

# **Buffalo County Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2013-2033**

**Buffalo County Comprehensive Land Use Plan  
2013 - 2033  
Buffalo County Wisconsin**

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Technical Committee members are comprised of County employees in the areas of mapping, zoning, surveying, conservation, highway and education. The role of this committee is to take on the majority of the planning facilitation and writing responsibilities.

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Steering Committee members were comprised of at least one member of each participating community. They serve as a sounding board during the development of the plan to ensure the plan is reflective of the county needs for the future of the residents and resources. Buffalo County, through the local Towns Association, is divided into five areas. Each of these areas elected a member and alternate to serve on the Steering Committee.

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## **Introduction**

### Early Settlements

The first permanent settlement of Buffalo County occurred in 1839 at Fountain City, which was formerly called Holmes' Landing after a family who traded with the Dakota and Ojibway Indian Tribes. Over the next few years many German, Swiss and Norwegian homesteaders settled in the county, attracted by the County's lumber industry, good soils, abundant water and excellent pasture land. In 1848, Twelve Mile Bluff, now called Alma, was established.

At the time Twelve Mile Bluff (Alma) was settled, the county possessed limited timber resources, but was caught up in the middle of the logging boom, which was centered in the Chippewa Valley, an area of over 10,000 sq miles of dense hardwood and coniferous forest. Logs were rafted down the Chippewa and Buffalo (formerly Beef) Rivers to mills, which had sprung up all along the Mississippi River. Two (2) of these sawmills, one built at Buffalo City in 1857 and one in Alma in 1865 provided another source of local employment.

Agricultural development in the county began in the early 1850's, mainly in the valleys or up on open ridges. The land was relatively easy to break at the time since portions of the county were natural prairies or oak openings. Poor roads and a lack of adequate transportation though forced most farmers to settle close to the shipping routes along the Mississippi River. Before the railroads came in the 1880s, practically all grain was shipped out on Mississippi River steamboats. This all changed though with the completion of the Winona, Alma and Northern Rail, and by 1890 grain was shipped almost entirely by rail.

The first grain was grown in the county around 1852 in what would later become an extensive wheat producing area. During the years from 1860 to 1870, wheat acreage soared from 5,608 to 41,703 acres.

The Civil War increased the demand for grain and brought prosperity and wealth to those with large acreages under cultivation. After the war, Buffalo County was rapidly settled and new agricultural land cleared of timber or brush. At the height of the wheat-growing era there were 64,290 acres grown in the county.

With intensive cropping, soil fertility declined and farmers were plagued with insects, disease and soil erosion. Many settlers chose to move west rather than follow a program of crop rotations and fertilization. In time, with the falling of wheat prices and the advent of railways, farm enterprises shifted to milk and cheese production, with local creameries appearing around the 1880s. This in turn was followed by the introduction and proliferation of purebred livestock, including dairy, beef and sheep. Today agriculture is still the number one source of income in the county, though more diversified than in the past.

### County Topography

The relief of the county is characteristic of the Driftless area, with extremely varied topography consisting of high ridges, long narrow valleys, and areas of steeply sloping land in between. Bluffs rise above the river bottoms by 500 feet in some areas. Only a small corridor along the Mississippi River was ever glaciated, where terraces have been formed from glacial meltwater deposits.

### County Soils

Soils are underlain by sedimentary bedrock consisting mainly of Cambrian sandstones and Prairie du Chien dolomite limestone. The limestone once covered most of the surface of the county, but with erosion much of the original plain has been deeply dissected and worn away; such that it is found only as remnants capping the ridge tops and higher hills. This is underlain by sandstone and, at lower levels, a sandy shale or shaley sandstone. Outcroppings of bedrock are common, including sheer bluff faces along the Mississippi River.

Loess, alluvium, and colluvium form the uppermost geologic deposits and, in addition to the bedrock, are the parent materials for many of the soils in the county. Soil types range from shallow silty clay loams on steep rocky land to deep silt loams on the valley bottoms, with smaller areas of sandy outwash soils. Aeolian silt deposits range from .5 to 16 feet deep, with decreasing depths from southwest to northeast.

### Background and Authority

Wisconsin statutes outline the relationship of planning and zoning under Sections 60.61 for town government, 62.23 for cities and villages, and 59.69 for counties. Section 59.69(5) (c) provides for a county zoning ordinance to be effective in a township, with town board approval. All 17 Towns in Buffalo County have adopted the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance and participate with the county in planning and zoning as authorized under section 60.23(5).

Other county ordinances applicable in each town include:

- Floodplain Zoning Ordinance
- Shoreland Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Ordinance
- Sanitary Ordinance
- Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance
- Wind Energy Facility Zoning Ordinance
- Uniform Dwelling Code Ordinance

### Plan Objectives

Over the last 10-15 years, development in the county has been focused primarily in the unincorporated areas of the county. This has created a necessity for the creation of a long-range plan and revision of the Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance is an important implementation tool with respect to planning. It was adopted in 1965. Minor revisions have been introduced over the years but the county's Zoning Ordinance has not been substantially revised or amended since originally adopted. Considering the age of these documents and the changes that have occurred, it is unlikely the information base which land use decisions are being made are adequate to meet future challenges. A copy of all county zoning ordinances is available through the Buffalo County Land Resources Department.

### Land Use Planning Process

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001, Wis. Stats.) was signed into law on October 27, 1999. This legislation defines a comprehensive plan, details land use regulations that

must be consistent with a comprehensive plan in 2010, and lists mandatory procedures for adopting a comprehensive plan. Since its adoption in 1999, the Comprehensive Planning Law has been amended several times. In particular, the consistency requirement was amended to reduce the number of land use regulations that must be consistent to a certain group: zoning, subdivision regulations, and official mapping. The county utilized the following State Statutes to comply with the planning mandate; Chapter 60.61 authorizes and outlines the relationship of planning and zoning.

To address planning in the county, Buffalo County created an Ad Hoc Comprehensive Land Use Planning Committee. This committee is charged to:

- Develop a countywide comprehensive plan that represents local developed comprehensive plans that follow the planning requirements of the Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning legislation.
- Develop an educational/informational campaign to teach local residents about Comprehensive Planning legislation and land use issues.
- Assist local units in the formation of their comprehensive plan by providing support in visioning, surveys, demographic data, and mapping to ensure uniformity.
- Bring all municipalities in Buffalo County to the table to realize the importance of comprehensive planning.
- Coordinate the county comprehensive plan with neighboring counties.

The committee began studying changes, which have occurred around the county, changes that are likely to occur in the future, positive and negative aspects of the county, and what the county should plan for in the future.

Buffalo County made a commitment early on in the planning stages to promote a bottom up approach. The county promoted this idea by providing each local unit of government the opportunity to complete its local comprehensive plan prior to the county developing its plan. Once the county began its planning process it (the county) evaluated each local plan and incorporated as much of the local plans into the Buffalo County Comprehensive Plan as possible.

Throughout the process, the Comprehensive Planning Committee met to address the planning process. The Committee studied existing local planning efforts and additional planning information and evaluated the needs of the local units of government against the needs of the county as a whole. The county involved local units of government and the community at large throughout the planning process. Their involvement followed the public participation procedures.

The County plan included information from draft plans from the Towns of Alma, Buffalo, Dover, Belvidere, Gilmanton, Glencoe, Milton, Modena, Montana and Naples. It also used the draft plan from the Village of Cochrane and adopted plans from Towns of Cross (adopted 12/9/2011), Lincoln (adopted 4/10/2012) and Mondovi (adopted 7/9/2012).

### *Sustainability and a Sustainability Action Plan*

When the county's "bottom up" planning approach began, sustainability was not part of the planning process. Only recently has this topic made its way to the forefront of many agendas. Now more than ever citizens, industry, and government are all looking at sustainability practices. Buffalo County is no exception. Near the end of the county's planning efforts the county

recognized the importance of sustainability as a primary mode of operation for its daily activities. The county acknowledged its desire to move in a more sustainable direction, where a clean and healthy environment contributes to the quality of life.

# Section 1

## Issues and Opportunities Element

### Element Overview

The plan highlights: socio-economic characteristics, existing natural resource base, existing land use and land cover, identification of factors limiting development; a review of public involvement activities and public input obtained; the proposed land use plan, including a list of goals and objectives and a description of proposed land use patterns; and recommendations for implementing the plan.

### Socio-Economic Characteristics/General Trends

The primary goal of the Buffalo County Comprehensive Plan is to create a set of informational resources to assist in managing growth and development. Its purpose is to analyze and provide a foundation of historical, current, and projected data to meet this goal.

There are many factors influencing development issues in the county. This study was conducted to identify the extent of development, the impact of development on the environment, land use, services, infrastructure, and the economy; the options for managing future development; and what measures are reasonable to attain a development framework that will work for the local units of government and the county. The results of this study will be used to project future development and growth patterns.

### Population

Population change is the primary component in tracking Buffalo County's past growth as well as predicting future growth trends. Population characteristics such as size, distribution, density, and growth trends should be monitored in order to plan for housing, educational, utility, community and recreational facility needs as well as its future economic development.

Buffalo County is the least populated county, second to Pepin when comparing it to neighboring counties. Table 1.1 Regional Population Projections, shows the recent historical population and projection comparison of several counties that neighbor Buffalo County.

In most cases Buffalo County has the smallest increases within the counties listed and St. Croix County has the largest increases of population for all years listed. From 2010 to 2015 all the counties except St. Croix County had the largest increase among the years listed. All the counties had population increases between 10% and 21% overall, with the exception of St. Croix with a projection of a 36.5% increase from 2010 to 2030.

**Table 1.1 Regional Population Projections**

	2010 Estimate	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	Chg. 2010 to 2030	% of Chg. '10 - '30
Buffalo	13,587	14,554	14,794	14,986	15,100	+ 1,513	+ 10.0
Dunn	43,857	46,975	49,503	51,911	54,103	+ 10,516	+ 18.9
Jackson	20,449	21,339	22,151	22,860	23,438	+ 2,989	+ 12.7
Pepin	7,469	8,142	8,449	8,726	8,937	+ 1,468	+ 16.4
Pierce	41,019	44,306	47,008	49,608	51,963	+ 10,944	+ 21.0
St. Croix	87,123	99,965	113,154	125,736	137,360	+ 50,237	+ 36.5
Trempealeau	28,816	29,789	30,746	31,577	32,219	+ 3,403	+ 10.5

US Dept. of Commerce-Bureau of the Census

### *Age Characteristics*

Table 1.2 County Population by Age Group, actually shows a decrease in population for many of the age groups up to the age of 60. The age group above 60 shows the greatest increase in population.

**Table 1.2 County Population by Age Group**

Age Group	2005 Estimate	2010	2015 Estimate	2020 Estimate	2025 Estimate	2030	2035 Estimate	'05 - '35 Difference
0-4	799	803	841	861	858	838	812	+13
5-9	865	852	857	894	912	906	884	+19
10-14	944	872	860	865	903	921	915	- 29
<b>15-19</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>- 122</b>
<b>20-24</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>- 137</b>
25-29	718	924	896	806	744	735	740	+ 22
30-34	771	751	963	933	839	773	764	- 7
35-39	892	773	754	966	937	843	777	- 115
<b>40-44</b>	<b>1053</b>	<b>893</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>- 203</b>
<b>45-49</b>	<b>1192</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>- 229</b>
50-54	1065	1219	1094	935	815	800	1019	- 46
55-59	897	1059	1209	1087	934	816	805	- 92
60-64	695	900	1056	1209	1092	945	831	136
<b>65-69</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>1037</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>1086</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>70-74</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>801</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>1097</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>411</b>
<b>75-79</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>471</b>
<b>80-84</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>307</b>
85-89	211	234	260	268	270	298	398	187
90-94	92	104	120	138	146	150	168	76
95-99	25	34	40	48	58	63	68	43
100 +	2	3	5	7	9	13	16	14

US Census

From 2005 to 2035 our greatest decrease of population will be in the 15 – 24 year old and the 40 – 49 year olds (See Table 1.2 section in light red) with the greatest decrease in the 45 – 49 year olds at 229. Greatest increase will be the 65 – 84 year olds (See Table 1.2 section in dark red) with the greatest increase in the 75 – 79 year olds at 471 people.

Population by age group is an indicator of local population needs. For example, a large school-age population (ages 15 and under) requires schools and recreation facilities for children, while predominately elderly population (ages 60 and older) may need additional health care services, group home/care facilities, and leisure opportunities.

Between 2005 and 2010 Buffalo County experienced a decrease in the 10-24 age group, however, the county experienced a significant increase in all but one age group above the age of 50.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) population projections, by the year 2035 Buffalo County can expect a population increase of 713 persons. The largest increase in age groups will be the age groups over 60 years. They each are projected to show a substantial growth rate with the 75-79 age group growing by 471 people. For these groups, priorities such as recreation and educational facilities begin to fade. Housing needs for the 45-54 age group continue to focus on single-family residential, while the 65-79 age group begin to shift to medical, emergency services and food shopping. As long as health and income concerns do not develop, individuals tend to stay in single-family homes.

### *Population Projections*

Accurately projecting population change is a difficult task since changes are subject to variables out of the control of the county. Projections are merely based on past and current population trends, and should be used strictly for baseline information.

Looking at population trends within the municipalities (See Table 1.3 Population Projections for Buffalo County Municipalities) will show where the county may need to make changes to accommodate significant population increases and decreases. Wisconsin Department of Administration, compiled by Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission projections indicate the county, in general will continue to see population growth through 2020. According to the state's projections, Buffalo County can expect a 7.1% increase in population from 1960 to 2030.

Contrary to state statistics, residents in the county do not necessarily agree with the state predictions of increased population. Residents claim there are no plans in the near future for any new industry coming to the county that would employ current residents and draw a large number of new residents to the county. The recent closing of the Foremost Farms USA Coop, Lakeside Foods and shutting down of the one of the Dairyland Power Plant in Alma, could potentially decrease the number of new residents and provide no opportunity for new residents.

The Towns with direct access to a state highway or larger municipality, such as Glencoe, Buffalo, Naples and Mondovi indicated that population projection could change by such factors as new businesses in the City of Arcadia, Winona, MN and Mondovi.

**Table 1.3 Population Projections for Buffalo County Municipalities**

Municipality	1960	1990	2000	2010	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection
<b>Towns</b>								
Alma	384	430	377	297	378	375	371	366
Belvidere	456	505	442	396	444	443	441	436
Buffalo	737	682	667	705	733	747	758	766
Canton	479	309	304	305	318	320	322	322
Cross	395	325	366	377	427	446	463	479
Dover	491	451	484	486	531	546	562	574
Gilmanton	617	469	470	426	475	476	477	475
Glencoe	528	502	478	485	490	491	490	487
Lincoln	401	250	187	162	166	155	143	132
Maxville	493	370	325	309	331	328	325	320
Milton	271	452	517	534	576	600	623	642
Modena	555	360	318	354	287	273	259	243
Mondovi	511	544	449	469	463	461	456	450
Montana	445	316	306	284	320	323	325	326
Naples	584	494	584	691	686	720	752	779
Nelson	1,005	571	586	571	587	586	584	578
Waumandee	649	521	515	472	515	515	511	506
<b>Villages</b>								
Cochrane	455	475	435	450	384	368	350	330
Nelson	Na	388	395	374	402	407	409	409
<b>Cities</b>								
Alma	1,008	839	942	781	995	1,022	1,045	1,063
Buffalo	484	915	1,040	1,023	1,134	1,173	1,210	1,240
Fountain City	934	922	983	859	1,051	1,075	1,098	1,114
Mondovi	2,320	2,494	2,634	2,777	2,861	2,944	3,012	3,063
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,202</b>	<b>13,584</b>	<b>13,804</b>	<b>13,587</b>	<b>14,554</b>	<b>14,794</b>	<b>14,986</b>	<b>15,100</b>

Mississippi River Regional Planning

*Population Summary*

Buffalo County’s population decreased from 14,202 persons in 1960 to 13,587 persons in 2010, for a decrease of approximately 4.6% over those 50 years. It is expected to grow to 15,100 in 2030, which is an increase of approximately 11.1%.

As shown in Table 1.4 County Racial/Ethnic Populations, Buffalo County has a population that is 96.7% white, which is a higher percentage than Wisconsin, with Hispanic following in Buffalo County with only 1.8%. Diversity tends to attract residents to a community. Wisconsin’s second highest ethnic population is Black or African American, which drops to 6.4%.

**Table 1.4 County Racial/Ethnic Populations**

Race	Buffalo County		Wisconsin	
	Population	%	Population	%
White	13,135	96.7	4,902,067	86.1
Hispanic	237	1.8	na	na
Black or African American	37	.2	359,148	6.4
Asian	28	.2	129,234	2.3
Native American	38	.2	na	
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	na	na	54,526	1.0
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	na	na	1,827	.1
Identified by two or more	na	na	104,317	1.7
Other	112	.9	135,867	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,587</b>		<b>5,686,986</b>	

US Census

### Income

**Table 1.5 Per Capita Income Comparison**

	Buffalo County	Wisconsin	USA
Households (2007 – 2011)	5,708	2,279,738	114,761,359
Per capita income in the past 12 months (2011 dollars – {2007-2011})	\$ 23,240	\$ 27,192	\$ 27,915
Median household income – based on 2.34 persons per household (2007-2011)	\$ 46,073	\$ 52,374	\$ 52,762
Percent of persons below poverty level (2007 – 2011)*	14.3%	12.0%	14.3%

\*Dollar amount of poverty not available. US Census Bureau

Buffalo County has the lowest per capita income and median household income when compared to Wisconsin and the US. The per capita income is 14.5% less than the per capita income compared to Wisconsin and 16.7% less than the national per capita income. The comparison of median household income in Buffalo County to Wisconsin is 12% less and 14.6% less than the national median household income. (See Table 1.5 Per Capita Income Comparison)

### Education

Five-year estimates from 2007 – 2011 show 9,652 county residents over the age of 25. Of this group, 4,233 (43.9%) have graduated from high school or have an equivalent degree. Table 1.6 Education Attainment, provides details regarding educational attainment of Buffalo County residents.

**Table 1.6 Education Attainment**

	Buffalo County		Wisconsin	
	Number	%	Number	%
Population 25 years and Older	9,652	100.0%	3,771,680	100.0%
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	487	5.0%	133,915	3.6%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	618	6.4%	250,548	6.6%
High School Graduate (or equivalency)	4,233	43.9%	1,269,136	33.6%
Some college, no degree	1,736	18.0%	791,771	21.0%
Associate’s degree	1,018	10.5%	344,341	9.1%
Bachelor’s degree	1,116	11.6%	651,003	17.3%
Graduate or Professional	444	4.6%	330,966	8.8%

U.S. Census Bureau

Commuting

Residents age 16 and older make up the measured workforce of Buffalo County. Table 1.7 Percent of Buffalo County Commuters shows where these county residents work in relationship to Buffalo County.

**Table 1.7 Percent of Buffalo County Commuters**

Residents Working in the County	Residents Working Outside the County	Residents Working Outside Wisconsin
48.1%	28.3%	23.7%

US Census Bureau

Labor Force

Labor force participation represents the share of population that is 16 years of age and older. Table 1.8 County Labor Force Overview shows number of employed and unemployed residents in the county

**Table 1.8 County Labor Force Overview**

Total population 16 years and over		11,050
Classification	# Employed	%
In Labor Force	7,342	66.5% of total
Civilian Labor Force – Employed	6,980	95.1% of total labor force
Civilian Labor Force – Unemployed	359	4.9% of total labor force
Armed Forces	3	.1% of total labor force
Not in Labor Force	3,708	33.5% of total

Buffalo County has 33.5% of the population over 16 not in the labor force. Part of this number is High School students where little or no jobs are available for the youth and another part of this number are individuals who are retired.

***Industry & Employers***

The workforce in Buffalo County, (those 16 years of age and older) are employed in fourteen different industries. Table 1.9 Top 10 Industries in Buffalo County, lists the top 10 industries and the percentage of employment in those industries.

**Table 1.9 Top 10 Industries in Buffalo County**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Industry</b>	<b>% Employed</b>
1	Manufacturing	19.1%
2	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.0%
3	Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting, and mining	10.2%
4	Construction	9.4%
5	Retail Trade	8.7%
6	Transportation and warehousing and utilities	7.9%
7	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	5.9%
8	Arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services	4.8%
9	Professional, scientific and management and administrative and waste management services	4.5%
10	Wholesale trade	3.3%

U.S. Census Bureau

There are 25 employers identified in Buffalo County where their number of employees ranges from 20-49 and there is one employer that exceeds 1000 employees. In the top twenty-five employers in the County, most have employee levels between 20 and 49. See Table 1.10 County Employers by Number of Employees, for the rank of the top 25 employers in Buffalo County:

**Table 1.10 County Employers by Number of Employees**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Employer Name</b>
<b>1000+ Employees</b>	
1	Marten Transport Ltd. (General & Trucking)
<b>100 – 249 Employees</b>	
2	Mondovi Public School
3	Martin Transport (freight transportation arrangement)
4	Dairyland Power Coop
5	Staffing Network Holding LLC
6	US Department of Defense
7	County Of Buffalo
8	American Lutheran Homes Inc.
9	Cochrane-Fountain City Public School
<b>50-99 Employees</b>	
10	La Crosse Milling Co.
11	Lakeside Foods, Inc.
12	Gemini Employee Leasing Inc.
13	School District of Alma
14	Foremost Farms USA Coop
<b>20-49 Employees</b>	
15	Countryside Coop
16	Midwest Dental Care Mondovi Inc.
17	Saint Michaels Evangelical Lutheran
18	Alliance Bank
19	Gilmanton Public School
20	Nelson Cheese Factory, Inc.
21	Mondovi Super Value
22	SPF North America Inc.
23	Waumandee State Bank
24	US Postal Service
25	Beth's Twin Bluffs Café Inc.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development – Qtr. 3/2010 and prepared by Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission

## Section 2 Housing Element

### *Element Overview*

Housing is important for Buffalo County and the people who live here. It has an impact on traffic patterns, efficiency response for emergency services, travel distance for employment opportunities and shopping opportunities for essential needs, recreational and social activities for the family, among others.

Population density in the county is 19.9 people per square mile. Table 2.1 Comparison of Population Density, compares the population density of Buffalo County with neighboring counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota and with that of Wisconsin.

**Table 2.1 Comparison of Population Density**

	Population Density	Population Total	Population Density	Population Total
	2000		2010	
Wisconsin	98.8	5,363,675	105.0	5,726,398
Buffalo County	20.2	13,804	19.9	13,587
Jackson County	19.3	19,100	20.7	20,449
Pepin County	31.1	7,213	32.2	7,469
Trempealeau County	36.8	27,010	39.3	28,816
Pierce County	69.3	36,804	71.5	41,019
Wabasha County, MN	41.2	21,610	41.4	21,664
Winona County, MN	79.8	49,985	82.2	51,461

2000 US Census Bureau

Compared to other counties in our area in 2000, Buffalo County had a smaller population density than most of the counties, except Jackson County, however they have a larger population, just over 38% more than our county.

Table 2.2 Housing Units and Population, provides information on housing units and Population in Buffalo County. It is important to know that the county currently has sufficient housing for residents in all income levels.

**Table 2.2 Housing Units and Population**

	Occupied	Owner-Occupied	Population in owner-occupied	Renter-Occupied	Population In renter - Occupied	Households with individuals under 18	Vacant Household	Vacant household: for rent	Vacant Households: for sale	Population
T. of Alma	126	115	266	11	31	30	45	1	1	297
T. of Belvidere	175	155	364	20	32	35	44	2	6	396
T. of Canton	112	95	244	17	61	40	14	1	1	305
T. of Buffalo	285	258	643	27	62	75	31	0	1	705
T. of Cross	142	119	333	23	44	49	23	2	1	377
T. of Dover	167	146	445	21	41	67	32	2	2	486
T. of Gilmanton	164	129	338	35	88	57	26	3	1	426
T. of Glencoe	184	159	415	25	70	63	24	6	1	485
T. of Lincoln	69	60	143	9	19	14	54	2	0	162
T. of Maxville	129	112	259	17	45	32	23	3	2	309
T. of Milton	217	199	497	18	37	62	36	4	5	534
T. of Modena	140	120	303	20	51	44	21	1	0	354
T. of Mondovi	178	154	406	24	63	56	22	3	1	469
T. of Montana	100	90	260	10	24	38	22	1	3	284
T. of Naples	257	218	604	39	87	89	21	3	2	691
T. of Nelson	242	202	481	40	90	62	49	2	4	571
T. of Waumandee	190	170	433	20	39	53	27	3	2	472
C. of Alma	386	237	500	149	254	66	102	33	3	781
C. of Buffalo City	464	428	942	36	81	104	113	5	13	1023
C. of Fountain City	410	265	610	145	249	80	57	35	9	859
C. of Mondovi	1,194	717	1,784	477	918	383	109	33	15	2,777
V. of Cochrane	205	144	353	61	97	53	29	10	5	450
V. of Nelson	172	121	275	51	99	41	32	19	3	374
Buffalo County	5,708	4,413	10,898	1,295	2,582	1,593	956	174	81	13,587

Table 2.3 Total Housing Units by Year, provides information on the change in total housing units from 1970 to 2010.

**Table 2.3 Total Housing Units by Year**

	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>
T. of Alma	107	137	157	157	171
T. of Belvidere	158	182	218	222	219
T. of Buffalo	230	277	263	277	316
T. of Canton	112	115	109	112	126
T. of Cross	96	118	118	141	165
T. of Dover	140	158	147	156	199
T. of Gilmanton	169	176	173	180	190
T. of Glencoe	130	175	171	180	208
T. of Lincoln	106	109	106	106	123
T. of Maxville	103	125	120	123	152
T. of Milton	142	173	181	227	253
T. of Modena	154	154	148	155	161
T. of Mondovi	136	166	183	165	200
T. of Montana	97	107	113	116	122
T. of Naples	162	182	190	231	278
T. of Nelson	333	263	237	265	291
T. of Waumandee	165	193	193	198	217
T. of Alma	393	438	414	495	488
C. of Buffalo City	297	425	447	492	577
C. of Fountain City	348	389	410	470	467
C. of Mondovi	847	1,031	1,082	1,232	1,303
V. of Cochrane	172	209	216	197	234
V. of Nelson	n/a	176	190	201	204
Buffalo County	4,597	5,478	5,586	6,098	6,664

According to the Table 2.3 Total Housing Units by Year, there are 6,664 total housing units in Buffalo County. The county-wide housing density is 9.36 housing units per square mile.

Housing costs are a large single expenditure for most county residents. Table 2.4 Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, shows the percentage of income that residents spend on owner housing and rental housing costs.

**Table 2.4 Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income**

Household Income	Owner		Rental	
	Buffalo County	Wisconsin	Buffalo County	Wisconsin
Less than \$20,000	13.9%	8.3%	28.8%	31.0%
Less than 20 percent	1.1%	0.4%	1.5%	0.8%
20 – 29 percent	2.2%	1.1%	4.4%	3.1%
30 percent or more	10.5%	6.8%	22.9%	27.0%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	15.1%	12.7%	18.8%	23.6%
Less than 20 percent	6.3%	2.8%	1.8%	1.9%
20 – 29 percent	3.9%	3.3%	5.1%	7.8%
30 percent or more	4.9%	6.6%	11.9%	13.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.0%	13.9%	21.6%	16.4%
Less than 20 percent	7.6%	5.0%	8.8%	5.2%
20 – 29 percent	4.8%	3.3%	11.5%	8.2%
30 percent or more	5.6%	5.6%	1.3%	2.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.1%	22.6%	9.5%	14.3%
Less than 20 percent	13.1%	9.4%	7.1%	9.7%
20 – 29 percent	6.1%	7.3%	1.2%	4.0%
30 percent or more	4.9%	5.9%	1.1%	0.6%
\$75,000 or more	27.8%	42.1%	3.1%	8.9%
Less than 20 percent	21.1%	27.1%	3.1%	8.0%
20 – 29 percent	4.7%	11.6%	0.0%	0.8%
30 percent or more	2.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.1%
Zero or negative income	1.1%	0.4%	0.2%	1.4%

**Table 2.5 Household Income in 2011 Inflated-Adjusted Dollars**

Wages	% of Homeowners		% of Renters	
	Buffalo County	Wisconsin	Buffalo County	Wisconsin
Less than \$20,000	15.0%	8.8%	32.5%	34.0%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	15.1%	33.6%	21.0%	24.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	18.0%	25.4%	13.9%	17.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.1%	22.6%	15.8%	14.9%
\$75,000 or more	27.9%	42.2%	5.2%	9.4%

The largest % of household income is spent on rental housing for income levels less than \$50,000. Only when the household income exceeds \$50,000, does the percentage increase for owner housing costs. Compared to income levels from Table 2.5 Household Income in 2011 Inflated-Adjusted Dollars, there is a similar pattern and the largest percentage of housing falls with incomes less than that. The same holds true that largest percentage for rental housing falls with incomes less than, in this case \$35,000, rather than \$50,000 from Table 2.6 Occupied Housing Units Versus Income. This is important, because it will determine the type of housing

necessary. If the income levels remains similar to that in the above table there will be a need for rental housing as well as single family dwellings.

**Table 2.6 Occupied Housing Units Versus Income**

	Total	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Occupied Housing Units	5,754	4,447	1,307
Housing needs with income < \$35,000	1,935	1,290	645
Housing needs with income > \$35,000	3,819	3,157.	662
Total Housing Unit Available	6,639		
Balance of Housing Units available	885		

*Housing and County Economics*

Housing is a major source of revenue for many local communities in the form of property taxes. Housing is one of the largest land uses and the largest capital asset, in terms of dollar value in the unincorporated municipalities in the county.

There is a need for community housing, public facilities and economic development professionals to give greater weight to the interrelationships between infrastructures. Infrastructures refer collectively to the basic facilities serving a county, such as transportation and communication system, power plants and roads. Without adequate infrastructure, housing quantity and quality suffers and economic development is limited. Adequate housing, infrastructure, and economic investment, are the heart of our community.

**Table 2.7 Age of Housing Units**

Year Structure Built	Estimate	Percent
Built 2000 or later	779	11.7%
Built 1990 to 1999	748	11.2%
Built 1980-1989	538	8.1%
Built 1970-1979	911	13.7%
Built 1960-1969	558	8.4%
Built 1950-1959	658	9.9%
Built 1940-1949	360	5.4%
Built 1939 or earlier	2,112	31.7%

Over 2,000 of the total housing units in the county will approach 100 years of age over the next 20 years. See Table 2.7 Age of Housing Units. In addition to the new housing that will be necessary to meet the increasing population, additional housing will be necessary to replace the current housing as it becomes older and no longer able to be lived in. Extensive remodel and routine maintenance of these older homes will extend their life and reduce the need for new housing units.

You need to make a comparison with other counties to know if the age of the housing units in Buffalo County is significant. Table 2.8 County Comparison of Age of Housing Units, makes a comparison of the age of housing units with Wisconsin and several surrounding counties.

**Table 2.8 County Comparison of Age of Housing Units (Percent of Total)**

Year Structure Built	Wisconsin	Buffalo County	Jackson County	Pepin County	Pierce County	Trempealeau County
Built 2005 or later	3.9	11.7	4.1	4.2	5.1	4.1
Built 2000 to 2004	8.3	(2000 or later)	8.7	11.1	13.1	8.8
Built 1990 to 1999	13.9	11.2	14.8	10.0	14.0	11.2
Built 1980-1989	9.8	8.1	9.1	10.9	10.7	9.6
Built 1970-1979	15.1	13.7	16.1	13.7	17.5	13.9
Built 1960-1969	10.0	8.4	8.2	7.4	7.3	8.4
Built 1950-1959	11.2	9.9	7.1	8.0	5.0	7.9
Built 1940-1949	6.1	5.4	6.0	5.9	5.0	5.3
Built 1939 or earlier	21.7	31.7	25.9	25.9	22.4	30.9
Total Housing Units	2,609,819	6,664	9,623	28.9	16,038	12,554

US Census Quick Facts (Buffalo County US Census Bureau)

The percentages for each year’s construction between the counties and Wisconsin is very similar, even the construction prior to 1939. This tells us that surrounding counties and Wisconsin in general will be facing the same concerns as their current housing structures begin to approach the age of 100 years.

*Population and Housing Densities*

Population density in the county is 19.9 people per square mile. Housing density in the county is 9.36 houses per square mile.

Following Table 2.9 Housing Permits Issued Since 2009, shows the number of permits that have been issued since 2009 for housing. It also shows the median value and the highest and lowest value for those years. The largest, number of permits issued are for new single family dwellings, with additions to single family dwellings coming in second based on permits issued.

**Table 2.9 Housing Permits Issued Since 2009**

	New Single Family Dwelling	Addition to Single-Family Dwelling	Replacement Single-Family Dwelling	Modification to Single-Family Dwelling	Non-farm Mobile Home	Habitable Structure
<b>2009</b>						
Number of Permits	12	17	6	9	2	11
Mean Value	169,000.	25,771.	172,333	11,556.	30,000.	44,136.
Highest Value	236,000.	150,000.	330,000	50,000.	35,000.	150,000.
Lowest Value	15,000.	500.	19,000.	1,500.	25,000.	1,500.
<b>2010</b>						
Number of Permits	18	24	3	2	2	9
Mean Value	152,944.	20,843.	166,333.	18,750.	2,550.	43,267.
Highest Value	220,000.	100,000.	250,000.	27,500.	5,000.	150,000.
Lowest Value	70,000.	1,300.	99,000.	10,000	100.	4,000.
<b>2011</b>						
Number of Permits	14	22	2	9	4	7
Mean Value	186,000.	18,513.	180,000.	12,933.	17,500.	58,143.
Highest Value	438,000.	100,000.	180,000.	40,000.	20,000.	140,000.
Lowest Value	36,000.	1,000.	180,000.	1,100.	15,000.	3,000.
<b>2012</b>						
Number of Permits	15	23	2	2	2	10
Mean Value	214,038.	33,336.	140,000.	13,855.	22,000.	102,800.
Highest Value	650,000.	97,000.	180,000.	26,409.	34,000.	330,000.
Lowest Value	30,000.	350.	100,000.	1,300.	10,000.	2,000.

Buffalo County’s population is expected to increase by 1,513 (See Table 1.2 County Population by Age Group) from 2010 to 2030 and adequate housing must exist for these individuals. The increase in the County’s population is an average of just over 75 persons per year. According to the US Census Bureau, there are 2.34 persons per household in Buffalo County so housing for the equivalent of 32 single-family dwellings will need to be constructed each year to house the population increase. This could be single or multi-family dwellings or maybe apartment buildings

*Housing Characteristics*

At this time, Buffalo County is not anticipating a great deal of development over the next 20 years. However, according to the age distribution Table 1.2 County Population by Age Group, the age groups above the age of 60 will experience the greatest housing needs.

Buffalo County will need to focus on ways to accompany the demographic shift to a higher elderly percentage of total population. This may be done by encouraging the location of assisted living centers, elderly apartment units and other housing units deemed appropriate for the elderly.

Buffalo County will encourage housing construction, which may be more conducive to an elderly demographic, which includes ground level and handicap housing. This may include encouraging “ranch-style” construction of homes, which can be more easily used by elderly. Housing units accessible to wheelchair traffic will also be encouraged, along with handicap accessible business buildings and buildings used as social facilities.

The housing stock in Buffalo County is comprised of 6,664 housing units of which 2,976 (44.7%) were constructed after 1970. As the housing stock ages, Buffalo County will also encourage new housing development that is less expensive and more conducive to low-income residents. This may be done by allowing smaller lots in new subdivisions and encouraging multi-family developments where allowable as it fits other land uses and preferences. The County will encourage construction of multi-family dwellings and elderly housing be located in the villages and cities rather than the rural areas. This will give them easier access to the services that are provided in the incorporated areas of the county.

The County can affect the type and cost of housing available through regulations and policies. While most government regulations are implemented in order to serve specific community health, safety, and welfare needs, they may have unintentional adverse impacts on housing affordability. Residents in the county have expressed a desire for no further restriction on land use, however in some cases it is necessary to implement restrictions to provide a balance between additional restrictions and meeting the needs of the county. This can be accomplished, for example by restricting housing in an area that would require a steep driveway that would make it difficult to access with emergency vehicles.

The county has a subdivision ordinance and the county could consider making changes to this ordinance to promote affordability of housing without compromising the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. Some of the local ordinances include standards for how subdivisions are designed including; minimum lot requirements, land dedication, and location of the structure on the site. The Town plans expressed a need to update the current sub-division ordinance for stricter guidelines when sub-divisions are being proposed.

Old ordinances in particular should be revised to meet current needs. Current neighborhood design practices emphasize sustainable practices such as the social, economic, and environmental aspects and look to create neighborhoods that are more energy efficient and that have a greater range of housing options. An example would be 1 well in a subdivision versus 10 (one for each housing unit).

There has been concern within the county in regard to the age and physical appearance of mobile homes located in the county to the extent that it is suggested that there be a limitation on age of mobile homes being moved into the county. Some Towns suggested that mobile homes should not be older than 15 years when they are moved to a site in their Town and more of the Towns suggested that mobile homes should be less than 10 years old when they are brought into the county for housing.

The Town plans had concern about poor housing conditions and importance in the need to enforce/strengthen current regulation and/or rules on junk, abandoned vehicles, and health risks associated with excess rubbish on homes and farmstead property. Garbage should also be

addressed to ensure it is disposed of properly. This is addressed in the Buffalo County Health Hazard Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance.

Residents should be encouraged to maintain their homes and homesteads in a way to help preserve the natural beauty of the county. A funding base should be secured to assist in upgrading homes in the form of low income loans.

Residents should be discouraged from building on the scenic bluff lands and areas where access should be reasonable to allow for emergency response vehicles to reach property without risk to volunteers and equipment. This could be accomplished through the enactment of a bluff land ordinance.

Housing development should also be discouraged from building on land classified as prime farmland. The Zoning Ordinance could be modified to prevent construction on soils classified as Prime Soils Table 5.2 Buffalo County Prime Soil Types.

### Housing Programs

A number of federal and state housing programs are available to help communities promote the development of housing for individuals with lower incomes and certain special needs. The following is a partial listing of programs. Since programs as well as the funding requirements change, it is recommended that individuals use the contacts listed to verify programs and eligibility requirements.

### Federal Programs

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is the Federal Agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs, improve and develop the Nation's communities and enforce fair housing laws. HUD's business is helping to create decent home and suitable living environment for all Americans, and it has given America's cities a strong national voice at the Cabinet level. HUD'S programs include the following: Providing mortgage insurance to help individuals and families become homeowners; development, rehabilitation and modernization of the nation's public and Indian housing stock; development of HUD-insured multifamily housing; development, improvement and revitalization of America's urban centers and neighborhoods; providing rental subsidies to lower-income families to help them obtain affordable housing; and., enforcement of Federal Fair Housing laws.

HUD is assisted in carrying these various programs and in managing its own operations by a variety of independent contractors and vendors. Contact information for Wisconsin residents is the Milwaukee Field Office, 310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1380, Milwaukee, WI 53202-2289; Phone: (414) 297-3214, Fax: (414) 935-6775, TTY: (414) 297-1423; call toll-free (800) 955-2232.

Federal Housing Administration (FHA) is administered by the Office of Housing and is the largest mortgage insurer in the world, as well as regulates housing industry business. For information about FHA loans or programs, contact the FHA Resource Center. Call toll-free (800) CALL-FHA (800-225-5342); TTY: (800) 877-8339.

*United States Department of Agricultural – Rural Development (USDA-RD)* provides a variety of financial programs to support such essential public facilities and services, such as water and

sewer, housing and others. Housing programs deliver a variety of assistance to support the housing needs of rural residents. Most involve direct assistance by the USDA, while other work through local partnership. The RD Housing Programs include Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants, Housing Preservation Grants, Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans, Multi-Family Housing Guaranteed Loans, Repair Loans and Grants, Rural Housing Site Loans, Self Help Technical Assistance Grants, Single Family Housing Direct Loans and Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loans.

USDA-RD has district offices serving most parts of Wisconsin. For information on the Wisconsin Guaranteed Rural Housing (GRH) Program Email GRH at [Wisconsin-grh@wi.usda.gov](mailto:grh@wi.usda.gov) or call 715-345-7623. To submit an application, mail to: USDA Rural Development GRH, 5417 Clem's Way, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

The US Department of Veterans Affairs provides assistance when an eligible veteran is interested in purchasing a home through a "*Purchase Loan*". This program will help a veteran purchase a home at a competitive interest rate, and if they have found it difficult to find other financing. Eligibility criteria is established by the VA.

*VA's Cash-Out Refinance Loan* - is for home owners who want to take cash out of their home equity to take care of concerns such as paying off debt, funding school, or making home improvements. This program can also be used to re-finance a non-VA loan into a VA-loan.

*VA Home Loan Programs* - Most VA Home Loans are handled entirely by private lenders and VA rarely get involved in the loan approval process. VA "stands behind" the loan by guaranteeing a portion of it, similar to a co-signer.

These programs are administered by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs at <http://benefits.va.gov/>.

### State Programs

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) was created in 1972 by the Wisconsin Legislature as an independent authority, not a state agency. As a lender, WHEDA has over \$# billion in assets.

WHEDA works closely with lenders, developers, local government, nonprofits, community groups and others to implement its low-cost financing programs. They provide low-cost, fixed interest rate mortgages to low- and moderate-income individuals and families to purchase their first home. They also work with developers to finance affordable rental housing, and support economic development and agriculture through their small business guarantee programs.

WHEDA program does not rely on tax dollars. Instead, proceeds from the sale of revenue bonds allow the program to fund financing programs that help stimulate affordable housing and economic development throughout the state.

For information on WHEDA services and programs, contact them via e-mail at [info@wheda.com](mailto:info@wheda.com) or in Wisconsin call, 1-800-334-6873. WHEDA has 2 Wisconsin offices. Madison office – 201 W. Washington Ave., Ste 700, Madison, WI 53703 or P.O. Box 1728, Madison, WI 53702 – 1728, Pho. 608-266-7884, Toll Free 800-334-6873. Milwaukee office – 140 S. 1<sup>st</sup> St., Ste. 200, Milwaukee, WI 53204 – Pho. 414-227-4039, Toll Free 800-628-4883.

Division of Housing, State of Wisconsin – Department of Administration offers a broad range of financial and technical assistance to improve and expand housing, increase affordable housing opportunities and provide services to people without housing. The variety of federal and state programs it manages benefits persons with disabilities, low and moderate income residents and homeless populations. The Division partners with local governments, homeless service providers, developers and housing organizations throughout the state to provide its service.

This division functions include administer federal housing funds, administer a variety of programs for persons with special needs including homeless, provide state housing funds through local housing organizations, coordinate housing assistance programs with other state agencies and many other. For additional information about the services they provide you can contact Division of Housing, 101 E. Wilson Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Madison, WI 53703. Pho. 608-266-7531 and <http://doa/wi/gov/>.

### Local Programs

Western Dairyland, A Community Action Agency provides Homebuyer Education and Down payment assistance to residents in Buffalo County who meet certain income levels. Their HUD Certified Housing Counselors provide step-by-step assistance with the home buying process. Their education processes meet USDA/Rural Housing, WHEDA and FHA requirements for homebuyers. More information on Western Dairyland is available at [www.westerndairyland.org/](http://www.westerndairyland.org/).

Several Housing options are available for elderly, handicap and disabled residents. Buffalo County Housing is a 501-C 3 nonprofit organization in the County. A volunteer, active 7-member Board administers the program which includes qualification for apartment eligibility and rental assistance. The program serves residents at least 62 years of age, handicap and disabled. Three facilities are located in Cochrane, Nelson & Alma. This program is funded through Rural Development. Contact information is 715-685-3663.

Mondovi Housing, a non-profit organization owns and manages the Highland Apartments to provide a safe and affordable home for elderly independent living. Residents are individuals or couples ages 62 and older and prospective residents must apply and income-qualify. Rent is based upon a percentage of income, not assets after medical expenses. There is an application process and nearly always a waiting list for apartment. This facility is located at 600 Buffalo Street, Mondovi, WI 54755 715-926-4943.

Buffalo County offers a variety of Assisted Living Options. There are a total of 6 throughout the County, 5 are affiliated with the Senior Care Authority Network. Senior Residential placement services provide assistance to help identify the best location for seniors to live and receive proper care. This service simplifies the process for families looking for assisted living and other care services. Home Office phone contact for Senior Care Authority Network is 888-958-2690.

Following are the facilities in Buffalo County that are affiliated with Senior Care Authority Network:

*Garlicks CBRG Inc* - in Mondovi was founded in 1985 and currently has 4 adult family homes, 1 CBRF, and 2 Assisted Living Apartments. Garlick's is a Community Based Residential Facility

Incorporated Creating a safe home environment where every resident has the opportunity to develop their lives while enhancing their independence. They are located at 539 N. Eau Claire Street, Mondovi, WI 54755, 715-926-5818.

*Hillview Senior Living* - Is a 12-unit Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF), licensed by the State of Wisconsin and located on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the American Lutheran Home in Mondovi. Hillview Senior Living provides a supportive environment for individuals who need assistance with daily living tasks. They are located at 210 Memorial Drive, Mondovi, WI 54755 715-926-4962.

*Home Place of Mondovi (the)-haven & LLC* - Offers independent and assisted living apartments to seniors 55 years old and older. The apartments allow residents to maintain their independence while having assistance available if needed. Memory care provides the opportunity for all stages of dementia and accommodates the frail elderly. They are located at 158 E Main Street, Mondovi, WI 54755. Homeplace Haven - 715-926-4740 and Homeplace LLC 715-926-4777.

*Step By Step Adult Family Home* - Is located at 637 West Hudson Street Mondovi, WI 54755 715-926-5898

*Troys Adult Family Home* - Is located at 649 N Eau Claire Street, Mondovi, WI 54755 715-926-5828.

*St. Michaels Assisted Living* - Is located in Fountain City, Buffalo County Wisconsin. This facility focuses on individual wellness and promotes a healthy lifestyle that encourages continued independence with a tailored plan of assistance. They are located at 270 North Street, P.O. Box 7, Fountain City, WI 54629-0007 608-687-7721 or e-mail to [www.tlha.org/locations/fountain-city-wi/](http://www.tlha.org/locations/fountain-city-wi/).

### Housing Trusts

State Housing Trust Funds are, by any measure, the backbone of the housing trust fund world. Housing trusts are formed to create funding to address critical housing needs within a community. Each state has a set of guidelines that they must follow in order to organize a Housing Trust Fund.

State of Wisconsin in early 1989 passed legislation to create a housing trust fund with the appropriation of \$5.5 million in general tax revenues for home ownership and rental assistance to lower-income households, which is the Housing Cost Reduction Initiative and the Local Housing Organization Grant Program. These programs are still in existence. For information contact the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development, Inc., 121 South Pinckney Street, Suite 420, Madison, WI 53703. Pho- 608-258-5560 or email [infor@wphd.org](mailto:infor@wphd.org).

Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp (WHPC) was created from the Wisconsin Housing Preservation Trust to preserve affordable housing in Wisconsin. This means any housing with tenant income restrictions, serving very low-, low- and moderate-income persons. WHPC is a 501 C# not-for-profit corporation in Wisconsin.

The City of Stevens Point, in central Wisconsin, is one example of a community that has established a housing trust fund to provide a variety of programs and financial assistance for homeowners and home buyers. Contact information is CAPT Service, Inc., 1725 West River

Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54481 715-343-7142. Madison and Milwaukee each have housing trust funds. Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund provides grants and loans for construction, rehabilitation and accessibility modification of affordable housing for low- to moderate-income households. Contact information is 200 E. Wells Street, Room 404, Milwaukee, WI 53202. Pho 414-286-2366 and email [housingtrustfund@milwaukee.gov](mailto:housingtrustfund@milwaukee.gov).

Madison Affordable Housing Trust Fund was created to meet, in part the housing needs of the Low Income and Very Low Income households of the City. The fund would provide loans and grants to for-profit and non-profit housing developers for the acquisition, capital and soft costs necessary for the creation of new Affordable rental and owner-occupied housing. Contact information is CDBG Office of the Department of Planning and Development, Madison Municipal Building, 215 Martin Luther King, Jr. BLVD. LL100, Madison, WI 53703. Pho – 608-266-4635.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool that is used by Wisconsin communities to help finance commercial development, referred to as TIF districts. A community will borrow money by selling bonds, and use the cash to help finance improvements, such as street work or building renovations. The property taxes generated by those improvements, known as the “increment,” pay off the city’s debt. Once the debt is paid, the property taxes flow to the city, school district and other local governments. A well planned project should provide the necessary information to know if the project will generate the results that the TIF is designed for. In a smaller community where the value of the housing, for example, is less, and property taxes may be less, you need to be sure that the TIF project will serve the purpose it was intended to serve.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Housing Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

#### **Objective: Find Ways to Accommodate an Elderly Population**

- Work with the municipalities where there is the greatest need
- Find Opportunities for funding new construction or upgrading existing buildings
  - Provide information to landowners for cost-effective measures of maintenance
  - Establish a program that would educate the county’s citizens about the sources of funding available for housing grants and loans

#### **Objective: Need a Way to Address the Need to Make Affordable Housing Available**

#### **Objective: Complete a Comprehensive Update of the Zoning Ordinance**

- Add language to control the age of mobile homes placed in the county
  - Restrict mobile homes greater than 10 years old
- Discuss minimum lot size changes in each of the Zoning Classifications
- Discuss with the Towns potential changes to make the Sub-division Ordinance more restrictive
- Discuss with the Towns the need for a Bluffland Ordinance
  - Maintain the scenic beauty of the County

- Encourage all Towns to adopt a Driveway Ordinance
  - Eliminate driveways that are too steep for emergency vehicle safe access

## Section 3

### Transportation Element

#### Element Overview

The Buffalo County Transportation System is bordered by a collection of multi model systems and technologies. The internal movement of people and goods is dominated by the highway network. More specifically, water and rail transportation routes of national significance follow the Mississippi River corridor along the western edge of Buffalo County. Regional commercial airports are located at Eau Claire and La Crosse. No commercial airports, water ports or major rail sidings are currently operated within the County borders. Therefore, the highway network currently receives the vast majority of public investment and holds the most importance for development and growth in the short term.

#### Transportation Existing Facilities

*Air* - Regional air service is available at La Crosse Municipal Airport and Chippewa Valley Airport. Two private light aircraft airports operate in Buffalo County. One in the Town of Maxville (Durand Airport) and one in the Town of Naples (Log Cabin Airport).

*Rail* - The Burlington Northern & Santa Fe operates along the western portion of Buffalo County. This track is currently used as a major east- west national route with this portion connecting Chicago to the east and Minneapolis/St. Paul to the west. Currently there are sidings at Dairyland Power Cooperative and LaCrosse Milling Company Cochrane. There are maintenance sidings at Nelson, Alma and Bluff Siding; however, no other siding facilities are available at this time. Canadian National operates a feeder line from Marshland to Arcadia on the southern tip of Buffalo County.

*Water* – The inland waters of the Upper Mississippi River, Saint Paul District carve along the western edge of Buffalo County. This waterway connects Minneapolis/ St. Paul and the Upper Midwest ports to world markets via commercial barge traffic. Except for the coal port at Dairyland Power Cooperative in Alma, there are no ports currently located within Buffalo County. The port of Winona, MN is the closest port to Buffalo County.

*Bicycle/Trail Facilities* – A proposed bicycle trail is currently in design for a connector from the Great River State Trail (which presently terminates at the Buffalo/Trempealeau County line) to the City of Winona, MN. This connector would link Minnesota and Wisconsin bicycle trail systems and promote regional recreation facilities for Buffalo County. The Buffalo River State Trail is an existing All-Terrain Vehicle trail which terminates in Mondovi and runs east into Trempealeau County. This ATV trail is part of the Wisconsin DNR Trail System. A network of snowmobile trails are maintained on mostly private lands by local snowmobile clubs using DNR snowmobile registration funds.

*Interstate Bridges at Wabasha and Winona* – A unique reliance on these two interstate bridges exists for most of the residents of Buffalo County. Because of the rural nature of the County and the distance to major Wisconsin urban areas like Eau Claire and LaCrosse, a majority of Buffalo County residents depend on access provided by these two Mississippi crossings. This reliance ranges in importance from emergency medical services and job access to commerce and

entertainment. This reliance goes both ways as was evident by the profound loss of business in Winona due to a recent bridge closure for emergency repairs.

*Highway* – The Highway System within Buffalo County is comprised of 1,042 total miles that fall under the jurisdiction of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Buffalo County Highway Department and the various Cities, Villages and Towns within the County. While the regional transportation system is truly multi-model, it is the highway network of Buffalo County that moves people and goods throughout the County. The highway network receives a substantial level of public investment in order to maintain the system. Budget restraints will continue to pose a challenge for the continued current maintenance level of service across all jurisdictions. To assist in inventorying, classifying and planning efforts regarding the highway network a Road Functional Classification System has been established.

### *Road Functional Classification System*

The Functional Classification System uses criteria including traffic counts, the regional significance of a highway and spacing of other highways in its class as ways to define and compare the County's network. (See Map 3.1 for current Wisconsin DOT Functional Road Classifications) The functional classes are divided into three main groups which are Arterials, Collectors and Local Roads. The jurisdiction or "ownership" of highways ideally and typically follows the functional class so that the majority of Arterials have State jurisdiction; the majority of Collectors have County jurisdiction; and the Locals are comprised of the Town, City and Village roads. (See Map 3.2 for Current Jurisdictional Road Classifications) Buffalo County has many discrepancies between the defined functional class and the proper jurisdictional alignment. (A comparison between the functional road classifications and the current jurisdictional road network can be seen on Map 3.3 and in table form on Table 3.1) The last County Highway Functional and Jurisdictional Study was completed in 1987. The Functional Class Map (Map 3.1) was last updated and certified by the Department of Transportation in February of 2012.

*Arterials* - interconnect larger urban areas and carry high traffic volumes. These highways also connect other transportation system and large traffic generating commercial or industrial areas.

*Collectors* - provide service to moderate sized communities and locally important traffic generators.

*Locals* – service the most local traffic and lowest traffic volumes. All roads not classified as arterial or collector are locally functioning roads.

As stated previously, a more proper alignment of the jurisdiction of all highways in the County to their correct functional class may be beneficial to the long term preservation of the highway system. A realignment would ensure that the higher functional class routes would have access to higher levels of funding and services to maintain and preserve the network. Likewise, the realigned local functioning routes may receive a lower level of service.

It should be noted that all jurisdiction or "ownership" transfers must be mutually agreed upon before any transfer occurs.

### Wisconsin Asset Management Systems

Buffalo County uses the *Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating System (PASER)* that is incorporated into the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's *Information System for Local Roads (WHISLR)* program to evaluate and inventory the highway system as a tool for implementing a five-year maintenance and improvement plan. This five year maintenance plan is reviewed and adjusted annually by the Buffalo County Highway Committee. The Highway Department also assists most Town within the County for the physical inventory and record keeping for their systems. The PASER ratings are updated every year on the County system and every other year on the Town system. The most important element of the PASER and WHISLER programs is to maintain the history of all improvements on the system.

### Wisconsin Department of Transportation Local Bridge Program and Inventory

Buffalo County Highway Department manages the inventory and inspections of all Local Bridges (County, Town and City) within Buffalo County. The current inventory includes 173 structures that are inventoried, inspected and eligible for Federal Aid replacement funds. This program is significant in effort and importance due to the large number of structures maintained on the system. Map 3.4 Buffalo County Bridge Locations, shows our current bridge inventory.

### State and Regional Transportation Plans

At [www.dot.state.wi.us](http://www.dot.state.wi.us) the Wisconsin Department of Transportation home page under "Plans, Studies and Projects", then, "Planning Resources", then, "Modal and Multimodal Plans", a comprehensive list of Transportation plans can be reviewed. A list of the regional plans that are pertinent to the planning process, integrated or compared with the Buffalo County plan are listed below:

Connections 2030- the current plan addresses all form of transportation over a 20-year period. The WI DOT officially adopted the current plan in October of 2009. The most recent versions can be found at <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/2030-background.htm>

Wisconsin Six-Year Highway Improvement Program- the more specific construction programs for the Wisconsin DOT through 2018. See Map 3.5 Wis Dot Improvement Program and Table 3.2 Wisconsin DOT 2013- 2018 Six Year Highway Improvement Snapshot for the current Six-Year Program. The most recent versions of Map 3.5 Table 3.2 can be found at the Wisconsin DOT website <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/sixyear/nwr.htm>

Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2030- the plan for determining airport facility needs

Wisconsin Bicycle Plan 2020- comprehensive bicycle plan

Wisconsin Statewide Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020- the plan outlines State and local measures to promote safe pedestrian travel

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2030- the rail plan that is in development for integrated rail development through 2030.

**Table 3.2 Wisconsin DOT 2013- 2018 Six Year Highway Improvement Snapshot**

Hwy	County	Project Title And Project Limits	Miles	Estimate (Range)	Year	Work Type	Project Description
25	Buffalo	Nelson-Durand	0.09	\$500,000 - \$749,999	2013	BRRPL	Replace the existing USH 12 bridge over the Fox Coulee Creek with a new bridge in the same location.
25	Buffalo	Wabasha – Durand	0.03	\$250,000 - \$449,999	2016-2018	BRRHB	Bridge rehabilitation, deck overlay of the STH 25 bridge ( B-06-0020) over the Mississippi River.
25	Buffalo	Wabasha – Durand	0.00	Less Than \$100,00	2016-2018	BRSHRM	Bridge rehabilitation, Spring Creek bridge B-06-0122 place a polymer overlay on the wear surface of the deck.
25	Buffalo	Wabasha – Durand	1.30	\$750,000 - \$999,999	2016-2018	RESURF	Resurface improvement, urban section mill 2.5 inches overlay 2.75 inches. Rural section mill 2 inches overlay with 3 inches. Upgrade CTH D intersection north of Nelson. Repair or replace beam guard. Replace permanent signs.
35	Buffalo	Alma – Pepin	6.68	\$3,000,000 - \$3,999,999	2016-2018	RESURF	Mill rural section 2.75 inches, base patch and level wedge as needed, and overlay with 3.25 inches HMA. Urban section in Nelson mill 3.25 inches and overlay 3.25 inches HMA. Replace curb and resurface the wayside/historical m.
35	Buffalo	Trempealeau-Fountain City	4.25	\$1,000,000 - \$1,999,999	2013	RDMTN	Roadway maintenance improvement joint repair at the STH 54 intersection ( at Winona)
88	Buffalo	Cream – Mondovi	10.42	\$2,000,000 - \$2,999,999	2016-2018	RDMTN	Roadway improvement, mill and overlay with 2 inches HMA, and pave available shoulders 3 feet maximum.
88	Buffalo	Czechville – Gilmanton	6.63	\$2,000,000 - \$2,999,999	2014	RESURF	Surface mill 3 inches of existing pavement and replace with 3 inches x 28 foot wide HMA overlay.
88	Buffalo	Czechville – Mondovi	23.12	\$1,000,000 - \$1,999,999	2014	MISC	Miscellaneous improvement will consist of cleaning, lining, and replacing existing culvert pipes and endwalls.
88	Buffalo	Czechville – Mondovi	12.70	\$3,000,000 - \$3,999,999	2015	RDMTN	Surface mill 2 inches of existing travelled way and overlay with 2 inches HMA, and pave available shoulder up to 3 foot maximum. Also repairing wingwalls and overlaying the deck of Johns Valley Creek B-06-0040.
121	Buffalo	Gilmanton – Independence	0.03	\$250,000 - \$449,999	2016-2018	BRRHB	Bridge rehabilitation improvement placing a PCC overlay on the deck, replacing the existing Type W rail with Type LF parapet, and replace/upgrade beam guard.

Wis DOT Northwest Region Project Listing; May 14, 2013

*Other Plans*

Wisconsin DNR State Recreational Trails Network Plan- encouraging regional and local trail links to the statewide trail system

Buffalo County Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan- planning the coordination of publicly funded transportation services in Buffalo County

Buffalo County Outdoor recreation plan

In reviewing the Regional Plans listed above, no inconsistencies were evident between any regional plan and Buffalo County goals.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Transportation Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

#### **Objectives: To preserve and maintain the existing highway network while promoting improvements and programs that result in improved safety and more efficient transportation facilities**

- Require the non-traditional hauling operation to assess the traffic and highway impacts of their operations. Policy reference: Buffalo County Hauling Policy
- Continue the use of the PASER and WISLR systems to help plan , inventory and maintain the data for the highway system
- Maintain the access permit process for the County Highway System
- Pursue all available funding sources for improved safety and expanded facilities. More specifically, promote and support expanded Federal gas tax share for off system safety and bridge funds
- Promote continued and expanded cooperation with Towns for the sharing of services and equipment
- Work cooperatively with WI Dept. of Transportation, Counties, Towns and Local Governments to promote regional highway issues
- Support the jurisdictional transfer of highways in accordance with an updated study of functional class

#### **Objectives: To promote the expansion of multimodal transportation systems and highway enhancements that would encourage business, commerce, tourism, recreation and special needs users of the system**

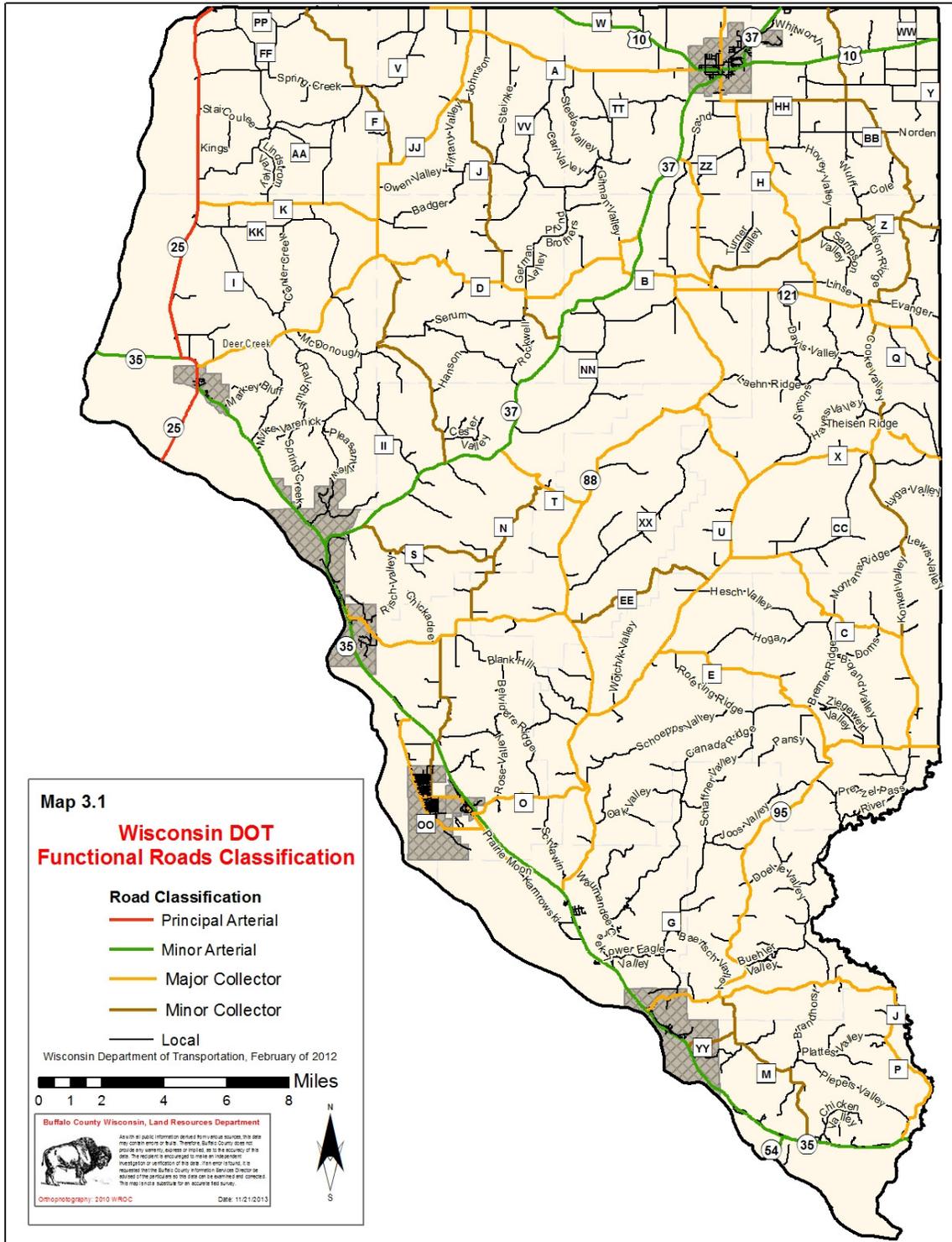
- Promote the possible development of harbor, rail or other alternate transportation facilities within Buffalo County
- Pursue enhancement funding for developing system expansions and upgrades for economic development when applicable
- Promote enhancement projects for scenic, tourist and recreation activities
- Support an updated Outdoor Recreation Plan that should include existing and proposed trails for ATV, Biking, Hiking and other outdoor activities as well as County website mapping and information to facilitate these activities
- Promote highway design to allow for safer alternate modes of travel such as wider shoulders and surface markings
- Encourage expanded transit and public transportation options

**Table 3.1 State/County /Town Certified Mileage**

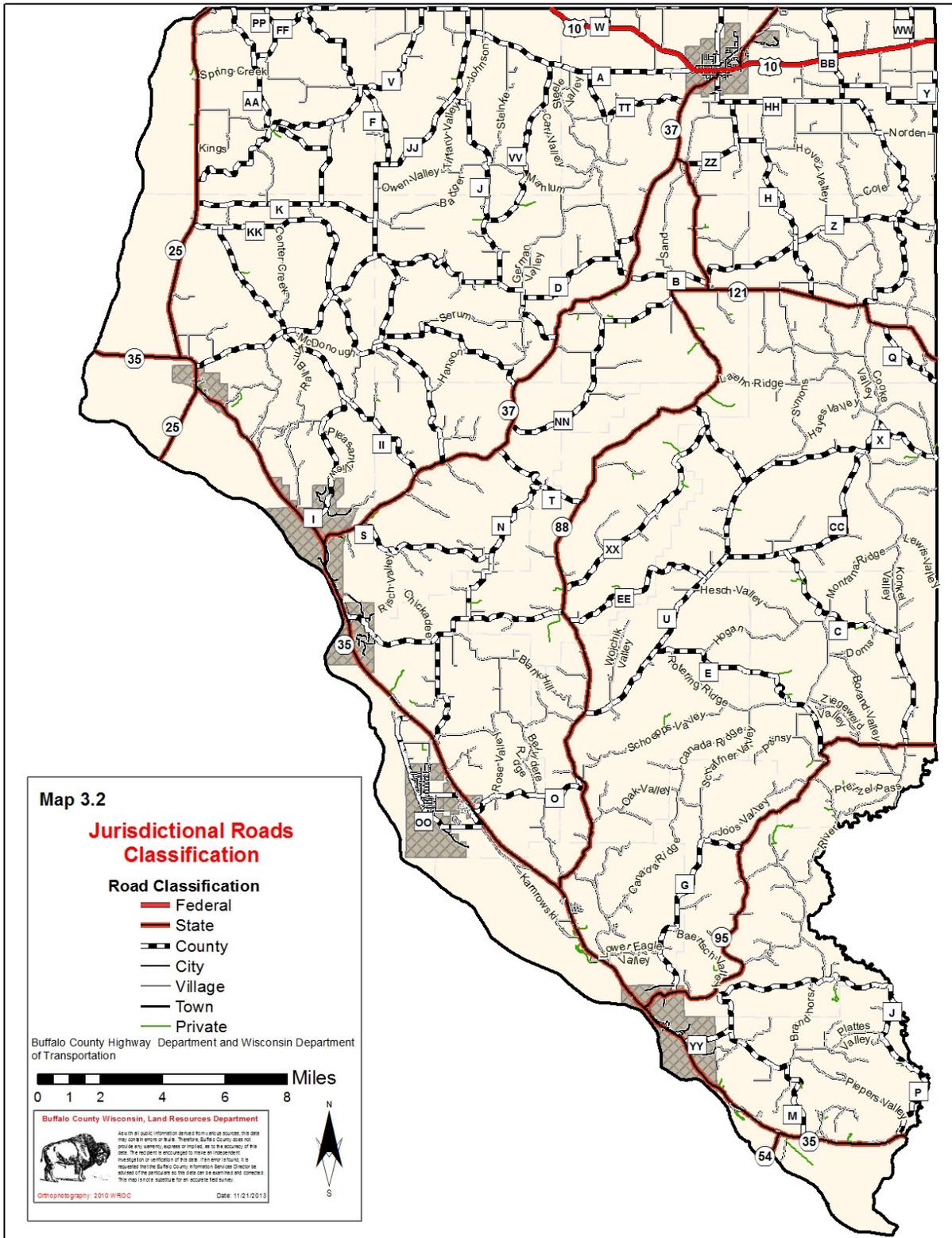
Municipality Name	Gross Miles	State		% of County		% of Municipal		State Jurisdiction by		County Jurisdiction by		Municipal Jurisdiction	
		Miles	% of System	Miles	% of System	Miles	% of System	Arterial	Local	Arterial	Local	Arterial	Local
T. Alma	47.22	8.45	18%	20.53	43%	18.24	39%	8.45		14.53	6.00		
T. Belvidere	51.66	6.88	13%	14.08	27%	30.70	59%	6.88		14.08		1.40	18.24
T. Buffalo	49.14	7.52	15%	13.38	27%	28.24	57%	7.52		13.38			29.30
T. Canton	55.16	0.42	1%	25.31	46%	29.43	53%	0.42		17.04	8.27		28.24
T. Cross	53.55	8.81	16%	9.89	18%	34.85	65%		8.81	6.66	3.23		29.43
T. Dover	63.89	7.02	11%	18.15	28%	38.72	61%		7.02	15.53	2.62		34.85
T. Gilmanston	50.96	14.68	29%	13.52	27%	22.76	45%	5.38	9.30	8.79	4.73		38.72
T. Glencoe	68.38	6.80	10%	12.82	19%	48.76	71%		6.80	12.82		0.48	22.28
T. Lincoln	39.78	11.26	28%	16.47	41%	12.05	30%		11.26	9.85	6.62		46.67
T. Maxville	57.30	6.26	11%	25.36	44%	25.68	45%	6.26		5.25	20.11		12.05
T. Milton	32.96	7.47	23%	3.84	12%	21.65	66%	5.50	1.97		3.84		25.68
T. Modena	52.52	2.88	5%	26.64	51%	23.00	44%	2.88		19.00	7.64	1.03	20.62
T. Mondovi	51.17	9.68	19%	15.51	30%	25.98	51%	8.21	1.47	7.91	7.60		23.00
I. Montana	60.31	0.00	0%	24.01	40%	36.30	60%			18.09	5.92		25.98
T. Naples	61.77	7.56	12%	18.71	30%	35.50	57%	7.56		13.03	5.68		36.30
T. Nelson	86.35	13.75	16%	36.85	43%	35.75	41%	13.75		14.34	22.51		35.50
T. Waumandee	60.90	7.12	12%	11.95	20%	41.83	69%		7.12	11.95			35.75
V. Cochrane	5.76	0.62	11%	0.79	14%	4.35	76%	0.62		0.79		0.62	41.83
V. Nelson	4.51	2.13	47%	0.07	2%	2.31	51%	2.13		0.07			3.73
C. Alma	23.89	8.28	35%	3.56	15%	12.05	50%	8.28		1.78	1.78	0.46	2.31
C. Buffalo City	21.62	0.10	0%	3.32	15%	18.20	84%	0.10		3.32			11.59
C. Fountain City	15.94	6.06	38%	1.37	9%	8.51	53%	4.52	1.54	1.11	0.26		18.20
C. Mondovi	23.80	4.10	17%	1.85	8%	17.85	75%	4.10		1.85		0.31	8.51
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>1038.54</b>	<b>147.85</b>		<b>317.98</b>		<b>572.71</b>		<b>92.56</b>	<b>55.29</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>211.17</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6.39</b>
											<b>106.81</b>		<b>566.32</b>

	State	County	Municipal
Target Goals as Percentage of System (per D.O.T. Criteria)	6-12%	18-24%	68-72%
Current Percentage	14.2%	30.5%	55.3%

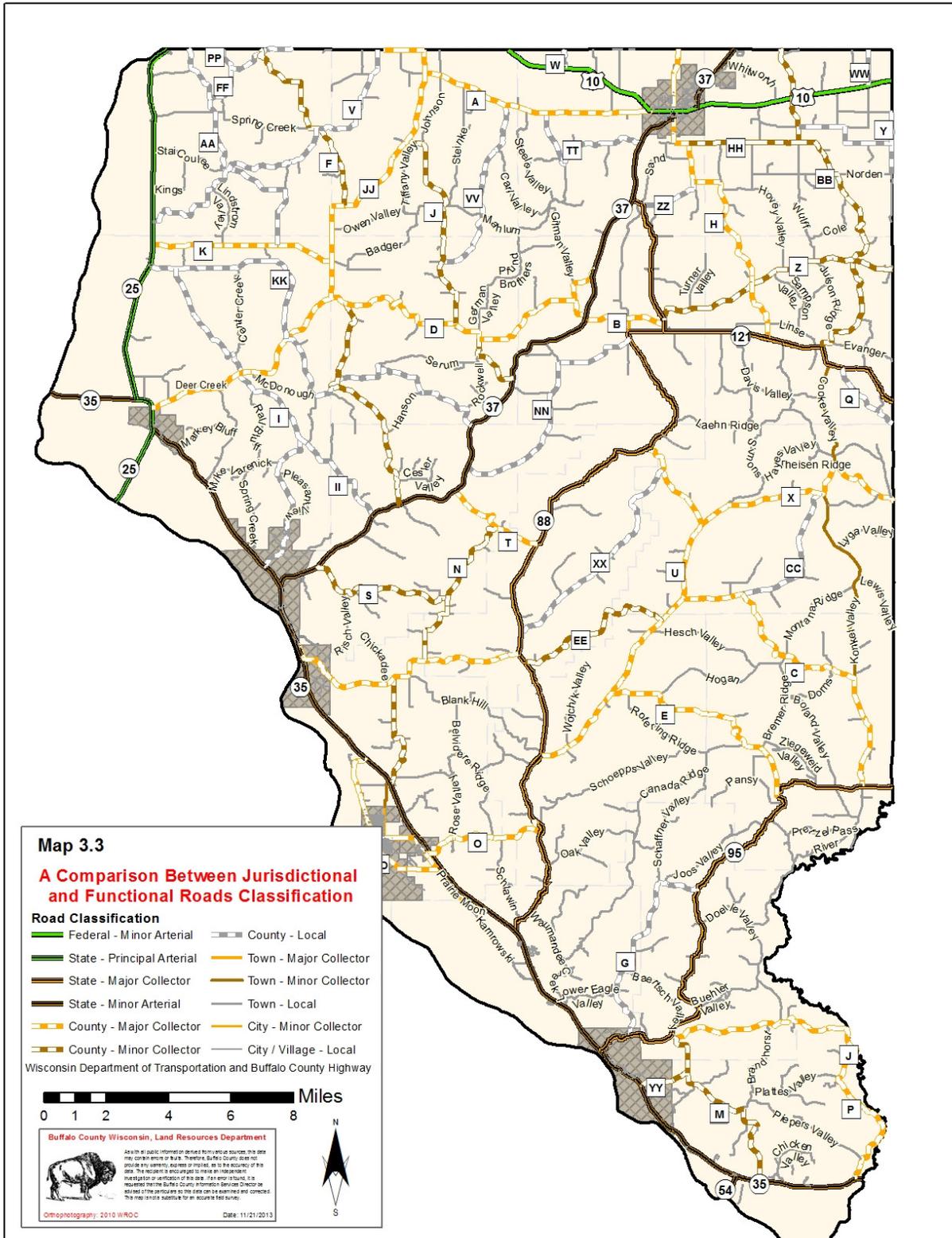
**Map 3.1 – Wisconsin DOT Functional Roads Classification**



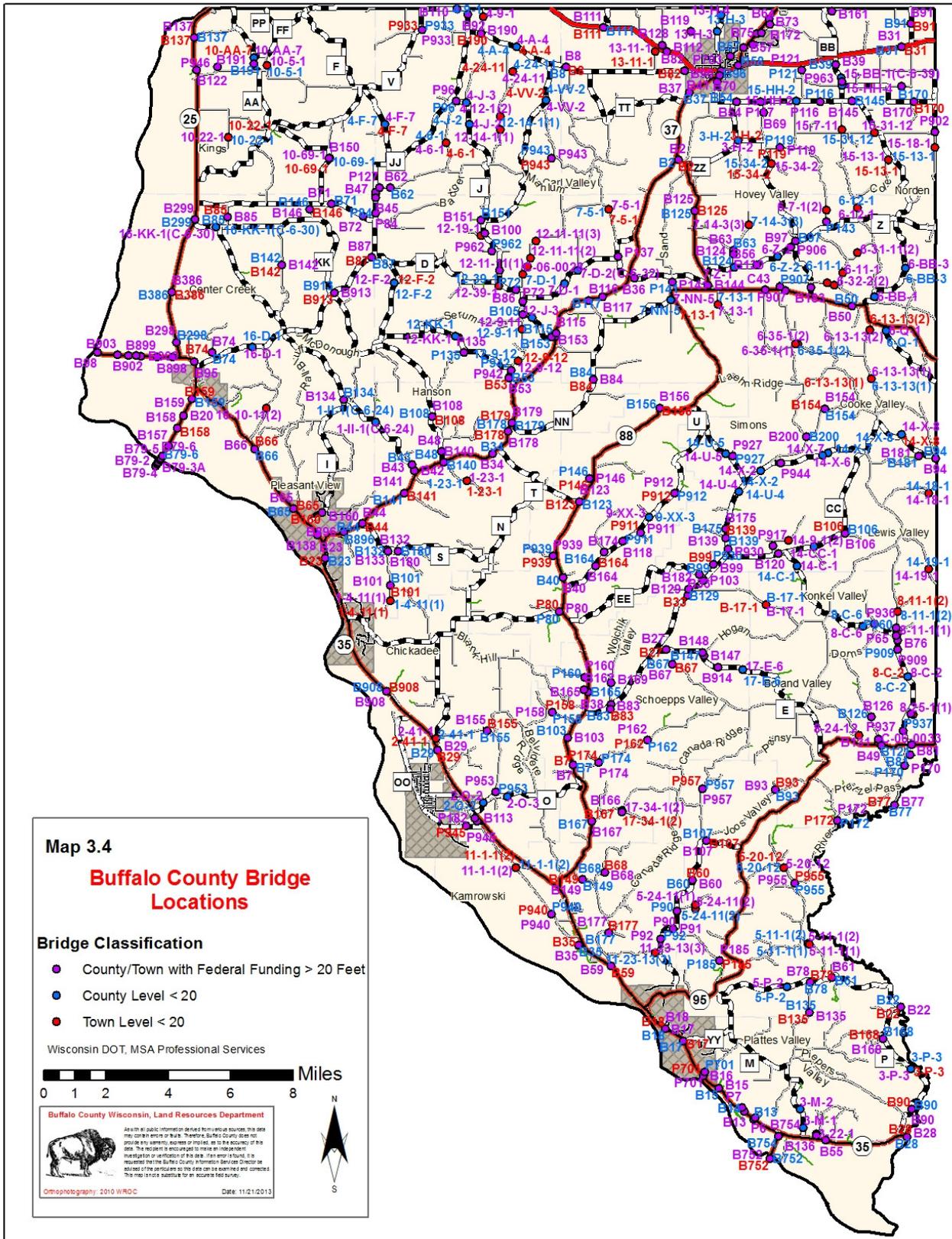
**Map 3.2 – Jurisdictional Roads Classification**



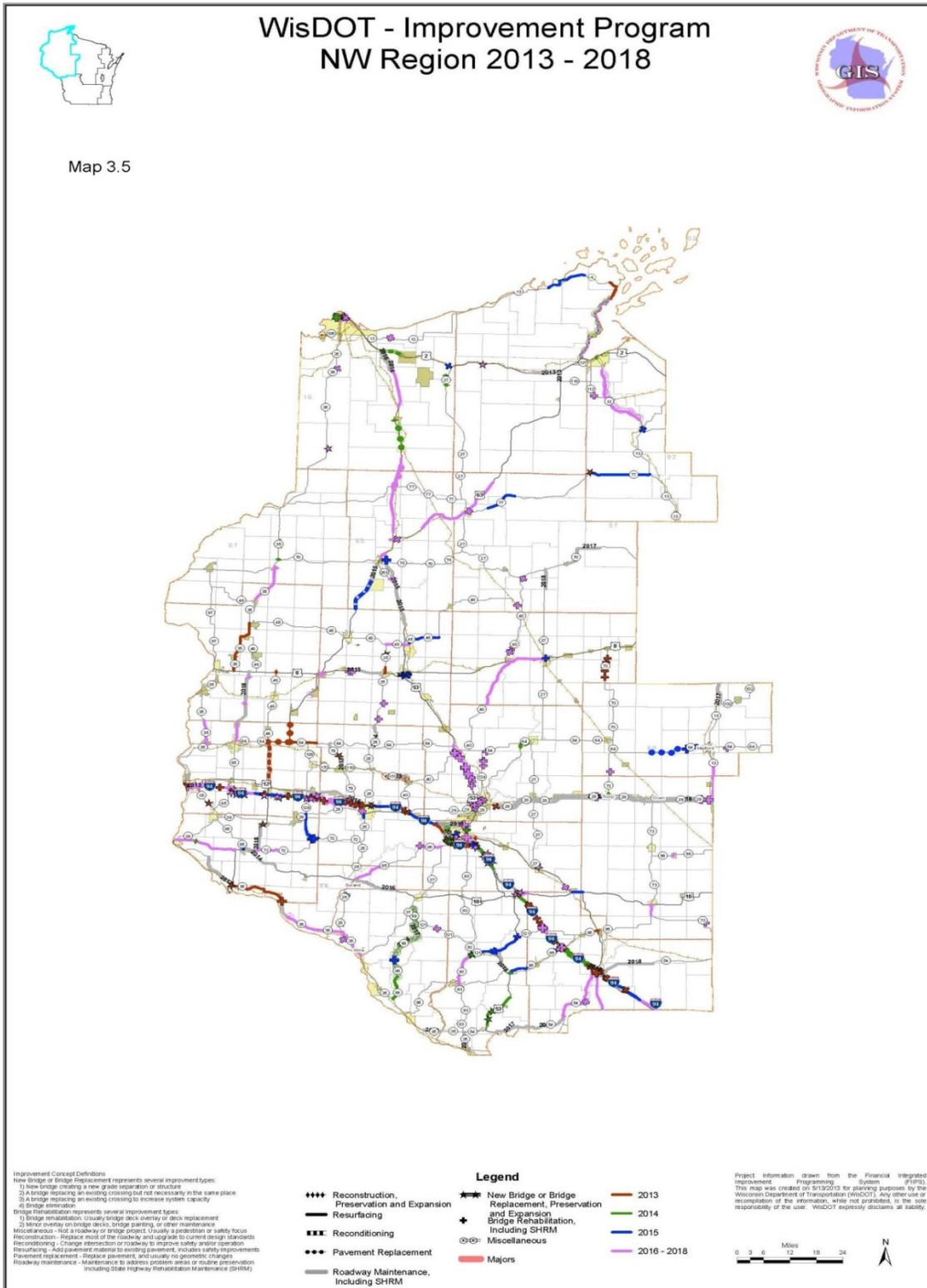
**Map 3.3 – Comparison Between Jurisdictional and Functional Road Classification**



**Map 3.4 Buffalo County Bridge Locations**



# Map 3.5 Wis DOT Improvement Program



## Section 4

### Utilities and Community Facilities Element

#### Element Overview

This element identifies and analyzes existing utilities and community facilities that provide critical services and fundamental benefits to the residents of Buffalo County. Utilities include water supply, wastewater management, stormwater management, solid waste and recycling, telecommunications facilities, and electrical power generation and distribution. Community facilities include senior care facilities, medical / health care, child care, libraries, cemeteries, schools, parks and trail systems, emergency services, and other government facilities. The information contained within this element will help to determine whether additional facilities and services are needed to maintain and improve the quality of life the communities throughout the County desire.

#### Water Supply

Buffalo County lies within the western end of the Lower Chippewa and Black Buffalo – Trempealeau basin. The high permeability of the County’s sandy soil geology, allows water from precipitation, as well as runoff, to penetrate the ground more readily causing higher rates of recharge for the St. Peter’s and Prairie du Chien -Jordan aquifers. These two massive aquifers provide nearly all the drinking and irrigation water throughout Buffalo County. This remarkable, natural process is the result of ordovician sandstones such as Prairie du Chien, St. Peter’s, and Jordan. The exceptional recharge ability along with the relatively high rates of precipitation from the region’s mild – continental climate helps ensure an abundant supply of groundwater for our future generation.

**Table 4.1 Municipal High Capacity Wells**

Municipal Water Supply Name	Normal Well Pump Capacity Gallons Per Day	Population Served by Facility	Well Depth (Feet)	Construction Year
Alma Waterworks	Well 1- 216,000	863	440	1910
	Well 2 – 128,000		488	1961
Cochrane Waterworks	49,000	450	100	1981
Fountain City Waterworks	34,000	983	305	1965
Mondovi Waterworks	Well 1 – 216,000	2,667	384	-----
	Well 2 – 324,000		373	1972
	Well 3 – 576,000		444	1995
Nelson Water & Sewer Department	180,000	375	90.5	1968

Wisconsin DNR Drinking Water System, Last Revised: 06/12/2013

At the time of this writing, an estimated 39 percent of all Buffalo County residents are served through five municipal water supply systems. These systems are fed by 8 high-capacity

municipal wells pumping anywhere from 34,000 gallons per day to 576,000 gallons per day, such as in the City of Mondovi. (These facilities are depicted in Table 4.1 Municipal High Capacity Wells).

Buffalo County has approximately 123 high-capacity wells. Wells that have approval from the Department of Natural Resources to pump over 70 gallons per minute are defined as high capacity wells. These wells are used in a variety of industrial, agricultural, and municipal applications.

Roughly, 61 percent of Buffalo County residents are served by private wells. These wells are owned and maintained by individual property owners. Buffalo County serves as a resource for residents but has no jurisdiction over the siting or design of these wells. Well drillers and residents are responsible for being in compliance with the regulations set forth by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) CH NR 812 and NR 809 Wis. Adm. Code.

The high soil permeability, close proximity to the Mississippi River, and the dense population of the City of Buffalo City makes the possibility of groundwater contamination a conceivable issue. With no municipal water or sewer services, the City of Buffalo City is the most populated region in the County without a municipal water supply. Some local regulations have been enacted to help mitigate contamination risks but the small lot sizes and dense urban population make private wells and sewer systems less than ideal for a city setting. The extremely high costs of implementing municipal utilities into the landscape of the city have discouraged future development of these systems. However, the potential health risks, reluctant development, and future needs of the city may outweigh system development costs.

In conjunction with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, the Buffalo County Department of Health and Human Services has established a fully operational Water Testing Lab. This water lab is able to provide the community with in house bacteriological testing and nitrate testing through UW Oshkosh. The water lab is available to test wells serving local schools, child care facilities, other community facilities, and individual property owners. The services provided by this lab have proven to be a cost effective way for residents and Buffalo County to obtain the required testing and help to ensure the safety of the county's drinking water supply.

### Wastewater Management

*On-site Wastewater Treatment Technologies* - Private on-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS) serve the majority of Buffalo County residents. All residents residing in the more rural regions of the County are dependent on private POWTS. Buffalo County does not provide public sewer service or wastewater treatment facilities. Five out of the six local municipalities in the County are served by a sanitary sewer service. Only the 1,017 residents of the City of Buffalo City are served by on-site POWT Systems. Due to setback regulations and the need for private well systems, land use may not be maximized resulting in possible sprawl of the city.

Concerns about the soil capacity, proximity to the Mississippi River, and the potential health effects that this high density of POWT Systems could have on the City of Buffalo City as well as the surrounding communities should merit high levels of discussion on possible ways to implement municipal utilities. Mitigation planning for the potential contamination risks may result in less financial hardships, earlier detection, and less political unrest.

Chapter SPS 383 Wisconsin Administrative Code was created to establish standards and criteria for the siting, design, installation, inspection, and management of POWTS in the state. Buffalo County is the governmental unit responsible for regulating POWTS within the county and administering the POWTS maintenance program. As part of administering the program, Buffalo County is in the process of conducting an initial inventory of all the private on-site wastewater treatment systems located in the county. Chapter 145.20(5)(am) Wisconsin Statutes requires that this inventory be completed before October 1, 2017. There are an estimated 3,500 systems in the county, and there are 3,020 systems in our inventory. The inventory will help to identify older POWTS in the county that are in need of rehabilitation or replacement.

*Sanitary Sewer* - Due to the wide spatial distribution of housing and the relative rural setting, Buffalo County does not provide sanitary sewer services. However, the cities of Fountain City, Mondovi, Alma, and the villages of Cochrane and Nelson, along with the Town of Waumandee all own and operate a municipal wastewater treatment facility (WWTF). In accordance with Wisconsin’s Administrative Code NR 208, these facilities must adhere to regulations set forth by the WIDNR Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Permit Program. In an effort to promote awareness and responsibility of wastewater treatment needs and to maximize the lifespan of these expensive capital investments, the WPDES Permit Program uses an annual, self-evaluation report called the Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR). This report is intended to evaluate possible system problems or facility deficiencies. CMAR not only provides the WWTF with a grade point average (GPA) based on weighted CMAR responses but also rates sample data collected from the WWTF. The WWTF’s GPA helps initiate actions that should be taken to prevent violations of WPDES permit and possible environmental contamination.

**Table 4.2 Buffalo County Wastewater Treatment Facility CMAR GPA Report**

Facility Name	2011	2010	2009	2008
Alma Wastewater Treatment Facility	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Cochrane Wastewater Treatment Facility	3.63	3.63	3.63	3.63
Fountain City Wastewater Treatment Facility	3.72	3.83	3.83	3.83
Mondovi Wastewater Treatment Facility	4.0	3.91	3.91	4.0
Nelson Wastewater Treatment Facility	4.0	3.92	4.0	9.82
Waumandee Sanitary District #1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0

Buffalo County 2004 - 2011 CMAR Summary Report; Bureau of Water Quality, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

All WWTF within Buffalo County have a GPA of good or satisfactory for the years if 2009 to 2011. (See Table 4.2 Buffalo County Wastewater Treatment Facility CMAR GPA Report for individual WWTF GPA’s) Scores are calculated by subtracting any points generated for a specific category from 100. The corresponding points can then be translated into an A through F grading scale. (See Table 4.3 CMAR Point and Grading System)

*Stormwater Management*

Various departments and agencies facilitate Stormwater management in Buffalo County. The WI Department of Natural Resources requires State Stormwater Permits for construction projects

that disturb more than one acre of land and mine sites. The Buffalo County Shoreland Zoning Ordinance regulates land use practices within 300’ of navigable water ways. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards are used as a guide in developing stormwater management and erosion control plans. County conservationists work closely with landowners to control runoff and prevent soil erosion problems. The Buffalo County Highway Department engages in stormwater management projects along highway right of ways to control runoff and sedimentation into waterways.

**Table 4.3 CMAR Point and Grading System**

Score	Grade	Grade Point	Grade Meaning	Response Range
100-91	A	4.0	Good	Voluntary
90-81	B	3.0	Satisfactory	Voluntary
80-71	C	2.0	Marginal	Recommendation
70-61	D	1.0	Poor	Action
<61	F	0.0	Fail	Action

Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 208.05

***Solid Waste Management***

The purpose of the Buffalo County Solid Waste program is a cooperative effort between the County and its incorporated municipalities to promote and protect the public health, the natural environment, and general welfare of the residents of Buffalo County, by minimizing environmental, economic and social costs to the residents of the County.

Within Buffalo County the process by which solid waste is handled is best described as convoluted. The County of Buffalo historically has had some level of involvement/governance over solid waste but has stopped short of County action to be the sole responsible agent since 1984 for the management of solid waste materials.

All residents have an option to contract for municipal solid waste pick up from a private contractor. The overwhelming municipal solid waste removal program in Buffalo County is the bag system or more commonly referred to as “Pay as you throw” (PAYT). PAYT programs have proven to be effective tool in increasing recycling efforts while also encouraging waste minimization. The result is significant energy savings from transportation, increases in material recovery for recycling, and reduction in pollution from landfills and incinerators. PAYT programs also encourage producers to develop more efficient designs and environmentally friendly product life cycles.

Under a PAYT scheme, waste collection costs are distributed more fairly among the population and in proportion to the amount of waste, each user generates. This allows some or all of the costs associated with waste management to be removed from the resident’s property taxes. Conversely, as long as the resident has disposable income the system works. Since household waste has been noted as “generally related to household income” even those with less disposable income are likely to face lower waste collection charges under PAYT systems.

It must be noted that since a PAYT is dependent on one’s disposable income, economic instability may result in excess dumping and burning of household refuse.

If solid waste management services in Buffalo County were treated more like other utilities such as electricity or water that are charged by contract, based on municipal use, and absorbed as part of the tax base. Then many of the byproducts that result from a fluctuating economy could be better mitigated.

With the closing of the municipal landfills in the late 1980's and the expansion of waste haulers a side effect known as Potential Responsible Party (PRP) possesses a potential threat to Buffalo County. A PRP is a possible polluter who may eventually be held [liable](#) for the contamination or misuse of a particular property or [resource](#). Under the Superfund Act, municipalities may be held responsible for the cleanup of contaminated landfills. The level of liability is dependent upon the four classes of contamination, and the amount received from that municipality over a given time period. The four classes of PRPs may be liable for contamination at a Superfund site:

1. The current owner or operator of the site.
2. The owner or operator of a site at the time of disposal of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant occurred.
3. A person who arranged for the disposal of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant at a site.
4. A person who transported a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant to a site, who also selected that site for the disposal of the hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants.

In an attempt to mitigate the risk, Buffalo County entered into a twenty-year agreement with La Crosse County, and their Waste to Energy Program. This program that the County bought into initially in 1991 and renewed in 2003 thru 2023 at a cost of \$9,800.00 annually and has been largely ineffective.

Buffalo County has decided that it will not pursue flow control, a legal provision that allows state and local governments to designate the places where municipal solid waste (MSW) is taken for processing, treatment, or disposal. The idea of flow control has become a heavily debated issue among state and local governments, as designated facilities may hold monopolies on local MSW and/or recoverable materials. However, by instituting flow control and routing Buffalo County's material solid waste to La Crosse, the County could reduce the annual cost to the La Crosse Waste to Energy Program exponentially by the amount of tonnage they receive.

### *Recyclable Materials Management*

Recycling in Buffalo County is more formal with an established responsible unit (RUs) program governed by NR544. Buffalo County is the responsible unit for 78% of the population. The Towns of Waumandee, Glencoe and Montana are their own responsible units, along with the Cities of Alma and Fountain City. Those RUs outside of Buffalo Counties program hire private contractors to collect either curbside or drop off site and process bulk recyclables. They also receive a small per cap stipend from the State to defray expenses.

The County Recycling Program runs a multi- stream roll off box, drop site system. This Multi-stream recycling system helps eliminate much of the initial contamination found in single-stream, by keeping the different types of recyclable materials separated from the initial collection all the way through their final processing.

This type of set up is generally seen as more expensive initially because of the additional collection receptacles. However, the added efficiency for processors quickly offset these added costs. As materials enter the sorting facility, the majority of materials are already sorted and contamination levels are dramatically decreased, eliminating waste and expense of removal of unrecoverable materials.

The County recycling program has ten sites throughout Buffalo County. (See Table 4.4 Buffalo County Recycling Program for the services offered in each municipality) It is at these sites patrons can drop off their separated materials. The program picks up the sorted material from these remote sites and takes them to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), located in the City of Mondovi, for bulk processing, storage, and marketing.

**Table 4.4 Buffalo County Recycling Program**

	DNR Responsible Unit Program	County Drop-Off Recycling Sites	Curbside Recycling	Landfills	Municipal Composting
Town of Alma	X	X			
Town of Belvidere (BBC)	X	X			X
Town of Buffalo	X	X			
Town of Canton	X				
Town of Cross	X				
Town of Gilmanton	X	X			
Town of Glencoe	X				
Town of Lincoln	X				
Town of Maxville	X	X			
Town of Milton	X	X			
Town of Modena	X	X			
Town of Mondovi	X				
Town of Montana	X				
Town of Naples	X				
Town of Nelson	X	X			
Town of Waumandee	X				
Village of Cochrane (BBC)	X	X			X
Village of Nelson	X	X			
City of Alma	X			X	X
City of Buffalo City (BBC)	X	X			X
City of Fountain City	X		X		X
City of Mondovi	X	X	X		X

Buffalo County Recycling Department Data 2009

The MRF is owned and operated by the Buffalo County Recycling Program for the purpose of processing bulk materials. It includes a tipping floor for the sorting of recyclables and enough cold storage for the accumulation of marketable recyclables for shipment.

### Telecommunications Facilities

As mobile devices and personal computers continue to advance, telecommunications facilities will become ever more important as they must support these growing technologies. These critical facilities help aid the communication and sharing of ideas and data, allowing for increased efficiency and economic growth. Conducting an inventory on telecommunications facilities is difficult given the rapidly changing nature of technology, ever-expanding service areas, and the multitude of providers in a deregulated market. Further, highly detailed service area maps for telecommunication options are not readily available, except for emergency planning purposes.

Due to the increase of wireless communication for public safety, business, and personal use, constructing telecommunication towers is an issue that Buffalo County has recently been working to address. Found in Article V Section 51.18 of the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance are the County's guidelines on the setting, type, and usages for communication towers within the County. These guidelines are designed to limit the overall number and the disruptive appearance of these massive towers, while ensuring the expansion of coverage and the implantation of newer technologies. Currently, the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance encourages those wishing to construct new telecommunications towers to use monopoles or stealth poles. These two design features help to minimize the amount of land that must be acquired for construction.

The hilly terrain and rural landscape of Buffalo County continues to cause some less than desirable coverage throughout the County. This has resulted in gaps of both wireless phone and broadband internet coverage in some of the more rural portions of the County. However, advances in technologies and better tower sitting practices are continuously improving coverage. (See Map 4.1 Cell Phone Coverage in Buffalo County).

### Phone/ Cable/ Internet

Currently, 11 telecommunications providers provide local telephone service throughout Buffalo County. The enactment of the Federal 1996 Telecommunications Act, aided in the removing of the franchises traditional telephone companies held over specific geographical service areas throughout the United States. However, many of the Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) still exist and continue to provide services to residents throughout the County. There has been a gradual influx of Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs). This increase in CLECs has not only helped lower cost for services but has also allowed for more choices and newer forms of technology for the majority of residents. The Telecommunications Act has also helped place more restrictions on telecommunications providers ensuring that all residential providers must now offer the Life Line & Linkup Programs to eligible, low-income customers, overall improving the quality of life for residents.

Besides the traditional landline telephone, many of these providers also carry cable television, and high speed internet services (For more information on what services and the communities these providers' services refer to Table 4.5). Though, many of the regulations that govern over these additional services fall under federal administration rather than state and local jurisdictions, the communal and economic benefits can be felt by all Buffalo County residents. Broadband internet access is a form of electronic communication transporting large quantities of data across multiple signals simultaneously. The availability of broadband access, allows businesses to save time and money, students to obtain online information, and families to stay better connected over

long distances. However, the limited population within Buffalo County makes the offering of these services a difficult and expensive task for providers. Because of this increase cost, many areas within Buffalo County are without affordable and reliable high-speed internet. (Map 4.2 Number of Broadband Providers, displays current Broadband coverage throughout Buffalo County)

### *Electrical Power Generation and Distribution*

As newer electrical devices continue to become more accessible, the demand for cheap renewable energy will continue to rise. As a state, we have seen our demand for energy grow by about 2 percent annually during the past decade, with residential energy usage increasing by 3 percent and commercial use growing by more than 5 percent. All of this growth has been facilitated through a vast network of transmission lines and distribution grids, which have seen no major upgrades in nearly 30 years. This lack of reinvestment in power generation and distribution not only causes growing concerns about the delivery of reliable energy but also slows the economic growth of a community.

Buffalo County is serviced by two electric power generation sources, Xcel Energy and Dairyland Power Cooperative. These two organizations produce and transmit all of the County's electricity from their power generation facilities to their cooperative members via their transmission lines and Xcel's limited distribution grid. The majority of the power delivered to the residents of Buffalo County comes from the Dairyland coal-powered plants located just outside the City of Alma. Originally built in 1947 to supply power for the soaring, post-war energy boom, Dairylands' Alma Station has since expanded several times. The first large expansion took place in the 1960's when generators Alma #4 and #5 went on line. These 80-megawatt (MW) units utilize a steam reheat system which help to save over 1.5 million dollars annually and reduces the plant's overall coal consumption. Built in the late 1970s Dairylands' most modern station, the John P. Madgett Station (JPM) has the capacity to generate 400 MWs of electricity. Both the Alma Station and JPM Station use electrostatic precipitators to remove nearly 100 percent of all particulates that are created from the burning of coal.

In a continual effort to provide more energy, from greener renewable sources and to reduce their consumption of coal, Dairyland has decided to cease the burning of coal in its three 1950's era generating units. Alma 1, 2, and 3 units have been placed in an emergency only status. Together these units are capable of producing about 60MW of generating capacity, but increased maintenance costs and newer technologies have resulted in decreased efficiency of these units.

The power that is produced from Alma's Dairyland plant and Xcel's Prairie Island nuclear power plant, located in Welch, Minnesota, is transmitted via large transmission line to one of approximately 17 substations located all throughout Buffalo County. Power from smaller renewable energy sources is added to the electricity transmitted through these transmission lines helping both Xcel and Dairyland meet their renewable energy quotas set forth by the State of Wisconsin. From these substations, the electricity undergoes a conversion from extremely high voltage, used to reduce energy loss during transmission line travel, into a useable household voltage and amperage. This energy is then distributed to ones household via the much smaller distribution grid.

The final distribution of electricity is provided by one of the three energy wholesalers that service Buffalo County, Riverland Energy Cooperative, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, and Northern States Power Wisconsin (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy). Servicing roughly 3,617 accounts in Buffalo County, Riverland Energy Cooperative manages the largest share of energy distribution within the County. Riverland was formerly known as Buffalo Electric Cooperative and Trempealeau Electric Cooperative before their merger on June 1, 1999. Riverland energy is continuing to offer affordable reliable energy within Buffalo County. (See Map 4.3 Utilities in Buffalo County for an overview of power utilities throughout Buffalo County)

A slight increase in the cost of energy and in conjunction with greater accessibility to newer technologies has helped to make the implementation of alternative energy sources a more attractive proposition for many rural residents. The potential to use animal or agricultural byproducts not only reduces ones energy consumption but also reduces the cost associated with the removal of these waste products. New advanced technologies are also making it easier for residents to harness the natural energy sources on their farms, providing yet another source of power generation that is plentiful and environmentally friendly.

The new CapX2020 Transmission Line promises much needed upgrades to the electrical grid throughout Buffalo County. The roughly 140-mile, 345-Kilovolt (kV) transmission line will run from Hampton-Rochester, Minnesota to La Crosse, Wisconsin, with approximately 25.48 miles located within Buffalo County. This new transmission line will utilize the newest of technologies and construction methods, reducing the impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and potentially requiring less private land acquisitions. Approximately 95 landowners throughout Buffalo County will be directly affected from the acquisition of land for the use of easements and right-of-ways. Innovated solutions, such as the use of heavy left helicopters, have already been used to set the 170 foot steel tower structures in other project areas plagued by steep hills and wetlands.

The efforts of this multiple company infrastructure project will not only supply a more reliable source of energy to many of the residents of Buffalo County but will also help reduce the overall appearance of the older, extensive network of lines and towers currently running from the City of Alma to the southern end of the County. Only two slight deviations from the current network of lines will be made. These deviations have been made in order to reduce the impacts on the more developed neighborhoods along State Road 35 and limit the line's visibility from the Great River National Byway. The CapX2020 project will provide those communities directly affected by this project with monetary funding both in the form of One-time and Annual Fees. According to Table 3. Environmental Impact Fees, 5-18-2012; from the Capx2020 Public Convenience and Necessity Application, approximately four million dollars in one-time fees will be distributed into both the County and communities affected by the line. Under Wisconsin Statute § 196.491(3g) this money must go towards park, conservancy, wetland or other similar environmental programs; however, additional projects maybe authorized by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin if deemed in the best public interest. Another \$282,170.00 will be given to the local communities affected by the line on a yearly basis, which can be used for local improvements. CAPX2020 money will be generated by increases in electric rates charged to the users.

Natural gas is one of the cleanest and most environmentally friendly fossil fuels used today. With 43% less carbon dioxide (CO<sup>2</sup>) emissions than that of electricity derived from coal, natural gas is considered by many as the best source of energy for the environment both inside and outside of one's home. Natural gas can be used for the heating of your home, drying of your clothes, and for the cooking of meals. This multi-purpose along with a growing market of high efficiency appliances could potentially lead to large energy savings for the residents of Buffalo County. Currently only Midwest Natural Gas, Inc. provides natural gas services within Buffalo County. Most of the 1,233 residents' serviced by Midwest Natural Gas, Inc. can be found around the City of Mondovi, with only a few exceptions on the border between Buffalo and Trempealeau counties. (To view regions where Midwest Natural Gas, Inc. provides services, please see Map 4.3) At this time, Midwest Natural Gas, Inc. has no plans to expand their distribution of natural gas any further into Buffalo County. Low population densities and long distances make any expansion an expensive undertaking for Midwest Natural Gas, Inc.

### Senior Care Facilities

Senior care facilities are located throughout Buffalo County. Though these facilities are not governed by the county, they provide a critical service for the county's aging community. Located within Fountain City, St. Michaels Assisted living offers a variety of living accommodations and levels of care. In City of Mondovi, residents can take full advantage of the skilled nursing staff and independent living apartments of the American Lutheran Home. The Buffalo County Housing Authority has been able to provide subsidized senior living, which is adjusted to one's income, for those seniors needing a lesser degree of care. This organization helps the Buffalo County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) achieve their "Aging in Place" mission, allowing senior citizens to have the resources to stay within their communities as long as possible.

Meal sites have been established in the Towns of Glencoe, Gilmanton, Modena and the Cities of Alma, Buffalo City, and Mondovi. Though these sites run on various days of the week and times, they do provide the county's elderly community an affordable hot meal and social activities. Programs like this have proven instrumental in maintaining cognitive health and establishing a social network for checking on the health and welfare of our community's older generation. Town of Glencoe meal site will be closing at the end of 2013.

Buffalo County's hilling topography and relatively rural setting makes transportation an ever-increasing issue for seniors or those with disabilities. The county does offer a Volunteer Driver program, which provides transportation to medical facilities for those who are unable to obtain their own form of transportation for a minimal fee. As part of the meal site program, the county offers bus services for those communities along the Wisconsin and Minnesota border. Through this program, residents of Buffalo County are able to travel into Winona and Wabasha, Minnesota for grocery shopping, banking and pharmaceutical needs. For more specific information about these types of services, please contact Buffalo County ADRC office at toll free 1-866-578-2372 or [ADRC-BCP@buffalocounty.com](mailto:ADRC-BCP@buffalocounty.com).

### Medical/ Health Care

Buffalo County only has two medical clinics within its borders. These clinics are located in the City of Alma and the City of Mondovi. Owned and operated by the Mayo Clinic Health System, residents of the county are able to receive excellent medical service. However, due to insurance

options, limitations in services, and the vast distances patients must travel, many of the residents in the county are forced to choose providers outside the county. Fortunately, Community Memorial Hospital in Winona Minnesota, Gunderson Lutheran in La Crosse, Franciscan Skemp Hospital in Arcadia, and Chippewa Valley in Durand, and the numerous medical facilities in Eau Claire and Menomonie, Wisconsin, are in relative proximity to Buffalo County and have the ability to serve many of our residents immediate and specialty needs.

This minimal access to quality universal health care has been noted as a major theme in the 2010 Community Health Needs Assessment, which was part of the Buffalo County 2011 -2015 Community Health Improvement Planning Process. This limited access not only encompasses one's hospital care but also the access the community has to dental, mental health, and long term care services. Without proper access to these critical services, the people of Buffalo County are at an even greater risk of suffering from diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and excessive alcohol use. Improvement in the number of medical facilities would not only aid in the efforts of improving health conditions throughout the county but also has the potential to bring new high paying jobs and higher levels of education to the communities within Buffalo County.

### Child Care

Child care facilities can be found all throughout Buffalo County with day care providers located in the Cities of Alma, Fountain City, and Mondovi as well as within the Village of Cochrane. Currently, Buffalo County has six certified child care facilities and eleven licensed facilities, which allows for the care of more children and stricter safety considerations. Buffalo County Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for ensuring that state and local standards are continually being followed by all known child care facilities within Buffalo and Trempealeau counties.

In the last decade, trends statewide have shown slight decreases in the amount of care families have been seeking. Though the county has lost several child care facilities in the past years, the cumulative effects have been much greater due to the low overall number of facilities. This is just one reason that many residents choose to seek child care facilities outside of the county.

### Libraries

Buffalo County is a member of the Winding River Library System (WRLS). WRLS provides the residents of its seven county region with a wide variety of library resources from connections to massive online databases, book sharing and delivery capabilities, and collections of eBooks and other multimedia. This system offers residents the availability to easily access resources that may be too cost prohibitive to obtain at the local level. Besides offering traditional library resources these facilities offer free WIFI internet access. This access to the internet has allowed residents whom are either unable to afford or live in regions with limited internet options to search for jobs or further their education.

The Cities of Alma and Mondovi are the only two physical library sites in the county at this time. Residents have the ability to travel outside of the county; however, the county incurs charges for these usages. At the present time, Buffalo County is responsible for 70 percent of the charges occurred by county residents. These rates vary, as the individual libraries, which reside outside of the county, are responsible for setting their own rates. This has resulted in large financial

spending on the behalf of county in past years. The Library Services Plan contains more detailed information about the county's participation in the Winding River Library System.

### Cemeteries

Buffalo County's rich historical significance in the Fur and Timber Trade routes of the late 1800's has resulted in a variety of cemeteries varying in size, age, and denominations. The County has an estimated 56 known burial sites located all throughout the county. All cemeteries within Buffalo County are maintained and cared for by either the municipalities or by private organizations. Wisconsin Statute §157.115 indicates that if a private organization abandons or fails to care for a cemetery then the municipality, in which the cemetery is located in, may take control of the cemetery. This has the potential to create a hardship on the municipality. As a result Buffalo County does not have jurisdiction over the cemeteries in the County. However, in an effort to ensure these historical sites are preserved for future generations, the County encourages collaboration and funding partners.

The locations of these cemeteries are generally available in county plat books as well as from the County's Historical Society. The county is continuously working to improve the mapping and documenting of these sites on its online mapping webpage, in order to better depict Buffalo County's rich archaeological heritage.

### Schools

Of the seven school districts that serve Buffalo County only four schools reside within the borders of Buffalo County. (See Map 7.1 Buffalo County School District)

Originally built in 1938, the Mondovi K4-12 City School has undergone many additions. The last upgrade came from a fiber optic internet connection. This connection was provided by the Building Community Capacity through a Broadband (BCCB) grant. This BCCB grant improved internet speeds from being slower than 91% of national average speeds to faster than 74% of that in United States, for both the City School and the district's Anthony School.

Constructed in 1959, the original Cochrane-Fountain City (C-FC) high school has since seen several different additions. These various additions helped to provide a safe learning environment for the school's 700 student population. The ample space of the C-FC high school gym, common areas, and the Jim Granum Auditorium makes it an ideal facility for events and public organizations. With minimal fees, used only to help offset operating costs, residents and organizations of the district are able to rent these spaces whenever school is not in session. The pre K- 12 school complex is located all on one site, in between the City of Fountain City and the Village of Cochrane. Small class sizes at the elementary level and a strong technology implementation plan help to ensure the success of the students from an early age. As with all the past additions, future additions will be determined by enrollment numbers and building conditions.

Located in the City of Alma, the Alma School provides a safe educational setting for all students from pre-K to seniors in high school. Multiple additions have been added to the buildings original 1850's structure to help facilitate a student population of about 300, with average class sizes ranging from 20 to 25 pupils. The schools large gym and cafeteria proves to be a great

venue for many local community organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and for public forums / debates.

With a student population of about 175 pupils, the Gilmanton K4-12 school facility is the smallest in Buffalo County. The original three-story brick structure was built in the early 1920's. As the student population expanded, additional expansions were completed including a gym facility and shops for teaching agriculture equipment maintenance and advanced farming practices. The most recent expansion was the addition of a science wing in the mid-90's. There are currently no plans for future facility expansions at this time.

### *Parks and Playgrounds*

Buffalo County's historical and natural beauty offers residents and tourists a plethora of outdoor recreational activities, which range from pleasure driving, to camping, biking, and water activities. Buffalo County does not own or maintain any county parks or trails; however, patrons of the county can find many parks and trails provided by the local municipalities, state, and federal agencies. For more specific information regarding the location and uses of each park and trail system in the county please refer to the Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Enjoying the natural beauty of Buffalo County is easy as there are roughly 10 camping areas, located all throughout the County. The mix of public and privately owned and operated camping sites provides approximately 424 total campsites (See table 4.6 Buffalo County Camping Locations for more details). This diverse camping selection offers the public a wide range of camping experiences, from tent camping to recreational vehicle camping with an even wider array of amenities. Buffalo County's nationally top ranking record of trophy whitetail deer has inspired a growing number of outfitters and sportsmen's clubs all throughout the county. Though the majority of these lands are not open to the public without permission, they do offer the outdoor enthusiast yet another pleasurable camping experience.

The newly established Lower Chippewa State Natural Area, in the Village of Nelson, allows outdoor enthusiasts to explore the breathtaking views from the high bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River and Great River Road. The 161 acres not only provides scenic views of the bluff lands, but also provides excellent habitat for raptors, reptiles, and rare plant life found in few other parts of the state. Once used by the Native Americans, this site was designated by the Wisconsin Historical Society as an important archaeological site. This site not only protects the natural beauty of Buffalo County but also the County's historical heritage.

Small municipal parks can be found all throughout the County. Many of these parks include playground equipment and green space or open areas for organized sports. Surrounding many of these parks, residents can find additional amenities such as tennis and basketball courts and baseball diamonds. These recreational areas not only provide a safe atmosphere for our county's youth to play but also provide an outlet for physical fitness and community wellbeing. Private golf courses can be found near the Village of Cochrane and the City of Mondovi. A third golf course, just north of the County lines near Durand, has the availability to serve the residents of Buffalo County as well.

**Table 4.6 Buffalo County Camping Locations**

Site Name	General Location	Total Number of Camping sites	Operation Status	General Description
The Great Alma Fishing Float	City of Alma	---	Private	Offers bunk-style sleeping accommodations on a floating fishing barge. Access is only accessible by water.
Great River Harbor Campground and Marina	Town of Belvidere	122	Private	The Great River Harbor Campground and Marina offer amenities such as a mini-golf course, family restaurant, and a recreational boat marina with docking for seasonal campers.
Peck's RV Camping	The City of Buffalo City	50	Private	Pecks RV Campground provides water, sewer, and electrical hook-ups to all of their sites, offering a wonderful weekend getaway for seasonal campers.
Henderson's Silver Moon	North of Alma	13	Private	Offers water and electric hooks-ups along with clean indoor restroom facilities.
Rieck's Lake Park	North of City of Alma	20	Public	Offers a small popular camping area with amenities such as a playground, fire pits, picnic tables, showers, electricity, and a direct view of the lake.
Mondovi Tourist Park	City of Mondovi	6	Public	Available on a first come first serve basis. Sites offer electrical and water hook-ups. A honor-based camping system offers outdoor enthusiasts with a fun camping experience.
Merrick State Park	Town of Milton	57	Public	Many sites offer direct fishing access to the beautiful backwaters of the Mississippi River. Amenities differ from site to site but are not limited to a boat launch ramp, drinking water, dump station, flush restrooms, and a pet picnic area.
Nelson Landing RV Park	Village of Nelson	137	Private	Nestled at the foot of the bluffs, along the scenic National Great River Road byway, sites offer full hook-ups and gravel pads. The deluxe grass sites also offer picnic tables and fire rings.
Olson's Fishing Camp	City of Alma	6	Private	The small sites, located right on the backwaters of the Mississippi River, provide seasonal campers with a tranquil camping experience. All sites include water and electric hooks-ups.
Drift Inn	North of Fountain City	13	Private	Located on the backwaters of the Mississippi River, and in close proximity to Merrick State Park, Drift Inn offers a unique camping experience for all. With 13 campsites equipped with water, electric hooks-ups, and four cabins, everyone is sure to have fun!

Buffalo County Department of Health and Human Services

Holding its first Fair in October of 1872, the Buffalo County Fair has held deep roots within the social fabric of the County. With the replacement of the Buffalo County Agricultural Society by the Buffalo County Agricultural Fair Association, Inc. (BCAFA) in 1954, the Buffalo County Fair has been able to continue embodying its original philosophy of promoting better farm products and stimulating better living conditions within the rural communities

The Fair was moved to the northwestern portion of the City of Mondovi in 1894, where it still resides today. The City of Mondovi purchased the Fairgrounds in 1912, and then in 1954 the BCAFA obtained their first ten-year lease of the property for operation of the Fair. Today the

fairgrounds are still owned by the City of Mondovi and leased to Buffalo County for the purpose of the County Fair. The Fair itself is organized and conducted solely by the BCAFA.

Multiple buildings have been constructed throughout the years to house livestock, distribute concessions, and provide flush restrooms and entertainment during the duration of the Buffalo County Fair. Many of these building are rented out for storage throughout the rest of the year. The open grass areas of the fairgrounds provide an excellent area for outdoor summer league activities such as soccer and flag football. The City of Mondovi uses portions of the fairgrounds for smaller city events such as Friendship Days.

Buffalo County's deep-rooted history along the Mississippi River makes motor boating and other water activities ideal during the summer months. There are public boat launches in Merrick State Park as well as the cities of Alma, Buffalo City, and Fountain City. The slower current of the Mississippi's backwaters is perfect for an afternoon of canoeing and kayaking. These same backwaters along with numerous tributaries provide excellent fishing opportunities during both the summer and winter months.

### Trail Systems

Buffalo County has very few formal hiking and walking trails. Outdoor recreation planners define "hiking trails" as those paths that allow for a walking trip of more than four hours or eight miles in duration. In contrast to hiking trails, walking trails offer shorter distances and can be found in both rural and more urbanized settings. Both of these trails are to be clearly defined (marked) and are maintained so that they are free of brush and other obstacles. They may also serve multiple purposes from access for all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and snowmobiles to biking and cross-country skiing.

Short-marked trails are available for general hiking in Merrick State Park as well as the steep trail connecting the City of Alma to Buena Vista Park, atop Twelve Mile Bluff. Besides the Buena Vista Trail, the City of Alma also maintains the Mossy Hollow Trail system located in the southern region of city limits. Running along an old railroad grade, The Buffalo River State Trail provides opportunities for community members to hike, off-road bike, and enjoy snowmobile and ATV activities. The Buffalo River State Trail not only offers an ideal location for improving ones physical wellbeing but also offers connectivity between the City of Mondovi and Village of Fairchild in Eau Claire County along its stretch of 36.4 miles.

Starting in Canada and winding down along the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, the Great River Road provides scenic views of the high bluffs to the east and the majestic Mississippi River and its low laying backwaters to the west. This 39.7 mile stretch of the National Scenic Trail is perfect for those wishing to experience a pleasurable scenic drive. The Great River Road does offer limited access for cyclists connecting to the Great River State Trail, located mostly in La Crosse County, in the southern portion of Buffalo County. The high volume of traffic and sections of road, with less than five feet of paved shoulder on both sides, can cause some safety concerns for even the most seasoned of cyclists. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation continues to make great strides towards improving the safety of cyclists. Currently, along the Great River Road in Buffalo County, we have approximately 62.1 miles of paved shoulder consisting of at least 5 feet in width.

In an effort to provide an even more extensive trail network, promote intergovernmental and interstate relationships, and to improve healthy living conditions, Buffalo County has taken the lead on the Great River State Trail Winona Connector project. With funding from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, a proposed 3.9 mile crushed limestone, multi-use trail would allow for a complete trail connection between Wisconsin's Great River State Trail and the Winona, Minnesota's City Trail system. Starting near Aghaming Park on Latsch Island, the proposed trail would follow the abandoned State Road 54 route. A new grade separation bridge would be built to allow for the safe crossing of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad. The new trail would then angle south following the old railroad grade towards the Town of Buffalo. A new bridge would be designed and placed on the abandoned cut stone foundation once used by the railroad for crossing the backwaters of the Mississippi River. Finally, the trail would follow the old railroad grade on the south side of State Road 35 to the parking lot of the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and the Great River State Trail.

Buffalo County's close proximity to the Mississippi River offers adventurous hikers the availability to explore the numerous, unmarked trails of the 8,000 acre lowland river bottom just east of the mouth of the Chippewa River. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manage these lands. They not only provide unstructured hiking for residents but also prime locations for hunting and fishing throughout the seasons.

### Emergency Services

Buffalo County relies predominately on the Buffalo County Sheriff Department and volunteer Fire and EMS agencies to respond to emergency situations. The only fulltime staffed agency is the Buffalo County Sheriff Department. State Patrol, and three local police departments augment the Sheriff Department through mutual aid requests.

Buffalo County is a 911 County and is equipped with a dispatch center. All agencies respond by dispatch and paging through the Buffalo County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center, which is located at the Buffalo County Courthouse.

With the advent of the National Incident Management System and the National Response Framework, an all-hazards approach to emergency mitigation, planning, response and recovery has taken place. The Departments of Public Health and Emergency Management are intertwined in planning for the executable response to all-hazards (manmade/natural) events within Buffalo County. This is done through strategic planning and the request for, and implemented use of, state and federal resources.

There is a standing Local Emergency Planning Committee that meets twice annually to review the status of bulk chemical plants and hazardous material spills within the confines of Buffalo County.

The County Administration has not shown a real desire to support Emergency Operation Center Operation compliance through NIMS training. EOC space is allocated and development of County continuity of operations plan is ongoing. Additional training requirements set forth by state and federal agencies, have produced some hardships for volunteer response agencies. Many of these additional requirements are associated with increases in certification standards needed

by volunteer personnel. These increases in standards require greater obligations on the volunteer staff, which will result in fewer personnel to service these departments. Sharp decreases in emergency personal could potentially slow response times or even eliminated local services.

*Fire and HAZMAT* - There are six volunteer fire departments within the boundaries of Buffalo County. There are three supporting on the outer fringes of Buffalo County and they are Durand VFD, Arcadia Glencoe VFD, and the Dodge Fire Department. There are also mutual aid agreements (MOU)'s with Winona and Wabasha, Minnesota and Eau Claire, WI.

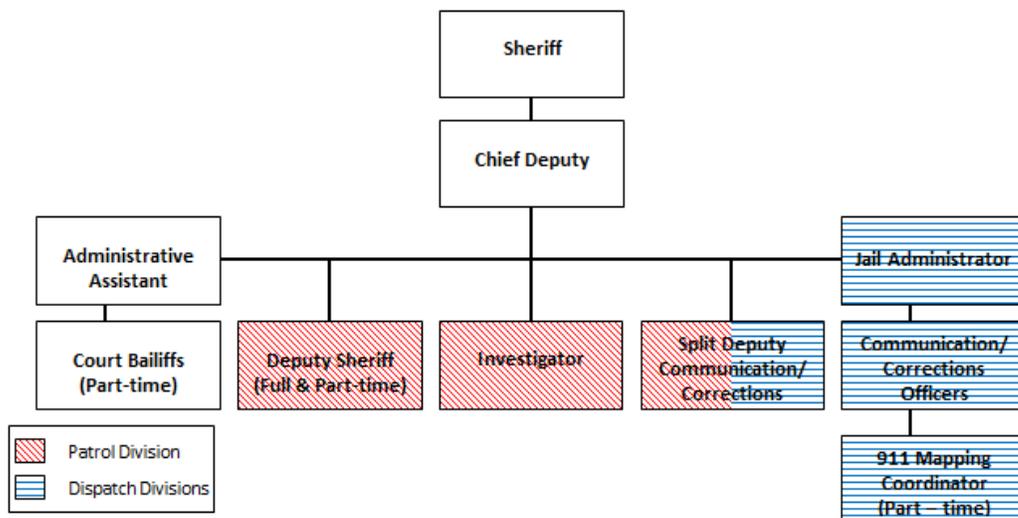
There are currently two Regional HAZMAT teams that service Buffalo County. Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire north of state highway 95 and that is a level 1, formally (LEVEL A+) and La Crosse south of state highway 95 and level 2 formally (Level A).

*Ambulance Service* - Six Ambulance companies service Buffalo County. Five are volunteer, with Winona Area Ambulance being private. Mayo health care provides helicopter service out of Eau Claire and Rochester.

*First Responders* - Six first responder agencies reside in the county. They are auto dispatched with all traffic accidents and rural ambulance calls.

*Law Enforcement* - The Buffalo County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency in the County. Though the Cities of Alma, Fountain City, and Mondovi maintain their own law enforcement agencies, the county is called upon regularly to help in mutual aid situations. Located in the Buffalo County court house building, the department's twenty three full-time staff, and six part-time employees provide 24-hour law enforcement and process services, court security, jail facilities, emergency dispatch, and the only trained K9 unit in our 672 square mile county.

**Figure 4.1 Buffalo County Sheriff's Department Organizational Chart**



Situated within the Buffalo County Sheriff’s Department, as depicted in Figure 4.1 Buffalo County Sheriff’s Department Organizational Chart, the Buffalo County Jail and Dispatch Divisions are responsible for providing 24-hour jail monitoring and emergency telephone services for all residents in the county. Using an Enhanced 911 System (E911), dispatchers are able to send and organize emergency management assets quickly and accurately. This highly integrated system has proven to be a critical component in the managing of nine Fire Departments, four First Responder organizations, six Ambulance Services, as well as with other county and state entities, including those in Minnesota.

The County is further supported by two troopers from the Wisconsin State Patrol, and the DNR Warden. An MOU with the State Police at Merrick State Park also is in effect.

***Other Government Facilities***

Built in 1962, the Buffalo County Court House, in Alma, serves as the seat of county government. This facility houses all county offices as well as additional rental office space for federal and state agencies. The 1988 southern addition added approximately 12,320 square feet to the overall building footprint. No future expansions are anticipated at this time.

Buffalo County owns and maintains five highway shops located throughout the County. Located off State Road 37, the largest of the Buffalo County highway shops, the Alma Highway Shop was originally built in 1969. This facility has since remodeled its sign and office areas in 2004 as well as the construction of a second larger storage building in 2010. Due to its close proximity to the County court house and its relative central location within the County, this facility has become the primary hub for equipment maintenance and field operations.

**Table 4.7 Other Government Facilities**

Facility Name	Year of Original Structure	Additions and Renovations
Alma Highway shop	1969	Completion of a second storage Building - 2010 Renovation of the sign and office area - 2004
Urne Highway shop	1973	New addition - 2000
Mondovi Highway shop	1930	Renovation - 2009 Completion of a second storage Building – 1953 New Addition - 1945
Waumandee Highway Shop	1978	New Ventilation system – 1999
Fountain City Highway Shop	1984	-----
Buffalo County Court House	1962	Southern addition - 1988

Future expansion of the Alma Highway Shop may include additional office space as well as a large conference room. This expansion could allow for greater consolidation of the highway department staff, resulting in improved office efficiency and greatly reducing travel times and their associated costs. This expansion would provide a spacious meeting room that could be used by other county departments as well as for both public and private organizations. The addition of a spacious conference room would provide an ideal classroom and outdoor setting for County Outreach training events or additional emergency personnel training.

Smaller satellite shops can be found in the cities of Mondovi and Fountain City as well as in the towns of Modena and Waumandee. These facilities vary in both age and size. (See Table 4.7 Other Government Facilities, for specific details) In an effort to maximize emergency response times and optimize county resources, flood control equipment, emergency response trailers, and the county impound facility have been strategically arranged at these sites. By placing these critical assets among the smaller highway shops, emergency planners can quickly deploy them as needed even in the most severe conditions.

Many of the local units of government own and maintain their municipal buildings. These facilities vary greatly in both age and size. Several of these structures were originally designed and used as schools and for farm storage. These buildings have since been renovated into large halls used for meeting and local events.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Utilities and Community Facilities Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

**Objective: Buffalo County will continue to support the Department of Health and Human Services Water Lab and ensure they have adequate resources to handle future increases in testing capacity.**

- The County will deploy innovative and creative marketing techniques to encourage local communities, residents, and businesses to utilize the services offered by the Buffalo County Department of Health and Human Services Water Lab. The Department of Health and Human Services will continue to work with the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh to ensure their services offer the ability to obtain cost effective and time saving water testing while maintaining standards set forth by the WIDNR.

**Objective: Ensure the proper disposal of wastewater in Buffalo County in order to protect the public health and water quality.**

- Complete an inventory of all Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems in the County.
- Identify noncompliant POWTS in the County and rehabilitate or replace them.
- Identify POWTS in the County that are no longer in use and ensure their proper abandonment.

**Objective: Protect the navigable waters of Buffalo County.**

- Prevent and control water pollution and soil erosion problems.
- Protect spawning grounds, fish, and aquatic life.
- Promote shoreland preservation and restoration projects in Buffalo County.

**Objective: The County will work with the City of Buffalo City and the surrounding communities to plan for the implementation of municipal utilities and secure the much needed funding to obtain these long lasting investments.**

**Objective: The County must continue to emphasize the detrimental effects that additional training requirements place upon rural emergency services.**

- The county will work with the Wisconsin Technical College System on eliminating the need for entrance examination for entry-level emergency services certifications.
- The County will continue to work with State agencies on the lobbying for federal government wavers and adjustments on rural emergency services in Wisconsin.

**Objective: Buffalo County will continue to promote the development of a modern communication network throughout the County while focusing on preserving the County's natural beauty and ensuring public safety.**

- The County will support the use of a self-supporting/ imploding communication tower design as they provide a greater sense of safety and generally require a smaller land use footprint.
- Buffalo County will work with local telecommunications companies and local businesses to encourage new services that offer affordable and reliable high speed internet to residents, schools, and businesses in the County.

**Objective: Buffalo County understands that affordable and reliable power services are critical for maintaining the current level of development as well as inspiring future development for the residents of the County.**

- The County will advocate for the use of alternative energy sources and support the implementation of residential energy sources.
- Buffalo County recognizes the aging utility grid and supports the cooperative efforts of the State of Wisconsin, State of Minnesota, and the surrounding counties.
- Buffalo County pledges to use potential financial investments from current and future energy projects to develop innovative ways to redistribute funds back into the community while focusing on public safety and community improvement.

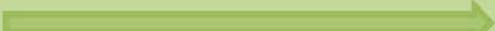
**Objective: Buffalo County understands that without affordable and efficient modes of transportation for the elderly and the disabled community, it would be impossible to provide the level of support and services that resident's desire.**

- The County will continue to assess current population and housing trends in order to develop programs that can assure that we maintain and improve our current level of services as the population of Buffalo County continues to age.
- Buffalo County will continue to work with programs administered by state and federal agencies to ensure residents receive benefits entitled to them in a timely and efficient manner.

**Table 4.5 Telecommunication Providers By Region**

	TDS	Frontier Communications	Nelson Telephone Cooperative	CenturyLink	Charter	Tri County Communications Cooperative Inc.	INCI	Cochrane Telephone Co.	Granite	Metel
Town of Alma	X			X						
Town of Belvidere	X								X	
Town of Buffalo					X	X				
Town of Canton			X	X						
Town of Cross					X	X				
Town of Dover				X		X	X			
Town of Gilmanton	X			X						X
Town of Glencoe					X	X				
Town of Lincoln	X			X	X					
Town of Maxville				X						
Town of Milton					X	X				X
Town of Modena	X			X						
Town of Mondovi			X							
Town of Montana	X			X			X			
Town of Naples			X	X		X	X			
Town of Nelson	X			X						X
Town of Waumandee	X					X		X	X	
Village of Cochrane									X	
Village of Nelson	X			X						
City of Alma	X							X		
City of Buffalo City									X	
City of Fountain City					X	X				X
City of Mondovi			X			X				X

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin; Local Service Competitors in Wisconsin

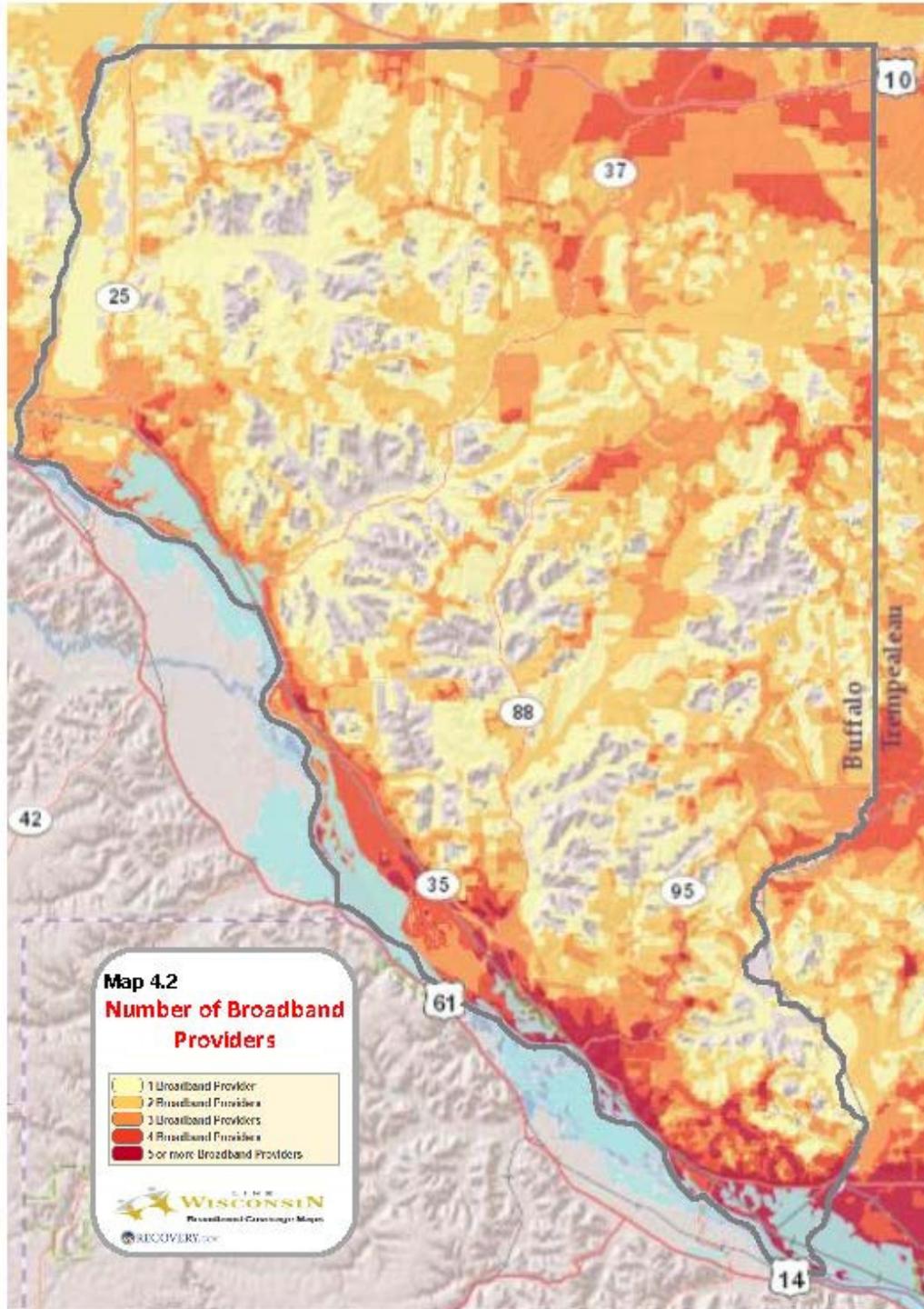
<b>Additional Services Offered</b>	 Land Line Phone	
	 High Speed Internet	
	 Cable Television	

Though many of these providers offer phone, internet, and television, services these services may not be offered in all regions of Buffalo County. To find out more about what services are available in your area please contact your service provider.

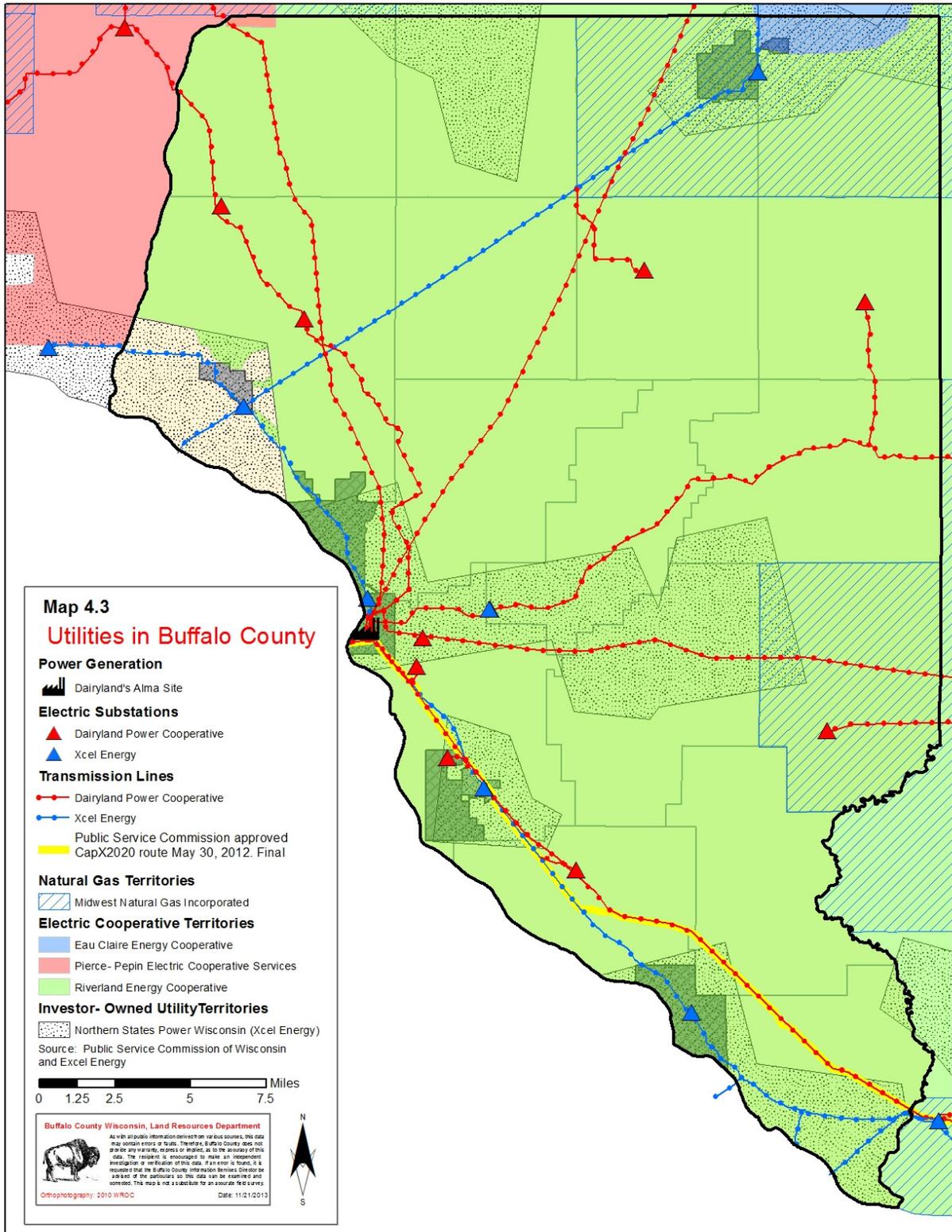
**Map 4.1 Cell Phone Coverage in Buffalo County**



**Map 4.2 Number of Broadband Providers**



# Map 4.3 Utilities in Buffalo County



## Section 5 Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element

### Element Overview

This chapter addresses the rich cultural, agricultural and natural resources Buffalo County has to offer. Sustaining these resources will be a challenge, but attainable goals and strategies including programs will be put into place in the preservation of these resources.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is still the dominate land use in Buffalo County today, with dairy, crop, and mixed livestock operations on an estimated 1,229 farms county wide. The average-size farm in Buffalo County is 250 acres, down from 280 acres in 2002, compared to the state-wide average for Wisconsin of 194 acres per farm, down from 204 acres in 2002, which ranks Buffalo County 7<sup>th</sup>, down from 4<sup>th</sup> in the state in 2002 in average size farm, with Adams County having the largest farm per acre with 283, followed by Ashland County at 273, Portage County at 264, Lafayette County at 255, Jackson County at 253 and Langlade County at 252.

Table 5.1 Change in Farm Size from 1991 to 2007 shows the number of farms, average size of farms and land in farms in Buffalo County from 1991 through 2007. The trend is that there are more farms, with less acres and there was a loss of 66,965 acres of land in farms in this 16-year period of time, which is 18% decrease in land in farms.

**Table 5.1 Change in Farm Size from 1979 to 2007**

	Number of Farms*	Average Size of Farms	Land in Farms
1979	1,310	295	387,000
1989	1,120	338	378,000
1998	1,170	291	341,000
2002	1,128	280	316,132
2007	1,229	250	307,035

\*Farm is currently defined as a place that sells, or would normally sell at least \$1,000 of agricultural products during the year.

Table 5.1 Change in Farm Size from 1991 to 2007 shows a decrease of 79,965 acres over this 28 year period of time, which is a 21% decrease in farmland.

As shown in Map 5.1 Agricultural and Residential Lands, the farmland tends to trend in the valleys and on ridge tops, and the prime farmland soils mainly reside in the valleys due to deposition of the sediment and nutrients.

### Prime Farmland

Prime farmland by definition from the USDA-NRCS- Wisconsin Technical Guide, Section 2, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air.

Prime farmland resides mainly in the valleys and on slopes with a grade of less than 6%. These soils are not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Users of the lists of prime farmland map units should recognize that soil properties are only one of several criteria that are necessary. Map 5.2 Buffalo County Prime Farmland, shows where the prime farmland soils in the county are located. Buffalo County does not have any restrictions in place for development on prime farmland soils at this time. The prime farmland soils for Buffalo County are listed in Table 5.2 Buffalo County Prime Soil Types

### Soils of Buffalo County

The soil survey currently being used in Buffalo County was published in 1962. A digital form of the 1962 Buffalo County Soil Survey is available through Web Soil Survey. Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information. They anticipate having an updated soil survey for Buffalo County by 2013.

The 1962 soil survey showed eight different general soil associations of the county. These soil associations are as follows:

1. Silty soils of the rolling uplands and steep stony and rocky land: Dubuque, Fayette, steep stony and rocky land.
2. Loamy soils of the rolling to hilly sandstone uplands: Gale, Hixton
3. Sandy soils of the rolling to hilly sandstone uplands: Boone, Hixton
4. Sandy soils of the stream terraces: Sparta, Plainfield
5. Silty soils of stream terraces: Bertrand, Richwood
6. Loamy terrace soils underlain by sand on stream terraces: Meridian, Tell
7. Wet organic and mineral soils of bottomlands: Peat and Muck, Etrick, Walkkill
8. Soils of overflow bottom lands: Loamy, alluvial, Marsh.

*Fayette-Dubuque Association* - As the largest and most uniform association in the county, the principal upland soils are Dubuque and Fayette. Down soils are also extensive. These silt-loam soils are underlain by dolomitic limestone or materials weathered from limestone and were formed under forest (Fayette and Dubuque) or prairie (Downs).

This association has the largest acreage of soils under cultivation and in pasture or trees. Although highly productive, these soils are susceptible to water erosion unless managed properly. This association is 35.6% of the soil in the county.

*Gale-Hixton Association* - Found mainly in the northeastern part of the county, this association consists of rolling and hilly soils underlain by sandstone. Both are forest soils; the Gale series formed in loess over sandstone, while the Hixton soils formed from materials weathered from sandstone.

The soils of this association don't have the moisture hold capacity or productivity of the Fayette-Dubuque soils and are less erosive. This association accounts for only 8.5% of the soil in the county.

*Boone-Hixton Association* - This association is found mainly on the sandstone uplands of northern Buffalo County and is formed of materials weathered from sandstone. The narrow stream bottoms within the association are alluvial lands, which are too wet or subject to frequent flooding for cultivation.

These sandy soils are low in moisture-holding capacity, low in fertility, and are subject to both wind and water erosion.

*Sparta-Plainfield Association* - The soils in this association are nearly level to rolling soils formed in sand that were stream transported. Most of the soils are on the stream terraces throughout the county. Although the terraces in this association are not as high above the floodplain as other stream terraces in the county, they have rather steep, well-defined escarpments. Soils of this association are generally droughty, low in productivity, and subject to severe wind erosion. Soils on escarpments are subject to severe gullying if not protected.

*Bertrand-Richwood Association* - This association consists of deep, silty soils, mainly on nearly level to sloping benches or terraces along streams. The soils range from well to poorly drained.

Most of the soils in this association are highly productive, occur in fairly large areas and generally have mild relief. Some soils on bottom lands require drainage or protection from flooding. Soils with the steepest slopes are subject to water erosion or severe gullying.

*Meridian-Tell Association* - Soils of this association consist mainly of nearly level to sloping, loamy soils on stream terraces, chiefly along the Buffalo River. They vary from moderately to well drained.

These soils are subject to water erosion, gullying and slumping, and as a result, a large amount of sediment has been deposited in the valleys and terraces below.

*Peat and Muck-Ettrick-Wallkill Association* - These soils occur on flats or in depressions along streams and are poorly drained. While they are subject to flooding, they are highly productive if drained and well managed.

**Table 5.2 Buffalo County Prime Soil Types**

Map Unit Symbol	Soil Series Name	Map Unit	Soil Series
Ar	Arenzville silt loam	BeA	Bertrand silt loam
BeB	Bertrand silt loam	BeB2	Bertrand silt loam, moderately eroded
CaA	Chaseburg silt loam	CaB	Chaseburg silt loam
DaA	Dakota fine sandy loam	DaB	Dakota fine sandy loam
DaB2	Dakota fine sandy loam moderately eroded	DbA	Dakota loam
DbB	Dakota loam	DcB	Downs silt loam
DcB2	Downs silt loam, moderately eroded	DdB	Downs silt loam, benches
DeB	Dubuque silt loam	DeB2	Dubuque silt loam, moderately eroded
DpB	Dubuque silt loam, deep	DpB2	Dubuque silt loam, deep, moderately eroded
FaB	Fayette silt loam, uplands	FaB2	Fayette silt loam, uplands
FvB	Fayette silt loam, valleys	GaB2	Gale silt loam
HcB	Hesch fine sandy loam	HfB2	Hixton fine sandy loam, moderately eroded
HsB	Hixton loam	HsB2	Hixton loam moderately eroded
Hv	Huntsville silt loam	JaA	Jackson silt loam
JaB	Jackson silt loam	JaB2	Jackson silt loam moderately eroded
JuA	Judson silt loam	JuB	Judson silt loam
MdA	Medary silt loam	MdB2	Medary silt loam moderately eroded
MeA	Meridian fine sandy loam	MeB	Meridian fine sandy loam
MeB2	Meridian fine sandy loam moderately eroded	MmA	Meridian loam
MmB	Meridian loam	MmB2	Meridian loam moderately eroded
MnA	Meridian loam, moderately well drained variant	MnB	Meridian loam, moderately well drained variant
NfB2	Norden fine sandy loam moderately eroded	RcA	Richwood silt loam
RcB	Richwood silt loam	Ro	Rowley silt loam
TeA	Tell silt loam	TeB	Tell silt loam
ToA	Toddville silt loam	ToB	Toddville silt loam
WkA	Waukegan silt loam	WkB	Waukegan silt loam

### Natural Resources

*Valleys and Ridges* - The land area of the county is 684.5 square miles or 438,080 acres. The county is 27 miles wide at its northern end, but in the southern part it tapers gradually to a point near the place where Trempealeau and Mississippi Rivers join. It is approximately 38 ½ miles long. The county ranks fortieth (40) in size among the 72 in Wisconsin. There are 17 civil townships; Alma is the county seat. With a total population of 13,425, the density is approximately 19.9 people per square mile, which is about the same as it was 10 years ago.

The landscapes of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) provide economical revenue for the county. These areas include wetlands, creeks, rivers, bluff sides, prairies and forests. In the county, there are six major watersheds, the major and largest being the Waumandee Watershed. Its steep sided valleys are heavily forested with hardwoods and scattered goat prairies.

Buffalo County is diverse in natural and agricultural resources from natural beauty of the bluffs and valleys to the wildlife habitat to the family dairy farms and chicken coops. It is located in west-central, within the unglaciated, Driftless Area of Wisconsin, with Pepin and Eau Claire Counties form the northern border, while Trempealeau County lies to the east. The county has many high ridges, with its highest point at 1,360 feet on Montana Ridge. It is dissected by streams that are bordered by bottom lands or floodplains. The lowest part of the county, the floodplain of the Mississippi River in the extreme southern part of the county has an elevation of approximately 650 feet. Farther back from the streams and along the edges of the floodplains are the stream terraces. The highest terraces are in the valley of Bear Creek in the northern end of the county. They rise to an elevation of approximately 900 feet.

*Forestry* - Total Forestland in Buffalo County is 168,000 acres or 48% of the county. There are no County, State or National Forest lands is located in Buffalo County. Most of the forest lands (woodland) in Buffalo County are all privately owned. See Map 5.3 Buffalo County Forest Land for more detail.

Of the acres of forestland in the county, according to 2013 numbers, 75,707.3 are enrolled in the Managed Forest Law (MFL) Program. Of the total MFL acres enrolled in the county, only 927.44 acres are open to the public for such activities such as fishing, hunting, cross country skiing and sightseeing.

### State Parks

Located along the Mississippi River north of Fountain City, the 322-acre Merrick State Park is popular with anglers and boaters and the only state park in Buffalo County. The marshy backwaters are home for egrets, herons, muskrats and otters. A wooden stairway provides access to the river. The park has picnic areas along the Mississippi River. One near the lower boat launch is open to leashed pets. Three shelters throughout the park have the option for reservations.

### State Wildlife Areas

Public lands managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provide many opportunities and public spaces for everyone to hunt, fish, trap, hike, canoe, or watch or photograph wildlife. All wildlife areas are managed to sustain the wildlife and natural communities found on the properties and to provide a full range of traditional outdoor recreational uses.

*Big Swamp Wildlife Area* - Acquisition of this property began in 1956 with the goal of protecting winter pheasant cover for pheasants. The Big Swamp WMA has since grown to 796 acres in size. Management on the property is limited as much of the acreage consists of tamarack swamp and lowlands, although there is a mix of upland hardwoods on the property.

Recreational opportunities in Bid Swamp Wildlife Area include of hunting (rabbits, squirrels, deer), trapping, hiking wildlife viewing and bird watching.

The property is located 5 miles west of Mondovi south on Highway 10. Currently access is only available from County Highway A on the south side of the property.

*Nelson-Trevino Bottoms* - Located below the confluence of the Chippewa and Mississippi Rivers, Nelson-Trevino Bottoms features an extensive, undisturbed wilderness portion of the largest delta floodplain forest in the upper Midwest. Roadless except for a short trail at the southwest corner, the bottoms are a maze of forested floodplain and ever-changing oxbow meanders, marshes, sloughs, and ephemeral ponds. The remoteness combined with a highly productive delta system has allowed extensive and large wildlife populations to flourish. The site is home to many rare or uncommon species. Nelson-Trevino Bottoms is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was designated a State Natural Area in 1970.

Ranging from the Reaches of Wabasha, Minnesota down to Rock Island, Illinois, the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge stretches 261 miles along the banks of the states surrounding the Mississippi River. The total amount of acreage in this stretch is 248,089.2 acres, with 90,297.81 acres on the Wisconsin side, spanning from the northwest corner of Buffalo County down to the southwest corner of Grant County. Here, recreational activities such as boating and tourism occur, but also supplements the sporting side, including hunting and fishing. This area also is vital habitat for waterfowl and the national bird, the American Bald Eagle.

*Tiffany Wildlife Area* - Tiffany Wildlife Area has a diversity and abundance of wildlife on more than 13,000 acres. The area contains one of the state's largest, continuous bottomland hardwood forests. Timber harvests help maintain aspen and oak in a diverse pattern of size and age classes.

This variety in woodland composition and structure provide food and shelter for a wide variety of wildlife including deer, ruffed grouse and beaver. Dead trees with dens are left to provide wildlife homes. Oaks with superior potential for producing acorns are preserved to provide nutritious high energy wildlife food. Scattered open areas are maintained to promote and provide habitat for open habitat species.

Recreational opportunities in the Tiffany Wildlife Area include hunting (deer, ruffed grouse, turkey, squirrel, waterfowl), trapping (beaver and otter are protected from trapping in an 8,000-acre closed area), hiking (trails not marked), cross country skiing (trails not marked), berry picking, canoeing, rafting, camping ([by permit only] primitive camping only, no developed sites), wildlife viewing and bird watching.

The property is located 45 minutes south of Eau Claire and 90 minutes north of LaCrosse, along the Chippewa River between Nelson and Durand on the west side of Highway 25 and mostly north of State Highway 35. About 1/6 of the property lies west of the Chippewa River in Pepin County. The rest lies east of the Chippewa River in Buffalo County.

*Trempealeau River Meadow* - Trempealeau River Meadow is a high quality wetland complex located in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin. The site features a large undisturbed sedge meadow with a diversity of species. At four locations the water deepens in old oxbows of the Trempealeau River forming deep-water marshes with an abundance of submerged aquatic species. An important aspect of these communities is the absence of invasive species. Large numbers of grassland birds, which are declining in Wisconsin, nest in the area. Trempealeau River Meadow is owned by the DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002.

*Whitman Dam Wildlife Area* - The Whitman Wildlife Area was established in 1965 through a donation of 1,257 acres of land made to the State of Wisconsin by John Latsch in 1919. Whitman Dam Wildlife now is an area of 2,253 acres. Latsch donated the land to be used by citizens of Wisconsin for outdoor recreational activities. In 1936 the US Corps of Engineers installed Lock and Dam #5 which tied into the north end of the Whitman Dam Wildlife Area. Since the construction of the dam three culverts have been installed that allow water to flow through the wildlife area. Management on the property is limited to boundary posting and fish and wildlife population surveys.

Recreational opportunities in the Whitman Dam Wildlife Area include hunting (rabbits, squirrels, deer, ducks, geese and turkey), trapping, hiking, wildlife viewing and bird watching.

### County Parks

There are no county parks in Buffalo County.

### Other Municipal Parks

Public lands managed by the towns, cities and villages they reside in. These lands are open to the public and provide a large array of recreational activity.

*Buena Vista Park* - Located in Alma, Wisconsin, Buena Vista provides the public with a view of the Mississippi River and the surrounding forests and lands.

*Buffalo City Park* - Located in Buffalo City, Buffalo City Park offers to the public a vast selection of recreational activities: tennis and volleyball courts, ice skating, picnic shelters, playgrounds as well as open grass areas.

*Foelsch Riverside Park* - Located in Buffalo City, Foelsch Riverside Park offers a ten acre stretch of woodland with meandering walking trails that allow visitors to view wildlife in a natural state.

*Goose Lake Memorial Park* - Located in Cochrane, Goose Lake offers areas for picnics, a heated pool, and the chance to watch hundreds of Canadian Geese migrate and rest in this beautiful scenery.

*Harmonia Park* - Located in Waumandee, Wisconsin, Harmonia provides the public with a quaint recreational area for children and picnic area.

*Memorial Park* - Located in Mondovi, Wisconsin, Memorial park offers the Joseph Peterson Arboretum and shelters for the public to use at their discretion. It also offers volleyball and baseball/softball fields. A swimming pool and tennis courts are owned and located at the school.

*Mirror Lake* - Located in Mondovi, Wisconsin, Mirror Lake provides playground equipment, picnic areas and shelters. A public boat landing is located at the park, allowing anglers and boat enthusiasts to enjoy the tranquil waters of Mondovi.

*Riecks Lake Park* - Located in Alma, Wisconsin, Rieck's Lake is located at the confluence of the Buffalo and Mississippi Rivers. In the past it was best known as a central staging area for Tundra Swans when they are in migration, but the park offers so much more. Beautiful sunrises start your day and if you are traveling in the summer months you may experience the morning mist as it rises from the water.

*Sharps Point Park* - Located in Mondovi, Wisconsin, Sharps Point is the site of Veteran's Memorial, and provides shelters for reservation.

*Tourist Park* - Located in Mondovi, Wisconsin, Tourist Park provides campsites for reservation, public shelters, historic log cabin, and a museum.

*Veteran's Memorial Park* - Located in Buffalo City, Veteran's Memorial Park offers shelters, baseball/softball fields and a concession stand for the public to use and enjoy.

*Fountain City, WI* – Located in Fountain City is a park with a pavilion, ball park and playground equipment.

### *Non-Metallic Mining*

Buffalo County recognizes the importance and need for non-metallic mining operations and also recognizes the importance of proper reclamation to those sites with an approved reclamation plan that meets the requirement of NR135. The ordinance is administered by the Land Resources Department in Buffalo County.

Nonmetallic mining, in Buffalo County, mainly consists mainly of the excavation of sand, gravel, and stone. This has been traditionally rock quarries in the county for road building and field limestone. Currently, there are 37 approved nonmetallic mines in Buffalo County. Map 5.4 Permitted Non- Metallic Mines in Buffalo County, shows the location of the current nonmetallic mining sites in the County.

There is concern expressed in the local Town Land Use plans about the increasing number of industrial sand mine inquiries in the western Wisconsin area, which also fall under the non-metallic mining category. Several concerns include, but not limited traffic on the rural state, county and town roads or an option of rail loading as an alternative for truck traffic. Air quality and water quality have also been of concern when industrial sand mining are in the process of being permitted, however air monitoring and high capacity wells are currently being regulated by the Wisconsin DNR.

### *Groundwater*

Buffalo County lies in two separate basins as defined by the DNR. The north-western part of the county, the Bear Creek Watershed, lies in the Lower Chippewa River Basin and the balance of the land lies in the Black-Buffero-Trempealeau Basin. These watersheds drain into the Mississippi River as well as recharge the sandstone aquifers below.

An aquifer is a layer of rock or soil that is capable of storing, transmitting and yielding water to wells. Buffalo County is located in the Cambrian-Ordovician (sandstone) aquifer system. Cambrian and Ordovician rocks form the bedrock surface in the southern 2/3 of Wisconsin. A visual representation of where these rock formations lay in the County can be seen on Map 5.5 Bedrock Geology of Buffalo County. The primary aquifer that serves Buffalo County is the St. Peter-Prairie Du Chien-Jordan aquifer that spans from southeastern Minnesota to the upper peninsula of Michigan. This information was taken from the Groundwater Atlas of the U.S. for Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin – Groundwater Atlas of the United States, U.S. Geological Survey.

Buffalo County residents rely entirely on groundwater for drinking water. The rural population depends on shallower, less protected aquifers than the urban population served by public water supplies. Most groundwater in the state is consumed by residential users for such needs as drinking water, cleaning and sanitary purposes. Industry is the next largest groundwater consumer, followed by irrigation.

Water distribution is governed by the hydrologic or water cycle, which is kept in motion by solar energy and gravity. As rain falls to earth, some flows downhill as runoff to water bodies. Some evaporates; plants take up some. The rest trickles down through surface soil and rock. This water becomes groundwater. Groundwater is discharged into surface water bodies such as wetlands, lakes and streams – the low places where groundwater meets the land surface. When there is development, large areas are paved over. This decreases in the area within a watershed where rain can infiltrate to the groundwater. The result is increased over land flow to surface water bodies. Flooding, increased sedimentation of streambeds, increased stream temperature and degradation of stream habitat will result.

The potential for groundwater contamination is determined by land use practices applied to an area in conjunction with the physical setting. The “physical setting” of an area includes, but is not limited to, soil, type and thickness, presence of glacial sediments such as sand and gravel, depth to bedrock, depth to groundwater, and topography. From the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Analytical database of groundwater well testing, there is a correlation between the type of soil and bedrock and amount of contamination in the groundwater. In the northern half of the county, the soils are more sandy, allowing the contaminants to permeate into the ground with more ease than in the southern half where the carbonate rocks reside.

Buffalo County has five municipal water systems: Alma Waterworks, Nelson Waterworks, Mondovi Waterworks, Fountain City Waterworks, and Cochrane Waterworks. As of 2009, two municipalities, Mondovi and Cochrane have Wellhead Protection Plans. Wellhead Protection Plans are developed to protect the groundwater through pollution measures from leaky underground storage tanks, agriculture, biological, etc. These wells are tested monthly and the findings can be found through the Wisconsin DNR at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/DrinkingWater/QualityData.html>.

Another layer of protection for groundwater is regular testing done by the Wisconsin DNR for public health and safety. The Wisconsin Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater manages activities that affect the safety, quality and availability of drinking water to protect the public health and our water resources.

Abandoned or unused wells pose a great threat to safety and quality of underground drinking water supplies. An unused well provides a direct path for contaminants and pollutants to the underground aquifers that supply working wells. Completing a well abandonment as well as an inspection of a well at the time of a real estate transfer, for example can only be completed by a licensed pump installer or well driller. At any time, a landowner may test their drinking well water for ecoli, coliform and nitrogen through the help of the Buffalo County Health and Human Services Department.

Currently there are 123 permitted high capacity wells in Buffalo County. They include 58 irrigation, 45 industrial, 10 municipal water supply, 7 schools and 3 miscellaneous wells.

Buffalo County has a Manure Storage Ordinance to protect groundwater and surface water resources. This ordinance addresses permitting of new and substantially altered manure storage facilities and closure of a facility no longer in use or one that poses an imminent threat to public health, fish and aquatic life or are causing a violation of groundwater standards. Noncompliant manure storage facilities built prior to October 1, 2002 and those constructed after that date are required to comply with manure management provisions in NR151. Compliance regulations are set in place to help protect the water of our county.

### Surface Water

There are twenty-two named and unnamed lakes in the county, all small and shallow totaling 358 acres. Of the named lakes, Mirror Lake in Mondovi, is the largest with 44 acres. One-half of the lakes have maximum depths of less than five feet. Map 5.6 Surface Water of Buffalo County that shows the waterbodies within the county and Map 5.7 Wetlands of Buffalo County shows wetlands in the county.

There are 8,390 acres of water, which include 73 miles of trout streams in the county. All or part of 21 streams are classified as trout streams and are stocked with brook or brown trout. Trout habitat in most Buffalo County streams is marginal due to silt or sand covered bottoms. Some natural reproduction occurs, but trout populations are largely maintained by stocking adult-sized fish. There are no Class I streams in Buffalo County.

### NR243 – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

Under Chapter NR 243, DNR regulates livestock operations with 1,000 or more animal units. These CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) require a Wisconsin Pollution Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit. An Animal Unit Calculation worksheet is used by a farmer/landowner so they know where their total animal count is.

In NR 243.26, DNR can now require a WPDES permit for medium and small CAFOs, which is defined as any owner or operator of an animal feeding operation with 300 to 999 animal units before a point source discharge of pollutants to navigable waters at an animal feeding operation occurs by either a man-made ditch, flushing system or other similar man-made device or pollutants are discharged into navigable waters that originate outside of the operation and pass over, across, or through the operation or otherwise come into direct contact with the animals confined at the operation.

In 2006, the Natural Resources Board adopted proposed revisions to NR 243 to meet federal regulatory changes. The changes primarily affect CAFOs and deal with restrictions on manure

applications near surface waters and during the winter, phosphorus-based nutrient management requirements, adjustments to animal unit equivalency numbers, additional groundwater protection associated with land applied manure and development of emergency management plans. The revisions to NR 243 were necessary to comply with changes to federal regulations for CAFOs and to improve consistency in implementing the associated WPDES permit program.

Currently there are four CAFO farms in Buffalo County residing in Nelson, Waumandee, and Gilmanton. These are all dairy production farms with the most animal units at 1630.

There are two licensed landfills in buffalo County, Dairyland Power Co-op off-site ash disposal and Dairyland Power Co-op Phase IV-Belvidere. There are no Superfund sites in Buffalo County.

There are additional restrictions, such as spreading of manure and implantation of fertilizers, that help support NR 243, WPDES permits and CAFO's know as SWQMA's (Surface Water Quality Management Areas). SWQMA are areas within 1,000 feet from the ordinary high water mark of navigable waters that consist of a glacial pothole lake, areas within 300 feet from the high water mark of navigable waters that consist of a river or stream or other non-lake navigable waters and areas within 300 feet of conduits to navigable waters. These distances are measured from the top of the channel for navigable waters and the middle of the channel to conduits to navigable waters.

Landowners with 590 Nutrient Management Plans also need to follow restrictions on spreading through the SWQMA maps and follow the manure advisory system located at <http://gis.soils.wisc.edu/>. This website forecasts the future potential for runoff into our surface waters that could potentially contaminate out groundwater, generate spreading restriction maps that include slope restrictions for winter spreading, nitrogen restrictions for fall spreading, and SWQMA 300 foot and 1,000 foot buffers.

### 303(d) Streams

Every two years, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) publishes as list of waters considered impaired under Clean Water Act Section 303(d). Impaired waters do not meet water quality standards and may not support fishing, swimming, recreating or public health and welfare.

Under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, states, territories, and authorized tribes are required to develop lists of impaired waters. These are waters that are too polluted or otherwise degraded to meet the water quality standards set by states, territories or authorized tribes. The law requires that these jurisdictions establish priority rankings for waters on the lists and develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for these waters.

In Buffalo County, the following streams are on the DNR's list of impaired waters (303d):

**Lower Trempealeau River Watershed**

Heuer Valley Creek (small segment in Buffalo County)  
Keller Creek (small segment in Buffalo County)

**Middle Trempealeau River Watershed**

Swinns Valley Creek (small segment in Buffalo County)

**Waumandee Creek Watershed**

Yaeger Valley Creek  
Wolf Valley Creek  
Buell Valley Creek  
Cochrane Ditch (Rose Valley Creek)  
Irish Valley Creek  
Weiland Valley Creek

*Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)*

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that load among the various sources of pollutant. Pollutant sources for Buffalo County are nonpoint sources of pollution. TMDLs must account for seasonal variations in water quality, and include a margin of safety to account for uncertainty in predicting how well pollutant reductions will result in meeting water quality standards.

TMDLs for Buffalo County streams suggest that implementation of conservation practices would have a number of positive effects on water resources. Stabilizing streambanks would increase available cover for adult trout and reduce sedimentation of riffles and pools. Installation of fish habitat structures would also improve general habitat conditions in trout streams where cover is lacking. Reduced sedimentation and bank erosion would also result in narrower and deeper streams, providing cooler temperatures and improved cover for adult fish. Reducing the intensity of streambank grazing would increase bank stability and increase stream cover and shading by allowing shrubs and grasses to grow along the stream corridor and also further reduce the sediment load.

Streams in the county provide habitat to a variety of macro-invertebrates, riparian dwelling reptiles and fish. They also serve as a watering source for cattle and wildlife, and a recreational and aesthetic resource for Buffalo County.

Streams are classified based on their ability for a trout population to survive and reproduce. Only a few streams reach the minimum classification standards to be considered a trout stream. These classification standards are as follows:

**Class I:** High quality that inhibits the reproduction and sustainability for wild trout at or near carrying capacity for the stream. These require no stocking of hatchery trout. These are considered desirable sport fishing areas.

**Class II:** Some natural reproduction, but not sufficient in comparison to the space and food of the stream. Stocking is necessary to keep the demand of sport fishing on these streams.

**Class III:** There is no natural reproduction due to the habitat being inadequate for the trout. With no carryover from one year to the next, stocking is required.

Buffalo County has 130.62 miles of trout streams. There are 43.54 miles of Class II and 87.08 miles as Class III trout streams. Additional information on trout streams can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website. Following is classification information on the streams in Buffalo County.

**Table 5.3 Stream Classification in Buffalo County**

Waterbody Name	Miles in the County	DNR Trout Classification
Armour Creek	3.79	II
Bear Creek	2.5	III
Center Creek	4.35	II
Cooke Valley Creek	2.8	III
Doelle Valley Creek	5.07	III
Eagle Creek	4.81	III
Eagle Creek	8.47	III
South Fork Elk Creek	5.06	III
Elk Creek	13.19	III
Harvey Creek	3.81	III
Hoyts Creek	9.66	III
Kilness Creek	4.05	III
Little Bear Creek	8.82	II
Little Waumandee Creek	10	III
Newton Valley Creek	4.27	II
North Branch Little Bear Creek	1.39	II
North Branch Little Bear Creek	5.4	II
Owen Valley Creek	2.16	III
Rossmann Creek	3.66	II
Sport Valley Creek	3.44	III
Spring Creek	2.88	II
Tamarack Creek	1.87	III
Tamarack Creek	3.83	II
Unnamed T24N R12W S5-9	3.27	III
Waumandee Creek	6.92	III
Weisenbeck Valley Creek	5.15	II

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

### Major Watersheds of Buffalo County

Buffalo County is located in two separate DNR Water Basins: the Lower Chippewa River Basin and the balance of the county is located in the Black-Buffalo-Trempealeau Basin. There are six major watersheds in the county. The following is a description of the main watersheds in Buffalo County.

*Bear Creek Watershed* - The Bear Creek Watershed is located in Buffalo and Pepin Counties and the only watershed in Buffalo County that is located in the Lower Chippewa River Basin. The watershed drains rolling agricultural and wooded areas with many of the tributaries originating in steep coulees and all streams drain the eastern slope of the Chippewa River Valley.

Land Use in the Bear Creek Watershed is dominated by forest cover (40%) and agriculture (37%). Wetlands and open water encompass most of the remaining area in the watershed with 15% and 6% respectively. Grasslands make up a little over 1% of the watershed's total area, while urban and suburban land use is minimal with one-tenth of a percent and on-half a percent respectively.

The Bear Creek Watershed contains typical steep topography characteristic of the driftless or unglaciated area of the state. Because the most productive and level land is on the valley floor, most farming takes place immediately adjacent to streams.

*Lower Buffalo River Watershed* - The Lower Buffalo River Watershed is located in the central part of Buffalo County and is approximately 176,278 acres in size and consists of 638 miles of streams and rivers, 891 acres of lakes and 9,907 acres of wetlands

Because of the diversion during the glacial period, this watershed now flows through two distinctly different geographic areas. The upper part of the watershed is characterized by broad valleys and narrow, short-crested ridges. The lower part, in contrast, is characterized by deep valleys. The watershed is dominated by forests and agriculture, but is ranked high for nonpoint source issues affecting streams and groundwater in the watershed.

Most streams in the Lower Buffalo watershed have stream habitat that has been severely degraded by agricultural nonpoint source pollution. All assessed streams have degraded fishery habitat, mainly due to streambank destruction and in-stream sedimentation.

The Buffalo River is the largest waterbody in this watershed and has the capability of supporting a community of warm water sport fish or serving as spawning areas for warm water sport fish. There are also aquatic endangered, threatened or special concern species found in the Buffalo River. There are no waterbodies on the DNR's 303(d) list of impaired waters that are located in the Lower Buffalo River Watershed. The nonpoint sources ranking for the Buffalo River is high

*Upper Buffalo River Watershed* - The Upper Buffalo River Watershed is approximately 124,389 acres in size and consists of 439 miles of streams and rivers, 85 acres of lakes and 6,108 acres of wetlands. Only a small part of this watershed is located in Buffalo County and is also located in the counties of Eau Claire, Jackson and the largest part of being located in Trempealeau County.

There are 16 named and 52 unnamed streams in this watershed. Only 2 of the named streams are located in Buffalo County; the Buffalo River, which stretches the whole length of this watershed and into the Lower Buffalo River Watershed and Session Valley Creek. These streams are not on Wisconsin's 303(d) list of impaired waters. The Buffalo River has an overall non-point source ranking of medium and Session Valley Creek has not been assessed and has no non point source ranking. Streams in this watershed are kept from achieving their full potential by agricultural non-point source pollution. Improvements in some protected areas show the ability of the streams to recover and reach their potential.

*Middle Trempealeau Watershed* - The Middle Trempealeau River Watershed is approximately 131,498 acres in size and consists of 490 miles of streams and rivers, 397 acres of lakes and 5,115 acres of wetlands. Only 16% of this watershed is located in Buffalo County.

The watershed is located in a geographic area of narrow, steeply sided, wooded ridges and rolling valleys. The steep topography of the area is characterized with wooded slope and agricultural croplands in the valley. The watershed is dominated by forest and agriculture and ranked high for nonpoint issues affecting groundwater in the watershed.

Most of the streams are considered cold water streams and some contain populations of trout. One (1) stream in the Middle Trempealeau River Watershed (Swinns Valley Creek), located in Buffalo County is on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 303(d) list of impaired waters. A Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) report is prepared for this stream. The segment of the stream listed on the 303(d) stream is impacted by sedimentation and loss of stream habitat and the primary source of impairment to this stream is cropland erosion. The TMDL report for this stream shows that there is 3,899 tons of sediment loading to the stream each year from the following sources: cropland-3,442 tons, development-94 tons, pasture-115 tons, woodlot grazed-168 tons and ungrazed woodlot-30 tons. Two additional 2 streams located in Trempealeau County are on the 303(d) list of impaired waters, Tappen Coulee Creek and Welch Coulee Creek.

This watershed was selected as a priority watershed project in the Wisconsin Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program. The watershed project ended in 2004, with the last conservation practice construction in 2005.

*Lower Trempealeau River Watershed* - The Lower Trempealeau River Watershed is approximately 113,345 acres in size and consists of 333 miles of streams and rivers, 4,667 acres of lakes and 13,987 acres of wetlands. Only a small part of this watershed is located in the southernmost part of Buffalo County. The watershed is dominated by forests and agriculture.

The Lower Trempealeau River Watershed has 11 named and 46 unnamed streams. Three of streams located in Buffalo County, Doelle Creek, Heuer Valley Creek and Keller Creek. Very little data is available for these streams. Doelle Creek has the potential for some natural production, is not listed on the DNR's impaired waters list and has not received a priority ranking for individual nonpoint source pollution.

Heuer and Keller Creek are on the DNR's 303(d) list of impaired water and they have not received a priority ranking for individual nonpoint source pollution.

Most of the streams in the Lower Trempealeau River Watershed have stream habitat that has been severely degraded by agricultural nonpoint sources of pollution. All streams that were assessed are considered to have degraded fishery habitat resulting from streambank destruction and in-stream sedimentation.

*Waumandee Creek Watershed* - The Waumandee Creek Watershed is approximately 142,060 acres in size and consists of over 842 miles of streams and rivers, 357 acres of lakes and 8,254 acres of wetlands. Land use in the watershed is dominated by forest, which covers 47% of the watershed area. Agriculture is the second most significant land use in the watershed with 38% of the land devoted to farmland. Open water and space together with wetlands make up the

remaining significant land uses, with about 8% and 5% respectively. There is a trend of land use change that has been occurring in this watershed and other parts of the county where large tracts are being split into many small parcels for single family housing. This change in the rural landscape can potentially have a negative effect on natural resources.

As the Waumandee Creek Watershed is dominated by forest and agriculture, pollution concerns are concentrated on nonpoint sources, which impact virtually every waterbody. Streams throughout the watershed suffer from moderate to severe streambank erosion and extensive channelization has occurred in some portions. Streams that were at one time cold, clear and lined with gravel riffles (conditions favorable for trout reproduction) have become blanketed with deposits of silt, sand and much. Elevated streambeds and increased runoff have resulted in downstream flooding and the loss of stream-side lands. It is suspected that the loss of streambank cover and stream-side vegetation have raised in-stream temperatures and have caused dissolved oxygen levels to fall.

There are 7 streams in this watershed that are on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 303(d) list of impaired streams, Yaeger Valley, Jahns Valley, Wolf Valley, Buell Valley, Cochrane Ditch (Rose Valley Creek), Irish Valley, and Weiland Valley creeks. Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) report is prepared for the Jahns Valley, Buell Valley Cochrane Ditch (Rose Valley Creek), Irish Valley and Weiland Valley creeks. The TMDL for these streams address sedimentation and degraded habitat impairment conditions.

This watershed was selected as a priority watershed project in 1985 under the Wisconsin Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program. Major objectives of the project was to decrease sediment loading to the Fountain City backwater complex and improve water quality of the streams in the watershed.

### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) defines a Wisconsin endangered species as “any species whose continued existence as a viable component of this state’s wild animals or wild plants is determined by the Department to be in jeopardy on the basis of scientific evidence” and Wisconsin threatened species is “any species which appears likely, within the foreseeable future, on the basis of scientific evidence to become endangered”.

For animals, it is illegal to take, possess, process or sell any wild animal that is included on the Wisconsin Endangered or Threatened Species List without a valid permit. Such permits are either a “Scientific” Permit or Incidental Take Permit, which will allow a person to conduct certain activities under certain conditions. With the abundance of wildlife in the county, endangered and threatened species are a prominent feature of our landscape. From rolling ridge tops on the bluffs to the marshlands by the Mississippi River, protection is needed for our threatened and endangered species listed on Table 5.3 Endangered or Threatened Species in Buffalo County

**Table 5.4 Endangered or Threatened Species in Buffalo County**

Type	Species	Habitat
Reptile	Eastern massasauga*	Forested wetlands, adjacent upland areas
Mussel	Higgins eye pearly mussel	Mississippi River
	Sheepnose	Chippewa and Mississippi River
	Spectaclecase	Chippewa, Mississippi, and St. Croix River

\*threatened species

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Not only should we be concerned for our endangered and threatened species in our county, but we should create a habitat within our county for threatened and endangered species residing in neighboring counties as well. Table 5.4 Endangered or Threatened Species in Neighboring Counties, gives some common examples.

**Table 5.5 Endangered or Threatened Species in Neighboring Counties**

County(ies)	Type	Species	Habitat
Trempealeau	Bird	Whooping Crane	Open wetlands
Pepin	Plant	Prairie Brush Clover	Dry to mesic prairie
Eau Claire, Winona	Insect	Karner Blue Butterfly	Jack pine, sandy soils, Prairie oak savanna

Buffalo County Land and Water Resources Management Plan, 2011

The golden eagle does not appear on the list of endangered or threatened species in Buffalo County, however it might be a species that some think should be there. The bird is considered a threatened species in Canada, however not in the U.S. Under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, written in 1940 and expanded to include the Golden Eagle in 1962, populations of these eagles have increased in size, especially in the southwestern part of Wisconsin, including the northern half of Buffalo County.

There is a population of 100 or so of these birds that visit the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota from November to March. One banded bird in particular spends his summers as far north as the Arctic Circle.

*Existing Plans for Natural Resources*

*Buffalo County Agricultural Lands Preservation Plan* - The Farmland Preservation Plan (FPP) for Buffalo County was prepared and approved by the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors, by resolution on April 19, 1983. No changes have been made to the plan since then. Counties are scheduled to revise their farmland preservation plans to meet new requirements designed to better protect farmland. Buffalo County is scheduled to have their plan updated in 2015.

Previously landowners enrolled in the FPP, do so through an application process for a period of 10 or 25 years. 2007 was the last year that farmers in Buffalo County could sign up for this

program through an application process. The last agreement in Buffalo County will expire in 2033.

*Buffalo County Land and Water Resources Management (LWRM) Plan* - In 2000, Buffalo County adopted their first LWRM Plan in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes (Wisconsin Act 27, Chapter 92.10). This plan was recently updated in 2012. The primary intent of the plan is to identify a vision for natural resource management in Buffalo County and outline strategies to protect the quality and quantity of soil and water resources.

Buffalo County Land Resources Department works with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in an effort to implement the LWRM Plan by implementing conservation practices in different scenarios to achieve the plan's ideologies.

*Town Land Use Plans* - There are seventeen (17) Towns in Buffalo County. Most Town Land Use Plans, showed a positive attitude to do whatever possible to maintain prime soils as farmland and discourage housing or development in "prime farmland" soils. The plans call for encouraging growth in the agricultural industry through proper soil erosion control and runoff control methods.

The Town plans encourage young people to enter the farming industry and explore if any, incentives that can be given to help beginning farmers. They also are encouraging the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors to maintain soil conservation staff and implement grants to county landowners.

*Buffalo County Erosion Control Plan* - The Buffalo County Land Conservation Department completed the Buffalo County Erosion Control Plan in 1986 under the authority of Chapter 92 of Wisconsin Statutes and Wisconsin Administrative Rule, Ag. 160. The purpose of the plan was to identify soil erosion problems within the county and provide a plan for solving them. The goal was to reduce cropland erosion to "T", a tolerable limit, by the year 2000.

The tolerable soil loss rate, commonly referred to as "T", is defined as the maximum average annual rate of soil erosion for each soil type that will permit a high level of crop productivity to be sustained economically and indefinitely (ATCP 50.01(16)). This document represents Buffalo County's response to an agricultural land use issue which has national proportions and which has resulted in local, state and federal directives aimed at curbing excessive soil erosion from agricultural land.

This plan identifies the extent, location and severity of cropland erosion by presenting the results of a physical erosion inventory of soil erosion in the county and its six major watersheds. From the natural erosion which cut deep valleys into the limestone-capped uplands through European settlement and agricultural development, the document traces nearly half to all topsoil on cultivated fields.

### *Floodplain*

Floodplains are formally designed areas that experience flooding during a 100-year storm event. As defined in the Buffalo County Floodplain Ordinance, the "floodplain" is land which has been or may be covered by flood water during the regional flood, (regional flood is the same as the 100-year flood). It includes the floodway and the floodfringe, and may include other designated floodplain areas for regulatory purposes.

“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.

“Floodfringe” is defined as that portion of the floodplain outside of the floodway which is covered by floodwaters during the regional flood and associated with standing water rather than flowing water.

Floodplain Ordinance is adopted by authority granted by Wisconsin State Statutes Sections: 59.69, 59.692 and 59.694 in the unincorporated areas of Buffalo County that would be covered by the regional flood or base flood. The purpose of the floodplain regulations are to protect life, health, and property; minimize business interruptions; minimize damage to public facilities; minimize the occurrence of future flood blight areas; discourage the victimization of unwary land and home buyers; and prevent increases in the regional flood from occurring.

This information in conjunction with the FEMA maps was used to identify floodplains in the county.

*Stormwater Management* - Stormwater management in Buffalo County is facilitated by various departments and agencies. The WI Department of Natural Resources requires State Stormwater Permits for mine sites and construction projects that disturb more than one acre of land. The Buffalo County Shoreland Ordinance regulates land use practices within 300’ of navigable water ways. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical standards are used as a guide in developing stormwater management and erosion control plans. County conservation staff work closely with landowners to control runoff and prevent soil erosion problems. The Buffalo County Highway Department engages in stormwater management projects along highway right of ways to control runoff and sedimentation into waterways.

*Shoreland Ordinance* - Buffalo County Shoreland Ordinance is to provide a regulatory scheme for the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, convenience and welfare, and promote and protect the public trust in navigable waters. This ordinance was established to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions and prevent and control water pollution by limiting structures to those areas where soil and geological conditions will provide a safe foundation, establish minimum lot sizes to provide adequate area for private on-site waste water treatment systems and to allow for some potential infiltration of run-off, control filling and grading to prevent soil erosion problems, and limit impervious surfaces to control runoff that has the potential to carry pollutants. It also protects spawning grounds for fish and wildlife, control building sites, placement of building structures, and preserve and restore shoreland vegetation.

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authorization in 59.692 Wis. Stats to implement 59.69, 59.692, 59.694, 87.30, 236.45, and 281.31 and is installed and enforced by Buffalo County Land Resources Department, Wisconsin NRCS, Wisconsin DNR, and, at specific times, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

*Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance* - Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; to determine, establish, regulate and restrict the areas within which agriculture, forestry, industry, trades, business, and recreation and residential uses may be conducted; the areas in and along or in or along natural waters courses, channels, streams and creeks in which trades or industries, including trailer camps, or tourist camps and motels or both,

may be prohibited or restricted; regulation and building setback lines and such other uses authorized pursuant to Sections 59.97 and 59.99 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

This ordinance is administered and enforced by Buffalo County Land Resources Department, Wisconsin NRCS, Wisconsin DNR, and, at specific times, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

### Cultural Resource Inventory

Buffalo County has a large variety of cultural resources that reflect the heritage of its citizens and how Buffalo County came to be. Each town, city and village has recognized the importance of preserving its history through historical societies and press releases, as well as doing cultural resource checks before construction. Listed are some examples of what the County believes to be of cultural importance: local churches (Tell Church and Eagle Valley Church), local fairs (Buffalo County Fair and Gilmanton Free Fair), local community events (Mondovi Friendship Days and Old Time Farm Fest), golf courses (Walnut Grove and The Valley), fraternal organizations (Lions and Knights of Columbus), 4-H Clubs, museums, and schools (both one room school houses and those currently used for educating the youth of the County)

The following section details some of the important cultural resources in Buffalo County. Cultural resources, programs, and special events are very effective methods of bringing people of a community together to celebrate their cultural history. Not only do these special events build community spirit, but they can also be important to the local economy. Unfortunately, there are many threats to the cultural resources of a community. Whether it is development pressure, rehabilitation and maintenance costs, or simply the effects of time, it is often difficult to preserve the cultural resources in a community. Future planning within the community should minimize the effects on important cultural resources in order to preserve the character of the community.

The history of Buffalo County dates several hundred years and begins with the area being used by American Indian tribes as hunting and gathering lands. Often the land was seen as a shared area among adjacent tribes with the understanding that hunters and gatherers could be safe from any fighting. The European settlement of Buffalo County began in 1839, when Thomas Holmes arrived with his wife, her brother and his wife. Their trip northward on the Mississippi River was cut short by winter, and Holmes set up a trading post hoping to trade with the Dakota Sioux living in the area now known as Winona. By 1853, enough settlers arrived to prompt the Wisconsin legislature to create Buffalo County.

Buffalo County's history is rich in agricultural pursuits as well as logging, other river related industries, transportation and tourism. As the county has moved through time, it has adapted well to take advantage of the natural beauty and resources available. For more information about Buffalo County's history, one can refer to the Buffalo County Historical Society as well as such books as *The History of Buffalo County*, by L. Kessinger.

### Historical Resources

Buffalo County does not have any of its own historical resource databases, but there are several state and federal databases that should be used to help identify and appraise cultural and historical resources. More databases and tools may become available, and the County would use those tools as well.

For places not listed in the following inventories or registers, the county can use the National Park Service's National Register Bulletin 15 to determine the historic significance of a place. This bulletin identifies standard requirements to identify places eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, whether they are significant on a national, state, regional, or local level.

Wisconsin Historical Markers identify, commemorate and honor the important people, places, and events that have contributed to the state's heritage. The WI Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation administers the Historical Markers program. There is only one registered historical marker in Buffalo County:

- Beef Slough, on Wisconsin State Road 35, ½ mile north of Alma

The Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) is a collection of information on historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts throughout Wisconsin. The AHI is comprised of written text and photographs of each property, which document the property's architecture and history. Most properties became part of the Inventory as a result of a systematic architectural and historical survey beginning in 1970s. Caution should be used as the list is not comprehensive and some of the information may be dated, as some properties may be altered or no longer exist. Due to funding cutbacks, the Historical Society has not been able to properly maintain the database. In addition, many of the properties in the inventory are privately owned and are not open to the public. Inclusion of a property conveys no special status, rights or benefits to the owners. The Historical Society lists 461 AHI records for Buffalo County. Contact the Wisconsin Historical Society Division of Historic Preservation for more information about the inventory.

The Archaeological Site Inventory (ASI) is a collection of archaeological sites, mounds, unmarked cemeteries, marked cemeteries, and cultural sites throughout Wisconsin. Similar to the AHI, the ASI is not a comprehensive or complete list; it only includes sites reported to the Historical Society. The Historical Society estimates that less than 1% of the archaeological sites in the state have been identified. Wisconsin law protects Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries from intentional disturbance. The Historical Society lists over 150 ASI records for Buffalo County. Contact the Wisconsin Historical Society Division of Historic Preservation for more information about the inventory.

Some resources are deemed so significant that they are listed as part of the State and National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official national list of historic properties in America worthy of preservation, maintained by the National Park Service. The State Register is Wisconsin's official listing of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage and is maintained by the Wisconsin Historical Society Division of Historic Preservation. Both listings include sites, buildings, structures, objects, and districts that are significant in national, state, or local history. The Historical Society lists 14 register places within Buffalo County.

The establishment of a historical preservation ordinance and commission is one of the most proactive methods a community can take to preserve cultural resources. A historical preservation ordinance typically contains criteria for the designation of historic structures, districts, or places, and procedures for the nomination process. The ordinance further regulates the construction,

alteration and demolition of a designated historic site or structure. A community with a historic preservation ordinance may apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status, with the Wisconsin State Historical Society. Once a community is certified, they become eligible for:

- Matching sub-grants from the federal Historic Preservation Fund,
- Use of Wisconsin Historic Building Code,
- Reviewing National Register of Historic Places nominations allocated to the state.

While Alma and Fountain City both have historic preservation ordinances on their books, no other local government in Buffalo County (including the County itself) has such an ordinance. There are no Certified Local Governments in Buffalo County.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

#### **Objective: Preserve Agricultural Land**

- Promote voluntary participation in the following programs:
  - “Agricultural Easement Area” of the Working Lands Initiative Program
  - Mississippi Valley Land Conservancy
  - West Wisconsin Land Trust
- Encourage landowners to farm to tolerable “T” soil loss
  - Complete one-on-one farm visits with landowners
  - Update conservation farm plans to “T”
    - Landowners enrolled in FPP
    - Landowners who constructed manure storage facilities
  - Complete spotchecks on farm fields
    - Landowners enrolled in FPP
    - Landowners who constructed manure storage facilities
- Encourage construction of conservation practices on agricultural fields
  - Survey and design structural conservation practices to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation to the streams for landowners on a voluntary basis with or without cost share funding
  - Survey and design structural conservation practices to maintain/improve habitat for all types of wildlife
- Complete the county Transect Survey Annually
- Provide information and education to landowners for awareness to agricultural land preservation on a voluntary basis
- Support the Buffalo County Land and Water Resource Management Plan as part of this plan
  - Require an update each year on work plan progress
    - Annual report to County Board of Supervisors

### **Objective: Protect Waterbodies through Non-Agricultural Performance Standards**

- Follow best management practices to reduce pollution to lakes, streams and rivers
  - Infiltration Areas
    - Low Impervious for development up to 40% connected impervious such as: parks, cemeteries, low density residential development
    - Medium Impervious for development with more than 40% and up to 80% connected impervious such as office parks, industrial and institutional development, medium and high density housing and multi family development
  - Fueling and Vehicle Maintenance Areas shall have best management practices to reduce petroleum within runoff, so that the runoff that enters waters of the state contains no visible petroleum sheen, or to the maximum extent practicable
  - Protective Areas which are areas of land that commences at the top of the channel of lakes, streams and rivers, or at the delineated boundary of wetlands and this is the greatest of the following widths, as measured horizontally from the top of the channel or delineated wetland boundary to the closest impervious surface...

### **Objective: Protect Woodland, Recreation and the Natural Beauty**

- Follow best management practices to maintain woodlands and marshlands
  - Work with local forester to develop woodland management plans
- Control invasive and aquatic invasive species
- Set realistic wildlife management goals
- Support regional programs that have workplans involving lands in the county
- Identify what these programs and plans are
  - Learn the goals of the programs
  - Provide educate to landowners on how they can participate in these programs

### **Objective: Support the Buffalo County Historical Society**

- Continue to provide a stable level of funding to the organization

### **Objective: Support Other County Historical Societies**

- Mondovi Historical Society
- Arcadia Historical Society
- Fountain City Historical Society
- Cochrane-Buffalo City Historical Society

### **Objective: Encourage residents and clubs to maintain existing historical sites and structures county-wide**

### **Objective: Maintain current Zoning regulations**

- Restrict development in floodplains

- Revise Floodplain Ordinance as needed
- Control housing construction on Bluff lands
  - Create a Bluff land Ordinance
- To preserve the natural beauty of the County
  - Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance must be adhered to

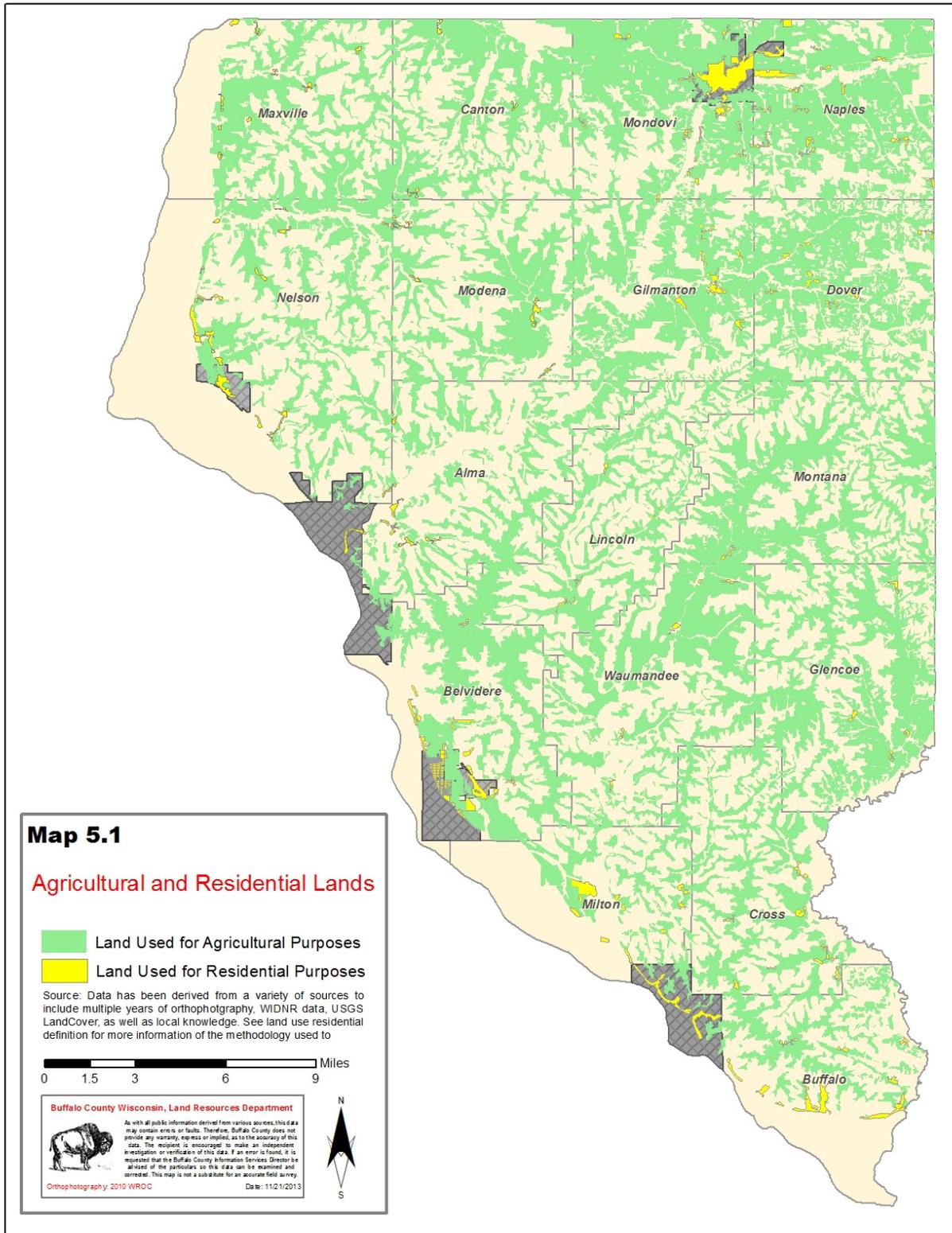
**Objective: Identify and promote the preservation of the Buffalo County’s cultural, historic, and archeological resources that celebrate Buffalo County’s heritage**

- Work with the registries and inventories available, as well as the National Park Service’s National Register Bulletin 15 to identify historic locations within Buffalo County.
- Encourage the maintenance and adaptive reuse of historic areas and buildings, including barns and silos.
- Promote “heritage tourism” (e.g. local festivals, fairs, farm tours, and farmers markets) that celebrate the County’s heritage and rural setting.
- Provide interpretive signs or historical monuments as part of County facilities.
- Work with local historical societies and the Wisconsin Historical Society to explore the availability and use of grant money to rehabilitate, restore, or relocate historic structures threatened by demolition or disrepair.
- Review County zoning and land division ordinances to promote better protection, adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic resources. Encourage local communities to adopt historic preservation ordinances or districts as a means to preserve significant cultural resources.

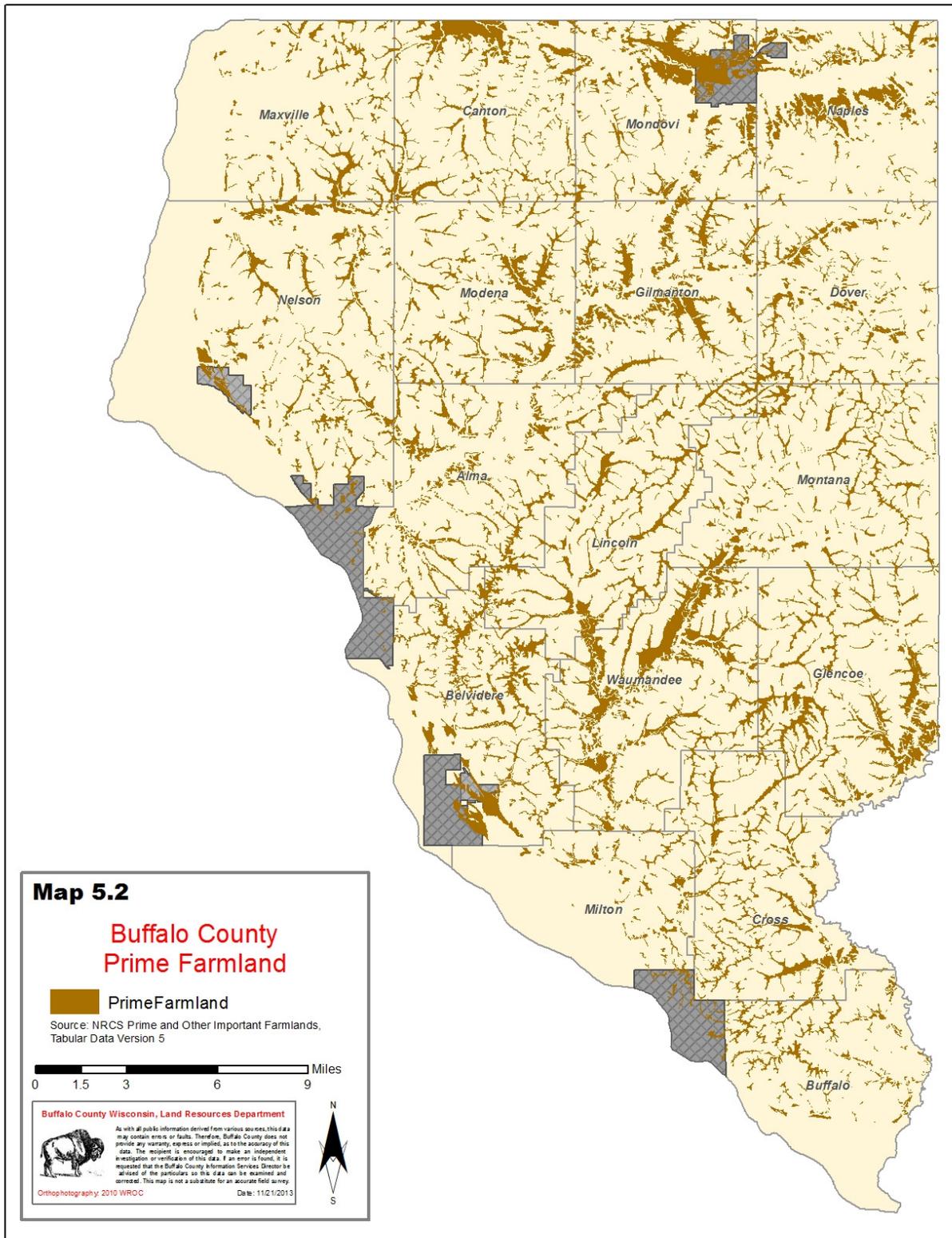
**Objective: Assess the potential effects of creating historic preservation ordinances and Certified Local Governments within Buffalo County**

- Create a committee to research the effects of creating a historic preservation ordinance for Buffalo County and/or becoming a Certified Local Government.
- Encourage municipalities to research creating their own historic preservation ordinances and/or becoming Certified Local Governments.

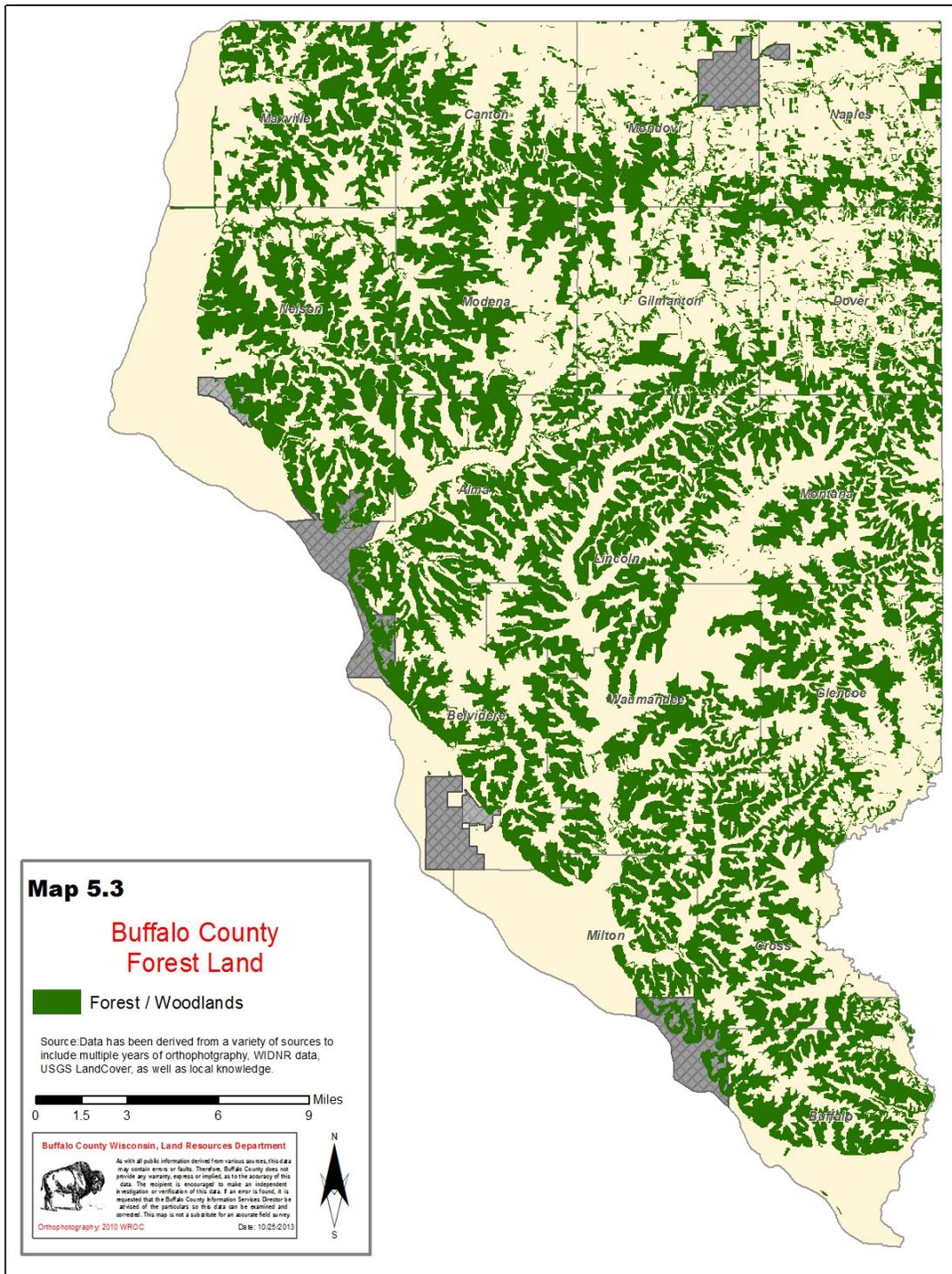
## Map 5.1 Agricultural and Residential Lands



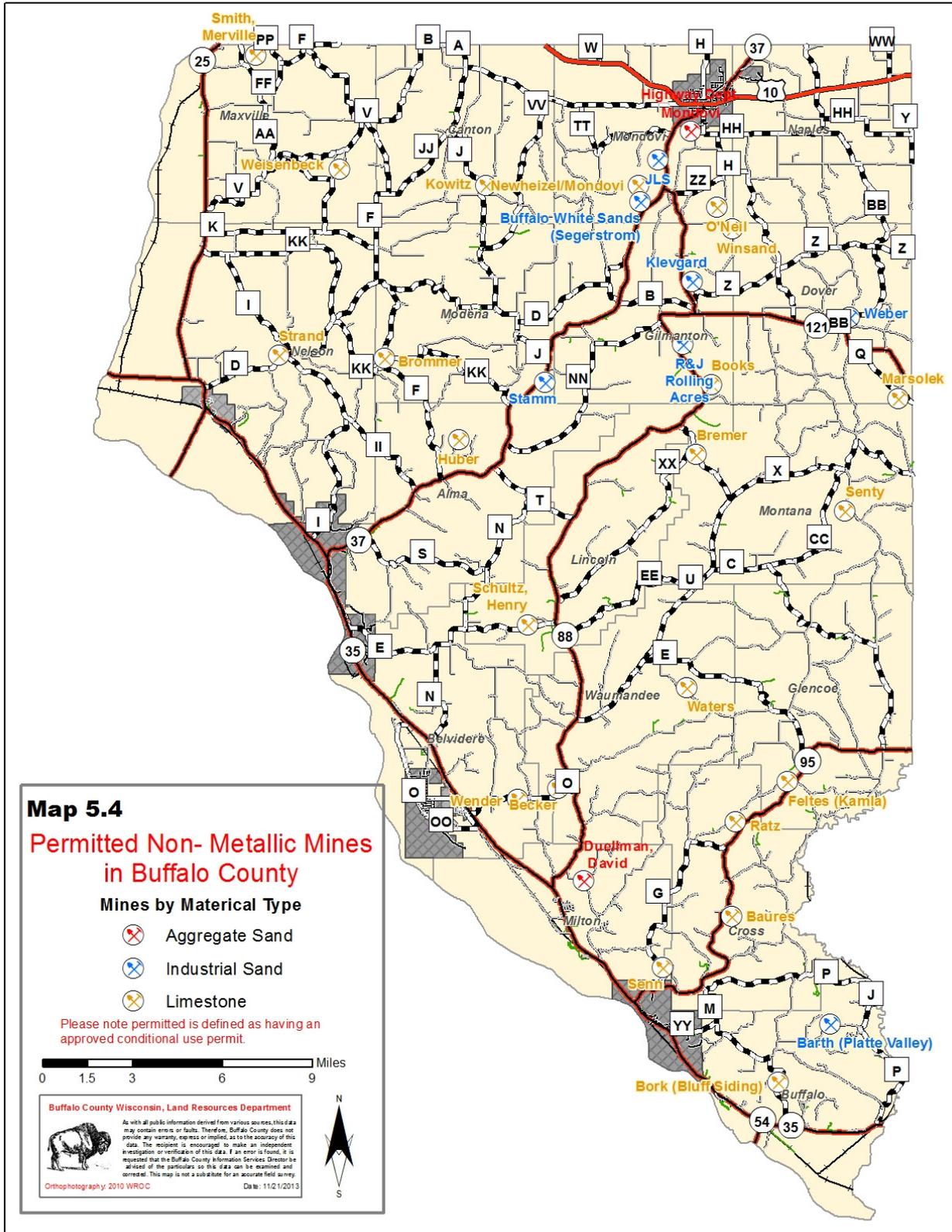
**Map 5.2 Buffalo County Prime Farmland**



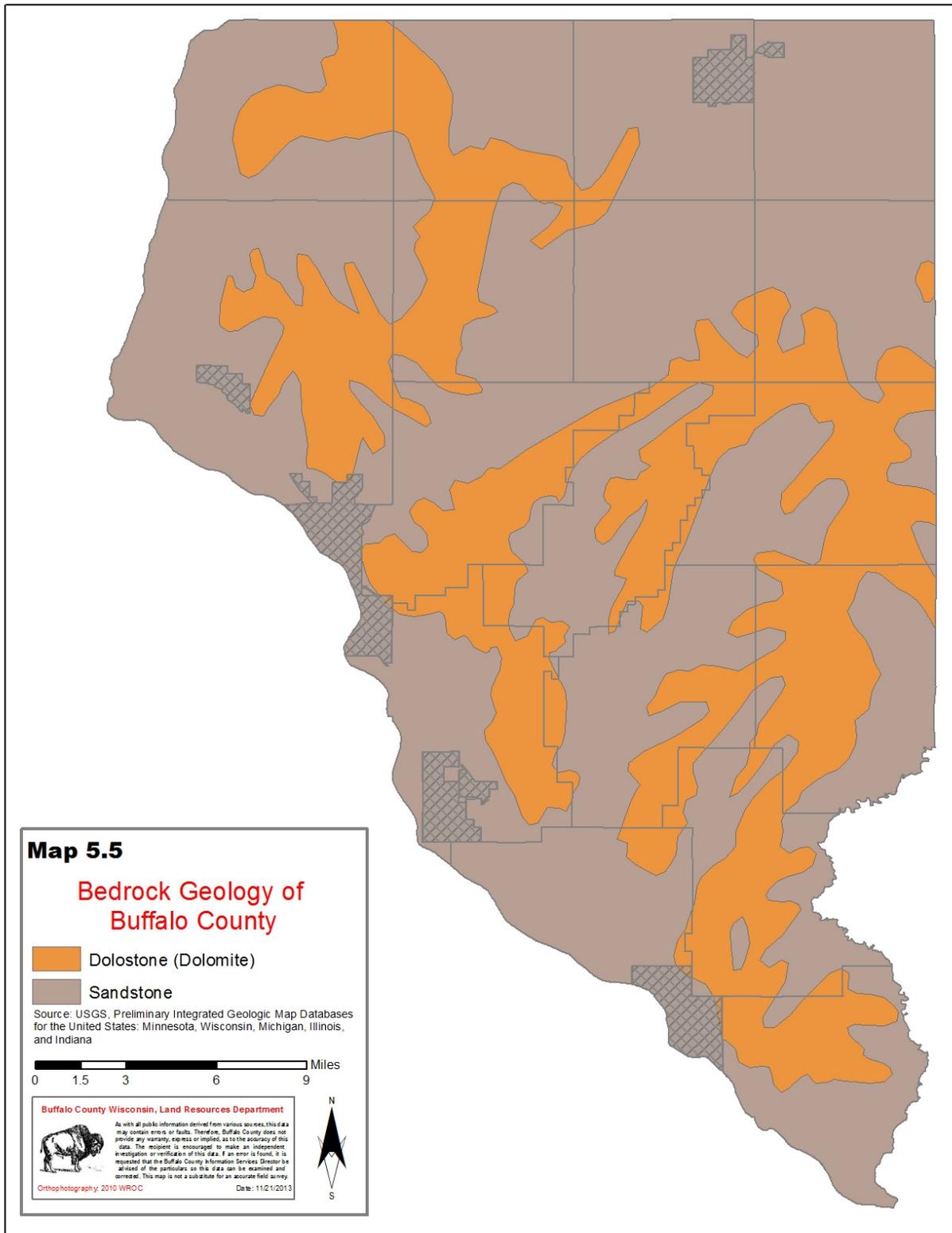
# Map 5.3 Buffalo County Forest Land



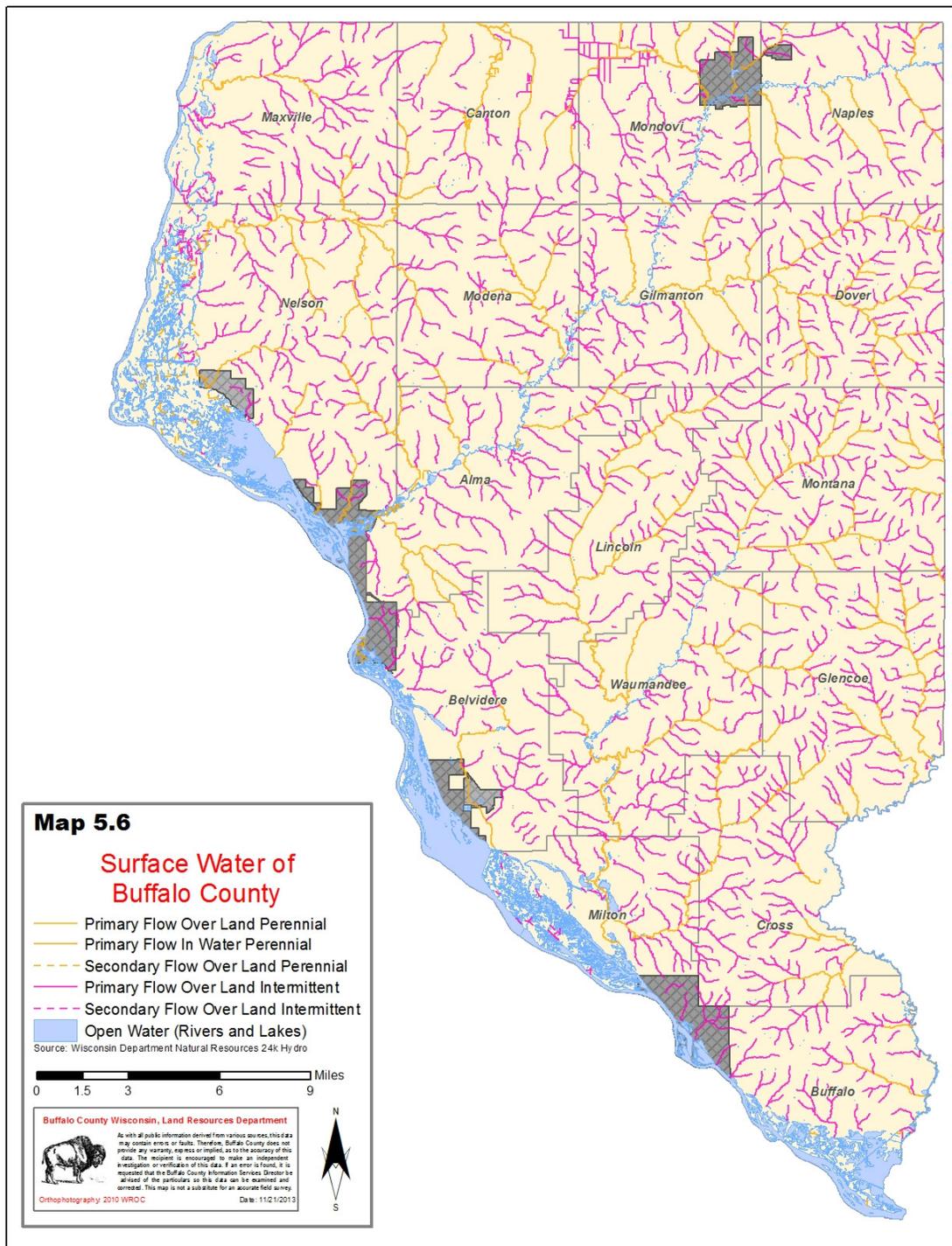
**Map 5.4 Permitted Nonmetallic Mines in Buffalo County**



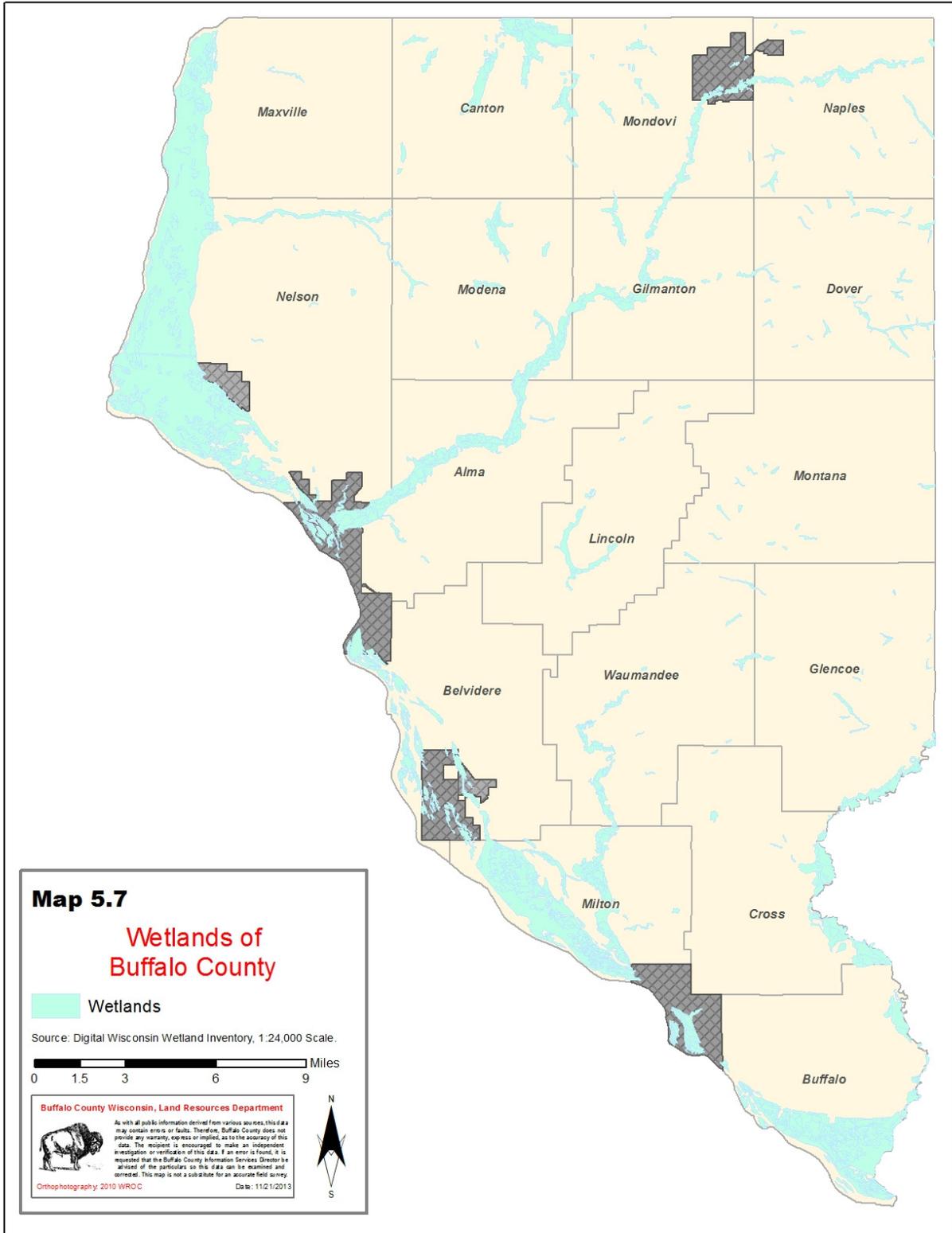
## Map 5.5 Bedrock Geology of Buffalo County



**Map 5.6 Surface Water of Buffalo County**



**Map 5.7 Wetlands of Buffalo County**



## Section 6

### Economic Development Element

#### *Element Overview*

It should be understood that this plan is just an initial plan that will need to be updated frequently. Buffalo County has put little if any resources or time into economic development in a coordinated or organized approach. An advisory group made up of Buffalo County citizens was used in developing this plan.

The majority of the data for this section came from the U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics: 2007-2011 5-Year Estimates. Other sources of information were the Department of Workforce Development, UW-Cooperative Extension, and citizens from Buffalo County.

**Table 6.1 Buffalo County Employment Statistics**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Population 16 years and older	11,050	100
In Labor Force	7,342	66.4
Civilian Labor Force	7,339	66.4
Employed	6,980	63.2
Unemployed	359	3.2
Armed Forces	3	0
Not in Labor Force	3,708	33.6
<b>Occupation</b>		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	712	10.2
Construction	659	9.4
Manufacturing	1,333	19.1
Wholesale Trade	232	3.3
Retail Trade	606	8.7
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	549	7.9
Finance and insurance	409	5.9
Professional, management, etc.	311	4.5
Education, health care	1,328	19.0
Arts and entertainment	334	4.8
All others	507	7.2
<b>Class of Worker</b>		
Private wage and salary	5,356	76.7
Government workers	731	19.5
Self-employed	872	12.5
Unpaid family	21	0.3

US Census Data

### Employment Information

Manufacturing, agriculture and the education/health/social occupations comprise a majority of people employed in Buffalo County. Buffalo County is very rural with a lot of natural beauty, great wildlife, and very productive soils. It is also within commuting distance to manufacturing, school and health care jobs in Arcadia, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Rochester, MN, and Winona, MN. All of Buffalo County tends to have very low unemployment rates, as seen in Table 6.1 Buffalo County Employment Statistics, due to the variety of jobs in the region and the growth of industry in Arcadia (Ashley Furniture and Golden Plump Chicken) and Mondovi (Marten Transport). Many people may be underemployed, but entry level jobs are available.

Thirty three percent of the population that is eligible to work are not in the workforce. This number is made up of retired residents, youth (few youth jobs in many parts of Buffalo County), disabled residents, and people who are not interested in working.

### Commuting to Work

Many employed residents of Buffalo County, who do not work on their own farms, or are self-employed, commute in or out of the county to work. Table 6.2 Buffalo County, Commuting Habits, indicates the means of travel and the mean commute time as reported in the US Census. The communities where most residents commute to work include Arcadia, Eau Claire, Durand, La Crosse, Menomonie, Rochester, MN, Wabasha, MN, and Winona, MN Table 6.3 Commuting Patterns for People Living in Buffalo County, summarizes the number of residents and the commuting habits by county and state.

**Table 6.2 Buffalo County, Commuting Habits**

<b>Means of Travel</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Car, truck, van – drove alone	72.6
Car, truck, van – carpoled	12.7
Public transportation	0.3
Walked	5.8
Other means	0.9
Worked at home	7.8
	<b>Minutes</b>
<b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b>	22.8

Census Data

**Table 6.3 Commuting Patterns for People Living in Buffalo County**

Workplace	Estimated # of Workers
Buffalo County	3,348
Winona County, MN	1,283
Trempealeau County	786
Eau Claire County	629
Wabasha County, MN	262
Pepin County	254
Dunn County	94
La Crosse County	86
Chippewa County	43
Olmsted County	40
All Others	193

Census Data

***Buffalo County Industries***

Buffalo County has a very small manufacturing base. Only one manufacturing industry, La Crosse Milling (oat miller) is in the top ten employers in the County, see Table 6.4 Buffalo County Top 10 Employers. Most employment opportunities in the near future will be outside of the Town or Buffalo County. Following the plans and actions and the end of this section should improve the long term employment opportunities within Buffalo County.

**Table 6.4 Buffalo County Top 10 Employers**

Company	Service	Size
Marten Transport	Trucking	1,000+
Mondovi Public Schools	Education	100-249
CFC Public Schools	Education	100-249
County of Buffalo	Government	100-249
American Lutheran Homes	Nursing Care Provider	100-249
Dairyland Power	Electrical Power Generation	100-249
School District of Alma	Education	50-99
Midwest Dental	Dental Care	50-99
US Army Corp of Eng.	Engineering Service	50-99
La Crosse Milling	Oat Miller	50-99

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

***Environmentally Contaminated Sites in Buffalo County***

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) was utilized in identifying contaminated sites in Buffalo County. There are 13 open or conditionally closed contaminated sites in Buffalo County identified in the database. Most of these sites are current fuel stations or recently closed fuel stations.

The Wisconsin DNR Solid and Hazardous Waste Information System was reviewed for waste disposal sites in Buffalo County. There are 47 operating sites in the registry located in Buffalo County.

### County, Regional and State Economic Develop Programs

#### County Programs:

- None

#### Regional Programs:

- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, Economic Development Program, Revolving Loan Fund
- Excel Energy

#### State Programs:

- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation  
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection USDA – Rural Development

### Local Planning Effort

Town Comprehensive Land Use Planning written surveys and Town planning meetings all had several key factors that need to be considered when planning for economic development. They include:

- Preserve the natural beauty of Buffalo County
- Preserve prime farmland in Buffalo County
- Preserve the rural character of Buffalo County

The planning group on economic development concentrated on a paper submitted and presented by Dr. Steve Deller; UW-Extension, UW-Madison Rural Economist, in 2011 that identified key economic development clusters. Key economic clusters identified by the planning group that seemed most important to Buffalo County at this time included:

- Forest and Wood Products
  - Value added and quality timber stand improvement need to be encouraged
  - Valuable timber has, and continues to be sold as commodities or as a raw material and value is added somewhere else
- Dairy Production
  - Mostly a commodity producer with value added somewhere else
  - Potential for artisan cheeses, but Wisconsin law for cheese making limits the possibilities. These laws need to be changed to be more in line with Minnesota and other states to allow for artisan cheese making. This does not mean to change sanitary and quality standards, but rather the need for a master cheese maker's license.
  - Buffalo county farmers have moved away from animal agriculture (especially away from cattle) to a row crop base. This has been driven by economics and by lifestyle changes. It has increase erosion and erosion potential in Buffalo county as fewer acres are in long term hay rotations. Could have serious economic implications in the loss of productivity, few people needed to operate farms, and the cost associated in dealing erosion on a countywide scale.

- Farm Value Added Production and Products
  - Buffalo County has tremendously productive soils, many with steep slopes but with potential to produce many different crops.
  - Examples of value added businesses currently in the county include
    - Direct honey sales
    - Goat milk products
    - Wineries
    - Wool and fiber products
    - Organic flour milling
    - Vegetable CSA
    - Small fruit production and sales
  - Buffalo County is close to many high population markets:
    - Minneapolis/St. Paul
    - Rochester
    - La Crosse
    - Eau Claire
    - Others
- Transportation and Warehousing
  - Data may be somewhat misleading in that the importance of transportation is largely due to one trucking business. This business is very important to Buffalo County, but many of the employees (drivers) are from throughout the United States.
  - Buffalo County is not located on an interstate highway and the current trucking influence is due to a tie to the County and a strong commitment to the City of Mondovi.
  - Transportation economic influence may increase if new industries are developed (frac sand mining), but more so if trucking firms are owned and operated by Buffalo County residents.
- Tourism
  - An important potential industry, especially along the Mississippi river if the industry is developed. The entire Western border of Buffalo County is the Mississippi River and the Great River Road.
  - Buffalo County is in close proximity of large population centers.
  - Currently little if any coordinated effort has gone into developing tourism as an industry. (See Map 6.1 Proximity of Large Population Centers)
  - Environmental tourism may have the largest growth potential;
    - Hunting
    - Fishing
    - Birding
    - Silent sports (canoeing, kayaking, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, etc)
  - Agriculture Tourism has started to develop on its own, without any coordination.
  - Historical/Cultural tourism including the Great River Road (<http://wigrr.com/>), Driftless Area, Native American history, etc.
  - Some regional attempts at tourism development, but have not been active recently, i.e. Mississippi Valley Partners (<http://www.mississippi-river.org/>).

- Tourism along the river consists of selling crafts and gifts, restaurants selling food and wineries.
- Minerals
  - Mining of limestone rock has been an important industry in Buffalo County for many years.
  - Frac sand mine development has currently been of interest in Buffalo County. Sand mining has been controversial due to the size and scale of the proposed mines. Also, unlike traditional rock quarries, the product is not used locally for building of infrastructure (roads) and much of the mining profits will go out of state.
  - Mining needs to be balanced with other industries and fit the reasons that people live in Buffalo County.
- Construction has been in a steady state with some potential for growth
  - The construction business in Buffalo County has mainly been small businesses with less than 10 employees.
  - Mainly meet housing and small business construction needs.

As with all economic development, business development cannot stand alone. Overwhelmingly, people live in Buffalo County because of the natural beauty, small town atmosphere, and agricultural base. Economic development must be in balance with these characteristics.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Economic Development Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

**Objective: Buffalo County will support the formation of a Buffalo County Economic Development Organization as a non-profit group supporting environmentally friendly economic development in Buffalo County.**

- Hold an economic development visioning session late winter of 2014 facilitated by Buffalo County UW-Extension.
- Develop a countywide economic development study group to look at different models for an economic development organization.
  - Buffalo County alone
  - Regional model – multi-county
  - Multi-state model
    - Mississippi Valley Partners
    - 7-River Alliance
- Form a Buffalo County economic development entity, based on the work completed by the study group by January, 2015.
- Have an active web presence on the Buffalo County webpage that is easily updated and easily accessible.

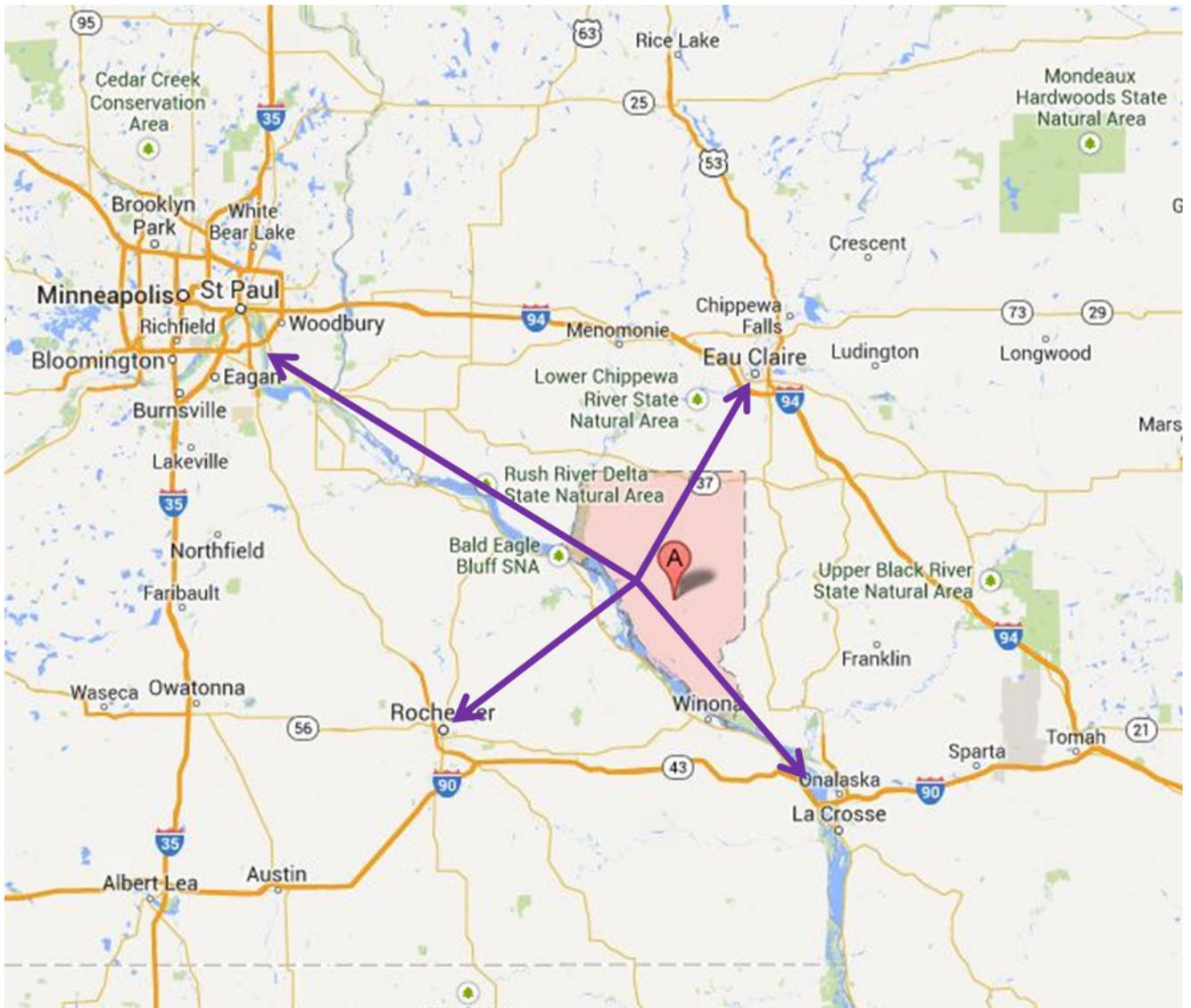
**Objective: Become active in using revolving loan funds that Buffalo County currently supports – Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission as well as several funds administered by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission**

- Have a representative from MRRPC speak in Buffalo County explaining their programs and how they can be used to benefit business growth.
- Buffalo County will update Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan to become eligible for grant funds and programs by ??/2014.
- Buffalo County economic development resources will be used along with Buffalo County Land Conservation, Buffalo County NRCS and DNR personnel to ensure that environmental impacts are always considered.

**Objective: The newly formed Buffalo County Economic Development organization will implement a series of economic development goals for Buffalo County based on recommendations in Buffalo County Town and Municipal plans as well as information gathered from people in the County:**

- Inventory Buffalo County assets that support economic development.
- Buffalo County residents support tourism as an industry as long as preservation of prime farmland, natural resources, beauty, and the history of the County are taken into consideration.
- Lobby to change state rules that limit or prohibit value added agricultural business development.
- Priority should be given to industrial development/manufacturing in the areas close to current industrial parks.

## Map 6.1 Proximity of Large Population Centers



Google Base maps

Buffalo County is located in close proximity to many major population centers. Eau Claire, La Crosse, and Rochester MN are all within an hour of the county borders. The Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul is within a two hour drive.

## **Section 7**

### **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

#### *Element Overview*

Intergovernmental Cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions communicate visions and coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. This can be as simple as communicating and sharing information, or it can involve entering into formal agreements or sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff or even revenue.

#### *Relationships with other Entities*

*School Districts* - Buffalo County is served by seven K-12 school districts and one private school; Alma, Arcadia, Cochrane-Fountain City, Durand, Gilmanton, Independence, Mondovi, and St. Boniface Catholic School. Buffalo County lies in two technical college districts, Western Wisconsin Technical College and Chippewa Valley Technical College. There are no conflicts identified at this time. (See Map 7.1 Buffalo County School District).

#### *Adjacent County and Overlapping Local Governments*

Three counties surround Buffalo County: Pepin County, Eau Claire County, and Trempealeau County. No conflicts are known to exist at the present time. Certain County Departments have and continue to coordinate and share information and services when available Buffalo County has 17 towns, 2 villages, and 4 cities within its boundaries. Each of those 23 municipalities are represented by elected officials who are responsible for managing the affairs of the local government following state legislation. (Town: Alma, Belvidere, Buffalo, Canton, Cross, Dover, Gilmanton, Glencoe, Lincoln, Maxville, Milton, Modena, Mondovi, Montana, Naples, Nelson, Waumandee. Village: Cochrane and Nelson. City: Alma, Buffalo City, Fountain City, Mondovi.) (Map 7.2 Buffalo County Municipal Boundaries and Surrounding Regions).

The Buffalo County Board of Supervisors (representing 14 districts) implement and oversee certain rules and regulations to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the community and/or environment. While issues do occasionally arise, the County Board of Supervisors and County Departments have and continue to respond on the values and best judgments representing the County as a whole.

*State* - Buffalo County, WisDOT, WDNR and other State Departments coordinate and discuss issues and potential joint projects in order to provide desirable and valuable services to the residents and visitors of the County. Continuing cooperation with these agencies will ensure future accomplishments benefiting the County.

*Federal* - Federal agencies that are active in Buffalo County include the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA). The Buffalo County Land Resources Department has primary interaction with these agencies.

*Region* - Buffalo County is within the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commissions area of representation. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) is a Commission of nine counties located along the Mississippi River in Western Wisconsin.

MRRPC authorized functions include providing advisory services on regional issues to local governments and other public and private agencies, acting as a coordinating agency for programs and activities and contracting with local units of government to make studies and offer advice on land use, thoroughfares, community facilities, public improvements, and encouragement of economic and other developments. Specific examples of services offered by MRRPC are: comprehensive plans, zoning and subdivision ordinances, grant writing, geographic information system map production, revolving loan fund administration, economic development planning, economic data collection and dissemination and advocating public policy positions on issues affecting our Region.

### Planning and Other Agreements

Comprehensive planning is at various stages in Buffalo County's local units of government. At this time Buffalo County has entered into various intergovernmental plans or agreements with local municipalities, other counties, and State and Federal agencies. These are some examples of the agreements that Buffalo County has entered into: Statewide Voter Registration System with 21 municipalities, Aging and Disability Resource Center with local Counties, Economic Support with local Counties, NRCS, Buffalo County Fair Association, Winter Road Maintenance Agreements with Pepin County, Trempealeau County, and Town of Naples, and Department of Transportation Contractual Agreements. The review period of each of these agreements vary from yearly to 25 years.

Local EMT, First Responders, Ambulance and Fire Departments provide services to area residents in emergencies. There may be possible conflicts in service coverage areas. Other areas of conflict deal with turnover in dispatch employees. New employees not familiar with the area could send the wrong EMS to the scene causing a delay in response time.

### Extraterritorial Zoning (ETZ)

Cities and Villages have been given by statute (Ch. 62.23(7a)) either a 3-mile (if population is 10,000 or more) or a 1.5-mile extension of zoning control outside their corporate boundaries (all Buffalo County communities would be limited to the 1.5 mile limit) if the proper cooperative steps with the adjoining Town(s) are followed. This allows a City/Village to exercise land use control over new development that otherwise might be incompatible with a City/Village's future growth.

What are some of the benefits of ETZ?

- Provides for smoother transitions between rural and urban land uses.
- Reduces conflicting land uses, which lessens citizen complaints and protects property values.
- Promotes intergovernmental cooperation and communication – but only if ETZ is enacted after mutual discussion and agreement.
- Makes planning for roads, utilities, recreation facilities, etc. easier.
- Coordinates mutual protection of sensitive areas and natural resources.

The key to using ETZ successfully is early and continuous discussions between all jurisdictions and formal public input plans. Sharing and discussing CLUP regularly should reduce the need for ETZ.

### Existing and Potential Conflicts

The legislation regarding comprehensive planning requires Buffalo County to identify any existing and/or potential problems between the County and other governmental units. The problems and the processes to resolve those problems must also be described. At this time there are no known existing conflicts between the County and other inter

governmental units. Potential conflicts could arise with various zoning regulations in the county. It is encouraged for the municipalities and county to work together to have uniform zoning regulations to avoid such conflicts. A weakness that has been noted is the communication between municipalities and the county board. Possible solutions to correct the weakness would be to have a bi-yearly meeting between the municipalities and the county board or to have the county board representative attend his/her municipalities meeting and keep them informed of upcoming or trending issues.

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Intergovernmental Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

**Objectives: Buffalo County would like to encourage and promote intergovernmental cooperation and planning efforts to make the most effective use of resources.**

- Have an annual meetings with all municipalities and the County to discuss potential changes or projects that arise.

**Objectives: Participation in the Towns Association is encouraged to continue the open lines of communication.**

- Encourage municipalities to attend Towns Association meetings regularly.

**Objectives: Regularly scheduled meetings with Management to encourage interdepartmental communications between the various Buffalo County Departments would be very helpful in keeping the lines of communication open within the Buffalo County Courthouse.**

- Have monthly meetings with Department Heads.

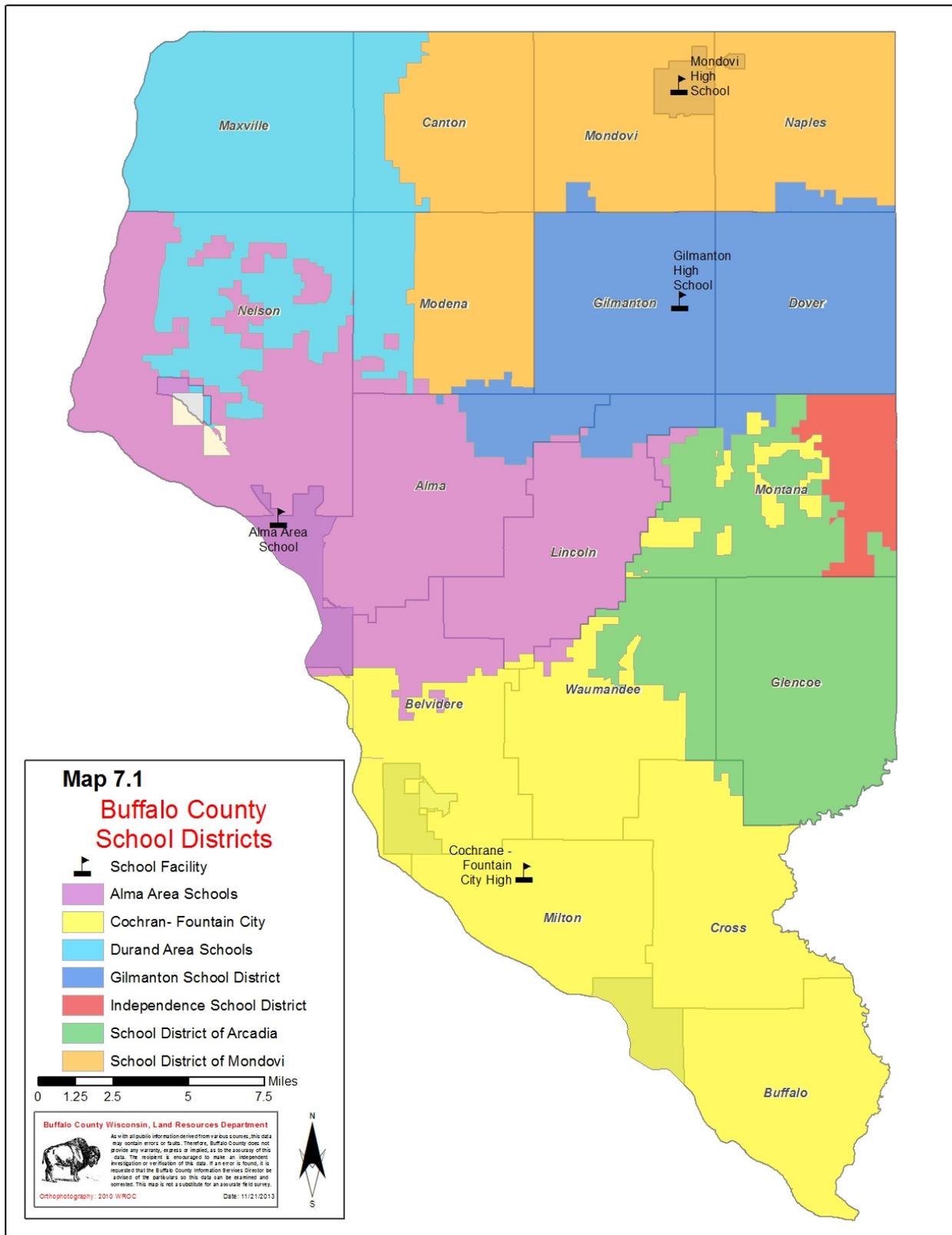
**Objectives: Buffalo County Board of Supervisors are encouraged to keep themselves informed of the goals, services, and responsibilities of each department.**

- Invite County Board Supervisors to attend Department Head meetings at least twice a year.

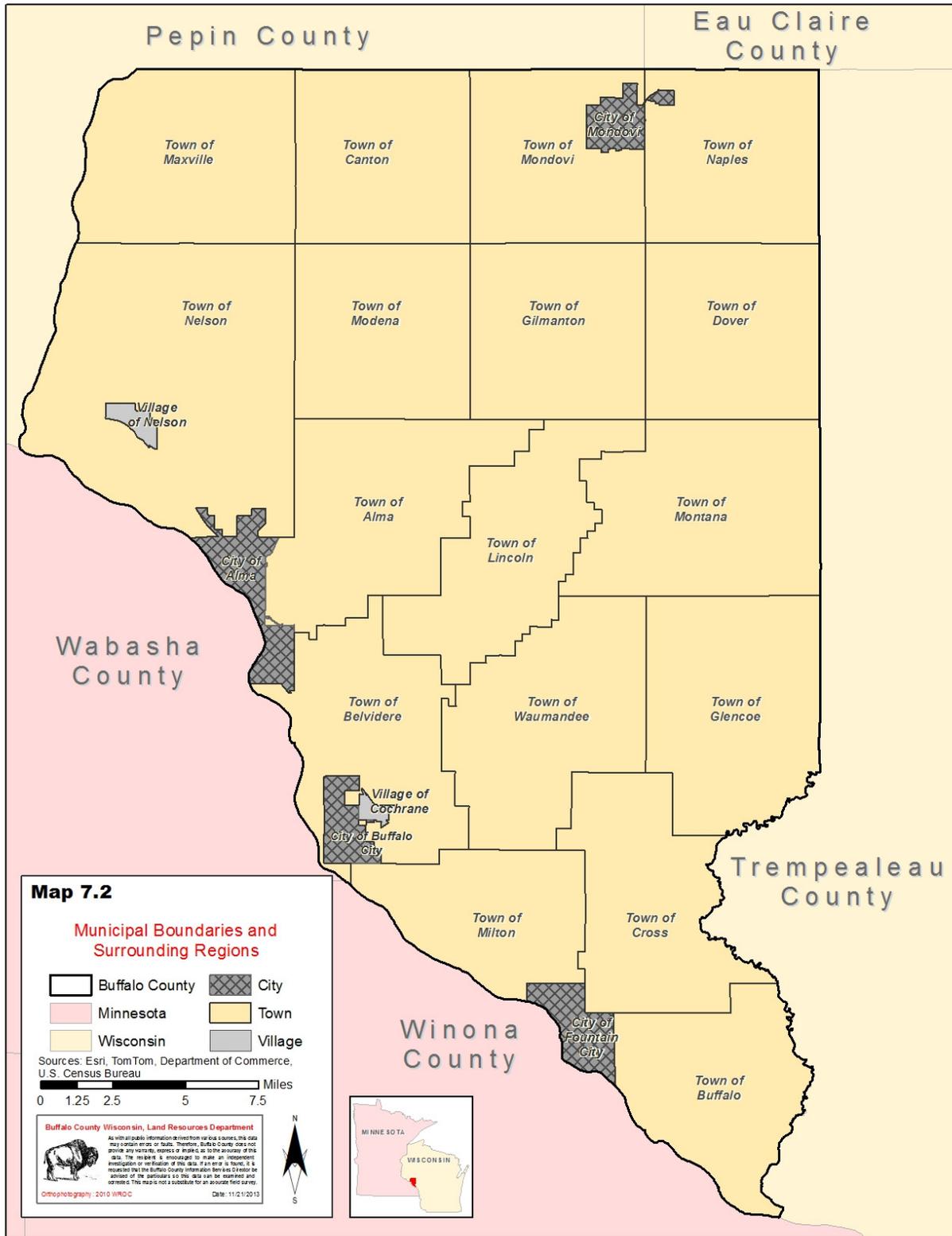
**Objectives: Keeping each municipality informed of proceedings occurring within Buffalo County should be a goal of each Buffalo County Board Supervisor.**

- Each County Board Supervisor should attend a municipal meeting at least once a year in the area he/she represents.

**Map 7.1 Buffalo County School Districts**



**Map 7.2 Municipal Boundaries and Surrounding Regions**



## Section 8

### Land Use Element

#### Element Overview

The Land Use Element provides the necessary information about how land in Buffalo County impacts the other planning elements. The element contains background information on land use, a land use map and strategies pertaining to future land uses.

#### Existing Land Use and Zoning

Buffalo County consists of 17 towns, 2 villages and 3 cities. Agriculture is by far the predominant industry in the county.

There are three general terms that are used throughout this element and the plan regarding land use. They are current and future land use, zoning classifications and assessed land. It is important to understand what is meant by each of these.

*Current and future land use* - Current land use describes how the land is currently being use. This may differ greatly from the future land use as the primary purpose is to depict regions in which current types of development are favorable. (For more information on how the corresponding maps were developed please see Appendix 8.1 on page 131 of this plan). Zoning is a system that is used to regulate the use of land. Zoning is the main planning tool of local government to manage future development. It is also the primary tool for implementing land-use plans.

*Zoning classifications* – Various geographic areas (zoning classifications) are restricted to certain uses and development. Buffalo County has five zoning classifications, residential, agriculture, recreational, commercial and industrial. Zoning classifications are designed to help regulate the types of activities that can be accommodated on a given piece of land, the amount of space devoted to those activities, and the ways that buildings may be placed and shaped.

#### Assessed Lands

Table 8.1 2012 Property Assessments, displays the breakdown of property within the county in the unincorporated Municipalities in the county. Ninety (90) percent of the land in Buffalo County is currently assessed as Agricultural land use. Agricultural Forest assessed land remains a distant second in terms of total acreage in the county.

Agricultural Land is defined as “land, exclusive of buildings and improvements, that is devoted primarily to agricultural use, while agricultural forest land use is land that is producing or is capable of producing commercial forest products, based on statutory changes in sec. 70.32, which addresses “use value assessment”. The county is expected to remain primarily agricultural in land use many years beyond the term of this plan.

Wisconsin law requires an assessor to classify land on the basis of use. There are situations where this involves a judgment of the predominant use. The eight statutory classifications for real property are residential, commercial, manufacturing, agricultural, undeveloped, agricultural forest, productive forest land and other.

**Table 8.1 2012 Property Assessments**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Residential Acres</b>	<b>Commercial Acres</b>	<b>Manufacturing Acres</b>	<b>Agricultural Acres</b>	<b>Undeveloped Land Acres</b>	<b>Agricultural Forest Acres</b>	<b>Productive Forest Lands Acres</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
T. of Alma	175.9	32.5	0.00	9,954.0	2,113.8	4,643.0	2,270.3	182.9	19,372.4
T. of Belvidere	216.4	111.6	0.00	9,523.5	657.0	4,266.0	2,164.6	249.2	17,188.3
T. of Buffalo	665.7	41.0	30.0	7,049.8	1,641.3	3,243.1	1,305.5	222.6	14,199.0
T. of Canton	199.7	1.0	21.0	12,494.6	1,034.2	3,295.9	345.6	180.1	17,572.1
T. of Cross	252.1	14.5	0.0	11,501.6	1,386.3	4,563.2	642.0	174.4	18,534.1
T. of Dover	384.0	25.7	55.0	14,010.9	1,731.0	2,998.0	1,310.0	197.2	20,711.8
T. of Gilmanton	247.3	11.5	0.0	12,160.6	2,283.2	4,561.6	1,466.0	161.1	20,891.3
T. of Glencoe	168.2	49.8	171.6	18,792.4	672.3	3,494.7	737.4	422.5	24,508.9
T. of Lincoln	144.6	3.8	0.0	9,824.8	790.4	5,017.2	1,678.9	117.1	17,573.6
T. of Maxville	123.8	7.4	133.1	11,687.1	431.6	5,777.2	1,107.8	157.2	19,425.2
T. of Milton	188.9	43.0	13.0	4,373.4	2,503.3	2,459.2	796.3	87.4	10,464.5
T. of Modena	249.1	32.3	0.00	9,909.6	1,690.5	3,866.8	1,354.6	209.3	17,312.2
T. of Mondovi	394.5	46.6	164.5	14,567.3	259.3	2,000.7	1,137.99	304.4	18,875.3
T. of Montana	110.0	0.0	0.0	18,043.3	730.6	4,460.2	881.2	231.7	24,457.0
T. of Naples	580.4	20.8	24.0	15,315.8	1,445.8	2,730.6	542.2	191.7	20,851.3
T. of Nelson	699.8	151.7	28.0	13,091.5	2,574.8	6,892.1	2,353.8	183.0	25,974.7
T. of Waumandee	189.1	21.7	7.7	15,604.6	1,160.5	3,808.0	842.9	274.8	21,909.3
<b>Total Acres</b>	4,989.5	614.9	647.9	207,904.8	23,105.9	68,077.5	20,937.1	3,546.6	329,824.2

\*Property Assessment 2012 (unincorporated areas of the county only) – County Treasurer. Rounded to nearest one-tenth

Map 8.1 and 8.2 respectively show Buffalo County Current and Future Land Use maps. The current land use map depicts how the land is currently being use. This is in sharp contrast to the future land use maps that show areas that have been identified by municipal comprehensive planning efforts as ideal locations for future residential, industrial or commercial development. One hypothetical example could be that 5 acre tract of land is zoned for agricultural use, however if an older home resides on this parcel, the current land use classification would be residential. In an effort to enhance the future development of the area, the local citizens, may request to expand their central business district. If this land was to fall within the proposed expanded area it would then be classified as commercial under the future land use definition. This not only helps direct future development but also provides citizen input into the future of the community. A comparison between the current and future land use maps can help decisions makers identify areas where potential conflicts could exist between land usages. These maps along with current zoning maps should be viewed as tools to help make subsequent zoning and other land use decisions more informed and more transparent.

### Current Zoning

All Towns within Buffalo County participate in county comprehensive zoning as described in Wisconsin Statute 59.97. Zoning decisions are made by the Buffalo County Land Resources (Zoning) Committee and Buffalo County Land Resources Department. The Towns, in their Land Use Plans expressed support to maintain this relationship. The following ordinances are administered in the Land Resources Department.

*Assemblage Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the assemblage of large numbers of people, requiring a license therefore, to protect the health, safety and welfare of all persons, residents and visitors, and to impose penalties and enforce the same against any person for any violation of such ordinance.

*Floodplain Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to provide a regulatory scheme for development in that uncontrolled development and use of the floodplains and rivers of this municipality would impair the public health, safety, convenience, general welfare and tax base.

Floodplain management is the operation of a community program of corrective and preventative measures for reducing flood damage. A community's agreement to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances, particularly with respect to new construction, is an important element in making flood insurance available to home and business owners.

Wisconsin has required communities to regulate floodplains since 1968 under Chapter NR 116 Wisconsin Administrative Code. Floodplain regulations are used to reduce flood risk and maintain the natural values of undeveloped floodplains. Wisconsin chose to enact floodplain management standards which exceed the minimum standards of the National Flood Insurance Program in order to ensure that development in flood prone areas has reduced risk to flooding. The floods of 2008 and 2010 exceeded the anticipated base flood. Development built to meet higher Wisconsin standards had reduced levels of damage.

*Shoreland Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to provide a regulatory scheme for the purpose of promoting the public health, safety convenience and welfare, and promote and protect the public trust in navigable waters.

*Subdivision Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to provide safe and orderly subdivision layouts.

*Sanitary Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to promote and protect public health and safety by assuring the proper siting, design, installation, inspection and management of private on-site wastewater treatment system (POWTS) and non-plumbing sanitary systems.

*Uniform Numbering System Ordinance* -The purpose of this ordinance is to promote public health, safety and convenience and general welfare; to regulate a uniform county-wide numbering system as authorized by state statute. Perhaps one of the more overlooked aspects of land use and future development is the rural addressing of Buffalo County. This should be viewed as a critical element in any future development initiative. A uniform numbering system plays a vital role in ensuring fast response times during emergencies and postal services.

*Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to establish a local program to ensure the effective reclamation of nonmetallic mining sites on which nonmetallic mining takes place in compliance with state statute and administrative rule.

*Wind Energy Facility Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is provide a regulatory scheme for the construction and operation of wind energy facilities, subject to reasonable restrictions, which will preserve the public health, safety and general welfare. It addresses the timely removal of non-operating, reconstructed, enlarged and relocated wind towers as well.

*Uniform Dwelling Code Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to provide a regulatory scheme for the construction of 1 and 2-family dwellings and other habitable structures. It also addresses the placement of manufactured homes, subject to reasonable restrictions, which will preserve the public health, safety and general welfare. (Buffalo County contracts with a private party to fulfill the requirements of this ordinance).

*Zoning Ordinance* - The purpose of this ordinance is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare: to determine, establish, regulate and restrict the areas within which agriculture, forestry, industry, trades, businesses and recreation and residential uses may be conducted; the areas in and along or in or along natural waters courses, channels, streams and creeks in which trades or industries, including trailer camps, or tourist camps and motels or both, may be prohibited or restricted; regulation and building setback lines and other uses authorized by state statute.

**Table 8.2 Permits Issued**

Year	Sanitary		Zoning	Conditional Use		Variance		Address		Appeal	Special Exception	Re-zone	Driveway
	New	Replacements		Approved	Denied	Approved	Denied	Approved	Replacements				
1990	54	5	78	10	1	1	2	3	23	1	0	0	0
1995	74	5	113	12	0	2	0	54	6	2	1	0	0
2000	110	8	146	10	0	4	0	65	11	0	7	1	0
2005	104	4	137	14	0	3	1	58	7	0	4	0	15
2010	72	0	121 (approved) ( 1 denied)	16	1	6	0	94	1	0	3	0	8
2012	75	0	114	21	10*	3	0	64	0	0	1	0	13

\*Seven of these permits were for 1 nonmetallic mining site. (Buffalo County Permit Tracking database).

Residents overall are not in favor of implementing any protections for farmland, natural areas or any other land use area, but they are in favor of farm residents entering into the Agriculture

Enterprise Area option of the Working Lands Initiative (Farmland Preservation Program). There is a lot of support for voluntarily participation in programs to preserve farmland, such as land conservancy organizations or land trusts.

To preserve the scenic natural beauty of the bluffs along the Mississippi River, measures should be put in place to discourage building on the bluff lands and if structures are built, appropriate setbacks should be in place. This can be accomplished through the enactment of a bluffland ordinance. Table 8.2 Permits Issued, shows the total number of permits issued by for each Ordinance from 1990 to 2012

A conditional use permit is currently required in the steep soil district when a structure is desired to be constructed on less than a 10 acre parcel. In some cases 10 acres is not sufficient and in others less than 10 acres is more appropriate. Minimum lot size for single family dwelling structure should be implemented in the best interest of the specific site location. This should be reviewed during a future change in the Zoning Ordinance. Table 8.3 Conditional Use Permit Issued in the Agricultural District, indicates that there is only 1 case where a permit was denied for construction in the steep soil. This could be reviewed during a modification in the Zoning Ordinance, to include language to permit construction in the steep soils where it otherwise would be a conditional use.

The current Zoning Ordinance lists farm and home based businesses, mini storage facilities, communication towers, agricultural supply businesses dog kennels, salvage yards and nonmetallic mining among many other permitted and conditional uses in the Agriculture District. This opportunity for permitted and conditional uses allowed, could create the potential for land use conflicts. Changes to permitted and conditional uses in each of the zoning classifications or the addition of zoning classifications could also be changed in the zoning ordinance to reduce these conflicts.

Non-farm mobile homes are not permitted in the Agricultural District. To place a mobile home in this district a conditional use permit is required. The table shows that the largest percentage of non-farm mobile homes are permitted. Similar to what is being suggested for construction in the steep soils, the same could apply to non-farm mobile homes. During a re-write of the Zoning Ordinance, it would be an opportunity to address an age limit on mobile homes being placed in the county as well. This was suggested in most of the Town Plans that mobile homes be no older than 10 years; some Towns were in favor of an age limit up to 15 years old.

**Table 8.3 Conditional Use Permits Issued in the Agricultural District (A-approved, D-denied)**

	Home or farm based business		Non-farm mobile home		Substandard lot in steep soils		Manufacturing Processing		Expansion of non-conforming use	Communication Tower	Sheet & Trap Shooting		Aircraft Landing Field	
	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D			A	D	A	D
2000	2		7		1		1							
2001	3				5	1				1				
2002	3		11		8					3				
2003	4		11	1	15									
2004	3		7				3		1					
2005	6		4		5		1							
2006	10		10		5		1			1				
2007	3		6	2	2									1
2008	2		5		3		2							1
2009	4		3		1		8				2			
2010	6	1	5		1		1			1				
2011			1		2		9 *	1 (2 withdrawals)						
2012	7		1		1		6 *	10 *						
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

\*Seven applications for one mine site. (Buffalo County Permit tracking database.)

In most cases more conditional use permits were issued, than denied in the Agricultural District. There are certain uses that will continue to need to be reviewed and follow the current application process due to their contentious nature. These would include manufacturing, sheet and trap shooting and aircraft landing fields.

### PLSS Preservation and Land Descriptions

In 1832 Survey Crews started placing the first monuments for the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) in Wisconsin. This system is still used as the dominant system for describing and dividing land through much of Wisconsin. All property located in Buffalo County today is tied into one of the 36 sections of the 6-mile by 6-mile townships that make up the bases for the PLSS.

As the value and ownership of land in Buffalo County continue to change, at an ever increasing rate, the legal means by which land is conveyed will become ever more important. Without well-defined legal descriptions describing the conveyance of property, residents of the County may encounter unwanted legal and financial hardships. Though many of these hardships may not be apparent today, they can cause serious problems for future generations resulting in the slowing of development and the fracturing of community ties.

By supporting the modernization of land records and programs like PLSS Remonumentation, the process of marking section corners with sturdy, modern monuments allows Buffalo County to ensure the protection of its \$993,167,100.00 real estate asset.

Overall, there is a lack of support for additional land use restrictions, but there is interest in providing Town input in rezone changes and conditional use permits. Land Use Plans at the Town level are evolving and there is some support within the county to make changes in the relationship between the county zoning and the Town if the taxpayers feel it is necessary.

However, it must be known that without proper restrictions the county may not be able to fully preserve the natural beauty and Agricultural heritage the residents of the county desire. (Map 8.3 Public Land Survey System (PLSS) Remonumentation Status, indicates those regions of the county where remonumentation of PLSS Corners has already been completed as well as what each Municipality gave for funding)

### Existing Land Uses

Table 8.4 Zoned Acreage in Buffalo County shows the zoning classifications in Buffalo County. Note that approximately 99.84 percent of the unincorporated areas of the county are zoned agriculture. Note that there are 448,364 total acres in the county.

**Table 8.4 Zoned Acreage in Buffalo County**

Municipality	Residential	Agricultural	Recreational	Commercial	Industrial
Total Acreage	86.8	447,654.3	325.6	124.7	172.7
% Of Total Land	0.01935%	99.8417%	0.07261%	0.0278%	0.03851%

See Map 8.4 Current Buffalo County Zoning Districts for a depiction of current countywide zoning districts in Buffalo County.

### Topography

Topography of Buffalo County is extremely varied consisting of high ridges, long narrow valleys and areas of steep sloping land in between. Bluffs rise above the river bottoms by 500 feet in

some areas. Only a small corridor along the Mississippi River was ever glaciated, where terraces have been formed from glacial meltwater deposits.

Commercial/Industrial

Most of the land in Buffalo County has been zoned agriculturally. Only a select few areas of the County have been zoned for commercial or industrial use, see map 8.3 for their locations.

Conventional zoning practices indicate that, like zoning districts, they are better off grouped in closer proximity to one another in order to better provide separation from incompatible uses, which may include residential neighborhoods.

One industrial park is located in the City of Mondovi. It is comprised of 94 acres and currently has 20 businesses located within the park. An additional 8 lots of approximately 1.5 acres are available. Future expansion is possible, as additional acres and larger parcels are available to the north. A second industrial park is located in the City of Alma.

Buffalo City has had discussions about designating an area with a Zoning classification of light industrial, with the hopes of attracting small industries to their City.

Population and Housing Densities

Population density in the county is 19.9 people per square mile. Housing density in the county is 9.36 houses per square mile. Table 8.5 House Permits by Dwelling Type shows the number of permits that have been issued for housing since 2009. It also shows the values (high and low) during those years.

**Table 8.5 House Permits by Dwelling Type**

	New Single Family Dwelling	Addition to Single-Family Dwelling	Replacement Single-Family Dwelling	Modification to Single-Family Dwelling	Non-farm Mobile Home	Habitable Structure
<b>2009</b>						
Number of Permits	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>
Highest Value	236,000	150,000	330,000	50,000	35,000	150,000
Lowest Value	15,000	500,000	19,000	1,500	25,000	1,500
<b>2010</b>						
Number of Permits	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>
Highest Value	220,000.	100,000.	250,000.	27,500.	5,000.	150,000.
Lowest Value	70,000.	1,300.	99,000.	10,000	100.	4,000.
<b>2011</b>						
Number of Permits	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
Highest Value	438,000	100,000	180,000	40,000	20,000	140,000
Lowest Value	36,000	1,000	180,000	1,100	15,000	3,000
<b>2012</b>						
Number of Permits	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
Highest Value	650,000.	97,000.	180,000.	26,409.	34,000.	330,000.
Lowest Value	30,000.	350.	100,000.	1,300.	10,000.	2,000.

County Permit tracking database

From Table 8.5 you will notice the biggest change is in the highest value of new single family dwellings from 2009 to 2012, which is \$414,000 and \$202,000 from 2009 to 2011. Habitable structures had an increase of \$180,000 from 2009 to 2012. Habitable structural are defined as anything other than a single or multi-family dwelling. An example of a habitable structure would be a cabin.

Land Demand and Prices

Table 8.6 Agricultural Land Sales shows Agricultural Land Sales comparison.

**Table 8.6 Agricultural Land Sales**

Year	Agricultural land continuing in agricultural use			Agricultural land being diverted to other uses			Total of all agricultural land		
	Number of transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per acre	Number of transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per acre	Number of transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per acre
1998	30	2,288	1,052	37	1,676	1,124	67	3,964	1,083
2000	29	2,651	1,201	34	1,595	1,306	63	4,246	1,240
2005	27	2,080	2,177	15	612	2,978	42	2,692	2,359
2010	17	1,141	2,941	8	260	2,965	25	1,401	2,945
2012	26	2,035	4,116	7	186	4,161	33	2,221	4,120

USDA , NASS Statistics Service.

Agricultural land sales in dollars per acres in Buffalo County increased 74 % from 1998 to 2012, while the number of transactions and the acres sold decreased 50% and 44% respectively. Table 8.6 also shows the amount of land that was diverted from agricultural use. During the time between 1998 and 2012; 14,524 acres were sold. Of those acres 4,329 or 30% were diverted to other uses or loss of agricultural land for agricultural use. This could potentially mean less feed for livestock or cash cropping.

With the steep topography of the county, there is little opportunity for land to be taken out of forest and put into crop production to make up for the loss of agricultural land being diverted to other uses.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

Buffalo County will have very limited development due to its rural nature. The Land Resources (Zoning) Committee will seek to make development in Buffalo County attractive, though modifications to the Zoning Ordinance. The committee will strive to maintain a balance between limiting regulation of current and potential property owners within the county, while deterring development that would have a detrimental impact on future land use(s).

The committee welcomes new development but will attempt to direct it to the most suitable areas indicated by the County and municipal comprehensive planning efforts. Lot size requirements

will be addressed and the Land Resources Department and Committee will steer developers towards areas where development is better suited.

### Land Use Projections

The major land use in Buffalo County is Agricultural. There is no indication that housing will increase at a rate greater than it has in the recent past with a trend of 2 or 3 homes expected to be built in each municipality each year. Cost of job commute and limited job opportunities may also hinder additional housing construction.

Commercial and industrial development is expected to remain low due to the lack of railway, interstate, and other critical utilities. State highways tend to be windy and hilly, which make it less appealing to attract new businesses. Table 8.7 Real Estate Valuation Summary in 2010 Dollars, provides a look at the value of land devoted to each land use type by Township.

**Table 8.7 Real Estate Valuation Summary in 2010 Dollars**

Township	Residential	Commercial	Manufacturing	Agricultural	Undeveloped Land	Agricultural Forest	Productive Forest Lands	*Other
Alma	11,587.5	760.6	0.00	1,430.3	1,061.3	6,245.4	6,125.5	9,270.0
Belvidere	21,366.8	1,502.3	0.00	1,331.2	329.8	4,489.2	4,533.2	10,399.2
Buffalo	35,755.6	2,118.5	55.6	855.2	810.9	6,044.4	3,737.5	8,493.8
Canton	6,854.9	33.6	37.2	1,726.5	331.2	3,987.7	829.4	9,585.4
Cross	13,704.3	335.5	0.00	1,336.4	861.1	6,644.1	1,909.2	7,456.0
Dover	14,634.4	293.5	108.2	1,682.6	1,760.7	4,410.1	3,663.6	6,407.5
Gilmanston	14,356.4	560.4	0.00	1,763.8	2,114.1	6,789.5	4,278.4	7,312.3
Glencoe	7,269.8	383.1	283.3	1,952.6	173.8	3,249.2	1,344.8	13,434.8
Lincoln	5,092.4	208.0	0.00	1,483.3	513.7	7,524.6	5,024.6	5,681.8
Maxville	8,989.8	216.8	411.2	1,721.4	217.8	9,103.7	3,488.8	8,012.4
Milton	31,153.8	1,691.3	442.9	659.5	940.5	2,578.2	1,672.7	6,373.5
Modena	9,343.4	637.4	0.00	1,366.7	1,125.6	4,451.0	3,112.4	5,828.1
Mondovi	16,361.4	825.4	285.1	2,014.6	66.1	2,400.9	2,725.1	8,106.4
Montana	6,554.3	0.00	0.00	2,053.4	497.6	6,248.4	2,467.4	10,982.3
Naples	22,462.1	364.9	115.1	1,780.2	503.8	3,017.0	1,173.1	8,188.8
Nelson	27,358.0	1,325.1	444.9	1,869.9	2,310.8	11,721.0	7,987.3	9,285.7
Waumandee	14,585.2	2,082.6	1,698.1	2,031.8	835.9	5,902.0	2,623.1	13,234.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>267,385.1</b>	<b>13,339.0</b>	<b>3,881.6</b>	<b>27,059.4</b>	<b>14,454.7</b>	<b>94,806.4</b>	<b>56,696.1</b>	<b>148,052.2</b>

Buffalo County Treasurer, 2012 Real Estate Valuation Summary (in thousands of dollars)

\*Other is defined as the area in a parcel (improvements and land) not devoted primarily for agricultural use, such as house, barn, silo, road right-of-way and lawn around the house.

### Recreational

Buffalo County is renowned for its beauty, landscape and hunting heritage. The county is known for quality whitetail deer and has been a destination for deer hunters within and outside of Wisconsin.

The presence of prime hunting land has made Buffalo County a desirable county for absentee landowners. This has created some concern regarding managed forest regulations within the county and also resulted in an increase in hunting cabin construction.

The county is also known for recreational opportunities on and near the Mississippi River, which provides activities including water sports, hunting, camping, and some of Wisconsin's best fishing.

*Absentee or Non-resident Landowners*

Absentee landowners in Buffalo County are starting to draw attention because of the changes in land use that have occurred. Table 8.8 Absentee Landowners in the Unincorporated Municipalities of Buffalo County, provides data on land that was sold and diverted to other uses. The increase in the price of an acre of land being sold in Buffalo County between 2005 and 2012 is believed to be sold to absentee landowners for recreational uses and much of it for whitetail deer harvesting.

Table 8.8 shows landownership in the unincorporated municipalities of the county as it relates to number of absentee landowners and the amount of land they own.

**Table 8.8 Absentee Landowners in the Unincorporated Municipalities of Buffalo County**

	<b>Total # of Landowners</b>	<b># of Absentee landowners</b>	<b>Acres owned by absentee landowners (Estimate)</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>% of absentee owned acres</b>
T. of Alma	208	76	11,739.6	19,372.4	60.6
T. of Belvidere	266	75	4,576.3	17,188.2	26.7
T. of Buffalo	371	102	5,555.8	14,299.0	38.9
T. of Canton	167	59	5,917.1	17,571.9	33.7
T. of Cross	221	70	6,532.1	18,534.2	35.3
T. of Dover	242	83	7,106.1	20,711.8	34.3
T. of Gilmanton	253	74	7,007.9	20,891.2	33.6
T. of Glencoe	216	78	8,580.5	24,508.9	35.0
T. of Lincoln	196	81	8,743.7	17,576.8	49.8
T. of Maxville	177	59	7,604.2	19,425.0	39.2
T. of Milton	276	57	2,183.3	10,464.5	20.9
T. of Modena	202	67	8,107.2	17,312.2	46.9
T. of Mondovi	249	53	5,285.6	18,875.3	28.0
T. of Montana	192	86	10,203.5	24,457.0	41.8
T. of Naples	298	62	5,917.8	24,457.0	24.2
T. of Nelson	379	142	11,902.1	25,974.6	45.9
T. of Waumandee	253	55	5,118.3	21,909.2	23.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,166</b>	<b>1,707</b>	<b>121,866.1</b>	<b>333,529.2</b>	<b>36.5%</b>

\*Small lots are not included in the total.

The definition of absentee landowner was decided by the Comprehensive Land Use Technical Committee as any landowner with a primary residence that did not fall within the boundaries of Buffalo County. To determine the estimated number of acres of land owned by absentee landowners within Buffalo County, a database file was exported from the Treasurer's Office to form a list of the total number of landowners for each municipality. The landowners were then sorted by zip code so that all similar zip codes were grouped together. Any landowner that lives within the borders of Buffalo County was deleted from the list. For some landowners, the online tax roll system was used to see if the address given lies within the geographical extent of Buffalo County. If the address was not within the borders of Buffalo County that landowner was considered an absentee landowner.

There is concern for the increase in absentee or non-resident landowners. From Table 8.7, you will notice that there are 1,707 absentee landowners, which is 41% of the total landowners in the county. They typically purchased the land for recreational hunting of whitetail deer. The absentee landowner does not always understand agriculture and the need for best management farming practices. You may find they are not as supportive of the snowmobile industry and the benefit of local trails to the economy of the county and prefer that the snowmobile trails be re-routed away from their land.

Absentee landowners enjoy a restaurant meal and quick snacks while they are in the county, but they generally bring their food and drink with them when they come.

The county is faced with a rising elderly population and decreasing younger population. As the number of absentee landowners increases this reduces the number of residents available to serve in a voluntary capacity, such as the local fire departments, EMT(s) and ambulance service.

### Managed Forest Law (MFL)

Managed Forest Law (MFL) enrollment is a concern throughout Buffalo County. At the end of 2012, Buffalo County had 75,188.46 (see Table 8.8 Total MFL Acres) acres in the MFL Program.

Wisconsin's Managed Forest Law (MFL) is a landowner incentive program that encourages sustainable forestry on private woodlands in Wisconsin. Together with landowner objectives, the law incorporates timber harvesting, wildlife management, water quality and recreation to maintain a healthy and productive forest. Sustainable forest management benefit's Wisconsin's economy, hunting, fishing, wildlife, recreation, soils, waterways, and air quality, and renews our beautiful forest for everyone to enjoy.

A new MFL application includes committing to a 20 or 50 years forest management plan. DNR foresters keep abreast of what is required in the plan and remind landowners well in advance when work in their plan needs to be completed. A landowner works directly with cooperating foresters and other resource professional when implementing management practices to ensure that forestry practices are implemented sustainably and will achieve desired results. To meet the goals and objectives, landowners will need to follow their forest management plans as they are written and necessary enforcement will need to be taken when the plans are not followed.

In return, MFL participants make a payment in lieu of regular property taxes plus a yield tax on harvested trees. Yield taxes go to the local municipality to help offset the annual property taxes that are deferred while properties are enrolled in MFL.

There is a direct connection between the increase in absentee landowners and the increase in land enrollment in MFL. As more absentee landowners have the available resources to purchase the land at the recent accelerated land prices, they enroll in the MFL program as a means to reduce the amount of property taxes they pay.

Table 8.9 Total MFL Acres shows a comparison of MFL Acres enrolled in the county between the Towns in the county.

**Table 8.9 Total MFL Acres**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2012</b>
T. of Alma	1,037.22	6,276.63	7,987.77	8,048.75
T. of Belvidere	919.60	2,951.76	3,157.86	3,092.86
T. of Buffalo	200.00	1,351.20	1,622.99	1,893.38
T. of Canton	731.25	4,492.36	4,736.58	4,787.21
T. of Cross	992.93	3,572.39	4,837.22	5,066.92
T. of Dover	745.35	2,259.65	2,504.21	2,504.51
T. of Gilmanton	936.10	2,425.24	2,471.50	2,455.95
T. of Glencoe	1,320.59	3,346.97	4,203.89	4,196.89
T. of Lincoln	2,594.74	5,771.04	6,567.32	5,891.10
T. of Maxville	772.45	3,602.97	3,875.94	4,202.55
T. of Milton	618.50	2,088.12	2,538.70	2,569.36
T. of Modena	2,546.91	4,233.31	6,029.49	5,980.93
T. of Mondovi	723.60	1,628.70	1,997.99	1,957.99
T. of Montana	1,419.02	5,514.07	5,837.95	5,839.10
T. of Naples	247.00	1,288.83	1,733.63	1,749.13
T. of Nelson	2,741.69	7,263.35	8,285.00	8,210.71
T. of Waumandee	1,783.95	5,714.12	6,090.89	6,097.89
V. of Nelson	0.00	0.00	109.50	109.50
C. of Alma	0.00	0.00	381.00	381.00
C. of Fountain City	0.00	0.00	152.70	152.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,330.90</b>	<b>63,780.71</b>	<b>75,122.13</b>	<b>75,188.43</b>

In addition to the number of absentee landowners purchasing this land, there is an impact on the amount of property tax that the property owners of the county pay because of the land enrolled in MFL. Table 8.10 Comparison of Property Tax With and Without MFL Enrollment, shows a comparison of the decrease in property taxes that are paid on land enrolled in MFL. This table reflects only the county tax and county receipts. In addition to this there are similar effects at the Town level in relationship to their levy.

**Table 8.10 Comparison of Property Tax With and Without MFL Enrollment**

	<b>Total MFL Acres Open &amp; Closed</b>	<b>Original Property Tax</b>	<b>MFL Tax (Tax Bill Payment)</b>
<b>2000</b>	20,330.90	\$ 110,490.88	\$ 3,008.97
<b>2005</b>	63,780.71	\$ 684,399.95	\$ 11,517.28
<b>2010</b>	75,122.13	\$ 469,290.29	\$ 13,973.18
<b>2012</b>	75,188.43	\$ 463,281.75	\$ 14,291.74

Information obtained from a spreadsheet created in the Buffalo County Treasurer's Office  
 The MFL Tax (Tax Bill Payment) is only an estimate. The mill rate used in the spreadsheet did not reflect the change, had the assessed value of land enrolled in MFL been included in the mill rate calculation.

It is important to understand that land enrolled in MFL does not decrease the amount of revenue that a County would receive. It changes or increases the mill rate and re-distributes the property tax. The effect on the Town is similar.

There are additional sources of revenue that the county receives when land in the county is enrolled in MFL. One source is a Resource Aid Payment for counties that have > 40,000 acres enrolled in MFL. This equates to a payment between \$30,000 and \$35,000 and based on the number of acres enrolled in MFL. The state funds are always the same, however the amount to each county changes each year based on the number of acres in relation to what other counties have enrolled in the program. The other sources of funding to the county include a Yield Tax, Withdrawal Tax and Annual Aid Payment.

These sources of revenue change each year as well and have never exceeded \$65,000 per year since the program began, including the MFL Tax from Table 8.9.

*Agricultural*

In general, Buffalo County is a rural community, industrial and commercial uses make up a small percentage of the land uses, while residential uses represent the bulk of development within the County. Historically this development trend has shaped the landscape of the County.

The majority of the towns in the county expressed an interest to protect prime farmland from development, therefore the Zoning Committee will review future developments on their placement in relation to areas designated as prime farmland. The prime farmland maps are listed in the appendix.

*Right to Farm Law* - Right to Farm is addressed in the Wi Statute. Wisconsin's Right to Farm law provides farmers with protections from silly nuisance lawsuits and gives them the ability to complete their farming operations without the fear of legal action as long as they follow good production. The law expects the farmer will conduct the farming operation in the best interest of public health and safety.

The law gives the farmers, who wish to continue to farm, the ability to do so with less fear of legal criticism from their non-farm neighbors. It was the belief that local units of government have the ability to manage land use conflicts through zoning and other land use tools.

### Use Value Assessment.

Use Value Assessment was created under the authority of 1995 Wisconsin Act 27 with a change to state statute sec. 70.32, which governs the valuation of real property.

The goal of this legislation was to protect Wisconsin's farm economy and curb urban sprawl by assessing farmland based upon its agricultural productivity, rather than its potential for development. Legislation requires that the assessed value of farmland be based on the income that could be generated from it rental for agricultural use and income and rental from farming are a function of agricultural capability. Because any land could theoretically be used for agricultural purposes, statutes and administrative rules limit the benefit of use value assessment to only those lands that qualify as "land devoted primarily to agricultural use."

### Objectives and Goals

The general objectives and goals of the Land Use Element follow the input of other Municipal plans, public involvement, Committee input, Technical Committee knowledge, and other participation. The general objectives are followed by goals that are more specific.

**Objectives: The County will work with the Buffalo County Towns Association Unit to develop mutually agreed upon land use classifications to be used in the development of a revised Zoning Ordinance.**

- Discuss at a Towns Association Meeting within 6 months to determine a dialogue with the Towns

**Objectives: The County will develop a high level standardization process for inventorying all current land uses located throughout the County.**

- Select a County Committee to take the lead with this objective within 3 months
- Lead County Committee will establish an approach and timeline to begin the inventory process within 9 months.

**Objectives: Complete a comprehensive update to the Zoning Ordinance to address – 3 months**

- Re-zone areas that surround commercially zoned areas to reduce cost and time for new businesses to start
- Address minimum lot sizes – housing in steep soils
- Address building on blufflands along the Mississippi River corridor – Bluffland Ordinance
- Address age of mobile homes moved into a new site – Include in a revision to the Zoning Ordinance
- Address driveways that are too steep for emergency vehicles to travel safe – Encourage the Towns that do not have an ordinance to understand the significance of such an ordinance.

**Objectives: Discuss with the Towns the need for a sub-division ordinance revision**

- Completed in cooperation with the Towns – identify priority

**Objectives: Promote preservation of farmland–within 6 months**

- Through programs that will encourage landowner to preserve their prime farmland
  - Working Lands Initiative – Agricultural Enterprise Areas
  - Western Wisconsin Land Trust
  - Conservancy Programs
- Conservation farm planning to “T” Tolerable soil loss
  - Landowners enrolled in the Farmland Preservation Program
  - Landowners receiving cost share funds for structural conservation practices
  - Landowners required to implement 590 nutrient management plans

**Objectives: Develop a way for Towns to provide input in all Conditional Permit Applications – Identify a process within 6 months on how to implement additional participation**

- Write a policy to encourage additional Town participation – request input

**Objective: The County Understands the Importance Of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Land Records Modernization and Supports the Following Efforts:**

- Select a County Committee to take a lead role within 3 months
- Selected County Committee to determine priorities and set a time line for the necessary activities within 9 months
- The development of a countywide GIS system that supports the collaborative efforts of multiple department while streamlining work flows and implementing quality control measures
- The development of a countywide parcel map
- The advancement of Enhanced 911 mapping and software capabilities
- The continuation of PLSS remonumentation program
- Establishing a long term orthophotography acquisition program

**Objectives: The County will work with the Buffalo County Towns Association Unit to Establish a Sustainable Rural Addressing Program. This program will be designed to do the following:**

- Select a County Committee to take a lead role within 3 months
- Selected County Committee to determine priorities and set a time line for the necessary activities within 9 months
- Educate representatives, county employees, and the residents of Buffalo County about the importance of addressing and the current issues of the system in place.
- Identify short comings in the current addressing program.
- Develop long term maintenance measures to ensure the future success of the system.

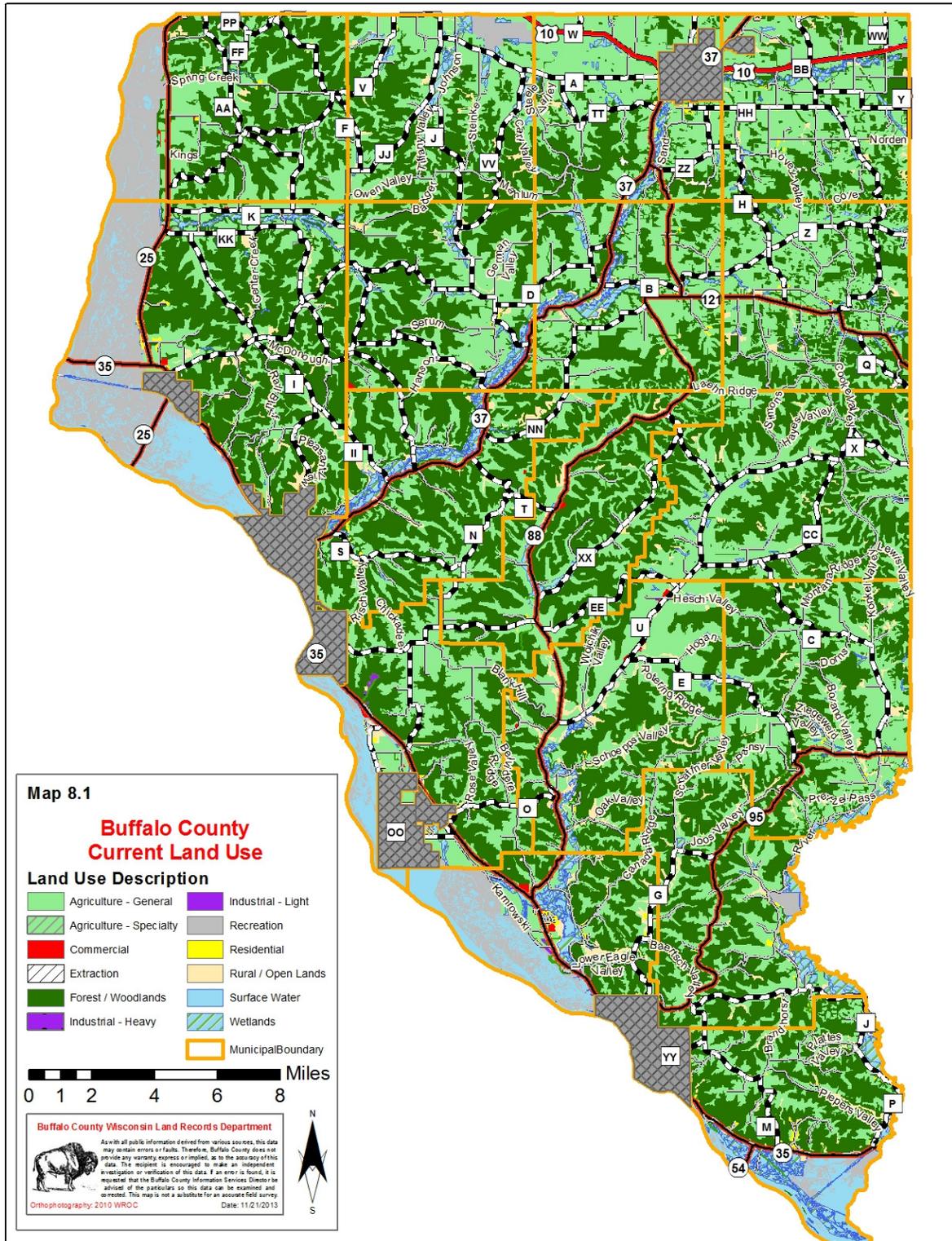
**Objectives: Promote Right to Farm Law**

- Make residents and non-residents aware of the language in the law
  - Post information on the new county website

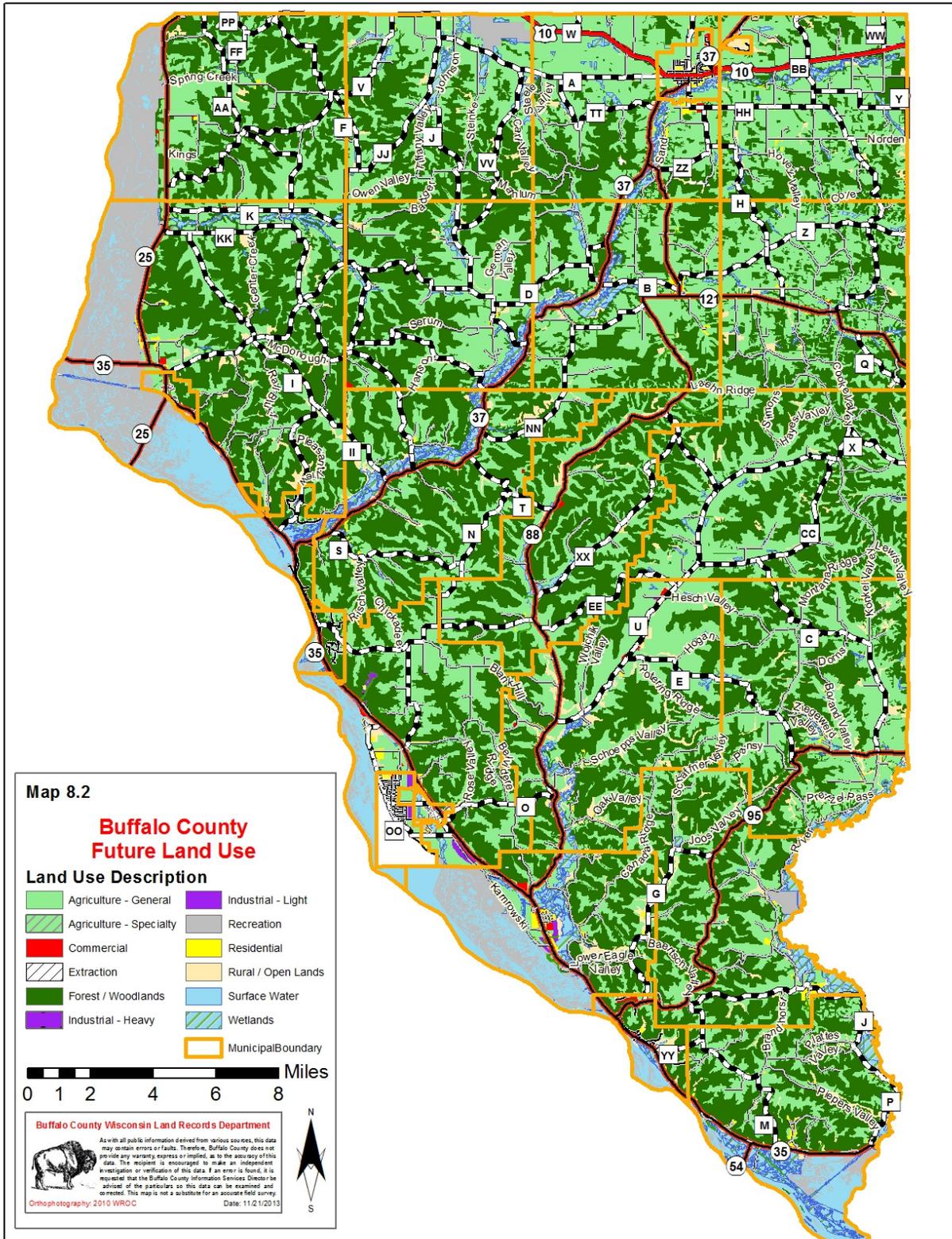
**Objectives: Discuss a re-evaluation to MFL – within 1 year**

- Talk with legislators
  - Provide information on the impact of all residents with and without the program
    - Presentation at a Towns Association Meeting

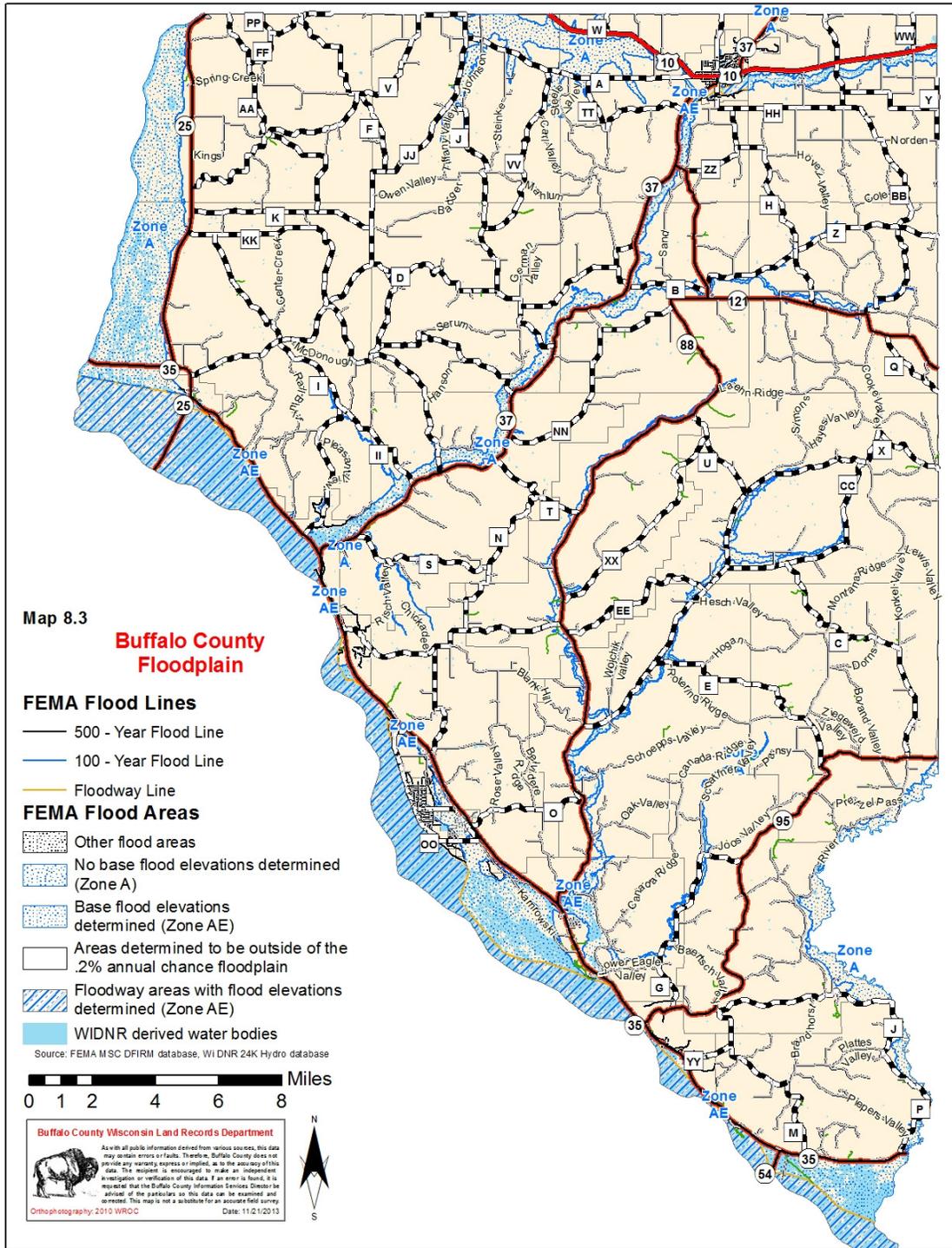
**Map 8.1 Buffalo County Current Land Use**



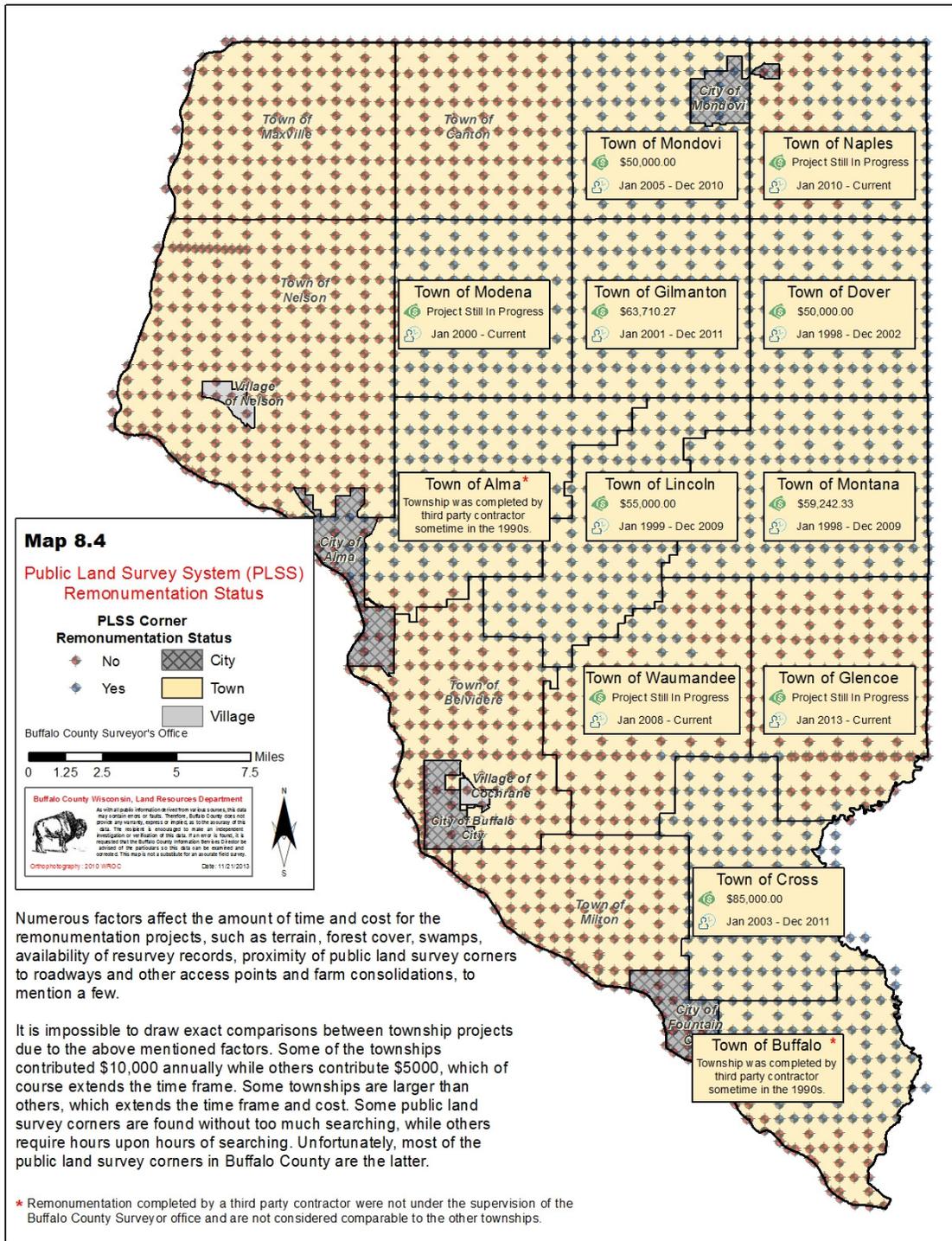
**Map 8.2 Buffalo County Future Land Use**



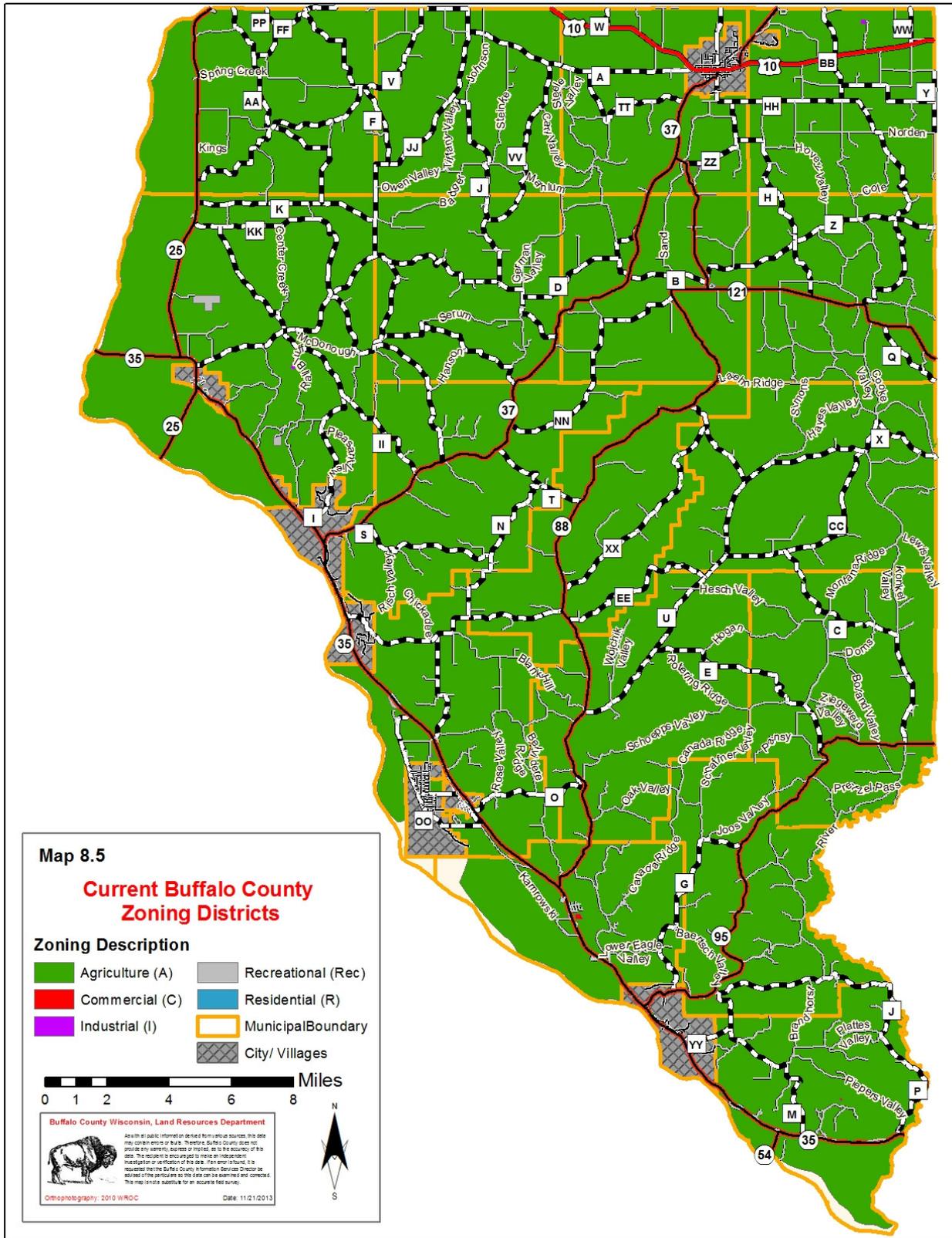
# Map 8.3 Floodplain



Map 8.4 Public Land Survey System (PLSS) Remonumentation Status



Map 8.5 Current Buffalo County Zoning Districts



## Appendix 8.1

### **Current and Future Land Use Mapping Methodologies, Land Use Descriptions**

*Current Land Use Mapping Methodologies* - The cartographic process of heads-up digitizing was used in order to extract those regions identified as Forest / Woodlands, Rural / Open Lands, and Agriculture- General from aerial photography datasets. Data obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources was used to create the Recreation, Wetlands, and Surface Water categories, which are both visible in the current, and future land use maps.

Much of the data used to derive the residential, commercial, and industrial categories came from local knowledge; however, building permits, zoning applications, and recorded documents were used when applicable. Buffalo County recognizes that this methodology of data collection and mapping process may result in potential inaccuracies of some land uses in the County. However, continual parcel mapping efforts by the County Treasurer's Office and the Land Information Office, as well as the evolution of this plan, should help identify and correct any errors that may have resulted from this initial mapping process.

*Future Land Use Mapping* - After presenting each municipality with their jurisdiction's current land uses, municipalities were asked to provide in detail about the types and locations of future developments they wished to see within their community. This information was then appended directly into the countywide Future Land Use dataset, which has been used to create the maps within this plan.

### **Buffalo County Land Use Descriptions**

*Agriculture – General* - These lands have been dedicated to dairying, livestock and poultry raising, and the cultivation of crops. Some products found within this category include corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. This includes both organic and conventional farming methods.

*Agriculture – Specialty* - These lands have been dedicated to production of specialized food products. These areas utilize manual labor or in some cases specific modern technologies for the harvesting of delicate products. Some products found within this category include orchards, small fruits, and vegetables. This includes both organic and conventional farming methods.

*Extraction* - These lands have been dedicated to the removal of natural mineral elements including metallic minerals, nonmetallic minerals, and construction aggregates for use in commercial and industrial products.

*Forest / Woodlands* - These lands contain tracts of trees and underbrush. They may be used for private hunting and forest management.

*Recreation* - These lands contain the most biological diversity of any classification. They cover from wetland marshes to tall broad leaf forests. Much of the land in this category is publically owned. The primary purpose is for outdoor recreation, education, conservation, and to promote general health and wellness.

*Residential* - Due to the rural distribution of housing within Buffalo County, this classification encompasses all residential activities that have met the following criteria. There must be four or more structures whose primary use is residential and that fall within five hundred (500) feet of one another.

*Surface Water* - These areas contain natural fresh water that has not penetrated much below the surface of the ground. These features have been established through time and do not represent seasonal runoff conditions.

*Wetlands* - These regions of land contain saturated soils and are capable of supporting vegetation indicative of wet conditions. These lands may alter with seasonal and environmental changes.

*Commercial* - Lands within this classification have been dedicated for the primary purposes of providing a safe and attractive location for such uses as retail stores, offices, entertainment, and other similar commercial establishments.

*Industrial – Heavy* - Lands contained in this classification are intended to be used for large scale manufacturing and industrial operations. These uses may have some detrimental effects to the surrounding areas due to smoke, noise, dust, odor, increased traffic, and the physical appearance of large buildings and outdoor storage sites. Some uses found within this category include energy production sites, Garbage dump sites, and large scale manufacturing operations.

*Industrial – Light* - This classification involves those regions that are intended to be used for small scale manufacturing and industrial operations. These regions differ from Industrial – Heavy in that the smoke, noise, dust, and odor typical of industrial operations are confined to the site on which they are produced and do not cause detrimental effects to the surrounding areas. Some uses found within this category include General warehousing, painting and publishing, and small repair services.

*Rural / Open Lands* - This classification involves those regions consisting of grasses, shrubs, grass-like plants, and other low lying plant life. With the exception of pasture land for grazing, these areas are free of farming for food production, and generally are free of most development.

### **Absentee Landowner Data Delineation**

The definition of an absentee landowner as decided upon by the Comprehensive Land Use Technical Committee was any landowner whose primary residence does not fall within the boundaries of Buffalo County. To obtain the approximate number of acres of land owned by both absentee and local landowners within Buffalo County, an export from the Treasurer's Office was first used to identify the total number of landowners for each municipality. The data was sorted by address to determine the actual number of landowner entities. For example there may be an individual that places their property into several different corporation names, but the property tax bill is sent to one main mailing address, this is counted as one property owner.

Data was then sorted by zip code so that all similar zip codes were grouped together. Any landowner that lives within the borders of Buffalo County was then deleted. For some landowners, the online tax roll system was used to see if the address given lies within the geographical extent of Buffalo County. If the address did not lie within the borders of Buffalo County that person was considered an absentee landowner.

## **Section 9**

### **Plan Implementation**

#### *Element Overview*

Buffalo County's Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide, decisions makers, County employees, and residents with a rational basis for how current and future development should be shaped throughout the county. This element outlines a variety of actions necessary to ensure the ongoing success of this plan and that the community's needs have and will continue to be addressed.

Buffalo County believes that all of the goals and their corresponding objectives identified throughout the nine elements of this plan, are critical for facilitating responsible growth and development in Buffalo County.

During the development of this plan, multiple reoccurring procedural themes appeared throughout the nine elements addressed in this plan. Following the same "comprehensive" approach set forth by Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law, the county has decided to focus its initial plan Implementation efforts on the following:

1. The development of sustainable / efficient mechanisms for updating and measuring the success gained by this planning effort.
2. A full comprehensive redesign of current countywide land use regulations, with an emphasis on public participation.
3. The development of an easy to use countywide website and a greater push for general technology use / implementation throughout the entire county.

These three-implementation focus has been designed to address the many reoccurring themes of this plan all the while laying the foundational support needed for community physical, social, and economic development.

#### *Plan Adoption*

Plan adoption, is in accordance with State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001(4). The adoption process includes enacting an ordinance of plan adoption, supported by the majority vote of the County Board and requiring at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance is discussed. The State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1001(4) requires the plan to be updated once in every 10-year period after adoption. However, to ensure that the plan will continue to evolve and adapt to unforeseen planning issues and opportunities and to promote maximum Intergovernmental communication, amendments to officially adopted County plan will be as necessary but no less than once every 3-years after the plan is adopted. The Land Resources Committee will oversee the plan amendments and the plan update process by enacting an ordinance of plan amendment, supported by the majority vote of the County Board and requiring at least one public hearing at which the proposed ordinance is discussed. Upon review of the Plan by the Land Resources Committee, recommended changes to the plan shall be forwarded to the County Board. Based on public input, from planning process described below, Resources, and Land Resources Committee recommendations, the board will then formally act on the recommended amendment(s).

Plan Amendment Process

Buffalo County understands that in order to ensure the success of the objectives identified throughout this document the development of an efficient process used to update this plan must first be established. It is critical that this process involves community participation as well as the technological and legal backgrounds of skilled planning professionals. Using a holistic approach, the drafters of this plan propose the following annual review process: (Please see Figure 9.1 for a visual representation of the plan amendment process)

In an effort to develop a greater sense of intergovernmental communication, it is suggested that a yearly meeting between the representative of all municipalities and the county board be established. (Intergovernmental Cooperation, *Existing and Potential Conflicts p 81*) It would be at this meeting that an overview of any upcoming countywide changes/projects be presented to the municipalities for comments and feedback. This purposed overview would be two fold; the first would be to provide county officials with a high-level planning tool to help identify possible government inefficiencies and the second to develop politically sound working relationships among County, Town, City, and Village leaders.

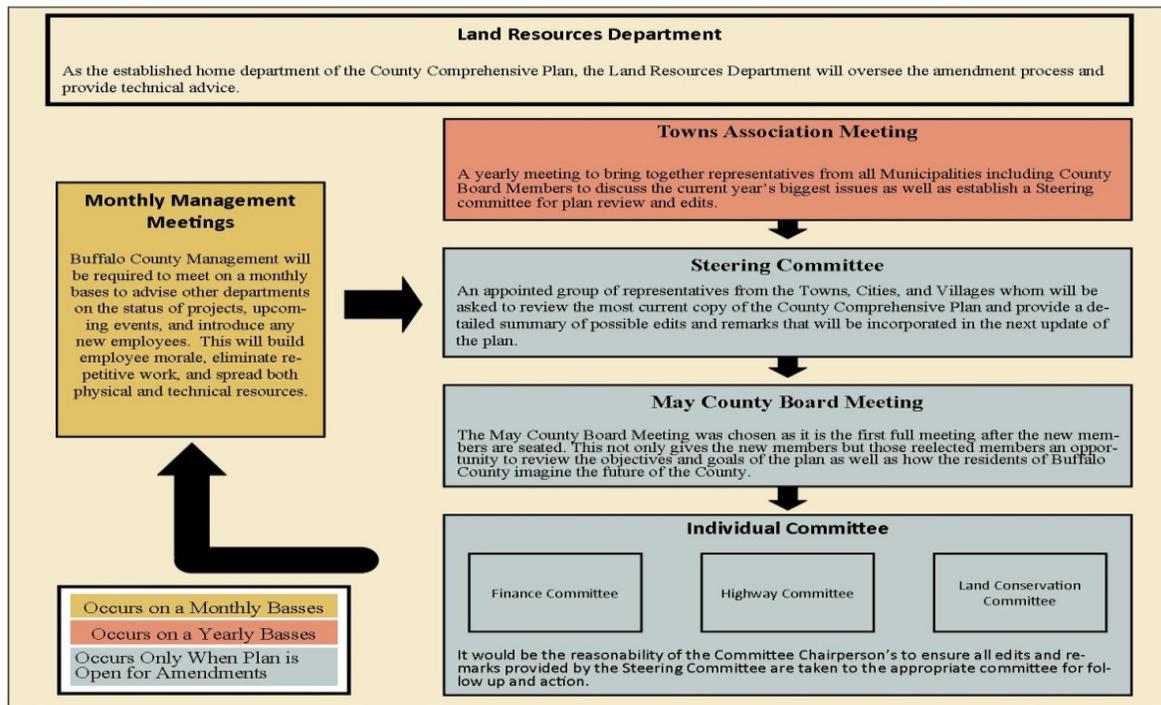
Continuing with the same bottom up approach that was originally established by the Wisconsin Town Association Buffalo County Unit (WTA) in 2010; a countywide planning committee (Steering Committee) would be selected at this annual meeting. Town representatives would select one representative for each of their five regions so that all areas of the county would be covered (See Table 9.1 Steering Committee Districts). In addition, the cities and villages would be asked to select two representatives to serve on the Steering Committee. The Steering committee would then be asked to review the most current version of the County Comprehensive Plan. It would be during this review process that the Steering Committee would be given the opportunity to meet with county management and supporting agencies (DNR, USDA, and NRCS) to discuss current and future development plans and answer any questions the committee may have. Following these presentations the steering committee would be asked to present a detailed summary of updates and recommendations to the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors at their annual May meeting.

**Table 9.1 Steering Committee Districts**

<b>Region Name</b>	<b>Municipalities Represented</b>
Northeast	Town of Mondovi, Naples, Gilmanton, Dover
Northwest	Town of Maxville, Canton, Nelson, Modena
West Central	Town of Alma, Belvidere, Lincoln
South East	Town of Montana, Glencoe, Waumandee
South	Town of Buffalo , Cross, Milton
City and Villages would select two representatives	

The May County Board meeting has been selected as the meeting in which the steering committee would deliver its report on any updates or recommendations to the county comprehensive plan, as this is the first County board meeting after new board members have been seated.

**Figure 9.1 Plan Amendment Process**



Individual County committee chairs will take any recommendations made back to their specific home committees for development of time lines and action plans. Finally, this process would come full circle with the implementation of monthly county department head meetings. (Intergovernmental Cooperation, *Goals and Objectives* p. 82) The purpose of these meetings would be to continue to facilitate interdepartmental communications and cooperation between the various Buffalo County Departments.

Working in conjunction with the Land Resources Committee, the Land Resources Department will be responsible for ensuring all proper procedures for amending the plan are followed in a timely manner and in accordance with those process set forth by this plan and its supporting ordinances.

*Comprehensive Land Use Regulation Revision*

Given the constant changes in land usage, increase in property values, and Buffalo County's aged countywide zoning and other land use related ordinances, a comprehensive revision of land use regulation should be administered. The revision process will look at all land use related regulations and how they affect the livelihood of the citizens of Buffalo County. Ensuring that the staff, the citizens, and leaders have an educational understanding of how proposed regulations will affect the community both today and in the future.

This lengthy process should start with a detailed investigation into the current status of all active land use ordinances in Buffalo County. The undertaking of a comprehensive ordinance revision should be seen from a holistic approach, focusing not only on current conditions but also examining possible future development activities. All county departments should be viewed as players and consulted during the redrafting of these regulations. Additional research and

communication with multiple (like) counties throughout Wisconsin should be viewed as a high priority. Buffalo County's rural setting and relatively small size provides certain advantages that should be clearly identified as they can be capitalized on (Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; *Natural Resources* p. 48, Economic Development Element, [*Local Planning Effort*] p. 73). Long-term ordinance maintenance and amendment procedures should also be updated during this revision period.

The implementation of a public participation plan should be viewed as a critical component to any land use regulation revision. Given the political nature of land use topics in previous years, multiple stake holders should be looked to for insight at all steps in the ordinance drafting process. Strict time lines, informational packets, and draft copies should be made available to the public in an easy to access, easy to read format in order to promote maximum transparency.

It is critical that an educational understanding of the differences between land use tools and how these mechanisms can be implemented into a County like Buffalo County be clearly understood by all. This educational aspect should be viewed with the highest importance throughout the entire revision process. Not only will a better understanding of what these regulations are designed to do help reduce the general fear and opposition of the public, but also allow decision makers to make more sound and transparent judgments.

#### *Promotion of Technology and Website Update*

From the way we shop to the way resident's bank the evolution of internet access has changed the way we lived from 20 years ago. Even in a rural setting the advancement of technology has the potential to act as an economic driver, closing the gap between far away markets, promoting tourism, and adding value to products through new educational process (Economic Development, *Local Planning Effort* p. 74). The abundance of free website hosting and social networking sites, like Facebook and Twitter allows businesses unique marketing opportunities for minimal cost.

The accessibility that internet access can offer to low cost educational sources allows both young and older residents to learn new farming and soil preservation techniques, obtain higher career advancement, and experience far away cultures (Utilities and Community Facilities, Schools p. 34)

The redevelopment of the current County website would not only allow for greater productivity among County employees but also create a more efficient means for sharing information between County government, local municipalities, and the general public. The development of a modern, easier to use website would allow greater access to open records and dramatically reduce costs for posting official notices.

The creation of a subcommittee made up of County employees, administration, and community stake holders will help aid in the development of a county website that not only maximizes resources but advocates for innovative solutions that help both county government and local business owners.

### Short Term Goals for Plan Implementation

- **(3 month after plan adoption)** Establish a monthly County Management meeting schedule with the CLUP being on the agenda at every meeting (education of department heads, updates to progress of elements, brainstorming on implementation strategies, etc.).
- **(6 months after plan adoption)** The Comprehensive Planning Technical committee will meet to review all objectives and goals throughout this plan and assign them to the appropriate committee or County department
- **(6 months after plan adoption)** Establish annual meeting of all municipalities and the county board.
- **(6 months after plan adoption)** Establish a meeting with the Buffalo County Towns Association Unit to describe the next steps in updating and revising Town and County Comprehensive Plans.
- **(6 months after plan adoption)** Establish a website creation subcommittee.
- **(9 months after plan adoption)** Buffalo County Outdoor Recreation Plan update.
- **(9 months after plan adoption)** Develop a public participation plan regarding comprehensive land use (zoning) regulation revisions.
- **(12 months after plan adoption)** Have new county website on line and operating.

### Long Term Goals for Plan Implementation

- **(18 months after plan adoption)** Drafts of revised land use regulations will be presented to the community for review.
- Meet individual element objectives and goals as stated in the plan.
- Plan revised as needed, but no less than every three years.
- 10 year plan revision
- Good, effective planning becomes part of the culture of Buffalo county government and County Departments.

Short term goals could be overwhelming. Following the three priority tasks identified in the beginning of this element, an alternative approach to implementation would be to assign a committee to each of the objectives in the plan. The committee would be expected to meet within 3 (three) months of plan completion and prioritize the goals identified in their perspective objective and within 6 (six) months, following their initial meeting, prepare a practical timeline in which to accomplish the goals. This will provide a work plan to better ensure that implementation of this plan will be ongoing.

### Closing Remarks

In order to meet the goals and objectives laid out in the plan, portions of other planning elements may overlap. While some goals are specific to a particular element, others may not be. The driving force behind this planning process has been a comprehensive analysis of the county. Therefore, achieving a particular goal may require a much broader approach. As the county implements its plan, it should assess the impact of each implementation effort against the rest of the plan.

Though market changes for commodities have created social conflicts throughout the County, these opposite viewpoints can be used as a catalyst to develop and implement new land use

regulations that better fit the evolving needs of Buffalo County, but also need to take into consideration Buffalo County landowner rights.

According to s. 66.1001, beginning on January 1, 2010, if a town, village, city, or county enacts or amends an official mapping, subdivision regulation, or zoning ordinance, the enactment or amendment ordinance must be consistent with that community's comprehensive plan.

As with all public information derived from various sources, this data may contain errors or faults. Therefore, Buffalo County does not provide any warranty, express or implied, as to the accuracy of this data. The recipient is encouraged to make an independent investigation or verification of this data. If an error is found, it is requested that the Buffalo County Land Resources Director be advised of the particulars so this data can be examined and corrected.