

2023 RES-403

**DANE COUNTY CONSERVATION FUND GRANT AWARD TO
DRIFTLESS AREA LAND CONSERVANCY**

The Driftless Area Land Conservancy has applied to the Dane County Conservation Fund Grant Program for financial assistance for the acquisition of 31.4 acres in the Town of Primrose from Alice Berlow. The property, known as Berlow Oak Woods, is an intact oak woodland within the Southwest Grasslands project area. It is close to and roughly central to other conservation holdings in the area: Badgerland Foundation's 77 acre Mt. Pleasant property, ¾ mile to the north and the 414 acre Wild Oaks Preserve which is owned and co-managed by DALC and Badgerland Foundation, ½ mile to the southeast.

Acquisition of this property would preserve a portion of declining forest habitat in the area and provide better connectivity between existing conservation holdings while providing a bird and wildlife habitat corridor. The land has been used as private recreational land and the landowner has been partnering with DALC to start restoration efforts on the property including invasive species removal and prescribed burning. Once acquired, DALC will continue with restoration and manage the property for wildlife habitat and public access. Two pull-off parking areas will provide safe access off County Highway U, existing trails will be open to the public and hunting and trapping will be allowed.

The estimated project costs for the acquisition are \$492,700. DALC has applied for a Wisconsin DNR Knowles Nelson Stewardship grant for 50% of the costs. The Dane County Park Commission recommends granting the remaining 50% of costs, up to \$246,500 in County matching funds.

The term of the debt issued to support this expenditure will be 20 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a grant of up to \$246,500 to Driftless Area Land Conservancy is approved by the Dane County Board and the Dane County Executive and that the County will pay up to the grant amount based on actual project expenses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Dane County Clerk and Dane County Executive are authorized to execute documents necessary to effectuate the grant award, which may include grant agreements, management agreements, and the acceptance of an easement that will vest in Dane County according to Wisc. Stats. 27.05(3), and that the land interests be managed under the jurisdiction of the Dane County Park Commission.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Dane County Land & Water Resources Director and Real Estate Coordinator, are authorized to approve closing and reimbursement documentation for grant projects and the transfer of an easement to Dane County and the Controller is authorized to issue checks necessary to effectuate the transactions authorized through the grant award.