

CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

Date: April 6, 1982

File Ref: 2100

To: Douglas Morrisette - SD

RECEIVED

From: James R. Huntoon



APR - 3 1982

BUREAU OF
REAL ESTATE

Subject: Approval of the Mt. Vernon Creek, Dane County Fishery Area Master Plan

On March 24, 1982, the Natural Resources Board ratified the Mount Vernon Creek, Dane County Fishery Area Master Plan, following approval of the plan by Secretary Besadny.

The master plan task force consisting of Chairman Clifford Brynildson, Jon Bergquist, Paul Pingrey, John Daniel and Robert Weiss recommended maintaining the approved acreage goal of 450 acres and that the preferred method to acquire the 60.82 acres remaining to complete the acreage goal would be by at least a 2-rod permanent easement on each bank, or if necessary, by fee title purchase.

The task force recommended expanding the approved boundary to include eight more private properties upstream along three miles of Frye Feeder and Deer Creek, which presently contribute sediments and excessive nutrients to the trout water downstream. If the permanent easement method of acquisition recommended is used, the 60.82 acres remaining to be acquired will amply cover the unsecured corridor within the present and proposed boundary.

Attached are 20 copies of the approved master plan and the original maps for your district files to answer inquiries by the public and for future use.

The implementation element of the master planning process should be completed next, and you are requested to supply this office with a copy on, or about July 1, 1982.

Please convey my appreciation to the task force for a job well done in the completion of this master plan.

VAH:rel

Attach.

- cc: James T. Addis - FM/4
- ~~Carl Evert~~ - OL/4
- Hal Schwenn - FM/4
- Vern Hacker - Oshkosh

→ Hal 105
CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

Date: October 27, 1982

File Ref: 2100

To: Douglas Morrissette - SD

From: James R. Huntoon

JRH

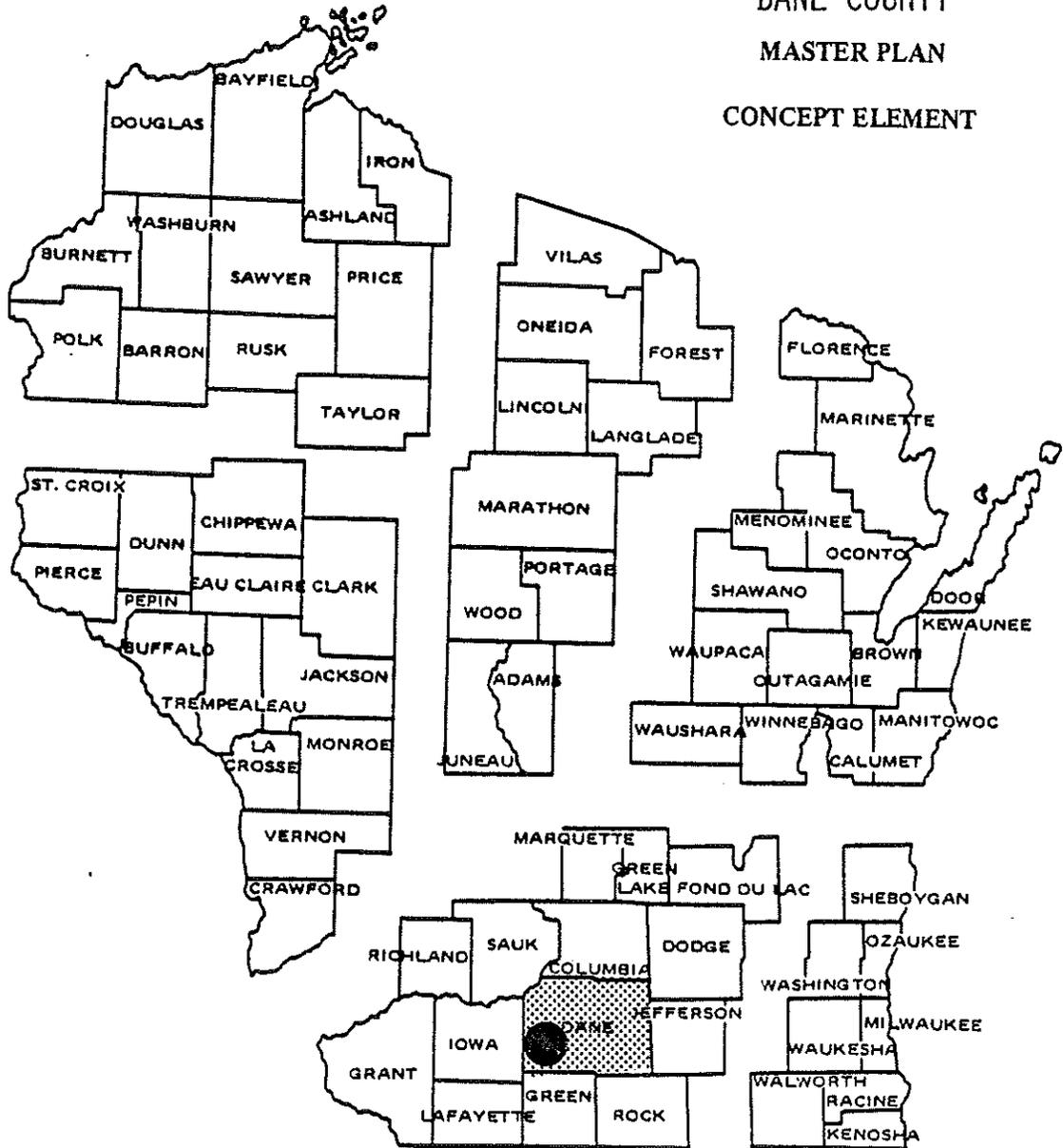
Subject: Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area

I am approving the Implementation Element of the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area Master Plan. Please advise the Task Force Chairman to incorporate the approved projects into the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Planning System.

HLS:rel

cc: R. Nicotera - ADM/5
J. Addis - FM/4

MT. VERMION CREEK FISHERY AREA
 DANE COUNTY
 MASTER PLAN
 CONCEPT ELEMENT



Property Task Force

Leader-CLIFFORD BRYNILDSON, AREA FISH MANAGER
 JON BERGQUIST, AREA WILDLIFE MANAGER
 PAUL PINGREY, AREA FORESTER
 JOHN DANIEL, CONSERVATION WARDEN
 ROBERT WEISS, PARK MANAGER

Approved:

C. D. Besadny
 C.D. Besadny - Secretary

Date

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SECTION I - ACTIONS
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND BENEFITS

Goals:

To obtain land control, and to manage, preserve and protect the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area in Dane County; to enhance fishing and other educational and recreational activities while perpetuating or restoring the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the waterway.

Annual Objectives

1. Provide opportunities for 4,000 participant days of fishing for brown trout.
2. Provide management services that successfully preserve and improve the fishery to offer the opportunity to catch a trout 6" or larger per fishing trip.
3. Manage the waterway and adjacent lands to provide opportunities for 450 participant days of hunting for deer, squirrels, pheasants, ruffed grouse, and waterfowl and 400 days of trapping for muskrat, mink, and raccoon.

Annual Additional Benefits

1. Provide 800 man days of associated recreational and educational activities, including cross country skiing, nature hiking and photography.
2. Contribute to, and enhance the habitat of resident or migratory, non-game, endangered and threatened species.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The management program recommended for the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, Dane County (Figure 1), includes completion of land acquisition (Figure 2) and stream habitat development (Figure 3). Maximum protection to the stream and adjacent land, and assurance of providing quality trout fishing can best be attained by adopting these management practices. Other outdoor recreational and educational activities will also be benefited.

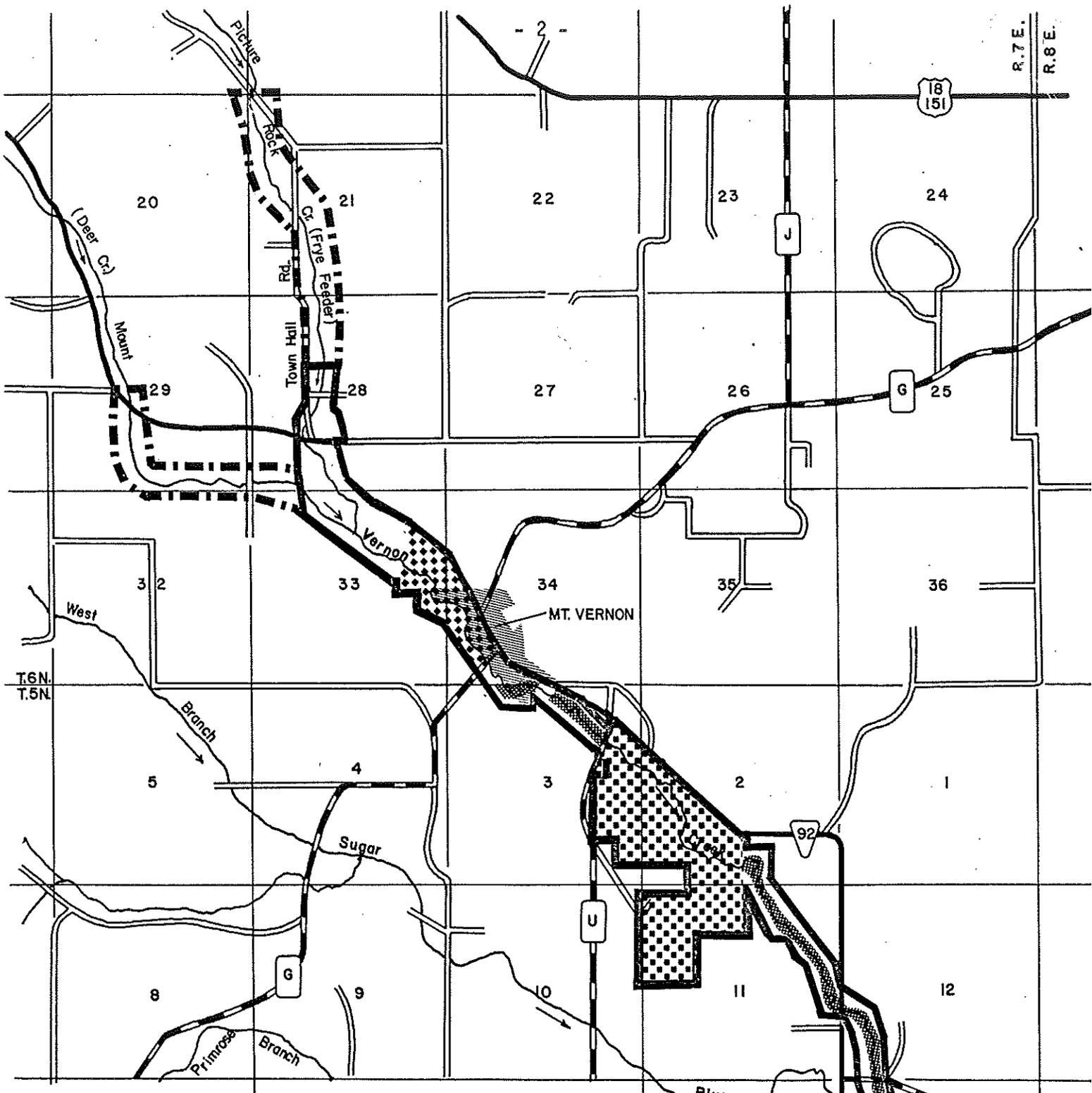
The present approved acreage goal of the fishery area is 450 acres and that goal is recommended to be continued. Of this amount, 354.90 acres have been acquired in fee title and 34.28 acres in permanent easement, totalling 389.18 acres with 60.82 acres remaining of the approved acreage goal. Several key parcels within the boundary, at the Village of Mt. Vernon, and below C.T.H. "A" have proven to be difficult to acquire. There are six private property landowners within the present approved boundary.

The preferred method of acquisition of acres yet to be acquired would be by a permanent easement on each bank, or if necessary, by fee title acquisition. A 2-rod permanent easement on each bank of the 3.10 miles in the proposed expanded boundary plus the 1.23 miles of private stream within the present boundary would total 34.6 acres. Thus, the 60.82 acres remaining to be acquired on the present acreage goal will amply cover an easement corridor of 2-4 rods on the present and proposed expanded boundary. The cost to acquire the remaining 60.82 acres based on 1982 land prices would range from \$76,000 to \$107,000 depending on whether the stream frontage was acquired as a fish management easement or in fee title.

The Department recommends expanding the boundary (Figure 2) to include eight more private properties upstream along three miles of Frye Feeder and Deer Creek. DNR control of the stream frontage along those reaches will provide added benefits to the valuable trout resource downstream. Reducing the amount of sediment and nutrient input from eroded banks and adjacent feed lots upstream will be reflected in improved water quality to Mt. Vernon Creek.

The first preference for acquisition is the 0.55 mile of unacquired stream frontage remaining on Mt. Vernon Creek. This would be followed by any location available in the rest of the present and proposed boundary if the latter is approved.

Considerable in-stream habitat development has been completed (Figure 3) on the 5.5 miles of Department of Natural Resources-owned stream frontage and will be scheduled on other properties acquired. Boom covers, deflectors and rock riprap were installed and constructed to provide instream cover and bank protection. Streambanks will be further protected by tapering and seeding grass. Selective vegetation control allows sunlight to penetrate where previously very little aquatic vegetation grew. Fences and cattle watering areas with flood gates will be constructed wherever the need occurs.



MOUNT VERNON CREEK FISHERY AREA

Scale 1:3520'

Figure 2. Property Ownership and Land Use Classification Map.

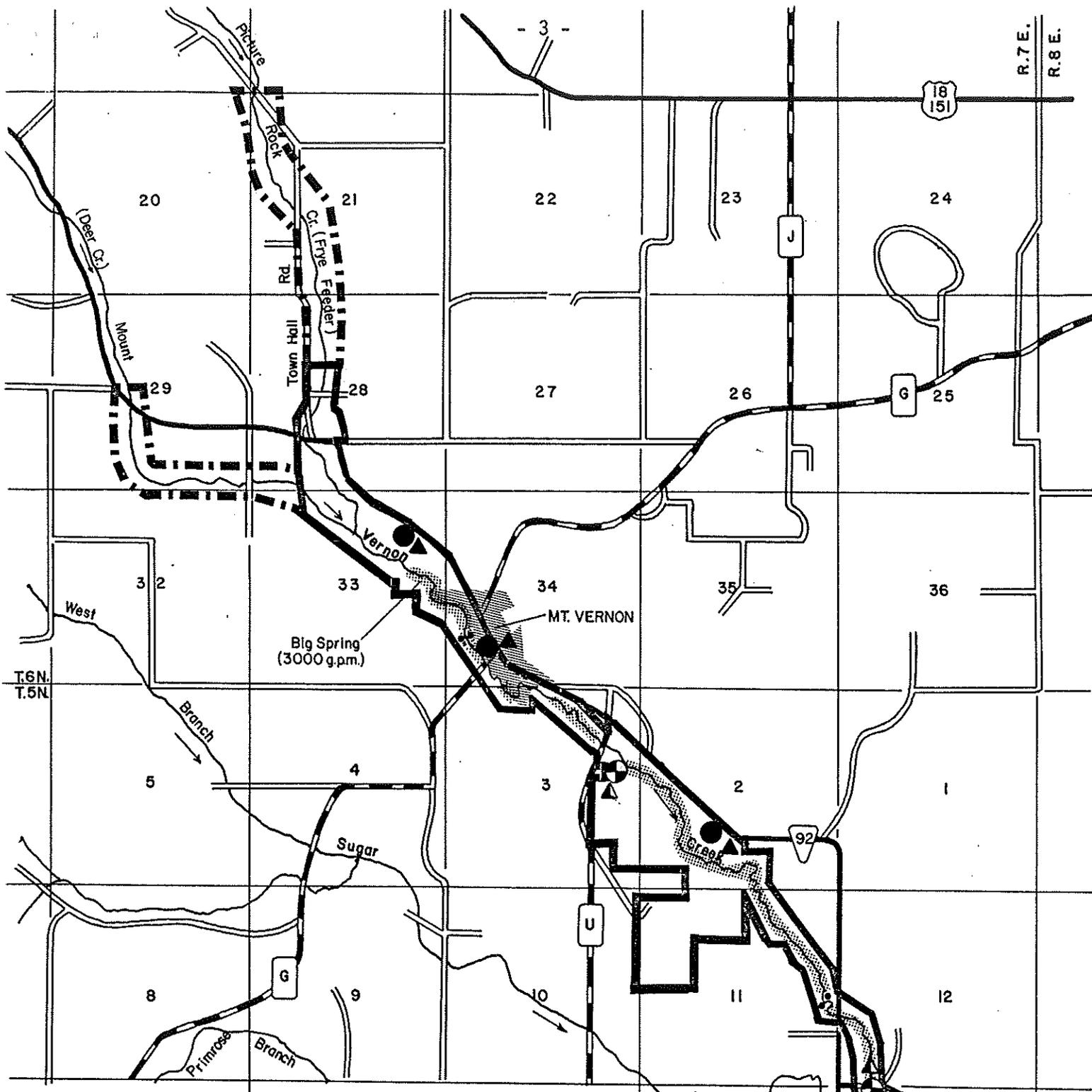
LEGEND

- Property Boundary ————
- Proposed Boundary Addition - - - - -
- State Land ————
- State Easement ————
- Private Land ————
- Fish & Wildlife Management Area — - - - - Entire Property



(T.5-6N-R.7E.
Mt. Vernon & Verona
Quadrangle Maps.)

R.7.E.
R.8.E.



MOUNT VERNON CREEK FISHERY AREA

Scale 1:3520'

Figure 3. Existing and Planned Development Map.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| Property Boundary | ----- | Existing Stream Hab. Improv. | |
| Proposed Boundary Addition | - - - - - | Proposed Parking Area | |
| Existing Parking Area | ● | Proposed Access Facilities | |
| Existing Access Facilities | ▲ | Proposed Stream Hab. Improv. | |

(T.5-6N-R.7E.
Mt. Vernon & Verona
Quadrangle Maps.)

R.7E.
R.8E.

R.7E.
R.8E.

The cost of completion of the stream habitat development within the present and proposed boundary could approach \$45,000 to \$65,000.

One public access and a 50 x 80-foot parking area are proposed for future completion at an estimated cost of \$800.

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area is part of the Sugar River drainage system, an organized, federally approved P.L. 566 watershed. A positive and cooperative attitude prevails among the landowners in the watershed to improve land use practices and to control nonpoint sources of pollution.

Trout populations in the streams will be monitored periodically to determine trends and to inventory the trout population. This will be accomplished by electro-fishing survey.

Because much of the acquired lands within the boundary consist of a narrow easement corridor, very little opportunity exists to apply management techniques for wildlife. However, twenty-four acres of corn are sharecropped with a local farmer. Ten acres were seeded to switchgrass in 1980. Permanent grass cover is needed to attract and support a greater variety of wildlife. Woody vegetation plantings would be confined to shrub species that would benefit wildlife species.

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

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

If the need arises, a designated trail will be constructed for cross-country skiers, hikers and nature observers.

SECTION II - SUPPORT DATA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area is located in western Dane County. Its boundary and acreage goal were approved by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1961.

Mt. Vernon Creek is the best of four trout streams that flow into the Sugar River in Dane County. It is also one of the two streams not totally dependent on stocked trout to sustain fishing during the fishing season in the Madison Area. A total of 6.6 miles of Mt. Vernon Creek within the boundary is rated as a Class I trout stream.

The fishery area on the stream extends from Frye Feeder or Picture Rock Creek in the NE 1/4 NE 1/4 of Section 28, T6N, R7E downstream 6.6 miles to the junction with the West Branch, Sugar River. A total of 0.33 miles of Deer Creek, a stream with forage species which flows into Mt. Vernon Creek is also present within the boundary. The Sugar River flows into Green and Rock Counties, eventually merging with the Rock River as part of the Mississippi River system.

Mt. Vernon Creek has been stocked with trout for the last 75 years. However, it was only after conducting fish population electro-fishing inventories in the early 1950's that some knowledge of the species, natural reproduction and size composition of the trout in the stream was obtained.

Yearling brown and rainbow trout were stocked throughout the stream prior to 1956. After 1956, and until 1970, a combination of fingerling and yearling brown and rainbow trout were stocked. The trout stocking quota was reduced periodically for the lower half of the stream. From 1978 to the present, none have been stocked. Only 200 brown trout were stocked in the upper portions of the stream in 1979 and 1980 because wild brown trout were inhabiting all other reaches of Mt. Vernon Creek.

Numerous population estimates have been made of the trout living in Mt. Vernon Creek, including studies in September, 1978 and April and October, 1979 and 1980. The density of the wild brown trout population has reached very high levels, starting in 1976 and extending to the present time resulting from intensive habitat improvement, and excellent seasonal climatic conditions. The density of wild brown trout averaged 1,635 fish per mile in October, 1979. The overall increase for all sizes of trout compared to Autumn 1978, was 25.6 percent. Standing crops of 250 pounds per acre of wild brown trout occurred above and below Highway U in 1980.

The first parcel of land was acquired within the boundary in 1963 from Herman Erfurth while the most recent purchase occurred in May, 1976. A total of 389.18 acres of stream frontage (5.5 miles) and adjacent land

has been acquired from eight landowners. Land control permitted the DNR to initiate stream habitat development which began in 1954 on Frye Feeder. The program gained momentum in 1966 and continued downstream annually through 1980, with the cooperation of the Madison School Program, the Dane County Conservation League and YACC.

Of the 5.5 miles of stream habitat development completed, 2.9 miles included fencing. Other work completed included the installation of boom covers, deflectors and rock riprap, selective vegetation control, bank tapering and seeding, the creation of two spawning beds and construction of cattle crossings with floodgates. Further habitat development is planned, using trout stamp funds as other properties are acquired.

RESOURCE CAPABILITIES AND INVENTORY

Soils and Geology

Mt. Vernon Creek drainage flows through outwash and alluvial deposits which consist of sand and gravel sorted and stratified. Bedrock is Prairie du Chien dolomite adjacent to the creek. St. Peter sandstone dominates the nearby uplands. The Mt. Vernon sandstone butte 0.5 miles above the village and a 100 foot tall rock outcrop called Devil's Chimney in the Town of Primrose are examples. The weathering of these materials has created silt loam soil of the Otter, Orion, Troxel, Elkmound, Batavia and Dunbarton series. Most of these soils are well adapted to crop and forage production and they continue to support successful farm operations.

Fish and Wildlife

Mt. Vernon Creek was originally a brook trout stream, but the introduction of brown and rainbow trout increased fishing pressure and habitat deterioration contributed to their demise. The stream is managed exclusively for brown trout today. The spawning grounds are located above and below Highway U and in scattered gravel-rubble riffles near Highway G, below the big spring and below Highway 92.

The companion fish species consist of white suckers and mottled sculpin, except in the spring when quillback, carp and northern redbreast move upstream from the west branch of the Sugar River. The white sucker population is not large, compared to Black Earth Creek. The mottled sculpin is abundant in the upper half of the stream. A small population of northern creek chubs and common shiners is also present.

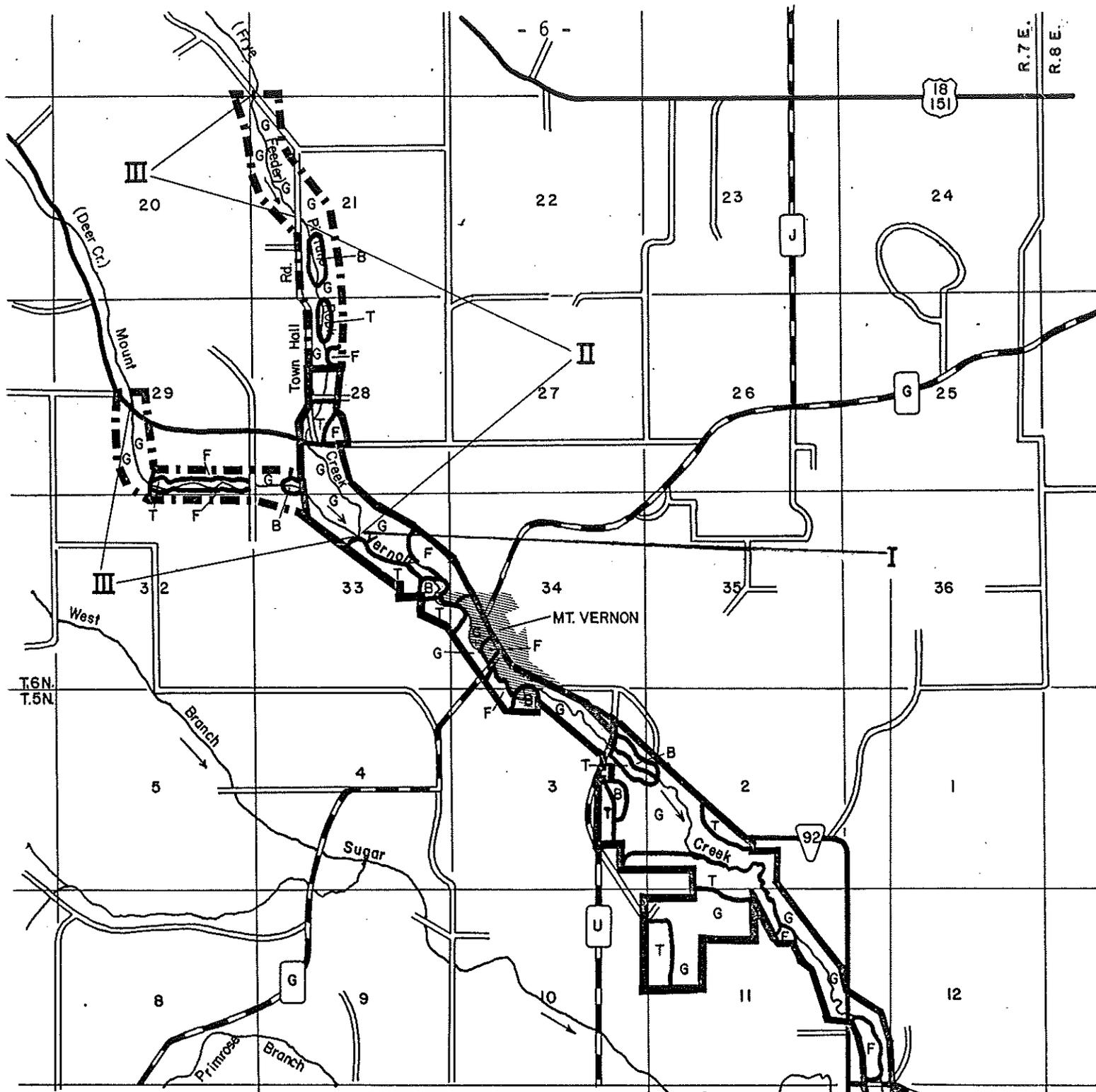
Wildlife species that inhabit the area are those that are indigenous to southern Wisconsin. The major game species are white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrels, muskrat, mink, raccoon, red fox, mallards, blue-winged teal, pheasants and ruffed grouse. Bobwhite quail occasionally inhabit the area. Waterfowl, primarily mallards, utilize the open water during the winter. Mallard nesting and broods also occur.

Vegetative Cover

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area is characterized by mixed hardwoods, dominated by red and white oak growing in the uplands. The understory is comprised of grey dogwood, elderberry, blackberry and red and black raspberry. Scattered stands of white birch, black cherry, basswood and wild plum are present. All but the cherry usually grow near the stream. Willows, silver maple and red dogwood grow in the floodplain. Reed canary grass grows profusely along the stream on DNR land. Table 1 shows the acreages and percentages of various vegetation types on the fishery area while Figure 4 shows the brush cover types within the boundary.

Table 1. Vegetation Types and Acreages on the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, Dane County, as determined by reconnaissance survey.

Vegetation Type	Acre	Percent
Basswood (central hardwood)	6	1.5
White, red, and burr oak	88	22.6
Lowland hardwoods (willow)	8	2.1
White birch	12	3.1
Red pine, white pine, white spruce	11	2.8
Cultivated fields	25	6.5
Upland grass	167	42.9
Lowland grass	72	18.5
TOTAL	389	100.0



MOUNT VERNON CREEK FISHERY AREA

Scale 1:3520'

Figure 4. General Cover Map.

LEGEND

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Property Boundary - - - - - | Cropland - - - - - F |
| Proposed Boundary Addition - - - - - | Class I Trout Water - - - - - I |
| Timber - - - - - T | Class II Trout Water - - - - - II |
| Brush - - - - - B | Class III Trout Water - - - - - III |
| Grassland - - - - - G | |

(T. 5-6N-R. 7E.
Mt. Vernon & Verona
Quadrangle Maps.)

R. 7E.
R. 8E.

Endangered and Threatened Species

No endangered or threatened species of fish, amphibians, molluscs, mammals, birds, reptiles or wild plants are known to be present on the property.

Water Resources

Mt. Vernon Creek originates south of Mount Horeb and flows southeast through the Village of Mt. Vernon to the west branch of the Sugar River, 0.8 mile below Highway 92. The stream is classified as trout water from the second upstream bridge on Town Hall Road (Frye Feeder) to the mouth (Figure 4). The presence of large springs in the upper two miles including the DNR-owned 3,000 g.p.m. spring (Figure 3) located 0.75 mile above Mt. Vernon, combined with periodic reaches of gravel-rubble riffles for spawning and food production, plus ample high quality pools make the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, an excellent trout stream. The gradient of the stream averages 23.3 feet per mile.

Table 2a - Streams Within the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, Dane County.

Name	Length In Miles	Acres	Classification
Deer Creek	0.33	0.49	Forage species
Frye Feeder (Picture Rock Creek)	1.00	0.73	II
Mt. Vernon Creek	6.60	12.89	I
TOTALS	7.93	14.11	

Table 2b - Streams within proposed expanded boundary, Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, Dane County.

Name	Length In Miles	Acres	Classification
Deer Creek	0.33	1.60	Forage species
Frye Feeder	1.00	0.63	II
Frye Feeder	6.60	0.46	Forage species
TOTALS	7.93	2.69	

A dam and millpond existed above Highway G in the Village of Mt. Vernon prior to 1948. Profound improvement in the water quality of Mt. Vernon Creek has occurred since the removal of the dam. The effects of the millpond are still evident by the straight channel and ridged clay hardpan substrate.

Instream natural trout cover consists of aquatic vegetation including Nasturtium sp., Ranunculus sp., Veronica sp., and logs, trees and undercut banks. Stream improvement devices including boom covers, wing deflectors and rock riprap augment the natural cover. Fishability is good, except in the midsection of the stream where the reed canary grass and forbs restrict movement and visibility of fishermen.

Waters in the stream are alkaline, fertile, and hard as revealed by the pH of 8.3 and the total alkalinity and specific conductance of 260 mg/l CaCO_3 and 524 mhos/cm^2 , respectively. The surrounding land areas are used for corn and forage production to feed dairy and beef herds. Nonpoint source pollution is inevitable from this type of agriculture. One point source has been identified, which was corrected during the summer of 1980.

Historical, Archaeological and Architectural Features

Richard W. Dexter of the State Historical Society states that there likely was a prehistoric village site on the west side of the Mt. Vernon Creek at Mt. Vernon, SW 1/4, Section 33, T6N, R7E; a scattering of lithic debris exists south of Deer Creek (SW 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 33, T6N, R7E) and a campsite is located at the base of Mt. Vernon Rock (SW 1/4, Section 34, T6N, R7E). None of these sites are apparently in the fishery area, but their proximity to it suggests the strong possibility that other sites may be present there.

Based on a recent architectural survey of this part of Dane County undertaken by the State Historical Society, there are no buildings either in or adjacent to the fishery area eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Ownership

There are 450 acres within the authorized boundaries of the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area. To date, 354.90 acres have been acquired in fee title at a cost of \$63,377.56, and 34.28 acres in perpetual easement at a cost of \$15,201. Six privately owned parcels remain to be acquired. Three parcels totalling 0.55 mile involve Class 1 trout water.

Current Use

Trout fishermen are the primary users of the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area. High quality trout waters are in short supply in the vicinity of Madison; consequently, fishing pressure remains heavy all during the fishing season. Deer, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon and pheasant hunting attracts some hunters. Cross country skiers, hikers and nature observers frequently use the area. Trapping for muskrat, mink and beaver is another popular activity.

Land Use Potential

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area is a combination of a narrow corridor of land and large acreage of upland grasses and small hardwood woodlots. The area is recommended to be classified as a Fish and Wildlife Area - RD2 (Figure 2). Possibly one archaeological site is located in the property boundary, but will not be designated until it is positively identified. No feature in the fishery area was considered suitable to be designated as a scientific area.

MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

The most serious management problem in terms of trout production are the occasional winter floods. They occur from mid-January to early March and scour the trout redds destroying trout eggs or fry. Successive loss of trout year classes from winter floods can reduce trout stocks and fishing opportunities dramatically. Climatic conditions during the past five winters have been ideal, resulting in abundant natural reproduction and an increasing wild trout population.

Increased algal growth has been observed in the stream above Highway "U". Nutrient input from cattle watering areas and feedlots are contributing factors. Sediment release from cropland, feedlots and roadways are harmful to food producing, and spawning, gravel-riffle areas. Some improvement in reducing sedimentation will occur as measures to combat nonpoint source pollution are adopted by landowners through cost-sharing and guidance of the SCS, DNR and the Sugar River Watershed Association.

All DNR properties in southern Wisconsin experience unauthorized use. Some unauthorized camping, "4-wheeling" up the slopes and hillsides and snowmobiling has occurred in the past. The area near the big spring is especially fragile and cannot tolerate excessive use. Littering occurs mainly at road crossings and parking lots.

Beaver have constructed dams and caused serious impounding of water, resulting in flooded streambanks and corn fields. In at least one case, a dragline was required to remove a large dam. Trappers have been successful in removing problem beaver, thereby keeping the population at a low level.

Constant maintenance of fences, floodgates and instream devices will be conducted on a one to two year schedule, depending on the need.

RECREATION NEEDS AND JUSTIFICATION

According to the Wisconsin Blue Book, the 1978 population estimate for Dane County and the eight adjoining counties was 747,477 people. Dane County is part of the highly urbanized Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Region 2, which also consists of Columbia, Dodge, Jefferson and Rock Counties.

As relates to fishing, the Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Plan for the region indicates that the density of users taxes the entire resource base, including the fishery. The region's per capita supply of surface water is only 55 percent of the state per capita average. Out-of-state residents fishing in the region exceed local participants by a 2 to 1 ratio.

The plan further states that to minimize the disparity between the supply of, and the demand for quality surface water resources in this region, governmental agencies must be committed to preserving lake and river frontage wherever it is available.

Fishing

The opportunity to fish a productive, wild brown trout stream attracts fishermen, who place a high value on quality trout fishing. Mt. Vernon Creek probably attracts 45 percent of the trout fishermen fishing Dane County trout streams. Acquisition of the remaining parcels followed by management geared to protect the resource upstream from the primary trout water are high priorities.

Mt. Vernon Creek is one of the most popular trout fishing streams in the state. Fly fishermen especially appreciate the abundant mayfly and caddisfly hatches from May to September. The stream is also within a short distance of Madison and with the increasing energy shortage, it becomes more important to provide public fishing close to large population centers. Enlargement of the property boundary upstream is advisable to protect the Class I and II trout water downstream. The upstream reaches are subjected to intensive pasturing and/or adverse affects of feedlot activities.

Hunting

Approximately 80 percent of the 389 acres currently owned by the State of Wisconsin support some huntable species of wildlife, primarily rabbit, squirrel, and pheasant. Whitetail deer, ruffed grouse and waterfowl are less abundant and are hunted occasionally. The area does serve as an island of public hunting surrounded by private, posted lands. Mt. Vernon Creek is intensively trapped for muskrat, mink and beaver.

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

No Further Action

Discontinuing management activities would allow the stream habitat to deteriorate, resulting in the reduction of the wild trout population. Adverse effects to the water quality caused by enrichment from primarily nonpoint source pollution will become a more serious problem along with sedimentation covering food-producing and spawning gravel-rubble. Willows would regenerate, causing excessive shading which reduces productivity. The change in ownership of the private parcels could be disastrous if drastic land use practices occurred.

Other recreational uses would not be affected as seriously, except on the sharecropped acreage which would not be partially converted to permanent grass cover.

Enlarge Project

Enlarging the property boundaries would be beneficial and is recommended. The proposed boundaries would extend the fishery area upstream to Highway 92 and above the second bridge on Town Hall Road. The extension of 3 miles would provide protection to the Class I trout water downstream. Wildlife production would be restricted to a narrow corridor along the stream. One additional parking lot may be constructed, below and to the west of Highway U. All future acquisition should be fish management 4-10 rod easements along the stream corridor.

Reduce Project

Reducing the project would not achieve the goals and objectives indicated. Most of the land designated in the present acreage goal (85.5%) has been acquired by the State.

Limited Habitat Management

Mt. Vernon Creek has received intensive habitat management since the first parcel of land was purchased in 1963. A substantial increase in the wild brown trout population has occurred, reaching a peak during the 1976-80 period. All newly acquired stream frontage would receive appropriate habitat development.

Wildlife management will include establishing permanent grass cover on croplands. No shrub or tree plantings are presently planned, although they may be recommended by the wildlife manager or forester at a later date.

Appendix - Master Plan Comments by Outside Reviewing Agencies

Comments regarding the Mount Vernon Creek Fishery Area 45 day review copy of the master plan were received from a number of outside reviewing agencies. Their comments, and DNR responses, where necessary, follow:

Charles Montemayor, Executive Director, Dane County Regional Planning Commission, Madison

The Dane County Regional Planning Commission has reviewed the Concept Element of the Fisheries Area Master Plan for Mt. Vernon Creek. We find the plan to be consistent with and supportive of the Dane County Land Use Plan, Water Quality Plan and the Park and Open Space Plan.

We are aware that you held a public meeting concerning this plan at the Springdale Town Hall on November 11, 1981. We understand that the response was positive and encourage you to continue the work that has already resulted in substantial improvements to the stream. We encourage you to continue this open discussion in the plan review process.

Since we regard this as an important stream in Dane County, we look forward to reviewing the implementation element of this plan. Our staff is available to work with you in coordinating our planning efforts.

If you have further questions, please contact Bill Lane or Tom Smiley of our staff.

Henry W. Kolka, Chairperson, Wild Resources Advisory Council

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area, Master Plan Concept Element Task Force of Clifford Brynildson, Jon Bergquist, Paul Pingrey, John Daniel and Robert Weiss have performed an excellent job. They should be congratulated for it.

General Review

The prescriptions for maintaining and enhancing the quality trout waters of Mt. Vernon Creek are very commendable. The Wild Resources Advisory Council wishes to congratulate the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area Master Plan Concept Element Task Force of Clifford Brynildson, Jon Bergquist, Paul Pingrey, John Daniel and Robert Weiss for proposing a very credible program for the fishery. The driftless streams are generally under a great deal more environmental stress than most of the streams in glaciated areas of Wisconsin. In considering this factor plus the potential user pressure, quality trout streams, such as Mt. Vernon Creek should have high priority attention. The Council considers the Task Force's projections and management proposals as very necessary and supports them.

Comments and Recommendations

1. Excellent statements for Goals and Annual Objectives. WRAC recommends insertion of and educational between the words recreational and activities in Item one, page one of Annual Additional Benefits.

DNR response: Agreed.

2. Page 1, first paragraph under heading: Recommended Management and Development Program. WRAC recommends the addition of and educational between words recreational and activities. (last sentence)

The analysis and projections under the above heading on pages one and four are positive and absolutely necessary for the welfare of this resource. The Council supports them. No mention is made of off season fishing. The Council finds it difficult to match benefits with losses.

DNR response: OK. Added. Off season fishing for the stream has been evaluated and it is obvious that large brown trout are being overharvested. A change in the regulation is possible.

3. Charts on pages 2 and 3 and 6

Very adequate and they correlate very well with the printed text. The Council does have a concern on figure 4, page 6. The legend identified Class I, II, and III trout waters. The chart does not pinpoint Class I trout waters.

DNR response: Trout waters are delineated in Figure 4. See Section 36, T6N, R7E.

4. Page 5. Wildlife

The listing of stream life and game species is very adequate. Conspicuously inadequate is the inventory of nongame species, amphibians and reptiles.

DNR response: No comprehensive surveys have ever been made of nongame species in the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area or in most other DNR properties. Most data is based on general observations and information from the Office of Endangered and Nongame Species. A recommendation for a complete biological inventory is included in this master plan.

5. Page 5, Vegetative Cover

Very fine listing of plants. The Council questions the advisability of leaving out the flowering plants in the stream corridor.

DNR response: Do not agree regarding listing of flowering plants.

6. Page 5 - Endangered Species

WRAC has a question - How can the Task Force make the assumption when it possesses incomplete inventories of wildlife species?

DNR response: The information was obtained from the Office of Endangered and Nongame Species.

7. Page 7 - Special Comments

A. Third paragraph listed under Historical, Archaeological and Architectural Features. This paragraph does not fit the heading. Analysis and proposal expansion makes good sense. Shouldn't the sentence read "protect the class II and I trout water downstream?" Such reversal of stream quality in its thread could most frequently occur under the bizarre driftless situations.

DNR response: Agreed. The last paragraph does not belong under this heading and may have been inadvertently placed here in the many revisions that have occurred. Recommend that it be moved under Recreation Needs and Justification - Fishing.

B. Land Use Potential

WRAC has a question regarding the last sentence of the paragraph. Even though no feature along the stream corridor is suitable per Scientific Area designation; our question is -- do any of the sites fit natural area identification?

DNR response: See comments from Scientific Area Preservation Council. The big spring probably could qualify as a natural area identification, but it is not recommended.

8. Heading - Recreation Needs and Justification

WRAC comments that the heading in table of contents and near middle of page be modified with the insertion of and Education between the words Recreation and Needs.

DNR response: Agreed.

9. Page 9 - Enlarge Project alternative

WRAC endorses the proposals put forth in this paragraph and recommends that the Natural Resources Board do likewise.

Ray Amble, Dane County Conservation Congress Chairman, Board Member, Yahara Fishermen Club, Madison

Looks like a good project. Hope it gets completed. I took this plan to the Yahara Fisherman's Club board meeting. They all approved.

Charles and Joan Maynard, 205 Glacier Drive, Madison, WI

We really have no questions. We have read the memorandum and found it very informative. The acquisition of more land along the stream seems reasonable. We wonder if some more protection against bank erosion might eventually be needed.

DNR response: The battle against bank erosion will be possible wherever the DNR acquires stream frontage. Another source of protection is the existence of and future land management assistance of the Upper Sugar Watershed Project which plans to focus on Frye Feeder and Deer Creek above Mt. Vernon Creek.

Stanley A. Nichol, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Madison

Page 1, a cost of \$45,000 to \$65,000 is quoted for stream habitat development, but the map in Figure 3 shows only two small areas in Section 11 and two in Section 34 where habitat improvement is proposed. This needs more explanation.

DNR response: The habitat improvement indicated in Figure 3 refers to spawning gravel placed at these sites after the master plan was started three years ago. It states in the narrative that all appropriate stream reaches that are acquired will receive habitat development.

This plan does not explain how the Mount Vernon Creek Fishery area ties in with fishery management plans on the remainder of the West Branch of the Sugar River above Belleville.

DNR response: The West Branch of the Sugar River is another entity. The DNR does not have any equity along the West Branch. Obviously, any improved land use practices and non-source pollution control that can be initiated in the streams in the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area will benefit the West Branch of the Sugar which is also a managed trout stream downstream to Hwy PB.

R. W. Baker, Director, Bureau of Environmental Analysis and Review, Department of Transportation, Madison

Re: Master Plan for the Mount Vernon Creek Fishery Area - Dane County. We have reviewed the above noted document and note that S.T.H. 92 borders most of the area. Since it is logical to assume future improvements to the highway will be required, DOT and DNR would be well advised to negotiate some sort of mutual understanding in order to avoid needless conflicts on this similar type areas.

We thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this Master Plan.

DNR response: Agreed.

Forest Stearns, Chairman, Scientific Areas Preservation Council

We have reviewed the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area Master Plan and find no conflict with our program objectives. Our natural area inventories have identified portions of the stream and especially Big Spring as worthy of special protective measures. Though the proposed management appears to recognize and protect the natural values should be helpful in guiding future management.

DNR response: The Task Force well recognizes the importance of the Big Spring and supplies assurance that it will continue to be protected in every way.

Mrs. James G. Woodburn, 211 N. Prospect Avenue, Madison

This letter is attached to your Master Plan Comments sheet to be filed with it.

At your meeting November 11th at the Springdale Town Hall you distributed copies of the Correspondence/Memorandum dated October 16, 1981. In this were included maps of the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area Master Plan.

My son, James Woodburn, pointed out to you that the maps, Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, included the creek area of our Rockview farm as being inside your Property Boundary lines, not as Proposed Boundary Additions. You recognized this and assured him they would be corrected.

This is a serious error in the master plan maps and unless corrected could be misleading, confusing, and inconvenient to many people.

When the corrected maps are issued, I would appreciate copies of them.

DNR response: I believe the matter has been resolved with Mrs. Woodburn. She felt we should use the word project rather than property in describing the present and proposed boundaries of the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area.

Her claim that DNR land in Section 33 belong to their family was corrected when a copy of the deed of the original purchase was sent to her.

Mrs. Woodburn objected to the boundary lines which included her property, assuming that persons would consider it as state property. A copy of the property ownership map was sent to her which clearly indicates her land is private property. She was also informed that the boundary lines simply indicate the portions of property that the state hopes to acquire for the fishery area, from willing sellers only.

0696N

DISTRICT OR BUREAU
Southern District
DOCKET NUMBER

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING WORKSHEET
(Attach Additional Sheets if Necessary)

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Title of Proposal: Master Plan for the Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area

Location: County Dane
Township 5, 6 North, Range 7 East, ~~West~~
Section(s) 2, 3, 11, 12 and 13 also 21, 28, 29, 33 and 34
Political Town Springdale and Primrose

Project:

- 1) Description (overview) of applicant's entire project proposal. Attach maps, plans and other descriptive material as appropriate.

The Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area extends from three miles northwest of Mt. Vernon to the West Branch of the Sugar River 0.33 mile below Highway A. Frye Feeder (Picture Rock Creek) and Deer Creek above the junction are included in the project. Land control and habitat management have been the primary activities by the DNR to protect the stream environment and enhance the trout population. The stream supports an excellent wild brown trout population and is heavily fished by both bait and fly fishermen. The State owns 389.18 acres of stream frontage, spring-heads and adjacent land in the project. Cross country skiing, hunting, photography, berry picking and nature observation are compatible auxiliary activities with fishing. The high quality trout fishery can be protected and managed for optimum production by a sound land control and habitat management program.

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

The Master Plan will provide direction in achieving the goal and objectives of the project which has been in existence since 1963.

Statutory Authority:

NR Board policy and DNR Manual Code 2103.2

Estimated Project Costs:

N.A.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

1) Physical (Topography-soils-water-air-wetland types)

Mt. Vernon Creek flows through a moderately broad valley bordered with oak-hardwood woodlots. Occasional sandstone outcrops are visible. The soils derived primarily from calcareous bedrock are of clay silt texture. One major spring augmented by several smaller ones provide excellent water quality. Wetlands are confined to scattered sedges and reed canary grass.

2) Biological

a) Flora

Willows and red osier are the dominant trees present along the stream. A few white cedar were planted below and above Highway U. Hardwoods common to the area are burr, white and red oak, basswood, silver and sugar maple, white birch, black cherry, white ash, elm and walnut.

b) Fauna

Wild brown trout are abundant in Mt. Vernon Creek, including the lower part of Frye Feeder. White suckers, mottled sculpin, creek chub, common shiner, carp, quillback and northern redhorse are common to present. Terrestrial fauna include the common mammals, birds and insects. Mayflies and caddisflies are the dominant aquatic insects of general interest.

3) Social

Most of the people live on farms or in Mt. Vernon and rural homes. Trout fishing provides some social activity along with other outdoor activities.

4) Economic

Trout fishermen purchase gas, food, bait and beverages locally on a regular basis during the fishing season.

5) Other (include archaeological, historical, etc.)

Three archaeological sites have been identified by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

BENEFICIAL AND ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS (Include Indirect and Secondary Impacts)

1) Physical

Beneficial environmental impacts should result. Long range acquisition and habitat development will protect the stream resource, e.g. bottom substrate, channel and banks.

2) Biological

Greater diversity of aquatic life and increased biological productivity will take place. The wild trout population may extend further downstream and upstream.

3) Economic

A modest ^{increase} ~~rise~~ in fishermen and other recreation seekers will create more monetary rewards.

4) Social

Expanding the project boundary would allow more recreation seekers to use the area ^{very} ~~causing~~ more ~~satisfaction~~, but also more enforcement problems.
pleasure,

PROBABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Increased littering.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

1) Energy

Resources committed will include fuel, materials; manpower and wear of equipment.

2) Archaeological and historic features or sites

None.

3) Other

ALTERNATIVES (No Action-Enlarge-Reduce-Modify-Other Locations and/or Methods. Discuss and describe fully with particular attention to alternatives which might avoid some or all adverse environmental effects. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

A. No Action

The maximum value and benefits of the trout fishery will not be realized if the goal and objectives of the Master Plan are not attained. The stream habitat in private ownership and to some extent the DNR controlled frontage will experience deterioration and a reduction in the density of the wild brown trout population.

B. Enlarge Project

Expanding the project boundary beyond what is proposed in the Master Plan would not engender any useful gain in the resource base. The trout water is adequately described in the proposed boundary.

C. Reduce Project

The goals and objectives as established by the Natural Resources Board will not be reached.

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

- 1) As a result of this action, is it likely that other events or actions will happen that may significantly affect the environment? If so, list and discuss. (Secondary effects)

Increased land control and attendant intensive habitat development will cause fishermen and other recreation seekers to use the area more, creating added litter. Vegetation control will eliminate most stream side trees, reducing habitat for birds and certain mammals.

- 2) Does the action alter the environment so a new physical, biological or socio-economic environment would exist? (New environmental effect)

There will be some modification in the factors indicated, because of increased land control, habitat development and a more diversified recreation base.

- 3) Are the existing environmental features that would be affected by the proposed action scarce, either locally or statewide? If so, list and describe. (Geographically scarce)

Class I trout water is in short supply in southern Wisconsin and warrants extra protection.

- 4) Does the action and its effect(s) require a decision which would result in influencing future decisions? Describe. (Precedent setting)

No.

- 5) Discuss and describe concerns which indicate a serious controversy. (Highly controversial)

Increasing DNR ownership in this project will cause some controversy from local citizens and town board officials.

- 6) Does the action conflict with official agency plans or with any local, state or national policy? If so, how? (Inconsistent with long-range plans or policies)

No.

7) While the action by itself may be limited in scope, would repeated actions of this type result in major or significant impacts to the environment? (Cumulative impacts)

No.

8) Will the action modify or destroy any historical, scientific or archaeological site?

No.

9) Is the action irreversible? Will it commit a resource for the foreseeable future? (Foreclose future options)

No.

11

10) Will the action result in direct or indirect impacts on ethnic or cultural groups? (Socio-cultural impacts)

No.

11) Other

EA. Mt. Vernon Creek Fishery Area Done

AGENCIES, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED REGARDING THE PROJECT

Date	Personnel and Title	Contact	Comments
November 1979	DNR Master Plan Task Force		Various resources were identified in the project.
January 1980	R. Wendt-District		Request for base map.
February 1980	V. Hagen ^{CKEY} -Fish Mgt. Bureau		Goal and objectives established.

RECOMMENDATION

EIS Not Required

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

Refer to Office of the Secretary

Major and Significant Action: Prepare EIS

Request EIR

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

SIGNATURE OF EVALUATOR *Clifford Brynildson* DATE *3/10/80*
 Clifford Brynildson, Area Fish Manager

CERTIFIED TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH WPEA
 DISTRICT OR BUREAU DIRECTOR (OR DESIGNEE) *[Signature]* DATE *12/5/81*

APPROVED (if required by Manual Code)
 DIRECTOR, BEI *H. S. Dushensmiller / E.S.* DATE *1-7-82*

No COMMENTS

This decision is not final until approved by the appropriate Director and/or Director, BEI.