

Envision 2050

Natural and cultural Resources

1851

LC

Sustainable • Collaborative • Equitable • Forward Thinking • Respect



Overview

- **Recommendations and Policies.** The purpose of this **Natural, and Cultural Resources Element** is to offer policies and recommendations to guide the future conservation, promotion, and effective management of natural, and cultural, resources in **La Crosse County**.

General Natural, and Cultural Resource Policy.

- La Crosse County will require municipalities to utilize county resource protection ordinances and encourage municipalities to develop stricter policies where warranted. Local preparation of special studies, maps, or monitoring strategies to protect natural, and cultural resources will be encouraged. The county will assist in directing local governments to appropriate opportunities, personnel, or special interest groups to further resource preservation.

Objective & Policy Recommendations



- 1. Identify and map environmentally sensitive areas.



- 2. Encourage all municipalities in the county to develop and enforce stormwater management plans that are similar to or more restrictive than the county's ordinance to reduce runoff to surface waters, and to identify treatment options.
- 3. Take actions to make the surface waters of the county safe for whole body contact recreation and attain their fishing potential. Implement existing plans such as the La Crosse County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Bad Axe-La Crosse Water Quality Management Plan, Bostwick Creek 9 Key Elements Plan.
- 4. Continue to test and monitor on a regular basis La Crosse County surface waters. These waters are both a natural resource asset and economic asset. Continue to promote and enforce construction setbacks from all waterways to prevent erosion into and siltation of surface waters.

Objective & Policy Recommendations



- 5. Develop a conservancy district as part of the La Crosse County Zoning Ordinance. Its purpose would be to protect areas of environmental significance, natural resources, or open space significance. A conservancy district could provide a tool to private landowners who wish to protect such areas.



- 6. Keep the La Crosse County Zoning and Planning Department, in cooperation with UW-Extension, current on the tax relief implications of the Farmland Preservation Program for county farmers and provide assistance as necessary.



- 7. Adopt policies and standards that are up to date with more recent rainfall occurrences and amend design standards to reflect this significant increase in frequency and intensity of rainfall in our climate.

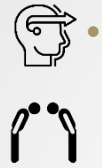


- 8. Explore the costs and benefits of initiating a voluntary countywide purchase of the development rights (PDR) program as an option for farmland preservation.



- 9. Explore diversity in La Crosse County and utilizing incentive programs and educational programming to encourage diverse populations for potential succession planning for our aging agricultural workforce.

Objective & Policy Recommendations



10. Encourage participation in agricultural programming through the State of Wisconsin such as the Agricultural Enterprise Areas (WLEA) program and Beginning Farmer and Logger Programs. These programs would help to maintain active agriculture in La Crosse County by identifying agricultural zones and supplying a new workforce for continued agricultural production.



11. Explore developing non-agricultural development density standards. Under this program, density is increased in incorporated areas thereby reducing the amount of land needed for non-farm development. Benefits to this approach include reduced pollution (stormwater, etc.) and more efficient development patterns that lower government expenses. La Crosse County should work with all governments within the county to develop intergovernmental agreements that would enable this program to succeed.



12. Encourage local historic societies and other organizations to preserve and promote historic places throughout La Crosse County. This would include assisting with the preparation of grant applications, possible mapping assistance, and referrals to educational programming through UW-Extension or other agencies. Continue to update maps and databases of historical and archaeological sites within the County's geographic information system.



13. Work with local communities to identify archaeological sites and require deed restrictions and disturbance limitations to protect the archaeological significance of the site, while balancing the privacy and security issues that come with attractive cultural and archeological resources.

Objective & Policy Recommendations



- 14. Establish soil capability guidelines for development on agricultural lands. Prime farm soils (types 1 and 2) should be protected whenever possible. Protections may include determining maximum percentages of acreage that can be disturbed on soils identified as prime.



- 15. Develop guidelines for “Conservation Subdivision Design” (CSD) development within the subdivision code. Ensure wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, in addition to a large portion of the flat, dry, and otherwise buildable land are set aside from clearing, grading, and construction. Explore developer incentives such as density bonuses for developers who pursue these types of development.






- 16. Encourage the development of Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies to determine the fiscal impact of existing local land uses. These studies evaluate working and open lands on equal ground with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.



- 17. Encourage farmers to participate in renewable energy programming. Work with public and private entities to educate agricultural producers about grants and other assistance available for planning and development of renewable energy resources.
- 18. Encourage uniformity testing for irrigation systems within La Crosse County every 3 to 5 years in an effort to help determine if water distributed by the irrigation system is being applied uniformly to the soil surface.

Objective & Policy Recommendations

- 19. Encourage pump testing in rural areas every 2 years. Periodic testing will identify problems in the water system, help prevent cavitation, and ensure sufficient water is available for residential and agricultural use.
- 20. Explore policies to protect groundwater resources in La Crosse County from non-resident users, or business entities that exist to harvest groundwater resources without returning water back to the local aquifer.

- 21. Funding stormwater infrastructure upgrades, flood improvement projects and conservation practices





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Chapter Overview

To participate in the county's Comprehensive Plan process, please visit lacrossecounty.org/comprehensiveplan or follow La Crosse County on Facebook for regular updates.