

Town of Stella
Comprehensive Plan
2005



Prepared By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

A cknowledgements

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their contributions to the development of this plan:

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgements | 2 |
| Contents..... | 3 |
| Tables and Displays..... | 5 |
| Maps | 5 |
| Introduction to the Plan | 6 |
| Funding..... | 6 |
| Planning Requirement | 6 |
| Public Participation | 7 |
| The Comprehensive Plan Elements | 8 |
| Element 1: Issues and Opportunities | 11 |
| 1.1: Background Information and Previous Plans | 11 |
| 1.2: Issues | 18 |
| 1.3: Opportunities | 19 |
| 1.4: Goals, Policies, Objectives, and Programs | 20 |
| Element 2: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources | 21 |
| 2.1: Background and Programs | 21 |
| 2.2: Inventory of Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources..... | 27 |
| 2.3: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 43 |
| Element 3: Housing | 46 |
| 3.1: Background and Programs | 46 |
| 3.2: Housing Stock Assessment..... | 47 |
| 3.3: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 49 |
| Element 4: Transportation | 51 |
| 4.1: Background and Programs | 51 |
| 4.2: Inventory of Transportation Infrastructure | 51 |
| 4.3: Inventory of Local Government Highways | 54 |
| 4.4: Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans..... | 54 |
| 4.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 54 |
| Element 5: Utilities and Community Facilities..... | 56 |
| 5.1: Background and Programs | 56 |
| 5.2: Inventory of Existing Utilities and Community Facilities..... | 57 |
| 5.3: Future Needs..... | 60 |
| 5.4: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 63 |
| Element 6: Economic Development | 65 |
| 6.1: Background and Inventory of Available Economic Development Programs..... | 65 |
| 6.2: Analysis..... | 68 |
| 6.3: Economic Assessment | 70 |
| 6.4: Inventory of Potential Sites | 71 |
| 6.5: Adaptive Re-use of Environmentally Contaminated Sites | 71 |
| 6.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 71 |
| Element 7: Land Use | 73 |
| 7.1: Background and Programs | 73 |
| 7.2: Inventory of Existing Land Uses | 73 |
| 7.3: Analysis..... | 76 |
| 7.4: Land Use Projections..... | 77 |
| 7.5: Future Land Use Map..... | 78 |
| 7.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 81 |
| Element 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation..... | 82 |
| 8.1: Background | 82 |
| 8.2: Programs and Possible Initiatives..... | 83 |
| 8.3: Analysis..... | 83 |
| 8.4: Intergovernmental Relationships..... | 84 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 8.5: Existing Cooperative Boundary Plans and Agreements | 86 |
| 8.6: Cooperative Issues..... | 87 |
| 8.7: Goals, Policies, and Objectives | 87 |
| Element 9: Implementation | 89 |
| 9.1: Integration of Planning Elements | 89 |
| 9.2: Implementation Activities | 89 |
| 9.3: Update and Evaluation of Progress | 95 |
| Appendix A: Public Participation Plan..... | 98 |
| Appendix B: Community Survey Process and Results..... | 100 |
| B.1: Survey Process..... | 101 |
| B.2: Survey Data Results..... | 101 |
| B.3: Survey Written Responses | 104 |
| Appendix C: Possible Implementation Tools | 109 |
| Appendix D: Lake Planning Attachments | 115 |
| Appendix E: Existing Zoning Map..... | 116 |

Tables and Displays

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Total Population by Geographic Area, 1980 to 2000..... | 12 |
| Table 2: Population Projection, Town of Stella, WI, 2000 to 2020 | 12 |
| Table 3: Number of Housing Units by Geographic Area, 1990 to 2000 | 13 |
| Table 4: Projected Number of Households by Geographic Area, 2000 to 2020..... | 13 |
| Table 5: Total Number of Persons under Age 18 by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000..... | 14 |
| Table 6: Total Number of Persons Age 65 and Over by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000..... | 14 |
| Display 1: Population Pyramid Model for Town of Stella, 2000 | 15 |
| Table 7: Educational Attainment by Political Subdivision, Persons Age 25 and Older, 2000..... | 16 |
| Table 8: Per Capita Income by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000 | 16 |
| Table 9: Median Household Income by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000..... | 16 |
| Table 10: Poverty Rate (%) by Geographical Area, 1999 | 17 |
| Table 11: Employment Characteristics, Town of Stella, 2000..... | 18 |
| Table 12: Year Home was Built, Town of Stella, 2000 | 47 |
| Table 13: Number of Rooms per Household, Town of Stella, 2000 | 48 |
| Table 14: Home Value, Town of Stella, 2000 | 49 |
| Table 15: Miles of Roadway by Jurisdiction, Town of Stella, 2004 | 52 |
| Table 16: Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment by Jurisdiction, 2000..... | 69 |
| Table 17: Resident Occupations, Town of Stella, 2000 | 70 |
| Table 18: Acres by Land Use Category, Town of Stella, 2004..... | 73 |
| Table 19: Unadjusted Equalized Real Estate Valuation (\$) by Geographic Area, 1980 to 2004. | 76 |

Maps

- MAP 1: Town of Stella, Locational Map
- MAP 2: Town of Stella, Community Facilities
- MAP 3: Town of Stella, General Soils & Water Table Depth
- MAP 4: Town of Stella, Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- MAP 5: Town of Stella, Water Features
- MAP 6: Town of Stella, Existing Land Use
- MAP 7: Town of Stella, Future Land Use
- MAP D: Town of Stella, Watershed Map
- MAP E: Town of Stella, Existing Zoning

Introduction to the Plan

Funding

In the winter of 2003-2004, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) prepared and submitted a grant application on behalf of the Town of Stella to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) for financial assistance through the Lake Management Planning Grant Program. The Town was awarded funding for this purpose and subsequently requested the services of the NCWRPC in June of 2004. The Town of Stella's Planning Committee held a series of meetings to develop the comprehensive plan with the assistance of the NCWRPC planning staff facilitating the planning process and eventual publishing of the plan.

Planning Requirement

This plan is intended to meet the requirements of Chapter 66.1001 regarding comprehensive planning. Under this legislation, local government must create a comprehensive plan if said government desires the ability to enforce local land use controls. Further, all programs, actions and decisions related to land use are to be consistent with this plan thereafter. This consistency requirement is scheduled to be effective on of January 1, 2010. In an effort to comply with this statute, the Town of Stella has prepared this plan to meet all the requirements of this law.

The comprehensive planning legislation specifies nine elements that must be used in the comprehensive plan. These elements are as follows:

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

The format of this plan follows these guidelines. Each of these nine elements is presented under its own section heading to identify its respective contribution to compliance with state planning law. Within each element, general information pertaining to the element subject is included with a variety of data and facts as well. Each element concludes with a series of goal statements and policies that address the issues and concerns raised within the element. The final element, implementation, summarizes the goals and provides strategies to bring about reaching said goals.

Public Participation

The comprehensive planning law requires that the planning process must develop a plan to encourage public participation. Obviously, a planning effort cannot be developed in the interest of the people if the people affected are not involved in the process. To ensure adequate public participation, the Planning Committee must create a public participation plan. This plan may be reviewed in Appendix A of this comprehensive plan. The public was provided the opportunity to 1) attend all planning sessions held by the Planning Committee, 2) attend either or both of two open house meetings to show plan progress and offer comments and criticisms in an open forum, 3) access printed copies of drafts approved by the Committee as well as minutes of meetings, 4) read about plan progress in a press release format, 5) and respond to a community-wide opinion survey. Copies of this plan are made available at the Town Hall, local municipal libraries, and by request from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Town Survey

Based upon the number of separate tax addresses for property owners in Stella, there are approximately 400 property owners in the Town. The mailed survey attempted to solicit participation from residents as well as commercial business owners within Stella. Nearly 150 surveys were received indicating a success in gathering public input for the planning effort. This high response rate is equivalent to participation by roughly one-half of the resident population of Stella. Since the survey is the most important aspect of the public participation effort, it is referenced when it applies in each planning element. A complete listing of survey questions and results may be found in Appendix B.

In summary, the survey indicated that most residents of Stella find their community to be appealing in terms of friendliness, atmosphere, appearance, and peacefulness. However, the small size of their community also creates frustration over the availability of goods and services in the community. Most residents believe there is a sense of pride in the community and feel that Stella is an enjoyable place to live. Many residents preferred to control of the rate of population growth to maintain Stella' rural atmosphere. General concern regarding the impacts of added population on the land and natural resources of the Town were common. This planning effort may be looked upon as a way to address those concerns.

Public Meetings and Workshops (Dates and Items Discussed)

June 7, 2004 – Informational Meeting – Town Hall

An informational meeting was held for Town Board members to discuss the planning process and to establish regular meetings for an appointed planning committee.

July 26, 2004 – Committee Workshop – Town Hall

The results of the 2000 Census were reviewed and sample surveys were discussed. Planning staff discussed how the survey would be distributed and a deadline for the receipt of surveys was established by the committee.

September 27, 2004 – Committee Workshop – Town Hall

The public participation plan and the process for formalizing the planning committee as an official body were discussed. Background information on the housing, utilities, community facilities, local history, and transportation elements of the plan were handed out for review and a draft Issues and Opportunities Element was distributed for comment. The Committee reviewed a generalized existing land use map for accuracy. Preparations were made for the first official public meeting of the Committee on October 25th, 2004.

October 25, 2004 – Planning Committee Meeting – Town Hall

The Stella Comprehensive Plan’s Public Participation Plan was adopted pursuant to state standard. The results of the 2004 Public Opinion Survey were reviewed. Committee members reviewed existing land uses in the Town and developed a draft future land use map for the land use element of the comprehensive plan.

November 29, 2004 – Planning Committee Workshop – Town Hall

The draft future land use map was reviewed and changes made in preparation for the first open house meeting for public input. The Land Use element and the Natural, Agricultural, and Cultural Resources element were both reviewed in draft form and changes made.

January 31, 2005 – Open House Meeting – Town Hall

The general public was invited to view progress on the comprehensive plan. After a question and answer session, the public was requested to review and comment on the plan and future land use map. Suggested changes to the map and text were noted for further review by the Committee at the next meeting.

April 25, 2005 – Planning Committee Meeting – Town Hall

The Economic Development and Implementation Elements were reviewed and changes made. The Committee reviewed all nine elements and associated maps. A final draft was prepared for mail out in preparation for the final Committee meeting.

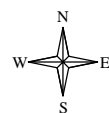
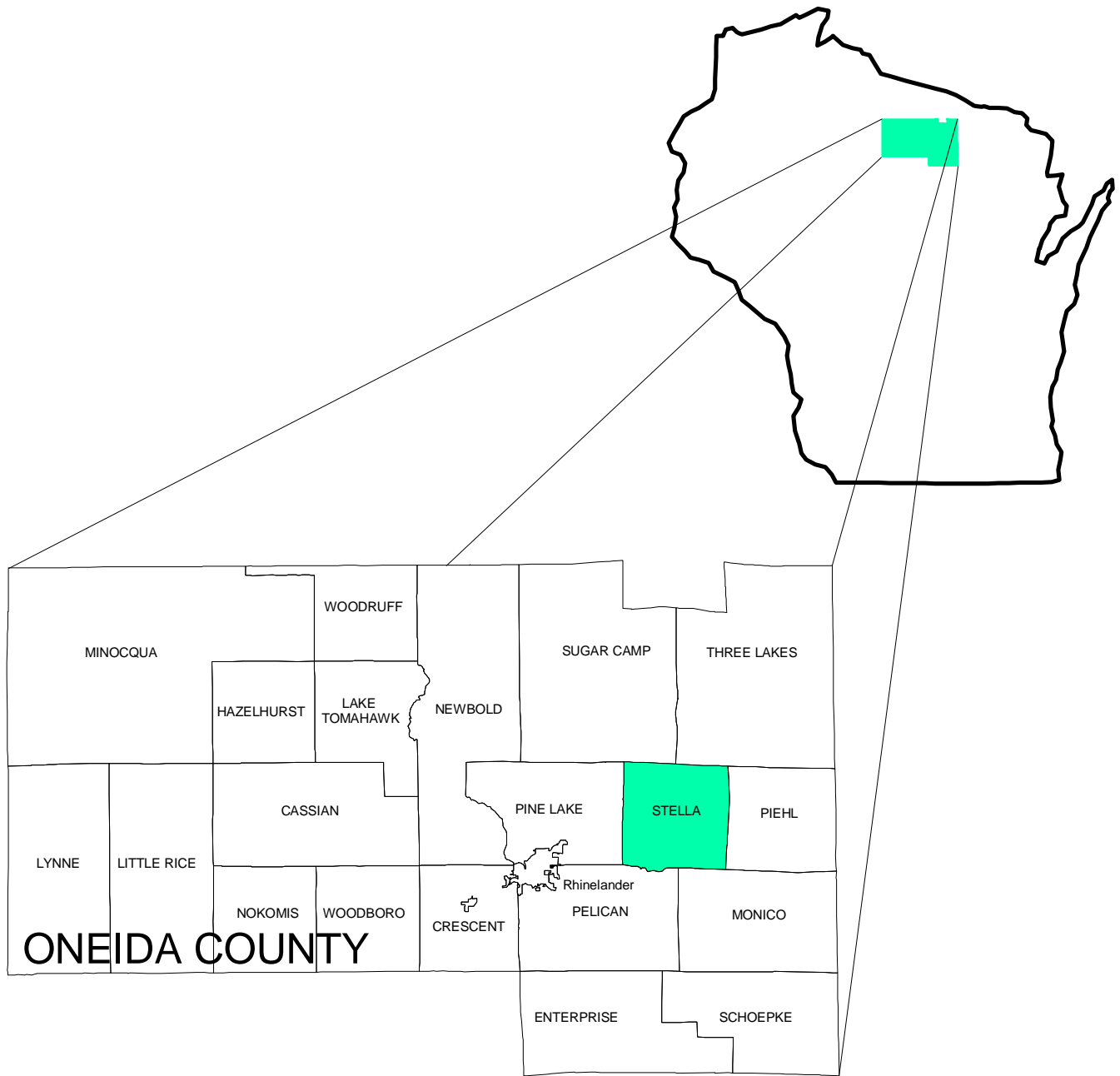
June 14, 2005 – Open House and Final Planning Committee Meeting – Town Hall

The general public was invited to view and comment on the completed final draft of the comprehensive plan. The Planning Committee was formerly designated as a “Plan Commission” by the Town Board and the Plan Committee made an official recommendation for plan approval to the Town Board.

The Comprehensive Plan Elements

As shown on the Location Map on page 9, the Town of Stella is located in the east central portion of Oneida County approximately three miles east of Rhinelander. The Town is one of 20 local units government within the County; Oneida County contains one city and nineteen Towns. While the following nine elements mainly address the Town of Stella, there may also be information regarding (or relationships with) other municipalities, counties, and the State of Wisconsin as well. The Community Map on page 10 may be used as a reference when reviewing the comprehensive plan elements.

Map 1
Town of Stella
Locational Map
Oneida County, Wisconsin

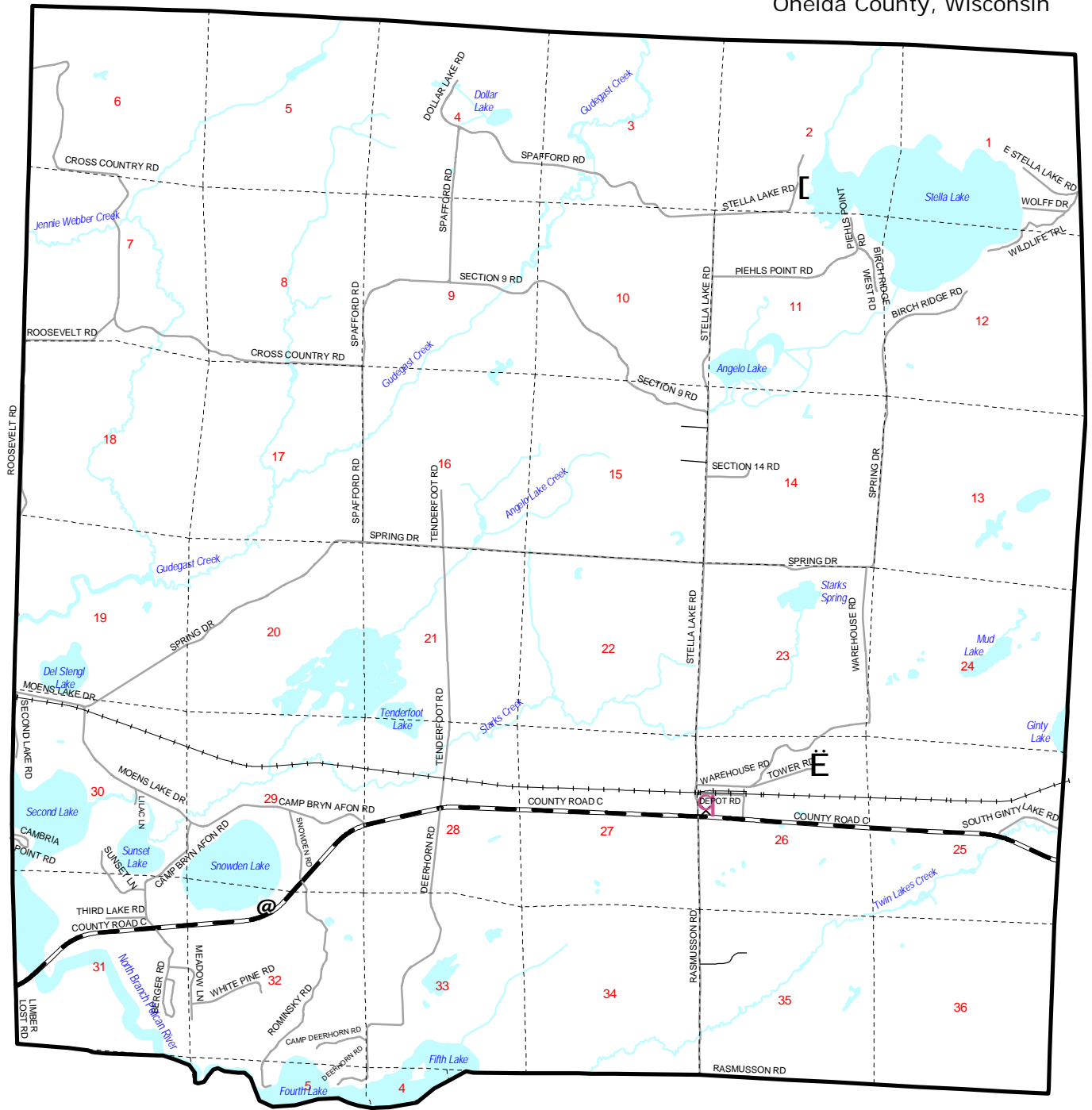


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This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

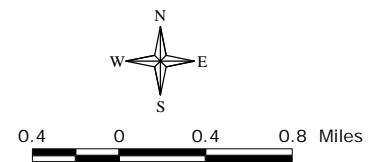
Map 2
Town of Stella
 Community Facilities
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



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- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Water

- Beach
- Boat Ramp
- Transmission Tower
- Stella Stadium
- Town Hall - Fire Station



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Element 1: Issues and Opportunities

This element, as the title describes, provides an overview of the issues facing Stella and the opportunities available to address them. This overview also sets the stage for the seven elements that follow it; therefore, the material provided herein will be referenced throughout the plan. The Town of Stella faces several issues with respect to development pressure. Recently, the City of Rhinelander has developed a new hospital and several major retail stores on its east side, which makes development near these sites more attractive. Given Stella's close proximity to these sites, land in Stella is increasingly being sought for residential development. The demand for additional public services to accommodate the new development has put a burden on available revenues. Increased development has also increased land valuation, which in turn increases taxes for residents.

1.1: Background Information and Previous Plans

The Town of Stella is located in the Eastern quarter of Oneida County Wisconsin (see map 1). The Town measures approximately six miles by six miles square and is bounded by the Towns of Monico, Pelican, Piehl, Pine Lake, Sugar Camp, and Three Lakes. The Town contains one unincorporated community known as Starks and is a short distance east of the City of Rhinelander, County Seat of Oneida County. A detailed history of the Town may be found in Element 5 under the cultural resources section. Below is a listing of plans referenced during the development of this comprehensive plan. These plans are general in nature, while other specific plans may be referenced later as they pertain to specific plan elements.

Oneida County Land & Water Resource Management Plan

The Oneida County Land Conservation Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission completed this plan in April of 2000. The plan was intended to meet the statutory requirement for such a plan under Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92. The plan assesses the topography, drainage, groundwater, geology, wetlands, wildlife, natural areas, soils, surface water, and watershed characteristics of Oneida County. The plan then identifies goals for resource management and a workplan for implementation. This plan was mostly used in the development of Element 2 concerning Stella's natural resources.

Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2004-2008

The Oneida County Forestry, Land & Outdoor Recreation Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepared this plan 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 by the Oneida County Board, City of Rhinelander, and the Town governments as well as the subsequent acceptance of the plan by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) 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. This plan was used in the development of Elements 2 and 5 in this plan.

Regional Comprehensive Plan: A Framework for the Future, 2002-2020

The Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) titled “A Framework for the Future”, adopted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2003, is an update and expansion of a plan adopted by the NCWRPC in 1981. The RCP looks at the nine elements as outlined in the new planning law. It covers things from a Regional Perspective and includes information on all ten counties in the North Central Region, including Oneida. It looks at general trends within the Region and recommends how county and local government can address issues. The RCP was used as the model for the development of this Stella comprehensive plan.

Population Forecasts

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) estimates a population of 667 people in the Town of Stella as of January 1, 2003. This is a 5.37 percent increase from Stella’s Census population of 633 in 2000, or a yearly increase of 1.95 percent (given that the Census is provided for April 1 of 2000 and DOA’s estimate is for January 1, 2003). Although Stella’s population is small, it has the highest estimated rate of increase of any municipality in Oneida County. As a comparison, the Town survey performed for this plan estimates approximately 671 non-seasonal residents in 2004. Given the similarity in estimates, the survey appears to be an accurate representation of the residents of the community and the survey managed to yield a response rate of nearly 50% of the total resident population. Table 1 provides Census estimates of Stella’s population between 1980 and 2000.

Table 1: Total Population by Geographic Area, 1980 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 80-00 | 80-00 % |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Town of Stella | 489 | 525 | 633 | 144 | 29.5% |
| Oneida County | 31,216 | 31,679 | 36,776 | 3,279 | 17.8% |
| State of Wisconsin | 4,705,642 | 4,891,769 | 5,363,675 | 658,033 | 14.0% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

It appears that the Town of Stella has experienced a relatively high increase in population since 1980 with most of this growth occurring over the last decade. The County shows growth, but much more in line with the natural increase of the state. Although much of this population increase comprises relatively few numbers when compared to the County and State population totals, it nonetheless describes a definite trend of increasing population within the Town. Table 2 offers two scenarios of population projection for the Town.

Table 2: Population Projection, Town of Stella, WI, 2000 to 2020

| Type of Projection | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 00-20 | 00-20 % |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Census Projection | 633 | 727 | 820 | 187 | 29.5% |
| DOA Projection | 633 | 715 | 781 | 148 | 23.4% |

Source: US Census Bureau, Wisconsin Department of Administration & NCWRPC

The first line of Table 2 is the trend projection of the Town using historical growth rate from the US Census. In this projection, it is assumed that the rate of growth in population from 1980 to 2000 will continue steadily until the year 2020. The second line of Table 2 is the DOA trend projection, obtained from the DOA’s official population projections. Age distribution in Stella seems focused around persons between 25 and 54 years in age indicating that the “baby boom” generation will not significantly skew projections in the years to come. The most significant impact on Stella’s future population will likely come from immigration. This prediction is further developed in the Age Distribution and Demographic Trends sections below.

Household Forecasts

In 2000, the Census estimated that the Town of Stella had 236 occupied housing units (or households) within its incorporated boundary averaging 2.65 persons in each. In addition, the Census shows that an additional 71 homes were seasonal comprising approximately 23 percent of the total housing stock. By contrast, the 2004 public survey estimated a slightly lower 2.6 persons per household and seasonal housing at 27 percent of the total housing stock. Table 3 shows historic data regarding the number of housing units in the Town and surrounding jurisdictions.

Table 3: Number of Housing Units by Geographic Area, 1990 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1990 | 2000 | 90-00 | 90-00 % |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Town of Stella | 316 | 316* | 0 | 0.0% |
| Oneida County | 25,173 | 26,627 | 1,454 | 5.8% |
| Wisconsin | 2,055,774 | 2,321,144 | 265,370 | 12.9% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

* Inconsistent data in Census also shows this value as 313.

Note that the Town appears to have gained no new housing units in the last ten years. On the contrary, the census indicates that 83 new housing units were built between 1990 and 2000. The discrepancy may be explained by the conversion of many seasonal housing units to full residences (which accounts for the population increase of the last ten years). However, permit data from the County zoning office indicates that residential construction in Stella has increased since 2000. Projecting the number of housing units in Stella using historical data is difficult since seasonal home conversions have obscured the actual new construction of homes. For this reason, we will look at household forecasts instead.

Table 4: Projected Number of Households by Geographic Area, 2000 to 2020

| Geographic Area | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 00-20 | 00-20 % |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Town of Stella | 236 | 281 | 319 | 83 | 35.2% |
| Oneida County | 15,333 | 16,809 | 17,934 | 2,601 | 17.0% |
| Wisconsin | 2,084,556 | 2,303,238 | 2,506,932 | 422,376 | 20.3% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration & NCWRPC

As shown in Table 4, the DOA has ambitious projections for the number of households in Stella by the year 2020. To accommodate this projected 35% increase, Stella must see an increase in the number of dwelling units (even if all vacant dwellings were filled and seasonal dwellings were converted to full residences). While the average number of persons per household in the Town has decreased by 5% (from 2.76 to 2.62 persons per household) over the last ten years, there has been virtually no change in the average household size in Oneida County (2.44 persons per household); meanwhile the State has actually increased its average household size from 2.61 to 2.67 in the same time period. Despite Stella’s downward trend in household size, it is still considerably higher than the County average. Smaller household sizes mean more people living alone, more couples without children, and couples having fewer children. More information on households and forecasting is provided in the Housing Element of this plan.

Employment Forecasts

Employment in the Town of Stella is limited. Roughly 18% of the Town’s population was employed in education, health, and social services according to the 2000 census. Retail trade and manufacturing accounted for 17% and 15% respectively. Agriculture and forestry constituted 11%. While few jobs may be found within the Town itself, those that are available are unlikely to see dramatic change in the near future given demographic projections. More information on employment forecasts may be found in the Economic Development Element.

Age Distribution

Stella’s population is aging; a trend seen across the state of Wisconsin and much of the Midwest. Tables 5 and 6 offer data on the dependent population, or that population least likely to work and most likely to be supported by the population aged 18 to 64.

Table 5: Total Number of Persons under Age 18 by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1990 | | 2000 | | Change ‘90 – ‘00 | |
|-----------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|------------------|------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Town of Stella | 153 | 29.1% | 162 | 25.6% | 9 | 5.9% |
| Oneida County | 7,524 | 22.8% | 8,203 | 22.3% | 679 | 9.0% |
| Wisconsin | 1,288,982 | 26.4% | 1,368,756 | 25.5% | 79,774 | 6.2% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

Table 6: Total Number of Persons Age 65 and Over by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1990 | | 2000 | | Change ‘90 – ‘00 | |
|-----------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|------------------|-------|
| | Count | % | Count | % | Count | % |
| Town of Stella | 55 | 10.5% | 79 | 12.5% | 24 | 43.6% |
| Oneida County | 5,721 | 18.1% | 6,884 | 18.7% | 1,163 | 20.3% |
| Wisconsin | 651,221 | 13.3% | 702,552 | 13.1% | 138,355 | 24.5% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

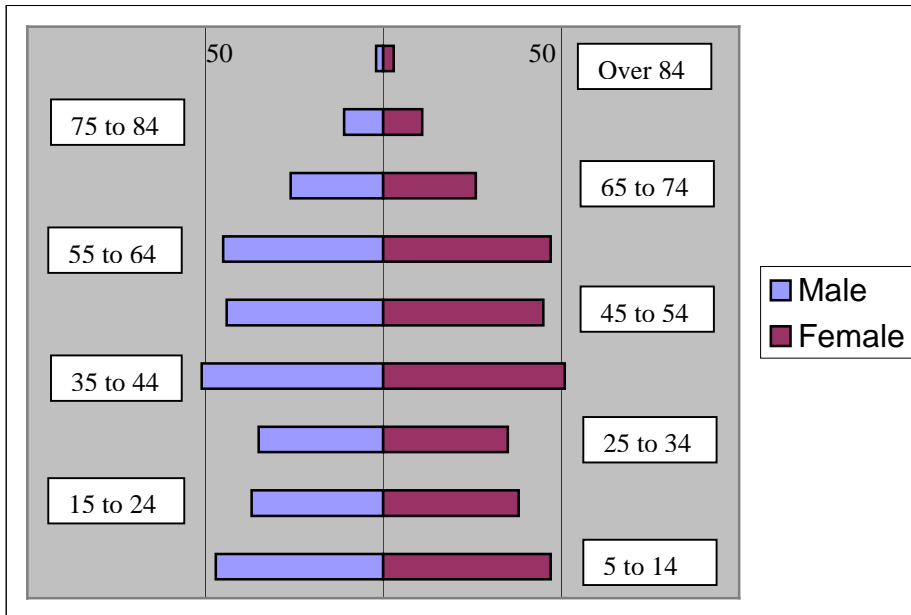
The Town of Stella compares to the State in its composition of youth population and has a slightly higher percentage than Oneida County. Oneida County has maintained the status quo in juvenile composition while Stella has been trending downward. Stella has seen a small but significant increase in the proportion of its senior population compared to the fairly stable compositions of both Oneida County and the State. Combined, the

Town of Stella had approximately 38% of its population comprised of juveniles and seniors. Stella’s median age is 39.3 years compared to Oneida County’s higher median age of 42.4. The State average is 36 years of age.

Demographic Trends

According to the Census, approximately 12 percent of Stella’s population was retired seniors in 2000. Stella’s senior population has increased and its juvenile population has decreased, which indicates a trend toward homogenizing Town’s age composition with the rest of Oneida County. Overall trends in population are most easily noted in the use of a “population pyramid”, which actually shows a shape more similar to an hourglass. Display 1 uses the demographic data obtained from the 2000 Census to create a model pyramid graph.

Display 1: Population Pyramid Model for Town of Stella, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 & NCWRPC.

Population aged 0 to 4 has been left out of the above graph to keep uniformity in age cohorts. The most important aspect of the graph above is the constriction in the age 15 to 34 age cohorts and the “bulge” of the 35 to 64 year cohorts – these cohorts predict a potential loss in population for the Town in the next twenty years. As is common in many rural areas, high school graduates often leave Stella as teenagers and then a fraction return ten to twenty years later with children of their own. Migrants from large metro areas and retired farmers also contribute to the expansion of numbers in the higher age cohorts in the pyramid.

Education Levels

The most common level of educational attainment in Stella is the high school graduate. Compared to the County, the Town has a higher percentage of high school graduates.

When compared to the State, Stella compares in much the same way as with the County. Table 7 provides a summary of educational attainment in Stella and the surrounding area.

Table 7: Educational Attainment by Political Subdivision, Persons Age 25 and Older, 2000

| Educational Attainment Level | Town of Stella | Oneida County | State of Wisconsin |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Less than 9 th Grade | 2.9% | 4.4% | 5.4% |
| 9 th to 12 th Grade, no diploma | 14.3% | 10.6% | 9.6% |
| High School Graduate | 40.8% | 36.5% | 34.6% |
| Some College, no degree | 18.1% | 21.7% | 20.6% |
| Associate Degree | 8.8% | 6.9% | 7.5% |
| Bachelor's Degree | 9.5% | 13.0% | 15.3% |
| Graduate or Professional | 5.5% | 6.9% | 7.2% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

Over the past decade, Stella has seen a decrease in the number of persons with less than 9th grade education and an increase in persons with college educations. Meanwhile, the younger generation has enjoyed better socio-economic conditions and opportunities that allow for larger numbers to obtain high school and college educations.

Income Levels

Per Capita and Median Household Income are two measures used to evaluate the living standard of a given area compared to another area. Tables 8 and 9 provide summaries of the 2000 Census with respect to the Town, the County, and the State and compare change in terms of 2000 dollars to account for inflation.

Table 8: Per Capita Income by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1990 | 2000 | Adj. Net Change* | % Change* |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| T. of Stella | \$11,013 | \$16,712 | \$2,202 | 15.2% |
| Oneida County | \$11,681 | \$19,746 | \$4,356 | 28.3% |
| Wisconsin | \$13,276 | \$21,271 | \$3,766 | 21.5% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC. * Adjusted for inflation in 2000 dollars.

Table 9: Median Household Income by Geographical Area, 1990 to 2000

| Geographic Area | 1990 | 2000 | Adj. Net Change* | % Change* |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| T. of Stella | \$27,578 | \$40,909 | \$4,574 | 12.6% |
| Oneida County | \$23,901 | \$37,619 | \$6,129 | 19.5% |
| Wisconsin | \$29,442 | \$43,791 | \$5,001 | 12.9% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC. * Adjusted for inflation in 2000 dollars.

In terms of per capita income, the Town appears to be at a distinctly lower living standard than the County average. Table 8 indicates that Stella is “falling behind” the rest of the County in income growth – it is however somewhat closer to the state average. Table 9 presents a different picture. Here, the Town appears to have grown similarly to the state average at 12% and Stella shows a higher median household income than Oneida County as a whole. The difference between the two tables provides insight into how income is

distributed within the Town. Table 8 indicates the Town of Stella his unlikely to have very wealthy individuals since per capita income is significantly below that of the County and state. Table 9 shows that households in Stella are wealthier than average for the County, but the standard of living is still less expensive than more urbanized areas of the state. It is important to note, however, that incomes in Oneida County are increasing at a more significant rate than those in the Town of Stella. This suggests that the Town of Stella has not yet been subject to the economic impacts that currently affect other parts of Oneida County. Fortunately, poverty in the Town of Stella has been stable for the past ten years and is slightly less than the County average. These conclusions are supported by the 2000 Census estimates on poverty; see Table 10 below.

Table 10: Poverty Rate (%) by Geographical Area, 1999

| Geographic Area | Poverty Rate (%) |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Town of Stella | 5.1% |
| Oneida County | 5.3% |
| State of Wisconsin | 8.7% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC.

The Town of Stella has a lower poverty rate than the state, likely due to a more affordable standard of living than some other parts of the state. Oneida County has a slightly higher poverty rate, which is reflected in Table 9 in that the typical County household had over \$3,000 less income than Stella residents.

Employment Characteristics

The 2000 Census indicates that 275 Town residents were employed; in 1990 that number was approximately 272. While the number of employed residents in the Town of Stella may be constant, the residents' occupations have changed dramatically. The number of residents engaged in management and professional occupations has nearly doubled in the past ten years. Meanwhile, those employed in service, construction, and maintenance occupations have declined. Those employed in sales, farming, and transportation remained almost the same. This shift in the character of employment has likely enabled the Town of Stella to maintain its relatively higher median household income.

The majority of the Town's workers are employed in Rhinelander, located about ten miles to the west. 94% of those employed are commuters who drive to work each day. In the future, it is likely that employment rates in Stella will depend upon increases in working population, but percentages of those employed will probably decrease. The inevitable retirement of the "baby boom" generation and the tendency for the Northwoods to attract retirees will certainly impact the composition of the Town's workforce. The Economic Development Element of this plan discusses employment in more detail.

Table 11: Employment Characteristics, Town of Stella, 2000

| Occupation | Number Employed | Percentage |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| Management / Professional | 97 | 35.3% |
| Service | 22 | 8.0% |
| Sales and Office | 74 | 26.9% |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry | 17 | 6.2% |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | 20 | 7.3% |
| Production, Transportation, and Material Moving | 45 | 16.3% |
| All Occupations | 275 | 100% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC.

1.2: Issues

“Issues” is a term used to describe those circumstances that can create problems, the potential for problems, or simply matters of concern or discussion. The issues facing the Town of Stella are identified via the 2004 public opinion survey administered as part of the comprehensive plan’s public participation plan. The issues are presented below in order of the issues mentioned most often to the least.

Development Pressure

The Town of Stella, although rural, is within easy driving distance of the City of Rhinelander. This makes Stella an attractive location for persons seeking residence in a rural area with easy access to large commercial markets. Consequently, land that was formerly used for agriculture and forestry is being converted into residential subdivisions. Agriculture, specifically potato farming, comprises a significant component of Stella’s local economy. Therefore, each farm parcel that is converted to a residence makes Stella more of a “bedroom community” and likewise more dependent upon the regional economy. To compound the problem, each residential land sale from subdivision development increases the value of property, which in turn increases the tax burden on surrounding landowners. More residential construction also leads to more demand for Town services including road maintenance and fire protection as well as burdens upon the local school system and utility provision.

Protection of Rural Setting, Natural Environment, and Lakes

Closely associated with the impact of development is the protection of Stella’s natural beauty. The presence of many homes and other building developments tends to give the Town a more “urban” feel. Many residents choose to live in Stella because of its rural character. Development is usually highly visible along highways and on shorelines, which are key to preserve in their rural state to maintain a sense “country living”. While development brings pollution, many residents specifically stated concerns regarding the use of paper mill waste on farm fields as fertilizer. In general, the lakes and water systems of the Town are impacted by storm runoff and some Town residents would, at a minimum, like to see some water quality testing to assure them that their well water is protected as well to prevent the pollution of Stella’s lakes and streams.

Local Government Regulation

Rural communities are typically less regulated than urban ones, usually due to staffing limitations and lack of necessity for highly developed controls. This may reflect the desire for personal freedom of the resident, but it also has the unfortunate side effect of allowing undesirable activities to continue unchecked. Land use controls and zoning were the local regulations most commonly mentioned in the 2004 public opinion survey. While several respondents indicated that they enjoyed the flexibility of limited zoning, an equal number identified problems with junk, nuisances, and poorly maintained property. A majority of respondents felt that additional land development regulations needed to be implemented. Other than speeding, crime did not appear to be an issue requiring increased local government law enforcement.

Local Commercial Development

A number of respondents indicated a desire for limited commercial development within the Town. These developments were often characterized as of the convenience store / gas station variety. Some respondents also expressed the need for the provision of “good paying jobs” and to a lesser extent the attraction of businesses. Conversely, several respondents specifically wanted to prevent business and other development from entering the Town for the purpose of maintaining rural character. This conflict of views could most easily be summarized by saying that there are respondents both for and against the shifting of Stella’s focus from an agricultural- and forestry-based economy to a more industrial- and service-based economy.

1.3: Opportunities

Similar to the Issues section above, Stella’s Opportunities are also derived from the 2004 public opinion survey. Unlike the Issues, Opportunities reflects the strengths and beneficial aspects of the Town. These opportunities can be used to either resolve the Issues, or to advance/maintain the community in terms of its quality of life. Again, the opportunities below are listed in order from most mentioned to least.

Rural Setting and Recreational Amenities

The Town of Stella offers a very rural feel to its residents. The only platted community in the Town is Starks, which mainly comprises a tavern, a public park with ball diamond, and a Town Hall with a fire station. The rest of the community is made up of rural residences, forests, and farms. Respondents indicated that they most enjoyed Stella for its quietness, forests, cleanliness, and distance from urban centers. Several felt that Stella offered the amenities of rural living while still being within comfortable driving distance of large retail markets. Stella’s rural setting also lends itself to a variety of recreational outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, boating, and hiking.

Community

Respondents often remarked that the residents of Stella are very neighborly and friendly. Those in need can count on assistance from others and that people will go out of their way to help their neighbors. Several also commented on the sense of commitment that Town residents have to their community. This type of environment can be considered family-oriented or family-friendly.

Standard of Living

Stella offers quality schools, a low crime rate, inexpensive taxes, adequate civic services, and minimal government regulation. The combination of these factors provides a high standard of living for community residents. When compared to the living expenses of large cities, Stella offers quality living for a fraction of the expense. This type of situation also lends itself to be considered family-oriented or family-friendly.

1.4: Goals, Policies, Objectives, and Programs

The next seven elements of the plan discuss the issues and opportunities of housing, transportation, utilities & community facilities, agricultural, natural, & cultural resources, economic development, and intergovernmental cooperation, and land use. Each element provides a general background and analysis of the topic as it relates to the Town of Stella followed by an outline of the goals, policies, and objectives of the Town. Applicable programs available to the Town are also listed in each element where appropriate.

Element 2: Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

This element, as the title describes, provides an overview of the most fundamental and “raw” resources available to the community. Natural resources are the physical characteristics of Town itself, including terrain, geology, water, vegetation, and wildlife. Agricultural resources are those commodities dependent upon rainfall, drainage, soils, and climate that permit the development of agricultural products. While natural resources focus on the “natural” or physical aspects of the Town, cultural resources are the “man-made” or human aspects of the community that make the Town of Stella different from other places. Cultural resources identify places, buildings, or events that are historically significant, aesthetically pleasing, or offer some insight into the human condition. The material provided herein will be referenced throughout the plan, with particular emphasis in the economic development, land use, and implementation elements. Additional information specifically related to natural resources may be found in Appendix D of this plan.

2.1: Background and Programs

When discussing the background of natural, historical, and cultural resources, it is easiest to begin with a general history of the community.

Town History

Thousands of years ago, the Town of Stella was shaped by glacial activity. The advances and retreats of these glaciers over the centuries are responsible for distinctive geological features. The last of these glaciers receded about 15,000 years ago and its impacts are still noticeable in the present day landscape. Stella is part of the Northern Highland physiographic subdivision. The Precambrian bedrock of Oneida County is a conglomeration of gneisses and schist although some younger, intrusive granites are also found. Bedrock formations are observed in scattered outcrops, and the ground moraine is thin.

Native Americans of the Chippewa tribes were the first inhabitants of the Oneida County area. Originally a French holding, Wisconsin was acquired by the English following the French and Indian War circa 1763. By 1812, the Northwest Territory was eventually given up to the United States. Until this time, the area was primarily used along rivers for fur trapping and trading. Wisconsin became a state in 1848, but the first recorded plat in the Town of Stella was not until 1887 when the Sault Ste. Marie Land and Improvement Company of Hennepin County, Minnesota, created the community of Pennington (now known as Starks) named for the Superintendent of the Atlantic Railway. A 100’ wide right-of-way was granted for a public use railroad which is still used to this day. By September of 1887, the Town of Stella saw the first regular train service from Rhinelander through Starks to Gagen. In Pennington the railroad terminal consisted of a six stall round house, blacksmith shop, boiler house, water tank, turn table, cooling station, cinder pit, sand pit, and water stand pipe. There was also a hotel and the homes of the railroad employees. Main Street ran east and west facing the tracks while all the other

streets bore the names of native trees. Local lore claims that the name Stella came from the daughter of a man who operated a mill on what is now Stella Lake prior to 1912.

As the railroad continued further east from Gagen, logging traffic became more prominent as logs headed to the mills in Rhinelander. Horse teams hauled logs unable to be sent by rail. White pine was commonly cut for the mills, Norway pine for homes, and White Cedar for shingles and railroad ties. The Menasha Wooden Ware Company owned most of the land in the Town during this period. In 1898, a tornado demolished Pennington and the train terminal facilities were moved to Rhinelander. Disaster struck again in 1908 when a fire destroyed much of the timber in the area from Three Lakes to Rhinelander. In the early 1900's the name Pennington was changed to Hobson in honor of Commander Hobson, a famous hero of the Spanish-American War. By 1910, much of the forest in the Town of Stella had been cut and the land became idle.

Leonard Starks was a man destined to play a significant role in the history of the Town of Stella. He was born in New York in 1851 and in 1903 he organized the L. Starks Company in Chicago specializing in buying potatoes. In 1912 Leonard Starks purchased 10,000 acres of land around Hobson and began clearing stumps and rocks using oxen teams, steam tractors, and dynamite. The leftover stones from the cleared rocks were used to build a stone warehouse 200 feet long and 60 feet wide. By 1914, Starks rebuilt the community of Hobson and renamed it after himself. The company maintained a company store and post office for use by employees of the Starks Farm. In 1915 the company erected a portable sawmill for the construction of homes and other buildings. After the land clearing, the first crops were rye, clover, and potatoes. The potatoes were planted and dug by hand. Carloads of cattle and sheep were also shipped in from Idaho for livestock activities. Largely due to Mr. Starks' success, Wisconsin became nationally known for its seed potatoes. Starks peaked in potato production with holdings of nearly 19,000 acres until a period of deflation in 1922. Mr. Starks died in 1927 after suffering substantial financial losses after 1922.

Leonard Starks had only one child named Lelah Starks. Lelah was born in Plainfield, Wisconsin in 1882 and took over her father's holdings after his death, but she was more interested in poultry than potatoes and raised several prize winning chickens on the Stella Lake Farm. Even so, Miss Starks became one of Wisconsin's most prominent potato growers and was eventually able to buy back some of the land her father lost in the mid-1920s. In 1941, Miss Starks was honored by the University of Wisconsin for her work in the field of seed potatoes. Miss Starks died in 1951.

The people of Stella are of German, Polish, English, French, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Lithuanian, Irish, and Scottish descent. With such mixed nationalities, old country customs were difficult to maintain, but new ones were formed. The Town Hall hosted many dances and plays using talent from the local population. There were housewarming parties for each new home that was built; Meredith's Hill was a popular location for sledding in winter; hay rides on the west end of Moen's Lake at Roosevelt; boat trips on nearby lakes. Baseball became a favored sport for Town residents and to this day there is a ball stadium in Starks.

Previous Plans

Oneida County Land & Water Resource Management Plan

The Oneida County Land Conservation Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission completed this plan in April of 2000. The plan was intended to meet the statutory requirement for such a plan under Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92. The plan assesses the topography, drainage, groundwater, geology, wetlands, wildlife, natural areas, soils, surface water, and watershed characteristics of Oneida County. The plan then identifies goals for resource management and a workplan for implementation. The goals of this plan are reflected where applicable to the Town of Stella in the Goals, Policies, and Objectives section below.

Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2004-2008

The Oneida County Forestry, Land & Outdoor Recreation Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepared this plan 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 by the Oneida County Board, City of Rhinelander, and the Town governments as well as the subsequent acceptance of the plan by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) 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.

Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources Programs

Programs available to the Town of Stella to achieve their goals and objectives with regard to agricultural, natural and cultural resources 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 s.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.

Drinking Water and Groundwater Program

This DNR 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. DNR 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 provide the Headwaters Basin with 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.

Fisheries Management Program

The WDNR 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.

Forest Management Program

Funding for the forestry program is supported primarily by a fixed rate mill tax on all property in the State of Wisconsin. Other support is received from the federal government, from recreation fees, from sale of forest products, from sale of state produced nursery stock, forest tax law payments, and other miscellaneous sources. All activities of the Forestry Program help support efforts to promote and ensure the protection and sustainable management of Wisconsin's forests.

The 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.

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 10 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 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner. There is a 5% yield tax applied to any wood products harvested.

Technical assistance for managing Wisconsin's urban forests is provided to local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and other public agencies through regional urban forestry coordinators. The DNR staff helps communities plan urban tree selection and removal, address insect and disease issues, offer financial assistance, and education for citizens.

Lake Planning Grant

The Department of Natural Resources' Lake Planning Grant is the funding source for this comprehensive plan. Funds are available to collect and analyze information needed to protect and restore lakes and their watersheds. Collection of physical, chemical, biological, and sociological data, water quality assessment, and watershed evaluation including county-wide or regional initiatives are examples of approved types of projects.

Lake Protection Grant

Funds are available to protect and improve the water quality of lakes and their ecosystems. Grants are available for purchasing land or easements, restoration of wetlands, development of local regulations to protect water quality, lake improvement activities called for in a Department approved plan, and countywide lake classification. Contact the WDNR Regional Lakes Coordinator for more information.

Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program

This DNR program is currently undergoing restructuring and being gradually replaced by short-term grants that will address specific projects rather than focusing on entire watersheds. The goal of this voluntary program is to improve and protect the water quality of surface waters and groundwater within the watershed. Landowners are encouraged to control nonpoint pollution on their properties through cost sharing of Best Management Practices. This program will be replaced by Targeted Runoff Management projects (TRiM). These are projects that are more specific in nature and may last up to three years. They are scored on a competitive basis, based on the amount of pollutant control they will achieve and the degree of impairment of the location. One nonpoint source coordinator is located in Rhinelander. This coordinator administers and oversees the

priority watershed program and will also assist with the TRiM grants. The coordinator also provides nonpoint source pollution advice to counties that are implementing their land and water plans.

Parks and Recreation Program

The DNR gets its 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 conservation fund, and the recycling fund, program revenue funds and federal grants.

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 DNR 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 (WRP)

The purpose of the WRP is to restore wetlands previously altered for agricultural use. The goal of the WRP is to restore wetland and wildlife habitats. Lands that have been owned for at least one year and can be restored to wetland conditions are eligible. Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent or 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent easements pay 100% of the agricultural value of the land and 100% cost-sharing; 30-year easements pay 75% of the agricultural value and 75% cost sharing; 10-year contract pays 75% cost share only. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded

with a property deed, however 10-year contracts are not. Public access is not required. Contact the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for further information.

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 analysis's, 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 Historical Society, Office of Preservation Planning

The Historical Society can provide information on how to protect and preserve your own historic property, to implement grassroots strategies for preserving and protecting historic properties, and on state or federal laws and regulations that may be applicable to a given case.

2.2: Inventory of Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Climate

In Oneida County, which has a continental climate, winters are very cold and summers are fairly warm, but not excessively hot. A short freeze-free period in summer limits the type of crops that are viable. Precipitation is fairly well distributed throughout the year, reaching a peak in summer. Snow covers the ground much of the time from late in fall to early in spring. The National Climatic Data Center reported that the average year-round temperature in Wisconsin is 43 degrees, while the average daily maximum temperature is 81 degrees and the average daily minimum temperature is 14 degrees. Average annual snowfall in Oneida County is 53 inches, and ice covers the lakes from December to April. The average annual rainfall is about 31 inches with thunderstorms occurring on about 34 days each year. The growing season generally extends from late May to early September, for an average frost-free growing season of 124 days. Prevailing winds come out of the northwest from late fall through spring, and from the southwest during the remainder of the year.

Topography

Oneida County is in the Northern Highlands physiographic region of Wisconsin where crystalline rock is overlain by thick glacial deposits. The surface of the Town can be described as having a varied topography. The Town 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.

Scattered areas of outwash were deposited throughout the county and these areas are characterized by relatively permeable sand and gravel laid down by glacial melt waters. The numerous lakes, streams, and wetlands of the county are directly related to the glacial action. The surface water system reflects the melting effect of the ice sheet that covered this part of the state. Many swamps and marshes exist due to two factors. First, many areas have poor drainage, and secondly, some of these areas are former lakes that have gone through the process of becoming extinct lakes. Plant succession slowly changes lakes into bogs and eventually wet forest communities commonly associated with black spruce, tamarack, cedar, and ash forests.

According to the Bedrock Geology of Wisconsin, Northeast Sheet, prepared by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, rocks of the Precambrian age underlie all of Oneida County. The Town of Stella is made up of three rock types: granite intrusive rocks, which are located in a large circular area centrally within the Town; gneiss, located along the northern border of the Town; and metavolcanic rocks, located in the remaining areas of the Town. It is important to be aware of the bedrock in an area before and development takes place. For example when bedrock is located at or near the surface, there is potential for hindering excavation of septic systems and a considerable increase in the cost of construction. In addition, a conventional onsite septic system may not function properly in areas where bedrock is near the surface, possibly resulting in wastewater passing through cracks or fissures.

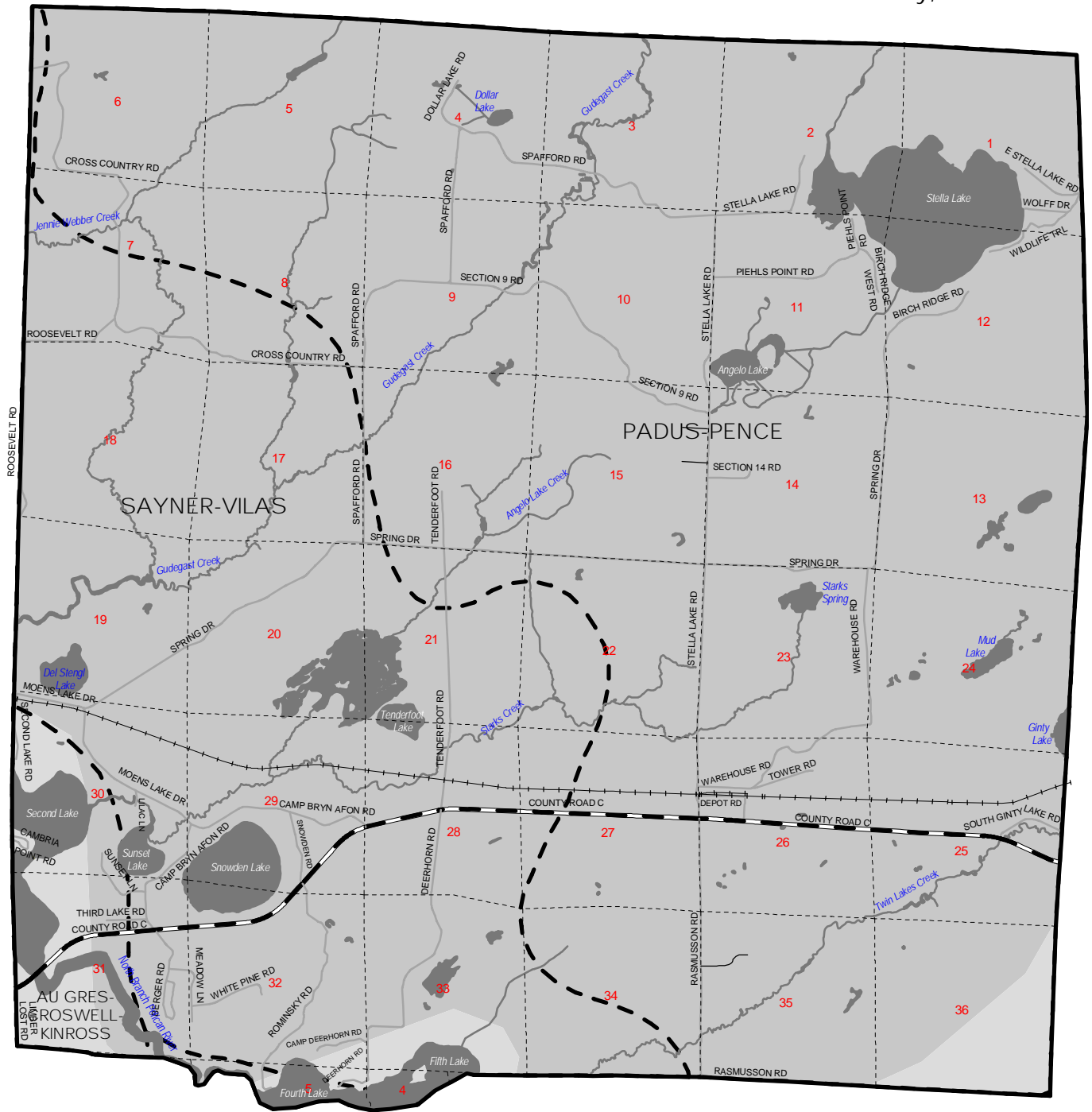
Soils

Soil is composed of varying proportions of sand, gravel, silt, clay and organic material. The composition of a soil should be evaluated prior to any development, as varying limitations exist for each soil. A detailed study of all the soils in Oneida County was developed in 1993 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. As part of that study, soils were identified in terms of generalized soil associations. This plan presents only those associations to avoid duplicating the detailed specifics of the Soil Survey. The following presents a list and description of the general soil associations included within the Town of Stella while Map 3 shows a geographical depiction of Stella's soils.

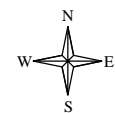
Sayner-Vilas Association

The soils in this association are located in the southwestern to western part of the Town of Stella. These soils are excessively drained and are mainly suited for woodland uses. Wetness and water erosion is a limitation and the potential for residential or other intensive land uses is limited. Level and gently sloping areas are suited to residential development, however effluent from septic tanks can pollute ground water because of the rapid or very rapid permeability within the soil.

Map 3
Town of Stella
 General Soils & Water Table Depth
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- Soil Boundary
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Water
- 0 - 20 feet
- 20 - 50 feet



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles



Prepared April 2005 By:
**North Central
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This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data used for reference purposes only. NCWRPC is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained.

Au Gres-Croswell-Kinross Association

The soils of this association are located in the extreme southwestern part of the Town of Stella and comprise less than a square mile of land. This moderately to poorly drained soil association is generally level with gentle slopes. Typically, soils are sandy and mucky and found mostly on outwash plains or in depressions. The soils are mainly suited to trees, however the seasonally high water table limits rooting depth. Development on these soils is also limited due to the high water table and possibilities of ground water contamination.

Padus-Pence Association

The majority of Stella's soil is comprised of this association in the southeast, east and northern part of the Town. Soils of this association are characteristically found on flats, knolls, and side slopes and are well drained to moderately well drained. Most areas found with these soils are used for woodland, with some small areas used as cropland or pasture. Limitations include low strength during wet periods and the hazard of water erosion in the more sloping areas. Nearly level or gently sloping areas are suitable to development, however threats continue to exist for basements and septic tank installation due to the high water table.

Carbondale and Greenwood Muck Series

These soils are commonly found in wetland areas along creeks, lakebeds, drainage ways, and spruce swamps. Map 4 on page 33 denotes areas where this series may be found as "environmentally sensitive areas".

Further investigation is required for "site-specific" soils information, as is the case with individual soil tests. Soil tests (commonly called percolation tests) are completed for each new building site application to determine the site's capacity for septic loads.

Groundwater

Groundwater is an important resource since it is used for all domestic, agricultural, and commercial purposes in the Town. According to the Oneida County Soil Survey report, the main aquifer in the county is glacial drift, particularly glacial outwash and ice-contact sand and gravel. The total mineral content is less than 150 milligrams per liter. The main components in the water are calcium, magnesium, and bicarbonate ions. A large concentration of iron is in the groundwater throughout the county, but is not considered to be a health hazard. The source of all groundwater is precipitation percolating down through the soil until it reaches the saturated zone called an aquifer. Water in an aquifer travels from its source to a discharge point, such as a well, wetland, spring, or lake. During periods of increased precipitation or thaw, this vast resource is replenished with water moving by gravity through permeable soils. This is known as a water table system. In some instances, groundwater moves because of pressure created by a confining layer of impervious rock known as an artesian system. The existence of granitic bedrock causes difficulties with obtaining groundwater in some areas of the Town. This hard rock is very difficult to drill through and thereby limits the availability of water. This bedrock layer is generally between ten and sixty feet below the ground and is present throughout the

Town. The bedrock comes closer to the surface in the eastern part of the Town. Map 3 shows the depth of the water table in Stella.

Water testing is encouraged every two to three years using a measure of corrosivity called the saturation index. Corrosive water can become a health risk for private homeowners who have lead solder or copper pipes as this water dissolves these metals and contaminate a home's drinking water supply. Iron concentrations are also an area of concern since concentrations greater than 0.3 mg/L can cause brown precipitates, discolored water or orange stains. These concentrations are common in the Town, however, filters are available to reduce these iron concentrations. Most groundwater contamination is related to poorly sited land uses such as agricultural manure, petroleum and salt storage in areas of high groundwater tables or fractured bedrock situations. Contamination of groundwater reserves can also result from such sources as percolation of water through improperly placed or maintained landfill sites, private waste disposal (septic effluent), runoff from livestock yards, improper application of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers, excessive lawn and garden fertilizers and pesticides, leaks from septic pipes, and seepage from non-metallic mining operations into the aquifer. Runoff from livestock yards, improper application of agricultural pesticide or fertilizers, and petroleum tank leaks and spills can also cause contamination in locations where the water table is near the surface. Once groundwater contamination has occurred, successful remediation can take years or a lifetime, depending upon the pollutant.

In the ten-year period from 1989 to 1999, UW-Extension organized a private well testing project for homeowners in the Oneida County area. Water samples were submitted to the Central Wisconsin Groundwater Center for analysis and a number of different tests were performed on the samples. Included within this suit of analyses were measurements on nitrate and nitrite levels, the saturation index, and coliform bacteria. Only 3 percent of the samples tested had levels that exceeded limits. The water samples were by and large clean with respect to coliform bacteria.

Forests

Boreal Northern Forest is the predominant forest community in the Town of Stella. Stella lies north of the climatic transition belt known as the "tension zone". The Boreal Northern Forest community consists of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests and may be composed of pines, maples, oaks, birch, hemlock, and other hardwood and conifer species. According to "Wisconsin's Biodiversity as a Management Issue" (a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) report), the composition of the Boreal Northern Forest in Oneida County is primarily made up of pine, both white and red, as well as hemlock, sugar maple and yellow birch. Loggers cutover nearly the entire Boreal Northern Forest in the late 19th to early 20th century. Both the species compositions and relative proportions of the northern forest have been greatly altered by humans over the past century. Even so, the overall species richness of plants and animals does not appear to be threatened at the current time.

Approximately 15,056 acres of the land in Town consists of forestland – both private-owned and industry-owned. There are also about 240 acres of land owned by the State of

Wisconsin and managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Stella has large tracts of land designated as Forestry zoning districts by the Oneida County zoning ordinance. These districts were established to protect the integrity of the county's forested lands by preserving the land in a relatively natural state. In the 1-A Forestry District, human habitation is intended to be limited in duration and seasonal in nature, not year round. Year-round dwellings, principal residences, or uses requiring year-round dwellings are permitted in the 1-B Forestry District. The County also offers a 1-C Forestry District, but this district has not been used in Stella yet. The forestlands in the Town offer both recreational opportunities as well as economic benefit. Preservation of Stella's forestland maintains the rural Northwoods character of the community.

Productive Agricultural Areas

Approximately 5,060 acres of the land within the Town consists of cropland. According to the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, a short growing season limits the number of viable crops in Oneida County. Given the Towns climate and soil conditions, commonly planted crops can include potatoes, snap beans, hay crops, and oats. Most farms specialize in potatoes. Historically, potatoes have grown well in Stella and a substantial amount of ground has been relegated to agricultural use. Today, potatoes remain a reliable crop for area growers.

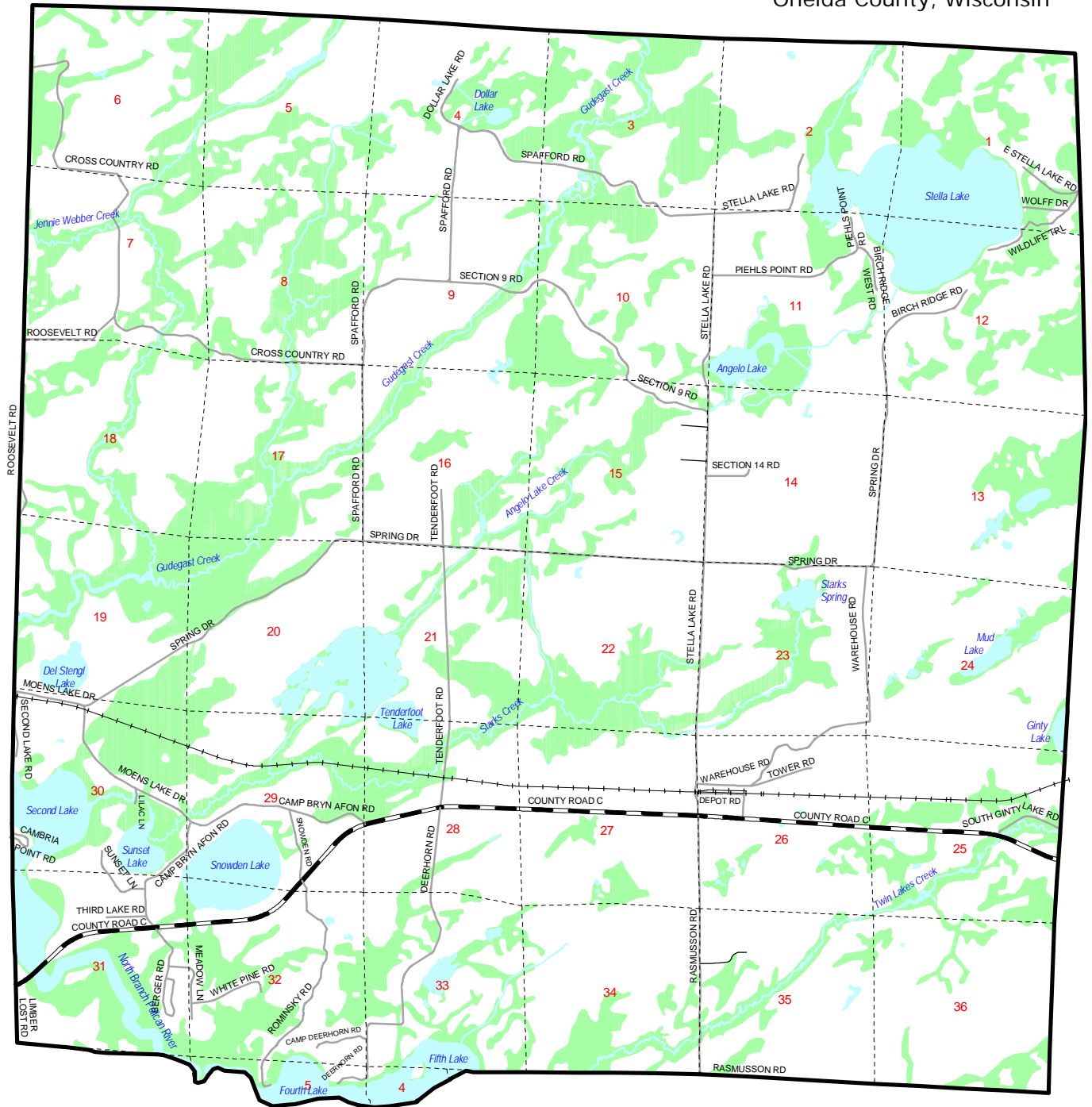


Potato field in northern part of Stella.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The Oneida County Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance describes ecologically significant areas as an area in which native aquatic plants are present in sufficient abundance and density to support significant spawning, seasonal or life stage habitat for first or other aquatic life and to protect water quality. This same definition is used herein to define Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Map 4 has displays environmental features using a number of objectively defined resource features as base data including surface water features, 100-year floodplains, wetlands, and shoreland zoning areas.

Map 4
Town of Stella
 Environmentally Sensitive Areas
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Water
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles



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Environmentally sensitive areas provide scenic open space, wildlife habitat, educational and recreational opportunities. They also provide the sense of identity and community character that people desire as well as serve as buffers between land uses while improving the aesthetics of the community. Environmentally sensitive areas are important to protect because of their functions in controlling, moderating, and storing flood waters while providing nutrient and sediment filtration. Environmental features should be utilized as a key resource feature to identify areas sensitive to development, and could be viewed as green infrastructure or an interconnected network of open space. These areas and their characteristic features should be considered during the land use planning process.

Threatened or Endangered Species

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) lists species as “endangered” when the continued existence of that species is determined to be in jeopardy on the basis of scientific evidence. Species are listed as “threatened” when it appears likely that the species may become endangered within the foreseeable future. The WDNR also lists species of “special concern” when some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven; the intent of this classification is to focus attention on a certain species before it becomes endangered or threatened.

There are currently 19 plants and 36 animals on the “special concern” list for Oneida County. Meanwhile, there are three plants and six animals on the “threatened” list. The only species identified as threatened or endangered in Oneida County by the federal government is the bald eagle. The WDNR urges local government to consult with their local field office before development takes place on rural properties. This will ensure that no threatened or endangered species will be adversely affected.

The large number of lakes, rivers and wetlands provide habitat for the most concentrated populations of bald eagles, ospreys, common loons, and river otters in the region. These aquatic communities also support a large population of beaver, colonial nesting water birds such as the great blue heron, and waterfowl. Large forested blocks provide habitat for a wide variety of songbird species, including forest interior and area sensitive species, as well as mammals such as gray wolf, bobcat, black bear and fisher. Within the Headwaters Basin there are 29 known species of threatened/endangered species of wildlife, including the gray wolf, populations of American marten and spruce grouse, osprey and red-shouldered hawk as well as other birds, aquatic and terrestrial insects, mussels, fish, amphibians, and reptiles.

Pelican River Watershed

Wisconsin has redesigned its natural resource management approach around the concepts of ecoregions and watersheds. This shift in approach recognizes that working with the natural structure and function of resources, as opposed to strictly political or social boundaries, will provide more successful results. The Town of Stella is located in the Headwaters Basin as designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). A watershed can be defined as an interconnected area of land draining from surrounding ridge tops to a common point such as a lake or stream confluence with a

neighboring watershed. All lands and waterways can be found within one watershed or another. In Wisconsin, watersheds vary in scale from major river systems to small creek drainage areas and typically range in size from 100 to 300 square miles. River basins encompass several watersheds. There are 32 river basins in Wisconsin, which range in size from 500 to over 5,000 square miles. Stella lies entirely within the Pelican River Watershed.

The Pelican River watershed drains into a tributary of the Pelican River itself, which then flows into the Wisconsin River. There are large wetland acreages within the watershed that have a substantial effect upon the quality of the surface water drainage within each watershed. Many localized impacts within the watershed tend to concentrate as water moves from vast areas into streams and creeks, then into rivers or lakes. This concentration can result in turbid waters or high amounts of phosphorus that can feed algae growth and reduce water quality. Map D in Appendix D shows the location of the Pelican River Watershed relative to surrounding watersheds.

Stream Corridors

Within the Town of Stella, there are several named river and creek features in addition to the many tributaries, intermittent streams, wetlands and floodplains located throughout the Town.

Angelo Lake Creek

This creek is approximately two and a half miles in length and is mostly located in Section 21 of Stella. The creek flows into the Starks Flowage and contains warm water forage fish. The shoreline of this creek is almost entirely wooded, however it does receive farm runoff from nearby agricultural fields.

Cornell Creek

Cornell Creek is a tributary to Starks Creek in the vicinity of Section 22 of Stella. This creek offers warm water forage fish and is approximately one mile in length. The creek is bounded by a wet forest community on both sides.

Gudegast Creek

This thirteen mile creek stretches from Stella Lake in the northeast corner of Stella to Moen Lake on Stella's southwest border. The creek actually traverses north from Stella Lake into the Town of Three Lakes, then winds its way southwest between large farms and through some grasslands to the Town of Pine Lake (where it enters Moen Lake). While the beginning and end of the creek supports warm water sport fishing, that portion that flows near farm fields offers little natural fish population. The creek quickly recovers from the impact of agricultural uses when it nears Stella's western border however. In fact, the creek is considered to be an Exceptional Water Resource by the WDNR and is capable of sustaining cold water fish communities in this area.



Gudegast Creek.

Jennie Webber Creek

Approximately half of this ten-mile creek lies in the western part of Stella and it joins with Gudegast Creek in Section 19 as a tributary. The Creek supports sport fishing but is negatively affected by a now defunct landfill in the Town of Pine Lake. Despite a shoreline of woodlands and grasslands, the WDNR recommends monitoring of this creek for water quality.

Jewel Creek

This cold water creek is only one mile long and lacks the adequate fish population for sport fishing but has a fish population nonetheless. The creek joins with Jennie Webber Creek in Section 7 near Cross Country Road. The creek is drains agricultural fields in Sections 4 and 5 in the northwest part of the Town.

Lela Creek

This high quality stream provides an excellent cold water fish habitat. Lela Creek is only two miles long but has been identified as an exceptional water resource by the WDNR. The Creek runs north to south in Sections 8 and 17 and acts as a tributary to Gudegast Creek.

Pelican River, North Branch

The North Branch of the Pelican River is about ten miles long and is the destination for all drainage within the Town of Stella. A portion of the North Branch lies in the southwest corner of Stella between Third Lake and Fourth Lake. This segment of the river is about two miles long and provides warm water sport fishing. The WDNR recommends monitoring and management of this water body due to agricultural runoff and recreational activities on nearby lakes. While there is limited development on this river in Stella, the shoreland development along the lakes adjacent to the river impact the water quality of this body as well.

Starks Creek

Starks Creek is a cold water fish community that originates in Starks Spring and travels about seven miles to empty into Sunset Lake. A portion of the creek runs between agricultural lands and grasslands and therefore cold water fish have difficulty reproducing in this area. Beyond Tenderfoot Road, however, the creek turns into a high-quality fishing stream with abundant populations. This creek is considered an exceptional water resource by the WDNR for the last three miles of its length.

Twin Lakes Creek

Twin Lakes Creek crosses the southeast corner of Stella linking Ginty Lake and the North Branch of the Pelican River. Only a portion of Twin Lakes Creek actually lies in Stella however. The creek actually begins at Spur Lake in the adjacent Town of Piehl and runs a total of fourteen miles. The Creek is affected by a gravel pit just south of Ginty Lake and therefore the WDNR recommends monitoring and water quality management.

Lakes

Lakes have a significant impact on Stella's development pattern because of the variety of opportunities they provide to property owners and visitors. Property values, community

character, fishing, wildlife, and recreation are all dependent upon the level of protection and quality of these surface waters. According to the WDNR, the lakes that are found in Stella are of three different types: drainage lakes are lakes that have both an inlet and outlet for stream drainage; seepage lakes are landlocked water bodies where the principal source of water is precipitation, runoff, and groundwater from the immediate drainage area; drained lakes are lakes with no inlet but a continuously flowing outlet. Stella's lakes all currently meet the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for water quality and there are no exotic species such as the Eurasian Water Milfoil or the Zebra Mussel to be found. The WDNR makes an evaluation of water quality every two years for submission to the EPA. Additional information regarding lakes and lake management is provided in Appendix D of this report.

At the time of this report, Oneida County was reassessing shoreland zoning regulations at the county level. Lake development is regulated through shoreland zoning. The fifteen named lakes of Stella are inventoried with brief descriptions below:

Angelo Lake

This landlocked seepage lake is approximately 34 acres in size and twelve feet at its deepest point. The Angelo Lake area is surrounded by farmland uses, but there is insufficient data available to assess phosphorous content of the lake.

Del Stengl Lake (Jennie Raisen Lake)

This 33-acre lake is home to Bluegill and Largemouth Bass and reaches a depth of 19 feet. The lake lies in Section 19 of Stella near some limited residential and agricultural activity. This lake has been recommended for monitoring by the WDNR.

Dollar Lake

Dollar Lake is located in Section 4 of Stella and is approximately six acres in size. This small seepage lake only measures eleven feet at the deepest point and has no public access.

Fifth Lake

This is the fifth lake in a chain of five along the North Branch of the Pelican River. At 240 acres and only nine feet in depth, Fifth Lake has a very low sensitivity to phosphorous loading. This has resulted in impaired fisheries and a WDNR recommendation for water quality monitoring. While Fifth Lake does not have as much shoreline development as Fourth Lake, it is down river from the impacts on Fourth Lake. Fifth Lake is part of the Moen's Lake Chain Association.

Fourth Lake

This is the fourth lake in a chain of five along the North Branch of the Pelican River. This wide but shallow lake measures 258 acres and nine feet deep. Unfortunately, Fourth Lake has poor water quality and its shallowness makes it sensitive to phosphorous loading. Excessive vegetation has impaired fisheries and the WDNR recommends monitoring of this lake's water quality. Several residences and the Camp Deerhorn Resort are located on the northern shore of this lake. Fourth Lake is part of the Moen's Lake Chain Association.

Ginty Lake

Only the western part of Ginty Lake lies within the Town of Stella. Water quality has not been officially tested on the lake, but the WDNR recommends monitoring quality. Fishing is not popular on this lake during the winter because fish are unprotected and subject to winterkill. The lake is 131 acres and only twelve feet deep.

Mud Lake

Mud Lake is a fifteen-acre seepage lake on the eastern edge of Stella. This landlocked lake is only a few feet deep and is isolated from all other surface water bodies in the area. This lake is relatively close to making the transition between water body to bog.

Second Lake

This is the second lake in a chain of five along the North Branch of the Pelican River. This wide but shallow lake measures 111 acres and eleven feet deep. Unfortunately, Second Lake has poor water quality and its shallowness makes it sensitive to phosphorous loading. Excessive vegetation has impaired fisheries and the WDNR recommends monitoring of this lake's water quality. Several residences are on Second Lake's west shoreline and the lake itself is connected with neighboring Moen Lake, which offers an active public boat access. Second Lake is part of the Moen's Lake Chain Association.

Snowden Lake

Snowden Lake is possibly the most developed lake in the Town of Stella. Nearly the entire shoreline is used for residential and resort land uses. The lake is only twelve feet deep but measures 135 acres in size. The lake suffers winterkill of fish species and the impact of runoff on such a shallow lake has resulted in impaired fisheries. The lake is unconnected with other surface water bodies and is used for mostly recreational purposes.

Starks Flowage

This isolated lake is nine feet deep at its lowest point and approximately 120 acres in size. The lake has a rather erratic shoreline as is common with flowages that have backed up and flooded low-lying areas.

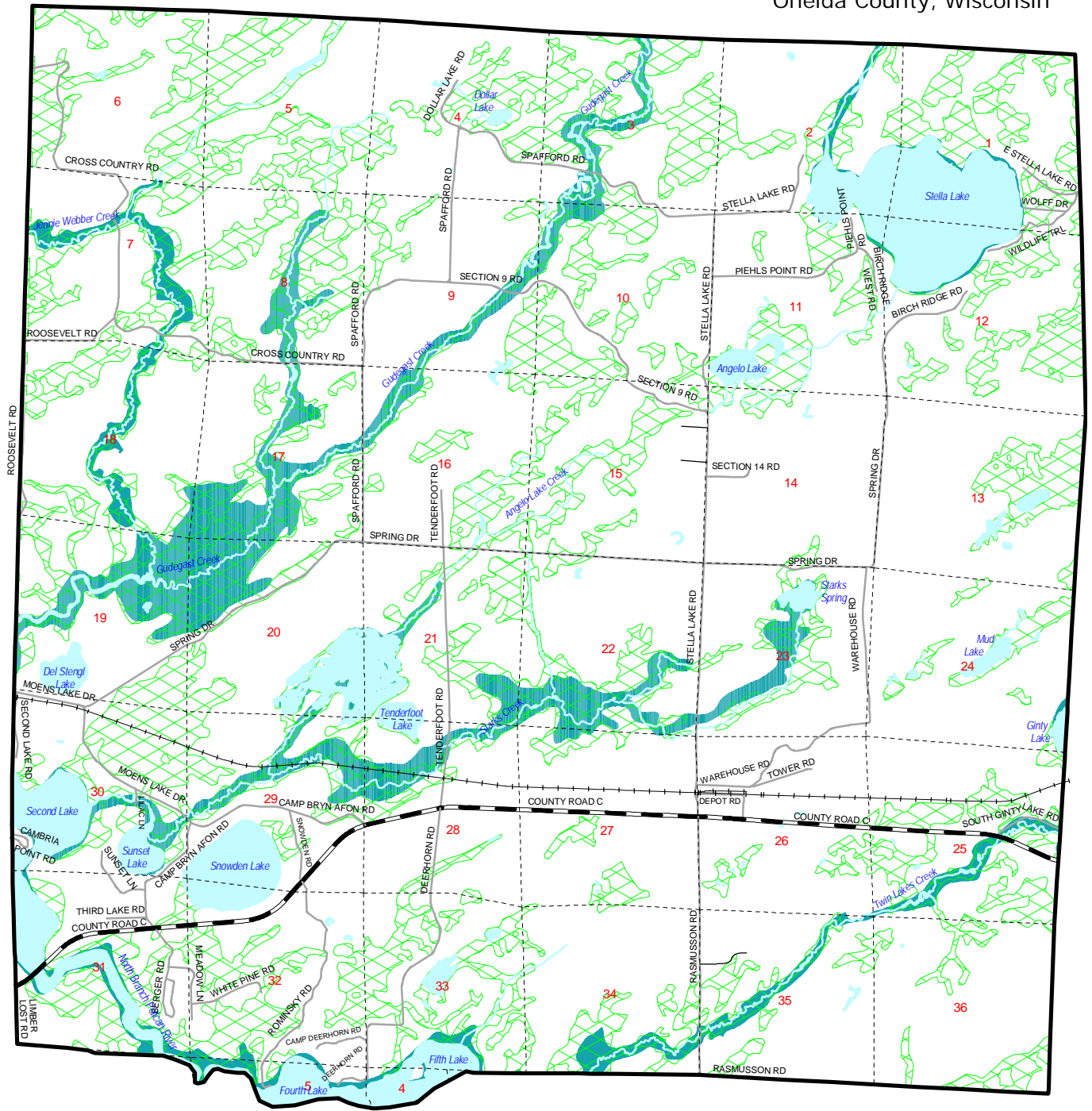
Starks Spring

This natural spring-formed lake is only thirteen acres in size and seven feet deep. There is little information available on the water quality of this lake, but its proximity to major agricultural practices gives cause for concern to regularly monitor the lake's water quality.

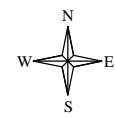
Stella Lake

Stella Lake is the largest lake in the Town of Stella. Measuring 405 acres and 22 feet deep, this lake is popular for recreational activities and shoreland development. The lake has public boat access on its west side and has been significantly impacted by phosphorous loading. Fisheries are subject to winterkill and there is excessive vegetation. The lake is managed and monitored by the Stella Lake Association.

Map 5
Town of Stella
 Water Features
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Water
- Wetlands
- Flood Plains



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles



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Sunset Lake

This 33-acre lake reaches a depth of 26 feet and feeds Second Lake. The lake lies in Section 30 of Stella bounded by significant residential development on the south shore. Sunset Lake is part of the Moen's Lake Chain Association.

Tenderfoot Lake

This small, isolated lake is 22 feet deep at its lowest point and approximately 24 acres in size. While very close to Starks Flowage, Tenderfoot Lake is not connected and receives its water by seepage of groundwater.

Third Lake

This is the third lake in a chain of five along the North Branch of the Pelican River. This lake is slightly deeper than some others in the chain, but is still subject to the same problems with phosphorous loading. Third Lake measures 103 acres and fourteen feet deep. Unfortunately, Second Lake has poor water quality and its shallowness makes it sensitive to phosphorous loading. The WDNR recommends monitoring of this lake's water quality. Several residences are on Third Lake's south shoreline and the lake itself is connected with neighboring Moen Lake by way of Second Lake. Third Lake is part of the Moen's Lake Chain Association.

Floodplains

Floodplains are defined as those areas, excluding the stream channel, that are subject to inundation by the 100-year interval recurring flood event. This "100-year" flood could be characterized as a flood event with a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. Areas subject to 100-year floods make poor choices for structural development and are better suited to parks and open space. Wisconsin Statute 87.30 requires counties, cities and villages to implement floodplain zoning. Within Oneida County's Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance, provisions are in place to protect designated floodplain areas. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed flood hazard data for insurance purposes. Under the authority of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, FEMA conducted studies to determine the location and extent of flood lands and the monetary damage risks related to the insurance of urban development in floodland areas. The 100-year floodplain areas for the unincorporated areas of Oneida County have been delineated by FEMA. Map 5 shows floodplains in the Town of Stella.

Wetlands

Wetlands make up approximately 27 percent of the Town's overall land cover. Wetlands comprise about 6,300 acres and are found primarily around surface water features, however they are also scattered throughout the Town. Wetlands are generally defined as areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Water saturation (hydrology) largely determines how the soil develops and what types of plant and animal communities will live in and on the soil. Wetlands may support both aquatic and terrestrial species. The prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants (hydrophytes) and promote the development of characteristic wetland (hydric) soils. Wetlands may be seasonal or permanent and are

commonly referred to as swamps, marshes, fens, or bogs. Wetland plants and soils have the capacity to store and filter pollutants ranging from pesticides to animal wastes. Wetland areas can make lakes, rivers and streams cleaner, and drinking water safer. They also provide valuable habitat for fish, plants, and animals. Groundwater discharge is common from wetlands and can be important in maintaining stream flows, especially during dry months. Map 5 shows wetlands in the Town of Stella.

Local, state, and federal regulations place limitations on the development and use of wetlands and shorelands. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) identifies wetlands two acres and larger on inventory maps for each Town in Wisconsin. These wetland inventory maps may be consulted in conjunction with development proposals in order to identify wetlands and ensure their protection from harmful development.

Counties are mandated by state law to establish shoreland-wetland zoning districts. The Oneida County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates use and development in all shoreland areas (300' of navigable streams, 1,000' of lakes), including all shorelands that are designated as wetlands on the Wisconsin Wetland Inventory maps. The WDNR regulates the placement of structures and other alterations below the ordinary high water mark of navigable streams and lakes. In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has authority over the placement of fill materials in virtually all wetlands, while the USDA incorporates wetland preservation criteria into its crop price support programs. Therefore, prior to placing fill or altering a wetland resource, the appropriate agency must be contacted to receive authorization.

Wildlife Habitat

A wildlife habitat can be simply defined as the presence of enough food, cover, and water to sustain a species. The Town of Stella and its surroundings provide habitat for a variety of plants, birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish. Examples of various environments within the Town include dense woodland, emergent aquatic, and floodplain forest. These areas are critical to the state's biodiversity and may provide habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Bureau of Endangered Species catalogs a Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI). The NHI enumerates both aquatic and terrestrial occurrences of rare or endangered plant and animal species and natural communities and maps the occurrences by section at the Town level (however, the locations of these species are not site specific). The WDNR also identifies State Natural Areas, which are managed to serve several purposes including scientific research, teaching of resource management, and preservation of rare native plants and ecological communities. State natural areas are defined as tracts of land in a natural or near natural state. There are five State Natural Areas identified within Oneida County, however none are located within the Town of Stella.

Metallic / Non-metallic Mineral Resources

The only active gravel pit operation within Stella is located south of County Highway C in the southeast quarter-corner of section 26. According to the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance, mineral extraction and processing operations are conditional uses and include

mining, quarrying, processing for manufacture of minerals, erection of a building, and the installation of equipment and machinery. Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 135 required that all Counties adopt and enforce a Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance by June 1, 2001. This ordinance establishes performance standards for the reclamation of active and future nonmetallic mining sites, but not abandoned sites. The intent of NR 135 is to contribute to environmental protection, stable non-eroding sites, productive end land use, the potential for enhancing habitat, and to increase land values and tax revenues.

Parks / Open Space

The Town of Stella has two well-known recreational camps for children. Camp Bryn Afon was started in 1916 and accommodated sixty girls. The Camp is now known as Camp Horseshoe and accommodates 200 boys per summer and is located on Snowden Lake. Camp Deerhorn for boys started on Moen's Lake in neighboring Pine Lake in 1920. In 1929, Camp Deerhorn relocated to its present location on the north side of Fourth Lake. Donald Dr. Broadbridge III and his two brothers operate this family-owned camp. Stella is a common destination for people seeking "quiet" recreation activities such as hiking, fishing, and bird watching, and cross-country skiing. Visitors also participate in some motorized activities like snowmobiling and power boating. Generally these activities take place on privately held lands with the owner's permission for public use.

Historical / Cultural Resources

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. According to the National and State Register, no historic places have been identified within the Town of Stella.

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. Within the Town of Stella, two homes were listed in the inventory: a side-gabled home in section 25 and a one-story cube home in section 26. Both homes are located on County Highway C.

Community Design

Stella's most prominent community feature was initially the Pennington train station. A small cluster of homes supported this station for the purpose of furthering the timber

industry. When Pennington was wiped out by a tornado, the railroad never reopened a station and Stella was once again a rural Town with no real “community” design. When Leonard Starks began clearing land for his potato operations, the community of Starks was reborn from Pennington. Stella began to form into a farm community with scattered rural residences engaged in growing potatoes. Today, Stella is a dispersed community consisting of scattered residences along improved roads, clusters of homes surrounding major lakes, and a small cluster of structures in what remains of Starks. Population is most dense along County Highway C.

Recreational Resources

The Town of Stella maintains one park known as Stella Stadium. This park is located behind Town Hall on Stella Lake Road in Section 26. The grass stadium is used primarily for baseball and softball events and consists of a fenced field, concession stand, bleachers, and temporary canopies for weather protection. There is a small playground near the stadium with a teeter-totter, swings, pull up bars, and climbing bars. The Town also maintains a public beach on Snowden Lake as well as a public landing on Stella Lake.

Other Natural Resources

Air Quality

In order to evaluate the quality of the air and to protect the public health, a series of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have been developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as established in section 109 of the Clean Air Act. According to the Wisconsin Air quality Report, as prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the air pollutants affecting Wisconsin include sulfur dioxide, suspended particular matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, oxides of nitrogen, lead, sulfates and nitrates. Oneida County is considered an attainment area, which is an area that meets the NAAQS defined in the Federal Clean Air Act. Within Oneida County, monitoring stations are located within the City of Rhinelander and in Harshaw. The Town of Stella is considered to have excellent air quality and meets all air quality standards.

2.3: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.

Policy: The Town shall promote well-planned development to minimize negative impacts on land and water resources.

Objective: Protect local water quality and forestland integrity through the use of regulatory development ordinances.

Objective: Educate and encourage landowners near the shoreline in the use of buffers and proper riparian land management practices.

- Objective: Educate and encourage landowners in forested areas to use proper forestland management practices.
- Objective: Monitor and encourage proper construction site and agricultural field erosion control.
- Objective: Educate the public on proper maintenance of septic systems, groundwater testing, well maintenance, and unused wells.
- Objective: Mark ecologically sensitive areas with signs and buoys to help enforce recommended restrictions. This includes speed limit signage for boating in shallow water or sensitive areas.

Goal: Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.

Policy: The Town shall seek to preserve and maintain cultural, historic, and archaeological sites located within the Town.

- Objective: Use local ordinances to protect historically significant structures; seek protective status designations from the federal and state government for publicly-owned historic sites and structures.
- Objective: Encourage residents to obtain special status for historic structures and sites.

Goal: Retain and restore shorelands on lakes, rivers, and streams, to preserve or improve shoreland habitat and reduce pollutants from entering water bodies.

Policy: The Town shall encourage riparian landowners to establish shoreland buffers.

- Objective: Use Town Board's review of land development to advocate the creation of shoreland buffers.

Goal: Improve forestry management to promote productivity of forest products, protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and provide recreational opportunities.

Policy: The Town shall encourage proper forest management and attempt to control illegal dumping and garbage in commercial and public forestlands.

- Objective: Establish fines for illegal dumping in the Town.
- Objective: Promote and support the "Clean Sweep" program.

Objective: Encourage private landowners to use professional forestry assistance.

Element 3: Housing

3.1: Background and Programs

The composition of housing in the Town of Stella has changed over the past two decades. Many housing units that were formally seasonal have been converted to full-time residences. By contrast, the actual number of new homes constructed has only increased significantly in the last few years. Most of this development takes place in rural subdivisions. Demand for additional housing is likely to increase with development pressures caused by the population of Rhinelander and the surrounding area. Stella's aesthetically pleasing location and rural amenities make it an attractive location for residency. Map 6, the Current Land Use Map (located in Element 8), depicts by parcel where housing is located within the Town.

There are a variety of programs available for funding the purchase, rehabilitation, or construction of housing. Many of these programs are listed below:

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Grant: This program is administered by the Rural Housing Service of the USDA Rural Development Department. Seniors aged 62 and older may obtain a grant for rehabilitating their home provided they are below 50% of the area median income and are unable to procure affordable credit elsewhere.

Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Loan: Also administered by USDA, this program is a loan for rehabilitation provided applicants meet the same standards as the grant above.

Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan: USDA also offers this loan that is used to help low-income individuals or households purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development also offers this loan to provide financing at reasonable rates and terms with no down payment. The loan is intended for low-income individuals or households to purchase homes in rural areas. Funds can be used to build, repair, renovate or relocate a home, or to purchase and prepare sites, including providing water and sewage facilities.

Rural Housing Direct Loan: USDA-Rural Development uses this program to help very low- and low-income households construct their own homes. The program is targeted to families who are unable to buy clean, safe housing through conventional methods.

HUD's FHA Loan: This program is administered by the US Housing and Urban Development Department and offers a low down payment of 3% mortgage loan for home purchase or construction for selected applicants under certain income limits.

HUD Insured Loans for Condominiums, Energy Efficiency, Special Credit Risks, and Rehabilitation: These programs are administered by the US Housing and Urban Development Department. HUD will insure selected applicants under certain income limits when procuring loans for rehabilitation or for rehabilitation at the time of purchase.

FHA HUD 203(k) Home Rehabilitation Loan Program: Whereas HUD desires to see current housing stock rehabilitated, this program provides owner occupants of existing homes, or intended owner occupants who are looking to purchase a home, readily available mortgage money to refinance/rehabilitate or purchase/rehabilitate their homes, respectively.

HUD Officer- and Teacher-Next-Door Program: Police officers and teachers may qualify for a 50 percent discount on a HUD-owned, one-family home in a designated Revitalization Area.

VA Home Loans: These loans, administered by the US Department of Veterans Affairs, are often made without any down payment at all, and frequently offer lower interest rates than ordinarily available with other kinds of loans. These loans may be used for purchase or construction up to \$240,000.

HOME Loans: The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) offers federal HOME Investment Partnership Program loans with a low, fixed interest rate to help low- and moderate-income individuals and families buy a home.

Locally, the Northeast Wisconsin Community Action Program (NEWCAP) provides emergency shelter and transitional housing. NEWCAP also assists disadvantaged persons with difficulties surrounding rent, taxes, month-to-month expenses, and homelessness. Oneida County Housing Authority is a local non-profit organization responsible for assisting in the development and maintenance of public housing facilities. The authority is funded by WHEDA and it maintains a public housing facility in the community of Woodruff.

3.2: Housing Stock Assessment

The following is an attempt to inventory the existing housing stock in the Town of Stella. While there are some dwelling units in need of repair or removal, these are few in number and the majority of available housing should be adequate to maintain average living conditions for residents. According to the Census, the Town has 18.4% of homeowners spending more than 30% of their income on housing. 30% of income is the generally accepted standard for housing affordability.

Age Characteristics

The age of the housing stock in the Town of Stella is widely varied. Table 12 provides a summary of age characteristics by age cohort.

Table 12: Year Home was Built, Town of Stella, 2000

| Age Cohort | Number | Percentage of Total | Oneida County | Wisconsin |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1990 to 1999 | 83 | 26.4% | 58.6% | 16.8% |
| 1980 to 1989 | 71 | 22.7% | 19.4% | 10.8% |
| 1970 to 1979 | 66 | 21.1% | 12.0% | 16.9% |
| 1960 to 1969 | 30 | 9.6% | 10.0%* | 11.9% |
| Pre-1960 | 63 | 20.1% | | 43.7% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC; *Data were combined in Census

Over 70 percent of the housing stock in Stella was constructed within the last thirty years. This shows that much of the housing stock in Stella has been built much more recently than the state average, however, Stella has older housing stock than Oneida County. Given Oneida County's reputation as a tourist and retirement destination, it would not be surprising if Stella experienced larger amounts of new home construction in the future. Even so, Stella is not as popular a destination as the Towns of Minocqua and Three Lakes for example, therefore Stella is currently below the County average in terms of new home construction.

Structural Characteristics

The actual housing stock in Stella is comprised entirely of single-family residences with five rooms on average. Table 13 shows the composition of rooms per household. The 2000 Census estimated that the Town of Stella had 264 single-family homes and 47 manufactured homes; that is, manufactured housing comprises about 15% of the housing in Stella. Duplex and multi-family housing structures do not exist in the Town.

Table 13: Number of Rooms per Household, Town of Stella, 2000

| Rooms | Number | Percentage of Total |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Room | 7 | 2.2% |
| 2 Rooms | 21 | 6.7% |
| 3 Rooms | 6 | 1.9% |
| 4 Rooms | 74 | 23.6% |
| 5 Rooms | 71 | 22.7% |
| 6 Rooms | 64 | 20.4% |
| 7 Rooms | 29 | 9.3% |
| 8 Rooms | 15 | 4.8% |
| 9 or More Rooms | 26 | 8.3% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

The 2000 Census also shows that over half of all homes in Stella utilize natural gas for heating. Another third of the homes use bottled, tank, or LP gas while the balance use oil or wood. Only two percent of the homes use electricity for heat. All homes are served with plumbing and kitchen facilities and very few do not have telephone service (likely by choice rather than necessity).

Seasonal Housing Units

Seasonal housing plays an important role in the demographics and economy of Oneida County. Every year, thousands of absentee landowners visit their properties in the Northwoods for recreation. Most of these landowners permanently reside and are employed in southern Wisconsin or Illinois. As a result, there is a significant number of homes in the area that are vacant for long periods of time (usually in winter). The 2000 US Census estimates that almost 23 percent of total housing units in Stella were seasonal. This figure is down from 1990 wherein approximately 34 percent of all housing units were seasonal. Given that the number of housing units in Stella from 1990 to 2000 was essentially unchanged, it appears that thirty-five existing seasonal units in Stella were

converted to full time residences during the decade. This eleven percent drop in seasonal housing unit composition is comparable to a ten percent drop for all of Oneida County indicating that Stella is simply following a larger regional trend with respect to seasonal housing.

Value Characteristics

Homes in the Town of Stella may be valued as high as \$500,000, but this is uncommon. Most homes in the Town are valued between \$50,000 and \$150,000 according to the 2000 Census. This holds true for Oneida County and the State of Wisconsin as well. Unlike the state and county, Stella has nearly twice the percentage of low value homes and very few if any homes in high value cohorts. Table 14 below summarizes and compares home values in Stella with the County and State.

Table 14: Home Value, Town of Stella, 2000

| Value Cohort in \$ | Number | Percentage of Total | Oneida County | Wisconsin |
|------------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|
| Less than \$50,000 | 21 | 13.8% | 7.1% | 6.5% |
| \$50,000 to \$99,999 | 45 | 29.6% | 39.3% | 35.4% |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 53 | 34.9% | 24.3% | 30.6% |
| \$150,000 to \$199,999 | 21 | 13.8% | 12.6% | 15.5% |
| \$200,000 to \$299,999 | 10 | 6.6% | 11.4% | 8.5% |
| \$300,000 to \$499,999 | 2 | 1.3% | 4.4% | 2.7% |
| \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 0 | 0.0% | 0.8% | 0.7% |
| \$1,000,000 or more | 0 | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.1% |

Source: US Census Bureau & NCWRPC

Occupancy Characteristics

As mentioned in the Issues and Opportunities Element, the 2000 Census estimated that the Town of Stella had 236 occupied housing units (or households) within its incorporated boundary averaging 2.65 persons in each. By contrast, the 2004 public survey estimated a slightly lower 2.54 persons per household and seasonal housing at 27 percent of the total housing stock. It is possible that there has been some dispersion of household occupancy during the past four years, but more likely that the difference is due to sampling error resulting from such a small population size.

3.3: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Promotion of the redevelopment, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing residential structures.

Policy: The Town shall encourage development activities that seek to redevelop underutilized land area and/or rehabilitate existing housing.

Objective: Promote education about and utilization of available programs to assist homeowners and homebuyers with rehabilitation of housing and the construction of new homes.

Goal: Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.

Policy: The Town shall encourage development regulations that seek to maintain affordable land values with respect to the median family income.

Objective: Form a partnership with local financial institutions to promote low-interest rates and available financing for homeownership.

Objective: Promote education about and utilization of available programs to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners and homebuyers with the construction of new homes.

Element 4: Transportation

4.1: Background and Programs

Transportation is an important function in our everyday lives. It facilitates the economy, government services, community contact, and recreation. The Town of Stella uses primarily ground transportation systems. County Highway C is Stella's "lifeline" and is the most frequently used means of ingress and egress. The Canadian National – Wisconsin Central Division Railroad also traverses the Town. The Town's transportation systems are reviewed and analyzed below. The relationship between land use and the road system makes it necessary for the development of each to be balanced with the other. If traffic is not planned to match the need created by land uses, safety can be seriously impaired. Transportation programs covering Oneida County do not affect Stella since there are no state or federal highways in the Town, nor are their airports, water ports, rail stations, or regional transit routes. Stella falls under the Department of Transportation's District 7, which has its regional headquarters in Rhinelander.

Applicable State, Regional, and Other Transportation Plans

Translinks 21 is Wisconsin's statewide transportation plan that includes an overall vision for transportation systems in the state for the next 25 years. While the plan does not specifically identify County Highway C, Stella's County highway does provide the necessary connection to US Highway 8 and US Highway 45 – both of which are designated Connector Routes in the plan. These connector routes link to the "Corridors 2020 Backbone" that is Interstate 39 (USH51). The *Oneida County Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridors Plan* recommends a regional system of interconnected trails and identifies roads suitable for walking or bicycling, including a general corridor leading from Rhinelander to Three Lakes. This plan identifies County Highway C as a potential route for a Walking and Biking Trail System, however it is considered to be the least favorable alternative for this corridor. County Highway C would likely only be used as an interim route until a new route following County Highway W and County Highway A or another cross-country trail could be developed to link the two communities. At the current time, the Town of Stella is not the subject of any other urban or rural area transportation plans, corridor plans, nor airport master plans. The Town had a functional classification of roadways study performed in 1994. There are currently no highway jurisdictional studies for the Town of Stella. Canadian National Railroad does not currently have plans for modifications or changes to the existing rail line traversing the southern part of the Town of Stella.

4.2: Inventory of Transportation Infrastructure

Highways and Roads

The original road from Rhinelander to Starks was a simple buggy trail. Today, it forms the foundation for County Highway C and its function as a "rural major collector". County Highway C covers only the southern part of the Town and connects with US Highway 45, State Highway 17, and Business Highway 8 in Rhinelander and carries

approximately 1,100 vehicle trips per day in and out of the Town of Stella. This amount is expected to increase steadily as residential development continues in the future. There is a four-mile stretch of County Highway C that is in fair condition and in need of resurfacing soon. The stretch begins at County Highway C's intersection with Camp Brynafon Road and extends all the way to the Town line at Piehl. Table 15 provides a breakdown of County and Town roads within the Town according to Wisconsin Department of Transportation Records.

Table 15: Miles of Roadway by Jurisdiction, Town of Stella, 2004

| Jurisdiction | Length |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Oneida County | 6.26 miles |
| Town of Stella | 38.74 miles |
| All Jurisdictions | 45.00 miles |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation 2004 Inventory Listing & NCWRPC.

Asphalt Pavement

The Town of Stella has twenty roads that are completely surfaced with asphalt pavement: County Highway C, Berger Road, Camp Brynafon Road, Dollar Lake Road, Emils Way, Limber Lost Road, Meadow Lane, Moens Lake Drive, Old C Road, Rasmusson Rd., Rosemil Lane, Section 14 Road, Spafford Road, Spring Drive, Stella Lake Road, East Stella Lake Road, Sunset Lane, Tenderfoot Road, Tower Road, and White Pine Road. There are also portions of three other roads with this type of surfacing: Deerhorn road, Depot Road, and Warehouse Road.

Gravel Roads

The Town of Stella has eight roads that are surfaced with gravel: 2nd Lake Road, 3rd Lake Road, Cambria Point Road, Cross Country Drive, Cross Country Road, Piehls Point Road, Section 9 Road, and Snowden Road. There are also portions of three other roads with this type of surfacing: Deerhorn road, Depot Road, and Warehouse Road.

Earthen Roads

The Town of Stella has two roads that are surfaced with dirt: Roosevelt Road and Town Road 4.

Transit

The Town does not currently fund any public transit systems. While the school districts provide busing for school children, this is specific to school uses and not considered public. Taxicab services from Rhinelander can accommodate customers in the Stella area.

Transportation Facilities for the Disabled

While there are no publicly funded transit facilities for the disabled, the Headwaters Achievement Center (a privately owned facility for the disabled) provides transportation for disabled individuals utilizing their services.

Bicycles

While there are no publicly funded bicycle trails in Stella, bicycle usage is relatively easy given the low volume of traffic on Stella's rural roads. Recreational bicycle trails may be found in nearby areas of Oneida County on State and County Forest Lands and in the City of Rhinelander.

Walking

While there are no publicly funded walking trails in Stella, pedestrian travel is relatively easy given the low volume of traffic on Stella's rural roads. Recreational walking trails may be found in nearby areas of Oneida County on State and County Forest Lands and in the City of Rhinelander.

Railroads

Canadian National - Wisconsin Central Division Railroad (CN-WC)

The Canadian National Railway (commonly referred to as Canadian National, Canadien National, CN, or CN Rail; formerly referred to as Canadian National Railways or CNR), is the largest freight railway in Canada both in terms of the size of its track network, and in revenue. It is also one of the six largest railway companies in North America, and currently the only transcontinental railway, spanning from Nova Scotia to British Columbia and south to the Gulf of Mexico. After the US Government's Surface Transportation Board's moratorium on rail industries' mergers expired, CN purchased the Wisconsin Central Railroad (WCR) in 2001. This allowed the company's rail network to completely encircle Lake Michigan and Lake Superior permitting more efficient connections from Chicago to Western Canada. The line that runs through Starks traverses most of Northern Wisconsin from Almena in the west to Pembine in the east with numerous connectors along the way. This rail system cannot be accessed from with the Town of Stella as there is no longer a depot at Starks.

Air Transportation

The Town of Stella currently has no aircraft landing facilities. Cleared areas are generally used for agricultural activities, especially potatoes. Three Lakes has an airstrip for small recreational or farm purpose aircraft and can accommodate chartered flights as well. Residents seeking commuter or commercial airport services must travel to Rhinelander Airport.



Canadian National Railroad in the Town of Stella

Trucking

The only commercial truck route through the Town is County Highway C. Although trucks may use other town roads, none of these roads would provide easy access due to the terrain they cover and their level of maintenance. During the spring, Oneida County enforces weight limits on Highway C from Starks to Rhinelander to prevent excessive road damage.

Water Transportation

Water transit is not used in Stella except for recreational purposes. Stella Lake and Sunset Lake both have public boat launches while Second and Third Lakes may be accessed from Moen Lake in the Town of Pine Lake.

4.3: Inventory of Local Government Highways

Local government in the Town of Stella does not maintain highways in its jurisdiction. See the section entitled “Highways and Roads” above for a more complete description of Town roads. The Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) maintained by the Department of Transportation identifies Town roads in need of repair. Asphalt roads in need of resurfacing include: 739 feet of Depot Road, Old C Road, Section 14 Road, Sunset Lane, and Tower Road. 2nd Lake Road, Cross Country Drive, Cross Country Road, Section 9 Road, Snowden Road and portions of Deer Horn Road and Depot Road are all in poor condition and require additional gravel surfacing and ditch reconstruction. Warehouse Road has failed completely and must be entirely rebuilt if it is to be used in the future. Roosevelt Road is in fair condition, but needs significant grading and repair of several potholes and ruts. The 2004 public opinion survey indicated that approximately one-third of the respondents felt road maintenance was adequate in Stella, however, 42% were dissatisfied with the level of road maintenance.

4.4: Relationship to State and Regional Transportation Plans

At the current time, there is no transportation system in the Town of Stella affected by a State or Regional transportation plans. The Town is affected by The *Oneida County Pedestrian and Bicycle Corridors Plan*. This plan was prepared in 2002 by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on behalf of the Oneida County Health Department and the Healthy People, Healthy Oneida County Initiative. The plan provides general guidelines for the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Oneida County. The vision of the plan is to increase the mobility of people within the County by making walking and bicycling viable and attractive transportation choices.

4.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Encouragement of development designs that support a range of transportation choices.

Policy: The Town shall encourage developments that allow for pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as vehicular traffic.

Objective: Ensure that approved subdivisions have adequate roadway widths to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicycles simultaneously with vehicle traffic.

Goal: *Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.*

Policy: The Town shall favor development patterns that are within the Town's capacity to provide adequate roadway maintenance.

Objective: Utilize a subdivision ordinance to require development that is readily accessible by existing roads with appropriate maintenance to handle the impact of the new development.

Objective: When necessary, require the developer to contribute to the maintenance of existing roads and/or the construction of new internal roads within the development.

Goal: *Providing adequate transportation infrastructure to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.*

Policy: The Town shall anticipate and budget for future transit system demands and maintenance of existing transit systems.

Objective: Utilize a capital improvements plan to prioritize transportation infrastructure expenditures.

Goal: *Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to facilitate transportation methods that are effective, but within the bounds of the municipal budget.

Objective: Continue to maintain all Town roads and implement ADA compliant design measures in the construction of new roads and trails when possible.

Element 5: Utilities and Community Facilities

Probably the greatest factor in the development of Stella's utilities and community facilities is its rural character. The expense of extending utility lines across relatively long distances to service a small population is neither attractive to the Town nor private firms. Many landowners in Stella maintain their own utilities and services themselves. Meanwhile, the facilities of other communities (such as Rhinelander or Three Lakes) are used in substitution for the lack thereof in the Town. Stella will face significant challenges for adequate provision of utilities and community facilities if significant development growth occurs in the future. This section inventories the services and facilities within the Town and analyzes the status and needs of each individually.

5.1: Background and Programs

Providing public infrastructure – roads, sewer and water service, schools, police and fire protection – is one of the major functions of local government. In addition to these public services, both public and private entities provide electricity and telephone service as well as such specialized services as child-care, health-care and solid-waste disposal. Taken together these constitute the utilities and community facilities that represent much of the backbone of modern life. Beyond what these facilities do for us, they also represent a huge investment of public and private resources.

The efficient utilization of these resources is one of the basic principles of comprehensive planning. Already in-place infrastructure is a public asset that must be safeguarded for the future, both to conserve and protect environmental values and to maximize the benefits of economic growth. Development that bypasses or ignores existing infrastructure resources is wasteful of the public investment that they represent. Development patterns that require the extension of utilities and the expansion of public facilities while existing facilities go unused at other locations is probably not the best use of scarce public resources. Both State and Federal government offer programs that assist communities with the construction of critical infrastructure and facilities. These programs are listed in more detail in the Economic Development element of this plan.

Previous Plans

Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2004-2008

The Oneida County Forestry, Land & Outdoor Recreation Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepared this plan 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 by the Oneida County Board, City of Rhinelander, and the Town governments as well as the subsequent acceptance of the plan by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WisDNR) 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.

5.2: Inventory of Existing Utilities and Community Facilities

Sanitary Sewer Service

The Town residents maintain their own on-site sewage treatment systems for wastewater. That is, each resident and business is responsible for installing and maintaining their own septic tank or other approved means of treating wastewater within the bounds of the Wisconsin state sanitary code known as COMM 83. At the current time, private, on-site sewage treatment is an adequate means to serve the community need.

Storm Water Management

Storm water is managed throughout the Town by the use of roadside ditching and culverts. Routine road maintenance includes attempts to keep ditches and culverts free of blockages and excess vegetation. Storm water moves through ditched areas and eventually empties into the streams and lakes of the Town. Given Stella's rural character and abundance of permeable surface, the current storm water management system is adequate to meet community need.

Water Supply

The Town's water supply is pumped directly from the groundwater via privately owned wells. Each landowner desiring running water must drill and maintain his or her own well subject to the standards of Wisconsin State Statute. The 2004 survey indicated that nearly half of the residents were satisfied with Stella's water quality, however, 14% found the Town's water to be only fair and 8% thought it was poor. At the current time, municipal water is beyond the economy of scale for the community.

Solid Waste Disposal

The Town does not provide a publicly funded garbage collection service. At one time, the Town maintained a waste dump on a parcel of land near Rasmussen Rd. This site was closed many years ago to alleviate environmental concerns. Landowners coordinate and finance their own curbside garbage collection. There are a number of firms in the general area that provide this service. Large items may be taken by the resident to the Oneida County landfill for disposal at a cost commensurate with weight and size of the items to be disposed. At the current time, revenues do not support municipally funded solid waste disposal services.

On-site Wastewater Treatment Technology

The state sanitary code, commonly known as COMM 83, has significant implications on land use. The type of system is largely dependent upon existing soil characteristics and depth to groundwater. The code is used to direct the location, use, and density of development in areas without municipally owned wastewater treatment. The majority of systems in the Town of Stella consist of two storage tanks and a gravity sand filtration field.

Recycling Facilities

The Town does not provide a publicly funded recycling service. Landowners coordinate and finance their own curbside recycling. There are a number of firms in the general area that provide this service. Alternatively, recyclable items may be taken to recycling facilities by the landowners themselves. At the current time, revenues do not support municipally funded recycling services.

Parks

The Town of Stella maintains one park known as Stella Stadium. This park is located behind Town Hall on Stella Lake Road in Section 26. The grass stadium is used primarily for baseball and softball events and consists of a fenced field, concession stand, bleachers, and temporary canopies for weather protection. There is a small playground near the stadium with a teeter-totter, swings, pull up bars, and climbing bars. Survey results indicate that nearly a third of the respondents felt Stella Stadium was not adequate to meet public need for parks in the Town of Stella; 44% felt that it was adequate. The *Oneida County Outdoor Recreation Plan* for 2004-2008 does not identify any planned park improvements in the Town of Stella.

Telecommunications Facilities

The most prominent telecommunications facility in Stella is the Channel 12 television tower located approximately ½ mile north of County Highway C along Warehouse Road. At one time, the television studio broadcasting building was located here, but damage from ice storms led to its relocation to the City of Rhinelander. Satellite dish television is a common alternative to antenna-based television for Town residents. Stella residents along County Highway C between Town Hall and Limber Lost Rd. have access to cable television and some areas also have DSL internet service. There are no cellular towers within the Town and coverage is sporadic.

Power Plants / Transmission Lines

Electricity lines were first run to the community of Starks in 1932. There are no power plants or high voltage transmission lines within the Town of Stella. Most power in the community is drawn from a high voltage line crossing through the Town of Piehl located to the east of Stella. The 2004 survey indicated that Town residents were generally satisfied with electrical service given that only 8% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with electrical service quality.

Cemeteries

There are no publicly accessed cemeteries within the Town of Stella. There are, however, some locations within the Town with pioneer cemeteries on private land. These cannot be accessed by the public and therefore will not be identified in this plan.

Health Care Facilities

The Town of Stella does not offer any health care facilities. Town residents seeking medical attention usually travel to the hospital in nearby Rhinelander. The Town of Stella

does not contain a large enough population to warrant the creation of a local health care facility at the current time.

Child Care Facilities

Parents in Stella generally rely upon child care services offered in Rhinelander and Pine Lake or upon friends, relatives, and hired sitters to meet child care needs. At this time, there are adequate child care services to meet need.

Police

The Town of Stella does not finance its own police protection. The Town relies upon police protection from the Oneida County Sheriff's Department or other state law enforcement officials. At this time, there are adequate law enforcement services to meet need.

Fire

A volunteer force of 20 persons provides fire protection in the Town of Stella. Unfortunately, since many residents work outside the community, the Stella Fire Department has a shortage of volunteers who work day hours near or in the Town. Despite this firefighter shortage during daylight hours, the 2004 Survey indicated that less than 15 percent of the residents were dissatisfied with the Fire Department while over two-thirds felt Stella had an effective fire department. The Stella Fire Department has 2 trucks and one van to transport equipment. The Town of Piehl contracts with Stella for all of its fire protection services, however Stella maintains an agreement of assistance with the Towns of Monico, Pelican, Three Lakes, and Pine Lake as well. The current equipment is adequate to meet fire protection needs.

Rescue

The Town of Stella is dependent upon the City of Rhinelander and the Town of Three Lakes for rescue and ambulance services. The Town of Pine Lake also provides some First Response assistance to the Town of Stella as well. At the current time, revenues do not support municipally funded rescue services.

Libraries

The Town of Stella does not have a library within its municipal boundary. Residents are dependent upon the City of Rhinelander and the Town of Three Lakes for the availability of library books and services. At the current time, revenues do not support a municipally funded library.

Schools

At one time, the Town of Stella had its own brick schoolhouse. The use of this facility has long since been discontinued. While Oneida County offers open enrollment for students, most Stella residents send children to school in Rhinelander or in Three Lakes depending upon their location in the Town. According to the 2004 Survey, two thirds of respondents believed the Town was located in a quality school district while 13 percent

expressed dissatisfaction. The Town of Stella does not contain a large enough population to warrant the creation of a local school facility at the current time.

Other Government Facilities

Senior Care Facilities

There are no senior care facilities within the Town of Stella at this time. Persons requiring specialized senior care must seek facilities in Rhinelander or other larger communities.

Town Government

The Town of Stella operates under the authority of an elected Town Board in a manner typical and consistent with Wisconsin Statute. The Town Hall was built in 1965. The Hall serves as an official meeting place for the Town Board, an administrative office, and a vehicle garage for the fire department. Near the Town Hall is a shed used for storing miscellaneous equipment. According to the 2004 survey, these structures are adequate to meet community needs.

Scale economies and remote location creates a difficult situation for Town Board members. A small tax base coupled with a high demand for local services such as fire, school, and roads causes increased taxation. The 2004 Survey indicated an even spread in opinions on taxation. Approximately one-third of those sampled felt the Town taxes were reasonable and an equal number felt that taxes were unreasonable. The remaining population was uncertain. While taxation is rarely popular with the public, the Town Board has sought to budget and control expenses in a manner conducive to keeping the tax rate as low as possible while still maintaining the services offered.

Postal Service

Stella's original Post Office was a log building and later part of the Starks Farms company store. In 1941 the post office was discontinued with mail being distributed from Rhinelander by rural mail carriers.

5.3: Future Needs

Sanitary Sewer Service and On-site Wastewater Treatment Technology

The Town of Stella currently requires no additional sanitary sewer service other than private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS). These systems are adequate to meet the needs of residential and limited commercial development. Exceptional wastewater producers, such as industrial plants, must address wastewater issues in the Town if and when the creation of such a facility occurs.

Storm Water Management

The Town of Stella currently requires no additional storm water management other than additional culverts and roadside ditching as required for the maintenance of roads and bridges. These systems are adequate to meet the needs of residential and limited

commercial development. Excessive impermeable surfaces must address storm water issues if and when such surfaces are created.

Water Supply

The Town of Stella currently requires no additional water service other than private on-site wells. These private wells are adequate to meet the needs of residential and limited commercial development. Exceptional water users, such as commercial and industrial sites, must address water requirements if and when the creation of such need occurs. The 2004 survey indicates that water quality is a matter of concern for slightly more than half of the population.

Solid Waste Disposal

The Town of Stella currently does not require municipally funded solid waste disposal services. The cost of this service for such a limited and dispersed population would not be cost-effective for the Town government. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, municipally funded solid waste disposal services may be necessary.

Recycling Facilities

The provision of municipally funded recycling facilities is cost prohibitive for a Town with such a limited and dispersed population. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population in the future, recycling facilities may be created to meet demand.

Parks

The Stella Stadium park area has dated playground equipment that continues to degrade rapidly. The 2004 survey indicated that two-thirds of respondents were against the use of Town revenues to upgrade or replace existing playground equipment in the park. Generally, the park appears adequate to meet demand for a majority of residents according to the survey. The survey also indicated that most people in Stella feel the Town has plenty of open space.



Playground equipment behind Stella Town Hall and near Stella Stadium.

Telecommunications Facilities

Wireless telephone communication towers are needed to provide better service to the Town. Many areas of the Town are lacking in digital cable lines preventing residents from obtaining high-speed internet connections and cable television. These services are dependent upon the decisions of private firms providing these them and therefore cannot be directly affected by this plan. There are no plans for the addition of municipally owned telecommunications facilities in the near future; these facilities will likely only be necessary if the population of Stella increases significantly in the future.

Power Plants / Transmission Lines

The provision of energy to the Town of Stella is currently adequate to meet local need. Businesses requiring excessive amounts of energy must address power issues in the Town if and when the creation of such a facility occurs.

Cemeteries

The Town of Stella does not have future plans to create municipally funded cemeteries due to the Town's limited and dispersed population. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the creation of public cemetery plots may be necessary.

Health Care Facilities

The Town of Stella does not have future plans to create health care facilities due to the Town's limited and dispersed population. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for local health care facilities may make the development of such facilities necessary.

Child Care Facilities

The Town of Stella does not have enough demand to warrant the creation of a childcare facility due to the Town's limited and dispersed population. Childcare within the Town is likely to remain in private homes caring for a small number of children. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for child care facilities may make the development of such facilities necessary.

Police

The Town's limited and dispersed population makes municipally funded police protection cost prohibitive. Police protection within the Town is likely to remain in the hands of the Oneida County Sheriff's Department. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for additional police protection may be necessary. While the 2004 survey gave some indications of speeding issues on rural roads, crime is not an issue in the Town of Stella.

Fire

The Town's volunteer fire department will need to continue to maintain its firefighting equipment and to train its volunteers. At the current time, there are no plans for the

purchase of additional vehicles. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for additional fire protection may be necessary.

Rescue

The Town's limited and dispersed population makes municipally funded rescue services cost prohibitive. Rescue services within the Town are likely to remain in the hands Oneida County and Three Lakes. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for additional rescue services may be necessary.

Libraries

The Town's limited and dispersed population makes municipally funded libraries cost prohibitive. Residents of the Town are likely to continue using libraries in the Rhinelander or Three Lakes area. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the demand for library facilities may be necessary.

Schools

The Town's limited and dispersed population makes the creation of a local school district cost prohibitive and unnecessary. Residents are likely to continue using schools in the Rhinelander or Three Lakes area. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the need for a local school may be necessary.

Other Government Facilities

At this time, the Town Hall of Stella adequately serves the needs of local government. There are no plans for the construction of additional government facilities. If the Town is subject to significant growth in population density in the future, the need for additional government facilities may be necessary.

5.4: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.

Policy: The Town shall be attentive to development impacts as they relate to the expense of infrastructure, utilities, and services.

Objective: Evaluate each new development proposal for its impact on local services and choose options that either operate within current capacities or expand capacity to accommodate the additional impacts.

Objective: Examine the possibility of utilizing impact fees to reduce municipal expenses in accommodating new development.

Goal: *Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.*

Policy: The Town shall make provision for improvements, expansions, and repairs with respect to infrastructure and public services consistent with current and projected need.

Objective: Develop and adhere to a Capital Improvements Plan.

Objective: Maintain a current comprehensive plan with population projection data to estimate future demand.

Element 6: Economic Development

The Town of Stella has seen significant economic change in recent years. To measure or assess this change, a variety of indicators are analyzed. Income, housing units, poverty, commuting patterns, and unemployment are among the various indicators used to evaluate the economic performance of the Town over the last twenty years.

6.1: Background and Inventory of Available Economic Development Programs

The Town of Stella is located in the heart of the “Northwoods” and as such, it is a tourist destination for hundreds of visitors each year. During the summer, and on weekends during the remainder of the year, the Town hosts many visitors and part-time residents. These visitors and part-time residents bring money into the community, which has a major economic impact on the Town. Commercial activities in the Town are relatively limited and rural; residents typically patronize the City of Rhinelander for many goods and services. County road C is the economic lifeline of the community as it is the only link between Stella and its surroundings. The railroad line currently has no stops within the Town and therefore has no direct impact on the Town’s economy.

Economic development programs available to the Town of Stella are listed below by jurisdiction:

County

Oneida County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC)

The Oneida County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC) was founded in 1989 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Corporation to act as an economic development coordinator for all of Oneida County. OCEDC assists individuals investigating the feasibility of going into business, works with existing business to expand and retain economic viability, and works to attract new business in an effort to expand our economic base and provide employment alternatives to the citizens of Oneida County. OCEDC also acts as a conduit between business and government on a local, regional, state, and federal level.

Oneida County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

The Oneida County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) financing program provides loans to businesses relocating to or currently located in Oneida County. Oneida County’s RLF was established to provide a means for businesses to obtain financing, which in turn promotes economic development, provides jobs, increases incomes and expands the local tax base. Funds from the program are repaid to the County to make funding available for new prospects. Applications and information may be obtained from the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation. Web site address: ocedc@newnorth.net.

Regional

North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation

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

North Central Advantage Technology Zone Tax Credits

Oneida County has been designated a Technology Zone by the Department of Commerce. The Technology Zone program brings \$5 million in income tax incentives for high-tech development to the area. The North Central Advantage Wisconsin Technology Zone offers the potential for high-tech growth in knowledge-based and advanced manufacturing clusters, among others. The zone designation is designed to attract and retain skilled, high-paid workers to the area as well as to foster regional partnerships between business and education to promote high-tech development. Web site address: www.ncwrpc.org/tech/TechZone.htm

Nicolet Area Technical College (NATC)

Nicolet College provides educational training and services to individuals, industries, and organizations to assist in maintaining a competitive work force in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Nicolet offers specialized labor development skills at the nearby campus at Rhinelander. Web site address: www.nicolet.tec.wi.us

Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC)

The Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center provides staff assistance for operation assessments, technology training, and on-site assistance to help firms in northeastern Wisconsin modernize and streamline manufacturing processes. Web site address: <http://nwmoc.uwstout.edu>

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The NCWRPC is a regional planning and economic development agency that provides assistance to local governments throughout a ten county region that includes Forest County. NCWRPC provides communities with assistance in developing economic development strategies as well as specialized studies such as economic impact studies, trade area studies and targeted marketing studies. Grant writing, management assistance for loan funds, feasibility reporting, business park design and layout, and tax increment finance district planning are part of the NCWRPC's services. Finally, the NCWRPC maintains relevant economic information for municipalities within the region.

State and Federal

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

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

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

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

Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

Rural Economic Development (RED) Program

This program administered by Wisconsin Department of Commerce provides grants and low interest loans for small business (less than 25 employees) start-ups or expansions in rural areas, such as Forest County. Funds may be used for “soft costs” only, such as planning, engineering, and marketing assistance. Web site address: www.commerce.state.wi.us

Wisconsin Small Cities Program (Community Development Block Grant Program)

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

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance and funding for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects. Web site address:

www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm

The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

This non-profit organization is located at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and specializes in new product and invention assessments and market expansion opportunities for innovative manufacturers, technology businesses, and independent inventors. Web site address: <http://academics.uww.edu/business/innovate>

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (UW- SBDC)

The SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small business as well as educational services such as seminars and customized labor training. This organization works with owners or managers of established businesses (500 or fewer employees) or new business start-ups. The SBDC is located at the UW-Stevens Point Campus. Web site address: www.wisconsinsbdc.org

Other State Programs

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

6.2: Analysis

The Issues and Opportunities Element discussed income levels and determined that the typical Town household has slightly less income than the state average and is roughly equivalent to the county average. Furthermore, the Town of Stella does not appear to be keeping pace with the rate of income growth shown in the Oneida County average. This is likely to change however since Stella has only begun to be subject to the rapid growth rates seen in areas such as Rhinelander and Minocqua. As developments continue eastward across the Town in the future, per capita incomes are likely to rise at a rapid rate. There is no disparity between the Town and the surrounding county with respect to the poverty rate and Stella is significantly below the state average poverty rate. Average home value will also be likely to notably increase in the near future due to new subdivision developments.

Stella's distance from major transit corridors inhibits its ability to benefit from transportation-related economic development. Commercial shipping into or out of the community is limited to trucks using County Highway C; commercial air and water transit simply are not convenient enough to be profitable. Furthermore, Stella is nearly 30 minutes away from the nearest four-lane highway, which makes locations closer to this major corridor more attractive to business and therefore more competitive. Since there are relatively few commercial businesses in the community, commuting is an important daily activity for many residents. The most popular destinations for residents are Rhinelander and Three Lakes.

The Town of Stella comprises a large component of Oneida County's agricultural base of employment. Stella contributes an average share for its size in forest and timber products to the overall County economy as well. In other industrial sectors, however, the Town's

economy has a relatively minor influence. The biggest export industries in Oneida County are health care, utilities, retail trade, accommodations, and food services. These industries are primarily driven by significant tourism and a large retired population in the Northwoods. The City of Rhinelander serves as a significant commercial hub for activity in the North Central Region of Wisconsin. Overall, Oneida County offers a competitive market for businesses and has a beneficial combination of fast and slow growth industries.

Labor Force

The Town of Stella seems to have a higher unemployment rate when compared to the county and state, but this is misleading due to the very small sample of population from which the calculation is made. Labor force includes only those persons age 16 and over that are employed or seeking employment. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not part of the “labor force”. Table 16 provides information regarding unemployment for Stella and surrounding jurisdictions.

Table 16: Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment by Jurisdiction, 2000

| Jurisdiction | Labor Force | Employed | Unemployed | Unemployment Rate |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------------|
| Town of Stella | 302 | 275 | 27 | 8.9% |
| Oneida County | 18,311 | 17,199 | 1,112 | 6.1% |
| State of Wisconsin | 2,869,236 | 2,734,925 | 134,311 | 4.7% |

Source: US Census 2000 and NCWRPC.

Overall, the Town is fairly average with respect to labor force and unemployment. Between 1990 and 2000, the Town’s employed residents increased 39 percent, from 1,582 to 2,206. The two strongest employment sectors have been Professional and Retail for more than ten years. Recently, the Personal, Entertainment and Recreational Services industry has grown larger than the construction industry, which indicates that tourism is growing faster than residential home construction. Resident occupations in the Town of Stella are examined in the Economic Base section below.

Economic Base

The list below provides a quick inventory of the businesses in Stella:

- Camp Deerhorn and Camp Horseshoe (seasonal recreational camps)
- Frito-Lay laboratory and research facility (potatoes)
- The Tower Tap
- Sowinski Farms on Tenderfoot Rd.
- D&G Equipment
- Northwoods Nursery
- Zdroik Lumber Mill
- Mueller’s Bait Shop
- Outdoor Enterprises (waste management)
- Countryside Kennels

From the list, it is apparent that Stella has a limited commercial economic base. These businesses represent the types of industry in Stella, including: tourism and recreation, wood product manufacturing, agriculture, and retail sales. In summary, Stella’s economic base is closely linked to its natural environment.

Table 17: Resident Occupations, Town of Stella, 2000

| Industry Name | Employment | Percent |
|---|------------|---------|
| Management, Professional, and Related Occupations | 97 | 35.3 |
| Service Occupations | 22 | 8.0 |
| Sales and Office Occupations | 74 | 26.9 |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations | 17 | 6.2 |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance | 20 | 7.3 |
| Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations | 45 | 16.3 |
| Total | 275 | 100 |

Source: US Census 2000 and NCWRPC

The types of occupations shown in Table 17 reflect what the residents of Stella do for a living, not the types of jobs that are offered within the Town. The 2000 Census shows a high number of residents employed as professionals as well as a large number of office workers and salespeople. Few people are actually employed in farming or fishing despite that fact that much of the local economy is driven by these two industries.

6.3: Economic Assessment

Agriculture is more prevalent in Stella than anywhere else in Oneida County, however this activity seems to be on the decline. Forestry will likely continue to be a major driver of the Town economy and the community will primarily serve as a bedroom community for larger populated areas. Overall, Oneida County has a fast growth economy coupled with competitive location for several niche industries. These indicators offer a positive outlook for Stella’s economy in the years to come.



Storage tanks and gas lines provide economic development opportunities.

6.4: Inventory of Potential Sites

The most suitable sites for commercial development may be found along County Highway C near the community of Starks. This location maximizes accessibility as well as visibility for visitors and residents alike. The Town land use map provides the appropriate designation to allow commercial development to occur in this area.

6.5: Adaptive Re-use of Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Town of Stella formerly had three sites listed as contaminated by the Department of Natural Resources. Two of these sites contained underground storage tanks that have been removed and the soils remediated. These two sites were former gas stations in Starks. The University of Wisconsin Research Station is also identified however no specific action is recommended. In summary, Stella has no environmentally contaminated sites that would qualify for economic development programs designed for adaptive re-use.

6.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures to revitalize community identity.

Policy: The Town shall encourage developments that rehabilitate and protect the historic character of the community while utilizing existing commercial and industrial structures.

Objective: Direct development into the area of Starks along County Highway C to preserve the character of the Town seat.

Objective: Educate the business community about the economic development assistance programs available to the Town.

Goal: Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.

Policy: The Town shall advocate land uses that utilize existing natural resources to yield an economic return.

Objective: Support land use that maintain renewable sources of lumber and agricultural products.

Goal: Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base.

Policy: The Town shall attempt to maintain the status quo with respect to economic base and employment. The Town Board should take measures to allow the economy to expand if the opportunity presents itself and it is within the financial means for the Board to do so.

Objective: Develop a working relationship with local and area economic development organizations for assistance in applying for funding assistance from local, state, and federal government entities.

Element 7: Land Use

Land use planning is one of the most commonly recognized and understood elements of comprehensive planning. The land use plan forms the foundation for the tools that implement it. The Town of Stella is covered under the Oneida County zoning ordinance, which controls land uses but lacks an actual land use plan to guide the application of these controls. Similarly, the Town is also subject to the County's land division ordinance. The 2004 Survey indicated that over two-thirds of Stella residents support the development of more restrictive zoning and subdivision standards to protect their community from growth related issues. The land use element of this plan ensures compliance with state planning law, which in turn permits the regulation of land use through the use of zoning and subdivision regulations.

7.1: Background and Programs

The Oneida County Shoreland/Zoning Ordinance regulates land uses in the Town of Stella. The zoning ordinance contains fifteen districts, however, only six are used in the Town of Stella: Forestry 1A, Forestry 1B, Rural Residential, Single Family Residential, Residential & Farming, and Business B-2. The Floodplain Ordinance follows closely with statutory requirements and regulates the Floodway, Flood Fringe, and General Floodplain. The Town is dependent upon the County for regulation of both subdivision and on-site sewer requirements as mandated by the State. A map showing the zoning classifications of the Town may be found in Appendix E of this plan.

7.2: Inventory of Existing Land Uses

The Town of Stella's incorporated area covers roughly 36 square mile of land. The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission performed an air photo interpretation of land uses in the Town of Stella in the fall of 2004. This inventory was then reviewed by the Stella Planning Committee and generalized land use categories were created.

Table 18: Acres by Land Use Category, Town of Stella, 2004

| Land Use Category | Total Acres | Percentage Total Land |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Residential | 751.48 | 3.2% |
| Commercial | 223.52 | 0.9% |
| Industrial | 21.12 | 0.1% |
| Outdoor Recreation | 5.92 | 0.0% |
| Public / Institutional | 269.61 | 1.1% |
| Transportation | 123.69 | 0.5% |
| Open Grassland | 1,284.95 | 5.4% |
| Water | 1,295.11 | 5.5% |
| Woodlands | 14,822.47 | 62.4% |
| Agriculture | 4,962.70 | 20.9% |
| Total | 23,760.57 | 100% |

Source: Town of Stella & NCWRPC.

Table 18 presents an overall summary of the result while Map 6 presents the result in graphic form. Woodland comprises nearly two-thirds of all land in Stella. Another fifth of the total land area is used for agriculture. Commercial and industrial uses account for only 1% as do public and institutional uses. Open Grassland and water make up about 11% and residential uses comprise 3.2% of the total land area. The above land use categories are defined as follows:

Agriculture

Areas used for row cropping, pasture, and livestock were considered agriculture.

Residential

This classification was used for areas with a residence on it plus any accessory structures (garage, shed, gazebo, etc.). In many cases, these residential areas are clearly described due to the absence of wooded area or farm fields immediately surrounding the residence.

Commercial

This classification was used for areas hosting commercial/business uses like retail, motels, gas stations, and other land uses. In general, any land use that involved the selling of goods and services was considered commercial.

Industrial

This classification was used for areas with heavy industrial uses like factories, heavy vehicles, salvage yards, etc. Stella has only one such use, which is a gravel pit.

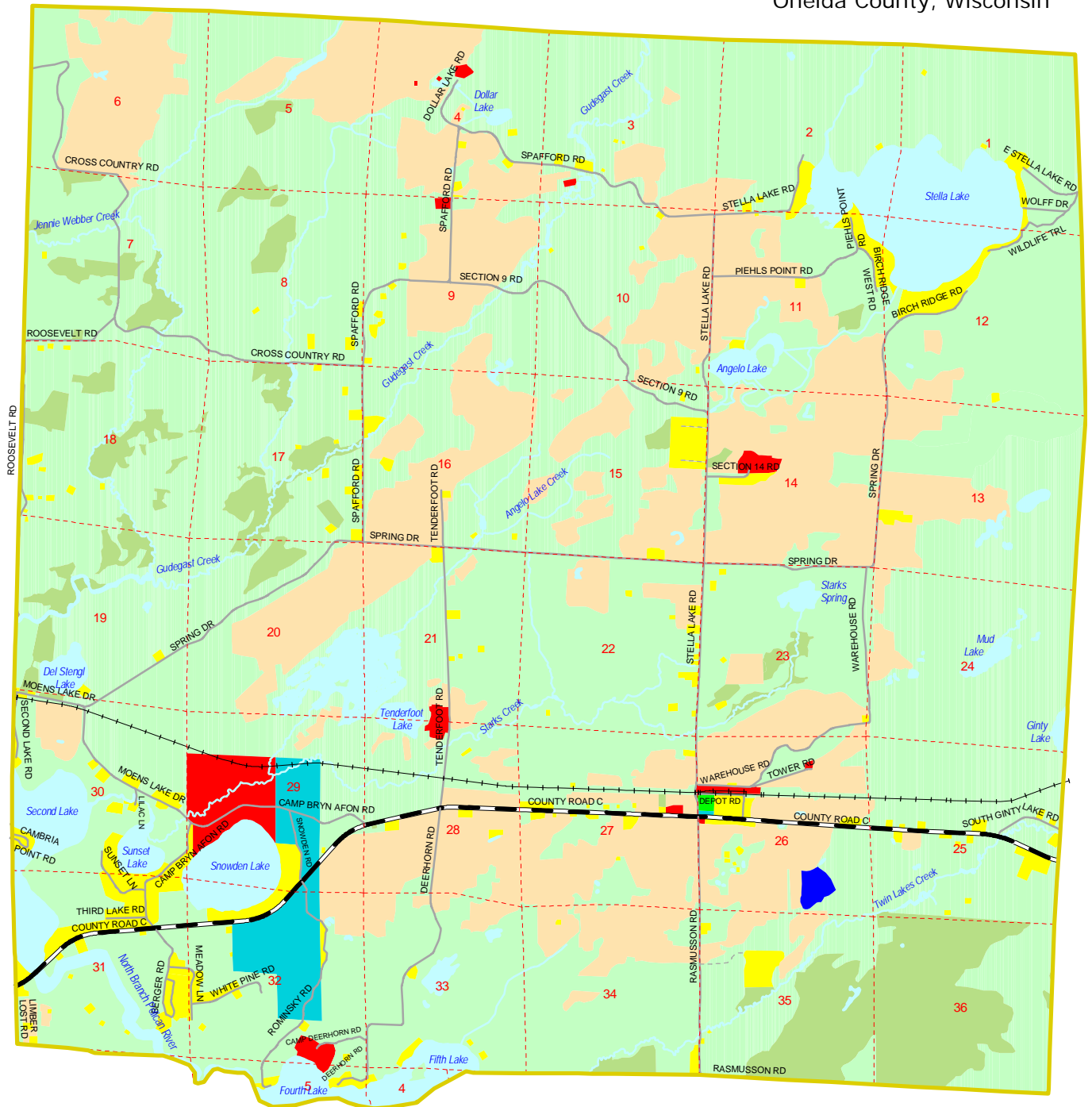
Other Public Uses

Outdoor recreation specifically identifies Stella Stadium and the playground behind Town Hall as well as two boat landings: the Stella Boat landing on Stella Lake and the Snowden Lake Public Beach. Public and Institutional land uses included the Town Hall and the UW Agricultural Research Facility on the east side of Snowden Lake; no other land uses received this designation. Transportation uses entail only that land acquired by the government to create roadways within the Town. Lakes and streams are counted under the water classification, which fall under public use depending upon the size of a given water body. The State of Wisconsin holds public land in four locations: Section 1 near Stella Lake, Section 13 surrounded by land owned by Plum Creek, in the NW quarter corner of Section 22, and most of the NE quarter of Section 30.

Other Private Uses

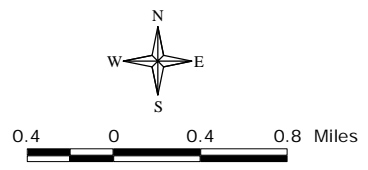
The most significant private use in the Town is woodland. Individual or corporate interests privately own all woodlands shown on the map. Some land classified as water is privately held as well.

Map 6
Town of Stella
 Existing Land Use
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



Prepared April 2005 By:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Governmental
- Industrial
- Open Grass Land
- Outdoor Recreation
- Residential
- Water
- Woodlands



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

7.3: Analysis

Land Supply

Given the large quantity of undeveloped land in Stella, the amount of land available is not a concern. However, the ability to adequately service intensive land uses with fire protection, paved roads, and other municipal services is problematic. Stella has many areas with poor boggy or swampy conditions that are unsuited to intensive development. Even so, the amount of available developable land is more than enough to accommodate even rapid population growth scenarios for the Town.

Land Value and Demand

There has been substantial real estate value growth in the total property of the state since 1980. Likewise, the Town of Stella more than doubled in valuation since 1980 with most of the increase occurring in just the last few years. Table 19 shows that in 1980, Stella's equalized real estate valuation was \$13,191,800 according to the Department of Revenue (DOR). In 2004 dollars, this amounts to approximately \$30,562,100, yet Stella's current 2004 valuation is \$65,421,500. Despite this massive increase in real estate valuation, the Town actually lost valuation from 1980 to 1990 likely due to economic hardship during the 80's. By 2000 however, the valuation rebounded and exceeded its 1980 valuation. The valuation increase from 2000 to 2004 indicates that a decrease is unlikely in the future.

Table 19: Unadjusted Equalized Real Estate Valuation (\$) by Geographic Area, 1980 to 2004

| Geographic Area | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2004 | Change 80-04 |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Town of Stella | 13,191,800 | 10,980,100 | 44,428,100 | 65,421,500 | 395.9% |
| Oneida County | 1,070,251,610 | 1,287,004,100 | 3,623,396,700 | 5,266,930,500 | 392.1% |
| State of Wisconsin | 108,480,469,889 | 141,370,307,160 | 286,321,491,800 | 360,760,211,300 | 332.6% |

Source: WDOR 1980, 1990, 2000, 2004 and NCWRPC

Stella's gains are comparable to Oneida County and significantly higher than the State average. Oneida County has benefited in land revenues from the influx of recreational investment on and near lakefront property. Many of these investors herald from the Milwaukee and Chicago metropolitan areas. The income disparity between these large cities and Oneida County causes real estate value to rise to levels commensurate with "big city" land values. Historically, Stella has been somewhat distant from most of the developed areas of the County and therefore its land values were initially lower than those in more developed areas. However, as demand for land continued to increase, Towns like Stella become attractive options for development. This meant that Stella's land values jumped even more dramatically than the County average. Land in Stella has steadily increased in value since the mid-90's and will likely continue to do so in the near future.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

While there are properties that could be redeveloped for other uses in Stella, the likelihood of doing so is limited. The amount of undeveloped land readily available for residential development in Stella precludes the likelihood that existing developments will be removed in favor of this use. Commercial and industrial activities have limited market potential given the rural nature of the community.

Existing / Potential Land Use Conflicts

The issues identified under the land value section above play out as a land use conflict. The search for developable land at inexpensive prices brings residential subdivision development to the Town. These new subdivisions and high value homes raise land values and associated costs for Stella's residents. The 2004 survey indicates that most Stella residents prefer the rural character of their Town; as development continues in the Town, these residents will likely be less satisfied with the character of their community. In summary, the greatest land use conflict for the Town will be finding a balance between maintaining rural character and accommodating new residential development.

7.4: Land Use Projections

At the current time, land use projections are difficult to make for the community of Stella. Growth seems significant as of late due to the construction of some new homes in the past few years, but it is misleading to represent this as a percentage of growth size the numbers of existing and new home built is actually very small to begin with. Relative to the City of Rhinelander, growth in Stella is minimal. Stella's population is also very small compared to most municipalities. To avoid adding mathematical credibility to what would largely be guesswork, this section uses only generalized statements to describe projected land uses in Stella without trying to specifically estimate numbers of acres allocated to each type of land use. The margin of error is simply too great to apply traditional projection models to such a small sample size.

Residential

The Issues & Opportunities Element projects 83 new households between 2000 and 2020 through simple projection of historical growth rate. This estimate could be low, however, given a recent upswing in new construction. These new homes will likely manifest themselves on or near County Highway C and account for roughly 400 acres. Woodland and agricultural will be the types of land uses converted to residential use during this time. These developments will be "bedroom" in nature – that is, the residents will travel often from Stella to Rhinelander, Three Lakes, and beyond to obtain services and goods.

Agriculture

Agricultural land uses are on the decline in Stella. Farmland turns a quick profit when subdivided and there are few people interested in continuing farm traditions in the area. Land area designated for farm uses in Stella will likely decrease in the future.

Commercial and Industrial

Commercial and Industrial uses will continue to be limited in the future as well. Stella may see some slight increases in commercial land use due to a convenience store or gas station, but other retail businesses and services will likely choose areas of greater population closer to Rhinelander for the time being. Industrial development generally requires a worker base and developed transportation systems, both of which are limited in Stella as well.

7.5: Future Land Use Map

Map 7 shows the final result of the land use planning process. The districting on the map is designed to facilitate the Objectives, Policies, and Goals described in this element below. The districts used on the land use map and their purposes are described as follows:

Forestry / Agriculture (Light Green)

This land use planning district is intended to cover all the land uses in Stella that are either undeveloped, used for forestry, or are engaged in farm practices. The district assumes that the land will remain as large parcels to promote efficiency in farming activities and forestry; farm houses are also permitted as a necessary part of the farm use. Open space recreational uses such as golf courses, campgrounds, and wilderness areas are permitted with special consideration. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: 1-A Forestry and 1-B Forestry.

Rural Residential (Orange)

This land use district accommodates roadside development in the town. The district is best described as a 660' wide buffer on each side of Stella's paved roads wherein the Town is likely to see limited residential development in the near future. The district allows for churches, cemeteries, schools, public libraries, campgrounds, public museums, parks, and municipal buildings given certain review. Home occupations and businesses subordinate to the residence may be permitted as well. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: Rural Residential District. Land divisions creating parcels of less than five acres should be discouraged or prevented by the Oneida County Subdivision Ordinance where possible. While this district seeks to focus development within a short distance from the roadway access, the planning committee anticipates that this district may be expanded further from the road once development has "filled in" in those areas closest to the road. This approach avoids difficulties in emergency management caused by population densities in remote areas accessed by long private roads.

Residential (Yellow)

This land-use planning district is intended to allow single-family residential uses. The district allows for more density around the Town's lakes. The district allows for churches, cemeteries, schools, public libraries, campgrounds, public museums, parks, and municipal buildings given certain review. Home occupations and businesses subordinate to the residence may be permitted as well. Unlike the rural residential district, this district

has no special limitation on land divisions; minimum parcel size is determined by the zone prescribed under the official county zoning map. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: 1-B Forestry, 1-C Forestry, Rural Residential, and Single Family.

Commercial (Red)

This land-use planning district is intended to allow for general commercial activities. This district is intended to cover most of the commercial operations in Stella with the exception of home occupations. This district is found in three places on the map: the community center of Starks, Camp Deerhorn, and Camp Bryn Afon. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: Single Family, Multiple Family Residential, Residential and Retail, Recreational, B-1 Business, and B-2 Business.

Industrial (Dark Purple)

This land use planning district is intended to accommodate intensive land uses, particularly those characterized by noise, dirt, smoke, odor, and physical appearance. This district is used in only one place on the land use map: in section 26 it denotes a mining operation adjacent to County Highway C. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: Manufacturing and Industrial District.

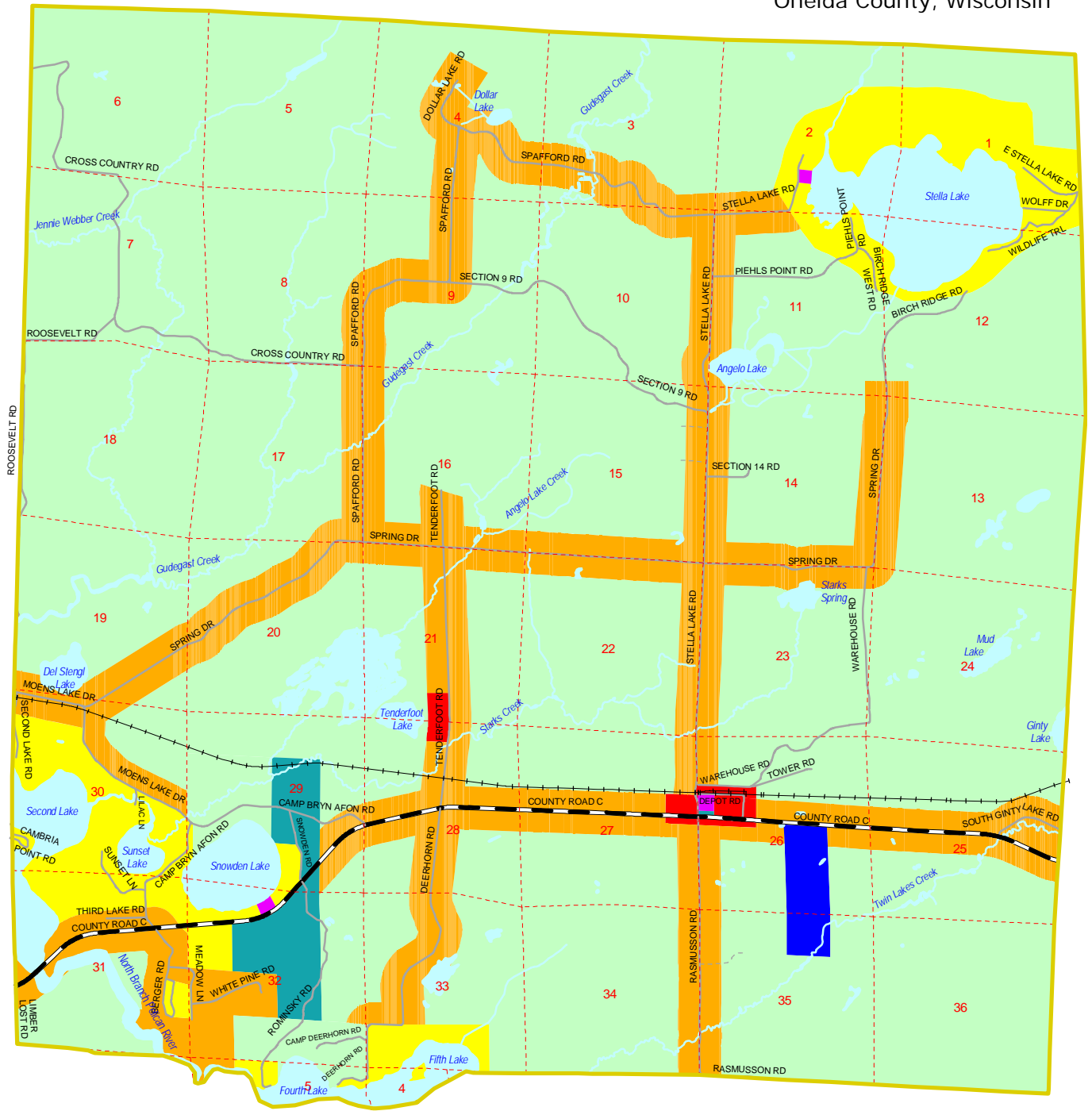
Governmental / Institutional (Blue-Green)

This district identifies land owned and maintained by government or institutional entities. Both Town Hall and the UW Agricultural Research property are covered by this district. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: General Use District.

Open Space and Recreation (Light Purple)

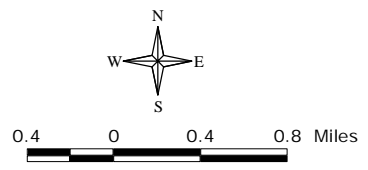
Only Stella Stadium is provided with this land use district. This use defines land that is publicly owned and maintained for purposes of outdoor recreation and open space. The following zoning districts (per the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance) are considered to be consistent with the intent of this land use district: General Use District.

Map 7 Town of Stella Future Land Use Plan Oneida County, Wisconsin



Prepared April 2005 By:
**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**
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- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Agriculture / Woodlands
- Commercial
- Open Space / Recreation
- Governmental
- Industrial
- Residential
- Rural Residential
- Water



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

7.6: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: *Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.*

Policy: The Town shall favor development patterns that are consistent with the land use plan.

Objective: Use the land use plan to direct land uses into established areas that are both aesthetically suitable and adequately serviced by services including school buses, Town fire protection, etc.

Objective: Use the land use plan to direct land uses into established areas that are adequately serviced by adjoining roads.

Goal: *Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.*

Policy: The Town shall endeavor to protect private property values and the ability of the property owner to enjoy his/her property to the extent that this protection does not constitute a severe detriment to the community welfare.

Objective: Ensure that zoning and subdivision regulations are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Goal: *Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique communities.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to develop and preserve community identity.

Objective: Planning and regulatory controls should be applied with the intention of maintaining the existing density and character of current development within the Town.

Objective: Attempt to preserve a low-density level of development when reviewing land division requests.

Element 8: Intergovernmental Cooperation

8.1: Background

Local governments often interact with one another in an attempt to resolve important issues, particularly when a local government lacks jurisdiction or control over where the problem originates. While the Town Board may take control of issues within their jurisdictional boundary, there are many outside influences on the Town that they cannot control. For example, new developments in nearby communities may impact the school district, local wages, or rental rates. Likewise, the activities of the Town have a direct impact on the surrounding governments and nearby communities as well. Intergovernmental cooperation allows units of government to act effectively and reduce costly duplication of effort, however it requires careful planning and support.

The Town of Stella sees the most need for intergovernmental cooperation with respect to the provision of utilities and public services. There could be conflicts between the Town and the surrounding area regarding annexation, sewer and water extensions, provision of police, fire, and other services if these services are not carefully thought out and agreed upon. Lack of planning can lead to services that are more expensive than they need to be, and that do not provide citizens with the best quality for their tax dollars. Sometimes, small communities will “share” part-time official positions to make them full-time positions with more responsibility. In these cases, the taxpayer benefits from the experience and knowledge of a full-time official while only burdened with the expense of a part-time employee.



Stella Town Hall/Fire Station in Starks.

Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA)

Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) is a non-profit, non-partisan statewide organization created under s.60.23(14) of the Wisconsin Statutes to protect the interests of the state’s 1,266 towns and to improve Town government. The association is organized into six districts and is headquartered in Shawano. WTA relies on regular district meetings, an annual statewide convention, publications, participation in

cooperative training programs and other means to support the goal of keeping grassroots government strong and efficient in Wisconsin.

8.2: Programs and Possible Initiatives

The following are intergovernmental programs available to the Town of Stella. The list is not all-inclusive. For specific information, a program representative should be contacted.

Mutual Law Enforcement Assistance

Stella currently uses the Oneida County Sheriff's Department as its primary law enforcement agency. Wis. Stats 66.0313 Law Enforcement; Mutual Assistance defines intergovernmental cooperation with regard to law enforcement. Upon the request of any law enforcement agency, including county law enforcement agencies, personnel may assist the requesting agency within the latter's jurisdiction. While acting in response to a request for assistance, the responders are deemed employees of the requesting agency.

Joint Ownership Agreement Programs

Local governments often share the purchase and ownership of expensive equipment, particularly if the equipment is limited in its use. This effectively distributes the financial burden and improves the level of service for all municipalities involved.

Group Purchasing Agreements

Local governments can either buy goods in bulk or combine their bidding efforts to achieve unit discounts on materials and equipment. Like joint ownership, group purchasing reduces financial burden and improves the level of service for the municipalities involved.

Resource Exchange and Sharing Agreements

Local governments sometimes rent equipment from one another or purchase services through the use of: a per mile maintenance fee. Another type of agreement could be a trade of equipment or personnel on an in-kind basis. These types of exchanges and agreements allow for the sharing of resources to accomplish projects of mutual benefit, such as jointly repairing a stretch of roadway.

8.3: Analysis

Wisconsin Statute 66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, and certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, and sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others. Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with s.66.30, are the most common form of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. The statute does not, however, require planning as a component of any

agreement and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

Under Section 66.0307 of the Wisconsin Statutes, combinations of municipalities may prepare cooperative boundary plans or agreements. Each city, village, or town that intends to participate in the preparation of a cooperative plan must adopt a resolution authorizing its participation in the planning process. Wisconsin Statute, 66.0305, Municipal Revenue Sharing, gives authority to cities, villages and towns to enter into agreements to share revenue from taxes and special charges with each other. The agreements may also address other matters, including agreements regarding services to be provided or the location of municipal boundaries. Wisconsin Statutes 66.0201 and 66.0211 regulate the process of creating new villages and cities from Town territory. Wisconsin Statute 66.0207 the criteria that have to be met prior to approval of incorporation. The incorporation process requires filing an incorporation petition with circuit court. Then, the incorporation must meet certain statutory criteria reviewed by the Municipal Boundary Review Section of the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

8.4: Intergovernmental Relationships

Adjacent Local Governments

The Town of Stella has no internal units of government like cities or villages, but it is adjacent to a number of jurisdictions with varying degrees of impact on Stella's activities. Map 1, the Location Map, provides locations of some of the municipalities near the Town of Stella as well as the Oneida County governments. The Town Board government is overlapped by the Oneida County Board of Supervisors, the Rhinelander and Three Lakes School Boards, the Nicolet Technical College District, the Wisconsin State government, and finally the Federal government. Meanwhile, Stella abuts six Town governments: Piehl, Pine Lake, Monico, Pelican, Sugar Camp, and Three Lakes. Local planning efforts should involve what other units of government have in their plans or intend to do in the future.

Town of Pelican

The Town of Pelican completed its Plan Resource Document in 2001. This land use plan was prepared by the Pelican Land Use Management Committee and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. This plan involves many goals and objectives regarding land use that are similar to those found in the land use element of Stella's plan. The Town of Pelican abuts the Town of Stella in the vicinity of Fourth and Fifth Lakes. Proposed land use maps within the Pelican plan indicate consistency with Stella's land use plan in that both indicate single-family residential use in these areas surrounding the lakes. Other adjoining areas are classified as forestry, which is also consistent with Stella's classifications of those areas.

Town of Pine Lake

The Town of Pine Lake completed its 2022 Comprehensive Plan in October of 2003. The intergovernmental element of this plan identifies a desire to work cooperatively with the Town of Stella and other adjoining communities. The "Preferred Land Use" Map in the

plan shows consistency with Stella's plan in the areas surrounding Third Lake and between Moen and Second Lakes in that both indicate single-family residential use in these areas surrounding the lakes. North of these lakes, Pine Lake's plan shows forestry uses while Stella shows both forestry and agricultural uses. The only inconsistency between the two planned land use maps is Pine Lake's classification of Rural Residential along Cross Country Road in the northeast portion of the Town. Stella's land use map does not support this type of development along this road, rather it indicates farm or large acreage forest residential development, if any. Much of this area is located in wetland/floodplain areas and is therefore unlikely to develop in this manner in either Town.

School Districts

The Three Lakes and Rhinelander Public School Districts operate independently from the Town Board and interaction between these entities and the Town is minimal in the official sense. The Town should closely monitor the activities of these school boards to ensure that these facilities anticipate changes in Stella in the future. While small, Town population projections indicate an increase and therefore the school board needs to be cognizant of the potential enrollment impact of this increase.

Regional

As mentioned previously, the Town belongs within a number regional districts. Some of these districts include: the Nicolet Area Technical College in Rhinelander, District 7 of the Department of Transportation in Rhinelander, the Northern Region of the Department of Natural Resources in Rhinelander, Workforce Development Area 6 for the Department of Workforce Development, and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The Town does not currently maintain any specialized inter-governmental agreements with these entities.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

There are nine Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's) that represent 66 of 72 counties within the State of Wisconsin. Oneida County lies within the planning jurisdiction of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Oneida County is a member of the RPC, which qualifies all municipalities within the county for local planning assistance. Typical functions of an RPC include, but are not limited to; comprehensive, intergovernmental planning; transportation planning and programming; water quality planning; collecting and analyzing data; conducting studies; sewer service area planning; economic development planning and grant writing; and meeting area wide requirements so local jurisdictions can receive federal grants. Working with RPC's may offer many benefits and local assistance options to the Town at a reduced cost compared to the private sector. The Town is eligible for services on a limited basis due to Oneida County's membership in the Commission. State Statutes require the RPC to perform three major functions:

- Make and adopt a comprehensive plan for the physical development of the region.

- If requested by a local unit, the RPC will report recommendations to that local unit regarding the location of or acquisition of land for any of the items or facilities that are included in the adopted regional master plan.
- Make an annual report of its activities to the legislative bodies of the local governmental units within the region.

RPC's are also authorized to perform several other functions, however, by law, they serve a strictly advisory role.

State

The following State entities perform important services for municipalities in Wisconsin with respect to the goals of this plan: The Department of Administration, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Emergency Management, the State Historical Society, the Office of Land Information Services, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Workforce Development. While there are still other departments and offices not listed here, these are the entities most often involved with planning issues and therefore it is recommended that the Town establish contact with these entities when the need arises. Some of these entities are explained in more detail below.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

The Town of Stella was awarded a Lake Planning grant to assist the town in the development of its comprehensive plan. The Town should continue to work with the WDNR to protect natural resources, as well as provide information and communication regarding land use and lake planning. See the Natural Resources Element in this plan for more information on the variety of services offered by the WDNR.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

County Highway C is the main travel corridor through the Town. Since this road is owned and maintained by Oneida County, the WisDOT has a limited role in the Town. WisDOT does perform surveys of local road quality in the Town and provides recommendations for road maintenance.

8.5: Existing Cooperative Boundary Plans and Agreements

Oneida County

The Town of Stella and Oneida County have multiple areas of shared responsibility. Several county ordinances apply in the Town, including shoreland zoning, non-metallic and metallic mining, sanitary, land division, and general zoning. The Town is under the jurisdiction of both the Oneida County Zoning and Shoreland Protection Ordinance. The County and Town have had a positive zoning relationship and the County generally respects the Town's wishes when reviewing rezoning requests. The intent of the Town's planning process is to have the County acknowledge the Town's plans when making land use decisions. Coordination and communication will be a key component between the Town and the County. Stella also has agreements with the Oneida County Sheriffs

Department for law enforcement and with the Oneida County Highway Department for road maintenance of Highway C.

Other Government

The Town currently maintains cooperative agreements with several different municipalities for the provision of services under s. 66.0301. Rhinelander, Pine Lake, Three Lakes, and Oneida County all provide emergency and ambulance services under this agreement. The Town of Stella also provides fire service to the Town of Piehl and has cooperative contracts for fire protection in Pine Lake, Three Lakes, Pelican, and Monico as well. There are no other agreements under Chapter 66 of the Wisconsin Statutes at this time.

8.6: Cooperative Issues

Stella's primary issue with respect to intergovernmental cooperation involves development pressure from the City of Rhinelander. Rhinelander's expanding east side has brought about land speculation for residential uses in Stella. Many of Stella's residents wish to maintain the Town's rural appeal and focus on forestry and potato farming. Balancing these contradictory interests will require intergovernmental cooperation since Stella cannot control Rhinelander's expansion and because the Town is obligated to use the Oneida County government for official enforcement of subdivision and zoning ordinances. Stella should ensure that its interests are represented at meetings involving land use with Oneida County government.

Assessment of the Relationship (opportunities and conflicts) with Other Jurisdictions

There are no known conflicts between the recommendations contained within the Town of Stella 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the plans and policies of other jurisdictions. All known plans and ordinances of other jurisdictions were taken into consideration throughout the development of this plan. Numerous opportunities exist for the Town of Stella and other jurisdictions to assess and possibly improve service delivery in a cost-effective manner.

Land use should be coordinated in the border areas of the Town since adjacent communities will be impacted by the Town plan: Sugar Camp and Three Lakes to the north, Pine Lake to the west, Pelican and Monico to the south, and Phiel to the east. The Town of Pine Lake has an adopted plan and direct coordination should continue to take place with this town. A current copy of an adjacent town's plan, zoning, and preferred land use should be on file as a reference in case of a border land use or zoning issue, and vice versa. In addition, land divisions or approved uses that may affect community services, such as roads via increased traffic volumes or reconstruction, should be communicated to reduce potential travel conflict and coordinate emergency response routes.

8.7: Goals, Policies, and Objectives

Goal: Encouragement of regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low governmental and utility costs.

Policy: The Town shall endeavor to limit municipal spending on redundant government services and utilities.

Objective: Seek out nearby units of government that may be interested in partnerships to obtain services already provided by Stella (e.g. fire protection, road maintenance, etc.).

Goal: Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.

Policy: The Town shall attempt to plan and develop the community in harmony with the plans and intentions of nearby units of government.

Objective: Periodically request plans and information from nearby government units for review and use by the Stella Planning Committee and the Town Board.

Objective: Invite representatives from nearby units of government to participate in public hearings, meetings, and discussions that involve issues of importance to the representative's jurisdiction.

Element 9: Implementation

This final element provides information regarding the implementation of the strategies outlined in the previous eight elements. Implementation takes the form of carrying out the objectives and adhering to the policies of each element. From time to time, the Town Planning Committee should review and amend the goals, policies, and objectives to keep consistency with demographic, economic, political, and environmental changes that occur. While the plan contains the strategy and direction, it is the efforts of government officials, local organizations, and village residents that actually make the plan happen. The Town Board is empowered to utilize local ordinances to accomplish objectives; local organizations and non-profits may utilize the plan in focusing their efforts; Town residents may reference the plan to see how it affects their lives and take appropriate actions. Overall, the Town Board and the Planning Committee should use the plan as a “guidebook” for decision-making and make their decisions from the standpoint of community impact balanced by the rights of the individual.

9.1: Integration of Planning Elements

Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning legislation requires that the implementation element describe how each of the nine elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. The planning process that was used to create the Town of Stella Comprehensive Plan required all elements of the plan to be produced in a simultaneous manner. No elements were created independently from the other elements of the plan, therefore eliminating the threat of inconsistency. There are no known inconsistencies within the plan or individual elements or between goals, objectives, policies and recommendations.

The potential for inconsistency between the plan and existing conditions will increase over time due to changes in the community, therefore amendments and/or updates may be required to keep the plan relevant. Over time, additional plans regarding specific features within Stella may also be developed (i.e., outdoor recreation plan, lake protection plan), however these plans should seek to be consistent with this Town of Stella Comprehensive Plan.

9.2: Implementation Activities

The following schedule for implementation is recommended to achieve the goals of the plan and is prioritized in order of most- to least-important, however, all items should be considered as necessary to implement the goals of the comprehensive plan:

1. Adopt this comprehensive plan under Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 (4).
2. Review, amend, and administer the Town procedures regarding the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance.
3. Develop Town subdivision standards that are consistent with the elements of the comprehensive plan to be applied when subdivisions are reviewed in the Town of Stella.

4. Develop and adhere to a Capital Improvements Plan to prioritize Town road maintenance expenditures.
5. Develop an impact fee ordinance to assist in accommodating future residential development pressures.
6. Communicate and network with nearby units of government to create mutually beneficial service agreements and coordinate future planning efforts.
 - a. Attempt to ease financial burden by procuring services from another jurisdiction or by selling existing services (such as fire protection or road maintenance).
 - b. Request plans and information; open up channels of communication to allow nearby jurisdictions to receive Stella's legal notices and for Stella to receive other communities' notices.
7. Explore the potential for obtaining official historic designations regarding key sites and buildings within the Town.
8. Review the comprehensive plan at a minimum of every ten years to update population projection data, the land use plan, and the goals, policies, and objectives of the Town.

Combined Goals, Policies, and Objectives

The following is a summary of all the goals, policies, and objectives as provided in each individual element. The summary is presented as a combined list.

Goal: Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.

Policy: The Town shall promote well-planned development to minimize negative impacts on land and water resources.

Objective: Protect local water quality and forestland integrity through the use of regulatory development ordinances.

Objective: Educate and encourage landowners near the shoreline in the use of buffers and proper riparian land management practices.

Objective: Educate and encourage landowners in forested areas to use proper forestland management practices.

Objective: Monitor and encourage proper construction site and agricultural field erosion control.

Objective: Educate the public on proper maintenance of septic systems, groundwater testing, well maintenance, and unused wells.

Objective: Mark ecologically sensitive areas with signs and buoys to help enforce recommended restrictions. This includes speed limit signage for boating in shallow water or sensitive areas.

Goal: *Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites.*

Policy: The Town shall seek to preserve and maintain cultural, historic, and archaeological sites located within the Town.

Objective: Use local ordinances to protect historically significant structures; seek protective status designations from the federal and state government for publicly-owned historic sites and structures.

Objective: Encourage residents to obtain special status for historic structures and sites.

Goal: *Retain and restore shorelands on lakes, rivers, and streams, to preserve or improve shoreland habitat and reduce pollutants from entering water bodies.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage riparian landowners to establish shoreland buffers.

Objective: Use Town Board's review of land development to advocate the creation of shoreland buffers.

Goal: *Improve forestry management to promote productivity of forest products, protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and provide recreational opportunities.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage proper forest management and attempt to control illegal dumping and garbage in commercial and public forestlands.

Objective: Establish fines for illegal dumping in the Town.

Objective: Promote and support the "Clean Sweep" program.

Objective: Encourage private landowners to use professional forestry assistance.

Goal: *Promotion of the redevelopment, maintenance, and rehabilitation of existing residential structures.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage development activities that seek to redevelop underutilized land area and/or rehabilitate existing housing.

Objective: Promote education about and utilization of available programs to assist homeowners and homebuyers with rehabilitation of housing and the construction of new homes.

Goal: *Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage development regulations that seek to maintain affordable land values with respect to the median family income.

Objective: Form a partnership with local financial institutions to promote low-interest rates and available financing for homeownership.

Objective: Promote education about and utilization of available programs to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners and homebuyers with the construction of new homes.

Goal: *Encouragement of development designs that support a range of transportation choices.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage developments that allow for pedestrian and bicycle traffic as well as vehicular traffic.

Objective: Ensure that approved subdivisions have adequate roadway widths to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicycles simultaneously with vehicle traffic.

Goal: *Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.*

Policy: The Town shall favor development patterns that are within the Town's capacity to provide adequate roadway maintenance.

Objective: Utilize a subdivision ordinance to require development that is readily accessible by existing roads with appropriate maintenance to handle the impact of the new development.

Objective: When necessary, require the developer to contribute to the maintenance of existing roads and/or the construction of new internal roads within the development.

Policy: The Town shall be attentive to development impacts as they relate to the expense of infrastructure, utilities, and services.

Objective: Evaluate each new development proposal for its impact on local services and choose options that either operate within current capacities or expand capacity to accommodate the additional impacts.

Objective: Examine the possibility of utilizing impact fees to reduce municipal expenses in accommodating new development.

Policy: The Town shall favor development patterns that are consistent with the land use plan.

Objective: Use the land use plan to direct land uses into established areas that are both aesthetically suitable and adequately serviced by services including school buses, Town fire protection, etc.

Objective: Use the land use plan to direct land uses into established areas that are adequately serviced by adjoining roads.

Policy: The Town shall endeavor to limit municipal spending on redundant government services and utilities.

Objective: Seek out nearby units of government that may be interested in partnerships to obtain services already provided by Stella (e.g. fire protection, road maintenance, etc.).

Goal: *Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to facilitate transportation methods that are effective, but within the bounds of the municipal budget.

Objective: Continue to maintain all Town roads and implement ADA compliant design measures in the construction of new roads and trails when possible.

Goal: *Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.*

Policy: The Town shall make provision for improvements, expansions, and repairs with respect to infrastructure and public services consistent with current and projected need.

Objective: Develop and adhere to a Capital Improvements Plan.

Objective: Maintain a current comprehensive plan with population projection data to estimate future demand.

Policy: The Town shall anticipate and budget for future transit system demands and maintenance of existing transit systems.

Objective: Utilize a capital improvements plan to prioritize transportation infrastructure expenditures.

Goal: *Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing structures to revitalize community identity.*

Policy: The Town shall encourage developments that rehabilitate and protect the historic character of the community while utilizing existing commercial and industrial structures.

Objective: Direct development into the area of Starks along County Highway C to preserve the character of the Town seat.

Objective: Educate the business community about the economic development assistance programs available to the Town.

Goal: *Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.*

Policy: The Town shall advocate land uses that utilize existing natural resources to yield an economic return.

Objective: Support land use that maintain renewable sources of lumber and agricultural products.

Goal: *Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to maintain the status quo with respect to economic base and employment. The Town Board should take measures to allow the economy to expand if the opportunity presents itself and it is within the financial means for the Board to do so.

Objective: Develop a working relationship with local and area economic development organizations for assistance in applying for funding assistance from local, state, and federal government entities.

Goal: *Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals.*

Policy: The Town shall endeavor to protect private property values and the ability of the property owner to enjoy his/her property to the extent that this

protection does not constitute a severe detriment to the community welfare.

Objective: Ensure that zoning and subdivision regulations are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Goal: *Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique communities.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to develop and preserve community identity.

Objective: Planning and regulatory controls should be applied with the intention of maintaining the existing density and character of current development within the Town.

Objective: Attempt to preserve a low-density level of development when reviewing land division requests.

Goal: *Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.*

Policy: The Town shall attempt to plan and develop the community in harmony with the plans and intentions of nearby units of government.

Objective: Periodically request plans and information from nearby government units for review and use by the Stella Planning Committee and the Town Board.

Objective: Invite representatives from nearby units of government to participate in public hearings, meetings, and discussions that involve issues of importance to the representative's jurisdiction.

9.3: Update and Evaluation of Progress

Wisconsin Statute requires that this plan be reviewed and updated every ten years (therefore, the next update would be in 2015). The Town may find it advisable to update sooner if certain policies and objectives become obsolete due to significant changes in the Town or surrounding area. To update the plan, follow the procedure outlined in s. 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The Town of Stella may choose to retain the services of a planning consultant or utilize the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission for assistance in updating the plan.

At the time of review, the schedule of implementation should be re-visited as well. The review should not only update the list, but also be used as a "measuring stick" of progress. The Town should be able to complete all items on the list within the next ten

years. Since the items reflect the objectives of all of the previous eight elements, completion of all would indicate excellent consistency and integration of the comprehensive plan elements with Town activities. When new implementation schedules are created, care should be taken to prioritize those goals that have not been met or have lagged behind others to ensure comprehensive and integrated planning efforts in the future.

Comprehensive Plan Amendments

The Town of Stella should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations within the comprehensive plan. It may be determined that amendments are needed to maintain the effectiveness and consistency established within the plan. Amendments are minor changes to the overall plan and should be done after careful evaluation in a non-accommodating manner to maintain the plan as a planning tool upon which decisions are based. The proper procedure for amending the plan shall involve a Class 2 notice pursuant to chapter 985 of Wis. Stats. As well as notice to all affected property owners and other entities with an interest in the change. A public meeting of the Planning Committee shall be held for discussion, public input, and recommendation to the Town Board. The Town Board shall hold a public hearing to review the Committee recommendation and hear public comments before making a decision to amend the existing comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Legislation requires that the comprehensive plan be updated at least once every ten years. An update requires revisiting the entire planning document. Unlike an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the text, updating of the inventory and tables and substantial changes to maps, if necessary. The update process should be planned for in a similar manner as was allowed for the initial creation of this plan including similar time and funding allotments. State statutes should also be monitored for any changes.

In order to ensure that the requirements of sec. 66.1001(4) Wis. Stats. are met, the Town of Stella is required to use the following steps to update the plan:

- The established public participation procedures must be followed. These procedures require the provision for written comments by the public to the Planning Committee and Town Board and for said entities to respond to such written comments.
- The Planning Committee will then recommend its proposed comprehensive plan amendment to the Town Board by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire Planning Committee. The vote shall be recorded in the minutes of the Planning Committee. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of the comprehensive plan.
- One copy of the comprehensive plan amendment adopted by the Planning Committee for recommendation to the Town Board is required to be sent to: (a) every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of

the Town, including any school district, Town sanitary district, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district or other special district; (b) the clerk of every city, village, town, and county that is adjacent to the Town; (c) the Wisconsin Land Council; (d) the Department of Administration; (e) the regional planning commission in which the Town is located; and (f) the public libraries that serve the area in which the Town is located.

- The Town Board, by a majority vote, shall then approve an ordinance for the amendment to take effect. The ordinance shall be filed with the serving public library and the clerk of all adjacent local governmental units.

Appendix A : Public Participation Plan

Public Participation Plan

for the
Town of Stella Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

The Town of Stella intends to utilize the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) as the facilitator for the public participation process required by the State's Comprehensive Planning Legislation of 1999. The objective of the Public Participation Plan is to encourage community input throughout the comprehensive planning process. At the same time, this plan seeks to keep the public informed and involved during each phase of the planning process. The participation plan will be maintained and kept fluid to the extent that the concerns of the public are addressed and accounted for prior to completion of the comprehensive plan.

Participation Plan Elements

The following elements will be utilized during the Planning Process to establish a line of communication with the local citizenry to afford their input in the development of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Written notice of meetings open to the general public. Two open house meetings: one mid-way through the planning process and one near the end of the planning process.
- Official minutes shall be kept of each meeting and shall be made available to the public for review and comment. Copies of said minutes may be obtained from the Town Clerk or NCWRPC staff.
- All meetings will maintain a sign-in sheet to keep a record of all individuals in attendance. The sign-in sheet for each meeting shall be public record and utilized for the proper development of meeting minutes.
- A community opinion survey shall be administered and analyzed by the RPC to gather useful statistics for the development of policy recommendations. The results and analysis of this survey shall be public record and made available in manner similar to the meeting minutes.
- Provisions for open discussion shall be afforded at each public meeting; RPC staff shall provide contact information for concerned citizens seeking information or ability to make oral or written comments in addition to scheduled meeting times. RPC staff will respond to questions or requests directly as well as disclose the nature of these dialogues at the next scheduled public meeting for documentation on public record.
- One or more press releases detailing activities undertaken during the planning process will be sent to the media by members of the Committee.
- Upon completion of the Stella Comprehensive Plan, the resulting planning document shall be made available to the public as the final step in the public participation plan. Reports, maps, poster plan summaries, recommendations, and the plan itself shall be available for review at the Stella Town Hall and may also be obtained from the NCWRPC.

Adaptability of Plan

The Public Participation Plan is intended to be adaptable to address unforeseen issues that may arise during the planning process. Therefore, the above elements may be subject to change or more elements may be added, however, all public participation efforts shall be documented and reported within the completed comprehensive plan.

Appendix B: Community Survey Process and Results

B.1: Survey Process

The Town survey consisted of thirty questions designed to gather basic demographic information as well as opinions and perspectives on a variety of topics concerning the community. All responses were anonymous as the postage-paid survey was mailed within an envelope to be discarded by the recipient. The tax addresses for the Town’s property owners was used as the base mailing list, however, Town employees handed out a number of surveys to persons requesting one. In total, 390 surveys were mailed and approximately 10 were given out by hand for a sum of 400 surveys. 140 surveys were received for tabulation. This high number of responses constitutes approximately 35% of all property owners in Stella and easily surpasses that which is considered necessary for accuracy in inferences. When computing the number of responses that came from actual residents of the Town, the response rate is closer to 50%. Confidence intervals are noted next to the questions in terms of standard error in the order they appear in the results below.

B.2: Survey Data Results

For informational purposes and convenience of future survey activities, the community survey results are printed in their entirety below. Each question provides the number of persons indicating a given response, the percent of the total each response comprises, and the number of persons not responding to the question. Questions with “write-in” responses are in the section following.

The Town of Stella . . .

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. has excellent drinking water. $n= 121 (\pm 3.6\%)$ | Strongly Agree (27) 22.3% | Moderately Agree (30) 24.8% | Uncertain (37) 30.6% | Moderately Disagree (17) 14.0% | Strongly Disagree (10) 8.3% |
| 2. has adequate park availability. $n= 122 (\pm 3.6\%)$ | Strongly Agree (27) 22.1% | Moderately Agree (27) 22.1% | Uncertain (30) 24.6% | Moderately Disagree (18) 14.8% | Strongly Disagree (20) 16.4% |
| 3. has an excellent fire department. $n= 131 (\pm 3.5\%)$ | Strongly Agree (38) 29.0% | Moderately Agree (46) 35.1% | Uncertain (28) 21.4% | Moderately Disagree (12) 9.2% | Strongly Disagree (7) 5.3% |
| 4. has a quality school district. $n= 114 (\pm 3.8\%)$ | Strongly Agree (38) 33.3% | Moderately Agree (32) 28.1% | Uncertain (29) 25.5% | Moderately Disagree (8) 7.0% | Strongly Disagree (7) 6.1% |
| 5. has adequate road maintenance. $n= 134 (\pm 3.5\%)$ | Strongly Agree (19) 14.2% | Moderately Agree (25) 18.7% | Uncertain (33) 24.6% | Moderately Disagree (29) 21.6% | Strongly Disagree (28) 20.9% |
| 6. has quality electric services. $n= 132 (\pm 3.5\%)$ | Strongly | Moderately | Uncertain | Moderately | Strongly |

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Agree (41) 31.1% | Agree (50) 37.9% | (30) 22.7% | Disagree (4) 3.0% | Disagree (7) 5.3% |
| 7. has plenty of open space. <i>n</i> = 133 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (68) 51.1% | Moderately Agree (40) 30.1% | Uncertain (19) 14.3% | Moderately Disagree (4) 3.0% | Strongly Disagree (2) 1.5% |
| 8. should make tourism a top priority. <i>n</i> = 134 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (3) 2.2% | Moderately Agree (11) 8.2% | Uncertain (18) 13.4% | Moderately Disagree (24) 17.9% | Strongly Disagree (78) 58.2% |
| 9. should designate preferred sites for commercial and industrial development. <i>n</i> = 133 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (47) 35.4% | Moderately Agree (15) 11.3% | Uncertain (18) 13.5% | Moderately Disagree (10) 7.5% | Strongly Disagree (43) 32.3% |
| 10. should focus on preserving large farm and forest land tracts. <i>n</i> = 138 (\pm 3.4%) | Strongly Agree (84) 60.8% | Moderately Agree (19) 13.8% | Uncertain (23) 16.7% | Moderately Disagree (7) 5.1% | Strongly Disagree (5) 3.6% |
| 11. should have more single-family housing. <i>n</i> = 132 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (19) 14.4% | Moderately Agree (18) 13.6% | Uncertain (39) 29.6% | Moderately Disagree (24) 18.2% | Strongly Disagree (32) 24.2% |
| 12. should have more zoning and subdivision controls to limit land development. <i>n</i> = 135 (\pm 3.4%) | Strongly Agree (72) 53.3% | Moderately Agree (18) 13.3% | Uncertain (15) 11.1% | Moderately Disagree (14) 10.4% | Strongly Disagree (16) 11.9% |
| 13. should make the preservation of forests, soil, water, wetlands, and open space its highest priority. <i>n</i> = 138 (\pm 3.4%) | Strongly Agree (75) 54.3% | Moderately Agree (33) 23.9% | Uncertain (11) 8.0% | Moderately Disagree (12) 8.7% | Strongly Disagree (7) 5.1% |
| 14. should approve development projects that have a cost to the taxpayer. <i>n</i> = 133 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (13) 9.8% | Moderately Agree (4) 3.0% | Uncertain (22) 16.5% | Moderately Disagree (24) 18.1% | Strongly Disagree (70) 52.6% |
| 15. should try to remain the same and resist population growth. <i>n</i> = 136 (\pm 3.4%) | Strongly Agree (45) 33.1% | Moderately Agree (17) 12.5% | Uncertain (41) 30.1% | Moderately Disagree (14) 10.3% | Strongly Disagree (19) 14.0% |
| 16. has reasonable taxes. <i>n</i> = 135 (\pm 3.4%) | Strongly Agree (22) 16.3% | Moderately Agree (24) 17.8% | Uncertain (42) 31.1% | Moderately Disagree (22) 16.3% | Strongly Disagree (25) 18.5% |
| 17. has adequate Town buildings. <i>n</i> = 132 (\pm 3.5%) | Strongly Agree (40) 30.3% | Moderately Agree (41) 31.1% | Uncertain (30) 22.7% | Moderately Disagree (8) 6.1% | Strongly Disagree (13) 9.8% |

18. has a great deal of community pride. $n= 129 (\pm 3.5\%)$

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strongly Agree (38) 29.5% | Moderately Agree (35) 27.0% | Uncertain (38) 29.5% | Moderately Disagree (9) 7.0% | Strongly Disagree (9) 7.0% |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|

19. Which of the following development patterns do you feel would be beneficial to Stella's future. $n= 136 (\pm NA)$

Low density, widely dispersed development (65) 47.8%

Low density development on lake fronts (65) 47.8%

Clustered development in and around community centers (40) 29.4%

High density development along lake fronts (4) 2.9%

High density development along major roads (13) 9.6%

Subdivisions along major roads (19) 14.0%

No further development (43) 31.6%

None of the above (8) 5.9%

20. Which level of development do you feel is most appropriate for lakefront property in Stella? $n= 120 (\pm 3.7\%)$

Large, mostly undeveloped land parcels (23) 19.2%

Single family units on small parcels (18) 15.0%

Single family units on large parcels (58) 48.3%

Condominium / hotel / resort development (3) 2.5%

None of the above (18) 15.0%

21. Do you feel the Town should set aside or purchase additional land for the following activities? $n= 114 (\pm NA)$

Boat Landings (41) 36%

Parks (34) 30%

Beaches (33) 29%

Sports Fields (7) 6%

Bike Trails (47) 41%

Snowmobile Trails (25) 22%

Hiking Trails (42) 37%

Ski Trails (26) 23%

Hunting Areas (30) 26%

ATV Trails (22) 19%

None of the above (20) 18%

Other:

Property around Town Hall.

Plum Creek Waterfront

X-Country Ski Trails

Expand existing beach or get a new beach site to accommodate more people

22. Do you think that the Town should upgrade its playground equipment through the use of tax dollars in the near future? $n= 131 (\pm 4.4\%)$

___ Yes (44) 33.6% ___ No (87) 66.4%

23. How many persons in your household (including yourself) are in the following age groups? *n*= 129 (NA)

| Age Group | Under 18 | 18 – 24 | 25 – 34 | 35 – 44 | 45 – 54 | 55 – 64 | Over 64 |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number in Household | 64 18.83% | 21 9.29% | 15 9.54% | 49 11.25% | 54 13.94% | 61 13.20% | 68 23.96% |

The average number of persons per household is 2.6.
 The median number of persons per household is 2.
 The mode number of persons per household is 2.

24. Are you a seasonal resident of the Town of Stella? *n*=136 (± 4.1%)

___ Yes (37) 27.2% ___ No (99) 72.8%

25. How long have you owned property / lived in the Town of Stella? *n*= 139 (± 3.4%)

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Under 5 years (9) 6.5% | 5 to 15 years (38) 27.3% | 15 to 25 years (35) 25.2% | More than 25 years (57) 41.0% |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|

26. Do you own waterfront property in the Town of Stella? *n*= 139 (± 4.2%)

_____ Yes (64) 46.0% No (75) 54.0%

B.3: Survey Written Responses

Certain portions of the survey allowed for respondents to “write-in” answers or comments of their own. These answers are listed below in the order in which they appear within the survey. Each questions provides a numeric total of write-in responses for the given question. Duplicate or similar responses are indicated with a multiplier in parenthesis (e.g. “x3” indicates the response was given three times).

What do you like most about the Town of Stella?

- | | |
|--|--|
| Small / rural / quiet / open (x86) | Friendly/neighborly (x39) |
| Outdoor Rec / Trails / Hunting / Fishing (x15) | Low Taxes (x7) |
| Family-Orientation / Low Crime (x9) | Town Services and Limited Regulations (x5) |
| Community Commitment (x4) | Community Effort to Preserve Nature / Agriculture (x4) |

What do you like least about the Town of Stella?

- | | |
|--|---|
| Lack of Road Maintenance / Availability (x28) | Subdivision / Development of Land (x19) |
| Taxes (x14) | Town Board and Local Gov’t Services (x12) |
| Too Many Government Regulations / Zoning (x10) | Junk / Poor Appearance / nuisances (x10) |
| Lack of Consumer Options (x8) | Nothing (x7) |

| | |
|--|---|
| Spreading of Chemicals from Paper Mill on Farms (x6) | Fire Department (x4) |
| Utilities (x4) | Speeding on Back Roads (x3) |
| Not Enough Government Regulation (x3) | Poor Boat Landing (x3) |
| Lack of Community Involvement (x3) | Town Appraiser (x3) |
| Not Progressive (x2) | Town Hall / Playground in Poor Condition (x2) |
| Backward Reputation | Garbage Services |
| Hunters | TV Tower |
| Mosquitoes | |

What do you think will be the biggest challenge the Town of Stella will face in the next 20 years?

| | |
|---|--|
| Development Pressure / Loss of Farmland / Subdivision Development (x73) | |
| Tax Increases / Property Value Increases (x23) | Pollution / Protecting Environment (x14) |
| Town Services to Handle Population Increase (x13) | New Roads / Maintenance (x8) |
| Economic Development (x8) | Zoning (x8) |
| Effective Town Board Leadership (x4) | Poor Boat Landing (x3) |
| Senior Care (x2) | Education |
| Losing Local Government Control | Access to Public Lands |

Additional Comments:

???

1. Proposed back lots with lake access should not be considered. The impact of additional lake usage by back lot homeowners and guests depreciates the value of existing lots due to increased use. Creates over use on lake, noise pollution, to name a few problems. 2. We own more than 20 acres of land.

Again, I think it is very unfair I pay taxes on my property, don't use the schools and many tax dollars supported programs and yet can't get in-state status for many items. Please pass along my concern as an out of state land owner.

All town work, plowing roads, cutting grass, has to be put out for bids!! Good Ole Boy system has to cease!!!

As a property owner near Cambria Point I don't understand how a residentially zoned property keeps growing as a commercially operating "Bait and Boat Rental" business. The two piers extend way into the lake and boat traffic is busy because gas, beer, and candy as well as bait is sold there. The property has changed three or four times in ten years and each new owner "improves" the business and makes it busier. I don't know the address but it advertises as "Lake 2 3/4 Bait Shop". Is this operation legal?? How can someone start a business in the middle of a single family home neighborhood! Muellers Bay Bait Shop is the new name.

As the tax base expands and more homes are constructed here, the town may have to buy its own truck with a plow or a grader so that it can provide faster snow removal on its side roads where more and more people are building. I believe that we pay the county now for doing this service, however they can't always get out here right away. There will become a time when it will be more cost effective for the town to do their job themselves. The board needs to be able to determine when that time arrives. It also becomes a safety issue for the people using these roads.

Business development should be restricted to those paying at least \$15.00 per hour. Trailer parks should not be allowed. Resorts on lakes should pay a user fee for their customers. (Most are from out-of-state.)

Certain people working for the Town are getting paid for doing nothing.

Do not allow large corporate companies destroy the quiet and slow pace life style we now experience. These companies are only interested in making money. People who only rent property for 1 or 2 weeks will not respect our lakes, community or the people who make up the community.

Finding other people to run in our elections so we can have new ideas from our town board members. Same people on so why even vote! More info on upcoming events such as firemen picnic, rummage sale, etc. It is posted at the town hall but when do we know--can't stop every day.

I am concerned about the effects of fibercake on the land around Starks. It may not impact our environment this year; however what are the future effects for our children, grandchildren, etc.

I lived for six years in the town of Chester, NH. It is one of the few towns I have heard of that has successfully resisted urban sprawl and almost all development. It is now a highly priced place to live in S. NH, they might provide a good model for Stella.

I think it is wrong to have to have 5 acres of land to build a house.

I think that we should get a new tax assessor. One that a person can talk to without the person thinking that you are wasting their time. Stop platting off the land. The people that are platting off are already relatives and have enough money now. They are just wrecking the land. Small communities should stay that way. NOT DEVELOP.

I urge strong resistance to all motorized recreation, especially in summer when windows are open. Stella and Piehl are unique in eastern Oneida County for relative silence (and dark skies at night!) These are virtues worth preserving. Scenic (uncluttered) lakeshores, undeveloped sylvan splendor, and silence make this a great place in which to live. It is also the foundation for sustainable tourism.

I would like to see an accounting of where and what our tax monies are going for!

I would like to see wind energy come into the township; the field by the Channel TV 12 tower would be an excellent place to put wind power and provide jobs and income in our township.

Is there any chance of finding an alternate public landing site on Stella Lake with access to the LARGER lake, not the small bay where it is now? With increase in boat and vehicle size and noise capacities of the impact on the environment (wildlife, plant life, and people) would be far less and a better boat ramp could be built.

It is important that the town retain control of zoning and other changes in the town.

Large parcel landowners should not be required to provide open space for other landowners if that becomes a priority. Large parcels can be purchased and preserved, if neighbors are willing to spend tax dollars. Economic development will drive the future of Stella, so land and a mechanism for that development needs to be available.

Maintain quality of life by resisting the temptation to make a few dollars by inappropriate over development. Look at the lakes in southeast Wisconsin. Would we want Stella Lakes to look like that?

Maintaining property owners rights after "Smart Growth" and zoning ordinances are in place.

No more subdivisions Please. Local town (Stella) officials that are elected should not harbor barking dogs. Dogs that bark at 0300 in the morning or all hours of day and night is not acceptable!! Dogs should also be chained not allowing them to roam freely on others property on a daily basis. Taxes too high.

Not much to like or dislike which could be good or bad depending on if one is an optimist or pessimist.

Notification of all residents when zoning changes are coming--i.e.. Juvenile halfway house--new housing development.

Once its gone, it's gone forever.

Our fire department could be improved-several years ago a mobile home burned down across from the fire department. Several townships responded before ours showed up. Speed limit signs need to be posted on all country roads (35 mph) as stated in Wisconsin Motorists Handbook on page 28. Excessive speeding from 45 to 55 occurs frequently and needs to be stopped by patrol cars.

People are moving here faster than ever. We would rather see them move into dispersed homesites instead of subdivisions in all the old fields.

Please clear up confusion about fire number versus house number. We don't know how to give directions in case of an emergency. It's the 3rd driveway after the 12th telephone pole is getting frustrating!

Please do not allow Northern Wisconsin to turn into an overpopulated rural area. We are in our second home purchased in Northern Wisconsin. Both were already built and previously lived in. We did not have to buy up more land and build on it. Which did not put more pressure on development.

Properties for sale for large amounts should be taxed at that higher rate IMMEDIATELY.

Provide recycling and garbage drop off for seasonal residents at Town Hall. "Roll-off" dumpster separated into section for glass, plastic, paper, metals, and garbage. This way there should be less burning of garbage and fewer garbage bags full of waste thrown along the roadside.

Question 20--do not understand what small and large parcel size is--I would prefer single family homes and 2 acres to 3 acres.

Services should be the same for all townspeople.

Stella should have 2-3 beaches on area lakes so family could enjoy swimming. Don't like 5 acre needed for lot! The young can't afford the land--let alone building a house. Not everybody wants to be \$100,000.00 in debt!

The closing of the road past the church-camp facility. As a resident, I first became aware of it when I saw the newly erected signs. Also, because of this closing, the truck/bus traffic could have been routed in to the facility from the other end of Camp Brynafon Road and Highway C which has no residences on it.

The last development plan was engineered by _____ to set up sale of their land. "conflict of interest"

There has been talk about a facility for seniors to be built on one of the lakes in the area. However, as I understand, this was forced to rescind because the township refused to zone the area to multi-family. They did not want the additional boat dock and activity on the lake. However, this same area will be permitted to sub-divide and have multiple boat docks plus much more activities around the lake. They used very poor judgment in this matter. The area is in need of a nice facility for seniors and would be welcomed by many. Plus, it would bring revenue into the area.

Things that should be done: 1. Take some random water samples around the town to establish a baseline for water quality to see if all the septic and ill waste dumping is affecting our water quality. 2. Put covenants on development (earth tone siding colors, etc.) 3. Increase minimum lot size for housing. 4. Eliminate noisy activities such as motor cross race tracks, stock car race tracks, etc. We eliminated pig farming because of the smell, why not eliminate these because of the noise?

Try to continue to grandfather property that is in the families. Guess it is time we find out more about Stella! Don't deal with _____ (County Zoning Board of Adjustment Member)!

Up grade town hall. Some newer fire equipment. Town roads need better maintenance.

Use other fund raising to raise funds for upgrading playground equipment.

We have owned property and lived here for over 25 years. We appreciate the short distance to shopping but the quiet wooded areas abound. We enjoy the river and lakes. We appreciate the wide areas of forests and fields. It has been a great place to live and raise a family.

We think with the right team approach and getting the community involved as much as possible we can continue to make Stella one of the best communities to live in. We would love to develop it without taxing it to death. I would like to see some plans for elderly housing in which they could afford to live. I'm not against some low income housing,

as long as it is properly maintained. Some commercial development would be good, within reason. It would be nice for some people to be able to work and live in our small community.

We would like Stella to stay small to much development would take away homes for our wildlife.

We would like to see first responders if we do not have any in our town. Enforce an ordinance for abandoned vehicles and unused, unsightly junk on property. Have more town activities so people become more acquainted and make money for fire department, etc.

Where does our tax money go if roads are not being maintained and we see no other improvements to the beach area or other community get together like other townships have? How can we address the high taxes for Nicolet College? All board members should have a limit to the number of years they are on the board...I think it's become stagnant with the same people always determining rules and regulations.

Would not like to see subdivisions on potato field, which would put more boat traffic on Stella Lake and create more pollution of oil and gas on the Lake that can affect the population of wildlife and change the quiet and peacefulness that it is today.

You should try to lower property taxes, we in Wisconsin are taxed enough. Tax more of the people who don't live in Wisconsin but have seasonal homes here. They buy land around our lakes, build big houses and then sell them, causing the taxes to go up and we in Wisconsin pay the price while out of state people sit back and laugh at us. Not fair to Wisconsin people is it? Keep the Northwoods the way God would be proud of it. I know I am right now.

Zoning should be limited. Landowners who pay taxes should have the right to use their land to its best potential.

Appendix C: Possible Implementation Tools

The following is a listing of potential methods (or tools) for implementing the comprehensive plan. Some may be more suitable than others for the Town of Stella and therefore discretion is advised in utilizing these tools.

Applicable Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Stella is under the jurisdiction of the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance. Some of the recommendations contained within this plan require less density or a larger lot size than would be allowed under the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance. In order to remedy this discrepancy, it is recommended that the Town and County coordinate their review procedures relative to lot size as part of the subdivision review process in accordance with the Implementation Activities. In 2001, Oneida County comprehensively revised the county zoning ordinance and the Town of Stella voted to stay within the jurisdiction of county zoning. Given that the Town of Stella has developed a comprehensive plan consistent with the requirements of state statutes, Oneida County may continue zoning enforcement activities after the consistency requirement becomes law in 2010.

Official Maps

The official maps for the Town of Stella are those maps held as official by the Oneida County government. Stella's thirty-six square mile area is regulated by maps associated with Oneida County ordinances.

Sign Regulations

Sign regulations are a function of the Oneida County Zoning Ordinance. The county has comprehensively addressed signage in the zoning ordinance. The county has established permit procedures and sign standards that are sufficient to address this issue, however, the Stella Planning Committee may wish to review the county standards as they apply to roads in the Town.

Erosion / Stormwater Control Ordinances

The Oneida County General Zoning and Shoreland Zoning Ordinance has provisions that apply to erosion control and stormwater management within the shoreland zone, which covers the majority of development in the town. The Town may wish to add additional erosion control provisions to the proposed land division code to clarify the requirements and administrative processes.

Historic Preservation Ordinances

Wisconsin Statute 60.64 provides the Town Board, in the exercise of police and zoning powers, for the purpose of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of the community and of the state, may regulate any place, structure or object with a special character, historic interest, aesthetic interest or other significant value for the purpose of preservation. The Town should consider the adoption of a historic preservation ordinance to protect historic structures.

Site Plan Regulations

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) typically are conditional uses applied to developments that are larger in scale or are used by a community to allow review of development proposals prior to any approvals for use or zoning. Plans for the proposed development should show the location, size, and proposed use of all structures and land included in the areas involved in the development. Individual drainage and landscaping plans are also typically provided as part of the review. Plans may provide for a combination of uses, including single family, multi-family, and commercial uses provided the plans indicate that:

1. The overall density of the project, defined as the number of living units per acre, does not exceed the regulations for the areas in which the development is located.
2. Streets, sidewalks, trails, etc., will be provided to adequately serve the development.
3. Adequate sewage and water facilities will be provided.
4. The development will be compatible with the surrounding land uses.
5. Adequate safeguards will be taken to ensure that parks and recreation areas are addressed.
6. Matters of potential concern such as signage, lighting, noise, and landscaping are addressed as part of the development review.

The Town has discussed this issue in regard to the preferred land use map. It is recommended the Town consider using provisions in the (county) zoning code or Town land division regulations when adopting Planned Unit Development provisions. The uses of PUD language in the ordinance will allow the Town to address matters of public concern and negotiate development conditions based on community values under the direction of the plan intent.

Design Review Ordinances

Building, Mechanical, and Housing Codes

The Town of Stella may explore the implementation of these types of codes, however it would be more appropriate if this were pursued by Oneida County as necessary. Each of these codes can be difficult to enforce and require professional inspection by trained and licensed inspectors. This type of administration can be cost-prohibitive for rural communities with limited revenues and large land areas. Even so, if problems continually arise due to construction failures, these ordinances may be necessary.

Sanitary Codes

The Town of Stella does not have a sanitary district or public sewer service available in the town. All wastewater treatment is done with private on-site wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) as permitted through the sanitary code of Oneida County and the State of Wisconsin. This ordinance is adopted to promote and protect public health, safety and welfare as well as groundwater and surface water supplies by assuring the proper siting, design, installation, inspection, maintenance and management of private sewage systems and non-plumbing sanitation systems.

In order to achieve these purposes, it is the intent of this ordinance to include, among other things, the following methods and strategies:

1. Developing a sanitary permit program that continues to ensure public health, safety and welfare to the residents and visitors of Oneida County.
2. Limiting the use of holding tanks to protect surface water and groundwater resources.
3. Maintain and improve the inspection and enforcement processes for new system installation.
4. Improve the maintenance and tracking program for systems previously installed as well as new systems installed each successive year.
5. Allow municipal ownership of systems servicing multiple structures on different parcels.

Oneida County is the governing entity with respect to the sanitary code. This code was recently updated for conformance with COMM 83 and no changes are proposed. The Town does not have any formal recommendations within this plan for provisions of public sanitary sewer or water services. It is unlikely the town will need public sewer within this 20-year plan despite the likelihood that the town may see clustered residential developments during this time.

Subdivision Ordinances

Oneida County, as part of its land use regulations, established language governing the division of land into smaller parcels (Subdivision Control Ordinance). The ordinance establishes minimum standards for when and how a land division shall take place. These standards are in addition to the county zoning and shoreland protection ordinance, and are effective throughout Oneida County, except the incorporated areas. Subdivision regulations require the developer or landowner to meet certain conditions such as complying with street and lot layout design standards in order to receive subdivision approval. A town's minimum lot sizes must be met under the zoning regulations, and the land division must meet the county requirements. The county subdivision ordinance defines subdivisions as the division of a lot, parcel or tract of land by the owner thereof or his agent for the purpose of transfer of ownership or for building development:

1. Where the act of division creates five or more parcels or building sites of 1½ acres each or less in area, pursuant to section 236.02(8) Wis. Stats.
2. All other divisions of land where two or more parcels of five acres each or less in area are created within a five year period.
3. Where two or more parcels of 10 acres each or less are created within a five year period and the lots are not served by a town road, county trunk, or state or federal highway.

The Town of Stella is under the jurisdiction of the Oneida County Subdivision Ordinance, but also subject to its own local Land Division ordinance. At a minimum, it is recommended that the Town work with the County to incorporate standards and a review procedure to deal with conformance to the Town plan during the review of land divisions. Overall, a land division ordinance is a planning tool to set minimum standards dealing with how, when, and if rural lands will be divided and developed. Properly administered subdivision regulations can be more useful in achieving planning goals than zoning ordinances.

The impact of land division (subdivision) regulations is also more permanent than zoning. Once land is divided into lots and streets are laid out, development patterns are set. Subdivision control ordinances often give a community its only opportunity to ensure that new developments are properly designed. The division of larger parcels to smaller parcels for the purpose of sale or transfer of ownership is certainly an issue in Stella. To address that issue, the preferred land use classifications all have different densities.

Section 236 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulates the division of land into lots for the purpose of sale or building development. Towns can adopt their own subdivision ordinances without county approval. In order to exercise this power, a town needs to have four things: a) village powers, b) land use plan-stating goals and objectives, c) planning committee/commission, and d) an ordinance. If there is a conflict between a county and a town land division ordinance, the proposed subdivision must comply with the most restrictive standard (*Wis. Stats.* 236.13 (4)). The land division ordinance is related to the zoning ordinance in that the zoning ordinance regulates the type (use) of development that takes place on a parcel and the land division ordinance regulates how the parcel is created and made ready for development. It must be stressed that a land division ordinance is not zoning in that it does not regulate permitted or conditional uses and/or setbacks.

Most importantly, the land division ordinance helps implement the land use plan. The basis of the approval of land division is its conformance or consistency with a local land use plan via density or the preferred land use classes. The land division ordinance may be the most effective method to implement proposed lot sizes that may differ from the zoning district that enforces the land use. The county may be reluctant to deal with large

lots on a countywide basis. Hence, the administration as well as enforcement may need to be accomplished by the Town of Stella.

In order to administer a land division ordinance, the Town must appoint a Planning Committee to review and approve division requests. Although it is ideal that land division codes and zoning codes (e.g., County zoning) be consistent with each other, there is no hierarchy of land use controls. Zoning does not take priority over the subdivision process or vice versa. Development approval must often proceed on two tracks: zoning approval and subdivision approval. In addition, the line between zoning and the regulation of subdivisions is not always clear.

A town land division code can provide the town the means to review and regulate new divisions of land to ensure consistency with the vision, goals, objectives, land protection criteria, and other recommendations of an adopted Town of Stella Year 2005 Comprehensive Plan. It can also allow or provide for review of divisions of land exempt from County subdivision requirements. For example, the division of a piece of property into less than five parcels or greater than 10 acres is generally not reviewed under the County code. A town land division ordinance would require administration and enforcement by the town. Therefore, local control of divisions of land would require town funding. It also adds a layer of government involved in regulating proposals for land divisions.

The alternative to a town land division code is to approach the County to amend the County land division code to ensure that new divisions of land are consistent with the town plan. Other town's may be in support of similar modifications and could provide political support for the changes. However, changes would affect the entire County and may not be politically supported by the County. In addition, any amendments may not be totally satisfactory to the town, since the County must balance its' own abilities to administer the code and also the needs of other local governments.

Appendix D: Lake Planning Attachments

Map D
Town of Stella
 Watershed Map
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



— Minor Civil Divisions
 — Watershed Boundary



2 0 2 4 Miles



Prepared April 2005 By:
**North Central
 Wisconsin Regional
 Planning Commission**

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

WHAT IS LAKE CLASSIFICATION?

(fact sheet #1 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)



BACKGROUND

Wisconsin is home to 15,000 lakes of varying types: from massive flowages to small town millponds, from highly developed urban lakes to undeveloped “wilderness” lakes. While the number of lakes is constant, the demand for use of these lakes has increased dramatically. In accordance with the many public demands and expectations, these lakes are used for all kinds of activities including permanent vacation homes, commercial development, hunting, fishing and boating. The primary use of Wisconsin lakes is enjoyment of their natural beauty and solitude. Needless to say, many of these uses can conflict with one another and threaten the quality of the lake experience.

We know from a wide variety of studies and from speaking to the folks who enjoy our lakes and lake shores that over use and over development of lakes can diminish water quality, natural fish reproduction, wildlife habitat, natural beauty and ultimately a positive recreation experience—the very things that people seek out when they visit lakes. While all lakes will suffer from over use and over development, the impacts will vary from lake to lake depending on its type, size, shape, location and other factors. As our population grows and pressures on our lakes increase, we need to decide how to satisfy increasing demand without harming our heritage of lakes.

A POTENTIAL SOLUTION

Resource classification is one of the basic tools used by resource managers. While each lake is unique and deserving of an individual management plan, it is impractical and unrealistic for broad units of government to strive to manage all lakes individually. Classification suggests that it makes sense to place lakes into categories with management strategies best suited to the types of lakes found in each category. For example, lakes can be classified to apply varying shoreland development standards.

Lakes can be grouped based on hydrology, average depth, surface area, shoreline configuration, as well as sensitivity to pollutants and recreational use. This is a rational approach which allows us to manage lakes in a manner which considers the lake’s capacity to support growth and development. The idea is that some categories of lakes are more vulnerable to problems associated with over use or are better suited to some uses than others. In recognizing these differences, a county or other unit of government is in a better position to implement appropriate management.

WHAT DOES LAKE CLASSIFICATION LOOK LIKE?

Following public input and data analysis, a county or other unit of government will likely develop three or more classes of lakes. The following categories describe the general characteristics of lakes which might fall within these classes.

Natural Environment Lakes/Wild Lakes

This category is designed to protect and enhance such qualities as natural beauty, diverse or unique wildlife and excellent water quality. These waters need special care because of their unique natural characteristics and because of their unsuitability for the densities of development and associated recreational uses which can occur under minimum state shoreland protection guidelines. These lakes are usually assigned the most restrictive development standards (i.e. large or clustered lots, deep setbacks, use restrictions).

Intermediate Lakes

These lakes, in spite of considerable shore and surface use, are relatively intact as natural resources. These lakes are managed compatibly with existing development patterns, but with the intent to prevent a transition to higher densities, which would potentially erode existing values. These lakes are generally characterized by light or moderate existing development densities, significant natural resource values, low maintenance fisheries, important wildlife habitat, and moderate sensitivity to shoreland disturbance.

General Development Lakes

These lakes have a high to moderate level of existing development. These lakes may possess the same physical and biological characteristics as transitional intermediate lakes, but due to size and shape and other factors, are more tolerant of shoreland development impacts. In other cases, these lakes are already so highly developed that changes to shoreland zoning are likely to be ineffective. This designation will most likely be assigned the least restrictive set of standards (although not less restrictive than state law). Management strategies for these lakes will be more restorative than preventive in nature.

Several counties in northern Wisconsin are experimenting with lake classification.

A new grant program, initiated by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and administered by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with assistance from the University of Wisconsin Extension provides funding and technical assistance for county lake classification projects. Citizens should participate in lake classification decisions that can provide lasting protection of our great natural resources.

Drafted by Carroll Schaal, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (608/261-6423).



For more information, contact your regional Department of Natural Resources lake coordinator, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes [800/542-5253] or UWEX/UW-Stevens Point [715/346-2116].

Common Questions

- 1. What's the difference between cutting trees along a residential shoreline and cutting trees along my forestland shoreline?**

In most cases, tree cutting done along a shoreline for residential purposes is usually done to permanently alter the shoreline in order to accommodate homes, lawns, etc. On the other hand, forest management usually includes periodic harvesting of trees - allowing new trees to grow in their place.
- 2. When do I need a zoning permit?**

Whenever you're planning to erect a structure or alter the land in some way such as cutting trees, grading soil, etc. you'll need to contact your local zoning administrator to determine permit requirements. Permits for certain activities (i.e. in-water activities or if a wetland is present) from your local DNR water management specialist may also be necessary.
- 3. Do I need a permit to cut trees?**

If you are going to cut trees along a shoreline, you need to contact your county zoning administrator first to find out the specific regulations are in your area. If you are going to sell wood products (saw-timber, pulp, firewood, Christmas trees, etc.) from any trees that are cut, no matter how far they are from the water, you must first file a cutting notice with the County Clerk (Chapter 26, Wis. State Statute).
- 4. A stream crosses my land. I've been told it might be "navigable." What does this mean?**

Navigable waterways are those which have a distinguishable bed (bottom or channel) and enough water (at least once each year) to regularly support navigation by a small craft. Local and state regulations apply to navigable waterways and adjacent land so it's important to check with DNR and local zoning authorities before starting any cutting or other projects in or near the waterway. The public also has certain rights such as recreation in navigable waterways.

Contacts & Resources

DNR Regional Headquarters

DNR regional foresters and water management specialists can be contacted through your regional DNR headquarters office:

Northeast Region: Green Bay 920-492-5800
West Central Region: Eau Claire 715-839-3700
South Central Region: Fitchburg 608-275-3266
Southeast Region: Milwaukee 414-263-8500
Northern Region: Spooner 715-635-2101
Rhinelander 715-365-8900

County Contacts:

For further information on county shoreland requirements, contact your county zoning administrator or view a county-by-county listing of ordinances on the DNR web site listed below.

Web resources:

DNR Shoreland Management Program (& county zoning links)
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/ds/fm/shore/title.htm

Wisconsin Forestry BMPs (DNR Forestry Bureau)
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/usesof/bmp/BMP.htm

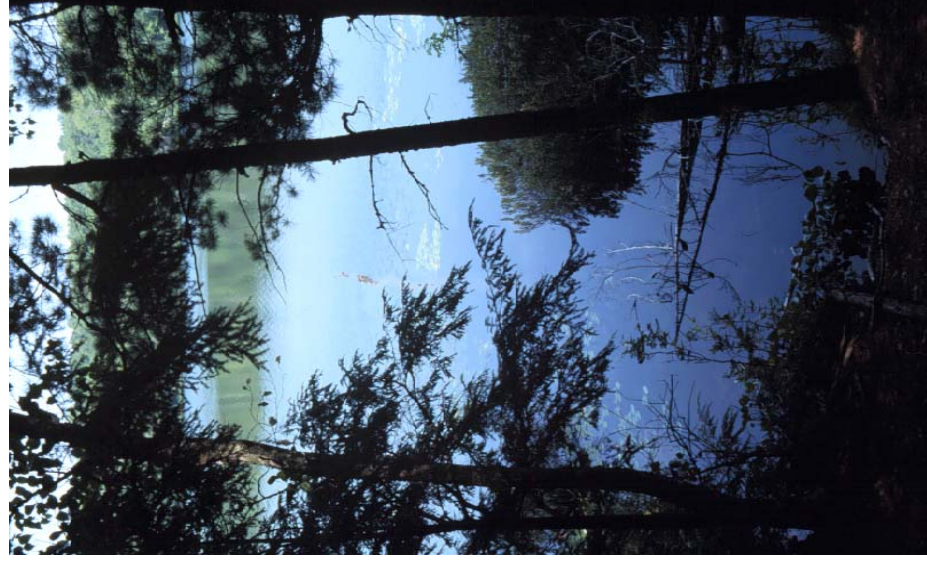
DNR Waterway & Wetland Permits
www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/fhp/waterway/index.htm

Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association
www.wisconsinwoodlands.org



Managing Wisconsin's Forested Shorelands

A Landowner's Guide



Sustainable Forests Protect Clean Water

From the shores of Lakes Michigan and Superior to the Mississippi River, Wisconsin is blessed with an incredible wealth and variety of lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams. The Badger state also abounds with forestlands, thanks to reforestation efforts in the last 100 years and the careful management of Wisconsin's public and private land managers. Wisconsin has 34.7 million acres, of which 16 million or 46 percent, are covered with trees.

These natural resources are important to the local economies and private forest owners; they are also home to Wisconsin's fish and wildlife which define the character of the state.

Protecting forest and water resources is critical for Wisconsin's citizens, tourists, and fish and wildlife that depend on them. Wisconsin has several programs designed to help private forest landowners sustain these resources and their livelihoods. This brochure describes how these programs can help you achieve your goals for your forestland while protecting water quality and meeting state law. The brochure also provides valuable information about contacts and key resources.

Managing Shorelands to Protect Lakes and Rivers

To protect Wisconsin's lakes and rivers, people who own land and forests along shorelines are required to follow rules governing how far structures must be set back from the water's edge, for removing trees from the shoreland, and for other activities that could affect water quality and habitat.

These rules have been in place for more than thirty years and are part of the partnership between state and local government. This partnership, known as the Shoreland Management Program, requires that certain activities near navigable lakes and streams meet statewide minimum standards. While DNR maintains oversight responsibility, each county shoreland zoning

ordinance must meet or be more protective than the minimum state standards found in ch. NR115 Wis. Adm. Code.

For the most part, these rules apply to unincorporated areas, particularly:

- Land within 1,000 feet of a navigable lake, flowage or pond, or
- Land within 300 feet of a navigable stream or the landward side of the floodplain (whichever is greater).

Activities which will be regulated on forested shorelands include:

- Controls on cutting shoreland vegetation;
- Standards for earth-moving activities; and
- Protection for wetlands.

Other activities regulated in the shoreland zone include:

- Setbacks for structures from waterways;
- Minimum lot sizes and land division review; and
- Restrictions on improvements to older structures that don't meet shoreland standards

For more information on statewide regulations, contact your DNR water management specialist (see back). For further information on county shoreland requirements, contact your county zoning administrator or view a county-by-county listing of ordinances on the DNR web site (see back).

Sustaining & Protecting your Forest Investment

Wisconsin's forests play a vital role in the economic and social well being of our state's landowners and visitors. By providing income from forest products, habitat for plants and wildlife, and aesthetics for recreation, our forests enrich the lives of everyone. Since the early days of the cutover, when Wisconsin's forests were heavily harvested, our forests have been steadily growing. Today our forests are comprised of larger, more valuable timber and better wildlife habitat than they were 80 or even 25 years ago. The

DNR's Division of Forestry is dedicated to maintaining and improving the health and quality of Wisconsin's forests today and for future generations. With a statewide network of educated, professionally trained foresters and staff members, the DNR provides technical forest management expertise on state and privately owned forests.

Since 1927, the Wisconsin DNR has been helping private landowners manage and protect their forests through forest management assistance programs.

Over the years, the assistance programs have evolved to include a wider range of natural resources.

Today's Managed Forest Law program considers not only trees but also water resources, soils, aesthetics, threatened and endangered species, and wildlife habitat. Participants in the Managed Forest Law program receive technical forestry assistance, a professionally prepared management plan and deferred property taxes. In addition, forested shorelands enrolled in the program are protected from development for 25 or 50 years.

To find out if your lands qualify for entry into the Managed Forest Law Program, contact your local DNR forester (see back).

Maximizing Water Quality Protection in Forest Activities

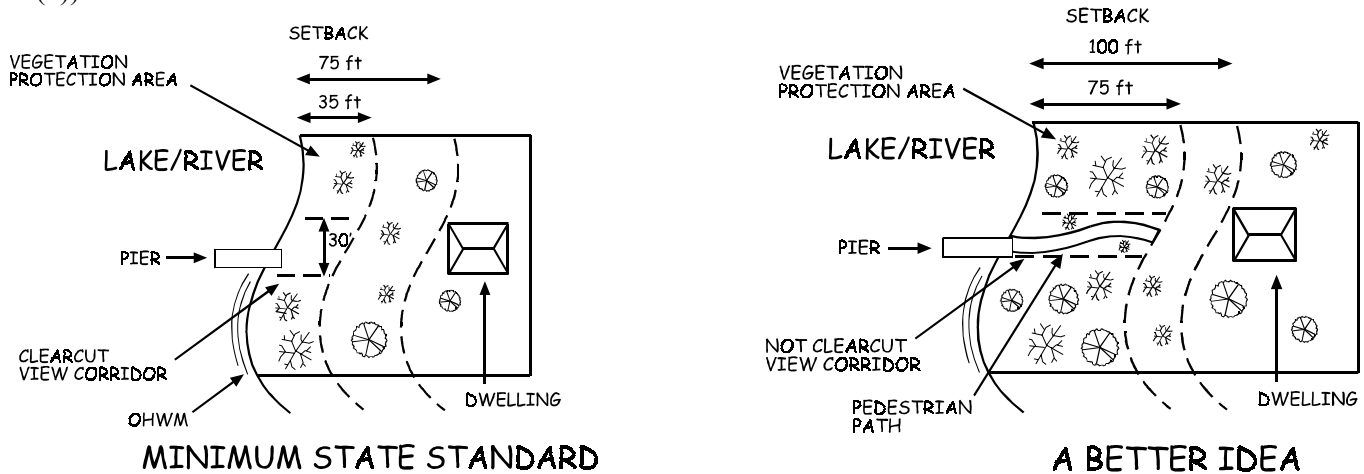
Wisconsin's forestry "Best Management Practices" or BMPs are voluntary guidelines to help loggers, landowners and natural resource managers minimize runoff resulting from forestry operations. The BMPs cover activities such as building roads and skid trails, installing stream crossings, and timber harvesting practices. The BMPs also include guidelines for managing forestland adjacent to rivers and lakes. The BMPs are described in the BMP Field Manual, available free from your local DNR Forester (and the DNR's website, see back). The BMP Field Manual also includes information on laws relating to wetlands, spills, and stream crossing permits. BMP education and training workshops are offered for private landowners, loggers and natural resource managers.

SHORELINE BUFFER ZONES AND SETBACKS

(fact sheet #5 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)

ISSUE:

Definitions: The **ordinary high water mark (OHWM)** means the point on the bank or shore where the presence and action of surface water is so continuous as to leave a distinctive mark by erosion, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, predominance of aquatic vegetation, or other easily recognized characteristic (Wis. Admin. Code § NR 115.03(6)).



Vegetated shorelines, heavy in brush, trees and diverse ground cover and larger setbacks:

- ❖ Stabilize the shoreline and help prevent runoff pollution from entering the waterway;
- ❖ Provide habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife;
- ❖ Normalize air and water temperature extremes in nearshore areas and within stream corridors, resulting in improved aquatic habitat; and
- ❖ Preserve a naturally beautiful shoreline.

MINIMUM STATE STANDARD:

Current minimum zoning standards require that in an area parallel to the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) extending 35 feet inland, **no more than 30 feet in any 100 feet of shoreline may be clear cut**. The result of this standard is that even if only two trees are left standing outside the permitted clear cut zone, the property will fall within current standards, to the detriment of wildlife habitat and water quality protection. Current zoning standards also require that **structures be set back at least 75 feet** from the OHWM (Wis. Admin. Code § NR 115.05(3)(c)).

OPTIONS:

Setback management should be considered in conjunction with revised standards for vegetation removal.

Leaving more shoreline vegetation intact will create a shoreline buffer which is more effective in curbing runoff pollution, providing for wildlife habitat, and preserving natural scenic beauty. Potential management strategies for creating a shoreline which provides homes for critters while protecting water quality are as follows:

1. Clear cut standard modification and larger vegetation protection area

Several counties have included more specific language in their ordinance regarding what kind of vegetation may be cut within the buffer zone or vegetation protection area (determined by measuring from the OHWM or from the building setback) and within the view corridor. These counties recognize that trees, shrubbery and ground cover are important to protect natural scenic beauty, wildlife habitat, and good water quality.

Potential performance standards for shoreline vegetation protection:

- ❖ Provide that within the vegetation protection area, or within 35 feet of the OHWM (and outside the view corridor), **dead, diseased or dying trees may be removed** only if they constitute a hazard.

- ❖ Modify “clear cut” standard for view corridor to provide that only a fraction of shore cover may be removed and the view corridor **shall not be clear cut**.
- ❖ **Specify the degree of vegetation which may be removed** within certain zones (i.e. 30% between 35 and 75 feet of the OHWM).
- ❖ Specify that within the area which may be cut, **no clearing of vegetation shall produce a clear cut** or open area in excess of a certain width (i.e. 30 feet).
- ❖ Require that land uses be **screened as viewed from the water** and that the scenic beauty of the shoreline be maintained.
- ❖ **Designate a pedestrian access path** of a certain width (i.e. 4 feet) within the viewing corridor.
- ❖ **Confine piers and wharves**, boathouses, shelters and lifts to view corridor.
- ❖ **Limit clear cut zone to 10 feet in width**.

2. Expansion of buffer zones

- ❖ Kenosha, Barron, Langlade, Waupaca, Marinette and Sheboygan counties apply shoreline cutting restrictions to expanded areas, ranging from 50 to 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark.

3. Expansion of buffer zones on specific bodies of water/classes of water

- ❖ Larger buffer zones may apply to specific bodies of water or in areas with unique ecological characteristics. Waushara County provides that the 35 foot strip from the OHWM where the clearcutting regulation is in effect is expanded to 60 feet in shorelands adjacent to Class I, II, and III trout streams.

4. Drainageway and wetland setbacks

- ❖ A county may provide that all buildings and structures be set back at least 40 feet from the landward edge of nonnavigable streams, wetlands and drainageways.

5. Larger setbacks

- ❖ Larger setbacks in combination with more shoreline vegetation left intact can create a shoreline buffer which is more effective in curbing runoff pollution, providing for wildlife habitat, and preserving natural scenic beauty.

EXAMPLE: For counties engaged in a lake classification project, setbacks and vegetation removal areas may vary with class.

| | Class 1 (most protected) | Class 2 | Class 3 (least protected) | Rivers/streams |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Shore setback | 125 feet | 100 feet | 75 feet | 100 feet |
| Vegetation protection area | 100 feet | 75 feet | 50 feet | 75 feet |

To learn about the value of a shoreline buffer for resource protection and wildlife habitat, see fact sheet #4.

References and other sources of assistance:

Standing, B.H, Bernthal, T.W. and Jones, S.A. 1997. Shoreland Zoning Resource Guide: An Annotated Model Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison.

For examples of ordinances recently adopted which address these issues, contact:

Langlade County: Becky Frisch (zoning administrator) (715-627-6206)

Waupaca County: David Rosenfeldt (zoning administrator) (715-258-6255)

Drafted by Tamara Dudiak, UWEX Lake Specialist (715/346-4744) tdudiak@uwsp.edu; Select ideas contributed by Mike Dresen; Graphics by Christopher Meyer.



For more information, contact your regional Department of Natural Resources lake coordinator, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes [800/542-5253] or UWEX/UW-Stevens Point [715/346-2116].

SHORE BUFFER AREAS... "WOODSMEN" SPARE THAT TREE!

(fact sheet #4 of the Shoreland Management and Lake Classification Series)



Aquatic Habitat Protection

- ❖ Woody and grassy vegetation along the shore provides an important source of energy for the aquatic system. Fallen twigs and leaves are broken down and digested by insects and microorganisms which in turn are consumed by fish and other predators at the top of the food chain.
- ❖ The near shore or littoral zone in a lake is critical in the support of fish and aquatic life by providing a source of food, cover and diverse habitat structure. Most Wisconsin lake fish need to spend part of their life cycle in the near shore zones for spawning and carrying out other essential life activities.
- ❖ Fallen trees in streams enhance the quality of the fishery. Tree canopy cover normalizes water temperature extremes, provides cover and creates habitat diversity.
- ❖ Shoreland plants in the form of roots, grasses and other types of vegetation help maintain shore stability and prevent bank and soil erosion.
- ❖ Shoreland vegetation traps polluted runoff and prevents silt from choking spawning beds and other productive areas within lakes and streams that are typically rich in aquatic life.

Riparian Wildlife Habitat Protection

- ❖ Many species of wildlife, from frogs and salamanders to a variety of birds and small mammals, are dependent on shoreline buffer areas. Shrubs and forested areas along shorelines are important nesting sites for several different kinds of songbirds while grassy areas provide nesting cover for waterfowl. Loons require undisturbed shorelines for nesting. Bald eagles require perch trees for nesting sites. Numerous amphibians and reptile species are dependent on areas of dense vegetation as a source of cover, shade and food.

Nutrient/Sediment Trapping and Water Quality Protection-The Sponge at Work!

- ❖ Residential development increases the flow of water and associated sediment and nutrients to a lake. The buffer area, if well vegetated, acts like a filter to trap excess sediment and nutrients and minimize water quality impacts from development. Densely vegetated shorelines can reduce the amount of nutrient laden sediment entering the waterway and prevent the degradation of habitat in stream beds and near shore zones.

Natural Scenic Beauty

- ❖ A University of Wisconsin-Extension study showed that lakefront property owners find peace and quiet and natural beauty to be by far the most important reasons to settle on lakeshores (Korth et al.,

1994). Shoreland zoning standards are designed to maintain natural scenic beauty by mandating a 75 foot setback and by limiting a property owner's ability to clearcut to a 30 foot wide view corridor. A community may enhance the view of a natural shoreline and minimize the visibility of shoreline structures by managing building density and by imposing vegetative protection standards.

How To Preserve and Restore That Buffer

Several factors (buffer size, soil type, and dominant vegetation) combine to form a buffer zone which is effective protection against runoff pollution while serving a variety of habitat needs. Consider these factors when developing a new lakeshore property or restoring existing property:

❖ Buffer Quality

Vegetation type is important for water quality protection and wildlife habitat.

Mowed lawns are less effective than natural vegetation in trapping nutrients, intercepting runoff, and preventing bank erosion. Flat stemmed turf grasses bend during runoff and are not effective sediment traps. Mowed lawns are often a significant source of nitrogen and phosphorus because of excessive fertilizer and pesticide applications and provide little habitat diversity for wildlife.

A natural mix of ground cover, shrubs and trees trap sediment more effectively than manicured lawns. Many native species have square, triangular or round stems (mint, sedge and reed families) and remain erect during rainstorms and persist throughout the winter to slow spring runoff and trap sediments and nutrients. Shorelines and nearshore zones which consist of a mix of vegetation types, from terrestrial to emergent and submergent vegetation, are likely to accommodate a host of fish and wildlife needs throughout the year.

Current vegetation cutting standards, which prohibit clearcutting outside of a view corridor, may still result in the removal of most shoreline plant cover. Shrubbery, trees (young, dead and dying), undergrowth and groundcover provide nesting and feeding sites, protection from predators and important structural complexity (**see fact sheet #5 for suggestions on vegetation protection standards**).

❖ Buffer Size

There is evidence to suggest that current shoreland zoning standards mandating a 75 foot setback and 35 foot buffer zone **may be insufficient** to fully protect against erosion and nutrient loading even when most vegetation is intact. The width of a 75 foot zone in terms of providing wildlife habitat is sufficient primarily for edge-adapted species while larger buffers provide greater benefit to wildlife (**see fact sheet # 5 for setback management strategies**).

References and Additional Sources of Assistance:

Korth, R., M. Dresen, and D. Snyder. 1994. *Lake Tides* survey. Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Stevens Point.

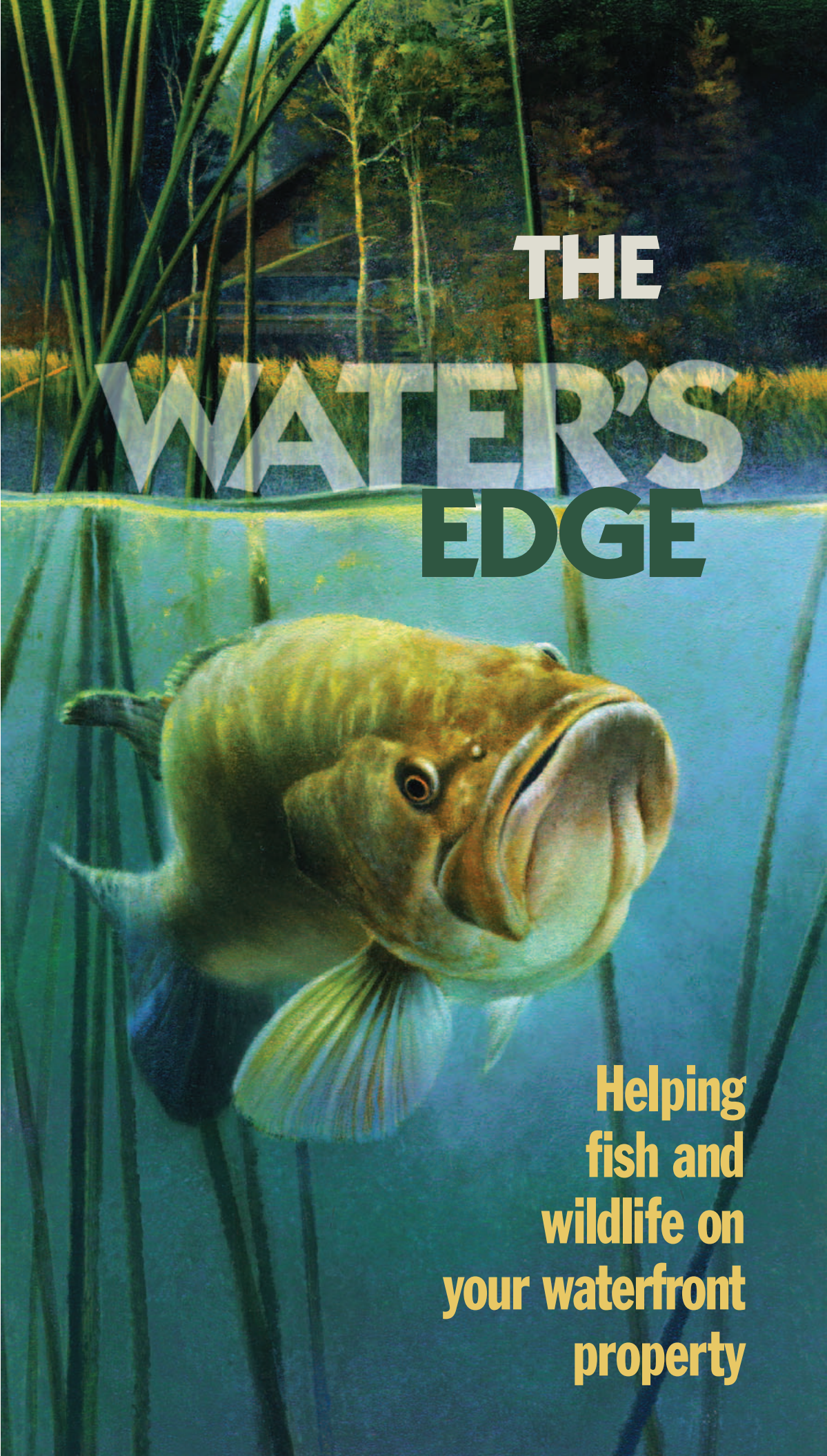
Dresen, M. 1995. *Shorelandscaping. A guide for waterfront property owners*. Wisconsin Lakes Partnership, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Stevens Point.

Bernthal, T.W., Barret, J.R. (ed). 1997. *Effectiveness of Shoreland Zoning Standards to Meet Statutory Objectives: A Literature Review with Policy Implications*. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Madison.

Drafted by Tamara Dudiak, UWEX-Lake Specialist (715/346-4744); tdudiak@uwsp.edu.



For more information, contact your regional Department of Natural Resources lake coordinator, the Wisconsin Association of Lakes [800/542-5253] or UWEX/UW-Stevens Point [715/346-2116].



**THE
WATER'S
EDGE**

**Helping
fish and
wildlife on
your waterfront
property**

Shoreline habitat

The water's edge is a busy place. Northern pike, bluegills, bass, and other fish spawn in the shallow water along the shore. Loons, ducks, geese, and other water birds nest along the banks. Wildlife such as frogs, otters, and mink live there, too. Shoreline areas—on land and into the shallow water—provide essential habitat for fish and wildlife that live in or near Wisconsin's lakes, rivers, and streams. Overdeveloped shorelands can't support the fish, wildlife, and clean water that are so appealing to the people attracted to the water's edge.

Unfortunately, that's exactly what's happening to many Wisconsin waterways. The problem is poorly planned shoreland development. Bit by bit, the cumulative effects of tens of thousands of waterfront homeowners "fixing up" their property are destroying one of our state's most valuable resources – its fragile lake and stream habitats. Some examples:

Sand trucked in for swimming beaches covers underwater gravel or silt used by:

- fish for spawning
- mayflies for burrows
- frogs for laying eggs.

Aquatic vegetation removed to create swimming and boating areas eliminates shoreline-stabilizing plants that are also habitat for:

- bass and other fish that hide among the plants and spawn in areas protected from waves
- loons that nest on floating vegetation
- waterfowl that feed on underwater plants
- insects that live among underwater vegetation.

Shoreline shrubs and "unsightly" fallen trees are removed to create golf course-type lawns, thus eliminating habitat for wildlife such as:

- songbirds that use these shrubs for nesting
- ducks that lay eggs in native shoreline grasses
- turtles that sun on fallen logs
- bass and panfish that hide in the shade under toppled trees.

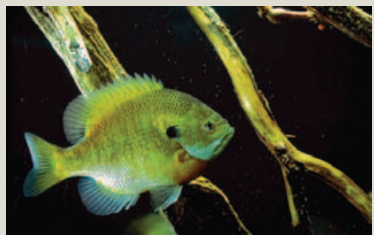
"If you destroy the natural shoreline habitat then fishing will get worse — and we cannot fix that situation simply by stocking or changing the fishing regulations. If you want great fishing — then you have to protect the fish habitat."

Mike Staggs

DNR Fisheries Director



In-Fisherman



In-Fisherman

“Clean” lawns can make dirty water

Owners of shoreland property often bring with them the traditional landscaping ideas centered on the conventional suburban yard that strives for the “clean” look of a golf course or a beach. Yet, besides eliminating fish and wildlife habitat, this type of landscaping also creates problems for homeowners such as:

- **Green water:** A mowed lawn sends rain runoff carrying fertilizers, pet waste, and lawn clippings to the water, where they fuel algae blooms that make swimming less enjoyable.
- **More erosion:** Water plants such as bulrushes, cattails, and coontail soften the erosive effects of waves along shores. Removing these plants increases erosion.
- **Nuisance wildlife problems:** Manicured lawns attract geese, which are grazers. In one week, an adult goose can produce 15 pounds of slippery, smelly droppings.

The combined effect of shoreland alterations by many property owners on a lake or river can destroy habitat and cause declines in fish and wildlife populations. It’s ironic that many waterfront property owners buy their lots because they enjoy nature and then unknowingly harm habitat by altering the natural landscape. Most species of fish and wildlife don’t thrive along sandy swimming beaches or on mowed lawns. They do best within the tangles of aquatic plants (“weeds”) and shoreline understory cover (“brush”) that waterfront residents frequently remove.

Landscaping that’s unfriendly to fish and wildlife

Rocky future

Rain that would seep into the soil flows more quickly off rocks and lawns straight into the water. The runoff carries pet waste, fertilizer, and other pollutants.

Sorry, songbirds

All natural vegetation along the water’s edge has been eliminated—and with it has gone the shrubs and grasses needed by birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

Make a New Wish, Fish

With all the aquatic vegetation gone, fish have no place to live. Waves will stir up sediment and destroy spawning areas.

The value of shoreline habitat

What can you do?

A growing number of waterfront dwellers are switching to native sedges and grasses, broadleaf groundcover plants, shrubs, subcanopy and canopy trees, instead of mowed lawns. In addition to helping wildlife, native plants require little to no maintenance, and will repel nuisance geese. That frees up more of your time to go fishing, watch wildlife, and otherwise enjoy being near the water.

Shoreline habitat consists of many natural elements woven into the aquatic ecosystem to form a web of life. Native vegetation, bottom materials, and natural debris play essential roles in the life cycles of fish and wildlife. Nearshore alterations that damage or destroy these habitat components sever essential strands in the web. As a result, the ecosystem is weakened, wildlife move elsewhere, and fish numbers decline.



Stephen J. Lang

Lightly developed shoreline = lots of fish and wildlife



Overdeveloped shoreline = few fish and wildlife



Amy B. Beyer

Buffer area

Nearshore vegetation provides habitat for many wildlife species. Waterfowl nest in shoreline grasses, while songbirds build their nests in trees and shrubs. Natural shorelines are wildlife highways, or travel corridors, for animals such as mink. Grasshoppers, ants, and other insects that live in shoreline vegetation are blown into the water, where they are eaten by bluegills and other fish.

A tidy lawn and a sandy beach make great spots for sunbathing and swimming, but they provide little habitat for fish and wildlife. By leaving a buffer area of natural vegetation along the shoreline, property owners can reduce erosion, help maintain water quality, and provide habitat and travel corridors for wildlife.

The width of the buffer strip depends upon the terrain. A significant body of research suggests that a 35-foot shoreland buffer is inadequate for several buffer functions. The wider the buffer the more wildlife habitat it can provide, especially for less common species. On a gentle slope, having **at least** 35 to 50 feet of natural vegetation between the water's edge and your mowed lawn will accommodate the needs of some shoreline wildlife. On steeper grades, leaving even more natural vegetation in place will stabilize soils and reduce the need for retaining walls or other erosion prevention. Trees and shrubs in the buffer strip can muffle noise from watercraft, provide increased privacy for residents, and provide nesting areas for songbirds.

Avoid using pesticides or fertilizers in the buffer area, because harmful chemicals can leach into the water. Pesticides kill beneficial insects living in shoreline vegetation that are important foods for fish, birds, and other wildlife.

Along your shoreline, try to maintain a buffer of at least a 35 to 50 feet of native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees. Healthy nearshore areas typically contain a canopy layer of trees like sugar maple, white pine, or red oak, a mid-canopy layer of smaller or younger trees such as ironwood, hazels, and willows, and a ground layer of shrubs, ferns, forbs, and grasses. Beneficial aquatic plants include bulrushes, wild rice, arrowhead, cattails, and bur reeds.



Have your lawn—and wildlife, too.

You don't need to give up your lawn and dock to create a natural, wildlife-friendly shoreland.

If you have 100 feet of shoreline, consider reverting at least 70 feet back to its natural condition and keeping no more than 30 feet for a view corridor, boat dock and swimming area. Additionally, if you restore the last 35 feet or more down to the water to natural grasses and shrubs, you can still keep some lawn up near the house or cabin while helping frogs, ducks, songbirds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

Woody cover

What can you do?

Leave fallen trees in the water to provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

Because most Wisconsin lakes and rivers are surrounded by trees and shrubs, storms and winds often blow woody “debris” (i.e., branches, limbs, and trees) into the water. This fallen wood is more than just debris, it forms critical habitat for tiny aquatic organisms that feed bluegills, turtles, crayfish and other critters. Water insects such as mayflies graze on the algae that grow on decomposing wood. Dragonfly nymphs hunt for prey among the stems and branches. Largemouth and smallmouth bass often find food, shelter, or nesting habitat among these fallen trees.

Above water, a fallen tree is like a dock for wildlife. Ducks and turtles loaf and sun themselves on the trunk. Muskrats use the tree as a feeding platform. Predators such as mink and otter hunt for prey in the vicinity of the tree. Dead trees that remain along the shoreline are used as perches by belted kingfishers, ospreys, and songbirds.

Many waterfront residents consider this woody cover unsightly and remove it from their shoreline. In northern Wisconsin, undeveloped lakeshores contain one log for every five feet of shoreline, while tree-falls may entirely disappear on highly developed lakes. Yet this takes away hiding and feeding areas for many fish and wildlife species. Unless the fallen tree is a hazard to navigation or swimming, consider leaving it in the water to provide fish and wildlife habitat, fishing, and wildlife observation.

Waterfowl, turtles, and other wildlife use fallen trees as loafing sites.



Bottom materials

Local geography and geology determine what natural materials exist on lakebeds, riverbeds and shorelines. Hard bottoms and beaches made up of sand or gravel are usually in open areas exposed to waves. Soft bottoms composed of muck are usually in shallow, sheltered bays. Areas with lots of rocks and boulders were left by receding glaciers 10,000 years ago.

Bottom material, called substrate, is used by fish and other aquatic life. Walleyes spawn on the clean gravel of wave-swept shorelines. Mucky bottoms support insects and other invertebrates that provide food for fish and wildlife. Crayfish, smallmouth bass, and other species hide and forage among rocks.

Pure sand is the least ecologically productive bottom substrate. Yet waterfront dwellers frequently buy property and then alter the shore and bottom by dumping sand to improve a swimming area. Creating sand beaches on soft bottoms is expensive, and covering rock-rubble bottoms with sand destroys fish spawning areas.

Before creating a beach, waterfront owners should know that their shoreline alteration will take away fish and wildlife habitat from the entire shoreland ecosystem and will require a permit from the DNR or county zoning office.

What can you do?

- **When buying property, look for shoreline and lake bottom that match your desires. Don't expect to change it into something it isn't.**
- **If you have a sandy beach, reduce its size to allow for more natural shoreland and underwater vegetation.**

Rock and gravel bottoms are important spawning areas for game fish such as walleyes and forage species such as suckers, darters, and some minnows.



Aquatic vegetation

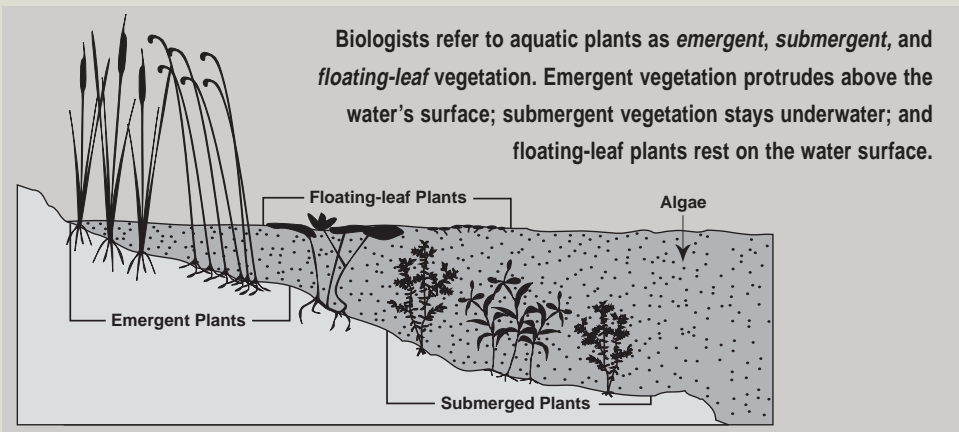
Often dismissed as “weeds” by many waterfront property owners, aquatic plants provide essential fish and wildlife habitat and help keep waters clean and healthy. Through photosynthesis, aquatic vegetation produces oxygen for the lakes and rivers. These plants also use nutrients that might otherwise fuel midsummer algae blooms. A diverse complement of aquatic plants provide food for waterfowl and are a tremendously important aspect of nearshore habitat for many fishes. Plants provide habitat for the invertebrates fish feed on. Fish such as northern pike and yellow perch lay their eggs on aquatic plants. They also provide food, shelter, and nesting areas for fish, invertebrates, and wildlife.

Removing aquatic vegetation to improve boating or swimming eliminates fish habitat and damages the root network that holds bottom sediments in place. For example, bulrushes help trap silt carried by waves from covering bottom gravel used by bass and panfish for spawning. When bulrush beds are removed, unchecked waves begin to erode previously protected shorelines.

Wave action and boat wakes also stir up sediment, causing the water to become murky. If sunlight cannot penetrate the cloudy water, many healthy and vibrant lakes and rivers can eventually turn into a green soup, devoid of most desirable fish and wildlife species.

What can you do?

- **Leave aquatic plants along your shoreline.**
- **Explore options for re-establishing aquatic plants along your shoreline.**
- **If you must remove plants, limit their removal to an area needed for boat access.**



Shoreline vegetation provides critical habitat for many aquatic insects to complete their life-cycle, such as these mating damselflies.



Robert Korth

Wetlands

Shoreline wetlands are habitat for a diverse community of plants and animals such as northern pike, which spawn among aquatic vegetation. Nutrient-rich sediments and soils in wetlands support insects, frogs, and other small animals eaten by fish and wildlife. Wetland vegetation provides food and cover for waterfowl, muskrats, and other wildlife.

Wetlands help keep lakes and rivers clean by filtering sediments and excess nutrients. Acting like natural sponges, wetlands slow down water. This function reduces flooding, stabilizes stream flows and lake levels, and provides recharge for groundwater.

Marshes, bogs, bulrush beds, and other shoreline wetlands have been disrupted by waterfront property owners to create boat docks and swimming beaches. The loss of wetlands leads to poorer water quality, lower fish and wildlife populations, and more frequent flooding.

What can you do?

- **Don't fill or alter wetlands, even if they're only wet in the spring.**
- **Consider restoring drained or filled wetlands.**

S. Nielsen



Healthy wetlands attract nesting and migrating waterfowl.

We're all responsible

It's up to everyone who values Wisconsin's waters to keep them healthy and productive. Many waterfront dwellers wonder what difference alterations to their single lot could possibly make. But when the actions of dozens or hundreds of individual property owners are added up, the sum effect can alter the habitat and water quality on that waterbody. The cumulative harm from shoreline alterations by many shoreland property owners affects swimming, fishing, wildlife watching, and the overall health of our water resources.

It's like walking in a garden. If a neighbor kid came through once, that would be no big deal. But if the whole neighborhood came through, your garden would be trampled.

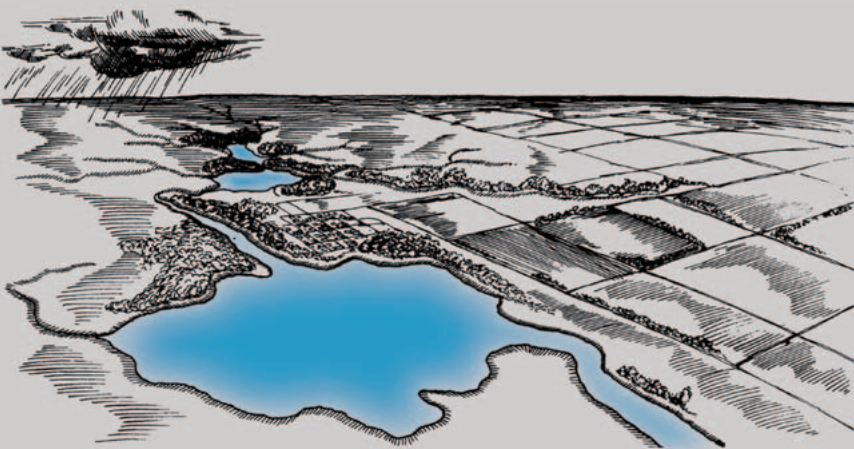
Chris Frieburger



Trees, bushes, and other native plants are often cut down to make room for houses and lawns. When multiplied around a shoreline, this destruction threatens the natural quality of Wisconsin lakes and rivers.

Protecting watersheds

A watershed is a basin that collects water from the landscape surrounding, a lake or river. A healthy lake or river depends on a healthy watershed. Logging, farming, livestock grazing, and urban development occurring in a watershed can affect water quality. Some lake and river associations map their watershed to inventory and evaluate activities taking place there. When activities that degrade water quality are discovered, people living in the watershed work together to find a solution.



Pollutants and eroding soil within the entire watershed can easily end up in surface waters. Poor land use even several miles away can end up harming fish and wildlife habitat.

Prescription for healthy waters

More things to know:

Several state and county laws and rules protect shoreland and shallow water areas. For example, statewide, it is illegal to build most structures within 75 feet of the shore, or to place fill on lake beds. Shoreland Management is a partnership between state and local government. Each county has its own shoreland zoning ordinance that regulates development near navigable lakes and streams, in compliance with statewide minimum standards. Additionally, many of the counties' ordinances are more protective than the minimum state standards, so check with your local county zoning office before cutting or removing shoreline vegetation. To learn which shoreline alterations are prohibited or require a permit, call your local DNR or County Zoning Office.

Healthy lakes and rivers are necessary for functioning ecosystems. The water is safe for swimming and fishing. The aquatic habitat supplies food, cover, and spawning areas for fish. Natural shoreline vegetation supports songbirds, small mammals, and other wildlife. Throughout the watershed, land management activities are planned to minimize impacts to water quality.

A healthy lake or river doesn't just happen. Shoreline property owners and others living in the watershed must take steps to ensure the ecological health of lakes and rivers. Only if more waterfront owners manage their shoreline in a natural condition can fish and wildlife populations on Wisconsin lakes and rivers stay healthy and abundant.



Kathleen Preece

Good fishing doesn't just happen. It's the result of clean water and abundant spawning habitat found in lakes and rivers that still have plenty of natural shoreline.

For more information

The DNR, University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension Service, and County staff can help you restore natural aquatic and shoreline wildlife habitat on your waterfront property. Give us a call and we'll show you and your neighbors how to plan restoration projects and improve the habitat along a waterfront. Contact your local DNR service center



to request information. DNR water management specialists and county zoning staff will be happy to explain the rules and how property owners can design their project so that it meets personal and environmental concerns and can possibly avoid the need for a permit. For further information check the the UW-Extension clean water web site (clean-water.uwex.edu) or the DNR waterway and wetland permits page at www.dnr.wi.gov/org/water/fhp/waterway/

Other helpful publications are:

Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality (180 pages, \$19.95, available from the Minnesota Bookstore at 1-800-675-3757). Wisconsin DNR staff recommend this book as the best detailed planning guide available for shoreland restoration in Wisconsin.

The Living Shore, a 17-minute video produced by UW-Extension and University of Minnesota Extension showing the importance of leaving a natural 'buffer zone' between the lake and lake owners' dwellings, and providing information about selecting and planting shoreline plants. Call the Wisconsin Association of Lakes (1-800-542-LAKE) to order a copy for \$15 plus \$2 in shipping, or check your local library for a copy.

Shoreland Stewardship Series. This is the fourth in a series of publications describing the impacts of shoreland development on water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat, and includes recommendations for waterfront property owners to limit those impacts. Available from UW-Extension, publications # GWQ027, #GWQ038, #GWQ039, and #GWQ041, or from the DNR, publications #FH-429, WT-748, WT-764 and WT-802.

Life on the Edge... Owning Waterfront Property, a comprehensive guide for waterfront property owners covering topics ranging from selecting the right property to understanding land and water regulations. Available from UWEX-Lakes Program, College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point at (715) 346-2116 or at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/uwexlakes/

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The Water's Edge - Helping fish and wildlife on your waterfront property

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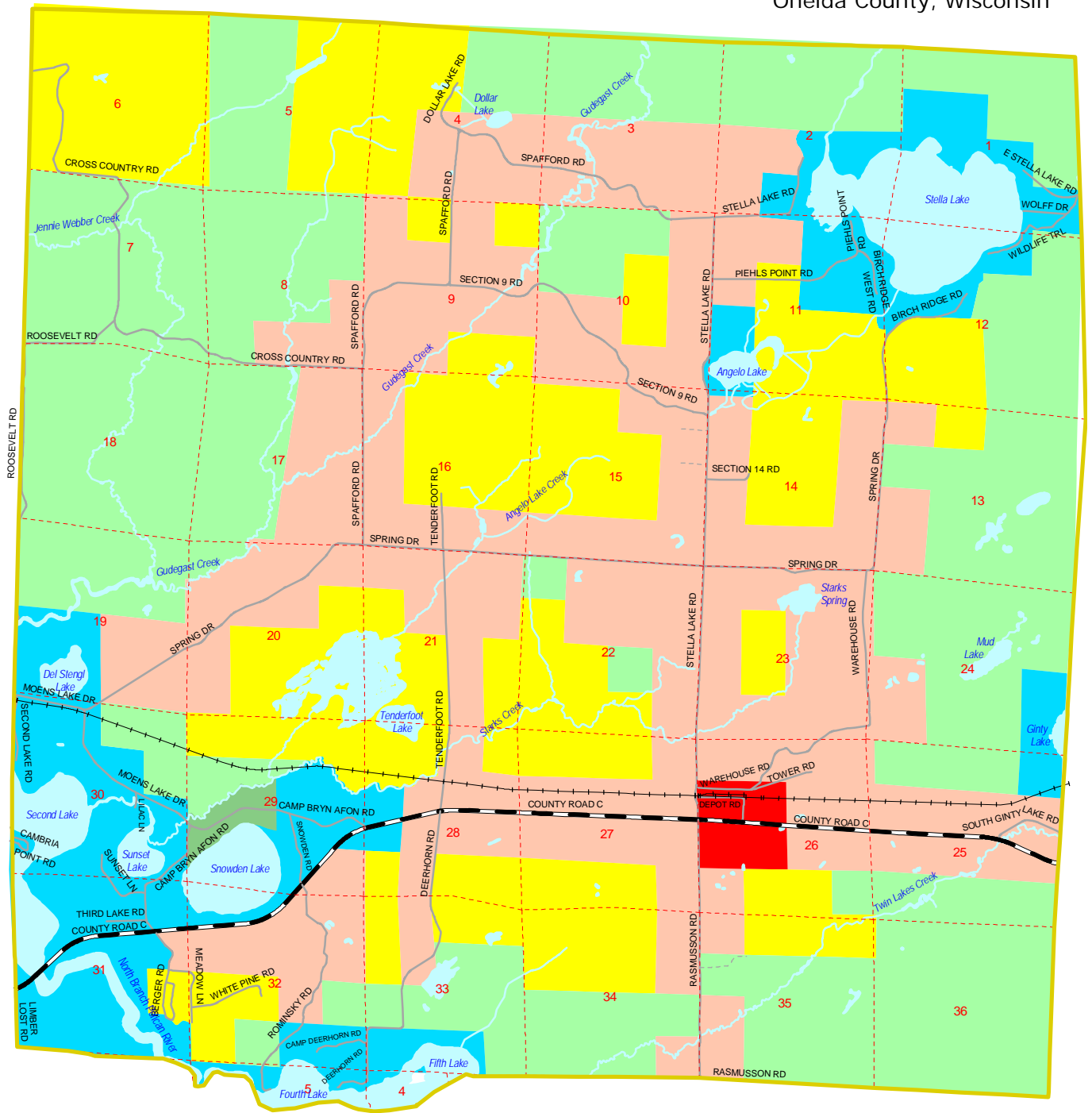


University of
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UWEX publication GWQ040



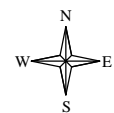
Appendix E : Existing Zoning Map

Map E
 Town of Stella
 Existing Zoning
 Oneida County, Wisconsin



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- Town Boundary
- Section Lines
- US & State Highways
- County Highways
- Local Roads
- Private / Other
- Railroads
- Business B-2
- Forestry
- Forestry 1B
- Residential & Farming 4B
- Rural Residential
- Single Family
- Water



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles

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