




ROCK COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2035

SECTION II - INVENTORY, ISSUES, AND OPPORTUNITIES REPORT



Chapter 1 - Issues and Opportunities

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(a), the Issues and Opportunities element of a community's comprehensive plan is to provide:

"Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit".

This Chapter provides information on the County's planning issues and opportunities. 1.1 provides a rationale for identification of planning issues and opportunities, whereas 1.2 provides a profile of the County, containing vital planning information. Overall County issues and opportunities to be addressed in the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035 (Plan)* are derived from this information, as well as from *Citizen Participation Plan* activities, and identified in 1.3.

1.1. Issues and Opportunities Planning

As stated in Section I: Executive Summary of this *Plan*, a comprehensive plan is formulated with the general purpose of guiding development to best promote a community's general welfare. To achieve this end, a planning context needs to be established, centering on the essential questions of "What are we planning for?" and "What will help us get there?". Identification of planning issues and opportunities creates a planning context and provides the answer to these questions. Thus, a comprehensive plan aims to rectify a community's planning issues and to advantageously utilize planning opportunities.

The County, similar to any community, has various planning issues that will present challenges as it develops over the next 25 years. However, the County also possesses unique planning opportunities, which if utilized in a thoughtful manner, offer a path to continued community vibrancy and stability.

1.2. A County Profile

Profiling a community is vital in identifying its planning issues and opportunities. The following provides a profile of the County utilizing the following categories:

- Geography
- History
- Existing Population and Demographics
- Population and Demographic Trends
- Population Projections

Geography

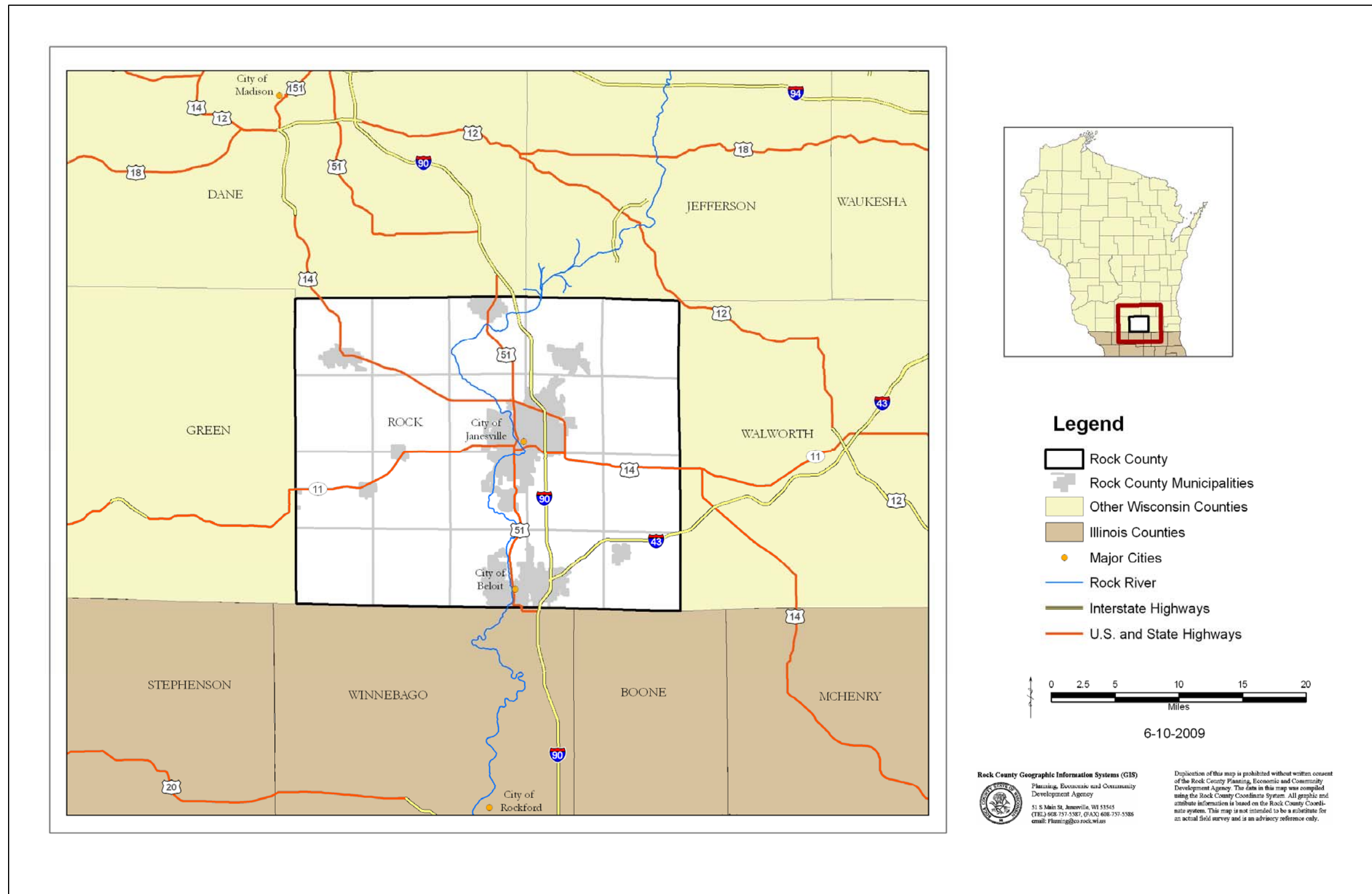
The County is located in the south-central portion of the State of Wisconsin, forming a portion of the State's southern boundary, approximately equidistant from Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. The County covers 721 square miles and is composed of 29 municipalities including six Cities, three Villages, and 20 Towns, and multiple unincorporated hamlets. The County's Cities include Janesville, Beloit, Edgerton, Milton, Evansville, and Brodhead. The City of Janesville serves as the County seat, is located in the County's central portion, and is the largest municipality in the County with a population estimated at over 62,000 in 2005. The County's Villages include Clinton, Orfordville, and Footville.

The County is surrounded by vibrant rural communities and burgeoning urban areas. The County is bordered by Wisconsin counties, Dane and Jefferson to the north, Green to the west, and Walworth to the east, and Illinois' counties Boone and Winnebago to the south. The rapidly growing Wisconsin State capital, the City of Madison, with an estimated population of over 223,000 people in 2005, is 30 miles to the County's northwest. Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee, with a metropolitan area containing over 1,700,000 inhabitants in 2005, lies 70 miles east of the County and Rockford, Illinois' third largest city with an estimated population of over 150,000 residents in 2005 is 30 miles south. Additionally, Chicago, Illinois, the country's third largest metropolitan area with a population of over 7,000,000 inhabitants, is 80 miles to the County's south. The County is connected to these urban areas and other regional, State, and national locations by a vast road network, including Interstates 90/39 and 43, and U.S. Highways 51 and 14.

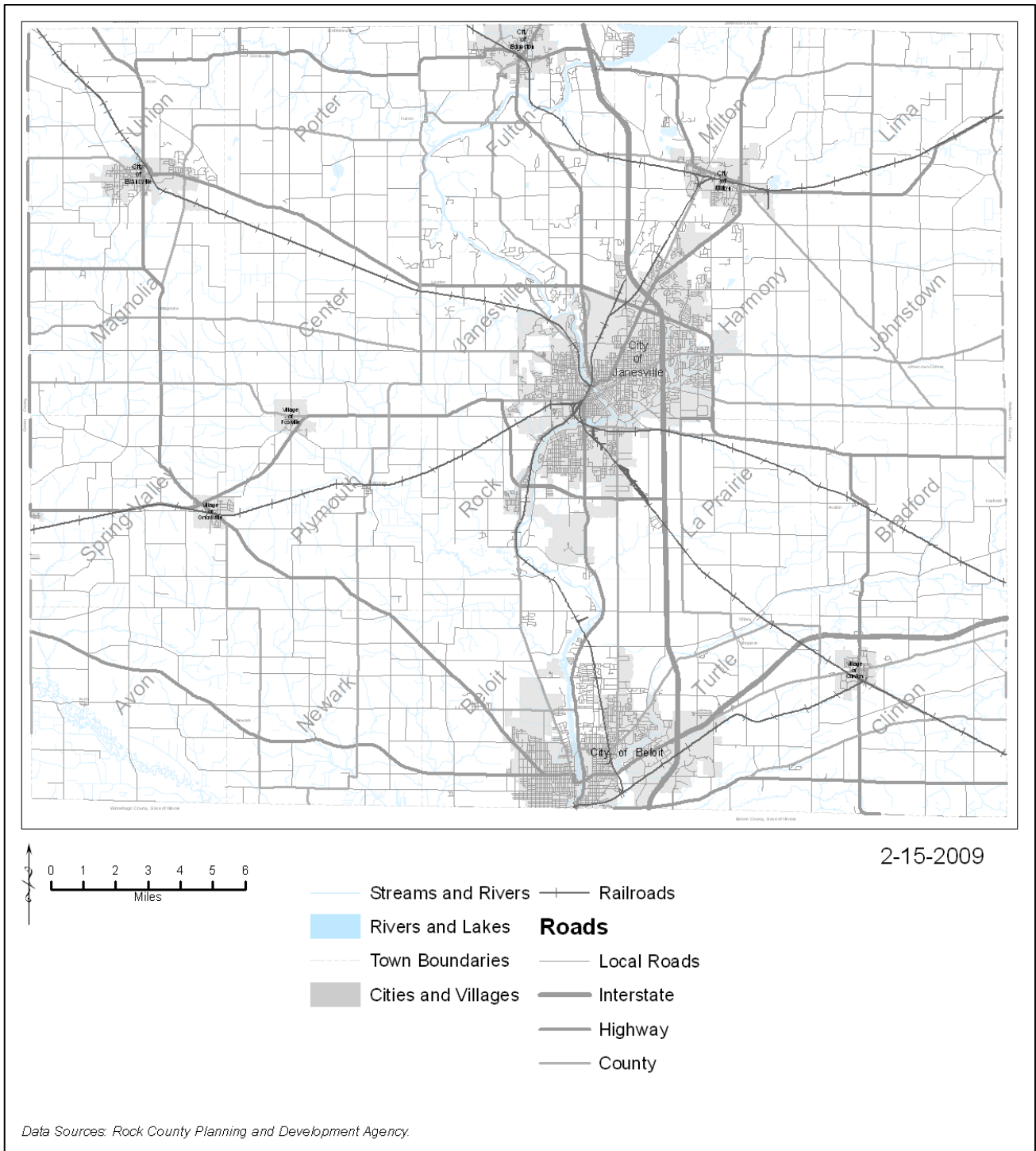
The County's physical geography is varied. The County's main waterway, the Rock River, bisects the County from north to south, running from Lake Koshkonong in the north-central portion of the County, through the Cities of Janesville and Beloit. The County is located in twelve base watersheds, all components of the Lower Rock Basin, which in turn is part of the Mississippi River Basin. The County's defining geologic feature is the end moraine, a remnant of the last glacial advance (Wisconsin Glaciation) approximately 10,000 years ago. The County's glacially formed kettle-moraine landscape is characterized by varying topography and drainage patterns, and uneven hills and ridges.

Maps 1.1 and 1.2 show the County's vicinity and location.

Map 1.1:
Vicinity



Map 1.2:
Location



The County's Cities and urban areas are home to diverse and unique commercial and industrial sectors, historic and cultural attractions, natural resources, and public and residential areas. The Cities of Janesville and Beloit both house substantial industrial sectors. Health care service entities, including Mercy Health System Corporation of Janesville and Beloit Memorial Hospital Incorporated, also employ a large segment of the County's labor force, as do various forms of

government, including the County and the City of Janesville and Beloit school districts. The County's many historic and cultural attractions include the City of Evansville historic district, Beloit College, an acclaimed liberal arts institution located in the City of Beloit, and the City of Janesville's Rotary Botanical Gardens and Tallman House, an exceptional example of Italian villa style architecture from the mid 1850's. Additionally, the Cities of Janesville and Beloit have a combined symphony orchestra, as well as individual performing arts centers. The Rock County Fair and Riverfest are regional cultural celebrations held every summer in the Cities of Janesville and Beloit respectively. These Cities both have extensive park and open space networks, including portions of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a Statewide trail commemorating the State's geologic history. Additionally, the Rock River runs through these Cities, offering opportunities for recreation, land preservation, and highly-valued residential, commercial, and industrial development. Historic and modern neighborhoods, comprising single and multi-family residences, are interspersed throughout the County's Cities and urban areas.

The County's rural areas, including its Towns and Villages, are home to a wide variety of natural resources, historic and cultural attractions, and public and residential areas as well. The County's rural land base and its rich soils are predominately utilized for agriculture production. As the County's urban area industries drive regional economic growth, so to does the County's rural agriculture production, providing diversification and balance. Various crops are cultivated in the County's rural areas, including corn and soybeans. The County's crop market value (\$63.5 million) in 2002 was fifth among all Wisconsin counties. Milk cattle, hogs, sheep, and goats are predominant livestock types reared in the County. County parks, including Magnolia Bluff, home to a unique scenic overlook, scattered woodlands, Lake Koshkonong, the Rock River, and various other waterways provide the County's rural areas with recreation, and land preservation and development opportunities.

History

The County has a rich history. The Lake Koshkonong area had been inhabited for thousands of years by various Native American groups including the mound building societies and later the Winnebago, Potawatomi, Sauk, Fox, and Menominee tribes. The Winnebago, in particular, figure prominently in the history of the area. The name Koshkonong is Winnebago meaning, "the lake we live on" and the largest Native American settlement in the State of Wisconsin in the early 19th century was a Winnebago settlement on the western side of the Lake, just northwest of the County's north-central border.

The Europeans first exposure to the area likely came in 1778 when French fur trader Charles Gautier de Verville passed through. In the next decade, French traders settled in the area now known as Charley Bluff on the southern end of the Lake in the present-day Town of Milton. Settlement of the area that was to become Rock County began in earnest in the 1830's, spurred on by two major events. Initially, the Federal Public Land Survey was completed in the area between 1833 and 1836. Additionally, U.S. soldiers returning from the Black Hawk War of 1832, which drove the great Winnebago chief Black Hawk westward through the lands that were to become the County, raved of the beauty and fertility of the Rock River Valley, peaking the

curiosity of restless souls eastward. John Inman and William Holmes left Milwaukee in 1835 to explore the area that was to become Rock County. The pair reached the site of the present-day City of Janesville and set up camp, deciding to return in the fall to begin a permanent settlement. The two men, along with four others, returned in November of 1835 and built a log house on the banks of the Rock River, becoming the County's first official settlers. The settlements of Janesville, Beloit and Milton soon sprung up, with other settlements following. Rock County, originally within Milwaukee County (one of six original counties of the Wisconsin Territory), was incorporated by territorial legislation in 1836. The City of Janesville was selected as the County seat in 1837 and the County's current boundaries were set in 1839.

The County's early settlers were greeted by a gently undulating landscape teeming with prairie grasses and wildflowers. Rock Prairie, the largest in the State of Wisconsin, occupied nearly half the County, extending from the Rock River eastward. Early settlers also found extremely productive agricultural soils, particularly in the Rock River Valley, and soon large swaths of the County were under cultivation.

The City's urban areas, particularly the Cities of Janesville and Beloit, both settled in the early 1830's, developed quickly due to the productive hinterlands that surrounded them, their geography, both on the Rock River and in close proximity to the larger urban areas of Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison, and emerging rail technology. The Rock River in particular, given its capacity for energy generation, transportation, and agricultural production, figured prominently in the development of these Cities. So too did rail, with lines coming to the County in the early 1850's, linking the County's farms to its urban areas and its urban areas to larger regional urban centers. The Milwaukee and Mississippi Rail Road passed through the northern part of the County, containing a branch from Milton to Janesville that was eventually continued west to the Mississippi River as the Wisconsin Southern. The Rock River Valley Rail Road ran from the Wisconsin-Illinois border up the Rock River, originating in Beloit and terminating in Madison. Lines also ran from Racine, on Lake Michigan, to Beloit and from Janesville to Kenosha, also on the Lake. The Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Northwestern Railway would later emerge, consolidating many of the rail lines in the County.

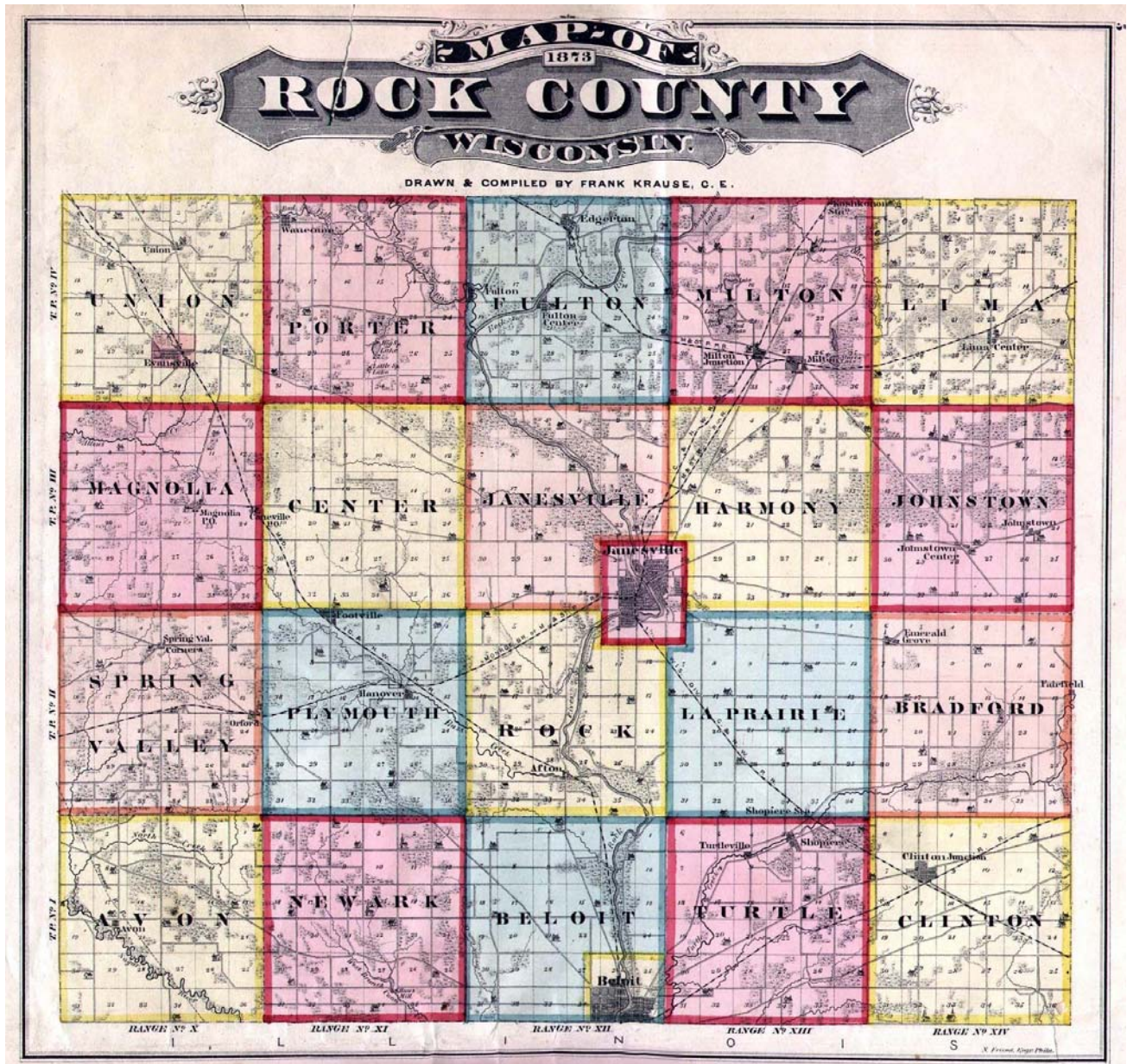
The County's population surpassed 30,000 by 1850. The County, with its balance of rural agricultural production and urban industry, continued to grow throughout the 19th century, spurred by innovation in both sectors. Prominent manufacturers in the County's early days included Beloit Reaper and Sickle Works, Merrill and Houston Iron Works, Rock River Paper Company, D.W. Dake's Creamery, and Beloit Plough and Wagon Works. Agricultural staples in the County's early days included wheat, corn, oats, and barley, and to a lesser extent wool, potatoes, pork, butter, and fruits.

The County emerged as a regional industrial center in the early 20th century. The Cities of Beloit and Janesville became centers of diversified industry, attracting immigrant workers. Parker Pen Company, a global pen manufacturer, was founded in the City of Janesville in 1891 and remained a staple of the County's economy into the century's second half. General Motors Corporation (GM) opened one of its first automobile assembly plants in the City of Janesville in 1919, providing the region with an industrial identity throughout the 20th century.

Stagnated population and economic growth was evident in the County in the late 20th century, coinciding with a national decline in domestic manufacturing and industry. Similarly, 2009 witnessed the closure of the GM plant, in turn affecting many other dependent industries in the County. Recent economic diversification, including an emerging health services sector, continued agricultural production, and the County's favorable geography have provided stability to the region though, and the County continues to grow and develop at a steady rate.

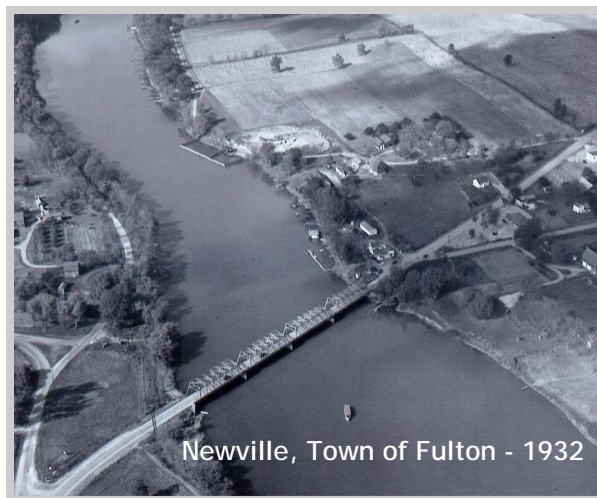
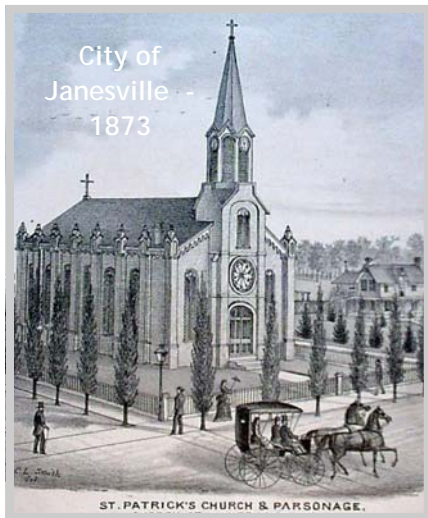
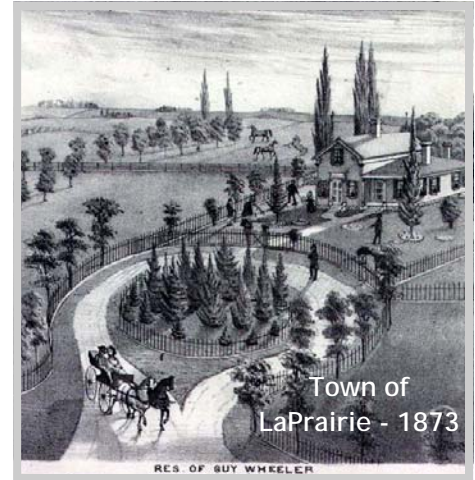
Figure 1.1 displays a plat map of the County in 1873, whereas Figures 1.2 and 1.3 display scenes from the County's earlier days.

Figure 1.1:
Plat Map: 1873



Source: WIRock Group - 2008

Figure 1.2:
Early County Scenes



Source: WIRock Group and Rock-Koshkonong Lake District - 2008

Existing Population and Demographics

Figure 1.3 displays the County's population by community in 2005.

**Figure 1.3:
Population: Rock County: 2005**

Community	Number	Percent
Town of Avon	589	0.4%
Town of Beloit	7,319	4.7%
Town of Bradford	1,027	0.7%
Town of Center	1,040	0.7%
Town of Clinton	909	0.6%
Town of Fulton	3,230	2.1%
Town of Harmony	2,448	1.6%
Town of Janesville	3,343	2.1%
Town of Johnstown	797	0.5%
Town of La Prairie	905	0.6%
Town of Lima	1,314	0.8%
Town of Magnolia	855	0.5%
Town of Milton	2,974	1.9%
Town of Newark	1,593	1.0%
Town of Plymouth	1,299	0.8%
Town of Porter	969	0.6%
Town of Rock	3,362	2.1%
Town of Spring Valley	813	0.5%
Town of Turtle	2,430	1.5%
Town of Union	1,981	1.3%
Village of Clinton	2,237	1.4%
Village of Footville	769	0.5%
Village of Orfordville	1,357	0.9%
City of Beloit	36,106	23.0%
City of Brodhead	5	0.0%
City of Edgerton	5,096	3.2%
City of Evansville	4,660	3.0%
City of Janesville	62,130	39.6%
City of Milton	5,437	3.5%
COUNTY TOTAL	156,994	100.0%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004

Figure 1.3 indicates the large majority of the County's population was located in its Cities, including Janesville (62,130 and 39.6%) and Beloit (36,106 and 23.0%), in 2005. Towns with large populations in 2005 include Beloit (7,319 and 4.7%), Rock (3,362 and 2.1%), Janesville (3,343 and 2.1%), Fulton (3,230 and 2.1%) and Milton (2,974 and 1.9%).

Figure 1.4 displays the age distribution of the County’s population and its median age in 2006.

**Figure 1.4:
Age Distribution: Rock County: 2006**

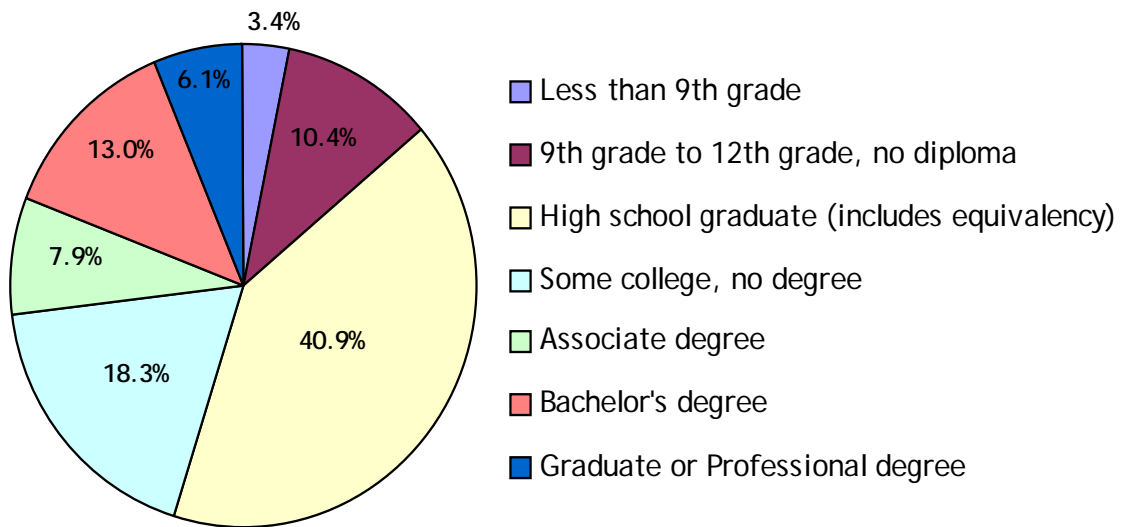
Age Group	2006	
	Number	Percent
Under 5	10,198	6.4%
5 to 19	33,297	20.9%
20 to 34	31,214	19.6%
35 to 44	23,290	14.6%
45 to 54	23,920	15.0%
55 to 64	17,145	10.8%
65 to 84	17,568	11.0%
85 and over	2,521	1.6%
COUNTY TOTAL	159,153	100.0%
MEDIAN AGE		
	36.6	

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 2006

Figure 1.4 indicates 46.9% (74,709) of the County’s population was 34 years of age or younger in 2006. Figure 1.4 also indicates 29.6% of the County’s population was between the ages of 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 in 2006. The County’s median age in 2006 was 36.6.

Figure 1.5 displays the education level of the County population age 25 years and older in 2006.

**Figure 1.5:
Education Level (Age 25 Years and Older): Rock County: 2006**



Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 2006

Figure 1.5 indicates 86.2% of the County’s population age 25 years and older had at least a high school diploma, and 45.3% had some education beyond high school, as of 2006.

Figure 1.6 displays the diversity of the County’s population in 2006.

**Figure 1.6:
Diversity: Rock County: 2006**

Race	Number	Percent
White	139,037	87.4%
Black or African American	6,648	4.2%
Hispanic or Latino	9,152	5.8%
Asian	1,738	1.1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	108	0.1%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	215	0.1%
Other race	2,255	1.4%
COUNTY TOTAL	159,153	100.0%

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 2006

Figure 1.6 indicates the largest segment of the County’s population (139,037 and 87.4%) is classified as White as of 2006, whereas Hispanic or Latino comprises the second largest portion at 5.8% (9,152).



Population and Demographic Trends

Figure 1.7 illustrates County population by community from 1980 to 2000.

Figure 1.7:
Population: Rock County: 1980 - 2000

Community	1980	1990	2000	Change: 1980-2000	
				Number	Percent
Town of Avon	555	570	586	31	5.6%
Town of Beloit	8,382	6,778	7,038	-1,344	-16.0%
Town of Bradford	1,100	1,030	1,007	-93	-8.5%
Town of Center	908	861	1,005	97	10.7%
Town of Clinton	925	899	893	-32	-3.5%
Town of Fulton	2,866	2,867	3,158	292	10.2%
Town of Harmony	2,090	2,138	2,351	261	12.5%
Town of Janesville	3,068	3,121	3,048	-20	-0.7%
Town of Johnstown	844	850	802	-42	-5.0%
Town of La Prairie	1,099	943	929	-170	-15.5%
Town of Lima	1,179	1,285	1,312	133	11.3%
Town of Magnolia	746	717	854	108	14.5%
Town of Milton	2,306	2,353	2,844	538	23.3%
Town of Newark	1,574	1,514	1,571	-3	-0.2%
Town of Plymouth	1,267	1,189	1,270	3	0.2%
Town of Porter	940	953	925	-15	-1.6%
Town of Rock	3,399	3,172	3,338	-61	-1.8%
Town of Spring Valley	912	790	813	-99	-10.9%
Town of Turtle	2,703	2,458	2,444	-259	-9.6%
Town of Union	1,329	1,537	1,860	531	40.0%
Village of Clinton	1,751	1,849	2,162	411	23.5%
Village of Footville	794	764	788	-6	-0.8%
Village of Orfordville	1,143	1,219	1,272	129	11.3%
City of Beloit	35,207	35,571	35,775	568	1.6%
City of Brodhead	0	0	0	0	N/A
City of Edgerton	4,335	4,254	4,891	556	12.8%
City of Evansville	2,835	3,174	4,039	1,204	42.5%
City of Janesville	51,071	52,210	60,200	9,129	17.9%
City of Milton	4,092	4,444	5,132	1,040	25.4%
COUNTY TOTAL	139,420	139,510	152,307	12,887	9.2%

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Figure 1.7 indicates modest population number (12,887) and percent (9.2%) growth at the County level from 1980 to 2000. Figure 1.7 indicates the highest population number increases were exhibited in the Cities of Janesville (9,129), Evansville (1,204), and Milton (1,040) from 1980 to 2000. The Town of Beloit experienced the largest population number decrease (1,344) from 1980 to 2000. Figure 1.7 also indicates the City of Evansville and the Town of Union (in

which the City of Evansville is located) experienced the highest population percent gains from 1980 to 2000, 42.5% and 40.0%, respectively. The majority of other County communities experienced modest growth during this same time period. A few County communities experienced negative population percent growth from 1980 to 2000, including the Towns of Beloit (16.0%), LaPrairie (15.5%), Spring Valley (10.9%), and Turtle (9.6%).

Figure 1.8 displays County population from 1980 to 2000, comparing its figures against neighboring counties.

**Figure 1.8:
Population: Rock County: 1980 - 2000**

County	1980	1990	2000	Change: 1980-2000	
				Number	Percent
Rock	139,420	139,510	152,307	12,887	9.2%
Green	30,012	30,339	33,647	3,635	12.1%
Dane	323,545	367,085	426,526	102,981	31.8%
Jefferson	66,152	67,783	74,021	7,869	11.9%
Walworth	71,507	75,000	93,759	22,252	31.1%
Stephenson (Illinois)	49,536	48,052	48,979	-557	-1.1%
Winnebago (Illinois)	250,884	252,913	278,418	27,534	11.0%
Boone (Illinois)	28,630	30,806	41,786	13,156	46.0%
McHenry (Illinois)	147,897	183,241	260,077	112,180	75.9%

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Figure 1.8 indicates neighboring counties Dane and McHenry (Illinois) have seen substantial population number increases (over 100,000) from 1980 to 2000. Figure 1.8 indicates the County is near the bottom of the displayed counties in population number (12,887) and percent (9.2%) increase from 1980 to 2000.

Figure 1.9 details age distribution of the County’s population from 1980 to 2000.

**Figure 1.9:
Age Distribution: Rock County: 1980 - 2000**

Age Group	1980		1990		2000		Change: 1980-2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	10,790	7.7%	10,922	7.8%	10,263	6.7%	-527	-1.0%
5 to 19	37,003	26.5%	31,019	22.2%	34,218	22.5%	-2,785	-4.1%
20 to 34	34,721	24.9%	32,599	23.4%	29,601	19.4%	-5,120	-5.5%
35 to 44	15,908	11.4%	20,358	14.6%	24,810	16.3%	8,902	4.9%
45 to 54	13,915	10.0%	14,743	10.6%	20,645	13.6%	6,730	3.6%
55 to 64	11,790	8.5%	12,320	8.8%	13,375	8.8%	1,585	0.3%
65 to 84	13,693	9.8%	15,586	11.2%	16,843	11.1%	3,150	1.2%
85 and over	1,600	1.1%	1,963	1.4%	2,552	1.7%	952	0.5%
COUNTY TOTAL	139,420	100.0%	139,510	100.0%	152,307	100.0%	12,887	N/A

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Figure 1.9 indicates the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups have seen the highest increases in numbers (8,902 and 6,730) and percent (4.9% and 3.6%) from 1980 to 2000. Figure 1.9 also indicates the 20 to 34 and 5 to 19 age groups exhibited the highest decreases in numbers (5,120 and 2,785) and percent (5.5% and 4.1%) during this same time period.

Figure 1.10 displays education levels for County residents age 25 years and older from 1980 to 2000. Due to the nature of the data, the 1980 Some college, no degree and Associate degree Education Level categories have been combined, as have the Bachelor’s degree and Graduate or professional degree categories. Subsequently, these same categories were combined for 1990 and 2000 to produce the percents as stated in the Change: 1980-2000 column for these categories.

**Figure 1.10:
Education Level: (Age 25 Years and Older): Rock County 1980 - 2000**

Education Level	1980	1990	2000	Change: 1980-2000
9th grade to 12th grade, no diploma	28.9%	21.8%	16.1%	-12.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	45.7%	42.9%	39.3%	-6.4%
Some college, no degree	13.0%	15.4%	21.3%	14.9%
Associate degree		6.6%	6.7%	
Bachelor's degree	12.4%	8.9%	11.3%	4.3%
Graduate or professional degree		4.4%	5.4%	
COUNTY TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	NA

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Figure 1.10 indicates the County’s population age 25 years and older has experienced increases in education level, including a drop of 12.8% of those residents who do not have a high school diploma and a combined increase of 19.2% of residents who have some education beyond a high school diploma.

Figure 1.11 displays the diversity of the County’s population in 1990 and 2000.

**Figure 1.11:
Diversity: Rock County: 1990 and 2000**

Race	1990		2000		Percent of Population Change: 1990-2000
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
White	130,803	93.8%	138,610	91.0%	61.0%
Black or African American	6,638	4.8%	7,048	4.6%	3.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1,754	1.3%	5,953	3.9%	32.8%
Asian	963	0.7%	1,191	0.8%	1.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native	369	0.3%	422	0.3%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	22	< 0.1%	61	< 0.1%	0.3%
Other race	715	0.5%	2,691	1.8%	15.4%
Two or more races	N/R	N/R	2,284	1.5%	N/A
COUNTY TOTAL	139,510	100.0%	152,307	100.0%	N/A

Source: United States Bureau of the Census - 1990 and 2000

Figure 1.11 indicates the County’s population has historically been classified predominately as White. Figure 1.11 also indicates the Hispanic or Latino population has tripled, representing approximately a third (32.8%) of total County population percent increase from 1990 to 2000.

Population and Demographic Projections*

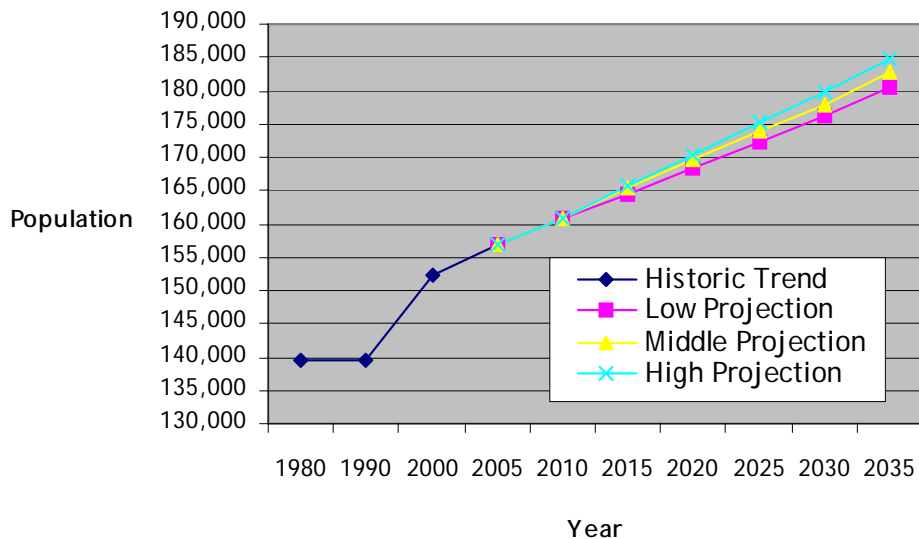
Figures 1.12 and 1.13 illustrate County population projection scenarios. Three projection scenarios, a High, Middle, and Low are presented to illustrate various, possible future County populations through 2035.

**Figure 1.12:
Population: Rock County: 2010 - 2035**

Projection	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change: 2010-2035	
							Number	Percent
High	160,952	165,706	170,460	175,214	179,968	184,722	23,770	14.8%
Middle	160,911	165,354	169,648	174,018	177,855	182,644	21,733	13.5%
Low	160,662	164,416	168,258	172,189	176,212	180,330	19,668	12.2%

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008*

**Figure 1.13:
Population: Rock County: 1980 - 2035**



*Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008*

Figures 1.12 and 1.13 indicate the High population projection scenario would add approximately 24,000 County residents above the 2010 projection, whereas the Low projection adds approximately 20,000. For the purposes of this *Plan*, the Middle projection will be utilized.

* These projections are presented to serve as a guide for planning purposes, providing only an indication of possible future County population and cannot account for the myriad of future factors that may influence future County population. For a detailed explanation regarding projection methodology, please see Appendix F - Projection Sources and Formulation Methodologies.

Figure 1.14 depicts the Middle projection of County population by community from 2010 to 2035.

**Figure 1.14:
Population: Rock County: 2010 - 2035**

Community	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change: 2010-2035	
							Number	Percent
Town of Avon	593	597	601	605	609	612	19	3.2%
Town of Beloit	7,406	7,597	7,781	7,968	8,125	8,314	908	12.3%
Town of Bradford	999	996	992	989	984	980	-19	-1.9%
Town of Center	1,101	1,150	1,198	1,247	1,295	1,343	242	22.0%
Town of Clinton	900	905	909	913	916	921	21	2.3%
Town of Fulton	3,375	3,486	3,594	3,704	3,812	3,922	547	16.2%
Town of Harmony	2,561	2,672	2,781	2,891	2,996	3,105	544	21.2%
Town of Janesville	3,540	3,789	4,034	4,280	4,523	4,769	1,229	34.7%
Town of Johnstown	765	748	729	712	701	687	-78	-10.2%
Town of La Prairie	886	865	844	823	803	782	-104	-11.7%
Town of Lima	1,359	1,383	1,407	1,431	1,455	1,478	119	8.8%
Town of Magnolia	918	951	982	1,015	1,047	1,076	158	17.2%
Town of Milton	3,200	3,380	3,557	3,735	3,913	4,085	885	27.7%
Town of Newark	1,616	1,640	1,663	1,686	1,708	1,732	116	7.2%
Town of Plymouth	1,324	1,352	1,379	1,406	1,428	1,454	130	9.8%
Town of Porter	942	951	960	969	978	986	44	4.7%
Town of Rock	3,377	3,399	3,419	3,440	3,460	3,483	106	3.1%
Town of Spring Valley	823	828	833	838	845	850	27	3.3%
Town of Turtle	2,395	2,383	2,369	2,357	2,344	2,332	-63	-2.6%
Town of Union	2,149	2,295	2,439	2,584	2,729	2,874	725	33.7%
Village of Clinton	2,480	2,640	2,798	2,957	3,116	3,175	695	28.0%
Village of Footville	784	783	781	780	775	777	-7	-0.9%
Village of Orfordville	1,335	1,367	1,399	1,431	1,455	1,486	151	11.3%
City of Beloit	35,927	36,029	36,100	36,190	36,268	36,317	390	1.1%
City of Edgerton	5,243	5,423	5,599	5,776	5,936	6,103	860	16.4%
City of Evansville	4,692	5,021	5,346	5,672	5,997	6,214	1,522	32.4%
City of Janesville	64,535	66,756	68,910	71,096	73,309	75,680	11,145	17.3%
City of Milton	5,686	5,968	6,244	6,523	6,815	7,107	1,421	25.0%
COUNTY TOTAL	160,911	165,354	169,648	174,018	177,855	182,644	21,733	13.5%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004
Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2008

Figure 1.14 indicates the highest population number increases from 2010 to 2035 will be seen in the Cities of Janesville (11,145), Evansville (1,522), and Milton (1,421), while the highest population percent gains will be seen in the City of Evansville (32.4%), Village of Clinton (28.0%), and Towns of Janesville (34.7%), Union (33.7%), and Milton (27.7%). Figure 1.14 also indicates the highest population losses, both in number and percent, will be seen in the Towns of LaPrairie (104 and 11.7%) Johnstown (78 and 10.2%).

Figure 1.15 displays the Middle projection of County population from 2010 to 2025 in comparison to neighboring counties.

**Figure 1.15:
Population: Rock County: 2010 - 2025**

County	2010	2015	2020	2025	Change: 2010-2025	
					Number	Percent
Rock	160,911	165,354	169,648	174,018	13,107	8.1%
Green	36,093	37,259	38,474	39,609	3,516	9.7%
Dane	480,573	503,017	527,534	554,848	74,275	15.5%
Jefferson	82,161	85,178	88,302	91,464	9,303	11.3%
Walworth	100,634	106,588	111,237	113,506	12,872	12.8%
Stephenson (Illinois)	47,812	48,136	49,268	50,553	2,741	5.7%
Winnebago (Illinois)	307,349	320,683	337,049	352,965	45,616	14.8%
Boone (Illinois)	45,484	46,773	48,540	50,807	5,323	11.7%
McHenry (Illinois)	337,034	377,315	407,931	434,286	97,252	28.9%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004
Illinois Department of Public Health - 2008

Figure 1.15 indicates the County will experience a low population percent growth rate (8.1%) and a moderate population number increase (13,107) in comparison to neighboring counties from 2010 to 2025.

Figure 1.16 displays a projection of the age distribution of the County population from 2010 to 2025.

**Figure 1.16:
Age Distribution: Rock County: 2010 - 2025**

Age Group	2010		2015		2020		2025		Change: 2010-2025	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	10,794	6.7%	11,151	6.7%	11,299	6.7%	11,267	6.5%	473	-0.2%
5 to 19	32,980	20.5%	32,622	19.7%	33,385	19.7%	34,291	19.7%	1,311	-0.8%
20 to 34	31,813	19.8%	33,034	20.0%	32,810	19.3%	32,123	18.5%	310	-1.3%
35 to 44	21,574	13.4%	21,282	12.9%	22,660	13.4%	24,085	13.8%	2,511	0.4%
45 to 54	24,391	15.2%	23,267	14.1%	21,314	12.6%	21,165	12.2%	-3,226	-3.0%
55 to 64	18,436	11.5%	20,729	12.5%	21,869	12.9%	20,955	12.0%	2,519	0.6%
65 to 84	17,804	11.1%	19,896	12.0%	22,794	13.4%	26,391	15.2%	8,587	4.1%
85 and over	3,119	1.9%	3,373	2.0%	3,517	2.1%	3,741	2.1%	622	0.2%
COUNTY TOTAL	160,911	100.0%	165,354	100.0%	169,648	100.0%	174,018	100.0%	13,107	N/A

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration - 2004

Figure 1.16 indicates the highest population gains (8,587 and 4.1%) will be seen in the 65 to 84 age group from 2010 to 2025. However, it is important to note that this age group spans 21 years, while the majority of other age groups span only 11. Figure 1.16 also indicates the 45 to 54 age group will exhibit the highest losses in population number (3,226) and percent (3.0%) during this same time period.

1.3. *Plan* Issues and Opportunities

Identifying issues and opportunities provides a planning context, providing answers to the essential questions of “What are we planning for?” and “What will help us get there?”. The following identifies the County’s planning issues and opportunities derived from both analysis of the County’s profile as provided in 1.2 and *Citizen Participation Plan* activities.

County Profile

- The County is a growth community.
 - The County’s geography, including proximity to Interstates 90/39 and 43 and various growing urban areas such as the Cities of Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago, has and will continue to contribute to growth and provide opportunities for development.
 - County population trends and projections indicate steady growth through 2035. Population trends and projections for County communities, including the Cities of Janesville, Evansville, and Milton, the Village of Clinton, and the Towns of Union and Janesville, exhibit significant growth rates.
- The dynamic of the County’s population is changing.
 - County age distribution trends and projections indicate an aging population.
 - The education of the County’s population age 25 and older will likely continue its recent trend, exhibiting increases in residents with high school educations and beyond.
 - The County’s Hispanic or Latino population has increased substantially in recent years.
- Growth and a changing population dynamic will have various implications for the County.
 - An aging and increasingly diverse County population has specific service needs that will need to be met.
 - The land base of the County’s Town’s will be eroded by annexations by the County’s Cities and Villages, and productive agricultural lands in the Towns will need to be converted to other uses to accommodate additional residential and associated (i.e. commercial, transportation, etc.) development in the Towns.
 - New residential and associated development will threaten the County’s agricultural, natural, and cultural resources. Residential development in the County should be responsible, entailing quality, diverse, affordable, and attractive units located in

appropriate, designated locations. The County's transportation system should also be responsible, entailing a safe, affordable, regional, diverse, efficient, and highly-connected system. Utilities and community facilities, and associated services, should be provided in the County at adequate levels and in appropriate, designated locations, in a timely, efficient, and affordable manner. Finally, economic development in the County should capitalize on the County's strengths, again ensuring diverse, viable, and responsible economic development in appropriate, designated locations

- Increased efforts, including multi-jurisdictional cooperation and planning, will need to be put forth by the County government to maintain and expand current levels of service to County residents.

Citizen Participation Plan*

The following list of planning issues and opportunities was derived from *Citizen Participation Plan* activities.

County residents:

- Are generally satisfied with the County's overall quality of life
- Support moderate (1% a year or less) increases in County population
- Recognize the continued preservation of agricultural lands, open space, and the agricultural industry as vital to the County's socio-economic identity
- Support the authority of local governments to regulate land use but are also supportive of intergovernmental cooperation between various governments (County, City, Village, and Town)
- Support agricultural innovation, bio-fuel production, and community and hobby farming activities
- Are concerned about the impact of Dane County's growth and escalating costs of County land and housing
- Are concerned about the threat that residential and commercial development of the County's urban fringes pose to the Town's agricultural land and open space
- Desire land use planning, in the County and surrounding areas, that provides stability to small farm owners and the agricultural industry, and ensures preservation of agricultural and open space lands

** This list of planning issues and opportunities, derived from Citizen Participation Plan activities, is not intended to be exhaustive nor representative of the entire County population, but rather to reflect input and a general consensus as put forth by participating stakeholders, including County residents and elected officials, and other interested parties.*

Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(e), the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of a community's comprehensive plan is to be:

"A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and non-metallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s.295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources, and other natural resources".

For the purposes of this *Plan*, the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources element has been divided into three separate Chapters, each with their own goals, objectives and policies. The Chapters are as follows:

- Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Each Chapter also has a section that address issues and opportunities for that specific Chapter, however, tools for implementation that might apply to all three Chapters have been described only at the end of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources of this *Plan* to avoid duplication. Those implementation tools that apply to Section II: Chapters 3 and 4 of this *Plan* will be referenced within 3.4. and 4.4. of those Chapters.

2.1. Overview

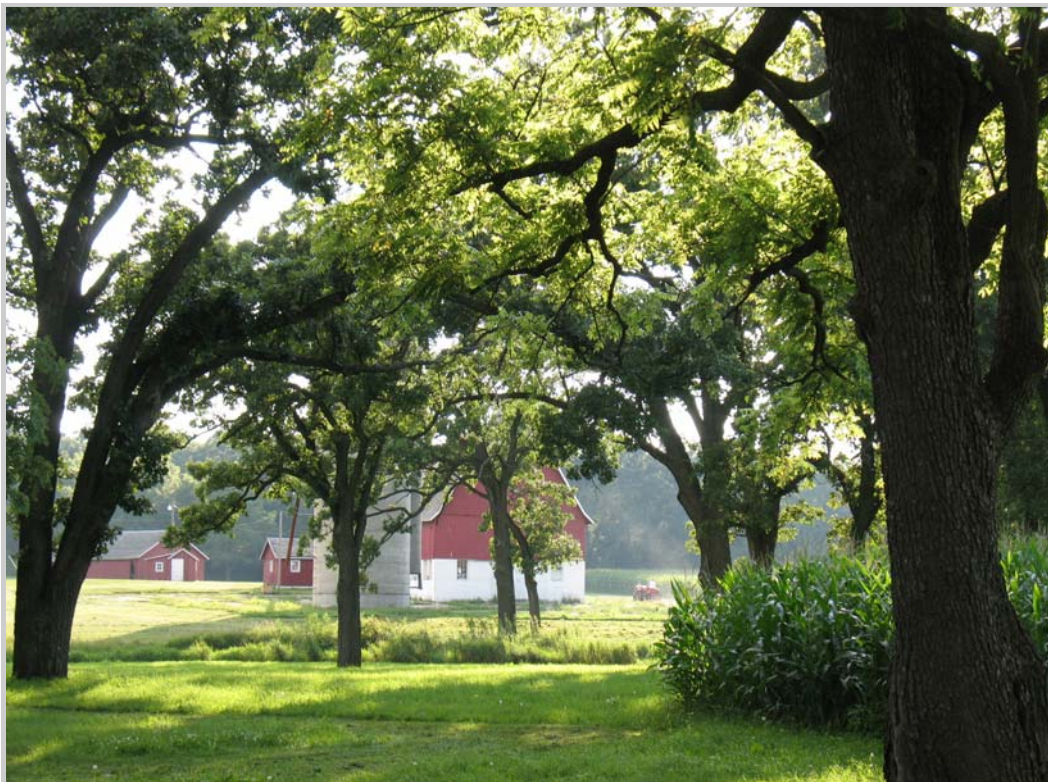
Rock County is largely characterized by agricultural land. This resource serves as the livelihood for many County residents and simply as an outstanding setting in which to live for many others. Either way, it is the most important natural resource existing in the County and should be carefully managed. Agricultural land is also a threatened resource in Rock County. Each year many acres of agricultural land are removed from production and removed from their role as open space in order to make room for development. Once agricultural land is developed, it is very unlikely that it will ever become agricultural land again. For this reason, this topic is one of the most important issues for Rock County to consider for planning purposes.

It is necessary to be knowledgeable about, and carefully consider possible alternatives to development of agricultural land. New and innovative ways to preserve farmland, not only for landowners but for the well-being of all residents of the region, should be carefully researched, analyzed and marketed. Rock County should take the lead in working together with other

jurisdictions to assess how agricultural and natural resources affect the region and determine the best way to manage them. Changing the way that land has been managed is often controversial and emotional, however, with careful research, development and implementation of new ideas and policies, the citizens of Rock County can have the ability to improve the economic viability of agriculture and its related quality of life for all citizens.

Residents of Rock County represent a wide variety of needs and opinions about how the land should be used, regulated and managed. Those who are choosing to live in rural areas and work elsewhere may have opposing viewpoints from those who are making their livelihood from farming the land. Landowners may have a very different idea of what it means to conserve or preserve agricultural and other natural resources than those who track the health and sustainability of the environment. Although it may be difficult or impossible to represent all viewpoints, this Chapter will provide a professional assessment for the best way to preserve agricultural resources based on the needs of all County residents.

This Chapter aims to describe the agricultural resources currently present in Rock County, explains the current level of protection (or lack of it) and proposes various methods and policies on what should be done to preserve agricultural resources for future generations. It is, however, up to the local communities of Rock County to implement methods and policies of their own to reach the level of protection that they have chosen for their agricultural land and to decide if it makes sense to consider methods of agricultural preservation on a Countywide scale.



2.2. Existing Plans and Program

There are many plans and programs that apply to agriculture in Rock County. Those that are currently affecting and are likely to continue to affect the future of agriculture in Rock County include the following:

Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update

Agricultural resources planning has previously been addressed via the *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update* (AgPres Plan) published October 31, 2005 and adopted by the Rock County Board December 15, 2005. It is expected that the goals, objectives, and policies of this *Plan* and its future updates will remain in effect during the life of this *Plan*.

The AgPres Plan was written to meet the requirements of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Act of 1977. The purpose of the act was to provide a method to preserve farmland through local land use planning and zoning. The AgPres Plan establishes official agricultural preservation areas (APA) whereby landowners in the APAs are eligible for tax credits through the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program. The location of APAs are shown on the AgPres Plan Map as it appears in 2.3. of this Chapter, and the entire AgPres Plan is designated as Section II: Chapter 13 of this *Plan*.

The AgPres Plan includes a discussion of the history of farmland preservation in Rock County, an inventory of various physical features affecting agricultural land use, a report on the agricultural economy, a report on the decline of agriculture in Rock County, an account of the public participation in plan development, goals and objectives for agricultural preservation, a map showing APAs and transition areas, policies and implementation tools, and finally, appendices with supporting documentation. Because of their relevance to planning for the future of the agricultural resource, the goals, objectives and policies of the AgPres Plan are reproduced in 2.6. of this Chapter.

Farmland Preservation Program

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Act of 1977 created what is known as the Farmland Preservation Program. The program consists of three components, land use planning, soil and water conservation and tax credit. Through this program, Rock County landowners have received an average of over \$850,000 in income tax credits annually when specific program criteria are met.

For Rock County landowners to be eligible for the program, the following criteria had to be met:

1. Rock County had to adopt an agricultural preservation plan that was certified by the State
2. Each individual Town had to agree to become part of the County program
3. Each Town had to adopt a State certified zoning map and text that conforms to the County agricultural preservation plan map
4. Each Town had to have an exclusive agricultural zoning district

With those criteria being met, landowners must also meet certain criteria to receive the tax credit. Examples of criteria for landowners seeking tax credits are:

1. Landowner must be a resident of Wisconsin
2. Landowner must meet farm income qualifications
3. Landowner must obtain a County approved land conservation plan that meets the Rock County soil and water conservation standards for the land in question
4. Land in question must be in an exclusive agriculture zoning district
5. Lot must be at least 35 acres in size

Wisconsin residents who own at least 35 acres of farmland and produce at least \$6,000 in agricultural products per year, or an average of \$18,000 over three years (plus meet other criteria) are eligible to participate in the program. The amount of tax credit varies, depending on the household income and the amount of real estate taxes on the farmland.

The Farmland Preservation Program is the current standard for agricultural preservation and is the primary method for creating financial incentive for farmers to stay in farming in Rock County. Unfortunately however, the financial incentive to develop the land is typically far greater than the tax advantage provided through the program. The Farmland Preservation Program is expected to be significantly changed and updated to be more effective as an agricultural preservation tool during the planning period.

Rock County Land and Water Resources Management Plan (LWRMP)

The LWRMP serves as a long-term strategic conservation plan for the Rock County Land Conservation Department and Rock County residents. The plan provides guidance for conservation efforts within the County and assists in forming annual work plans for the Land Conservation Department. The LWRMP, in coordination with this *Plan* discusses issues related to land use, physiography, soils, surface water (including wetlands) and groundwater, within the framework of watershed management. The LWRMP also includes discussion of other natural resource concerns including threatened and endangered species, forests and woodlands, invasive species, identification of priority farms for agricultural preservation efforts, and State and local regulations used to implement the plan. It is the intent of this *Plan* to uphold the intent of the LWRMP.

Local Land Use Plans and Zoning Ordinances

There are 28 local land use plans and 28 local zoning ordinances currently in effect in Rock County that illustrate where agricultural resources are planned for the future (land use plans), where agricultural resources currently exist (under agricultural zoning) and where development will be or is permitted (in some cases, land use plans and zoning) or is existing (zoned for other than agricultural uses). Each of the land use plans and zoning ordinances affects agriculture in one of three ways: First, by designating specific areas on the land that each community is planning for future agricultural uses, second, by designating specific areas where agriculture may be converted to other uses, and third, by designating areas for development that may be in close proximity to agricultural operations. Analysis of current land use plans and ordinances provides a clear picture of where agricultural resources are likely to be maintained in the near future and throughout the planning period.

2.3. Agricultural Resources Inventory

There are various ways that agricultural resources can be defined and inventoried. Four common methods of illustrating where agricultural resources exist have been chosen to define what is agricultural land in Rock County and what is not. A combination of these defining factors and others will be used later in this *Plan* to make informed decisions about where it makes the most sense to preserve agricultural land and where it makes sense to propose other uses for the land.

The four methods are:

1. Agricultural soil capability - Used to map where agricultural soils are located based on crop production
2. Agricultural preservation areas - Used for tax credit purposes
3. Town zoning - Shows where land is being farmed and/or where development is not allowed
4. City extraterritorial jurisdiction planning maps - Used to show where agricultural land now exists and to predict where it might be developed in the future

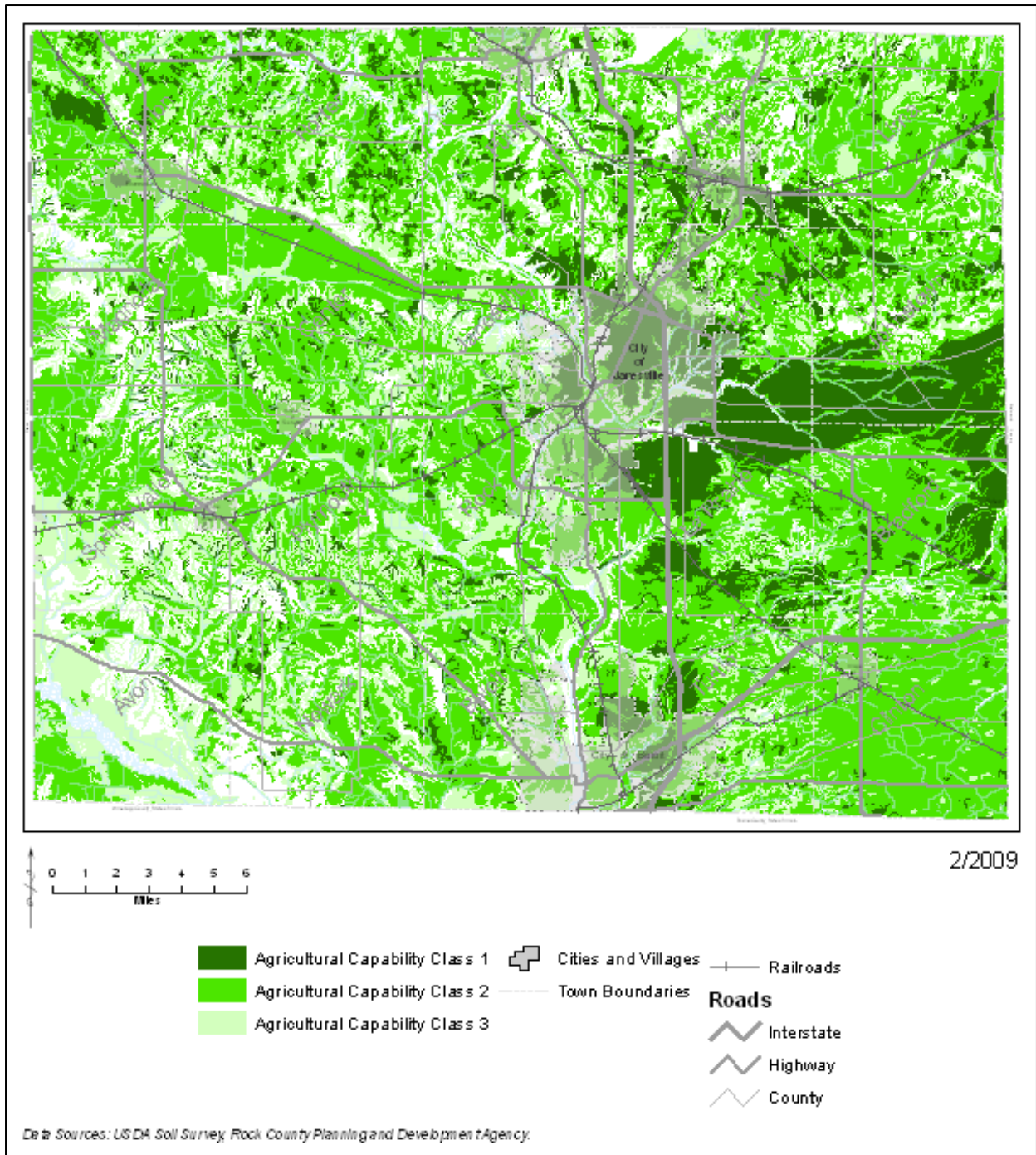
These four methods will be discussed in the following pages and will be used to define agricultural resources in Rock County.

Agricultural Soil Capability

Agricultural soils are classified into eight capability classes (see Map 2.1). Classes 1, 2 and 3 are the most ideal for agriculture. Class 1 soils have few limitations that restrict their use and are considered prime agricultural land. Some of the agricultural soil in Rock County is considered to represent some of the best soil in the world. Class 2 soils have moderate limitations that reduce

the choice of plants, or require moderate conservation practices and Class 3 soils have more severe limitations. Many Rock County farms exist on Class 3 and 4 soils. Smaller areas of interspersed Class 1 and 2 soils are characteristic of Rock County except on the southeastern side of the City of Janesville where a large contiguous area of Class 1 soils extends from the City border to the County line and beyond.

Map 2.1:
Agricultural Soil Capability



Agricultural Preservation Areas

According to the AgPres Plan, much of the agricultural land bordering the Cities of Janesville, Beloit, Evansville, Edgerton and Milton has been designated as urban agricultural transition area. These areas are typically experiencing high development pressure, are sometimes zoned as transition or development areas under local zoning codes, are within City or Village sewer service areas, and are likely to continue to develop, at least partially, during the term of this *Plan*. Most of the remaining agricultural land in Rock County is in the APA and is zoned for exclusive agriculture under local zoning codes. A smaller proportion of agricultural land is designated as excluded and has zoning consistent with small to medium sized, three to 35-acre farmettes, horse farms or residential lots. Rural transition areas are those areas designated for rural development. It is highly recommended that those areas currently in the APAs remain as such throughout the planning period (see Map 2.2).

Town Zoning

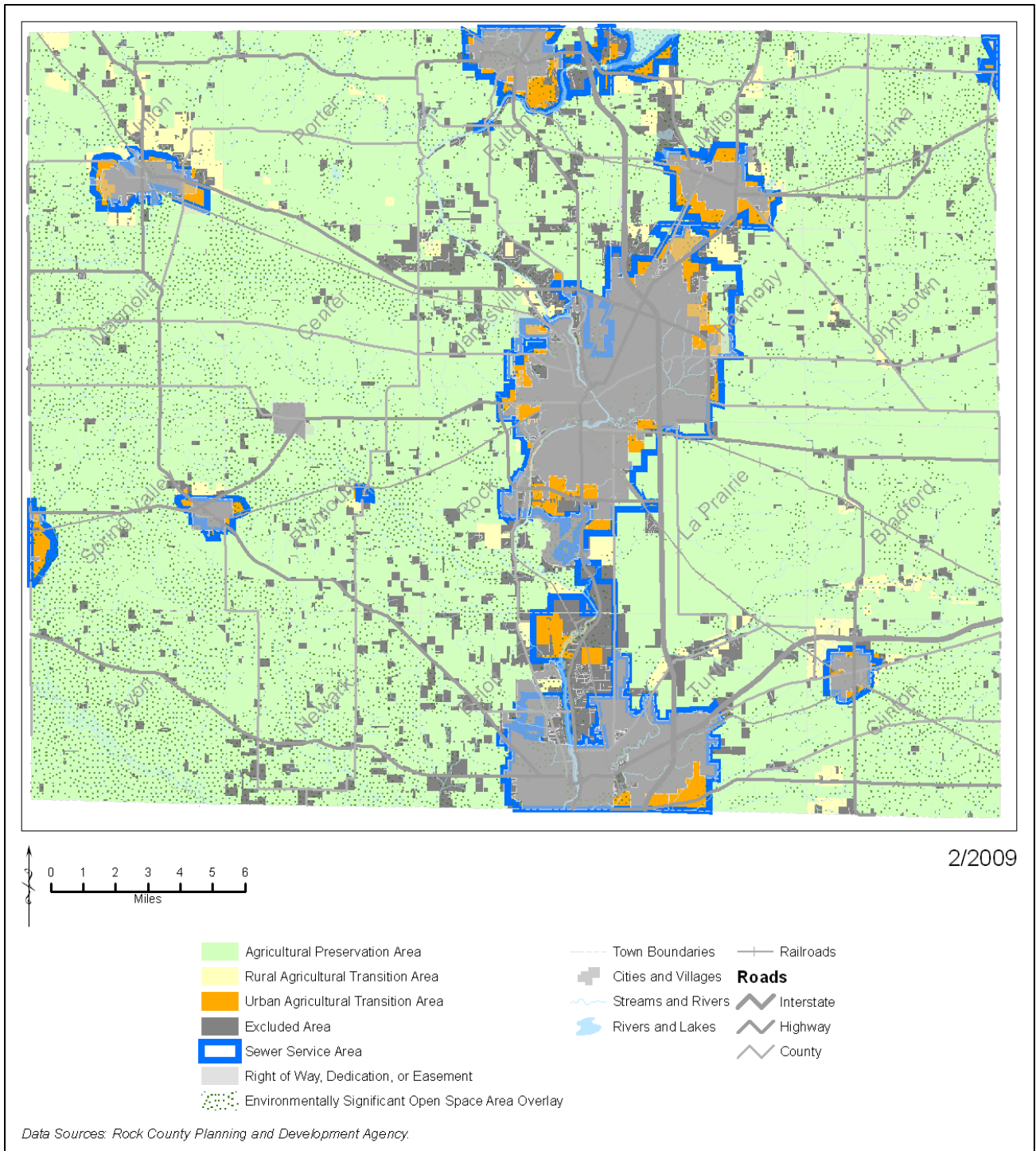
Although zoning does not truly define agricultural land, the reality is that zoning is a good indicator of where farmland currently exists and more importantly, where it is likely to continue to exist in the short-term future. Town zoning maps also delineate exclusive agricultural (A-1) zoning districts, as required by the AgPres Plan for eligibility in the tax credit program. These zoning maps, when compared to previous zoning maps show the history of Town effort to maintain the agricultural community.

The desires of the Towns for land use in the short-term future is best acknowledged through study of each Town's zoning map. Map 2.3 is a composite of current zoning maps from those Towns that have approved digital maps on file with Rock County (see Map 5.2, Section II: Chapter 5 - Land Use of this *Plan* for a larger version). This map will be used to help determine future land use recommendations for Rock County.

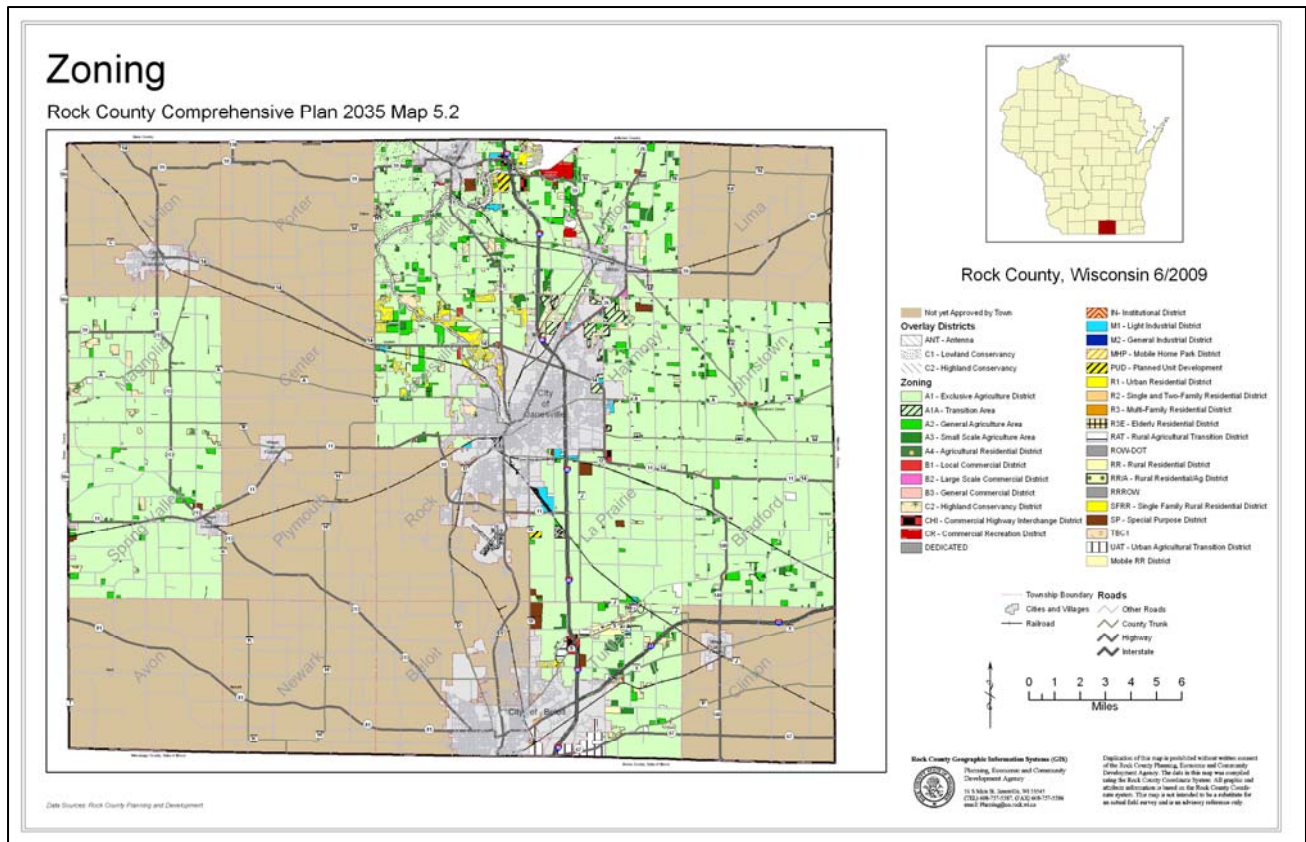
City/Village Extraterritorial Planning

Each city and village in the State of Wisconsin has the right to review and approve land uses in areas adjacent to their borders. This is called extraterritorial jurisdiction. Cities with a population of 10,000 or more have the right to control land use within three miles of their borders. Cities and villages with less than 10,000 in population have the right to control land use within one and one half miles of their borders. Eleven Cities and Villages, within Rock County or in adjoining counties, retain this jurisdiction over land uses in Rock County Towns. A significant amount of land acreage is within these extraterritorial jurisdictions making it an important consideration for future planning (see Map 2.4).

Map 2.2:
 Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update Map



Map 2.3:
Composite Town Zoning: 2009

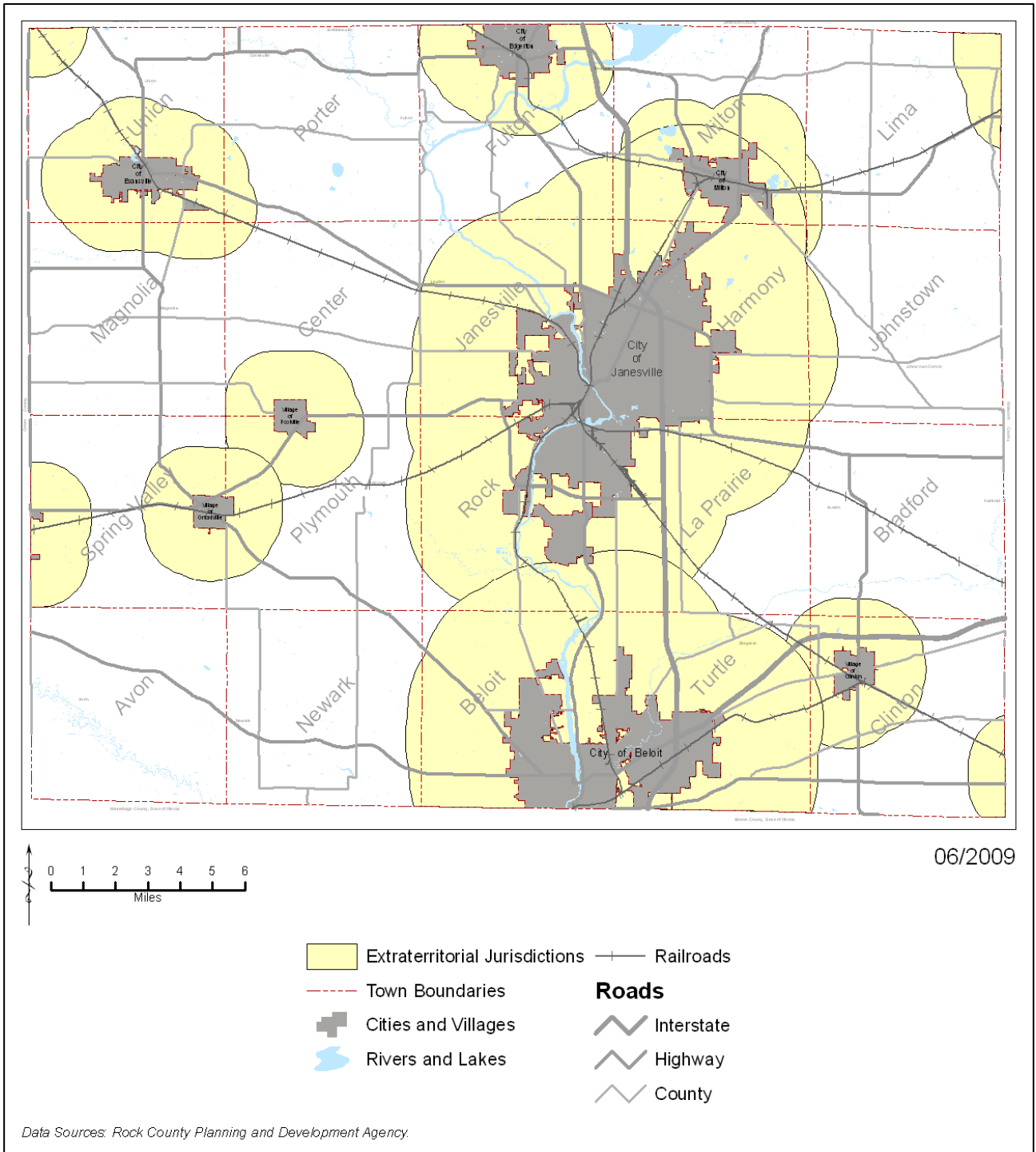


2.4. Agricultural Resources Issues and Opportunities

In order to preserve agriculture as a viable economic activity in Rock County, the best practice is to consciously select and plan for specific areas for development that are not on agriculturally productive soils and that do not fragment areas of agricultural production. Isolated areas of development within agricultural areas can cause fragmentation of farmland that brings about conflicts among rural neighbors and discourages farming. When scattered development occurs, the negative impacts are often far-reaching and permanent.

Infill development within existing development areas should be promoted and growth should occur outwardly from urbanized areas where the provision of public infrastructure is cost efficient. The rate of desired growth in each community should be carefully analyzed and the amount of development that is allowed to occur should match the desired growth rate. Orderly growth and development is imperative to reduce costs of infrastructure and to preserve the quality of life for Rock County residents.

Map 2.4:
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Areas: 2009



- Land Conversion:** In most Rock County Town ordinances, there are three agricultural zoning districts. The district that most Towns term the exclusive agricultural (A-1) district allows a minimum lot size of 35 acres and is intended for large-scale farming operations. The A-2 district, often termed general agricultural district two, commonly allows a minimum lot size of 10 acres and is intended to provide for agricultural activities and uses that are compatible with agriculture that are generally best suited for smaller farm units. The A-3 district, often termed small-scale agricultural district, usually allows a minimum lot size of three acres and is intended for combined rural residential/agricultural uses.

Although much of the land in Rock County is under local exclusive agricultural zoning, agricultural land can be converted to residential or other non-farm uses through rezoning. Figure 2.1 shows that over 12,300 acres of land zoned A-1 was rezoned to other districts from the time that each Town entered into the Agricultural Preservation Program through 2006. This figure does not include farmland that was annexed into other jurisdictions for development. It does represent land that has had a probable land use change while remaining within Town jurisdiction.

**Figure 2.1:
Exclusive Agricultural (A-1) Zoning District Acres Rezoned
Out of Rock County Agricultural Preservation Program: 1977- 2006***

A-1 Rezoned To	Primary Uses	Acres Taken Out of A-1
Agriculture 10-35 acres and combined ag districts (A2, A2/A3)	Housing, horse farms, and hobby farming	5,285.0
Agriculture (A-3) 3-10 acres		2,551.1
Combined agriculture and residential (A2/CR, A2/R1, A2/RR, A3/RR, A3/SFRR)		332.3
Residential (R1, RR, SFRR, MHP)	Housing/manufactured housing	2,328.0
Business, manufacturing, and special purpose (B1, B2, M1, SP)	Local business, small industry, gravel pits, salvage yards, and landfills	1,143.0
Conservation, commercial, recreation and combined (C2, C1/CR, CR)	Open space, campgrounds and associated buildings	658.8
Other (A3/B1, A4, and other)	Combined districts, agricultural preservation, and other	19.9
TOTAL**	-	12,318.0

Source: Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency - 2007

* Towns entered the Agricultural Preservation Program at different times.

**Rock County total is from the time the first Town entered the Program.

Figure 2.1 also shows that over 2,300 acres was rezoned from exclusive agriculture (A-1) to residential zoning districts. Often when zoning is changed from the A-1 district to the A-3 district, it is for the purpose of placing a house on a large rural lot and often does not include any agricultural use at all. This is also true for some of the zoning changes into the A-2 district. While there is nothing wrong with building a house on a large rural lot, the implications for preserving contiguous areas of agricultural land are often negative. The frequent placement of houses on large rural lots causes fragmentation and high consumption of agricultural land. In addition, more houses in rural areas create more traffic, the need for more road maintenance or expansion of roads, and the need to provide city services that are needed or desired by non-farm residents.

The use of A-2 and A-3 zoning districts often creates an avenue for more housing, along with its accompanying issues, in rural areas that are far removed from city services and employment centers. Figure 2.1 shows that over 12,300 acres of land zoned for exclusive agriculture (A-1) was rezoned into other agriculture districts that accommodate housing (first three zoning categories combined). These figures show that exclusive agricultural zoning alone is not enough to control the rate at which agricultural land is being converted to housing and other uses. To effectively manage the rate of development on agricultural land, the County should assist Town governments, when appropriate, in making policy changes that address these rezone situations.

- **Fragmented Development:** Unsustainable, and therefore, unhealthy patterns of rural development have, unfortunately, become commonplace and acceptable in the United States. Many Americans continue to desire rural living where housing has been developed on large rural lots in agricultural or open space areas that are fragmented and non-contiguous to existing forms of urban development, and are often detached from existing public infrastructure. These developments are often non-cohesive and separated from existing communities. They are often far removed from schools, parks and recreation, workplaces and shopping destinations, creating more reliance on automobiles and discouraging pedestrian activity and mixed-use neighborhoods. As such, these developments are less sustainable and more costly to maintain over time, detracting from a sense of place, while segregating the community and expediting the removal of agricultural land from production and threatening or eliminating existing natural features.

Rock County should continue to collaborate with local governments toward the creation of regional policies that prohibit fragmented and unsustainable development, especially in rural areas that are rich in agricultural soils. In fact, it may at times be even more reasonable and less costly to area governments to simply sustain and maintain agricultural production. An analysis of the anticipated cost for building, expanding and maintaining utilities, roadways, schools, emergency services, etc., may determine in some instances, that it is less expensive to invest in the preservation of agricultural and natural resources, through a purchase of agricultural easements (PACE)/purchase of

development rights (PDR) program for example, than it would be to actually support development in certain areas. Efforts to ensure sustainable, cost efficient development, while encouraging a sense of place, strengthening the community and preserving agricultural land should continuously be pursued and analyzed by County and Town officials.

- **Preservation vs. Property Rights:** In the past, the profitability of development has brought about a basic conflict between preservation policies and private property rights. Although Federal land laws do not provide landowners with uncontrolled land rights, Rock County and many of its local communities have, in the past, typically supported policies that allow land owners broad discretion on how and when to change the use of, or develop their property given physical constraints. Thus, landowner property rights have typically prevailed over policies that enforce agricultural and natural resource preservation.

Although this type of policy is often best for the individual landowner in the short run, it can generate conflict with the common good of the community at large. The disappearance of our basic life sustaining resources is a concern for everyone and should be acknowledged in our land use policies. Those policies should provide for innovative methods that allow landowners profitability from their land, while at the same time preserving this essential resource. This *Plan* aims to point out strategies, policies and programs that are available for the County and the agricultural community to help alleviate the financial incentives associated with converting large portions of agricultural land to other uses.

Various tools exist to promote preservation including use value assessment, zoning, conservation easements and PACE/PDR or transfer of development rights (TDR) programs (see pages II-2-23,24 of this Chapter). Other strategies such as cluster and conservation developments ensure that less land will be used when new housing is developed. Zoning and density regulations, as well as policies guiding the rate of growth can have a powerful effect on how development occurs within the County. However, these must be implemented at the Town level. These tools for preservation and others will be examined in 2.5. of this Chapter.

- **Agriculture and Nature:** In southern Wisconsin, agriculture is often interspersed with or in close proximity to other natural resources. The special interconnectedness of these resources makes it necessary to analyze and manage them as a whole, rather than as separate planning issues. It makes sense to analyze agriculture as it affects and is affected by wildlife and other natural resources.

Agriculture has long been valued not only for its productive and economic qualities, but also for its ability to provide visual open space. Land that is zoned agriculturally often includes natural areas that are valuable for their ability to provide continuous areas of

cover and passage for wildlife. Agricultural land should also be considered for its ability to buffer important natural resources from areas of development where a change in landscape, water drainage and human activity itself can threaten some natural resources. With these assets in mind, contiguous areas of open agricultural land should be encouraged and preserved.

Agriculture should also be considered for its role as a source of non-point water pollution. Agricultural run-off is one of the biggest contributors to surface and groundwater contamination, primarily in the form of nitrates and phosphorus from fertilizers. It is important to be sure that agriculture does not harm other important natural resources. This issue can be addressed through careful agricultural management and conservation practices. There are also opportunities available for educational and monetary assistance to farmers who are operating near water sources and wish to reduce the negative affects of their operation on the environment. With these issues in mind, an inventory of natural resources as well as common tools, strategies and programs for conservation and/or preservation of both agriculture and natural resources are explored in this Chapter as well as in Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources of this *Plan*.

- **Annexation:** It would be remiss to make recommendations for agricultural preservation in Rock County without acknowledging the issue of annexation. Some of the consumption of farmland in the County does not occur because of Town or County policy, but because of annexation beyond the control of either jurisdiction. It is the right of landowners living in areas contiguous to a neighboring city to request annexation into the municipality for the purpose of developing their land. This process is often imminent for farmers on the fringe of an urban area because surrounding uses make it difficult or impossible to farm, and because of the overwhelming economic incentive to allow the land to be developed. It is with these issues in mind, that constant and continuous discussion, cooperation and identification of common values and possible solutions be sought between Cities, County and Towns regarding appropriate growth, development, and land preservation.
- **Food vs. Fuel:** Food vs. fuel is a growing debate in the agriculture industry that is beginning to impact communities like Rock County. Farming, similar to other industries, is heavily impacted by structural economic as well as political issues. Perhaps more than ever, these influences have begun to shape what has been commonly referred to as the food versus fuel dichotomy. Although the long-term impacts of this dichotomy are relatively unknown, it has already begun to have profound impacts.

Historically, the agricultural community's outputs have been designed exclusively for food generation. Over time however, other value-added attributes (e.g. composites, additives, etc.) generated from food based products, have become commercially acceptable and viable. The printing and plastics industries, in particular, have enjoyed a long-standing relationship with agriculture. Yet despite these relationships, commodity exchange and agricultural property prices remained somewhat stagnant.

The same cannot be said for what is happening with respect to the fuel dichotomy associated with agriculture. As the United States and other nations worldwide seek to become less dependant upon fossil-based fuels, agriculture has become vogue. Specifically, fuels generated from traditional food commodities, such as corn and soybeans, have placed unknown pressures upon this nation's economic landscape.

Similar to other agricultural related public policy issues, the outcome of this food versus fuel debate is one that will continually have roots within the upper Midwest and Wisconsin in particular. The United Cooperative Ethanol plant in the City of Milton, the Midwest Biofuel plant in the Village of Clinton and the proposed North Prairie Production facility in the City of Evansville, as well as other plants not yet proposed, will definitely be part of these debates. Even though their true impacts will not be known for several years, additional discussions regarding this topic will likely be addressed within future updates of the AgPres Plan and future updates of this *Plan*.

Tools for implementation are policies or actions local governments can take, in order to meet the goals, objectives and policies detailed in this *Plan*. The following implementation strategies should work collectively to guide development to appropriate locations in the County while also valuing and preserving agricultural, natural and cultural resources.

- **Growth Management Coalition:** Cities, Villages and Towns in Rock County have the right and responsibility to zone the land within their jurisdictions. Town zoning usually provides for the division of land into rural lots of at least 40,000 square feet (nearly one acre) with private septic and wells. City and Village zoning, on the other hand, allows for development that is often at least four times more dense. Property laws allow rural landowners the right to petition for annexation of their property into a neighboring municipality, often for the purpose of achieving higher density development. Thus, it often makes sense for Towns to also rezone agricultural land that is already close or contiguous to other development for higher density development. While compact, dense development is more sustainable and should be a regional goal, sometimes growth occurs in locations where preservation of agricultural and natural resources would be desirable.

There is, therefore, a growing need to collaborate on planning and growth issues. By forming a growth management coalition of County and local planners and officials that border each other in growth areas, there is an opportunity for open discussion, debate and consensus on important planning and growth decisions. In an effort to guide development, provide clear priorities for the location of growth, and find ways to best preserve agricultural and natural resources, there must be a "meeting of the minds" between local jurisdictions to identify the best way to manage growth in the best interest of everyone. To that end, it is recommended that the Towns, Villages, Cities and County come together to form a growth management coalition so that all parties and considerations for growth can be heard and understood.

- **Tall Unnatural Structures:** Wind power devices, cell phone towers, and other unnatural, tall structures are becoming increasingly prevalent in the rural landscape and are being erected with little or no regulation in place. Rock County, in conjunction with local communities, should carefully research the environmental, agricultural and aesthetic ramifications of placing such structures in the rural landscape and develop ordinance language as needed.
- **Community/Development Design:** As land becomes more scarce and development pressures increase, it is important that the development that does happen is planned and designed with the needs of the future residents, public, and environment in mind.

As our population increases and diversifies, it is important to take into account the young, the old, the wealthy, the poor, the healthy and the disabled. Community design issues such as housing types, lot sizes, aesthetics, building placement on lots, street and road configuration, trails, transportation design, and accessibility issues will take place within other Chapters of this *Plan*. Because the Agricultural, Natural, and Historic and Cultural Resources Chapters (Section II: Chapters 2-4) of this *Plan* are associated with the identification, preservation, and protection of the environmental resources of the County, it is necessary to discuss the issues of logical and efficient design of subdivisions and home sites here.

For years, in general, subdivisions and home sites have been designed and planned with limited analysis done of the actual physical conditions of the proposed site. Conditions such as steep slope, soil types, drainage patterns or hydrologic systems, viewsheds, and overall compatibility with the surrounding character of the land are sometimes overlooked, under studied, or simply not taken into consideration. This practice adds a substantial inefficiency and cost to the development process due to the fact that both parties must make numerous requests, adjustments, and re-submittals to react to issues that would have been recognized earlier in the process had pre-design analysis been done.

Conservation subdivision design, often referred to as cluster development design, is one example of a design concept that supports the analysis of the existing environment prior to starting the actual design process. Compared to conventional subdivision design practices, conservation subdivisions and cluster developments generally attempt to preserve the open space and natural resources of the parcel being developed, while minimizing the infrastructure of the development.

With the opportunity of comprehensive planning to introduce new smart growth-oriented ways of doing business, a fundamental change in site planning is appropriate. Currently, new technology makes computer-generated analysis of the environmental features and physical characteristics of the land possible (see land evaluation and site assessment (LESA), under 2.5. of this Chapter). Site evaluations and analysis enables

development sites to be assessed prior to design, taking into account both the positive amenities and the environmental limitations of the building site. This pre-design analysis can lower costs, streamline the application/approval process, as well as alleviate frustrations for the County and local approving agencies and the developer when determining compliance with Federal, State, and local code enforcement, environmental constraints, public safety issues, etc.

It is suggested that the process of design become a collaborative effort at the very beginning of the development process, between the developer or home owner and the County and local approving agencies. In addition, it is recommended that the design process take place only after the physical conditions of building and development sites have been evaluated and analyzed. This site evaluation process would maximize the potential of the building site to the developer or homeowner while minimizing the impact of the development on the environment. In practice, pre-design site evaluations would undoubtedly expedite the approval process saving money for the County government, Town government, and the developer or homeowner.

2.5. Tools of Implementation

Regulatory Tools

Regulatory tools are those used for controlling consumption and promoting preservation of valued resources through policy and code. The following is a description of some of the tools that are available and may already be in use. There may be other appropriate tools in addition to those described here. It is important to recognize that all laws, codes and regulations, or the lack thereof, that affect land use, also affect the natural and/or agricultural environment in some way. For this reason, careful examination of any policies or laws affecting land use is highly recommended.

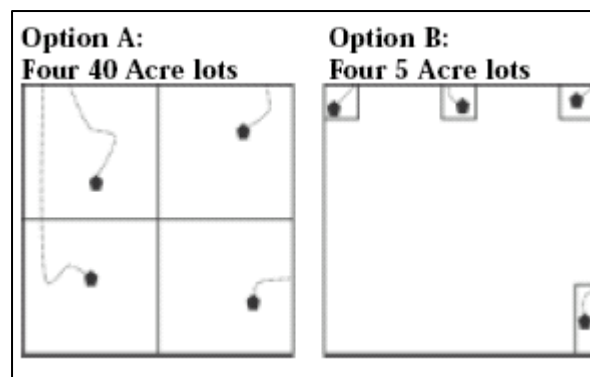
- **Landscaping and Vegetative Cover:** One of the most critical regulatory strategies for retaining rural character as well as for addressing issues of erosion control and replacement of disrupted natural features is a landscaping ordinance. Most cities and villages in Southern Wisconsin have stringent requirements for natural screening and replacement of vegetation when a subdivision is developed. Used as part of or in conjunction with local planned unit development regulations and/or subdivision ordinance, landscaping can have a significant effect on the shaping of the rural environment. Rock County should encourage and support the local implementation of landscaping requirements as one way to sustain the rural character of the County even as development continues to occur.

Specific requirements for landscaping and vegetative cover is also one of the tools available to municipalities, corporations, developers, landowners, and homeowners to offset the negative visual effects of infrastructure facilities and structures, as well as

neighborhood population density. The use of both natural and artificial landscaping to separate and buffer potentially obtrusive features, structures, and developments is gaining national acceptance and can greatly improve the privacy and general visual aesthetics of an area or viewshed. Techniques such as disguising cell towers as evergreen trees, building audio/visual berms adjacent to developments and retail stores, or simple linear plantings of large trees and shrubs can improve the visual appeal of an area and improve the quality of life for the residents.

- Lot Size and Density:** Rock County Towns typically have zoning regulations that require a large (35-acre) minimum lot size in exclusive agriculture (A-1) zoning districts. These large lots are often not big enough for a viable farming operation and can tend to encourage the development of rural housing on very large lots, thereby defeating the purpose of the exclusive agricultural (A-1) zoning district. Town zoning ordinances can, if desired, require much smaller maximum lot sizes (i.e. 5 acres) for new housing development, in both agricultural and residential zoning districts, in order to encourage non-farm housing to locate on relatively small lots. To further discourage the fragmentation of farmland, Towns may regulate the density (number of houses) allowed in their exclusive agriculture (A-1) district. In order for this to work effectively, density restrictions would need to be placed on the deeds of all new parcels based on the density allowed on the original acreage prior to any land divisions (*Planning for Agriculture in Wisconsin-A Guide for Communities*, November 2002). Lowering lot sizes might seem, at first, to allow more housing on agricultural land, but when used in conjunction with density limits (see Figure 2.2) is an effective method of preserving farmland.

Figure 2.2:
Same Density Lot Size Comparison



Source: *Planning for Agricultural Resources Guide* - November 2002

- Performance Zoning:** Performance zoning is a method that permits controlled development while also being sensitive to the landscape. It tries to regulate the impacts of land uses rather than the uses themselves, by outlining general goals for developers that they can meet in different ways. Landowners are permitted a wide variety of uses,

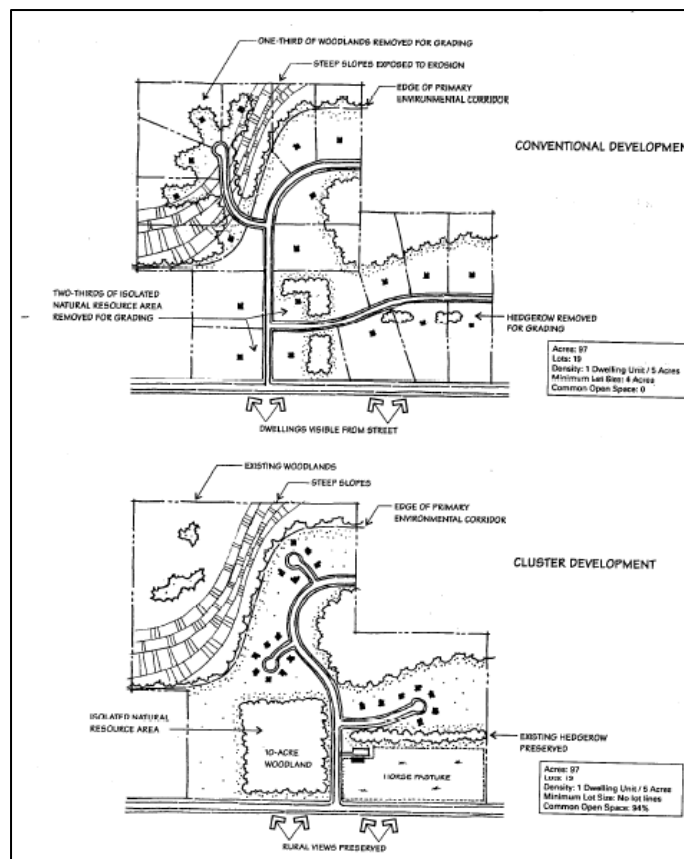
so long as they meet certain numeric standards such as a certain ratio of impervious surfaces, a certain density, a certain amount of open space, or certain noise level standards. Performance zoning is done at the local level and can be complex. It would likely require a professional planner on staff to administer the ordinance.

- **Overlay Zoning:** Overlay zones allow special regulations within all or a portion of a zoning district or several districts. This type of zoning can be helpful for agricultural or natural resource preservation because it can then provide protection in a consistent way, regardless of which district it is in. Overlay zones are common for wellhead protection areas and groundwater recharge areas. The agricultural-residential overlay district, used in the Town of La Prairie, Rock County, is an example of a successful overlay district that helps to protect agriculture.
- **Incentive Zoning:** Incentive zoning allows developers to provide additional amenities such as open space in exchange for higher densities, additional floor area, or other property enhancements. Incentive zoning strategies may be used in the context of other ordinances like conservation subdivisions ordinances (see page II-2-20 of this Chapter) where higher housing densities are permitted in exchange for developing around natural resources present at the site. TDR programs (see page II-2-24 of this Chapter) utilize incentive zoning by permitting higher density building in receiving areas.
- **Official Maps:** Official maps show existing and planned public facilities such as streets and parks. They can also be used to restrict the issuance of building permits within the limits of the mapped areas. The maps are an especially effective means to reserve land for future public use, such as parks and open space.
- **Sign Ordinance:** Signs, especially billboards can drastically affect the perceived rural character of the County as viewed from roadways. For this reason, it is important to have an up-to-date sign ordinance that regulates such things as location and size of billboards, light emitting diodes, changing message and pictures on signs. Wisconsin law now allows a changing message every six seconds on billboards. This can cause a noticeable change to the rural landscape unless addressed in local ordinances. It is recommended that codes address how existing signs may be modified as well as specific requirements for new signs.
- **Cluster Development:** The concept of cluster development, including conservation subdivisions (to be discussed next) is one of the most important strategies, along with landscaping regulations, available for the preservation of agriculture and natural resources. In a cluster development, up to four dwellings, each on the smallest allowable lot size (typical minimum lot size for residential development in most Towns in Rock County is one acre) with the additional requirement that they are clustered together in such a way as to avoid important agricultural and natural resources. In the agricultural districts that allow residential development on rural size lots, such as A-3

zoning that allows three acre lots and A-2 zoning that allows 10-acre lots, the result can be widely spaced homes that cause fragmentation of farmland, woodlands, or degradation of other natural resources (see Figure 2.3). Requiring smaller lots and specifying building envelopes for dwellings that are clustered together on the portion of the land least likely to degrade or fragment existing resources, preserves larger contiguous tracts for agricultural use and natural resources.

Through use of cluster housing overlay districts, local units of government can encourage cluster development by allowing a higher density of housing (i.e. more lots) than would be allowed under the underlying zoning district if the developer agrees to cluster homes on the minimum allowable sized lots (this is an example of incentive zoning). This type of regulation can be also accomplished through a town or county level land divisions regulation and as part of a conservation subdivision for developments of over five land divisions (see conservation subdivisions, next).

Figure 2.3:
Cluster Development



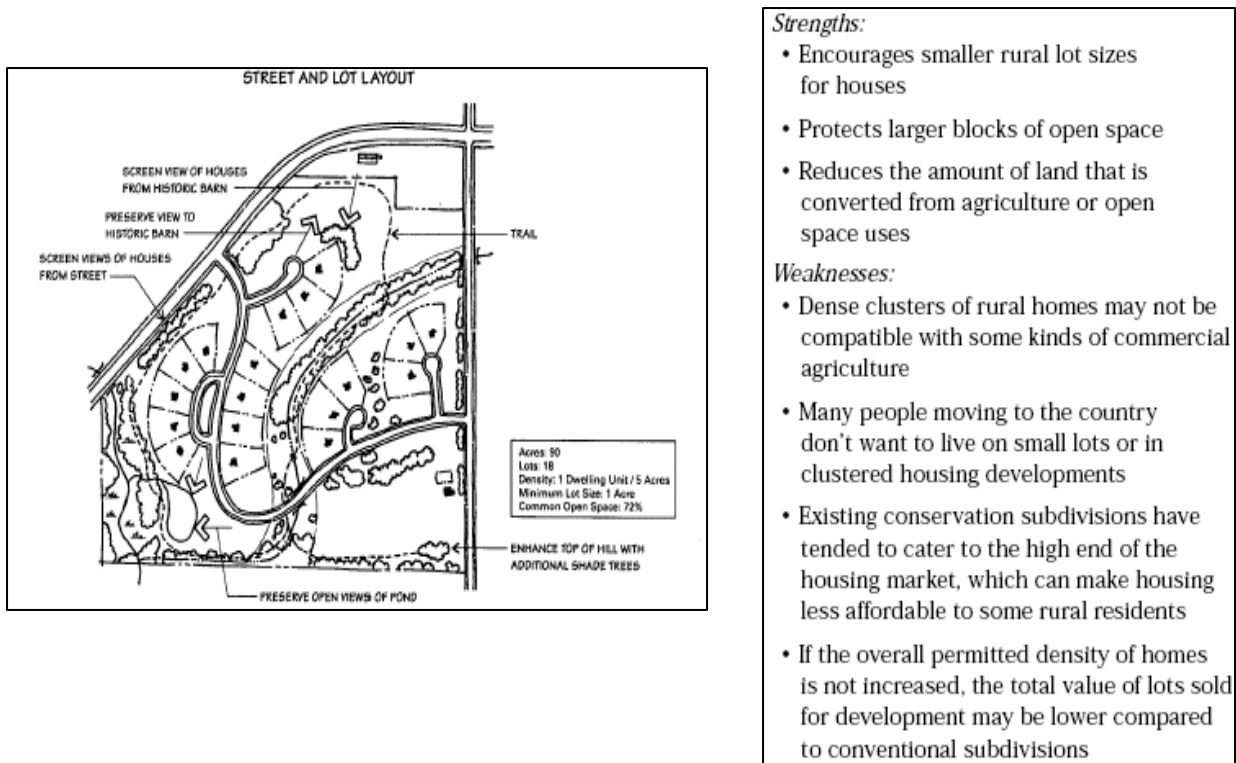
Source: Rural Cluster Development Guide - December 1996: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Plan Commission

- **Conservation Subdivisions:** Conservation subdivisions are an excellent way to preserve agriculture, open space and natural resources in zoning districts where subdivisions, five or more lots created through land division, are permitted. The most appropriate way to

regulate conservation subdivisions would be through a specific conservation subdivision ordinance at the local level. In Rock County where most of the buildable areas are characterized by flat, open spaces, landscaping requirements would be a necessary regulatory element to achieve the desired effect of a conservation subdivision.

The clustering of homes into conservation subdivisions can promote development in areas best suited for such development and away from areas that are environmentally sensitive, such as wetlands or woodlands, providing for the preservation of archeological sites, scenic views and natural vegetation often found near surface water. These subdivisions are most effective when the open space is owned publicly or through a homeowners association, as these natural amenities can be preserved for the community or neighborhood as a whole. Finally, conservation subdivisions can help protect water and groundwater quality for everyone through the maintenance of surface water buffers and better management of run-off (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4:
Conservation Subdivisions: Strengths and Weaknesses



Source: *Rural Cluster Development Guide - December 1996: Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission*
Planning for Agriculture in Wisconsin, A Guide for Communities - November 2002

In order to sustain an agricultural community and ensure farming as a viable lifestyle, large blocks of contiguous farmland should be protected. Conservation subdivisions are appropriate for protecting blocks of agricultural land and promoting areas where agricultural and residential activities can co-exist especially if used along with other

conservation practices intended to prevent fragmentation of agricultural land. This is significant for particular types of agricultural practices that have some economic and aesthetic benefits for residential homeowners. This might include pick-your-own operations, community supported agricultural programs, organic vegetable production, hay and straw production and other specialty products and activities that use low chemical and low intensity production.

- **Building Permits:** Establishing criteria for the issuance of building permits gives local governments influence over the precise siting or location of new construction within a parcel of land. Issuance of building permits can be further subject to conformance with language in an ordinance or plan that states specific rules about placement of structures (i.e. that new homes are situated in such a way as to avoid agricultural land and/or must be shielded from views of neighbors). Cities, villages and towns may specify a limit on the number of building permits that will be issued each year based on the rate of growth deemed appropriate. In this way, the consumption of land and the strain on the environment caused by development can be more carefully monitored and controlled.
- **Driveway Standards and Other Regulatory Strategies:** The siting of driveways, septic systems and wells as well as other land use controls such as specific requirements for siting of structures relevant to agricultural and natural resources helps to regulate the effect of housing developments on the rural environment. These issues can be addressed through local or county ordinance.

Land Acquisition and Related Tools

There can be little question that the best way to preserve agricultural and natural resources is for those resources to be owned by an entity that is obligated to preserve it and/or for development to be restricted by property deed. There are several viable economic options for this to occur.

- **Conservation Easements:** Conservation easements can be compulsory or voluntary. Compulsory conservation easements occur when a governmental unit designates, through approved policy and/or through code, land or environmental conditions that are not acceptable for building. The government entity may prevent these areas of concern from being built upon by placing a permanent conservation easement (deed restriction) on the portion of the land where those conditions exist. In Rock County some features of environmentally significant open space areas (ESOSA) are protected through compulsory conservation easements. Conservation easements are an excellent way to permanently protect natural resources. However, to ensure consistency, specific criteria for their future use should be included in a regulatory document such as the Rock County Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock).

Voluntary conservation easements are typically used as part of a TDR or PACE/PDR transaction (see the following). They are the same legal agreements as compulsory conservation easements, but are established when the right to develop a property is purchased from a private landowner by a qualified land trust, conservation organization or government agency for the purpose of limiting land to specific uses and thus protecting it from development. The development right value of a voluntary conservation easement is often purchased, but is frequently donated by conservation-minded landowners. Grantors can receive tax benefits as a result of donating easements that may apply to parts of or entire parcels of property.

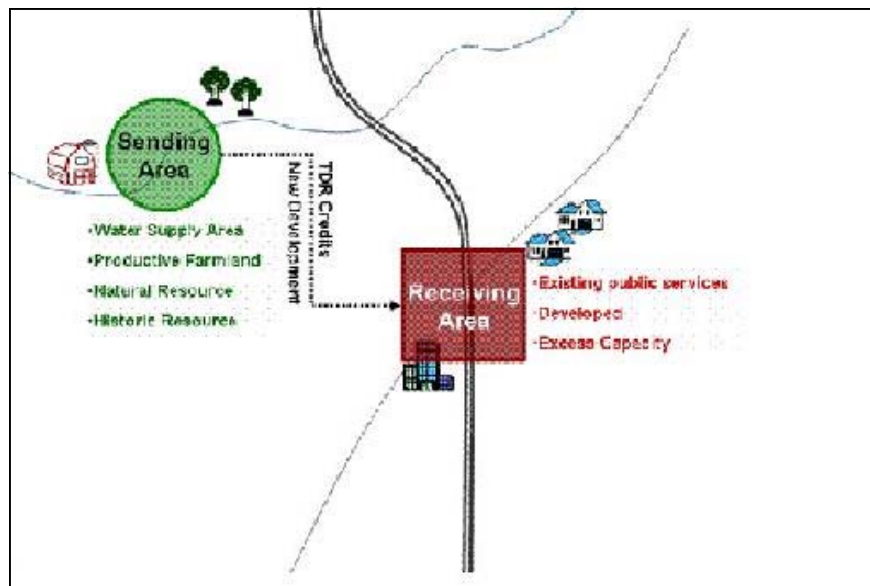
- **Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)/Purchase of Development Rights (PDR):** Purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE)/purchase of development rights programs are aimed at maintaining the economic viability of keeping land in agriculture, even in the face of development pressure. PACE/PDR programs facilitate the purchase of the right to develop farmland property (i.e. purchase the value of putting a conservation easement on the property) that meets pre-established criteria for agricultural preservation. Through various efforts, including partnerships with other governmental and non-profit agencies, a landowner can voluntarily put a conservation easement on his or her land that permanently prohibits the right to develop the land in the future. The deed to the property reflects the inability to develop no matter who owns the land or how many times it is sold. This system lowers the value of the land for taxing purposes and also provides cash-in-hand to the landowner that can be used for re-investment into the farming operation.

The highlights of PACE/PDR programs are summarized below:

- The value of an easement is determined by calculating the difference between the market value of the land with development and the value of the land without development, in current dollars.
- The right to develop land is purchased from the landowner (farmer) from a local government or non-profit organization.
- Some landowners may choose to donate land in order to reduce tax burden while keeping their land in agriculture.
- Easements are recorded on the deed and remain with the land into perpetuity.
- Landowners may sell the development rights to all or just a portion of their land.
- Landowners retain the right to continue to use their land and sell it to others, but the right to develop the land is no longer available once development rights have been sold.
- This system puts cash in the hands of current farmers.

- This system keeps the price of farmland lower for future farmers.
- **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):** A transfer of development rights (TDR) program is based on the same principles as a PACE/PDR program, but also provides a mechanism for cooperating units of government to designate sending areas (areas where development is discouraged) and receiving areas (areas where development is encouraged). The sending area would typically contain farmland that a community wants to protect and the receiving area would be an area planned for development (see Figure 2.5). These areas do not necessarily need to be under the same governmental jurisdiction, as long as there is agreement between them. Landowners in sending areas are allocated development rights based on density policy and criteria identified in adopted plans, which specify the number of potential building sites or non-farm development available on the property. Landowners seeking to develop in a receiving area must first buy development rights from landowners in a sending area. Once a development right is purchased and transferred, the landowner in the sending area gives up the ability to develop all or a portion of the property.

Figure 2.5:
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)



- **Non-Profit Conservation Organizations:** Non-profit conservation organizations such as land trusts are private organizations established to protect land and water resources for the public benefit. Land trusts often protect natural resources by owning the land or by holding a conservation easement which limits the use of the land to the terms specified in the easement. Land trusts and other non-profit conservation organizations are eligible to participate in State grant programs that fund land or conservation easement acquisitions.

- **Public or Private Purchase:** Governmental units and non-profit conservation organizations can acquire land for conservation purposes by purchasing it outright. This is recommended when full public access to the property is required.
- **Public Land Dedication:** Local governments may require, through ordinance, that a specified percentage of land is dedicated to the public whenever a subdivision or other type of development occurs. This requirement assures that there will be public open space within each development. If appropriate, a fee in lieu of a land dedication can be permitted, thereby creating a fund for maintenance of public lands.
- **Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA):** Land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) categorizes land parcels, and guides land-use decisions by evaluating soil and site suitability for specific uses, including agriculture, development, or recreation. A LESA program utilizes a comprehensive, objective methodology to develop a LESA score that provides a numerical method for evaluating a parcel of land. A LESA score can then be utilized for evaluation and decision making regarding the preservation or development potential of any property.

Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update Implementation Tools

- **Exclusive Agricultural (A-1) Zoning District:** The exclusive agricultural (A-1) district employed by all twenty Towns in Rock County permits agricultural pursuits. The district requires large lot sizes and ensures that residential development in rural areas does not become more dense than one home for every 35 acres, except in certain circumstances. In fact, the intention of the A-1 district is that only farmland owners and other persons engaged in agriculture are allowed to reside there. This stipulation helps protect neighboring farmland owners from potential nuisance complaints generated by non-farming rural residents. Non-farm uses are limited in the A-1 district. Rock County dissuades rezoning petitions that remove properties from the A-1 district. Where development is not warranted or appropriate, the Towns should consistently deny rezoning out of the A-1 district, in order to preserve farmland.
- **Sanitary Codes:** The Rock County Sanitary Code is enforced by the County Health Department. The purpose of the code is to regulate the placement of private septic systems. The intent of the code is to promote development that conserves land and water resources. In so doing, development is restricted in some areas of the unincorporated County.
- **Urban Service Areas:** Some incorporated municipalities in the County have conducted water quality management plans. These plans provide policies to promote cost effective development while preserving agricultural and natural lands. These plans establish urban service areas, which depict where cost effective installation of public sewer service is planned. By guiding development to be within the urban service areas, less

sprawl would be allowed to occur and more agricultural land would be preserved.

- **Land Division Regulations:** Rock County adopted the currently applied Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) in 1971 to guide the creation of parcels, whether for a large residential subdivision or simply for a farmer selling land to a neighbor. The intent of these regulations, as outlined in the ordinance, is to have development occur in an orderly, planned, efficient and environmentally sound manner. If the purposes of the regulations are carried out, development should only occur where the siting of public infrastructure is cost efficient and overcrowding and congestion should be mitigated. Also, land divisions should be designed to protect the beauty of the landscape. Agricultural land comprises much of the landscape in the unincorporated County. The ordinance should protect the rural countryside from sprawling development. The ordinance should be updated to allow for the implementation of additional tools listed in this *Plan*.
- ***Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan:*** The POROS Plan contains broad recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of park and recreation facilities. The plan also references and/or includes portions of the 2003 update of the plan titled the *Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan 2003-2008* (specifically, those portions of the earlier plan that discuss and define ESOSA). Those policies that are being reinforced in the new plan have been re-created, in their original form, within the goals and objectives section of the current POROS Plan. These policies identify and define fourteen physical characteristics or natural features in the County that are either in need of protection or that currently limit land availability for development. Though prime agricultural land is not included as one of the fourteen natural features, land used for agriculture often contains other natural features such as wetlands, hydric soils, depressions, groundwater recharge areas, and so forth.

By protecting areas defined as ESOSA, construction is restricted on a sizable amount of the County's agricultural land. The policies of the POROS Plan, if consistently enforced, will encourage compact, conservation developments, helping to maintain natural areas in the unincorporated County.

- **Use-Value Taxation:** Rock County supports use-value taxation for farmland owners. Property assessed at fair market value is based on the highest and best use of the land. This can place an irrational tax burden on farmland owners, particularly in vicinities experiencing development pressures. When agricultural property is taxed according to use-value it is based on the amount that the land is worth if it were restricted to agricultural uses. This would typically result in an assessment that is less than the fair market value.

In 1995 the State of Wisconsin passed legislation to require farmland to be assessed based on the income that could be generated from its rental for agricultural use. This

use-value assessment only applies to land devoted primarily to agricultural use. Eligible agricultural land is categorized by assessors as being first grade tillable cropland, second grade tillable cropland, third grade tillable cropland, pasture or specialty land. Every year each category is assigned a value by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (WDOR), on which to base the assessed value of the agricultural land.

The use-value taxation employed by the State aims to combat urban sprawl. It protects the farm economy by helping to make farming more affordable, while also discounting farmlands' potential for development. In addition, farmland owners are subject to a monetary penalty if the use of their land changes from an agricultural use to a non-agricultural use.



2.6. *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update* Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following goals, objectives and policies were approved as part of *the Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update*. That plan is intended to serve as part of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* (Section II: Chapter 13) and is expected to remain in effect during the planning period.

Agricultural Goal

Preserve the agricultural land base, for the long term, by protecting agricultural soils from nonagricultural development.

Agricultural Objectives

- To protect the agricultural land base by clearly designating Agricultural Preservation Areas that are to be used for exclusive agricultural use (chosen on the basis of soil types, topography, agricultural productivity, historic use, existing land use and location) on the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map.
- To protect the profitability of farming, by discouraging rural-urban land use conflicts and by preventing the imposition of urban development into prime agricultural areas.

Growth Management Goal

Manage growth through a process involving all governmental units by guiding development to areas of sufficient physical characteristics and supporting infrastructure.

Growth Management Objectives

- To manage growth by clearly designating Rural Transition Areas where existing rural development, physical features and existing public services support future rural development.
- To manage growth by clearly designating Urban Transition Areas where access to cost-effective public sewer service and other public services are available to support future urban development.
- To manage growth through urban infill development and urban brownfield redevelopment.

Environmental Goal

Protect areas of environmental and open space significance for all residents of Rock County.

Environmental Objectives

- To protect the Environmental Corridors (i.e. wetlands, floodplains, storm water drainage areas, etc.) and Areas of Environmental Significance (i.e. endangered plants and animals, groundwater contribution areas) as Open Space not to be developed, but to be acquired by conservation easements or purchase over time.
- To allow minimal destruction to significant environmental characteristics in the county, as defined in the Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Policies

- Land uses in the Agricultural Preservation Areas should be limited to those permitted under Farmland Preservation law. Only land uses and residence provided in s.91.75 Wis. Stats. should take place in the Agricultural Preservation Area.
- Areas planned for agricultural preservation should contain a minimum of 100 acres of contiguous area.
- Areas planned for transition should contain a minimum of 35 acres of contiguous area.
- When permitted under Chap. 91 Wis. Stats. and consistent with permitted uses/conditional uses in state certified "Exclusive Agricultural Use Ordinances", if the Town board wishes to allow the creation of a parcel of less than 35 acres in an agricultural preservation area, the Town board should accomplish such creation by conditional use permit where permitted by ordinance, or by such means as will retain the parcel in agricultural use.
- Town boards are encouraged to concentrate rural residential development in areas identified as Rural Agricultural Transition Area or in Excluded Areas outside of Rural Agricultural Transition Areas on the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map and in areas where the soils are suitable for private septic systems or where sewer systems are to be constructed.
- Dense residential development should occur in areas identified as Urban Agricultural Transition Areas or in areas identified as Excluded on the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map, and in areas that have public water, public sewer and satisfactory roads.
- The Towns and the County should not permit development of lots of a size less than permitted under Town and County land division regulations and zoning ordinances.

- Non-agriculturally related commercial and industrial development should occur in areas serviced by public sewer and/or water, or in designated areas on the Town/County land use plans.
- Public sewer and water providers should not extend sanitary sewer lines and water mains outside Urban Agricultural Transition Areas and urban Excluded Areas indicated on the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map, unless a new water quality management plan is approved or an existing water quality management plan is amended by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- Town boards and the County should discourage future development in areas indicated as Environmentally Significant Open Space Area Overlay on the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map. Limited development in these areas should be consistent with the resource being protected and ensure the least disturbance possible to environmental features.
- Environmentally Significant Open Space Area Overlays are not intended to change the agricultural use of the underlying Exclusive Agricultural Preservation Area.
- In making land use decisions, Town boards and the County should adhere to the Rock County Farmland Preservation Soil and Water Conservation Standards, as adopted by Rock County Land Conservation.
- Towns should use the Agricultural Preservation Plan Map as a guide, and traverse rezoning requests that are not consistent with the Plan Map. Rezoning out of the Exclusive Agricultural district should only be granted if the standards in s.91.77 Wis. Stats. are met. In those cases, the Town Clerk must notify the State of Wisconsin of the rezonings, per s.91.77 (3). In addition, Town Clerks must notify the Rock County Planning and Development Agency of all rezonings and conditional use permits granted.



2.7. Agricultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals, objectives and policies were formulated for the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* for implementation through 2035.

Agricultural Resources Goal

2.1. Preserve and protect all agricultural resources identified in Rock County.

Agricultural Resources Objectives and Policies

- 2.1.1. Develop Rock County policies and mechanisms for effective preservation and protection of agricultural land.
- 2.1.1.a. Rock County shall promote conservation and preservation of farmland through consistent, well thought-out land division decisions.
 - 2.1.1.b. Rock County shall provide information and recommendations for development to committees, local governments, landowners and developers based upon soil quality, presence of natural features, proximity to urban services and other appropriate objective measures.
 - 2.1.1.c. Rock County shall, through coordination with local Towns, approve land divisions based upon soil quality, presence of natural features, proximity to urban services, the effects of development on on-site and off-site agricultural and natural resources and other appropriate objective measures for determining where development should be located.
 - 2.1.1.d. Rock County shall, through coordination with local Towns, create land division policy that will establish clear, concise rules about how, when and where development (especially residential) should occur.
 - 2.1.1.e. Rock County shall research the implementation of fees and other financial mechanisms to support agricultural preservation efforts and create a disincentive for conversion of agricultural land.
 - 2.1.1.f. Rock County shall, through coordination with local Towns, amend the current Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) with clear criteria for development that requires maximum protection of agricultural resources as listed:
 - Require review of all land divisions regardless of size
 - Require all current and proposed agricultural features to be depicted on all development proposals

- Require subdivisions to be located near urban services and adequate transportation facilities
 - Reduce farmland fragmentation with improved driveway regulations
- 2.1.1.g. Rock County shall educate and work with local governments to update their zoning ordinances.
- 2.1.1.h. Rock County shall assist Town governments, when appropriate, by providing language for policy changes that address rezone situations.
- 2.1.1.i. Rock County shall provide model cluster development and conservation subdivision ordinances and educate local governments on their features and use.
- 2.1.1.j. Rock County shall provide a model landscape ordinance for all developments and educate local governments on its features and use.
- 2.1.1.k. Rock County shall provide a model sign ordinance as needed to preserve the rural character of the landscape and educate local governments on its use.
- 2.1.2. Communicate and plan with neighboring communities to the greatest extent possible to ensure the protection of the County's agricultural resources through cooperative efforts.
- 2.1.2.a. Rock County shall encourage Cities and Towns to work with each other and the County to establish standards and policies that uphold the values of Rock County citizens.
- 2.1.2.b. Rock County shall meet with Cities and Towns and other applicable groups and/or jurisdictions to identify agricultural areas for preservation, promote and decide upon the viability of regional preservation programs and to consider other factors such as groundwater protection criteria and areas, etc.
- 2.1.2.c. Rock County shall assist local governments in implementing agreed upon standards by assisting with writing them into official zoning, subdivision or land division ordinances.

Agricultural Resources Goal

2.2. Maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity in Rock County.

Agricultural Resources Objectives and Policies

2.2.1. Encourage and promote innovative and value-added farming practices.

- 2.2.1.a. Rock County shall provide information on innovative farming ideas or direct interested individuals to helpful organizations and resources.
- 2.2.1.b. Rock County shall develop clear policies and procedures under which value-added agricultural ventures can be encouraged and allowed.
- 2.2.1.c. Rock County shall provide or direct farmers and interested parties to information regarding assistance programs, conservation practices, niche farming, organic farming, alternatives to development, etc.

2.2.2. Research and determine the viability and usefulness of implementing tools at the County or multi-Town level, such as purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE)/purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR) and conservation subdivisions to meet agricultural resource goals.

- 2.2.2.a. Rock County shall hold education workshops and distribute written material for farmers, developers, landowners and the general public on options and alternatives to development, including but not limited to purchase of development rights (PDR)/transfer of development rights (TDR).
- 2.2.2.b. Rock County shall research a design, present scenarios and conduct a survey, if necessary, of Rock County residents to determine the desire for a land evaluation and site assessment system (LESA) to specifically evaluate and identify areas for preservation, purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs.
- 2.2.2.c. Rock County shall research the costs and procedures for implementing a purchase of development rights (PDR) program.
- 2.2.2.d. Rock County shall support the creation of purchase of development rights (PDR) and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in jurisdictions where such programs are desired.

Agricultural Resources Goal

- 2.3. Adhere to goals as listed in the *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update*, dated December 15, 2005.

Agricultural Resources Objectives and Policies

- 2.3.1. Adhere to objectives as listed in the *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update*, dated December 15, 2005.

- 2.3.1.a. Rock County shall adhere to policies as listed in the *Rock County Agricultural Preservation Plan: 2005 Update*, dated December 15, 2005.

Chapter 3 - Natural Resources

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(e), the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of a community's comprehensive plan is to be:

"A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and non-metallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s.295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources, and other natural resources".

For the purposes of this *Plan*, the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources element has been divided into three separate Chapters, each with their own goals, objectives and policies. The Chapters are as follows:

- Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Each of the three Chapters also has a section that address issues and opportunities for that specific Chapter, however, tools for implementation that might apply to all three Chapters have been described only at the end of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources to avoid duplication as referenced in 3.4. of this Chapter.

3.1. Overview

Why plan for natural resources? A simple answer is that environmental health, measured by the quality and quantity of natural resources, is a cornerstone to human health and quality of life. Having thorough, documented knowledge of exactly what natural resources exist in Rock County, why they are important, and the measures needed to insure their quality helps to set the stage for future development decisions. Providing for methods of analysis and preservation of natural resources is vitally important, as it will ultimately impact the health and welfare of current and future Rock County residents who are now sharing or will inherit the use of the land. Understanding what currently exists on the land suggests advantages and disadvantages for particular land uses and leads to more conscientious use of land.

There are many programs, resources and policy mechanisms, addressed later in this Chapter, that make it possible for government and citizens throughout Rock County to preserve agricultural and natural resources. Funds from State and Federal sources, as well as increasing availability of non-profit funding creates increased preservation-related opportunities. This *Plan* can be the first step in providing education, information and

policies that can have a permanent affect on the future of Rock County's landscape and natural resources.

3.2. Existing Plans and Policies

Groundwater Protection Principles and Alternatives for Rock County

This 1985 report of the *Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey (Special Report 8, September 1985)* prepared in cooperation with the Rock County Health Department, University of Wisconsin-Extension, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) identifies groundwater resources, inventories potential groundwater risks, and develops groundwater protection strategies for Rock County. It is the intent of this *Plan* to uphold the intent of this document.

Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan

The POROS Plan contains policies and recommendations for the maintenance and improvement of park and recreation facilities and the preservation of natural resources. The plan references and/or includes portions of the 2003 update of the plan titled *Parks, Outdoor Recreation and Open Space (POROS) Plan 2003-2008*. Of particular relevance to this Chapter is the ESOSA Map and policies. ESOSA policies are being reinforced in the POROS Plan and have been re-created, in their original form, within the goals, objectives and policies section of that plan. These policies identify and define fourteen physical characteristics or natural features in the County that are either in need of protection or that currently limit land availability for development.

It is the intent of Rock County to update the text and policies relevant to ESOSAs and for those updates to be taken out of the POROS Plan and instead, become part of this Chapter and/or part of the Rock County Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock). If consistently enforced, ESOSAs will help to encourage development that is planned with sensitivity to natural resource preservation and conservation efforts (see 3.3. of this Chapter).

- *Subject Plans and Maps included as part of the POROS Plan*
 - *Rock County Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes and Trails Plan*
 - *River Trails Plan*
 - *Snowmobile Trails Plan*
 - *Ice Age Trail Corridor Plan*
 - *Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas Plan*
 - *Park Improvement Action Plans 2009-2014*

Rock County Land and Water Resources Management Plan (LWRMP)

The LWRMP serves as a long-term strategic conservation plan for the Rock County Land Conservation Department and Rock County residents. The plan provides guidance for conservation efforts within the County and assists in forming annual work plans for the Land Conservation Department. The LWRMP, in coordination with this *Plan* discusses issues related to land use, physiography, soils, surface water (including wetlands) and groundwater, within the framework of watershed management. The LWRMP also includes discussion of other natural resource concerns including threatened and endangered species, forests and woodlands, invasive species, identification of priority farms for agricultural preservation efforts, as well as State and local regulations used to implement the plan. It is the intent of this *Plan* to uphold the intent of the LWRMP.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)

The WDNR has many policies that directly affect natural resources in Rock County. The WDNR also administers many programs to help communities and individuals to effectively manage, improve and/or protect natural resources. For more information, visit the WDNR website at www.dnr.state.wi.us.

3.3. Natural Resources Inventory

There are many valuable natural features present in Rock County. There are many possible methods of inventorying those natural features. Currently, in Rock County several natural features that are particularly important to preserve have been identified and mapped. Map 3.1, Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSAs), shows features that have previously been determined to have a significant effect on the landscape and/or health of the people of Rock County. Many of these ESOSA features, plus additional natural resources that are important to consider for further preservation or management are addressed in this Chapter.

Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSA)

Once any land is developed, it can very rarely revert back to its natural state. Alternatively, the preservation or conservation of environmentally sensitive or significant areas protects and can even improve surface and groundwater quality, reduce the risk of flooding, protect wildlife and help to maintain scenic landscapes and rural character. In response to these facts, Rock County has analyzed and defined fourteen environmentally significant natural features termed environmentally significant open space areas (ESOSA) (see Figure 3.1) that are identified in the POROS Plan (Section II: Chapter 12 of this *Plan*). These natural features, considered green infrastructure for the County, may pose limits to development.

Some ESOSAs are already being protected through the Rock County land divisions process while others should be considered for future protection. Also included as ESOSAs are features that must be protected and monitored according to State or Federal mandate. These areas, when protected from development, serve to aid against the depletion of wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and open space. Map 3.1 shows the location of the composite area of all fourteen ESOSA features.

Not all of the ESOSA features will be addressed in this Chapter, however, natural features of importance that are not currently defined as ESOSAs will be discussed in 3.4. of this Chapter. Refer to the POROS Plan for more information on existing ESOSAs.

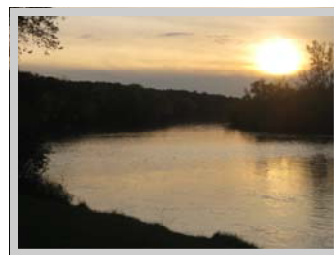
**Figure 3.1:
Environmentally Significant Open Space Area (ESOSA) Features**

State or Federally Protected ESOSA Features	Additional ESOSA Features
Surface water	Potential groundwater protection areas
Shorelands	Hydric soils
Wetlands	Kettles and depressional areas
Floodplains	Steep slopes
WDNR hunting lands	Natural areas
Federal lands	Town land, open spaces, and recreational areas
Airport open space areas	County parks

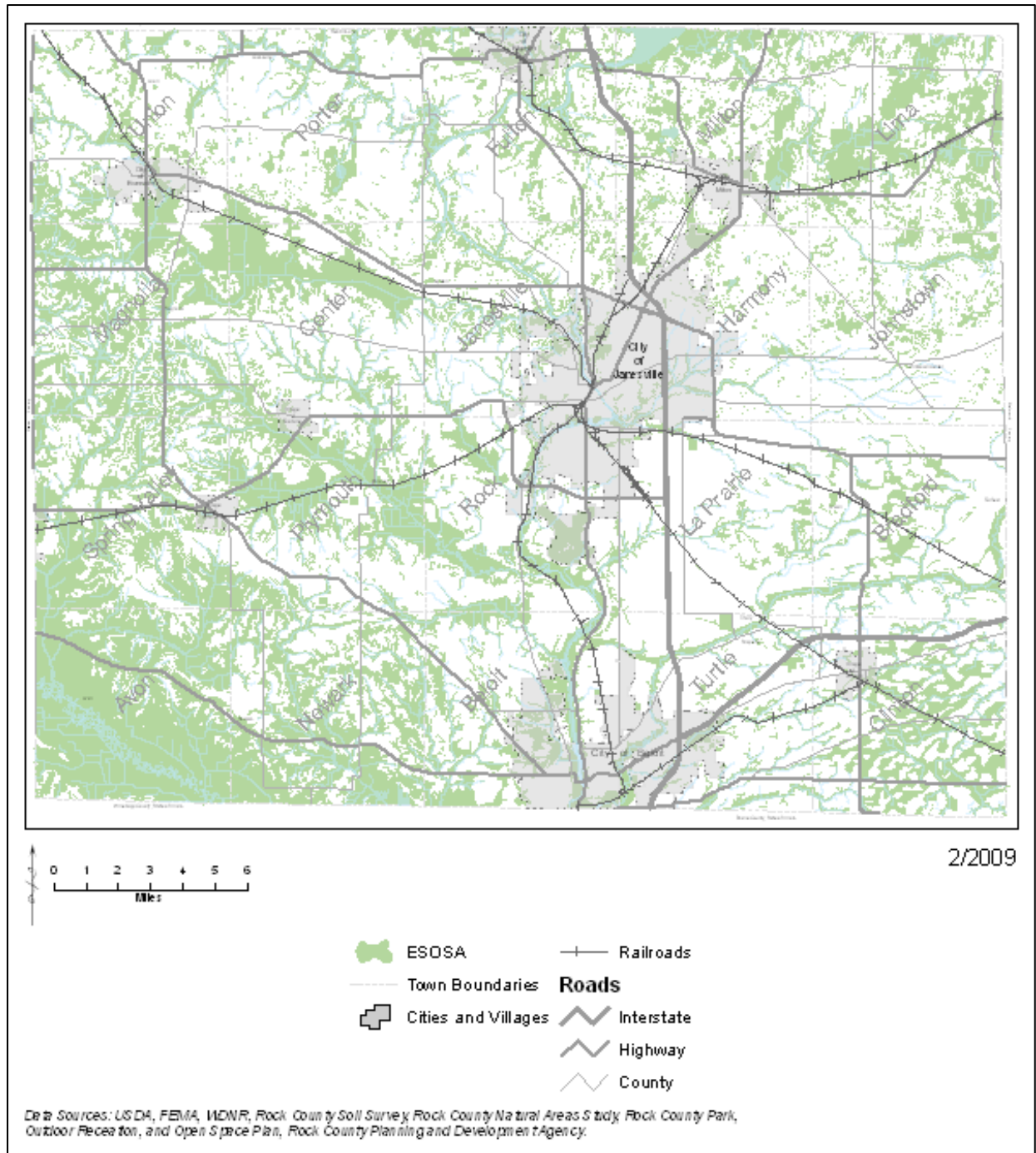
- Surface Water

Surface water mapping for Rock County includes delineation of all navigable and intermittent lakes, ponds, retention and detention basins, rivers and streams. Surface waters in Rock County total 3,549 acres, or 1% of the total area. There are three rivers in Rock County. Of the three, the Rock River is the largest major drainage basin in southern Wisconsin (see Map 3.2).

Other rivers in Rock County are the Yahara and Sugar Rivers. There are more than 50 creeks and streams of which Turtle, Raccoon, Bass, and Allen Creeks are of some recreational value. For the remainder, agricultural runoff and large fluctuations in high and low flow periods preclude any recreational use. In 1970 the WDNR identified 72 lakes and ponds. Of these 72, 48 are five acres or less and only 10 exceed 20 acres.



Map 3.1:
Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSA)



The southern tip of Lake Koshkonong is located at the Rock, Dane and Jefferson County line. This 10,000 acre lake, which lies primarily in Jefferson County, offers numerous recreational opportunities not only for Rock County residents, but also people from all over Southern Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. Because of this, Lake Koshkonong should be considered a lake of Statewide significance.

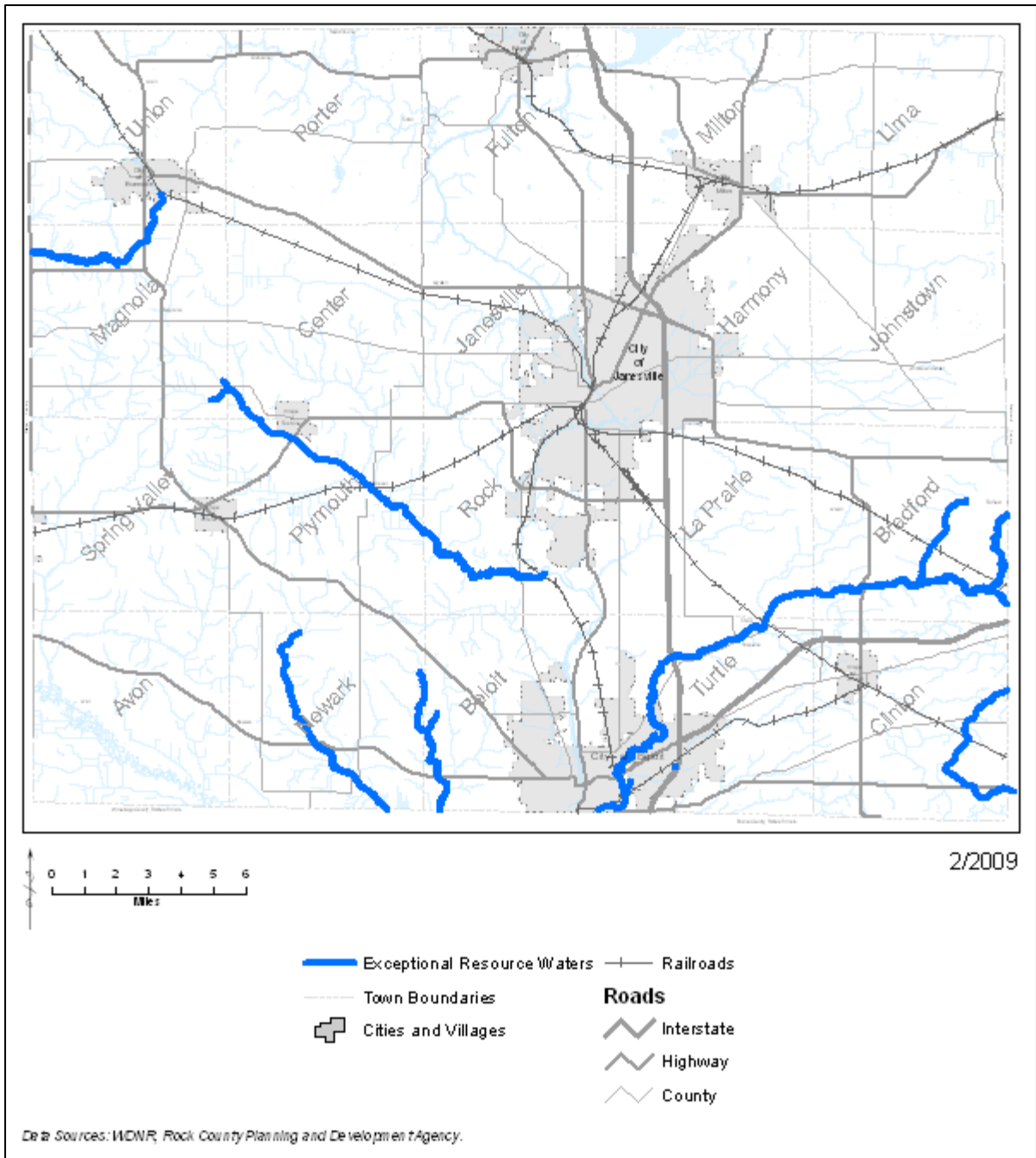


The Rock River Lagoon at City of Beloit's Riverfront

As a result of glaciation, the northern portion of Rock County contains many kettles, depressions, and lakes. Gibbs Lake, Storrs Lake, and Clear Lake are among the most recognized. The proximity to Dane, Jefferson, Walworth, and Green Counties, as well as Illinois, makes these areas attractive to potential users from outside Rock County. Although this proximity has an impact on the recreational pressure on these bodies of water, the use of these lakes does represent a positive impact on the local economy. People using Rock County's lakes and streams will spend dollars on gas, food and lodging.

WDNR's Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters Program provides a designation for Wisconsin's cleanest waters. An outstanding resource water is defined as a lake or stream that has excellent water quality, high recreational and aesthetic value, high quality fishing and is free from point source or non-point source pollution. An exceptional resource water is defined as a stream that exhibits the same high quality resource values as an outstanding resource water, but that may be impacted by point source pollution or that may have the potential for future discharge from a small sewer community. Exceptional resource waters in Rock County are Allen Creek (below the City of Evansville), Bass Creek, E. Fork Raccoon Creek, Little Turtle Creek, Raccoon Creek, Spring Brook (T2N, R14E S27), Turtle Creek and an unnamed creek (T2N R14E S31) (see Map 3.2).

Map 3.2:
Surface Water and Exceptional Resource Waters



- Shoreland Areas
Under State of Wisconsin Statute 59.692, Rock County administers a shoreland overlay district. The uses and standards established under the district apply to land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water mark of navigable lakes, ponds or flowages and within 300 feet of the ordinary high water mark of rivers or streams or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater. The district prohibits any construction

within 75 feet of the ordinary high water mark and these areas are included as ESOSA features. This regulation applies to rivers, streams and floodplains within Rock County. According to State of Wisconsin Statute 281.31, this district limits certain development activities in order to "further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions and prevent and control water pollution, protect spawning grounds, and fish and aquatic life, control building sites, placement of structures and land uses, and preserve shore cover and natural beauty."

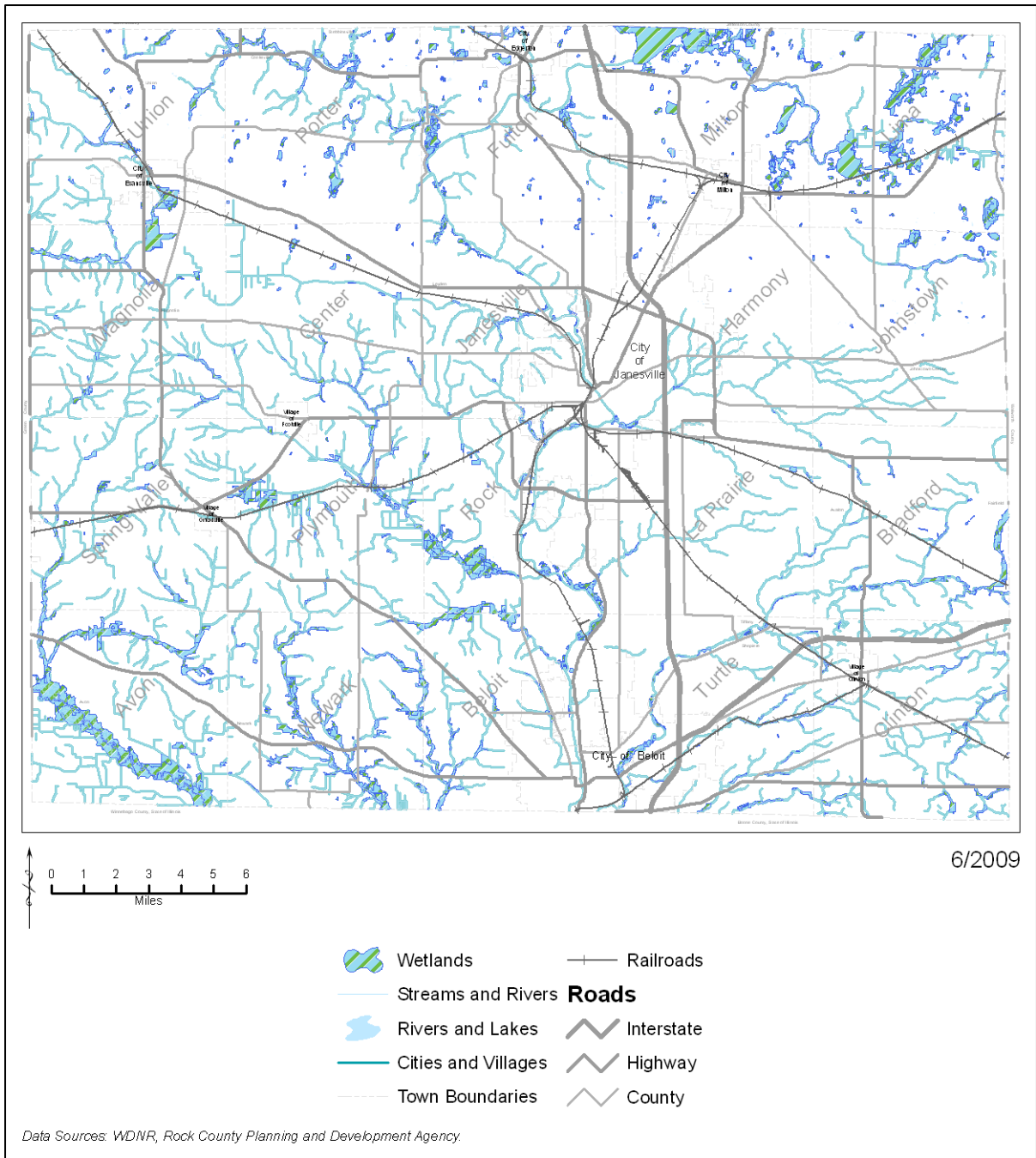
- Wetlands

Wetlands are those areas where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to support aquatic or hydrophilic vegetation or which have soils indicative of wet conditions. Wetlands support unique flora and fauna and are of limited human use.

WDNR wetlands in Rock County total 19,612 acres or 4.3% of the total area according to a 2003 inventory (see Map 3.3). Once viewed as wasteland, useful only when drained for agriculture or filled for development, wetlands are now understood to provide substantial and irreplaceable benefits for people and the environment. By filtering pollutants, nutrients, and sediments, wetlands help protect water quality in our lakes, rivers, streams, and wells. Storing runoff from heavy rains and snowmelts, wetlands reduce flood damage. Wetlands provide for recreational opportunities by providing essential habitat for fish, waterfowl and a variety of other animals. Acre for acre, wetlands usually support a greater variety and number of animals than any other biotic community. Acting as a shoreline buffer, wetlands protect against erosion from waves and currents. By providing natural open spaces, wetlands enhance quality of life, property values, and tourism.



Map 3.3:
Wetlands



- Floodplains**

Floodplains are lands that have been, or may be, covered by floodwater during a regional flood and include the floodway and the floodfringe. A floodway is defined as the channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel required to carry the regional flood discharge. A regional flood, commonly called a 100-year flood, is based on historical data and describes a flood that is expected

to have a 1% chance of occurring in a given year (shown as floodfringe-100 on Map 3.4). The floodfringe-100 (approximate) is where the 1% chance of flooding has been estimated because of a lack of an engineering study in that location, and the floodfringe-500 is where there is a .2% chance of flooding in any given year (see Map 3.4).

The concept that development should avoid floodplains seems almost self-evident. Yet these areas, even when accurately identified, continue to attract homeowners and developers. Floodwaters need not be fast or deep to quickly damage homes, businesses, or other development. Public facilities such as wells, sewage treatment plants, and roads can quickly be rendered unusable and unsafe. Rock County has experienced flooding along the Rock River and its tributaries frequently, at a significant cost to its citizens. With continuing urbanization within the river basin and increasing runoff from impervious surfaces, floods will certainly continue.

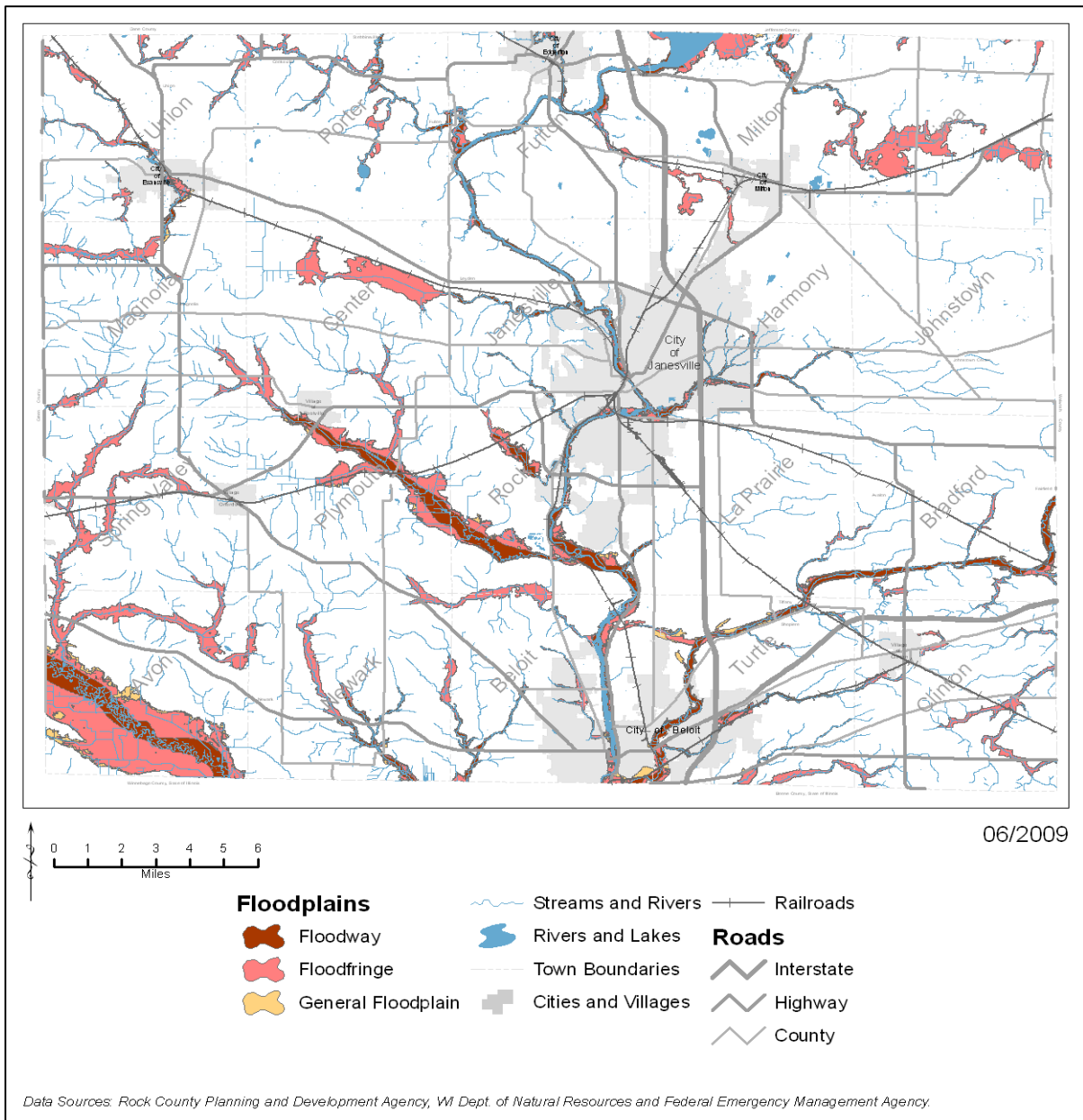
Traditional public responses to floods have included cleanup assistance, financial aid to victims, engineered flood control structures, and insurance programs. However, as these repetitive events have become better understood, and the costs tallied, land use controls are frequently recognized as a better way to manage flood risks and costs.

Chapter 32, Rock County Code of Ordinances establishes the floodplain overlay district. Required by State of Wisconsin Statute 87.30 (1), this ordinance provides for the identification of floodplains within the County and establishes development limits. While not mentioned in the State statute as a purpose for these controls, the environmental value of floodplains has long been recognized. Developed with these factors in mind, floodplains serve important natural functions, serving as shoreline buffers, wildlife corridors, and recreational areas.

Additional information regarding floodplains and their management can be obtained within the *Rock County Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Manual and Plan* published in September 2004 by the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency in cooperation with the Rock County Department of Emergency Management. The plan is available for viewing at the Janesville Hedberg Public Library or the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency at the Rock County Courthouse.



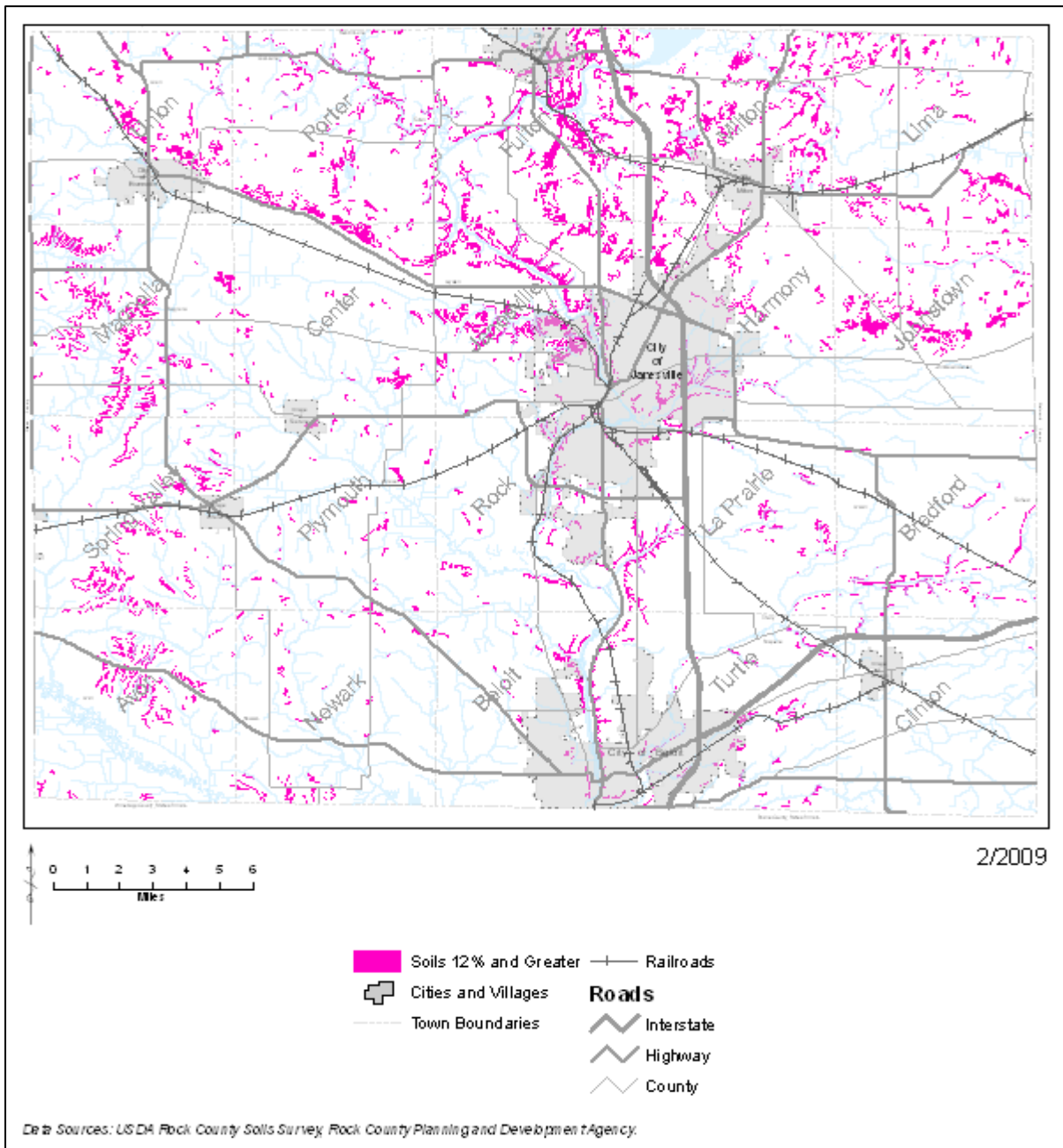
Map 3.4:
Floodplains



- Steep Slopes**

Steep slopes are defined as being 12% or more, the generally accepted division between lands topographically suitable or unsuitable for most human uses (see Map 3.5). As slope increases farming or construction projects encounter more restraints, costs, and likelihood of associated environmental degradation. Unless conducted with care using best management practices, farming on steep slopes can result in erosion of topsoil, the exposure of more erodible subsoils or bedrock, and reduction of water quality in adjacent streams. Construction activities on steep slopes typically require more site preparation, increased building costs and too often result in severe erosion and sedimentation problems.

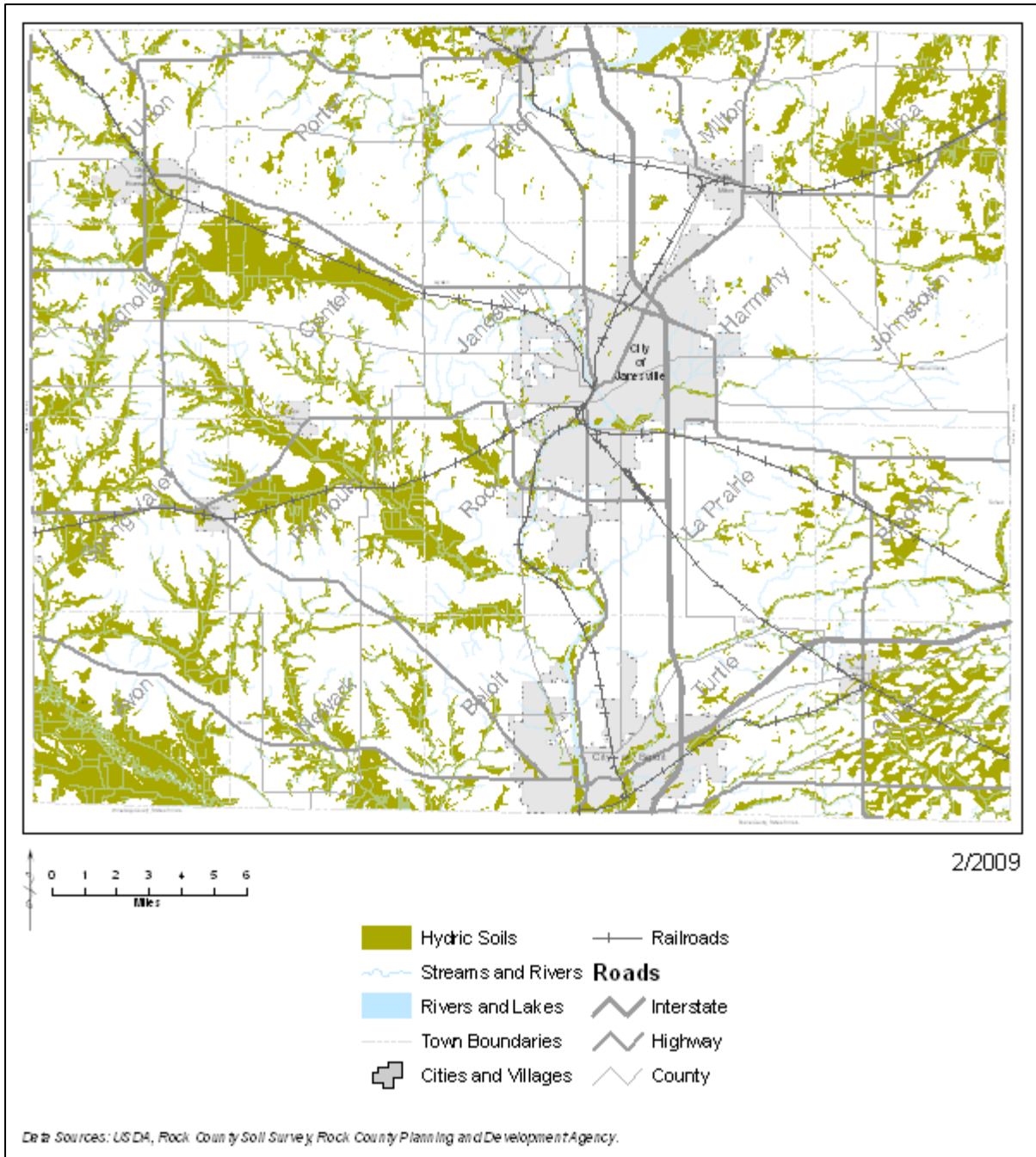
Map 3.5:
Steep Slopes



- Hydric Soils**

Hydric soils are formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions (see Map 3.6). The presence of hydric soils are one of the criteria, along with hydrophilic vegetation and wetland hydrology, which are required to exist before an area can be classified as a wetland. Although human activities, such as ditching, tiling, and grading, can remove enough moisture in many places to permit farming, true hydric soils are not conducive to development activities. Rock County currently has a soil survey showing where all types of soils exist as well as which types of soils are insufficient for development.

Map 3.6:
Hydric Soils



- Natural Areas (Ranked 5 or greater)

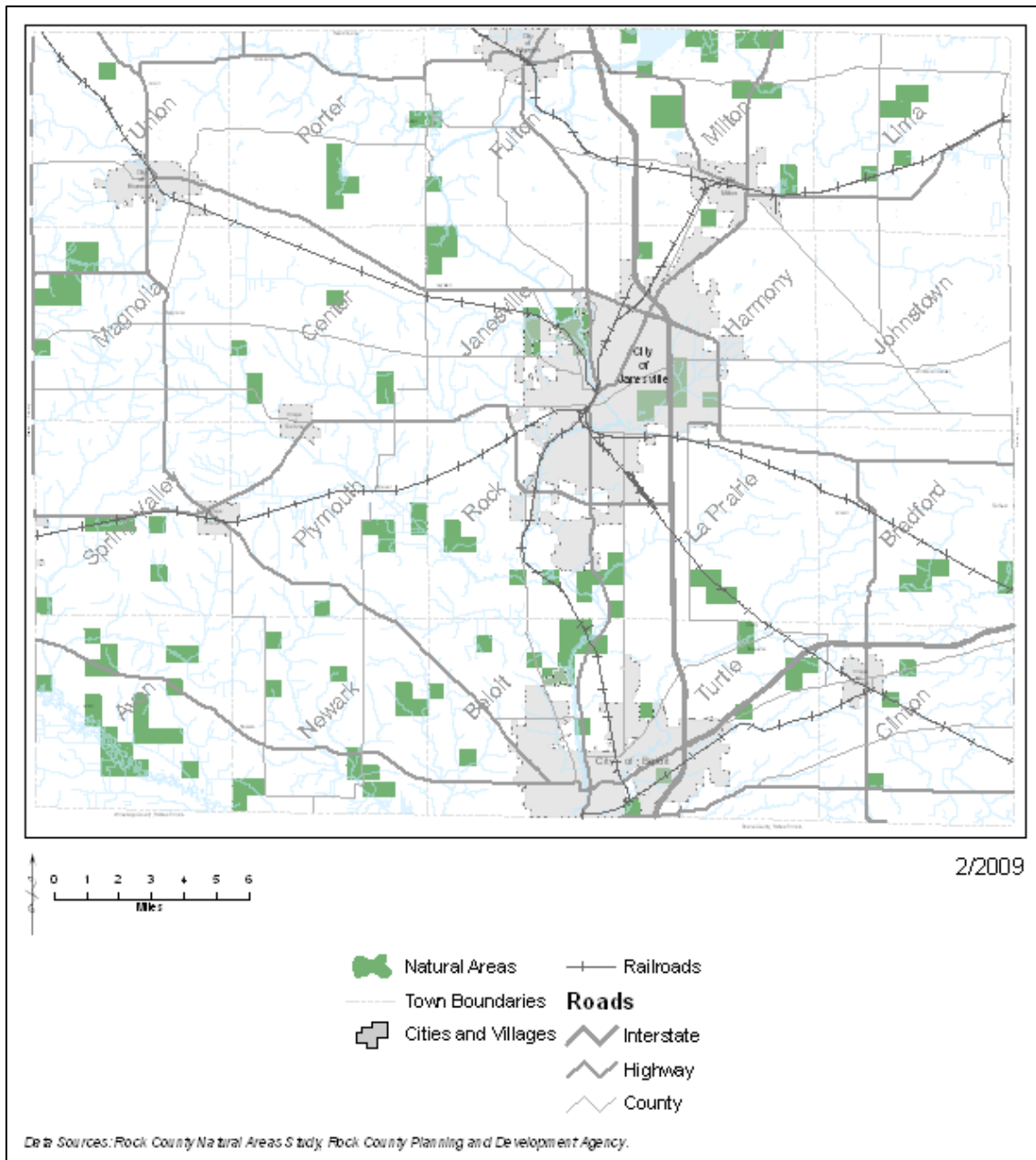
In 2001, ecologist Robert Baller evaluated natural areas in Rock County on behalf of the Rock County Planning, Economic, & Community Development Agency. Sites were derived from the WDNR natural area inventories for Rock County from 1969 and 1986. Baller and others added additional sites. Primary habitats included prairie, savanna, woodland, wetland, and cliff communities. Site evaluations involved mostly floristic assessments. All sites were ranked on a scale of 1-10 (10 being the best site) for their quality and

condition, size, and context. These constituent rankings were combined into an overall rank of 1-10 for each site. A rank of 5 or above denoted an ecologically significant site for Rock County. The 2001 survey involved 114 private and 55 public sites (169 total). Individual site acreages varied from 0.1 to 142 acres. 138 sites were given an overall rank of 5 or greater. The total acreage of sites ranked 5 or greater was 2,686.2 acres or 0.58% of Rock County.



All sites, regardless of ranking, were mapped on the Rock County geographic information system (GIS) for future reference (see Map 3.7). All sites ranked 5 or greater were recommended for conservation. Of these, 39 were recommended for immediate, proactive landowner contact leading to conservation and nine were selected as the highest priorities for conservation. The data in the survey was compiled after re-visiting previously known sites. Presently, there is no complete inventory of the entire County. Future surveys may need to be conducted.

Map 3.7:
Natural Areas



- Groundwater

Rock County obtains all of its domestic drinking water from groundwater sources, including both municipal and private wells. In addition, numerous high capacity wells exist in the County to serve agricultural and industrial uses. Recharge of the County’s aquifers is derived almost entirely from locally occurring precipitation, giving our citizens control over, and responsibility for, their groundwater. As reported in the report, *Groundwater Protection Principles and Alternatives for Rock County*, the County’s aquifers are close to the land surface and their limited natural protection make

them vulnerable to pollution. In order for Rock County to plan for the future, it is essential to protect groundwater quality and quantity.

Although Rock County is fortunate to have an abundant supply of groundwater, long-term planning is needed to assure that increasing demands do not deplete the groundwater. It is estimated Rock County consumes 20 million gallons of groundwater a day. This rate of groundwater use is the third largest in the State (Dane County uses 48 million, and Waukesha County uses 27 million gallons a day, according to United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates. Evidence in neighboring counties of Dane and Walworth have identified considerable drawdown of the water table in some locations. Rock County may be susceptible to some of these same influences as water demands increase, especially in areas with large numbers of high capacity wells, and areas with increased demand on the sandstone aquifer. Monitoring of potential depletion should be conducted to evaluate possible adverse impacts.

In 2002, the USGS created a groundwater simulation model of all municipal wells in the County that identified zones of contribution for each well (see *Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey Open File Report 2002-02 Delineation of Zones of Contribution for Municipal Wells in Rock County, Wisconsin: Final Report*. S. Gaffield, M. Gotkowitz, and K. Bradbury, 2002, 47p.). These zones of contribution identify land areas that contribute infiltration and recharge to a particular well. Recognizing that it is much easier and less expensive to protect supplies than remove pollutants, land use controls and land preservation provide an opportunity to protect these identified groundwater contribution areas. Further information on the zones of contribution and well locations within Rock County can be obtained by contacting the Rock County Health Department, or the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency.

Over one-fourth of private wells tested in Rock County exceed the health enforcement level of 10 mg/liter for nitrate-nitrogen. Nitrates are present naturally in groundwater at low levels, but can be elevated due to leaching of agricultural fertilizers, livestock manure, lawn fertilizers or septic system. High nitrate levels have a significant economic impact on the residents of Rock County. Map 3.8 shows areas where contaminants do not have far to go before they reach groundwater because the groundwater is close to the surface of the ground. For this reason, these areas are particularly susceptible to groundwater contamination. Wells with high nitrates sometimes need costly treatment systems or new deeper wells costing thousands of dollars each. Municipalities faced with high nitrates have had to replace high capacity sand and gravel wells with multiple low producing sandstone wells at costs in the millions of dollars. Options available to reduce nitrate impacts include nutrient management plans for agricultural lands, septic system design and maintenance programs, locating new developments in areas with sewer service, and land preservation. In cases of areas already identified as having high nitrate in the well water, the designation of special well casement areas would assist in ensuring that new wells are constructed in a manner as to avoid high levels of nitrates.

The second leading cause of unsafe wells in Rock County is bacterial contamination. Every year 15% to 30% of private wells in Rock County test positive for bacteria. In most cases, the contamination is related to poor well construction issues, especially the existence of well caps that are not vermin-proof. In most cases, bacteria problems are localized to an individual well, however in some cases, local geology and land use can have a broader impact on bacteria contamination of wells. Annual testing can identify this problem and in areas of chronic problems, and again special well casement areas can promote the safe construction of new wells in impacted areas.

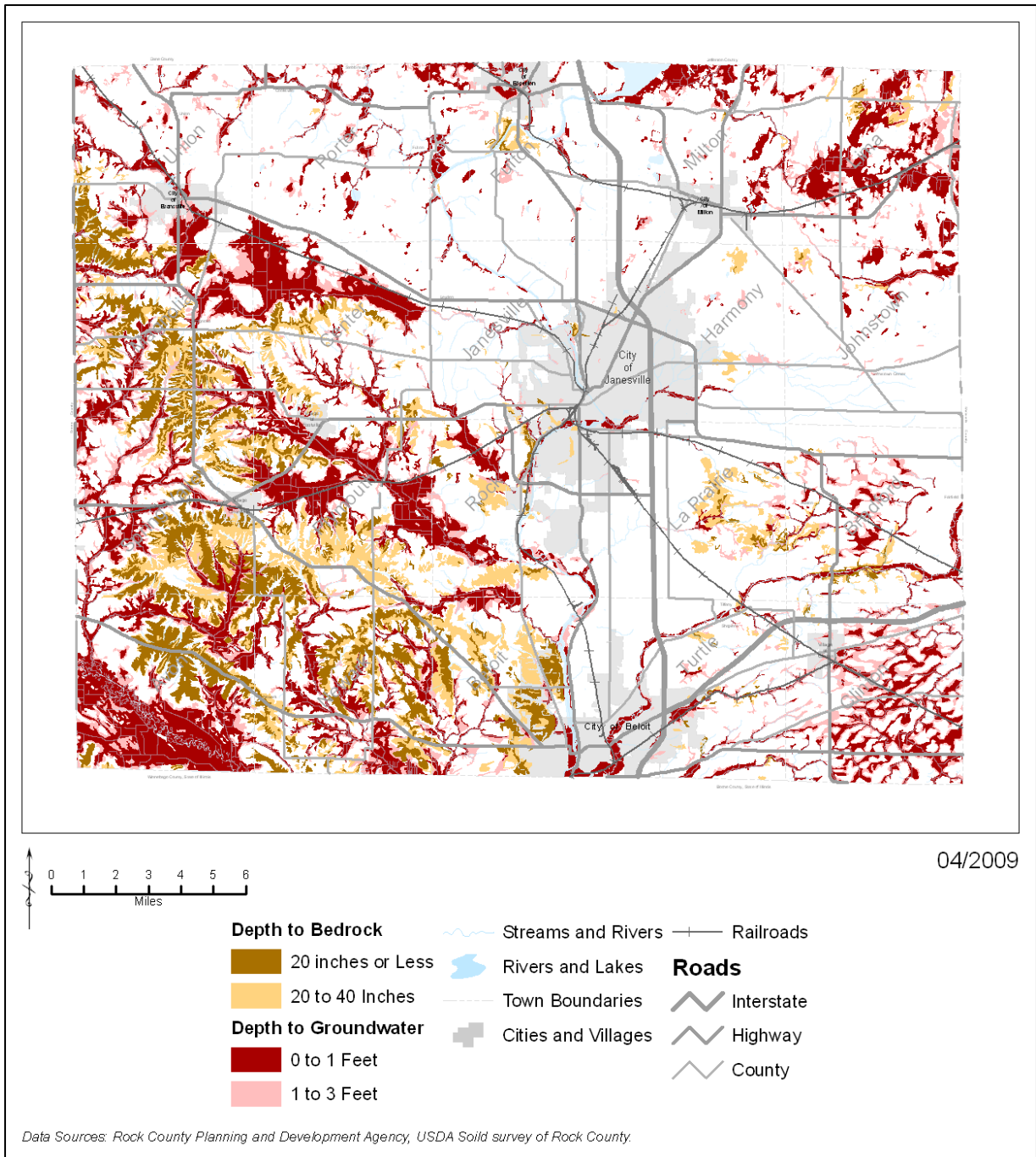
Other known or potential sources of groundwater contamination include underground storage tanks, pesticide applications, salvage yards, solid waste disposal sites, pharmaceutical wastes, and spills of hazardous substances. Programs such as residential and agricultural clean sweeps and pharmaceutical drug collection programs assist the community in removing chemicals from potentially ending up in the waters of Rock County.

It is estimated that there may be over 500 wells in Rock County that are no longer in use but have not been properly abandoned. These wells pose as a potential risk as direct conduits for contamination to enter the groundwater. A County well abandonment ordinance along with cost sharing for proper abandonment should be utilized to eliminate these wells.

Map 3.8 shows areas where there is shallow depth to groundwater and also shows areas where there is shallow depth to bedrock, indicating that groundwater may be threatened due to the limited amount of filtration that can take place before surface water gets to the bedrock where groundwater is stored (bedrock is solid rock made up of carbonated rocks such as limestone or dolomite). Additionally, shallow depth to bedrock areas are areas where it may be advisable to discourage development because fracturing of the bedrock (i.e. through digging a foundation) can also reduce the ability surface water to be filtered before joining the underlying aquifers and can introduce interconnected fractures that serve as conduits for spreading pollutants over a large area.

Educating the public about groundwater concerns is an essential tool in reducing negative impacts to the groundwater of Rock County. Well testing programs, planned development and interagency coordination of community awareness are needed as tools to prevent further degradation of the groundwater.

**Map 3.8:
Depth to Bedrock and Groundwater**

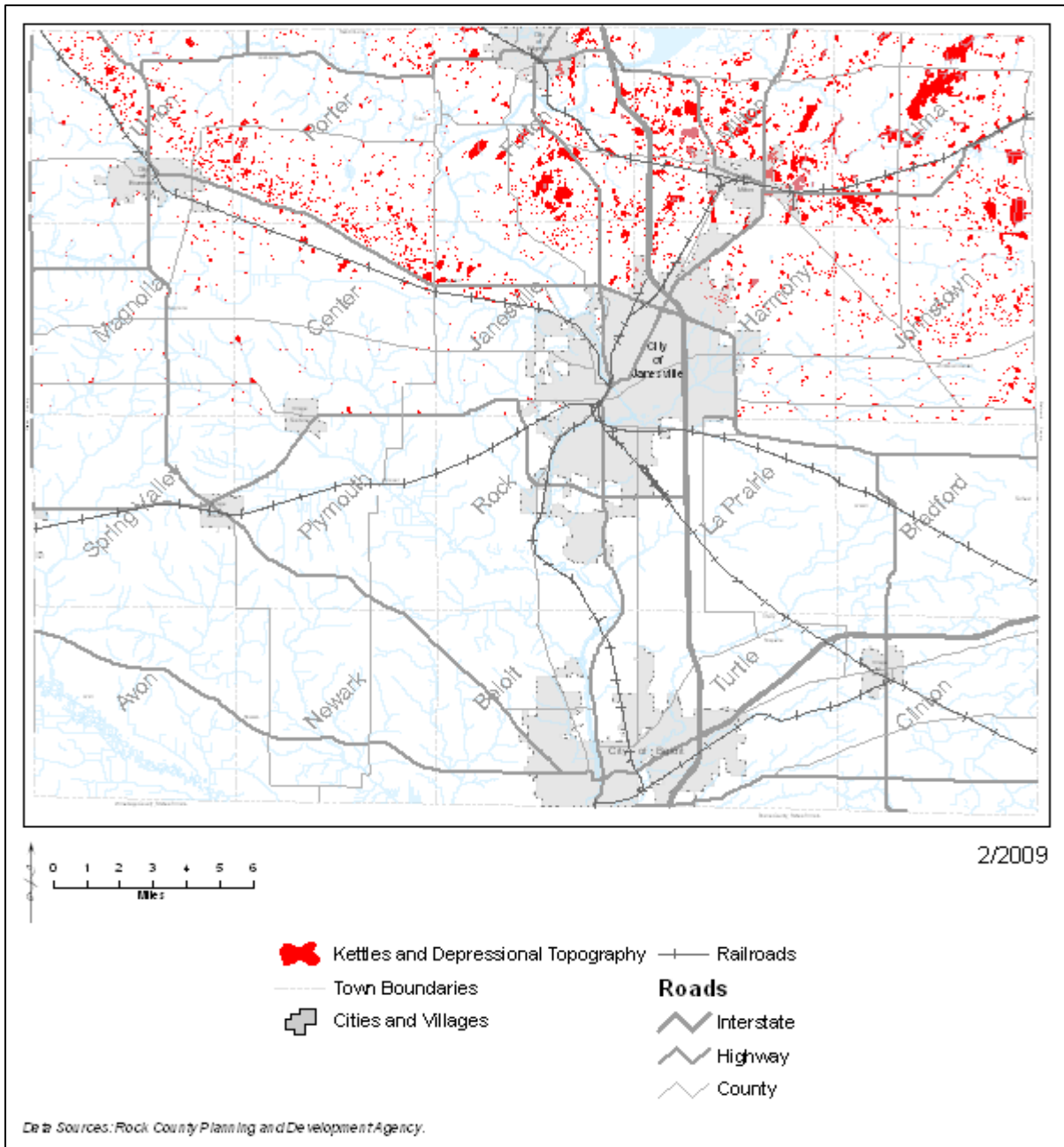


- **Kettles and Depressional Topography**

A kettle is a bowl shaped basin or depression. They are formed by the melting of a large detached block of stagnant ice left behind by a retreating glacier. Rock County has many kettles that were formed during the last ice age. These kettles and depressions vary considerably in size, and although they may exist throughout Rock County, locational data only exists in the northern portion of the County where they are known to be more

numerous (Map 3.9). It is the lack of surface drainage that gives kettles their unique natural characteristics and makes them generally unsuitable for development. Subject to periodic flooding not generally identified in floodplain studies, building sites within kettles often also contain soils that do not offer sufficient foundation support. Kettles frequently contain unique plant and animal communities not found in the surrounding area. These natural depressions can also collect stormwater creating natural recharge areas. If development within or adjacent to kettles concentrates pollutants into stormwater, groundwater quality could be affected.

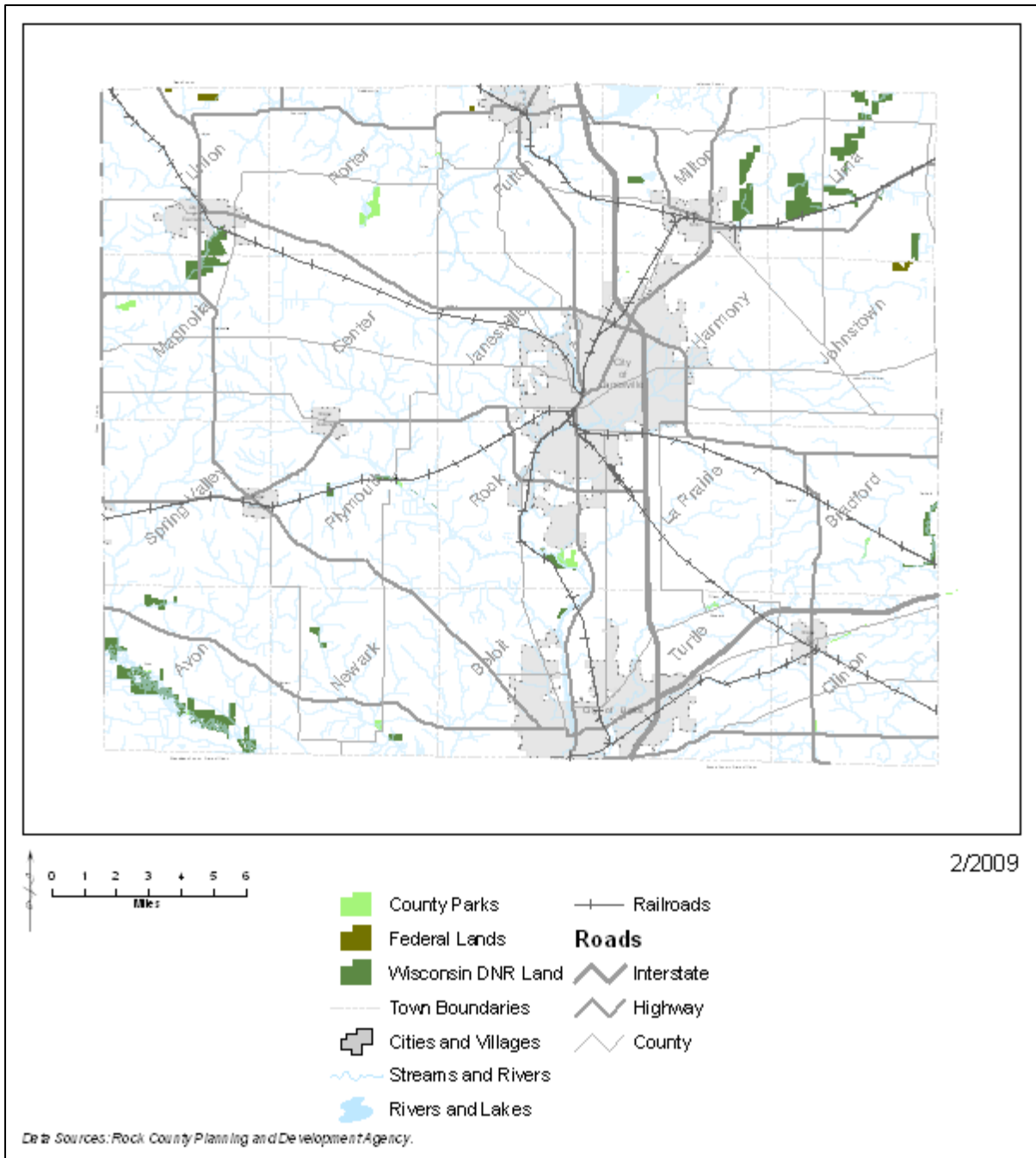
Map 3.9:
Northern Kettles and Depressional Topography



- Parks and Open Space

With increasing pressure for residential, commercial, and industrial development, outdoor recreation and open space areas have become important ingredients to preserving quality of life in Rock County. Accessible and adequate parks and outdoor recreation areas contribute to the overall appeal and livability of Rock County. Map 3.10 shows the location of WDNR hunting lands, County Parks and other State and Federal lands (refer to specific Town comprehensive plans for location of Town parks).

Map 3.10:
Parks and Open Space



The POROS Plan (Section II: Chapter 12 of this *Plan*) is an expression of the County's objectives, needs, and priorities for park and outdoor recreation facilities. The focus of the plan is on assessing existing conditions of County parks and providing policy guidelines for the improvement of outdoor recreational opportunities for Rock County residents. The need for additional parkland has been addressed as one of the objectives of the plan as well. The plan provides for continued eligibility for matching funds from the State of Wisconsin and shows Rock County is setting a course of action for continued improvement of its fine park system.

3.4. Natural Resources Issues and Opportunities

This section lists the County's natural resource issues and opportunities.

- **Environmentally Significant Open Space Areas (ESOSAs):** The Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency is committed to providing the best possible methods and processes for the protection of natural resources. To that end, in a process for including ESOSAs into the Rock County Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock), a public review and recommendation process will be held for the possible update and modification of the way ESOSAs are defined and used. Several natural features that are not currently identified as ESOSAs, such as depth to bedrock and woodlands, should be considered for identification and protection as ESOSAs because of their environmental significance.
- **Floodplain Enforcement:** The flood of 2008 has brought the issue of improved identification and enforcement of the shoreland overlay (SO) district of the County's Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 32 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock): . Rock County is committed to making those improvements during the term of this *Plan*.
- **Fish and Wildlife Habitat:** A diverse range of water resources in Rock County is reflected in the diversity of the fishery resource. The most significant water resource in the County is the Rock River, which includes approximately 800 acres of Lake Koshkonong. Over 50 species of fish have been identified in the Rock River. The sport fishery is comprised of catfish, smallmouth bass, northern pike, walleye, white bass, crappies, bullheads, bluegills and perch. Carp present problems especially in Lake Koshkonong, but the population is held in check with an aggressive commercial harvest. The WDNR stocks Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River with northern pike, walleye and muskellunge.

The large size of the Rock River Basin combined with high levels of natural fertility, intensive agriculture and municipal development has put a strain on the waters. High levels of phosphorus and sediment combined with algae blooms result in low dissolved oxygen. Periodic testing of fish for contamination has found low levels of PCBs. A health

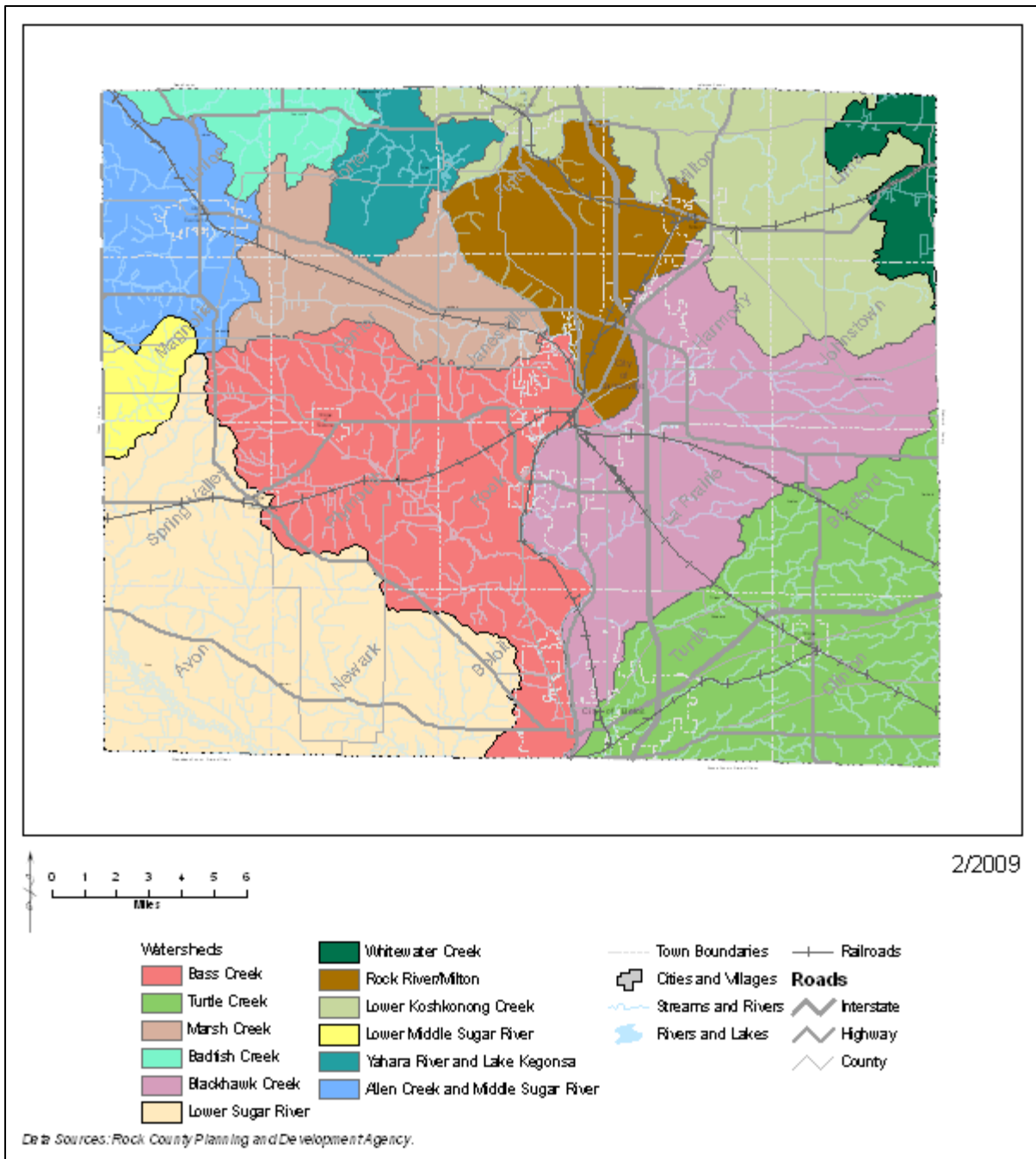
advisory has been issued on eating fish. Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River are on the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) list (303d) of impaired waters. The County has three trout streams, Allen Creek, Spring Creek and the East Fork of Raccoon Creek. Of these, the East Fork of Raccoon Creek was recently determined to be supporting a naturally reproducing population of brook trout. Special regulations are in place to protect this population.

A loss of wildlife habitat due to human encroachment and population growth has historically impacted several wild game species in Rock County. Historically, wildlife populations such as pheasants, quail, and cottontail rabbits rise and fall based on several factors, but there is a direct correlation existing between populations and the number of acres of rural land actively enrolled in conservation reserve programs. These lands now number in the thousands of acres within Rock County.

- **Drainage Basin and Watersheds:** The WDNR delineates water quality management units known as basins, which are further divided into watersheds. Rock County lies within the Lower Rock River Basin and is split into twelve distinctive watersheds (see Map 3.11). These watersheds have differing characteristics that may suggest different management practices for the protection of ground and surface water. The Blackhawk Creek Watershed, for instance, has high susceptibility to groundwater contamination whereas the Lower Koshkonong Creek Watershed has medium susceptibility to groundwater contamination. These areas should be taken into account when considering criteria for protection of groundwater. Various management and conservation programs and assistance may be available to landowners within these watershed areas (see the Rock County Land Conservation Department website).
- **Scenic and Visual Resources:** As population and development densities increase, management of scenic and visual resources will become important considerations for planners, administrators, developers, and citizens of Rock County. Issues such as maintaining aesthetically pleasing viewsheds, landmarks, and transportation corridors will prove challenging. Efforts should be made to analyze all positive and negative visual attributes associated with the site development of such features as cell towers, wind generators, advertising billboards, electrical distribution lines and towers, and water towers. In some cases, County and Town governments may want to explore the use of ordinances to control or standardize the quality of important viewshed areas.

Criteria (such as design and location) for allowing structures on highly visible hilltops and ridgelines should be carefully considered. Although viewsheds are often not addressed as areas for preservation, decision makers should consider the possible negative effects of development in areas that are easily seen from hilltops and ridgelines. In addition, any development along roads or pathways that provide for expansive views of the landscape should be carefully reviewed. At a minimum, visual

Map 3.11:
Watersheds

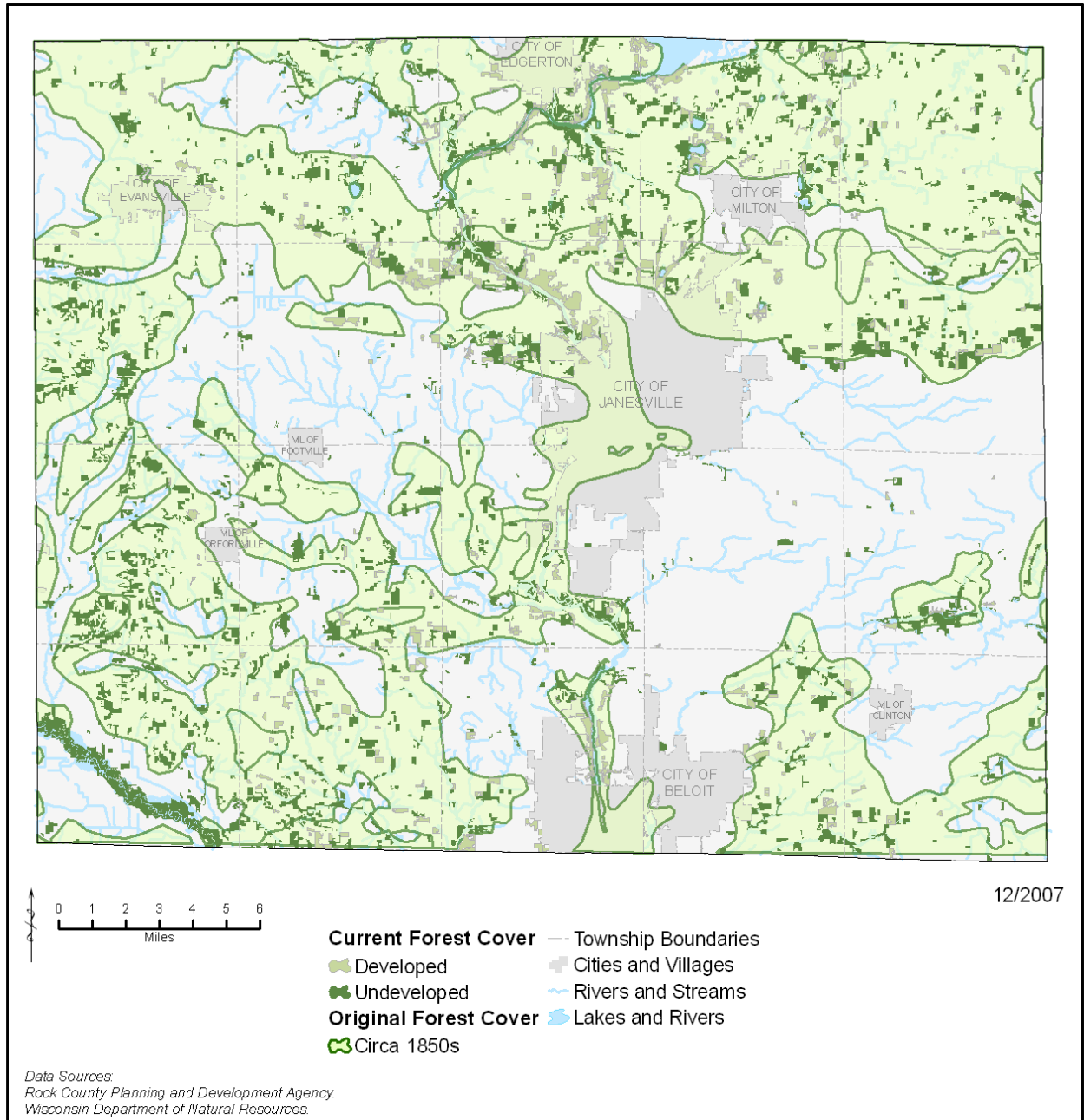


buffer areas around key landmarks within the County should be considered. Uninterrupted scenic views and viewsheds are features that add to the quality of life for residents and contribute to the perception of the quality rural character of the County.

- **Forests and Woodlands:** According to the WDNR, in 2004, Rock County forested area comprised 58,551 acres or 12.6% of the total County land area. Of this acreage, 55,198

are privately owned with the remainder being public lands. Approximately two-thirds of the total acreage is in tracts of less than 40 acres. The total acreage of land enrolled in WDNR's Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program (see Section II: Chapter 5 - Land Use of this Plan) as of January 2006 was 5,607 acres.

Map 3.12:
Forests and Woodlands



One of the problems facing forests and woodlands nationwide is fragmentation (see Map 3.12). Fragmentation is the conversion of large contiguous areas of forest and woodlands into relatively small patches in ways that reduce or eliminate the ability of the forests

and woodlands to provide ecological, economic, and social benefits.

Originally, factors such as agricultural management practices (clearing the land for farming was an accepted practice), fires, and lumber use contributed to the decline of this limited resource. Today, the number of non-industrial private owners of forested land is increasing thereby causing the division of existing forested lands into smaller private parcels. In Rock County, wooded land has drastically increased in value for use as home sites, recreational uses and investment, not typically for forest products. Development of forested or wooded lots has the potential to alter the landscape in ways that can have long-term ecological impacts and can spur greater fragmentation through the establishment of roads, utilities, etc.

Rock County should work with local communities to identify and establish a method to protect or more effectively manage forests, woodlands and valued trees that may be in the path of development.

- **Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation Sites:** Non-metallic mining is a widespread activity in Rock County due to unique geologic features formed thousands of years ago. Much of the sand and gravel in the area was brought here by a series of glaciers. Over time, as the glaciers moved south from what is now Upper Michigan and Canada, rock and other material accumulated within the glacier. As the glaciers melted, most recently around 10,000 years ago, a mixture of sand, gravel, and boulders was deposited in southern central and eastern Wisconsin. Some areas of the County have consolidated rock (limestone or dolomite) at or near the surface. This material has been in place much longer than the sand and gravel and dates back 400 to 600 million years ago.

An ample local supply of these materials provides a lower cost for construction and building supplies, road building and maintenance as well as for agricultural use as lime. While these sites provide a valuable resource to the community, many exhausted or abandoned nonmetallic mining sites have been left in a condition that prevents them from being of further use or, at a minimum, a safe landscape. Rock County now has regulations in place to ensure that all active nonmetallic mine sites comply with standards relating to regrading, re-vegetating, and conversion to the best post-mining land use.

A 1995 State law creating Chapter 295 of State of Wisconsin Statutes, and later Administrative Code NR 135, establishes the framework for statewide regulation of non-metallic mining reclamation. It does this by establishing uniform reclamation standards and setting up a locally administered reclamation permit program. The law is intended to create a reclamation program only. It neither regulates active mining processes nor has any effect upon local zoning decisions such as those related to the approval of new mine sites.

Those people considering opening a new nonmetallic mine site in Rock County should contact the local zoning authority (City, Town or Village) for the procedures necessary

for zoning and mine operation approval. The Rock County Land Conservation Department should also be contacted regarding the procedures necessary for developing a reclamation plan and obtaining a reclamation permit. These processes are independent of each other and may be done concurrently (one approval is not necessarily required prior to obtaining the other) but both are needed prior to mine operation.

Any non-metallic mining site operating after August 2001 is required to have an approved reclamation plan and a reclamation permit to ensure that the mine site is restored following the completion of mining. As of 2006, Rock County currently administers reclamation permits for 44 active sites, consisting of approximately 1,140 active mine acres (see Map 3.13). With another 1,300 acres planned for mining, the area has reserves available for many years to come.

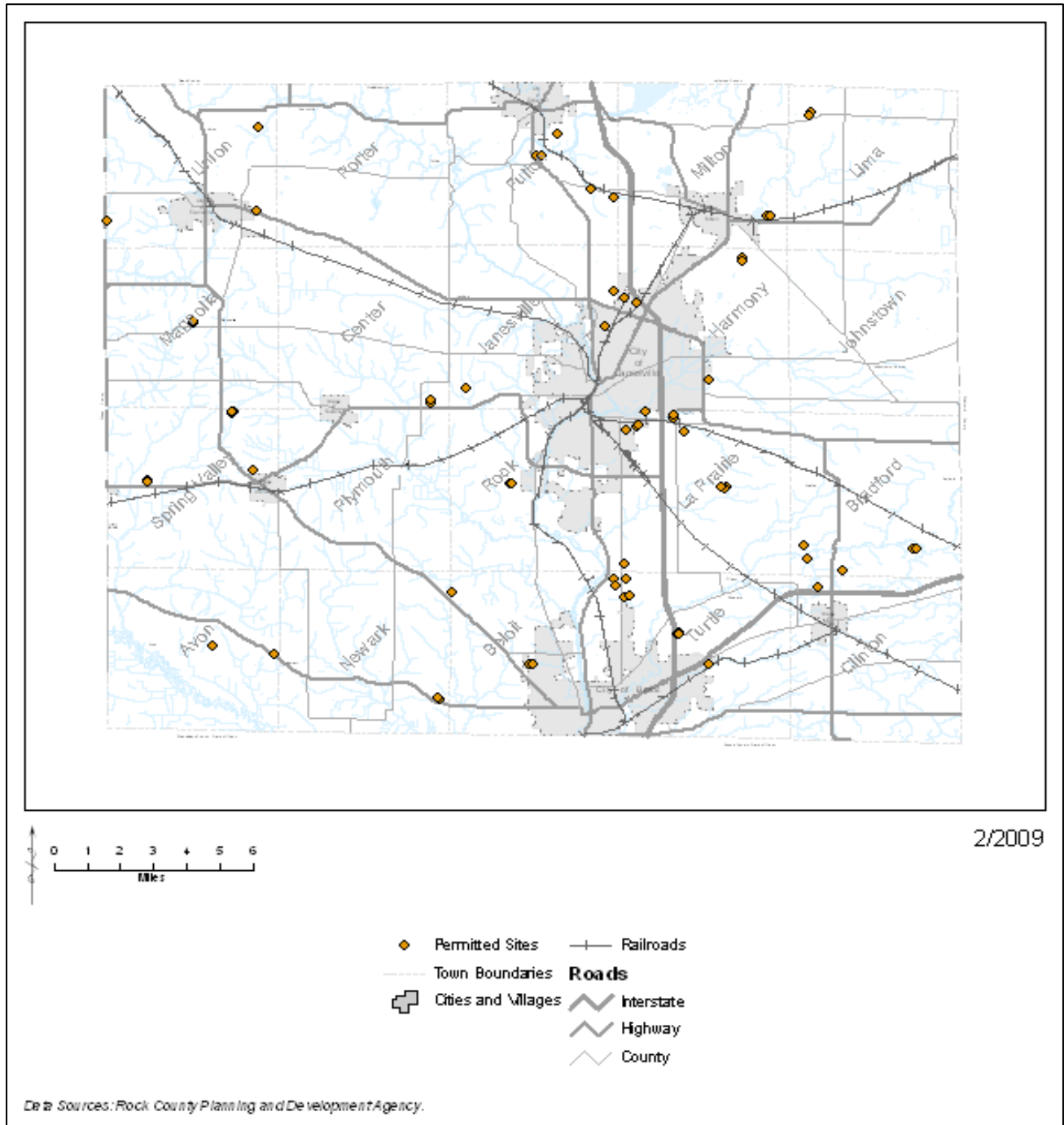
- **Threatened and Endangered Species:** Both the State and Federal governments prepare their own separate lists of threatened and endangered plant and animal species but do so working in cooperation with one another, as well as with various other organizations and universities. The WDNR Endangered Resources Program monitors endangered, threatened, and special concern species and maintains the State's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) database. This program maintains data on the locations and status of rare species in Wisconsin and these data are exempt from the open records law because of their sensitive nature.

According to the NHI and the WDNR there are 24 plant, six bird, six fish, three reptile/amphibian, three insect/invertebrate, and two mammal species listed on the Federal or State threatened or endangered species listed in Rock County (see the *Rock County Land and Water Resources Management Plan (LWRMP)*). As development occurs many species of both flora and fauna are forced to move and adapt to new and different environments. This movement can create strain on the species and affect populations via reproduction cycles, feeding and hunting patterns, or adaptability based on soils, water, and human proximity.

The Wisconsin Endangered Species Law was enacted to afford protection for certain wild animals and plants that the Legislature recognized as endangered or threatened and in need of protection as a matter of general state concern. The Federal Endangered Species Act also protects animals and plants that are considered endangered or threatened at a national level. While the conservation of plants, animals and their habitat should be considered for all species, this is particularly important for threatened, endangered, or special concern species. A threatened species is one that is likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered. An endangered species is one whose continued existence is in jeopardy and may become extinct. A special concern species is one about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven. The main purpose of the special concern category is to focus attention on certain species before they become endangered or threatened.

Implementation of endangered species laws is usually accomplished during the state permit review process, but is ultimately the responsibility of a project proponent and property owner to ensure that they are not in violation of the laws. WDNR is available to provide information on endangered and threatened species. See the WDNR website for the Endangered Resources Program.

Map 3.13:
Permitted Non-Metallic Mine Reclamation Sites



3.5. Natural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies

This section states the County's natural resource goal, objectives, and policies.

Natural Resources Goal

3.1. Preserve and protect Rock County's natural resources and open space.

Natural Resources Objectives and Policies

- 3.1.1. Utilize existing policies and ordinances and consider new policies, efforts, mechanisms and ordinances for the purpose of protecting natural resources and open space.
 - 3.1.1.a. Rock County shall continue to enforce the *Rock County, Wisconsin 2009-2014 Parks, Outdoor Recreation, and Open Space (POROS) Plan* for the purpose of preserving environmentally significant open space areas.
 - 3.1.1.b. Rock County shall continue to enforce the Rock County Stormwater Management Ordinance (Chapter 28 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock), the Construction Site Erosion Control Ordinance (Chapter 27 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock), and the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance ((Chapter 32 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) in accordance with State of Wisconsin Administrative Codes NR 151 and NR 115 for the purpose of preserving and protecting the quality of surface water and shorelands within Rock County.
 - 3.1.1.c. Rock County shall continue to enforce the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 32 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) in accordance with State of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 115 and 116 and will continue to oppose building and construction within any designated wetland within Rock County.
 - 3.1.1.d. Rock County shall continue to enforce the *Rock County Hazard Mitigation Plan* and the Rock County Floodplain Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 32 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) in accordance with State of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 116 and will continue to oppose building and construction within any designated floodway within Rock County.
 - 3.1.1.e. Rock County shall continue to monitor, prevent and/or oppose development on 16% slopes or greater unless properly engineered to mitigate downstream impacts.
 - 3.1.1.f. Rock County shall continue to monitor, prevent and/or oppose development on hydric soils.

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- 3.1.1.g. Rock County shall continue to enforce the Rock County Stormwater Management Ordinance (Chapter 28 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) and Construction Site Erosion Control Ordinance (Chapter 27 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) in accordance with State of Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 151 to preserve and protect the quality of groundwater in Rock County.
 - 3.1.1.h. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect natural areas ranked 5 and above as defined in the *Rock County Natural Area Survey*, June 2002.
 - 3.1.1.i. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect bedrock and groundwater.
 - 3.1.1.j. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect the quality of kettles and depressions, the unique habitat they provide and their ability to act as natural recharge areas.
 - 3.1.1.k. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect parks and open space for the enjoyment of the citizens of Rock County.
 - 3.1.1.l. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect the Lower Rock River Drainage Basin and associated watersheds.
 - 3.1.1.m. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect forests, woodlands and valued trees.
 - 3.1.1.n. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect all species identified, either at the local, State, or Federal level as threatened or endangered.
 - 3.1.1.o. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect fish and wildlife habitat.
 - 3.1.1.p. Rock County shall support efforts and ordinances that preserve and protect the visual quality of scenic and visual resources such as hilltops, ridgelines and vistas.
 - 3.1.1.q. Rock County shall consider amending those Rock County documents referenced within the Policies under Objective 3.1.1, *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*, for the purpose of making them consistent with the intent of Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*.

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- 3.1.1.r. Rock County shall consider developing a land evaluation and site assessment (LESA) system as a means to objectively measure soil quality, presence of natural features, proximity to urban services and other measures.
- 3.1.1.s. Rock County shall research financial mechanisms to support natural resource and open space preservation efforts.
- 3.1.2. Promote conservation and preservation of farmland, natural resources and open space through consistent land division decisions.
- 3.1.2.a. Rock County shall consider amending the Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) for the purpose of protecting environmentally significant open space areas (ESOSA).
- 3.1.2.b. Rock County shall consider amending the Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) to:
- Require developers to incorporate and preserve environmentally significant open space areas (ESOSA) within the designs and scope of their projects.
 - Require identification of all forests, woodlands and species on all building site proposals and land divisions.
 - Include a list of encouraged and discouraged vegetative species.
 - Require builders/developers to review, analyze and identify environmental issues affecting the safety (as related to flooding) and design of new development.
 - Require identification of natural features and agricultural soil capability present at all proposed development sites.
 - Require identification of natural features that may be affected by development that are not directly on the development site.
 - Specify criteria for the level of protection of natural features and open space present in the County.
 - Specify a procedure for discussing, collaborating on, and submitting development designs prior to the application approval process.
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- 3.1.2.c. Rock County shall consider other amendments to the Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) that are consistent with the intent of Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources of the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* .
- 3.1.3. Encourage, educate and assist local Rock County governments and/or organizations in the responsible management and preservation of natural resources and open space.
- 3.1.3.a. Rock County shall provide, when available, information, mapping and policy recommendations to other jurisdictions for the responsible analysis, management, and preservation of rural character, natural resources, open space, farmland and cultural resources.
- 3.1.3.b. Rock County shall educate local units of government and the public on the use of cluster development, conservation subdivision, landscape and sign ordinances and any other policies or ordinances that encourage the preservation of natural resources and/or farmland cultural resources and/or rural character (see Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources, 3.5., *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035*).
- 3.1.3.c. Rock County shall consider creating the following model ordinances for local government use and implementation:
- Cluster development ordinance
 - Conservation subdivision ordinance
 - Landscape ordinance
 - Sign ordinance
 - Ordinance regulating cell towers and any other unnatural, tall structures as needed to preserve the rural character of the landscape
 - Wind generating device ordinance
- 3.1.3.d. Rock County shall assist local governments in the development of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in the County.
- 3.1.3.e. Rock County shall continue to work cooperatively with the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation and/or other appropriate organizations to determine possible locations for Ice Age Trail and/or other parks and trails for designation or development within Rock County.
- 3.1.3.f. Rock County shall meet with the Cities, Villages and Towns within the County to explore the viability of regional preservation programs such as purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE)/purchase of development rights (PDR) and/or transfer of development rights (TDR)
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- 3.1.4. Support efforts and ordinances to further protect the quality of groundwater in Rock County.
 - 3.1.4.a. Rock County shall consider establishing well testing programs as tools to prevent further degradation of the groundwater.
 - 3.1.4.b. Rock County shall educate local units of government and the public on groundwater concerns and issues.
 - 3.1.4.c. Rock County shall consider adopting a County well abandonment ordinance that provides for cost sharing for proper well abandonment.
 - 3.1.4.d. Rock County shall consider re-establishing an acceptable number of groundwater monitoring wells within the County through collaboration with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) or other appropriate agency.
 - 3.1.4.e. Rock County shall investigate and consider implementing procedures for designating special well casement areas in areas already identified as having high nitrate or bacteria levels in the well water in order to ensure the safety of new wells.
 - 3.1.4.f. Rock County shall consider collecting data regarding the quality and quantity of groundwater within Rock County.
 - 3.1.5. Support efforts and ordinances to further protect floodplains and floodways in Rock County.
 - 3.1.5.a. Rock County shall support and assist all entities in the delivery of information and mapping regarding floodplains within Rock County.
 - 3.1.5.b. Rock County shall identify, document and maintain data regarding structures located within floodplains in an effort to mitigate future hazards associated with flood prone areas within Rock County.
 - 3.1.5.c. Rock County shall educate County residents who have structures located within floodplains on flood probability and other issues associated with floodplains in an effort to mitigate future hazards associated with flood prone areas.
 - 3.1.6. Continue to support responsible management and reclamation of non-metallic mining sites in Rock County.
 - 3.1.6.a. Rock County shall continue to administer, monitor, and document non-metallic mining sites and reclamation plans within Rock County.
 - 3.1.6.b. Rock County shall provide assistance to local governments for analysis, planning and reclaiming of non-metallic mining sites.
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Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Per State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001 - Comprehensive Planning (2)(e), the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of a community's comprehensive plan is to be:

"A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and non-metallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s.295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources, and other natural resources".

For the purposes of this *Plan*, the Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources element has been divided into three separate Chapters, each with their own goals, objectives and policies. The Chapters are as follows:

- Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 3 - Natural Resources
- Section II: Chapter 4 - Historic and Cultural Resources

Each Chapter also has a section that addresses issues and opportunities for that specific Chapter, however, tools for implementation that might apply to all three Chapters have been described only at the end of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources to avoid duplication, as referenced in 4.4. of this Chapter.

4.1. Overview

Identification and preservation of historic, archeologically or architecturally important sites helps to foster a feeling of pride and identity in a community. Similarly, the ability to participate in culturally diverse activities and events helps to give Rock County residents a feeling of place within their community. Rock County has many quality opportunities and places for the pleasure and enrichment of its residents. Additionally, there is strong awareness of the importance of historic and cultural preservation that is helping to assure the continued availability of significant buildings and sites of nationwide. At the same, however, a growing population and favorable economic factors create incentives to replace historic buildings instead of restoring them and the tendency to deemphasize the importance of preserving other culturally significant sites in favor of development. Identifying and designating sites is an important step in the preservation of Rock County's rich history and culture.

Responses from a Countywide survey done in Spring 2006, as well as comments by vision workshop participants (Fall 2005) indicated that citizens of Rock County are supportive of

preservation of cultural and historic sites. Although there may be widely differing opinions about how protection of these attributes can best be accomplished, this Chapter will present the best information available from a variety of professional sources and experiences and from Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency, in the form of research and maps, that lead to the formation of the following strategies, policies and recommendations.

4.2. Existing Plans, Policies, and Inventories

National Register of Historic Places

Text from the National Park Service website states, "The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation." Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historic and archeological resources. It goes on to say, "National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, Federal agencies, and others identify important historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and consideration in planning and development decisions."

Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings - 1976

The Rock County Historical Society in conjunction with the Rock County Planning Department did a comprehensive study of Rock County historic sites and buildings dated May 15th, 1976. Nancy Belle S. Douglas and Richard P. Hartung created the text. To date, this is the most complete study of historic sites and building available. A copy of this historical study may be viewed at the Rock County Planning, Economic & Community Development Agency, or at the City of Janesville Hedberg Public Library. Additional information regarding Rock County history and historic sites, buildings, and memorabilia can be obtained from the Rock County Historical Society located in the City of Janesville.

Architecture and Historic Inventory (AHI) Sites

The Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) is a collection of information and photographs documenting the architecture and history of historic structures, sites, objects, and districts throughout Wisconsin including Rock County (see Map 4.1). This inventory is housed at the Wisconsin Historical Society in the City of Madison and is maintained by the Society's Division of Historic Preservation.

Other historic settlement and archeological sites are located throughout the County and have been identified and mapped as key sites by the Wisconsin Historical Society. These datasets represent settlements and locations of archaeological sites as listed in the Archeological Site

Inventory (ASI) of the Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society. These important settlements and archeological sites help to document the settlement locations and patterns of early Rock County.

Archeological Site Inventory (ASI)

Rock County contains several ancient burial sites and archeological features of high historical significance as inventoried by the Wisconsin Historical Society in the Wisconsin Archeological Site Inventory (ASI). The Beloit College area has 23 prime examples of Native American conical, linear, and animal shaped effigy mounds built between 400 and 1100 A.D. Although not all effigy mounds contain skeletal remains, they are of great historical importance in the study of Native American cultural anthropology. Because early civilizations used water systems as transportation corridors, most archeological sites are located adjacent to or with close proximity to water. Many of Rock County’s major archeological sites are located in areas close to the Rock River, Yahara River, Turtle Creek, and Lake Koshkonong (see Map 4.1).

4.3. Historic and Cultural Resources Inventory

Architectural and Historic Sites



Tallman House, City of Janesville

Rock County is home to many historic sites and buildings that add charm and historic interest to the area. Certainly, all but the most infrequent visitor to Rock County is aware of the Tallman house in the City of Janesville, the Five Arch Bridge located in the Town of Turtle or historic Beckman Mill in the Town of Newark. These locations along with others, (see Figure 4.1) offer a step back in time and a cultural learning experience.



Five Arch Bridge, Towns of Turtle and Tiffany



Beckman Mill, Town of Newark

- Milton House

In 1998 the Milton House was designated a National Historic Landmark and is, to date, the only National Historic Landmark in Rock County. It is the only Underground Railroad National Historic Landmark in all of Wisconsin and as such, represents an important aspect of Rock County history. For more information on the Milton House visit www.miltonhouse.org.

**Figure 4.1:
Historic Sites and Attractions: Rock County**

Site or Attraction	Location	Contact
1800's Log Cabin and Museum	205 W. Lawton Street, Edgerton	608-884-4408
The Armory	10 S. High St., Janesville	866-995-7400
Beckman Mill	11600 S. County Road H, Beloit	www.beckmanmill.org
Beloit College	700 College St., Beloit	608-363-2000
Beloit Historical Society/ Lincoln Center	845 Hackett St., Beloit	608-365-7835
Beloit Visitors Center	1003 Pleasant St., Beloit	800-4-Beloit
Cooksville Historical Sites	State Highway Hwy 59 and 138, Cooksville	608-873-3115
Evansville Historic District	Evansville	608-882-2260
Fisher Schoolhouse	State Highway 213 and Luther Valley Rd.	608-879-9990
Hanchett-Bartlett Homestead	2149 St. Lawrence Ave., Beloit	608-365-7835
Lincoln Tallman House	440 N. Jackson St., Janesville	608-756-4509
Rock County Historical Society	N. Jackson St., Janesville	800-577-1859
Milton Historical Society	P.O. Box 245, Milton	608-868-7772
Milton College Historic District	513 College St., Milton	608-868-3651
Milton House Museum Historic Site	State Highways 26 and 59, Milton	608-868-7772
Helen Jefferies Wood Museum Center	426 N. Jackson St., Janesville	608-756-4509
Logan Museum of Anthropology	Memorial Hall, Beloit College, Beloit	608-363-2110
Luther Valley Historical Society	Depot and W. Centre St., Footville	608-876-6776
Medal of Honor Walkway	Veteran's Plaza at Traxler Park, Janesville	608-755-3030
Sterling North Home and Museum	409 W. Rollin St., Edgerton	608-884-3870
Tiffany Five Arch Bridge	Smith Rd., Shopiere	608-362-0655
City of Janesville Historic Commission	City of Janesville	608-755-3085
City of Beloit Historic Preservation	City of Beloit	608-364-6711

Cemeteries

Signs of Rock County's historic and cultural heritage can be found in several cemeteries located throughout the County (see Map 4.1). Many of the County's forefathers, prominent citizens, and "everyday important people" are buried within the cemeteries of Rock County. An education in history awaits anyone who has the interest to explore these sites. A tour of any Rock County cemetery will produce a historical connection to surnames present in our local road names, historical sites, businesses, and architecture. An often-overlooked aspect of cemeteries, other than the historical connection, is the cultural value of the stone artwork, design, and engraving.

Historical Markers

Rock County is currently home to 18 State of Wisconsin Historical Markers. The markers are located at key historical sites and buildings throughout the County. Private individuals as well as cities, towns, and villages may purchase historical markers. The marker program is designed to document a significant historical event, person, or place. The upkeep of the marker is the responsibility of the purchaser. There are firms located in the State that will refurbish deteriorated or damage markers for a fee. Although these State historical markers do not offer a complete history of the area, they do provide historical insight as to major activities and events important to communities and local areas (see Map 4.1 and Figure 4.2).

Rustic Roads

The 1973 State Legislature created the Rustic Roads Systems in Wisconsin in an effort to aid citizens and local units of government to preserve Wisconsin's scenic, lightly traveled country roads. These roads are used for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian travel in unhurried, quiet and leisurely enjoyment. There are currently two designated rustic roads in Rock County. They are Serns Road, which runs from the City of Milton north to County Highway N, and Riley Road, which runs from U.S. Highway 14 north to the County line.

A rustic road not only serves as an aesthetic feature for a community or region, they can actually attract economic development due to increased interest from homebuyers, tourists, and recreationalists. A well maintained, properly signed, and promoted rustic road system is a feature that adds value to a city, town, village, or county.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a trail located entirely in Wisconsin. It is projected to be over 1,000 miles long when completed. The trail is supported by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation, which includes 23 local chapters throughout Wisconsin. The trail system offers a varied and scenic hiking experience while attempting to follow, or stay adjacent to, the glacial geology of the Green Bay and Lake Michigan lobes of the Wisconsin glaciation that occurred approximately 10,000 years ago.

**Figure 4.2:
State of Wisconsin Historical Markers: Rock County**

Title	Location	Date	Community
First State Fair	Rock County Courthouse Area on S. Atwood Ave.	1954	City of Janesville
Jefferson Prairie Settlement	State Highway 140, 4 miles south of Village of Clinton, in the road triangle	N/A	Town of Clinton
Medal of Honor	Rest area on Interstate 90/39 (westbound), south of City of Beloit at Stateline	1990	Town of Turtle
Blackhawk at Turtle Village	Rock River Heritage Walkway just north of junction of Public and State Streets	1998	City of Beloit
Home of Governor Harvey	Southwest corner of the intersection of County Highway S and J, Shopiere	1953	Town of Turtle
Route of Abraham Lincoln	U.S. Highway 51 across from Blackhawk Technical College (rear entrance)	1960	Town of Rock
Wisconsin's First Aviation	Milwaukee Rd. and Lee Lane, Morgan School	1964	Town of Turtle
Burr Robbins Circus	Next to the Spring Brook Bike Trail, Dawson Field, north of the intersection of Delavan Dr. and Beloit Ave.	2000	Town of Rock
The Black Hawk War	Next to the Spring Brook Bike Trail, Blackhawk Golf Course, Palmer Dr. (west of the Clubhouse)	2001	Town of Harmony
Beckman Mill	Located next to the main driveway to the Beckman Mill, County Highway H	1997	Town of Newark
Wisconsin's Tobacco Land	Located on U.S. Highway 51 (northbound, just north of Rock River Bridge), one half mile south of City of Edgerton	1961	Town of Fulton
Village of Cooksville	North of State Highway 59 on Church St. at Cooksville Community Center	1996	Town of Porter
Milton House	In front of Milton House Museum 18 S. Janesville St. (State Highway 26)	1961	City of Milton
Rock River Industry	Front of the rest area on Interstate 90/39 (eastbound), 4 miles north of City of Janesville	1983	Town of Milton
Janesville Tank Company	In front of the Armory, 10 S. High St.	1990	City of Janesville
Black Hawk War	Northwest corner of the Interstate 90/39 rest area, south of City of Beloit	1968	City of Turtle
Beloit College	Front wall of the Middle College building on Beloit College campus	1967	City of Beloit
Storr's Lake	South wall of the stable at the Milton House Museum	1976	City of Milton

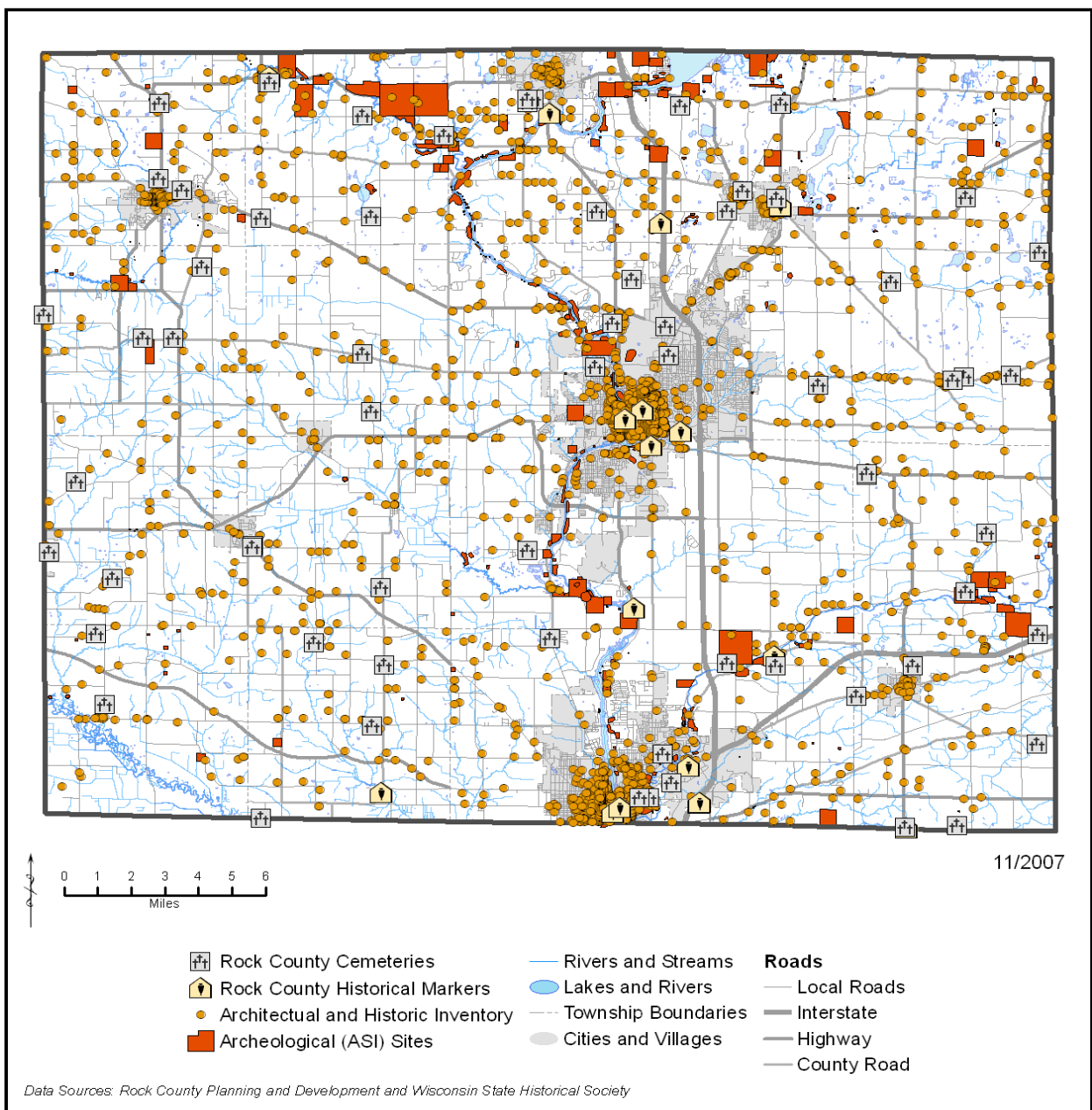
As of 2009, there is a short segment of the trail that begins at Storrs Lake Recreation Area and continues along Vincent Street on the City of Milton’s west side. In June 2007 the City of Janesville approved a request to construct a one-mile hiking trail from the north end of Riverside Park to N. Washington Street. This trail hooks the Devil’s Staircase Hiking Trail into the Ice Age Trail system. Additionally, the Ice Age Trail has physical connections to both the Kiwanis Trail and the Spring Brooke Trail systems.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail, in association with the National Parks Service, has begun a trail corridor scoping study in Rock County in hopes to complete a Rock County trail segment as

part of the approximately 1,000 mile Wisconsin segment of the Ice Age Scenic Trail. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail and National Parks Service has selected a group of area environmental and recreation professionals to participate on two committees (Technical Advisory Committee and Steering Committee) in the selection and assessment of potential future trail corridors.

The future segment will connect Rock County with neighboring county trail systems. The lands needed to complete this system will come from a combination of existing public land, land grants or gifts, and landowner agreements.

**Map 4.1:
Cemeteries, Historical Markers, and
Architectural, Historical, and Archeological Sites**



Cultural Sites, Organizations and Activities

Rock County has a wide array of cultural activities, events, and performances that offer entertainment as well as an opportunity for cultural awareness to its citizens and visitors. From theatre to musicals the Rock County area is home to many facilities and groups dedicated to the performing arts and entertainment (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).



*Janesville Performing Arts Center,
City of Janesville*



Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre, Beloit College

**Figure 4.3:
Cultural Sites, Organizations, Activities, and Events: Rock County**

Cultural Sites, Organizations, Activities and Events	Location
American Industrial Art Gallery	655 3 rd St. Suite 302, City of Beloit
The Angel Museum	656 Pleasant St., City of Beloit
Beloit Fine Arts Incubator	620 Grand Ave., City of Beloit
Beloit Snappers Baseball	Pohlman Field, Telfer Park, City of Beloit
Janesville Art League	108 S. Jackson St., City of Janesville
Poetry Gardens, Wright Museum of Art	700 College St., City of Beloit
Rock Aqua Jays Water Ski Show	Traxler Park, City of Janesville
Rotary Gardens	1455 Palmer Dr., City of Janesville
Welty Environmental Center	8606 County Highway H, City of Beloit
Rock County Thresheree	Thresherman’s Park, U.S. Highway 51, Town of Fulton
The Merrill Community Center	1428 Wisconsin Ave., City of Beloit
El Centro Hispanic Community	1982 Cranston Rd., City of Beloit
The Milton House	State Highway 26, City of Milton

**Figure 4.4:
Music and Theatre Venues: Rock County**

Venue	Location	Contact
The Armory	City of Janesville	
Beloit Civic Center	City of Beloit	www.inwave.com/theater/bct
Beloit College International Performing Arts Series	Beloit College, City of Beloit	www.beloit.edu
Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra	Cities of Beloit and Janesville	www.beloit.edu/~bjso
Edgerton Performing Arts Center	City of Edgerton	www.edgerton.k12.wi.us/epachomepage.htm
Janesville Presents	City of Janesville	www.janesvillepresents.org
Janesville Little Theatre	City of Janesville	www.inwave.com/theater/jlt/
Janesville Performing Arts Center	City of Janesville	www.janesvillepac.org
Laura Aldrich Neese Theatre	Beloit College, City of Beloit	www.beloit.edu
New Court Theatre	City of Beloit	www.newcourtbeloit.com
Kirk Denmark Theatre	University of Wisconsin - Rock County, City of Janesville	www.rock.uwc.edu
Rock County 4H Fair	Rock County Fairgrounds, City of Janesville	www.rockcounty4hfair.com
Riverfest	Riverfront, City of Beloit	www.beloitriverfest.com

Source: Rock County Tourism Council

The preceding listings are by no means a complete inventory of all the available sites, organizations, activities, or events that represent the cultural resources of Rock County. For more information contact the Rock County Tourism Council at 608-757-5587 or go to www.rockcounty.org and click on the Tourism tab or contact Visit Beloit, 1003 Pleasant St., Beloit, Wisconsin 53511 or Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau at www.janesvillecvb.com.

Cultural Opportunities

With the populations and diversity of ethnic groups increasing in Rock County, cultural organizations, activities, and related facilities will certainly grow and expand. To date, as compared to just a few years ago, there has been an increasing presence of art exhibits, festivals, publications, and community activities associated with many minority ethnic groups. For example, in the African-American community Juneteenth (June 19th) has been an important nationally recognized celebration. The local celebration of Juneteenth has been historically held in Beloit. For more information on this event see www.juneteenth.com/history.

Two important organizations in the Hispanic community are El Centro Hispanic Community

located in the City of Beloit and the YWCA. El Centro sponsors youth activities, tutoring and mentoring, and outreach events such as youth leadership summits and keynote speakers. One of El Centro's missions is to be a non-partisan central location for information and referrals within the Stateline area regarding Hispanic services and opportunities. In addition, the Janesville YWCA Hispanic outreach program sponsors Hispanic Heritage Month (September-October) as well as various community support services and events including the Hispanic celebration of Cinco de Mayo (5th of May). The Cinco de Mayo celebration takes place annually at various locations in the Cities of Janesville, Beloit, and around Rock County. All of the above mentioned events and services are designed to educate, inform, and enlighten the Hispanic sector of Rock County.

Rock County is home to many other cultural and ethnic publications, organizations and events that contribute to the diversity of area. *The Chronicle* is an African-American weekly newspaper established in 1981 and based in the City of Beloit that has a weekly publication of 6,000. Gospel in the Park is a musical celebration of gospel music that is quickly becoming a mainstay event in the City of Beloit. The Merrill Center, a Stateline area United Way Agency, contributes to youth mentoring through programs such as Golfing with the Boys as well as family support services and senior programs. These are all examples of important cultural components of Rock County.

4.4. Historic and Cultural Resources Issues and Opportunities

This section states the County's historic and cultural resources issues and opportunities.

- **Identification of Historic Sites and People:** As with agricultural and natural resources, historic and cultural resources are often threatened resources that require protective measures to remain intact. The State and National Register of Historic Places (Registries) are excellent tools for preserving historic buildings and archeological sites once sites have been identified and have been accepted into the programs. A bigger issue for Rock County, however, is the continual identification and updating of potential historic and cultural sites that may be eligible for placement in the Registries. Although the State Historical Society and Rock County have both done studies to identify historic sites, they quickly become obsolete as structures are removed and replaced.

Other groups and organizations in Rock County have also recognized important historical events and leaders in the community that are not named here, such as the Lavinia Goodell marker erected at the Rock County Courthouse by the Rock County Women's History Committee. The continued identification of such people and sites throughout Rock County is recommended and encouraged.

The Logan Museum of Anthropology is an additional resource, located at Beloit College that can offer additional information on Native American archeological sites located throughout Rock County.

- **Historic Barns and Landscapes:** Another opportunity for Rock County lies in the specific recognition of barns and landscapes as items of historical and cultural interest. Some of these structures and landscapes may be protected through farmland preservation. There are various programs and incentives available for barn restoration in Wisconsin. Additional information is available from the Wisconsin Historical Society www.wisconsinhistory.org on available programs.
- **Tax Benefits for Archeological Site Preservation:** State of Wisconsin Statute 70.11 (13.m.) provides a property tax exemption for owners of land containing an archeological site that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places. The intent of the legislation is to provide an incentive for landowners to report and protect significant archaeological sites located on their lands. To obtain the tax exemption, the landowner must agree to place a permanent protective covenant on the site thereby helping the State of Wisconsin preserve its archaeological heritage and making the landowner a steward of Wisconsin's past. A protective covenant does not discourage all uses of the site, but it encourages land use planning to avoid disturbing the site area. The covenant contains a legal description of the area that is to be exempted from property taxes and defines landowner and Wisconsin Historical Society obligations in the protection of that area. Continued identification and mapping of these sites is critical to their preservation.
- **Tax Credit for Historic Homeowners:** The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation administers a program of 25% State income tax credits for repair and rehabilitation of historic homes in Wisconsin that are listed on a State or National Register and meet eligible work/improvement requirements (see the Wisconsin Historical Society website for more information).
- **Tax Credit for Income-Producing Historic Properties:** Owners of historic income-producing properties in Wisconsin may be eligible for two income tax credits that can help to pay for the building's rehabilitation. Two programs that apply to these properties are the Federal Historic Preservation Credit and the Wisconsin Supplemental Historic Preservation Credit (see the Wisconsin Historical Society website for more information).
- **Other Pertinent Issues, Opportunities and Tools:** Issues, opportunities and tools for historic resource protection are discussed in 2.4. of Section II: Chapter 2 - Agricultural Resources of this *Plan*. Because historic resources are in need of similar types of conscientious preservation efforts, many of the subjects listed in that Chapter are relevant to historic and cultural resource protection as well as to agricultural preservation.

4.5. Historic and Cultural Resources Goals, Objectives, and Policies

This section states the County's historic and cultural resources goal, objectives, and policies.

Historic and Cultural Resources Goal

- 4.1. Preserve and protect historical and cultural resources within Rock County that are identified in the *Rock County Comprehensive Plan 2035* and other plans and Inventories.

Historic and Cultural Resources Objectives and Policies

- 4.1.1. Encourage and support efforts to identify and document historic sites and buildings, burial and archeological sites and cemeteries within Rock County.
 - 4.1.1.a. Rock County shall, where resources allow, update the *Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings - 1976* inventory to reflect the current status of sites already appearing in the inventory and to add additional sites.
 - 4.1.1.b. Rock County shall, where resources allow, collect data and provide information regarding the type and location of burial and archeological sites and activities within Rock County and serve as a public clearing house for such data and information.
 - 4.1.1.c. Rock County shall, if appropriate, assist Towns with the identification and designation of historic, burial and archeological sites.
 - 4.1.1.d. Rock County shall identify historic, burial and archeological sites that are likely to be impacted by future development.
 - 4.1.1.e. Rock County shall encourage developers to incorporate and preserve historic, burial and archeological sites within the designs and scope of their projects.
 - 4.1.1.f. Rock County shall enforce the State of Wisconsin Statutes regulating Burial Sites Preservation (see State of Wisconsin Statute 157.70).
 - 4.1.1.g. Rock County shall encourage and support Towns in an effort to utilize service groups such as church youth groups, boys and girls clubs, Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H, Future Farmers of America, or any other service/youth group to participate in the maintenance and/or restoration of cemeteries and burial sites within Rock County.

- 4.1.1.h. Rock County shall support and encourage the establishment of historic preservation committees and/or historic preservation zoning overlay districts at the Town level (see State of Wisconsin Statutes 59.69 and 60.64).
 - 4.1.2. Consider developing Rock County policies to aid in the identification and preservation of historic and cultural resources.
 - 4.1.2.a. Rock County shall consider amending the Land Division Regulations (Chapter 15 - Municipal Code of the County of Rock) to implement:
 - Procedures and guidelines for the development of design proposals that alleviate the disruption and/or degradation of archeological and historical sites within development areas
 - Identification of historic buildings and sites, cemeteries, archeological and other burial sites on or near proposed development sites
 - Development designs that minimize the disruption and degradation of historic and cultural sites
 - 4.1.3. Identify, attract, and support historical and cultural resources for the citizens of Rock County.
 - 4.1.3.a. Rock County shall encourage and assist, where possible, in the identification and designation of rustic roads in Rock County.
 - 4.1.3.b. Rock County shall encourage and assist, where possible, in the identification of appropriate locations for historical markers identifying important historical people, places, and events throughout Rock County.
 - 4.1.3.c. Rock County shall support, encourage, and assist all local units of government in the development of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail as a historically significant feature in Rock County.
 - 4.1.3.d. Rock County shall provide or direct interested parties to educational materials on available cultural resources and events within Rock County.
 - 4.1.3.e. Rock County shall promote the efficient use of existing facilities to aid in the attraction and presentation of cultural events and activities.
 - 4.1.3.f. Rock County shall support, where appropriate, the creation of new cultural or ethnic opportunities within Rock County.
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