

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA • Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

October 8, 1975

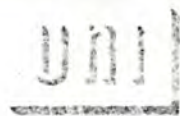
Mr. John Bruce
Iowa Northland Regional Council
of Governments
209 West 5th Street
Waterloo, Iowa

Dear Mr. Bruce:

The reports on the environmental description and educational usage of Hartman Reserve, Black Hawk County, Iowa are enclosed in accordance with your request at a meeting with the Biology Department faculty on September 8, 1975. While we feel that we have been conservative in compiling lists of species and stress that information is probably incomplete on most subjects, we are confident that the enclosed data are sufficiently complete and accurate to provide the environmental assessment needed.

We are pleased that we have been able to collectively pool our expertise and provide you with this information. Though we all work for the University of Northern Iowa, we wish to emphasize that in this endeavor we also acted voluntarily as citizens of the community. The acquisition of Hartman Reserve for use as a community outdoor education resource deserves the support of all Black Hawk County citizens interested in improving the quality of our educational system. It also merits acquisition simply to preserve the last sizable segment of mature, relatively undisturbed upland forest in the county as a part of our biological heritage for the enjoyment and benefit of present and future generations. What a splendid bicentennial contribution this would be for the citizens of the county to leave for children yet unborn!

Each of us has visited the Hartman Reserve on several to many occasions. It is our unanimous feeling that there is no other tract of land in Black Hawk County so ideally suited for development as an outdoor education center. It is presently receiving considerable usage by the area schools. This fact clearly demonstrates its need for this purpose and its advantages. It is conveniently accessible to the large metropolitan area while providing a significantly large tract of land in one location which offers much diversity.



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There are two major reservations which we have regarding the proposal, as presently planned, to which we express our opposition and urge that the proposal be modified to accommodate these changes. One pertains to plans for multiple agency management; the other to the virtual exclusion of the lowland woods from the proposed acquisition. Just because monetary contributions for acquisition may be derived from several sources should not dictate that multiple agents should manage the tract as the present proposal would indicate. Our experience with the University Biological Preserves System convinces us that a single management agent, with advisors from the major user groups and professionals with management experience and expertise, would be most advisable. We recommend that the Black Hawk County Conservation Board be that single agency. It is an agency representing all citizens of the county. It already has some experience and personnel for the management of such lands, and, based on precedences in other counties, it could be concluded the obligation to develop such a facility for the citizens of the county. A firm use program must be adopted at the outset to enable the establishment of a functional, compatible management program. Responsibility cannot be diffuse. Herein, there is danger if a multiple management agency is established.

In regard to the second matter of concern, the entire Reserve should be purchased with both its upland and lowland forests intact. Indeed, consideration should also be given to the acquisition of an adjoining tract to the east which is an old field in early stages of succession. The lowland forest, which is largely omitted from the proposal, enhances the tract as an educational resource by providing much needed diversity. To exclude it eliminates many species of plants and some animals from consideration. It could be argued that there is much lowland woods already existent in our park system, but none is so strategically located in association with a prime upland woods. Travel time to visit different community types would be greatly reduced by acquiring this total tract. Furthermore, the larger contiguous tract as it now exists would not only provide for greater diversity of biota but would also lessen the human impact under the anticipated heavy usage. Management to avoid undesirable impact can be more effectively planned and implemented for a larger unit. To exclude the lowland forest from consideration for the apparent reason that it would interfere with a possible inter-city traffic corridor is premature. Brice, Petrides and Associates Inc., planning consultants of the inter-city expressway, have repeatedly emphasized at public hearings that the location of the route has not been established and that they plan to be influenced by public opinion. In our judgment, each project must stand on its own merits; the two are separate issues and should not be treated as one project. To do so can only indicate to the public that the expressway site has already been selected.

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If we can clarify any portion of this report or our comments of reservations regarding the application, we will be pleased to arrange a meeting time of mutual convenience for discussion. The acquisition of Hartman Reserve as a community educational resource is an exceptionally worthy project which we all strongly support. We are dedicated to it and are willing to expend such time and energy as are necessary to achieve this goal.

Sincerely yours,

B. L. Clausen

Bernard L. Clausen, Associate Professor of Biology

Daryl D. Smith

Daryl D. Smith, Associate Professor of Biology

Virgil E. Dowell

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