

Benton County Master Plan Meeting Notes—April 11, 2002

Group 1

❖ Natural Areas

1. Granite Ledge
2. Southeast corner
3. Graves / MBS
4. Bifurcating stream

❖ Parks

1. Graves—future park, natural area, and trails—connect to others. Park/natural area/trail connections

2. High School area—additional park, trail connection
3. Mayhew—trail connection/park
 - Granite Ledge—future natural area
 - Bob Cross—by school, natural area to new high school
 - Mayhew Park to Foley
 - Foley to Granite Ledge
 - Trail to Sherburne WMA—from where?

❖ Trails

1. Loop near river—Graves, Benton Beach, Mayhew Lake through Rice to Soo Line.
2. Mayhew Lake Park connections east to Foley
3. Collner Creek—Sherburne WLMA
 - Graves Soo Line—Benton Beach
 - Trail connection From Graves to/around Benton Beach to Mayhew, west from Rice—across river and back south on side of river

Group 2

❖ Natural Areas

1. Peace Rock
2. Granite Ledge Area—waterfalls
3. Peat swamp by Sartell WMA
 - Benton County, south edge of Watab Township, southeast of Jack Frost Feed Mill

❖ Parks

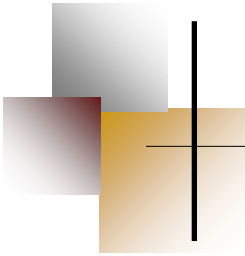
1. Benton Beach—expansion and improvements, extended uses
2. Graves Farms
3. Harms property—1 mile south, 55 acres nature—section 16 Watab
 - improve Benton Beach Park

❖ Trails

1. River into Benton Beach Park
2. Mississippi to St. Cloud
3. Highway 23—abandoned RR
 - Benton County Hwy 2 from Mississippi River to Rice extend east of Rice
 - Along Sucker Creek by nature Conservancy through pirates cove.

+Gordon bridge fishing

+Boat ramp at section 16 or Graves farm



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Group 3

❖ Natural Areas

- North of Little Rock—Oak Savannah
- Platte River—flood plain hardwoods, oaks, and eagle nest
- Conservancy—youth of Little Rock Lake, hardwood forests, wetlands and pine plantations
- Bunker Hill Creek and Little Rock Creek confluence north of Sartell WMA
- Graham WMA
- Mayhew Creek—Elk River, gravel pit/hardwoods
- Wetland south of Honda House
- North of Bibles Slough—Maple Basswood forest (wetland restorations south of Bibles Road).
- Waterfalls
- Tuberclad-rein orchid site
- Pull meadow outside of Sauk Rapids

❖ Parks

1. Mayhew Creek at Elk River Junction
2. Granite Ledge—Rum River waterfall
3. North of Little Rock Lake—Little Rock Creek
 - Rum and Mississippi rivers

❖ Trails

1. Mayhew Creek—Triangle trail
2. Little Rock Creek to Rice to Graves farm

Group 4

❖ Natural Areas

1. Granite Ledge
2. Take care of small rivers
3. Hwy. 23 and 95—Elk River and Meyhew Creek—protect
 - Ridge line from heavy soils to sand areas in southern part of county

❖ Parks

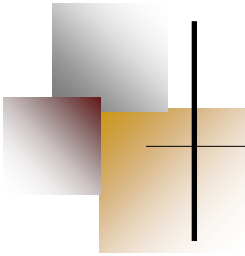
1. Expand existing Benton Beach Park on Little Rock Lake
2. Harms property

❖ Trails

1. North of Little Rock Lake along trout stream
2. St. Cloud to Foley and Milaca along rail

❖ Parks, Natural Areas and Trails—Additional Locations

- Public access picnic areas, etc., playground Little Rock Lake
- Sand Hills should be preserved
- Control use, preserve/protect many natural features
- Park on the river, lowlands, recreation wooded 3,300 ft. of shoreline, 55 acres, boat ramp, swimming
 - Preserve as much as possible, limit (monitor) residential development. Establish use areas and natural areas. Whole area in general.



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❖ Parks, Natural Areas and Trails—Additional Locations (continued)

- Old and almost forgotten cemetery
- Fishing piers/parking Gordon Bridge
- Nine natural areas, Indian Burial Grounds
- Preserve River corridors/protect from encroachment
- Preserve some area on the ridge to highlight this natural geologic feature

Group 5

❖ Natural Areas

1. Granite Ledge
2. Little Rock Creek connects to Crane Meadows
3. Directly north of Little Rock Lake—Dry Oak Savanna

❖ Parks

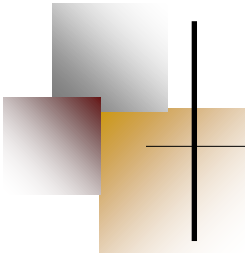
1. Graves—natural plants on river, historical buildings, multipurpose, multiple levels of recreation directly across from Stearns
2. Next to Mille Lacs County, would like to put horseback riding near wildlife areas, primitive camping
3. Ronneby and Foley—increase existing parks

❖ Trails

1. Along Mississippi River Road with lookouts at locations along river; Peace Rock, Graves, Pirates Cove.
2. Connection line along Elk River—attempts to restore/connect natural areas still existing along Elk River habitat corridor
3. Future trail next to, along river by Gordon's Bridge.

❖ Parks, Natural Areas and Trails—Additional Locations

- Ronneby Wilson Addition: Between Cemetery Road and St. Francis River Kiln—Historic landmark on state register
- Glendorado Township—use state land for nature trails, horse use and primitive camping
- St. George Township—use St. Francis River crossing #6 for small picnic area.
- Foley with City to better develop park facilities in the City
- Little Rock Creek/Bunker Hill Creek—north to Crane Meadows
- St. Francis south to Sherburne Wildlife Refuge



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Public Participation—Natural Areas

Back Nine Fairways Golf Course

- Preserve as natural, east of Elk River

Mayhew Creek

- Near Wapicada Golf Course
- Preserve as natural, could become park access but is becoming built up

Bring back natural area to Benton Beach Park and restore creek

There is great concern about an area of land in Granite Ledge Township owned by Mildred Shenk. Many neighbors in the area are concerned about a park going in this area. Many don't want one. We are considering having a township meeting with area neighbors to get opinions on a plan for this land. We would all like more information on Mildred's opinion of the project. Janet Post—landowner—Daniel Post.

Like to discuss the options for Granite Ledge—Larry Warner.

I am very concerned about the park in the Granite Ledge area. We need more discussion about this. I don't want a "park" next to my property—Dale

Esker at Ronneby—B. Bloomer

Quarry at northeast edge of Sauk Rapids—B. Bloomer

Public Participation—Parks

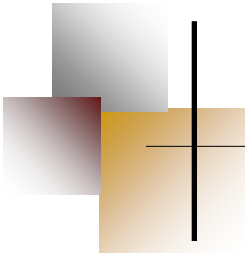
On Graves Farm

- Walking trails
- Wild flowers
- Plant corn for wildlife

Harms 55 wooded acres with 4500' (approximately) feet of river frontage. Ideal for another boat ramp, trails, walking, skiing, picnicking, wildlife, etc.

Ronneby Kiln

- Protected and stabilized and made into roadside stop - B. Bloomer



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Public Participation—Trails

Caroline Westrum—(320) 251-1305 cwestrum@aol.com

I would like to see historical markers and interpretive signage GALORE throughout the county as Benton County is one of the three oldest counties in the state.

I will furnish you with a map of historical sites (dates and explanations) and hopefully you can use all of it.

Joan Spiczka— 968-7778 jspiczka@aol.com

I would like to see a trail along Highway 23 making use of the old railroad right of way. Although this land has gone back to private ownership, it is still pretty much in the condition of when it was abandoned. I would think it would take less effort and cost to turn it into a transportation trail - ATV, snowmobiles, bikes, horses. It could be possible to get assistance from a couple of area snowmobile clubs to help with maintaining the trail if they would be willing to change their current route. I would also like to see a park incorporated into this in Oak Park because there are no current recreational opportunities for the people, especially the kids in this unincorporated town. This trail could also be developed as a joint effort with Mille Lacs County as well to continue the trail to Milaca. In that event, a park in Oak Park could make a nice rest area.

Mitch Fiedler

We must figure out a way to connect Benton County to the Soo Line north of Royalton

Tim Roehc

Do not want anything in Granite Ledge

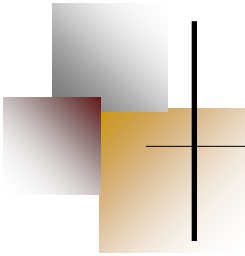
Greg Slade

Do not want anything in Granite Ledge

Graves purchase—Cross Country Ski Trails

B. Bloomer

Make sure that trail plans include connections



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Public Participation—Existing Park Comments

St. George Township Park—easement for road on deed.

Benton Beach—quite frankly, I think the development of Benton Beach is really very nice and it has been maintained more beautifully than ever the last couple of years. It is multiuse for family low-impact activities with nice facilities for picnics, camping, family baseball, beach sitting and lake access. There is a shelter house and a nice facility for small meetings. There is plenty of space to run around and explore. What more could anyone want? Good job. Keep up the good work.

Would like to bring some natural areas back to Benton Beach park like a no mow area and restore each side of creek to bring the wildlife back. We have plenty of open space on the east side of road to lake.