

October 26, 2023

Sarah Lerner – City of Madison  
City-County Building, Room 115  
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**RE: Wexford Stormwater Ponds Herptile Capture-Relocation Summary,  
City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin**

In April of 2023, the City of Madison contracted Heartland Ecological Group, Inc. (Heartland) to provide Herptile capture and relocation services prior to a construction project within the Wexford Stormwater Ponds. The Wexford Stormwater Ponds are located northeast of the intersection of Old Sauk Road and North High Point Road, City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin (Figures 1 & 2). The purpose of these efforts was to avoid and minimize impacts to herptiles during the construction process. Heartland completed the following tasks:

Task 1: Complete two meander surveys to capture and relocate any present herptiles.

Task 2: Install and maintain exclusion fencing around the perimeter of the sight to prevent herptiles from reentering into the water body.

Task 3A: Install and maintain five turtle traps on site for the purpose of removing most of the turtles before construction work could begin.

Task 3B: Using the installed turtle traps, remove turtles from the pond prior to construction activities.

Task 3C: Submit a report detailing capture efforts and numbers of herptiles removed.

Task 4: Relocate herptiles found by construction crews on site during the dormant period.

**Summary of Work Completed**

Silt fence was installed on May 25, 2023, according to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Amphibian and Reptile Exclusion Fencing Protocols standard and was maintained in good condition throughout the capture and relocation period. The fencing was removed on October 11, 2023, after the area had experienced several overnight frosts, reducing herptile movement.

Heartland staff installed and baited turtle traps on June 27, 2023, and removed them on October 11, 2023. During that time, 101 painted and nine (9) snapping turtles were captured and relocated to various City of Madison owned ponds of appropriate habitat. Release of turtles was spread out over several ponds to prevent overcrowding.



Both meander surveys were completed on June 22, 2023, and September 19, 2023. A total of 225 frogs and four (4) turtles were removed using this method. Several large tadpoles were removed during the first survey as well as several frogs in between tadpole and adult life stages. All frogs from the first survey were released in the Blackhawk Neighborhood Park ponds. All frogs from the second survey were released in the pond near the intersection of Nesbitt Road and Dolphin Drive. Frogs were released into two different ponds to reduce handling time and promote swift recovery after capture. Frogs captured consisted primarily of bullfrogs and green frogs. While on site, Heartland staff did not observe any salamanders or snakes within the unit.

In addition to the 108 turtles captured in the traps, four (4) turtles were captured during the meander surveys. During the removal project, 104 painted turtles and eight (8) snapping turtles were captured including several large adult snapping turtles. Trapping efforts commenced for six (6) days in June and sixty (60) individual turtles were captured for an average of ten turtles per day. In August, trapping commenced for a total of nine (9) days and thirty-nine (39) individuals were captured for an average of 4.3 turtles per day. In September, trapping commenced for four (4) days and nine (9) turtles were captured for an average of 2.25 turtles per day. The diminishing returns on the trapping effort indicated that most turtles have been removed from the pond.

### **Dormant Period Relocation**

Heartland will be available to remove herptiles found by construction crews during the dormant season project work. Wes Ellarson (cell phone: 715-570-984) and Luke Bignall (cell phone: 906-281-1700) are the contacts available for this effort. All capture and releases will be tracked and documented throughout the process.

### **Future Recommendations**

One of the largest challenges faced during the trapping efforts was muskrat damage to turtle traps. Timely repairs were made to all damaged traps during site visits and placement of traps to discourage muskrat use was implemented.

Additionally, fluctuations in water level created challenges. Lowering the water level slightly during the summer prior to construction could make trapping and meander surveys more efficient. High water levels provide more range for herptiles, often flooding shoreline vegetation where frogs prefer to hide. Lower than average water levels may also encourage resident animals to look for new habitat naturally.

However, based on the success of the capture and release efforts, Heartland believes that this project met the goals of limiting the impacts to herptiles during the planned construction project, and a significant number of herptiles were captured and relocated from the Wexford Ponds.



Wexford Ponds – Herptile Capture and Relocation  
City of Madison  
October 26, 2023

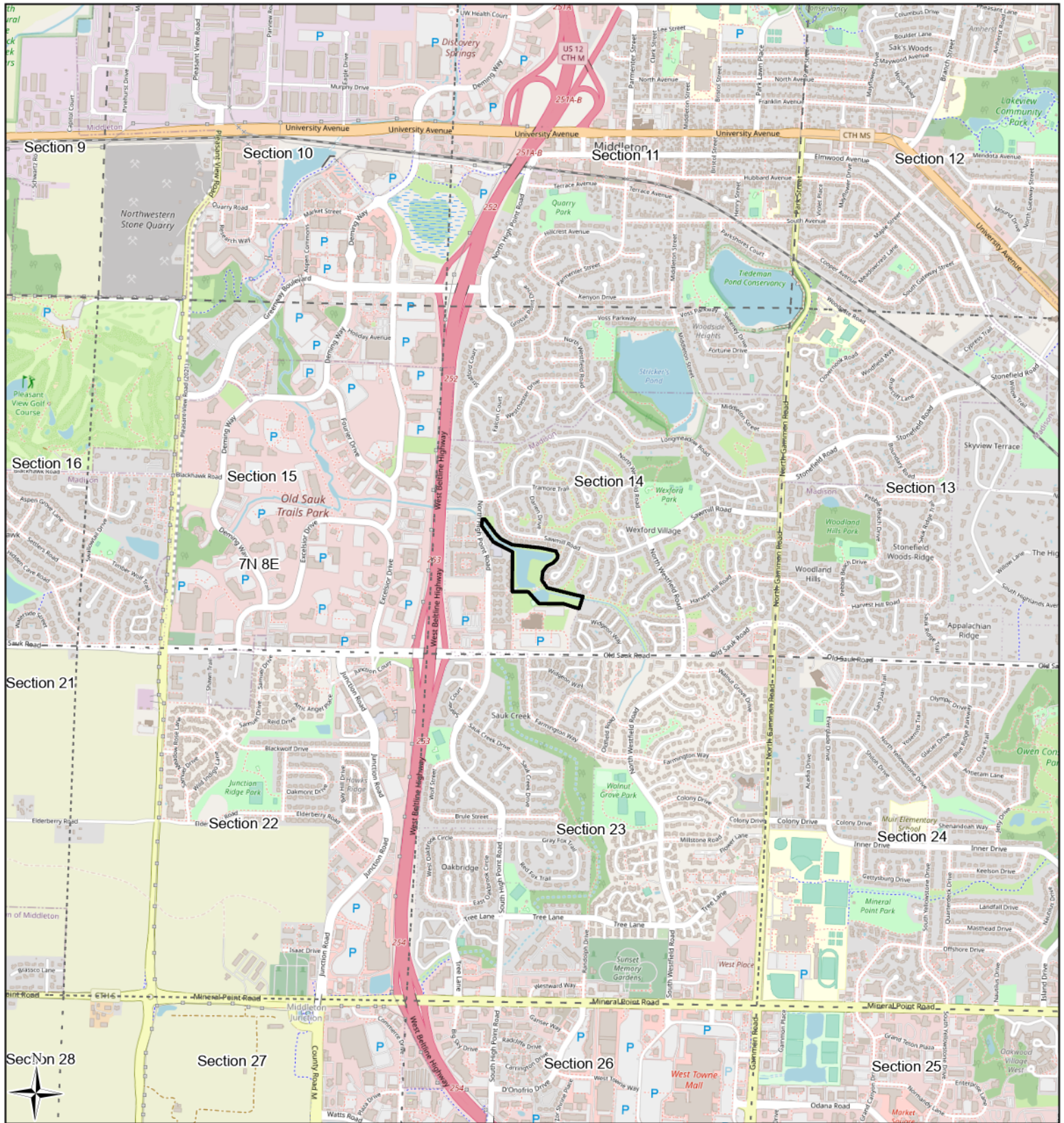
Please feel free to reach out to us directly if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

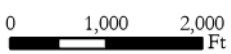
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Attachments: Project Location Maps; Site Photographs





- Study Area (13.18 ac)
- Township
- Section



**Heartland**  
ECOLOGICAL GROUP INC

Figure 1. Project Location  
Wexford Ponds  
Project #20230960  
T7N, R8E, S14  
C Madison, Dane Co

OpenStreetMap  
ESRI LRR: NCNE







Study Area (13.18 ac)  
 Dane Co 1' Contours

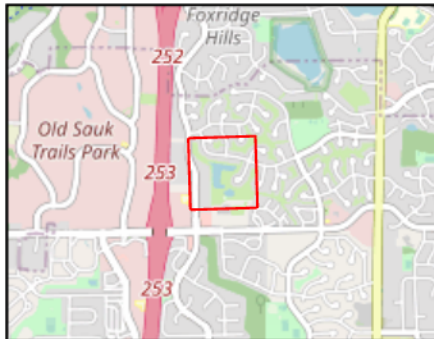


**Heartland**  
ECOLOGICAL GROUP INC

Figure 2. Field Map  
 Wexford Ponds  
 Project #20230960  
 T7N, R8E, S14  
 C Madison, Dane Co

2022 Dane Co  
 Dane Co, HEG  
 LRR: NCNE

Figure Created: 4/14/2023







**Photo #1** June 22, 2023



**Photo #2** June 22, 2023



**Photo #3** June 22, 2023



**Photo #4** June 22, 2023



**Photo #5** June 22, 2023



**Photo #6** June 23, 2023



**Photo #7** June 23, 2023



**Photo #8** June 23, 2023



**Photo #9** June 23, 2023



**Photo #10** June 23, 2023



**Photo #11** June 23, 2023



**Photo #12** June 23, 2023





**Photo #13** June 23, 2023



**Photo #14** June 23, 2023



**Photo #15** June 26, 2023



**Photo #16** June 28, 2023



**Photo #17** June 28, 2023



**Photo #18** June 28, 2023





**Photo #19** June 28, 2023



**Photo #20** June 28, 2023



**Photo #21** September 6, 2023



**Photo #22** September 6, 2023



**Photo #23** September 6, 2023



**Photo #24** September 6, 2023





**Photo #25** September 6, 2023



**Photo #26** September 6, 2023



**Photo #27** September 6, 2023



**Photo #28** September 6, 2023



**Photo #29** September 19, 2023



**Photo #30** September 19, 2023