



McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park

MASTER PLAN

Dane County, Wisconsin

August 2015



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park is located in the Town of Sun Prairie just north of the Village of Cottage Grove. The vision for McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park began in 1974 with a donation of 180 acres of land that was owned by Russell and Ella McCarthy. Ella McCarthy was actively involved with 4H for 60 years, and the McCarthy's primary vision was for the park to become "a place where kids from the city could learn about nature." This vision has been increasingly realized due in large part to youth and family orientated events organized by the Friends of McCarthy Park and the Dane County Parks Volunteer Coordinator. Since the original donation, Dane County Parks has purchased an additional 105 acres of lands adjacent to the park, that increased the total size to approximately 285 acres.

This Master Plan process evaluated existing conditions of the McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park planning area and incorporated public, stakeholder and staff input to create recommendations found within this report. The planning process included an interactive web site and series of public information, local unit of government and stakeholder meetings from July of 2014 through June of 2015. The following vision statement was prepared for McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park based on Town, stakeholder and neighbor input:

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park will become an eastern Dane County destination for families to bring their children to participate in low impact outdoor conservation and recreation activities. Primary public access and developed park facilities will occur at the south end of the park, with remaining areas of the park lightly accessible by a natural surface trail system. Ho-Chunk Nation interpretive signage and educational nodes will be developed throughout the park that will provide opportunities to teach youth about a variety of cultural, ecological and environmental topics. Upland restoration efforts will focus on creating additional oak opening and prairie grassland bird nesting areas. Preservation of surrounding agriculture lands and establishment of future Koshkonong Creek wetland restoration areas will provide long term park buffers from surrounding urban land uses. Improving public awareness and use of the park, particularly 4H, camping and equestrian, is a priority.

Major plan recommendations include:

- New shelter, playground and picnic area at the park entrance.
- Grassland, oak opening and wetland restorations.
- Surrounding farmland preservation.
- A 4 season yurt at the equestrian group camp.
- Future off leash dog exercise area.
- Ho-Chunk interpretive trail.
- Development of a regional trail segment from Town Hall Drive to the park entrance.

- Consideration of regional sports complex in the Cottage Grove region.
- Consideration of future target archery area.
- Development of an outside the park equestrian trail system.

Additional detailed construction drawings and planning will still need to be completed for many of the recommendations found within this plan. As the park and recreation use continue to grow over the next 5-10 years, the plan should be revisited and amended as necessary to reflect current recreation trends and natural resource preservation needs.



II. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The vision for McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park began in 1974 with a donation of 180 acres of land that was owned by Russell and Ella McCarthy. Ella McCarthy was actively involved with 4H for 60 years, and the McCarthy's primary vision was for the park to become "a place where kids from the city could learn about nature."

The property was being mined for gravel and had an active asphalt plant until 1988, at which time Dane County Parks began reclamation and restoration of the park. Existing mineral extraction pits at the center of the park were filled and re-graded to a rolling, hilly landscape, typical of the surrounding area. The McCarthy family provided financial assistance to the County for restoration of the site.

Over the next 20 years, Dane County Parks purchased an additional 105 acres of land adjacent to the park, that increased the total size to approximately 285 acres. Since the original mining reclamation of the property, relatively little park facility development has occurred. Current park amenities include an access road, two vault toilets, kiosk, group camp, equestrian group camp and natural surface trails. With the help of the Friends, considerable vegetation management at the park has been completed including prairie and woodland restorations, a wetland scrape, and invasive species removal.

The Friends have also helped a variety of special events to grow in popularity at the park including the Spring Youth Service Day, Fall Trail Run and Winter Snow Day. There has been some use of the park by area scout groups for group camping and set up of a geocache site in the park, based on Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac. All of these events are consistent with and fulfill the McCarthy's original vision to bring kids from the city to the park to learn about nature.



III. PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The master planning process began with a public kick off meeting held at the Village of Cottage Grove in July of 2014. Following the kick off meeting, Dane County Parks planning staff met with the Village of Cottage Grove, the Town of Sun Prairie, the Dane County Park Commission, the Friends of McCarthy Park, the Ho-Chunk Nation and other McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park stakeholders to gather input and ideas for the master plan. All area 4H Clubs were contacted and asked for input on how the park could be made more useable for their meetings and events. A follow up public information meeting was held at the Town of Sun Prairie in June of 2015 to present draft recommendations being considered for inclusion in the plan.

Notifications of public information meetings were sent to all landowners adjacent to the planning area boundary and press releases were printed in Madison, Sun Prairie and Cottage Grove newspapers. Dane County Parks also created a website for the master planning process that included all project information and an online feedback form.

The following hope/concern/comment themes were heard throughout the public input process:

- Interest in developing a sports complex in the region of the McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park.
- Support for the proposed Ho-Chunk interpretive trail.
- Support for additional equestrian trails and facilities.
- Support for additional trail opportunities, especially cross country.
- Support for park expansion/agriculture preservation north and east of the park.
- Support for additional shelter/yurt development.
- Potable water, winter warming areas and electric is needed at the park.
- Support restoration efforts and natural landscapes of the park.
- Concern that proposed bicycle trail will conflict with equestrian use.
- Concern that Town Hall Drive can accommodate increased on road bicycle traffic.
- Concern regarding off leash dogs in the park, dog park needed.



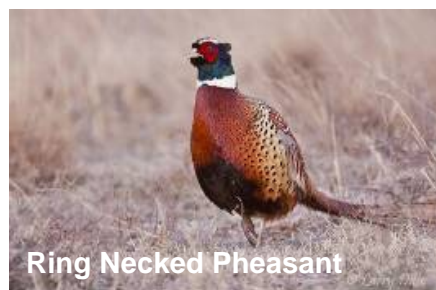
IV. RESOURCE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Natural and Geologic Resources

Dane County Parks and the Friends of McCarthy Park have been working extensively to improve existing natural resources found within the park boundary. Beginning in 1990, Dane County began an intensive reclamation project of the former gravel pits at the park to restore the land into the typical, rolling landscapes of the surrounding area. Initially row cropping and pasture were the primary land covers of the park. Since reclamation of the site, Dane County Parks and volunteers have made significant efforts to create a variety of open, grassland environments in the park.

The west central boundary area of the park includes an approximate 30 acre wetland restoration that was created with the help of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service that has become extremely popular for migrating and nesting waterfowl. The wetland restoration offers great opportunities for bird and wildlife viewing, as well as learning about the native plants and functions of wetland communities.

The east central portion of the park is a combination of restored upland prairie and prairie transitional areas. These areas offer outstanding nesting habitat for grassland birds, as evidenced by the presence of bobolink and ring necked pheasant.

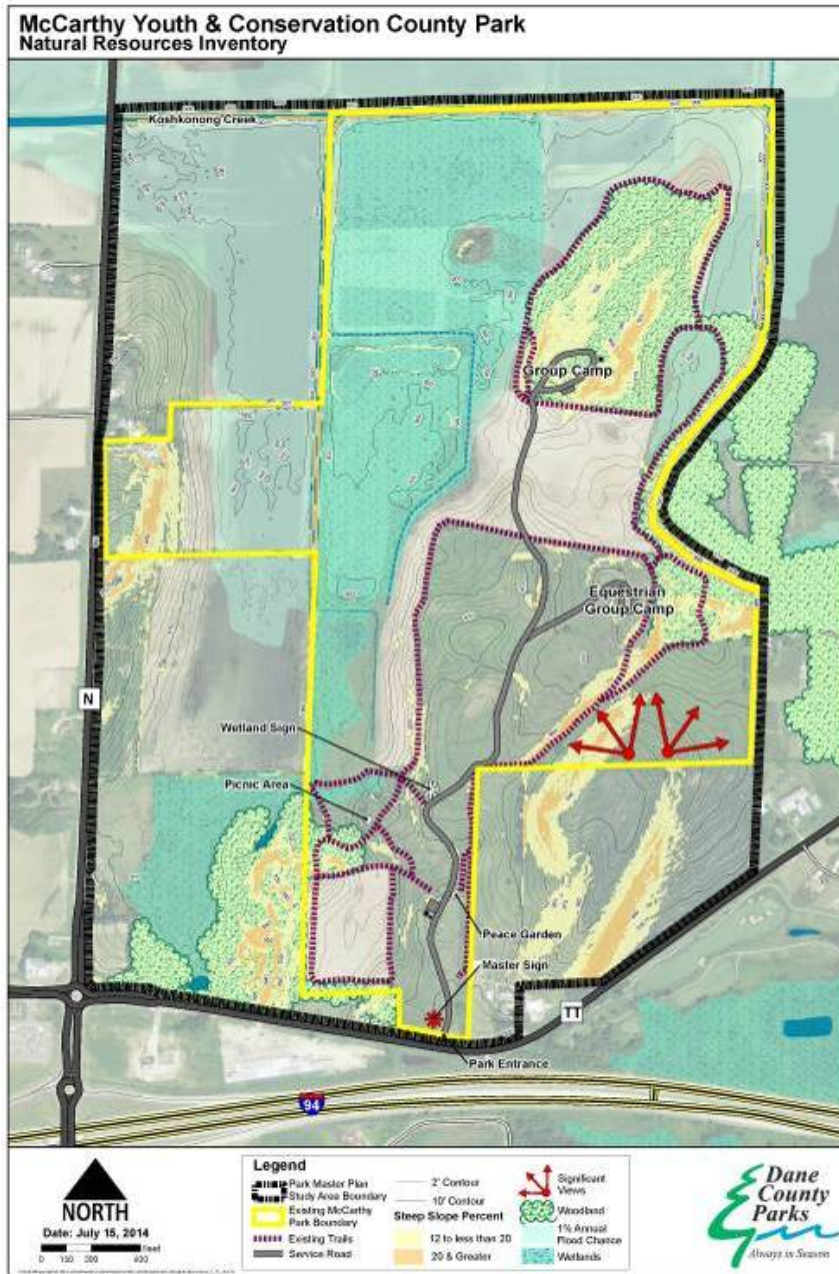


Another important natural resource opportunity of the park are oak savannah restorations. In Wisconsin, oak savannas are defined by native plant community expert Curtis as grassland areas with no less than 1 tree per acre and no more than 50% canopy. The Dane County Naturalist often refers more generally to these communities as oak openings, and are characterized by widely scattered oak trees and prairie at the transitional area between woodland and prairie. The Friends have been working on several oak opening restorations in central areas of the park.

There are three woodlots found throughout the park that offer restoration opportunities primarily through invasive species removal to enhance native oak communities. The Friends have also been working on under planting native woodland perennials near the group camp. The woodlot areas of the park offer a

variety of bird and wildlife species habitat and food zones, they also provide trail users with a break from wind in the winter and offer shade in the summer.

Koshkonong Creek borders the north and eastern boundaries of the park. It is considered a warm water stream and could offer limited youth fishing opportunities for rough fish species such as chubs, carp, suckers, shiners and bullheads. A drainage ditch tributary to the creek is found on the western border of the park. The banks of the stream and ditch do offer great habitat and bird watching opportunities for a variety of waterfowl species and ringneck pheasants, especially in the winter and early spring months.



McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park offers opportunities to interpret the glacial history of this region as evidenced by the drumlins located within and around the park. Drumlins are elongated hills that are generally orientated southwest to northeast, and provide evidence of the direction of glacial ice flow. They are composed of large deposits of sand and gravel, and often surrounded by lowland, poorly drained areas. The drumlins afford spectacular views of the surrounding landscape, and opportunities to interpret both the glacial and human settlement history of the region.



SLOPES & VIEWSHEDS

Opportunities:

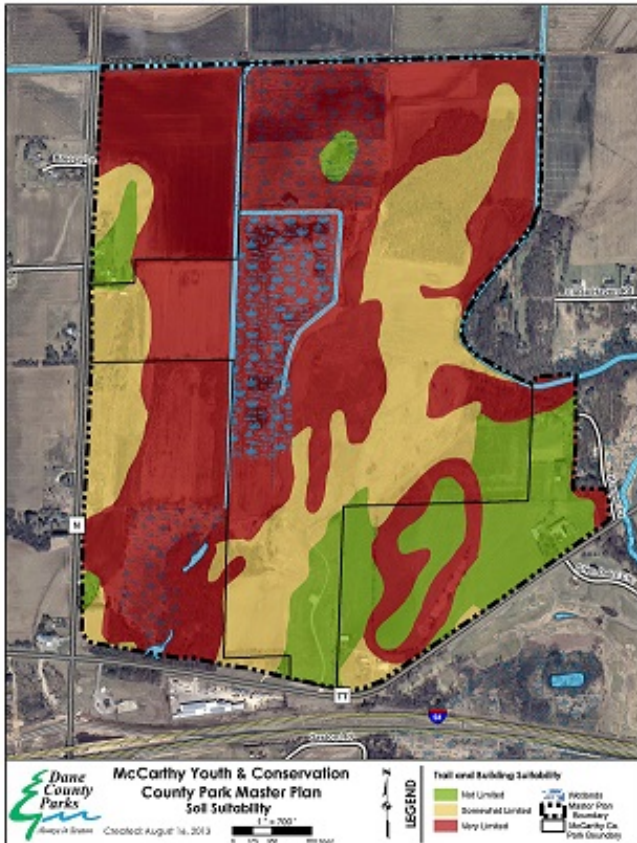
- Panoramic scenic views of the surrounding countryside
- Excellent winter recreation terrain
- Glacial and Native American history education opportunities
- Natural visual screening from within the park

Constraints:

- Some trail building limitations



The soils of the west central areas of the park are primarily poorly drained and lowland. They are extremely limiting for development of park facilities and are best suited for agriculture or wetland restoration areas. The group camp area is located on a drumlin, and consists of sandy, gravel soils that are less limiting for park facility development. Southeastern portions of the park offer the least soil suitability limitations for park development. This complements Dane County Parks planning strategy to create access and cluster infrastructure near the entrance of the park to reduce maintenance responsibilities.



SOILS

Opportunities:

- Wetland restorations
- Streambank buffers
- Prime agriculture land

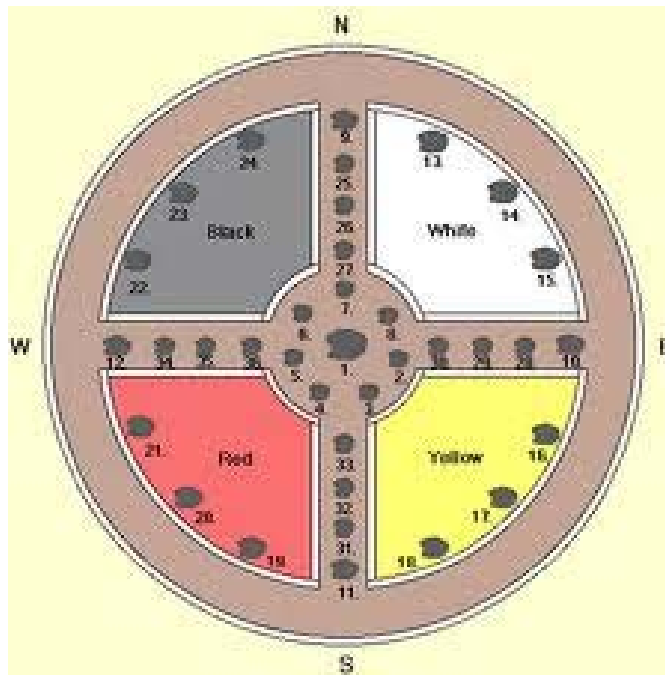
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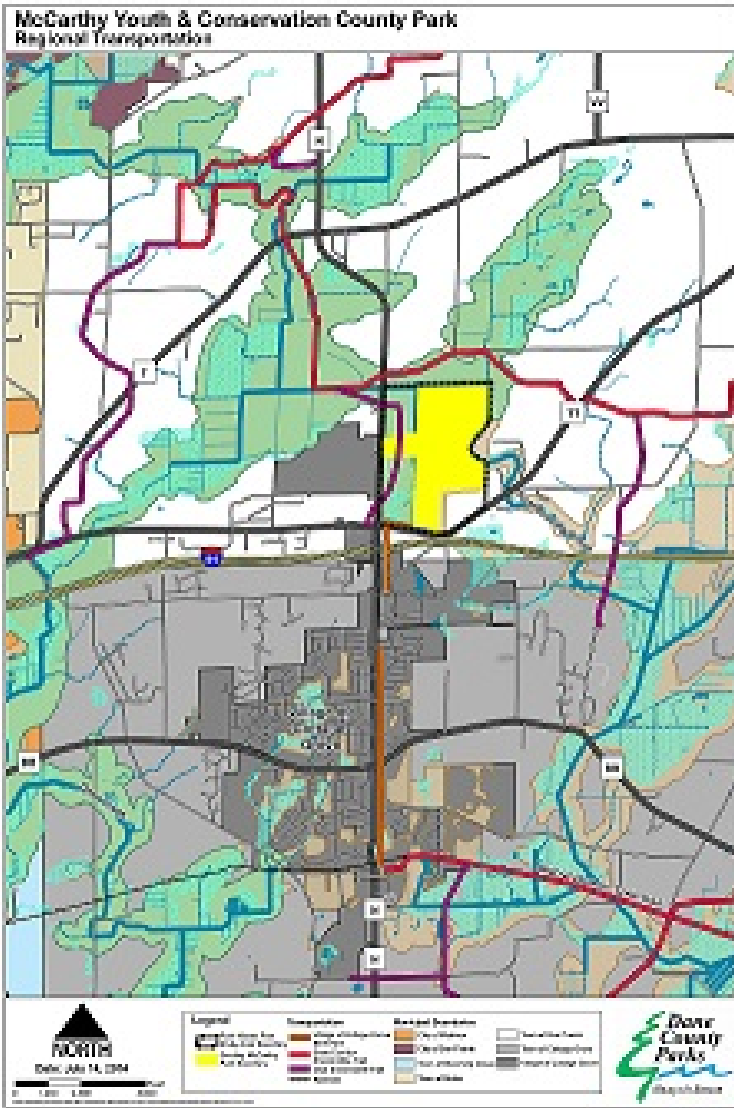
- Some trail and building limitations, especially within interior areas of the park



Cultural Resources

Dane County Parks completed an archaeological survey in 2009 of potential mound sites in the group camp area that were identified by Larry Johns in 1991. The mound features were confirmed to be “not of Native American origin.” There are currently no recorded archaeological sites within the park boundary. An Eagle Scout has also created a Medicine Wheel garden near the main parking lot area. The Medicine Wheel is also sometimes referred to as a Sacred Hoop, has been used by generations of various Native American tribes for reflection, guidance and understanding. Medicine Wheels represent some form of 4 directions, all of which symbolize dimensions of health and the cycles of life.





REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

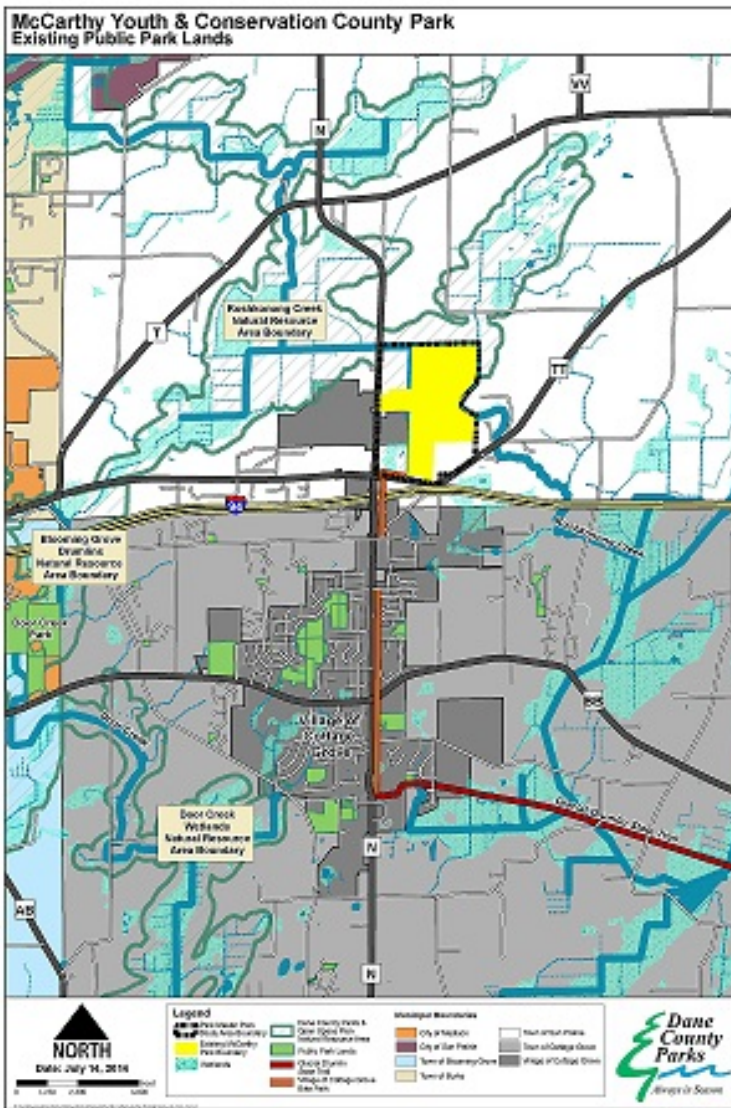
Opportunities:

- County road frontage and connections
- Easy access to the park via Interstate/CTH network from surrounding area
- Off-road trail connections to Cottage Grove/Glacial Drumlin State Trail
- Park access to Town Hall Drive/Sun Prairie connections, Georgia O'Keefe Cultural Trail

Constraints:

- Noise and off-road trail barriers
- Town Hall Drive does not have bicycle accommodations





EXISTING PUBLIC LANDS

Opportunities:

- Village/Town supportive of park
- Potential to create a Koshkonong 'E-way' working with the Village/Town

Constraints:

- Lack of other connecting large-scale public lands/greenspace within regional planning area





SURROUNDING LAND USE

Opportunities:

- Existing surrounding farmland buffers
- Limited residential neighbors at park boundary
- Close proximity to potential future sports complex sites

Constraints:

- Limited large-scale natural area connecting opportunities in the surrounding area



VI. OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

DONOR EXPECTATIONS

Russell and Ella McCarthy envisioned the park to be a place for kids from the city to visit and learn about nature. Ella McCarthy was actively involved with the Dane County 4H program for many years. The annual spring Youth Volunteer Day and Winter Snow Day events truly meet the original vision set forth by the McCarthy's. Area 4H clubs have indicated an interest in development of some type of shelter facility area that would allow for monthly meetings to occur at the park. All future park development, programming and restoration efforts should consider opportunities to encourage youth interest and participation.



DANE COUNTY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan provides the countywide vision for future conservation, land management, recreation and trail needs over a five year period. It is also useful for helping to determine what types of park and recreation facilities may be considered when developing park master plans. The recreation needs summary of the latest adopted 2012-17 Dane County Parks and Open Space plan identifies the following recreation expectations on the park system through 2017:

- Trails (Particularly Mountain Biking, Snowshoeing, Multi-Use Regional)
- Wildlife Viewing Opportunities
- Water Access Facilities (fishing, kayaking)
- Camping
- Picnicking and Shelters
- Disc Golf
- Dog Exercise Areas
- Hunting & Target Archery

Many of these recreation activities are currently included within the recommendations of this master plan. There was some interest shown for the possibility of developing mountain bike trails within the park. This proposal was not pursued due to the existing equestrian use that is already occurring on areas of the park that would have suitable soils for mountain bike trail development.

In addition to the Parks and Open Space Plan considerations, proposed recreation needs recommended in this plan were also derived from public comment heard during the planning process, site analysis and lands that were available for public use at the time this report was written. As future lands are added within the project area boundary, other listed recreation uses could be considered that are deemed suitable based on future site analysis and public input.

EXISTING RECREATION USES & FACILITIES

Hiking, cross country, sledding and horseback riding are currently the most popular recreation uses within the park. Wildlife observation, bowhunting, and geocaching also occur on a seasonal basis. In keeping with the original donor objectives of creating a park for youth to explore and learn about nature, this plan recommends continuing to provide these low impact activities that provide an outlet for youth to be active and experience the outdoors.

KOSHKONONG CREEK DRAINAGE DISTRICT

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park is within Dane County Drainage District Number 8 that requires the periodic maintenance of Koshkonong Creek and associated tributary ditches. Any future consideration of wetland restoration projects adjacent to these waterways would require County, DNR and Drainage District review and approval.

WDNR STEWARDSHIP GRANT REQUIREMENTS

In 2011 Dane County purchased the former 25 acre Weisensel property on the west side of the park. Funding through the Wisconsin DNR Stewardship program that was used for approximately 22 acres of this property requires the land be open to archery hunting for all legal game species and limited trapping permits be available to the public. Additional information is available on the Dane County website at: <https://www.countyofdane.com/lwrp/parks/hunting.aspx>

VII. PLANNING PURPOSE

Dane County began reclamation and restoration of the original 180 acre McCarthy property in 1988 and has since added approximately 105 more acres of land to the park. A very active Friends group evolved and has been organizing special events and working on a number restoration projects within the park without a current adopted master plan in place.

The purpose of this plan is to create a long term vision for the park through a consensus building process that will guide future use, facility development and land management while balancing resource protection with public access.

VIII. PARK VISION STATEMENT

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park will become an eastern Dane County destination for families to bring their children to participate in low impact outdoor conservation and recreation activities. Primary public access and developed park facilities will occur at the south end of the park, with remaining areas of the park lightly accessible by a natural surface trail system. Ho-Chunk Nation interpretive signage and educational nodes will be developed throughout the park that will provide opportunities to teach youth about a variety of cultural, ecological and environmental topics. Upland restoration efforts will focus on creating additional oak opening and prairie grassland bird nesting areas. Preservation of surrounding agriculture lands and establishment of future Koshkonong Creek wetland restoration areas will provide long term park buffers from surrounding urban land uses. Improving public awareness and use of the park, particularly 4H, camping and equestrian, is a priority.



IX. MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following plan recommendations are also presented graphically on the preferred alternative master plan exhibits at the end of the document.

A. MAIN ENTRY PARKING LOT AREA

The existing gravel parking area is in need of reorganization to more efficiently utilize space available for parking and allow construction of a picnic shelter. The proposed parking lot would be paved and accommodate approximately 15 vehicles with accessible pathways to the existing restroom/kiosk, proposed drinking fountain, shelter, and playground area. If future increased use of the park justifies, the proposed shelter parking area could be expanded to the north. A new 3 sided trailhead kiosk could also be considered if needed to provide additional park information and maps. The existing day parking area for equestrian trailers would be relocated slightly to the south.

A new picnic shelter is proposed off the northwest corner of the parking lot. The shelter would be an approximate 35'x60' timber frame structure with a concrete slab and metal roof. The shelter would also have a fastening system that would allow temporary canvas walls to be attached to the posts for winter use at special events. An informal picnicking area would be developed between the parking lot and east property boundary.



A new playground with parking for approximately 6 vehicles is proposed south of the existing restroom. If future increased use of the park justifies, the proposed playground parking area could be expanded to the south.

B. EQUESTRIAN GROUP CAMP

Several improvements are proposed for the equestrian group camp area that would serve a variety of users. Strong support was heard for provision of drinking water at the group camp. A large, central firepit, vault toilet and yurt are also proposed at this area. A demonstration ciporoke could also be considered as a warming house/camping shelter in the short term until a yurt was able to be constructed. All of these proposed improvements are anticipated to also be of great benefit for special events.



C. TRAILS & BRIDGES

Several types of trails are proposed throughout McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park.

Mown 6' wide natural surface trails will traverse through upland areas and adjacent to wetlands/ditches atop existing spoil piles created from maintenance dredging. Natural surface trails will allow for hiking, snowshoe, equestrian and cross country uses.

Seasonal winter trails primarily created for cross country skiing may also be considered if created, operated and maintained by volunteers.

The existing snowmobile club spur trail #33 from State Corridor Trail #15 is proposed to be realigned adjacent to the northwest boundary of the park. This will allow for more efficient maintenance and long term viability of the trail. A bridge would be constructed across the western drainage ditch that will also serve the proposed multi use trail on the former 25 acre Weisensel property. New hiking and winter use trails are proposed within the woodlot north and east of the existing group camp. These trails will add variety to the existing network and allow trail users relief from sun in the summer and wind in the winter. Signage will be installed at the intersection with the group camp spur trail to discourage park day users from traveling through the group camp.

A future bridge could be considered across Koshkonong Creek that would provide access to the rural subdivision east of the park. This project would only be possible if existing land owner(s) located on Creek Haven Road were willing to sell land or an easement necessary to create public access to the proposed bridge.

A hard surface multi use bicycle trail is proposed to traverse through the park beginning at the main entrance and exiting onto Town Hall Drive. This trail is envisioned to co-exist on the existing park entrance road approximately to the group camp parking lot. A new 12' wide gravel maintenance road/trail would be constructed from group camp parking lot to the existing Koshkonong Creek stream crossing and through the trail easement to Town Hall Drive. It would function both as a trail and provide seasonal maintenance access to the proposed Ho-Chunk garden area. A hard surface spur trail connecting to the neighborhood east of the park could also be considered after the trail was completed through the park. This project is envisioned to be a segment of the proposed regional trail system that extends from Cottage Grove to Patrick Marsh, as shown on the County Parks and Open Space Plan.

Proposed trail improvements are presented on the graphic master plan exhibit attached to the end of this document. All trails proposed within this master plan are conceptual, actual trail alignments will be field located by Dane County Parks planning staff and adjusted as necessary based on existing conditions.



D. RECREATION

Primary recreation at the park will continue to be trail orientated uses. These trails provide a conduit for youth to enter and explore natural areas of the park. Continuing outreach to area scouting and 4H clubs is needed to increase youth equestrian and camping use of the park. Limited archery hunting does occur within the park, this master plan also recommends consideration of a target field archery range that would be located on proposed future park lands northeast of the existing main parking area.

This master plan also recommends development of a future off leash dog exercise area on proposed future park lands east of the main entrance. The dog exercise area would be sited away from steep slopes and be visually buffered from adjacent residential areas and overlook areas of the park.

Equestrian use of the park could potentially be increased by expanding the miles of trail offered to riders. Donald County Park has a very successful trail program that extends beyond the borders of the park onto private landowner property through a voluntary lease program. These trails are only open to equestrian use and do not allow for public access for any other purposes. Volunteers work with neighboring landowners to secure the lease agreements, operate, and maintain the trails. This same model of a trail program should be considered for McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park and is consistent with the long term vision of sustained agriculture use surrounding the park.



E. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Vegetation within the park will be continue to be managed primarily for open grassland nesting bird habitat. Oak openings should be restored as transition areas to the limited woodlots throughout the park.

Woodland areas within the park would benefit greatly from both woody and herbaceous invasive species removal that would be carried out by the Friends under the direction of the Dane County Naturalist.

Continued removal of boxelder trees at streambank areas will also aid in establishment of denser grassland species that will benefit wildlife and reduce erosion.

Expansive hydric soil areas create additional opportunities for creation of wetland scrapes. These should continue to be done with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and will require Drainage District review and approval depending on the location.



F. HO-CHUNK INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

U. W. Madison Landscape Architecture student Amanda Depagter prepared a plan to create an interpretive trail throughout the park that would educate park users on a variety of Ho-Chunk and natural topics. The plan was created with input from Bill Quackenbush, Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. The absence of archaeological resources within the park was viewed as an opportunity by the Ho-Chunk Nation to create interpretive demonstration areas without concern of cultural artifacts being disturbed or destroyed. A U. W. Madison Landscape Architecture class led by Janet Gilmore also provided input throughout preparation of the interpretive plan.

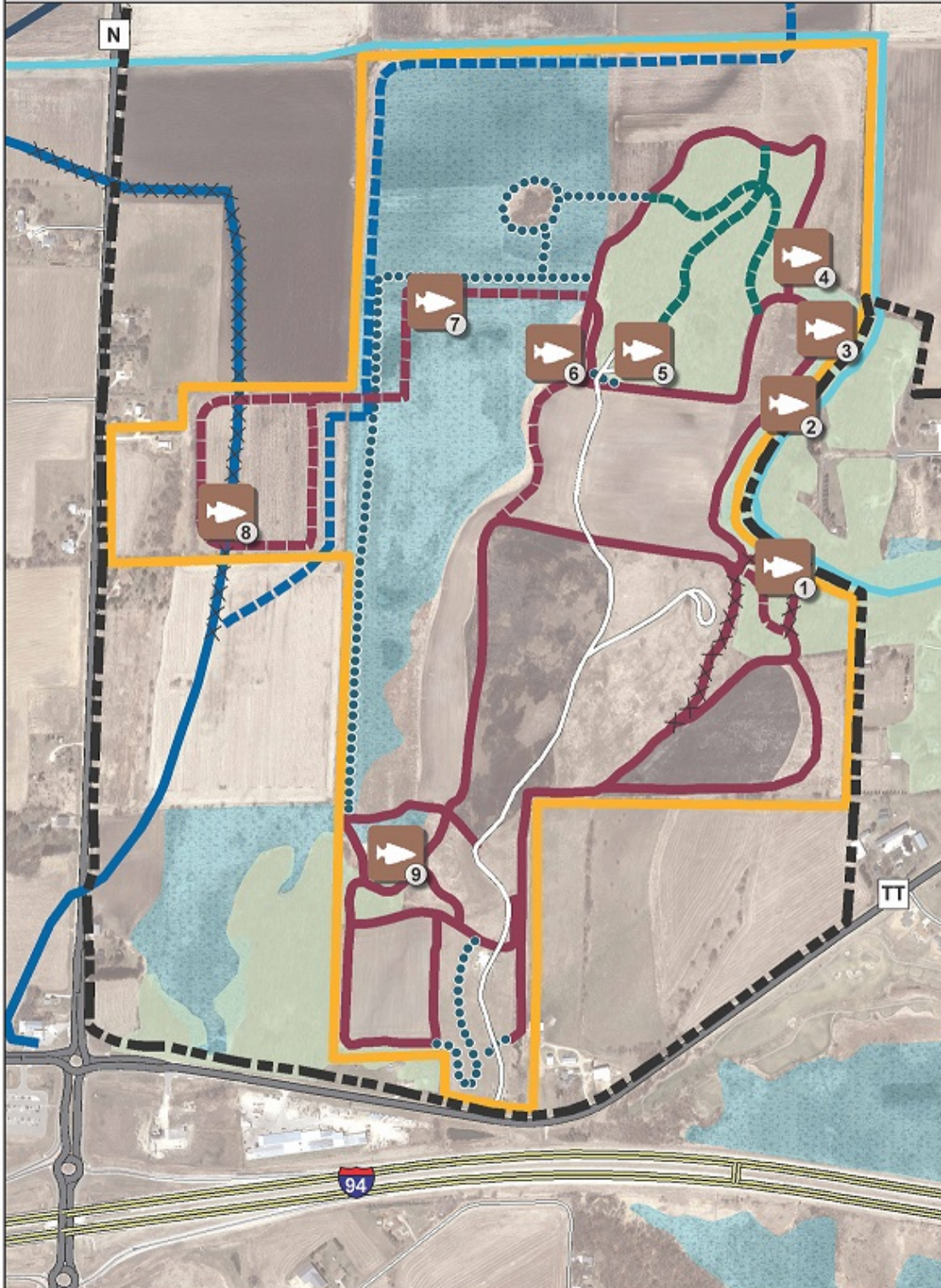
The interpretive trail is envisioned to be a place where youth can learn through hands on demonstration areas about Native American lifestyles and how they lived with the land. The Ho-Chunk Nation would be responsible for constructing and maintaining proposed interpretive nodes within the park.




The concept plan has been completed, Dane County Parks should now work with the Ho-Chunk Nation on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will further outline roles and responsibilities to implement the trail at this park. The MOU is anticipated to be a template for consideration throughout the park system. The proposed Ho-Chunk Interpretive Trail project is attached to the end of this report.

McCarthy Youth & Conservation County Park

Proposed Ho-Chunk Interpretive Trail



Legend

 Ho-Chunk Trail Nodes

Ho-Chunk Interpretive Nodes

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ① Woodland Ways Gathering Area | ⑥ Landscape Narrative |
| ② Riparian Community | ⑦ Wetland Ways |
| ③ Spring Camp | ⑧ Winter Camp |
| ④ Agricultural Evolution | ⑨ Oak Savannah Community |
| ⑤ Summer and Fall Camp | |



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Feet

Revised: June 24, 2015



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G. REGIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX

Strong support was heard throughout the planning process for creation of a regional sports complex facility in the vicinity of Cottage Grove and McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park. McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park does not have sufficient suitable lands to develop this type of facility. Regional sports complexes are also being considered on the southeast side of Madison and near the City of Sun Prairie.

The Village of Cottage Grove has had some preliminary discussions with the Madison Area Sports Commission's Sports Product Development Committee (SPDC) regarding development of a future regional sports complex. The SPDC conducts sports venue facility inventories, monitors recreation trends and identifies large scale sporting event and facility needs in Dane County. They also provide consultation to local units of government for large scale sporting event and facility planning that generate a variety of economic benefits to those communities.



The Village of Cottage Grove has tentatively identified some potential suitable sites for a large scale regional sports complex. The Madison Area Sports Commission's SPDC recommends a feasibility study be undertaken as a first step, potentially partnering with the cities of Madison and Sun Prairie to avoid duplication of facilities.

Upon completion of a feasibility study and identification of a suitable site, Dane County's role would be to potentially assist with cost sharing for acquisition of necessary property through the Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program.

Participating local units of government would be responsible for planning, development, operation and maintenance of future regional sports complex facilities.

H. AGRICULTURE PRESERVATION AND WETLAND PARK BUFFERS

Much of the land surrounding the park is considered prime farm land and is being actively farmed. Working farm lands are a large contributor to the Dane County economy and preservation is key to maintaining a rural landscape character adjacent to the park.

From the perspective of a rural park, continuation of agriculture use surrounding the park is a benefit as it reduces the number of residential neighbors adjacent to the park border and potential boundary conflicts. Ag lands also provide wildlife food and habitat areas, and complement the desired open grass land environment of the park.

Much of the agriculture land adjacent to Koshkonong Creek within the park is hydric in nature and experiences seasonal flooding during wet years. If cropping becomes no longer feasible within these areas, wet prairie or wetland scrapes could be considered if able to be approved by the Wisconsin DNR, Dane County and Drainage District.



I. REGIONAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park is within the Koshkonong Creek Natural Resource Area as identified within the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan. It is somewhat isolated from other large scale public park and natural resource area lands.

The next update to the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan is scheduled to begin in October of 2016. Potential regional planning considerations could include a potential proposed greenway corridor that would follow the Koshkonong Creek corridor and associated wetlands between McCarthy Youth and

Conservation Park and the large wetland complex just south of the Glacial Drumlin State Trail. This concept would require future input and approval from the Village and Town of Cottage Grove.

VIII. FUTURE BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Dane County Parks only acquires land from willing land owners. The 2012-17 Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan includes a recommendation for development of an off leash dog exercise area in the vicinity of McCarthy Park. This master plan proposes acquisition of approximately 40 acres immediately east of the main entrance for this purpose.

Approximately 30 acres of woodland and adjacent wetlands are proposed for acquisition that would provide a natural buffer to adjacent commercial and transportation land uses. The property would provide additional opportunities for woodland trails and protection of a spring that flows to Koshkonong Creek.

Wetland buffer zones are proposed adjacent to the western and northern boundaries of the park. These areas could be considered if property owners were no longer interested in farming or as transitional conservation areas to future development on CTH N. Acquisition could be in the form of conservation easements or fee title purchase.

Agriculture preservation zones are proposed primarily north and east of the park. Preservation would occur through a variety of programs available for farmland preservation.

Boundary adjustments are presented on the graphic master plan attached to the end of this document. Land acquisition is more often based on an opportunity than identified priorities, therefore any lands available within the project area should be considered on a case by case basis.



IX. ACTION PLAN

The action plan identifies major capital park improvement and planning projects to be carried out over the next 7 years and beyond. Items prioritized as “immediate” should occur within 1-3 years, “pending” within 3-5 years and “future” would occur within 5-7 years or as necessary milestones are realized. All estimated costs are general and should be revised after detailed plans and specifications are completed for each project. Actual implementation schedule will depend on when funding becomes available.

TASK	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PROJECT SCOPE	COMMENTS/ COST
Planning, Design, Engineering, Cost Estimates and Permits for Proposed Main Entry Improvements	Immediate	Consultant	Site development, grading & stormwater (?) plans and cost estimates for proposed parking lots, paths, playground and picnic area.	Estimated Cost: \$15,000
Construct Main Entry Parking Lot and Pathway, and Picnic Improvements.	Immediate	DCP/Contracted	Pave proposed parking and accessible pathways. Includes paving driveway to main entrance, stormwater facilities (?) and 3 pedestal grills. Does not include future parking area.	Estimated Cost: \$ 70,000
Install new playground structure at main entry.	Immediate	Contracted	Construct play structure with benches and timber border.	Estimate Cost: \$35,000
Construct timber frame shelter at entry parking lot.	Immediate	Contracted	35'x60' timber frame shelter with concrete slab/patio, includes retaining wall.	Estimated Cost: \$170,000
Construct snowmobile/multi use trail bride to former Weisensel property.	Immediate	Contracted	Install bridge at drainage ditch capable of supporting grooming equipment.	Estimated Cost: \$60,000
Construct wetland overlook patio and observation deck below group camp.	Immediate	DCP/Contracted	At grade stone patio with sitting rocks and observation deck for story telling.	Estimated Cost: \$7,500

TASK	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PROJECT SCOPE	COMMENTS/ COST
Install Water at Equestrian Group Camp and Main Entrance	Immediate	Contracted	Includes well, electricity and drinking fountains.	Estimated Cost: \$30,000.* *Unknown if 1 well can service both locations.
Construct Vault Toilet at Equestrian Group Camp	Pending	Contracted	Similar design to group camp vault toilet.	Estimated Cost: \$40,000
Construct Yurt at Equestrian Group Camp.	Pending	Contracted	4 season yurt that could be reserved and serve as warming house for winter special events.	Estimated Cost: Unknown.
Construct bridge over Koshkonong Creek to provide access to Creek Haven Road neighborhood.	Pending	Contracted	Contingent on acquiring necessary lands from willing landowners.	Estimated Cost: \$80,000
Develop Target Archery Range Area	Pending	Volunteers/DNR	Will require additional planning/coordination with WDNR.	Estimated Cost: Unknown
Construct regional bicycle trail connection between Town Hall Road and park entrance.	Future	Contracted	Minimum 10' wide hard surface trail.	Estimated Cost: \$320,000
Construct off leash dog exercise area.	Future	Contracted	Contingent on acquiring necessary lands from willing landowners.	Estimate Cost: \$450,000

X. SUMMARY

McCarthy Youth and Conservation Park is located adjacent to some of the most rapidly growing areas in Dane County that will undoubtedly result in higher use as the park becomes more developed and awareness increases. Future planned trail and park facility program areas within this master plan strive to maintain balance between public use and preservation of intact, large scale natural areas. The Ho-Chunk interpretive trail will greatly enhance cultural learning opportunities at this park and should serve as a model to be duplicated at other Dane County Parks.

The primary planning objective from the McCarthy's of providing a park where kids from the city could visit and learn about nature has already been realized to a certain degree. Annual Youth Service Days, Snow Days, scouting activities, cross country meets and a variety of other youth orientated events organized by

the Friends have been very popular. These events are an excellent way to raise awareness of the park to area families and should be continued into the future.

This master plan is meant to serve as a guide for future acquisition and phased development of the park. Additional detailed construction drawings and planning will still need to be prepared for many of the recommendations found within this plan. As the park and recreation use continue to grow over the next 5-10 years, the plan should be revisited and amended as necessary to address changing adjacent land uses and current recreation trends.

