

February 21, 2002

John Wiley, Chancellor
Chancellors Office
161 Bascom Hall
Campus

Dear Chancellor Wiley:

The Campus Natural Areas Committee (CNAC) has concluded its deliberations on the user and boundary requests from Biocore, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the Eagle Heights Garden interests. A summary of our deliberations is attached. Included with this summary is the Campus Natural Areas mission statement and use policies. I have also included a draft of the master planning process we will begin this spring. I believe that both may provide some insight as to the decisions that we have and will continue to make.

For your quick reading, the CNAC passed the following motion on December 10, 2001:

“approve FP&M Land Use Option #1 as presented (and attached), with the addition of 0.5 acres in the University Houses’ garden plot area; that a transition period of 2 growing seasons (CALs occupies in 2004) be established for the Eagle Heights Community Gardens (EHCG) plots where CALs plots will be located; that a transition period of 5 growing seasons (through 2006) be established for the remaining reduced area of EHCG plots (peninsula); and that the exact area for UW-Grounds will be determined in the future by this committee.”

On January 28 the Committee agreed that the day-to-day governance and administration of the gardens does not belong with the CNAC. However, it does need to be kept aware of actions taken within the gardens that may impact the Campus Natural Areas.

Although, the recommended solution is not one preferred by all involved parties, I believe it is workable and that it provides some unique opportunities for CALs, Biocore, EHCG, and the CNAC to work together on a wide variety of learning opportunities. As

we proceed with our master planning activities, the Committee will continue to engage each of these groups to this end.

Sincerely,

John A. Harrington
Chair, Campus Natural Areas Committee

Enclosures

xc: Bruce Braun
John Harrod

Campus Natural Areas Committee Chair's Report to the Chancellor February 21, 2002

The Campus Natural Areas Committee has completed its deliberations for several user requests and boundary issues, particularly those of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) and the Eagle Heights Community Gardens (EHCG). To put the Committee's decisions in context I have divided this report into three sections: Mission and Policies; Boundaries and User Requests; and Master Planning Process.

1. Mission and Policies

The mission responds to the charge in your letter of September 5, 2000. In that letter you charged us "to ensure the integrity of these cherished campus resources through the provision of necessary and appropriate oversight, policies, guidelines, stewardship, and management." The Committee relied on work conducted by the Campus Natural Areas (CNA) Planning Task Force under the leadership of Professor Robert Ray. Three members of the current CNAC were on that committee. Its work was helpful in guiding the CNAC in the development of the mission statement and policies below:

Mission

The Campus Natural Areas (CNA) are a place where the campus community can experience the aesthetic and intellectual benefits of nature. They provide biologically significant areas of natural plant and animal communities for teaching, research, outreach, and environmentally sensitive use. The CNA are as essential an element of the university as its lecture halls, laboratories, and playing fields. They contribute a strong sense of place to the UW campus as a whole and foster a mutually beneficial relationship between humans and the rest of nature.

The Campus Natural Areas Committee (CNAC) ensures the integrity of the CNA through the provision of necessary and appropriate oversight, policies, guidelines, stewardship, and management in order to protect and pass on these natural communities to future generations.

Policies

Policies concerning teaching and research in the CNA are summarized below. Policies concerning recreational uses of the CNA will be addressed during the master planning process.

1. The preservation and restoration of natural plant and animal communities in conjunction with UW instruction and research is the primary management objective for most of the Campus Natural Areas.
2. Teaching and research projects, including master planning, management, and restoration activities, that study and restore natural communities have the highest priority in the CNA. Preference is given to campus – affiliated organizations whose purpose includes thoughtful and constructive relation to natural landscapes.

3. Research and educational projects (including class, independent study, service learning, and formal and informal volunteer assistance) are encouraged but require permits and coordination to avoid conflicts and damage to the resources. Requests may be denied in situation where undertaking the project on top of other approved projects is likely to result in damage to the CNA.
4. Any teaching or research activity that will alter vegetation, animals, soils, or hydrology (including the collection of specimens) requires a permit from the CNAC.
5. Activities that have no impact and leave no trace (e.g., passive observation) do not require a permit but we request project registration with the CNA Field Manger. Because other uses or habitat modifications may occur in the areas under observation, the CNAC encourages all persons carrying out long term projects to request a permit so that we know about your project and can notify you of potential conflicts.
6. Projects that include the building of any structures (including roads and paths) in the CNA are discouraged and generally will not be approved by the CNAC.
7. Grant proposals for projects that rely on existing vegetation, animals, soils, or hydrology or that will change vegetation, animals, soils, or hydrology or that will add structures require approval by the CNAC *prior* to submission to the granting agency.
8. Activities in the CNA that began before the current oversight and policies were put into place (January 2001) must also go through the permit/review process. The CNAC reserves the right to eliminate those that are inconsistent with current policy.
9. Only authorized motorized vehicles are permitted. Their use must be kept to a minimum and restricted to paved and gravel roads.
10. The use of any pesticide in the CNA is restricted and requires authorization. Potentially hazardous chemicals may be applied only by trained personnel with oversight by the CNA Field Manager.
11. Prescribed burns require authorization and must be carried out by trained personnel with oversight by the CNA Field Manager.

2. Boundaries and User Requests

CNA Boundaries

The attached map (Attachment 2) outlines the recommendations for the physical boundaries of the CNA. The CNA extends from Eagle Heights and Wally Baumann Woods on its west border with the Village of Shorewood, along Lake Mendota through Frautschi and Picnic Point and Class of 1918 Marsh. The CNA continues along the entire length of the Lakeshore Path ending at and including Muir Woods. The CNAC is also concerned with activities in adjacent areas that impact the CNA by causing erosion (e.g., storm water from Observatory Hill, the Medical complex/lot 60, and Eagle Heights), tree damage (e.g., building construction at the crew house), and noise and light pollution. These CNA boundaries were recommended by the Arboretum and reaffirmed by the CNAC in consultation with Grounds, FP & M, and University Housing.

Use and Boundary Issues with CALS, EHCG, and Grounds

The CNAC knew from its beginning that several boundary issues would require resolution, but it had hoped that these could wait until a master planning process had been completed. This was not to happen because several units (Biocore, CALS, and Eagle Heights Community Gardens) had urgent needs that had to be addressed. Besides the CNA mission and policy statements, the Committee has considered the Kline-Bader report (the current plan for management of the natural areas adopted by the UW Arboretum in 1996) in its deliberations.

The Committee received a proposal for garden boundaries from representatives of the EHCG, three boundary scenarios developed by staff of FP&M, and a statement of need from CALS. FP&M also introduced proposals for restructuring the EHCG governance to align it with state and university protocols and modifications to the areas that Grounds occupies. Since the aspects that dealt with Grounds were not urgent, the Committee decided to postpone that discussion and integrate it into the master planning process.

1. Expansion of the Biocore Prairie

The CNAC unanimously approved the request by Biocore to expand their prairie restoration site from 2 acres to 5 acres. This is a reaffirmation of prior commitments made by the UW-Arboretum. The Biocore site is located in the eastern one-third of the open field. The committee reasoned that the Biocore use was implementing the recommendations of the Kline-Bader report while also using it as valuable adjunct to a teaching program. This was seen to be perfectly in accord with the mission of the CNA.

2. Relocation of CALS Instructional Gardens and Reduction of EHG Area.

CALS will lose its Walnut Street test gardens if and when the new co-generation heating plant is built and requested 2.7 acres in the CNA to relocate these gardens. The requested area is adjacent to Lake Mendota Drive, immediately north and east of the existing EHCG, and south of the City of Madison water utility (Attachment 1). This area provides parking at the water utility and existing water lines. The location requires the elimination of 45 garden plots in the EHCG. CALS will provide approximately one-third of its space for the F.H. King students' organic gardening project and additional space for instructional programs by CALS faculty. After considerable discussion and listening to all affected parties, the CNAC approved the location of the CALS' test gardens next to and including some space currently occupied by the EHCG. The CNAC has told CALS that it would not agree to future structure, parking, or utility expansion.

3. Boundary Changes in the Eagle Heights Community Gardens

CALS' garden relocation results in the loss of 45 Eagle Heights garden plots (out of 458). The CNAC also noted that a peninsula of approximately 33 plots (some of which are abandoned) jutting out into the CNA field will be problematic for restoring this area in the future and recommends that it be phased out slowly.

To mitigate the loss of garden plots, the CNAC recommends that 0.5 acres of land southwest of the Eagle Heights apartments near University Houses be incorporated into the Eagle Heights Gardens. This area, known as the "U-Houses plots," is currently underutilized and only partially being used for productive gardens. University Housing and UW Grounds are committed to integrating the area into the overall gardening program on campus and increasing its viability as an offset to the lost EHCG space (if there is sufficient demand by the EHCG).

4. Decision

The CNAC began deliberations on CALS' request in December 2000 and began discussions with EHCG representatives in summer 2001 when it became apparent that space within the gardens would likely be impacted. During its deliberations the CNAC met with EHCG personnel, UW Housing, Grounds, and CALS several times, particularly in fall 2001. In addition, Committee members conversed with members of these groups by phone, email, and face-to-face meetings.

The strong devotion of the leaders of the EHCG to their cooperative project made it difficult to reach decisions on boundaries. A representative group of gardeners expressed strong concern for the loss of any garden space and fear of governance loss over the plot area. The CNAC understood the sensitivity of the issue and spent considerable time in discussions of how various alternatives would impact the groups. A majority of the committee, while respecting the EHCG program, did not accept the argument that the proposed loss of garden space will severely impact the project, although it could potentially reduce participant numbers. Members of the Committee also noted that a number of gardeners had multiple plots and that there was a significant amount of plot abandonment evident in mid-summer. Members of the CNAC are not indifferent to the gardener's issues. We very much value the diverse community involved in gardening there.

Some committee members noted that CALS' relocation into the Eagle Heights Community Garden area offers several opportunities to enhance the campus garden efforts. One-third of the CALS plots (approximately equal to those removed from the EHCG) will be gardened by F.H.King students. These students have an interest in organic gardening and are being displaced from their current location on campus by the additional power generation facilities. The Department of Horticulture and others will use the rest of the space in the CALS plots for instruction as well as research.

The committee views its final decision as a compromise that best balances the competing demands on space. The following motions were passed, the first dealt with CALS' request and the second with both CALS and the EHCG.

On November 5, 2001 the following motion was approved 7-1:

"That we approve in principle continuation of the Eagle Heights Gardens and the addition of CALS garden plots in the area identified in the proposal submitted on October 15, 2001 and noted as Exhibit A of approximately 2.7 acres area. This approval is subject to the understanding that CALS' use will be compatible with the continued existence of the Eagle Heights Gardens and the surrounding natural area. The final arrangements and agreements will be subject to the submission of a request following procedure for long-term permits. We request FP & M staff to assess the options for specific designs of the space. Exact boundaries are to be established after receiving this report. The Campus Natural Area requests that this report be made available on or before December 10, 2001."

On December 10, 2001 the following motion was passed 6-0-1.

"approve FP&M Land Use Option #1 as presented, with the addition of 0.5 acres in the University Houses garden plot area; that a transition period of 2 growing seasons (CALS occupies in 2004) be established for the Eagle Heights Community Gardens (EHCG) plots where CALS plots will be located; that a transition period of 5 growing seasons (through 2006) be established for the remaining reduced area of EHCG plots (the peninsula); and that the exact area for Grounds will be determined in the future by this committee."

5. EHCG Governance

Use policies and governance have been a major topic of discussion with the gardeners. The CNAC's charge is not to determine the governance structure for the EHCG but to recommend its boundaries and be cognizant of any activities that it and other groups adjacent to the CNA are engaged in that may have impact on the CNA. Therefore, it would request that any governance committee of the EHCG have a CNAC member upon it and that an annual report of garden activities be presented to the CNAC.

6. The Prairie

Some of the public commentary has portrayed the compromise decision reached as sacrificing gardens for "yet another" prairie. This is an oversimplification of the situation, which required the committee to balance several competing demands on space. The restoration and protection of this area's natural communities is at the core of the CNA vision. Our recent experiences with respect to the clearing at Frautschi Point and the input from the campus community that came in its wake have made it necessary to consider revisions to the "Kline-Bader" plan, which called for restoration of

prairie to some areas presently supporting degraded forests. A more deliberate and cautious approach to tree cutting now seems advisable, and this means that prairie restoration can only be undertaken in presently open areas, and the only suitable area is adjacent to the Eagle Heights Community Gardens.

The peninsula re-absorption into the CNA would be recommended whether the field area was slated to be prairie, woodland, or wetland. The present configuration is problematic to restoration and management because of the narrow width of the projection and the significant amount of edge that it introduces. Prairie, however, is the preferred community to be planted next to the gardens. Forested communities would both cast shade and invade deeply into the plots.

During its master planning process the CNAC will continue to consider mechanisms to reduce garden plot loss including the removal of an island of "weedy" trees within the garden boundaries and relocation of compost piles and Grounds staging areas that may possibly increase garden space. However, such decisions must wait until a CNA master plan is finalized.

3. Master plan

The CNAC is beginning an 18-month master planning process. I have outlined below the general steps that the Committee will likely follow and a tentative timeline. We welcome your suggestions. Upon completion of the Master Plan we expect to have types and boundaries for biological communities (plant and animal), trail locations, signs and interpretive devices, finalized boundaries for Grounds, and management agreements with UW Housing, guidelines for campus and community interpretive programs, and general use, and resolution for the future of the beach house. Gary Brown, FP&M, will assist the Committee in this process. This is an ambitious task for the Committee and I expect many changes to the process below before we are done. We will seek to collapse this process, when possible, as we proceed.

Draft Master Plan Process

- A. Develop a Common Understanding within the Committee on the CNA Resources and Existing Uses (February/March)
 1. Review charge and mission
 2. Committee and Sub committee discussion of current Kline-Bader master plan
 3. Committee and Sub committee discussion of current biological and cultural components and needs
 4. Committee and Sub committee discussion of current uses and infrastructure
 5. Review of past CNA taskforce work

- B. Complete Inventory and Analysis Needs (February/March/April)
 - 1. Field (vegetation, soils, topography, hydrology, trails, roads, cultural/historical features such as native American mounds, the pines and orchard; aesthetics)
 - 2. Assembling available information
 - 3. Map Analysis
- C. Committee Discussion on Issues and General Goals (March-April)
 - 1. Vegetation
 - 2. Fauna
 - 3. Uses
 - 4. Cultural Features
- D. Focus Group Meetings (May-September) (Facilitator led/several groups may be collapsed into one)
 - 1. Campus (faculty)
 - 2. Campus (students)
 - 3. Campus (administrative units)
 - 4. Eagle Heights residents
 - 5. Gardeners of University Housing and Eagle Heights
 - 6. Public
 - 7. Friends of the CNA
 - 8. Municipalities (Cities of Madison, Shorewood)
 - 9. Dane County Parks/DNR
- E. Development of Alternative Objectives and Solutions by subcommittee (Fall 02)
- F. CNAC Review of Subcommittee Alternatives (Fall 02)
- G. Focus Meetings to Present Alternatives (Spring 03) (Facilitator led)
 - 1. Campus (all)
 - 2. Housing and Gardens
 - 3. Friends of the CNA
 - 4. Public
- H. Strategy of Choice and Implementation (Spring/Summer 03)
- I. Report Generation

Submitted by John Harrington for the Campus Natural Areas Committee,
February 21, 2002