

# ADDENDUM TO THE 2025 CONSERVANCY LANDS PLAN - PHEASANT BRANCH RIDGE GREENWAY

## **Purpose**

Additional land was donated to the City of Middleton after the 2025 Conservancy Lands Plan (CLP) was adopted by the City in May 2025. This 14-acre parcel is directly adjacent to the Pheasant Branch Ridge Greenway (PBRG) conservancy, and so has been added to that conservancy. It is part of the larger “Graber Pond Greenway” proposal, which includes efforts towards wetland restoration and enhancement and re-establishing floodplain and stream channel connections. This addendum provides preliminary information about the parcel and its vegetation and updates the overall Conservancy Lands System. These updates include a new inventory table, new management plan schedule, and a new prioritization matrix. These updates were informed by a meeting on November 6, 2025 with stakeholders including City of Middleton staff, members of the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy’s (FOPBC) Watershed Committee, and members of the City’s Water Resources Management Commission.

## Updated Inventory Table

This is Table 6.1 from the 2025 CLP, updated with the additional acreage in the PBRG.

**Table A.1: Updated Inventory of the Conservancy Lands System**

CONSERVANCY NAME	UNIT NAMES AND ACRES	ACRES
Confluence Pond Conservancy		35.7
Esser Pond Conservancy		28.1
Graber Pond Conservancy	<i>Pond Unit, 16.9; Misty Valley Unit, 5.7; Prairie Unit, 3.8; Savanna Unit, 5.8</i>	32.2
Hidden Oaks Conservancy	<i>Capital Ice Unit, 15; Woodland Unit, 4.5; Hubbard Property Unit, 4.4</i>	23.9
Jacobsen Conservancy		5.8
Lakeview East Conservancy		9.6
Metropolitan Refuse District		34.3
Middleton Hills Conservancy	<i>Pond Unit, 1.5; Glacial Ridge Unit, 7.8; Oak Savanna Unit, 4.8; Frank Lloyd Wright Wetland Unit, 16.5</i>	30.6
North Fork Conservancy		32.1
Pheasant Branch Conservancy*	<i>Bock Forest Unit, 20.5; Bock Prairie Unit, 25.7; Community Garden Unit, 0.9; Orchid Heights Unit, 10.34; Overlook Prairie Unit, 6.9</i>	356.50
Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor Conservancy		65.6
Pheasant Branch Ridge Greenway	<i>Original unit, 4.4; 2025 addition, 14</i>	18.4
Quarry Hill Conservancy		5.3
South Fork Conservancy		35.3

Stonefield Greenway		5.4
Stricker Pond Conservancy		25.5
Tiedeman Pond Conservancy	<i>Elm Lawn Unit, 3.2; Tiedeman Pond Unit, 34.2</i>	37.4
Total		781.7

\*Note that Pheasant Branch Conservancy has not been completely divided up into named units, so the total acreage for the conservancy is more than the sum of the unit acreages

## Parcel description

This description replaces the PBRG inventory entry in the 2025 CLP that starts on page 161.

Name	Pheasant Branch Ridge Greenway
Approx. address	6810 Whittlesey Rd
Acres	18.4
Priority Ranking	Medium
Description	<p>The original 4.4 acre parcel contains a trail corridor from Pheasant Branch Ridge Park to Pheasant Branch Road, and a storm water detention basin.</p> <p>The 2025 addition of 14 acres includes a mix of invasive cattail marsh, sandbar willow thickets, and lowland or floodplain forest trees with buckthorn and reed canary grass understory. Restoration Ecologist Evelyn Williams briefly surveyed the property on 10/16/2025 and identified the species found in Table A.2. Note that this survey took place outside of the growing season, and future surveys will likely identify additional species. Of the 48 species noted, 32 (66.6%) were native and 8 (16.6%) were invasive species. Three species had C-values of 7 or above: greater water dock (<i>Rumex britannica</i>), rough bedstraw (<i>Galium asprellum</i>), and tussock sedge (<i>Carex stricta</i>).</p> <p>The 2025 addition also includes a stream running west to east. This stream merges with a ditched waterway that runs parallel to the northern parcel border, and then the merged waterways go under a culvert on Pheasant Branch Road before entering the Pheasant Branch Conservancy.</p>
Habitat	Stream, wetlands, lowland forest
Vegetation quality	Low
Visitation	Low
Access	Access to the Pheasant Branch Creek Trail from Century Ave and from Deming Way. A trail connects the conservancy and Kromrey Middle School.
Connectivity	Access from Pheasant Branch Road and Whittlesey Road
Recreation	Walking, biking
Facilities	Paved shared-use trail (Graber Pond Trail - Linkage)
Management Plan	None

Management activity in past 5 years	Low
Management needs	Many, and requires some thought on how much time and support the City is able to dedicate to the Conservancy. A possible future desired condition would be a patchwork of native wetland species and lowland forest trees like cottonwood with a native understory. The future condition would require extensive removal of invasive brush, reed canary grass, and invasive cattails with any necessary follow-up; addition of native seed; and return of regular prescribed fire. Restoring native habitat in the Conservancy would positively impact the Pheasant Branch Conservancy, as it would receive less invasive species propagules via the Western Stream. The Conservancy would also be continually affected by invasive propagules flowing from further upstream. There is also extensive new housing development upstream that may impact sediment inputs into the Conservancy. These considerations are part of the reason that a Management Plan for this Conservancy moved in the priority list compared to the original 2025 CLP.
Grants received in past 5 years	None
Volunteer support and/or partners	
Stormwater facility	Yes - detention basin Note about the 2025 addition: it is likely the case that the new addition has groundwater upwelling from springs, and therefore doesn't have a lot of stormwater storage capacity.
Threats	Invasive species. Runoff impacts.

Table A.2: Plant species observed in October 2025

Common name	Scientific name	C-Value	Wetland Ind. Status (MW/NCNE)	WI Status	Invasive (NR40) Status
bittersweet nightshade	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	0	FAC	Introduced	
boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	6	OBL/FACW	Native	
box elder	<i>Acer negundo</i>	0	FAC	Native	
brittle willow	<i>Salix X fragilis</i>	0	FAC	Introduced	
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	0	FACU	Introduced	Restricted
Canadian clearweed	<i>Pilea pumila</i>	3	FACW	Native	
Canadian goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	1	FACU	Native	
common blue violet	<i>Viola sororia</i>	3	FAC	Native	
common buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i>	0	FAC	Introduced	Restricted
common burdock	<i>Arctium minus</i>	0	FACU	Introduced	
common dodder	<i>Cuscuta gronovii</i>	4		Native	
common duckweed	<i>Lemna minor</i>	4	OBL	Native	
common groundnut	<i>Apios americana</i>	5	FACW	Native	
common sneezeweed	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	4	FACW	Native	
dame's rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	0	FACU	Introduced	Restricted
elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	3	FAC/FACW	Native	
garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	0	FAC/FACU	Introduced	Restricted
giant goldenrod	<i>Solidago gigantea</i>	3	FACW	Native	
glossy-leaved aster	<i>Symphyotrichum firmum</i>	6	OBL	Native	
great angelica	<i>Angelica atropurpurea</i>	6	OBL	Native	
greater water dock	<i>Rumex britannica</i>	8	OBL	Native	
hairy willow-herb	<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	3	FACW	Native	
hybrid cat-tail	<i>Typha X glauca</i>	0	OBL	Introduced	Restricted
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	0	FAC/FACU	Introduced	

Common name	Scientific name	C-Value	Wetland Ind. Status (MW/NCNE)	WI Status	Invasive (NR40) Status
Non-native honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sp. (non-native)</i>	0		Introduced	
orange jewelweed	<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	2	FACW	Native	
periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>	0		Introduced	Caution
quaking aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	2	FAC/FAC*	Native	
red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	3	FACW	Native	
reed canary grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	0	FACW	Introduced	Non-restricted
rice cut grass	<i>Leersia oryzoides</i>	3	OBL	Native	
river bank grape	<i>Vitis riparia</i>	2	FACW/FAC	Native	
rough bedstraw	<i>Galium asprellum</i>	7	OBL	Native	
sandbar willow	<i>Salix interior</i>	2	FACW	Native	
Sedge species	<i>Carex species</i>				
small-spike false nettle	<i>Boehmeria cylindrica</i>	6	OBL	Native	
stickseed	<i>Hackelia virginiana</i>	3	FACU	Native	
stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	1	FACW/FAC	Native	
tussock sedge	<i>Carex stricta</i>	7	OBL	Native	
Virginia creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	5	FACU	Native	
water smartweed	<i>Persicaria amphibia</i>	5	OBL	Native	
watercress	<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	0	OBL	Introduced	
white avens	<i>Geum canadense</i>	2	FAC	Native	
white snakeroot	<i>Ageratina altissima</i>	1	FACU	Native	
white vervain	<i>Verbena urticifolia</i>	2	FAC	Native	
wild parsnip	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	0		Introduced	Restricted
wild red raspberry	<i>Rubus idaeus</i>	3	FACU/FAC*	Native	
yellow-rocket	<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	0	FAC	Introduced	

## PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

For this Addendum, we updated the Prioritization Matrix for maintenance and development efforts within the conservancy system. For more details on the process, see page 91 of the 2025 CLP. Although this interest may lead to volunteer support in the future, that support doesn't exist at this time. This changed PBRG's score to 117, and doesn't change its overall priority. This replaces Table 6.3 in the 2025 CLP.

**Table A.3: Updated Conservancy Lands Maintenance Prioritization Matrix**

CONSERVANCY	SCORE	PRIORITY	FACILITIES	NATURAL COMMUNITIES
Pheasant Branch Conservancy	246	very high	Shared use bike-ped ADA-accessible trails (crushed limestone, paved), parking lots, wildlife viewing platform, boardwalks, bridges, interpretive and wayfinding signage. Passive hiking-only trails and bridge. Two scenic vistas including duckblind overlook. Trail loop is contiguous with Dane County Parks trails.	wetlands, sedge meadow, restored prairie, restored/remnant oak savanna/oak woodland, marsh, natural springs, stream, seeps, fresh/wet meadow, mixed hardwoods
Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor Conservancy	200	very high	Paved shared use bike/ped trails, benches, birding alcoves, interpretive and wayfinding signage	Stream, wetlands, mixed hardwoods, oak savanna
Stricker Pond Conservancy	198	very high	Crushed limestone and natural surface shared used bike/ped trail, benches, scenic vista, interpretive signage, nesting boxes, purple martin bird houses. Trail connects with City of Madison's natural surface trail to loop around pond. Pond accessible for ice skating.	Glacial kettle pond, wetlands, marsh, shrub communities, restored mesic prairie, restored oak savanna, mixed hardwoods

CONSERVANCY	SCORE	PRIORITY	FACILITIES	NATURAL COMMUNITIES
Tiedeman Pond Conservancy	181	High	Shared use bike/ped trail loop (paved and natural surface), ADA accessible boardwalk, wildlife viewing platform and scenic vista, interpretive signage. Pond accessible for ice skating	Glacial kettle pond, wetlands, marsh, restored mesic/wet-mesic/wet prairie, mixed hardwoods, restored oak savanna
Lakeview East Conservancy	180	High	Paved shared use bike/ped trail. Connects to Lakeview Park facilities	Wetland, marsh, shrub communities, remnant sedge meadow, mixed hardwoods
Jacobsen Conservancy	180	High	Paved shared use bike/ped trail. Connected by non-Conservancy prairie to Lakeview East.	Wetland, marsh, shrub communities, remnant sedge meadow, mixed hardwoods
Graber Pond Conservancy	173	Medium	ADA accessible boardwalk and paved shared use bike/ped trail, adaptive kayak launch and fishing port, benches, interpretive signage	Glacial kettle pond, wetlands, restored mesic prairie, mixed hardwoods and oak savanna
Hidden Oaks Conservancy	164	Medium	Paved shared use bike/ped sidewalk	Detention pond, restored wet and mesic prairie, oak woodland
Middleton Hills Conservancy	153	Medium	ADA accessible boardwalk and alcove, natural surface hiking loop, interpretive signage; natural surface trails, interpretive signage, benches	Glacial kettle pond, restored wet-mesic/wet prairie, marsh, restored oak savanna, mixed hardwoods, detention pond
Confluence Pond Conservancy	153	Medium	Paved shared use bike/ped trails, interpretive and wayfinding signage	Pond, wetlands, marsh, shrub communities, planted wet-mesic/wet prairie
North Fork Conservancy	146	Medium	Paved shared use bike/ped trails	Stream, wetlands, marsh, shrub communities, planted wet-mesic/wet prairie

CONSERVANCY	SCORE	PRIORITY	FACILITIES	NATURAL COMMUNITIES
Metropolitan Refuse District	144	Medium	"Conservancy Lands" area excludes dog parks and leased land. No public access to conservancy and Public Works-managed areas	Wetland, remnant sedge meadow
Esser Pond Conservancy	128	Low	Paved shared use bike/ped trail, bench, scenic vistas, interpretive and wayfinding signage	Glacial kettle pond, wetlands, marsh, wet-mesic/wet prairie
South Fork Conservancy	125	Low	Paved shared use bike/ped trail, benches, interpretive and wayfinding signage	Stream, wetlands, marsh, shrub communities, oak woodland
Pheasant Branch Ridge Greenway	117	Low	Paved shared use bike/ped path connecting Graber Pond Trail and Pheasant Branch Creek trail system	Detention pond, planted wet prairie
Quarry Hill Conservancy	102	Low	Adjacent to Quarry Skate Park	Oak savanna
Stonefield Greenway	84	Low	Paved shared use bike/ped path connecting adjacent neighborhoods, natural surface hiking trail	Detention pond, restored wet prairie

## MANAGEMENT PLAN NEED

The prioritization matrix below is for deciding how to allocate City resources to restore and maintain the Conservancies. Separate from that is the need for a management plan for each Conservancy. Table A.4 replaces Table 4.8 from the 2025 CLP. The PBRG moved from “low” priority to “medium”, based on the recommendation in the 2025 CLP to increase its priority if additional land was acquired.

**Table A.4: Updated Proposed Schedule for Management Plans**

Conservancy	Year of prior plan <sup>A</sup>	Priority	Estimated cost	Respon-sibility	Comments
Jacobsen	none	High	\$20,000	CL	Needs a dedicated plan
Quarry Hill	none	High	\$20,000	CL	Potential recreation and restoration area, developing Friends group
Metropolitan Refuse District	none	High	\$25,000	CL, DPW	High quality sedge meadow needs documenting and protecting given surrounding activities
Hidden Oaks	none	High	\$25,000	CL, DPW	Oak woodland with recreation potential
Units within Pheasant Branch Conservancy	2008, 2018, 2024 in part	Medium	\$30,000	CL	The Bock unit will have a plan in 2024. Other units do not have plans. Partners: FoPB, Dane County
Pheasant Branch Creek Corridor	2020	Medium	\$30,000	CL	Restoration efforts and results need to be documented. Partners: FOPB
Pheasant Branch Ridge Greenway	none	Medium	\$15,000	DPW, CL	Land addition in 2025, and connectivity to Pheasant Branch Conservancy.
Tiedeman Pond	2004	Medium	\$30,000		Including Elm Lawn planning
Stricker Pond	2016	Medium	\$20,000	CL	Prairie and savanna need management plans
Middleton Hills	2009	Medium	\$25,000	CL, DPW	Multiple units with diverse uses

Conservancy	Year of prior plan <sup>A</sup>	Priority	Estimated cost	Respon-sibility	Comments
Lakeview	2002	Medium	\$30,000	CL	Estimate is for Conservancy Lands E of Allen Blvd. and Lakeview Park Vegetation Management Area
Esser Pond	2004	Medium	\$15,000	CL	
Stonefield	1995	Low	\$10,000	CL, DPW	
Graber Pond	2025	Low	\$20,000	CL, DPW	
South Fork, North Fork, and Confluence Pond	Anticipated 2025	Low		CL, DPW	

A - See the Inventory Chapter for details about the previous plans

B - Estimated cost is based on size, stakeholder interest, complexity and previous budget requests.

## **UPDATED MAPS**

These maps are for the PBRG. The updated system-wide map files have been provided to City staff.



