



# Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains General Management Plan Newsletter

Dear Friends,

Last summer, we invited you to help us imagine the future of the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains. Many of you participated in one of two open houses that were held in the towns of Middleton and Cross Plains, read the first newsletter, submitted comments on our website, or returned a comment card with your thoughts and suggestions. Several people expressed very specific ideas and concerns about the complex and its future.

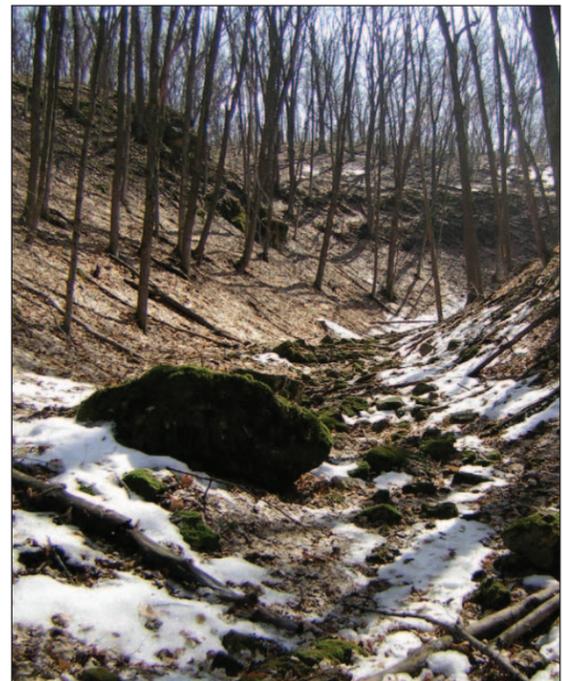
In early fall, our planning team wrote a “foundation statement” for the complex — a statement of its fundamental purpose, resources, and values as well as the guiding themes we will use in interpreting the significance of this area to visitors. Once the foundation statement was written and public feedback was analyzed, our planning team used this information to draft a set of preliminary management alternatives.

This newsletter begins by summarizing the public comments we received and the foundation statement the planning team developed, and then describes the preliminary management alternatives. While each of the management alternatives presented in this newsletter is built on the same foundation, each alternative approaches this task differently to reflect the varied public feedback we received. Please read through these alternatives and let us know what you think. We hope you are able to attend one of our public meetings in September to voice your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions about the preliminary management alternatives. If you are unable to attend, please submit your comments directly on our website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/iatr> or use the enclosed comment form to submit your comments by mail.

Because the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains is undeveloped for visitor use at this time, many of you may not be familiar with its unique resources. We are very excited to invite you to join us for tours of the site at specific times in August and early September. Tour details are provided on the back of this newsletter. As always, thank you for your interest in preserving the unique ice age features at Cross Plains and communicating their significance to future generations. We look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Gilbert,  
Superintendent,  
Ice Age National Scenic Trail, National Park Service  
and

Dana White-Quam,  
Regional Park Specialist,  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



## Contents

Letter from the Park .....	1
Initial Public Comments .....	1
Articulating a Foundation .....	2
Map of Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains .....	2
The No-Action Alternative .....	3
How to Comment .....	3
Management Areas .....	4
Elements Common to All Action Alternatives..	4
Map of Alternative 1.....	4
Map of Alternative 2 .....	5
Map of Alternative 3.....	5
Public Meetings and Tours .....	6
The Planning Process .....	6



Tom Gilbert, Superintendent of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail, discusses options for the complex with a community member.

## Initial Public Comments

The Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains planning team has benefited from your thoughts about the complex. We have learned a great deal from your thoughtful comments. A brief summary of the written and verbal comments follows. If you are interested, the full record of comments, along with more information about the planning process and upcoming public meetings are available online at the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/iatr>.

Many people value the complex because of the natural resources or setting, which includes the flora, wildlife, views, natural quiet and undeveloped areas in and around the complex. In addition, respondents said they value the preservation of the scenic corridor and natural landscape found within the complex. Many also noted how much they value the visitor and recreation opportunities available in the complex. They also expressed great pride in the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

The most frequently mentioned topic of concern was the need for more planning and land acquisition for a continuous pathway and/or resource

preservation. Other issues and concerns mentioned included the presence of invasive species, the need to garner support from local governments, to engage local residents/instill a sense of ownership, to create a buffer from development, and to protect the viewsheds from urban intrusions. Threats to the complex's resources that were identified included unlimited development, urban sprawl, encroachment, and overuse.

Respondents would like to have more educational and interpretive opportunities within the complex and would also like to see continued restoration and preservation efforts. Many comments stated the need to accommodate different user groups and recreational uses as well as provide greater public access, while others want the complex to be kept as wild and natural as possible.

The comments we received have been incorporated into the development of alternative visions for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains. We thank you for your feedback; it will help us develop a general management plan that will make a lasting difference in the long-term vision for preservation and management of the complex.



## Articulating a Foundation for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains

Before drafting management alternatives, our planning team crafted a foundation statement for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains to identify and clearly describe the purpose of the area, its significance, its resources and values, and its primary interpretive themes.

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

Purpose statements are the specific reasons for establishing a park area based on authorizing legislation and legislative history. As we described in our first newsletter last July, this area has two legal definitions — it is both the Cross Plains Unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve and the interpretive site for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Laws from which the purpose statements for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains were derived include the 1964 law establishing the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve and the National Trails System Act as amended in 1980 to include the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. The purposes of the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains are

- to assure protection, preservation, and interpretation of the nationally significant values of Wisconsin continental glaciation, including moraines, eskers, kames, kettleholes, drumlins, swamps, lakes, and other reminders of the Ice Age;
- to establish a superlative segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and provide information and interpretation about the trail to the public at a significant site along its route;
- and to provide outdoor recreation and educational opportunities in support of and compatible with the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historic, and natural and cultural resources within the complex.

### SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Significance statements describe why the area's resources and values are important. The Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains is significant

- for its impressive marks of continental glaciation;
- for the path of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail across the complex providing outstanding opportunities for recreation, education, inspiration, solitude, and enjoyment;
- and as the primary site for interpreting the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

### RESOURCES AND VALUES

In addition to articulating the purpose and significance of a site, foundation statements describe which resources and values are the preeminent responsibility of park managers because they are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. These qualities are called the park's "fundamental resources and values." Parks often have other resources and values that, while not fundamental to the park's purpose or significance, are nevertheless determined to be particularly important considerations for general management planning. These other resources and



values are called the park's "important resources and values."

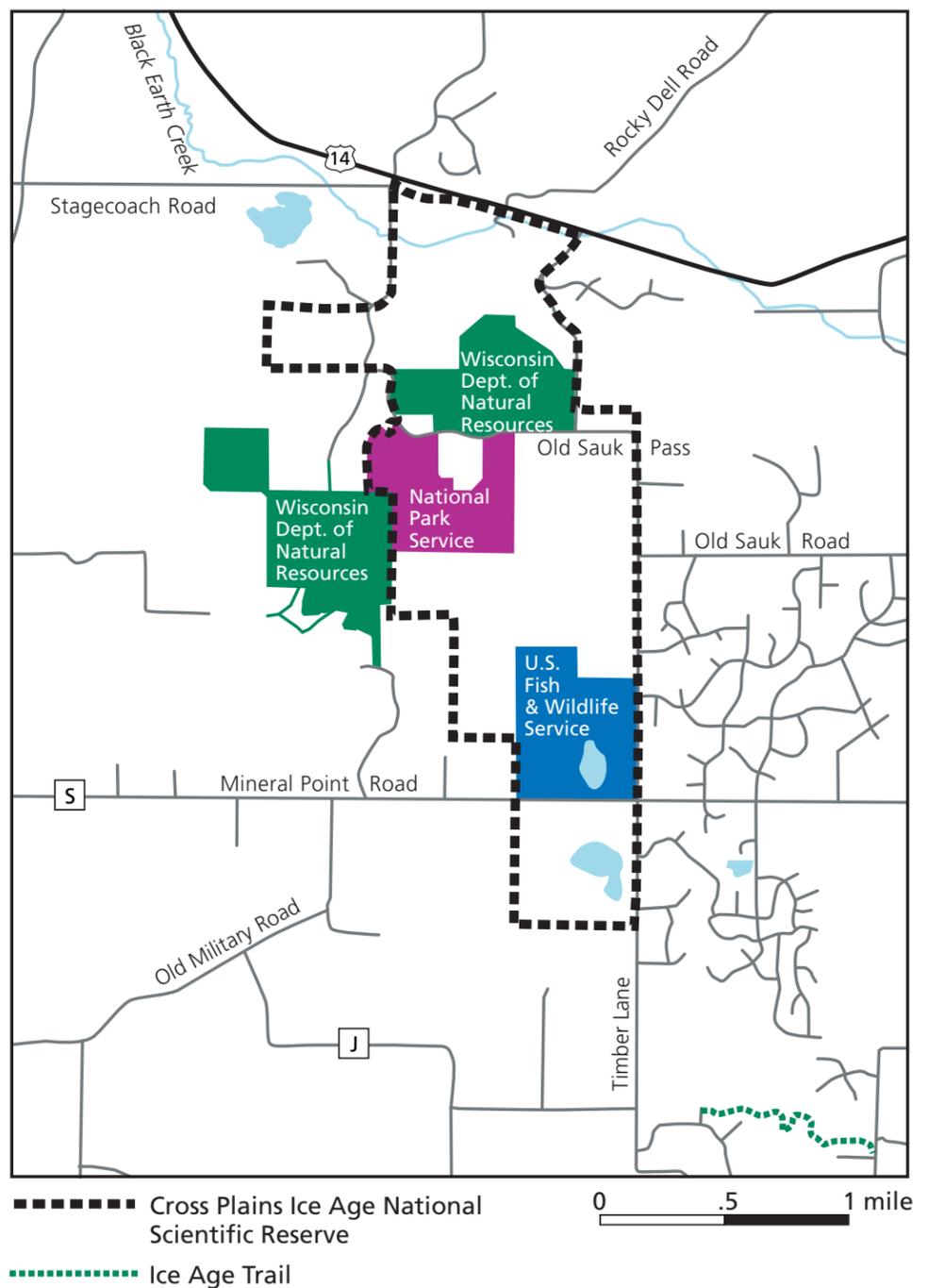
Fundamental resources and values of the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains include the following:

- geological features that tell the glacial story of the site;
- a continuous route for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail through the complex;
- the opportunity for people to experience immersion into a large, natural landscape;
- and expansive views which provide a visual display of the contrast between the unglaciated driftless area and lands shaped by continental glaciation.

Important resources in the complex include the following:

- the Wilkie farmstead (#0004791 on the Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory);
- the Native American migration route that traverses the site;
- and the high concentration of open grown white and bur oak that are representative of the oak savanna.

## Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains



Lastly, foundation statements include a description of **primary interpretive themes** to focus exhibit design and programming.

These themes for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains include the following:

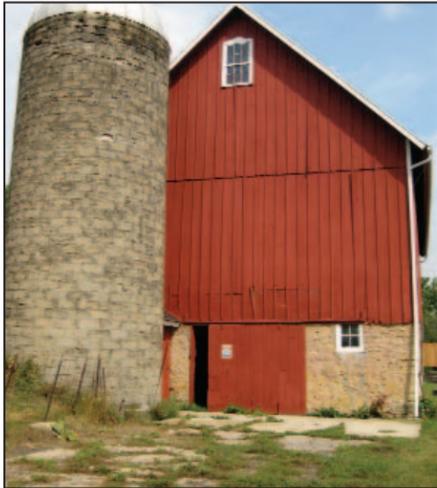
- **People and the Land** —  
*How unglaciated and glaciated landscapes have affected human migration, settlement patterns, land use, and values of the land for thousands of years.*
- **The Ice Age National Scenic Trail** —  
*The opportunities for nature immersion and discovery presented by the trail.*
- **Environmental Conditions** —  
*How our glacial past provides opportunities to better understand changing current environmental conditions affecting the way we live today and might live tomorrow.*
- **Managing the Ecosystem** —  
*The dynamic, but balanced, nature of ecosystems and how they can change with human intervention.*



## The No-Action Alternative – Continuation of Current Management

This alternative describes how the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains would look in the future if we took no *new* action. This alternative description will be used as a baseline to assess additional benefits, costs, and impacts of the next three alternatives, which do propose new actions.

The Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains is undeveloped for visitor use and minimally maintained. Both the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) manage vegetation on land each agency owns, and, on land owned by the NPS, Ice Age National Scenic Trail staff have stabilized facilities to prevent their deterioration. There are currently no improvements to facilitate visitor experience such as parking or constructed trails on either DNR- or NPS-owned land. The Shoveler’s Sink Waterfowl Production Area owned by the USFWS is open to visitors for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent activities, but there are no visitor facilities there other than two small, non-surfaced parking lots. Privately owned lands within the complex consist mostly of agricultural fields with scattered houses and outbuildings.



**Introduction to Action Alternatives**

A management plan alternative is one of a number of possible approaches to the future management of the property resources, facilities, and recreational uses. The alternatives are intended solely to explore and evaluate various approaches to protection and management of the property. Each alternative consists of a written summary of the proposed management approach, anticipated results, a map indicating the general land management zones and proposed recreational facilities and lands.



*How to Comment*

You may comment on the preliminary management alternatives in one of three ways:

1. Through our website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/iatr> (please use this option if you can as it is the most efficient way for us to accurately record and analyze comments),
2. By completing and returning the enclosed comment form, or
3. In person at one of our public meetings.

## Management Areas

Each of the maps accompanying the action alternatives are colored to explain how different areas of the complex would be managed. Different colors imply different natural resource conditions that site managers would aim to achieve, different types of visitor uses that would be allowed and encouraged, and different types of facilities that would be appropriate. You can use the chart below as a key to understand the maps on this page and the next page.

### Potential Management Areas for the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains

	Park Operations and Visitor Orientation	Sensitive Resources	Natural Experience	Landscape Interpretation	Expanded Recreational Experience
<b>Desired Resource Condition</b>	In good condition, but could be highly modified as needed to accommodate and withstand high levels of use by visitors and staff.	Natural resources that are a direct result of glaciation are intact. Natural resources that may not be a direct result of glaciation are managed as necessary to reveal glacial features. Resources particularly sensitive to user-created impacts or conditions or that pose risk to visitor safety are located here.	Natural resources are managed to approximate pre-settlement (circa 1830) conditions. To the extent possible, natural ecological processes sustain the integrity of these resources.	Natural resources that are a direct result of glaciation are intact. Natural resources that may not be a direct result of glaciation are managed as necessary to reveal glacial features (land cover would need to meet certain criteria and specifications such as height requirements). Structures or manipulated landscapes (e.g., agricultural fields, yards) do not prevent visitors from being able to recognize glacial and driftless features from key viewpoints.	Natural resources that are a direct result of glaciation are intact. Natural resources that may not be a direct result of glaciation are managed as necessary to reveal glacial features (land cover would need to meet certain criteria and specifications such as height requirements). Structures or manipulated landscapes (e.g., agricultural fields, yards) do not prevent visitors from being able to recognize glacial and driftless features from key viewpoints.
<b>Desired Visitor Experience</b>	Orientation. Visitors come to this area to gain an understanding of this site and its resources. Visitors activities might include: consulting orientation maps at trailheads, viewing exhibits and /or participating in interactive exhibits, watching a film, and enjoying programming both in indoor and/or outdoor sheltered settings. Visitors would generally have access to all of this area except for office spaces and maintenance and operation areas.	Access to these areas would be highly controlled to protect resources and ensure safety.	Direct sensory experience of natural resources from foot paths would be provided. Interpretation is primarily provided by wayside exhibits. Visitors would participate in low-impact activities such as: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing on ungroomed trails, berry picking, photography, bird watching, and earth caching.	Views of the results of glaciation on the land across a wide expanse from key points on foot paths as well as direct experience of smaller-scale features along paths. Interpretation primarily provided by wayside exhibits. Visitors could participate in low-impact activities such as: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing on ungroomed trails, berry picking, photography, bird watching, and earth caching.	The primary use is hiking. Other allowed uses include primitive camping following leave-no-trace principles and low-impact activities such as: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing on ungroomed trails, berry picking, photography, bird watching, and earth caching. Non-motorized and/or snowmobile uses would be considered upon request if needed to connect existing but otherwise disconnected trails.
<b>Appropriate Facilities</b>	Facilities (either newly constructed or existing) would be developed to serve purposes like: a visitor center or contact station; indoor and outdoor exhibits; sheltered picnic areas; outdoor gathering areas (e.g., amphitheater), office space; maintenance and operations space, parking, bike racks, and bus shelters; hardened trail and trailheads to leading out of this area.	Trails would be minimally developed and carefully designed and located to afford access to or views of resources while avoiding impacts. Resources could be bridged if necessary to provide for interpretation and/or resource protection.	Trails would be designed and located to afford direct experience of natural resources. Wayside exhibits, directional signage, occasional benches as well as roads for service vehicles to use for maintenance and resource preservation purposes and in emergencies might also be located in this zone.	Trails would be designed and located to afford views and direct experience of glacial features. Wayside exhibits, directional signage, occasional benches as well as roads for service vehicles to use for maintenance and resource preservation purposes and in emergencies might also be located in this zone.	Trails would be built in this zone. And space to accommodate primitive camping would be provided. Roads for service vehicles to use for maintenance and resource preservation purposes and in emergencies might also be located here.

### Elements Common to All Action Alternatives

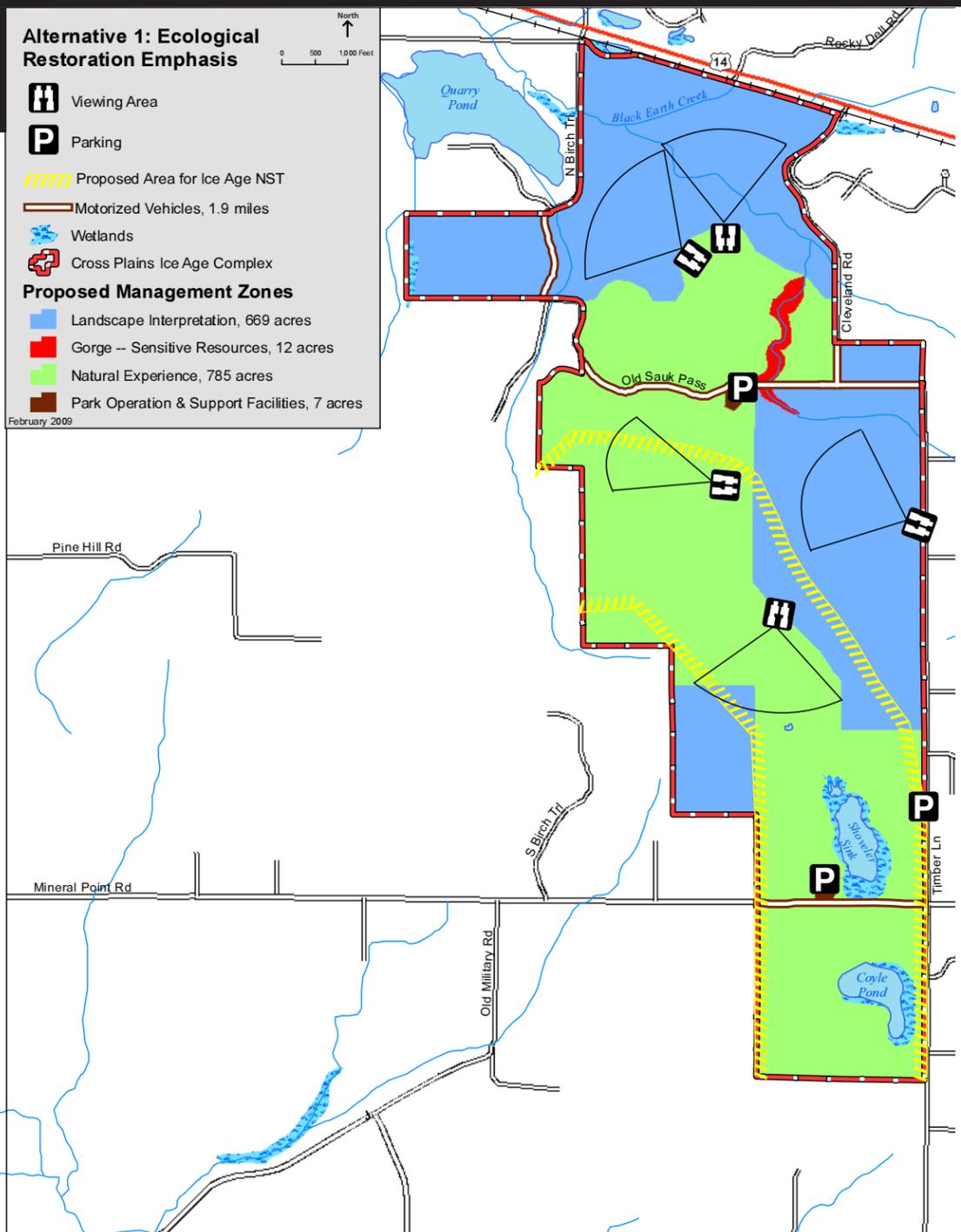
1. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail would traverse the site within the area marked on the alternative area maps.
2. An agreement would be developed to describe how roles and responsibilities for managing the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains would be divided between the Wisconsin DNR, the NPS, and other public landowners within the complex.

## Alternative 1 – Ecological Restoration Emphasis

Under this management alternative, the ecosystem throughout most of the site would be restored to a period before European settlement (circa 1830). This restoration would support interpreting how natural conditions in the complex would have evolved since the glacial period under minimal human influence. At key points, vegetation would be managed to reveal glacial landscapes, but the focus would be on ecosystem management. Visitors would enjoy a sense of perceived remoteness and quiet, primarily by hiking on trails.

This management concept would be implemented by:

- Restoring pre-settlement vegetation by applying natural processes wherever possible.
- Removing the buildings at the core of the site that belonged to the Wilkie's and providing parking and trail access at this location as well as outdoor exhibits and primitive restrooms.
- Providing a minimally-developed trail to and along the rim of the gorge.
- Interpreting the site with wayside and outdoor exhibits.
- Managing the complex from an off-site location; there would be no permanent staff stationed at the site and visitor interaction with park staff would be rare.

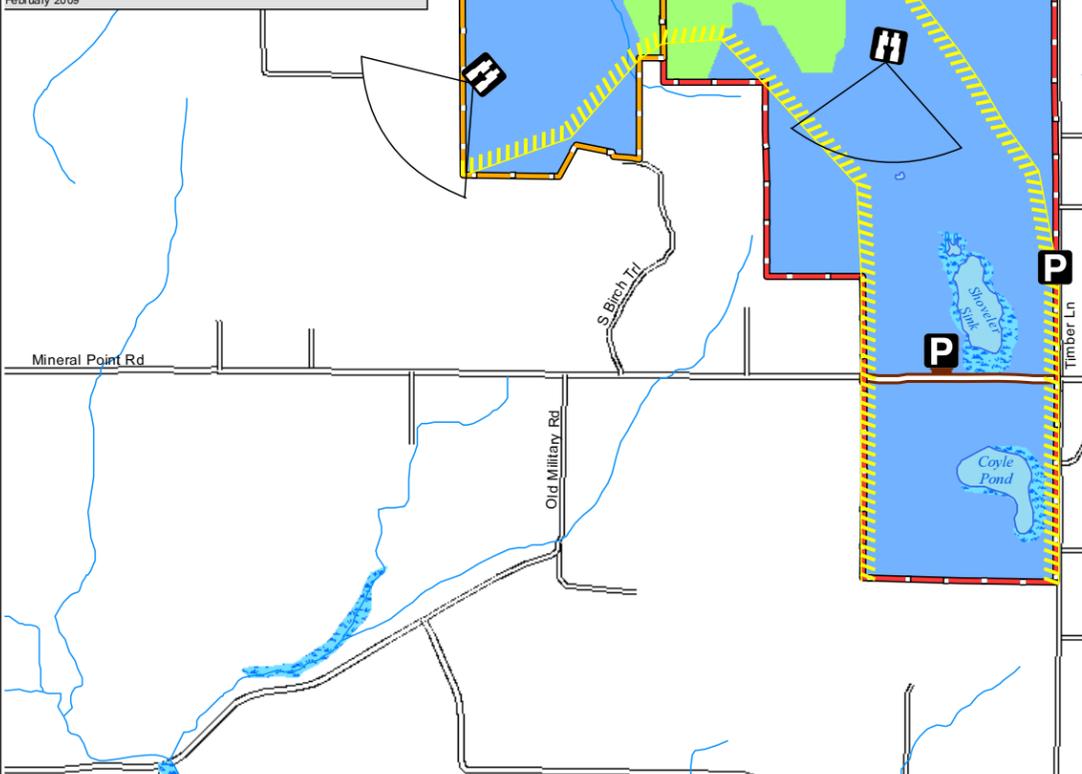
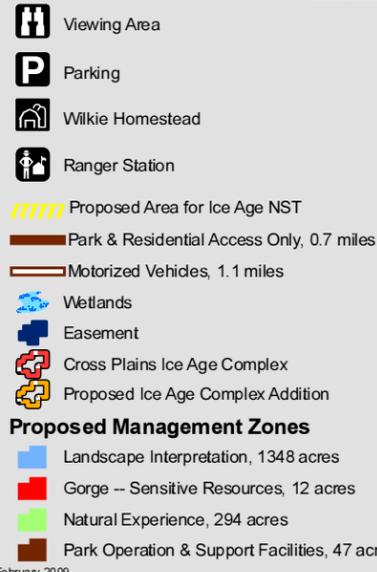


## Alternative 2 – Interpretation and Education Emphasis

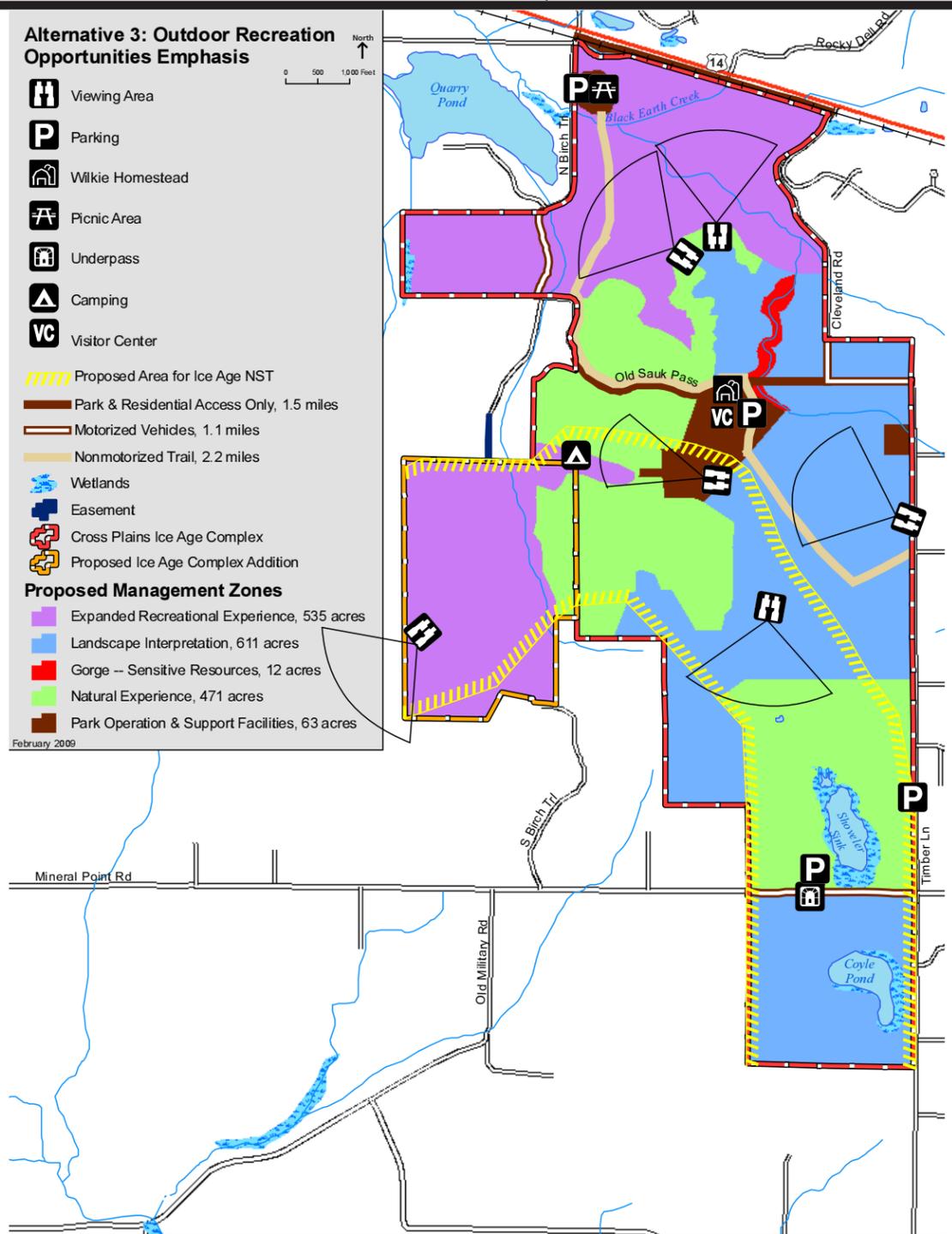
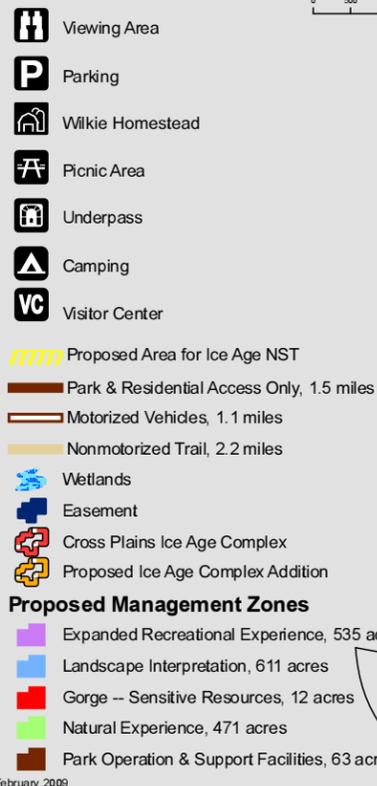
Under this management alternative, the glacial landscape would be interpreted with a focus on how this complex has evolved from the retreat of the last glacier to today. Throughout most of the site, ecological resources would be managed to reveal the glacial landscape. Visitors would have an opportunity to experience a wide variety of resources – ecological and geological, as well as remnants of human use of the site – in sheltered and indoor settings at the core of the property and by hiking throughout most of the rest of the site. Trails would be placed to tell stories of the formation of the glacial landscape and, to a lesser extent, about the ecological resources such as the oak savanna. This management concept would be implemented by:

- A combination of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the house and/or barn at the core of the site to accommodate visitor orientation and to interpret human use and settlement patterns. Space in these facilities would also be rehabilitated for use as staff offices.
- Constructing a new facility at the core of the site to accommodate maintenance needs.
- Requesting the township of Cross Plains to abandon Old Sauk Pass between Cleveland Road and North Birch Trail so that it could be used for park purposes, bicycles, and pedestrians, while still allowing access for private landowners. This would provide for safe passage for visitors between the north and south parts of the complex.
- Providing a trail to and along the gorge with overlooks, surfaced at least in part to accommodate people with disabilities, as well as controlled partial access along the floor of the gorge.
- Preserving and enhancing key vistas through vegetation management (for example, by selective thinning and pruning).
- Expanding the complex boundary westward to include DNR-owned land and enhance opportunities to interpret a wider expanse of driftless area terrain.

### Alternative 2: Interpretation and Education Emphasis



## Alternative 3: Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Emphasis



## Alternative 3 – Outdoor Recreation Emphasis

Under this management alternative, visitors would be offered a variety of low-impact outdoor recreational experiences in support of and compatible with preserving and interpreting the glacial significance of the complex and restoring and managing the ecosystem. Visitors would be able to experience resources in diverse ways, and would enjoy a broad range of interpretive programming in indoor and outdoor settings. This management concept would be implemented by:

- Developing the core of the site to:
  - Rehabilitate the house and barn primarily for use as staff offices. (The interior of these buildings may or may not be accessible to visitors. A site development plan would determine the most effective and efficient use of space.)
  - Selectively site and construct a new visitor center with orientation services (exhibits, film, etc.)
  - Selectively site and construct a new maintenance facility (unless future land acquisitions would allow for this development away from the core of visitor activity).
  - Provide outdoor gathering spaces such as an amphitheater and picnic shelter.
- Requesting the township of Cross Plains to abandon Old Sauk Pass between Cleveland Road and North Birch Trail (same as Alternative 2).
- Providing a trail to and along the gorge with overlooks, surfaced at least in part to accommodate people with disabilities. If feasible in terms of structural engineering, cost, and environmental impacts, a pedestrian bridge spanning the gorge could be built to provide visitors a unique perspective on its formation.
- Providing extensive, varied trails including a hardened bicycle/pedestrian trail across the site.
- Offering primitive camping in the western and northern sections of the complex.
- Expanding the complex boundary westward to enhance opportunities for recreation, especially for a primitive camping experience near the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

DENVER SERVICE CENTER – C MILLER  
 DSC / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
 ICE AGE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL AND  
 NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC RESERVE  
 ICE AGE COMPLEX AT CROSS PLAINS  
 12795 W ALAMEDA PARKWAY  
 PO BOX 25287  
 DENVER, CO 80225

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
 POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
 PERMIT NO. G-83

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
 PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300



Ice Age National Scenic Trail  
 Ice Age National Scientific Reserve  
 Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains  
 Wisconsin  
 General Management Plan • Newsletter 2 • July 2009

National Park Service  
 U.S. Department of the Interior




*Public Meetings*

Public meetings will be held on:  
 Wednesday, September 9<sup>th</sup>  
 and  
 Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup>  
 in the towns of  
 Middleton and Cross Plains

*See insert for times, locations, and  
 agendas for these meetings.*

*Tours*

To help you visualize how these  
 management alternatives would  
 change the complex, we are  
 offering tours of the site on:

Saturday, August 29<sup>th</sup>  
 and  
 Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>

*See insert for details on these tours.*

*Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains  
 General Management Plan Newsletter*

*Newsletter 2 • July 2009*

*The Planning Process*

Dates	Planning Activity
Spring 2008 to Fall 2008	Public official and general public open house meetings set the stage for planning.
WE ARE HERE Fall 2008 to Summer 2009	Develop preliminary alternatives. Public review of preliminary alternatives; hold public meetings.
Fall 2009 to Fall 2010	Planning Activity – Analyze costs, benefits, and environmental impacts of preliminary alternatives. Use value analysis to refine alternatives and choose a preferred alternative. Prepare and publish the <i>Draft GMPIEIS</i> . Public review of draft; hold public meetings.
Fall 2010 to Spring 2011	Revise and publish the <i>Final GMPIEIS</i> .
Summer 2011 and beyond	Implement the approved plan.