



Friends of the

**Blufflands**

# Friends of the Blufflands



# FoBL Mission, Part 1

- To be a voice for a wide variety of blufflands users who value the region's blufflands for:
  - the natural habitat and the diverse plant and animal species it supports
  - the scenic beauty they provide for residents and visitors
  - the outdoor nature study and nature-based recreation opportunities that they provide
  - the values green space provides to local communities and their residents
- Leading to higher quality of life

# Norwegian Friluftsliv

- Philosophical lifestyle centered on the joy and appreciation of nature, outdoor activities and beautiful scenery. It's about embracing the outdoors, improving your relationship with nature and experiencing the pleasure of being outside, either alone or with others.
- Camp, hike and forest-bathe (*taking in a forest atmosphere through the senses*), or simply incorporate bike rides and strolls into your routine. Encourage kids to play outside, develop their own relationships with the natural world, and strike a healthy balance between screen time and green time.

# “The benefits of nature experience: Improved affect and cognition”

- Randomly assigned sixty participants to a 50-min walk in either a natural or an urban environment in and around Stanford, California. Compared to the urban walk:
  - Nature experience produced clear benefits for affect (e.g., decrease in anxiety and rumination [*repetitive thought focused on negative aspects of the self*]).
  - Nature experience produced some benefits for cognition (complex working memory span task).
  - Supports the idea that exposure to natural greenspace can improve outlook and cognition.
- Emmett Interdisciplinary Program in Environment and Resources, Stanford University, June 2015, “Landscape and Urban Planning”

# “The influence of urban green environments on stress relief measures: A field experiment”

- Measured the effects on 77 people of short visits to these areas in Helsinki, Finland:
  - The built-up urban city center
  - A large urban park
  - An urban managed woodland
- “Our results show that the large urban park and extensively managed urban woodland had almost the same positive influence, but the overall perceived restorativeness was higher in the woodland after the experiment. The findings suggest that even short-term visits to nature areas have positive effects on perceived stress relief compared to built-up environment.”
- Finnish Forest Research Institute, June 2014, Journal of Environmental Psychology

# Why do we exist? Part 2

- To promote sound conservation practices to maintain the health of the Coulee Region blufflands
  - Forest management / reforestation
  - Prairie management
  - Control of invasive species, encourage native species
  - Preservation of rare and endangered species
  - Advise on trail placement and construction
  - Keep in natural state

# Who is Friends of the Blufflands?

- Board of Directors
  - Pat Wilson – President
  - Fred Skemp – Vice President
  - Stephanie Hanna – Secretary
  - Pat Caffrey – Treasurer
  - George Arimond
  - Jon Rigden
  - Sunshine Love
  - Willie Bittner
- Thanks to Matt Brantner and Jacob Sciammas
- 35 member households
  - And growing. please join!

# Financial Report

# We partner with

- City of La Crosse Park and Rec Department
  - We work with Forest Management Coordinator Brandon Carey, and Jay Odegaard
  - Environmental Leadership Forum
- Regional Bluffland Coalition
  - We work with Chuck Zauner (Project Coordinator), Charlie Handy (La Crosse County Planner)
  - “The Blufflands, A Plan for Conservation and Recreation Throughout the La Crosse – La Crescent Region”
  - We adopted the Memorandum of Understanding in May

# Southeast WI Project

6/11/18 - TRIB.

## Preliminary work continues on trail project

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Preliminary work continues on a 500-mile regional trail network proposed for southeastern Wisconsin.

The Route of the Badger project has been in the works for a few years. It would connect existing trails and add more trail miles in seven counties. Joe Delmagori, with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, said he's working with local officials to identify the trail's potential route. About 300 of 500 miles already exist, he said.

The city and county

of Kenosha recently recommended pursuing trail routes for the community, he said.

"I think it's understanding the importance of connecting communities, giving people options to get around so that you don't always have to get in the car to get where you need to go. Tourism opportunities, especially in the summer months," Delmagori said.

There's about \$800 million available for regional trail networks each year, said Keith Laughlin, president of the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, which recently held

a national conference in Milwaukee on developing regional trail networks in the U.S.

"We've been closely following what's been happening with a potential infrastructure bill, looking at that as an opportunity to increase that funding," Laughlin said. The group could lobby Congress to increase funding to regional bike networks in the 2020 federal transportation bill if the infrastructure measure is stalled, Laughlin said.

Project leaders don't have an estimate on the trail's cost.

# FoBL also partners with

- Prairie Enthusiasts
- USFWS
- Mississippi Valley Conservancy
- WisCorps
- After Hours Rotary
- Department of Natural Resources
- Friends of the Marsh
- Neighborhood Associations
- Coulee Region Sierra Club
- Coulee Region Audubon Society
- Outdoor Recreation Alliance

# What are we working on?

- Reforestation
  - Two 6.5 acre plots and one smaller one – John Rigden, Fred Skemp

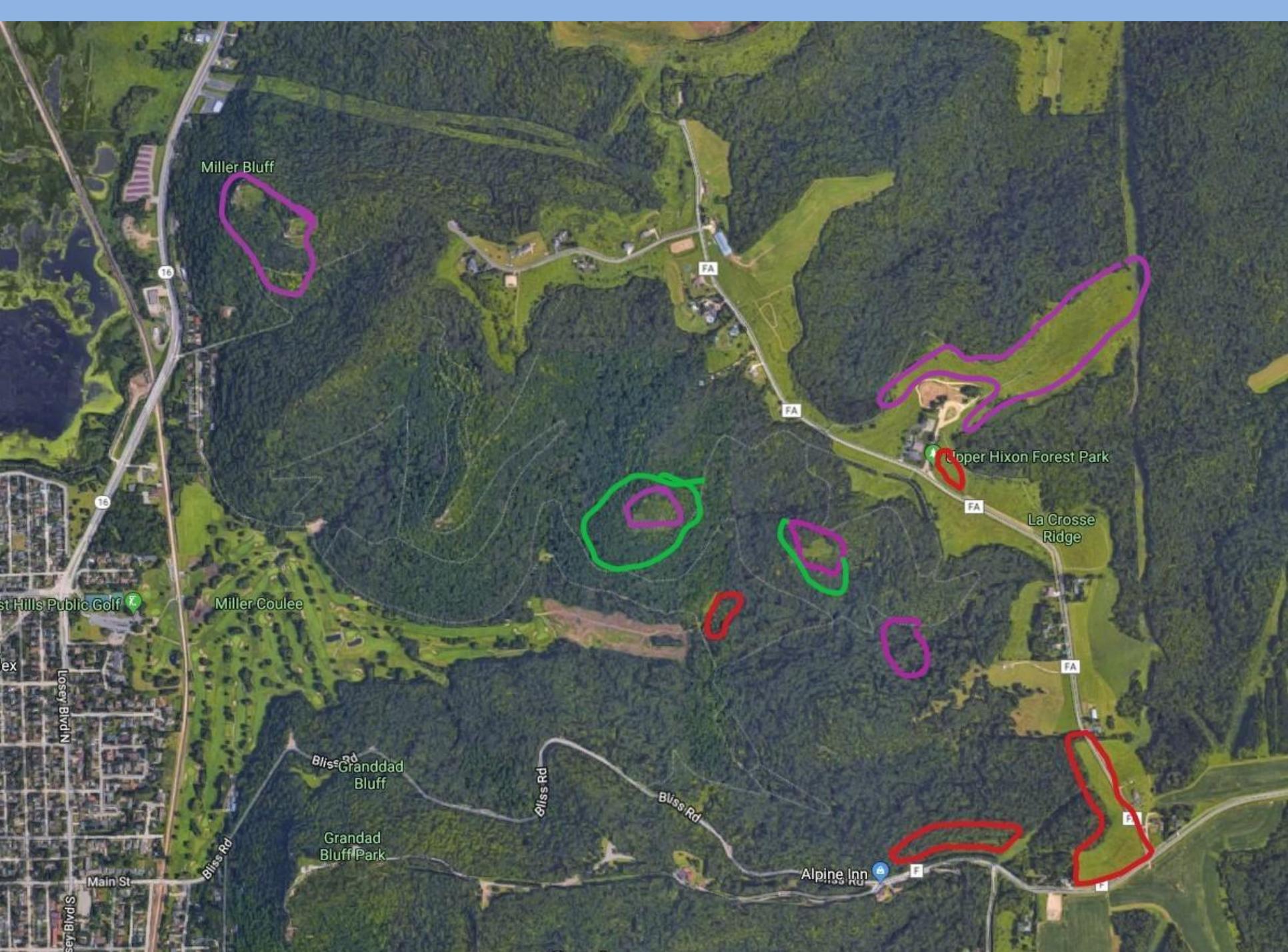
# Reforestation





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  - Lookout, Zoerb, Birch, Thompson
  - Miller Bluff, Juniper Partners
  - Pollinator prairies – Mathy, Fitzpatrick



Miller Bluff

16

FA

FA

Upper Hixon Forest Park

FA

La Crosse Ridge

Miller Coulee

16

FA

St. Hills Public Golf

Bliss Rd  
Granddad Bluff

Bliss Rd

Bliss Rd

Granddad Bluff Park

Alpine Inn

E

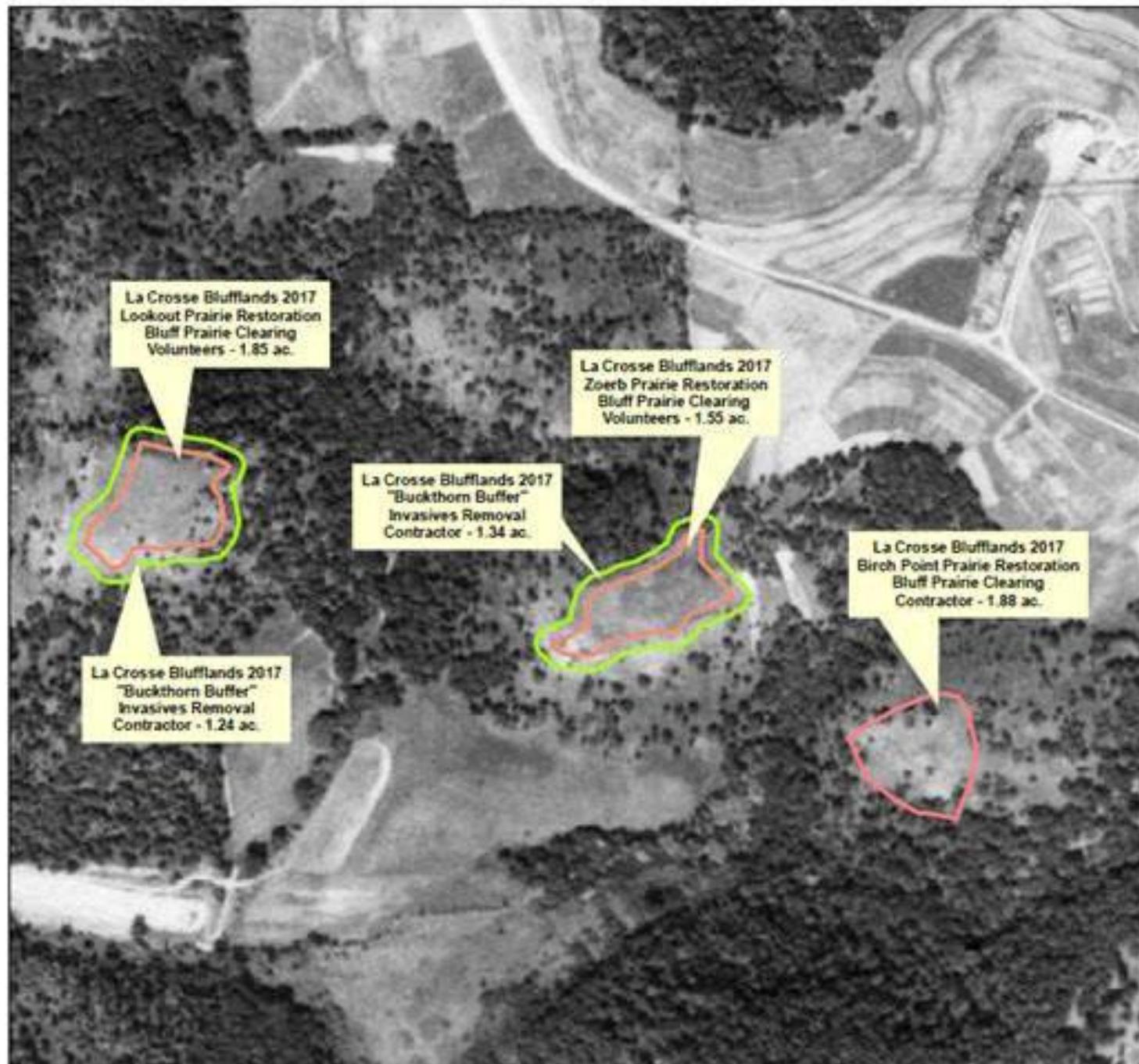
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Losey Blvd

Losey Blvd

Main St

# 2017 La Crosse Blufflands - Hixon Prairies 1939 Photo







# Pollinator Prairies



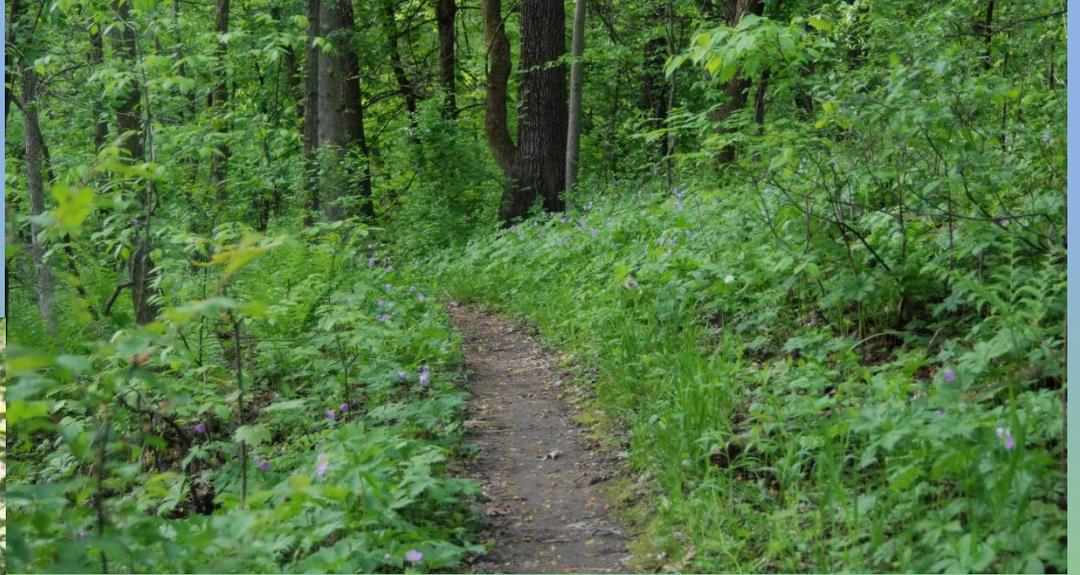
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- Invasive Species Control
  - All over – Buckthorn, Invasive Honeysuckle, Black Locust, Garlic Mustard, Oriental Bittersweet, Autumn Olive, Japanese Knotweed...
- Identification and protection of rare and threatened species

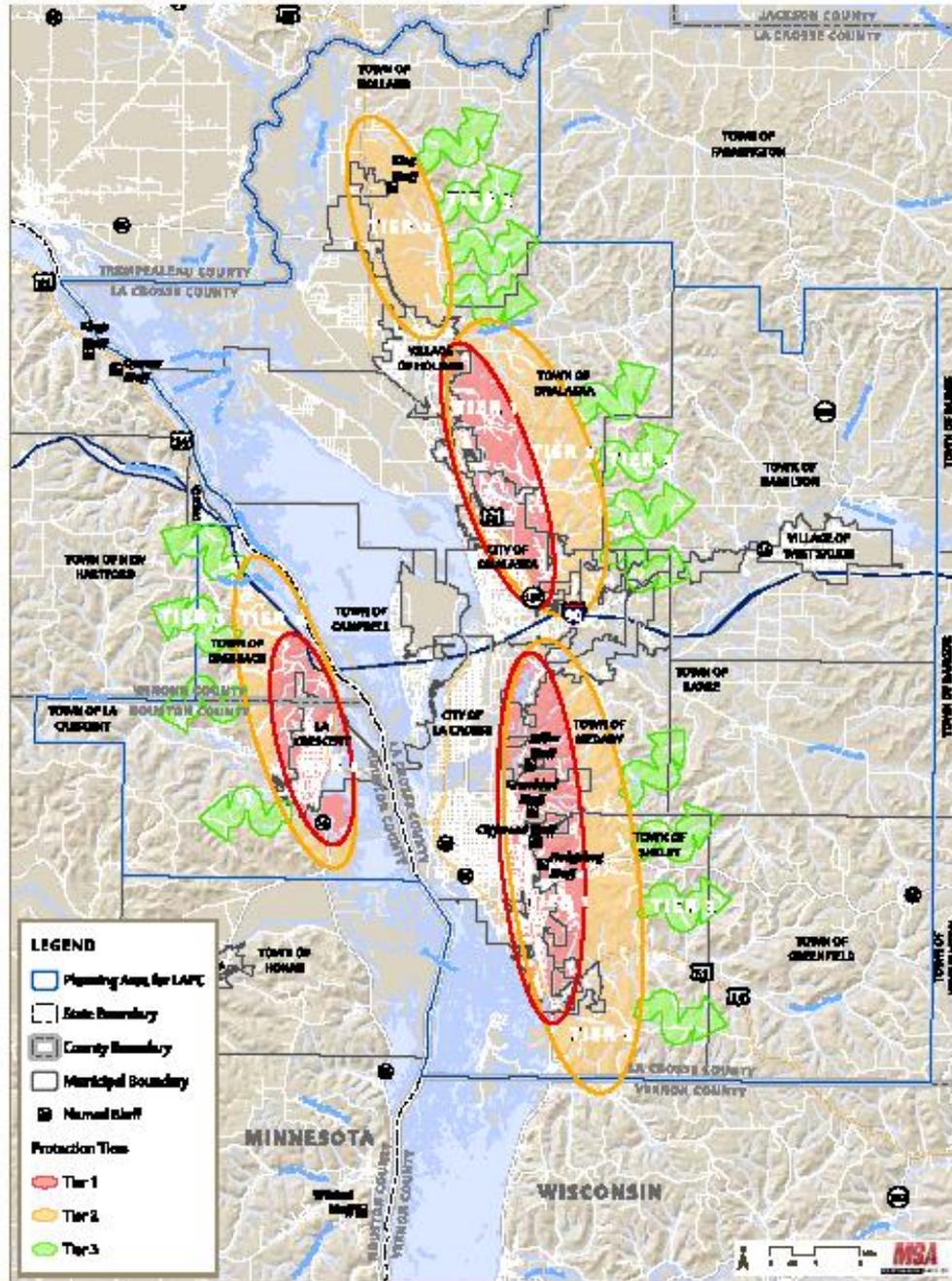


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- Environmental Education
  - Held Fall 2015 session on use of Hixon for environmental education
  - Resulted in education loop being included in the Vista 2 Trail project
  - Steph & George planning a Lower Hixon education trail
- Primarily through BC and ELF, participate in planning for
  - future land acquisition in the blufflands
  - future trail development in the blufflands
  - future user facilities in the blufflands



### La Crosse - La Crescent: Acquisition Tiers





## SUMMER TRAILS KEY

**Rotary Vista Trail—2.5 mi one way**

Hike/Bike

**Bicentennial Trail—3 mi loop**

Hike only

**Hickory Trail—2.2 mi loop**

Hike only

**Oak Trail—2.1 mi one way**

Hike only

**Connecting & Side Trails**

**Difficulty**

- Easy
- Intermediate
- ◆ Difficult

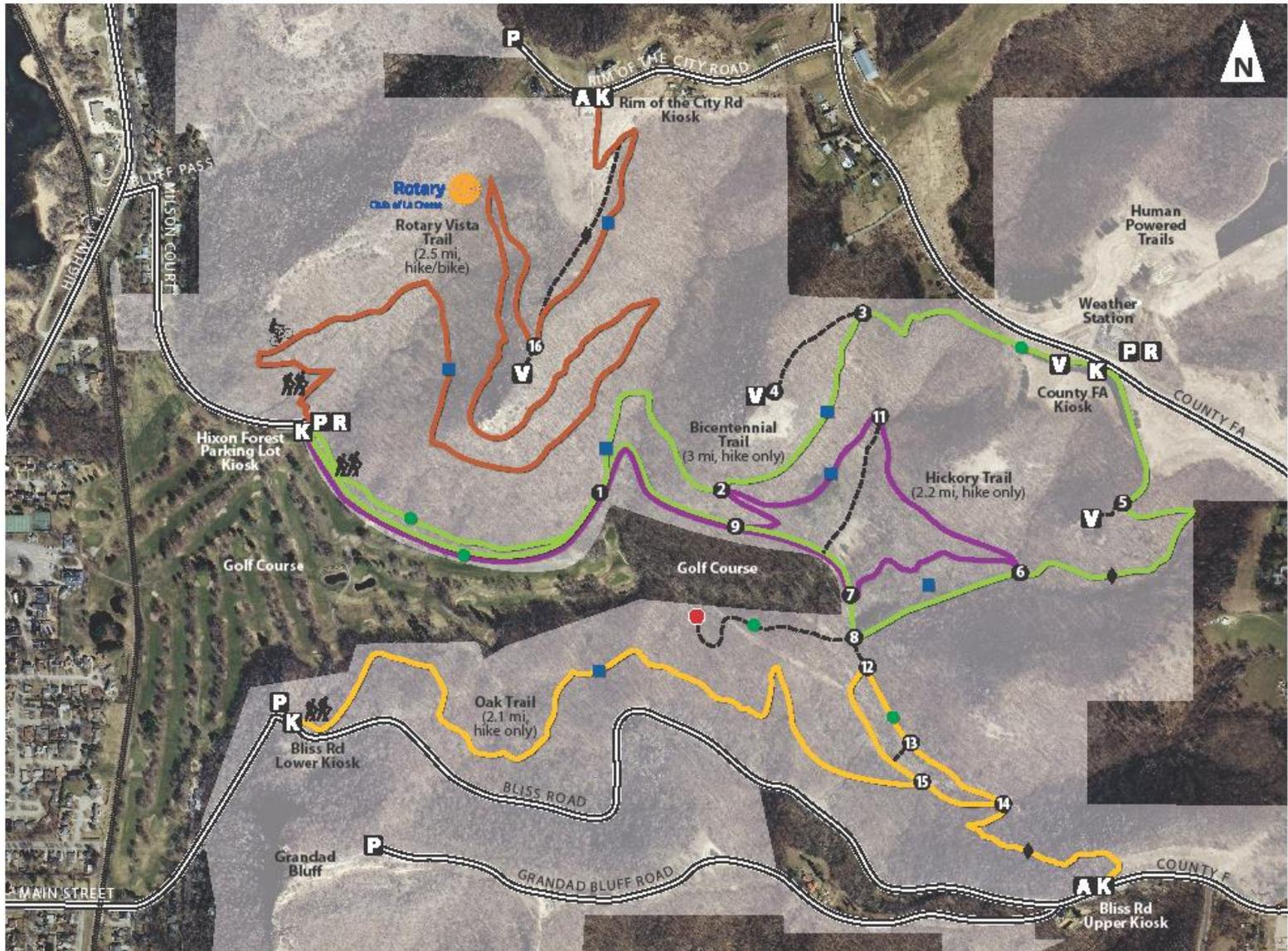
- P** Parking
- V** Overlook
- A** Trail access (no parking)
- K** Kiosk
- R** Restroom
- 1** Map post
- Turn around here

City of La Crosse  
Parks, Recreation & Forestry

**Rotary**  
Club of La Crosse

Wisconsin  
**Outdoor Recreation Alliance**  
wisconsinoutdoorrecreation.com

2015



# UPPER HIXON FOREST TRAIL KEY

- Abys - 0.2 mi
- Bob - 0.5 mi
- Buckthorn - 0.35 mi
- Darkside - 0.74 mi
- Deadwood - 0.11 mi
- French Connection - 0.3 mi
- Gollnick - 0.2 mi
- Hill Pig - 0.1 mi
- Imberm - 0.2 mi
- Lost Loop - 0.3 mi
- Moonshine - 0.24 mi
- OBI - 0.6 mi
- Prairie Loop - 2.1 mi
- Pudn (Coming Soon)
- Skeeter - 0.2 mi
- Still Hill - 0.4 mi
- Stinky's - 0.43 mi
- Twister - 0.67 mi
- Connector Trail
- Trailhead Trails

## TRAIL DIFFICULTY

- Easy
- Intermediate
- ◆ Difficult

## TRAIL FACILITIES

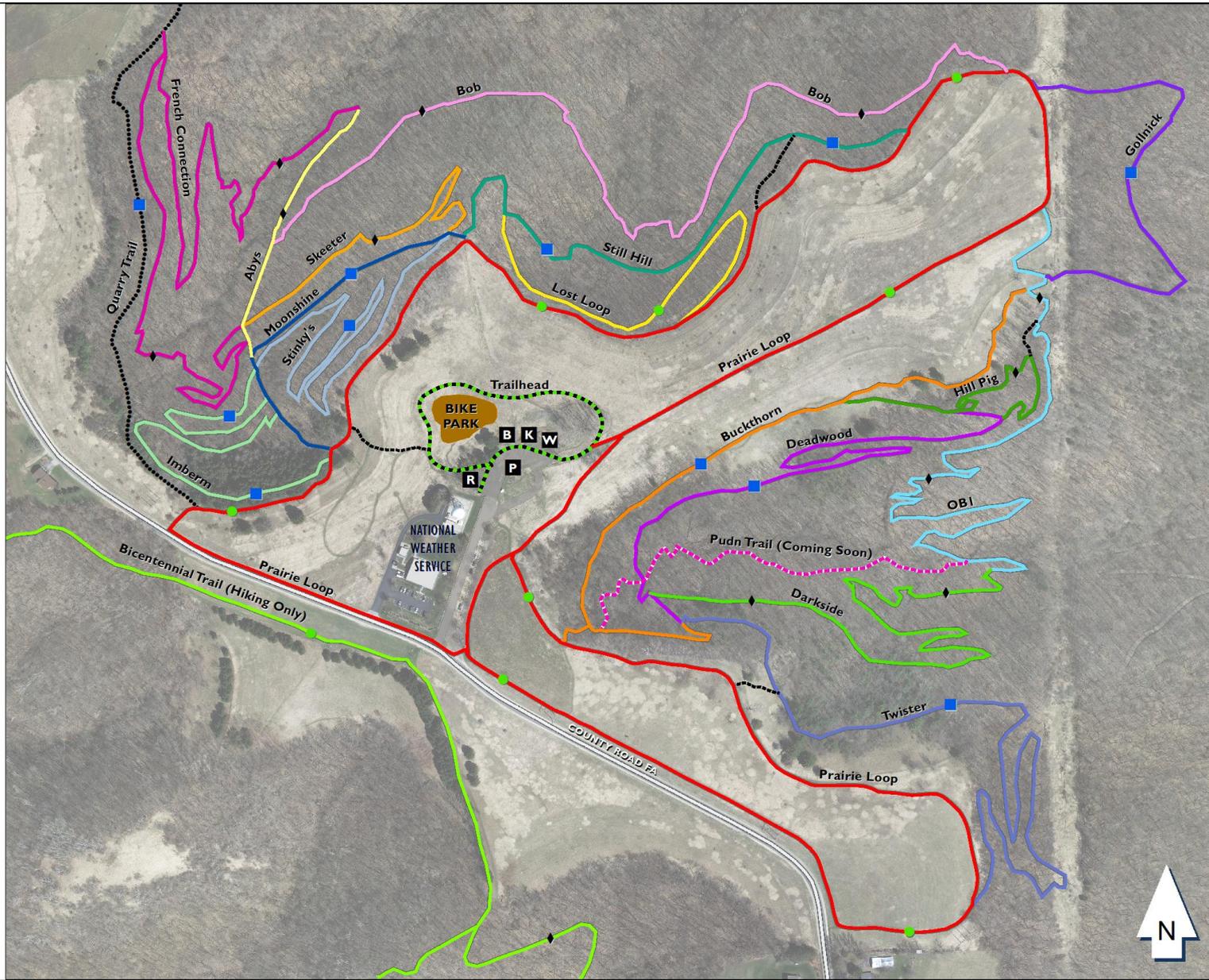
- P Parking
- R Restroom
- W Water Fountain
- K Kiosk
- B Bike Repair Station

City of LaCrosse  
Parks, Recreation & Forestry

7 Rivers Region  
Outdoor Recreation Alliance  
[naturesplacetoplay.com](http://naturesplacetoplay.com)



Map Printed 2015



# What are we working on?

- Expanding our activities to a wider geographical area

# What can you do?

- Join
- Participate in Work Outings (Monday nights)
- Participate in Public Meetings on Blufflands
- Like our Facebook site so you get updates on activities
  - <https://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheblufflands/>
- Buy a trail map cloth

Thank You!



# Challenges of Multi-Use Trails

- Maintaining user safety
- Protecting natural resources
- Providing a high-quality user experience

# Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails

- Recognize conflict as goal interference
- Provide adequate trail opportunities
- Minimize number of contacts in problem areas
- Involve users as early as possible
- Understand user needs
- Identify the actual source of conflict
- Work with affected users
- Promote trail etiquette
- Encourage positive interaction among different users
- Favor “light handed management”
- Plan and act locally
- Monitor Progress

# User Safety Concerns

- User speed (often has more to do with speed differential than the speed itself).
- Mass of user and vehicle (if any).
- Sight distances.
- Trail width.
- Trail surface.
- Congestion (e.g., number of users per mile).
- Users overtaking one other silently/without warning.
- Trail difficulty (obstacles, terrain, condition, etc.).
- User skill level and experience.
- User expectations and preparedness (e.g., walkers who understand they may see bicycles on a particular trail can better prepare themselves for possible encounters).
- Emergency procedures.
- On-site management presence.

# Resource Damage Factors

- Soil characteristics: type, texture, organic content, consistence, depth, moisture (e.g., muddy versus dry), temperature levels (especially frozen versus thawed), etc.
- Slope of surface and topography
- Position in land form (e.g., northern versus southern exposure)
- Elevation
- Type of ecosystem
- Type of wildlife
- Type of vegetation in trail
- Type of vegetation and terrain beside trail (influencing widening)
- Quality of trail design and construction (especially regarding drainage)
- Level of maintenance (e.g., effectiveness of drainage)
- Type of use
- Type of vehicle
- Level of use
- Concentration or dispersal of use
- Season of use
- Difficulty of terrain (to user)
- Up or down hill traffic direction
- Style of use or technique (e.g., skidding tires versus controlled riding)

# High-Quality User Experience

- Number of encounters
- Number of encounters preferred
- Number of encounters expected
- Discrepancy between actual and expected encounters
- Motivations for participation (e.g., solitude versus social interaction)
- Preferences (desires)
- Expectations (what was anticipated)
- Behavior (as opposed to the number) of others
- Visitor attitudes
- Type of area (e.g., primitive versus urban)
- Location of contacts (e.g., trailhead versus campsite)
- Proximity of others
- Size of group \* Size of group encountered
- User's experience level
- Perceived environmental disturbance
- Type of encounter \* Obtrusiveness of visual impact (e.g., bright-colored versus earth-toned clothes, tents, and equipment)

# AvidTrails – Troy Duffin

- Multi-use Trails
  - Speed difference is the main source of user conflict
  - Solutions
    - Design and build mountain bike specific trails
      - More enjoyable for bikers
    - Speed limits on trails
    - One-way trails
  - Recommendations
    - Build separate user-specific trails
    - Slow down and show courtesy when meeting others on the trail