Chapter 2

Natural, Cultural, & Agricultural Resources

This chapter describes local land and water conditions in detail as well as agricultural resources and cultural heritage. It is important to consider the patterns and interrelations of natural resources on a broader scale because they do not follow geo-political boundaries. In addition, many of the programs for protecting or mitigating impacts to natural resources are administered at the county, state, or federal level. Thus, an overview of recent county-wide natural resource planning efforts is described below. Natural resources covered in this chapter include biology, geology, and geography including terrain, soils, water, forests, wetlands, wildlife, and habitat.

Cultural resources include a community's heritage, archaeological sites and cemeteries, historic buildings and landscapes, historic transportation routes, or traditional cultural properties important to indigenous peoples or other cultural groups. Cultural resources also include arts and the way of life in a community. Cultural resources are those elements around us that signify our heritage and help to evoke the sense of place that makes an area distinct.

Previous Plans and Studies

Oneida County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2020-2029

This plan was developed by the Oneida County Land & Water Conservation Department with assistance from various local, regional, and state agencies and input from members of the community. It provides a framework for local, state, and federal conservation program implementation efforts. Implementation of this plan will help protect and improve the valuable water and soil natural resources in Oneida County. Some of the Plan's recommendations include protecting shoreland areas, reducing nonpoint source pollution, replacing failing septic systems, and reducing wildlife conflicts. The plan can be found at www.oclw.org.

Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2024-2028

The primary purpose of this Recreation Plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the county's current and future recreation needs. This direction takes the form of an inventory and analysis of outdoor recreational facilities, followed by establishing recommendations to meet identified needs. Adoption of this plan and its subsequent acceptance by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) allows for continued eligibility for financial assistance from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Stewardship Fund, and many other federal and state funding programs. A copy is available in the Oneida County Forestry Department.

Oneida County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2021-2035

The mission of the county forest is to manage, conserve, and protect the natural resources within the county forest on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. This plan is administered by the County's Forestry, Land, and Recreation Committee and it 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. A copy is available in the Oneida County Forestry Department.

USGS Protecting Wisconsin's Groundwater through Comprehensive Planning

In a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the University of Wisconsin System, and the United States Geological Survey, a website was made available with data and information on geology, general hydrology, and groundwater quantity and quality. The website was developed to aid government officials in their comprehensive plans, including this plan. The most recent data available for Oneida County was public in 2007. The Oneida County report can be accessed here: *https://wi.water.usgs.gov/gwcomp/index.html*.

Natural Resources

Examining the natural environment is essential to the planning process. For instance, soils, topography and geology can pose limitations to certain types of development, while an inventory of surface water resources, vegetation types, environmentally significant areas, and historical features identify those resources and areas which should be protected from over-development. This section of the plan identifies both the land and water resources of the City.

Land Resources

Rhinelander has a continental climate characterized by cold, snowy winters, warm summer days and cool summer nights. The short frost-free period during the summer limits the production of crops to forage, small grain, and suitable vegetables. Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year, reaching a peak in summer. Snow covers the ground during much of the period from late fall through early spring. September is usually the wettest month of the year and February is the driest. Average annual wind speed is 21 miles per hour and is highest in April.

Topography

Oneida County is in the Northern Highland physiographic region of Wisconsin, a gently arched dome underlain by crystalline rock. Most of the County is a pitted outwash plain. Other areas consist of glacial till or glacial drift. The landscape is the result of several glacial advances and retreats that took place over northeastern and central Wisconsin some 12,500 to 20,000 years ago. Numerous and inconsistent soil variations and numerous, unique geologic and topographic features emerged. These features include extensive ground moraines in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the County, a remnant end moraine near Rhinelander, and a number of parallel ridges adjacent to drumlin fields in Forest and Langlade Counties.

Oneida County's physical landscape is defined not only by forest, wetlands, streams, woodlots, hills, and other natural features, but perhaps most by the density of the lake area in the northern part of the County and in Vilas County; one of the most extensive lake districts in the world.

Soils

Area soils are related to the physical geography, climate, and vegetation. Silty deposits cover the glacial deposits in the southern, eastern, and western parts of the County. The soils in these areas are among the best suited in the county for agricultural crops and hardwood forests. Over time, human activity affects soil formation by altering and accelerating natural soil processes. Clearing, burning, cultivating, and urbanization can affect soil structure, porosity, and soil nutrients. By reviewing the soil maps and other information, it is possible to determine the best uses for a particular area. See the 1993 Natural Resource Conservation Service Soil Survey of Oneida County for more information.

Limitations for constructing basement are either due to a high-water table or a shallow depth to bedrock. 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. Contaminated soils are discussed in the Economic Development chapter of this plan.

Water Resources

Surface water resources support the area's economy by drawing tourists and providing a good quality of life for residents. The Oneida-Vilas-Iron County area contains one of the highest concentrations of natural lakes in the world. Oneida County Shoreland Zoning is in effect. Actual shoreland jurisdiction measurements are coordinated through the County Zoning Department.

The Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers flow through the heart of Rhinelander. Boom, Thunder, and Bass Lakes are impoundments of the Wisconsin River, which travels from the northwest area of the City into downtown. The Pelican River flows from the southeast along Old 8 Road into Rhinelander and joins the Wisconsin River on the southern border of the City.

All of Oneida County is located in the Upper Wisconsin River drainage basin. The City is within 4 watersheds – Rhinelander Flowage to the north, Pelican River to the east, Noisy and Pine Creeks to the south, and Woodboro to the west.

Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters

Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW's) and Exceptional Resource Waters (ERW's) share many of the same environmental and ecological characteristics. The primary difference between the two is that ORW's typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. In addition, any pollutant load discharged to an ORW must meet background water quality at all times. Exceptions are made for certain types of discharge situations to ERW's to allow pollutant loads that are greater than background water quality when human health would otherwise be compromised.

Slaughterhouse Creek is listed as an exceptional resource water.

Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters, commonly referred to as the "303(d) list." A waterbody is considered impaired if a) the current water quality does not meet the numericor narrative criteria in a water quality standard or b) the designated use that is described in Wisconsin Administrative Code is not being achieved. A documented methodology is used to articulate the approach used to list waters in Wisconsin. Every two years, states are required to submit a list of impaired waters to EPA for approval.

Within the City, only Slaughterhouse Creek is listed on the 303(d) list as an impaired water. Slaughterhouse Creek is listed as an impaired water due to unspecified metals leaching from the closed landfill.

Closed Rhinelander Landfill

The City of Rhinelander closed the landfill in 1979, and various cap enhancements and monitoring systems have been in place for a period of years. Monitoring wells placed adjacent to the site are still showing pollutants discharging to both Slaughterhouse Creek and Pelican River. The approximately 38-acre site may have a value for uses which are consistent with closed landfill sites after a final remediation plan is developed.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Oneida County are threatened by the introduction of invasive aquatic species. These species out-compete native species and degrade habitats possibly by decreasing biodiversity from having less plant and animal species. A listing of documented cases of invasive aquatic species is provided below:

- **Bass Lake** – Eurasian Water-Milfoil, Chinese Mystery Snail, Rusty Crayfish, Yellow Iris
- **Boom Lake** – Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Chinese Mystery Snail, Yellow Iris
- **Lake Julia** – Chinese Mystery Snail, Yellow Iris
- **Wisconsin River** – Chinese Mystery Snail, Rusty Crayfish, Phragmites, Yellow Iris
- **Purple Loosestrife** – Located in portions of the City
- **Reed Canary Grass** – Located in portions of the City

Wetlands

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of the hydrologic cycle and local ecological systems. In terms of hazard mitigation, they act as water storage devices in times of high water. Like sponges, wetlands are able to absorb excess water and release it back into the watershed slowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. As more impermeable surfaces are developed, this excess capacity for water runoff storage becomes increasingly important.

Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Calm wetland waters, with their flat surface and flow characteristics, allow particles of toxins and nutrients to settleout of the water column. Plants take up certain nutrients from the water. Other substances can be stored or transformed to a less toxic state within wetlands. As a result, the lakes, rivers and streams are cleaner.

Wetlands that filter or store sediments or nutrients for extended periods may undergo fundamental changes. Sediments will eventually fill in wetlands and nutrients will eventually modify the vegetation. Such changes may result in the loss of this function over time. Eradication of wetlands can occur through the use of fill material. This can destroy the hydrological function of the site and open the area to improper development. The WDNR has promulgated minimum standards for managing wetlands. The wetlands shown for the City of Rhinelander were mapped from the WI DNR Wetlands Inventory and are shown in the **Natural Resources Map**.

Floodplains

A floodplain is generally defined as land where there is a one percent chance of flooding in any year. The primary value of floodplains is their role in natural flood control. Flood plains represent areas where excess water can be accommodated whether through drainage by streams or through storage by wetlands and other natural detention/retention areas. Specific areas that will be inundated will depend upon the amount of water, the distance and speed that water travels, and the topography of the area. If uninterrupted by development, the areas shown on a map as floodplains should be able tohandle the severest (regional) flood, i.e. those that have a probability of occurring once every one-hundred years. Floodplains are shown in the **Natural Resources Map**.

Groundwater

Groundwater in the Rhinelander area comes from an aquifer of glacial drift. Yields from wells in this type of aquifer can range from a few gallons to over 2,000 gallons per minute. Currently, several wells yield more than 1,000 gallons per minute.

Overall, groundwater quality is good. The total mineral content is less than 150 milligrams per liter. The main components in the water are calcium and magnesium. In some areas, particularly within moraines, the ground water is hard. A large concentration of iron is in the ground water throughout the County but is not considered to be a health hazard.

Groundwater quality can be impaired by a variety of pollutants including leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), landfills, septic tanks, over-application of pesticides and fertilizers, and spills of hazardous chemicals. The most common contaminants in Wisconsin's groundwater are pesticides, nitrates, nitrogen, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These contaminants come from many sources, including nitrogen-based fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste storage, feedlots, municipal and industrial wastewater discharges, and sludge disposal. A recent concern related to groundwater is Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS). These substances are a group of chemicals often used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water.

Groundwater contaminants can affect the health of humans, livestock, and wildlife. Because groundwater seeps more slowly than surface runoff, pollution that occurs today may not become evident for several years. Once polluted, the groundwater is very difficult to purify and may take many years to clean itself by the dilution process.

More information on the municipal well water provided to all Rhinelander customers is listed in the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter.

Woodlands

Significant tracts of woodland exist throughout the City. These forested areas are primarily associated with streams and wetlands. Forest cover provides many vital functions, which are diverse in nature; forested lands provide for recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and wildlife habitat as well as protection of sensitive environmental areas. Regulation of the removal of woodland plant material is desirable to protect scenic beauty, to control erosion, and to reduce effluent and nutrient flows into surface waters. Tree cover is also important to reduce erosion and effluent and nutrient flows into surface waters.

In an urbanized area like the City of Rhinelander, tree cover is very important. According to the U.S. Forest Service, the urban tree canopy provides an important stormwater management function by intercepting rainfall that would otherwise run off paved surfaces and be transported into local waters through the storm drainage system, picking up various pollutants along the way. Urban trees also reduce heating and cooling costs, lower air temperatures, reduce air pollution, increase property values, provide wildlife habitat, and provide aesthetic and community benefits such as improved quality of life.

Metallic & Non-Metallic Resources

There are five active non-metallic mining operations currently located within the City of Rhinelander.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas are typically defined by the local jurisdiction and often include many of the areas referred to in this section such as special groundwater protection areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, floodplains, wetlands and other unique or special resources where encroachment or development could have negative consequences. Some potentially sensitive areas are discussed below.

Redevelopment is the reuse of a parcel of land. Within the City there are 455 sites identified by the WDNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS). Of the 455 sites, 11 sites have an open status with the DNR indicating that remediation of these sites is necessary. The remaining 444 sites have a closed status indicating they have been remediated to DNR standards. Sites identified by this database were contaminated or potentially contaminated sites with their prior use.

Rare Species & Natural Communities

The City of Rhinelander has a presence of wildlife, including deer, rabbits, ducks, geese, turkey, a large variety of birds, and more. WDNR's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) lists endangered and threatened species by location; however, data is only available at the County level to protect certain species. As of March 2026, the NHI tracked 71 occurrences of rare or threatened species and communities within Oneida County. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, there have been both aquatic and terrestrial occurrences of rare, endangered or protected plant and animal species in the City. There are many contiguous sections of land with rare or threatened aquatic species in the Wisconsin River, spanning from Rhinelander to Oneida County line to the north.

Holmboe Conifer Forest is State Natural Area #79, located near the Wisconsin and Pelican River confluence just south of State Highway 17. According to the DNR, Holmboe Conifer Forest features a variety of old-growth northern forest types on very steep morainal topography along the south bank of the Pelican River. A hemlock forest occupies the north-facing and lower ridge slopes. The drier sites are wooded with white and red pines, white birch, and a mixture of northern hardwoods. The north-central portion is occupied by a black spruce and tamarack wet forest. Canada yew occurs along a seepage area located between the moraine hills on the south and the swamp conifer forest near the river. Holmboe Conifer Forest is owned by The Northwoods Land Trust and was designated a State Natural Area in 1983.

Wisconsin's biodiversity goals are to identify, protect and manage native plants, animals, and natural communities from the very common to critically endangered for present and future generations. Knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems are critical to their survival and greater benefit to society. Original vegetation types for the City of Rhinelander and surrounding areas were white spruce, balsam fir, tamarack, white cedar, white birch, and aspen, which came from a map of Finley's Original Vegetation.

Agriculture

Hodag Farmer's Market in Pioneer Park provides about 30 booths worth of fresh food to Rhinelander residents on a weekly basis. A second weekly market is currently being developed at another site. Three grocery stores and several convenience stores provide daily access to fresh and processed foods.

There is no active agriculture in the City of Rhinelander, nor are there any prime agricultural soils. The surrounding towns have agricultural uses, with potato farming occurring the closest in the Town of Stella. There are tree farms in the area too.

Historical & Cultural Resources

A brief community history is located in Chapter 1. Historical buildings are identified here. The unique history of the Hodag is described on the next page.

ArtStart is run by a group of volunteers, organized as a non-profit organization, who have transformed the historic Federal Building in downtown Rhinelander into a destination arts and cultural center. The City of Rhinelander purchased the building from the Federal Government for $1 and leases it to ArtStart.

Pioneer Park Historical Complex is a collection of historical buildings and exhibits. The complex is home to the Rhinelander Logging Museum, which was built in 1932 and contains logging artifacts. Pioneer Park is also home to the Rhinelander Schoolhouse Museum, the Soo Line Depot and model railroad display, a museum dedicated to the Civilian Conservation Corps, a museum dedicated to outboard motors and a sawmill.

There are four structures in the City of Rhinelander that are listed on the National Register of Historical Places: First National Bank (ca. 1900-1924), the Oneida County Courthouse (ca. 1900-1924); the Solon and Mathilda Sutliff House (1923); and the West Side School (ca. 1924-1958).

Architecture and History Inventory in Rhinelander contains 138 buildings—23 buildings circa 1800-1900, and 95 buildings from 1900-Present.

History of the Hodag

From *The Living Legend of Rhinelander's Hodag (hodagpress.com/about.htm), 2006. Reprinted with permission.*

The Hodag first made its appearance in the autumn of 1893 near the lumbering frontier community of Rhinelander, Wisconsin. Eugene Simeon Shepard (1854-1923), timber cruiser, real-estate broker, and community jester stumbled across the beast while hiking near his Rhinelander home.

It was not until three years later that a determined Eugene Shepard captured a live Hodag. In the autumn of 1896, Shepard and a group of lumberjacks surprised a Hodag in its den and asphyxiated the monster with a heavy dose of chloroform. Shepard then transported the Hodag to the Rhinelander fairgrounds and confined it to a pit resembling its den "in order that the animal would not discover the deception being practiced upon him." Days before the opening of Oneida County's first fair, Shepard announced that he would proudly exhibit his recently captured beast.

To the casual observer, Shepard's Hodag ploy was a practical joke pulled by Rhinelander's most celebrated prankster. A more in-depth investigation of the circumstances surrounding the Hodag's creation, however, reveals a far more serious side of the beast. In addition to comprising a known jokester's most successful ploy, Rhinelander's Hodag was, and continues to be, a very serious, preconceived promotional project. To be sure, the Hodag played an important role in making Rhinelander what it is today--the regional industrial center of Northern Wisconsin with an odd twist of local color.

In the autumn of 1896, Rhinelander found itself in the midst of a very significant crisis. Although founded just fourteen years earlier on the sole strength of the lumber industry, the city that grew up overnight had all but depleted the very thing that gave it life— the surrounding pine forests. Indeed, half the city's sawmills had already closed and moved on, and the few remaining were forced to extend their operations farther and farther from their mills each season. Countless other lumbering frontier communities had flourished with the industry and disappeared with the trees. Would Rhinelander follow suit? The city's leading citizens--those who had invested time, money and measureless energy into forging a community out of the northern Wisconsin frontier--were determined that Rhinelander would survive the demise of the great stands of pine. To this end, Eugene S. Shepard eagerly donated his unusual talents and odd personality.

The businessmen who comprised the community's elite struggled to keep Rhinelander growing while the surrounding lumber supply dwindled. Prompted by the city's newspapers, Rhinelander began a tireless campaign of city promotion. Working through organizations such as the Rhinelander Businessmen's Association and the Rhinelander Advancement Society, Shepard and others attempted to attract agriculture, tourism, and non-lumbermill-related industry to the city.

Rhinelander, as the seat of the newly created Oneida County, spearheaded the county's drive toward agricultural development. By 1896 the Oneida County Agricultural Society planned its first annual Fair and Exposition. Unfortunately, the sparsely settled county had very little agricultural produce to exhibit because farming in the cut-over was still unproven and extremely difficult. Even the city's leading weekly confessed, "The farm product and livestock exhibit cannot be expected to be very extensive in a community where agricultural interest has only commenced to be developed." Acknowledging the lack of exhibit substance, the fair organizers appealed to the city's most flamboyant and popular entertainer for guidance. Under these

circumstances Shepard created the captured Hodag--to be exhibited at the fair and bring people to Rhinelander.

While amusing Shepard and others, the Hodag brought people to Rhinelander. In doing so, the town promoters felt the Hodag fulfilled a crucial step in the process of booster-assisted city growth. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Hodag is that it continues today, over 100 years later, to fulfill a similar promotional role.

The Hodag. Source: NCWRPC

Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources Programs

There are a variety of programs available to the City related to natural, agricultural, and cultural resources. Some of these are identified below. The following list is not all-inclusive. For specific program information, the agency or group that offers the program should be contacted.

Aquatic Habitat Protection Program

The WDNR provides basic aquatic habitat protection services through their staff. Staff members include Water Management (Regulation) Specialists, Zoning Specialists, Rivers (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission-FERC) Specialists, Lakes Specialists, Water Management Engineers, and their assistants (LTEs). The program assists with water regulation permits, zoning assistance, coordination of rivers, lake management, and engineering.

County Conservation Aids

Funds are available to carry out programs for fish or wildlife management projects as per §23.09 (12), Wis. Stats. and NR 50, Wis. Adm. Code. Projects related to providing improved fish or wildlife habitat or projects related to hunter/angler facilities are eligible. Projects that enhance fish and wildlife habitat or fishing and hunting facilities have priority. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Discovery Farms Program

Discovery Farms is a program administered by UW-Extension that works with over 40 farmers across the state of Wisconsin. The program's mission is to "develop on-farm and related research to determine the economic and environmental effects of agricultural practices on a diverse group of Wisconsin farms; and educates and improves communications among the agricultural community, consumers, researchers and policymakers to better identify and implement effective environmental management practices that are compatible with profitable agriculture." On-Farm projects fall under one the following categories: Nitrogen Use Efficiency, Tile Monitoring, Leachate Collection Systems, Watershed water quality, and Edge-of-Field Runoff Monitoring.

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program

This WDNR program is responsible for assuring safe, high quality drinking water and for protecting groundwater. This is achieved by enforcing minimum well construction and pump installation requirements, conducting surveys and inspections of water systems, the investigation and sampling of drinking water quality problems, and requiring drinking water quality monitoring and reporting. A team of specialists, engineers, hydrogeologists, and a program expert and program assistants staff the program. WDNR staff provide assistance to public and private well owners to help solve water quality complaints and water system problems. They also provide interested citizens with informational or educational materials about drinking water supplies and groundwater.

Endangered Resources Program

The DNR's Endangered Resources staff provides expertise and advice on endangered resources. They manage the Natural Heritage Inventory Program (NHI), which is used to determine the existence and location of native plant and animal communities and Endangered or Threatened Species of Special Concern. The NHI helps identify and prioritize areas suitable for State Natural Area (SNA) designation, provides information needed for feasibility studies and master plans, and maintains the list of endangered and threatened species. All management activities conducted by Wildlife Management and Forestry staff must be reviewed to determine the impact on NHI-designated species. A permit for the incidental take of an Endangered or Threatened species is required under the State Endangered Species Law. The Endangered Resources Program oversees the permit process, reviews applications and makes permit decisions. Funding for the Endangered Species Program comes from a number of sources, including tax checkoff revenue, license plates, general program revenues (GPR), gaming revenue, Natural Heritage Inventory chargebacks, wild rice permits, general gifts and Pittman Robertson grants.

Family Forest Carbon Program

The Family Forest Carbon Program enables private forest owners across 19 states, including Wisconsin, to access the voluntary carbon market, a growing market that has been traditionally inaccessible to smaller forest owners, providing landowners with income they can use toward forest management costs or to help pay property taxes.

Fisheries Management Program

The WI DNR funds this program primarily through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. The program assists with fishery surveys, fish habitat improvement/protection, and fish community manipulation. This program may also be used to fund public relations events and a variety of permitting and administrative activities involving fisheries.

Private Forestry

The WI DNR's goal is to motivate private forest landowners to practice sustainable forestry by providing technical forestry assistance, state and federal cost-sharing on management practices, sale of state produced nursery stock for reforestation, enrollment in Wisconsin's Forest Tax Law Programs, advice for the protection of endangered and threatened species, and assistance with forest disease and insect problems. Each county has at least one Department forester assigned to respond to requests for private forestland assistance. These foresters also provide educational programs for landowners, schools, and the general public. Both private and industrial forest landowners have enrolled their lands under the Managed Forest Law.

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

The purpose of the MFL is to promote good forest management through property tax incentives. Management practices are required by way of an approved forest management plan. Landowners with a minimum of 20 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber) are eligible and may contract for 25 or 50 years. Open lands must allow hunting, fishing, hiking, cross-country skiing, and sight-seeing; however, up to 320 acres per township may be closed to public access by the landowner. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Nonpoint Source Program (NSP)

Wisconsin's NPS Program, through a comprehensive network of federal, state and local agencies working in partnership with other organizations and citizens, addresses the significant nonpoint sources in the state. This program combines voluntary and regulatory approaches with financial and technical assistance. Abatement activities include agriculture, urban, forestry, wetlands and hydrologic modifications. The core activities of the program — research, monitoring, data assessment and management, regulation and enforcement, financial and technical assistance, education and outreach and public involvement — work to address current water quality impairments and prevent future threats caused by NPS pollution.

NRCS Conservation Programs

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. NRCS provides funding opportunities for agricultural producers and other landowners through these programs:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) by USDA's Farm Service Agency
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Small, Limited, and Beginning Farmer Assistance
- Working Lands for Wildlife

Parks and Recreation Program

The WDNR gets it's authority for administering the Parks and Recreation Program from Chapter 27 Wisconsin Statutes. This program provides assistance in the development of public parks and recreation facilities. Funding sources include: the general fund, the Stewardship Program, Land and Water Conservation fund (LAWCON), and program revenue funds.

Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants

The Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) provides funding to producer-led groups that focus on nonpoint source pollution abatement activities through the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program (PLWPG). The goal is to improve Wisconsin's soil and water quality by supporting and advancing producer-led conservation solutions by increasing on the ground practices and farmer participation in these efforts.

Stewardship Grants for Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

Nonprofit conservation organizations are eligible to obtain funding for the acquisition of land or easements for conservation purposes and restoration of wildlife habitat. Priorities include acquisition of wildlife habitat, acquisition of lands with special scientific or ecological value, protection of rare and endangered habitats and species, acquisition of stream corridors, acquisition of land for state trails including the Ice Age Trail and North Country Trail, and restoration of wetlands and grasslands. Eligible types of projects include fee simple and easement acquisitions and habitat restoration projects. Contact the WDNR for further information.

Wastewater Program

The Department of Natural Resources provides this program to address point and non-point source pollution control. Operating funds for this program come from the federal government's Clean Water Act funding as well as state general program revenues. The core work of this program involves the issuance of wastewater discharge permits that discharge directly to surface or groundwater and enforcing the requirements of these permits. The program closely monitors the impacts of industry, septic tanks, sludge, and stormwater on the environment. Pretreatment plants for wastewater are offered economic assistance and provided with plan review services before the facility is established.

Watershed Program

The WDNR seeks to protect wild and domestic animals, recreational activities, natural flora and fauna, agriculture, business, and other land uses through watershed management. Funds to run this program are provided by the federal government through Clean Water Act and through state general program revenues. The program assists with watershed planning, water quality monitoring and modeling, and development of water quality standards and policy.

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program which was established to restore wetlands on lands which were previously altered for agricultural use. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with the Farm Service Agency and other federal agencies.

Land is eligible for enrollment in the WRP if the landowner has owned that land for at least one year, and the land is restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. Landowners may choose to restore wetlands with a permanent or 30-year easement or enter into a cost-share restoration agreement with the USDA. If a permanent easement is established, the landowner will receive payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100% of the wetland restoration costs. The 30-year easement payment is just 75% of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site, and 75% of the restoration costs. Voluntary cost-share restoration agreements are generally for a minimum of 10 years, and 75% of the cost of restoring the land to wetlands is provided. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Wildlife Management Program

The DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management oversees a complex web of programs that incorporate state, federal and local initiatives primarily directed toward wildlife habitat management and enhancement. Programs include land acquisition, development and maintenance of State Wildlife Areas, and other wild land programs such as State Natural Areas. Wildlife Staff work closely with staff of state and county forests to maintain, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. Wildlife Management staff conduct wildlife population and habitat surveys, prepare property needs analyses, develop basin wildlife management plans and collaborate with other DNR planning efforts such as Park, Forestry or Fishery Area Property Master Plans to assure sound habitat management. Funding comes from the federal government in the form of Endangered Species grants and Pittman-Robertson grants and from state government in the form of hunting and trapping license revenues, voluntary income tax contributions, general program revenue and Stewardship funds.

Wisconsin Fund

Wisconsin Fund is a program by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division. Grants are provided to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). Eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure.

Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Wisconsin Historical Society

This office is part of the Wisconsin Historical Society and serves as the principal historic preservation agency in the state. In partnership with communities, organizations and individuals, the SHPO works to identify, interpret and preserve historic places for the benefit of present and future generations.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Maintain the natural beauty of Rhinelander, while at the same time allowing the City to expand to meet the future growth needs.

Objective 1: Retain views of white pine, rivers, and forested areas.

a. Identify viewsheds to maintain the natural scenic beauty.

b. Discourage removing trees from hillsides.

c. As bridges are reconstructed, continue to require edge-of-bridge car barriers to allow views of the scenery beyond them.

d. Require site plans for any proposed new development to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to protect sensitive natural areas.

e. Require developers to use best management practices to minimize adverse impacts when it is not possible for development to avoid sensitive natural areas.

f. Encourage the development of a walking and biking trail system throughout Rhinelander to take advantage of existing natural amenities.

Goal 2: Protect and preserve the City's cultural and historical resources.

Objective 1: Preserve the Hodag as a symbol of Rhinelander.

a. Continue to perpetrate the Hodag through Chamber of Commerce initiatives.

b. Develop various ways throughout the community to celebrate the Hodag.

Objective 2: Work to enhance the Pioneer Park Historical Complex.

a. Continue to support the Pioneer Park Historical Complex.

b. Identify and inventory all historical sites in Rhinelander.

c. Encourage preservation of historic buildings of significance by having a local resident, staff member, or consultant available to answer questions about all parts of the process.

d. Maintain certified local government status through the Wisconsin Historical Society, so the City can qualify for additional funding and technical assistance from the State.