

**Targeting Working Lands and Operations  
Calumet County Pilot Project  
Meeting 2 Notes, April 9, 2008, 4:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Attendance:** Doug Miskowiak, Mary Kohrell, Rose Moehn, Dale Voskuil, Lylas Tremble, Mike Hofberger, Joe Sprangers, Don Waldvogel, Kenn Buelow, Doug Thiel, Eugene McLeod, Deb Reinhart-Geiser, Dena Mleziva  
Guests: Ray Mueller, Bryce Larson, Bob Streck, Dani Sentry

**Agenda/Minutes Approval**

The agenda as presented was acceptable to members. They also agreed that the level of detail included in the minutes from the first meeting was acceptable, so Mary will continue to record minutes accordingly at future meetings.

**Task 1**

The committee's first task was to establish a purpose for prioritizing working lands. Committee members reviewed purposes from previous meeting and from Doug's comprehensive planning document. Doug also distributed a two-page summary that tried to condense information from the 10-page document. The group discussed a number of possible options, including five possible purposes listed below:

1. Preserve sufficient quantity of contiguous lands (through PDR?).
2. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Designate specific areas within the county suitable for agricultural purposes, with a focus on environmental areas.
4. Develop and implement educational programs for farmers on soil erosion and runoff and BMP's to control them.
5. Planning and Zoning decisions, for example, locate karst areas.

The committee would like to have access to some data/maps online - at a minimum, a list of available data. Doug will work with the planning department to see what is practical. Doug also shared his reservations about sharing a list of available data. He does not want to see the committee's decisions limited by the availability of data.

The TWLO Committee and Dena acknowledged the close relationship between density committee and TWLO committee discussions. The current Density Committee proposal is that density is based on land use.

After further discussion, and by consensus, the committee determined the project purpose for Calumet County: **Designate specific areas within the county appropriate for agricultural purposes, mindful of environmental sensitivity.** The discussion remained opened regarding which farmland protection tools would be used (i.e. zoning/pdr). Depending on county/town priorities, a single LESA tool might be appropriate.

## Task 2

Doug distributed a four-page handout that includes some common characteristics that are used to define priority working lands, and taught the committee how to use these characteristics.

- Under soil characteristics, important indicator crops of corn, alfalfa, soybeans will be used, along with the non-irrigated capability class and NRCS soil data. Doug will work with Eugene to build one soil capability layer.
- Committee reviewed possible ag productivity characteristics, development pressure characteristics, and public value characteristics. Under ag productivity, committee members expressed interest in including contiguous acres into the list. There was discussion of adding Niagara Escarpment, groundwater recharge, and environmental sensitivity onto the list of public values.
- One particular option for measuring contiguous acres was measuring the percent of working lands per PLSS section. A few committee members responded that they thought this was an appropriate measure.

Committee members voted on their priority characteristics for defining working lands with six dots each. Doug will compile the results and will also request committee members to complete a homework exercise prior to the next meeting on Wednesday, May 14 from 4:30 to 7:00pm. Doug mentioned that the dot exercise completed tonight was meant to begin the discussion toward choosing the characteristics of working lands that met the committee's established purpose. This single exercise is not meant to come to a conclusion.

Two members of the public provided comment. Bryce Larson, Calumet County's part-time Ag Agent with UW Extension shared the results of ag surveys he had previously conducted in a 20 region area. Bryce discussed the relationship between dairy cows and loss of farms and productive farmland to development. In Wisconsin, and especially in Calumet County, the loss of dairy cows is closely linked to the loss of farms and farmland – moreso than in other states. Bryce offered to share those survey results with the committee. Ray Mueller shared comments and concerns about the challenges of working lands preservation, but indicated that the Secretary of DATCP is going to be placing higher emphasis on this topic again in the near future.