

VISION STATEMENT:

In 2030 natural resource planning is sustainable, consistent and coordinated in order to protect and build a strong sense of ecological place. The proactive protection of natural features not only contributes to water quality and wildlife, but also to the long term sustainability and economic benefit of the region. Significant resources have been identified, inventoried, preserved and protected to meet the development and societal needs of the region. The region has proactively addressed public access, recreation, open space, and trail facilities and the surface water resources are planned for in a watershed-based manner. The region is comprised of well-defined urban and rural spaces which improve the individual's perception of 'sense of place', while communities have maintained their individual character and identity.

Issues & Opportunities:

- The bedrock geology of the region provides high quality materials – *stone and aggregates* – which are used in road construction, housing and commercial developments, as well as agricultural products. The bedrock and glacial features of the region are also very unique and, in some cases, deserve increased protection as scenic resources.
- The use of *groundwater* within the region has reached an upper end estimate of more than 170 million gallons per day. Portions of the central part of the region in Winnebago, Outagamie, and Shawano Counties are in an "Arsenic Advisory Area" and many of the region's areas are considered to be highly susceptible to aquifer contamination based on conditions such as sandy soils, thin soils or fractured bedrock.
- The Fox River, Wolf River & Winnebago Pool Lakes have serious water quality problems related to sediment and nutrient loadings.
- Within the region's remaining habitats 615 different species and natural community types, had been listed in 2003 by the WDNR as '*endangered*' or '*threatened*'. Four of these species types and eighty-seven of these 'occurrences' have been listed as federally endangered or threatened within the region.
- Based on the standards, and with the addition of the numerous local *recreation facilities*, the East Central region has a fair to ample amount of recreation opportunities for its current residents.
- Many of the region's natural resources or open spaces are large enough to be considered 'regionally significant' and, as such, they contribute to the overall *aesthetics* of both the region and their associated communities.

Core Goals:

Geologic Resources & Non-Metallic Mining

- Preserve and protect unique geologic sites within the region for aesthetic, cultural/historic, scientific, and educational purposes.
- Preserve and protect mineral resources within the region to meet projected short and long-term needs.

Groundwater Resources

- Preserve and protect the quantity and quality of the region's groundwater supply.
- Identify, protect and integrate aquifer recharge areas into the development patterns of the region

Water Quality and Watershed Management

- Maintain and enhance surface water quality within the region's streams, rivers, and lakes
- Improve inter-governmental coordination to reduce stormwater impacts and management costs.

Ecological Resources (Natural Areas & Wildlife)

- Protect the integrity and biodiversity of the region's main ecological corridors.
- Preserve and enhance the region's remaining natural shorelines along lakes and river corridors.
- Better emphasize the creation / maintenance of the local and regional 'ecological sense of place'.

Recreation and Open Space

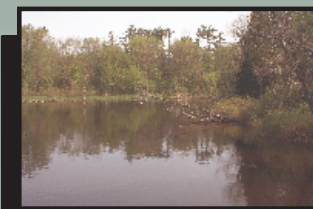
- Preserve and protect the region's important and unique parklands, natural features and open spaces in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life within the region.
- Create a common vision for a highly accessible regional trail network which includes both land and water features.

Regional Character & Aesthetics

- Protect and improve the aesthetic qualities and features of the region and its communities while balancing the needs of private industry, government, and the general public.

So What?

- In the absence of long-term comprehensive planning for non-metallic resources, it is possible, and perhaps even likely that zoning or growth will prohibit the use of aggregate materials when they are needed.
- It has been estimated that the deep sandstone aquifer system, which serves the Fox Cities, is being lowered by two feet per year. Groundwater quality and susceptibility to contamination is of concern in numerous parts of the region due to the presence of highly fractured bedrock deposits and karst topography. Arsenic, nitrate, and bacteria contamination can negatively affect the health of individuals living in the region.
- Without clean water, recreation and fishing opportunities will be limited for both residents and visitors. As development and the associated impervious (non-absorbent) surface areas increase, cumulative negative effects on water quality will negatively affect this system.
- Active recreation opportunities may be of concern in the future, but mostly at a local level. At a time when demand is increasing, the opposite is occurring regarding funding for such facilities.
- Billboards, cellular communication towers, strip commercial development and monotonous, cookie cutter houses and subdivisions persist in many communities and along rural highways and negatively affect the overall aesthetic qualities of the region.
- Many ecological resources are also related directly or indirectly to sectors of the regional economy. Large and small-scale commercial forestry and silviculture remain a prominent land use and economic activity within the northern and western portions of the region, while significant areas of remaining woodlands provide ideal habitats which contribute to recreational hunting activities.



Wolf River, Keshena, Menominee County

What's Next?

June through November 2004:

- Evaluate goals and identify potential policies to support them.
- Finalize policies.
- Identify targets to enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of policies over time.

January 2005:

- Milestone 3 Report will be submitted to East Central's Planning Commission for acceptance.