

The Little Sugar River Farm

A Truly Unique Property Of
Architectural Distinction, Hand-Made Quality,
Natural Beauty, Privacy, & Peace.



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The Little Sugar River Farm is an extraordinary place with a diverse range of potential uses.

Surrounded on almost three sides by approximately 1,700 acres of state wildlife refuge, this is a spot where a person can feel closer to nature's beauty. The farm is on a quiet road, not a busy highway, and the house is set back nearly a quarter mile from the road. The property is extremely peaceful, offering proximity to natural processes: dramatic thunderstorms, dragonflies perched on sunlit walls, the muffled silence of a snowstorm, the chorus of spring peepers on an April evening. It is a true refuge from the chaos and coarseness of modern life -- a place of peace and privacy, calm and order.

The farmhouse is an architectural gem. To paraphrase the jury representing the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects which selected the house for an Honor Award in 2000, the house is an elegant yet simple 1,600-square-foot example of American vernacular architecture. Set at the edge of a wildlife preserve with views of a distant moraine, the house has exposed structural framing and raised battens reminiscent of early 20th century farm buildings. French doors open to a large back porch, which looks out over fields, prairie, woodlot, wildlife preserve, and moraines.

Interior flooring, cabinets, and furniture were custom designed for their specific location and built of cherry and oak harvested from the woodlot. Within the main room of the house, three walls of windows flood the interior with light. Vaulted ceilings in the main room create an feeling of openness. A massive cherry sofa, dining table, and wood stove anchor the living space. The furniture throughout the house was hand-crafted by local woodworkers.

The property's 19.42 acres are bordered by approximately 1700 acres of state wildlife area, ensuring privacy and proximity to relatively undisturbed land and the wildlife and natural beauty it offers. Bird life is diverse, and skies are often quite dramatic, especially as the sun sets over the state land.

The grounds include several stages of restored prairie, an orchard of mature apple and pear trees, some older perennial plantings of asparagus, raspberries, and grapes, several acres of pasture, many tilled strips which are ideal for home gardening, 4-5 acres of woodlot, and 5 acres of tilled ground that could be used for more prairie, pasture, or gardening.

There are 3 principal structures on the property, all designed by KEE Architecture of Madison.

N5929 GUESTHOUSE



The **guesthouse** is a truly remarkable building. In 2000 it was selected by the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Institute of Architects as 1 of the 3 best design projects from among the 97 submitted that year by a range of architecture firms based in Wisconsin.

This is a genuinely a custom-built, hand-made house. The interior details were architect-designed and built by local artisans, using oak and cherry sourced from the property's woodlot. For example, in the photo above, all the black metal work (trellises on posts, handrails, post bases) was fabricated by either Dieckmann Arbeit or Carter Machine in Monroe WI. These contractors also fabricated such interior details as handrails, guard rails, and table bases

Much of the wood used in the interior of the building came from the woodlot on the property, particularly the oak boards used for flooring and the cherry boards used for cabinets and furniture. The dining room table, the built-in beds, the bathroom vanities, the desk in the third bedroom, the kitchen cabinets, the kitchen countertop, and the couch in the living area were all made from local cherry. The oak used for the flooring and cherry for the furniture helps create a feeling of continuity in the inside space. The pine of the exposed joists and the maple veneer of the ceiling panels add to the collage of various wood types that each respond differently to the light that flows through the many windows and changes as the sun moves across the sky toward the horizon. At dusk, the soft yellow light shining on the deep maroon of the cherry furniture is often very beautiful.

The architect told once told the owner that architecture is about manipulating light. He certainly incorporated that concept into his design of both the interior and exterior of the buildings. The battens, exposed rafters, overhangs and angles all provide surfaces against which light can play in ever changing ways as the day progress.

Then there is the outside light, the interplay of sun, sky and clouds. During storms and at sunset, the skies are often very dramatic. On the west porch, the artisan-built porch swing is a perfect place from which to watch the beauty unfold.

This building is currently generating income as a short-term vacation rental.

N5931 STUDIO



The **studio** (on the right in the photo above) was originally a garage and workshop building that was converted into additional living quarters when the owner decided to use the main house as a vacation rental. The studio is an open, airy, loft-like space with a 30' x 30' footprint. The first floor is divided into 2 large, open spaces that are approximately 15' x 30'. The second floor is a 20' x 30' loft that creates a cathedral ceiling for the first floor. Heating is supplied by a Modine shop heater which runs on LP gas. There is also a wood stove which is capable of heating the entire building. Two ceiling fans mounted on the cathedral ceiling help air circulate. Two sets of double doors open to allow fresh air and light into the building.

Downstairs are a washer and dryer with a two compartment laundry sink. Extensive custom-built upper and lower cabinets provide storage. The lower cabinets have custom-built stainless steel counter tops. Two custom-built rolling tables with stainless steel tops can be positioned as needed to provide work space, desk space, or dining space.

Upstairs there is a kitchen with stainless steel counters, a bathroom, an office with built in desk and bookshelves, and a raised platform bed. A loft that provides additional storage.

On the east side of the studio, there is a lovely slate patio with perennial gardens. Plantings include hostas, lilies, native dogwoods, iris, and assorted native prairie plants including Jacob's ladder, spiderwort, and thread leaf coreopsis. The patio provides a lovely place to enjoy the natural beauty of the surrounding environment. The studio is currently generating income as a long-term rental, and it would be also be well-suited to housing visitors and family, or for use as studio or workshop space.

N5927 BUNKHOUSE



The **bunkhouse** provides a certifiable commercial kitchen, living space, and storage for vehicles and farm equipment. The structure 84'x30', with a finished foot print of 54'x20'. The living quarters include a 13'x20' bedroom, a 12'x20' living area with woodstove, and 3 small sleeping rooms that could be used for storage. This building can sleep 4-6 people. The large double doors open out to let fresh air and light to into the bedroom and the living area.

The kitchen was formerly a certified commercial kitchen and could be certified again if desired. All the features required for a commercial kitchen are in place, including:

- NSF-certified commercial refrigerator and freezer
- 6 burner Sunfire gas range,
- 3 foot commercial hood with external exhaust fan
- Ruud air handler, heater, and air conditioner
- 3 compartment dish washing sink, food prep sink, hand wash sink,
- septic system with 1000 gallon grease trap.

Attached to the kitchen are a utility room and a bathroom. In the utility room are an electric water heater, water softener, and mop sink. There is also a full shower in the utility room. In the bathroom there are a toilet, a washer, a dryer and a laundry tub type sink. It is possible to access the bathroom through a door that opens to the outside so that it isn't necessary to go through the living space or the kitchen to get to the bathroom.

Within the shed structure, there are two bays (15'x30' each) on either side of the bunkhouse that provide garage space for vehicles or farm and garden equipment. A 10' by 54' storage area at the rear of the shed includes ample shelving and additional dry storage.

OUTDOOR FEATURES



In 1996 this property was a 15 acre hayfield and a 5 acre woodlot. A great deal of hard work, love, care, and attention to detail have been dedicated to creating the Little Sugar River Farm as it exists today. The outdoor features that deserve mention include:

- Several acres of prairie plantings with a broad range of native grasses and flowering plants. The owner has worked for years with Taylor Creek Restoration Nursery of Brodhead, WI on the ever-evolving challenge of restoring native plantings.
- An orchard with 20 apple and pear trees, most of which are mature and fruit-bearing.
- A row of flowering crabapples along the driveway.
- Several acres of tilled ground that could be used for prairie, pasture, or gardening.
- Several acres of pasture
- A small pond that fills with water in the winter and provides a home for spring frogs. Though the pond tends to dry out in the summer, it supports a thriving plant community of cattails, willows, grasses, goldenrods etc. There is a water line running to the pond so a future owner could decide to keep it filled in the summer for swimming.
- 5 acre woodlot which provides aesthetic beauty, a home for wildlife, an abundance of firewood, and many happy hours of woodlot management in the early spring (one of the owner's favorite activities).
- Screened gazebo with gravel floor and fire pit. A local machine shop custom fabricated the benches, tables, and fire pit grating, making it possible to enjoy cooking over wood, dining al fresco, and relaxing around a fire.
- Private outdoor shower with hot and cold water. The outdoor shower is one of the pleasures of summertime at the Little Sugar River Farm, particularly on a warm night full of moonlight and fireflies. (The outdoor shower needs to be rebuilt, and the owner will take care of this).

- Chicken yard with solid fencing. There is a coop with a shelter, a screened run, and nesting boxes. Within the fence, there are also several thousand square feet for the birds to roam.
- The old chicken coop was turned into a safe and clean “tiny house”. Children might enjoy camping out in that building or using it for play. If needed, it could also house an adult guest in a fun, unusual way.
- Prairie flower nursery. About 10 years ago several hundred 2-3” pots of prairie flower transplants were put into a small part of the perennial garden, and now there are thousands of mature prairie flowers that can be transplanted to extend the established prairie. They could also be sold or shared with friends. Plants in the nursery include nodding wild onion, monarda, cup plant, thread leaf coreopsis, new england aster, yellow cone flower, purple coneflower, and several varieties of goldenrod.
- Approx 1000’ of tilled 6’ wide garden strips ideal for home gardening, separated by grass walkways.
- Irrigation system fed by a 70 gallon/minute high capacity well and a hydrant in the middle of the property. 20 and 30ft sections of connectable irrigation pipe, some with sprinklers that can spray water up to 40’-50’, are able to provide irrigation water throughout the property
- Versatile lawn space for activities, sports, tents, and entertainment
- Perennial garden of asparagus, raspberries, and grapes, which do need attention to continue to bear.
- Maturing trees on lawn to create shade in summer and increase privacy. These trees include maple, red oak, hackberry linden, burr oak, honey locust, and birch
- Fifteen acres have been completely fenced.
- The property is surrounded on 2.5 sides by ~ 1700 acres of the Albany State Wildlife Area, which provides open space for hiking, dog-walking, boating, biking, fishing, and hunting..
- The birding is spectacular. Sandhill cranes dance and nest in the restored prairie, and grassland birds are abundant. Feeders attracts cardinals, grosbeaks, nuthatches, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, and finches, while the woodlot hosts migrant warblers. Mourning doves, barred owls, herons, woodcocks, whippoorwills, ducks, pheasants, turkey, meadowlarks, and geese are all abundant.
- The proximity of several low wet areas both on the property and in the DNR land make for a vibrant community of amphibians. Especially in the spring, frogs create a chorus of sound that is a harbinger of warmer weather and a comfort to hear on a cool spring evening.
- This is an excellent area for road cycling and for rails-to-trails biking. The Little Sugar River Farm has easy access to the trail system. The 20 mile Sugar River Trail that runs from New Glarus to Brodhead passes about 1/3 mile from the property. It is a great resource for walking, running and biking. The Sugar River Trail crosses the Badger State Trail about 4 miles to the west in Monticello. On the Badger State Trail one can ride north to Madison or south to the Illinois border where the trail joins the Jane Addams Trail which runs a further 19 miles south to Freeport IL.

UTILITIES

ELECTRIC

- Provided by Alliant Energy
- One Alliant meter serves N5929 and N5931
- One Alliant meter serves N5927
- Take off meter to measure use going into N5931

PROPANE

- Provided by Badger State Propane
- 1000 gallon tank serves N5929 and N5931
- 500 gallon tank serves N5927
- \$10/yr rental fee for LP tanks
- Take off meter to measure use going into N5931

WATER

- 70 gallon/minute high capacity well serves all 3 buildings, outdoor spigots and irrigation
- Hydrant in middle of property to which sectional irrigation pipe can be attached

SEPTIC

- One mound system serves N5929 and N5931
- One mound system serves N5927. This system was designed to meet the needs of the commercial kitchen and includes a 1000 gallon grease trap

INTERNET

- Provided by TDS. Landline is used for internet and alarm system

FIRE/CO/FREEZE ALARM

- Provided by ADT. Operates through the telephone landline.
- Fire alarms in N5927, N5929 and N5931. CO and freeze monitors in N5929

N5927

- Electric water heater, air handler AC
- LP range/oven, air handler heat

N5929

- LP water heater, stove, furnace
- Electric clothes dryers

N5931

- LP Modine shop heater, water heater, clothes dryer
- Glass-top electric stove

This information received by owner has not been verified.

