

Southeastern Wisconsin **Regional Planning Commission**



Natural Areas Planning in Southeastern Wisconsin: A Regional and County Perspective

American Planning Association Conference

September 21, 2023

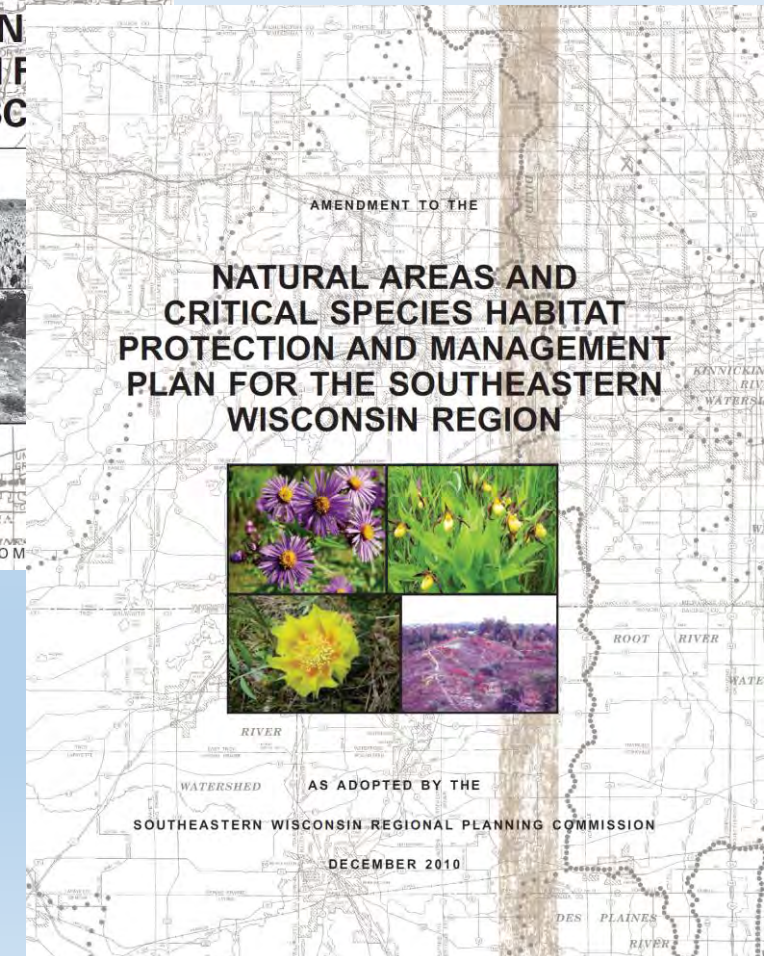
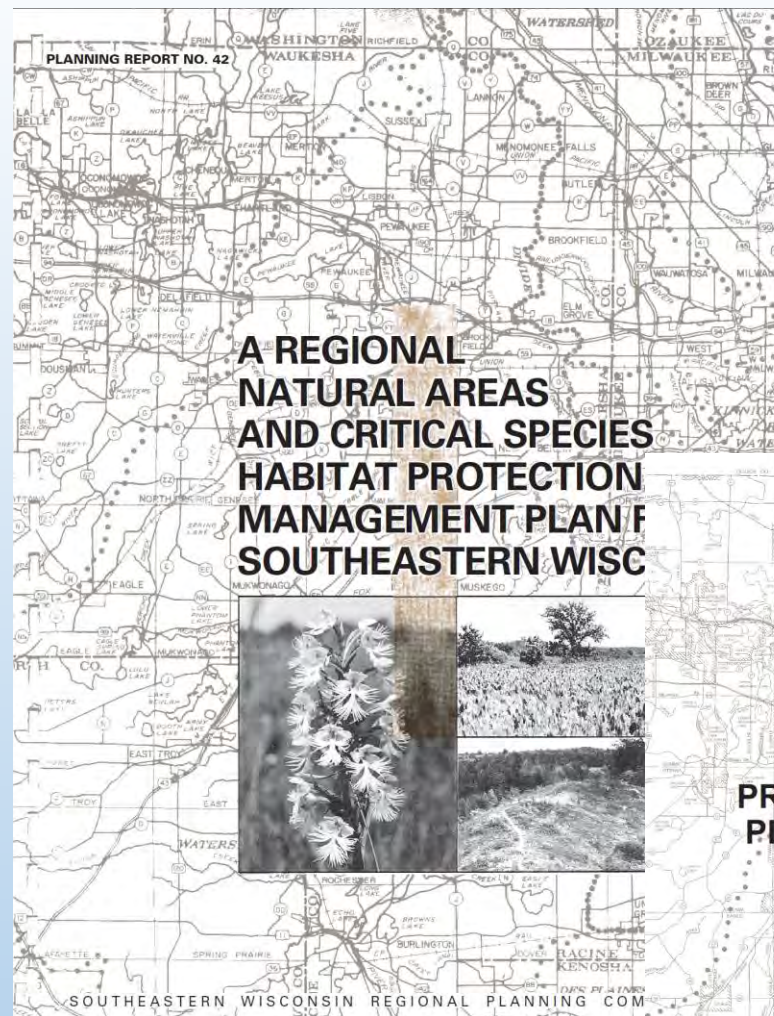


Brian Russart
Natural Areas Supervisor
Milwaukee County Parks

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Chief Biologist
SEWRPC

History

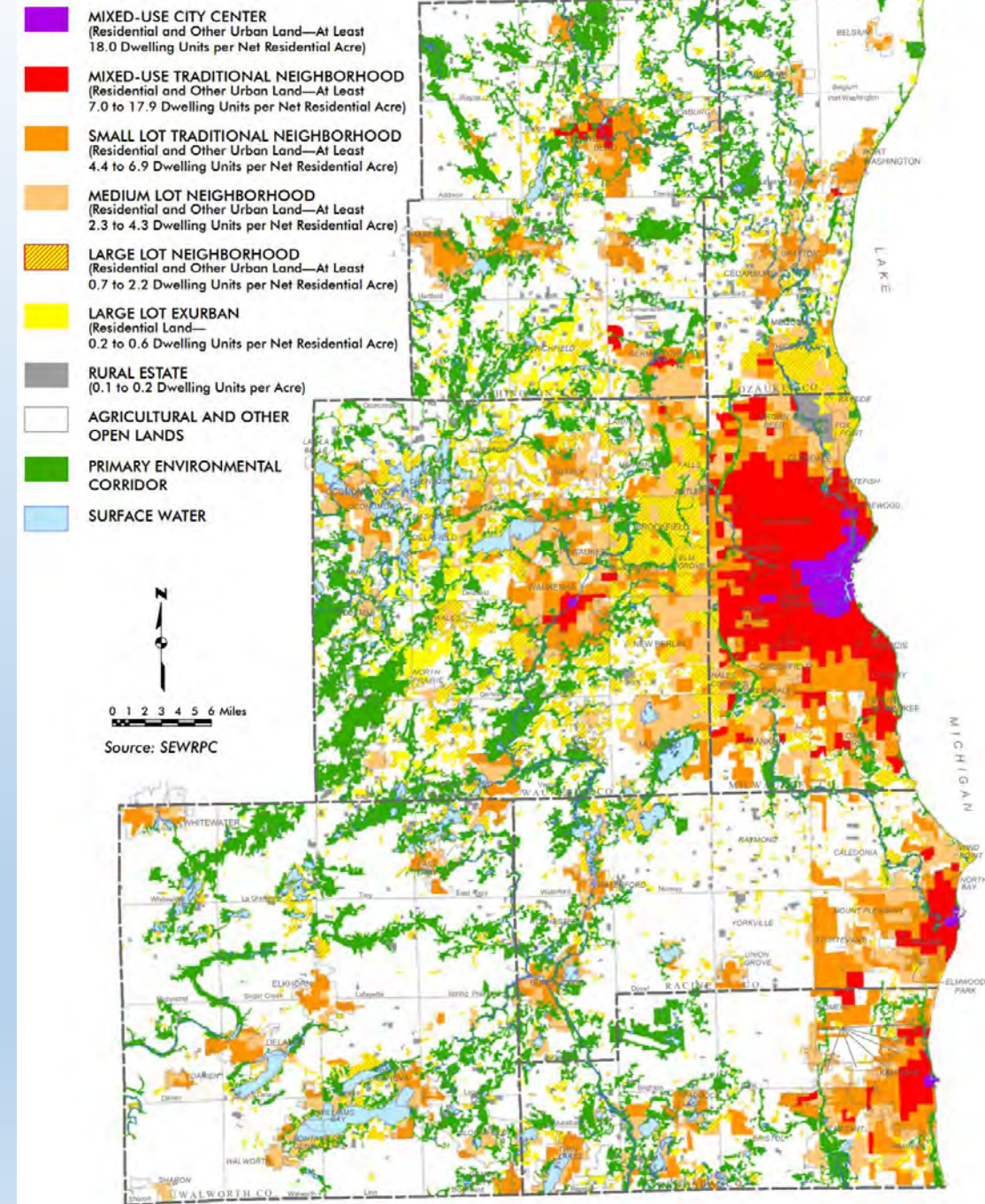
- Planning effort initiated in 1987
 - Requested by Milwaukee County, followed by remaining 6 counties.
- Planning Report (PR) No. 42 adopted in 1997
- Amendment to PR 42 adopted in 2010
- Update--initiated in 2019, with target publication date between 2023-2024



Natural Areas Plan

Objectives

- Maintain the integrity of the remaining biodiversity of the region
- Preserve and protect the remaining significant geological and archeological sites of the Region

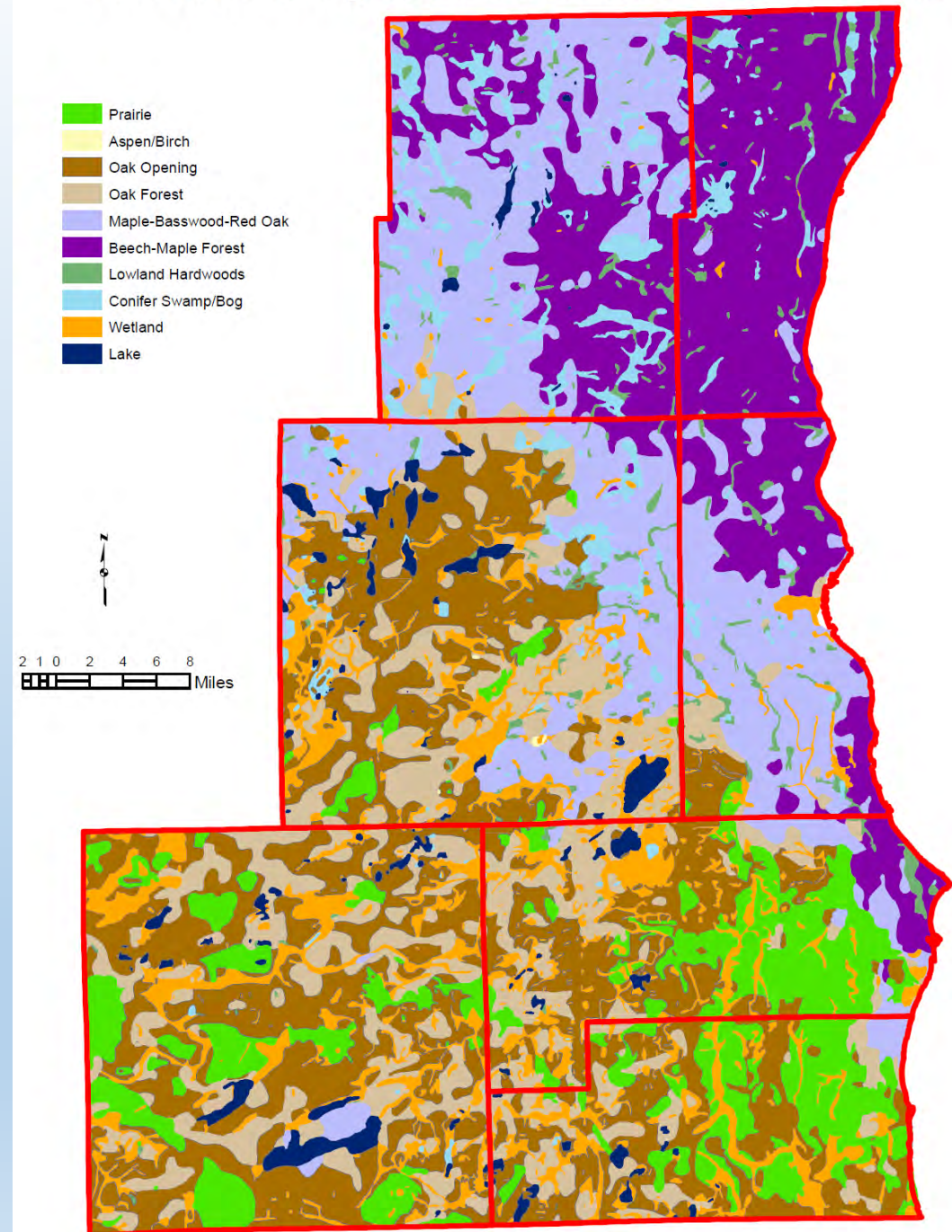


Natural Areas Plan

➤ Objectives

- Maintain the integrity of the remaining biodiversity of the region

Presettlement Vegetation of Southeastern Wisconsin - 1836

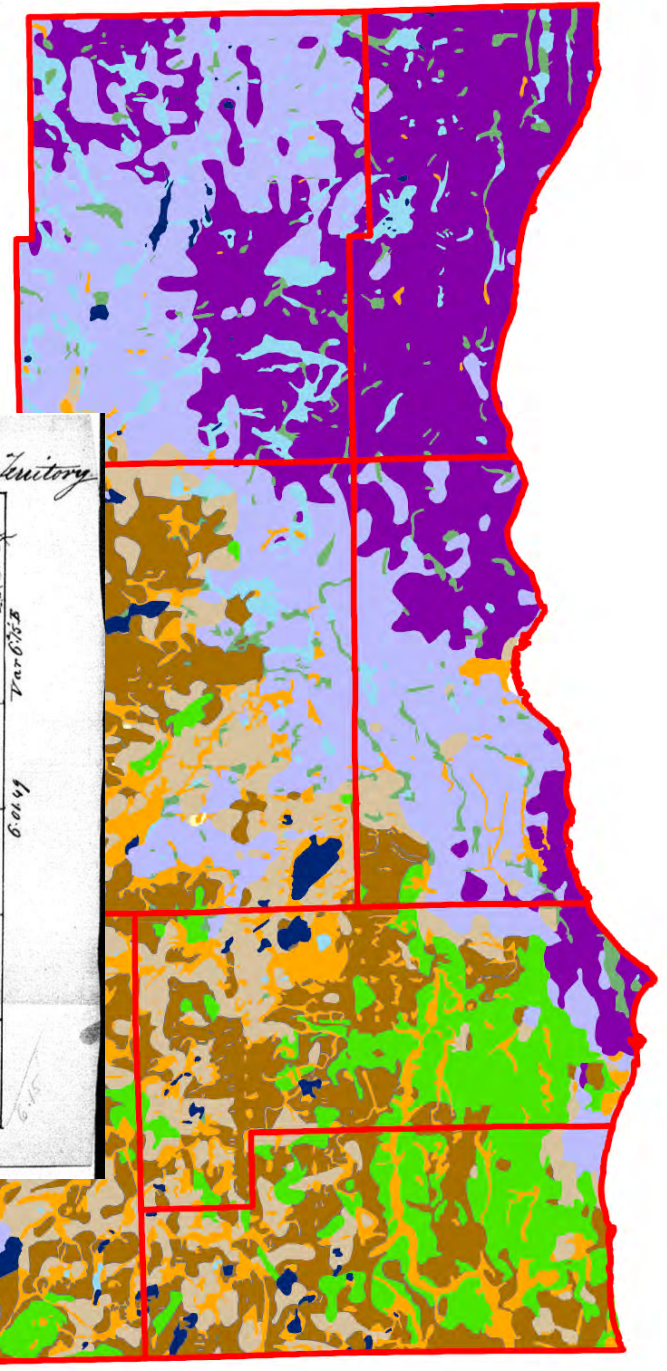
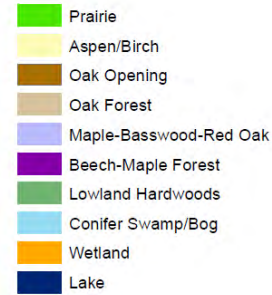


Natural Areas Plan

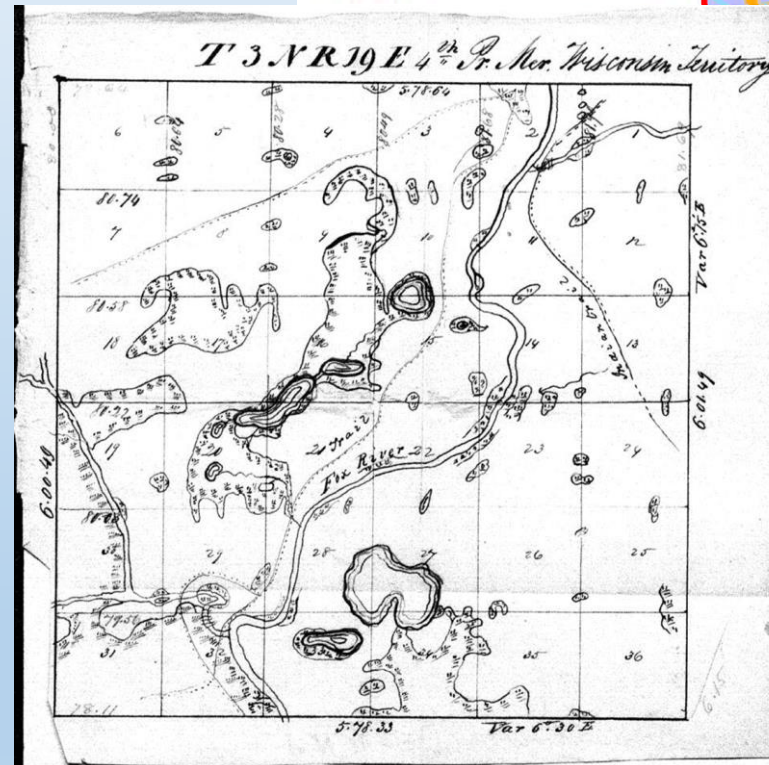
Presettlement Vegetation of Southeastern Wisconsin - 1836

Objectives

- Maintain the integrity of the remaining biodiversity of the region



South Boundary of Township No. 4 North.		Range No. 19 East, 4th Meridian. m	
	Var 6° 46' E		
Start on South Side of Section 36.		Start on South Side Section 35	
.50 Lean Marsh		29.12 To left Bank of Fox River & set Meander post	
8.00 Enter another marsh		Aspen 10 S 44 E 1.33	
16.00 Leave same		H. Oak 12 N 36 E 2.46	
27.92 H. Oak 12			
35.00 Enter Marsh		31.95 Cross River on Sec 4 set Meander post on right bank	
40.00 Set 1/4 Section post in Marsh		H. Oak 14 N 70 W 2.69	
H. Oak 16 N 87 E 6.52		do 13 S 82 W 3.39	
do 18 N 88 W 7.14		40.00 Set 1/4 Section post	
51.00 Lean Marsh		Blue Oak 8 N 54 E 82	
69.00 Enter another marsh		do 7 N 47 W 73	
75.00 Leave same		43.47 Run Oak 12	
81.00 Set post cor Sections 35 & 36		80.00 Set post cor Sections 34 & 35	
H. Oak 12 N 43 E 1.19		Blue Oak 8 N 33 E 3.06	
do 14 N 27 W 66		H. Oak 18 N 75 W 1.22	
Land broken, 2 ^d rate		Land broken 2 ^d rate	
413 Bur Oak		413 Bur Oak	



Natural Areas

➤ What is a Natural Area (NA)?

- Intact native plant and animal communities
- Three classes
 - NA-1, Statewide significance
 - NA-2, County or Regional Significance
 - NA-3, Local Significance
- NA Definition: Natural areas are defined as tracts of land or water so little modified by human activity, or which have sufficiently recovered from the effects of such activity, that they contain intact native plant and animal communities believed to be representative of the pre-European-settlement landscape.



Critical Species Habitat Sites

- What are Critical Species Habitat (CSH) sites?
 - Areas that support Federally or State-listed Special Concern, Threatened, and/or Endangered plant or animal species
 - Some Natural Areas are also Critical Species Habitat Sites, but not all
 - CSH Definition: Critical species habitats are defined as tracts of land or water which support endangered, threatened, or rare plant or animal species.



Plan Recommendations

➤ Acquisition priorities for Natural Areas and CSH sites

1. NA-1
2. NA-2 and NA-3 within PEC, containing rare species, or already partially protected
3. CSH sites within PEC or already partially protected
4. Reestablish large grassland and forest interior sites



➤ How does this relate to Environmental Corridors (EC)?

(<https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/LandUse/EnvironmentalCorridors.htm>.)

- Defined by a point scale based on natural resource features
- EC can be defined, in part, by NA or CSH.
- Corridor is considered in Natural Area and CSH acquisition priority



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(<https://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/LandUse/EnvironmentalCorridors.htm>.)

Joel Dietl, SEWRPC Chief Land Use Planner, "history of environmental corridors"


(<https://youtu.be/27OkV75a0kM>)


Christopher Jors, SEWRPC Principal Specialist-Biologist, "how to prepare for and conduct an environmental corridor delineation"

(<https://youtu.be/V9iyEoUDYvQ>)

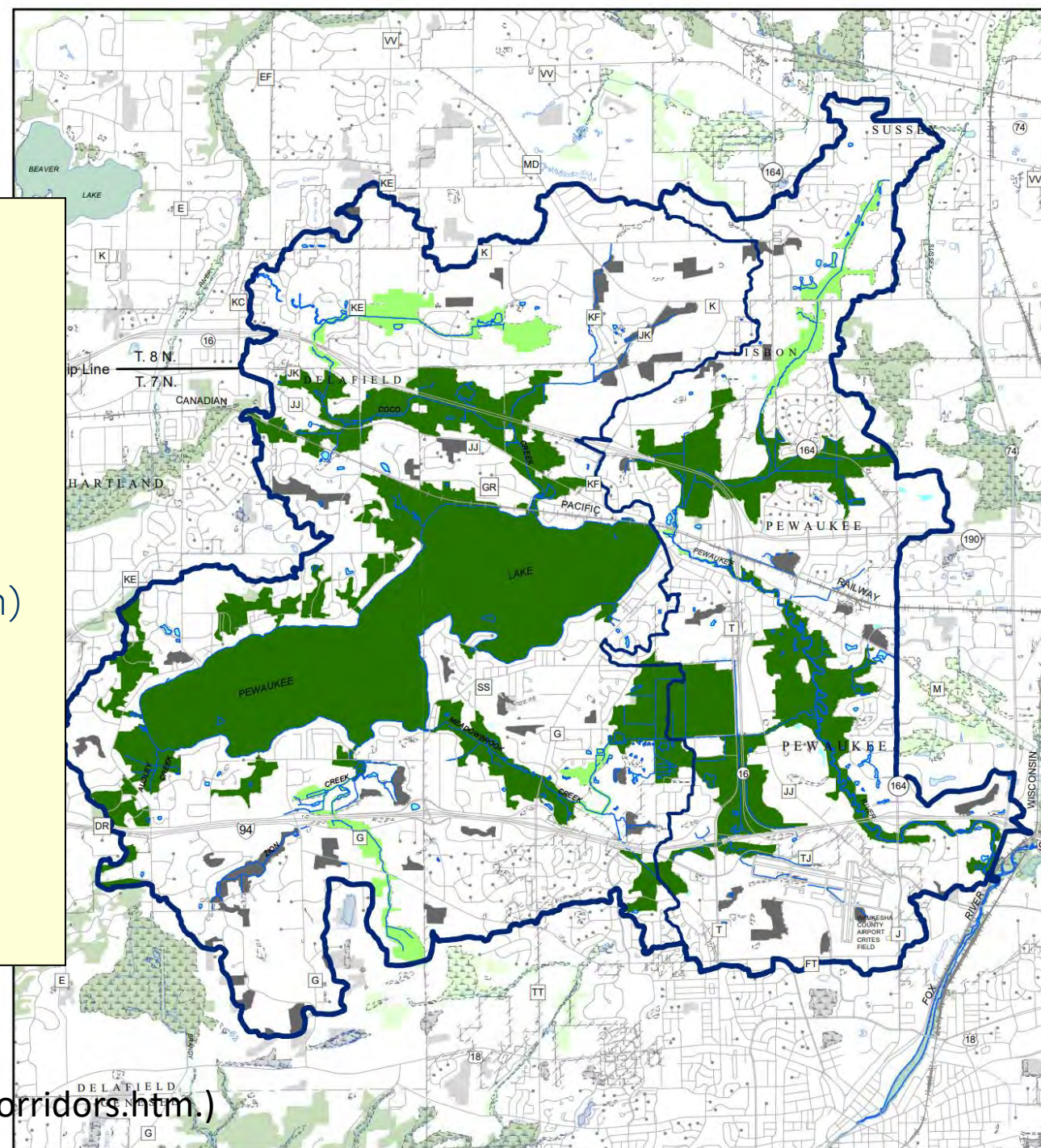


Environmental Corridors

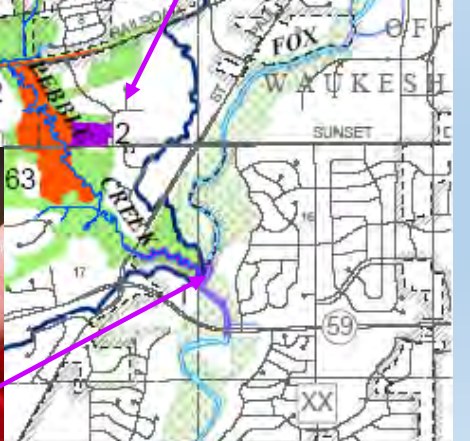
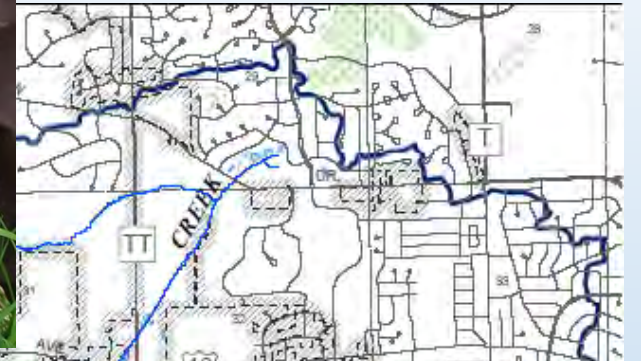
 Primary environmental corridors:
200 feet wide, 2 miles long, and 400 acres

 Secondary environmental corridors:
1 mile long and 100 acres (no minimum width)

 Isolated natural resource areas:
200 feet wide and 5 acres



Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat



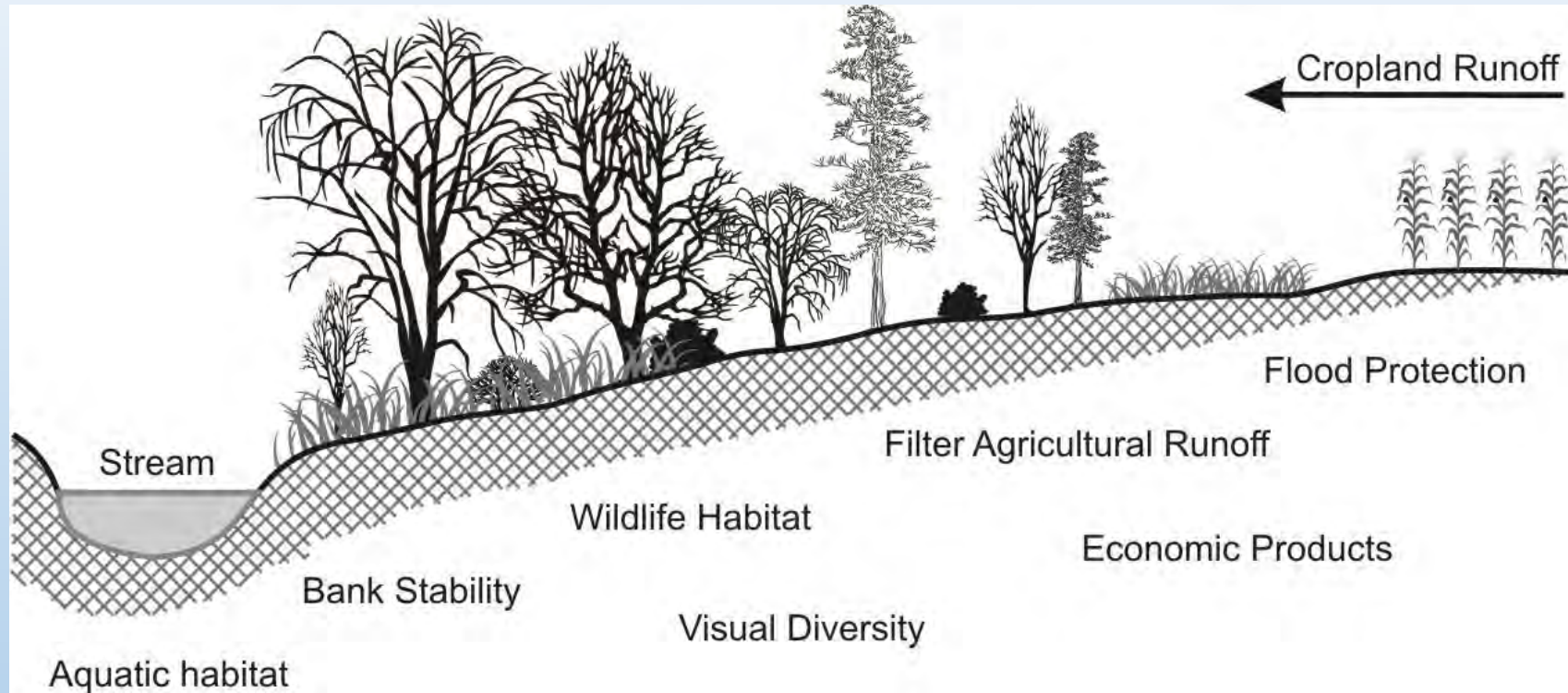
Community Assistance Planning Report No. 284 Waukesha County Wisconsin

Pebble Creek Watershed Protection Plan

Part One

Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Resource Protection of NAs and CSHs combined with Environmental Corridors provides framework for climate resilience



- Climate change impacts
- Landscape connectivity
- Natural areas within corridors
- Corridors buffer NA and CSH Sites
- Carbon sequestration and storage
- Prioritize protection of biodiverse and connected landscapes

Implementation



➤ State

- SSA extension reviews
- Natural Heritage inventory database
- State Natural Areas Plan

➤ Regional/County

- County Adoption & ordinance
- Comprehensive plans
- Corridors
- County Park and Open Space plans
- Transportation plans
- Lake and River Watershed plans

➤ Non-Governmental

- Land Trusts/Conservancy
- Lake Association/River group
- Easements, purchase, restoration, and management

➤ Municipal

- Local County Park and Open Space plans
- SSA amendment reviews
- Local ordinance

NA Summary by County

	1997	2010	2024	Change
Kenosha	38	41	26	-15
Milwaukee	43	55	53	-2
Ozaukee	48	50	52	+2
Racine	53	55	46	-9
Walworth	74	82	83	+1
Washington	90	93	95	+2
Waukesha	101	118	122	+4
	447	494	477	-17

CSH Sites by County

	1997	2010	2024	Change
Kenosha	18	71	70	-1
Milwaukee	13	55	124	+69
Ozaukee	7	17	31	+14
Racine	33	37	36	-1
Walworth	23	39	37	-2
Washington	13	21	23	+2
Waukehsa	38	71	62	-9
	145	311	366	+55

Common problems

- Lack of management and invasive species
- Clear cutting
- Development

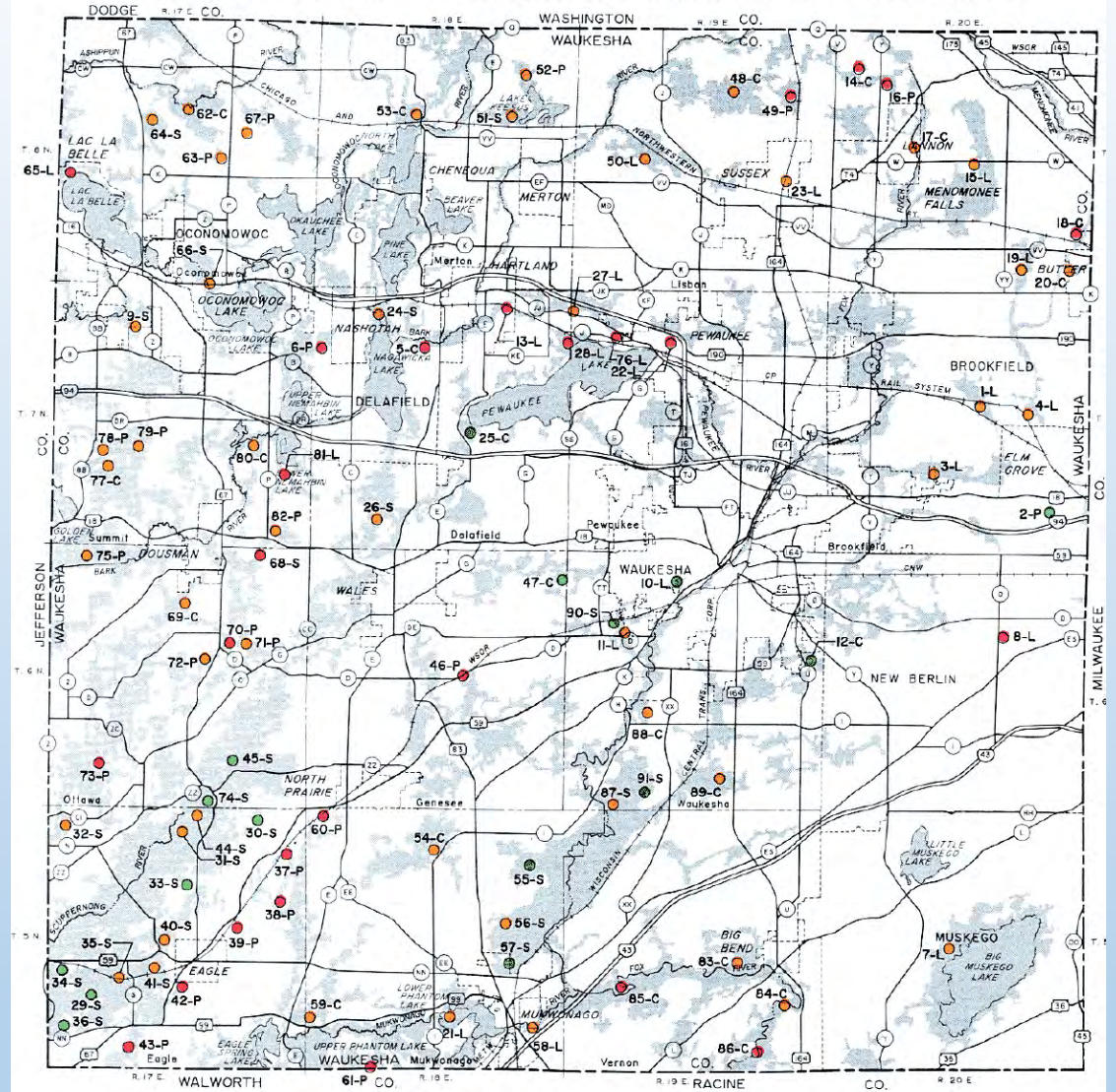


Site Profile Updates

Map X
Franklin Woods Natural Area Site No. 19 (NA-3)



RECOMMENDED ACQUISITION AND OWNERSHIP OF SELECTED NATURAL AREA SITES OF COUNTYWIDE OR REGIONAL (NA-2) OR LOCAL (NA-3) SIGNIFICANCE IN WAUKESHA COUNTY



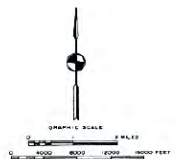
LEGEND

NATURAL AREA SITES

- NA-2 OR NA-3 SITE ALREADY FULLY UNDER PROTECTIVE OWNERSHIP (16)
- NA-2 OR NA-3 SITE PARTIALLY UNDER PROTECTIVE OWNERSHIP RECOMMENDED TO BE EXPANDED (49)
- NA-2 OR NA-3 SITE RECOMMENDED TO BE ACQUIRED FOR PROTECTIVE OWNERSHIP (26)

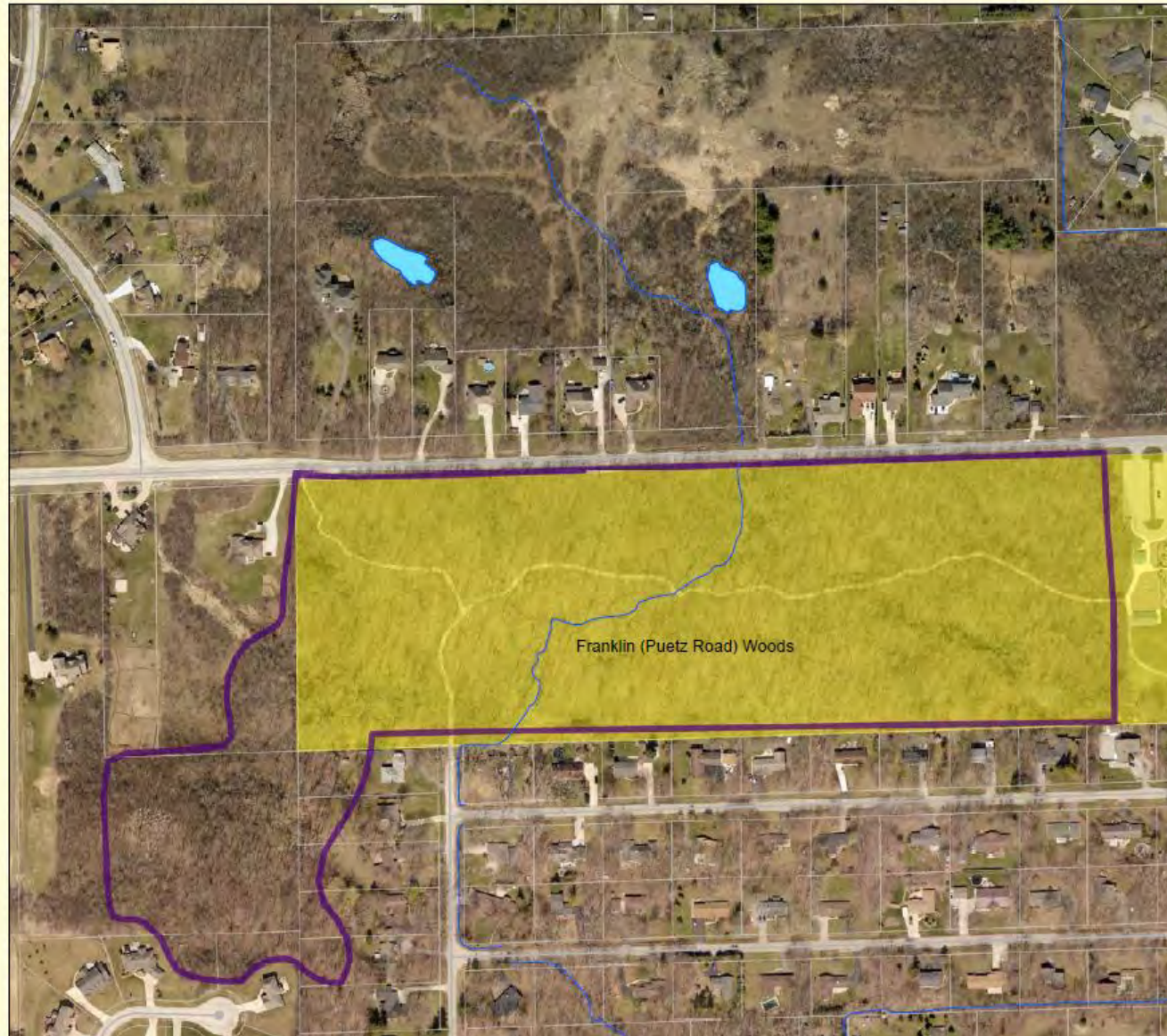
RECOMMENDED OWNERSHIP

- S STATE GOVERNMENT (26)
- C COUNTY GOVERNMENT (22)
- L LOCAL GOVERNMENT (20)
- P PRIVATE CONSERVANCY ORGANIZATION (23)
- 23 REFERENCE NUMBER (SEE TABLE 118)
- PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS



Site Profile Updates

Map X
Franklin Woods Natural Area Site No. 19 (NA-3)



Franklin (Puetz Road) Woods: Natural Area of Local Significance (NA-3)

Level of Protection: **Medium (Conservation Ownership)**

Level of Threat: **Medium (Invasive Species)**

Size	34 Acres
Ownership	City of Franklin / Private
Site Management Plan	No
Number of Native Plant Species	127
Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern Species	Yes, Plant and Animal

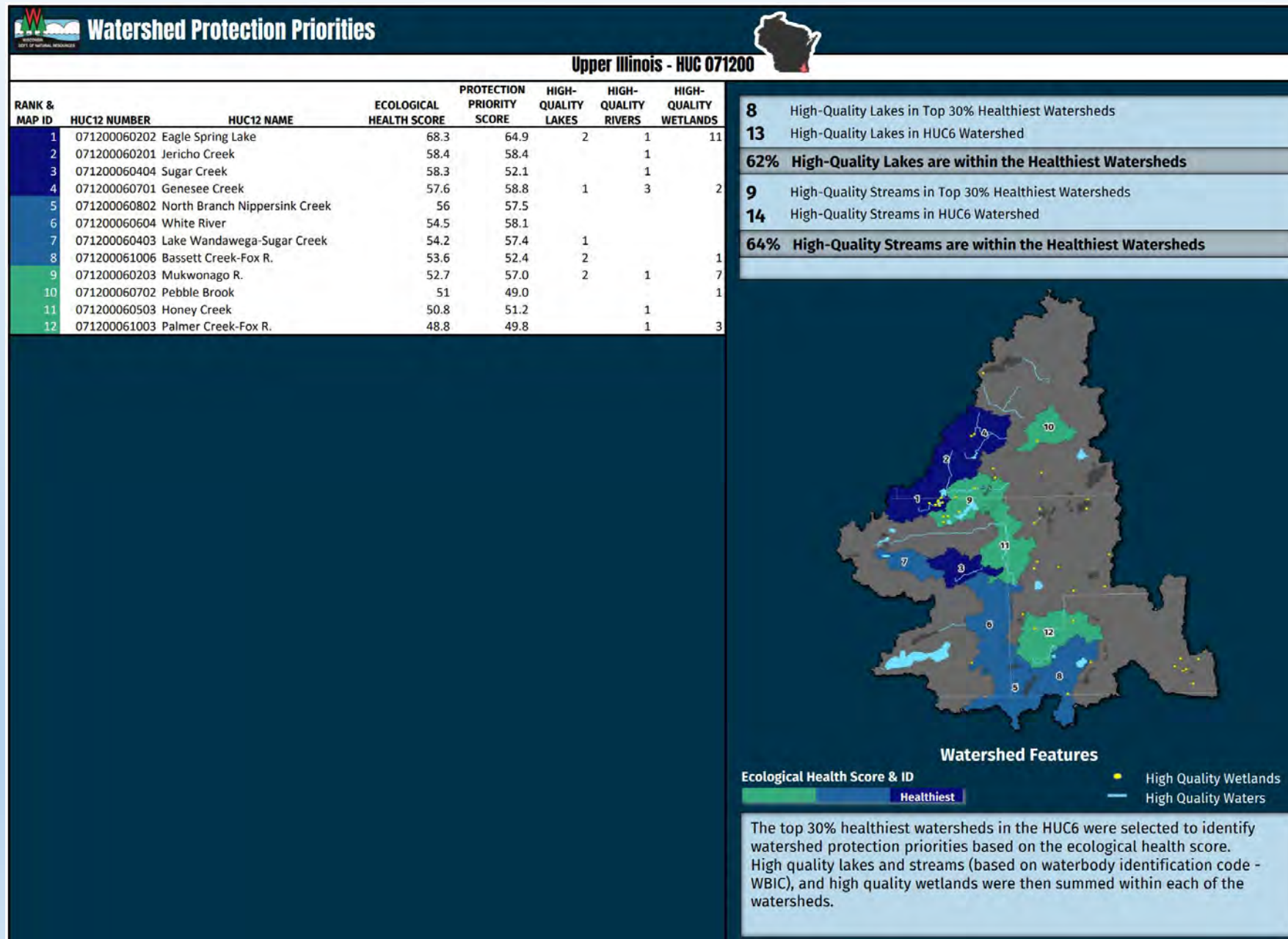
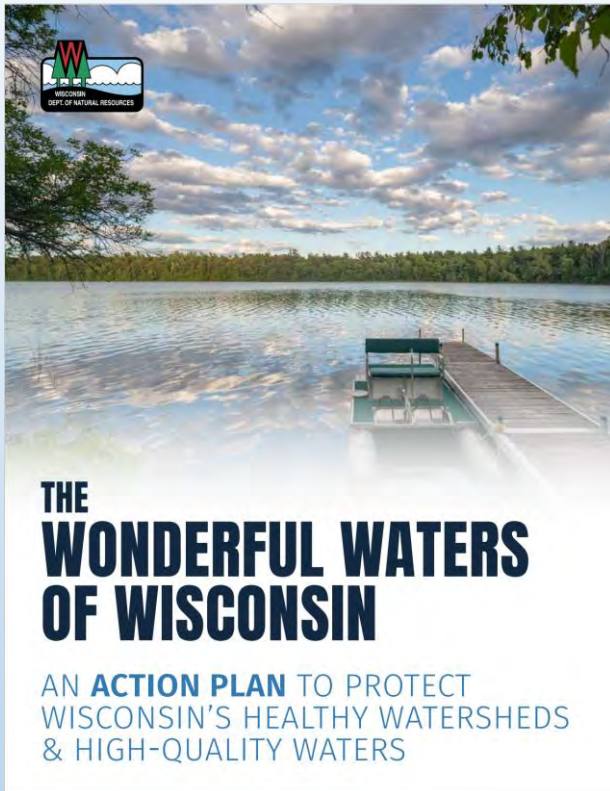
Red Oak-red maple dry-mesic forest and hardwood swamp are both present within Franklin Woods. The woods support impressive mature red oaks, spring ephemeral wildflowers, and rare plants and animals. Spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*), false mermaid (*Eloerkea proserpinacoides*), prairie trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*), and blue wood violet (*Viola sororia*) are particularly abundant among the spring flora.

Swamp portions of Franklin Woods have been hit particularly hard by ash die-off caused by the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*). Areas of the canopy have been opened substantially. In addition, lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), a particularly aggressive invasive species, was detected by SEWRPC staff along Puetz road immediately adjacent to the woods, and other potential invasive species (e.g. wintercreeper, *Euonymus fortunei*) are being introduced through the dumping of yard waste from adjacent properties along the southern boundary of the woods.

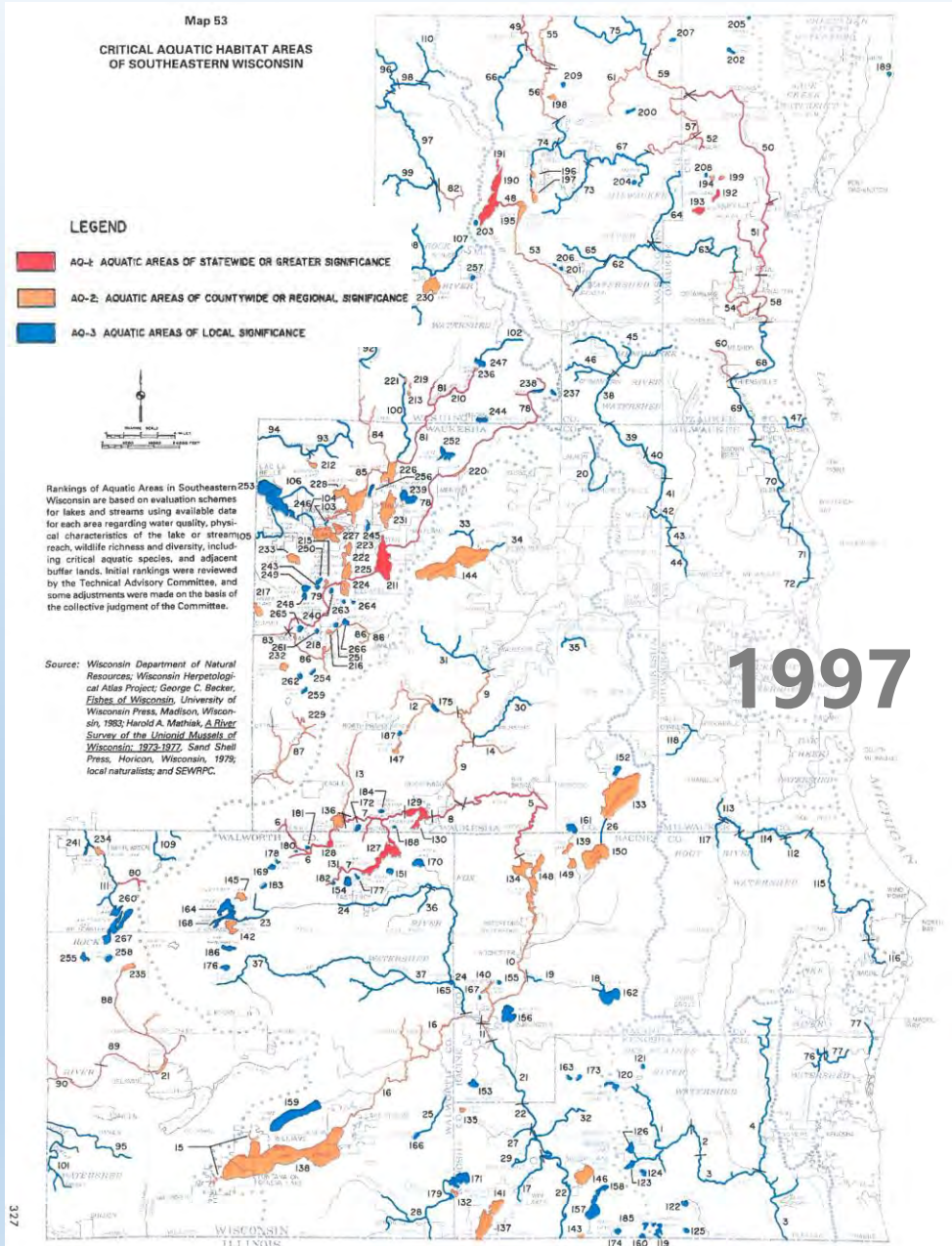
Replacement of dead ash in the existing woods with other swamp hardwoods like swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) and silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) would mitigate some of the impacts of emerald ash borer. Acquisition and afforestation of agricultural lands to the west of woods would help to buffer the core remnant natural community. Also, much of the residential area immediately to the south and northwest of Franklin Woods was built in what was historically a larger forested tract. Thus, the effective size of the woods for wildlife would be enhanced by the maintenance of existing mature trees and utilization of native plants for landscaping on those residential properties.



Aquatic Assessment scheme update



Aquatic Assessment scheme update



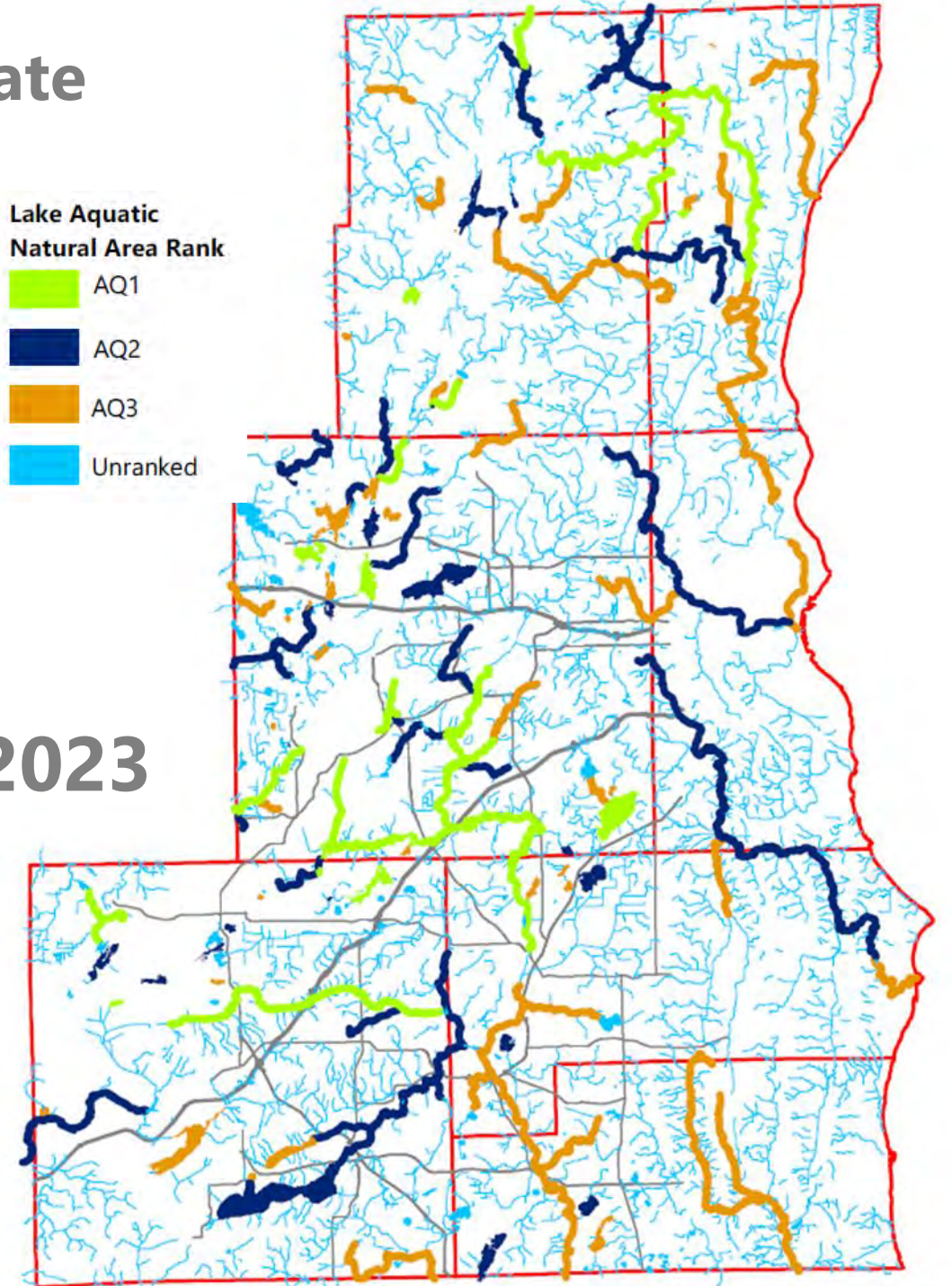
Stream Aquatic Natural Area Rank



Lake Aquatic Natural Area Rank



2023



Thank You

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