

Foth Infrastructure & Environment, LLC
Meeting Notes

Natural Resources Focus Group
Burnett County Comprehensive Plan

Date: October 15, 2008

Location: The Lodge at Crooked Lake, Siren, WI

Present: Robin Maercklein, *National Park Service*; Arthur Bistram, *Town of West Marshland*; Bob Hartshorn, *WDNR*; Jim Evrard, *Certified Wildlife Biologist (Ret.)*; Tom Fredrickson, *USDA-NRCJ*; Paul Martin, *WDNR*; John Haack, *UWEX*; Ann Lane, *LWCD*; Dianne Gravesen, *BCHS*; Roger Noe, *BCLRA*; Shaun Mularkey, *Foth*; Mike Kornmann, *UWEX*

Notes By: Shaun Mularkey, Foth; Mike Kornmann, UWEX

The meeting began with introductions and a presentation on the Burnett County Comprehensive Planning process, data and trends, and major issues relative to Natural Resources as identified by the county Comprehensive Planning Committee. These issues were discussed and validated and the following questions were discussed in detail:

Questions:

- I. What does the term “Natural Resource” mean to you?
 - Native flora and fauna
 - Scenic/visual resources
 - Historic sites – Forts Fole Avoine
 - Soil and water
 - Namekagon barrens
 - Forest
 - Wild rice – gain in acres on state lands, decrease in near shores, impact for Tribe
 - Wild blueberries
 - Fish Lake Wildlife Area
 - Amsterdam Slough
 - Sedge Meadows
- II. What is the overall state of the natural resources in Burnett County?
 - Shorelines continue to be impacted – shoreline development, runoff and lake of stormwater controls, resistance to enforcement of rules
 - Forests – diseases present, but overall healthy
 - Access wild rice resources and link to shoreline protection
- III. What are the driving forces that could affect the natural resources in Burnett County over the next 20 years either positively or negatively (i.e. trends, threats, opportunities)?

- ATV traffic – erosion issues, fire danger in spring, enforcement challenges (lack of staff), lack of state wide effort and enforcement, large impact, illegal trail activity, private land impacts, mud from ATVs introduce invasives – affects trail location
- Weekend boat use is trending toward tubers and skiers where previously it was mostly fishing and personal watercraft
- Urban values – Lack of respect for hunting and lack of understanding of forestry practices
- Fragmentation of forest land changes hunting patterns and access
- High deer numbers affect the ability to grow certain plant species

IV. What challenges are facing forestry on public and private lands?

- Population growth – how we grow our economy makes a difference
- Recreational development challenges and use conflicts – need for better management and/or emphasis on sustainable approaches
- Forests are fire prone every spring – uninformed seasonal residents; homes need to be built, situated on lots, and have proper access to be “fire protected”.
- Forest management brings in a million dollars to the County annually
- Many people do not understand that short-lived tree species can be cleared and harvested and see it as anti-environmental. Need education on forest management
- Fragmentation of forests makes education/management more difficult for private land: 5-acre lots is not the answer for private development

V. What resources are not being protected or conserved?

- Views – need to do a better job screening unsightly uses such as junk yards
- Need more enforcement of rules that exist – ATV use, aquatic invasive species, etc.

VI. Which recreational activities are under-supported through lack of infrastructure in the county?

- Eco-tourism
- Biking/bike lanes, Gandy-Fort connection, connection with rustic roads
- More parks