

Natural and Recreational Areas Committee Agenda
Wednesday January 18, 6:30 PM

Town of Verona Hall, 7669 County Highway PD

1. Call to Order/Approve Agenda
2. Approve Minutes from December 13, 2022
3. Public Comments
4. Updates from Chair and/or Members
5. Update from board member
6. Prairie plan- A draft plan will be presented
7. Educational programs- Proposals will be made as to who to invite and when
8. Points of interest in town- drafts of specific points descriptions will be presented
9. Incentives- How to get people to visit points of interest
10. Schedule next meeting and set agenda
11. Adjourn

Town of Verona
Natural and Recreational Areas Committee Minutes
Town of Verona meeting
12-13-22

DRAFT

Present: Bill Keen, Jo Tucker, Rosemary Bodolay, Kirk Feller, Dave Lonsdorf

Chair Keen called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

Approval of Agenda- Motion by Bodolay, Second Feller, passed 5-0

Approval of Minutes from October 18, 2022: Motion to approve Bodolay, Second Feller, passed 4-0, Lonsdorf abstained

Public Comments-None

Update from Chair/ Members: Bodolay pointed out that the City of Verona plan commission approved of the zoning changes for the Marty property. It goes to the city council next.

Update from Board Member: Lonsdorf explained the Badger Mill Creek meeting discussing discharge of water into Badger Mill Creek as Madison Metropolitan Sewage District is working on plans to meet state guidelines on phosphorus levels. A study on the impacts on fish habitat and water quality will be made.

The town board also asked that a long term plan for the town's prairie needs to be developed. The board also approved of the NRAC priorities for 2023.

NRAC priorities for 2023 were reviewed:

#1 Update the NRAC plan for 2024-2029

#2 Help create education programs for the town citizens. Discussion surrounded around which programs and what times should the programs be presented. Proposals will be given at the next NRAC meeting.

#3 Update significant natural features and public lands on town maps and add to the town website to help with landowner recognition and protection, and to help promote and guide recreational activities. This includes making a map of public access and parking to recreational points within the town. Lonsdorf suggested narrowing down the natural features list from the NRAC 2018-2023 plan to ten features which would allow people to visit and explore.

1. Madison School Forrest/Olson Oak Woods state natural area
2. Scheidegger County Forrest
3. Prairie Moraine County Park
4. Moraine Kettles Preserve (IATA)
5. Badger Mill Creek Corridor (county part)
6. Badger Prairie County Park
7. Goose Lake (town land)
8. Sugar River Natural Area-Davidson House
9. Military Ridge Trail
10. Sugar River Water Trail (includes Falk-Wells Wildlife area)

Features were divided up and members will make drafts of each feature that could be put on town webpage. Incentives to get people to visit these features were discussed, such as patches and free items from local vendors. Whether to have a program that would charge a fee to have these rewards was discussed. How to manage any program was a topic of concern.

Next meeting will be January 18 at 6:30 pm. Two members would not be available on the second Tuesday of January.

Motion to adjourn by Tucker, Second by Lonsdorf, Passed 5-0 at 7:50 p.m.

Sugar River Watertrail

The Town of Verona is proud to have the Sugar River flow through it. There are several launching sites for your canoes, kayaks and even tubes. You can see the sites on a map by the Upper Sugar River Watershed page.

https://uppersugar.org/images/downloads/Maps/usrwa_paddling_map_verona_to_belleville.pdf

The river will give you a chance to relax and enjoy this beautiful area of the Town of Verona.

(Insert picture of each access point.)

Bobcat Lane- This is the first usable access point. The land is part of the county owned Sugar River Wildlife area. A winding path takes you through a marsh area and finishes in a wooded area that is bordered by DNR land. There is good fishing in the lower area of this section..

Valley Road. There is a parking lot, boot scrub station and is DNR property. The DNR land extends all the way to the north to the military ridge bike trail. River openness is well maintained between here and Paoli as a local outfitter offers canoe and kayak rentals that start at this location. This section takes you through farmland and woods.

Riverside Road- This is an access point but there is no parking lot. The bank here is steep, but it is a great place to put in your canoe or to reach a fishing hole. This path is mainly farmland with a slightly wooded area close to the next access point, the Davidson House.

Sugar River Wildlife Area Davidson Unit- This is an easy location to put your canoe or kayak in as there is a gravel entrance to the river that is used by farm equipment to reach the fields on the other side of the river. There is an old bridge (walkable) to reach the other side of the river for those who like to hunt and hike. This site contains the old Davidson house. For all the info, go to <https://www.veronahistory.com/historical-sites/davidson-house>. From here, the river is a combination of open and wooded areas.

Falk-Wells Sugar River Wildlife area- A large parking lot, right on highway 69, makes this a very usable launching site. The property was once going to be a golf course which explains why you will see many concrete abutments that still exist after the bridges they were supporting were removed. This winding and secluded path will allow you to experience relaxation in a natural area. You will go over the remains of an old dam that served the mill in Paoli.

The following are not in the Town of Verona but provides for more fun as you get to Paoli.

Paoli Dam- This is where the old dam existed. After going over the dam remnants, there is a large pond. Access from this site is harder than others. A large parking lot exists and there is a bridge that allows you to cross the river. This is a winding twisting path to Paoli.

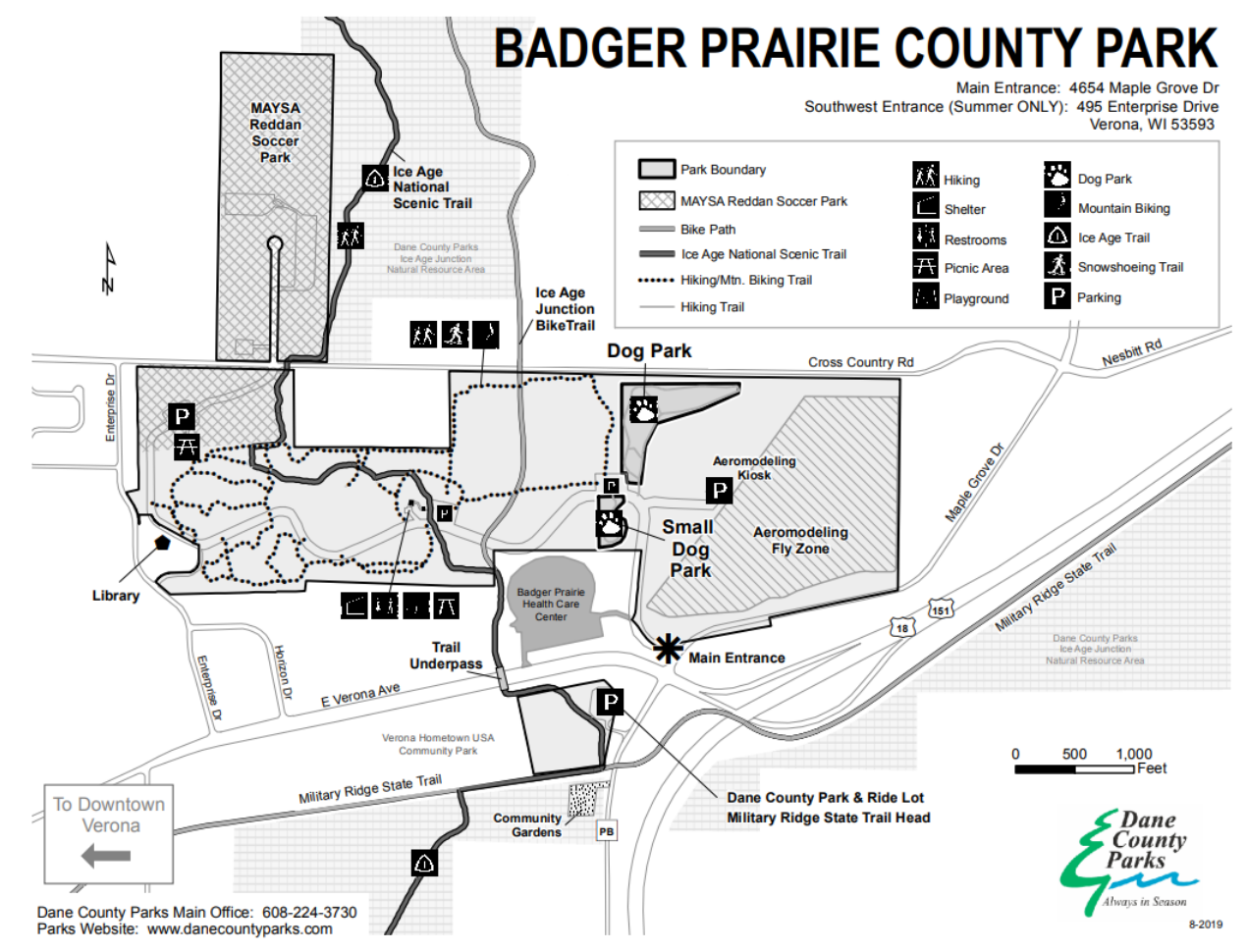
Paoli- The access point here is next to the property that the old mill sits on. Tables on the mill property allow you to bring food and drink. Available food, drinks and stores allow you to enjoy your stop in Paoli. Live music during the summer enhances this experience even more.

Sugar River Wetlands Davidson Unit

Visiting this property allows you to visit history and enjoy the area. From easy access to the Sugar River, to the old bridge crossing over the river (the bridge once spanned the Badger Mill Creek and was moved here by horses in the 1920's), the historic Davidson house and Indian mound make this an unique spot along the Sugar River. For the history and more info, visit <https://www.veronahistory.com/historical-sites/davidson-house>.

Badger Prairie County Park

This 317-acre park is located in the Town of Verona just east of the City of Verona at the intersection of County Highway PB and US Highway 18 and 151. The park has a shelter facility, play fields, mountain bike trails, a playground, an 11 acre dog park (including a 2 acre small dog area), and an aeromodeling field. Walking trails through restored prairie are accessible from the Verona Public Library on the west, the main entrance on the southeast, and the soccer fields on the north. A paved walking/bicycle path extends through the park from north to south and provides access to the [Military Ridge State Trail](#) and a segment of the [Ice Age National Scenic Trail](#).



Madison School Forest

1680 Fritz Rd

Located in the SW portion of the Town of Verona, this hilly terrain provides an outdoor classroom for MMSD where students have interactive experiences for environmental education.

It's open daily to the public and is free to access. Directions to the day lot:

<https://friendsofthemadisonschoolforest.wordpress.com/directions/>

The park consists of 307 acres with a 2.4mi hiking loop:

<https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/wisconsin/mmsd-school-forest-loop>

Connected by a short drive down the road (0.8mi from day lot) is Friends' Prairie. Friends' Prairie is 72 acres that provides more education for MMSD students.

<https://friendsofthemadisonschoolforest.wordpress.com/friends-prairie/>