

VILAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted November 10, 2009



Prepared by the:
Land Use Planning Committee and Zoning & Planning Committee

With the assistance of the:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

VILAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Chapter 1: Background & Demographics

Chapter 1: Background & Demographics

1.1 Background

In 1999, the Governor signed into law Wisconsin Act 9, the Budget Bill, containing substantial revisions of existing planning related statutes and established the current comprehensive planning law (§66.1001 WI Stats.). Basically the law provides a definition of a plan, and should address demographic trends, natural resources, housing, transportation, economic development, and land use, among others. In addition, the law requires consistency between the local plan and local implementation tools of official mapping, subdivision ordinances and zoning ordinances; and requires public participation. Most important, is that it maintains that the process be locally driven so all local units of government decide their own future.

This is the first of nine chapters that comprise the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. As required by the state's comprehensive planning law this chapter contains population trends and other basic demographics including: households, employment, age, education, and income.

1.2 Previous County Planning Effort

In 1997 the Vilas County Board unanimously adopted Resolution 1997-63 to "support the development of a comprehensive land use plan for Vilas County in cooperation with the local Towns and the City of Eagle River." The resolution also authorized applying for state grant funding to offset the costs of land use plan and ordinance development and allocated financial resources in the 1998 budget to initiate development of the plan. Vilas County's land use process began in 1998, in conjunction with a successful county Lakes Classification and Shoreland Management program. While the shoreland ordinance revision established dimensional standards for development, the process did not address the issue of compatible land uses. The County had utilized zoning regulation since the 1940s, yet had never done a land use plan to assess the viability of current land use decisions framed against the driving market forces that were developing both on- and off- water properties. The development link between County-level regulation and administration and local-level land use decisions suggested a planning approach that involved integrated and coordinated decision-making. To facilitate and strengthen intergovernmental relationships, the County decided that land use planning should be a "bottom-up" approach with planning done at the local level first, then the county level. Many land use

issues are reviewed by the Towns first, then administered or regulated by the County.

The County helped with coordination of the process through securing and administering the grant funds and through contracting with a single planning consultant. Land use is often a difficult issue to address, especially when the decision making process and land use impacts cut across differing political and social boundaries. Overall, the planning effort focused on continuity between community preferences for land uses and County zoning administration. To address plan development efficiently, a combination of Vilas County staff and a single consultant was used through a five-phase planning process to simultaneously build data for town level plans and for the county level plan.

The five phases were:

Phase 1: Project Orientation – During this phase initial meetings were held with participating local municipal land use plan committees, local planning committees were established, timelines and project schedules were developed, and coordination was set in place for data, mapping, and scheduling.

Phase 2: Background Inventory - Developed, edited, and converted digital mapping products for local and county level, coordinated GIS database development with Vilas County Mapping Department, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Wisconsin Department's of Transportation and Natural Resources, produced maps and overlays for local and county level plan development, and held Land Use Workshop with County and local planning committees to inventory land uses.

Phase 3: Trend Analysis - Collected Demographic Data Development and collected information and completed analysis for Natural and Environmental Resources, Land Use Analysis, Community Facilities, Services, and Utilities Inventory, Transportation Facilities Inventory, Economic Development, Growth Trends and Projections. Also assembled and reviewed existing plans, ordinances, processes, and prepared background analysis, trends, and projections reports for the County and participating Towns.

Phase 4: Local Community Planning Process - Local Issues Identification Workshops were held, developed Vision Statements, Goals & Objectives, developed Proposed Local Land Uses and Alternative Development Scenarios, and identified Implementation Tools and Strategies.

Phase 5: Development of County Land Use Plan - Determined Compatibility and Recommendations Assessment of Local Issues and Plan Implementation with County Regulations and Administration, held Three Focus Groups on

Countywide Issues, developed Countywide Vision, Goals, and Objectives, identified Development Scenarios Based on Analysis of Existing Zoning Pattern, and Local Preferred Land Uses. Also identified Implementation Tools, Strategies & Proposed Modifications to Existing Suggested Regulations Based on Integrated Local Plan Recommendations, held Four Public Informational Meetings, Public Hearings, and 12 meetings with Vilas County Land Use Planning Committee. The final step was the preparation of the 2003 Plan Document

Over the four-year process, many successes and accomplishments were realized. Leaders from involved jurisdictions leveraged significant time, resources, and public involvement to develop plans that were based on public participation. A focused implementation strategy was developed that involved both separate (individual Town) and integrated (County/Town partnerships) implementation options. Significant effort was placed on developing data and maps, and linking the visual (maps and land related data) with both the County and Town political and administrative processes of land use and regulation. The questions of 'what do we want' and 'how can we do it' were evaluated by assessments of the potential impact, cost, time and responsibility of those decisions. The linkage of plan intent was measured against the existing conditions of a community to assess and evaluate those decisions.

Planning at every level included extensive public participation, involvement, and input into the direction of plan development. Citizens were enabled to gauge proposed future conditions as compared to the existing conditions, which allowed for the objective assessment of land use plans. Each participating community held at least 13 meetings with the consultant (and typically held many more locally), held two public informational meetings and workshops, held one public hearing, sent out direct mail poster plans (and some mailed optional community surveys) to local residents, and had very dedicated efforts from the local Planning Committees, Town Boards, and local residents. The County also spent significant effort in parallel with the activities described in the Public Participation chapter of this document. The planning process enabled the participating communities the ability to understand land use both locally and at the county level. For Towns, the value of a local plan with local control options, and being able to adopt their own individual plan, is of great value. For the County, having a coordinated and consistent plan development process resulted in plan recommendations that could be developed locally and implemented at the county-level, creating efficiency in how those plans could be implemented.

However, planning and land use also force discussion on issues that are not always easy or comfortable for communities to address. Planning takes time and typically extends through the course of local elections, so political changes may have an impact on the planning process. However, the true value of

planning cannot be evaluated solely on the end result of an adopted plan. The purpose of the Vilas County Year 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan is to encourage the orderly use and development of lands within the county. At the same time, the planning effort also intended to promote and stimulate public participation and knowledge of land use issues by identifying local issues and coordinating adopted town land use policy with County administration.

The Vilas County Year 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan is an advisory plan document. The extent to which the County will be able to achieve the vision set forth in the plan is going to depend on the ability of Vilas County and the individual local governments to implement the plan recommendations as set forth in this plan and in the adopted local plans. The daily decisions of land use will continue to rely on both Town and County-level coordination. Sound land use and development policy and decisions will need to occur at all levels through a variety of implementation tools, including zoning and land division regulations, environmental regulations, capital improvements, facilities planning, and infrastructure management. By Vilas County initiating a lead role in planning, the County is being pro-active to the idea that even though things change, County-level coordination and local-level cooperation can achieve sound long-range planning goals through integrated implementation that protects the environment, better serves the community, and treats landowners in a fair and equitable manner. Conversely, however, not incorporating the local plan recommendations at the county level, where applicable through zoning ordinance modification as an example, may force the Towns that wish to implement their respective plans into local administration. The effect is not of detriment to results, but of efficiency, cost, administration, and intergovernmental cooperation that the planning process helped strengthen.

Literally thousands of people were involved with, attended, and responded to well over a hundred local level meetings, issues identification and development, community surveys, public informational meetings, and public hearings. Few issues bring out more passion than land and the associated balance of property rights and land regulation. Land use will continue to be an important issue, as all county residents have a stake in and an opinion on how the county should or should not develop. That is indeed the essence of, and value received, from planning. Indeed, there are tough choices ahead.

Effective and efficient land use administration needed to be championed by both County and local officials. Vilas County should refer to this document and to the locally adopted plans to find guidance for future development, rezonings, and land division decisions. Landowners should be free to develop their property, but the development should fit within the guidelines written and understood to be in the best interest of the larger community.

Overall, Vilas County's initial planning process was successful in developing the 2003 draft County Plan. That draft plan is the foundation of the current planning effort.

1.3 Current Planning Process

A draft plan was prepared in 2003, but that plan was not adopted. The county is using that plan as the foundation of this planning process, with the assistance of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). The overall goal of the process is to adopt a county plan by the end of the year. Each task listed below identifies the group responsible for completion. This is an extremely tight timeline and several steps need to take place.

The process to develop the 2009 Vilas County Comprehensive Plan is overviewed below:

A. Background:

In the late 1990s and early 2000s the county along with several towns worked with a planning consultant to prepare both town level and a county plan. Many of the towns adopted the plans they developed others did not. The county did not adopt the draft plan dated 12-5-2003. Although dated, the draft plan is used as the foundation for this planning process because of the fast approaching deadline. The process overviewed here will use that document and augment it in places as well as eliminate unneeded sections.

B. Meetings:

NCWRPC will meet with the Land Use Plan Committee four times to develop a plan using the 2003 draft as a base.

Meeting 1: Agenda (March)

Overview Planning Process & Role of Committee

Identify & Discuss Current Planning Issues

Review draft Plan Goals & Objectives and County Demographics Information

Review draft Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Information

Review draft Housing Information

Review draft Existing Land Use Map

Meeting 2: Agenda (May)

- Present Revised Draft of Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- Review draft Utilities & Community Facilities Information
- Review draft Transportation Information
- Review draft Economic Development Information
- Establish Future Land Use Planning Categories

Meeting 3: Agenda (July)

- Present Revised Draft of Chapters 4, 5 and 6
- Review draft Land Use Information
- Develop Future Land Use Map
- Discuss Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter
- Review and discuss Plan Implementation Policies and Recommendations

Meeting 4: Agenda (August)

- Present Draft Chapter 7
- Present Land Use Background Information
- Review Existing Land Use Map
- Develop Future Land Use

Meeting 5: Agenda (September)

- Present Revised Draft of Chapters 7, 8 and 9
- Review Future Land Use Plan Map
- Review Implementation Recommendations
- Make all final changes to plan document text, tables, and maps.

The plan was then sent to the Zoning Committee for review and to pass a resolution recommending the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

C. County Responsibilities:

Land Use Plan Committee/County Board completed the following tasks:

- Develop and adopt a Public Participation Plan (PPP)
- LU Planning Committee Passes Resolution Recommending Plan Approval
- Held a Public Hearing (September/October)
- County Board Adopt by Ordinance
- Distribution of Plan (Initial & Final)

1.4 Public Participation Process

A. Initial Public Participation Process

The focus of public participation during the initial County planning process was driven at the local level. In fact, the public participation process was the key element to the development of local plans, which in essence developed the County plan. Plan direction was driven by the participation of and opinions expressed by town residents and landowners as facilitated by the local Planning Committees and Town Boards. Numerous techniques were utilized to gather public input in the plan development process, as can be referenced in any of the final plan documents produced by participating governments.

- Vilas County Land Use Planning Committee

The Vilas County Land and Water Planning Committee was appointed by the County Board in 1998 with two subcommittees, a Lake Classification subcommittee and a Land Use Planning subcommittee. Upon completion of the Lakes Classification project, the committee structure was revised to a single Land Use Planning Committee. The Committee was authorized to manage the project and guided the work effort through administration of Vilas County staff and the planning consultant, Foth & Van Dyke. The County Land Use Planning Committee consisted of elected County Board Supervisors who were responsible for project administration, reviewing data, selecting preferred development scenarios and land use policy, and for making a recommendation to the full Vilas County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors has the final plan approval authority.

- Local Planning Committees

Following project authorization, Vilas County assisted the local participating communities to advertise and appoint their local Planning Committees, under authority of the various Town Boards. The Planning Committees consisted of volunteers of various backgrounds who were responsible for the local plan development in concert with the Town Boards.

- Local Government Participation

The concept behind the Vilas County Year 2020 Comprehensive Land Use Plan was to coordinate County policy and regulation through integrated local government recommendations. To this end, all the local governments were contacted to determine involvement interest. Vilas County UW-Extension facilitated the discussions. Six Towns and the City of Eagle River joined the effort.

- Public Meetings and Public Involvement

As discussed throughout this section, a central idea behind the County planning process was to extensively involve and utilize input and opinion of county citizens and taxpayers throughout the plan development process. The approach proved fruitful as public participation was a highlight in many local plan processes. The approach to involve citizens in key decisions, not tell them what the decision had been, was positively received through comment and plan approvals. Several Towns also set attendance records for public meetings during plan development.

B. Current Process

Vilas County has a Land Use Planning Committee that is responsible for the oversight of the comprehensive planning process. That committee has held several meetings with the towns and city to inform them of the planning process. The Zoning Department and the NCWRPC are providing staff support.

A Public Participation Plan was prepared and adopted by the County. It is attached.

1.5 Demographics

Planning for growth and development in Vilas County requires an understanding of the forces that shape land use. The inventory and analysis of population and other demographic trends are essential in determining and planning for basic supply and demand. This section presents some of the demographic findings related future land use needs.

The data presented in this plan utilize numerous sources:

- ◆ U.S. Census Bureau
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) Demographic Services Center
- ◆ Vilas County Zoning Department
- ◆ Vilas County University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX)
- ◆ Other sources

A. Population Characteristics

Population change is the primary component in tracking past growth as well as predicting future population trends. A stable or declining population usually indicates minimal changes in land use demands, while continued population

growth is directly related to pressures for land use change, and the need for additional facilities/services and supporting infrastructure improvements. As is the case with Vilas County, seasonal demands exert tremendous land use pressures and play a major role in shaping land use. It should be noted however, that over time there are fluctuations in the local and regional economy, which generally cannot be predicted.

i. Population Change

Vilas County has experienced continued population growth since 1960, increasing from 9,332 persons in 1960 to 21,033 persons in 2000, representing growth of 125%. In terms of percentage of population, growth within Vilas County between 1950 and 2000 was more than double that experienced in the state overall. Table 1-1 illustrates the population trends of Vilas County from 1950 through 2000.

The most significant growth in the county occurred between 1970 and 1980, with the overall population increasing by 50% during this time period. It is important to note that in terms of percentage increase, Vilas County was the fastest growing county in the state during this decade, during which time the state's overall growth rate was 6.5%.

All towns within the county experienced significant population growth between 1950 and 2000 increasing by over 50% and in many cases over 100% and 200%, with the exception of Phelps which saw a population increase of approximately 15% during this period. The Towns of Arbor Vitae, Cloverland, and St. Germain experienced the most significant increases in population all of which nearly, or more than, tripled their population numbers. For example, Arbor Vitae's population increased 387% between 1950 and 2000 from 648 persons to 3,153 persons.

The City of Eagle River experienced a slight population decline between 1950 and 2000, declining by 1.8%. Eagle River was the only municipality in the county to experience a decline in population during this time period.

By 2008, the population estimate for the county was 23,044, an increase of 9.6% percent since 2000. All towns and the city increased in population as well.

Table 1-1: Population, 1950-2000

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change		% Change		% Change		% Change	
							1950-60	1960-70	1970-80	1980-90	1990-00	1950-00	1950-00	1950-00
Arbor Vitae	648	745	982	2,303	2,531	3,153	15.0%	31.8%	134.5%	9.9%	24.6%	386.6%		
Boulder Junction	482	540	607	934	884	958	12.0%	12.4%	53.9%	-5.4%	8.4%	98.8%		
Cloverland	231	258	305	692	768	919	11.7%	18.2%	126.9%	11.0%	19.7%	297.8%		
Conover	477	405	543	826	932	1,137	-15.1%	34.1%	52.1%	12.8%	22.0%	138.4%		
Lac du Flambeau	1,337	1,447	1,669	2,190	2,433	3,004	8.2%	15.3%	31.2%	11.1%	23.5%	124.7%		
Land O' Lakes	548	542	617	803	839	882	-1.1%	13.8%	30.1%	4.5%	5.1%	60.9%		
Lincoln	959	1,080	1,450	2,262	2,310	2,579	12.6%	34.3%	56.0%	2.1%	11.6%	168.9%		
Manitowish Waters	273	347	509	625	651	646	27.1%	46.7%	22.8%	4.2%	-0.8%	136.6%		
Phelps	1,179	924	876	1,129	1,187	1,350	-21.6%	-5.2%	28.9%	5.1%	13.7%	14.5%		
Plum Lake	310	272	356	408	465	486	-12.3%	30.9%	14.6%	14.0%	4.5%	56.8%		
Presque Isle	312	261	294	390	471	513	-16.3%	12.6%	32.7%	20.8%	8.9%	64.4%		
St. Germain	398	398	473	1,176	1,319	1,932	0.0%	18.8%	148.6%	12.2%	46.5%	385.4%		
Washington	493	560	711	1,100	1,189	1,577	13.6%	27.0%	54.7%	8.1%	32.6%	219.9%		
Winchester	247	186	240	371	354	454	-24.7%	29.0%	54.6%	-4.6%	28.2%	83.8%		
C. Eagle River	1,469	1,367	1,326	1,326	1,374	1,443	-6.9%	-3.0%	0.0%	3.6%	5.0%	-1.8%		
Vilas County	9,363	9,332	10,958	16,535	17,707	21,033	-0.3%	17.4%	50.9%	7.1%	18.8%	124.6%		
Oneida County			24,427	31,216	31,679	36,776	NA	NA	27.8%	1.5%	16.1%	NA		
Wisconsin (000)	3,434	3,951	4,417	4,705	4,891	5,363	15.1%	11.8%	6.5%	4.0%	9.6%	56.2%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1950-2000.

Table 1-2: Peak Summer Population Vilas County 2007

	2007 Estimates	Accommodations		Campgrounds**		Second (Seasonal)+				Total	% Year- Round Pop.	% Seasonal Pop.
		Rooms	X 2.2 Persons	Sites	X 3.5 Persons	Homes	X 4 Persons	Day Visitors				
Arbor Vitae	3,345	411	904	796	2,786	1,039	4,156	800	11,991	28%	72%	
Boulder Junction	1,019	497	1,093	300	1,050	977	3,908	500	7,570	14%	86%	
Cloverland	1,030		0		0	569	2,276	---	3,306	32%	68%	
Conover	1,256	197	433	101	354	1,028	4,112	400	6,555	20%	80%	
C. Eagle River	1,512	1,114	2,451	341	1,194	50	200	1,000	6,356	24%	76%	
Lac du Flambeau	3,250	377	829	121	424	1,974	7,896	500	12,899	26%	74%	
Land O' Lakes	951	278	612	91	319	940	3,760	500	6,141	16%	84%	
Lincoln	2,765		0		0	742	2,968	---	5,733	49%	51%	
Manitowish Waters	698	285	627		0	836	3,344	400	5,069	14%	86%	
Phelps	1,475	227	499		0	1,091	4,364	400	6,738	22%	78%	
Plum Lake	537	156	343	60	210	592	2,368	400	3,858	14%	86%	
Presque Isle	610	148	326	24	84	1,106	4,424	300	5,744	11%	89%	
St. Germain	2,026	984	2,165	162	567	1,218	4,872	500	10,130	20%	80%	
Washington	1,566				0	1,096	4,384	---	5,950	27%	73%	
Winchester	505	54	119	35	123	618	2,472	300	3,518	15%	85%	
Fed/State/Co. Campgrounds				1,082	3,787				3,787		100%	
Vilas Co. Total	22,545	4,728	10,402	3,113	10,896	13,876	55,504	6,000	105,346	22%	78%	

* Accommodations, Campgrounds, and Day Visitors for Cloverland, Lincoln, and Washington are included in the Eagle River figures.

** Does not include Residential Campground Units.

+ Seasonal homes includes seasonal, recreational, or occasional use housing units from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center Population Estimates; Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services licensed accommodations list dated 7/2007.

ii. Seasonal Population

The population figures shown previously are based on the year-round resident population in the county. However, as a significantly large portion of the county's economy is centered around the recreation/tourism industry, there is also a considerable amount of seasonal residents. The summer season is identified as the most popular season for recreational tourists in the county, although fall and winter recreation are continuing to increase in popularity. It is important to identify the number of seasonal residents as this population creates significant additional demands on public services such as town roads and outdoor recreational facilities. Table 1-2 identifies the estimated peak summer population in Vilas County by municipality.

It is estimated that in 2007 the peak summer population of Vilas County was slightly over 105,000 persons. The seasonal visitors include those that stay at resorts/motels and campgrounds, and those with seasonal homes. The peak summer population in the county in 2007 was nearly five times greater than the year-round resident population of 22,500.

The greatest peak summer populations were experienced in the Towns of Arbor Vitae, Lac du Flambeau, and St. Germain, which, combined, comprised approximately 33% of the county's peak summer population. Second homes generated the greatest amount of seasonal population in 2000, followed by campgrounds, accommodations, and day visitors (5.6%).

Overall, the County must be prepared to provide adequate services to its significant seasonal population in addition to its year-round residents.

iii. Population by Age Cohort

Figure 1-1 offers a comparison of the population by age cohort for Vilas County in 1990 and 2000. Figure 4-5 provides a comparison of population by age cohort in Vilas County, Oneida County, and the state in 2000.

A review of the population by age cohort, or age groups, can indicate local population needs. For instance, a large school age population (age 15 years and under) would require schools and recreational facilities for children, while a predominately elderly population (age 65 years and over) may require additional health care services, group home/care facilities, and different leisure opportunities.

Vilas County's population distribution by age cohort remained relatively stable between 1980 and 1990, experiencing a slight decline in the younger age cohorts and a slight increase in the portion of population ages 45 and over.

Based on the population breakdown by age cohort in the county in 1990, if not much migration into the county occurs, it is expected that the county's population breakdown by age cohort would remain relatively stable between the years 2000 and 2010. The county may experience an increase in the age 16-29 cohort and the 75 years and over cohort. For the 16-29 age group which includes young adults participating in the labor force, priorities lie in transportation, short-term/temporary housing (i.e., apartments, "starter homes"), part-time employment opportunities, and recreational facilities and programs. This age group includes the majority of individuals who are pursuing continuing education. For this reason, many in this age group may migrate out from Vilas County to reside near the educational institution they are attending, while still others will likely leave the county for employment opportunities found elsewhere. Therefore, predicting an increase in this age category is rather difficult as the likelihood of individuals of these ages to leave home and move elsewhere is rather high due to the existing economic structure of the county. The age 75 and older grouping is very dependent on group living environments to accommodate health and transportation concerns, and elderly care facilities are often required.

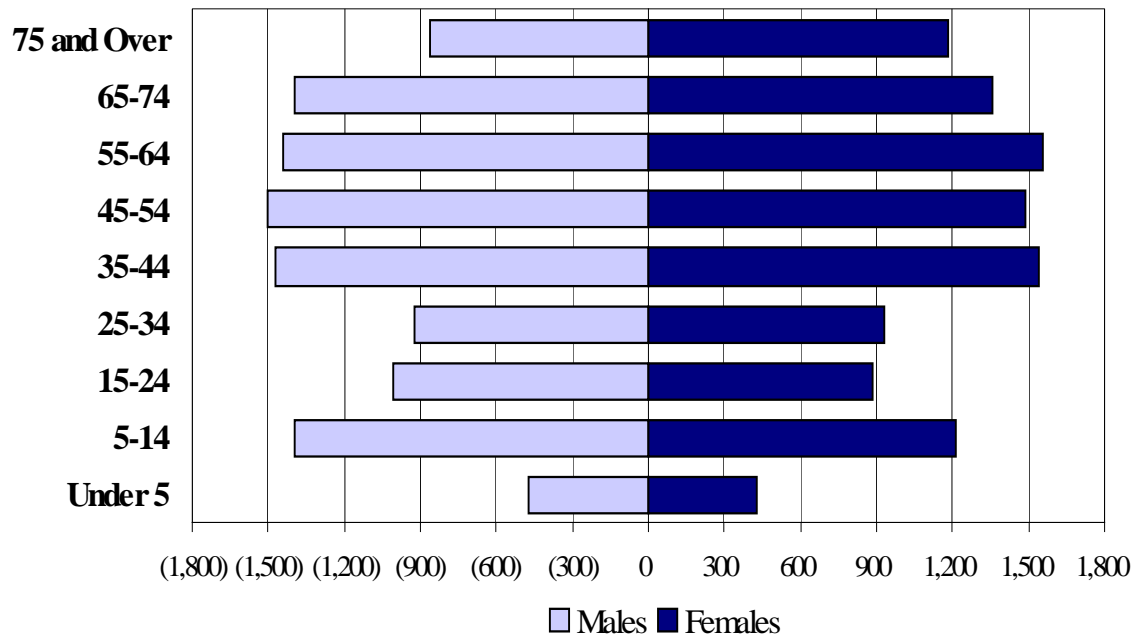
The figure indicates that Vilas County has a larger portion of individuals in older age groups when compared to Oneida County and the state of Wisconsin. Approximately 51% of the county's population is over age 45, compared to approximately 46% in Oneida County and 35% in the state. This information indicates the county serves as residence for people of retirement age, whereby previously seasonal housing units are converted to year-round residences subsequent to retirement.

In comparison to the state, Vilas County contains a small percentage of persons ages 15-24, which indicates that many individuals in this age group leave home for post-secondary educational opportunities or for better employment opportunities elsewhere in the state.

iv. Age-Gender Distribution

The following figure presents a more detailed breakdown of the population composition for Vilas County in 2000, including a distribution of males and females by smaller age-cohorts.

Figure 1-1: Age-Gender Distribution Vilas County, 2000



Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

The figure illustrates the county's predominantly older-aged population which is comprised primarily of persons ages 35 and over.

Vilas County's population is comprised rather equally of males and females throughout the range of age categories in 2000, having slightly more females than males with 10,564 compared to 10,469, respectively.

v. Educational Attainment and Race

According to the 2000 Census 85.4 percent of the population 25 and older have a high school degree or more, compared to 85.1 percent at that national level. While 17.6 percent of the population 25 and older held bachelor's degrees, compared to 22.4 percent nationally.

Overall, 89.7 percent of the county's population is white and 9.1 percent is identified as Native American. That compares to 88.9 percent white and 0.9 percent Native American nationally.

B. Households

In 2000, there were 9,066 households in the county. Of those, 25.2 percent included individuals under 18 years of age and 35.7 percent with individuals 65 years of age and older. Nationally those compared to 33.9 percent and 23 percent respectively.

C. Employment and Income

The county's labor force in 2000 was 9,889. Of those 6.1% were unemployed. The primary occupations were sales and office occupations; followed by management and professional occupations; and service occupations. From an industry sector perspective, the three largest sectors were educational, health and social services; arts entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service; retail trade. The median household income in 2000 was \$33,759, and the per capita income was \$18,361.

See the Economic Development Chapter for more information related to employment.

1.6 Goals, Objectives and Policies

Each of the following comprehensive plan chapters will conclude with a set of goals, objectives and policies, which will be used to guide the future development of the community.

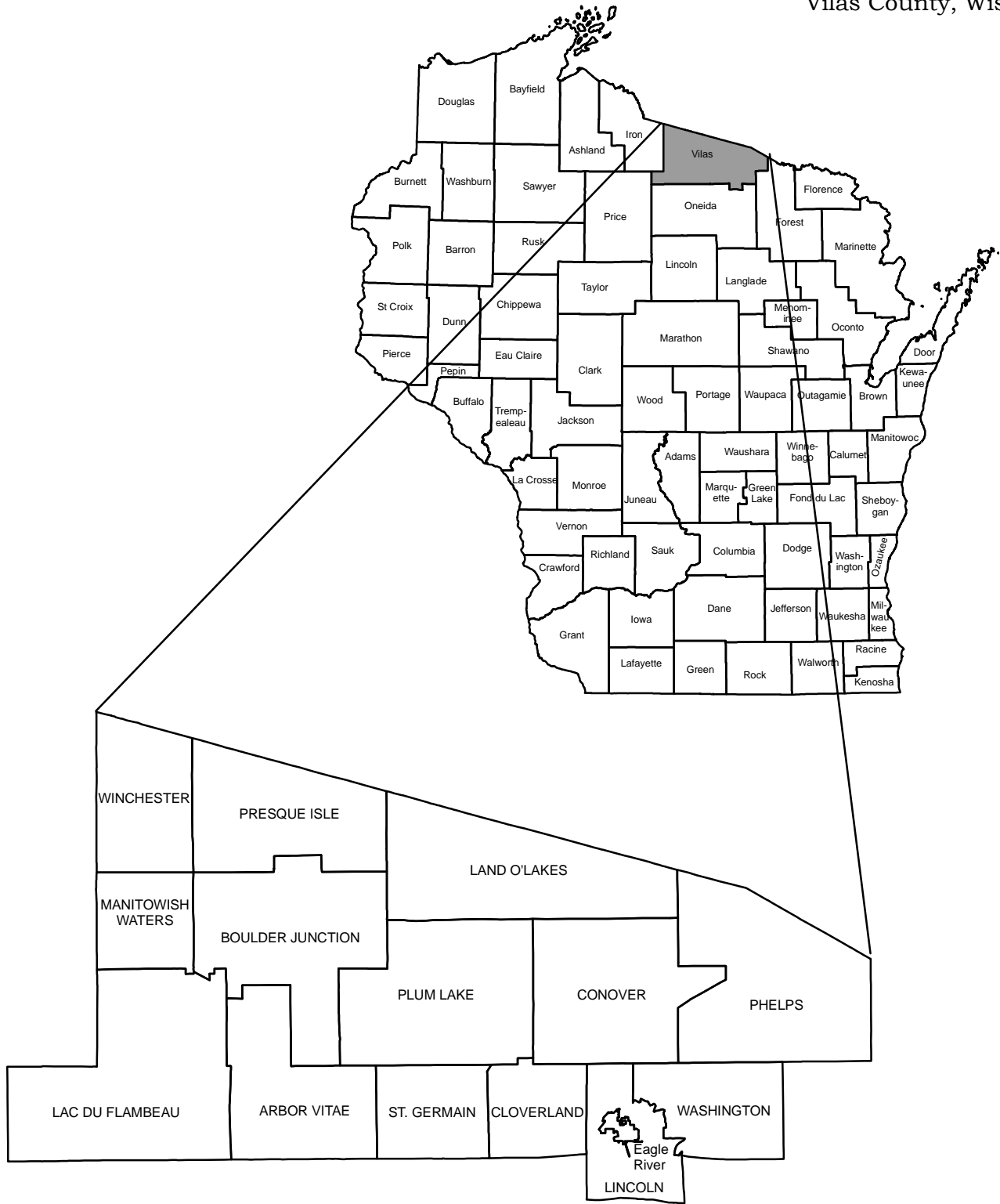
For purposes of this planning process, goals, objectives and policies are defined as follows:

Goals: Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the community should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the community.

Objectives: More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

Policies: Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a regular basis.

Map 1-1
 Planning Context
 Vilas County, Wisconsin



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC

This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.



Prepared By:

**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Chapter 2: Natural Resources

Chapter 2: Natural Resources

2.1 Background

This is the second of nine chapters that comprise the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. The natural resource base in Vilas County not only holds significant ecological value, but also has great economic, recreational, and aesthetic value. Development pressure for lakefront and wooded property is so significant that, if not properly managed and directed, could pose a threat to the very thing that attracts people to be there - the abundant natural resource base. This chapter also addresses agriculture and cultural resources.

2.2 County Resources

Vilas County maintains two departments and county level committees related to natural resources. There are three planning documents prepared related to these departments. One is the Forestry Department's 15 -Year Forest Comprehensive Forest Plan, the Land Conservation's 5 - Year Land & Water Resource Management Plan, and the County Farmland Preservation Plan. All of these documents set policy direction for the county.

2.3 Inventory

The county's natural resource base encompasses the geography, topography, soils, surface water, watersheds, floodplains, wetlands, groundwater, woodlands, and environmental sensitivity areas. See the Natural Features Map.

A. Geography

Vilas County is located in northern Wisconsin and is bounded by Upper Michigan to the north, Forest County to the east, Oneida County to the south, and Iron County to the west. The county is approximately 651,529 acres in size including approximately 549,573.08 acres (84.3%) of land and 101,577.2 acres (15.6%) of surface water (including islands). Approximately 76.9% of the county's surface area is covered by forest land (woodland), which is held in both public and private ownership.

The vast amount of surface water and forest land present in Vilas County is the driving force behind the county's economy, which is supported primarily by recreation/tourism and timber production. Vilas County is a popular vacation area for both in-state and out-of-state visitors who wish to enjoy the abundance of natural resources and recreational opportunities provided in this setting. Areas near the lakes and streams, and more recently within the off-water woodlands, have become increasingly popular for vacation property (cottages), home sites, and as recreational areas. This is evident by reviewing population trends whereby the 2000 estimated year-round population was 21,033 persons, while the peak summer population was 100,405 persons (see Section 4. Community Profile). In addition, building permit data indicates a 52% increase in the average number of building permits granted for new homes from 1980-89 to 1990-1998. As development pressures in the area continue to escalate, the county's land and water resources must be intelligently managed to ensure their protection and quality.

B. Topography

Vilas County is included in the Northern Highland physiographic region of Wisconsin. The physiography (physical nature of a geographic area) of the county resulted from glacial activity that occurred 10,000 - 25,000 years ago. The last retreat of the glaciers transformed the formerly uneven, rocky terrain of the county into a diverse landscape.

The county's landscape ranges from broad, nearly level glacial outwash plains to rough, broken glacial moraines and areas of pitted outwash. There are three distinct physiographic regions in the county. The drumlins and ground moraines in the eastern portion of the county are characterized by low, smoothly rounded, elongated, and oval ridges that are nearly level to moderately steep and are interspersed with long, narrow drainageways. The Winegar moraine area in the western portion of the county is characterized by short, steep slopes and ridges, and by numerous wet depressions, most of which have no outlets. Outside of these moraine areas is an outwash plain, characterized by a rolling or hilly topography with many enclosed basins and depressions. In scattered areas on this plain, including the communities of Eagle River, Manitowish Waters, Conover, St. Germain, and Boulder Junction, sand flats are present, while end moraines and drumlins are scattered throughout. The glacial melt is directly related to the amount and location of surface water.

Overall, relief in the county is low. However, the county has some of the highest elevations in the state which range from approximately 1,560 feet above sea level in an area along Squaw Creek in the southwest corner of the county, to 1,845 feet above sea level at Muskellunge Hill.

C. Soils

Soils exert a strong influence on the way land is used. Soils affect the cost and feasibility of building site development, the provision of public facilities, and agricultural production capabilities. Knowledge of the potentials and limitations of soil types is necessary to determine how they can best be used and managed. For example, development may be limited on soils which are characterized by poor filtration, slow percolation, flooding/ponding, wetness, steep slope, and subsidence.

A detailed study of the soils of Vilas County was conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS - formerly Soil Conservation Service, SCS), in 1984 which resulted in the Soil Survey of Vilas County, Wisconsin, June, 1988. The survey includes a detailed identification of the specific soils found throughout the county, and also provides a grouping of soils into generalized soil associations or predominant soil patterns. Further investigation is required for "site-specific" soils information, as is the case with individual soil tests. Soil tests (commonly called perk tests) are completed for each new building site application to determine the site's capability to accommodate the septic loads.

Important to land use planning, the study identifies the limitations of each soil type for certain forms of development. A soil which exhibits a "severe" limitation is one in which one or more soil properties or site features are so unfavorable or difficult to overcome that a major increase in construction effort, special design, or intensive maintenance is required. For some soils rated severe, it may not be feasible to proceed with development.

The soils of Vilas County are primarily sandy and loamy soils which are suited to, and do support, forested/woodland uses. Due to the sandy and droughty nature of the soils, most are of relatively low agricultural value; in addition, the growing season in the county is rather short.

The following provides a general discussion of the general soil associations found within Vilas County. It should be noted, however, that these general descriptions are only guidelines and should be referred to as such.

The majority of the county (42%) is dominated by the Rubicon-Sayner-Karlin association which includes most of the southern and central portions of the county. The far eastern portion of the county, including primarily the Town of Phelps and portions of Conover and Washington, is dominated by the Champion and Padus-Pence associations. The Champion association comprises 8% of the county and the Padus-Pence association comprises approximately 21%. The Padus-Pence association is also found along the Presque Isle/Boulder Junction border, in the central portion of Land O' Lakes, the Sayner and Star Lake areas, and the majority of southern/central Arbor Vitae. The majority of Winchester and Presque Isle and approximately half of Land O' Lakes, are comprised of the Gogebic-Pence-Fence association which comprises approximately 14% of the county. The Crowell-Dawson-AuGres association is found scattered throughout the county, comprising a total of 8% of the soils. The Loxley-Dawson association and the Keweenaw-Karlin association comprise the remaining 2% and 5% of the county's land area, respectively. These areas are also scattered throughout the county.

The State of Wisconsin Department of Commerce adopted revisions to the existing on-site sanitary system disposal code (called COMM 83) in 2000. The revisions change the private, on-site treatment system options allowed in the state septic system code by adding an assortment of sewage treatment options for residential applications that have not been previously allowed. For example, existing state code allows sanitary systems to be approved for conventional septic systems and certain types of above ground mound systems. Holding tanks are also allowed under state code, but counties and local municipalities have the authority to ban holding tanks within their jurisdictions. The COMM 83 revisions expand treatment options to include five additional designs, which would allow greater flexibility in siting private septic systems and treating waste.

D. Metallic and Nonmetallic Resources

The County contains some significant non-metallic deposits, and as such, several quarries are in operation. All new mines would be subject to the reclamation standards under this ordinance. The county maintains a list of all permitted mines in the county.

There are no known metallic deposits within the county.

E. Surface Water

Surface water resources constitute an extremely valuable part of the natural resource base of Vilas County. Vilas County is home to over 1,320 lakes, more than any other county in Wisconsin, resulting in one of the highest concentrations of inland freshwater lakes in the world. Numerous rivers and streams are also located within the county's boundaries. These surface water resources are vital natural resources, which are held in the public trust by the state. The abundance of water resources provides the public with unique recreational opportunities and the enjoyment of scenic beauty, and therefore plays a primary role in sustaining tourism, the major economic force of Vilas County.

Unfortunately, the quality of these surface water resources is highly susceptible to deterioration from pollutant runoff. Therefore, land uses and related activities must be carefully managed in order to achieve a balance between the level and extent of use, and the maintenance of water quality. This portion of the plan provides a general inventory and discussion of the significant surface waters in Vilas County. In addition, this section also identifies the impact of development on these features, and discusses the approach, which was recently implemented by Vilas County toward managing development patterns in order to protect surface water quality.

Vilas County contains approximately 101,577 acres of surface water, including lakes, streams, and islands, which comprise approximately 15.6% of the county's total area. Table 2-1 provides a breakdown of the total surface water acreage in the county for each community.

Table 2-1: Surface Water Acreage Vilas County

Municipality	Water Acres	Islands	Total Surface Water	Percent of County Total	Percent of Each
Arbor Vitae	6,055.0	49.5	6,104.5	6.0%	13.4%
Boulder Junction	12,699.6	150.4	12,850.0	12.7%	20.4%
Cloverland	2,639.7	9.7	2,649.4	2.6%	11.8%
Conover	5,396.4	153.9	5,550.4	5.5%	10.1%
Lac du Flambeau	17,923.9	413.6	18,337.5	18.1%	22.4%
Land O' Lakes	8,761.7	87.6	8,849.3	8.7%	14.0%
Lincoln	2,949.8	46.1	2,995.9	2.9%	12.6%
Manitowish Waters	4,502.8	563.4	5,066.2	5.0%	22.1%
Phelps	9,234.6	31.6	9,266.2	9.1%	13.4%
Plum Lake	7,448.8	105.6	7,554.5	7.4%	12.0%
Presque Isle	9,466.6	119.7	9,586.3	9.4%	19.5%
St. Germain	4,522.4	7.3	4,529.8	4.5%	17.6%
Washington	4,142.0	26.6	4,168.6	4.1%	13.7%
Winchester	3,927.3	23.5	3,950.8	3.9%	11.4%
C. Eagle River	117.9	0.0	117.9	0.1%	6.9%
Vilas County	99,670.7	1,788.6	101,577.2	100.0%	15.6%

Source: Vilas County Mapping Department, 1999.

The greatest amount of surface water in the county is located in the Town of Lac du Flambeau (18.3%), followed by the Towns of Boulder Junction (12.6%), Presque Isle (9.4%), and Phelps (9.1%), which, combined, comprise about half of the county's total surface water. In the Towns of Lac du Flambeau, Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, and Presque Isle, surface water comprises approximately 20% of each municipality's total area.

The primary component of surface water in Vilas County is lakes. There are approximately 1,320 lakes in Vilas County, including 563 named lakes and 757 unnamed lakes. As mentioned previously, this is more lakes than any other county in the state. When combined with Oneida County, Vilas is located in the heart of the highest concentration of fresh water lakes in the world. However, development around lakes may be affecting water quality and wildlife habitat. Alterations to the shoreline, such as that

experienced with development, harms the productivity, diversity, and natural scenic beauty of lakes. Therefore, it is important to protect and maintain the quality of these invaluable resources, not only to ensure the region's biological integrity, but also to preserve the sociological, cultural, subsistence, and economic values that these lake resources provide.¹ There are 3,383 miles of shoreline in Vilas County. There is a total of 1,117.5 miles of shoreline along the lakes in the county which are 50 acres or greater in size and are not located within public ownership boundaries. Of this, 78% of the shoreline is privately developed, while 22% is owned publicly. A total of 17,179 structures were identified as being located along the private shorelines, resulting in an average of approximately 19.71 structures per private mile of shoreline.² Based on the county existing land use map, a large percentage of existing shoreline is developed on lakes 50 acres and above. The focus will move to smaller lakes and stream areas, then to the off-water parcels.

Development trends indicate that the desire to own lakefront [waterfront] property sparked after WWII, as more families began to move to the cities, and began to seek waterfront property as a "getaway". Between 1965 (after WWII) and 1995, there was an overall average increase of 216% in the number of dwelling units on all sizes of lakes in northern Wisconsin. As the demand for lake frontage increased during these years, large parcels of land were further subdivided into narrow "slices" of frontage which resulted in fragmented shorelines. In fact, an aerial survey completed by the WDNR revealed that since the mid-1960s, approximately two-thirds of previously undeveloped lakes (10 acres or larger) in northern Wisconsin had been developed (one or more dwellings along shore). If this trend continues, it is projected that all undeveloped lakes not in public ownership could be developed within the next 20 years.

This ever-increasing demand for land near water has resulted in significant impacts to lakefront property values. This is especially evident in more recent years as lakefront property is becoming harder to find. In fact, because lake water quality is significantly affected by surrounding land use, this significant increase in lakeshore development has already led to an apparent decrease in water quality on many lakes, ultimately changing the very nature of lake ecosystems. Water quality often changes as a result of increased levels of such nutrients as nitrogen and phosphorus which are direct results of residential development activities

¹ WDNR, December 1995, "Northern Wisconsin's Lakes and Shorelands: A Report Examining a Resource Under Pressure," Madison, Wisconsin.

² Vilas County Lake and River Classification Study, February 1999.

including private sewer systems, lawn fertilizers, etc., and the removal of natural shoreline vegetation.

Vilas County officials and supporting agencies are continuously faced with the challenge of balancing the continuing development pressures and their stewardship responsibilities to maintain the ecological integrity of the lakes with the county's need to provide basic economic opportunities. Therefore, in response to the dramatic increase in lakeshore development and development pressures, and the potential impacts of this development on the surface water resources and associated wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, Vilas County initiated development of the Vilas County Lake and River Classification System. This system was ultimately adopted as part of the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance in May 1999. The system establishes varying degrees of protection and mitigation to water bodies based on the varied sensitivity levels and existing development characteristics of lakes. The purpose of the Lakes Classification System is to manage further development as determined by the waterway's ability to accommodate the development, thus providing enhanced protection to surface water quality, fish and aquatic life, shoreland communities and natural beauty, and compatibility of proposed development with existing land and water usage. The Lakes Classification System is also designed to maintain safe and healthful conditions, prevent and control water pollution and soil erosion, and control building sites and the placement of structures and other land uses.

Each lake in Vilas County greater than 50 acres in surface area, which included 270 lakes (approx 20.5% of all county lakes), was individually evaluated and classified as either low, medium, or high in regards to both its sensitivity to development and the level of existing development along privately-owned shoreline. The lake sensitivity ratings were determined by evaluating five scientific criteria which were based on the physical characteristics of lakes, not on the chemical or biological characteristics which may change over time. Existing levels of development were determined based upon the number of visible structures per mile of privately owned shoreline as identified by 1996 aerial photos. Prevention strategies such as minimum lot size, setback requirements, and mitigation strategies, were then developed for each lake classification category.

Lakes 50 acres and less in surface area, which includes approximately 1,050 lakes, were not individually evaluated, but were classified as warranting the highest level of protection based on their small surface areas, proportionately larger shoreline lengths/surface area, less water

volume to assimilate excess nutrients, and generally small-sized watersheds. The minimum lot size and setback requirements established for lakes 50 acres and less are as follows:

Minimum lot area = 60,000 ft²
Minimum frontage width = 300 ft
Minimum lot width = 270 ft

Approximately 23% of the lakes over 50 acres in size (63 lakes) were classified as having a medium sensitivity to development and a low level of existing development (0-13 structures/mile). Prevention strategies will be applied to these lakes to help protect them from experiencing degraded water quality as a result of unplanned/inappropriate land use and associated applications. Over 17% (47 lakes) were classified as having a medium sensitivity to development and medium level of existing development, while 16% (43 lakes) were identified as being highly sensitive to development with a low level of existing development. Prevention strategies will also be targeted on these lakes. Only 6 lakes (2.2%) which were classified were identified as being highly sensitive to development and having high levels of existing development. These lakes include Alma Lake in the Town of St. Germain, Bills Lake in the Town of Lac du Flambeau, Edith Lake in the Town of Boulder Junction, and Sumach (Long), Towanda (Bass), and Vandercook (Crane) lakes in the Town of Arbor Vitae. More extensive mitigation strategies will be applied to these lakes.

Table 2-2: Lake Classification Matrix for Lakes Greater than 50 Acres, Vilas County

Sensitivity to Development	Current Level of Development		
	Low Development Level	Medium Development Level	High Development Level
High Sensitivity	Minimum Lot Area = 60,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 300 ft Minimum Lot Width = 270 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 40,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 200 ft Minimum Lot Width = 180 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 40,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 200 ft Minimum Lot Width = 180 ft
Medium Sensitivity	Minimum Lot Area = 40,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 200 ft Minimum Lot Width = 180 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 40,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 200 ft Minimum Lot Width = 180 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 30,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 150 ft Minimum Lot Width = 135 ft
Low Sensitivity	Minimum Lot Area = 30,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 150 ft Minimum Lot Width = 135 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 30,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 150 ft Minimum Lot Width = 135 ft	Minimum Lot Area = 30,000 ft ² Minimum Frontage Width = 150 ft. Minimum Lot Width = 135 ft

Source: Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Article IV, 4.3, May, 1999.

In addition to the significant number of lakes in the county there are also numerous rivers and streams, some of which interconnect lakes. The major river system which travels through Vilas County is the Wisconsin River, which originates at Lac Vieux Desert in the Town of Phelps. Overall, there are no widespread water quality problems with streams in the county. Beavers and beaver dams probably cause the most nuisance problems by obstructing flows and changing fish habitat. However, shoreline development and development pressures are increasing river resource management issues.

The Vilas County Lake and River Classification portion of the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance separates rivers and streams into two classes for management and development purposes, based upon factors set forth in the Vilas County Lake and River Classification Study. Class I rivers and streams were designated as those water bodies having low or limited adjacent development or potential for development, and which were classified as outstanding or exceptional resource waters, or cold water trout streams. Class I rivers and streams are considered highly sensitive waters, and include the majority of rivers and streams in the county. Development regulations applied to Class I rivers and streams include a minimum lot area of 60,000 ft², minimum frontage of 300 ft, and a minimum lot width of 270 ft. Class II rivers and streams were individually reviewed and classified. Class II rivers and streams are generally larger in size and have higher flushing volumes, and therefore are less vulnerable to impacts from nutrient or sediment runoff. Many rivers which were classified as Class II have high levels of existing shoreline development. Development regulations applied to Class II rivers and streams include a minimum lot area of 30,000 ft², minimum frontage width of 150 ft, and minimum lot width of 135 ft. The rivers and streams which were approved for inclusion as Class II include: Wisconsin River downstream of Hwy G, Eagle River, Manitowish River from Johnson Lake to Rest Lake Dam, St. Germain River downstream of Big St. Germain Lake, Military Creek downstream of Hwy E, Tomahawk River, Deerskin River downstream of Range Line Road, Muskellunge Creek downstream of Birchwood Drive, Johnson Creek, and Mud Creek

F. Watersheds

Surface water quality is directly affected by the land uses of the area which drain to it, which is called its watershed. A watershed is an interconnected area of land in which water drains to a common point, such as a stream, lake, or wetland. All lands and waterways are within one watershed or another. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas, and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. In relation, river basins are defined within the state which encompass numerous watersheds. There are 32 river basins in Wisconsin which range in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles. The WDNR prepares water quality management plans for each river basin which identify the sources of water quality problems and identify management objectives that the WDNR, local communities, counties, and other agencies should take to protect and improve the water resources within the basin.

The majority of Vilas County lies within two basins - the Upper Chippewa River Basin in the west/northwest, and the Upper Wisconsin River Basin in the central, southern, and eastern areas. In addition, a small portion in the east is included in the Upper Green Bay Basin. Overall, 13 watersheds are included within the county either completely or partially.

G. Floodplains

Floodplains include land that has been or may be covered by floodwater during the regional flood. The regional flood may be expected to occur on a particular lake, river, or stream once in every 100 years. Areas susceptible to flooding are considered unsuitable for development because of risks to lives and property. Therefore, from a planning perspective, floodplains are a very important land use feature. Construction or development within these areas should be limited to uses that are associated with the floodplain, such as recreational activities, wildlife applications, or open space areas.

The most recent source for identifying areas subject to flooding in Vilas County is the Flood Hazard Boundary Map (FHBM) for Vilas County developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which became effective in 1981. The Flood Hazard Boundary Map delineates the special flood hazard areas within the county. These areas are primarily located along major rivers and streams, along with several creeks. Floodplains are also present around several lakes in the county; however, the areas subject to flooding around these typically do not extend much past the existing shoreline.

The FHBMs are intended to be interim maps prior to the completion of a more detailed FEMA study, and therefore may not include all flood hazard areas. Additional field checking may be required to determine whether or not a given area is in the floodplain before development is authorized or denied.

H. Wetlands

Wetlands are part of the region's hydrologic and ecological structure. They act as sources, sinks, or routes for water, materials (e.g., nutrients, pollutants), energy, and biological activity. Maintaining the integrity of wetlands promotes a region's health and sustains its capability to survive disturbance. It also affects the beneficial functions and values that wetlands provide to society such as:

- Wetlands act as a natural filtering system for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates, and thus aid in maintaining surface water and groundwater quality.
- Wetlands are very productive wildlife habitat, and consequently provide recreational activities such as hunting, trapping, and bird watching.
- Wetlands provide open/green space and reduce soil erosion.
- Wetlands recharge groundwater supplies, the source of drinking water for Vilas County's residents.
- Wetlands attenuate flood flows which decreases the risk of flood damage to property owners.
- Wetlands maintain base flows of streams and watercourses, which is important to the continued well-being of aquatic ecosystems and associated wildlife habitat.
- Wetlands serve as a natural buffer protecting shorelines and streambanks.

The State of Wisconsin's operational definition of a wetland is defined as an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions. Most wetlands are dominated by plants that can tolerate various degrees of flooding, with species composition and productivity dependent on the variations in water patterns and human activities (e.g., cultivation, grazing, logging).

The Natural Features Map delineates wetlands (2.5 acres and greater) as determined by the WDNR's digital Wisconsin Wetland Inventory (WWI) maps from 1996. These wetlands may not reflect all areas considered wetlands by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. As indicated on the map, wetlands of varying size are scattered throughout the county.

Wetlands comprise approximately 110,632 acres of land in Vilas County, or 17% of the county's total area. These wetlands include a wide diversity of wetland types ranging from emergent/wet meadow to scrub/shrub, to

deciduous and coniferous, forested wetlands. Table 2-3 displays wetland acreage calculation for each community. Nearly 40% of the wetlands in the county are located in the Towns of Lac du Flambeau (17%), Land O' Lakes (11%), and Conover (10%). Approximately 30% of the Town of Manitowish Waters is wetlands, while approximately 23% of the Towns of Winchester, Lincoln, and Lac du Flambeau are comprised of wetlands.

Due to the significant environmental functions served by wetlands, there is a complex set of local, state, and federal regulations which places limitations on the development and use of wetlands [and shorelands]. Counties are mandated to establish shoreland-wetland zoning districts. The Vilas County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates use and development in all shoreland areas (within 300' of navigable streams, 1000' of lakes), including all shorelands which are designated as wetlands on the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory maps. The WDNR regulates the placement of structures and other alterations below the ordinary high water mark of navigable streams and lakes. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has authority over the placement of fill materials in many wetlands, while the USDA incorporates wetland preservation criteria into its crop price support programs. Therefore, prior to placing fill or altering a wetland resource, the appropriate agency(ies) must be contacted to receive authorization. Ultimately, development within wetland areas should be avoided due to the benefits earlier described.

Table 2-3: Wetland Acreage by Municipality Vilas County, 1999

Municipality	Wetlands (Acres)	Percent of Total Wetlands	Percent of Total Area
Arbor Vitae	5,117.6	4.6%	11.5%
Boulder Junction	8,821.4	8.0%	14.2%
Cloverland	3,812.0	3.4%	17.2%
Conover	11,579.8	10.5%	21.3%
Lac du Flambeau	18,716.6	16.9%	23.0%
Land O' Lakes	11,719.3	10.6%	18.7%
Lincoln	5,441.5	4.9%	23.0%
Manitowish Waters	6,746.3	6.1%	29.4%
Phelps	8,475.4	7.7%	12.5%
Plum Lake	6,639.3	6.0%	10.8%
Presque Isle	8,586.7	7.8%	17.8%
St. Germain	3,057.7	2.8%	12.0%
Washington	3,685.4	3.3%	13.7%
Winchester	8,141.1	7.4%	23.8%
C. Eagle River	92.2	0.1%	5.5%
Vilas County Total	110,632.3	100.0%	17.0%

Source: WDNR, Wisconsin Wetland Inventory, 1996; Vilas County Mapping Department, 1999.

I. Groundwater

Groundwater is an extremely important resource in Vilas County as it is the source of the entire county's potable water supply and serves many agricultural, commercial, and industrial purposes as well. Because of its importance, a greater understanding of groundwater is needed to gauge existing and potential threats to its quantity and quality.

Groundwater is comprised of rainfall (or snowmelt), which percolates down through the soil until it reaches the zone of saturation, often called an aquifer. Water in an aquifer then travels from its source to a discharge point such as a well, wetland, spring, or lake. During periods of increased precipitation or thaw, this vast resource is replenished with water moving by gravity through permeable soils down to the water table. In some instances, groundwater moves because of pressure created by a confining layer of impervious rock or clay soils. This is referred to as an artesian system. The groundwater system is the source of potable water in

Vilas County. Regional groundwater flow in Wisconsin tends to follow surface topography, and usually enters the aquifer in upland areas and flows towards low points in the drainage basin.

In the north central Wisconsin region, deposits of sand and gravel are highly permeable and yield large quantities of water both for recharge and to wells. Less expansive recharge areas also are found in areas where decomposed and fractured granite lies at or near the surface.

Contamination of groundwater almost always results directly from land uses associated with modern society. Almost anything which can be spilled or spread on the land has the potential to seep through the ground and enter the groundwater. The impacts of improper land uses or waste management are usually determined by the physical characteristics of that area. By locating, constructing, and operating development and waste management systems appropriately, these negative effects can be minimized.

Most groundwater contamination is related to poorly-sited land uses such as agricultural manure, petroleum, and salt storage in areas of high groundwater tables or fractured bedrock. Contamination of groundwater reserves can also result from such sources as improperly placed or maintained landfill sites, private waste disposal (septic effluent), excessive lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides, and leaks from sewer pipes. Runoff from livestock yards and urban areas, improper application of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers, and leaking petroleum storage tanks and spills can also add organic and chemical contaminants in locations where the water table is near the surface. Once groundwater contamination has occurred, successful remediation can take years, or may never occur, depending upon the pollutant. Therefore, when considering specific land uses for an area, it is vital to consider the relationships between the land, the proposed/actual use, the physical characteristics, and the potential for contamination to help ensure that groundwater contamination does not occur. Protection of these groundwater reserves is necessary to ensure adequate quality water to all users.

Groundwater elevations ranging from approximately 1,560 feet above mean sea level in the southwest to 1,780 feet above mean sea level in the east. Elevations primarily range in the mid-1,600s. A comparison between the county land surface elevation to groundwater elevation indicates that the water table is very high (near land surface) in the county as land elevations range from approximately 1,560 to 1,845 feet

above mean sea level. The depth to groundwater is generally less than 50' throughout the county, and is typically less than 20'. Shallow depths coupled with highly permeable sandy soils means the groundwater in Vilas County is highly susceptible to contamination. Nearly all of Vilas County is identified on the map as being most susceptible to groundwater contamination.

Groundwater flow in the county is generally southwesterly, flowing into Iron, Price, and Oneida counties. Major discharge areas are the Wisconsin River system and the Upper Chippewa system (Manitowish River). Therefore, contamination that enters the groundwater today in Vilas County can have serious consequences tomorrow in other counties.

J. Woodlands

Forest cover is a key environmental, economic, and aesthetic feature. Expansive forest lands provide recreational and aesthetic opportunities for residents and tourists, and also function as sources of commercial timber production. In addition, woodland cover plays a key role in the function and value of sensitive environmental areas like steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains. Regulations concerning removal of woodland vegetation may be necessary to protect natural scenic beauty, control erosion, provide critical wildlife habitat, and reduce effluent and nutrient flows into surface water bodies/courses. Therefore, the preservation and protection of forest resources is critical to sustain and enhance both the economic and environmental health of Vilas County.

The presettlement composition of forest land in Vilas County primarily included two forest types. Approximately one half of the county included pine forests composed of white pine and red pine mixtures with few hardwoods. A common belief of presettlement forests is that extensive pine forests covered most of northern Wisconsin. This forest type was actually very limited even before settlement, with the most extensive block occurring in Vilas and Oneida counties. The remaining half of the county was comprised of hemlock, sugar maple, and yellow birch with mixtures of white and red pine.³ This forest type was the largest, most characteristic forest composition type in northern Wisconsin. [Finley, 1976, modified by Kotar, 1990, Wisconsin Biodiversity as a Management Issue].

³ Original Vegetation Cover of Wisconsin (Map), compiled from U.S. General Land Office Notes by Robert W. Finley, 1976, of UW Extension.

Between the mid-1800s and early 1990s, forests throughout Wisconsin were almost entirely cut. White pine, and to some extent red pine, was the concentration of early logging practices, which virtually eliminated the white pine seed source in northern Wisconsin. Remaining forests were logged for commercial and industrial purposes or were cleared for agriculture.⁴

Through the years, Vilas County has regained much of its forest cover, although the species composition is not the same as that of presettlement times. Overall, forest cover comprises approximately 76.9% of the county's total area.

K. Areas of Critical Environmental Sensitivity

Areas of critical environmental sensitivity are those unique elements/areas of the natural resource base which should be preserved, and therefore excluded from urban/intensive development. Typically, areas of critical environmental sensitivity include wetlands, floodplains/floodways, critical shorelands, areas of steep slope (especially those adjacent to wetlands and shorelands), publicly-owned scientific and natural areas (i.e., fish and wildlife habitats), and identified archaeological sites. The protection of such areas is intended to 1) protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, 2) protect surface water and groundwater quality, 3) reduce damage from flooding and stormwater runoff, and 4) maintain important wildlife habitats or recreational areas.

There are nine publicly-owned state natural areas located within Vilas County. Table 2-4 identifies each of these significant areas and provides a brief description of each.

⁴ Wisconsin's Biodiversity as a Management Issue: A Report to the Department of Natural Resource Managers.

Table 2-4: State Natural Areas Vilas County

State Natural Area	Location	Acres	Reason for Preservation
High Lake Spruce - Balsam Forest	Presque Isle, T43N R7E, Sec. 35, NE¼, in NHAL	40	Designated in 1953 as representative example of boreal forest in Wisconsin. Research on the ecological effects of a natural disturbance has become major value of the site as a spruce budworm infestation killed about ¾ of the canopy in early 1980s.
Plum Lake Hemlock Forest	Plum Lake, T41N R8E, Sec. 21&22, in NHAL	228	Contains a near virgin, old-growth stand of hemlock and its associated hardwoods. White pine was selectively logged in the 1880s, otherwise the forest is in presettlement condition (estimated origination = 1810).
Bittersweet Lakes	Arbor Vitae, T40N R7E, Sec. 15, 22, & 27, in NHAL	568	Contains four clear (oligotrophic) soft-water lakes in a wild setting, each separated by isthmus.
Black Tern Bog	Arbor Vitae, T40N R6E, Sec. 11, pt. NE¼, in NHAL	26	Bog has an outstanding collection of plants, including several rare and unusual species. Large numbers of black terns nest on the bog.
Johnson Lake Barrens	Land O' Lakes, T42N R8E, Sec. 8&9, in NHAL	189	Contains most of the remaining pine barrens in Vilas County. Also present are northern sedge meadow, a fast, hard, cold stream, and a shallow, soft drainage lake.
Aurora Lake	Plum Lake, T41N R8E, Sec. 18&19, in NHAL	250	The lake is a shallow, soft, drainage type with many aquatic plants and has a wilderness aspect. A state-threatened bird nests on the tract.
Goodyear Springs - East	Land O' Lakes, T42N R8E, Sec. 14, pt. E½, in NHAL	180	Contains a spring and northern sedge meadow complex and one of the few unaltered spring ponds left in Vilas County.
Day Lake	Boulder Junction, T41N R6E, Sec. 1&2, in NHAL	117	Lake is an exceptionally oligotrophic lake, which contains a specialized flora of rosette-forming plants. This exceptionally scenic lake is designated a Wild Lake.
Pine-Oak Grove*			

*No information available

Source: WDNR, State Natural Areas by County, last revised April 30, 1999

Most of the areas of critical environmental sensitivity within Vilas County are already managed/regulated at the federal, state, and/or county level, such as wetlands, floodplains, shoreland buffer zones, and publicly-owned scientific and natural areas.

In addition, the WDNR maintains a listing of all rare, threatened, and endangered species and natural communities within the state.

2.4 Public Ownership

Ownership is an important factor to consider related to comprehensive planning. Different levels of government throughout the county own various lands. See the Ownership Map in Chapter 7.

Federal Ownership

Lands in the county owned by the federal government total approximately 53,969.1 acres (8.3% of land in county), and are primarily part of the Nicolet National Forest, but include some Chequamegon National Forest lands. The majority of this acreage is located in the Town of Phelps where the Nicolet National Forest comprises 37,578.1 acres, or 54.2% of the town. The remaining federally-owned lands are located in Washington and Lac du Flambeau. Relatively small amounts occur in the Towns of Conover and Lincoln and in the City of Eagle River.

The Nicolet National Forest (NNF) occupies approximately 47,000 acres or 7% of the county's total area. The NNF covers over 661,000 acres in Vilas, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Oconto, and Oneida counties in Wisconsin. Historically, this area, which is now forest land, was subject to destructive logging practices and was then sold to immigrants for farms and homesteads. Farming was not viable in the area's soils which are better suited to trees, and as a result most farms were abandoned. Therefore, the forest was established in 1933 by presidential proclamation to reestablish the area's original tree-covered vegetation. Today, public access is allowed within the forest for enjoyment of its abundant natural resources and beauty. The NNF not only provides abundant recreational opportunities, but is also a working forest, which provides for timber production.⁵

⁵ USDA Forest Service, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, at www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service is currently revising the forest plans of the Chequamegon - Nicolet National Forests. The two forests were merged in 1993 to be managed as one administrative unit, though each has retained its individual identity. The most current forest plans were completed in 1986, and were designed to last 10-15 years. Revision of the plans, including the consolidation into one forest plan, officially began in 1996. It was determined by the Forest Service through monitoring, evaluation, and public comment that there was a need to make changes to the 1986 plans. Major revision topics which will be addressed in the revised plan include 1) access and recreational opportunities, 2) biological diversity, 3) special land allocation, and 4) timber production. Public involvement in the forest planning process is encouraged, and interested persons should contact the Nicolet National Forest office in Rhinelander or the Eagle River Ranger District. It would be advantageous for county residents to participate in the forest plan revision process to ensure local needs and ideas are being considered with regard to the NNF.

Land acquisition for inclusion in the NNF is done on a "willing seller" basis. However, the Forest Service has identified types of land they would be interested in acquiring, which include land with threatened and/or endangered species present, land within the "forest block" which can therefore be easily and efficiently managed, land adjacent to lakeshores, and in general any lands which warrant protection. The Forest Service also entertains land exchanges, however the agency will not sell land. The acquisition of land by the Forest Service is variable. For example, between 1987 and 1996, the Forest Service acquired a total of 331 acres for inclusion in the Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forest.⁶

There is a little over 6,000 acres of Chequamegon National Forest (CNF) land located in the Town of Lac du Flambeau which comprises approximately 1% of the county's total area. The same discussion provided under the NNF applies to the CNF, as both are managed as one forest unit.

State of Wisconsin Ownership

Within the county, the state of Wisconsin owns the majority of the publicly-owned land with approximately 149,733.6 acres (23% of land in county), the majority of which is included in the Northern Highland - American

⁶ USDA Forest Service, Chequamegon-Nicolet Forest, Foth & Van Dyke phone conversation with supervisor's office, Rhinelander, Wisconsin, October 1999.

Legion State Forest (NHAL). Every municipality in the county has some state forest land within its boundaries, except for the City of Eagle River. There are 39,511 acres of state forest land in the Town of Boulder Junction, approximately 34,592 in the Town of Plum Lake, and roughly 27,000 in the Town of Arbor Vitae, while in some other towns the state forest only comprises a few hundred acres. This forest is the largest and most-visited state property in Wisconsin, and occupies a total of over 220,000 acres in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties. The NHAL state forest not only provides abundant recreational opportunities, but is also a working forest which provides for timber management and production. The NHAL state forest is managed using sustainable forestry practices to provide a combination of recreational opportunities, timber production, aesthetics, watershed protection, and habitat for a variety of plant and animal species. Ultimately, the management goal is to benefit the people of Wisconsin, both current and future generations.⁷ The acquisition of property for inclusion in the NHAL state forest is based on “willing sellers”.

The master plan for the management of the NHAL property is currently being revised. Public involvement in the forest planning process is encouraged, and interested persons should contact the WDNR NHAL headquarters in Woodruff for additional details. It would be advantageous for county residents to participate in the Forest Plan Revision process to ensure the county’s needs and ideas are being considered with regard to the NHAL, as it comprises a significant portion of the county.

Vilas County Ownership

Vilas County owns 39,502.5 acres, most of which is part of the Vilas County Forest (VCF), comprising 6.1% of the county’s total area. Approximately 60% of the county-owned land is located in the Town of Conover, 19% in the Town of Cloverland, and 14% in the Town of Plum Lake. The remaining 7% is distributed in Land O’ Lakes, Lincoln, with small portions in the Towns of Lac du Flambeau and Washington. The VCF provides abundant recreational opportunities, and is also a working forest which provides for timber production. The current management plan for the VCF was written in 1995, and will be reviewed and discussed at public hearings in the year 2005, as state law requires counties to review management plans every 10 years. On average, approximately 600 acres of VCF land is logged each year which brings approximately \$200,000-\$350,000 into the county

⁷ Northern Highlands American Legion State Forest Land Acquisition Agent, phone conversation with Foth & Van Dyke, October 1999.

annually.⁸ Ten percent of the profits received are returned to the towns where county forest land is located to make up for the loss of property taxes.

In terms of acquisition of property for inclusion in the Vilas County Forest, the plan is to obtain lands as they become available. The desire is to obtain those properties which would result in the "filling in" of the existing forest boundary block which is currently rather fragmented. In recent years the County has been relatively unsuccessful in acquiring property due to continually rising land prices, and the county cannot compete with the private market at these prices. The County will trade isolated lands for in-fill parcels.

The significant amount of land in public ownership (federal, state, and county) in the county provides many benefits including the following:

Long-term preservation of the county's "northwoods" character. In a time of rapid development of private land within the county, lands in public ownership remain "untouched", providing the basis for the county's northwoods appeal which is sought by tourists and recreational enthusiasts.

Provides the basis for recreational and aesthetic opportunities, the driving force behind the county's tourism-focused economy.

Requires minimal services from local units of government, therefore less cost. Contrary to popular belief, publicly-owned land does not burden the tax base of local municipalities. In fact, the higher assessments and property taxes generated by development are often offset by the increased services that must be provided, whereas minimal services are required by local government to support public lands. In addition, the recreationalists/tourists who utilize public lands will bring money to the local economy during their stay in the area.

Provides managed commercial timber production which is an integral part of the regional and national economy for consumer goods.

⁸ Krembs, Dorothy, "County Forest Management Practice Has Eye Toward Global Perspective," The Lakeland Times, January 19, 1999., p. 3,8.

Tribal Ownership

Tribal lands comprise approximately 4.5% of the county's total acreage. Most are located in the Town of Lac du Flambeau which comprise the Lac du Flambeau Indian Reservation. A small amount of tribal land in the Town of Phelps has been acquired as part of the Lac Vienx Desert Reservation.

Town Ownership

Town-owned lands comprise less than 1% of the county's total acreage. Primarily, town-owned land is used for town facilities such as administration buildings, community centers, garages/maintenance buildings, fire stations, etc. Several towns such as Land O' Lakes, Presque Isle, and Washington own forest land for the purpose of commercial timber production.

Private Ownership

It is important to identify how the remaining woodlands in the county are (or are not) managed and the value private landowners place on maintaining their wooded property.

In 1999, over 25,600 acres of woodlands were enrolled in the various WDNR forest management programs such as the Managed Forest Law, Forest Tax Law, and Woodland Tax Law programs, totaling approximately 4% of the county's total acreage. These programs provide tax relief to landowners of enrolled property in return for the landowner entering into a contract to manage the land as forest land for a specified length of time. Property enrolled in these programs will likely remain under management through the planning period and possibly beyond, as many of the contract agreements associated with these programs are 25 years or longer in length. The towns with the largest amount of land enrolled in such programs include Land O' Lakes (6,765.4 acres), Lac du Flambeau (4,490 acres), and Presque Isle (2,272 acres). Overall, each town in the county has some acreage enrolled in one or more of these programs.

Over 15,500 acres (2.4% of the county's total acreage) are owned by private entities for industrial purposes, such as for paper making and lumber. The major industrial forest owners include Consolidated Papers, Four States Timber Venture Industrial Investors, and Pukall Lumber Company, along with some others. Corporate ownership of these lands has been changing rapidly in recent years through acquisitions and

mergers. The majority of the industrial forest property is located within the Town of Winchester where over 9,000 acres is managed for industrial use, comprising more than 25% of the town's acreage. In addition, the Towns of Land O' Lakes and Lac du Flambeau also contain rather large amounts of forest land which is currently owned and managed for industrial purposes, totaling approximately 2,000 acres in each town. Most other municipalities in the county also have forestland which is managed for industrial use within their boundaries, however the amount is not very significant. The importance of identifying lands which are currently owned for industrial purposes is that major land use impacts could occur if the large, contiguous tracts of industrial forest lands would ever be sold, divided, and/or used for private purposes other than timber production. Some sale of blocks of industrial forestland is occurring now. Such private uses may significantly change the landscape and impact the county's rural character in these areas. However, a large amount of the industrial forest land is also enrolled in the WDNR's forest management program(s), and therefore is contractually obligated to remain forested for some time. In essence, the very large tracts of industrial forest add to the county's rural, wooded, northwoods character and appeal, and generally provide large areas for public hunting and other outdoor recreational activities.

Conservation/educational organizations own over 3,500 acres in the county comprising approximately 0.6% of the county's total area. These organizations are primarily established with the intent of managing and maintaining woodlands and other natural features for the purpose of providing recreational, educational, or aesthetic opportunities, and for the protection/preservation of natural resources. School district property is also included in this section. Approximately 50% of conservation and educational organizational ownership is located in the Town of Winchester. Such ownership includes the Papoose Creek Hunting Club, which comprises approximately 1,120 acres. Conservation/educational organization property within the county primarily includes sportsman/hunting clubs, youth camps, and conservation association ownership.

The remaining acreage, which comprises approximately 35% of land in the county, is not enrolled in any type of formalized management program. This land typically includes existing intensive development (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial). These private uses may have the largest impact on the county's rural character and quality of natural resources if not properly planned for.

In recent years, the demand for private forest land has increased dramatically. The reason for this can be primarily attributed to the decreasing available supply of waterfront property. As the amount of available waterfront property in the county declines, the demand for forest land has been increasing. Private woodland management will continue to have significant impact in Vilas County. Private landowners should be encouraged to participate in the Managed Forest Law program, or engage in some other form of formalized forest management practices such as the tree farm programs sponsored by the paper companies, to ensure the preservation and health of the county's woodland resources and wildlife habitat.

2.5 Goals, Objectives & Policies

Goal 1:

Preserve, protect, and enhance the ecological quality, function, and other values of the county's land and water resources.

Objectives:

1. Support integration and implementation of the Vilas County Land and Water Resource Management Plan and future updates adopted by Vilas County.
2. Discourage development within environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, lowlands, steep slopes, and contiguous forest or farmland areas.
3. Coordinate lakeshore development with Vilas County's lakes classification system, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, and the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Maintain natural buffers and building setbacks between land uses and lake, stream, creek, river, and wetland areas.
5. Conserve productive forest and farmland.
6. Preserve the county's most important and sensitive natural resources and areas.

7. Protect and enhance surface water, ground water, and shoreline quality.
8. Encourage and explore measures to decrease point and non-point source pollution and run-off.
9. Preserve, protect, and promote historical features, buildings, and sites in Vilas County.
10. Preserve the county's scenic beauty, history and heritage, and archeological resources.
11. Work with local governments to protect natural and cultural resources.

Goal 2:

Preserve forest integrity throughout Vilas County.

Objectives:

1. Support integration and implementation of the Vilas County Forest Comprehensive 10 Year Plan and future updates adopted by Vilas County.
2. Encourage land trades or acquisitions that maintain blocks of contiguous public forest lands and minimize isolated residential and other development.
3. Continually explore options for more effective incentives, voluntary measures, and other land use practices for retaining the county's large, contiguous forestry tracts.
4. Encourage landowner and community support for development of forest management plans and voluntary enrollment in forest conservation programs.
5. Recognize the right to practice forestry as critical for public and private land stewardship.
6. Examine population density and road development standards for consistency with forestry management practices.

7. Work cooperatively with the WDNR and other forestry agencies and organizations in sponsoring workshops and educational materials regarding sound forest management practices and programs.
8. Conserve forest lands for sustaining the long-term commercial production of timber products and other values of forest ecosystems.

Goal 3:

Protect the ability of existing areas of farmland to remain in agricultural use.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the integrity and viability of existing agricultural areas so that farming practices can occur without conflict with non-agricultural uses.
2. Encourage retaining large, contiguous, farmland tracts.
3. Implement farmland preservation and other programs as requested by agricultural property owners.

Goal 4:

Protect the ability of existing areas of forestry and farmland to remain in those uses.

Objectives:

1. Maintain the integrity and viability of existing forestry and agricultural areas so that those practices can occur without conflict with other uses.
2. Encourage retaining large, contiguous, forestry and farmland tracts.

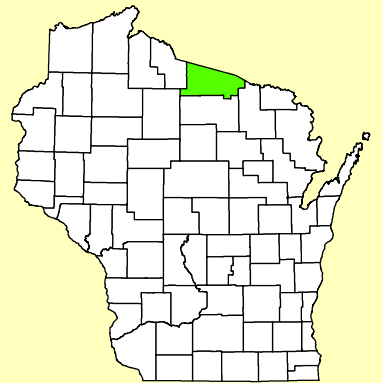
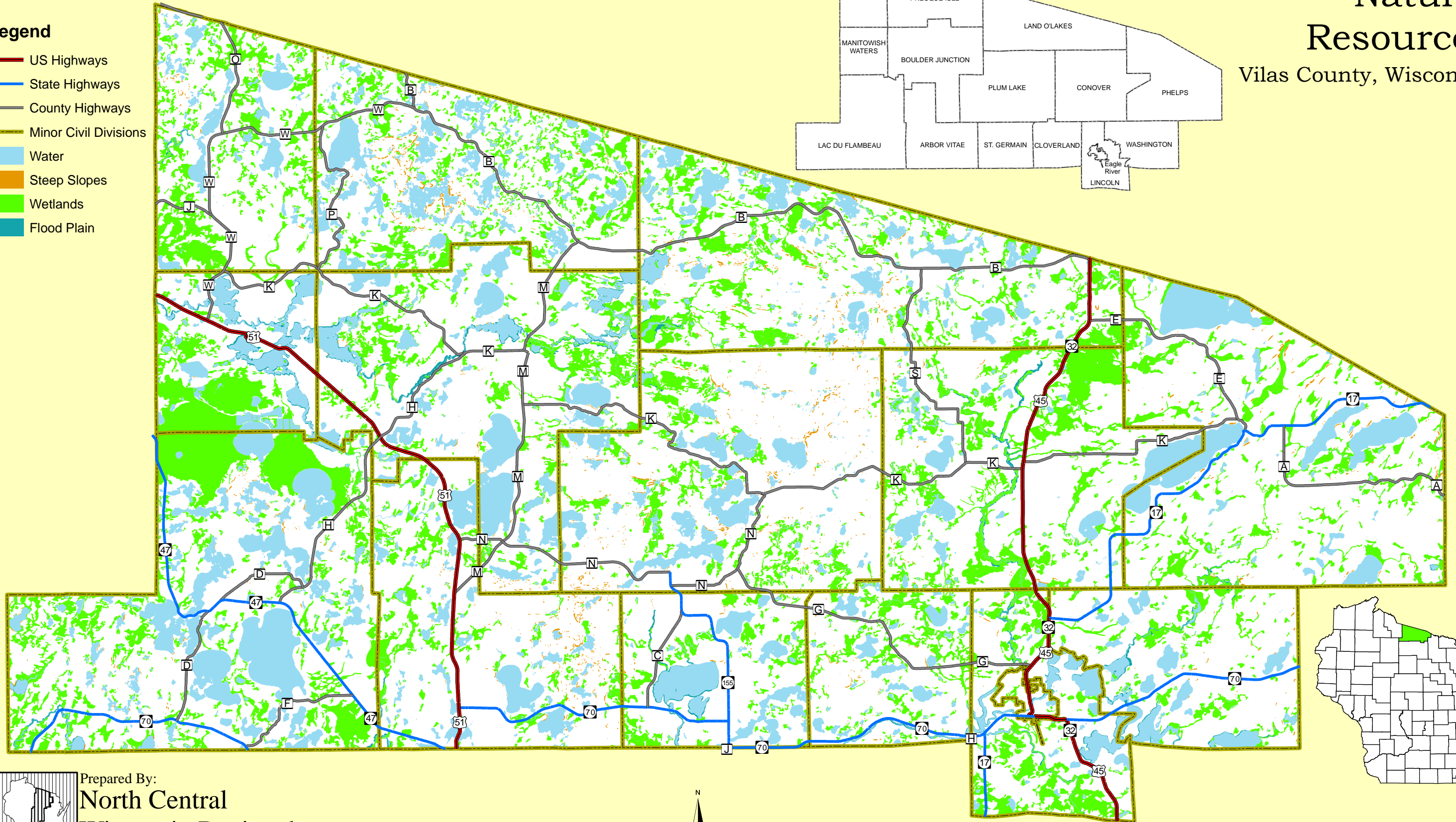
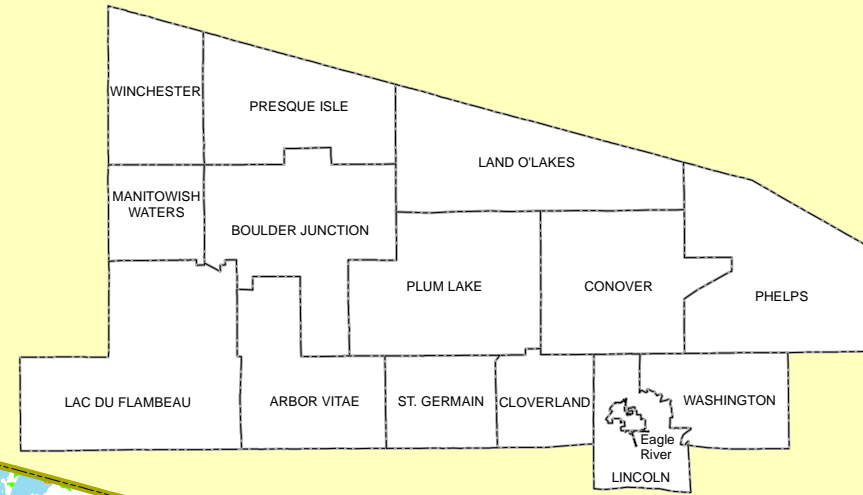
See the policies as identified in the County's Comprehensive Forest Plan, Land & Water Resource Management Plan, and Farmland Preservation Plan.

Natural Resources

Vilas County, Wisconsin

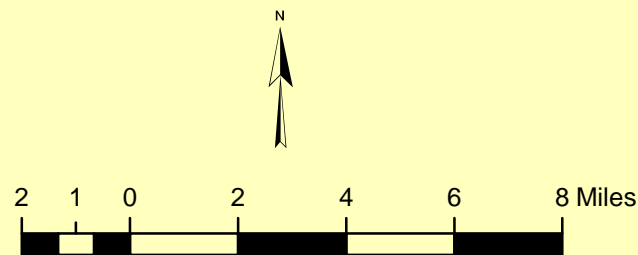
Legend

-  US Highways
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water
-  Steep Slopes
-  Wetlands
-  Flood Plain



Prepared By:
**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas Co, FEMA, NRCS
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

Chapter 3: Housing

Chapter 3: Housing

3.1 Background

This is the third of nine chapters that comprise the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. The housing characteristics of Vilas County are important elements of the land use planning process. The physical location of housing determines the demand and cost of many public services and facilities. In addition, housing characteristics are related to the social, aesthetic, and economic conditions of the community.

This section will provide the county with information about the current housing stock, as well as identify significant changes that have occurred over time. Information is presented about the occupancy/vacancy characteristics, housing values, trends in seasonal/recreational housing, and the equalized valuation of Vilas County.

3.2 County Resources

The county does not deal directly with housing. There is no formal committee or county department that has responsibility in this area. This is an area that may be addressed in the future updates of this plan.

3.3 Inventory

A. General Housing Characteristics

Table 3-1 provides general information about the housing supply for Vilas County from 1990 to 2000, including a breakdown of units by year-round and seasonal, and a comparison of persons per household. Year-round units include all occupied units and vacant year-round units (for rent, for sale, rented or sold but not yet occupied). Seasonal units are those units, which are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.

Table 3-1: Housing Supply Vilas County 1990-2000

Housing	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	# Change 90-00	% Change 90-00
Total Units	20,225	100.0 %	22,397	100.0 %	2,172	10.7%
Year Round Units	7,909	39.1%	9,810	43.8%	1,901	24.0%
Occupied Units	7,294	36.1%	9,066	40.5%	1,772	24.3%
Owner Occupied	5,779	28.6%	7,416	33.1%	1,637	28.3%
Renter Occupied	1,515	7.5%	1,650	7.4%	135	8.9%
Vacant Year Round Units*	615	3.0%	744	3.3%	129	21.0%
Seasonal/Recreational Units	12,316	60.9%	12,587	56.2%	271	2.2%
Persons per Household	2.40	N/A	2.29	N/A	-0.11	-4.6%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

Vilas County experienced an 11 percent increase in housing units between 1990 and 2000, including increases in the number of both year-round and seasonal units.

The majority of housing units in Vilas County are for seasonal/recreational use, comprising over 60% of the county's housing stock. However, between 1990 and 2000, the number of year-round units increased significantly more as a percentage of total units than did seasonal/recreational units. This can likely be attributed to the conversion of seasonal housing to permanent, year-round residences.

The average household size in Vilas County declined from 2.40 in 1990 to 2.29 in 2000. The declining household size is a trend experienced nationwide which is expected to continue. The trend implies more housing units occupied by fewer people, resulting in increased land use consumption.

Based on the 1990 and 2000 census data, an average of 217 housing units per year were added within the county during this 10-year period.

B. Seasonal and Recreational Housing Trend

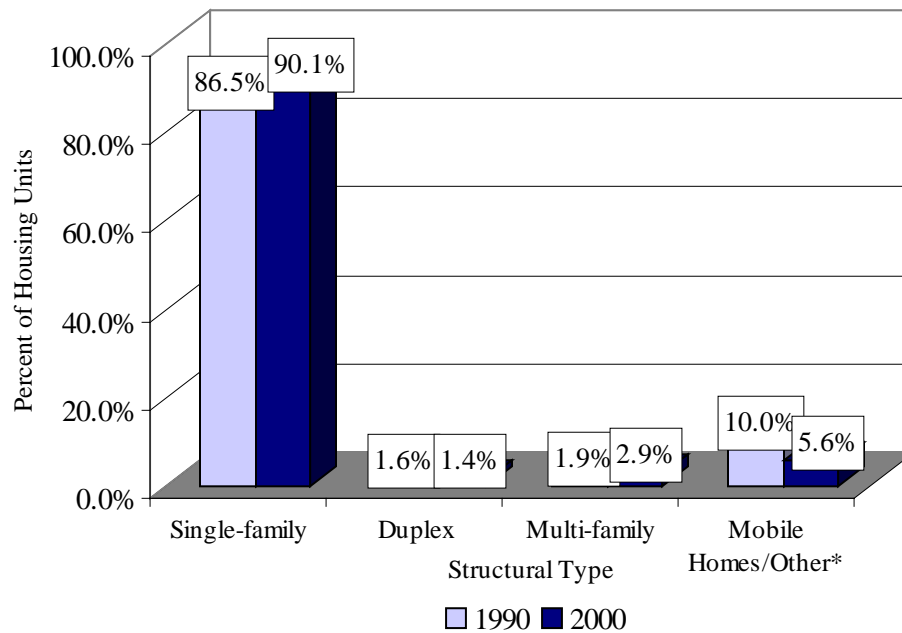
Vilas County offers both residents and visitors year-round recreational opportunities with its abundance of natural resources which define its "northwoods character". The attractiveness of this asset is demonstrated by the dominance of seasonal/recreational housing units in the county.

As indicated in the figure, the percentage of housing units in Vilas County for seasonal/recreational use (nearly 60%) is extremely significant when compared to that throughout the state where such units comprise only about 6% of the state's total housing stock.

C. Structural Type

A comparison of the structural type of housing units in Vilas County in 1990 and 2000 is illustrated in Figure 3-1. The majority of the county's housing stock is single-family units, which comprised 86.5% of the county's total housing units in 1990 and over 90% in 2000. This is indicative of the conversion of seasonal units to year-round units, resort conversions to single family, and increased single family unit development.

Figure 3-1: Structural Type Vilas County 1990 and 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing, 1990 and 2000.

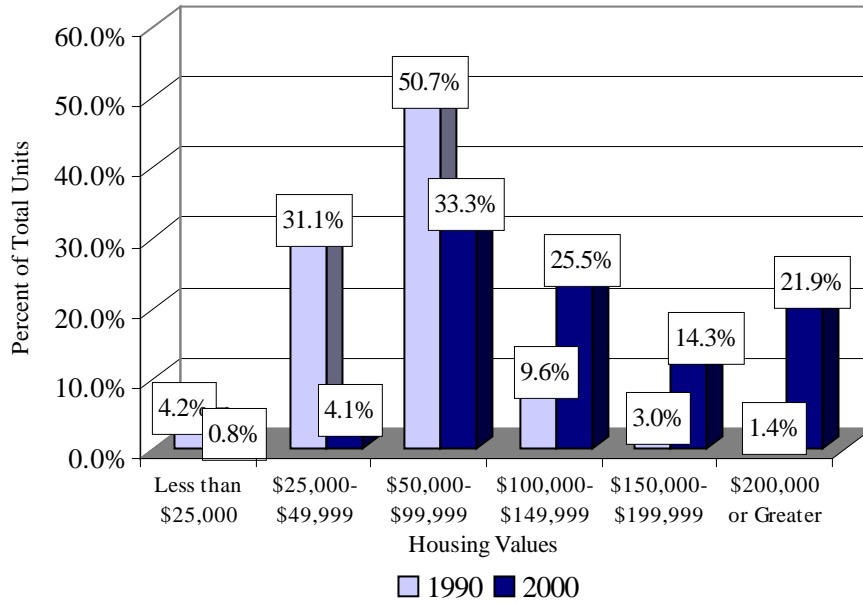
Mobile homes/Other housing units refers to mobile homes, trailers, and living quarters that are occupied, or could be occupied, which do not fall into any of the other categories. Examples include houseboats, railroad cars, campers, vans, etc.

D. Comparative Housing Value

A comparison of housing stock values in Vilas County for 1990 and 2000 is presented in Figure 3-2, while Figure 3-3 identifies the median housing value of all municipalities in Vilas County in 2000. The housing values are based on specified owner-occupied units only.

The majority of owner occupied housing units, slightly over 30%, were valued at \$50,000-\$99,999 in 2000.

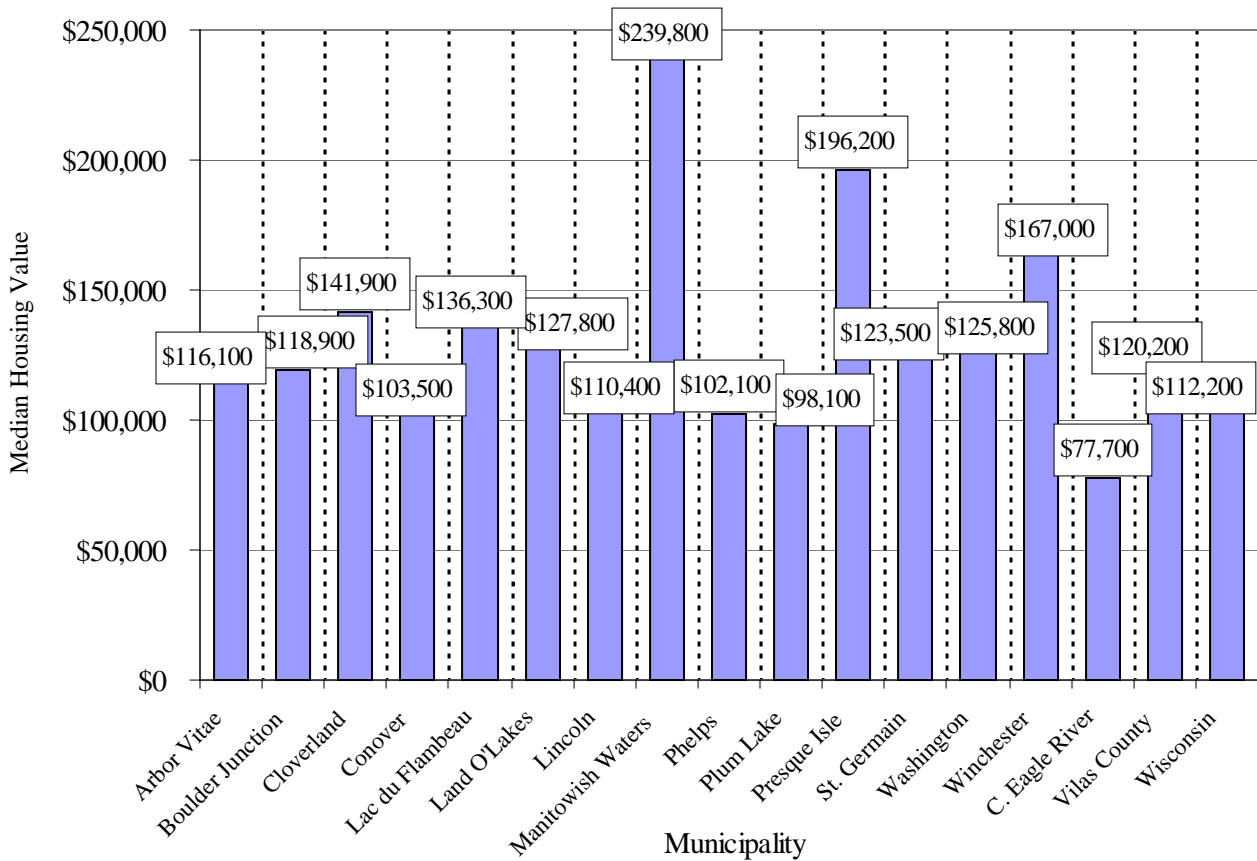
Figure 3-2: Vilas County Housing Values 1990 - 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing 1990, 2000.

Housing values over \$100,000 grew to 61.7% of the county total in 2000, a significant increase over 1990. The trend implies significant increases in housing values will continue as new housing starts are of much higher value, and it mirrors the increased land and shoreland costs over the decade.

Figure 3-3: Comparative Median Housing Values Vilas County 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

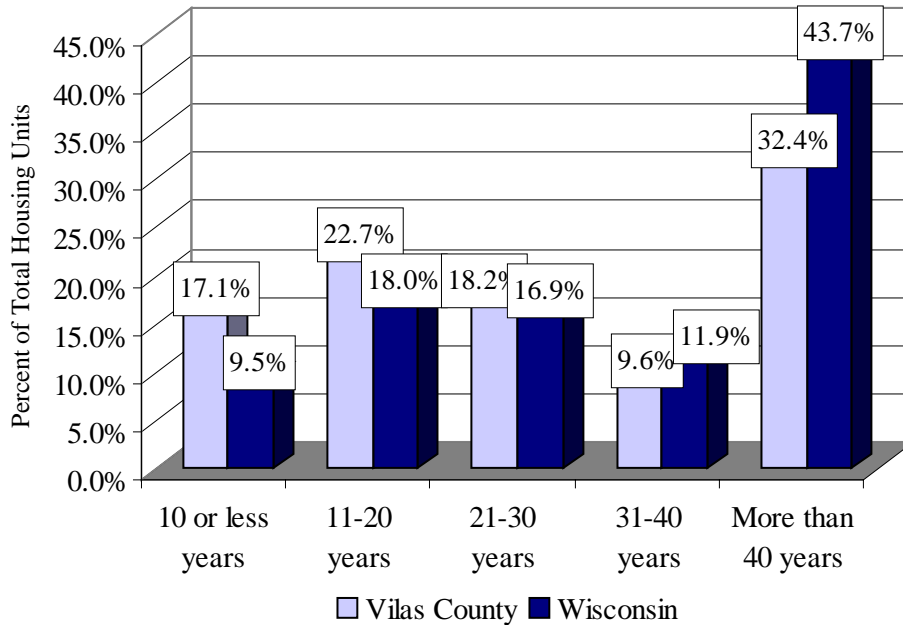
Median housing values in the county overall were higher than the statewide median in 2000, at \$120,200 and \$112,200, respectively.

Housing units in the Town of Manitowish Waters had the highest median value of all municipalities within the county, having a median value of \$239,800, followed by Presque Isle at \$196,200. This may be attributed to the fact that Manitowish Waters has the greatest amount of shoreline of all towns in the county where waterfront development tends to be quite expensive. The City of Eagle River's median housing value was the lowest of municipalities in the county at \$77,700, followed by the Town of Plum Lake at \$98,100.

E. Age of Housing Units

Figure 3-4 presents the age of the housing stock in Vilas County. The data is presented in terms of the year the housing structures were built.

Figure 3-4: Age of Housing Units Vilas County and Selected Areas 2000



Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau.

Approximately 32% of the housing units in Vilas County were constructed more than 40 years ago as compared to nearly 44% for the State of Wisconsin.

F. Building Permit Data

An additional measure that assists in the illustration of the growth in residential housing for Vilas County is building permit activity. Table 3-2 displays the building permit activity for new residential and commercial units in Vilas County from 1980 through 2008 as recorded by the Vilas County Zoning Department Annual Reports.

**Table 3-2: New Residential and Commercial Building Permit Activity
Vilas County 1980-2008.**

Year	Single Family Permits	Multi-Family Permits	Mobile Home Permits	Total Residential Permits	Commercial Permits
1980	234	1	27	262	17
1981	180	2	21	203	18
1982	163	1	8	172	17
1983	212	2	22	236	23
1984	171	3	14	188	26
1985	162	1	18	181	27
1986	184	1	21	206	31
1987	199	1	22	222	25
1988	204	3	23	230	37
1989	205	1	22	228	30
1990	231	0	31	262	25
1991	256	2	27	285	27
1992	316	1	35	352	29
1993	335	2	37	374	34
1994	384	2	34	420	38
1995	378	12	27	417	36
1996	372	2	26	400	28
1997	288	7	13	308	52
1998	358	6	19	383	33
1999	383	14	19	416	45
2000	357	26	16	399	36
2001	358	16	21	395	16
2002	318	5	21	344	12
2003	360	4	9	373	20
2004	428	8	16	452	24
2005	257	8	14	279	27
2006	243	8	12	263	23
2007	234	4	17	255	19
2008	160	1	8	169	7
Total Permits	7,930	144	600	8,674	782
Average	265	4	23	293	26

Source: Vilas County Zoning Office Annual Reports, 1990 – 2008.

Over 91 percent of the total residential permits issued were for single-family permits, followed by Mobile Home permits with 7 percent, and multi-family with less than 2 percent.

- In the 1980s (1980 to 1989), the county approved about 1,900 single-family permits, or about 191 per year for the decade.
- In the 1990s (1990 to 1999), the county approved about 3,301 single-family permits, or about 330 per year for the decade.
- In the 2000s (2000 to 2008), the county approved about 2,700 single-family permits or about 301 each year for the decade.

Overall, the county experienced a significant increase in the number of building permits for single-family permits with the number of building permits granted per year averaging 273 over the last 29 years. Adding both multi-family and mobile home permits over the period; the county averaged about 299 residential permits per year. By contrast, commercial permits averaged about 2.5 permits per year.

3.4 Goal & Objectives

Goal 1:

Provide opportunities for a broad range of housing choices that will meet the needs of all residents while maintaining the predominantly rural forested and lakeshore residential character of Vilas County.

Objectives:

1. Provide for a wide choice of housing types serving different age levels, income, and need.
2. Support local, regional and state efforts and programs to provide housing development or rehabilitation in Vilas County for individuals of low to moderate income.
3. Guide housing development to areas capable of serving it, such as lands served by existing roads, public utilities, parks or other services.

4. Encourage high quality construction, enforcement, and maintenance standards for old and new housing.
5. Utilize various programs and concepts that can encourage creative ways to preserve rural character and natural resources and incorporate the environment into development, including PUDs.
6. Encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of historically significant homes that will encourage their existence.
7. Encourage subdivision designs and locations of residential development that protect residential areas from incompatible land uses.
8. Support redevelopment efforts, which serve to enhance community values; enhance natural resources and recreation; and minimize the costs of providing services.
9. Encourage conservation subdivisions as development options that provide for protection of natural resources and open space while promoting clustered residential development that minimizes the costs of providing services.

The county policy is to support existing efforts related to housing.

Chapter 4: Utilities & Community Facilities

Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities

4.1 Background

The quality and capability of community facilities and services within Vilas County are important and attractive components of the county and are often used as a measure of the quality of life within the community. Community services often require capital-intensive investment supported by local tax bases or user fees. Community facilities generally include sanitary sewer and water systems, gas and electric services, public buildings, land, and administration that serves the population. Thus, the level of service is generally balanced with the demand for service and the user's ability or interest in paying for the service. Local features such as parks, schools, utilities, and protective services must be considered in relation to the future development they are intended to support, not just the current demand for services. In addition, the location, quality, and capacity of planned improvements can also influence the location and pace of development.

In order to identify the future needs of Vilas County, an inventory of the existing community facilities and services was conducted to assess need. The information gathered through this inventory is presented in this portion of the plan. The locations of various public facilities are displayed on the Community Facilities Map.

4.2 County Resources

The county does not own or operate many of the utilities or community facilities mentioned above. However, the county does provide administrative services, law enforcement and waste management. There are several standing county level committees that deal with these issues, including Law Enforcement & Emergency Management, Library, and Solid Waste & Mining. The County also maintains a Health Department that serves the residents of the county.

4.3 Administrative Facilities and Services

Vilas County's administrative facilities are located at the Vilas County Courthouse, located at 330 Court Street in Eagle River. The courthouse was constructed in 1936 and was expanded with the Courthouse Annex in 1985.

The Courthouse is used for County business and administration, County Board meetings, and the meetings of the County's various committees.

The Courthouse houses all of the County's departments, with the exception of the Forestry and Highway Departments. The Coroner's office is located at 29 Forest Drive in Manitowish Waters; the Forestry and Highway Departments are located at 1881 Hwy 45 N in Eagle River.

The courthouse has been under extensive study for over the years as the public demands for services and the resulting growth in public administration has outgrown the capacity of the existing structure. The Vilas County Board of Supervisors approved a remodeling and renovation project in 2002 that remodeled and upgraded the existing structure for an estimated 10-15 year space solution while upgrading the HVAC, electrical, plumbing, windows, telecommunications, and juvenile detention facility. The remodeling project addressed the space requirement for County staff and services per the anticipated growth projections.

Each of the County's 15 municipalities (14 Towns and one City) also has its own local government administrative facilities.

4.4 Law Enforcement

Law enforcement in Vilas County is provided in majority by the Vilas County Sheriffs Department, and in part by the City of Eagle River Police Department, and the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Police. Coordination and shared service agreements are in place between Vilas County and the other two departments.

Vilas County Sheriffs Department

Police protection for Vilas County is provided by the Vilas County Sheriffs Department which is located at 330 Court Street, in the City of Eagle River. In 1999, the department moved to the Justice Center that houses the jail and Huber facility.

In 1997 the sheriffs department instituted "Enhanced 911" or E-911 throughout the county. Upon receiving a call, E-911 allows the dispatcher to see the address to which the phone is billed, the township of the call, as well as the appropriate link for fire and first responder services for the call. Therefore, the Vilas County Sheriffs Department is able to adequately serve even its most remote, rural communities.

In addition, the Sheriffs Department has recently instituted a deputy vehicle dispatch program where deputies take their Sheriffs Department vehicle to their place of residence to increase police presence and reduce potential response delays. Residency requirements throughout the county have also been implemented to address the increased demands for service.

Lac du Flambeau Tribe Law Enforcement Agreement

Vilas County annually enters into agreement with the Lac du Flambeau Band of Chippewa Indians for shared law enforcement. The Lac du Flambeau reservation is located in part in Vilas County. The Tribe has its own tribal police department. Vilas County and the Lac du Flambeau Tribe have successfully worked together to address tribal enforcement, and that relationship should continue throughout the planning period. According to County officials, in order to enhance the working relationship between the Vilas County Sheriffs Department and the Lac du Flambeau Tribal Police Department, additional manpower and funding are necessary. It is recommended that the cost-share relationship continue to be evaluated annually and the opportunity for grant funding continue to be pursued by all means possible to offset costs.

City of Eagle River Police Department

Police protection services for the City of Eagle River are provided by the Eagle River Police. The Department is located at 525 E. Maple Street, in the City of Eagle River. Dispatching for the department is provided by the Vilas County Sheriff's Department. The department provides mutual aid to, and receives mutual aid from, the County Sheriffs Department. The department responds outside the city at the request of the Sheriffs Department to handle calls or provide backup for deputies.

The implications of growth and the resulting impacts affect services. The relationship between the County and City is good and should be continued. Current conditions, such as the boundary configuration of the City of Eagle River and the Town of Lincoln, existing shared service arrangements, and the coordinated intergovernmental cooperation developed through planning and growth management projects, suggests that future sharing of police services between the City and the Town is a possibility.

The sheriffs department indicated the increased seasonal population is likely an attributable cause to the increase in complaints/reports, as there is a direct relationship between population increases and the resultant increase in police services necessary to adequately administer law, safety, and protection.

4.5 Fire, Rescue, and Medical Facilities

Vilas County does not provide fire, rescue, or EMS services or facilities. All provisions of service are either provided by the municipal volunteer fire departments or by medical facilities in the area that provide ambulance and emergency care. Fire protection and rescue services and facilities for Vilas County are provided by 12 separate fire and EMS departments which are located throughout the county. Vilas County's rescue/first responder services are the same departments that provide fire protection services. The City of Eagle River and Towns of Lincoln, Cloverland, and Washington are members of the Eagle River Joint Municipal Fire Commission. Each municipality pays a proportionate fair share based upon the equalized assessed value on real estate to support department operations. All 12 departments rely on volunteers to provide service.

All fire departments within the county operate with mutual service agreements, including northern Oneida County agreements with the Towns of Three Lakes, Sugar Camp, Hiles, and Alvin fire departments.

The adequacy of the fire protection within Vilas County can be evaluated by the Insurance Service Office (ISO) by the Grading Schedule for Municipal Fire Protection. This grading system provides a guideline which many municipalities follow when planning for improvements in their existing fire protection services. The grading schedule is based upon several factors including: fire department equipment, alarm systems, water supply system, fire prevention programs, building construction, and distance of potential hazard areas from a fire station. The rating is on a scale of one to ten, with one representing the best protection and ten representing the most unprotected community.

Most county residents can access medical services from hospitals in Eagle River and Phelps within the county, and Minoqua/Woodruff and Rhinelander in Oneida County. Eagle River Memorial Hospital is a critical access care hospital. The medical and EMS facilities appear adequate to provide medical services over the 20-year planning period. However, Vilas County has a high median age and retirement age demographic. As the older population continues to increase and age, demand for emergency services, assisted living, and nursing facilities will increase. Vilas County should anticipate the increased demand, in conjunction and cooperation with the private sector, to address the anticipated service demands and the employees/volunteers to staff them.

4.6 Solid Waste Management/Recycling

Waste collection and recycling services for county residents are primarily provided by private collection services through individual contracts throughout the county. With the exception of Land O' Lakes, all waste is transported to the Vilas County Landfill located on County Highway G in Cloverland. The landfill also allows individuals to drop-off waste.

The City of Eagle River and all Towns except Land O' Lakes are members of the Vilas County Landfill Venture Group, an organization commissioned to construct and operate the Vilas County Landfill. Each participating Vilas County municipality has a commissioner, or representative, in the Venture Group. An elected body manages the operations. The landfill on CTH G opened in 1989 and was designed with a 20-year life span. A land purchase and operational changes has extended the life for another 5 years.

In addition to the active landfill located on CTH G there are 10 closed (inactive) landfills located throughout the county within the communities of: Arbor Vitae (2 closed sites), Boulder Junction, Cloverland, Conover, Lincoln, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, St. Germain, and Winchester.

Waste drop off and recycling facilities are scattered throughout the county, including locations in: Arbor Vitae, Boulder Junction, Cloverland, Eagle River, Land O' Lakes, Manitowish Waters, Phelps, Presque Isle, St. Germain, and Washington.

Another trend in the solid waste industry is centralizing town recycling facilities and drop-off sites. The combining of facilities can reduce manpower and costs per user, but may not be as accessible to some residents. It is recommended the County review this opportunity during discussions with the Landfill Venture Group during assessment of solid waste planning. Vilas County currently serves as the responsible unit for state recycling grants, and provider of those funds to the communities to support the local recycling programs. The Vilas County Solid Waste Committee, through the Vilas County UW-Extension, provides countywide recycling administration. It is recommended the County continue to support and promote recycling and waste-reduction programs to decrease waste loads going to the landfill.

4.7 Public Sanitary Sewer Service

In Vilas County, wastewater is either treated by public sanitary sewer systems or by private, on-site septic systems. According to the 2000 census, approximately 25 percent of county residents are provided with sanitary sewer, and 75 percent have private on-site waste disposal systems. Most households within the City of Eagle River, approximately 90 percent of households in the Town of Phelps, approximately 25 percent of households in the Town of Land O' Lakes, and 75 percent of households in Lac du Flambeau are served by a public sewer system. The County does not have a sewer service area plan, nor does it anticipate developing one. Coordination of land use relative to sanitary district policy is regulated at the local level, over which Vilas County has little authority. This section provides an overview and recommendations for both the public and private treatment systems in Vilas County.

Nearly all development within Vilas County's unincorporated areas utilizes on-site sewage systems. Most systems in the county include a typical gravity-flow design, where waste flows from the house to a septic tank, and from the tank to an absorption field. The wastewater is partially purified as it moves through the soil. There are several variations of system types that may allow for treatment of wastewater, therefore allowing a parcel to become buildable. Vilas County has a Private Sewage System Ordinance adopted to promote and protect public health, safety, and welfare as well as groundwater and surface water supplies by assuring the proper siting, design, installation, inspection, maintenance, and management of private sewage systems and non-plumbing sanitation systems.

In Wisconsin, the Department of Commerce (COMM) regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of most private on-site treatment systems. In 2000, the state revised the state plumbing code. The code, known as COMM 83, allows both conventional and advanced pre-treatment systems for residential development. The new rules have significant implications for rural land use. Properties that before could not be developed with conventional septic systems can now meet the sanitary codes for a pre-treatment system. This has been less of an issue in Vilas County as the County does not allow holding tanks as a system of choice, which is a positive attribute to the code. This means that soils absorption options must be deemed not viable prior to a holding tank being permitted to occur for a new development. Comm 83 also eliminated the language requiring connection to a public sewer when the service becomes available or is available to serve a property. A revised county ordinance could help locally restore the requirement to connect to public sewer.

Other Potential Public Systems

State law authorizes the creation of additional public sanitary districts and utility districts. Other units of government in Vilas County may wish to form such districts in areas of planned or existing intensive development, or in areas with known septic problems. Candidates for such areas include several of the small, unincorporated “villages” such as St. Germain, Sayner, Winchester, and Presque Isle. In addition, the dense lakeshore development around the county can lead to reduced water quality in the lakes due to effluent infiltration. The lakeshore development areas are also candidates, some in the shorter term, for public system development.

4.8 Public Water and Water Supply

Municipal wells are located in the same communities in Vilas County that have public sewer, including Land O'Lakes, City of Eagle River (two wells), Phelps (two wells), and Lac du Flambeau. All residents rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply.

All households in Vilas County are drawing groundwater for the water supply. Recharge areas must be assessed for contamination potential due to development or non-compatible land use practices.

4.9 Educational Facilities

Educational services for Vilas County are provided by multiple public school districts: including the Northland Pines School District, Lakeland School District, and Phelps School District.

A. Northland Pines School District

The Northland Pines School District serves the central third of the county and includes the following educational facilities:

Northland Pines High School is located at 1800 Pleasure Island Road in the City of Eagle River, and houses grades 9-12. The facility was constructed in 2006. There have not been any additions or upgrades to the facility in recent years. The school's maximum capacity is 600 students.

Northland Pines Middle School I provides educational facilities for grades six through eight. The school is located at 1700 Pleasure Island Road in Eagle River. The school was constructed in 1995 and is 160,000 square feet. This facility also houses elementary students in grades K-5. The maximum capacity of the facility is 1,230 students (including elementary students).

There are three elementary schools in the district, one in Eagle River, one in Land O' Lakes, and another in St. Germain. The facility in Eagle River is included with the Northland Pines Middle School facility.

The Land O'Lakes facility opened in 1997 and provides education to grades K-2. This facility, like the one in St. Germain, is 48,000 square feet, and has a maximum capacity of 381 students.

The St. Germain Elementary School for grades K-5 opened in 1997. The facility is 48,000 square feet and has a maximum capacity of 381 students. The 1998-99 enrollment for the elementary school was approximately 177 students.

B. Lakeland School District

Lakeland Union High School serves the western third of the county. Lakeland Union High School is located at 9573 State Highway 70 in Minocqua (Oneida County). Within this district three elementary schools serve residents. They are the North Lakeland a K-8 facility located in Presque Isle, Lac du Flambeau a K-8 facility located in Lac du Flambeau, and Arbor Vitae also a K-8 facility located in Arbor Vitae.

C. Phelps School District

Phelps School District provides educational facilities for the Town of Phelps. All grades (kindergarten – 12) are all located in one facility, which is located on Old School Road in the Town of Phelps.

The existing school was originally constructed in 1938, with additions completed in 1978 and again in 1996. In 1996, the 1938 and 1978 portions of the facility were remodeled, and an addition was made which included a commons area, kitchen, gymnasium, wood shop, metal shop, drafting room, elevator, stairwells and locker rooms. Upon completion of the additions, the school increased to a current size of 82,884 sq. ft., and can accommodate approximately 300 students. In addition, the school building also serves various functions for the general public. The commons area is utilized by the town for various meetings and programs, the weight room is open for use, open gym is provided for the

public, and people may also walk in the gym in the morning before the school day begins.

D. Private

In addition to the public school facilities provided by the Northland Pines School District, there is one private schools within the area. Christ Lutheran School provides educational instruction for preschool and kindergarten through eighth grades. Christ Lutheran School is located at 111 N. 3rd Street in Eagle River.

Located in the Town of Land O' Lakes is the Conserve School. This school is located on Black Oak Lake on approximately 1,200 acres. The school has recently restructured its four-year academic program to a semester program-boarding program for high school juniors.

E. Technical College

Vilas County is located in the Nicolet Area Technical College district, which has its main campus in Rhinelander. The Nicolet College District includes all of Oneida, Vilas and Forest counties, and roughly the northern half of Lincoln county, the northwestern third of Langlade county, and the southeastern corner of Iron county.

About 1,500 students take credit classes each semester, with nearly 10,000 people a year utilizing some aspects of the college through Business and Community Education, the Nicolet Live! Arts and Speakers Series, Outdoor Adventure Series, Basic Education, Richard J. Brown Library, and the Art Gallery.

4.10 Electrical and Natural Gas Facilities

Excel Energy, Wisconsin Public Service, Wisconsin Electric, and Eagle River Light & Water provide electrical service and natural gas service throughout the county. Eagle River Light and Water services the City of Eagle River and the immediate surrounding area via power purchased through Wisconsin Public Power, Inc. (WPPI). Wisconsin Electric services the northern half of the Town of Washington with electric and all of the Towns of Phelps, Conover, and Land O' Lakes with both electric and natural gas. Wisconsin Electric serves the Towns of Presque Isle, Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, and Winchester with gas facilities only. Wisconsin Public Service serves the remainder of the county with both gas and electric service.

Gas and power utility expansion is typically customer-driven based on user density. Vilas County and the local governments can use this information to assist with land use planning.

4.11 Parks and Open Space

There is a variety of park, recreation, and open space areas located through Vilas County, varying from active recreational facilities to community parks, neighborhood parks, special purpose parks, school recreation areas, and trail systems for various uses. Vilas County adopted the Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2009, and is hereby adopted by reference to this section.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan should continue to be utilized and updated as necessary to be concurrent with recreation development projects (such as the county-wide bicycle trails project) and the associated grant program eligibility requirements.

4.12 Libraries

Vilas County residents are several libraries located throughout the county. They are:

1. Boulder Junction Public Library, 5386 Park Street
2. Koller, Frank B. Memorial Library, Hwy. 51, Manitowish Waters
3. Lac du Flambeau Public Library, 622 Peace Pipe Road
4. Irma Stein Public Library, Community Building, Presque Isle
5. Olson Memorial Library, 203 N. Main, Eagle River
6. Phelps, E. Ellis Library, 4495 Town Hall Rd.
7. Plum Lake Library, 239 Hwy. 155, Sayner
8. Winchester Public Library, Presque Isle
9. Land O'Lakes, County B in Land O' Lakes
10. Arbor Vitae residents are served by the Minoqua Library in Oneida County.

Each of the libraries is funded by and serves the respective communities in which it is located. The County is not directly involved with library operations or funding. The Olsen Memorial Library in Eagle River serves the City of Eagle River and the Towns of Washington, Lincoln, and Cloverland through a joint service and cost share agreement. Each library operates independently but shares programs such as the interlibrary loan program. The Walter E. Olsen Memorial Library in Eagle River is the largest library in terms of volume, space, and

materials. Most of the libraries are relatively small with limited budgets, and rely extensively on volunteer labor to maintain operations. Not all towns in Vilas County have libraries or direct library service.

Based on the density and seasonal nature of population, Vilas County should be adequately served by the existing library structure over the 20-year planning period, assuming the local library system can be financially maintained. It is recommended the library administrators continue to work with their respective communities on reviewing the funding formulas for library services. As the local libraries receive funding through state shared revenues, and with the recent 2009 State budget deficit and anticipated future budget issues, library service providers across the state must monitor funding closely.

4.13 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1:

Promote the public health, safety, and general welfare of Vilas County.

Objectives:

1. Continue to evaluate the service demands and capabilities of County law enforcement in coordination with anticipated growth.
2. Protect the lives, property, and rights of all residents and guests through law enforcement and fire protection.
3. Support local coordination of joint service agreements.

Policies:

1. Ensure that schools, public safety, health care, and other community facilities are of the highest quality without placing undue financial burden on county taxpayers.
2. Assure public health and groundwater quality when permitting and monitoring private on-site wastewater and wells.

Goal 2:

Ensure the provision of reliable, efficient, and well-planned utilities to adequately serve existing and future development.

Objectives:

1. Plan and coordinate the location and use of utilities with other agencies, affected jurisdictions, interested parties, and individuals.
2. Continually monitor the location, condition, and capacity of existing and future public utilities in order to efficiently and cost effectively serve existing users and planned service areas.
3. Encourage appropriate utility development in environmentally sensitive areas.
4. Encourage development of fiber optic cable systems, DSL, wireless web technology, high speed, broadband Internet access, and other high technology development to service throughout the county.
5. Ensure that existing and new technologies are available throughout the county.

Policy:

1. Maintain current information on the availability of various services, including broadband, at the county level.

Goal 3:

Maintain and enhance year round recreational opportunities and facilities within the county while minimizing user conflicts.

Objectives:

1. Support integration and implementation of the Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan and future updates adopted by Vilas County and/or local communities.

2. Follow the recommendations of the County's Outdoor Recreation Plan (ORP) when making park acquisitions and development decisions.
3. Monitor and update the ORP based on recommendations of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan and any other local opportunity to maintain relevance and grant potential.
4. Continually evaluate the need, conditions, and maintenance requirements of public access to waterways.
5. Pursue state and federal funding programs, which can aid in the development and acquisition of parks, trails, scenic areas, open space, and environmentally significant areas.
6. Recognize the need to accommodate all age groups and abilities in recreational pursuits.
7. Work with and support service clubs and organizations related to the maintenance and development of recreational facilities and activities.

Policies:

1. Encourage land acquisition and development strategies for parks, as outlined in the County Outdoor Recreation Plan.
2. Encourage the development of a comprehensive county-wide multi-use trail plan that includes facilities for hikers, bikers, ATVs, snowmobiles, as well as the disabled and elderly, and that ties together attractions and natural and cultural resources throughout the county.

Goal 4:

Promote quality schools and access to educational opportunities for everyone.

Objectives:

1. Increase coordination of planning efforts with local school districts in order to coordinate anticipated future growth.
2. Continue coordination and support of libraries in their efforts to increase community services, education, and social relevance.

3. Support school districts and local community organizations in their sponsorship of child care programs and early developmental programs.
4. Support high quality preschool, K-12, higher education, and continuing adult educational opportunities for Vilas County residents.

Policy:

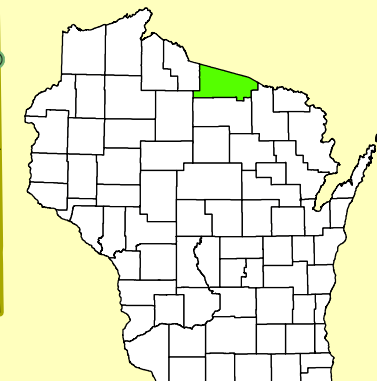
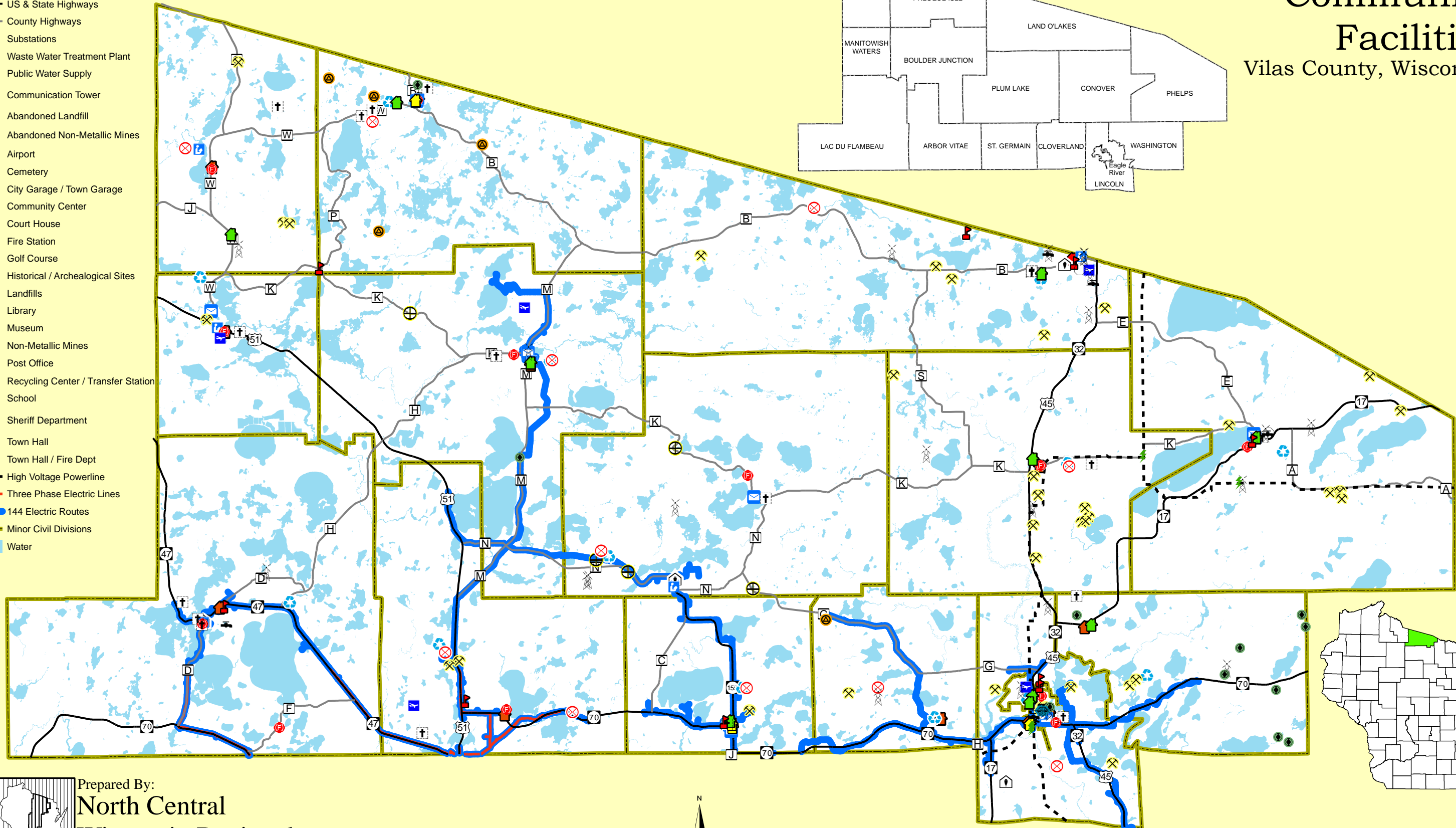
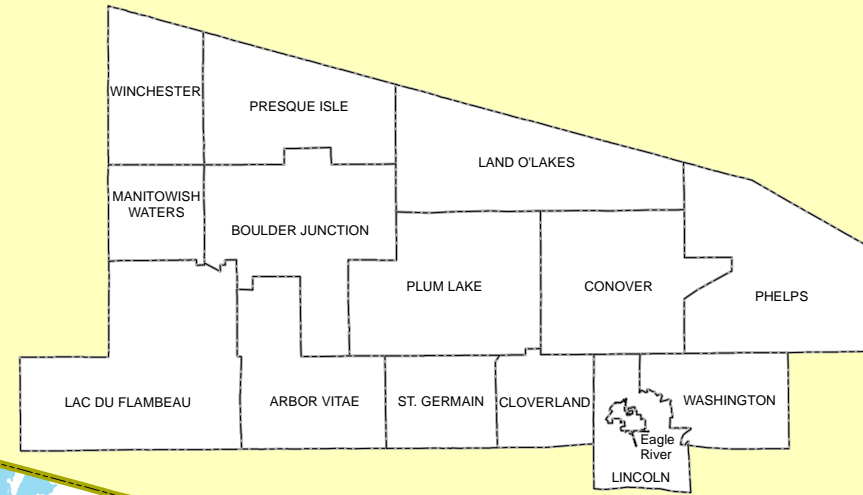
1. Work with higher education institutions to share facility space for training opportunities in the county.

Community Facilities

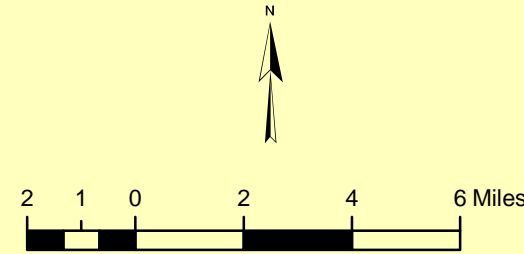
Vilas County, Wisconsin

Legend

- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Substations
- Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Public Water Supply
- Communication Tower
- Abandoned Landfill
- Abandoned Non-Metallic Mines
- Airport
- Cemetery
- City Garage / Town Garage
- Community Center
- Court House
- Fire Station
- Golf Course
- Historical / Archeological Sites
- Landfills
- Library
- Museum
- Non-Metallic Mines
- Post Office
- Recycling Center / Transfer Station
- School
- Sheriff Department
- Town Hall
- Town Hall / Fire Dept
- High Voltage Powerline
- Three Phase Electric Lines
- 144 Electric Routes
- Minor Civil Divisions
- Water

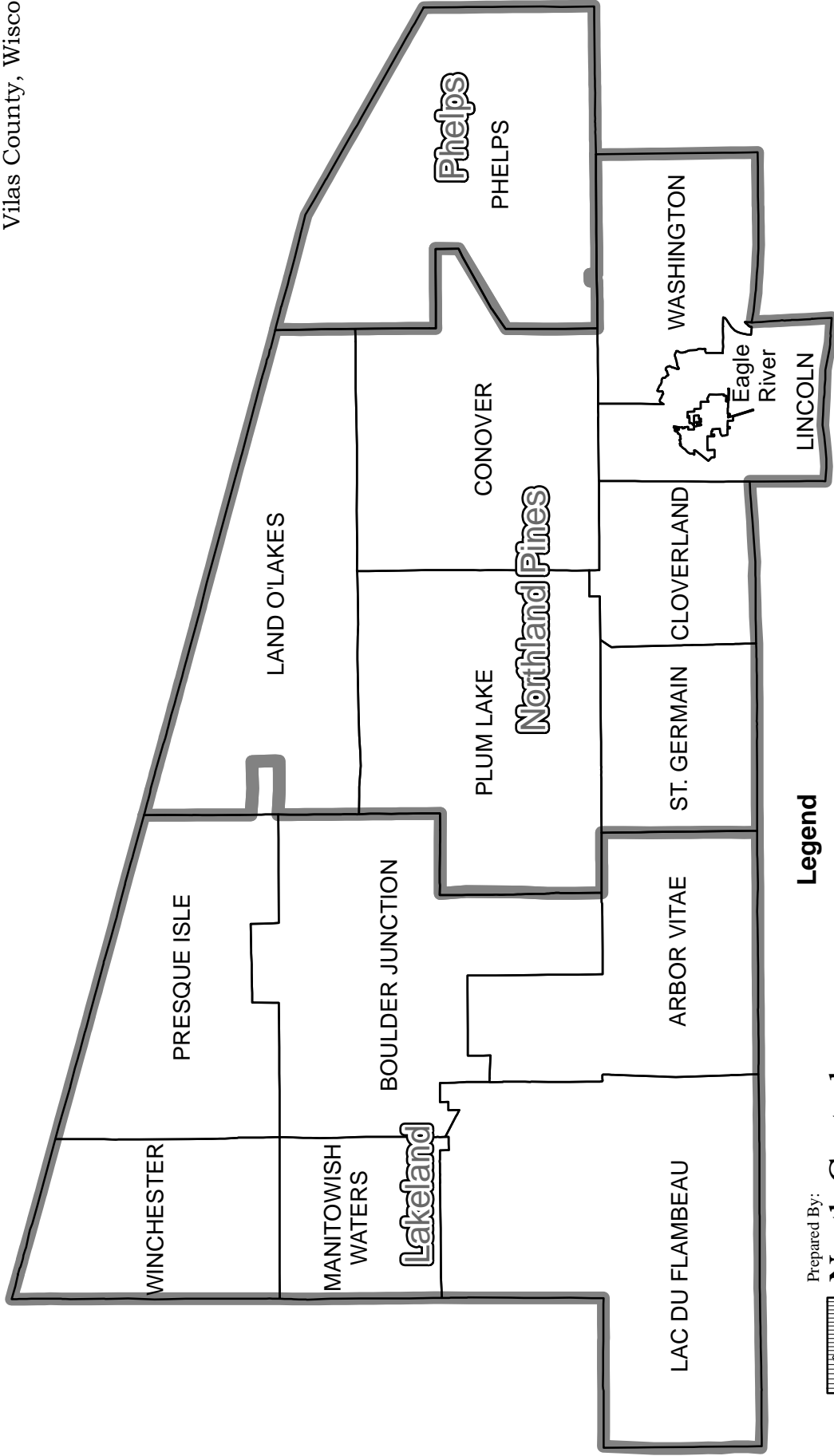


Prepared By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org




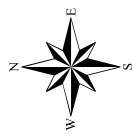
Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas Co
 This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

Map 4-2
School District Boundaries
 Vilas County, Wisconsin

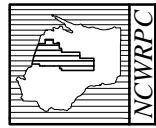


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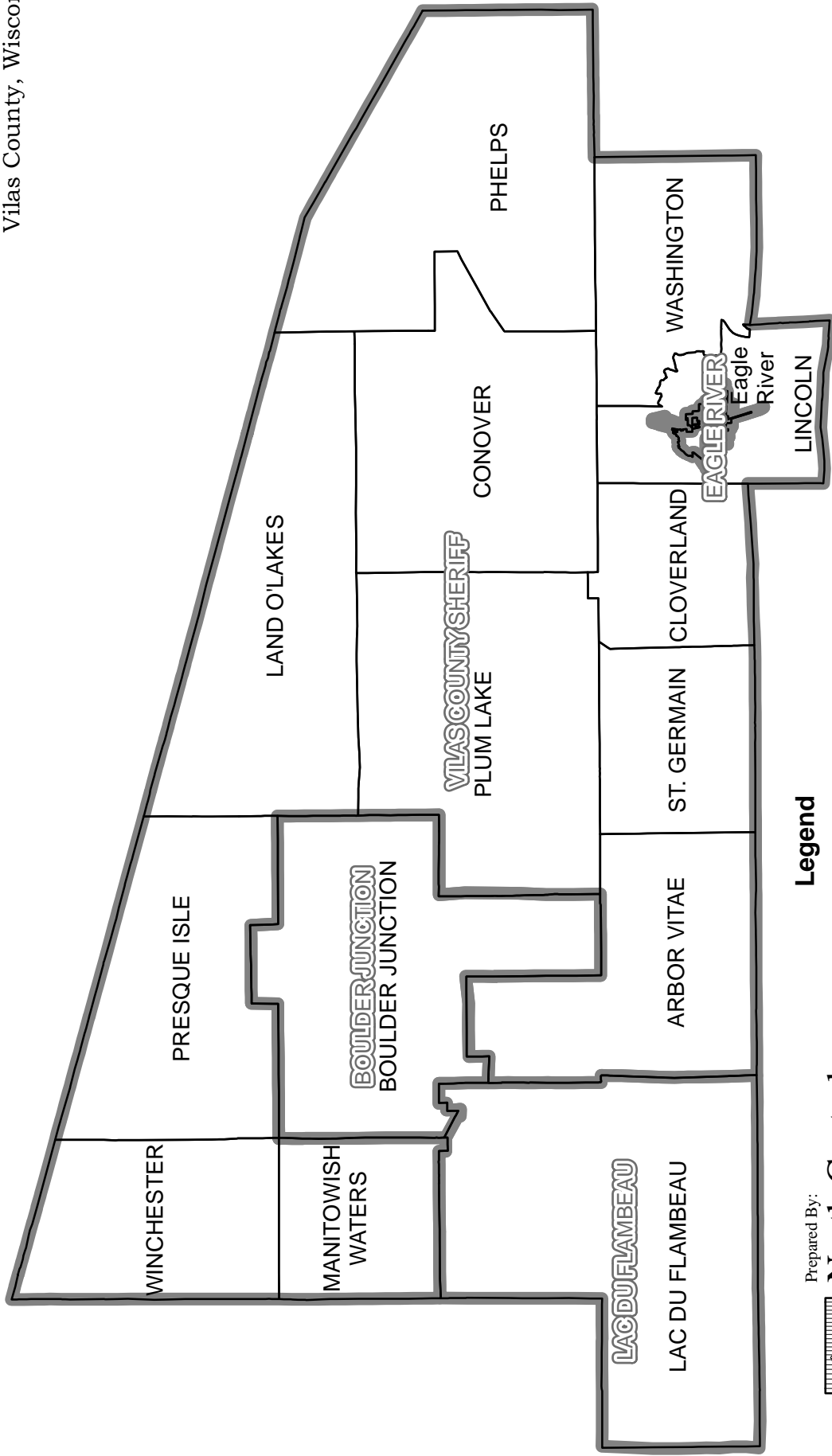
-  Minor Civil Division
-  School District Boundaries





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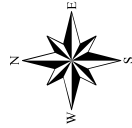
Map 4-3
Law Enforcement Boundaries
 Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

-  Minor Civil Division
-  Law Enforcement Boundaries

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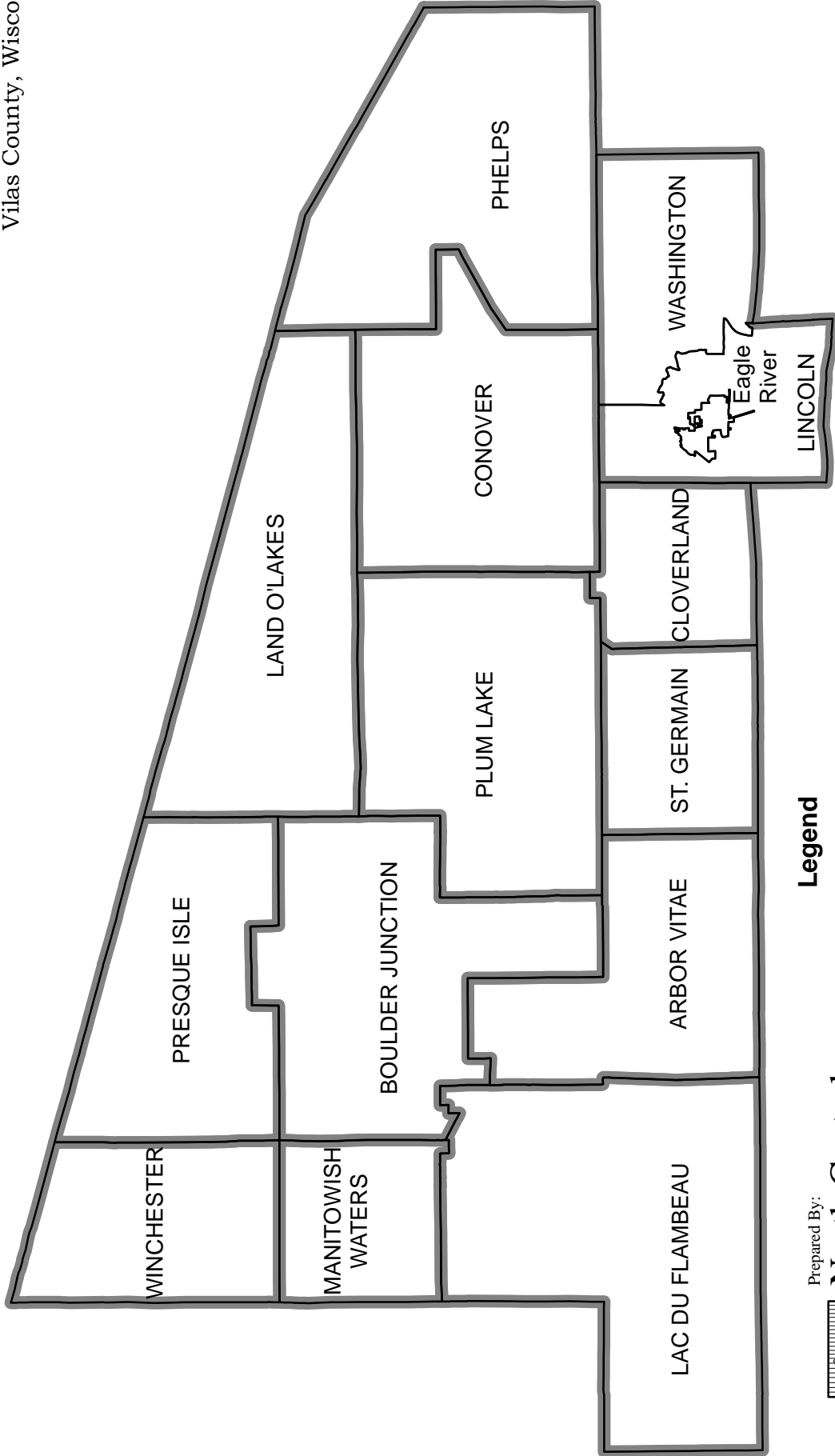


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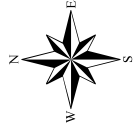
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Map 4-4
Fire/EMS Boundaries
 Vilas County, Wisconsin



Legend

-  Minor Civil Division
-  Fire/EMS Boundaries

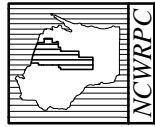


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**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**



210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org

Chapter 5: Transportation

Chapter 5: Transportation

5.1 Background

Vilas County's transportation system includes, roads, airports, lakes and rivers, various types of trails, as well as utility corridors. The transportation system supports the movement of people and products within a community and connects to areas beyond. Of particular importance in rural counties is the local road system, since it generally represents the greatest direct input on and investment by the County and local government.

A well-designed road system can result in many benefits and long term cost savings for a community. Being an integral aspect of the county, it plays a major role in the efficiency, safety, and overall desirability of the community as a place to live and work.

5.2 County Resources

The county maintains a Highway Department responsible for the network of County Highways throughout the county. A standing county Highway Committee provides oversight.

5.3 Existing Road Systems

In analyzing the road system, several aspects and factors should be examined to discern possible shortcomings as well as plan for future needs. Analysis of traffic patterns through the examination of the road system, review of traffic counts, study of accident reports, discussion with individuals at the local, county, and state levels, and finally, a field survey of the roads can assist in providing possible recommendations relevant to the system.

The County Trunk Highways and the State Trunk Highways divide Vilas County in many pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. USH 51 and USH 45 further divide Vilas County into western, central, and eastern sections. Map 5-1 identifies the existing road patterns.

The road system is composed of three levels of government jurisdiction. These include the State and Federal highway systems, the County system of trunk

highways, and the system encompassing the local municipal roads. The map illustrates that the local roads comprise the greatest mileage. However, in terms of the functional role and the amount of traffic carried by each type, USH 51, USH 45/STH 32, STH 17 and STH 70 are the most significant.

A. Roadway Classifications

The three levels of jurisdictional roadway, State and Federal, County, and Local, often times are considered to approximate the functional classification of roads used for planning and design purposes. The division of roadways into the functional classes, arterials and collectors, represents a breakdown relative to the principal service the roadway is intended to serve. The functional classification is generally the basis of funding, constructing, and maintaining the various levels of roadway. This classification for rural areas often results in the use of the state and federal roads as arterials, while county and town roads serve as collectors within the system.

Although the definitions are somewhat formal, they attempt to explain the principal role of each type of roadway. While the four classes appear to be set apart, the sharp distinctions are actually more subtle. For discussion and planning purposes, however, these more specific definitions are applied.

Principal Arterial (Freeways)

The principal function is to provide the most efficient movement for relatively large volumes of traffic at increased speeds. Movement to and from other road facilities is limited to controlled interchanges. Regional movement of traffic contributes an increasing portion of the traffic counts.

Minor Arterial

The principal function is to provide efficient traffic movement for larger volumes of traffic. Little or no direct access is strived for with non-local destinations comprising a major portion of the traffic.

Major Collector

The principal function is to provide an intermediary link between efficient movement of arterials and accessibility of local roadways. They serve to funnel or collect traffic from local roadways to arterials. More efficiency of movement is strived for in favor of accessibility.

Minor Collector (Local Roadways)

The principal function is to provide traffic with access to and from property. It is the grass roots classification where accessibility for vehicles

and pedestrians is emphasized and efficiency of movement is secondary.

As previously noted, these functional classifications are generally equated with the jurisdictional divisions. In the more developed, larger urban communities, this relationship may not be as rigid, where the local community constructs and maintains all classes of the roadway system. In the typical rural transportation system, however, the jurisdictional and functional classifications maintain a closer relationship. The greatest emphasis of traffic in rural areas is generally on non-local, efficient movement whereas local access is secondary due to relatively low population densities.

Based on the qualifications of the roadway classifications, Vilas County has the service of two principal arterials, two minor arterials, 19 major collectors, and 24 minor collectors. USH 51 and USH 45/STH 32 are principal arterials. STH 70 and STH 17 are minor arterials. State Highways 155, 17, and 47 and County Highways A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, M, N, O, P, S, W are major collectors. Chain O' Lakes Road, Sugar Maple Road, North Farming Road, Buckhorn Road, Razorback Road, Birchwood Drive, Big St. Germain Drive, Sunset Road, Oxbow Road, Pomeroy Lake Road, Indian Village Road, Buckatabon Road, Airport Road, West Shore Road, South Shore Road, Little Trout Road, Croker Road, Matke Road, Illinois Street, North Creek Road, Hall Road, Bayview Road, Dairyman's Road, and Boulder Lane are minor collectors.

B. Traffic Counts

Annual average daily traffic counts (AADTs) for 1992, 1995, 1998, and 2002 for 19 locations in Vilas County.

The highest daily traffic volumes in the four reference years were found in 1995 on the principal arterial USH 45-STH 32/17 north of Spruce Street at location P (21,420). The largest percentage increase in volume from 1992 to 2002 occurred along STH 70 east of USH 51, recording an additional 3,250 motor vehicles or an increase of 96.4 percent. The second largest increase was recorded along STH 70 west of STH 155, with an increase of 2,510 motor vehicles or 78.2 percent. A large increase was also recorded along STH 47 west of CTH H, experiencing an increase of 1,470 motor vehicles or 62.3 percent. USH 45-STH 32 south of CTH G (S) showed a decline in traffic volume, with a 14.9 percent decline in traffic volume or 1,310 fewer vehicles between 1992 and 2002.

5-1: Traffic Counts					% Change 1992- 2002	# Change 1992- 2002
Location	1992	1995	1998	2002		
STH 70 east of USH 51	3,370	6,380	4,880	6,620	96.4	3,250
STH 70 west of STH 155	3,210	3,110	5,350	5,720	78.2	2,510
STH 47 west of CTH H	2,360	3,050	4,080	3,830	62.3	1,470
USH 51 0.3 miles east of CTH W	3,210	3,920	5,520	4,860	51.4	1,650
STH 70 south of STH 155	5,470	9,090	7,210	8,160	49.2	2,690
STH 70 0.5 miles west of CTH O	4,950	5,560	5,710	6,930	40.0	1,980
USH 51-STH 70 1.0 mile north of STH 47	11,110	12,750	12,000	15,340	38.1	4,230
STH 70 east of USH 45	4,910	7,120	5,870	6,560	33.6	1,650
USH 51 northwest of CTH H	3,270	3,900	4,180	4,280	30.9	1,010
STH 17 south of STH 70	3,820	4,450	4,210	4,830	26.4	1,010
USH 45-STH 32 0.5 miles south of STH 70	5,820	7,090	6,230	7,240	24.4	1,420
STH 17 1.0 mile northeast of STH 70	9,440	13,000	10,940	11,260	19.3	1,820
STH 17 north of USH 45/STH 32	2,190	3,150	2,780	2,530	15.5	340
STH 17 north of CTH E	1,040	1,160	1,260	1,170	12.5	130
USH 45-STH 32 north of CTH B	3,080	2,920	4,080	3,360	9.1	280
USH 45-STH 17-32 north of Spruce Street	14,340	21,420	19,250	15,150	5.6	810
STH 17-70 west of Railroad Street	10,040	14,440	12,200	10,340	3.0	300
USH 51 east of STH 47	2,960	2,960	3,130	2,889	-2.4	-71
USH 45-STH 32 south of CTH G	8,820	9,080	8,940	7,510	-14.9	-1,310

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation

In addition to the annual average daily traffic counts, traffic count forecasts were prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for several locations within Vilas County. Table 7-3 shows the projected Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts from base year 2002 to forecast year 2025. The largest percentage increase in traffic volume is projected to occur on STH 17 north of USH 45-STH 32, with an additional 1,750 motor vehicles expected or an increase of 69.2 percent. Traffic volume on USH 45-STH 32 north of CTH B is projected to increase from 2002 to 2025 by an additional 2,290 motor vehicles or an increase of 68.2 percent. USH 51 east of STH 47 is projected to increase in traffic volume by 61.0 percent or an additional 1,761 motor vehicles. The location with the lowest percentage increase in projected traffic volume (22.2 percent or an additional 1,070 motor vehicles) is on STH 17 south of STH 70.

C. Crash Locations

To further analyze Vilas County's road system, the frequency, location of, and causes of motor vehicle crashes can be used to identify problem areas. The frequency of motor vehicle crashes tends to correlate directly with traffic volumes, however, the design and condition of the road may also have an impact on the crash rate. Table 7-2, Motor Vehicle Crash Summary, displays the number of crashes for roads that have experienced 95 or more motor vehicle crashes from 1994 to 2002, as reported by the Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles. The "other" category includes all other crashes from locations that individually had less than 95 motor vehicle crashes from 1994 to 2002.

Vilas County had 4880 motor vehicle crashes from 1994 to 2002. As expected, the roadways with the greatest traffic volumes (STH 70, USH 45, USH 51, STH 17, STH 47, CTH B, Railroad Street, CTH K, CTH M, Pine Street, CTH W, Wall Street) also had the greatest number of motor vehicle crashes.

STH 70 experienced 15 percent of the total number of motor vehicle crashes between 1994 and 2002. USH 45 was the location of 14 percent of the county's motor vehicle crashes. USH 51 was the location of 10 percent of the motor vehicle crashes between 1994 and 2002 in Vilas County. STH 17 followed in number of crashes with five percent. No other individual roadway listed had more than five percent of the county's crashes. All "Other" Roadways combined totaled about a third (33 percent) of the motor vehicle crashes in Vilas County.

In addition to analyzing the number of crashes per roadway, a review of the trends for intersection motor vehicle crashes can provide insight to problem areas within the county's roadway system. The intersections are classified by location and number of crashes, which range from one to 74. The intersection of USH 45 and Railroad Street had 74 crashes during the period 1994-2002. It should be noted that this entire intersection in Eagle River was changed with a major bypass completed by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 2001. The intersection of USH 45 and STH 70 experienced 36 motor vehicle crashes from 1994-2002. The intersection of USH 51 and STH 70 also had 36 motor vehicle crashes between 1994-2002. The intersection of STH 70 and STH 17 had 33 crashes between 1994-2002. The intersection of Railroad Street and Jack Frost Street had 20 motor vehicle crashes. The intersection of Railroad Street and Wall Street experienced 16 motor vehicle crashes. The intersection of USH 45 and Pine Street experienced 15 motor vehicle crashes. It should be understood,

however, that roadways with greater volumes of traffic have an increased risk of crashes, which is the case for the above-mentioned roadways.

Table 5-2:
Motor Vehicle Crash Summary Vilas County 1994-2002

Crash Location	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
STH 70	77	73	94	74	80	80	107	98	68	751
USH 45	71	80	82	84	87	68	81	72	53	678
USH 51	39	54	73	46	54	65	68	62	42	503
STH 17	16	37	33	20	38	26	44	36	15	265
STH 47	16	26	28	17	19	15	24	24	15	184
CTH B	21	31	28	0	20	18	19	21	18	176
Railroad St	18	15	24	25	25	20	17	12	4	160
CTH K	17	15	17	16	12	18	19	11	8	133
CTH M	20	17	19	11	10	9	13	14	11	124
Pine St	10	11	11	14	12	8	16	8	9	99
CTH W	11	16	16	0	5	13	14	15	7	97
Wall St	13	16	5	15	4	14	11	4	13	95
Other*	157	181	171	227	165	158	195	214	147	1,615
Total	486	572	601	549	531	512	628	591	410	4,880

*Note: Denotes all locations with less than 95 crashes from 1994-2002.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Crash Listing, 1994-2002

D. Roadway Conditions

To assess the condition of the county's roadways, the Vilas County Highway Department uses the WISLR (Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads) system. In addition, the Highway Committee members (County Supervisors) conduct a road tour in the spring and in the fall to inspect the roadways.

5.4 Air Transportation

Vilas County residents and visitors have access to 5 public-use airports within the county boundaries as well as access to commercial air service in Rhinelander for passenger and cargo transport.

The Eagle River Union Airport is located within the boundaries of the City of Eagle River, and is co-managed by the Towns of Lincoln, Washington and the City of Eagle River. The airport is classified as a public-use Transport/Corporate

airport and operates year round. The airport features 2 runways; RWY 04/22 is 5,000' x 75', RWY 13/31 is 3,400' by 60'. Instrument approach procedures are published for runways 04 and 22, including localizer and RNAV (GPS) procedures to provide for all weather instrument approaches.

TransNorth Aviation operates a Northwood's Shuttle service between Palwaukee, IL and Eagle River four days per week during the summer tourist season. The airport is home to 72 hangars for aircraft storage serving seasonal, year round and corporate tenants. ERUA is home to three fixed base operators on the field providing general aviation services to airport users and customers from around the world.

Upcoming projects for the ERUA include reconstruction of the aircraft-parking ramp in front of the terminal building in 2010. Included in the plan are additional tie-downs for overnight parking and two concrete aprons for parking of heavier aircraft. Future developments include the reconstruction of the main runway in 2013/2014 and possibly extending it an additional 400 feet. A parallel taxiway to the main runway is also anticipated as part of the project. This will improve airport capacity and safety.

The Lakeland/Noble F. Lee Memorial Airport is located in Arbor Vitae. This facility is also classified as a Transport/Corporate Airport. Lakeland Airport added VASI to one of its runways; 1992 MALS/R lighting was added; a Localizer was added in 1993 & 1994; one runway was widened to 100' in 1996. 1997 through 1998 saw two new carriers added, and a new 24-hour weather station was added in 1998. In 2000 a new parallel taxiway for runway 18/36 was added and the terminal building was enlarged and remodeled.

Land O'Lakes Airport has greatly expanded during the last five years. There are 15 hangars at present with plans to add another 10 hangars. In 1999 a GCO (Ground Communications Outlet) was added for flight planning convenience. In 2000, seven hangars were added, including two 60' x 60' facilities capable of housing small jet aircraft. There are a total of 35 hangars additional hangars will be added in the future.

The Manitowish Waters Airport services the communities in the northwest area of Vilas County. The airport has a 3500' paved runway and a 2800' sod runway. It has a modern terminal building, 24-hour self-service AV100 gas, four privately owned hanger units, and a five-unit airport owned hanger that is available for lease. It also has a PAPI system on the paved runway.

Boulder Junction Airport is classified as Basic utility general aviation airport. There is no scheduled or seasonal passenger service.

Major improvements at the airports during the last several years have greatly increased their efficiency and ability to handle increased air traffic. Continued expansion and/or enhancements to all air facilities in Vilas County is anticipated. In addition, these five airports all have Height Limitation Zoning Ordinances in place. These are three-mile zones from around the boundary of the airport that protect the airport from tall structures and other obstructions. See Maps 7-1 & 2.

The Rhinelander-Oneida County airport, located about 20 miles south of the county border, also serves the county. This facility is classified as an Air Carrier/Air Cargo airport. Regularly scheduled commercial air service is available to Vilas County residents. The airport provides one commercial flights daily to Minneapolis, Minnesota. The total commercial passenger traffic for the Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport for 2001 was 56,000 persons. Additional passenger services at the airport include private air charters.

5.5 Rail Transportation

Railroad facilities do not exist in Vilas County. The nearest railroad is Canadian National Rail Road located in Rhinelander and Argonne; both facilities are approximately 20 miles from the Vilas County border.

5.6 Access Control

Highway access management is planning the number and location of driveways and intersections to help maintain safe, efficient movement of traffic and to provide safer access to and from adjacent property. While growth and development are good for area economies, they often result in too many access points located too close together. As a result, traffic congestion increases, conflicts between land use and highway traffic grow, and crashes increase. There are a number of State statutes and administrative rules that require WisDOT to regulate access on State Trunk Highways.

The most frequently used form of access management by WisDOT is the purchase of access rights. This statute allows WisDOT to acquire property and interests for highway purposes. There are a number of projects in Vilas County that are managed through the administrative access control statute. This statute gives WisDOT the statutory authority to designate controlled-access highways in certain corridors.

The county administrative access control statute is similar to the state statute but applies to the county rather than the state trunk highways. The county does not have any completed or future access management projects at this time.

5.7 Goal, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1:

To provide an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens, while maintaining the rural character of the County.

Objectives:

1. Maintain and expand the efficiency, safety and functionality of the County's existing transportation system, which links the urban center with outlying towns, adjacent communities and the region.
2. Encourage a balanced transportation network that provides a choice in the type of mode (i.e. car, bus, aircraft, bike, walking, etc.) easy transfer between modes and transportation opportunities for those without use of an automobile.
3. Achieve close coordination between development of transportation facilities and land use planning and development.
4. Preserve the scenic value along select roadways.
5. Seek Rustic Road designation where appropriate to help preserve the special roadways within the County and promote them for economic development/tourism and recreational purposes.

Policies:

1. Work with the Department of Transportation and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to ensure that the County's transportation system is coordinated with surrounding regional systems and that the County's interests are well served when major transportation facilities or programs are proposed.










2. Work with WisDOT on corridor preservation for all federal and state highways.
3. Support coordination and consolidation of specialized transit by a variety of agencies that serve the County's elderly and handicapped residents.
4. Plan for extension of County highways and other major arterials as necessary to complete connections, provide for appropriate routes for trucks and emergency vehicles and serve planned development areas.
5. Consider future road locations, extensions, or connections when reviewing development plans and proposals.
6. Work with local governmental units to plan for a network of interconnected roads in planned development areas to control highway access, preserve rural character, and improve access to these areas.
7. Space roadway access according to minimum standards to increase safety and preserve capacity.
8. Avoid land uses that generate heavy traffic on roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
9. Plan for new developments to minimize extensive road construction and avoid burden to towns for maintenance. Consider assisting towns with implementing road impact fees for new development projects that place a burden on or require upgrading of town roads.
10. Work with the towns to implement Town Road Management Plans to provide for the appropriate maintenance of town roads.
11. Protect communities and airports from incompatible land uses that could interfere with the safe operation of airports and pose hazards to the public.

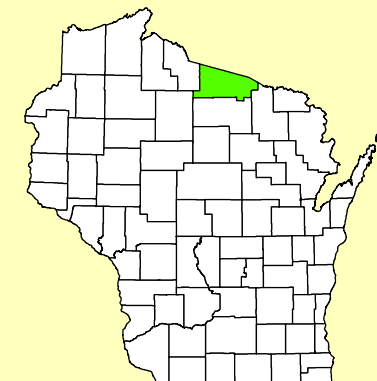
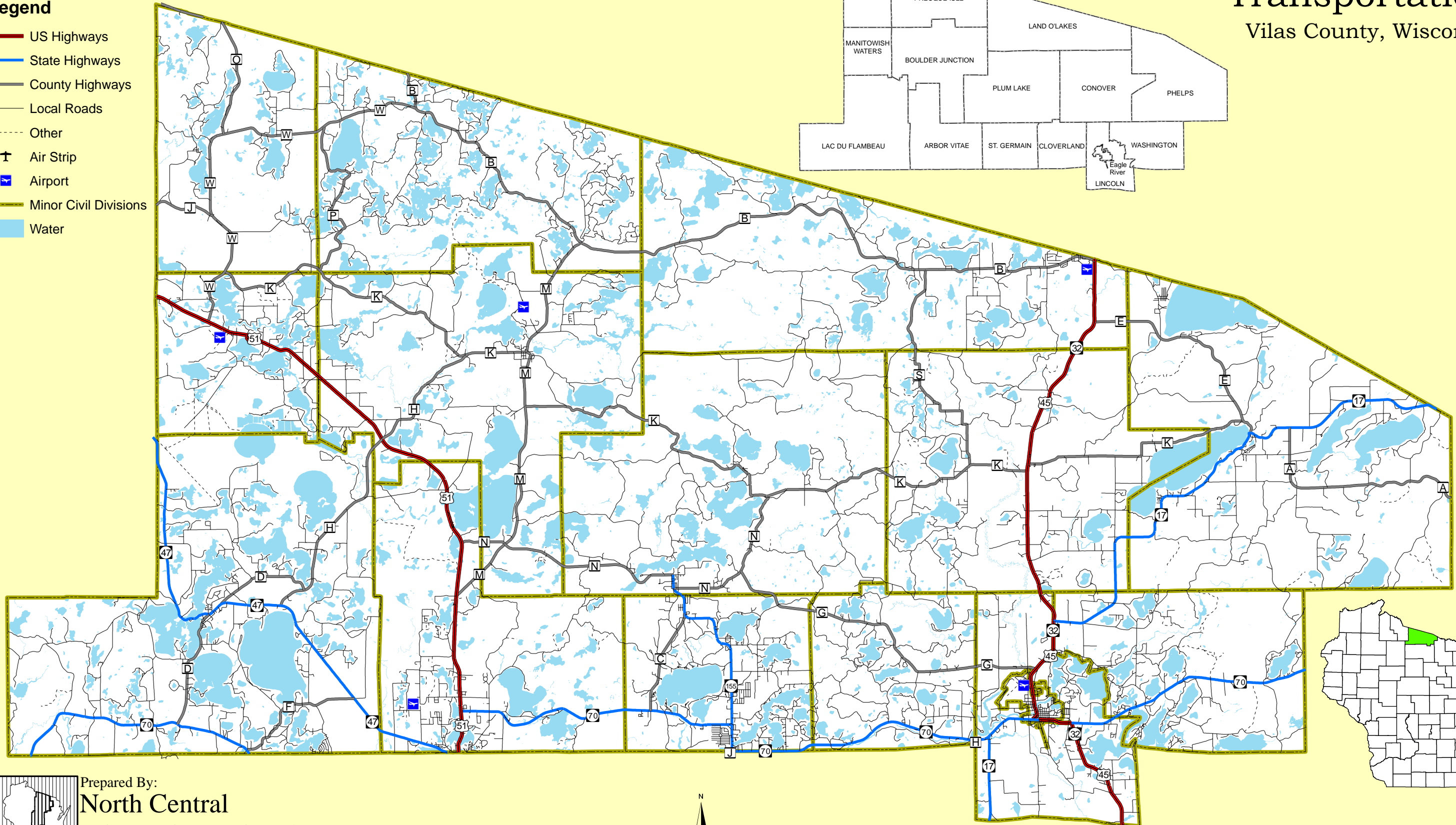
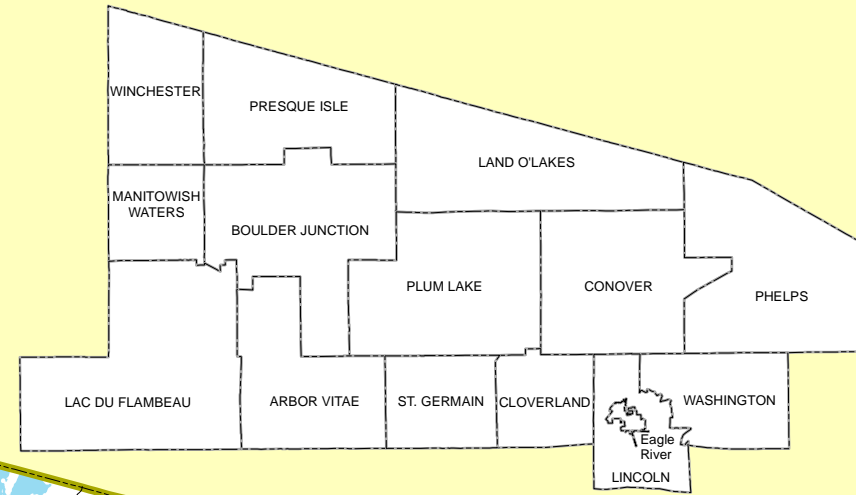
There are additional policies that are developed by the Highway Committee and the County Highway Department.

Transportation

Vilas County, Wisconsin

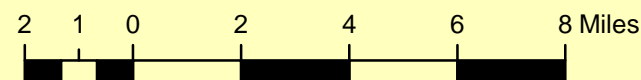
Legend

-  US Highways
-  State Highways
-  County Highways
-  Local Roads
-  Other
-  Air Strip
-  Airport
-  Minor Civil Divisions
-  Water



Prepared By:
**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



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Chapter 6: Economic Development

Chapter 6: Economic Development

6.1 Background

The economic base of the community serves as an important driver for current and future land use. Economic characteristics include such components as the size of the civilian labor force, employment growth, employment by industry, unemployment rates, and commuting patterns.

For Vilas County, much of the economic base is centered around the tourism industry and other natural resource-based businesses. The lake-rich area is also attractive for seasonal/recreational homes, and serves as a major retirement area.

Assessment of these components of the economic base provides an important historical perspective on current land use patterns, and provides insights that help to predict possible future directions and opportunities for growth of the local economy.

6.2 County Resources

Currently the county has a standing Economic Development Committee that deals with issues related to economic development, such as broadband and business assistance. UW-EXT provides staff support for this committee.

In addition, earlier this year the county took action to create a County-wide Economic Development Corporation. The intent of this effort is to add local capacity in the area of business assistance.

6.3 Labor Force

This section examines four factors related to the county's labor force. These factors are labor force, unemployment, workforce participation, and education & training. Table 1 displays a variety of information related to the county labor force.

Indicator	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980-2000	State 1980-2000
Labor Force	6,682	7,129	9,869	47.7%	26.8%
Employed	5,800	6,538	9,268	59.8%	29.3%
Unemployment Rate	13.2%	7.7%	6.1%	-53.8%	-28.8%
Participation Rate	51%	50%	57%	11.8%	11.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 1980 to 2000 and NCWRPC

Overall, the labor force has grown from 6,682 in 1980 to 9,869 in 2000. That represents a growth of over 47 percent, which is about twice the state's growth rate of about 27 percent. The labor force is defined simply as the number of persons, sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Persons over sixteen who are students, homemakers, retired, institutionalized, or unable/unwilling to seek employment are not considered part of the labor force. As identified earlier in the plan, the county has experienced population growth over the last two decades, although that growth is not the same among all age groups. In 1980, over 30 percent of the population was 17 and under, while only about 16 percent were 65 and older. By 2000, there were about 24 percent 17 and under, while the 65 and older grew to almost 19 percent. These population trends create issues for the expansion of the local labor force.

In 1980, 5,800 members of the labor force were employed and that number rose to 6,538 in 1990 and to 9,268 in 2000, an increase of almost 60 percent over the twenty-year period.

According to the 1980 U.S. Census, the county had 13.2 percent unemployment compared to the state rate of 6.6 percent. By 2000, unemployment dropped to a rate of 6.1 percent for the county while the state rate lowered to 4.7 percent. Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered to be part of the "labor force".

A significant portion of the growth in the county's labor force has been due to the increase in participation rate. Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons not actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. These persons may not seek employment due to retirement, disability, choose to be a home care provider,

or simply are not looking for work. In any event, these persons are not receiving unemployment benefits, nor are they seeking employment in any capacity. In 1980, only about 51 percent of the population over 16 actively participated in the labor force. By 2000, that rate increased by almost 7 percent. The national participation rate in 2000 was 48 percent, and the State of Wisconsin rate was 69 percent. Overall, the county has a labor force participation rate that is slightly less than state average, which can partially be attributed to the county's high median age.

Worker productivity has often been cited as one important reason for the strength of Wisconsin's economy. Both education and training are critical to maintaining productivity. The level of educational attainment is an important indicator of the skills of the labor force. Formal education and job training reflect a community's ability to provide a labor force for certain types of industry. Educational attainment in Vilas County is very similar to the state average in terms of those with a high school diploma or better, but the County does lag further behind the state in terms of bachelor's degrees or higher.

Training is another labor force indicator. Partnerships between local businesses, governments, and educational institutions are very useful in developing the Regional economy. Institutions such as UW-Stevens Point and Nicolet Technical College often direct their programs to the training needs of local workers and businesses. Organizations such as the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board are important to this process as well.

6.4 Employment by Industry

The employment by industry within an area helps to illustrate the structure of the economy. Historically the State of Wisconsin has had high concentrations of employment in the manufacturing sector of the economy. Recent trends show a decrease in the concentration of employment in manufacturing, and increasing levels of employment in the service industry. In contrast, Vilas County has had relatively low employment in manufacturing, and much higher employment in service and retail sectors due to the large tourism industry.

Table 6-2 provides data on the employment distribution by industry for Vilas County for 1990 and 2000. The highest employment was in the educational, health, and social services sector with 18.0% of the workers. In the county, the entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services sector followed with 16.6% of the workers, then retail trade with 15.7% and construction at 11.9%. Employment for manufacturing of durable and nondurable goods in Vilas County remained the same from 1990 (640) to 2000 (643).

Table 6-2: Employment by Industry Vilas County 1990-2000				
Industry of Employed Persons 16 Years and Over in Vilas County				
	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	223	3.1	231	2.5
Construction	780	10.9	1,107	11.9
Manufacturing-Durable and Nondurable Goods	640	9.0	643	6.9
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	185	2.6	324	3.5
Information	141	2.0	145	1.6
Wholesale Trade	163	2.3	264	2.8
Retail Trade	1,852	26.0	1,457	15.7
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	374	5.2	425	4.6
Prof., Scientific, Mgmt., Admin. and Waste Services	217	3.0	489	5.3
Entertainment, Recreation, Accom., and Food Services	646	9.1	1,536	16.6
Educational, Health, and Social Services	1,205	16.9	1,666	18.0
Other Services	357	5.0	460	5.0
Public Administration	346	4.9	521	5.6
Total	7,129	100%	9,268	100%

Note: Percents may not add due to rounding

Source: U.S. Census

Table 6-3 compares Year 2000 employment by industry of between Vilas County and Wisconsin. Vilas County has a higher percentage of employment than the state in the entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services sector as well as retail trade and construction. Conversely, Vilas County has a much lower percentage of employment than the state in employment for the manufacturing of durable and non-durable goods.

Table 6-3 Employment by Industry in Vilas County Industry of Employed Persons 16 Years and Over - 2000		
	Vilas County (Percent)	Wisconsin (Percent)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	2.5	4.7
Construction	11.9	5.9
Manufacturing-Durable and Nondurable Goods	6.9	22.2
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	3.5	4.5
Information	1.6	2.0
Wholesale Trade	2.8	3.2
Retail Trade	15.7	11.6
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	4.6	6.1
Prof., Scientific, Mgmt., Admin., and Waste Services	5.3	6.6
Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations, and Food	16.6	7.3
Educational, Health, and Social Services	18.0	20.0
Other Services	5.0	4.1
Public Administration	5.6	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0

**included in category directly above

Source: U.S. Census

6.5 Commuting Patterns

Table 6-4 identifies commuting patterns for Vilas County residents based on the 2000 Census. The majority of workers residing in the county also worked in the county (71.3%), although the percentage of residents working in Vilas County declined from 76.7% in 1990. Oneida County was the location of business and industry where nearly one fourth of Vilas County's residents (23.1%) were employed in 2000, a higher percentage than in 1990 (19.1%). About 3.7% of the County's workers commuted to other Wisconsin counties. About 1.8% commuted out of state, mostly to Michigan.

Table 6-4 Location of Workplace - 2000		
Location of Workplace	Number	Percent
Vilas County	6,332	71.3%
Oneida County	2,051	23.1%
Iron County	50	0.6%
Forest County	31	0.3%
Other WI Counties	247	2.8%
Out of State	165	1.8%
Total	8,876	100%

Note: Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Source: 2000 Census

6.6 Income Characteristics

As displayed in Chapter 1, the county median income rose 64.5% from \$12,373 in 1979 to \$20,352 in 1989, and again 65.9% from 1989 to \$33,759 in 1999. While increasing by about the same percentage rate, median incomes in Vilas County were significantly less than the statewide median through the same period. Wisconsin's median household income increased 66.5%, from \$17,680 in 1979 to \$29,442 in 1989, and increased 48.7% to \$43,791 in 1999. Vilas County's median household income remains just 77% of the statewide median.

The large number of retirees living within Vilas County also contribute personal income in the form of transfer payments such as retirement fund income, social security, and others. In Vilas County, transfer payments account for more of the personal income of residents than proprietor income. When compared with the rest of Wisconsin and the United States, the level of transfer payments is more than twice the percent of total income.

6.7 Tourism & Seasonal Residents

Tourism is a major component in Vilas County's economy, as thousands of visitors travel to the area to take advantage of more than 1,300 lakes, large public forest lands, and diversity of recreational resources. Accommodations such as motels, resorts, campgrounds, and other lodging facilities generate an influx of

visitors and business to Vilas County. As identified in Chapter 1 over 4,700 rooms and 3,100 campsites are available throughout the county.

In addition to visitors to the town, people owning seasonal/recreational homes in the area can out-number the local residents during peak times during the summer. In Vilas County, 12,587 housing units are used for seasonal/recreational or occasional use according to the 2000 Census. With these housing units, an estimated 50,348 additional seasonal residents may be housed in Vilas County communities during the peak summer season, greatly adding to the resident population. Seasonal homeowners also contribute expenditures for food and drink, recreation and equipment, auto and home supplies, construction and remodeling, and professional and other services.

When the numbers of overnight visitors, day visitors, and seasonal residents are added to Vilas County's resident population, the area communities are estimated to service about 100,405 people during the peak of the summer season.

Vilas County ranked 11th among the 72 counties in Wisconsin in 2006 for total tourism expenditures. According to annual estimates prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism by Davidson-Peterson Associates, travelers to Vilas County spent \$256.5 million in 2006.

Davidson-Peterson also estimates the tourism expenditures according to three seasons. Not surprisingly, about 60 percent of traveler expenditures occur during the summer season from May through August. Expenditures from December through April (the winter and early spring seasons) made up 20 percent of the total, while fall expenditures during September through November were 20 percent.

6.8 Strengths and Weaknesses for Attracting and Retaining Businesses

A countywide community development plan was adopted in 1990, and a series of surveys and focus groups were conducted as part of the previous planning effort. In addition, there has been discussion at the Economic Development Committee as they prepare an Economic Development Strategy, with the assistance of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Those plans identified the following constraints to retaining and expanding the existing economic base: limited availability of financing for expanding businesses, the limited role of Vilas County in actively promoting economic development, limited availability of improved business sites, no countywide

organization for economic development marketing, perceptions of distance to major markets, limitations of local markets, lack of preparedness by municipalities for economic development, limited use of business assistance programs for start-ups, lack of business incubator space, impacts of development on natural resources, and lack of large-scale convention and conference facilities.

Over the years, a number of programs have been implemented to address these weaknesses, however many remain as constraints for attracting and retaining businesses. Local chambers of commerce formed the Vilas County Chamber of Commerce for cooperative efforts to develop and enhance the tourism industry. Vilas County has also created an Advertising Department with an annual budget for a tourism advertising campaign, including a cooperative advertising campaign with the chambers of commerce.

The most significant strengths for Vilas County remain the world-class outdoor recreation and natural resources. These are strong attractions for business owners who would like to bring their business where they may already recreate and/or own a seasonal home. Community safety in the northwoods is also becoming increasingly attractive as an incentive for business relocations, especially with the increase in home-based business opportunities. Health care services in the region are also very strong as they support the large retirement population.

6.9 Types of Businesses Desired

Several communities in Vilas County have conducted community planning surveys since 1995. These include the Towns of Arbor Vitae, Manitowish Waters, Winchester, St. Germain, Washington, Presque Isle, Phelps, Land O' Lakes and Lincoln along with the City of Eagle River. Although somewhat dated, these still have some relevancy to today. The surveys were mailed to all property taxpayers in each of the municipalities.

Tourism-oriented, retail, service, and light industrial businesses were consistently selected as types of businesses the local communities should attract to Vilas County. Some communities had very specific business needs identified such as a service station and supermarket in Arbor Vitae, technology and home-based businesses in Washington, and hardware/lumber, supermarket, and bakery in Phelps.

Conversely, industry other than light industry was not well accepted in most communities in Vilas County. In the Town of Washington survey, 82% of the

respondents felt the Town should discourage heavy industry (exceeded only by casinos at 86% and adult entertainment at 84% who felt these should be discouraged).

There was a mixed response among the communities on support for developing industrial/business parks. In Winchester, for example, nearly 85% of the survey respondents felt the Town should not be financially involved in developing industrial/business parks. The same was true in Manitowish Waters (76% of respondents) and Arbor Vitae (71%). In St. Germain, just 13% of those surveyed supported having the Town purchase land for development of light industrial/business parks.

A majority of City of Eagle River (53%) and Town of Lincoln (72%) respondents though, favored purchasing and developing a joint industrial park using intergovernmental cooperation. In Eagle River/Lincoln, more survey respondents agreed the area should provide increased promotion and information, and should share costs between the municipalities to bring sewer and water to a light industrial area.

Some communities asked about other types of assistance they could provide to help attract businesses. More survey respondents in Presque Isle, Washington, and St. Germain felt no incentives should be offered. In Phelps the number of responses for providing financial incentives and technical assistance to businesses met or exceeded the number against providing incentives. In Winchester, more than two thirds were against the Town helping to create jobs for either new or current residents.

In Manitowish Waters though, respondents were generally in favor of providing physical, technical, and financial assistance for the downtown area businesses. Eagle River/Lincoln surveys also supported business recruitment, decorative street lighting, and other improvements targeted to the downtown commercial district.

In St. Germain, 70% of respondents felt large retailers and fast food chains should be discouraged from locating in the town. Similar results were found in Manitowish Waters, with 69% opposed to large retail stores and 78% against fast food chain restaurants. In Phelps, more people felt fast food restaurant should be encouraged than discouraged (155 for, 121 against), but reversed their opinion on superstores (201 against, 178 for).

Aesthetics is an important issue for commercial and industrial developments across Vilas County as communities strive to retain and enhance their northwoods character. In Arbor Vitae, a large majority of survey responses (84%)

felt there should be aesthetic requirements for commercial and industrial developments. Similar responses were received in Eagle River (65% in favor of such requirements), Lincoln (68%), Manitowish Waters (88%), Phelps (73%), St. Germain (82%), Washington (90%), and Winchester (86%).

6.10 Focus Group Discussions

Three focus group discussions were conducted as part of the previous planning effort by Vilas County based on issues generated during the local community planning processes. These included Sustaining Forestry, Home-Based Businesses, and Cluster Development.

According to the Sustaining Forestry focus group, both public and private, non-industrial forest lands are considered very important for sustaining forestry in Vilas County. Private forest lands are the “agricultural lands” of Vilas County. They are also the largest untapped opportunity area to support existing and new forest products businesses. A variety of incentives, policies, strategies and other tools and techniques were discussed that could help sustain forestry in Vilas County including Managed Forest Law property tax incentives, landowner education, local road policies, conservation subdivisions, and others.

Community planning surveys indicated that home-based businesses are becoming increasingly common, especially with the advent of new technologies. In the Town of Washington for example, a majority of respondents felt that home-based businesses should be encouraged in the town. Encouraging business owners to relocate or expand their businesses to Vilas County to take advantage of the opportunity to live where they recreate and own second homes is being used as an economic development strategy. However, with such businesses located in residential areas a variety of compatibility issues can arise such as noise or smell, clutter, and increased activity from vehicles and people. The Home-Based Business focus group highlighted a variety of advantages of home-based businesses that can be used to encourage their development, as well as a number of technology and other infrastructure needs that can be limiting for home-based business development.

On community surveys that asked about business development patterns, commercial clustered development was consistently favored over strip development: St. Germain (38% for clustered versus 7% for strip development), Winchester (66% for cluster, 27% for strip), Arbor Vitae (64% for cluster, 36% for strip), and Manitowish Waters (60% for cluster, 26% for strip). The Cluster Development Focus Group considered highway intersections as the most likely

locations for commercial cluster development to occur. Limitations of driveway access to state and other highways often results in shared frontage and other access roads which can promote clustering of commercial businesses. The Focus Group also discussed other possible incentives such as a density bonus or smaller lot sizes where public sewer and water are available.

6.11 Economic Development Programs

A variety of local institutions are available to local businesses in addition there a numerous program available from regional, state, and federal sources related to economic development.

Local Financial Institutions:

There are many financial institutions within Eagle River and the surrounding area. These are the first source of funding for private companies. The financial institutions include:

- First National Bank in Eagle River and Conover
- Peoples State Bank in Eagle River
- M&I Bank in Eagle River
- Mid Wisconsin Bank in Eagle River
- Associated Bank in Eagle River
- River Valley State Bank in Eagle River
- Headwaters State Bank in Land O Lakes and Presque Isle
- Chippewa Valley Bank in Presque Isle
- Citizens Bank in Boulder Junction and Manitowish Waters
- Nicolet Credit Union in Eagle River

Regional Programs:

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation

The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages two revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. Web site address: www.ncwrpc.org/ncwdc/ncwdc.htm.

Rural Economic Development (RED) Program

This program administrated by Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas, such as Vilas County. Funds may be used for "soft

costs" only, such as planning, engineering, ad marketing assistance. Web site address: www.commerce.state.wi.us

State Programs:

Wisconsin Small Cities Program (CDBG Program)

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as: acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion, or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor. Web site address: www.commerce.state.wi.us

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance and funding for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects. Web site address: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm

Other State Programs

Technology Development grants and loans; Customized Labor Training grants and loans; and Major Economic Development Project grants and loans.

Redevelopment of environmentally contaminated lands is another economic development option with PECFA and state Brownfields initiatives. Cleanup projects in Phelps, in downtown Lac du Flambeau, and in the commercial business districts in Eagle River and other local communities are key potential redevelopment sites. Once reclaimed, these sites could be available for potential commercial redevelopment with limited liability concerns.

Small business development has been the focus of multiple efforts by UW-Extension, Nicolet College, area chambers, and the Small Business Development Center at UW-Stevens Point. Educational workshops are offered regionally by Nicolet College and monthly in Vilas County through the UWEX Area Business Agent. Free, confidential, small business counseling is also available through the Small Business Development Center.

Federal Programs:

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA manages a public works grant program and a technical assistance grant program. Any local unit of government is eligible, but must meet certain distress criteria. Web site address: www.eda.gov.

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA – RD)

The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in all of rural America. Financial programs include support for such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. USDA-RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. The program also offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services. Web site address: www.rurdev.usda.gov.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90 percent of the principal and interest on loans to companies, individuals, or government entities for financing in rural areas. Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation acts as an agent for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital. Web site address: www.sba.gov.

In addition, the Lac du Flambeau area, as part of the Nijjii Enterprise Community, was designated as an Enterprise Community in 1999. Nijjii is a partnership between the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the Sokaogon Chippewa Community of Mole Lake, together with eight municipal partners in northern Wisconsin. The effort will assist the development of an business & industrial park development, and other economic development projects. Website address: www.nijjii.org.

6.12 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goals:

1. Encourage a variety of economic development opportunities appropriate to the resources and character of Vilas County.
2. Enhance career opportunities and living wage jobs in an economy that is compatible with our natural resources and reflects the needs of the entire community.
3. Enhance and diversify the economy consistent with other Vilas County goals and objectives.

Objectives:

1. Work in cooperation with the local communities to enhance their economic development.
2. Continuously determine current employment characteristics and identify existing and future employment needs.
3. Develop a county-wide economic development organization.
4. Evaluate infrastructure as necessary to facilitate economic growth.
5. Identify and pursue business and industry sectors for potential growth in the county.
6. Create and maintain a current overall economic development plan for the county.
7. Continuously pursue state, federal, and other funding resources to facilitate the recruitment and expansion of business and industry sectors appropriate for the county.
8. Encourage and support educational institutions to develop training programs needed by the area's businesses to meet identified needs and future needs.
9. Support the revitalization of small community downtown areas.
10. Provide assistance in identifying suitable properties for development consistent with local plans and any site design or design review criteria.

Policies:

1. Cooperate with local, regional and other agencies and organizations to coordinate economic development activities where appropriate.
2. Include all communities, residents and the private sector in the dialogue about economic development.
3. Promote business development that will help diversify and expand the economic base, create living-wage jobs, and operate in a manner that is compatible with our natural resources.
4. Promote and enhance Vilas County's tourism industry in cooperation with the Vilas County Tourism & Publicity Department, the Vilas County Chamber of Commerce, local chambers and municipalities, and other organizations.
5. Recognize that community resources to maintain and enhance the quality of life for Vilas County residents are critical to economic development.
6. Promote a plan for an adequate supply of land for commercial and industrial needs.
7. Recognize the value of, and support entrepreneurship.
8. Help retain and grow existing businesses and new opportunities in Vilas County.
9. Promote the expansion of career opportunities and living wage jobs.
10. Advocate for better access to higher education resources in the county.
11. Advocate for telecommunications infrastructure and other technology related to development and expansion.

Chapter 7: Land Use

Chapter 7: Land Use

7.1 Introduction

This is the seventh of nine chapters that comprise the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. This chapter is based on the statutory requirement for a compilation of goals, objectives, maps, and policies to guide the future development of the County. The land use chapter also provides a brief explanation of planning resources, implementation tools, a review of the planning efforts which have occurred in the county to date, an inventory and analysis of existing land uses by classification, a future land use discussion, and concludes with goals, objectives and policies.

There are 14 state planning goals contained in the Comprehensive Planning Legislation. All of these goals can be related to land-use planning, with three being directly related. These 3 land-use planning goals are: (1) Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs, (2) Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities, and (3) Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.

The Land Use Chapter brings together all of the planning chapters to provide a general framework for future growth in the County. Each adopted Town Plan provides additional information specific to that town.

7.2 County Resources

Vilas County has several departments that have some relationship to land use. The primary department is the Zoning, which is responsible for the administration of county zoning, issuance of building and septic permits, and general code enforcement. Land and Water Conservation Department is responsible for soil and water conservation, related planning and education. Forestry, Recreation & Land Department manages all county lands, including the county forest, and coordinate recreation throughout the county.

All of these departments have standing county level committees that provide policy oversight, including Zoning & Planning, Forestry, Recreation & Land, and Land and Water Conservation.

7.3 Previous Planning Efforts

A. County

As in the previous chapters, it is important to review prior planning efforts related to land use. There are a variety of specialized county plans that relate to some degree to land use. These plans include:

County Land & Water Resource Management Plan: This plan is currently being updated. The primary intent of this plan is to identify strategies to protect the quality and quantity of the county's soil and water resources.

County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2009-13: This plan's primary purpose is to identify existing recreational facilities and identify needed facilities for a five-year period. A variety of information is included in that plan, such as trail information, park inventory and future needs.

County Forestry Management Plan, 2002: The purpose of the 15-Year plan is to manage, conserve and protect the natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. The Plan contains information about forest resource planning, outdoor recreation planning, silvicultural practices, aesthetic management zones, trails and access control, biological communities, and wildlife species that exist within the county forest. Contact the County Forestry Department for more information.

In addition, as discussed at length in Chapter 1, Vilas County participated in a four-year planning process that concluded with a draft document entitled Vilas County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, 2003. That plan provides the foundation for much of this planning effort.

B. Local

Several Vilas County communities have been proactive completed town level comprehensive plans or are either in the planning process.

The Towns of Boulder Junction, Cloverland, Lac du Flambeau, Lincoln, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, St. Germain, Washington, and Winchester have completed plans. The Towns of Arbor Vitae, Conover, Land O'Lakes, Presque Isle, and Phelps are working to complete plans. The City of Eagle River does not have a comprehensive plan in place at this time.

C. Land Use Planning Tools

1. Zoning Regulations

There are two basic types of zoning, general and shoreland.

General Zoning has been a tool used by units of government since the 1920's in Wisconsin. Zoning provides a reasonable protection of property rights of landowners by minimizing incompatible uses. Generally, zoning identifies a variety of broad districts that identifies the primary allowable or permitted uses, as well as a list of permitted uses with some conditions, called conditional uses. Often a district will list non-permitted uses. These districts are displayed on an official zoning map.

Shoreland Zoning is mandated by state law and is administered at the county. The intent of shoreland zoning is to control development near waterways, in the most sensitive environmental areas. The area defined by state law is the area within 300 feet of a stream or river or to the landward side of the floodplain and 1000 feet of a lake, flowage, or pond. The county has jurisdiction throughout all of the towns for shoreland zoning, regardless if they have county zoning, local town zoning or no zoning, therefore all fourteen towns fall under county shoreland zoning ordinance.

2. Land Division Regulations

The purpose of a land division or subdivision ordinance is to regulate and control the division of land to: Further the orderly layout and use of land; Prevent the overcrowding of land; Lessen the congestion on streets and highways; and Facilitate adequate provision for water, sewage and other public improvements. A subdivision ordinance includes technical requirements, design standards for plats and certified survey maps, and required improvements (i.e. stormwater detention, public and private sewage, land dedication).

The County Land Division Ordinance outlines procedures for land division, technical requirements, design standards for plats and certified survey maps, and outlines required improvements (i.e. stormwater detention, public and private sewage, land dedication). Local units of government may also elect to have a separate land division ordinance if it is more restrictive than the county ordinance.

3. Official Mapping

Counties have limited official mapping powers; cities and villages have much greater powers. Counties may prepare plans for the future platting of lands, or for the future location of streets, highways, or parkways in the unincorporated areas of the county. In addition, counties may adopt highway-width maps showing the location and width of any existing streets or highways, which are planned to be expanded; however, the municipality affected must approve the map.

7.4. Generalized Existing Land Use

Land use analysis is a means of broadly classifying how land is used, as well as how it is regulated. Each type of use has its own characteristic that can determine compatibility, location, and preference to other land uses. The maps, especially existing land use, are used to analyze the current pattern of development, and serve as the framework for formulating how land will be used in the future.

Generalized existing land use categories include: Agriculture, Commercial, Industrial, Woodlands, Residential, Transportation, Open Grassland, Outdoor Recreation, Government/Public/Institutional, and Water.

While the vast majority of the county is forested and rural in character with low-density residential uses, there are some areas of higher-density development (lakeshores) and areas where development pressures for higher densities are increasing. The land use inventory was completed to allow assessment of existing conditions and to allow analysis of proposed uses in comparison.

The first step in the land use analysis process was to conduct an inventory of the existing land uses within the county. Existing land use maps from the previous planning effort were provided to the towns for review and update. Once returned, those maps were edited and joined together into a countywide map. See the Generalized Existing Land Use Map.

An Existing Land Use Map provides a “birds eye view” of existing development patterns in the county. Easily observed in the county are the vast woodlands, including wetlands, as well as the major agricultural areas. Residential development is concentrated around many of the larger lakes and scattered along town and county roads throughout the county. Using this map,

calculations were made with a geographic information system (GIS) to determine acreage calculations. Note that these are generalized and are not intended to be exact, but rather provide an overview of what the land is being used for now. The information is displayed in Table 7-1.

Woodlands were identified as the largest land use in the county. Over 76 percent of the county is considered woodlands, although much of this is also wetland. The second largest use is water, with about 15 percent of the total. Combined these two uses represent 91 percent of the land use in the county. Residential uses make up less than 6 percent of the total.

General Category	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	4,415	0.68%
Commercial	3,331	0.51%
Industrial (includes quarries)	1,844	0.28%
Governmental/Public/Institutional	1,144	0.18%
Open Lands	1,636	0.25%
Outdoor Recreation	1,846	0.28%
Residential	37,063	5.69%
Transportation	6,447	0.99%
Woodlands	496,175	76.23%
Water	97,015	14.90%
Total Acres	650,916	100.0%

Source: Existing Land Use Maps from Plans, Towns, and Vilas & NCWRPC GIS

Agriculture

Very little productive agricultural land exists within Vilas County in terms of traditional agriculture and production of cash crops. In fact, such uses comprise less than 1% of the county's total land uses. The Town of Washington has the largest area of tillable land in the county. Sandy soils and a limited growing season make cash cropping very difficult. However, cranberry operations in the Town of Manitowish Waters have been a very strong agricultural component in terms of production and for generating tourism.

Commercial (Business)

Commercial uses are found throughout the county. In all less than 1% of the county's land is in this use. Commercial uses include hotels, motels, and resorts which are located throughout the county, particularly along lakeshores. It also includes commercial developments located along highways, such as gas/service stations, gift shops, restaurants, etc. Other commercial uses include those uses which provide goods and services required by both year-round and seasonal populations such as grocery stores, medical facilities, banks, etc.

There are several small communities with concentrations of development, including a mix of residential and commercial, with the largest being the City of Eagle River. There is concentrated commercial in the form of local downtown areas in several towns such as Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, St. Germain, Phelps, Presque Isle, Sayner, and Land O' Lakes to name a few. The downtown areas play a large role in Vilas County's community character and northwoods aesthetic. Most of the local business activity is located along the road system, scattered throughout the county. Higher concentrations of commercial uses exist along the state and federal highways, including STH 70, USH 45, and STH 51. Much of the local business activity is home-based, and consists of local trade, service, and retail.

Government/Public/Institutional

Such uses are comprised of lands used for public schools, cemeteries, airfields, active and closed landfill sites, transfer stations/recycling sites, public facility and service buildings (i.e., municipal buildings, community centers), and provision of community utilities and services such as power, gas, and telephone.

Industrial

Industrial uses in Vilas County are very low and comprise less than 1% of the county's total existing land use. The majority (70%) of industrial uses in the county consist of active and abandoned gravel pits. Because of the desire for municipal water, sewer, fire protection, cheap land and other services, most industrial uses are typically located in incorporated municipalities, which is why the highest concentration of industrial use occurs in the City of Eagle River. Although historically industrial uses have been segregated from residential areas, certain industrial facilities may be compatible with these areas if there is an adequate buffer and protection. Because protection of the natural environment, including water, air, and forest resources is so important in Vilas

County, heavy polluting industries will likely not be a part of the area's industrial growth. The City of Eagle River does have the county's only industrial parks.

Open Lands

Open lands are areas that have no development and are clear of large concentrations of trees, such as open wetlands or fallow farm fields. Less than 1% percent of land is in this use.

Outdoor Recreation

Vilas County has many areas that are dedicated for public parks and outdoor recreation. With an array of recreational resources provided from local, county, state, and federal sources, the effects of a growing population and accompanying service demands will place greater demands on the recreational facilities. Less than 1% of the county is used for parks and recreation, but that does not include the vast resources of land and outdoor recreation found in the Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests, the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, and the Vilas County Forest.

Residential Uses

Residential development has consumed less than 6% of the total land in Vilas County. Residential uses are split into four categories: single family, single family with business, two-family residential, and multi-family residential. Residential development patterns can be generally characterized into four categories. These include: 1) high and low density lakeshore residential, 2) community and neighborhood concentrations, 3) remote subdivisions, and 4) rural, large-parcel forestry/residential. A majority of residential development occurs along or in close proximity to the lakeshore areas. Lakeshore development has occurred on the majority of the county's lakes which are 50 acres or greater. As the larger lakes become developed, the trend will shift the development pressure to the numerous smaller-sized lakes (less than 50 acres). Much of the lakeshore development consists of second homes and seasonal conversions to permanent housing. Scattered low-density development is occurring in many areas of Vilas County, radiating outward from the lakeshore areas. This demand is impacting land prices which have more than doubled in the past five years, and is also creating a larger market (demand) for forested land as available lakeshore property is becoming scarce and expensive.

Transportation

Transportation uses are the roadways that run throughout the county.

Woodlands

Over three-fourths of the county is comprised of forest land. The majority of this land in forest use is owned and managed by public entities including the U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Vilas County Forestry Department. Much of this land is heavily used for recreation and for commercial timber production.

These areas are not only used by local residents, but also attract people from around the nation, and thus protection of these areas is important to maintaining the county's viable tourist economy. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas, such as riparian and forested habitats and floodway areas, whether on public or private land, is important for the same reason.

Water

Surface water comprises almost 15% of the land area in Vilas County. The development pattern is a direct reflection of the location of lakes, rivers, and streams.

7.5 Demographics Affecting Land Use

Population, housing and employment are the three most critical demographic factors that influence land use patterns. Land use patterns in Vilas County have been shaped by a variety of factors. These key factors and their associated influence on the county's land use are responsible for much of the development pattern, as it exists in Vilas County today.

In an effort to determine future land use needs, a series of projections were completed using 1980 and 2000 population, housing units and employment information. By continuing the trends of the last twenty years into the future, we determine the number of additional persons, housing units and jobs that will need a place somewhere in the county.

The population of the County has continued to grow over the last twenty years. In 2000, there were 21,033 people living in the County. Between 1980 and 2000,

population grew by over 27 percent. Over that same period, total housing units increased by over 67 percent, and employment increased by 30 percent.

A. Population

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population projections are displayed in Table 7-3. The DOA projections indicate a 22 percent growth over the 30-year period from 2000 to 2030. The projected population, based on DOA, for 2030 is 25,720.

Table 7-3 displays the projected increase for population in five-year increments for 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030.

B. Housing

Over the last twenty years there have been significant changes in the number of housing units in the County. In 1980, there were 13,388 housing units and by 2000, there were 22,397 housing units in the county, an increase of over 21 percent.

Housing will continue to be needed throughout the county as the population continues to increase. As displayed in Table 3 there will be an additional 4,600 persons in the county by 2030. Based on projected population growth and existing persons per household of 2.29 we determined the total units needed in the county. An additional 2,000 housing units will be needed for the new residents alone. This does not include demand for seasonal housing, which currently accounts for 56 percent of the housing stock.

Table 7-3 displays the projected increase for housing units in five-year increments for 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030.

C. Employment

Employment in the County is expected to continue to increase. In 2000, 7,256 jobs were located in the County. Using the 1990 to 2000 historic Census employment trend an additional 5,000 jobs will be created in the county, a 30 percent increase.

Table 7-2 displays the projected employment increases in five-year increments for 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025 and 2030. See Table 7-2.

Table 7-2: Population, Housing & Employment Projections					
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population					
DOA	22,953	23,829	24,64	25,295	25,720
Housing Units					
NCWRPC	23,235	23,618	23,974	24,258	24,444
Employment					
NCWRPC	10,711	11,514	12,378	13,306	14,304

7.6 Land Demand

As the County's population grows there is demand for more housing and employment opportunities. The previous projections highlighted those needs. To translate those needs to land use we use the projections to determine land use demand.

Residential:

The overall residential land demand is based on the addition of 1,209 units for year round residents, and an additional 677 units for seasonal uses. (According to the 2000 Census, seasonal housing makes up about 56 percent of the total units within the County).

Combined about 1,886 new housing units (2010–2030) or about 94 per year per year will be added to the housing stock. Assuming a county wide average of about 2 acres of land needed per unit, we arrive at 188 acres per year or an average of about 940 acres of residential land is expected to be needed every 5 years to accommodate anticipated population growth by the year 2030.

Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural:

Commercial and industrial development is subject to market forces and difficult to predict. Agricultural demand will remain stable over the period, so no

additional land is needed. In fact, some of the additional acres needed for other uses will likely be converted from existing agricultural uses.

Currently there are about 3,300 acres of commercial land and about 1,800 acres of industrial land. There is no trend information available for either commercial or industrial lands in the county. Therefore, we make a general assumption that over the twenty-year planning period that these uses both increase by 20 percent, or about 660 acres for commercial uses and about 360 acres for industrial uses. Thus for each five-year period about 132 and 72 acres are needed for commercial and industrial uses respectively.

Table 7-3: Land Use Demand in Acres						
		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Residential		940	940	940	940	940
Commercial		132	132	132	132	132
Industrial		72	72	72	72	72

Source: NCWRPC

Between 2010 and 2030, it is anticipated that approximately 1,144 acres will be needed every five-years to support residential, commercial and industrial development demands in the county. Over the twenty-year period about 5,720 acres will be needed to meet the land demands in the Vilas County.

7.7 Future Land Use

Developing the county plan was simple since it takes all of the locally developed and adopted plans and combines them together into one county future land use plan map. The county relied upon the local units to create their own plan. The future land use map does include four town plans that were in final draft form. These are Arbor Vitae, Conover, Land O' Lakes, and Phelps.

Each town developed their future land use map by reviewing the natural and built environments and after examining population, housing, employment and land demand trends. The future land use plan map represents the preferred long-term land uses in each town. Those plans are generalized here for planning purposes only.

Although a future land use map is advisory and does not have the authority of zoning, it is intended to reflect community desires and serve as a guide for local officials to coordinate and manage future development.

A. Land Use Categories

Much like the existing land use map process several future generalized land use planning categories were established. Some towns utilized these categories during the development of their own plan, while others developed similar type categories, and others have utilized existing zoning as the basis for future land use. The resulting future land use map was prepared to present a generalized overview of the county.

The Thirteen basic land use categories used here are generally consistent with the local town plan categories. However, there are deviations, therefore the town plans provide the greatest detail and are the official plan for the town. Those plans should be used for decision-making.

The future land use categories are defined below:

Residential

Identifies areas recommended for residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes, such as lakeshore development.

Rural Residential

Identifies areas that are recommended for less dense residential development, consisting of larger minimum lot sizes than the residential category. These areas will also allow a mixture of residential uses, and provide a good transition from more dense development to the rural countryside.

Multi-Family Residential

Identifies areas for higher density residential development, such as apartments.

Commercial

Identifies areas recommended for commercial development, as well as existing commercial establishments located throughout the county, including resorts.

Mixed Use

Identifies areas that have a variety of existing uses and no particular recommended use. Uses could range from residential to recreational to commercial.

Industrial

Identifies areas recommended for industrial development, as well as existing industrial areas located throughout the county.

Governmental (Public/Institutional)

Identifies existing or planned governmental/public/institutional facilities within the county, including recreational facilities.

Agricultural

Identifies areas to be preserved for the purpose of general crop farming or the raising of livestock.

Forestry

Identifies areas of large woodlands within the county.

Transportation Corridors

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the county. This also includes rail corridors and airports.

Tribal

This identifies Tribal lands.

Outdoor Recreation

Identifies areas for active recreation, such as golf courses and ball fields.

Preservation & Open Space

Contains sensitive environmental areas, such as 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands, steep slopes, and open water. This could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the county.

For administration purposes, adopted town plans would be the basis for future decision making. **Several county or town zoning classifications may be appropriate in each of the classifications above.**

Several towns are currently under county zoning, while some towns have town level zoning in addition to other land related regulations. Landowners need to seek information from both the town and the county related to planning and zoning issues. In addition, surrounding all five airports in the county are Height Limitation Zoning Ordinances (HLZO) that must be considered in land use decisions. See airport HLZO maps for information.

B. Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Plan map is not the same as the Existing Land Use map. The existing land use map categorizes the way land is being used today, while the intent of the future land use map is to identify areas for future development. Often times there is overlap, but the purpose of each map is very different.

To create the future land use map at the county level, all of the town plans were combined into a composite map. Since most of the towns utilize several different plan categories they were all consolidated into some general categories, as defined above. Once the future land use plan map was finalized the areas were again calculated for each of the categories using GIS software. The results are not exact acreage calculations, but rather generalized areas as calculated from the lines on the map. The local plan maps are incorporated into this planning process, but are generalized for presentation purposes only. See Future Land Use Map.

It is important to note that the map developed here is for a general display of all of the town plans. As discussed earlier, all of the plans were generalized and categorized into some basic categories to develop this presentation map. The official future land use map is contained in the individually adopted town plans.

The Future Land Use Plan reflects no major changes in land use over the next twenty years. Forestry will continue to be the major land use in the county utilizing over 60 percent of the land, followed by residential uses of about 11 percent. Water covers about 14 percent of the county leaving about 15 percent for the remaining uses.

Countywide about 80,000 acres were identified as future residential uses, over 9,600 acres for future commercial development, and over 1,300 acres for future industrial development. See Table 7-4: Generalized Future Land Use.

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	5,721	0.9%
Commercial	9,618	1.5%
Forestry	377,597	58.0%
Governmental (Public/Institutional)	1,428	0.2%
Industrial (includes quarries)	1,334	0.2%
Preservation and Open Space	4,416	0.9%
Residential	51,989	8.0%
Rural Residential	28,743	4.4%
Multi-Family	538	0.1%
Mixed Use	23,811	3.7%
Outdoor Recreation	12,832	2.0%
Transportation	7,954	1.2%
Tribal	30,833	4.7%
Water (Surface Water)	92,494	14.2%
Total Acres	649,308	100.0%

Source: Based on Generalized Local Use Plans & NCWRPC GIS
Note that the total presented here does not include Eagle River.

The Future Land Use Plan map is not a zoning map. The Future Land Use Plan map is general in nature and was developed as a general guide for future development in the county. Although general, the future land use plan map indicates appropriate future land uses, and as the result shows where rezonings may occur. In many areas the existing zoning districts already reflect the desired future land uses; while in other areas, zoning map or text changes may be required to meet some of the desired future land uses.

The identification of desired future land use types through the map does not imply that an area is immediately appropriate for rezoning. Given service demands and a desire for controlled growth, careful consideration to the timing of zoning decisions is essential. In some places, it may be desirable to rezone land to reflect the planned land use designations as soon as possible. In other cases, it may be appropriate to wait to rezone the area until an actual development proposal is brought forward.

One of the goals of this land use plan is to balance individual private property rights with the town's need to protect property values community-wide, minimize the conflicts between land uses and keep the cost of local government as low as possible. An essential characteristic of any planning program is that it be ongoing and flexible. Periodic updates to the plan are needed to maintain that it is reflective of current trends.

7.8 Redevelopment Opportunities

The most efficient development utilizes existing public services and infrastructure; these areas are referred to as "*Smart Growth*" areas. Currently, the majority of existing services are located in the City of Eagle River and where sewer and water systems are in place, such as Lac du Flambeau, Land O' Lakes, and Phelps. These areas have existing infrastructure and service capacity. The use of existing infrastructure and services is more cost-effective; therefore, new commercial, industrial and higher density residential development should be located in these areas. Areas where sewer & water and other infrastructure and services are not available should have minimal industrial and commercial development and only scattered residential development, where appropriate. There are some scattered sites throughout the county that may be available for reuse.

7.9 Public Land Ownership

Public ownership of land has had a significant impact and will continue to impact the development patterns in the county. Nearly 43 percent of the county's total area is owned by public entities, such as the National Forest Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Vilas County, local governments, and tribal lands. See the Ownership Map.

Table 7-5: Public Ownership			
	Total Acreage	% of Total Public Ownership	% of County Acreage
Public Ownership			
Nicolet-Chequamegon (Federal)	53,969	19.4%	8.3%
Northern Highland (State)	149,733	53.9%	23.0%
Vilas County Forest/Lands	39,502	14.2%	6.1%
Town Lands/Forest	5,563	2.0%	0.9%
Tribal Lands	29,114	10.5%	4.5%
Totals:	277,881	100%	42.8%

Source: Foth & Van Dyke, 2003

Public ownership provides long-term protection against development in these areas. Additionally, a significant amount of land in Vilas County and other northern Wisconsin counties is owned and managed for the production of timber for industrial uses. The most significant amount of industrial forestland in Vilas County is located in the Town of Winchester. However, much of these lands are being divided and sold to individuals, which has changed the development patterns in the county.

In addition to ownership, the amount of natural features in the county, primarily its numerous lakes, is a major factor in the existing development pattern of the county. The effects of the desire of property owners to establish seasonal or permanent residences along lakes and other water bodies in Vilas County are unmistakable, as major residential developments exist along the majority of the county's lakes. A majority of the lake shorelines are held in private ownership, hence the concentrated lakeshore development.

Three major trends are likely to continue throughout the planning period which relate to lake/waterfront development:

- ✓ Conversion of seasonal to permanent residences will increase as the baby-boomer generation migrates northward for its retirement location.
- ✓ Waterfront development pressure and cost of shoreline property will increase as fewer lakefront properties are available.
- ✓ Large, privately-owned parcels adjacent to lakes will likely face heavy development pressure for subdivision.

7.10 Land Use Programs

The principle land use programs include the County Zoning and Land Division ordinances. Two other related programs that may impact land use within the Town are listed below:

Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Program:

In October of 1999, the Governor signed into law Wisconsin Act 9, the Budget Bill, containing substantial revisions of statutes governing comprehensive planning. The law has been revised by the signing of two additional bills into

law. The first is AB 872, containing “technical revisions” which was signed May 10, 2000. The second bill, signed April 13, 2004, is AB 608, which reduced the number of items that must be consistent with the plan to three, these are: official mapping, subdivision ordinances and zoning ordinances. Taken together these bills represent the most sweeping revision of the State’s planning enabling laws in half a century.

The law (§66.1001 WI Stats.) requires all jurisdictions within the state that exercise control over land-use to prepare a comprehensive plan by 2010. It lays out the nine required chapters of the plan and requires a public participation process. Jurisdictions that do not have a comprehensive plan in place by the deadline may not engage in actions that impact land-use.

The comprehensive planning law is significant in many ways. The law creates for the first time a definition of a comprehensive plan; it requires that almost all local units of government have a plan; it sets requirements for public participation; and requires that the plan be consistent with local implementations tools. Most important, is that it maintains that the process be locally driven so all local units of government decide their own future.

Working Lands Initiative:

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was passed as a part of the state’s 2009-2011 biennial budget process. The goal of the Working Lands Initiative is to achieve preservation of areas significant for current and future agricultural uses through successful implementation of these components. The main components include:

- Expand and modernize the state’s existing farmland preservation program
- Establish agricultural enterprise areas (AEAs)
- Develop a purchase of agricultural conservation easement matching grant program (PACE)

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative will require that each county update its Farmland Preservation Plans over the next few years.

7.11 County Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1:

Provide for a well-balanced mix of residential, business, industrial, recreational, forestry, and other uses to serve the future needs of Vilas County and to maintain the area as a desirable place to live and work; to work cooperatively with Town and City governments to promote coordinated land use and a compatible development pattern that respects private property rights; to minimize land use conflicts and negative development impacts; to carefully consider the use, location, and density of development and how it affects the natural resources, community character, anticipated growth, and need for utilities and services.

Objectives:

1. Guide the use, location, and density of development within both public and private lands consistent with the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan.
2. Designate, maintain, and regulate an adequate quantity of suitable lands for future residential, commercial, forestry, industrial, recreational, and other uses in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and public input.
3. Focus new areas of growth within or near existing areas of development where adequate public facilities and services exist or are planned for expansion and where there is adjacent existing compatible development.
4. Encourage the clustering of new business, residential, commercial, and industrial development into planned development areas in order to promote defined development districts, conserve resources, and maintain the character of the area.
5. Encourage public land management in a manner compatible with Vilas County Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs.
6. Work directly with the Towns and City to plan for a compatible land use pattern throughout Vilas County.
7. Promote development patterns, which provide current and future residents with a diversity of lot sizes and uses.

8. Ensure that future land use policies and decisions are based on sound planning techniques and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
9. Promote flexibility and provide for incentives to encourage desired outcomes.
10. Encourage early identification of potential negative impacts from development proposals and promote strategies to minimize those impacts on neighbors, the community, and the natural resources.

Goal 2:

In conjunction with local municipalities, retain and preserve the rural, “northwoods” aesthetics and related quality of life.

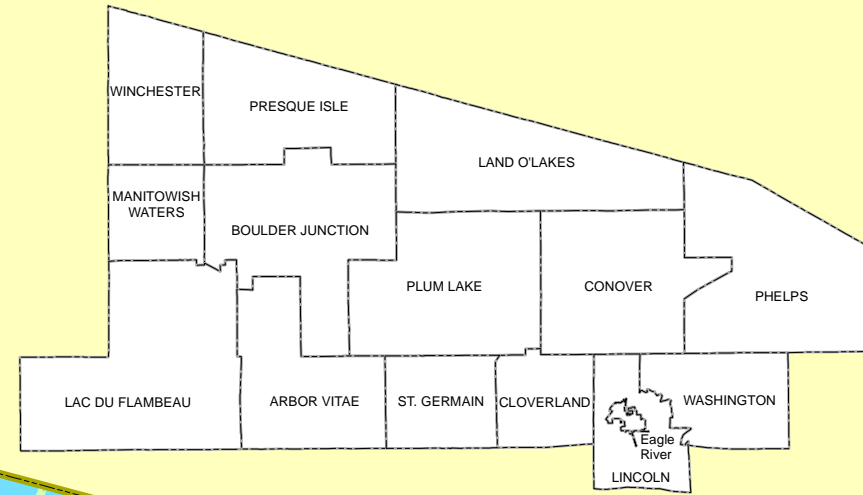
Objectives:

1. Encourage new commercial or business development to be consistent with and complement adjacent land uses and character through such items as architecture, landscaping, signage, lighting, exterior building materials, and color.
2. Increase enforcement of existing nuisance, design, or aesthetic ordinances and support local enforcement or development of ordinances such as those that address signage, junk vehicles, white goods, and illegal dumping.
3. Encourage natural buffers where they exist, and encourage native tree planting or tree replacement in areas without natural buffers to minimize the potential of land use conflicts and further promote the rural atmosphere of the county.

See the policies as identified in the County’s Comprehensive Forest and Land & Water Management Plans, as well as the Zoning Ordinance and other regulations.

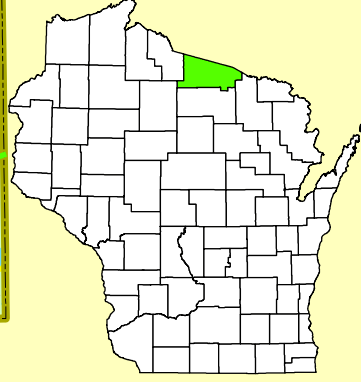
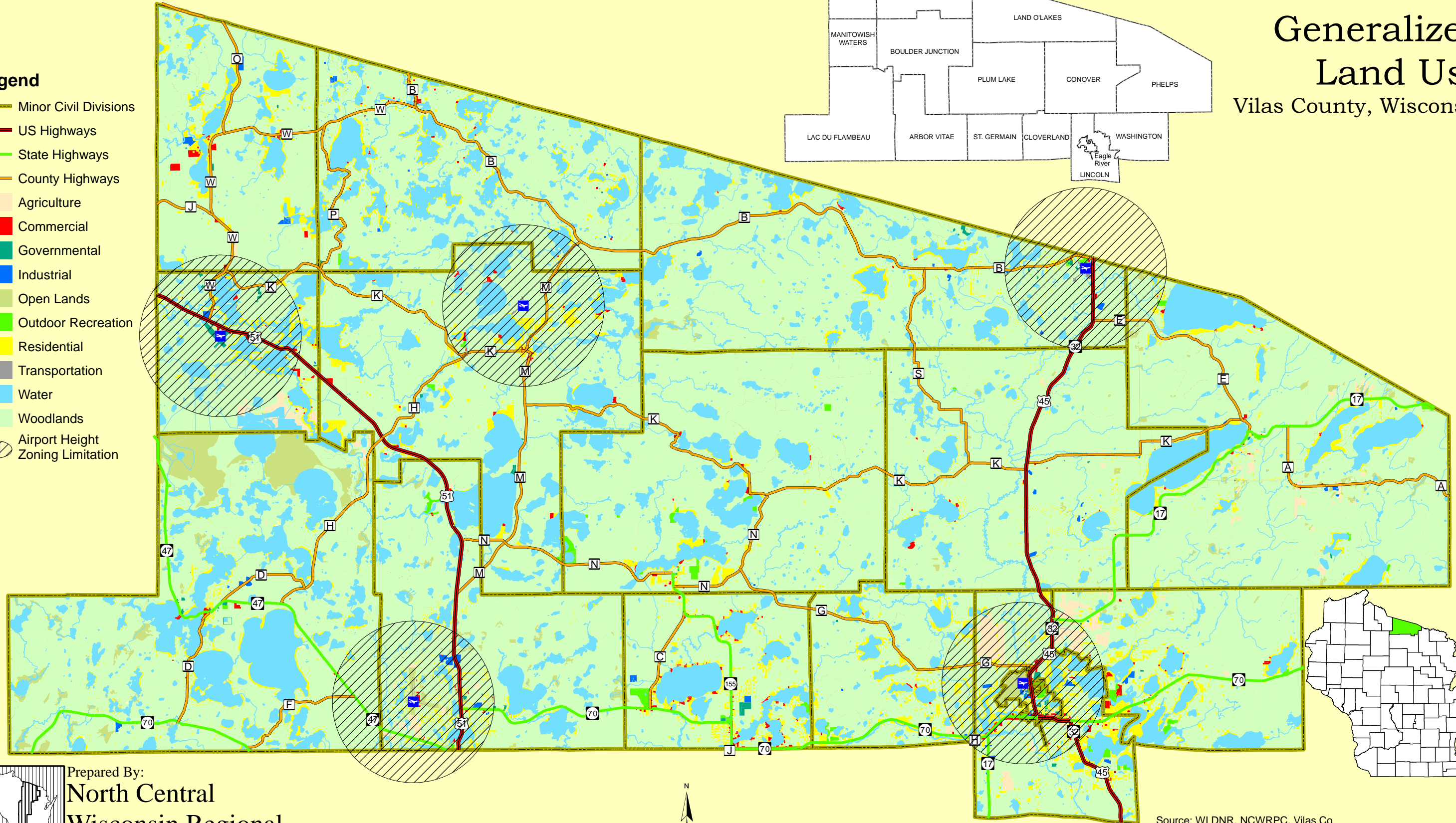
Existing Generalized Land Use

Vilas County, Wisconsin



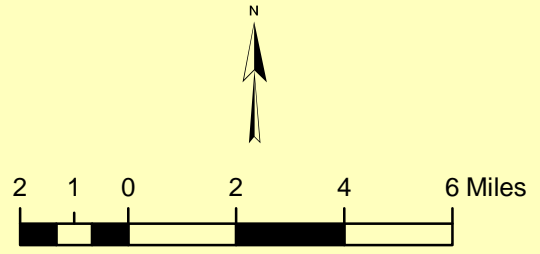
Legend

- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental
- Industrial
- Open Lands
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Transportation
- Water
- Woodlands
- Airport Height Zoning Limitation



Prepared By:
**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas Co
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Generalized Future Land Use

(See Adopted Town Plan Maps)

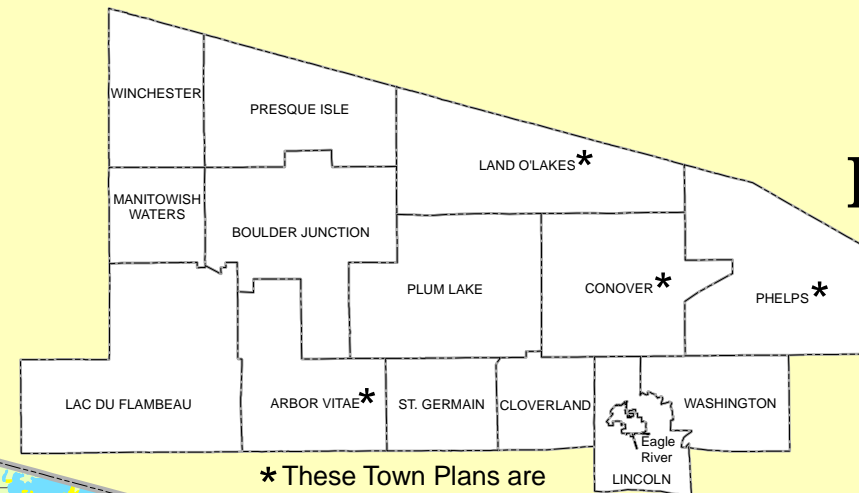
Vilas County, Wisconsin

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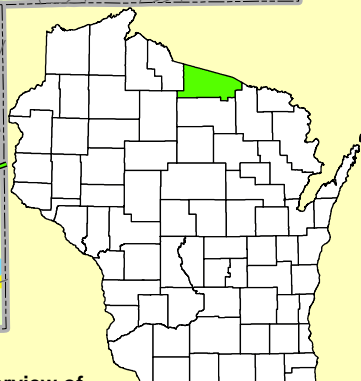
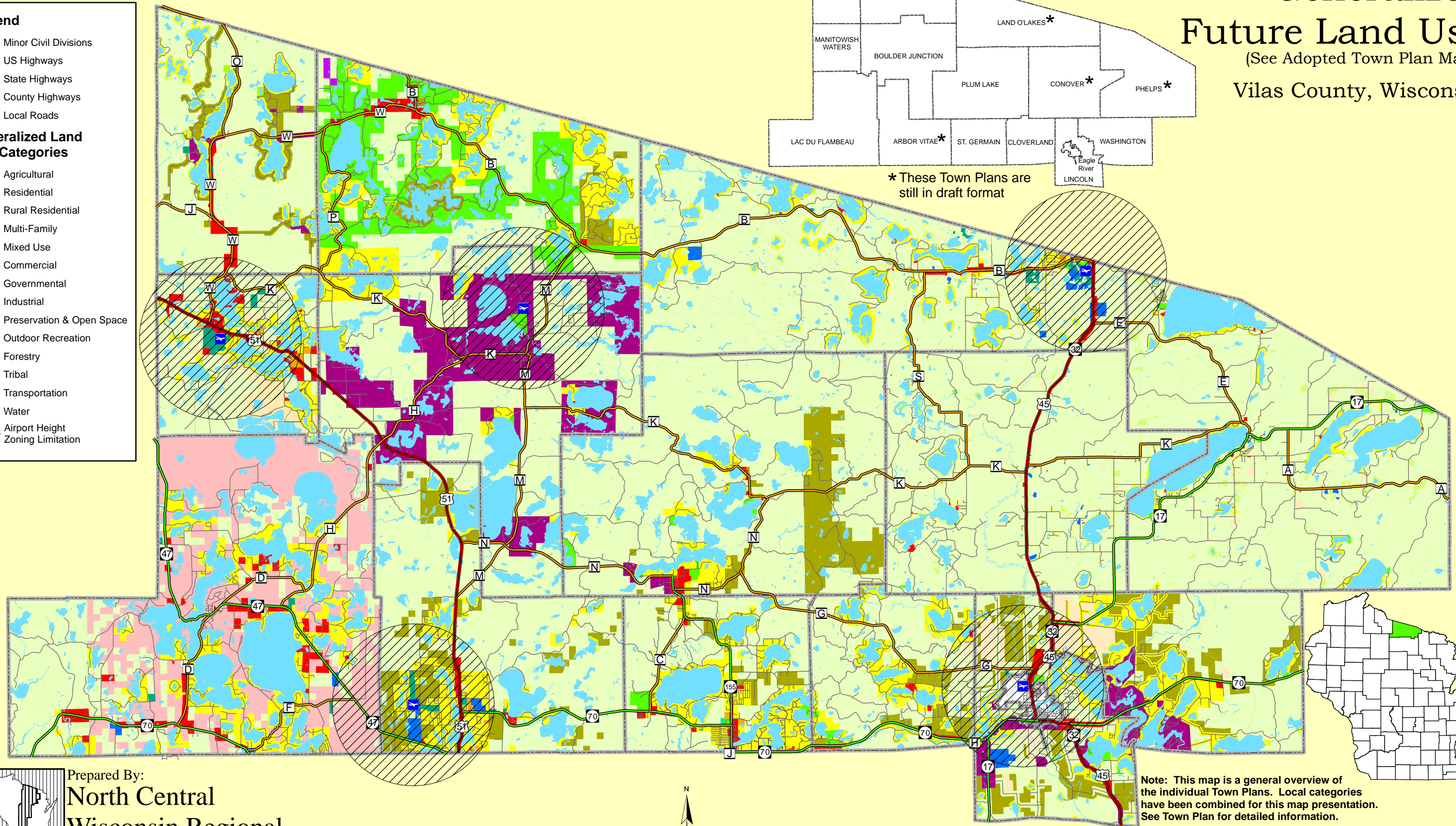
- Minor Civil Divisions
- US Highways
- State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads

Generalized Land Use Categories

- Agricultural
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Multi-Family
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Governmental
- Industrial
- Preservation & Open Space
- Outdoor Recreation
- Forestry
- Tribal
- Transportation
- Water
- Airport Height Zoning Limitation



* These Town Plans are still in draft format

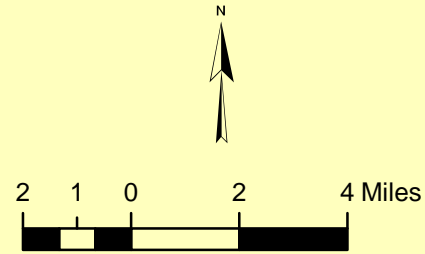


Note: This map is a general overview of the individual Town Plans. Local categories have been combined for this map presentation. See Town Plan for detailed information.

Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas Co











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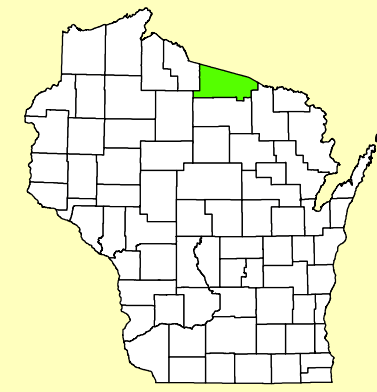
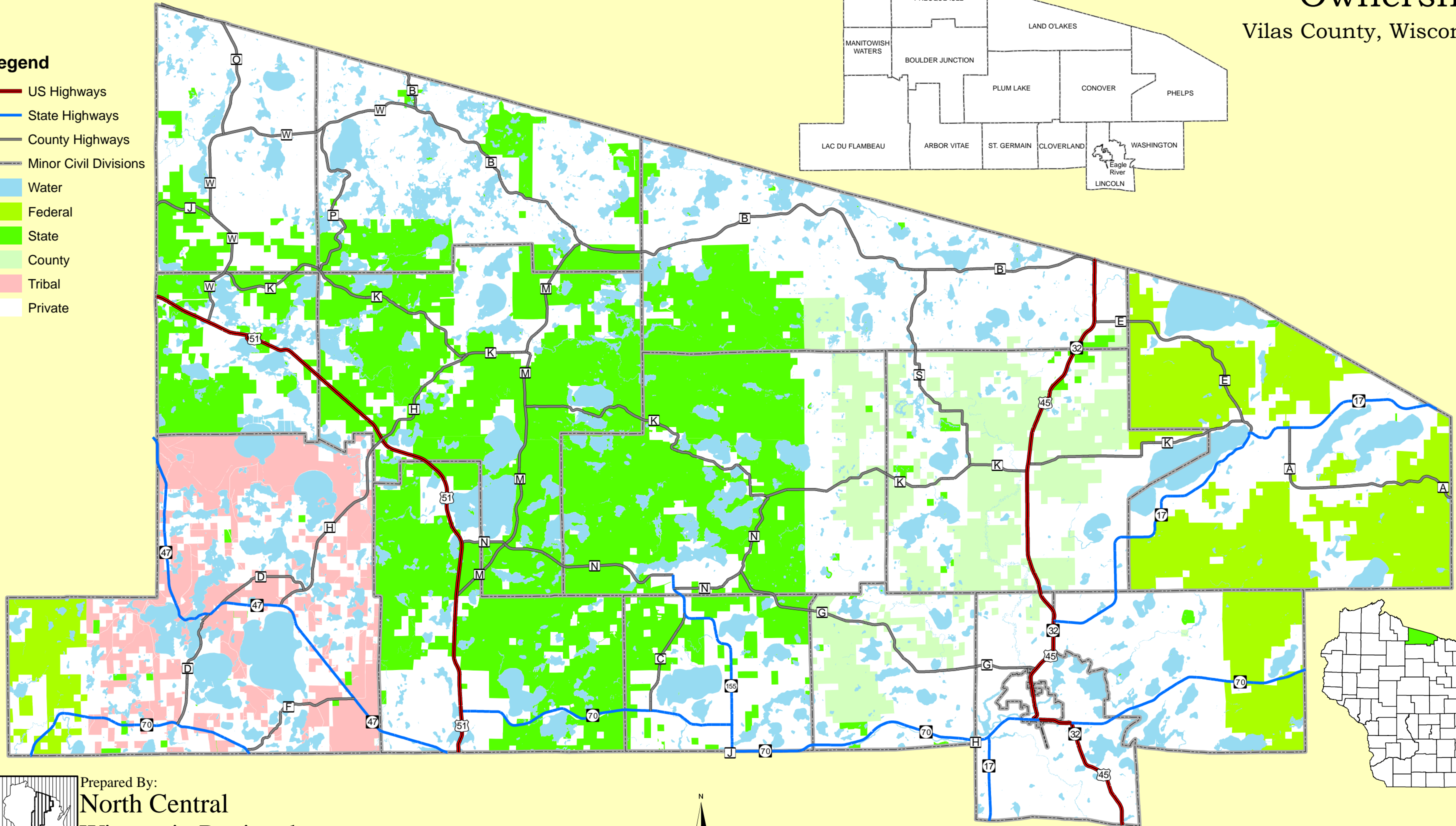
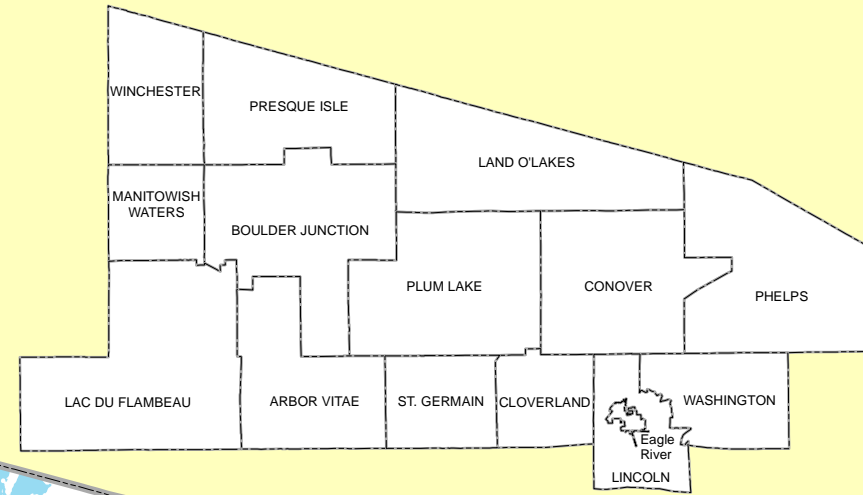
Prepared By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



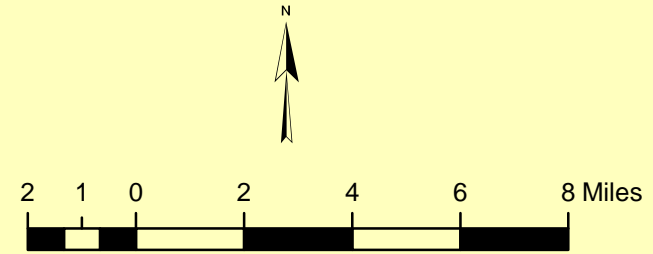
Ownership

Vilas County, Wisconsin

- Legend**
-  US Highways
 -  State Highways
 -  County Highways
 -  Minor Civil Divisions
 -  Water
 -  Federal
 -  State
 -  County
 -  Tribal
 -  Private



Prepared By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
 210 McClellan St., Suite 210, Wausau, WI 54403
 715-849-5510 - staff@ncwrpc.org - www.ncwrpc.org



Source: WI DNR, NCWRPC, Vilas Co, FEMA, NRCS
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Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Chapter 8: Intergovernmental Chapter

8.1 Background

This is the eighth of nine chapters in the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this chapter is to overview intergovernmental cooperation, inventory existing cooperative efforts, identify potential opportunities, and establish goals, objectives, and policies to promote intergovernmental cooperation.

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is increasingly important; since many issues cross over political boundaries, such as watersheds, labor force, commuter patterns, and housing. Communities are not independent of each other, but rather dependent on each other. The effects from growth and change on one spill over to all surrounding communities and impact the region as a whole.

State-wide, Wisconsin has over 2,500 units of government and special purpose districts. Having so many governmental units allows for local representation, but also adds more players to the decision making process. In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communication and information sharing, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue.

A. Benefits

There are many reasons intergovernmental cooperation makes sense. Some examples include:

- **Trust:** Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions. As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another's needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them.
- **Cost Savings:** Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can

enable some communities to provide their residents with services that would otherwise be too costly.

- Consistency: Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities and other jurisdictions.
- Address Regional Issues: Communicating and coordinating their actions, and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues, which are regional in nature.

The major beneficiary of intergovernmental cooperation is the local resident. They may not understand, or even care about, the details of a particular intergovernmental issue, but residents can appreciate their benefits, such as costs savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

B. Trends

A variety of factors, some long-standing and others more recent have brought the issue of governmental cooperation to the forefront. Some of these factors include:

- Local governments financial situation;
- Opportunity to reduce costs by working together;
- Elimination of duplication of services;
- Population settlement patterns and population mobility; and
- Economic and environmental interdependence.

In addition, as more jurisdictions create comprehensive plans and share them with surrounding communities, new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation will be identified.

C. Intergovernmental Cooperation Tool

The primary tool used for intergovernmental cooperation is the shared service agreement.

- ✓ Shared Service Agreements

Wisconsin Statute s.66.0301, formerly 66.30, entitled "Intergovernmental Cooperation"; does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Typically, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination refers to the management and delivery of public services and facilities. It is also dependent upon a defined geographic area within which cooperation and coordination may be feasible.

Intergovernmental agreements prepared using this statute, are the most common form of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. However, the statute does not require planning as a component of any agreement and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process. Shared service agreements are utilized to allow this type of cooperation.

8.2 Existing / Potential Intergovernmental Conflicts

No major intergovernmental concerns/conflicts were identified, although there were some issues identified.

Towns that have their own zoning and other land regulations creates an extra step for land owners, since they have two sets of regulations and procedures to work with.

Towns should develop local regulations and enforcement capacity to deal with nuisance issues, since these are local not county level issues.

Annexation conflicts and boundary disputes between the City of Eagle River and the Town of Lincoln may occur if the city expands.

No potential intergovernmental conflicts were identified in this process. The process for resolving some of these conflicts will in part be achieved by meeting with the surrounding towns when significant issues of mutual concern arise, including across the state border to Michigan.

8.3 Inventory & Trends

Currently there are numerous intergovernmental relationships and some general agreements in place. The following is a summary of existing and potential cooperative efforts.

A. County

There are a variety of agreements in place with the towns, surrounding counties and other agencies.

Vilas County directly and indirectly provides a number of services to the Towns and the City of Eagle River. Some of these services include: Highways, Sheriff, Emergency Management, Public Health, and Courts. Mutual aid agreements are in place with surrounding jurisdictions for emergency services, including into Michigan. There is a tri-county agency with Forest and Oneida related to health services.

The County Highway Department maintains and plows County, state and federal highways within the Town. The County Sheriff provides protective services through periodic patrols and on-call 911 responses. The Sheriff also manages the 911-dispatch center, not only for police protection, but also for ambulance/EMS response and dispatching the Town Fire Department. The Forestry and Outdoor Recreation Department maintains a county-wide park system and county forest system for the use and enjoyment of all residents. The County Zoning Department administers zoning in the Towns, as well as providing land records and land conservation services.

The county also cooperatively works with local communities to fund the chamber of commerce and participates in Grow North a group of five counties to promote economic development.

B. School Districts

There are several school districts within the County, including Lakeland School District, Northland Pines School District, and Phelps School District.

The technical college that serves the area is the Nicolet Area Technical College. There is no permanent campus in the county, the nearest locations are located in Minocqua and Rhinelander.

C. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Statutes as a voluntary association of governments serving a ten county area. Vilas County is a member of the NCWRPC, which includes all of its local units of government. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) land use, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

The NCWRPC is also assisting the county and several town comprehensive plans. Other countywide projects by the NCWRPC that cover the Town include a county economic development strategy, county regional bike route plan, human services public transit coordination plan, and the Conover – Land O’ Lakes Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

D. State and Federal Government

The Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation are the primary agencies the Town might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

The WNR Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department Of Transportation is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government. Examples include local road aids, the County Road Improvement Program (CHIP) and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the Town must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roadways.

In Wisconsin, most federal programs are administered by the state, so the Town would be dealing with the responsible state agency with regard to federal programs and regulations.

8.4 Goal, Objective and Policies

As in the previous chapters of this plan, a series of goals, objectives, and policies are identified.

Goal:

1. Seek mutually beneficial cooperation with all levels of government.

Objective:

1. Maintain current agreements and explore additional opportunities with adjacent communities, including solid waste and recycling, protective services, and border aquatic and terrestrial invasive species.

Policies:

1. Meet with surrounding communities and counties to discuss issues of mutual concern, including those in Michigan.
2. Study cost sharing or contracting with neighboring counties to provide more efficient services or public utilities.
3. Maintain a close relationship with the School Districts related to facility planning.
4. Encourage towns to develop local regulations and enforcement capacity related to nuisance issues.

Chapter 9: Implementation

Chapter 9: Implementation

9.1 Background

This is the final chapter of the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan. This chapter outlines plan adoption and monitoring procedures, plan amendment and update procedures, and reviews plan implementation tools. This chapter also includes the overall recommendations to implement this plan.

The County Board and its various committees, boards, and commissions, along with county staff, will use this Comprehensive Plan to guide the physical development of the County in the years to come. In addition, developers and landowners will use the document.

9.2 Plan Adoption and Monitoring

The adoption process requires that the Plan Commission, which is the Zoning and Planning Committee, reviews the Comprehensive Plan and pass a “resolution” (by a majority vote) to recommend the adoption of the plan to the County Board. That recommendation is forwarded to the County Board who must adopt the Comprehensive Plan by “ordinance”. Prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a public hearing is required to be held to solicit public comment. That public hearing must be advertised with at least 30 days notice.

Adoption formalizes the plan document as the framework to guide local development decisions over the next 10 years. The adopted plan should also be recognized as a tool for communicating the County’s land use policy related to growth and development.

Members of the County Board, Zoning Committee, County Staff, and other local decision-making bodies should periodically review the plan and identify areas that might need to be updated. On an annual basis the Future Land Use Map should be reviewed and amended if necessary to keep the map current. At a minimum, the entire plan should be formally reviewed at least every five years and, by law, updated at least every 10 years.

As part of the comprehensive planning process, a number of goals, objectives, and policies were developed. To measure progress towards meeting those, a variety of actions need to take place. Therefore, the task to measure plan

progress, is as simple as determining if any action was taken or not on the various goals, objectives, and policies. Various committees and agencies would complete many of these actions at the department level. It should be noted that many of the policies identified in the plan are continuous or on going and should also be monitored to measure the plan's overall success. Any evaluation should involve first reviewing the goals and objectives to ensure they are still relevant and reflect current community desires. Then the policies should be reviewed and refined to eliminate completed tasks and identify new approaches if appropriate.

It is recommended that a formal periodic "Plan Status" report be prepared to summarize the progress toward implementation. This report might be jointly developed by various County Departments with town input, as related to implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies developed within this plan.

9.3 Plan Amendments and Updates

The plan may be amended at any time upon the recommendation of the Zoning and Planning Committee and approval from the County Board following the same statutory process described for initial plan adoption. The procedures are the same regardless of how minor the proposed amendment or change. Amendments may be appropriate throughout the lifecycle of the plan, particularly if new issues emerge or trends change. These amendments will typically consist of minor changes to the plan text or maps. The plan is long-range in design and any amendments should be carefully considered for their cumulative effect.

Future amendments should also consider consistency with current state Comprehensive Planning statutes. The planning statutes provide the framework for developing and adopting plans and a requirement that beginning on January 1, 2010, certain actions of a local government unit that affects land use will be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted in conformance with state requirements.

A list of general criteria to consider when reviewing proposed amendments to the comprehensive plan, including:

- ✓ The plan amendment corrects an error made in the original plan.
- ✓ The amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

- ✓ It will maintain the public health, safety, and welfare.
- ✓ The amendment is necessary due to changed conditions or circumstances.
- ✓ The cumulative effects of proposed changes have been assessed and determined to be consistent with the spirit and intent of the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan and any other applicable local plans and policies.
- ✓ The amendment does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated.
- ✓ The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including surface water quality and groundwater, or the impact can be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- ✓ The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration or dedication.
- ✓ The change allows a more appropriate transition or buffer to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- ✓ The resulting new development would be compatible with the existing land uses and physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve the area.

Landowners, local units of government, Vilas County staff, the Vilas County Zoning and Planning Committee, or the Vilas County Board of Supervisors, can initiate amendments. The amendment process begins with a resolution from the Zoning and Planning Committee recommending an amendment. A public hearing on the amendment would be needed and the Board must approve a plan amendment by ordinance.

According to the State's comprehensive planning law, comprehensive plans must be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to the more routine amendments described above, plan updates will probably involve re-writing entire chapters of the plan document. A plan update should include a thorough examination of the community's goals and objectives, based upon an analysis of current growth trends and major changes that have occurred since

the plan was initially adopted or last amended. Plan updates must be formally adopted following the same procedure described above for initial plan adoption.

It is important that the public be involved in the update process. To ensure that the public is engaged in plan amendments, the same procedure used for initial plan adoption must be followed. The Land Use Planning Committee assisted in the development of the plan, then the plan was forwarded to the Zoning Committee for review and that committee passed a resolution to recommended county adoption of the plan. A public hearing will be held to allow citizens and property owners an opportunity to review and comment the plan.

9.4 Implementation Tools

Having the appropriate tools to implement the recommendations in this comprehensive plan is critical. The most common implementation tools are the County's official controls or regulatory codes, these are, the zoning ordinance and map, subdivision regulations, and official map. These regulatory tools are used to protect existing development and guide future growth and development.

The State planning law requires that by January 1, 2010, land use decisions must be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive plan. Therefore, to meet this deadline, the County should review and update related ordinances, such as zoning (both general and shoreland), land division, and official mapping.

1. Zoning Ordinance and Map

The County Zoning Ordinance is an extremely detailed, locally adopted law that is used to regulate and control how land is used and developed. The zoning ordinance contains rules for building setbacks, the density of development, the height and size of building and other structures, and the types of land uses that are allowed on each and every piece of land in the County. The zoning ordinance consists of a written text and a map. The general purpose of zoning is to protect the public health, safety and general welfare. This is accomplished by minimizing the undesirable effects resulting from high-density urban development. Some methods for this include segregating and/or buffering incompatible land uses and by maintaining standards that ensure development will not negatively impact the community's character or environment. Under Wisconsin Statutes, counties and local units of government are authorized to

adopt "zoning" ordinances. Several towns have adopted local zoning, such as St. Germain, Lac du Flambeau, Manitowish Waters, and Presque Isle.

The establishment of zoning districts and the zoning map indicate where specific types of development can and should be located. Zoning districts shown on the zoning map should be coordinated with the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan and the future land use map. While the zoning map and land use map do not need to directly match at the time the land use map is adopted, the intent is that the land use map will serve as a guide indicating how the property should eventually be zoned. However, the goal and objective statements in the comprehensive plan, as well as the policies and strategies, need to be considered in guiding future land use in the community.

Indiscriminate zone changes may result in weakening the comprehensive plan since, on a cumulative basis, they are likely to move the community away from its vision and stated goals and objectives. There will, however, be situations where changing the zoning district boundaries is in the best interest of the community. When changing the zoning would result in a conflict with the comprehensive plan, the plan should also be amended.

The County Board makes the final decisions regarding changes to the content of the zoning ordinance text and the zoning district assigned to each parcel of property covered under zoning. These decisions are preceded by public hearings. The Land Use Plan Committee also makes recommendations to the County Board on all proposed zoning ordinance text changes and zoning district map amendments. Generally, zoning ordinance text changes have a much broader impact on land use than map amendments. Text changes will often apply to literally hundred or even thousands of properties in the community, while a map change is specific to one area. Zoning will continue to be a primary tool for implementing the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan.

As part of the original planning process, four new zoning districts were identified to provide more flexibility to the existing zoning. There are:

- Lakeshore Residential/Resort District

Purpose: The Lakeshore Residential/Resort District is created to provide for areas around lakeshores and other riparian areas with primarily low-density residential use, but with some mixing of low-density tourism and vacation lodging. Such lodging uses are conditional in order to minimize/address the potential impacts to neighboring residential uses. The uses include resorts with no contiguous dwelling units, tourist rental cottages and houses, and bed & breakfast

establishments. Land use and density is subject to and consistent with existing shoreland provisions within the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning and General Zoning Ordinance. The district is primarily intended for parcels located within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark.

- Lakeshore Recreation District

Purpose: The Lakeshore Recreation District is created to provide for areas of mixed uses including single and multi-family residences, and shoreland-related recreational uses. This district is designed to be more restrictive than the existing Recreation Zoning District in types of proposed uses, and more intensive (less restrictive) than the proposed Lakeshore Residential/Resort District. Land use and density is subject to and consistent with existing shoreland provisions within the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning and General Zoning Ordinance. The district is primarily intended for parcels located within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark.

- Wooded Residential District

Purpose: The Wooded Residential District is intended primarily for single and multi-family residential uses on standard size lots (1.5 acres), but with some additional uses allowed for mini-storage, building and trade contractors, professional offices, and limited others that could be compatible as conditional uses. The conditions that could apply to any commercial uses could directly relate to the intensity of the proposed use, as the intent of this proposed zoning district is primarily for residential uses. However, the occurrence of this type of preferred use (within the Town Land Use Plans) being located along roads suggests that some mixing of residential and less-intensive commercial uses should occur due to road access the existing mixed development pattern.

- Rural Mixed Use District

Purpose: The Rural Mixed Use District is created to provide areas for low density single and multi-family residential uses on larger lots (five acre minimum), but with some mixed uses as conditional uses to reduce incompatibility. Examples of mixed uses that may be expected to occur in this district are eating and drinking establishments, retail sales, building and trade contractors, heavy equipment storage, and sales, service, and repair. The intensity of some uses would be greater than the proposed Wooded Residential District. The normal ordinance amendment procedures and public hearing process as identified in the Vilas County Shoreland Zoning and General Zoning Ordinance

would need to be followed to actually add these four recommended districts to the ordinance.

2. Subdivision Ordinance

The subdivision ordinance establishes regulations on how large tracts of vacant land are to be split into smaller parcels. These regulations address design issues such as road access, street standards, public utility installation, storm water drainage, parks and open space, and other improvements necessary to ensure that a new residential area will be an asset to the community and a safe and desirable place for the people living in the neighborhood. The County Board makes the final decisions on the content of the subdivision ordinance text. With input from County staff, the Land Use Planning Committee approves all subdivision plats.

The impact of land division (subdivision) regulations is permanent. Once land is divided into lots and roads are laid out, development patterns are generally set. Subdivision control ordinances often give a community its only opportunity to review the proposed development design and assess the potential impact prior to development. Vilas County's Subdivision Control Ordinance works in conjunction with Section 236 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The County's Subdivision Ordinance is a primary implementation tool and works in conjunction with zoning ordinance regulations. The zoning ordinance regulates the type (use) of development that takes place on a parcel and the subdivision ordinance regulates how the parcel is created and made ready for development.

An additional benefit of a subdivision ordinance is that it can help implement the land use plan. A basis of the approval of a land division is its conformance or consistency with a local land use plan via lot size and/or density provisions as set forth in the preferred land use classifications of adopted comprehensive land use plans. A land division ordinance may be the most effective method to implement proposed lot sizes and density that may differ from the zoning district minimum standards in which the land use occurs.

The County Subdivision Control Ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas of the county. All of the local plans have recommendations to consider adopting a locally regulated land division ordinance to drive consistency of lot sizes and density when lands are divided. Towns can adopt (as St. Germain and Manitowish Waters have) their own subdivision ordinances without County approval. In order to exercise this power a town needs to have four things: 1) village powers, 2) a comprehensive plan-stating goals and objectives, 3) a planning committee/commission, 4) an ordinance. If there is a conflict between

a county and town land division ordinance, the proposed subdivision must comply with the most restrictive standard. The uses available to a property are still a zoning function and will need to work in combination with zoning and subdivision control.

3. Official Mapping

Counties have limited official mapping powers; cities and villages have much greater powers. Counties may prepare plans for the future platting of lands, or for the future location of streets, highways, or parkways in the unincorporated areas of the county. In addition, counties may adopt highway-width maps showing the location and width of any existing streets or highways, which are planned to be expanded; however, the municipality affected must approve the map.

Official maps are not used frequently because few communities plan anything but major thoroughfares and parks in detail in advance of the imminent development of a neighborhood. Following the planning process it is important that the Official Map is reviewed and changes made if needed.

4. Capital Improvement Program

There is also a non-regulatory approach to implementing the comprehensive plan; this generally involves decisions related to how the community will spend its financial resources, or a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is simply a method of planning for and scheduling expenditures for public improvements over a period of several years in order to maximize the use of limited public funds.

Each year the CIP is reviewed as part of the budget process and extended one year to compensate for the previous year that was completed. This helps keep the improvement program current and allows for modifications to meet changing needs. Typically improvements or expenditures considered in the CIP process include:

- Public buildings (such as fire or police stations)
- Roads and highways (maintenance and new construction/paving)
- Utility system construction/expansion, treatment plants, water towers, wells, etc.
- Long-term equipment
- Park and trail acquisition and development

5. Other Tools

A. Cluster Development

Cluster development is a technique, which provides options for how land can be developed. The objective of cluster development is to concentrate development in one area so that significant tracts of open areas may be preserved. The primary design element in cluster development is open space; lot layouts are designed around the open space, natural features worthy of preservation, managed forest land, or productive agricultural areas. This type of development encourages the creation of smaller lots rather than scattering large lots throughout the development area. The concept applies to both residential and commercial applications.

Cluster development can be more effective when public, private, and nonprofit agencies combine their efforts. The appropriate combination of tools should be defined which are best suited to the successful protection of land in each individual situation. Cluster development could be a viable alternative to the typical development pattern that is seen throughout the county.

B. Development Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are typically used by communities to ensure quality community character through establishing regulations, standards, and procedures for conducting site plan review as it applies to new business, industry and/or multi-family development. Many towns in Vilas County find the character and aesthetic issues associated with development along the major transportation corridors to be a primary concern. The objectives of design review standards often include: 1) to ensure efficient, safe, and attractive land development that is compatible with surrounding land uses and community character, 2) to implement the goals and policies of the land use plan; 3) to provide for screening landscaping, signage, and lighting which enhances and complements land development activities and minimize adverse impacts on surrounding properties; 4) to develop proper safeguards to minimize environmental impact, and to advance and promote sound growth and continued development, and 5) to safeguard property values and promote high-quality development, among others.

While most design guidelines are expected to be implemented where desired at the local level, at a minimum, Vilas County should consider amending the zoning and subdivision ordinances to include site plan review as part of the cluster development approval process. Applicants for cluster developments

should be required to submit site plans showing the following: 1) Location of existing buildings, 2) Proposed location of additional structures, 3) Locations of existing and proposed driveways and roadway access points, and 4) Location of septic system.

The county should keep the focus on how does the access onto public roads affect traffic flow and traffic safety. Standards could be developed for landscaping/screening, signage, parking, lighting, and building design, along with any other areas deemed appropriate or necessary, but will be better served by housing those regulations at the local level in accordance with local initiatives. The level of site plan review will vary among local governments reflecting the different goals and policies of development. Where the town site plan review regulations are more restrictive than Vilas County, the county could refer the applicant to the respective town for town approvals.

C. Purchase of Development Rights Program

Purchase of development rights programs allow a governmental entity or nonprofit conservation organization to purchase the development rights to land to either keep it in operation or undeveloped. The selling of development rights is done on a voluntary basis by landowners, and the rights are purchased based on a set of priorities. The value of the rights usually ranges from 30% to 80% of the property's fair market value, or the difference between the value of the land before restrictions are placed, and the value after the easement is placed on the land. Selling development rights has numerous benefits for the landowner, including the ability to obtain the equity (or development value) from the property, keeping the land permanently in production or as open space, allowing the property to be passed from generation to generation within the family, potential for significant tax savings on retirement income, and to make needed capital investments with the proceeds. Purchasing development rights results in a permanent restriction on the land. These programs are typically funded by a variety of sources including property and sales taxes, real estate transfers, special purpose taxes, farmland conservation fees, general funds, and bonds.

D. Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) and purchase of development rights are similar in that compensation is given to the landowner for the land's development value. The TDR program differs from the PDR program, however, in that it relies on the free market transfer of development rights from the open land to the development area rather than governmental acquisition.

E. Conservation Programs

A variety of conservation programs are available, such as the Managed Forest Law, direct acquisitions for shoreland restoration, habitat improvements, partnering with land trusts for securing conservation easements or land acquisition, and many other programs exist to encourage landowners to adopt conservation practices.

F. Land Trusts

A land trust is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection of the natural areas. Land trusts develop partnerships with landowners and citizens to achieve goals in the conservation of land and natural resources. Land trusts work with landowners, local community groups, recreational organizations, conservation clubs, and private individuals who have identified an area worthy of conservation. Land trusts can provide direct assistance to landowners in land acquisitions, resource management, and considerable tax benefits. A land trust operates through landowner property donation, outright purchase of land, or through securing conservation easements.

G. Airport Land Use Plans / Overlays

The general purpose and intent of an airport land use plan/overlay is to promote public health, safety, convenience, and general welfare residents; and to protect the airports approaches and surrounding airspace from encroachment, as well as limit the exposure of impacts to persons and facilities in proximity to the airport. These plans identify height limitations for structures, and try to minimize conflicts around airports, including land use, noise and lights, as outlined in Wisconsin Statute 114.

9.5 Consistency Among Plan Chapters

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the Implementation Chapter describe how each of the required chapters will be integrated and made consistent with the other chapters of the plan. Since the County completed all planning elements simultaneously, no known inconsistencies exist. It is noted that some overlap occurs between the nine plan chapters. Where deemed appropriate, certain goals, objectives, and policies have been repeated or restated within multiple chapters of the plan.

This Comprehensive Plan also references previous and current related planning efforts to ensure they are considered in the community's planning and development decisions. Recommendations from other plans have been summarized and incorporated in this plan, as deemed appropriate, to foster coordination and consistency between plans.

In the future, as plan amendments occur, it is important that County staff and the plan commission conduct consistency reviews. These reviews will ensure that the plan is up-to-date. It is also critical that the plan and/or maps are changed that these changes are made they do not conflict with other sections of the plan or other maps.

9.6 Recommended Actions

This section outlines some recommendations to implement the goals, objectives, and policies that are contained in the comprehensive plan. These recommendations are:

1. The Zoning & Planning Committee should pass a resolution recommending adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The County Board should hold a public hearing and adopt the plan by ordinance and use it as a guide for decision-making.
3. The County should incorporate changes to its Zoning Ordinance and Maps, Land Division Ordinance, and other implementation tools to establish consistency.
4. The Zoning & Planning Committee should become knowledgeable of the plan and use it to justify recommendations to the County Board on development issues.
5. The County's staff should incorporate the goals, objectives and policies of the plan into annual work plans and budgets.
6. The County should encourage citizen awareness of the plan. It is also important that developers are aware of the plan. An initial step would be to have the document hosted on the County website.
7. The County should provide copies of the plan to all communities within the County.

8. The Zoning & Planning Committee should review the Future Land Use Map at least annually and make necessary amendment recommendations to the County Board.
9. The County should review and update the plan when new detailed demographic data is available and at least every ten years thereafter.

Attachments:

RESOLUTION NO. 2009 - 20

Re: **Public Participation Plan (PPP)**

1 **WHEREAS**, Vilas County is required to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Plan as
2 outlined in Wis. Stat. §66.1001; and

3 **WHEREAS**, public participation is critical for the development of a sound plan; and

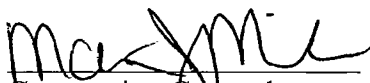
4 **WHEREAS**, it is necessary for the County Board of Supervisors to approve a process to
5 involve the public in the planning process; and

6 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Vilas County Board of Supervisors
7 in session this 24th day of March 2009, that we approve and authorize the Public Participation
8 Plan as attached to this resolution.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

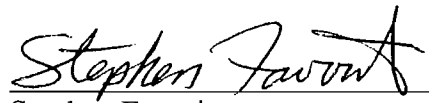
- Included within Resolution
 See Attached
 Not Applicable

APPROVED AS TO FORM



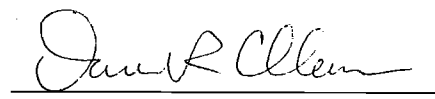
Corporation Counsel

SUBMITTED BY:



Stephen Favorite,
County Board Chair

I, David R. Alleman, Clerk of Vilas County, Wisconsin, do hereby certify that the above resolution is a true and correct copy of a resolution which was approved by the Vilas County Board of Supervisors on the 24th day of March, 2009.



David R. Alleman
Vilas County Clerk

VILAS COUNTY Public Participation Plan

I. Background

The County recognizes the need to engage the public in the comprehensive planning process. This document sets forth the techniques the County will use to meet the goal of public participation. Therefore, this Public Participation Plan forms the basic framework for achieving an interactive dialogue between citizens, local decision makers, and staff.

The creation of the Public Participation Plan is a task required in meeting the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation (66.1001). As the planning process develops, it should be expected that deviations from the plan may occur.

II. Objectives

The following is a list of objectives for the public participation plan:

- That the residents, land owners, and other interested parties become fully aware of the importance of participating in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.
- That the public has opportunities to provide their input to the plan process.
- That the public has access to all written information and all maps created throughout the planning process.
- That there is input from the broadest range of perspectives and interests in the community possible.
- That input is elicited through a variety of means (electronic, printed, and oral) in such a way that it may be carefully considered and incorporated into the process.
- That this process of public involvement strengthens the sense of community.

The goal will be to inform, consult and involve the public and the communities served during each phase of the planning process. Hopefully, this will help balance the issues related to private property rights.

III. Techniques

The public participation plan for the comprehensive planning process will incorporate the following:

1. All meetings for the planning process will be posted and open to the public.
2. Plan meeting handouts will be maintained by the County and available for review by the public.
3. The draft plan will be reviewed by department heads and related organizations.
4. When the draft plan is prepared it will be available at County Courthouse, the library, and on a website.
5. The draft plan will be distributed to all surrounding communities for comment.
6. A Public Hearing will be held prior to plan adoption by the County Board of Supervisors.

**Resolution of the Vilas County Zoning & Planning Committee
Recommending the Adoption of the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan**

1 WHEREAS, Section 66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes, establishes the required procedure
2 for a local government to adopt a comprehensive plan, and Section 66.1001(2) identifies the
3 required elements of a comprehensive plan; and

4 WHEREAS, the Zoning & Planning Committee has the authority to recommend that the
5 Vilas County Board of Supervisors adopt a "comprehensive plan" under Section 66.1001(4)(b);
6 and

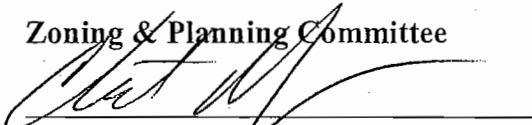
7 WHEREAS, the Vilas County Land Use Planning Committee has prepared the attached
8 Vilas County Comprehensive Plan, containing all maps and other descriptive materials, to be the
9 comprehensive plan for the County under Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Vilas County Zoning and Planning
11 Committee hereby recommends the adoption of the attached Comprehensive Plan as the
12 County's Comprehensive Plan under Section 66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes.

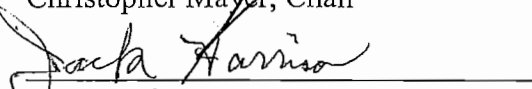
13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Zoning & Planning Committee hereby
14 recommends that, following a public hearing, the County Board adopt an ordinance to constitute
15 official approval of the Vilas County Comprehensive Plan as the County's comprehensive plan
16 under Section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

Dated this 2nd day of October, 2009,

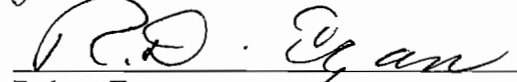
Zoning & Planning Committee



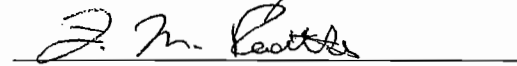
Christopher Mayer, Chair



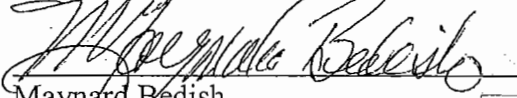
Jack Harrison



Robert Egan

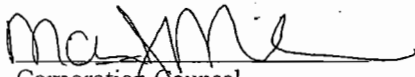


Fred Radtke



Maynard Bedish

APPROVED AS TO FORM



Corporation Counsel

ORDINANCE NO. 2009-4A

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE VILAS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1 The Vilas County Board of Supervisors in session this 10th day of November, 2009, does hereby
2 ordain as follows:

3 SECTION 1. Pursuant to section 59.69(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the County of
4 Vilas, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)(a) and
5 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

6 SECTION 2. The Vilas County Board has adopted written procedures designed to foster public
7 participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by Section
8 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

9 SECTION 3. The Vilas County Zoning Committee by a majority vote of the entire Committee
10 recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the County Board the adoption
11 of the document entitled "Vilas County Comprehensive Plan," containing all of the elements specified in
12 Section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

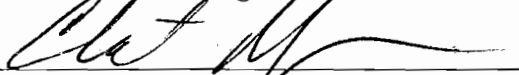
13 SECTION 4. The County held a public hearing on this ordinance on November 7, 2009 at the
14 Conover Town Hall, in compliance with the requirements of Section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin
15 Statutes.

16 SECTION 5. The Vilas County Board does, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt
17 the document entitled "Vilas County Comprehensive Plan," pursuant to Section 66.1001(4)(c) of the
18 Wisconsin Statutes.

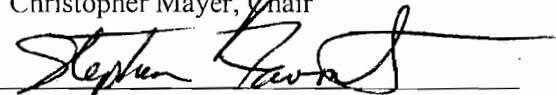
19 SECTION 6. This Ordinance shall take effect upon passage and publication as required by law.

SUBMITTED BY:

Land Use Planning Committee



Christopher Mayer, Chair



Stephen Favorite



James Behling

Adopted this 10th day of November, 2009

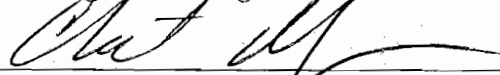
Published: _____

Approved, Vetoed: _____

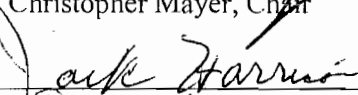
Attest: _____
Vilas County Clerk

SUBMITTED BY:

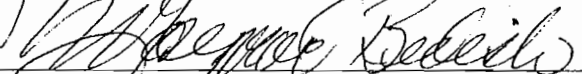
Zoning & Planning Committee



Christopher Mayer, Chair



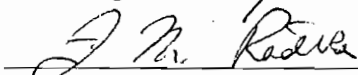
Jack Harrison



Maynard Bedish



Robert Egan



Fred Radtke

Fiscal Impact:

Yes

No

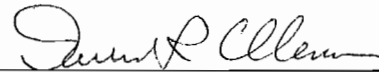
APPROVED AS TO FORM


Corporation Counsel

ORDINANCE 2009-4A was amended as follows:

1. On Map 2-1, within the legend, remove "DNR" to read only as **Wetlands**.
2. On Maps 7-1 and 7-2, add the 3-Mile Airport Height Limitation Zoning Ordinance (HLZO) Overlay.
3. On Map 7-2, add the word "Maps" under the title to read **See Adopted Town Plan Maps**.
4. Remove the following sentence from page 2-4, paragraph two, "Vilas County allows holding tanks as a system of choice."
5. Chapter 4, page 4-7, update school information related to the new Northland Pines High School being completed in 2006, and to include reference to the Conserve School.

I, David R. Alleman, Clerk of Vilas County, Wisconsin, do hereby certify that the attached ordinance is a true and correct copy of an ordinance which was approved by the Vilas County Board of Supervisors on the 10th day of November, 2009.



David R. Alleman
Vilas County Clerk