



WISCONSIN
AUDUBON COUNCIL

14 September 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6 (DNRsaukprairie@wisconsin.gov)
WI Department of Natural Resources
P O Box 7921
Madison WI 53707-7921

Re: Sauk Prairie Recreation Area – Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. (John) Pohlman:

The Wisconsin Audubon Council (the Council) has participated in the planning process for determining the future of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant ("Badger Army") since it was decommissioned in 1997, and in the planning for the subsequent Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (SPRA) portion. We commend the WDNR for taking on the huge task of planning for this extraordinary property. Because it's one of the largest, unfragmented landscapes in southern Wisconsin, the SPRA, as part of Badger Army, is of special value to grassland and shrubland birds, many of which are declining.

In general, the Wisconsin Audubon Council supports most of what's laid out in the WDNR's Sauk Prairie Recreation Area Draft Master Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, including the proposal for restoration work and the emphasis on primarily nonmotorized and low-impact recreation.

The Council is especially supportive of the proposal for restoration work, as we believe that management of grassland, shrubland, and savanna habitat and the birds associated with them *must* be the *primary focus* at Badger Army overall, and SPRA specifically. Over the several years this plan has been in development, the ornithological value of "Badger Army" to these suites of birds has been emphasized many times over. This value is recognized through the designation of Badger Army as an Important Bird Area (IBA), a program that is international in scope and for which sites must meet strict objective, standardized, and science-based criteria. The write-up for the IBA states that Badger Army "provides some of southern Wisconsin's most extensive and continuous habitat for our troubled populations of grassland, shrubland and savanna birds—about 5,000 acres." Imagine our surprise, then, that nowhere in the Master Plan is it once mentioned that this is an IBA!

Nor is there much mention, by name, anywhere in the 162-page document, of most of the important bird species present on the property. This seems to be a serious oversight in an Environmental Impact Statement, especially as many of these species are sensitive to habitat fragmentation and need very large blocks of habitat to successfully breed. In addition, climate change may shift the range of many southern shrubland birds into Wisconsin, one more reason we recommend that management of Badger for grassland, shrubland, and savanna bird habitat must be a very high priority. Bird species that have been found here include Eastern and Western meadowlarks, Bobolink, Upland Sandpiper, Orchard Oriole, Bell's Vireo, Dickcissel, and Clay-colored, Vesper, Savannah, Field, Grasshopper sparrows, and more.

Secondly, the Council particularly likes the emphasis on nonmotorized and low-impact recreation silent sports. A couple of recommended activities aren't compatible with restoration and low-impact recreation, however: dual-sport motorcycles and model and high power rocketry. The planned "special events staging area" and associated "special use permits" could lead to additional incompatible uses and user conflicts. Running the snowmobile trail along the eastern perimeter of the property would keep this high impact activity out of the interior, where it could directly impact other users and disrupt the quiet sports opportunities within the SPRA. We would re-emphasize that ATVs should not be allowed, nor that a shooting range be reconsidered.

The Wisconsin Audubon Council would urge the WDNR to collaborate with all landowners at Badger to craft a cohesive and comprehensive management plan for all of the 7,400 acres of Badger lands. WDNR should also greatly expand the EIS to address the short-term and cumulative impacts of proposed recreational activities and set up a process for mitigating future impacts, including multiple-user conflicts, soil erosion, noise abatement, and light pollution.

The Council would further recommend that the WDNR should aggressively seek funding for habitat restoration and management, especially management of invasive species. The DNR should take the lead in this effort, but work in partnership with friends groups and other interested parties.

In addition, the Council would once again strongly urge that non-toxic ammunition and fishing tackle be required for any hunting and fishing on the property. A heavy burden of lead shot is being deposited on DNR-managed lands throughout the state, and the result is continued contamination of these sites and the predictable negative consequences for our waterfowl, game birds, and other wildlife. Just two or three pellets can kill some bird species. Lead can also cause behavioral changes, making wildlife more susceptible to disease, predation, and accidents.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Karen Etter Hale

Karen Etter Hale
Director of Community Relations
Wisconsin Audubon Council
PO Box 22
Lake Mills, WI 53551



Wisconsin Firearm Owners, Ranges,
Clubs and Educators, Inc.

Phone 888-337-3534
www.wisconsinforce.org

September 10, 2015

Wisconsin Natural Resources Board

Re: Public Range at Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

Dear Board Members:

Ranges provide the community with a great place to meet, learn, and practice safe firearms handling and marksmanship. Whether it is practicing, sighting-in for a successful fall hunt, plinking with the kids, or improving the safe handling and proficiency with a firearm used for home or carried self-defense, ranges are where that happens.

It is critical that a small portion of Sauk Prairie Recreation Area be developed with a sport shooting complex. This shooting complex should be modeled similar to the other State ranges offering 100 and 50 yard ranges along with a 25 foot range. With proper placement, this complex would utilize a very small percentage of the property. It would be a great asset for the surrounding community and the State of Wisconsin. Wisconsin Firearm Owners, Ranges, Clubs, and Educators, Inc. (Wisconsin FORCE) strongly encourages the inclusion of a shooting complex.

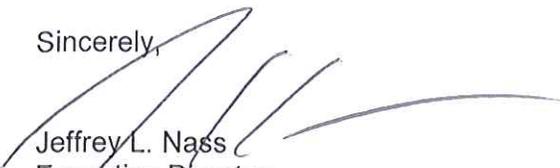
Ranges have an exceptional safety record, especially for their neighbors. Although some individuals have enough private property for safe practice, many do not. Ranges by design allow large amounts of rounds to be fired safely and efficiently. Firearm ranges are where shooters teach and learn firearms safety formally, such as in classes, and informally, by following range operating procedures and general use of the range.

As educators, we emphasize that repetition is the key to becoming proficient in marksmanship and safety. A public range in the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area would allow the required access to encourage and obtain the skills needed to achieve these goals for the general public.

Wisconsin FORCE offers to continue to assist the DNR in range construction that provides great places to get together and shoot. We strongly support the development of a shooting complex as part of the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey L. Nass
Executive Director
Wisconsin Firearm Owners,
Ranges, Clubs and Educators, Inc.
Phone 920-687-0505
jeff@wisconsinforce.org



September 25, 2015

In regard to the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this as the State Trails Coordinator for Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association to ask for your consideration to include Four Wheel Driving (Jeeps, trucks, SUV's) in the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

My understanding by your proposal that there will be some "roads" that will not be well developed and at times may not be for low clearance vehicles which will definitely be of interest to us. Also, I understand that some of the "trails" will be available on a repurposing program for Dual-Sport Vehicles on a maximum of 6 times a year. Since it seems it has been determined that motorized vehicles will not be allowed on a routine basis on these unsurfaced trails, we question why the Four Wheel Drive Community cannot be included in the limited times per year as the Dual-Sport group on these more remote primitive trails as long as the vehicles are legally licensed? Our activity does not include speed, have legal exhaust and enjoy narrow unsurfaced trails.

Being able to access remote areas provides a better opportunity to see the wild animals, wild flowers and overall the scenery not available to many people any other way—especially if mobility is an issue which is becoming more and more of an issue with a more aging public.

This is an activity that many families enjoy together and gets them outdoors as a family, appreciating nature and all that goes with that.

This area is in an area where there is a significant amount of population nearby that would be very interested in being able to have access to trails of this kind without travelling long distances. This would be a service to a large group of people and a major economic impact to the area.

As an association, we are strong advocates of the **Multiple Use** concept of land use where access to public lands should be made available to as many as possible. In other words, many users as realistically possible should be able to share the same trails.

If included in the usage of trails we as an organization are willing to assist in establishing trails and work with other user groups in doing such.

Thank you for your time and at anytime I can be of assistance or if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Four Wheelin' Four Ever

Luana Schneider
Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association Trails Coordinator
6793 County Road C
DeForest, WI 53532
608-837-7409 (Home) 608-575-1853 (Cell)



Wisconsin Horse Council Trails Committee

Kricket Jewett

7428 E. Schmidt Rd

Fort Atkinson WI 53538

September 8, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6

WI Department of Natural Resources

P O Box 7921

Madison WI 53707-7921

Dear John:

I would like to comment on the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area Master Planning. I am representing the Wisconsin Horse Council Trails Committee an equine related group that has a membership all around the state and represents the interest of horse owners. As horse owners we are always looking for properties that offer multi use trails.

In looking over the master plan we are happy to see that equine trails have been included in the draft. There are just a few points that I would like to suggest,

Parking for 10 trailers would often times fill quickly, please consider locating the parking where this space could be expanded once the use is taken into consideration.

The rocketry area could cause user conflicts, I see that it is only listed for 10 days a year, but if horses are on the trail during that time, there is a great potential for spooking horses.

Would it be possible to consider expanding the equine trails to include the outside loop of snowmobile trails? At the SKM unit these 2 user groups have quite a bit of overlap, and seems to work well. It would also allow SPRA to be more of a destination trail with the extra mileage.

Thank you for your continued support of multi-use trails in the SPRA. We look forward to enjoying the scenic beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Kricket Jewett

Wisconsin Horse Council- Trail Committee



Wisconsin Horse Council Trails Committee
Floyd Finney
1908 Monague Rd.
Milton WI 53563

September 8, 2015

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

Dear John:

I would like to comment on the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area Master Planning. I am representing the Wisconsin Horse Council Trails Committee an equine related group that has a membership all around the state and represents the interest of horse owners. As horse owners we are always looking for properties that offer multi use trails.

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Thank you for your continued support of multi-use trails in the SPRA. We look forward to enjoying the scenic beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Floyd Finney". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Floyd Finney
Wisconsin Horse Council- Trail Committee

State of Wisconsin \ SNOWMOBILE RECREATION COUNCIL

Bev Dittmar
Council Chair
Eagle River

Larry Erickson
Vice Chair
Hurley

Thomas Chwala
Lake Mills

Matthew Harter
La Crosse

Gary Hllgendorf
Tomahawk

Michael Holden
Sheboygan Falls

Sam Landes
Dane

Robert Lang
Cable

Andrew Malecki
Green Bay

Dale Mayo
Conover

Steve Moran
Tomahawk

David Newman
Unity

Dan Timmerman
Kieler

Lee Van Zeeland
Appleton

Michelle Volght
Spooner

Date
John Pohlman
Regional Property Planner
Sauk Prairie Recreational Area
Wisconsin DNR
Phone: (608) 264-6263
John.pohlman@wisconsin.gov

John:

The Sauk Prairie Recreational Area Master Plan Development was discussed at the August 24th Wisconsin Snowmobile Recreational Council Meeting in Weston Wisconsin. Discussion followed on two topics: The need for proper written snowmobile trail inclusion language in the plan, and that the included snowmobile trails were accurately drawn out on the map. The Rec Council voted unanimously to place the following comments for the plan:

"A fully connecting and usable snowmobile trail must be included both in the SPRA Master Plan language and on the included SPRA Master Plan Map. Of the two current snowmobile trail alternatives listed in the draft plan, the first alternative trail on the rails-to-trails location seems to be correct. The second alternative on the eastern edge of the property was questioned, as its location within the property is not clear on the published map. That trail needs to be clearly identified on the final presented map. Also needing clarification is that connections from the approved trail need to attach to all trails surrounding the outside of the property. All written language in the plan and trails listed on the map need to match".

Sincerely:



Wisconsin Snowmobile Recreation Council

cc: Cathy Stepp



WISCONSIN
SOCIETY *for*
ORNITHOLOGY

11923 W. Bender Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53225
E-mail: membership@wsobirds.org
Phone: 414.353.2624

September 24, 2015

VIA EMAIL to: DNRsaukprairie@wisconsin.gov

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

Dear Mr. Pohlman;

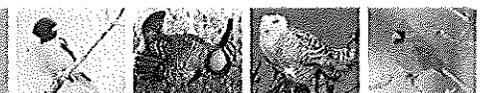
I am submitting these comments on the Draft Master Plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area on behalf of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO). WSO is an active, volunteer, nonprofit organization established in 1939, with over 1,400 members throughout Wisconsin.

WSO has had a long and active presence in the Sauk County area. We began purchasing land in the Baraboo Hills in 1960, which we actively manage as a natural area. Our property, The Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve, was designated as State Natural Area in 1971.

Our mission is to promote the enjoyment, study and conservation of Wisconsin's birds. Birdwatching is an extremely popular activity in our state with the US Fish and Wildlife Service estimating that over 1.6 million Wisconsinites enjoy watching birds at some level.¹

WSO has an active Conservation Committee, which reviewed the Draft Master Plan. The committee works to analyze issues, provides expert advice, and helps to develop actions to reduce potential impacts to Wisconsin birds. The future use of the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area is a significant enough bird conservation opportunity to warrant WSO'S attention and comments from its Conservation Committee.

¹ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis, Addendum to the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. Report 2011-1. <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/economicImpact/pdf/2011-BirdingReport--FINAL.pdf>





Wisconsin Walking Horse Association
Mick Salm
3931 W. Larson Road
Larsen, WI 54947
920.836.2099
mfsalm@aol.com

September 8, 2015

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

Dear John:

I would like to comment on the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area Master Planning. I am representing the Wisconsin Walking Horse Association an equine related group that has a membership of over 100 members. As horse owners we are always looking for properties that offer multi use trails.

In looking over the master plan we are happy to see that equine trails have been included in the draft. There are just a few points that I would like to suggest,

Parking for 10 trailers would often times fill quickly, please consider locating the parking where this space could be expanded once the use is taken into consideration.

The rocketry area could cause user conflicts, I see that it is only listed for 10 days a year, but if horses are on the trail during that time, there is a great potential for spooking horses.

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Thank you for your continued support of multi use trails in the SPRA. We look forward to enjoying the scenic beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Mick Salm
President WWHA



WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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September 10, 2015

Thank you for this opportunity to present information about the proposed uses of the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area on behalf of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and its 195 hunting, fishing and trapping affiliate clubs including seventeen dog-oriented organizations like the Wisconsin Federation of Field Trial Clubs.

Specifically the Federation strongly supports the proposed uses and seasons for hunting, fishing and trapping on the SPRA. In addition we greatly appreciate the fact that the Department included a 78 acre Class II dog training area in the plan. However the current proposed training area near Locator Point 18S is not suitable for dog training because of its great overgrowth of mature trees and brush. We are submitting a map with this testimony indicating a more preferred location for an 80 acre Class II dog training area near Locator Points 15S and 16S. We would be glad to make a field visit with DNR staff to the site to show the specific area in question. This area would be used for foot training of dogs.

In addition, we are asking that an area be designated for up to four weekends a year for a horse dog trialing area. The alternative areas for this dog trialing area are north of Locator Points 13 or north of Locator Point 14S or eastward of a line between Locator Points 9S and 11S. We are submitting a map along with this testimony showing the exact locations and would be glad to traverse the area with DNR staff to more accurately show the areas. The four weekends could be any combination of the first two weekends in April or any in September or the first two weekends in October.

Lastly, the Federation strongly supports that the SPRA only be used for passive recreational uses as it has always was intended to be and thereby opposes the use of rockets and motorcycles on the property.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

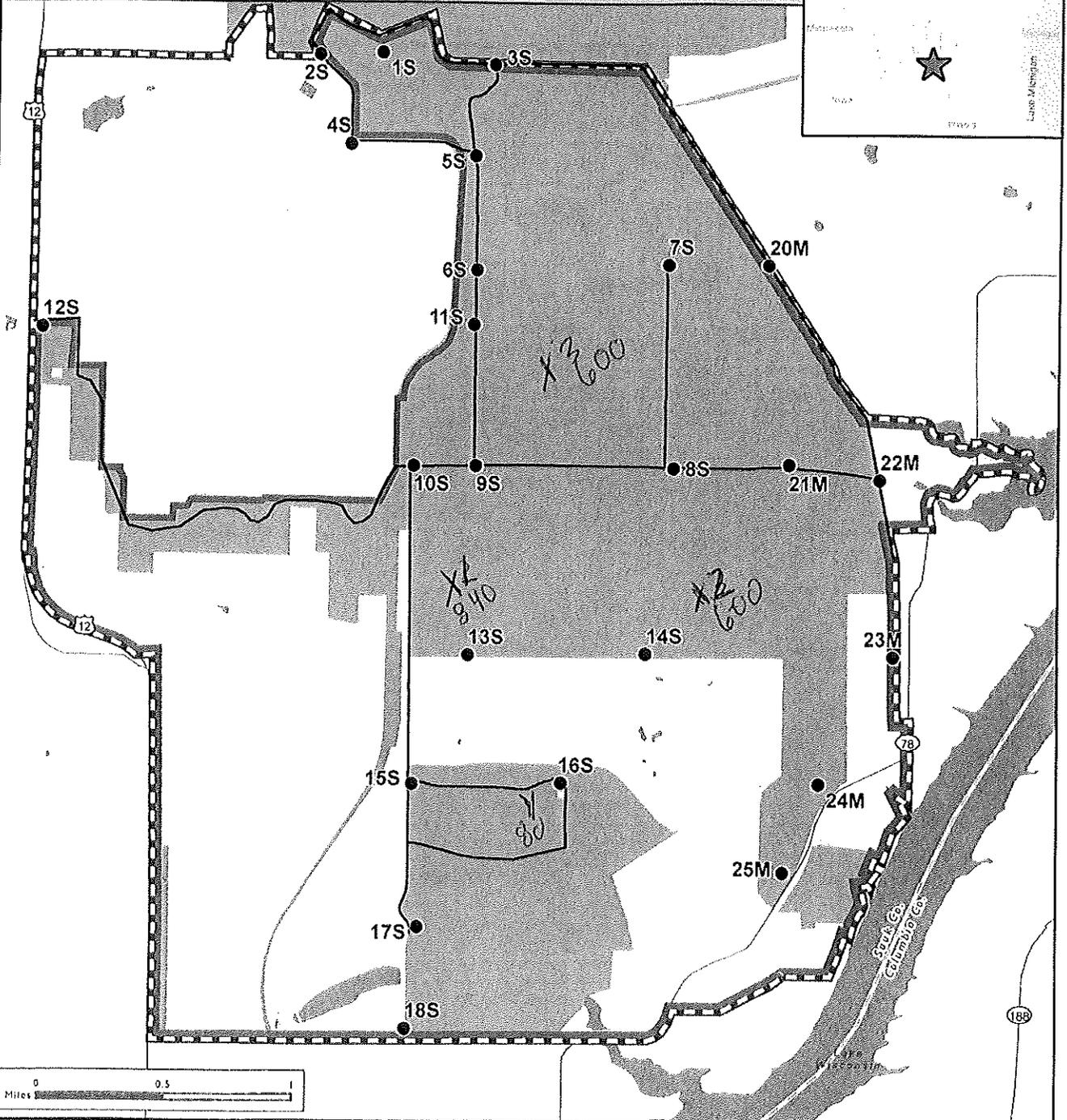
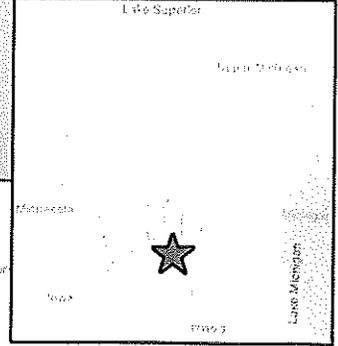
George Meyer
Executive Director
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

DRAFT



LOCATOR POINTS



●	Locator Points	▭	Proposed Project Boundary
—	Roads		
▭	Project Boundary		
■	DNR Managed Land		

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

 Bureau of Facilities and Lands
 Jul 30, 2015
 WM-SPRA-MP9493-C.knh
MAP C

The data shown on this map have been obtained from various sources, and are of varying age, reliability and resolution. This map is not intended to be used for navigation, nor is this map an authoritative source of information about legal land ownership or public access. Users of this map should confirm the ownership of land through other means in order to avoid trespassing. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made regarding accuracy, applicability for a particular use, completeness or legality of the information depicted on this map.

CSWAB

CITIZENS FOR SAFE WATER AROUND BADGER
E12629 Weigand's Bay South - Merrimac, WI 53561
Telephone (608) 643-3124
Email: info@cswab.org
Website: www.cswab.org
www.facebook.com/cswab.org

August 10, 2015

Cathy Stepp, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
dnrsecretary@wisconsin.gov

SENT BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

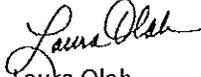
Dear Secretary Stepp,

On behalf of Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger, I am very pleased to provide you with an electronic copy of 79 signed letters that we received from students in Sanford, Florida supporting conservation of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands for wildlife habitat, sustainable agriculture, environmental education and only low-impact recreation.

These students were very interested in supporting community efforts here in Wisconsin to conserve these lands and decided on their own to print out our online petition. We are very honored to present their letters to you as the Secretary of the Wisconsin DNR.

As you know, the Badger property contains a mix of grasslands with small remnants of native prairie, scattered oak woodlands, and farm fields. It currently hosts some of the largest populations of grassland birds in southern Wisconsin – 103 bird species have been recorded here, of which 21 have critical status in our state. With the Baraboo Hills adjacent to the north, the Badger lands provide a rare continuum of grassland to oak forest. The Badger lands are critically important in maintaining, and hopefully recovering, some of the biological richness of Wisconsin's disappearing native grasslands. With your help, this will be our legacy to the generations that will follow.

Sincerely,



Laura Olah
Executive Director

Enclosures attached as a .pdf file

Dear WDNR's Secretary Stepp,

I/we strongly oppose the WDNR's concept proposal for motorized vehicles [ATVs] and a shooting range at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant.

Nearly the entire 500-acre area targeted for these disruptive uses has been identified by WDNR biologists as a High Priority Grassland Bird Parcel. A major portion of this area has also been identified by WDNR experts as one of two ecologically significant sites at Badger that warrant our protection.

These and all Badger lands should be conserved for wildlife habitat, sustainable agriculture, environmental education and low impact recreation.

Signature

X

Print name

X

Address

Student addresses are not shown for privacy reasons.

All attend school in Sanford, Florida.