

**Targeting Working Lands and Operations
Calumet County Pilot Project
Meeting 3 Notes, May 14, 2008, 4:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

Attendance: , Kenn Buelow, Mike Hofberger, Eugene McLeod, Dena Mleziva, Rose Moehn, Deb Reinhart-Geiser, Doug Thiel, Lylas Tremble, Dale Voskuil,. Doug Miskowiak, Mary Kohrell

Unable to attend: Joe Sprangers, Don Waldvogel

Public present: Ray Mueller, Dani Santry

Approve May 14 agenda and minutes from previous meeting

The agenda was approved as presented. Minutes from the April 9 meeting were distributed and approved. Kohrell will e-mail the notes from that meeting.

Define characteristics of priority working lands.

Doug reviewed the top votes that had been assigned at the end of meeting two. These included groundwater recharge (8); compatibility with adjacent and surrounding land uses (7); percent wetland (6); and environmental sensitivity and Niagara Escarpment (4 each). He reminded members that they had agreed that soil quality would be one of the criteria, so it was not included in the voting exercise. He asked members to share the results of their individual ranking and comments from the homework assignment.

“Size of farm” was discussed. The group agreed that contiguous acres is more important than size of farm, and that a number of small farmers could act as a unit. There was an interest in preserving farms of all sizes, not just large ones.

Two members ranked “availability of agricultural infrastructure” as their second priority. Other members indicated that this was not a priority for them because the infrastructure would follow as a result of the presence of animals, per comments at the previous meeting from Bryce Larson, UWEX Ag Agent.

Educational value was prioritized by two members who suggested that small dairies have particular educational value. Other members agreed, but thought that working lands of all sizes and types would have educational value.

Three members ranked distance to urban services as a priority. There was clarification that this issue means that areas further from urban boundaries would be given a higher priority. Doug shared maps with members that depicted sewer service areas and zones of village/city extraterritorial jurisdiction. Members agreed that working lands within sewer service areas should receive low priority, but lands within ETJ areas should rank high. The committee suggested that a PDR application could include a question regarding price, with priority given to lands that could be purchased for a lower price or discount.

Seven members ranked “land use policies” as a high priority. There was discussion about whether towns that have zoning policies should be given priority over those towns without zoning. This issue was not resolved, but several members thought that land in towns with no zoning should not be penalized in the case of a preservation program.

There was discussion about the categories of karst features, Niagara Escarpment, groundwater recharge, and environmental sensitivity. Several members had prioritized each of these categories in their homework. Participants agreed that the Niagara Escarpment should be defined as only the exposed face of rock, commonly called “the Ledge.” Karst features would be more inclusive, but would be extremely difficult to map. There was a suggestion that karst features be preserved, but not for houses or ag production. The group agreed that there may be environmental limitations with certain lands, but the practices utilized on that land would be the determining factor about if and how the land should be protected for agriculture. There was a suggestion that the concept of stewardship could be included on a purchase of development rights application, but would likely be difficult to map.

It was acknowledged that since groundwater recharge areas are important to Calumet County, this should be an important category as it may help sell a future PDR program. The group decided that groundwater quality would be a better term, and could possibly be mapped using recharge rate, depth to bedrock, or potential for groundwater pollution. Doug showed a map of areas of groundwater susceptibility which was produced by the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey for Calumet County.

The group decided that three categories -- percent of surrounding land uses, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and proximity to protected working lands -- should be combined.

Following this lengthy discussion, members were provided with six dots each, and asked to vote for their priority characteristics. Doug acknowledged that he would follow up after the meeting with the three members who were missing from the vote (Hofberger, Sprangers, Waldvogel). He also reminded members that they should assume soil productivity is already included as a category. A summary of this vote yielded the following priority results:

- 7 – proximity to protected working lands
- 6 – distance to urban services
- 6 – compatibility with adjacent/surrounding areas
- 6 – groundwater quality
- 5 – land use policies
- 4 – discounted cost of easement
- 3 – stewardship

Committee members discussed what types of lands and land uses are to be included in its recommendations. Doug reminded the committee that the purpose indicates agricultural lands, but there may be interest in expanding that to include forested areas. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

The June meeting will be cancelled so Doug can work on data gathering and map preparation. The next meeting will be held from 4:30 to 7:00 pm on July 9. The meeting topics will be scoring and weighting the characteristics.