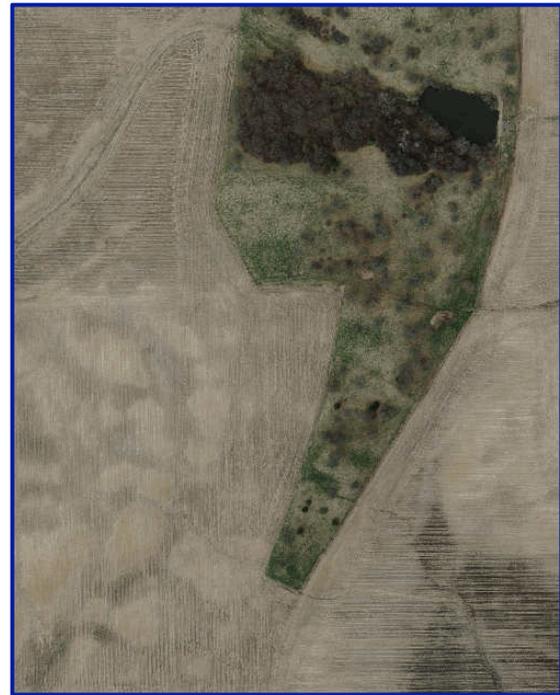


## Introduction

The Town of Linn possesses a diverse landscape and retains a strong agricultural sector; however, development demand emanating from nearby incorporated municipalities and the tourism sector has the potential to rapidly change the landscape of the community. Most new construction outside of urban environments occurs on previously undeveloped agricultural lands and open spaces. Without the need to demolish or rebuild existing structures, development costs are much lower in these areas. Before substantial growth occurs, the Town should consider which agricultural, natural, and cultural resources to preserve for the long-term benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the resources present in the community, identify those most valued by Linn’s residents, and prepare a plan for their preservation.



## Comprehensive Planning Law

Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning Law (Section 66.1001(2)(e), Wis. Stats.) requires that the agricultural, natural, and cultural resources element of a comprehensive plan contain all of the following:

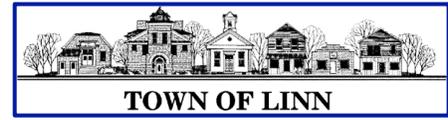
- A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for the conservation and promotion of the effective management of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally-sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources, parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, and recreational resources.

### **Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Vision**

*The Town of Linn will adopt policies and programs to preserve its prime agricultural lands, unique natural environment, and cultural and historic resources to ensure that these assets remain available for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.*

## Agricultural Resources

Farming remains a significant component of the Town’s landscape, particularly south of Linton Road. It is also the most threatened, since agricultural land is highly sought after for residential and commercial uses. The removal of land from agricultural use is not always avoidable. People need places to live and work, and new roads must be built to serve them. Future development will inevitably reduce the amount



of land available for agricultural use. However, development in rural areas should occur in a manner that preserves, to the greatest extent practicable, prime agricultural soils (see map on page 5-3) and established farm operations. The purpose of this section of *Chapter 5* is to determine where and how to protect the most important farmland for the future.

## **Agricultural Challenges**

Active agricultural operations are concentrated in the southern half of the Town, although, productive agricultural soils occur throughout the community. A variety of factors pose threats to the long-term viability of farming in Linn. Among these:

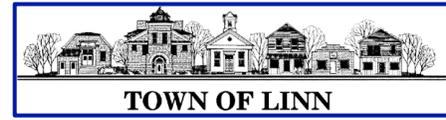
- A projected population approaching 2,800 by the year 2035.
- Annexation by the City and adjoining Villages.
- Large-lot residential development outside.
- Conflicts between agricultural and residential land uses, including the fragmentation of farm fields.
- Agricultural land values exceeding possible agricultural income opportunities.
- The continuing desirability of the community as a location for seasonal and vacation homes.
- The increasing average age of the typical farm operator combined with fewer young people interested in farming.
- The size and scale of farm operations and an evolving marketplace for agricultural products.

A variety of tools are available to local governments and farmers to preserve prime agricultural lands. These include Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program (Chapter 91, Wis. Stats.), various Natural Resource Conservation Service and WDNR programs, and the purchase or transfer of development rights, among others. These tools are most effective in communities where farming will remain a primary land use over time. Successful farmland preservation efforts are dependent upon the support of local farmers and their ability to pursue new markets to sustain operations over time.

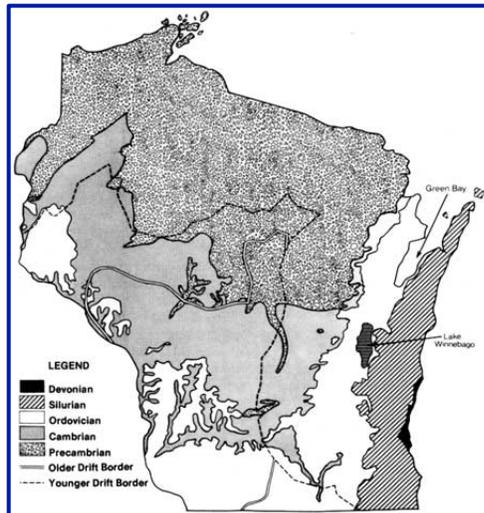
## **Natural Resources**

The variety and abundance of natural resources within a community play a significant role in attracting development, providing recreational opportunities, and maintaining a high quality of life among residents. A correlation exists between the presence and prevalence of open space and the positive feelings people have about their community. The Town of Linn benefits from a rich mosaic of landscapes, with a greater diversity of ecosystems than most communities. Its natural environment includes upland hardwood forests, riparian systems, wetlands, glacial features, mineral deposits, and large expanses of prime agricultural soils, in addition to the most popular lake in southern Wisconsin. The purpose of the Natural Resources section of this chapter is to describe the variety of resources present within the Town, identify those at greatest risk of loss due to development pressure, develop a plan for their sustainable use, and identify a means by which to preserve them for the future.





## Geology & Topography

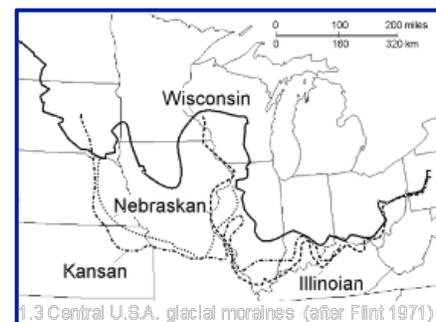


Courtesy Geology of Ice Age National Scientific Reserve of Wisconsin

The materials that control the movement and storage of ground water in Walworth County range from the basement rocks of Precambrian age to the unconsolidated glacial deposits, alluvium, and soils of Pleistocene and Holocene ages. Bedrock is overlain by glacial drift throughout the county. According to the Ground-Water Resources and Geology of Walworth County, Wisconsin, prepared by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, crystalline rocks of the Precambrian age underlie the entire county. The Precambrian rocks have low permeability and mark the lower limit of ground-water movement. Cambrian sandstone overlies the Precambrian rocks and is present under the entire county. The ability of Cambrian sandstone to store and yield water and its great thickness make it an important source of water. Other bedrock found within the county includes Ordovician dolomite, sandstone, shale, and Silurian dolomite. All of these rocks dip toward the east.<sup>1</sup>

The area's major topographic features resulted from frequent periods of glaciation. Glaciers made four separate advances across what is now Walworth County. These periods of glacial advance are called the Nebraskan, Kansan, Illinoian, and Wisconsin stages and are believed to have begun about one million years ago (see image at right). The most recent advance, the Wisconsin stage, consisted of two major sub-stages known as the Cary and Valdres. The Wisconsin period began approximately 70,000 years ago. This ice mass had its origin in the snowfields of the Hudson Bay region of Canada.

The topography in the Town of Linn is typical of glaciated terrain. The southeastern corner of the town is generally level, however, the remainder of the town has higher and rolling terrain. West and north of Nippersink Creek, the terrain is more diverse with areas of steep slopes, wetlands, woodlands, and the town's most notable feature, Geneva Lake. Elevations within the town range from over 1,100 feet above sea level in both the southwest corner of the town and north of Geneva Lake, to a low point of 860 feet at the lake's surface.<sup>2</sup>



Courtesy University of Arizona, History of Pleistocene Study

## Soils<sup>3</sup>

Soil is composed of varying proportions of sand, gravel, silt, clay and organic material. The composition of a soil affects the specific properties of that soil. These properties must be evaluated prior to any development, as varying limitations exist for each soil. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, developed a detailed study of all the soils in Walworth County. As part of that

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.



study, soils were identified in terms of generalized soil associations. The two dominant soil associations in the township are the Miami-McHenry and Plano-Griswold.

- Miami-McHenry Association - These soils occur on glacial till plains throughout the county and make up the majority of soils within the town. Permeability of this soil is moderate, and the available moisture capacity is moderately high. This soil type is suitable for all general farm crops and for many special crops. Crops within this soil respond well to applications of lime and fertilizer.
- Plano-Griswold Association - These soils are found primarily in the southeast corner of the town. This soil is among the best farming soils in the county. There are no serious limitations for rural or urban development on these soils. Permeability is moderate, and the available moisture capacity is moderately high.

### **Mineral Resources<sup>4</sup>**

Two nonmetallic mining operations (rock quarries) are located in the eastern portion of the township. Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 135 requires that all counties adopt and enforce a Non-metallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance that establishes performance standards for the reclamation of active and future non-metallic mining sites.

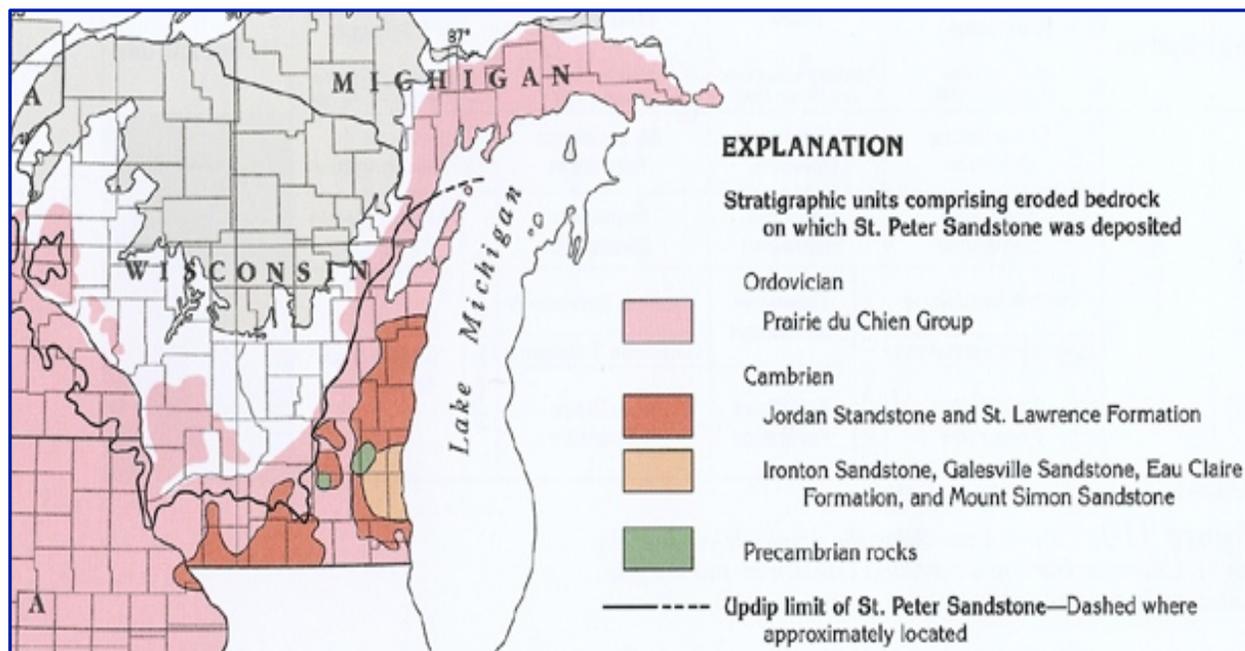
### **Groundwater Resources<sup>5</sup>**

The source of all groundwater is precipitation that percolates down through the soil until it reaches the saturated zone of an aquifer where it is then contained. Within an aquifer water travels from its source to a discharge point such as a well, wetland, spring, or lake. During periods of increased precipitation or thaw, this vast resource is replenished with water moving by gravity through permeable soils. This is called a water table system. In some instances, groundwater moves because of pressure created by a confining layer of impervious rock called an artesian system. According to the Geological and Natural History Survey's publication, Ground- Water Resources and Geology of Walworth County, Wisconsin, all of Walworth County depends on groundwater for potable water supplies. The principal sources of these supplies include the sand-and-gravel aquifer, the Niagara aquifer, the Galena-Platteville aquifer, and the sandstone aquifer.

Most groundwater contamination is related to agricultural manure, petroleum, and salt storage located in areas of high groundwater tables or fractured bedrock situations. Contamination of groundwater reserves can also result from such sources as percolation of water through improperly placed or maintained landfill sites, private waste disposal (septic effluent), runoff from livestock yards and urban areas, improper applications of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers, excessive land and garden fertilizers and pesticides, leaks from sewer pipes, and seepage from mining operations in to the aquifer. Runoff from leaking petroleum storage tanks and spills can also add organic and chemical contaminants in locations where the water table is near the surface. Once groundwater contamination has occurred, successful remediation can take years, or may never occur, depending upon the pollutant. Therefore, when considering specific land uses for an area, it is vital to consider the physical characteristics of the area and the relationships between the land and the proposed/actual use in order to ensure that groundwater contamination does not occur.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.



Courtesy United States Geological Survey

In June of 2000, the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey completed the Report on the Preliminary Investigation of Arsenic in Groundwater near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. The main objective of the preliminary report was to evaluate the nature and extent of arsenic in well water in the area, specifically in the vicinity of Wood School. Groundwater from three aquifers was found, to some extent, to be impacted by arsenic. The overall recommendation of the report is that a public education effort in the Geneva Lake area is necessary to alert residents, well drillers, and real estate developers to the need to test for arsenic in well water. Although this report was completed in 2000, the issues presented should be monitored over the planning period.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, in Technical Report No. 37, Groundwater Resources of Southeastern Wisconsin, identifies the hydrogeology of southeastern Wisconsin, and numerous sources of contamination to well water supplies. In addition, due to increases in rural development and private wells, coordinated regional water resource management is needed to satisfy future water demands in the region. The Town of Linn and the Linn Sanitary District should continue to keep informed of available groundwater supplies and the impacts rural development will have on its quality and quantity.

### **Watersheds<sup>6</sup>**

A watershed is an area of land that drains directly into a lake or other surface water. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. River basins encompass several watersheds. There are thirty-two river basins in Wisconsin ranging in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles. The Town of Linn contains four subwatersheds: Geneva Lake, Nippersink Creek, the North Branch of Nippersink Creek, and the Piscasaw Creek. Wisconsin has redesigned its natural resource management approach around the concepts of eco-

<sup>6</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.



regions and watersheds. This shift in approach recognizes that working with the natural structure and function of resources, as opposed to strictly political or social boundaries, will provide more successful results. The Town of Linn is located in the Fox River-Illinois River Basin as designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

### **Geneva Lake<sup>7</sup>**

Geneva Lake is the most significant surface water resource in the Town of Linn and considered one of the most important natural resources in southeastern Wisconsin. It was formed 10,000 years ago during the last Wisconsin glaciation and was known as “Kishwauketoe”, or clear water, by the Potawatomi Indians. By 1858, the lake had a steamboat for tourists (Jenkins, 1921), and by 1871, a railway was built that connected the City of Lake Geneva with Chicago, Ill. Parts of the lake’s watershed became agricultural and others urbanized. In 1935, the Lake Association was formed and in 1946 the Linn Sanitary District was established to address sanitary issues within the Town of Linn. In 1971 the Geneva Lake Environmental Agency was formed and in 1981 the Geneva Lake Conservancy was formed.



Courtesy Cully Pillman and Geneva Lake Association

The lake has only one basin with several bays: East Bay separated from the West Bay by the Narrows; Williams Bay and Fontana Bay off of the West Bay; and, Geneva Bay and Buttons Bay off of the East Bay. The lake typically freezes over each winter. The topography around the lake is steep with an average soil slope of 4.6%.

### **General Conditions<sup>8</sup>**

- Tributary streams are the major source of phosphorus to the lake (84% of total load).
- Water quality characteristics measured at the surface (water clarity, and chlorophyll-a and nutrient concentrations) were horizontally uniform throughout the lake.
- Direct and indirect measurements on sediment-core analyses indicate that water quality of Geneva Lake has degraded in the last 170 years (urbanization being the primary cause).
- Sources of water to the lake are precipitation (38%), groundwater (36%), and surface water inflow (26%).
- Municipal and agricultural drainage from the watershed has produced elevated concentrations of potentially harmful compounds in lake sediments.
- Septic systems were estimated to contribute between about two- and eight-percent of the total phosphorus load.

#### **Just the Facts**

Name: Geneva Lake  
Area: 5,401 acres  
Maximum depth: 135 feet  
Mean depth: 61 feet  
Bottom: 95% sand, 5% gravel  
Lake type: Spring  
Recreation beaches: 6  
Boat landings: 6  
Fish species: Panfish, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, northern pike, trout, walleye  
Trophic status: Oligotrophic

Source: WDNR Lakes, 2017

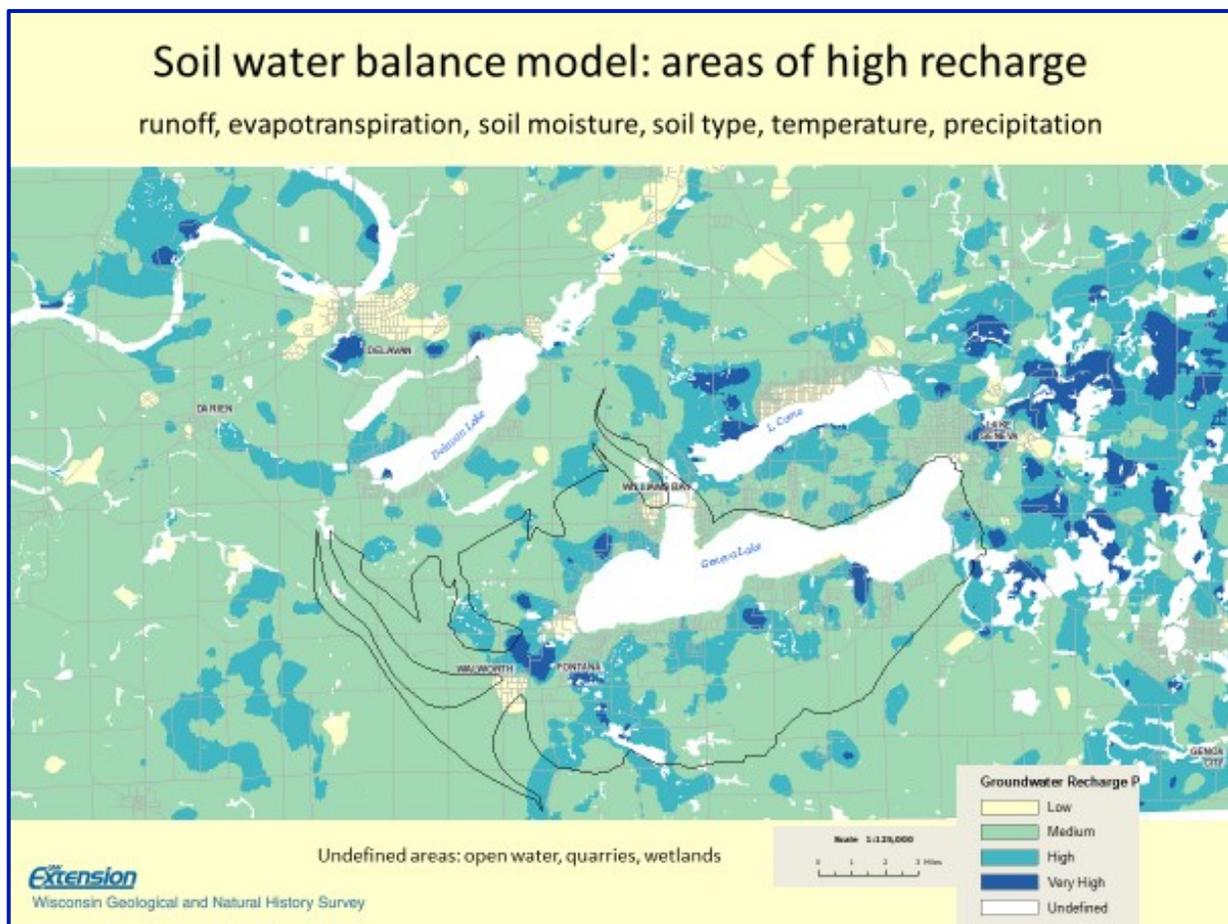
<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Source: Hydrology and Water Quality of Geneva Lake, Walworth County, Wisconsin; Water-Resources Investigations Report 02-4039, US Geological Survey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and Geneva Lake Environmental Agency, 1997.



The Geneva Lake Lake-Use Survey, completed in 1999, provided additional insight into resident and visitor usage and values pertaining to the lake. A random sample of 1,200 households was selected for participation including households within the Town of Linn. Notable findings included:

- 29% of respondents believe that water clarity is the most important factor in determining water quality.
- A majority of respondents (83%) are satisfied with the way Geneva Lake is being maintained.
- 76% believed that the number of boats should be restricted.
- 71% rate fishing on the lake from good to excellent.
- The vast majority (87%) think steps should be taken to control runoff into the lake.
- 75% of respondents believe that growth should be limited in the area.



Source: Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, Groundwater flow model for the Geneva Lake area, Walworth County, Wisconsin, Madaline Gotkowitz, Jonathon Carter, Open file report 2009-02 / 2009, Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and UW-Extension



## **Nippersink Creek**

A stretch of the west branch of Nippersink Creek drains the lower half of the township before entering the state of Illinois. Nippersink is the only named stream in the community.

## **Wetlands, Floodplains, and Shorelines**

Wetlands act as a natural filtering system for sediment and nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates, and serve as natural buffers protecting shorelines and stream banks from erosion. They are essential in providing wildlife habitat, flood control, and groundwater recharge. Floodplains serve a number of important functions related to flood and erosion control, water quality, groundwater recharge, and fish and wildlife habitats. They provide areas for streams and creeks to expand during high rainfall and snowmelt events. Floodplains are generally unsuitable for development due to potential risk to lives and property. The limited wetland acreage and mapped floodplain in the township are located within riparian areas along Nippersink Creek and other unnamed streams.

Shorelines are often thought of as a boundary between the land and water, but they also serve as a transition area within which the health of land and water ecosystems can be positively or negatively affected. In addition to providing habitat and migration corridors, the vegetation within shoreland areas traps and filters sediment and debris from rainfall and snowmelt preventing it from entering surface waters. The bulk of Geneva Lake's shoreline has been developed.

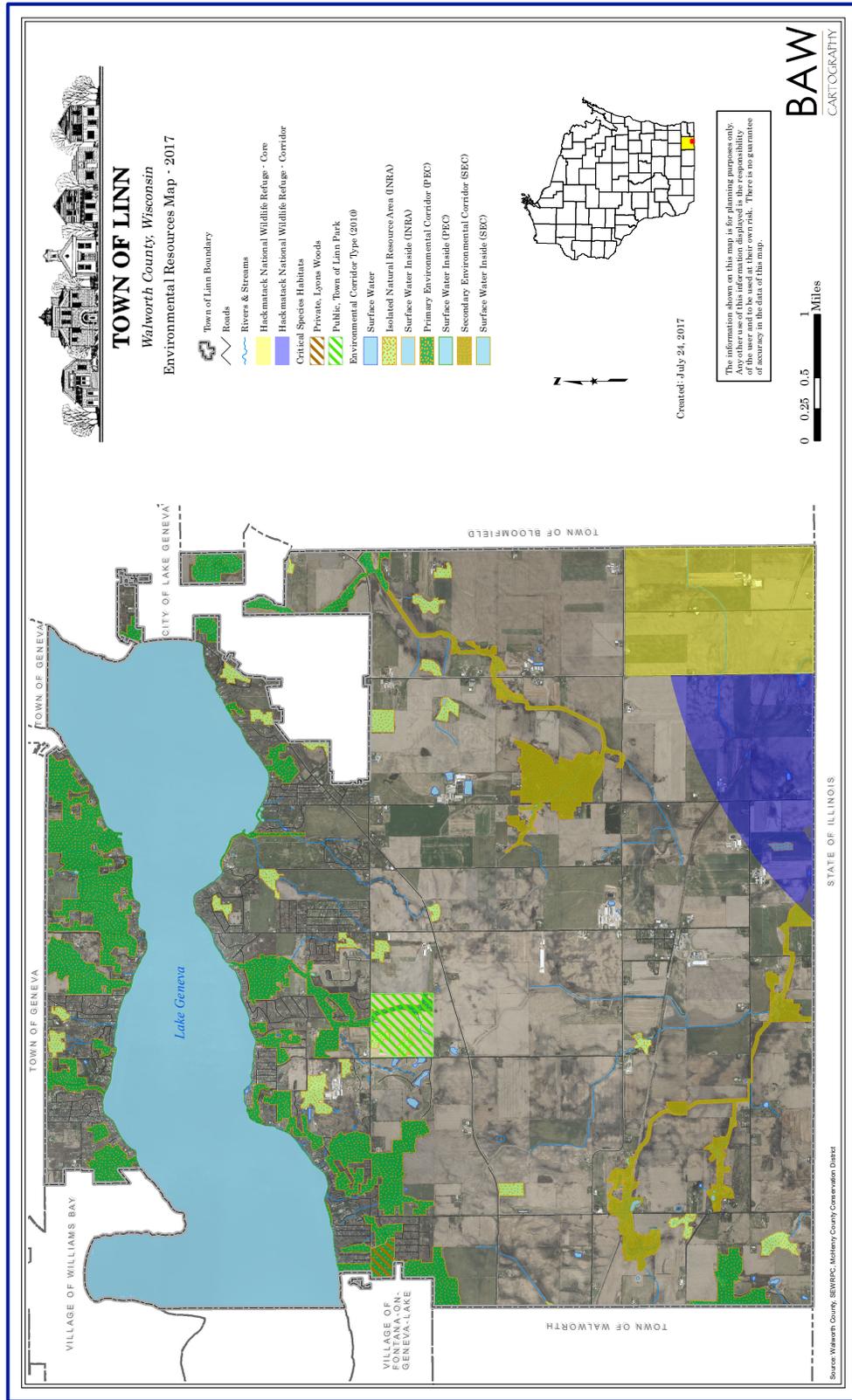
Federal, state, and county regulations place limitations on the types of development that may occur within and adjacent to wetlands, floodplains, and shorelines.

## **Wildlife Habitat**

Primary wildlife habitat areas in provide food and cover for deer, raccoons, skunk, and other animals common in the area. Farm fields serve as a food source for deer, sand hill cranes, turkeys, and waterfowl. Agricultural areas are important to wildlife because they provide travel corridors between waterways, woodlands, wetlands, and other habitat.

Farmland also provides the cover and large contiguous open spaces needed by many wildlife species. Habitat comprises an array of varied systems each critical to the viability of local species. These include:

- Feeding Habitat – The right types of food and the opportunity for animals to consume it.
- Nesting/Resting/Breeding/Burrow Habitat – places to lay eggs, rear young, rest, and breed.
- Wintering/Migratory Habitat – Places to rest during migratory flights and the availability of food and open water for over-wintering species.
- Environmental Corridors – Places that provide wildlife the ability to move to different habitats in order to complete daily and seasonal living cycles (see Environmental Corridors below).





## **Environmentally Sensitive Areas / Environmental Corridors**

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has identified and mapped environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) within Walworth County. Development within these areas is to be limited or avoided whenever practicable. SEWRPC's regional planning program identifies seven categories of ESAs considered essential to the maintenance of the ecological balance, natural beauty, and overall quality of life in Southeastern Wisconsin. They include:

- Rivers, streams, lakes, and associated shorelands and floodplains.
- Wetlands.
- Woodlands.
- Prairies.
- Wildlife habitat areas.
- Wet, poorly drained, and organic soils.
- Rugged terrain and high relief topography.

### **Environmental Corridors: Nature's Hallways**

One way to think of environmental corridors is to compare them to hallways. A building contains hallways, which are places of concentrated movement back and forth; and rooms, which are destination points where people eat, work, play, and sleep. The hallways serve to link places of activity. Just as hallways enhance the operation of a building, environmental corridors increase the value of natural resource areas. Areas of concentrated natural resource activity ("rooms"), such as wetlands, woodlands, prairies, lakes, and other features, become more functional when linked by environmental corridors ("hallways").

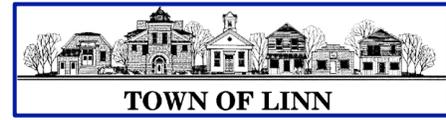
Source: Environmental Corridors: Lifelines for Living, University of Illinois Extension, 2001.

## **Threatened & Endangered Species**

Plant and animal species are considered one of the fundamental building blocks of ecological landscapes and biodiversity. The presence of one or more rare species and natural communities in an area can be an indication of an area's health and ecological importance, and should prompt attention to conservation, management and restoration needs. Protection of such species is a valuable and vital component of sustaining biodiversity.

While the conservation of plants, animals and their habitat should be considered for all species, this is particularly important for rare or declining species. An endangered species is one whose continued existence is in jeopardy and may become extinct. A threatened species is one that is likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered. A special concern species is one about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected, but not yet proven. The main purpose of the special concern category is to focus attention on certain species before they become endangered or threatened. Both the state and federal governments prepare their own separate lists of such plant and animal species, but do so working in cooperation with one another, as well as with various other organizations and universities. The WDNR Endangered Resources Program monitors endangered, threatened, and special concern species and maintains the state's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) database. This program maintains data on the locations and status of rare species in Wisconsin and these data are exempt from the open records law due to their sensitive nature.

The Wisconsin Endangered Species Law was enacted to afford protection for certain wild animals and plants that the Legislature recognized as endangered or threatened and in need of protection as a matter of general state concern. It is illegal to:



- Take, transport, possess, process or sell any wild animal that is included on the Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species List.
- Process or sell any wild plant that is a listed species.
- Cut, root up, sever, injure, destroy, remove, transport or carry away a listed plant on public lands or lands a person does not own, lease, or have the permission of the landowner (There are exemptions to the plant protection on public lands for forestry, agriculture and utility activities. In some cases, a person can conduct the above activities if permitted under a Department permit, i.e. “Scientific Take” Permit or an “Incidental Take” Permit).



The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) also protects animals and plants that are considered endangered or threatened at a national level. The law prohibits the direct killing, taking, or other activities that may be detrimental to the species, including habitat modification or degradation, for all federally listed animals and designated critical habitat. Federally listed plants are also protected, but only on federal lands. Implementation of the ESA is usually accomplished during the state permit review process, but is ultimately the responsibility of a project proponent and property owner to ensure that they are not in violation of the laws.



Federally listed endangered and threatened species known to exist in Walworth County (see images at right), along with their associated habitat, include:



- Eastern massasauga rattlesnake (threatened) – Open to forested wetlands and adjacent uplands.
- Eastern prairie fringed orchid (threatened) – Wet grasslands.
- Northern long-eared bat (threatened) - Hibernates in caves and mines - swarming in surrounding wooded areas in autumn. During summer, roosts and forages in upland forests.
- Rusty-patched bumble bee (endangered) – Grasslands with flowering plants from April through October, underground and abandoned rodent cavities or clumps of grasses above ground as nesting sites, and undisturbed soil for hibernating queens to overwinter.
- Whooping crane (endangered) – Open wetlands and lakeshores.



## **Air Quality**

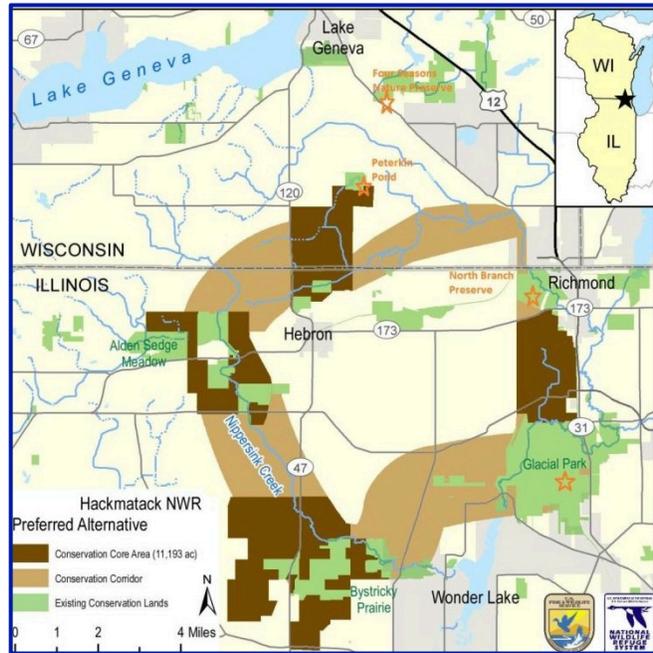
The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has developed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in order to evaluate air quality and protect the public health. The air pollutants affecting Wisconsin include sulfur dioxide, suspended particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, oxides of nitrogen, lead, sulfates and nitrates. Walworth County is considered an attainment area, which is an area that meets NAAQS defined in the Federal Clean Air Act. A continuous air quality

monitoring station located in the City of Lake Geneva.<sup>9</sup> WDNR and USEPA reported five Air Quality Notices for Walworth County from January 2012 to January 2017.<sup>10</sup>

### **Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge<sup>11</sup>**

The National Wildlife Refuge System is a national network of public lands set aside specifically to protect wild animals and plants. Found in all 50 states and five U.S. territories and encompassing 95 million acres, 560 refuges currently exist. National Wildlife Refuges are special places with significant natural resources where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquires land and/or conservation easements.

The Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge boundary employs a Cores and Corridors concept for wildlife preservation with a focus on migratory and grassland birds. Four core areas will be protected alongside existing conservation lands held by other partners including the McHenry County Conservation District and Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources. Tributaries of Nippersink Creek will serve as wildlife corridors to connect most of the core areas. It is hoped that corridors at least 600 feet wide can be protected in these areas by working with local landowners.



Courtesy Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge

### **Cultural Resources**

Historical and cultural resources are valuable community assets warranting preservation. The term “cultural resources” typically refers to historic buildings and structures and archaeological sites; however, municipalities are granted the authority to identify the places that are cultural significant within their boundaries irrespective of the National Register of Historic Places or the State Historical Preservation Office. One of the most effective ways to do so is through a local historic preservation ordinance. A historic preservation ordinance can establish procedures to designate historically and culturally sensitive properties and places, and to review projects that have the potential to negatively affect these important places.

Another way in which local governments can protect historically significant structures and places is through the use of overlay zoning in the zoning ordinance. An overlay zone is an additional layer of regulations for a particular area that is laid atop the underlying or base zoning regulations. A design review board, site plan review committee, or historic preservation commission administers the regulations within the historic overlay zone.

<sup>9</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Walworth County Air Quality Notice History, WDNR, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Excerpted from Friends of Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge website, 2017.



Finally, the designation of ‘secondary conservation areas’ within the conservation subdivision components of a local subdivision ordinance allows a community to identify structures and places that should be preserved during the residential development process.

### **National Register of Historic Places<sup>12</sup>**

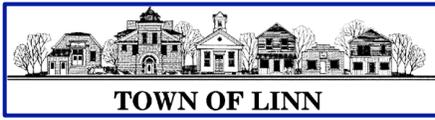
The National Register of Historic Places recognizes properties of local, state, and national significance. Properties are listed in the National Register because of their associations with significant persons or events, because they contain important information about our history or prehistory, or because of their architectural or engineering significance. The National Register also lists important groupings of properties as historic districts. In addition, the National Park Service highlights properties that have significance to the nation as a whole by conferring them the status of National Historic Landmark. According to the National and State Register, there are four sites listed within the Town of Linn including:

- Black Point, 580 S. Lake Shore Drive (Pier 580), listed in the State and National Register in 1994, Queen Anne style home, period of significance identified as from 1875 to 1899. According to the Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report, the barns of Black Point are significant due to their gray shake cladding and because there are two of them.
- Bonnie Brae, 78 Snake Road, listed in the State and National Register in 1986, it is identified as a Queen Anne, shingle style. According to the Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report, it was most likely built by Martin Ryerson in 1897. Now converted into a dwelling, it retains the gambrel roof, applied half-timber detailing and round stone silo.
- The organization of the first 4-H club in the state took place in the town in 1914. A historical marker is located on South Lakeshore Drive.
- Lake Geneva Country Club, located at south Lake Shore Drive Pier 710, was the first golf course in the State of Wisconsin. In 1895 a five-hole course was first laid out. Additional land was purchased and a clubhouse was built in 1896. This clubhouse was destroyed by fire in 1915 and re-built.



Courtesy Lake Geneva Country Club

<sup>12</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.



### **Wisconsin State Historical Society<sup>13</sup>**

The mission of the Wisconsin State Historical Society (WSHS) is to maintain, promote and spread knowledge relating to the history of North America, with an emphasis on the state of Wisconsin. WSHS helps people connect to the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories. Its guiding principles are to:

- Reach out and partner with the broadest possible public.
- Present and promote sound and authentic history.
- Share its riches of staff, collections, and services in ways that captivate and respect its many audiences.
- Collect and safeguard evidence of Wisconsin’s diverse heritage according to the highest standards of stewardship

The Wisconsin Historical Society had record of a possible Euro-American cemetery, and three different mound groups as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- Grout Children Graves – The site lies on an east-west fence line 22 meters west of the centerline of the Willow Road-West Side Road intersection. Three footing stones and a dolomite obelisk are stacked beneath a mature sugar maple tree on the fence line. The Esmond’s land abstract states that Almun Grout homesteaded the property in 1848. His son and twin daughters are presumed buried nearby, sometime after 1848. The exact location of the burial site is unknown.
- Otto Young – The site is located in the Birches Subdivision. The site consists of four possible Indian Mounds, greatly disturbed and mutilated.
- Kaye – The site is near the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. The site consists of a campsite and a mound.
- Northwestern Military and Naval Academy Mound Group – Greatly disturbed, the mounds are on the northeastern corner of the former academy property, within 5 feet of the shoreline.

### **Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory**

The Wisconsin Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) is a digital source of information on more than 140,000 historic buildings, structures and objects throughout Wisconsin. Each property has a digital record providing basic information about the property and most include exterior images. The AHI contains information on buildings, structures, and objects that illustrate Wisconsin’s unique history. It documents a wide range of historic properties such as round barns, log houses, cast iron bridges, small commercial buildings, and Queen Anne houses, among others. As of January 2017, the AHI listed 423 structures of significance within the Town of Linn.

Inclusion in the AHI conveys no special status or advantage. The inventory is merely a record of the property resulting from site



Lorammor Stables (top) and Wadsworth Hall (bottom), courtesy Wisconsin AHI

<sup>13</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin State Historical Society website, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.



reconnaissance conducted by staff of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

### **Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report<sup>15</sup>**

Between July of 1984 and July 1985 a survey was conducted of architectural and historic features within the Geneva Lake area was conducted. The resulting report, Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report, comprehensively describes the historical, commercial, and cultural development of the area. There are a number of structures, developments, or significant features that were identified within this report that may not be listed on federal or state historic registers, however are significant to the cultural aspects and heritage of the Town of Linn. The report identified four potential historic districts, including:

- Snake Road Historic District
- Elgin Club Historic District
- The Chicago Club Historic District
- Lake Geneva Club Historic District

The identification of existing historical and cultural resources is an important consideration in all planning efforts. These areas help define the community's appearance and character. The Geneva Lake Intensive Survey Architectural-Historical Report was an important step in documenting the historical and cultural resources of the area.

## **Agricultural Resources Plan**

### **Preserving Farmland in a Growing Community**

Given the projected rate of population growth in the Town, there is a real concern about the impact development may have on open space and agriculture. Preservation of natural resources and farmland is important to sustaining the local economy, maintaining wildlife habitat, and providing the 'green infrastructure' (e.g., wetlands and floodplains for stormwater management, scenic areas, etc.) necessary in recharging groundwater and reducing the impact of flood events. They are also important landscape features contributing to Linn's economy and high quality of living.

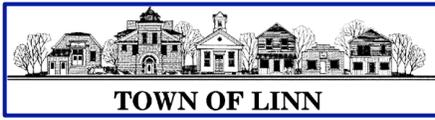
### **Farmland Preservation Zoning<sup>16</sup>**

Under the Farmland Preservation Program (Chapter 91, Wis. Stats.) administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), local governments may choose to adopt and have certified a farmland preservation zoning ordinance to ensure that landowners covered by the ordinance are eligible to claim farmland preservation tax credits. The credits are applied against tax liability on an annual basis. Tax credit amounts are as follows:

- \$5.00 per eligible acre for farmers with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009 and located in an agricultural enterprise area.
- \$7.50 per eligible acre for farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation.

<sup>15</sup> Excerpted from Town of Linn 2025 Comprehensive Plan, Foth & Van Dyke, June 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Source: Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Farmland Preservation website, 2015.



- \$10.00 per eligible acre for farmers in an area zoned and certified for farmland preservation and in an agricultural enterprise area, with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009.

Certification of a zoning ordinance must be obtained through application to DATCP. Landowners must be residents of Wisconsin and their agricultural operations must meet the following criteria:

- Acres claimed must be located in a farmland preservation area identified in a certified county farmland preservation plan. Eligible land includes agricultural land or permanent undeveloped natural resource areas or open space land that is in an area certified for farmland preservation zoning, and/or is located in a designated agricultural enterprise area and under a farmland preservation agreement.
- Claimants must have \$6,000 in gross farm revenue in the past year or \$18,000 in the past three years. Income from rental receipts of farm acres does not count toward gross farm revenue. However, gross farm revenue produced by the renter on the landowner's farmland can be used to meet this eligibility requirement.
- Claimants must be able to certify that all property taxes owed from the previous year have been paid.
- Farmers claiming farmland preservation tax credits must certify on their tax form that they comply with state soil and water conservation standards. New claimants must also submit a certification of compliance with soil and water conservation standards that has been issued by the county land conservation committee.

Eligible landowners in the Town of Linn may participate in the Farmland Preservation program via the Walworth County zoning ordinance. The County's zoning ordinance was certified By DATCP under Chapter 91 in 2013.

### **Community Supported Agriculture**

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system in which a farm operation is supported by shareholders who share both the benefits and risks of food production. CSAs consist of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes the 'community's farm', with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.

Typically, members pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary. In return, they receive shares in the farm's bounty throughout the growing season, as well as satisfaction gained from reconnecting to the land and participating directly in food production. Members also share in the risks of

farming, including poor harvests due to unfavorable weather or pests. By direct sales to community members, who have provided the farmer with working capital in advance, growers receive better prices for their crops, gain some financial security, and are relieved of much of the burden of marketing.



Courtesy Turtle Creek Gardens CSA, Delavan.



## **Specialty Farming**

On average, close to 3,000 acres of productive farmland are lost to development in the U.S. each day. Adapting to survive, many farmers have embraced a new paradigm that focuses on agricultural models custom-fit to changing markets and filling local niche markets with specialty produce and value-added products. Specialty (or niche) farming provides an alternative to conventional agricultural practices, particularly for smaller farmers attempting to compete with larger operations. The movement seems to be working.

According to Agricultural Census data nearly 300,000 new farms have begun operations during the past decade. Compared with all farms nationwide, these new arrivals tend to have more diversified production, fewer acres, lower total-dollar sales, and operators who also work off-farm. Interestingly, many of these operations are located in decidedly urban and suburban areas. Linn's proximity to major urban areas provides opportunities for directly marketing specialty agricultural products to local consumers.

Examples of specialty agricultural products include:

- Agroforestry
- Aquaculture products
- Alternative Grains and Field Crops
- Industrial, Energy and Non-food Crops
- Native Plants and Ecofriendly Landscaping
- Organic milk and cheese
- Organic produce
- Ornamental and Nursery Crops
- Post-harvest Handling and Processing
- Medicinal and Culinary Herbs
- Raising of non-traditional farm animals (llama, ostrich, bison, etc.)
- Seeds and Plant Breeding
- Specialty, Heirloom and Ethnic Fruits and Vegetables

## **Organic Agriculture**

Organic farming is a particularly attractive specialty farm option given that organic food is the fastest growing segment of the agricultural industry. Products that once occupied a boutique marketplace niche are becoming mainstream as consumers seek healthier alternatives to conventional farm produce. Organic and specialty farming counter the notion that farms must become very big or be lost to development. They provide a profitable choice for small, family farmers.

## **Conservation Easements**

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that limits present and future development of a parcel. Under a conservation easement, the landowner retains ownership of the land (within the terms of the easement, i.e. only for farmland or natural space, not for development) and a land trust or similar organization assumes the responsibility for protecting the land's conservation values.

Donated conservation easements that meet federal requirements can provide significant tax advantages to landowners since their land will be assessed as undevelopable land, which has a much lower tax value than developable land. Qualified easements may also generate charitable contribution deductions for income and transfer tax purposes. All land is "taxed" at the same rate, though value determinations are variable.



## **Purchase and Transfer of Development Rights**

Another means of preserving agricultural (and natural) land is through the establishment of a purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR) program. Such programs ‘send’ development from farmland and natural resource areas to designated ‘receiving’ areas within a community. Advantages of these approaches include just and fair compensation for landowners, permanent protection of farmland and natural resources, and voluntary participation.

### Purchase of Development Rights

In a PDR program, a land trust, local government, or other organization offers to purchase the development rights on a parcel. The landowner is free to decline the offer or negotiate a higher price. When the development rights to a farm are sold, the landowner typically receives payment equal to the difference between the fair market value of the land and the price the land would command for agricultural use. Upon payment, a conservation easement is recorded on the property deed. The easement stays with the land in perpetuity.

The landowner retains the right to occupy and make economic use of the land for agricultural purposes, but gives up the right to develop the property in the future. Farmers are not compelled to sell their development rights. The main disadvantage of PDR is cost. Development rights can be expensive, so funding for a PDR program must be selectively targeted in order to protect the agricultural land that is most worthy of preservation. As a result, not every farmer who wants to sell his or her development rights will be able to do so.

<b>Table 5.1: Purchase of Development Rights</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanently protects land from development</li> <li>• Landowner is paid to protect land</li> <li>• Local governments can target locations effectively</li> <li>• Land remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls</li> <li>• Program is voluntary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be costly for local unit of government, therefore land is protected at a slower rate</li> <li>• Land remains in private ownership – typically no public access</li> <li>• Since program is voluntary, it may be difficult to preserve large tracts of contiguous land</li> </ul>

### Transfer of Development Rights

TDR involves transferring development rights from one piece of property to another. In this approach, a landowner is compensated for selling his/her development rights. However, rather than simply eliminating these rights, they are transferred to another property in the community that is targeted for development. That landowner of the ‘targeted property’ is free to develop the land and may use the transferred rights to develop at a greater density or intensity (e.g., smaller lot sizes to locate more homes in a single area). This approach preserves farmland and natural areas in designated sending zones while allowing for more intensive development to occur in the receiving zones.



<b>Table 5.2: Transfer of Development Rights</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Limitations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanently protects land from development</li> <li>• Landowner is paid to protect their land</li> <li>• Local governments can target locations effectively</li> <li>• Low cost to local unit of government</li> <li>• Utilizes free market mechanisms</li> <li>• Land remains in private ownership and on tax roll</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be complex to manage</li> <li>• Receiving area must be willing to accept higher densities</li> <li>• Difficult program to establish</li> <li>• Program will not work in areas where there is little to no development pressure on the area to be preserved</li> </ul>

### **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations**

On September 16, 2005, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture's Board gave final approval of ATCP 51, which establishes standards for the siting of livestock operations. In its approval, the Board added an amendment to have the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) annually review ATCP 51 to see if any modifications are needed.

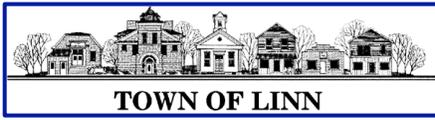
ATCP 51 implements Wisconsin’s Livestock Facility Siting Law (Chapter 93.90, Wis. Stats.). The law does not require local approval of new and expanding livestock operations. Should a local government require approval, it must grant or deny according to this rule. A municipality may not consider other siting criteria, or apply standards that differ from this rule, except as specifically authorized in the law. This rule applies to new or expanded facilities that keep cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, or goats. Under the law, a local government may not deny or prohibit the siting or expansion of a livestock facility of any size unless one of the following applies:

- The site is located in a non-agricultural zoning district.
- The site is located in an agricultural zoning district where the livestock facility is prohibited. The zoning prohibition, if any, must be clearly justified on the basis of public health or safety. The law limits exclusionary local zoning based solely on livestock facility size.
- The proposed livestock facility violates a valid local ordinance adopted under certain state laws related to shoreland zoning, floodplain zoning, and construction site erosion control or stormwater management.
- The proposed livestock facility violates a state building, electrical or plumbing code for that type of facility.

The proposed livestock facility will have 500 or more “animal units” (or will exceed a lower threshold incorporated in a local zoning ordinance prior to July 19, 2003), and the proposed livestock facility violates either the standards in the rule or a stricter local standard by ordinance, which must be based on scientifically defensible findings of fact that clearly show the standards are necessary to protect public health or safety.

### **Wisconsin Right-to-Farm Act**

Wisconsin’s Right-to-Farm Law (Section 823.08, Wis. Stats.) protects farmers from nuisance lawsuits. As residential development expands into agricultural areas, issues often arise related to manure spreading and storage, plowing and harvesting at night, and large farm vehicles on roads (among others). People



who move to rural areas may not be aware of these and other potential nuisances. To minimize conflicts, education is strongly recommended (newsletters, Town website, etc.). By educating new landowners about potential conflicts, ‘surprise’ nuisances can be avoided. Many communities require that right-to-farm language be included with the deed for all new home sales in or adjoining active agricultural lands.

## **Natural Resources Plan**

### **Loss of Habitat for Unique Species**

The Town of Linn has an abundance of important natural resources. As discussed earlier in this chapter, natural areas in the community provide important wildlife habitat for a number of threatened and endangered species. Habitat loss and fragmentation are often the results of poorly planned development. In a community that values its natural environment, it will be important to utilize local land use tools (zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, etc.) to guide development away from the most sensitive habitat areas to ensure the long-term viability of a healthy ecosystem.

### **Preservation of Surface Water Quality**

Additional strains are placed on aquatic systems with each new home, business, or road constructed in a community. Development in a watershed has direct and predictable effects on streams and wetlands. The implementation of best management practices can protect water quality during construction, road building, and farming. Historically, water quality was degraded by point sources, or direct discharges to lakes and rivers from industry, municipal sewerage districts and the like. Since the passage of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 (the Clean Water Act), the United States had taken dramatic steps to improve the quality of water resources. No longer are industries allowed to discharge untreated waste directly to surface waters.

Today, the greatest threat from a cumulative standpoint to streams and lakes comes through nonpoint-source water pollution. Nonpoint-source water pollution, or runoff, cannot easily be traced to a single point of origin. It occurs when rainwater or snowmelt flows across the land and picks up soil particles, organic wastes, fertilizers, and other contaminants that become pollution when carried to surface and/or groundwater. Nonpoint pollution, in the form of nitrogen, phosphorus and total suspended solids (soil particles), contaminates streams and lakes, increases the growth of algae and harmful aquatic weeds, covers spawning beds and feeding areas, and turns streams into conveyances of stormwater. The main sources of nonpoint pollution include impervious surfaces, agricultural fields, and residential lawns.

### **Conservation-based Development**

Conservation-based development is a tool that is intended to minimize the amount of disturbance to the natural landscape by preserving onsite resources identified during the planning stages of development. Resources commonly targeted for preservation include wetlands, streams and ponds, riparian corridors, natural or sensitive habitat areas, steep slopes, view sheds, and agricultural lands.

The goal is to successfully integrate a development with its environment and unique natural surroundings, rather than having the environment functioning apart from the development altogether. Such an approach minimizes the site disturbance footprint by confining development to within existing open spaces and taking advantage of site topography by constructing roads on natural ridgelines. A conservation-based development typically involves a developer and his/her team of surveyors, engineers,

and landscape architects conducting site assessments to identify features of interest to preserve from which a design layout is generated.

The following principles are integral to an effective conservation-based development design:

- Preservation and protection of natural drainage patterns.
- Protection of sensitive natural resources.
- Maintenance of existing topography.
- Clearing and grading as little as possible.
- Minimize the amount of impervious cover.
- Maintaining a community-determined ratio of preserved open space to developed area.

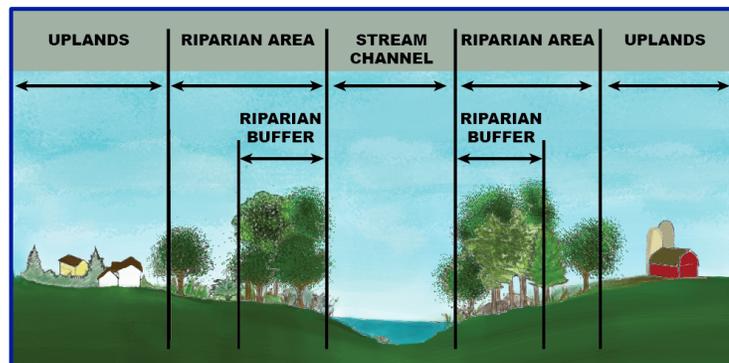
Local governments may implement conservation-based concepts for residential development within the zoning and subdivision ordinances, and for commercial and industrial development through the site plan review process. For additional information related to conservation-based development for subdivisions please refer to *Chapter 2: Housing*.

### **Riparian Buffers<sup>17</sup>**

Riparian buffers are zones adjacent to water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and wetlands that protect water quality and wildlife, including both aquatic and terrestrial habitat. These zones minimize the impacts of human activities on the landscape and contribute to recreation, aesthetics, and quality of life.

Buffers can include a range of complex vegetation structure, soils, food sources, cover, and water features that offer a variety of habitats contributing to

diversity and abundance of wildlife such as mammals, frogs, amphibians, insects, and birds. Buffers can consist of a variety of canopy layers and cover types including: ephemeral (temporary-wet for only part of year) wetlands, ponds, and spring pools; shallow and deep marshes; wetland meadows; wetland mixed forests; grasslands; forests; and prairies. Riparian zones are areas of transition between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that provide numerous benefits to wildlife and people including pollution reduction and recreation. Riparian buffers are widely considered to be the single most effective protection for water resources.

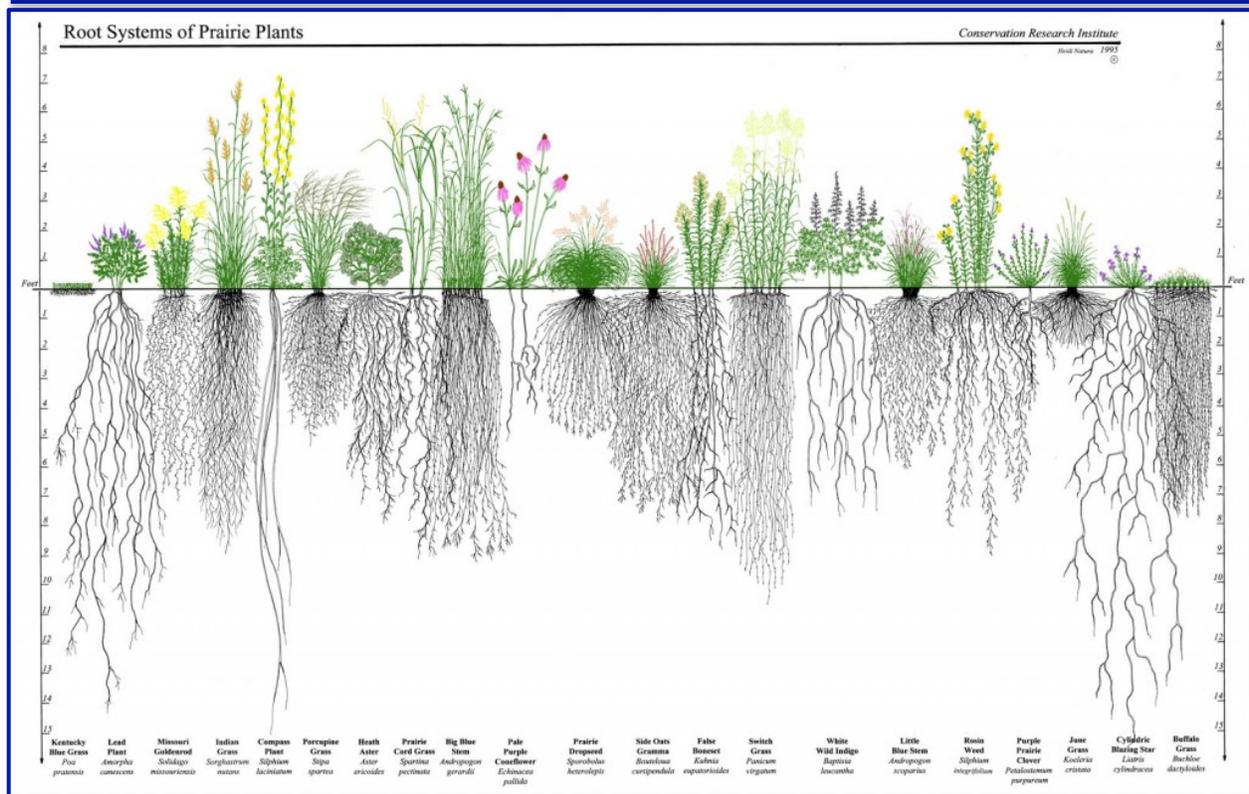


Courtesy USEPA

### **Native Landscapes**

A native landscape is generally defined as one comprised of species that occur naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat, and that were present prior to European settlement. Landscaping with native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees improves the environment. Natural landscaping brings a taste of wilderness to urban, suburban, and corporate settings by attracting a variety of birds, butterflies,

<sup>17</sup> Excerpted from *Managing the Water's Edge: Making Natural Connections*, USEPA.



Comparing the root system of typical turf grass (far left) with those of grass and flower species native to Wisconsin. Deeper root systems provide greater opportunities for infiltration of precipitation and snow melt thereby reducing the incidents of flood events. Courtesy Conservation Research Institute.

and other animals. Once established, native plants do not need fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, or watering, thus benefiting the environment and reducing maintenance costs.<sup>18</sup>

The benefits of native landscapes include:

- Environmental - Once native plants are returned to the land, many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and beneficial insects return as well, restoring a vital part of the web of life. Landscaping with natives enriches the soil, decreases water run-off, and filters the pollution caused by nonpoint source pollution from commercial sites, subdivisions, parks, and farms.
- Economic - Over the long term, native landscaping is more cost-effective than traditional landscaping and requires no fertilizers, pesticides, or irrigation. Natives also increase infiltration reducing the need for expensive stormwater management infrastructure (see image above).
- Aesthetic - While traditional landscapes use one or two species of grass, native landscape designs can include dozens of species of trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers. Each is unique and constantly evolving, and thrives in wet, dry, sunny, and shaded locations.
- Educational - Native landscapes provide hands-on opportunities for people of all ages to learn about habitats and ecosystems.

<sup>18</sup> Excerpted from Landscaping with Native Plants in the Great Lakes Region, USEPA.



## Cultural Resources Plan

### Century Farms<sup>19</sup>

The Century Farm and Home Program began in 1948 in conjunction with the State of Wisconsin's Centennial Celebration. There are currently 8,583 Century Farms and Homes nestled throughout the Badger State. The Sesquicentennial Program originated in 1998 as part of the State's Sesquicentennial Celebration, and since that time, 616 families have been honored. In 2011, 138 Century properties and 30 Sesquicentennial properties were honored for carrying on Wisconsin's rich family farming tradition.



Highfield Farm Creamery, courtesy GazetteXtra

### Secondary Conservation Areas

As discussed in *Chapter 2: Housing*, conservation subdivisions provide a means by which local government, landowners, and developers may preserve important natural and cultural features present on a given piece of property. They do so by identifying *secondary conservation areas* (SCA) to be preserved during the residential development process. Unlike primary conservation areas (wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, etc.), SCAs are cultural, natural, and agricultural resources that hold particular value within a given community. Examples of cultural SCAs may include architecturally significant homes, structurally sound barns, fencerows, and windmills, among others. Most importantly, SCAs are determined at the local level based upon local values.



One room school in Town of Linn, courtesy Geneva Shore Report

### Historic Preservation

The term historic preservation refers to the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of cultural resources. Cultural resources can include structures, sites, and objects having historical, archaeological, social, or cultural significance within a community. Historic preservation ordinances are the tool typically utilized by local government to protect cultural resources.

Historic preservation ordinances provide protection to individual sites and structures or historic districts through a permitting process that requires advance review of proposed projects by a preservation commission or other administrative body. While similar in many respects, preservation ordinances can differ widely from place to place. Variations arise due to differing levels of political support for preservation. The most effective ordinances are tailored to meet the individual needs of the community and the resources being protected.

<sup>19</sup> Excerpted from Agri-View website.



### **Certified Local Government Program<sup>20</sup>**

Local units of government that have enacted historic preservation ordinances may consider being certified to participate in the state and federal Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The CLG program provides special grants to fund planning and educational activities. The Division of Historic Preservation at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers the CLG program. Wisconsin has forty-four Certified Local Governments.

Jointly administered by the National Park Service in partnership with State Historical Preservation Officers, the CLG program is a cost-effective local, state and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation. Working closely with such national organizations as the National Association of Preservation Commissions, the CLG program seeks:

- To develop and maintain local historic preservation programs that will influence the zoning and permitting decisions critical to preserving historic properties.
- To ensure the broadest possible participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program while maintaining preservation standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.



Courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society

## **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resource Programs**

The following pages describe the various federal, state, and local programs that are available to aid in implementing its agricultural, natural, and cultural resources plan.

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

#### **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program**

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is an offshoot of the Conservation Reserve Program, the country's largest private-land conservation program. Administered by the Farm Service Agency, CREP targets high-priority conservation issues identified by local, state, or tribal governments, or non-governmental organizations. In exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production and introducing conservation practices, farmers, ranchers, and agricultural landowners are paid an annual rental rate. Participation is voluntary, and the contract period is typically 10–15 years, along with other federal and state incentives as applicable per each CREP agreement.

<sup>20</sup> Excerpted from Wisconsin Historical Society website, 2017.



### Natural Resource Conservation Service – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns, and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. In addition, a purpose of EQIP is to help producers meet federal, state, tribal, and local environmental regulations. Owners of land in agricultural, or forest production or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land and that have a natural resource concern on the land may participate in EQIP.

### Natural Resource Conservation Service - Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) - Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

### Natural Resource Conservation Service – Financial Assistance Program

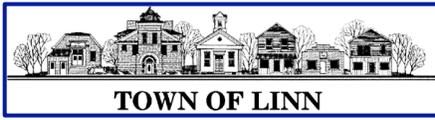
NRCS offers voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers to provide financial and technical assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. Through these programs the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal, and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land.

### Natural Resource Conservation Service – Landscapes Initiatives Program

The NRCS Landscape Initiatives Program (LIP) is intended to accelerate the results that can be achieved through voluntary conservation programs. All NRCS programs are designed to support farmers, ranchers, and foresters in improving the environment while maintaining or improving a vibrant agricultural sector. Most program delivery is driven primarily by grassroots input and local needs. Landscape conservation initiatives enhance the locally-driven process to better address nationally and regionally important conservation goals that transcend localities. Improving water quality in the eight state Great Lakes region is a priority of the LIP.

### **Farm Services Agency – Conservation Reserve Program**

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency. In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10-15 years in length. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.



## **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

### [Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Acquisition and Development of Local Parks Program](#)

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program (KNSP) sets aside fifty percent of the funds in the Local Assistance Program for projects that improve community recreation areas and acquire land for public outdoor recreation. Funds are allocated on a regional basis with seventy percent distributed on the basis of each county's proportionate share of the state population, and thirty percent distributed equally to each county. Applicants compete against other applicants from their region. Funds may be used for both land acquisition projects and development projects for nature-based outdoor recreation.

Under all KNSP programs, eligible local governments are only those towns, villages, cities, counties, and tribal governments that have a DNR-accepted comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or master plan that has been approved by resolution by the local governing unit. Local governments with qualifying plans receive eligibility to apply for grants for up to five years.

### [Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Urban Greenspace Program](#)

The intent of the Urban Green Space Program (UGS) is to provide open natural space within or in proximity to urban areas; to protect from urban development areas within or in proximity to urban areas that have scenic, ecological, or other natural value; and to provide land for non-commercial gardening for the residents of an urbanized area.

### [Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program – Acquisition of Development Rights Program](#)

The purpose of the Acquisition of Development Rights Program is to protect natural, agricultural, or forestlands that enhance and/or provide nature-based outdoor recreation. "Development Rights" are the rights of a landowner to develop their property to the greatest extent allowed under state and local laws.

### [Land and Water Conservation Fund Program](#)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal program administered in all states that encourages creation and interpretation of high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities. Funds received by the DNR for this program are split between DNR projects and grants to local governments for outdoor recreation activities. Grants cover fifty percent of eligible project costs. Eligible projects include:

- Land acquisition or development projects that will provide opportunities for public outdoor recreation.
- Property with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and reservoirs that will provide water-based outdoor recreation.
- Property that provides special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains, wetlands, and areas adjacent to scenic highways.
- Natural areas and outstanding scenic areas, where the objective is to preserve the scenic or natural values, including wildlife areas and areas of physical or biological importance. These areas shall be open to the general public for outdoor recreation use to the extent that the natural attributes of the areas will not be seriously impaired or lost.



- Land or development within urban areas for day use picnic areas.
- Land or development of nature-based outdoor recreation trails.
- Development of basic outdoor recreation facilities.
- Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities which are in danger of being lost for public use.

### Managed Forest Law

The intent of the Managed Forest Law is to promote forest management practices through property tax incentives. Property must be a minimum of ten contiguous acres of which eighty percent must be capable of producing merchantable timber.

### Urban Forestry Grants

WDNR offers urban forestry grants to cities, villages, towns, counties, tribes, and 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in or conducting projects in Wisconsin. These grants fall into three categories: Regular grants, start-up grants and catastrophic storm grants.

- Regular grants are competitive cost-share grants of up to \$25,000. Grants are to support new, innovative projects that will develop sustainable urban and community forestry programs, not to subsidize routine forestry activities.
- Start-up grants are competitive cost-share grants of up to \$5,000. These simplified grants are available to communities that want to start or restart an urban forestry program.
- Catastrophic storm grants fund tree repair, removal or replacement within urban areas following a catastrophic storm event for which the governor has declared a State of Emergency under s. 323.10, Wis. Stats.

### Urban Nonpoint Source & Storm Water Management Grant Program

The Urban Nonpoint Source & Storm Water Management Grant Program offers competitive grants to local governments. Grants reimburse costs of planning or construction projects controlling urban nonpoint source and storm water runoff pollution. Eligible recipients include cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, tribal governments, and special purpose lake, sewage, or sanitary districts may apply. The local government must have either jurisdiction over the project area or be required to control storm water discharge with an inter-governmental agreement between the municipality and the Department of Natural Resources.

### Wisconsin Forest Landowners Grant Program

The Wisconsin Forest Landowners Grant Program (WFLGP) program assists private landowners in protecting and enhancing their forested lands, prairies, and waters. The program allows qualified landowners to be reimbursed up to fifty percent of the eligible cost of eligible practices. Private landowners are eligible for WFLGP funding if they own at least ten contiguous acres of non-industrial private forest, but not more than five hundred acres within Wisconsin.



## **Wisconsin Historical Society**

### Historic Home Owner's Tax Credits

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation (DHP) administers a program of twenty-five percent state income tax credits for repair and rehabilitation of historic homes in Wisconsin. To qualify, the residence must be one of the following:

- Listed in the state or national register.
- Contributing to a state or national register historic district.
- Be determined through the tax credit application process to be eligible for individual listing in the state register.

And, the property owner must spend at least \$10,000 on the following types of eligible work within a 2-year period:

- Work on the exterior of the house, such as roof replacement and painting, but not including site work such as driveways and landscaping.
- Electrical wiring, not including electrical fixtures.
- Plumbing, not including plumbing fixtures.
- Mechanical systems, such as furnaces, air conditioning, and water heaters; and Structural work, such as jacking up floors.

### Historic Preservation Tax Credits for Income-Producing Historic Buildings

Owners of historic income-producing properties in Wisconsin may be eligible for two income tax credits that can help pay for their building's rehabilitation. DHP administers both programs in conjunction with the National Park Service (NPS). The programs are:

- Federal Historic Preservation Credit. This program returns 20 percent of the cost of rehabilitating historic buildings to owners as a direct reduction of their federal income taxes.
- Wisconsin Supplemental Historic Preservation Credit. This program returns an additional 5 percent of the cost of rehabilitation to owners as a discount on their Wisconsin state income taxes. Owners that qualify for the Federal Historic Preservation Credit automatically qualify for the Wisconsin supplement if they get NPS approval before they begin any work.

## **Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management**

### Land and Water Resource Management Plan

This program sets forth long-range strategy to target Land Conservation activities, staff and financial resources and is funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. It also provides funding on a countywide basis for Best Management Practices to be installed to protect the diverse and unique natural resource base.



## **Implementation Plan**

The goals, objectives, and policies related to agricultural, natural, and cultural resources are presented in Chapter 9: Implementation.