



AFTER A FIFTEEN-YEAR COMMITMENT TO UPHOLD A COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING OUTCOME FOR THE BADGER LANDS (FORMER BADGER AMMUNITION PLANT), **THE ALLIANCE HAS ENTERED INTO A LAWSUIT AGAINST THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)** TO STOP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MASTER PLAN FOR DNR'S SHARE OF BADGER THAT CONTAINS UNACCEPTABLE RECREATION ACTIVITIES.

HERE IS HOW THE STORY AT BADGER HAS UNFOLDED...



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SAUK PRAIRIE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

UPDATE TO
ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

SaukPrairieVision.org

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The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance was created in 2002 to support the recommendations of the Badger Reuse Plan crafted in 2001 through a 9-month facilitated series of meetings with 21 stakeholders from federal, tribal, state, regional and local government, community leaders and non-profit organizations. The organization has been consistent in encouraging all landowners on the 7,400-acre Badger Lands, including DNR, to adhere to the tenets established in the reuse plan, including managing the property collaboratively as a whole, supporting compatible low impact recreation and conservation agriculture, restoring native habitat and offering educational and research opportunities.

Since 2012, as DNR developed its master plan for its portion of the land—the 3,400-acre Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area—the agency continually included proposals for high impact recreation in the various iterations of its plan, and the Alliance and hundreds of citizens from the area consistently argued against those activities. After all, DNR was one of the signatories to the Badger Reuse Plan that expressly stated that low impact recreation compatible with other land uses that would not endanger natural or cultural features would be developed at Badger. Furthermore, DNR received its land from the federal government based on its commitment to uphold that and other reuse plan criteria.

Despite the Alliance's repeated concerns expressed to DNR about the agency not upholding its agreements and commitment to the people of Wisconsin over these past four years, the agency continued to break its promises. Similarly, despite the overwhelming public input into the draft master plan and to the Natural Resources Board opposing high impact recreation activities at Badger, the Natural Resources Board approved DNR's final

Master Plan for the property on December 14, 2016. The approved Plan still includes a number of high impact recreation activities like off-road motorcycles, helicopter training, dog training and trialing, and unspecified "special uses" on up to 600 acres of the property.

Unfortunately, and as a last resort, the Alliance has been forced to sue DNR in court for its breach of the various agreements it signed onto and for its lack of thorough analyses of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed high impact activities. The Alliance has also requested a "stay" (injunction) from the judge to put a hold on implementation of the high impact recreation portion of the final Master Plan until the lawsuit is settled. Our intention with this injunction is to protect nesting grassland birds and potentially contaminated soil from any disturbance due to approved activities like off-road motorcycles. Furthermore, off-road motorcycle riding on 27 miles of bike and horse trails could result in soil erosion and other damage, rendering the trails impaired. We expect to know the judge's decision about the injunction in March.

LOOKING AHEAD

While the lawsuit moves through the judicial system, the Alliance will continue to be a major player and collaborate with all of the landowners—including the DNR—on the former Badger Plant. The Alliance recently signed a Cooperative Agreement with Ho-Chunk Nation and plans to develop a similar agreement with the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center. The Alliance will provide grant funding to both DNR and Ho-Chunk Nation in 2017 for managing invasive species on their respective lands.

For its entire 19 years, the Alliance has provided a wealth of experiences and opportunities at and about Badger to the public, including field trips, tours, programs and presentations, and guided visits for school groups to the Badger lands. This year (2017) will be no exception as the group's monthly "We Are Sauk Prairie" program and tour series continues. The Alliance will continue to plan and conduct volunteer work days throughout the year to restore the Hillside Prairie and other native landscapes at Badger.

The mission of the **Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance** is to promote cooperative conservation on the Badger lands and in the surrounding Sauk Prairie landscape. The organization has four core values:

- Following the values and tenets of the Badger Reuse Plan, we believe the entire Badger property should be managed as a whole through collaboration among and between landowners.
- We believe that the best overall use of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant is for prairie and oak savanna restoration, providing habitat for wildlife and opportunities for quiet recreation and enjoyment while simultaneously healing the land. The painting, "Sauk Prairie Remembered... A Vision for the Future" is our guiding visual depiction of this value.
- Conservation on the Badger lands serves as a model for holistic landscape-scale region-wide conservation, demonstrating how land protection, ecological restoration, research, conservation agriculture and community participation can be integrated and mutually supportive.
- The Badger lands have a unique geological, natural and cultural history and they provide a wonderful opportunity for community engagement, public education and research.

We have several very ambitious large-scale plans for the future of the Badger Lands, including working with all landowners to facilitate the restoration of a combined 5,000 acres of prairie and oak savanna and promoting the planning and development of a visitor center/museum shared by all landowners in which each landowner and the Badger History Group can share their own unique perspectives on the Badger Lands.

We're optimistic about a bright and promising future for the Badger Lands over the next 20 years. The Alliance will be consistently promoting and facilitating restoration, education, research, conservation agriculture, and low impact nature-based recreation at the property.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!
Please consider making a donation to support our lawsuit, our educational programs and our restoration work on the Badger Lands.
Go to our website to make a contribution: saukprairieivision.org or send your check to: PO Box 403, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913.
THANK YOU!

As the Alliance begins its 20th year, we reflect on our past and our vision going forward.