

## ***PLAN SUMMARY***

The management of Wisconsin's natural resources has become exceedingly complex. A myriad of environmental rules and regulations exist at all levels of government to protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens. People will continue to demand that these natural resources remain abundant and available as well as of high quality. There will need to be a coordinated effort between federal, state, and local natural resource managers to ensure that this demand will be met today and well into the future. The Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan is a five-year plan that provides direction to natural resources managers of all levels of government for the protection and improvement of our natural resources.

In 1997, Wisconsin Act 27 and in 1999, Wisconsin Act 9 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 and delivery mechanisms and better utilizes local, state, and federal funds to protect Wisconsin's land and water resources. The purpose of the Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan is to:

- Identify and prioritize the major natural resources issues and concerns for Wood County.
- Develop a coordinated effort to resolve these issues and concerns.
- Determine the roles of agencies in implementing the plan.
- Develop strategies, goals, objectives, and outcomes for program years 2007-2011.
- Service funding for the management of the natural resource base in Wood County.

To successfully implement the plan, cost-share funding for farmers will be needed for the installation of Best Management Practices that protect and conserve our natural resources. Additionally, the implementation of this plan is dependent upon having available staff hours to assist farmers in meeting the agricultural performance standards and prohibitions, monitoring, compliance and delivering technical assistance. The Wood County Land and Water Resource Management Plan will accomplish the goals set forth through a coordinated effort aimed at improving program effectiveness at all levels of government.

**ABBREVIATED TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

- Chapter 1:** Background, Plan Development and Citizen Participation
- Chapter 2:** County Setting, Natural Resources, and Trends
- Chapter 3:** Land and Water Resource Conditions
- Chapter 4:** Environmental Issues and Concerns
- Chapter 5:** Goals and Objectives
- Chapter 6:** Agricultural Performance Standards and Prohibitions
- Chapter 7:** Coordination with Other Resource Management Plans and Programs
- Chapter 8:** Evaluation and Monitoring
- Chapter 9:** Information and Education Strategy

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Background:** Wood County first developed a Land and Water Resource Management Plan in October of 2000. This revision is in response to Wisconsin 1997 Act 27 and 1999 Act 9, which amended Chapter 92 to require counties to develop plans.

**Plan Development and Citizen Participation:** Wood County received plan input from agency staff and a selected group representing a cross-section of Wood County. The Wood County Local Work Group met once to identify and prioritize resource concerns. Attendees from the Local Work Group meeting were invited to a Focus Group meeting to develop goals and objectives of the prioritized resource concerns.

**Related Resource Management Plans:** Information regarding the natural resources in Wood County was obtained from WDNR Basin Plans and Priority Watershed Implementation Plans.

**Cooperating Agencies and Organizations:** Those groups who assisted with natural resources management in Wood County are listed.

## **CHAPTER 2: COUNTY SETTING, NATURAL RESOURCES AND TRENDS**

**General Characteristics:** Wood County is near the center of Wisconsin. The total area of the county is 516, 544 acres or about 807 square miles. Land use is predominately agriculture and woodland.

**History and Development:** Wood County was created in 1856 from part of Portage County. The vast stands of quality lumber, especially white pine attracted lumberman. Agriculture soon moved in after the logging activity ceased.

**Climate:** In Wood County, winters are long, cold, and snowy and summers are warm and occasionally humid. Total annual precipitation is about 31 inches.

**Soils:** Most of the soils in Wood County formed in glacial till, residium, or glacial outwash.

**Woodland:** Approximately 40 percent of the county is classified as woodland making up 206,500 acres.

**Farmland and Agriculture:** There is an estimated 1,108 farms in Wood County with 228,000 acres of farmland. Wood County leads the state in cranberry production.

**Physiography, Geology and Drainage:** Wood County lies in two geographic provinces of Wisconsin. The northern one-third is part of the Northern Highland, and the rest of the county is part of the Central Plain. Powers Bluff is the highest point in Wood County.

**Watersheds and Drainage:** Wood County is part of the Upper Wisconsin River Central Sub-basin and the Southern Sub-basin and has ten distinct watersheds.

**Wetlands:** There are 131,068 acres of wetland in Wood County or about 25.31 percent of the total acres in the county.

**Surface Water Resources:** Wood County has a total water surface of 7,250 acres, which includes nine named lakes, 70 unnamed lakes/flowages and 82 streams.

**Groundwater:** Groundwater is the source of all drinking water in Wood County. Groundwater is generally abundant and of good quality.

**Agricultural and Natural Resource Trends and Outlook:** It is anticipated that farmland trends for Wood County over the next five years will lead to increased pressure to convert farmland to other uses. Demand for forest products is predicted to increase, while forests managed for timber harvest are expected to decrease.

**Land Use :** Land use in Wood County is predominately agriculture and woodland. The number of larger, confined dairy operations is increasing, but the number of milk cows is decreasing. The number of rural non-farm residences has greatly increased.

**Sediment Delivery:** Transect survey data estimates that 92 percent of cropland fields in Wood County have soil loss rates below tolerable soil loss levels.

**Air Quality:** Outdoor air quality is a prime concern in Wood County. Contaminants in the air can cause illness including asthma attacks and respiratory illness.

### **CHAPTER 3: LAND AND WATER RESOURCE CONDITIONS**

**Basins/Geography:** Wood County consists of two major drainage basins. They are the Central Wisconsin River Basin and the Black – Buffalo – Trempealeau River Basin.

**Exceptional and Outstanding Resource Waters:** There are no outstanding resource waters listed by WDNR in Wood County. Wood County has 9.5 miles of Class I trout water classified as exceptional resource waters.

**Impaired Waters:** The impaired waters of Wood County include Lake Dexter, Mill Creek, and the Wisconsin River near Port Edwards.

**Watersheds:** There are ten distinct watersheds in Wood County that drain to two major river basins.

## **CHAPTER 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

**Local Workgroup:** On Tuesday, October 3, 2006 about 20 people representing a broad-cross-section of the county met to identify and prioritize natural resource concerns.

**Focus Group:** On Tuesday, October 24, 2006 about 12 people met to develop goals, objectives, identify resources needed and available (time, money, people, etc.) and the formation of actions (timetable) for each of the prioritized resource concerns.

**Other Issues and Concerns:** Additional issues and concerns that face natural resource managers were discussed.

## **CHAPTER 5: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

At the local workgroup meeting, the following resource concerns were identified and prioritized:

- landspreading issues
- monitoring of surface water
- declining grassland habitat
- loss of wetlands
- loss of agricultural land
- soil loss from agricultural fields and construction sites
- excessive wildlife
- improved rural economics through prescribed grazing
- decreased enrollment in land conservation programs
- water conservation
- land use planning
- invasive species
- air quality
- abandoned well closure
- Yellow River water quality
- nonmetallic mining reclamation

The following goals were developed by the Focus Group to address the priorities:

Goal 1: Reduce Sediment Delivery to Surface Waters of Wood County.

Goal 2: Reduce Animal Waste and Nutrient Delivery to Surface Waters.

Goal 3: Reduce Crop Damage Caused by Wildlife.

Goal 4: Protect and Develop Wetland and Uplands for Wildlife Habitat.

Goal 5: Increase Efforts to Inventory the Water Resources.

Goal 6: Minimize the Adverse Effects of Urban Sprawl and Land Fragmentation in Rural Wood County.

Goal 7: Improve Air Quality.

## **CHAPTER 6: AGRICULTURAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AND PROHIBITIONS**

**Performance Standards:** The Wood County Land Conservation Department will assist landowners in meeting the agricultural performance standards for sheet, rill, and wind erosion, manure storage facilities, clean water diversions, and nutrient management.

**Local Implementation Strategy:** The Wood County Land Conservation Department has developed an information and education strategy as well as a priority farm identification process to inform landowners of the agricultural performance standards and prohibitions. The strategy also describes the methods for compliance determination, enforcement, and appeals.

**Cost-Share Assistance:** Cost-share funds will be made available to landowners through the County's Soil and Water Resource Management Program. Cost-share funds will be available for installing best management practices by DATCP.

## **CHAPTER 7: COORDINATION WITH OTHER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

The Land Conservation Department will utilize plans and programs from county, state, and federal sources.

## **CHAPTER 8: EVALUATION AND MONITORING**

The Land Conservation Department has developed a strategy to evaluate and monitor the goals of the plan including sediment delivery, animal waste and nutrient delivery, crop damage, and protection of wetlands and uplands.

## **CHAPTER 9: INFORMATION AND EDUCATION STRATEGY**

The Land and Water Resource Management Plan will set goals, take actions, and evaluate an information and education strategy.