

# **Plan Summary**

## **2010-2019**

### **Ashland County Land & Water Resource Management Plan**

---

#### **Introduction**

The Ashland County Land and Water Resource Management Plan was developed as a result of changes in Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The intent of the change was to foster local water quality planning and increase public participation in natural resource management. The plans are intended to provide counties, through their Land Conservation Committees, the tools, flexibility and funding to be able to address both statewide goals as well as priorities identified at the local level. The Ashland County Land & Water Resource Management Plan contains realistic objectives and activities intended to meet the goals established by a workgroup of volunteer citizens from throughout the county. The LWRM Plan itself is intended to have a 10-year life (2010-2019), but the work plan outlined in Chapter VI will be revised after 5 years or less.

#### **Plan Organization**

The Ashland County Land and Water Resource Management Plan is divided into eight chapters:

- I. Introduction
- II. Resource Assessment
- III. Issues, Goals, Objectives and Activities
- IV. NR151 Performance Standards and Implementation Strategy
- V. Information and Education Strategy
- VI. Plan Implementation and Budget
- VII. Monitoring and Evaluation
- VIII. Coordination

Maps and tables pertinent to each chapter are found throughout the document and internet links to sources of additional or updated information are provided whenever possible. Short summaries of other resource management plans and extensive supporting data can be found in the appendices.

#### **Public Participation**

The LWRM plan was developed through public informational meetings and hearings, questionnaires, surveys and the efforts of a dedicated volunteer work group. The Land Conservation Committee held a public hearing February 2, 2010 where citizens and agency representatives had a chance to learn more about the land and water resource management plan and to offer comments. After approval by the Land and Water Conservation Board in **April, 2010**, the LWCD will present the final plan to the Ashland County Board for approval by resolution. Public participation will continue throughout the life of the LWRM plan at annual planning meetings, through annual reports to the county board, other groups, and department newsletters to Ashland County citizens. Groups, organizations and individuals will also be asked by the LCC to participate in project planning and/or implementation as necessary.

#### **Resource Assessment**

A detailed look at past planning efforts, water quality data, updated county information, and revised land use trends provided the workgroup with information necessary to look at where the land and water conservation program should target their time and effort. A good deal of time was spent validating the issues and concerns of the previous plan, identifying progress on the previous plan's goals, and

determining if any new or emerging issues should be considered. The identified land and water concerns fall within four broad categories of issues:

- Protect surface and groundwater resources: interior and coastal wetlands, lakes and streams, headwaters, drinking water, and recreational water. Reduce nonpoint source pollution arising from construction development, roads and trails, forestry, agriculture, stormwater runoff, and other sources.
- Conserving soil and terrestrial resources: promoting good land stewardship and use of best management practices, reducing impacts caused by recreational activities, and encouraging the retention of agricultural lands, forests and open spaces.
- Protecting and improving aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat: sensible shoreland development, control of invasive species, protection of sensitive habitats, avoiding or correcting habitat fragmentation, and reducing property or ecological damage caused by wildlife.
- Providing information and education through coordination with landowners, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and resource management entities.

### **Goals Objectives and Activities**

The issues, concerns and opportunities identified through the resource assessment and input from the local work group were reworked to form a logical set of goals and objectives:

- Goal #1: Protect and enhance the quality of Ashland County's Surface and ground water resources.
  - Objective A: Reduce non-point source pollution and environmental risks to water quality in agricultural, rural-residential, and urban situations.
  - Objective B: Identify and reduce point source pollution originating from industrial, urban, and rural settings.
  - Objective C: Minimize the environmental effects of non-metallic and metallic mining while ensuring public safety.
- Goal #2: Conserve and enhance the soil and terrestrial resources of Ashland County.
  - Objective A: Encourage good stewardship of public and private forest lands, open spaces, and wetlands.
  - Objective B: Preserve agricultural lands for sustainable production of crops and livestock while protecting soil resources, wildlife habitat, scenic values and human health.
- Goal #3: Protect and improve aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat in Ashland County.
  - Objective A: Restore or enhance habitat within and adjacent to lakes, rivers, and streams.
  - Objective B: Restore, conserve, or enhance wetlands for wildlife habitat and watershed health.
  - Objective C: Identify, classify, and protect sensitive areas.
  - Objective D: Develop a comprehensive invasive species management and control program.
  - Objective E: Maintain or enhance habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.
  - Objective F: Support the ABDI County Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP).
- Goal #4: Provide information and education concerning natural resource conservation to private landowners, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and the general public through cooperation and coordination with other resource management entities.
  - Objective A: Promote cooperation among conservation partners.

- o Objective B: Work to attain a common vision and a conservation land use ethic among government representatives, land managers, and conservation partners in Ashland County and surrounding areas.
- o Objective C: Inform and educate people about land use regulations, land management plans, watershed assessment techniques, and best management practices necessary to protect and improve soil, water, and habitat resources.

**NR151 Implementation Strategy**

The NR 151 performance standards strategy (Chapter IV) capitalizes on education and voluntary compliance. The first priority for technical assistance and cost-share funding will be for landowners who want to voluntarily achieve compliance, followed by areas that have received complaints or enforcement actions. Landowners with existing or new farmland preservation agreements and farmers wishing to complete nutrient management plans will also receive priority. In all cases, the actual and potential risk of negative environmental impacts must be evaluated and prioritized according to available staff and financial resources.

**Information and Education Strategy**

The I&E Strategy (Chapter V) outlines the methods and activities the LWCD will employ, the target audiences, and the messages that will be delivered. Providing meaningful and effective information and education is so important to success that it has been integrated in the plan as an identified goal and set of objectives.

**Plan Implementation and Budget**

Specific activities were then devised to address each of the goals and objectives, and each activity was provided with measurable outcomes. The measurable outcomes for each activity, a partial listing of partners that will help implement the activities, and an identification of priorities forms the core of Chapter VI. An estimate of staff and funding needed to implement the plan is provided using two methods:

- ❖ Implementation of LWCD priority activities - provides a target of what the LWCD hopes to accomplish during the life of the plan. These priority activities form the basis for annual work planning and budget requests. In the current situation of limited staff and funding, it must be realized that not all priority activities will be accomplished each year.

<b>Table 1. Estimated Staffing &amp; Funding Needed to Implement Priority Activities Only</b>						
	<b>Staff or Contract Time</b>			<b>Estimated Cost</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Existing Staff or Contract (FTE)</b>	<b>Needed Staff or Contract (FTE)</b>	<b>Shortfall (FTE)</b>	<b>Staff Cost</b>	<b>Project &amp; Support Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>2010</b>	2.25	3.5	1.25	\$203,000	\$100,000	\$303,000
<b>2011</b>	2.25	4.0	1.75	\$236,640	\$120,000	\$356,640
<b>2012</b>	2.25	4.0	1.75	\$241,372	\$120,000	\$361,372
<b>2013</b>	2.25	4.0	1.75	\$246,200	\$120,000	\$366,200

<b>2014</b>	2.25	4.0	1.75	\$251,124	\$120,000	\$371,124
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.25 FTE</b>	<b>19.5 FTE</b>	<b>- 8.25 FTE</b>	<b>\$1,178,336</b>	<b>\$580,000</b>	<b>\$1,758,336</b>

- ❖ Full plan implementation, including partner agencies and organizations, outlines those activities and goals where LWCD may act as lead, but where extensive partner support and increased staffing and funding levels will be needed. These activities are important to the overall region and help to build consensus among resource agencies and partners who can contribute staff time, support, and a greater diversity of funding sources. Full plan implementation remains the focus of our respective organizations, strengthens an overall watershed-based approach, and helps ensure regional consistency and continued partner support.

DRAFT

<b>Table 2. Estimated Staffing &amp; Funding Needed to Implement All Activities</b>						
	<b>Staff or Contract Time</b>			<b>Estimated Cost</b>		
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Existing Staff or Contract (FTE)</b>	<b>Needed Staff or Contract (FTE)</b>	<b>Shortfall (FTE)</b>	<b>Staff Cost</b>	<b>Project &amp; Support Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>2010</b>	2.25	6.0	3.75	\$348,000	\$120,000	\$468,000
<b>2011</b>	2.25	6.0	3.75	\$354,960	\$150,000	\$504,960
<b>2012</b>	2.25	6.0	3.75	\$362,058	\$150,000	\$512,058
<b>2013</b>	2.25	6.0	3.75	\$369,300	\$150,000	\$519,300
<b>2014</b>	2.25	6.0	3.75	\$376,686	\$150,000	\$526,686
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.25 FTE</b>	<b>30.0 FTE</b>	<b>- 18.75 FTE</b>	<b>\$1,811,004</b>	<b>\$720,000</b>	<b>\$2,531,004</b>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Chapter VII is comprised of a plan evaluation component and a project and program monitoring component. Plan evaluation is important as it assesses if activities are being accomplished that are leading toward attainment of the goals. The LWCD does not have adequate staff or funding to perform detailed studies to determine the effectiveness of educational events and activities. As a result, evaluation will consist of whether the activity was completed or not. Other activities such as technical assistance will also be evaluated on whether they were completed or not, and detailed analysis of the benefits of the assistance will not be completed. Project and program monitoring may entail more detailed evaluation of the benefits of the action, such as amount of soil saved, amount of runoff reduced, acres and numbers of conservation practices installed, etc. The LWCD will monitor for maintenance needs, conduct engineering spot checks and field reviews, and assess customer satisfaction through surveys and documentation of verbal feedback. A written annual report will be provided to the public, the county and DATCP. The Land Conservation Department staff will review progress toward plan completion on a quarterly basis and provide updates to the committee. In March or April of each year, the LCC will review progress in detail at their annual meeting. Work planning will also provide an opportunity for the LCC, citizens and staff to meet together, discuss progress and determine the next fiscal year's projects.

### **Coordination**

Chapter VIII outlines recommended coordination activities that may occur with some of the key conservation and political partners in the region. These partners include local governments, state and federal agencies, tribal governments and entities, and non-governmental organizations.

### **Conclusion**

Land and water resources are very important to Ashland County. Unique resources such as coastal estuaries and priority wetlands, the Bad River, Copper Falls and Big Bay State Parks, Morgan Falls and Caroline Lakes State Natural Areas, and 153 miles of scenic Lake Superior coast including the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore are a few of the invaluable resources found in the county. These areas and other high quality resources need to be protected and resources made available to prevent the need for remedial approaches. The LWRMP is intended to reflect local needs and encourage grass roots leadership to protect these important resources. The LWRMP empowers the Land Conservation Committee and department to provide that local leadership for other agencies, private groups, organizations and individuals.

The implementation of the LWRMP will provide the basis for the future of land and water conservation in Ashland County.

DRAFT