2013 ANNUAL REPORT / LAND CONSERVATION & ZONING OFFICE

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To the Waushara County Board of Supervisors:

2013 was another busy year in the Land Conservation & Zoning Office. We will outline the highlights here.

- General Building activity remained about the same in 2013 as it was in 2012. There was a rebound last year to 2009 levels and that was good news. Hopefully the construction industry is leveling off and will remain steady or show slow growth over the next few years and construction seasons.
- Our department made over 1100 field visits to various properties around the county. These included 232 sanitary system inspections, 19 on-site soil verifications, about 500 code non-compliance investigations, 213 landowner requested information visits, and 61 address number assignments.
- There were 281 code non-compliance inquiries made to our office, 271 investigations that were brought into compliance, and 132 non-compliance situations are still pending.
- Mandatory septic system maintenance notices were sent to 2,348 Waushara County landowners, resulting in 51 citations, and an overall compliance rate of greater than 99.8%. The Wisconsin Fund grant program benefited 4 property owners for a total of $17,842.
Staff worked with 18 non-metallic mining sites involving approximately 214.6 un-reclaimed or active acres. Annual inspection fees netted the department $3,165, and about 1.5 acres was certified as reclaimed in 2013.

Work continues on the Lakes Management Grant. Phase III has begun with updating and writing lake management plans for 8 of the 32 lakes with public access. Grant monies totaling $64,459 were secured by Waushara County to perform this work in 2013, with some of that going to outside contractors at UWSP.

Cost-share funding of $48,987 was secured for landowners working with the Soil & Water Resource Management Program, and a total of $32,564 was slated for nutrient management covering more than 1163 acres. This is significantly more dollars and acres than were covered in 2012. Seven landowners were certified in compliance with State Ag. Performance Standards and 23 contracts were signed under the Soil & Water Resource Management Program.

The Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) is in its second year of providing cost-share funding for worthy conservation projects that do not rank high enough for shrinking State or Federal funds. The Waushara County Board approved $25,000 in county funds per year for a three year trial period, to be evaluated after that. Seven contracts for WQIP projects were signed in 2013 which is the same as in 2012.

The Department continues to partner with Golden Sands Resource Conservation & Development (serving Waushara, Adams, Portage, and Wood Counties) on the DNR Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Program. Land Conservation also maintains groundwater education for 4th graders in all Waushara County Schools by contracting with Golden Sands RC&D.

Administration of the Wildlife Damage & Claims program assisted 9 landowners with crop damage claims. Crop damage was up in 2013, so although the number of landowners has remained the same, the amount of damage being claimed was more than 2012.

The seventh annual Conservation Field Days for Waushara County 5th graders was held in May with over 200 students in attendance. This is a very well received event and we always need volunteers to serve as group leaders. So if you have May 15th or 16th free this year, please contact our office for more information on how you can enjoy a day outdoors learning about conservation and the environment.

Assistance for Construction Site Erosion Control was provided to 187 landowners. 46 onsite visits were made to help landowners with standard and individual plans relative to erosion control, stormwater management, and re-vegetation, resulting in 9 detailed plans for individual landowners.

II, our current contracted inspection agency, issued permits for 57 new homes, 81 commercial structures, 72 additions to homes, 139 electrical installations or upgrades, and 80 miscellaneous permits, for a total of 429 permits which resulted in over $117,000 in fees collected.

And our office issued 421 zoning permits for 169 new homes or additions to homes, and 252 accessory structures. In addition, we issued 149 sanitary permits authorizing 36 new private onsite wastewater treatment systems, and 113 replacement systems or reconnections to existing systems.

Once again our budget was able to remain at zero without the need for decreasing staff or hours, and so far without increasing fees. Our goal remains to continue to provide a high level of service to landowners looking to acquire 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 doing everything possible to preserve our unique natural resources, safeguard public health and welfare, and secure state and federal dollars for Best Management Practices whenever possible while remaining fiscally responsible and maintaining a zero increase on tax payer dollars.