

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

1

University of Wisconsin-Madison

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural
Research Project**

**Draft Environmental Impact Assessment
Public Meeting
March 24, 2022**



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- WEPA Process
- Project Description/Alternatives/Schedule
- Potential Impacts
- DEIA Comment Period
- Closing Comments



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

Introduction

- Attendance recorded through virtual meeting sign-in, written comments through e-mail
- Public Notice in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and *Stoughton Courier Hub* on Wednesday, March 10, 2022; sent through Distribution List
- Draft EIA report and public notice posted on Ayres' project website
- Draft EIA public meeting will be recorded, and minutes developed
- EIA Team Members and Design Team

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

4

EIA Team Members

UW – Madison

- Gary Brown – Campus Planning & WEPA Coordinator
- Josh Arnold – Campus Energy Advisor

EIA Consultant - Ayres Associates

- Ben Peotter, PE – Project Manager
- Logan Seipel, PG – Author
- Bill Honea, PG – Author

Development Team/Owner

Alliant Energy

- Andy Ehlert – Project Manager
- Chase Coleman – Communications Partner
- Melissa McCarville – Communications Partner

Sunvest Solar, LLC

- Catie Malcheski – Project Design
- John Daugherty – Project Leader



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

5

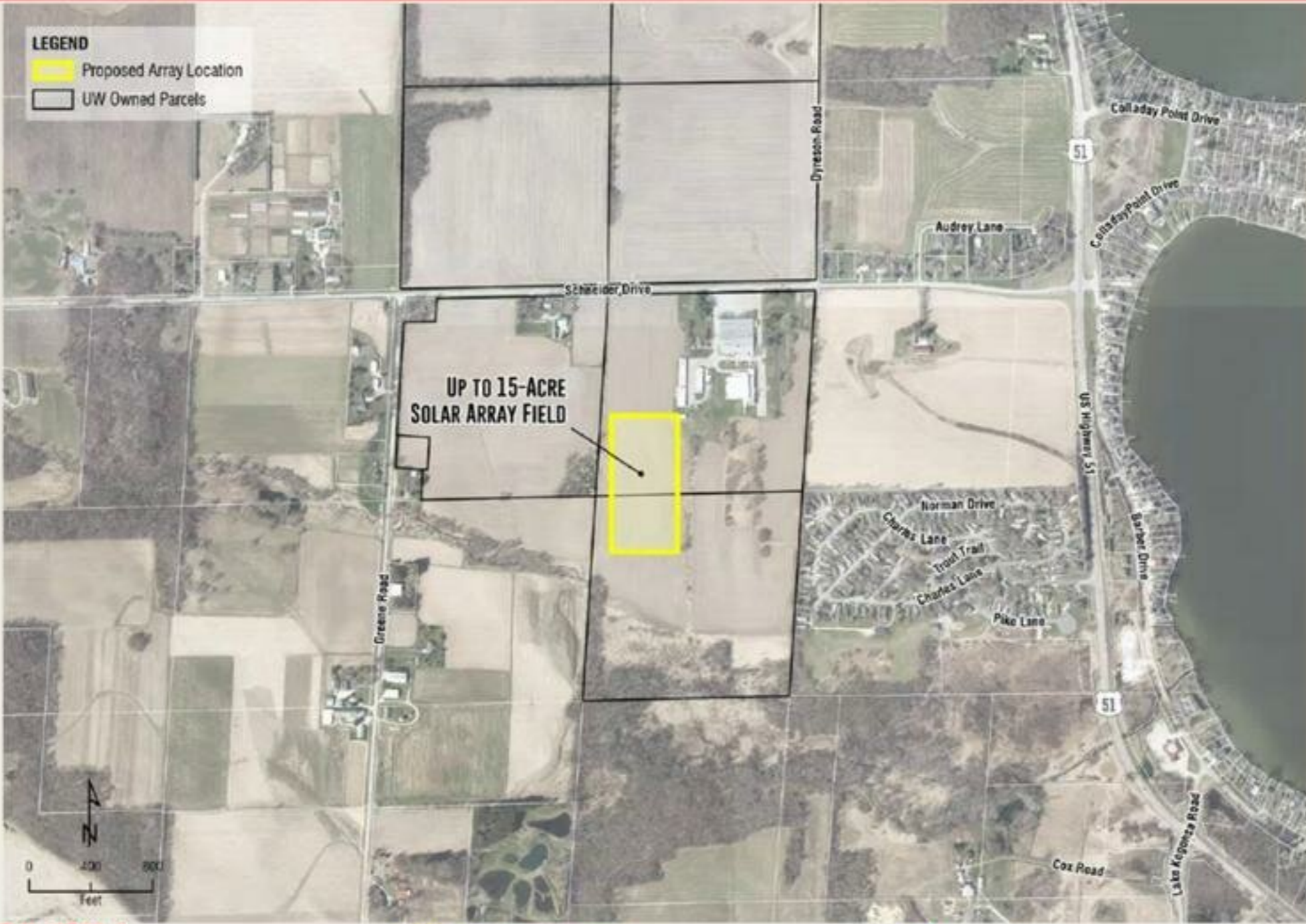
Draft EIA Meeting Purpose

- Describe Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process
- Describe proposed project, alternatives, and schedule
- Discuss the potential project impacts
- Obtain and share comments from the DEIA meeting with design team for consideration in design process
- Incorporate appropriate comments and design team input into Final EIA

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



Project site

Project site, facing south

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



Project site

Project site, facing southwest

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

10



View of the project site from Schneider Drive, facing south

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



Project site

Project site, facing north

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

12



Project site

Project site, facing northeast

UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting

13

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- **WEPA Process**
- Project Description/Alternatives/Schedule
- Potential Impacts
- DEIA Comment Period
- Closing Comments



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

14

Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) Process

- WEPA – 1971 and UWSA Resolution 1981/1999
- Purpose – Evaluate environmental effects of project
- Major steps in process:
 - UWSA/UW-Madison determine need for EIA (Type II Action)
 - Scoping letter (February 10), one comment received from Town of Dunn
 - Prepared Draft EIA report
 - Draft EIA submittal with 15-day comment period (March 10 to March 24, 2022)
 - Draft EIA public meeting (March 24, 2022)

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

15

Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) Process

- Major Steps Cont'd
 - Board of Regents Meeting April 7th and 8th
 - Prepare Final EIA report (assessment on elevating to EIS) and FONSI as appropriate

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

16

Draft EIA available at:

- E.D. Locke Public Library (McFarland)
- Stoughton Public Library
- Download from Ayres website:

<https://bit.ly/AyresKRC> or through <http://www.ayresprojectinfo.com/>

- NOTE: UW-Madison Project Website (independent from WEPA process):

<https://sustainability.wisc.edu/strategic-initiatives/renewable-energy/kegonsa-research-campus/>

UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting

17

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- WEPA Process
- **Project Description/Alternatives/Schedule**
- Potential Impacts
- DEIA Comment Period
- Closing Comments



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

21

Project Description

Presented by Josh Arnold, UW Project Coordinator

A/E Team Project Managers

- Alliant Energy
 - Andy Ehlert, Resource Development Team PM
- Sunvest
 - John Daugherty, Development Director
 - Catie Malcheski, PM

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

18

Project Need

- UW-Madison strives for sustainable practices under Chancellor's Second Nature Resilience Commitment and the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System
- Project supports institution's mission and planning principles through effective use of human, environmental, and financial resources:
 - Project would promote co-studies in renewable energy and agriculture (botany, soil sciences, applied economics, ag sciences)
 - Annual lease payments from the project would be reinvested in UW-Madison renewable energy and sustainability initiatives.
- Project supports Alliant Energy's Clean Energy Blueprint goals

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

19

General Project Description

- Project site on UW Board of Regents-owned property, UW Kegonsa Research Campus (KRC)
- KRC includes Physical Sciences Lab, part of 280-acres of leased agricultural land
- Construction of 2.25-Megawatt solar array (up to 15 acres) on land currently leased for agriculture
- Co-located with agricultural production/research

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

20

General Project Description

- **Proposed Solar Array**
 - Includes agricultural production and research
 - Portions of the parcel not included in the lease continue agricultural use
 - New distribution and fiber optic lines
 - Array owned and operated by Wisconsin Power and Light (DBA Alliant Energy) on UW-owned land leased to Alliant Energy
 - \$2.1 million project budget (approximate), funded by Alliant Energy

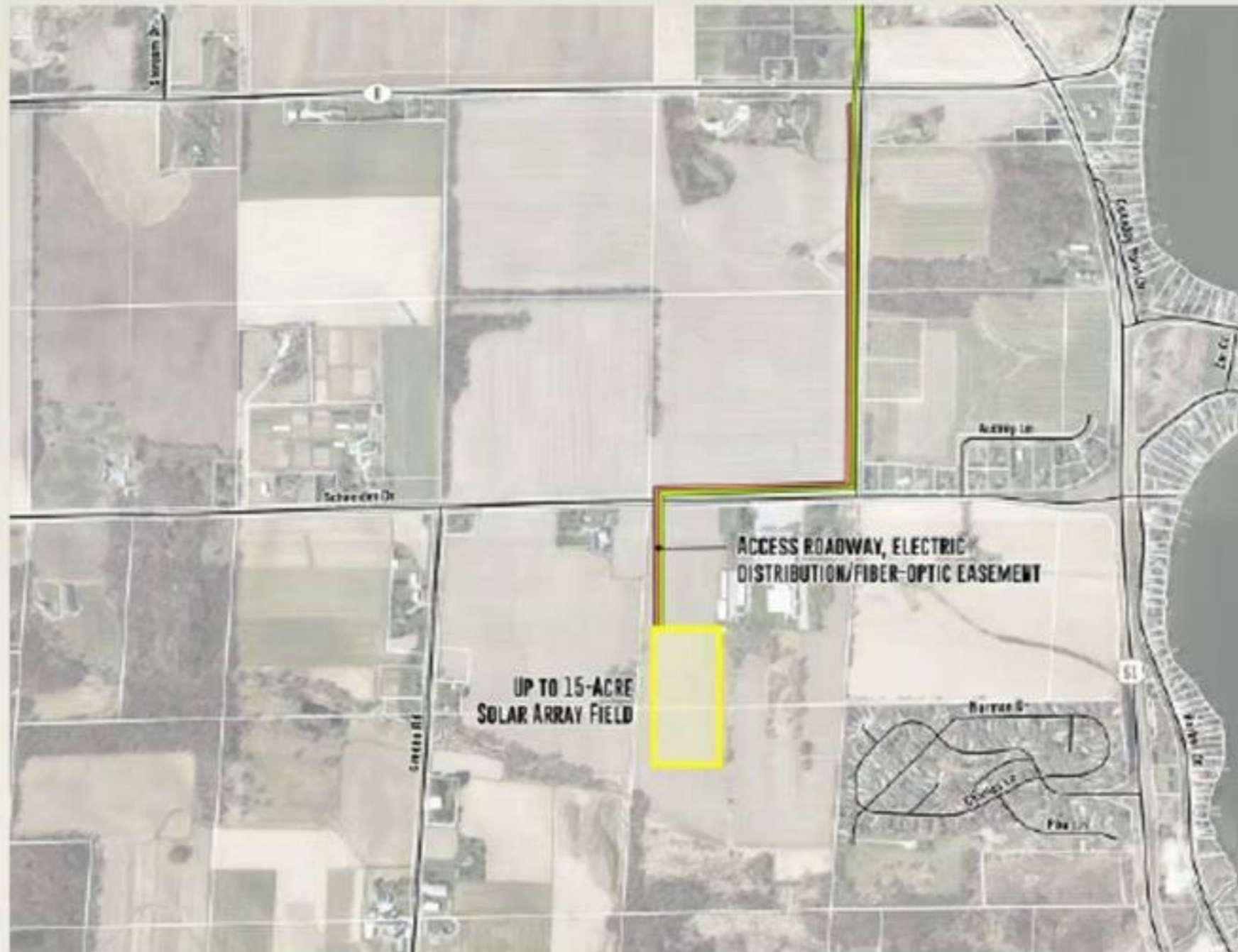
UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

24

Design, Construction notes:

- Fixed mount arrays, no moving parts
- Pile-driven I-beam support elements
- Racking height higher than typ. (~8') to allow for crop growth, livestock, and farming options. Total height expected to be <14'.
- Row spacing (~16') wider than typ. to minimize shading and maximize potential agricultural yield
- South facing modules (away from road) with anti-glare coating
- Maintenance, inspection estimated as twice per year
- No buildings
- No lighting
- Security/animal fencing required
- Vegetated post construction

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

26

Alternatives Considered

- **No Action/Defer Project Request**
 - Does not meet the programmatic, sustainability, or alternative energy production needs of the university
 - Maintains 100% agricultural land use
- **Other Alternatives:**
 - Locating elsewhere on UW-owned areas near KRC
 - Other locations close to homes and roads (greater visual impact)
 - Flatter areas have greater tilting factors
 - Steeper topography makes construction difficult
 - Larger or smaller arrays either outside of Alliant Energy's limits (200 kW to 2.25 MW for customer-hosted project) and/or impacted by setbacks or permitting requirements.

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

27

Proposed Project Schedule

- WEPA Process completed May 2022
- Notice to Proceed Spring 2022
- Design, Permitting, Reviews Summer/Fall 2022
- Interconnection Design, and Procurement Winter 2022/2023
- Final Permitting, CUP Approvals, Interconnection Agreement, Final Design Winter - Spring 2023
- Start Construction Spring 2023
- Substantial Completion, Commissioning: Summer/Fall 2023

UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting

28

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- WEPA Process
- Project Description/Alternatives/Schedule
- **Potential Impacts**
- DEIA Comment Period
- Closing Comments



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

30



View 1 looking northwest from the mobile home neighborhood to the southeast.

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

32



View 3 looking south from Schneider Drive.

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

33



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

34



View 4 looking southeast from south of the farmstead on the corner of Schneider Drive and Green Road.

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

35



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

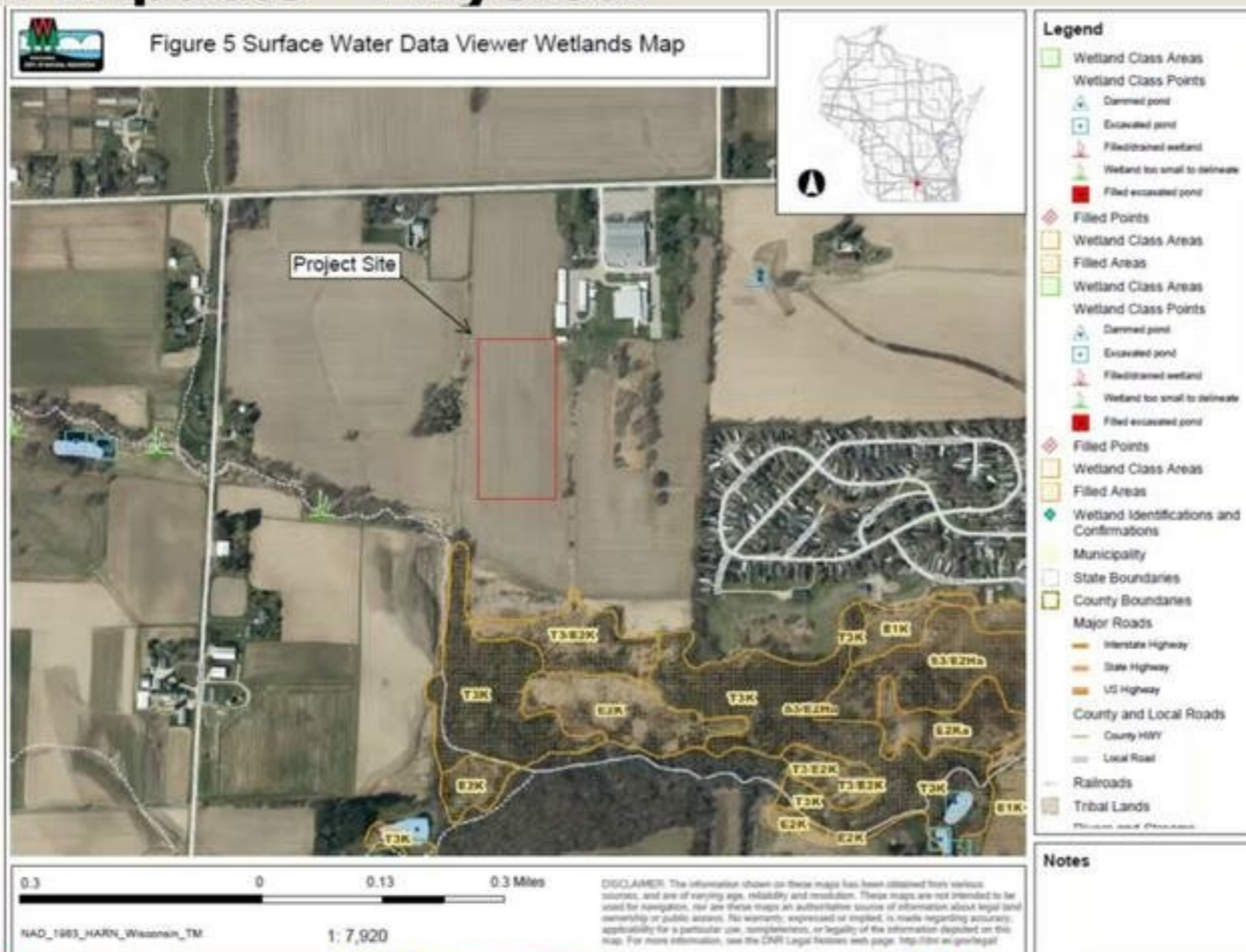
36

Potential Impacts - Physical

- Modification of existing landscape of row crops (corn/soybeans) by addition of solar array and access drive
- Agrivoltaics incorporates various crops, less drastic modification than traditional photovoltaic arrays
- Construction actions, including maintenance and possible decommission, will not impact surface water, groundwater or soil quality at the site.
- No delineated wetlands on project site

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

Potential Impacts - Physical



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

38

Potential Impacts – Physical Continued

- Potential for short-term interruptions to KRC power; staged strategically
- Short-term increase in emissions and noise during construction, no long-term effects expected based on industry sound analysis of similar projects

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

39

Potential Impacts – Biological

- No long-term adverse biological impacts are anticipated
- Temporary disturbance to flora and fauna during construction
- Disruption mitigated through recommended actions in WDNR's ERR response
- Beneficial impact to flora or fauna expected compared to current crop scenario
- Federally or state-listed endangered, threatened and rare species are unlikely to exist or be in site vicinity based on ERR response

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

40

Potential Impacts – Social/Cultural

- Short-term adverse impacts due to construction (traffic, noise)
- Agricultural land use will remain as agricultural designation
- Research opportunities through multiple UW programs
- No measurable negative results on property values based on industry studies
- Long-term beneficial use of generating clean energy – offset green house gas even when factoring in manufacturing/supply chain of solar

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

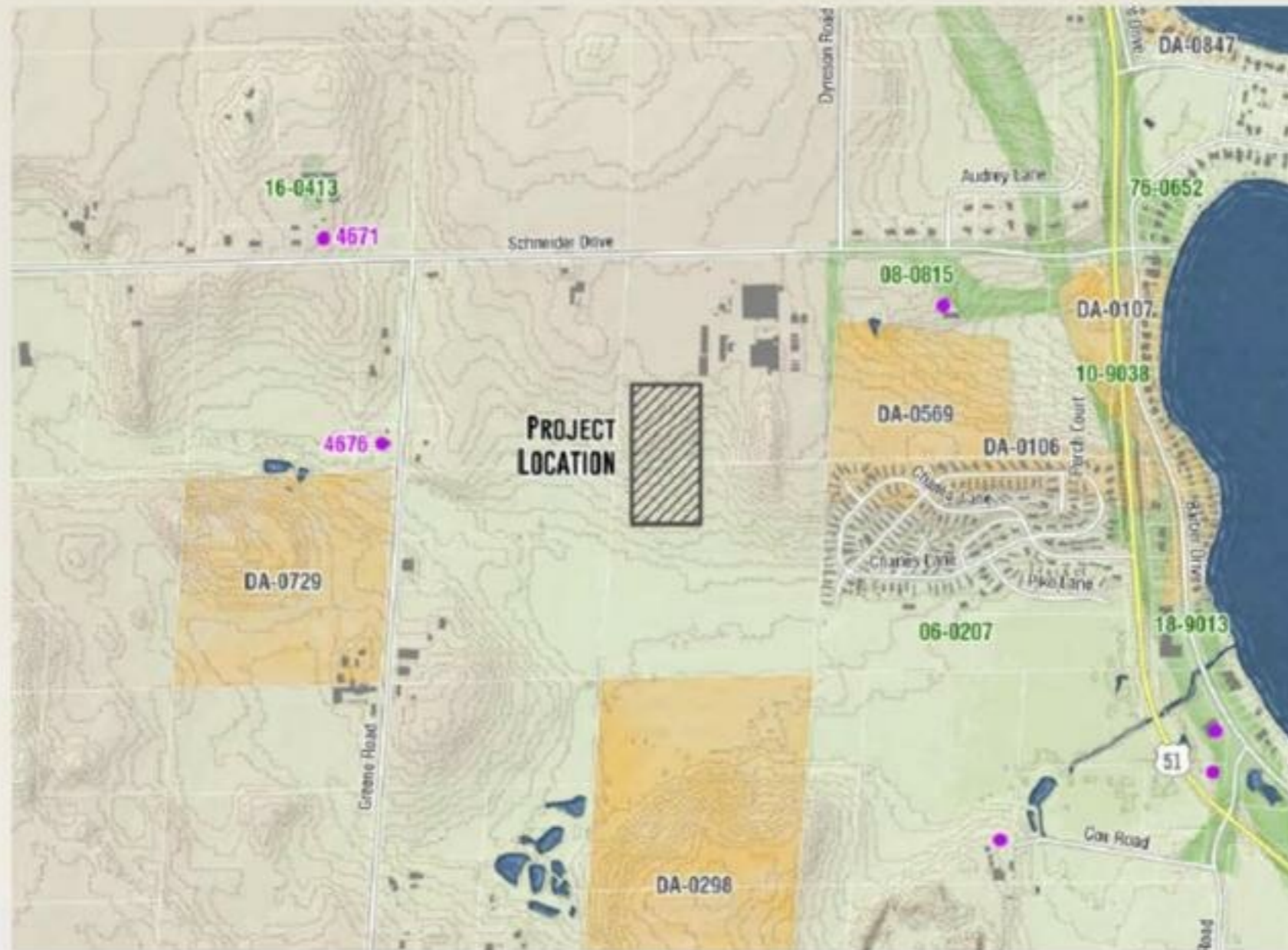
Potential Impacts – Historical/Archaeological

- No archeological sites are anticipated during construction
- If archeological sites are encountered, appropriate protocols will be followed
- No buildings or impacts to buildings with historical significance



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

Potential Impacts – Historical/Archaeological



**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

43

Potential Impacts – Economic

- Long-term income through lease payments to UW
- Renewable Energy Credits to UW Madison which will offset lease payments depending on power generated the previous month (RECs = market based, Jan. 2022 ~\$4 per 1 MWhr of energy generated)
- Solar energy provides known long-term energy pricing, other alternative electricity costs more volatile (note recent increases)

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

44

Potential Impacts – Economic

- Approximate \$2.1 million project budget would result in a positive economic impact of \$4 million with multiplier effect (C3 Study)
- Though project is small in context, could have small impact on ratepayers as part of future large portfolio docket to be evaluated by PSC.

UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

45

Potential Impacts – Parking and Transportation

- Short-term impact to traffic patterns for construction delivery, installation, including distribution lines
- No established parking as part of project



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

46

Potential Impacts – Utilities

- Possible Short-term interruptions in localized KRC power
- Short-term commitment of energy resources to the project, including fossil fuel consumption used by construction vehicles and equipment.
- Construction of new electrical distribution and fiber optic to the project area

UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting

Meeting Agenda

- Introduction
- WEPA Process
- Project Description/Alternatives/Schedule
- Potential Impacts
- **DEIA Comment Period**
- Closing Comments



UW Kegonsa Research Campus Solar and Agricultural Research Project Draft EIA Public Meeting

48

DEIA Comment Period

- Purpose
 - Solicit public input to identify potential issues and concerns specific to the proposed project
 - Distribute comments to design team for consideration in design process
 - Incorporate comments and design team considerations into the Final EIA document
- Comments received to date during Draft EIA public comment period
 - Nearby property owner concerned about visuals and removing agricultural land from production
 - WSC snowmobile route near proposed array
 - Solar array height restrictions in Town of Dunn solar ordinance (<14')

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

49

- **DEA Comment Period**
 - Open for comments (oral/written)
 - Please state name, entity, representing and comment
 - E-mail written comments to
PeotterB@AyresAssociates.com

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

Closing Comments

- Draft EIA comment period concludes tonight
- Board of Regents to discuss lease approval April 7th- 8th
- Campus WEPA officer to consider comments and issue recommendation to finalize or move to EIS
- If EIS not required, Final EIA and Finding of No Significant Impact to be developed in April 2022

**UW Kegonsa Research Campus
Solar and Agricultural Research Project
Draft EIA Public Meeting**

52

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

<https://bit.ly/AyresKRC>

<http://www.ayresprojectinfo.com/>

<https://sustainability.wisc.edu/strategic-initiatives/renewable-energy/kegonsa-research-campus/>

Ben Peotter, PE

EIA Project Manager and Manager of Development Services – Midwest

Ayres Associates

PeotterB@AyresAssociates.com

608.443.1206

