

**FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN**  
**Oneida County**  
**2015**

April 2015

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North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

## ONEIDA COUNTY FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN

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Oneida County Land and Water Conservation would like to thank the following individuals who gave of their time by providing valuable input for this plan.

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND

In 2010 agriculture constituted a \$59 billion industry in Wisconsin. Farmland around the country is being lost at an alarming rate, and once it is gone we cannot get it back. Because of the economic importance of agriculture in Wisconsin and the potential for loss of our agricultural land base, farmland preservation planning is crucial to preserve the agricultural land remaining the State.

Much of the best agricultural areas in the nation are located in the upper Midwest, stretching from Ohio to the Dakotas. While Wisconsin does not contain as much prime farmland areas as some of the other upper Midwest states, there are still many areas where agriculture is important.

Despite its importance, agriculture faces many challenges, especially in the Northwoods, where the main challenge is a shorter growing season. Other challenges to maintaining successful agriculture are the acidic sandy soils that developed under pine forests; and shallow depth to groundwater, which restricts many agriculturally cultivated plants from growing.

### B. OVERVIEW OF WLI/FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLANNING

Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative (WLI) was adopted in 2009 as part of the 2009-2011 biennial budget. The law is specified in Chapter 91 of Wisconsin State Statutes. The main components include:

1. Modernization of the state's farmland preservation plans;
2. Establishment of agricultural enterprise areas;
3. Increased tax credit opportunities and certainty of credit value; and
4. Development of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

A Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) provides a vision and guidelines for future growth, development, and land preservation in the County. The plan functions as the primary policy document setting forth directions for how the County intends to preserve agricultural production capacity, farmland, soil and water resources, and rural

character. These plans also review the economic and cultural importance of agriculture in the County. One of the primary components of a FPP are detailed maps that identify farmland areas for preservation based on established criteria.

#### C. OVERVIEW OF 1983 PLAN

The most recent Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) was adopted in 1983. The dated plan is simply a listing of how conservation standards would be met in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes. Landowners would make sufficient annual progress to ensure that the standards would be met by the end of the schedule of compliance. Each participant would certify in writing every year that they were complying with the soil and water conservation standards required in the plan.

#### D. PLAN MAINTENANCE AND AMENDMENT

The Farmland Preservation Plan is an element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. On December 31, 2015, the 1983 farmland preservation plan is set to expire. This 2015 farmland preservation plan is intended to fulfill the statutory requirements for both the Farmland Preservation Plan (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) and the Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan (§66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.).

Wisconsin Statute §66.1001 requires that an adopted plan be reviewed and updated at least once every ten years. This is not a static plan, but one that may change over time. Changing land uses, policy changes, regulatory changes, or shifting economics are some reasons to review if this plan is still current.

See Chapter 7, under: "PLAN AMENDMENTS AND CONSISTENCY" for details about how this plan is consistent with the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan.

## CHAPTER 2 – PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process considers existing and future agricultural conditions, the local economy, existing and future growth trends, and current and future prospective participation in the program. The plan tries to coordinate all of this with other agencies who work with landowners, as well as offer the public the opportunity to have input into the planning process. This chapter will discuss the planning process, including public participation.

### A. REQUIREMENTS

The Farmland Preservation Plan must address certain elements as specified in Chapter 91, Wis. State Statutes. There are several required plan elements to develop the farmland preservation plan. Once certified by the state, landowners become eligible for various programs, which includes income tax credits.

Several meetings were held during the development of this plan. All meetings were held in a public place, easily accessible, and in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. They were advertised well ahead of time, with phone numbers and names of contact persons in case of questions or comments. A public hearing was held as part of the formal plan adoption process and this too was published as required by law. Several objectives were met by holding these meetings: Participants of all races, ethnic backgrounds and economic levels had an equal opportunity to voice their opinion and be involved in the process.

All residents of Oneida County had an opportunity to be aware of the planning process through the advertisement of the meeting and the stated objective of the Farmland Preservation Plan and mapping criteria. Residents were also offered the opportunity to call or write to voice their comments if they were not able to make them in person. Public involvement strengthens the sense of vested interest in the success of the process and in the community as a whole.

## B. PLANNING PROCESS

The Oneida County Farmland Preservation Plan was developed during calendar year 2014 in cooperation with the North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

To assist in the revision of the Farmland Preservation Plan, Oneida County Land and Water Conservation Department invited participation from a variety of resource protection agencies as well as local farmers. They discussed farming issues and mapped where farmland should be preserved over the next 15 years. An *Advisory Committee* (AC) was assembled and met on two occasions during the 2014 calendar year. AC members are listed on the back of this plan's cover.

A chronological history of the plan update activities is as follows:

- May – July, 2014 – Development of draft plan text and initial maps.
- July 29, 2014 – the first Advisory Committee (AC) meeting was held at the courthouse in Rhineland and 5 people attended.
  - Mapping criteria established; and
  - Goals, objectives, and policies created.
- September 11, 2014 – a second AC meeting was held at the courthouse in Rhineland, and 5 people attended.
  - Sample maps based upon mapping criteria were reviewed and mapping criteria was revised and approved;
  - Goals, objectives, and policies revised and approved; and
- October 20, and November 10, 2014 – Draft Farmland Preservation Plan reviewed by Extension and Land Use Committee. Farming trends and agricultural infrastructure discussed. Public hearing date set. Draft plan and public hearing notice sent to DATCP for initial plan review.
- November, 2014
  - Class I Notice published in the newspaper for the January 6, 2015 Public Hearing; and
  - Each town mailed notice of the Public Hearing.
  - Draft plan and maps available for public review online.
- January 6, 2015 – Public Hearing for Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Spring 2015 – Adoption of the plan by the Oneida County Board of Supervisors, and DATCP sends letter adopting the plan.

## CHAPTER 3 - EXISTING CONDITIONS

### A. ISSUES AND TRENDS

This chapter provides a brief summary of the existing conditions and where agriculture is headed in Oneida County. Some of this information was taken from Committee members, the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan, the Oneida County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, and staff and farmers within Oneida County.

The Conservation & UW-EX Education Committee met in October and November 2014, and provided the following assessment of issues and current trends.

#### **Issues and Concerns:**

- Concern that DNR is no longer issuing permits for lateral shallow wells or conventional wells for agriculture. Access to water for agricultural production is necessary, so without receiving approval for wells, then agricultural production will decline.
- Water quality is a concern among rural and lake residents on private wells, that their wells may be contaminated by adjacent land uses (either agriculture or dense housing)

#### **Trends in farming practices:**

- Increase in farmer's market attendance. People want to buy locally.
- More hobby farms are developing to take advantage of consumers willing to buy locally.
- Organic farming is increasing, and consumers are willing to pay a premium for their products.

### B. ANTICIPATED DIRECTION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE COUNTY

Growing potatoes and cranberries are two of the main agricultural enterprises in Oneida County. Additional enterprises include beef production, Christmas tree growing, maple syrup production.

Current trends in Oneida County show that potato production will continue as it has for over 50 years, centered around the Town of Sugar Camp. Potato development is supported by the Rhinelander Agricultural Research Station, also known as the UW Lelah Starks Potato Breeding Farm, located in the Town of Stella, and two commercial seed potato research farms operated by Frito-Lay, one in the Town of Stella and the

other in the Town of Three Lakes. Sowinski Farms has a seed potato farm in the Town of Stella. All of the machinery, repair services, growing inputs, and crop storage necessary for potato production are available in the Rhinelander area and the Towns of Stella up through Three Lakes in Oneida County. Potato storage exists and is projected to continue in the Town of Sugar Camp into the foreseeable future. All potato processing is projected to continue outside of Oneida County.

Cranberries are grown in the Towns of Newbold, Three Lakes, and Stella, with most of the machinery, inputs, crop storage, and processing originating in Wood County. Oneida County projects that cranberry production will increase wherever beds can be developed, so with much of the county having a shallow depth to groundwater, then many places throughout the county are possible for new bogs.

## C. NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

### 1. Landscape

Oneida County is located in northeastern Wisconsin and is bounded on the north by Vilas County, on the east by Forest County, on the south by Langlade and Lincoln Counties, and on the west by Price County. The county is approximately 779,235 acres in size, with about 68,447 acres of surface water. The county contains 1,129 lakes and 830 miles of rivers and streams.

Oneida County is divided between two ecological landscapes; the Central Sand Plains Landscape and the Western Coulee & Ridges Landscape. The Northeast portion of the county is characterized by flat, sandy plains that were once the bed of Glacial Lake Wisconsin. The southwest portion of the county is characterized by highly eroded, unglaciated topography. Steep valleys are heavily forested. Agricultural activities, primarily dairy and beef farming are typically confined to valley floor and ridge tops. Soils are typically silt loams and sandy loams in the uplands and alluvial or terrace deposits in the valley floors. Much of the soil is very sand in nature which provides for excellent infiltration during periods of heavy rainfall and snow melt.

Oneida County's landscape is the result of several glacial advances and retreats that took place over northeastern and central Wisconsin some 12,500 to 20,000 years ago. As a result of this activity, there are numerous and inconsistent soil variations, numerous unique geologic and topographic features emerged, such as extensive ground moraines in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the county, a remnant end moraine near Rhinelander, and a number of parallel ridges adjacent to drumlin

fields in Forest and Langlade Counties. The physical landscape is defined not only by forest, wetlands, streams, woodlots, hills, and other natural features, but perhaps most by the density of the lake area in the northern part of the county, which, with Vilas County, is one of the most extensive lake districts in the world.

## 2. Natural Resources

Groundwater quality in Oneida County is generally good. The impact of development and agriculture may cause deterioration or contamination of the groundwater. However, some areas have exceeded the preventative action limit for Nitrogen. Some common sources of nitrate contamination include individual septic systems, sewage treatment plants, fertilizers and animal waste. Ninety five percent of the 606 private well samples collected in Oneida County between 1990 and 2006 met the health-based drinking water limit for nitrate-nitrogen.

Oneida County has 1,129 lakes covering over 68,000 acres, and over 830 miles of streams. The general water quality is good; however, eutrophication is an issue during the summer months. A number of the waters are classified as Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters and a few are classified as Impaired Waters.

Oneida County has a variety of environmentally sensitive landscapes. Steep slopes, wetlands, habitat for threatened and endangered species, and floodplains are all sensitive to development activity. The ecological functions served by these are important and may be difficult or impossible to replace.

Based on data contained in Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory, there are 51 known rare or endangered plant and animal species and natural communities in Oneida County. The Nicolet National Forest and the Northern Highlands—American Legion State Forest contain the densest population of these species with scattered populations existing in the rest of the County. Some of the unique and protected species that can be found include bald eagles, osprey, spruce grouse, American marten, and wood turtle.

Over 213,790 acres of the County are defined as wetlands (27% of the total land area). Wetlands provide habitat for wildlife, store water to prevent flooding, and protect water quality, yet they continue to be destroyed and degraded as they are drained and filled for agriculture and development.

Oneida County has 18 State Natural Areas and two State Wildlife Areas. Both distinctions are designated by the Department of Natural Resources. State Natural Areas are set to protect outstanding examples of native natural communities, significant geological formations, and archaeological sites, while State Wildlife Areas preserve habitat for wildlife.

See Map 2: Natural Resources.

### 3. Soils

The soils of Oneida County are primarily sandy and loamy soils which are suited to, and do support, forested/woodland uses. Due to the sandy and droughty nature of the soils, most are of relatively low agricultural value; in addition, the growing season in the county is rather short.

The many different soils found in Oneida County have been grouped into nine major soil associations which have distinct soil patterns, relief, and drainage features. The nine associations found in Oneida County are: Magnor-Greenwood-Cable, Goodman-Monico-Cable, Greenwood-Dawson-Carbondale, Padus-Goodman, Au Gres-Croswell-Kinross, Sayner-Vilas, Padus-Pence, Keweenaw-Vilas, and Goodman-Keweenaw. See the Oneida County Soil Survey for detailed descriptions of each soil type, including tables to determine suitability and limitations.

See Map 3: Soils.

## D. POPULATION, HOUSING, AND MUNICIPAL EXPANSION

### 1. Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the County has an average population growth of negative two percent in the past decade. Table 1 shows the population in each municipality in the County in 2000 and 2010. The table also shows the percent change each town's population experienced during that time. A wide range of changes took place throughout the County from the Town of Lynne shrinking by 32 percent to the Town of Woodboro growing by 18 percent.

Table 1: Population, 2000-2010

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Cassian	962	985	2.39%
Crescent	2,071	2,033	-1.83%
Enterprise	274	315	14.96%
Hazelhurst	1,267	1,273	0.47%
Lake Tomahawk	1,160	1,043	-10.09%
Little Rice	314	306	-2.55%
Lynne	210	141	-32.86%
Minocqua	4,859	4,385	-9.76%
Monico	364	309	-15.11%
Newbold	2,710	2,719	0.33%
Nokomis	1,363	1,371	0.59%
Pelican	2,902	2,764	-4.76%
Piehl	93	86	-7.53%
Pine Lake	2,720	2,740	0.74%
Schoepke	352	387	9.94%
Stella	633	650	2.69%
Sugar Camp	1,781	1,694	-4.88%
Three Lakes	2,339	2,131	-8.89%
Woodboro	685	813	18.69%
Woodruff	1,982	2,055	3.68%
C. Rhineland	7,735	7,798	0.81%
<b>County</b>	<b>36,776</b>	<b>35,998</b>	<b>-2.12%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

## 2. Housing

The County saw a 13 percent increase in the number of housing units from 2000 to 2010. This is a particularly large growth, relative to the two percent population decrease during the same period. The significant increase in housing units is mainly due to the construction of seasonal homes built around the lakes. In Oneida County, 41 percent of all housing units are seasonal homes, but in some towns, that figure is as high as 75 percent. Table 2 shows the number of housing units in each municipality in 2000 and 2010, as well as how that number changed over the decade. All towns experienced growth in housing units during this period, although in the Town of Lynne it was just one new unit.

Table 2: Housing Units, 2000-2010

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Cassian	1,011	1,204	19.09%
Crescent	1,034	1,252	21.08%
Enterprise	386	460	19.17%
Hazelhurst	1,113	1,246	11.95%
Lake Tomahawk	1,052	1,139	8.27%
Little Rice	435	459	5.52%
Lynne	298	299	0.34%
Minocqua	4,284	4,835	12.86%
Monico	216	231	6.94%
Newbold	2,074	2,327	12.20%
Nokomis	1,013	1,145	13.03%
Pelican	1,532	1,715	11.95%
Piehl	85	102	20.00%
Pine Lake	1,381	1,617	17.09%
Schoepke	626	647	3.35%
Stella	316	385	21.84%
Sugar Camp	1,326	1,579	19.08%
Three Lakes	2,908	3,151	8.36%
Woodboro	592	748	26.35%
Woodruff	1,515	1,603	5.81%
C. Rhinelander	3,430	3,981	16.06%
<b>County</b>	<b>26,627</b>	<b>30,125</b>	<b>13.14%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

### 3. Municipal Expansion

Only one community within Oneida County is incorporated, the City of Rhinelander. According to the County Comprehensive Plan, some limited municipal expansion is likely to occur around Rhinelander and where sewer and water facilities are in place, such as Minocqua-Woodruff, Lake Tomahawk, and Three Lakes.

The older population is growing at a faster rate than the younger population so the need for assisted living areas will grow and these tend to be closer to towns where other services for the elderly are more readily available. This will ease the pressure to build on prime farmland.

## E. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES

Additional community facilities relating to water, solid waste, public works, public safety, health care, and education exist in *Chapter 5—Utilities & Community Facilities* of the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan.

### 1. Energy

The Wisconsin Public Service serves the largest part of the County. Xcel Energy serves many areas in the western part of the County and Price Electric Co-op serves part of the Town of Lynne. The ANR Pipeline Company provides a pipeline to move petroleum through the County. Wisconsin Public Service provides natural gas to the City of Rhinelander along with all towns except Cassian, Little Rice, and Lynne.

### 2. Water/Sewer

The City of Rhinelander, Lake Tomahawk, the Lakeland Sanitary District encompassing parts of the Towns of Minocqua, Woodruff, and Arbor Vitae in Vilas County, and the Three Lakes Sanitary District #1 provide water supplies for domestic and commercial use to the town centers. There are 184 high-capacity wells licensed in the County.

A municipal wastewater treatment facility serving the City of Rhinelander is located on the south side of the city along the Wisconsin River. Wastewater treatment facilities serve the Lakeland Sanitary District #1, the Lake Tomahawk Sanitary District, and the Three Lakes Sanitary Districts #1 and #2. The remainder of the County relies on privately owned wastewater disposal systems.

### 3. Transportation

Although the County is rural, it is also very accessible and the existing transportation elements are adequate for the foreseeable future. The County road network is in relatively good shape. The future land use plan shows a low level of new development so no new major road improvements have been identified for the future.

Many highways crisscross Oneida County: US highways 8, 45 and 51, state highways 17, 32, 47, and 70, as well as a network of county highways. There are two types of WisDOT designated truck routes within Oneida County—1) Designated Long, and 2) 65 foot Restricted. The Designated Long truck routes are USHs 8, 45, and 51 and STHs 17, 47, and 70. STH 32 east of US 45 is a 65 foot Restricted truck route.

The problem that arises is with the larger farm equipment on the smaller rural roads there can be a conflict between farm versus non-farm traffic. Some of the equipment can take up the whole road. If this plan is going to preserve farm land and give people the right to farm, then information and education needs to be done with the non-farmer population on the conflicts that arise with these types of issues.

The Canadian National Railroad (CN) operates on tracks running east to west through the southern and central portion of the County. Freight can be loaded/unloaded at the rail yard in downtown Rhinelander, and service is also provided to industrial sites west of the City.

The Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport is a commercial airport with scheduled passenger service and freight movement year-round. The Lakeland Airport/Noble F. Lee Memorial Field is cooperatively owned and operated by the Towns of Woodruff, Minocqua, Arbor Vitae, and Lac du Flambeau, and is located within Arbor Vitae. This transport/corporate airport serves corporate jets, small passenger and cargo jet aircraft used in regional service, and small airplanes used in commuter air service. The Three Lakes Municipal Airport has a lighted grass runway, but is closed in the winter. This facility is classified as a basic utility airport for smaller aircraft.

### 4. Communications

Cellular telephone service and wireless internet service have become important tools in today's farming climate. However, concerns over the locations of wireless service facilities and their possible impact on property values and health have led some municipalities to develop restrictions on the location, placement and appearance of

wireless service facilities. Three communications providers (Frontier Communications, Verizon North, and Century Tel) provide telephone and wireless service the County. There is a lack of major broadband providers in rural Wisconsin and the best solution in providing reliable, high-speed service is often left to municipally-owned cooperatives.

## 5. Waste Management

The City of Rhinelander contracts with a private firm to operate a weekly curbside pick-up of solid waste and recycling for residents. Some Towns have transfer stations where residents can drop off their garbage and recycling. The Oneida County Landfill, located in the Town of Woodboro, no longer has active landfilling, but still handles disposal, recycling, and composting of waste within Oneida County. Solid waste from Oneida County is hauled to the Lincoln County Landfill and a corporate landfill in Wood County.

The Oneida County Solid Waste Department operates a year round hazardous waste collection at the Oneida County Landfill. This service helps local farmers and landowners dispose of waste that is potentially dangerous to keep on hand.

## F. PUBLIC AND TRIBAL OWNERSHIP

Ownership is an important factor to consider related to comprehensive planning. Different levels of government throughout the County own various lands.

See Map 4: Public Ownership.

### 1. Federal Ownership

Lands in the county owned by the federal government total approximately 10,236 acres (about one percent of land in the county). This federal land is primarily part of the Nicolet National Forest and found in the Town of Three Lakes. The Nicolet National Forest covers over 661,000 acres in Vilas, Florence, Forest, Langlade, Oconto, and Oneida counties in Wisconsin. The forest not only provides abundant recreational opportunities, but is also a working forest, which provides for timber production.

### 2. State of Wisconsin Ownership

Within the County, the State of Wisconsin owns approximately 111,454 acres, or 14 percent of total land in the County. Much of this land is part of the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest. This forest occupies more than 232,000 acres in Iron,

Oneida, and Vilas counties. The forest provides employment and economic support to rural and urban communities through the production of forest products, recreation, and tourism.

### 3. Oneida County Forest

Oneida County owns approximately 82,115 acres, or 10 percent of all land in the County. The Department of Forestry and Outdoor Recreation manages most of this land as part of the Oneida County Forest. The forest is open to the public for recreational activities and is also a working forest for timber production.

### 4. Town Ownership

Primarily town-owned land is used for town facilities such as administration buildings, community centers, garages/maintenance buildings, fire stations, etc.

### 5. Tribal Lands

The Lac du Flambeau Tribe owns approximately 686 acres within Oneida County in the Town of Minocqua. The majority of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation is in Vilas County in the Town of Lac du Flambeau.

## G. EXISTING LAND USE

While the vast majority of the county is forested and rural in character with scattered low-density residential uses, there are some areas of higher-density development (lakeshores) and areas where development pressures for higher densities are increasing. Residential development is concentrated around many of the larger lakes and scattered along town and county roads. See Map 1 and Table 3 which show existing land use.

Table 3: Existing Land Use, 2010

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	16,703	2.11%
Commercial	2,179	0.28%
Cranberry Bog	1,351	0.17%
Governmental	938	0.12%
Industrial	1,281	0.16%
Open Lands	13,833	1.75%
Outdoor Recreation	2,018	0.26%
Residential	21,954	2.78%
Transportation	6,198	0.78%
Water	74,046	9.36%
Woodlands	650,167	82.23%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>790,667</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: NCWRPC 2010 Land Use Cover

Woodlands were identified as the largest land use in the county. Over 82 percent of the County is considered woodlands, although some of this is also wetlands. Residential uses make up less than three percent of the total land.

Oneida County has a small amount of land used for agriculture, at just over two percent of total land. This land is spread throughout the County, mostly in the Towns of Cassian, Crescent, Hazelhurst, Nokomis, Schoepke, Stella, Sugarcamp and Three Lakes.

F. FUTURE LAND USE

1. Population

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population projections are displayed in Table 4. The DOA projections indicate a 6.9 percent growth over the 30-year period from 2010 to 2040. The projected population for Oneida County in 2040 is 38,500 persons.

Table 4: Population Projections, 2010-2040

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
<b>Population</b>	35,998	35,825	37,265	38,905	39,985	39,745	38,500

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

2. Housing Projections

The household projection may be a more important indicator of what might happen to land use. Nationally, the number of persons per household has been on a steady downward trend for a number of decades. This trend has also been seen in Oneida County. In 2000, the county's average household size was 2.34, in 2010 it was 2.21, and in 2040 it is projected to be 2.10. The population is going up while the number of persons per household is going down. This will mean an increased demand for housing in the next ten to fifteen years

Table 5: Housing Projections, 2010-2040

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
<b>Housing Units</b>	16,289	16,509	17,333	18,095	18,685	18,748	18,333

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, NCWRPC Housing Projections

## CHAPTER 4 - AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Identifying the resources and land uses in the County are important in order to recognize areas that need to be protected, or characteristics that would limit development potential.

The following will provide a brief review of some of these resources in Oneida County.

### A. RESOURCES AND LAND USES

As seen in Table 3 from Chapter 3, agriculture accounts for a little over two percent of the existing land use in Oneida County. Woodlands make up over 86 percent of the land and residential uses another three percent. Table 6 shows how the agricultural land is divided among various agricultural uses in Oneida County. The agricultural land is quite evenly dispersed among the four uses, with agricultural woodland using slightly more land and pasture and rangeland using slightly less.

Table 6: Agricultural Land Use

Use	Acres			Distribution in 2012
	2007	2012	% Change	
Total Crop Land	13,890	12,095	-12.9%	25.4%
Total Woodland	18,101	15,872	-12.3%	33.3%
Permanent Pasture and Rangeland	6,386	7,725	21.0%	16.2%
Land in Buildings, Livestock, Facilities, etc.	12,298	11,990	-2.5%	25.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,675</b>	<b>47,682</b>	<b>-5.9%</b>	100.0%

Source: USDA 2012 Census of Agriculture

### B. FARMLAND CONVERSION

The rate and speed of farmland conversion is an important factor in understanding County-wide land use trends. The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program, enacted in 1977 to preserve good agricultural land from development and provide income tax credit to farmers, is a helpful tool to limit where the farmland conversion can take

place. Since the rate of population growth has increased, it is likely that either total farm land sold has increased, and/or the percent converted to non-farm uses has increased.

## C. PROGRAMS

With the abundance of natural resources in Oneida County and the growing pressure on both public and private lands, the need to protect these precious areas is increasingly important. There are many Federal, State and Local programs in place that offer technical assistance and cost-share funding to help preserve the environment.

Some of these are as follows:

### Federal Programs:

#### Backyard Conservation

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Farmland Protection Program

Forestry Incentive Program (FIP)

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP):

### State:

#### Managed Forest Law

Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)

Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)

WI Association of Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D)

Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claim Program

WI Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)

WI Forest Landowner Grant Program (FLGP)

WI Non-point Source Pollution Abatement Program

Potential Funding Sources for environmental preservation may come from the following:

Private Sources:

Private Foundations  
Individual Contributions  
Volunteers  
Conservation Organizations  
Outdoors Forever  
Trout Unlimited  
Ducks Unlimited  
Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

Local Government Sources:

County Land & Water Resource Department  
County Planning & Zoning Department  
County Forestry and Parks Department  
County Highway Department

State Government Sources:

Department of Natural Resources  
Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection  
University of Wisconsin-Extension  
Priority Watershed Program  
New Nonpoint Sources  
Stewardship Grants  
Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program  
Lakes Planning Grants  
Lakes Protection Grants  
Land & Water Management Plan Implementation Funds

## CHAPTER 5 – ECONOMICS

Oneida County's agricultural related industries bring a significant amount of revenue into the county. Agriculture also supports a variety of other industries such as transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail, and service.

Data for this chapter mainly came from the Census of Agriculture, where statistics of Wisconsin Agriculture are published every five years by the Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

### A. AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

According to the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 6), the segment of population that is employed with the agriculture and natural resources sector accounts for 1.1% of the population. Compare this to the 2.9% on average in Wisconsin and the conclusion can be drawn that Oneida County is less agricultural than some of the other counties in the State. While 1.1% is a small percentage, it should receive special attention because of the importance agriculture plays in a rural County. Additional economic detail of all sectors in Oneida County are explained in Chapter 6 of the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan.

#### 1. Economic Impact

In 2012, agriculture generated more than \$75 million in exports through the sale of agricultural products to customers outside of the State of Wisconsin. The agricultural industry supports a variety of additional industries like transportation and warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail and service.

## 2. Farms

In 2012, there were 150 active farms in the county. Between 2007 and 2012, the total number of farms in the county decreased by 29. See Table 7 for Farm Statistics.

Land in farms decreased between 2007 and 2012, losing over 4,200 acres of farmland. The County experienced an increase in farmland in 2002, but has now decreased to below 1997 levels. However, while the total land in farm decreased, the number of farms increased over the five year period (2007-2012). There are more farms on less total farmland today, giving a smaller average farm size.

Table 7: Farm Statistics

	1997	2002	2007	2012	Change: 1997- 2012
<b>Number of Farms</b>	117	183	179	150	28.2%
<b>Average Size (Acres)</b>	334	279	219	233	-30.2%
<b>Land in Farms (Acres)</b>	39,036	51,006	39,172	34,926	-10.5%

Source: USDA Agricultural Census

## 3. Agriculture Production

Total sales of agricultural products from Oneida County were \$20 million in 2012 and \$17 million in 2007. The largest sectors of agricultural production are Fruits and Berries (cranberries are part of this group), and Other Crops (potatoes belong to this group). Table 8a shows the summary of farm sales by sector.

Table 8a: Farm Sales (in \$1,000)

Commodity	2007	2012
Fruits and Berries	7,805	8,602
Nursery and Greenhouse	1,820	2,010
Other Crops (Grains, Vegetables, Etc.)	4,925	6,562
Livestock, Poultry, and their products	2,973	3,071
Other Farm Sales	2,723	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,523</b>	<b>20,246</b>

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Table 8b separates further what commodities exist within Oneida County in 2012. Some data was suppressed by USDA in three commodity groups in Table 8b, because there were few farms that provided most of the data. NCWRPC approximated the percent of sales and identified the most likely crop producing those figures in Oneida County.

Cranberries are well suited to the climate and short growing season of Oneida County. Cranberry production accounts for about 43 percent of 2012 farm sales as shown in Table 8b. Sandy loam soils that are primarily in the Towns of Crescent, Cassian, Stella, and Sugar Camp provide an excellent substrate to grow potatoes, which are about 29 percent of farm sales. Even though the farm sales amounts are low for mainly forage crops (Table 8b: Other crops, hay, maple syrup, other), about 30 percent of farms in Oneida County grow them. There are 23 farms in Oneida County that need this forage for their cattle and calves.

Table 8b: Farm Sales in 2012

Commodity	Farms	Percent Sales
Grains, Oilseeds, Dry Beans, and Dry Peas	11	1.7**
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	11	29.3**
Berries	11	42.5
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	8	9.9
Cut Christmas trees and short-rotation woody crops	9	0.4
Other crops, hay, maple syrup, other	48	1.0
Poultry and eggs	14	0.1
Cattle and calves	23	0.8
Hogs and pigs	6	0.0
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	7	0.1
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	4	0.3
Other animals and other animal products	7	13.8**
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100**</b>

Source: \*\*NCWRPC approximation due to data suppression from USDA Census of Agriculture

Table 8b summarizes all 2012 farm sales as: \$ 20,243,000; which is only slightly different from the official USDA count of \$20,246,000 shown in Table 8a.

#### 4. Livestock

In 1997 there was only a single dairy farm in Oneida County. At that time livestock sales accounted 14 percent of the market value of agricultural and were 17 percent in 2007, and data was no longer available in 2012 due to no dairy herds existing. A number of beef herds still exist in the County.

Between 2010 and 2012, the number of cattle in Oneida County remained steady at 700. No data is available on milk cows indicating there is little, if any, milk production.

#### 5. Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Total gross regional product (GRP) in Oneida County in 2012 was \$1,387,426,896, which included \$35,234,448 in revenues from NAICS 11: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting. In comparison to other industries, the agriculture industry generates the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest gross regional product in the county and accounts for 3 percent of the county's GRP. By comparison, the county's top producer, retail trade, accounts for \$196,893,426 or 14 percent of the county's GRP.

#### 6. Exports

In 2012, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting accounted for over \$75 million in export revenue, or 4.24 percent of the total export revenue. Agriculture is the sixth highest export industry. Manufacturing is the largest export industry exporting over \$478 million in 2012. The location quotient for the agriculture industry decreased from 2.47 to 2.10 from 2001 to 2012. The agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry is 2 times more concentrated in Oneida County than it is on average in the United States. The 2.1 location quotient indicates that the industry is an export industry and will continue to be an economic driver. However, the decrease in the quotient indicates that the industry may be struggling as positions are eliminated and the county is reducing its concentration in the agricultural industry suggesting that there may be trouble for the entire industrial economy (i.e. suppliers, ancillary businesses).

The ability to export goods and services is essential to the county's economy as it introduces new money to the economy, rather than simply circulating money that is already in the region. This influx of new revenue is redistributed throughout the economy at local restaurants, suppliers, and retailers.

## 7. Job Growth

Further evidence that the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry is struggling is shown in job growth. Oneida County decreased employment in the agriculture industry 25.94 percent from 2001 to 2012, eliminating 172 jobs, see table 7a. In 2012, the agricultural industry directly employed 491 persons. The decrease in jobs is the result of the county's unique competitiveness. Shift share analysis shows that Oneida County's competitive advantage resulted in the reduction of 150 jobs from 2001 to 2012. Based on National Growth (14 jobs) and an Industry Mix (-23 jobs), the region would expect to lose 23 jobs in this industry over the 11 year time period. The industrial mix effect represents the share of regional industry growth explained by the growth of the specific industry at the national level.

The national growth effect explains how much of the regional industry's growth is explained by the overall growth of the national economy. The regional competitive effect explains how much of the change in a given industry is due to some unique competitive advantage that the region possesses, because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as whole. As a result of the regions unique competitiveness in this specific industry, the county experienced a decrease in jobs (172 jobs). The decrease in employment combined with a decrease in location quotient identifies that the agriculture industry in Oneida County is not growing as fast as it is in the national economy and may be becoming less vital to the economy.

Table 10 shows the number of small farms increasing. The trend toward small farms is important to economic development for two reasons. First, the rapid increase in small farms demonstrates the explosion of "hobby farming". These farms may produce on a very small or local scale but they generally do not employ labor or produce food for general consumption. While these types of farms are not being discouraged, it is not this type of land that needs to be preserved by a farmland preservation plan. Second, the largest farms produce large quantities of food but often are so modernized that they require only a fraction of the labor force as previously. As farming moves towards these two extremes of very small and very large farms, the economic impact will be seen and agricultural employment will likely decline.

Table 9: Farms by Size

Acres	1997	2002	2007	2012	Change: 1997- 2012
<b>1 to 9</b>	6	13	13	10	66.67%
<b>10 to 49</b>	24	32	47	55	129.17%
<b>50 to 179</b>	38	70	70	47	23.68%
<b>180 to 499</b>	32	41	34	24	-25.00%
<b>500 to 999</b>	9	13	5	7	-22.22%
<b>1,000 +</b>	8	14	10	7	-12.50%
<b>Total</b>	117	183	179	150	28.21%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

## B. HEALTH CARE

Easy access to quality health care is important to any community. Farming is a particularly hazardous occupation and health care is a necessary component to the overall plan of operation. Two hospitals and 4 clinics are located in Oneida County. Saint Mary's Hospital is located in Rhineland and Howard Young Medical Center is located in Woodruff. There are two nursing homes in Rhineland and one in Woodruff with a total capacity of over 200, as well as several in other nearby communities like Tomahawk, Crandon, and Phelps. Additionally, there are twelve Residential Care Apartment Complexes in the County.

## CHAPTER 6 – GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND MAPPING CRITERIA

### A. OVERVIEW

This chapter will provide a description of what is included in the Farmland Preservation Plan map and why it was or was not included in the mapping process. Oneida County has no exclusive ag zoning in any township and the trend with the farmland preservation program has indicated declining participation. Because of these two factors, the future of the program in the County is somewhat uncertain. Policies, goals and actions will take this into account.

### B. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The Farmland Preservation Area is mapped generously in order to include as many potential participants as possible, while taking into consideration the 15-year future growth of the County.

All county residents went through the comprehensive planning process. Housing demand was projected during the process, and residents identified where additional housing would be located. These areas can be seen on the Future Land Use map. Residents identified why new residents would move into their communities, and recognized that future housing development would take a variety of forms. Two of the most common housing trends identified were conversion of resort housing to condominiums and continued subdivision of land for single family “cottages” of various lot sizes.

No additional housing related goals, objectives, and policies were identified from what already exists in the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan, because of the housing trends identified.

**Goal 1:**  
**Conserve and enhance economically productive woodlands.**

**Objective:**

- Minimize the conversion of woodlands into other uses.

**Policy:**

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

**Goal 2:**  
**Conserve and enhance economically productive farmlands.**

**Objectives:**

1. Work to preserve farming as a viable occupation within the County.
2. Limit the number of non-farm uses in agricultural areas.

**Policies:**

1. Existing agricultural uses and buildings should be taken into consideration when locating new development to avoid conflict.
2. Update the Farmland Preservation Plan, under the new Working Lands Initiative, and other related ordinances.

**C. MAPPING CRITERIA**

The Oneida County Farmland Preservation Plan Map (Attachment A, and Map 6) identifies three areas: "Farmland Preservation Areas," "Planned Out," and "Existing Agricultural Areas." Farmland preservation areas were determined by including all the soils listed as farmland (Map 3); including the following existing land uses (Map 1): agriculture, cranberry bog, open lands, or woodlands, and by retaining all agricultural and forestry lands on the Future Land Use Map (see Oneida County Comprehensive Plan for the map). The next step was determining what land to exclude. Basically, all land that is planned for development over the next 10-15 years was removed from farmland preservation, because non-agriculture is planned. Map 5 shows lands planned out due to future land uses that allow only non-agricultural or non-forestry development to occur. See Criteria for Farmland and Non-Farmland Preservation Areas on next page.

Below are the map legend definitions:

Farmland Preservation Areas – Parcels that meet the Farmland Preservation Plan mapping criteria. Landowners in this area may apply for farmland preservation income tax credits. These areas have been identified during the planning process to be agricultural uses or open spaces. No non-agricultural development is planned in the next fifteen years for those areas identified as farmland preservation areas. In addition, if there is a conflict with other plan maps, the Farmland Preservation Plan map will supersede those other maps.

Planned Out – Parcels that do not allow the owner to apply for farmland preservation income tax credits. These parcels are “planned out,” or excluded because they meet the criteria for non-farmland preservation areas.

Existing Agricultural Areas – Any land that was actively farmed and identified on the Existing Land Use map, which was created for the Comprehensive Plan in 2010.

**Criteria for Farmland Preservation Areas:**

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

**Criteria for Non-Farmland Preservation Areas:**

Exclude all of the following:

- Local, county, state, and federal lands.
- Exclude the City of Rhineland, and sewered areas (i.e. Minocqua, Three Lakes, & Lake Tomahawk).
- Tax exempt land.
- Parcels less than 5 acres.
- “Planned Out” lands on the “Planned Out From Future Land Use” Map (Map 5). When the Future Land Use Map changes in the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan, then the “Planned Out From Future Land Use” Map needs to change.

## CHAPTER 7 - IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter will look at the tools available to those who work with the landowners of the County. They also have the charge of implementing the standards and statutes filtered down from national and state agencies. All of this will affect how this Plan is implemented.

### A. IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Educating the public and local government agencies about the economic benefits of farming and the cost of converting farmland to non-agricultural use is an important part of the implementation strategy. Equally important is showing that land stewardship benefits the owner financially, while also protecting soil productivity into the future.

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was signed into law in 2009 and is comprised of the following three programs:

- Farmland Preservation Program
- Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) Program
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program

Not all of these tools have funding available at any given time. The more specific tools that may be available are as follows:

**Farmland Preservation Income Tax Credits** – An active Farmland Preservation Plan provides participating landowners with an opportunity to claim farmland preservation income tax credits that are applied against their tax liability.

Landowners must be residents of Wisconsin and must meet other eligibility criteria to claim the credit, including compliance with state soil and water conservation standards.

Tax credits for land under Farmland Preservation Zoning are as follows:

- \$10.00/acre if land is zoned and located in an Agricultural Enterprise Area.
- \$7.50/acre if land is zoned exclusive agriculture.
- \$5.00/acre if landowner has an agreement through the Farmland Preservation Tax Credit Program if signed after 2009.

**Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA)** - This is a tool set forth in Chapter 91 of the Wisconsin State Statutes. Designation of an AEA identifies the area as valuable for current and future agricultural use. Eligible farmers in an AEA can receive income tax credits per an agreement with DATCP.

General eligibility requirements are:

- Five eligible land owner participants
- All land in the proposed AEA area must be in the farmland preservation area
- Land must be contiguous
- Land must be primarily in agricultural use

Benefits of the AEA designation are that the land is identified as important for agricultural preservation. This designation provides reassurance about future farmland use and may encourage investment in agriculture.

Eligible landowners can enter into a voluntary Farmland Preservation Agreement that allows them to claim a tax credit in exchange for keeping land in agricultural use for 15 years and meeting conservation standards.

**Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE Program)** - Agricultural Conservation Easements are deed restrictions that landowners voluntarily place on their properties to protect productive agricultural land. They sell a conservation easement to a government agency or private conservation organization. Landowners retain full ownership and continue to pay property taxes, and manage and operate the farm. Conservation easements are tailored to each property: purchasers and landowners decide which activities should be restricted or limited. When the landowner eventually sells the farmland, the development restrictions are passed on to the new owner.

**Farmland Preservation Zoning** – Agricultural protection zoning ordinances (Farmland Preservation Zoning) allow some residential development but can restrict density. Such constraints on development potential can limit land speculation and keep land affordable to farmers. Keeping large areas relatively free of non-farm development can reduce the likelihood of conflicts between farmers and their non-farming neighbors.

**Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)** – A similar program is the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) where government agencies buy up the development rights to a property. The program does not give the government agency the right to develop the agricultural land; it simply permits it to extinguish those rights in return for appropriate compensation.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)** – These programs allow landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land. The programs are usually established by local zoning ordinances, and they are used to shift development from agricultural areas to designate growth zones closer to municipal services. The parcel of land where the rights originate is called the “sending” parcel. Once the development rights are transferred from a sending parcel, the land is restricted with a permanent conservation easement. The rights are transferred to a “receiving” parcel, which allows an owner purchasing the rights to build at a higher density than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning. Most TDR transactions are between private landowners and developers. Local governments approve transactions and monitor easements. Some jurisdictions have created “TDR banks” that buy development rights with public funds and sell them to developers and other private landowners. TDR programs can prevent non-agricultural development of farmland, reduce the market value (and tax burdens) of protected farms and provide farmland owners with liquid capital that can be used to enhance farm viability.

**Mitigation Ordinances** – Mitigation ordinances require developers to permanently protect a certain amount of farmland for every acre of agricultural land they convert to other uses. Developers can place an agricultural conservation easement on farmland in another location or pay a fee to satisfy mitigation requirements.

**Comprehensive Land Use Planning** – The County and Townships can use their comprehensive plans as the basis for farmland preservation zoning ordinances. This not only protects these areas for agricultural uses but also offers a greater tax incentive for landowners.

## B. MONITORING

Monitoring is an important step to the whole planning process in order to assess what is working and needs to be adjusted. The County will continually evaluate the plan and that the decisions made remain consistent with the goals and objectives of the Farmland Preservation Plan and the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Any participants in the programs will be monitored according to rules and regulations set forth by the Federal, State or Local agencies participating in the program.

## C. PLAN CONSISTENCY AND AMENDMENTS

This 2015 farmland preservation plan fulfills the statutory requirements for both the Farmland Preservation Plan (Chapter 91, Subchapter II, WI Statutes) and the Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan (§66.1001(2), Wis. Stats.).

Several methods were used to ensure consistency between this plan and the Oneida County Comprehensive Plan.

1. The Farmland Preservation Plan was adopted as an attachment to the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Goals, objectives, and policies initially came from the Comprehensive Plan, then were modified to focus on farmland preservation, while still complementing the Comprehensive Plan goals, objectives, and policies.
3. All maps came from, or are consistent with, the Comprehensive Plan.
4. Mapping criteria used the Future Land Use Map from the Comprehensive Plan.

Now that the Farmland Preservation Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan, Wisconsin Statute §66.1001 requires that an adopted plan be reviewed and updated at least once every ten years. This is not a static plan, but one that may change over time. Changing land uses, policy changes, regulatory changes, or shifting economics are some reasons to review if this plan is still current.

The plan has a long-term outlook, one that may need to be readjusted as policy or trends become irrelevant or contradictory or errors/omissions have been identified. The plan has been written with some flexibility incorporated so future amendments should be limited in scope.

The process to amend the Plan is similar to that of writing this initial document. The steps to amend any part of the Plan will be as follows:

1. As a result of the request of a local government, a property owner or a developer, the County staff and Committee will evaluate the proposed amendment to see if it meets the goals and objectives of the Plan, the State requirements and any other laws or standards that may be in effect at the time of the request. If all is in order, the proposal will be brought before the County Board.
2. The County Board adopts a resolution outlining the proposal/amendment.
3. The County staff prepares the text and/or map that amend the specific part of the Farmland Preservation Plan or Plan map.
4. County Staff forward the amended materials required under Section 91.20, Wis.Stats. to DATCP for certification of the Plan amendment.
5. A public meeting is held for input on the amendment
6. A Class 1 notice is published at least 30 days before the County Board public hearing is held.
7. The County Board holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed Plan amendment into the County's Farmland Preservation Plan
8. Following the public hearing and DATCP certification, the County Board approves or denies the ordinance adopting the proposed Plan amendment.
9. County staff forward a copy of the adopted ordinance and Plan amendment to DATCP and any landowners who have requested a copy in writing as well as Township chairpersons.

Map 1 Existing Land Use

Map 2      Natural Resources

Map 3      Soils

Map 4      Public Ownership

Map 5      Planned Out From Future Land Use

Map 6 County Farmland Preservation

# ATTACHMENT A

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## Town Level Farmland Preservation Area Maps

## **ATTACHMENT B**

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### **Public Participation Plan and Resolution**

## **ATTACHMENT C**

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### **Farmland Preservation Plan Resolution and Ordinance**