AGENDA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, January 15, 2020
Training Room-City Hall- 5:15PM

5:15 p.m. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/MINUTES
Minutes of November 20, 2019 Park and Recreation Advisory Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Non-Agenda Related Topic

OLD BUSINESS
1. Kinni Off Road Cyclists Annual Report-Rick Cleary
2. Sterling Ponds Park Plan-Sam Wessel

NEW BUSINESS
1. Acknowledgment of Foster Cemetery Master Plan 2018
2. Election of New Chairperson

ADJOURNMENT
Council members may be in attendance for informational purposes only.
No official Council action will be taken.

Post: City Hall Bulletin Board 1/10/2020
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES  
Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 5:15 p.m.  
City Hall Training Room

Members Present: Susan Reese (Chair), Sean Downing (Council Rep), Brandon Dobbertin  
Brenda Gaulke, Jim Nordgren, Patricia LaRue and Melissa Pedrini.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Cindi Danke-Recreation Manager; Amy Peterson-Development Services Director; Sam Wessel - Planner

Others Present: Ben Fochs and Andrew Reese-local citizens

CALL TO ORDER  
Meeting convened at 5:15 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
MSC LaRue/Dobbettin to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2019 Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

NEW BUSINESS  
Sam Wessel, City Planner was present to discuss the Sterling Ponds Park Plan. Over the past half year, planning and public works staff have been working towards completion of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan. While the park is partially developed, opportunity exists to upgrade the park due to its large size. While the park is considered a neighborhood park, it serves an area with poor pedestrian connectivity to the rest of City’s park system. Sterling Pond Park is currently 4.04 developed and 5.12 of undeveloped park acreage. The park contains a volleyball court, half-court basketball court, playground equipment, benches and picnic tables. City staff administered a neighborhood survey to identify future park needs. The top three were shelter, walking/bike paths and informal ballfield backstop. Park Board felt the sidewalks in the development offered a great walking/bike option. Old Jersey Road should not be a road to drive through to the development. There was also discussion about access points to the hill. Some of the confusion/complains with the residents of Sterling Pond lays with the Corporate Park developers and what they had promised to residents. Staff will work on completion with the modifications from board and will present the final completer draft of the plan for review and adoption at a future meeting.
OLD BUSINESS
None

ADJOURNMENT
MSC LaRue/Dobbertin to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindi Danke, Recreation Manager
MEMORANDUM

TO: Park and Recreation Advisory Board

FROM: Sam Wessel, Planner

DATE: January 15, 2020

TITLE: Sterling Ponds Park Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION
Forward the enclosed resolution to City Council with a positive recommendation to approve the Sterling Ponds Park Plan.

BACKGROUND
In November, City Staff presented sections 1 through 3 of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. The plan’s Section 4: Recommendations has been completed since the last draft was presented and it contains site plan concepts, a description of proposed improvements, and improvement implementation recommendations. Most of the improvements are to be paid for by impact fees or by being incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) over time following ongoing financial analysis, with implementation dates and financial sources to be determined.

DISCUSSION
Sterling Ponds Park’s history dates to the early 2000s when the original Sterling Ponds neighborhood was platted. Following the housing market crash, the neighborhood’s configuration shifted to include the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park, and the master plan from the original developer was modified by subsequent developers. The Park was not developed per the original master plan and the City borrowed funds to develop the current facilities in the park, which include a basketball court, volleyball court, playground, and benches.

The purpose of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan is to identify the park’s existing level of service as the neighborhood rapidly develops with new housing and recommend improvements over time as impact fees are collected. This plan provides detailed calculations regarding the acreage of park and open space in the neighborhood relative to National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) standards as well as the parkland dedication requirements in the City’s subdivision ordinance. The plan recommends that the park’s boundaries be reconfigured to free up vacant developable land while recommending
improvements within the park and throughout the neighborhood to maximize community resources while developing underutilized park and open space.

Recommended improvements include adding a picnic shelter, simple ballfield including bases and a backstop (grassed infield), benches, additional playground equipment, and upgrading the berm along State Highway 35, as well as creating mowed and paved trails throughout the neighborhood to access natural features and stormwater ponds already dedicated to the public.

Park improvements are intended to be financed using a variety of approaches. For example, the STH-35 berm can be upgraded as early as 2021 using funds from Tax Incremental District (TID) #10. Timing and funding of other improvements will be determined in the future as impact fees are collected and Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) are developed.

CONCLUSION
Community Development staff requests your feedback on the final draft of Sterling Ponds Park Plan.

Staff recommends Park Board forward the enclosed resolution to City Council with a positive recommendation to approve the Sterling Ponds Park Plan.

ATTACHMENTS
• Sterling Ponds Park Plan
• Resolution
Sterling Ponds Park Plan
2020

City of River Falls, WI
Community Development Department

Adopted by the City of River Falls Common Council February 11, 2020
Acknowledgments

The City thanks the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and the greater community for providing input that will guide the development of Sterling Ponds Park as the neighborhood continues to grow.

River Falls Park and Recreation Advisory Board

Susan Reese, Chairperson
Sean Downing, Council Representative
Brandon Dobbentin
Brenda Gaulke
Patricia La Rue
Jim Nordgren
Melissa Pedrini

River Falls Plan Commission

Dan Toland, Mayor
Susan Reese, Park and Recreation Chair
Hal Watson, City Council Representative
Bill Stuessel
Lisa Moody
Mike Woolsey
Craig Hinzman

River Falls City Council

Dan Toland, Mayor
Todd Bjerstedt
Sean Downing
Christopher Gagne
Scott Morissette
Diane Odeen
Michael Page
Hal Watson

River Falls City Staff

Sam Wessel, AICP, Planner
Brandy Howe, AICP, Senior Planner
Amy Peterson, AICP, Development Services Director
Cindi Danke, Recreation Coordinator
Scot Simpson, City Administrator
Nathan Croes, City Forester
Mike Stifter, Operations Director
Eric Viessman, Public Works

For more information, please contact the City of River Falls Community Development Department:

River Falls City Hall – 222 Lewis Street – River Falls, WI 54022 – 715-425-0900
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1. Introduction

Sterling Ponds Park Location

The Sterling Ponds Neighborhood is a relatively new and rapidly-developing residential and business park area of approximately 257 acres located at the northern edge of the City. Although it is served by a newly-upgraded interchange with STH 35, the neighborhood is surrounded by rural homes and farms, with little connectivity to the rest of the City. Today, Sterling Ponds Park consists of 4.04 acres of dedicated parkland that features a playground, a basketball half-court, and a sand volleyball court, surrounded by a mostly-flat, open grassed area. The site also includes benches and picnic tables, along with a small mound used for activities such as sledding. The park is located at 870 Edenburgh Drive and is adjacent to an undeveloped 5.12 acre outlot dedicated to the public for park space. The total acreage of the developed and undeveloped existing dedicated park outlots is 9.16 acres. The park borders the Sterling Ponds subdivision to the northeast, Sterling Ponds Corporate Park to the northwest, STH 35 to the southwest, and a future phase of the Sterling Ponds subdivision to the southeast.

![Sterling Ponds Park Location Diagram](image)

Figure 1. Location of Sterling Ponds Park, City of River Falls, WI.
Park Size and Service Area

Sterling Ponds Park is currently classified as a neighborhood park by both national and local standards when using the total of 9.16 acres of the two dedicated park outlots. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), neighborhood parks are between 5 and 10 acres and they serve the population within a half-mile radius (see Figure 2). The City’s Comprehensive Plan (2005) also assigns a half-mile service area to neighborhood parks but classifies them as being between 2 and 19 acres.

Neighborhood parks generally contain a mix of active and passive recreation, including facilities such as athletic fields and nature trails, in a setting that’s well-connected to surrounding residences. In most cases, neighborhood parks do not include highly-intensive park space that generates noise and traffic, nor do they preserve large swaths of protected natural features. The purpose of a neighborhood park is to provide a variety of recreational options at a scale that reflects the surrounding neighborhood’s character.

Figure 2 is a map of Sterling Ponds Park’s half-mile service area. Since areas of the neighborhood feature curvilinear streets and a lack of pedestrian connections, the radius does not necessarily reflect a half-mile walking distance. Lands beyond STH 35 are excluded from the park’s service area since there are no pedestrian connections to the other side within a half-mile radius. Sterling Ponds Park is accessed by Edinborough Drive and does not have off-street parking facilities; however, on-street parking is permitted with no hourly restrictions. Section 5 of this plan includes recommendations for improved connectivity between the park and the surrounding neighborhood.

Figure 2. Half-mile service area of Sterling Ponds Park, excluding lands beyond STH 35, a pedestrian barrier.
History and Purpose of the Sterling Ponds Park Plan

The Sterling Ponds Park configuration has varied since the neighborhood was first planned in the early 2000s as a result of rapid development and changing market conditions. Therefore, it is important to consider the park’s history when comparing its current size, configuration, and level of service within the context of a changing neighborhood. Throughout this plan, the title “Sterling Ponds Neighborhood” is used to describe all platted and future residential units located in the triangular area bordered by STH 35, Huppert St, and Chapman Drive (these roads are labeled in Figure 2). Sterling Ponds Corporate Park is used to describe nonresidential development to the west of the residential development within the same triangular area of land (See Appendix A).

The area containing the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and Sterling Ponds Corporate Park was annexed in 2002, with the first phase of development platted in 2003 as the Sterling Ponds Subdivision. Initially, the entire annexation that comprises the entire triangular area was planned for single and multiple family residential, but a shift in housing market conditions in the late 2000s directed the City to create the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park, which opened in 2014. The developed areas of the neighborhood are served by paved paths and sidewalks.

The 2003 preliminary plat for the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood depicts approximately 22 to 23 acres of dedicated parkland. A large portion of this plat was later reconfigured to build the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park. The current area dedicated to the public as Sterling Ponds Park was recorded as two separate, adjacent outlots of 4.04 acres in 2009 and 5.12 acres in 2017 (See Appendix A). A future 4-acre addition to Sterling Ponds Park is included on the preliminary plat for the Sterling Ponds Second Addition plat, which is expected to be followed by a final plat for the remaining vacant land to the southeast of the park.

Since 2003, three phases of Villas of Sterling Ponds (2004, 2017, and 2018), Sterling Heights Townhomes (2005), and Sterling Ponds First Addition (2019) have been platted for single family attached and detached housing units. In the eastern portion of the neighborhood, Hope Lutheran Church constructed a worship facility (2015) and an outdoor pavilion (2019), and the City approved a 60-unit market-rate apartment complex called The Aberdeen in 2019, which is currently under construction. Remaining vacant land in the neighborhood is anticipated to be a mix of housing types, with possible neighborhood-scale commercial or other institutional space.

A 4-acre outlot depicted on the Sterling Ponds Second Addition preliminary plat is the only expected dedicated parkland beyond the existing two outlots in Sterling Ponds Park. However, other forms of open space can be found throughout the neighborhood. For example, the original Sterling Ponds subdivision dedicated several outlots for the swath of stormwater infrastructure and steep slopes that runs through the neighborhood. Informal trails that the City does not currently maintain run through sections of this open space, but there are no official park facilities that the City maintains in this area besides Sterling Ponds Park. Additionally, Sterling Heights Townhomes (2005) maintains a small stormwater pond and a 0.41-acre private playground at the corner of Bandle Street and Triton Avenue, which was a component of the site’s developer’s agreement. An extensive breakdown of park and open space acreage in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood is presented in Section 2: Existing Conditions.

In summary, what began as a master-planned neighborhood incrementally evolved into a series of subdivisions that do not reflect the neighborhoods’ preliminary plat from 2003. Therefore, the goal of this park plan is to:

- Review existing park and open space acreage against City parkland dedication requirements;
- Determine recreational needs in the neighborhood; and
- Recommend maintenance and facility improvements for Sterling Ponds Park.
Throughout this plan, the term **parkland** is used to describe outlots dedicated to the public specifically for developing parks. The term **open space** is used to describe outlots dedicated to the public, including dedicated parkland, that may also contain landscape features such as stormwater ponds, wetlands, slopes, and woodlands with a varying degree of accessibility for outdoor recreation. **Active recreation** is used to describe developed park facilities such as ballfields, playgrounds, and basketball courts, whereas **passive recreation** describes minimally-developed facilities for walking, hiking, photography, wildlife viewing, and other similar activities.

*Figure 3. In addition to Sterling Ponds Park, there are several outlots dedicated to the public which contain stormwater infrastructure, wetlands, and steep slopes, but they are not considered parkland.*
2. Existing Conditions

Demographics

As outlined in the City of River Falls 2018 Trends Report, the City's population is steadily growing, with an estimated population increase of 1.71% between 2010 and 2017. The Wisconsin Department of Administration expects this trend to continue, with a projected population increase of 20.7% between 2010 and 2040. This projection results in an increase from 15,000 residents (2010) to 18,105 residents (2040) over 30 years. River Falls residents have demonstrated a desire for and commitment to investing in park space, having an existing 18.08 acres of developed, active parkland per 1,000 residents. This is nearly double the standard of 9.1 acres per 1,000 residents recommended by the City's Comprehensive Plan (2005) and is well above the National Recreation and Park Association's recommended 6-10 acres per 1,000 residents. Therefore, this plan anticipates continued population growth and demand for recreational space as development continues in the surrounding neighborhood. Since the neighborhood borders the agricultural lands in the Town of Troy to the north, east, and west, additional growth is possible following potential future annexation.

![Figure 4: Villas of Sterling Ponds new home construction](image)

As of August 2019, 188 housing units have been permitted for construction or already constructed in the Sterling Ponds neighborhood, all of which were either single family attached (townhome or twin home) or detached units. At the time, there were also an additional 66 platted, undeveloped single-family lots in the neighborhood. A 60-unit market rate apartment complex (The Aberdeen) was under construction as of August 2019.

According to the 2013-2017 U.S. Census American Community Survey, the average household size for owner occupied housing units in the City of River Falls was 2.63 people, and the average household size for renter occupied housing units was 2.13 people. Table 1 multiplies each housing unit type (owner occupied and renter occupied) by its associated average household size (2.63 people and 2.13 people) to estimate the neighborhood's population.

Table 1 provides a population estimate of 494 current residents in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood based on the number of homes that are currently completed or under construction. This estimate jumps to 796 residents once all platted single family lots and the 60-unit apartment complex, known as The Aberdeen, are complete. It is important to note that these projections do not account for situations where the housing unit is owned by one individual and rented by another, but it is a method to differentiate between housing unit ownership types and the estimated household size of each type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Estimated Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single family</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple family</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped lots</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total platted units</strong></td>
<td><strong>314</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.13-2.63</strong></td>
<td><strong>796</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimates in Table 1 do not account for the preliminary plat of Sterling Ponds Second Addition (72 single-family lots) or vacant land depicted Figure 5. Since all vacant land in the neighborhood is zoned Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), the remaining vacant land could be any combination of single and multiple family residential units, with the possibility of neighborhood scale commercial or institutional uses.

Figure 5. Map of vacant, developable land in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood. As of January 2020, several proposals that feature a mix of housing types have been presented to the City, though none have been formally submitted for development review.
To account for the estimated possible future development not yet platted or permitted, Table 2 estimates the population of Sterling Ponds Neighborhood at full build out. These estimates are based on combining two calculations: the preliminary plat for single family homes in the Sterling Ponds Second Addition, and the remaining vacant developable space. The preliminary plat for Sterling Ponds Second Addition contains 72 additional single family homes. For vacant land in the neighborhood outside of this plat, the comprehensive plan limits multifamily housing density in the neighborhood to 8 dwelling units per acre. Multiplying the vacant developable acreage outside the Sterling Ponds Second Addition area by the estimated 8 dwelling units per acre figure results in an additional potential 96 multiple family units. Using the same methodology as Table 1, Table 2 calculates the estimated housing to be permitted in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and adds it to the population estimates in Table 1.

**Table 2. Estimated population of Sterling Ponds Neighborhood. Source: City of River Falls Community Development Department, 2012-2017 American Community Survey.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Estimated Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacant land maximum</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.P. 2nd Addition</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. future units</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>2.13-2.63</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing platted units</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>2.13-2.63</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. full buildout</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>2.13-2.64</td>
<td>1,190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The calculation in Table 2 assumes no significant amendments to the City’s Comprehensive Plan (2005) or Official Zoning Map. Figure 2 shows where the Park’s half-mile service radius overlaps with the Town of Troy north of Chapman Drive and east of Huppert St. Should these areas be annexed to the City, limited population growth within a half mile of Sterling Ponds Park can be expected. Currently, the City’s Future Land Use Map (2005) depicts these areas as Low Density Residential (north of Chapman Drive) and Office Park (east of Huppert St).

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends a minimum of 3 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 residents. While this metric is typically applied citywide, the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood is located remotely with STH 35 forming a pedestrian barrier between the neighborhood and the rest of River Falls’ park system. Therefore, in this instance, the standard can be used to determine if Sterling Ponds Park will adequately support the population of the surrounding neighborhood. Using a 3 acre per 1,000 population standard, and a potential population of 1,190 residents (see Table 2), 3.57 acres of developed, active park space is required to meet NRPA standards. With an existing 4.04 developed park acres, dedicated 5.12 developable acres of parkland, and potential additional 4 acres of parkland, Sterling Ponds Park’s total future acreage of 13.16 acres is over three times greater than the acreage suggested by NRPA standards. While growth beyond the City’s existing boundary is anticipated long-term, relatively little of it falls within the park’s half-mile service area. As a result, the site’s surplus of land may prove to be a long term maintenance liability where a manageable park size with high quality features is needed.
Analysis of Parkland Dedication

Since land throughout the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and Corporate Park has a variety of characteristics ranging from flat and wet to steep and forested, this section of the plan will further analyze the dedicated parkland acreage and the future parkland expected to be dedicated. Table 3 depicts Section 16.20.010 of the City of River Falls Municipal code, which imposes parkland dedication requirements developers must follow when subdividing land. This section also states that “the council may require the lands dedicated for park, playgrounds, recreation and open space purposes be of a character, size and location suitable for such use and purpose and may further require it to be relatively level and dry.” This provision helps ensure that developers don’t dedicate “leftover” land, such as rocky or saturated soils, steep slopes, or dense forest, where active recreation, such as athletic fields, is desired. However, the code does not impose acreage, slope, or soil standards in greater detail. Additionally, it does not specify how much of the 10% land dedication must be flat and dry for developed, active recreational activities.

Table 3. City parkland dedication ordinance (Section 16.20.010 B.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Dedication</th>
<th>Subdivision Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Industrial Commercial and Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% (0-3 units per acre)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add 1% for each unit above 3 with a maximum cap of 20%</td>
<td>Residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The developed portion of Sterling Ponds Park is relatively level and dry, but compact soils must be taken into consideration when developing athletic fields. Dedicated non-parkland outlots in the neighborhood contains a variety of stormwater ponds and forested steep slopes. In some cases, certain athletic activities, such as disc golf or mountain biking, may desire challenging terrain. However, most forms of active outdoor recreation require a flat, well drained playing surface, and parkland should be dedicated accordingly.
Figure 6. Land with steep slopes provides an opportunity where varied terrain is desired for certain types of outdoor recreation, for example, disc golf. Old Jersey Road (above) provides emergency access as well as a potential bicycle and pedestrian connection.

The Sterling Ponds Neighborhood developed incrementally over time and its current configuration differs with what was originally anticipated, so it is important to evaluate the amount of parkland currently dedicated to the public against the City’s subdivision ordinance. Table 3 provides the formula for calculating the percent of a subdivision, by area, that is required to be parkland. To determine parkland dedication requirements, a residential subdivision’s density must first be calculated. Appendix A depicts a visual breakdown of housing units and acreage for each subdivision in the Sterling Ponds neighborhood.

Lake many communities, the City of River Falls requires parkland dedication or a fee in lieu of dedication for each individual subdivision plat. Although the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood is the culmination of several plats constructed at different times, the entire neighborhood was initially master planned with coordinated infrastructure and capital improvements. As a result, the City’s parkland dedication requirements will be calculated by totaling all residential and industrial acreage from each plat in the neighborhood against the neighborhood’s total acreage.

Section 16.20.010 B. of the City’s municipal code requires parkland dedication equal to 10% of residential, commercial, office, and industrial land area along with outlots associated with these areas. The percentage increases by 1% for every 1 unit per dwelling acre for residential land about 3 units per acre, with a maximum requirement of 20%. By calculating the projected 482 units from Table 2 against the overall residential acreage of approximately 158.10 acres, Sterling Ponds Neighborhood’s density is approximately 3.05 units per acre, resulting in a 10% parkland dedication requirement for residential land (see Table 4). The total of 158.10 acres includes all developed and vacant residential areas and the stormwater outlots labeled “Stormwater 1 and 2” since they serve the residential portion of the neighborhood.
Sterling Ponds Corporate Park and Sterling Ponds Neighborhood has a combined acreage of 243.01 acres which results in a required 24.3 acres of dedicated parkland per City ordinance, as summarized in Table 4. Note that Hope Lutheran Church's 5 developed acres are not included in these calculations since institutional uses do not require parkland dedication.

**Table 4. Required parkland dedication per Section 16.20.010 B. of the City's municipal code.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parkland Dedication Standard</th>
<th>Subdivision Type</th>
<th>Parkland Acres Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Industrial/Commercial/Office (84.91 acres)</td>
<td>8.49 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Residential (158.10 acres)</td>
<td>15.81 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>243.01 acres</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>24.3 acres</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 summarizes the acreage and characteristics of all open space in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and Corporate Park. Currently, there are 9.16 acres of dedicated parkland, 4.0 future acres of dedicated parkland, 0.41 acres of private parks, and 57.02 acres of dedicated non-parkland outlots containing stormwater, wetland, and steep slopes, for a grand total 70.59 acres of open space.

**Table 5. Inventory of all parkland and open space acreage in Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and Corporate Park. See Appendix A for a map of all neighborhood acreage totals.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Ponds Park</td>
<td>Developed park</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Ponds Park</td>
<td>Undeveloped park</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Ponds Park</td>
<td>Future platted park</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Heights</td>
<td>Private park</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater (1)</td>
<td>Non-park outlot</td>
<td>36.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater (2)</td>
<td>Non-park outlot</td>
<td>7.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater (3)</td>
<td>Non-park outlot</td>
<td>8.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stormwater (4)</td>
<td>Non-park outlot</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>70.59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the City's parkland dedication ordinance is interpreted to strictly require only flat, dry, developable parkland, the 13.57 acres of existing and future park space in the neighborhood falls short of the ordinance's required 24.3 acres by 10.73 acres (Table 4). However, this narrow approach disregards the vast greenways of streams, prairie,
forest, and escarpment features that found throughout River Falls' park system. The City is known for having unique and diverse natural features in proximity with neighborhoods and commercial districts, setting River Falls apart from many similarly sized communities. When considering the existing park system's successful utilization of varied terrain, the acreage of dedicated parkland and non-parkland outlots in the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood meets the neighborhood's recreational needs for the following reasons:

- The 36.16-acre stormwater outlot contains informal trails as well as public access cut throughs to surrounding residential streets, along with the potential for future trail development. The 13-acre mound within this outlot is protected by the Wisconsin Urban Green Space program from development for public enjoyment.

- Existing bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout the neighborhood provide recreational amenities beyond Sterling Ponds Park's boundaries (Figure 16 in Section 5 depicts existing infrastructure).

- Some recreational activities requiring rough terrain have the potential to be developed within existing outlots, such as disc golf or hiking.

- Section 17.73.040 C. of the City's municipal code requires future multifamily development to provide outdoor amenities such as picnic tables, grills, and play equipment. For example, The Aberdeen, which includes 60 recently approved apartment units, features an inner courtyard and picnic area for its residents.

Currently, the 5.12-acre undeveloped portion of Sterling Ponds Park and the future 4.00-acre portion of Sterling Ponds Park are undeveloped, and the existing 4.04-acre developed portion of Sterling Ponds Park is mowed with large, underutilized flat fields and relatively few amenities. The City's resources should focus on investing in high quality park features within existing park space that will be used regularly, rather than mowing and maintaining excess park acreage with minimal development. If the recommendations in this plan are implemented to upgrade and maintain the developed portion of Sterling Ponds Park, the undeveloped and future portions of Sterling Ponds Park are better suited for non-park development.

*Figure 7. Stormwater infrastructure provides passive recreation opportunities without requiring flat, well drained land.*
Impact Fee Discussion

The City collects park impact fees to finance the capital costs of acquiring, establishing, updating, expanding and construction public facilities which are necessary to accommodate land development, in accordance with Wisconsin State Statute. Fees are set by the Common Council and are collected at the time of building permit. Revenues are then placed into two separate interest-bearing accounts with 40% allocated to local parks and 60% allocated to regional parks. The local park allocation is what is utilized for neighborhood parks, like Sterling Ponds. Since the neighborhood parks depend on development for funding, these parks are typically not completed until all development is completed. When Sterling Ponds Park was developed with the addition of basketball, volleyball, and playground facilities, the City borrowed funds into the park improvement fund so the park development could happen more quickly, and the fund has been paying the City back since that time. As the development continues in the area, the fund will replenish, and it is anticipated that recommendations from this Plan will be implemented.

Existing Site Layout, Inventory, and Images

Figure 8. Existing site layout of Sterling Ponds Park. Chevrons with numbers indicate locations where photos in Figures 9 - 12 were taken from.
Table 6. Inventory of existing Sterling Ponds Park amenities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park features</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stationary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Tables</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Movable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asphalt half-court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sand court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swing set</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 infant and 2 child swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Structure on wood chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage can</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enclosed container</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9. View of the developed portion of Sterling Ponds Park taken from the mound facing southeast.
Figure 10. View of the undeveloped portion of Sterling Ponds Park (background) taken from the mound facing northwest.

Figure 11. View of the park’s basketball and volleyball courts, taken from Edenburgh Drive facing south.
Figure 12. View of the park’s playground equipment and swing set, taken from Edenburgh Drive facing west.
3. Public Participation

City Operations Staff Meetings

Community Development staff met with Public Works staff on May 2, 2019 to introduce the Sterling Ponds Park plan and receive input from forestry and operations staff members. Appendix D. provides a complete list of the key issues and ideas discussed during this meeting from a maintenance and operations perspective. In summary, Public Works staff provided a brief history of the Park, identified on-site topsoil and topography challenges for parkland development, and recommended additions such as a picnic shelter, grills, benches, tables, simple trails and paths, playground equipment, and a ballfield. Public Works staff also supported administering a neighborhood survey to provide feedback for this plan.

Figure 13. Informal trails that the City does not currently maintain allow for passive recreation, such as walking and photography.

Park and Recreation Advisory Board Meetings

May 15, 2019: City staff briefly introduced the Sterling Ponds Park Plan project to the City's Park and Recreation Advisory Board by providing a project timeline and breakdown of project tasks.

July 19, 2019: City staff met with the Park and Recreation advisory board to recap project progress and seek input for a 2019 neighborhood survey. The following ideas were discussed:

- Leftover dirt from nearby industrial development could possibly be used to improve the hard, compacted soils in the existing park.

- The existing mound in the park could be spread over areas where hard soils exist, and the large hill to the east of the site has the potential for sledding hill development to replace the existing mound's use.
• Picnic shelters are preferable to gazebos since they are larger, used more frequently, and are less frequently vandalized.

• Native prairie plants are preferable to gardens since they require less intensive maintenance and are more likely to maintain their quality over time.

• Potential recreational facility choices listed on the 2010 survey should be updated to remove facilities that have already been developed at the park, while adding currently-popular facilities like pickleball courts and a small dog area.

Edits to the draft park survey based on Parks and Recreation Advisor Board input were incorporated prior to administering the survey over the month of July 2019.

November 20, 2019: City Staff presented the neighborhood survey results and discussed future park needs. Park Board members mentioned that sidewalks in the development offered a great walking and bicycling option and that Old Jersey Road should not be a road to drive through to the development. Park Board members also discussed access points to the mound which included ideas to provide parking near Old Jersey Road in case the site becomes a disc golf course or hiking trails in the future. Board members also mentioned that the neighborhood’s original developer promised more park amenities that were never provided, and that the City stepped in to develop the existing Sterling Ponds Park facilities. Finally, City Staff presented a draft plan document for board members review and comment on, with a completed final draft to be brought back at a future board meeting.

PR Board Meeting 4 – Recommend to Council for Approval. Include adoption date.

2010 Neighborhood Survey

In February and March 2010, a survey was distributed throughout the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood, to identify which park upgrades were most desired at the time. Appendix B provides a map of housing units that existed at the time of the survey (built 2010 or earlier). Key takeaways from that survey are found in Table 7.

Table 7. Sterling Ponds Park 2010 Survey Results Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey response rate:</th>
<th>43%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents between 18 and 40 years old:</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents with 1 child or 2 children:</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children reported between age 1 and 5:</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children reported between 6 and 12:</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children reported between 13 and 17:</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents living within 1/4 mile of park:</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who would visit the park weekly:</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most popular facilities respondents desired included paved walking and biking paths, playground equipment, trees and landscaping, benches, picnic areas, a basketball court, a ballfield or backstop, and lighting. Appendix C of this plan provides a detailed summary of survey results. Changes in homeownership and the age of families may have changed considerably since 2010, so staff created and administered a survey in 2019 to identify the neighborhood's current recreational needs. Additionally, paved paths, playground equipment, a volleyball court, and a half basketball court have been developed, addressing a few of the neighborhood's existing needs identified in this survey.

2019 Neighborhood Survey

In July 2019, an updated survey was distributed to the neighborhood using doorhangers, which were designed to give respondents the option of taking the survey online, filling out the doorhanger and mailing it, or filling out the doorhanger and bringing it into City Hall. The updated survey retained much of the previous survey's content while streamlining duplicative or unnecessary questions. Out of the 183 units completed or under construction in the neighborhood, 53 households responded, for a response rate of 29%. Since some of these homes may not have had occupancy at the time the survey was distributed, the actual response rate is likely higher. The following tables directly reflect survey responses to the following three survey questions:

1. Please list ages of household members
2. Please circle the top three facilities you would like to see at Sterling Ponds Park (in no particular order)
3. Are you interested in helping build park improvements?

Table 8. Head count of various age groups within households that responded to surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximate number of surveys distributed</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households responding to survey</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of 2 oldest family members with households of 3 or more persons</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of additional family members</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of 1 and 2-member households</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with a member 60 or older</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. Detailed breakdown of age group totals comprising households that responded to survey. Note: the groups are not divided into equal age ranges, but ages that reflect activities related to specific age groups in the survey, such as playground equipment for ages 3-5 and equipment for ages 6-12.

As depicted in Table 9, the biggest age groups in the neighborhood are adults in their 30s and children between the ages of 6 to 12. When combining children from age 0 to 2 and 3 to 5, the age group of 0 to 5 represents the third largest age group with 18 members, greater than the approximate number of high school and college-age residents. Therefore, most of the neighborhood is comprised of young to middle age adults with children living at home. As depicted in Table 9, the average age of the two oldest household members in households with more than 2 members is 38, while the average age of 1 and 2-member households is 47. In households with more than 2 members, the average age of members other than the oldest two is 9, indicating that households with only one or two members may be more likely to be empty nesters, while households with more than 2 members are younger families. These demographic conditions are similar to the results of the 2010 survey, and park upgrades should be geared towards younger families and empty nesters.
Table 10. Total number of responses for each respondent’s three most desired facilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennis court</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small area for dogs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open play area</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboard elements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic shelter</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native prairie plantings</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickleball court</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees and landscaping</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional playground equipment age 6-12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional playground equipment age 3-5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved walking/bike trails</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball field/backstop (grass)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional benches/picnic tables</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the pre-listed ideas on the survey reflected in Table 10, respondents had the option of listing their own idea and choosing it as one of their top three desired facilities. Other ideas not pre-listed that respondents chose include a swimming pool (3 votes), gaga pit (2 votes), soccer nets (2 votes), ice rink (2 votes), trails to the top of the hill southeast of the park, additional basketball hoop on existing basketball court, a hockey rink, and an interactive fountain similar to one at Stinson Park in Omaha, NE. In additional to each respondent’s top three choices, several respondents wrote additional comments on their survey, which are reflected in Appendix D: 2019 Survey Comments at the end of this plan.

It is interesting to note that in both the 2010 and 2019 surveys, paved walking and bicycle trails were the top choice. Picnic shelters were added as a suggestion by the Park and Recreation Advisory Board to the survey to replace the “picnic area” and “gazebo” options in the 2010 survey, and this choice was the second most popular in on the 2019 survey. While there was relatively little interest in 2010 for a ballfield and backstop, this facility was third most desired in the 2019 survey.

Regarding the survey’s final question, City staff was interested in evaluating how much willingness neighborhood residents had in volunteering labor to help build new park facilities, similar to the approach used at Highview Meadows Park. Of the households surveyed, 22 indicated that they were interested in volunteering (41.5%), 25 said they were not interested (47.2%), and 4 gave no response (7.5%). The Park and Recreation Advisory Board my find these results useful if they choose to recruit volunteers for future park upgrades.

Public Participation Summary

City staff and neighborhood residents identified similar opportunities involving feasible upgrades to upgrade the existing park site as well as the surrounding neighborhood. The following section compiles a list of issues and opportunities identified in the first three sections of this plan.
4. Recommendations

Sterling Ponds Park is underutilized and must be improved to effectively serve its rapidly-growing surroundings. Utilizing the findings gathered from Public Works staff, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members, and neighborhood surveys from 2010 and 2019, this section of the plan identifies issues and opportunities along with site specific and neighborhood recommendations.

Figure 14. Sterling Ponds Neighborhood and Corporate Park

Issues

- Existing terrain on the undeveloped 5.12-acre outlot is unmowed and ungraded.
- Existing soils are compact throughout the site.
- The distance to walk to the park is considerably longer for those living northeast of the stormwater infrastructure that bisects the neighborhood.
- The neighborhood has limited facilities for active recreation (e.g. athletic fields).
- The park has no facilities for a large picnic or gathering.
- The park consists of greater dedicated park acreage than what is practical or needed to develop and maintain long-term.

Opportunities

- There is strong demand for a picnic shelter, ballfield and backstop, and additional walking and cycling trails.
- Native prairie and walking trail are possible where soils aren’t suitable for park development and a reduction in mowing is desired.
- Extended sidewalks and trail cut-throughs may provide passive recreation opportunities for existing and future development.
- An informal practice ball diamond and/or soccer field may serve the neighborhood and address the removal of a ball diamond from Glen Park without generating excessive traffic, parking, and noise associated with larger diamonds.
- New grading, topsoil, and grass may improve the compact playing surfaces.
- Preservation of miniature sledding hill is possible on the existing 4.04-acre outlot for young families.

24
Nearby industrial development has resulted in leftover dirt mounds that may be available for topsoil where the park’s soils are poor.

**Sterling Ponds Park Master Plan**

The master plan for Sterling Ponds Park must consider on-site upgrades as well as neighborhood-wide connectivity. To maximize resources, The City should prioritize investing in a high-quality park space rather than focusing on increasing the park’s size. By taking advantage of landscape features such as ponds, wetlands, and wooded areas, improving access to the extensive non-parkland outlots provides a greater diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the neighborhood beyond the park’s boundaries.

The park’s **Site Concept** (Figure 15) includes facility upgrades that reflect the needs identified in the survey and the types of facilities that are most feasible. The top three facilities in the survey were paved walking and bicycling trails (23 responses), a picnic shelter (18 responses), and a ballfield with backstop (16 responses). Coincidentally, these three facilities were recommended by Public Works staff prior to the survey being administered (see Appendix D). These facilities also scored high in the 2009 Survey, along with additional playground equipment. Finally, additional survey and Park and Recreation Advisory Board comments indicate that there is a desire to preserve the existing sledding hill.

The Site Concept also maximizes the existing mowed park outlot by adding a grassed infield ballfield with little league dimensions, an expanded area for playground equipment, a 30’ x 30’ picnic shelter, prairie, and by preserving sledding hill. Since the area where the ballfield is sited currently contains compact soil, fill may be required to make the field surface playable. Rather than borrowing from the sledding hill mound, the City owns leftover fill from Sterling Ponds Corporate Park projects that should be evaluated for use as topsoil in the park.

The addition of a ballfield with a backstop will addresses a citywide shortage in practice fields following the closure of a diamond at Glen Park. Since Sterling Ponds Park is a neighborhood park, this diamond will not be used to host games or tournaments. A new picnic shelter will include picnic tables, waste containers, and areas to grill food, which will greatly enhance the usefulness of the park for a variety of users. Finally, a prairie area will enhance the park’s landscaping with minimal maintenance and reduce the portion of the park that must be mowed.

This plan recommends that the City explores reconfiguring the existing undeveloped L-shaped park outlot to expand the existing portion of Sterling Ponds Park towards STH 35. The remaining portion of this outlot may be undedicated, rezoned, and sold for small-scale commercial activities compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, such as professional offices or a day care, the latter of which is experiencing a shortage citywide. To accomplish this, the City must follow the Wisconsin Department of Administration’s procedures for undedicking parkland. The existing Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) zoning district used throughout the neighborhood permits commercial development at this scale while maintaining residential neighborhood character and is appropriate for this portion of the site following the undedication of parkland. It is important to note that the outlot is in poor shape for park development with rocky, uneven terrain and coverage by excessive weeds and invasive species.

Similarly, the anticipated future 4-acre park outlot depicted on the Sterling Ponds Second Addition Preliminary Plat is better suited for additional residential development, which also is in high demand. This space could be used to increase the total number and or/size of anticipated residential lots. Although the future park outlot depicted on the future plat isn’t desired, the City should preserve the shortcut from the subdivision into the park depicted on the plat.
Following the recommended lot reconfiguration, Sterling Ponds Park's boundaries result in a park size of approximately 5.86 acres. Limiting the park's boundaries while freeing up land for development avoids excessive park maintenance liabilities while increasing the neighborhood's tax base to pay for park improvements. This increases the likelihood of timely park upgrades and ensures high quality maintenance. To maintain the neighborhood's character while repurposing surrounding sites for development, the City should upgrade the landscaped berm between the neighborhood and STH 35. Berm maintenance easements should be imposed on the future commercial and residential sites on either side of the park to provide adequate screening and noise reduction for Sterling Ponds residents. Finally, mowing the sledding hill while planting a prairie in undeveloped areas provides a variety of natural features while minimizing maintenance liabilities.
The Sterling Ponds Neighborhood features several opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities and neighborhood connectivity within existing public land. The **Neighborhood Concept** (Figure 16.) reflects the park boundary reconfiguration recommended by the Site Concept. Future sidewalks that connect future residential lots in this concept mirror the sidewalks depicted on the Sterling Ponds Second Addition Preliminary Plat. The City also plans to develop a paved off-street bicycle and pedestrian path on Huppert St beginning at Arrow Ct and extending north to the intersection of Chapman Drive and Huppert St where it connects to the path along Chapman Drive. Currently, Old Jersey Road is minimally maintained as a gravel emergency access road for the neighborhood. This plan recommends removing the existing gate and paving the road for bicycle,
pedestrian, and emergency vehicle access only to connect the neighborhood with the eventual Huppert Street path. This new path will require realignment at the northwestern end around future residential lots in Sterling Ponds Second Addition to provide a connection to Kettering Road within the existing stormwater outlet frontage.

The green shaded area in the Neighborhood Concept reflects the boundaries of non-parkland dedicated to the public to contain stormwater infrastructure, wetlands, and steep slopes that are undevelopable. Currently, existing mowed paths around some ponds exist, though they are not recognized or maintained by the City as formal walks or paths. Based on the desire to access these ponds identified by comments in the survey, the Neighborhood Concept recommends formalizing two paths around the stormwater ponds that take advantage of access points to existing sidewalks while keeping users away from backyards of homes. This is a simple, cost-effective approach to increase the accessibility of existing public land for passive outdoor recreation, especially for homes located farther away from Sterling Ponds Park. Should this approach be successful, the City may explore future additional mowed trails throughout the neighborhood, including the wetlands and ponds behind Hope Lutheran Church if vacant land in this area is developed for residential use. New signage at trail entrances should be installed depicting a trail map and rules to prevent neighborhood conflicts and protect stormwater infrastructure.

Finally, the area labeled "Wooded Mound" has the potential to become a disc golf course if enough interest moves course development forward. The course would use a similar approach to Kinnickinnic Off Road Cyclists (KORC) trails where KORC uses City owned land in Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park for volunteer developed and maintained mountain bike trails. Should the course be developed, parking options should be discussed when the Sterling Ponds Second Addition final plat is under review.
Figure 16. Sterling Ponds Park Master Plan: Neighborhood Concept.
Facilities and Capital Costs

Appendix F of this plan provides an inventory of all recommended park improvements along with the associated itemized cost, quantity needed, and total cost in today’s dollars. Descriptions of park improvements included in Appendix F are as follows:

- **Upgraded berm trees and landscaping** between the neighborhood and State Highway 35 will reflect the original intent of creating a sound and aesthetic buffer for the neighborhood. The project is to be funded by Tax Increment District (TID) 10 as early as 2021. Existing trees in the park are to be retained while minimizing surrounding grading and disturbance as park improvements are built.

- **Signs** added to four recommended unpaved trail entrances will be used to identify trail locations and rules to minimize conflicts between trail users and neighbors as well as preventing damage to stormwater infrastructure.

- **Benches**, which are typically obtained on a donation basis, are a low-cost upgrade that provides seating for park users of various ability levels.

- **Topsoil and grass seed** will be required on an as needed basis as park improvements are added. While the turf is well established in most of the park, the hard topsoil may need to be addressed for playing field surfaces. Throughout the park, existing lawn care management involving aerating, seeding, fertilizing, and weed control should continue to be utilized.

- **Grills, trash cans, picnic tables, and a 30’ x 30’ picnic shelter**, similar to the picnic area found in Highview Meadows Park, will allow for family and community picnics and events.

- **A ballfield backstop and set of bases** with little league dimensions improves the existing underutilized playing field by providing a facility desired by neighborhood residents following the closure of a similar ballfield at Glen Park. This ballfield should be obtained using park impact fees collected as future residential sites in the neighborhood develop.

- **Additional playground equipment** will accommodate a wider range of age groups as children in the neighborhood grow and young families have more children. Dimensions and needed equipment to be evaluated at the time of playground expansion.

- **Paved trails** along Huppert Street (approx. 4,320 ft.) and over the existing Old Jersey Road (approx. 1,210 ft.) provide bicycle and pedestrian connections as well as emergency access into the neighborhood. The Huppert Street trail is to be paid for with the City’s street fund at the time of Huppert Street’s future reconstruction.

The estimated costs in Appendix F represent actual costs at the time of this plan’s publication to obtain and install park upgrades. Plan implementation is dependent on the availability of impact fees and feasibility in future Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) cycles, which are to be determined in the future. However, the City of River Falls will explore grant or collaborative funding sources, along with providing opportunities for community and neighborhood members to donate and volunteer to potentially expedite plan implementation. The 2019 survey indicated that over 41% of survey participants were interested in volunteering to build park upgrades, and this approach was successful in developing Highview Meadows Park.
According to Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 50, the City must adopt a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) that meets Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requirements to qualify for grant funding from the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space program (UGS), and Urban Rivers Grant Program (URGP). While not all funding sources may apply to Sterling Ponds Park improvements specifically, adopting a CORP and updating it every 5 years benefits both the park itself as well as all City parks by qualifying them for these easily accessible funding sources. The City should include a CORP as part of its work plan prior to park upgrades beginning in 2023.

The recommendations in this master plan provide a clear vision of Sterling Ponds Park's future as the neighborhood continues to grow. Implementation of the plan relies on recommendations being included in future City Budgets and CIPs. Other opportunities to enhance the park and its neighborhood not identified in the plan should be investigated as they present themselves in view of the plan's intent. By following the recommendations of this plan, the City will maintain its reputation for maximizing resources and providing high quality recreational amenities for current and future residents in the Sterling Ponds neighborhood and the City overall.
### Table: Housing By Year (August 2019 Data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2011 or Before</th>
<th>2010 or Before</th>
<th>Total Units Platted</th>
<th>Undeveloped Lots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total units platted</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single family 2003-2010</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single family 2011-2019</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily (2019)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HH Size Est. Pop*
Appendix C. 2010 Park Survey Results

We sent out 152 surveys and have received 65 responses for a return rate of 43%.

# of Adults listed on surveys were:
Ages 18-30 = 40   Ages 31-40 = 59
Ages 41-49 = 14   Ages 50+ = 19

# of Children living in your household:
13 people responded they have 1 child
8 people responded they have 3 children
0 people responded they have 5+ children
13 people responded they have 2 children
2 people responded they have 4 children

Ages of children in household (81 total children)
1 yrs old= 17, 2 yrs old= 9, 3 yrs old= 6, 4 yrs old= 11, 5 yrs old= 4, 6 yrs old= 1, 7 yrs old= 7, 8 yrs old= 2, 9 yrs old= 5, 10 yrs old= 0, 11 yrs old= 3, 12 yrs old= 2, 13+ yrs old= 10

Amenities rating for Sterling Ponds-

Paved Walking/Bike Path – 15 rated #1 11 rated #2 7 rated #3
Playground Equipment Age 3-5- 13 rated #1 3 rated #2 3 rated #3
Playground Equipment Age 6-12 – 14 rated #1 12 rated #2 3 rated #3
Trees/Landscaping- 3 rated #1 12 rated #2 4 rated #3
Basketball Court- 5 rated #1 5 rated #2 8 rated #3
Lighting – 3 rated #1 5 rated #2 6 rated #3
Gardens – 3 rated #1 1 rated #2 4 rated #3
Benches/Picnic Area – 3 rated #1 8 rated #2 12 rated #3
Ball field/Backstop – 1 rated #1 6 rated #2 3 rated #3
Gazebo – 1 rated #1 0 rated #2 1 rated #3
Volleyball Court – 1 rated #1 0 rated #2 3 rated #3
Skateboard elements – 0 rated #1 0 rated #2 1 rated #3
Open Play area- 0 rated #1 1 rated #2 7 rated #3

Other amenities suggested
Dog Park -8
Tennis Court – 7

How far do you live from the Park?
0-1/4 mile - 74% - 46 responded
1/4-1/2 mile – 26% - 16 responded
More than 1/2 mile - 0% - 0 responded

How often would you spend time in Park on a yearly basis?
Daily – 48%
Weekly – 45%
Monthly – 6%
Rarely – 1%

Would you be interested in receiving information on the Adopt a Park Program?
Yes – 50% - 31 people responded
No – 50% - 31 People responded

Would you be willing to contribute labor?
Yes- 62% - 40 people responded
No – 38% - 24 people responded
Appendix D. City Operations Staff Feedback

- Although 9.16 acres of parkland is dedicated to the public, the City initially anticipated as much as 23.2 acres, according to the 2009 City of River Falls Parks Inventory (This acreage likely reflects the Sterling Ponds Preliminary Plat from 2003, which depicts a much larger area along STH 35 dedicated for parkland when the Corporate Park area was originally planned for single family homes). A possible factor in the change of dedicated parkland is a shift from planning single family homes to business park development where the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park now exists.

- The recent passage of the Town of Kinnickinnic Cooperative Boundary Agreement may affect how the area east of the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood develops over time.

- For planning purposes, Sterling Ponds Park shouldn’t take future growth to the west into consideration, since STH 35 acts as a pedestrian barrier.

- Although the City does not maintain the informal mowed path along stormwater ponds, the path contributes to the amount of accessible open space in the neighborhood (see Figure X).

- Simple additions such as grills, picnic tables, and a simple picnic shelter would make the park much more appealing to a variety of users.

- A simple softball diamond was requested in the 2009 survey, and Glen Park is losing one, so the City could consider the feasibility of locating one here.

- If possible, the City should include cut-through to the next phase of Sterling Ponds neighborhood to the east of the park.

- Existing contours on the site appear to be a result of the developer scraping the flat area and mounding the topsoil towards the western corner of the developed 4.04-acre outlot. This has resulted in a mostly flat site, which is ideal for development, but little to no topsoil exists, leaving it flat and rocky. The mounded portion of the site is softer and more fertile.

- The City should consider providing a recommendation for enacting ordinances that require more desirable topographical conditions when developers dedicate parkland. Undesirable soils and slopes are an ongoing problem throughout the City where active, developed park space is desired in new neighborhoods. This may include a City-wide analysis and inventory of existing park facilities.

- Because of changes in homeownership and rapid growth in the neighborhood, a new survey should be administered to see which recreational needs have changed since the 2010 survey.

- Playground equipment should be expanded to accommodate the growing neighborhood and broader age range of users.

- The current maintenance schedule for City parks involves applying fertilizer with crabgrass preventer and weed kill in Spring, applying fertilizer in summer, and applying fertilizer and weed kill in fall along with aeration and grass seed.
Appendix E. 2019 Park Survey Comments

The following represent comments that were received in addition to the three questions on the 2019 Survey:

- Fill in gaps on berm with trees
- In addition to my 3 choices I would also like to see a tennis court, skateboard elements, and additional playground equipment age 6-12
- The City currently does not maintain the grass trails that are all over our neighborhood. Pave them and we can finally use the trails that go around the ponds! There are several dead trees that should be removed. The landscaping areas need tending. And some yellow lines and upkeep would be nice. For years we've been the forgotten neighborhood. Would be nice to have that change.
- Would also be nice if parking was not permitted on curves, around median areas, and by the church. Literally dangerous to navigate!
- Finally, I believe we were told that no entrance would exist to drive into/out of the industrial park?? We have now an entrance/access for vehicles...
- Long-term care of trees and landscaping
- Parking for visitors in each area
- We need law enforcement of the stop signs and speeding. Coming onto Newcastle they come in both directions. They (many times do not stop at the stop sign and continue very fast from both ways). As the population grows these things need to be addressed.
- In addition to my 3 choices, I would also like to see additional benches/picnic tables, a picnic shelter, and a tennis ball court (trade it for the volleyball court, get rid of volleyball- never used.)
- Another idea: community garden to grow veggies!
- We like to be in nature. It's good for your mental well-being. Trails to walk- a real garden – native plants. Good for birds/butterflies.
- Less light pollution
- Keep the butterflies!
- Trails around ponds too
- Benches w/ backs on them to actually relax
- For ballfield, is there room to put it up on the hill by the playground apparatus w/backstop near trees? Maybe not the best location.
- Area to park R.V.s & Sports Equipment (not on road)
Appendix F. Park Improvement Cost Estimates

Below is a table of itemized costs and quantities for park improvements recommended in this plan. Estimated costs with an asterisk (*) are derived from the average of a range of possible costs ($300-$400 for 2" caliper trees, $49-$128 per linear foot for paved trails, and $27,000 - $75,000 for a playground set depending on size and age group). Benches (**) cost approximately $1,000 to purchase and install, but they are typically implemented by receiving donations along with a small commemorative plaque. Berm trees and landscaping are recommended to be financed by TID 10 as soon as 2021, and the Huppert Street Paved Trail may be financed by the street fund for the future Huppert Street reconstruction. Remaining improvements will be either be financed by park impact fees or incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan budgeting process in upcoming years, with the opportunity for volunteers to provide labor to potentially expedite the installation of improvements. Financing and implementation of improvements shall be determined in the future as impact fees are collected and analyzed to determine the availability of park funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Estimated cost</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berm trees</td>
<td>$350 each*</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$8,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berm landscaping</td>
<td>$30/ft</td>
<td>Approx. 1,650 ft.</td>
<td>$49,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs</td>
<td>$50 each</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>$0**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topsoil</td>
<td>$15/yd</td>
<td>250 yds</td>
<td>$3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass seed</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>As needed</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grills</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash cans</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic shelter (30’ X 30’)</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic tables</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballfield backstop with bases</td>
<td>$3,200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground equipment</td>
<td>$51,000*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$51,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved trail (Old Jersey Road)</td>
<td>$88.30/ft.*</td>
<td>Approx. 1,210 ft.</td>
<td>$106,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved trail (Huppert Street)</td>
<td>$88.30/ft.*</td>
<td>Approx. 4,320 ft.</td>
<td>$381,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total, all improvements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$625,099</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE STERLING PONDS PARK PLAN

WHEREAS, the Sterling Ponds Park Plan has been completed and thoroughly reviewed by the City Park and Recreation Advisory Board during regular meetings; and

WHEREAS, the plan will guide future park and recreation improvements to both Sterling Ponds Park and the Sterling Ponds Neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, community engagement was a component to this planning process, which included regular meetings with City staff, the Park and Recreation Advisory Board, and a neighborhood survey;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council does hereby adopt the Sterling Ponds Park Plan for the City of River Falls.

Dated this 11th day of February 2020.

CITY OF RIVER FALLS

______________________________
Dan Toland, Mayor

ATTEST:

______________________________
Amy White, City Clerk
TPE and the Foster Conservation Area

This document summarizes the goals and aspirations of The Prairie Enthusiasts regarding the management of the Foster Conservation Area.

The Prairie Enthusiasts understands the rarity, value, and history of the oak savanna ecosystem that still exists in the Foster Conservation Area. We want to protect our investment and prevent any degradation to the site.

History of TPE and the FCA

The St. Croix Valley chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts has managed the native oak savanna remnant in the cemetery and surrounding conservation area for over 20 years. In that time, the invasive Eastern red cedar and brush that covered the hills has been removed and a controlled burn program initiated.

Areas that were historically open landscapes with savanna or prairie communities have been revitalized, providing much needed habitat for the threatened or endangered plant species as well as the wildlife who use the site.

Today, oak savannas are among the rarest plant communities on Earth\(^1\). River Falls residents are extraordinarily lucky to have an example of this ecosystem so close.

Investment

TPE volunteers have invested 4,181 total hours or 209 hours per year since 1998 in managing the oak savanna in the Foster Conservation Area. In addition, we have conducted 10 prescribed burns.

These management hours represent almost $103,229 in volunteer time\(^2\). The prescribed burns represent an additional $20,400\(^3\).

Partnerships

TPE has worked with many local and regional organizations to accomplish our management goals. Volunteers from these organizations have helped collect and then hand-broadcast local-ecotype seed, clear trees and brush, conduct bird counts, participate in prescribed burns, and provide grants for internships and contractors.

- UW-River Falls Resource Management Club
- UW-River Falls students enrolled in the Prairie Restoration class
- St. Croix Valley Bird Club
- St. Croix Valley Master Gardeners Association
- St. Croix Oak Savanna chapter of Wild Ones
- Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT)
- Kiap TU Wish chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Wisconsin DNR

\(^1\) National Science Foundation, http://www.ecology.com/2012/09/17/american-midwest-last-oak-savanna-site/
• U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
• Tropical Wings

Adjoining Properties
TPE also manages the oak savanna/goat prairie remnant located within River Hills Park.

This site features large populations of state listed Threatened, kittentails (Bessya bullii) and state listed special concern, prairie turnip (Pediomelum esulentum).

This native oak savanna remnant is accessed by a trailhead located between 1371 and 1401 River Ridge Road (Kinnickinnic Trail #12 entrance). It can also be accessed from Glen Park by two trails on the north side of the unit.

Accreditation
In August of 2018, The Prairie Enthusiasts and The Prairie Enthusiasts Trust earned national recognition for sound finances, responsible governance, ethical conduct, lasting stewardship, commitment to Public Trust, and conservation excellence. This is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

Voluntary accreditation provides independent verification that land trusts meet the high standards for land conservation, stewardship and nonprofit management by the nationally-recognized Land Trust Alliance.

TPE joins other accredited land trusts in Wisconsin:
• Bayfield Regional Conservancy
• Caledonia Conservancy
• Door County Land Trust
• Driftless Area Land Conservancy
• Groundswell Conservancy
• Ice Age Trail Alliance
• Kettle Moraine Land Trust
• Kinnickinnic River Land Trust
• Mississippi Valley Conservancy
• Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust
• Northwoods Land Trust
• Ozaukee Washington Land Trust
• Tall Pines Conservancy
• West Wisconsin Land Trust

Management Objectives
The Prairie Enthusiasts knows the rarity, value, and history of the Foster Conservation Area. We want the residents of River Falls to recognize the ecological gem within walking distance.

To that end, we seek
• To protect, preserve, and maintain the oak savanna remnant of the Foster Conservation Area by
• Reducing the introduction of non-native and invasive plant species from surrounding areas.

• Preserving the oak savanna ecosystem by working with the City and WI DNR to obtain State Natural Area designation.

• Maintaining the ecosystem through tree and brush removal, prescribed burns, and herbicide spraying for the plants, insects, mammals, and birds that are dependent on specific plants and habitat.

• The long-term protection of the federally listed (U.S. Endangered Species Act) prairie bush clover (*Lespedeza leptostachya*) by managing and restoring its immediate prairie habitat area.

• The long-term protection on Globally Rare (GI-G3) and State Listed Species including Hill’s thistle (*Cirsium hillii*), Kittentails (*Besseya bullii*), Prairie fame flower (*Talinum rugospermum*), Timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), Northern harrier (*Circus cuaneus*), Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), Great Blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) and others.

• To foster a cooperative partnership among the City of River Falls, private landowners and private conservation organizations.

Thank you,

Evanne Hunt
Chair, St. Croix Valley chapter of
The Prairie Enthusiasts
715-381-1291
Management Plan

For

Foster Cemetery Oak Savanna

Pierce County, WI

The Prairie Enthusiasts

St. Croix Valley Chapter

2018

Prepared by: Brooke Dreshek 2018
I. PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

Property Name: Foster Hill Prairie
Property Location – County: Pierce
Property Acreage: 19 acres
Property Manager: The Prairie Enthusiasts

OWNERSHIP
Foster Conservation Area
City of River Falls
Department of Parks & Recreation
222 Lewis Street, Suite 221
River Falls, WI 54022

PRESERVATION STATUS
Foster Conservation Area is owned by the City of River Falls and has been designated as a conservation area due in large part to the steep slopes on this parcel and its being separated from the rest of the City by the Kinnickinnic River. (*Site ordinance or city council action creating the conservation area and add preservation expectations pursuant to River Falls Comprehensive Plan.*) TPE has had a verbal agreement with the City to allow some land management practices by TPE volunteers since 1998.

LOCATION
State: Wisconsin
County: Pierce
Township: River Falls
T27N R19W section 23, NW ¼

SITE SPECIFICs
Foster Hill Prairie is located an area of approximately 19 acres. First identified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) Bureau of Endangered Resources plant survey team as an area with significant rare plant populations. It was identified as an
official project area by the WIDNR in 1987. The project was proposed but not implemented, so parts of the property were subdivided and houses built. Fortunately, most of the rare plant habitat survived on steep slopes at the back of each private parcel. Most of the site has been actively managed by TPE since 1999.

Foster Hill Community Prairie is a large complex of oak savanna and dry prairie. The bedrock outcroppings on Foster Hill belong to the Prairie Du Chien group, a series of dolostones, sandy dolostones, and sandstone formed earlier in the Ordovician period in an intertidal or shallow marine environment. The bedrock is highly fractured and honeycombed with solution cavities. This bedrock is covered on the bluff top by glacial drift. The drift consists of a poorly exposed mixture of outwash sand and gravel and wind-blown loess. The outwash was most likely from the Superior Lobe. Colluvium of varying thickness occurs on the steeper slopes.

This site is significant in that it is located along the Kinnickinnic River and abuts Lake Louise in an area with several hundred acres of protected land surrounding the site. This coupled with healthy rare plant populations and ease of management makes long-term success and sustainability of this project more likely.

Current habitat types: Oak savanna and dry prairie

Rare Species: Ground Plum (*Astragalus crassicarpus*), Kittentails (*Bessya bullii*)

Primary Soils: Doretton 52.5% (very stony-Elbaville complex), Dakota 16.8% (loam, strath terrace)

Invasive Species: Crown vetch, garlic mustard, dames rocket, buckthorn, musk thistle, chicory, Canada thistle, white sweet clover, red clover, common mullein, orange daylily, Autumn olive

**LAND USE HISTORY**

Much of this site was formerly owned by the Johnson family who used it to pasture cows and horses. Lower fields were once plowed for a hemp crop but soon abandoned due to poor soil quality. The horse pasture was seeded to smooth brome but many native plants, including some threatened species have returned in the brome sod.

The hillsides were only lightly grazed and hold significant populations of prairie savanna. The Prairie Enthusiasts St. Croix Valley Chapter has been managing portions of this site since 1999. Much of the red cedar and brush that covered the hills has been removed and a controlled burn program has been initiated.
II. MANAGEMENT PLAN

GOALS

Primary

• Provide a native prairie and oak savanna community representative of historic flora and fauna to provide habitat for mammals, birds and any prairie or savanna dependent species
• Maintain and expand endangered and rare plant species
• Decrease cover of invading exotic plant species

Secondary

• Utilize the site as a seed source for expansion of TPE-managed prairie remnants and plantings on other local sites
• Preserve ecosystems for current and future generations to experience, study and enjoy

THREATS/CONCERNS

1) Continued colonization of the site by invasive non-native plant species
2) Possible concerns (not yet voiced) from adjacent landowners regarding the use of fire as a management tool
3) Development pressures from the City of River Falls
4) Difficulty in acquiring grant funding necessary for the continued work on the removal of undesirable and invasive woody species

OBJECTIVES

1) Control woody species to open overgrown prairie and oak savanna
2) Control herbaceous exotic and invasive species to open up prairie/savanna area
3) Maintain regular prescribed burns to open up prairie/savanna
4) Inventory and monitor prairie species on site
5) Provide educational opportunities
MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

MECHANICAL +/- OR HERBICIDE APPLICATION

Seasonally manage species listed below as needed. Spray species during month listed for optimal results to avoid seeds developing. Note: Always read label and follow manufactures guidelines.

**WINTER**

Buckthorn/woody invasive: *December*

Cut stump, 2 gal. Garlon 4, Barkoil red mixed in 15 gal. container using 2-quart hand sprayers

**SPRING**

Crown Vetch: *June*

1 oz. Milestone VM and surfactant per 3-gal. pack sprayer

Garlic Mustard: *June*

8-12 oz. Garlon 4 and surfactant per 3-gal. pack sprayer

Hand pull in early spring prior to seed set and if flowering; burn or bag

Dames Rocket: Hand pull in early spring and if flowering; burn or bag

Purple/White Sweet Clover: Hand pull or mow and if flowering; burn or bag

**SUMMER**

Crown Vetch: *June*

1 ox. Milestone VM and surfactant per 3-gal. pack sprayer

Dames Rocket: Hand pull or mow and if flowering; burn or bag

Purple/White Sweet Clover: Hand pull or mow and if flowering; burn or bag

**FALL**

Buckthorn: *September*

Cut stump, 2 gal. Garlon 4, 10 gal. Barkoil Red mixed in 15 gal. container using 2-quart hand sprayers
Trees/shrubs

Aspen - Girdle in the spring. Cut re-sprouts as they occur and treat with herbicide.

Box Elder - Girdle in spring or cut and herbicide treat. Cut re-sprouts as they occur.

Buckthorn - Cut in fall/winter and pile away from the prairie. Treat cut stems with herbicide (Garlon 4 or Roundup). Burn piles in the winter.

Eastern red cedar - Cut and pile away from prairie. Burn piles in the winter.

Ironwood - Thin or remove. Treat cut stems with herbicide.

Red Oak - Cut trees less than 8” diameter at base and pile away from prairie. Treat cut stems with herbicide. Burn piles in the winter.

Sumac - Cut entire clone June 1 and August 1 annually.

All cut stems should be cut within 1-3 inches of the ground for safety. Areas of dense shrubs and small trees may be ground up with a forestry mower, without application of herbicide, instead of being hand cleared. After initial clearing, a combination of mowing and burning may be used to control the woody growth until the native vegetation recovers to the point that fire alone will maintain the system. Some follow up of selective herbicide application may be needed as well.

Sweet clovers (yellow and white)

Prevent from setting seed in the second year. May be controlled by hand pulling or cutting. Plants should be pulled or cut below the lowest side branch as sweet clover flowers begin to appear (mid-June to early July for yellow sweet clover and early to late July for white sweet clover). Cutting should be reserved for large dense patches. Plants pulled or cut after late July should be removed and composted. Fire often stimulates germination of dormant sweet clover seed, resulting in dense patches of first-year (non-flowering) plants. Locating these patches during the growing season after a burn helps in assessing how much work will be needed the following year.

Canada thistle

Small patches or isolated plants can be hand pulled. More established beds will be mowed or treated with herbicide (Milestone) before seed sets.
Non-native grass

Non-native cool-season grasses are generally readily suppressed by frequent spring fire. If they continue to persist, an occasional early May burn may be very helpful (see prescribed burns below).

Additional Invasive Species

Highly aggressive plants such as spotted knapweed, wild parsnip and leafy spurge should be routinely looked for. When found will be hand pulled or selectively treated with an herbicide, following label instructions, that is appropriate for the species and setting.

Prescribed burns

South and west facing slopes can be burned in early spring (mid March to early April). Late fall burns may also be worth experimenting with. Because of the potential negative impacts that late-spring burning may have on some early-blooming native plants and some insects, it should be used more cautiously than early spring burns. Its use should be limited to specific management needs such as suppressing undesirable species. Only temporary mowed, raked, or burned breaks should be placed across the higher quality remnant sod.

INVENTORY/MONITORING

These actions will be undertaken as time and resources permit.

1) Compile a plant species list. Survey visits should be spread out over the growing season and repeated over several years. For a species list, see fig. X
2) Annually search for aggressive non-native plants, both those currently known to be present and those that may yet arrive, such as leafy spurge and crown vetch.

FACILITIES

There is a public walking easement that occurs through parts of the site. No formal parking area has been established.
RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS

The Foster Conservation Area and the Foster Cemetery are open to the public.

Access to the Foster Hill Community Prairie will be limited to foot travel and low impact activities as noted below. High impact activities are prohibited.

1) Low Impact Activities

- Hiking
- Wildlife viewing/appreciation
- Nature study/photography
- Research, but by permit only (see below)
- Bow hunting of white-tailed deer (see below)
- Seed/nut/fruit collecting by TPE for use in off-site conservation projects will be limited and tightly regulated

2) High Impact Activities

- Vehicles (including bicycles), except to carry out approved management activities and to remove harvested deer
- Camping or picnic fires
- Pets off leash
- Horseback riding
- Collection of flowers, plants, rocks, or any other part of the natural landscape (except seeds as noted under permitted uses)
- Trapping (except as a management tool when necessary)

Additional restrictions may be imposed by The Prairie Enthusiasts to preserve the natural values associated with the Property.

Hunting will be tightly regulated to enhance the hunting experience and to minimize conflicts among users. Permits may be issued following a plan approved by The Prairie Enthusiasts in conjunction with the WIDNR Department's Wildlife Management program.

The Property may be used by the public for research with the written consent of The Prairie Enthusiasts. Researchers shall possess a valid research permit issued by The Prairie Enthusiasts while on the property.
With the approval of The Prairie Enthusiasts, the Property Manager may authorize additional public use of the premises provided that such uses are not inconsistent with this land management plan, or written restrictions by The Prairie Enthusiasts.

III. MANAGEMENT RECORDS

All management activities will be recorded and kept by the Prairie Enthusiasts St. Croix Valley Chapter Land Management Committee. All activity will be marked by location on a base map of site. Wayne Huhnke, Chair of Land Management Committee will keep records.

Questions should be directed to:

Wayne Huhnke
235 State Road 65
River Falls, WI 54022
715-425-7605
IV. APPROVALS

________________________ is hereby designated as the site steward of the Foster Hill Community Prairie. The steward will keep records of all management activities (i.e., what, where, when, and how). A site base map should be used to show where an activity was conducted. All management activities must be reported to the steward, or other appropriate TPE representative, for record keeping.

By: __________________________________________
    Evanne Hunt, Chair

Title: Saint Croix Valley Chapter
Date: ___________________________

TPE LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

By: __________________________________________
    Mark Martin

Title: Committee Chair
Date: ___________________________

THE PRAIRIE ENTHUSIASTS

By: __________________________________________
    Scott Fulton

Title: President
Date: ___________________________

LAND OWNER

By: __________________________________________
    (name)

Date: ___________________________
V. ATTACHMENTS

Photos

Culvers Root

Caddisfly Nymph

Turks Cap Lilly

Lists of species present
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Foster Prairie</th>
<th>Community Type:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T27N R19W</td>
<td>AT: Alder Thicket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: River Falls, WI</td>
<td>BF: Boreal Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size: 19 Acres</td>
<td>CG: Cedar Glade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Date: Summer 2018</td>
<td>FN: Fen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Type: Prairie/Oak Savanna</td>
<td>ND: Northern Dry Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant Species: Dogbane, Canada Goldenrod</td>
<td>NW: Northern Wet Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management: The Prairie Enthusiasts</td>
<td>OB: Oak Barrens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OO: Oak Openings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PB: Pine Barrens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD: Dry Prairie</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Code</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PM 1</td>
<td>Achillea millefolium</td>
<td>Common Yarrow</td>
<td>July-Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PB 6</td>
<td>Agastache foeniculum</td>
<td>Anise Hyssop</td>
<td>Aug.-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD 9</td>
<td>Amorpha canescens Pursh.</td>
<td>Lead plant</td>
<td>June-July</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ND 2</td>
<td>Apocynum androsaemifolium</td>
<td>Spreading Dogbane</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWM 1</td>
<td>Asclepias syriaca</td>
<td>Common Milkweed</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FN 5</td>
<td>Asclepias incarnata</td>
<td>Swamp Milkweed</td>
<td>July-Aug.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OO Naturalized</td>
<td>Asparagus officinalis</td>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PDM Endangered (10)</td>
<td>Astragalus cassarapis</td>
<td>Ground Plum</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>OO Threatened (9)</td>
<td>Betseya bullii</td>
<td>Kittentails</td>
<td>May-June</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invasive</td>
<td>Carduus acanthoides</td>
<td>Musk Thistle</td>
<td>July-Oct.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>invasive</td>
<td>Cichorium intybus</td>
<td>Chicory</td>
<td>July-Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>invasive</td>
<td>Cirsium arvense</td>
<td>Canada Thistle</td>
<td>June-Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDM Threatened (7)</td>
<td>Cirsium hillii</td>
<td>Hills Thistle</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
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<tr>
<td>invasive</td>
<td>Coronilla varia</td>
<td>Crown Vetch</td>
<td>May-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- 7</td>
<td>Delphinium carolinianum</td>
<td>White Larkspur</td>
<td>June-July</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDM 6</td>
<td>Desmodium glutinosum</td>
<td>Cluster Leaved Tick-Trefoil</td>
<td>July-Sept.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- 7</td>
<td>Echinacea bicornispina</td>
<td>False Rue-Anemonie</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>NW 3</td>
<td>Equisetum fluviatile</td>
<td>Swamp Horsetail</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SC 2</td>
<td>Erigeron philadelphicus</td>
<td>Common Fleabane</td>
<td>May-Aug.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW 5</td>
<td>Fragaria versicolor</td>
<td>Woodland Strawberry</td>
<td>April-June</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FN 5</td>
<td>Garrya boreale</td>
<td>Bedstraw</td>
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<td>Common Name</td>
<td>Bloom Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>Forbs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDM</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geranium maculatum</td>
<td>Wild Geranium</td>
<td>April-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Geum triflorum</td>
<td>Prairie Smoke</td>
<td>April-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Hesperis matronalis</td>
<td>Dames Rocket</td>
<td>May-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SM</td>
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<td>Hydrophyllum virginianum</td>
<td>Virginian Waterleaf</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Laportea canadensis</td>
<td>Wood Nettle</td>
<td>May-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lespedeza leptostachya</td>
<td>Prairie Bushclover</td>
<td>July-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OB</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lithospermum canescens</td>
<td>Hoary Puccoon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Mellilotus officinalis</td>
<td>White Sweet Clover</td>
<td>May-Sept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monarda fistulosa</td>
<td>Wild Bergamot</td>
<td>July-Sept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Naturalized</td>
<td>Nepeta cataria</td>
<td>Catnip</td>
<td>July-Aug.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Osaia stricta</td>
<td>Wood Sorrel</td>
<td>June-Oct.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Packera platensis</td>
<td>Prairie Ragwort</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM</td>
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<td>Penstemon digitalis</td>
<td>Tall Penstemon</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Potentilla simplex</td>
<td>Common Cinquefoil</td>
<td>April-June</td>
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<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prunella vulgaris</td>
<td>Heal-All</td>
<td>June-Oct.</td>
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<td>SM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sanguinaria canadensis</td>
<td>Blood Root</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Solidago canadensis</td>
<td>Canada Goldenrod</td>
<td>July-Oct.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Solidago speciosa</td>
<td>Showy goldenrod</td>
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<td>Taraxacum officinale</td>
<td>Common Dandelion</td>
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<tr>
<td>FN</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thalictrum dasycarpum</td>
<td>Tail Meadow Rue</td>
<td>June-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Prairie Buttercup</td>
<td>Early Meadow Rue</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Toaxicotendron rydbergii</td>
<td>Poison Ivy</td>
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<td>Tragopogon dubius</td>
<td>Goats Beard</td>
<td>May-July</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Trifolium pratense</td>
<td>Red Clover</td>
<td>May-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDM</td>
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<td>Wild Coffee</td>
<td>May-June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uvularia grandiflora</td>
<td>Large flower bell wort</td>
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<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Verbascum thapsus</td>
<td>Common Mullein</td>
<td>June-Sept.</td>
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<td>PWM</td>
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<td>Veronicastrum virginicum</td>
<td>Culvers Root</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Invasive</td>
<td>Hemenocallis fulva</td>
<td>Orange Daylily</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
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<td>SW</td>
<td>Vitis riparia</td>
<td>River Bank Grape</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Helianthus belianthoides</td>
<td>False Sunflower</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tradescantia ohiensis</td>
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<th>Community Code</th>
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<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
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<td>Rudabeckia hirta</td>
<td>Black Eyed Susan</td>
<td>June-Oct.</td>
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<td>Grasses/Sedges</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Carex Sprengelii</td>
<td>Sprengel's Sedge</td>
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<td>Adiantum pedatum</td>
<td>Maidenhair Fern</td>
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<td>Trees/Shrubs</td>
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<td>Rhamnus cathartica</td>
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<td>Elaeagnus umbellata</td>
<td>Autumn Olive</td>
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<td>Quercus macrocarpa</td>
<td>Burr Oak</td>
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<td>Quercus rubra</td>
<td>Red Oak</td>
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<td>Xanthoxylum americanum</td>
<td>Northern Prickley-Ash</td>
<td>April-May</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Ash</td>
<td>Smooth Sumac</td>
<td>June-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Birch</td>
<td>Cedar</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>American Basswood</td>
<td>Chestnut</td>
<td>June-Aug.</td>
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TPE - Foster Management Plan
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fungi</th>
<th>Species</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cantharellus</td>
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<td>Golden Chanterelle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ganoderma</td>
<td>applanatum</td>
<td>Ganoderma applanatum</td>
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<td>Russula</td>
<td>emetica</td>
<td>Fetid Russula</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Species</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anas</td>
<td>platyrhynchos</td>
<td>Mallard Duck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Odocoileus</td>
<td>virginianus</td>
<td>White Tail Deer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passerina</td>
<td>cyanea</td>
<td>Indigo Bunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plathemis</td>
<td>lydia</td>
<td>Common Whitetail Skimmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tricoptera</td>
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<td>Caddisfly</td>
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</table>
Timeline of Foster

1970s -- University of Wisconsin River Falls Botany professor Jim Richardson uses site for Botany classes and many site species records of rare plants are filed with Wisconsin DNR.

1986 -- Dr. Richardson files Site survey to DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources detailing locations of rare plants around Foster Hill especially location of the federally listed plant Lespedeza leptostachya, or Prairie Bush Clover

1987 -- Ms. Signe Holtz, Dr. Richardson and Randy Hoffman (from DNR BER), Begin working with the congregation of Trinity Episcopal Church, to clear brush on the site.

      May 24, 1987 -- Church holds brush-clearing workday.

      Members of the congregation; Kirby Symes, Charles White, Lowell Norden Flossie Milbrath, and Reverend Don Turner; along with Dr. Richardson, Randy Hoffman and Signe Holtz, cut large Red Cedars and other brush off of the high quality prairie that is apparent on the site.

      June 1987 -- Five-year management plan is written by Signe Holtz and submitted to guide the Church in management of the vegetation at the Cemetery.

1989 -- Emmet Judziewicz surveys entire Foster Hill area for rare and endangered vascular plants.

      September 29 1989 report entitled "Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Vascular Plants in the Kinnickinnic River valley, Pierce Co., Wisconsin" is filed with the Bureau of Endangered Resources. Within the plan a 100-acre project area is outlined that would protect 12 listed plant species.

1991 -- David Kopitzke of BER contacts Trinity Episcopal Church about management of site especially for the Prairie bush clover. With the help of the Scientific and Natural Areas crew several large cedars are cleared from site.

1998 -- West Central Wisconsin Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts contacts Trinity Episcopal Church and the owner of the land, The Diocese of Eau Claire, about taking on management of the site. Permission is granted and a management plan for the site is written and approved by church and diocese.

      May 23 1998 TPE hold first work party at site.

2000 -- TPE conducts monthly work parties and yearly controlled burns

2001 -- Diocese donates 4acre-cemetery parcel to the City of River Falls

2002 -- City of River Falls purchases two adjoining parcels of land from the Johnson Family Trust, a 16.5 acre parcel and a 3.9 acre parcel. Site total acreage now at about 25 acres.

      City designates entire area as a "Conservation Park"

      TPE and local citizens restore some gravestones and remove old fences.

2003 to present TPE continues to manage site with monthly work parties and annual controlled burns.
Maps

Pre-settlement vegetation map
Plat map (w/site delineated)
Aerial and trail photo map
Topography map
Invasive crown vetch map
Soils map