



October 21, 2014

Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Jarvis,

The Madison Audubon Society represents thousands of citizen conservationists in the Wisconsin counties surrounding the former Badger Ammunition Plant. We respectfully ask the National Park Service (NPS) to require the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to honor its agreement with NPS as it finalizes use of federally-owned land at that site. NPS wisely stipulated that those lands conveyed to DNR be used for habitat and low-impact recreation. This requirement is extraordinarily important because the site includes a uniquely large mass of habitat suitable for many grassland bird species, most of which have suffered significant population declines due to loss of similar habitats. Conservation of these species is among the most important aims of federal, state, and local conservation organizations, including Madison Audubon Society. Failure to convert the Plant site to habitats as envisioned by NPS and other parties would be an indefensible blow to the recovery of these species.

Madison Audubon Society is invested in this issue because we know firsthand the degree to which grassland bird species are threatened and the difficulty in creating and sustaining the habitat they require. We have painstakingly restored about 2000 acres of sanctuaries at which management focuses largely on creating grassland bird habitat. Squandering the opportunity to create habitat for grassland bird species at the Plant site would be extremely unfortunate, to say the least.

With significant public input and final, critical assistance from the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the DNR now has a clear plan before it that will honor its commitment to NPS. More importantly, the plan realizes the potential of the Plant site to provide a wide variety of public recreation and wonderful habitat for grassland birds. However, the DNR continues to pursue the possible development of ATV trails and shooting ranges that would occupy about 500 acres of land that has already been identified as having high potential for grassland habitat. Such developments, we believe, would violate the DNR's agreement with NPS and we ask that you remind DNR of the need to honor that agreement.

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NPS represented the American people in allowing the DNR to use a great and historic national asset to enhance the health and public enjoyment of a large swath of land containing a variety of natural resources. We need you now to continue that representation and ensure that the DNR manages the lands of the Badger Ammunition Plant as it promised.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Reetz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Matthew Reetz
Executive Director

cc: Sally Jewell, Director of the Interior