



September 25, 2015

John Pohlman - LF/6  
WI Department of Natural Resources  
P O Box 7921  
Madison WI 53707-7921

**SUBMITTED BY ELECTRONIC MAIL**

RE: Joint Organizational Letter Supporting Conservation and Quiet Nature-Based Recreation in the Draft Master Plan for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area (DNR portion of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands)

Dear Mr. Pohlman:

Located on the South bluff of Devil's Lake State Park and framed by the Wisconsin Riverway, the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands represent our largest and most viable opportunity to restore and manage a large-scale forest to grassland transition in Wisconsin.

Scientists and birders are concerned about population declines of many grassland bird species. Since the North American Breeding Bird Survey began in 1966, grassland birds have declined more steeply than any other group of birds in North America and the Midwest. These are the birds found at Badger.

The Driftless Area of Wisconsin, including the Baraboo Hills, is particularly rich in known and potential bat hibernacula sites within easy commuting distance for summer resident bat populations. Military ammunition production and storage bunkers and similar facilities at Badger provide a unique opportunity to help in the recovery of bat populations.

The nearby Baraboo Hills have been designated by The Nature Conservancy as one of the Western Hemisphere's "Last Great Places" by the U.S. Department of Interior as a National Natural Landmark, by the DNR as a Forest Legacy Area and a Conservation Opportunity Area of continental significance, and by the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative as an Important Bird Area. The nearby villages of Sauk City and Prairie du Sac have both earned and sustain Bird City Wisconsin status.

The DNR will be initiating a process to locate a public shooting range in Sauk County. The Sauk Prairie Recreation Area will be among the top contender sites. The potential gun range location at Badger features a complex of remnant prairie, oak woodland, and grassland habitats.

The conservation goals outlined in the DNR plan are to maintain and reestablish the biological richness of Wisconsin's disappearing native prairies, particularly grassland birds. Not only do proposed loud disruptive uses contradict these goals, they are not compatible with other sustainable recreational activities proposed for Badger like biking, family picnics, bird watching, snowshoeing, and hiking, including the nearby Great Sauk Trail.

While we support the WDNR's proposals for ecological restoration, habitat management and quiet nature-based recreation on the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant lands, we do not support proposed on/off-road motorcycles, sport rocketry and a future gun range.

Sincerely,

Laura Olah, Executive Director, Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger

Peter Galvin, Director of Programs, Center for Biological Diversity

Craig Williams, Program Director, Kentucky Environmental Foundation

George Meyer, Executive Director, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

John E. Peck Executive Director, Family Farm Defenders

Denny Caneff, Executive Director, River Alliance of Wisconsin

Matthew Reetz, Executive Director, Madison Audubon Society

Bill Davis, Chapter Director, Sierra Club - John Muir Chapter

Forest Jahnke, Coordinator, Crawford Stewardship Project

Craig Schlender, Chapter President, Sauk County Pheasants Forever

Dr. Robert Horwich, Director, Community Conservation

Kimberlee Wright, Executive Director, Midwest Environmental Advocates

Kerry Schumann, Executive Director, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters

Bill Welch, President, Friends of Scenic Lodi Valley

Patricia J. Popple, Editor, Frac Sand Sentinel

Julie Enslow, Facilitator, 350 Milwaukee

Maria Powell, Executive Director, Midwest Environmental Justice Organization

Tim Lopez, Director, Voluntary Cleanup Advisory Board

Dave McCoy, Director, Citizen Action New Mexico

Al Gedicks, Executive Secretary, Wisconsin Resources Protection Council

Gail Lamberty, Rob Nurre, Co-chairs Badger Forward Committee, Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance

Elaine Swanson, People Empowered Protect the Land (PEPL) of Rosendale

Don Timmerman and Roberta Thurstin Timmerman, Casa Maria Catholic Worker

Dena Eakles, President, Echo Valley Hope

Alison Jones Chaim, Executive Director, Physicians for Social Responsibility Wisconsin

Alex Bryant, Program Director, Wisconsin Environmental Health Network

**Respectfully submitted on behalf of the above 26 organizations by:**

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**Endorsements received after September 25:**

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Hannah West, Executive Director, Alliance for Animals and the Environment