



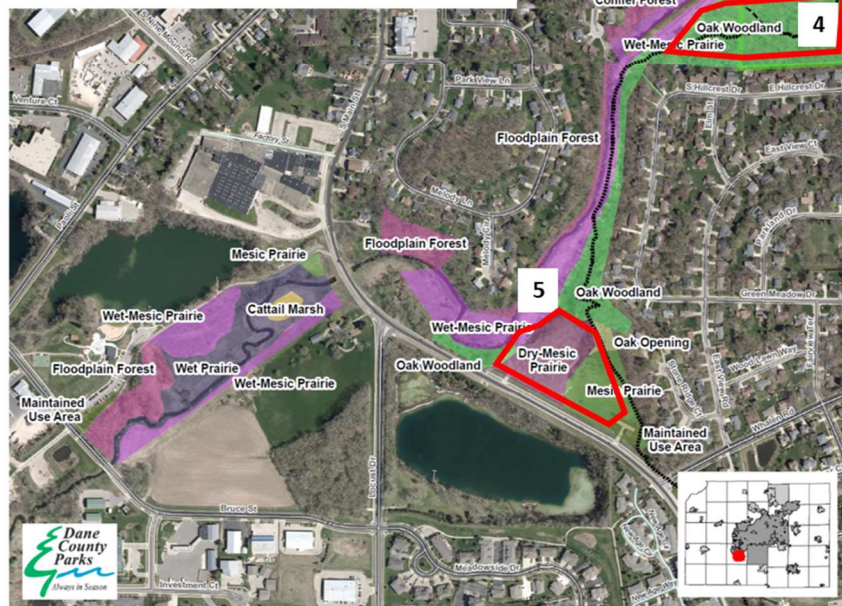
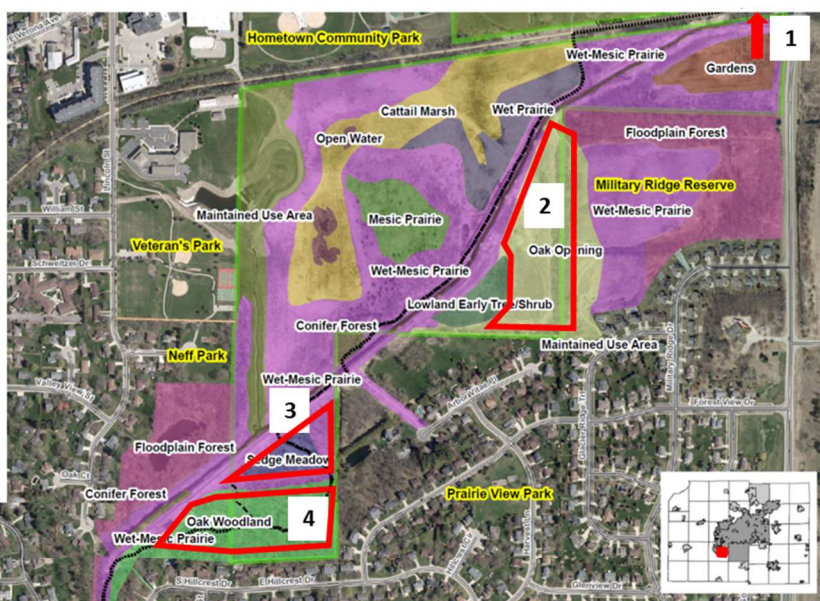
Welcome to the Friends of Badger Mill Creek Conservancy

Five years have passed since the FBMCC was registered as a “Friends Group” with Dane County Parks volunteer program. Since then, at the completion of the Verona/MMSD sewer project which markedly changed the appearance of the creek corridor, the group has been actively working to protect and restore the natural plant and animal communities along the creek.

We’re fortunate that the area we steward, depicted in the map below, contains a diversity of natural habitat communities, home to a variety animals and plants. What’s more, the area also provides access to a cold-water trout stream, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, various City trails, and the Military Ridge Bike Trail. We are also excited that we have extended the area we steward to habitats near Goose Lake.

The BMC corridor provides a valuable local opportunity for us to easily connect with nature, an uncommon asset within an urban setting. Please take a moment to read on and see what we have been up to.

The FBMCC site is comprised of portions of the Dane County Ice Age Trail Junction Natural Resource Area and City of Verona property within the Badger Mill Creek corridor. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail traverses the site adjacent to BMC. The site contains a range of natural communities including wetlands, prairie, sedge meadow, oak opening and oak woodland.



Natural communities near Goose Lake include oak savanna and a prairie pothole pond.





FBMCC Restoration Work Area Progress. The numbered areas on the map identify current restoration work areas. Work area plans are developed collaboratively with Dane County Parks and the City of Verona. Below is a summary of current progress.

1. Park & Ride



The Park & Ride at the intersection of Co. Hwy PB and Verona Road serves as primary access point to the Military Ridge State Bike Trail, the Ice Age Trail (IAT) and hiking trails in the BMC corridor. It contains a pond supplied by a very productive spring. In addition, IAT volunteers have established a prairie planting near the pond. FBMCC is working to remove invasive weeds, and to clear and burn undesirable brush and trees. Our goal is to improve both the appearance and health of this prominent entrance to the BMC corridor.

2. Oak Opening/Prairie



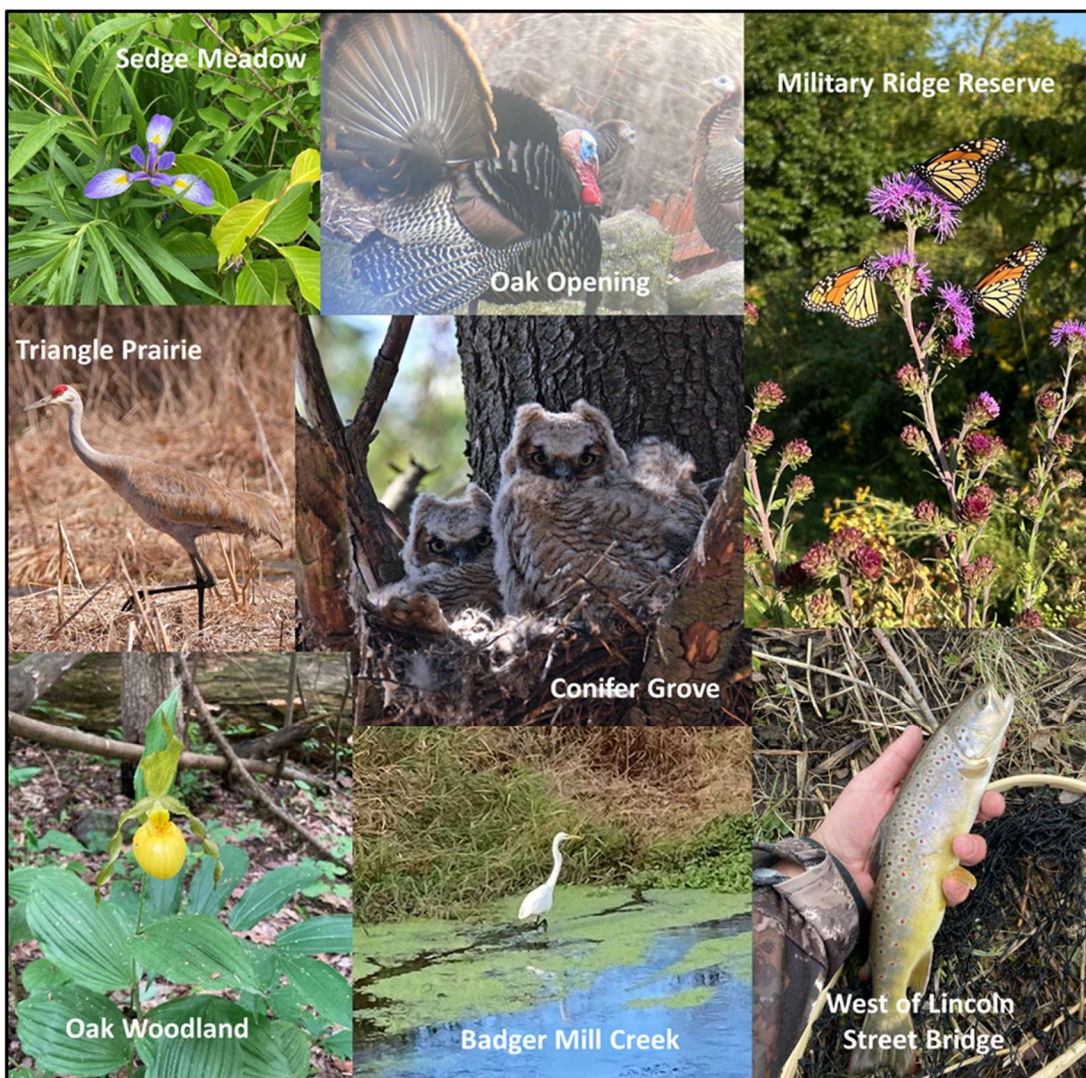
Following two years of site preparation which included cutting and burning/hauling brush from under adjacent oaks and eradicating invasive forbs, the 5-acre parcel was seeded with native plants in February of 2025. In 2026, shade tolerant plant species were seeded under the line of oaks, between the new prairie and the Military Ridge Reserve. The plan is to continue to mow the new prairie a couple of times a season for the first 2-3 seasons after seeding to further control invasive non-native plants.

In addition, this work area was selected as a site for involvement in the Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program. Dane County Parks was awarded a large grant for their participation which began in 2025 and involves at least two years of monitoring. FBMCC participates in the monitoring. Following detailed training, monitors record observations of blooming plants, milkweeds and all stages of the monarch life cycle. Observations are made on 100 subplots (1 m²) within a 200 x 50-meter study plot monthly from May through September. The overall goal of the project is to understand habitat factors that support monarch populations. Because this area is newly planted, it will provide baseline information that can be compared to data in future years, hopefully showing the benefits of native grassland habitats for monarchs.



Monarch larvae at the "2nd instar" stage of development on common milkweed.

Plants and animals photographed in the BMC Conservancy



3. Sedge Meadow



The Dane County Parks Naturalist tells us that the sedge meadow area is the natural community most worthy of restoration effort investment. This is exemplified by the picture showing southern blue flag iris growing among the sedges. Surrounding this area are patches of thistle and woody invasives remaining from a formerly wooded area. Our long-term plan is to manage the area with prescribed burning



4. Oak Woodland

Our oak woodland is a mature forest which appears as a dense woodland on aerial photographs taken in 1937, the earliest source of aerial photography in Wisconsin. It contains many woodland ephemerals such as trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, may-apple and even lady-slipper orchid. The image shows a large patch of maidenhair fern. On an annual basis we remove garlic mustard. Several windstorms over the last 10+ years have caused a great deal of dead wood to accumulate. This work area plan requires many workdays to remove the downed wood, as well as removal of woody invasives (e.g. buckthorn and honeysuckle). We are doing this to prepare the area for prescribed burning, hopefully in 2027.



4. Prairie



In February 2026, the southern half of South Main Park was seeded with a mix of native prairie plants. This followed two years of site preparation which involved removal of undesirable woody shrubs and trees. Herbaceous invasive weeds were eradicated from the field. A similar process will be followed for the northern half of South Main Park that will occur following earth-scaping and removal of construction debris.

6. Oak Savanna



A large area of primarily oaks stands adjacent to a prairie pothole pond and wetland just west of Goose Lake, an area we are now stewarding. Oak savanna, historically comprising up to 30% of natural vegetation in southern Wisconsin is one of the most imperiled habitats in the Midwest. Multiple work events were conducted to cut, stack and burn the woody invasive understory. One work event organized by DCP, involved about 20 participants and grappling equipment that enabled cutting and burning large amounts of brush on the same day. In addition, a 20-acre corn field, adjacent to the woodland and pond was seeded with prairie plants in 2025 by Dane County Parks.

The more the merrier!!

Connecting with nature provides a needed respite from our often too hectic schedules. We believe we are making a difference in improving the ecology of the Badger Mill Creek corridor and the experience of users.

So.....If you have interest, we encourage and welcome you to join us in these efforts.

All levels of experience and diverse skill types can help us move our goals along. Contact us at.....

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