

Plan Purpose

The Walworth County Land and Water Resource Management Plan presents the best evaluation of the current condition of Walworth County's natural resource base and how the citizens, conservation professionals and elected officials can preserve, protect and restore important environmental features and attributes. In addition, this Plan should serve as an instrument to capitalize on opportunities, cooperation, and innovation to conserve Walworth County's vital environmental resources in a cost-effective manner. The priorities, the activities and the actions in this Plan Amendment are best if viewed as a tool that charts a general direction and cultivates new ideas.

Most importantly, this Plan Amendment will direct the Walworth County Land Conservation Committee and the Committee Staff help County farmers comply with the State-mandated Agricultural Performance Standards and Prohibitions. This Plan sets forth a strategy to target priorities and insure that resources are allocated in a cost-effective way.

The Walworth County Land and Water Resource Management Plan Amendment will be used by those making decisions and shaping policy that effect Walworth County's natural resource base. This Plan Amendment should also be used by citizens who make choices on how they use and enjoy Walworth County land and water resources.

Plan Development Process and Public Participation

The LWRMP plan development process included the preparation of following three important documents.

1. The **LWRMP** includes Walworth County land use, agricultural, natural resource, and water quality data. The plan addresses the principal land and water resource issues and concerns of County residents. A set of goals and objectives, activities and actions were developed and an implementation strategy was prepared.
2. A **5-year Work-plan** based on the goals and objectives of the LWRMP was prepared. The 5-year Work-plan will be reviewed annually and amended, if needed, to accommodate changing programs, polices funding availability and opportunities.
3. A **Public Information and Education Strategy** was prepared to increase public awareness and use land and water resource management practices.

The initial LWRMP was adopted by Walworth County in 1999 and up-dated in 2004. Similar to the preparation of the previous LWRMP, the preparation of this Plan Amendment required the active and thoughtful participation of a diverse group of Walworth County citizens and natural resource professionals. A Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) convened on March 24, 2009 and August 4, 2009 to develop the plan goals and objections and implementation strategy. The public opinion surveys conducted by Walworth County were also used to compile a list of Walworth County land and water resources management issues and concerns, as well as affirm the goals and objectives of the LWRMP.

A public hearing on this Plan was held on January 18, 2010. Public participation will continue through the LWRMP implementation period.

Walworth County land use, natural resource data, soils, agricultural resources and water quality data were gathered from a variety of sources. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) provided essential and timely technical information that was used extensively in the preparation of this Plan Amendment. Water quality reports prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) were referenced in this plan. Resource conservation plans and soil surveys conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) were used as a foundation of this Plan. The *Wisconsin Land Legacy Report*, the *State of the Southeast Fox River Basin Report*, and the *State of the Rock River Basin Report*, all prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and their partnership teams, helped to identify those land and water resource management challenges facing Walworth County.

Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Walworth County: 2035

On November 10, 2009, the Walworth County Board of Supervisors adopted *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Walworth County: 2035*. This plan can be viewed and downloaded through internet access at <http://www.sewrpc.org/smartgrowth/walworthcounty>. This plan was developed through a three-year planning process under the guidance of the Walworth County Smart Growth Technical Advisory Committee. The Plan includes the nine required planning elements, including addressing Walworth County agricultural and natural resource issues and opportunities. The Comprehensive Plan serves to increase the awareness and understanding of the County and town planning goals and objectives by landowners, developers and other private interests.

Other Planning Efforts

Walworth County has always shown strong support for programs and planning efforts that protect agricultural land and the County's natural resource base. The LWRMP is not intended to replace any current plan approved by Walworth County. This Plan revision is intended to supplement those plans and address broader county-wide land and water resource management issues.

The following are plans that were used in the preparation of this amendment to Walworth County LWRPM.

1. *Walworth County Agricultural Land Preservation Plan* (Walworth County, adopted by County Board in 1978).
2. *Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection Plan* (SEWRPC, Planning Report No. 42, adopted by the County Board in 1998,)
3. *A Land Use Plan for Walworth County: 2020*, (SEWRPC Community Assistance Report No. 252, adopted by the County Board in 2001)
4. *Walworth County Land and Water Resource Management Plan* (Walworth County, adopted by the County Board in 1999)
5. *The Nonpoint Source Plan for the Sugar/Honey Creek Priority Watershed Project*, (Walworth County and WDNR, adopted by the County Board in 1996)

6. *The Walworth County Soil Erosion Control Plan* (Walworth County, 1987)
7. *Lake Management Plan for Eagle Spring Lake*, (SEWRPC, Community Assistance Report, 1999)
8. *Lake Management Plan for Delavan Lake*, (SEWRPC, Community Assistance Report, 2000)
9. *Lake Management Plan for Powers Lake*, (SEWRPC, Community Assistance Report, 1991)
10. *Lake Management Plan for Rice-Whitewater Lakes*, (SEWRPC, Community Assistance Report, 1997)
11. *Aquatic Plan Management Plan for Lauderdale Lakes*, (August 2001)
12. *Groundwater Resources of Southeastern Wisconsin*, (SEWRPC, Technical Report No. 27, 2002)
13. *Biodiversity Recovery Plan* (Chicago Wilderness, 1999)
14. *State of the Rock River Basin*, (WDNR, April 2002)
15. *State of the Southeast Fox River Basin*, (WDNR, February, 2002)
16. *A Lake Management Plan for Benedict and Tombeau Lakes* (SEWRPC, Community Assistance Report, 2001)
17. *A Park and Open Space Plan for Walworth County* (SEWRPC, 2000)
18. *The Wisconsin Land Legacy Report*, (WDNR, 2002)
19. *The Green and Gold Belt Project*, (Geneva Lake Conservancy, 2003)
20. *Regional Water Supply Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin*, (SEWRPC. Draft)

The Walworth County Soil Erosion Control Plan was prepared in 1987. This plan identified sources of soil erosion in Walworth County and prioritized areas prone to soil erosion by township. The goal of The Walworth County Soil Erosion Control Plan is to reduce soil losses in Walworth County to acceptable levels or the soil T-value by the year 2000. The soil inventory data collected for preparation of The Walworth County Soil Erosion Control Plan has been updated by undertaking an annual soil transect survey.

Comprehensive lake management plans have been prepared for Powers Lake, Eagle Spring Lake, Whitewater-Rice Lakes, Geneva Lake, Lauderdale Lakes, Booth Lake, Pell Lake, Wandawega Lake, Benedict and Tombeau Lakes and Delavan Lake by the Southeastern Regional Planning Commission. The Eagle Spring Lake tributary drainage area includes Lulu

Over 109 farmers have enrolled in the County's buffer program. This program is supported by financial incentives from the Federal Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program with a total of \$242,248.43 dispersed to County landowners. This program is a joint venture with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and Walworth County.

- ✚ Walworth County Land Conservancy - The Plan supported the formation of a county-wide non-profit conservation organization, for the purpose of acquiring and preserving farmlands, natural areas, critical species habitat sites, and other environmentally sensitive areas in Walworth County. For over a year a group of thoughtful citizens convened to build an organization. In September of 2002, the Walworth County Land Conservancy received its Federal tax-exempt status. In 2009, this organization was strengthened by merging with the Kettle Moraine Land trust, LTD.
- ✚ Stream Restoration - The Plan identified channelization as a significant impairment to Walworth County streams and waterways. This year, a project to reestablish meanders and runs on Spring Brook, a unique creek in the Sugar-Honey Creeks Watershed, flowing through privately-owned land in the Town of Spring Prairie, was undertaken.
- ✚ Reclaiming Wetlands - The Plan advocated the need to protect and reclaim Walworth County wetlands. The Turtle Valley Wildlife Area, with its vast area of reclaimed wetlands, is a glowing example of how local, state and federal staff and budgets can be pooled together to achieve a common vision that will benefit wildlife and meet the recreational needs for our growing population. Over 1600 acres of reclaimed wetlands are a prominent feature within the Turtle Valley Wildlife Area. Dedicated local and state conservation professionals from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources were the driving force behind this project that will benefit future generations.
- ✚ Restoring and Expanding Natural Communities - The Plan supported educational opportunities for citizens to learn about Walworth County native plant communities. For eight consecutive years, over 500 citizens joined conservationists and wildlife specialists on *Prairie Walks*, sponsored by Walworth County, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and UW-Extension.
- ✚ Revisions to Walworth County Storm Water Management and Construction Site Erosion Control Ordinances - In 2007, the Walworth County Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the County's Storm Water Management and Construction Site Erosion Control Ordinance to include the non-agricultural performance standards contained in NR 151.
- ✚ Conservation Subdivision Standards - The Walworth County Board of Supervisors adopted amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance and Land Division Ordinance to include provisions and standards for conservation-design subdivision. Although

voluntary, the standards have been used to protect environmental significant resources by developers.

- ✚ Transect Survey - Walworth landowners and land users continue to make progress in conserving soil. Since 1999, Walworth County has participated in a state-wide program to estimate cropland soil erosion rates. This inventory is based on a visual examination of 694 sites annually throughout Walworth County. Although, there has been an increase in planting row crops, that typically results in higher erosion rates, the survey has documented a positive trend in controlling erosion. Seventy-five percent of cropland in Walworth County has soil erosion rates below the tolerable limit.

- ✚ Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Program - The Walworth County Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance was adopted in May 2001 by County Board of Supervisors. This Code requires operators of mining sites to have County-approved reclamation plans and permits. Walworth County currently has 30 active mining sites covering over 900 acres. Mining sites covering 200 acres have been successfully reclaimed since the adoption of the reclamation standards.

- ✚ Animal Waste Storage Facility Construction - The Animal Waste Storage Ordinance was initially adopted in 1997, and revised in 2004. Construction of animal waste storage structures must comply with County construction, operation, and maintenance standards. Over 30 permits have been issued for the construction of animal storage structures in Walworth County.