



MINUTES

**LAND EVALUATION AND SITE ASSESSMENT (LESA) TECHNICAL ADVISORY WORK GROUP
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2006 AT 1:30 PM
OZAUKEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER – AUDITORIUM
121 WEST MAIN STREET, PORT WASHINGTON**

Attendees:

NAME	AFFILIATION
MICHELLE LEHNER	WDNR
SUE MILLIN	LCP
PETER ZIEGLER - for ANGIE CURTES	OWLT
DEB SIELSKI	WASHINGTON CO
DAN LYNCH	NRCS-RET. WINGS OVER WI
DEBRA WALLS for JIM KADOW	TOWN OF SAUKVILLE
MICHELLE KOMISKEY for BETSY GILLEN	NRCS
KEVIN TRAASTAD	NRCS
LARRY NATZKE	NRCS
KENT PENA	NRCS
DON HAMM	DAIRY FARMER
MIKE PAULUS	DAIRY FARMER
OTTO KOHLWEY	FARMER
KENNETH ALBINGER	FARMER
DALE BUSER	NORTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL
COREEN FALLAT	DATCP
BEN MCKAY	SEWRPC
PAUL ROBACK	OZAUKEE-UWEX
NANCY ANDERSON	SEWRPC
ANDY HOLSCHBACH	OZAUKEE- PRLM
ANDREW STRUCK	OZAUKEE- PRLM

1. Welcome and Introductions

Andrew Struck welcomed everyone to the work group meeting and thanked them for their time and assistance in the comprehensive planning process.

2. Discussion on the Role of the LESA Technical Advisory Work Group

Andrew Struck discussed the role of the LESA Technical Advisory Work Group. He noted that the recommendations from this work group will be forwarded to the Comprehensive Planning Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and County Comprehensive Planning Board (CPB) for review and approval. Andrew Struck further noted that the results of the LESA will be incorporated into the County Comprehensive Plan as a recommendation for evaluating agricultural lands within the County. Furthermore, this LESA will be provided to participating local units of government for use in developing their local comprehensive plans. Andrew Struck also informed the work group that their priority was to establish site assessment criteria

that are or can be supported by GIS data as well as to create a weighted system of these criteria for ranking agricultural lands as part of the overall Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA).

3. Background on the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Process – Presentation by NRCS

Andrew Struck provided a brief background and introduced staff from the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) who will be assisting the work group and staff in developing the LESA for Ozaukee County. Andrew Struck introduced Larry Natzke, who has conducted the LESA with St. Croix County, Kent Pena, a GIS specialist from NRCS to assist in the technical development, and Kevin Traastad, a regional soil scientist to assist throughout the process. Michelle Komiskey, a District Conservationist, was also sitting in on the meeting for Betsy Gillen, the new District Conservationist for Ozaukee and Washington Counties.

Andrew Struck then turned the meeting over to Kevin Traastad from NRCS and he presented an overview of LESA, which is available at: <http://www.gis.psu.edu/outreach/index.html>. Kevin Traastad also mentioned the LESA Guidebook as a resource for the process. The *Land Evaluation and Site Assessment: A Guidebook for Rating Agricultural Lands, Second Edition* can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/lesa/LESA%20Guidebook.pdf>.

Larry Natzke then discussed some elements of the St. Croix County example and passed around some of the final LESA mapping that was developed as part of the process.

4. Discussion on Developing Criteria for LESA – Site Assessment Criteria

Andrew Struck talked about the Land Evaluation (LE) analysis that has already been completed for Ozaukee County with the assistance of NRCS staff and relies on an objective ranking of soil types for agricultural production. Andrew Struck then showed the mapping results of the LE analysis for Ozaukee County on a large map. This map of the LE analysis was also provided in the packet of information. Andrew Struck also talked about some of the other relevant inventory data that has been collected regarding agricultural lands within Ozaukee County. Andrew showed large maps containing inventory information on existing land in agricultural use, land zoned for agricultural use through a generalized zoning map, and farmland preservation area lands within Ozaukee County.

Andrew then showed some large inventory maps that have been compiled as part of the comprehensive planning process that may serve as data for establishing site assessment criteria. The work group discussed some of this inventory data and the currency of the data. The work group discussed the criteria that may be supported by this inventory data. Andrew Struck then passed around a summary sheet of criteria used by other counties/communities entitled, "Potential Site Assessment Criteria for LESA Evaluation". This was a summary of the site assessment criteria used by St. Croix County, Dane County and McHenry County, IL. The summary lists potential criteria from those other county/community LESA processes that are supported currently by GIS data in Ozaukee County. The full reports for these three example counties/communities were provided in the work group packets. Andrew then read the summary list of potential criteria and presented a staff recommendation for potential site assessment criteria in Ozaukee County. This included:

POTENTIAL SITE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR LESA EVALUATION FOR OZAUKEE COUNTY

- Compatibility of adjacent land uses, based on updated SEWRPC land use inventory
- Compatibility of surrounding land uses (land within 0.5/1.5 miles?)
- Agricultural Zoning- 35 acre minimum parcel size (current as of 2000)
- Distance to sewer service areas
- Road classification factor (minor/collector; local arterial; county arterial; state arterial)
- Primary or secondary environmental corridors or isolated natural resource areas present on parcel
- Size of contiguous agricultural/conservancy ownership
- Distance from city or village boundary
- Natural areas on the site
- Historic resources on the site (National Register sites are digital; need to find out if archeological info is available from NRCS/FSA)
- Proximity to permanently protected land (fee simple and easement)

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Additional Suggestions by work group included:

- Emphasis on natural features rather than roads, city/village boundaries, and other "man-made" features; also the SA should include floodplain information since this isn't specifically a part of Land Evaluation (LE) score.
- Consider impact on surface water - maybe distance to streams and/or management of individual watersheds/subwatersheds. Utilize GIS data for rivers, streams, ponds, lakes and other waterbodies and/or watershed information.
- Wetlands on the parcel and wetland quality
- Consider length of time farm has been in the family / Century Farms
- It was mentioned by Larry Natzke that the length of time in a family was dropped from the St. Croix LESA example because it did not have much impact
- There was also discussion about "Stewardship" (similar to the Penn State example) and it was discussed that perhaps a GIS database could be created to provide information about the past installation of approved conservation improvements and practices on individual farms.

5. Next Steps

Andrew Struck encouraged work group members to continue to review the materials provided and think about site assessment criteria and a weighting system for ranking agricultural lands. Andrew noted that at the next meeting we would like the work group to tentatively decide on a set of site assessment criteria to pursue that will then be "tested out" on specific farmland to refine the GIS model and weighting system. We will also be talking about a weighting system for the criteria at our next meeting.

6. Next Meeting Dates

November 1, 2006

December 6, 2006

January 10, 2007

February 7, 2007