FOREST COUNTY

FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

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Plan assistance by:

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

FOREST COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

In 2010, agriculture constituted a $59 billion industry in Wisconsin. Farmland around the country is being lost at an alarming rate, and, once it is gone, we cannot get it back. Farmland preservation planning is crucial to preserve the agricultural land remaining in Wisconsin, because of the economic importance of agriculture in the State and the potential for loss of our agricultural land base.

Recognizing the importance of forestry and farming within Forest County we have maintained wide tracks of forest land and open farm fields where conditions permit the growing of field crops. The removal of the pine forests followed by hardwood succession, have matured our acidic sandy soils. Because of this a greater variety of high quality crops can be planted. Almost all available farmland is situated on deep permeable soils located in the southern half of the County. Well over half of the land in Forest County is permanently protected by the Nicolet national forest and other entities.

Modernization and technologies have lessened the importance of the short growing season through modified seed genetics and the ability to grow high value crops within sheltered structures. As a result, there is now opportunities abound where none existed before for small footprint high value crops. The introduction of northern European fruit and nut crops would fit well with our climate and terrain.

The plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions on how the county intends to enhance and promote value added agricultural/ forestry production capacity, protect soil and water resources, and enrich our rural character. This plan will demonstrate our commitment to forestry, as well as open field agriculture, where the cabinet maker is just as relevant to a farmland preservation plan as a cheesemaker.

B. WORKING LANDS INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

Our open field agricultural operations contribute no discernable erosion toward water bodies. Our deep permeable soils and prolific wetlands/lowland fringe vegetation combine to insulate our water bodies from an excess of applied nutrients. The patchwork mosaic of our mixed forest generates unique organic compounds from the decomposition of needles and leaves. This is increasing the rate of eutrophication in neighboring lakes.

Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative (WLI) was adopted in 2009 as part of the 2009-2011 biennial budget. The law is specified in Chapter 91 of Wisconsin State Statutes. The main components include:

1. Modernization of the state's farmland preservation plans;

2. Establishment of agricultural enterprise areas;

3. Increased tax credit opportunities and certainty of credit value; and

4. Development of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

A Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) provides a vision and guidelines for future growth, development, and land preservation in the County. The plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions for how the County intends to preserve agricultural production capacity, farmland, soil and water resources, and rural character. These plans also review the economic and cultural importance of agriculture in the County. One of the primary components of a FPP are detailed maps that identify farmland areas for preservation based on locally established criteria.

C. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT PLAN

The most recent Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) was adopted in 1983. The dated plan is simply a listing of how conservation standards would be met in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes. Landowners would make sufficient annual progress to ensure that the standards would be met by the end of the schedule of compliance. Each participant would certify in writing every year that they were complying with the soil and water conservation standards required in the plan.

D. PLAN MAINTENANCE

The Farmland Preservation Plan is an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. On December 31, 2015, the 1983 farmland preservation plan is set to expire. This 2015 farmland preservation plan is intended to fulfill the statutory requirements for both the Farmland Preservation Plan (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) and the Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan (§66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.).

This plan is intended to integrate and incorporate our farmland preservation language as the platform for future revision of the comprehensive plan.

Wisconsin Statute §66.1001 requires that an adopted plan be reviewed and updated at least once every ten years. This is not a static plan, but one that may change over time. Changing land uses, policy changes, regulatory changes, or shifting economics are some reasons to review if this plan is still current.

See Chapter 7, under: "PLAN AMENDMENTS AND CONSISTENCY" for details about how this plan is consistent with the Forest County Comprehensive Plan.

CHAPTER 2 – PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process considers existing and future agricultural conditions, the local economy, existing and future growth trends, and current and future prospective participation in the program. The plan tries to coordinate all of this with other agencies who work with landowners, as well as offer the public the opportunity to have input into the planning process. This chapter will discuss the planning process, including public participation.

A. REQUIREMENTS

The Farmland Preservation Plan must address certain elements as specified in Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes. There are several required plan elements to develop the for farmland preservation plan. Once certified by the state, landowners become eligible for various programs, which include income tax credits.

Several meeting were held during the development of this plan. All meetings were held in a public place, easily accessible, and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. They were advertised well ahead of time, with phone numbers and names of contact persons in case of questions or comments. A public hearing was held as part of the formal plan adoption process and this too was published as required by law. Several objectives were met by holding these meetings: Participants of all races, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels had an equal opportunity to voice their opinion and be involved in the process.

All residents of Forest County had an opportunity to be aware of the planning process through the advertisement of the meeting and the stated objective of the Farmland Preservation Plan and mapping criteria. Residents were also offered the opportunity to call or write to voice their comments if they were not able to make them in person. Public involvement strengthens the sense of vested interest in the success of the process and in the community as a whole.

B. PLANNING PROCESS

The Forest County Farmland Preservation Plan was developed during calendar year 2015 in cooperation with the North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

To assist in the revision of the Farmland Preservation Plan, Forest County Land Conservation Department invited participation from a variety of resource protection agencies as well as local farmers. They discussed farming issues and mapped where farmland should be preserved over the next 15 years. The resource protection agency staff members were a part of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the local farmers and other interested individuals were part of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The Land and Water Conservation Committee for the County was also involved in the process. All three groups were assembled to jointly plan for the Farmland Preservation Plan. The Land and Water Conservation Committee, CAC, and TAC members are listed on the back of this plan's cover.

A chronological history of the plan update activities is as follows:

- February 25, 2015 – the first meeting for the Farmland Preservation Plan was held at the County building in Crandon, WI and 9 people attended. All members of the Land and Water Conservation Committee, CAC, and TAC were invited. Attendees discussed farming and forestry trends, criteria to be included in the farmland preservation plan, and reviewed the goals, objectives, and policies of the Agricultural Element in the County Comprehensive Plan.
- April 30, 2015 – the second meeting for the Farmland Preservation Plan was held at the County building in Crandon, WI and 9 people attended. All members of the Land and Water Conservation Committee, CAC, and TAC were invited. Attendees reviewed the mapping criteria, the farmland preservation map was reviewed, and the goals, objectives, and policies were reviewed.
- July 2015 – The plan was made available to the community for review and comments for 30 days. Comments focused on the goals, objectives, and policies and the recommendations were implemented into the plan.
- August 25, 2015 – The third meeting for the Farmland Preservation Plan was held at the County building in Crandon, WI and 9 people attended. Attendees reviewed the final draft, reviewed the final maps, and the final criteria, goals, objectives, and strategies. The committee recommended the document be sent to DATCP for initial review.
- September 2015 – Document was sent to DATCP for review.
- March 2016 – Final Plan Document and maps were sent to DATCP for certification.

CHAPTER 3 – EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. ISSUES AND TRENDS

This chapter provides a brief summary of the existing conditions in Forest County. Some of this information was taken from the TAC and CAC participants, County Comprehensive Plan, the County Land and Water Management Plan, among other sources.

Both the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members jointly met in February 2015, and provided the following assessment of issues and current trends. The full group was broken into sub-groups that each contained both TAC and CAC members so better interaction would occur.

Sub-group discussions identified the following **issues and concerns**:

- The growing season is less of a concern because of tech advances and modern agricultural practices.
- A great market exists for value agriculture/forestry in the county.
- If open crop farmland is not managed and maintained, forests will encroach and it is very difficult to recover.
- Dairy farming has accelerated beyond the capacity of Forest County farms to be viable.
- Not enough fertilizer is produced within the county to satisfy demand.
- The type and size of farms in Forest County are getting more compact with unique and diverse high value crops.
- Of all the available private land in Forest County, forestry and farming are the majority use.
- A majority of open field crops are produced for livestock.
- The use of chemicals and pesticides on agricultural land and their environment will have an impact on long term soil fertility.

Sub-group discussions identified the following **trends in farming practices**:

- Incorporate agroforestry within the Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Agro tourism could be prominent in forested areas.
- New agricultural and forestland industries will emerge.
- Due to the rural nature of Forest County, access to broadband services will need to assist farmers to get what they need from vendors and suppliers.
- Production will respond to demands because people like to know where their food originates and to the standard to which it was grown.
- Consumers appreciate and will pay a premium for handmade forest products.

B. NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

1. Landscape

Forest County is located entirely in the Northern Highlands physiographic region, which was glaciated during the Pleistocene Age by the Langlade Lobe.

The elevation in the county generally ranges from about 1,800 feet above sea level in the west and northwest to about 1,300 feet in the southeast. The third highest point in the state, Sugar Bush Hill, is a drumlin east of Crandon. It rises about 1,938 feet above sea level. The west end of McCaslin Mountain is about 1,610 feet above sea level.

Forest County is underlain by igneous and metamorphic bedrock that makes up the southern extension of the Canadian Shield. The bedrock surface is irregular throughout the county and slopes generally to the east and southeast. The extreme northwest part of the county near the Michigan border is underlain by metavolcanic and metasedimentary rock and an iron formation. A significant sulfide deposit of zinc and copper is also in the southwestern part of the county, north of Little Sand Lake. Underlying the southeast corner is the Hager porphyry rock and a quartzite and conglomerate rock upland, which includes prominent relief feature of McCaslin Mountain protruding through the glacial deposits. Bedrock exposed in other areas is typically located in topographic lows surrounded by glaciofluvial deposits, such as the gneiss outcrop on the south shore of Pine Lake. Bedrock exposed near the surface is located in areas not subject to this plan, such as outcrop on the south shore of Pine Lake.

See Map 1: Natural Resources

2. Soils

There are 39 different soil types in Forest County identified in the County Soil Survey. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is a federal agency that produced the Forest County Soil Survey. The survey contains predictions of soil behavior for selected land uses and also highlights the limitations and hazards inherent in the County's soil. A series of detailed maps identifying the location of soil types in Forest County accompanies the survey. The survey also contains detailed descriptions of each soil type, and includes tables to determine suitability to limitations. Detailed soil maps are available for Forest County online at www.nrcs.usda.gov, or contact the Forest County Land and Water Conservation office.

These soil associations demonstrate the relationship between soil types and characteristics to the various types of development or use. Residential, commercial, and industrial buildings are limited by shallow depth to bedrock which restricts foundation depth or increases construction costs; by high water tables which cause wet basements and are often found with unstable soils; and by land with steep slopes which hampers commercial and industrial uses more than residential.

Soils and soil conditions greatly affect certain types of development. Depth to bedrock, poor filtration capabilities, slow water percolation, wetness, ponding, susceptibility to erosion (slope), and subsidence are all factors that make development activities difficult. These types of soils are generally found in wetlands, on hillsides, and in shallow soils overlying bedrock. Due to their fragile nature, destruction of vegetative cover on such soils can trigger damage from wind and gully erosion.

A generalized soil map is included in this plan that displays the broad soil associations. The parent material of the soils in Forest County varies greatly, sometimes with small areas, depending on how the material was deposited. The parent materials in Forest County are mainly glacial till or glacial mudflow sediment, glacial outwash, and lacustrine deposits, which in places are covered by a thin layer of silt or loamy windblown material. Most of the soils in the county formed under forest vegetation.

See Map 2: Soils

C. POPULATION, HOUSING, AND MUNICIPAL EXPANSION

1. Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County has an average population growth of -7.2 percent in the past decade. Table 1 shows the population in each municipality in the County in 2000 and 2010. The table also shows the percent change each municipality population experienced during that time period. Every municipality experienced a reduction in population during the decade except the Town of Crandon who increased their population 5.9 percent. Popple River experienced the largest decrease in population, decreasing 44.3 percent. The City of Crandon is currently the most populated municipality in Forest County with 1,920 people.

Table 1: Forest County Population 2000-2010

Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**Percent Change**
Alvin	186	157	-15.6%
Argonne	532	512	-3.8%
Armstrong Creek	463	409	-11.7%
Blackwell	347	332	-4.3%
Caswell	102	91	-10.8%
City of Crandon	1961	1920	-2.1%
Town of Crandon	614	650	5.9%
Freedom	376	345	-8.2%
Hiles	404	311	-23.0%
Laona	1,367	1212	-11.3%
Lincoln	1,005	955	-5.0%
Nashville	1157	1064	-8.0%
Popple River	79	44	-44.3%
Ross	167	136	-18.6%
Wabeno	1,264	1,166	-7.8%
County	10,024	9,304	-7.2%

Source: US Census

2. Housing

Forest County experienced a 7.8 percent increase in the number of housing units from 2000 to 2010. This is a considerable increase relative to the 7.2 percent decrease in population during the same time period. The housing increase is mainly due to the construction of seasonal and recreational units and the decrease in median household sizes. Table 2 shows the number of housing units in each municipality in 2000 and 2010, as well as the percent change. All municipalities, except, Laona, and Wabeno experienced an increase in housing units during this period.

Table 2: Forest County Housing Units, 2000-2010

Municipality	**2000**	**2010**	**Percent Change**
Alvin	411	477	16.1%
Argonne	314	407	29.6%
Armstrong Creek	422	476	12.8%
Blackwell	116	209	80.2%
Caswell	156	156	0.0%
City of Crandon	961	964	0.3%
Town of Crandon	443	456	2.9%
Freedom	435	482	10.8%
Hiles	761	774	1.7%
Laona	850	847	-0.4%
Lincoln	998	1,107	10.9%
Nashville	1,264	1,404	11.1%
Popple River	128	145	13.3%
Ross	218	237	8.7%
Wabeno	845	829	-1.9%
County	8,322	8,970	7.8%

Source: US Census

3. Municipal Expansion

Although only one community, the City of Crandon, is incorporated, there are seven other community centers that are expanding. According to the County Comprehensive Plan, most of this rural expansion is going to occur by converting adjacent forest land. Rural development can only occur on private property of which there is less than 17 percent available within the county.

D. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

1. Energy

The Wisconsin Public Service serves the largest part of the county. WE Energies serves part of the Towns of Alvin and Hiles. Two high-voltage transmission lines traverse the county. A 69 kV transmission line crosses the Town of Alvin, north of State Highway 70; and the second is a 115 kV line that enters the City of Crandon from Monico along USH 8. Both lines are shown on the Community Facilities Map.

Natural gas transmission across Forest County generally follows USH 8 from the Town of Crandon through the Town of Armstrong Creek. This gas line is tapped by Wisconsin Public Service to provide local delivery in another pipeline that generally serves the City of Crandon, the downtowns of Laona and Wabeno, and a 32-mile pipeline from Argonne to Hiles. This local service pipeline is currently being expanded making a reliable energy source.

Adequate energy supplies of all types must be utilized to bring value added forestry and open field agricultural products to market. Value added forestry operations require 3-phase power which is very expensive and operations are limited to areas where these facilities are available.

2. Water/ Sewer

All areas of Forest County have access to a safe abundant water supply.

The City of Crandon, the towns of Laona and Wabeno, the Blackwell Job Corps (USDA), the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, and the Potawatomi Community in Carter provide water supplies for domestic and commercial use.

The City of Crandon maintains a ground reservoir on a hill, and a water tower in the downtown that are filled by two high capacity wells. The City does not have a wellhead protection plan or ordinance.

The Town of Laona has one water tower and one high capacity well that serve most of the downtown, the golf course, and residential development along the western and eastern sides of Silver Lake. The Town of Laona has a wellhead protection plan, but does not have an ordinance.

The Sokaogon Chippewa Community on Mole Lake operates a well and water tower to serve the whole community.

The Town of Wabeno has a water tower and two high capacity wells that serve most of the downtown. Both of Wabeno's municipal wells have wellhead protection plans and ordinances to protect the recharge areas from pollution. In the Carter area of Wabeno, the Potawatomi Community operates a water supply system that serves the casino and surrounding development.

The Blackwell Job Corps, operated by the Forest Service (USDA), has a water tower and two wells on site to provide water for the campus living and instructional buildings. A wellhead protection plan or ordinance does not exist.

There are 10 active high capacity wells in Forest County:

- 6 are used for municipal water supply;
- 3 are used for irrigation in Nashville (2) and Freedom (1); and
- 1 is used for industrial purposes in Lincoln.

Municipal wastewater treatment facilities serve most of the City of Crandon, and the downtowns of Laona, Wabeno, Mole Lake, Blackwell Job Corp, and the Carter development. All six treatment plants discharge treated effluent to the groundwater through absorption lagoons.

A majority of sanitary systems in Forest County servicing private homes are conventional systems using insitu soil for infiltration and treatment. Holding tanks and mounds service those sites that are restricted in size and soil quality, which there are few.

3. Transportation

Although the County is rural, it is also very accessible and the existing transportation elements are adequate for the foreseeable future. The County road network is in relatively good shape. The future land use plan shows a low level of new development so no new major road improvements have been identified for the future.

There is one US highway in the County – USH 8. The County contains portions of six state trunk highways: 32, 52, 55, 70, 101, and 139.

There are two types of WisDOT designated truck routes within Forest County—1) Designated Long, and 2) 65 foot Restricted. The Designated Long Truck Routes are USH 8, STH 32 south of Highway 8, STH 70 and STH 139. The 65' Restricted Truck Routes are STH 32 north of Highway 8, STH 52 and STH 55. County Trunk Highways (CTH) connect the County's rural areas with the designated state truck routes, which then provide Forest County with access to the rest of the state and the nation.

Canadian National track traverses Forest County through Cavour, Laona Junction and Argonne, however, there is no local access to rail service in Forest County. Both the main line and a rail spur in Argonne that linked to the Crandon industrial park have been taken out of service indefinitely. A majority of railroad tracks in Forest County have been converted to recreational trails which allow access to great portions of the national forest and could be considered to serve agro-tourism.

The Crandon Municipal Airport, which lies 3 miles southwest of the city, is Small General Aviation class (formerly basic utility, BU-A) airport. Small General Aviation airports primarily support single engine aircraft, but may also accommodate small twin-engine aircraft and occasionally business aircraft activity.

The closest scheduled air passenger service available to Forest County residents is at the Rhinelander - Oneida County Airport in Rhinelander, and the Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) near Wausau.

4. Agricultural Facilities and Services

Overall, Forest County's economic development infrastructure is concentrated as an industrial park in the City of Crandon. This infrastructure investment provides a wider range of opportunities for the prospective entrepreneur or expanding business, and greatly increases the county's chances of developing and maintaining a stable employment base for its workforce in the future. Additional detail about non-agricultural community facilities exists in Chapters 5 and 6 of the Forest County Comprehensive Plan.

Forage, grain, and livestock are the most important open field crops in the County. Livestock within the County are mainly beef herds with only one dairy farm currently in operation All milk processing occurs outside of the County. The County also has small Bison, Elk, and deer farms. Roughly half of the meat from these herds are processed inside the county and primarily sold in Forest and the surrounding counties. Many landowners supplement their incomes with small forest operations in the form of portable saw mills and finishing operation such as planning and edging. Value is again added when the lumber is locally utilized on a small scale for a wide range of products such as cabinets, furniture, flooring, and even a wide range of crafts.

Grains grown in the County include but are not limited to corn, seed potatoes, oats. And triticale. Crops grown are mainly used to feed livestock. Oats account for the largest share of cropland in Forest County. The bulk of grains and forage produced in Forest County are sold outside of the County. Fertilizer for crop production must be special ordered into the County, as there are no stores or sales agents within Forest County. A residential quantity of fertilizer exists within the County, but the amount does not meet the needs of the agricultural community. The bulk of goods produced in Forest County are sold outside of the County. However, the County does have farmers markets in Crandon, Wabeno, Laona, and the potential for one in Nashville. Products sold at these markets come mainly from surrounding Counties.

A variety of small agricultural products are currently being produced in Forest County with the potential for significant growth in the near future. Agroforestry is an industry that has a significant opportunity within the County providing products such as: popple poles, seasonal wreaths and bows, Christmas tree farms, bark and birch sheet, moss, and understory vegetation with medicinal value. These products are primarily sold outside of the County. Currently, these crops are small in scale, but have the potential to grow and have a significant impact on the local

economy. The County does have farmers markets in Crandon, Wabeno, Laona, Armstrong, and the potential for one in Nashville.

5. Communications

There are six telephone providers in the county: CenturyLink, Charter Communications, Charter Fiberlink LLC, Powercom, Frontier, and Verizon. High-speed internet access is available throughout the southern half of Forest County. Most of Forest County's developed areas where cable TV exists, also has access to high-speed internet over the cable TV network. Digital subscriber line (DSL) is broadband over existing copper wire phone lines. Delivery of DSL service has a maximum distance of 18,000 feet from a digital switch, of which, several exist in Forest County.

Depending upon which cellular communication network used, most of Forest County south of USH 8 has cellular phone coverage. Ten telecommunications towers, which may have cellular phone antennas on them, exist in the county, and more are projected for construction in the future.

6. Waste management

The city contracts with Eagle Waste, a private hauler, for weekly pickup. There has been interest in maintaining a transfer/recycling center in the City. Most towns maintain waste and recycling transfer sites, since no active landfills exist in Forest County.

In 1990, the state passed a Solid Waste Reduction, Recovery and Recycling Law. One of the primary purposes of the law was to encourage recycling. Unlike solid waste that is land filled, recycled material has an economic market value, and will continue to be sold as long as markets exist.

E. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Ownership is an important factor to consider related to any planning. In 2014, non-taxable lands accounted for 82 percent of all the land in Forest County. Only 120,700 acres or 18 percent of forestland in Forest County are taxable acres. Non-taxable acres consist of land owned or managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the State of Wisconsin, Forest County, School Lands, Town Lands, Private Forest Crop, Managed Forest Lands, Other, and County Forest Crop. Overall, of the 653,728 acres, 533,028 are considered non-taxable.

See Map 3: Land Ownership

1. Federal Ownership

Land in the county owned by the US Forest Service totaled 359,909 acres (55 percent of total acreage) as part of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. This land is managed and harvested. Some of the forest is closed to motorized vehicles.

2. State of Wisconsin Ownership

Within the county, the state of Wisconsin owns 25,931 acres (4 percent of total acreage), mainly as state natural, fishery, or wildlife areas.

3. Forest County Ownership

Forest County owns 13,273 acres (2 percent of total acreage) of county forest. This land is managed for multiple uses, and is independently certified as sustainably managed and harvested. Some of the county forest is closed to motorized vehicles. Examples of permitted recreational activities are hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, camping, bough cutting (permit required), firewood collection (permit required), and wildlife observation.

4. Town Ownership

Town-owned land comprises less than 1 percent of the county's total acreage (2,358 acres).

5. Tribal Ownership

Tribal-owned lands comprise about 2.7 percent (17,857 acres) of the county's total acreage. Tribal lands are used for governmental buildings, casinos, tribal member housing, and farming. Tribal farm land holdings are projected to increase in the Town of Wabeno, which may take land off the tax roll, but would keep it in agriculture.

6. Managed Forest Lands

Managed Forest Lands comprise 123,720 acres (20 percent) of the county's total acreage. Enrollment into the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program is open to all private owners of forested land. To be eligible for the MFL program, a landowner must have a minimum of 10

acres of contiguous land and at least 80 percent of that land must be forested. The management plan addresses items such as landowner objectives, timber management, wildlife management, and water quality. MFL land can be open or closed to public access and recreational activity. The public can use MFL lands that are "open" for public recreation. The public may: access the land only for the purposes of hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing, and cross country skiing; access the land without permission; access the land only by foot unless given other permission by the landowners; use legal hunting methods including baiting and temporary tree stands. Land, tree, and other property may not be damaged. The public recreation use of MFL open land can relieve the need for other lands to be converted to residential and allow agro tourism to co-exist.

F. EXISTING LAND USE

While the vast majority of the county is forested and rural in character with scattered low-density residential uses, there are some areas of higher-density development (lakeshores). Residential development is concentrated around many of the larger lakes and scattered along town and country roads.

See Map 4: Existing Land Use

Table 3 displays existing land use information. Woodlands were identified as the largest land use in the county. Over 88 percent of the county is considered woodlands, although some of this is also wetlands. Residential uses make up less than one percent of the total. Only 1.73 percent of all land is identified as open field agriculture in the county.

A majority of the Open Land, Governmental Land, and Outdoor Recreation land is forested. Roughly 97 percent of all the land in Forest County is either forest or agricultural.

Table 3: Existing Land Use, 2010

Land Use	**Acres**	**Percent**
Agriculture	12,205	1.73%
Commercial	404	0.06%
Governmental	3,978	0.56%
Industrial	621	0.09%
Open Lands	8,128	1.15%
Outdoor Recreation	10,073	1.43%
Residential	6,762	0.96%
Transportation	9,242	1.31%
Utility	9,576	1.36%
Water	22,703	3.22%
Woodlands	622,420	88.15%
Total Acres	706,112	100%

Source: NCWRPC 2010 Land Cover

G. FUTURE LAND USE

Population change is a major indicator for future land needs. As the population grows more land is needed for residential and commercial uses.

1. Population

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population projections are displayed in Table 4a. The DOA projections indicate a 14.5 percent growth over the 30 year period from 2010 to 2040. The projected population for Forest County in 2040 is 10,655 persons. Future residential growth will be directed toward areas where suitable private property is available.

Based on a 10 year growth rate of negative .00718 between 2000 and 2010, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission projects a decrease in population between 2010 and 2040, Table 4b. NCWRPC projections indicate a 19.4 percent decrease in population over the 30 year period. The projected population for Forest County in 2040 is 7,495 persons, a decrease of 1,809 people.

Table 4a: Forest County Population Projections, 2010-2040 WIDOA

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	9,304	9,275	9,695	10,245	10,710	10,855	10,655

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Table 4b: Forest County Population Projection, 2010-2040 NCWRPC

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population	9,304	8,975	8,657	8,350	8,055	7,770	7,495

Source: NCWRPC

2. Housing

The household projection may be a more important indicator of what might happen to land use. Nationally, the number of persons per household has been on a steady downward trend for a number of decades. This trend has also been seen in Forest County.

In 2000, the county's average household size was 2.4, and in 2010 it was 2.33. Wisconsin Department of Administration projections indicate the number of persons per household in 2030 will be 2.22 in Forest County. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission housing projections are displayed in Table 5.

NCWRPC projections indicate a 16.8 percent growth over the 20 year period from 2010 to 2030. Forest County will experience an increased demand for housing while the number of persons per households continues to decrease in the next ten to twenty years.

Table 5: Forest County Housing Projections, 2010-2030					
	2010	**2015**	**2020**	**2025**	**2030**
Housing Units	8,970	9,325	9,693	10,077	10,475

Source: NCWRPC Housing Projections

The future residential growth area, as identified on the Future Land Use map will provide the land necessary for new houses, while preserving agricultural production in Forest County.

Future land use in the county was determined by each town when they developed their individual comprehensive plans. The county comprehensive plan utilized those plans to develop the county future land use map.

See Map 5: Future Land Use

CHAPTER 4 – AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Identify the resources and land uses in the County are important in order to recognize areas that need to be protected, or characteristics that would limit development potential.

The following will provide a brief review of some of these resources in Forest County.

A. RESOURCES AND LAND USES

As seen in table 3 from Chapter 3, agriculture accounts for 1.73 percent of the existing land use in Forest County. Woodlands make up over 88 percent of the land. Residential uses make up less than 1 percent. Table 6 shows how the agricultural land is divided among various agricultural uses in Forest County. The majority of agricultural land is used for agricultural woodlands, with 44 percent, followed by crops at 34 percent. However, a majority of governmental land, open land, and outdoor recreation land is forested. Overall, roughly 97 percent of all land is agricultural land or forested land in Forest County.

Table 6: Agricultural Land Use

Use	Acres			Distribution in 2012
	2007	2012	% Change	
Total Crop Land	11,049	10,265	-7.1%	33.9%
Total Woodland	14,073	13,440	-4.5%	44.4%
Permanent Pasture and Rangeland	6,025	4,215	-30.0%	13.9%
Land in Buildings, Livestock, Facilities, etc.	2,658	2,338	-12.0%	7.7%
Total	33,805	30,258	-10.5%	100.0%

Source: USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture

B. FARMLAND CONVERSION

The rate and speed of farmland conversion is an important factor in understanding County-wide land use trends. The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program, enacted in 1977 to preserve good agricultural land from development and provide income tax credit to farmers, is a helpful tool to limit where the farmland conversion can take place. Land use trends indicate that either total farm land sold has increased, and/or the percent converted to non-farm uses has increased since 2007. See the projected conversion by comparing the Existing Land Use Map with the Future Land Use Map.

C. PROGRAMS

With the abundance of natural resources in Forest County and the growing pressure on both public and private lands, the need to protect these precious areas is increasingly important. There are many Federal, State, and Local programs in place that offer technical assistance and cost-share funding to help preserve the environment. Some of these are as follows:

Federal Programs:

Backyard Conservation
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
Conservation Security Program (CSP)
Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Farmland Protection Program
Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

State:

Managed Forest Law
Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)
Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)
WI Association of Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D)
Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claim Program
WI Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)
WI Forest Landowner Grant Program (FLGP)
WI Non-point Source Pollution Abatement Program

Potential Funding Sources for environmental preservation may come from the following:

Private Sources:

Private Foundations
Individual Contributions
Volunteers
Conservation Organizations
Outdoors Forever
Trout Unlimited
Ducks Unlimited
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

Local Government Sources:

County Land and Water Conservation Department
County Planning and Zoning Department
County Forestry and Parks Department
County Highway Department

State Government Sources:

Department of Natural Resources
Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Priority Watershed Program
New Nonpoint Program
Stewardship Grants
Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program
Lakes Planning Grants
Lakes Protection Grants
Land and Water Management Plan Implementation Funds

CHAPTER 5 – ECONOMICS

Crops and Animal Production (NAICS 11), which includes Forestry, is the most significant driver of Forest County's economy. This industry had a location quotient of 2.98 in 2013. The location quotient model compares County employment to the National employment by industry. If a location quotient is greater than 1.00, then it is an exporting sector providing goods and services to consumers both inside and outside of the County. If the location quotient is below 1.00, than the industry is only providing goods and services to its own County.

Specifically, Forestry is the most significant driver of Forest County's economy. Forestry employed 125 people and had a location quotient of 70.77 in 2013. Other Wood Product Manufacturing employed an additional 113 people and had a location quotient of 21.94. Data for this chapter mainly came from the US Census of Agriculture and Economic Modeling Software International.

Global demand for wood and wood products continues to support forestry employment in Forest County. The presence of these forests has also led to a demand for a mix of both forest products and recreational uses. Managed properly, the forest can support both agro tourism and the continued production of high value timber. Greater access to forests can give rise to an emotional attachment between the visitor and the ecosystem that can be as strong a tool as regulations.

A. AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

The County produces a variety of agriculture products like corn for silage, oats, and forage. The agricultural industry infuses a significant amount of revenue into the county economy through the sale of agricultural products to customers. In 2012, crop production sales equaled roughly $2.85 million; crop sales equaled roughly $1.8 million and livestock sales equaled roughly $1.1 million.

The agriculture industry in Forest County continues to grow the Region's gross regional product while increasing access to local produce for the region. The increase in access ensures that local communities have the ability to eat fresh, affordable produce creating a healthier population. The agricultural industry will continue to be a driver economy for Forest County supporting a variety of additional industries like transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and retail and service.

1. Farms

Forest County experienced a decrease in the number of farms over the past ten years, specifically over the past five years. Peaking in 2007 with 173 farms, Forest County decreased the total number of farms to 127 in 2012, a reduction of 46 farms. In particular, the county decreased oat farms from 21 in 2007 to 11 in 2012, decreased corn farms from 7 in 2007 to 3 in 2012, decreased corn for silage farms from 11 in 2007 to 6 in 2012, and decreased forage farms from 120 in 2007 to 93 in 2012. Prior to 2012, the county experienced a steady increase in the number of farms between 1997 and 2007. The reduction in the total number of farms negatively impacted the total land in farms. Between 2007 and 2010, the county decreased the total land in farms from 33,805 acres to 30,258 acres, a 3,547 acre decrease. The County increased the total land in farms 175 acres between 2002 and 2007 and experienced an even larger increase between 1997 and 2002. Although the total number of farms and land in farms are decreasing in the county, the county has experienced an increase in the median size of farms. After decreasing the average farm size from 236 acres in 1997 to 195 acres in 2007, the median size increased 43 acres to 238 acres in 2012. The increase in the median size of farms in the county has helped offset the reduction in the total number of farms over the past five years. The increase in median farm size indicates that some of the 46 farms lost between 2007 and 2012 were the result of consolidation, larger farms absorbing smaller farms.

Table 7: Farm Statistics

	1997	2002	2007	2012	% Change 1997-2012
Number of Farms	111	164	173	127	14.4%
Average Size (Acres)	236	205	195	238	0.8%
Land in Farms (Acres)	26,150	33,630	33,805	30,258	15.7%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

2. Agriculture Production

Forest County experienced a decrease in the production of oats between 2002 and 2012. Oats continues to be the county's top crop producing over 13,000 bushels of product in 2012. After decreasing the amount of oats planted by 161 acres, the county increased production by 13.1 bushels per acre resulting in a total of 13,840 bushels of production. The county increased the production of corn for silage significantly between 2007 and 2012.

The county increased the amount of corn for silage harvested from 193 acres to 302 acres resulting in 3,727 tons of product, an increase of 2,163 tons. The production of forage (land used for all hay and all haylage, grass silage, and green chop) increased between 2007 and 2012. Production of forage increased 3,672 tons from 12,562 tons in 2007 to 16,234 tons in 2012. The county increased the number of acres harvested by 149 acres over the 5 year period resulting in 1.9 bushels per acre, a 0.4 increase from 2007. Corn for grain data is unavailable due to single ownership of corn farms in 2012. In 2007, corn for grain produced 8,040 bushels on 100 acres resulting in 80.4 bushels per acre.

Table 8: Farm Sales (in $1,000)

	2007	2012
Grains	$42	$24
Vegetables and Potatoes	D	D
Nursery and Greenhouse	$109	D
Christmas Trees	D	D
Livestock, Poultry, and their products	$1,586	$1,084
Other		
Total	$1,737	$1,108

Source: US Census of Agriculture
(D) withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual

3. Milk Cows and Cattle

Forest County had a total of two milk production farms in 2007 and 2012. To avoid disclosing data for individual farms, the US Census of Agriculture withholds any additional information on milk farms.

Forest County decreased the number of cattle and calves from 2,864 in 2007 to 2,018 in 2012, a difference of 846 cattle. In 2007, Cattle and Calve sales resulted in $1,077,000, roughly $750 per cattle. In 2012, the total number of cattle and calves sold was 857. The 2012 value has been withheld to avoid disclosing data on individual farms.

4. Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Total gross regional product (GRP) in Forest County in 2013 was $265,600,000. The revenues from NAICS 11: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting in Forest County resulted in a total GRP of $23,446,199 in 2013. In comparison to other industries, the agriculture industry generates the largest gross regional product (excluding government) and accounts for 9 percent of the county's GRP. Other non-industries (7%) generated the second largest GRP followed by Utilities (6%) and Manufacturing (6%).

5. Exports

In 2013, Forest County exceeded $579 million in export revenue. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting was the highest export industry (excluding government) accounting for over $59 million, or 10.2 percent of total export revenue. Manufacturing was the second highest export industry accounting for over $45 million, or 7.9 percent of total export revenue. The agriculture industry continues to be a major export industry increasing their National location quotient

from 2.2 in 2002 to 2.82 in 2013. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry is 2.82 times more concentrated in Forest County than it is on average in the United States. The county's location quotient over the 11 year period indicates that the industry is a strong export industry and will continue to be a major economic driver in the future. The ability to export goods and services is essential to the county's economy as it introduces new money to the economy, rather than simply circulating money that is already in the region. This influx of new revenue is redistributed throughout the economy at local restaurants, suppliers, and retailers.

6. Job Growth

Between 2002 and 2013, NAICS 11: Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry increased employment 6 percent, adding 7 jobs. In 2013, the agricultural industry directly employed 125 persons, up from 118 in 2002. The increase in jobs is the result of the county's competitiveness in the industry. Shift share analysis shows that Forest County's competitive advantage resulted in the creation of 10 jobs from 2002 to 2013. Based on National Growth (5 jobs) and an Industry Mix (-7 jobs), the region would expect to lose 2 jobs in this industry over the 11 year time period.

The industrial mix effect represents the share of regional industry growth explained by the growth of the specific industry at the national level. The national growth effect explains how much the regional industry's growth is explained by the overall growth in the national economy. The regional competitiveness effect explains how much of the change in a given industry is due to some unique competitive advantage that the region possesses, because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as a whole. As a result of the regions unique competitiveness in this industry, the county experienced an increase of 7 jobs. The increase in employment combined with an increase in location quotient shows that the county is increasing employment in the agriculture industry at a faster rate than the nation. This trend signifies that there is a need to continue to strengthen the agricultural economy as it is a driver industry for Forest County supporting the retail and service industries.

Table 9 shows the number of small and very large farms increasing between 1997 and 2012, while the number of medium-sized farms (180-499 acres) decreased. However, since 2002, only large farms (1000+ acres) have increased. The increase in smaller farms (1-179 acres) and larger farms (500+ acres) is important to economic development for two reasons. First, the rapid increase in small farms demonstrates the explosion of "hobby farming". These farms may produce on a very small or local scale, but they generally do not employ labor or produce food for general consumption. While these types of farms are not being discouraged, it is not this type of land that needs to be preserved by a farmland preservation plan. Second, the largest farms produce large quantities of food, but often are so modernized that they require only a fraction of the labor force as previously. As farming moves towards these two extremes of very small and very large farms, the economic impact will be seen and agricultural employment will likely decline.

Table 9: Number of Farms by Size					
Acres	**1997**	**2002**	**2007**	**2012**	**% Change 1997-2012**
1 to 49	19	39	50	27	42.1%
50 to 179	34	64	62	49	44.1%
180 to 499	49	43	55	39	-20.4%
500 to 999	6	16	4	8	33.3%
1000 +	3	2	2	4	33.3%
Total	111	164	173	127	

Source: US Census of Agriculture

B. FORESTRY ECONOMIC GROWTH

Forestry and Logging (NAICS 113) and Wood Product Manufacturing (NAICS 321) are significant employers and economic drivers for Forest County. The county produces a variety of forest products like lumber, pulpwood, hardwood flooring, paneling, and specialty items. The forest products industry infuses a significant amount of revenue into the county economy through customer sales outside of Wisconsin. Forestry and Logging was the county's top export industry generation more than $32million in export revenue in 2013 (excludes Government). Wood Product Manufacturing was second with more than $28 million in export revenue in 2013.

CHAPTER 6 – GOALS AND CRITERIA

This chapter will provide a description of what is included in the Farmland Preservation Plan map and why it was or was not included in the mapping process. The Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Action Items will take into account the issues, concerns, and trends identified by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

A. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Farmland Preservation Area is mapped in order to include as many potential participants as possible, while taking into consideration the 15-year growth of the County.

All county residents went through the comprehensive planning process. Housing demand was projected during that process and residents identified where additional housing would be located in the future. These areas can be seen on the Future Land Use map. Residents identified why new residents would move to their communities, and recognized that future housing development would take a variety of forms.

No additional housing related goals, objectives, and policies were identified from what already exists in the Forest County Comprehensive Plan, because of the housing trends identified.

Goals:

1. **Preserve open crop farmland for the widest possible range of uses as appropriate for Forest County soils and landscape.**
2. **Protect the economic viability of forest and open crop farmland.**
3. **Become a state leader in small farm agriculture increasing access to local produce and opportunities for farming entrepreneurs.**
4. **Promote positive soil health.**
5. **Ensure the agricultural industry (NAICS 11) continues to lead the county in export, gross regional product, and total sales.**

Objectives:

1. Increase timber production and processing capacity.
2. Promote value added forest product occupations for employment.
3. Educate the public on agro-tourism.
4. Reduce the use of chemicals and pesticides on farmland.
5. Increase the number of farms less than 500 acres by 10 percent.
6. Increase farm sales and production in all agricultural areas
7. Continue to increase agricultural GRP, Exports, and Sales
8. Develop emerging "niche markets increasing agricultural competitiveness.
9. Increase the acres of land enrolled in Farmland Preservation contracts.
10. Increase the number of farmers markets to one in each main community and the number of farm to table restaurants.

Policies:

1. Promote agro-tourism in its many forms.
2. Curtail the conversations of open farmland to forested farmland.
3. Educate forested farmland owners to agroforestry and multiple use forestlands by holding education seminars and distributing information.
4. Support policies in the 2016 Forest County land and water resources plan that compliment and support this updated farmland preservation plan.
5. Promote agroforestry as a value added land use to owners.
6. Promote non-animal micro-farming operations as complimentary or supplementary use in rural residential areas.
7. Identify funding opportunities for agricultural related uses.
8. Work with local governments to encourage value added agricultural/forestry resources.
9. Support the good neighbor agreement with the USDA forest service to increase timber production.

10. Encourage niche crops in the county like: livestock operations, purebred breeding stock supply, minnow production and aquiculture farms, and maple syrup production.
11. Develop hoop house, hydroponic greenhouse production, and geothermal greenhouse production allowing year round growing season
12. Increase the number of deer, elk, and bison production farms.
13. Increase the production of local fruits and vegetables and meats for farmers markets, farm to table restaurants and schools.
14. Work with farming community to develop new farmers market in additional communities and continue to grow existing markets.
15. Develop seed production that supplies larger corporate farms in agriculture regions.
16. Continue to support and develop forage production farms and small grain farms.
17. Expand local processing facilities for livestock products, fruits, and vegetables.
18. Work with regional dairy companies to service milk farms in the County.
19. Update the Farmland Preservation Plan.
20. Fur Farming.
21. Any inventive farming practices that meet the goals and objectives of this plan.

B. FARMLAND PRESERVATION CRITERIA

In an effort to identify areas for farmland preservation a variety of criteria were established. They are outlined in Display 1.

See Display 1

The Farmland Preservation Plan Map identifies: "Farmland Preservation Areas," and "Planned Out" Areas. Farmland preservation areas were determined by including all land listed as agricultural, forestry, preservation, and open space, and all lands currently enrolled in the managed forest law program (MFL). In addition, all areas that are currently in agricultural uses were included. Combined over 213,000 acres are included in the farmland preservation areas.

Those areas excluded or "planned out" are basically: all land that is planned for development over the next 10-15 years, all tax-exempt lands, and parcels 10 acres or smaller.

These criteria were used to create the Farmland Preservation map. Any land that does not meet the criteria would not be eligible for tax credits under this plan until the Farmland Preservation Plan map is amended.

See Map 6: Farmland Preservation

Below are the map legend definitions:

Farmland Preservation Areas -Parcels that meet the Farmland Preservation Plan criteria. Landowners in this area may apply for farmland preservation income tax credits, if the town has adopted County zoning. In an un-zoned town, the residents may apply for an Agricultural Enterprise Area if they meet the criteria. These areas have been identified during the planning process to be agricultural uses or open spaces. No non-agricultural development is planned in the next fifteen years for those areas identified in the farmland preservation areas. In addition, if there is a conflict with other plan maps, the Farmland Preservation Plan map will supersede those other maps.

Planned Out - Parcels that do not meet the Farmland Preservation criteria. These parcels are not eligible for farmland preservation income tax credits. These parcels are "planned out" or excluded because they meet the criteria for non-farmland preservation areas.

Display 1: Farmland Preservation Criteria

Criteria for Farmland Preservation Areas:

- Lands depicted on the Future Land Use Map as agricultural areas, forestry areas, mixed use, preservation and open space.
    - In cases where there is an inconsistency in the farmland preservation map and future land use map, the farmland preservation map supersedes the future land use map.
- Lands currently Enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL)
- Lands currently in Agricultural Uses

Criteria for Non-Farmland Preservation Areas:

Exclude all of the following:

- Lands depicted on the Future Land Use Map that allow any development other than for an agriculture and forestry purpose to occur.
    - MFL Lands may be listed as residential, commercial, or industrial land uses in the future land use map, but they shall not be excluded from farmland preservation.
- Tax exempt lands
- Parcels 10 Acres and Less in Size

CHAPTER 7 – IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter identified common tools available to assist landowners with preserving their farmland for future generations of productivity. Also included is a section about how to revise the plan when conditions change, and so that this plan remains consistent with the Forest County Comprehensive Plan.

A. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Educating the public and local government agencies about the economic benefits of farming and the cost of converting farmland to non-agricultural use is an important part of the implementation strategy. Equally important is showing that land stewardship benefits the owner financially, while also protecting soil productivity into the future.

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was signed into law in 2009 and is comprised of the following three programs:

- Farmland Preservation Program
- Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) Program
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program.

Not all of these tools have funding available at any given time. The more specific tools that may be available are as follows:

Farmland Preservation Income Tax Credits: - An active Farmland Preservation Plan, along with a valid Farmland Preservation Ordinance, provides participating land owners with an opportunity to claim farmland preservation income tax credits that are applied against their tax liability.

Landowners must be residents of Wisconsin and must meet other eligibility criteria to claim the credit, including compliance with state soil and water conservation standards.

Tax credits are as follows:

- $10.00/ acre if land is zoned for farmland preservation, and located in an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA).
- $7.50/ acre if land is zoned for farmland preservation.
- $5.00/ acre if landowner is in an AEA, and has a farmland preservation agreement with DATCP signed after 2009.

Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) – This is a tool set forth in Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Designation of an AEA identifies the area as valuable for current and future agricultural use. Eligible farmers in an AEA can receive income tax credits per an agreement with DATCP.

General eligibility requirements are:

- Five eligible land owner participants
- All land in the proposed AEA area must be in the farmland preservation area
- Land must be contiguous
- Land must be primarily in agricultural use

Benefits of the AEA designation are that the land is identified as important or agricultural preservation. This designation provides reassurance about future farmland use and may encourage investment in agriculture.

Eligible landowners can enter into a voluntary Farmland Preservation Agreement that allows them to claim a tax credit in exchange for keeping land in Agricultural use for 15 years and meeting conservation standards.

Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE Program) - Agricultural Conservation Easements are deed restrictions that landowners voluntarily place on their properties to protect productive agricultural land. They sell a conservation easement to a government agency or private conservation organization. Landowners retain full ownership and continue to pay property taxes, and manage and operate the farm. Conservation easements are tailored to each property: purchasers and landowners decide which activities should be restricted or limited. When the landowner eventually decides to sell the farmland, the development restrictions are passed on to the new owner.

Farmland Preservation Zoning – Agricultural protection zoning ordinances (Farmland Preservation Zoning) allow some residential development, but can restrict density. Such constraints on development potential can limit land speculation and keep land affordable to farmers. Keeping large areas relatively free of non-farm development can reduce the likelihood of conflicts between farmers and their non-farming neighbors.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): - These programs allow landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land. The programs are usually established by local zoning ordinances, and they are used to shift development from agricultural areas to designated growth zones closer to municipal services. The parcel of land where the rights originate is called the "sending" parcel. Once the development rights are transferred from a sending parcel, the land is restricted with a permanent conservation easement. The rights are transferred to a "receiving" parcel, which allows an owner purchasing the rights to build at a higher density than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning. Most TDR transactions are between private landowners and developers. Local governments approve transactions and monitor easements. Some jurisdictions have created "TDR Banks" that buy development rights with public funds and sell them to developers and other private landowners. TDR programs can prevent non-agricultural development of farmland, reduce the market value (and tax burdens) of

protected farms and provide farmland owners with liquid capital that can be used to enhance farm viability.

Mitigation Ordinances – Mitigation ordinances require developers to permanently protect a certain amount of farmland for every acre of agricultural land they convert to other uses. Developers can place an agricultural conservation easement on farmland in another location or pay a fee to satisfy mitigation requirements.

Comprehensive Land-Use Planning: - The County and Townships can use their comprehensive plans as the basis for farmland preservation zoning ordinances. This not only protects these areas for agricultural uses, but also offers a greater tax incentive for landowners.

B. MONITORING

Monitoring is an important step to the whole planning process in order to assess what is working and needs to be adjusted. The County will continually evaluate the plan and that the decisions made remain consistent with the goals and objectives of the Farmland Preservation Plan and the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Any participants in the programs will be monitored according to rules and regulations set for by the Federal, State, or Local agencies participating in the program.

C. PLAN CONSISTENCY AND AMENDMENTS

This 2015 farmland preservation plan fulfils the statutory requirements for both the Farmland Preservation Plan (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) and the Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan (§66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.).

In 2015, the Forest County board passed a resolution that all revised plans in the county will trickle up to the comprehensive plan.

Several methods were used to ensure consistency between this plan and the Forest County Comprehensive Plan.

1. The Farmland Preservation Plan was adopted as an attachment to the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Goals, objectives, and policies initially came from the Comprehensive Plan, and then were modified to focus on farmland preservation, while still complementing the Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies.
3. All maps came from, or are consistent with, the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Mapping criteria used the Future Land Use Map from the Comprehensive Plan.

Now that the Farmland Preservation Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan, Wisconsin Statute §66.1001 requires that an adopted plan be reviewed and updated at least once every ten years.

This is not a static plan, but one that may change over time. Changing land uses, policy changes, regulatory changes, or shifting economics are some reasons to review if this plan is still current.

The plan has a long-term outlook, one that may need to be readjusted as policy or trends become irrelevant or contradictory or errors/omissions have been identified. The plan has been written with some flexibility incorporated so future amendments should be limited in scope.

The process to amend the Plan is similar to that of writing this initial document. The steps to amend any part of the Plan will be as follows:

1. As a result of the request of local government, a property owner, or a developer, the County staff and Committee will evaluate the proposed amendment to see if it meets the goals and objectives of the Plan, the State requirements, and any other laws or standards that may be in effect at the time of the request. If all is in order, the proposal will be brought before the County Board.
2. The County Board adopts a resolution outlining the proposal/amendment.
3. The County staff prepares the text and/or map that amend the specific part of the Farmland Preservation Plan or Plan map.
4. County staff forward the amended materials required under Section 91.20, Wis Stats., to DATCP for certification of the Plan amendment.
5. A public meeting is held for input on the amendment.
6. A class 1 notice is published at least 30 days before the County Board public hearing is held.
7. The County Board holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed Plan amendment into the County's Farmland Preservation Plan.
8. Following the public hearing and DATCP certification, the County Board approves or denies the ordinance adopting the proposed Plan amendment.
9. County staff forwards a copy of the adopted ordinance and Plan amendment to DATCP and any landowners who have requested a copy in writing as well as Township chairpersons.

ATTACHMENT A

Town Farmland Preservation Maps

ATTACHMENT B

Public Participation Plan and Resolution

ATTACHMENT C

Farmland Preservation Plan Resolution and Ordinance