



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

September 25, 2015

John Pohlman – LF/6  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Post Office Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

Dear Mr. Pohlman:

We are writing today to share our thoughts about the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (SPRA) draft Master Plan and EIS that WDNR currently has before the public for input.

We would first like to acknowledge that we are both relatively new to this subject in representing SPRA in the Legislature, while many of our constituents have been intricately involved in this discussion since the property was decommissioned in 1997. We value and respect the countless hours of community work that so many have put in to formulating a plan that will help restore these lands and provide opportunities for the public to enjoy them. This truly has been a community driven movement.

In reviewing the WDNR proposed plan, we very much appreciate the Department's work in acknowledging the "founding documents" that detail the consensus building that went into the very public process that has led to this point. Those guiding documents contain critical guidance for the future use of the Badger lands.

Overall, the draft Master Plan is a pretty good one, and follows many of the guiding principles that arose as a result of the almost 20 year process of open, collaborative work that produced them. It is clear that the public will have great access to the lands. It is also clear that the department is committed to the restoration of nearly all of the land to prairie, savannah, oak woodlands and other natural community types that were native to the area, and we greatly commend the WDNR for that.

However, our offices have had more than one thousand contacts from constituents and citizens from around the state, expressing great concern about a couple of components in the plan (along with great support for much of the plan.)

The high-impact uses of Rocketry, dual sport motorcycles, and a shooting range are listed in the plan. Our offices have received unanimous opposition from the public in those contacts on all three of these proposed uses. All three appear to be incompatible with the guiding principles earlier identified through countless hours of work, and the end result of conservation focus and low-impact recreational opportunities.

We share those concerns and encourage WDNR to remove all three items from the plan.

We also strongly encourage WDNR to work harder to honor the first value of the Final Report of the Badger Reuse Committee Report to manage the Badger property as a single unit. We would very much like to see a greater emphasis in the plan for greater collaboration and cooperation with the other landowners of Badger lands: the Ho-Chunk Nation, the Dairy Forage Research Center, the Bluffview Sanitary District and the Town of Sumpter. WDNR was a part of that process, and a signer of the final report – it should be incumbent on the department to honor that commitment.

The return of the Badger lands are truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to restore the lands to a state of naturalness for us all to enjoy. Thank you very much for your work to ensure that this opportunity is not squandered. The future of the Badger lands is very bright – especially if we all work together to ensure that the best interests for the land are ensured.

Sincerely,



JON ERPENBACH  
State Senator  
27<sup>th</sup> District



DAVID CONSIDINE  
State Representative  
81<sup>st</sup> District

JE.DC.tk

## Comments from the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center

### Re: DNR Master Plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area

#### Introduction

As one of the three major land owners of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP), the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFRC) will be greatly affected by the designated uses, level of activity, and ability of the DNR staff to effectively monitor the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (SPRA). The USDFRC thanks the DNR for the excellent relationship our two agencies have had in the long process of determining the best way to manage the former BAAP as a whole, while also meeting the distinctly different legislatively mandated purposes for each agency's use of the property. The congressional mandate for the USDFRC is to conduct comprehensive research programs which support the environmental and economic sustainability of integrated dairy systems; but the USDFRC does further support a strong continuing partnership with the DNR and others to improve the ecology and environmental sustainability of the SPRA.

Consequently, the USDFRC is generally very supportive of the Draft Management Plan for the SPRA, including the designation of one public entrance to the property, the emphasis on land restoration, and the limitations on intensive/invasive uses such as an ATV track or shooting range. The USDFRC will continue to support DNR efforts to restore the SPRA land to native or preferred species and improve wildlife habitat through agronomic practices and other means such as the removal of invasive species.

Specific USDFRC concerns with the SPRA Draft Management Plan are limited, but detailed below.

#### Magazine Area Uses

Because the Magazine Area is surrounded on three sides by USDFRC land, the USDFRC is most concerned with proposed activities in this area. As adjacent land owners, the USDFRC priority is to have this area dedicated to non-invasive activities and land/habitat restoration. The DNR states (page 73): "Because the Magazine Area is separated from the rest of the property, it provides a unique opportunity to potentially host special events that do not disrupt visitors to the main part of the property." The USDFRC perspective is that the opposite is a preferred alternative: Because the area is separated from the rest of the property, it is an ideal place for those who want to find the peace and solace of an unspoiled, quiet area, and as a primary location for native prairie and wildlife habitat restoration.

Additionally, because the Magazine Area is separated from the rest of the SPRA property and essentially land-locked by the USDFRC:

- It will be more difficult for the DNR to monitor activity taking place here, both approved and unapproved.
- It will be much more likely that the public trespasses onto USDFRC property.
- There will be more motorized traffic going through USDFRC land to get to the Magazine Area for specific activities.
- There will be a greater risk of accidents or conflicts between SPRA visitors and USDFRC farm vehicles.

For these reasons, the USDFRC strongly requests that no dog activities, dual-sport motorcycle or other motorized vehicle activities, or unspecified "special events" take place in the Magazine Area. However, if these activities are ultimately allowed in the Magazine Area, here are more specific USDFRC concerns and requirements.

#### *Dual-Sport Motorcycles:*

For all trails to and/or through the Magazine Area, the USDFRC requests that the events be held on weekends and holidays when the USDFRC is less apt to be moving through the area with farm vehicles. We request that roads needed for USDFRC farm vehicles *not* be closed for the dual-sport

motorcycle trail. And we request that the SPRA manager work with the USDFRC farm manager to find the best times and places for this activity.

*Off-leash dog access:*

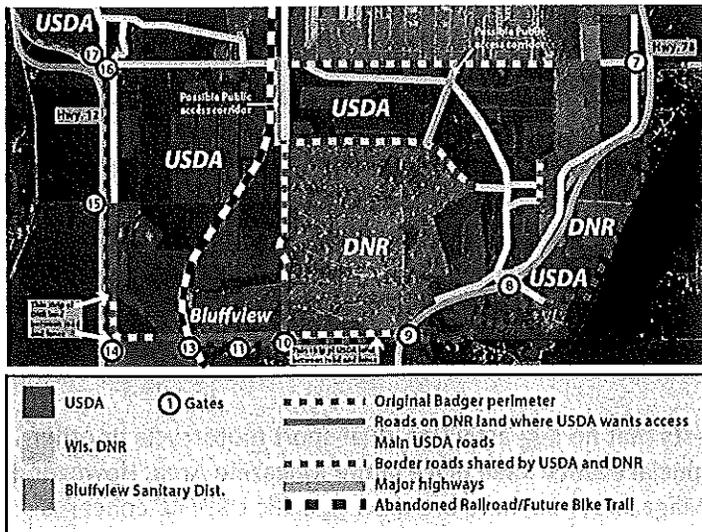
Unless the DNR is planning to build a chain link fence around the Magazine Area, the USDFRC is extremely concerned about having off-leash dogs here. The USDFRC conducts grazing research with heifers on pastures adjacent to MA3, from April through October. These pastures have been designed for management intensive rotational grazing, with a system of fences, lanes and a water supply; so moving the heifers elsewhere is not an option. The USDFRC is concerned that dogs that are free to run will be tempted by cattle, bark at and/or chase them, and potentially cause the cattle to stampede and trample research pastures and/or break through electric fencing resulting in losses of valuable research investment, creating liability issues for dog owners, and potentially compromising dog and cattle health and well-being. If dogs are to be in the Magazine Area, we request that they be on leashes from April 1 through October 31.

*Special Events:*

The USDFRC requests that these events be non-invasive (such as bird watching or other nature-related events) and be conducted whenever possible on weekends or holidays when the USDFRC is less apt to be moving through the area with farm or research vehicles. To keep traffic at a minimum if special events are held in the Magazine Area, the USDFRC requests that the events be limited to those that do not require people to be coming and going all day; and that the total number of people participating not exceed available parking capacity.

**Road Access for USDFRC, Especially in Magazine Area**

Earlier in the planning process the USDFRC indicated that it would like to have east-west access through the Magazine Area for farm vehicle traffic. Two existing roads were indicated (see map, solid blue lines). The map on page ii of the Draft Master Plan does not show these two roads as going all the way through on the east side of the Magazine Area. The southern road goes through as a trail; will this remain as a roadbed that USDFRC vehicles can use? The northern road shows no road or trail going through; will the existing roadbed be kept so that USDFRC vehicles can use it?



Similarly, there are references to the Army and Bluffview Sanitary District needing access to certain areas in the former BAAP (page 18, II.B.1.b.), and about the need for public access to Thaelke Cemetery and the Hillside Prairie (page 73, II.B.3.f.). But there are no specific references to the USDFRC's need for road access through the Magazine Area. A specific reference should be added to the final plan that acknowledges this critical need for the DFRC.

## Other Uses

### *Rocketry:*

The USDFRRC is concerned about the location chosen for the Rocket Area on the SPRA because of the close proximity to USDFRC land. The USDFRC is concerned that there are no formal protocols and/or regulations for rockets landing on USDFRC property. Owners of wayward rockets will logically want to retrieve them which could be potentially damaging to crops and/or research projects. There is an additional potential threat to crops (mature winter wheat and straw) due to fire, which would also need to be prevented proactively with restrictions on time of year, type of rockets used, etc. The USDFRC respectfully suggests that the launch site be moved further away from the boundary with USDFRC to the North and East to limit the possibility of a rocket landing out of bounds on the USDFRC, and that the SPRA manager work with the USDFRC farm manager to find the best times for this activity.

Respectfully submitted,

### **U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center**

Mark Boggess, Center Director	<a href="mailto:mark.boggess@ars.usda.gov">mark.boggess@ars.usda.gov</a>	608-890-0082
Rick Walgenbach, Farm Manager	<a href="mailto:Richard.walgenbach@ars.usda.gov">Richard.walgenbach@ars.usda.gov</a>	608-643-2438, ext. 223
Lori Bocher, Information Specialist	<a href="mailto:lori.bocher@ars.usda.gov">lori.bocher@ars.usda.gov</a>	608-890-0079

T H E T O W N O F  
**MERRIMAC**

S6911 State Highway 113 - P.O. Box 115  
Merrimac, WI 53561

September 4, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6  
WI Department of Natural Resources  
P O Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

RE: DRAFT SAUK PRAIRIE RECREATION AREA MASTER PLAN

The Town Board of the Town of Merrimac met in regular session on Wednesday, September 2, 2015 and has asked me to present the following items for consideration into the final Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (SPRA) Master Plan:

1. The plan for Weigand's Bay Day Use Area has inadequate onsite parking. The concern is the lack of parking will present unnecessary traffic congestion in a location that adjoins a private residential neighborhood. The proposed paved parking lot should be expanded from 6 spaces to 21+ spaces and the proposed overflow lot should be eliminated. Ruthe Badger Lane is a town highway per Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 82. The parking area located there is currently serving Richard A. Grant Park. The town board has met with the neighbors and has a conceptual plan regarding the easement access and other public right-of-way options which need to be considered. The agreement in the past was that the town and DNR would develop this property together and the Master Plan should reflect that.
2. The town also wishes to see the DNR provide an entrance to the SPRA from Highway 78. Town residents, and any visitors of the estimated 300,000 cars from the Merrimac Ferry, will have to drive more than 10 miles around to enter property that is located here in the town of Merrimac. Access points could easily be provided at (referencing Locator Map C) at Locator point 25M or 23M.
3. The Merrimac Sanitary District was formed to provide a municipal drinking water supply that currently proposes to service the entire SPRA. On page 28, your proposal indicates ambiguity as to whether or not a priority will be placed on using the system and should be clarified. Also, this district is currently in the design phase, it is CRITICAL that your team meet with Mike Sitton of the US Army and indicate where the visitor center and any

other drinking water facilities might be provided so it can be considered and approved by the Merrimac Sanitary District during the initial design phase. Should the district approve the system and move forward with construction, the expense to add on will be that of the Department (DNR) and not the US Army or the Merrimac Sanitary District.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.



**Tim McCumber, WCMC**  
**Town Administrator & Clerk – Treasurer**  
tnadmin@merr.com  
www.facebook.com/MerrimacTown  
Twitter @Town\_Merrimac

Cc: Town Board  
Mark Aquino, WI Department of Natural Resources  
Mike Sitton, U.S. Army

Phillip Lehman

Dear Mr. Poldman,

I really hope that a shooting range of some type could be built in the South Rec. areas I think a lot of people would use it. It is such a huge area that I feel the D.N.R. could build a range that would fit in and be a neat facility. Please consider it. Thank you  
Phil Lehman

★ Proud to Support our Troops ★

9-16-15

Dear Mr. Pakman:

Since all my in laws live in Ok. I've had the good fortune to visit that State 9 times & fish salmon.

On one of my visits we went up to Fairbanks & stopped at a bird preserve. There was a wooden walk way on stilts that we could walk & see many birds.

I picture this in Sankhut could not have it with target practice & ATV's around.

In fact I live within a target range & can hear the hunters sighting in their rifles for the coming season. Marion H. Johnson



Marion H. Johnson  
1720 Elizabeth St. Apt. 6  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Dear Mr. Polmer,

Please keep the Snake Prairie  
Restoration Area a quiet and  
healing place. There is so much  
speed and noise in the world  
today; people need a place to  
relax and re-connect with nature.

Please emphasize quiet  
recreation and put more effort  
into prairie restoration and  
habitat improvement. So walk  
at Badger and hear the  
meadowlarks in a rare and  
precious gift. Please help us  
protect that gift for the future.

Thank you.  
Thimi Trust  
Redotung, WI 53959

RECEIVED  
SEP 25 2015  
FACILITIES AND LANDS

Dear Mr. Pohlman,

I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the horse trails at the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area. While I applaud the miles of bridle trails, my concern lies in opening the trails to recreational trail driving. I have never seen the limitations to trail driving set as proposed in the Master Plan, and was dismayed to read them. I know many people who utilized public trails for driving, many cannot ride anymore for many reasons. To take away a resource before even opening it to us does a great disservice.

You may have concerns about maintaining the trails for driving. The vehicles used for trail driving aren't any wider than the tractors/mowers used to maintain trails. Any trails unsuitable for horse drawn vehicles can be marked and will not be used.

You may be concerned with interactions with trail riders. I have gone out on trail drives on public trails and on organized trail rides and have had no issues. Common sense should rule all interactions between horse people, and problems should not be the main assumption.

Horse drawn vehicles are a traditional and historic use of the lands. If you wish to emphasize the history of the land, horse drawn vehicles should not be excluded but welcomed.

I realized my address puts me quite a few miles from the Baraboo area, but my driving friends and I do like to trailer to trails. This brings us to new areas where we spend our money to stay and support the local economy.

Thank you,



Cyndi Conley  
1105 Nassau St  
New London, WI 54956

Dear John Pohlan,

RE: SAUK PRAIRIE RECREATION AREA – Draft Master Plan Input

Date: September 24, 2015.

Recently, a new draft master plan has been made public that suggests the recreational activities include a model rocketry area and to allow dual-sport motorcycles on the property for competitive events.

I oppose the area's use for the above. If the Ho-Chunk plan to put livestock on the property, the noise pollution will frighten those causing stampedes and miscarriages. The USDA Dairy Forage Research Center already has cattle on the property and this will have the same effect on them. Allowing the use of this area for an explosion that results from ignition of the rockets being set off is not a good fit for the land. Same goes for the motorcycles use. The grass lands and prairie soils are fragile and prone to fire and erosion. I own horses and know that motorcycles/loud noises don't mix well. The noise produced will scare birds and other wildlife that roams freely on the land. It can cause a dangerous condition when stray bullets fly nearby.

The private Clubs that wish to use the SPRA for rocketry and dual-sport motorcycles already have access to public and private lands for this purpose. This is a small group with special interests and they should not override what the majority of our WI citizens want to use this area for.

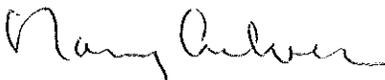
I have horses and my neighbor uses his land for "target practice" many times on Saturday and Sunday. About 3 miles away is the Sauk Prairie Trap Club. I just hate it when they are shooting the guns for hours at a time. I don't enjoy my backyard activities because I have to listen to the bang, bang, bang, bang! They are using automatic rifles and shoots off 100 rounds at a time. Ridiculous! There is nothing I can do about it. I do not want to have this same thing happen to the users of the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

I heard on the local news that the NRA has now become involved and is interested in putting forth their agenda to have a gun range. I'm opposed to this idea and always will be. I hope the Wisconsin DNR cannot be "bought". The NRA's power to change legislation to favor their membership is un-American. The majority of American citizens don't believe in the NRA principles and refuse to belong, I will be very upset if they get their way.

I feel the draft plan which includes model rocketry and dual-sport motorcycles use is an inappropriate activities for the environment.

Please just keep the SPRA for hiking, biking, horseback, snowshoe, cross country ski trails and focus on wildlife conservation and mitigating invasive plants.

Sincerely,



Nancy Culver

Sauk County Taxpayer

**Douglas J. Decker**

**Cynthia A. Decker**

W5560 County F, Fond du Lac, WI 54937  
(920) 923-1723 dcdecker70@gmail.com

September 19, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6  
WI Department of Natural Resources  
P O Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

Dear John:

We would like to comment on the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area (SPRA) Master Planning. We enjoy trail riding and are always looking for properties that offer horse trails. This area is well within the distance that we would consider hauling our horses to from our home.

We are happy to see that equine trails have been included in the draft. Please consider ample horse trailer parking areas.

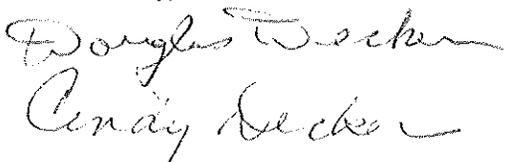
There is a great potential for spooking horses if there is a rocketry area.

Would it be possible to consider expanding the equine trails to include the outside loop of snowmobile trails? At many of the DNR managed properties, these two user groups have quite a bit of overlap and seem to work well. It would also allow SPRA to be more of a destination trail with the extra mileage.

Thank you for your continued support of horse trails in the SPRA.

We look forward to enjoying the scenic beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Douglas J. Decker and Cynthia A. Decker. The signature of Douglas J. Decker is written in cursive and is positioned above the signature of Cynthia A. Decker, also in cursive.

Doug and Cindy Decker

September 17, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

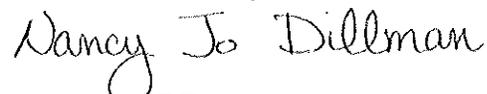
Dear Mr. Pohlman,

In general, I believe the DNR has done a good job with its planning for the restoration of the lands at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant, but several provisions of the Draft Master Plan do not seem compatible with the overall goal of low-impact and quiet recreation.

In my opinion, dual-sport motorcycles and model high-power rocketry are activities that, even on a limited basis, are antithetical to the Master Plan's stated goals, and I hope they will be removed from the final version of the Plan.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Nancy Jo Dillman  
P.O. Box 178  
E10826 Highway 136  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Off-road motorcycles, rocketry and gun ranges can be accommodated elsewhere on DNR or other public lands. Such activities are wholly incompatible with the re-establishment of a prairie ecosystem. The Badger lands offer an incomparable and unique chance to restore a grassland of sufficient size in southern Wisconsin to support self-sustaining, accessible and manageable populations of wildlife typical of a native prairie. Such an opportunity for public education, outreach and non-consumptive recreation will not likely occur again.

FROM: LLOYD AND INGE KEITH  
(please print)  
9344 BOX TURTLE RD  
MAZOMANIE, WI 53560

First  
Class  
Stamp  
Here

*Public Comment on the Draft Master Plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area*

I am writing to support the WDNR's proposals for ecological restoration, habitat management and quiet nature-based recreation on the former Badger Ammo lands but do NOT support proposed on/off-road motorcycles, high power rocketry and a future gun range because:

*PLEASE READ ATTACHED PARAGRAPH*

John Pohlman - LF/6  
WI Dept of Natural Resources  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Signed: Lloyd Keith Inge Keith



7216 St. Dominic  
Sauk City, WI 53583  
September 21, 2015

John Pohlman  
WDNR  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Response to Sauk Prairie Recreation Area draft Master Plan & EIS  
(Submitted electronic and US Postal Service)

Dear John,

My first order of business is to thank WDNR for acknowledging “founding documents” (Application to National Park Service, Badger Reuse Committee Report, WDNR Property Analysis) in this draft plan which allowed the citizens of Wisconsin to acquire this amazing property. Frequently WDNR has informed the public of the uniqueness of this opportunity, acknowledging it as “one of the state’s most distinctive and exceptional holdings.” It is beyond the cliché “a once in a life time opportunity” to carefully plan for this property in order to reach the land’s highest potential. I believe WDNR is sincerely trying to fulfill its commitments and develop the land’s promise within the present significant constraints of political pressure, special interest groups and severe budget limitations.

My review of some of the main (certainly not all) points originates from WDNR application to NPS and the commitments as creators and signators of the Badger Reuse Committee Report and conclusions of the WDNR property analysis.

**2004 Application to National Park Service to Acquire Surplus Property Program of Utilization**

*2a. The property will be classified as a recreational area and include facilities for hiking, picnicking, primitive camping, Lake Wisconsin Access and viewing savanna and grassland restoration, environmental education and cultural/historical interpretation.*

*Natural Resources*

Overall WDNR has exemplified a commitment to restoration and is to be commended.

*Education and Research*

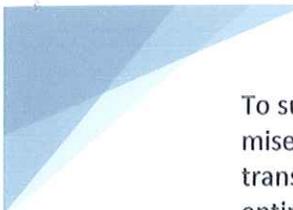
Well done acknowledgement of conservation agriculture and commitment to tell the Badger story from glacier to reuse.

*Historical/Cultural Resources*

Acknowledgement of Badger History Group is to be commended, however work on a combined visitor’s center in collaboration with Ho-Chunk and Dairy Forage Research Center would directly fulfill Badger Reuse Committee Report ( Value 1 and Value 4 Plan Elements) and would significantly enhance the visitor experience.

*Team Approach to Master Planning and Collaborative Work with Partners*

1. Obviously each land owner needs to create a master plan for their individual property. WDNR plan acknowledges some collaborative problem solving for “common concerns”—roads, Honey Creek hydrogeology, some restoration efforts and other issues. However problem solving is NOT planning for the entire property. To comply to Value 1 of the Reuse Committee Report <The Badger Property is managed as a single unit.> and the Application to National Park Service <Program of Utilization 2a. “The Master plan would be developed for the entire 7,354 acres, in cooperation with Ho Chunk Nation and USDA Dairy Forage.”> requires additional WDNR action.



To suggest putting the four land owner plans together fulfills the pledge to plan for the entire property miserably fails the commitment (mentioned above) made to NPS. Frankly this approach could put the transfer at risk by failing to meet the covenant agreement in the request for property to plan for the entire 7,354 acres. A better plan would be to commit that after each land owner's individual master plans are completed, discussions and cooperative planning would commence among all with the result being an overall master plan for the entire property. I sincerely request you take this next step.

2. The shared "common goal to convert it to a recreational property with low impact recreation (hiking, picnicking, primitive camping) prairie, savanna and grassland restoration, environmental education and cultural/historical interpretation with the potential for an education center", in some instances has been met (trail networks) , in others severely lacking.

Rockets and dual sport motorcycles (even for a few days) by any stretch of the imagination cannot be considered low impact recreation. Just the continued consideration of a shooting range defies the overwhelming public sentiment against such use which was previously identified in the public's response to the conceptual alternatives. The public understands this landscape is a treasure with opportunities not like other locations, and this majority public sentiment must be honored after almost 20 years of discussion of defining is the best use for this property. No shooting range ever on this landscape.

Taking the M parcels and opening them and the entire property to various high impact recreation and "special uses" without clear definition and evaluation criteria is not acceptable. As identified, the lack of WDNR staff available to monitor and oversee such activities limits thoughtful, detailed analysis of the proposed recreation activities. Putting that responsibility on one individual, the property manager, is not good policy.

Dog training and trialing includes shooting guns which negate the unique opportunity Badger presents for that quickly disappearing silence experience in recreation. Opportunities for dog recreation are present at very nearby Mazomanie and Pine Island. Badger is not an acceptable location.

High impact uses are a legitimate form of recreation. The issue here however, is that Badger is NOT the location for such type uses.

### **2012 WDNR Regional and Property Analysis Sauk Prairie Recreation Area**

*"Based on this report's findings, the best overall functional role for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area is to fulfill the highlighted ecological opportunities available while maximizing compatible recreation opportunities.*

1. This conclusion is not supported with this plan's land use Management Area Designations --primarily recreational use (62%) rather than habitat or native community management (34%). Only 17 acres, 0.5 percent of the property, are classified as a Native Community Management Area, yet many acres have historically been found to contain important native species and relict native habitat. As addressed above, some recreation uses are both high impact and certainly not compatible with restoration.
2. Hunting season dates conflict with bird habit enhancement, and should be adjusted accordingly.
3. Dog training and trialing which includes guns is not a recreation compatible with restoration.
4. Snowmobiles should be allowed on the only perimeter trail, as endorsed by BOMC.

**2001 Badger Reuse Committee Report**

*“The conversion of the Badger lands provides remarkable opportunities for the protection, enhancement, use, restoration, and enjoyment of the property’s unique natural and cultural features. In its work, the BRC has sought to highlight these opportunities and to achieve a realistic, community consensus vision for realizing them.” And “The Badger property is [to be] managed as a single unit. The managers and owners of land and activities have an affirmative, formal obligation and written agreement to manage the property collaboratively and holistically, and to empower local stakeholders in identifying, discussing, and influencing major management and long-term use decisions.”*

Had WDNR followed established procedures, this draft master plan would have been submitted to the Planning and Land Use Committee of Badger Oversight and Management Commission. Without a doubt BOMC has problems, however, WDNR by ignoring the organization, once again WDNR fails to meet its commitments as identified in the application to National Park Service (2a. Program of Utilization Team Approach to Master Planning and Collaborative Work with Partners) to show good faith effort to plan for the entire property. This again puts the transfer of the property at risk. If WDNR sincerely intended to be partners in managing the property with other land owners, WDNR would work cooperatively to strengthen BOMC, and have cooperatively created this plan.

**Proposed Land-use Review Tool**

<b>Proposed Use: WDNR draft Management Plan Sauk Prairie Recreation Area</b>		
<b>Description: Land use Plan for WDNR 3400 acre portion of Badger</b>		
<b>Value/Criterion</b>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Value 1</b> <i>Manage property collaboratively and as a single unit.</i>	Yes	WDNR presents a few problem solving opportunities but does <u>not</u> plan for the entire property. DNR explicitly refuses the opportunity to create a comprehensive property wide master plan.
	<b>No</b>	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<b>Criterion 1.1</b> Operate within the RC values & criteria	<b>Yes</b>	Occasionally. See specific values & criteria.
	<b>No</b>	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<b>Criterion 1.2</b> Minimize number of owners	Yes	WDMR’s lack of involvement with BOMC in the Creation of this draft master plan is an insult To other landowners, stakeholders and general public. It puts the NPS land transfer at risk.
	No	
	Neutral	
	<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 1.3</b> Establish oversight & management board	NA	
<b>Criterion 1.4</b> Useful land link between Devil's lake, Wis River & Lake Wis	Yes	DNR fails to enhance the opportunity for access from Devil’s Lake State Park to Lake Wisconsin.
	<b>No</b>	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<b>Criterion 1.5</b> Phase out existing leases	NA	Establishing crop leases to keep out invasives and enhance restoration is a good thing

<b>Value 2</b> <i>Highest quality cleanup</i>		Yes	
		No	
		Neutral	
		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 2.1</b> Army retains Liability for clean up		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 2.2</b> Army bears cost for infrastructure removal		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 2.3</b> Clean up not restrict future uses		Yes	
		No	
		Neutral	
		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 2.4</b> Future uses not add to contamination		Yes	Rockets have the potential to add to future contamination.
		<b>No</b>	
		Neutral	
		NA	
<b>Criterion 2.5</b> Clean up provide research & education opportunities		Yes	
		No	
		Neutral	
		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 2.6</b> Salvage preserve historic materials & recycle others		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Value 3</b> <i>Preserve historic significant buildings and maintain infrastructure to support cleanup and approved uses.</i>		Yes	
		No	
		Neutral	
		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 3.1</b> No improvement to buildings		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Criterion 3.2</b> Evaluate historic buildings		<b>NA</b>	
<b>Value 4</b> <i>Contribute to reconciliation and the resolution of past conflicts.</i>		Yes	
		No	
		<b>Neutral</b>	
		NA	
<b>Criterion 4.1</b> Establish educational facilities		<b>Yes</b>	Minimally
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	

<p align="center"><b>Criterion 4.2</b></p> <p>Recognize history features at locations</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Acknowledgement of cemeteries and remains of farmstead.</p>
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 4.3</b></p> <p>Memorialize community's contributions to war</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Acknowledgment of Badger History Group role.</p>
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p><b>Value 5</b></p> <p><i>Develop educational, research, and recreational opportunities afforded by the Badger property's unique natural, agricultural, historical, and cultural resources &amp; make available to the public.</i></p>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Could be better with a visitors center cooperatively planned with Ho-Chunk and DFRC.</p>
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 5.1</b></p> <p>Formal &amp; informal education for all</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 5.2</b></p> <p>Access for people and animals balance with protection of natural &amp; cultural resources</p>	Yes	<p>Too much emphasis of intensive recreation in the M parcels.</p>
	<b>No</b>	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 5.3</b></p> <p>Low impact recreation focus on natural &amp; cultural features &amp; have not detrimental impact</p>	Yes	<p>Rockets, dual sport motorcycles, dogs, and lack overt approval of ill defined special uses are extremely problematic.</p>
	<b>No</b>	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p><b>Value 6</b></p> <p><i>Sustainable agriculture contributes to community &amp;, history, social &amp; natural sciences important</i></p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 6.1</b></p> <p>Integrate conservation &amp; agriculture</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p align="center"><b>Criterion 6.2</b></p> <p>Develop &amp; maintain public &amp; wildlife access between bluffs &amp; river</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Better planning for trails from Devil's Lake to Lake Wisconsin could have been done.</p>
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	

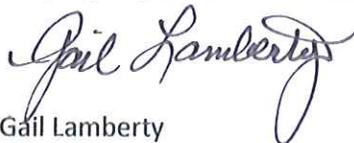
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Conserve & restore ecological communities via research	Criterion 6.3	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Include local & family farming opportunities	Criterion 6.4	<b>Yes</b>	Grazing opportunities for other land owners and local farmers to keep out invasive good strategy
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Ag activities compatible with conservation, wildlife habitat & restoration goals for entire property	Criterion 6.5	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Grazing & crop production primary ag use	Criterion 6.6	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
<b>Value 7</b> <i>Protect and enhance natural features in land use, and maintain critical role of the Badger in the broader landscape.</i>		<b>Yes</b>	Mostly yes, however a 50 car parking lot at the top of the property is excessive.
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Coordinate & share management between Badger & nearby natural resources, conservation areas and private lands	Criterion 7.1	Yes	
		No	
		<b>Neutral</b>	
		NA	
Protection, restore plant & animal habitat & geologic features	Criterion 7.2	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Maintain & enhance bluff & prairie views	Criterion 7.3	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
Enhance aesthetic quality of property, no damage to natural, cultural resources or views	Criterion 7.4	<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	
<b>Value 8</b> <i>Open space important. Protect rural landscape of area.</i>		<b>Yes</b>	
		No	
		Neutral	
		NA	

<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Criterion 8.1</b></p> <p>Not foster residential or commercial development in area. Consistent or more restrictive with local zoning &amp; plans</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p><b>Value 9</b></p> <p><i>Contribute to economic stability and sustainability in our local municipalities.</i></p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Criterion 9.1</b></p> <p>Benefit local communities with no additional external costs</p>	<b>YES</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Criterion 9.2</b></p> <p>Natural &amp; cultural features contribute to tourism economy</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Criterion 9.3</b></p> <p>Contribute to cost of local government services.</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Criterion 9.4</b></p> <p>Transportation needs not interfere with approved land uses values &amp; criteria</p>	<b>Yes</b>	
	No	
	Neutral	
	NA	

One last consideration needs to be mentioned. Value 1 directs all land owners to manage the property as a whole. Ho-Chunk Nation is considering an appropriate name for their acreage. Although Sauk Prairie Recreation Area fulfills the legal DNR requirement for classification, it would be a message of solidarity to consider (if Ho-Chunk permission granted) to share a common name for the land.

Overall the draft plan is a pretty good plan. With a few changes as suggested above, it can become a much better plan. If WDNR takes the initiative (as promised in the application to NPS) to cooperatively plan for the entire property with all the property owners it could become a fantastic plan!



Gail Lamberty

- Cc: Elyse LaForest, NPS  
 Senator Tammy Baldwin  
 Representative Mark Pocan  
 Senator Jon Erpenbach  
 Representative Dave Considine  
 Randy Peolma, Ho-Chunk Nation



W12350 Tiedt Rd.  
Columbus, Wi. 53925  
[lbitranch@gmail.com](mailto:lbitranch@gmail.com)

John Pohlman  
Department of Natural Resources LF/6  
PO Box 6721  
Madison, Wi. 53707-7921

9/17/15

Dear Mr. Pohlman,

We are writing to you to voice our enthusiasm for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area opening soon.

As active trail riders and buggy drivers being able to enjoy this historic property is exciting. Many of us remember when the Badger Ammunition Plant buildings were there and our Father's drove us through the property as young children telling us stories of distant relatives who worked there and their contribution to the war efforts. I personally, remember seeing all the law enforcement people combing the area looking for the Armstrong Brother's after the UW bombing. We happened to be in the area camping that weekend. I am excited to be able to see this property again as an adult.

In your master plan of the trail uses we see that you have some nice features for the horse trail riders but that you have excluded the driver's? As an active member of the American Driving Society, Dairyland Driving Club, Board member of Wisconsin State Horse Council and coach for Wisconsin Interscholastic Horse Association I have my ear to the pulse of the horse world.

We drive horses on trails with trail riders and don't have any issues. Like any multi use trail system (Black River Falls comes to mind) everyone moves to the right and slows down. Whether you come upon a 4 wheeler, a Jeep or other horses this rule applies. Equine groups are willing to share trails and this project should not be an exception.

Horse drawn vehicles represent the very essence of the history of our land. Indian's having travois' on their horses to white settlers who cleared and farmed our land. Horses and horse drawn vehicles are part of our heritage. To single out how one person uses her/his horse compared to another is confusing. In trail maintenance 4 wheelers are used and if a 4 wheeler can make it through a cart can as well. Those trails that cannot be driven safely can be marked and avoided.

**THE WILDEST FILLIES MAKE THE BEST HORSES**



As a member of many horse organization's I feel as though I can speak for many of us and offer our help in marking those trails not being suitable for driving. We can also offer our assistance in determining the trails if you would like. Either through the many driving clubs in the State or through our Wisconsin State Horse Council Trails committee.

If you would like to discuss this further in person I am willing to meet you. I can be reached at 608-444-5333 as well.

I am looking forward to being able to share a buggy ride with my elderly Father who is no longer able to ride. 48 years later driving HIM through the Badger Ammunition grounds would be a great day for me. I hope you can help make this happen.

Melanie Lichtfeld

Also signing in favor of having trails open all the time to buggies and carts

Jeanne Coluccy  
Janet Wimmer  
Paula Gross  
Maddi Hendricks  
Mena Schmitt  
Cindy Bahr  
Ann Combs  
Gina Schoenherr  
Holly Schoenherr

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**From:** [kdlins@merr.com](mailto:kdlins@merr.com) Add to Contacts**To:** [dnrsaukprairie@wisconsin.gov](mailto:dnrspaukprairie@wisconsin.gov)**Subject:** Fwd: Comments on Draft Master Plan from a former BAAP Reuse Committee Board member**Date:** Fri, 25 Sep 2015 14:47:27 -0500[-Display Full headers](#)

----- Message Forwarded on Sep 25 -----

**From:** [kdlins@merr.com](mailto:kdlins@merr.com)**To:** [johnpohlman@wisconsin.gov](mailto:johnpohlman@wisconsin.gov)**Subject:** Comments on Draft Master Plan from a former BAAP Reuse Committee Board member**Date:** Fri, 25 Sep 2015 09:21:27 -0500

I was a member of the Badger Reuse Committee and participated in all the meetings and a majority of the subcommittee meetings that were held to determine the future use of BAAP. This committee was faced with the task of creating a plan that would be unanimously supported by all of its members - not just a majority.

Many proposals were considered - from converting unused (but new) chemical buildings into a chemical park to giving the land back to the farmers who once lived there. All these proposals were talked about and considered, but it became clearly apparent that they did not have the unanimous support of the board.

The only plan that the board could fully endorse was to bring the land back to what it WAS (prairie) - not to what it could be (new uses)

This is what the community wanted. Our community spoke back then and they are speaking now (if you listen to them) - bring this land back to what it was.

New uses (gun range, off road motorcycles, rocketry) will conflict with the original Reuse Plan which had the full backing of all the board members representing the community and the DNR.

The Reuse Plan is not outdated (as some have said it needs fine tuning) It is the only plan which will bring harmony back to this land and the people who live near it.

Please follow the Reuse Plan. It was right back then. It is right for now and into the future.

Kendall Lins

E11575 County Road Z

Prairie du Sac, WI 53578

September 18, 2015

Mr. John Pohlmann  
WDNR  
P. O. Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707

Re: Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

Dear Mr. Pohlmann:

I understand that the WDNR is considering and proposing activities in the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area that result in loud and disruptive use of the land. I would like to express my opposition for designating any area in the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area for any activities that are loud and disruptive, such as ATV and snowmobile trails, on/off road vehicle, sport rocketry, shooting range or similar activities, all of which would not have a positive impact on the preservation of the area, and all of which would have an unfavorable impact on the area and activities.

The widely touted and accepted conservation goals for the area are to maintain and reestablish the biological richness of the area. As proposed, there are many activities that meet these goals, more than enough to make full use of the area, compatible with each other and with the goals for the area. Such use would also offer a tremendous educational resource for schools and colleges.

The Sauk Prairie Recreation Area is significant and unique in its contiguous forest, oak woodland, grassland and prairie and its perfect habitat for grassland bird species and other wildlife that require such expanses of habitat for survival and, tragically, are rarely to be found any longer. More of these types of land need to be preserved. The forest and grassland areas that now exist in the state are rapidly being developed or changing in uses that no longer are supportive of such habitat.

I believe that there are other areas in the state that are very suitable for the type of activities that would be detrimental to the special and unique Sauk Prairie Recreation Area and which would also be economically attractive to nearby communities.

I urge the decision makers not to allow any activities that threaten this important, sensitive and rare area and to make decisions paramount to maintaining the biological richness and natural environment of the area.

*Respectfully,*  
*Kevin L. Luetken*  
*215 S. Pine Street*  
*Rec ds lewy. WI 53789*

Charles Luthin  
540 N. Main Street  
Lodi, WI 53555

RECEIVED  
SEP 25 2015  
FACILITIES AND LANDS

September 22, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6  
WI Department of Natural Resources  
P O Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

## COMMENTS ON WDNR DRAFT MASTER PLAN FOR SAUK PRAIRIE RECREATION AREA

Dear John,

I appreciate having the opportunity to offer some personal observations and comments on the Draft Master Plan (Plan) for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (SPRA). I know that you and your planning team have invested a great deal of time, thought and effort into this Plan. It is well-prepared and developed, and there are many very good components. Naturally, even though a plan may be excellent, public comments tend to focus on what is not liked. I'm offering a few general and specific concerns with the hope that they can help improve the Plan.

I have been involved to some degree in the planning of the re-use of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant for longer than it has been decommissioned. In 1997-98, I helped found a group that we dubbed the "Sauk Prairie Restoration Council," or SPRC. Many state, federal and private entities joined that effort with the offer of assistance to the Army to help restore a large portion of the property while still under Army ownership. I was hired by the Army to develop a restoration plan for approximately 1300 acres of the Plant. SPRC was dedicated to helping get that work done, had the Army not soon thereafter declared the property surplus. I was also a participant in and organizer for the first meeting of what became the Community Conservation Coalition for the Sauk Prairie (CCCSP) in 1998, the precursor of the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance (SPCA) that was incorporated in 2001. I was involved with the group during its early years, and served as one of the first board members of the Alliance. The Alliance has been deeply involved in the planning process at Badger since 1998.

What was envisioned during the early discussions and decisions among and between a great number of stakeholders (including WDNR) regarding the Badger property included a necessary healing process for a highly disturbed landscape. The way to reduce potential impacts due to persistent industrial pollution, all agreed, was to "rest the land." The very best way to do that was to establish native prairie for holding the soil and building the lost organic layer anew.

Since the Badger lands have provided habitat for a cohort of rare grassland birds and the area was subsequently declared an Important Bird Area, it was an obvious step to identify ecological restoration as one of the highest and best uses of the land at Badger. That focus for Badger also fit nicely with existing conservation land use in the area—the 9,000+ acres at Devil’s Lake State Park, the extensive protected forests owned or under easement to The Nature Conservancy, and the extensive grassland complex nearby owned and managed by Riverland Conservancy.

Fast forward some 15 or more years. The historic perspective has been significantly lost, the WDNR has changed leadership, and everyone wants to start the planning effort afresh, looking at the former Badger lands through their own lenses. With each step of the planning process, many odd “johnny come lately” proposals have arisen for filling the former Badger landscape with new ideas for what seems to many a vacuous landscape and a golden opportunity to get what they want. Every recreational special interest has stepped into the fray, demanding again and again, “Give me this. I want this.” But how many of those special interests acknowledge the long history of planning that is already behind us? How many are saying, “I’ll give back. I can help heal this landscape.” Few, if any.

I applaud WDNR for incorporating a long-term restoration vision into the Plan. It is appropriate and laudable that the agency has planned for an almost complete restoration of the property to native prairie, oak opening and woodland over 50 years, although it is clearly a remote possibility that such restoration will occur. It seems as if restoration is given mere lip service, as the modest budget is hidden among the pages, and nowhere is there a bold statement indicating that restoration will be a high priority. In a few years, the former grasslands will be so thick with invasive shrubs it may be impossible to reverse the loss. Priority MUST be given to habitat management, lest the opportunity for restoring grassland be forever lost.

The primary focus of the Plan is recreation, almost to the exclusion of restoration. The Plan tries to accommodate all recreation interests, but fails to successfully achieve any coherent and cohesive overarching recreation design for the property. Instead, it seems to be a hodgepodge assembly of activities intended to satisfy many special interests, but none will be fully satisfied with what is proposed. The Plan includes lots of recreational activities that would not be permissible in a state park. The SPRA, therefore, is a “catch all” for “everything else” that people can’t do at Devil’s Lake. It doesn’t work, it doesn’t fit, and it’s not right for the land.

I would suggest that the planning team look more closely at the Devil’s Lake model of recreation. There is a reason that 1.2+ million people visit that spectacular state park every year. Not only is it a beautiful place, but low impact recreation is all that is allowed. No motor boats, no snowmobiles, no ATVs or off-road motorcycles. The quiet recreational opportunities

at Devil's Lake are available to everybody, and nobody takes that away from visitors with their loud and consumptive recreation.

I argue that the successful Devil's Lake model for recreation should be repeated at SPRA. There should be a primary if not exclusive focus on silent and low-impact recreation. After all, that is what WDNR committed to in its application to NPS to acquire the property, and that use more closely follows the values established through the Badger Reuse Committee planning process as stated in its Final Report.

What changes would I recommend to the Plan? Bring recreation back in line with what was originally envisioned for the property. Remove any reference to off-road motorcycles, rocketry, snowmobiles and dog training. These are all loud and disruptive high impact sporting activities that are enjoyed by a few, but that negatively impact the majority of visitors. There is no escaping the sound of gunfire that would be associated with dog training events, as the retort of a weapon travels a great distance over a prairie landscape.

The proposed hunting season at SPRA as described in the Plan is very long, running continuously from mid-October to the end of May. Having such an extended hunting season all-but-excludes the thousands of families and hikers interested in a peaceful spring or autumn saunter on the SPRA. Silent recreationists would avoid visiting the SPRA during any hunting season. I would encourage the WDNR to limit hunting to a shorter season, from November 15 to April 30, to better accommodate the majority of visitors to the property.

I personally feel that no public land should provide "exclusive use" to any special interest. The 600-acre (18% of SPRA) "special events" area is intended to be an exclusive use area, available for the most part "by reservation only." This is unfair, unjust and undemocratic. It excludes use by a large percentage of visitors. I don't believe that a property plan should contain any reference to "exclusive use," even for short periods of time. What if I brought my family a great distance to enjoy the SPRA, only to arrive and discover that there is a major sporting event happening there, limiting my access to the property? My experience would be seriously compromised, and I might never come back.

Instead of planning "exclusive use" areas (e.g., Magazine Area), I would recommend a larger and interwoven network of hiking trails that extends from the southernmost boundary of SPRA to Devil's Lake, and that includes all parcels on the SPRA. Silence is one of those commodities most difficult to experience in a crowded urban landscape. The Badger lands can still offer the pleasure of silence and solitude in a large open landscape, but this needs to be actively planned for. It doesn't take much to steal silence from visitors to a public land.

I know that mountain bikes and horses can shred trails. I've been on enough trails that show significant erosion due to bikes and livestock to understand their potential impact. I wouldn't hike on a horse trail or a mountain bike trail, as there could be user conflicts. Besides, a well-used horse trail stinks! Those uses at Badger would be acceptable if the noisy recreation activities were eliminated completely and if adequate hiking trails were constructed.

There are some unusual elements to the infrastructure plan. A 50-car parking lot accompanied by an amphitheater is planned where the reservoirs are currently located. With the single proposed entrance into the SPRA, you'll have few people attending events so far from the main gate. I understand that the cost of removing the reservoirs is several million dollars. I argue that the reservoirs should be left intact, sparing the rare neotenic salamanders. That funding could be applied toward real site priorities—habitat restoration, a great visitor center, good trails, or other infrastructure needs.

I was disappointed with the modest proposal for a visitor center. The proposed facility is small, and there is very limited parking (15 stalls). There is more parking proposed at the horse trailhead than at the visitor center. It seems to me that priorities are upside down. It is clearly in DNR's best interest, as well as that of the Ho Chunk Nation and perhaps even DFRC, to design and construct a shared visitor center with adequate opportunity for cultural, historical, natural and geological interpretation, as well as enough parking to accommodate a larger number of visitors. Again, this concept was agreed to by all parties who signed the Badger Reuse Plan. Stick to it! It's a great idea, and there is strength in collaboration—in seeking funding, in designing the facility and in providing a rich interpretive experience for the thousands of future visitors.

Finally, the property needs to be renamed. Although it is designated as a "recreation area," that term does not adequately reflect the property's value as an ecological landscape. I've heard "Sauk Prairie Conservation Area" as a potential substitute. I'm sure there are others, but stay away from "recreation area." Otherwise, this will look a LOT like Bong!

Thank you for considering my –hopefully constructive—suggestions for improving the Draft Master Plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. As a colleague of mine says repeatedly, "We have one chance to do it right. Let's do it right, or forever pay the price." The SPRA is a property near and dear to me and to many of us who live in the area, and we ask that you do it right. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Charlie Luthin