in Albany Township. The Historic Area was previously described. The Scenic Area consists of a 10-acre oak-savannah knoll overlooking the Sugar River valley.

The Sugar River State Trail is designated as an Intensive Recreation Development Area (IRD). The Sugar River State Trail Master Plan (approved May, 1975) proposed a primitive campground for bikers and a bridle trail. The bridle trail has existed for about 3 years and has received very little use. The proposed campground and the bridle trail are also designated as IRD. Prior to development of the camping facilities or improvement of the bridle trail, approval of detailed plans will be coordinated between the DNR Bureau of Wildlife Management and Parks and Recreation.

A Demonstration and/or Experimental Management Area (RD₁) is located in Section 20 of Albany Township. This area is titled "The Albany Oak Regeneration and Hardwood Underplanting Research Area" as part of an ongoing investigation by the U.S. Forest Service. The agency is monitoring the growth of planted red oak and other hardwood trees including basswood, red maple, sugar maple, tulip (yellow) poplar and black walnut as well as regeneration of native oak trees.

A 12-acre wetland located in the NW 1/4 of Section 17, Albany Township, will be designated as a "Public Use Natural Area". This unique wetland contains several native wetland plant species and has been relatively undisturbed.

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

1. Habitat Management:

Brush invasion into open fields is a recurring problem which reduces the attractiveness of the area to nesting waterfowl and pheasants. Brush control is difficult due to lack of manpower and cost effective control techniques. However, brush control can be improved with increased use of prescribed fire.

2. Poor Water Quality:

Local concern and interest in the fishery of the Sugar and Little Sugar Rivers as well as Albany Millpond have been expressed. The heavy silt load and presence of carp in the system preclude any type of meaningful management.

Reduction of the silt load in the river system requires a conservation plan for the entire watershed and is beyond the scope of this master plan.

Chemical treatment to eradicate carp populations also requires application beyond the boundaries of the wildlife area. In addition to the significant cost of treating the entire Sugar River system, game fish, Ozark minnows (threatened), river red horse (threatened), as well as several uncommon species including silver chub, red fin shiner, least darter and slenderhead darter would be eliminated.

The Department will continue to support interagency programs designed to improve water quality but, in all likelihood, will not undertake a costly chemical treatment program.

3. Encroachment of Rural Subdivisions:

Rural subdivisions are being built near the wildlife area. If, in the future, construction takes place adjacent to the wildlife area, some problems between residents and hunters could arise. Both trespass and shooting safety problems can be minimized by proper posting. Regular Department contact with landowners throughout the year can greatly assist in monitoring activities and improving communications as well as responsiveness.

4. Sugar River Trail Development:

Coordination between Bureaus of Parks and Recreation and Wildlife Management concerning camping facilities and bridle trails proposed in the Sugar River State Trail Master Plan is essential. Primitive camping and horse-use by small numbers of users is compatible with other wildlife area activities. However, if these uses are greatly expanded, conflicts between user groups as well as habitat deterioration may occur.

5. Public Misuse:

Vandalism, littering and nonpermitted uses such as off-the-road vehicles and snowmobiles are a continuing problem. These difficulties are present statewide and are very difficult to control with present management and law enforcement manpower.

RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATION

The wildlife area is located within one hour's drive of Madison, Monroe, Janesville and Beloit. Paved highway access to and around the property is excellent via county and town road systems. U.S. Highway 14 is located just 10 miles to the east and I-90/94 is within 20 miles of the property. Increasing transportation costs and increasing populations are leading to a higher demand for public recreational lands close to metropolitan areas. This scenario is emphasized in the Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Plan (1977).

Demands for outdoor recreational activities in the Albany Wildlife Area will increase faster than the regional population increases. Many of these activities are compatible with the goal and objectives of the Albany Wildlife Area and will be encouraged. These include hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing and nature study. Certain other activities are incompatible with the goals and objectives of the property (snowmobiling and off-the-road vehicle sports) and will be discouraged or prohibited.

The goals and objectives of the wildlife area complement the 1985 goals of the Fish and Wildlife Comprehensive Planning System.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES

"As Is" Management:

As is management would result in only partial development of the wildlife area. This alternative would not allow the property to realize its full potential. Natural succession would take over. The marsh would eventually convert to brush swamp and fallow croplands would be invaded by woody vegetation. This would eliminate the value of marsh areas to waterfowl and aquatic furbearers, and the value of uplands as nesting cover for waterfowl and pheasants. However, with some conservative land management techniques coupled with new acquisition of land, this regime would more than double the waterfowl and pheasant hunting opportunities as well as to provide additional recreation.

Enlarge Property:

The majority of the lands adjacent to the currently approved boundary are agricultural. Those lands would be very expensive to purchase and, while additional objectives could be achieved, cost/benefit ratios would be very questionable. They would, however, be highly desirable as a buffer zone.

Reduce Property (Recommended alternative):

In light of difficulties encountered because land acquisition was delayed for extended periods of time (land use conflicts and budget restrictions), it is very likely that ownership patterns will remain fragmented for another 20 years while costs continue to increase. From a practical standpoint, a reduction of property size and acceptance of reduced objectives is very rational.

By establishing a western boundary as shown in Figure 3, the bulk of the ownership would be consolidated into a viable public use area. A minor adjustment on the north boundary would include an additional 30 acres of state-owned land while providing more wildlife cover and recreation potential.

Because 310 acres of state-owned land would exist in the deleted area and the extremely high potential for wildlife production alongside the Sugar River Trail, the creation of an Extensive Wildlife Habitat Unit (EWHU) would maximize these values while complementing the state trail.

It is obvious that a reduction in property size will also reduce the recreational advantages of the wildlife area. While this may not appear to be consistent with anticipated increases in recreational demand or adequately protect aesthetically pleasing vegetation associated with the state trail beyond EWHU protection, it is the preferred alternative from a cost/benefit standpoint.

APPENDIX

Master Plan Comments

By: Henry W. Kolka
Representing: Wild Resources Advisory Council
Date: September 30, 1981

General Review

The WRAC wishes to congratulate the Albany Wildlife Area Master Plan Concept Element Task Force of Bruce Folley, Reynold Zeller, Charles Pills, Ray Amiel, and Larry Johnson for facing the multiple problems of the Albany Wildlife Area with considerable realism. Though this part of Wisconsin needs all the quality public wildland it can muster, the WRAC recognizes that compromises are necessary in light of today's political and economic climates. Recognizing the above fact, the Council encourages the Task Force and property category of wildlife education.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Goal

WRAC comments that and education be added to the Goal statement following the word recreation.

DNR RESPONSE: Concur; text added.

2. Objective Number 3

WRAC considers the proposal of stocking of 650 rooster pheasants per year not a reliable objective for a viable management goal for two reasons: 1) There is a possibility that the source of supply may not exist in the future, 2) The put-and-take programs may continue to lose credibility as a management tool.

DNR RESPONSE: Do not agree. Recent legislative action reflecting very strong public support provides security for future stocking activities.

3. Objective Number 4

WRAC considers this objective an excellent one, however, the Council looks upon the presentation in the text treatment on page 9 as inadequate. Under Historical and Archeological Features, the Council suggests a correction. The site locations are found on Figure 2, not Figure 3. If Reuben Fulsom cave is the chosen historical site, it should be so designated.

The Demonstration and/or Experimental Management Area is a special designation area and should receive some visibility in the text.

DNR RESPONSE: Concur; changes incorporated.

4. Annual Additional Benefits

Number 5. WRAC recommends that the sentence end with and education.

Number 7. The Council recommends the insertion of and resident between the words migratory and endangered.

DNR RESPONSE: Concur; text added.

5. Page 1. -- Next to the last paragraph

This proposal of recommended management may lack substance in light of existing and potential circumstances. See item 2 under Council's Comments.

6. Figure 2

The reviewer is left uninformed as to the shading used in Figure 2 in the west section of the Albany Wildlife Area.

There are a number of parking lots posted on the chart with no road accesses shown.

In all other aspects, this is an excellent chart.

DNR RESPONSE: Figure corrected.

7. Land Control

WRAC considers the reduction of Albany Wildlife Area goal by 1,162 acres a realistic move in light of existing circumstances. Even though this procedure appears to be necessary, the Council feels that future users in this part of Wisconsin are being short-changed.

8. Fish and Wildlife

WRAC considers the lack of exposure of nongame species the weakest segment of the concept element. The Council recommends substantial listing of all forms of wildlife for those people interested in all forms of natural endowment.

DNR RESPONSE: Fish and Wildlife list expanded. Inventory needs identified.

9. Vegetative Cover

For the same reasons as stated in the above item, WRAC recommends the listing of floral plant species.

DNR RESPONSE: Inventory needs identified.

10. Page 9 -- Item 4

This is the first master plan concept element that consider horse use of bridle trails compatible with other wildlife area activities. In Council's opinion, horses are as erosionally destructive as off-road vehicles.

DNR RESPONSE: Experience obtained from horse trails in the Kettle Moraine State Forest has demonstrated that erosion is not significant and can be controlled.

11. Page 10 -- Reduce Property Alternative

WRAC reluctantly supports this alternative for reasons presented in earlier comments. Council's greatest concern is that future generations are short-changed with this solution.

By: Forest Stearns
Representing: Scientific Areas Preservation Council
Date: October 7, 1981

We have reviewed the Albany Wildlife Area Management Plan and have several recommendations regarding natural areas located during the county inventory several years ago. In addition, we recently received information from a cooperator at the UW-Janesville locating a significant small wetland area which supports unique vegetation for this project area. A copy of the letter as well as the inventory summary will be sent to the project manager. A brief description of the sites follow:

1. Sugar River Trail Prairie - NA-2, 2 acres of dry mesic prairie in E 1/2 SE 1/4, Section 13, T3N, R8E.
2. Albany RR Prairie - NA-2, 10 acres of dry mesic prairie in NW 1/4 NE 1/4 of Section 21, T3N, R9E.
3. Sugar River Lowland Timber - NA-2, 40+ acres of bottomland timber with river slough and oxbows in SE 1/4 SE 1/4 of Section 17, T3N, R9E, but extending also into SW 1/4 SW 1/4 of Section 16 and NW 1/4 of Section 21.
4. Gentian Wetlands - (unranked), a wetland of 10-20 acres located in NW 1/4 NW 1/4 of Section 17, T3N, R9E, recommended by botanist Marion Rice of UW-Janesville.

These relatively small sites should be considered in the master plan and perhaps, most appropriately, as Public Use Natural Areas. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

DNR RESPONSE: Number 1 and 3 are outside of the proposed wildlife area boundary. Number 3 is a common type throughout southern Wisconsin wildlife areas and, while it will be protected, is not deserving of special designation. Number 4 has been designated Public Use Natural Area.

By: Larry Kurowski
Representing: Southwestern Wisconsin Planning Commission
Date: September 9, 1981

Major Comments:

Management Problems #3, Sentence reading, "This problem could be averted through the enactment of proper zoning ordinances."--Green County has a zoning ordinance and a zoning office and staff and operates under the direction of a county Land Use and Zoning Committee. I believe this is proper! Perhaps #3 alludes to possible inadequacies of the ordinance perceived by the writer. If so, they should be outlined and discussed.

DNR RESPONSE: The Department had originally felt zoning ordinances were inadequate. While more restrictive rules could be beneficial, the plan text has been modified to reflect a more realistic course of action.

Page 1 - last paragraph identifies a fish management problem but does not go on to discuss management techniques or what might be done to improve the situation (i.e., what is needed to decrease the silt problem, etc. in order that there may be a fish management program in the future).

DNR RESPONSE: Concur; text modified.

Additional Comments: Cover letter addressed to persons interested in wildlife area planning BUT DID NOT INCLUDE (cc) the local officials, specifically Town Chairman (Albany and Mount Pleasant) and village officials in nearby communities of Albany and Monticello. Those local officials in the vicinity of the project should have some valuable input or observations. It would be appropriate as well as courteous to have them "wired in".

DNR RESPONSE: Statewide procedures modified accordingly.

By: Robert W. Baker
Representing: D.O.T. Bureau of Environmental Analysis and Review
Date: September 29, 1981

We have reviewed the above-noted document and offer some general suggestions. Though the Albany Wildlife Area does not involve State Trunk Highways, it does abut County Trunk Highway (CTH) "E" and CTH "EE". CTH "E" is on the Federal Aid System. We have not been informed of any proposed improvements of these roads nor of the town roads in and near the wildlife area; nevertheless, we suggest that copies of this or subsequent documentation be sent to the County Board Chairman, County Highway Commissioner, and appropriate township officials to gain their input. It is our opinion that these county and township officials as well as the County Planning Office should routinely receive documents of this type.

DNR RESPONSE: Statewide procedures modified accordingly.

Editorial Comments:

Figure 2 & 3 - It is difficult to visualize the proposed changes in the boundaries of the wildlife area. The maps and the text should be revised to clearly illustrate the changes.

DNR RESPONSE: Figures modified.

Additional Comments:

Since the goal, objectives, and other benefits of the proposed wildlife area center around intensive recreational usage, the role played by the highway network in facilitating the realization of that usage should be recognized. Also, in order to ensure that role and interaction, allowances should be made for making future improvements to the local road system eliminating the necessity for needless red-tape. (R.C. Blum, Chief Design Engineer - Transportation District #1).

DNR RESPONSE: Highway information added to text. DNR's Office of Lands has streamlined the process for accommodating future highway improvement projects adjoining state lands.

By: Dale Marsh
Representing: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Date: September 14, 1981

Overall View: Good

Section on Management Problems, is very useful - recommended Management and Development Program, page 1 is consistent with original objectives of Project W-88-L.

Major Comments:

Land Use Potential, Fig. 2 and Pg. 9, is an area of reservation and concern. Eighty (80%) percent of land (Fig. 3) was acquired with Federal Aid (FA) in Wildlife Restoration Act funds. Five (5) Intensive Recreational Development (IRD) sites, the campground and part of the Scenic and Historic Areas are identified on the FA acquired lands. We cannot concur with the general recreational proposals per se, due to our unfamiliarity with Wisconsin standards and procedures for designing IRD's, etc., and keeping the level of use at acceptable levels to insure the primary wildlife objectives are not compromised.

DNR RESPONSE: IRD standards provided via the Department's P-R Aid Coordinator. FA conflicts will be eliminated if they exist.

By: Stanley A. Nichols
Representing: Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey
Date: September 10, 1981

Overall view: Good

Reduce property. I think the reduction of area as proposed is not good and if reduction is proposed it should be as follows: (1) eliminate the area west of the road in Section 22; (2) retain areas south of the river in Section 23 and north of the river in Section 13. Those two areas contain dense stands of herbaceous and shrub communities and contain ponded water in wet years. They supply natural refuge areas from hunting pressure and dense winter cover. With those areas a four-mile wildlife corridor is formed along the Little Sugar River. Those areas are not high in agricultural potential and they are not as easily hunted as the higher, more open land on east end of the project.

DNR RESPONSE: Do not agree. Some important wildlife cover is located west of Section 22 and should be preserved. This cover along with the habitat components located in Section 23 may be purchased under the Extensive Wildlife Habitat proposal.

Additional Comments:

No comments with regard to water or mineral resources on the area. Additional comments (separate document) about soils are noted.

Sugar River Trail Development - there is already a conflict between hunters and Sugar River Bike Trail users. It seems naive to think that guns, dogs, and horses that aren't used to each other would be compatible.

DNR RESPONSE: The additional comments have been incorporated into the plan in their entirety. Actual conflicts have been minimal over the past several years. Hunting and biking activities are controlled by time zoning hunters to the period between the Saturday nearest October 27 and February 1. Horses are not allowed on the Sugar River State Trail.

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