To the Waushara County Board of Supervisors:

2014 was another busy year in the Land Conservation & Zoning Office. We will outline the highlights below:

- General Building activity remained about the same in 2014 as it was in 2013. Hopefully the construction industry is leveling off and will remain steady or show slow growth over the next few years and construction seasons.
- Our office issued 394 land use permits for 150 new homes or additions to homes, and 244 accessory structures.
- IIL, our current contracted inspection agency, issued permits for 68 new homes, 63 commercial structures, 64 additions to homes, 118 electrical installations or upgrades, and 76 miscellaneous permits, for a total of 389 permits which resulted in over $153,000 in fees collected.
- In addition, our office issued 157 sanitary permits authorizing 48 new private onsite wastewater treatment systems, and 109 replacement systems or reconnections to existing systems.
Mandatory septic system maintenance notices were sent to 2,949 Waushara County landowners, resulting in 22 citations, and an overall compliance rate of 99.7%. The Wisconsin Fund grant program benefited 2 property owners for a total of $12,425.

Our department made over 1200 field visits to various properties around the county. These included 311 sanitary system inspections, 17 on-site soil verifications, about 500 code non-compliance investigations, 71 annual travel trailer inspections, 187 landowner requested information visits, and 79 address number assignments.

There were 237 code non-compliance inquiries made to our office, 228 investigations that were brought into compliance, and 138 non-compliance situations are still pending.

Staff worked with 17 non-metallic mining sites involving approximately 205 un-reclaimed or active acres. Annual inspection fees netted the department $3,050, and 1.61 acres were certified as reclaimed.

The Lakes Management Project, now in phase III (lake management planning), continues. The Department is hosting a series of four meetings for each lake group. Planning began in October 2013 and will continue through 2016. Late in the year, the Bugh’s Lake Management Plan was approved by DNR and the Lake Management District. To follow; town and county board adoption of support of Lake Management Plans in their Comprehensive Plans.

Working with the Soil & Water Resource Management Program, $40,000 was secured for landowners for hard practices. An additional $10,000 was slated for nutrient management. With additional interest in nutrient management, $11,500 extra funds were transferred from Kewaunee County. To date a total of 30,832 acres were enrolled.

The Water Quality Improvement Program passed its 3-year trial period and has now been approved as a line item for the Land Conservation Department. Budgeted for $25,000, the program helps offset decreasing state funding by providing cost-share for worthy conservation projects that do not rank high enough for State or Federal funding.

LCD is still partnering with Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development on the Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Program. Helping riparian landowners, the partnership allows for invasive species training to be provided, and also training for Clean Water/Clean Boat stations. LCD also contracts with RC&D to provide groundwater education in the public schools.

Waushara County’s Farmland Preservation Plan was updated and approved for another 10 years. Oversight of this program provides an opportunity for tax relief to qualifying farmers.

The 8th annual Conservation Field Days environmental learning event was held in May. Attending were 188 5th graders from all public schools in Waushara County.

Assistance for Construction Site Erosion Control was provided to 103 landowners. Twenty-nine onsite visits were made to help landowners with standard and individual plans relative to erosion control, stormwater management, and re-vegetation. Four detailed plans and 8 re-vegetation/stormwater management plan reviews were the result of these onsite visits.

The Land Conservation Department continues to contract with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to provide the Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program. Deer damage payable losses in 2014 totaled $19,102, to eleven participating landowners.

Our goal remains to continue to provide a high level of service to landowners looking to acquire various land use, zoning, building, sanitary or manure storage permits, or looking to install a recommended conservation practice on their property. We also aim to continue to provide the best general information we can when landowners are looking to develop land, install agricultural practices, or enhance habitat. While providing advice we do everything possible to preserve our unique natural resources, safeguard public health and welfare, and secure state and federal dollars for Best Management Practices so that we remain fiscally and environmentally responsible.