

CHAPTER 5: AGRICULTURE, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

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CHAPTER 5: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural, natural, and cultural resources give definition to a community and strongly affect its quality of life. For communities in Waushara County, a tapestry of working farms interwoven with large stands of woodlands and wetlands continue to dominate the rural landscape and help shape the area's identity and culture. The County's natural features such as topographic relief, lakes, streams, wetlands and soils also have a significant bearing on historic and contemporary land use, development patterns and contribute to a strong heritage of outdoor recreational pursuits. Fishing, swimming, hunting, and other outdoor activities are important quality of life past-times. The area's lakes and other scenic landscape features provide attractive home sites for many permanent and seasonal residents. At the same time, many of these environmental elements have limiting conditions that make them less than ideal for supporting particular types of activity or development. Understanding the relationship between these environmental characteristics and their physical suitability to accommodate specific types of activity or development is a key ingredient in planning a community's future land use.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an inventory of existing agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. In addition, existing policies associated with these resources are discussed.

Agricultural Resources

The Town of Oasis has had a farming history and tradition that have attracted residents to the area. Waushara County farmers produce a variety of feed and cash crops. Farming and other agricultural activities contribute significantly to the local economy. As with elsewhere in rural Wisconsin, these trends are changing as new developments encroach on productive farmland. The suburbanization trend is of great concern to both farmers and residents of the County. This section will look at important farmland classifications, agricultural land cover and farmland loses, and sales between 1990 and 1997. The UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Studies is currently finalizing an updated *Wisconsin Town Land Use Databook; Town-Level Farming and Land Use Trends* from 2002 - 2007. This document is to be published in early 2009 and will provide a more comprehensive view of Waushara County's agricultural trends.

Agricultural Land Cover

Agricultural land cover includes row crops (corn, peas, potatoes, snap beans, soybeans and other row crops); forages (hay and hay/mix); and grassland (timothy, rye, pasture, idle, Conservation Reserve Program land, grass and volunteer grasses).¹ ***Agricultural land cover, which includes row crops, forages, and grassland, comprised over 81 percent of the total area of the Town of Oasis and 56 percent of the total area of Waushara County (Table 5-1).***¹

¹ Jackson-Smith, D., and E. Finnin. 2001. *Wisconsin County Agricultural Trends in the 1990s*.

Table 5-1. Percent of Land Cover, 1991—1993

| Community | Row Crop | Forages | Grassland | Total Farmland |
|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| T. Oasis | 45.0% | 19.0% | 17.8% | 81.8% |
| County | 26.6% | 9.0% | 20.4% | 56.0% |

Source: UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, 1999

Farmland Losses

Farm and farmland losses are the result of economic pressures within agriculture as well as competition for agricultural lands from residential and recreational development. Within the state and nation there has been a steady decline in the number of farms and farmland acreage. Trends have indicated that while the number of farms has declined, the acreage per farm has increased. However this was not true in the Town of Oasis (617 and 316 respectively) and Waushara County (297 and 278 respectively) as a whole between 1990 and 1997.

In 1997, an estimated 54 farms existed within the Town of Oasis. This represents a net gain of 27 farms from 1990 (Table 5-2). The percentage of the farms within the Town has increased at a much faster rate than the county as a whole. The Town of Oasis also had a higher percentage of farms based on land area than the county with 1.5 farms per square mile, compared to 1.2 farms per square mile for Waushara County.²

Dairy farms within the Town of Oasis and Waushara County have declined since 1990 (Table 5-2). ***In 1990, there were 8 dairy farms in the Town and 232 in Waushara County; by 1997, the Town lost four dairy farms while the County lost 101 dairy farms.***

Table 5-2. Trends in Farm Numbers, 1990 – 1997

| Community | Estimated Farms | | | | Dairy Farms | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|------|----------|---------------------|-------------|------|----------|---------------------|
| | 1990 | 1997 | % Change | Per sq. mile (1997) | 1990 | 1997 | % Change | Per sq. mile (1997) |
| T. Oasis | 27 | 54 | 100% | 1.5 | 8 | 4 | -50% | 0.1 |
| County | 709 | 710 | 0.10% | 1.2 | 232 | 131 | -43.50% | 0.2 |

Source: UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, 1999

While the Town of Oasis farm acreage increased as the total number of farms increased, countywide the total amount of farm acreage decreased as the number of farms increased countywide. ***Between 1990 and 1997, 379 acres (2.3%) of farmland were gained in the Town of Oasis*** (Table 5-3). Waushara County experienced a decline in the amount of farmland (4.4%) during this same time period. The average farm size in Oasis and Waushara County in 1997 was 316 acres and 278 acres respectively. The percent of the Town taxed as farmland represents the overall percentage of the Town that is considered agricultural by the local assessor.

² UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Statistics. 1999. *Wisconsin Land Use Databook: Town-level Farming and Land Use Trends 1990-1998, Waushara County.*

Table 5-3. Loss of Farm Acres, 1990 – 1997

| Community | Farmland (Acres) | | Percent Change | % of Town Taxed as Farmland (1997) |
|-----------|------------------|---------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| | 1990 | 1997 | | |
| T. Oasis | 16,667 | 17,046 | 2.30% | 76% |
| County | 206,263 | 197,197 | -4.40% | 54.10% |

Source: UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, 1999

When agricultural land is sold in the State of Wisconsin, information is collected by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue regarding whether the land is going to remain in agricultural use. It should be noted that the Wisconsin Department of Revenue only collects information on larger parcels. In 1990 a "large" parcel was 20 acres in area and in 1997 a large parcel was increased to 35 acres in area. Between 1990 and 1997, 25 parcels encompassing 1,326 acres was sold in the Town of Oasis (Table 5-4). Approximately 94 percent of this land remained in agricultural use, while 6 percent was converted to other uses. Losses of agricultural lands in the Town of Oasis are lower than the average conversion rates throughout Waushara County; approximately 22 percent of land in the County sold was converted to non-agricultural uses.

Table 5-4. Farmland Sales, 1990 – 1997

| Community | No. Parcels Sold | Remain Agricultural | Converted to Other | Total Acres |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| T. Oasis | 25 | 1,242 | 84 | 1,326 |
| County | 974 | 33,881 | 9,558 | 43,439 |

Source: UWEX Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, 1999

Farmland Soils

Waushara County's farmland contributes to the quality of life, provides an open agricultural landscape, and adds to the economy of the area. A classification system rating the suitability of a specific area based on soil type and condition was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.³ These classifications in order of importance are: 1.) prime farmland, 2.) unique farmland, 3.) farmlands of statewide importance, 4.) farmlands of local importance, and 5.) other lands. Table 5-5 and Exhibit 5-1 summarize the distribution of available farmland in these categories.

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is "the land that is best suited for food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops" when managed according to acceptable farming methods. These lands may be cultivated, pasture, woodland, or other land, however the land cannot be built-up, urbanized, or a water area. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources with the least damage to the environment. Criteria used to determine prime farmland include an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or

³ USDA. 1993. *USDA Handbook 18: Soil Survey Manual*.

irrigation, few or no rocks, high permeability, gently sloping terrain (0 to 6%) and a low erodibility. Prime farmland is not frequently flooded during the growing season or saturated with water for long periods of time. Soils that have a seasonal high water table may qualify as prime farmland if this limitation is overcome by drainage measures.

Unique farmland is defined as land other than prime farmland that is used to produce specific high-value food or fiber crops. It has a moisture supply, either from stored precipitation or irrigation systems, and combines favorable factors of soil quality, growing season, temperature, humidity, drainage, elevation, aspect or other conditions. Examples of specialty crops that typically require a high management and investment level include apple orchards, lettuce, carrots, celery, and cauliflower.

Farmlands of statewide importance are lands in addition to prime and unique farmland that are important to the State of Wisconsin for crop production.

Farmlands of local importance are lands in addition to the previous three categories which are important to Waushara County for crop production.

Other lands are areas which have little value for producing crops.

According to the above criteria, the highest percentage of land within the Town of Oasis is considered prime farmland. ***Prime farmland accounts for 35 percent (7,824 acres) of the town's farmland.*** Unique farmlands are the second most abundant category of farmland (28%) with a total of 6,262 acres. Approximately 20 percent (4,447 acres) of the Town is considered state importance farmlands, while 12 percent (2,687) is classified as local importance. Other lands account for five percent or 1,166 acres (Table 5-5, Exhibit 5-1). The remaining 234 acres are classified as water.

Table 5-5. Important Farmland Classes

| Farmland Class | T. Oasis | |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Acres | Percent |
| Prime Farmland | 7,824 | 34.6% |
| Unique Farmland | 6,262 | 27.7% |
| State Importance | 4,447 | 19.7% |
| Local Importance | 2,687 | 11.9% |
| Other Lands | 1,166 | 5.2% |
| Water | 234 | 1.0% |
| Total | 22,620 | 100.0% |

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982, Waushara County, 2003.

Natural Resources

This section will describe the general soils' associations of the Town of Oasis together with the soils' suitability for on-site waste disposal, septage spreading, the potential for building site development and steep slopes. It will also explain the water resources of the area including watersheds and drainage; lakes, ponds and quarries; rivers and streams; floodplains; wetlands and groundwater. Wildlife, parks, open space, recreational and mineral resources will also be touched upon.

Soils

Soils provide the physical base for development and agriculture within a community. Knowledge of their limitations and potential difficulties is important in evaluating crop production capabilities and other land use alternatives such as residential development, and utility installation. The criteria considered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in establishing the severe rating of soils include wetness, shrink–swell potential, bearing strength, susceptibility to flooding, land spreading, slope steepness, and frost action.⁴ Severe soil limitations do not necessarily exclude areas from being developed, but instead indicate that more extensive construction measures must be taken to prevent environmental and property damage.

Soils are classified according to their associations, which are a grouping of similar soil types based on geographic proximity, physical characteristics, and permeability. There are two major soil associations within the Town of Oasis.

Plainfield-Okee-Richford Association soils are sloping to steep sandy soils located on moraines, hills, and terraces. Plainfield soils are rapidly permeable and excessively drained, while Okee and Richford soils are moderately permeable and somewhat excessively drained. Slopes range from 6 to 30 percent. While some of the Richford soils are used for cropland, most acreage in this association is used for woodlands. These soils are especially suited for pine species.

Plainfield-Richford-Boyer Association soils are nearly level and gentle sloping soils that are well drained to excessively drained sandy soils located on outwash plains and terraces. Most acreage in this association is used as irrigated cropland; a few areas suitable for woodlands. Soil erosion and very rapid permeability are the main concerns with this association.

On-Site Waste Disposal

Exhibit 5-2 identifies suitability for on-site waste disposal options based on an evaluation of soil characteristics. This map is not intended to serve as a substitute for on-site soil investigations, but rather as an indicator of reasonable expectations for soils underlying a site.

Evaluation of the soil data indicates that almost all of the soils in the Town of Oasis (99%) are rated suitable for conventional or at-grade in-ground pressure or mound systems (Table 5-6). Generally, soils near streams and rivers are the least suitable for on-site waste disposal. Areas with high groundwater or characterized by poorly drained soils are also more likely to be unsuitable for on-site systems.

Nearly all of the soils in the Town of Oasis are capable of supporting private on-site wastewater disposal systems. ***About 98 percent of the area in the Town of Oasis is suitable for conventional systems; while another 0.1 percent is suitable for at-grade, in-ground pressure and mound systems.*** The remaining 0.1 percent (31 acres) of the soils in Oasis are rated unsuitable for on-site systems due primarily to wet soil conditions and low permeability. Water features account for about 1 percent of the surface area within the Town of Oasis.

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. 1989. *Soil Survey of Waushara County, Wisconsin*.

Table 5-6. Soil Limitations for On-Site Waste Disposal

| Community | Conventional | | At-Grade ¹ | | Holding Tank ² | | Unsuitable | | No Rating | | Water | | Total Acres |
|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------|------------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 22,257 | 98.4% | 30 | 0.1% | 69 | 0.3% | 31 | 0.1% | 0 | 0% | 234 | 1.0% | 22,620 |

¹Includes in-ground pressure and mound systems.

²Includes new technology systems producing 10⁴ or less coliform fecal units (cfu) per 100ml.

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982, Waushara County, 2003.

Building Site Development

The USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service has evaluated soil characteristics and rated soil potential for building site development based upon wetness, shrink-swell potential, bearing strength, susceptibility to flooding, slope steepness, and frost action. The ratings range from low to very high potential. Areas with lower soil potential for building development are associated with the outer moraine and through the central lake area. Exhibit 5-3 identifies soil potential for building site development. ***Over three-quarters of the area within the Town of Oasis (86.6%, 19,586 acres) have soils that are considered to have a very high suitability for building site development***, while an additional 7.2 percent (1,637 acres) have a medium suitability (Table 5-7). Approximately 5 percent (1,164 acres) of the Town is rated very low or is not rated for building site developments. Water accounts for slightly more than one percent of the area.

Table 5-7. Soil Potential for Building Site Development

| Community | Very High | | Medium | | Very Low, No Rating | | Water | | Total Acres |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------|---------|---------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 19,586 | 86.6% | 1,637 | 7.2% | 1,164 | 5.1% | 234 | 1.0% | 22,620 |

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982, Waushara County, 2003.

Septage Spreading

The Waushara County Land Conservation Office has evaluated soil characteristics for the suitability of septage spreading based on groundwater depths, permeability, soil texture, slope, wetness, and soil depths (Exhibit 5-4). The ratings range from none or slight to severe. Soils rated slight are relatively free of limitations that affect the intended use or have limitations that are easily overcome. Soils with moderate limitations can normally be overcome with corrective planning, careful design, and good management. Soils rated severe have physical limitations which are severe enough to make the use of the soil doubtful for the proposed use. Septage spreading cannot occur within 300 feet of rivers and streams or within 1,000 feet of lakes unless they are incorporated into the soil within 72 hours of application. Spreading rates need to be based on current soil tests, on-site vegetation, and a septic nutrient test.

Over half of the soils (54.4%, 12,309 acres) pose a slight risk to no limitations for septage spreading within the Town of Oasis. Approximately 39 percent (8,913 acres) are listed as having a moderate risk, while 5.1 percent (1,143 acres) of the soils in Oasis are considered a severe risk for septage spreading (Table 5-8).

Table 5-8. Soil Limitations for Septage Spreading

| Community | None to Slight | | Moderate | | Severe | | No Rating | | Water | | Total Acres |
|-----------|----------------|---------|----------|---------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 12,309 | 54.4% | 8,913 | 39.4% | 1,143 | 5.1% | 21 | 0.1% | 234 | 1.0% | 22,620 |

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982, Waushara County, 2003.

Geography and Topography (Scenic Resources)

The local communities in the Waushara County are defined by diverse topographical features⁵. Evidence of several phases of the Wisconsin Glacier can be found in the County.⁶ The western edge of the County is a flat outwash plain. A narrow moraine is located on the eastern boundary of this outwash plain extending through the Villages and towns of Coloma, Hancock and Plainfield. This moraine ridge creates a groundwater divided separating the County's groundwater flow east and west. Central Waushara County (City of Wautoma, Village Wild Rose and surrounding towns) gradually flattens to a rolling plain as you move eastward across the County. The eastern third of the County is a gently rolling lake plain. The southeastern areas of Waushara County were once occupied by Lake Oshkosh and is characterized by relatively flat to gently rolling plains. The glacial plain areas of Waushara County have expansive deposits of red clay and organic-rich soils.⁷ This combination has resulted in expansive wetlands and valuable agricultural areas.

As a result of glacial activity, land relief within Waushara County is quite varied.⁸ ***Within the Town of Oasis, land relief is approximately 90 feet, from a low of 1,110 feet above sea level in the southwest corner of the Town near Herrick Lake to a high of 1,200 feet above sea level in several areas north of Plainfield Lake east of CTH BB.***

Steep Slopes

Exhibit 5-5 indicates areas that have slopes greater than 12 percent. ***Approximately five percent (4.6%, 1,034 acres) of the Town of Oasis is classified as having slopes in excess of 12 percent*** (Table 5-9). In the Town of Oasis, steep slopes are scattered, however a large concentration of them follow the outer moraine and the ridges running along the shorelines of the town's central lakes. In general, steep slopes are generally found in conjunction with moraines, drumlins, and other glacial features.

Table 5-9. Steep Slopes

| Community | 0-12 Percent | | >12 Percent | | No Rating, Water | | Total Acres |
|-----------|--------------|---------|-------------|---------|------------------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 21,332 | 94.3% | 1,034 | 4.6% | 254 | 1.1% | 22,620 |

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982, Waushara County, 2003.

⁵ WDNR, *Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin*; 2001

⁶ Dutch, S. 2003. *Lake Oshkosh Drainage*. <http://www.uwgb.edu/dutchs/geolwisc/geohist/wi12ka.htm>

⁷ Attig, J., et al. 2005. *Glacial Lakes Wisconsin and Oshkosh: Two Very Different Late-Glacial Ice-Marginal Lakes*. http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2005NC/finalprogram/abstract_86950.htm

⁸ USGS. 1984. *USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Maps*.

Water Resources

Water resources are sources of water that are useful or potentially useful to humans. Water is important because it is needed for life to exist. Water is used for household, agricultural, recreational, industrial and environmental activities⁹. Essentially all these uses require fresh water.

Watersheds and Drainage

The WDNR has divided the state into 24 hydrological based geographic management units (GMUs) or basins. Each GMU is further divided into smaller units based on smaller sub-watersheds. The Wisconsin DNR has completed several reports analyzing water quality for designated GMUs.¹⁰

Surface water drainage for the Town of Oasis is predominately located within the Central Wisconsin River Basin, with a small area in the town's southeast corner falling within the Upper Fox River Basin. The Central Wisconsin River Basin (4,021 square miles) includes twenty-nine different sub-watersheds. The Upper Fox River Basin covers 2,090 square miles and is comprised of fifteen different sub-watersheds.

The Town of Oasis is divided into four sub-watersheds (Exhibit 5-5). The Town is generally divided horizontally into thirds. The Big Roche-A-Cri Creek Sub-watershed (CW06) encompasses the southern and southwestern one-third of the Town. The Central portion of the Town falls within the Fourteenmile Creek Sub-watershed (CW07). The northern areas of the Town fall within the Sevenmile & Tenmile Creeks Sub-watershed (CW09), while a very small portion of the town's (southeast corner) falls within the White River Sub-watershed (UF08).

- **The Big Roche-A-Cri Sub-watershed** (Central Wisconsin River Basin) drains the south and southeastern portions of the Town of Oasis toward the Big Roche-A-Cri Creek located to the west within the Town of Plainfield. Wind erosion is severe in this sub-watershed and it is rated high for stream and wind erosion controls.
- **The Fourteenmile Creek Sub-watershed** (Central Wisconsin River Basin) is situated in Waushara, Wood and Adams Counties. Ditching and drainage for agricultural uses have significantly reduced what were once extensive wetlands in the northern portions of this sub-watershed. Water quality concerns for this sub-watershed are high nitrate levels, stream pasturing, and water draw down for agricultural uses.
- **The Sevenmile & Tenmile Creeks sub-watershed** (Central Wisconsin River Basin) is a maze of ditches and laterals that were created to drain lowland areas for agricultural activities. Large areas are being maintained by the State as grassland ecosystems. This sub-watershed is ranked as a high priority watershed. Water quality is impacted by grazing and pivot irrigation systems. Soil erosion due to wind and water is a major concern for this sub-watershed.

⁹ Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_resources, 2/16/07.

¹⁰ WDNR. 2002. *State of the Basin Reports*. <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/stateofbasin.html>

- **The White River sub-watershed** (Upper Fox River Basin) encompasses 106 square miles. The town's southeast corner falls within the northwest corner of the White River Sub-watershed which drains surface water to the south and southeast. There are a number of streams within this sub-watershed (outside the town's boundaries) that are classified as exceptional water resources.

Lakes, Ponds and Quarries

The majority of lakes within Waushara County are natural and of glacial origin. Sandy soils readily allow for the percolation of precipitation into the ground rather than overland flow directly to surface waters. This results in a continual recharge of the shallow aquifer underlying the county and surrounding region.¹¹ ***There are seventeen lakes and/or impoundments found within the Town of Oasis.*** (Table 5-10, Exhibit 5-5).

Table 5-10. Lakes and Ponds

| Name | Acres | Maximum Depth Feet | Location (Section Number) | Lake Type |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| Fiddle Lake | 2 | Not listed | 16 | Not listed |
| Herrick Lake | 25 | Not listed | 31 | Not listed |
| Horsehead Lake | 6 | 3 | 16 | Seepage |
| Huron Lake | 40 | 46 | 22 | Seepage |
| Kawalski Lake | 8 | 11 | 4 | Seepage |
| Long Lake | 45 | 6 | 17 | Spring |
| Mud Lake | 11 | 4 | 22 | Seepage |
| Piper Lake | 3 | Not listed | 10 | Not listed |
| Plainfield Lake | 31 | 5 | 18 | Seepage |
| Pumpkin Seed Lake | 2 | Not listed | 16 | Not Listed |
| Second Lake | 10 | Not listed | 17 | Not listed |
| Sherman Lake | 17 | Not listed | 17 | Not listed |
| Shumway Lake | 11 | 6 | 22 | Seepage |
| Slafter Lake | Not listed | Not listed | 34 | Not listed |
| Walters Lake | Not listed | Not listed | 4 | Not listed |
| Weymouth Lake | 8 | 16 | 21 | Seepage |
| Yonke Lake | 20 | Not listed | 5 | Not listed |

Source: *WDNR Wisconsin Lakes, 1995; ECWPC, 2008.*

Lakes can be described as drainage, seepage, spring, or drained lakes. The vast majority of Lakes within Waushara County are classified as seepage lakes. Seepage lakes do not have an inlet or an outlet and are recharged by precipitation and runoff supplemented by groundwater. Seepage lakes commonly reflect groundwater levels and can fluctuate seasonally.

The second most common type of lake in Waushara County are Drainage lakes. These lakes have both an inlet and an outlet where the main water source is stream drainage. Drainage lakes where one-half of the maximum depth is dependant on a dam are considered to be artificial lakes or impoundments.

¹¹ WDNR. 1970. *Surface Water Resources of Waushara County.*

Waushara County has a small number of spring lakes, primarily scattered throughout north central and south central Waushara County (towns of Springwater, Saxeville, Mount Morris, Leon, Dakota, and Richford). Spring lakes have an outlet, but have no inlet. The primary source of water is groundwater flowing into the bottom of the lake from inside and outside the immediate surface drainage area. Spring lakes are the headwaters of many streams.

Waushara County has one listed drained lake (located in Mount Morris). Drained lakes have no inlet, but have a continuously flowing outlet. Drained lakes are not groundwater fed. The primary source of water is from precipitation and direct drainage from the surrounding land. Water levels fluctuate depending on the supply of water.

Rivers and Streams

There are no named river/streams in the Town of Oasis.

Floodplains

Areas susceptible to flooding are considered unsuitable for development due to potential health risks and property damage. Flood Insurance Rate Maps for the unincorporated portions of Waushara County identify areas lying within the Town of Oasis.¹² Floodplains are found along the shorelines of the town's lakes.

Table 5-11 indicates the total number of acres and overall percentages of land which are within the 100-year floodplain. ***Approximately 1 percent (222 acres) of the land within the Town of Oasis lies in a floodplain.***

Table 5-11. Floodplains

| Community | Acres | Percent |
|-----------|-------|---------|
| T. Oasis | 222 | 0.9% |

Source: FEMA, 1985, Waushara County, 2001

Waushara County has adopted a floodplain ordinance requiring certain land use controls in designated flood hazard areas, thus making residents eligible to participate in the Federal Flood Insurance Administrative Flood Insurance Program. The program requires all structures that are constructed or purchased in designated flood areas utilizing loans from federally insured banks to be insured by a flood insurance policy.

Wetlands

Wetlands act as a natural filtering system for nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrates. More importantly, wetlands also serve as a natural buffer protecting shorelines and stream banks from erosion. Wetlands are essential in providing wildlife habitat, flood control, and groundwater recharge. Consequently, local, state, and federal regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands and shorelands. The Shoreland/Wetland Ordinance adopted by Waushara County regulates development within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water elevation mark of navigable lakes, ponds, or flowages or 300 feet from the ordinary high

¹² FEMA. 1985. *Flood Insurance Rate Maps*.

water elevation mark of navigable rivers or streams. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has authority over the placement of fill materials in virtually all wetlands two acres and larger or adjacent to navigable waters. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and United States Department of Agriculture also have jurisdiction over wetlands within Wisconsin. The U.S. Department of Agriculture incorporates wetland preservation criteria into its crop price support programs. Prior to placing fill or altering wetland resources, the appropriate agencies must be contacted to receive authorization.

The wetlands surveyed according to the Wisconsin Wetlands Inventory Map are shown in Exhibit 5-6.¹³ They were identified on aerial photographs by interpreting vegetation, visible hydrology, and geography based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Wetlands in the Town of Oasis are generally located along the shoreline of the town's lakes, however wetlands smaller than five acres are located in various locations throughout the Town.

Table 5-12 indicates the number of acres and the percentage of wetlands within the Town of Oasis. Not including small tracts of wetlands (less than five acres); ***less than one percent (171 acres) of the Town of Oasis is classified as wetlands.*** The amount and variety of wetlands have slight limitations on the future growth and development of the area.

Table 5-12. Wetlands

| Community | Acres | Percent |
|-----------|-------|---------|
| T. Oasis | 171 | 0.8% |

Source: WDNR, 2004; Waushara County, 2008.

Groundwater

In Waushara County, groundwater occurs mostly in the alluvium and glacial drift of the Quaternary Age and in the sandstone of the Cambrian Age. Precipitation in the form of either rain or snow is the largest contributor to recharge of the groundwater aquifers. Recharge is generally greatest in spring when water from melting snow and heavy rains saturates the ground and percolates to the water table. If discharge (the drawing out and use of groundwater) is greater than recharge, the elevation where the groundwater is extracted will fall and a local depression in the water table will result. Lower water levels cause the pumping lifts to increase and may reduce the yields of some of the wells.

Groundwater within the county occurs under both water table and artesian conditions. Water in the unconsolidated beds of sand and gravel is generally unconfined and occurs under water table conditions. Confined or artesian conditions exist locally where the water in the sand and gravel deposits is confined by layers of silt or clay.

A groundwater divide, located west and parallel to the topographic divide, cuts diagonally through Waushara County. It extends from Marquette County, through the towns of Hancock and Coloma, the Village of Hancock, and then east of the

¹³ WDNR. 1979. *Wisconsin Wetland Inventory Maps.*

Village of Plainfield to the Portage County line.¹⁴ East of this divide, groundwater moves southeasterly toward the Wolf and Fox Rivers. West of this divide groundwater moves westerly toward the Wisconsin River.

According to the well water information obtained from the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center in Stevens Point, some private wells located in this area contain nitrate levels that are higher than the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act standards of 10 mg/L.¹⁵ These standards apply to municipal water sources only, but are strongly suggested thresholds for private systems. Nitrates originate in both agricultural and residential fertilizers, human sewage, and farm animal waste. Excessive levels of nitrates in drinking water have caused serious illness or death in infants under six months of age. Pregnant women are also advised not to drink water in which nitrate levels exceed the EPA standards. Due to sandy soils within the County, there is potential for groundwater contamination in the shallower aquifers. However, this potential is greatly reduced in the deeper aquifers. Table 5-13 lists the results of water sample tests conducted between 1990 and 2001.¹⁶ For conversion purposes, 1 part per million (ppm) is the same concentration as 1 mg/L. ***Four wells within the Town of Oasis exceeded the 10 ppm threshold level for nitrate.*** According to Waushara County, ***the majority of homes within the Town of Oasis are served by private wells.***

Table 5-13. Nitrate Levels (ppm) in Waushara County Wells

| Community | None Detected | 0.1 - 2.0 ppm | 2 -10 ppm | 10 -20 ppm | > 20 Ppm |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| T. Oasis | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 1 |

Source: Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center, UW – Stevens Point, 2001.

Although groundwater is found at varying depths throughout the County, the vast majority of groundwater in the Town of Oasis is found in depths greater than six feet (Table 5-14 and Exhibit 5-5). ***Groundwater depths of less than two feet are found in less than one percent (100 acres) of the land area.*** Groundwater depths exceed 6 feet in approximately 98 percent of the Town; an additional 0.4 percent (194 acres) of the area has groundwater depths of 2 to 6 feet. The remaining 1.0 percent (254 acres) in Oasis has either no rating or is surface water.

Table 5-14. Depth to Groundwater

| Community | < 2 Feet | | 2-6 Feet | | > 6 Feet | | No Rating | | Water | | Total Acres |
|-----------|----------|---------|----------|---------|----------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 100 | 0.4% | 194 | 0.9% | 22,072 | 97.6% | 21 | 0.09% | 234 | 1.0% | 22,620 |

Source: USDA-NRCS, 1982. Waushara County, 2005.

According to the *Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter ATCP 30 Atrazine, Pesticides; Use Restrictions*, atrazine prohibition areas have been established throughout Waushara County. In the prohibition areas no person can apply, mix or load any atrazine product, except under

¹⁴ Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Waushara County, Wisconsin, Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper, 1809-B. Map of Waushara County, Wisconsin, Showing Configuration of Water Table, July 1957 and Location of Wells, Springs, and Stream flow-Measurement Sites.

¹⁵ USEPA. 2005. *List of Drinking Water Contaminants & MCLs*. <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/mcl.html>.

¹⁶ Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center. 2001. *UWEX Private Well Project: Waushara County*.

special conditions. ***The Town has no atrazine prohibition areas.*** The Department of Agriculture has determined these areas based on well samples. These areas are monitored, and if atrazine is not applied, the levels may diminish and may be removed from the list.

Natural Springs and Artesian Wells

There are a number of natural springs and artesian wells scattered throughout Waushara County. A natural spring can occur when an impermeable layer (usually consisting of clay) forces the water table to the surface or when water-bearing crevasses in fractured rock intersect the surface. An artesian well is created when a well is drilled into a confined aquifer which is recharged from a source located at a higher elevation¹⁷. The majority of springs within Waushara County are gravity depression springs, generally located in the eastern portions of the County.

Groundwater Planning

Water quality and quantity have been a concern for Waushara County communities. Low lake levels throughout Waushara County underscore a more pressing problem: groundwater quantity and quality preservation. Communities throughout East Central Wisconsin have been challenged with a number of issues ranging from potable water supply shortfalls to contamination issues such as elevated arsenic and radium levels. A prolonged drought coupled with increased water demands may be contributing to a declining water table. The anticipated population increases, agricultural irrigation demands, and growing recreational demands will continue to place significant demands on Waushara County's groundwater resources.

With an ever increasing demand on current groundwater supplies, local communities must assess how local and county-wide land use decisions will continue to affect groundwater quantity and quality. Identifying soil characteristics, water table levels, and groundwater susceptibility is just a beginning step in this process. Other underlining geological characteristics such as bedrock, groundwater flow direction, private well information, community groundwater pumping rates, and water table depth will be essential in understanding the current status of groundwater. Moreover, the abundance and quality of surface water is directly tied to groundwater supplies. Many streams and lakes rely on groundwater as their primary source of water; thus, local lake levels are directly tied to groundwater levels. Human impacts such as high capacity wells, irrigation systems, and others also place demands on groundwater supplies.

Additional information and technical expertise is available from several governmental and academic agencies statewide. The Center for Land Use education has completed several case studies and groundwater planning assistance documents for local communities. Additional information can be found at <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/groundwater/index.html>.

¹⁷ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Source Water Springs and Natural Wells
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/dwg/OpCert/HTML/chapter2/sw2a.htm>,

Wildlife Resources

Wildlife Habitat

Waushara County falls within the following ecological landscapes¹⁸:

- **Central Sand Plains** is located in western Waushara County, occurring on a flat, sandy lake plain, and supports agriculture, forestry, recreation, and wildlife management. This Ecological Landscape formed in and around what was once Glacial Lake Wisconsin, which contained glacial meltwater extending over 1.1 million acres at its highest stage.
- **Central Sand Hills** encompasses the majority of Waushara County and is located at the eastern edge of what was once Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The landforms in this Ecological Landscape are a series of glacial moraines that were later partially covered by glacial outwash. The area is characterized by a mixture of farmland, woodlots, wetlands, small kettle lakes, and cold water streams, all on sandy soils. The mosaic of glacial moraine and pitted outwash throughout this Ecological Landscape has given rise to extensive wetlands in the outwash areas, and the headwaters of coldwater streams that originate in glacial moraines.
- **Southeast Glacial Plains** is located in the eastern portions of Waushara County, and are made up of glacial till plains and moraines. Most of this Ecological Landscape is composed of glacial materials deposited during the Wisconsin Ice Age.

The majority of the Town of Oasis falls within the Central Sand Hills ecological landscape, while the town's northeast corner falls within the Central Sand Plains ecological landscape. Together, these ecological landscapes support numerous habitat types throughout Waushara County for a varied and abundant wildlife and fish community. Habitats found within Waushara County include streams, lakes, rivers, woodlands, marshes, open wet meadows, and fallow/abandoned farmland. White-tailed deer and small mammals such as opossum, raccoon, gray and fox squirrels are abundant in wooded areas. Lakes and streams support diverse warm and cold water fisheries. Wetlands attract waterfowl during spring and fall migrations as well as during the nesting season. Other wildlife found in the area include grassland and wetland birds, cottontail rabbits, mink, otter, muskrats, red fox, and a wide variety of songbirds and similar passerines.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species and Natural Communities

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources maintains a database of rare, special concern, threatened, and endangered species and natural communities in Waushara County.¹⁹ In order to protect these communities from harm, their exact locations are not released to the public; however, Waushara County has access to this database. When a development proposal is presented to the county, the WDNR database is consulted prior to granting approval. Before development, precautions should be taken to minimize adverse impacts which could disturb potential habitats for these flora and fauna. A list of the rare, threatened, and endangered species and natural communities is included in Appendix D (Table D-1).

¹⁸ WDNR, 2002. *Ecological Landscapes of Wisconsin*

¹⁹ WDNR. 2005. *Natural Heritage Inventory Program*. <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/>.

Exotic and Invasive Species

Non-native species commonly referred to as exotic or invasive species have been recognized in recent years as a major threat to the integrity of native ecosystems, habitats, and the species that utilize those habitats. Invasive species disrupt native ecosystems by out-competing native plants and animals for valuable resources such as food and space. The resulting competition between native and invasive species has the potential to completely displace native species. Invasive species are found in both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. The WDNR updates a list of plant and animal invasive species in Wisconsin. This list can be found on the Department's website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/>. Human livelihood and quality of life are greatly altered by invasive species; they hamper boating, swimming, fishing, and other water recreation; place an economic burden on local communities in eradication and control costs; and in some instances present a potential fire hazard. Prior to introduction of any non-native fish or wildlife, a permit from the WDNR is required pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 29.736 and 29.745.

Woodlands

Originally, the majority of Waushara County contained vegetation consisting of a mixture of oak forest species interspersed with pine forests and oak openings with an understory of prairie grasses. Waushara County once encompassed substantial areas of wetland conifers, lowland hardwoods, wet meadows with lowland shrubs, and marshes. Currently, upland forest areas are characterized by an oak-hickory association. Pine species are found throughout much of the county, while the wetland conifers have been replaced largely by shrub wetlands, general agriculture, and urban areas. Woodlands are found in large stands as well as scattered throughout the Town. ***Woodlands comprise about 27 percent of the total land area in the Town of Oasis*** (Exhibit 5-6).

Forests and woodlands can be classified into one of two categories: general (unplanted) woodlands and planted woodlands. General woodlands are naturally occurring forests and hedgerows. Planted woodlands are tree plantations in which trees are found in rows; these areas include orchards, timber tracts, Christmas tree production and other general uses. ***There are 3,072 acres of general woodlands and 2,962 acres of planted woodlands in the Town of Oasis.*** These woodlands should be considered as prime wildlife habitat areas; efforts to protect them from encroaching development should be evaluated (Table 5-15).

Table 5-15. Woodlands

| Community | General Woodlands | | Planted Woodlands | | Total Woodlands | | Total Acres |
|-----------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | Acres | Percent | |
| T. Oasis | 3,072 | 13.6% | 2,962 | 13.1% | 6,034 | 26.7% | 22,620 |

Source: ECWRPC, 2005.

The Forest Crop Law of 1927 (FCL) and the Woodland Tax Law of 1954 (WTL) were established to encourage sound forestry practices on private lands. In 1985, the Managed Forest Law (MFL) replaced both the FCL and WTL.²⁰ Enrollment in the FCL closed in 1986, and renewal in the program is not permitted. The last WTL contract expired in 2000. The MFL ensures the

²⁰ WDNR. 2005. *Managed Forest Law*. <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/ftax/mfl.htm>.

growth of future commercial crops while balancing individual property owner objectives and society's need for compatible recreational activities, forestry aesthetics, wildlife habitat, erosion control and protection of endangered resources. ***In 2008, a total of 1,748 acres were actively managed within the Town of Oasis under the MFL*** (Table 5-16).

**Table 5-16. Managed Forest Law
And Forest Crop Law Lands**

| T. Oasis | Acres | Percent |
|--------------------|-------|---------|
| Managed Forest Law | 1,748 | 7.7% |
| Forest Crop Law | 0 | 0% |

Source: WDNR, 2008.

Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Resources

Public open space such as parks and parkways are important to the quality of life within a community. These lands serve many purposes including outdoor recreation and education; buffers between different land uses; flood and stormwater management; habitat preservation; air and surface water quality improvements; protection of groundwater recharge areas; and aesthetics. They can also enhance the value of nearby properties. (See Utilities & Community Facilities Chapter)

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and Public Lands

Since 1876, the State of Wisconsin has been acquiring land to meet conservation and recreation needs. Public lands managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provide many opportunities and public spaces to hunt, fish, hike, canoe, or watch or photograph wildlife. All Wildlife Areas are open to a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses. These include hunting, fishing, trapping, hiking, nature study, and berry picking. Dog training or trialing (hunting dog competitions) may be allowed by permit. A limited number of properties allow additional outdoor recreation at designated locations; like camping, bicycling, horseback riding, and snowmobiling.

State Fishery Areas (SFAs) protect important waterways in Wisconsin by providing a natural buffer from agricultural practices and urban runoff. SFAs often preserve and manage the headwaters or springs of streams which serve as the biological base for fish and other aquatic life. SFAs also increase the availability of public access to navigable waterways throughout the state. ***The WDNR owns approximately 198 acres within the Town of Oasis.***

The Town of Oasis has the following State owned and managed lands:

State Wildlife Areas:

- ***Statewide Natural Area encompasses a large portion of the Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes (Sherman Lake, Second Lake, and Plainfield Lake).*** This area provides specialized habitat for Falsetto's Locoweed, one of the rarest plants found in Wisconsin. This plant is found only on the fluctuating shorelines of lakes in Wisconsin's Central Sands Ecological landscape areas and nowhere else on earth.

State Fishery Areas:

The Town of Oasis does not have any lands classified as State Fishery Areas.

WDNR Managed Lands:

The WDNR does not manage lands within the Town of Oasis.

Environmental Corridors

Environmental corridors are continuous systems of open space created by the natural linkage of environmentally sensitive lands such as woodlands, wetlands, and habitat areas that provide important travel ways for a variety of wildlife and bird species. These features are sensitive natural resources; preserving the corridors from development protects habitat and keeps non-point source pollution to a minimum, thus ensuring that high quality groundwater and surface water is maintained and habitat is not impaired.

As stated above the Statewide Natural Area surrounds Sherman Lake and portions of Second and Plainfield Lakes. It is important to protect and preserve these resources and more specifically to protect the invaluable habitat associated with these lakes. It is important that development is directed away from this environmental corridor as well as other privately owned natural corridor areas which are scattered throughout the Town of Oasis.

Mineral Resources

Non-metallic Mineral Resources. Non-metallic mineral resources include all mined minerals other than those mined as a source of metal. Economically important non-metallic minerals include building stone, lime, sand, gravel, and crushed stone. ***There is one active non-metallic mining site in the Town of Oasis*** (Table 5-17 & Exhibit 5-6).

Table 5-17. Non-metallic Mining Sites

| Operator | Total Acres | Location (Section number) |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Michels Materials | 45 | 36 |

Source: Waushara County Zoning, 2008.

Metallic Mineral Resources. Metallic mineral mining refers to mining of mineral deposits that contain recoverable quantities of metals such as copper, zinc, lead, iron, gold, silver, and others. ***There are no metallic mineral resource sites in the Town of Oasis.***

Solid and Hazardous Waste

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has inventoried the past and current sites which have been used for solid and/or hazardous waste disposal.²¹ The list includes active, inactive, and abandoned landfills and collection sites. Inclusion of a site on the Registry does not mean that environmental contamination has occurred, is occurring, or will occur in the

²¹ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 1999. *Registry of Waste Disposal Sites in Wisconsin.*

future. Instead, the document is intended to be utilized as a general information resource and planning tool. ***The Town of Oasis does not have sites listed on the WDNR's registry of active, inactive and abandoned sites where solid waste or hazardous wastes were known or likely to have been disposed.***

Air Quality

Air quality, particularly good air quality, is often taken for granted. Clean air is vital to maintain public health. Sound local and regional planning can minimize negative impacts to the air. Development patterns can impact automobile use. As communities become more spread out, the use of automobiles increases dramatically, resulting in more emissions and subsequent decreases in air quality. As residential development moves into rural areas, there are increased conflicts between non-farm residents and agricultural operations that emit odors and dust. Emissions from certain industrial uses also have the potential to impact air quality.

There are no areas in Waushara County which exceed the limits of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, particulates, or carbon monoxide. The nearest ozone monitoring sites are in Brown and Outagamie Counties.²²

Cultural Resources

Cultural resources, like natural resources are valuable assets which should be preserved. These resources define a community's unique character and heritage. Included in this section is an inventory of historic buildings, sites, structures, objects, archeological sites and districts.

State and National Register of Historic Places.

The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historical Preservation (DHP) is a clearing house for information related to the state's cultural resources including buildings and archaeological sites. A primary responsibility of the DHP is to administer the State and National Register of Historic Places programs. The National Register is the official national list of historic properties in the United States that are worthy of preservation. The program is maintained by the National Park Service in the U.S. Department of the Interior. The State Register is Wisconsin's official listing of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The inventory is maintained by the DHP. Both listings include sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant in national, state, or local history. Sites are chosen based on the architectural, archaeological, cultural, or engineering significance.

The following items are listed on the National Register for Waushara County:

- Alanson M. Kimball House – Town of Leon
- Waushara County Courthouse, Waushara County Sheriff's Residence and Jail – City of Wautoma
- Whistler Mound Group – Village of Hancock

At the present, no properties within the Town of Oasis are listed on the National Register. The National Register is not a static inventory. Properties are constantly being

²² U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2007. *County Air Quality Report – Criteria Air Pollutants.*

added, and, less frequently, removed. It is, therefore, important to access the most updated version of the National Register properties. This can be found by accessing the DHP website (<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/histbuild/register/index.html>) or by contacting the DHP at (608) 264-6500.

Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)

In order to determine those sites that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register, the DHP frequently funds historical, architectural, and archaeological surveys of municipalities and counties within the state. Surveys are also conducted in conjunction with other activities such as highway construction projects. A minimal amount of this type of survey work has been done in Waushara County.

A search of the DHP's on-line Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) indicates that there are no properties listed within the Town of Oasis. Inclusion in this inventory conveys no special status, rights, restrictions, or benefits to owners of these properties. It simply means that some type of information on these properties exists in the DHP's collections. As is often the case, some of these properties may no longer exist. AHI is primarily used as a research and planning tool. Like the National Register, this is not a static inventory. Properties are constantly being updated. Information can be found on the DHP web site (<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/ahi/search.asp?cnty=WS>).

Archaeological Sites Inventory (ASI)

An inventory similar to the AHI exists for known archaeological sites across the state: the Archaeological Sites Inventory (ASI). Due to the sensitive nature of archaeological sites, information as to their whereabouts is not currently made available on-line. This information is distributed only on a need-to-know basis. Archaeological sites are added to ASI as they are discovered; discovery is a continual process. For technical assistance and up to date information on sites within a given area, contact the DHP at (608) 264-6500.

Wisconsin Historical Markers

Wisconsin historical markers identify, commemorate and honor important people, places, and events that have contributed to the state's rich heritage. The Wisconsin Historical Markers Program is a vital education tool, informing people about the most significant aspects of Wisconsin's past. The Society's Division of Historic Preservation administers the Wisconsin Historical Markers Program. Applications are required for all official State of Wisconsin historical markers and plaques.²³ ***There is one historical marker, the Sir Henry Wellcome home in the Town of Oasis.*** The Sir Henry Wellcome Birthplace is located on CTH J. Wellcome was a Wisconsin born, naturalized Briton who in 1932 was knighted by King George of England in recognition of his contributions to the medical sciences.

According to the Wisconsin Historical Society, three historical markers or plaques are located within Waushara County:

²³ Wisconsin Historical Markers of the Wisconsin Historical Society.
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/markers/index.asp>. Accessed 10/28/08

- Sir Henry Wellcome – Town of Oasis
- Whistler Mound Group and Enclosure – Town of Hancock
- The Auroraville Fountain – Town of Aurora

Museums/Other Historic Resources

Museums protect valuable historic resources for community enjoyment. Residents are welcome to learn from the exhibits and amenities they have to offer. Although ***there are no museums in the Town of Oasis***, several museums are located in close proximity to the Town.²⁴

- **Waushara County Museum** is housed in the former county jail in Wautoma. The Waushara County Historical Society maintains several exhibits detailing the genealogy, antiques, and the history of the sheriff's department. The original doors and bars of the jail cells have been preserved. Other nearby museums are located in the Oshkosh and Appleton areas.
- **Pioneer Museum** is located in the Village of Wild Rose. This museum encompasses the Victorian era home of Elisha and Jane Stewart, Pioneer Hall (bank and drug store), a country school, barn and carriage house.
- **Woodland Indian Mounds** in Whistler Park. These historic earthen structures were constructed by Woodland Indians during the period of 650 to 1200 AD.
- **Hancock Public Library** is housed in a fully restored historic firehouse.

Local History²⁵

The earliest inhabitants of Waushara County were Native Americans. Considerable evidence of their civilization has been found. A total of 332 mounds, 49 camp and village sites, two spirit stones, two cemeteries, and several other archeological sites have been identified within the County.²⁶ A trail once traversed the Town of Oasis from Plainfield Lake southeasterly to the Town of Rose. This trail was located north of the chain of lakes that are scattered through the center portion of the Town. ***Traces of Native American existence, in the form of numerous mound groups, enclosures and a campsite have been found near the lakes in the Town of Oasis.*** However, many of these mounds have been plowed over, excavated, vandalized, destroyed and in one instance, dirt from the mound was used in road construction.

A campsite was once located on the sandy shores of Plainfield Lake. Above the lake, a series of five mounds have been discovered and are named the Cornell Group after Mr. J. A. Cornell, whose farm they are located on. The Millard Smith Group, located near Smith Lake in section 21, contains a total of four mounds. The Weyneth Group (4 mounds), the Krushki Group (30 mounds) and enclosure, and the Lake Huron Group (3 mounds) and enclosure are located near Lake Huron. Finally, the Town House mounds (2 mounds) are located near the Oasis town hall.

²⁴ <http://www.explorewisconsin.com/countypages/waushara.asp>

²⁵ Reetz, E. 1981. *Come Back in Time: Vol. 1.*

Stertz, N. 1996. *Auroraville, Wisconsin.*

http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/tp-061/?action=more_essay

²⁶ Fox, G., and E.C. Tagatz. *The Wisconsin Archeologist, Indian Remains in Waushara County, Volume 15, October 1916 No. 3.*

On October 18, 1846, the Menominee Tribe ceded their land, including Waushara County, to the U.S. Government. In 1848, Isaac and William Warwick, the first white settlers to the area, built a log cabin in the Town of Marion. During the winter of 1848 to 1849, Philip Green settled on the site of the former Village of Wautoma. Other settlers soon followed. By 1849 a crude dirt road was built between Berlin (Strong's Landing) and Wautoma (Shumway Town). The 1849 road roughly corresponds with present day CTH F. The community of Sacramento, located on the south side of the Fox River, was platted in either 1849 or 1850 and a post office was established for the community in 1852. During 1849 and 1850, other settlers began gathering and making settlements in other parts of what is now Waushara County. On February 15, 1851, the Wisconsin Legislature established Waushara County and selected Sacramento as the county seat. The county originally consisted of a single town, the Town of Waushara. In 1852, Waushara County was organized for judicial purposes and in September 1854 the county seat was moved to Wautoma.

William Lord, a tavern owner settled in the Town of Oasis in 1849. Other settlers included N. K. Currier, I.C. Herrick, R.R. Crowe and Thomas Hyde²⁷. ***The Town of Norwich was created on November 11, 1851. On November 12, 1852, the name was changed to Oasis.***

Ethnic Origin

In 2000, the most common ancestry identified by Town and county residents was German (Table 5-18; Appendix D, Table D-2). Thirty-nine percent (38.8%) of Town of Oasis and 38.0 percent of Waushara County residents claimed German ancestry. Several residents (15.9% Town of Oasis, 20.0% Waushara County) could not identify or chose not to report their ancestry. The second most common ancestry identified by Town of Oasis and Waushara County residents was Polish. Approximately ten percent (10.0%) of residents in the Town of Oasis and 7.3 percent of Waushara County residents claimed Polish ancestry.

Table 5-18. Top 5 Ancestries

| | Ancestry | Total Population in Sample | Percent of Population |
|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| T. Oasis | German | 159 | 38.8% |
| | Unclassified or Not reported | 65 | 15.9% |
| | Polish | 41 | 10.0% |
| | Irish | 20 | 4.9% |
| | United States or American | 20 | 4.9% |
| | Total Population | 410 | 100.0% |
| Waushara County | German | 8,805 | 38.0% |
| | Unclassified or Not reported | 4,629 | 20.0% |
| | Polish | 1,681 | 7.3% |
| | Irish | 1,101 | 4.8% |
| | United States or American | 1,055 | 4.6% |
| | Total Population | 23,154 | 100.0% |

Note: Includes individuals who only reported one ancestry and the first response listed for those who reported multiple ancestries.

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 STF 3A

²⁷ From the Portrait and Biographical Album of Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara Counties, Wisconsin – ACME Publishing Co., 1890. <http://wigenweb.org/waushara/cvtn/oa.htm>.

Research has shown that there is a high correlation between those communities with Pennsylvania German ancestry and those communities with concentrations of Amish population.²⁸ Within Waushara County, Amish settlements include 52 households, 291 people, and an average household size of 5.6 persons (Appendix D, Table D-3). Thirty-three percent are employed in farming, 23 percent in dairying and 51 percent in woodworking. ***While Waushara County has Amish Settlements, these settlements are not concentrated in the Town of Oasis area.*** According to power point presentation given by UW-Extension²⁹, in 2000, there were between 0 to 10 Waushara County residents over the age of 5, who speak a Germanic language at home in the Town of Oasis. It further states that “The Amish speak a Germanic language at home”.

Key Findings

Agricultural Resources

- Agricultural land cover, which includes row crops, forages and grassland, comprised over 81 percent of the total area in the Town of Oasis (1991 - 1993).
- In 1997, an estimated 54 farms existed within the Town of Oasis. This represents a net gain of 27 farms from 1990.
- In 1990, there were 8 dairy farms in the Town of Oasis and 232 in Waushara County; by 1997 the Town had lost four dairy farms, while the county last 101 dairy farms.
- Between 1990 and 1997, 379 acres (2.3%) of farmland were lost in the Town of Oasis.
- Prime farmland accounts for 35 percent (7,824 acres) of the town’s farmland.

Natural Resources

Soils

- About 98 percent of the area in the Town of Oasis is suitable for conventional systems; while another 0.1 percent is suitable for at-grade, in-ground pressure and mound systems.
- Over three-quarters of the area within the Town of Oasis (86.6%, 19,586 acres) have soils that are considered to have a very high suitability for building site development.
- Over half of the soils (54.4%, 12,309 acres) pose a slight risk to no limitations for septage spreading within the Town of Oasis.

Geography and Topography

- Within the Town of Oasis, land relief is approximately 90 feet, from a low of 1,110 feet above sea level in the southwest corner of the Town near Herrick Lake to a high of 1,200 feet above sea level in several areas north of Plainfield Lake and east of CTH BB.
- Approximately five percent (4.6%, 1,034 acres) of the Town of Oasis is classified as having slopes in excess of 12 percent.

²⁸ UW Madison Applied Population Lab

²⁹ *Waushara County Demographic Overview, 2008*; as presented by UW-Extension Waushara County. Source data: Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Water Resources

- Surface water drainage for the Town of Oasis is predominately located within the Central Wisconsin River Basin, with a small area in the town's southeast corner falling within the Upper Fox River Basin.
- The Town of Oasis is divided into four sub-watersheds: the Big Roche-A-Cri Creek (Central Wisconsin River Basin), the Fourteenmile Creek Sub-watershed (Central Wisconsin River Basin), the Sevenmile & Tenmile Creeks Sub-watershed (Central Wisconsin River Basin), and the White River (Upper Fox River Basin).
- There are seventeen lakes and/or impoundments found within the Town of Oasis.
- There are no named river/streams in the Town of Oasis.
- Approximately 1 percent (222 acres) of land within the Town of Oasis lies in a floodplain.
- Less than one percent (171 acres) of the Town of Oasis is classified as wetlands.
- A groundwater divide, located west and parallel to the topographic divide, cuts diagonally through Waushara County. It extends from Marquette County, through the towns of Hancock and Coloma, the Village of Hancock, and then east of the Village of Plainfield to the Portage County line. East of this divide, groundwater moves southeasterly toward the Wolf and Fox Rivers. West of this divide groundwater moves westerly toward the Wisconsin River.
- Four wells within the Town of Oasis exceeded the 10 ppm threshold level for nitrate.
- The majority of homes within the Town of Oasis are served by private wells.
- Groundwater depths of less than two feet are found in less than one percent (100 acres) of the land area.
- The Town has no atrazine prohibition areas.

Wildlife Resources

- The majority of the Town of Oasis falls within the Central Sand Hills ecological landscape, while the town's northeast corner falls within the Central Sand Plains ecological landscape.
- Woodlands comprise about 27 percent of the total land area in the Town of Oasis.
- There are 3,072 acres of general woodlands and 2,962 acres of planted woodlands in the Town of Oasis.
- In 2008, a total of 1,748 acres were actively managed with the Town of Oasis under the MFL.

Parks, Open Space and Recreational Resources

- The WDNR owns approximately 198 acres within the Town of Oasis.
- Statewide Natural Area encompasses a large portion of the Plainfield Tunnel Channel Lakes (Sherman Lake, Second Lake, and Plainfield Lake).
- The Town of Oasis does not have any lands classified as State Fishery Areas.
- The WDNR does not manage lands within the Town of Oasis.

Mineral Resources

- There is one active non-metallic mining site in the Town of Oasis.

- There are no metallic mineral resource sites in the Town of Oasis.

Solid and Hazardous Waste

- The Town of Oasis does not have sites listed on the WDNR's registry of active, inactive and abandoned sites where solid waste or hazardous wastes were known or likely to have been disposed.

Air Quality

- There are no areas in Waushara County which exceeds the limits of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, particulates, or carbon monoxide.

Cultural Resources

- At the present, no properties within the Town of Oasis are listed on the National Register.
- A search of the DHP's on-line Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) indicates that there are no properties listed within the Town of Oasis.
- There is one historical marker, the Sir Henry Wellcome home in the Town of Oasis.
- There are no museums in the Town of Oasis.
- Traces of Native American existence, in the form of numerous mound groups, enclosures and a campsite have been found near the lakes in the Town of Oasis.
- The Town of Norwich was created on November 11, 1851. On November 12, 1852, the name was changed to Oasis.
- In 2000, the most common ancestry identified by Town and county residents was German. Thirty-nine percent (38.8%) of Town of Oasis and 38.0 percent of Waushara County residents claimed German ancestry.
- While Waushara County has Amish Settlements, these settlements are not concentrated in the Town of Oasis area.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

Wisconsin's important agricultural base is strongly integrated with its natural resources. Complex agricultural patterns are mixed with the state's natural features to form a patchwork of different land uses. Natural resource issues and concerns are closely linked to activities taking place on agricultural lands, not only adjacent to one another, but in the area. Soil erosion from farm fields and surface water runoff of crop nutrients and agricultural chemicals can impact the quality of streams, rivers, and lakes. Leaching of pesticides and nutrients has the potential to impact underground aquifers and affect drinking water supplies. There is a growing concern, especially in areas where rural residential development is occurring, about the impact of livestock farming on air quality. However, it is important to note that individual farming operations differ in management practices and vary widely in their contribution to these environmental problems.

Although agricultural activities can have negative impacts on the environment, they can also provide positive benefits. People value the open agricultural landscape and the benefits of

maintaining wildlife habitats. Other benefits include nutrient recycling and enhanced water recharge.

The long, rich history of farming in Wisconsin has led to the creation and exposure of many of the state's archaeological sites. In the County it is not uncommon to find evidence of native villages and burial mounds. Architecturally distinctive homes, barns, or entire farmsteads can reflect a significant time period, be associated with a notable person, reflect ethnic building types and construction practices, or represent an example of a once important agricultural specialty.

Economic Development

Agriculture, natural and cultural resources should be considered when developing an economic development plan. It is important to remember that farming is still an important segment of Waushara County's rural economy. There may be specific economic development strategies that could help improve the well-being of local farmers; as long as financial conditions remain difficult, farmers will continue to find alternative uses for their land. Natural resources can provide a positive economic benefit to the area through recreational uses and overall aesthetics. However, protection and impact to the area's natural resources should be considered whenever a new business or development is proposed.

Cultural and natural elements provide opportunities for enhanced quality of life for current residents and can be a valuable tool to bring new workers and employers to the area. Historic preservation can be used to enhance unique qualities found in many of Waushara County's communities and towns.

Housing

Agriculture and natural resources need to be considered when planning for the housing element. Most new residential construction is occurring on agricultural land or adjacent to significant natural resources such as a lake, stream, river, wetland, steep slope, or woods. Although these natural features provide aesthetically pleasing views for new homeowners, residential encroachment has detrimental impacts to the natural resource base. In many areas, housing development patterns have been rather haphazard. Scattered housing patterns have resulted in high costs to local communities in the form of lost farmland, increased demand for public services, and conflicts between homeowners, farmers, environmentalists, and recreationalists. Demand for home sites also drives land costs upward, reducing the ability of farmers to buy land to either begin farming or expand existing operations.

Existing older housing stock provides community character and reflects the historical development of the area. Older neighborhoods often offer the best opportunities for low income housing that can be rehabilitated using community improvement programs. Abandoned historic industrial buildings and old schools can be retrofitted and preserved to provide unique and attractive affordable housing for the community.

Transportation

Transportation planning should consider the transportation needs of the area. Transportation is critical to the agricultural community because it provides access to suppliers, processors,

haulers, and other support industries. The transportation network also allows goods to be brought to local, regional, national, and international markets. An efficient transportation network can increase income levels for Wisconsin farmers. Additionally, when planning for transportation, it is important to consider how rural residential developments and expanding agricultural operations will affect the transportation infrastructure and safety of the local area. Development and subsequent transportation improvements may impact the County's natural resources, wetland areas, and farmland adjacent to existing highway corridors. To minimize this impact, Waushara County and its communities should monitor these situations and consider development techniques that offer greater environmental protection.

When transportation corridors are expanded or proposed, care should be taken to minimize the effects on historical and cultural resources. Sensitivity must be shown for historic buildings and markers as well as archaeological sites and objects. The integrity and identity of a community is dependent on the preservation of its historic character and distinctive natural features. For example, the identity and aesthetics of a historic neighborhood can easily be threatened by a street widening project that removes large trees and narrows street terraces.

Utilities and Community Facilities

Planned development leads to an efficient use of public infrastructure and reduces the amount of sprawl, which leads to the consumption of the rural landscape and other natural resources. Educating local officials and citizens about how local land use decisions impact the agricultural industry is important if the ability to grow and raise food is to be preserved. Diminishing farmland also affects a community's ability to land spread bio-solids, a byproduct of the wastewater treatment process. As large areas of farmland in close proximity to suburban areas decrease, communities must travel longer distances to dispose of this waste, thereby increasing the cost of sewage disposal.

Similar to farmland, our natural resources are limited and are being consumed at an alarming rate. Fossil fuel emissions lead to persistent health and environmental problems; regional haze; acidification of surface waters and forests; mercury in fish and other wildlife; acidic damage and erosion to buildings and other materials; ozone damage to forests; and eutrophication of water bodies. Renewable energy, or an alternative energy source, is created from sustainable natural resources. Corn and other cellulose products can be used to produce ethanol for alternative fuel vehicles. Wind energy provides an alternative to coal and natural gas boilers.

To maintain our quality of life, it is essential that not only is growth accommodated but that it be done while protecting our natural environment. The quality of the region's surface and groundwater resources are linked to the proper siting, installation, and maintenance of individual on site wastewater systems. Improper treatment and discharge of human waste and bacteria can contaminate public and private water supplies. The impact of increased development and associated impervious area can adversely affect groundwater quality and quantity.

Public buildings such as city or town halls, county courthouses, schools, water treatment plants, water towers, libraries, and fire stations are often architecturally significant landmarks in a community and are an important element of the community's character. Even when these buildings have outgrown their original use, they are often converted into a community center, senior center, housing or another productive use due to the community's attachment to them.

Land Use

Land use is an integral part of all the elements in the plan. County residents value the preservation of agricultural land and the natural resources. There is a need to protect the rural atmosphere while allowing for controlled orderly development. Opportunities for historical preservation should also be considered in all future planning, zoning, and development decisions.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Many agricultural and natural resource issues go beyond local boundaries. Watersheds and other ecosystems, economic conditions, transportation patterns, and housing can impact regions as a whole. Air and water pass over the landscape so that one jurisdiction's activities can affect other jurisdictions located downwind or downstream. Regional development patterns and neighboring municipal land use policies also affect land price, availability of land, and the economic performance of local farms in adjoining towns. Unless towns, cities, villages, and counties communicate and coordinate effectively, it will be difficult to control growth in agricultural areas that preserves farmland and protects natural resources.

Preserving a community's heritage allows people to connect with the past. Unfortunately, little has been done in Waushara County to establish a base of historically significant buildings and other features. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation provides funding to local governments and non-profit organizations. These funds can be sought independently or collectively with neighboring communities to fund architectural and historical surveys. Communities should work together to utilize existing local expertise on not only the history of the area, but also on historic preservation issues.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

State, Regional, County, and Local Policies

Wisconsin Administrative Code. Comm 83, revised during the 1990s to add provisions for new wastewater treatment system technologies and land suitability criteria, came into effect on July 1, 2000. Unlike the code it replaced, the new rules prescribe end results – the purity of wastewater discharged from the system – instead of specific characteristics of the installation. This rule provides land owners with more on-site wastewater treatment options, while at the same time protecting natural resources and groundwater. Within Waushara County, holding tanks are banned for new construction and are not allowed for replacement systems unless the property cannot support any other on-site sewage disposal systems.

NR-103, Water Quality Standards for Wetlands, establishes water quality standards for wetlands.

NR-115, Wisconsin's Shoreland Management Program, requires counties to adopt zoning and subdivision regulations for the protection of all shorelands in unincorporated areas.

NR-116, Wisconsin's Floodplain Management Program, requires municipalities to adopt a reasonable and effective floodplain zoning ordinances.

NR-117, Wisconsin's City and Village Shoreland-Wetland Protection Program, establishes minimum standards for city and village shoreland-wetland zoning ordinances.

NR-135 was established to ensure that nonmetallic mining sites are properly abandoned. This law promotes the removal or reuse of nonmetallic mining refuse, removal of roads no longer in use, grading of the nonmetallic mining site, replacement of topsoil, stabilization of soil conditions, establishment of vegetative groundcover, control of surface water flow and groundwater withdrawal, prevention of environmental pollution, development and reclamation of existing nonmetallic mining sites, and development and restoration of plant, fish and wildlife habitat if needed to comply with an approved reclamation plan.

NR-243, Animal Feeding Operations, purpose of this chapter is to implement design standards and accepted manure management practices for concentrated animal feeding operations. This chapter also establishes the criteria under which the department may issue a notice of discharge or a permit to other animal feeding operations which discharge pollutants to waters of the state or fail to comply with applicable performance standards and prohibitions in ch. NR 151.

Wisconsin State Statutes.

Wis. Stats. S. 93.90 and rule ATCP 51, Livestock Facility Siting Law regulates the siting of new and expanded livestock operations. The statute limits the exclusion of livestock facilities from agricultural zoning districts. It establishes procedures local governments must follow if they decide to issue conditional use or other local permits for siting livestock facilities. It also creates the Livestock Facility Siting Review Board to hear appeals concerning local decisions on permits.

Wis. Stats. S. 823.08, Actions against agricultural uses. The "Right to Farm" law protects farmers from nuisance law suits related to odor and noise in normal agricultural operations provided that public health and safety are not endangered.

Regional

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. East Central has adopted a regional comprehensive plan. As a part of this Plan, East Central has adopted several core policies and/or goals for agricultural, natural, and cultural resources.

Agricultural Resources

- Encourage appropriate and practical conservation oriented land and wildlife management practices.
- Promote management of renewable resources in ways compatible with sustained yield.
- Support land use patterns which are consistent with soil suitability and other environmental considerations.
- Encourage development on lands not suitable for farming and community recreation.
- Maintain employment and increased income in the agricultural sector.
- Encourage contiguous planned development to eliminate the intermingling of farms and urban land uses.
- Preserve land suitable for the production of food and fiber to meet present and future needs.

- Promote adoption of exclusive agricultural zoning districts to ensure that valuable farming lands are not lost or disrupted by urban land uses.

Natural Resources

- Improve and protect surface and groundwater quality.
- Improve and/or maintain high air quality.
- Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive areas and promote the linking of these areas into environmental corridors.
- Manage wildlife and wildlife habitat in a manner that maintains ecological stability and diversity while considering the social and economic impacts.
- Protect nonmetallic mineral deposit sites.
- Ensure sufficient natural public open space is provided to meet the active and passive recreational needs of all residents while preserving and protecting the region's natural and cultural resources.
- Promote the consideration of design and aesthetics as a means of ensuring that communities and the region as a whole remain attractive as places to live, work, and play.

Cultural Resources

- Establish a regional cultural resource implementation committee to work on pursuing implementation of the regional cultural resources plan.
- Hold an annual Cultural Resources Summit where local organizations, preservation professionals, HP commissioners, and the general public could hear speakers, exchange ideas and interact with each other, raise and address current issues and needs, and encourage support for cultural resource appreciation, enhancement, and protection.
- Create a web-based clearinghouse to serve the region, offering a variety of resources to support preservation of our prehistoric and historic, archeological, and cultural heritage.
- Ensure that decision makers have an understanding of, and an appreciation for, cultural resource protection.
- Make the public better aware of the tax benefits and protections which are available to local landmarks, state and national register site properties, as well as associated responsibilities.
- Work with the Wisconsin Historical Society to increase access to the WHS WHPD database and expand its usefulness to a broader user base.
- Develop an easy, reliable way to alert local government officials conducting permit reviews, and prospective buyers making land/home purchase decisions, as to the location of culturally significant properties by including these cultural resource status designations in all title transfer records.
- Work with local and regional groups to update the State's list of archaeological and historical inventories.
- Revise the Wisconsin State Statutes (709.02) to expand and include "archaeological sites" as well as historic buildings and sites, in the items which realtors must make known to potential buyers.
- Prevent generational loss of cultural heritage by encouraging the use of more cultural resource programming in the history and social studies curriculum of K-12 and higher education institutions in the region.
- Establish a Cultural Resource Center for the ECWRPC region.

- Encourage greater interaction and sharing of ideas, resource materials, etc. between the private sector and the public sector, volunteers and professionals.

County

Waushara County Zoning Ordinance. The Waushara County Zoning Ordinance regulates zoning in the Town of Oasis. The following Chapters contain relevant information.

Chapter 22: Article IVs, Manure Waste Storage Ordinance regulates the location, design, construction, installation, alteration, closure, and use of manure storage facilities in order to prevent water pollution and the spread of disease. The county does not currently regulate large animal farming operations (CAFOs); however, regulation of these operations is being investigated and may be included under the Manure Waste Storage Ordinance.

Chapter 58, Zoning defines the different zoning categories and identifies what land uses are permitted in a given zone). Exclusive agricultural zoning is not practiced within the county. The A-G zone is designed primarily for large-scale agricultural uses of land related to growing of crops and the raising of livestock. However, single family residential homes are permitted. The A-R zoning provides a semi-rural type of environment, allowing for general agricultural use. According to the Waushara County Zoning Ordinance, all unincorporated areas within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes, ponds or flowages within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of a navigable river or stream fall under Shoreland Jurisdictional Area. Restrictions meant to protect these areas address lot size, setbacks, building, permitted uses, vegetative shore cover, grading and filling.

Waushara County Farmland Preservation Plan. Waushara County adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan on June 9, 1981. The goal of program is to preserve productive and potentially productive agricultural land, forest land, and environmentally sensitive areas while providing other areas for well planned growth in other appropriate areas of the county. Adoption of this plan allows farmers in preservation areas (existing farms with a minimum of 35 acres of productive cropland that are mapped as preservation areas) to sign a voluntary agreement under the State's Farmland Preservation Act for tax credits. Even though existing cropland is enrolled in this program, farmland in the County continues to be lost as more people seek homesites in rural areas.

Federal and State Programs

Federal

United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). These programs protect sensitive land by reducing erosion, increasing wildlife habitat, improving water quality, and increasing forestland. CREP, a partnership between federal and state agencies and county land conservation departments, allows a landowner to enroll agricultural lands into various land conservation management practices. To be eligible under this program, farmland needs to be highly prone to erosion and must have been planted for 4 to 6 years before the enactment of the 2002 law. Marginal pastureland is also eligible. Producers need to develop and follow a plan for the conversion of cropland to less

intensive use and to assist with the cost, establishment, and maintenance of conservation practices. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/crp/> and <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=cep>.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). This program is used to protect private grasslands, shrublands, and pasturelands. Agricultural areas which were formerly one of these ecosystems are also eligible for enrollment. The program helps to restore native grasslands and forbs by banning any agricultural practice which requires breaking the ground. Landowners must place their land into an easement for a period of between 10 and 30 years. An accompanying restoration plan delineates how best to return the area to a natural state. Program participants must share in installation costs. More information can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=grp>.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). This voluntary program is used to develop or improve wildlife habitat on privately owned land. All private land is eligible for this program unless the land is enrolled in CRP, WRP, or other similar programs. Producers must design and implement a wildlife habitat development plan and assist in the implementation costs. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/whip/>.

Grazing Lands Conservation Incentive. This program provides cost sharing to improve grazing land management. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/glci/>.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This voluntary conservation program promotes agricultural production and environmental quality and compatible goals. Financial assistance and technical help are offered to assist eligible participants in the installation and implementation of structural improvements and management practices which better protect agricultural land from environmental degradation. All private agricultural land is eligible for enrollment including cropland, grassland, pastureland, and non-industrial private forestland. Participants are required to develop and implement a EQIP plan that describes the conservation and environmental purposes to be achieved. Participants must share in the overall costs. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/eqip/>.

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP). This program aids landowners in the application of sustainable forestry on private land. The program places a permanent easement on farmland. All non-industrial private forestlands are eligible for financial, technical, and educational assistance. Landowners must develop and implement a management plan to harvest timber while protecting the environmental quality of the forest. More information can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flep.shtml>.

USDA Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). The purpose of this program is to maintain prime farmland in agricultural use through agricultural conservation easements. This program provides funding for state, tribal, or local government to purchase development rights on prime agricultural land. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/fppa/>.

Wetland Reserve Program. This program which provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands. The management goals include restoring both the functional values of the wetlands and providing optimal wildlife habitat. Most private wetlands that were converted to agricultural uses prior to 1985 are eligible. Participants must develop and follow a plan for the restoration and maintenance of the

wetland and, if necessary, assist in the cost of restoration. More information can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/wrp/>.

US Environmental Protection Agency

Clean Water Act (1977). The Clean Water Act established the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States.

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Program. The NPDES program addressed the non-agricultural sources of storm water discharge and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

State

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program. The 1977 Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program was developed to preserve farmland through local planning and zoning; promote soil and water conservation; and provide tax relief to participating landowners. Landowners qualify if their land is located in an exclusively agricultural zoning district or if they sign an agreement to use their land exclusively for agricultural purposes. Participating landowners must comply with soil and water conservation standards set by the state Land Conservation Board.

Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program. The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides tax relief to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres. The credit is computed as a percentage of the first \$10,000 in property taxes up to a maximum credit of \$1,500. The DOR determines the actual percentage based on the estimated number of claims and amount appropriated for the credit.³⁰

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES). The Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits (WPDES) was instituted as a complement to the NPDES program. WPDES regulates municipal, industrial, and agricultural operations which discharge (or have the potential to discharge) into local surface waters. Depending on the site-specific land use, the program regulates three different uses. Wastewater discharge permits regulate effluents discharged by industries and municipalities into surface and groundwater. Construction sites greater than one acre and industrial sites (non-metallic mining) are regulated through stormwater runoff permits.³¹ Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) with 1,000 animal units or more are regulated as a result of potential contamination from animal waste.³² If an individual operation is found to be a significant contributor of pollutants, it may

³⁰ Wisconsin Department of Revenue. 2002. *Division of Research and Policy Farmland Preservation Credit Program and Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program.*

³¹ Wisconsin State Statutes NR 135 and NR 216.

³² Wisconsin State Statutes NR 243.

be considered a medium-sized CAFO; permits can be issued for medium-sized CAFOs which exceed 300 animal units.

In order to be defined a CAFO, the agricultural operation must first be defined as an animal feeding operation (AFO). CAFOs are facilities which animals are stored, stabled, or fed for at least 45 days within a 12 month period and which vegetation or post-harvest residues are not sustained in the normal growing season over any portion of the facility.³³ Permits require CAFOs to provide runoff management plans for outdoor lots and feed storage areas; a manure storage facility plan/diagram, an annually updated comprehensive manure management plan; and routine monitoring and reporting of daily operations. Permits are issued for a maximum of five years. The permit system regulates land application, manure storage, and runoff management; it does not address noise, land values, traffic, odors, or other similar types of issues because there is no statutory authority to do so. These issues must be regulated by county and local ordinances.

Forest Crop Law and Managed Forest Law. In 1927, the Wisconsin Legislature enacted the Forest Crop Law (FCL), a voluntary forest practices program to encourage sound forestry on private lands. It has promoted and encouraged long-term investments as well as the proper management of woodlands. This law allowed landowners to pay taxes on timber only after harvesting, or when the contract is terminated. Since the program expired in 1986, participants are not allowed to re-enroll in the program. Since 1986, the Managed Forest Law has replaced the Forest Crop Law.

The Managed Forest Law (MFL), enacted in 1985, encourages the growth of future commercial crops through sound forestry practices. To be eligible, a landowner must own at least 10 contiguous acres of woodlands in a village or town. The landowner must implement a forestry management plan for future commercial harvests on the land. Contracts can be entered for a period of either 25 or 50 years. Portions of the land enrolled are open to public access for hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, sight-seeing, and hiking. The program recognizes individual property owners' objectives while providing for society's need for compatible recreational activities, forest aesthetics, wildlife habitat, erosion control, and protection of endangered resources.

Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program. The Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program assists private landowners in protecting and enhancing their woodlands. Only private non-industrial forest owners of at least 10 acres but no more than 500 acres who have an approved or pending forest stewardship management plan are eligible for assistance. Qualified projects include reforestation; soil and water protection; wetland and riparian protection, restoration, and creation; fish and wildlife habitat enhancement; recreational, historic, and aesthetic forest enhancement; and endangered or threatened resources protection.

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP). The purpose of this program is to assist private landowners in protecting and enhancing their forested lands and water by providing cost-share reimbursement for sustainable forestry practices.

³³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 1999. *Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations*.

Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Partners for Fish and Wildlife is a program which provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wildlife habitats on their land. This is a voluntary incentive based program. State resource agencies and individual landowners work closely with the Service to help establish priorities and identify focus areas. The restoration of degraded wetlands, native grasslands, streams, riparian areas, and other habitats to conditions as close to natural is emphasized. The program's philosophy is to work proactively with private landowners for the mutual benefit of declining Federal trust species and the interests of the landowners involved. A 50 percent cost sharing is required from individual landowners. Landowners must sign an agreement to retain the restoration for a minimum of 10 years. During this time period, no other private property rights are lost.

Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) Division of Historic Preservation (DHP) provides funds for conducting surveys to identify and evaluate historical, architectural, and archaeological resources, nominating properties and districts to the National Register, and carrying out a program of comprehensive historic preservation planning and education. These are available to local units of government and non-profit organizations. Although funding is limited, the DHP identified target communities during each funding cycle. In recent years the DHP has favored underrepresented communities: unincorporated communities or villages or fourth-tier cities with a population less than 5,000. A set of funds is also designated for use by Certified Local Government (CLG) status communities. In addition, many private funding sources specifically target smaller communities in the more rural parts of the state. Other specific programs are listed below.

Federal Historic Preservation Credit. This program returns 20 percent of the cost of rehabilitating historic buildings to owners as a direct reduction in the federal income taxes. To qualify, buildings must be income producing historic buildings, must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or contribute to the character of a National Register Historic District.

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 National Park Service approval before they begin any work.

25-Percent State Income Tax Credits. This program can be used for the repair and rehabilitation of historic homes in Wisconsin. To qualify, buildings must be either listed on the state or national register; contribute to a state or national register historic district; or be eligible for individual listing in the state register.

Exhibit 5-1

Important Farmland Classes

Exhibit 5-2

Soil Limitations for On-Site Waste Disposal

Exhibit 5-3

Soil Potential for Building Site Development

Exhibit 5-4

Soil Limitations for Septage Spreading

Exhibit 5-5

Environmental Features (Map 1)

Exhibit 5-6

Environmental Features (Map 2)