

Protecting Water, Ecology and Quality of Life in Dane County

Uren Trust Addition to Erbe Grassland

Town of Blue Mounds, Dane County, Wisconsin

This site is part of a landscape identified by the Wisconsin DNR as a conservation priority for over 25 years. Beyond its conservation value, it's arguably the best source for recharged groundwater in Dane County according to a 2012 UW-Extension study. Protecting this crucial groundwater source from development and degradation will protect water quality for nearby residents and two Class II trout streams.



Goal: To protect this 77 acre property to safeguard its clean groundwater, ecological resources and make it available to the public for recreation and enjoyment.

Funding:

- Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program
- Bobolink Foundation
- Members of The Prairie Enthusiasts

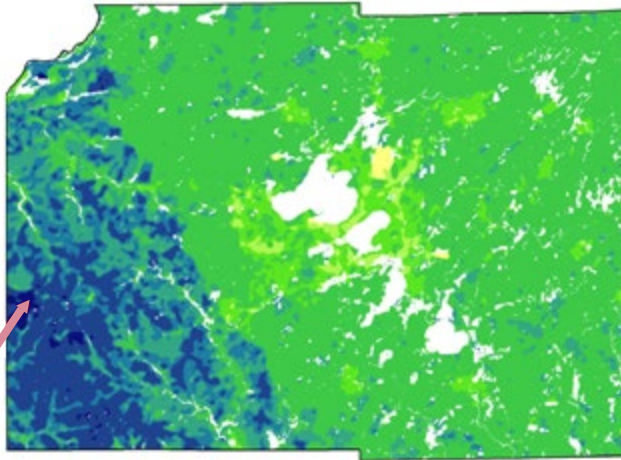
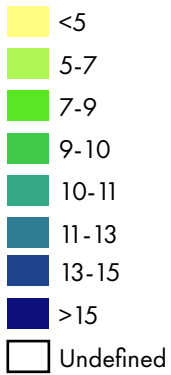
Objectives:

- Remove phosphorus from the land by re-establishing a native plant community.
- Expand habitat for the Federally Endangered rusty-patched bumblebee and the State Endangered regal fritillary butterfly that reside in neighboring Erbe Grassland.
- Expand critical nesting and foraging habitat for seven species of grassland birds of Greatest Conservation Need.
- Make the property immediately available for public use, including hunting wild reproducing pheasants.

The Prairie Enthusiasts is an accredited, nonprofit land trust serving parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois. We seek to ensure the perpetuation and recovery of prairie, oak savanna and other fire-dependent ecosystems of the Upper Midwest through protection, management, restoration and education. Our 11 regional grassroots chapters of volunteers lead projects in their local communities focused especially on high-quality remnants, which contain nearly all the components of endangered prairie communities.

Community, Tourism and Ecological Value

SWB Recharge
(inches/year)



Uren Acquisition Parcel



The above map prepared by the Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey shows the proposed acquisition site as having the highest recharge of soil-water-balance in Dane County.

Community



Students on the prairie. Photo by Addie Theis.

- The site is within the town of Blue Mounds and is a five-minute drive from downtown Mount Horeb.
- Demonstration site for area landowners interested in establishing prairie.

Tourism



Birdwatchers at nearby Mounds View Grassland. Photo by RS Baller.

- The property is close to several other tourist destinations like Cave of the Mounds and Blue Mound State Park.
- Easy access off the intersection of US-18 and WI-78.
- The location is an anticipated draw for birders. According to Acorn Consulting Partnerships, "Bird watching is reported as being the fastest growing outdoor activity in America."

Ecology



Dickcissel at nearby Erbe Grassland. Photo by Joshua Mayer.

- The parcel is adjacent to already protected land, making it a prime location for habitat reconstruction. The protection of this site would create a contiguous 216 acres of habitat.
- Phosphorus will drastically decrease as the land is restored to prairie, improving the water quality and supply of two nearby trout streams, German Valley Brand and Gordon Creek.
- The area is already a stronghold of wild pheasants and, when restored, will add excellent nesting, rearing and wintering habitat.