

Carl Ewert - RE/4

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Wild Goose Trail Master **RECEIVED**

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Form 1100-1  
Rev. 11-82

NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Item ~~JUN~~ - 5 1989

**Bureau of  
Real Estate**

SUBJECT: MASTER PLANNING - Approval of the Master Plan for the Wild Goose Trail, Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties, with an Acreage Goal of 500 Acres.  
FOR: JUNE, 1989 BOARD MEETING

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Jim Treichel (With Comments by a representative from Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties)

SUMMARY: The Concept Master Plan for the "Wild Goose Trail" is presented for review and approval.

The "Wild Goose Trail" is located in southeastern Wisconsin in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties, between the communities of Clyman and Fond du Lac. The trail passes along the west boundary of the 32,000 acre Horicon Wildlife Refuge for about 14 miles. Potential recreational uses of the trail are bicycling, hiking, jogging, horseback riding, with snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicles in the winter.

In June, 1985, the Natural Resources Board authorized the Department to negotiate and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) whereby the State would purchase the right-of-way (including all reversionary parcels) and Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties would develop, maintain and operate the right-of-way as a trail. Both counties signed the M.O.U. in November of 1985. The Board also authorized the Department to negotiate with the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation for purchase of the right-of-way.

The Board established the 35-mile Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction State Trail in July, 1986, and approved the purchase of the right-of-way for the sum of \$223,000. Currently 356 acres are state-owned at a total cost of \$239,450. Of the 46 reversionary parcels on the corridor, 22 remain to be purchased by the Department at an estimated expenditure of \$60,000.

An easement was purchased by AT&T in 1987 from the Department for \$180,000 to install an underground fiber optics cable the entire length of the trail.

It is recommended that the trail be officially named the "Wild Goose State Trail."

The M.O.U. required each County to draft a master plan for their segment of the right-of-way. Since Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties are spending their own money on the development of the trail, preparation of a master plan allows them to be creative with their respective management and development recommendations, and, importantly, promotes a spirit of cooperation and contribution on the part of area citizens.

Projects proposed in the master plan include decking and railing the bridges, surfacing with crushed limestone, terminus facilities at Clyman and Fond du Lac, and rest areas at the various communities along the trail. Facilities for the terminuses and the rest areas will consist of small parking lots, toilets, drinking water, picnic tables, bike racks, grills, signing, etc.



Development cost estimated by the counties totals \$313,000. Additionally, the counties have the ultimate responsibility for all maintenance and operations costs.

In 1986, a nonprofit organization, known as Friends of the Recreational Trail (FORT) was organized in Dodge County to raise funds and promote development of the trail. To date, FORT has raised \$35,000. The DNR intends to advocate the formation of an advisory group for the trail in both counties, which could also assume a fund-raising role for the entire project.

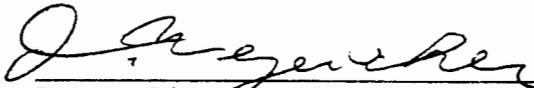
The Parks and Development Committee of the Fond du Lac County Board approved the draft master plan for their portion of the trail on April 29, 1987. Approval of Dodge County's section of the master plan by the County Board is expected in June, 1989.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board approve the master plan for "Wild Goose Trail" with an acreage goal of 500 acres.

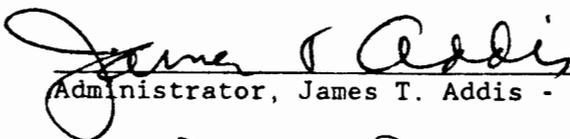
LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS:

No X Fiscal Estimate Required	Yes	Attached
No Environmental Assessment or Impact Statement Required	Yes X	Attached
No X Background Memo	Yes	Attached
Master Plan	Yes X	Attached

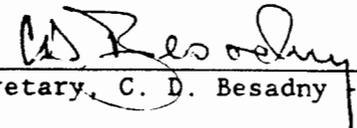
Approved:

  
Bureau Director, D. L. Weizenicker - PR/4

5/26/89  
Date

  
Administrator, James T. Addis - AD/5

5-30-89  
Date

  
Secretary, C. D. Besadny AD/5

5-31-89  
Date

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- cc: J. Scullion - AD/5
- J. Addis - AD/5
- C. Karr - AD/5
- D. Weizenicker - PR/4
- J. Treichel - PR/4
- L. Nehls - PR/4
- P. Matthiae - ER/4
- C. Evert - RE/4
- K. Traska - Nevin
- J. Huntoon - Nevin



## INTRODUCTORY SECTION - WILD GOOSE STATE TRAIL MASTER PLAN

The Wild Goose State Trail was established as a result of a unique cooperative agreement between the Department of Natural Resources, Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties.

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) signed by all three parties in 1985, the DNR is responsible for the purchase of the 35-mile abandoned rail right-of-way including all reversionary parcels and both counties are responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of the trail.

According to the M.O.U. each county must prepare a master plan for their segment of the right-of-way. The following summarizes their master plans' goal and objectives for the Wild Goose Trail.

### Dodge County

Dodge County's master plan goal is to provide a 21.6-mile recreation trail linking with Fond du Lac County's 13-mile segment, and make available a safe, year-round trail for two-way traffic accessible to all users, regardless of impairment, for hiking, bicycling, and snowmobiling, horseback riding and all-terrain vehicle riding, and lastly, to preserve the corridor for present and future generations.

The master plan objectives provide for surfacing and other appropriate improvements on the trail to accommodate up to 20,000 bicyclists per year in addition to 5,000 horseback riders, and 5,000 snowmobilers and 20,000 all-terrain vehicle (ATV) operators during the winter months. Trail use opportunities will also be provided for hikers, joggers, bird watchers, and photographers. Finally, through proper design, construction and management, access to the trail for the physically impaired will be provided.

### Fond du Lac County

The goal in Fond du Lac County's master plan is to provide and preserve a 13-mile all-season recreational trail that will link with Dodge County's segment and accommodate bicyclist, hikers, and snowmobilers.

According to the master plan's annual objectives, the trail will be developed and maintained to accommodate 10,000 to 20,000 bicyclist, 5,000 to 15,000 snowmobilers in addition to hikers, joggers, bird watchers, photographers, and stream anglers. Trail access for the handicapped and disadvantaged through proper design, construction and management will also be provided.

Based on citizen comments received at the County's public hearings, they made the decision not to allow horses and ATV's on their segment of the trail.

### Local Advisory Group

The Department recommends that a seven-member trail advisory group made up of three members from each county plus one-at-large member appointed by the DNR be established. Responsibilities of the group would be:

1. Maintain liaison with all state and local governmental agencies.
2. Recommend priorities on development projects.
3. Consider any business aspects of the trail such as concession services for the public
4. Recommend any changes to the M.O.U. on an ongoing basis.
5. Coordinate trail activities among the communities affected by the trail.
6. Raise funds for the trail.

Approved 6/29/89



**WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL**

**MASTER PLAN  
CONCEPT ELEMENT**

**DODGE COUNTY SEGMENT**



WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL

MASTER PLAN

DODGE COUNTY SEGMENT

Prepared by the

Planning and Development Department Staff

James L. Erdmann	Executive Director
Fred A. Lueck	Assistant Director
Todd Andrews	Director of Planning
**Kathleen M. Rosner	Planner III
*Tom Haight	Planner I
*Laine Stowell	Environmental Services Specialist
Joseph Giebel	Environmental Services Assistant
Bill Ehlenbeck	Deputy Land Use Administrator
*Stephanie Jansen	Cartographer I
*Kathleen Bach	Drafting Technician
Esther Tanger	Administrative Assistant
Rebecca Horton	Clerk Typist I

under the direction of the

DODGE COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION

Robert Lechner,	Chairman	Eugene Pritchard
Henry Knecht,	Vice Chairman	John Crandall
Howard Kriewald,	Secretary	Don Fabisch
John Kastenmeir		

with the assistance of the

RECREATION TRAIL CITIZEN'S ADVISORY BOARD

Ruby Abel	Jean Joslin
Marie Cigelski	Eugene Rossing
Diane Grebel	Ginny Seaholm
Clem Hoelzel	Mike Schwarzenbacher

\*\* Project Director  
\* Project Staff

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## INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan Concept Element represents Dodge County's portion of the two-part Master Plan for the Wild Goose State Park Trail. The 34.6 mile recreation trail, running from the City of Fond du Lac, in Fond du Lac County, to Clyman Junction, in Dodge County, will be developed in the right-of-way (ROW) of the abandoned Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company (CNW) railroad line. Map 1 shows the regional location of the Wild Goose State Park Trail.

The Wild Goose State Park Trail will be developed as a result of a cooperative agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Fond du Lac County and Dodge County. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by all parties (see Appendix A), the DNR will be responsible for the purchase of the railroad right-of-way and any additional land for necessary facilities such as parking. Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties will be responsible for the development and operation of the trail under their respective jurisdictions. Map 2 shows the location of the trail in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties.

## SECTION I - ACTIONS

### A. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

#### Goal

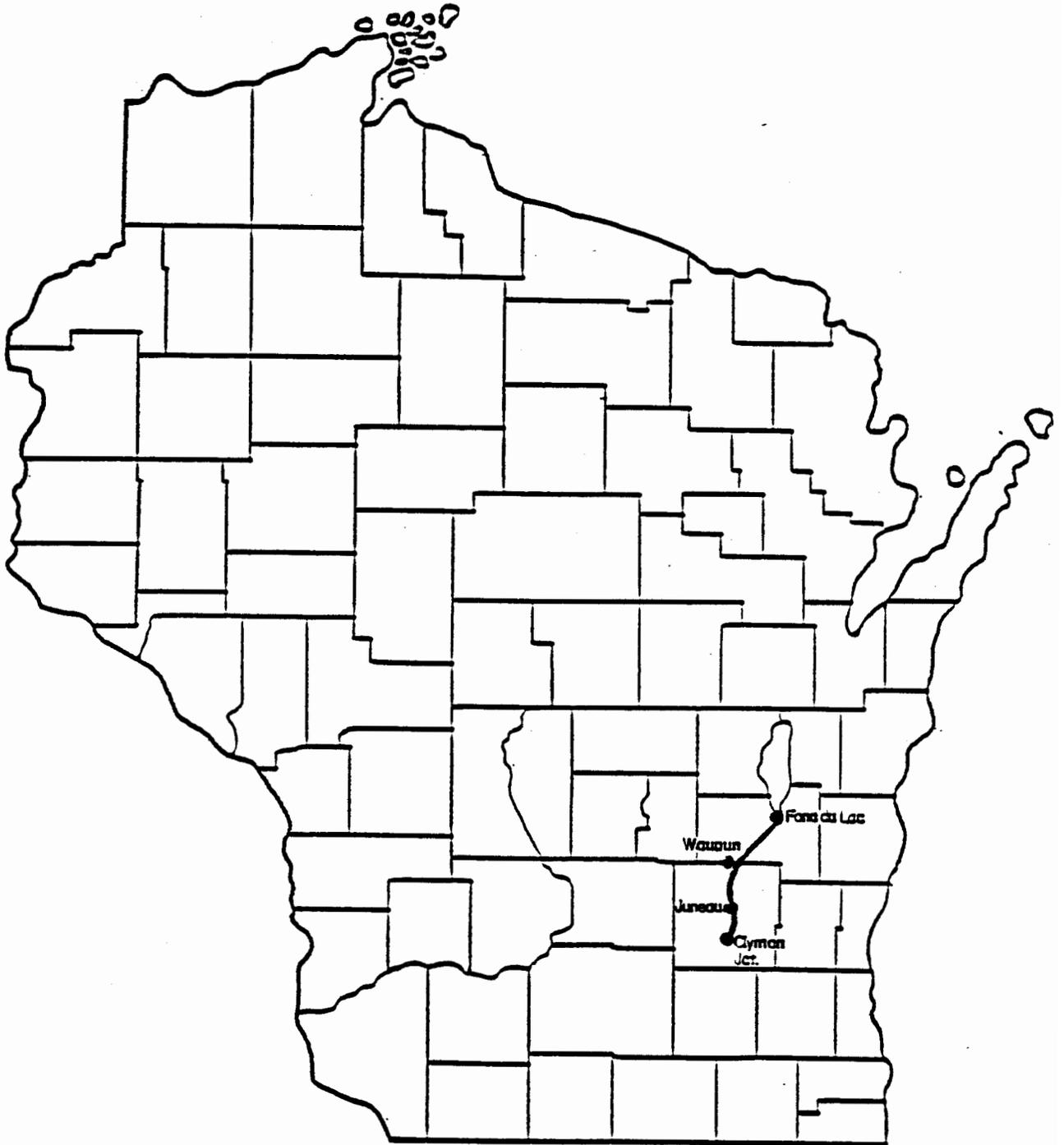
Provide a 21.6 mile long recreation trail, to link with Fond du Lac County's 13 mile segment, for year round use that will provide safe two-way traffic, accessible to all users regardless of impairment, for hiking, bicycling, snowmobiling, horseback riding and ATV riding, and to preserve the corridor for present and future generations.

#### Objectives

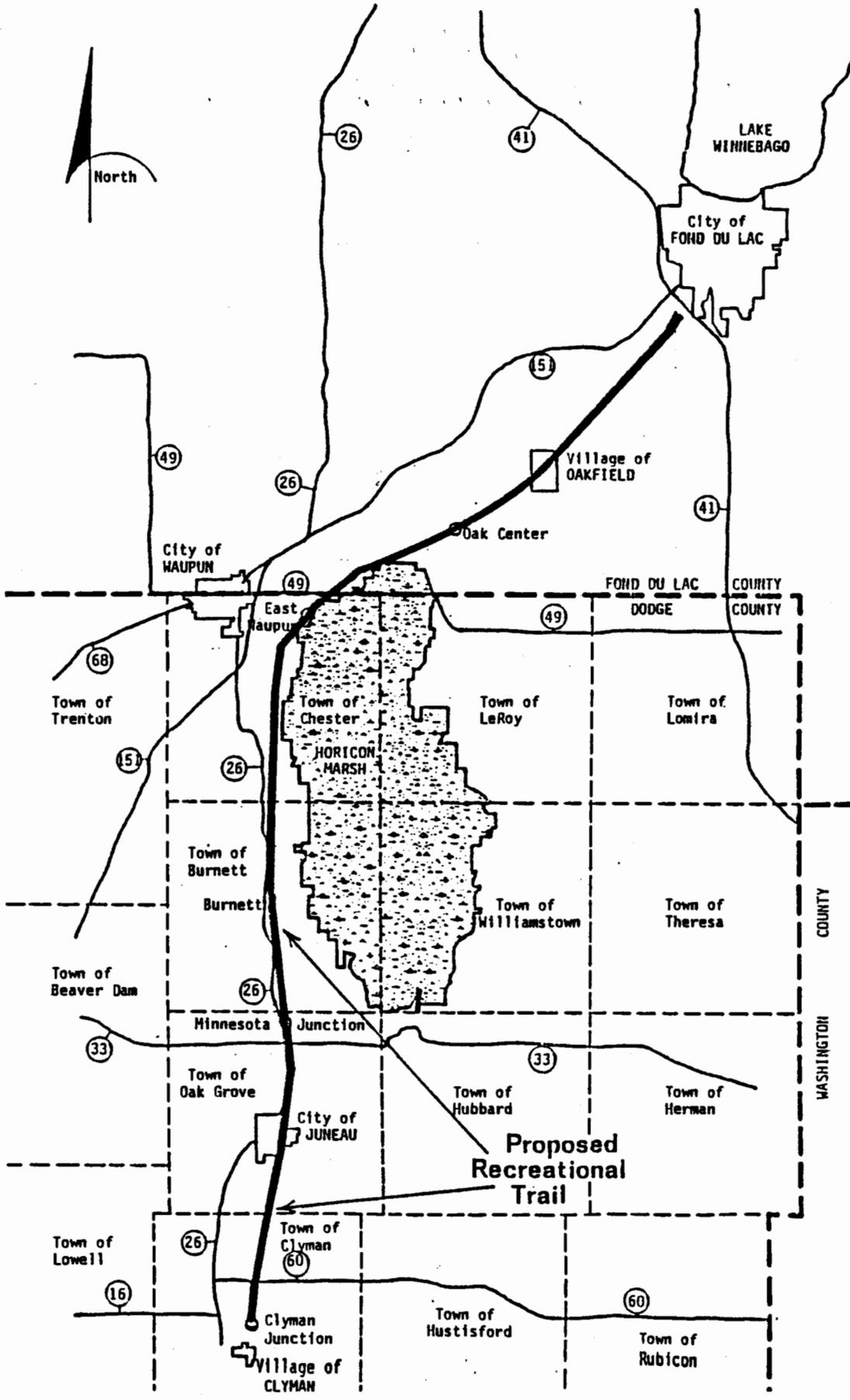
1. Provide a trail with surfacing and other appropriate improvements, along with the necessary maintenance, that will accommodate up to 20,000 bicyclists per year.
2. Provide spring, summer and fall trail use opportunities to hikers, joggers, bird watchers and photographers.
3. Provide a trail and the necessary maintenance to accommodate up to 10,000 snowmobilers each season.
4. Provide access to the trail to the physically impaired through proper design, construction and management.

MAP I  
WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL

TRAIL LOCATION MAP



# MAP 2



5. Provide a trail and the necessary maintenance to accommodate up to 5,000 horseback riders per year.
6. Provide a trail and the necessary maintenance to accommodate up to 20,000 operators of all terrain vehicles (ATV) during the winter months.

#### Additional Benefits

1. Continued preservation of the right-of-way not developed as trail in grass, prairie, brush and trees will benefit wildlife by providing food and cover.
2. Continued preservation of the prairie vegetation remnants identified along the trail right-of-way.
3. Provide future connecting links for other recreational systems in the region.

### B. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

#### 1. Land Acquisition

Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, the DNR is responsible for acquisition of the entire railroad right-of-way starting at the west edge of Highway "41" (near Rolling Meadow Drive) in Fond du Lac County and ending at mile post 140.8 in Clyman Junction. The status of the trail acquisition-to-date is shown on Map 3. Most of the right-of-way was purchased from the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company (CNW) in 1987, at a cost of approximately \$223,000. There are a number of small segments of the right-of-way in both counties to which the CNW did not have title. The ownership of these parcels reverted to the adjoining landowners after the right-of-way was abandoned by the CNW. The DNR began acquisition of these "reverted" parcels in 1987 at a total anticipated cost of \$40,000. Approximately twenty-three (23) reverted parcels lie within the abandoned rail right-of-way in Dodge County. Options to purchase have been obtained on nine (9) of these reverted parcels and an easement will be granted from the federal government for the portion of the trail right-of-way that is contiguous to the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.

#### 2. Development

According to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the development of the recreation trail is the responsibility of Dodge and Fond du Lac counties. The DNR has granted an easement to the counties for the development and operation of the full length of the trail. Under the terms of the MOU, the counties must open the trail for public use within five (5) years of the acquisition of the ROW by the DNR.

# MAP 3 STATUS OF TRAIL ACQUISITION



## LEGEND

- SEGMENTS OF THE TRAIL CORRIDOR OWNED BY THE DNR.
- SEGMENTS OF THE TRAIL CORRIDOR WHERE THE DNR HAS AN OPTION TO PURCHASE.
- SEGMENTS OF THE TRAIL CORRIDOR WHERE THE DNR IS NEGOTIATING FOR THE PURCHASE OR USE OF THE CORRIDOR.

Development of the trail in Dodge County will occur under the direction of the Parks Commission. The total cost of trail development is estimated at \$203,000 with annual maintenance cost of \$13,000. Development will be phased in accordance with acquisition of the ROW and available funding. In Dodge County a private non-profit organization, the Friends of the Recreation Trail (FORT), has been formed to promote the recreation trail and to raise funds for the development of the trail. To date FORT has raised over \$35,000 for the development and promotion of the trail. During 1989 FORT will donate \$20,000 to the county to provide the necessary matching funds required to obtain a \$20,000 LPA grant from the state of Wisconsin.

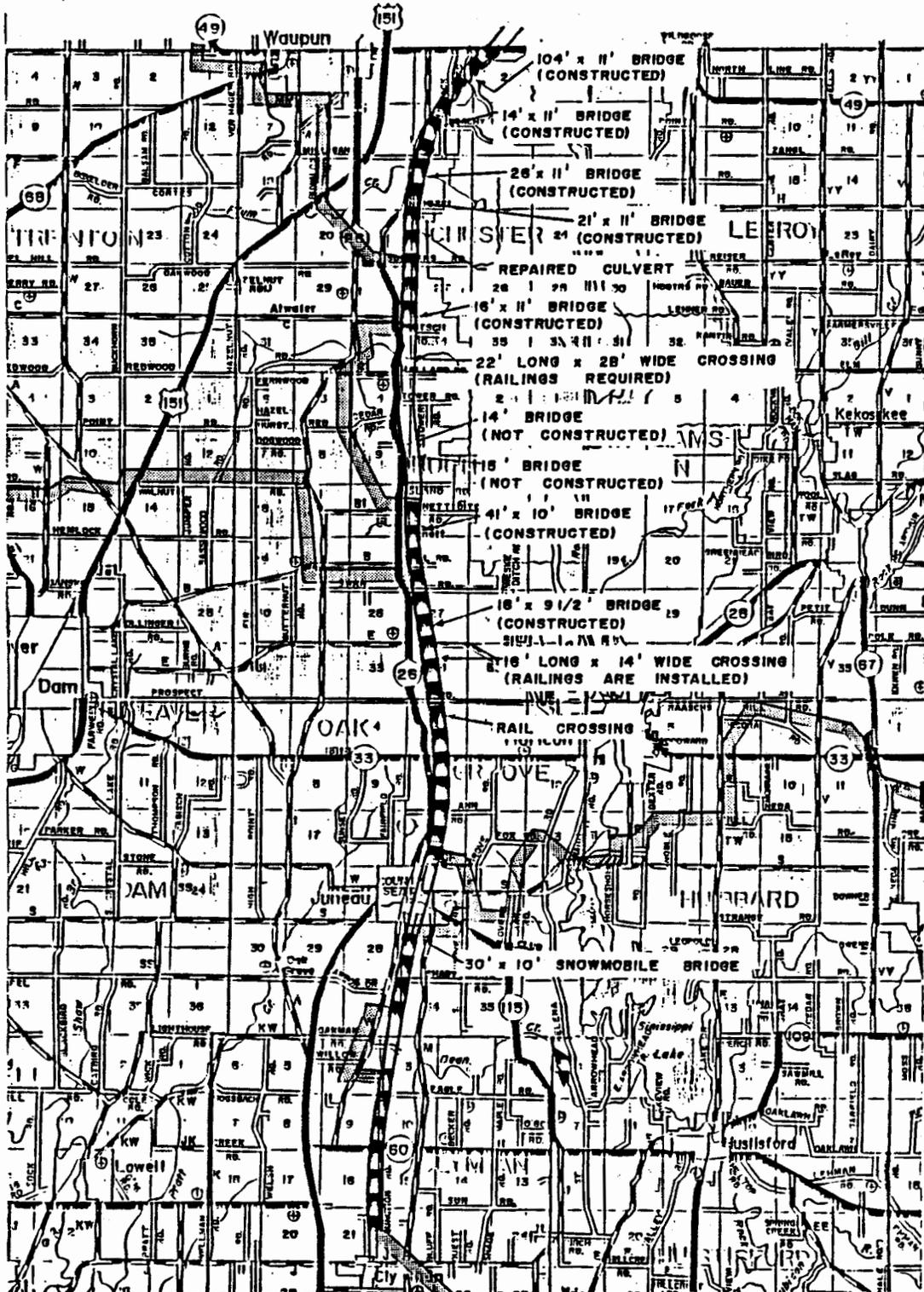
The initial stages of development for the trail will terminate the Dodge County portion of the trail in the City of Juneau. The City of Juneau is the logical location for an initial trail terminus because of existing parking facilities with easy access to the trail. The first segment of trail to be developed will be approximately seven (7) miles between the City of Juneau and the Village of Burnett. Based on acquisition rates the next segment of trail in Dodge County that will become available for development will be approximately seven (7) miles from STH "49" south to Pautsch Road in the Town of Chester. This is the northernmost segment of the trail in Dodge County and will provide the necessary trail linkage between Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties. The trail south of the City of Juneau to Clyman Junction is the last segment proposed for development. This section of the trail and the approximately three (3) miles of trail between the Village of Burnett and Pautsch Road will be developed as acquisition of the right-of-way is completed and funding becomes available.

a. Phase I. - 1988

The first phase of development, totaling about \$27,000, has prepared the entire length of the trail, except for those sections the DNR does not have ownership of, for snowmobile use in the winter. Using funds allocated to Dodge County from the Snowmobile Aids Program, and volunteer labor provided by the Dodge County Snowmobile Association, seven (7) of nine (9) railroad trestles have had decking and railings installed. Also, railings have been installed on one (1) of another two (2) bridges that require only railing to be suitable for use on the recreation trail. In addition to the bridges that have been constructed a rail crossing has been constructed on the grade in the unincorporated village of Minnesota Junction and a partially collapsed culvert was repaired in the Town of Chester. Development of the trail for snowmobile use has also included the posting of temporary signs on the trail, and at road crossings, and the removal of some of the more intrusive brush along the trail by volunteers from the snowmobile association.

The sections of the trail which were opened for snowmobile use during the 1988-89 season, and the location of the

# MAP 4 STATUS OF TRAIL DEVELOPMENT



## LEGEND

- ■ ■ SEGMENTS OF RAIL CORRIDOR TO BE USED FOR SNOWMOBILING DURING THE 1988-89 SEASON.
- ▨ OTHER PUBLIC SNOWMOBILE TRAILS IN DODGE COUNTY.

‡ ALL SEGMENTS TO BE USED FOR SNOWMOBILING ARE BEING BRUSHED & CLEARED BY MEMBER OF THE DODGE COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF SNOWMOBILE CLUBS.

bridges which have been constructed, are shown on Map 4. Appendix B gives the specifications for the bridges which have been constructed.

b. Phase II - 1989

The second phase of development, totaling about \$40,000 will prepare the trail between the City of Juneau and the Village of Burnett, approximately seven (7) miles, for public use, including hiking, biking and horseback riding in the summer and ATV riding and snowmobiling in the winter. Road crossing signs will be placed warning trail users of public road crossings. Caution signs will be erected on public roadways to warn motorists of the trail crossings. Boundary fence will be constructed along both sides of the ROW where necessary according to acquisition agreements and statutory requirements.

An eight (8) foot wide trail tread will be located on the existing rail ballast for hiking and biking and will be surfaced with crushed limestone screenings. After removal of the box elders within the ROW a four (4) foot wide trail in the excess ROW, on the west side of the trail, will be provided for horseback riding. It is necessary in some areas, shown on Figure A, to have the horses on the same trail tread as the bikers and hikers. These areas include bridge crossings and environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and heavily wooded areas. The horse trail will be surfaced with wood chips.

Additional development will include marking the trail with informational, directional and control signs. All facilities developed will be fully accessible to all trail users, including those with physical impairments.

As the trail passes through the City of Juneau it will be rerouted, as can be seen in Figure B, through an existing city park and along city streets for a distance of about five (5) blocks. The proposed trail route through the city will be designated, in both directions, as a bike route and will run along streets with low traffic volume. The City of Juneau will construct a bike path through the city park. The parking lot of the Community Center and the park will be available for trail users as will the park's restroom facilities.

The rerouting of the trail from the rail corridor in Juneau has been necessitated by the unavailability of the right-of-way for purchase due to existing industrial development which blocks the ROW and which would pose a threat to the safety of trail users. The industrial development includes a plant extension for Universal Foods and the location of ammonia tanks adjacent to the ROW. Additional development existing in the ROW includes the storage of propane gas tanks in the ROW by the Dodge County Co-op.



FIGURE A  
 PHASE II HORSE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

- ★ HORSE TRAIL TERMINUS
- SEPARATE HORSE TRAIL SEGMENTS
- ▬ SHARED TRAIL SEGMENTS



c. Phase III - 1990-1992

The third phase of development, estimated at \$100,000, will include development of the trail from the Village of Burnett to the county line, approximately ten (10) miles in length. Completion of this phase of development will link the Dodge and Fond du Lac County segments of the trail. The remaining two (2) bridges will be planked and railed. Road Crossing signs will be placed warning trail users of public road crossings. Caution signs will be erected on public roadways to warn motorists of the trail crossings. Boundary fence will be constructed along both sides of the right-of-way where necessary according to acquisition agreements and the statutory requirements. The trail tread for hiking and biking will be surfaced with limestone screenings and marked with informational, directional and control signs. Parking and restroom facilities will be available in the communities along the trail route. All facilities developed will be fully accessible to all trail users, including those with physical impairments.

Completion of this phase of development will be contingent upon acquisition of sufficient reversion parcels to allow development of the trail.

d. Phase IV - 1990-1994

The fourth phase of development will include the development of the trail from the City of Juneau to Clyman Junction, approximately four (4) miles.

Completion of this phase of development is contingent upon acquisition of sufficient reversion parcels to allow for development of the trail.

e. Phase V - 1990-2000

Additional development of trail facilities could include picnic and camping areas along or near the trail right-of-way, a visitors' station, drinking water facilities, sales and concessions area and bicycle rental. Interpretive nature and historical displays could also be developed along the trail right-of-way. Such displays could be made accessible to the visually impaired.

This phase of development could occur concurrently with Phases II, III and/or IV of trail development if funding is available.

3. Management

The recreation trail will be designated as a state park trail and will be managed, by the counties, to state standards. Each county will manage its own trail segment independent of the other.

a. Facility Management

Under the terms of the MOU, management of the trail is the responsibility of Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties. In Dodge County the recreation trail will be managed as a part of the county parks system under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission. The trail will be managed according to state standards in accordance with the designation of the trail as a state park trail.

Winter maintenance of the trail will involve sign replacement and trail grooming, which will be done under contract with a snowmobile club. Annual maintenance in other seasons will involve sign replacement and cutting a narrow strip of grass along both sides of the trail surface. Periodic maintenance will include the clearing of brush, grading and rolling portions of the trail surface and fence maintenance where necessary.

Labor for trail maintenance will be provided by volunteers and supplemented through the Wisconsin Conservation Corps. The Friends of the Recreation Trail are also working to obtain additional donations for trail development in the form of funding, materials and labor.

It may be desirable to create a Citizens Advisory Committee, or a non-profit organization to assist in the management of the trail. A non-profit organization could also provide such services as bicycle rental and pickup, refreshments, souvenir sales and other services and amenities to trail users. Such groups could be jointly formed with Fond du Lac County.

b. Vegetative Management

Vegetative management is needed to improve and maintain the aesthetics of the trail and enhance the wildlife habitat along the trail right-of-way. Vegetative management will involve the removal of weed species such as box elders and other periodic selective brushing, and controlled burning of prairie remnants. Other vegetated areas along the right-of-way will be selectively cut to provide the trail users views of the surrounding landscape.

It may be desirable to establish plant screens along the right-of-way where developments within sight of the trail reduce aesthetic value. Planting screens may also be useful in areas where it may be desirable to screen privately owned land from the recreational activities on the trail.

A biological inventory of the trail is being conducted to identify remnant prairies and other native grass, tree and plant species along the trail right-of-way. A resource management plan will be completed to assist in the preservation of native vegetation and the enhancement of wildlife habitat

along the trail. Wetland areas along the trail right-of-way will also require special management practices and protections.

c. Wildlife Management

It is desirable to improve the habitat for songbirds and other wildlife along the trail. Weed trees, such as box elder, will be periodically removed to increase shrub growth to improve wildlife habitat. Also, brush will be selectively managed to improve food and cover for songbirds.

Signs will be posted to inform the public that hunting is not allowed along the trail.

Nesting boxes for bluebirds, wood ducks, kestrels and other species will be provided by the organization Wings Over Wisconsin and will be placed in suitable habitat along the trail by volunteers.

## SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1. Location

The trail begins, on the north end in Fond du Lac County, in the City of Fond du Lac, runs south through the Village of Oakfield and intersects STH "49" just east of the City of Waupun (See Maps 1 and 2). The Dodge County Segment of the trail runs south of STH "49", skirting the western edge of the Horicon Marsh, runs through the Village of Burnett and the City of Juneau and terminates at Clyman Junction.

##### a. Relationship to Highways

The major travel routes to the trail are USH "151" from the City of Madison and USH "41" from the City of Milwaukee. Other important travel routes include STH "26" from Janesville and Watertown, STH "33" from West Bend and Baraboo and STH "23" from Sheboygan.

##### b. Relationship to Population Centers

There are at least eight (8) population centers of 100,000 or more within 150 miles of the trail, the largest being the Chicago, Milwaukee and Madison metropolitan areas. There are at least 12 million people living within 150 miles of the trail.

The trail terminates on the north at one of the area's major population centers, the City of Fond du Lac in Fond du Lac County, and runs within ten (10) miles of three (3) other major urban centers in the area, Waupun in Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties and Beaver Dam and Watertown in Dodge County.

The potential outdoor recreation population for the Horicon Area identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, SCORP II, September 1985, ranges from a winter low of 245,608 people to a summer high of 270,902 potential users of the Wild Goose State Park Trail.

#### 2. History of the Area

The railroad line was constructed in 1853 as part of the short-line Rock River Valley Union Line. The line later became part of the Chicago, Fond du Lac and St. Paul Railroad Company which later became part of the Chicago and Northwestern system. While

the line did serve the local agricultural industry not much traffic originated or terminated between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction.

### 3. Chronology of the Property Establishment and Development

- June 29, 1984 - The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad files petition of abandonment, for the rail corridor between the City of Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC).
- October, 1984 - DNR completes feasibility study for the establishment of a state recreation trail in the Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction rail corridor.
- October 11, 1984 - The ICC approves the CNW abandonment petition.
- April 15, 1985 - Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties request the DNR to purchase abandoned rail corridor for recreation trail development by the counties.
- December 10, 1985 - Memorandum of Understanding specifying the terms of the purchase and development of the trail is executed between the DNR, Dodge County and Fond du Lac County.
- October 30, 1986 - DNR purchases the right-of-way from the CNW and begins purchase of right-of-way which reverted to the land owners.
- June, 1987 - DNR grants easement to Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties for the development and operation of the trail.

## B. RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

### 1. Geology and Topography

The segment of the trail which runs through Dodge County passes through a varied topography. The bedrock formation in Dodge County is overlaid by up to 300 feet of glacial till in some areas. A steep cliff, known as the Niagara escarpment, runs along the east side of the Horicon Marsh in Dodge County. The trail right-of-way skirts the escarpment for several miles along the Fond du Lac County segment.

The north end of the trail in Dodge County is primarily flat, skirting the western edge of the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in a low-lying area with intermittent marshy areas. South of the City of Juneau the trail is surrounded by a series

of well-defined glacial features known as drumlins. These long narrow ridges running roughly in a north-south direction parallel the direction of the trail right-of-way creating an interesting ridge and wet swale pattern.

## 2. Soils

The trail passes through five (5) soil groups in Dodge County. As the trail enters Dodge County from Fond du Lac County the first fourteen (14) miles passes through the St. Charles-LeRoy-Lomira soil association which is a well drained to moderately well drained soil group associated with glacial moraines. Where the trail passes most closely to the Horicon Marsh it passes through the Houghton-Pella soil association which is a very poorly drained to poorly drained soil group found on glacial lake plains and moraines. Several miles of the trail north of Minnesota Junction passes through the Plano-Mendota soil association which is a well drained to moderately well drained soil group associated with moraines and drumlins. From Minnesota Junction to Clyman Junction, most of the remaining approximately eleven (11) miles of trail pass through the St. Charles-Miami-Elburn soil association which is a well drained to somewhat poorly drained soil group associated with moraines and drumlins. A portion of the trail just north of Clyman Junction passes through the Theresa-Lamartine-Hocheim soil association which is a well drained to somewhat poorly drained soil group associated with the foot slopes of moraines and drumlins.

## 3. Water Resources

The trail right-of-way in Dodge County falls within the Rock River watershed, which eventually drains to the Mississippi River. The northern part of the trail, in Fond du Lac County falls within the watershed of the East Branch of the Fond du Lac River which flows into the Lake Winnebago-Fox River system which then drains to the Great Lakes.

The trail right-of-way crosses a number of waterways in Dodge County, but only nine (9) are bridged with railroad trestles; another two (2) crossings have a modified trestle configuration having the typical structural elements of stone piers and steel "I" beams spanning the waterway, with the top consisting of a steel plate upon which the ballast has been laid. The other waterways flow through concrete or steel culverts.

There are four (4) fairly large stream crossings along the trail in Dodge County. Spring Brook is crossed by a forty-one (41) foot long trestle. Spring Brook is too small to support a fishery and often runs almost dry during drought years. Mill Creek is crossed by a twenty-two (22) foot long modified trestle that is twenty-eight (28) feet wide. Mill Creek supports only a poor fishery of forage fish. Plum Creek is crossed by a twenty-six (26) foot long trestle. Due to the intermittent nature of the stream, however, Plum Creek supports only a poor fishery of carp and forage fish. The West Branch of the Rock River is spanned

by a trestle about one hundred (100) feet long and thirty (30) feet above the surface of the water. The Rock River provides seasonal sport fishing of bullhead and northern pike.

The northern one-half of the trail in Dodge County closely follows the Horicon Marsh with a portion of the trail being contiguous with the western edge of the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. Several other wetland areas lie near, or along, the trail right-of-way. Also, wetland swales parallel the trail in several areas.

#### 4. Vegetative Cover

Much of the land adjacent to the trail right-of-way is in agricultural use in Dodge as well as Fond du Lac Counties. Much of the actual right-of-way is vegetated with shrubs including sumac, dogwood, wild plum, wild grape and hawthorn. Trees found along the right-of-way include oaks, black cherry, willow, box elder and aspen.

Several prairie remnants within the trail right-of-way in Dodge County has been identified by the DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources and the County Environmental Services Specialist. Dodge County will work with the DNR to preserve and enhance these remnant prairies.

#### 5. Wildlife

Wildlife commonly found along the railroad corridor are cottontail rabbit, fox, skunk, raccoon, woodchuck, hawks, owls, pheasants, partridges and various songbirds. Whitetail deer are present in adjacent wooded areas and near the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. Large concentrations of geese, ducks and wading birds such as egrets and heron can be found around the Horicon Marsh during the fall and spring migrations.

#### 6. Site Inventory

The total area of the trail right-of-way in Dodge County is approximately 260 acres. Land classifications within the right-of-way include upland and lowland brush, grass, remnant prairie, wetlands and water and can be broken down as follows:

<u>Land Cover</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Mixed trees	53
Brush	73
Grass/remnant prairie	39
Trail tread	39
Urban uses	25
Wetlands/water	31
TOTAL ACREAGE	260

## 7. Land Use

Land use adjacent to most of the trail in Dodge County is agricultural. As the trail enters Dodge County from Fond du Lac County the trail closely parallels the Horicon Marsh. At the City of Juneau the trail passes through a light industrial-commercial district.

## 8. Road and Rail Crossings

There are numerous road crossings involving the recreation trail and state and county highways and town roads in Dodge County. These road crossings will require the posting of warning signs along the trail and caution signs along the roads. The trail also crosses four (4) state highways in Dodge County. As the trail enters the county it crosses STH "49", just north of the City of Juneau the trail crosses STH "33", in the Juneau the trail crosses STH "115" and just north of Clyman Junction the trail crosses STH "60".

The Dodge County segment of the recreation trail also crosses three (3) county highways, seventeen (17) town roads and several village and city streets as it passes through the unincorporated Village of Burnett and the City of Juneau. The county highways crossed are CTH "E" south of the Village of Burnett, CTH "DF" north of the City of Juneau and CTH "S" as the trail passes through Juneau.

At Burnett the trail crosses the Wisconsin and Southern Railroad. A rail crossing will be constructed on the rail grade at this location.

## 9. Historical and Archaeological Features

There are no known historical or archaeological sites or features within the railroad right-of-way. Any existing sites were undoubtedly destroyed during construction of the railroad. However sites adjacent to the right-of-way, especially those lands adjoining the Rock River and Horicon Marsh, could be rich in archaeological sites which would be of interest for their interpretive value.

## C. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

1. Trespassing on both the trail right-of-way and adjacent property will be the primary management problem until the trail is opened to the public. Posting of "No Trespassing" and "Trail Closed" signs, along with response to trespass complaints by the Dodge County Sheriff's Department have been used to address this problem.
2. Vegetation encroachment on the trail right-of-way will be an ongoing management concern. Periodic clearing of unwanted vegetation will be necessary.

3. The trail surface may be damaged by wetness or animal burrows. The limestone surface of the trail can rut when wet and therefore should be groomed more often when wet and additional screenings added for fill where necessary. Burrowing animals may dig occasional large holes on the trail tread. The trail should be monitored for animal burrows.
4. Though it has not been a problem on other trails in Wisconsin, vandalism to bridges, vegetation, signs, the trail bed and adjacent properties could become a management problem. The possibility of vandalism is expected to be minimized by frequent use of the trail upon opening to the public.
5. Fencing will be used primarily to separate livestock from recreation trail uses. The use of fencing to separate trail users from private property abutting the trail may also be necessary. Fencing agreements modeled after a DNR form will be used where necessary.
6. Prohibiting trail use by ATV's during the summer months and the enforcement of this prohibition, may be a significant trail management problem.
7. Conflicts could arise between the various user groups on the trail. Conflicts could potentially arise between hikers and bikers and between bikers and horses in the summer months and between the snowmobiles and ATV's during the winter months. Rules for use of the trail by the various user groups and development of a "user ethic" encouraging considerate and safe use of the trail will need to be developed and posted along the trail.
8. The trail, or at least sections of the trail, may need to be closed during the gun hunting season. This is due to the close proximity of hunting areas to the trail along the Horicon Marsh.
9. Prohibiting hunting and trapping along the trail will require the posting of signs at intervals along the trail. Violations of this prohibition may require a law enforcement response.
10. Though it has not been a problem along other Wisconsin trails, litter could become a problem along the trail with frequent use. Encouragement of a "user ethic" will help keep litter under control.

#### D. RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The trail is located in the Horicon Area as identified in the Statewide Comprehensive-Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP IV), December 1985. This document ranks the various recreation needs in a three (3) tier system. Potential recreation trail uses fall within this ranking system as follows:

- High Priority    - Bicycling  
                   Cross-country skiing  
                   Picnicking  
                   Walking/Jogging
  
- Medium Priority - Camping  
                   Fishing  
                   Hiking/Backpacking
  
- Low Priority    - Horseback Riding  
                   Off the Road Vehicles - cycles  
                   Off the Road Vehicles - other  
                   Snowmobiling

E. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

A. Multiple Use Trail Development

1. Uses Allowed: The trail will be developed and maintained for hiking, jogging, biking, and horseback riding in the summer. Winter use of the trail will consist of ATV riding, snowmobiling, and cross country skiing. The trail will be fully accessible to users in wheelchairs and those with other mobility limitations.

Considering the relatively narrow tread (8 feet) it has been determined that ATV's and other motorized recreational vehicles will not be compatible with nonmotorized uses of the trail in the summer months. During the winter months, however, ATV's will be able to make use of the trail even if there is no snow, therefore, possible conflicts with snowmobiles will be minimized.

Cross country skiing will not be banned from the trail during the winter months but no improvements to the trail, such as grooming, will be made for this use. Cross-country ski trail guidelines recommend that equal portions of the trail be uphill, downhill and level. The existing trail corridor is generally level and would be suitable, but not ideal for cross-country skiing.

Because the trail has been designated as a state park trail hunting will not be allowed on the trail or within the ROW.

2. Trail Facilities: An eight (8) foot wide trail tread will be surfaced with crushed limestone screenings for use by bikers and hikers. A four (4) foot wide trail will be blazed, where appropriate, in the excess ROW and surfaced with wood chips for horseback riding. For the present, the horses will use the same bridges as the hikers and bikers but in the future separate stream crossings will be developed for the horses where appropriate. In areas where the horses must use the same trail tread as the hikers and bikers signs will be posted requesting horses to stay left and bikers to stay on the right. Additional maintenance of the trail surface will be required in these areas. Horses will not be allowed in the City of Juneau. Negotiations are currently underway with owners of existing parking facilities at the intersection of highways "26" and "33" and in the unincorporated village of Minnesota Junction to allow horse trailers to use their lots.

Additional trail development includes the planking and railing of all bridges and rest stops provided at major access points. Parking, toilets, water and picnic tables are available at the existing facilities in the communities along the trail. In the future it may be necessary to provide parking and toilet facilities at highway "49". Also, the availability of federal highway funds to construct a pedestrian crossing over highway "49" will be researched.

All facilities will be fully handicap accessible. Also the needs of the handicapped will be taken into consideration in developing and posting signs and information kiosks. Interpretive nature displays could also be developed with nature and trail information provided in large type and possibly braille.

An alternative trail design calling for horses and hikers and bikers to share the same tread has been considered and rejected. Under this alternative a five-to-six foot tread would be surfaced with crushed limestone screenings would be provided for the hikers and bikers and a two-to-three foot tread surfaced with wood chips would be provided for horseback riding adjacent to the tread for hikers and bikers. Since it was determined that removal of the box elder would provide sufficient room in the excess ROW for a separate horse trail the above option was deemed less desirable.

**B. Limited Use Trail Development**

1. **Uses Allowed:** Hiking, jogging, biking only allowed as summer uses. Snowmobiling would be the only allowed winter use.
2. **Trail Facilities:** Trail development would be similar to that discussed in option A, the trail would be surfaced with limestone screening, the bridges planked and railed. Parking, toilets, water, picnic tables, bike racks, etc. would be available in communities along the trail. In addition, concession buildings with bike rentals, refreshments, etc. could be constructed at the north and south ends of the trail. The use of local community facilities would be incorporated wherever possible. All facilities would be fully handicap accessible.

This development option was not considered feasible due to the tremendous public interest in allowing horses and ATV's on the trail. Another development option calling for only limited development of the trail, such as using the rail ballast instead of limestone screenings as a trail surface, was also not considered since it would not accommodate most bicyclist.

**APPENDICES**

- Appendix A - Memorandum of Understanding
- Appendix B - Trail Bridge Specifications
- Appendix C - Partion Fencing Agreement
- Appendix D - County Board Resolution
- Appendix E - Newspaper Article

**"EXHIBIT B"**

**Memorandum of Understanding among Dodge County and Fond du Lac County  
and State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

**I. Introduction:**

The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth the agreements and understandings which have been reached among Dodge County (DC), Fond du Lac County (FC), and the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the acquisition, development, and operations of approximately 35 miles of abandoned rail property located between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction in Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties. The grade is presently owned by the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company and has been approved for abandonment by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The DNR is interested in preserving the grade corridor for recreational trail purposes. Both DC and FC are interested in developing, maintaining, and operating a recreational trail in the corridor provided the DNR acquires same. DC, FC, and the DNR agree to work together to achieve their mutual goals as set forth below.

**II. Description of the Property**

The property begins at railroad milepost 175.4 near Fond du Lac and runs approximately 34.6 miles to milepost 140.8 near Clyman Junction in Dodge County. Approximately 15 miles of the grade is located in Fond du Lac County and 20 miles in Dodge County. An exact legal description of the property in each county will be agreed upon prior to the execution of trail easements.

**III. Consideration**

The DNR will acquire the grade from the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company provided a reasonable price can be negotiated. The DNR will execute trail easements with DC and FC for one dollar and other valuable consideration.

**IV. Obligations of the DNR**

1. The DNR will purchase the 35 mile Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction abandoned railroad grade from the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company.
2. The DNR will pay all costs to acquire the property.
3. The DNR will purchase all parcels which may be necessary to obtain clear title to the property and pay all costs associated therewith.
4. The DNR will convey by easement to DC and FC the right to develop, maintain, and operate a recreation trail on lands within their respective counties.
5. The DNR agrees to complete the environmental impact process for the purchase of the property pursuant to s.1.11, Stats., and Chapter NR150, Wis. Adm. Code.

**V. Obligations of DC and FC**

1. DC and FC shall develop, maintain, and operate the lands located within their respective counties for recreation trail purposes (bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and cross country skiing).
2. DC and FC shall enter into an easement in perpetuity with the DNR to accomplish the purposes contained in paragraph V.1.
3. DC and FC shall complete the environmental impact assessment for development, maintenance, and operation of the trail.
4. DC and FC shall write a master plan for the project to be completed prior to any trail development (according to DNR format).
5. DC and FC shall participate in or conduct public meetings which may be necessary for the establishment and development of the trail project.
6. DC and FC agree the trail will be open for public use within their respective counties within 5 years of completion of acquisition that would allow the trail to be built and used. If the trail is not open by this date or ever ceases to be used for trail purposes for two years, then all easement rights revert to and revert in the DNR without necessity of reentry. The DNR has no obligation to develop and operate the trail.
7. DC and FC indemnify and hold harmless the DNR and its employees against all claims, damages, costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising from the performance of this MOU by the counties or from any act of negligence of FC or DC, their agents, contractors, servants, licensees, permittees, or employees. In case any action or proceeding be brought against the DNR or its employees by reason of any such claim, FC or DC upon notice from the DNR, will defend such action or proceeding.
8. DC and FC agree that any advertising or display material relating to the trail shall clearly identify the property is owned by the DNR and under the management and control of the DC or FC.
9. DC and FC in connection with this MOU shall open the facilities to the general public subject to reasonable rules and regulations, fees, and charges as the DC or FC deem necessary for the management and operation of the Premises.
  - a. Rules and Regulations. The parties agree that the provisions of Chapter NR 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code, remain applicable to the Premises. Pursuant to s.45.01(1), Wisconsin Administrative Code, the Department retains management, supervision, and control over the Premises for the purpose of enforcing Chapter 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code, when needed to protect the Premises. Daily routine enforcement remains the responsibility of DC or FC.
  - b. Admission fees, if any, charged by DC or FC shall not exceed those established in s.27.01(7), Stats. Other fees shall remain similar to those contained in Chapter NR 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code. DC and FC will discuss the fees to be charged with the DNR at an annual meeting held prior to May 1 each year and the fees shall be subject to written approval by the DNR. DC and FC shall retain all fees collected as payment for its services under this MOU. If admission fees are charged, the conservation patron license and senior citizen card issued by the DNR shall be honored without additional admission charges.
10. Trail development will conform with DNR state trail standards.

**VI. General**

1. This Memorandum of Understanding is subject to all applicable laws and regulations and to the approval of the Natural Resources Board and the Governor of Wisconsin.
2. The DNR retains the right to withdraw from this transaction if they determine the railroad cannot convey good title to the property.
3. This Memorandum of Understanding may be revised by mutual written agreement of the DNR, DC, and FC.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, DNR, DC, and FC have caused this memorandum to be executed in their respective names by their respective duly authorized representatives on the date shown below.

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carroll D. Besadny, Secretary

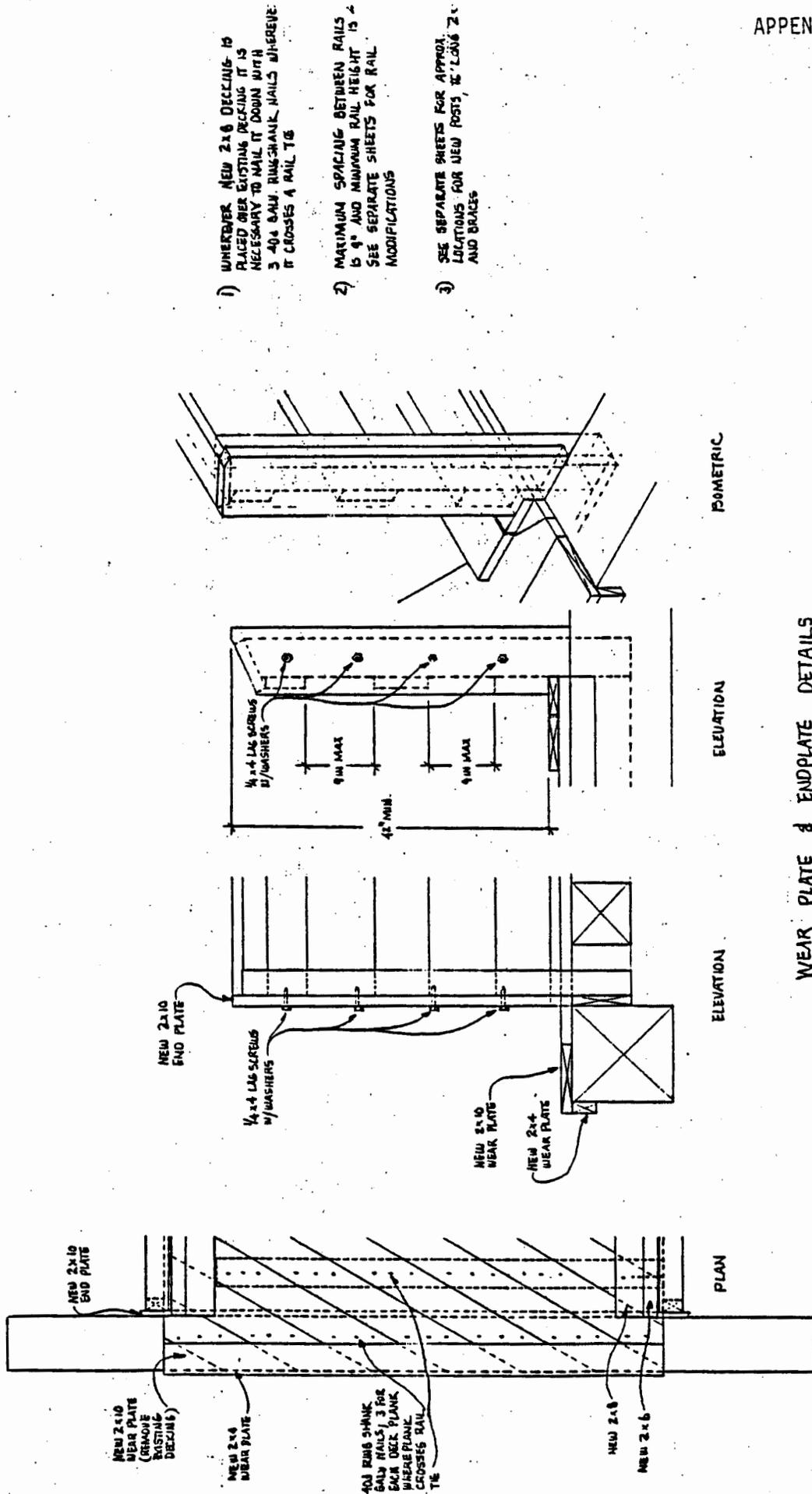
DODGE COUNTY

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Board Chairperson

FOND DU LAC COUNTY

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Board Chairperson

Dated \_\_\_\_\_



- 1) WHEREVER NEW 2x6 DECKING IS PLACED OVER EXISTING DECKING IT IS NECESSARY TO NAIL IT DOWN WITH 3-40# GALV. RING-SHANK NAILS WHEREBY IT CROSSES A RAIL TO
- 2) MAXIMUM SPACING BETWEEN RAILS IS 9" AND MINIMUM RAIL HEIGHT IS 4". SEE SEPARATE SHEETS FOR RAIL MODIFICATIONS
- 3) SEE SEPARATE SHEETS FOR APPROX. LOCATIONS FOR NEW POSTS, 16' LONG 2x4 AND BRACES

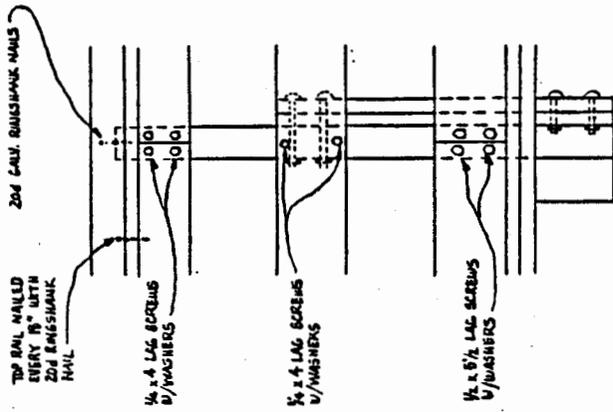
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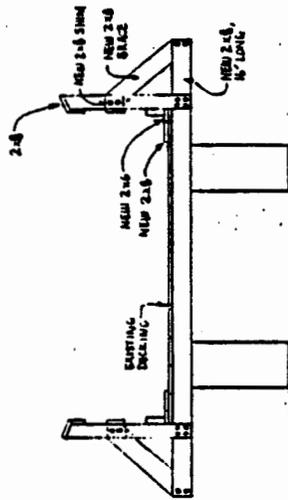
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WEAR PLATE & ENDPLATE DETAILS

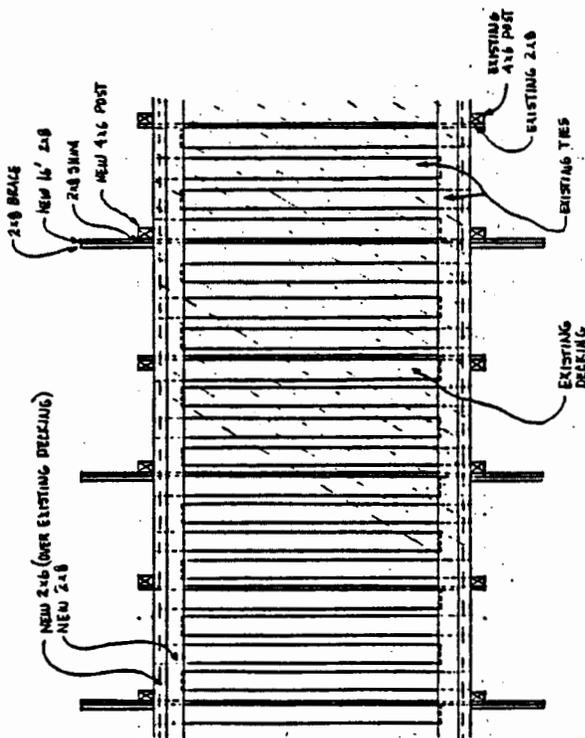


RAIL FASTENING DETAIL 1" x 1'0"

(ALL RAILS MUST BE FASTENED TO ALL POSTS AS ILLUSTRATED)

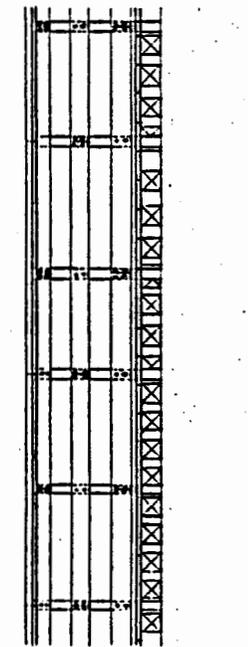


CROSS-SECTION 1/4" x 1'0"

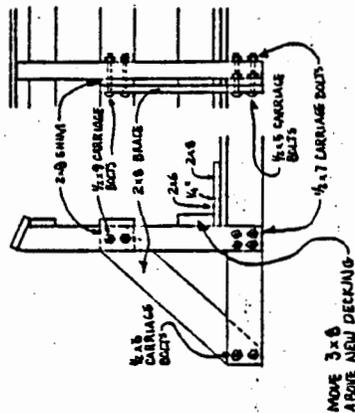
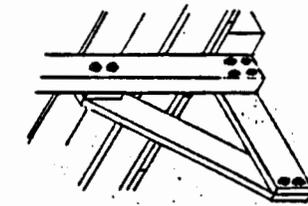


PLAN 1/4" x 1'0"

4'0" 4'0" 4'0" 4'0" 4'0"



ELEVATION 1/4" x 1'0"



BRACE FASTENING DETAILS

Dodge County  
Courthouse  
Juneau, Wisconsin 53039

**PARTITION FENCING AGREEMENT**

This partition fence agreement is entered into between Dodge County, County, and

-----  
-----, Landowner, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of -----,  
19\_\_\_\_\_.

WHEREAS, Dodge County, under terms of an easement conveyed to Dodge County by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is responsible for the development, operation and maintenance of a recreation trail on property which adjoins property owned by the Landowner in -----, and

WHEREAS, the County and Landowner, in consideration of the mutual promises and conditions herinafter contained, do agree as follows:

1. The County shall furnish and deliver to the Landowner the following materials which are to be used by the Landowner to construct a fence which will act as a partition between the property to be developed, operated and maintained by the County as a recreation trail and the property owned by the Landowner:
  
2. ----- shall construct this partition fence between the following described adjoining lands:
  
3. This partition fence shall be constructed in compliance with the requirements of 90.02, 90.03 and 90.035 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and this fence shall be constructed under the direction of an authorized representative of Dodge County.

- 4. This partition fence must be certified as meeting the requirements of this contract by an authorized representative of Dodge County upon completion of the fence.

The partition fence shall be completed at the time of construction of the trail where it passes the Landowners adjoining property.

- 5. It is the Landowner's responsibility to maintain this fence in a state of good repair as defined in s.90 of the Wisconsin Statutes subject to the following conditions as authorized by s.90.03 of the Wisconsin Statutes:

- 6. This agreement runs with the land and shall bind the County and the Landowner, their survivors, heirs, executives, administrators, successors and assigns.

- 7. This agreement is subject the following additional conditions:

- 8. This agreement is to remain in effect for so long as such partitioned fence is legally required under s.90 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this agreement to be signed at

\_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

19\_\_\_\_\_.

DODGE COUNTY

\_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER

\_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION # 85-48

TO THE HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF DODGE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Members:

WHEREAS, the Dodge County Park, Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan (1985-2000) recommends that recreation trails be developed in Dodge County for bicycling, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and other recreational activities, and that abandoned railroad beds should be considered as sites for such trails, and

WHEREAS, the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company has abandoned a railroad bed located in Dodge County and Fond du Lac County as illustrated on the attached map marked "Exhibit A", passing through the following municipalities in Dodge County: the Towns of Clyman, Oak Grove, Burnett and Chester; the unincorporated Villages of Burnett and Minnesota Junction; and the City of Juneau, and

WHEREAS, the county recreation plan further recommends that a railroad right-of-way to be used as a trail should be purchased by the state, and development, maintenance and operation of the trail should be a joint effort of the state, county and local governments, and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has agreed to purchase the abandoned railroad right-of-way in Dodge County if Dodge County agrees to develop, maintain and operate the trail as outlined in the attached Memorandum of Understanding marked "Exhibit B", and

WHEREAS, the Fond du Lac County Board has voted 35 to 1 in favor of developing a recreational trail on their portion of the abandoned railroad right-of-way, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources must be assured of Dodge County Board support to assure timely and successful negotiations with the railroad, and

WHEREAS, there are recreational grant funds available from the federal and state governments which may cover up to 50% of the cost of developing a recreational trail, and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost of developing a recreational trail on the previously mentioned abandoned railroad bed in Dodge County is \$202,980 with state and federal aid expected to cover 50% of that cost, and,

WHEREAS, in addition to grants covering 50% of the cost, funds for development can come from the Snowmobile Trail Aids program and fund-raisers on behalf of the trail, and

WHEREAS, the County may charge a user's fee to recover maintenance and operating costs estimated at \$12,900 per year, and

WHEREAS, in addition to user's fees, the Snowmobile Aids Program can provide funds for maintenance of signs and bridges, and

WHEREAS, the County would not need to expend funds for this project sooner than 1987 and would have five (5) years to develop the trail, and

WHEREAS, the presence of a recreation trail in Dodge County would be beneficial to the local economy, as has been the case near other state recreational trails including the Sugar River Trail where studies have revealed that visitors spend an average of \$7.00 in local businesses with 47,000 visitors per year and on the Elroy-Sparta Trail where over \$295,000 in gross income at 72 businesses was attributed to trail users, and

WHEREAS, the development of this recreational trail for bicycling, hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling and horseback riding would provide Dodge County residents with an outstanding and unique recreational resource contributing to their health and well being as well as providing the County with a new, economically beneficial tourist attraction, and

WHEREAS, the Planning and Surveyor Committee recognizes that there is wide popular support for this project as indicated by petitions submitted to the County Board and Planning and Surveyor Committee with nearly 1000 signatures from County residents supporting the trail proposal and also indicated by those in attendance at a public informational meeting on September 4, 1985, and other activities by local people and organizations supporting the trail concept.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dodge County Board of Supervisors does hereby approve of and agree to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties and the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, as stated in "Exhibit B."

All of which is respectfully submitted this 15<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1985.

Donald M. Fabris

Richard Bied

Elmer Fuchs

R Kenneth Bauer

J. J. Cochran

DODGE COUNTY PLANNING AND SURVEYOR  
COMMITTEE

# Deere Donates To Trail

By CONNIE  
POLZIN DORNFIELD  
Area Editor

**HORICON — \$5,000**  
now - with the opportunity  
for another \$5,000 by Sept.  
1.

In presenting the \$5,000 check to Jon Urban, president, Friends of the Recreational Trail, Tuesday afternoon, Raymond E. Gregg Jr., general manager, John Deere Horicon Works, issued the challenge for FORT to raise \$70,000 in cash by Sept. 1. If that goal is met, Gregg pledged another \$5,000 to bring the total to the \$75,000 required for filing of a matching funds LAWCON grant.

"Obviously this is a carrot with a good purpose," Gregg said. "If the \$70,000 is not in place, the \$5,000 offer perhaps will make people realize the urgency of the project."

AND, putting icing on the cake, Gregg volunteered to work with FORT in contacting businesses and industries in Dodge County and surrounding areas to raise funds for development of a 21.4 mile multi-use trail along the abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Company railroad right-of-way. The multi-recreational trail will have its beginning at Clyman Junction and wind north through the central part of Dodge County - passing by the scenic Horicon Marsh and Horicon National Wildlife Refuge to the Dodge County line at Highway 49 east of the City of Waupun.

Once developed, the 112,922 feet of crushed limestone-surfaced trail - one of six converted abandoned railroad corridors in the state - will be suitable for such recreational uses as hiking, biking, cross country skiing, horseback riding and snowmobiling.

At a press conference held at late Tuesday afternoon in Gregg's office, Urban noted that funding received by the Dodge County Snowmobile Association had been used primarily for the reconstruction of three bridges located between Juneau and Burnett.

TAKING the approximately \$25,000 in funding used by the Snowmobile Association into consideration, Urban reported that cash on the line of \$75,000



**HORICON —** Smiling approval as Raymond E. Gregg Jr., general manager, John Deere Horicon Works, signed a check in the amount of \$5,000 Tuesday afternoon for development of the recreational trail, are, from left, Jon Urban, Juneau, president, Friends of the Recreational Trail (FORT);

Ginny Seaholm, director, FORT, and Rita Clavatscher, secretary, FORT. The check was presented by Gregg with the challenge to FORT to raise \$70,000 by Sept. 1, and, if accomplished, the promise of a second \$5,000 donation.

*Citizen Staff Photo*

is necessary to apply for the LAWCON grant. He said that he had been advised by personnel of the Dodge County Planning and Development Department that this type of endeavor meets many of the requirements for the matching grant money. "They see little, if any, problem in applying for that grant," Urban said. "The LAWCON grant must be applied for by October, and, hopefully, with the good graces of the Dodge County Board, we can get limestone screenings on the trail by the spring of 1989."

Gregg stressed that in order to apply for the grant it is necessary that they deliver cash money - not pledges - to the county board. "Many people would like to pledge into the future. But that won't help at all," he said.

Referring to the recreational trail as "a very worthwhile project," Gregg said "I feel very strongly that having this recreational trail in Dodge County will bring many quality people here to spend some of their money and enhance business places in the county. Recreational trails do attract quality people. We do not have to be concerned

about a problem. It will be a very definite economic boost. It is high quality. It will bring in tourism and people. And that can only be good for Dodge County and its people."

CONCURRING, Urban pointed out that the trail provides a unique opportunity to create a lasting resource for Dodge County. "Not only will it give area residents a chance to enjoy recreational activities close to home, it will bring in tourist dollars to benefit the local economy." To prove his point, Urban said that, based on information from the Upper Great Lakes Regional Commission, if there were only 500 group visits each of snowmobilers and cross country skiers, they could generate \$16,000 worth of economic value to the county by the time the dollars were spent and respect. The 47,000 annual visitors to the Sugar River Trail in southern Wisconsin bring in an estimated \$326,000.

"When industries look at areas for new developments, recreation is a major consideration. Industry is becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of health and recreation to

employee productivity," Urban said, adding that Chambers of Commerce and 72 businesses contacted near other state trails were all anxious to point out that the trails had greatly benefited their communities.

Tax deductible donations can be made by sending them to: Friends of the Recreational Trail, Box 72, Juneau, 53039.



WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL  
MASTER PLAN - CONCEPT ELEMENT  
FOND DU LAC COUNTY SEGMENT

Prepared by the Fond du Lac County  
Planning Department - April, 1987  
- May, 1989



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## INTRODUCTION

This Master Plan represents Fond du Lac County's portion of the two-part Master Plan for the State Park Trail. The 34.6 mile trail, running from Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction in Dodge County, will be developed within the right-of-way (ROW) of the abandoned Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company railroad line. The Fond du Lac County portion of the trail extends from Fond du Lac to the north to State Highway "49" on the south county line, a distance of approximately 13 miles.

The Wild Goose Trail will be developed as a result of a unique cooperative agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Dodge County, and Fond du Lac County. Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by all three parties (see Appendix), DNR will be responsible for the purchase of the railroad ROW, and Dodge County and Fond du Lac County will be responsible for the development and operation of the trail.

## SECTION I - ACTIONS

### A. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

#### Goal

Provide and preserve a 13-mile recreational trail, linking with Dodge County's 21-mile segment, to form a 34-mile trail through the two counties. The all-season trail will provide for two-way traffic for bicycling, hiking and snowmobiling.

#### Objectives

1. Provide a trail with surfacing and other appropriate improvements, along with the necessary maintenance, to accommodate as many bicyclists as care to use the trail; possibly in the range of 10,000-20,000 use-trips per year.
2. Provide a trail and the necessary maintenance to accommodate 5,000-15,000 snowmobilers each season.
3. Provide spring, summer and fall trail use opportunities to hikers, joggers, bird watchers, photographers and stream fishermen.
4. Provide access to the trail to the handicapped and disadvantaged through proper design, construction and management.

#### Additional Benefits

1. Continued preservation of the ROW (off the trail surface) in grass, prairie, brush and trees will benefit wildlife and birds by providing food and cover.
2. Public ownership and management of the ROW will help to assure the preservation of the prairie vegetation remnants in the Towns of Byron and Fond du Lac.

## B. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### Land Acquisition

Under the terms of the MOW, DNR is responsible for acquisition of the entire railroad right-of-way starting at the west edge of Highway "41" (near Rolling Meadows Drive) in Fond du Lac and ending at mile post 140.8 in Clyman Junction. Most of the ROW was purchased from the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company (CNW) in early 1987, at a cost of approximately \$223,000. There are a number of small segments of the ROW in both counties which the CNW did not have title to and reverted to the adjoining landowners. DNR will acquire these reverted parcels. It is anticipated that DNR will grant an easement to the counties for development and operation.

### Development

Development of the recreational trail within Fond du Lac County will be the responsibility of the county. Under the terms of the MOW, the county has five years from the time that acquisition is completed to complete the development of the trail, which will be done according to DNR trail standards. The total cost of trail development is estimated by the county to be \$100,000-\$110,000.

Due to budgetary limitations, trail development will proceed in phases as funds are available. It is not possible to schedule development exactly as it will occur year to year over the five-year development period, because of the inherent uncertainties involved with future annual county budgets. To add to the uncertainty factor, it is not known whether the county will be successful with its applications for funding assistance through the LAWCON and/or Snowmobile Trail Aids programs.

The adopted 1987 Fond du Lac County budget contains \$15,000 for recreation trail development, so at least that amount of work will be done in 1987. A Snowmobile Trail Aids grant, which does not require a local match, has been applied for. The grant would be used for railing and planking of bridges, signing, brushing, clearing and trail grading. A LAWCON grant of \$15,000 has also been applied for, which would be used for trail surfacing. If both of these grants are received in 1987, trail development in Fond du Lac County could be over 50% completed by 1988. If the grants are not received, development will proceed at a slower pace.

The first phase of development will be directed toward preparing the trail for snowmobiling and hiking. This will involve planking and railing of the eight existing railroad trestles, signing, a limited amount of fencing, some earthwork at the Willow Lawn Road intersection, base preparation and grading.

Later phases of development will involve surfacing of the trail for bicycle riding. After the base is prepared and graded, crushed limestone screenings will be laid down and compacted to a minimum three inch depth. Trail surfacing by this method is expected to cost approximately \$6000 per mile, and will proceed as funding allows. Development will be basically completed when the surfacing is completed.

The Fond du Lac terminus of the trail will be at Rolling Meadows Drive, about 2000 feet away from the county-owned and operated Rolling Meadows Golf Course. Trail users will be directed to use the golf course parking lot and sanitary facilities, and the golf course clubhouse is open seven or eight months out of the year for

refreshments. If in the future trail use becomes extremely heavy, it may be necessary to construct another parking lot at Rolling Meadows Drive, in which case it would be built within the trail ROW. Also in the case of very heavy trail use, it may be desirable to construct a parking lot and sanitary facilities at Highway "49", perhaps jointly with Dodge County.

### Management

The state park trail will be managed by Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties, with each county managing its own trail segment independent of the other. The trail will be managed to state standards. In Fond du Lac County, upon completion of development, the trail will be managed as a part of the county parks system, under the jurisdiction of the Planning and Parks Director and the Parks and Development Committee of the County Board. Necessary equipment will be provided out of existing equipment by the Parks Department. Specialized equipment will be rented from the County Highway Department.

The trail will be managed and maintained to provide a facility for bicycle riding, snowmobiling, hiking and jogging. Snowmobiling will only be possible if the trail is funded annually as a snowmobile trail by DNR. Winter maintenance will involve sign replacement and trail grooming, which will be done under contract with a snowmobile club. Annual maintenance in other seasons will involve sign replacement and cutting a narrow swath of grass along both sides of the trail surface. It will also be necessary to periodically (perhaps annually) grade and roll portions of the trail surface, and to apply herbicides to the surface to prevent weed growth through the screenings. Brush will be cleared every several years, and occasional fencing projects will also be necessary.

The several prairie remnants within the ROW will require specialized management, for which advice will be solicited from DNR. Management will involve periodic selective brushing and burning.

## SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

### A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### Location

The trail runs from Fond du Lac on the north end, through the Village of Oakfield, and intersects Highway "49" at Horicon Marsh just east of the City of Waupun (See Maps 1 and 2). Highway "49" is the south county line, so Fond du Lac County's responsibility ends there. From Highway "49", the trail skirts the western edge of Horicon Marsh, runs through the City of Juneau, and terminates at Clyman Junction.

Within Fond du Lac County, the trail crosses nine town roads and crosses County Highway "D" three times, and intersects State Highway "49" at the south county line. The City of Fond du Lac, at the north end of the trail, has a population of 36,707, the Village of Oakfield's population is 1013, and the population of the City of Waupun is approximately 8300.

#### History

The railroad line was originally constructed in 1853 as part of the short-line Rock River Valley Union Line. The first locomotive to serve the short-line was brought in by ox team from the Port of Sheboygan over the Sheboygan-Fond du Lac plank road.

In the 1880's the line became part of the Chicago, Fond du Lac and St. Paul Railroad Company, and later it became part of the Chicago and Northwestern system. Although the line did serve the local agricultural industry throughout the years, not much traffic originated or terminated between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction. (Fond du Lac is served by another major railroad and by another branch of the CNW.) By the 1970's only the canning company at Oakfield still shipped or received freight on the railroad regularly.

#### Chronology of Property Establishment/Development

- June 29, 1984 - The Chicago and Northwestern filed a petition with the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to abandon the Fond du Lac-Clyman Junction segment.
- October, 1984 - DNR completed a state trail feasibility study of the Fond-du Lac - Clyman Junction segment.
- October 11, 1984 - The ICC approved the CNW petition for abandonment of the rail line.
- April 15, 1985 - Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties proposed to DNR that DNR acquire the abandoned segment and the counties develop and operate it.
- December 10, 1985 - A Memorandum of Understanding between Dodge County, Fond du Lac County and DNR, specifying the purchase/development arrangement, was executed.
- October 30, 1986 - DNR purchased the right-of-way from the CNW and began to work on the purchase of reverted parcels.

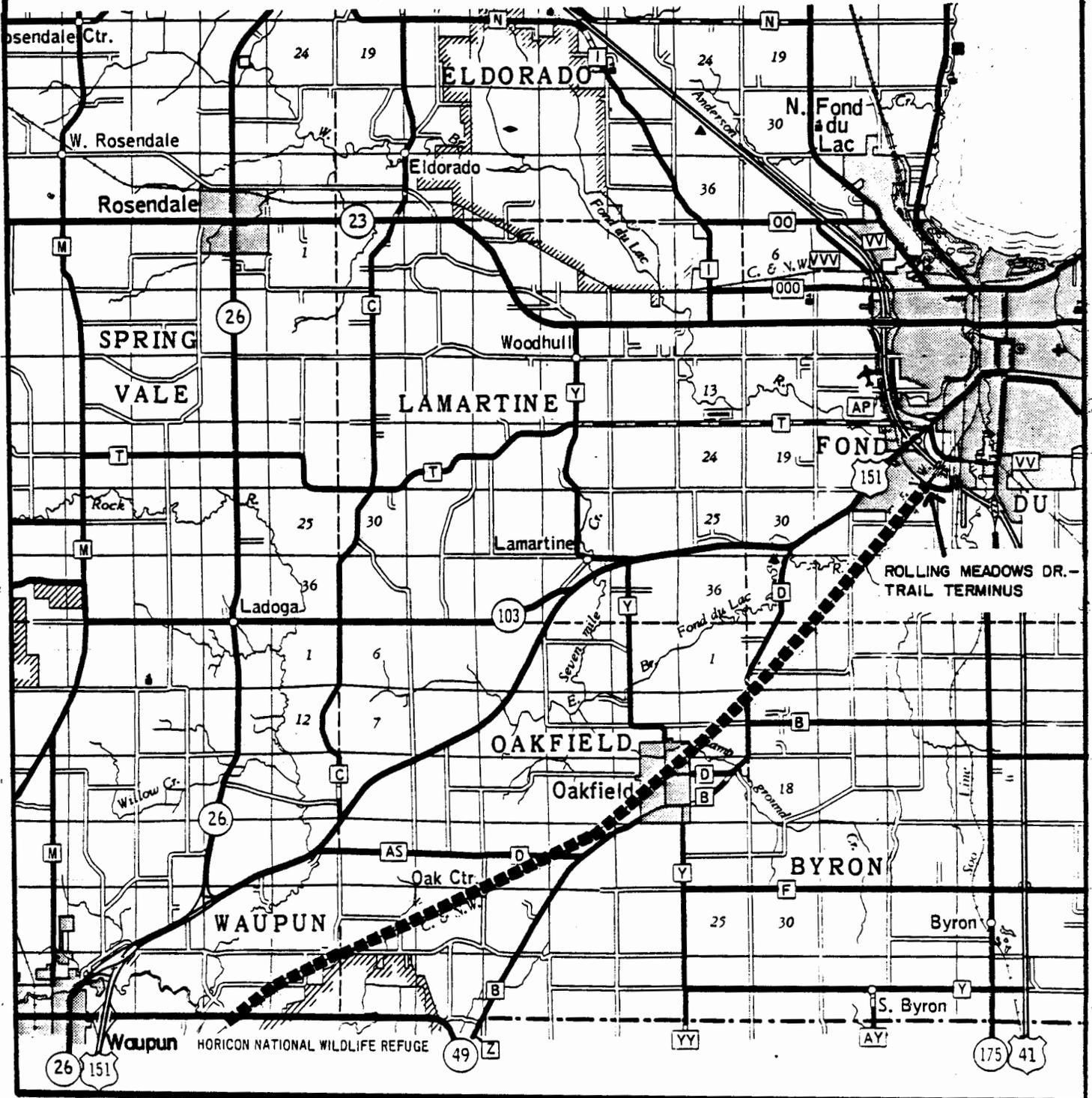
# WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL

## TRAIL LOCATION MAP



# WILD GOOSE STATE PARK TRAIL

## FOND DU LAC COUNTY SEGMENT



MAP 2

■■■■■ = TRAIL

- June, 1987 - An easement was granted by DNR to the two counties for the development and operation of the trail.
- July, 1988 - Complete construction of all 8 bridges on the county's portion of the trail.
- November, 1988 - Open trail for operation as a state funded snowmobile trail.
- June, 1989 - Begin trail surfacing of Fond du Lac to Oakfield segment.

## B. RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

### Geology/Topography

Bedrock formations in the part of Fond du Lac County through which the trail passes are overlaid by ten to one hundred feet of glacial till. The segment of the trail within Fond du Lac County can be loosely described in three topographical sections. In Fond du Lac, the trail starts at the southwest edge of the Lake Winnebago basin and crosses a glacial end moraine, which is the ridge of high ground near Willow Lawn Road. South of there, the trail crosses the Fond du Lac River and rises again toward Oakfield, where it closely skirts the Niagara Escarpment for several miles. Continuing to the southwest, the trail enters the basin of the Horicon Marsh about four miles northeast of Highway "49". The trail borders the marsh for about two miles at this point.

### Soils

The trail passes through three soil groups in Fond du Lac County. For the first three miles out of Fond du Lac, the trail passes through the Kewaunee-Manawa-Poygan soil association, which is a well-drained to somewhat poorly drained silty and clayey soil group associated with lacustrine deposits and glacial moraines. For the next nine miles, the Beecher-Elliott association is encountered. This is a somewhat poorly drained silty clay soil with a high shale content which tends to have a poorly defined drainage pattern. Finally, the last two miles of the trail before reaching Highway "49" lie in the Lomira-Virgil soil association, in this case a poorly drained ground moraine soil.

Other than a few minor erosion problems and poorly-drained spots along the railroad grade, the soils do not present a problem for trail development. For the most part, the stone ballast which supported the railroad ties and rails is in good condition and will make a good base for the trail surface.

### Water Resources

The trail right-of-way falls within two major watersheds. The upper two-thirds of the trail passes through the watershed of the East Branch of the Fond du Lac River, which flows into the Lake Winnebago-Fox River system, which drains to the Great Lakes. The southern end of the trail lies within the Rock River watershed, which eventually drains to the Mississippi River.

The right-of-way crosses a number of waterways, but only eight are bridged with trestles; the others flow through concrete or steel culverts. Only two fairly large streams are crossed. The East Branch of the Fond du Lac River is bridged with a 120-foot span just out of Fond du Lac, and Campground Creek is crossed just north of Oakfield by a large old cut-limestone bridge. Campground Creek is classified as a Class 2 trout stream, and is stocked with trout on an annual basis. The East Branch of the Fond du Lac River supports only a poor fishery of northern pike, sucker, and white bass.

Several wetland areas lie near or along the ROW. Wetland swales parallel the trail in several areas, and the lower two or three miles of the trail are in close proximity to the Horicon Marsh.

#### Vegetative Cover

Although most of the land adjacent to the trail ROW is in agricultural use, there are several small woodlots along the trail. Much of the actual ROW is vegetated with shrubs, including sumac, dogwood, wild plum, wild grape, and hawthorne. Trees include oak, black cherry, willow, box elder and aspen.

The DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources has identified two prairie remnants within the ROW in Fond du Lac County. One is located in section 32 of the Town of Fond-du Lac and section 6 of the Town of Byron, and the other is located in sections 30 and 31 of the Town of Oakfield and section 36 of the Town of Waupun. Fond du Lac County intends to work with DNR to preserve and enhance these prairie remnants.

#### Wildlife

Cottontail rabbit, fox, skunk, raccoon, whitetail deer, woodchuck, hawks, owls, pheasants and songbirds are found along the trail ROW. Large numbers of geese, ducks and wading birds are found along the ROW during the spring and fall migrations, particularly in the area of the Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge.

#### Land Use/Cover

At the beginning of the trail in Fond du Lac, the ROW passes through an industrial park. At Oakfield and Oak Center, it passes a canning company, a small lumberyard and two feed mills. Land use adjacent to the corridor through the rest of the county is agricultural. Power lines parallel the ROW for about the upper one-third of the route.

The total area of the trail ROW in Fond du Lac County is approximately 191 acres. Land cover within the ROW can be broken down approximately as follows:

<u>Land Cover</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Mixed trees	74
Brush	52
Grass (inc. prairie)	37
Trail tread	16
Urban uses	10
Wetlands/water	2
	<u>191</u>

## Historical/Archeological Features

There are no known historical or archeological sites or features within the railroad ROW. Any sites that may have existed prior to the construction of the railroad were undoubtedly destroyed during construction.

### C. MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

1. Trespassing on both the trail ROW and on adjacent property will remain as the primary management problem until the trail is opened to the public. Posting of "No Trespassing" and "Trail Closed" signs, along with a law enforcement response to trespass complaints, have been used to address this problem.

2. Encroachments into the trail ROW exist in several forms. Vegetation encroachment within and over the trail surface will be controlled by periodic cutting and possible application of herbicides to the trail surface. Areas containing prairie remnants must be managed to protect this unique feature and maintain a safe recreation facility.

The second form of encroachment, removal of ballast and completion of drainage improvements, can be minimized by maintaining a good working relationship with property owners abutting the trail. Removal of ballast and installation of additional culverts by these property owners must be accommodated on an individual basis.

3. Fencing will be used primarily to separate livestock from recreation trail uses. It is anticipated that isolated cases will necessitate the use of fencing to separate trail users from private property abutting. Fencing agreements modeled after a DNR form are being used as is necessary.

4. A trail user/parked vehicle conflict may develop within the trail ROW in the northern quarter of the Village of Oakfield. Currently the parking areas of several commercial establishments and the trail, are not well defined. Posts or a similar barrier may be necessary to eliminate this problem if it arises. A similar vehicle/trail user conflict might develop on the west side of the Village adjacent to a feed mill and canning facility, and in Oak Center where a lumber company abuts the ROW.

5. Placement of trail signs and grooming for snowmobiling use must be accommodated. An agreement has been reached with one of the local snowmobile clubs to provide trail grooming services. A trail groomer could provide a cursory patrol, keeping watch for the obstructions, missing signs, and similar hazards. Spring and summer patrol of the trail will be the responsibility of the County Parks Department, and will have to include inspection of the trail bed for damage created by wet spots and animal burrows.

6. Vandalism to trail signs, the trail bed, adjacent properties and vegetation creates an ongoing management problem. It is expected that this type of property destruction will be minimized upon opening of the trail. Dumping of refuse within the trail ROW, a form of vandalism, has already been a problem. Again, trail usage is expected to minimize or eliminate this problem.

7. Prohibiting incompatible trail uses, and enforcement of this prohibition, will be a significant trail management problem. ATVs, motorcycles, and other vehicles have already misused the trail ROW. Provisions must be made to prohibit this type of use, especially upon completion of trail development. The finished trail bed would be destroyed by ATVs and similar vehicles.

#### D. RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The trail is located in the Horicon Area as identified in the Statewide Comprehensive-Outdoor Recreation Plan, SCORP IV, December 1985. The area is primarily rural in character, with the trail terminating at one of the area's major population centers, Fond du Lac, and passing or terminating within 10 miles of the two other major urban centers in the area, Beaver Dam and Watertown. Additionally, the trail facility is within a 60-90 mile drive of the State's major urban areas. A recent study conducted by the DNR indicates that the average in-state trail user traveled 80 miles to get to a trail; see Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, SCORP III, April 1986. A similar, favorable condition exists for out-of-state trail users, bringing the Chicago Metropolitan area within the potential user area.

The Recreation Needs Assessment format has changed over the years. Needs Assessments today are more generalized than those of the period preceding 1981. The December 1985 SCORP document ranks the various recreation needs in a 3 tier system. Potential recreation trail uses fall within this ranking system as follows:

High Priority - Bicycling  
Picnicking  
Walking/Jogging

Medium Priority - Hiking/Backpacking  
Fishing  
Organized Sports (Running Races)

Low Priority - Snowmobiling

#### E. ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

##### Management/Development

The trail is designated as a State Park Trail, and will be developed and managed by the counties to state standards. Development will take place over a five-year period.

As discussed earlier in the plan, trail development in Fond du Lac County will concentrate on preparing the trail for snowmobiling and hiking. Initial work items will include planking and railing of the railroad trestles, signing, fencing, base preparation and so on. As funds allow, the trail will be surfaced for bicycling by providing a surface of compacted limestone screenings. Parking and sanitary facilities will be provided at the Fond du Lac trail terminus at the county-owned Rolling Meadows Golf Course.

If trail use becomes extremely heavy, development of an alternate trail terminus might become necessary. This could be located within the trail ROW at the Rolling Meadows Drive intersection. Facilities would include a parking lot, picnic area and toilet building. A similar facility could be located at the intersection of the trail and Highway "49", and could perhaps be financed jointly with Dodge County. It is most likely, however, that neither development will become necessary. The existing facilities at the Rolling Meadows Golf Course should be more than adequate for years to come, and it may be possible to utilize existing facilities near the Highway "49" intersection.

Another possible alternative development action would be the development of a campground for trail users. This would be very convenient for bicyclists and hikers, but is probably unnecessary. The Fond du Lac County Park at Waupun is located only four miles west of the trail intersection with Highway "49". In addition, a campground accessible only to trail users would represent a significant development and operational cost and would probably be subject to vandalism, especially in the off-season.

### Potential Uses

The trail will be developed and operated for snowmobilers, bicyclists, hikers and joggers. Other potential uses, including all-terrain vehicles (ATV's), horseback riding and cross-country skiing and hunting, have been considered and discussed.

ATV's and other motorized recreational vehicles are incompatible with the bicycling and hiking uses. Their high speed and noise would create dangerous and unpleasant conditions for users on bicycles or on foot. It is also expected that ATV's would severely damage the trail surface of limestone screenings, particularly during periods of wet weather when the trail surface would be soft.

Horseback riding would also not be compatible with the other permitted uses. Although noise and speed would not be a problem, damage to the trail surface would be. Horses hooves would gouge the trail surface, and droppings would also litter the surface. Neither condition would be desirable. Unfortunately, there is not enough room within the ROW in most areas to fit in another trail for horseback riding off the trail surface.

Cross-country skiing would be a compatible use where it not for the danger presented skiers by snowmobiles. Again, not enough room exists within the ROW to provide for another trail for skiers off of the regular trail.

Finally, hunting is also considered an incompatible use, which is one reason why all parties involved agreed to the State Park Trail designation. Hunting is not allowed in state parks. Hunting could have been allowed on the trail by using the State Recreation Trail designation, but it was felt that shooting and/or trapping would present a danger to trail users and to adjoining landowners. During the public meetings held by Fond du Lac County before approval of the trail project by the County Board, both potential users, adjoining landowners and County Board Supervisors expressed concern about hunting and trapping along the trail. Farmers were concerned that they could be exposed to danger from stray shots while working their fields, especially during the autumn. For these reasons, hunting will not be allowed within the trail ROW.

**F. APPENDIX**

- Memorandum of Understanding
- County Board Resolution
- Public Hearing Information
- Letters of Support
- Newspaper Editorial/Articles

Memorandum of Understanding among Dodge County and Fond du Lac County  
and State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

I. Introduction:

The purpose of this memorandum is to set forth the agreements and understandings which have been reached among Dodge County (DC), Fond du Lac County (FC), and the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the acquisition, development, and operations of approximately 35 miles of abandoned rail property located between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction in Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties. The grade is presently owned by the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company and has been approved for abandonment by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The DNR is interested in preserving the grade corridor for recreational trail purposes. Both DC and FC are interested in developing, maintaining, and operating a recreational trail in the corridor provided the DNR acquires same. DC, FC, and the DNR agree to work together to achieve their mutual goals as set forth below.

II. Description of the Property

The property begins at railroad milepost 175.4 near Fond du Lac and runs approximately 34.6 miles to milepost 140.8 near Clyman Junction in Dodge County. Approximately 15 miles of the grade is located in Fond du Lac County and 20 miles in Dodge County. An exact legal description of the property in each county will be agreed upon prior to the execution of trail easements.

III. Consideration

The DNR will acquire the grade from the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company provided a reasonable price can be negotiated. The DNR will execute trail easements with DC and FC for one dollar and other valuable consideration.

IV. Obligations of the DNR

1. The DNR will purchase the 35 mile Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction abandoned railroad grade from the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company.
2. The DNR will pay all costs to acquire the property.
3. The DNR will purchase all parcels which may be necessary to obtain clear title to the property and pay all costs associated therewith.
4. The DNR will convey by easement to DC and FC the right to develop, maintain, and operate a recreation trail on lands within their respective counties.
5. The DNR agrees to complete the environmental impact process for the purchase of the property pursuant to s. 1.11, Stats., and Chapter NR150, Wis. Adm. Code.

V. Obligations of DC and FC

1. DC and FC shall develop, maintain, and operate the lands located within their respective counties for recreation trail purposes (bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and cross country skiing).
2. DC and FC shall enter into an easement in perpetuity with the DNR to accomplish the purposes contained in paragraph V.1.
3. DC and FC shall complete the environmental impact assessment for development, maintenance, and operation of the trail.
4. DC and FC shall write a master plan for the project to be completed prior to any trail development (according to DNR format).
5. DC and FC shall participate in or conduct public meetings which may be necessary for the establishment and development of the trail project.
6. DC and FC agree the trail will be open for public use within their respective counties within 5 years of completion of acquisition that would allow the trail to be built and used. If the trail is not open by this date or ever ceases to be used for trail purposes for two years, then all easement rights revert to and revert in the DNR without necessity of reentry. The DNR has no obligation to develop and operate the trail.
7. DC and FC indemnify and hold harmless the DNR and its employees against all claims, damages, costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising from the performance of this MOU by the counties or from any act of negligence of FC or DC, their agents, contractors, servants, licensees, permittees, or employees. In case any action or proceeding be brought against the DNR or its employees by reason of any such claim, FC or DC upon notice from the DNR, will defend such action or proceeding.
8. DC and FC agree that any advertising or display material relating to the trail shall clearly identify the property is owned by the DNR and under the management and control of the DC or FC.
9. DC and FC in connection with this MOU shall open the facilities to the general public subject to reasonable rules and regulations, fees, and charges as the DC or FC deem necessary for the management and operation of the Premises.
  - A. Rules and Regulations. The parties agree that the provisions of Chapter NR 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code, remain applicable to the Premises. Pursuant to s. 45.01(1), Wisconsin Administrative Code, the Department retains management, supervision, and control over the Premises for the purpose of enforcing Chapter 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code, when needed to protect the Premises. Daily routine enforcement remains the responsibility of DC or FC.
  - B. Admission fees, if any, charged by DC or FC shall not exceed those established in s. 27.01 (7), Stats. Other fees shall remain similar to those contained in Chapter NR 45, Wisconsin Administrative Code. DC and FC will discuss the fees to be charged with the DNR at an annual meeting held prior to May 1 each year and the fees shall be subject to written approval by the DNR. DC and FC shall retain all fees collected as payment for its services under this MOU. If admission fees are charged, the conservation patron licensee and senior citizen card issued by the DNR shall be honored without additional admission charges.
10. Trail development will conform with DNR state trail standards.

VI. General

1. This Memorandum of Understanding is subject to all applicable laws and regulations and to the approval of the Natural Resources Board and the Governor of Wisconsin.
2. The DNR retains the right to withdraw from this transaction if they determine the railroad cannot convey good title to the property.
3. This Memorandum of Understanding may be revised by mutual written agreement of the DNR, DC, and FC.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, DNR, DC, and FC have caused this memorandum to be executed in their respective names by their respective duly authorized representatives.

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By *C. D. Bradley* 12/10/85  
County Board Secretary Dated  
DODGE COUNTY

By *H. Kesterman* 11-21-85  
County Board Chairperson Dated

*Wilhel Halverson* 11-25-85  
County Board Chairperson Dated  
FOUR DU LAC COUNTY

4025L

RESOLUTION NO. 100-85

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PROPER COUNTY OFFICIALS TO  
ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING A RECREATIONAL TRAIL

WHEREAS, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad has abandoned its railroad between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction in Dodge County, a distance of approximately 34 miles, approximately 13 of which are within Fond du Lac County, and

WHEREAS, considerable interest has been expressed in a proposal to acquire this railroad right-of-way and develop it as a recreational trail, and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has offered to acquire the right-of-way if Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties develop and operate it as a recreational trail, and

WHEREAS, development of the recreational trail would cost about \$100,000 in Fond du Lac County, but the agreement with DNR gives the County five years to complete the development, measured from the time that acquisition is completed, and

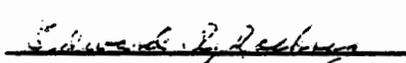
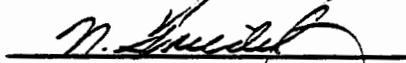
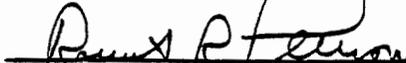
WHEREAS, the Parks and Development Committee held a well-attended public hearing on this matter in Oakfield on August 29, and received an overwhelmingly favorable response from the public and from local officials.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors that the proper county officials be and hereby are authorized to enter into the attached Memorandum of Understanding with DNR and Dodge County, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if Dodge County decides not to participate, the proper county officials be and hereby are authorized to enter into a revised Memorandum of Understanding with DNR only.

Dated September 17, 1985

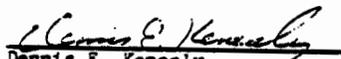
FISCAL NOTE: The County's share for developing the trail would be \$100,000.00 spread over a five year period beginning approximately in 1987.

  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PARKS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY:

  
M. Anita Anderegg  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

APPROVED BY:

  
Dennis E. Kenealy  
FDL CO. CORPORATION COUNSEL

Adopted by the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors on September 17, 1985  
by a vote of Ayes, 35. Nays, 1. Absent, 1.

COUNTY OF FOND DU LAC  
MEMORANDUM

Date August 13, 1985

TO: County Board and Other Interested Parties  
SUBJECT: Proposed Recreational Trail  
FROM: Wayne Rollin, County Planner

As many of you know, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad has abandoned its line between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction. The line runs southwest out of Fond du Lac, through Oakfield, and skirts the Horicon Marsh as it turns south towards Juneau. The Parks and Development Committee of our County Board, along with its counterpart committee in Dodge County, has expressed an interest in working with the Department of Natural Resources to turn this abandoned railroad into a 34-mile recreational trail. About 13 miles of the trail would be in Fond du Lac County, and about 21 miles would be in Dodge County.

DNR has agreed to work with Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties to acquire and develop the recreational trail. DNR will purchase the property at a cost of \$300,000 to \$500,000, if the counties in turn promise to develop and maintain the trail. We would have a specified number of years (probably five) to develop the trail. According to my estimates, we could fully develop the Fond du Lac County part of the trail for less than \$100,000, a figure which could possibly be decreased with the help of DNR grants. Development would mainly consist of putting down limestone screenings for a base, putting planks and railings on the railroad bridges, and putting up trail signs. The trail would be used for snowmobiling in the winter and for bicycling and hiking in the summer.

In order to gain public input about the proposal, the Parks and Development Committee has scheduled a public hearing for 7:30 P.M. August 29 at the Village of Oakfield Village Hall. The meeting will be a nice opportunity for citizens, local officials and other interested parties in Fond du Lac County to discuss the proposal. All of the local officials that we have spoken to over the past several weeks have been in favor of the proposal, as are the snowmobile and bicycle clubs. Some nearby landowners have expressed concerns about the proposal, but most have no objection.

If the reaction of most of the people at the hearing is as positive as everyone's has been so far, the Committee will bring the proposal to the County Board at the September session. The proposal will be brought to the Board in the form of a contract with the DNR, spelling out the terms of ownership, development, operation and so on. No expenditure would be called for until 1987 at the earliest.

Many people, including myself, think that this opportunity is just too good to pass up, especially with DNR funding the acquisition. The recreational trail would be enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages, throughout the four seasons, for many, many years to come.

WR:bjd

*Wayne Rollin*

# TOWN OF FOND DU LAC

FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN

Rt. 2 1974 Reinhardt Road  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935  
13 September 1985

Mr. Wayne Rollin, County Planner  
Planning Department - 4th Floor  
City-County Government Center  
160 South Macy Street  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin 54935

RECEIVED

SEP 13 1985

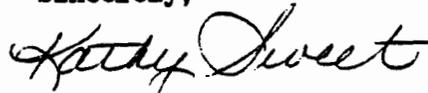
FOND DU LAC COUNTY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Dear Wayne:

At the September 9, 1985, Town Board meeting of the Town of Fond du Lac a motion was made and passed unanimously stating that the Town of Fond du Lac supports the action of Fond du Lac County in trying to develop a recreational trail along the abandoned right-of-way of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad located in Fond du Lac County.

The Town wanted to notify your office of their interest in this project.

Sincerely,



Kathryn J. Sweet  
Town Clerk

kjs

cc Charles Birschbach  
Donald Schmitz

# TOWN OF OAKFIELD

ALBERT MESSNER, Clerk

Rt. 1, Oakfield, Wisconsin 53065

April 7, 1985

The Town of Oakfield wishes to go on record in support of using the C & NW railroad corridor between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction for a recreational trail. The trail could be used for bicycling, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, etc. There are no such trails located in this area of this type at the present time and we feel that it would be an excellent use of the corridor if the track is abandoned. We feel that this is an important project for the following reasons:

1) The railroad track will undoubtedly be abandoned and we can think of no better use for the corridor.

2) There are no other state operated bicycle-snowmobile trails in this area of the state. For some reason this area of the state seems to have been left out. There is no doubt in our mind that the trail would get a lot of use since this is right in the middle of the Fox Valley - Horicon Marsh area. More than 60% of the states entire population would be within 1 hours driving time of the trail.

3) Tourists and users of the trail would provide an economic benefit to all of the communities along the trail through buying lunches, gas, staying in motels, etc.

4) The trail would go past the Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area providing excellent viewing of geese, ducks, other wildlife, and plants. The new Marsh hiking trails would be very accessible from the proposed trail.

5) The trail also follows the Niagara escarpment and the new Oakfield Ledge Scientific Area is only 2 miles on a Town road from the railroad corridor providing another hiking area.

6) There is a definite need for more recreational trails like this. This will keep snowmobiles and especially bicycles off the main roads. For example, it would be very easy for adults and children to bike from Oakfield to Fond du Lac without being on any highly traveled roads. There are few roads in our state that are desinged for bicycle traffic.

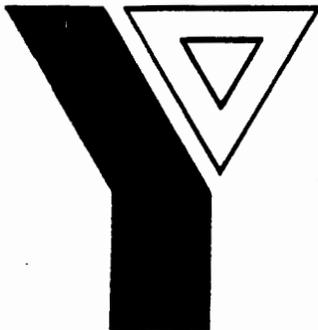
7) The corridor should be maintained in its entirety otherwise there will be haphazard development.

8) Most local residents are in favor of the project. At the recent Town of Oakfield Annual Meeting, all ot the residents present voiced their approval of the project as have several other groups such as Fond du Lac County, the Village of Oakfield, area snowmobile clubs, and other organizations. State legislators contacted also voiced their approval of the project.

Our Town Board will cooperate to make this project a reality and we are also quite concerned that if the track is abandoned that all of the bridges and culverts be left intact. If they are removed, it would make upgrading of the trail that much more difficult and costly. This has already happened to another railroad corridor in our county.

Yours truly,

Town of Oakfield  
Raymond Panzer, Chairperson  
Eugene Boelk, Supervisor  
Marvin Pea, Supervisor  
*Albert Messner*  
Albert Messner, Clerk



**YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

90 WEST SECOND ST. FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN 54935 414-921-3330

—Serving the Youth of Fond du Lac Since 1904—  
A United Way Agency

August 17, 1985

RECEIVED

AUG 20 1985

Mr. Wayne Rollin  
Fond du Lac County Planner  
160 S. Macy Street  
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

FOND DU LAC COUNTY  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Dear Mr. Rollin:

I have before me a copy of your letter to "Interested Parties" discussing the possible acquisition and development of a recreational trail on abandoned railroad tracks between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction.

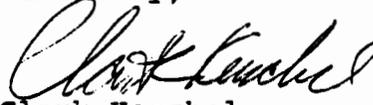
Being interested in fitness and recreational opportunities for our citizens, I would heartily endorse the pursuit of this proposal and eventual development of the trail. Being closely allied with cycling and running enthusiasts I can say without a doubt that a good deal of support for the idea would be present if the public were aware of the proposal.

Having cycled trails in Winnebago, Door and Monroe Counties with my family and friends I could see literally thousands of people per year using it for fun, fellowship and fitness.

The hearing on August 29 is appropriate for me but rest assured the support is there.

If I can be of assistance please let me know.

Sincerely,

  
Clark Koechel  
Executive Director

CK/ih

# Recreational opportunity

9/22/85

We agree with Oakfield area property owner Al Messner who, at Tuesday night's Fond du Lac County Board meeting, called development of a recreational trail on an abandoned railroad right-of-way a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The County Board agreed too, and so the county will someday have a 13-mile recreational trail along the abandoned Chicago & North Western Transportation Co. right-of-way between Fond du Lac and the south county line.

It's too bad the Dodge County Board did not agree; the trail could have extended an additional 21-plus miles, all the way to Clyman.

But while the Fond du Lac County Board was voting 35-1 in favor of the trail development, the Dodge County Board was voting 25-10 against it.

With the current emphasis on physical fitness and recreation, development of the trail for bicyclists, hikers and snowmobilers makes a lot of sense. We're familiar with biking

trails built along former railroad rights-of-way elsewhere in the state. They actually provide an economic benefit to their areas because of their attraction for tourists. While the estimated \$100,000 cost of trail development is substantial, it is a cost that can be spread out over several years.

The Fond du Lac County Board's overwhelming vote in favor of the development shows a lot of foresight. It's a foresight we wish would have been applied years ago when the county was considering purchasing the former Camp Shaginappi grounds along Lake Winnebago near Columbia Park.

But that's another story. In their action Tuesday night, Fond du Lac County supervisors approved a joint venture with the state Department of Natural Resources, which is offering to purchase the C&NW right-of-way. Even without a Dodge County commitment to participate, we hope the DNR considers the purchase of the full 34.6-mile stretch against the day the Dodge County Board can be persuaded to change its mind.

EDITORIALS  
FROM  
FOND DU LAC  
REPORTER

# Recreation potential seen

10/20/85

We were happy to read that the Dodge County Board of Supervisors rethought its position on the Dodge County leg of that proposed recreation trail between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction.

Fond du Lac and Dodge counties were asked to join the Department of Natural Resources in purchasing, developing and maintaining as a recreation trail an abandoned Chicago & Northwestern Transportation Co. rail line. The Fond du Lac County Board agreed immediately, seeing the potential both in resource protection and in tourism attraction.

The Dodge County Board resisted the first time around, balking at the development cost,

which would be left largely to the counties while the DNR would cover the purchase cost.

In the end, though, the Dodge County supervisors saw the same potential in the recreation trail that was seen by their counterparts in Fond du Lac County. A second vote last week brought Dodge County into the project, paving the way for development of a trail for biking, hiking and snowmobiling covering more than 30 miles through the two counties.

The DNR is supplying the funding to purchase to county parks — long and narrow ones, but parks nevertheless. The county boards were wise in accepting the offer.

# County approves trail development

By THOMAS GUENTHER  
Reporter Staff Writer

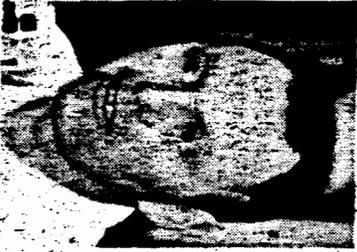
Development of a recreational trail off an abandoned railroad right-of-way will proceed in just Fond du Lac County after Fond du Lac County supervisors approved a trail development plan but the Dodge County Board rejected it.

The Fond du Lac County Board voted 35-1 Tuesday night in favor of entering into an agreement with Dodge County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources concerning acquisition, development and operation of the recreational trail on a 34.6-mile stretch of Chicago & North Western railroad right-of-way that runs through the two counties, Supervisor Robert M. Fox cast the only dissenting vote.

Original plans for the trail called for it to extend from Fond du Lac to Clyman Junction in Dodge County. However, following the action by the Dodge County Board, the trail will only stretch 13

miles — from Fond du Lac south to the Dodge County line. (See related story on the Dodge County action on page 11.)

AL  
MESSNER



Supervisor Raymond B. Puddy, chairman of the county Parks and Development Committee, which brought the agreement to the board for action, said this morning that rejection of the

trail by the Dodge County Board will not affect the project in Fond du Lac County.

A clause in the resolution approved in Fond du Lac County states "If Dodge County decides not to participate, the proper (Fond du Lac) county officials are authorized to enter into a revised memorandum of understanding with the DNR only."

"We'll go ahead with the trail just in Fond du Lac County," Puddy stated. He said it was the "consensus of the Parks and Development Committee, and, I'm sure, of the County Board" to proceed even if Dodge County chose not to participate in development of the trail.

Puddy said completion of the trail through Dodge County would have added significantly to its attractiveness but stressed that county officials planned to follow through with the project anyway. Development of the trail is expected to cost the county about \$100,000 after

the right-of-way is acquired by the DNR. Development would be spread out over a five-year period beginning in about 1987.

During an Aug. 29 public hearing at Oakfield on the recreational trail issue, Fond du Lac County residents and local officials spoke out in favor of the trail.

Al Messner of Route 1, Oakfield, who owns land adjacent to the right-of-way and is the Town of Oakfield clerk, told supervisors he could not envision a "better use for this particular piece of property" than the proposed recreational trail.

He said he would rather see it developed for recreational purposes than left the way it is.

Urging county supervisors to accept the memorandum of understanding, Messner called possible development of the abandoned right-of-way a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Note: (This revision combines Form 1600-1 and 1600-2 into one form).

DISTRICT OF BUREAU

Parks and Recreation

DOCKET NUMBER

TYPE LIST DESIGNATION(S)

al

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
(Reference Information Source Utilized)

Applicant: Department of Natural Resources

Title of Proposal: Acquisition and development of the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company rail line between Clyman Junction and Fond du Lac.

Location: Counties - Dodge and Fond du Lac (see attached plat maps for townships, ranges, sections and political towns).

PROJECT SUMMARY

1. General Description (brief overview)

The project proposes the acquisition and development of a 34.6-mile segment of the abandoned Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company (CNW) rail line between the communities of Clyman Junction (milepost 140.8), to Fond du Lac (milepost 175.4). The right-of-way will provide a public recreational trail which would accommodate year-round use. Potential uses are biking, hiking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, jogging, and horseback riding.

Geographically, the right-of-way is located in south central Wisconsin in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties. Total population of the two counties traversed by the grade is 163,699 (1980 Census).

Primary road access to the south end of the grade is provided by either State Highway 26 or 60. Primary access to the north end is by either U.S. Highway 151 or 41.

The railroad grade passes along the west boundary of the 32,000-acre Horicon Wildlife Refuge for about 14 miles and is in most cases less than a mile removed from the refuge boundary.

At this time no other nearby rail abandonments are pending or are anticipated that may have tie-in potential. There is an operating short line that intersects the grade at Burnett and Minnesota Junction in Dodge

County. This short line operation includes a network of track from Oshkosh to Horicon and from Cambria to 37th Street in northern Milwaukee. A spur to Markesan and a spur to Mayville is also a part of the short line.

The subject grade does not connect with any existing state trails.

By agreement Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties will develop, operate and maintain the trail. With the cooperation of the various communities on the grade, additional lands may not be needed for terminus and rest stop development. However, it may be necessary for the counties to acquire a small amount of additional acreage to supplement that provided by the communities.

Preliminary indications are that approximately 18 reversionary parcels exist on the grade. A complete title review will be undertaken.

2. Purpose and Need (include history and background as appropriate)

In the mid-1960's, Wisconsin pioneered a new national concept in outdoor recreation by acquiring abandoned railroad rights-of-way and establishing the grades as state parks or recreation areas for public trail purposes. The trails are established under the provisions of Chapter 27 of the Wisconsin Statutes that refers to state parks or 23.091 that pertains to state recreation areas.

Abandoned railroad right-of-ways provide an excellent corridor for trail use and supply much needed recreational facilities for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. Public use of the trails has exceeded expectations and bolstered area economies. Local citizens are promoting the trails as an asset to their communities.

The Department currently owns 11 state trails over 350 miles in total length.

3. Authorities and Approvals (list statutory authority and other relevant local, state, and federal permits or approvals required).

For state park trails Section 27.01 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Authority for establishing as a state recreation area is through Section 23.091. First right to acquire by the Department of Transportation is authorized by Section 85.09 of the Wisconsin Statutes. This statute also authorizes acquisition for recreational or scenic purposes.

Chapter 30 permits will be required if bridges are replaced.

Acquisition of the railroad right-of-way must be approved by the Natural Resources Board.

Building designs must meet state and local requirements for public buildings and zoning regulations.

4. Estimated Cost and Funding Source.

Purchase price for the 34.6-mile railroad right-of-way is estimated at \$415,000. Funding source is Outdoor Recreation Action Program (ORAP) bonding and formula funds. LAWCON federal cost-sharing funds may also be available. Development costs are generally estimated at \$15,000 per mile of grade for a total cost of \$519,000, however, the counties estimate the cost at \$202,980.

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PROPOSED PHYSICAL CHANGES

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5. Manipulation of Terrestrial Resources (include relevant quantities - sq. ft., cu. yard, etc.)

The ultimate goal is to acquire and convert the 34.6-mile grade into a recreational trail which is safe and enjoyable for public use. Once acquired, possible development would include planking and railing trestles, surfacing the trail with a seven-foot wide layer of finely crushed limestone, connecting terminus facilities at Clyman Junction and Fond du Lac and providing rest areas at Juneau, Burnett, and Oakfield. Facilities for both terminuses and the rest areas would consist of small parking lots, toilet facilities, drinking water, picnic tables, bike racks, grills, signing, etc. Where possible, municipal utilities would be used for sewer and water hook-ups.

Weeds and some woody vegetation will be eliminated by cutting, mowing, and/or herbicide treatment. Herbicide application will be by ground methods (no aerial application) using state of the art equipment available (hand sprayers, pressure pump-boom sprayer, injector, wick method, etc.). Application will be limited to the growing season, primarily spring and early summer. Herbicides will be applied by or supervised by a person trained and registered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

The three prairie remnants will be maintained by prescribed burning.

6. Manipulation of Aquatic Resources (include relevant quantities - cfs., acre, feet, MGD, etc.)

According to USGS quads there are six permanent named river and stream crossings and approximately eight intermittent stream crossings.

The 18 bridges on the right-of-way will require inspection by the DNR engineering staff to determine their size and condition. It is unlikely that any will need replacements by the counties.

7. Buildings, Treatment Units, Roads, and Other Structures.

A number of culverts and bridges are located on the grade and will be retained if the grade is acquired for trail purposes.

8. Emissions and Discharges.

Some local noise and air pollution might be expected during construction due to equipment operation and disruption of surface conditions. Vehicular traffic generated by trail users can be expected to increase slightly in the area and add some to the noise and potential air pollution. These emissions, however, are not expected to significantly affect the ambient air quality. Fossil fuels and lubricants consumed by construction equipment and that used for labor and materials will be consumed and will result in some CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

9. Other Changes.

10. Attach Maps, Plans, and Other Descriptive Materials as Appropriate (list)

- a. Location maps
- b. Plat maps

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AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

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Information Based On (check all that apply):

- Literature/correspondence
- Personal Contacts (list in item 31)
- Field Analysis By: \_\_\_ Author,  Other (list in item 31)
- Past Experience With Site By: \_\_\_ Author,  Other (list in item 31)

11. Physical (topography - soils - water - air - wetland amounts and types)

The south end of the trail near Clyman Jct. is surrounded by a series of well-defined glacial features known as drumlins. These long narrow ridges run roughly in a north-south direction parallel to the railroad grade. They create an interesting ridge and wet swale pattern.

North of the Town of Juneau the land is primarily flat, draining in an easterly direction into the Rock River. North of the Horicon Marsh the railroad line turns in a northeasterly direction and somewhat parallels the Niagara escarpment. The escarpment is quite prominent on the eastern horizon. After passing through Oakfield, the grade again continues in a northeasterly direction into a broad plain terminating on the south side of the City of Fond du Lac. Just north of Horicon Wildlife Refuge the river drainage shifts from the Rock River to the Fox River.

In Dodge County, soils range from deep, well drained to somewhat poorly drained silt loams. A small area near Clyman contains poorly drained organic soils.

Proceeding northward through Fond du Lac County the rail line traverses through well drained to somewhat poorly drained silt loams and clayey silt loams.

All bridges and culverts will be retained if the grade is acquired as a state trail. The exact number and condition of these structures would be determined pending an inspection by the Department's Engineering Section. Railroad ties not salvaged by the railroad company would be disposed of according to Department regulations. Fencing along the right-of-way in need of replacement would be constructed by the counties depending on priority and available funding.

## 12. Biological

### a. Flora

The railroad right-of-way supports a large variety of different vegetative species. Many sections of the right-of-way contain dense shrub growth of sumac, dogwood, wild plum, wild grape and hawthorn. Sections of the right-of-way contain prairie grasses and forbs, with one section of outstanding quality. The tree species that are found growing on the right-of-way include oaks, black cherry, willow, box elder, and aspen.

According to the Bureau of Endangered Resources, there are three prairie remnants on the right-of-way worthy of protection.

The majority of the land adjacent to the right-of-way is agricultural with a few small woodland lots. There are many low-lying marshy swales along the railroad grade that remain wet throughout most of the year.

### b. Fauna

Wildlife commonly found along the railroad corridor are cottontail rabbit, fox, skunk, raccoon, woodchuck, hawks, owls, pheasants, and various songbirds. Whitetail deer are present in adjacent wooded areas and near the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.

During the spring and fall migrations, large concentrations of geese, ducks and wading birds can be found around the Horicon Marsh. This concentration of wildlife could be readily observed from along the railroad grade.

## 13. Social/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups, and zoning if applicable).

The grade connects the communities of Clyman (pop. 317), Juneau (pop. 2,045), Minnesota Jct. (unincorp.), Burnett (unincorp.), Oakfield (pop. 990), and Fond du Lac, (pop. 35,863). If acquired and developed as a public recreational trail it is expected that many of the trail users, which may number 50,000 per year, will contribute to the economy of the local communities. Development projects such as planking and railing of the trestles, surfacing, toilet construction, wells, etc., may also have a beneficial impact on the local economy.

This action will not affect or displace any ethnic group or native American. The trail facilities will be designed to accommodate the handicapped.

14. Other Special Resources (e.g., archaeological, historical, endangered/threatened species, scientific areas, natural areas)

Any historical and archaeological sites that were in the railroad's right-of-way during construction would have undoubtedly been destroyed. It is anticipated that the land surrounding the railroad rights-of-way, especially those lands adjoining the Rock River, Horicon Marsh, and related drainage ways, would be rich in archaeological sites. A detailed investigation would undoubtedly reveal some sites near the grade of interest for their interpretive value.

The railroad corridor has three areas of important prairie plant remnants. They include Sections 10, 15, 22 and part of 27 in the Town of Chester, Sections 30 and 31 in the Town of Oakfield, and part of Section 36 in the Township of Waupun. A third area located in Fond du Lac Township--part of Section 6 and part of Section 32--is considered to be of relatively high scientific value and of statewide significance.

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES (probable adverse and beneficial impacts including indirect and secondary impacts)

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15. Physical (include visual if applicable)

Acquisition and development of the grade should have minor impact on the resource. Management practices would include implementing a county trail fencing policy, maintaining the trail facilities, controlling weed growth, and managing the vegetation according to a specific plan. Unsalvageable railroad ties will be disposed of in accordance with Department regulations.

Some increase in vehicular traffic into and through the area will add to noise and potential air pollution although it is not expected to significantly affect Wisconsin's air quality. Increased traffic will increase energy use. Although short term, construction activities will cause some local noise and air pollution.

The proposed development will have a negligible effect on drainage.

16. Biological

If the grade is acquired and developed it will be maintained as a public recreational trail. The land will not be lost to urban sprawl and agricultural fields. Surface and ground water quality are not expected to be adversely affected by the proposal. Existing vegetation will be managed to control weeds, and promote woody growth for wildlife habitat

with some control to maintain scenic vistas. Human use may be somewhat detrimental to the behavior pattern of some wildlife although it should be negligible in comparison to the existing train traffic.

17. Social/Economic (include ethnic and cultural groups and zoning if applicable)

This grade has the potential of being developed into a public recreation trail. Possible uses are hiking, biking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, jogging and horseback riding. If the right-of-way is sold to adjacent landowners, it will be lost as an outdoor recreation area. If acquired and developed, approximately 50,000 users are expected to use the trail annually.

Studies indicate that state-owned land is not an economic burden to local governmental units due to state payments in lieu of taxes and increased school aids in many cases.

Acquisition will preserve public ownership of a transportation corridor for future use.

18. Other Special Resources (e.g., archaeological, historical, endangered/threatened species, scientific areas, natural areas)

No archaeological or historical sites should be affected by the proposal since the 100-foot right-of-way is already a disturbed zone within the rail corridor. No rare or endangered plant or animal species are known to be present along the grade.

Significant prairie remnants would be preserved that would otherwise be lost to agriculture.

19. Probable Adverse Impacts That Cannot Be Avoided.

State acquisition of the grade should have minimal adverse impact on the existing environment. Individuals may desire to purchase the grade for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, and other uses.

If development occurs, there will be some air pollution caused by auto and snowmobile emissions as well as minimal increase in noise from autos, snowmobiles, bikers, hikers, and other trail users. Some noise, air, and water pollution may occur during the development of the facility.

Some minor grading will take place around the terminus and rest area parking lots and toilet facilities; however, this will only minimally alter existing topography and drainage patterns. Some soil erosion could occur at construction sites, but this would be minimized through the use of appropriate erosion control techniques.

Public services such as police and fire protection, as well as medical attention will be needed if the grade is developed as a recreational trail used by the public.

Traffic will increase on the highway systems leading to the trail; however, this increase is not expected to have a significant effect on the traffic volume.

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**ALTERNATIVES (no action - enlarge - reduce - modify - other locations and/or methods)**

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20. Identify describe, and discuss feasible alternatives to the proposed action and their impacts. Give particular attention to alternatives which might avoid some or all adverse environmental effects.

There are three alternatives. The first is DNR acquisition, development, maintenance, and management of the grade as a state trail. Such action would assure retention of the resource for recreational purposes. The trail could be developed for biking, hiking, and snowmobiling.

A second alternative would provide for DNR acquisition as in the first alternative but the responsibility for development and management would be given to counties and/or local units of government. This action would retain the resource for recreational purposes. The role of DNR would also include encouraging local leadership to plan and develop the trail based on uniform trail development guidelines.

A third alternative would provide no acquisition and development of the right-of-way for recreational uses. The need for additional trails would have to be met by other means or in other locations.

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**EVALUATION (Discuss each category. Attach additional sheets and other pertinent information if necessary.)**

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21. Secondary Effects: As a result of this action, is it likely that other events or actions will happen that may significantly affect the environment? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 15-18 as appropriate.

Based on experience gained from other state trails, it is unlikely that other events or actions will occur which may significantly alter the environment. Traffic volumes on roads adjacent to the proposed trail should not increase significantly. Police and fire protection will be provided by the counties. If supplementary protection is needed, it should be limited and, therefore, should not cause an increase in other local agency manpower and equipment needs.

22. **New Environmental Effect:** Does the action alter the environment so a new physical, biological, or socio-economic environment would exist? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 5-10 or 15-18 as appropriate.

The abandoned grade will provide a safe off-road trail for bikers, hikers, and snowmobilers. Development will generate revenue for local contractors and local businesses should realize increased sales due to trail user purchases. Aids in lieu of taxes will be paid by the state to local government units and thereby increase tax revenue. Development will slightly alter the railroad grade, trestles, and land used for terminuses and rest areas. Vegetation will be allowed to grow in the margins of the right-of-way, except weeds will be controlled.

23. **Geographically Scarce:** Are the existing environmental features that would be affected by the proposed action scarce, either locally or statewide? If so, list here and reference their discussion in items 15-18 as appropriate.

According to the Bureau of Endangered Resources, there are prairie remnants on the right-of-way worthy of protection.

24. **Precedent:** Does the action and its effect(s) require a decision which would influence future decisions? Describe.

No. The DNR has acquired eleven other abandoned railroad grades for the purpose of converting them into multi-use recreational trails.

25. **Controversy:** Discuss and describe concerns which indicate a serious controversy or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

Acquisition and eventual development of the grade as a recreational trail does not appear to be controversial. However, controversy may arise if adjoining land owners claim that the right-of-way reverts back to them.

The Dodge and Fond du Lac County boards have approved the project.

26. **Consistency With Plans:** Does the action conflict with local or agency zoning or with official agency plans or policy of local, state or federal government (e.g., NR 1.95)? If so, how? Refer to applicable comments in item 31.

No. The Department of Transportation and our Department are closely coordinating their planning efforts so that there will be no conflict over intended use of the abandoned right-of-way. Both Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties will utilize citizen input in the development of the master plan for the trail.

27. Cumulative Impacts: While the action by itself may be limited in scope, would repeated actions of this type result in major or significant impacts to the environment?

Based on other state trails which utilize existing railroad right-of-ways, converting the railroad grade into a recreational trail will have very little impact on the existing corridor. Conversion to trail use will be beneficial to wildlife habitat, as trees and shrubs are allowed to grow in the right-of-way.

28. Foreclose Future Options: Is the action irreversible? Will it commit a resource (e.g., energy, habitat, historical features) for the foreseeable future?

If acquired, the grade will be used for trail purposes. However, the land utilized for trail facilities could be reclaimed by obliterating the construction item such as parking lots, toilets, etc., regrading and revegetating the site.

29. Socio-cultural Impacts: Will action result in direct or indirect impacts on ethnic or cultural groups or alter social patterns?

No  
 Yes, refer to item 17.

30. Other:

None.

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LIST OF AGENCIES, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED REGARDING THE PROJECT  
(Include DNR personnel and Title)

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31.	<u>Date</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Comment Summary</u>
	11/85	D. Fenske - Bureau of Real Estate	Starting and ending points; funding information.
	11/85	J. Treichel - Bureau of Parks & Recreation	Use estimate from counties.
	11/85	Richard Black - DOT	Status of shortline operation.

Acquisition and Development  
of Chicago & NW RR

Project Name: Clyman -> Fond du Lac

County: Dodge - Falls

**RECOMMENDATION**

EIS Not Required..... X

Analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department on this project.

Refer to Office of the Secretary.....   

Major and Significant Action: Prepare EIS.....   

Request EIR.....   

Additional factors, if any, affecting the evaluator's recommendation:

Dennis Kullback

Signature of Evaluator

1/22/86

Date

Noted: Area Supervisor/Bureau Director Date

James D. Thiel for D. Weizenstein 1/22/86

Number of responses to public notice 6

Public response log attached?..... yes

**CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WAPA**

District Director or Director of BEI (or Designee)

Ray A. Borch

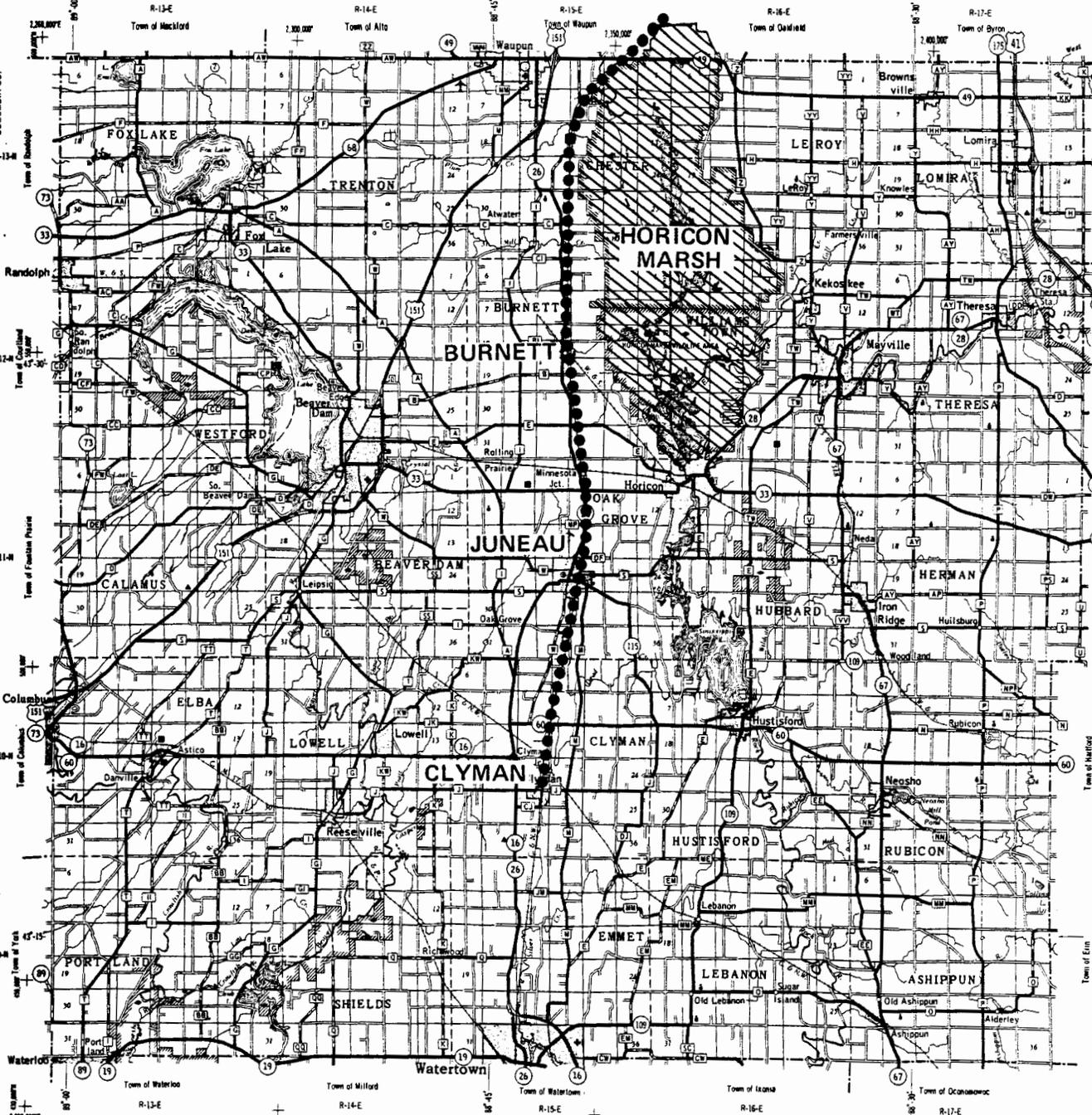
Date

March 3, 1986

This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate District Director or the Director of BEI. If you believe you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Codes establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed. For judicial review of a decision pursuant to ss. 227.15 and 227.16, Stats., you have 30 days after service of the decision to file your petition for review. The respondent in an action for judicial review is the Department of Natural Resources. You may wish to seek legal counsel to determine your specific legal rights to challenge a decision. This notice is provided pursuant to s. 227.11(2), Stats.







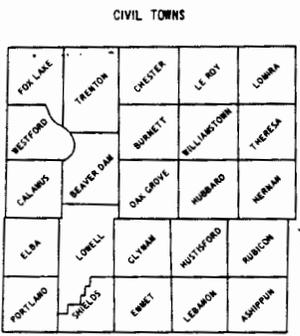
- LEGEND**
- |                        |            |                               |
|------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Partial Canal          | U.S. STATE | Cast Town Boundary            |
| Blvd. Concrete         | COUNTY     | Corporate Limits              |
| Blvd.                  |            | Hot & State Forest            |
| Street                 |            | Airport                       |
| Earth                  |            | Fish Hatchery                 |
| Town Road              |            | Game Farm                     |
| Fire Lane              |            | County Seat                   |
| Highway Divided        |            | University Village            |
| Freeway                |            | Schools                       |
| Interchange            |            | Public Heat or Fish Grd.      |
| Highway Separation     |            | Hospital                      |
| Interstate Highway No. |            | Range Station                 |
| U.S. Highway No.       |            | Public Camp & Pkng Grd.       |
| State Highway No.      |            | State Park - with Campsite    |
| County Hwy. Letter     |            | County Park - with Facilities |
| Railroad               |            | Wayside - with Facilities     |
| Dike                   |            | Wayside - without Facilities  |
| State Boundary         |            |                               |
| County Boundary        |            |                               |

TOWNSHIP NUMBERS

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
20	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36



**CLYMAN JCT.-FOND DU LAC RAILROAD**



WILES OF HIGHWAY as of Jan. 1, 1983

STATE	300
COUNTY	537
LOCAL ROADS	1,173
OTHER ROADS	9
<b>TOTAL FOR COUNTY</b>	<b>1,979</b>

**DODGE CO.**

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
Watson, Wisconsin

SCALE 1" = 2 MILES

Corrected for  
JAN. 1984

Compiled from U.S.G.S. Quads  
Based on Aerial Photographs