

**APPENDIX B**  
**Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance**  
**PROPOSAL to Sauk County Board**

Request for Funding – BOMC Account  
December 2019

**Summary.** The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance hereby proposes to fulfill some of the core functions of the former Badger Oversight & Management Commission (BOMC), currently inactive for several years. This is a formal request of the Sauk County Board of Directors to provide up to \$15,000 from the unused portion of the “BOMC Account” that was established years ago to support BOMC activities.

**Background.** Following the acceptance of the “Final Report of the Badger Reuse Committee” (hereafter, ***Badger Reuse Plan***) in March 2001, a formal mechanism was established for reviewing and overseeing the Badger Reuse Plan. The original “Badger Intergovernmental Group” (BIG) established in 2001 was eventually replaced by the “Badger Oversight and Management Commission” (BOMC) that endured through 2015. An account was established by Sauk County with funding from the Ho-Chunk Nation to support the activities of BOMC. Only some of that funding was used, and to date some residual funding remains in the account.

From the Sauk County BOMC website: “The [Badger Reuse] plan calls for all 7,354 acres to be managed as a whole. The land uses include conservation, prairie and savanna restoration, agriculture, education and recreation. These land uses should contribute to reconciliation and resolution of past conflicts. The conversion of the Badger lands provides remarkable opportunities for the protection, enhancement, use, restoration, and enjoyment of the property's unique natural and cultural features.” BOMC was established, “to be guided by the principles of the Badger Reuse Plan in all actions and activities of its work.” (BOMC Bylaws)

The role of the BOMC, were it still active, could and should be:

- Facilitate actions by and communications between all landowners to contribute to “property management as a whole” (Badger Reuse Plan, Value 1);
- Identify areas of shared interest and overlap to coordinate actions that lead to addressing common goals, including ecological restoration, public education, research, recreation (Badger Reuse Plan Values 4, 5 & 7);
- Resolve problems shared by all landowners (e.g., trespass, vandalism, potential conflicts between landowner activities—such as heavy public traffic on DNR land during times of heavy DFRC farm vehicle movement)
- Identify sources of funding that can support collaborative efforts on the shared Badger Lands, including but not limited to ecological restoration, research and public education.

**Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance.** Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance, a non-profit tax-exempt organization, was formally incorporated in 2002 to support the Badger Reuse Plan. The Alliance (formerly the Community Conservation Coalition for the Sauk Prairie) had been engaged since 1997 in the effort to promote a community-supported “green future” for the decommissioned Badger Army Ammunition Plant. The Coalition was represented on the Badger Reuse Committee and is a signatory to the Badger Reuse Plan. For twenty years, the Alliance has been the voice of the community on issues related to Badger. In the absence of BOMC, the Alliance has been deeply engaged in efforts to bring the current landowners at Badger together on issues of importance to each of them, most notably land management (Values 1 of Badger Reuse Plan: Manage the property as a whole), public education and research (Value 5) and habitat restoration (Value 7: Protect and manage natural resources and biological communities).

The Alliance has worked closely with each of the Badger landowners to support and complement their efforts on their respective lands. Examples of Alliance-initiated projects include:

- Leading countless volunteer restoration work days on a remnant prairie on state land since 1999 as well as activities in support of Ho-Chunk Nation (Indigenous Peoples Day) and Dairy Forage Research Center (fence removal, brush clearing);
- Researching and writing a widely-distributed publication, “**Visitor Guide to the Badger Lands**” that serves as the singular source of information about and the most widely used map of the combined Badger lands. Almost 15,000 free copies have been distributed throughout the county and region, and a third printing is being explored in 2020.
- Securing funding for Badger-wide activities (shrub management, bird and mammal research, prairie restoration, public education, interpretive signs on the Great Sauk Trail, etc.)
- Coordinating and leading dozens of public tours on state land at Badger, that have also included Ho-Chunk and DFRC land when representatives of those landowners were involved;
- Mapping, marking and completing 12 miles of hiking/biking and horse trails on the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area;
- Originating and coordinating the “Badger Apple Corps,” a collaborative effort by all Badger landowners to locate, map, preserve and manage the historic apples trees of Badger (a project supported by BOMC in 2014)
- Producing two award-winning documentaries on the transformation of the Badger Lands, “**Restoring the Sauk Prairie, A Story of Hope and Healing**” and the historic apples of Badger, “**Of Connection and Renewal: The Historic Apple Trees of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant.**”

- Giving considerable public visibility to the Badger Lands through an extensive outreach effort. For example, 1,850 people have learned of Badger through 85 different programs, presentations and tours by the Alliance in 2019 alone.

**The Need.** The four Badger landowners held their first joint meeting in February 2018, three years after the last meeting of BOMC. Important topics were discussed, including issues and concerns with roads, access and trespass; land management (ecological restoration, prescribed fire, invasive species management) and Badger-wide research activities. Subsequently, representatives of the landowners have met on several occasions to continue discussions on shared concerns and opportunities. Trespass and vandalism continue to be an area of concern by landowners.

Although each landowner at Badger has a unique focus and site-specific priorities, several clear shared goals by all landowners have emerged, and in accordance with the Badger Reuse Plan:

- 1) Planning and facilitating large-scale ecological restoration;
- 2) Engaging the public in meaningful educational and volunteer opportunities;
- 3) Facilitating and attracting on-site research that benefits all landowners;
- 4) Finding funding to accomplish all of these shared goals.

**The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance requests BOMC funding held by Sauk County to address each of these goals in support of landowners at Badger.**

**Large-scale Ecological Restoration.** Of the entire 7,400 acres at Badger, the combined acreage to be restored to native ecosystems approaches 5,500 acres. The Badger grassland/oak savanna complex will represent the largest landscape-scale grassland restoration in southern Wisconsin once completed. This restoration will be of great significance to wildlife (especially rare grassland birds) while simultaneously enhancing and improving a large open public landscape for diverse outdoor recreation activities.

With Dairy Forage Research Center taking the lead, the three primary landowners (DFRC, DNR, Ho-Chunk Nation) have identified a specific project that each landowner can contribute to that benefits the whole of Badger. The new Great Sauk State Trail (GSST) running more than five miles diagonally through Badger represents a unique ecological restoration opportunity. Since the majority of current visitors to Badger first see the Badger lands by hiking or biking the GSST, landowners have agreed to focus their initial restoration efforts along the Trail corridor. Since each Badger landowner owns land bordering the Trail, this is a perfect collaborative effort. All told, somewhere between 300 and 400 acres will be targeted for this first phase of restoration. The goal is to undertake a high-quality restoration with a high concentration of beautiful native wildflowers, creating a spectacular “**GSST Prairie Corridor**” as a visually aesthetic introduction to the prairie landscape for bikers and hikers. The Trail prairie corridor can serve as a model for restoration elsewhere on Badger lands.

The ecosystem restoration challenges for over 5,500 acres held by four separate landowners at Badger are daunting. No single land manager can undertake such a large-scale restoration effort alone. Value 1 of the Badger Reuse Plan states that all landowners should manage the Badger lands as an integrated whole, and this necessitates a cohesive, collaborative well-constructed long-term management and restoration plan that includes all properties.

Southern Wisconsin is rich in expertise on ecological restoration. The national origins of ecological restoration hark back to Aldo Leopold at both the Shack (in Sauk County) and the UW-Arboretum in the 1930s. The UW campus has maintained long-standing programs in restoration planning and ecology, and many regional conservation organizations have engaged in prairie and savanna restoration for decades and have considerable experience to share.

The Alliance proposes to revitalize a once-flourishing restoration advisory team. Begun in 1996 before the Badger property was decommissioned, the “Sauk Prairie Restoration Council” (SPRC) advised the Army on restoring a large portion of the Badger Plant. The SPRC plan for 1300 acres of restoration at Badger, published in 1999, languished during the deconstruction and planning phases following the closure of the Plant. Now is the time to revitalize an advisory team for the large-scale landscape restoration process at Badger for a total of over 5,500 acres!

**Public Education and Engagement at Badger.** Currently, the Alliance and occasionally one or more of the landowners plans and coordinates public tours of the Badger Lands. Whereas the Alliance tours normally traverse state land only, if a representative of Ho-Chunk and/or Dairy Forage are present, the tours also visit (normally inaccessible) lands managed by those property owners. Through the season, representatives from all of the primary landowners participate as tour leaders, demonstrating active management on their respective properties. Furthermore, the Alliance collaborates with the various landowners to coordinate volunteer efforts on each of the landowner parcels through the season. Such activities have included invasive species control (DNR and DFRC land), prairie seed collecting (DNR and Ho-Chunk land), fence removal (DNR and DFRC lands), and apple tree mapping, monitoring and preservation (DNR, Ho-Chunk and DFRC lands).

Leader training (for tours) and coordination are needed in order to facilitate the continuation of these educational and volunteer events that engage members of the public.

**Research Opportunities.** Research opportunities at Badger are unlimited—soils, wildlife, restoration, invertebrates, fire ecology, carbon cycling, use of grazing to manage invasive shrubs, etc. Many topics for research have already been identified. The Alliance has assisted and supported research on birds, small mammals, insects, fire ecology, apples and other topics on Badger Lands.

Dairy Forage Research Center is developing its own research agenda on their property at Badger. Some of their research transcends Dairy Forage property into neighboring Badger landowners (e.g., vegetation mapping and baseline soil sampling) with landowner collaboration. The Alliance has had deep connections to University of Wisconsin researchers, and many thesis and class projects have already been completed on Badger lands with Alliance encouragement and support.

**Fundraising.** In order to begin addressing each of these shared goals in a meaningful way, funding is always a natural prerequisite. Although each landowner has its own internal sources of funding (albeit modest in many cases), many opportunities present themselves for submitting collaborative grant proposals for shared activities. The Alliance is uniquely poised to help develop and submit grants that would benefit each landowner on shared activities at Badger, including ecological restoration and public education.

### **Proposed Activities**

#### **Ecological Restoration**

In order to assist the landowners with their goal of ecological restoration, the Alliance proposes to:

- 1) help plan and facilitate “Phase I” of the restoration effort to create a prairie corridor along the Great Sauk Trail.
- 2) identify sources of native seed and funding to undertake the early steps in restoration along the Trail prairie corridor;
- 3) begin implementation of the restoration efforts on the Trail prairie corridor.
- 4) facilitate the creation of a Badger restoration advisory team that can help inform long-term, large-scale ecosystem restoration over all of Badger and provide input into a landscape-scale restoration plan.

#### **Public Education and Engagement at Badger**

In support of landowner interest in public education and engagement, the Alliance proposes to:

- 1) plan and conduct a “tour leader training program” to train a suite of volunteer (and potentially paid) tour leaders;
- 2) plan and coordinate three public tours of Badger that involves at least two property owners;
- 3) plan and coordinate monthly volunteer work days that benefit each of the Badger landowners.
- 4) revise and reprint the “*Visitor Guide to the Badger Lands*” for free distribution to citizens

## Research

To support research on the Badger Lands, the Alliance will:

- 1) summarize historic and current research activities and results (reports, publications) on Badger Lands to share with all landowners;
- 2) conduct conversations among landowners to identify shared research needs and interests;
- 3) facilitate meetings between landowners and academic researchers;
- 4) introduce researchers from diverse disciplines to research opportunities at Badger;
- 5) help develop a research plan for the combined Badger Lands.

## Fund-raising

The Alliance will research and write grants and undertake fundraising events and activities to generate financial support to supplement whatever funding is provided by Sauk County in support of these targeted goals.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE AND OUTCOMES**

<b>Need being Addressed</b>	<b>Key activities</b>	<b>Timeline (2020)</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Ecological Restoration</b> 1) Great Sauk Trail Prairie Corridor	Hold discussions among landowners to determine extent of prairie corridor and early priority sites for restoration	February – April	Buy-in from all landowners on GSST Prairie Corridor and early plans
	Thorough planning of GSST Prairie Corridor, including maps, species lists, sources of seed, etc.	May-October	Restoration Plan for GSST Prairie Corridor
	Plan & implement fund-raising strategy to support prairie corridor restoration	August-December	A fundraising strategy and initiation of strategy
	Site preparation for first prairie planting; collecting seeds;	September-November	A site prepared for first restoration work and seeds collected
	sow seeds if site is thoroughly prepared	December	First planting of initial site.
2) Badger Restoration Advisory Team	Identify potential restoration advisers and areas of expertise;	February – May	A fully functional Badger Restoration Advisory Team (name TBD)

Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance/Proposal to Sauk County Board/BOMC Funding

	<p>Hold several meetings of landowners and advisers to identify components of a restoration plan for Badger;</p> <p>Develop an outline for a Badger-wide restoration plan on 5,500 acres</p>	<p>June-September</p> <p>September-December</p>	<p>Skeletal outline of large-scale restoration plan</p> <p>Outline and elements of a Badger Restoration Plan, with input from landowners, will be crafted and presented by the Advisory Team.</p>
<p><b>Public Education and Engagement</b></p> <p>1) Tour Leader Training Workshop</p> <p>2) Public Tours</p> <p>3) Volunteer Work days</p> <p>4) Reprint "Visitor Guide to Badger Lands" brochure</p>	<p>Work with landowners to plan a tour leader training workshop</p> <p>Develop training materials, invite speakers &amp; trainers, set date, etc.</p> <p>Host Tour Leader workshop</p> <p>Plan three public tours of Badger; locate tour leaders for each tour; contract bus for each tour; publicize widely</p> <p>Conduct three public tours</p> <p>Plan volunteer work days with Badger landowners</p> <p>Publicize and promote work days</p> <p>Conduct monthly work days</p> <p>Identify funding sources for reprint</p> <p>Make revisions to original brochure</p>	<p>January-March</p> <p>February – April</p> <p>May</p> <p>January-April</p> <p>May-October</p> <p>January-March</p> <p>March-September</p> <p>April – November</p> <p>January-March</p> <p>March</p>	<p>Commitment to tour leader training</p> <p>Tour Leader Training Materials</p> <p>Tour Leader Training Workshop for 10+ individuals</p> <p>Three tours planned and leaders identified, bus secured, tours announced through media, websites, newsletters, etc.</p> <p>Three public tours conducted for 75+ individuals</p> <p>Monthly work days planned and conducted on Ho-Chunk, DFRC and DNR lands. Target volunteer numbers: 50 people, 250 hours</p> <p>Visitor Guide is updated and reprinted (5,000+) and distributed widely throughout county.</p>

Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance/Proposal to Sauk County Board/BOMC Funding

	Reprint and distribute brochures	April-November	
<b>Research</b>			
1) Summarize historic research	Identify historic research at Badger and compile a list of projects and publications	January-April	
2) Identify research needs & interests	Survey of landowners to ascertain current research needs and activities;	March-June	Survey of landowners that identifies current and future research interests and activities;
3) Invite researchers to Badger for special tours and meetings	meeting(s) of UW researchers interested in Badger;	July-September	engagement of UW research faculty in projects at Badger;
4) Research Plan	Develop a coordinated research plan, identifying research leaders, timeline, etc.	October-December	Outline and elements of of a research plan for Badger Lands
<b>Fundraising</b>			
1) Grant research & writing	Research on grant opportunities will be an ongoing effort through the year	February-November	Sources of new funding for restoration and education and research will be identified
	Grants will be written on behalf of Badger landowners as opportunities arise	March-December	As opportunities arise, grants will be generated on behalf of Badger landowners to support goals
2) Special fundraising activities	Several of the proposed activities may be conducive to a special fundraising appeal or event. Example: "Adopt-an-Acre" for the GSST Prairie Corridor.	June-November	One or more fund-raising events/appeals will be conducted and funding secured for proposed activities



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**PROJECT BUDGET**

<b>Need being Addressed</b>	<b>Expense Items</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Ecological Restoration</b>	Coordination & planning of Prairie Corridor; contract map-maker; site preparation; seed purchase	\$10,000
<b>Public Education and Engagement</b>	Coordination & planning of training workshop, materials; plan and conduct tours, contract school buses	\$3,000
<b>Research</b>	Plan and conduct landowner survey; prepare report; plan meeting(s) with researchers; develop preliminary research plan	\$2,000

**Total request of Sauk County BOMC Account = \$15,000**