

September 19, 2024

Ms. Darlene Whittington, Head of Corporate Giving

Promega Corporation

2800 Woods Hollow Road, Madison, WI 53711

Mr. Darryl LaFontaine, Executive Director

Sub-Zero Group Foundation

4717 Hammersley Road, Madison, WI 53711

Dear Ms. Whittington and Mr. LaFontaine,

I'm enclosing a proposal for a conservation and construction project related to the property adjacent to Sub-Zero Parkway.

As we discussed at our meeting in August, our working group believes that this project will directly benefit the employees of Sub-Zero and Promega as well as the Fitchburg community at large. While we understand that this project does not fall within the traditional areas that Sub-Zero Group Foundation and Promega Corporate Giving usually focus on, we believe that this project is of such importance that we will hope you will find it worthy of discussion and eventual funding.

The enclosed proposal includes a full breakdown of the costs of the project and a survey of current users of the property. We have also focused in the proposal on the potential benefits to the community, to conservation efforts, and to the employees of your facilities that lie adjacent to the property, as we believe these benefits provide a very compelling argument for the project.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to peruse and consider this proposal. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if you have any input that will assist us in working together to turn this proposal into reality.

Sincerely,

R. Chris Reeder

Member, Promega/Sub-Zero Ponds Working Group

Protecting the Wetlands

A Conservation and Construction Project for Sub-Zero Ponds in Fitchburg, Wisconsin

by R. Chris Reeder

On behalf of Promega/Sub-Zero Ponds Working Group

Submitted to Promega Corporate Giving and Sub-Zero Group Foundation

September 19, 2024

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Executive Summary

In Fitchburg, Wisconsin, just next to Lacy Road, there sits a property about 65 acres in size. The land is mostly covered in wetland and prairie. If you were to drive by, you might see a few bicyclists and pedestrians. Maybe a few birds. Other than that, the property would appear fairly empty. But perhaps that emptiness is just the point.

This conservation and construction project will preserve the property as a natural space and will build 4,000 feet of boardwalks around the wetland as well as two wildlife observation decks. This will provide fuller use of the space for the current users of the property and will also serve to draw new users to the area.

The project will be broken down into three phases: Planning, Construction, and Upkeep. It is our intent that phases 1 and 3 will be of minimal burden to the funders of the project. The full cost of Phase 2, the construction phase, will be approximately \$350,000.

This project will provide significant and verifiable benefits to the employees of Promega Corporation and Sub-Zero Group, to the community of Fitchburg, and to conservation efforts.

While we understand that this project does not fall within the traditional areas that Promega Corporate Giving and Sub-Zero Group Foundation generally fund, this project would provide such exceptional value to the community, to the environment, and to your employees, that in this case, we hope an exception can be made. In the case of the preservation of this stunning piece of land, we believe that the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Introduction

“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”—Aldo Leopold

In Fitchburg, Wisconsin, just next to Lacy Road, there sits a property about 65 acres in size. The land is mostly covered in wetland and prairie. If you were to drive by, the property might look fairly deserted. A few bicyclists ride along the bike path on the eastern edge of the property. An occasional pedestrian walks by on the sidewalk on the northern edge. Employees of the two adjacent facilities pass by on their way to or from work. But other than those few bicyclists and pedestrians, and the birds you might see flying overhead as they migrate through Wisconsin, this land appears mostly unused. A casual observer might see it as nothing more than empty.

But perhaps that emptiness is just the point.

In this proposal, we will describe a conservation and construction project that will make full use of this picturesque property, that will provide more opportunities for visitors to the area and employees of the nearby businesses to experience its beauty, and that will preserve this breathtaking, invaluable natural green space for generations to come.

The property that we will be discussing lies adjacent to facilities of two different local businesses: Sub-Zero Group and Promega Corporation. The property is part of the lovely community of Fitchburg, Wisconsin, a suburb of Madison. And this property sits right in the middle of a flyway for large swaths of migratory birds, from swans to swallows, from sparrows to sandpipers. In this proposal, we will show that this project will provide significant and verifiable benefits to the employees of these two companies, to the community of Fitchburg, and

to conservation efforts that will benefit migratory birds and the other flora and fauna that reside on the property.

Many studies have shown the impact of green spaces within communities, boosting property values, tourism efforts, and wellness. Many studies have shown the value that providing employees access to natural areas can offer, offering improvements in areas from productivity to employee retention. And, of course, preservation of green spaces is essential to all conservation efforts. We will include a sampling of this data within this proposal.

While we understand that this project does not fall within the traditional areas that Promega Corporate Giving and Sub-Zero Group Foundation generally fund, this project would provide such exceptional value to the community, to the environment, and to your employees, that in this case, we hope an exception can be made. In the case of the preservation of this stunning piece of land, we believe that the benefits far outweigh the costs.

After reading this proposal, we hope you agree.

The Property

The property in question is often known colloquially to locals and birdwatchers in the area as “Sub-Zero Ponds.” It is composed of three parcels, all located in Fitchburg, Wisconsin.



(Figure 1. Sub-Zero Ponds. Photo by R. Chris Reeder)

The smallest parcel (225/0609-083-8740-2) is 6.29 acres and is owned by Sub-Zero Group. The second parcel (225/0609-083-9055-2) is 22.18 acres and is owned by Promega Corporation. The third parcel (225/0609-074-9745-2) is 36.285 acres and is owned by Promega Corporation (*Access Dane*).

Together, these parcels form a total property of 64.755 acres. A very rough approximation shows that approximately 1/3 of the property is wetland. The remainder is prairie.

The property is bounded on the east by the Badger State Trail, a “Rails to Trail” bike path (*History*). On the north, the property is bordered by Sub-Zero Parkway and on the south by Lacy Road. The property is



(Figure 2. Map of the property. Source: DCIMAP)

bounded on the west by Commerce Park Drive and a Promega facility. Sub-Zero Group has a facility across the road to the north.

The sidewalk on the north border of the property and the bike path on the east side of the property are heavily traveled. The wetland is an important site for migratory waterfowl and other birds.

Current Use of the Property—People and Wildlife

The property is currently used by a variety of people and wildlife. We will address each category separately.

People

To determine the demographic makeup of the current users of the property, we conducted a survey over three days in the fall of 2024: Tuesday, September 10; Thursday, September 12; and Saturday, September 14. Two surveyors administered the questions in person and sought responses from pedestrians and bicyclists on the two adjacent pathways: the sidewalk on the northern edge of the property and the bike trail on the eastern edge of the property.

Demographic questions on the survey sought to identify what percentage of users of the property are employees of Sub-Zero Group and Promega Corporation and what percentage of users are residents of Fitchburg or the greater Madison metropolitan area (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

	Weekday	Weekend	Total
Total users	120	176	296
Bike Path	73	114	187 (63%)
Sidewalk	47	62	109 (37%)
Fitchburg resident	102	71	173 (58%)
Madison area resident	18	105	123 (42%)
Sub-Zero employee	14	3	17 (6%)
Promega employee	27	6	33 (11%)
Other local employee	15	8	23 (8%)

Over the course of the three days that the survey was conducted, responses were received from 296 people. 63% of those spoken to were using the bike path, and the other 37% were using the sidewalk. 58% of respondents were residents of Fitchburg, while the other 42% were residents of the Greater Madison area. While there may be infrequent visitors to this property from outside the Fitchburg/Madison area, it is unlikely that these people are numerous.

Additionally, we found that 25% of the people we spoke to were employees of a nearby business: 6% were Sub-Zero employees, 11% were employees of Promega, and 8% worked at other nearby businesses.

To determine how frequently the property is used and for what purposes, respondents were also asked how often they visit and for what reasons (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

How often do you visit	
Daily	77 (26%)
Weekly	138 (47%)
Monthly	59 (20%)
Rarely	22 (7%)
Primary purpose in visiting	
Exercise	118 (40%)
Relaxation	103 (35%)
Nature/Wildlife	47 (16%)
Passing Through	23 (8%)
Other	5 (2%)

73% of users reported visiting the property at least once per week. Exercise and relaxation were the primary reasons given for the purpose of the visit. Please see the appendix for a full breakdown of the survey results.

While only a small percentage of current users are employees of Promega Corporation and Sub-Zero Group, it is our hope that the proposed conservation and construction project will draw out more employees to enjoy this beautiful property. The benefits to both the companies and the employees will be shown in the following sections.

Wildlife

The other category of current users that is of interest to this proposal is wildlife. The wetland on the property is an important migration site and is used by a wide variety of resident and migratory birds. 166 different species of birds have been recorded here by birdwatchers.

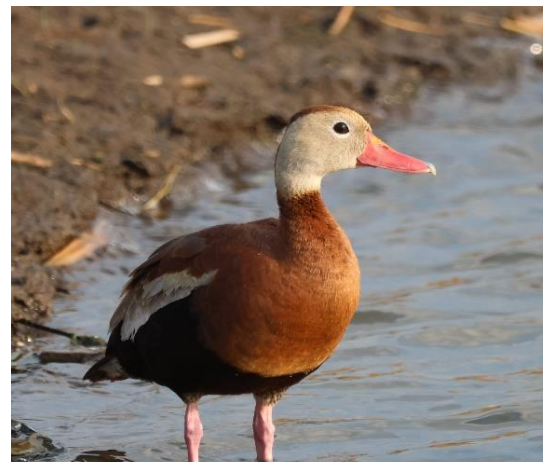


(Figure 3. An Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) hunting at Sub-Zero Ponds. Photo by R. Chris Reeder)

Regular visitors include many species of gulls, terns, geese, ducks, swallows, cranes, herons, swans, sandpipers, warblers, sparrows, and raptors. Rare migratory visitors to Wisconsin that have been seen at this site over the past seven years include Black-bellied Plover, Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, American Avocet, Red-necked and Wilson's Phalaropes,

American Golden-plover, Nelson's Sparrow, and Black-necked Stilt (*Sub-zero pkwy ponds (N of lacy rd.), Dane, Wisconsin, United States - ebird hotspot*).

The above covers only birds. If we were to include native mammal, insect, and plant species, we would see even more clearly the vast diversity that resides on these 65 acres. It is our hope that in the future use of this property, through careful conservation and construction efforts, this diversity can be protected for the community and for future generations.



(Figure 4. Black-bellied Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) at Sub-Zero Ponds. Photo by R. Chris Reeder)

Future Use of the Property—Proposing a Conservation and Construction Project

The proposal for future use of the property falls into two parts: conservation and construction.

Conservation

In this portion of the project, we propose that the majority of the property be maintained in its current state, thus preserving this beautiful natural space for those who currently use it and for future users. This portion of the project, luckily, requires little effort on the part of anyone.

Construction

It is the second portion of the project that will require some creativity, determination, effort, and cost. We believe, however, that the effort and cost will be significantly offset by the benefits that the construction project will provide.

We propose to construct two wildlife observation decks and a series of boardwalks around the wetland on this property. Please see the following map (Figure 5).



(Figure 5. Proposed boardwalk map. Source: DCIMAP)

The black lines on the map represent boardwalks. Approximately 4,000 feet of boardwalk would be constructed (3/4 of a mile). Boardwalks would be four feet wide and would be supported on precast concrete piers. The larger black rectangles on the above map represent wildlife observation decks. Two observation decks would be constructed, each 200 square feet (10' by 20').

The boardwalks would allow users to walk a full circle around the major portion of the wetland on the property and along the edge of the prairie, allowing fuller views of this stunning landscape. The observation decks would give users places to rest and enjoy the scenery as well as giving wildlife observers places to set up their equipment. One observation deck would be placed on the east end of the pond and the other on the west end, thus giving users excellent views of the area no matter where the sun is in the sky.

Boardwalks will be accessible to those in wheelchairs and to others with mobility restrictions, allowing use by a wider variety of visitors. The observation decks will also include educational signage. We plan on enlisting the assistance of Southern Wisconsin Bird Alliance to ensure that the signage is accurate, up-to-date, and informative.

Survey

Strong support was shown for the conservation and construction project in our survey. 68% of users felt strongly about the importance of preserving the property. 58% of users felt that the construction project would encourage them to visit the property more frequently (see Table 3.)

TABLE 3

How much value does this property add to the community?	
1 (Least Value)	2 (1%)
2	12 (4%)
3	67 (23%)
4	167 (56%)
5 (Most Value)	48 (16%)
How important is it to preserve this property in its natural state?	
1 (Least Importance)	3 (1%)
2	28 (9%)
3	64 (22%)
4	98 (33%)
5 (Most Importance)	103 (35%)

If boardwalks were added around the wetland, would you visit the area more frequently or less frequently?	
More Frequently	172 (58%)
Less Frequently	0
No Change	124 (42%)

This conservation and construction project will provide a variety of benefits to the users of the property and the community they reside in. These benefits will be described in detail in the following section.

Benefits of the Conversation and Construction Project

"What are the natural features which make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual frocks, a forest and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents can never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things."—Henry David Thoreau

Conserving this natural space and creating additional options for use will benefit a large swath of the greater Madison community, the city of Fitchburg, the employees of the nearby businesses, and the wildlife who live here and migrate through. This project will allow current users to utilize the property more fully and will draw additional visitors to the area.

The benefits of the conservation and construction project can be broken down into three parts: benefits to the community, benefits to employees of the nearby businesses, and benefits to conservation efforts. We will address each of these areas separately.

Benefits to the Community

Natural spaces provide a vast array of benefits to a community, from the less tangible benefits provided to residents such as boosts to health and mood, to the more quantifiable aspects such as increases to property values and tourism revenue. Scientific research has borne these findings out over and over again. The following are selections from just a few relevant studies.

Dutch study from 2010:

“Like other public areas, parks and other green spaces can support physical activity and facilitate social cohesion.... However, green spaces appear to have a special quality that is lacking in other public areas: contact with green space can provide restoration from stress and mental fatigue.”

(van den Berg et al.)

The American Psychological Association in 2020:

“From a stroll through a city park to a day spent hiking in the wilderness, exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders and even upticks in empathy and cooperation.”

(Weir)

The Environmental Protection Agency in 2017:

“Wetlands are important recreation destinations for activities such as birding and have significant historical, scientific, and cultural values. They also have a wide variety of plant and animal life, which draw people who want to hunt, fish, and recreate in these areas.... Usable outdoor areas can also result in economic benefits through the creation of supporting businesses and jobs and increased property values and tax revenue, thus increasing the livability of a neighborhood.”

(“EnviroAtlas Benefit Category: Recreation, Culture, and Aesthetics”)

The Nature Conservancy in 2016:

“Time and again, studies show green space and tree canopies considerably boost the market value of homes, thus providing important contributions to the overall property tax base in cities.”

(House et al.)

Reached by phone, Fitchburg Alder Kendra Erickson offered her full-throated support of the project, saying, “The wetland property just off of Sub-Zero Parkway is a wonderful opportunity for conserving a natural space in our city. I’ve driven by there so often and hoped that we could make better use out of that beautiful spot. The City of Fitchburg would greatly benefit from adding more recreational opportunities to this area and I look forward to helping in whatever way I can” (Erickson).

Benefits to employees

Beyond the benefits to the community, there are also specific benefits afforded by a natural space near one's place of work. These benefits have also received significant amounts of scientific study, clearly showing the potential benefit of preserving this green space directly adjacent to facilities that house large workforces. The evidence is clear: access to nearby green spaces results in greater productivity, less worker stress, and fewer health complaints. Perhaps even more significantly, green spaces help companies retain quality employees and attract new ones.

UK based study in 2020:

"Employees with views of trees and landscapes took an average of 11 hours less sick leave per year than employees with no view. This equates to an average saving of around £1,600 (\$2,000 reported) per employee. Workers with a view of nature handle calls 6-7% faster than those with no view. This generates annual productivity savings of around £2,400 (\$2,990 reported) per employee."

(Morrison et al.)

The American Public Health Association in 2013:

"The more nature contact that employees describe in their workplace, the less they report stress and health complaints."

(Improving Health and Wellness Through Access to Nature)

The Nature Conservancy in 2016:

"Quality of life, including outdoor recreation amenities, is ranked as one of the main factors when deciding to take a job or relocate a company.... With the global growth of knowledge-based industries, a city's competitive advantage rests on its ability to attract a talented workforce. Highly educated workers choose cities based on economic, cultural, and lifestyle considerations, and integrated green space is part [of] the urban environment they seek.... Nearby nature makes for healthy employees, and healthy employees make for better business."

(House et al.)

Benefits to conservation efforts

The benefits of preserving green space to conservation efforts is perhaps self-evident, but there are still a few data points that can be drawn out. Conservation efforts help not only the native and migratory flora and fauna, but can also strengthen economic efforts, education, tourism, and community health. The following are just a few of many groups that have studied conservation efforts and spoken out in favor of preserving green spaces in our communities.



(Figure 6. Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) at Sub-Zero Ponds. Photo by R. Chris Reeder)

The Missouri Department of Conservation:

“In addition to their ecosystem roles, birds are one of life’s more beautiful pleasures. Millions of people around the world enjoy watching and feeding birds. They are a gateway for many to learn more about the outdoors and nature.... Because birds are sensitive to toxins and pollutants, problems detected in wild birds can serve as an early warning system that something is wrong in the environment. Then changes can be made before the problem starts affecting humans and other animals.”

(“Why Should We Care About Birds?”)

The American Bird Conservancy:

“Bird-related tourism generates billions in economic activity globally. In the U.S., birdwatching generates about \$40 billion annually, creating over 860,000 jobs.”

(“Why Bird Conservation Matters”)

National Audubon Society:

“Birds make big contributions across habitats, and they’re crucial for people and the planet to thrive. When avian species are lost, their particular functions and benefits disappear, too. And introduced species can’t easily replace the critical roles of native ones.... That means holding onto the bird diversity we have is paramount.”

(Leffer)

Method and Timetable

The proposed conservation and construction project will be divided into three distinct phases.

<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Planning</i>	<i>2-4 Months</i>
<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>2-3 Months</i>
<i>Phase 3</i>	<i>Upkeep</i>	<i>Indefinite</i>

Phase 1 will begin immediately upon acceptance of this proposal. This phase will include further planning of the project, consultation with experts (environmental, wildlife, construction, community), and drafting a full set of blueprints. We estimate Phase 1 to take 2-4 months.

Phase 2 will cover the construction of the boardwalks and wildlife observation decks on the property. We will be partnering with a local construction company with extensive experience with wetland preservation and boardwalk construction. Supplies for the project will be sourced at the best possible rates, with preference given to local suppliers and distributors. We estimate, based on discussions with the construction firm, that Phase 2 will take 2-3 months.

Phase 3 will cover the upkeep of the boardwalks and the property once construction is complete. To minimize the costs and labor to those funding the initial construction project, we propose the creation of a new non-profit entity, “The Friends of Promega/Sub-Zero Ponds” who will hereafter be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the boardwalks and observation decks. Phase 3 will begin once construction is complete and will continue indefinitely.

Costs

Estimated costs for the project are as follows:

Phase 1—Planning, Consultation, and Blueprints

The approximate cost of phase 1 is \$0. We plan to seek pro-bono consultants and already have an architectural firm on board who is willing to draft up the plans at no cost to the project.

Phase 2—Construction of Boardwalk and Observation Decks

Approximately 4,000 feet of boardwalk would be constructed (3/4 of a mile). The boardwalks will be four feet wide and will be supported on precast concrete piers. Two wildlife observation decks will be constructed, each 200 square feet (10' by 20').

We have utilized two different sources to estimate costs for the construction of the boardwalk and observation decks. The Association of State Wetland Managers provides a low-end estimate, for a 4-foot-wide boardwalk, of \$20 per linear foot (Kusler et al.). Permatrak provides a high-end estimate, with precast concrete piers, of \$260 per linear foot (Parada). These estimates include both labor and materials.

Based on our conversations with the construction firm and these estimates, we estimate that, for this construction project, the costs will run approximately \$75 per linear foot. Including the observation decks, we are estimating the project to run approximately \$350,000, which will include both labor and materials.

Phase 3—Upkeep

As described above, once the construction project is complete, a new non-profit organization, "Friends of Promega/Sub-Zero Ponds," will be incorporated to handle costs and labor for maintenance and upkeep of the boardwalks and observation decks. Details would be worked out by the board of the new non-profit once it is incorporated, but we believe that there

are many options to raise funds for this effort, from direct fundraising appeals, to donation boxes, to various fundraisers. All these fundraising efforts would be run through the new non-profit and would require no costs on the parts of the funders of the initial construction project.

Total Estimated Costs

The total estimated cost of the conservation and construction project is \$350,000.

Conclusion

While the costs listed in the previous section may seem extravagant at first glance, we believe the benefits that would accrue from this project would far outweigh the costs. The project would benefit the employees of your companies. The project would benefit the city of Fitchburg. The project would benefit the environment, both locally and globally.

Twelve months from today, that empty space we discussed on the very first page of the proposal could be transformed into a vibrant space alive with hikers, bikers, birdwatchers, and families.

Employee productivity would increase. Stress and illness would decrease. Visitors would be drawn to Fitchburg and new prospective employees would have yet another reason to consider moving to Fitchburg, Wisconsin, and working for Sub-Zero Group or Promega Corporation.

Together, we could conserve a beautiful green space and protect it for the children of Fitchburg, for the residents of Fitchburg, for the employees of Sub-Zero and Promega, for the future of our community, and for the future of our planet.

We thank you for your time and consideration of this project. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have further questions about this proposal or input that could help us work together to achieve this dream.

Sincerely,

The Promega/Sub-Zero Ponds Working Group

Appendix—Full Survey Information

In order to determine how beneficial the proposed conservation and construction project would be to the current users of the property, this survey attempted to quantify the relevant demographics of current users.

Specifically, demographic questions sought to identify what percentage of users of the property are employees of Sub-Zero Group and Promega Corporation (the owners of the property) and what percentage of users are residents of Fitchburg or the greater Madison metropolitan area. Additionally, the survey sought to identify how frequently users visit the property, their reasons for use (recreation, exercise, etc.) and their opinions on the proposed conservation and construction project.

The property under consideration is currently bounded on two sides by a sidewalk and a bike path. The survey was administered in person and sought responses from walkers and bicyclists on the two adjacent pathways. The survey targeted three different time periods when potential respondents were likely to be walking or riding in the area: before work (7-9am), mid-day/lunch (11am-1pm), and the end of the work day (4-6pm).

Survey questions

- 1: Are you a resident of Fitchburg? YES/NO
- 1a: If NO, are you a resident of the greater Madison area? YES/NO
- 2: Are you an employee of Sub-Zero Group? YES/NO
- 2a: If NO, are you an employee of Promega Corporation? YES/NO
- 2b: If NO, are you an employee of a different nearby business? YES/NO
- 2c: If YES, which one?
- 3: How often do you visit this area?
- DAILY—WEEKLY—MONTHLY—RARELY
- 4: What is your primary purpose when you visit this area?
- EXERCISE—RELAXATION—NATURE/WILDLIFE—PASSING THROUGH—
OTHER
- 4a: If OTHER, what?
- 5: How much value do you think this natural area adds to the community?
- (Least value) 1--2--3--4--5 (Most value)
- 6: How important is it to you that this area be preserved in its natural state?
- (Least importance) 1--2--3--4--5 (Most importance)
- 7: If boardwalks were added around the wetland, would you visit the area more frequently or less frequently?
- MORE FREQUENTLY—LESS FREQUENTLY—NO CHANGE

Survey Data

Survey was conducted Tue., 9/10, Thu., 9/12, and Sat., 9/14.

Demographic questions

	Weekday	Weekend	Total
Total users	120	176	296
Bike Path	73	114	187 (63%)
Sidewalk	47	62	109 (37%)
Fitchburg resident	102	71	173 (58%)
Madison area resident	18	105	123 (42%)
Sub-Zero employee	14	3	17 (6%)
Promega employee	27	6	33 (11%)
Other local employee	15	8	23 (8%)

Use questions (total only)

How often do you visit this area?

Daily	77 (26%)
Weekly	138 (47%)
Monthly	59 (20%)
Rarely	22 (7%)

What is your primary purpose when you visit this area?

Exercise	118 (40%)
Relaxation	103 (35%)
Nature/Wildlife	47 (16%)

Passing Through	23 (8%)
Other	5 (2%)

How much value do you think this natural area adds to the community?

1 (Least Value)	2 (1%)
2	12 (4%)
3	67 (23%)
4	167 (56%)
5 (Most Value)	48 (16%)

How important is it to you that this area be preserved in its natural state?

1 (Least Importance)	3 (1%)
2	28 (9%)
3	64 (22%)
4	98 (33%)
5 (Most Importance)	103 (35%)

If boardwalks were added around the wetland, would you visit the area more frequently or less frequently?

More frequently	172 (58%)
Less frequently	0
No change	124 (42%)

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