

To the Town of Primrose Board of Supervisors:

I am writing to express the opinion that resuming mowing of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery is not a good idea. It is neither the best way to care for the cemetery grounds nor to show respect to the people who are buried there.

The Mount Pleasant Cemetery it is the final resting place of some of our township's earliest white settlers, the first burials date from the 1850s, as well as Primrose men who served and died in the American Civil War. Along with the monuments marking the graves vestiges of the native plant community that grew on the site that became the cemetery still persist—among them several increasingly rare Wisconsin wildflowers. The native oaks that grow in and near the cemetery indicate that it was once an oak savanna which might likely be the reason that site was chosen as a burial ground. Oak savannas have widely spaced, broad crowned trees, sparse shrubby undergrowth and a rich ground story of wild flowers and short statured grasses and sedges—a very park-like appearance that humans find comfortable and appealing.

I am a Town of Primrose landowner and I stop by the cemetery fairly often especially when I expect to find certain wildflowers in bloom. This past Memorial Day weekend I found dozens of shooting stars and other savanna wildflowers in full bloom many of them being visited by bumble bees. I have returned over the summer to look for endangered rusty patched bumble bees which I know have been documented on properties near the cemetery.





I visited the cemetery a couple of weeks ago and it did look rather unkempt, but in my opinion the non-native invasive plants that were suffering from lack of rain were unsightly not the native plants which were still green. My husband and I have oak savanna and prairie remnants on our property very much like the Mount Pleasant site. We value these native ecological communities and have been working to protect and restore ours for the last 40 years. During that time we have had success using annual spring burning and removal of invasive non-native plant species.

I understand that the Town budget is tight and that extra funds will be needed to do this work. Public sources of funding are limited too just now but local land trusts or conservation organizations might lend support as could community members. Those of us who call the Town of Primrose home are fortunate to still have this beautiful piece of our natural and early cultural history. I think restoring the cemetery's native plant community to close to what it was in the mid-nineteenth century would be the most fitting way to both preserve that history for future generations and show respect to the hardy souls and soldiers buried there.

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