

TOWN OF BIG FLATS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Adopted: August 2013

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

TOWN OF BIG FLATS
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Telephone: 608-564-7754

Town Board

Todd Peterson, Chair
Jim LaPointe, Supervisor I
Joseph Myren, Supervisor II
Mary O'Neal, Clerk

Plan Commission

Jay Jocham, Chair
Wendy Goerke
Tom Hendricksen
Joseph Myren
Ray Quimby

Cover: Rabbit Rock

Photo Credits: Town Plan Commission

Final Revised Plan: May 2013
Public Hearing Draft: June 2013

Adopted: August 13, 2013

This plan was prepared under the direction of the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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**PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION
ADOPTING AND RECOMMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR THE TOWN OF BIG FLATS IN ADAMS COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

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

WHEREAS, the Town of Big Flats Plan Commission has the authority to recommend that the Town Board adopt a "comprehensive plan" under section 66.1001(4)(b); and

WHEREAS, the Town has prepared the attached document Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan, containing all maps and other descriptive materials, to be the comprehensive plan for the Town under section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

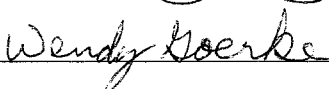
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Plan Commission of the Town of Big Flats hereby adopts the attached Comprehensive Plan as the Town's comprehensive plan under section 66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk certifies a copy of the attached Comprehensive Plan to the Town Board; and

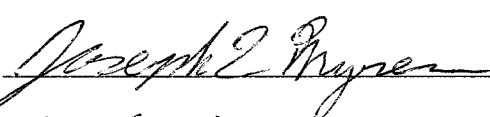
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Plan Commission hereby recommends that, following a public hearing, the Town Board adopt an ordinance to constitute official approval of the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan as the Town's comprehensive plan under section 66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes.

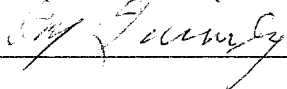
Adopted this 19th day of June, 2013.

Jay Jocham, Chairperson _____


Wendy Goerke _____


Tom Hendricksen _____


Joseph Myren _____


Ray Quimby _____


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66.1001 (4) * Ordinance to adopt comprehensive plan.

(ONLY for use by towns authorized to exercise VILLAGE POWERS under s. 60.22).

Ordinance #41 – Adoption of Town Comprehensive Plan

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Town of Big Flats, Adams, County

SECTION I – TITLE/PURPOSE

The title of this ordinance is the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan

Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance is for the Town of Big Flats to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION II – AUTHORITY

The town board of the Town of Big Flats has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., its power to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Big Flats must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats., in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III – ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE

The town board of the Town of Big Flats, by this ordinance, adopted on proper notice with a quorum and roll call vote by a majority of the town board present and voting, provides the authority for the Town of Big Flats to adopt its comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., and provides the authority for the town board to order its publication.

SECTION IV – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The town board of the Town of Big Flats has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V – TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Plan Commission of the Town of Big Flats, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI – PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Big Flats, has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

SECTION VII – ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The town board of the Town of Big Flats, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Big Flats Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under pursuant to s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION VIII – SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance of its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision of application, and to this end, the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

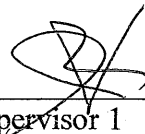
SECTION IX – EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.
The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats.

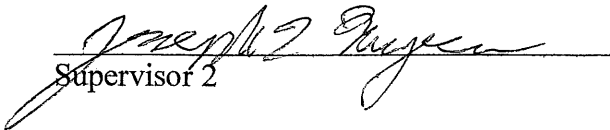
Adopted this 13th day of August, 2013.



Board Chairman



Supervisor 1



Supervisor 2

Attest: 
Town Clerk

TOWN OF BIG FLATS
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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Public Participation Plan
- B. Community Survey
- C. Cottonville Fire – Final Map

Map 1 Location Map

1. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Background

The Town of Big Flats is an eight-mile by six-mile town with 48 sections, located in the north-central part of Adams County, Wisconsin. The Town of Rome to the north, the Town of Colburn to the east, the Town of Monroe to the west, and the Towns of Strongs Prairie and Preston to the south bound the town. It is one of the seventeen towns in the county. See the locational reference map.

Over the years the town has been dominated by swampland conifers and lowland hardwood forest types, and some agricultural uses. Scattered residential development also has been locating in the town.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan for more detailed information.

The Planning Process

The Town of Big Flats joined with all the local units and Adams County to apply for funding to complete a comprehensive plan. An application was prepared and submitted in 2002 and approved in 2003. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has coordinated this effort and is assisting with the development of these plans.

A Planning Committee was created to oversee the development of the plan. The working group met to analyze and discuss information that was gathered and presented by the NCWRPC.

A three-phase process over a three-year period was developed for the completion of the Adams County Comprehensive Plan and all of the local unit plans (except for the Town of Rome, which completed a plan in 2002). Phase one was the inventory stage where data was collected, information was reviewed and maps were prepared. The second phase was the development of the 18 local unit plans, including this one. Finally, phase three was the creation of the County Comprehensive Plan, where the local unit plans were merged together to form a county level plan.

Draft local plans were provided to all local units in August 2004. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff met with each local unit over the fall and winter to review the draft text and maps. Revised drafts were prepared and distributed to the Towns in February 2005. See Attachment A for more detailed information.

Public Participation

An important part of any planning process is public involvement. Public involvement provides the citizens of the town an opportunity to express their views, ideas, and opinions on issues that they would like addressed on the future development of their town. Local officials use this input to guide policies and decisions with greater awareness of the public's desires and consensus. See Public Participation Plan in Attachment B.

Community Survey

The Town of Big Flats COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE mailed 1320 surveys to property owners in September 2002, with 440 surveys returned, providing a 33 percent response rate. This is the summary of how property owners in the Town of Big Flats responded to the "TOWN OF BIG FLATS COMMUNITY SURVEY 2002." See Community Survey in Attachment C.

Land owners who responded to the survey mostly enjoy Rural atmosphere (62%), followed by Natural Setting/Resources (20%), Recreation/hunting/fishing (10%), Friendly people/neighbors (8 %).

What respondents found least enjoyable in the Town was Junk on property (44%) followed by High taxes (33%). Others dislike the Lack of road maintenance (8%), ATVs on roads (7%), a general lack of businesses (3%), a lack of zoning (3%), and feeling unwelcome (2%).

Most survey respondents (46%) have owned property in the Town for more than 15 years. Twenty-one percent of respondents have owned property for 5 years or less. The remaining respondents lived or owned property in the Town for 6-10 years (18%), or for 11-15 years (14%).

Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents have a house on their property in the Town.

Property in Big Flats was listed by respondents as:

- 44% Seasonal Residence
- 33% Primary Residence
- 21% Undeveloped Land
- 2% Commercial or Industrial Property

Respondent's property was located on the waterfront (4%), on a farm (3%), in a subdivision (18%), on 1-5 acres of land (40%), on 5 acres or larger (34%), or other (1%).

Many Town respondents (60%) think the current pace of development is about right in Big Flats. More development is necessary according to 27 percent of respondents, and 13 percent think that too much development already exists.

Should the Town have a say in where new growth should occur?

77% Yes 9% No 14% Don't know

	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>No Opinion</i>	<i>"It Depends"</i>
Would you support or oppose additional residential development?	43%	31%	26%	---
Would you support or oppose additional small business development?	72%	14%	13%	1%
Would you support or oppose large scale industrial development?	31%	53%	14%	1%

Current land use ordinances in Town are:

5% Too Strong 37% Adequate 25% Too Weak 34% Don't Know

Survey respondents want Big Flats to encourage these kinds of housing developments:

39% Single Family Houses	23% Seasonal/Recreational Houses
15% Elderly Housing	7% Subdivisions
4% Manufactured Home Parks	4% Duplexes
3% Condominiums	3% Apartments
2% None	Other “a popular motel”

Land Use Issues prioritized by respondents			
Land Use Issue	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Location of residential growth	40%	40%	20%
Location of business growth	49%	31%	20%
Lack of zoning	39%	37%	24%
Water quality (streams & ground water)	75%	20%	5%
Preservation of natural resources (wetlands, floodplains, woodlands)	76%	19%	5%
Preservation of farmland	57%	37%	6%
Development of forestry property	43%	36%	21%
Accumulation of junk in yards	75%	14%	11%
Preservation of rural heritage	60%	29%	11%
Recreational availability	48%	35%	17%
Others receiving more than one vote: Jobs in area, enforcement of existing ordinances, non-essential use of road for ATVs.			

The most important land use issues facing the Town of Big Flats according to respondents:

1. Clean-up of junk on property (67 responses)
2. Lack of zoning/ordinance enforcement (26 responses)
3. Small business growth and new jobs (26 responses)
4. Water & groundwater quality (20 responses)
5. Saving the environment for future generations (17 responses)

Other issues include: Recreation (13 responses), High taxes (9 responses), Land subdivision (7 responses), preservation of rural heritage (5 responses).

Survey respondents want the Town Board to manage growth and development.

42% Strongly agree, 35% Agree, 12% Neutral, 4% Disagree, and 6% Strongly Disagree

In 20 years respondents view the Town as: Staying the same (28%), a slow growing community with a balance of small businesses and residential growth (27%), cleaner with the removal of junk on personal property (18%), having a country setting (9%), a preservation of natural heritage (6%), having lower taxes (5%), recreation (4%), & zoned (3%).

Relationship to County Plan

As mentioned earlier, this plan is part of a county-wide planning effort. The Adams County Comprehensive Plan contains much of the detailed background information that is briefly mentioned throughout this document. Although this plan refers to the County Plan, there is no change in the existing relationship between the Town of Big Flats and Adams County.

Town Demographics

A. Population

The Town's population has increased over the last ten years according to the Census, but at a much slower rate than in the previous decade. As displayed in Table 1, the town experienced a 29 percent increase between 1990 and 2000, while the county grew by 27 percent over the same time period. Both the county and the town grew more slowly after 2000. Big Flats grew by 7.6 percent, still significantly higher than the county's 4.8 percent growth rate. All of the surrounding towns grew at a slower rate, with the exception of Monroe, and especially Colburn which grew by over 23 percent. Between 1990 and 2010, Big Flats added 287 persons. The town is about 5 percent of the total population of the county.

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2000 – 2010 % Change	1990 - 2010 % Change	1990 - 2010 Net Change
Big Flats	731	946	1,018	7.6%	39.3%	287
Rome	1,674	2,656	2,720	2.4%	62.5%	1,046
Monroe	305	363	398	9.6%	30.8%	94
Strong's Prairie	1,028	1,115	1,150	3.1%	11.8%	122
Preston	1,057	1,360	1,393	2.4%	28.6%	303
Colburn	154	181	223	23.2%	44.8%	69
Adams County	15,682	19,920	20,875	4.8%	33.1%	5,193

Source: U.S. Census

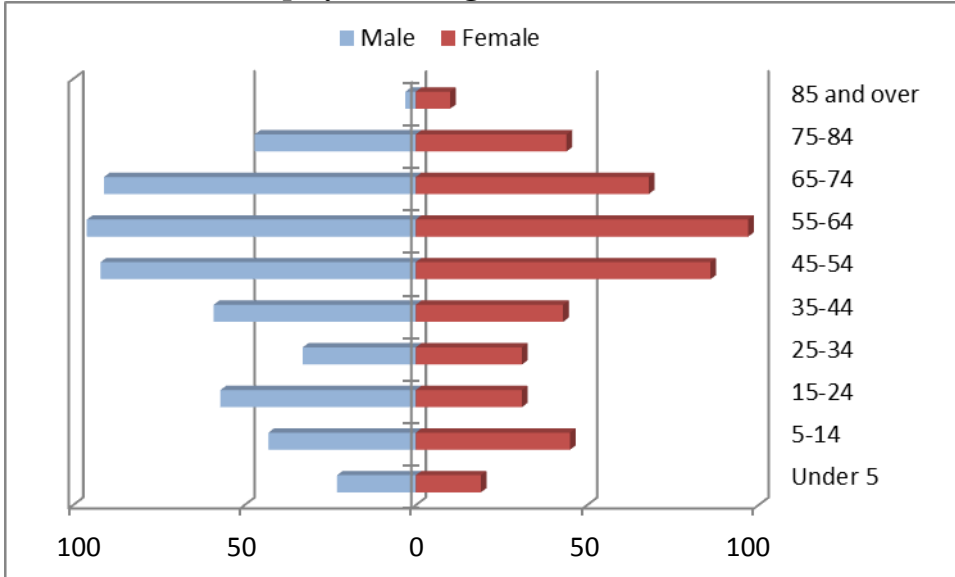
If the twenty-year growth trend were maintained, the town would expect about a 19.6 percent increase in population, or 200 residents in the town over the next ten years. However, if the town grew at the same pace as the county it would mean about 168 additional residents.

B. Age

The number of people aged 65 and older who live in the community increased from 113 in 1990, to 193 in 2000, and to 263 in 2010. The rate of increase slowed from 70.8 percent in the 1990s to 36.8 percent since 2000. Overall, persons over 65 make up 36.3 percent of the population, while those under 18 make up only 15.6 percent. Both are an indication of an aging population. According to the U.S. Census, in 1990 Big Flats' median age was 38, in 2000 it was 45, and 52.5 in 2010. Compared to Adams County, in 1990 the median age was 40, 44 in 2000, and 49 by 2010.

Over the decade, Big Flats’ median age increased more than seven years and is above the county’s median age by three and a half years. Display 1 shows the majority of the population in 2010 to be in the 45 to 74 age range.

Display 1: 2010 Age Cohorts



Source: U.S. Census

C. Race

In 1990, 98.8 percent of the Town’s 731 residents were counted as White, 1.0 percent were American Indian, 0.1 percent were African American, and 0.1 percent were some other race. Racial composition of Big Flats’ population has changed very little. In 2000, 97.4 percent listed themselves as White, 0.6 percent as American Indian, 0.5 percent as African American, and 1.5 percent as some other race. In 2010, 96.9 percent were White, 2 percent counted as American Indian, 0.8 percent as African American, 0.6 percent as Asian, and 1.5 percent as some other race.

D. Educational Level

Educational levels in 1990 showed that 289 had completed high school and of those, 52 had some college, 31 had an associate degree, 4 had a bachelor degree and 3 had a graduate or professional degree. The 2000 Census showed that 490 had completed high school of which 110 had some college, 39 had an associate degree, 30 had a bachelor degree and 26 had a graduate or professional degree. The 2010 Census listed 506 persons who had completed high school and of those 506, 129 had some college, 47 had an associate degree, 32 had a bachelor degree and 10 had a graduate or professional degree.

Only those 25 years of age and older are reflected in these statistics. Table 2 provides a summary of educational attainment in Big Flats, Adams County, and the State.

Table 2: Educational Attainment, Persons Age 25 and Older, 2000

Educational Attainment Level	Town of Big Flats	Adams County	State of Wisconsin
Less than 9 th Grade	9%	4.1%	3.4%
9 th to 12 th Grade, no diploma	15.4%	11.9%	6.3%
High School Graduate	43%	42.7%	33.1%
Some College, no degree	19.3%	22.9%	21.3%
Associate Degree	7%	7.6%	9.6%
Bachelor's Degree	4.8%	7%	17.4%
Graduate or Professional	1.5%	3.8%	9%

Source: U.S. Census

The Town of Big Flats educational attainments are slightly lower than Adams County. The town has a higher percentage of residents with an educational attainment of less than a 9th grade level and 9th to 12th grade with no diploma, compared to the county and state. The town also has a lower percentage of residents with an associate, bachelors, graduate or professional degrees than the county and the state.

E. Households

The number of households in the town grew by 36.7 percent, from 294 in 1990 to 402 in 2000, and by 5.7 percent in 2010. Of the 444 total households in 2010, 62.6 percent were family households, while the other 37.4 percent were non-family households. Three-quarters of family households were married couple households.

Slightly more than thirty percent of all households included someone 65 years old or older, while twenty-one percent included someone 18 or younger. The average household size was 2.29 persons.

F. Employment

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of those employed in Big Flats increased by only 3.2 percent to 382, this after employed residents increased 45.7 percent in the previous decade from 254 to 370. The two largest employment sectors in 1990 were Manufacturing and Retail Trade. That changed in 2000, with Educational, Health & Social Services taking second place, but by 2010 Retail Trade was the second again. In 2010 a fifth (20.4%) of those employed worked in Manufacturing, 16.8 percent were in Retail Trade, 13.4 percent were employed in Education, Health & Social Services, and 12.3 percent work in Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation & Food Service.

Over the decade, the percentage of unemployed has gone down in Big Flats. In 1990, 39 people reported they were unemployed, and in 2000 56 people reported they were unemployed, 13.1 percent of civilian labor force. By 2010, 49 persons were unemployed, which translated into an unemployment rate of 11.3 percent.

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	1990 - 2000 % Change	2000 - 2010 % Change
Big Flats	254	370	382	45.7%	3.2%
Rome	695	1,096	1,104	57.7%	0.7%
Monroe	108	162	167	50.0%	3.1%
Strong's Prairie	336	479	583	42.6%	21.7%
Preston	372	872	550	53.8%	-36.9%
Colburn	32	93	67	190.6%	-38.8%
Adams County	5,640	7,847	8,354	39.1%	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census

The growth in the number of residents who were employed slowed significantly in the last decade, and in some cases reversed. Based on the Census, in the 1990s employment for the county grew nearly forty percent and by a greater percentage in Big Flats and all its surrounding towns. Since 2000 employment growth has slowed, probably reflecting the general slowdown in the economy, and turned negative in Colburn and Preston.

G. Household Income

The 1999 median household income in the town was \$27,800, which was lower than both Adams County and the State, which were \$33,408 and \$43,791 respectively. Over the next decade household income in Big Flats increased by nearly one third and, as a percentage of the county median, grew by ten percent.

Of 425 households in the town, 141 reported incomes less than \$24,999 and 33 had an income above \$100,000. The 2000 Census indicates that for persons over 65 the poverty rate is 1.6 percent, but among families with children under 18 the rate is 55.4 percent.

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 % Change	20-yr. Net Change	1990-2010 % Change
Big Flats	\$18,289	\$27,800	\$36,472	31.2%	\$18,183	99.4%
Rome	\$30,652	\$44,000	\$51,982	18.1%	\$21,330	69.5%
Monroe	\$24,583	\$34,500	\$34,464	0.1%	\$9,881	40.2%
Strong's Prairie	\$21,447	\$30,048	\$45,900	52.7%	\$24,453	114%
Preston	\$22,417	\$33,491	\$41,372	23.5%	\$18,955	84.5%
Colburn	\$12,143	\$35,250	\$40,536	15%	\$28,393	233.8%
Adams County	\$21,548	\$33,408	\$39,885	19.4%	\$18,337	85.1%

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC

Income growth has been uneven over the last two decades. Since 1990 median household income in Big Flats has nearly doubled, but two-thirds of that growth took place during the 1990s.

Per capita income can give a clearer indication of the effect of household size. For example, although household income increased in Big Flats by only 3.6 percent during the last decade per capita income increased over fourteen percent, a sign of small household size. Even more striking, in Monroe median household income was flat, but per capita income fell by nearly three thousand dollars, indicating larger households.

Table 5: Per Capita Income

Minor Civil Division	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 % Change	20-yr. Net Change	1990-2010 % Change
Big Flats	\$9,411	\$14,629	\$21,178	44.7%	\$11,767	125%
Rome	\$14,781	\$23,901	\$30,218	26.4%	\$15,437	104.4%
Monroe	\$12,480	\$19,970	\$17,050	-14.6%	\$4,570	36.6%
Strongs Prairie	\$9,513	\$15,583	\$26,543	70.3%	\$17,030	179%
Preston	\$10,347	\$19,117	\$21,137	10.5%	\$10,790	104.2%
Colburn	\$5,586	\$21,440	\$30,956	44.4%	\$25,370	454.2%
Adams County	\$11,945	\$17,777	\$21,917	23.3%	\$9,972	83.5%

Source: U.S. Census & NCWRPC

During the last decade both household and per capita incomes grew at a faster rate in Big Flats than either the county or state, and at a faster rate than in all the surrounding towns, except Strongs Prairie. Although Big Flats continues to lag behind the surrounding towns it is moving up. The rate of income growth in the town is a positive factor for the future.

Table 6: Poverty Rate (%)

Minor Civil Division	1989 Poverty Rate	1999 Poverty Rate	2009 Poverty Rate
Town of Big Flats	22.7%	13.1%	16.8%
Adams County	14.4%	10.4%	12.6%
State of Wisconsin	10.7%	8.7%	11.6%

Source: U.S. Census

After decreasing in the 1990s the poverty rate has gone back up, probably as a result of the after effects of the financial crisis, and although the poverty rate for the state has gone nearly a full percentage point higher than the 1989 level, the poverty rate for Adams County, and especially Big Flats, has remained below the 1989 levels.

H. Community Issues

There are a variety of influences in the town, from population growth, to residential development, to the future of farming. These issues are critical to the long-term success of the town. A four page summary from the U.S. Census is included as Attachment D.

The following sections of the document examine the many issues that impact the town.

2. NATURAL, AGRICULTURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

A. NATURAL

The town lies in the mid-latitude continental climatic zone, which is characterized by long, snowy winters and short, warm summers. Spring and fall are often short with rapid changes from summer to winter and winter to summer. Annual precipitation, throughout the area, averages about 32 inches. About one-half to two-thirds of the annual precipitation falls between May and September. Snowfalls range between 45 and 80 inches annually, with a continuous snow cover from November to early April.

In terms of the physical landscape, the protection of certain natural features is necessary for the environment and for future generations. Certain environmental features and assets have more than merely aesthetic and leisure-time activity values. They are essential to long-term human survival and the preservation of life, health, and general welfare. As such, the protection and/or management of these environmental features and assets clearly are in the public's best interest.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information on this topic.

The environmental features and assets that were examined in this plan include soils, wetlands, floodplains, water, and woodlands.

1) Water, Wetlands, & Floodplains

Together the ponds, lakes, streams and wetlands total about 2,199 acres in the town or 7.15 percent of the total. The major water body is the Big Roche a Cri Creek. These surface water resources replenish the groundwater as part of the hydrologic cycle. See the Water Features Map.

Under natural conditions, aquifers receive water from rainfall that percolates through the soil. Contamination of groundwater can result from landfill liquids percolating through improperly designed landfills, private effluent disposal located near the water table, and petroleum products from leaking underground storage tanks, among other possibilities. Runoff from livestock yards and urban areas, or improper application of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers can also add organic and chemical contaminants in locations where the water table is near the surface or where the soils drain fast as sandy soils usually do. Protection of these groundwater reserves is necessary to ensure adequate water to domestic, agricultural and commercial uses. If groundwater is not protected, contamination could result; thus, endangering the quality and supply of the water in the town.

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle, and local ecological systems. In a natural condition, they control floodwater by moderating peak flows, and some may act as groundwater recharge sites. All wetlands have valuable water purification capabilities and make significant contributions to surface and groundwater quality. They act as settling areas for inflowing streams as well as functioning in the reduction of water nutrients through uptake of these compounds into plant tissues. They also have a buffering affect on water acidity or alkalinity and are helpful in the elimination of harmful bacteria, which may be found in surface or groundwater. They also serve as breeding and nesting grounds for waterfowl and many other animals that depend on aquatic habitats; they are an important recreational, education, and aesthetic resource. In many instances, wetlands serve as the combined roles of flood moderation, water purification and aquatic habitat, wetlands are important to the maintenance of downstream habitat as well. See the Water Features Map.

Wetlands generally occur in areas where water stands near, at, or above the soil surface during a significant portion of most years. Vegetation is generally aquatic in nature and may vary from water lilies and rushes in marsh areas to alder and tamarack in lowland forest. Swamps, bogs, marshes, potholes, wet meadows, and sloughs are all wetlands. The soils in these areas are usually saturated during the growing season within a few inches of the surface.

When drainage of wetlands occurs, the water table is locally lowered and soils are exposed to oxidation at depths previously saturated. Nutrients held in the wetland soils can then be leached away, and constant fertilization is necessary to keep the root zone of those soils productive for agriculture. Wildlife population and habitat in drained areas and downstream locations may decrease, thereby negatively affecting the recreational and aesthetic value of an area. Eradication of wetlands can also occur in urban locations through the use of fill material, which destroys the hydrologic function of the site and produces elevated water levels downstream. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) has delineated the location of wetlands and has laws for managing wetlands. There are no lakes in the Town, but the Big Roche a Cri Creek does run through the Town from the northeast toward the south central part of town.

Floodplains are a natural feature not conducive to development. Inappropriate location of roadways in floodplains can result in serious flood damage from elevated flood water levels and flood water velocities. Periodic roadbed saturation and embankment washing eventually lead to an increase in road maintenance costs. In addition to roads, floodwaters can create a number of problems by damaging foundations of homes, electrical equipment, heating units, etc. Basements constructed on permeable sands and silts of floodplains are especially susceptible to damage resulting from seepage through walls. Thus, it is advisable to restrict development in such areas. In the town, the areas that are designated as floodplains by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are mainly adjacent to the Big Roche a Cri Creek. See the Water Features Map.

Map 2 Water Features

Map 3 Soils

Map 4 Soil Limitations for Septic Tank Absorption Fields

2) Soils

As with most areas in Central Wisconsin, the Town of Big Flats has a variety of soil types within the town. According to the 1984 USDA Soil Survey of Adams County, the soil patterns include scattered areas of Adrian Muck (Ad), which is in most of the areas classified as DNR Wetlands and along the creeks and lakes. Newson Loamy Sand (Ne) is also scattered in these same areas and normally border the Adrian Muck. Scattered between the creek and wetland areas is Plainfield Sand [(PfB), (PfC) and (PfD)], which cannot be used for cultivating crops or construction of houses. Some soils that potentially can be used as farmland include Brems Loamy Sand (BrA), Brems-Newson Loamy Sand (BsA), Richford Loamy Sand (RfA), Au Gres Loamy Sand (Au), Meehan Loamy Sand (MoA), Plainfield Sand (PfA), and Coloma Sand (CoB). Coloma Sand (CoB), Richford Loamy Sand (RfA), and Brems Loamy Sand (BrA) are also suitable for construction of houses and with special precaution, can also be suitable for private onsite waste water treatment systems. Boone Rock Outcrop Complex (BpF) is found on very steep hills and is unsuitable for development and cultivated crops because of the steep slope.

Soils are an important natural resource. Knowledge of the potential uses and/or limitations of soil types is necessary to evaluate crop production capabilities or when considering construction of buildings, installation of utilities, or other uses of land. Problems that limit development on certain soils include poor filtration, slow percolation, flooding or ponding, wetness, slope, and subsidence. A "severe" limitation indicates that 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, such costly measures may not be feasible. See the Soils with Limitations Map.

Many soil interpretation maps may be created from soil table data available from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) online at:
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

3) Woodlands

Forest cover provides many vital functions, which are diverse in nature. Forested lands provide for recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, economic productivity (timber products), wildlife habitat, and protection of headwaters areas. From the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, of the 30,762 acres of land in Big Flats, 55.3 percent or 17,011 acres are forests. Tree cover is essential for erosion control and to reduce effluent and nutrient flows into surface water bodies and streams. See the Woodlands Map.

Some woodlands in the town are enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) program and the Forest Crop Law (FCL). This tax assessment program is available to landowners willing to manage their forest plot according to sound forestry practices as specified in a management plan. For more information see the Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element of the Adams County Comprehensive Plan.

Goals:

1. Protect natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, ponds, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
2. Protect economically productive forests, and discourage its conversion to other uses.
3. Ensure that all new development in the town is compatible with surrounding uses, and will not negatively impact environmental resources or adjoining property values.

Objectives:

1. Discourage new development in the town that negatively impacts natural resources.
2. Minimize impacts to the Town's natural resources from non-metallic mineral mining.
3. Encourage and support the preservation of natural open spaces that minimize flooding such as wetlands and floodplains.
4. Promote development that minimizes groundwater impacts from on-site septic systems and other sources.

Policies:

1. Discourage new development from areas shown to be unsafe or unsuitable for development due to flood hazard, potential groundwater contamination, loss of farmland, highway access problems, incompatibility with neighboring uses, etc.
2. Allow expansion of existing non-metallic mining operations or development of new sites only on lands where the expansion will not conflict with preexisting development.
3. Reclaim non-metallic mining sites to conform to the land use plan map.
4. Discourage the draining or filling of wetlands.
5. Encourage forestland owners to maintain and enroll their property in the state Managed Forest Law program.

B. AGRICULTURAL

According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook*, the Town of Big Flats between 1991-1993 was 34.3 percent agricultural, 55.3 percent forested, and 9.3 percent wetlands. The town's total land area is 48.1 square miles. Of the 34.3 percent of town land in agriculture, 4.5 percent was used for row crops, 0.2 percent was used for foraging, and 29.6 percent was grassland.

In terms of farming trends, the town has lost 1.5 percent of farmland acreage on tax rolls between 1990 and 1997. According to the *Wisconsin Land Use Databook* there were nine farms, none of which were dairy farms in 1997. Prime farmland produces the highest yields with minimal inputs and results in the least damage to the environment. None of the town's land is classified as prime farmland. See the Prime Farmlands Map.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goal:

1. Protection of economically productive farmlands.

Objectives:

1. Support diversification of farming types and practices to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity.
2. Existing agricultural uses and buildings should be taken into consideration when locating new development to avoid conflicts.
3. Preserve productive farmland for long-term agricultural uses.
4. Support road rules that minimize agriculturally-intensive impacts on roads.

Policies:

1. Encourage non-farm development, particularly subdivisions, in areas away from intensive agricultural activities, in order to minimize farm & non-farm conflicts due to noise, odors, nitrates in well water, pesticides, farm/vehicle conflicts on roadways, late night plowing, etc.
2. Consider the use of such tools as transfer of development rights (TDR) or purchase of development rights (PDR) to protect sensitive areas.
3. Encourage landowners with existing forestry to keep the land in timber production, and to develop forest management plans and enroll in the managed forest law program.

4. Post roads that commonly have farm implement traffic with slow moving vehicle signs.
5. Encourage fallow land to be sown with a cover crop to minimize erosion or return to forestry/MFL if abandoned as cropland.

C. CULTURAL

There are several original farm homes and farm buildings in the town. Historic registration has never been sought because these structures are commonly acknowledged as historic in the Town of Big Flats.

Six Century Farmsteads exist within the town. A century farmstead has maintained family ownership for at least 100 years. The Wisconsin State Fair recognized the Herbert L Peterson farmstead in 1991, the Thayne A Henningsen and Eldon Henningsen farmsteads in 1998, and the Anna Lee Landen and Darlene Benner Miller farmsteads in 1999.

Big Flats Century Farmsteads

- Herbert L Peterson on 200 acres in T19N R6E Sec 24 was settled in 1880.
- Thayne A Henningsen on 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 was settled in 1875.
- Eldon Henningsen on 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 was settled in 1875.
- Anna Lee Landen on 40 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 was settled in 1875.
- Darlene Benner Miller on 140 acres in T19N R6E Sec 25 was settled in 1875.
- Peter Hendricksen on 80 acres in T19N R6E Sec 15 was settled in 1874.

The Town of Big Flats glacial history includes mineral outcroppings – Keystone Rock in T19N R6E Sec12, Rabbit Rock in T19N R6E Sec 29, and Minnie Rock in T19N R6E Sec 34.

The old Pinery Road ran through the town at one time. See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information about the old Pinery Road.

Lands immediately adjacent to surface waters, but not man-made drainage ditches, may have an abundance of cultural and archeological significance because they were often the location of Native American and early European settlements.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Natural, Agricultural, & Cultural Resources element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Preserve cultural, historic, and architectural sites.
2. Preserve glacial limestone outcroppings in the Town of Big Flats for scenic enjoyment.

3. Prevent residential intrusion to allow farming to continue, and respect Century Farmsteads within the town.

Objective:

1. Provide guidance in the identification and protection of historic and cultural resources by working with the Adams County Historical Society and others.

Policy:

1. Review development proposals relative to the potential impacts to the historical and cultural resources of the town.

Rabbit Rock Park, Town of Big Flats



3. HOUSING

Background

The 1990 Census indicates that there were 824 housing units in the town. Two hundred ninety-four of these housing units were occupied, 14 were vacant for sale or rent, 498 were vacant for occasional use, and 18 were other vacant housing units. About 83 percent of all occupied housing units in the town were owner-occupied. The average household size was 2.49 people.

In 2000, there were 797 housing units in the town. Four hundred two of these housing units were occupied, 11 were vacant for sale or rent, 362 were vacant for occasional use, and 22 were other vacant housing units. About 88 percent of all occupied housing units in the town were owner-occupied. The average household size was 2.35 people.

By 2010, there were 960 housing units in the town. Four hundred twenty-five of these housing units were occupied, 26 were vacant for sale or rent, 599 were vacant for occasional use, and 26 were other vacant housing units. Of all occupied housing units in the town 86.5 percent were owner-occupied. The average household size was 2.29 people

The number of units vacant for occasional use (seasonal dwellings) tells a story of how the residential character of the town has changed over the last twenty years. In 1990 seasonal dwellings made up sixty percent of the housing stock. By 2000 the total number of housing units had gone down by 3.3 percent, even while the population increased in the town by 29 percent, which is reflected in a 27.3 percent decline in seasonal dwellings. Much of this change can be attributed to conversion of seasonal to year-round dwellings, although the decline in total housing units was probably in considerable degree the result of some marginal seasonal units being torn down. Since 2000 the total number of housing units increased by a fifth while the population only went up 7.6 percent. Meanwhile, the number of seasonal dwellings increased by nearly two-thirds and is back up to 62.4 percent of housing units in the town.

The robust growth in total housing units, in spite of relatively slow population growth indicates the dynamic within Big Flats for a strong market in residential properties. Despite the lingering effects of the financial crisis, the jump in seasonal dwellings since 2000 shows that although the growth in year-round residents may have slowed, demand for recreational property is still strong. Growth in the future is likely to follow a similar pattern.

Based on the twenty-year growth trend it is reasonable to project a population over 1,400 for the town by 2030, requiring an additional 245 occupied housing units, a 57.6 percent increase. This does not account for growth in seasonal dwellings, however. If the twenty-year trend in housing units is projected forward it yields 1,118 total units by 2030. By subtracting the projected occupied units (670) this leaves 448 vacant (primarily, seasonal) units. This is on the low end of the range of seasonal dwellings over the last twenty-years.

The year-round population of the town is subject to a number of factors, not least the ability in the future of owners of recreational properties to retire full time to Big Flats. The extremely strong growth in seasonal dwellings over the last decade, during a period of major

economic dislocation, argues that demand for these properties will remain strong no matter what the economy does. So an overall increase in housing units from 158 units on the low end (1,118 units projected for 2030, less 960 existing) to 245 on the high end (see above).

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Housing element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Discourage residential development in or adjacent to productive farmland areas.
2. Allow adequate affordable housing for all individuals consistent with the rural character of the community.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that local land use controls and permitting procedures do not discourage or prevent the provision of affordable housing opportunities.
2. Support development of senior and special needs housing within the town.
3. Direct residential development away from existing agricultural uses and buildings to avoid conflicts.

Policy:

1. Work with developers to provide a variety of housing types for all income and age groups.

4. TRANSPORTATION

Background

The transportation system in the town includes all the state, county and local roads. The local transportation network is an important factor for the safe movement of people and goods, as well as to the physical development of the town. There is no transit, rail, air or water transportation service within the town's jurisdiction.

The nearest transit system is in the City of Wisconsin Rapids. Union Pacific provides commercial rail service. Amtrak passenger rail service is available in Wisconsin Dells. The nearest commercial air service is at the Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA) in the City of Mosinee, and in Madison at Dane County Regional Airport (MSN). There are no water transportation facilities in the area.

State and Regional Transportation Plans:

1. State Plans

Corridors 2020 was completed in 1989. The plan was designed to meet Wisconsin's mobility needs for the future. The 3,200-mile state highway network was comprised of two elements: a multilane backbone system and a two-lane connector system. The backbone system is a 1,650-mile network of multilane divided highways interconnecting the major population and economic centers in the state and tying them to the national transportation network. The connector system is 1,550 miles of high-quality highways that link other significant economic and tourism centers to the backbone network. All communities over 5,000 in population are to be connected to the backbone system via the connector network. Within Adams County, STH 21 is a Corridors 2020 connector route, and the only highway in the county designated as part of the Corridors 2020 system.

Connections 2030 is Wisconsin's latest long-range, statewide, multi-modal transportation plan. This recently adopted plan is policy based and incorporates the previous Corridor 2020 and Translinks 21 plans. Like Corridors 2020, Connections 2030 identifies a series of system-level priority corridors that are critical to Wisconsin's travel patterns and the state's economy, and expands on how those corridors function together to create a coherent transportation system. The priority corridors impacting Adams County include I-94 designated as the Badger State Corridor (Madison to Eau Claire), which although it does not actually enter Adams County, includes a call for a corridor study of STH 13 starting in Wisconsin Dells. This route is arguably the primary road through Adams County, and the Town of Big Flats, so such a study would have a major effect of transportation in the county. The other priority corridor runs east-west through the center of the county. It is STH 21 the Cranberry Country Corridor (Oshkosh to Tomah).

Another state plan was *Translinks 21*, completed in 1994. This effort began developing more detailed modal plans that include in-depth analysis of a specific mode and its relationship to the other modes. Completed plans include the *Wisconsin State Highway Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020*, the *Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2020*, the

Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 and the *Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report*. Each modal plan includes extensive analysis of land use related issues.

Another state level plan related to the highway system is the *Wisconsin Access Management System Plan*. This is a plan for managing access on portions of the State Trunk Highway System that designates 5,300 miles of state highways on which access will be managed through the purchase of access rights or the designation of "controlled access highways". It shows where WisDOT intends to control access points as new development occurs and to consolidate or eliminate existing access as necessary and feasible.

The access management plan is composed of two tiers. Tier 1 consists of the routes that make up the Corridors 2020 system, including STH 21 in Adams County. Access management on these routes is seen as essential to maintaining the required high level of service. Because these highways are generally the main routes between communities and have higher traffic volumes than other state highways, they tend to experience the greatest development pressure. Tier 2 is comprised of other State Trunk Highways that meet specified criteria, including STH 13 and STH 73 in Adams County. These routes are roadways where limiting access is seen as a cost-effective strategy to improve safety, reduce congestion, facilitate planned access to developing land, and delay or avoid future construction expenditures.

2. Regional Plan

The Regional Comprehensive Plan: A Framework for the Future, 2002 – 2020 was adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2003. The RCP looks at transportation in all ten counties that make up the North Central Region, including Adams. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address transportation issues.

The RCP identifies a number of transportation issues including growing traffic volumes and congestion. Moderate levels of congestion, see MAP 4 are expected by the year 2020 on STH 13 in Adams/Friendship and north of the lakes area in the Town of Rome as well as STH 21 west of STH 13, assuming no capacity improvements. Moderate congestion indicates that speeds and distance between vehicles are reduced, constricting traffic flow. Freedom of drivers to maneuver within the traffic stream or enter the highway is noticeably limited. Minor incidents can result in traffic jams because the traffic stream has little space to absorb disruptions. Traffic volumes continue to swell, especially in summer months due to the local tourism and seasonal housing growth. The RCP shows 72 to 77 percent increase in average daily traffic on major routes in Adams County between 1980 and 2000.

The RCP addresses other modes of travel as well as highways, including bicycle transportation. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle Facilities Network Plan is incorporated in the RCP by reference. The plan envisions development of a regional system of new interconnected bicycle facilities for the ten county area including Adams. The proposed network will encompass routes on bicycle paths, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders and wide curb lanes which will link existing and potential traffic generation sites and points of interest, as outlined in the plan, to make bicycling a more attractive and safer

transportation alternative. A map displaying highway suitability for bike routes is included in the attachments.

The goals of the regional bike plan are to generate public interest in using existing and developing new bike trails across the Region and state and to provide county and municipal officials with guidance in planning and establishing bike facilities at the local level.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Transportation element for more detailed information on this topic.

Road Network

The road system in the Town of Big Flats plays a key role in development by providing both access to land and serving to move people and goods through the area. The interrelationships between land use and the road system makes it necessary for the development of each to be balanced with the other. Types and intensities of land-uses have a direct relationship to the traffic on roadways that serve those land-uses. Intensely developed land often generates high volumes of traffic. If this traffic is not planned for, safety can be seriously impaired for both local and through traffic flows. See the Transportation Map.

The Town of Big Flats road network consists of roughly 6.01 miles of state highway, 8.05 miles of county highway, and 89.35 miles of local roads. WisDOT requires all local units of government to submit road condition rating data every two years as part of the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR). The Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) program and WISLR are tools that local governments can use to manage pavements for improved decision making in budgeting and maintenance. Towns can use this information to develop better road budgets and keep track of roads that are in need of repair.

Traffic generated and attracted by any new land-use can increase the volume throughout the highway system and increase congestion on the roadway system keeping property from reaching its full potential value. Even without the creation of new access points, changes in land-uses can alter the capacity of the roadway because more, and possibly different, kinds of vehicles than before enter, leave, and add to the traffic flow. Uncontrolled division of land tends to affect highways by intensifying the use of abutting lands, which impairs safety and impedes traffic movements.

In terms of traffic volumes, there is the Department of Transportation annual average daily traffic count for two areas in the town. In the most current count, Highway 13 south of County C the AADT count was 3,600 and County C between 14th and 15th Avenues the AADT count was 640. These counts need to be monitored as a way to gauge the increase of traffic in the town. Two state highway segments in Adams County are shown as moderately congested. Both highway segments have AADTs above 4000. Other factors also affect congestion such as lane widths, shoulder paving, alignment, and adjacent land use.

Wisconsin was one of the first states to recognize this relationship between highway operations and the use of abutting lands. Under Chapter 233, the Department of

Transportation (WisDOT) was given the authority to establish rules to review subdivision plats abutting or adjoining state trunk highways or connecting highways. Regulations enacted by the WisDOT establish the principles of subdivision review. They require new subdivisions to: (1) have internal street systems; (2) limit direct vehicular access to the highways from individual lots; (3) establish building setbacks; and (4) establish access patterns for remaining unplatted land. This rule has recently been suspended.

As development continues and land use changes, the cost of maintaining the road system must be increased. More traffic requires more maintenance and expansion of the local road system.

Goals:

1. Encourage development of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
2. Provide an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system affording mobility, convenience and safety, and that meets the needs of all town residents.
3. Utilize PASER software to inventory and rate the local roads.
4. Improve existing roads before constructing new roads.
5. Establish a Wisconsin Department of Transportation Rustic Road in the northern part of town.

Objectives:

1. Support and maintain a safe and efficient Town road system.
2. Promote the development of multi-use trails, trail linkages, or wide shoulders as part of new development proposals, where appropriate.

Policies:

1. Prepare and update a 5-year Road Improvement Plan.
2. Discourage land uses which generate heavy traffic volumes on local roads that have not been constructed or upgraded for such use.
3. Better space roadway access along the existing Town road network to increase safety and preserve capacity.
4. Consider future road locations, extensions or connections when reviewing development plans and proposals.
5. Accommodate access requirements for emergency services (fire, EMS, ambulance, etc.) as well as school bus and snowplows on all Town roads.

Map 5 Transportation

5. UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Background

As a small rural town relatively few public utilities exist. There is no sanitary sewer, storm water systems, water supply, or wastewater facilities. Pineland Grade School serves all of the children in the area, and is part of the Adams-Friendship School District. The Enbridge pipeline passes through the town delivering petroleum and natural gas to remote refineries. A pipeline substation exists within the town. Big Flats does not provide for curbside refuse collection; however, that service is made available with area private firms who offer curbside refuse and recycling collection for a fee.

The town provides volunteer fire, & first responder service, while Mound View Hospital provides ambulance service to town residents. A map displaying the fire service areas is included in the attachments

Community facilities include the Town Hall, which functions as a multi-purpose building. The building is owned and maintained by the Town. See the Utilities & Community Facilities Map.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Utilities & Community Facilities element for more detailed information on this topic.



Fire department, Town of Big Flats

Goals:

1. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
2. Continue to provide ambulance, volunteer fire and first responder services to residents.
3. Encourage recycling by residents.
4. Encourage development of high speed internet access.

Objectives:

1. Make information available to residents on the proper maintenance of septic systems.
2. Consider the potential impacts of development proposals including high-capacity wells on groundwater quality and quantity.
3. Explore opportunities to develop integrated, multi-use trail systems and recreational facilities.
4. Share equipment and services across town boundaries, where possible.

Policies:

1. Work with adjoining towns, the county, the state, and individual landowners to address known water quality issues.
2. Consider the feasibility of wastewater collection and treatment systems in major developments.
3. Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan for major equipment purchases.
4. Maintain convenient access to recycling containers at the transfer site.
5. Initiate communication with the local telephone cooperative about resident desires for high-speed internet access.

Map 6 Utilities & Community Facilities

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Background

As discussed in previous sections, the town has had an agricultural base for generations. Farming is still the dominant economic sector occurring in the town. Nearly 35 percent of the total land is used for agriculture. According to the *Wisconsin Town Land Use Databook*, there were 9 active farms in Big Flats in 1997; none were dairy farms.

Scattered throughout the town there are about a dozen small businesses, other than farms, that employ a few people. Most of the town's residents commute to employment areas outside of the town. There are several industrial parks nearby that provide employment opportunities, including: the Cities of Wisconsin Rapids, Stevens Point and Adams, as well as the Village of Friendship and the Town of Rome.

There are no major redevelopment areas in the town.

There are a variety of county, regional, state and federal economic development programs available to businesses in the Town. These programs range from grants to loans, to general assistance.

1. County:

Adams County Rural & Industrial Development Corporation (ACRIDC)

ACRIDC is a non-profit organization that promotes the economic development of Adams County, Wisconsin, and its cities, villages, and towns. ACRIDC is comprised of area businesspeople, citizens, elected officials, representatives of local government, utility companies, state agencies, educational institutions and other organizations essential to the growth of Adams County. ACRIDC serves the needs of new businesses coming to the area, as well as to assist existing companies.

JAM Development Zone

Adams County was awarded designation as a Wisconsin Development Zone in association with Juneau and Marquette Counties. Known as the JAM Zone (Juneau-Adams-Marquette), Adams County qualifies for special state incentives available to businesses that locate or expand within the Zone. The extent of the credits for any given business is determined during the certification process. This program is administered by the ACRIDC.

Adams County Revolving Loan Fund

A Wisconsin Department of Commerce Economic Development Grant was awarded to Adams County in 1996. This grant enabled Adams County to establish a revolving loan fund in order to assist local businesses and is administered by the ACRIDC.

Adams County Chamber of Commerce

The Adams County Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to the development of the business community in Adams County. The Chamber offers information on local business and industry and also provides a variety of programs designed to assist business development.

Adams - Columbia Electric Coop (ACEC) Revolving Loan Fund

The ACEC established a USDA - Rural Development IRP revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. It is targeted at the timber and wood products industry, tourism and other manufacturing and service industries.

2. Regional:

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation

The North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed-rate, low down payment, low interest financing. It is targeted at the timber and wood products industry, tourism, and other manufacturing and service industries.

North Central Advantage Technology Zone Tax Credits

Adams County has been designated a Technology Zone by the Department of Commerce. The Technology Zone program brings \$5 million in income tax incentives for high-tech development to the area. The North Central Advantage Technology Zone offers the potential for high-tech growth in knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing clusters, among others. The zone designation is intended to attract and retain skilled, high-paid workers to the area, foster regional partnerships between business and education to promote high-tech development, and to complement the area's recent regional branding project.

3. State:

Rural Economic Development 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 Adams County. Funds may be used for "soft costs" only, such as planning, engineering, ad marketing assistance.

Wisconsin Small Cities 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.

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The UW SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small business in Wisconsin.

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.

Other State Programs

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

4. Federal:

U.S. Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA offers a public works grant program. These are administered through local units of government for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

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.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90% 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.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goals:

1. Build community identity by revitalizing community character and enforcing building standards.
2. Promote the stabilization of the current economic base.
3. Discourage large scale development that may create excessive traffic flow through residential areas.
4. Encourage new retail, commercial & industrial development to locate adjacent to county or state highways.
5. Prevent industrial development from negatively impacting environmental resources or adjoining property values.
6. Encourage creation of new ordinances that establish minimum aesthetic standards to reduce commercial, industrial, and agricultural property with excessive debris, blight, and dilapidated buildings.

Objectives:

1. Encourage new retail, commercial & industrial development to locate in designated areas and adjacent to county or highways.
2. Encourage businesses that are compatible in a rural setting.

Policies:

1. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding areas.
2. Review the costs and benefits of a proposed development project prior to approval.
3. Commercial and industrial development should be directed to designated planned areas consistent with the Future Land Use Map that have the service capability to support the development.

7. LAND USE

Background

The Town of Big Flats covers an area of about 30,761 acres in Adams County. The area is characterized by thin till and pitted outwash. The typical terrain is flat and largely planted with pines or open for agricultural use with a general north to south drainage pattern. The natural resource base of the area is dominated by timber. Agricultural and Forestry uses of the land are vitally important.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use element for more detailed information on this topic.

Existing Land Use 2010

Knowledge of the existing land use patterns within a town is necessary to develop a desired “future” land use pattern. The Existing Land Use Map was developed using air photos from a countywide flight in 2010. The land use calculations in the 2006 Plan were based on air photos taken in 1992/1998, so although some differences in land use totals reflect variance in interpretation, some show significant changes that have taken place during that period.

Woodlands are the dominant use at 76.3 percent of the land area. This is down from 81.4 percent in 2006. During that same period Open Lands increased by nearly 2,200 acres to 7.9 percent of land area. Although this is a thousand acres more than the decrease in woodlands, much of this change is undoubtedly the result of the Cottonville Fire. Agriculture accounted for 7.2 percent of land and includes about 800 acres of new agricultural land developed recently in the burnt-over area. The other notable change is in Residential which went from 8.6 percent of land area in 2006 to 4.4 percent today. Part of this difference may be the result of interpretation, but in the time since the original air photos there has been a shift in housing units from seasonal to year-round and back to seasonal and some units have been torn down (see Housing p. 23). See the Existing Land Use Map.

In general, agricultural, forest lands, and residential uses are scattered in a “mixed” pattern. Residential development is distributed fairly evenly along the road network. Commercial forests are extensive across the northern part of the town, and in the southeast and southwest corners of the town.

Future Land Use 2010-2030

The Future Land Use Plan Map represents the long-term land use

Table 7: Existing Land Use, 2010

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	2,220	7.2%
Commercial	52	0.2%
Governmental	32	0.1%
Industrial	0	0.0%
Open Land	2,433	7.9%
Outdoor Recreation	4	0.1%
Residential	1,360	4.4%
Transportation	1,051	3.4%
Water	113	0.4%
Woodlands	23,497	76.3%
Total Acres	30,761	100.0%

Source: NCWRPC GIS

Map 7 Existing Land Use

Map 8 Future Land Use

recommendations for all lands in the town. Although the 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 manage development of the town.

The Plan groups compatible land uses and separates conflicting uses. To create the Plan, nine basic future land use categories were created. The majority of the classifications generally correspond to the districts within the Adams County Zoning Ordinance, to ease future implementation of the plan. Again, the classifications are not zoning districts and do not have the authority of zoning. However, the preferred land use map and classifications are intended to be used as a guide when reviewing lot splits, conditional uses, and revisions to the town zoning map.

A general description of each land use classification follows:

1. Residential

Identifies areas recommended for residential development typically consisting of smaller lot sizes.

2. 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.

3. Commercial

Identifies areas recommended for commercial development, as well as existing commercial establishments located throughout the town.

4. Industrial

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

5. Governmental/Public/Institutional

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

6. Agricultural Areas

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

7. Forestry Areas

Identifies areas of large woodlands within the town.

8. Transportation Corridors

Identifies the existing road network along with the recommendations for improved and safe traffic movement in the town, including airports and rail facilities.

9. Preservation & Open Space

Contains sensitive environmental areas, such as 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, DNR wetlands, steep slopes of 12 percent or greater, and open water. This could include endangered species habitat or other significant features or areas identified by the Town.

Using these categories the Plan Commission participated in a mapping exercise to identify the desired land use. Specifically, they used their broad knowledge of the town, the series of maps that were prepared as part of the planning process, and their interpretation of the current trends. The goal was to produce a generalized land use plan map to guide the town's growth in the next decade. The Year 2030 Land Use Plan Map represents the desired arrangement of preferred land uses for the future.

Future Land Use Plan Map Overview

The future land use plan map has identified approximately 3,158 acres of land for agriculture, 10,650 acres of land for forestry, 4,560 acres of land for preservation & open space, 3,757 acres for residential development, 7,694 acres for rural residential development, no land for industrial development, 114 acres of land Governmental/Public/Institutional use, and 174 acres of land for commercial uses.

Commercial development is envisioned around the intersection of CTH C and STH 13, on land around the intersection of STH 13, Bighorn Ave, and Dead Horse Creek, and a large area south of the school, at the corner of Browndeer Ave. and STH 13.

Agriculture is becoming a larger part of the land use mix in Big Flats. A large contiguous area in sections 15, 16, & 21 is an agricultural operation. Several large parcels (sections 11, 12, 13, 24, and 26) in the area affected by the Cottonville Fire have recently been converted to agriculture. There are also large agricultural blocks in sections 25, 30, 32, 34, and 36.

Forestry in addition to producing timber also provides recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat. Sustainable management techniques and enrollment under the Managed Forest Law are encouraged. Large contiguous blocks of forest primarily at the corners of the town, should be encouraged to remain as forests.

Government/Public/Institutional development consists of the former Town dump, mapped cemeteries, the Town Hall, the wayside at Rabbit Rock, and Pineland Grade School. These are permitted uses in the Commercial District.

Preservation & Open Space areas generally buffer all floodways in town. The three buttes in the town should be preserved for the visual enjoyment of all. Two buttes are located adjacent to creeks in sections 12 & 34. The other is located with a wayside in section 29.

Rural Residential development is allowed within large and small pockets that are mapped throughout the town. Conservation subdivisions are encouraged throughout the town.

Industrial development is not encouraged within the Town of Big Flats.

Residential development on small lots of about two acres or less and located next to other small residential lots exist generally in linear patterns along Town roads, and STH 13. Clusters of small residential lots exist in several areas of town.

The goal 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 ensure that it is reflective of current trends

Zoning

County Shoreland Jurisdiction:

All counties are mandated by Wisconsin law to adopt and administer a zoning ordinance that regulates land-use in shoreland/wetland and floodplain areas for the entire area of the county outside of villages and cities. This ordinance supersedes any town ordinance, unless the town ordinance is more restrictive. The shoreland/wetland and floodplain area covered under this zoning is the area that lies within 1,000 feet of a lake and within 300 feet of a navigable stream or to the landward side of a floodplain whichever distance is greater.

Town Zoning

The Town has recently adopted its own zoning ordinance, which provides for six districts: two Residential Districts, Commercial District, Agriculture Districts, and Forestry/Recreation District. The ordinance also provides for, but at this time does not include, overlay districts allowing for regulations either more or less restrictive than the underlying zoning district. The Residential Districts are distinguished by the minimum lot size requirement (two-acres and five acres). The Commercial District permits a list of uses, including mobile home parks and campgrounds that meet state standards and requirements enumerated in the ordinance, as well as governmental and institutional uses. Multi-family residential is a conditional use in this district, as is single-family residential if it is "intended to be occupied by the owner or manager of the business."

The Agriculture and Forestry/Recreation Districts have several important aspects in common, most significantly a twenty-acre minimum lot size. The Agriculture District contains numerous provisions spelling out specific uses related to agricultural functions,

including setback requirements tied to farming functions and facilities and landscaped buffers around agricultural fields. The Forestry/Recreation District is more restrictive. Beyond certain nature-based recreational uses and the practice of forestry, the only permitted use is one single-family residence and accessory structures. Livestock-raising, within stated standards, is a conditional use in the Forestry District (as it is in both Residential Districts).

The ordinance also has provisions that address recreational vehicles and camping, modular and manufactured homes, and issues associated with maintenance of property and “junk” in yards. A Plan Commission, Board of Appeals and Zoning Administrator are established, and procedures laid out for making applications, charging fees, amendments, and enforcing the provisions of the ordinance.

The County Board in addition to approving the ordinance’s original adoption, will continue to have “veto” power over future amendments to the Town’s ordinance [§60.62(2), Wis. Stats.]. Administration of this ordinance will be accomplished by having a Town zoning administrator who will work for the Town part-time or perhaps be shared with another Town. Any revision to the zoning ordinance would require County Board approval. There will be some areas of overlap between the County and Town ordinances for shoreland and floodplain areas.

Land Use Vision

The Town of Big Flats enjoys a safe, peaceful, and rural environment as a special place to live and raise a family. The residents wish to ensure, preserve, and conserve our most valuable resources of woods, water, air, and family traditions. Together these abundant resources offer a variety of valuable lifestyle and seasonal recreational opportunities to both residents and visitors. The Big Flats community has a unique combination of business opportunities, which include agriculture, forestry, and entrepreneurial employment that are in harmony with our rural environment.

Goals:

1. Promote the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and maintain and rehabilitate existing residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial structures.
2. Encourage land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
3. Provide adequate infrastructure and public services to meet existing and future market demand for residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial uses.
4. Plan and develop land uses that preserve the rural community.
5. Reduce the risks associated with wildfires.

Objectives:

1. Maintain orderly, planned growth which promotes the health, safety and general welfare of residents and makes efficient use of land and efficient use of public services, facilities and tax dollars.
2. Prevent new development from negatively impacting the natural environment or existing property.
3. Provide for a mix of land uses within the town.
4. Promote new land development that is consistent with this plan.
5. Encourage the CWPP Planning Committee to develop and prioritize an annual list of mitigation projects.

Policies:

1. Maintain the comprehensive plan, which will serve as a guide for future land use decisions. Permit new development based on consideration of this Plan, as well as other Town, County, Regional, and State plans and regulations.
2. Minimize both the loss of productive farmland and the potential for conflicts between existing and proposed land uses by encouraging proper land uses and building locations.
3. Encourage land uses and building locations that minimize fragmentation of large, contiguous forest tracts.
4. Encourage conservation easements and other tools to protect environmentally sensitive or unique resources.
5. Update existing land use regulations to be consistent with this plan.
6. Annually select which priority mitigation projects to implement from the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or the CWPP Planning Committee.

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Background

Governmental relationships can best be described as “vertical” relationships, such as between federal, state and local units (county/city/town) that are relatively well established in law. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that requires horizontal governmental relationships such as town to town and city to county or town. The result is that towns, villages, cities, and counties act more as adversaries than as partners. Comprehensive planning is one effort that has as its goal encouraging intergovernmental cooperation.

School districts are one of the most common intergovernmental organizations since they cross municipal boundaries. Adams County is served by five school districts. A school district map is included in the attachments

Wisconsin Statute s.66.30, entitled "Intergovernmental Cooperation", enables local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Typically, intergovernmental cooperation and coordination involves the management and delivery of public services and facilities, and a defined geographic area within which cooperation and coordination may be feasible. Often the area is a central city and surrounding municipalities, or several towns. It is a collection of local communities in which the citizens are interdependent in terms of their employment, residence, health, and medical care, education, recreation and culture, shopping and other experiences.

A variety of other factors, some long-standing and some of fairly recent origin, are combining to force citizens and local governments in both urban and rural area to confer, cooperate, and in some cases, to join together in search of better ways to deliver public services in their respective areas. These factors include:

- population settlement patterns;
- local government structure, finance, and politics;
- high population mobility;
- economic and environmental interdependence; and
- high cost, capital-intensive functions.

Adjoining Units of Government

The Town of Rome completed its comprehensive plan in 2000 and the towns of Monroe, Strongs Prairie, Preston, Richfield, Colburn, and Leola all completed their own comprehensive plans as part of the Adams County comprehensive planning process (as did Big Flats). No conflicts have been identified.

Mutual Agreements

The Mound View Ambulance capital costs are shared among the 10 towns the Village of Friendship and the City of Adams. The Town of Monroe has built a fire hall and the Town of Big Flats is providing the fire truck. Monroe and Big Flats completed a joint Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2010.

See the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, Intergovernmental Cooperation element for more detailed information on this topic.

Goal:

1. Encourage coordination and cooperation among nearby units of governments.

Objectives:

1. Promote communication with other units of government, including adjoining towns, the county, the state, and federal government.
2. Provide services in a more cost-effective manner by joining with other units of government.

Policies:

1. Identify alternative solutions to existing or potential land use, administration or policy conflicts that may hinder intergovernmental cooperation.
2. Meet periodically with adjoining units of government to discuss issues of mutual concern.
3. Review on a regular basis existing shared service agreements, and explore additional agreements.



Cottonville Fire (May 5, 2005), Town of Big Flats

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this Comprehensive Plan depends on local officials. It is also important that local citizens and others become aware of this plan.

Some steps have already been accomplished toward implementing this plan, such as the adoption of written public participation guidelines, the formation of a Plan Commission, hosting an open house meeting, passing a Plan Commission resolution recommending the Plan to the Town Board, holding a formal public hearing, and adoption of the Plan by ordinance by the Town Board.

The following recommendations are made to further implement this Comprehensive Plan:

Recommendation 1:

The Town Board should use the Plan as a guide when making decisions, especially those that relate to growth and development. The Plan Commission and any other official committee of the Town should also use the Plan in their efforts as well.

Recommendation 2:

The Town should encourage citizen awareness of the comprehensive plan by making copies available, making reference to it at public meetings and Town newsletters, and displaying a copy of the future land use plan map in the Town Hall. Neighboring local units of government and others will receive copies of the Plan.

Recommendation 3:

The Town has recently adopted a zoning ordinance to supplement the shoreland areas covered under county zoning. Beyond that, there are some additional tools and approaches that can be utilized by the Town to achieve the goals of the Plan. These include but are certainly not limited to the following: land division, official mapping, fee simple land acquisition, easements, deed restrictions, land dedication, and ordinances or programs regulating activities such as building permits, erosion control, or septic pumping, etc. The Town should consider these tools as needed.

Recommendation 4:

Amendments to this Plan may include minor changes to the plan text or maps, and/or major changes resulting from periodic review. Wisconsin Law requires that the same process used to adopt the Plan will be used to make any amendments. The steps are outlined below:

- An amendment or change may be initiated by either the Town Board or Plan Commission, a request from a resident, or may result from a regular review of the Plan.
- The Plan Commission prepares the specific text or map amendment being considered, holds a public meeting and votes to recommend approval or disapproval of the proposed amendment, by resolution to the Town Board.
- A copy of the proposed Plan amendment is sent to all affected government units, including Adams County.
- Town Clerk publishes a 30-day Class 1 notice announcing a Town Board public hearing on the proposed changes.
- The Town Board conducts the public hearing and votes to either approve, disapprove or approve with changes.

Any approved changes are sent to affected government units, including Adams County. Frequent minor changes to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided.

Recommendation 5:

Periodic updating of the Plan is necessary to insure that it reflects the desires of the Town's residents. The Plan Commission should review the Plan on an annual basis, and conduct an in-depth review of the plan every five years. At a minimum the Plan must be updated every ten years.

The annual review should compare how decisions made during the year, especially land use decisions, are related to the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. If decisions are inconsistent with the Plan, changes need to be made.

The update should consider the following to maintain consistency in the land development process:

- Revision should be made to bring decision-making back in line with Plan's goals, objectives, and policies.
- The goals, objectives, and policies should be reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and worthwhile in the Town.
- New implementation tools should be considered to gain more control over decisions.

The above recommendations provide a general process for the Town to best implement the findings of the Plan. The process to develop the Plan consisted of many hours of work

from elected, non-elected staff and the general public; however, the ability to implement the Plan lies with the Town Board. In the end, it is the Town Board's responsibility to uphold and promote the Plan.

Consistency Among Plan Elements

The comprehensive planning law requires that the implementation element describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan should be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive Plan. The nine sections (elements) of the Plan were prepared simultaneously to achieve integration and eliminate any inconsistencies between the different sections.



Big Roche-a-Cri Creek, Town of Big Flats

ATTACHMENT A
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

ATTACHMENT B
COMMUNITY SURVEY

ATTACHMENT C

COTTONVILLE FIRE – FINAL MAP (Control Lines Removed)

Control lines were used by the WDNR to break the fire suppression efforts into zones.