

Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

Preliminary Vision Statement:

The Sauk Prairie Recreation Area contributes important areas of grassland habitat needed to reconstruct and experience a natural mosaic of prairie-savanna-woodland at a landscape scale. Directly adjacent to Devils Lake State Park, it serves as an ecological transition from the Baraboo Hills to the Wisconsin River, and creates a recreational corridor that enhances and complements regional recreation opportunities. The site's significant history is incorporated into the management and interpretation of the natural, agricultural, historical and cultural resources.

Preliminary Goal Statements:

Ecological Management

Provide extensive areas of grassland and oak savanna habitats to support the significant grassland and shrubland bird populations. Restore and enhance the ecological transition zone between the Baraboo Hills and the Wisconsin River to promote quality habitat for desirable game and non-game species, including rare and special concern species.

Recreation

Provide for public recreation that complements and fulfills regional needs while providing opportunities that draw users past significant cultural and natural points of interest as well as aesthetic vistas.

Cultural Resource Preservation

Identify and preserve significant sites that contribute to the property's storyline from geological history, Native American life, Euro-American settlement, and the design, operation and decommissioning of the Badger Army Ammunitions Plant.

Education and Interpretation

Provide interpretive and educational opportunities focusing upon natural history, restoration efforts, and the impacts of human uses. Integrate education and research related to restoration and conservation land use activities.

We would like your input:

Our preliminary vision and goal statements for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area are based on the comments and information we have compiled to date. We've also identified several draft conceptual alternatives describing resource management and recreation use opportunities. We would like your feedback as we work toward a preferred alternative for the property.

Visit our website at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/masterplanning/saukprairie/>

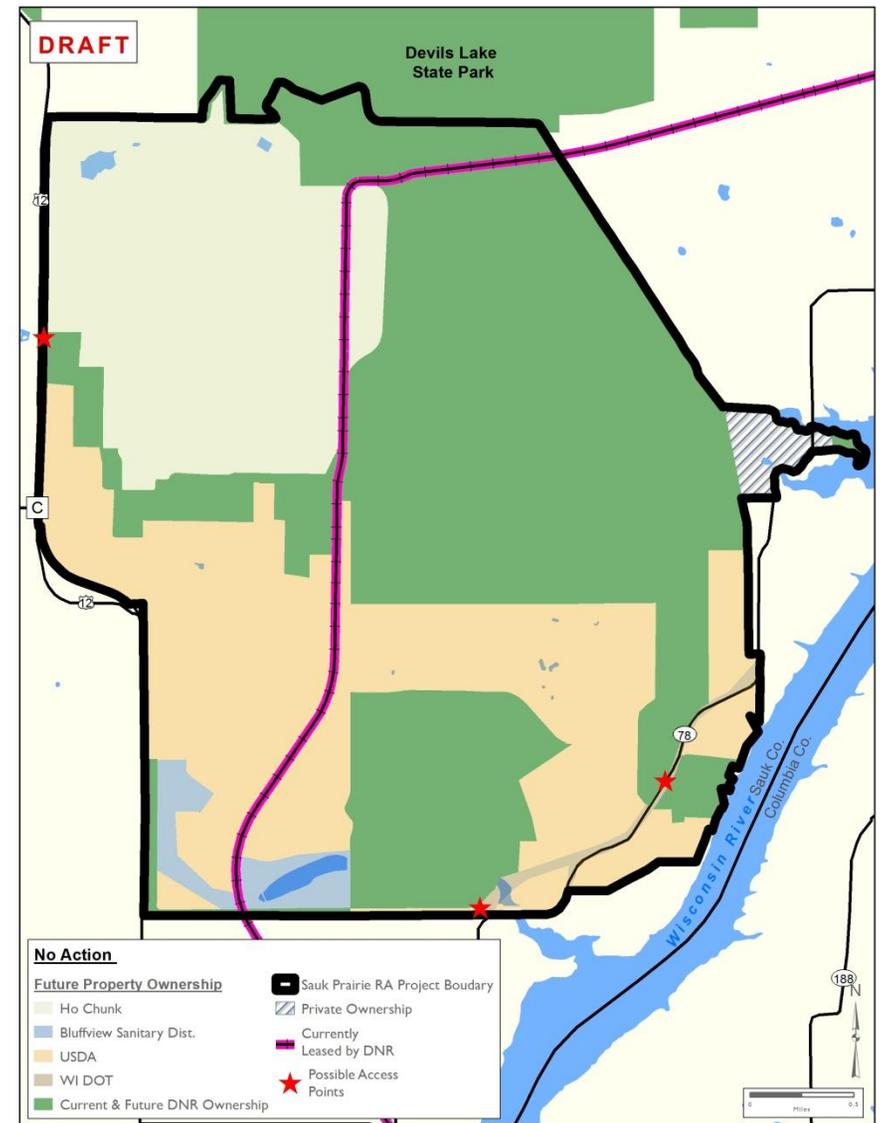
Draft Conceptual Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action

This alternative describes how the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area would look in the future if we took no new action. This description will be used as a baseline to assess additional benefits, costs, and impacts of the next two alternatives, which do propose new actions.

As a new property not yet opened for public use, the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area is undeveloped for visitor use and minimally maintained with management activities focused on keeping some of the roadways cleared of invasive species. The property has roads of varying condition throughout and areas to pull-off on the side for parking. There are currently no improvements to facilitate visitor experiences. Possible property access points are identified with a star.

The property will have limited public access for Nature Based Outdoor Activities (NBOAs) of hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, and cross country skiing. Public access to the cemeteries will be maintained. No additional funding will be spent on restoration or property development. Any structures or debris left on the property at the time of the land transfer will remain. The Department will restrict areas due to any public safety concerns.

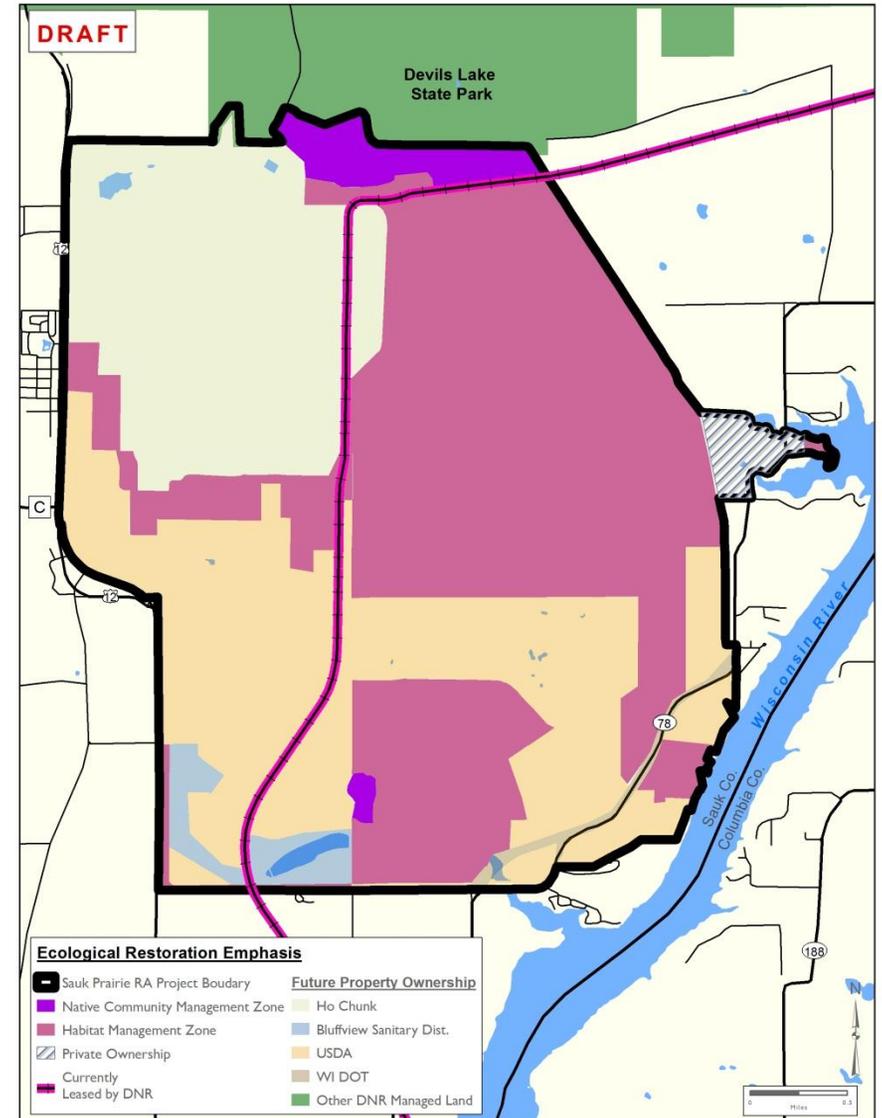


Alternative 2: Ecological Restoration Emphasis

Under this management alternative, the primary emphasis is on restoration work of the grassland ecosystem. A variety of management tools will be used to maintain grassland and savanna. No development is proposed, and vehicle access will be limited. Visitors would enjoy a perceived remoteness and quiet. Recreation opportunities will be limited to the NBOAs (hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking and cross country skiing).

This management concept will be implemented by:

- Restoring large, unfragmented tracts of grassland and shrubland (Habitat Management Zone) to support grassland and shrubland dependent birds
- Restoring remnants of rare natural communities and the species they support (Native Community Management Zone); access will be limited to pedestrian use
- Removing any infrastructure, buildings or debris that remain on the property, with the exception of several BAAP bunkers retained to support bat research
- Limiting vehicle access
- Managing the property from an off-site location; there would be no permanent staff stationed at the site and visitor interaction with DNR staff would be limited
- Providing limited interpretation and education opportunities regarding the management practices being used
- Using volunteers to promote community participation in education
- Providing outdoor classroom opportunities for schools

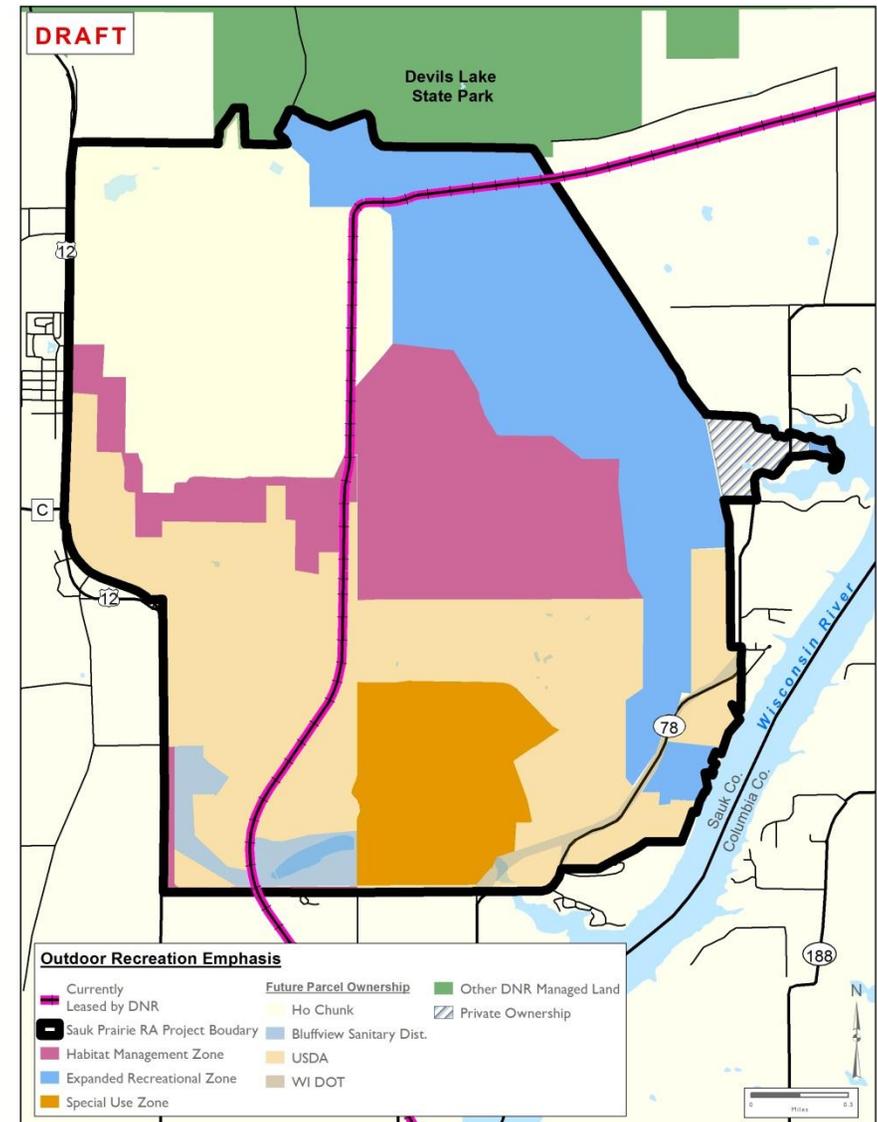


Alternative 3: Outdoor Recreation Emphasis

Under this management alternative, the primary purpose is getting users onto the property. Visitors would be offered a variety of outdoor recreational experiences while providing interpretive and educational opportunities related to the property's history and restoration efforts. The visitor experience will include a higher level of development and accessibility. Opportunities for NBOAs (hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, and cross country skiing) will be provided as well as opportunities for biking, horseback riding, motorized use and a shooting range.

This management concept would be implemented by:

- Restoring tracts of grassland and shrubland with compatible low-impact recreation trails
- Developing parking, picnic areas, and viewing areas in the Expanded Recreational Zone
- Developing a fishing pier, canoe/carry-in boat access, and picnic area at Lake Wisconsin parcel
- Selectively siting and constructing (through community partnerships) a new visitor center with interpretation and education opportunities; the center could also serve as a trailhead facility near the railroad corridor, which will serve as a designated recreation corridor in the future
- Identifying and improving primary auto access routes through the property; and abandoning roads no longer needed
- Providing extensive, developed trails across property that complement the topography and resource management
- Providing hiking and biking opportunities into Devils Lake State Park via Burma Road
- Providing motorized recreation opportunities in the Special Use Zone
- Providing shooting range opportunities in the Special Use Zone



Alternative 3: Outdoor Recreation Emphasis - continued

- Providing facilities such as a classroom, parking area, staging area, wash station, bathroom and water area in the Special Use Zone
- Providing interpretation and education opportunities about this property's location at the juncture of major landforms, acknowledgement of Ho-Chunk Nation and Euro-American histories and displacements, and the design, operation and decommissioning of the Badger Army Ammunitions Plant.
- Selectively siting and constructing auto and trail access to better route visitors past interpretive displays highlighting both natural and cultural points of interest
- Preserving and enhancing key vistas through vegetation management
- Providing vehicle access to the property to improve user access to more educational, research and recreational opportunities

DRAFT

Proposed Management Zones for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area

	Habitat	Native Community	Expanded Recreational	Special Use
Desired Resource Condition	Natural resources are managed to reconstruct the grassland ecosystem	Restore remnants of rare natural communities and the species they support.	Natural resources are managed to approximate pre-settlement conditions while accommodating recreational use. Natural resources are managed to preserve and enhance the views.	Natural resources are managed to control invasive species, and accommodate recreational use.
Desired Visitor Experience	Visitors enjoy a perceived remoteness and quiet. Nature Based Outdoor Activities (NBOAs) will be accommodated.	Visitors will have limited access to these areas; they would be highly controlled to protect resources.	Visitors enjoy increased accessibility and a range of recreation activities. The primary use is trails that accommodate hiking, biking and horseback riding. NBOAs will be accommodated as will the existing snowmobile trail.	Visitors enjoy this area that fulfills regional recreational needs. Sights and sounds of fellow visitors are common.
Appropriate Facilities	Minimal facilities would be developed to serve as an information station; access roads, trails and trailheads lead out of the possible access points in this area. Trails would be carefully designed and located to afford access to or views of resources while avoiding impacts.	Trails would be minimally developed to accommodate pedestrian use only. Trails would be carefully designed and located to afford access to or views of resources while avoiding impacts.	Trails would be built in this zone to accommodate hiking, biking and horseback riding. The existing snowmobile trail that serves as a connecting route will be accommodated. Additional facilities include parking, picnic areas, viewing areas, fishing piers, canoe/carry-in boat access, visitor center, and interpretive and educational opportunities.	Trails would be built in this zone to accommodate motorized use; a shooting range would also be built. Additional facilities would include a classroom, parking area, staging area, wash station, bathroom and water area.