

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

1997 Wisconsin Act 27 and 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 (the 2000-2001 Budget Bill), amended Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes, requiring counties to develop Land and Water Resource Management Plans. The intent of this change is to foster and support a locally led process that improves decision-making, streamlines administrative delivery mechanisms, and better utilizes local, state, and federal funds to protect Wisconsin's land and water resources.

Wood County first developed a Land and Water Resource Management Plan in October 2000. Implementation of the plan has been completed and annual accomplishment reports can be reviewed at the Wood County Land Conservation Department, 400 Market Street, Courthouse, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495. Since the development of the original Land and Water Resource Management Plan, several significant changes have occurred locally and at the state level that will impact how Wood County will implement its soil and water conservation programs. These changes include:

- Use value assessment has been fully implemented in Wisconsin affecting local land use decisions.
- Passage of NR 151 and ATCP 50 creating Agricultural Performance Standards and Prohibitions.
- Creation of ATCP 51 legislation that regulates the siting of new and expanding livestock operations.
- Revisions to NR 243 that regulates operations with 1,000 animal units or more and for permitted operations that discharge to the waters of the state.
- Wood County is participating in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program that affects 13 townships.
- The Land Conservation Department closed out the Upper Yellow River Priority Watershed Project in 2005.
- Wood County passed and is administering a nonmetallic mining reclamation ordinance.
- The trend towards more residences in agricultural areas continues, increasing the potential for land use conflicts.

Plan Development and Citizen Participation

The Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan was compiled from numerous sources including, Wisconsin DNR Basin Plans, Farmland Preservation Plan for Wood County, Agricultural Statistics Service, Inventory and Trends Report and others. The Wood County Local Work Group met once to identify and prioritize resource concerns. The Focus Group met once to develop goals, objectives, and actions.

On September 12, 2006 over 2,000 citizens of Wood County representing a cross-section of residents were mailed a natural resources planning survey. Recipients were asked to complete and return the survey to the Land Conservation Department. Over 300 people responded to the survey. The survey was an important tool used in determining priority resource concerns in the county.

On September 21, 2006, the Wood County Land Conservation Committee invited over 100 area people together to identify and prioritize their resource concerns for Wood County. Participants of the planning process included: township officials, Department of Natural Resources basin team, University Extension, Land Conservation Department, County Board members, concerned citizens, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Mid-State Technical College, and Wood County Health and Planning and Zoning Departments. The agenda allowed for each participant to give a short presentation to the group on any natural resource issue or concern. Both specific and general concerns were recorded on a wall chart. The group was then asked to vote on which issues they thought most important.

On October 24, 2006, the Wood County Land Conservation Committee invited 12 people who had participated in the local workgroup meeting to develop goals, objectives, and actions for the prioritized resource concerns. Members of the Focus Group consisted of: Department of Natural Resources Basin Team, Wood County Planning and Zoning Department, Wood County Health Department, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University Extension, Land Conservation Committee, Land Conservation Department, Resource Conservation and Development, and Mid-State Technical College.

Public Input

The general public was given opportunities to review and comment on the Land and Water Resource Management Plan. An article was written in the fall edition of the Land Conservation Department newsletter informing landowners of the plan revision, how to obtain a draft copy of the plan and where to send comments of the plan. The newsletter has a circulation of over 2,000 landowners in Wood County.

A public hearing was held for the Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan in January of 2007.

Related Resource Management Plans

Several resource management plans have been previously developed that have a relationship to this plan. Data from these plans was reviewed in the preparation of the Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. These include:

- The State of the Black-Buffalo-Trempealeau Basin
- The State of the Central Wisconsin River Basin
- Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (2000)
- Upper Yellow River Priority Watershed Project (1992)
- Wood County Farmland Preservation Plan (1982)