

## **Mission and Vision of the Friends of Hartmeyer Natural Area**

The mission of The Friends of Hartmeyer Natural Area (FHNA) is to preserve the entire thirty acre historic wetlands along with its surrounding uplands and oak openings. This land is bounded by North Sherman Avenue, Roth Street, Commercial Avenue and the rail road track which abuts the former Oscar Meyer plant.

### **Introduction:**

The Hartmeyer Natural Area is the last remaining remnant of wetland and upland on the near north side of Madison. This often overlooked area of the city is vital to our north side community. Nestled in among industrial, commercial and residential use, the property contributes to the betterment of the area by providing important habitat for plants, birds and animals, natural water infiltration (both upland open space and low lying areas) to help reduce storm water runoff, and an open green space for area residents and passersby.

The Hartmeyer Natural Area is an area of where people can connect with nature and enjoy this restorative and calming resource in its natural state. Sustainability most importantly includes sustaining healthy ecosystems for healthy citizens.

### **Rationale:**

The preservation of this property as a natural area will contribute to the betterment of the area by providing:

- Important habitat for plants, birds and animals,
- A variety of bird and animal life include nesting Sandhill Cranes, Red Tail Hawk, Blue Birds, Wood Ducks, Mallard Ducks. Bees and butterflies frequent the area.
- Natural water infiltration (both upland open space and low lying areas) helps reduce storm water runoff.
- Open green space provides benefits for area residents and passersby.
- “. . . integrating natural environments into urban planning is a promising approach to improve mental health and reduce the rising global burden of psychiatric disorders.”<sup>1</sup>
- We have an opportunity for education and increased awareness of the role of wetlands and of the value of rain gardens throughout the area.
- Public input at recent Friends of Hartmeyer Natural Area (FHNA) meetings shows a desire for green space that is accessible to the public, but kept in a natural state
- Many individuals we have met with do not want to see building on this fragile land.

- The value of the commercial properties along the western border would be enhanced by easy accessibility to this green space.

**Vision:**

The entire area, which now has the appearance of a vacant lot, would become a conservancy for native plant and animal life

This natural space should be available to community residents for quiet, non-invasive activities.

Signage would promote understanding of the area, it's features and it's inhabitants.

A viewing platform would provide observation of the waters which are now obscured by a mix of undesirable vegetation (thistles, garlic mustard, etc.) and native species (Prairie Grasses, Rushes, Joe Pye Weed and much more.)

Invasive species would be gradually removed and the return of native vegetation would be supported.

The eye sore of continual litter that now plagues the area would be significantly reduced by the designation of this land as a nature preserve.

Naming the area should involve a respectful understanding of the people who have come before us. This includes the Hartmeyer family and the Indigenous peoples of the Ho Chunk Nation who once lived in this area.

Through traffic should be limited to walking and bicycling pathways. No vehicular traffic should invade this space.

The Hartmeyer Natural Area is an area of where people can connect with nature and enjoy this restorative and calming resource in its natural state.

Madison is a community that places high value on sustainability.

Sustainability, most importantly, includes sustaining healthy ecosystems for healthy citizens.

1. *Residential green space in childhood is associated with lower risk of psychiatric disorders from adolescence into adulthood*

Kristine Engemann, Carsten Bøcker Pedersen, Lars Arge, Constantinos Tsirogiannis, Preben Bo Mortensen, and Jens-Christian Svenning

PNAS (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America) March 12, 2019 116 (11) 5188-5193 <https://www.pnas.org/content/116/11/5188>

Additional Ideas from Master Naturalist, Paul Noeldner

- \* No more impervious surfaces - The city should avoid adding any more impervious streets and structures in the 30 acre largely undeveloped Hartmeyer property that can be preserved and restored as a shared community public open space natural area, and instead focus development on reuse and improvements along existing streets and the many opportunities for redevelopment, additional housing and transportation infrastructure using large existing areas that already have impervious surfaces, buildings and opportunities for reuse and improvement of transportation connections. There is plenty of land around this natural area that is suitable for development and redevelopment.
- \* Keep remaining refugia - Refugia are important sanctuary habitat areas for pollinators, amphibians, and many species of birds and animals. Keeping remaining large refugia in urban areas is critical to sustaining viable healthy populations of bees, butterflies, turtles, frogs, birds, and other wildlife. Without refugia and connecting corridors between them a city becomes an ecological desert so to speak. This historic Hartmeyer area wetland and surrounding upland has been relatively undisturbed for the past 100 years and it has critical railroad right of way habitat connectors to other urban Madison natural areas. It needs to be preserved intact to retain this ecological asset to our natural world and to our community.
- \* Preservation is a viable public vision - This vision for preserving the 30 acre Hartmeyer property as a natural area deserves opportunity for public review, comment and support. There is in fact feasible opportunity for purchase of the 30 acre Hartmeyer property by the City of Madison based on the landowner's invitation for the city to make an offer, the local alderperson who plans to offer a budget proposal that will allocate funds for purchase, and partnership offers to help with purchase if needed from Dane County Planning and Groundswell, with a vision and purchase goal of long term preservation and restoration as a shared community public space nature park with opportunity for compatible infrastructure developments such as a bike path, walking trails, parking for park access, nature lookouts and educational signage.
- \* Social justice benefits - the City of Madison has a commitment to social justice and community place making. This 30 acre Hartmeyer natural area offers opportunity to preserve a large place making near north side community nature park, especially for surrounding economically challenged neighborhoods, to enjoy compatible nature recreation, nature education and natural health activities, and especially for families and kids who do not have resources or regular opportunities to visit outlying Madison nature parks and natural areas.





Hartmeyer Park





