

Transcript from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Public hearing on the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area draft master plan and environment impact statement

September 10, 2015 – River Arts Center, Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

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0:36:35

Hess: The first person that I have to speak is Laura Olah, followed by Dave Considine, followed by Frank Nobile.

0:36:54

Laura Olah: Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight on behalf of Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger. The Badger property, which contains a mix of grasslands, scattered oak woodlands and farm fields, certainly has some of the largest populations of grassland birds in southern Wisconsin. 103 bird species have been recorded here, of which 21 have critical status in our state. The bird list is impressive for an area of this size, especially the numbers and diversity of grassland and shrubland birds, such as is the Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Bobolink, Upland Sandpiper, Orchard Oriole, Bell's Vireo, many more. Grassland and shrubland species are in more need of management than any other group of birds in Wisconsin and include most of the critical species found at Badger. And where there are birds there are birdwatchers. Wisconsin ranks second nationally in the number of people considered birders. Fully one third of residents sixteen and older travel to watch birds or spend time watching and identifying birds near their homes. Nationally there are about 47 million birders or about 20% of the population. Birders spent an estimated \$41 billion on trip related expenditures and equipment, generated a total economic impact of \$106 billion, supported more than 600,000 jobs, and generated \$13 billion in state and federal tax revenues. However all of these positive ecological and economic benefits of bird conservation require a quiet sound environment. Acoustic interference from noise can hamper the detection of songs by birds of the same species. Noise can make it more difficult for birds to establish and maintain a territory, attract mates and maintain pair bonds. This in turn may reduce breeding success in noisy environments. Scientific studies have documented a correlation between high urban noise levels and songbird diversity. The more noise, the fewer the number of bird species. Unfortunately the Draft Master Plan proposes on-off motorcycles, sport rocketry and possible shooting range. These particular uses stand apart as inherently loud and disruptive and therefore undermine the conservation goals for the property. Moreover, these uses are not compatible with other desirable recreational activities including biking, family picnics, snowshoeing, hiking, including the Great Sauk Trail. As a result while there is great public support for the conservation goals outlined for the property, there is great objection to the introduction of these particular uses. Already more than 800 email messages have been sent to the DNR supporting proposed goals for ecological restoration and habitat management, but objecting to on-off road motorcycles and sport rocketry. Certainly these objections should come as no surprise. Quiet nature-based recreation is in keeping with promises made in the Badger Reuse Plan, reached through consensus at all levels of government including the DNR and the public. This plan is our collective commitment to each other and to the land and to those that will follow. Together let's make sure that future generations will hear meadowlarks not motors on the Great Sauk Prairie. Thank you.

0:40:36

Hess: Thank you Laura. We've got a couple technical issues here... Representative Considine, thank you. And you're not going to be subject to the three-minute rule.

0:41:11

Representative Considine: I hope I take a lot less than that. I remember when I was coaching track and I had to run those timers. It was like, kid, come and run this for me will you? Tell me how to reset this thing... At any rate, that's a different story. I wanted to first of all thank you for what I think is a really well done, comprehensive plan. I think you listened to consumers very appropriately. But I do want to encourage that we look very carefully at that statement, "the protection and restoration of the unique species in this area and its habitat." That is the main concern. And I have some concerns about a few of the uses that I'm not sure are totally compatible with protection and restoration. Partially because, as you know we just passed a budget that was pretty insufficient in a whole lot of areas as far as I'm concerned, but I'm really concerned about enforcement, and especially with some of those activities with the lack of funds that you've been given to try to have appropriate enforcement for some of these. Thank you.

0:42:25

Hess: Thank you very much. So next we have Frank Nobile, followed by Bill Stehling, followed by Mary Carol Solum. Thank you. You guys are going to just laugh at me about this by the time this is all done because I'm just horrible with it.

0:42:56.

Frank Nobile: Hi. Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Frank Nobile, however you want to pronounce it. I'm the president of the Wisconsin Rocketry Tripoli Association. We've been flying model rockets in the State of Wisconsin at Bong Recreational for the past 15 or 20 years, and we're just looking for an opportunity to have this region here to have our young people get involved in rocketry, especially in the engineering field that we usually sponsor and represent. What we do, we encourage young people for model rocketry. We encourage, and we sponsor universities throughout the State of Wisconsin and Illinois in competition model rocketry and the new engineering ideas that they can come up with that they can carry on in their future endeavors. We have competitions with the First Nation people that are in engineering degree universities throughout the Midwest to come to competitions so they can gain an idea of aeronautics. In the past years of doing this and being involved in it and running a safety instructional sound hobby and for enthusiasts that we've been working with the DNR down in southeastern Wisconsin has been a very positive attitude for the users of the park and the management and we have always been aware of all the nestings, of migration, that we did not, you know, hold an event or, we respected the area and always cleaned up after certain situations. Otherwise, I want to thank you for the opportunity to at least show an example where we could hold an event up in this area because I do believe that rocketry should be in a safe area - not in a church parking lot, a school parking lot or someone's back yard. And a park of this caliber, I think, will do very fine. Thank you.

0:45:21

Hess: Thank you, Frank. Bill Stehling, followed by Mary Carol Solum, followed by Charlie Luthin.

0:45:37:4.

Bill Stehling: Bill Stehling, Sauk City, representing myself. Proposed uses of the property should not adversely impact or compromise the mission and vision for other property owners, nor should they impact the lives and livelihoods of adjacent residents. Why does the Wisconsin DNR not use the Badger Reuse Plan to collaborate, to create jointly with potential land owners at the time, and stakeholders, local municipalities, school districts, Sauk City, the State University system and a broad range of NPO's from Badger History Group, CSWAB, the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance, Prairie Enthusiasts, groups interested in hunting, handicap hunting, and youth hunting. One vision and goal was to heal the land, the people, the community. Another was to collaborate, collaboratively manage the property as a single entity, with low-impact users described then by the National Park Service as hiking biking and primitive camping. Those were definitions written in the transfer documents from the National Park Service to the WDNR. Please define your terms - which you've done a better of job tonight - the special event staging area, associated special use permits, this may be done at Bong, but here this may lead to exclusive and incompatible uses, and user as well as a land owner conflicts. This is a huge piece of property surrounded by farms with livestock, residential developments. The people have endured contaminated private drinking wells, explosions during the cleanup of road tubes and foundations. Their houses have been shaken and basements cracked. Quiet is a valuable commodity around the world. If you are Type III Management classification is defined by the noise of dual-sport motorcycles, and model and high-powered rocketry -- these are not low-impact recreational activities. These will impact the missions of other landowners and also the low-impact recreational activity users. The Badger lands should not, and must not, be a sacrifice zone for incompatible user groups as has happened at the former Bong Airbase. The master plan states, the management area designations within the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area are 62% recreational use instead of habitat and native community management, which is 34%. Yet, WDNR, based on their own research advises providing extensive and contiguous grassland for the threatened and endangered grassland and cavity nesting birds. Scott Klug held a commission here and in seven weeks announced 2% of the property would be for threatened and endangered species, and the commissioners wanted to know how those species should know where they should live. This triggered the demand for a facilitated reuse process. WDNR participated in a reuse process, and now they have received their land, they state only a half percent of the property is classified as native community management area. 17 acres. This demonstrates a disproportionate emphasis on recreational management over habitat management. The magazine and rocket area...

0:49:36

Hess: Bill... Bill, thank you. Next we have Mary Carol, followed by Charlie Luthin, followed by Rob Nurre.

0:49:46

Mary Carol Solum: My name is Mary Carol Solum and I am a resident of Sauk County. I've been involved with the Badger project for 20+ years. I am speaking as an individual. Years ago I was fortunate to meet an outstanding land-use planner who said the land will tell you what it needs to be. It's up to you to listen. Wise words. The DNR draft master plan reflects the change in the department since the agreement for the Badger Reuse Plan and nine values signed in 2002 and the agreement signed in 2004 with the National Park Service to obtain the land. Today's DNR is run mainly by politics and less by science, which is made obvious by the fact that so many science-driven positions have been eliminated, as well as environmental protection regulations being weakened. If rockets, a shooting range, ATVs, and off-road motorcycles were in the application, would the National Park Service have given approval? I think not. That is not restoration and low-impact uses that were presented and agreed to in the application. Two years ago the DNR staff assured us, we as citizens would be involved in the planning process and kept informed during the master plan creation. The Dairy Forage, the Ho Chunk Nation and the Badger Oversight Management Commission would be involved since the agreement called for the Badger landholding to be

managed as a whole, with compatible restoration, low-impact usage. How many informational meetings has the DNR had with Dairy Forage, the Ho Chunk Nation, BOMC, and the public during the process? As far as I know, zero. Nada. Zip. Over and over from the multiple DNR staff, we have heard about the shortage of staff to supervise the property and the shortage of money to complete the project. Then why would activities that require a great deal of supervision, and cause considerable damage, even be considered in the plan? And my comments of the plan, you've got a 70% of the plan right. Restoration and low-impact recreation. The 30% is the damaging risk elevating areas that are totally incompatible for the land, the adjoining Badger property owners, and the surrounding neighbors. This 30% mess can easily be corrected. Listen to the land. Listen to the people. Take the lead.

0:52:36

Hess: Thank you Mary Carol. We have Charlie Luthin, followed by Rob Nurre, followed by Donna Schmitz.

0:52:53

Charlie Luthin: Good evening. My name is Charlie Luthin. I'm a conservation biologist and avid outdoorsman. I live in nearby Lodi. And I'm here representing myself. In 1998 I was hired by the Army to help develop an ecological restoration plan for 1300 acres of the then Badger Army Ammunition Plant. Now much of that land is owned by us, the citizens of Wisconsin. To begin talking about the plan, I think this is a really good plan. With a few modifications it can be an excellent plan. The DNR staff is to be commended for doing a really good job at looking at the criteria and coming up with a difficult and useful plan. I'm thrilled that ecological restoration is a major theme in the Draft Master Plan for the state land, but I feel that the priorities in the plan are frequently upside-down. Recreation often trumps habitat restoration in the plan, and some proposed recreation is incompatible with restoration. Motorcycles, mountain bikes and horses will continuously disturb the soil, and contribute to soil erosion, while simultaneously spreading invasive species into what will become a healing prairie and savanna landscape. The whole of the Badger property's been formally designated as a Wisconsin Important Bird Area, one of 100 some IBA in the state, due to its extensive grasslands, which support rare grassland bird species. Yet conflictive and incompatible recreational activities such as rocketry, motorcycles, and year-round dog training, which entail the use of firearms, are planned for important known grassland bird nesting sites. Quiet recreation has been given a backseat to noisy recreation in the plan. I urge the DNR to revise the plan to support considerably more silent recreation, shorten the proposed hunting season to exclude the best fall and spring months for outdoor silent recreation, never propose a shooting range for the site, limit a snowmobile trail to the periphery, plan lots more hiking trails and reduce the noise for those of us who seek solace and quiet solitude in the large, grassy landscape. Finally, I would suggest re-naming the property "Sauk Prairie Conservation Area" to fully acknowledge its ecological importance. Thank you.

0:55:48

Hess: Thank you, Charlie. Next we have Rob Nurre, followed by Donna Schmitz followed by Bill Wenzel.

0:55:55

Rob Nurre: I'm Rob Nurre the current president of the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. The Alliance has been actively engaged in the planning for the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands since the plant was decommissioned in the 1990s. In 2001, we served on the Badger Reuse Committee which agreed on the values for the future of the property, and since 2006 the Alliance has been an active member of the Badger Oversight Management Commission. The Commission's mission is to ensure that the vision of the Badger Reuse Plan is realized. We have worked alongside with the DNR throughout this planning

process. The Alliance's long-held priority for the Badger lands are the restoration of the native prairie and savanna communities, and to provide for compatible, low-impact recreational opportunities to allow visitors to enjoy and learn from the natural and cultural features of this land. The DNR's draft master plan for its portion of Badger lands, the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, calls for the restoration of the nearly all of the 3400 acres to native prairie, savanna and oak woodland communities. In collaboration with land conservation efforts on other public and private lands of Badger, and in the surrounding area, the southern portion of Sauk County will include a vast mosaic of thousands of acres of conservation lands that will provide crucial habitat for many native animals and plants. This will attract visitors from around the world to experience these landscapes. The Alliance commends the DNR for its commitment to this restoration work, and looks forward to being a partner in these efforts. However, some of the recreational components of the draft master plan are troubling. The plan appears to be based, at least in part, on the idea that the SPRA is a vast empty area which should be able to accommodate a wide variety of recreation that the DNR and other interests believe should be available in the region. Some of the proposals appear to disregard the unique natural and cultural history of the Badger lands, and the agreements that have been made during the Badger Reuse Process, and the DNR's own commitments. Off-road, or dual-sport motorcycles, even when used on only a limited number of days, simply are not low-impact or compatible with restoration. The same is true I believe of rocketry. The only very generally defined special events that will be allowed are of concern. If properly managed, off-leash dogs, dog training, mountain biking and equestrian trails may be considered to be low-impact and compatible with restoration. All of these, as well as all other recreational uses, must be carefully monitored to ensure that their cumulative impacts do not undo the important work of restoring the natural landscape. The Alliance will be submitting detailed written comments to assist in improving this draft master plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. We look forward to an improved plan, which follows the DNR's commitment to low-impact recreation, and includes meaningful collaboration with other Badger land owners. And a plan which we can fully support when it goes before the DNR's Board for approval. Thank you.

0:59:04

Hess: Thank you, Rob. Up next we have Donna Schmitz, followed by Bill Wenzel, followed by Robert Horwich.

0:59:19

Donna Schmitz: Hi. Thanks for the opportunity. I really don't have anything written out. I don't agree with having rocketry. I think the DNR has agreed prior, that the Badger property would be low-impact recreational only. I'll hold you to your word. Hopefully, that is good. The one thing I would like to say, and it's just a quote that I ran across the other day, and it was by President Lyndon Johnson, and he stated "If future generations are to remember us with gratitude, rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them with a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it." Thank you.

1:00:09

Hess: Thank you, Donna. Bill Wenzel, followed by Robert Horwich, followed by Jeff Nass.

1:00:21

Bill Wenzel: Thank you. And for a little bit of background, I was interested in the Badger situation from the time I got on County Board, which is about 1997, and somewhere between 97 and 98, I went down to meet with the governor's office to see if Tommy Thompson was interested at all in the state acquiring the recently surplused Badger property. It turns out that he was and appointed a representative from the DNR and then shortly

thereafter, became part of the Badger Reuse Process. And as part of that process, as it unfolded, I was a representative from Sauk County and I was also chairing the Property and Land Use Committee at the time. As a result of that, I'm sure you guys are aware of, the Department of Natural Resources went through the Badger Reuse Process, which resulted in the Badger Reuse Plan. As a result of that, the Department of Natural Resources was a full member of the Badger Reuse Commission and as such signed the Badger Reuse Plan which called for, and I quote, "the Badger property is to be managed as a single unit." That is to say, all the properties not just the DNR portion, but also Dairy Forage and the Ho Chunk portion. The managers and owners 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. I wish that you'd have done that. Recently, we've seen the ignoring and shunning of Badger Oversight Management Commission, a group that you had collaboratively created, along with a bunch of other entities - local governments, county governments - of which I was a part of. And that has not represented in as much involvement by citizenry and local government as it could've been. We had set up a process, and I'm sure you're aware of that process, in which prospective users could come before the Planning and Land Use Committee of that department, that commission, and present their propositions and their uses and get publicly and holistically looked at. That has not happened either. So the uses that have cropped up and are a big surprise in the draft master plan, they just like sprung out of nowhere in the view of the local community. And that is not good. The part that you did get right, and I'm really appreciative of that, I was pleased to hear that Badger is really good at two things and I'm totally in agreement with this. The deep woods to prairie transition. You've got it exactly. You hit it right on the head. The other thing is big block habitats management. You absolutely hit it right on the head. Those two things are what you need to keep in your sights as you look forward to this plan. Don't try to do too much on too little property. 3800 acres isn't all that much property. In cooperation with your neighbors, you can expand that to 7500 acres, and that was the reason that we wanted you to manage this holistically. So, rocketeering, off-road motorcycles, shooting range - just, I'm sorry, don't belong there. And of course, I think everybody knows that. They have not been a part of the planning process, they've not been a part of any of the BOMC's history at all, and it's just popped up, wherever. I don't demand uses...

1:04:21

Hess: OK. Yet your time is up. So thank you very much. Just one quick note in regards to the microphone, please feel free to adjust it up and down so that everybody can hear your comments, and we are recording all the comments. So, feel free to adjust that, so it's right at your mouth. So we have Robert Horwich, and then Jeff Nass, followed by Michael Putnam.

1:04:51

Robert Horwich: My name is Rob Horwich. I'm director of an organization called Community Conservation Network in Wisconsin and in 14 other countries besides the U.S. And we found that communities have been the most consistent in the strongest conservationists. And, in a sense, that's what I'm directing because governments can be very fickle. As our government is right now. And I'm surprised, unfortunately, that the DNR has become fickle and added things that were not in the original plan. There is an 18 year history. Many of the people here are part of it. I don't remember if you were or not. And people have already explained the Badger Reuse Committee that was formed and now all these things that have been added since. Motorized, ATVs, dual-sport motorcycles, snowmobiles, a shooting range, special paintball events, and rockets. They have no place. They are not conducive to the mission. And the mission of the - the first sentence of the mission of the DNR is to protect and enhance our natural resources. So you guys got to go back there and remember what that is. Thank you.

1:06:08

Hess: Thank you, Robert. Up next we have Jeff Nass, followed by Michael Putnam, followed by Wendy Carlson.

1:06:17

Jeff Nass: Hi. My name is Jeff Nass. I'm the executive director of Wisconsin FORCE, which is Wisconsin Firearm Owners, Ranges, Clubs and Educators. We're the NRA's chartered state association. I'm speaking today in support of putting a range in there. I personally believe that the range would have a low-impact, as it would be a very small portion of the property. Less than half a percent would be utilized for a range similar to the one the DNR had put in at the park at Yellowstone. Ranges are the place that education, training, safety, and marksmanship are practiced and learned. It's something that helps every citizen in the state, because we want, naturally, we want all our hunters and all our concealed carry holders to be safe and proficient, if ever needed, that would be the case. As far as the low-impact, again, it's a very small portion. The range that would be strategically placed on the property to better facilitate all the other activities and all the other wildlife areas that you have designated. So we strongly support you putting a range in that's needed in this part of the state. The northern part of the state has quite a few public ranges. The southern part is very, very sparse as far as the amount of ranges available for public use. Again thank you for having me speak today.

1:07:41

Hess: Thank you, Jeff. And again I apologize if I mangle names. Up next we have Michael Putnam, followed by Wendy Carlson, followed by George Meyer.

1:07:55

Michael Putnam: Thank you for this opportunity. I'm a conservation biologist, invasive species specialist, and ornithologist. I speak for myself. I live here in Sauk City. I've been following the Badger Reuse Process since 1997. I wholeheartedly support activities congruent with the Badger Reuse Plan, which DNR and other state agencies helped craft. I wholeheartedly support the visionary restoration of oak savanna and prairie throughout the entire property, because these are two of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. I support low-impact recreation. I support reclassifying all the land as Native Community Management Areas. I oppose higher impact uses - equestrian trails, mountain bike trails, model rocketry, off-road motorcycles, dog trial area, and shooting range. I will reference DNR's statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, or SCORP, in my comments. SCORP ID's (identifies) more than 22 million participants who could engage in low-impact recreation at Badger. Higher impact uses, such as mountain biking, off road driving, rocketry and horseback riding, SCORP only identified fewer than 3.6 million participants. I oppose equestrian trails because they fragment endangered ecosystems. They'll pass through the substrated bare native soil, and horse manure contains seeds of invasive plants that thrive in disturbed soils. Don't put these in our prairies and savannas. The National Association of Rocketry website ID's (identifies) only 5 rocketry clubs in Wisconsin, none within one hour of Badger. Don't allow this small group to disrupt the quiet sports practiced by large numbers of recreationalists. The NAR safety code cautions against the risk of grass fires. Controlled burns are important in prairie management. Uncontrolled burns will be a PR headache for DNR. I oppose the dog training area. The plan highlights how the perimeter fence will keep wandering dogs out of the neighbors' property, but no fence will keep unleashed dogs out of one the two highest priority sites for grassland birds identified by DNR. There's no fence to keep the wandering dogs and trainers from trespassing on Dairy Forage land. The Badger Reuse Plan resulted from nine months of hard work to create good neighbor policies for future land owners at Badger. Putting an unleashed dog in area M, surrounded by Dairy Forage land is not a good neighbor approach to the collaborative management called for by the Reuse Plan. I urge

you to follow the Badger Reuse Plan. Be a good neighbor with the other land owners at Badger. Don't undermine their interests and activities. By all means, restore and rehabilitate prairie, oak savanna, an ecological continuum to Devil's Lake. That effort will provide global benefits beyond Sauk County in Wisconsin, and will gain DNR worldwide recognition and praise. Thank you.

1:11:11

Hess: Up next we have a Wendy Carlson, followed by George Meyer, followed by Mary Larson.

1:11:35

Wendy Carlson: Hi. I'm a local resident and I have been following what's been happening up at Badger land for over 2 decades. So I've been a part and heard a whole lot of things. I just want to say that for Badger, I feel, conservation should trump recreation every time. Badger needs to be a sanctuary of peace and quiet. There aren't many of those to be found anywhere. A place for wildlife to thrive and survive, especially, with special emphasis on the grassland birds. And also for people to be out in the natural world and hear natural sounds - like bird sounds, grass rustling, leaves rustling in the breeze. So having said all that, of course you know I'm going to say I don't support the use of dual-use motorcycles, or high-power rocketry. I also feel the shooting range is a big mistake. I'm very disappointed to hear it has raised its ugly head after it was so badly shot down, pun intended. But the first time it was brought up, I know there was an overwhelming negative response from local area people against a shooting range on the Badger property. I just feel, I have a concern, about overall the DNR having low staffing levels at this time, and the ability to monitor some of these maybe less safe activities. How much oversight can there be? I think maybe having so many special events can be an administrative nightmare. For the plan, how about people that are used to coming, you know, are they just going to have to check the website to see if the horse trails are closed? Or there's dog trials going on? Or the rocket people are there? I mean this is just, kind of crazy to keep track of, and it can add up to a lot of time, being devoted to stuff (?) and people just coming in. I'm not in favor of a stocked pheasant hunt. I don't hunt myself, but I know people who do and they consider that maybe somewhat un-sporting. You know, it's like a canned hunt. These birds are domestic caged birds don't have a chance. I also don't think anybody financially around here needs trapping, and I think it's unnecessary cruelty to animals. I'm concerned about dogs getting into the traps, and so forth. Again, I just feel that this should be a sanctuary for the people who need some peace and quiet. Animals also. And you guys are the Department of Natural Resources. Like someone who spoke before me, I just want to say that that's your mission, not supporting all kinds of other things – clubs and hobbies and whatnot. You are tasked with preserving and conserving the natural resources of our state. Thank you.

1:14:30

Hess: Thank you, Wendy. Up next George Meyer, followed by Mari Larson, followed by Don Hammes.

1:14:41

George Meyer: Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to present information about the proposed uses for the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area on behalf of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and its 195 hunting, fishing and trapping affiliated clubs, including 17 dog-oriented organizations such as the Wisconsin Federation of Field Trial Clubs. Specifically, the Federation strongly supports the proposed uses and seasons for hunting, fishing and trapping on the SPRA. In addition, we greatly appreciate the fact that the department included a 78 acre Class II dog training area in the plan. However, the current proposed training area near locator point 18 S is not suitable for dog training because of its great overgrowth, mature trees and brush. We are submitting a map with this

testimony, I'll be sending in writing, indicating a more preferred location for an 80 acre Class II training area near locator points 15 S and 16 S. I'd be glad to make a field visit with DNR field staff to the site to show the specific area in question. We also recognize that, in fact, Class II areas don't allow field training during the bird breeding and nesting season, so that's compatible. We also recognize that you have not included Class I trial area in this, and we recognize that fact. We're asking, however, that an area be designated for four weekends a year for dog trialing area. I will have a map to show those locations. Four weekends being any combination of the first two weekends in April or any in September, or in the first two weekends in October. Lastly the Federation strongly supports that the SPRA only be used for passive recreational low-impact usage, as it always was intended to be used for, and thereby, opposes the use of rockets, motorcycles on the property. On a personal note, I was involved in the petition, as the secretary, to the Park Service where in fact the use of this area was intended to be a low-impact area. My deputy secretary at that time, Darrell Bazzell, served on the drafting of the Reuse Plan and the goal was to have it be low-impact, not having uses such as rocketry. We have extensive experience at Bong as dog clubs, and there are serious conflict issues there and public safety issues. While we're not against rocketry, there has to be a proper place for it and we don't consider SPRA to be one of those. Thank you very much.

1:17:30

Hess: Thank you, George. We have Mari Larson followed by Don Hammes, and then followed by Michael John Jaeger... Mary? Mary? Going once. Going twice. Thank you, Mary. Please submit your comments in writing. Don Hammes, followed by Michael John Jaeger, followed by Ron Lins.

1:18:40

Don Hammes: My name is Don Hammes and I am here today to speak for the Sierra Club John Muir Chapter, headquartered in Madison. The Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter is an organization of 15,000 members and supporters from throughout Wisconsin working to promote clean energy and protect land and water resources. There are many things that are favorable about the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area draft master plan, including plans to restore hydrology in the northern portion of the DNR property and the proposed use of grazing animals to control shrubs and forbs in several different areas. What I wish to do today however is point out several areas of concern to our organization. Chief among these concerns is the fact that according to the master plan, 1,647 acres of DNR land is planned to be designated oak openings, while 1,519 acres it is planned to be designated grasslands. The focus and the dream of most citizens that are interested in Sauk Prairie Recreational Area has always been to restore the majority of the land to grassland prairie for both historic reasons and to restore, maintain, and enhance grassland bird populations. Particularly grassland bird species of greatest conservation need. While oak openings are appropriate in the area below the Baraboo Hills, the total of land planned for oak openings is not in concert with the overwhelming public preference for prairie grassland. A second related area of concern regards the statement on page 15 of the master plan that says "the department's desire is to provide high-quality experiences and to focus on those activities for which the site is particularly well-suited, not to include all possible recreational opportunities." In reality many more than the 5 statutorily defined recreational activities of hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, and cross-country skiing are planned for SPRA. These additional activities include mountain biking, trail biking, dual-sport motorcycles, horseback riding, rocketry, snowmobiles, horse-drawn buggies and carts, snowshoeing, dog sledding, skijoring, dog trials, agricultural cropping, and a wide range of special events. The master plan also notes that the potential exists for a shooting range, geocaching, paintball courses, dog parks, community gardens and even Army National Guard helicopter training. Add to this 15 miles of trails, 10 miles of hiking trails, 5 miles of mountain bike trails, and 15 miles of roads, and SPRA will be a busy place indeed. In fact, there are few recreational activities that are not included in the SPRA master plan. This is not what the people's vision is for this land and it should not be DNR's vision. Another area of concern is the deception of how much DNR

land will be devoted to farmland. Presently 145 acres are dedicated to farmland and cropping. But time and time again the plan mentions that additional lands will be devoted to cropping and other ag uses to prevent the spread of invasive plants and shrubs. The amount of ag land planned is not specified. Once additional funding is secured, the plan points out that Dairy Forage Research plans to construct a new research complex that will include an additional 450 cows to bring the total, not counting cows and heifers, to 800 cows. Additional forage crops will be needed to support increased herd size and since the DNR land is already being used to support the DFRC operations the question comes up - how much additional DNR land will be used to support Dairy Forage Research and for how long? The widespread use of herbicides, insecticides on DNR ag lands also needs more consideration in relation to soil contamination, contaminants and wildlife, and health dangers to people using the property for recreation. The EIS is totally lacking in this area. A fourth area of concern is the apparent lack of water availability for human consumption, horses, dogs, wildlife and birds, since nearly all the groundwater is still contaminated at levels not safe for human consumption. Ponds, seepage areas, creeks, and all standing water collection points need to be considered contaminated and unsafe. The EIS is truly weak in this area. Army plans for a new municipal water system are not approved by local governments and local sentiment is not to support this plan. The Army even states that before any groundwater is used, they must be consulted. A fifth area of great concern is the lack of staffing dedicated to land management, restoration, maintenance and law enforcement. The DNR has well over 3000 acres of land, with more than 24 possible recreational activities, and no funds for staff...

1:24:57

Hess: Don I'm going to have to stop you there. I didn't hear the second beeper go off. And you are past your three minutes. To be fair to everybody in the room, we need to keep it to the 3 minutes. And we do have your written comments. Thank you very much. That was my fault I apologize for that. I'll have to listen a little bit better. Michael John, followed by Ronald Lins, followed by John Keefe.

1:25:24

Michael John Jaeger: Good evening. My name is Michael John Jaeger and I'm the vice president of Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. WSO is an active, volunteer, non-profit organization that was established back in the day when the Badger site was still on active agricultural landscape. We have over 1400 members throughout Wisconsin and they have actually been quite active in the Baraboo Hills area for quite a long time. Our mission is to promote the study, enjoyment and conservation of Wisconsin birds. The first speaker tonight did a pretty good job of laying out how large of an activity birdwatching is in Wisconsin and nationwide. The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that over 1.6 million Wisconsinites enjoy watching birds at some level. WSO also has an active conservation committee, and my comments today are on behalf of that committee. Back in August 2013, we provided DNR with some comments during an earlier phase of the master plan's development. Those focused on the unique values of the Badger site to Wisconsin birds, along with the exceptional opportunity to increase critical bird habitat this area. We also expressed concerns that some of the possible recreational uses of the site could significantly degrade this opportunity. We are very pleased that the Draft Master Plan proposes considerable grassland and oak opening habitat management and ecological restoration throughout the property. Restoring the extensive grasslands and savanna habitats that once occupied the site would be a huge benefit to the rare and declining bird species. Our previous comments focused on the possible use of Badger for ATV trails and the shooting range. We commend DNR for having excluded those potential recreational activities from the draft master plan. We also hope that they will not somehow make their way back into the master plan as you continue your planning process. The draft plan does however contain another seemingly high-impact potential use which might be inappropriate from a bird conservation perspective. Dual-use or dual-purpose motorcycles are noisy and fast-moving, and while this is why they can actually be so much fun, it's also why they are very disruptive to birds

and other wildlife. While we would prefer to see these motorcycles entirely out of the master plan, if they are included we strongly urge the DNR not allow their use during the bird breeding season. We will be filing some additional written comments, and I want to thank you for providing the forum today for our initial thoughts.

1:28:05

Hess: Thank you, Michael John. Ronald Lins, followed by John Keefe, and then followed by Curt Meine.

1:28:16

Ronald Lins: Thank you. I live on County G south of the Badger plant, and I'm the chairman of the town of Prairie Du Sac, and I'm also have been the co-chair of the Restoration Advisory Board since it was formed. I like to think that that group has a little bit to do with how Badger looks today. The off-road motorcycle setting is located fairly close to the two subdivisions in the Town of Prairie du Sac, and I think that that use will be just about as noisy as the ATV track would have been. The rocketry area is located in-line with the Sauk Prairie Airport and that could impact the airport. This is one chance to create an area that would allow visitors to see and experience natural settings that our ancestors saw when they settled in this area. Motorcycles and rockets are a modern day hobby. Let's keep this area of Badger a thing of the past. Thank you.

1:29:21

Hess: Thank you, Ronald. Up next is John Keefe, followed by Curt Meine, followed by Frank Olah.

1:29:34

John Keefe: Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on the draft plan. I'm John Keefe, president of Prairie Bluff Eagle Council. Prairie Bluff is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the habitat areas for wintering and nesting bald eagles throughout the Sauk-Prairie area, on and off the River. In general, I think it's fair to say we are very supportive of the compatible low-impact, passive uses that have been described by many of the other speakers here tonight. When we first organized as an organization 25 years ago Prairie Bluff focused on wintering eagles because that's all there were in the area. It was not until after 2000, the early 2000s, about a dozen years ago, that nesting eagles in our area became numerous enough that we felt it appropriate to expand our conservation efforts to include these as part of the annual cycle as well. Since then, the number of nests in this area have increased rather dramatically. We have about six of them, right now, within about a 5 mile radius of where we are. And, who would've thought? Who would've thought? That that would've happened? If you include Sauk County, Dane County, Columbia County, and all of those, we probably have closer 20 or 25 nests. What's going to happen in the next 25 years? I think the lesson to be learned from this unanticipated development of year-round eagle activity in our area here, is to constantly ask the question "what if?" And one of the ones that scared me are long range plans that become rigid and fixed in place. What if future DNR staffers and decision-makers really don't recognize changes that occur that require changes in the plan? What if the planned recreational activities at Badger impede eagle habitat? In whatever season? What if eagles are disturbed? What changes can be made? Certain parts of the plan I think are very sensitive to the habitat and nature of eagles. Certainly, the decision to exclude ATVs and limit shooting ranges and some of these others are part of those things for which you need a pat on the back. But the rocket launch area that is talked about, however, raises a lot of questions. What if, someday in the future, god forbid, a rocket and an eagle collide out there? Improbable, yeah. Impossible? I wouldn't say so. And who here would want to handle the fallout for that? You speak of habitat management, I think in greater balance between a broader habitat management, more including the vegetation, and more of the wildlife habitat would be appropriate. You have a beautiful space out there. But it's not

necessarily all of the blend of recreational activities are compatible. Having something that I think is going to make it more compatible would be more appropriate. Using the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines, as distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, would be a start as far as eagles are concerned. But we can move on from there as well. Thank you.

1:33:03

Hess: Thank you, John. Up next Curt Meine, followed by Frank Olah, followed by Chris Hanson.

1:33:15

Curt Meine: OK, thank you. I'm Curt Meine. I live here in the Sauk City area and have been involved in the Badger Reuse Process for more than 18 years and was a member of the Badger Reuse Committee. Well, first, thanks to all the hard-working employees of the DNR. It's been a difficult task in a challenging time and we do, I know I certainly do, appreciate your efforts to bring this plan forward and help achieve the vision we played out in the Badger Reuse Committee report. The Reuse Committee Report called for all of the Badger landholders and stakeholders to work together and craft the future Badger. That would include and integrate four main uses – land restoration, agriculture, education and research, and recreation. So, it's through that lens that I've been following the planning, and I've read draft plan, and that's going to stick to that big picture the high level in my comments here. So we'll see how this current version respects the guidelines that we all agreed to in 2001, and how it advances our efforts to realize the vision. I'm very pleased to see the plan giving such high priority to the restoration of the prairie, savannas, oak woodlands, and wetlands on its portion of the Badger lands. We have a lot of work to do, obviously, on this, and the plan points us in a good direction. But I would like to see a little more emphasis on the need to develop partnerships to help make that happen. We heard that talked about today. And again, the especially the significance you've placed and recognized for grassland birds. I'm also very pleased to see the draft plan recognizes the great potential for conservation agriculture on the Badger lands. That wasn't there in your earlier version, and I'm just delighted to see the greater emphasis given to that. Again it reflects a fundamental part of what we called for in the Badger Reuse Plan. I'm also pleased to see the cultural values of the Badger lands recognized from the educational opportunities you've laid out. I think there's room for improvement in the draft plan, especially by working across jurisdictional boundaries with your neighbors and other partners. The site was obviously designated a recreation area, and recreation is the main focus of your plan. It's appropriate – that was one of the four primary uses we envisioned. Like others I have concerns over several specific activities. I'm not going to go into them - you've heard about them already. I'm going to submit that in a written comment. I share those concerns, and I will provide more detail. So, add it all up, it provides a pretty good plan for recognizing and advancing the values of the Reuse Committee Report. But, I would like to highlight in closing, what I see as the single most important statement of the Badger Reuse Committee. Value four of the final report of our committee called for the future uses that "contribute to the reconciliation and resolution of past conflicts." That principal is even more valid and important now than it was when we agreed to it almost 15 years ago. And I'd ask you to let that be the guide to all decisions that we make together about the future of this special place. Thank you.

1:36:40

Hess: Thank you, Curt. Up next we have Frank Olah, followed by Chris Hanson, followed by Terrence McCormick.

1:36:51

Frank Olah: I'm disappointed that the draft plan basically kicks the can down the road when it comes to the shooting range. I think the final plan should come right out and say that a shooting range is not a compatible use.

It's not compatible because it will negatively impact any hiking, biking, horseback riding trails within earshot. And depending on weather and wind conditions, those gunshots can be heard over 5 miles away. It's not compatible with endangered and high-risk birds and their nesting habits. It's not compatible with the values of the Badger Reuse Plan. The final master plan should acknowledge these incompatibilities and then recommend siting elsewhere. By the way there are already 17 shooting ranges within 30 miles of Badger. Thank you.

1:37:46

Hess: Thank you, Frank. Up next is Chris Hanson, followed by Terrence McCormick, followed by Chris Gabrielson.

1:37:56

Chris Hanson: Well, good evening. I'm Chris Hanson. I'm here representing myself. I live on east side of Badger, and, by way of background, I'm a former land and natural resource manager. I'm going to take a little bit different tact. You've had a lot of input about the potential uses and proposed uses, I'll provide some other comment in written form for that. However, my concern here tonight is access. And in looking at the proposed plan, there's only a single access from US 12. Any other access was easily dismissed in the plan, and I would suggest that the DNR go back and take another look at that. Of principal concern is the fact there is no access on the eastern side of the property. The majority of the DNR property is central and the east side of the former Badger area. The Town of Merrimac has repeatedly asked for access from the eastern side, and in fact there are over 200 residences between the Weigand's Bay area and Water's Edge area that would have no immediate access to that area. Those people are the ones that will, in fact, receive the impacts that were stated earlier. The noise. The dust. And so forth, that you were talking about. However, those people would have to literally drive, and I drove it the other day, right at 10 miles to get to the other side of the street. So in order to get to that serenity of the birds, we're going to have to get in our vehicles and drive 10 miles to enjoy that serenity. Now, I understand that there is some concern about controlling access, as there is within any fee area, that it could potentially be a shortcut between Hwy 78 and 12, but I would suggest that there are many management approaches that could be taken to mitigate those impacts. Also, I understand that Dairy Forage has a concern about conflicts with their operations. However, I would suggest 3 potential options that should be actively pursued by DNR. The first would be to go back to the negotiating table with Dairy Forage, and propose a public easement with the existing eastern gate near Inspiration Drive and Kilpatrick Drive that would limit that use only to the perimeter road going immediately north to the state DNR lands, and the proposed parking area. A lot could be accomplished through signage and education. I think you will get a lot of support for that, you would also get volunteer help to help work with the signage. If that's not successful with Dairy Forage, then I would suggest a limited easement approach. A limited easement would allow the Dairy Forage to shut the gate and limit access during periods of active operations. Another approach would be direct access off of 78 at Ruthie Badger Road. That's currently privately owned property, I took the liberty earlier this week to contact those owners, and they are open to discussions with the DNR about potential acquisition of that few acres that would give you direct access. And finally if none of those above were viable, to provide some kind of non-motorized access on the eastern side of the property. Thank you for your time.

1:41:34

Hess: Thank you, Chris. We have Terrence McCormick, followed by Chris Gabrielson, followed by Steve and Cathy Frisch.

1:41:46:9. Hello. My name is Terrence McCormick. I'm president of the Baraboo Range Preservation Association. We recently did a new strategic plan for the coming 2 ½ years and out of that, because of some limitations we have in terms of actually acquiring and purchasing easements, we decided to set our sights on training and youth,

the youth experience in the outdoors, visiting nature, and its true character. When I was younger I used to ride an adventure bike, and I've been on a rifle range, and I'm sure riding a horse is a lot of fun but I've never tried to ride anything that might kick me. But these are all about youth, youth will enjoy all of these activities, there is not a problem there. But not here. It seems that here we have one opportunity to restore the prairie to being a prairie with the transition into the wooded area on the north in Devils Lake State Park. And anything that tends to weaken that goal of restoring the prairie seems to be something that should not have found its way into the Badger, into this action plan... So I urge you to take a look at it and ask the question, does this support, or denigrate, the restoration of the prairie? I appreciate your time and the efforts to come forth on this, on your proposal. Thank you very much.

1:40:41

Hess: Thank you, Terrence. Up next Chris Gabrielson, followed by Steve and Cathy Frisch, followed by John Eric Allen.

1:43:52

Chris Gabrielson : Hello. My name is Chris Gabrielson. I live in Baraboo and I've been following the formation of this area for a few years now. As soon as I heard that there is going to be, possibly, single track mountain biking. I really appreciate that that's been included in the plan, along with anything else including the dual-sport motorcycles, the rocketry, I think you've put together a great plan that includes activities for everyone in the area, including birding and hiking. I do all those things and I think this is going to be a boon for the Sauk County area, the Sauk County businesses, and keep our families here doing activities and keeping the money in the community. We spend thousands of dollars every year driving to other communities to mountain bike, to hike, to ride ATVs, and to keep that money here and to keep us here and to keep our family doing those activities here I think is great. I don't know exactly how these work. Can I ask a question during this, or is this just for comment?

1:44:55

Hess: It's just for comment. I mean you can certainly ask a question. But we won't be providing any answerswe'll provide them as part of the master plan.

1:45:07

Gabrielson: I'll keep the question to myself, then. I just wanted to say thank you for all the work that you've done and I think there's a lot of people that are ready to help build these trails and the activities and things that are going to be available to our families. So thank you very much.

1:45:23

Hess: Thanks, Chris. Next we have Steve and Cathy Frisch, followed by John Eric Allen, followed by Bryan Much. All right, Kathy is speaking on behalf of Steve.

1:45:33

Cathy Frisch: I represent the County Line Snow Busters Snowmobile Club in Black Earth and Mazomanie and I'm here just to say that we're really excited that a snowmobile trail is included in SPRA. We support a permanent trail through SPRA that connects to the trail, the existing trail, on the outside of the park that exists today. And I'm a snowmobile enthusiast and I love the sport and I really enjoy seeing the beautiful area around here and getting out

on our trails and enjoying nature in the winter when most of us are tucked away at our homes. So we are very excited that this is part of the master plan and hope that it stays within there. And I just wanted to say I'm not here to say "no" to anybody. I'm not trying to say, "Your sport is bad. My sport is good." All those things. We're all taxpayers of the state. And I feel that it's really important that we find ways to find ways to enjoy this property together, because it's really going to be awesome. I'm very excited about what you've done so far and I really thank you for all the thought you've put into the plan.

1:46:54

Hess: Thank you, Cathy. Up next John Eric Allen, followed by Bryan Much, followed by Tim Lins.

1:47:08

John Eric Allen: Good evening. I'm here for myself. I speak for myself here. I have one major problem, and that's with the trail system. There just aren't enough hiking trails. Especially for young families with young children. I would never take that child on a horse trail or a bike trail. That means some of these restoration areas will be cut off from those people. And that's just not appropriate. This is supposed to be a place where young families and old folks or whatever to go there and commune with nature. Be there in its presence. And that's just not what's going happen here. You have horse trails there at the start, you just start overwhelming the whole thing. And the bike trails. I realize there's a couple of really nice horse stables in the area. In fact there's one right on the northern border. But, it's just, there's families that have horses, that's true. But, there's families that have ATVs and dirt bikes and guns. We're trying to keep those out of this. This is supposed to be about human beings interfacing with nature. Not a bunch of loud noises or big animals. They don't belong there. Thank you.

1:48:45

Hess: Thank you, John. Up next Bryan Much, followed by Tim Lins, followed by Suzanne Covoloskie. Again I apologize.

1:49:02

Bryan Much: Hi. I'm Bryan Much and I'm an advocate for trails, dual-sport motorcycling, and I know little bit about repurposing. I hadn't planned to speak, but I think I have some information to share that might give some useful perspective to some of the issues that are being talked about. Dual-sport people saw a lot of opportunity to ride here at this recreation area because they're pretty under-served in the region. There aren't any opportunities. There are a lot of other properties in the area that offer some of the uses that are proposed here. But there's no opportunity of off-highway motorcycles. So, we saw an opportunity here and now, in this version of the plan we are down to 6 days per year. With regards to repurposing, this isn't a new concept. I personally did a couple case studies that involved horse, hiking and mountain biking trails. I presented the case studies to the State Trails Council and the DNR because repurposing applies to all users, not just motorcycles. Repurposed mountain bikes could ride other trails, that aren't mountain bike trails. And that works really well. I heard the words "incompatibility and damage" with regard to sharing trails. You know we've got a proven history, where what has actually have taken place in other areas that shows that neither of these is a significant problem where we are doing repurposing. And motorcyclists have shown to be good partners concerning the trails that they use. With regards to noise, dual-sport motorcycles are street-licensed motorcycles. They're regulated just like cars and trucks. The same cars and trucks that we use on the property. There's sound limits. Dual sporters sound test to insure compliance at all events. The sound testing that we do before we let somebody participate in an event would also apply on this property as well. If you read the description in the proposed plan, the DNR has dual-sport

as well-regulated to ensure that no harm comes to any trail or the property itself. Constant noise from trucks and cars that use the nearby highway are probably more significant than anything that dual sporters will bring to the property, especially at only up to 6 days per year. In fact, we've got vehicles that would be driving on the property as part of their visit that might even have a greater impact. Regarding environmental issues, keep in mind we're not talking about creating a new trail here for dual sporters. We're simply allowing that the people that use that trail that day would be from a different group. So you'd have the same number of trail use days. Someone mentioned speed. You know this isn't a race way, it's a trail. Speed's really not an issue here. So, when it comes to sharing the comments, is using an already existing trail, for only up to 6 days a year, really too much to ask? Thank you.

1:51:50

Hess: Thank you, Bryan. Next we have Tim Lins, followed by Suzanne Covoloskie, followed by Wayne Schutte.

1:52:02

Tim Lins: Hello. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak tonight. I'm Tim Lins. I'm director of the Association of Sauk County Snowmobile Clubs. I represent Sauk County in the state level. I'm also president of the Plain-Hillcrest Snowmobile Club. And I also volunteer. I have 10 miles of trail that I put in myself and take care of. First off I want to thank you for clarifying the trail from the southern border, where it comes off the Great Sauk Trail, and within the perimeter of the property up to Burma Road. Just a couple things I'd like to add, there is a connection where the railroad, with the Great Sauk Trail will head to Merrimac, I want to make sure that's included in there, that we do have that connection going to Merrimac. And also when I approached other groups, the Badger Oversight Commission and the Great Sauk Trail, I've always expressed an interest that access to the scenic overlook, by the reservoir area. Our trail goes right by there. We will not be crossing any habitat to get to that trail, to the scenic overlook. And lastly, a couple things. The Association of Sauk County Snowmobile Clubs it's one of the older user groups in the area. We've been in business for 30 years. We have several hundred landowners that we work with and if we hadn't learned how to police ourselves and work with our landowners, we wouldn't be in business anymore. So, with that, I appreciate your time. Thank you very much.

1:53:27

Hess: Thank you, Tim. Up next we have Suzanne Covoloskie, followed by Wayne Schutte followed by Ed Krumenauer. Suzanne? Going once. Going twice. Thank you, Suzanne. Please be sure to submit any comments that you have. Wayne?

1:53:56:4.

Wayne Schutte: Thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak tonight. Frankly, this is an event that I thought would never happen. In 1969 I started as a fresh, green Park Ranger at Devil's Lake State Park and the powder plant was in full operation at that time. And I thought to myself at that point, what a great opportunity there may be some day to have this as a recreation area. I actually never thought it was going to happen. That's personal note. Tonight I'm here to advocate on behalf of a user group that has been mentioned but only briefly. I'm a horseman by hobby. I have been for over 40 years. I spent a lot of time trail riding and I noticed you have pictures of trail riders and you mentioned trail horseback riding in the plan. As I've gotten older, my knees have gotten worse and a lot of the people in my sport have changed from riding our horses to driving our horses with carriages and buggies. It is a very popular activity and is getting more and more popular. And I'm saddened to see that the horse-drawn carriages and buggies on equestrian trails would be limited to two events per year, or two weekends

per year. This just doesn't happen anywhere else in my experience. Where there are equestrian trails, carriages and buggies are allowed along with horseback riders. I tried to find out the reasoning behind that and I was cited two reasons, two lines of thought with that. One, that the trails may be not be compatible for buggies and carriages. Well, I would say that since it was stated earlier that the trails need to be constructed. If you're going to build the trails you can build so that they will accommodate any use, any horse and carriage use along with horseback riding. And along with that, if those trails are going to be maintained, you're going have to maintain the with power equipment, mowers, tractors, trucks, and so on. And I think I can speak to that with a certain amount of expertise. As I said in 1969 I started as a park ranger at Devils Lake State Park and I retired 35 years later having served all over the state of Wisconsin, including 11 years at Devils Lake and 11 years as a recreation specialist in the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway. I've built and I've maintained a lot of trails. And, the other thing that was cited for allowing horses and carriages only a couple of times per year, was the possible or perceived incompatibility between horseback riders and carriages. That just doesn't happen in my experience. It may happen, but it is so seldom that it is a negligible amount. In fact, I regularly attend one of the largest pleasure drives in the United States every fall in Kentucky at the Kentucky State Horse Park where there are a couple of hundred horses and carriages. It's called the National Drive. People are invited to come down there and drive in one of the Kentucky state parks. And people are encouraged to bring horses and ride horseback along with the carriages. So, it's just not a concern. It doesn't need to be limited. The horses and carriages, and buggies and carriages are not an event, like the motorcycle races or motorcycle rallies. Or competitive event. They are a lot of us that like to just go out there and take our horses and carriages and drive just for the fun of it, on the spur of the moment. My wife and I do that on a regular basis, as do a lot of friends of ours. So, I'd like your consideration to give us more time out there.

1:57:59

Hess: Thank you, Wayne. Up next, Ed Krumenauer, followed by Jim Meier, followed by Gail Lamberty.

1:58:09

Ed Krumenauer: Hi. And thank you for the opportunity to talk. My name is Ed Krumenauer from Prairie du Sac, I'm an adjoining property owner on the south side of Badger, and I'm speaking on behalf of myself. Two years ago, there was a lot of controversy about the ATVs and gun range. Many of the neighbors were very upset. River's Grove, Weigand's Bay, surrounding neighbors. So, some of them are still against the high noise levels. The shooting, it would be very disruptive. There's a lot of kids in the area, there's a lot of horses in the area on the farm south of us. And that's where the proposed high noise range would be. So I want you to keep this in mind for your next evaluation. That there is no gun range in the future. And, please, there are approximately 20 to 30 ranges within a 30 mile range, radius of this area already, gun ranges. And please, no dual sports, this is another high-impact, specifically on the south end of Badger again. And that's where it's going to affect the most people. Thank you for your time.

1:59:20

Hess: Thank you, Ed. Up next, Jim Meier, followed by Gail Lamberty, followed by Dave Lenoved.

1:59:42

Jim Meier: Hello. My name is Jim Meier and I'm with the Ashton Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club. A small club in Ashton, mostly made up of farmers and their families. And I just want to speak in support of having the trail access either to either the Great Sauk Trail, or an adjacent trail, snowmobile trail. I mean, last year we didn't open trails

for even a day, you can't get any more low-impact than that. Even on a good year, we're usually in the neighborhood of 20ish days or so in an average year that you would even use it. You use just that 15 foot slot to get from top to bottom, essentially, and we use it when it's cold and most people, most other people are not using the system. So, that's all I have. Thank you very much for your time.

2:00:31

Hess: Thank you, Jim. Up next, Gail Lamberty, followed by Dave Lenoved, followed by Kenneth Lange.

2:00:45

Gail Lamberty: My name is Gail Lamberty. I'm vice president of the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance and co-chair of the Badger Forward Committee. The mission of the Alliance is very simple; implement the Badger Reuse Report. However, for right now I would like us all to just stop. Stop for a moment. Let's take a breath. Let's step back. And remember why we are here tonight. Look at this room. Look at all these people that are here. Why are we here tonight? What are we doing here? ... We are here because the people of Wisconsin have been given an amazing gift. We have over 3,000 acres of land that has been obtained at no dollar cost. Let me repeat that. Not one dollar. Not a line item budget. No dollar cost. However there is an accounting purpose that will come due. The accounting is the responsibility to honor that so beautiful, so abused piece of property. You, WDNR, you are the spokespeople for the people of Wisconsin. And we thank you for that. We thank you, for along with the Alliance and 19 other members of the co-creators of the Badger Reuse Committee report. The State of Wisconsin actually had three of the 21 seats on that committee. Your role was huge. You created the nine values to guide the future of the property. You, your neighboring landowners, Ho Chunk, Dairy Forage and Bluff View Sanitary, said it's not about who owns which particular piece of property, we will manage this as a whole. Thank you for that promise. We thank you for being specific in your application to the National Parks Service. You said the property would be primarily for conservation and recreation. What an amazing opportunity. Thank you for your commitment to that landscape and thank you for that promise. We thank you for studying the property so carefully and so diligently in the 2012 property analysis. You said the best role for Badger was restoration with recreation that is compatible to restoration. That was a great promise. Thank you for that promise. Mother Earth thanks you for that promise. You put your signature on the line to documents that obtained this acreage with promises to the land, with promises to your neighboring land owners, and promises to the generations that will follow you. For over 10 years you have made promises to this land. And, you know, sometimes it's really just the poets who say it better than all the reports, all the meetings, all the discussions. "We have miles to go, and promises to keep. We have miles to go, and your promises to keep." Thank you.

2:04:41

Hess: Thank you, Gail. Up next, Dave Lenoved --- I'm sorry – thank you...

2:04:54

Dave Lenoved: I'd like to thank the DNR for being here. I'm glad to see all our neighbors and friends here. I just want to keep this short and simple. I would like to see non-motorized uses of the DNR, all of the Badger land. Some of the ideas that I have been reading about have dumbfounded me. Rocketry, helicopters, motorcycles; I don't understand how that can possibly fit with what people think this should be. There was a plan put together by the Badger Reuse Committee and that seems to have been thrown out the window and totally disregarded. That plan had the support and the input of the local community. There's some things that I think we should dismiss out of hand. A rifle range, which seems to be supported only by the NRA, and the DNR already is an agency which is

suspected of being politically influenced. Putting in a rifle range is not going to help their image, and I don't think it serves any purpose there. I think the DNR, or, excuse me, the NRA would have no trouble siting a rifle range in any number of locations around southern Wisconsin, including the basement of the capitol, if they should so desire. So, there was a plan, I don't know what became of it, but I'd like to quote Captain Jack Sparrow – "Stick with the plan." Thank you.

2:06:36

Hess: Thank you, Dave. Up next we have Kenneth Lange, followed by Patricia Kelly.

2:06:50

Ken Lange: My name is Ken Lange. I live in Baraboo, and I was a naturalist at Devils Lake State Park for 30 years, now retired and representing myself. One of my prouder achievements at the park was being responsible for the motorboat ban on Devils Lake. In 1970. I emphasized two criteria – safety and noise. Safety, because we counted up to 100 motorboats on the lake, 10 or so pulling water skiers at the same time, and noise because of the echoing quality of the three bluffs by the lake. I mention this because both ATVs and rockets, presumably up to the size of a human being, are being proposed for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. The vast majority of people will not be coming here for machine and rocket noise, but for peace and quiet. Noise pollution should not be allowed in the recreation area for 10 days, or for four days. It should not be allowed at all. I urge you to disallow ATVs and rocketry in the recreation area. And thank you very much for all your efforts on this plan, and thank you for being able to speak.

2:08:02

Hess: Thank you, Kenneth. Up next we have Patricia Kelly, followed by Peter, boy I'm terrible at reading hand writing as well... looks like Schmitz ?

2:08:18

Patricia Kelly: Thank you for being here. I did not prepare anything because I had no intention of saying anything, but I feel like I need to now, and I'm just going to try to speak from my heart. I was there in the beginning 20 some years ago, I remember all of us gathering in Sauk, I think at the old library, and I remember forming a big circle, and everybody saying, "We're in this together, and we're going to figure this out". And I remember the DNR person at the time, and it was such an exciting time. And it was open to anyone who wanted to come and say they wanted to be a part of it. And so then everything moved on and the Reuse Plan came into being, which was low-impact recreation. There was never a discussion, never anyone that was asked to leave because they weren't welcome. And now I sit here and I'm watching the bypass go in and I was also there in the beginning when that was being spoken about. And I don't have my statistics down, but I understand that we're at less than 1% of the original prairie that Wisconsin had. And I know we want to do fun things in life and we want to just do whatever we want to do. But, frankly, I am worried about the things I'm seeing in the world today. I'm worried about our future. And I wish that everybody could think the bigger picture. And if there's other places to do things that aren't compatible, I'm wondering really if the rare species might be better off now than they will be when I hear all that could be going on there. So I ask everybody to really think about the future not so just think about themselves. And let's do this for the bigger picture, let's take care of our earth because that is taking care of us. So, thank you.

2:10:31

Hess: Thank you, Patricia. And last up I have Peter, and Peter, I'm sorry I can't read your handwriting. Thank you...

2:10:44

Peter Schmitz: Hi, I'm Peter Schmitz, and I'm a Prairie du Sac resident, and I'm representing Cyclists Receiving(?), and a number of different cycling groups that includes the Baraboo Sharks, the Sauk Prairie Endurance Club, and the Sauk Prairie Eagle Cycling, all local to this area. I'm really excited about this master plan. I'd also like to thank the people that are involved with writing the master plan. You guys have done a lot of work and it is an awesome plan and you really have done a great thing for this area. I'd like to say a couple things about cycling. A bicycle is a very quiet machine. It doesn't make a lot of noise. Mountain biking and cycling in general are low-impact sports. They are not high-impact sports. Cyclists are conservationists. We sweep roads, we pick up trash, and we improve trails. In a time now, where the state budget is very low, cyclists also have a very large community and travel in numbers. We have a lot of partnerships, we build a lot of mountain biking trails, and we can really do a large impact on the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. I'd also like to bring up one small point on the Sauk Prairie Eagling - the Sauk Prairie Eagle Cycling Club is a club of high school cyclists taught by a high school coach. They compete in Wisconsin and a lot of mountain biking trails here in Wisconsin and currently within this area they only 0.5, a half of a mile, of trail to train on. The inclusion of mountain bike trail in Sauk Prairie Recreational Area and the five miles that has been designated for it would be very beneficial to our youth and very beneficial to this team. I think we should think about our children. Thank you.

2:13:05

Hess: Thank you, Peter. Well that's the last that I have, so that concludes our commentary period, unless there's anybody else that still wants to have an opportunity to come up and speak? I have this gentleman right here... oh, sorry, OK.

2:13:35:5.

Hiroshi Kanno: My name is Hiroshi Kanno. I thought I should add some color to this meeting here, to the hearing. I live in the Dells, the Wisconsin Dells, the kind of tourist mecca of the world I guess and I have a suggestion for those who want to start a gun club or a hunting club or a trail or a rocketry site. Come to the Dells! We'd love to have you there. We have a million visitors and we have land. We actually have a gun range close to my house, which I avoid, but you know you have to be. One of the things about the Dells is for those who live there, we like to leave there in the tourist season because it's a little chaos. I have a lot of friends in Baraboo here because I like it, it's peaceful, it's quiet. And the Baraboo Range and the mountains are so beautiful and serene, that it's something that we should think about preserving and I'm glad that the DNR is, in fact, has a plan to preserve the land. But one of the things you want to avoid is, you want to avoid waterparks, and you want to avoid the possibility of seven generations from now having a tourist mecca because you really don't need it. You really don't, shouldn't have something like that in this beautiful and serene area. So, I have some land up in Columbia County which I'm willing to sell to the rocketry club if they want it, if my wife would let me and I don't think she will. But it's not something, tourism is not something that you want to have in this area. And I think you should think like the Ho Chunk do and the Native Americans do. I'm not a Native American, but let me just say that seven generations from now, what will this land look like? What will our country look like? You know, and it's something that we have now, we should preserve and we should keep. I congratulate you for your plans, but I think you should consider the aspect of recreation as being something you really don't want to promote in this area. Thank you.

2:15:52

Hess: Thank you, Hiroshi.

2:16:02

Mary (?): Hi. Excuse me. My name is Mary. I'm glad you're here. However, I have to say that I'm saddened that we're here and frankly I'm a little upset because we've done this already. We did this starting in 1997. We had our regional community members have come in together and done this. This process was done and finished starting in 1997 and finished about 10 years ago. Many regional community members from all walks of life sat on the Badger Reuse Committee and unanimously decided not to have any loud machinery or horse trails on this property. This decision was to be legendary and honored indefinitely. So why are we here? Discussing it again now? I think that we need to honor and respect the Badger Reuse Committee Plan that has been in place now for years. Again, it was supposed to be legendary, and honored indefinitely. And I don't think we should change a thing. Thank you.

2:17:27

Hess: Thank you, Mary. Is there anybody else that signed up, signed the sheet we didn't get? Oh, I think we have one. Susan Holmes?

2:18:00

Susan Holmes: My name is Susan Holmes. I'm old enough to remember when Devils Lake allowed motor boats on it. The huge speedboats, and there were many on that small lake, with their outboard motors revved up, raced across the lake and made a lot of noise and created huge waves. The motorboats churned up the water and there was a constant drone on the lake. My mother was a sun worshipper and we were at that lake every day all summer long. The cacophony of the motors was ever present and drowned out the quiet and calm sounds of nature. When the motor boat ban took place it was like night and day at Devils Lake. I will never forget the first time that I really looked at the beauty of the lake and saw and heard it in a different way. This was the way that nature intended it to be. Getting rid of the noise factor and the pollution from the great big outboard motors was wonderful. I'm happy that there are no guns or ATVs in the DNR plan. But now I see that there are rockets and motorized bikes. What part of the original agreement that talked of conservation and low-impact recreation isn't understood here? Rockets, motorized bikes, whether they're part of some sanctioned club or not, are not conducive to the terms under which this land was given. Please stick with the original agreement to use the land for conservation and low-impact recreation and do not allow the serenity, or the terrain, to be destroyed. Thank you. I have a copy. Would I give that to you?

2:19:45

Hess: Thank you, Susan. Is there anybody else that didn't get an opportunity to fill out a sheet who'd like to come up and comment? Alright, on behalf of the DNR, I'd like to thank everybody for coming, you guys have been fantastic throughout this process. We appreciate your comments. Make sure that if you still want to submit something in writing you do so by September 25th. We will consider all comments that are given with regards to the draft master plan and environmental impact statement. Thank you and have a great night.