

REPORT SUMMARY

In 1997, Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes was amended to require, and give authority for, counties to develop their own land and water resource management plans as a guide in their efforts to protect and improve land and water resources.

The initial Racine County Land and Water Resource Management Plan was adopted by the County Board in September of 2000. The 1st revision of this plan was adopted in September of 2007. This is the second revision. It has been prepared following the requirements of Chapters ATCP 50 and NR 151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

This 10-year workplan:

- Specifically addresses the implementation of the State's Performance Standards
- Identifies local land and water resources and concerns.
- Establishes goals and objectives based on these concerns.
- Develops a comprehensive program integrating existing and proposed resource programs.
- Establishes partnerships between agencies, municipalities and organizations
- Incorporates an information and education strategy
- Identifies a method to evaluate and monitor progress.

Public participation was used in plan under the guidance of a Citizen's Advisory Committee. The committee was comprised of individuals that had natural resource, agricultural, or environmental backgrounds.

The five goals established by the committee include:

- Increase resource protection by reducing non-point source pollution
- Implement the non-agricultural performance standards to reduce non-agricultural non-point source water pollution
- Protect and preserve the land and water resources
- Invasive and exotic species management and control
- Increase information and education activities to promote conservation of natural resources, the environment, and knowledge of the State Performance Standards

The chapters in the plan are as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Plan Development Process

Chapter 2 – Resource Assessment

Chapter 3 – Related Plans, Regulations, and Programs

Chapter 4 – Goals, Objectives, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Estimated Costs

The following is a summary of each chapter to identify the major components of this plan.

Introduction and Plan Development Process

The plan was developed under the recommendations of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC included agency personnel, farmers, elected officials, and municipal representatives. The CAC completed a survey of resource concerns and analyzed results. Also taken into consideration was State and local priorities to provide comments and recommendations for this plan. The CAC will meet for final approval on August 8th. On August 20th, the Racine County Land Conservation Committee, a subcommittee of the Economic Development and Land Use Planning Committee will meet to approve the plan; this meeting will be open to the public for citizen comment and input. This meeting was announced twice in the *Racine Journal Times* prior to the meeting as a Class II public notice. This plan may be approved by the Racine County Board of Supervisors on September 25th, with final approval by the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Board on October 2, 2012.

Resource Assessment

The land and water resources of Racine County are susceptible to development, intensive farming, invasive species and other variable trends and elements over the next ten years. It is important to identify the soils, their location and the production capability of the soils. Secondly, the topography and geology of the County is taken into consideration for mineral extraction, erosion and geological characteristics.

The water resources are identified within this plan. Groundwater, an important water supply, is generally protected by heavy clay in the central to eastern portion of the County. In the far western portion of the county, sand and gravels create a higher potential for contamination.

Currently, a majority of the surface water resources in the County are only partially meeting established water use objectives. Waterbodies listed as Section 303(d) waters include: Fox River, Root River, Root River Canal, West Branch Root River, Racine Harbor, and Wind Lake. All water resources, including: lakes, rivers, streams, ditches, groundwater and wetlands are prioritized within this plan.

Terrestrial natural resources such as woodlands, natural areas and environmental corridors are to be protected due to their natural, recreational, historic, and aesthetic value. These areas have been identified and should be preserved to maintain the overall quality of the environment.

Related Plans, Regulations, and Programs

One of the first steps to developing this plan was to take into consideration a collaboration of inventory, collation and review of recommendations of relevant previously prepared plans and reports. Accordingly, an important step in the planning process was a review of the existing framework of area-wide and local plans and related land use regulations. This chapter presents a summary of that review.

Summary of the 10 year Work Plan Goals and Objectives

The CAC developed the five goals established on the first page of this summary. No goal is a priority over another goal. In Chapter IV, Tables 12-16 (pages 63-71), the activities listed in bold under the planned actions are measurable and planned goals that will be accomplished by the Land Conservation Division. The other planned actions may be included to assist with the goals and work plan activities.

The first goal is to increase resource protection by reducing non-point source pollution. The Agricultural Performance Standards, Farmland Preservation Program, Nutrient Management Plan Development, Animal Waste Management Ordinance, and Livestock Facility Siting are all

effective methods of completing this task. The priority farm strategy includes targeting farms in soil and water quality management areas, farms with livestock, and farmers participating in any program, primarily the Farmland Preservation Program. Our GIS tracking system, along with a compliance inventory and monitoring system will help guide our office through this process. We will also utilize SWRM, CREP, EQIP, WHIP, WRP, CRP, TRM, CSP, and any other grant funds to assist in accomplishing this goal.

Our second goal is to implement the non-agricultural performance standards to reduce non-point source water pollution. This implementation includes: shoreland erosion control, construction site erosion control, and maintenance of stormwater ponds. Also, the MS4 permit requirements will be implemented through the Land Conservation Division.

The next goal includes protecting and preserving our land and water resources. This includes utilizing the Farmland Preservation Program to protect prime farmland. Working with local agency partners to enhance and protect other environmental resources through easements, improvements through planning efforts, promoting riparian buffers, and the protection of ground water. This goal also includes the protection of forests and woodlands. The proper management of shorelands and floodplains, and the appropriate reclamation of non-metallic mining sites.

Another goal is the management and control of invasive and exotic species. This includes youth activities, workshops, clean boats/clean waters volunteer programs and the encouragement of aquatic plant management.

The final goal is to increase the information, education and awareness of activities to promote the conservation of natural resources, the environment, and the State Performance Standards. This includes proving public outreach to developers, engineers, landscapers, local officials, lake associations, schools, farmers and the general public. We will continue to provide a quarterly “Ties to the Land” newsletter, an annual “Rural Landowner Workshop”, and assist with other training and seminar opportunities. Also, the Land Conservation Division will continue to provide information and education through one-on-one contacts, phone calls, and handouts related to all of the goals listed in this summary.

Progress, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Estimated Costs

Monitoring progress of program effectiveness is a critical stage of the recognition of not only accomplishing our goals, but protecting the environment to enhance and improve the quality of life for the citizens of Racine County. Automated tracking, using GIS, spreadsheets, erosion data, and water quality data is a vital component to show improvements. Knowing the number of farmland preservation participants, permits issued, acres of conservation easements, inspections conducted, and non-metallic mines reviewed are easier to quantify, but just as important to track and realize trends within this data.

Consistent and thorough evaluations and monitoring of conservation efforts is essential to this plan. Racine County completes an annual report to DATCP to quantify implementation of this plan. Annual reports developed by the Racine County Land Conservation Division are posted on our website. Data has been collected since the beginning of Racine County’s first adopted Land and Water Resource Management Plan. We will continue to improve this data and report it to show the effectiveness of activities accomplished and trends for focusing on new activities.

The total cost of current funding levels to implement this plan is listed as Table 17 on page 72. Fully implementing the Racine County Land and Water Resource Management Plan will require additional staff as well as additional sources of cost-share. At present, funding is inadequate to support additional staff or cost-share. Therefore, outside sources will be utilized whenever possible to assist with staff or cost-share to try to fully implement this plan.