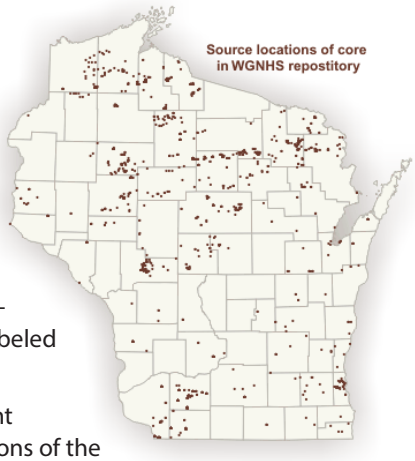
Wisconsin's repository for core and rock samples

Research Collections and Education Center



The Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey's (WGNHS) geologic repository—the Research Collections and Education Center—houses a variety of carefully organized and maintained earth-science materials. These collections are essential to improving our scientific understanding of the geology and natural resources of the state of Wisconsin. To date, the repository holds the following:

Rock cores

- Cores from more than 2,000 drillholes throughout the state are cataloged and available for study.
- These cores comprise more than 600,000 linear feet of subsurface rock samples from mineral, engineering, and geologic investigations.

Water-well cuttings

- Cuttings from more than 11,000 individual water-wells throughout the state are available.
- These cuttings include 570,000 individual samples, each representing a 5-foot interval, collectively representing approximately 2.7 million linear feet of drilling.

Individual rock samples

- More than 51,000 hand-size rock samples are labeled and stored.
- These samples represent hundreds of investigations of the geology of Wisconsin.

Supporting documentation

- Computerized databases provide access to a variety of related information.
- Field notes, geologic logs, geophysical logs and records, thin sections, and assays supplement the cores, cuttings, and samples.
- The inventory of WGNHS publications describe the various studies, mapping projects, and related investigations and build on the information contained in the data collections.

The present-day replacement cost of these materials is conservatively estimated to be $120 million to $140 million; many parts of the collections are unique and irreplaceable. Protecting these materials is vital because geologists frequently reanalyze existing samples as new environmental issues come to the forefront, as advances in technology and equipment allow for different types of analyses, and as geologic theory evolves.

The WGNHS Research Collections and Education Center includes approximately 20,000 square feet for the collections. In addition, as the name implies, the facility also has space for an educational area, giving Survey staff the opportunity to develop programs and workshops that have a hands-on component for groups interested in learning more about the geology and hydrogeology of Wisconsin.

To schedule an appointment, phone 608.262.1705.

UW Extension
University of Wisconsin-Extension

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Research Collections and Education Center
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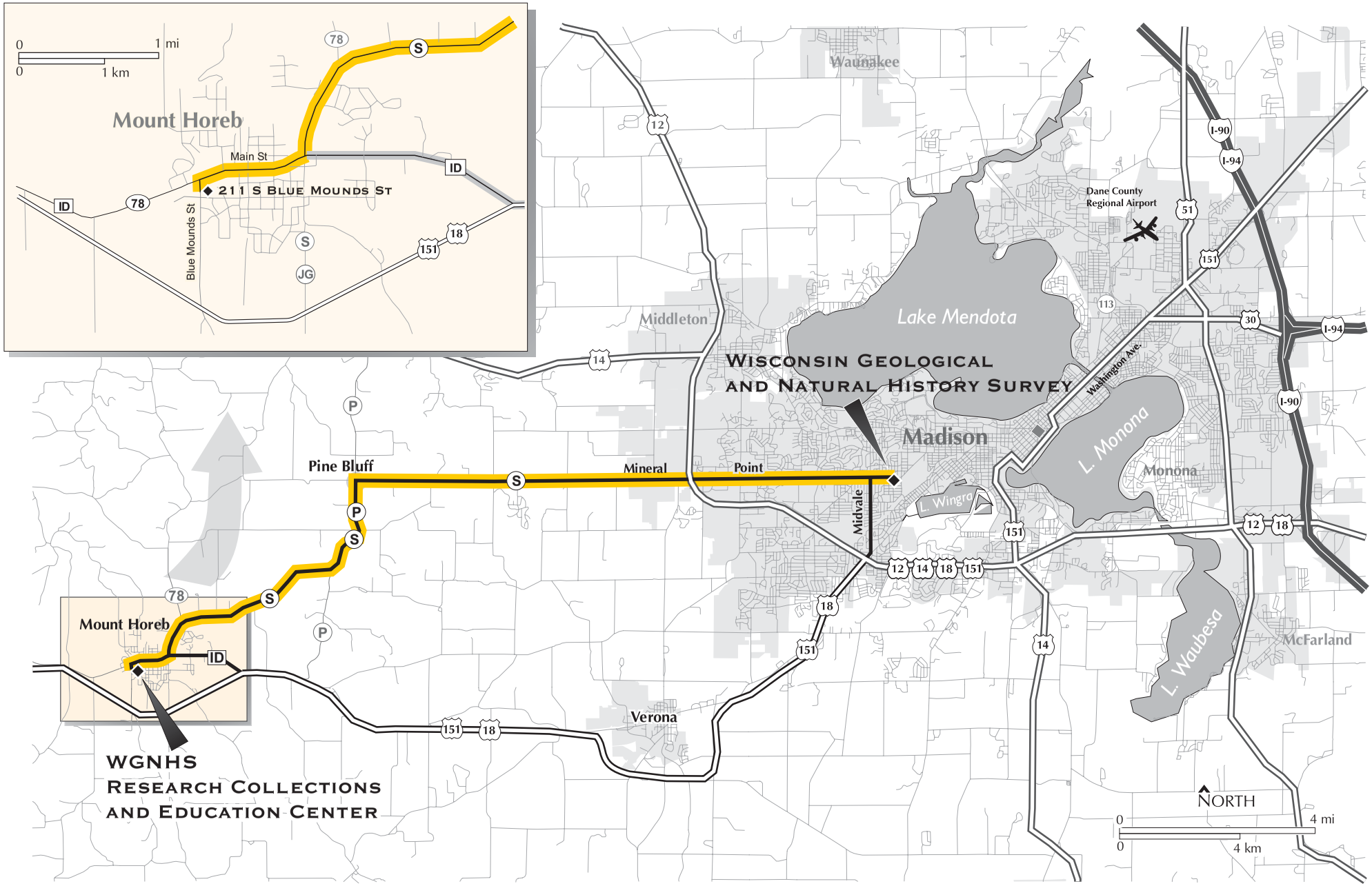
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