

April 24, 2024

Potentially Interested Party
Via Email

Re: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Outreach Center
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Project #A-22-007_9950-2218

To Whom It May Concern:

The University of Wisconsin System Administration (UWSA) has retained Ayres to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Lakeshore Nature Preserve Outreach Center. The EIS will be prepared following the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA), Wisconsin Statutes 1.11, and UWSA guidelines (Board of Regents' Resolution 2508, November 6, 1981). An initial requirement of the EIS is the scoping process. The scoping process intends to identify potential beneficial or adverse impacts of the project on the physical, biological, social, and economic environments at an early stage. Because you or your agency or group may have an interest in the project, we are inviting you to participate in the scoping process.

Project Background

The University of Wisconsin–Madison plans to construct an Outreach Center within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve, a 300-acre natural area along Lake Mendota's south shore. The need for this center was initially identified in the 2006 Lakeshore Nature Preserve Master Plan, which proposed a gathering place for students, faculty, staff, and visitors near Picnic Point. The 2015 Campus Master Plan further supported this concept, designating a site outside Picnic Point's historic stone entry walls. The chosen location offers favorable solar exposure and microclimatic conditions for a sustainable building.

The new facility will serve as a central hub for Preserve staff, facilitating collaboration with over 600 individual volunteers and 45 volunteer groups involved in land management. By streamlining coordination and providing a large meeting space, the Outreach Center aims to enhance efficiency and support the Preserve's teaching, research, and public outreach efforts.

The proposed project area includes the Outreach Center, geothermal facilities, parking, roads, a multimodal path, and relocation of a biofiltration basin. The Lakeshore Nature Preserve currently holds a "Conservancy" zoning designation in the City of Madison and establishing the Outreach Center/Nature Center will require a conditional use review through the Madison Plan Commission.

Proposed Project Action

The proposed Outreach Center, spanning approximately 10,000 gross square feet (GSF), will be located within the Lakeshore Nature Preserve on the UW-Madison campus. Its primary objective is to create a dedicated space for experiential, hands-on learning while expanding the research, teaching, and outreach capabilities of the Preserve. This center will be housed in a sustainable facility that incorporates resilient green building design elements.

Key features of the proposed Outreach Center include:

1. **Preserve Staff Work Areas and Land Care Management Space:** These functional areas will support the day-to-day operations of the Preserve.

2. **Public-Facing Facilities:** Designed to align with the University's mission, these facilities will include a 50-person multipurpose room and space for interpretive displays.
3. **Restrooms:** Conveniently accessible from both inside and outside the building.
4. **Carbon-Neutral Building:** The center will reflect the core values of the Lakeshore Nature Preserve and the University, emphasizing sustainability.
5. **Geothermal Heating/Cooling:** An environmentally friendly solution for maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures.
6. **Stormwater Management:** The design incorporates green roofs and stormwater reuse best practices to minimize runoff impact.
7. **Consideration for Ancestral Land:** Acknowledging the significance of the Ho-Chunk Nation's ancestral home.

The project also involves relocating a portion of University Bay Drive and shifting lot 130 to the north. The new road pavement will maintain a similar distance from the Class of 1918 Marsh as the existing parking lot. Additionally, existing bio-infiltration swales will be reconfigured to accommodate the building. Throughout this process, mapped wetlands and floodplains will be carefully considered.

The Outreach Center's funding relies entirely on gifts and grants, with a proposed budget of \$16,500,000.

Below is a summary of the targeted project schedule:

Project Schedule

Board of Regents Authority to Construct	August 2024
Bid Date	April 2025
Start Construction	June 2025
Substantial Completion	August 2026
Occupancy	Fall 2026

A project location map, conceptual site plan, and figure depicting existing vs. proposed site features is enclosed. EIS information will also be made available on the Ayres project website:
<http://www.ayresprojectinfo.com>.

EIS Schedule

The EIS report will evaluate the potential positive and adverse environmental impacts of the project in accordance with the WEPA and UWSA guidelines. Issues identified during the scoping process will be addressed in the Draft EIS report. As part of our standard EIS process, Ayres will perform research using available databases and resources to collect information pertaining to environmental, social, economic, cultural, or historic aspects of the project. The Draft EIS report is anticipated to be made available to the public for a 45-day comment period in June. A legal notice will be published in Wisconsin State Journal to announce the availability of the Draft EIS in addition to emailing a distribution list of potentially interested parties.

Appropriate revisions will be incorporated into a Final EIS document based on comments received during responses to this letter or noted during the comment period. The availability of the Final EIS report and notice of public hearing will also be announced with a legal notice in the Wisconsin State Journal, anticipated in September.

Scoping Meeting

Because you or your agency might be interested in or have input regarding potential environmental impacts associated with this project, we would like to invite you to a Scoping Meeting on Wednesday,



Potentially Interested Party
April 24, 2024
Page 3 of 3

May 8, 2024, at 5:30 PM. The meeting will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams (Meeting ID: 279 245 268 085; Passcode: RxzJ7v) and telephone (+1 715-318-5006, 959821715#).

If you are interested in this project, we welcome any comments, suggestions, or other input you feel are important. Please submit your comments related to this project in writing by **May 8, 2024**, for consideration in the Draft EIS report. A comment form is enclosed. Send your comments to:

Mitchell Banach, PG
Ayes Associates
3433 Oakwood Hills Parkway
Eau Claire, WI 54701
BanachM@AyesAssociates.com

If no comments are received from you or your group, we will assume that there are no project issues that negatively impact you, or that you would like to comment on.

Sincerely,

Ayes Associates Inc

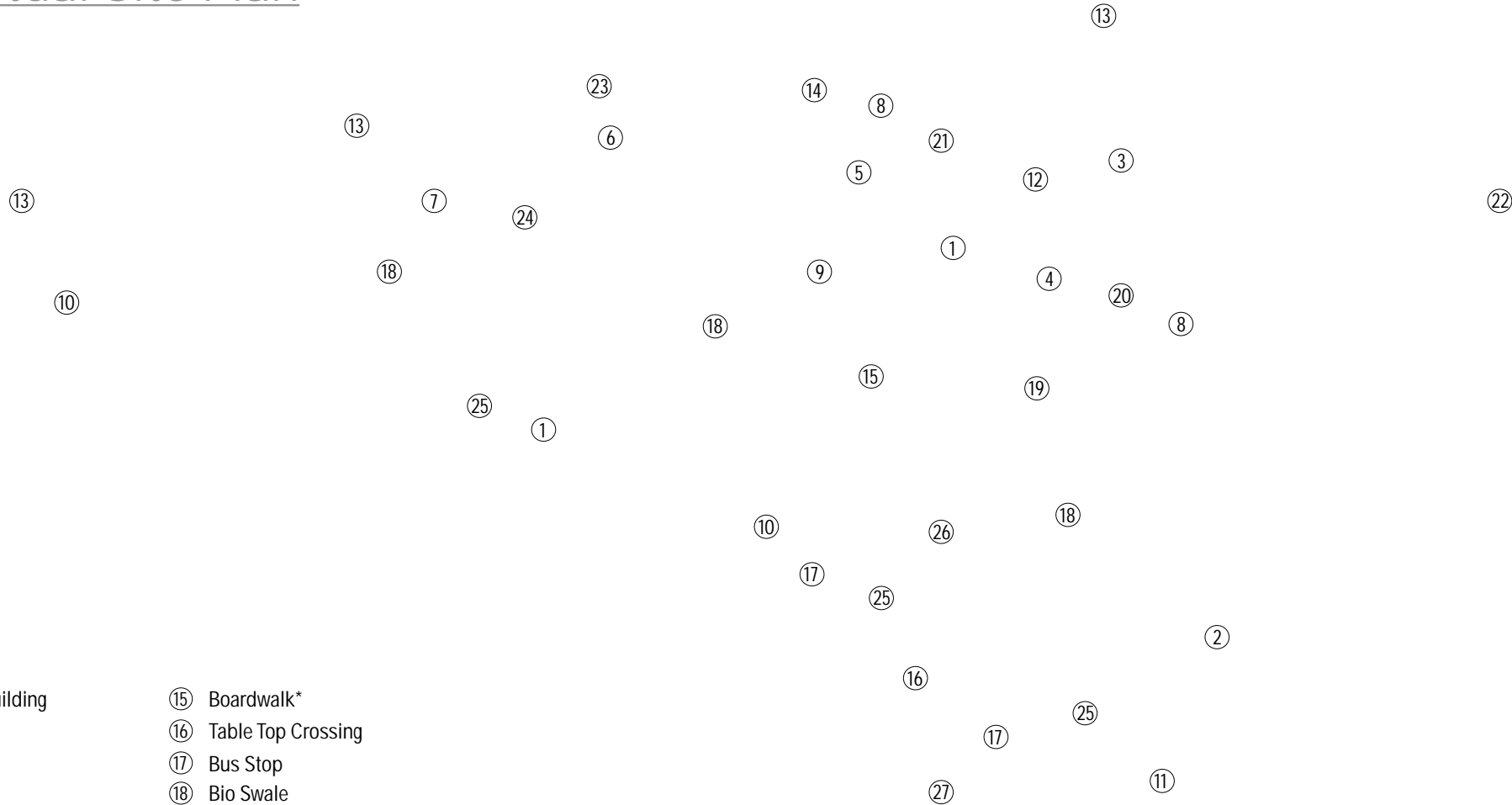


Mitchell C. Banach, PG
Geologist

Enclosure: Location Map
 Conceptual Site Plan
 New vs. Existing Features
 Comment Form



Conceptual Site Plan



Key

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ① Entry to Site/Building | ⑮ Boardwalk* |
| ② Lakeshore Path | ⑯ Table Top Crossing |
| ③ Preserve Portal | ⑰ Bus Stop |
| ④ Public Space | ⑱ Bio Swale |
| ⑤ Outreach Center Building | ⑲ Water Collection Feature |
| ⑥ Service Yard/Garages | ⑳ Ho-Chunk Medicine Plant Garden |
| ⑦ Ramp to Building | ㉑ Outdoor Terraces |
| ⑧ Existing Stone Wall | ㉒ To Picnic Point |
| ⑨ Parking Lot | ㉓ Screen Wall and Gates |
| ⑩ Temin Lakeshore Path, relocated | ㉔ Service Enclosure |
| ⑪ B-Cycle Parking | ㉕ Turtle Tunnels |
| ⑫ Stone Seat Walls* | ㉖ Covered Bike Parking* |
| ⑬ Existing Trail | ㉗ Class of 1918 Marsh Dedication Boulder |
| ⑭ Proposed Canopy Walk | |

*Donor Gift Opportunity (not in project scope)

New vs. Existing



COMMENT FORM

Environmental Impact Statement Scoping
Lakeshore Nature Preserve Outreach Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI
Project #A-22-007_9950-2218

I have the following comments regarding this project and items to be considered as part of the scoping process:

[Please write comment here. Attach additional pages if necessary.]

Please complete the following information and sign if submitting comments:

Name: _____

Title/Representing: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail Address (optional): _____

Signature: _____

- I am interested in continuing my involvement in the public participation components of this project. Please continue to send me project notices.
- I am NOT interested in continuing my involvement in the public participation of this project. Please do NOT continue to send me project notices.

Please return this form by **May 8, 2024**, to:

Mitchell Banach, PG
Ayes Associates
3433 Oakwood Hills Parkway
Eau Claire, WI 54701
BanachM@AyesAssociates.com