

# Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

# 3



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Prime Farmland	3-3
Drainage Districts	3-3

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Physical Characteristics	3-5
Water Resources	3-8
Land Resources	3-16
Natural Resources and the Built Environment	3-20

### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Community History	3-24
Places	3-26
Events	3-29
Organizations	3-33

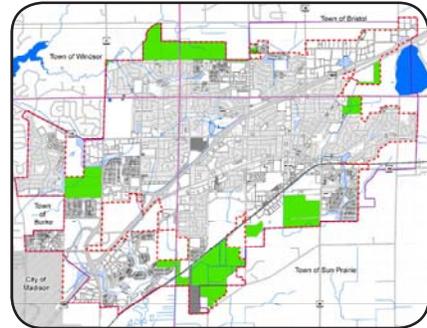
This chapter examines the current state of the agricultural, natural and cultural resources within the Planning Area. This information will help to identify those resources that should be properly managed or protected as well as provide information regarding factors that may place natural limitations on development. These three types of resources have shaped the City's past growth and will likely continue to influence city growth into the future.

Volume 2 of this plan element contains the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations that are intended to guide the preservation, protection, expansion or improvement of natural and cultural resources in Sun Prairie.

# AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES



Although Sun Prairie is considered an urban center within Dane County, agricultural uses and practices still exist within the City's corporate boundaries. As of the writing of this plan, there were approximately 629 acres of land within the City's boundaries used for agricultural purposes. This number is less than the agricultural acreage found in the Land Use chapter due to the recent construction of the new high school - which was formerly agricultural land. Approximately 225 acres surrounding the municipal Water Pollution Control Facility on the City's south side is used to cultivate marsh grass; approximately 120 acres of land on the City's west side is used for crop production; approximately 195 acres of land on the City's north side is used for row crop production; approximately 53 acres near Patrick Marsh is used for crop production; and the City leases 36 acres of land within Sheehan Park for crop production. There are significant portions of the City's designated growth areas that are under agricultural production, but are not yet in the City. The agricultural use of these properties is likely temporary until such time that these areas are developed for urban uses.



Another agricultural use within the City, although less well known, is community gardening. Community gardens provide a number of benefits including an increased sense of community ownership, a cost effective source of fresh produce, a way to socialize with friends and neighbors, educational opportunities, and increased access to green space.

Currently, there is one community garden within the City that was started through the Sun Prairie Youth and Family Commission, but is currently overseen by the Public Works Committee. The garden began in 1999 and is located on a parcel of city-owned property immediately east of the Sun Prairie Public Library. It was originally created to serve the needs of lower income residents. The garden currently consists of 144 plots, each measuring 18 feet by 24 feet. A small annual fee for each plot is necessary to cover the costs of maintenance, water and electricity to serve the area.

## COMMUNITY GARDEN

*City residents can register for the plots through the Parks and Recreation Department. Demand for this use has steadily increased. The site is open from early May through the first frost in fall and organic production is encouraged whenever possible.*



Another opportunity for connecting to area agricultural resources is through the Industrial Food Market Coalition (IFM), a project formed by the Dane County Planning and Development Department. Created in 2006, IFM works to connect large volume institutional buyers and large businesses with local and organically grown Wisconsin agricultural products, and increase market opportunities for local growers. IFM works through education and outreach to better connect buyers and sellers through the Badgerland Produce Co-op Auction.



McCoy Farm c.1949

*See Map 3-1*

*See Map 3-2*

## PRIME FARMLAND

Map 3-1 illustrates the soils in Sun Prairie and the surrounding area that are classified as prime farmland. According to the Natural Resource Conservation Service, prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oil seed crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Although preserving productive farmland is important, this needs to be balanced against the long-term need for the continued growth and development of the City. Due to political and physical barriers to growth to the north, west and southwest, it is likely that some areas of prime farmland to the south, southeast and east will be displaced by urban development at some point in the future.

## DRAINAGE DISTRICTS

Drainage districts are areas of land that are drained for agriculture or other purposes. The land is drained within the district using open ditches, tiles, pumps or levees. Districts are governed by drainage boards who have the authority to levee assessments against landowners within the district who receive benefits from the drainage. Those assessments are used to cover the cost of constructing, maintaining, and repairing the drainage system. As of the writing of this plan, there are approximately 1,075 acres of land within Sun Prairie that are also within the boundaries of Dane County Drainage District #9 (Map 3-2). The City currently maintains the ditches and drains within the corporate boundaries and residents are already being charged for this service provision through the City's stormwater utility. Questions have been raised as to whether or not the City should continue to be part of such drainage districts since property owners are already paying for maintenance services through the stormwater utility.

## NATURAL RESOURCES



Picnic at Token Creek

Understanding the community's inventory of natural resources and the rules and regulations that are in place to protect these resources is a critical step in the process of planning for future growth and development. A balance is needed between the economic growth of the City and the preservation of important natural resources that contribute to the environmental health of the community and the quality of life for city residents. Identifying critical resources and potential conflicts now will help all involved in future development decisions to be better prepared to address and resolve such conflicts, and will help to ensure that critical resources are adequately protected.

**See Map 3-3**

The natural resources section includes:

- A description of the existing natural resources giving character to the City of Sun Prairie and its surrounding jurisdictional area.
- Maps that document the location and extent of these resources.
- Regulatory information pertaining to natural resources found in Appendix H.

## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

### GEOLOGY

Dane County has a varied and unique geologic and physiographic setting. In the center of Dane County is the Yahara River Valley, which encompasses some of the City of Sun Prairie and the surrounding area. In this area, deep glacial deposits dammed up large valleys and formed a chain of large lakes and wetlands.

The eastern part of Dane County is known as the drumlin and marsh physiographic area and includes most of the City of Sun Prairie. The deposits found in this area include general glacial deposits with extensive areas of marsh deposits. This area consists of many low drumlin hills interspersed with shallow glacial deposits and scattered wetlands.

According to the National Resources Conservation Service, there are very few occurrences of bedrock issues. These are generally located on the western and northeastern boundaries of the City where the bedrock lies between zero and three feet of the land surface. However, there are known areas around the City where bedrock has been a problem for development. Specific areas have been encountered during construction to the west of the CTH C corridor, and north of the Sun Prairie Business Park.

### TOPOGRAPHY

The topography in Sun Prairie and the surrounding area is generally flat with some gentle slopes. There are several high points in the City. The topography of the land west of Schuster Road reaches an elevation of 1,040 feet above sea level and is the City's highest point. A second high point is located in the southwest corner of the Wyndham Hills subdivision. The lowest point in the City is located in the far northwest corner of the City where the Token Creek crosses these lands. The topography in this area is 899 feet above sea level. Other low points in the City are located along the Koshkonong Creek and the Canadian Pacific Railroad on the south side of the City. Refer to Map 3-3 for location of slopes greater than twelve percent.



Patrick Marsh Viewshed



Wetland Feature in Smith's Crossing

## VEGETATION

Vegetation in this landscape has been significantly changed due to agricultural and urban land use practices. Land cover within and surrounding Sun Prairie that had once been dominated by prairies, brush, oak openings, and marshes are now primarily developed or used as agricultural cropland. Most riparian zones have been degraded through forest clearing, urban development, and intensive agricultural practices. Most wetlands have experienced widespread ditching, grazing, and infestation by invasive plants.

Efforts are being made to plant native species on some public open space lands. Examples include native plantings on stormwater management lands, and prairie restoration efforts on lands adjacent to the public library and at some area schools. In addition, the City is planning a large-scale wetland and habitat restoration effort on lands located west of S. Bird Street and south of Sheehan Park.



## MINERALS

Identification of local supplies of mineral resources will help guide land use decisions to minimize conflicts that would limit access to these economically important resources. Mineral resources in Dane County are non-metallic in nature. Non-metallic aggregate resources provide essential material for the construction of roads, buildings, utilities and community facilities. Mineral deposits having potential for extraction are usually located in land zoned agricultural and are subject to state and county regulations with regard to mining extraction and restoration. Increasing urbanization near resource areas represents the predominant barrier to efficient extraction of these important resources.

Mineral extraction potential within the Sun Prairie extraterritorial jurisdiction area includes an area of potential sand and gravel deposits along the eastern edge of the City. The southern end of this area has the highest potential as an extraction site, with the balance of the area having a lower potential. Map 3-4 includes other potential sites for non-metallic mineral extraction.

*See Map 3-4*

## SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

*Dodge-St. Charles-McHenry soils are located in the eastern, southern, and central portions of the city.*

### **Dodge Series**

Slope: 0-20%

Surface runoff: negligible to high

Permeability: moderate

### **St. Charles Series**

Slope: 0-30%

Surface runoff: very low to low

Permeability: varies

### **McHenry Series**

Slope: 0-30%

Surface runoff: low to high

Permeability: moderate to mod-rapid

*Plano-Ringwood-Griswold soils are located on the north and west sides of the city.*

### **Plano Series**

Slope: 0-12%

Surface runoff: low or medium

Permeability: moderate to mod-rapid

### **Ringwood Series**

Slope: 0-12%

Surface runoff: low or medium

Permeability: moderate to mod-rapid

### **Griswold Series**

Slope: 0-20%

Surface runoff: medium or low

Permeability: moderate to mod-rapid

*Batavia-Houghton-Dresden soils are located along Token Creek and Koshkonong Creek.*

### **Batavia Series**

Slope: 0-12%.

Surface runoff: low or medium

Permeability: moderate to mod-rapid

### **Houghton Series**

Slope: 0-2%

Surface runoff: very slow or ponded

Permeability: moderately slow to mod-rapid

### **Dresden Series**

Slope: 0-30%

Surface runoff: slow to rapid

Permeability: moderate to very rapid

## SOILS

Soil data is used to understand permeability and drainage, evaluate the ability of land to replenish groundwater supplies and filter contaminants, and to determine suitability and stability for development. The general soils associations in the City of Sun Prairie are listed in the sidebar to the left. Most of these soils are very deep, well-drained soils with slight to moderate limitations for urban uses. An exception exists where hydric soils are found. Hydric soils are formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions. Hydric soils typically correspond with designated environmental corridors, floodplains, wetlands, and low areas surrounding creeks, and have severe limitations for urban development. Map 3-5 depicts the location of non-hydric and hydric soils in Sun Prairie and the surrounding area. A positive correlation can be seen between the location of hydric soils and a shallow depth to groundwater when comparing Maps 3-5 and 3-6.

## WATER RESOURCES

### WATER REGULATIONS

Water resources are regulated and protected at all governmental levels. The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission and the Dane County Board of Supervisors have authority, by Chapter 33 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission, by NR 121 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, to recommend minimum water quality regulation standards and guidance of water quality programs that apply within the county and cities.

The county administers these regulations unless a city chooses to adopt and administer their own regulations that are at least as restrictive, or more so, than the county's. The City of Sun Prairie has chosen to adopt such regulations through the City's Shoreland and Wetland, Floodplain, and Stormwater Runoff, Erosion and Non point Source Pollution Ordinances.



Patrick Marsh

*Each person uses, on average, about 140 gallons of groundwater per day.*

*Public water supplies, including water used in municipal and private systems for residential, industrial, and commercial purposes, account for about 75% of total groundwater use.*

*Urban areas account for 80% of groundwater use.*

Source: Dane County Water Quality Plan Summary Plan 2004

See Map 3-6

## GROUNDWATER

*The water beneath the surface of the ground, consisting largely of surface water that has seeped down. Natural discharge often occurs at springs and can form wetlands. It is often withdrawn for agricultural, municipal and industrial use via extraction wells.*

## AQUIFER

*An underground bed or layer of permeable rock, sediment, or soil that contains and transmits a sustainable amount of water, especially one that supplies the water for wells, springs, etc.*

## WATER TABLE

*The level at which the groundwater pressure is equal to atmospheric pressure*

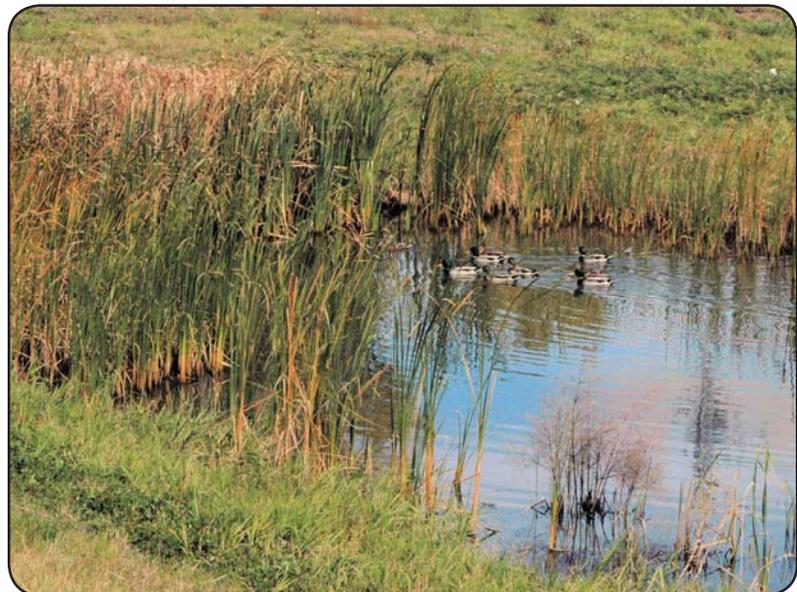
*Groundwater is water located beneath the ground surface. A unit of rock or deposit is called an aquifer when it can yield a usable quantity of water. The depth at which soils and voids in rock become completely saturated with water is called the water table.*

## GROUNDWATER

Groundwater serves many purposes, including residential, industrial and commercial consumption, irrigation, and flow to lakes, streams, and rivers. In Dane County, nearly all water supply sources originate from groundwater resources stored in aquifers. Rural, shallow domestic wells draw from the upper sandstone and unconsolidated aquifers. Municipal wells draw their water supply from the deep sandstone (Mt. Simon) aquifer. Infiltration from precipitation is the major source of local groundwater recharge for both levels of aquifers. Map 3-6 shows groundwater depth in the Sun Prairie area ranges between 0-50 feet. The relative shallow depth to groundwater may pose a risk of basement flooding and ponding in certain areas of the City.

According to the Dane County Water Quality Summary Plan, 2004, water table levels in the Sun Prairie region have declined almost fifty feet from pre-development conditions and are expected to decline further as pumping demands increase to accommodate projected community development. However, the significant amount of rainfall the region experienced in 2008 helped to elevate water table levels.

Although Chapter 106 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code authorizes the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as the primary regulatory agency overseeing groundwater controls, local land use decisions and water utilities have increasing responsibility to protect ground and surface water.



Wetland Feature in Smith's Crossing

## SURFACE WATER

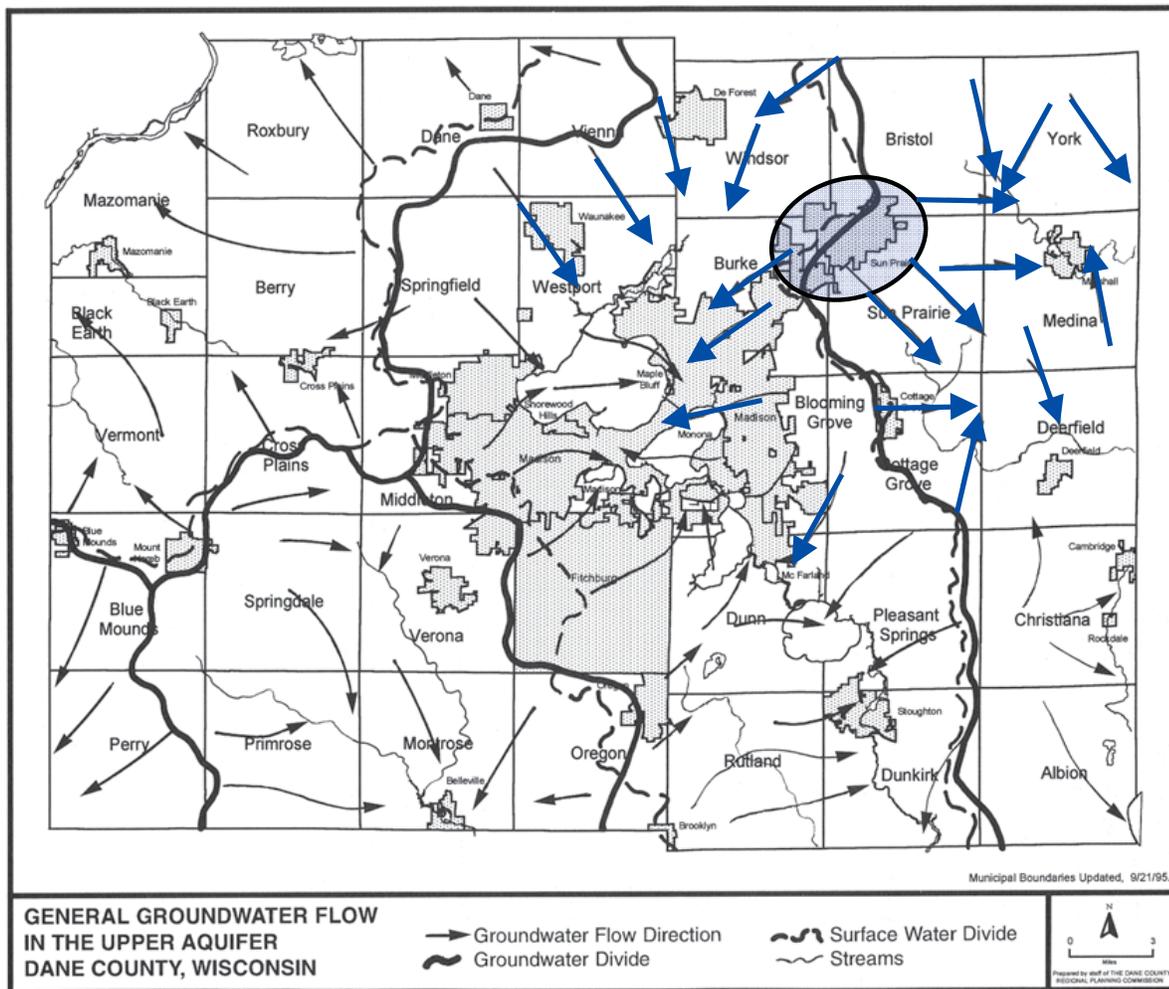
Surface water resources include lakes, rivers, wetlands and watersheds and planning for this resource should be approached at a regional level. The City of Sun Prairie is intersected along its length by both surface water and groundwater divides. General water flow to the north and west of these divides is in a south-westerly direction toward the City of Madison. Water flow on the south and east side of the divides is generally toward the communities of Deerfield and Marshall.

*“Polluted urban runoff takes two general forms:*

- *stormwater running off impervious surfaces such as rooftops, parking lots and streets, carrying sediments, nutrients, and other pollutants; and*
- *sediment-laden water flowing from development sites into streams and lakes.”*

Source: DNR, Lower Rock River Basin-wide Issues

**FIGURE 3-1  
DANE COUNTY GROUNDWATER FLOW DIRECTION**



Source: Dane County Water Quality Plan, Summary Plan 2004, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey 1995

### WATERSHED OR DRAINAGE BASIN

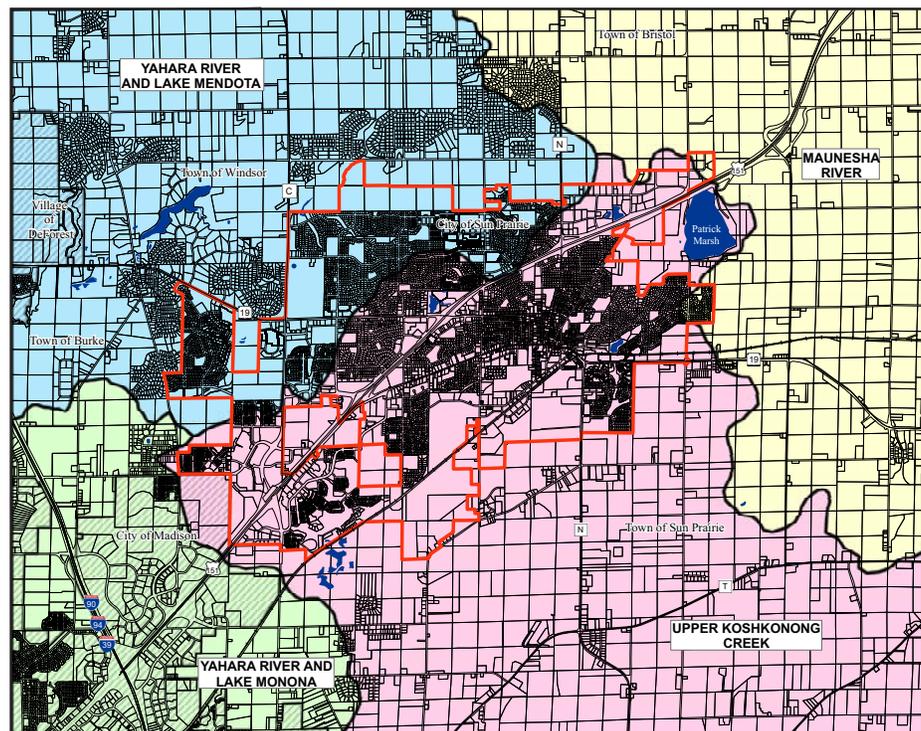
*The area of land where water from rain or snow melt drains into a body of water, such as a river, lake, or wetland. It includes both the streams and rivers that convey the water as well as the land surfaces from which water drains.*

### WATERSHEDS

A watershed, or drainage basin, is an area of land where water drains downward from surrounding ridges to a common point such as a stream or lake. A majority of the City of Sun Prairie is within the Lower Rock River Basin encompassing portions of the Yahara River/Lake Mendota and Upper Koshkonong Creek Watersheds. The most northeastern tip of the City along US 151, and portions of the eastern boundaries, are within the Mauneshia River Watershed, which is part of the Upper Rock River Basin. As the City continues to grow in these directions, development will have more influence and effect on this watershed.

Most of the original wetlands of the Lower Rock River Basin have been drained to accommodate agriculture and many streams sections ditched and straightened to provide more efficient drainage. These conditions, coupled with warm temperatures, erosion of sediment and nutrients from cropland, discharge of treated wastewater from urban development, and hydrologic modifications, contribute to overall poor water quality. Additionally, erosion from construction sites and runoff from urban land uses as a result of increased urban development will continue to exhibit more strain on the quality of the basin.

**FIGURE 3-2**  
**WATERSHEDS WITHIN SUN PRAIRIE CORPORATE BOUNDARIES**



Source: City of Sun Prairie Planning Department, Dane County Land Information Office

## Yahara River/Lake Mendota Watershed

The Yahara River Watershed drains almost 467 square miles in Dane County and includes parts of the north and west sides of the City of Sun Prairie. This watershed includes Token Creek, which empties into the Yahara River and ultimately the Rock River after flowing through Lakes Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, and Kegonsa.

The Upper Yahara-Mendota Watershed was designated in 1995 as a Priority Watershed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Covering 85 square miles in north central Dane County, this watershed touches a mixture of urban, suburban, and agricultural land. Based on DNR groundwater susceptibility mapping, the watershed has a medium susceptibility for groundwater contamination. As urban development expands on Sun Prairie's west side, there is raising concern about decreased groundwater recharge and altered base flow in Token Creek.

### Lake Mendota Priority Watershed Project

Selected by the DNR in 1993, the 232 square mile Lake Mendota Watershed Project will complete an eleven-year implementation program in 2008. The plan includes management objectives to minimize the impacts of urban runoff for both rural and urban areas. The project goals include reducing sediment contributions from existing urban areas, including the City of Sun Prairie, which amended its erosion control ordinance and now contracts with the Dane County Land Conservation Division for erosion control plan review and inspection.

### Token Creek

Token Creek is a significant natural resource feature in the Sun Prairie area unique for its freshwater spring-fed stream ecosystem and many inherent ecological and aesthetic values. Passing through mostly agricultural land, the main stem of Token Creek is approximately ten miles long and flows from just north of Sun Prairie to Cherokee Marsh, and is the primary tributary to the Yahara River. Another 77 miles of smaller tributaries feed into the creek along its length. The creek has an average width of fifteen feet and an average depth of 1.5 feet. Water from the springs and other groundwater sources from Token Creek contributes the most significant amount of base flow to Lake Mendota.

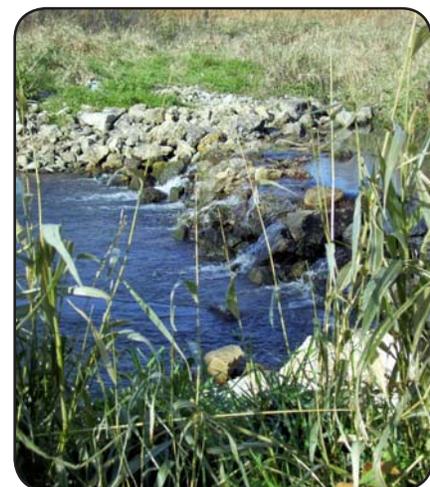
The Token Creek area is subject to a high level of development pressure from adjacent communities, including the City of Sun Prairie. Stormwater runoff from these areas, and three major highways that cross the stream, is often warmer than lakes and streams, and can raise water temperatures and degrade



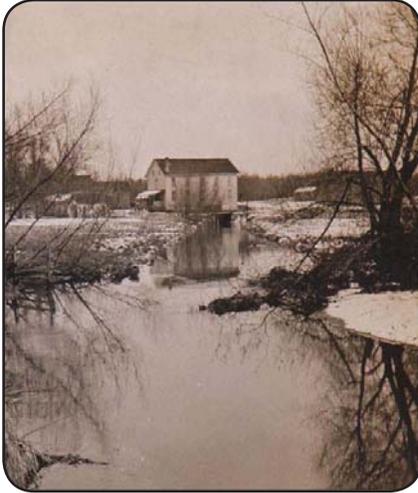
Token Creek



Source: www.thedailypage.com

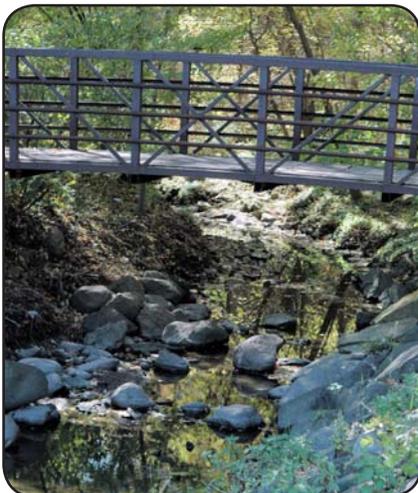


Token Creek



Token Creek Mill Pond

*Drainage in the northern portion of Sun Prairie's Westside neighborhood addition flows to Token Creek. The southern portion of the neighborhood drains to the Upper Koshkonong Creek.*



Koshkonong Creek Tributary

fish habitat. Surrounding lands that drain to Token Creek have been designated as Thermally Sensitive Areas. The City has taken several measures to help mitigate the impact of development, including the construction of a greenway near STH 19 and CTH C, and improved stormwater management practices that place an emphasis on infiltration.

In an effort to help protect and improve this watershed, the Town of Windsor, DNR and United States Army Corps of Engineers acquired lands north of STH 19 that comprised the former Token Creek Mill Pond. The mill pond was constructed in 1861 to power a gristmill which remained operational until 1945. Since then, the dam has been removed and there are plans to restore the area to its pre-1860's condition, with a functioning wetland habitat and native brook trout fishery.

### Upper Koshkonong Creek Watershed

The Koshkonong Creek Watershed drains approximately 279 square miles of mostly agricultural land in the far eastern part of Dane County and includes eastern, central and southern portions of the City of Sun Prairie. This watershed includes the Koshkonong Creek, which empties into the Rock River after flowing through Lake Koshkonong. Although erosion control regulations are in effect, development, along with agricultural uses in the City and adjacent municipalities, continue to be a concern in this area. The DNR identifies the watershed with a medium susceptibility for groundwater contamination.

### Koshkonong Creek

Koshkonong Creek is approximately 42 miles long and the upper portion of the creek flows from the headwaters at the east edge of the City through the southern portion of the City. The stream has an average width of twenty feet and an average depth of one foot. The creek flows through an open channel through most of the City with short enclosed sections in the Linnerud Drive area. The creek supports a warm water sport fishery in all but the first six miles of its length where it flows through the City and the Water Pollution Control Facility, which discharges treated effluent. A Sun Prairie Stormwater Utility Ordinance (Chapter 15.30 of the Municipal Code) is in force to help control unfiltered runoff from storm sewers into the creek.

## Maunasha River Watershed

The Maunasha River Watershed drains 88 square miles of north-eastern Dane County that is characterized as seventy percent agricultural land created from drained wetlands. Twenty miles of the Maunasha River flows through Dane County, before eventually joining the Crawfish River. The river is a shallow, meandering, wetland drainage stream with a low gradient. The river is classified as a warm water sport fishery and rates fairly good water quality in comparison to other monitored streams in Dane County, but is subject to runoff of agricultural fertilizers and erosion.

## FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are lands that have been or may be covered by water during a regional flood. Cities are required by section 87.30 of Wisconsin Statutes and Chapter NR 116 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code to adopt floodplain zoning ordinances to meet the minimum standards provided by the state. The City's floodplains zoning provisions are found in Chapter 17.28 of the Zoning Ordinance. Floodplains are identified as the 100-year floodplain as designated on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The City also requires the identification and preservation of the flood carrying capacity of drainage areas that are not mapped by FEMA through its platting and development ordinances.

General floodplain boundaries are depicted on Sheet 2 of the City's Official Zoning Map: Environmental Corridor-Natural Resource Protection. Map 3-3 includes the FEMA mapped floodplains as well as other natural resources in Sun Prairie and surrounding areas. A detailed site analysis is prepared with the proposal of development on any property that contains a floodplain area shown on either the City Zoning Map or the FIRM.

FEMA, through the DNR, is currently involved in a "map modernization" effort where floodplain maps are created and distributed in a Geographic Information System (GIS) format. The GIS floodplain maps for Dane County went into effect on January 2, 2009.

*See Map 3-3*

*"To address flooding and control water quantity, the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) requires municipalities to perform floodplain mapping and management plan development to receive federal flood insurance."*

Source: DNR, Lower Rock River Basin-wide Issues

## WETLANDS

Wetlands are areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to support aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation, and which have soils indicative of wet conditions. The primary function of wetlands is that of wildlife habitat and water quality. They are natural filters for stormwater runoff and provide many additional benefits in the areas of pollution control, drainage, and hydrologic function.

Wetlands are regulated and protected at all governmental levels and development is generally prohibited within wetland areas. Primary regulatory agencies include the DNR, which establishes minimum standards found under NR 103 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Dane County and the City of Sun Prairie both enforce a buffer zone from wetlands, shorelands and bodies of water, within which only limited uses may be located.

According to the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory, the wetlands in the City of Sun Prairie are generally found along Koshkonong Creek and Token Creek. Other potential wetlands exist in the Sun Prairie area, however, it is likely that not all of them are mapped and further investigation is needed at the time of development. Wetland boundaries are depicted on Sheet 2 of the City's Official Zoning Map: Environmental Corridor-Natural Resource Protection. See Map 3-3 for the general location of known wetlands in the Sun Prairie area.

*"The hydrology of a particular site is determined by the amount, flow, frequency, duration, and depth of water."*

*"Wetland, or 'hydric' soils are saturated or waterlogged for all or part of the year."*

Source: Dane County Wetlands Resource Management Guide



Wetland Feature in Meadow Crossing

## LAND RESOURCES

### ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS

“Environmental Corridors are contiguous systems of open space in urban and urbanizing areas that include environmentally sensitive lands and natural resources requiring protection from disturbance and development, and lands needed for open space and recreational use” (Dane County Department of Planning and Development Environmental Corridors Fact Sheet).

Title 17 of the City of Sun Prairie Zoning Ordinance establishes natural resource protection regulations for defined Environmental Corridors. Map 3-3 shows the natural resource features included on Sheet 2 of the City’s Official Zoning Map: Environmental Corridor-Natural Resource Protection.

Environmental corridors in the Sun Prairie Urban Service Area have been mapped by the regional planning agency, now restructured as the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC). Once delineated and adopted, local governments and state and federal agencies use the corridors to help make decisions regarding the location of urban development and major facilities. There are approximately 927 acres throughout the City of Sun Prairie defined as environmental and open space corridors that are additionally serving to function as drainageways and stormwater management. Some of the corridors include the 100-year floodplain, wetlands and detention ponds.

*See Map 3-3*



Sun Prairie Business Park

*Habitat loss has been identified as the single greatest threat to biodiversity in the United States.*



*In 2008, The City of Sun Prairie Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department updated the City's five year Parks and Open Space Plan, now effective through 2013, which serves as a guideline for the planning, development and maintenance of the park system within Sun Prairie. The plan contains an analysis of the present supply and needs of outdoor recreation facilities as well as a projection of some future needs.*



Blooming of Sun Prairie

*The National Recreation and Park Association recommends a minimum of ten acres of local parkland and twenty acres of regional open space for every 1,000 people.*

## OPEN SPACE

In addition to providing parklands for the public, open space serves to protect and preserve water quality and quantity, reduce non point source pollution, and enhance scenic beauty and wildlife habitat through both managed and natural areas. The City of Sun Prairie has 348.6 acres of city-owned parks, 92.5 acres of special use and private lands, and over 83 acres of open space adjacent to schools. A list and breakdown of acreage by site can be found in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of this plan.

In 1991, The City of Sun Prairie and City of Madison executed an intergovernmental agreement regarding community separation with the intent of designating and maintaining a permanent open space corridor along US 151 between the two municipalities. This agreement has been altered several times, most recently through the adoption of the Town of Burke, Village of DeForest, City of Sun Prairie and City of Madison Cooperative Plan, adopted by all four communities in January 2007. The agreement establishes goals for the establishment of a landscape buffer along the highway and the preservation of key lands for open space and recreation uses, among other things (Refer to Exhibits 11 and 12 of the Cooperative Plan for more detailed information).

## URBAN FOREST

There are just a few areas classified as woodlands scattered throughout the City, but they contribute to the fabric of an urban forest. An urban forest is defined as all of the trees and other vegetation in and around a community, including tree-lined streets, trees in home landscapes, school yards, parks, riverbanks, cemeteries, vacant lots, utility rights-of-way, and adjacent woodlands.

With the assistance of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban Forestry Grant, the City of Sun Prairie Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department completed a Tree Inventory and Management Plan in November 2007. All street, park and public space trees, and planting sites were cataloged. The recent planting of new trees has bolstered the City's inventory but has also created an imbalance in the recommended tree diameter ratio that provides a sustainable pattern of growth and coverage. With a majority (66%) of the trees being less than six inches in diameter, the City's tree stock is very young. Over fifty percent of City trees are comprised of maples (28%) and ash (23%). Seventy percent of the ash trees are classified in fair to worse condition and should be monitored for susceptibility to Emerald Ash Borer infestation. More information can be obtained from the City of Sun Prairie Parks and Open Space Plan 2009-2013.

## NATURAL RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARIES (NRAB)



Patrick Marsh Planned Open Space

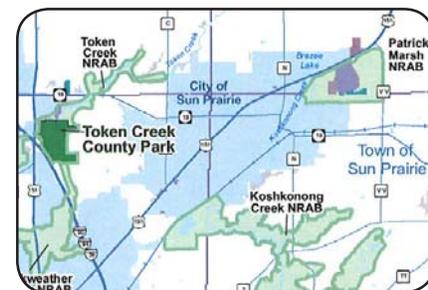
### Patrick Marsh NRAB (est. 2001)

Located just south of US 151 on the eastern edge of the City of Sun Prairie, this resource area encompasses 990 acres of both public and private land. Approximately 330 acres are protected for wetland and prairie preservation and restoration. The majority of public land around the marsh is owned by the DNR (225 acres), Dane County (25.5 acres), and the Natural Heritage Land Trust (79.5 acres). The City of Sun Prairie Parks and Open Space Plan 2009-2013 identifies lands to the west and south of Patrick Marsh as planned open space.

The shallow marsh encompasses approximately 2.3 miles of shoreline length and is home to more than 100 varieties of waterfowl and grassland nesting birds. The Patrick Marsh resource area was included in the DNR Land Legacy Report (2006) as one of the 229 places that are critical to protect "to meet Wisconsin's future conservation and recreation needs in the next 50 years."

The Dane County Parks Department worked with several area stakeholders to prepare the Patrick Marsh Project Plan, adopted in June 2003. The plan encourages ongoing purchase of land at the site to restore the wildlife habitat, create trails that connect the protected properties at the Marsh with surrounding neighborhoods, and open the land to the public for hiking, nature study, and other activities. A local conservation group, the Patrick Marsh Conservancy, has been working with the Natural Heritage Land Trust to raise funds to acquire lands surrounding the marsh, with the intent of restoring wetland and wet prairie habitat on these lands in the future. Funding has been obtained through various sources, including grants through the State of Wisconsin, the Dane County Conservation Fund Grant program, and contributions from the City of Sun Prairie and numerous private donors.

*Natural resource areas are designated by Dane County and consist of land specifically dedicated for protection and preservation of natural environments accomplished by acquiring land or conservation easements.*



Source: Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan 2006-2011

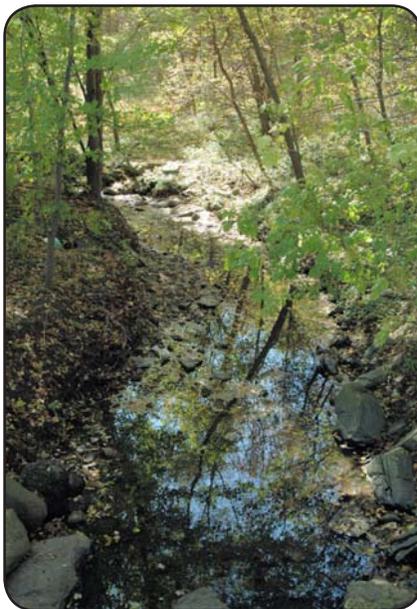
*Patrick Marsh overflow is directed away from the natural outlet on the west side of the marsh to a watershed spillway culvert to the northeast that pipes water under Stone Quarry Road and US 151, discharging it to a wetland north of the highway and into the Maunasha River watershed.*



Token Creek



Token Creek Mill c. 1960's



Koshkonong Creek Tributary at Sheehan Park

### Token Creek NRAB (est. 1970)

Located adjacent to Sun Prairie, within the Towns of Windsor and Burke, and covering an area of 890 acres, this resource area extends from I-90/94 on the west along the creek to CTH C on the east. The Token Creek valley is characterized by several wetlands, which remain close to their natural state, and heavily wooded mature hills identified as a significant natural and recreational preservation potential at the edge of an urbanized area.

Land preservation, stream restoration, and fish habitat improvement efforts have been a priority for this natural resource area. In 1997 the Token Creek Watershed Association was formed and has worked with the DNR, Dane County, and neighboring communities, including the City of Sun Prairie, in efforts to mitigate growth and development impacts. Development lands within the City eventually drain into this portion of Token Creek, and as a result, stormwater treatment has been scrutinized very closely within this corridor in recent years.

The Token Creek Conservancy was created to include lands preserved through purchases, conservation easements, and land donated by property owners. The Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan 2006-2011 recommends additional efforts to acquire lands north and east of Token Creek Park to STH 19, and the protection of lands from STH 19 east to the mill pond through dedication or acquisition.

### Koshkonong Creek NRAB (est. 2006)

The Koshkonong Creek Natural Resource Area has been recently added to the Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan (2006-2011). Located in the Town of Sun Prairie, and covering almost 3,600 acres, the resource area is intended to provide a greenbelt open space between the City of Sun Prairie, Madison and the Village of Cottage Grove, and could help provide a long-term rural transition into the Town of Sun Prairie. This project area extends from the City of Sun Prairie south to I-94 and the northern tip of the Blooming Grove Drumlin Natural Resource Area. It also includes environmental corridor lands northeast of McCarthy County Park that drain into the Koshkonong Creek. This corridor could provide a diversity of benefits including flood mitigation, wetland restoration potential, and future recreation opportunities such as shore fishing and trails. Protection of these lands is also expected to include working farms that exist throughout the drainage district areas.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

### THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Threatened and endangered species and habitats, such as rare plants and animals, and natural communities, are identified on a county, township and watershed level through the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) program, established in 1985. Part of an international network established by the Nature Conservancy, Wisconsin State Statute 29.604 and Administrative Rule NR 27 established the Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species Law that is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A listing of endangered and threatened species found in and around Sun Prairie is included in Appendix I. There are no specific occurrences of endangered species, federally listed or otherwise, within the City of Sun Prairie corporate boundaries or its' extraterritorial jurisdiction territory.

### NAVIGABLE, DESIGNATED, AND IMPAIRED WATERS 303(d)

The Yahara River, Token Creek, Koshkonong Creek, and Maunsha River are classified as navigable waters. Token Creek and Koshkonong Creek are also considered Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest and therefore require state permits for any construction activity as governed by the DNR through Chapters 30 and 31 of the state statutes.

Per Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, the DNR must report all impaired waters in the state that are not meeting water quality standards. The DNR maintains a list of impaired waters, and reports every two years to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its priorities for dealing with impaired waters through the Dane County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. Table 3-1 shows which portions of the Token Creek and the Maunsha River are listed as impaired waters with a high priority rank for water quality improvement.

**TABLE 3-1  
SUN PRAIRIE AREA IMPAIRED (303d) WATERS**

Water Body Name	Stream Mile	Basin	Impacts	Priority Rank
Token Creek	2 – 6.5	Lower Rock	Flow, habitat, sediment, temperature, turbidity, migration	High
Maunsha River	5.4 – 13.5	Upper Rock	Dissolved oxygen, habitat	High

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Purple Loosestrife

*Invasive plants and animals are the second major threat to biodiversity in the United States*



Reed Canary Grass

Photos by Elizabeth J. Czarapata

## INVASIVE SPECIES

Invasive species are any plant, animal, fish, insect, or pathogen not indigenous to a region. When introduced, these non-native species negatively affect native species, ecosystems, recreational activities, commercial, agricultural, and aquacultural resources. The absence of predators and competitors lead to rapid and aggressive dispersion. Native species with limited population size or ecological range can be particularly susceptible.

The DNR and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection have authority to regulate invasive species and the DNR has proposed an Invasive Species Identification, Classification and Control Rule to allow for more rapid collaboration with local governments and landowners to contain and prevent infestations. The City of Sun Prairie municipal code requires by law the destruction of all noxious weeds by landowners.

Examples of invasive plant species known to be present in Sun Prairie include purple loosestrife, a wetland perennial that grows in a wide range of habitats; and reed canary grass, a wetland perennial grass often found in moist organic soils.

The migration of the Asian Beetle and Gypsy Moth are currently being monitored. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was first identified in Wisconsin in Ozaukee County in August 2008. Urban concentrations and areas immediately adjacent face the highest risk of EAB infestation.

## AIR QUALITY

The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). By means of a statewide Air Monitoring Network, the DNR is responsible for monitoring six NAAQS criteria pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. They are Carbon Monoxide, Lead, Nitrogen Dioxide, Particulate Matter (PM10) and (PM2.5), Ozone, and Sulfur Oxides. The closest monitoring station recording particle pollution (PM2.5) levels for the area is located on the east side of Madison.

On March 12, 2008, the EPA lowered the eight-hour ozone standard. This federal rule also required the amendment of Air Quality Index (AQI) concentration ranges. These new standards place Dane County air quality levels closer to the federal noncompliance point. Violation of these standards would require more strict pollution emission controls. Major factors affecting air quality include vehicle, industrial, power plant, and farm emissions. There are currently ten sites in Sun Prairie being monitored by the EPA for air quality.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

Industrial and commercial properties are a potential source of release of contaminants that affect natural resources and the environment. The DNR Remediation and Redevelopment program ensures proper cleanup of the release of hazardous substances to land, water or air. Degradation of groundwater is the primary concern for environmental impacts from contamination. Releases are most often discovered at the time of property transfer and during building expansion/demolition and infrastructure activities.

As of the writing of this plan, the DNR database of contaminated and cleaned up sites identified 33 properties within the corporate boundary, with eleven sites listed as open sites involving ongoing cleanup. The type of contamination is listed in the callout to the right. Petroleum is the major source of contamination on the identified sites. A majority of these sites are located on Main Street and in the downtown area.

The EPA partners with state and local agencies to monitor environmental issues. The callout to the right lists the number of sites, by contamination type, in the City of Sun Prairie being monitored by the EPA. Many of the properties identified coincide with properties identified by the DNR. Additional sites are located in the Sun Prairie Business Park, Smith's Crossing, and other scattered sites around the City.

### 33 DNR IDENTIFIED CONTAMINATED PROPERTIES

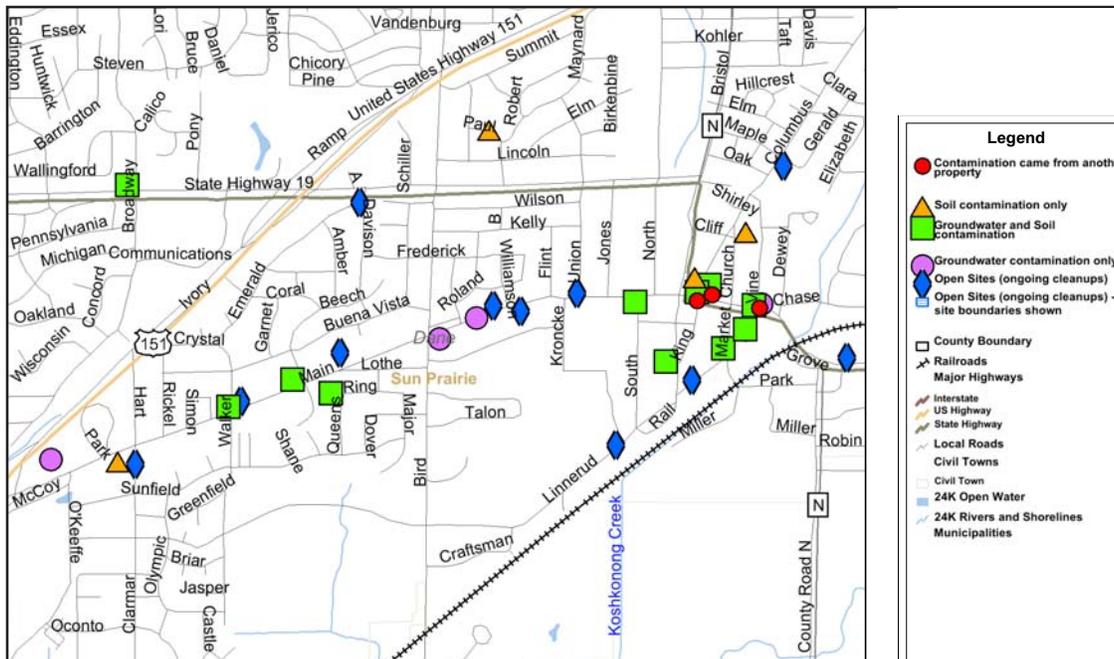
- 4 Soil
- 4 Groundwater
- 11 Soil and Groundwater
- 3 Source from other sites
- 11 Ongoing cleanup

### EPA REGULATED SITES

- 1 Water Discharge
- 2 Air Emission
- 46 Hazardous Waste
- 10 Sites that emit any combination above

Source: EPA EnviroMapper as of December 2008

**FIGURE 3-3  
CONTAMINATED OPEN AND CLOSED SITE PROPERTIES IN SUN PRAIRIE**



Source: DNR Contaminated Lands Environmental Action Network RR Sites Map Database, Map created 12/23/2008

*The State of Wisconsin Statutes defines brownfields as “abandoned, idle or under used industrial or commercial facilities or sites, the expansion or redevelopment of which is adversely affected by actual or perceived environmental contamination.”*

## CONTAMINATED PROPERTY REMEDIATION

Parcels of industrial or commercial property with identified contaminants have the potential to become viable redevelopment sites. Typically located in urban areas, the remediation of these infill properties makes best use of existing infrastructure and contributes to the minimization of community sprawl.

Funding for the assessment, remediation, and planning of under utilized and environmentally contaminated sites is available to local governments through county, state and DNR grant programs. Some of these programs are listed below.

Tax incremental financing (TIF) districts have been created to finance downtown revitalization efforts in Sun Prairie. The Downtown Master Plan, adopted in 2001, was made possible in part with funding awarded from two BUILD Grants and a Site Assessment Grant for planning, implementation, and remediation of industrial sites within the project area. Redevelopment included a new public gathering open space and the rehabilitation of an historic cannery building.

The former Dane County Garage Site, located on E. Main Street, has been redeveloped for retail/grocery purposes.



### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PROGRAMS

- *Blight Elimination and Brownfields Redevelopment Grant - as part of the CDBG program.*
- *Community Development Zone program*
- *Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund*

### DNR PROGRAMS

- *Brownfield, Green Space and Public Facilities Grant*
- *Brownfield Site Assessment Grant*
- *Land Recycling Loans*
- *Stewardship Grants*

### DANE COUNTY PROGRAMS

- *Better Urban Infill Land Development (BUILD)*
- *Commercial Revitalization Loan Funds*
- *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)*

## CULTURAL RESOURCES



Cultural and historic resources can help define a community's sense of identity and link the present with the past. This section will examine the places, events and organizations that contribute to the City's history and uniqueness.

*See Map 3-7*

## COMMUNITY HISTORY

### SUN PRAIRIE, OUR HOME: BY PETER KLEIN

*Sun Prairie's settlement in 1837 was preceded by Native American settlements in this area for more than 12,000 years. Native American history is important to understanding the development of early Sun Prairie. Native American trails became roads used by Caucasian settlers. Burial Mounds, village sites, and artifacts still remain in this area. Native American people continued to visit this area into the 1960s; they remembered their history through oral tradition*

*Madison and Sun Prairie were born out of the influence of developers in the Wisconsin Territorial government. James Doty, who owned many acres of land in the four-lakes area of what is now Dane County, convinced the territorial legislators to build the new Wisconsin Territory capitol in the "paper city of Madison." The territorial legislature commissioned Augustus A. Bird as the architect and construction foreman of the new capitol.*

*In 1837 Bird assembled carpenters and mechanics in Milwaukee for the construction of the new territorial capitol in Madison. After days of rain that rendered the trip memorable, the sun came out when they entered the lobe of a small prairie. A member of the expedition inspired by the sun on the prairie named the site Sun Prairie on June 9, 1837.*

*Sun Prairie was the western frontier when the first white settlers arrived here. Local stories and legends are replete with the difficulties involved in the settlement of the Sun Prairie area. The Sun Prairie Squatters Protective Society formed on March 5, 1845. Another society was the Sun Prairie and Token Creek Anti-Horse Thief Society. When the survey of the newly incorporated Village of Sun Prairie was completed on Nov. 20, 1868, it marked the separation of the village from the Town of Sun Prairie.*

*Sun Prairie was primarily a farming community as late as the 1960s. The village served as an economic, religious, and cultural center for the farming community. Rural Schools and rural settlements such as Pierceville, North Bristol, East Bristol, and Burke Station became community centers. Sun Prairie had the first Rural Free Delivery Route in Wisconsin, which started on November 17, 1896.*

*The formation of the Sun Prairie Canning Company in 1900 gave farmers another way of preserving their crops and extending their markets away from the Sun Prairie area.*

*The village's dependence on the farming community experienced a major change with the formation of the Sun Prairie Spark Plug Factory in 1919. This factory, later known as the Sun Prairie Porcelain Company, provided a major alternative to employment in the agricultural community. The company provided women with full-time employment. Women comprised about half of the factory's employees.*

*German Prisoners of War worked in the factory during the war. Canning Company employment records in the 1950s listed many categories of employees that worked in the factory. The factory later depended upon Hispanic employees and constructed housing units for some of its employees.*

*The village of Sun Prairie incorporated into a city in 1958. The need to provide housing for military personnel stationed at Truax Field in the 1960's was the catalyst for Capehart, a housing area consisting of 280 units off of N. Bird Street, an area now known as Vandenburg Heights and Prairie Homes. Capehart brought Sun Prairie's residents their first major contact with people of different ethnic and racial groups.*

*New industries developed in the community during the 1950's and 60's, these industries including: the Wisconsin Cheeseman, Diesel Injection Service, Foulke Rubber Products and General Telephone Company. Admiral opened a television component factory in Sun Prairie in 1965, which was later redeveloped in 1967 as Good-year. General Casualty opened a two-story building containing 120,000 square feet in 1982. Since then, Sun Prairie continues to experience the establishment of industries in its Business Park. Sun Prairie has continued to diversify with steady growth of new business establishments and business expansions in the Sun Prairie Business Park.*

*Sun Prairie changed from a farming community of 2,263 residents in 1950 to a community of 4008 in 1960. In 1970 city residents increased to 9,935. Approximately 25,370 residents in 2008. Two periods of significant population increase have taken place: from 1960 to 1970 and from 1990 to the present. Much of this growth has occurred to the west and northwest, most likely influenced by the proximity of this area to transportation corridors that connect Sun Prairie with the rest of the Madison region. The majority of the recent increase has occurred on the City's west side, in concert with Madison's outward expansion.*

*The growth of the City over time has led to a great deal of change in the community, as example of this change can be illustrated by the changes in the community's school facilities. In 1950, the Sun Prairie School Public School System consisted of one building serving grades kindergarten through twelfth grade. In 2008, a seventh public elementary school was under construction. The district operates two middle schools and one high school. Upgrades to these facilities and a new school for eighth and ninth graders are currently underway. There are also several private schools in the City offering alternatives for the student population.*

*Sun Prairie's history will continue to evolve, changing its employment opportunities, housing, and community services, to meet future needs.*

## PLACES

### REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The City of Sun Prairie has four properties listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places. The Crosse House, built in 1883 and located at 133 W. Main Street, is a two-story frame structure trimmed in the Victorian, Carpenter Gothic style. The building architecture is unique in Sun Prairie. Historically the house has been used for a number of purposes including a doctor's office and pharmacy, a grocery store, and a creamery and ice cream shop. Due to the construction of the new Water and Light Commission building in 1999, the Crosse House was moved approximately one lot to the west of its original location.

Another Sun Prairie home on the Register of Historic Places is the Adam and Mary Smith House, originally located along US 151 between Madison and Sun Prairie. This brick structure was built in late 1800's of the Italianate architectural style and was recently moved approximately one-half mile as a result of an expansion of US 151. It now serves as the anchor and namesake for the Smith's Crossing development on the City's southwest side.

Effective April 6, 2000, the Columbus Street Water Tower is on the Register of Historic Places. The water tower is a sixty-foot high structure rising from a two-foot rusticated foundation, which is almost entirely below the level of the plaza and the street. The tower is topped with a steel tank, which adds thirty feet to its overall height of 92 feet. The water tower is significant to the history of the community because this modern structure, and the necessary administrative organization to manage it, marked the development of the community from a village into a municipality.

The fourth property, listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places in 2004, is the Fuhremann Canning Company Factory located at 151 Market Street. The factory, constructed in the early 1900's and active into the 1970's, served the surrounding agricultural industry through vegetable processing and canning. The building now serves as the anchor for Cannery Square, part of the City's downtown redevelopment project.

### WISCONSIN ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY INVENTORY

*The State Historical Society conducted a survey of Sun Prairie's architecture beginning in 1977. The inventory currently lists 55 sites with historic architecture; however, a number of the buildings are no longer in existence. A full list of these sites can be obtained through the State Historical Society. More detailed information about these and other sites can also be obtained at the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.*



Crosse House

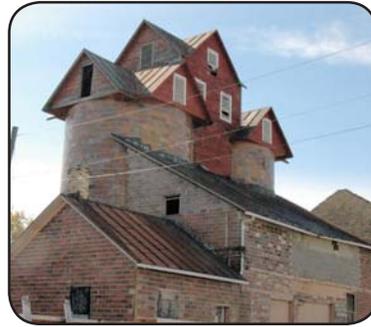


Adam and Mary Smith House  
Pre and Post Relocation





Columbus Street Water Tower c.1912



Cargill Granary



Historical Museum c.1920's

Fuhremann Canning Company Factory  
c.1928 and 2008

### SUN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

This red brick building, located at 115 E. Main Street, was constructed in 1924 and currently serves as the headquarters of the Museum. The museum building has served many purposes over the years including use as a library, city offices, the village council chamber, World War II Red Cross center, and as the original site of the Colonial Club.

Downtown Sun Prairie and its surrounding neighborhoods contain a number of historic buildings, however, there are no formally recognized historic districts within the City. An example includes the Cargill Granary located south of Linnerud Drive near the railroad tracks, which was constructed in 1923 by Fred Chase and may be the only one of its kind in the country. The City has recently implemented an overlay district as part of the adoption of the Business District Revitalization Plan to encourage the preservation and enhancement of historic buildings in the downtown area.

### CEMETERIES

Cemeteries are another example of a resource that can add to a community's sense of history. Formally catalogued burial sites, including cemeteries and Native American mounds, are protected from disturbance by state law. The Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum maintains a 'death list' on its web site that includes a more detailed description and location of many area cemeteries.

### NATIVE AMERICAN MOUNDS

Although there are no documented Native American burial mound sites in the area, a cluster of mounds is said to be located in the general vicinity of Patrick Marsh - according to the Patrick Marsh Project Plan developed by the Dane County Parks Department in 2003. The mounds are located on private property and are somewhat protected by the existing residential development.

## ANGELL PARK

Angell Park, located between CTH N and the railroad tracks on the City's east side, was created in the early 1900's when Colonel Angell donated fifteen acres of 'Angell's Grove' to the Volunteer Fire Department. The official dedication of the park took place on June 20, 1903.

The Volunteer Fire Department finished construction on the first park pavilion in 1904, to coincide with the second annual harvest festival in August of that year. In 1919, the pavilion was moved and expanded to its present location. The reconstruction at that time doubled its original size and added a lower floor. The pavilion currently houses the National Midget Auto Racing Hall of Fame historical display.

The park was, and continues to be, the site of many community events. The park has hosted harness racing, auto racing, industrial fairs, high school athletics, recreation classes, and was the site of the city pool from 1958-1992.

Now at approximately 62 acres in size, Angell Park continues to host midget auto races throughout the summer months, is home to the Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival, and includes the recently constructed Firemen's Park In the Prairie.



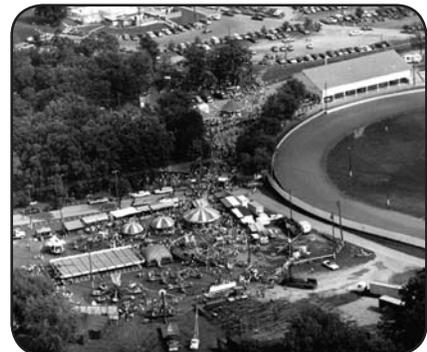
Colonel Angell c.1890's



Sun Prairie Dream Park in Fireman's Park



Harness Racing



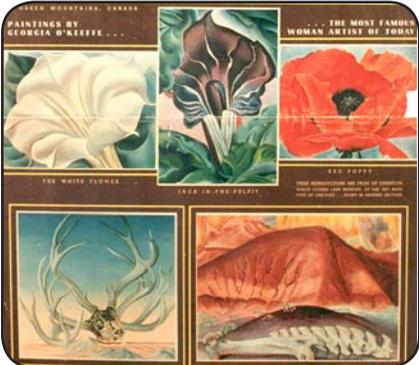
Angell Park: Corn Fest 1970's

## EVENTS

There are numerous events that occur in the community, both on a regular basis and as one-time events, such as the Cannery Square Block Party, Strawberry Fest, Maxwell Street Days, the Art Fair in Sheehan Park, and many more. The Chamber of Commerce is a good resource for information regarding community events.

### THE O'KEEFFE FESTIVAL

This annual event celebrates the City's most famous resident, world-renowned artist Georgia O'Keeffe. She was born in 1887 on a dairy farm in the Town of Sun Prairie. O'Keeffe is known for her paintings of flowers, shells, rocks, landscapes, and animal bones. The festival showcases the work of local artists and displays a number of framed O'Keeffe prints.



### MIDGET AUTO RACING

Midget Auto Racing originated in 1934 at the Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles, CA. Soon thereafter, the sport spread throughout the country and began in Wisconsin at the Blue Mound Dog Racing Track in Brookfield.

Midget Racing came to Angell Park in 1946 when the harness racing track was shortened from a one-half mile to a one-third mile semi-banked, clay oval. Over the years, concrete walls and double steel barriers have replaced the hay bales and trees that once lined the perimeter of the course. Modern concession, restroom facilities, and a remodeled public pavilion and restaurant at track side, have added to spectator comfort and enjoyment. Races are generally held every Sunday between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

### COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING

A tradition since 1915, this event marks the beginning of the holiday season. The lighting ceremony currently takes place the Friday after Thanksgiving in front of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum.

## GROUNDHOG DAY

*For over 50 years, the Sun Prairie members and supporters have been proclaiming Sun Prairie to be "The Groundhog Capital of the World." This proclamation has caused reverberations from the halls of Congress, to the coal fields of Pennsylvania, and in the news media of the country. The tradition of Groundhog Day is tied to Candlemas Day, a centuries old celebration day in Europe. Folklore states: "If the day is bright and clear there'll be two winters in the year."*

*The Groundhog Day tradition in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin dates back to 1948, when Wisconsin celebrated its centennial year. Many ways were found to commemorate the centennial event, both public and personal. One such private observance was a rather ambitious project. A commercial artist, Ira Bennett, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin and his young son decided to create a series of commemorative post cards relating various locations in Wisconsin to the holidays throughout the year. Some of the cities chosen were: Independence, Wisconsin for July 4th, Port Washington, Wisconsin for Washington's Birthday, Loyal, Wisconsin for Boy Scout Sunday (a scout is loyal). Groundhog Day required a stretch of the imagination. The groundhog sees his shadow when the sun comes up on the prairie, thus, Sun Prairie was picked for the honor.*

*At that time the postmaster in Sun Prairie was Margaret McGonigle, a lifelong resident, active in politics and a promoter of the virtues of Sun Prairie. When this idea was presented she quickly asked the artist his permission to use this idea to further promote the community. Soon after, the Sun Prairie Groundhog Club was organized as a sort of serious spoof. All people born on February 2 were eligible to be groundhogs. Those born on other days in February were designated woodchucks. The word spread and birth certificates were mailed to folks all over the country, for a nominal fee.*

*Ground hogging really hit its stride in Sun Prairie when the 4-H Club and its leaders, Erich and Teena Lenz took over. Erich, never one to do things halfway, immediately got live groundhogs and always had one ready for the ceremony. Dan Royle, the newspaper publisher and neighbor to the Lenz', made his contribution to the legend with his recipe for Moose Milk, a hot milk drink with the kick of a moose (liquor). The celebrations were held at the Lenz home on Pony Lane, with their ample home bursting with media people, local politicians and anyone else who wanted to be there at sunrise. Telephone calls came from TV and radio stations all over the country wanting to know if spring was at hand or if we were in for six more weeks of winter.*

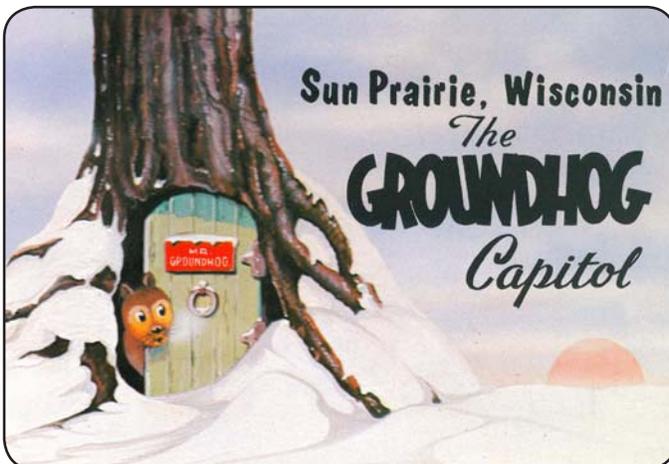


Photo Source: Sun Prairie Historical Museum



Circa: 1968

*Each year, the groundhog group had a different scheme to attract the attention of the country. One year, two stuffed groundhogs were married in a wedding ceremony. This gave rise to a declaration by Wisconsin Congressman Glen Davis in the Congressional Record that Sun Prairie groundhogs were "legitimate" and that those in Pennsylvania were otherwise. This of course prompted an equally frivolous response from the Punxsutawney congressman, all printed in the Congressional Record. Congressman Davis has a Sun Prairie street named in his honor. When Sputnik was the subject of conversation, the groundhog was sent to the moon by rocket to keep up with the Russians.*

*All this high-jinx did not go unnoticed by the groundhog club in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania who claimed prior rights to the title. Good natured ribbing has been the order of the day since the start. One year the Pennsylvania rodent didn't see his shadow and Sun Prairie's Jimmy did, the locals proclaimed the reason was that their animal's eyes were full of coal dust and of course couldn't see his shadow.*

*The first Groundhog Ball was held at a now defunct dance hall, Tropical Gardens, on the corner of Bird and Main Streets. The Groundhog Ball is now sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and is held at The Round Table on a Saturday night around Groundhog Day.*

*After caring for many generations of Jimmy the Groundhog, Erich Lenz retired. Today, the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce is the official sponsor of the Groundhog Day festivities. Upon the retirement of Mr. Lenz, the Chamber sought out new caretakers. Ted and Cheri Krisher volunteered to care for Sun Prairie's famous prognosticator. Having cared for Jimmy for 20 years, the Krisher family retired and the responsibility was transferred to Sun Prairie Jerry Hahn.*

*The Chamber partners with local organizations to host the Groundhog Day event and member businesses participate via booth displays and promotion. A community breakfast is held with approximately 1,000 people on hand to hear Jimmy the Groundhog predict an early spring or six more weeks of winter. Jimmy the Groundhog boasts an 80% accuracy rate in predicting what type of weather is in store!*

Source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce



Photo Source: Neil Stechschulte



Mayor Chase, Jerry Hahn and Jimmy

## SWEET CORN FESTIVAL

*The first annual Sweet Corn Festival was held on August 29 and 30 in 1953. It is the oldest sweet corn festival in Wisconsin. The 1953 and 1954 festival grounds extended along the two blocks of Angell Street, just north of Main Street. The 1953 festival served 13,000 ears of corn and two hundred pounds of butter to 6,000 people on Saturday, August 29.*

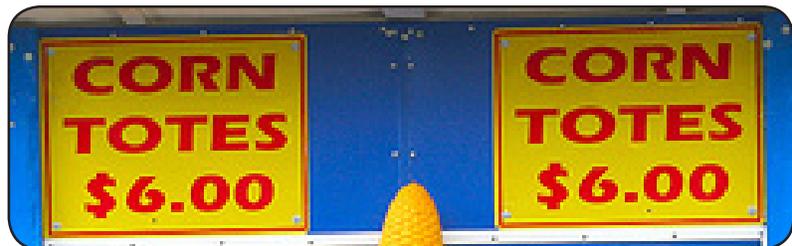
*The festival moved to Angell Park's more spacious grounds in 1955, the third year of the festival. The 1957 corn festival committee assignments included eight committees: dance, corn, butter, queen, concessions, corn sales, rides, and advertising. Bingo in the Angell Park pavilion was added to the roster of events in 1973.*

*The festival is the major event of the year in Sun Prairie. A corn building staffed by volunteers remains the center of the festival. Service clubs and organizations use the festival to gain operating funds for their community projects.*

*In 1997, Stokely USA, expanded their facilities. Stokely had cooked the corn for the festival for years so the festival had the challenge of finding a new location to steam over 70 tons of sweet corn. The solution came in constructing a new "community owned" corn cooking building with the help of local businesses and residents interested in taking "stalk" in the Sun Prairie Sweet Corn Festival. The community rallied to protect the future of the time-honored tradition that the festival has become. The new corn steaming facility was completed in 1997.*

*Approximately 100,000 people now attend the four day Sweet Corn Festival. On Saturday and Sunday nearly 70 tons of sweet corn is served on the grounds. The corn and the carnival continue to be the major attractions on the grounds. In addition, there are a wide variety of family activities, stage shows, musical entertainment, mini-golf, a craft show, petting zoo and a parade.*

Source: Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce



## ORGANIZATIONS

A number of organizations exist to promote and maintain a range of cultural resources within and around the City. The American Legion Post #333, VFW Post #9362 and a list of other organizations can be obtained by contacting the Sun Prairie Chamber of Commerce. Some examples include:



Flags of Freedom Parade

### SUN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The purpose of this organization is to support the on-going efforts of the Museum. The Society sponsors a regularly held tour of historic homes within the City.

### SUN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL RESTORATIONS

This non-profit group was organized in 1976 for the purpose of preserving the historic Crosse House on Main Street. Its on-going mission is to preserve and restore any improvement in the City that has a special character or historical interest as a part of the cultural characteristics of Sun Prairie.



### SUN PRAIRIE CIVIC THEATRE

This area theatre group, created in 1970, performs four different productions a year. They are headquartered within the remaining Bradley farm buildings located on S. Bird Street next to Sheehan Park where rehearsals, meetings, set construction, and storage take place. Performances are held at the Sun Prairie High School auditorium which functions as the main facility serving the community as a performing arts venue.



Sun Prairie Civic Theater

### THE COLONIAL CLUB

This organization originated in 1969 to provide a meeting place and activities for seniors. The initial meetings took place in the basement of the Sun Prairie Historical Library and Museum. The Colonial Club is now located at 301 Blankenheim Avenue.

### SUN PRAIRIE COMMUNITY BAND

The Community Band, sometimes referred to as the Legion Band, was formed in 1961 and is comprised of adults and students. Free performances are conducted throughout the year including outdoor concerts at city parks, a spring and fall concert, and at community events.



Concerts in the Park

### SUNSHINE PLACE

This charitable, non-profit organization directs and administers the operation of a facility located at 18 Rickel Road. The building currently houses a food pantry, a non-profit second-hand clothing store and space for community-oriented tenants. It is intended to provide a single point of access for residents in need.



### Prime Farmland

#### Legend

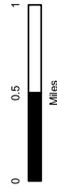
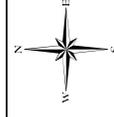
##### Soil Classification

-  All areas are prime farmland
-  Not prime farmland
-  Only drained areas are prime farmland
-  Only drained areas that are either protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season are prime farmland

City Limit



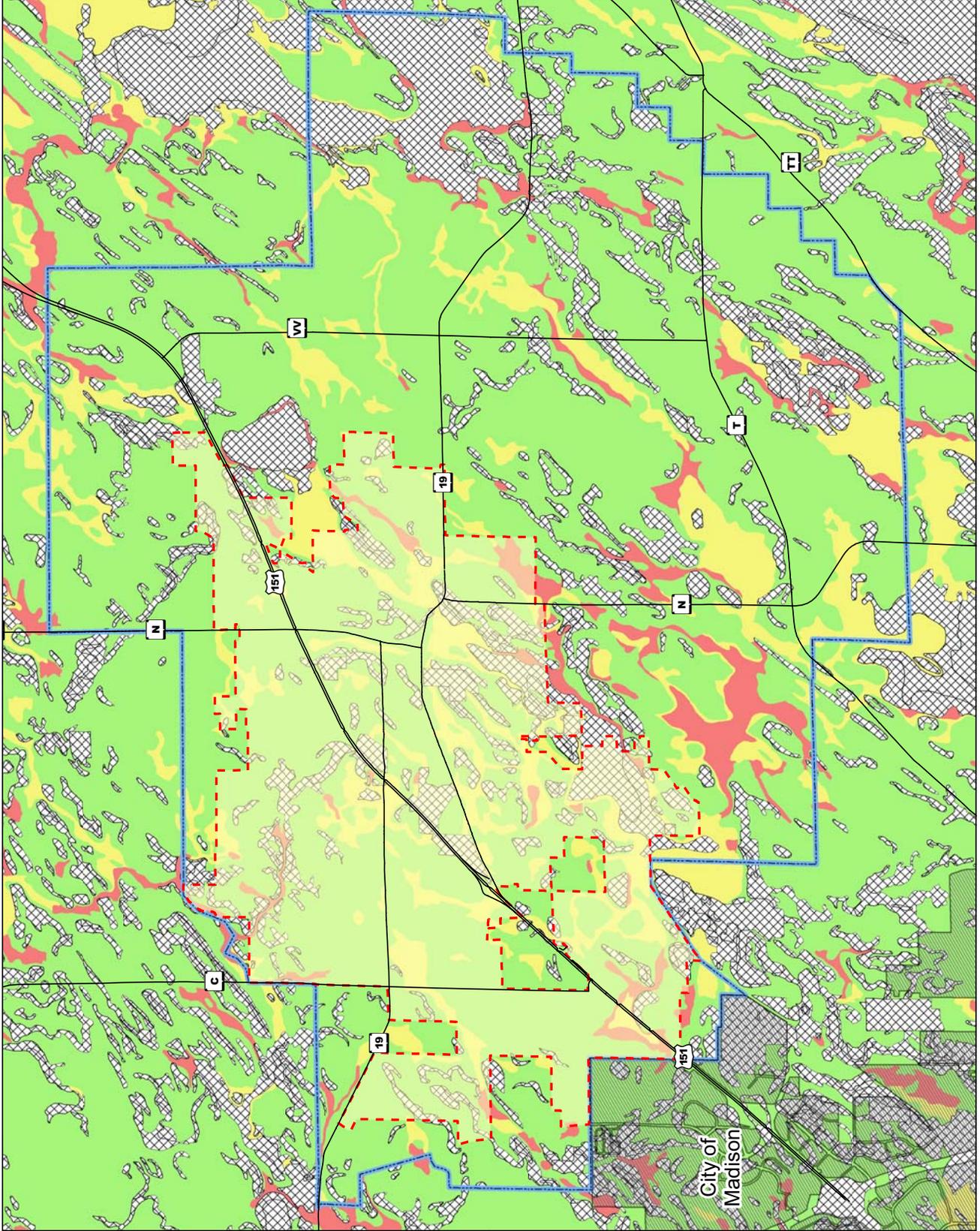
Planning Area



Notes: Urban, built up land is not considered prime farmland. Urban land is shaded in grey as well as fiber production to qualify as prime.

Source: Natural Resource Conservation Service Soils Data

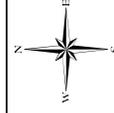
Date Adopted: November 3, 2009





### Drainage Districts

- Legend**
- Dane County
  - Drainage District
    - District #8
    - District #9
    - District #11
    - District #27
  - Water
  - City Limit
  - Urban Service Area

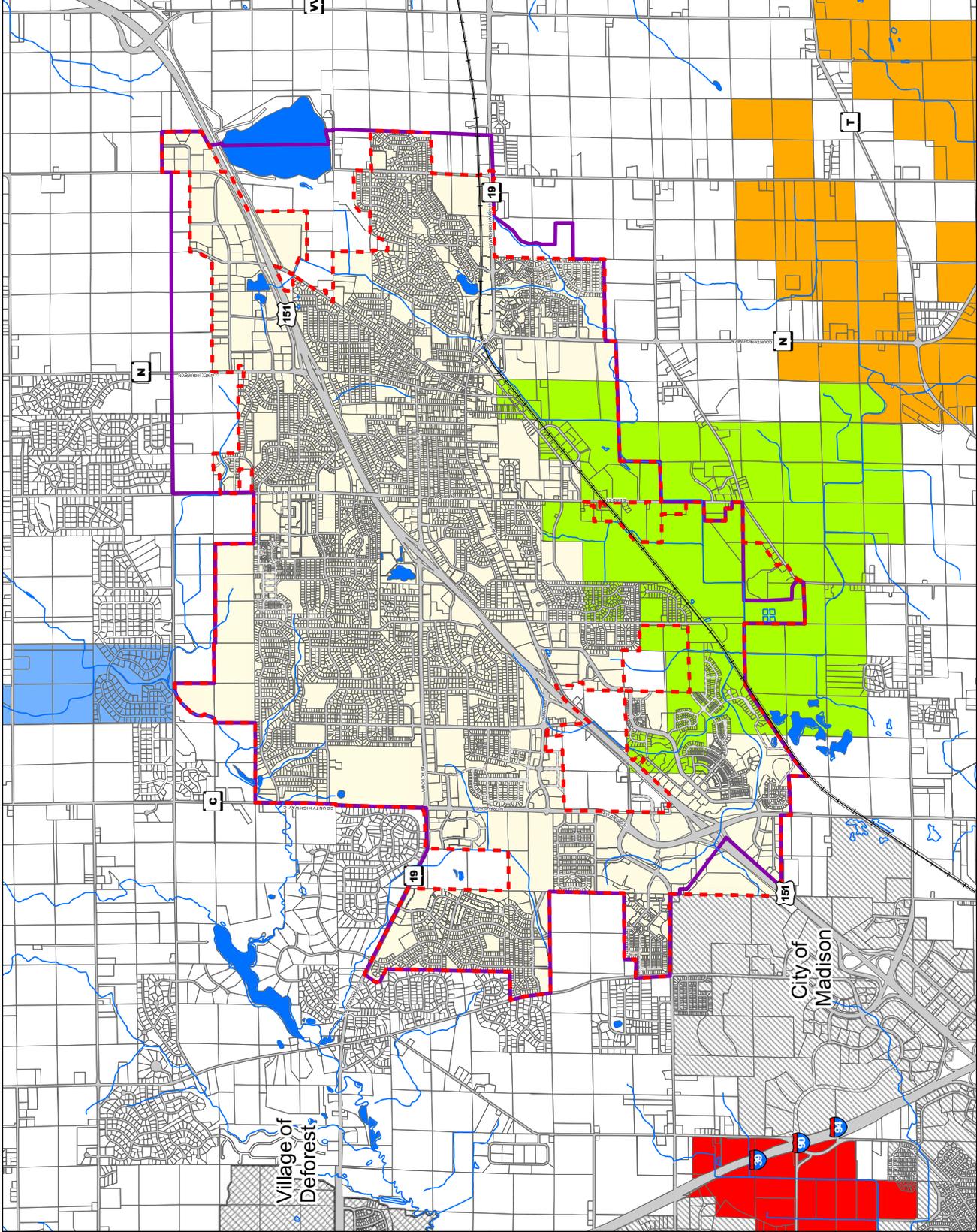


0 1,000 2,000 3,000  
Feet

Notes: Drainage Districts are regulated by the City of Sun Prairie Ordinance 10.01 and to Chapter 88 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Source: Dane County Land Information Office

Date Adopted: November 3, 2009

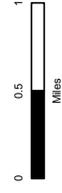
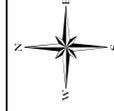




# Environmental Corridors and Natural Resources

## Legend

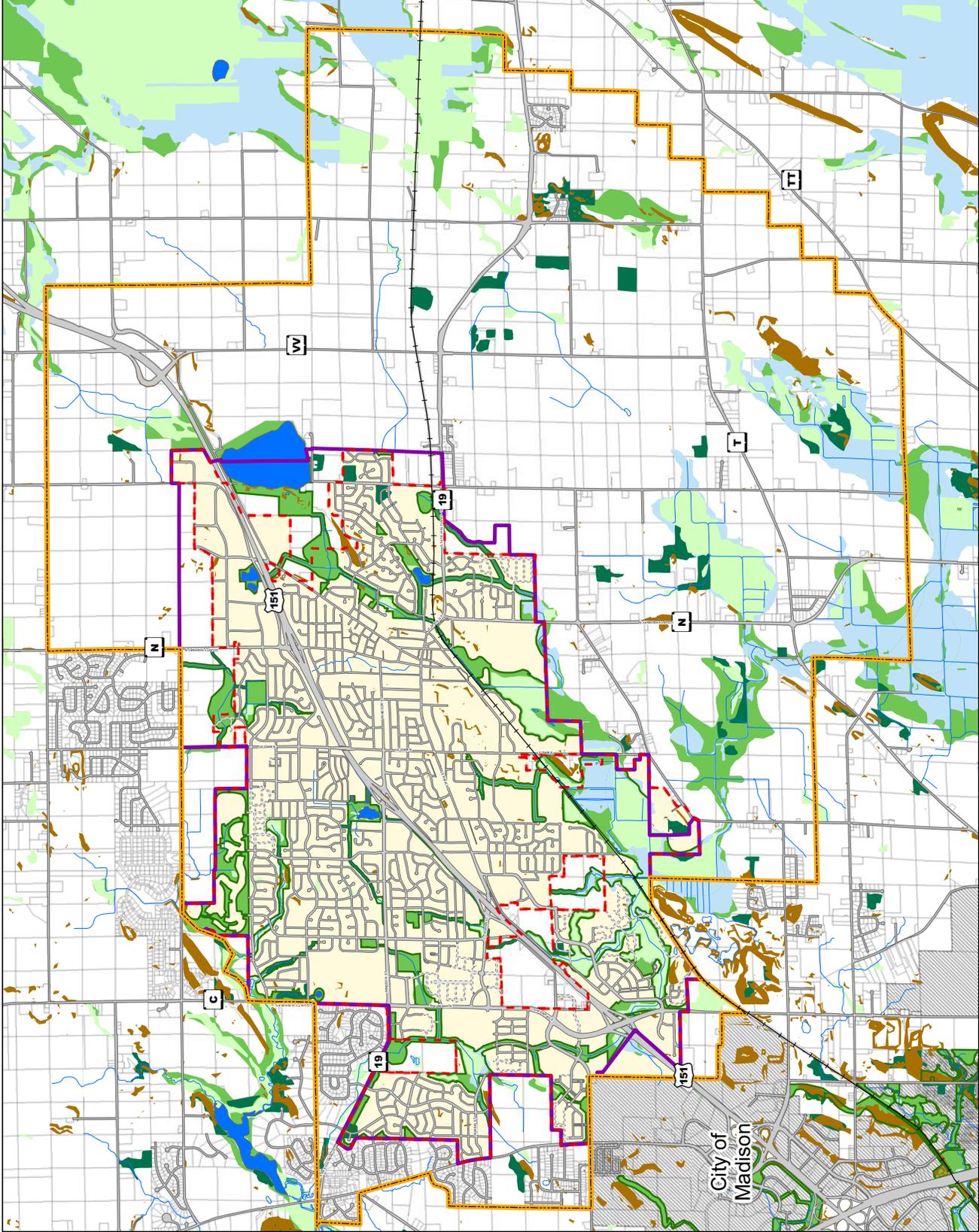
- Environmental Corridor
- Water
- Streams/Drainageways
- Floodplain
- Wetland
- Woodland
- Steep Slope
- Open Space
- City Limit
- Urban Service Area
- Planning Area



Notes: Environmental Corridors have only been mapped within Urban Services Areas.

Source: City of Sun Prairie with the natural resource and environmental corridor layers provided by the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission Feb 5, 2008. The floodplain boundary represents the January 2, 2009 FEMA FRM maps with amendments through February 27, 2008.

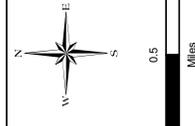
Date Adopted: November 3, 2009





# Mineral Resources

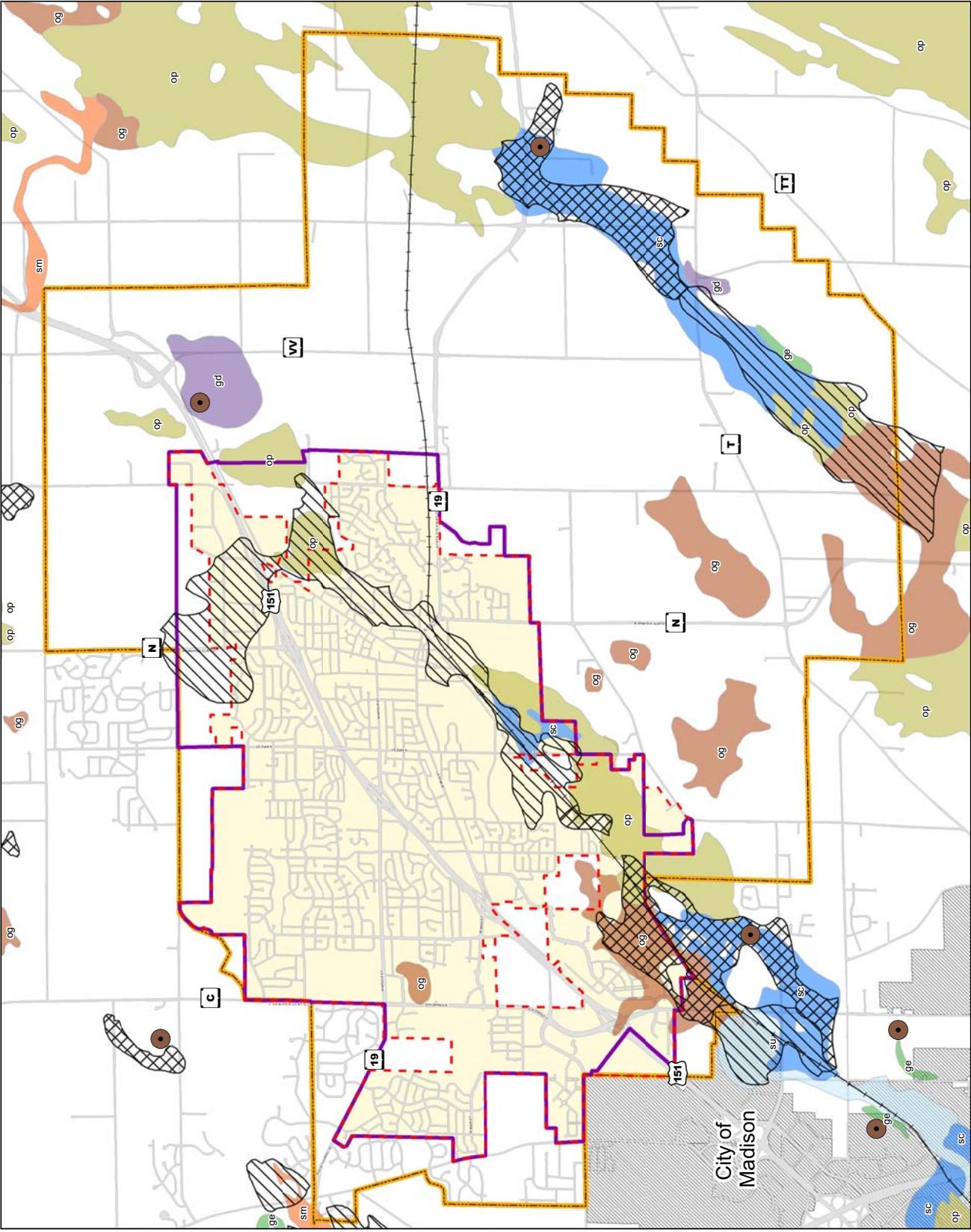
- Legend**
- Potential Source for High Quality Sand & Gravel
- High
  - Low
- Quarry
- Geologic Unit Name**
- gd: Glacially Scoured Dolomite Plateaus
  - ge: Glacially Eroded Slopes
  - og: Mostly Uncollapsed, Flat with Some Hummocks
  - op: Overlain with Pleistacial Peat, Flat
  - sc: Collapsed Melwater Stream Sediment
  - sm: Sediment deposited on floodplains of modern rivers
  - su: Uncollapsed melwater stream sediment
- City Limit
- Urban Service Area
- Planning Area



Notes:

Source: City of Sun Prairie with sand and gravel data provide by Dane County Planning & Development and geologic data provided by Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey.

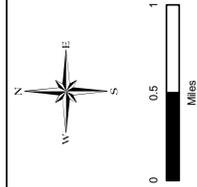
Date Adopted: November 3, 2009



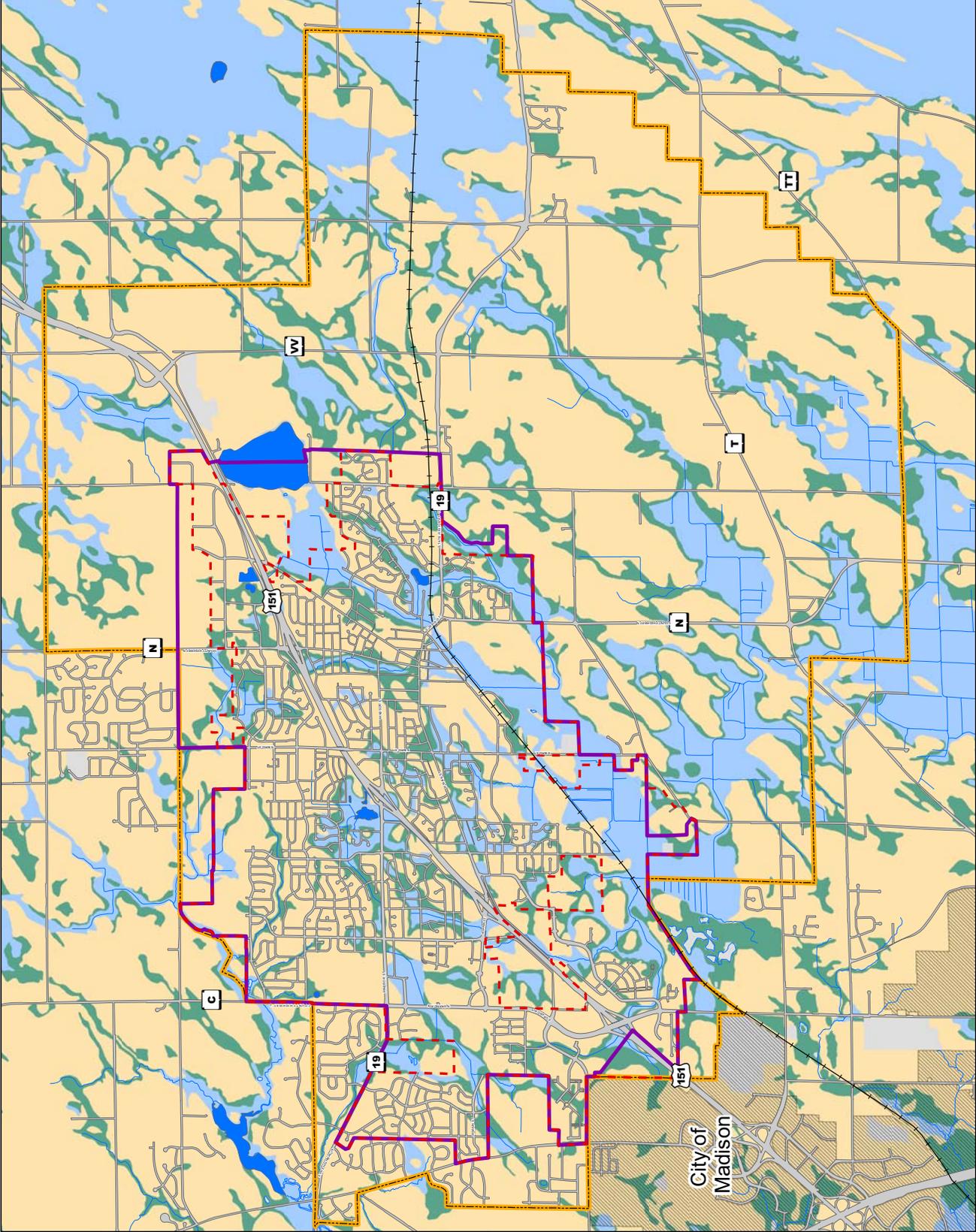


### Hydric Soils

- Legend**
- Hydric Rating
    - All Hydric
    - Partially Hydric
    - Not Hydric
    - Unknown Hydric
  - Water
  - Streams/Drainageways
  - City Limit
  - Urban Service Area
  - Planning Area



Notes:  
 Source: City of Sun Prairie with the hydric soil data layer provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.  
 Date Adopted: November 3, 2009





# Depth to Ground Water

## Legend

Depth to Ground Water

0' - 1'

1' - 3'

3' - 6'

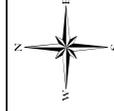
6' or greater

Surface Water

City Limit

Urban Service Area

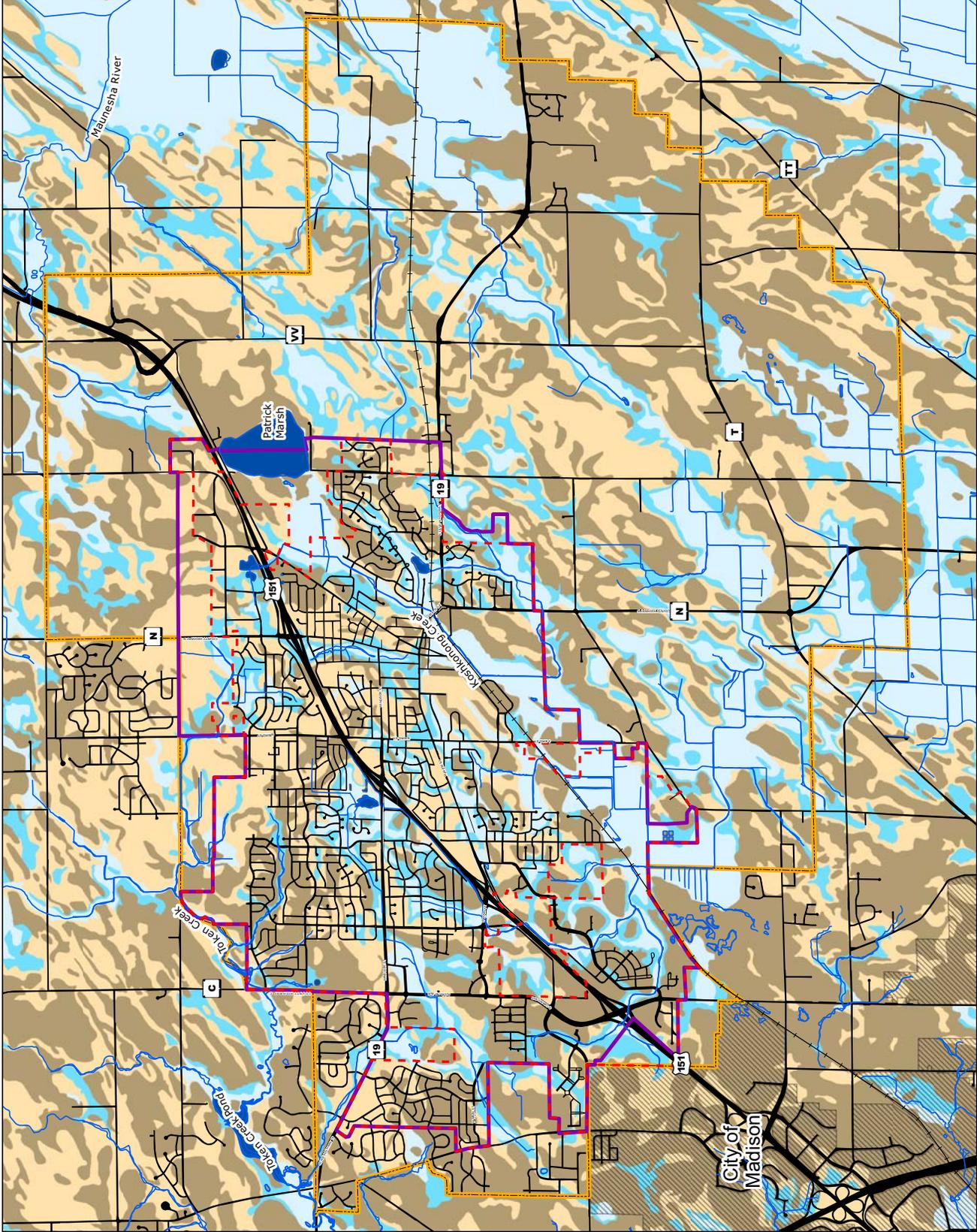
Planning Area



Notes: The depth to groundwater is a representative value that indicates the expected value for the soil.

Source: City of Sun Prairie Planning, with updates to groundwater data layers provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Date Adopted: November 3, 2009





# Cultural Resources

## Legend

### Places of Interest

- 1 Sun Prairie Historic Museum & Library
- 2 Angell Park Speedway and Pavilion
- 3 VFW Post #49362
- 4 Community Gardens

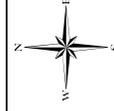
### Register of Historic Places

- 1 Crose House
- 2 Fuhremann Canning Company
- 3 Smith House
- 4 Historic Water Tower

### Cemeteries

- 1 Bristol Lutheran Cemetery
- 2 Bristol Methodist Cemetery
- 3 Burke Lutheran Cemetery
- 4 Sacred Hearts of Jesus & Mary Cemetery
- 5 Sun Prairie Cemetery
- 6 Sun Prairie Memory Garden
- 7 Sweet Cemetery (Quarry Cemetery)
- 8 Token Creek Cemetery
- 9 Town of Burke Cemetery

- City Limit



Notes:

Source: Sun Prairie Historical Museum and Library.

Date Adopted: November 3, 2009

