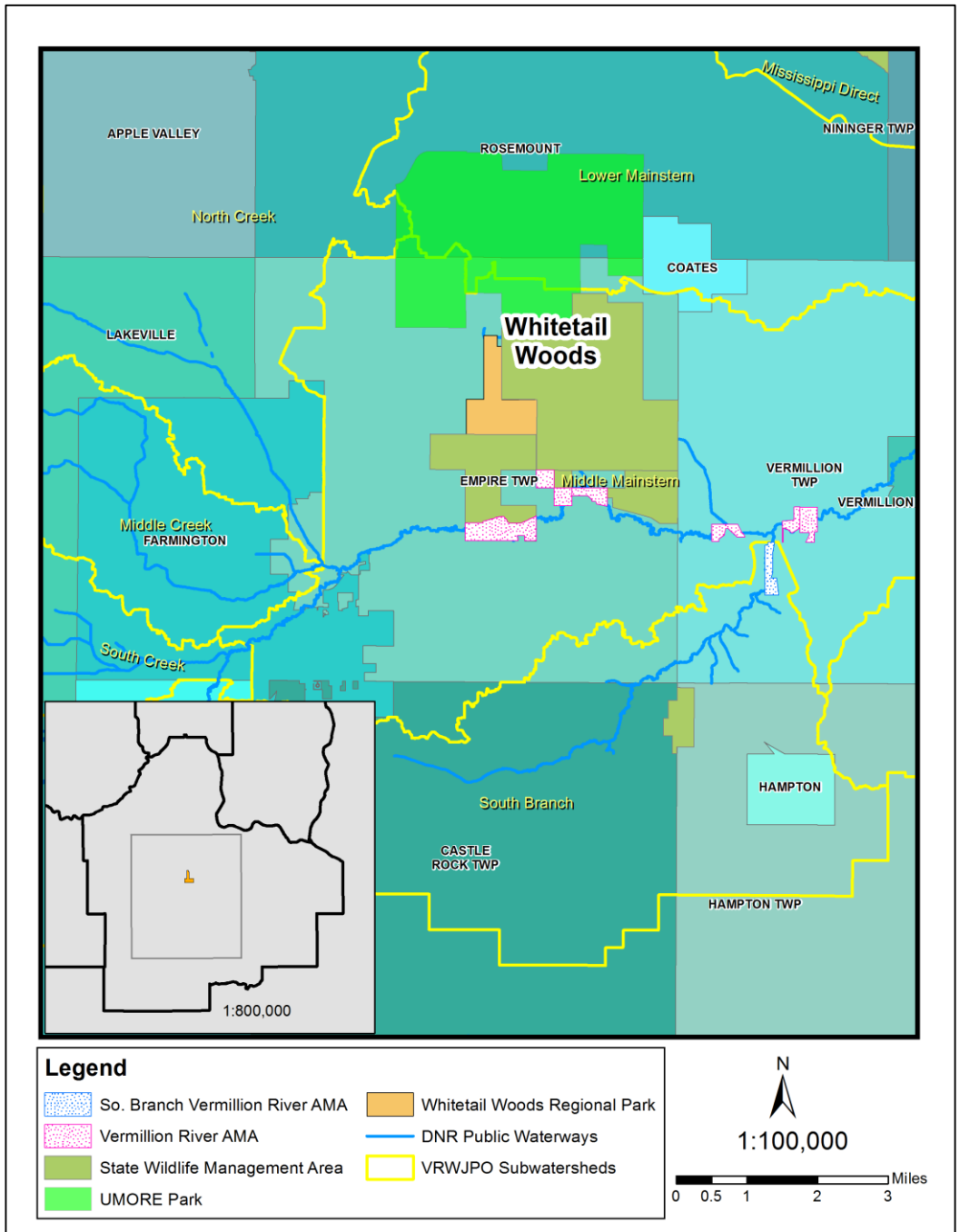


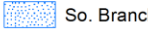
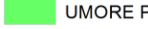
**NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
PLAN FOR WHITETAIL WOODS
REGIONAL PARK:
PHASE 2
GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

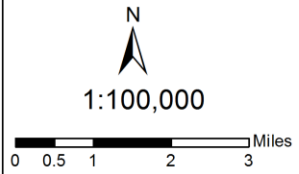
**Dakota County
Planning Commission,
October 24, 2019**

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

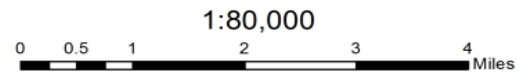
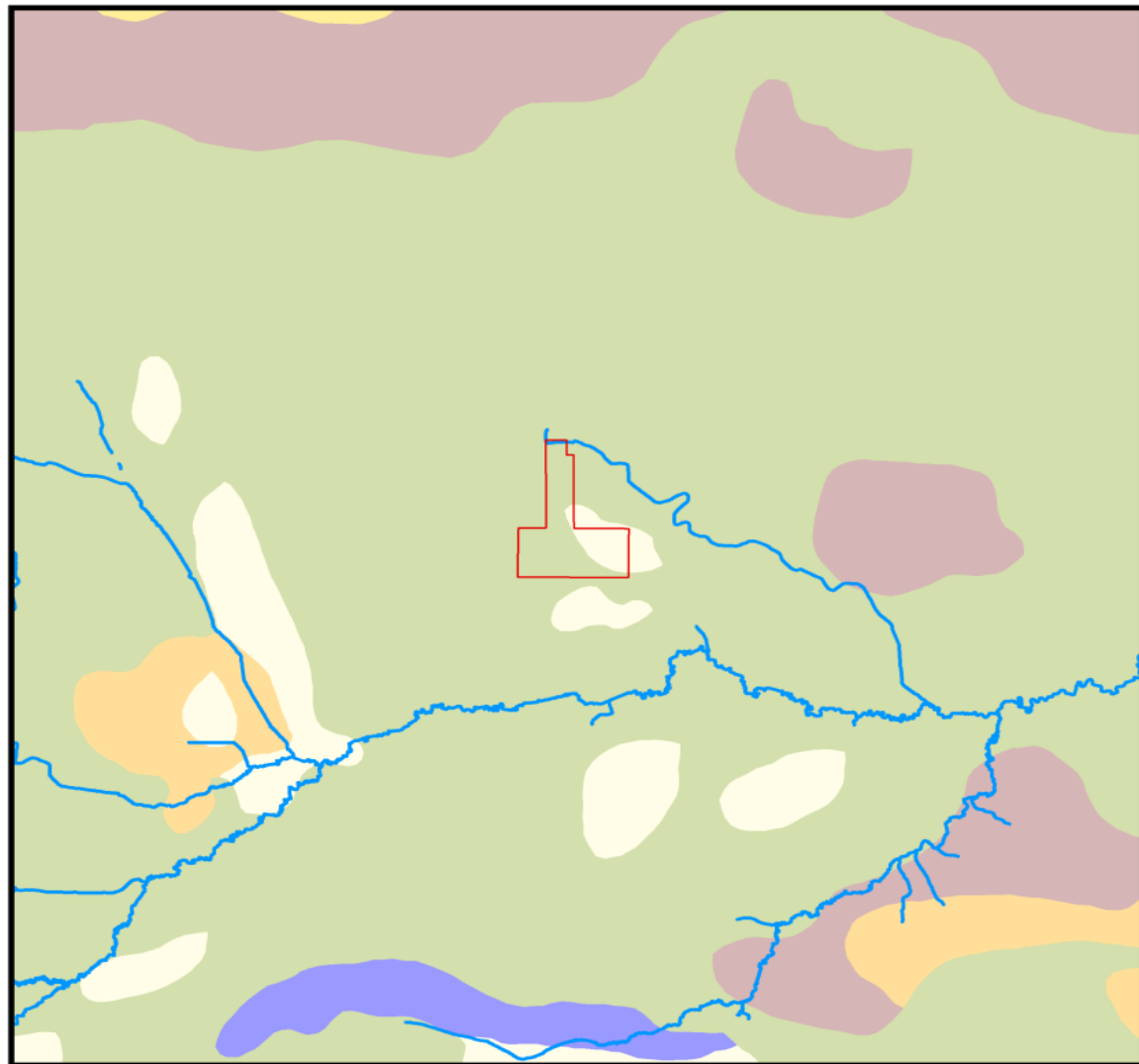


Legend

-  So. Branch Vermillion River AMA
-  Vermillion River AMA
-  State Wildlife Management Area
-  UMORE Park
-  Whitetail Woods Regional Park
-  DNR Public Waterways
-  VRWJPO Subwatersheds

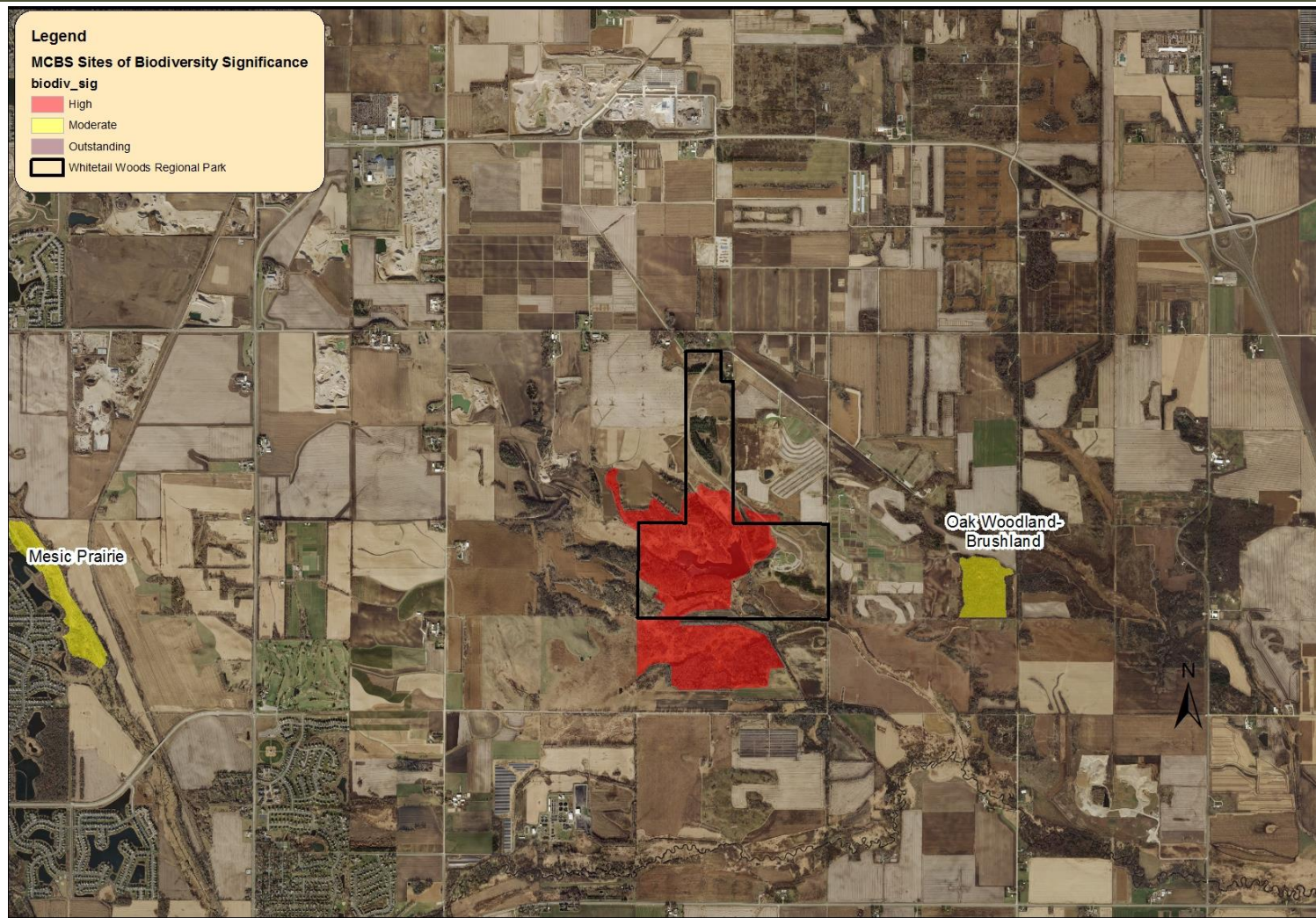


PRE-SETTLEMENT VEGETATION





ECOLOGICAL CONDITION: MINNESOTA BIOLOGICAL SURVEY



1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles

GIS Data: Dakota County,
2017 Aerial Photo, Fall (6 inch).

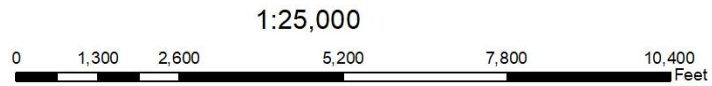
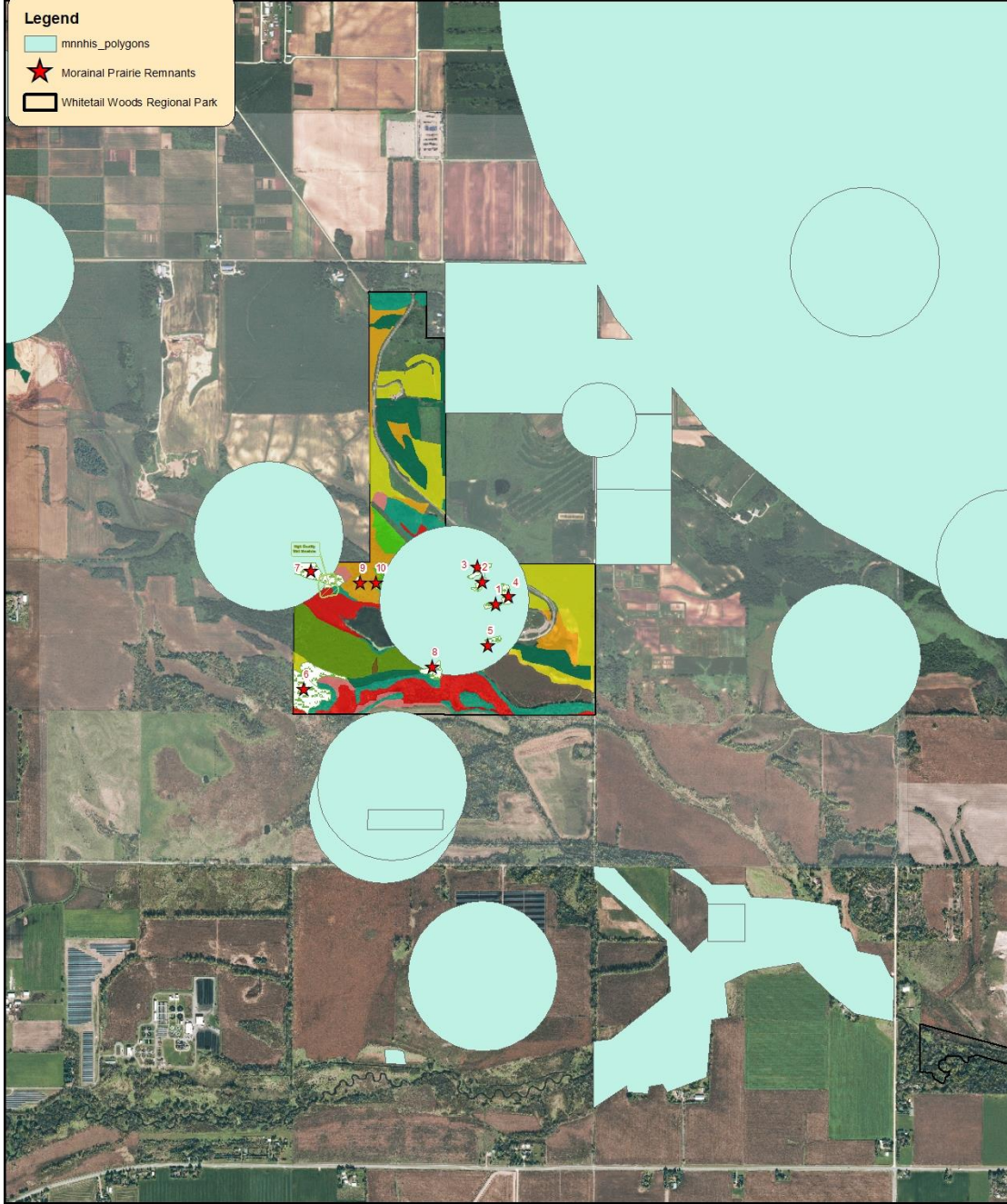
N



INHERENT ECOLOGICAL STRENGTHS

- Recently restored
 - Part of a larger natural landscape
 - Can coordinate management activities with adjacent properties
 - Burning will be less of a problem as compared to most park sites
 - There is an excellent habitat diversity across the park
 - Rare species occur on and near the park
- 

RARE FEATURES



GIS Data: Dakota County.
2018 Aerial Photo (composite).

ECOLOGICAL STRESSORS

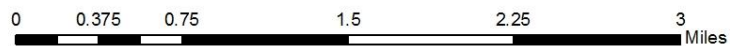
- Loss of ecological integrity; fragmentation
 - Loss of ecosystem processes
 - Land use affects: altered hydrology, community structure
 - Invasive species
 - (Lack of a management plan)
- 
- A landscape photograph showing a field of tall grasses and weeds in the foreground, leading to a line of trees in the distance under a blue sky with light clouds.

AQUIFER VULNERABILITY



1:40,395

GIS Data: Minnesota Geospatial Commons, 2018



VISION

A scenic view of a park with a pond, trees, and a grassy area. The image shows a large, leafy tree in the foreground on the right, casting a shadow over a grassy area. In the background, there is a calm pond reflecting the sky and trees. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

The water, vegetation, and wildlife of Dakota County parks will be managed to conserve biodiversity, restore native habitats, improve public benefits, and achieve resilience and regionally outstanding quality, now and for future generations.

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A photograph of a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. The ground is covered in lush green vegetation, including ferns and other plants. The trees are tall and have thick trunks. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, suggesting a healthy ecosystem.

1. Restore Ecosystem Processes and Native Habitats

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Conserve Biodiversity



GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Achieve Ecological Resilience and Provide Ecological Services



GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Achieve Regionally Outstanding Quality



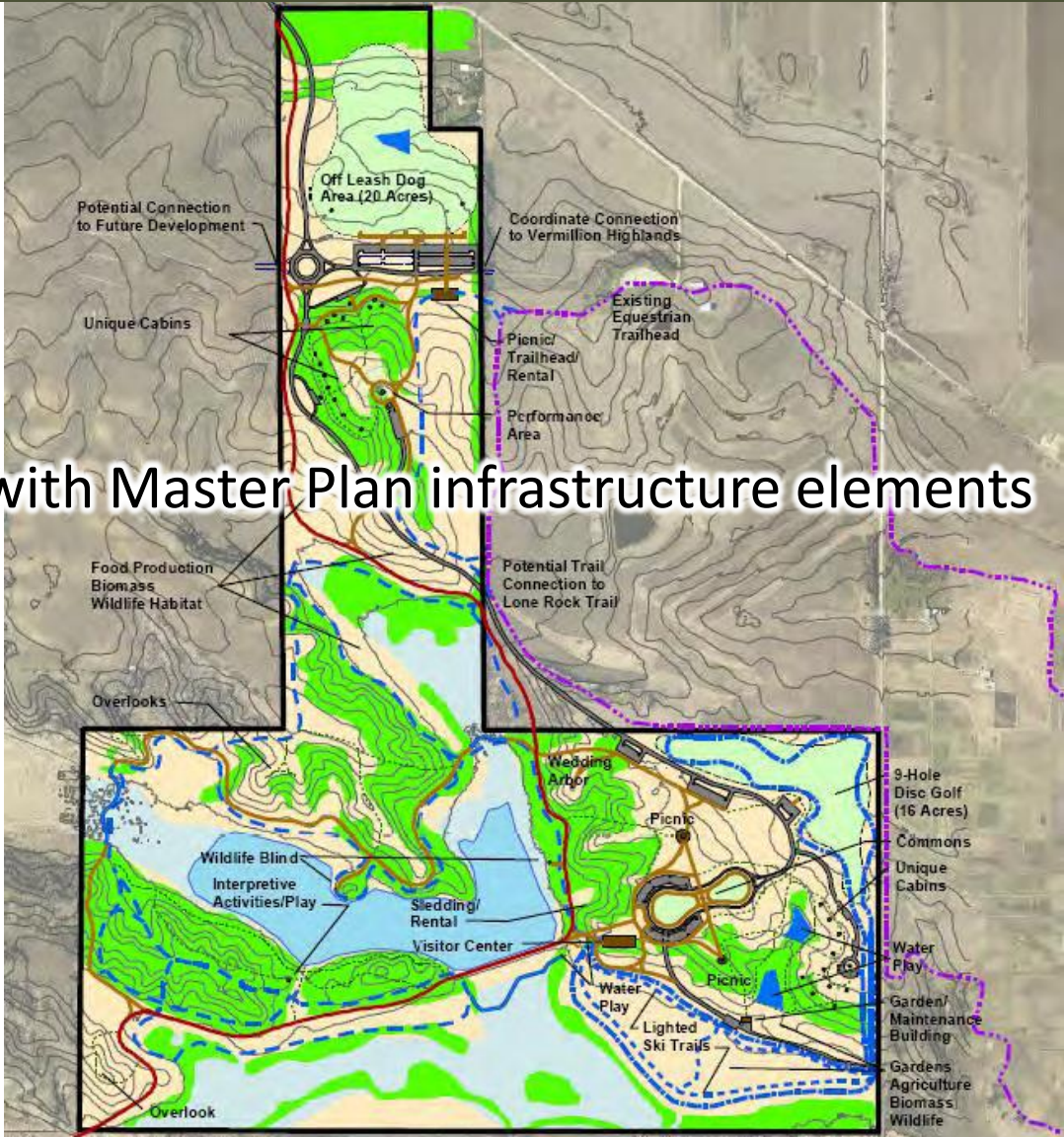
GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Enhance Visitor Experience and Environmental Education



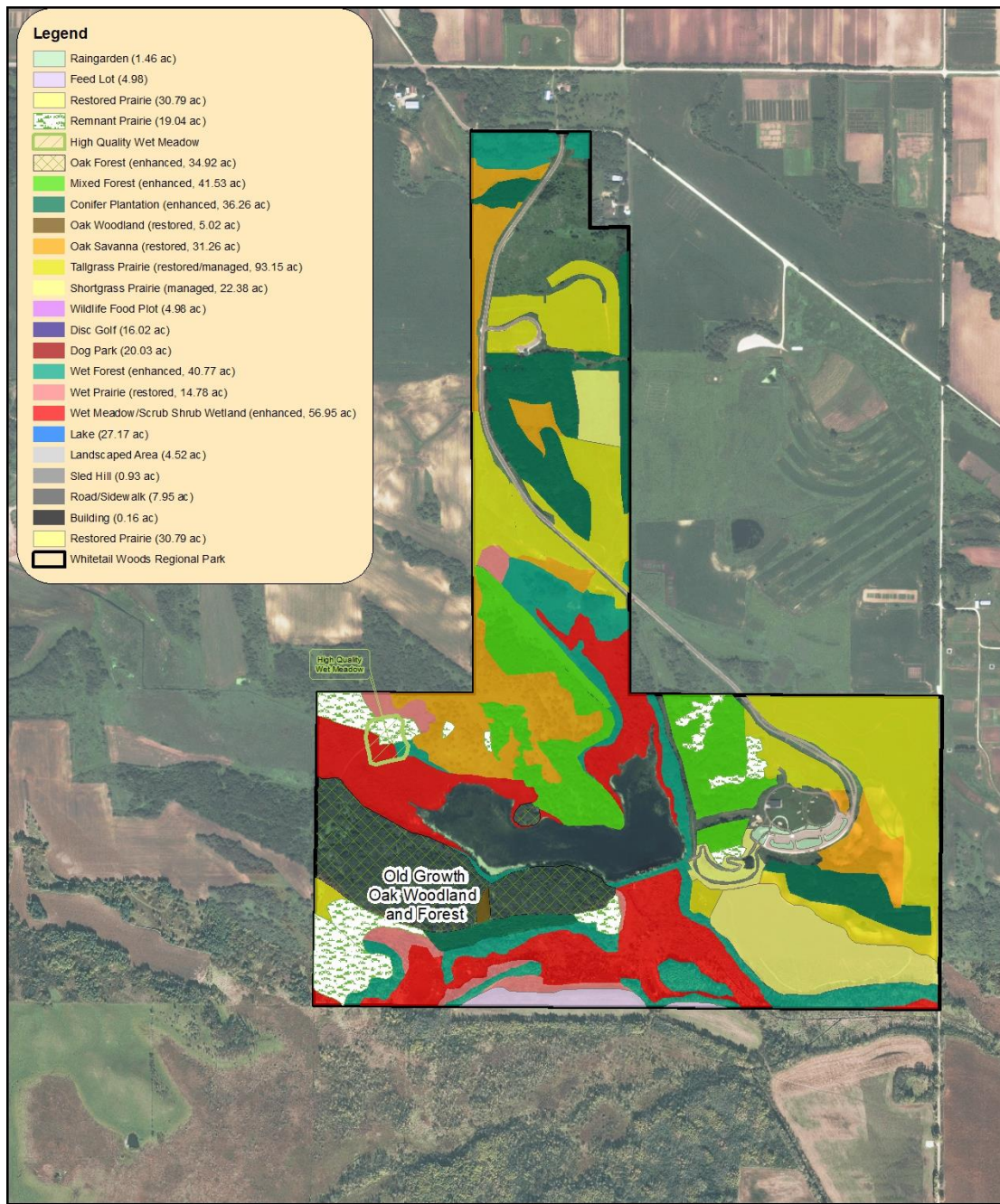
GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrate with Master Plan infrastructure elements



GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 6.
Develop
a Target
Plant
Comm-
unity
Map for
the park



1:12,000



GIS Data: Dakota County.
2018 Aerial Photo (composite).

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS



7. Develop a 5-Year and a 20-Year Work Plan

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS



8. Utilize Adaptive Management and Monitoring

SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- 
1. Convert non-historical plant communities (e.g., conifer plantations, old fields, exotic species dominated wetlands) to more appropriate native ones
 - Use *novel communities transition plan* as a guide

SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Revisit each restoration unit and evaluate its status.

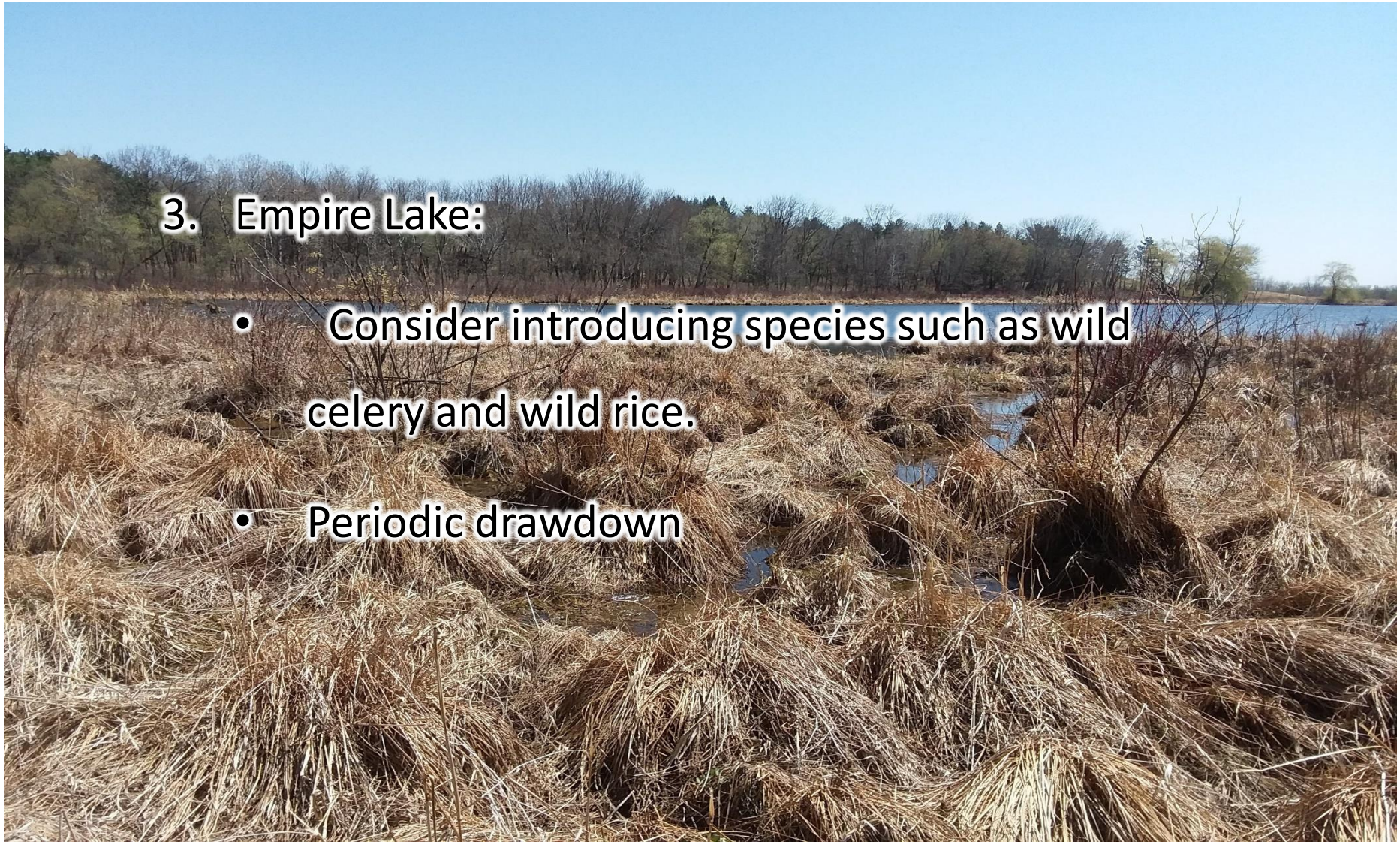
Examples:

- Food plots
- “Bowling Alley”
- Provide remnant prairie buffers
- Join similar restoration units to make larger, new management units
- Burn Units vs Mangement Units

SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Empire Lake:

- Consider introducing species such as wild celery and wild rice.
- Periodic drawdown



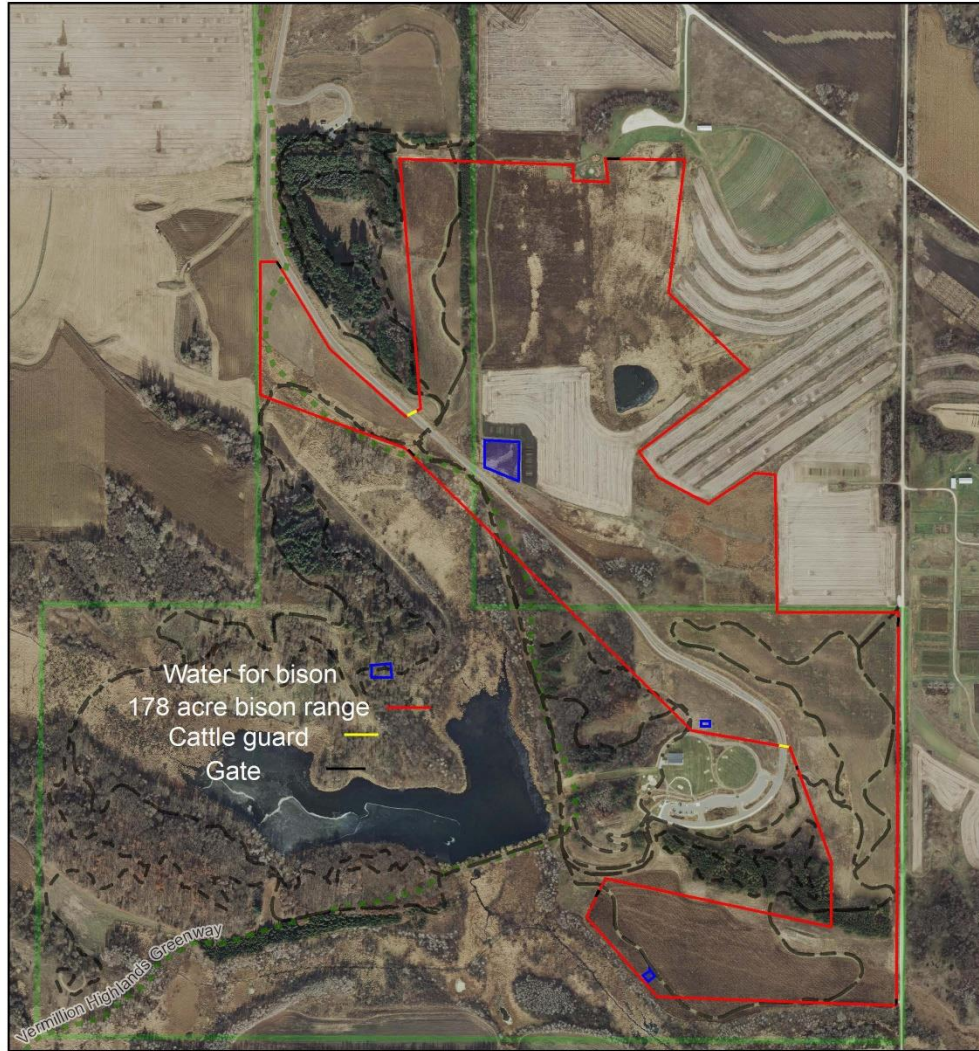
SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



4. Consider reintroducing grazing to the park

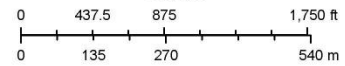
POSSIBLE BISON HERD AREA

Draft WWRP/VH Bison Range



September 27, 2019

1:9,600




Parks & Recreation

SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

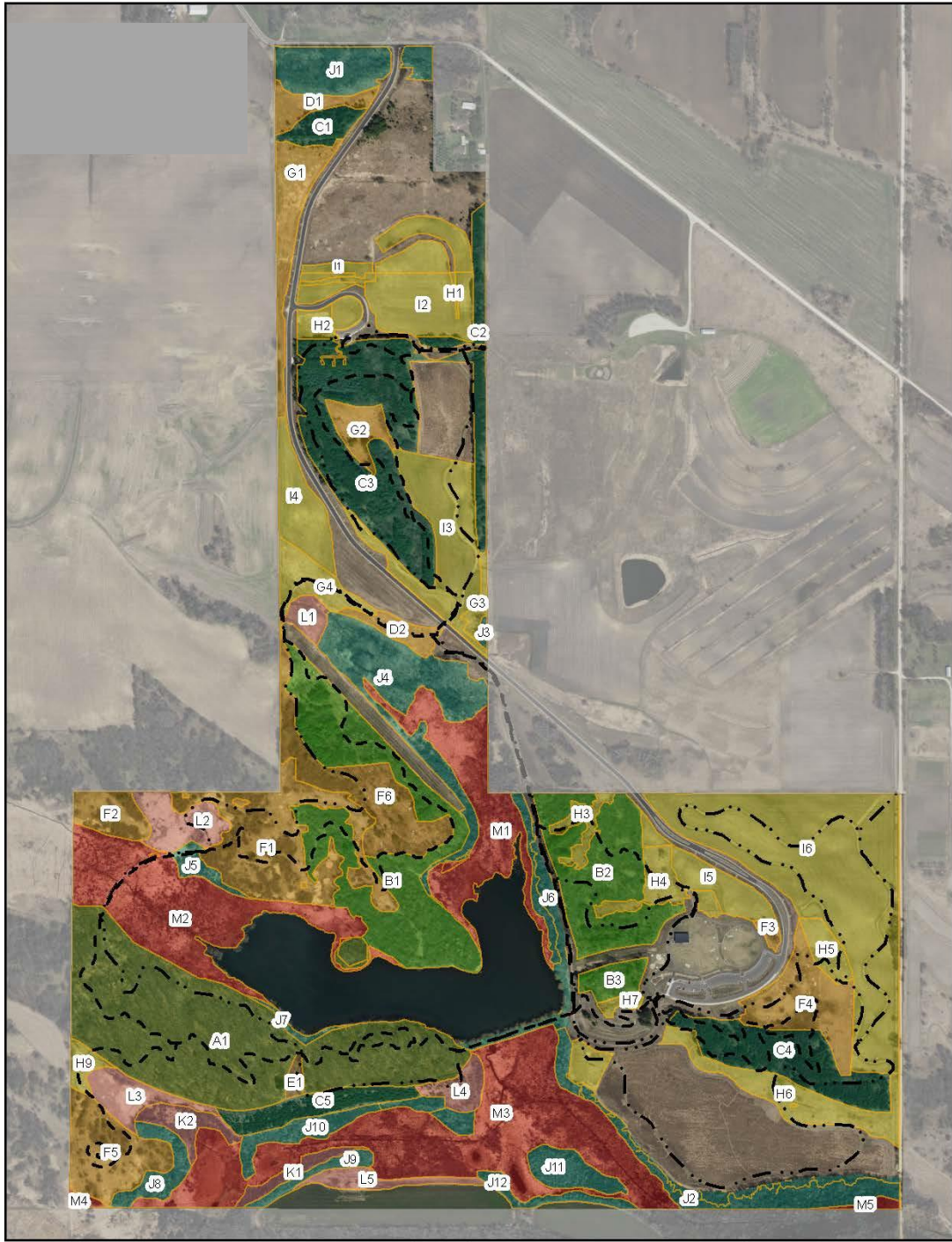
5. List Priority Features for the park and their recommendations

- Remnant prairies, old growth forests, high quality wetlands, key wildlife species.
- Significant geologic, soil, and water features

SOME SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- 
6. Restore—all areas that did not get restored previously
 7. Enhance—all areas that did receive initial restoration
 - Seed “onto the black”
 8. All Land Cover Types:
 - Soften edges—blend boundaries across community types

PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT UNITS



PRIORITIES

Higher Priorities

1. Rare flora
2. Rare fauna
3. Important water resources
4. High quality upland areas



PRIORITIES

Medium Priorities

1. Areas that have been previously restored
2. High-use recreational areas that merit attention, mitigation, or restoration
3. Road sides
4. Raingardens

PRIORITIES

A photograph of a grassy field with two young trees in the foreground and a dense forest in the background. The trees are thin with light-colored bark and green leaves. The field is filled with tall green grass and some white wildflowers. The background is a thick line of dark green trees under a cloudy sky.

Lower Priorities

1. Food plots
2. Possible Dog Park Area
3. Low-use recreational areas

NEXT STEPS

- Develop Work Plans and Final Draft NRMP (4th Quarter, 2020)
- Review of Final Draft NRMP by Planning Commission and PDC (1st Quarter, 2020)
- Release of Final Draft NRMP for 45-day Public Review, including and Open House (1st Quarter, 2020)
- Make changes to Draft NRMP that reflect public comments
- NRMP Adoption (2nd Quarter, 2020)

QUESTIONS?

