

WETLAND GEMS



WAUBESA WETLAND TYPES

Cal DeWitt

Sedge meadow, fen, marsh, shrub carr

DANE COUNTY



WAUBESA WETLANDS

Property Owners: The Nature Conservancy, WDNR  
 Recognitions & Designations: WI State Natural Area, WI Land Legacy Place, WI Wildlife Action Plan Reference Site

Funding for this project provided by The McKnight Foundation, which seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grantmaking, coalition-building and encouragement of strategic policy reform.

Wisconsin Wetlands Association  
 wisconsinwetlands.org

ECOLOGY & SIGNIFICANCE

This Wetland Gem, located just south of Madison along the southwest shoreline of Lake Waubesa, is one of the more diverse wetland complexes remaining in southern Wisconsin. Waubesa Wetlands comprises more than 500 acres of relatively high quality sedge meadow, fen, marsh and shrub carr habitats. The site is characterized by deep peat deposits and numerous springs, which provide these wetlands with a continuous source of clean, cool and mineral-rich groundwater. Two streams, Murphy's Creek and Swan Creek, meander through the site and empty into the lake. These wetlands are important to water quality in the lake and the larger Yahara River system. The proximity of this site to Madison means that it is heavily used for research, education and recreation.

FLORA & FAUNA

The majority of the site is sedge meadow habitat with species diversity that is created by varying hydrology across the site. Species include bluejoint grass, tussock sedge, sawgrass sedge, cattails and common bur-reed.

A floating mat of cattails and sedges lines the lakeshore and marsh plants line the streams. Calcareous fen areas feature a diversity of plants including grass-of-parnassus, Riddell's goldenrod, northern bog aster, sage willow and the rare lesser fringed gentian. Other abundant wetland plants at the site include common lake sedge, tussock sedge, woollyfruit sedge, swamp loosestrife, American water horehound and numerous asters.

This Wetland Gem provides habitat for many species of waterfowl and other migrating birds including sandhill crane, green heron, marsh wren, sedge wren, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, American coot, blue-gray gnatcatcher, common yellowthroat, great blue heron and willow flycatcher. Rare and unusual birds include least bittern, American bittern and black tern. This area also provides important spawning habitat for many Lake Waubesa fishes. The site could provide good spawning habitat for northern pike, but lake level drawdowns reduce the availability and accessibility of the flooded mats of grasses and sedges that pike need to lay their eggs.



Willow flycatcher — Scott Franke

THREATS

Runoff from watershed agriculture and residential development has degraded water quality and habitat at this site. Spring flow has also been diminished because of alterations to watershed hydrology. Invasive species, particularly reed canary grass, are of great concern. The lack of fire and resulting encroachment of woody vegetation is also of concern.

ACCESS

This site is best enjoyed by canoe. For details, visit the Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program website: [dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).

Sources:  
 Wisconsin State Natural Areas Program (WDNR)  
 Wisconsin Land Legacy Report (WDNR)  
 Wisconsin's Strategy for Wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need (WDNR)



MEMO  
CITY OF FITCHBURG

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5520 Lacy Road  
Fitchburg WI 53711  
(608) 270-4245  
Fax: (608) 270-4212

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**To:** Northeast Neighborhood Land Use Committee  
**From:** Mike Zimmerman, Economic Development Director  
**Date:** July 20, 2009  
**Subject:** Comments from CEDA on Northeast Neighborhood

At our last CEDA meeting on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, members reviewed and discussed the June 5<sup>th</sup> draft of the Northeast Neighborhood Plan, primarily the economic development section. Based on that discussion, CEDA wanted to share with the Northeast Neighborhood Land Use Committee some comments and feedback which also reiterate some of the information provided at some of your earlier meetings when you asked economic development staff to attend and offer their input. After contacting the Planning Department on June 24<sup>th</sup>, Joyce received an email on the 25<sup>th</sup> stating that "comments were due earlier this week, like this past Tuesday." We were told it was too late to submit comments. Since the two members filling the elected officials' positions on CEDA also serve on the Northeast Neighborhood Land Use Committee they offered to bring forward our comments at your July meeting. They are as follows:

1. the .50 floor area ratio density might work on the land adjacent to the interchange but making it a requirement on all of the business park land limits what types of buildings can be built;
2. Fitchburg needs land for light manufacturing and clean industrial sites - these are the types of requests that we are getting in our office and we need the ability to respond to the market; including some of our existing businesses;
3. Sites that offer more acreage and allow for one story buildings to accommodate light manufacturers and clean industrial users that need larger building footprints and the all on one floor goods in goods out assembly process for operational efficiency;
4. LEED certification - should be encouraged but not required, also, other sustainable type programs should be recognized.

If you have any questions please let us know. On behalf of CEDA and the Economic Development Office, thank you for your consideration.

## Comments for Northeast Neighborhood Land Use Committee Hearing 7-09

I am Neon Ringwood. I live at 5672 Byrneland St in Fitchburg. I purchased my home because of its location and the wonderful view of farmland and the hills beyond. I enjoy the fresh air and the quiet. I tell you this to help you understand why I am requesting that you do not decrease the size of the 300 foot buffer that is a part of the Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan which was adopted on March 24 with much public support for a 300 foot buffer around wetlands by new developments.

More important than my personal preferences are the consequences of a 75 foot buffer around <sup>the wetlands</sup> Lake Waubesa. The impervious surfaces in new developments reduce the amount of water entering the earth. Instead, the excess water with excess nutrients and excess sediment runs into the lakes and wetlands. The algae we see in the lakes is an example of effects of the runoff. Dr. Zedler's research at the Arboretum has shown how tubs planted with 14 native species are filled with nothing but Reed Canary Grass (a highly invasive non-native species) in just one season when exposed to these effects. The Arboretum has serious problems with non-native species that come into the Arboretum with runoff. A lot of volunteer hours have been spent making changes to reduce the runoff and continue to be spent removing the non-native species.

We are very fortunate to have the natural resources we have. The Wisconsin Wetlands Association recently named the Waubesa Wetlands as one of "100 Wetland Gems" in the state. Let's keep it that way. Our lakes and wetlands are enjoyed by many, but they have to be taken care of. We can do that by preventing runoff from developments from entering our wetlands by having a 300 foot buffer around wetlands by new developments.

Thank you for considering my request.

**LONG, O'RILEY, LONG**

3022 COUNTY ROAD MM  
FITCHBURG, WISCONSIN 53711

July 15, 2009

City of Fitchburg  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
5520 LACY ROAD  
FITCHBURG, WI 53711

RE: NEN IMPERVIOUS SURFACES ON PARCELS WITHIN THE NEW PARKS & OPEN SPACES  
PARCELS: #0609-013-8360-4; 0609-013-8410-3; 0609-013-8435-4

GENTLEMEN:

WE HAVE RECEIVED YOUR LETTER AND THE OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN FOR THE NORTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD. THE OUTLINE LEAVES A LOT OF QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED, SUCH AS WHAT MAY BE DONE IN THE AREA THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO "COVER", IS THIS TO BE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC ACCESS, WHAT IS "IN HARMONY WITH THE SITE AND IMPORTANT RESOURCES" AND WHO IS TO DETERMINE THAT? IN SHORT, THERE ARE SO MANY MORE QUESTIONS RAISED THAN ANSWERED IN THE OUTLINE THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE MEANINGFUL COMMENTS ON THE PLAN.

IN ADDITION THERE ARE THE ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. TO WHAT EXTENT IS THIS TAKING GOING TO BE COMPENSATED? SINCE THERE WILL CLEARLY BE A LOSS IN VALUE FROM THE RESTRICTIONS ON USE, FOR THE PORTIONS NOT TREATED AS HAVING BEEN TAKEN, WILL THE TAX BURDEN BE REDUCED? THE CITY IS ASKING US IN THIS PART OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO HAVE OUR PROPERTY USE RESTRICTED FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY. WHAT RECOMPENSE IS THERE FOR THIS LOSS OF VALUE?

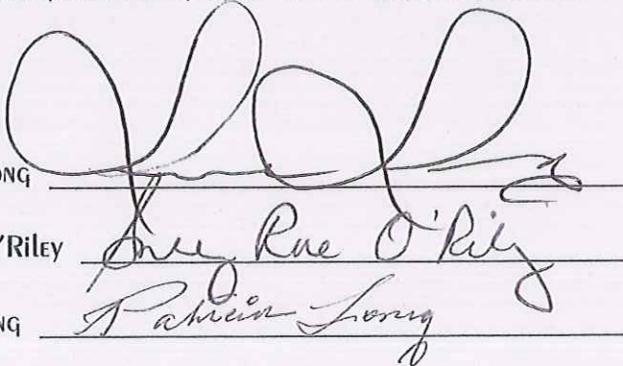
WE FEEL YOU WOULD BE DOING A SERVICE TO THE NEN IF YOU GRANT US A MINIMUM OF FOUR MONTHS DELAY BEFORE ANY ACTION IS TAKEN. WE LOOK FORWARD TO A CAREFUL EXAMINATION OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THIS PLAN AND ITS IMPACTS ON THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY IT, AND A MEANINGFUL EXPLANATION OF ITS DETAILS.

Sincerely,

LUCIANNE LONG

SALLY RAE O'RILEY

PATRICIA LONG



**Subject:** Fw: NEN meeting

**From:** Betty <alzbetjt@sbcglobal.net>

**Date:** Mon, 20 Jul 2009 12:20:37 -0500

**To:** Steve.Arnold@Fitchburg.WI.US, westwaubesa@sbcglobal.net

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Betty](#)

**To:** [jay.allen@city.fitchburg.wi.us](mailto:jay.allen@city.fitchburg.wi.us)

**Sent:** Monday, July 20, 2009 12:17 PM

**Subject:** NEN meeting

Dear Jay,

I agree with the Northeast Neighborhood & the testimony by Dr. Joy Zedler that there should be a 300' buffer around any wetlands for development.

I'm unable to be at the Tueaday morning meeting.

Regards,

Betty Viney

West Hill Dr.

**Subject:** Please vote against the reduced POSB buffer at NEN

**From:** dlewein@charter.net

**Date:** Tue, 21 Jul 2009 05:12:48 -0700

**To:** Jay Allen <Jay.Allen@city.fitchburg.wi.us>, Steve.Arnold@Fitchburg.WI.US

**CC:** westwaubesa@sbcglobal.net

Jay and Steve,

I've learned through the West Waubesa Preservation Coalition about the hearing this morning. I would urge you to vote against the decreased POSB buffer for the wetlands in the proposed Northeast Neighborhood.

I'm very much against the development of this land, not only because of the many environmental factors that argue against this development. But I also am against the city allowing the development of this property against our own planning process. This development is not contiguous to our urban service area. As such, it does not meet the needs of the city. The city should not be beholden to the developer's timetable for seeking his return on his investment--and that is how I view this deal. It's not the right time to develop this land at all.

In the meantime, I urge you to vote against the proposed 75 foot POSB buffer. I trust you both to make a thoughtful and principled vote.

(I'm sorry that this email is getting to you so late -- I was away from emails for a few days and am unable to attend the meeting this morning due to schedule conflict with my work.)

Thanks,  
Donna Lewein  
2194 Conover Cir  
658-4616

2358 Fitchburg Rd.

Fitchburg, Wis. 53593

July 21, 2009

To: City of Fitchburg officials

From: Rich Eggleston

I hope the wetland buffer area in the proposed Northeast Neighborhood is expanded from the 300 feet proposed in the comprehensive plan to 900 feet. The comprehensive plan calls for "a minimum 300 feet of environmental corridor or buffer zone outside the current (2007) urban service area." But it does not stipulate a maximum width.

However, the comprehensive plan does call for the city to "examine the impact of development on existing wetlands and (to) promote the re-establishment and re-generation of wetlands and related natural systems when and where appropriate."

Further, it is the policy of the city, stated in the comprehensive plan, to "implement a Plan for Open Spaces and Recreation that is consistent with this plan..."

Note the lack of wiggle room in that phrase, which appears as Policy 8 on page 2-2 of my copy of the plan.

It does not say, "consistent with this plan except when it is convenient to deviate from the comprehensive plan..." or words to that effect.

**The majority of the citizens of Fitchburg clearly want the 300-foot environmental corridor or buffer zone outside the 2007 urban services area to represent a minimum set-aside area, not a maximum set-aside area.**

Thank you.

I am concerned about the fact that the current land use map has houses within the area that was flooded in June of 2008.

I fear for Swan Creek, the Waubesa Wetlands and Lake Waubesa – that they could be severely damaged by runoff from impervious surfaces in the North-East Neighborhood.

I am impressed by the research of Dr. Zedler and Dr. Semlitsch that has shown the need for buffer zones much greater than the currently-accepted 300ft from wetlands.

But it is a need for larger, personal “buffer zones” that I am requesting today. As I find I need to work longer hours to meet the requirements of my job, and have less money for travel and recreation away from home, I turn to the open spaces close by for relaxation and rejuvenation. I believe I am not alone in this need. Please expand, rather than decrease, the current buffer limits and protect the natural and green spaces that are so important to both animal and human life.

Thank you,  
Mary Upshaw  
2679 Richardson St.  
Fitchburg

**From:** Jason Schmidt  
**To:** Thomas Hovel  
**Date:** 7/21/2009 8:21 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Create a much larger buffer around wetlands!

**CC:** Susan Sloper

--  
Jason J. Schmidt  
Resource/Project Planner  
City of Fitchburg  
5520 Lacy Road  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
Phone (608) 270-4258  
Fax (608) 270-4275  
Jason.Schmidt@city.fitchburg.wi.us

>>> 7/21/2009 at 7:47 AM:  
> Dear Mr. Mayor and colleagues,  
>  
> Regarding the NEN!  
>  
> Will the land set aside in this plan for parks and open space stay the same,  
> grow, or shrink?  
>  
> Please expand the area of land set aside.  
>  
> Keep in mind what makes Fitchburg a special place are not:  
>  
> Too many Houses for sale, too many lots for sale, too much commercial and  
> retail sitting idle.  
>  
> Much preferred are policies which support, enhance, and improve our quality  
> of life and property values. Strong property values place a foundation under  
> much needed property tax revenues.  
>  
> Keeping Fitchburg a most desirable part of Dane County, as a place that  
> honors the quality of life, is a legacy we can leave to our children and  
> their children.  
>  
> Parks, wise land use supporting organic products, and respect for the beauty  
> we have been given stewardship over will best serve the future well being of  
> our community.  
>  
> With respect and best regards,  
>  
> Gary Leverington / Fitchburg resident.

July 15, 2009

NE Neighborhood land use Committee  
c/o City of Fitchburg - Planning Committee

Re: Northeast Neighborhood Plan & Map, and  
the attachment forwarded to us titled  
Potential wording relative to: Northeast Neighborhood  
Park and open Space Boundary document.

I like the idea of keeping the woods  
private open space, but I do not want  
the city of Fitchburg telling me I can't  
build on my property. If I ever had to  
sell, I believe this would reduce what  
the property is going to sell for.

Having worked for several underground utility  
contractors for the past 31 years, there is  
not a neighborhood in Madison, or any  
of the surrounding communities that I  
have not worked in. Having this experience  
I can tell you that there is no other  
place around here as unique as this  
neighborhood. So keeping the woods the  
way they are is important to me.

I would like you to postpone any  
committee approval until we get

Answers to how this would impact  
our properties.

Sincerely

St Sh

Steve Saley

25 year Clayton Rd

4787 E Clayton Rd

Neighbor

Fitchburg W. 53211

608-273-0638

**en Koppes**

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**n:** "Helen Koppes" <helenkoppes@rcperformance.com>  
<Steve.Arnold@Fitchburg.WI.US>  
"Janet Aberle" <janetaberle@rcperformance.com>; <mandrakemackinac@aol.com>; <rbarroilhet@gmail.com>;  
<sstreic1@wisc.edu>; <timjan@charter.net>; <dan.statz@yahoo.com>; <pattibewick3207@sbcglobal.net>  
**t:** Tuesday, July 14, 2009 2:23 PM  
**ch:** Fitchburg-SArnold.doc  
**ject:** NE Neighborhood Land Use Committee Proposal

'e,

ve attached a letter which I will be forwarding to you and committee members for your  
aw and consideration.

rk you!

in Koppes

er copy forwarded to Steve Saley)

7/14/2009

July 14, 2009

NE Neighborhood Land Use Committee  
c/o City of Fitchburg – Planning Department  
5520 Lacy Road  
Fitchburg, WI 53711-5318

Attention: Ald. Steve Arnold, Chair,  
Committee Members, and  
Thomas Hovel, Zoning Administrator/City Planner

Re: Northeast Neighborhood Plan and Map, and the attachment forwarded to us titled "Potential wording relative to: Northeast Neighborhood Park and Open Space Boundary document."

Dear Steve,

I would like to thank you for attending our neighborhood meeting held at 4825 E. Clayton Road last evening, July 13<sup>th</sup>. We are all very appreciative of your attendance and helpful information on this complex issue impacting our properties.

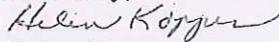
It is difficult to be "in support of or in opposition to" a proposal which is difficult to assess in relation to the impact it would have on our property.

We also appreciate your invitation to suggest alternative solutions and/or language to the documents we reviewed, and therefore my husband Orland and I would respectfully request a four month delay in approval of the NE Neighborhood Park and Open Space Boundary proposal.

Thank you for your consideration in postponing committee approval. As I understand there is no deadline which requires immediate action. I will continue to work with my neighbors to provide you with feedback as quickly as possible.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide any proposed alternative language or map reconfiguration suggestions.

Sincerely,



Helen Koppes  
4825 E. Clayton Road  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
608-274-2416  
helenkoppes@rcperformance.com