

DRAFT #1

**Crawford County Land and Water
Resources Management Plan**

April 2010

Section 1: Introduction

Crawford County is keenly aware that its land and water resources are vital to the County's future. Protecting and enhancing the resources is a top priority and Crawford County supports and fosters locally led conservation efforts to protect the County's natural resources. The County, through the Land Conservation Department and Committee will comply with Wisconsin Act 27 (the 1997-1999 Budget Bill) and Wisconsin Act 9 (the 2000-2001 Budget Bill), and amended Chapter 92 of the Wisconsin Statutes. It requires counties to develop and update Land and Water Resource Management (LWRM) plans.

Background

Crawford County had its initial LWRM plan approved by the Land and Water Conservation Board in 2001 and a subsequent update in 2006. Since completion of the original plan resource concerns continue to change. Some major trends and issues affecting Crawford County are:

- NR 151 is passed, creating runoff performance standards and prohibitions
- Crawford County passed and is administering a nonmetallic mining reclamation ordinance.
- Use Value Assessment has shifted taxes on the landscape impacting forest use sometimes negatively
- Crawford County is cooperating with other agencies to provide technical support and administration for the Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program (CREP) that protects stream corridors
- Rotational grazing and low-cost milk parlors increases throughout the county
- Larger and more mechanized dairy production increases throughout the county
- Non-farm rural weekend residents are increasing in number along with the value of their residences and with their expectations for rural living education and services
- Citizens and agencies are increasingly concerned about invasive species
- Crawford County adopted a Comprehensive Plan meeting the requirements of Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" law
- Crawford County adopted a revised manure storage ordinance.

Plan Development and Public Input

In 2008-2010 Crawford County undertook a public intensive comprehensive planning process to develop the "Crawford County Comprehensive Plan 2009-2029". In developing the County's Comprehensive Plan, the revision of the Crawford County Land and Water Resource Plan was recognized by the LCC and County Planning Committee as important and integral to the development of the County Comprehensive Plan. Residents, elected officials, and agencies clearly recognize that the economic and social fabric of the County is unequivocally tied to the land and water resources of the Crawford County. Therefore, as public input was gathered in the comprehensive planning process special attention was given to ensure input gathering methods addressed land and water resource concerns. Public input was gathered in the form of a comprehensive county survey, public informational meetings, a public hearing and additional planning meetings. It was intended that this information gathered be utilized not only to direct the goals and policies of the County comprehensive plan but guide the revision of the County's Land and Water Resource Plan.

Committee/agency Involvement

The Crawford County Planning Committee (membership listed in appendix), was utilized as the committee to gather public input on the LWRM plan revision along with developing the Crawford County Comprehensive Plan. The committee met regularly (monthly) from late 2008 to early 2010 compiling information through survey and meeting input. The committee identified the following issues from information gathered or review of the existing LWRM plan.

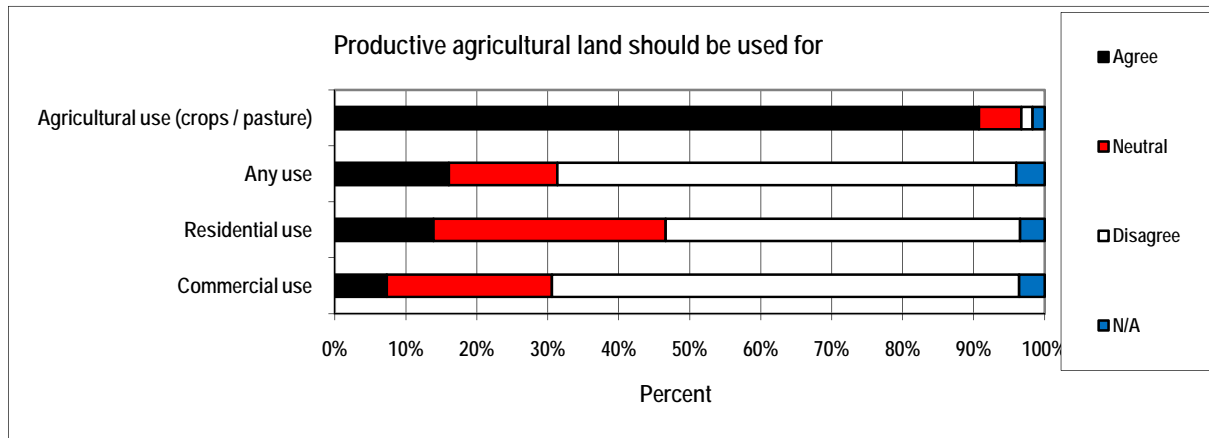
- ▶ Water quality and non-point source pollution.
- ▶ Impacts of inadequate land use planning
- ▶ Groundwater pollution and protection
- ▶ Nutrient Management education and research
- ▶ Preservation of land for agricultural use
- ▶ Preservation of forestlands to maintain their economic value

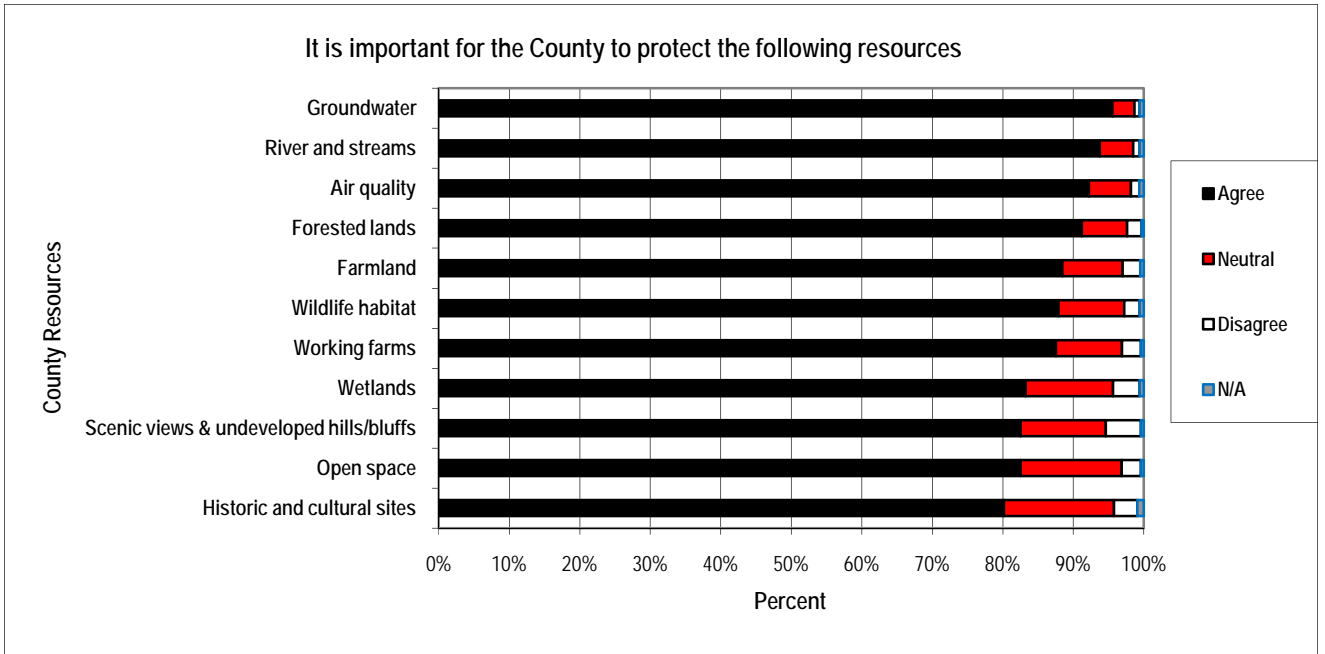
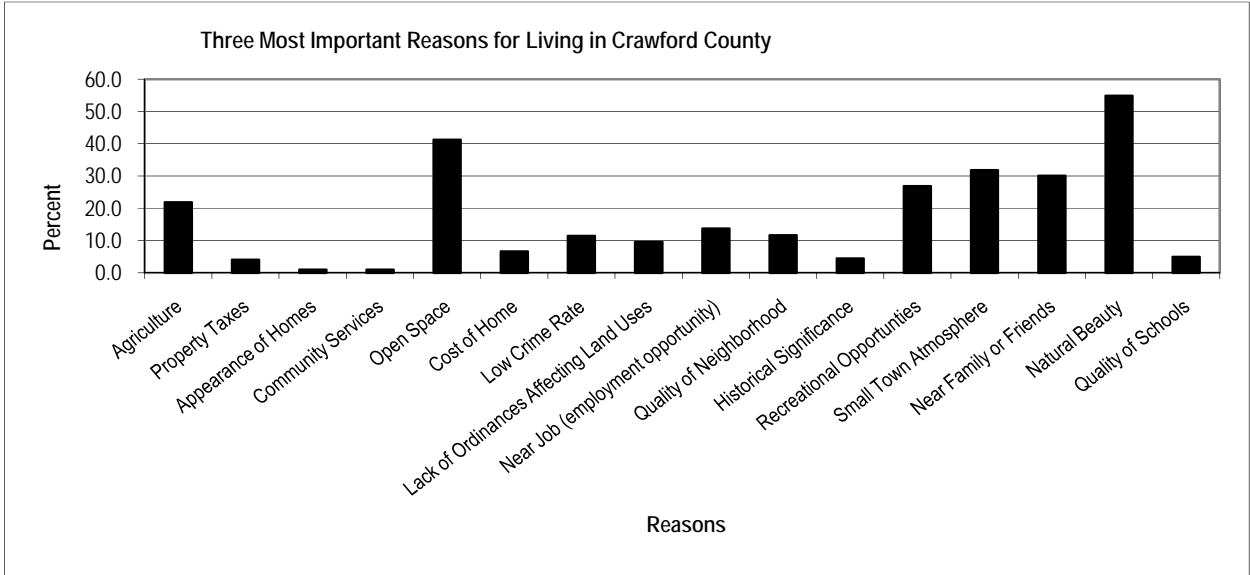
Crawford County Land Conservation Committee (membership listed in appendix), reviewed the plan at their March and April 2010 meetings. They discussed the goals from the previous Land and Water Plan and identified goals and objectives for the revised LWRM Plan.

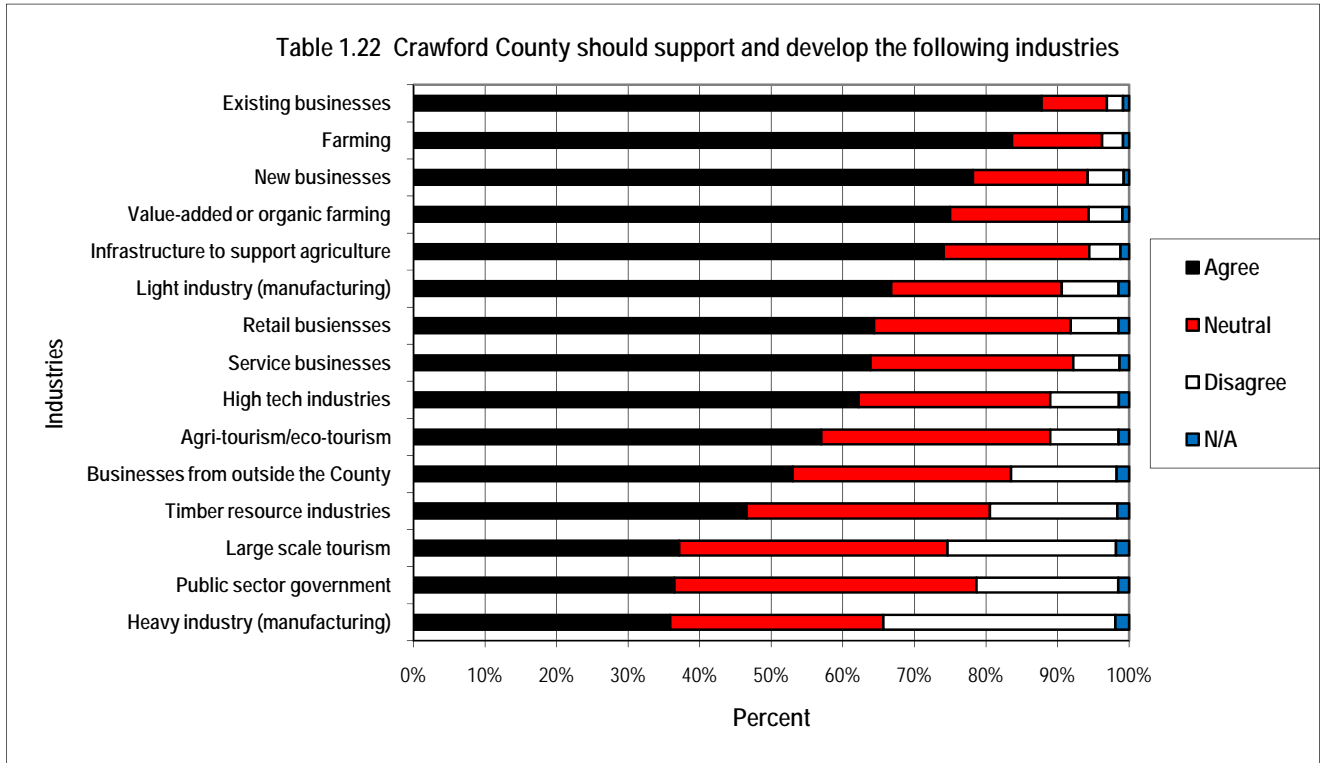
Additional agencies and departments requested to provide input on the LWRMP include UW Extension, Planning and Zoning, NRCS field office staff, Farm Service Agency staff, DNR local and regional staff were consulted and have been requested to provide input on the plan as drafts have been developed.

Survey Information Pertaining to Natural Resources

In 2008, The Crawford County UW-Extension Economic Development Agent coordinated the distribution and tabulation of a county survey mailed to an estimated 5,657 Crawford County residences. Surveys were mailed to property owners in the unincorporated Towns of the County. In all, 5,657 surveys were mailed out and 1,325 were returned for a return rate of about 23%. The following tables illustrate the results as they pertain to the County’s land and water resources. The survey results clearly show how important the land and water resources are to the residents.







Public Information Meeting Input Pertaining to Natural Resources

In November of 2008 as part of the comprehensive planning process, a county wide public information meeting was held at the Seneca High School Gymnasium. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit input from residents pertaining to issues affecting the County. Tables were set up with poster boards displayed in which attendee’s were encouraged to write down their comments regarding the various planning topics. The following comments were received pertaining to land and water resources:

What do you envision for land use, agriculture, natural or cultural resources?

- Community cultural events music dance, theater, arts
- Preserve grazing land and forest. No CAFOs
- Make this a model for other natural areas and learn from mistakes
- Small sustainable farming- bigger is not better
- The state government is pushing regulations on farms and energy that excludes local control. This is not what smart growth plan is supposed to be. We need to get state government to support us.
- Some control of breaking up plots to form scattered housing.
- How will the comp plan accommodate diversity in land use such as occasional/intentional community? Will zoning allow it?
- If actions at the town level need to “be consistent” with the town plan how can the town government meet the needs of residents- one township’s geography population and development potential may be very different from another town’s, for instance.
- Help us prepare, share, protect the right of small producers and single families to feed themselves and their neighbors. Cities are unsustainable. These people are coming ready to welcome them.

Other Plans Considered

Several resource management plans have a relationship to this plan. Data from these plans were reviewed in the development of the Crawford County LWRM plan:

1. State of the Basin Plans, Wisconsin DNR:

These plans provide an overview of land and water resource quality in their basins and outline actions to address resource concerns.

- The State of the Bad Axe – LaCrosse River Basin, 2002
Web site – <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/balax/basinplan.html>
 - The State of the Lower Wisconsin River Basin,
Web site - <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/gmu/lowerwis/lwbasinplan.html>
2. Crawford County Farmland Preservation Plan, 1982 (revised 2005 to include performance standards)
 - This plan is to protect farmland from uncontrolled development, competing land uses, and promote sound conservation.
 3. Crawford County Soil Erosion Control Plan, 1987
 - This plan met the requirements of Chapter 92 statutes to identify soil loss by county watersheds. It also details a plan of action and implementation to decrease soil erosion in priority areas.
 4. Hydrologic Assessment of the Kickapoo Watershed, 1998
 - This plan was written by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey and the UW Department of Geological engineering for the Trout Unlimited Home Rivers Initiative project in the Kickapoo Watershed. It assesses the hydrologic state of the area and makes recommendations for improvement.

Plan Goals

Based on public input gathered through a survey, public meetings, committee meetings and review of past land and water resource documents the following goals for the revised LWRM plan have been prepared. The goals are categorized under six general headings that summarize the issues affecting the County.

Soil Erosion

Goal 1: Maintain soil erosion on all cropland to “T”.

Goal 2: Reduce erosion on land other than cropland.

Goal 3: Increase money available for cost-sharing to install practices to prevent erosion.

Water Resources

Goal 1: Preserve, protect and enhance surface and groundwater integrity, quality, and supply.

Goal 2: Increase funding for cost-sharing and demonstration projects.

Nutrient Management

Goal 1: Improve and protect the quality of our natural resources by the judicious and economic use of nutrients.

Land Use Planning

Goal 1: Provide guidance and expertise from cooperating agencies to assist towns with implementing their comprehensive plans.

Forests and Invasive Species

Goal 1: Encourage sustainable forestry practices that protect groundwater and surface water resources.

Goal 2: Encourage the regeneration of native plant species and strive to manage invasive species and pests.

Waste Disposal

Goal 1: Enhance recycling practices and proper disposal of unwanted & hazardous ag waste products.

