

Iron County Board's Report to the Town of Sherman Board of Electors,

April 19, 2022, from
Anne McComas, Iron County Supervisor, District 15

Thank you for reelecting me to another term on the Iron County Board as the Supervisor representing our District, District 15. This report will describe the activities that have happened during 2021 and 2022 on the 4 committees I serve: Zoning, Land and Water conservation, Recycling, and Transportation.

The Comprehensive Planning /Land and Zoning Committee (Zoning Committee)

The Zoning Committee has been working to maximize local control over land use. Statutes passed in 2017 by the state's previous administration have limited local control. Iron County updated its own ordinances in an attempt to retain some of that local power.

Among the most important changes to the county ordinance are the following:

1. Iron County ordinance 9.8.3 (D) (2) (c) dictates that a proposed conditional use must be "compatible with the use of the adjacent land and **any adopted local plans** in the area." This addition to the Iron County ordinance essentially dictates that **Conditional Use Permits (CUPS) must be compatible with the Town of Sherman's Comprehensive Plan**. Conflict with our Comprehensive Plan can be the basis for denial of a CUP. Plans separate from the Comprehensive Plan can also limit CUPS, even if they are not specifically mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan, as long as they have been adopted by board meeting motion.

Since our Town Board passed a resolution that stating the Town will make its decisions on conditional use permits (CUPS) based on their consistency with Town's Comprehensive Plan, this change in the Iron County ordinance is particularly significant.

2. 9.8.3 (C): The 90-day deadline for approval or denial can be extended to 180 days. The decision to extend to 180 days is up to sole discretion of the Zoning Committee.
3. 9.8.2 (C) and 9.8.3 (A): A CUP application will be dated twice, once when it is received, and a second time when it is complete. This change was implemented in an effort to make sure application packets contain all the information that the county asks for. The 90-day countdown will not begin until the packet is marked "complete".
4. 9.8.3 (D) (3) reads: "At all times the burden of proof to demonstrate satisfaction of these criteria remains with the applicant." This reminds authorities that both the Town/County and the CUP applicant are bound to provide "substantial evidence" for their arguments.

The Department of Comprehensive Planning /Land and Zoning continues to process applications for conditional use permits, tourist rooming houses, and rezoning proposals at an unprecedented rate. 677 permits were issued in 2021. Of 48 new residences in Iron County, seven are in the Town of Sherman. Of the 101 accessory building permits, 12 are in the Town of Sherman.

The Zoning Department continues to keep the sanitary program working well. The Floodplain Ordinance has been updated. The Tourist Rooming House language will be updated as well.

Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD)

The Land and Water Conservation Department promotes stewardship of our natural resources by educating, delivering programs, and providing technical support. Many of its activities are funded by grants. Of the \$325,796 the Department spent in 2021, Iron County provided only \$50,809, which is about 15%.

Two private landowners on Trude Lake took advantage of the Department's cost-share program to construct shoreline stabilization projects. These landowners paid only 20 to 25% of the total cost of projects that cost as much as \$53,000. The Town of Sherman might be able to benefit from a cost-share project of its own. The towns of Oma and Gurney are currently involved in cost-share projects for stream crossings.

Iron County's Aquatic Invasive Species program is now in its 14th year. Its crew conducts surveys of wildlife flora and fauna, creates education fliers and puts together educational YouTube videos. This year, LCWD hired 4 limited term employees (LTE). I met one of them at the Springstead landing. She was making sure boats were clean before they entered the water. The LCWD continues to pull curly leaf pondweed from Pike Lake, Turtle River, and Rice Lake, all of which empty into the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. They maintain a database that shows lakes with invasive species, landowner contacts, agreements, and volunteers. The Department created an interactive online county GIS map to provide information on lake statistics, water quality, aquatic invasive species, fish species present, and conservation work done.

Recently LCWD published a booklet about shoreline stabilization that took 2 years to write. The name of the booklet is Shoreline Stabilization: A Guide for Homeowners and Conservationists on Inland Lakes and Flowages. Ask the Department for your copy!

LCWD administers the Wildlife Damage Abatement Program. Matt Bolen has replaced long-time Coordinator Dave Schultz, who recently retired. Last year, Iron County had a project in which 35 bear were trapped and relocated. 715 acres were appraised and lost 244 bushels of corn. This year, one farmer has also experienced wildlife damage from turkeys.

Last year the Department hosted 75 programs involving field days, workshops, and education programs which were attended by 389 youth and 523 adults. The Wisconsin Conservation Camp was cancelled in 2020 and 2021, but will resume with a full schedule this year.

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The Transportation program is funded by 85.21 Trust funds. Every year, Becky Rein writes the grant proposal to get the funds, and the Transportation Committee approves it. The funds are distributed nearly equally between Project Highline, and Project Aging. A small amount is reserved for Project Volunteer Driver.

Other interesting Iron County Board Developments

The Gogebic/Iron County Airport is now contracting with Denver Air. Newer and larger airplanes and jets are providing transportation to Minneapolis and Chicago from Ironwood. Book direct flights to Chicago O'Hare or Minneapolis by calling 866-373-8513 or booking through Denver Air Connection.

There is a new roundabout replacing the intersection of Route 2 and Route 51.

The Board expressed its approval of Enbridge's Line 5 Segment Relocation Project.

The Board passed a resolution to limit the wolf population to 350 or less. They requested that the Wisconsin DNR not relocate problem wolves from other counties to Iron County.

If you have a small check from Iron County and have not yet cashed it, you need to know that the Board has resolved to cancel all outstanding checks for 2020.

Iron County's main source of income comes from timber sales. Stumpage ending 2021 was valued at \$1,924,347.71. Iron County has developed another source of income from its county forest. Iron County entered into a carbon monitoring and development agreement with Bluesource in September and will use of the county's timberlands to sell carbon offset credits. The Forestry Department will continue to manage the forest just as it always has, making sure that cuttings are always replaced.