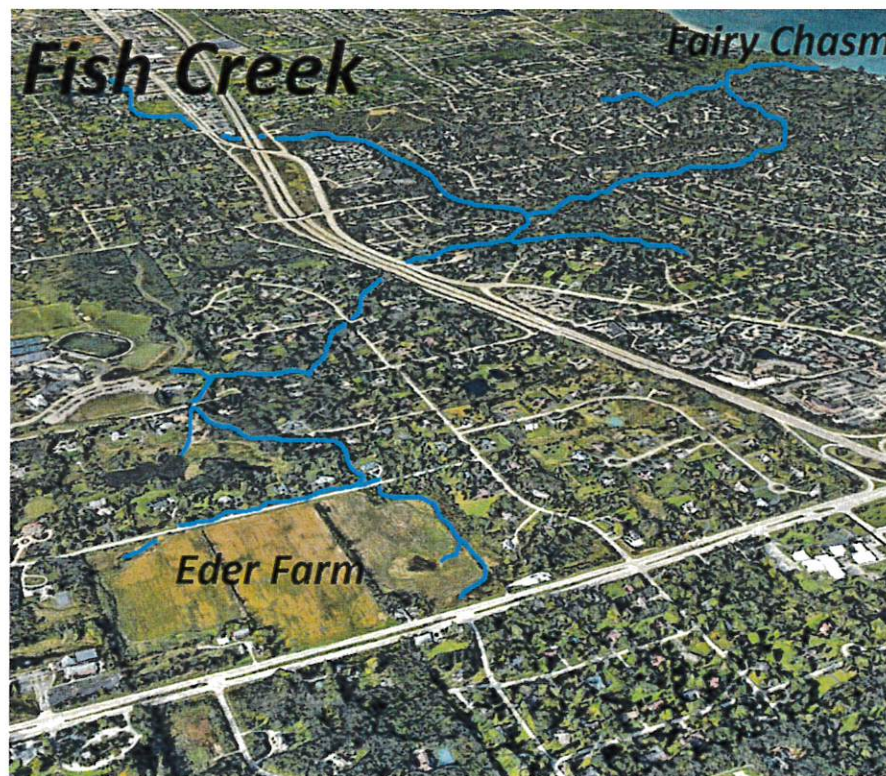
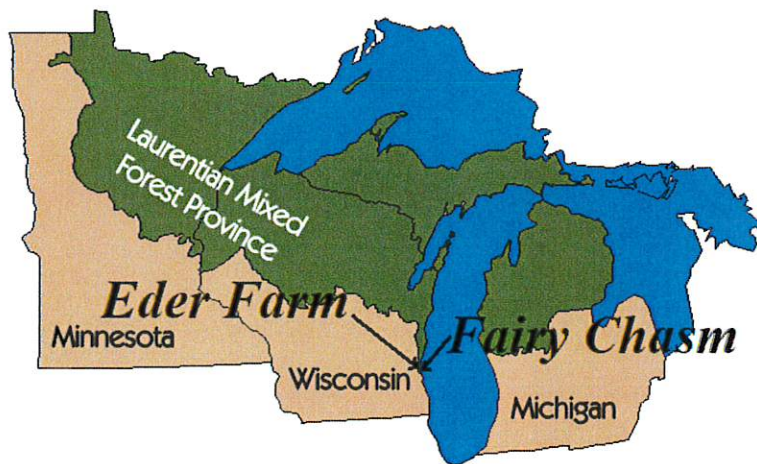


Creation of a River Hills Nature Reserve

Proposal from the Committee on the Environment

The Committee on the Environment recommends creation of a River Hills Nature Reserve at the 53-acre parcel on Brown Deer Road, former site of the “Eder Farm.” This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to restore such a large undeveloped area in this urban setting. This land is the headwaters of tiny Fish Creek, whose mouth is less than two miles downstream at Lake Michigan. This is the southernmost extension of the “Laurentian Mixed Forest”, more commonly known as Wisconsin’s “North Woods.”



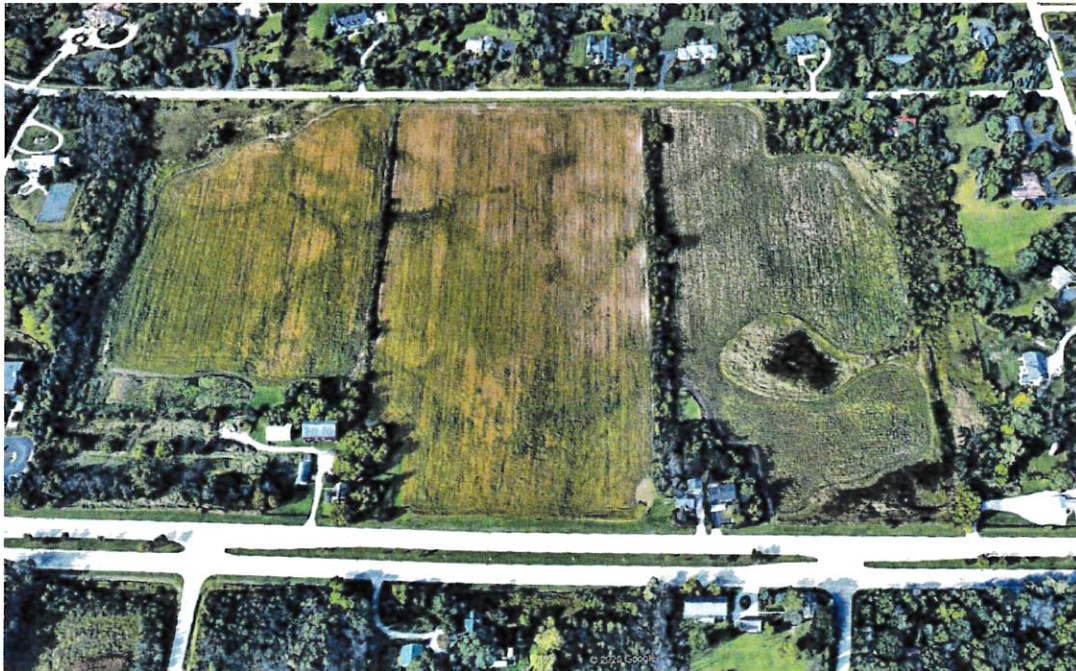
The mouth of Fish Creek is protected by the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust as the Fairy Chasm State Natural Area, preserving a rare remnant of virgin woods seen by Milwaukee's first settlers. The Brown Deer property could be restored like this.



To accomplish this goal, the Committee on the environment proposes to:

1. Partner with a land conservation organization who would take title to the land, and assume responsibility for restoring and managing it. Discussions are currently underway with Ozaukee Washing Land Trust and the River Revitalization Foundation.
2. Enlist technical assistance from environmental organizations.
3. Initiate private fund-raising to cover costs of land acquisition and restoration.

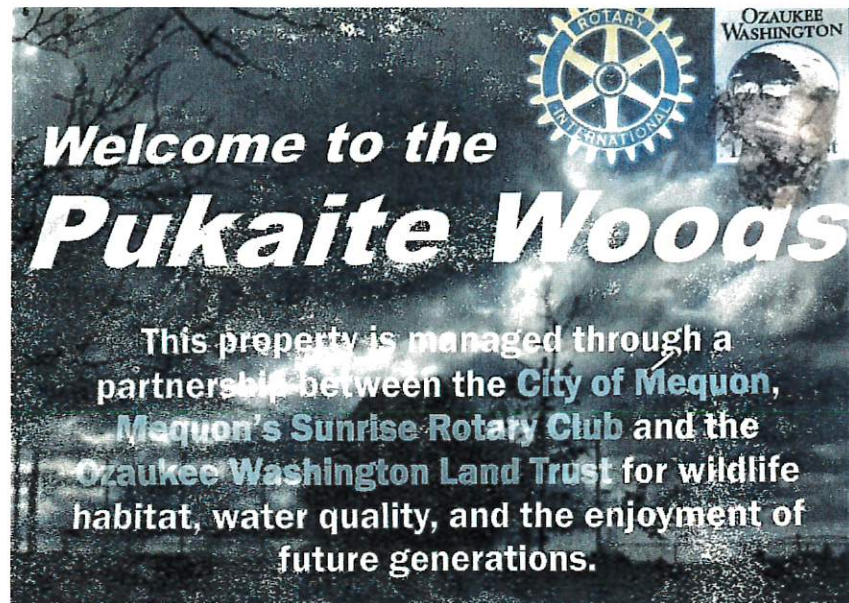
Our recommendation would be to set aside all 53 acres of the site, preserving its above- and below-ground natural hydrology.



Alternatively, a small strip of this land along Greenbrook Road could be developed with large River Hills style lots, which would still leave 40 acres for a reserve. This would generate some income through the sale of the land, and ongoing tax revenue, and provide prospective new homeowners with a natural preserve in their back yard.



The city of Mequon has done precisely this at the Pukaite Woods bordering the Rotary Park and Spirit Lake Preserve.



At the edge of the woods is signage indicating private property. The houses bordering Pukaite Woods have an enhanced value by such a wonderful back yard, managed by a land conservancy.



Oconomowoc is currently receiving private donations to change the direction of development of land from condos to parkland.

OCONOMOWOC NEWS

More than \$500,000 has been raised so far to turn a piece of Oconomowoc property into a park instead of condos

Evan Frank Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Published 11:53 a.m. CT Oct. 26, 2020

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Over \$500,000 has been raised to save an Oconomowoc property from becoming condos. *Submitted*

If Mequon and Oconomowoc can accomplish these things, certainly a community as generous and environmentally conscious as River Hills can do the same.

A natural reserve in this location would be immediately adjacent to the world-renowned Lynden Sculpture Garden, a church, and a synagogue.

A restored forest at this wetland site would maintain ground water in its place and help alleviate flooding issues currently seen along the outflow of Fish Creek. A reserve would avoid the need for the highly expensive ventures of piping public water in, and piping sewerage out that a condominium development requires.

A natural reserve in this location would truly be a jewel in the crown of River Hills.

June 23, 2021

Dear Tammy:

The Committee on the Environment offers for consideration by the Planning Commission on July 7, 2021 the attached materials. This represents one of two alternative approaches to handle the Eder Farm situation as opposed to the one currently identified on the Village's website.

The proposal is to subdivide and sell four five-acre parcels abutting Greenbrook. These parcels are to the south of Greenbrook and opposite to the four five-acre parcels directly across the street and as shown on the attached map and Google aerial photo.

The property taxes on the four five-acre parcels to the north of Greenbrook average about \$23,675 per parcel. Accordingly, when built out the Village could anticipate receiving an additional \$94,700 in revenue. This as opposed to the approximate \$31,000 paid by the Eders on the entire 53-acre farm.

We would also propose selling two five-acre parcels in the southwest corner of the farm adjacent to the synagogue. This includes the Eder farmhouse proper and out buildings. These two lots can either be divided horizontally or vertically, whichever is most advantageous. Estimated property taxes would be approximately \$20,000 per year per parcel.

Assuming these six parcels totaling 30 acres bring an average of \$385,000 per parcel, the Village would be fully reimbursed for its investment in the farm.

The balance of the 23 acres would be devoted to green space for the benefit of the Village residents.

The advantage of this plan includes:

- Preservation of the traditional five-acre zoning for parcels in River Hills that we all enjoy.
- When fully built out, has the potential to yield approximately \$135,000 of property tax revenue whereas the Eder Farm currently yields approximately \$31,000. This equates to over \$100,000 of additional tax revenue.

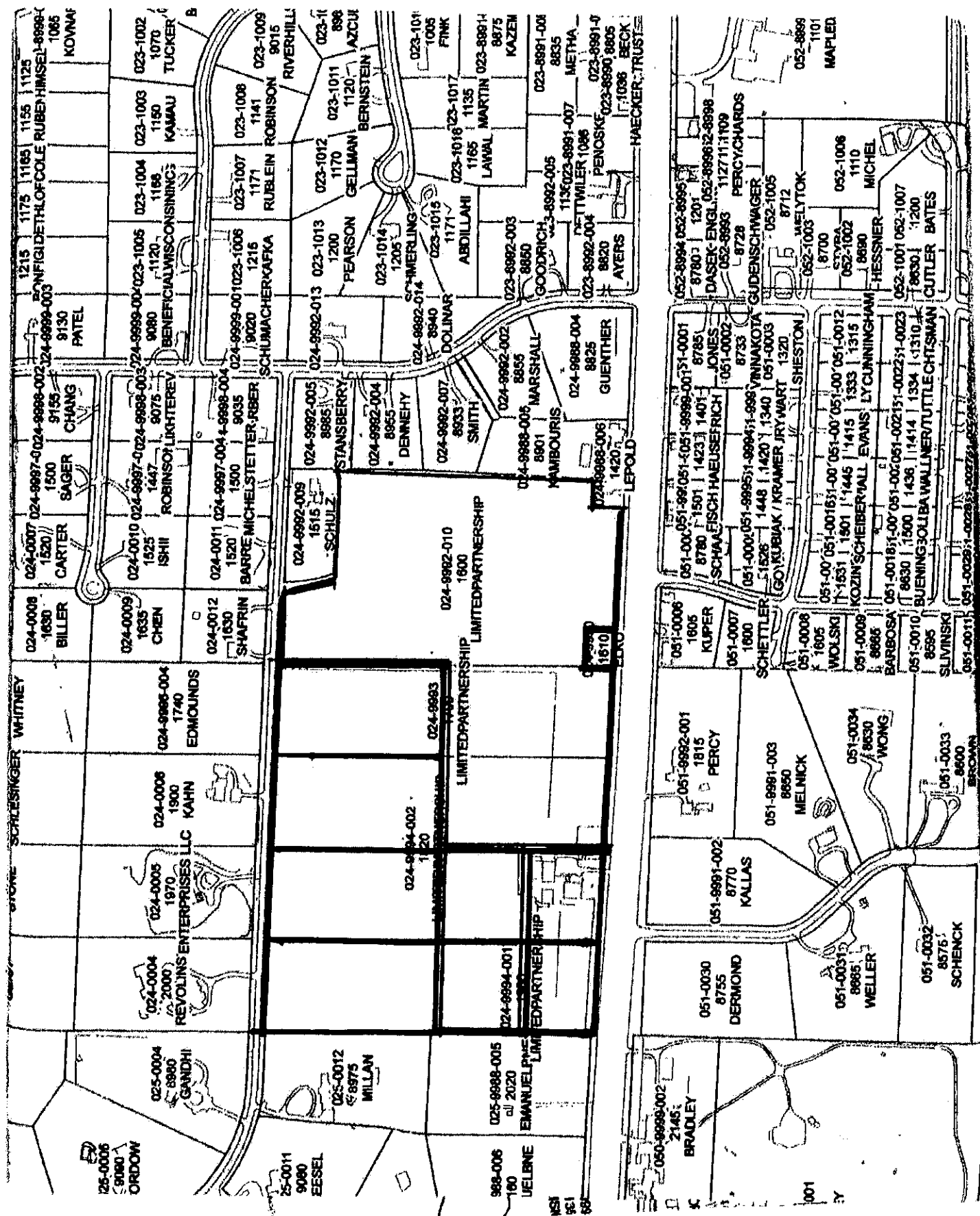
- No need to supply water piped from across the Milwaukee River from Brown Deer to the site.
- Virtually no impact to the present infrastructure including
 1. Any need to expand Brown Deer Road and/or traffic control at Spruce and Brown Deer for overall increased traffic.
 2. Having to increase the capacity of Indian Hill or Maple Dale Schools.
- Creates an equal to or greater amount of green space over the current proposal.

The Planning Commission's kind consideration of this alternative proposal would be greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Victor C. Harding
Email: vich@warshafsky.com

kla
Enc.



imagery in Google Earth

