

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area Regional Analysis



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Parks and Recreation

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Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area
Regional Analysis

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CAPITAL SPRINGS CENTENNIAL STATE PARK AND RECREATION AREA
REGIONAL ANALYSIS
Revision August 2003

The purpose of the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area (CSCSPRA) Regional Analysis is to discover the unique character and use or “niche” for this nearly 3000-acre property and to identify primary management and public use opportunities and limitations.

For the purposes of this study, “region” refers to the Madison metropolitan area and the municipalities immediately adjoining CSCSPRA (Map A, Regional Context). Most daily visitors to the State Park and Recreation Area are expected to come from the Madison area. Users from outside of metropolitan Madison are expected to visit for special events at the State Park or in Madison or trail users who are passing through or coming to Madison on the Glacial Drumlin, Capital City, Badger, or Military Ridge State Trails (Map Y, Madison Bike Routes).

The regional analysis and accompanying suitability analysis maps, found in the Map Appendix, explore what is available in the CSCSPRA and the region, what facilities and activities are suitable, and what unique opportunities may be provided that are not available in the surrounding area. This information will insure that recreational activities are not duplicated in the Madison region and that needed activities and facilities are part of the Master Plan.

Specifically, the following interest areas were explored in this analysis: land ownership, socio-economic conditions and future land use; historic, archaeological, and cultural resources and their significance; biological and ecological resources and capabilities, existing and desirable recreational opportunities, and educational opportunities. Each section gives background information on the topic, a summary of how this information could impact the form of the CSCSPRA master plan, and an analysis of the findings.

CSCSPRA was created in the year 2000 as one of two “Centennial State Parks” celebrating one hundred years of the Wisconsin State Park System.¹ Dane County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) have entered into an innovative partnership to jointly manage the State Park and Recreation Area. Capital Springs Centennial State Park (referred to as “State Park” in this document) is comprised of the existing 328-acre Lake Farm Park on the west shore of Lake Waubesa, currently managed by Dane County, and 323 acres of agricultural land directly south of Lake Farm Park, acquired by the WDNR in 2001, creating a 651 acre State Park nestled within the larger Recreation Area (Map B, Land Ownership and Existing Land Uses).

The Capital Springs Centennial Recreation Area (referred to as “Recreation Area” in this document) is part of the E-Way system, a 21-mile long “linear, continuous network of natural and developed features that focus on educational, ecological, esthetical, and environmental values”.² Professor Phillip Lewis of the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Wisconsin developed the E-Way concept. Dane County has been implementing the E-Way since the early 1970’s.³ The Recreation Area extends within the E-Way from the Upper Mud Lake Fishery Area and Monona Conservancy on Upper Mud Lake west to Fish Hatchery Road, forming a greenbelt along the south side of Madison (see Map B, Land Ownership). The Capital City State Trail winds through the Recreation Area and enters Lake Farm Park at the Lussier Family Heritage Center (see Map B, Land Ownership).

¹ Draft Memorandum of Understanding Between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Dane County. 2000. Contact Dane County Parks Department.

² Lewis, P.H., Jr. 1996. *Tomorrow by Design*. NY, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

³ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2000. *Feasibility Study & Environmental Analysis for Land Acquisition To create by the year 2001 A capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area*.

POPULATION, LAND OWNERSHIP and FUTURE LAND USE

Demographics and Population Trends

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area is located in one of the fastest growing, densely populated, yet livable, urban areas in Wisconsin.⁴ The City of Madison is the Capital of Wisconsin and the home of the University of Wisconsin. Madison (2000 population of 208,054) has been rated by various sources as one of the best small cities in the nation to live and work. The numerous lakes, bike paths, and recreational opportunities are attractive to new businesses and residents.

This active, growing population enjoys outdoor recreation and is expected to provide the user base for CSCSPRA. Residents and employees who live and work in the new developments in Fitchburg (described in the following sections) and adjacent urbanized areas already use the Recreation Area for exercise, transportation, and outdoor enjoyment.

From 1990 to 2000 Madison gained more people than any other Wisconsin city, growing at a rate of 9.1%.⁵ Dane County gained more people than any other county, and the Village of Cottage Grove, a few miles to the northeast of CSCSPRA, grew faster than any other community in the state with a 258.9% increase in population from 1,131 to 4,059. The Madison metropolitan area was the 95th fastest growing nation-wide with a 16.2% increase in population. The population of Dane County is forecast to increase 23.4 % between 2001 and 2020 to 510,155. As a result of this growth, more homes were built in Dane County during 2001 than in any of the last 32 years.

Population Trends 1990-2015 ⁶				
Jurisdiction	1990 Population	2000 Population	% Increase	Projected 2015 Population ⁷
State of Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,363,675	9.6%	6,056,186
Dane County	367,985	426,526	16.2%	471,823
City of Madison	199,766	208,054	9.1%	229,453
City of Fitchburg	15,648	20,501	31.0%	24,058
City of Monona	8,637	8,081	-7.2%	8,189
Village of McFarland	5,232	6,416	22.6%	8,213
Town of Madison	6,442	7,005	8.7%	7,076
Town of Dunn	5,274	5,270	0.01%	6,436
Town of Blooming Grove	2,079	1,768	-15.0%	2,300

Of the municipalities immediately surrounding CSCSPRA, the City of Fitchburg grew 31% in population between 1990-2000. The City of Monona and Towns of Blooming Grove and Dunn lost population during that time period. The towns may be losing population because of the annexation of town land to adjacent cities.

Municipalities within or adjacent to the CSCSPRA project area with significant minority populations include the Town of Madison – 44.6% minority population of total population, the City of Fitchburg – 20.4 %, and the City of Madison – 18.0%.

⁴ Dane County Regional Planning Commission. May 2002. Regional Trends 2001.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

⁷ 1993 Population Projections. www.doa.state.wi.us

State government and the University of Wisconsin have provided a stable employment base and high tech jobs are increasing in the metro area. Since 1990 about 65,000 jobs have been created in Madison and the August 2002 Dane County unemployment rate in was the lowest of any county in the State at 2.5 percent.⁸

Average household income varies substantially by neighborhood in the area around CSCSPRA as shown in the following table:

Community	Median Household Income in 1999⁹
Dane County	\$49,223
City of Fitchburg	\$50,433
City of Madison	\$41,941
City of Monona	\$48,034
Village of McFarland	\$62,969
Town of Blooming Grove	\$56,328
Town of Dunn	\$66,250
Town of Madison	\$29,766

Median household income ranges from about \$30,000 to \$66,000. This wide income range may indicate a population with varying abilities to access distant outdoor education and recreation. CSCSPRA could provide outdoor experiences such as camping, canoeing, and outdoor skills courses for those who do not have the means to travel to rural and outlying state parks.

The Wisconsin population is, on average, slightly older than the U.S. population as a whole. 13.1% of the population is aged 65 or older compared to 12% nationwide.¹⁰ Almost one in four households (23%) includes at least one person age 64 or older. The proportion of people age 65 or older in Dane County is lower than the state as a whole at 9.3%, however, the rate of growth in the older population since 1990 has been much faster than the state as a whole at 17.2% versus 7.9%. The over 65 age group is expected to reach a high of almost 21% of the total Wisconsin population by 2030 when one in five people will be 65 or older. The non-working population will be increasing over the next 30 years and will have more time available for the recreational activities. The CSCSPRA master plan may need to plan for accessible facilities and activities that senior citizens enjoy such as universally accessible walking trails, educational classes and volunteer opportunities.

Land Ownership

CSCSPRA covers about 3000 acres in the Nine Springs Creek watershed (Map O, Ecological Suitability). The Recreation Area, which passes through several municipalities, is not expected to change much from its current natural condition as a result of the Master Plan. Most of the new park and recreational facilities will be located in the State Park, which is expected to receive the greatest increase in visitors. The project boundary (Map B, Land Ownership) simply indicates a zone within which the WDNR may consider negotiating the purchase of a property or easement from a willing seller, if such an opportunity arises. The boundary also designates the area in which all the public landowners have agreed to work together toward a common management goal. The governmental units that own land in the corridor

⁸ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research. Fall 2002. U.S. Housing Market Conditions Regional Activity-Madison, Wisconsin Housing Profiles.

www.huduser.org/periodicals/ushmc/fall02/wi.html

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

¹⁰ Ofstead, Cindy, Bureau of Aging & Long Term Care Resources. The 2000 Census Report: Wisconsin is Changing. www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging

generally have management plans in place for their properties. It is not the intention of the Master Plan to alter in any way the private parcels within the boundary. However, these landowners may find the final land management recommendations helpful when making management decisions for their own property.

Much of the land within the Recreation Area boundary is publicly owned (Map B, Land Ownership) with Dane County being the major landowner. The Dane County Parks Department is also the management agency for the Capital City State Trail.

The public and private landowners within the Recreation Area and applicable management plans are described below:

Dane County

Dane County and the Dane County Parks Department own and manage Lake Farm Park, Jenni and Kyle Preserve, portions of the Recreation Area, and maintain the Capital City State Trail, a multi-purpose trail of which approximately seven miles travel through CSCSPRA. Dane County and the WDNR have a unique and unprecedented joint management agreement for CSCSPRA. The County also holds conservation easements on several parcels adjacent to the Recreation Area for open space preservation and park buffers (Map B2, Land Ownership).

The Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005¹¹ includes policies for intergovernmental cooperation and encourages working with partners to reach open space goals. In 2000 the Parks Commission adopted a park classification system that divides lands managed by the Dane County Parks into four broad categories: Recreation Parks, Natural Resource Sites, County Forest Sites, and Historic Sites. CSCSPRA falls under two of those categories:

Natural Resource Site

The land in the Nine Springs E-Way Corridor is identified as a “Natural Resource Site” and is intended for resource protection and trail-oriented recreation. Lands within the Nine Springs E-Way boundary are acquired for conservation purposes, as opportunities arise from willing sellers.

Recreational Park

CSCSPRA is identified as a “Recreation Park” in the plan. Recreation parks are intended to provide active and passive outdoor recreational opportunities.

City of Madison

The City of Madison borders CSCSPRA on the north. Most of the land adjacent to CSCSPRA in the city is already developed for commercial, industrial and residential uses (Map B, Land Ownership). The city owns and maintains Indian Springs and Baxter Parks on Englehart Drive on the north side of the Recreation Area. The City also owns a wooded parcel of vacant land within the Recreation Area boundary on West Clayton Road near the Syene Road intersection.

City of Monona

The City of Monona is located north of Lake Farm Park. The city is currently in the process of developing a comprehensive land use plan.¹² The Executive Summary of the Economic Development element states that the community is landlocked and unable to expand geographically through annexation,

¹¹ Dane County. 2001. Draft Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005.

www.co.dane.wi.us/parks/2005plan/2005draft.htm

¹² www.monona.wi.us/comprehensive_plan.htm

therefore, economic development will rely on infill development and redevelopment, primarily along East and West Broadway, in the South Towne area, and along Monona Drive (Map B, Land Ownership).

The Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element natural resource goal is to “preserve and enhance the natural, cultural, and scenic resources of the City for the enjoyment of present residents and future generations”. The Monona Conservancy and Monona wetlands complexes owned by the City are within the CSCSPRA boundary.

City of Fitchburg

Fitchburg is a rapidly growing city south of the western half of the Recreation Area (Map B, Land Ownership). Currently, eastern portions of the city are in agricultural use with scattered residential development. The city hall and Fitchburg Center/Promega Technology Park are located near the intersection of Fish Hatchery Road and Lacy Road and directly south of the Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. Gunflint Trail Park is within the Recreation Area boundary. Fitchburg is in the planning stages for their Smart Growth comprehensive land use plan.¹³ The city is expected to develop on the south side of CSCSPRA for the foreseeable future. Several innovative technological developments are planned for areas adjacent to the Recreation Area, with groundbreaking taking place in August 2003¹⁴:

- **Fitchburg Center/Promega** borders CSCSPRA (Map B, Land Ownership) and Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area in the southwest corner. It is a multi-use community under construction on 400 acres of prairie, forest, and wetlands. The community will contain high-tech businesses, civic structures, retail, educational facilities, and residential neighborhoods. All aspects of planning reflect a future perspective of 50-100 years. Eagle School and Gunflint Trail Park are part of Fitchburg Center and are served by the Capital City State Trail.

The following Fitchburg developments are not located within the Recreation Area but are adjacent to it (Map S, Social Access and Adjacent Land Uses). Access to the Recreation Area via trails, entrances, or parking may be desirable from these areas. Fitchburg is implementing innovative storm water control techniques combined with natural areas and walking trails in these developments:

- **Nine Springs Green –Tech Village** will be located east of Syene Road and west of Highway 14, south of West Clayton Road, and north of Lacy Road. This is a mixed-use employment center and will include high tech businesses, retail, and residential areas.
- **Agritechnology Park** will be located south of Green-Tech Village and will provide space for agricultural technology business laboratories, greenhouses, plots and office space.
- **Swan Creek or the Nine Springs Neighborhood** is a residential development area south of CSCSPRA and McCoy Road and west of Syene Road. The 1232-acre development has 290 acres of existing small tract development and 542 acres slated for development. The Cheryl Drive extension from Fish Hatchery Road to Syene Road was completed in 2003. The WDNR and the City of Fitchburg have agreed to a 100-yard buffer on the west and north sides of this new development that will be used for trail access and to buffer the DNR hunting grounds within the adjacent Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. 150’ of the buffer is located in the City of Fitchburg and 150’ on DNR land.

Town of Blooming Grove

The Town of Blooming Grove encompasses regions to the east of the City of Monona and Village of McFarland and includes the State Park and eastern portions of the Recreation Area. The *Town of*

¹³ www.city.fitchburg.wi.us/planning

¹⁴ Vandewalle & Associates. 2002. Nine Springs Green-Tech Village Neighborhood Plan.

*Blooming Grove Land Use Plan*¹⁵ was completed in 2000. Town of Blooming Grove zoning has jurisdiction over private lands on Lake Farm Road and Libby Road adjacent to the State Park.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Department of Natural Resources owns several properties within the project area. On the far west side of the Recreation Area, in the City of Fitchburg, the Department owns the Nevin property. Nevin is composed of the South Central Region Headquarter Offices and operational buildings, the Nevin Fish Hatchery, and the Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. The total acreage for these properties is 323.61 acres. On the far east side of the Recreation Area, along the shores of Upper Mud Lake, the Department owns 262.10 acres in fee title and 30.28 acres in easement at the Upper Mud Lake Fishery Area. Just below Mud Lake the Department owns 264.32 acres called the Upper Waubesa Fishery Area. The DNR also purchased 323.01 south of Libby Road and Lake Farm Park to create the new State Park, as described in the introduction.

The 2000 *Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan*¹⁶ developed goals for the Fish and Wildlife Area adjacent to the Nevin Fish Hatchery Administrative campus. The Fish and Wildlife Area is managed for habitat. Hunting is allowed within this area and the property is posted. The Capital City State Trail passes through the Fish and Wildlife Area. Plan goals include: protection of ground and surface water resources (especially several natural springs that feed Nine Springs Creek), maintaining hunting for wildlife management and recreation, and increasing opportunities for education and recreation. Potential areas for boundary expansion and land acquisition are identified in the plan.

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD)

Just to the north of Lake Farm Park lies the Nine Springs Treatment plant of MMSD. The 140-acre MMSD Wildlife Observation Area was created from reclaimed bio-solid lagoons adjacent to Lake Farm Park and Nine Springs Creek. The area attracts a great number of waterfowl and other birds and is managed to provide food and habitat.¹⁷ The treatment plant serves the Madison Metropolitan area and outlying communities. MMSD owns several parcels within the CSCSPRA boundary (Maps B, Land Ownership and Map C - Land Ownership and Protected and/or Permanent Land Uses). Some parcels will be used for MMSD purposes and others may be available for recreational uses.

Local Units of Government Adjacent to CSCSPRA

These Towns and Villages are located adjacent to CSCSPRA but do not have land within the current boundaries. Access to the Park and Recreation Area is important for their residents. Land use and management decisions that affect land that borders CSCSPRA may impact the park.

Village of McFarland

The Village of McFarland is located on the eastern shore of Lake Waubesa (Map B, Land Ownership). Industrial land use borders the eastern side of the Upper Mud Lake Fishery. McDaniel Park connects the Village to the Recreation Area and Mud Lake. McFarland began the process of updating the Village Master Plan in 2003 to comply with Smart Growth requirements.¹⁸ [McFarland residents have indicated a desire to have access to the State Park and the Capital City State Trail by a proposed trail adjacent to the Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad tracks or a rails-to-trails conversion. The rail line currently hauls freight.](#)

¹⁵ Planning and Design Institute, Inc. 2000. Town of Blooming Grove Land Use Plan.

¹⁶ WDNR. Fall 2000. Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan and Environmental Assessment.

¹⁷ MMSD Wildlife Observation Area brochure and www.madsewer.org

¹⁸ www.mcfarland.wi.us

Town of Dunn

The Town of Dunn is located directly east of the City of Fitchburg and south of CSCSPRA. The Town has an active purchase of development rights program (PDR) and the Sinaiko property, just south of CSCSPRA on Lake Farm Road and Alma Road (Map B, Land Ownership), was the first PDR parcel in Wisconsin¹⁹. The *Town of Dunn Land Use Plan* (amended 1998) designates agricultural preservation areas south of CSCSPRA interspersed with environmental corridors. A limited service area for residential land use is located just south of the State Park along Lake Waubesa on Waubesa Avenue and Waucheeta Trail. The *Town of Dunn Land Use Plan* indicates that the Town of Dunn will stay predominantly rural in the foreseeable future. [The PDR land will stay in agriculture or open space permanently and could be considered for CSCSPRA boundary expansion areas.](#)

The Town of Madison

The Town of Madison is adjacent to the CSCSPRA in the vicinity of Hwy 14 and Rimrock Road. This area is generally residential and commercial (Map B, Land Ownership).

Private Ownership

Several inholdings, or privately owned parcels surrounded by CSCSPRA, are located within the project boundary. Inholdings adjacent to the State Park include several homes along Libby Road. These residents have requested noise and visual buffers around their homes and they would consider closing Libby Road to through traffic due to the volume and speed of the traffic going to the Lake Farm Park boat launch. Smoke from the campfires at the Lake Farm Park campground can also be disturbing.

Inholdings that are surrounded by the Recreation Area include a residential parcel adjacent to the State Park on the northwest corner of Libby Road and Lake Farm Road, a private parcel on the north side of Clayton Road at Hwy MM, a commercial site on the west side of Syene Road at the intersection of McCoy Road, a private parcel on West Clayton Road between Dane County and City of Madison land, and an agricultural parcel on Clayton Road through which Dane County has an easement for the Capital City State Trail. The Capital City State Trail also passes very near to the property line of the commercial businesses.

Trespassing, noise, traffic, more park visitors, and visual changes in the landscape may concern the residents who own land surrounded by CSCSPRA.

Analysis

The Madison metropolitan area surrounding CSCSPRA is one of the most attractive places to live in the nation. Attributes such as educational institutions, employment opportunities, available housing, and lakes, trails and open space to enjoy will continue to attract people to Madison and the surrounding cities, villages, and towns. This increasing population will demand more recreational opportunities and access to CSCSPRA. Senior citizens will make up a greater proportion of the Dane County population in the coming years. Park facilities and programming that meets their needs and interests will be in demand. Income disparity in the region may indicate a need for natural and outdoor opportunities for people who are not able to travel far, for a variety of reasons, to experience and enjoy such activities. More development on surrounding lands and an increase in park users can be expected to put more pressure on sensitive natural resources in the Nine Springs Creek watershed.

¹⁹ <http://town.dunn.wi.us>

Multiple ownership and jurisdiction within the CSCSPRA project boundaries presents unprecedented opportunities and challenges. The Recreation Area falls within the boundaries of several cities, towns and agencies described above. Inholdings (private properties surrounded by the project boundaries) include private residences, commercial businesses, agricultural land, and institutions such as the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District lands. The master plan needs be responsive to the concerns of the private property owners immediately adjacent or surrounded by CSCSPRA

Land administered by different jurisdictions or owners within the Recreation Area will be covered by the Master Plan recommendations. The project intergovernmental partners (cities, towns, Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WDOT), Dane County, and WDNR) have indicated that they would like to see CSCSPRA function and look like one big park.²⁰ They are interested in coordinated and consistent management efforts across all jurisdictions, they would like a management plan that is simple and recognizes that municipalities and businesses need flexibility. The intergovernmental partners look forward to continued communication about implementation of the Master Plan.

Historically the Nine Springs wetland complex has served as a barrier to southern expansion of the cities of Madison and Monona. Map S, Social Access and Adjacent Land Use, depicts future land uses based on the current land use plans of the surrounding municipalities and jurisdictions. This map is simplified to show broad areas of industrial/commercial, medium-high density residential, and agricultural/low density residential land uses. Land south of the State Park and the eastern portion of the Recreation Area, in the Town of Dunn, is expected to stay in agricultural, conservancy, and low-density residential land uses for the near future. These land uses are complementary in rural appearance, character, and use with CSCSPRA.

The area surrounding the western portion of the Recreation Area and the Nevin Fish and Wildlife Area in the City of Fitchburg is expected to urbanize much more quickly. Lands to the north of the Recreation Area have been developed for some time. This narrow portion of the Recreation Area holds some of the most pristine natural areas and the springs that feed Nine Springs Creek. The surrounding commercial, industrial, and residential land uses are contrasting in appearance, character, and use. Possible impacts of adjacent development include increases in storm water run-off, sediment, and pollutants and an increased need for public access as housing and businesses develop adjacent to the Recreation Area.

TRANSPORTATION and ACCESS

The Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area is located just south of the City of Madison in Dane County in south central Wisconsin (Map A, Regional Context), a location served by many and varied transportation routes.

Roads

An extensive Interstate system connects Madison to major regional population centers. Access to Interstate Highways 39/90 and 94 is located about 5 miles east of CSCSPRA. The Interstate connects travelers to Milwaukee, La Crosse and Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Chicago, Illinois, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota. Madison's Beltline (Highway 12/18), a limited access highway, runs east and west through the north edge of CSCSPRA, providing multiple access points to the State Park via South Towne Drive to Mooreland and Lake Farm Roads, and to the Recreation Area by Fish Hatchery Road and Highway 14 (Map S, Social and Access Patterns). The Wisconsin Department of Transportation

²⁰ CSCSPRA Issues Identified Through Public and Partner Comments, 2/27/2003
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(WiDOT) owns the right-of-way along the Beltline and the Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad as both cross the Yahara River and Monona Conservancy lands within the Recreation Area.

Multiple road access points are available to CSCSPRA at the E-Way parking lot on Moorland Road and Lake Farm Park on Lake Farm Road, the Nevin Fish Hatchery on Fish Hatchery Road, Jenni and Kyle Preserve on Post Road, and Indian Springs and Baxter Parks on Engelhart Drive.

Automotive transportation patterns in the immediate area of the CSCSPRA are predominantly north-south while the Recreation Area is oriented east-west. This pattern makes it difficult for those who enjoy pleasure driving or are not able to hike or bike to experience or understand the scale and scope of the Recreation Area. A designated scenic drive along Meadowview, East Clayton, and McCoy Roads and parking lots and overlooks or pull-offs could make the Recreation Area more accessible to a variety of users.

Rustic Road R-19 travels down Lalor Road, just south of CSCSPRA, giving motorists a glimpse into historic farmsteads, prairies, and wetland preserves (Map U - Recreation Suitability).

Madison Metro bus routes serve portions of CSCSPRA (Map X, Madison Bus Routes).²¹ The Nevin Administrative Campus, Fish Hatchery and Fish and Wildlife Area are accessible from Fish Hatchery Road routes. The central Recreation Area is served by Park Street, Rimrock Road, and Mooreland Road routes. The MMSD Wildlife Observation Area can be reached by the South Towne Drive routes. Bus service does not stop at the Heritage Center at Lake Farm Park or the newly acquired section of the State Park at this time.

Future Highway Projects

The WiDOT is conducting a corridor study and needs assessment of Stoughton Road (US 51) from Interstate 39/90/94 to the Village of McFarland.²² Future construction may impact the Beltline/Stoughton Road interchange, adjacent to Recreation Area wetlands. The City of Fitchburg may, at some point in the future, expand Syene Road to serve the proposed Green-Tech Village. Syene Road is a major collector road²³ that crosses the Recreation Area and Nine Springs Creek. Cheryl Drive, a major collector road at the southwest corner of CSCSPRA was recently extended.

Bicycle Access

Please see the Recreation section on page 20 for a detailed review of regional bicycle, pedestrian, and water trails.

The Madison Bike Route Map (Map Y) is available at

<http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/transp/Bicycle/BikeMap/bikemap.pdf>

From a statewide perspective the Capital City State Trail will connect CSCSPRA to Milwaukee and Dodgeville. Trail enthusiasts can travel from CSCSPRA to Dodgeville now on the Military Ridge Trail and in the future to Milwaukee on the Glacial Drumlin Trail, which is nearly complete (Map Y, Madison Bike Routes). Connections are planned to the future Badger State Trail that will travel south to Illinois.²⁴ These trails are generally used for hiking, jogging, biking, cross-country skiing, dog walking, and rollerblading. Snowmobiling and equestrian use may be available in some rural areas.

²¹ www.ci.madison.wi.us/metro/PDF%20Flyers-02/System%20map.pdf

²² www.dot.state.wi.us/projects/d1/stoughton

²³ Fitchburg Transportation Plan. 1995. City of Fitchburg

²⁴ Dane County. 2001. Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005. www.co.dane.wi.us/parks/2005plan

Dane County, the City of Madison, and many other area communities have made significant progress in developing and designating bike trails, bike lanes, and paved shoulders. The Madison network offers 50 miles of streets with bike lanes and 55 miles of off street bike paths.²⁵ The Southwest Commuter Path serves as a major bicycle connection from the Capital City State Trail (CCST) to downtown Madison and will eventually connect with Freeport, Illinois by the Badger State Trail.²⁶ The CCST, managed by Dane County, is the longest grade separated bike/pedestrian trail in the Madison metropolitan area. Other trails planned for the CSCSPRA area include a trail link from the Town of Dunn on the west side of Lake Waubesa north to the Capital City State Trail and a trail link from the Village of McFarland to the Capital City State Trail, perhaps crossing the channel between Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa on the Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad trestle.²⁷ The City of Fitchburg²⁸ and the Village of McFarland²⁹ also have bicycle transportation plans in place.

CSCSPRA could become a hub for trails connecting to local communities and neighborhoods and several parts of the state. The existing Capital City State Trail is used for recreation and for commuting to work and school. Snow is not cleared from the trail at this time so bicycling is limited in the winter months. Access points and parking are needed and wanted from the neighborhoods surrounding CSCSPRA³⁰ and more users are expected on the trail as the Fitchburg developments grow.

Cars often park, and make U-turns on the wide shoulders at the corner of McCoy and Syene Road and park on the street at Eagle School in Fitchburg to access the trail (Map S, Social Access and Adjacent Land Use). These may be desirable locations for trail parking. The E-Way parking lot on Lake Farm Road gets consistent use and may need more spaces for bikers and hikers. Access and parking for the Capital City State Trail is currently available at the Nevin Administrative Campus and Lake Farm Park.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access from neighborhoods that border CSCSPRA to the Capital City State Trail and other hiking and interpretive trails is desirable. Visitors from outside the immediate vicinity need parking lots and trails to access all parts of CSCSPRA. Map S, Social Access and Adjacent Land Use, shows existing and needed access points. Most of the existing access points are in the eastern portion of the Recreation Area and in Lake Farm Park. This portion of the project area is also the least populated. The Waubesa Beach neighborhood just south of the State Park wants pedestrian and bike access to the Capital City State Trail and the State Park so that bike riders can avoid busy roads.

Sidewalk access is and will be needed from the neighborhoods on the west end of the Recreation Area. Development surrounds the Recreation Area in this area where the fewest entry points are available. Users seem to enter the Recreation Area from city parks such as Indian Springs, Baxter, and Gunflint and from the Nevin Administrative Campus, creating their own trails in places. Most of the parking in this area is along the road, except for the parking lot at Nevin. Building one or more bike or pedestrian bridges over Nine Springs Creek connecting neighborhoods on the north side of the Recreation Area to the CCST on the south side has been discussed and was suggested at public input meetings.

Potential Rails to Trails

The Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad from McFarland to Madison crosses the channel between Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa (Map S, Social and Access Patterns) within CSCSPRA. This line currently

²⁵ Dane County Regional Planning Commission. 2002. Regional Trends 2001.

²⁶ Badger State Trail. http://wicip.uwplatt.edu/green/ci/monroe/outdoors/bl_trail.htm

²⁷ Dane County. 2001 Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005. www.co.dane.wi.us/parks/2005plan

²⁸ City of Fitchburg. 1995 Fitchburg Bicycle Trail System map.

²⁹ Dane County Regional Planning Commission. 1994. Village of McFarland Proposed Bicycle Trail System map.

³⁰ CSCSPRA Issues Identified Through Public and Partner Comments, 2/27/2003

carries freight. It is being considered for commuter rail³¹ and perhaps, with the addition of a paved trail and bridge, a bike/pedestrian trail connection between McFarland, the Capital City State Trail, and Lake Farm Park. The Chicago Northwestern Railroad that parallels Syene Rd is being considered for conversion from rails to trails.³² The rail activity on both lines currently limits multi-use path opportunities at this time.

Water Access

Water-based recreation such as pleasure boating, canoeing and kayaking, and sport and ice fishing is very popular on the Yahara chain of lakes. The State Park and portions of the Recreation Area are accessible from Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa. Canoes and kayaks can navigate up and down Nine Springs Creek, however some low bridges and down trees can impede paddlers. Canoe access points from CSCSPRA have not yet been designated along Nine Springs Creek or Lake Waubesa. Map U, Recreation Suitability, illustrates potential landings. The boat ramp at Lake Farm Park is heavily used on warm season weekends, overflowing the parking lot.

Ice fishing enthusiasts reach Upper Mud Lake through private property in the industrial park on Terminal Drive in Mc Farland or from private property at the Beltline and Monona Drive. Designated parking lots and access would be desirable. The area along Hog Island in the State Park is a favorite ice fishing spot as well and is currently reached from the boat landing or from Waucheeta Trail. Duck hunters also use the waters of Mud Lake and Nine Springs Creek in season to access designated hunting zones in the Recreation Area. Duck hunters enter the area by boat from landings on the Yahara chain of lakes.

Analysis

Vehicular access to CSCSPRA is fairly quick and easy from the Madison metropolitan area. Several entrance points are currently available but more are needed, in particular in the western portion of the Recreation Area. CSCSPRA entry points need to connect to new, existing, and future neighborhoods. The nearby Interstate road system provides access to visitors from outlying areas. Major local roads cross CSCSPRA in a north-south direction, restricting the ability of motorists to experience the linear nature of the Nine Springs Creek corridor. Public transportation serves most of the Recreation Area except the Heritage Center and State Park. More pedestrian access points to the CCST are wanted from adjacent neighborhoods.

Multi-modal, non-motorized state trails connect with the Capital City State Trail and CSCSPRA, except for a few gaps in the Glacial Drumlin Trail (Map Y, Madison Bike Routes). The centrally located Lussier Family Heritage Center or the State park may become a trail hub and destination or “jumping off” point for multi-day trips. The CCST is used for both recreation and commuting and neighborhood access points and parking lots are needed. Two rail corridors cross the project area; both are being considered for possible rails-to-trails use or parallel grade-separated bike/pedestrian trail development. A CCST connection was recently installed alongside the railroad tracks under the Beltline and seems to be heavily used.

Boating and fishing opportunities abound within and along the State Park and Recreation Area. The boat landing at Lake Farm Park is heavily used and designated winter access for ice fishing is needed. Water trails for canoes and kayaks will be marked in 2003 and there is potential for longer trails on Nine Springs Creek and along the shore of the State Park to Goodland Park.

³¹ Transport 2020-Transportation Alternatives Analysis for the Dane County/Greater Madison Metropolitan Area. www.transport2020.net

³² Dane County. 2001. Dane County Parks & Open Space Plan 2001-2005. www.co.dane.wi.us/parks/2005plan
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Southern Wisconsin is rich in Native American history. Archeologists divide the past into a series of timeframes to help them categorize the various Native American cultures that occupied this land over time. Archaeological Research has shown that the following cultures lived in and around the Madison area at some point in time:

Paleo-Indian Tradition	10,000 to 5,000 BC
Archaic Tradition	8,000 to 500 BC
Woodland Tradition	1,000 BC to 1,600 AD
Mississippian Tradition	700 AD to 1400 AD

The most significant Paleo-Indian site in Wisconsin and perhaps the Midwest is located at the Skare Site just east of Lake Waubesa on the Yahara River.³³ Numerous effigy mounds in the shape of animals, generally sited on hills overlooking lakes and rivers, remain from the Woodland culture in southeastern Wisconsin. Unfortunately many mounds have also been destroyed. Later, the Mississippians built a stockaded village and flat-topped ceremonial mounds and practiced early agriculture along the Crawfish River, just east of Madison in Jefferson County. This location is now known as Aztalan State Park. The Capital City State Trail and the Glacial Drumlin Trail will connect CSCSPRA with Aztalan.

Many archeological artifacts have been found within and around CSCSPRA (Map G, Archeological Resource Disturbance Zones). Thirty-two archaeological sites are located in Lake Farm Park. The specific locations are not shown on project maps for their protection. These sites have been designated the Lake Farm Archaeological District and placed on the National Historic Register.³⁴

The Lake Farm Park archeological sites and the other sites shown on Map G were discovered or investigated by Philip Salkin and Thomas Emerson in a 1976 federally mandated survey of the proposed E-way.³⁵ During their studies artifacts from the Late Archaic to Late Woodland period were discovered. A general conclusion of the report was that proximity to the lake or marsh increases the probability of encountering archeological material and that well-drained soil, especially soils such as St. Charles and Dodge Silt Loams, would be markers for more prehistoric habitation. These soils are scattered throughout the uplands around Nine Springs Creek and Lake Waubeasa (Maps L and N, Soil Suitability).³⁶

Due to the large number of sites found by Salkin and Emmerson, Salkin conducted another study of the Lake Farm area in 1979.³⁷ The significant evidence of a long-term pattern of pre-historic habitation found during this study led Dane County to nominate portions of Lake Farm Park to the National Historic Register.

The predictors, proximity to water and upland soils, along with known archaeological locations provided by the State Historical Society are interpreted on the Suitability for Disruption Based on Archaeological Resources maps for the State Park (Map R) and the Recreation Area (Map Q). The maps attempt to

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³⁴ Dane County Park Commission. Prehistoric Native Americans in Lake Farm Park, a brochure.

³⁵ Salkin, P. H. and Emmerson, T. E. 1976. An Archeological Survey of Phase I of the Dane County E-Way Project.

³⁶ USDA Soil Conservation Service. 1978. Soil Survey of Dane County.

³⁷ Salkin, P.H. June 1979. An Intensive Archeological Survey in the Lake Farm Parks Archeological District of Madison Wisconsin. Anthropology Program, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

predict where ancient artifacts are most likely to be found. Disruptions should be minimized in known artifact areas and an archaeologist should investigate all sites prior to the beginning of any construction. Plans may need to be changed if significant archaeological sites are discovered. Salkin and Emmerson pointed out that the entire area could hold some archaeological artifacts and recommended that an archaeologist be present for all major disruptions.

The Lussier Family Heritage Center at Lake Farm Park will provide interpretation of ancient and recent cultures that have made their home in this region and will display archaeological exhibits and artifacts depicting the early settlement of the area.³⁸ A large outdoor assembly area or “powwow” grounds, designed in accordance with Native American requirements is proposed near the Lussier Family Heritage Center for outdoor cultural and educational events.

The Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife area contains one known Indian Mound and possible remnants.³⁹ Two sites in the Nevin Administrative area have good potential for prehistoric or historic Native American archeological remains. Mound sites are also located in the new State Park area south of Lake Farm Park (see Map G, Archaeological Resource Disturbance Zones).

Analysis

Significant archaeological resources are found within CSCSPRA, especially within the State Park where the Lake Farm Archaeological District is located and in the portion of the park south of Libby Road. The Heritage Trail within Lake Farm Park (Map U, Recreation Suitability) is designed as an interpretive trail, educating hikers about the Native American history of the area. A trail brochure describing Native American culture and history in the park is available; interpretive signs could enhance the experience.

The Lussier Family Heritage Center at Lake Farm Park is expected to have educational exhibits on Native American culture and the archaeological sites. The potential for education about Native American cultures and multi-cultural involvement is great. Evidence of prehistoric cultures may be found anywhere in the State Park or Recreation Area. Archaeological surveys must be performed before disruption of sites where artifacts might be encountered to insure the protection of these sites and artifacts.

BIOLOGICAL and ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area is located in the Eastern Ridges and Lowlands geographical province of Wisconsin in the Yahara River Valley. The topography of this province is “smooth, low, fertile, and convenient to through transportation and hence is the most densely populated and the richest of the geographical province in the state”.⁴⁰ The Yahara River valley ranges from 2.5 to 5 miles wide and includes the five Madison area lakes, Mendota, Monona, Wingra, Waubesa, and Kegonsa. From its headwaters northeast of Madison, the Yahara flows through four of the five lakes to its confluence with the Rock River north of Janesville. The Yahara is a wandering stream that flows through broad marshes and has few tributaries. Nine Springs Creek is one of the tributaries.

³⁸ Dane County Heritage Center brochure

³⁹ WDNR. Fall 2000. Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan and Environmental Assessment

⁴⁰ Martin, Lawrence. 1965. The Physical Geography of Wisconsin. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Glacial Geology

The glacial geology of Dane County and surrounding regions is famous among geologists the world over. Drumlins, moraines, eskers, glacial lakes, massive outwash plains, terraces, kettle lakes, and other features created by the retreat of the Green Bay glacial lobe over 12,000 years ago make this area unique and interpretive displays could explain the glaciations of this area. The park is located just east of the Ice Age Scenic Trail that marks extent of the glacier's advance and is linked to the Ice Age Trail via the Capital City State Trail and Military Ridge Trail.

Ground moraine, soil derived from glacial deposits left by the melting ice, covers CSCSPRA. The ground moraine forms the typical rolling topography of southeastern Wisconsin. Unique physical features of the State Park that may be of interest to visitors include drumlins, an oval hill with its orientation in the direction the glacial ice move, just above Hog Island and just west of the Lussier Family Heritage Center (Map O, Ecological Suitability). Eastern Wisconsin is one of only three areas in the United States where drumlins are abundant. More drumlins can be seen in the Town of Dunn just west of the park. Ramparts, ridges of soil and rocks pushed up by the winter ice are another unique feature on the shore of Lake Waubesa along Hog Island.

The undulating ground moraine and drumlins provide some high topographic points from which to view the State Capital, CSCSPRA, and the surrounding countryside (Maps K, Topography/Slope Analysis). Locations of potential overlooks, observation decks, or car pull-offs are indicated on Map U, Recreation Suitability. Generally these points are at the edges of the Recreation Area, looking down into the Nine Springs Creek Valley. Highpoints are also found in the vicinity of the Lussier Family Heritage Center in Lake Farm Park, on the E-Way Trail, and at Hog Island, overlooking Lake Waubesa.

Research Studies of CSCSPRA

Two recent studies provided the background for the CSCSPRA natural resource recommendations. Those studies are *Ecological Overview for the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area*, completed in 2002 by Robert Wernerehl, Clark Forestry and *Nine Springs Watershed and Environmental Corridor: A Water Resources Management Study* by the 1996 Water Resources Management Practicum, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The *Ecological Overview* provides information about the ecological resources of CSCSPRA. The report documents the current plant community types and threatened and endangered species in the area (Map F, Ecosystems of Ecological Significance and Map I, Current Land Cover). It also identifies nine sites with potential for high quality plant community areas (Map F, Ecosystems of Ecological Significance), describes plant community restoration and protection opportunities, and suggests interpretive activities.

The *Water Resources Management Study* is an extensive review of the current water regime in the Nine Springs Creek Watershed (Map O, Ecological Suitability). Participants in the practicum measured water quality and quantity, described natural and municipal conditions and trends for water management, identified critical areas for protection, evaluated water management options, and made water natural resource management recommendations.

Both of these studies are referenced heavily in the following natural resources section.

Plant Community History

Studies of 1830's surveyor records indicate that much of the CSCSPRA at that time was an open wetland along Nine Springs Creek that included marsh, sedge meadow, wet prairie, and lowland shrubs (Map H, Pre-European Settlement Vegetation). Uplands consisted of oak woodland including white, black, and bur oak. The far southwestern portion of the Recreation Area in the Fitchburg Center area may have once been prairie. These plant communities developed over time in soils and microclimates that best suited them. This map may be used as a guide for future plant restoration efforts.

In the 1830's the southern sedge meadows that flanked Nine Springs Creek "were thriving, productive ecosystems filled with bird life, frogs, snakes, and turtles. Sandhill and whooping cranes used the marshes, as did herons, egrets, bitterns, snipe, Wilson's phalarope, rails, coots, short-eared owls, harriers, and ducks".⁴¹ The wetlands were and are fed by an unusually high number of natural springs, some with rather high flow rates, a very unique occurrence. Several of the springs have been protected and utilized by the Nevin Fish Hatchery and Fish and Wildlife Area. The Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan recommends public access to at least one spring and educational exhibits on ground water resources in the old stone building on the grounds.

Fire and soil saturation maintained the sedge meadows and farmers harvesting marsh hay kept shrubs and trees at bay. In the early 1900's the wetlands were drained and ditched for agricultural use and Nine Springs Creek was canalized, or straightened, to speed water drainage from farm fields. (Map W, Nine Springs Creek Meanders). Shrubs and invasive species that could survive on marsh soils with fluctuating water tables, such as reed canarygrass, gained a foothold in the unburned meadows. The *Water Resources Management Study* and Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area plans both consider the possibility of recreating some of the stream meanders to restore the natural water flow of Nine Springs Creek and improve fish habitat.

Nine Springs Creek Watershed

The Nine Springs Watershed extends beyond the boundaries of CSCSPRA (Map O, Ecological Suitability). All rainwater falling within the watershed drains to Nine Springs Creek. The *Water Resources Management Study* found that non-degraded wetland areas in the Nine Springs watershed have shrunk by 70% since 1974, being replaced by solid stands of reed canarygrass and other invasive species, which choked out the many native plant species that once thrived here, and by conversion of the land to other uses. The loss of diverse plant species has led to a decline of bird and animal species because of the lack of appropriate habitat and food sources. The land cover ratios for the Lake Monona/Lake Waubesa Watershed from the Ecological Overview are listed below:

Land Cover	Area in Acres	% of Watershed
Urban/Developed	19,139	31.9%
Agricultural	13,303	22.2%
Grassland	9,299	15.5%
Open Water	6,372	10.6%
Wetland	5,161	8.6%
Forest	5,184	8.6%
Barren	1,485	2.5%
Shrubland	42	.01%

⁴¹ Wernerehl, Robert - Clark Forestry. 2002. Ecological Overview for the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area.

Currently one third (31.9%) of the land cover is residential, business, or freeway and generally covered by impervious surfaces that do not allow water to infiltrate. 22.2% of the land cover was agricultural, and the remaining 45.9% open, park, or natural area.

Runoff begins to impact natural ecological systems when 10% of the ground surface is impervious.⁴² As the amount of impervious surface increases, the volume and speed of storm water increases and pollutants, nutrients, and sediment are carried into Nine Springs Creek and Lake Waubesa and periodic flooding may occur after large rain events. In urban/developed areas water cannot soak into the ground to recharge the springs that feed Nine Springs Creek and the Nevin Fish Hatchery.

The study concludes by saying that the “entire Nine Springs E-Way is a valuable resource that must be protected. In order to protect the resource, wise management decisions must be made on a watershed basis. Management must include protecting the springs, their recharge areas and valuable wetlands; addressing areas where urbanization negatively impacts the watershed; and increasing the value of this resource for use by humans and wildlife.” The long-term ecological health and function of the Recreation Area’s resources is highly dependent upon land use decisions beyond its borders.

While the master plan will not make recommendations for areas outside of the Recreation Area, educational opportunities on innovative storm water management techniques may be possible along the Capital City State Trail. Dane County adopted an Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance on August 2, 2001⁴³ and the City of Fitchburg is dedicated to utilizing the best management practices available to “enhance, protect and preserve the unique environmental character of the Nine Springs E-Way corridor”,⁴⁴ some of which may be visible from the trail.

The Water Management Study makes the following recommendations:

- Springs and groundwater recharge areas supply high quality base flow of water to Nine Springs Creek and the Nevin Fish Hatchery. The study states that “if the springs are not identified and protected, the hydrology of the system may be altered, water quality in the stream may become further degraded, and dependent vegetation and wildlife may suffer.”
- Sufficient groundwater recharge areas (hilltops or high elevations in the watershed) are needed to maintain the spring discharge; recharge in Dane County is relatively low so larger recharge areas must be maintained for water infiltration.
- The quantity and quality of storm water flows are two of the major threats to the watershed. Areas to protect are the wetlands and lowlands adjacent to Nine Springs Creek, which ease flood peaks and retain this water for filtration and settling of contaminants. However, performing these functions is also destructive to wetland quality. Reed canarygrass and other invasive species are a symptom of changeable water conditions and increased nutrient loads washing down from the uplands.
- Critical non-point source pollution areas in the watershed are areas with high percentages of impervious surface, construction site erosion, and stream bank erosion. Specific areas currently include (Map O Ecological Suitability) the new developments west of Fish Hatchery Road along the E-Way (sub-watershed 28), the commercial/industrial area north of the Nevin Fish Hatchery

⁴² Center for Watershed Protection. 2000. Impacts of Urbanization Slideshow. www.stormwatercenter.net

⁴³ Dane County. 2002 Dane County Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Manual. Contact Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission and Dane County Land Conservation Department

⁴⁴ Vandewalle and Associates. 2002. Nine Springs Green-Tech Village Neighborhood Plan. City of Fitchburg.

(sub-watershed 32), and the commercial, industrial and residential areas along Hwy 18/151 (sub-watershed 34).

The *Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan* makes recommendations to develop and implement a plan to limit storm water-caused degradation of Nevin’s wetlands and Nine Springs Creek water quality, to explore the feasibility of restoring stream meanders and recreational fishing, and to protect groundwater so that the Nevin Fish Hatchery can continue to function to its full potential and for the protection of Nine Springs Creek and its surrounding wetlands.⁴⁵

Vegetative Cover

Current vegetative land cover in CSCSPRA is illustrated on Map I, Current Land Cover (WISCLAND Land Cover Grid provided by WDNR Geographic Services Section). Wetland is the predominant vegetative community at 49.3% of the area. This community has pockets of high quality native species in the Monona Conservancy and Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area, however, the wetlands generally consist of monocultures of cattail marsh and reed canarygrass. The wetlands extend throughout CSCSPRA along Nine Springs Creek to the northern portion of Lake Farm Park, the Monona Conservancy, and the marshes around Upper Mud Lake.

The second greatest land cover is agricultural land at 27.3%. [This land is owned by farmers or leased for cropping by Dane County and MMSD. Dane County has purchased the development rights to some of the farmland within and surrounding CSCSPRA for open space protection.](#) Much of the State Park south of Libby Road is leased for agricultural production right now.

Opportunities exist for improvement of a variety of plant communities, ecological education, and volunteer activities. The complete land cover table is listed below:

Land Cover	Area in Acres	% of CSCSPRA
Urban/Developed	96.9	3.2%
Agriculture	830.9	27.3%
Wetland Emergent/Wet Meadow	1177.3	38.6%
Lowland Shrub	111.9	3.7%
Forested	213.7	7.0%
	1502.9	49.3%
Grassland	272.7	9.0%
Forest Coniferous	9.5	.03%
Broad-Leaved Deciduous	214.0	7.0%
	223.5	7.3%
Open Water	100.8	3.3%
Barren	17.7	0.6%
Shrubland	0.7	0.0%
Total	3046.0	100.00%

⁴⁵ WDNR. Fall 2000. Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan and Environmental Assessment. Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area Master Plan

Prairie restoration is underway in CSCSPRA with 65 acres having been planted to date by Dane County with acreage expected to double in the next 10-15 years (Map P, State Park Soil/Plant Associations).

Significant Plant Communities

The *Ecological Overview for the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area* (2002) identified nine ecologically significant sites with high quality native vegetation that warrant protection. The locations of the significant sites concur with the findings of the *Water Resource Management Study*. The nine sites are illustrated on Map F, Ecosystems of Ecological Significance, and listed below:

	Site	Size	Predominant Plant Community
1.	Nevin Springs	67 acres	Southern Sedge Meadow & Calcareous Fen
2.	Bike Trail Fens	62 acres	Southern Sedge Meadow & Calcareous Fen
3.	Shrubby Cattail Marsh	36 acres	Emergent Aquatic & Shrub-Carr
4.	Jennie and Kyle Preserve Marsh	25 acres	Shrub-Carr
5.	Syene Fen	33 acres	Southern Sedge Meadow & Shrub-Carr
6.	Monona Conservancy West	97 acres	Emergent Aquatic, Southern Sedge Meadow Floating Sedge & Cattail Mat
7.	Monona Conservancy East	85 acres	Emergent Aquatic, Southern Sedge Meadow Floating Sedge & Cattail Mat, Bluejoint Grass Meadow
8.	Upper Mud Lake Wetlands	76 acres	Southern Sedge Meadow & Tamarack Swamp
9.	State Park Drumlin & Shores	64 acres	Mixed deciduous woods, prairie remnant, mixed emergent aquatic & sedge meadow

These nine areas have the most intact native plant communities and are prime candidates for removal of invasive species and preservation and restoration activities. The Dane County Parks Department and their Adult Conservation Team and volunteers have been and will continue in these restoration efforts. The Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan makes recommendations for protection, enhancement and restoration of sedge meadows, calcareous fens, disturbed wetlands, upland habitat, and open savanna/grasslands under their jurisdiction.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The WDNR Bureau of Endangered Species maintains the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) to document unique ecological sites and rare and endangered species throughout the regional area. The NHI lists four high quality, rare, or otherwise significant natural communities within the Recreation Area. These communities include southern sedge meadow, shrub-carr, slow, hard, warm water stream; and a shallow, hard drainage lake – emergent aquatic community.

Two rare, threatened or endangered plant species have been documented in the Recreation Area: small white lady’s slipper, which grows in fens and calcareous wet-prairies and yellow giant hyssop, which grows in open woods or woodland edges in floodplains and mesic forest. The general locations of threatened and endangered speices are shown on Map F, Ecosystems of Ecological Significance. Specific locations and species are not given to protect them. Protection and enhancement strategies are critical for the survival of these species and plant communities.

Wildlife and Wildlife Corridors

Typical southern Wisconsin wildlife species frequent CSCSPRA such as deer, wild turkey, fox, coyote, raccoon, muskrat, woodchuck, and others. Other uncommon species may also be present. Recreational hunting is allowed in certain portions of the Recreation Area and Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. Hunting is a safety concern in such an urban area, as is hunting in unauthorized areas.

The 140-acre Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) Wildlife Observation Area was created to provide habitat and viewing of waterfowl and shorebirds and has trails and viewing platforms. Over 200 species of birds have been documented here including shorebirds, waterfowl, marsh birds, gulls and terns, and upland birds. The numerous wetlands, Nine Springs Creek, and Lake Waubesa attract resident and migrating waterfowl. Unauthorized waterfowl hunting from Nine Springs Creek in the Wildlife Observation Area has been occurring.

The State Park has opportunities to restore upland grassland bird habitat on what is currently agricultural land. The virtual demise of native prairie has led to a large decline in grassland bird species. The *Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan* recommends development of trails and boardwalks for wildlife observation within its boundaries.

The Recreation Area is a relatively narrow natural corridor in a growing urban area. Road crossings may restrict this corridor further and block natural stream flow and aquatic life movement and deter wildlife movement. The master plan needs to consider enhancing opportunities for wildlife movement throughout CSCSPRA and especially where major roads cross the natural areas. Some species such as mallard duck, for example, depend on both wetland and upland habitat at different times in their life cycle. It is important to maintain continuity between lowland and upland natural areas to maintain habitat and feeding areas.⁴⁶ The relatively rural nature of the Town of Dunn just south of the State Park also provides wildlife habitat.

Lakes

CSCSPRA is located on Lake Waubesa, one of five lakes on the Yahara River chain. Upper Mud Lake, 223 acres, is also within the project boundary. Sport fishing, boating and swimming are favorite activities on the lakes. Lake Waubesa is 2050 acres in size and has a shoreline of 8.6 miles. The greatest depth is 37 feet.⁴⁷ Fish species found in Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa include muskellunge, northern pike, walley, large mouth bass, small mouth bass, rock bass, white bass, black crappie, bluegill, channel catfish, and bullhead. Migrating and resident waterfowl frequent the lake and associated marshes.

The water level of the Yahara Lakes chain is controlled by a series of dams between Lakes Mendota and Monona and between Lake Waubesa and Lake Kegonsa. In recent years storm events have caused large long term and short term lake level fluctuations and flooding at more frequent intervals. The Yahara Lakes Advisory Group concluded in a 2002 study that development that increased the area of impervious surfaces, especially in areas north and west of Lake Mendota, was causing a greater volume and velocity of storm-water run-off entering the chain of lakes.⁴⁸ Run-off is also increasing sedimentation and nutrient and pollutant loading. [The water clarity of Lake Waubesa is medium to low and the lake is designated at](#)

⁴⁶ Water Resources Management Practicum, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison. 1996. *Nine Springs Watershed and Environmental Corridor: A Water Resources Management Study*.

⁴⁷ www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water

⁴⁸ Lake Waubesa Conservation Association. Winter 2001/2002. *Erratic Levels on Our Yahara Lakes. Lake Currents* www.lakewaubesa.org

“Impaired Resource Water” on the Environmental Protection Agencies 303d list due to a variety of water quality problems.⁴⁹ Lake fluctuations may cause damage to the State Park shoreline along Lake Waubesa and increased sedimentation. Enhanced shoreline habitat, water quality improvement, and educational demonstrations are potential projects and activities for the Lake Waubesa shoreline.

Analysis

Preservation of the existing high quality plant community areas, re-creation of wetlands and prairies, including restoring Nine Springs Creek meanders, and education about the forces that degrade pristine natural areas may be undertaken at CSCSPRA. It is important to maintain and enhance native plant communities to increase species diversity and wildlife habitat. The biologically significant systems within CSCSPRA include:

- Numerous springs, Nine Springs Creek and associated sedge meadows, wetlands, and marshes; and the nine ecologically significant sites illustrated on Map F, Ecosystems of Ecological Significance
- Lake Waubesa, Upper Mud Lake, the Yahara River, and associated marshes
- State Park drumlin with possible remnant prairie vegetation and unique system of upland, lowland and lake in close proximity
- Prairie restoration efforts underway in the E-Way and Lake Farm Park
- MMSD Waterfowl Observation Area.

Native plant community restoration efforts have been underway in the Recreation Area and Lake Farm Park by the Dane County Parks Department Naturalist and volunteers. The Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area and MMSD Wildlife Observation Area have plans in place for continuing restoration efforts.

Maintaining base flow to the unique springs, most of which are in the western portion of the Recreation Area, and supporting efforts to mitigate impacts of storm water on the water and natural resources of CSCSPRA is a unique opportunity to work with municipal partners and provide educational demonstrations to Recreation Area visitors.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area presents a unique regional opportunity to create a large natural resource based park within an urban area for education and recreation.

Existing Recreational Facilities

Easily accessible recreation is one of the things that make Dane County such a livable place. According to the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce over 29,000 acres are designated for recreational use.⁵⁰ The Yahara chain of lakes and other water bodies provide canoeing (48 miles), swimming (32 areas), boating (40 launch sites) and fishing for a variety of species. Hundreds of miles of trails are available including hiking (46 miles), bike trails/routes (over 160 miles), and cross-country skiing (14 areas, 100+miles). There are 170 camping sites in Dane County Parks, hunting is available of 8,548 acres of

⁴⁹ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. April 2002. State of the Rock River Basin, Publication # WT-668-2002.

⁵⁰ www.greatermadisonchamberofcommerce.com/move/rec.htm

public land, there are 13 sledding hills, and skating at 40 facilities. Some of these activities are available at CSCSPRA (Map J, Existing Recreation Opportunities – State Park and Map U, Recreation Suitability) and others are being considered during the Master Planning process.

Lake Farm Park

328-acre Lake Farm Park, operated by the Dane County Parks Department, is currently under development (Map B, Land Ownership). The park is home to the Lussier Family Heritage Center. The mission of the Center is “to provide an environment that supports and encourages the discovery of the history, culture, and resources of the Dane County Region, the Nine Springs E-Way, and Lake Farm County Park through recreation, interpretive programs, special events, and interpretation.”⁵¹ The Heritage Center includes park offices, a large space for meetings and banquets, an overlook of the Monona Conservancy wetlands and MMSD Wildlife Observation Area, and display and exhibit areas. An exhibit pavilion will house cultural and environmental exhibits, as well as an “orientation center” to Dane County and the region’s cultural and natural resources. The Dane County Historical Society is housed here as well. The adjacent barn will be utilized for the Adult Conservation Corps, storage and special events. The Center’s architecture reflects the agricultural heritage of Dane County.

Other facilities at the park include a fully accessible RV campground with 54 sites, 39 with electric hook-ups, a sanitary dump station, restrooms and shower facilities. Campers often visit Madison for events at the Alliant Energy Center, UW-Madison, Monona Terrace, and city events, as well as enjoying the State Park and Recreation Area.

The park also offers a heavily used boat launch with fish cleaning station, three shelters, a fishing pier, an overlook tower, a group camp area, wildlife pond, nature and interpretive trail, cross-country skiing trails, and a future Millennium Grove Nursery. The Capital City State Trail enters the park at the Lussier Family Heritage Center and will connect with the Glacial Drumlin Trail to Milwaukee and joins with the Military Ridge Trail to Dodgeville (Map Y, Madison Bike Routes).

Lake Farms Archaeological District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, contains at least 32 archaeological sites, some of which had been in use for up to 10,000 years. The Heritage Trail along the shore of Lake Waubesa invites visitors to explore the Native American history of Lake Farm Park.

The park is on the shores of Lake Waubesa, which is popular for sport fishing, both summer and winter, boating, wildlife observation, and quiet water sports such as canoeing and kayaking.

New State Park Addition

The DNR recently purchased 323 acres of open land directly south of Libby Road and adjacent to Lake Farm Park. The State Park has no facilities and is not currently open to visitors. The tillable land is in agricultural production. Local residents do cross the land to access ice fishing spots off Hog Island. Ultimately this new addition will combine with existing Lake Farm Park to form Capital Springs Centennial State Park.

Nine Springs E-Way

CSCSPRA is building on the E-Way concept that was established in the 1960’s by Dr. Phil Lewis, emeritus professor of Landscape Architecture at UW-Madison. Dr. Lewis writes in his book, *Tomorrow*

⁵¹ Dane County Heritage Center brochure www.co.dane.wi.us/parks/heritage
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by Design.⁵² “The E-Way was designed to show how a community’s existing natural and cultural resources could be identified and accentuated to elevate environmental, ecological, and aesthetic planning decisions to a higher priority within the community development decision-making process and to provide a permanent aesthetic and recreationally enjoyable corridor system for the use of residents.”

Dr. Lewis and his students identified many natural and cultural resource nodes that could be visited during a trip on the E-Way. Twenty-six interpretive nodes link downtown Madison with open spaces by bicycle and pedestrian trails, and now water trails as well. Several of the nodes are within CSCSPRA and include Nevin Fish Hatchery, MMSD Lagoons, Jenni and Kyle Preserve, MMSD Treatment Plant, Monona Conservancy, Lussier Family Heritage Center, and the Capital City State Trail. The CSCSPRA Master Plan will continue to implement the E-Way concept.

The Dane County Board of Supervisors adopted a proposal in 1974 to acquire and develop the E-Way section along Nine Springs Creek from Dunn’s Marsh to Lake Waubesa, a distance of seven miles. Abundant springs and wetlands dominate the landscape. Prairie plantings and upland woods add variety to the scene.

The paved Capital City State Trail provides opportunities for walking, jogging, bicycling for recreation and commuting, and rollerblading. Mowed hiking and cross-country skiing trails begin at the E-Way parking lot on Lake Farm Road and link the Lussier Family Heritage Center and Lake Farm Park to trails along Nine Springs Creek. This entry area has also been suggested as a possible canoe launch (Map U, Recreation Suitability) and will be the terminus of a signed water trail that Capital Water Trail volunteers plan to have in place in summer 2003.⁵³

Parks and Designated Natural and Recreation Areas within the CSCSPRA

Several different parks and designated areas within the CSCSPRA boundary, that are maintained by a variety of municipalities and agencies, provide a variety of experiences and activities to the public. The public has requested more access and connections between the parks and the Capital City State Trail and other parts of CSCSPRA (Map U, Recreational Suitability), The parks and areas include:

Jenni and Kyle Preserve

The Jenni and Kyle Preserve is a 161-acre Dane County Park designed for universal accessibility by children and adults with disabilities. Upon completion it will include fishing decks, trails, wildlife viewing and a trail to universally accessible hunting blinds in the Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. The spring-fed trout ponds were once part of the Nevin Fish Hatchery. Wetlands and prairies surround the park and volunteers have spent countless hours improving the natural communities.

Indian Springs Park

Indian Springs Park is maintained by the City of Madison and consists of springs, wetlands and lowland forest. A path meanders along the banks of Nine Springs Creek and huge cottonwood trees dominate the landscape. The park is adjacent to residential housing and parking is along the road. Neighbors have asked for a bridge over Nine Springs Creek to access the Capital City State Trail.

⁵² Lewis, Philip H. 1996. *Tomorrow by Design*. NY, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. .

⁵³ www.mailbag.com/users/cwt

Baxter Park

Baxter Park is a community park just east of Indian Springs Park that provides open space for active play, a playground, and overlook seating areas. A path created by users is located along the creek. Parking is on the road

Gunflint Trail Park

Gunflint Trail Park is an undeveloped park owned by the City of Fitchburg. The park is adjacent to Eagle School and provides access to the Capital City State Trail in the Fitchburg Center Development. Parking is along the road.

WDNR Nevin Fish Hatchery and Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area⁵⁴

The Nevin Fish Hatchery is the oldest of all DNR managed lands, acquired in 1876. Over half a million rainbow, brown, and brook trout are raised here annually. The 320-acre property has a variety of plant communities, 14 springs, picnic areas, and is on the Capital City State Trail. Hunting is allowed on portions of the Fish and Wildlife Area in season. Hatchery tours are available. Nevin is also the home of the DNR South Central Region Headquarters where information on trails, camping, permits, and all DNR activities is available. The Forest Pest Lab is located here as well. CCST users can park in the Nevin parking lot.

Gilligan's Island

Gilligan's Island, a sandbar between Lake Monona and Upper Mud Lake owned by the WiDOT, is a favorite spot for boaters to anchor and socialize.

WDNR Upper Mud Lake and Upper Waubesa Fishery Areas

Fishery areas are for the purpose of protecting or managing for fishery habitat and/or providing public access for fishing opportunities. Secondarily fishery areas also provide opportunities for hunting, hiking, nature study and other similar types of recreational uses.

Upper Mud Lake is located between Lake Waubesa and Lake Monona. The lake and associated marshes are favorite ice fishing and duck hunting locations. Ice fishing enthusiasts generally access the lake from private property at Terminal Drive in McFarland and the intersection of Monona Drive and the Beltline in Monona (Map U, Recreation Suitability). Designated public access is needed. Boating, canoeing, kayaking, sport fishing are favorite warm season activities on the lakes. Canoe and kayak rentals are available nearby.

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District Wildlife Observation Area

A 140-acre wildlife observation area has been created from former biosolid storage lagoons at MMSD. The wildlife area is between the Monona Conservancy lands to the north and Lake Farm Park on the south and can be seen along Moorland Road. In the western part of the area, water levels are managed to create excellent conditions for migratory shorebirds. The eastern portion has a combination of open water and wetlands that attract marsh and water birds. Over two hundred species of birds have been seen here. Nine Springs Creek flows within the wildlife area and could provide canoe access. An observation platform can be accessed from the E-Way parking lot on Moorland Road. Hiking trails along the spoil banks provide observation and seating areas. Hunting from the creek in posted 'No Hunting' areas is creating a hazardous situation.

⁵⁴ WDNR. Fall 2000. Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area Master Plan and Environmental Assessment.

Nearby Recreational and Educational Sites

Nearby recreational and educational sites can enhance the diversity of experience for CSCSPRA users and information about them may be included in interpretive displays about local history, culture, and natural resources.

McCoy Farmhouse

Benjamin Brown, a successful tobacco farmer, built this 1861 farmhouse on Syene Road. In 1949, Elizabeth McCoy, a microbiologist famous for her works in bacteria toxin and botulism purchased the property. Dr. McCoy was an advocate for the preservation of the wetlands along Nine Springs Creek and brought attention to the area. The house is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and has a historical marker in front. The home is privately owned.

Sinaiko Park

Sinaiko Park is just to the south of Capital Springs Centennial State Park. This land was the first Purchase of Development Rights parcel in Wisconsin, purchased by the Town of Dunn. This event is marked by a small marker at the parking lot on the northeast corner of Lake Farm Road and Alma Road. A short trail from the parking lot leads to one of the few remnant oak savannas in Wisconsin, a very rare plant community, with a good view of Lake Waubesa and the countryside. The remainder of the Sinaiko property is in agricultural production.

Aldo Leopold Nature Center

The nearby Aldo Leopold Nature Center in Monona teaches “love, respect, and admiration for the land in the spirit of Wisconsin’s premier conservationist, Aldo Leopold”. The nature center offers hands-on educational classes and outdoor programs primarily for youth. The twenty-acre site affords a variety of habitats for study, such as oak woods, prairie, field, wetlands, and pond.

Goodland County Park

Goodland Park is located just south of CSCSPRA on the shore of Lake Waubesa. The 15-acre park with 600 feet of shoreline serves a small residential area along the lake and offers a boat ramp, wooded picnic areas, tennis and basketball courts, volleyball, a softball field, playgrounds, and unsupervised swimming. It is one of the oldest county parks.

Babcock County Park

Babcock Park, on the east shore of Lake Waubesa at the outflow of the Yahara River, offers a boat launch and fish cleaning station, accessible fishing pier, a 25 unit campground with showers and sanitary dump station. The park is named for Stephen Babcock, a Wisconsin dairy scientist who discovered a method for measuring the percentage of butterfat found in milk.

Holtzman Natural Resource Site

This 64-acre natural area, owned by Dane County, just south of Meadowview Road does not have public access.

Rustic Road R-19

Rustic Road 19 travels along Lalor Road from County Road B to Goodland Road, just south of CSCSPRA. The road borders the Waubesa Wetlands Preserve and crosses Swan and Murphy Creeks. Native prairie plants can be seen alongside the road. The William Lalor Farm, on the road, was originally purchased from the government in 1846.

Existing Recreation and Trail Opportunities in Dane County

The municipalities within and immediately surrounding CSCSPRA have park systems and land use and open space plans in place. It is the intent that these municipalities will manage their properties according to their own plans and that they may find recommendations in the Master Plan useful in implementing their plans. The following describes the existing trails and parks in the surrounding municipalities. Connections may be formed between CSCSPRA and other parks and trails to expand the local open space network.

Dane County Parks And Open Space Plan 2001-2005⁵⁵

Dane County is a partner in the CSCSPRA. The recent draft *Parks and Open Space Plan* identifies park and open space goals for the period of 2001-2005 and a process to meet those goals. The Parks Department operates 32 separate areas consisting of 21 recreational parks and 11 natural resource sites throughout the county. Lake Farm Park, managed by Dane County, will become a unit within the State Park and be managed jointly by Dane County and WDNR. A draft Memorandum of Understanding forms the guidelines for the joint management of CSCSPRA.

Trails

A major emphasis of the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan is the recommendation for new trails to connect existing and proposed parks and natural resource sites, including water trails.

Pedestrian and Bicycle trails with possible connections to CSCSPRA include:

Madison Lakes Loop – Cities of Madison, Middleton and Monona – focus on filling gaps in trail connectors, better signage and identification.

Starkweather Trail – Link the Capital City State Trail with Token Creek/Sun Prairie Trail along Starkweather Creek.

Badger State Trail – will link the Camp Randall area in Madison to Freeport, Illinois and cross the Capital City State Trail. The Southwest Commuter Trail is part of the Badger State Trail.

Capital City State Trail – Better links to Madison City Trails and the Glacial Drumlin Trail are still needed.

Town of Dunn and Capital City State Trail – Provide a link from the Town of Dunn on the west side of Lake Waubesa north to the Capital City State Trail.

Oregon Loop – A trail to follow open space corridors and old railroad right-of-way to connect the Capital City State Trail, the Town of Dunn, the Village of Oregon, DNR land in the City of Fitchburg, and the Badger State Trail.

Capital City State Trail to Aldo Leopold Center in Monona – connection from the Capital City State Trail to east Broadway and the Aldo Leopold Center, perhaps extending to the City of Monona's Woodland Park and City of Madison's Edna Taylor Park, possibly providing an entrance and parking for the Capital City State Trail.

Parks Surrounding CSCSPRA

Municipalities around CSCSPRA also have park systems. City parks often provide active and organized recreation as well as picnic and natural areas. The following lists the adjacent municipalities and the types of recreation that are offered. A great variety and number of recreational opportunities already exist in CSCSPRA and the immediate area.

City of Fitchburg

The adjacent City of Fitchburg provides 67 park and open space areas on a total of 576 acres. There are 27 neighborhood and area parks for public use, a golf course and 28 natural and storm water management areas. A 1974 Subdivision Ordinance requiring dedication of parkland insures that additional open space will be preserved as the city grows. Gunflint Trail Park, adjacent to Eagle School is currently within the Recreation Area boundary.

City of Monona

Monona's city park system contains 25 parks over 330 acres including neighborhood parks, community parks, area parks, and open space. Parks provide active recreation, historical sites, lake access, hiking trails, ice skating rink, and a pool.

Recreation Needs Analysis

Local residents are expected to be the primary CSCSPRA and Capital City State Trail users. The CCST is a 9.5-mile long urban bike and pedestrian path, of which 6.2 miles run within CSCSPRA, used for recreation and commuting. It links downtown Madison with the south side neighborhoods and communities, drawing users from throughout Madison. The trail also connects to the Military Ridge Trail and will connect to the Glacial Drumlin Trail and the future Badger State Trail, drawing bike enthusiasts to the park from throughout southern Wisconsin (Map Y, Madison Bike Routes). Neighboring residents have said that they are looking forward to more trail connections between their neighborhoods and the park, other trails, McFarland, and downtown Madison.

At Lake Farm Park picnic shelters are very popular for reunions, weddings, corporate picnics, and family parties. Most of these groups come from the Madison area.

Fishing tournaments, ice fishing, and the boat landing at Lake Farm Park draw visitors to the chain of lakes from a wider area of south central Wisconsin. Visitors to the Lake Farm Campground generally come from outside Madison to enjoy the park and events at the nearby Alliant Center and in Madison.

The Lussier Family Heritage Center at Lake Farm Park hosts local wedding receptions and parties every weekend and is booked with meetings and banquets during the week. The future natural and cultural history exhibits about Dane County are expected to draw local and outside visitors.

CSCSPRA is an urban park. It does not have the wildness and isolation that some other rural State Parks may have and will not attract those looking for a primitive wilderness experience. Most users are expected to come from the greater Madison area to experience nature and outdoor learning and recreation, an experience they may not be able to find elsewhere in or near the city.

Jurisdictional boundaries within the State Park and Recreation are meaningless to the public. Connecting all parts of the site seamlessly is a goal of the Master Plan. Information centers at the Lussier Family Heritage Center and Nevin Fish Hatchery grounds could provide visitors with maps and directions to recreational opportunities throughout the site.

Activities need to be consistent with the vision for CSCSPRA, suitable to this place located at the border between rural and urban environments, and mindful of the sensitive natural resources within the project area.

Several plans and studies, listed below, and public comments were taken into consideration to determine an appropriate range of activities for CSCSPRA.

State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000

According to the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000* (SCORP),⁵⁶ overall recreation demand is determined by a variety of factors such as demographics, economics, and visitation from other states. The *Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis for Land Acquisition to create Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area*⁵⁷ states that CSCSPRA supports two SCORP policy recommendations: “acquiring lands threatened by development that meet environmental protection and recreation needs” and “implementation of a comprehensive state rivers program to protect the resources and related recreational activities.”

The *Feasibility Study* goes on to suggest that CSCSPRA can fill a need for bicycle trails, scenic roads, public boat launch sites, wildlife observation and habitat areas, and picnic areas/shelters. CSCSPRA can also expand the availability of campgrounds, groomed cross-country trails, and nature interpretive trails.

Forecasting recreation participation is difficult because recreation activities are dynamic and constantly changing. Looking at trends in broad categories of outdoor recreation, such as the following, is most effective and suggested in SCORP.

Tier I Activities

Outdoor activities with participation rates of 50-90 percent of those surveyed that are appropriate for CSCSPRA include walking and driving for pleasure, wildlife viewing, and picnicking. Sustaining these activities requires protecting Wisconsin’s environment while providing outdoor recreation.

Tier II Activities

Outdoor activities that are suitable for CSCSPRA with participation rates 30-50 percent of those surveyed include bicycling, hiking, fishing, nature study or bird watching, motor boating, and nature photography. Participation in these activities is expected to grow at a rate comparable to the rate of population growth in the state. These activities are more closely tied to specific recreation resources than the activities in the first tier.

Potential Recreation Activities at CSCSPRA

Park users and the general public suggested many activities they would like to see offered at CSCSPRA. The DNR has assessed recreation demand through SCORP and the *State Parks and Their Gateway Communities*⁵⁸ study. A survey of State Park users in the study indicated that people agree that state parks and trails are meant to preserve and protect ecologically or historically significant places. The main reasons for visiting state parks include escape, solitude, and quiet recreation. Information from these studies, Dane County and WDNR park managers, and public comments was considered to create the following list of existing and requested facilities that may be suitable for CSCSPRA and compatible with the natural resources:

Camping – the campground at Lake Farm park is popular but unknown. The public has asked for a variety of camping experiences such as rustic walk or bike-in camping, canoe camping, and camping shelters. As “baby boomers” retire, growth of this recreational pursuit may increase the demand for campgrounds with amenities.

⁵⁶ www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/reports/scorp/2000/project.html

⁵⁷ WDNR. 1999. Feasibility Study and Environmental Analysis for Land Acquisition to Create Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area.

⁵⁸ Marcouiller, D., Olson, E., Prey, J. 2002. State parks and their gateway communities: Development and recreation planning issues in Wisconsin. DNR.

Picnicking is very popular at the three shelters in Lake Farm Park. More shelters and scattered picnic tables may be considered for the expected increase in visitors when facilities at the State Park are developed. Shelters are used for parties, reunions, and retreats. A variety of shelter sizes and picnic areas separate from the shelters may be needed to serve a variety of groups.

Hiking is the single most popular activity at State Parks in Wisconsin. Lake Farm Park and the Recreation Area offer a variety of trail surfaces and experiences and the additional State Park land can accommodate expanded trails.

Cross-country skiing is available in Lake Farm Park, on the Capital City State Trail, and on E-Way trails. Trails can serve different user groups in the winter and the summer. The existing trails will need to connect seamlessly to new trails in the project area and have consistent direction signage developed. Additional trails are possible on State Park land.

Bicycling is available on the Capital City State Trail with connections to regional trails. Bikers use the trail for recreation and commuting. Adjacent residents want more neighborhood access points, parking lots for the trail, and bike trail connections from adjacent neighborhoods.

Mountain biking may have grown by as much as one-half million people in the 1990's. Environmental effects such as erosion and user conflicts must be considered. Mountain bike trails can be used for hiking or snowshoeing in the winter.

Equestrian trails and/or camping were requested at a park design workshop. Trail groups are developing horse trails on private land adjacent to Dane County Parks with parking areas within the park.

In-line Skating attracts younger people and those young at heart. If they continue with the sport, as they get older the demand for relatively flat smooth trails may increase.

Fishing is popular both summer and winter. Some fishing piers and a fish cleaning station are provided at Lake Farm Park. Winter access and parking for ice fishing on Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa is problematic and appropriate access needs to be designated.

Hunting – participation in hunting has not kept pace with population growth, however, as ownership patterns in rural Wisconsin change, demand for public hunting areas may increase. Hunting in the Recreation Area is recreational and used for wildlife management. It is currently offered in season on DNR land around Upper Mud Lake and in the Nevin Springs Fish and Wildlife Area. Hunters need access that does not conflict with other recreational uses and hunting areas need to be clearly posted. Hunters constantly hunt in posted “No Hunting” areas along Nine Springs Creek, expansion of hunting areas may be considered to accommodate hunters in the marsh around Upper Mud Lake.

Wildlife/bird observation is a favorite activity in the natural areas and especially the MMSD Wildlife Observation area, which has trails and observation platforms. Continuous walking and even canoe/kayak trails between observation points could expand the possibilities. WDNR surveys show that wildlife viewing is the second most popular activity in state parks.

Dog walking – Off-leash dog parks receive more use than any other parks in Dane County. Local units of government may have a variety of rules pertaining to dog walking that need to be considered.

Walking with strollers requires a hard surface trail such as the Capital City State Trail.

Canoe/Kayak – interest this activity is growing. Kayak and canoe rentals are available in the vicinity of CSCSPRA. The Capital City State Trails volunteer group will be marking trails along Lake Waubesa and Nine Springs Creek in 2003. Raising the railroad trestle at the mouth of Nine Springs Creek and removing down trees would improve canoe and kayak access from the Yahara River.

Nature Study and Outdoor skills Programs – organized nature study programs are becoming more popular with adults, as well as children. As the population ages, more people are spending leisure time traveling to parks and natural areas and are interested in learning about the environment. Surveys show that state park visitors expect interpretive exhibits and nature centers. The State Park could provide outdoor skills classes for urban youth who do not have such opportunities otherwise.

Volunteer Opportunities, especially for conservation and land management projects, are popular with school, scout and church groups and seniors. Dane County Parks has an Adult Conservation Team to assist in management of many natural areas.

Motor Boating – boating has been a traditional activity in Wisconsin. Recently boats have become larger and motors more powerful. As demand for lakes and waterways increases, environmental impacts should be considered. The boat landing at Lake Farm Park is overflowing on weekends, reflecting the popularity of this sport.

Open Space for fairs, shows, and corporate events – scheduled events for 2003 at Lake Farm Park include car shows, a triathlon, day camp program, and motorcycle rally. These events expose more people to the park, involve the community in the park, and required additional facilities such as parking and restrooms.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION

The previous sections identify many educational opportunities and sites within and around CSCSPRA. Opportunities abound for education in life systems, natural resources, outdoor skills, history, culture and archaeology. Education is one of the five “E”’s identified by Dr. Phil Lewis in his E-Way plan of which CSCSPRA is a part. The other “E”’s are ecology, environment, and esthetics, all of which present educational opportunities.

School groups currently visit the Nevin Fish Hatchery, Lake Farm Park, and the Recreation Area for field trips and projects. According to John Komassa, Fish Hatchery Manager, over 800 visitors to the Fish Hatchery came with a scheduled tour in 2002. Most of these tours were school classes but special interest groups such as scouts or church groups also tour the hatchery. The most popular tour times are in the spring and fall. School groups have had bike rides on the Capital City State Trail and fishing field trips at Lake Farm Park. Several groups have helped with spring clean-up, mulching, and litter pick-up throughout Lake Farm Park, the Recreation Area, and the undeveloped portion of the State Park.

Interpretive programs are not provided at this time at Lake Farm Park or the Recreation Area. Tailoring interpretive programs that mesh with school curriculums can extend the classroom into CSCSPRA. The Wisconsin State Academic Standards must be consulted to develop a viable education plan and attract school groups.⁵⁹

CSCSPRA should identify unique educational opportunities for school groups that are not offered at other area field trip destinations such as the UW Arboretum, Cherokee Marsh, the Aldo Leopold Center, and the State Historical Society. Interpretation and education on springs and fens, lake monitoring, archaeology and Native American cultural history, and outdoor skills classes in camping, fishing, and canoeing are possible experiences not found elsewhere in the Madison Area.

Interpretive exhibits, demonstrations, mini-classes, and special events planning for the Lussier Family Heritage Center in natural and cultural heritage can be linked directly with corresponding locations within the project area and the rest of Dane County.

An education plan with an appropriate budget for staff, facilities, and materials can insure a successful program.

⁵⁹ Gail Epping, Aldo Leopold Center, personal conversation.

CONCLUSION

What is now CSCSPRA was first identified as a park location in the State of Wisconsin Open Space plan of 1963. It was adopted as part of the E-Way Plan by the Dane County Board in 1971, the E-way having been laid out in 1969 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to the Environmental Awareness Center at the University of Wisconsin. This park exemplifies Professor Philip Lewis's corridor identification principles and process, embodying coincident and diverse natural and cultural features. Development and accessibility to the E-Way have been achieved by the Capital City State Trail, Dane County Parks shelters, lake access, boating and fishing opportunities, picnic areas, playgrounds, walking and hiking trails, the educational Heritage Trail at Lake Farm Park, and most recently, the Lussier Family Heritage Center.

The 21-mile E-way system is an internationally known model for protecting natural and cultural resources and providing access to recreation and tourism attractions.⁶⁰ CSCSPRA can provide to the public the five “E”s that E-Way stands for: educational, ecological, esthetic, exercise, and environmental systems

The 100th-year celebration of the Wisconsin State Park System has brought about the incorporation of this Centennial State Park and Recreation Area, which contains major resources in terms of land and lakeshore and Native American history and culture. .

CSCSPRA is in the unique position to provide outdoor experiences, cultural education, and recreation to a growing urban population of over 300,000 people. Natural resources such as rare plant communities, crystal clear springs, waterfowl habitat, and expansive wetlands can be preserved and restored. The Lussier Family Heritage Center and the historic Nevin Fish Hatchery could provide education on the natural and cultural resources of Dane County. The Lake Farm Archaeological District is nationally recognized and provides opportunities for cultural and archaeological interpretation. [Recreational opportunities in tune with nature could be provided throughout the project area including hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, equestrian trails, canoeing, boating, fishing, and camping.](#) Trails passing through and originating in the park may connect neighborhoods, cities, and all of Wisconsin.

Natural areas restoration provides opportunities for community and visitor involvement. The majority of the native biological systems are compromised and threatened by rapid urban development and from existing drainage ditches and tiling within the wetlands. Invasive species such as reed canarygrass and invading shrubs and trees threaten the wetlands and take advantage of the altered hydrology and long standing fire suppression. Despite these threats there are still areas of high quality plant communities and endangered species within the project area.⁶¹ The unique springs, wetlands, and fens provide respite and educational opportunities in an urban area.

[All of these opportunities lie in and near the Nine Springs Creek valley, Lake Waubesa, Upper Mud Land and a large wetland complex. Unique glacial features such as drumlins and Hog Island provide uplands for expansive views of the area and upland wildlife habitat and restoration opportunities.](#)

CSCSPRA is unlike any other state park in Wisconsin: it can provide outdoor educational, natural, and recreational experiences to a large urban population and also preserve, protect, and restore 3000 acres of wetlands, springs, woods, prairies, and lakeshore, [all within the nationally known and historic E-Way.](#)

⁶⁰ Libby Lewis correspondence

⁶¹ Paraphrased from conclusion of Ecological Overview for the Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area.

Capital Springs Centennial State Park and Recreation Area Regional Analysis

Map Appendix

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