Hoffbeck

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - 650.1.3

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
(Public Law 91-190)

SCHMEECKLE RESERVE

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

for

Land and Water Conservation Fund Program
Secretary of Interior Contingency Reserve

Prepared by

University of Wisconsin
Central Administration/UW-Stevens Point

March 1977

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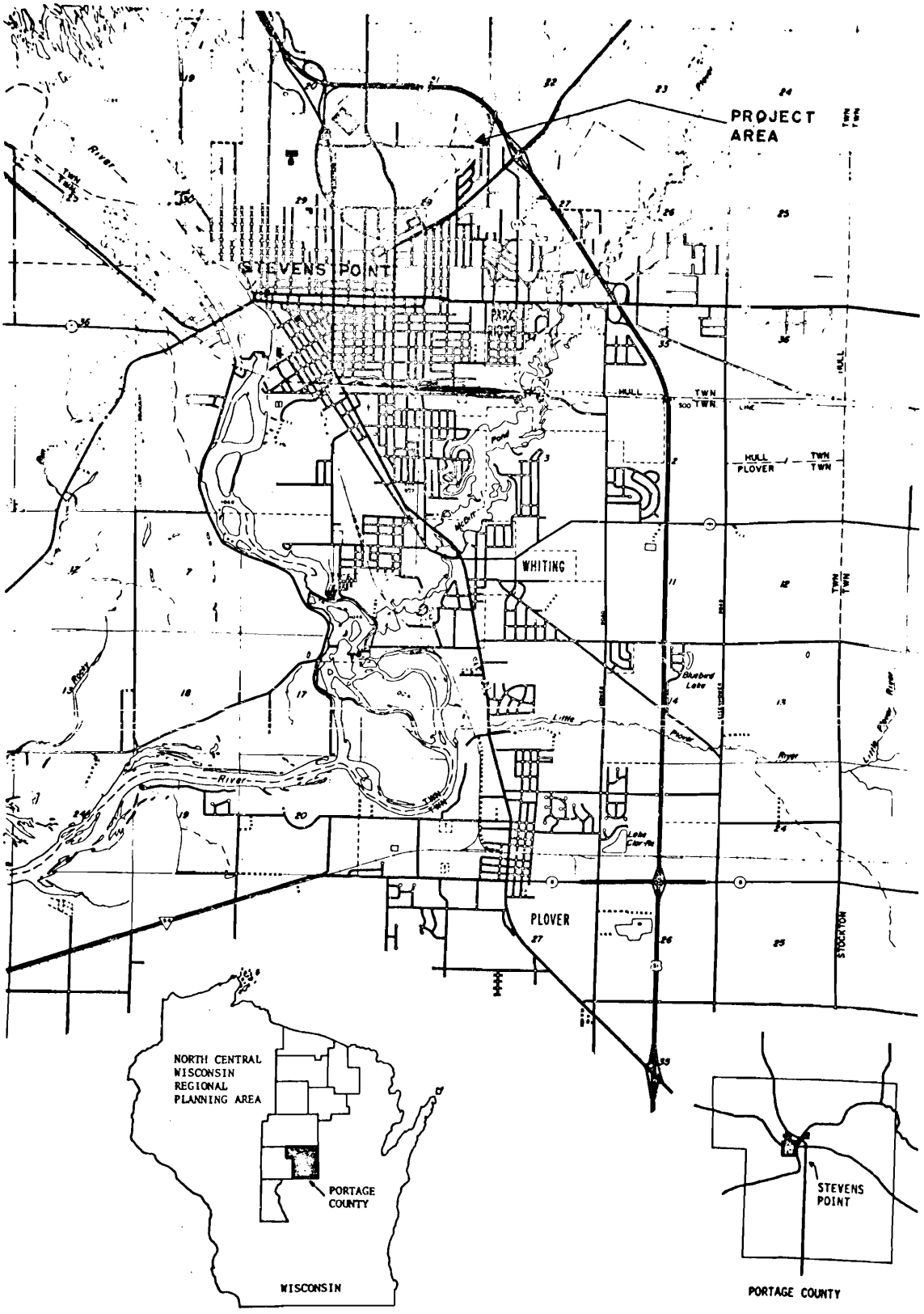
I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

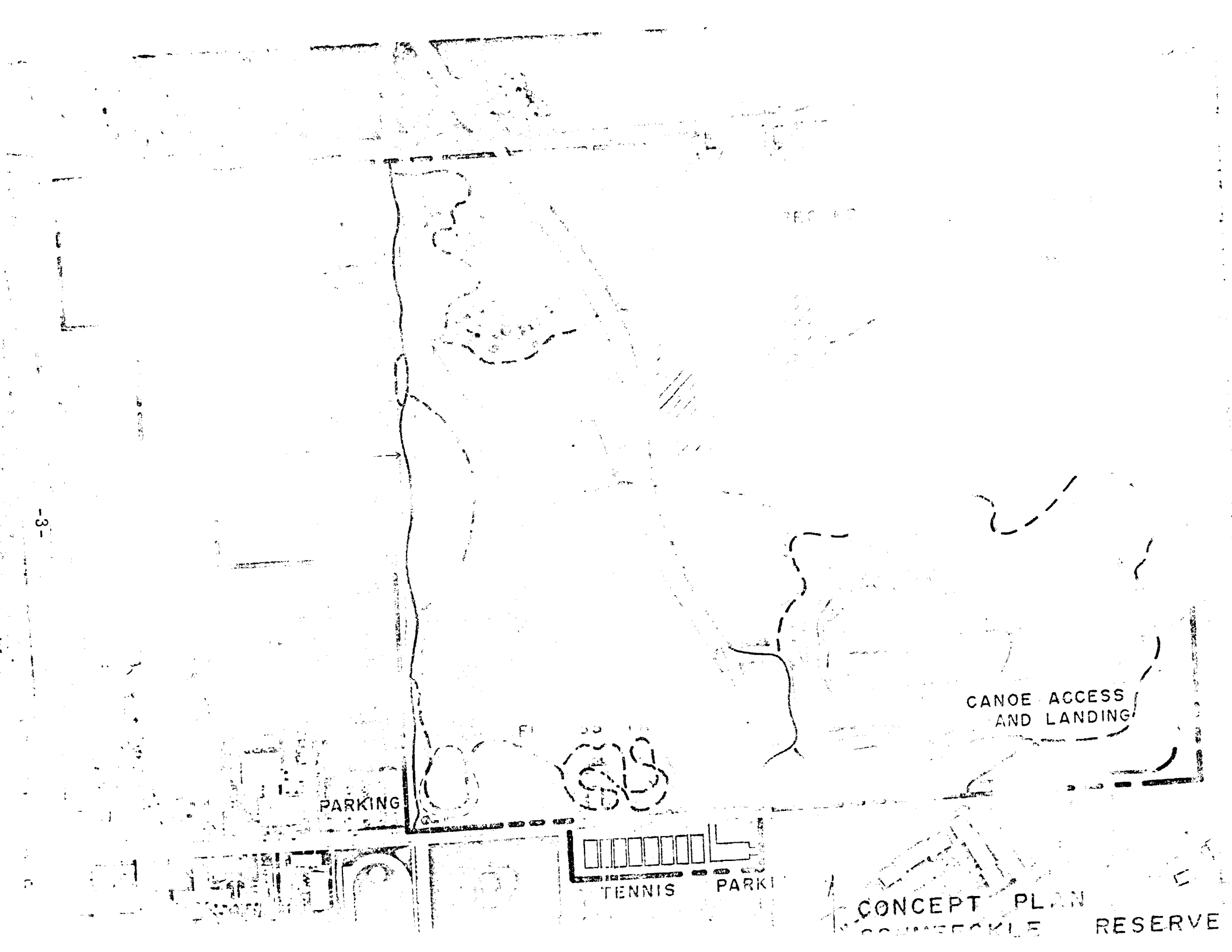
A. General Description of the Action

The action involves land acquisition and development to create a 186-acre recreation and environmental awareness center in Stevens Point, Wisconsin in Portage County. (See location maps, p. 2 & 3). The project area comprises 126 acres of state-owned University lands, a 50-acre parcel of land to be donated as an in-kind contribution for the project, and 10 acres of contiguous lands to be acquired in the first phase of the action. A 24-acre man-made lake is currently under construction on the parcel to be donated to the project. Project implementation will make a natural aesthetic resource more accessible to the public for passive, active and resource purposes, but in such a way as to maintain the existing natural ecosystems. The 24-acre lake will be made accessible for summer and winter sports such as non-motorized boating, fishing, picnicking, ice skating, ice fishing, and sightseeing. A 2 1/2 mile pedestrian trail system will meander through various natural plant communities, providing public access, cognizant of handicapped requirements, for hikers, joggers, nature lovers, nature study groups, cross-country skiers, and families. A meandering bicycle path to be developed on a vacated city street will provide safety, aesthetic value, and convenience for north-south travel. A fitness trail containing 23



PORTAGE COUNTY IS CENTRALLY LOCATED WITH STEVENS POINT CONSIDERED TO BE THE GEOGRAPHICAL CENTER OF THE STATE.

LOCATION MAPS


CANOE ACCESS
AND LANDING
PARKING
TENNIS
PARK
CONCEPT PL
RESERVE

exercise stations will offer special exercise opportunities for all ages. An instructional ski slope overlapping the vacated street right-of-way will create a visual closure and terminus to the half-mile long abandoned streetway and add an extra experience of topographic change for cross-country skiers and fitness trail users. Lighted tennis courts will support a growing public activity which has been recognized as a life long sport for men and women. Four shelter buildings, two of which will have toilet facilities, and off-street parking facilities will be provided to support public use of the project. The preservation of the existing natural landscape as a setting for and the focus of the mentioned activities is also a prime concern of this action. Disturbed areas will be landscaped with native plants and a natural form in order to blend with and in time become part of the existing landscape. The development of a self-instructional nature study guide with pamphlets and trail markers will be developed by the College of Natural Resources of the University. Access to the park will be limited to daylight hours to protect the site from misuse. No lighting will be provided in the natural areas in order to protect the plants which respond negatively to artificially lengthened days.

B. Project Location

The 186-acre project area is located on the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point campus. It lies at the northern end of

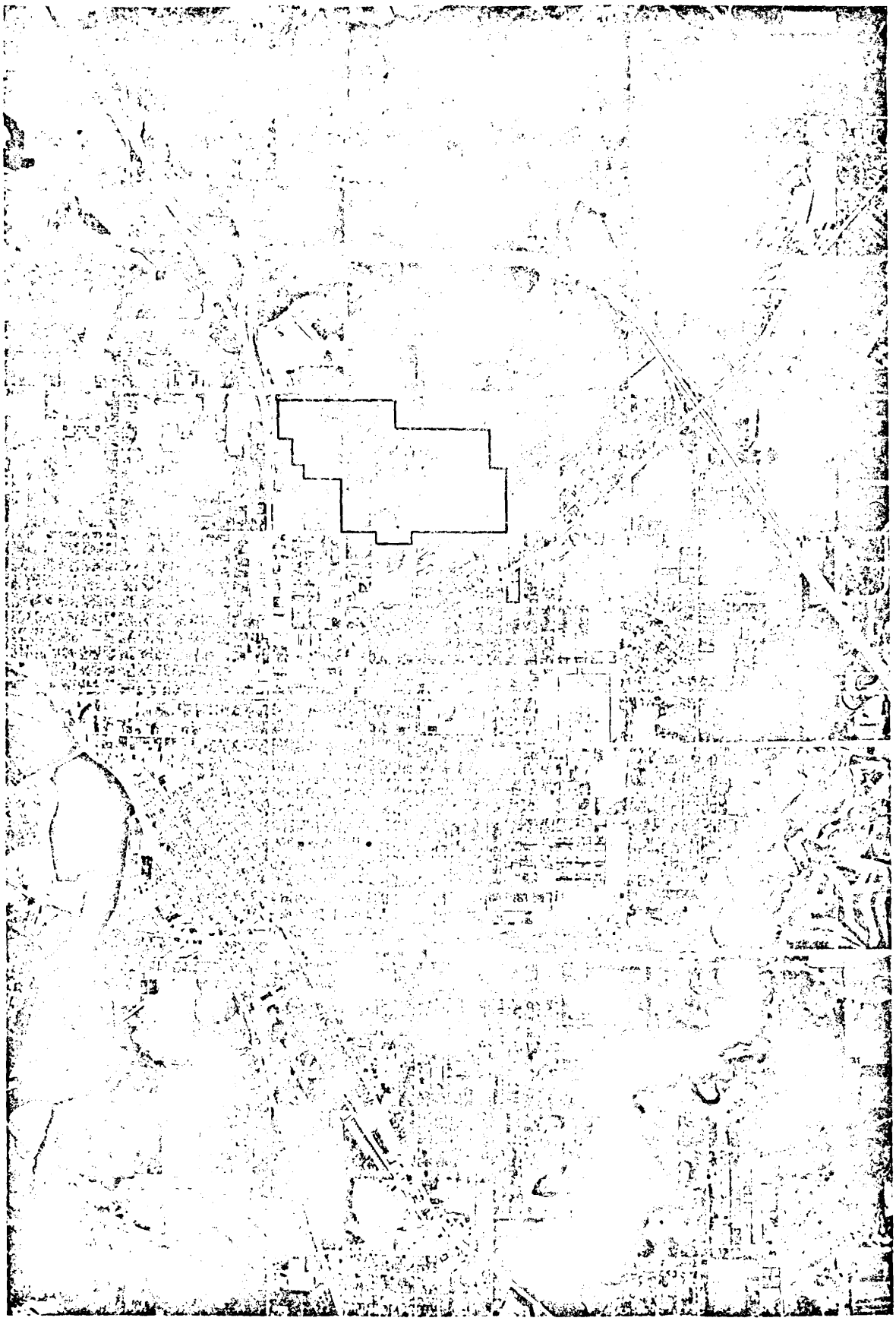
the Stevens Point community. The corporate home office of Sentry Insurance, Inc. claims 478 acres directly to the north of the project site and includes one large building and undeveloped lands. Commercial and urban development border the project area to the west. University residence halls and athletic fields as well as a community residential area border the project location on the south. To the east lie privately owned and undeveloped lands.

State highway/city bypass 51 is a short distance away, so the area is accessible from all directions. (See Stevens Point area photograph p. 6).

The Stevens Point municipal airport is located one mile to the east and the Wisconsin River is 1 1/3 miles to the west.

C. Project Time Schedule

The proposed ten acre land acquisition and project construction would be phased in 1977 and 1978 to allow for proper planning and construction coordination with city public improvements and private development activity. Highest priority needs such as lake improvements and site development would be completed as soon as possible with related development work items scheduled to climatic conditions and most efficient and economical bid programming.



AERIAL PHOTO WHOLE CITY

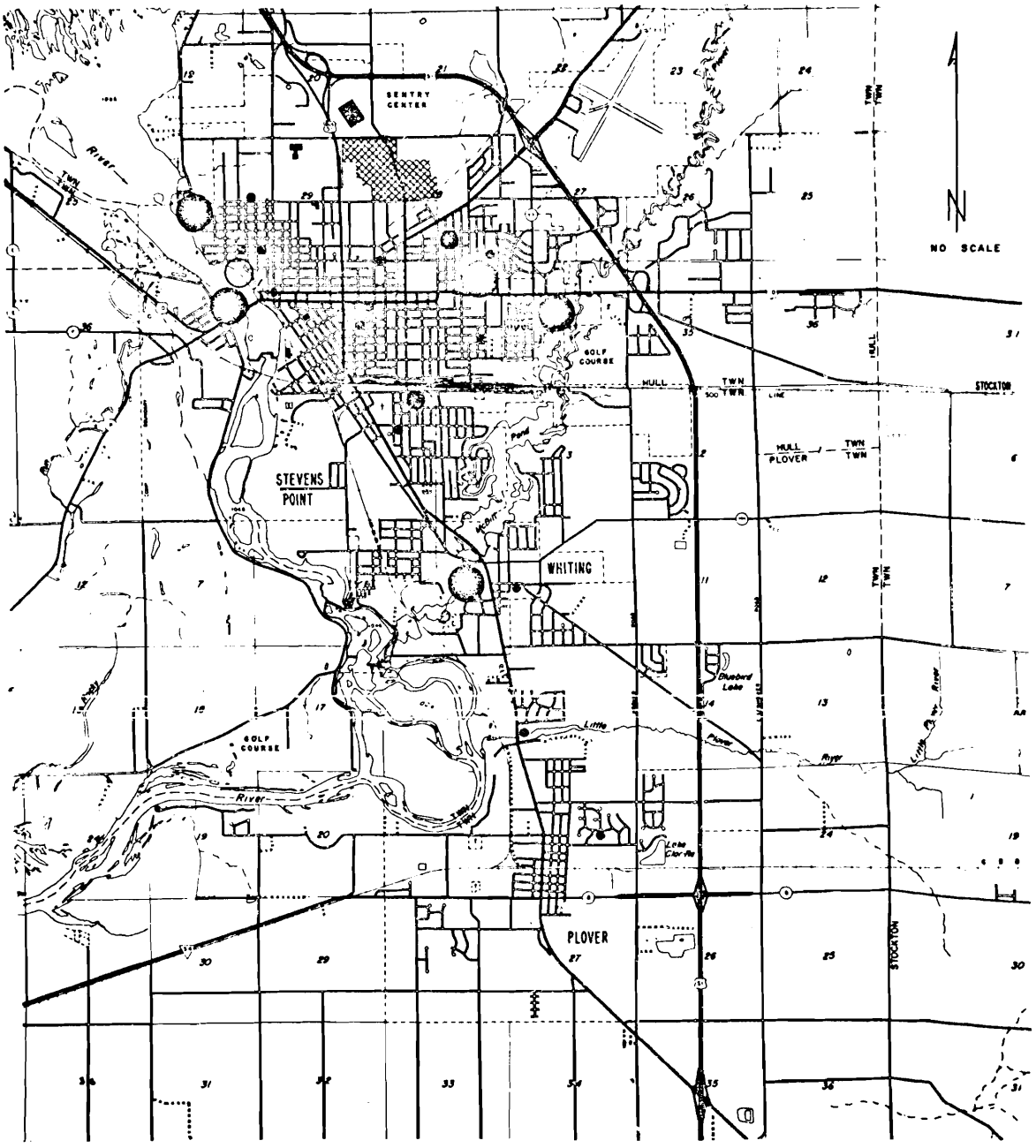
D. Interrelationships with Local, State and Other Federal Recreational Needs, Goals and Plans

The five "General Goals" for the Stevens Point Plan for Parks and Recreational Facilities support this action. These points in summarized form are:

1. Provide year-round facilities
2. Provide sites throughout the city
3. Emphasize natural beauty and resources
4. Cooperate with other government agencies in developing parks
5. Provide good quality design

The urban area of Stevens Point, which includes the villages of Park Ridge, Whiting, and Plover have a total of five community parks, three of which are located in Stevens Point - Iverson, Bukolt, and Mead Parks. Recreation lots total two. Playgrounds total twelve (see map of existing parks and recreation facilities, p. 8). Our project's trail system will complement an adjoining area with privately developed trails. The combination will eventually create an 8-mile system. Jointly the eight-mile trail system will be the most complete in the region, fully planned and developed with proper shelters, toilet facilities, parking, signing, variety in terrain and visual interest.

The Portage County Outdoor Recreation Comprehensive Plan, published April 1971, has twenty policies and objectives. Four of these directly relate to the proposed park:



EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

STEVENS POINT AREA

6. "... Preserve ... sites having scientific or historical values."

7. "In all cases the primary basis for planning should be ecological rather than economic."

9. "...some parks should be 'places of learning' with an interpretive program designed to get people interested in the complex of ecology."

17. "...enhance the natural beauty of all natural areas within Portage County."

The State Department of Natural Resources and Portage County already place a strong emphasis on preservation of the natural landscape. County-owned lands total approximately 700 acres. The DNR owns approximately 15,400 acres and manages additional privately-owned lands. The objectives of the action are also in harmony with the U.S. Department of Interior's continued effort to preserve our natural heritage while making it accessible to the public.

E. Present Demand and Supply of Recreational Needs in the Project Area

During the warm months approximately 200 joggers a day use the vacated streetway as well as a near-by track facility. With the anticipated growth of the University, Sentry Insurance, and Holiday Inn business, as well as continued population increase, the demand for outdoor recreation will grow. Sentry Insurance has purchased and developed adjacent lands for this very purpose in anticipation of a growing need.

F. Users of the Proposed Project

The recreation and environmental awareness center will serve local, county, state and nationwide users. Local residents can easily reach the site by foot or automobile, including 4,000 persons living in the University resident halls. The people of the area are geared toward outdoor recreational activity. The Wisconsin River Valley Paper Companies, American Seating Company, Copps Company, Sentry Insurance Corporation, as well as the University bring in visitors from all over the State and nation. In addition, Stevens Point is considered to be a desirable conference and tourist location because of its central location in the State and its attractive qualities. The local municipal airport and the Mosinee five-county airport 19 miles to the north make the above-mentioned businesses and institutions accessible to out-of-county persons.

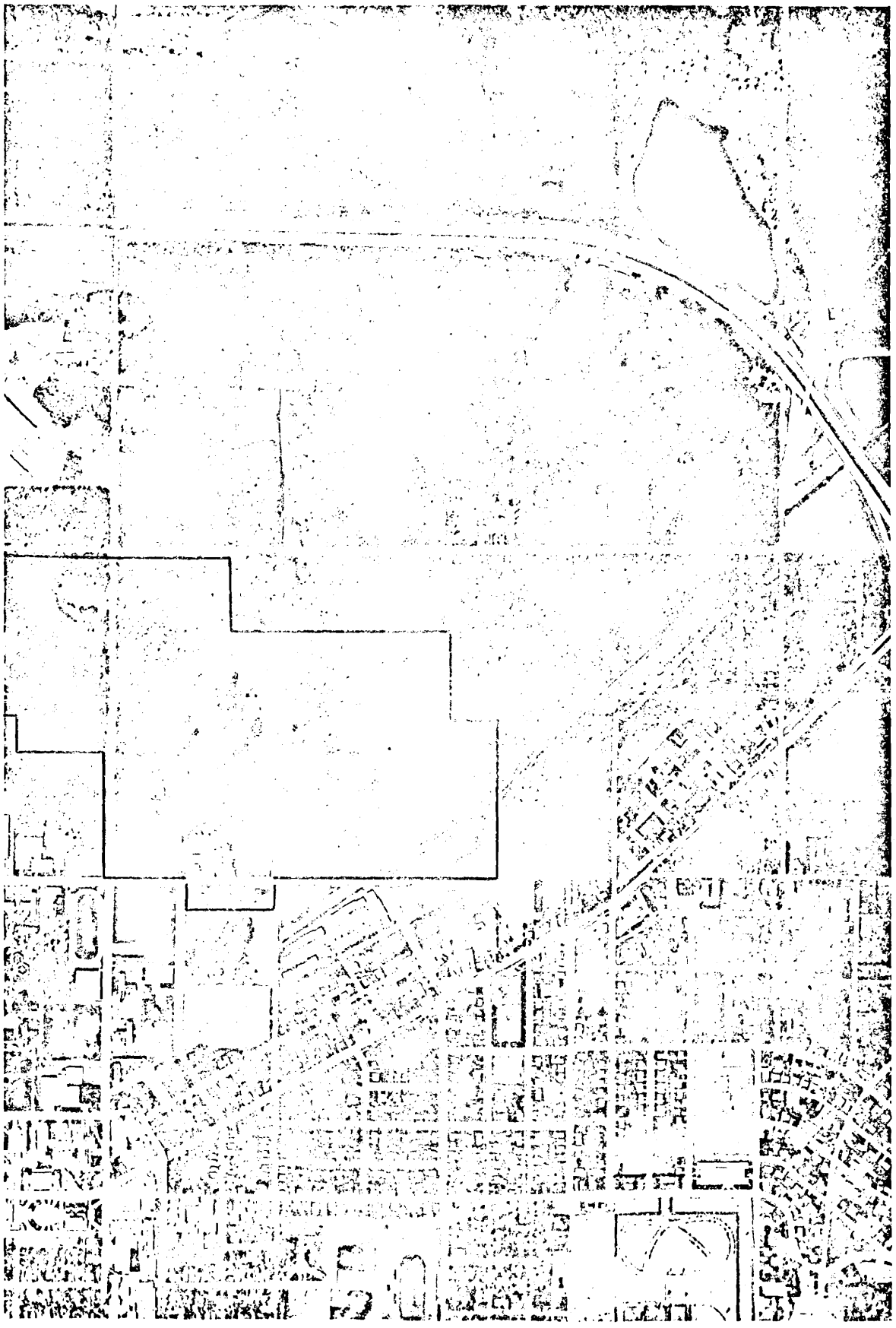
II. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

A. General Description of the Site

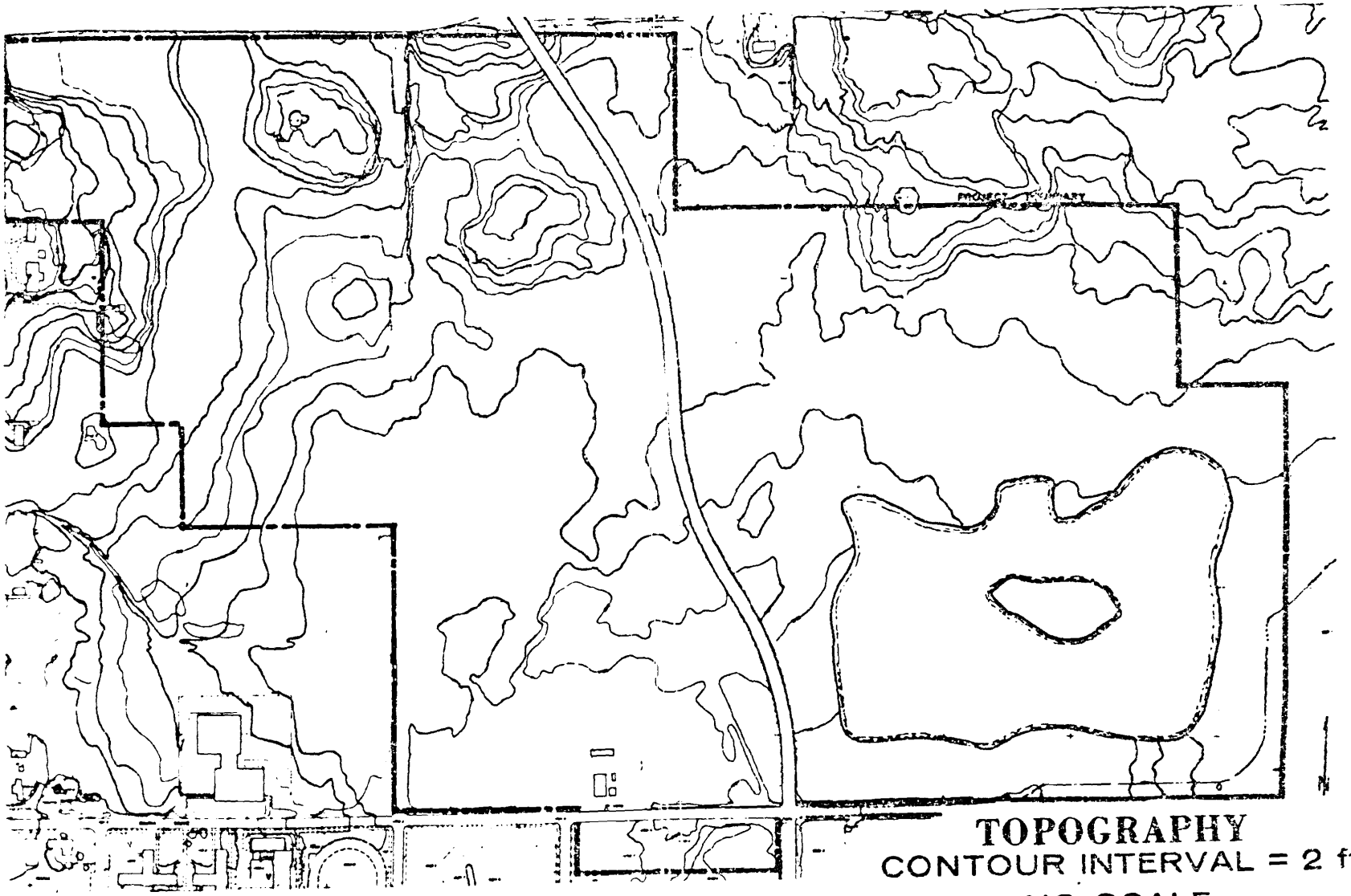
The project site is bounded on the south by Maria Drive, on the east by privately-owned lands, on the west by commercial development along Division Street, and on the north by Northpoint Drive and the Sentry Insurance Company complex. Since Stevens Point is situated at the center of Portage County and has Highway 51

as a major traffic arterial for Central Wisconsin, skirting its boundary, the site is well situated and convenient to county and state travelers. (See aerial photo of the site on p. 12). The 186-acre site consists of a relatively flat area varying in elevation a total of 28 feet from its northwestern high point to the lowest elevation on the southeast corner where the lake has been constructed (see topographic map on p. 13). Sandy loam and loamy sand are the dominant soil types (see soil map on p. 14). The first impression of the landscape, as viewed from the roads bordering the site on the north and south and from the newly constructed road running through it, is one of flat land vegatively covered with trees, shrubs, and native ground cover grasses. However, as one walks through the site he discovers continuing changing elevations, fourteen different, easily discernible native plant communities varying from densely mixed hardwoods of Paper Birch, Red Oak, Ironwood, Wild Black Cherry and Red Maple to Jack Pine openings with short native grasses and open areas of Blue-Joint grasses growing in low places (see plant communities map and legend on p. 15). In two separate locations glacial deposits of large and small boulders are piled together among fallen decaying trees, or scattered around moss-covered naturally excavated land forms.

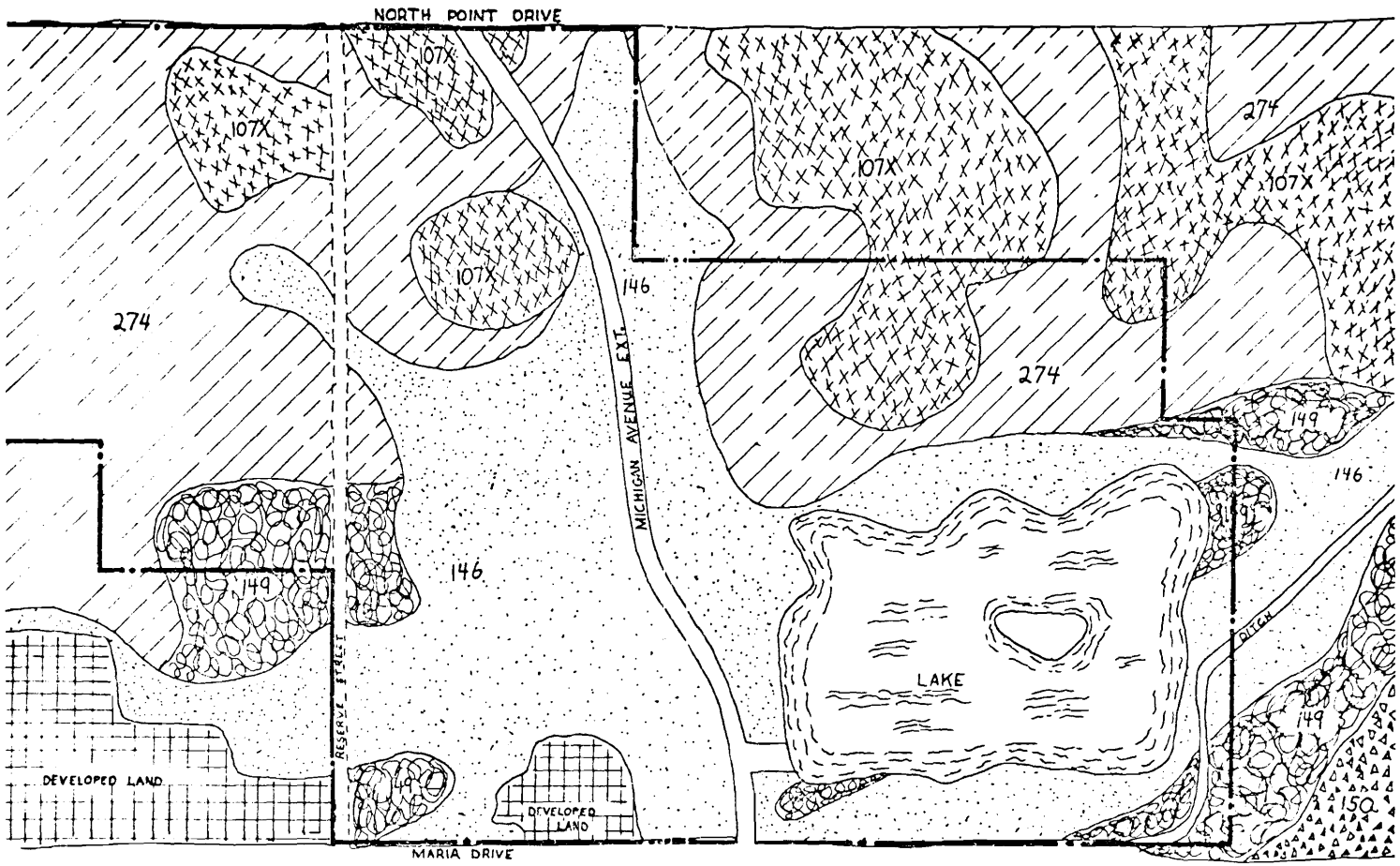
Because of the rich diversity of pristine native plant and animal habitats, the School of Natural Resources of the University has



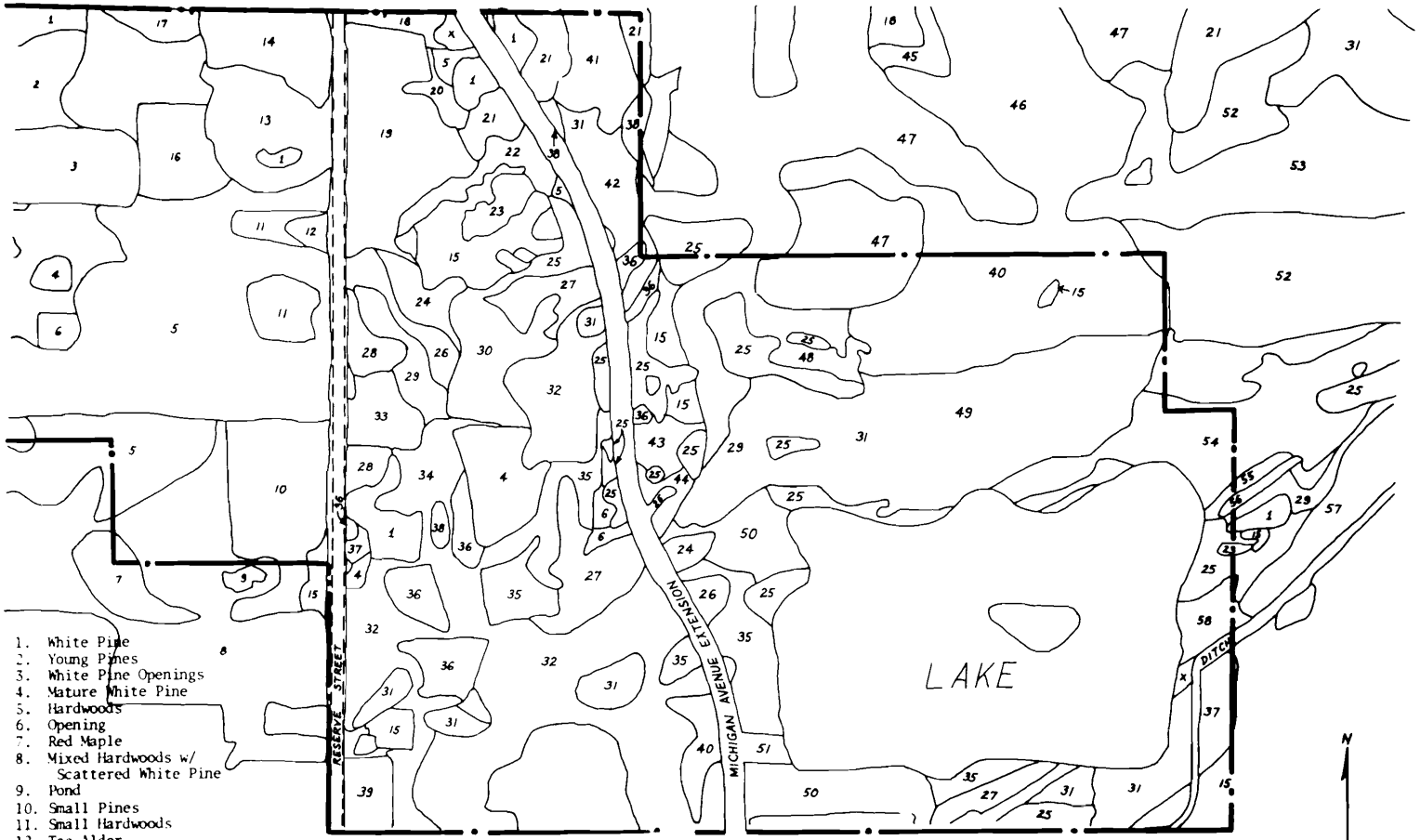
AERIAL PHOTO NORTH CAMPUS



TOPOGRAPHY
CONTOUR INTERVAL = 2 ft.
NO SCALE


NORTH POINT DRIVE
107X
274
146
149
RESERVE STREET
MICHIGAN AVENUE EXT.
DEVELOPED LAND
DEVELOPED LAND
LAKE
DITCH
150
MARIA DRIVE
PLAINFIELD LOAMY SAND
LOAMY SUBSTRATUM
NEWTON LOAMY SAND
MOROCCO LOAMY SAND
NEKOOSA LOAMY SAND
POINT SANDY LOAM
NO SCALE
N

SOIL SURVEY



1. White Pine
2. Young Pines
3. White Pine Openings
4. Mature White Pine
5. Hardwoods
6. Opening
7. Red Maple
8. Mixed Hardwoods w/ Scattered White Pine
9. Pond
10. Small Pines
11. Small Hardwoods
12. Tag Alder
13. Meadow w/Sumac
14. Meadow w/White Pine
15. Meadow
16. Few Hardwoods
17. Hardwoods/Tag Alder
18. Robus-Sweet Ferns
19. Mature Mixed Hardwoods/ White Pine
20. Glade
21. Mixed Hardwoods
22. Jack Pine/White Pine
23. Mixed Pines
24. Mixed Pine/Hardwoods
25. Jack Pine
26. Willow-Bluejoint
27. Aspen Woods
28. White Birch
29. Bluejoint- Marsh
30. Jack Pine Woods
31. Aspen
32. Willow-Bluejoint Marsh
33. White Pine Woods
34. Aspen/Willow/Tag Alder/ Marsh
35. Aspen/Willow
36. Bluejoint
37. Willow
38. Mixed Woods
39. Nursery
40. Aspen Savanna
41. Bluejoint/Sedge/Marsh
42. Bluejoint-Aspen
43. Young Jack Pine
44. Young Aspen
45. Hazelnut
46. Aspen/Willow/Tag Alder
47. Oak Opening
48. Jack Pine Opening
49. Willow/Thickets/Aspen Fringe (not mapped)
50. Willow Thickets
51. Haul Road
52. Savanna (Esp. Oak)
53. Savanna (Esp. Jack)
54. Jack Pine/Red Maple/Hardwoods/White Pine
55. P. Birch
56. Large White Pine
57. Mixed Pine/Aspen
58. Tag Alder/White Birch

VEGETATION

this area for its research studies of natural ecosystems. Consequently the natural succession of plant communities has remained intact, disturbed only by fires at various times in the past. There are 14 different plant communities, two evergreen tree species, ten dedicuous tree species, 25 shrub species, and in excess of 100 species of ground cover plants. The woodland canopied areas provide inviting cool shade in the summer while the open spaces present unique views and vistas. The fauna of these native habitats were surveyed in 1974. The survey found 28 species of birds, nine species of mammals, six species of amphibians and one species of reptile. None of the species of animals observed were listed as "endangered" or "with changing status" by the State of Wisconsin or Federal Government.

Construction of the 24-acre lake began in December, 1974, and was completed in November, 1976. It is presently filling from natural springs toward its anticipated high-water level. When filled it will add a new experience to the site. An island has been completed in the lake and 2-5-inch caliper trees and native top soil filled with seeds of native plants placed on it. The city installed a control device to regulate the water level of the lake at 1087.0 feet elevation. Any overflow would be directed into the Moses Creek storm drain.

An abandoned, deteriorated bituminous two-lane, straight city street with electrical overhead wires on one side also passes through the site and presents an ugly appearance and wire blight. However, native vegetative growth crowding the edges of the road will help in redesigning this eyesore into a vegetatively-dominated pedestrian corridor after the overhead lines have been placed underground. A creek meanders near the proposed corridor and has clear water in it throughout the year. The scattered low areas are filled with water each spring of the year and are fed by seasonal creeks which drain water from other portions of the site. Run-off water from roads and developed areas to the north, west and south of the site drain into it.

A University maintenance and storage facility is located on the southern border of the site. The land-fill which supports this use has been added to in recent years. It presents an expanding threat to the aesthetics and ecology of that portion of the project area.

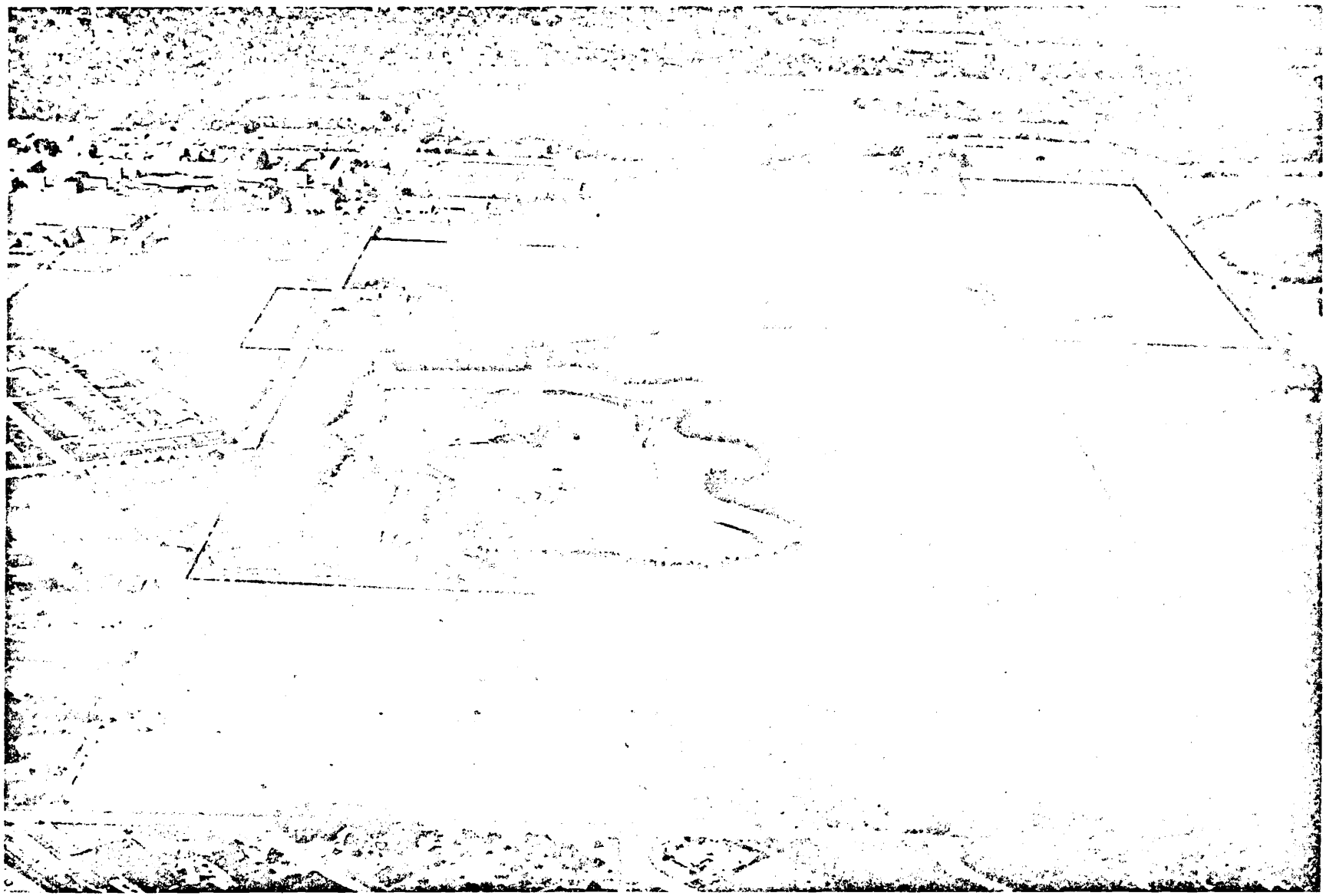
A portion of the project boundary extends 160 feet south of Maria Drive and is the temporary storage area for 15,000 cubic yards of fill to be used in project site preparation.

Michigan Avenue, which previously terminated at Maria Drive has been extended into the site and cuts a meandering path north and

south through it (see photo, p. 19). It was used as the direct haul route for the lake excavation in transporting fill to the Sentry Center. The 44' roadway has a 66' R.O.W. Four 11' traffic lanes were forecasted by city engineering and the Department of Transportation. This roadway will be completed by the city in 1977 and will have a bituminous surface with curb and gutter. Stop and go lights will be located at the intersection of Northpoint Drive. Stop signs will be located at the intersection of Maria Drive. A speed limit of 25 mph is proposed. A pedestrian/bikeway is recommended to the city to be constructed adjacent to the east side of the streetway.

Transportation planners have determined that Michigan Avenue will provide all necessary internal traffic for emergencies, through traffic, and visitors. The peripheral collector street system which includes Northpoint Drive, Division Street, Maria Avenue and the proposed improvement of Minnesota Avenue to the east would adequately provide community-wide access to the project area with no new additional streets planned or needed. This existing system of streets now accommodate existing public improvements for water, sewer, and storm drainage and will provide space for future improvements.

Prior to beginning construction of Michigan Avenue and the lake, a survey indicated that no unique archeological sites or places of historical significance exist.



SITE LOOKING WEST

B. Environment of Existing Key Recreation Activity Areas Which Will be Affected by the Development

The project's impact can be related to six separate design areas:

1. The 10 acres of land to be acquired for inclusion in the project constitutes a mixture of native plant communities which do not exist in the same density, distribution and form found in any other part of the site. An Oak Opening of 10" caliper Oaks and large Paper Birch are irregularly scattered in clusters on meadows of well established native upland grasses. Clusters of American Hazelnut and Sweetfern add to the aesthetics. A large mass of Jack Pine constitutes a focal point seen from a Blue Joint lowland area south of this private acreage. Surface water drains from this area into the existing lands held by the University (see photo p. 21).

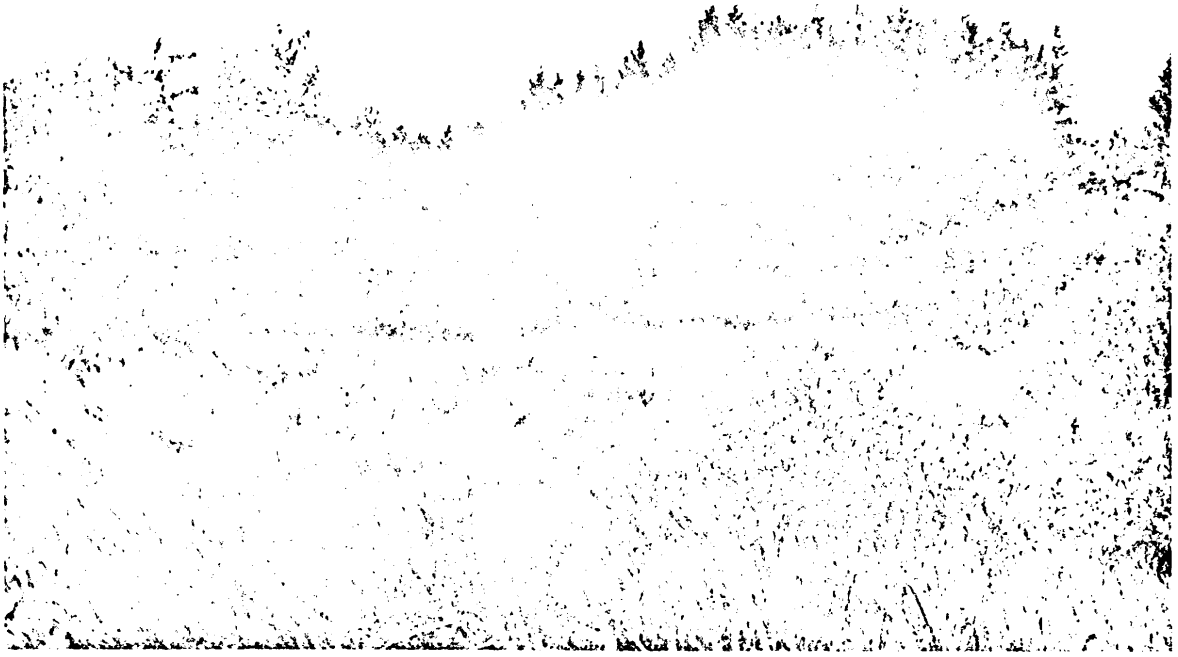
2. The lake is in the process of filling from seepage of underground water and natural springs. Its shores are devoid of vegetation. Four access points have been cut by construction equipment through the woodlands surrounding the lake, leaving large openings. The created island has newly planted trees on it but has insufficient ground cover vegetation (see photo p. 21).

3. The 2,500 feet of vacated streetway is a visually negative straight road with deteriorating asphalt surface. A rotten granite surface path on one side parallels the street. Electrical utility poles parallel the other side. Two culverts allow for drainage under the road. A City easement is maintained to service water and sewer lines which run under the street. Automobiles, bikers, bicyclists and joggers continue to use it.

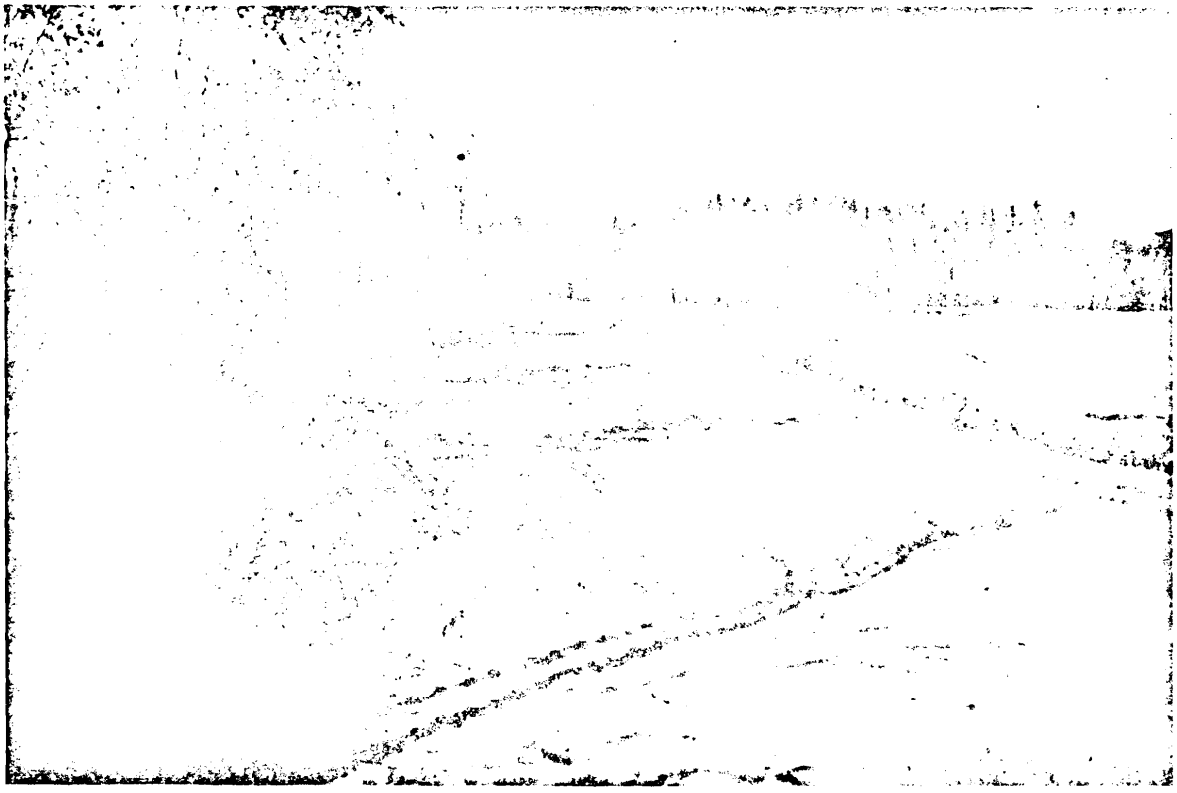
4. The natural vegetative areas which constitute the basic land use of the site is for the most part undisturbed and in a natural state. However, random paths made by nature lovers, joggers, hikers, snowmobiles and mini-bikes are evident. Lean-to shacks, beer cans, and burned logs are evidence of unauthorized activities hidden in the woodland areas.

5. The landfill area located on the south edge of the project area is an ugly sight (see photo p.22).

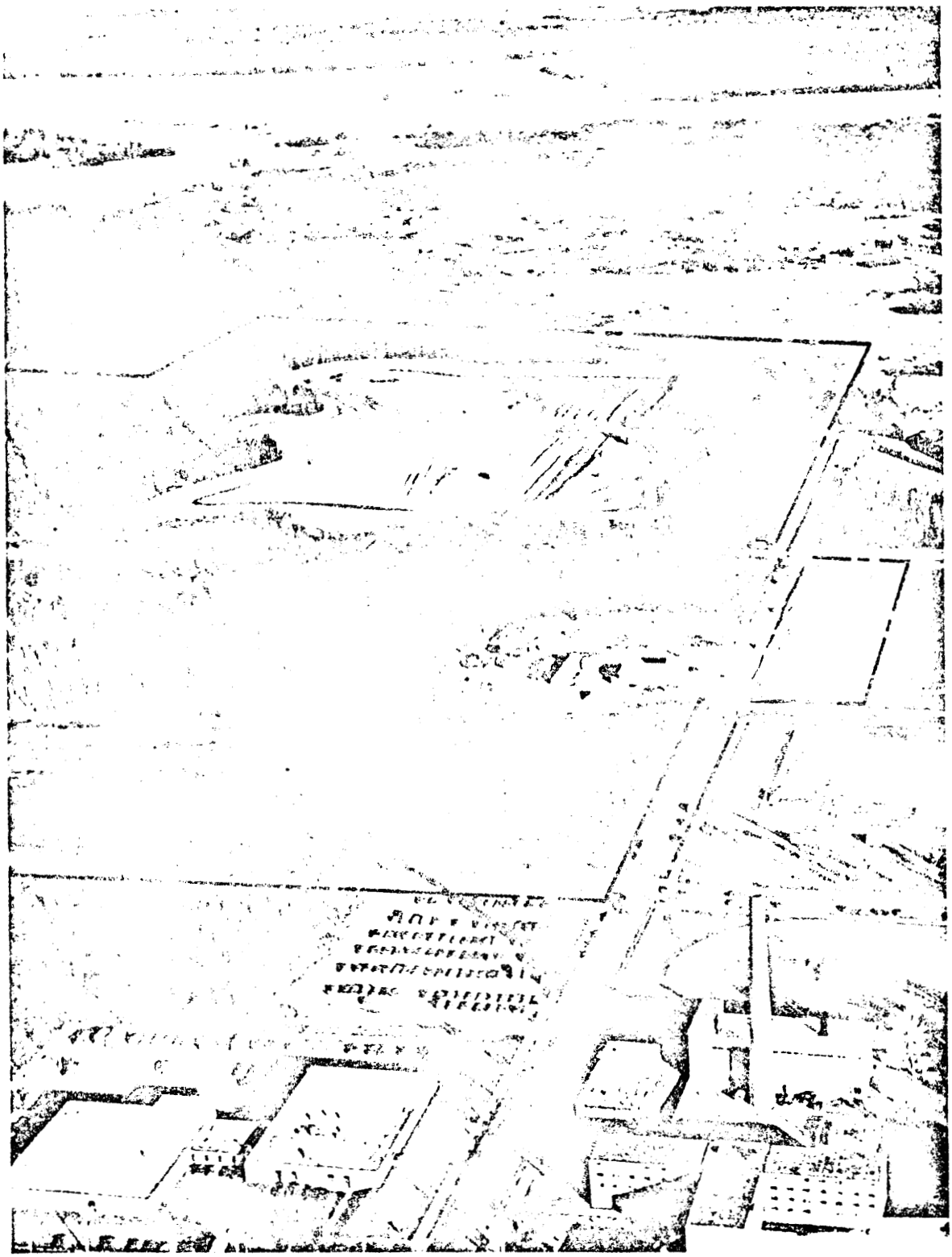
6. The University physical education field is presently covered with excess land fill removed from the lake excavation.



PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION



LAKE SHORE UNDER CONSTRUCTION



BUTLER LANDFILL SITE

C. Projected Environment of Key Areas if Project Isn't Implemented

In the event the project is not implemented the six areas previously described will, with one exception, become less valuable.

1. The land to be acquired will probably in time be developed for housing, commercial, or University use. It is presently zoned commercial. The University, in its now outdated Long Range Development Plan, showed a 150-unit married student housing project for this acreage.

2. The lake shore will not stabilize without proper vegetative plantings. Eurasian weeds will dominate until native plants can reclaim the exposed soil. Random use by unauthorized persons will probably keep the shore from developing trees or shrubs. The clear-cut access points will be dominated by Eurasian weeds. These areas will probably become permanent parking lots for persons using the lake.

3. The vacated streetway will continue to be used by pedestrians and cyclists until encroachment by natural weed growth and aged and deteriorated asphalt necessitates removal of present road materials.

4. The natural vegetative areas would remain the same unless the state decided to sell the land whereby it would become available for speculation purposes. The University may also expand its facilities onto the southern portion of the site. The misuse of the woodlands by snowmobiles, mini-bikes and unauthorized activities would continue.

5. The landfill site would probably continue to be used for this purpose or at the very least remain in its present ugly state.

6. The athletic field would not be cleared of its excess landfill.

D. Present Level of Economic Development, Land Use, and Related Cultural Factors

The 1975 Population and Economy Inventory and Analysis, Part 4 for Portage County and the Stevens Point urban area, put together by the Portage County Areawide Planning Committee states the following summarized findings.

1. Most socio-economic indicators show Portage County is a good place to live.

2. The county and Stevens Point are a growth center of significant potential.

3. A significant percentage of county residents are economically dependent upon the Stevens Point urban area for jobs, shopping and marketing goods and services.

4. Low income levels, substandard housing, and problems of the aged affect significant segments of the county's population.

5. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is a major influence on the population and employment make-up of the county and the single greatest factor in the composition of the urban area population.

6. The paper industries, Sentry Insurance, Agriculture and the University have lead roles in shaping the socio-economic conditions of the area.

7. Population trends show a steady growth pattern. The population increased 28.6 percent from 1960-1970 with the primary impact coming from University growth (see chart and map, p. 25 & 26).

8. Family income levels for Stevens Point and for Portage County have generally remained below state and national averages. The median family income for Portage County was reported at $12,043 for 1975.

TABLE 2

POPULATION GROWTH OF CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES
& THE STATE OF WISCONSIN
1930 - 1970

COUNTIES	1930 Population	1940 Population	30-40 % Change	1950 Population	40-50 % Change	1960 Population	50-60 % Change	1970 Population	60-70 % Change	30-70 % Change
Portage	33,827	35,800	5.8%	34,858	- 2.6%	36,964	6.0%	47,541	28.6%	40.5%
Adams	8,003	8,449	5.6%	7,906	- 6.4%	7,566	- 4.3%	9,234	22.0%	15.4%
Marathon	70,629	75,915	7.5%	80,337	5.8%	88,874	10.6%	97,457	9.7%	38.0%
Waupaca	33,513	34,614	3.3%	35,056	1.3%	35,340	0.8%	35,780	6.9%	12.7%
Waushara	14,427	14,268	- 1.1%	13,920	- 2.4%	13,497	3.0%	14,795	9.6%	2.6%
Wood	37,865	44,405	17.4%	50,500	13.6%	59,105	17.0%	65,362	10.6%	72.6%
TOTAL CWR*	198,264	213,511	7.7%	222,577	4.3%	241,346	8.4%	272,169	12.8%	37.3%
STATE	2,939,006	3,137,587	6.8%	3,434,575	9.5%	3,951,777	15.1%	4,417,731	11.8%	50.3%

*Central Wisconsin Region

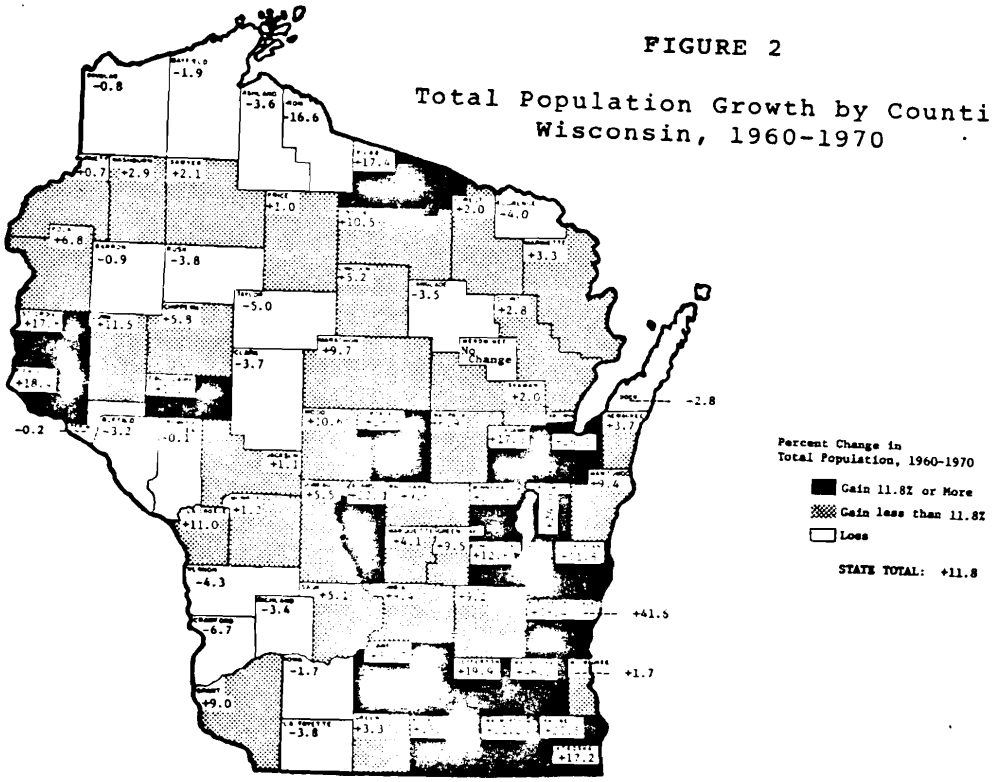
Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1930-1970

Portage County has been the second fastest growing county in the Central Wisconsin Region since 1930. The state, however, over the same period had a greater percentage gain than all but one of the counties. This further supports the statement that the regional growth profile is one of slow but steady growth.

The 1960 to 1970 decade, however, deviated from that trend in Portage County. This was the first time that the county grew faster than any of the other counties in the Central Wisconsin Region. The state-wide growth indexes are shown in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

Total Population Growth by Counties
Wisconsin, 1960-1970



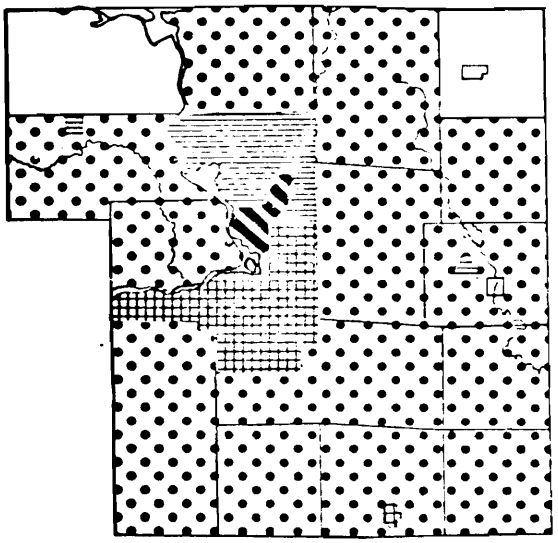
Source: Wisconsin Division of Health, Department of Health & Social Services, Public Health Statistics Wisconsin-1971

The changes in population density show the City of Stevens Point, the villages within the urban area, and the towns experiencing sprawling urban development to be the areas that are rapidly growing. These findings are reflected in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6

POPULATION DENSITY CHANGE

Portage County: 1960-1970



The distribution of persons within the minor civil division can only be estimated as the census does not give detailed statistics on areas smaller that the minor civil division level.

The site is bounded on the north, west and south by four major economic influences. The new Sentry Insurance office building will have a labor force of 1,550 persons beginning in July of 1977. The Holiday Inn, 200-bed capacity, Convention Center hosted over 1,000 conferences and conventions of groups larger than 25 during 1976. It had 90,000 guests during 1976. Most new construction of convenience and service goods facilities has occurred on Division Street in the past decade. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, had a total enrollment of 8,500 persons during the fall of 1976, of which 4,000 were housed on campus. In addition the University offered 400 seminars and courses to the general public during 1976, and received 10,000 requests for continuing education programs. Finally, the 200-bed St. Michael's Hospital adjacent to the University is the largest in the county. These facilities bring capital into the community and people into this area.

Land for building purposes is very limited in the northern portion of the city. With little exception the only available commercial land borders the north, east and west edges of the project site.

E. Projected Level of Economic Development, Land Use and Related Cultural Factors

The Portage County and Stevens Point Urban Area Population and Economy Inventory and Analysis, Part 4 states that, "The growth and strength of trade employment ... will increase proportionally

as the county's economic base grows," but not " . . . equal to that of the 1960-1970 decade." There are no projections on overall employment, industry growth or earned income.

Land values adjacent to the project will probably increase due to anticipated commercial retail opportunities and supply and demand. The Sentry Insurance complex expects to add 150 new employees each year until it reaches its capacity of 2,200. Increased activity at Sentry will increase the use of the Holiday Inn conference center. The University of Wisconsin System projects a target enrollment of 9,100 persons by 1980, for the Stevens Point campus, an increase of 600 persons from 1976. It follows then that there will be an increased need for recreational facilities in this area. Businessmen staying at the Holiday Inn will be looking for recreation for themselves and in many cases for their families who may accompany them. Parents and relatives of University students, as well as those attending the University, will be looking for ways to spend leisure time. Individuals attending special seminars and continuing education refresher courses will use outdoor recreational facilities during the summer months. The Sentry Insurance Company has developed a physical fitness program for their employees which will encourage them to exercise. These groups of people will have easy access to the planned fitness trail as well as the jogging trails.

III. THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Physical Environmental Impact

The project provides opportunity to preserve a piece of Wisconsin's natural heritage in a location readily accessible to the public and to create within that setting new public recreational opportunities. The action's physical impact upon the environment will be almost totally positive. The negative physical impacts have already occurred with the lake and Michigan Avenue developments. Reference to their impacts are found in the two Environmental Assessments entitled, UW-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc., Lake Construction, Maria Drive at Michigan Avenue, dated December 1974 and Michigan Avenue Extension, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, dated December 1974. This action will directly help preserve and improve the physical beauty and diversity of the 186-acre site by obtaining LAWCON protection and developing disturbed areas.

1. The proposed land acquisition will preserve an especially unique aesthetic natural landscape from potential commercial site development. The drainage pattern of this acreage will also be kept intact.

2. The lake shore and its disturbed construction access points will be landscaped to return the destruction to a natural setting. The only negative impact will be development of the picnic area by placing wood chips on the site to prevent soil compaction. In so doing the natural ground layer plants will be destroyed. Some trees, shrubs, and ground layer plants will be destroyed to construct a shelter.

   The addition of aquatic plants by the University, along a portion of the north shore and the stocking of fish by the State DNR will increase the presence of aquatic-related wildlife.

3. The vacated streetway will involve the removal of 2.12 acres of an abandoned 20' wide city street and a 7' path running parallel to it, the burying of 2,500 lineal feet of electrical overhead wires and removal of 11 electrical poles. A winding, aesthetically pleasing 8 foot wide bicycle and pedestrian path surrounded by natural landscape plantings will improve the acreage. The ski slope placed at the southern entry to the streetway will visually close the existing linear appearance. An abandoned tree nursery will also be covered by the slope. Natural landscape planting will blend the hill with the existing landscape.

4. The trail system will have a direct negative impact by covering 1.1 acres of ground cover vegetation. The trail's changing appearance of wood chips, screened limestone, and boardwalks will blend in with the natural setting it passes through. The disturbed acreage to be landscaped surpasses that covered by the paths. In low drainage areas the boardwalk will pass over and not destroy the vegetation.

5. The fitness trail development will improve the present landfill site by creating a rolling topography and introducing natural landscape planting.

6. The tennis courts and parking lot will put to use a landfill site especially prepared for University athletic fields. The excess fill now stored there will be removed. Tennis courts and the parking facility are aesthetically negative items. Proper landscaping will help to hide their impact.

Water and air quality will in no way be negatively affected, apart from pollution from motorized equipment used for construction. The water quality of surface and ground waters will be preserved by protecting this site from extensive speculative or University development. Part of the reason for purchasing the additional 10 acres north of the lake is to preserve the water quality which drains from the north toward the lake.

Preservation of native habitats will protect the fauna of the area.

The random, unauthorized use of the site for beer parties and wooden shack construction will be curtailed (see photo, p. 32). Existing shacks will be removed and the debris disposed of in the city landfill site.

B. Economic Environmental Impact

The short-term direct, positive impact will be in the use of federal funds for jobs, services and materials. The long-term positive impact may be an increase in land values in the area for residential and commercial lands. The additional recreational facilities and the improved natural aesthetic environment will add to the value of the area. The current tax revenue for the 50 acres of donated lands is nothing, and for the 10 acres to be acquired is $25. This does not represent a significant tax base loss.

C. Social Environmental Impact

This project in conjunction with the Sentry Insurance Company 5.5 miles of trails, an art gallery, a public theater, and restaurant facilities will attract people to this area, thereby introducing them to the recreational opportunities available. It is hoped that a greater public awareness of and appreciation for the natural heritage will create public support for preserving its beauty, thereby discouraging the unauthorized, occasional,

UNAUTHORIZED SHACK

impromptu beer parties which pose the continual threat of fires. The availability of the natural landscape for nature study will be a very supportive resource for scouting programs, and nature study programs carried out by clubs and youth groups.

IV. MITIGATING MEASURES INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Mitigating the Existing Landscape

This recreation and environmental awareness center mitigates the continual expansion of the Stevens Point urban environment. The development of the recreational facilities is an expansion of man's activities, but man's impact is diminished by preserving the natural environment on the site. The need for both is recognized. The water quality preservation was a major concern in development of the lake. Moses Creek was diverted from flowing into the lake to prevent storm sewer water from polluting the lake. Warzyn Engineering of Madison and the DNR cooperatively designed a lake with a maximum depth of 27 feet in order to provide oxygenation for a fish habitat and prevent freeze kill. The lake, with a portion of shore planted with aquatic plants, will attract waterfowl such as ducks, geese, herons and loons.

Other mitigating measures of urban expansion reflected in this development are: preservation of present land use and value, development within existing zoning requirements, removal of deteriorating bituminous on streetway, burial of electrical lines, halting

expansion of an existing landfill site, landscape planting of all disturbed soils, and preservation of water quality. The Moses Creek was re-routed during the lake development around the lake to prevent storm drain water from lessening the water quality of the lake.

B. Mitigating Negative Development Factors

The following recommendations will mitigate a number of negative actions and anticipated problems.

1. Erosion of soil around the lake's edge and on newly constructed topography must be held to a minimum by an erosion control program of roughening the soil, mulching and revegetation. Jute matting should be applied to the steep slopes.

2. Spraying of herbicides should be prohibited in order to protect the native landscape. With proper landscape planting Eurasian weeds will be crowded out by the competition and shade of native grasses and forbs.

3. Elevated boardwalks should be used where paths cross low, seasonally wet areas to provide a stable path and prevent restriction of drainage patterns. Usage of paths should be restricted if soil becomes soft from excessive spring rains.

4. Signs and entrance baffles will be constructed to discourage use by snowmobilers.

5. Chemicals should not be used for snow and ice removal on the street passing through the site nor those bordering it.

6. A water quality monitoring system should be implemented to evaluate the type of run-off which is draining into the site from University and private business complexes adjacent to the project. Steps should be taken to divert chemically polluted surface water which would endanger plants and animals.

V. ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED SHOULD THE PROPOSAL BE IMPLEMENTED

The adverse effects resulting in the loss of 28 acres of native landscape have already occurred due to the construction of Michigan Avenue and the lake. The Environmental Impact Assessment of the UW-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc., Lake Construction, Maria Drive at Michigan Avenue dated December 1974 and the assessment of the Michigan Avenue Extension, Stevens Point, Wisconsin dated December 1974 detail the adverse effects.

The construction of trail system will destroy 1.1 acres of native grasses and wild flowers. The planting of trees, grasses and wild flowers around the lake, on the vacated streetway and on the existing landfill site will more than replace the area of plants lost.

The only other adverse effect may be possible misuse of the site by the public. Since there is existing misuse of the site in the form of beer parties and the construction of shacks, it only becomes a question of the degree of public misuse and what kind will occur after development. Such negative impact can be lessened in at least four ways.

1. Create physical barriers in the form of shrubs, baffles or wood railings to limit movement of people.
2. Establish rules and regulations for use of the site.
3. Post signs to direct activity.
4. Design trails and activity areas with the highest degree of aesthetic appeal and maintain it so users will want to preserve what they see and experience.

VI. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

A. Negative Effects

Negative short-term effects are erosion, dust, noise and air pollution from equipment. These short-term effects would be felt during the construction phase.

Adverse long-term effects are the fact that some areas will be permanently utilized for roads, buildings, and utilities. Also, use will be more intensive than at the present.

B. Positive Effects

Beneficial long-term effects that the proposed project would impart are that more people would be able to enjoy the out-of-doors and gain a release from an increasingly urban environment. The area will also become more accessible to the handicapped, paraplegics and elderly who have the right to enjoy an outdoor experience.

The preservation of 186 acres of native plant and animal habitat by developing this recreation and nature awareness center is a significant positive long-term effect. By identifying the acreage in this way, temptation to use these lands for business, residential or University expansion will be removed. Twenty acres are presently zoned commercial but will be zoned conservancy when the project is implemented. The remaining acreage is zoned conservancy

but pressures could force rezoning for development if the area is not formally designated for recreational use.

Other positive long-term effects include: a greater public awareness of the beauty, diversity and value of a natural environment; the preservation of an educational resource which would provide excellent examples of how to group native plant materials to create a natural landscape in an urban environment; the promotion of better health by making exercising a more enjoyable experience in an aesthetically pleasing setting.

The proposed project is justified due to the overall benefits provided.

VII. ANY IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROPOSED ACTION

The land use would be lost for business, residential and University development. The large financial investment commits this land to recreational facilities and preservation of the natural landscape.

The materials used to construct the shelters, outdoor furniture, fitness trail exercise stations, trails and landscape plantings could be salvaged if the project were abandoned.

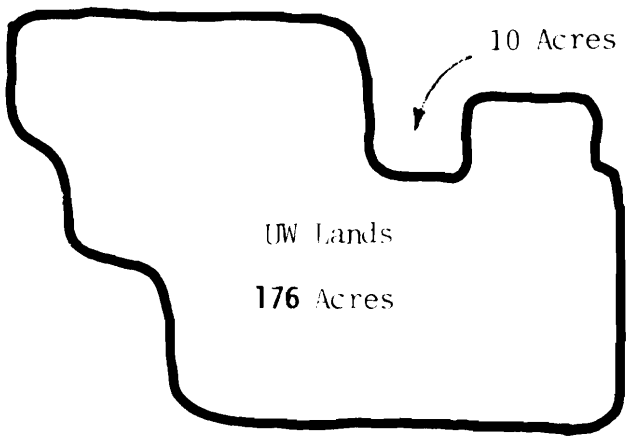
The development of the project will use resources of manpower, oil, gasoline, wear on equipment and capital. The use of such resources on the other hand provides employment and creates a valuable asset for people to use.

VIII. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the alternate land uses that would most logically occur in this area which is in the path of rapidly increasing urbanization. Therefore, if we fail to take advantage of the opportunities proposed in this project, in all probability one of, or a mixture of, the following alternative uses will occur, influenced by the law of supply and demand.

A. No Action Alternate

This alternate is based on the premise that the 50-acre parcel on which the lake is located would be donated to the University of Wisconsin, thereby creating a total University land area of 176 acres which would remain in its existing condition.



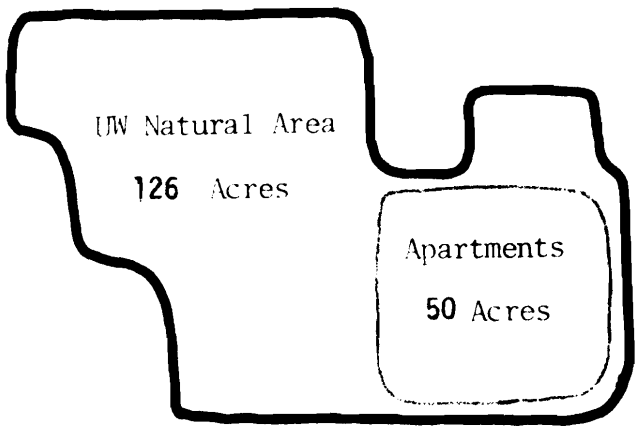
The natural areas would continue to be used as a nature laboratory for the College of Natural Resources. The land excavation would be completed, but the final site development would not. The disturbed lakeshore and access points would deteriorate as a result of erosion, growth of Eurasian weeds, and development of mini-bike trails. The north-south Michigan Avenue development would be completed by the City. The 10-acre proposed land acquisition would remain in private ownership subject to commercial zoning requirements. The vacated streetway would be partially redesigned

into a bicycle pathway and the project implemented as state funds become available. The landfill site would continue to be used by the University for materials storage.

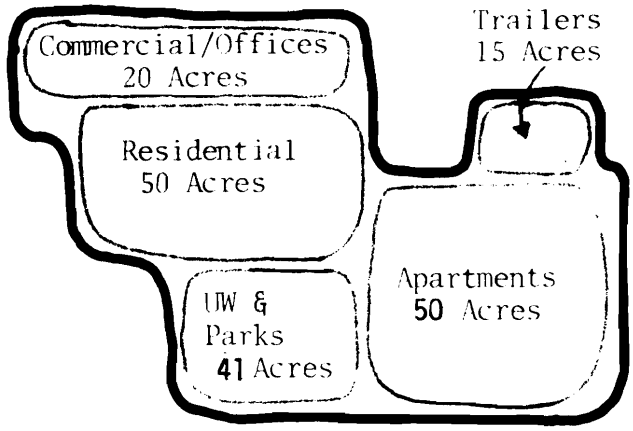
Most significant to note is the presence of the Wisconsin Building Commission and the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents policy to dispose of University lands not being used for development purposes. In the event no development activity occurs in this area due to the lack of state funding support in this austerity era, there is the likelihood these lands may be sold to provide additional money for the general state fund.

B. Multiple Family Residential Development

The University would maintain its lands as a natural area. The 50-acre parcel containing the lake would, instead of being donated to the University, be sold for the purpose of multiple family residential development. The presence of a lake makes this site a prime development target. The 26 acres of land surrounding the lake would accommodate 545 apartment units with 2,025 square feet per unit.

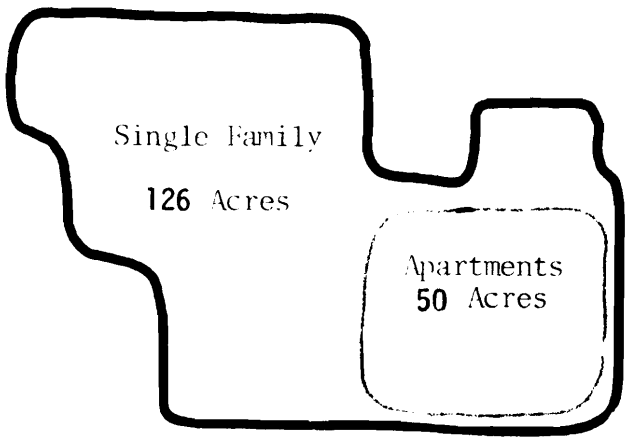


C. Planned Unit Development



The total 176 acres could profitably be developed with an overall plan for accommodating varied uses. The 50-acre parcel with the lake would be ideal for multiple family development with 545 apartment units constructed on the 26 acres surrounding the lake. A trailer court of 150 to 200 units would be constructed on the 15 acres north of the lake which is presently zoned commercial. Twenty acres along Northpoint Drive and across from the Sentry building would become a commercial retail and office development. Fifty acres in the central portion of the site would be developed as a single family residence of no less than 100 houses at a density of two per acre. The remaining 41 acres would become neighborhood parks and UW open space.

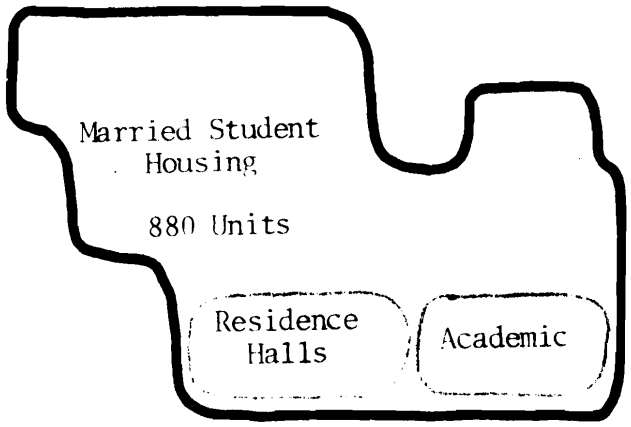
D. Single Family Housing



If the 126 acres of University lands are developed for single family use following normal platting procedures, neighborhood parks would use 7 acres, and street R.O.W. would use 25 acres (20 per-cent of total land) permitting the development of

~~development of~~ approximately 300 houses on the remaining 94 acres of land at three buildings per acre density. The 50-acre parcel of lake related lands would accommodate 545 multiple family residential units.

E. University Development - Expansion



The University could use all of the 187 acres in future expansion if the need arises. In 1968 a Long Range Development Plan for the Stevens Point campus was completed. This was at a period when the University was growing in enrollment much faster than it is presently. The plan shows 880 married student housing units north of Maria Drive accompanied by open space and athletic fields to serve the residents. Four residents halls were also anticipated, having a capacity of 1,500 beds. Parking and open space would have served these accommodations. An academic structure having 55,000 assignable square feet was also planned.

The following table shows the number of family units in the above alternates.

	Alternates	Acres	Family Units
A.	University of Wisconsin Lands (No Action)	176	
B.	Multiple Family (Private)	50	545
	UW Lands	126	0
C.	Planned Unit Development	176	
	Apartment Unit	50	545
	Trailer Court	15	200
	Residences (Single Family)	50	100
	Office/Commercial	20	--
	Open Space (UW)	41	--
D.	Single Family Housing UW Lands	126	300
	Multiple Family (Private)	50	545
E.	UW Expansion	176	
	Academics	55	0
	Married Student Housing	81	880
	Open Space	40	0

F. Impacts on Project Area if Alternates Are Implemented

Significant impacts will occur if the above alternates are implemented. For example, four of the above alternates indicate the lake to be private and not available to the public. The lake would benefit only those living in the 545 lakeshore apartments. Several thousand people would be excluded from the lake resource.

Traffic volumes on Division Street, Northpoint Drive, Maria Drive, and Michigan Avenue will experience an A.D.T. increase of 5 percent annually based on existing land use. Therefore, the addition of 545 to 880 housing units each having 1 1/2 vehicles per family would create significant traffic conjestion and circulation problems on the existing collector street system.

The additional 545 to 880 housing units consisting of an average of 3.43 persons per household in Stevens Point, would greatly affect city services. According to the city, the sanitary sewer system would be strained. The addition of new residential building development would add considerable storm drainage requirements to an area already receiving its maximum surface capability from the surrounding drainage area. The roof tops and paved street surfaces would cover 50 percent of the ground surface, thus greatly decreasing the water retention capability of the site. The existing Moses Creek storm drainage system which flows westerly through the campus and the central business district to the Wisconsin River is functioning at its maximum.

The 880 family units in the one alternate would provide approximately 1,300 children based on an average of 1.5 children per family. Such numbers could not be handled by the existing school system which is presently at maximum capacity. Unfortunately residential development cost-benefit analysis prove that taxes paid by housing developments are less than what is required to cover the cost of providing services for them. The development of any of the alternate proposals would create a much greater environmental impact than the proposed action.