

# Indian Lake County Park/ Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Property Plan Kick Off Meeting

Chris James  
Senior Landscape Architect  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022



# Meeting Overview

- Introductions
- Public Information Meeting Notice Overview
- Purpose of Meeting and Property Plan
- Planning Area Boundary
- History of Park and Wildlife Area Properties
- Existing Park Use and Conditions
- Draft Inventory and Analysis
- Savanna Restoration Update
- Preliminary Planning Considerations
- Draft Park Recommendations & Opportunities
- Plan Timeline
- Next Steps
- Public Input Session



# Public Information Meeting Notice

- Called/Emailed Town of Berry 4/20
- Posted to Next Door 4/27 (156,00+ members)
- Posted on Dane County Parks Events Webpage 4/27
- Posted in Parks Newsletter 4/29 (2,200 members)
- **Sent Meeting Notice to All Neighbors Adjacent to Project Area Boundary, 5/2**
- Press Release 5/2
- Posted on Dane County Projects Page 5/2
- Posted Meeting Notice in Park, 5/6
- Posted on Dane County Facebook/Instagram (10,000 followers)
- Sent Town Berry Poster Notice 5/6

# Public Information Meeting Notice

## Contacted Following Stakeholder/Community Groups:

- Ho Chunk Nation
- Color in the Outdoors
- Outdoor Afro
- Ice Age Trail Alliance
- Past Indian Lake Archery & XC Ski Permit Holders
- Goodman Community Center
- Black Men Run – Madison
- BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin (Madison Chapter)
- Friends of Indian Lake

# Purpose of the Meeting

- Kick Off Planning Process for Updates to Indian Lake County Park & Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Provide Information about the Park Planning Process
- Open Communication between Stakeholders and County Planning Staff
- Listen to Town, Neighbor, Park Visitors & Other Stakeholder Ideas, Hopes & Concerns Related to Future Public Land Park Development & Management

# Why do a Park Property Plan?

- A process to determine the suitability of the land for future restoration areas and development of park and recreation facilities. (soils, slopes, vegetation, micro climates, existing recreation uses, trail connectivity, views, cultural/historical features, etc.)
- To determine what types of recreation & park program areas could occur within the park.
- To provide a forum that allows public/stakeholders to give input throughout the planning process.
- To aid in the preparation of preliminary cost estimates & budgeting for capital improvements.
- To enable eligibility to participate in certain grant programs.

## ***But most importantly.....***

- To provide **a common vision** for phased park facility development & park land management **that balances public use with resource protection.**

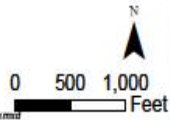


# Indian Lake Property Plan

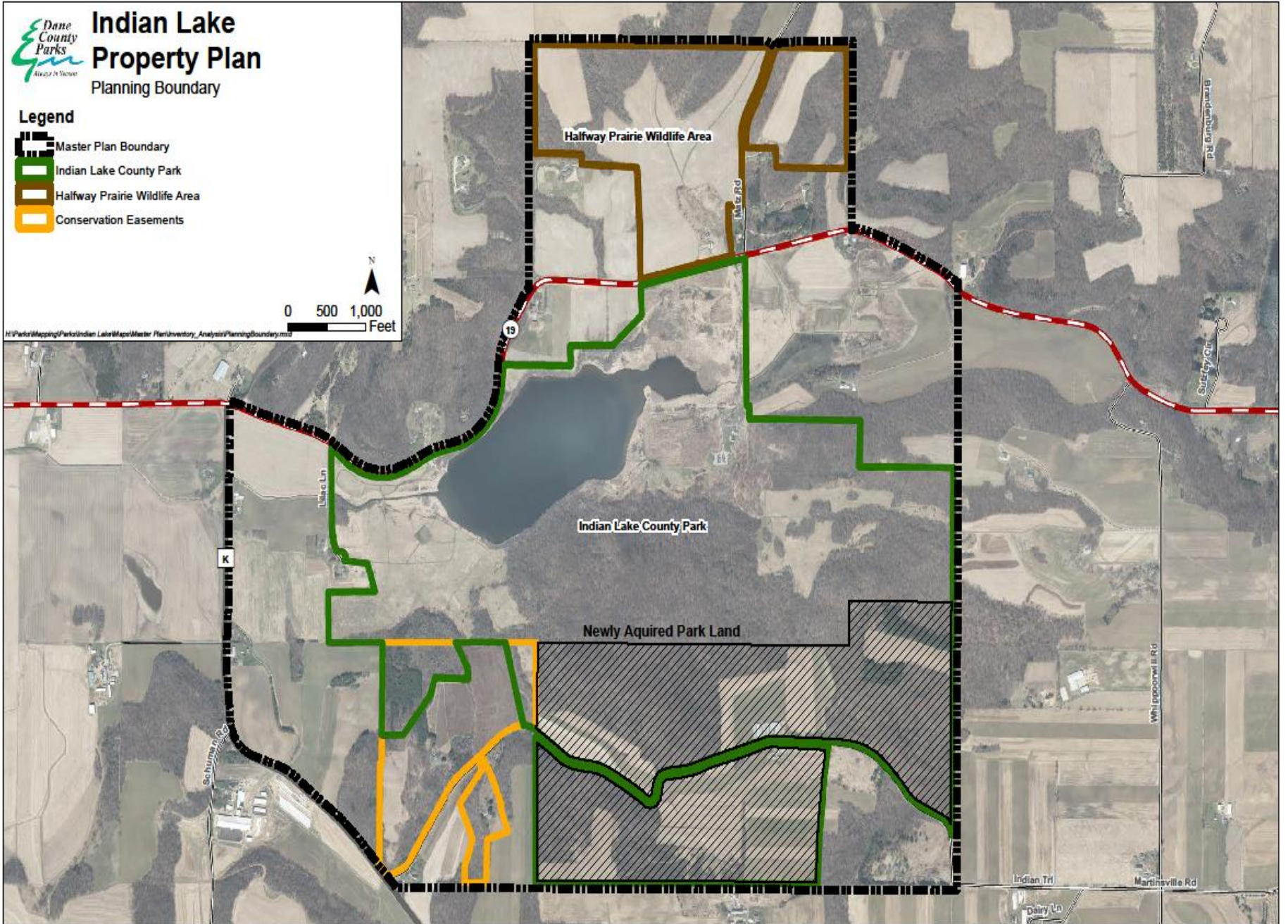
## Planning Boundary

### Legend

- Master Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements



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# Indian Lake County Park

## Halfway Prairie WA Natural History

- Glaciers influenced the Indian Lake region landscape 12,000+ years ago.
- Indian Lake lies along the southern edge of the non-glaciated or “driftless region”.
- Steep slopes of exposed rock indicate the valley was never completely covered with ice.
- Large boulders found in the draws and on the valley floor could only have been brought here by a finger of ice, which fanned out from the main body of the glacier.
- The lake is a shallow kettle lake created when the glacier retreated.
- The outwash plain surrounding the lake was formed when glacial melt water carried large volumes of silt and sand into the valley.

*Dane County Natural History Marker, Indian Lake, 1977*

- The Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor traverses through Indian Lake County Park and Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area



# Natural History

## What You Need to Know

- Indian Lake landscape was created by glaciers 12,000 years ago.
- The park is on the southern boundary of where the last glacier retreated and at the transition into the “driftless region” of southwest Wisconsin.
- Nearly all of Indian Lake County Park and Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area are within the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor.
- The Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor is intended to highlight and preserve pre-settlement glacial landscapes.

# Indian Lake County Park

## Halfway Prairie WA Cultural History

- This region was first inhabited by Native American people more than 12,000 years ago. (WHS)
- The lake area was used by Native American people for fishing and hunting 5000-8000 years ago. (WHS)
- In 1830, Chief Black Hawk and people of the Sauk tribe were ordered to abandon their ancestral lands on the Rock River. The band moved several times throughout NE Iowa, NW Illinois and SW Wisconsin while being pursued by volunteer soldiers and the US Army. Chief Black Hawk and his band continued north through the Blue Mound/Mazomanie region and were eventually captured in 1832 near Wisconsin Dells. (WHS)
- Native American people continued to camp, fish and hunt in the lake area for several years after the first Europeans settled around the lake in the 1850s. *Dane County Place-Names, Frederic G. Cassidy, 1947*
- "The name "Indian Lake" first appeared on a map in 1873, but was surely in use long before that date." *Dane County Place-Names, Frederic G. Cassidy, 1947*

# Cultural History

## What You Need to Know

- Native American people first lived in this region 12,000+ years ago.
- The Indian Lake area was used by Native American people beginning 8,000 years ago to as recent as the mid to late 1800's.
- Chief Black Hawk and his band were driven from ancestral lands in northeastern Iowa. They attempted to relocate further north several times. He was captured near the Wisconsin Dells in 1832 after several small battles with volunteer militia and the army. Indian Lake was not a significant historical aspect of his retreat.
- There are 6 recorded archaeological sites in the park.

# Indian Lake County Park

## Halfway Prairie WA History 1848-2022

- **1848**-Kohlmann's settle just west of the lake.
- **1852**-Property east of the current park that includes chapel area was homesteaded by John Endres family.
- **Circa 1855**-Diphtheria epidemic spreads into Wisconsin, John Endres family loses 2 children.
- **1857**-John Endres builds St. Mary of the Oaks chapel to provide a spiritual thanks for the rest of his family being spared from the flu virus.
- **1923**-John Endres farm sold to Henry Ballweg family.
- **1959**-John A. and Jeanette Marx purchase former John Endres farm.
- **1963**-Marx family donates chapel and surrounding land including access to STH 19 to Dane County Park Commission.
- **1974**-Kohlmann House listed on NRHP.
- **1975**-Dane County Parks acquires additional property and creates 442 acre Indian Lake Park. Scoutcraft Log Cabin (1926) moved to park.
- **2013**-Dane County Parks acquires former 149 acre Matz property for IAT corridor, becomes Half Way Prairie Wildlife Area.
- **2020**-Dane County Park acquires former 295 acre Dega property south of park. Indian Lake becomes largest Dane County Park.

# Settlement History

## What You Need to Know

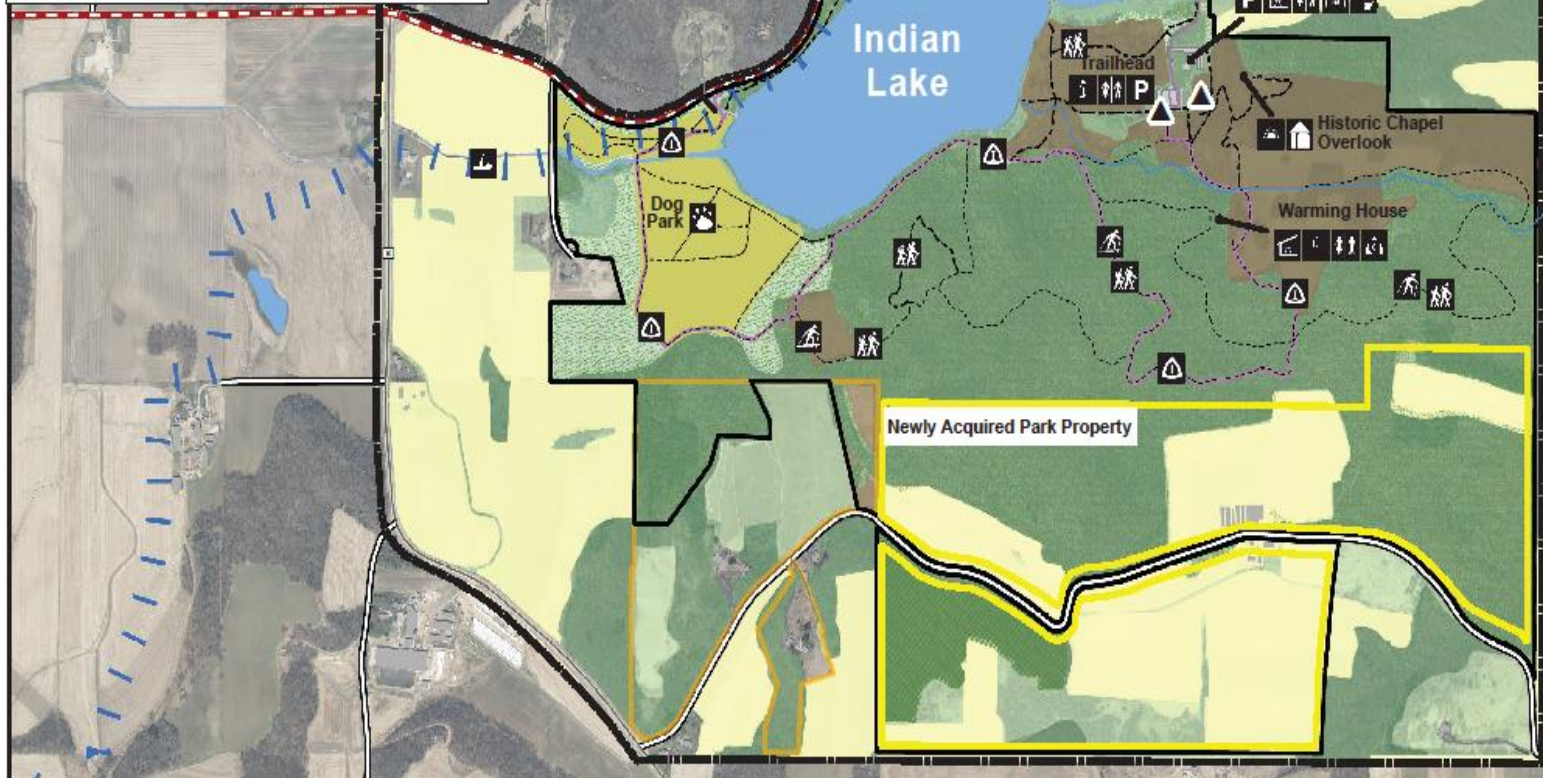
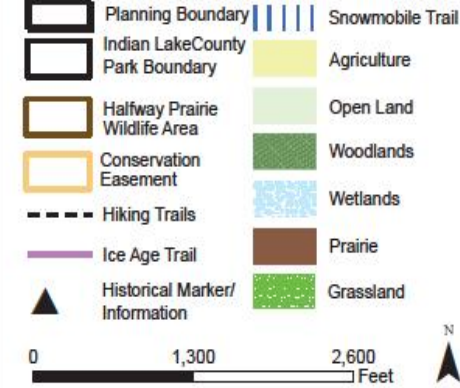
- European settlers first began to homestead in the Indian Lake area in the late 1840's.
- Matz, Endres and Kohlmann were the first to settle around Indian Lake.
- The Scoutcraft Log Cabin (group camp) was originally constructed at Camp Indianola on the north shore of Lake Mendota, it was moved to Indian Lake County Park in 1975.
- The Kohlmann House and Frederick Schumann Farmstead are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- St. Mary of the Oaks Chapel and Scoutcraft Log Cabin may be eligible for National Register of Historic Places.

# Existing Park Use and Conditions

- Indian Lake County Park is a destination for cross country skiing.
- Hiking, foraging, fishing, dog walking, snowshoeing, limited archery hunting and paddling also occur at the park.
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area is primarily used for hiking (Ice Age National Scenic Trail), hunting, snowshoeing and foraging. Stewardship funding requires the property must allow for hunting, trapping, hiking, cross country skiing and wildlife observation.
- Park conditions include a mix of developed park land, active crop lands, forest, woodlands, wetlands, oak savanna and prairie.

# Indian Lake County Park & Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Property Plan

## Existing Conditions May 2022



### Map Symbols

- Boat Launch
- Cross-country Ski Trail
- Dog Park
- Drinking Water
- Fishing
- Foraging
- Group Camp
- Hiking Trail
- Historical/Cultural Site
- Ice Age National Scenic Trail
- Information/Registration Kiosk
- Parking
- Playground
- Restroom
- Scenic Overlook
- Shelter/Warming House
- Sledding Hill
- Snowmobile Trail
- Snowshoeing

# Draft Inventory and Analysis

## What's Out There?

- Planning review of existing natural, cultural and historical features; grant restrictions, and other public lands and trails in the project area boundary.
- Primary purpose is to collect preliminary planning information that is useful for deciding where/if future development of park facilities and program areas could occur.
- It also is helpful for identifying where larger scale ecosystems co-exist in the planning area (woodlands, wetlands, prairie) that can provide guidance for future land management goals.



# Draft Inventory and Analysis

## What's Out There?

- Historical/Cultural Features
- Public Lands
- Regional Context
- Soils
- Topography
- Vegetation and Land Cover
- Threatened and Endangered Species

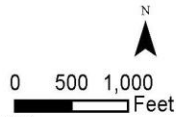


# Indian Lake County Park & Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Property Plan

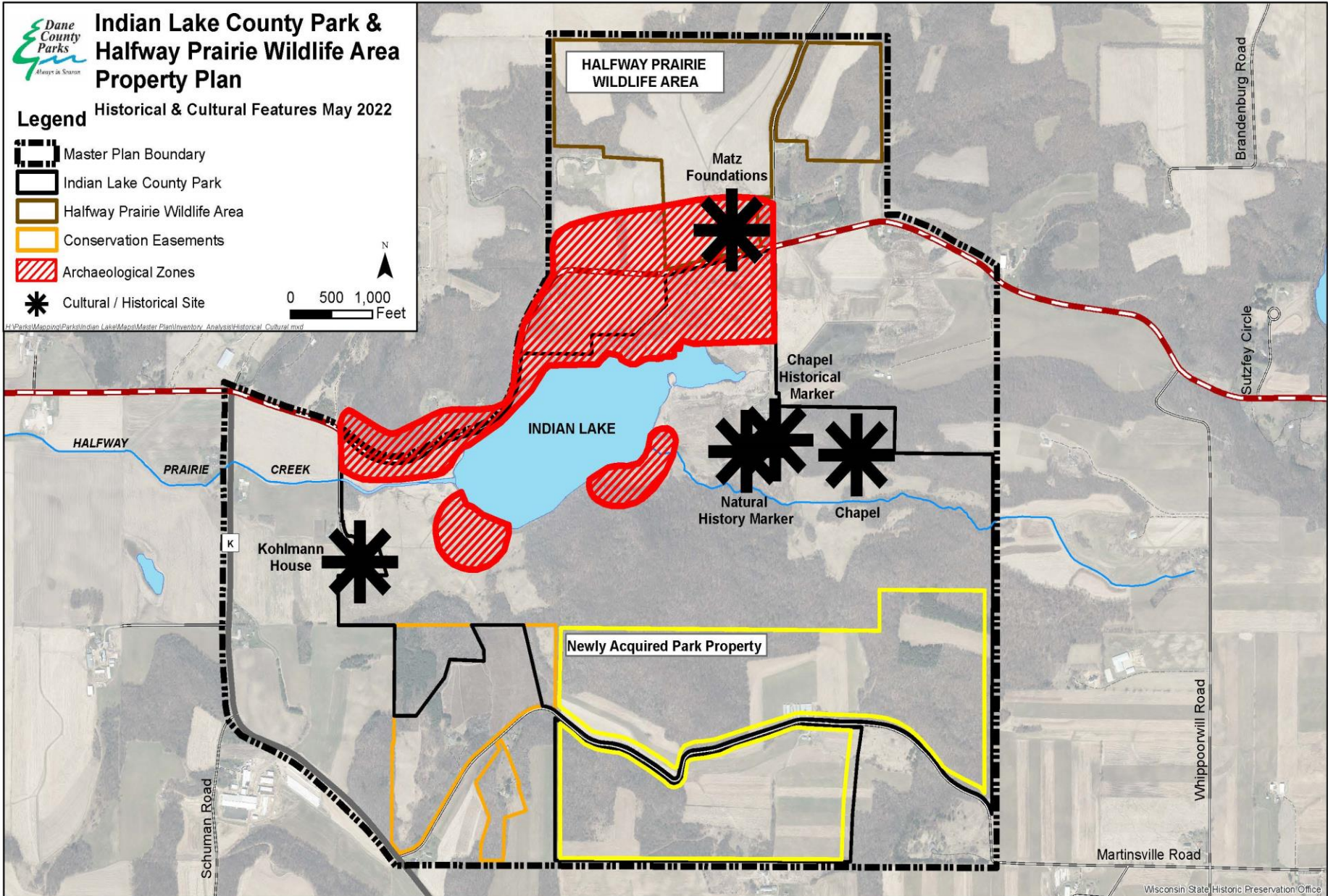
## Legend

- Master Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements
- Archaeological Zones
- Cultural / Historical Site

Historical & Cultural Features May 2022



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# Indian Lake & Halfway Prairie Prairie Property Plan

Public Lands May 2022

## Legend

 Project Plan Boundary


### Fee Title - Public Access


 County Owned Recreation Park

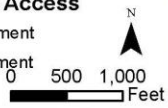
 County Owned Recreation Park with Conservation Easement

 County Owned Wildlife Area

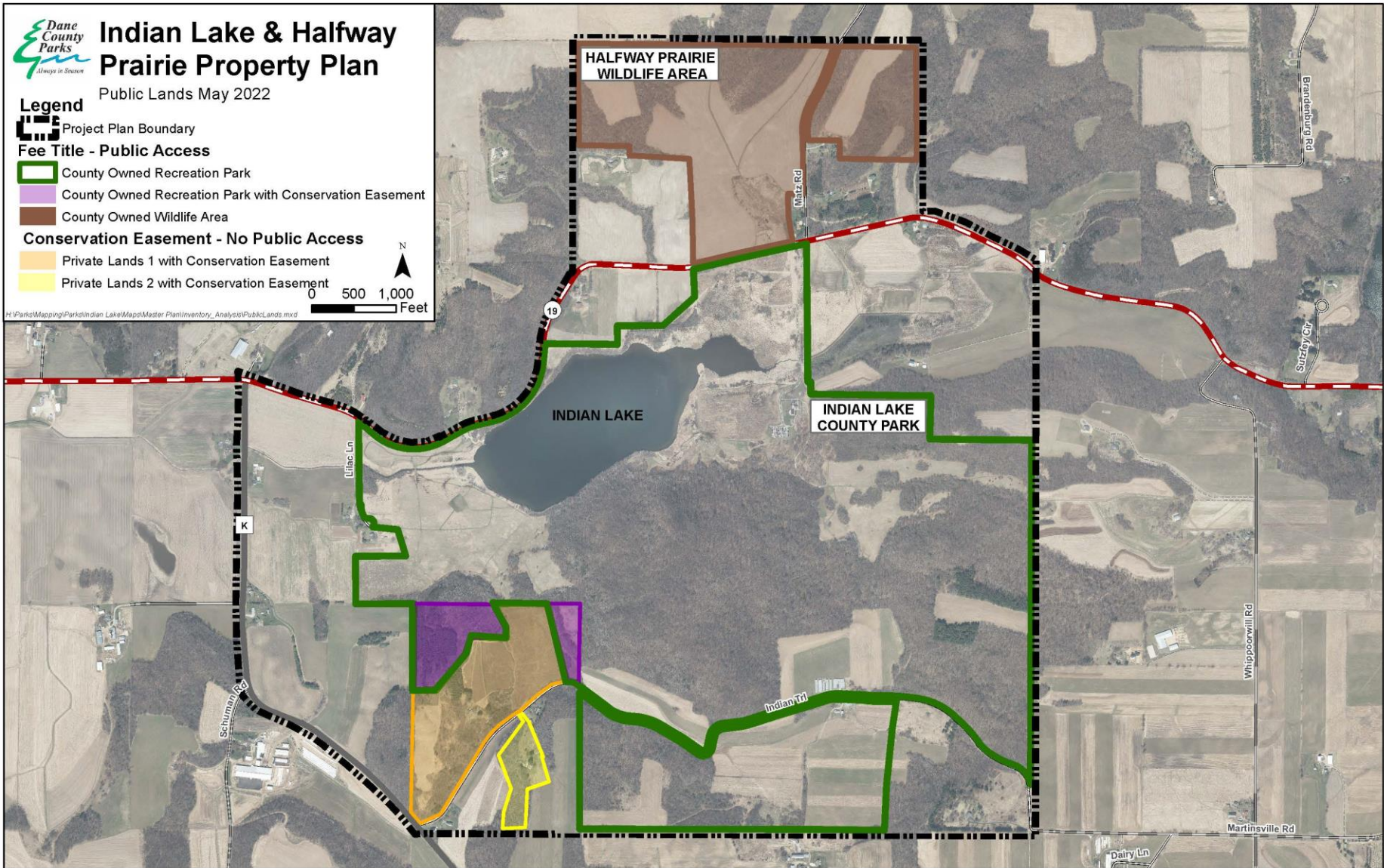
### Conservation Easement - No Public Access

 Private Lands 1 with Conservation Easement

 Private Lands 2 with Conservation Easement



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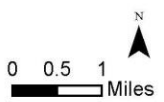




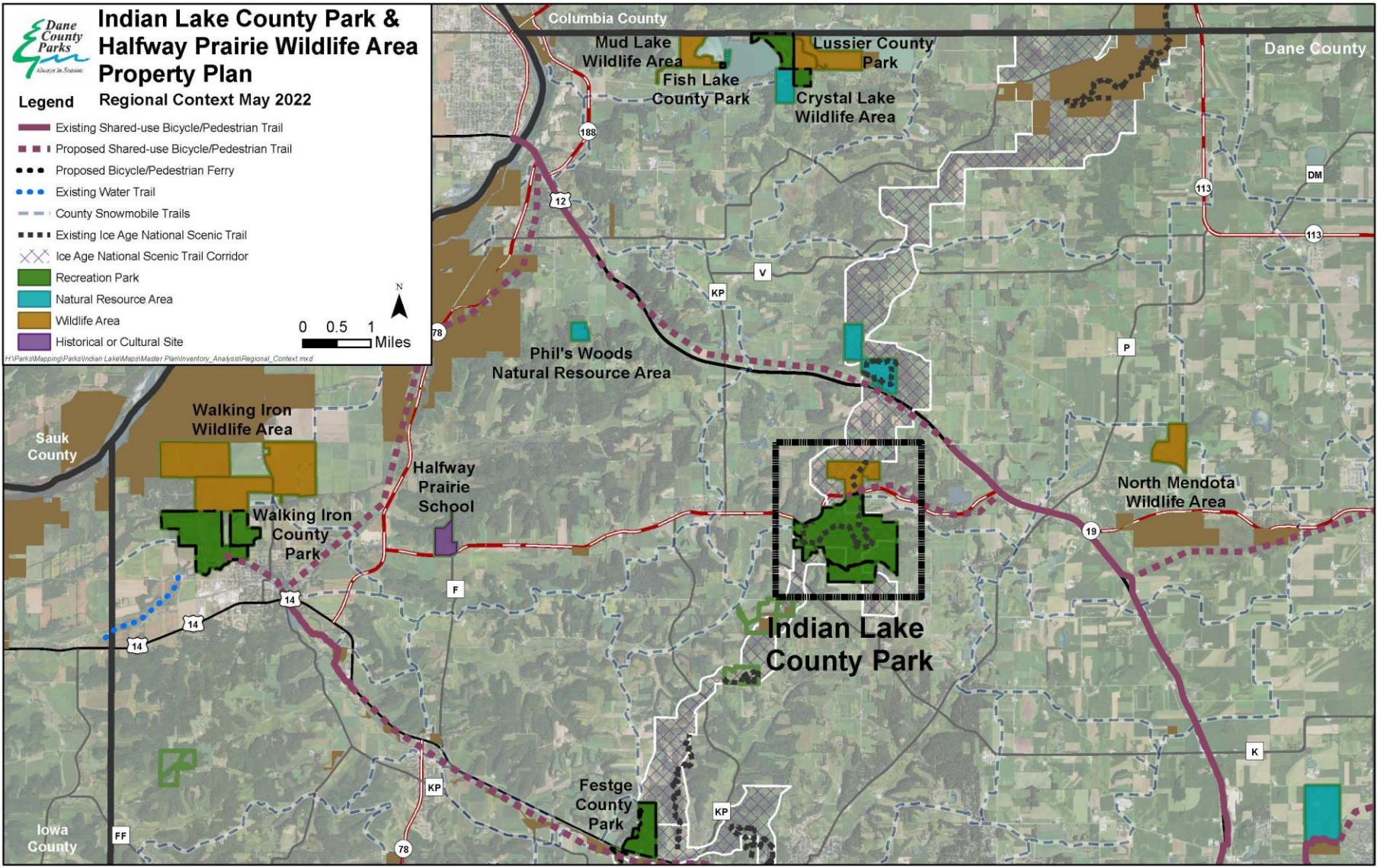
# Indian Lake County Park & Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Property Plan

Legend Regional Context May 2022

- Existing Shared-use Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Shared-use Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail
- Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Ferry
- Existing Water Trail
- County Snowmobile Trails
- Existing Ice Age National Scenic Trail
- Ice Age National Scenic Trail Corridor
- Recreation Park
- Natural Resource Area
- Wildlife Area
- Historical or Cultural Site



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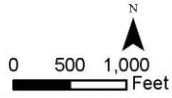


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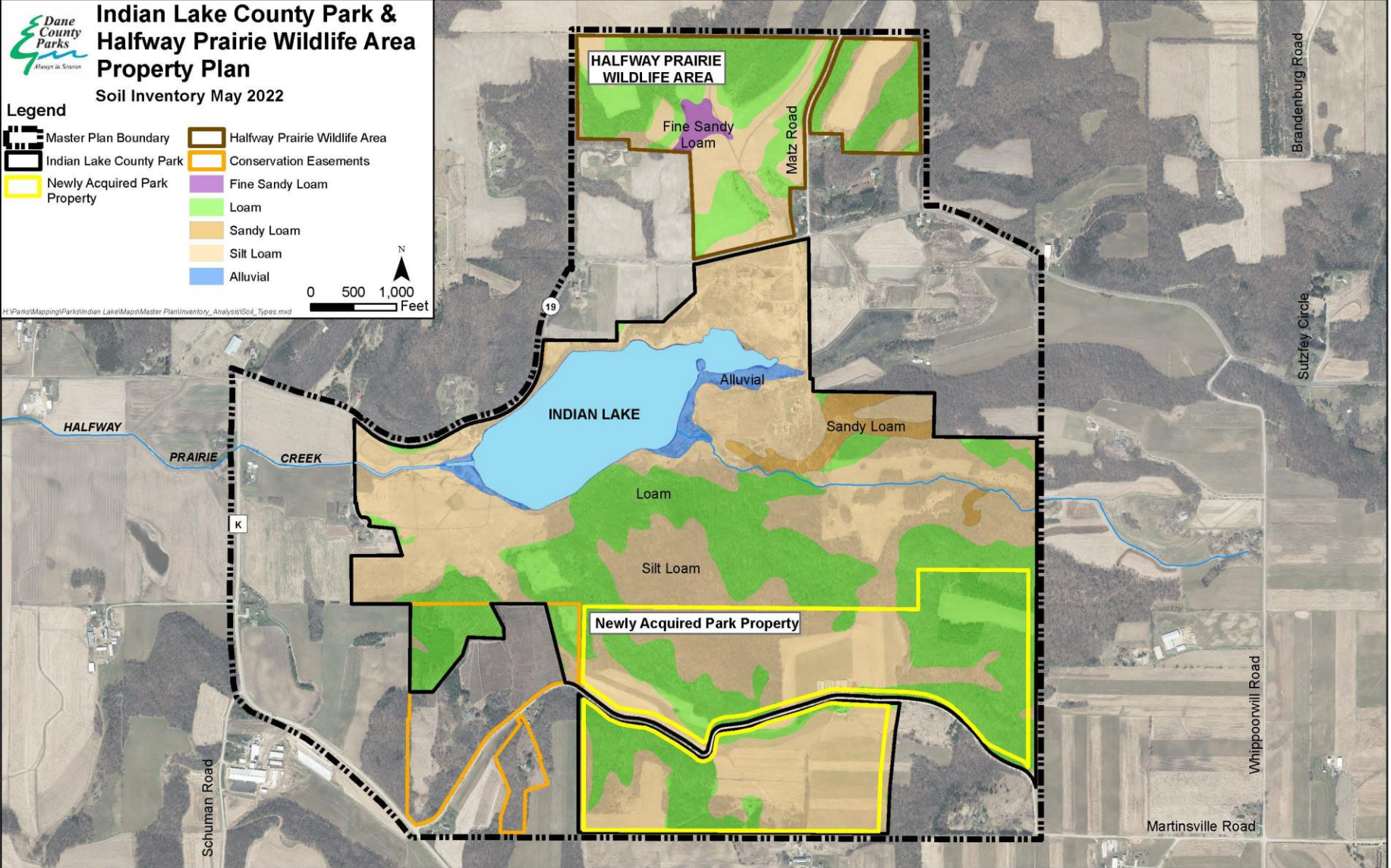
Soil Inventory May 2022

## Legend

- Master Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Newly Acquired Park Property
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements
- Fine Sandy Loam
- Loam
- Sandy Loam
- Silt Loam
- Alluvial



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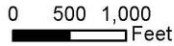


# Indian Lake County Park & Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area Property Plan

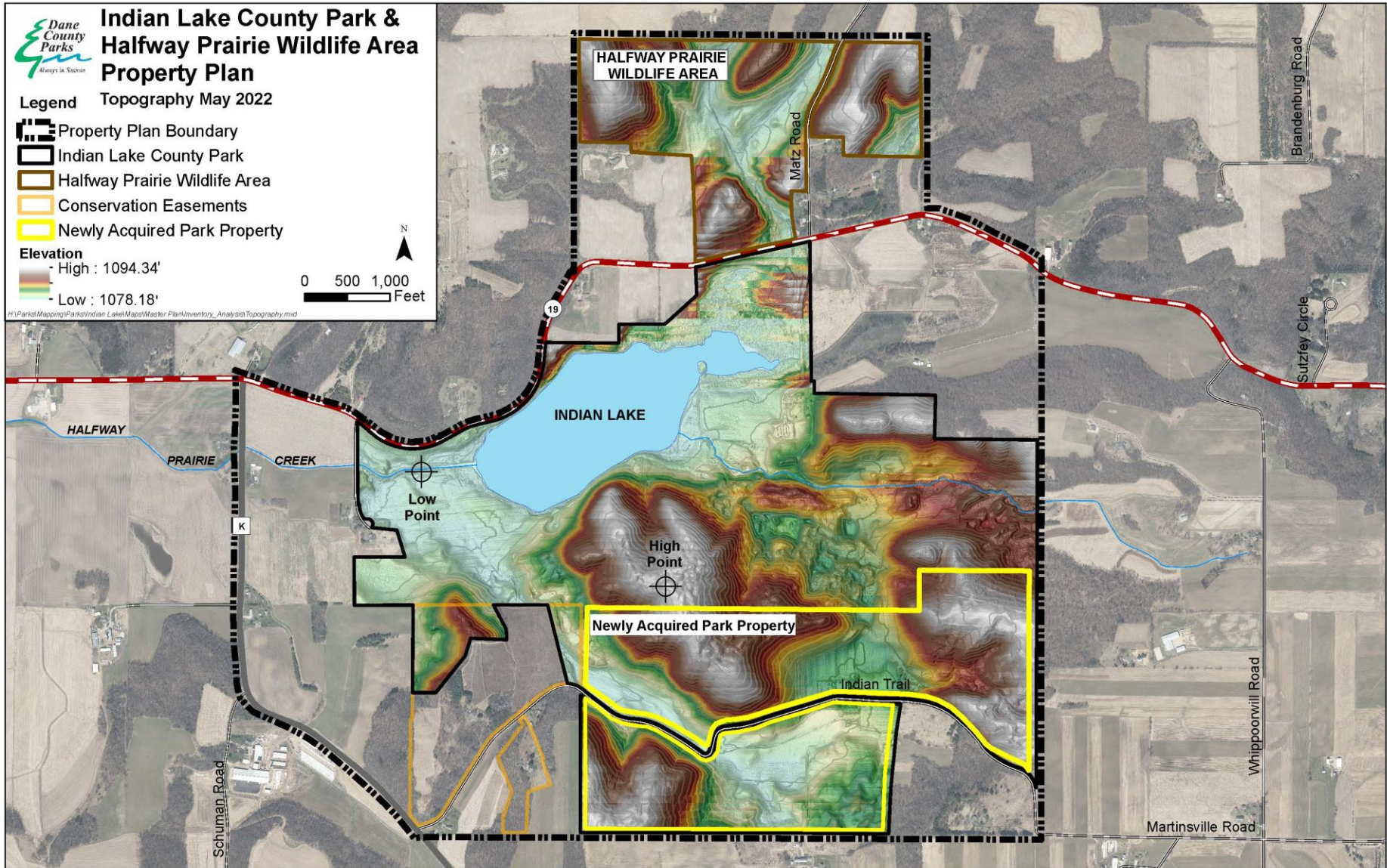
Legend Topography May 2022

- Property Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements
- Newly Acquired Park Property

**Elevation**  
- High : 1094.34'  
  
- Low : 1078.18'



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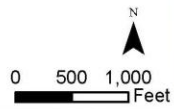


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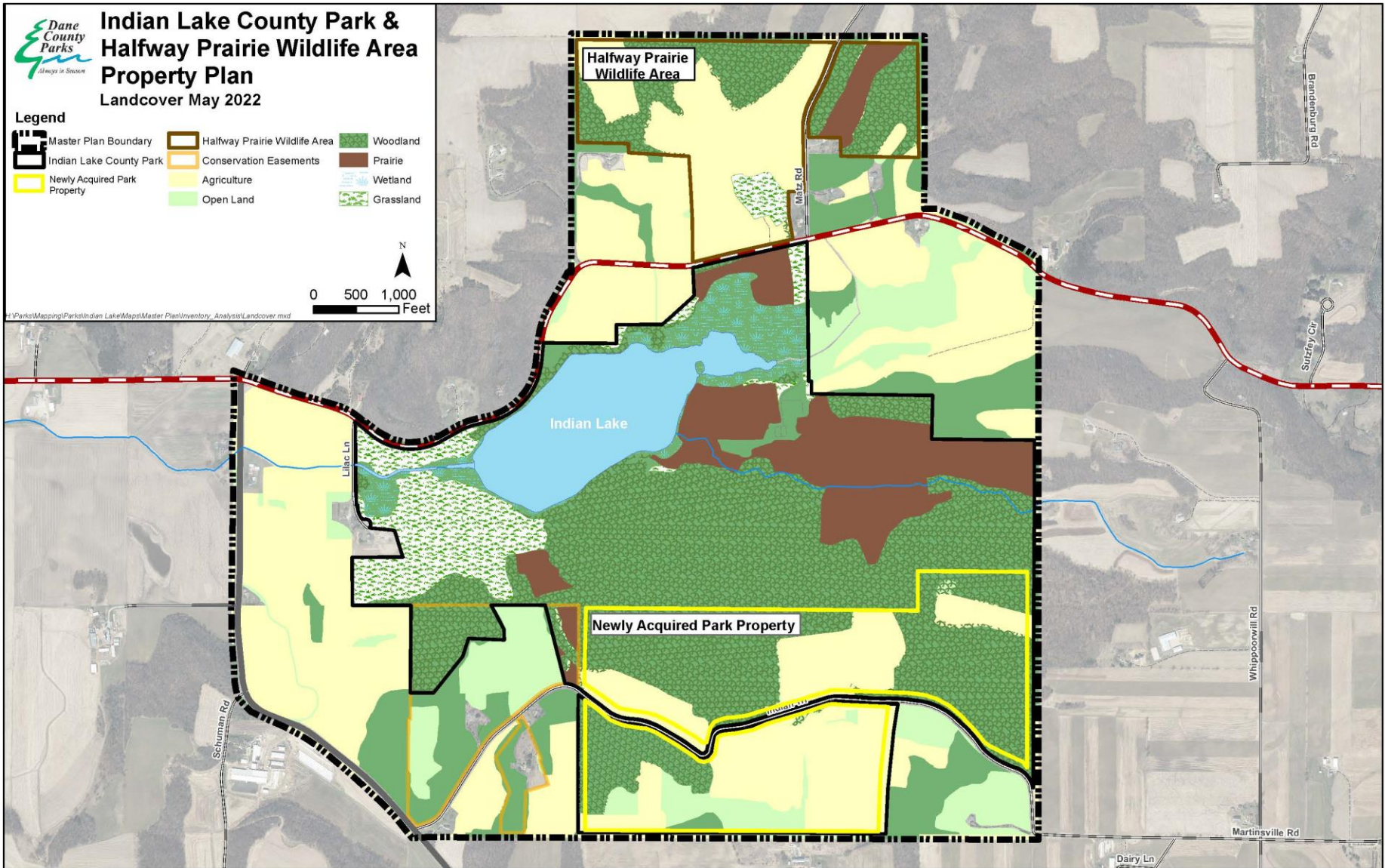
## Landcover May 2022

### Legend

- Master Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Newly Acquired Park Property
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements
- Agriculture
- Open Land
- Woodland
- Prairie
- Wetland
- Grassland



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# Endangered Resources Preliminary Assessment

- A DNR Preliminary ER Assessment was submitted in April 2022.
- The search areas included a 1 mile buffer for terrestrial and wetland species and 2 mile buffer for aquatic species from the project area boundary.
- The species recorded are state or federal threatened or endangered animals.
- The project site overlaps the Karner Blue Butterfly High Potential Range.
- The project overlaps the Rusty Patched Bumble Bee High Potential Zone.
  
- Other Species/Habitat Areas of Interest/Concern:
  - Bats
  - Savanna/Prairie Remnants
  - Snakes
  - Red Maple Forest (Concern)



# Savanna Restoration Indian Lake County Park

**Lars Higdon, Naturalist  
Dane County Parks**



# Indian Lake

Harvest Boundary



Property Line



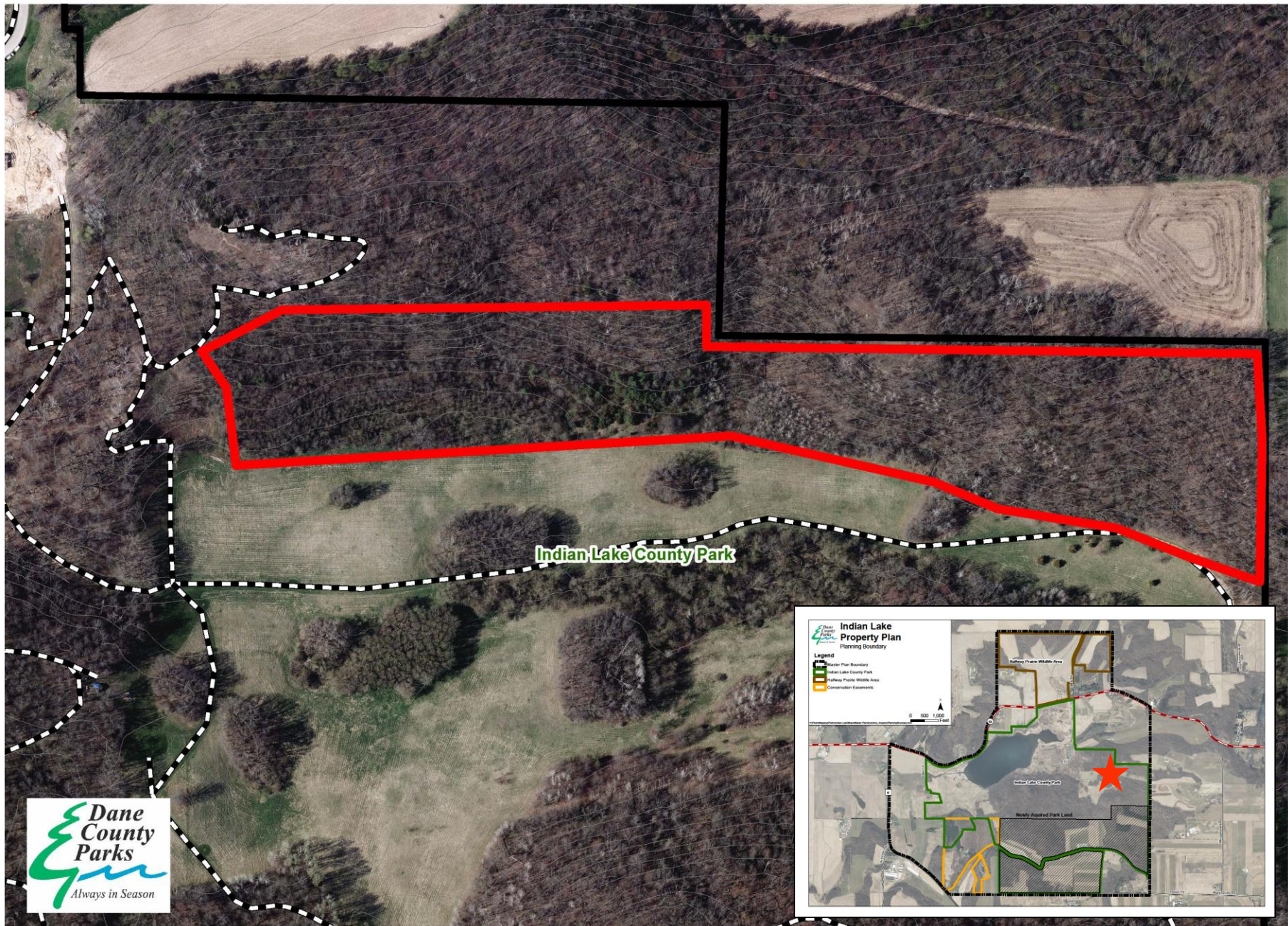
2020 Timber Harvest

Park System Trails

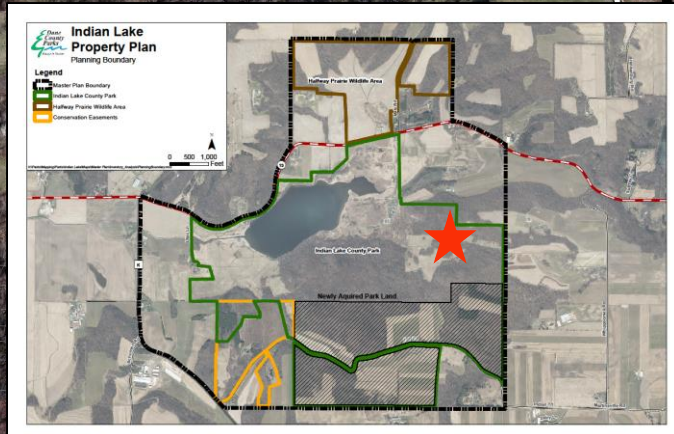


0 200 400 Feet

Digital orthophoto: 4/2017  
Map date: 6/19/2020



Indian Lake County Park



# Savanna Status

- Logging of commercially viable trees completed Spring 2021. Species included black locust, hickory, cherry, ash, and black oak. Species excluded included bur oak and white oak.
- All logging slash has been stacked and burned.
- Volunteers and staff have removed invasive brush and undesirable trees across the western 2/3 of the project area.
- Staff and volunteers collected, processed, and planted native grass seed across the western 2/3 of the project area during 2021 and 2022.
- Staff and volunteers have treated weeds and brush resprouts across the western 2/3 of the area. Additional treatment events will occur this summer.

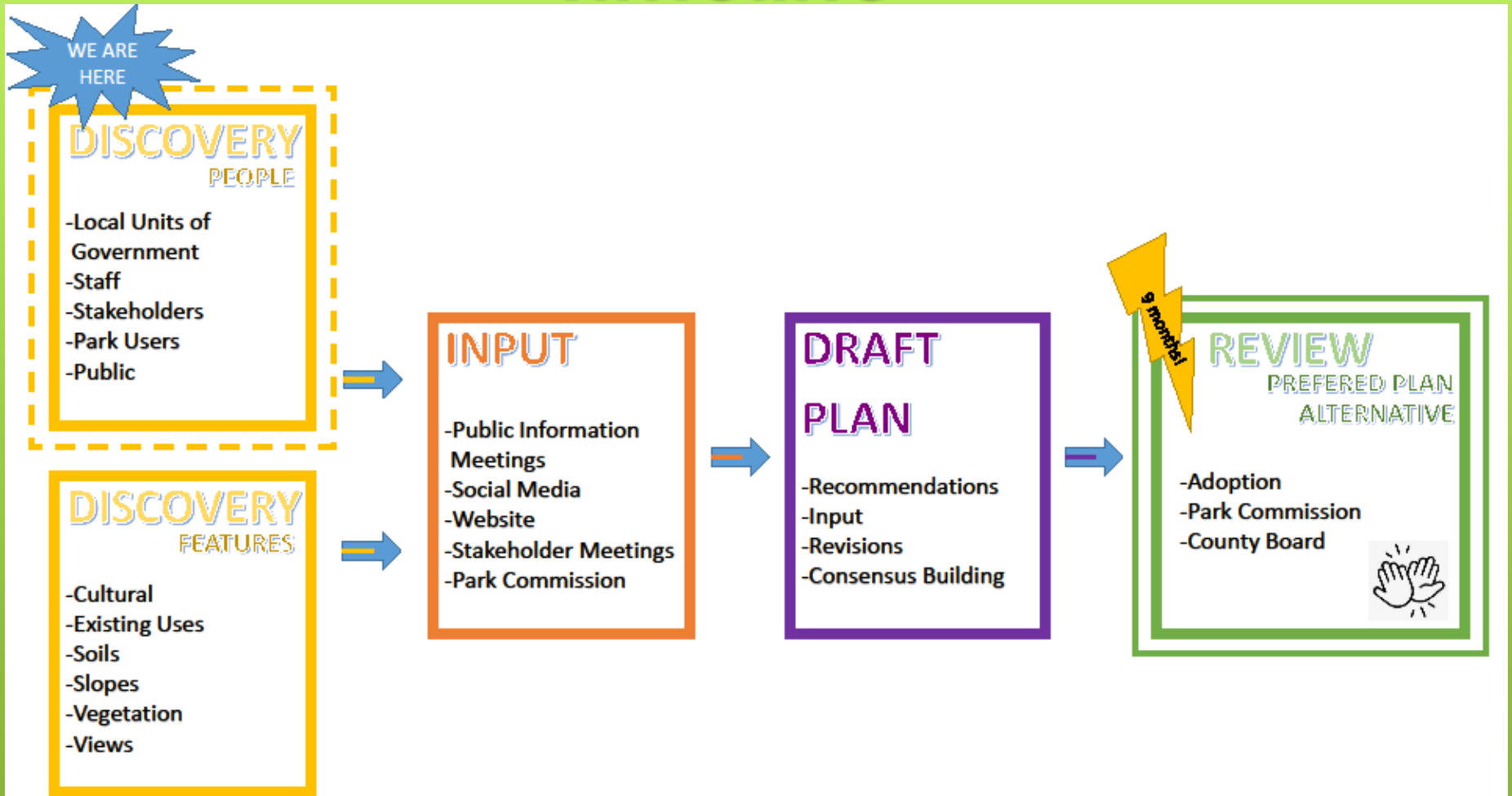
# Preliminary Planning Considerations

- Project Area Includes Three Different Dane County Park land classifications: Recreation Park, Wildlife Area, Trails
- Park is heavily used for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing and has trail alignment and conflict issues.
- Park and wildlife area are nearly all within the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor of the driftless region.
- Parking lot use often exceeds capacity.
- Currently no designated public access onto recently acquired former Dega parcel.
- Dog park parking access is limited, lack of fencing results in frequent off leash dogs beyond boundary.
- Indian Lake has accumulated heavy sediment, requires intense management and winter aeration to sustain fishery.
- Access to park and wildlife area is primarily limited to personal motor vehicles.
- Park and wildlife area have extensive cultural, historical and natural features.

# Draft Park Recommendations & Opportunities

- Maintain existing park and wildlife area uses.
- Improve parking conditions.
- Investigate water access improvements for dogs.
- Investigate fencing dog park.
- Explore access and public use of recently acquired Dega parcel.
- Long term lake improvement project (dredging).
- Trail realignments and expansion.
- Bat habitat areas.
- Continued prairie/savanna restoration.
- Conduct forest management plan.
- Identify barriers that may be preventing people from visiting park.
- Improve kayak/canoe accommodations.
- Historical/cultural/natural interpretation and education.
- Improve awareness/volunteer opportunities.
- Plan long term Ice Age National Scenic Trail alignment.

# Timeline



# Next Steps

- Continue Inventory & Analysis
- Continue Gathering Public, Stakeholder Input/Ideas
  - Submit Comments by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 to be Considered for Preliminary Draft Plan*
- August 2022 Public Information Meeting to Review Draft Plan Recommendations

# Public Input

## Please...

- In-person Attendees, Respect your Allotted Time Limit (3 Minutes)
- Zoom Attendees, Type your Questions or Comments into the Q/A – We will Read them Aloud.
- Do Not Interrupt or Interject Comments on Other Comments
- Do Not Laugh at Someone's Idea
- Refrain from Talking while Others are Speaking

We'll be here as long as we can afterward for additional questions.



## For More Information Contact:

Chris James, Senior Landscape Architect

Dane County Parks

5201 Fen Oak Drive #221

Madison, WI 53719

608-224-3763

[james@countyofdane.com](mailto:james@countyofdane.com)

Web:

<https://www.danecountyparks.com/propertyplan/detail/Indian-Lake-Halfway-Prairie>



# Indian Lake Property Plan

Planning Boundary

## Legend

- Master Plan Boundary
- Indian Lake County Park
- Halfway Prairie Wildlife Area
- Conservation Easements

