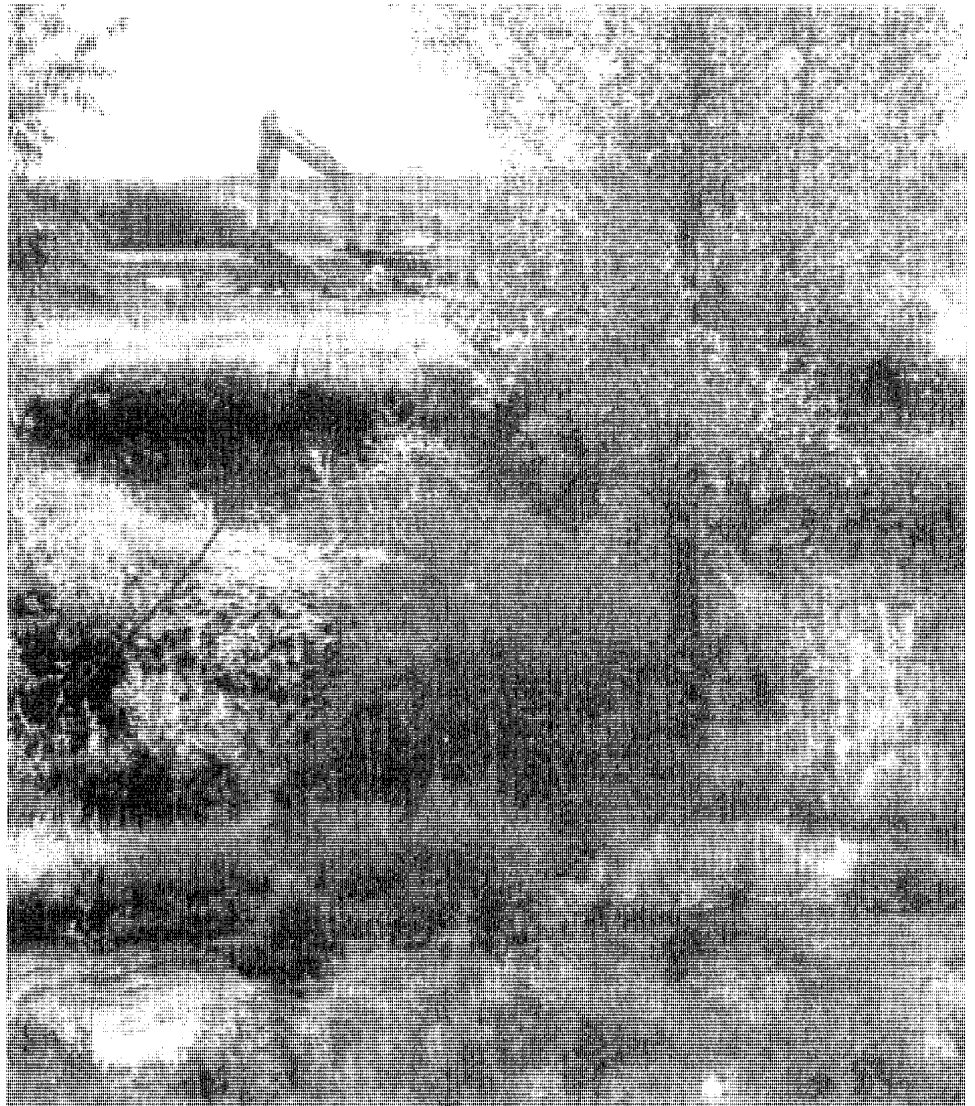


Urban Growth and Environmental Protection: Searching for a Balance at Eagle Creek

by Paul Phifer, William Cunningham and Bruce Vondracek

At the base of the river valley bluffs in northern Scott County, just south of the Twin Cities, a shallow pool bubbles vigorously as water percolates upward through the sand below. This rare "boiling spring" serves as the main water source for Eagle Creek's west branch and one of the last remaining self-reproducing brown trout populations in the metropolitan area. The spring is considered a sacred site by the local Mdewakanton Sioux, whose legend says that an eagle flew out of the boiling spring and took human form in order to guide the tribe, hence the name Eagle Creek. Together with the nearby Savage Fen, a sixty-four-acre calcereous (alkaline) wetland, the area around Eagle Creek contains several plant and animal species listed by the state as "threatened" or "of special concern," along with remnants of one of the most endangered habitat types in the world, oak savanna.

This area, in the city of Savage, lies directly in the path of the rapidly expanding Twin Cities metropolitan region. With the recent completion of the Bloomington Ferry bridge over the Minnesota River, Savage



In This Issue

Urban Growth and Environmental Protection	1
Idle Youth in Minnesota	7
Improving Economic Forecasting ..	11

expects to more than double in population over the next twenty years, and these spaces near Eagle Creek have been targeted by some as an ideal place to settle the newcomers. But other groups and individuals see disastrous ecological damage resulting from this growth. The significance of the dispute is made quite clear by a survey recently conducted for the *Metropolitan Council Growth Option Report*, finding that Twin Citians place the protection of wetlands, woodlands, and other natural areas as “the most important value” to be considered in growth planning. The question is then, how can we better plan so as to reduce these “developer vs. conservationist” disputes? In other words, how can a community better manage urban growth while protecting natural resources? These are the questions Savage city officials have had to answer.

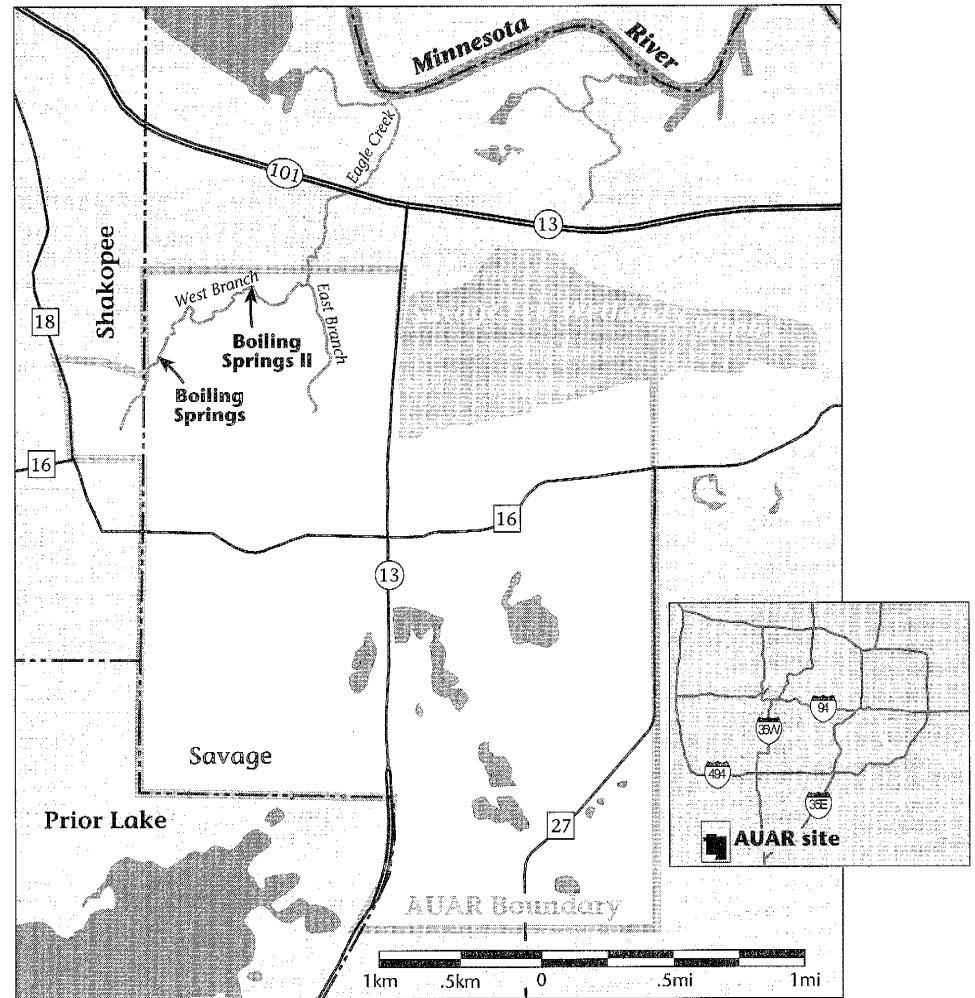
To assess the impact development would have on Eagle Creek, as Minnesota law requires, the city of Savage chose a somewhat unusual environmental review method. It is a process that has been in existence for nearly ten years but has rarely been used—the Alternative Urban Area-wide Review (AUAR). Our study analyzes the effectiveness of the AUAR using the Savage example as a case study, and we make specific recommendations as to how the AUAR can play a role in the struggle for more comprehensive and environmentally-aware land use planning. The research tools employed in this analysis were a series of qualitative interviews with eighteen key players in the Eagle Creek AUAR, and a mail survey to ascertain Savage residents’ knowledge of and participation in the AUAR process.

A New Approach

Gregg Downing, the Environmental Review Coordinator of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), said he knew in the mid-1980s that the typical urban environmental reviews were deeply flawed when, in one summer, a single town submitted five Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAWs). The five projects were all near each other but were not considered to be connected actions, and so had to be reviewed separately. Mr. Downing said that summer illuminated the problem of the “fragmented and imperfect kind of review we were doing in urbanizing areas.” In response, Mr. Downing, with a group consisting of agency staff, local developers, regional planners, and representatives of environmental interest groups, drafted legislation creating the

Cover photo: Because of the AUAR, construction near Eagle Creek (in foreground) is leaving a 200 foot buffer zone on both sides of the creek.

The AUAR (Alternative Urban Area-wide Review) Area in Savage, Minnesota



AUAR as an alternative to EAWs and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).

What sets the AUAR apart is that, rather than being restricted to the evaluation of a single development proposal, it examines an entire geographic area. As Bill Penning of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says, “The AUAR looks at a piece of ground rather than individual projects.” At the same time, however, the *1995 Minnesota Rules* state that the AUAR must have a similar “content and format” to an EAW, while it also “must provide for a level of analysis comparable to that of an EIS.” Mr. Downing envisions the AUAR as something a city conducts on a particular area that, although likely to be developed, has not yet been the subject of specific development proposals. It is a way for a city to outline its environmental and cultural concerns and to prepare a proactive rather than reactive mitigation plan.

To entice a city to use the AUAR, the

rules exempt from further EAW or EIS review any “residential and commercial development projects within the [AUAR] boundaries...that are consistent with development assumption established [in the AUAR]...as long as the approval and construction of the project complies with the conditions of the plan for mitigation developed [in the AUAR].” In other words, once an AUAR is completed, then any future development projects consistent with the AUAR plan are exempted from further review, except those mandatory reviews performed in conjunction with any required permits.

An Opportunity for Savage

In 1990, the city of Savage received permission from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council for an expansion of their Metropolitan Urban Services Area (MUSA) line, allowing infrastructure services to be brought to a 2,400-acre area in Savage’s western and northwestern sections. The subsequent application for extension of sanitary sewer and water service to the

newly created MUSA area triggered the requirement for an EAW. The results of the EAW then raised concerns that the infrastructure extension could adversely affect the Savage Fen, a habitat type offered considerable protection by Minnesota law.

Based on these concerns, in March of 1994 Savage chose to take broader action and, in a memorandum of understanding with the DNR, promised to conduct an AUAR on the extension area. Contemporaneously, three housing development projects (two in Savage and one in neighboring Shakopee) were proposed for the west branch of Eagle Creek. But because Savage initially did not consider any of these three projects to be connected actions, the city excluded its two development sites from the promised review, granting them preliminary approval. The AUAR explains, "The [proposals] in Savage were submitted at different points in time and city of Savage officials were unaware of activities in the city of Shakopee."

However, at the petition of Trout Unlimited, a national trout conservation organization, the EQB reviewed all three proposals and determined them to be "phased and connected actions" and therefore subject to an EAW requirement. The EQB then offered Savage the option of either conducting a single EAW for the three projects (including the Shakopee development site through an agreement with the city of Shakopee) or

of incorporating them all into the AUAR. Savage chose the latter, thereby increasing the total AUAR review area to 2,600 acres (see map).

The comprehensive geographical review was made available for public comment on October 10, 1994, and it created a maelstrom of controversy. Due to the extraordinary public interest surrounding this issue, the Savage City Council established an AUAR Advisory Panel, an action not required by law. The panel—comprised of eighteen representatives drawn from local, state and federal agencies, conservation groups, landowners, developers, and the community in general—held ten meetings (for a total of nearly fifty hours) to specifically address criticisms leveled against the AUAR.

The outcome of the Advisory Panel meetings was a set of comprehensive mitigation measures for the entire AUAR area. For example, the number of houses planned for the west branch decreased from over 400 to approximately 150. Most notable, however, was the proposed establishment of a 400-foot buffer zone (200 feet at each side) on both the east and west branches of Eagle Creek. This buffer zone and a series of stormwater detention ponds are intended to keep all stormwater runoff, often warm and polluted, from entering the cold and clean, trout-friendly waters of Eagle Creek. The establishment of these zones

is currently being implemented along the west branch on lands that are now property of the DNR, purchased in a deal made possible by a combination of funds from Reinvest in Minnesota (a state fund for wildlife conservation) and donations from the developer, Klaas Van Zee, and the city of Savage. The purchase of the east branch corridor, which has yet to be completed, was made possible by an energetic group of conservation organizations led by Trout Unlimited, which successfully lobbied the Minnesota legislature to allocate \$1.5 million for the purchase.

How Well Did It Work?

We judged the Savage AUAR by two standards. The first was how well it fulfilled the legal requirements of the AUAR and the environmental review regulations of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As mentioned earlier, the AUAR is under state requirement to provide "the level of analysis comparable" to an EIS, and the state and the federal acts each have similar language concerning EIS requirements. According to MEPA:

The [EIS] shall be an analytical... document which describes the proposed action in detail, analyzes its significant environmental impacts, discusses appropriate alternatives to the proposed action and their impacts, and explores methods by which adverse environmental impacts of an action can be mitigated.... To ensure its use in the decision making process, the [EIS] shall be prepared as early as practical in the formulation of an action (Minn. Stat. 116D.04 Subd. 2a).

The second standard coalesced as we conducted our interviews and mail survey. As our research progressed we noted recurring criticisms which led us to more closely juxtapose what actually happened in the Savage AUAR with the language of the 1995 *Minnesota Rules*. The general areas of concern that emerged were the completeness of environmental information gathered and how well the AUAR assessed and incorporated citizen input.

Addressing Environmental Concerns.

Ideally, the AUAR is most valuable because it provides a comprehensive analysis of many factors in a particular geographic area. In the Savage AUAR, however, several people doubted whether a sufficient breadth of environmental review was achieved. Jim Larsen, environmental planner with the Metropolitan Council, states, "There was an absence of a lot of fundamental information because of the scale of the [review].... There were almost 2,000 acres for which all we had were topo[graphical] maps and the minimal



This rare boiling spring is the main source of water for Eagle Creek. The spring is a sacred site of the Mdewakanton Sioux.

overhead mapping—things that really didn't have any detail." Mr. Downing believes this lack of information existed because so much emphasis was placed on the Savage Fen and on Eagle Creek. So much emphasis, in fact, that the remainder of the 2,600 acres was "not ignored, but it probably wasn't given the level of attention that it ought to have been given."

The crux of this problem is rather simple. The AUAR is valuable because of its breadth, yet it may fail to provide the depth of detailed review required for particular development proposals. What makes the AUAR even more problematic is that, as previously stated, it exempts from further review all projects proposed within its boundaries that "are consistent with [the AUAR's] development assumptions." Dan Callahan, a former Trout Unlimited member and the main catalyst behind the effort to keep Eagle Creek free of development, says the danger is that "If the AUAR is not done properly, it then precludes anyone from taking a magnifying glass approach which is needed on specific projects or resources."

The city administrator of Savage, Steve King, agrees that specific information is required. But he argues that had Savage gone the traditional, non-AUAR route, the environmental review would have been less detailed and less complete: "I think the quality and quantity of information that was generated here...is about as deep as you will find." Mr. Penning of the DNR agrees that, overall, the level of information in the Savage AUAR was unusually high: "Putting this in context of the way the process normally works, we had as much or more [information] than the norm." Mr. King also says that the Savage AUAR has provided a framework by which new development proposals are now judged. Proposals must meet not only the AUAR standards based on the information gathered but also those of other environmental protection strategies Mr. King said have stemmed from the AUAR.

Incorporating Citizen Input. To address the adequacy of citizen input into the AUAR process, we augmented our interviews of AUAR participants with a mailed survey of Savage residents conducted by the University of Minnesota's Minnesota Center for Survey Research. Using a random sample generated from households within the Savage zipcode, 600 surveys were mailed, and we achieved a response rate of 61 percent.

Our survey first asked whether or not citizens knew the AUAR had occurred and whether they had participated in the AUAR. Then we inquired about how residents would like to see the Eagle Creek area used.

For this question, we provided several options ranging from "preserved as park space" to "single family housing and office development with a four-hundred-foot corridor of park space on both branches of the Creek." This question has been criticized for focusing only on Eagle Creek instead of the entire AUAR area and for not providing a sufficiently clear range of optional answers, but the variety of reasons respondents provided in explaining their answers gives us confidence in our conclusions.

A significant portion of the Savage residents, 47 percent, had heard of the Savage AUAR, mostly from their local paper, the *Savage Pacer*. This relatively high level of awareness was expected considering the significant amount of media coverage and local hype (posters and flyers, for instance) the issue received. The survey also told us that 5 percent of all respondents actually participated in the process (Table 1). An overall participation rate of 5 percent, or 12 percent of the portion who knew the AUAR was occurring, may not seem especially low given the typically minimal involvement of citizens in the decision making processes

Table 1. Did you participate in the AUAR?

	Yes	No
All respondents	5%	95%
Of those who knew the AUAR was occurring	12%	88%

of their government. But when juxtaposing these numbers with the results of the question asking how respondents would prefer the Eagle Creek area be used, the participation rate becomes more disappointing (Table 2). Here a combined 59 percent of respondents said they would prefer the area to either be preserved as park space or to retain large open areas. Both these options are significantly different from the original plan—to mix traditional single-family housing and office space—and from the current plan, modified by AUAR process—to incorporate a 400-foot corridor of park space on both branches of the creek.

Table 2. Which one of the following would you most prefer for the Eagle Creek area?

Preserved as park space	46%
Single-family houses clustered together and large areas of open space	13%
Single-family housing and office development with a 400-foot corridor of park space on both branches of the creek	16%
A mix of traditional single-family housing and office space	25%

The reasons given for why the area should be preserved were diverse (Table 3). Many feel the area is worth preserving because it is, as one respondent wrote, "one of the last local areas of native plants and wildlife." Others touched on a commonly discussed issue throughout the Savage

Table 3. Reasons for Wanting the Area Preserved*

Natural look/value	42%
Too much development already	36%
Savage needs more park space	13%
Other areas to develop	6%
Will harm rural feel of the area	3%

* As a percentage of the 234 respondents who made comments.

AUAR—the struggle between nature preservation and increasing the tax base. "An area such as Eagle Creek/Savage Fen is more valuable than any kind of tax base," one person wrote. Another poignantly asked, "Do we look for beauty or tax relief?"

Obviously, this viewpoint of the citizenry was not the operative view of the Savage AUAR decision makers, but criticizing the process for not following the public's desire is not the same as saying the public was not involved. Is our 5 percent participation figure a sufficient level of representation? Interestingly, the majority of agency and city representatives interviewed believe it is, while most non-agency people (Trout Unlimited members, for example) believe it is not.

Much of the praise or criticism regarding the level of citizen input centered on the Advisory Panel process initiated by the Savage City Council, or, as the process was termed, the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). Many of the comments from city or agency representatives resemble Mr. Larsen's statement that the ADR "allowed issues to be aired...and everyone around the table the opportunity to listen to and critique concerns." The criticisms against the ADR came most strongly from Mr. Callahan who, although not a participant, did analyze the ADR from a review of the

meeting minutes. As Mr. Callahan puts it:

In the ADR, the public was seated at the table, but the public was seated at the kids' table...they were not at the grown-ups' table. At the grown-ups' table was the City, the DNR, the PCA [Pollution Control Agency], the Met Council, and the developers. Everybody else was there as centerpieces.

Why the harsh criticism? Mr. Callahan believes that the public's interest was co-opted by the ADR, and that by entering into a decision-making process in which Savage maintained final decision-making authority, conservation groups relinquished too much of their leverage.

What, then, is a sufficient level of citizen involvement in the decision making process?

Should a collaborative decision-making body possess the final authority to make decisions, or should that authority rest in a single, responsible governmental unit? The current norm is to place the authority mainly in the government's hands, as the AUAR ultimately does, but this practice can make others feel excluded from or peripheral to the process. The Savage example is an indication of this, despite the fact that the Savage AUAR was exceptional in that it involved a non-required process—the Alternative Dispute Resolution—directly for the purpose of inclusivity. Even with this wholly elective addition, the question of whether the AUAR process provides for a truly collaborative decision making body remains troubling. Given that AUARs review areas rather than projects, and that they have a high propensity for encountering diverse environmental concerns and citizen views, especially in urban settings, it appears that a more genuinely collaborative process would produce the most informed and locally sustainable decisions.

The No-Build Option. The 1995 *Minnesota Rules* clearly mandate that, within an EIS, "The alternative of no action shall be addressed" (Minnesota Rules 4410.2300 Subd. G). Several organizations involved with the Savage AUAR believed that a similar so-called "no-build option" would, by law, be part of the AUAR. But with no judicial precedent on this matter as yet, this belief has proven false. The city of Savage did not include a no-build option in their AUAR, nor did they feel compelled to do so. Why not? Mr. Downing explains:

Once a comprehensive plan is adopted [by a city] which basically says, here is the general density and type of development that has been decided for this area...we say that there isn't a no-build [option] any longer. The no-build has been ruled out by the comprehensive plan saying we are going to develop. The baseline level of development is what the plan is calling for.

As this argument goes, expecting no development to occur in an area that is within the MUSA extension line and has already been outlined for development is unreasonable. According to Mr. King, asking that the Savage AUAR area not be developed was especially unrealistic given the expanding metropolitan region and the opening of the Bloomington Ferry Bridge.

The Timing Of the Review. The discussion of the desire for a no-build option exemplifies what several of the people interviewed felt was one of the most significant problems with the Savage AUAR and with AUARs in general—that they do not occur early enough in the planning process to truly affect the land-use decisions. This problem seems endemic to environmental



The new Eagle Creek Advisory Committee is assisting with in-stream restoration of the west branch of the creek. Here bales of hay are used to narrow and eventually deepen the creek as it flows under the Independence Avenue bridge.

reviews. As Mr. Penning states, "The intent of MEPA and NEPA is that you review a project very early in the process before decisions have been made, and environmental concerns get equal weight in decision making...it's very seldom that we live up to that intent in environmental review."

For example, in the Savage AUAR the environmental review became part of the decision process only after the Savage comprehensive plan was completed, after the Metropolitan Council had granted the MUSA expansion, and after the city had begun planning water and sewer extensions. The critics feel that the AUAR's late start meant that the issues it raised, namely environmental ones, were not given equal weight to economic concerns. As several people argued, the Savage process was biased toward development because the city wanted to recoup the money it had spent on planning and infrastructure service extensions and because property rights issues arose when developers had already purchased land with the belief that they could develop it.

In fairness to the Savage AUAR, this type of mitigation planning resulting from environmental concerns, as previously noted, is exactly what Mr. Downing envisioned the AUAR would do. The criticism still persists, however, that this type of environmental review does not satisfy MEPA's and NEPA's requirement of timeliness—it does not allow for the early infusion of citizen input and environmental information into the decision making process.

Recommendations

Because the Savage AUAR was only the second AUAR ever performed in the state, Savage had almost no precedent to follow. The experience led Mr. King to declare, "the EQB rules governing the AUAR need clarification and improvement. That's pretty apparent." Mr. Downing agreed, saying that the "guidance is pretty sketchy." As we have seen, strong criticisms against the AUAR obviously exist. We believe, however, that it is an improvement to current environmental review and land use planning methods, and we make these recommendations for the improvement of the AUAR:

- Provide clearer guidelines in the *Minnesota Rules*. Currently, sections of the rules are unclear and do not provide adequate guidance. The rules should specifically address, for example, whether a no-build option is required.
- When conducting an AUAR, in order to preserve the advantage of its wide geographical basis without sacrificing the exactness of specific detail, extra sensitivity and forethought will be required to achieve an acceptable breadth-versus-

specificity ratio of environmental information. Each situation may require a different ratio, making it imperative that these discussions occur as early as possible in each AUAR process to avoid any serious omissions of information.

- Compel the use of a collaborative decision making process, such as the ADR performed in Savage, in all AUARs. We believe that this approach provides for the inclusion of stakeholder input and outweighs the resources (time and money) needed to conduct such a process. Also, it is probable that should this process become the norm, most AUARs, and therefore most ADRs, will not be as contentious nor as labor intensive as the Savage example.
- Given the inability of the current environmental review and land use planning processes to foster early review, we advocate the use of the AUAR (with the requirement of a collaborative decision making body) as a vehicle for early comprehensive planning. As Elliott Olson of Trout Unlimited suggested, have an AUAR be "mandatory for cities, or have them mandatory for areas...and then, have them not preclude additional environmental assessment." Mr. Olson's statement describes what Mr. Downing calls "tiered review." Here, the more comprehensive, broad-scoped AUAR analysis involving environmental information and public participation is conducted at the beginning of the decision process as the comprehensive plan is being drafted. Later, more narrow and less intensive reviews and participation processes are conducted as land uses are proposed. In this manner, the great-

est level of public participation would occur early in the review, at the time of greatest influence, rather than at the end.

- The AUAR should be used as a land use planning tool that allows for a more ecologically delineated review boundary—one based on watersheds, for example. Politically defined review boundaries often pay no heed to environmental characteristics and ultimately inhibit the review from, as MEPA says, "promoting efforts that will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere."

As previously stated, the DNR has purchased a four-hundred-foot corridor along the west branch of Eagle Creek and is beginning the process of a similar purchase on the east branch. Houses are now under construction on the remaining area around the west branch, and building has begun for a business park development on the east branch. Concurrently there has been the formation of the Eagle Creek Advisory Committee. This committee was originally created to plan for the management of the DNR's west branch corridor, but its scope has broadened as it has garnered funds to hire a committee coordinator. The committee, which will be expanded to include citizen representatives, is now involved with establishing a student and homeowner environmental education program, as well as assisting with in-stream and upland restoration work. And most importantly, the committee demonstrates a willingness among many parties (the city of Savage, the DNR, and Trout Unlimited, for example) to work cooperatively and respectfully toward common goals, a spirit rarely seen springing from other review processes.

More Controversy in Savage

Since the completion of the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) process, a proposal to extend County Road 27 north, across the Savage Fen, to connect with State Highway 13 has caused renewed controversy between environmentalists and the people and groups seeking to accommodate urban growth. Environmental groups are concerned that the proposed highway will change the fen hydrology and threaten its survival. Scott County officials say that anticipated growth in the county will create such traffic congestion that the road has to be built.

A legacy of the Savage AUAR is that the same process used in preparing the AUAR is being used to resolve the new county road controversy. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR),

by law, must create a new fen management plan. They are not only using information already gathered for the AUAR (such as data on vegetation in the fen) but are also capitalizing on the relationships and trust formed during the AUAR process. The DNR has created an advisory panel of representatives from federal and state agencies, from the county and city, and from the citizens of the community. By using a collaborative, decision making process through a series of facilitated meetings—with all the stakeholders represented—they hope to produce the best possible management plan given the circumstances. Without the AUAR process which preceded it, this might not have been possible.

The final question asked of those we interviewed was the open-ended one, "What will the Savage AUAR area look like in ten years?" Not surprisingly, we received a wide range of answers, some optimistic and some not. But each answer stemmed from a knowledge of the area and its issues that was exceptional in relation to other environmental reviews and land-use decision processes. Despite its shortcomings, the Savage AUAR did inform and involve people to a significantly greater extent than normal. The task now is to capitalize on the AUAR's good aspects and to produce an even better tool to help fulfill the desire for both development and effective environmental protection that Twin Citians, and most people nationwide, so clearly express.

Paul Phifer is a doctoral student in the Conservation Biology Program at the University of Minnesota. He has served as coordinator of the Eagle Creek Advisory Committee for the past year and a half. Bill Cunningham is a professor of genetics and cell biology at the University of Minnesota. He teaches environmental science courses and is author of the country's most popular environmental science college textbook. Bruce Vondracek is an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at the University of Minnesota and works for the U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, at the Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit.

This study was supported in part by an interactive research grant from CURA and the Office of the Vice President for Research, University of Minnesota. Interactive research grants have been created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. These grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis. Assistance for this study was also provided by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance.

Idle Youth in Minnesota

by Dennis A. Ahlburg

There is a perception in Minnesota, as in many other states, that the quality of life is deteriorating. A number of reasons for this have been discussed: globalization of economic activity leading to unemployment, the breakdown of the family, rising individualism, and the like. These same factors are thought to have had a profound effect on young people. Some young people have diminished prospects and are therefore aimless. They are not in school, nor working, indeed, they are increasingly likely to be "hanging out" with no particular purpose or with an anti-social purpose. In a feature on idle youth in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, reporter Bob von Sternberg wrote that "a large number of teenagers without jobs or school in a neighborhood is a leading indicator of a neighborhood beset by crime."*

This study investigated whether, in fact, large numbers of Minnesota youth are idle and if they are more likely to be idle than previously, or, to put it differently, they are less likely to be engaged in worthwhile pursuits like school or work. How much of the belief in "idle youth" is real and how much is myth? We also investigated whether idle youth is a problem peculiar to the metro area. Finally, we looked at some of the factors that are believed to contribute to the problem of idle youth: low household income, inadequate education, a broken home, and the like.

Method

We used data from the 1980 and 1990 U.S. Census to investigate the activities of youth in Minnesota. The 1980 sample consisted

* "Increasing idleness of urban teens is measure of trouble," *Star Tribune*, 1 February 1993, page 1A ff.

of 42,882 and the 1990 sample 32,282 individuals. Since the samples were five percent samples of the population, the samples represent 857,640 and 645,640 individuals respectively. We considered all residents from ages fifteen through twenty-five years to be youth and we classified their activities into school only, school and work, work only, in the military, and unemployed but looking for work. If they were not in one of these categories, then we consider them to be "idle."

Is Idleness Widespread and Rising?

Table 1 reports the activities of Minnesota youth for 1980 and 1990. Most young Minnesotans were involved in either work or school. In 1990, 90 percent of youth were involved in school, work, or both, a slight increase over the percentage so engaged in 1980. The percentages involved in the military were tiny, about a tenth of a percent, and fewer than four percent were unemployed (but looking for a job). Note that the percentage of young Minnesotans who were "idle" actually decreased from 9.2 percent in 1980 to 6.2 percent in 1990. And, because the overall number of young Minnesotans decreased over the 1980s, the actual number of "idle" young Minnesotans decreased substantially over the decade. Quite clearly, the belief that there are more young people around with nothing to do is false.

Metro and Nonmetro Differences

There are differences in the activities of youth in the metro and nonmetro areas (Table 1). In general, youth in the metro area

Table 1. Activities of Minnesota Youth, 1980 and 1990 (in percents)

	School	School and Work	Work	Military	Unemployed	Idle
1980 State	29.2	20.7	37.1	0.1	3.7	9.2
Metro	25.2	23.0	40.5	0.0	2.9	8.4
Nonmetro	33.3	18.4	33.5	0.1	4.7	10.0
1990 State	31.9	25.8	32.6	0.2	3.3	6.2
Metro	26.0	28.2	36.7	0.1	2.8	6.2
Nonmetro	35.4	24.4	30.2	0.2	3.6	6.2