

DNR seeks input on land use

Planning efforts begin for properties in Rock, Green, Dane counties

By Gina Duwe

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BRODHEAD

Hunters, fishers and recreational users of state fish, wildlife and natural areas in western Rock, eastern Green and south central Dane counties can provide input and ideas on a master plan for the properties.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is developing a master plan for the properties called the Sugar River Planning Group. An open house will be held Tuesday in Brodhead.

Users are invited to share how they use the properties and how they would like to see the land managed, said Ed Jepsen, a DNR planner overseeing the effort.

For example, users who hunt deer, turkey or pheasants could comment on what they enjoy about the property, he said.

The 8,800 acres of leased lands in the Footville Public Hunting Grounds is included in the plan. The leased lands represent about 40 percent of the properties available for public hunting in the planning group. The leases expire between 2015 and 2017.

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The Sugar River Planning Group properties also include 12,222 acres of fee title and easement lands with 10,579 acres in wildlife areas, 860 acres in fishery areas, 256 acres in Ice Age Trail lands and 527 acres in natural areas.

It includes 1,285 acres in 14 smaller Extensive Wildlife Habitat and Scattered Wildlife Land parcels.

Results of the planning could be more parking lots, easier access and different property boundaries, Jepsen said.

“More than likely, there will be a few more state natural areas out of the process,” he said.

Questions have been raised about the tax base and road maintenance in the town of Avon, where a substantial amount of land is under state or federal ownership, Jepsen said.

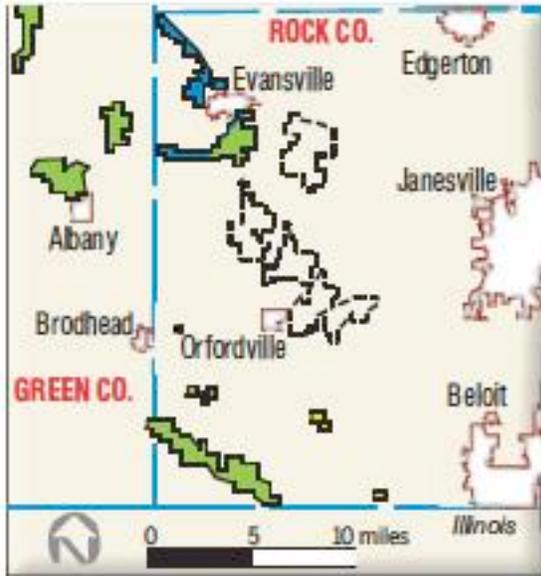
“We’re going to be looking at that,” he said. “That’s a pretty unique property.”

The DNR is collecting public comments through July 14. A draft of the master plan will be released in December or January, when another round of public meetings and a comment period will be held.

The public also can comment during the third phase, when the plan is before the natural resources board for approval.

GREEN/ROCK COUNTIES

DNR master planning areas



-  Wildlife area
-  Stream bank protection
-  Extensive wildlife habitat
-  Public hunting ground

IF YOU GO

What: Open house on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' master plan on recreation and habitat management of state properties in eastern Green and western Rock counties with an emphasis on Avon Bottoms Wildlife Area and the Footville Public Hunting Grounds.

When: 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 1.

Where: Brodhead Memorial Public Library, 1207 25th St., Brodhead

To comment: Residents can provide comment at the meeting or in writing by Monday, July 14. Comments can be mailed to Ed Jepsen LF/6, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707 or emailed to edward.jepsen@wisconsin.gov.

For more information: Details about the properties, maps and a preliminary vision and goals are available by searching the DNR website dnr.wi.gov for keywords "property master planning," and clicking on the link for "Sugar River

Planning Group”under master plans in progress. The materials also will be at the DNR’s central and regional offices and the public libraries in Evansville, Albany, Edgerton, Beloit, Janesville, Oregon, New Glarus, Monroe, Monticello, Stoughton, Madison and Verona.