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

Vilas County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, 2025-2035

This Plan provides a framework for local/state/federal conservation program implementation efforts. Implementation of this plan will help protect and improve the valuable water and soil natural resources in Vilas County. Some of the plan's recommendations include protecting shoreland areas, reducing nonpoint source pollution, replace failing septic systems, and reduce wildlife conflicts. A copy is available in the Vilas County Land Conservation Department.

Vilas County Outdoor Recreation Plan 2023-2027

The primary purpose of this recreation plan is to provide continued direction in meeting the current and future recreation needs of the County. 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 (LAWCON), the Stewardship Fund, and many other federal and state funding programs. A copy is available in the Vilas County Forestry Department.

Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan, 2015

The Vilas County Farmland Preservation Plan is required under Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes. The Plan's purpose is to guide and manage farmland preservation and agricultural production capacity from 2015 to 2024. The plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions for how the County intends to preserve agricultural production capacity, farmland, soil and water resources, and rural character.

Farmland Preservation Areas – Parcels that meet the Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) mapping criteria. Landowners in this area may apply for farmland preservation income tax credits. No non-agricultural development is planned in the next fifteen years for those areas identified.

Criteria for Farmland Preservation Areas:

- Lands depicted on the Soils Map as farmlands.
- Lands depicted on the Land Use Map as agriculture, cranberry bog, open lands, or woodlands.
- Lands depicted on the Future Land Use Map that allow agriculture or forestry to occur

Lands are excluded if they are any of the following:

- Local, county, state, and federal lands
- "Planned Out" lands on Map 5 of the FPP
- Parcels less than 5 acres
- Tax exempt land

Farmland preservation areas are present throughout the City. However, there are currently no areas of land currently being used for agricultural production purposes within the City.

Vilas County Forest Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2006-2020

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. The Plan contains information about forest resource planning, outdoor recreation planning, silvicultural practices, aesthetic management zones, trails and access control, biological communities, and wildlife species that exist within the county forest. A copy is available in the Vilas 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 Vilas County was public in 2007. The Vilas 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.

Water Resources

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

Waterbodies within the City include the Wisconsin River (which forms the City's western border), Eagle River, and Silver Lake. Coordination between all levels of government, public and private entities are essential in the operation and continued maintenance of this system. Combined, these waterbodies are significant attractions, which contribute to the entire area's tax base and trades.

The City of Eagle River is part of three watersheds. The majority of the City is located in the Eagle River watershed, a small portion in the northwest corner of the City is located within the Tamarack Pioneer River watershed and the southern portion of City is located within the Sugar Camp Creek watershed. The sub continental surface-water divide determines where surface water will drain. All streams in Eagle River flow into the Mississippi River.

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.

The portion of the Wisconsin River bordering the City is listed as an Outstanding Resource Water, while there are no waterbodies within the City 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 Silver Lake is listed as an impaired waterbody in the most current 303(d) list, with an unknown pollutant listed as the impaired water pollutant.

Invasive Aquatic Species

Surface water resources in Vilas 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. Contact the Unified Lower Eagle River Chain of Lakes Commission for public outreach education strategies. A listing of documented cases of invasive aquatic species is provided below:

- **Silver Lake** – Eurasian Water-Milfoil, Banded Mystery Snail, Chinese Mystery Snail
- **Wisconsin River** – Eurasian Water-Milfoil, Curly-Leaf Pondweed, Chinese Mystery Snail, and Rusty Crayfish
- **Eagle River** – Banded Mystery Snail, Chinese Mystery Snail, Purple Loosestrife
- **Reed Canary Grass** – Located in portions of the City

Wetlands

Wetlands perform many indispensable roles in the proper function of thehydrologic 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 watershedslowly, preventing flooding and minimizing flood damage. As more impermeable surfaces are developed, this excess capacity for water runoffstorage 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 Eagle River 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. The 100-year floodplain was digitized by the NCWRPC from FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, for planning purposes only, and are shown in the **Natural Resources Map**.

Groundwater

Groundwater is water that occupies void spaces between soil particle or cracks in the rock below the land surface. It originates as precipitation that infiltrated into the ground. The type of soil and bedrock that a well is drilled into often determines water's pH, saturation index, and the amount of hardness or alkalinity in water. The type of soil and bedrock in a region also determines how quickly contaminants can reach groundwater.

Groundwater is an important resource since it is used for all domestic, agricultural, and commercial purposes in the City. Most groundwater in Vilas County is obtained from sand and gravel aquifers. Groundwater quality in Vilas County and the City of Eagle River is generally good. Local differences in quality are the result of the composition, solubility, and surface of the soil and rock through which the water moves, and the length of time that the water is in contact with these materials. The main constituents in the water are calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions. Mainly in the moraines, the water is hard. A high content of iron is a problem in many wells, but it is not a health hazard.

While groundwater quality might be generally good at present it is important to factor in the potential for contamination. Five physical resource characteristics were identified as important in determining how easily a contaminant can be carried through overlying materials to the groundwater. These characteristics are depth to bedrock, type of bedrock, soil characteristics, depth to water table and characteristics of surficial deposits.

Many land use activities have the potential to impact the quality of groundwater. A landfill may leach contaminants into the ground that end up contaminating groundwater. Gasoline may leak from an underground storage tank into groundwater. Fertilizers and pesticides can seep into the ground from application on farm fields, golf courses, or lawns. Leaking fluids from cars in junkyards, intentional dumping or accidental spills of paint, used motor oil, or other chemicals on the ground can result in contaminated groundwater.

Land Resources

Topography and Geology

Vilas County is in the Northern Highlands physiographic region of Wisconsin where crystalline rock is overlain by thick glacial deposits. The City and County were covered by glacial ice during the most recent glaciation period. Glacial activity formed several distinct types of glacial deposits such as end moraine and glacial ground moraine. End moraine deposits are composed of glacial till which is an unsorted mixture of gravel, sand, silt, clay, and occasional boulders. Adjacent to the end moraine deposits are glacial ground moraine deposits. A glacial ground moraine is also composed of till and gives rise to the rolling undulated type topography.

Forests

Forests play a key role in the protection of environmentally sensitive areas like steep slopes, shorelands, wetlands, and flood plains. Expansive forests provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, and economic development.

The pre-settlement composition of forestland in the City of Eagle River was a mix of conifer and deciduous tree species that included hemlock, sugar maple, yellow birch, jack pine, scrub (Hill's oak), and beech, with white pine and red pine throughout. All forests are dynamic, always changing from one stage to another, influenced by natural forces and humans. Changes can be subtle and occur over long periods, or can happen in seconds from a timber harvest, windstorm, or fire.

While there are no public tracts of forested land located within the City, there are numerous publicly-owned tracts of land located in the area including the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, the Northern Highland State Forest, and County Forest lands.

Some private woodlands in the County are enrolled in Managed Forest Law (MFL). This program provides a low annual tax rate per acre and requires a management plan for the property that must include some harvesting along with allowing some public uses based on acreage thresholds. When timber is harvested from MFL properties, a harvest tax is also assessed. This provides an incentive to keep woodlots in active production and allows some community access to the site in exchange for greatly reduced taxes. See the programs section at the end of this chapter for more detail on this program.

Metallic & Non-Metallic Resources

There are no quarries currently located within the City of Eagle River. There are three active non-metallic mines in the surrounding Towns of Lincoln and Washington, however.

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 161 sites identified by the WDNR Internet database known as the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS). Three of these sites have an open status with the DNR indicating that remediation of these sites is necessary. The open sites within the City are listed below. The remaining 158 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.

- 112 S 1st Street | Van Haverbeke Property -
- 522 E Wall Street | Citgo Quick Food Mart – Krist Oil

Rare Species & Natural Communities

As of February 2026, there were four occurrences of endangered resources (rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants & animals, and high-quality natural communities) in the City of Eagle River as identified in the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory, as shown in **Table 9**. 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.

Table 9: Rare Species & Natural Communities

Common Name	Status	Group
Bald Eagle	-	Bird
Spruce Grouse	THR	Bird
Swainson's Thrush	SC/M	Bird
Snail-seed Pondweed	SC	Plant

Source: Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory

Status Definitions

- **THR** – Threatened
- **SC** – Special Concern
- **SC/M** – Fully Protected under Migratory Bird Act

Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties harbor one of the highest concentrations of lakes in the world. Although most of the privately owned lake shoreline in these counties is developed, a pocketed of mostly undeveloped or lightly developed lakes exists along the border with Michigan's Upper Peninsula. These lakes support an unusually diverse and high-quality assemblage of aquatic natural communities.

The Border Lakes Region is flanked by the Northern Highland American Legion (NH-AL) State Forest, several large County Forest properties, the Nicolet National Forest, and Michigan's Ottawa National Forest. This area harbors a high-quality forest complex with several patches of old-growth forest. Numerous rare bird and plant species are known to exist here.

Protection of this unique mosaic of lakes, wetlands, and upland forests—with its significant water quality, fisheries, wildlife, and forestry resources—is important to maintaining the biological diversity and recreational opportunities of northern Wisconsin.

Soils & Productive Agricultural Resources

Soil is composed of varying proportions of sand, gravel, silt, clay, and organic material. The soils in the City primarily result from glacial till, glacial outwash, or glaciolacustrine deposits, and a few formed from organic material. There is little agricultural activity within the City and its surrounding area.

A detailed study of all the soils in Vilas County was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. As part of that study, soils were identified in terms of both generalized soil associations, or predominant soil patterns, and specific detailed soils.

Within the City itself, there are currently no active farms, while in the surrounding Town of Washington, agricultural uses account for only about 4 percent of the Town's total area.

Historical & Cultural Resources

History of Eagle River

The following is an overview of the history of Eagle River from the **Eagle River Historical Society**:

With settlements starting on the South Bank of the Eagle River, which earned its name given the amount of eagles present in the surrounding forests. The river is a flowage from a larger chain of 28 lakes, taking approx. 50 miles to travel, with the two ends however being only approx. 16 miles apart. Some of the earliest settlers arrived some 30 to 20 years before the Milwaukee Lakeshore and Western (M.L.S.W.) Railway was introduced in 1883.

These first explorers who arrived ranged from Timber Cruisers by the name of Fox & Helms in 1853 near what is now Eagle Waters Resort, but also that of James Hall and his family who arrived in 1863 on northern shores of Eagle Lake, farming aspirations by C.L. Perry in 1865 near Yellow Birch Lake, and at the same time Daniel Gagen who settled the point directly ahead of the T-Docks. As the M.L.S.W. started construction of the Railroad Bridge in June of 1883, new settlers had started to permanently terraform and encamp where the current town resides, the first and notable being John O'Connor and his son George in April of 1883. Soon following came other notable "original" families such as Walsh, Lawler, Croker, Drager, Carter, and McIntyre to name a few.

The first merchants to arrive in Eagle River were Dickinson & Cook to which as Lyman J. Cook recounts "... Dickinson and myself came to Eagle River the first part of May, 1883 ... On arriving here we found a crew getting out timbers for the railway bridge, there was a pole bridge for the teams across the river below where the railway now stands." That same year, a large tract of land was purchased from logger and speculator John Phelps by lumberman John O'Connor and, in 1885, while still a part of Oneida County, the plat of Eagle River was officially filed by O'Connor's wife, Anna.

Timber Basket of the North

Although logging of the area began in the 1850s, the construction of sawmills did not occur until the 1880s and the arrival of the railroad. Until then, harvested logs were driven down the Wisconsin River on rafts to mills further south on the river and then continued south, as there was little need for sawn lumber for personal homes and business, no less any new construction in the largely unpopulated Northwoods itself.

By the winter of 1885-1886 the "Eagle River District" had produced 58,200,000 feet of lumber, clearly demonstrating the output of lumber in the region. As of the winter of 1891 approached, there were reportedly twenty-eight logging camps in the "Eagle River District." While left to be entertained by saloons, the demand by lumbermen demanded more saloons. So much so that in 1891, and with an approximate population of 1,500, a total of fourteen liquor licenses were granted in the town and despite the financial panic of 1893, the number of saloons had increased to twenty-one by 1894. Unsurprisingly, the town earned a rough and tumble reputation. As the Lumber Industry had started to clear many of the surrounding old growth forests leaving behind only stumps, more and more people poured into the town and with it, the infancy of our Tourist Industry.

An Up and Coming Community

In spite of the varied development of the town, Eagle River was progressing at what would be considered an "unusual rate". At least according to a representative of the Rhinelander Herald who visited Eagle River in June 1900 and reported that the community was "showing unusual evidences of prosperity"; The town had established Sewer Systems, Telephone Service, Electric Lighting, and a Public Works water plant all between 1891 and 1900.

As the town grew, more and more services became available, viz. black smith shops, numerous grocery stores, saloons, meat markets, opera houses, a garment district, newspaper companies, harness and shoe store, boarding house, and even a hospital (with a competent physician no less). As time would go on, Eagle River's main and longest running industry would emerge. In October 1920, following what was identified as "the most successful tourist season ever seen in Eagle River.", at that point, long standing resorts such as Crystal Springs, the Hemlock, Tilden, and Morey to name a few had become staples on the Chain of Lakes. The Chicago & Northwestern Railway had even picked up on the trend, eventually offering Pullman car service from down state and northern Illinois, such accommodations would transform into promotions such as "The Fisherman Special" which ran from the 1930s through the 1950s. Rail service would eventually end by 1968.

As Logging in the immediate area had started to subside by 1910 and most of the Lumber Mills had closed or caught fire by the start of the Great Depression, tourism has become the main source of income for the bourgeoning town and still serves to be dominant industry. For generations locals and tourists alike have enjoyed the peace and quiet of the Northwoods, and this is where our role is vital in preserving the very essence that has made people come back year after year and decade after decade.

Source: https://www.eagleriverhistory.org/vilas-co-history

Historic Properties

The National Register of Historic Places recognizes properties of local, state, and national significance. Properties are listed in the National Register because of 1) their associations with significant persons or events, 2) because they contain important information about our history or prehistory, or 3) because of their architectural or engineering significance. The National Register also lists important groupings of properties as historic districts. In addition, the National Park Service highlights properties that have significance to the nation as a whole by conferring them the status of National Historic Landmark.

The Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places parallels the National Register. It is designed to enable state-level historic preservation protection and benefits. Most of the properties in Wisconsin listed in the National Register are also listed in the State Register. There are three listings on the National & State Registers of Historic Places within Eagle River:

- Region Nine Training School/Tree For Tomorrow – 519 Sheridan Street
- St. Peter's Catholic School – 115 S Third Street
- Eagle River Downtown Historic District

The Wisconsin Architecture & History Inventory (AHI), provided by the Wisconsin Historical Society, lists historical and architectural information on properties in Wisconsin. The AHI contains data on buildings, structures and objects that illustrate Wisconsin's unique history. The majority of properties listed are privately owned. Listed properties convey no special status, rights or benefits. There are 85 properties listed in the AHI within Eagle River.

Cultural Resources

Eagle River has a long history and a bright future which is enhanced by features that attract visitors and provide residents a quality of life. The City of Eagle River has a wealth of cultural resources such as recreational activities, community events, access to the world's largest chain of lakes, and the five parks located within the City. These cultural resources are important selling points which help to bring new residents to the area. They foster growth and aid the economy. Cultural resources such as the Olson Memorial Library and the City's parks are described in subsequent chapters of this plan. Eagle River should be grateful for, and protective of, these cultural resources which we have inherited from the past to protect for the future.

Events

The City of Eagle River hosts a number of annual events and festivals such as Cranberry Fest, the Performing Arts Concert Series, Paul Bunyan Fest, a 4th of July Parade, and Street Dances among other events. The Vilas County Fairgrounds are located within Eagle River and are home to the annual Vilas County Fair. The Fairgrounds also serve as the headquarters for the National Championship Musky Open held each year.

Sports

Eagle River is recognized as the Snowmobile Capital of the World and is home to the World Snowmobile Headquarters as well as the World Championship Snowmobile Derby. Eagle River is also recognized as the Hockey Capital of Wisconsin and is home to the Wisconsin Hockey Hall of Fame. Additionally, the USA Hockey Long Drink Pond Hockey National Championships are held annually on nearby Dollar Lake.

Other sports which play an important role in past and recent history are fishing and other water sports, cross-country skiing, golfing, biking, hunting and other team sports such as baseball and soccer.

Community Facilities

Community facilities often serve as cultural resources. Community Facilities located within Eagle River include the City Hall, Olson Memorial Library, as well as a large selection of churches which help to meet special needs of the area such as the Vilas Food Pantry and Northwood's Share. Other facilities within the City include the Northwoods Children's Museum, the Eagle River Historical Society, the Vilas County Fairgrounds, the City's parks, and the World Snowmobile Headquarters.

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: Maintain and enhance the aesthetic quality of life consistent with the Northwoods Character.

Objectives:

1. Consider structural development in environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, lowlands, waterfront and steep slopes.
2. Promote the use of City sewer and water systems wherever possible and practical.
3. Consider assisting lake associations with aquatic invasive species management and other assistance.
4. Assess development impacts on public well water sources to protect wellhead areas from contamination.
5. Examine and encourage new opportunities for cultural development which maintain the character of the City.